

Notes

Preface

1. Translating the Greek word “*Panaghía*,” literally meaning All Holy One, certainly poses a problem, since the choice is not evident (cf. Dubisch 1995: 263, n.1). In these pages I usually render it as Holy or All Holy Virgin, trying to maintain its symbolic content (of perpetual virginity, immaculacy, and holiness) in the English language as well.
2. Edmund Leach argues that “all metaphysical entities start out as inchoate concepts in the mind; if we are to think clearly about the ideas which are represented by words such as ‘god’ and ‘spirit’ we have to externalise them. We do this in two ways: (i) by telling stories (myths) in which the metaphysical ideas are represented by the activities of supernatural beings, magnified non-natural men and animals; (ii) by creating special material objects, buildings and spaces which serve as representations of the metaphysical ideas and their mental environment. Clearly, (i) and (ii) are interdependent; each is a metaphor for the other” (Leach 1976: 37 ff).
3. With the term “communication event,” Edmund Leach sums up any form of communication between at least two individuals within a culture. Every “communication event” is therefore reciprocal, because it involves at least two individuals and because every communicational practice is both performance and message (Leach 1976: 11).

Acknowledgments

1. Papachristophorou 2006, 2008, 2008a, 2008b, 2011, (forthcoming).
2. Papachristophorou 2013.

Introduction: Lipsi 2000–2010: History and Storytelling

1. Whereas today the island makes part of the administrative division of Kalymnos, in the report of commander A. S. Parker on the activities of the British Military Command for the year 1946, Lipsi and the neighboring islands (Leros, Patmos, Gaidouronissi [=Agathonissi], Arkioi, Farmakonnisi, and Levinthos) form an administrative part of Leros, with a population of 907 (Tarsouli 1948: 132; Divani & Konstantopoulou 1996: 279). Population data from the Dodecanese in general are relatively recent, the first official

- census being that of 1931, since the inhabitants were reluctant to cooperate with the authorities for fear of tax implications. Any earlier data on the population were approximate estimates (Agapitidis 1969: 5–6).
2. The total area of the island is variously reported between 13 and 23 sq. km., depending on the number of islets counted as part of the Lipsi complex (cf. Volonakis 1922: 43; Tarsouli 1948: 132; Koumoundouros N. 1994: 14; Divani & Konstantopoulou 1996: 279; Volanakis 2002: 20).
 3. Diptychs of the Church of Greece: kanonarion-annals, 2001-ba, year 77, published by the Apostolic Diakonia of the Church of Greece, p. 975.
 4. http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A1604/Other/A1604_SAP02_TB_DC_00_2001_01_F_GR.pdf, p. 367/455.
 5. “On this little island there is a small settlement with a harbor surrounded by some ancient relics, and the locals produce themselves everything they need for their sustenance” (Volonakis 1922: 43). Much has changed in these 90 years since the description of Michael Volonakis, but this settlement remains the only one on the island. On the data from the 1922 census, see also Giuli & Giuli 2005: file 9b “Lipso.”
 6. It was only in February 2011 that the entire island was declared a protected archaeological site by the Central Archaeological Council (see, for instance, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_civ_2_08/02/2011_431736).
 7. Giuli & Giuli 2005, file 23.
 8. The recent salvage excavation—and the only one on the island, to my knowledge—brought to light part of an amphora-manufacturing workshop from the Early Christian era. According to the published report (source: http://www.yppo.gr/0/anaskafes/pdfs/4_EBA.pdf, pp. 3–4): “the huge amount of finds, the large pits and the size of the kilns point to a prosperous pottery workshop of the 6th-7th century.” The excavation was privately financed by the Italian owner of the plot who wanted to build on it, and was carried out at the Kampos site between 2008 and 2010.
 9. On the recent archaeological survey in Agathonissi, whose conclusions could prove complementary to the archaeology of Lipsi, see Triantafyllidis 2007: 183–211.
 10. A bibliography on the Milesian islands in antiquity is cited in Vlachopoulos 2005: 453–454.
 11. It is possible that in Byzantine times Lipsi belonged to the *theme* of Samos, along with Kos, Nissiros, Tilos, Kalymnos, and Patmos (Sakellaridis 1969: 144). According to information by local teacher and scholar Theologos Koumoundouros, in AD 730 Lipsi and the surrounding islands formed part of a Byzantine *theme* but were later deserted due to pirate raids (Koumoundouros Th. 1976: 14).
 12. For the 1454–1522 period, see Zachariadou 1966.
 13. Possibly because Patmos, too, due to its position in the southeast Aegean, “was spared occupation and offered the protection of Venice and the Ecumenical Patriarchate” (Olympitou 2002: 29).

14. According to Th. Koumoundouros, with the treaty of Constantinople (9.7.1832) the island goes again under Ottoman rule and the independent Turkish subcommand of Leros; it is governed by the mayor and a council of *Demogerontes*, along with some Turkish officials who collected the taxes (Th. Koumoundouros 1976: 15–16).
15. According to the demographic data cited by Agapitidis, the population of Lipsi grew measurably during that period and the island gained administrative autonomy (Agapitidis 1969: 5). In 1934, the population reaches 1029, the highest in its modern history. Lipsi was classified as a *Demogerontia* under Ottoman rule (personal communication by Lipsi mayor, Benetos Spyrou), and a municipality by decree of the Italian government; this privilege was later upheld by the Greek government as well (Volanakis 2002: 23 and 158).
16. Fourni, Arkioi, Agathonissi, and Levinthos.
17. The entire text, as well as historical information about Patmos, are available on the Monastery's website: <http://www.patmosmonastery.gr/monastiki.html> (accessed on July 12, 2012).
18. The country churches of *Páno* and *Káto Kímissi* (Upper and Lower Dormition) are thought to have been built around that time by Patmian monks “away from the handful of farmers and fishermen who had come from nearby Patmos” (Koumoundouros Th. 1976: 14 and 78).
19. Interestingly, in *Revista dell' Istituto di Politica Internazionale* published by the Italian authorities in 1937, it is stated that the island was not listed among the Dodecanese islands with special privileges (Giuli & Giuli 2005: file 22, p. 14, “11. Lisso”). According to another source, however, the regime for Patmos, and most probably for Astypalea and Kassos, after the advent of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1522 was not that of *wakf* but altogether different yet still privileged, including, for instance, the right to self-government by locally elected elders or commissioners, although they did not “constitute a self-contained state” (Sakellariadis 1969: 147–150). On the privileged fiscal and administrative regime in most Aegean islands under Ottoman rule, see also Contogeorgis 1982: 124–125, n. 4.
20. A Royal mandate or decree issued by the Sultan.
21. Research into the Ottoman documents in the Monastery archives by an international team of historians has brought to light further information about land ownership on the island in Ottoman times. According to the published part of this study, the arable land on Lipsi belonged to the Monastery (or to Patmians), and the Monastery paid the tax from the crops to the Ottoman authorities (Vatin et al. 2011: 166–167, 318–319, 409, 462).
22. The word *koliás* obviously derives from the Modern Greek word *kolígas* (meaning vassal), itself deriving from the Latin word *collega* < *colligo*.
23. An English tourist guide notes about the activity on the local property market: “four times the full-time population of about 750 live overseas (mostly in Australia and Ohio), and much of eastern Lipsi is for sale as real estate” (*The Rough Guide to the Greek Islands*, June 2009: 402).

24. Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, table 1, at <http://www.demography-lab.prd.uth.gr/DDAoG/article/cont/ergasies/stefanou.pdf>. The overall birth rate in Greece was 1.38 in 1991, 1.25 in 2001 and 1.40 in 2011 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, Population and Labour Market Statistics Division).
25. Founded in 1717, it is overseen by the Patriarchal Exarchate of Patmos and operates as a Gymnasium and Ecclesiastical Lyceum (*Diptychs of the Church of Greece: kanonarion-annals*, 2001–ba, year 77, published by the Apostolic Diakonia of the Church of Greece, p. 980).
26. Cf. Divani & Konstantopoulou 1996: 281.
27. Yannis, August 23, 2001.
28. In 2000, however, the only kind of cookies one could buy were *kourabiédhes* (festive butter cookies) and *poungákia* (crullers).
29. An economy that nevertheless attempts to focus on “sustainable development,” as envisioned by the community’s mayor in the last 2–3 decades, which could promote local cultural elements, particularly through tourism (Spyrou 2007: 44–50; Noutsos 2007: 54–63).
30. A water supply network had been established earlier on the island, with one water dispenser per neighborhood from as early as 1950, according to several of my interlocutors.
31. The traditional dance group was essentially founded in 1983 by Yorgos Laountos.
32. Founded in 1997 upon the people’s request.
33. Established in April 1997 upon the initiative of Mayor B. Spyrou.
34. A biological processing plant installation and a sanitary landfill also operate in this context.
35. According to Evdokia Olympitou, “their large number on certain islands could be associated with the presence of monasteries which cultivate and promote religiousness, at the same time playing a key role in local social life” (Olympitou 2002: 201).
36. It falls on August 23.

1 “On the island of goddess Calypso”

1. According to Michael Volonakis (1922: 43), the first textual reference to the island is in Roman times by Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia* (AD 77–79), book V, ch. 36 “Rhodes,” where it is referred to as *Lepsia* (133).
2. Golden Bull (chrysobull) by Alexios I Komninos. The original “founding” text of The Monastery of Saint John the Theologian and the land granted to it by the Byzantine emperor is available at <http://www.patmosmonastery.gr/xrisoboulo.html> (last accessed on July 07, 2012).
3. Cf. the relevant entry in Babinotis’s *Modern Greek Dictionary* (2002).
4. Excerpt from an interview given by Benetos Spyrou, mayor of Lipsi (1987 to date), in *Passport* magazine, no. 35, Aug.–Sep. 2008, “Special Issue—Patmos: The Island and Its Insular Neighborhood,” p. 118.

5. Literally: “white island, long island and the Francs’ island.”
6. Sevasti (1932–), September 05, 2003. I will retain the nomination of this specific Holy Virgin (*Panaghiá*), associated with the toponym *Koussélio*, for the rest of my text; a most appropriate translation in English would be “The All Holy Virgin at Kousselio.”
7. It is, however, difficult to say whether this era fades away to a depth of time associated with goddess Calypso or is vaguely linked to an improvised description of the tsunami that followed the 7.8-magnitude earthquake of July 9, 1956, in the south Aegean, near Amorgos (and reached the nearby islands’ coasts as 10, 20, or 30m-high waves [Okal et al. 2009: 1533]), as it appears clearly in a different record: “It was a sight, my child, the rain, the hail. So much water coming down the mountain, not clear water but red with earth. The beach of Lientou had risen up to this point, at the school. The shrubland had become one with the sea.” Yannis (1918–2003), August 23, 2001.
8. The deluge myth is among the most prevalent in world mythology and has been interpreted in various ways (see for instance Dundes 1988, with an extensive bibliography up to 1977). Man’s fall as a consequence of an “original” sin is a common motif in ancient Greek thought, where virtuous man is a creation of Nature, which is identified with Earth as the supreme goddess, while his “fall” symbolizes the transition to the next technological stage of agriculture and the brutal violation of Earth. Through a historical-philosophical reading of stoicism as the last major philosophy of Greek and Roman antiquity that “seems to assume the place of God,” Maria Daraki explains that until then (3rd c. BC). “Nature” was “divine to Greeks not just superficially, not because it is inhabited by all sorts of demons and spirits, but on a more fundamental level because the body of Gaea represents all space in general. The approach to the form of Earth requires familiarization with the notion of a physical divine presence. Without being anthropomorphic, Gaea is conceived as a conscious living being and as a source of immanent justice” (Daraki 2001: 11–13 and 36–46).
9. The archaeological survey of the area from Castro to St Nicholas of Apallonia attests to pottery relics that indicate the island’s earliest habitation (Dreliosi-Iraklidou 2005).
10. Moschoudi, 87 years old on August 26, 2001.
11. The references to fairies and nymphs that weave abound in both ancient and modern Greek mythology (Politis 1871: 112–113).
12. *Odyssey*, 1.14–15; Murray 1919.
13. Sevasti, September 06, 2003.
14. *Odyssey*, 5, 55–74; Murray 1919.
15. The narrator here makes a play on the meanings of the name *Argó*—which was actually the boat of Jason and the Argonauts—and the adjective *argó*, which in modern Greek means slow (deriving from *aergós* = not working), but initially meant “shining or bright” (cf. Liddel-Scott-Jones Greek Lexicon).

16. Yannis, August 23, 2001.
17. By this point in the story my interlocutor's ten-year-old grandson is thrilled and keeps interrupting. His grandfather scolds him: "you are not to speak." His granddaughter sits listening silent and attentive. This oral version of the *Odyssey*, as I present it in excerpts throughout this chapter, was narrated to me in August 2001 by Yannis, an 80-year-old man with very little schooling, in the presence of his two young grandchildren.
18. The people of Agathonissi themselves, however, associate their island's mythical past with Circe, again based on surface relics. Recent excavations have yet clarified several points about the history of the place (see Triantafyllidis 2007).
19. *Koussélio* as a place name has no meaning for today's inhabitants but just evokes the archetypal refuge for Odysseus and *Panaghiá tou Kousseliou*, the Holy Virgin of that name. As a place name it has been recorded in 1957 under the form of "Koussél-lia" without the etymology (manuscript kept at the archive of the Research Centre for Modern Greek Dialects—Academy of Athens, vol. 3, no. 700, pp. 215–217, collector Anastassios Karanastassis). The relevant entry in the dictionary by Emmanuel Kriaras notes that the word "kousselio" derives from the Italian "conseglio" and means (1) council and (2) counsel (Kriaras 2001). Eleni Psychogiou suggests however that its etymology can be associated through alliteration with the word *kasséla* [=trunk in Modern Greek] (>*kasselió*), and refers to the uses of the word *petrokasséla* in Cephalonia where it denotes an ancient stone tomb (cf. Psychogiou 2010).
20. *Theologia*, September 01, 2003.
21. Yannis, August 23, 2001. A British map of 1830 marks some buildings from the island's occasional habitation; see Introduction, p. 2.
22. *Arápis* is a rather common representation in the Modern Greek imaginary and refers to a Black Giant, often guarding treasures. Literally it refers to Moor (<*Araps* = Arab) (see also Stewart 1991: 251).
23. *Theologia*, September 01, 2003.
24. August 27, 2001, taped interview with municipal employees at the municipal office (men and women, 40–50 years old).
25. Collected informally as stenographic notes with the consent of an interlocutor for whom I have no identity data (field notes: December 2, 2007).
26. The male name *Charálampos*, and the relevant saint, is here associated paronymologically to a composite word deriving from the noun *chará* (= joy) and the verb *lámpo* (= to shine).
27. Moschoula, August 26, 2001.
28. Sevasti, September 05, 2003.
29. That is, master, expert in handicraft.
30. Yannis, August 23, 2001.
31. Katina, 74, on September 05, 2003.
32. Field journal 2001.
33. I am conveying at this point a comment made by Eleni Psychogiou, who links the etymology of the name Calypso with the complex

representations of Black Earth (Mavrigi) as equivalent to both the earth and Hades (the world of the Dead, Psychogiou 2008: 526).

