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Yiatrosafia yia ton Anthropon: Indigenous Knowledge of Medicinal, Aromatic and Cosmetic (MAC) Plants in the Utilisation of the Plural Medical System in Pírgos and Práitoria for Community Health Development in Rural Crete, Greece

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Citation

Aiglsperger, J. (2014, November 18). *Yiatrosafia yia ton Anthropon: Indigenous Knowledge of Medicinal, Aromatic and Cosmetic (MAC) Plants in the Utilisation of the Plural Medical System in Pírgos and Práitoria for Community Health Development in Rural Crete, Greece*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/29757>

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Issue Date: 2014-11-18

Chapter V THE COMMUNITIES OF PIRGOS AND PRAITORIA

Following a description of the geographical, historical and cultural features of Crete at large, the present chapter sheds light on the characteristics of two local communities situated in the rural area of South-Central Crete. Kain Hart (1992: 8) defines locality as: *'a circumscribed area of a world-historical field of forces known to villagers through their own experience (and that of their families and acquaintances) and education'*. The following paragraphs describe the physical outline of the research area and the cultural features of the target population from a local point of view. The Greek term *'Kosmos'* can be translated as both 'community' and 'culture' and hereby suggests that the inhabitants of the two research communities rely on a strong sense of local and social affiliation. Communal features, which are known and secure, stand in contrast to external elements, namely anything outside the *'Kosmos'*, which herewith bare notions of mystery and danger of the unknown. Overall, a description of the cultural characteristics of the target population incorporates a variety of polarities, which appear to exist between: exchange and isolation; diversity and uniformity; excess and moderation; chaos and order; public and private life; competition and sense of community; anarchy and loyalty; as well as crisis and consistency. Since communal norms generally span across such polarities, socially adequate patterns of behaviour shown by the local inhabitants depend largely on social occasions and specific moments in time. Nevertheless, a contradiction appears to exist between the norms of the community and the behaviour of the community members, who constantly and consciously fail to conform to communal standards. As Gilmore (1982: 190) observes: *'Sibling solidarity [, for example,] is always an ideal, but it is often directly contradicted by open and often violent animosity between brothers'*. Failure to display an ideal and adequate form of behaviour does, however, not provoke feelings of guilt among the community members. In view of such polarities and contradictions, local belief systems shared by the local population generally involve the notion that the social, natural and spiritual environments have both good and bad characteristics. Traditional practices and local rituals are generally directed at keeping the social, natural and spiritual environment in harmony and to provide a sense of orientation, thereby reducing feelings of anxiety and uncertainty (cf. Blum & Blum 1965; Greger 1985; Herzfeld 1985; Kain Hart 1992). At first, the present chapter localises the two research communities within the wider research area of South-Central Crete.

Subsequently, the surroundings and the size of the villages are highlighted in addition to patterns of migration and settlement developed by the local population. Following a detailed description of the socio-demographic characteristics of the study population, the everyday life of local inhabitants, as it is not only shaped by adherence to an annual religious canon but also by the performance of practices and festivities, which follow spiritual belief systems, socio-economic routines and traditional habits, is presented. In this way, the pluralistic characteristics of the two research communities and population provide a sound basis for the subsequent presentation of medical-anthropological material collected in the research area. Shedding light on the social context of the community allows for a more profound understanding of differences in local perceptions of health and illness (cf. Slikkerveer 1990; Koutis *et al.* 1993). As Arnott (1996: 265) observes: *'A society's attitude towards the health of its population and the development of medicine are reflections of [...] its social order [...]'*.

5.1. Between the Asterousia Mountains and the Mesara Plain

5.1.1 Location of the Research Communities in South-Central Crete

The region of South-Central Crete covers an area of approximately 611 square kilometres and overlaps with the boundary between the Aegean and African land plates. As the result of a rather dynamic geologic history, the region is to this day exposed to increased seismic activity, whereby a rather strong earthquake occurred in the southern part of Crete as late as in June 2013.

Average temperatures across the area reach between ten and 15 degrees Celsius during the winter months and between 25 and 30 degrees Celsius during the summer months. The surface is shaped by the catchment area of the Yeropotamos River running westward, which carries water during rainy seasons, and the catchment area of Anapodaris River, the longest river of Crete, running eastward. The principal features of South-Central Crete, however, refer to the Asterousia Mountain range, which spreads along the south coast, and to the extensive and fertile Mesara Plain. In particular, the Asterousia Mountains, which rise to a maximum of 1.231 metres at the peak of Mount Kofinas and descend abruptly to the south coast, offer a barren landscape dissected by small valleys and gorges. While the mountain slopes produce a natural abundance of wild greens and aromatic plants, agricultural products, such as olives (*Olea europaea* L. *sylvestris* Brot.), grapes (*Vitis vinifera* L.), maize (*Zea mays* L.) or almonds (*Amygdalus communis* L.), are largely grown in the mountain valleys. Olives are, however, cultivated in a low-density fashion, which has recently been fostered by the growing abandonment of olive groves and the increased migration of workforce to urban, touristic zones. Enclosed by the Asterousia Mountains in the South and by the foothills of the Psiloritis Mountain in the northwest, the Mesara Plain, also known simply as 'Mesara', forms the largest plain of Crete. The flatland is crossed by the Yeropotamos River and offers a distinctively rich natural environment and a great abundance of arable land. More than 400 different species of flowering plants, including over 350 aromatic plants, which grow across a variety of natural habitats, have been found in the Mesara. In this way, over a hundred plants have reportedly been used for medicine, spice, food, fodder, forage, fuel, construction and craft material or have been applied for ritual purposes by the local population since the early days of human settlement in the area. While the western end of the Mesara has recently emerged as a centre of greenhouse cultivation of crops, such as tomatoes, a variety of agricultural products, including olives, grapes and cereals have long been harvested across the region.

On the whole, the Mesara Plain has been distinguished as a centre of intensive olive cultivation, whereby the practices involved have at times been identified as having a negative impact on the biodiversity of the plain in terms of causing plant extinction, soil erosion and water resources insufficiency. The movement of rather large flocks of sheep and goats between the Asterousia Mountains and the Psiloritis Mountain has caused tensions between olive farmers and shepherds. In brief, episodes of drought, excessive garbage disposal, as well as activities of grazing and burning, which are the result of farming and shepherding techniques, as well as of natural phenomena, are the leading causes of environmental degradation in the region of South-Central Crete (cf. Watrous *et al.* 1993; Dijkstra 2005; Fielding *et al.* 2005; Allen *et al.* 2006; De Vries 2007; Kritsotakis & Tasnis 2009) (5.1).

Patterns of early human settlement in the region of South-Central Crete shed light on a concentration of settlement towards the western end of the Mesara Plain, as evidenced by the historical sites of: Minoan Phaestus; Minoan Ayia Triada west of Phaestus; Hellenistic-Roman Matala, namely the location of the main harbour at the time; and Roman Gortyn. Following a frequent occurrence of earthquakes as well as the advance of the Arabs during the Byzantine Era, upon which Iraklion became the Capital of Crete, the population of Gortyn declined and reorganized itself into rural communities around the 7th century A.D. Although the number of rural sites in South-Central Crete had reportedly increased earlier, namely during the Hellenistic Period, the majority of present-day villages and rural churches have been established during Byzantine times. Encouraged by the Venetians and supported by the operation of new olive presses, the production of olive oil in South-Central Crete increased significantly during the 16th century. Ottoman hegemony of the 17th and 18th century introduced an increase in cereal production, building of water mills and the establishment of new villages across the Mesara Plain (cf. Watrous *et al.* 1993).

In general, the inhabitants of rural Crete have resorted to living in small hamlets or communities whereupon the sight of isolated houses is rather rare (cf. Rackham & Moody 1996). As Watrous *et al.* (1993: 196) notice: '*Villages in the region are often located at the base of the*

foothills, at points where up-slope streams or springs converge on the fertile bottomland'. The rural community of Pírgos is situated at the northern foothills of the Asterousia Mountains east of Mount Kofinas and southeast of the Mesara Plain. Joining the flatland of the Mesara in the North, the community is placed at an average height of 290 metres and is enclosed by hills in the East, West and South. Following the definition adopted by the *United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre*, in which high altitude areas consist of a lower limit of 300 metres, Pírgos may be identified as a semi-mountainous community (*cf.* Hellenic Statistical Authority 2008; Tyrovolas *et al.* 2011). By contrast, the lowland community of Praitória is found in the eastern part of the Mesara Plain north of Pírgos and on the western bank of Anapodaris River, which rises at the Dikti Mountains and exits at the south coast between the villages of Tsutsuros and Keratokambos into the Libyan Sea (*cf.* Map 5.1).



Map 5.1 The Two Research Communities in South-Central Crete.
Source: Daily & Gerrard (2008) (*edited*).

The weather conditions of Pírgos and Praitória are rather typical for South-Central Crete and are characterised by a relatively small variation of minimum and maximum temperatures although humidity and frost occasionally persist in the lowland areas during the winter months. While winds generally reach the communities from the northwest throughout the year, southern winds, such as the *Sirocco*, may at times sweep through the villages during the winter. The prolonged absence of excessive rainfall during the past decades in conjunction with episodes of draught has created widespread patterns of soil dehydration across the region. As a result, the hills of Pírgos, which used to provide the community with spring water, nowadays offer numerous drained streambeds, whereas only one of three streams continues to run through the community carrying water during the rainy season. In the same fashion, the western bank of the Anapodaris River, which borders the community of Praitória in the North, remains largely dry during the summer months (*cf.* Illustration 5.1).



Illustration 5.1 Anapodaris River in Praitoria.
Photograph by J. Aiglsperger (2011).

In addition to a natural abundance of wild plants and species, the natural environment surrounding the communities of Pírgos and Praitoria comprises a number of man-made landscapes. Practices of reforestation, namely of different types of trees, such as Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens* L.) or Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus* Labill.), in the region of South-Central Crete during the mid-20th century resulted in the planting of the ‘Forest of Farmakaras’ in Pírgos in 1949. In the same fashion, Cypress and Eucalyptus trees were planted on the cemetery of Pírgos, whereby the Eucalyptus trees, however, had to be destroyed at a later stage due to the damage the enormous roots inflicted upon several tombs. The road connecting Praitoria to the community of Kharakas southwest of Praitoria has been similarly framed by two rows of Eucalyptus trees, not at least as a means to curtail the spread of Malaria in Crete at the beginning of the 20th century. In view of the prevalence of Malaria, villages situated at the higher foothills of mountain, such as Pírgos, provide a healthier environment for the local population than flatland communities (*cf.* Watrous *et al.* 1993; Kalokhristianakis 2009).

The name of the community of *Pírgos* contains a direct reference to the Greek word for ‘Tower’. The settlement is said to derive its name from a tower, which was established on a hill towards the eastern edge of the present village, known as ‘*O Apano Pírgos*’ (‘Upper Pírgos’), and served as a point of observation, most probably during the Venetian occupation of Crete. Originally, a second tower was established in the centre of the village, which served as a watchtower for the Venetian and subsequently the Ottoman guards, but was almost entirely demolished in favour of the construction of residential buildings in the village centre. The name of the community has reportedly first been mentioned in an inscription dating back to the First Century A.D., which made a reference to the historical site of Rytion. Found northeast of Pírgos, the site was occupied during the Greek Dark Ages and is nowadays known as Rotasi. Although no historical evidence regarding the establishment of Pírgos as a community before the introduction of Christianity has been found, archaeological remains recognize the possibility of an early existence of the village under a different name or in the form of an independent unit within the settlement of Rytion. While the excavation of two Roman tombs west of Pírgos indicates that the settlement evolved as a community during that time, the historical records on the existence of Pírgos during the periods of the Venetian and the Ottoman rule in Crete are, however, more readily available. The community of Pírgos reportedly first appeared as an

independent entity in 1271 in the context of a Venetian treaty prepared by the notary of Iraklion Pietro Scardon. Furthermore, the Seat of the Venetian Master is said to have been situated on the hillside enclosing Pírgos in the South, known as *Ta Arkhontika* ('The Mansions'), and is to this day covered in fragmentary remains of walls, water channels and fountains spread across the hill.

Local accounts refer to the existence of a chain of up to 18 watermills, which had been constructed during the periods of the Venetian and the Ottoman rule in a valley between two hills enclosing Pírgos in the South and were mainly used for the production of flour. The name of the community of Praitória, at times referred to as 'Protoria', on the other hand contains a reference to the occupation of Praetor, who acted as a Judicial Officer in Ancient Rome. Although the name of the village suggests that Praitória has existed for more than 2000 years, the community first appeared as *Praitória Apáno* ('Upper Praitória') in the Venetian Population Census of 1577 (cf. Kalokhristianakis 2009; In 2013).

5.1.2 Administration, Surroundings and Size

Under the Venetian rule, the communities of Pírgos and Praitória formed part of the Province of Monofatsi, which was the largest of the 20 provinces of Crete at the time and enclosed a considerable part of the Mesara Plain. The province derived its name from a fortress built in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade on a hillside west of the contemporary community of Tsifout Kastelli, northwest of the community of Praitória. The fortress was named after a similar stronghold established in 820 B.C. in Corsica, called 'Bonifacio', later transformed into Greek as 'Monofatsi', and served as eponym to the Province of Monofatsi. The community of Pírgos was assigned the Seat of the Province in 1867 and is to this day frequently referred to as '*Pírgos Monofatsiu*', namely the 'Pírgos of Monofatsi'. Towards the end of the 19th century, the provinces of Greece were changed into administrative regions, whereby new regulations introduced a system, in which administrative units were distinguished on the basis of their population size. The new administrative regulations differentiated between a smaller unit or community, known as '*Kinotita*', managed by the Village President or '*Proedros*', and a larger unit or municipality known as '*Dimos*', governed by the so-called '*Dimarkhos*'. At the beginning of the 20th century, Pírgos and Praitória were officially recognised as communities.

During the general reorganisation of the Greek administrative system in 1997, the differentiation between '*Kinotita*' and '*Dimos*' was abandoned and smaller units were submerged into larger aggregates. By consequence, the communities of Pírgos and Praitória both came under the administration of the '*Dimos*' of Asterousia, whereby Pírgos has been appointed as the Seat of the municipality (cf. Table 5.1). In 2011, the administrative system of Greece was overhauled in an attempt to form larger administrative units whereupon the Municipality of Asterousia was merged with the Municipalities of Arkhanes and Nikos Kazantzakis. The communities of Pírgos and Praitória nowadays fall under the administration of the Municipality of Arkhanes-Asterousia, which forms part of the Prefecture of Iraklion. The community of Peza in the former Municipality of Nikos Kazantzakis has been assigned as the Seat of the municipality (cf. Kalokhristianakis 2009).

The community of Pírgos, as it was officially recognised at the beginning to the 20th century, originally extended its administrative authority to the following surrounding settlements: Plakiotissa and Kefalados in the North; the semi-mountainous village of Rotasi in the East; the mountainous community of Ethia in the Southeast; the mountainous settlements of Murnia and Prinias in the South; the mountainous communities of Amigdalos and Paranimfi in the Southwest; and the settlement of Tris Ekklesies along the south coast. Although the community has been incorporated into the Municipality of Asterousia and subsequently came to form part of the Municipality of Arkhanes-Asterousia, the mountainous settlements of Murnia and Prinias remained under the administrative control of Pírgos (cf. Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 The Population of the former Municipality of Asterousia (2001).

