Narrative, Practice and Performance:

Women's Central Role in Re-imagining Macedonian Identity in Suburban Melbourne

Suzanne Shearer

BA Honours, Monash University

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Department of Social Inquiry
School of Humanities and Social Sciences
College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce
La Trobe University
Victoria, Australia

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Abstract

Narrative, practice and performance: Women's central role in re-imagining Macedonian identity in suburban Melbourne.

The creation of a shared identity remains part of an ongoing complex process in all communities, shaped by the past and re-shaped in the present. In diasporic communities, traditions and history of 'home', are influenced by traditions of the host country, into something new. In the Macedonian diaspora in Melbourne the construction of a national identity is fluid, dependent on a past, where history and territory remain contested and influenced by continuing debates in Europe. This thesis explores how Macedonian populations in the diaspora reshape identity, with a focus on women's roles, to show that this is not only a cultural process but becomes a political act due to the contested ideas around Macedonian identity and the Macedonian nation.

The complex history that led to the emergence of 'the Macedonian Question' is discussed in the thesis, as is the similarly contested establishment of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Macedonian women, in their homeland, used households as political spaces where they performed, practiced and preserved Macedonian identity in the context of annexation, colonisation and oppression. In the diaspora Macedonian women's roles in households serve to maintain cultural identity, and in public sites such as the Macedonian Orthodox Church women's performance also helps shape the politics of national identity. These two critical sites of household and church are examined in this thesis, revealing that women's secular and sacred practices are political acts where women create, defend and re-imagine Macedonian identity.

Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

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Introduction: Researching Macedonian women in Melbourne

In the years after World War II and assisted by the Australian federal government, families from northern Europe began to re-settle in Australia. Then, with a change in government policy in the late 1950s, villagers from provinces in northern Greece such as Konzani, Kastoria and Florina, also began to move there (Jupp 2001: 387). Afentoulist and Cleland (2013: 1) refer to this as a 'large scale movement' where 'whole villages' immigrated to suburbs in Australian cities. Anthropologist Loring Danforth (2000a: 194) estimates that by the beginning of the 20th century, at least 15,000 people from the province of Florina had settled in Melbourne. Other research suggests that the numbers could have been even higher as there was 'a reluctance by some Macedonians born in Greece, to identify as Macedonian-speaking due to Greek/Macedonian tensions' (Ben-Moshe et al: 2012: 20). James Jupp (2001: 577) refers to other problems associated with census collection which lead him to believe 'that the Macedonian population is perhaps twice as great as statistics suggest'. Despite a fear of identifying as Macedonian, those who settled in the diaspora remained connected to 'home'[1] through letters and travel, and within households, women spoke their mother tongue and practiced customs and traditions. By the early 1970s, the newly elected federal Labor government replaced the policy of assimilation with multiculturalism, creating an environment where ethnicity could be celebrated and national identity could be re-imagined.

The creation of a shared national identity is an ongoing process in all communities, but for immigrant communities the concepts of home and belonging can be complex. At the centre of community life is the family, so women in immigrant populations play important roles in the maintenance of cultural identity. This thesis explores the ways in which Macedonian populations in the diaspora reshape identity, with a focus on women's roles to show that maintenance is not only a cultural but also a political act, due to the contested ideas around Macedonian identity and the Macedonian nation. It has been taken for granted that 'the progressive agenda of national identity' concern men's roles and responsibilities and because of this, Anne McClintock (1993: 66) argues, women have

[1] 'Home' is used throughout, in quotation marks, to refer to the homeland of Macedonia.

been ‘represented as the atavistic and authentic “body” of national tradition (inert, backward-looking, and natural) embodying nationalism’s conservative principle of continuity’. Her argument is that ‘despite nationalism’s ideological investment in the idea of popular unity’, it remains a system based on gender difference (McClintock 2993: 61). For women access to resources is often limited or restricted with the result that building national identity is seen as men’s work (McClintock 1993: 61). Similarly, the public performance of national identity supports a view that men’s visibility in public spaces highlights their agency in these matters.

Research into migrant communities in Australia has found national identity to be a ‘particular type’, described as ‘long distance’ (Skribis 1999: 184), as it balances between ‘the modernity of nationalism’ and the ‘obvious pre-existence of identities, traditions and cultures from which it draws’ (Danforth 1995 16). However, research into identity formation concentrates on the centrality of men in celebrations held in public spaces. In rejecting such a position, this thesis adopts Evy Håland’s view (2012b: 108) that the importance of women’s performance ‘depends on where you are standing’. Women in their domestic roles in households are seen as maintaining cultural identity in the diaspora, but in public sites such as the Macedonian Orthodox Church, too, women perform the politics of national identity.

Migration and the maintenance of cultural identity

Following WWII, most studies of immigration focused on government policies and community attitudes, research which has been described as ‘relegated to statistical tables and plodding accounts of who came and when’ (Douglas & Wilton 1984: 1). Historians also shared a perspective that ‘documented [immigrants] only from the outside as a social problem’ (Thomson 1999: 7) or understood human relocation as part of the ‘grand narratives of human intention and progress’ (Goodson 2006: 7). This perspective overlooked the experiences of migrants as well as their impact on Australian society. By the end of the 20th century, the ‘grand narrative’ was replaced by a study of ‘small narratives’, a new paradigm that focused on immigrants’ stories so as to gain more

nuanced knowledge of immigration, settlement and the complex processes of identity construction (Goodson 2006: 13).

The small narrative approach focuses on the 'mobility of memories, territories and people' (Christou 2009:149) and according to Rina Benmayor and Andor Skotnes (1994: 1- 4), 'allows an understanding' of how 'social forces impact and shape individuals, and how individuals, in turn respond, act and produce change in the larger social arena'. This shift of focus places women at the centre of family life, where they reproduce cultural traditions and customs. In the transference of tradition and language, their influence is not confined to the private sphere but becomes relevant in public spaces (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 7; Thomson 1999: 29). This thesis assumes the importance of women's cultural roles in immigrant families and argues that in Macedonian families in the diaspora, women are responsible for teaching culture and language, as well as the performance of secular and religious rites, and that in these roles, they are crucial to the construction of political identity.

Identity is now understood as constructed, not fixed, as there are no 'pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition'; rather, identity is 'produced performatively' (Bhabha 1994: 2). Identity is part of a process, often dynamic, and constructed in response to changes in social, economic and cultural circumstances. Diasporic Macedonian identity is neither fixed nor static; instead, it is a combination of older traditions and the new, constantly re-shaped to protect and defend national identity. The stories, traditions and practices of first-generation immigrant women preserve the 'sameness', the patterns of village life; subsequent generations preserve, mediate and adapt a past and re-shape it in the present (Cleland 2013: 287). This complex relationship between village and suburban life is managed by Macedonian women in story, tradition and practice, 'the stock' from which is constructed not only an individual's life but also the identity of a community (Hinchman & Hinchman 1997: 187).

The Macedonian homeland: Writing on Macedonian women

> [Macedonian women] were individuals of great physical stamina, wives and mothers who not only worked the family's land but also in cottage industries. They were not only a 'portal of the Slavic language which they taught to their children, but also an 'arch of the specialized knowledge of the *zadruga,*[2] its traditions etc' (Karavidas 1931: 239; cited in Karakasidou 1996: 102).

Greek economist Kostas Karavidas' 1931 observations of family relationships in Florina contrast with later ethnographic studies of the region, which assumed 'the universality of sexual asymmetry rooted in structure and culture' (Anderson 2007: 163). Early anthropological research in Greece described women's subordinate roles and their relatively limited freedom, which was considered a shared feature of many Mediterranean societies (Mills 2003: 1; Herzfeld 1991). In early ethnographies, women were portrayed as silent, submissive and deferential to men on public and economic matters, on children's futures and anything concerning the family's public image (Herzfeld 1991: 94). However, Karavidis found that women in Aegean Macedonia were somewhat 'different to [those in] other parts of the country' and wrote of them as a 'special kind'. Anastasia Karakasidou (1996: 102) believes that Karavidis saw beyond the 'superficial silence of the *zadruga* women' and found them 'experts in religion, rituals, superstitions, songs, proverbs, legends, popular wisdom and experience'. Macedonian women, according to Karavidis (1931: 239-240), were the main organisers and performers of festive celebrations, the holders of family history, and the controllers of interfamily relations as well as other 'hidden knowledge' which they taught to children.

The study of Mediterranean communities used a kinship model in which gender guided the understanding of relationships and roles within families and the wider community. Studies of village life assumed that strong agnatic systems shaped family relationships, and some studies referred to the kinship structures as patriarchal (Denich 1974: Ramet 1996). Violeta Schubert's research into family groups who lived in villages on the plain of

[2] This refers to a large collective household with two or more members of a family producing, 'consuming the means of its livelihood jointly and owning its means of production communally' (Brown 2018: 145).

Capari, a south western region of the Republic of North Macedonia, suggests more complex gender relationships, supporting the early findings of Karavidas. Her work focuses on formal kinship structures to investigate the realities of family and gender relationships in village households (2005a; 2005b). Schubert concluded that women were 'ideologically denied significance in matters of descent' but acknowledged that within families they held the 'keys to … stability', and were often the 'movers and shakers' as they had the power to refashion relations without openly challenging them (2005b: 66). The presumption of a particular type of gender relations, she concludes, has meant that when women are found to have authority or power 'it is frequently depicted as problematic, extraordinary or even inexplicable' (Schubert 2005b: 66)

In Aegean Macedonia the 'extended agnatic *zadruga',* once the principle focus of identity, has, since annexation in 1913, been replaced by the Greek nation-state (Karakasidou 1996: 106). Women there have remained the holders and transmitters of cultural heritage within family groups but in many families, women and their children have adopted Greek national identity. This, according to Karakasidou, was unlikely to be a conscious choice, as women have become either 'agents or victims of enculturation' and are 'notably conservative in the presentation of their past ethnic identity' (1996: 104, 106). She also points out that after 'the advent of formal Greek rule' and with post-war migration of Macedonian families to areas in Europe, North America and Australia, those who stayed at 'home' see those who have emigrated as 'the most fanatic anti-Greeks' (Karakasidou 1996: 106). In Aegean Macedonian migrant families, women are the custodians of customs and traditions, as they were at 'home'. Domestic practices performed in households in the diaspora should not be understood as simply cultural for, as Malina Stankovska and Pandora Petrovska (1994: 7) suggest, these activities make 'a viable contribution to the overall political situation'.

The political trauma of the 20th century, discussed in Chapters One and Two below, is still found in stories, memories and artefacts of Macedonians, who tell of colonisation, German occupation, the Civil War, and military dictatorship. According to Stankovska and Petrovska (1994: 7), it was during this long period of oppression that Macedonian women came to use domestic practices and rites as a 'weapon for survival as well as an

expression' of identity. During colonisation, and later in new locations, women's creative and artistic performances within households became a means to express identity, and women became 'totally responsible for the outer persona of the Macedonian people' (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 7). In multicultural Australia, Macedonian women can also openly articulate a national identity in public places such as the church, cemeteries and in protest marches where women are visible as practical and ritual performers.