34. In the sense of arable land.
35. Information by Nektaria, field journal 2007/1: 49.
36. Field journal entries, 2003: 39.

2 About Origins (And the Story Goes On)

1. The Byzantine name for the city of Heraklion, Crete.
2. The author, a spiritual leader and himself a bearer of the island's oral tradition, does not date the (re)habitation of Lipsi with more precision, being aware of the gap in historical research: "Anyone who tries to write the history of the island called 'Lipso,' 'Lipsi' or 'Lipsiae,' as it is written on a pre-Christian plaque kept in the Nicephorion Ecclesiastical Museum, will face insurmountable difficulties due to the absence of historical sources" (Koumoundouros 1994: 15).
3. This account was compiled by students of the High School of Lipsi as a project for the class of Environmental Education. Their narrative was given the title "a story like a fairy tale . . .," the choice of which suggests to me both the younger people's distance from their local stories and the advent of—a possibly selective—forgetfulness.
4. Nikitas, taped on August 21, 2001; he was around 75 years old in 2001.
5. I have not managed to establish the etymology or the narrative context of this place name, which is largely reported as "Liontou" as well. As a place name it is absent from the records of the Research Centre for Modern Greek Dialects—I.L.N.E.—(the abbreviation standing for "Historical Lexicon of Modern Greek") at the Academy of Athens. Its etymology could be linked to the idiomatic "liontas" < "liontari" [= lion], which could denote also a strong and brave man; equally, as Eleni Psychogiou very aptly pointed out to me, it could mean "melting, the one who melts" and thus be paronymologically associated with the many versions of the life of old-Lios, as we shall see below.
6. Field notes and field journal: September 6, 2003.
7. The city of Halicarnassus, today Bodrum, in Asia Minor.
8. Vangelis's version, October 27, 2005.
9. 81 years old when I interviewed him in 2005.
10. Panayis (1920–2004), August 18, 2001.
11. Themelina, (1938–), information in the context of an unscheduled open interview on September 7, 2003.
12. It is also known, as Evdokia Olympitou reports, that "in Ottoman times and during the War of Independence the monks sheltered fugitives and paid to liberate captured slaves" (Olympitou 2002: 29, n. 20).
13. Field notes, September 3, 2003.
14. These local saints and the dates of their violent death are as follows: Neophytos the monk from Amorgos (April 6, 1558), Ionas the monk

- from Leros (February 28, 1561), Neophytos Fazos (1609), Ionas Garbis from Nissyros (1635), and Parthenios from Philippoupolis (1696) (Florentis 1980: 2, 15, 23, 43).
15. The word *Kollyvádhes* derives from the word *kóllyva*, which designs the ritual food made from boiled wheat, which is used liturgically in the Eastern Orthodox Churches at various intervals after a death—mainly during the *mnemosyna*, that is, the Orthodox Memorial services. The ingredients used have strong symbolic value relating to the Greek culture (cf. Seraïdari 2005).
 16. Dorotheos Monachos, 1986: 103–108 (vol. I, ch. XVI, “Oi kollyvádhes”). Cf. also Koumoundouros N. 1994: 61.
 17. Cf. Giuli & Giuli 2005: file 22, p. 7 ff.
 18. Stephanis, September 10, 2003.
 19. See indicatively Braudel 1996a, Imellos 1968, Kefalliniadis 1984, Enepekidis 1988, Belavilas 1997, Krantonelli 1998, Olympitou 2002.
 20. The hypothesis of a “marriage-alliance” emerged in this frame is fully compatible with a universal practice in kinship systems as pointed out by Lévi-Strauss in 1947, whereby marriage makes part of a reciprocal exchange between men (a bride in exchange for services), and on the basis of this need leads human societies to exogamy (Lévi-Strauss 2002).
 21. The name Lios is thus paretymologically associated with the verb *lióno*, which means to melt; see also note 5.
 22. Yannis, August 22, 2001.
 23. Recording: August 18, 2001. Among the versions I have collected, this is the only one where my interlocutor, Panayis (1920–2004), ascribes to the first modern inhabitant—not Lios, in his story—an extra trait I see as largely symbolic: the blindness due to old age, and the intuition and envisioning it entails.
 24. See chapter 1, n. 25.
 25. The Mani Peninsula, also known by its medieval name Maina or Maïna, is a geographical and cultural region in Peloponnese, southern Greece. Mani is home of the Maniots.
 26. *Fóurnoi Korseón* (“the island of corsairs”), is the biggest island (30.5 km²) in a complex of more than 20 small Greek islands that lie between Ikaria, Samos, and Patmos in Ikaria regional unit, in the eastern Aegean Sea. The main island of Fourni has a population of 1,320 (2011 census). Thymaina is a smaller island (10 km²) that makes part of the insular complex of Fourni as well; the population of Thymaina is 136 inhabitants (2011 census).
 27. The terrible symbolism of the curse we described earlier lies, according to Eleni Psychogiou, in that the earth is cursed so as not to allow the accursed person’s body to decompose after death. The analogy with the “melting” of old-Lios instantly, without interment, is obvious in my view (cf. Psychogiou 2008: 45–47).

28. Nevertheless I use it frequently, solely in the interests of ethnographic accuracy.
29. A typical story in the Christian tradition is that of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, who spent 194 years sleeping in a cave and woke up ready to teach the truth of monotheism. The same tradition appears in the Koran (Papachristophorou 2002: 24–25).
30. “It has been observed that, within certain ancient and modern societies, on the one hand the family was not distinguished from the religious group, and on the other hand, being rooted in the soil, it was fused with house and land. [...] the family is anchored to the soil, like the altar itself” (Halbwachs 1992: 63).
31. Prometheus and Oedipus are two typical examples from Greek mythology.
32. Tricksters feature frequently in creation myths, and in many cultures their actions combine with those of the culture heroes who introduce a new practice or rule to the community. Ambiguity is a standard trait in tricksters, being precisely what enables them to mediate between the two worlds they move in and fuse together; at the same time, they are called upon to shed this ambiguity. For a general overview see Fernandes 2008; for a structural analysis of this mythological character with reference to American mythologies, see Lévi-Strauss 1974: 248–251.
33. It could be claimed that old-Lios as a narrative character stands in between an idealized modern-Greek cultural and historical identity, that of “genius,” and Greek Orthodoxy’s perception of man as perpetual “sinner,” both notions included in the Greek word “*daimónios*” (Paparizos 2011).
34. According to an inscription on the threshold, the church was built in 1968 (Volanakis 2002: 127).
35. Reported by Marouso; field notes November 21, 2007.
36. Another piece of noteworthy information about the etymology of the name “Lios” comes from Nicolaos Politis in his commentary of acritic songs and laments from Symi, where Lios is associated either with St Nicholas or with the prophet Elijah, while sometimes it is even a diminutive of Emmanuel (Manolios>Lios) (Politis 1909: 190 and 222–223).
37. Another version of the proverb goes like this: “Patmos makes clay and Kalymnos makes sponges / And the brave Lipso makes wine and gallant youths.”
38. Savvas (1914–2012), August 11, 2001.
39. Savvas, August 11, 2001.
40. Marouso, August 15, 2001.
41. Yet in all Balkan peoples, blood denotes patrilineality, just like the seed, with patrilineal descent being less pronounced for cultivators as opposed to animal farmers (Alexakis 2001: 103).
42. The “bleeding bush” could be seen also as a symbolic parallel of the “tree of blood” that Alexakis mentions about the Albanian system of