Community & Administrative Units	Inhabitants	Households
Pirgos (Pirgos, Murnia, Prinias)	1.148	389
Ahentrias (Ahentrias, Ayia Paraskevi, Ayios Penteleimonas)	318	116
Ethia (Ethia, Ayia Anna, Rotasi)	365	145
Kalivia (Kalivia, Kato Kalivia, Neokhori)	440	161
Ligortinos (Ligortinos, Kefalados, Plakiotissa)	642	226
Mesokhorio (Mesokhorio)	752	262
Paranimfi (Paranimfi, Amigdalos, Platanias, Tris Ekklesies)	305	95
Praitoria (Praitoria)	197	71
Tefeli (Tefeli, Aposelemi, Pirathi)	905	302
Kharaki (Kharaki, Vorias, Made)	348	90
Kharakas (Kharakas, Ayia Fotia, Doraki)	883	344
Total	6.303	2.201

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority 2008.

Following a campaign launched in the 1930s, which established the connection of the villages in the Mesara Plain through a network of roads, the communities of Pirgos and Praitoria were connected through a bridge, which was asphalted in 1966. Eventually, a network of asphalted roads has been created, which connected the region of South-Central Crete to the urban centres along the north coast. Prior to the construction of asphalted roads, the communities south of the Anapodaris River, including Pirgos and Praitoria, frequently remained isolated from the villages north of the river, which appeared to cut the region in half, particularly during the winter months. Following the building of a north-south axis between the capital of Iraklion and Pirgos, which runs along the communities of Tefeli, Ligortinos, Plakiotissa and Praitoria (5.2), in 2008, the bridge connecting Pirgos and Praitoria has been replaced. In addition to the north-south axis of Central Crete, the two research communities are moreover situated along the southern east-west axis, which connects the city of Ierapetra to the city of Rethymnon. The north-south axis splits and enters Pirgos as the country road Praitoria-Pirgos in the North, while the east-west axis continues eastward and passes Pirgos along the northern edge connecting the community to the villages of Rotasi and Mesokhorio. The village of Praitoria is situated at a roundabout marking the intersection of the two axes. In this way, the east-west axis links Praitoria to the neighbouring community of Asimi, to the commercial town of Mires and to the historical sites of Gortyn, Phaestus and Matala (*cf.* Kalokhrisianakis 2009).

As shown in Table 5.1, the Population Census of 2001 indicates that the population of Pirgos comprises 1.148 inhabitants, who live among a total of 389 households. Excluding the settlements of Murnia and Prinias, which fall under the administrative authority of Pirgos, the population of the community amounts to approximately 1.100 inhabitants. In comparison, the population of Praitoria consists of 179 inhabitants, who live among a total of 71 households (*cf.* Hellenic Statistical Authority 2008; Kalokhrisianakis 2009). Table 5.2 shows the sample for the present research, which has been taken from the population of Pirgos and Praitoria with the exclusion of the administrative units of Murnia and Prinias and amounts to a total of 656 inhabitants living among 293 households.

Table 5.2 The Sample or Study Population of the Two Research Communities of Pirgos and Praitoria (N=656).

Community	Inhabitants	Households
Pirgos	495	220
Praitoria	161	73
Total	656	293

The sample or study population consists of 495 inhabitants living among 220 households in Pírgos and of 161 inhabitants living among 73 households in Praitória. The number of sample households in Praitória exceeds the official number of households recorded for the community during the Population Census of 2001. Possible reasons for such an inconsistency may refer to the construction of new houses or to the reuse of houses, which had been abandoned, by family members or other relatives (*cf.* Paragraph 5.1.3). Apart from the sample population, additional informants, who participated in the present study, were found among the extended population of Pírgos and Praitória, as well as among the inhabitants of the surroundings villages, including Murnia, Plakiotissa, Rotasi, Mesokhorio, Kharakas and Tefeli.

5.1.3 Patterns of Migration and Settlement

The neighbouring communities of Pírgos and Praitória are situated at a rather short distance from the surrounding settlements, to which the villages are connected through a relatively well-developed network of roads. Nevertheless, the majority of household members of the sample (61.7%, $n=405$) appear to have been born in the respective research community. It is found, that 61.0% ($n=302$) of the 495 inhabitants of Pírgos and 64.0% ($n=103$) of the 161 inhabitants of Praitória were born in respectively Pírgos or Praitória (*cf.* Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Distribution of the Place of Birth of the Household Members of the Sample over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Place of Birth	Pírgos		Praitória		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
this community	302	61.0	103	64.0	405	61.7
this municipality	74	14.9	18	11.2	92	14.0
somewhere else in Crete	87	17.6	15	9.3	102	15.5
somewhere else in Greece	20	4.0	3	1.9	23	3.5
other	12	2.4	22	13.7	34	5.2
Total	495	100.0	153	100.0	656	100.0

Overall, none of the household members living in Pírgos were born in Praitória, whereas a total of three respondents living in Praitória referred to Pírgos as their place of birth. Around 14.0% ($n=92$) of the household members of the sample appear to have been born in a community within the Municipality of Arkhanes-Asterousia. Excluding the respondents, who were born in the research communities, the majority of household members living in Pírgos indicated the mountainous settlements of Murnia and Prinias as their place of birth. In general, these findings reflect the administrative authority of the community of Pírgos over the settlements of Murnia and Prinias. Furthermore, a considerable number of inhabitants of both research communities were born in the village of Ahentrias, while a relatively significant number of household members living in Pírgos referred to the communities of Mesokhorio and Paranimfi as their place of birth (*cf.* Table 5.4). Besides the Municipality of Arkhanes-Asterousia, a considerable number of household members (15.5%, $n=102$) were born somewhere else in Crete. The distribution of respondents born elsewhere in Crete among the research communities is affected by the number of largely young, inhabitants of Pírgos, who were born in the hospital of Iraklion, but who were raised in the village. Furthermore, a considerable number of household members living in Praitória were born in the community of Asimi outside the Municipality of Arkhanes-Asterousia. In line with the distribution of community members born elsewhere in Crete, the number of household members, who were born somewhere else in Greece other than Crete, is higher among the respondents living in Pírgos. On the other hand, the number of household members, who were born in a place outside Greece, is higher among the respondents living in Praitória. Among the inhabitants of Pírgos, the most commonly mentioned countries of birth other than Greece include Bulgaria, Albania and Rumania.

Table 5.4 Distribution of the Place of Birth of the Household Members of the Sample in the Municipality of Arkhanes-Asterousia over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Place of Birth	Pirgos	Praitoria	Total
Pirgos	302	3	305
Praitoria	-	103	103
Murnia	15	-	15
Prinias	11	-	11
Ahentrias	4	4	8
Mesokhorio	8	-	8
Paranimfi	7	1	8
Kharakas	5	1	6
Doraki	5	0	5
Ethia	4	1	5
Ligortinos	3	2	5
Amigdalos	3	0	3
Kalivia	1	2	3
Kefalados	2	1	3
Rotasi	3	-	3
Plakiotissa	-	2	2
Tefeli	2	-	2
Neokhori	-	1	1
Pirathi	1	-	1
not applicable ¹	119	40	159
Total	495	161	656

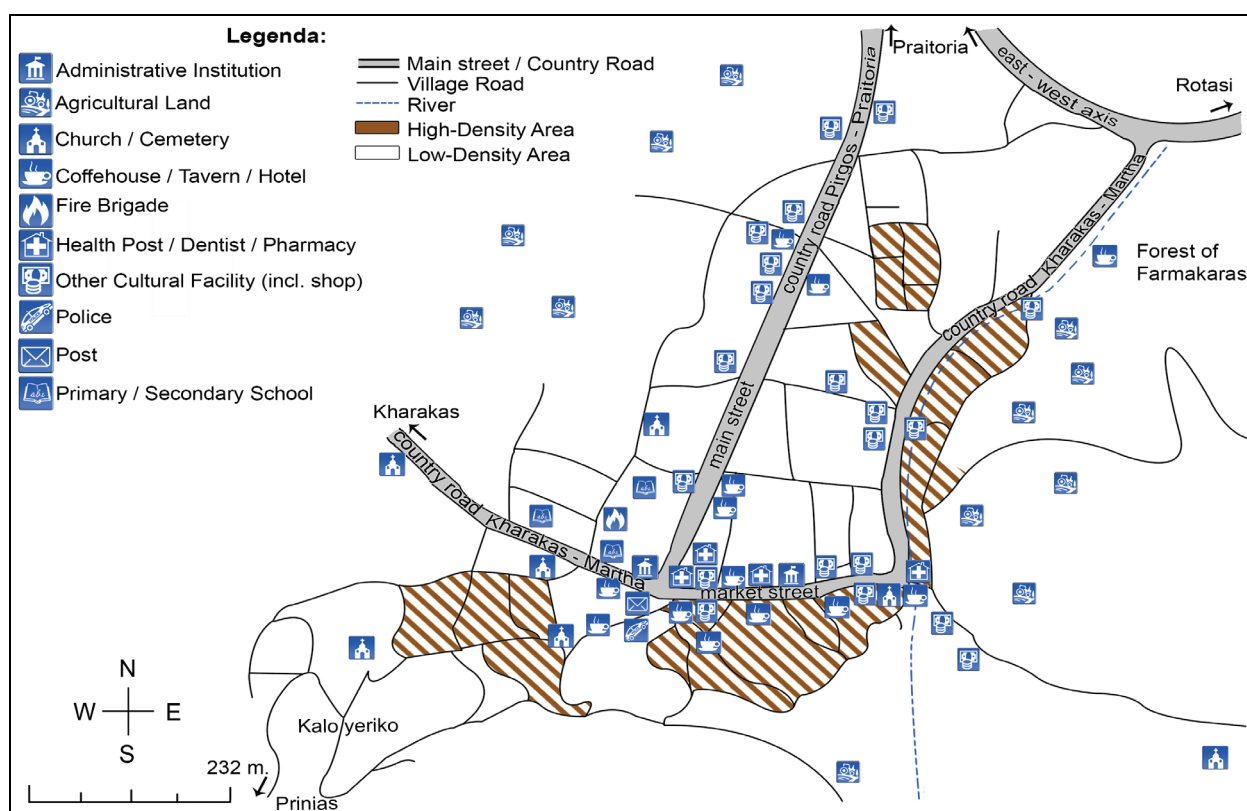
¹: place of birth somewhere else in Crete, somewhere else in Greece or other

In the community of Pirgos, the distinct places of birth are to some extent reflected in the local patterns of settlement, whereby inhabitants born in the mountainous villages of Murnia and Prinias tend to reside at higher altitudes on the mountain slopes. Community members, who were born in Murnia, appear to cluster on the eastern hillside of Pirgos, while inhabitants, who were born in Prinias, tend to settle on the southern hillside of the village. The western hillside of Pirgos has long formed an independent settlement and is today commonly referred to as '*To Kaloyeriko*', loosely translated as 'The Monk's Quarter', which derives its name from a group of monks previously residing in the area (*cf.* Illustration 5.2). More recently, areas of settlement in Pirgos have spread northwards, particularly following the construction of the north-south axis, which connects Pirgos to Iraklion. New houses are primarily built in the immediate vicinity of the main street of Pirgos, which enters the village in the North as a section of the country road Praitoria-Pirgos. Map 5.2 presents a detailed map of the community of Pirgos, including the network of country roads and local streets, as well as the location of a number of local institutions, as they are described in the following paragraphs.

Settlement patterns in the community of Praitoria shed light on a concentration of houses in the village centre as well as on a dispersion of a handful of detached houses along the outer edge of the community. At its western edge, the community of Praitoria gives way to cultivated fields and olive groves, as they are characteristic of the landscape of the wider region of the Mesara Plain, in which the community is embedded (*cf.* Illustration 5.3). Map 5.3 presents a detailed map of the community of Praitoria, in which the network of country roads and local streets, as well as a number of local institutions, as they will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs, are charted.



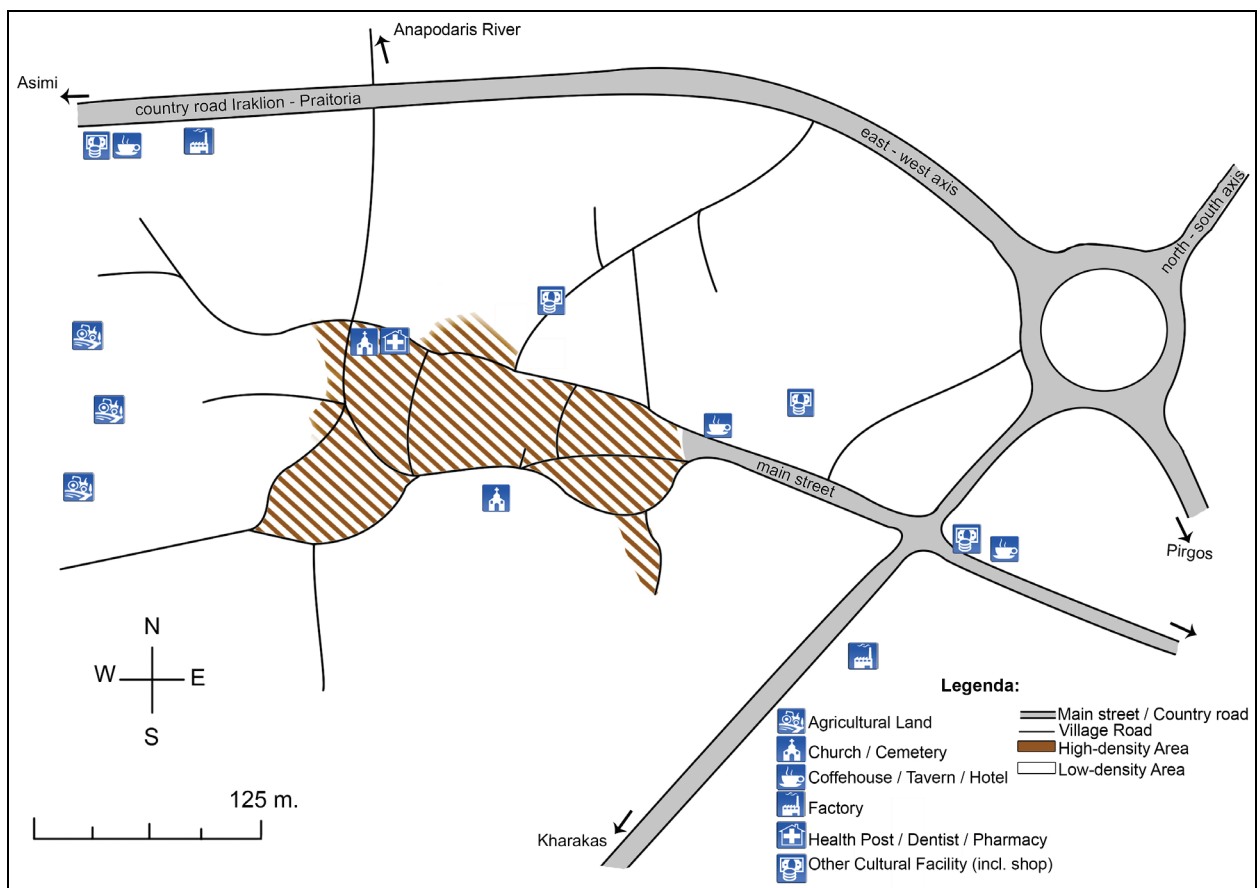
Illustration 5.2 View of the Community of Pírgos from the south-eastern hillside against the backdrop of the Mesara Plain with the row of Eucalyptus trees framing the road between Praitoria and Kharakas. In the front, there are the ruins of the Venetian Occupation with the 'Kaloyeriko' on the western hillside on the left. Photograph by J. Aiglsperger (2011).



Map 5.2 Map of the Community of Pírgos, Crete. Source: J. Aiglsperger (2010).



Illustration 5.3 View of the Community of Praitoria from the South against the backdrop of the south-eastern foothills of the Psiloritis Mountain.
Photograph by J. Aiglsperger (2010).