Migration from Macedonia

A Macedonian custom of working away from home, *pecalba,* began in the 19th century. A young man, a *pecalbar,* would leave home after marriage to earn money to help secure his family's future (Hill 1989: 10). These men were mainly 'itinerant labourers from peasant backgrounds' (Ben-Moshe 2012: 20). However, Peter Hill writes that many of those who arrived in Australia during the first half of the 20th century turned into permanent settlers, bought land and set up businesses (1989: 12). At the beginning of WWII, and later with the collapse of Macedonian resistance in Greece in 1949, men were not able to return to the 'old country' (Hill 1989: 12). In the 1960s, there was a significant spike in the settlement of families and communities from Aegean Macedonia (northern Greece) and at the end of the 1900s, Macedonian migrants from the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia settled in Australian suburbs (Ben-Moshe 2012: 20).

With partition, authorities in Greece and Serbia began the colonisation of Macedonian minorities. Households became the centres of resistance and women's roles became key in the maintenance of national identity. After settling in the suburbs of Australia, Macedonian women's domestic practices remained political acts. The study of diasporas in the context of globalisation has resulted in a renewed focus on the social, economic and cultural aspects of those now living in new locations. Traditionally, the term diaspora referred to an exiled people, like the Jews, who had fled their homeland and formed communities now scattered across the globe (Braziel 2008: 24). During the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the formation of diasporas resulted from similar political, economic and social circumstances. For those living in the diaspora, the general focus now is the 'connection between groups [in] different nation states whose commonality derives from

an original but maybe removed homeland; a new identity becomes constructed on a world scale which crosses national borders and boundaries' (Anthias 1998: 559 - 60).

Kim Butler (2001) suggests that the term diaspora now loosely defines a group of people who have been dispersed from an original homeland and have settled in two or more locations. These groups, she argues, must be connected to each other by group identity, maintain a strong relationship between communities in new locations and at 'home', and have existed for more than two generations (Butler 2001: 192). Peoples whose lands were annexed during the Ottoman collapse, sociologist Pierre Van Den Bergh (1981: 62) calls 'multistatal', referring to peoples like the Kurds and Armenians who, without land, continue to maintain a national identity. It is a term applied to landless communities, or to those denied a political identity by the dominant group and can describe Macedonian peoples now living in the diaspora (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 7).

Danforth (1997: 8) claims there was an expectation that, during the process of globalisation, interaction and integration between peoples would lead to cultural exchange and to the 'demise of the nation or the obsolescence of national identities. As he predicted, this did not occur, but it did lead to a closer scrutiny of diasporas. Research now describes diasporas as 'fractured sites of belonging, participations, disenfranchisement, identification or disidentification', suggesting spaces both dynamic and fluid (Braziel 2008: 158). However, Arjun Appadurai (1996) suggests that members of the diaspora remain connected to 'home' through complex networks that sweep the globe and carry information, people, money and images – all made possible through new networks of communication. While connections with 'home' are maintained, Danforth (1995) found in his research of Macedonian communities in the northern suburbs of Melbourne in the 1990s that identity was constantly re-imagined in the diaspora: constructed, reconstructed and not consolidated. In his research on the Croatian diaspora, Zlatko Skrbis also noted (1999: 184) that the politics of the diaspora is 'a controversial kind', a type of 'long distance nationalism' that has a life of its own and is independent from the homeland, while constantly referring to it.

The women interviewed for this research came from villages and towns in Aegean Macedonia and the Republic of North Macedonia. In the Melbourne diaspora, women from these regions ignore borders imposed by others, or the labels given to each partitioned location, but share a history and culture that makes them Macedonian. While the region's history remains disputed, as does the recognition of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, in domestic practices and in places of worship women, defend their Macedonian identity. Skrbis (1999: 184) describes identity in the diaspora as having a 'life of its own', it refers to a past and to a homeland where construction and reconstruction is never consolidated, a fluid and shifting national identity. This process in Macedonian communities highlights the complexity of identity formation in the diaspora. At 'home' the custodians of cultural identity had been women, who continue to play these roles in the diaspora, but now in public spaces women's practices connect the household and the Church, and in performance they express their national identity at church.

After partition, with the continuing discrimination against Macedonian people, private households provided stable spaces where women's labour ensured the transmission of cultural identity (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 7). But, after resettlement, Stuart Hall argues, a community's identity is 'not necessarily armour-plated against other identities', since identity is not fixed but is in constant transition (1988: 44-46) because identity formation depends on a transaction between the immigrant and a host community (Isgandarova 2009: 69). The construction of identity is found in memories of 'home', linked to loss and violence resulting from regional politics. In the diaspora, Macedonian families continue to practice identity not only in households but also in public spaces, where women's practical and ritual performances remain central to religious performance, for example. Women in the Orthodox Church participate in rites using ancient artefacts, practice gestures, using their native language, expressing a distinct national identity now re-imagined in the diaspora.

In the first century, the 'cult of Christ' had been just one in the 'mosaic of beliefs' found in the Roman Empire (Hughes 2017: 73). Over centuries the Orthodox Christian Church, has been shaped in ancient practice, influenced in Roman, Byzantium, and Ottoman occupation and more recently by 'ecclesiastical nationalism'. Its new form shapes

national identity of members in Orthodox Churches and has resulted in disputes over history and the ownership of symbols (Danforth 2000b: 50). Håland (2012b: 106) argues the Orthodox Church has been built on a past, which it transcends but 'does not reject it'. In her research of women's performance in Greece, Håland explores how Orthodox Church rites, adapted from earlier traditions, allow the expression of both faith and national identity. Ancient beliefs and practices are not rejected but have adapted to new situations. The link between households and the Church, 'still largely unknown' in the modern world but had followed 'the invisible rhythms of family life and hospitality' remain a pattern which connect practice and performance (Cooper 2013: xviii). Håland (2009b: 103) claims religious rituals in Europe have become the means to express political discourse and performed using religious symbols and practice and has become a matter of faith. She concludes rites combine both religious and political elements and can be complementary and interdependent. In the diaspora, Macedonian women perform national identity and express it in ritual and practice which is found both in households and at the Church.

In this thesis, I examine the rites practiced in Macedonian households in Melbourne and in a Macedonian Orthodox church. Håland's work was an important resource for my research as it is her study of seasonal rites that makes a connection between the ancient agricultural year, the role of goddesses, and the cyclical markers which now shape the that church and highlight the role of Mary as the mother of God. This proved useful to understanding the important roles women play in performances at church. While women's roles in public rituals are important, Håland (2012b: 110) shows in her analysis of public festivals in Greece that earlier research into such festivals reflected the values of a male dominated system and, because of this, analysis of women's roles is often 'one-sided and incomplete'. Viewed from a patriarchal system, women's roles are performed on the margins and not seen as central but, as she suggests, 'since marginalisation is a spatial metaphor' [it] 'depends where you are standing' (Håland 2012b: 108 fn. 61). To further investigate women's roles in church rituals, in Chapters Five and Six below, my analysis of life-crisis rites is also shaped by van Gennep's early work on rites of passage (1960) and the later work of Victor Turner (1969). These provided useful frameworks to

understand the complex nature of both seasonal and life-crisis rites in the Macedonian Church.

The Macedonian question

Evangelos Kofos (1989: 229) argues that 'during the period of "national awakening" and emancipation', communities in the Balkans depended on historical legacies to 'create national awareness and shape national ideology' and did so with 'the reincarnation of long extinct empires'. Under Ottoman rule, religion and language had been the principle factors in the shaping of national consciousness, but the region's historical legacy was also important. Increasingly, the past 'triggered and stimulated' political developments in each region as heroes, battles, symbols and events provided a complex and layered history for Macedonians which, by the end of the 19th century and into the early 20th, was a factor in shaping national consciousness. Kofos (1989: 262) suggests that in 'Macedonian districts of Greece, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria three distinct identities have emerged, based on three different perceptions of Macedonia'. For the many Macedonians living in the diaspora, images from ancient history are reproduced in public spaces and used in public protests. Philip II of Macedon conquered the Greek city states and ended Greek rule, and his son, Alexander the Great, created a vast empire 'and introduced to Europe monarchy and the divine right of kings' and 'completely transformed the world' (Breasted 1945: 510). In the diaspora, narratives of this history are revived where any attempt to appropriate the knowledge or to falsify it is challenged (Kofos 1989: 262; Gingeras 2008: 341).

Nations, as Stathis Gourgouris argues, are 'creations, which does not mean they are false, but that they are created by human beings at particular moments of history' (1994).[3] He wrote this in an opinion piece published to make the argument to Robert Kaplan and Loring Danforth, two academics who have supported Macedonian identity, that 'Macedonia is a nation … because it has been made one'. But the letter is also a reminder that the nation-state of Greece was also 'created', a problem that has divided historians and anthropologists, and generated debate in which academics accuse each other of

[3] Opinion and Editorial, *The New York Times* (May 9, 1994).

misrepresenting the facts. No area of research is immune to criticism, as Aristotle Tziampiris (2001: 180) accuses Tasos Kostopoulos of exclusively dealing with 'a particular linguistic aspect of the Macedonian issue' and questions whether there is any evidence to show that the Greek state suppressed the speaking of Slavic dialects in Macedonian provinces over the last nine decades. Tziampiris suggests that Kostopoulos' text is problematic: there are problems with the book's documentation and even if none of 'the documents are fake', there is the 'question of their selective use' and 'serious doubts about its methodology and arguments' (2001: 180). As Danforth suggests, discussions among historians and anthropologists concern two peoples who claim history, heroes, symbols and the right to use the name Macedonia.

Not only are history, heroes and symbols used for political purposes but so too is religion, as in the Greek Orthodox Church rites adopted to express opinions on political issues. Håland (2012b: 99) refers to the rite of Mary's Dormition to illustrate that imagery can be used to represent current political national identity. The Macedonian Church has had a long history associated with the need for autonomy. According to Ines Murzaku (2018a 43, 1; 2018b), for centuries church autonomy had been ignored, only asserted in the 19th century when recognition of the Orthodox churches became linked to national identity. In 2018 the 'name-change agreement' was successful, but the 'the thorny issue' remained, though as Murzaku suggests, this may have an 'impact on settling the autocephaly issue of the Macedonian Orthodox Church' (2018a 1).

This is why the building of Macedonian churches in Melbourne has been an important political statement: to the local Macedonian community, they are places to express and defend a unique national identity. In the diaspora, the debate that is part of the Macedonian Question, is connected not only to the recognition of the Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church but also to the acknowledgement of Macedonia in Christian narratives. Macedonian congregations claim that Macedonia was the first place in Europe where Saint Paul began to teach the new religion. The New Testament refers to Paul being called in the night by a man to 'come over into Macedonia and help us' (Acts 19.9). Current research into the early religious movement has changed its focus from men's roles to those of women in the establishment of the early church in Macedonia. Traders

and household leaders were 'leading women' in their communities, offering hospitality and financial support to Paul and spreading the message (Cooper 2013). The links between households and the Church remain evident in the diaspora and are maintained by the practices of Macedonian women. Other research shows that women in Greece and Crete play similar roles, connecting the past to the present and linking households to public spaces in their performances (Christ 2011; Håland 2012a).