- kinship, meaning the agnatic lineage (Alexakis 2001: 77–78). On the complex symbolism of blood in Greek family ties, see du Boulay 1984.
43. A letter attributed to Andreas Vokos Miaoulis, on display in the Nicephorion Ecclesiastical Museum, is seen as further testimony of the local history. Two historical incidents are also reported, one in 1821 when Lipsi sheltered the exiled patriarch of Alexandria Theophilos III Pancostas, and the other in August 1824 when the island hosted naval fighters from the islands of Psara, Spetses, and Hydra; commander Giorgos Sachtouris sailed from Lipsi to join Miaoulis in the famous sea battle of Gerontas (Koumoundouros Th. 1976: 15 and Koumoundouros N. 1994: 19–21). Moreover, it is very interesting to note another report about the merchant captain’s youthful action as a pirate, especially with reference to the composition of the population and the uses of the island during those early years of its modern history (Krantonelli 1998: 131–132; cf. also Belavilas 1997: 223).
 44. “The sartorial changes between the times before and after the revolution reflect the clear attempt at building a national identity” (Bada 1995: 189). As “masters and hence managers of ‘their’ cultural past,” as K. Bada aptly puts it through another example (Bada 1995: 199), Lipsians symbolically reinforce their local identity by making their traditional attire represent the two “main” lines of the community’s descent. I am referring specifically to the local costume as it was revived recently for the requirements of the dance group, since the earlier references to the female local costume do not have the same pronounced urban character (cf. Koumoundouros N. 1994: 80–81; Alexiadis 2003: 38); the male costume, by contrast, does not adopt urban features but emphasizes the inhabitants’ Cretan roots. David Sutton, with reference to the ethnographic example of Kalymnos, also sees the connection of traditional costumes with dance performance as relevant indices of local identity (Sutton 1998: 112).
 45. Classical archaeologist, Dimitris Plantzos, arrives to the same conclusion by examining the archaeological—ethnographic example of the community at Argos Orestikon, in Macedonia, Northern Greece (Plantzos 2011). The example is however entirely different from that of Lipsi.

3 Demons and Sancta

1. Name of the coast northwest of the village between the bay of the harbor and Kimissi. According to data from the Research Center for Modern Greek Dialects, this is a very common place name, particularly in the Aegean islands, and generally denotes a dry and rocky place; especially in the islands of Fourni and Ikaria, it means a steep and craggy coastline.
2. Marouso (1918–), August 15, 2001.
3. Stephanis (September 10, 2003) “reporting” the estimations of a foreign archaeologist some years ago.

4. Limni [Lake]: a small, enclosed bay on the south coast.
5. Katina, 74 on September 5, 2003.
6. Marouso, August 15, 2001.
7. Marouso, August 15, 2001.
8. Theologos Koumoundouros, *Folklore of Lipsi*, 1976, pp. 78–79; submitted as a manuscript of a folklore material collection in the archive of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre, no. 3893.
9. In the islands this word denotes a scrubland (Research Center for Modern Greek Dialects of the Academy of Athens).
10. I mainly refer to ritual practices such as the peripheral plowing (in Greek, *periárossis*) or the symbolic encircling of a village (in Greek, *zóssimo*).
11. Matthew: 6.13 and 12.45, Luke: 6.43, Ephesians: 6.16; in English translations it is generally rendered as *evil*.
12. See “Introduction,” n. 8.
13. At the Apallonia location, where there are ruins of a temple dedicated to Apollo Lipsieus (see below).
14. Anna, 65, October 21, 2005.
15. Excerpt recorded on October 22, 2005. My interlocutor, Antonis (1940–2007), had a very rich repertoire of stories.
16. See chapter 1, n. 7.
17. The Tuesday after Easter.
18. This Lipsian litany is quite similar to the litany performed for the feast of St George at Neo Souli, Serres, as reported by G. N. Aikaterinidis (1969 and 1975: 15–16), or that of the Tuesday after Easter as analyzed semantically by A. Lagopoulos (2003: 74–76). In Lipsi, however, St George is absent and replaced by Panaghia “Mavri” (although the relevant place at Gerani is looked after by the same old woman who sees to the church of St George on the hill of kyr-Vassilena).
19. Lagopoulos sees as main features of this semantic core the cycle of life that prevails over death, the liberating power of east and the cross as well as the “cosmology of the centre, the circle and the four cosmic directions that establish a sacred place” (Lagopoulos 2003: 153).
20. *Achtarmás*, according to my interlocutors, is “a wall in the air; soil dug up with a pick.”
21. Marouso, August 15, 2001. This is a variation of the story we cited in chapter 1, pp. 22–23; the two storytellers were of the same age (b. 1918).
22. Sevasti, September 6, 2003. This is the beginning of the account cited in chapter 1, p. 16 (note 13).
23. Specifically, between the churches of St Anargyroi and St Eustathios.
24. Sevasti (1932–), September 6, 2003.
25. This version that links the name of the church with that of its builder is possibly prevalent among the older inhabitants: “The one who built it was said to be a stranger in these parts, and his name was Charis. If you ask today, people get it wrong: it was *Cháris*, [from] *Theocháris*. So it’s *Panaghía tou Chári*, tou Chárou”; Christodoulos (1923–), September 4, 2003 (cf. Volanakis 2002: 69).

26. *Zoodóchos Pighí*, meaning the Spring of Life, is an Orthodox holiday dedicated to Holy Virgin and celebrated on the fifth day after Easter, on Friday of the so-called Bright Week (see chapter 5).
27. Yannis, August 23, 2001.
28. This icon dates from the late seventeenth–early eighteenth century and is associated with the large numbers of icons for domestic use produced at the workshops of Crete and the Ionian islands (Konstantinidis 2009).
29. According to Phaedon Koukoules’s report on the Madonna’s iconography in Greek Byzantine tradition, there are several icons where the Virgin is painted with large eyes (quite the same as the “Panaghia Gourlomata” of Leros) (Koukoules 1932: 439); however, Koukoules makes no reference to Panaghia tou Charou (1932).
30. *Ktiriákia*, literally means little buildings and refers to a specific toponym in the countryside of Lipsi, beneath Castro.
31. As it is known, a sequence of beliefs conveyed by word of mouth can form a narrative, although these beliefs constitute unconnected elements whose content is not evident to those who do not belong to the culture to which they refer (Belmont 1970).
32. Antonis, recorded on October 22, 2005.
33. I am alluding to the philosophical meaning of “historicity,” which reflects man’s need to perceive his existence as “historical,” as proposed mainly by Heidegger and Ricoeur (cf. Grondin 2006: 570–573).
34. Durkheim 2007/1912: 46. We remain in a theoretical philosophical context, and specifically at the point where historicity meets religiousness (cf. Gell 1992: 3–14).