In view of the settlement patterns shown in the research communities, a number of inhabitants of Pírgos and Práitoria own additional houses along the south coast, primarily in and around the coastal village of Tris Ekklesies. Used as holiday homes, community members generally visit these houses on weekends during the summer months or for the entire summer period, particularly when they are retired or exempted from the duties of their year-round profession. In the same fashion, villagers living in the research communities may inhabit their houses on a seasonal basis. In particular, community members, who own a house in the village, occasionally live and work in urban areas, such as Iraklion, and hereby visit their village homes only in the weekend or during the summer in order to call on relatives or friends or to engage in farm work. In this way, a number of inhabitants reside outside the community for a substantial period of time during the year, but keep a house in the village. Relatives or friends of the absent homeowner at times decide to return to the village, particularly when they are facing financial difficulties, and hereby reuse the vacant houses in the village. The number of people living in Pírgos and Práitoria fluctuates continuously, whereby the community members can be classified as (1) villagers registered and living in the community; (2) villagers registered but not living in the community; and (3) villagers not registered but living in the community (*cf.* Lindholm *et al.* 1992; De Vries 2007). With regard to the present study, the sample was taken from the permanent parent population of Pírgos and Práitoria, which comprises all community members residing in the village for at least six months per year.

5.2 Characterisation of the Local Population

5.2.1 Age, Gender and Communal Networks

On the basis of identifying the sample population of Pírgos and Práitoria, Table 5.5 presents the age distribution of the household members of the sample over the research communities.

Table 5.5 Distribution of the Age of the Household Members of the Sample over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Age	Pírgos		Práitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<7	38	7.7	14	8.7	52	7.9
7-13	35	7.1	9	5.6	44	6.7
14-20	24	4.8	5	3.1	29	4.4
21-27	49	9.9	13	8.1	62	9.5
28-34	51	10.3	11	6.8	62	9.5
35-41	44	8.9	13	8.1	57	8.7
42-48	36	7.3	10	6.2	46	7.0
49-55	39	7.9	8	5.0	47	7.2
56-62	40	8.1	19	11.8	59	9.0
63-69	38	7.7	26	16.1	64	9.8
70-76	48	9.7	12	7.5	60	9.1
77-83	40	8.1	14	8.7	54	8.2
84-90	9	1.8	6	3.7	15	2.3
>90	4	0.8	1	0.6	5	0.8
Total	495	100.0	161	100.0	656	100.0

The relative majority of community members are between the ages of 28 and 34 (10.3%, n=51) in Pírgos and between the ages of 63 and 69 (16.1%, n=26) as well as 56 and 62 (11.8%, n=19) in Práitoria. On the whole, these findings are in line with the data collected by the Hellenic Statistical Authority during the Population Census of 2001, in which the highest percentage of community members living in Pírgos are found in the age category of 25 to 39 years and the

highest percentage of community members living in Praitoria belonged to the age categories of 65 to 79 and 55 to 64 years (*cf.* Hellenic Statistical Authority 2008). In total, the majority of the sample population, namely of all respondents residing in Pirgos and Praitoria, are found in the age category of 63 to 69 years (9.8%, n=64). Although the respondents are rather evenly distributed among all age categories, the population of Praitoria appears to be slightly older than the population of Pirgos. In general, older inhabitants occupy a position of esteem within the community and are treated with a sense of respect and politeness by the younger community members. The difference in social status is expressed by the common use of the terms ‘*Kirios*’, ‘Sir’, and ‘*Kiria*’, ‘Madam’, by community members when addressing male and female inhabitants, who have reached an advanced age (*cf.* Kain Hart 1992).

Following the distribution of age among the respondents, Table 5.6 highlights the distribution of gender among the household members of the sample over the two research communities.

Table 5.6 Distribution of the Gender of the Household Members of the Sample over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Gender	Pirgos		Praitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
male	233	47.1	83	51.6	316	48.2
female	262	52.9	78	48.4	340	51.8
Total	495	100.0	161	100.0	656	100.0

Although the difference in percentage between the male (48.2%, n=316) and female (51.8%, n=340) gender within the sample is minor, the female population (52.9%, n=262) predominates in the community of Pirgos, while the male population (51.6%, n=316) outweighs the female population in Praitoria (*cf.* Table 5.6). As represented in Figure 5.1, the relative majority of male respondents are between the ages of 63 and 69 years (11.4%, n=36), while the highest percentages of female respondents are found in the age categories of 70 to 76 (11.2%, n=38), 56 to 62 (10.6%, n=36) and 21 to 27 (10.3%, n=35). In general, the female population of both research communities outweighs the male population in the age categories of 70 to 76 years and above.

In Crete, male-selfhood, which is primarily rooted in the recognition of patrilineal ancestors, is embedded and visibly performed within the larger context of the community and household. In contrast to women, male community members typically tend to consume alcohol, tobacco and meat, play with the so-called ‘*Komboloi*’ (‘worry beads’, which are moved by one or two hands to pass the time), attend local coffeehouses, play card games, hold political discussions in public, wear fire arms, notably at weddings and baptisms, practice stock farming, raid sheep and entertain their guests within great hospitality (5.3). Furthermore, men are associated with the values of both loyalty and competition, whereby the latter occurs only between men without any social affiliation. Masculinity is closely linked to the image of the ‘*Palikari*’, originally a Greek soldier serving in the War of Independence against Turkey, which is enhanced and acknowledged to this day as the ideal of a strong, courageous young man. As Greger (1985: 31) explains: ‘[...] *Household values of harmony and hospitality are the ones relating to social skills, those of the palikari shepherd and freedom-fighter are related to skills of individual and manly survival for the sake of one’s own household*’. In the same fashion, masculinity is attached to the profession of the shepherd, which traditionally involves a difficult but modest way of life in line with the purity of nature and is exclusively practiced by men. Although male self-hood continues to carry specific social connotations, conformity with the ideals of masculinity is frequently characterised by men creatively separating what it means to be men in the social context from actual practices to achieve such a status (*cf.* Blum & Blum 1965; Gilmore 1982; Greger 1985; Herzfeld 1985; Damer 1988; Van der Hoeven 1992; Hanepen 1997; Hagoort 1998; Van den Akker 2002; Palstra 2003).

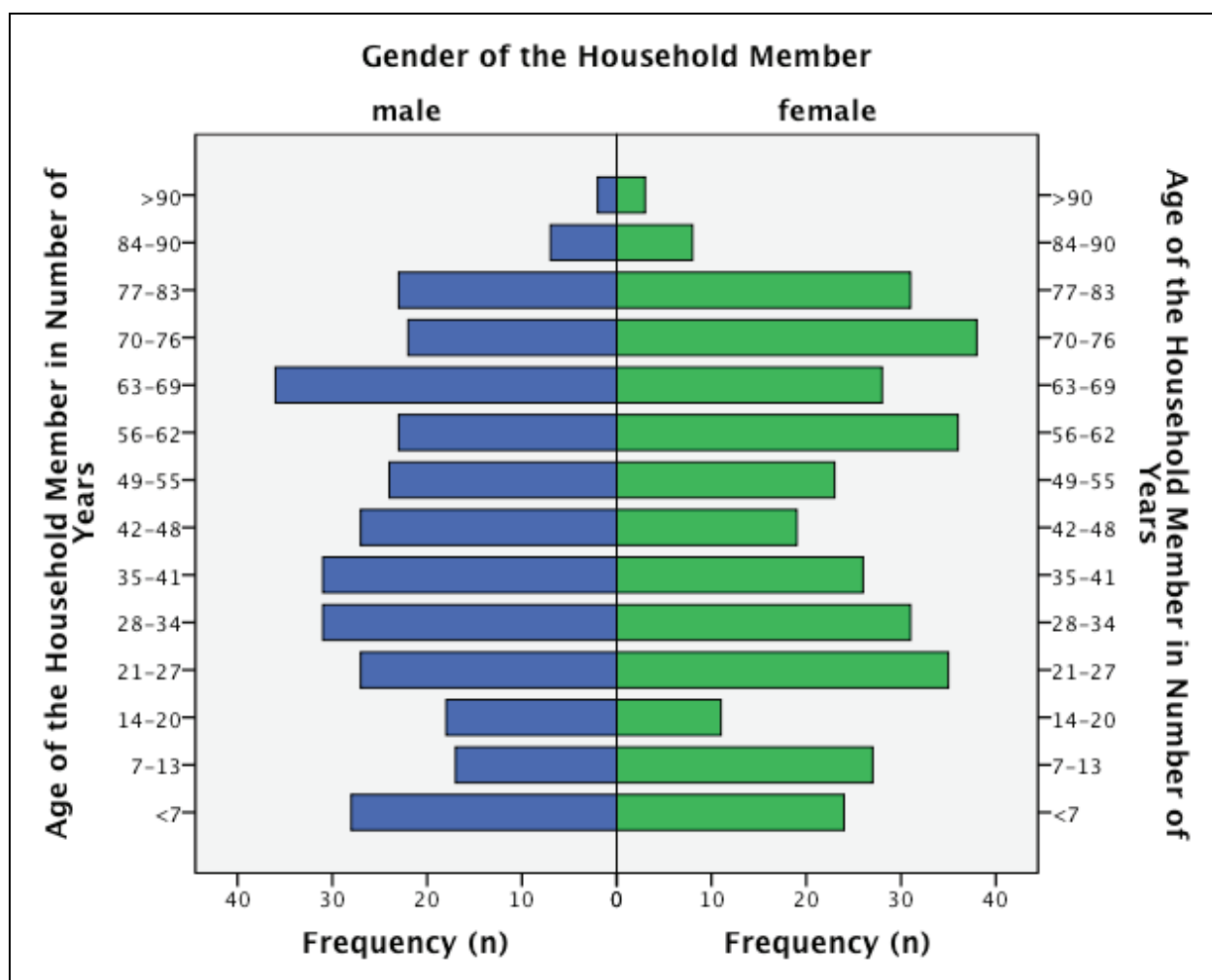


Figure 5.1 Frequency of the Age of the Household Members of the sample divided by the Gender of the Household Members of the sample (N=656).
Source: Household Surveys (2011).

On the other hand, female community members rarely tend to abandon the sphere of the parental and later spousal, household, farm or village and by consequence function as natural stewards of traditional, local values. Furthermore, female inhabitants are commonly devoted to religious matters where women attend the church on a regular basis and feel responsible for the everyday performance of religious duties. On the whole, femininity is associated with passiveness and indecisiveness, as well as with practices of harmonisation and concealment. Women are moreover considered to be unable to control their tempers or sexuality and to be dangerous, not at least because of their ability to create and destroy life. In this way, the marriage bed forms a crossing point between the sacred and the mysterious where, as Greger (1985: 135) notes: '[...] *sexuality* has been, and still is, regarded as an intensely private, concealed and polluting activity'. In this way, gender roles are supported by religious doctrines, which involve the arrangement of men sitting on the right and women sitting on the left side in church, as well as the rather unofficial regulation that women should wear skirts when attending the service. Furthermore, menstruating women are generally prohibited from kissing icons and from receiving communion, and in some places from attending the liturgy (*cf.* Greger 1985; Herzfeld 1985, Koutis *et al.* 1991; Kain Hart 1992; Van den Akker 2002; Roussou 2011).

While the social connotations of masculinity and femininity seemingly persist regardless of the marital status of the respondents, marriage appears to further confine the role which men and women play in the community. Table 5.7 illustrates the distribution of the marital status of the household members of the sample over the two research communities.

Table 5.7 Distribution of the Marital Status of the Household Members of the Sample over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Marital Status	Pirgos		Praitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
single	163	32.9	40	24.8	203	30.9
co-habiting	9	1.8	4	2.5	13	2.0
married	278	56.2	97	60.2	375	57.2
separated	0	0.0	2	1.2	2	0.3
divorced	3	0.6	1	0.6	4	0.6
widowed	42	8.5	17	10.6	59	9.0
Total	495	100.0	161	100.0	656	100.0

The vast majority of the population of both research communities is married (57.2%, n=375), while only a minor percentage of community members are co-habiting (2.0%, n=13), divorced (0.6%, n=4) or separated (0.3%, n=2). The relatively rare occurrence of cases of co-habitation, divorce and separation seemingly roots in the social esteem and pride associated with marriage in rural Crete. In case that the spouse is from a village other than their own, women generally abandon their place of birth when getting married in order to live with the husband. Among the sample population of Pirgos and Praitoria the number of male community members born in the village (68.4%, n=216) exceeds the number of female community members (55.6%, n=189) born in the community, whereas a significantly larger number of women than men are born either in the municipality, or somewhere else in Crete or in Greece. In this respect, a number of respondents, notably of advanced age, recall that their marriage was the result of bride-theft or bride-abduction, as it has been practised by villagers during earlier times. Bride-theft principally occurred upon disagreement among the parents of a couple intending to marry with the proposed marriage plans, whereupon the man decides to kidnap his envisaged bride and to hide her in the mountains in order to show his determination and to eventually receive the parents' approval. As Kain Hart (1992: 127) concludes: *'If the Church position is that marriage is an act of free will, it is most often locally called a matter of tyche (chance, fortune, fate)'*. Moreover, the majority of women get married at a relatively young age, often to men ten years or more their senior, as reported by all married female community members in the lowest age group of 14 to 20 years. The difference in age at the time of marriage can furthermore be related to the unequal distribution of the widowhood between the male (10.2%, n=6) and female (89.8%, n=53) household members of the sample (cf. Van Beelen 1990; Van der Hoeven 1992; Van Bommel 1993; Dijkstra 2005; De Vries 2007).

The relative abundance of widowed women has moreover been associated with the minimal exposure of female community members to warfare and competition as well as to responsibilities and worries in general (cf. Greger 1985; Van Beelen 1990; Bouma 2000). As Greger (1985: 34) highlights: *'It is well known in Crete that men are worriers, and that women should not be. Women have pains but they do not have worries: their husbands protect them from such responsibilities'*. Widowhood is often related to a status of social vulnerability and women commonly accuse their male relatives of having them left unprotected during practices of lamenting, a custom, which is typically followed by the female villagers. Nevertheless, women can be subject to the faults of men carrying responsibilities and can consequently experience feelings of anxiety and risk. The relationship between men and women is primarily shaped by female subordination, which is coupled with the adherence of women to their household and religious chores (cf. Greger 1985; Herzfeld 1993) (5.4). As Kain Hart (1992: 24) indicates: *'Women are preeminent in the domain of religion, and are channels of sanctity for the family, yet their participation in this field is crosscut by signals of subordination to men'*. While male community members generally resort to demonstrating their character in public, women express their personality only upon defence of the household or marital group. Female villagers moreover nurture their husbands and children within the domestic sphere of the household, but

maintain a distance from the husband in the wider social context. As noticed by Greger (1985: 127): *'Family honour comes before all other and the maintenance of a husband's honour and a wife's virtue are two sides of the same coin'*. Nevertheless, following their role as custodians of local values and meaning systems, women exercise a certain degree of social authority. As Gilmore (1982: 196) theorises: *'[...] Women, through gossip, virtually run the daily life of villages, maintaining social control through the power of their tongues. So, paralleling the political control of men in the Mediterranean region, there appears to be an oral dominance of women'*. Community members fear public exposure not only in terms of physical exposure of the body, but also in terms of oral exposure through the means of gossip. In this respect, female community members generally develop close friendships among each other and regularly gather in or in front of their homes to chat, express their opinion and share gossip, while drinking coffee and embroidering. Men and women, supported by their acquaintances of the same gender, usually conceal gossip from one another, thereby widening the gap between the male and female social spheres (cf. Blum & Blum 1965; Gilmore 1982; Greger 1985; Herzfeld 1985; Damer 1988; Kain Hart 1992; Hagoort 1998).