Methodology

Background

The research findings presented in this thesis were influenced by several factors. The most significant is my connection to a large extended family that left a village in Florina, a province in Aegean Macedonia, in the 1960s. In the late 1980s I met the family at the celebration of the betrothal (*daroy*) of my elder daughter, Stella, and Peter, the only son of a Macedonian immigrant family. This event made public the couple's intention to marry and introduced two families who until then had not met. Peter, by then in his 30s, had come as a young child with his parents and sister to join members of their extended family, who had earlier settled in Melbourne. Peter's family was only able to immigrate to Australia because of a change in government policy (Immigration Act 1958). The 'whole villages' that moved from Aegean Macedonia during the 1960s and 1970s included his family, who left Peshosnitsa,[4] a village in Florina. Their reasons for leaving were a combination of politics, economics and the need to find a safe place to raise a family. This is echoed in other migrant stories, including that of my own family, that in 1852 made its way from the Orkney Islands to South Australia. Before WWI, Macedonian workers journeyed to new locations to make their fame and fortune, including Australia, but it was only during the 1960s and 1970s that large numbers of Macedonian families settled and Macedonian communities developed.

[4] This is the name used by villagers who settled in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s. Early in my research I used a translation service but was told that no village of that name existed in Florina. Villagers later told me that it had been renamed by Greek authorities after the 1913 annexation.

Because of my relationship to the Gelis family,[5] I was introduced to family members who now lived in Melbourne and Adelaide, and to other villagers who had settled in Melbourne. The family included two sisters, Rose (Peter's mother) and Lydia, and seven other siblings.[6] After WWII, two remained in the village and one sister moved to Germany. She, I was told by Lydia, had returned to the village and now lived on a generous German pension in the household of the remaining family. One brother settled in Adelaide and became a market gardener. Rose and Lydia married while still in the village, then left with their husbands and children, arriving at different times in Melbourne. They have remained close and still live near each other.

Since the 1960s, contact has been maintained between the families and other villagers, so at the time of Stella and Peter's wedding, relatives made the journey from Peshosnitsa to Melbourne. On other occasions, village relatives visited to attend family or religious celebrations. On these occasions, stories retold the drama and laughter of village life: of characters and events that shape a history still shared and remembered. In the early years of my relationship with the Gelis family, I wondered what they felt about their only son marrying someone who was not a member of their community. As Peter's *sverkra* (mother-in-law), I was considered a family member. Cultural and national matters had to be explained, since I was after all an 'outsider', but the women of the family always introduced me as *sverkra* to their friends and others in the community. In my role as mother-in-law, I participated in many family celebrations: name days, Easter and Christmas meals and other events held at the Church: weddings, baptisms, funerals and memorials. At family events, which always included an abundant feast and gift giving, I listened to family stories, asked questions and was asked questions about my own life and experiences.

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[5] Gelis is the original name of the family, remembered but not used by the family in Melbourne. Family names were changed by Greek authorities during colonisation.

[6] All personal names used in this thesis are pseudonyms. I have included all children born to the parents of Rose and Lydia (the Gelis family). I had been told different numbers by the sisters, as three children who had died during childbirth had not been included, but this list was supplied by a younger member of the family.

In kitchens, women told stories of the past and village life: of houses and gardens, family and friends, dances, picnics and weddings, and as they worked, they expressed their Macedonian identity in their domestic practices. Often for the older women these stories were tempered by the experience of the war years and after. There were always stories of settling in Melbourne: of housing, employment, children, picnics and weddings. It always surprised me how connected the women were to 'home'. I was told of and shown DVDs of weddings, listened to their excitement at news of births and heard the sorrow in their voices at the death of someone still remembered. DVDs were also sent and shared in the community, of Macedonian festivals showing Macedonian families who had settled in other regions, such as Canada. At family gatherings, older members are all too willing to tell stories of their childhood to highlight the difference between their childhood experiences and those of younger members living in the Australian suburbs.

On many occasions, I heard family memories being re-told again and again; in their telling, stories act to shape a family's history. Tariq Ali writes that family stories act like 'myths [and] always overpower truth' (2015: 1). They are also like myths insofar as they are shaped by place and time. This has led Karen Armstrong to suggest that 'there is never a single, orthodox version of a myth' and never a single, orthodox version of a family story, for as 'our circumstances change we need to tell our stories differently in order to bring out their timeless truth' (2005: 11). Anastasia Christou's research suggests that 'stories cannot stand in isolation but … [are] shaped by the very socio-cultural and politico-historical conditions that penetrate their construction' (2009: 144). Cultures tell themselves stories that connect the public and private worlds and, in the process, act like myths to reshape cultural identity for both individual and community (Christou 2009: 143).

A year of fieldwork

After many years of involvement with the Macedonian extended family into which my daughter married, and their community in Melbourne, in 2015 I commenced research for this thesis. When members of the family were told I was going to undertake a study of Macedonian families in the diaspora, with a special emphasis on women and their roles

in private and public spaces, there was much interest but I was asked to tell the truth, and not to believe what others said of the Macedonians. I heard this at my first interview. I arrived at the house armed with *The Times Comprehensive Map of the World,* which I believed included a map of Macedonia. But before I could open it, I was told politely and firmly by Lydia's husband Jovan, a deacon in the local Macedonian Orthodox Church, that as it was an English publication, it was a lie. Lydia's family much later gave me a photocopy, not of the map of their own that I had requested, but of a rather battered poster covered in small photographs of members of the Secret Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation (SMAC), 1895–1913. At each corner of the poster, a sketch of a skull, pistol, soldiers and a lion can be seen faintly. From its state, I assumed that it was a photocopy of an original, which had been shared and handled many times by members of the family.

In the months that followed, Mariana, born in Melbourne in the 1970s to Macedonian parents, kindly made a gift of another Macedonian map. This map, not black and white like the earlier one, had bright colours and showed Macedonia surrounded in gold, as a region now divided by barbed wire borders. Danforth (1997, 1995) includes maps like these, which circulated among the Melbourne diaspora during the time of his research and acted as a reminder to the community of Macedonian families of the 1913 annexation by Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania. In Melbourne, these are mental maps for Macedonians who still hope for an autonomous nation. At 'home', the nation is still divided by borders, but at the church where I conducted my research (discussed below), women who were from Aegean Macedonia (northern Greece) did not act as though they were divided from women who had arrived later from the Republic of North Macedonia; they are part of one nation, sharing a national identity. While there may be differences in women's cultural practices, which were discussed, sometimes celebrated and often laughed about, this was not enough to challenge their shared Macedonian identity.

My research included visits to families and households, for formal interviews, informal conversations and participant observation, discussed in the next section. As explained below, some of the fieldwork was conducted at the local Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church (hereafter referred to as 'the Church'), where I observed a full year's cycle of

rituals. Women in the family to which I am connected through marriage attended the Church, though some only occasionally, but these visits proved crucial as they revealed that women's roles in this public arena are closely linked to their practices within their homes.

The research was approved in advance by La Trobe University's Human Ethics Committee. Informants were fully informed about the nature of the study and the nature of their engagement in it. Informants were made aware of their rights to refuse or to withdraw from the study. Those who agreed were assured that their real names would not feature in the thesis. Nevertheless, many informants still feared that their participation might result in reprisals from authorities, not only for themselves but also for their relatives at 'home'. I was also aware that many older participants were not comfortable speaking English and assumed that most were not able to read English. For this reason, the consent and withdrawal forms were translated into Macedonian. This too created a problem, as some older members who speak fluent Macedonian, and many who also speak Greek, cannot read Macedonian and had to have the form read to them by a relative.

The research was centred on members of the Gelis family, including cousins, aunts and uncles, and also their friends from the region. Over 30 years, in houses and in other spaces, I had attended many family events. Since Stella and Peter's wedding, new family members have been born and others have died, so this relationship has been forged through times of joy and sadness. Dorothy Hodgson's statement about the dilemmas that often confront ethnographic researchers is relevant here; citing the early work of Philippe Bourgois (1990), she writes:

> Anthropologists 'rely on ethnographic methods especially participant observation' to 'build rapport' and forge personal relationships with people as we observe and participate in sometimes quite intimate aspects of their lives. Much 'data' is collected through conversations, causal observations, and other unobtrusive interactions for which it is impossible to request 'informed consent' at every turn (1999: 201-224).

Informant interviews

I interviewed members of the extended Gelis family and other women who attended the Church. Although only six women in the family agreed to be formally interviewed, 15 others were willing to participate in casual conversation, or to allow me to observe domestic or ritual practices. Most women I met at the Church and spoke to over the year were reluctant to have their interviews recorded. At family events, it was more effective to conduct casual interviews, and we often spoke again about the same subjects. We spoke in women's homes, in cars or in designated meeting places and I conducted interviews without any form of recording apart from my notebook. After each interview, I used my scribbled notes to write up our conversations. As I saw the women in the congregation over the year, I was able to ask further questions, or to seek clarification. At large family events, the informal setting also allowed me to ask further follow-up questions.

The extended family was the starting point of this research, but later interviews were held with members of the local Macedonian Church, which the family had attended since the 1990s. At the Church, some women were interested in my research but while some came to speak with me and offered information, only a few were willing to be interviewed and none wanted to be named or recorded. I stood in the nave with them each week and gradually came to be acknowledged with a nod, and after the Divine Liturgy was asked to share coffee and cake with them on the Church verandah or in the Church Hall. Other women, daughters of Macedonian immigrants, heard about the research and wanted older family members to be interviewed. But none of these women were willing to participate, mostly claiming that the past was too difficult to speak of now. One daughter wanted her mother to talk to me of her childhood during the Civil War. According to her daughter, the experience had been traumatic for her mother and had affected the rest of her life. However, a few weeks later, the daughter rang to say her mother had thought about an interview, wished me well with the study but could not speak of these events. She said her mother still worried about the Greek authorities, not for her, but for her family in Melbourne and those who still lived at 'home'.

This fear of authorities was raised not only by older women: Sophie, one of the first women I interviewed, who was in her early 60s at the time, rang me after a protest march (discussed below) and asked me not to use her interview. She was worried about being thought of by Greek authorities as too political. I emphasised, as I had before the interview, that her name would not be used. She was adamant that she did not want anything she had signed held at the university, however when I told her she could choose the name I would use to refer to her, she finally agreed that I could use the information she had given during the interview.

Thus, most of the interviews were conducted as I sat with women at church; sometimes with just one person, sometimes with a number of women on the verandah; sometimes outside in the car park or in the church hall, though the constant chatter in the hall made it difficult. One woman wanted to be interviewed inside the church. Our first interview was done after the service had finished and she showed me sections of the building that her father had worked on when it was being renovated. Her parents were both dead and her relationship with her father had been difficult, but I understood that she was proud of his hard work. A husband and his wife, both on the Church Committee, had refused to be interviewed, but on one occasion the man took me outside and talked about the difficulties of the renovation. He showed me sections of the church that he had worked on, but also told me he would not sign any form or allow his name to be used. This was one of the many occasions, Hodgson suggests, on which it is 'impossible to request "informed consent"' (1999: 201). On occasion, I asked if I could take notes, and most were happy if I did. Sometimes I was not able to do this and was anxious to get somewhere quiet, so I could write an outline of what had been said. From these hastily written scraps, I later asked informants if I remembered correctly what they had told me.