4 Hierophanies and Miracles

1. At this point we are joined by my interlocutor’s daughter, who seems to know the story very well.
2. The same condition of silence, keeping the secret of a hierophany, appears in fairy tales.
3. Moschoula, August 26, 2001.
4. One could compare this kind of attitude toward supernatural experience with that of fairytale heroes who coexist and interact with saints and demons in a one-dimensional world with no distinction between natural and supernatural (cf. Lüthi 1982: 4–10). Besides, until the 4th c. AD and according to pre-Christian worldviews, the world was not divided into natural and supernatural (Paparizos 1990: 69; cf. also 1995: 369–371). According to Mary Douglas, “in the miracle-believing ages of Christianity” the possibility of miracle was always present: it did not automatically depend on rituals, it could be expected to happen anywhere at any time in response to virtuous need or the demands of justice (2002: 74). Without rituals certain types of experience would not be

- possible; while the ritual comes first and shapes the experience, however, it is the verbal description of the experience that ultimately influences human thought (2002: 79).
5. *Panaghía Kímissi* is actually a place name and a church dedicated to the Dormition of Virgin Mary; this is the only record where it functions as a human representation.
 6. Narrated by Michalis, October 26, 2005.
 7. The one exception is perhaps “Panaghia tou Stavrou” (dedicated to the Theotokos’s Nativity, on September 8), for which I have noted no stories apart from the miracle of the three wicks that burned without oil under the altar (field notes, September 8, 2003).
 8. Hypapante, is a feast celebrated by the Eastern Orthodox Church on February 2 commemorating the presentation of Jesus and his meeting with priest Simeon in Salomon’s church, where as a first male infant he was dedicated to God according to Moses’s law; it also commemorates the purification of the Virgin Mary after giving birth. In Lipsi, the name Hypapante (pronounced *Pepantí*) is a rather common female name.
 9. My interlocutor refers to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus on July 20, 1974, and the relevant response of the military junta in Greece.
 10. Captain Nicholas (1931–2008), seaman, on September 4, 2003.
 11. The Orthodox Church also celebrates the Leave of the Theotokos’s Dormition, on the Ninth day afterfeast, following the general ritual cycle after death, where the third, the ninth, and the fortieth days are considered as crucial for the passage of the soul to the other world; they are thus highly symbolic for both theology and worship practices.
 12. This is obviously a collective neologism, since the name *Krinoúla* is not common elsewhere in Greece; as a feminine name it derives from *krínos*, that is lily.
 13. Information by Marouso, August 29, 2010.
 14. N. Koumoundouros reports a similar miracle (1996: 22–25).
 15. “*Panaghía mou!*” which could be translated as “By our Lady!” is an invocation quite often pronounced by Orthodox Christians in Greek speaking cultures.
 16. Theologos (1932–2007), October 20, 2005.
 17. Field notes: September 6, 2003.
 18. Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
 19. Sevasti, September 6, 2003.
 20. Yannis, August 23, 2001.
 21. Marouso, September 6, 2003.
 22. Marouso, videoed interview, August 2011.
 23. There is, however, a Megali Panaghia in Patmos as well (Olympitou 2002: 85, 94, 96).
 24. Father N. Koumoundouros also speaks of the “traces of the Great Lady” (1994: 46).
 25. I could note as a possible parallel the same shift of feast in the Holy Virgin of Tinos, which was originally celebrated on Annunciation Day

- (March 25) and not on Dormition Day (August 15) (Dubisch 1995: 268, n.4).
26. A fisherman, around 40 years old. The videotaping of a series of open, unscheduled interviews was made a sunny December morning just before St Nicholas day in 2007, as the fishermen were out in the harbor mending their nets, baiting their hooks, and chatting idly.
 27. The worship of a patron saint in patrilineal or patrilineal groups is frequent in the Balkans and the Mediterranean (cf. Nitsiakos 2010: 234–236); the main difference with Lipsi is that this relation is not necessarily inherited or, even less, patrilineal.
 28. Information by Mariaki, 70, originally from Marathi (field journal 2003, September 5). During her labor, this woman invoked the help of St Nicholas and so her son bears the saint's name.
 29. Valanto (1918–2005), excerpt from a taped interview (September 3, 2003) in the presence of her daughter, who made her own contributions. My interlocutor refers to a widespread ceremonial practice in orthodox culture, where *Artos* refers to a loaf of leavened bread, usually sweet and spiced, that is blessed during services. Loaves of *Artos* are also offered in the context of a *Paraklesis* or Supplicatory Canon, which is addressed to a specific saint as a service of supplication for the welfare of the living.
 30. See footnote 26.
 31. Modern Greeks traditionally celebrate their nameday only; birthday celebrations are recent and due to “Western” influence.
 32. Saint Phanourios, whose name literally means “the one who reveals” (in Greek, *phanerónei*), is a saint particularly venerated by women who normally ask him to reveal secrets, hidden objects, or even a husband to come.
 33. In Greek, “*t’ ai-Nikíta, kíta; ke t’ ai-Ghiorghioú xekíta.*” St Nikitas’ day is the 15th of September and St George’s is the 23rd of April. I only heard this proverb from Captain Nicholas, a seaman with roots in Asia Minor and Farmakonissi, during an informal conversation.
 34. Captain Nicholas, September 04, 2003.
 35. Giuli & Giuli 2005: file 9b “Lipso.”
 36. Spontaneously recounted by my landlady, in a mixture of Greek and Italian, on St Demetrius day during one of my stays on the island (2005). The bilingual rendering makes it particularly interesting as a performance.
 37. Field journal 2001, August 23.
 38. Lagopoulos 2003.

5 Fertility and Death

1. Spontaneous account as part of an open interview recorded in the courtyard of the house of Sevasti, in the presence of her schoolteacher lodger,

- two of her grandchildren, and her daughter. The meeting was held on September 6, 2003, without prior arrangement.
2. The most extensive reference to the Annunciation is found in Luke 1:26–38. However, the lily as a symbol of the Mother of God rather than the Holy Trinity is introduced much later in iconography, and as a motif it is prevalent in the relevant stories.
 3. *Pelargonium graveolens*.
 4. I had arrived only the day before, starting for the first time from the even more distant city of Ioannina where I had moved, in order to spend Easter with them, also for the first time.
 5. It is not usual for the eldest daughter to take her paternal grandmother's name. In this case, the deviation from the customary practice was made for the sake of Panaghia Evangelistria herself.
 6. "The girls set off at dawn to go to a well and drink the speechless water. They are secretly followed by lads, just as in the midsummer feast of Klidonas, only that custom is no longer observed; it is still done on Mayday, but only by a few young people. They have to go to a specific well, preferably a distant one so that the walk is long; the lads lie in wait and spring out to scare the girls and make them speak out, utter a cry and thus fail." Taped information by municipal employees, August 27, 2001.
 7. Literally meaning "eyes wide open."
 8. Here fennel obviously receives metonymical qualities, since *máراثos*, which is its name in Greek, is paronymologically associated with *amáran-tos* = evergreen.
 9. see reference in note 6.
 10. In the Orthodox creed all Saturdays are dedicated to the dead, but the Church has designated two particular Saturdays specifically for the departed, the so-called Soul Saturdays: one before Meatfare Week and one before Pentecost. In practice, however, believers observe more of them (cf. Seraïdari 2005).
 11. *Messosporítissa*, literally meaning "the One in the Middle of Sowing," is the popular name for Theotokos celebrating on November 21st, when the Orthodox Church commemorates the Presentation of the Theotokos into the temple.
 12. The saint's icon is kept in a private house and since 2006 is taken to Panaghia tou Charou for mass.
 13. Similarly, when one of my regular interlocutors invited me over to record their preparation, the dough had been made before I arrived—on time. This secrecy is observed also in other sacred foods from the preparation of which I was tactfully excluded, like the saint's *kóllyva* or the Easter bread of Holy Thursday.
 14. This motif is particularly prevalent in two fairytale plots in which it is a standard narrative element. This is the AT/ATU 207A animal tale in the international classification system (*Ass Induces Overworked Bullock to Feign Sickness*) and the fairytale AT/ATU 670 (*The Animal Languages*).