In addition to acting as guardians of traditional values and the household domain, women generally experience a change in social status upon the advent of motherhood. In other words, femininity is closely associated with the status of being married and having children, to which community members commonly attach great social significance. In this way, female villagers continue to meet the social demand of raising a family in spite of limited financial resources and the physical hardship involved in having children (5.5). Mothers generally lack family authority and occupy the same social position as their offspring, notably under the authority of their husband. Consequently, mothers and children form a type of same-level companionship, which is not at least encouraged by the relatively young age of female community members at the time of delivering their first child. The average age of women of the sample, whose firstborn is of age seven or below, amounts to 24 years at the time of birth of their first child (cf. Blum & Blum 1965; Gilmore 1982; Greger 1985; Arnold 1986; Damer 1988; Kain Hart 1992). In view of the rather great social significance, which rural inhabitants attach to marriage and motherhood, Table 5.8 highlights the distribution of the size of the households, namely of the number of members per household of the sample, over the research communities.

Table 5.8 Distribution of the Size of the Household of the Sample over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Number of Household Members	Pirgos		Praitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 member	76	15.4	23	14.3	99	15.1
2 members	160	32.3	58	36.0	218	33.2
3 members	60	12.1	24	14.9	84	12.8
4 members	104	21.0	40	24.8	144	22.0
5 members	65	13.1	10	6.2	75	11.4
6 members	30	6.1	6	3.7	36	5.5
Total	495	100.0	161	100.0	656	100.0

The majority of households of the sample is composed of two members (33.2%, n=218), of which 91.7% (n=200) are married and of which the highest percentage belongs to the age category of 63 to 69 years (20.2%, n=44), suggesting that the households consist primarily of married couples of older age. The second largest majority of households of the sample are composed of four members (22.0%, n=144), which in equal parts are either single (48.6%, n=70) or married (48.6%, n=70). Furthermore, the highest percentage of 4-member households is found in the age group of 7 to 13 years, which indicates that the four members refer primarily to the married couple and their children. Hereafter, the percentage of 5- and 6-member households is

higher among the inhabitants of Pírgos. The highest percentage of 5- and 6-member households in both communities coincides with the age category of seven and below, as such supporting the fact that nuclear families in rural Crete consist primarily of the husband and wife as well as their children. Table 5.9 shows the distribution of the composition of each household of the sample, that is of the relationship of each household member to the household head, over the two research communities.

Table 5.9 Distribution of the Relationship of the Household Members of the Sample to the Household Head over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Relationship	Pírgos		Praitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
household head	220	44.4	73	45.3	293	44.7
partner	137	27.7	48	29.8	185	28.2
son / daughter	124	25.1	31	19.3	155	23.6
son-in-law / daughter-in-law	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2
grandchild	2	0.4	4	2.5	6	0.9
parent	4	0.8	3	1.9	7	1.1
parent-in-law	2	0.4	0	0.0	2	0.3
grandparent	2	0.4	0	0.0	2	0.3
brother / sister	3	0.6	1	0.6	4	0.6
brother-in-law / sister-in-law	0	0.0	1	0.6	1	0.2
Total	495	100.0	161	100.0	656	100.0

The most common pattern of household composition found in the sample links up with the relationship between the household head and his or her partner (28.2%, n=185) and to the relationship between the household head and his or her son or daughter (23.6%, n=155). The percentage of households, which are composed of sons and daughters, is slightly higher in the community of Pírgos. In general, family ties among the Cretan population are strong whereupon children, who decide to stay in the village, commonly live with their parents until they are married. While the majority of representatives of 3-member households are either married (64.3%, n=54) or single (31.0%, n=26), the highest percentage of 3-member households belongs to the age category of 35 to 41 years (13.1%, n=11), which suggests that unmarried children to a certain extent continue to live with their parents until they reach their middle age.

The most common pattern of household composition following the relationship between the household head and his or her partner as well as his or her son or daughter refers to the relationship between the household head and his or her parent. Overall, parents often live with or in the immediate vicinity of their children, whereby community members commonly accommodate their parents when the latter reach an advanced age, experience illness or loose their spouse. The nuclear family hereby acts as a substitute for the welfare state, whereby: working parents generally leave their children in the care of the grandparents whilst at work. The physically or mentally handicapped inhabitants commonly live with a family member; and community members frequently move in with their children, sometimes to urban areas, such as Iraklion, when they are reaching an advanced age. In Crete, inhabitants moreover follow the custom of naming the firstborn son after his paternal grandfather, as such highlighting the general significance of maintaining family relationships.

In the same fashion, the characteristic ending of Cretan surnames in ‘-akis’, notably a diminutive referring to ‘son of’, which has been in use since the Middle Ages and refers to an ordinary given name or to the nickname of a particular ancestor (5.6), emphasises the great significance of family affiliation in Crete. Family ties within the community are usually based on agnatic, that is paternal, relationships and follow the patrilineal ancestry (*cf.* Greger 1985;

Herzfeld 1985; Van Beelen 1990; Kain Hart 1992; Rackham & Moody 1996; Molenaar 1999; Van den Akker 2002; Davaki & Mossialos 2005). In this respect, Kain Hart (1992: 175), however, concludes: *'If "close" relationships are generally within the family, of these, the relationships between mothers and daughters and sometimes between sisters are the most intense'*. Furthermore, spiritual kinships, such as the ties established between the child and the godparent during the baptism or between the bridal pair and the marriage witness at the wedding, as they are not necessarily based on blood relations, carry great social significance (cf. Greger 1985).

On the basis of kinship relationships, rural communities generally embrace a small number of powerful patrigrups, namely agnatic kin groups, which form a communal network and allow community members to position themselves along an extensive array of relatives. In this way, agnatic relationships to a certain extent determine the distribution of land holdings, which are generally inherited within the kin group. Since property tax has only been introduced to Crete in 1913, namely the year when Crete joined the Republic of Greece, land holdings have long been under the control of families and patrigrups and have hereby been indicative of the wealth and social status of these groups within the community. Patrigrups moreover play a rather crucial role during the periods of election, which to a certain extent depend on patrigrup membership, challenging the role of the state. The custom of firing of weapons in the air at weddings or baptisms by members of the respective patrigrup can be interpreted as a sign of aversion to the state or to members of other patrigrups, or to villagers, who stand outside the network of kin groups. Villagers generally view fellow community members, who lack a tight network of family relationships, with concern. Overall, local inhabitants attach considerable importance to kinship ties, which in turn evoke notions of loyalty, solidarity, mutual help and joint defence among the family and kin group members. As Herzfeld (1990: 112) notes: *'Cretans rather pride themselves on their aggressive - and often highly divisive - defence of family and individual prestige'*. Nevertheless, affiliation with a family or kin group does not necessarily involve a share of confidence between its members. The value system of the community strongly discourages intimacy between family and patrigrup members. Furthermore, conflicts within one kin group generally cause embarrassment and shame among the entire village population and are at times settled through interpersonal agreements, such as an establishment of spiritual kinship or an arrangement of marriage between the opposing groups (cf. Greger 1985; Herzfeld 1985; Kain Hart 1992; Van den Akker 2002) (5.7).

Following the web of family and kinship relationships, the subsequent level of communal network refers to the affiliation of the community members with the village at large. Local inhabitants generally have a strong sense of belonging to the community, as it generally persists even among villagers, who have left the community in order to live somewhere else. The sense of belonging is, however, not necessarily rooted in historical affiliation with the community. As Kain Hart (1992: 57) argues: *'So while there is a strong flavour of local endogamy and local identity, this has existed within the brackets of a history of migration'*. The inhabitants of rural Crete manage a communal network of social ties, on which they rely for everyday duties and in which they are tied to a set of social obligations. 'Appropriate' social behaviour is locally known as *'Filotimo'*, a word, which is unique to the Greek language and has roughly been translated as 'Friend of Honour'. In the research communities, *'Filotimo'*, which forms one of the most integral virtues among the population of Greece at large, is most prominently expressed by the generous hospitality of the villagers, by the making promises or by practices of the exchange of gifts. To some extent, the community members continue to fulfil their social duties during episodes of illness or other hardships (cf. Van de Kerk 1993). Nevertheless, social conduct commonly involves a certain degree of manipulation, upon which community members offer hospitality in a way to prevent others from causing them harm and exchange promises and gifts in order to burden the counterpart with debt allowing them to make demands (5.8).

As Herzfeld (1991: 81) observes: ‘*Hospitality does not mark acceptance of the stranger so much as the moral superiority of the host*’. In the same fashion, inhabitants usually maintain a good relationship with certain well-educated, members of the community, such as physicians or teachers, in an attempt to win their support.

Villagers generally find contentment in the familiarity of the social ties. Nevertheless, the rather closely-knit social network provides a common ground, on which community members become affected by the uncontrolled ill-will, as well as the negative moods and feelings of others, as such developing feelings of distrust and anxiety. While patterns of social conduct moreover include a general respect for the wealth of others, rural population groups have recently become prone to an unequal distribution of welfare as a consequence of the introduction of new technologies and a new education system to Greece in the 20th century. Consequently, an unequal distribution of possessions and levels of education have provoked a hierarchical configuration of social structures whereupon spontaneous, amicable visits to fellow villagers within the realms of true hospitality have become rather rare. The social network has become subject to notions and practices of competition, including theft, which create powerful tensions between family and community members (5.9). As Kain Hart (1992: 183) shows: *Theft might occasionally have been motivated by actual need, but clearly the significance of theft in the imagination of villagers has to do with ridicule and the assertion of dominance*. In order to avoid feelings of envy and competition among others, local inhabitants frequently conceal notions of happiness, pride, wealth or success. Nonetheless, obligatory social conduct, including practices of hospitality and the exchange of gifts, continues to have great social significance, particularly in rural communities, in which it forms an informal code of conduct and as such overshadows differences in the formal social status of the community members (cf. Blum & Blum 1965; Gilmore 1982; Greger 1985; Herzfeld 1985; Kain Hart 1992; Hagoort 1998; Herzfeld 1999; Van den Akker 2002; Herzfeld 2003).

5.2.2 Nationality, Religion and Cretan Character

Further specifying the characteristics of the sample population, Table 5.10 presents the distribution of the nationality of all household members of the sample over the research communities.

Table 5.10 Distribution of the Nationality of the Household Members of the Sample over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Nationality	Pirgos		Praitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Greek	483	97.6	135	83.9	618	94.2
Albanian	6	1.2	0	0.0	6	0.9
Bulgarian	0	0.0	23	14.3	23	3.5
Rumanian	6	1.2	1	0.6	7	1.1
other	0	0.0	2	1.2	2	0.3
Total	495	100.0	161	100.0	656	100.0

The vast majority of the respondents report the Greek nationality (94.2%, n=618). The highest percentage (14.3%, n=23) of the community members, who have a nationality other than Greek, is found in Praitoria, namely among the Bulgarian inhabitants of the community. The highest percentage of non-Greeks living in Pirgos is equally distributed among the inhabitants with the Albanian (1.2%, n=6) and the inhabitants with the Rumanian (1.2%, n=6) nationality. Table 5.11 indicates the distribution of the religious affiliation of all household members of the sample over the research communities.

Table 5.11 Distribution of the Religious Affiliation of the Household Members of the Sample over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Religious Affiliation	Pirgos		Praitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Greek Orthodox	483	97.6	134	83.2	617	94.1
Bulgarian Orthodox	0	0.0	23	14.3	23	3.5
Rumanian Orthodox	6	1.2	1	0.6	7	1.1
non-Orthodox Christian	0	0.0	3	1.9	3	0.5
non-Christian	6	1.2	0	0.0	6	0.9
Total	495	100.0	161	100.0	656	100.0

In line with the distribution of nationality among the respondents, an overwhelming majority of household members belong to the Greek Orthodox Church (94.1%, n=617). Furthermore, 14.3% (n=23) of the sample population of Praitoria follows Bulgarian Orthodoxy and as such forms the highest ratio of non-Greek Orthodox adherents. The majority of respondents, who have the Albanian, Bulgarian or Rumanian nationality and practise a religion other than Greek Orthodoxy, settled in rural Crete as immigrants in search of work. In general, these immigrants commonly arrive in groups of sometimes extended families, of which the second generation of children are nowadays born in Crete. Migrants from mostly neighbouring countries reach Crete as seasonal labourers, who come for the harvest season and reside in the village for a period of about six months' time (*cf.* Van den Akker 2002).

In view of the overwhelming majority of respondents, who reportedly assume the Greek nationality and belong to the Greek Orthodox Church, the inhabitants of Crete generally identify themselves as Greek within an international context. On a national level, however, community members distinguish themselves as Cretan and maintain an identity, which is acknowledged not only by the inhabitants of Crete but also by the population of Greece at large. As Herzfeld (1985: 6) claims: '[...] *Crete regards itself as an idiosyncratic and proudly independent part of the national entity* [...]'].

Despite the recent development of tourism and the increased arrival of immigrants in Crete, the local population has continued to adhere to a notion of 'Cretan-ness' and to display a rather unswerving loyalty towards other Cretans, consequently retaining a sense of autonomy, inner strength and security. Devotion to the ideal of being Cretan has remained particularly visible and expressed among rural and mountain communities, in which forms of loyalty and autonomy have been linked to the circumstances of hard work and physical isolation. Local inhabitants commonly express 'Cretan-ness' by a way of dressing, whereby the habit of older community members to typically dress in black has been interpreted as a way of mourning their loss and sharing their sorrow over the years of foreign oppression. The traditional attire involves a black dress and headscarf for women and a black shirt and special black baggy trousers, '*Vrakes*', which are tucked in black knee-height boots, '*Stivania*', as traditionally worn by shepherds, as well as a traditional male headdress, '*Sariki*', which is wrapped several times around the head. Male community members moreover express 'Cretan-ness' and local pride by growing a moustache (*cf.* Greger 1985; Herzfeld 1985; Van de Kerk 1993; Rackham & Moody 1996; Herzfeld 1999; 2003).

In line with the display of loyalty among each other, the inhabitants of Crete also show a certain degree of resentment towards forms of external authority, which can be understood as a consequence of their experience of continuous periods of time of foreign occupation throughout history. Community members commonly disregard bureaucratic and legal regulations and adhere to a negotiation system based on honour and patronage, in which written and legal evidence is not required but rather interpreted as a sign of failed negotiation and betrayal (*cf.* Herzfeld 1985; Hagoort 1998). As Gilmore (1982: 191) explains: '[...] *Mediterranean honour contains three separate vectors of competition: first, for wealth; second, for status in the sense of respect; and third, for masculinity narrowly defined as virility*'. Consequently, abstract schemes, such as

systems of central administration, frequently fail to meet the demands of the local population (cf. Greger 1985; Herzfeld 1985). According to Greger (1985: 169): ‘[...] [*Competitiveness*] *within the honour ethic has a greater component of morality, and can be better kept under control, than competitiveness as understood within a marketing profit-making economy*’. Although community members generally respect the dominance of the state apparatus, local autonomy is held in high esteem, whereupon the population of Crete appears to be characterised by a constant interplay between the ideals of democracy and freedom (cf. Herzfeld 1985; Van Bommel 1993; Van de Kerk 1993; Hanepen 1997; Dijkstra 2005). As noticed by Greger (1985: 76): ‘*At one and the same time it is honourable to steal (and get away with it) and dishonourable to steal and break good laws designed to protect the [community]*’.

5.2.3 Education, Occupation and Socio-Economic Profile

As regards the sample population, Table 5.12 shows the distribution of the level of education completed by the household members of the sample over the two research communities.

Table 5.12 Distribution of the Level of Education Completed by the Household Members of the Sample over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Level of Education Completed	Pirgos		Praitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
no formal education	128	25.9	45	28.0	173	26.4
primary education	156	31.5	61	37.9	217	33.1
secondary education	134	27.1	48	29.8	182	27.7
post-secondary education	77	15.6	7	4.3	84	12.8
Total	495	100.0	161	100.0	656	100.0

The majority of the respondents completed primary education (33.1%, n=217). The percentage is lowest among household members, who finished post-secondary education (12.8%, n=84). With the exception of religious institutions, which offered a certain degree of education, the availability of educational facilities in rural Crete has until recently been rather limited whereupon inhabitants remained largely illiterate and most knowledge was handed down orally. While only a minor proportion of the older population of today have completed the level of primary education, the majority did not receive any type of formal education. Accordingly, the percentage of respondents, who did not enter formal education, is higher among older and female inhabitants. Women generally got married at a young age and hereby abstained from entering formal education, whereas access to secondary education has been long restricted to men. Following the establishment of educational facilities after the Second World War, male and female community members have since entered higher levels of education and have begun to leave the village, the island or even the country in pursuit of receiving formal education elsewhere. In the two research communities, the percentage of inhabitants, who have received a level of primary education, is considerably higher in Praitoria (cf. Van Beelen 1990; Van der Hoeven 1992; Van de Kerk 1993; Molenaar 1999; Bouma 2000; Dijkstra 2005).