The women I interviewed at the Church included friends of the sisters, Rose and Lydia, from Aegean Macedonia, but also a group of women who were younger, who had arrived in Melbourne in the 1990s from the then Republic of Macedonia. These women too, were unwilling to be formally interviewed and wrote the names they wanted to be known by on small slips of paper: Fisa, Marie, Rose, Suzie and Petti. They did agree to have a photograph taken in a shopping mall showing them holding the map of Macedonia that

Mariana had given me. These women told me stories about their homes in different regions of the Republic. They spoke of their reasons for leaving, taught me Macedonian dances, fed me Macedonian food, translated Macedonian television news, told me some very racy jokes and taught me how to play bingo. This happened when I attended Monday luncheons in the church hall and other venues in surrounding suburbs. Often, they spoke of their employment after arriving in Melbourne: like women who had arrived earlier, they worked in factories. Now, many of their children run businesses, have university degrees and work in government jobs. These women had retired because of age or illness and most were widows, but their views reflected those of younger Macedonian women, and, as none of them wanted to live with her children, they were constantly making plans to journey overseas but mostly travelled in Australia. Both groups of women who attended the Church, those from Aegean Macedonia and those from the Republic, spoke the same language, shared cultural traditions and a national identity.

Members of the clergy, both parish priests and deacons, were kind enough to speak to me and to answer questions. During my year of visits to the Church, two parish priests and a retired priest undertook pastoral duties. But during the Church's patronal festival, priests from other churches joined the congregation for not only the service but also the feast that followed. A young priest joined the parish priest for more than a month, as he finished his training and waited to learn where he and his wife would be sent. Over those weeks, he spoke to me and allowed me to photograph him wearing his beautiful white cope embroidered with golden thread. On three occasions, I was introduced to the archbishop of the Macedonian Orthodox Church in Australia when he visited the Church. Unfortunately, he spoke little English, but made allowances for my unfamiliarity with the appropriate protocol for greeting an archbishop. During these visits, aspects of the performance highlighted the link between religion and politics in the Macedonian diaspora, as is discussed later.

Observing performances in the Church

While this research depended in part on data collected from both formal and casual interviews, participant observation often moves beyond the text and allows a different

focus. Dorothy Hodgson writes of this in an introduction to ethnography in which she reminds the observer to be aware of the visual images, styles, practices and gestures that are part of both secular and religious performance (2001: 1–23). Women's participation in the weekly Divine Liturgy, their performances in seasonal rituals and life-cycle rites supports such a view, and in interviews and during my weekly participant and observation at the Church, I was shown how crucial women's roles are in religious practice and in the maintenance of national identity. Their roles in religious rites needed to be explored as these roles are both practical in the domestication of the Church interior, and crucial to the complete performance of many rituals.

Churches, mosques and synagogues are important to diasporas because they serve not only as places of worship but also as 'communities of memory' (Isgandarova 2007: 65). For the newcomer, the church is a 'social and cultural link' that connects them to 'people and places through religious practices' (Kallis et al 2018: 1). Places of worship are transactional: they connect new settlers to the host community, a place where traditions change – both among immigrants and the host community (Isgandarova 2007: 69). In the Macedonian diaspora, churches have a memory-preserving function but also serve other, multi-functional purposes. The church becomes an institution where people who share a common heritage can meet, speak their original language and share culture, and families can escape the long-term trauma of geo-political division, occupation and colonisation. It is a public space for remembering and performing Macedonian identity.

Diaspora celebrations held in Macedonian churches are events that connect immigrant families, help preserve memory and are expressions of culture and politics. Chapter Three discusses the status of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, a diocese of the Ohrid Archbishopric, and explores its politics, including lack of recognition from other Orthodox churches. Church rites are expressions of the congregation's faith but, in the diaspora, they can also celebrate the politics of national identity. Women's performances at the Macedonian Church are expressions of both religious faith and national identity. This is evident in both sacred and secular events, where women use language, symbols and artefacts to celebrate goddesses, gods, saints, heroes and martyrs, and in women's practical and ritual performances, their choices of colour and decoration, patterns of

prayer, song, gesture and gift giving, their roles are central to the expression of identity politics.

Hence it was important for me to attend sacred and secular rituals held in the Church. Attendance at the weekly Divine Liturgies celebrated over the year, the seasonal rites that follow the rhythm of the agricultural year, and rites that celebrate the cycle of a person's life allowed me to witness expressions of both faith and politics. My fieldwork in the church began in April 2016 with the most important religious festival held in the Orthodox Church: Palm Sunday, the Sundays during Lent, Holy Week and Holy Thursday (Good Friday), and the Saturday evening ritual and procession, which ends at midnight with the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection.

Life-cycle rites celebrated in the Church are not linked to prescribed dates, except in the case of weddings which are usually held at times appropriate times to the liturgical calendar. I attended several life-cycle rites over the year, including the Churching of Women, where a mother brings her small baby to the church, the baptism and chrismation (confirmation) of the year-old child, and the many memorials held in the Church and its cemetery. Before I began fieldwork, I had attended weddings (and watched films of weddings) and burial services at the Church and cemetery, and feasts to celebrate a person's life held in the hall. I also attended other rites and commemorations during the liturgical year. These celebrated the lives of saints, the patronal festival, and the feast days of martyrs. I attended Divine Liturgies where the young, newly ordained parish priest helped to conduct services, and I observed the rituals that accompanied the Archbishop's visit to the Church.

At the Macedonian Orthodox Church, I met older women, friends of Rose and Lydia from villages in the Aegean Macedonia region. One group of older women always came together in the same car, driven by the same woman. I was fearful for all in the car as each week the driver sped through the gate into the carpark, holding my breath until they all alighted safely. These women were part of the choir and came early to help decorate the Church. They arrived for each ritual in the liturgical calendar and for important rites, when they were joined by children, grandchildren and sometimes great-grandchildren.

This was also the attendance pattern for Rose and Lydia's families, who only came to church for important festivals, and both women expressed some sadness to me about this.

As women arrived at the church, they would meet in the vestibule, greet each other in Macedonian, and begin the rituals of entry. As I always arrived with Rose, they would greet me too. On the occasions when I asked questions, they asked me to wait for younger members to translate for them, or sometimes replied that they did not know enough English. Thus, I often found it easier to speak to them as a group; I suspected that many were embarrassed about their lack of English. When Lydia was available, she translated for me.

Understanding the nature of women's practices in the public spaces of the Orthodox Church was an important aspect of my research. My observations revealed that these practices were both practical and crucial to ritual performances. It was mainly the older women who came early to decorate the church with leaves, herbs and flowers and although younger women arrived later with items to place in front of the icons (usually near the icon of Mary). One of the older women, who never spoke to me but nodded and smiled, brought me gifts of basil, but always at the appropriate festival. It was only the women who arrived early, then sat in the high-seated choir stall or stood in the front pew on the left side of the church and sang the prayers. During the service it was they who prompted and helped the clergy, knew the order of hymns and readings, and gave the appropriate responses to prayers. In this space, their agency was apparent. On many occasions, women appeared like the directors of a performance as they prompted the clergy and covered up with their loud singing any faults he might have made, to bring him back to the 'script'. After the service, it was these women who organised events on the verandah, and food and refreshments in the church hall.

Other events were celebrated at the church too, that may have seemed to be more secular. One yearly event held in the hall celebrates the independence of the Republic of Macedonia (renamed the Republic of North Macedonia); others were influenced by the

host country: including Mother's Day, Melbourne Cup and the Monday women's luncheons.

Participant observation beyond the Church

Church women also invited me to coffee shops, picnics, sporting events, food halls, gambling venues, shopping centres and into their houses. At the suggestion of a young family member, I visited an exhibition titled *Girls in Our Town: Women in the Shadow of the 'Magnificent Empire'*, which presented the life of women in the Florina Prefecture from the years 1900-1918 and 2017. The exhibition curated photographs of women and clothing from the period. Needlework and embroidery on clothing and seen in the photographs of women who lived in the region showed the influence of the many who travelled along the via Egnatia.[7] The photographs illustrated the great diversity of those who lived in the region (Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Gypsy). I mention this because I later learned that women in the family and at the Church saw the exhibition as a celebration of Greek rather than Macedonian culture, illustrating the complex way that identity is being re-shaped in the Melbourne diaspora.

A different public expression of national identity, rather more controversial, was made at the beginning of 2018. An authorised protest march, titled 'We are Macedonians Standing in Defence of Macedonia', included members of the Macedonian community from both Aegean Macedonia and the Republic. Family groups, along with members of the clergy from different Macedonian churches, marched to support the struggle for recognition of their national identity.[8] The demonstration revealed that the Macedonian question is not yet resolved and remains important to those in the diaspora, as discussed in Chapter One below.

Other interactions, the most enjoyable, were those I attended with women and girls of the Gelis family, where we were always learning something new from the older women.

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[7] The importance of the via Egnatia, a highway built through Macedonia, which linked the Roman Empire to its Eastern provinces, is discussed in the next chapter.

[8] Estimates of the number of people on the street on that day ranged from 30,000 to 75,000 thousand.!

As a participant, I was shown how to make food and items to be used in the home and church rituals. I watched and helped stretch the thin pastry used to make bread known as *musnik,* rolled rice balls, browned peppers and other Macedonian food. I was shown how to knit *pinkies,*[9] watched skirts being crocheted, and learned how to make candles and coloured eggs for Easter. Since at these teaching sessions I was just one of the class, I heard the older women telling stories of their younger years at 'home' and of the mistakes they made in shopping for ingredients when they first settled in the suburbs.

Over the course of the year, women brought their children and grandchildren to the Church for me to meet. One woman brought her two granddaughters to a Monday luncheon. She had told me that she wanted to bring the girls as their mother worked, and she would like to teach them to dance. That day, I noticed two beautiful young Asian girls sitting quietly on the verandah but did not associate them with her. A father brought his two daughters to the midnight service on Holy Saturday night and both were dressed in colourful Macedonian costumes. He asked me to photograph them, which I did, but I forgot to ask if the photograph could be used in the thesis. I took many other photographs, including many at the protest march: a young woman with the star of Philip painted in gold and red on her face; t-shirts with printed images of Gotse Delchev; and a man with his large Macedonian mountain shepherd dog marched with young boys dressed as Alexander the Great.[10] I did not request permission to use these pictures, so they remained in storage, serving as memory prompts as I wrote up this thesis.

Some of the women who were not willing to be interviewed brought gifts and books for me to read. I received texts about Macedonian Orthodox saints and photocopied articles about villages in the region. Other women showed me pictures on their mobile phones

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[9] These are knitted slippers worn in the house as outside shoes are left at the front door.

[10] Claims are made by both Macedonians and Greeks to the same symbols and heroes, including the symbol of the star/sun associated with Philip 11 of Macedon. In the late 1970s, an excavation near the town of Vergina uncovered what is thought to be Philip's tomb, now annexed in the northern region of Greece, which contained this design; at the establishment of the Republic of Macedonian, the republic chose the star/sun design as the central image for their flag and used the colours red and yellow. The politics of the region led to the Republic having to adopt of a different design, but the colours remain. The colours are now associated with Macedonia, used in the diaspora to decorate private and public spaces, and in the clothes worn by the young boys dressed as the Macedonian hero Alexander the Great. The *sharplaninec* is an ancient dog breed from the Balkan region, but whose origins and ownership are disputed.

of 'home' that illustrated the horror of Macedonian displacement: black and white images of families with their children, carrying all they possessed as they trudged through the mud, and other images of starving or dying people lying on the side of roads. Many brought flowers, fruit and vegetables or gave gifts of wine and biscuits. Another Macedonian woman, who worked with my daughter, Elizabeth, heard I was researching Macedonian immigrants and sent me a text treasured by the family. It was lent with instructions that I must look after it and return it when the thesis was finished. It was Peter Hill's *Macedonians in Australia* (1989).