15. Sevasti, December 2, 2007; she had mentioned the same belief in our talk of one year earlier, on September 6, 2006 (see note 1).
16. Themelina, (b. 1938), September 7, 2003.
17. Eleni Psychogiou also reports another example of “copulating seeding,” this time from Arta, in Epirus: “The Earth should come to ‘ovulate’ [...] for the sowing to begin. [...] In order to check that, we would dig a trough [...] Or they’d sit on the ground, and if it was warm they’d sow; if not, they wouldn’t—the Earth didn’t want the seed” (Psychogiou 2008: 81).
18. I report here a comment by an aged woman interlocutor (b. 1918) as we watched a TV series where the 25-year-old heroine fell in love with a 70-year-old man: “How is he going to cultivate her now, eh? (and winked)” (field journal, 2001α: 70). The same woman, talking about the birth of one of her daughters, told me several years later: “I shed blood on earth to have her!” (field journal, 2007), obviously meaning that she had given birth out in the fields.
19. Or: “St Barbara gave birth
St Savvas received it
And St Nicholas baptized it.”
My interlocutor, Irini, was clear in her interpretation: “‘gave birth,’ from the fertile earth; people sow. ‘Baptized’—this means rain, bad weather.”
20. The three saints—Barbara, Savvas, Nicholas—are also seen as patrons of childbearing and infants in other Greek regions such as Elis: “The patron saints of pregnant women are ‘the Holy Virgin who gave birth to our Master Jesus’ and St Barbara who braces (*varvarónei*) them against the risks of pregnancy. [...] For infants it is St Savvas, who ‘shrouds (*savvanónei*) all child illnesses and infections’ and is generally the patron saint of the village, and above all St Nicholas, with his miraculous icons in Spata and Kavassila” (Psychogios 1950: 346).
21. *Várvara*, as a paronym to *Barbara* in Greek, is a special plate prepared on the Day of Saint Barbara in mainly the Eastern parts of the Greek territory. It is made of a variety of grains, mainly legumes and cereals, which are boiled together and served with cinnamon as a kind of porridge. *Várvara* are mainly destined for children and are believed to protect from variola (see also Papachristophorou forthcoming).
22. There are a number of first names relating to Virgin Mary, such as Maria, Despoina, Panaghiota, that are usually celebrated either on August 15th (the Dormition Day) or on November 21st (Presentation of Theotokos).
23. “Today the Church congregates to honor the All Holy Mother of God. Panaghia is an ‘elevation for all women,’ as St Proclus praises her, while St Cyril hails her with these words: ‘Praise be to thee, O holy Mother of God, masterpiece of the universe... scepter of orthodoxy.’ She is humankind’s sacred and immaculate offering to God, the best present the world could offer. This is how a hymn of yesterday’s great festivity puts it:

- ‘What shall we present unto Thee, O Christ, For Thy coming to earth for us men? Each of Thy creatures brings Thee a thank-offering: The angels, singing; the heavens, a star; The Wise Men, treasures; the shepherds, devotion; The earth, a cave; the desert, a manger; But we offer Thee the Virgin-Mother.’” (<http://www.ec-patr.org/gr/saints/m12-26.htm>).
24. The exchanges of wishes for the coming season is common in Greek-speaking cultures.
 25. See chapter 1, n. 8
 26. Ecclesiastically known as “Leave-taking of the Feast of the Dormition.”
 27. The church is *trishypostate*, with three Altars (Koumoundouros 1994: 62).
 28. Moreover, August 28 corresponds to August 15 in the Julian Calendar.
 29. Field journal, August 28, 2010.
 30. Panaghia here is invoked both for prosperity and protection from evil powers: “May the wine be good!”—“Drink it in happiness!” (“kala krassia!”—“kaloxodemen!”). Field notes taken down between November and December, 2007.
 31. “The Megalocharos had his ears open,” to cite one example of its use after making a wish.
 32. “Primogeniture” is not observed in the inheritance customs of Lipsi (cf. Michailidis-Nouaros 1926/1972: 163; Olympitou 2002: 209–306; Vernier 1987 and 1991; Kalpourtzi 2001).
 33. As we saw, however, St Barbara also protects the health of children.
 34. Field journal, 2005; cf. also the testimony in chapter 4, pp. 3–5.
 35. “Like a sun with twelve joints and twelve rays hanging from his waist on either side” (field journal, 2010, Palm Sunday 28/03).
 36. I attended the Easter celebrations of 2010. The present tense of my description here accords with what my interlocutors would prefer; I remain hesitant, however, since the actual behaviors of community members do not always correspond to the idealized account of certain customs or, conversely, to criticisms about abandoning tradition. The example of a universal, devout participation in Easter may well be typical, as in 2001 I had recorded the exact opposite in the form of report: “Easter is beautiful in Lipsi. There’s an atmosphere of piety. Of course, it, too, has changed in recent years; I’m grumbling again, but you can’t have the Crucifix up on Holy Thursday and then coming out in the churchyard and hearing the music from the coffee shops—yet that’s what happens. Or taking the Epitaphios out on Holy Friday and seeing happy faces all round, who rush out immediately after mass to go for entertainment. I don’t agree with all this; I think we have forsaken everything, we don’t act in accordance with the spirit of the day.”
 37. *Dasó(g)alo*, literally meaning “forest’s milk,” is a thick beverage prepared using “ground bread, ground almonds, mastic, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, rosewater.”
 38. According to some scholars, black as a color of mourning alludes to the color of the earth (cf. Psychogiou 2008: 37–39).

39. In 2010, Holy Thursday was on the 1st of April, but as expected there was no hint of April Fools' Day.
40. Especially those of the recently deceased—generally considered as “freshly” dead.
41. In 2010 only four women lasted the whole night, while until three o'clock there were more.
42. I have recorded the lamentation of Holy Virgin in two versions, with no major differences save for the motif of Aghia-Kali (on this motif, see also Alexiou 2002: 75–76 and Psychogiou 2008). I present it as delivered by an 87-year-old woman in 2005, who made a great effort to say it so that I could tape it. “No one who heard her sing it could help their tears”:

*The holy Lent, holy days have come
 When mass is held in churches, and holy fathers chant
 Down there in Jerusalem, at Jesus' sacred grave
 Where myrrh and frankincense grows freely
 And wells are full of rosewater
 Our Lady sat there all alone
 Praying for her only son
 And as she prayed and crossed herself
 Thunder she heard and lightning, a terrible turmoil
 Out of her door she comes to see the place around her
 She sees the sky all hazy, the stars awash in tears
 The bright moon drenched in blood—upon my soul!
 She looks to left, she looks to right, and there she sees St John
 —Tell me, St John Prodromos, baptizer of my son
 Tell me if you've seen my only son
 —Who has the eyes to look at you, the mouth to tell you this
 The hand to point your son
 See that mountain black and grim
 That's where the Jews have taken him, his elbows tied together
 On hearing this our Panaghia collapsed and fell unconscious
 Water and three sprinklers of scent
 They brought, and five of rosewater
 And once they had awakened her she rose and said
 —Follow me, kin and friends, follow me also strangers
 None other followed her
 But Martha Magdalene and Lazarus's mother
 And Jacob's sister, the four of them together
 They took the road, they took the path
 That brought them to the Gipsy's door
 —Our greetings, Gipsy, and what are those things you're making
 —It's nails the Jews have asked of me to make
 They ordered four but I'll make five
 Two for his arms, two for his knees
 And one with poison that will go straight into his heart
 On hearing this our Panaghia collapsed and fell unconscious*