Apart from attending the ‘*yimnasio*’ and ‘*likio*’, community members reportedly received secondary education at vocational training institutes, ‘*Instituta Epangelmatika Katartisis (IEK)*’, and at technical schools, such as the former technical vocational lyceum, ‘*Tehniko Epangelmatiko Likio (TEL)*’, which has been later replaced by the vocational secondary school, ‘*Epangelmatiko Likio (EPA.L)*’ (5.10). During the 1980s, a number of post-secondary educational facilities, such as the University of Crete with seats in Iraklion and Rethymnon, the Technical University of Chania and a number of national as well as international research centres, have been established in Crete. In this way, respondents, who pursued post-secondary

education, attended a university primarily in Iraklion or Rethymnon, or, albeit less frequently, in places outside Crete, such as Athens or Mytilene. Community members received post-secondary education at Technological Education Institutes, '*Tekhnoloyika Ekpedeftika Idrimata (TEI)*', at vocational colleges and at logistic schools. Nevertheless, the number of inhabitants, who completed a level of post-secondary education, is rather small. Such small number is probably due to the restrictions imposed by the admission to post-secondary education facilities and the limited opportunities, which are offered to rural inhabitants, who follow agricultural work, or for entering education at the post-secondary level. In this respect, the percentage of community members, who have completed a type of post-secondary education, is substantially higher among the inhabitants of Pirgos than of Praitoria (*cf.* Greger 1985; Hagoort 1998; Briassoulis 2003; Palstra 2003; De Vries 2007).

Following the distribution of the level of education completed by the respondents, Table 5.13 shows the distribution of the main occupation of the household members of the sample over the two research communities.

Table 5.13 Distribution of the Main Occupation of the Household Members of the Sample over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

Main Occupation	Pirgos		Praitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
not in labour force	26	5.3	9	5.6	35	5.3
student / non-paid	74	14.9	19	11.8	93	14.2
self-employed	8	1.6	1	0.6	9	1.4
homemaker	78	15.8	24	14.9	102	15.5
(stock) farmer	151	30.5	64	39.8	215	32.8
manufacturer	12	2.4	5	3.1	17	2.6
electrician	2	0.4	0	0.0	2	0.3
construction worker	8	1.6	0	0.0	8	1.2
retailer	21	4.2	6	3.7	27	4.1
driver / carrier	4	0.8	2	1.2	6	0.9
provider of food, beverage, accommodation	10	2.0	0	0.0	10	1.5
insurance agent	2	0.4	0	0.0	2	0.3
head officer / researcher	2	0.4	2	1.2	4	0.6
servant to building	1	0.2	4	2.5	5	0.8
public administrator / defence personnel	22	4.4	5	3.1	27	4.1
educator	37	7.5	4	2.5	41	6.2
health, social worker	8	1.6	4	2.5	12	1.8
artist / entertainer	2	0.4	1	0.6	3	0.5
priest / personal servant	6	1.2	0	0.0	6	0.9
employee of the private sector	4	0.8	1	0.6	5	0.8
unemployed / retired	15	3.0	10	6.2	25	3.8
other	2	0.4	0	0.0	2	0.3
Total	495	100.0	161	100.0	656	100.0

The category 'not in labour force' comprises those respondents, who have not entered formal education and are as such not considered to practice any kind of formal profession. All of the 35 respondents (5.3%), who are not in labour force, belong to the age category of seven and below. The category of students includes any community member, who receives formal education on a primary, secondary or post-secondary level. The 93 students and other non-paid workers (14.2%) of the sample are primarily younger inhabitants. Across the sample population, the majority of community members, however, have the occupation of farmer or stock farmer (32.8%, n=215),

more precisely of farmer, shepherd, animal breeder or beekeeper. In the two research communities, men and women alike practice the profession of stock farmer, although the percentage of male farmers slightly exceeds the percentage of female farmers, not at least stimulated by inhabitants who have the profession of shepherd, which is exclusively chosen by men. The highest percentage of respondents, who have a formal occupation but who did not receive any formal education, is found among the profession of farmer or stock farmer. To some extent, local inhabitants view farming as a somewhat random activity rather than a formal profession, whereby practices of agriculture and stockbreeding are generally associated with a low social status. Nevertheless, the profession of shepherd has widely enjoyed a good reputation and forms an ideal for an enduring life, which reflects a proximity between humans, animals and the natural environment. Shepherding commonly involves the conquest and inhabitation of isolated, impassable and bitter mountain locations, as well as an exposure to natural elements, such as wind, rain and the sky in general. The profession of shepherd is regarded as a symbol of harshness, strength, purity and romanticism, by which shepherds have occupied a rather independent and solitary position within the community (*cf.* Herzfeld 1985; Kain Hart 1992; Rackham & Moody 1996; Bouma 2000; De Vries 2007; Panagiotakos *et al.* 2008).

The geographical location of the two research communities on the slopes of the Asterousia Mountains and on the eastern edge of the fertile Mesara Plain provides a sound basis for undertaking agricultural and stockbreeding activities. As Chartzoulakis *et al.* (2011: 194) explain: '*Horticultural crops have always been the major agricultural activities in the small and medium-sized farms, especially in the Island of Crete*'. In the two research communities, crops are generally harvested for private consumption or for sale at local markets, which are held in the more populated communities of South-Central Crete on a weekly basis. While the largest market in the research area is held in the town of Mires, a weekly market has been held in the community of Pirgos every Tuesday for the last 60 years. The main agricultural products grown in the research area include olives (*Olea europaea* L. *sylvestris* Brot.), grapes (*Vitis vinifera* L.), cereals, legumes, citrus fruits, nuts and culinary herbs (5.11). Olives are planted extensively up to an altitude of around 600 metres and are either consumed privately or sold at local markets (*cf.* Illustration 5.4). Moreover, the cultivation of olives forms the basis for the local production of olive oil, which is consumed privately rather than sold at the market. Following the general availability of homemade olive oil across the households in the research area, the product is rarely sold in local supermarkets (*cf.* Kalokhristianakis 2009). Grown at altitudes above the olive-limit, grapes provide the basis for the production of privately consumed vinegar, raisins and wine leaves, as well as for the preparation of privately consumed and commercially sold wine and raki, an alcoholic beverage made from the distilled pomace of grapes (5.12). Wine, which is cultivated at small vineyards, is usually consumed privately or sold as loose, barrelled wine at local taverns. The wine, which is harvested at large vineyards, such as the resinated 'Retsina', is commonly bottled, a practice Cretans reportedly consider to produce a rather distasteful wine, and sold commercially. Raki, which is typically brewed at locally owned distilleries, is either used for private consumption or sold at local coffeehouses, bars and taverns. Cereals, such as maize (*Zea mays* L.), wheat (*Triticum vulgare* L.), barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.) and oat (*Avena sativa* L.), which used to form the main subsistence crops during the 19th and 20th century, are nowadays used, at times in combination, in the production of bread for private consumption, although wheat is occasionally also cultivated for sale and trade. Legumes, including peas (*Pisum sativum* L.), lentils (*Ervum lens* L.) and other types of beans, as well as seeds, such as flax (*Linum usitatissimum* L.) and sesame (*Sesamum indicum* L.), used for the preparation of bread and sweets, are grown solely for household consumption. The pods of carob (*Ceratonia siliqua* L.) are used in the preparation of homemade sweets but are also frequently sold at local markets. Other fruits and nuts, which are cultivated in the research area, notably in river bottomlands, as minor crops for household consumption or for sale at local markets, include apples (*Malus domestica* Borkh. / *Malus sylvestris* (L.) Mill.), quinces (*Cydonia oblonga* Mill.), figs (*Ficus carica* L.), pomegranates (*Punica granatum* L.), loquats (*Eriobotrya japonica*

(Thunb.) Lindl.) oranges (*Citrus sinensis* (L.) Osbeck), lemons (*Citrus medica* L.), almonds (*Amygdalus communis* L.), bitter almonds (*Prunus amygdalus* Batsch *amara*) and walnuts (*Juglans regia* L.). Vegetables and culinary herbs, such as fresh tomatoes (*Solanum lycopersicum* L.), cucumbers (*Cucumis sativus* L.), potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum* L.), aubergines (*Solanum melongena* L.), onions (*Allium cepa* L.), common peppers (*Capsicum annuum* L.), artichokes (*Cynara scolymus* L.) and okra (*Hibiscus esculentus* L.), which are harvested in local gardens, are similarly grown for private consumption or for sale at local markets.



Illustration 5.4 Olive Cultivation in Pirgos in Crete.
Photograph by J. Aiglsperger (2011).

Furthermore, the herding of sheep and goats in the research area allows for the production of meat and dairy products, including various types of cheese, which are typically prepared in Crete, such as 'Graviera', 'Mizithra', 'Anthotiro' or 'Feta'. The meat and dairy products are either privately consumed or sold to local supermarkets. In addition to flocks of sheep and goats, donkeys have long been used as riding and packing animals, but are rarely seen in the research area today. Villagers typically reach the fields by a pick-up truck, which has gradually replaced the tractor and is nowadays commonly seen in the two research communities, loaded with farming tools and products. As Greger (1985: 142) points out: '*The pick-up truck is probably the biggest labour-saving device and also the biggest agent of change*'. Moreover, the local inhabitants engage in the collection of snails, particularly following periods of rain, which are used for private consumption. Furthermore, community members commonly keep bees in beehives, which are placed in rocky and flowery locations covered with aromatic plants, such as Thyme (*Coridothymus capitatus* (L.) Rechenb. Fil. or *Thymus capitatus* (L.) Hoffmanns. & Link) or Summer Savory (*Satureja thymbra* L.), and as such produce specific types of aromatic honey. Apart from crops and animals, which are farmed for the production of food, the plants, which are cultivated in the research area, are mostly used for seasoning and medicine. Cereals, carobs (*Ceratonia siliqua* L.) and other wild plants are commonly harvested for the preparation of animal fodder as well as for bee forage. The cultivation of trees and shrubs moreover enables the production of timber, which is used as a building material in fencing and roofing, as well as for blocking gaps, breaking the wind and providing shade in places, such as village squares. Firewood is primarily harvested from the wood of the long-lasting Olive tree (*Olea europaea* L. *sylvestris* Brot. / *Olea europaea* L. *oleaster* (Hoffmanns. & Link) Negodi), as well as from the wood of the spiny broom and the oak tree, and is used for heating and cooking instead of oil and

gas. Fuel and charcoal are similarly extracted from the wood of the Olive tree, the spiny broom and the oak tree, which are also used for making the traditional walking sticks, known as 'Katsuna', used by shepherds and popular among tourists. Finally, plants and plant-based products are also used as compost and for fishing and dyeing. They are also used for lighting, whereby a lamp floats on olive oil, and as a decoration, as well as in religious and spiritual ceremonies and rituals. Although income is seasonal and depends largely on environmental and weather conditions, practices of farming and stock farming have provided the most valuable source of self-sufficiency to the population of rural Crete (*cf.* Greger 1985; Van de Kerk 1993; Watrous *et al.* 1993; Rackham & Moody 1996; Iatrou & Kokkalou 1997; Chartzoulakis *et al.* 2001; MEDUSA Network 2002; Van den Akker 2002; Briassoulis 2003; Fielding *et al.* 2005; Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem 2007; De Vries 2007; Clark 2011).

As regards the occupation of farmer or stock farmer, the second highest percentage of respondents practice the profession of homemaker (15.5%, n=102). Excluding the category of students and non-paid labourers, the third highest percentage of household members of the sample are found in the occupation of educator (6.2%, n=41), which comprises teachers, kindergarten teachers, gym teachers, professors and schoolmasters. In this respect, a significantly higher number of educators (90.2%, n=37) lives in the community of Pírgos.

The availability of communal facilities, such as schools, coffeehouses and hairdressers, as well as administrative buildings in Pírgos contributes to the rather unequal distribution of certain occupations among the two research communities. The inhabitants of Pírgos predominantly have the occupation of respectively: electrician; construction worker, which includes refrigeration engineers, plumbers and crane operators; provider of food, beverage or accommodation, which comprises the proprietors and staff of coffeehouses, as well as owners of tavern and hotels; insurance agent; priest or personal servant, whereby the latter refers mainly to hairdressers; public administrator or defence personnel, which includes municipal employees, policemen, firemen and soldiers; and retailer, which includes vendors, grocers, butchers, car mechanics and gas station owners. On the other hand, the number of household members, who work as servants to buildings, namely as cleaning ladies, secretaries, receptionists and night watchmen, is larger among the inhabitants of Práitoria. The distribution of professional activities among the sample population differs in relation to the gender of the respondents.

In fact, a significantly larger number of male community members practice the profession of: electrician; construction worker; driver or carrier, which includes taxi and tourist bus drivers as well as sailors; provider of food, beverage or accommodation; priest or personal servant; head officer or researcher, as well as manufacturer, notably of food, textiles, furniture and mechanical goods. In the same fashion, more men than women are reportedly self-employed or employed in the private sector. Female community members dominate the profession of respectively: homemaker; human health or social worker, which includes childcare and health care delivery workers; artist or entertainer, which includes gymnasts, betting shop owners and theatre employees; servant to buildings; and retailer. Across the sample population, the highest percentage of unemployment has been found among inhabitants, who are found in the age category of 21 to 27, thereby reflecting the high rate of youth unemployment in Greece, which has been reportedly estimated at 55.3% in 2012 (*cf.* Eurostat 2014c). Furthermore, a rather large number of respondents have an occupation, which is not subject to formal retirement, and as such stimulate a relatively low rate of retirement among the sample population. Community members commonly practice the profession of farmer, stock farmer, homemaker or provider of food, beverages or accommodation until an advanced age or enter the occupation after having retired from a different job. In general, local inhabitants frequently continue to work after retirement or during episodes of illness, expressing as such their strong working mentality, which is to a certain extent based on the wish to make money and to stay active.

Finally, the profession of priest, which is exclusively practiced by men, has wider social significance, whereby the priest is not only responsible for the execution of religious tasks, but also functions as a communal advisor and person of trust (*cf.* Greger 1985; Van Beelen 1990; Koutis *et al.* 1993; Van de Kerk 1993; Bouma 2000; Dijkstra 2005; De Vries 2007; Panagiotakos *et al.* 2008).

In the research communities, local inhabitants, who have the occupation of farmer or provider of food, beverage or accommodation, generally participate in a family business, which is managed by members of the nuclear, extended or in-law family. The majority of community members own pieces of land or cattle, which are inherited within the kin group and are farmed by family members. Furthermore, local taverns and accommodation facilities are frequently run by members of the same family. Family businesses not only offer full-time employment to the members of a kin group, but also provide members of the family, who have an occupation outside the family business, the opportunity to make some extra money. In this way, younger inhabitants frequently engage in the agricultural activities of their parents whilst practicing a regular profession, at times in places even outside the community. In this fashion, community members are frequently joined by relatives, who are living outside the village, such as in Iraklion, visiting them on weekends or during harvest time to work in the fields, olive groves or vineyards. Family members, who practice a profession in the tourist sector, frequently work extended hours during the summer months, whereby they combine agricultural and tourist activities. Overall, it is common practice among the inhabitants of rural Crete to have more than one occupation, not at least encouraged by the widespread availability of family businesses. Nevertheless, a gradual tendency among community members to have an occupation in sectors other than agriculture has recently prompted holders of large areas of land to employ migrant labourers during the harvest season from countries such as Bulgaria or Albania (*cf.* Greger 1985; Van Beelen 1990; Van de Kerk 1993; Rackham & Moody 1996; Hanepen 1997; Molenaar 1999) (5.13).