I received another gift of a text at the end of my second visit to the Church. The parish priest presented me with a copy of the Divine Liturgy: on one page the text was in Macedonian, on the opposite page, in English. He apologised for the English translation and asked for any suggestions about the English expression. On a few occasions after the Divine Liturgy we sat on the verandah and spoke of the differences between the Eastern and the Western Churches. The discussions concerned differences between 'original sin' and 'first sin'; Mary, the mother of God, Her Dormition or Assumption; and Baptism and Conformation, which shed light on differences between Eastern and Western Christianity. These discussions proved extremely useful. However, the gift of the Divine Liturgy proved a very useful prop in quite a different way. During services, women who stood near me watched to see if I was following the text and used it as an excuse to ask about my research. Sometimes they helped me to find the place or to explain its meaning or offered other information.

There were also many informal encounters with people who told stories and responded to me in surprising ways. On one occasion I was left rather embarrassed as I stood on a suburban railway station. I had been speaking to a woman and had mentioned my research which focused on Macedonian women now living in Melbourne. As the train approached, she jumped up and rushed along the station towards the approaching train shouting 'Macedonians are Greeks', and so made sure I would not get into that carriage. This was my first encounter with an expression of Greek/Macedonian hostility. However, most encounters were far more positive and allowed many insights into the lives of Macedonian immigrants, their children and neighbours. Their stories told not only of

settlement but also of how the first Macedonian settlers and children saw their identity. A building company assessor, Graig, visited my house on occasion and each time saw me working at my table. When I told him the topic of my research, he lifted the sleeve of his shirt and showed me his arm, which had been tattooed with Philip's sun/star. In his early 40s, he was born in Australia, but his parents had immigrated from Aegean Macedonia. He talked about his parents, especially his father who had suffered discrimination and name-calling when he first arrived in Melbourne. His mother had died some time ago, but his father was still alive and being cared for as he suffered from dementia.

In a later conversation, Graig and I talked about a Macedonian/Aboriginal flag used at the Macedonian Food and Wine Festival held in Footscray in 2017. The flag acted was the backdrop to the 'Welcome to Country' ceremony conducted by members of the Aboriginal community. The familiar colours of yellow, red and black were adopted and in the centre of the flag the sun/star united the two communities. He spoke of Macedonian and Aboriginal peoples both losing their land when colonised. I also asked him about his decision get the tattoo of Philip's symbol on his arm, an element in the Macedonian/Greek dispute. He smiled when he answered and told me he had had it done when he was younger and he recalled summers at the beach when Greek men would smile at him and say, 'Oh, you are Greek'. He told me he would say nothing, but would think: 'No, I am not, I am Macedonian'.

I followed media stories and news items about Macedonia and Macedonians. A radio program broadcast during a taxi strike (ABC Radio National, 7 February 2017) included an interview with a Macedonian driver. The man spoke of losing everything when the state government changed the legislation governing the taxi trade in Victoria. At the end of an interview held at the man's house, the interviewer asked about a series of photographs over an inside doorway. The taxi driver explained: these were Macedonian freedom fighters and he had placed the photographs over the door to remind him of his national identity. The taxi driver then named the men, but the only name I recognised was Gotse Delchev, whom I had heard of during a visit to the church hall when I asked those sitting by me at the table about a photograph on the wall of a young man dressed in soldier's fatigues. I was told: 'that is Gotse Delchev, a teacher, freedom fighter and martyr'. He

was killed at the age of 33 during Macedonia's struggle for independence; to many in the congregation, Delchev remains Macedonia's most important hero.[11] His photograph, along with those of other Macedonian secular martyrs, now hangs on the wall of the suburban church hall.

Other people I talked to told of their Macedonian neighbours with whom they had formed close and long relationships. One such conversation happened quite accidently at a local shop where I often buy home-made food. On this day, I noticed two older women stretching dough on a slab of marble by the oven at the front of the shop. As I knew the owner, I asked if the women were making *musnik.* He shook his head and told me he knew *musnik* because he had eaten it when it was given it to him by his neighbour who is Macedonian. He explained that the women making bread were Lebanese, like him, and while the bread was similar, women in each region made bread differently, and put different fillings in it. He spoke with great affection of the long relationship he has had with his Macedonian neighbour, but said he worried about him. He said his neighbour drank too much, and then shook his head and told me: 'He has lost his homeland'.

Working with the data collected

As the intention of the thesis was to understand women's roles within the family and church, with a focus on the maintenance and reconstruction of identity in the diaspora, the formal interviews were semi-structured, guided by themes rather than by fixed questions. The questions were chosen to generate discussions with women who had come from Florina and settled in Melbourne. They asked about the family's relationship with villages in the surrounding region, about women's roles at 'home' and their work within families. Questions were asked about marriage, decisions to emigrate, experiences during and after settlement, work in the suburbs and their perceptions of change within the family. During the interviews I was guided by the informants, as many had prepared and brought photographs, artefacts and had stories they wanted to tell.

[11] The parish priest told me that in the Republic of North Macedonia, Delchev is a national hero to young people. His image, like that of Che Guevara in Cuba, features on t-shirts, keyrings and other goods.

Interviews conducted with one or two informants were always useful but so, too, were the informal discussions with women from different generations who talked about changes in family attitudes and their sense of identity. No formal or informal interviews were recorded, so I took detailed notes which I typed up afterwards.

Participant observation was one of my most important data sources. In the Church, visual images, practices, gestures, artefacts and smells were all important and highlighted women's roles in the maintenance of Macedonian identity. I took notes, sketched the space, drew patterns of the performance, collected leaves and gifts of crosses to take home. Later, I took photographs with a borrowed camera. On all occasions, women made place for me at the front of the nave or put me where I could get a better image or alerted me to the next stage that would be important. This data was crucial for several reasons as visual images, the photographs and DVDs acted as prompts and added to my written descriptions. They record the colours, the placement of people, the artefacts used, allowing the performance to be brought to life more accurately. They also allowed me to see the ritual patterns found in repeated gestures and actions, the lighting of candles, colours in foliage and in the gowns of priests and deacons, and showed the interaction between the priests and the women. Data collection included notes written of the events held in private houses, the church hall, at the cemetery and elsewhere in Melbourne, along with visual items, and a collection of other items such as holy water, leaves, herbs, flowers, palm crosses and gifts.

Data analysis was done manually, using the broad interview questions as a starting point for content analysis and thematic analysis. Further themes were added as notes from the formal and informal interviews and many casual conversations were analysed, along with my detailed notes of events and rituals. Throughout this analysis, the photographs I took and those given to me by participants, and the many items collected or observed, added further detail. I was assisted in the research and later in the writing process by my ongoing relationship with the women. These women were always willing to answer questions, give their opinions and explain what they saw as their roles and responsibilities in households and in other spaces and this helped to shape the thesis.

Limitations of this study

There are several limitations to the approach that I took in this research. I had made the decision at the outset to speak to more women than men, and that was the case, although men related or married to women in the family often spoke to me. Men at the Church also asked about my research, and often agreed with the focus of the study, and the importance of women's roles in the community; a number of them introduced me to their wives and daughters. Another important limitation was my inability to understand or speak much Macedonian: although younger women speak both Macedonian and English, older women mostly speak only their native tongue. To deal with this deficiency, I made sure when listening and asking questions that others were present to interpret when needed. The nature of my relationship with the extended family, and later with the women in the congregation, allowed me to observe and participate in intimate moments in their life. 'Data' was collected in many casual conversations, sometimes while watching rites, and it was on these occasions that I could again ask questions. Sometimes the answers of the women contradicted each other or were at variance, sometimes due to regional differences. On other occasions, aspects of a story would be remembered differently by the women, but these were usually small matters, and the substance was shared. Women told stories, especially those of 'home', as their own but, because of their age, it highlighted the way stories in families are shared, and as Ali writes (2000), become family myths. Because of the number of women in this research and the personal relationships I had built with many of them in conversations conducted over many years, generalisations cannot be made to include all Macedonian women or those who claim Macedonian heritage in the Melbourne diaspora. The focus on the Melbourne diaspora also limits the study and my findings cannot be generalised to the Macedonian diaspora elsewhere.

Chapter summary

This thesis consists of seven chapters as well as this Introduction. In order to make sense of women's stories, it was necessary to provide a truncated history of the Balkans region.

This region and its problems are still referred to as the 'Macedonian Question', a 'question' still disputed not only by nation-states and peoples in the region within Europe but also within communities in the Macedonian diaspora.

The first chapter provides a very brief overview of a long, contested history that stretches from an ancient kingdom and empire to its conquest by other empires. The chapter discusses the strategic importance of Macedonia in modern history where it remained relevant to its neighbours and to the Western powers. The consequences of the 1913 partition and colonisation of the region and its people have generated an ongoing debate between historians and anthropologists in which each accuses the other of misrepresentation. The result of colonisation by the middle of the 20th century is discussed to show that in the mass emigration in the 1960s, Macedonian diasporic populations were established in North America, Canada and Australia. The chapter concludes with the suggestion that in new locations the past continues to influence and re-shape a national identity based on the 'past', which is reconstructed in the present.

Chapter Two focuses on women's stories of their memories of 'home' and of settling in Melbourne, showing their roles in maintaining and shaping Macedonian identity in the diaspora. Women from both Aegean Macedonia, who emigrated in the 1960s, and women from the Republic of North Macedonia, who began to arrive in Melbourne in the late 20th century, are included, as it is their personal accounts that highlight their shared history and the politics of the region. Fani's story is used as an exemplar, highlighting her family's experiences, both at 'home' and in Australia. It discusses Australia's migration history to illustrate that a government policy can change not only the host country but also the lives of immigrant families.

Chapter Three discusses the importance of the establishment of Macedonian Orthodox Christian Churches for the Melbourne diaspora. It includes a description of the distinctive architectural style of the local church and how older sacred places have been adapted. A brief history of the Roman province of Macedonia is included in this chapter as it was from this region that the teachings of the new religious movement made its way into Europe. The acceptance of Christian teaching by the Roman Empire is discussed in order

to focus on the dramatic change in roles of women and men within the Church (Breasted 1944; Cooper 2014), as well as later divisions and disputes that concerned matters of doctrine and resulted in the split into the Eastern and Western churches. Tensions later felt within the Orthodox Christian Church and still expressed today are related to the political tension in the region. My research on a Macedonian Orthodox church in the Melbourne diaspora shows this space to be multi-functional: a community centre and a place to educate young people in language and cultural matters. In the performance of Macedonian Orthodox rites, the expression of national identity connects the Church with the households and illustrates how women's practices are necessary and crucial.

Chapters Four and Five focus on rituals that Van Gennep identifies as rites of passage. These chapters complement the women's stories told in Chapter Two, as in both women's memories and their practices in households and religious rites, their roles are crucial to the re-imagining of national identity. Chapter Four discusses important celebrations in the liturgical calendar, the seasonal rites of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, that originated in ancient regional seasonal celebrations of fertility/growth (Easter/spring), the harvest/death of the land (Mary's Dormition/autumn), and the promise of rebirth (Christmas and Theophany/mid-winter). The chapter illustrates how in the Macedonian diaspora, religion and politics are expressed in the performance of rites, with a focus on women's practical and performance roles to show how their practices express national identity.