*Water and three sprinklers of scent they brought
 And once they had awakened her she rose and said
 They took the road, they took the path
 That brought them at the robber's door
 —Open up, robber's door, open, door of Pilatus
 The doors, afear'd, opened up on their own
 She sees people innumerable, thousands upon thousands
 She looks to left, she looks to right, and there she sees St John
 —Tell me, St John Prodromos, baptizer of my son
 Tell me if you've seen my only son
 —Who has the eyes to look at you, the mouth to tell you this
 The hand to point your son
 See that naked, wretched man,
 His shirt all soaked in blood?
 This is your son, and you must go and find him
 That's where the Jews have taken him, his elbows tied together
 Find him before they mount him on the cross
 Before they drive the nails in him and take his life away
 On hearing this our Panaghia collapsed and fell unconscious
 Water and three sprinklers of scent
 They brought, and five of rosewater
 And once they had awakened her she rose and said
 —Find me a precipice to fall, a well to kill myself
 —Mother, don't go and kill yourself or others will die, too
 Mother, don't go and drown yourself or others will drown, too
 Mothers for children go and jump, and children for their mothers,
 And married women kill themselves over their worthy husbands
 Go back to your house, mother, go back to your prayers
 And on the Holy Saturday your only son will join you
 Lay out a jug of wine, lay out fresh rusks
 And show what consolation is so others get to see it
 Aghia Kali goes by the door and says this to condemn her
 —Who has a son up on the cross, a mother at the table
 —You go along, kyra-Kali, and have no moment idle.*

43. The Greek word *trypopérasma* literally means “passing through a hole.” As Nicole Belmont affirms on many occasions, when the ritual is confined to protecting against illness, of which “trypoperasma” is a typical example, the subject comes out purged of all illness and death itself is prevented (see, indicatively, Belmont 2000: 23).
44. A wild aromatic plant with a foliage resembling rosemary but with different flowers and a strong lavender-like scent; it grows at a special place near the cemetery.
45. “Put it on your head. It's for the headache.”
46. In many parts of Greece the floors are not swept for three days after the deceased has been removed (Megas 1939a: 188).
47. Made with intestines, abdomen, tripe, and the head stewed all together without onions or dill.

48. It was obviously a supplication (cf. the story about the mother- and daughter-in-law, chapter 6, pp. 15–16).
49. The blessing of the water—if only outside the well, these days—turns the crossroads into a point of sacred power (cf. Lagopoulos 2003: 116–117).
50. My emphasis.

6 Ordinary Days and Talks

1. Recorded as part of a semistructured interview on October 26, 2005, outside the coffeehouse in the village square, with Michalis as my main interlocutor and in the presence of his wife who features in the story.
2. Dictated by Marouso (b. 1918) and written down in August 2001. She was also my source for the following quatrain/letter ending: “That’s all; sweet kisses /From my bitter lips/And I shall be waiting/For your prompt reply.”
3. Poetic improvisations with all sorts of content constitute a trait of folk culture in many Aegean islands, as Minas Alexiadis finds, especially in the Dodecanese, Crete, Cyprus, and Naxos, particularly in the form of couplets and *mantinádhēs* (Alexiadis 1983: 347). The same folklorist was among the first to study in detail their printed dissemination, especially through the local press in Greece (cf. Alexiadis 2003: 279–302). In the present context, “folk poetry” interests us solely as performance and as part of an oral communication system within the community.
4. Recorded on October 17, 2005.
5. Cursing someone’s mother for his own deeds is common practice in popular Greek attitudes; in this context this means that my interlocutor’s mother’s soul would not rest in peace.
6. The mythologizing process described here makes the very antithesis of the process reported by Marianthi Kaplanoglou about the adaptation of folktale heroes in the audience’s everyday life through storytelling (2002: 166–168).
7. At this point it is interesting to remind the Cretan origins of many among my interlocutors, and specifically their descent from “brave” Vassiliós, the legendary seaman / corsair as introduced in the second chapter.
8. I am translating the Greek word “*palaií*,” literally meaning “antique,” which in the local idiom designates the midwife.
9. Valanto, information as part of a recorded interview (September 3, 2003) in the presence of her daughter, who intervened in the discussion.
10. *Kallikántzaroi* are a sort of goblin “extremely ugly, possessing a long tail and horns. They are said to spend most of the year sawing through the gigantic trunk of the tree that holds up the earth.” They spend the 12 days of Christmas among humans, playing horrible pranks against them. “At Epiphany they are chased away by the blessing of the water

and begin anew their task of sawing through the tree trunk,” which during their absence on the earth was completely restored (Stewart 1991: 252).

11. The 40 day period of Christmas Advent.
12. See also Stewart 1991: 253.
13. A similar procedure affects affinal relations, since the only stable ones are those among elementary family members, which also change after the siblings get married and form new families – again to the benefit of collective identity within the community (field notes 2007; cf. Campbell 1974: 54–55). On the connection of nicknames with kinship systems and lineage in the example of southeast Attica, see Alexakis 1996: 159–169.
14. At this point I should like to return to the debate opened by Mary Douglas about “magic and miracle,” since it is obvious in this instance that ritual “enlivens the memory” and aids perception by “linking the present with the relevant past,” coming first and “formulating experience” – the experience believers define as a miracle and which is mediated by reason (Douglas 2002: 72–90).
15. The Greek language preserves, however, the word “bride” (*nyfi*) for designating the association of the daughter-in-law with her husband’s family.
16. Sevasti, October 26, 2005: this story was told spontaneously in the context of one of our many conversations round the kitchen table, and recorded immediately afterward upon request, in the presence of her daughter.
17. For the role of the family and the social milieu in raising children inside Greek traditional societies, see Avdikos 1996: 240–290.
18. As I was never able to learn how to synchronize the body with the emotions and the music within a given set of movements such as the steps of traditional dancing, I could not participate as fully as I should like in this collective expression of joy and pride that dancing is to the people of Lipsi.
19. The *gblénda* (translated here as “feast”) of the Aegean Sea communities, as a syncretic process of experience, expression, and communication through the performance of dance, music, and songs, is to anthropology a social and cultural phenomenon reflecting a worldview shaped through historical and mythologizing parameters within the community, and is thus of a strongly symbolic nature (Kavouras 1993).
20. In these collective movements, passive onlookers are excluded as a rule, whereas in the major urban centers a procession may be treated as a spectacle. As collective practices, therefore, processions and litanies update an admission of faith for all members of the community.
21. Captain Nicholas, September 4, 2003.
22. Nikos Belavilas pointed out the similarly slow perception of space at sea, and the slow unfolding of one’s thoughts, when he crossed the Aegean in a simulation of the past (Belavilas 1997).

23. Captain Nicholas, scheduled interview, September 4, 2003.
24. Information by Evangelia (80) and her middle-aged daughter; combined recording, October 18, 2005.
25. “Religious folk life” (Varvounis 1995, with detailed bibliography), as successor to the field previously described as “folk religion” (Megas 1949c and 1988; Spyridakis 1961), makes today a relatively new interdisciplinary field for folklore studies in Greece.

7 The Narrative Construction of the Community

1. Here we refer to a wide range of narratives that go well beyond autobiography and may be classified under a variety of tale-types and categories in terms of folklore classification systems, such as anecdotes, Wellerisms, legends, and eventually many other genres, depending on the disposition of both the narrator and the main character of the story told and retold.
2. Anna Lydaki reaches similar conclusions about the functions of folk narratives in traditional societies, through a socio-aesthetic approach to older records and literary texts (Lydaki 2012: esp. Chapter 2).
3. The most elaborate study that I can quote on this topic is that published by Richard Tallman (Tallman 1974).
4. In ancient Greece “*apátē*” (deception) was part of many rites of passage (Calame 1977: 259–260; cf. Papachristophorou 2002: 165).
5. To the best of my knowledge, active participation of women in pranks is not current and is largely considered as “androgynous” behavior.
6. I would like to mention at this point, as an example from Greek bibliography, a case study on the community of Monodendri (a mountain village in Zagori, Epirus, Greece) and the functions of anecdotes and humor in traditional contexts of Greece (Dalkavoukis 2001).
7. Despina Damianou finds the same through her research in Kythera in 2000–2002 (Damianou 2005).
8. Nicolaos Politis called “traditions” the narrative genre that is internationally known as “legends” for the same specific historical purposes that made him refer to folklore genres in general as “Monuments of the Word” (Politis 1909: 10–11; Papachristophorou 2012: 759–761; see also Herzfeld 1986: 75–90; 146).
9. Legend classification has been a major concern for folklore studies internationally, mainly because of their versatility in oral contexts.
10. Linda Dègh makes the same observation about legend storytelling (Dègh 1991: 30–31).
11. A more detailed description of these gathering places in Lipsi is required at this point. The oldest coffee shop/ouzo bar is at the old harbor, in a

building that is depicted in the old photograph of 1919 (see figure 0.4), and now operates in the summer months only. Two more shops opened nearby some three decades ago: in the summer they operate as open-air ouzo bars for locals and tourists of both sexes and all ages, and in the winter they revert to their more introvert use as coffee shops, mostly for fishermen. A “cafeteria” in the village is frequented mainly by “family men.” Youths go to various other “venues,” restaurants, cafés, clubs, and ouzo bars of a much more urban character, which may be anywhere on the island.