In view of the social significance of family and patrigroup relationships, as well as the predominance of family businesses in the research communities, economic standards are generally based on the income of the family or patrigroup, rather than on the individual community member. Family and patrigroup members share the responsibility in their contribution to the income of the kin group and provide sources of economic power, whereby family members living in urban areas commonly raise the economic standard of their communal patrigroup. Local inhabitants provide financial support to each other through the network of social ties, in which they adhere to a rather informal system of referral. Based on a notion of loyalty between fellow community members, the referral system, which comprises the entire village population and at times extends to neighbouring settlements, produces economic revenues for the community at large. Villagers, who live outside the community but who own properties in the village, tend to visit the community regularly during weekends or holidays. Also community members, who own businesses outside the village but remain in the community, continue to rely on these local socio-economic networks. Community members, who are not working, unemployed or incapable of work, are generally exempted from participating in family- and community-based socio-economic networks. In the same fashion, the businesses managed in the two research communities, which are linked to international enterprises, are mainly managed independently from local socio-economic networks. In general, the economic environment of the two research communities has been rather secluded and has provoked low outside competition. Nevertheless, a growing tendency towards national and international cooperation has recently weakened the solidarity and loyalty in the communities, on which the socio-economic networks are based, and has shifted the responsibilities for economic security to the nuclear family (*cf.* Hanepen 1997; Herzfeld 1999).

In this way, Table 5.14 shows the distribution of the estimated annual income of each household, namely the income of all household members combined, of the sample over the two research communities. In the communities of Pirgos and Praitoria, the majority of households

have an estimated income, which ranges from 10.000 to 20.000 Euro per year (37.5%, n=110). The distribution of household incomes of the sample leans towards the lower end of the scale, whereby only a minimum number of households reportedly have an annual income above 40.000 Euro (1.0%, n=3).

Table 5.14 Distribution of the Estimated Annual Income of the Households of the Sample in Euro over the Two Research Communities (N=293).

Annual Income	Pirgos		Praitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<10,000	70	31.8	21	28.8	91	31.1
10,000-20,000	88	40.0	22	30.1	110	37.5
21,000-30,000	34	15.5	12	16.4	46	15.7
31,000-40,000	8	3.6	2	2.7	10	3.4
>40,000	2	0.9	1	1.4	3	1.0
no income reported	18	8.2	15	20.5	33	11.3
Total	220	100.0	73	100.0	293	100.0

While the distribution of the annual income of the household is fairly similar in both research communities, a considerably high percentage of household heads living in Praitoria refrained from indicating the amount of income on the present scale (20.5%, n=15). In addition to the annual income of the household, Table 5.15 presents the distribution of the socio-economic status (SES) of all households of the sample over the two research communities.

Table 5.15 Distribution of the Socio-Economic Status (SES) of the Household Members of the Sample over the Two Research Communities (N=656).

SES ¹	Pirgos		Praitoria		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
poor	52	10.5	60	37.3	112	17.1
average	442	89.3	99	61.5	541	82.5
rich	1	0.2	2	1.2	3	0.5
Total	495	100.0	161	100.0	656	100.0

¹Specifications of the Socio-Economic Status:

poor: minimum number of possessions; small, dark and old house;

average: medium number of possessions, including ownership of a limited number of assets, such as a public house; medium-sized house;

rich: possession of a variety of assets, such as public houses, holiday homes or shops; large and well-furnished house (*cf.* Van den Akker 2002).

The vast majority of households in both research communities have an average SES (79.2%, n=232) and are defined as neither poor nor rich. Furthermore, a considerably low percentage of households across the sample reportedly enjoy a high SES (0.7%, n=2). The percentage of community members, who have a poor SES (20.1%, n=59), is higher among the inhabitants of Praitoria. A rather large number of households, which maintains a poor SES (52.5%, n=31), has an estimated annual income of less than 10.000 Euro, thereby suggesting that a poor SES is related to a low annual income. All households with an estimated annual income between 31.000 and 40.000 Euro as well as above 40.000 Euro show an average SES. The heads of the households, who have been classified as maintaining a high SES, all refrained from reporting an annual income, which indicates that community members may conceal their wealth and possessions from others. The highest percentage of households, which shows a low SES, furthermore coincides with the age category of 70 to 76 years, while the percentage of households, which reportedly has a high SES, is highest among the age groups of 21 to 27 and 56 to 62 years. While both young and older community members appear to be similarly able to

achieve a high SES, older inhabitants are seemingly more likely to maintain a low socio-economic status. A vast majority of respondents, who have been born outside the Municipality of Arkhanes-Asterousia or outside Crete, demonstrate an average SES, which suggests that local inhabitants, who were born in the community or municipality, maintain a lower socio-economic status than villagers born elsewhere. Finally, the highest percentage of households, which show a low SES, is found among community members, who have not received any type of formal education.

5.3 Social Organisation of the Research Communities

5.3.1 Housing and Communal Institutions

From the outside, an initial impression gained from the view of the communities of Pirgos and Praitoria reveals the rather typical features of dusty roads, whitewashed old houses and often unfinished two-storyed buildings. To a certain extent, however, the characteristics of the sample population are reflected in local patterns of living and housing, as well as in the types of local institutions available in the communities. It is common for community members, who start a family and decide to stay in the village, to live in the close vicinity of their parents whereupon parents and children often tend to reside in neighbouring houses or occupy both levels of a two-storeyed building. Houses established in the two research communities have mostly one or two, but occasionally three storeys, which are usually connected through external staircases. Balconies generally encircle the first and second floors, while ground floors frequently extend towards a terrace or small garden, which is commonly decorated with flowers and potted plants, providing a hospitable area for drinking coffee and entertaining passers-by. Overall, only a small number of houses in the two research communities are bordered by fences and accessed through external gates. The most commonly held kinds of pets, such as dogs and cats, are always kept outside the house on the terrace or in the garden, whereby watchdogs are generally tied against walls or fences. Similarly accessible by external staircases, the rooftops of houses are typically flat, whereby the space is used *i.a.* for collecting and heating water in containers, for hanging clothes, as well as for drying vegetables or fruits, such as grapes (*Vitis vinifera* L.) (*cf.* Rackham & Moody 1996).

During the day, blinds on the balcony and shutters at the windows protect the houses from the sun leaving the inside rather dark. The inside of the houses is typically divided into a kitchen and adjoining dining area, which generally include a fireplace or oven, different seating facilities and a dining table. In addition, there is a master bedroom, and depending on the number of household members, a second or a third bedroom. There is also a bathroom with toilet, whereby the latter is sometimes housed in a separate room. In this way, it is common practice among families with three or more children for siblings, notably of the same gender, to share a room. Older, widowed inhabitants may resort to sleep on a sofa bed in the kitchen instead of using the master bedroom. Inside the house, the walls and flat surfaces of tables and sideboards of inhabited rooms are typically decorated with framed family pictures and icons. Furthermore, an altar table, which holds pictures of deceased family members or close acquaintances, icons, incense and oil lamps, is frequently arranged in one corner of the house, usually in the kitchen. The majority of houses in the two research communities contain an extra, non-inhabited room or shed for storage, namely of food, such as barrelled olive oil or wine, which usually adjoins the house or occupies an uninhabited ground floor. In view of the spread of farming activities, local inhabitants frequently own an additional field house, '*Khorafi*', which is typically positioned next to their field and in which agricultural equipment and products are stored (*cf.* Roussou 2011) (*cf.* Illustration 5.5).

In addition to residential and field houses, the two research communities of Pirgos and Praitoria furthermore encompass a variety of administrative, cultural and religious institutions, which assist the local population in their daily activities. Since Pirgos formed the Seat of the

Municipality of Asterousia from 1997 until 2011, all administrative establishments providing services to the inhabitants of the settlements in the former municipality are to this day based in the community of Pírgos (*cf.* Map 5.2). The communal building located at the crossing between the main street of Pírgos and the country road Kharakas-Martha accommodates the local town hall and the Citizen Service Centre, '*Kentro Eksipiretisis Politon (KEP)*'. To the southwest, an ascending path leads to the oldest administrative institutions of Pírgos, which were established following the Pact of Halepa in 1878 and include the police station, the local court and the post office, which formerly hosted the telegraph and telephone office.



Illustration 5.5 Rural Field House in South-Central Crete.
Photograph by J. Aiglsperger (2011).

West of the building in which the town hall is established, the local nursery school is situated along the northern edge of the country road Kharakas-Martha, and is adjoined by the building of the local fire brigade in the North. In view of the general absence of educational facilities until the beginning of the 20th century, the students of Pírgos and Praitória had to walk on foot to the nearby community of Kharakas in order to receive primary education. When free access to compulsory education for both genders was established in the first Cretan Constitution adopted in 1899, educational facilities have been established in the rural areas of the island. The primary school in Pírgos is currently located north of the town hall at the western edge of the ascending main street in a two-storeyed building, which was opened in 1997 and extends towards a large asphaltic schoolyard. Encircled by a high fence, the schoolyard is used for gym lessons as well as for the organisation of open-air communal festivities. In the same fashion, the school building houses a large auditorium on the first floor, which serves the organisation of communal assemblies, theatres, concerts and other festivities. In addition to the nursing and primary school, the community of Pírgos furthermore encompasses a lower-secondary school, which is located behind the nursing school further west along the northern edge of the country road Kharakas-Martha. The one-storeyed building extends to an asphaltic schoolyard, which is encircled by a fence, and is enclosed by several equally asphaltic yards used for gym lessons and ball games. The students of both research communities usually attend school in Pírgos until they complete the lower secondary level, whereby the students of Praitória as well as of other surrounding villages are brought to Pírgos by the local school bus. In order to enter education at the higher secondary level, students generally commute by bus to the nearby community of Kharakas. Apart from the educational facilities, the communal institutions located in Pírgos moreover include an 'Open Care Centre for the Elderly', '*Kentro Anikhtis Prostrasias Ilikiomenon (KAPI)*',

which is located along the northern edge of the market street next to the health post. The centre functions as a gathering place for the older community members, who meet at the common room to talk, have coffee, crochet or read the newspaper. The female Director of the KAPI, who is generally present at the centre on weekdays until noon, performs the task of organising a number of activities, such as excursions, music sessions or theatre plays. Furthermore, a female assistant is present at the centre during weekdays to prepare coffee and other beverages for the visitors. The majority of guests at the KAPI in Pirgos live in the village. Following the absence of an open care centre in Praitoria, the inhabitants frequently resort to visiting the KAPI in the nearby village of Kharakas (*cf.* Molenaar 1999; Kalokhristianakis 2009).

Apart from the different administrative institutions located in Pirgos, a number of cultural facilities are available in both research communities. The community of Pirgos accommodates a multi-storeyed hotel, which is located north of the village along the western edge of the main street, as well as a small-sized hotel, which is situated in the centre of the community, south of the market street. The availability of rooms in both hotels is written on signs, which are displayed along the streets in the village as well as along the main roads bordering the community of Pirgos. For the most part, hotel guests are either Cretans, who visit the village as family members or friends on festive occasions, such as weddings, or foreign transients, who stay for rather short periods of time. The multi-storeyed hotel in Pirgos offers apartments in an adjacent building on a monthly basis, which are rented by mostly young visitors, who come to Pirgos from different parts of Greece in order to assume a job in fields such as education or health care and frequently encounter initial difficulties in finding accommodation. Besides the hotel buildings, Pirgos encloses a number of taverns and coffeehouses primarily situated along the main and the market street, which offer guests the opportunity to sit outside, watch television or use the Internet. The older community members tend to frequent the coffeehouses located along the market street, while younger inhabitants gather primarily in the cafes along the main street, which are used as bars during the evening hours, as well as at the coffee bar adjoining the Forest of Farmakaras. In view of the availability of a single coffeehouse in Praitoria, the inhabitants either frequent the cafes in Pirgos or visit, notably in small numbers, the local coffeehouse, which is situated north at the division of the main street (*cf.* Map 5.3). The inhabitants of Praitoria and other visitors commonly gather at the two local gas stations, which are positioned in the Southeast along the country road Knossos-Kharakas and in the northwest along the country road Iraklion-Praitoria.

In addition to providing the opportunity to consume beverages and snacks, the gas stations in Praitoria both accommodate a small shop, forming the only selling points of consumer goods in the community. While the gas stations in Pirgos withhold from offering a meeting place and consumer goods, the petrol station situated at the northern edge of the main street in Pirgos functions as a service station. Service stations, which attend to the reparation of motorised vehicles, are available in both research communities. With the exception of both gas stations located in Praitoria, consumer goods and other services are, however, solely found in the community of Pirgos, particularly in the vicinity of the main and the market street, as well as the country road Kharakas-Martha. Furthermore, there are in Pirgos a variety of supermarkets, small grocers, bakeries and tobacconists; clothing and jewellery shops; a flower store; shops specialised in household goods and electronics; two banks; a number of hairdressers; a bookstore; a betting shop; a private insurance company; and a gym. Making use of the open space surrounding the community of Praitoria, two factories of mechanic products, of which one is specialised in the manufacture of olive-harvesting tools, have been established at the southern and western edge of the village. With the exception of supermarkets, which are generally open the entire day from Monday until Saturday, and gas stations, which operate all week long, the cultural institutions in the two research communities operate from Monday until Saturday during the morning and evening hours, and close down after lunch hour during the afternoon.

In general, the administrative and cultural institutions provide the meeting places for mostly male community members, who frequently visit acquaintances at their place of employment, gather around the office desk or cash register and engage in rather vivid conversations, which are at times accompanied by the consumption of beverages or snacks ordered from a coffeehouse or tavern nearby.

Besides the administrative and cultural institutions available in the two research communities, the landscape of rural Crete generally offers a number of sacred sites, such as sanctuaries, caves, churches, chapels and monasteries often found at extremely remote locations. As Rackham & Moody (1996: 187) observe: *'Nearly every chapel, even if shattered in some forgotten earthquake, is still sacred and has a little icon and a lamp in a hole in the wall'*. Religious institutions, such as churches, chapels or monasteries, are frequently established in response to a religious calling, such as a request received from an angel in a dream or the need to thank a particular Saint. In Pirgos, the whitewashed Church of the Prophet Elias at the *Kaloyeriko*, which is located in the south-western part of the village and has been established during pre-Venetian times, is reminiscent of the group of monks, who lived previously in the area. Founded during the late-Byzantine Era, the Church of Saint Constantine and Saint George is found south of the market street of Pirgos and experiences bustling activities on the name day of Constantine, Eleni and George. Following the market street to the west, the small Church of Saint Paraskevi, which was presumably established at the beginning of the 20th century and worshipped for its holy water, is found in the midst of residential houses. The Church of Lord Christ (Methamorphosis), also founded at the beginning of the 20th century, which is located in the south-western part of Pirgos along the southern edge of the country road Kharakas-Martha, provides wider space as well as a church square. Following the country road Kharakas-Martha to the west, the village cemetery is placed towards the edge of the village south of the road. In response to an increase in population size, the even larger Church of Saint Irene, situated north of the primary school, was constructed. The church was founded in 1973 and inaugurated in 1981, and forms the core institution in which religious services and festivities are held today. Finally, the Church of Saint Raphael, which was established and inaugurated in 1990, is located on a hill in the south-eastern part of Pirgos at a rather long distance from the village centre. It can be reached by an asphaltic road from the North as well as by a non-prepared road from the west. In spite of its rather small size, the community of Praitoria accommodates three churches, namely: (1) the Church of Archangel Michael founded in the 13th century, which is positioned towards the west of the village next to the health post; (2) the Church of the Holy Trinity, which forms the largest church of the community, is situated at the southern edge of the village; and (3) the Church of Saint George, which is located at the heart of the community.