Chapter Five focuses on life-crisis or life-cycle rites celebrated for members of the Orthodox Church over the period of their lives. Those discussed here are held at the beginning and end of life. Religious celebrations occur when a 40-day old child is brought by her mother to be blessed at the church and later, before the young child is one year old, she is brought to be baptised and become a member of the church congregation. Funerals, feasts and memorials, held at the end of life, are discussed to illustrate that in the Orthodox Church, human life is measured in a similar way to the yearly cycle of the seasons and families remain responsible for the departed member who has moved to the next stage of life. The inclusion of the visit of the archbishop focuses on this as a ritual of status and an act of religious faith but in the diaspora the celebration is also a political

performance as it celebrates the establishment of the Macedonian Orthodox Church in Australia.

Marriage rites are discussed separately, in Chapter Six, as this complex set of rites, which are similar in structure to seasonal and life-cycle rites, are held in both the household and the Church. In Macedonian communities, marriage, especially for males, is seen as an important rite that separates youth from adulthood. A comparison of weddings at 'home' in the villages, with those held in the 1980s in the suburbs of Melbourne is made. My daughter's marriage to the only son of a Macedonian family in 1989 is discussed in some detail here. Weddings celebrated at the beginning of the 21st century are also included to highlight the changes that have occurred, and why. The chapter concludes with a general discussion of marriages among Macedonian families, to suggest the significant influence of popular culture on weddings, showing that older women remain the custodians of knowledge, the organisers of weddings, the experts in order, practice and how things should be performed.

In Chapter Seven the focus turns to Macedonian households to show that in their domestic practices, women are not only at the centre of family life but also important contributors to the creation of identity in public spaces. Women at 'home' were the inheritors of knowledge and traditions; they participated and controlled performance in both seasonal and life-cycle rites. In the diaspora, rites that women perform in the house are often connected to ancient rites that celebrate the cycle of agricultural seasons and life-cycle rites associated with the end of life, which only women can perform. Both are discussed in this chapter to demonstrate the complex nature of Macedonian rituals. Macedonian women's household practices at 'home' maintained customs and traditions and helped to defend a unique identity but, in new locations through women's performances, these customs and traditions continue and are constantly re-imagined in the creation of a national identity that is both Macedonian and Australian.

The concluding chapter of the thesis draws together the threads of the previous chapters. It argues that in the diaspora identity maintenance and reconstruction is aided by elements, symbols, stories, heroes and events, both ancient and modern, religious and

secular, which are creatively re-shaped to form a fluid national identity that expresses a past, present, and future. In this endeavour it falls to women in their roles, both in their households and in the Macedonian Orthodox church, to create and reimagine Macedonian national identity.

Chapter One: History and memory: Re-shaping Macedonian national identity in the Melbourne diaspora

This thesis investigates the role of household and public rites, in which women play a crucial role, in the construction of the national identity of the Macedonian diaspora in Melbourne, Australia. The focus in this chapter is on the multiple layers of Macedonian history, demonstrating that in the diaspora, matters of history, politics and religion remain relevant to its members despite the distance and the passage of time. Macedonian migrants of the 1950s depended on memories and artefacts brought from 'home' to shape and maintain their identity. As a result, they were often seen as unable or unwilling to adapt to the new location and labelled 'fossilized relics' of an ancient culture, a position taken by researchers and often held by members of the wider Australian community (Danforth 1984: 53). This study explores Danforth's position, acknowledging different views expressed within Macedonian families but argues that in Australia, identity remains linked to the history of a lost homeland, but is reshaped in the new location. Both older and younger generations use the past and present to re-shape a Macedonian-Australian identity. Here, discussion of secular and religious performance shows that women are responsible for the continuation of customs and traditions, as keepers of the culture. At 'home' women used culture as a weapon to counter political oppression, for their family's survival as well as for artistic expression (Stankovska & Petrovska (1994: 5). As culture is creative and artistic it is an outlet for women where during performance women make comments such as 'these are ours'. However, culture is not fossilised nor can it be viewed as an exotic anachronism but an element in a process which is constantly reshaped in its 'modern sociocultural context' (Danforth 1984: 58; Said 1979).[12]

In the diaspora, Macedonians draw on their regional history to defend the identity of a nation which has been divided. At the Bucharest Peace Treaty of 1913, Macedonian land was parcelled out to the surrounding nation-states: the northern lands of Macedonia

[12] Statements like this were expressed by women when they described intimate or more public performances of identity.

went to Serbia (Vardar Macedonia), the eastern lands to Bulgaria (Pirin Macedonia), the southern part of Macedonia to Greece (Aegean Macedonia), and villages in the west to Albania (Hill 1969: 6; Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 1). Apart from the recent official acceptance of an independent Republic of North Macedonia in 2019, which had been effectively created before the end of WWII, these borders have remained, while in the Macedonian diaspora, communities continue to challenge their legality.

While overseas emigration of people from the Aegean Macedonia began in the 1950s, as early as the nineteenth century male workers, *pechalbi*, followed a 'widespread Macedonian custom' and left villages to find work, to make their fortune and return home (Hill 1989: 10). However, with the Ottoman's gradual decline in the 18th and 19th century the social and economic situation worsened and regional conflicts, violence and an unreliable agrarian system led to a more dynamic pattern of migration (Hristov 2010: 32; Ivaylo 2019). In the Balkan region of Macedonia rates of emigration increased during the 1960s. This was the result of the annexation of the region, two world wars, a civil war and the colonisation villages. Changes to immigration laws (discussed later) had led countries including the US, Canada and Australia to encourage settlers. This pattern of Macedonian settlement overseas occurred again at the end of the 20th century with the collapse of Yugoslavia. It was in the Melbourne diaspora that Macedonian communities, separated by 1913 borders, were reunited. The earlier settlers from Aegean Macedonia now met those from the Republic of Macedonia, and together they built institutions, organisations, communities and homes. In Australia, in private and public, Macedonians share stories of history, attend Macedonian church services, publish newspapers, make radio broadcasts and television programs, and speak in Macedonian, all of which allows for an expression and re-imagining of national identity.

In the diaspora, a Macedonian family's everyday interactions and experiences create and re-shape the national identity of its members. The regions' political history remains disputed but continues to be imagined in new ways. As discussed in this chapter, this includes a history of an ancient world, the influence of Roman and Ottoman colonisation, the fatal impact of nationalism, along with the experience of settling in Melbourne. In memories, narratives and artefacts, a sense of belonging is shared, providing connections

to the homeland and among those living outside it. The chapter ends with a description of a public performance held on the streets of Melbourne in March 2018. The protest march organised by Macedonian-Australians in response to what was perceived to be a threat to Macedonia's sovereignty, and to Macedonians in the Republic and Aegean Macedonia. In new locations, the staging of the protest becomes an illustration of communities continuing to identify as Macedonian. The march illustrated a community's defence of its national identity but was also more than protest – it was also a celebration of what it is to be Macedonian.

Narratives and icons from ancient kingdoms

According to Kofos (1989: 229) nowhere in Europe has 'the heritage of the past so triggered and stimulated political developments as in the Balkans', where communities used heritage as a pedigree, a line of decent by which they could justify their claim to regions. In 1830 the modern Greek nation-state was established, based on a belief in national continuity, a shared language, customs on the Greek Orthodox religion (Kofos 1989: 232). Members of the Macedonian community participated in Greek liberation movements and the War of Independence and understood that the 'multilingual communities of Macedonia' could reach their goal of national independence (Kofos 1989: 231). But by the late 19th and early 20th century national narratives became 'the context for competing Greek and Macedonian nationalism' (Roudometof 1996: 253), and at the end of the 20th century, during the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, 'this controversy', remained a dispute over a nation's symbols: over names, flags and ancestors (Danforth 1993: 3). In new locations Macedonians continue to share an interest in, and a deep knowledge of their history, which has led Thiessen (2007: 83) to suggest that these sentiments are more intense in communities who live in the diaspora than those who live in Europe.

Ancient stories whether pagan or Christian remain aspects of a narrative which is rich and complex and are tools which shape modern societies. Karen Armstrong (2005: 11, 7) argues that when circumstances change in a community, so does the myth, as mythology is an 'art form that points beyond history to what is timeless in human existence'. A fresco

which included the images of Persephone, Demeter and Zeus discovered in 1970 visualises an ancient world, but also had such an impact it was to become another point of tension in the 'Macedonian Question'. At Aigai, in a tomb situated near the town of Vergina (in northern Greece), excavations uncovered a material culture and a society able to produce textiles and artefacts, finely crafted ivory, gold, silver and ironware. On the walls, friezes depicted banquets, royal hunts, bodyguards and attendants to shed light on a structured kingdom organised by a complicated set of religious beliefs which included funeral rites for their leaders.

The frescos, religious in nature, illustrate a narrative which linked deities to the seasons and explained their control over the cyclical agricultural year. Myths remain the 'major repertoire' and shed light on current religions as the original content of the myth and the associated practices and symbols may be diluted or alter over time, as 'new conditions' endow it with 'new layers of meaning'. As Anthony Smith argues (1984: 286), 'myths themselves endure and acquire new elements and are subject to continuous elaboration'. This is a view shared by Julien Orgereau (2018: 6) who argues: 'Macedonia as elsewhere [has] a distinctive Christian identity [but] emerged from a deeply pagan Graeco-Roman milieu'. In Chapter Three I have shown that practices, rites and performance held in the local Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church were shaped in a pagan past but have in the diaspora include new layers of meaning.

In the diaspora, identity is constructed from myths in which elements become props in performances to illustrate Macedonian national identity. For many Macedonian families, identity begins in ancient Macedon, in Philip's kingdom and his son, Alexander the Great's empire. Skrbis comments that 'myths of descent' remain 'undoubtedly important and inspiring although they only make sense when considered through the prism of contemporary political needs' as they provide an 'important expressive dimension for an ethno-national collectivity' (2005: 95). Thiessen (2007: 25) also says that in the Macedonian diaspora, it is the 'expatriates who [are] seen as the most fervent nationalists appropriating Alexander the Great's symbols' and those associated with his father Philip II. She dismisses myths as 'an ancient issue', overlooking the fact that in the Melbourne Macedonian community, myths and symbols not only celebrate but also

express a shared national identity, and as Danforth's research suggests, it is not a simple issue – these myths remain relevant to communities as they were 'always … highly political' (1984: 66; Herzfeld 1982: 75–81).[13] Myths told by ancient Hellenes were also used 'in the revolution of 1821' to found a Greek national ideology in which 'modern Greeks' argued that they are 'the descendants of Ancient Greeks' (Kouraridis 2006: 215). The assertion is still made today, as it was after the annexation of Aegean Macedonia when Greek policy was to assimilate the people there to Hellenism. The Greek government continues to accuse Macedonians both in the Republic and in Aegean Macedonia of appropriating Greek cultural heritage and holding territorial ambitions (Roudometof 1996: 266). This sentiment continues to be expressed by members of the Greek diaspora in Melbourne and during the recent 'name deal', such ideas were reported in the press: 'We cannot stomach this deal, to give away our Macedonia, our history … Macedonia is Greek, period' (*The Age* January 22, 2019).

In the diaspora, Macedonians increasingly challenge this view and claim that the symbols associated with Philip and Alexander are Macedonian. Danforth argues that in 'this dispute between Greeks and Macedonians two different national identities and cultures are being constructed from the same raw materials, from the same set of powerful national symbols' (1995). When Yugoslovia was collapsing, the Greek Consul in Australia stated: 'Australia is the first line of defence in the battle for Macedonia', illustrating that 'long distance nationalism' and 'raw materials and national symbols' continue to be relevant and disputed in the diaspora (Danforth 1995: 7-8). The 'old dispute' over these national symbols from a region 'half a world away' continues in Macedonian communities because in the diaspora they express and defend a Macedonian identity (Skrbis 1999: 3).