12. Jane Cowan provides a delightful description of the coffee ritual as an act of communication in Greek society through the example of Sochos, Thessaloniki (Cowan 1990: 67–68).
13. *Krinoúla*, as a feminine diminutive, derives from the Greek word *krinos*, which means lily flower.
14. According to the “Amalarian” (< Amalarius, Bishop of Metz, AD 780–850) interpretations of liturgy in Medieval Europe, “Mass represented an elaborate drama with definite roles assigned to the participants and a plot whose ultimate significance is nothing less than the ‘renewal of a whole plan of redemption’ through the re-creation of ‘life, death, and resurrection’ of Christ” (Hardison 1965: 39–40, 79; and Schechner 2002: 25–27).
15. One more example from Christian Medieval Europe is the wood-carved effigies of saints that, besides decorating churches and accompanying processions, were also set aside for a kind of “puppet theatre” enacting various episodes from the lives of saints, the Passion, and so on. Source: Museum of Catalan Art, Barcelona, Romanesque Art section.
16. As we saw in chapter 2, the female costume reflects the middle-class standards of the early twentieth century, unlike the traditional male *vráka*—black baggy trousers (cf Vrelli 2003: 65–68).
17. Water, as a symbolic representation of the “spring,” must have once served as a landmark of many of the supernaturally charged locations in the island’s countryside. The most important among them is “*Agrio Neró*” (wild water), the spring at the sacred location of Kato Kimissi. Conversely, other springs such as *Fountána* at Chalaro lie in forgotten areas of the local narrative tradition. According to Eliade, water as a religious symbol represents the world before Creation, when everything was unshaped and thus everything was possible (Eliade 1965: 112–114).
18. This complementary symbolism between St John and the Holy Virgin, as promulgated by the Monastic community of Patmos, may accord with profoundly theological connotations where John the Theologian corresponds to a filial representation; moreover according to Orthodox tradition Jesus on the cross designated John as protector of his holy mother.
19. In the rather different example of classical Athens and the Acropolis, the various phases in the city’s history are associated with the sacred narratives and mysteries around its patron goddess Athena.

20. Victor Turner analyzes the meaning of the dominant symbols as “highly constant and consistent throughout the total symbolic system.” Dominant symbols appear in many different ritual contexts; they may be regarded as “eternal objects” not in the sense of “infinite duration” but because “they are relatively fixed points in both the social and the cultural structure.” According to Turner, “each dominant symbol may be said to represent a crystallization of the flow pattern of the rituals over which it presides” (Turner 1967: 31–32 and 1968: 80; Turner & Turner 1978: 245–246).
21. According to Lagopoulos, this complex set comprises “a *code of life*, a *cultural* and an *anthropomorphic* code, a code of *sanctity*, a *moral* and a *social* code. These codes in turn are internally structured upon a central opposition and are homologous among themselves and with the original *spatial* code, which is combined with a *topological* code” (Lagopoulos 2003: 162).
22. Augé argues that “anthropological places” have at least three characteristics in common, as people want them to be “places of identity, of relations and of history” (Augé 1995: 51–57).
23. According to Dubisch, “pilgrimage may be a way of trying to overcome liminality, to connect, to identify oneself with the core symbolic structures of one’s society.” In the example of the emblematic pilgrimage to Tinos, Dubisch does not see liminality, like *communitas*, as necessarily “an inherent feature of pilgrimage” (Dubisch 1995: 96–97). Victor Turner’s description of pilgrimage, however, includes all three phases of a rite of passage as seen originally by Arnold van Gennep (1908/1981): separation, margin or *limen*, and reaggregation. As an antistructure however, the dominant phases in pilgrimage are those of liminality and *communitas*. In all processions and pilgrimages I attended in Lipsi, pilgrimage makes a conditional framework for a ritual performance along which the community updates and/or reaffirms its symbols—at any rate I cannot perceive it as a rite of passage (cf. Turner & Turner 1978: 249–251 and 253–254).
24. Starting from the ethnographic example of the Bororo in South America, with their matrilineal descent and matrilocal residence, Lévi-Strauss describes the concentric structure of the Bororo village, with the relation of center and periphery expressing two oppositions: one between *male* and *female*, and one between *sacred* and *profane*. The center of the village functions as a theater of ceremonial activities where men dominate, whereas the periphery is dominated by the domestic activities of women. Although the parallel between the dualist spatial layout in American populations and in the village of Lipsi is obviously tentative, it still argues in favor of a “circular” semiotic interpretation where the “center” is the most powerful symbol of the community (Lévi-Strauss 1974: 156–157); according to the approach of Lagopoulos, “the traditional symbolic space is constructed mainly as a set of concentric circles,

- of diminishing sanctity from the center outwards” (Lagopoulos 2003: 161). See figure 4.2.
25. This book reached me after the writing had been completed. I was pleased to find that our conclusions about narratives through the example of Lipsi fit into the same framework of “lines” as seen by the British anthropologist from a holistic approach to civilization.
 26. The symbolic complementarity between the Holy Virgin and John the Theologian in this region could be seen in terms of gender representations of social roles, as when communicating with God women mediate for their family members, and priests on behalf of the entire community. As Stewart observes, priests with their vows of chastity, their long hair, and their long cassocks are symbolically placed between the two sexes, just as God is more remote than the Holy Virgin, who is invoked much more easily and whose importance in monastic worship is well-known (Stewart 1991: 74). John the Theologian, however, is closely associated with Mary, according to Christian tradition, as well as with the sacred history of the region and the Monastery.
 27. As Vassiliki Chryssanthopoulou concludes on the basis of two examples from today’s Dodecanese Diaspora in Australia, “the key-symbols of rituals bring together the members of the group around a common sense of belonging.” These symbols evolve over time, but for all their changes their keepers see them as elements of their own identity and “as continuity of the community to which they belong and its culture” (Chryssanthopoulou 2008: 350–352). The case of Lipsi is more complex, since migration has taken place within the same administrative, national, and cultural space without a preformed social framework of reception.
 28. As Stewart aptly points out, “the use of expressions such as ‘popular’ or ‘folk’ to describe local religion” implies the existence of its opposite—that is, a “doctrinally faithful elite” (Stewart 1991: 11).

Postface: Reflections on Fieldwork

1. Jill Dubisch aptly describes the inner conflicts and contradictions experienced by a field researcher, at a personal and at a social-gendered level, as well as the theoretical ones within a discipline that constantly redefines itself (Dubisch 1995: 3–19 and 2000: xvii–xix).
2. The structural opposition between fertility and death, on which I focused from the outset, was mediated in my case by a recent miscarriage at an advanced stage of pregnancy.
3. Excerpt from the field journal of 2010.

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