5.3.2 Adhering to the Religious Canon: A Selection of Rituals and Celebrations

Following the development of Orthodox Christianity during the Byzantine Era, the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea in the East came under the influence of Orthodox elements. To this day, the national churches of these countries demonstrate a number of similarities, such as an emperor cult or an extensive monasticism, which are evidence of a common religious affiliation. Throughout history, however, Orthodox Christianity has come to incorporate various pagan features, which are characteristic of the habits of local population groups living in areas of Orthodox domination. The religious canon of the Greek Orthodox Church, for example, contains elements of local culture and traditional lifestyle, which have been adapted from people's organisation of daily life (*cf.* Kain Hart 1992). As Kain Hart (1992: 1) argues: *'[...] [Religious] tradition in Greece deeply relies on a scrupulous sense of place; religious experience is the product of theology in the crucible of a community (the living and their dead) and a landscape, which is the physical ground or material for a cosmology'*. Nevertheless, the Greek Orthodox Church, which has not been subject to events of reformation or counter-reformation, also offers a number of theoretical and practical commonalities at the local level. By consequence, the

components of Greek Orthodox Christianity are rather ambiguous, as they include both religious elements, which are virtually identical among communities, and irreligious elements, which are largely specific to local or regional population groups. Apart from its rather ambiguous features, Greek Orthodox Christianity incorporates a certain sense of nostalgia for the past. As noticed by Kain Hart (1992: 18): *'Religion in Greece involves a canon, in other words a sacred tradition that is articulated in more or less archaic terms, and in which the past has a positive value'*. Religious representatives, who throughout history have acted as local experts and mediators of mundane as well as sacred knowledge, continue to play an indispensable role in the daily life of particularly rural population groups. Although local inhabitants occasionally view them with scepticism, religious representatives serve the community not only as ministers but also as authoritarian figures and educators, who advocate and adhere to religious doctrines. *'The ideas and ideals expressed in Orthodox rhetoric in its more and less abstract manifestations often have the role not of mirroring the "ambient" social reality but of providing an indigenous critique of social reality'* (ibid.: 21). The Greek Orthodox Church performs a number of rituals, which aim at strengthening moral security and at counteracting socially destructive values, such as envy and jealousy, as well as at protecting personal feelings, conditions and belongings (cf. Kain Hart 1992). In particular, Greek Orthodox Christianity is organised around a calendar of rituals and celebrations, which invoke: the birth, life and death as well as resurrection of Christ; the birth, life and dormition of the Mother of God; and the birth, life, martyrdom and death of the Saints. Practices of veneration, particularly of the Mother of God and the Saints, are rather closely linked to people's daily life and provide a direct insight into the parallel reality of the past. The adoration of Saints, which emerged out of the disintegration of the Roman social order in late classical times, expresses the linkages very well between pagan and religious elements and forms a particularly significant ritual within the Greek Orthodox Church. As Herzfeld (1990: 11) notes: *'In popular cosmology, which situates saints in a local setting and gives them local relevance, actions often seem more significant than physical form'*. The Saints are regarded as pure and stand in contrast to the impure humans, whereby their purity embraces values of localism and family, as well as natural elements, such as air, sun or water. As Kain Hart (1992: 199) concludes: *'[...] [The] saints serve in a great variety of capacities: as models for personal behaviour, as emblems of social groups, as personifications of disease or heralds of weather, as putative ancestors and national fathers, and so on. Saints carry such a varied load of associations and identities that it is impossible to characterize them in any simple way or to reduce them to sociological or psychological "projections"'*.

The inhabitants of the two research communities commonly express their religious faith by making the sign of a cross, particularly when receiving uncomfortable news, when speaking about deceased loved-ones or when passing by a church building. In addition to the sign of the cross, habitual expressions, such as *'Panayia mu'*, *'My Mother of God'*, or *'Doksa to Theo'*, which literally translates as *'Glory of God'*, interpreted as *'Thank God'*, highlight the ubiquity of religion in everyday village life. Reverence for Christ, the Mother of God and the Saints is furthermore expressed through the worshipping of icons, which are the frame of reference in the canon of the Greek Orthodox Church. According to Herzfeld (1990: 111): *'The capacity of these icons to express social division does not lie in features of their design, but in the uses to which their very conventionality can be put'*. Holy icons combine religious values with local virtues, such as hospitality, for example, and thereby act as mediating symbols between religion and its members. In this way, local inhabitants frequently hang icons on the inside wall of their houses or place them on the family altar, which is designed to protect the household from evil forces. In addition to icons, the altar with incense and oil lamps commonly contains mostly pictures of deceased family members or friends. In general, the villagers worship icons by means of decorating the icon with flowers or lighting the censer and oil lamp on the altar, thereby provoking a regular exchange of substances between the domestic and the religious environment. Water and oil, for example, which are commonly available in rural households, are not only used for regular household chores, but are also used as sacred substances to domestic religious rituals.

The oil lamp, which is frequently lit during evening hours, is used for censuring each room and for protecting the house from invasive spirits. As Kain Hart (1992: 116) demonstrates: '*[Each] household, through the possession of its own icons and the performance of private rituals, maintains its religious autonomy. Despite the public fuss made on formal occasions over higher members of the clerical hierarchy, there is a strikingly democratic ring to local piety*'. Community members moreover undertake casual visits to churches in the village, at times when taking a leisurely stroll, and lit a candle and cense the icons in the church with the available censer, while saying a prayer (*cf.* Kain Hart 1992; Roussou 2011).

Apart from the religious activities performed at home or by chance, the inhabitants of rural Crete frequently attend church on Sunday morning in order to follow the Eucharistic Liturgy. While it is common practice among villagers to enter the church after the service has begun, delaying their attendance at the liturgy, participation in the communion is generally held in high esteem. The communion centres on the distribution of the '*Prosforo*', namely a round loaf of bread, which is stamped with a seal, usually in the shape of a cross, and symbolises the incarnation of Christ. The loaf is cut at its centre with a small knife in the shape of a lance, '*Loghi*', and is thereafter consecrated and distributed as communion. The remainders of the *Prosforo* are cut in small pieces and distributed as blessed instead of consecrated '*Antidoro*' to the congregation after the service. In contrast to the *Prosforo*, the '*Artos*', a type of bread sweetened with sugar, is brought to church, blessed and distributed, usually accompanied by olive oil, wine, candles and incense, on particular festive days. Apart from the Sunday liturgy, community members commonly attend church on the name days of specific Saints, which are celebrated rather extensively and where students frequently remain absent from school. Following the annual calendar, the icon of the Saint is placed on the respective name day in front of the altar behind the seating area and visitors to the church usually walk to the front in order to kiss the icon and make the sign of a cross before taking a seat. As Kain Hart (1992: 231) highlights: '*[...] [The] saint's personality becomes over time deeply linked to the time of year in which he or she is celebrated*'. In this respect, it is common practice among local inhabitants to attend church on the name days of Saints, who have acquired wider significance (5.14). Since the majority of the villagers are named after a local Saint, community members furthermore visit church on the name day as well as on the day of birth and the day of death of the Saint concerned. In Crete, great significance is attached to the celebration of name days, on which local inhabitants not only attend church, but also invite family members and friends to a meal after the service and distribute sweets to friends, visitors and passers-by. In the same fashion, community members celebrate the name day of Saints, in whose name the village churches have been established by means of visiting the respective church (5.15). Following the tradition of dedicating religious institutions, such as churches and monasteries, to particular Saints, rural inhabitants may furthermore go on a pilgrimage to churches and other institutions located outside the community, often in remote areas, in order to venerate the respective Saint (*cf.* Kain Hart 1992; Van der Hoeven 1992; Van den Akker 2002).

In addition to a list of a specific number of name days, the annual cycle of the Greek Orthodox Church is divided into three major feasting and fasting periods, namely Easter, the Dormition of the Mother of God and Christmas. In particular, Easter, '*Paskha*', which according to ecclesiastical tables is celebrated on the Sunday after the Paschal Full Moon, is the most significant feast of the religious year. Traditionally, the celebrations are preceded by a fasting period of seven weeks known as 'Lent'. During the Holy Week, that is the last week before Easter, people attend church in the evening hours. On the evening of Holy Wednesday, the priest anoints people with the Holy Oil, while on Holy Thursday, a life-sized figure of Christ on the cross is brought to the centre of the church and held in an upright position allowing people to come forward and venerate Christ by means of kneeling in front of the cross and kissing the feet of the statue. The same evening, women stay in church after the liturgy in order to decorate the '*Epitaphios*', an icon or embroidered cloth, which is placed on a wooden bier and adorned with flowers (*cf.* Illustration 5.6). The cloth and flowers are commonly held in red, which symbolises

the assassination and blood of Christ. Resembling the tomb of Christ, the ‘Epitaphios’ is placed in front of the entrance to the church during the liturgy of Good Friday where people exit the church after the liturgy by means of passing underneath the wooden bier.



Illustration 5.6 Icons and *Epitaphios* at the Church of Ayia Irini in Pírgos, Crete.
Photograph by J. Aiglsperger (2011).

Subsequently, the church congregation follows the wooden bier, which is traditionally carried by four men, on a procession through the village, thereby engaging in songs and prayers. Naturally, people, who did not attend church, step outside their houses to witness the procession and to pass underneath the wooden bier, which is planted and lifted at several locations in the village. The celebrations held on Easter Sunday typically begin with a visit to church on Saturday shortly before midnight, during which candles are lit and after which people exchange the greeting of ‘*Christos anesti*’, ‘Christ is risen’, to which they respond ‘*alithos anesti*’, ‘truly, He is risen’.



Illustration 5.7 Traditional Egg Tapping on Easter Sunday.
Photograph by J. Aiglsperger (2011).

At this time, the church distributes bread and wine to the congregation. Hereafter, families typically gather during the night of Easter Sunday as well as on the day of Easter Sunday in order to consume a meal, which commonly consists of wine and roasted lamb. The Easter meal furthermore includes red-coloured eggs, which customarily are clinked together in the traditional game of 'egg tapping', '*Tsungkrisma*', before being eaten (cf. Illustration 5.7).

Including the three major feasting and fasting periods, the inhabitants of Crete observe a number of holy days and feasts, as well as fasting periods and days within the canon of the Greek Orthodox Church (5.16). During the feast of Pentecost, for example, which is traditionally celebrated 50 days after Easter, the inhabitants of Pírgos typically make a one-day pilgrimage to the church of the Holy Spirit, which is located on the southern slopes of the Asterousia Mountains along the road to Tris Ekklesies. Similarly, the nativity of Saint John the Baptist honoured on June 24th is commonly celebrated with bonfires, which symbolise the heat of the sun and the arrival of the summer. Religious celebrations, which are tied to specific moments in time within the canon of the Greek Orthodox Church, occasionally follow numerical cycles. The number '40' frequently appears throughout the religious year as a link between time, space and ritual action, whereupon ascension is celebrated 40 days after Easter; a child is considered polluted for 40 days after being born; and it is 40 days after death that the soul of the deceased is evaluated and given direction (cf. Kain Hart 1992; Van den Akker 2002).

The canon of the Greek Orthodox Church moreover encloses a number of collectively performed celebrations, which are not tied to a specific point in time in the religious year. Overall, these festivities include foundation ceremonies, baptisms and weddings, as well as funeral and memorial services. In particular, the foundation ceremony known as '*Eghkenia*' is conducted in order to bless the construction of churches, official institutions and other buildings. Furthermore, baptisms are celebrated in a way to minimise the pollution of the child and to communicate new life, as well as to award the child with a social personality and a licence for taking communion. Since baptisms are held in high esteem, virtually all community members are baptised and the celebration is generally well attended by family members and friends as well as fellow villagers. In the same fashion, weddings are celebrated extensively and commonly attended by not only family members and friends but also by the entire village population. The wedding celebration is usually preceded by an engagement ceremony, during which the couple exchanges engagement rings. In Crete, the parents of the couple may prepare the so-called '*Gamokuluro*', a wedding cake shaped in the form of a large ring, which is adorned with flowers and leaves made out of dough and is given to the couple as a present during the engagement ceremony. The wedding celebrations generally involve the firing of guns by male family members, the consumption of a heavy meal and the performance of dances, which commonly last until the early hours of the morning. During baptisms and weddings, additional family ties are established through the assignation of the godparent, the male '*Nonos*' or the female '*Nona*', and the appointment of the marriage witness, the male '*Kumbaros*' or the female '*Kumbara*' (cf. Greger 1985; Kain Hart 1992; Van den Akker 2002; Roudometof & Makrides 2010).

In contrast to the joy experienced during the celebration of foundation ceremonies, baptisms or weddings, the death of a community member is usually met with collective fear and openly demonstrated sadness (5.17). The death of a human being sheds light on the general proximity of the natural and supernatural to the human world, as it is a frequently discussed subject in traditional songs and laments. Death is frequently interpreted as an assault on the deceased as well as on the family, whereby the deceased is at times blamed for leaving family members and friends behind. Although systems of belief in life after death are rather diverse, the inhabitants of Crete generally regard 'evil' as an active component of village life and share the belief that good deeds during life have a positive effect on life expectancy and life after death. Traditionally, villagers pay their last respects to a fellow community member at the house of the deceased, in which the family gathers and female relatives commonly engage in laments, '*Miroloyia*'. Funerals are announced on posters, which show a picture of the deceased and are displayed across the village, and are generally attended by the entire village population. In addition to the

funeral service, the canon of the Greek Orthodox Church offers a number of memorial services, 'Mnimosina', which are held on the request of the family of the deceased and are commonly performed 40 days and one year after death. On several occasions, family members may decide to hold a memorial service annually, notably on the anniversary of the death. Memorial services usually involve a visit to the cemetery and offerings of food, which are, however, not interpreted as nutrition for the deceased, but are served in remembrance of the dead. Women typically prepare 'Koliva', a dish of boiled wheat (*Triticum vulgare* L.) sweetened and prepared with small pieces of nut and pomegranate seeds (*Punica granatum* L.), which is taken to church and subsequently offered to the attendants of the church as well as to family members and friends (cf. Blum & Blum 1965; Greger 1985; Kain Hart 1992; Van den Akker 2002; Herzfeld 2003). As Greger (1985: 65) argues: '*There seems to be some notion that the actual digestion of wheat, nut and fruit symbolizes purgation in the 'other' world outside [...]. As the sins are purged so the dead person can be left increasingly distanced, and the danger of his jealousy clinging to life diminishes*'. Likewise, Kain Hart (1992: 134) claims that: '*[...] the wheat is treated as a sacred and protecting substance rather like holy water*'. During the first months or even years after death, close family members may moreover perform the task of preparing the *Prosforo* for the weekly liturgy and may resort to wearing black over a period of at least one year. Women, who experienced the death of a husband, child or grandchild, frequently maintain the custom of dressing in black for the rest of their life. On various occasions, family members may moreover decide to exhume the corpse after a specific period of time, notably dependent on the wish to prolong the mourning period, in order to examine the bones of the body and to bury the remains in communal holy ground (5.18) (cf. Greger 1985; Kain Hart 1992; Herzfeld 2003).

Overall, the canon of the Greek Orthodox Church forms an integral component of the everyday life of the population of rural Crete. In addition to their religious significance, rituals and celebrations provide a favourable environment in which young men and women meet, in which estranged parts of the family get together and in which the inhabitants of different villages express their common interest for each other and establish bonds of kinship and marriage (cf. Kain Hart 1992). As Greger (1985: 51) shows: '*Worship and religious ritual are community activities and individuals participate by expression of their social roles. As for self-restraint and periods of ascetic behaviour such as fasting, these too are social activities and individuals seem to have little sense of separation or tension between bodily or personal wants and their desire to emulate the holy ideals*'.