This 'old' dispute was expressed on Christmas Day (25th December)[14] 1999, which I spent with the extended Gelis family, in a spontaneous performance after I had given my son-in-law the video, *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great*, and an accompanying text (1997). While I was familiar with story of Alexander the Great, I wondered if the story was

[13] These are discussed in relation to the protest march at the end of the chapter and also in Chapter Three where ancient symbols used in the church and church hall are described.
[14] The Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church celebrates Christmas on 5 January.

known by the family and especially my son-in-law, as he arrived in Melbourne when he was four years old. The gift was a great success. The book was passed around, and questions and comments were made about maps and photographs of mosaics, but the question most often asked of me was 'how do you know of Alexander?' As the afternoon lengthened, men began to dance on the lawn, a performance appearing to be a celebration of the ancient leader. Alexander the Great remained relevant to this family, remembered as a hero and associated with their Macedonian heritage.

During the afternoon, stories were told of Alexander's heroic journeys and an empire that had stretched from Macedon to Persia, covering Afghanistan, India and Egypt. One man spoke of Aristotle, his tutor, and others of Alexander's death at the age of 33. Alexander the Great has always been of interest to historians, so it is little wonder that given the politics of Macedonia, families continue to tell his story. In Melbourne, the hero Alexander remains a constant element connecting the resettled Macedonian community to its past. The debate over ancient history concerns legitimacy and whether Macedonians or Greeks have the right to claim the name 'Macedonia', its heroes and symbols. Members of Greek communities in suburban Melbourne continue to claim Alexander as Greek. While it remains disputed 'at home', in the diaspora Macedonian families openly claim heroes and use their symbols in private and public spaces, adapting them to express identity.

Later, in a very different context, Alexander the Great was again the focus of discussion. In a subject I was teaching at a tertiary institution, *Stories cultures tell themselves,* the focus was on 'leaders and power'. In this context, Alexander, the military genius who established the largest empire in the ancient world was portrayed as an example of a leader who wielded power. At the suburban Christmas Day party, nothing was mentioned of Alexander's supposed sexual preferences, but in a class of 20-year-old students, the topic was raised. The following day, one of the class members, a young Macedonian-Australian woman, announced that she had gone home to speak to her father about Alexander's sexuality. Her father, a labourer on building sites, told his daughter to remind the class that Alexander was not 'gay'. The term 'gay' he reminded the class was a modern concept, not relevant in the ancient world or as a label for Alexander.

A similar concern was raised 10 years later in 2018, in a conversation at the church hall, during one of the Macedonian women's Monday meetings. The topic of Alexander was again raised but this time in reference to the Australian 2017 postal survey on legalising same-sex marriage. One woman used Alexander to justify why she would not vote for the proposition, claiming he was not a hero as he was 'gay'. Women sitting at surrounding tables dismissed her comment, speaking instead of their support for legalisation, and telling stories of family members, neighbours and people they had worked with who were 'gay'. The women spoke openly of accepting people's difference and referred to the ancient story of a Golden Age and of a Macedonian hero. It seemed evident that a classical hero and narrative was being used as a reference, a 'framework of meaning' (Skribis 1999: 95), for the women to discuss Alexander's sexuality, his supposed sexual preference and the 2017 Same Sex Plebiscite, and its relevance for ethnic Macedonians in a discussion of a current dilemma (Vangeli 2009: 7-8).

Ancient historian George Rawlinson (1899) wrote that 'Macedonians themselves were not Hellenes' but considered a 'barbaric' race, and Macedon a region on fringes of European affairs. However, the 'turning-point in Macedonian history' came in the 25 years of Philip II's reign (359–336 BCE) as under his leadership, Macedon came to dominate the Hellenes (Cawkwell 1978: 145; Errington 1990; Hatzopoulos 2011). In 4 BCE, the kingdom of Macedonia conquered the Hellenic world and after Philip's death his son Alexander began his conquest of lands to the east as far as the Indus River, creating one of the world's first empires. This history relies on ancient sources and oral traditions but since Macedonian annexation, and in the current political climate, the facts continue to be disputed by historians and politicians. In the diaspora, Macedonian narratives include those of ancient heroes and events that are hard for families to forget and are considered to be the property of a nation and its members (Danforth 1993: 10). In new locations Macedonians use elements of these as a national identification but Theissen claims this entails venturing back to 'Alexander the Great and Christianity to find Macedonia' (2007: 41). This is an expression of cultural 'fossilisation' which Danforth argues overlooks that identity is part of a process which cannot remain located in ancient history or the past (1984: 58). While Macedonian rites acknowledge 'home' and history,

their performance allows for the creative re-imagining of national identity, which both references the past and adopts elements of the new. Macedonians in the diaspora are now free to openly express their identity and performances can often appear acts of dissent, seen as part of an ongoing political struggle, because in practice, rites can defy, challenge and defend Macedonian national identity.

Roman and Ottoman empires: Macedonia's annexation

The decline of Alexander's empire began with his death in 323 BCE in Babylon. With no heir, the empire fell into dissent, rivalry and finally disunity. It was ruled by Alexander's generals: Antigonus in southern Europe (Simpson 1959: 385–409) and Ptolemy I Souter in Macedonian Egypt (Holbl 2013: 21). However, with the defeat of the Macedonian army at the battle of Pydna in 168 BCE, Macedonian independence ended, and Macedonians were forced back within its original borders (Hill 1989: 73). In 30 CE, the defeat of the army and the suicide of the last ruler of the Macedonian-Egyptian Empire, Cleopatra VII, Rome conquered what remained of Macedonian lands, which then became provinces in an expanding Roman empire (Jones 2006: xiii; Grant 2009: 43). During the years of Roman rule, the Macedonian province in southern Europe also included the regions of Epirus, Thessaly, Thrace, Paeonia and parts of Ilyria.

The geography of the Macedonia made it strategically important to the administration of Rome and later to the Ottoman empire. The region's importance is understood by the construction of the Via Egnatia, undertaken by the first provincial proconsul to the region, Gnaeus Egnatius. It was he who 'masterminded' this 'paved highway' considered in the second century 'a superhighway' (Hughes 2017: 58). He had it built to 'help subdue the potentially new province of Macedonia', and as 'an instrument of control' but it remained 'crucial infrastructure' and was for 'over 2,000 years the principle thoroughfare from Rome' to the eastern provinces and beyond. (Hughes 2017: 58). (In Chapter Two, a story illustrates how this ancient highway in the 1940s was again associated with moving soldiers and people). Under Roman rule, the province of Macedonia was part of larger administrative network formed by small, semi-agricultural towns and larger centres which were to have an uninterrupted historical presence in the Balkans; over time it

became home to an 'amazing number of groups [who] lived together' (Danforth 1993: 3). The population grew due to 'incursions, invasions, raids and those who settled in large numbers to till the land and to graze their flocks', reshaping and permanently changing its ethnography (Mazower 2000: 52).

In the early centuries of the Roman Empire, the province's paved road allowed the passage of goods and armies, and an increase in the population, but the road is also remembered as important for the spread of Christianity into the rest of Europe. It was from the port city of Salonica (Solon), an important commercial centre, that travellers and craftspeople helped to spread the new teachings to inhabitants in villages and towns along the highway, to recruit followers to the 'new' religious movement (Kyrtatas 1987: 571; Cooper 2013: 13). Apostle Paul preached to both pagans and Jews, and Macedonians became some of his first converts. It was the support of these people that resulted in the success of his mission, some became 'inspiring believers' and others became martyrs (Kyrtatas 1987: 591). The influence of both the pagan and Jewish religion in the early religious movement is explored in Chapter Three.

During the ninth century, two brothers living in Salonika, Cyril and Methodious, known today as the Apostles to the Slavs, adapted the Greek alphabet to the Cyrillic, and created a new alphabet, a script form used to translate the Bible and liturgy into the local language (Bainton 1964: 169; Danforth 1995a: 49; Shea 1997: 56). This alphabet was initially used to spread Christian teachings and initiate educational programs; today, the use of the Cyrillic can be 'politically charged now as it was then', and author and journalist, Ivan Dikov, writes of the concern in 1913 when the Cyrillic script was first used on a Euro note (Hughes 2017: 636). For the Macedonians who live in Aegean Macedonia, worship is linked to politics as all religious services must conform to Greek Orthodoxy and be conducted in Greek. However, in Melbourne the liturgy is sung and spoken in Macedonian, and the Divine Liturgy is conducted in both Macedonian and English. Not only was the first Macedonian Orthodox Church in inner city Melbourne named after the saintly Macedonian brothers, it was a centre for worship, education, culture and speaking in the natal language, so for many Macedonian families, church attendance is a political act.

The Roman Empire split in 395 AD. Rome remained the capital of the western half of the empire, and in the east, Byzantium (Constantinople) became the administrative centre of the eastern or Byzantine Empire. The region of Macedonia, part of the Eastern Empire, remained crucial for transport, communication and trade, providing 'a rich network of paved interregional roads' necessary for its administration and functioning (Mazower: 2000: 22). However, the split had a significant impact on Christianity, resulting in the Great Schism in 1054 AD, which began to re-shape Christianity in Europe (Djuvara 2014: 49). Differences in matters such as theology, papal primacy, liturgy and the significance of Mary still divide the Western and Eastern churches. The political implications for the Orthodox Church of this split are explored in Chapter Three.

The Islamic conquest of Constantinople in 1453 brought the Byzantine Empire and Christian rule to an end, and with the defeat of the port of Salonika (whose chronology is still debated) resulted in the conquest of Macedonia (Fine 1994: 301). This began the 'five-hundred-year-old empire' of the Ottomans (Mazower 2000: 88). The name Macedonia fell out of favour as the Ottomans referred to the newly acquired region as *Rumeli*, the 'formerly "Roman" land conquered from Byzantium' (Breuilly 2013: 192; Jelavich, B 1982; Jelavich, C & Jelavich, B 1986; Mazower 2000). However, while Byzantium's defeat meant that there was no formal reference to Macedonia as a region in the Ottoman Empire, this did not totally obliterate the Macedonian identity. During Macedonia's long history as part of the Ottoman Empire the collection of peoples who remained in the region retained a sense of identity even though their colonisers made efforts to undermine it.