5.3.3 Spiritual Belief, Calendar and the Local Diet

In addition to adhering to the canon of the Greek Orthodox Church, the inhabitants of Crete share a certain level of spirituality and believe in a variety of elements, which give meaning and purpose to life (cf. Greger 1985; Kain Hart 1992; Sapountzi-Krepia *et al.* 2005). As Papadopoulos (2009: 127) indicates: '*Magical beliefs and the "irrational" have been part of Greek life since antiquity and in the study of [...] modern Greek culture what matters is that "magic" took place in a setting of pluralistic community beliefs and customs regarding the supernatural*'. Local inhabitants believe to a certain extent in the power of supernatural spirits, 'Eksotika', as well as in witchcraft and sorcery, which are practiced by humans. Women may predict the future by means of reading coffee cups, while men, particularly shepherds, may practice a form of divination known as 'Scapulomancy', in which the future is prophesied from the shoulder blades of a sheep (cf. Blum & Blum 1965; Kain Hart 1992). In this respect, Kain Hart (1992: 165) observes that: '*[...] the territory of "divination" has widened, while that of "magic" has continued to shrink*'.

Apart from these rather pagan systems of belief and practices, the inhabitants of rural Crete moreover rely on a popular socio-economic calendar, which is primarily rooted in activities of farming and animal husbandry. The socio-economic cycle functions as a 'naturally' given circumstance to the community members and forms a vivid component within the ritual year. In

an attempt to summarise the activities undertaken ritually and annually by the inhabitants of rural Crete, Figure 5.2 presents the socio-economic calendar of the inhabitants of Magoulas, a community on the Lasithi Plateau. In contrast to the population of the two research communities, the inhabitants of Magoulas migrate from settlements established at higher altitudes, 'above', to settlements established at lower altitudes, 'below', during the winter months and appear to be actively engaged in touristic activities from April until September. Nevertheless, the celebration of holy days and the observation of fasting periods, which are highlighted in the outer circle of the figure, as well as the practices of farming and animal husbandry presented, as they are followed in accordance with local climate conditions, overlap with the rituals performed in the research area of South-Central Crete (*cf.* Greger 1985) (5.19).

The local characteristics of landscape and climate in Crete divide the year into a period of agricultural activity and growth, which lasts roughly from September until May, and a period of agricultural deadlock, which occurs during the months of June, July and August, as they are typically marked by extensive heat and drought. In view of the widespread cultivation of olives (*Olea europaea* L. *syvestris* Brot.) and grapes (*Vitis vinifera* L.), the cycle of agricultural activities largely centres on the olive harvest and the production of olive oil, which generally start in October and may last until March, as well as on the collection and processing of grapes, which typically begin at the end of August. On several occasions, the beginning of the grape harvest is marked by a local celebration, such as the 'Sultana-Festival', which is held during August in Sitia in North-Eastern Crete. In the same fashion, festivals are organised in a variety of places across rural Crete during the months of October and November to celebrate, notably with the consumption of alcohol, the annual production of raki, and as such to herald the end of the grape harvest. The festivities, which accompany the harvest of agricultural crops, are rather locally-specific and may differ from community to community. The inhabitants of Elos in West Crete, for example, celebrate the gathering of chestnuts during October and November with music, dancing, eating and drinking. In addition to organise harvest festivals, a number of villages in Crete honour the tradition of sheep shearing, which is commonly followed during the months of May and June. While the sheep are shorn, villagers and visitors gather to celebrate the occasion with alcohol, food and music. In addition to the festivities, which are more or less tied to specific moments during the year, the socio-economic calendar of the local population usually includes a number of events, which are organised randomly, most commonly by local institutions. These events may refer to: musical concerts presented in the auditorium of the primary school; musical and sportive performances given in the schoolyard by the students of local schools; theatres played in the auditorium of the primary school on the initiative of community members or the staff and members of the local KAPI (*cf.* Greger 1985; Kain Hart 1992; Rackham & Moody 1996).

Following the embeddedness of practices of farming and animal husbandry in the socio-economic calendar, the consumption of locally produced food generally has great physical, social and emotional significance for the local inhabitants. In general, traditional eating patterns, which have been developed by the population of rural Crete, pertain to the so-called 'Mediterranean Diet'. On the whole, the Mediterranean Diet refers to the dietary patterns, which have been developed by the population groups living in the olive-growing areas surrounding the Mediterranean Sea during the 1960s. Similarities in landscape and climate shared between the geographical regions of Crete, continental Greece and Southern Italy have prompted the development of common eating habits among the population groups. To some extent, the dietary patterns of the Cretan population date back to the early Minoan times, providing evidence of the historical dimension of these specific eating habits.

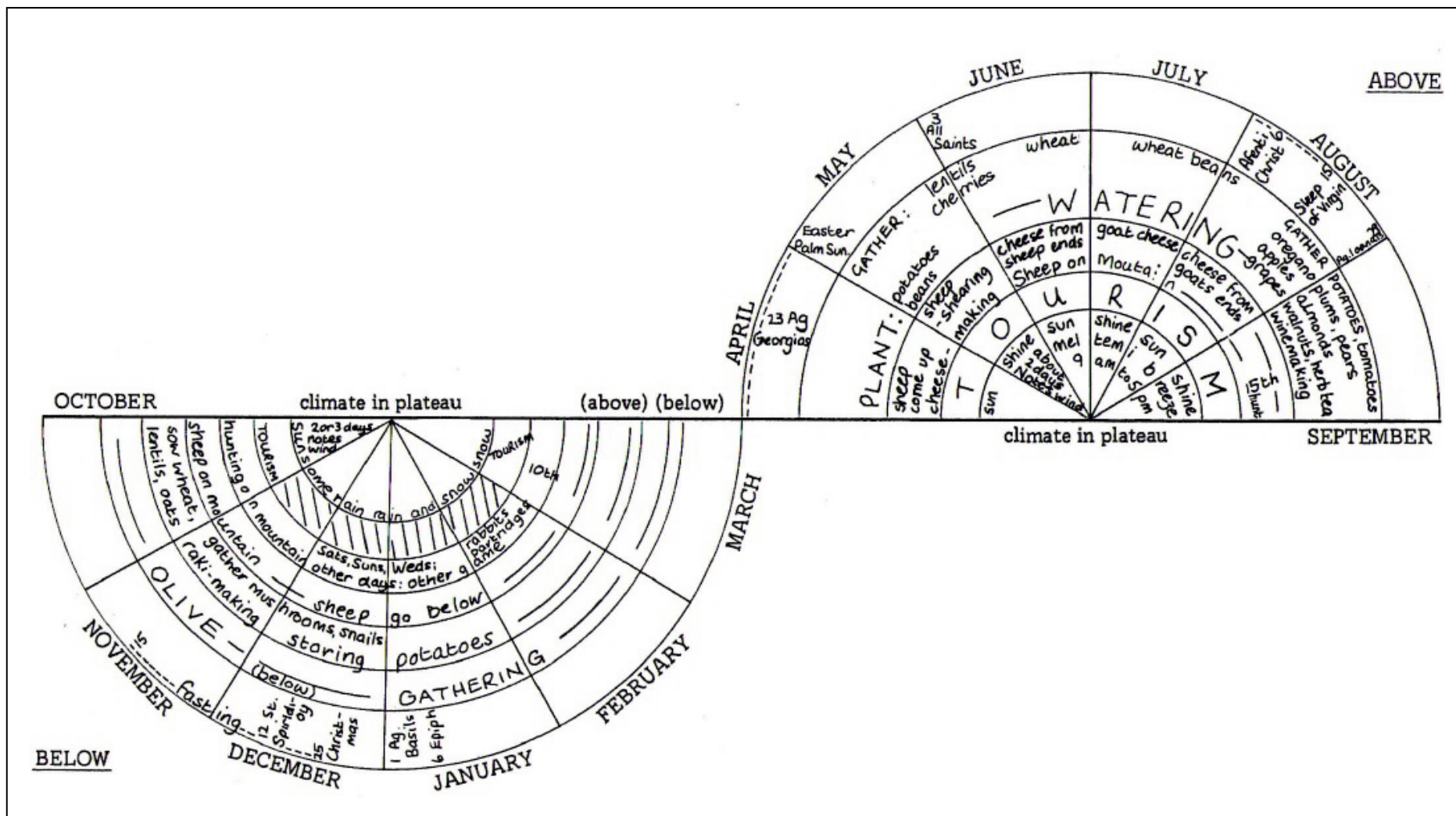


Figure 5.2 'The Year for the Villagers of Magoulas'.

Source: Greger (1985: 55) (edited).

In particular, the Cretan diet is characterised not only by the consumption of products, which are minimally processed, seasonally fresh and locally grown; but also by a high intake of plant foods, including vegetables, cereals and whole grain bread, legumes, nuts and fruits, which are traditionally eaten as dessert; a heavy consumption of mostly raw olive oil, which forms the principal source of fat; the utilisation of onions (*Allium cepa* L.), garlic (*Allium sativum* L.) and aromatic plants as condiments; a moderate intake of honey, which is used as sweetener; a moderate consumption of dairy products, such as milk, cheese and yoghurt; a weekly consumption of zero to four eggs; a moderate intake of white meat, fish and snails; a moderate intake of pure alcohol, such as wine, which is typically served during meals, or raki, which is traditionally served cold with starters, snacks or as a digestive with fruits after the meal; a low intake of red meat from mostly grazing animals; and a low consumption of sugar (*cf.* Blum & Blum 1965; Van der Hoeven 1992; Willett *et al.* 1995; Trichopoulou & Lagiou 1997; Giugliano *et al.* 2000; Simopoulos 2001; Riley 2002; Palstra 2003; Chatzi *et al.* 2007) (5.20).

In Crete, the consumption of certain beverages or meals has also a ritual and social function. Eating patterns differ between men and women, whereby the latter commonly abstain from consuming large quantities of alcohol, particularly in public. Men, however, consume alcohol rather frequently in large amounts as well as in public, whereby wine is generally drunk at home with the meal and raki is consumed at local coffeehouses. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is related to having a good time and functions as a means to engage in social interaction. Offering wine or raki to visitors forms a critical aspect of Cretan hospitality. In the same fashion, it is common practice among the inhabitants of rural Crete to invite fellow villagers and guests at home as well as at the coffeehouse to drink a cup of coffee. Visitors to people's home are moreover frequently treated to home-made snacks, which may include olives (*Olea europaea* L. *syvestris* Brot. / *Olea europaea* L. *oleaster* (Hoffmanns. & Link) Negodi), pastries, such as 'Kulurakia', or a spoon with sweet preserved fruits, known as 'Ghliko tu Kutaliu', made from fruits coated with syrup and typically served in small amounts, namely in the size of a teaspoon, on a small crystal plate. The consumption of beverages and food is at times tied to specific moments within the ritual year, such as the celebration of name days, Easter or Christmas, as well as the festivities following the production of raki and the shearing of sheep. During the Easter period, for example, women traditionally prepare small rounded pies stuffed with Mizithra Cheese and various culinary herbs, which are known as 'Kalitsunia' and are offered to family members and guests.

Notes

- (5.1) During the 19th and 20th century, the operation of limekilns in the Mesara led to a gradual deforestation of areas surrounding the kilns (*cf.* Wartrous *et al.* 1993).
- (5.2) From north to south, the axis runs as follows: Iraklion - Khoudetsi/Arkhanes - Tefeli - Ligortinos - Pargos (*cf.* Kalokhristianakis 2009).
- (5.3) Although rarely practised today, the raiding of animals, notably in secrecy, has been interpreted as a public test of manhood and as an initiation ritual for men towards reaching adulthood (*cf.* Herzfeld 1985).
- (5.4) In 1983, the 'Council for Equality of the Sexes' has been established, which saw the recognition of women's rights to full pension and participation in agroindustrial cooperatives, as well as the introduction of civil marriage, while abolishing the system of dowry and the patriarchal notion of 'head of the family' (*cf.* Greger 1985).
- (5.5) Abortion has been legalised in Greece in 1988 and is generally carried out secretly in private practices or special clinics. Women, who decide to abort, are mainly unmarried or do not wish to have any more children (*cf.* Van Bommel 1993).
- (5.6) The characteristic ending of Cretan surnames has elsewhere been interpreted as a form of depreciation of Greek Christians among Ottoman occupants or of the Cretan population among their fellow Greeks (*cf.* Herzfeld 1999).
- (5.7) The raiding and eating of animals, which are owned by members of a different patriline, has served as a means of expressing loyalty to the kin group. Although animals are generally stolen from someone other than an agnate relative, raiding has moreover served as means of showing insubordination within one patriline and has been a frequent cause for family dispute (*cf.* Herzfeld 1985).

- (5.8) In earlier times, failure to repay debts has occasionally resulted in the theft of natural, rather than material, goods, which is committed in order to restore social balance (*cf.* Blum & Blum 1965).
- (5.9) In this respect, a member of the community of Pírgos has defined the local population as rather selfish. Greger (1985) has similarly observed a tendency of people to first defend what is theirs before cooperating with others.
- (5.10) In contemporary rural Crete, inhabitants, who receive lower secondary education at the ‘*yimnasio*’, are likely to enter higher secondary education provided by the ‘*likio*’ instead of leaving school after the compulsory nine years.
- (5.11) The region around Arkhanes south of Iraklion between the Psiloritis Mountain and the Dikti Mountains is known as a favourable wine-growing district (*cf.* Molenaar 1999).
- (5.12) In Crete, the spirit made from the pomace of grapes is traditionally known as ‘*Tsikudia*’. Following the Ottoman occupation of Crete, the oriental term ‘*raki*’ has been used to refer to the locally brewed *Tsikudia*, whereby both names have since been used interchangeably across the island. Nevertheless, the name ‘*raki*’ has across Greece also been given to spirits made from the pomace of grapes, which have been refined with additional flavours, such as orange or apple, and hereby offer similarities to the Greek ouzo. The Cretan *raki* or *Tsikudia* is, however, solely made from grapes and hereby bears strong resemblance to the Greek *Tsipuro* (*cf.* Damer 1988; Fielding *et al.* 2005).
- (5.13) The profession of the farmer frequently evokes memories among the inhabitants of rural Crete of a, notably poorer, past, in which the prosperity of the household depended almost exclusively on agricultural gains and community members enjoyed true hospitality, whereby the current abandonment of land is often viewed with great sadness (*cf.* Kain Hart 1992).
- (5.14) In Crete, the following name days are of particular significance:
 23rd of April: Saint George, patron saint of the shepherds;
 21st of May: Saint Constantine and Saint Helena;
 25th of August: Saint Titus, patron saint of Crete;
 6th of December: Saint Nicholas, patron saint of the seafarers.
- (5.15) In Pírgos, the main village church of Ayia Irini is celebrated on the 5th of May, whereas in Praitória, the main village church of the Holy Trinity is celebrated during Pentecost.
- (5.16) *cf.* Appendix IV for a selection of holy days, as well as fasting periods and days observed within the canon of the Greek Orthodox Church.
- (5.17) Widely discussed in everyday village life, community members generally fear death and the deceased, as they reflect a transition to the ‘other’, unknown world (*cf.* Greger 1985; Kain Hart 1992).
- (5.18) Community members interpret a rapid decay of flesh as an indication of the goodness of the deceased, whereas a slow decay of flesh sheds light on a person clinging on to the world of the living (*cf.* Greger 1985).
- (5.19) The dates of the religious year are based on the year 1983 (*cf.* Greger 1985).
- (5.20) In Crete, a since antiquity rather commonly consumed type of bread refers to the so-called ‘*Paksimadi*’, a rusk, which is baked twice in a way to ensure its storage life and is dipped or sprinkled with water in order to melt it for consumption.