Initially, the Christian West's view of the conquest was, as Elizabethan historian Richard Knolles put it, that the Islamic state as 'the present terror of the world' (Mazower 2000: 7). In Rome, the Catholic Church called for a military response and Pope Nicholas V wanted a crusade to regain Christian Constantinople. During the 15th century, 'foreign schemes' like these and others 'sought to end Turkish domination in the Balkans' but no agreement could be reached about 'who would succeed the Turk' (Mazower 2000: 86). Gradually, this harsh view was tempered because of the Ottomans' effective

administration, sound financial management, its well-organised military machine and the religious tolerance afforded to its subjects (Mazower 2000: 8, 55–58). Ottoman territories included those in the Middle East, Austria, Arabian Peninsula and northern Africa, which were strategically important to the 'economics' and 'the movement of ideas' in kingdoms in western Europe (Loizos 1999: 239). For all the 'religious antipathy between the Christians and Muslims, sixteenth-century Europeans respected and feared the power, reach and efficiency of the Turks' (Mazower 2000: 7).[15]

By the end of the 14th century, Macedonia had been conquered and it remained a vassal of the Ottoman Empire until the early 20th century. But despite Macedonia's strategic importance in the administration of the Ottoman Empire 'the relevance of Macedonia within European history fades' (Gingeras 2008: 341: Thiessen 2007: 1). The Ottomans inherited a region that was an ethnic kaleidoscope settled by Bulgarians, Turks, Albanians, Serbians, Greeks, Gypsies and others (Danforth 1995b: 64) One 'unique feature' was Sephardic Jews who became the largest single group in the population (Mazower 2000: 104). After the Alhambra Decree (1495) Sultan Bayezid ll welcomed Sephardic Jews, expelled from Spain, Portugal and from southern Italy, who were encouraged to settle in the port city of Salonika (Mazower 2000: 104). During Ottoman rule the region of 'Macedonia' had increasingly become home to many different ethnic and religious groups, though 'the vast bulk of the population - probably around 80 percent of the total remained Christian' and all groups functioned within the political framework of Islam (Mazower 2000: 58; Loizos 1999: 238).

An important difference between the Ottoman Empire and Europe's kingdoms was in the administration of their subjects. The Ottomans had adopted a non-assimilative administrative system and organised society into religious communities (Anastasovski 2005: 20) Communities were not based on 'ethnicity, language or nationality' because every Ottoman subject 'belonged to a recognised ecclesiastical institution', knows as a *millet* (Anastasovski 2005: 20). This had initially been introduced to protect the rights of

[15] Renaissance observers regarded the Ottoman Sultan, the 'Gran Signore', 'as perhaps the most powerful ruler in the known world and described him as 'the successor to Alexander the Great and the Roman emperors' (Mazower 2000: 7-8).

non-Muslims (Theissen 2007: 58; Sachedina 2001 96; Bates & Rassam 2000; Poulton 1995: 45).[16] Millets were administered 'largely by their own ecclesiastical hierarchy, with rabbis, bishops and kadis presiding over the courts' as judges (Mazower 2000: 64). The head of the millet assumed the responsibilities of taxation collection, supervision of civil affairs and other economic matters (Mazower 2000: 64). Compared with other European regions, this system of rule offered a degree of religious tolerance but while Ottomans may have accepted religious coexistence 'there was certainly no sense of religious equality' (Mazower 2000: 17). A long-term consequence of the millet system was realised during the break-up of the Empire: with no clear borders or formal acknowledgement of Macedonia, nationalists found it difficult to make case for an independent nation-state (Mazower 2000: 103).

The early success of the Ottoman Empire depended on territorial expansion but with the army's retreat during the siege of Vienna (1683), the Empire faced a gradual decline caused by 'mounting debts, foreign invasions and internal dissent' (Gingeras 2008: 341; Loizos 1999: 238). This was not simply due to military failures but was more the consequence of the 'sweeping narrative of European identity and civilisation' (Mazower 2000: 14-15). The 'ascendant' western powers eagerly anticipated the collapse of the Ottomans, referring to the Empire as the 'sick man of Europe' (Mazower 2000: 94), yet at the beginning of the 20th century the Ottomans 'remained the dominant power in the region' and doggedly held onto their lands while the Great Powers 'nibble[d] away at the edges'. The West judged the local Balkan communities as lacking the 'organisation, leadership, ability or the will to prevail against what remained of the world's major powers', so the Empire would only be toppled by 'the intervention of Europe's Great Powers' (Mazower 2000: 86).

Western ideas influencing the east

[16] In the last decades of the Empire the term millet was used not only for non-Muslim communities but also for Muslim communities. The millet system in the Muslim world 'provided the pre-modern paradigm for a religiously pluralistic society by granting each religious community an official status and substantial measure of self-government' (Sachedina 2001: 96 - 97).

The intellectual ferment created during the French Revolution swept from western Europe to the east, awakening the possibility of political change. The revolutionary project aimed to replace subjects with citizens, to free people from alien rule and grant rights that challenged the traditional authorities (Loizos 1999: 239). For communities living under Ottoman rule, nationalism offered the promise of 'liberty and social equality' and with it came autonomy, which would grant 'political separatism' (Djuvara 2014: 224; Marinov 2009: 117-120; Pollis 1965: 310). These revolutionary aspirations turned the region into a 'field of cultural competition among peoples' (Yovorava 1977: 13; Roudometof 1996: 254). Nations were to be created on historical narratives, shared ethnicity, language and religion, but often their creation depended on 'interference' from Western powers (Roudometof 1996: 254). Nations were created on the basis of statistics and information collected by ethnographers; cartographers were paid to draw borders that would justify their claims (Mazower 2000: 104). Nationalists also 'struggled for the loyalties of the peasantry', resulting in areas contested by different nationalist groups with 'irregular guerrilla fighters who attacked each other and terrorised the local population' (Mazower 2000: 104; Danforth 1993: 104). Other nationalists took a gentler tack, founding schools and establishing churches with loyal 'bishops' propagating their nationalist ideals (Mazower 2000: 104).

In 1817, Serbia was the first of the Balkan states to gain independence; Greece followed in 1830 and both these regions 'dreamed of resurrecting their mediaeval empires' (Hill 1989: 4) In Greece, the establishment of their 'empire' was known as the 'great idea' but to the Serbians, the 'landlocked ("imprisoned") nation sought an exit to the sea' (Hill 1989: 4). While Albania and Bulgaria continued to make cases for autonomy, the inhabitants of Macedonia did not identify themes regionally but rather by religious affiliation (Breuilly 2013: 192; Mazower 2000: 50). While Western ideas began to influence people, for the largest group of the population, 'the Slavonic peasant, the question of national allegiance in the nineteenth century was probably completely incomprehensible and certainly irrelevant' as in the Ottoman Empire, areas and their inhabitants were defined by religious affiliation (Breuilly 2013; 192; Mazower 2000: 5; Roudometof 2000). But by the end of the 19th century, local inhabitants had come to identify with their region instead, and the name Macedonia began to regain currency (Hill

1989: 4; Roudometof 2000). The 'struggle' for Macedonian 'loyalties' led to regional wars between pro-Greek and pro-Bulgarian nationalists and more 'half-heartedly' between the Serbs and the Romanians, while for 'the most part the Turkish authorities sat back and watched the Christians fight among themselves' (Mazower 2000: 104). The history of the region was re-imagined and maps of Macedonia began to circulate of a nation-state that included what is today called Aegean Macedonia, and the southern area now known as the Republic of North Macedonia, with the port of Salonika as its capital (Wilkinson 1951).[17]

The struggle for Macedonia

While Macedonia remained strategically important to the Ottomans it became increasingly necessary for the ambitions of the nation-states on its borders as well as the expansionary aims of the Western Powers. This led to Macedonia's neighbours, in an attempt to gain the support of peasants, to establish schools and churches to propagate their nationalist ideals, to produce maps and collect ethnographies to justify their claims, and when peaceful methods failed, they enlisted the support of 'agents' (Mazower 2000: 104). The process of nation-building in the nineteenth century was based on 'false premises', nourished by myths and served the interests and ambitions of both local communities and that of the Great Powers (Karpet 1997: 329). Interests outside the Ottoman Empire were willing to help create Greece and the Principality of Serbia, and with the help of Russia a vast autonomous state, Bulgaria, was created in south eastern Europe (Pavkovic 2001: 1). Immediately the English Prime Minister, Disraeli, became involved and Bulgaria was whittled down to an area half its size, and the 'lost lands' of Macedonia were returned to Ottoman control (Mazower 2000: 100). Because of this Macedonia remained a particular object in Bulgaria's dream of expansion.

With England's interference the region of Macedonia remained a part of the Empire and acted as a 'buffer state between Bulgaria and Constantinople' (Mazower 2000: 100).

[17] Today, the borders of the 'nation-state' of Macedonian are found on maps and on banners, distributed and held in marches in the diaspora.

Strategically Macedonia was integral to the functioning of the Ottoman Empire, and because of its geography the 'Macedonian Question' remained a 'thorny issue' in discussions between its neighbours - Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria - and the Great Powers (Rossos 2015: 4). To some historians the problem for Macedonia was that 'apart from a handful of intellectuals and activists' the development of a national sentiment lagged behind its neighbours and was slow to develop (Mazower 2000: 96). However, later research suggests this small group adopted the name which became both of national and symbolic significance, and the 'Macedonian intelligentsia' questioned Macedonia's future, including its national identity and explored what direction Macedonia would take in the future (Rossos 2015: 24).

During this period its neighbours, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, began to deny its 'very existence' and claimed 'Macedonia and the Macedonians as their own' (Rossos 2015: 6). In support of their claims Macedonia's neighbours produced a 'confusing array' of 'historic, linguistic, cultural ethnographic documents' and involved themselves in every sphere of life: in churches, schools, communal organisations, reading rooms and guilds (Rossos 2015: 6). The Great Powers also influenced internal affairs in the Balkan states and did so by appointing leaders (selecting kings from unemployed members of Europe's princely houses), drawing up constitutions, selecting military and civilian advisors, adjusting territories and defining borders. In this way European Powers were able to impose 'their wishes on all the parties through gunboat diplomacy and economic arm-twisting' (Mazower 2000: 101).

Bulgaria's rapid spread of influence in the region was accompanied by the aim to annex Macedonia which led Greece and Serbia to express similar aims. But the newly created states soon realised 'that they could not acquire [Macedonia] in its entirety as in 1908 the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary caused a 'crisis' (Rossos 2015: 7). As the region was still part of the Ottoman Empire the annexation became a warning to the Balkan states who had similar ambitions. This 'crisis' brought into focus problems which existed between the Great Powers, as Austria-Hungary saw this as a triumph, but humiliation to Russia as this 'endangered Russia's traditional aims [of expansion] in the Near East'. It also undermined the national aspirations of Serbia and Montenegro, and to

a lesser degree to those of Bulgaria and Greece' as it made clear that a compromise was needed (Rossos 1915: 6 – 7). Andrew Rossos suggests (1915: 6) it was clear a compromise was needed and a united position must be reached to settle the 'Eastern and, hence the Macedonian question', as the Great Powers would 'intervene and impose their own, European solution'.

However, in the early years of the twentieth century finding a unified approach between Macedonia's neighbours remained a problem, and the only reason the Balkan states united was to wage war against the Ottoman Empire, with the aim to 'conquer, divide and annex the Empire's last remaining European possession' (Rossos 2015: 13). Bulgaria continued to claim all Macedonia believing this could be achieved with the help of Russia: either by 'direct annexation or by way of autonomy' (Rossos 2015: 20. The long term aim of the 'antagonists' had been to conquer new lands: 'to enhance its power position vis-à-vis the others, and thus establish its dominance in the Balkan peninsula' (Rossos 2015: 15). So neither the Bulgarians, Serbians nor Greeks wanted an autonomous Macedonia on its border and any agreement became increasingly difficult because of a 'schism' in the Orthodox Church: between the Bulgarian Exarchate and the Greek Patriarchate so this little room for a political alliance (Rossos 2015: 10).

The Treaty of Bucharest (August 1913) partitioned the region between the Bulgarians, Serbians, Albanians and Greeks, and this was seen a solution which would end the 'Macedonian Question'. However, from the beginning the partition did not prove a viable solution. The claimants' claims remained unreconcilable and contradictory so no agreement would be acceptable, and the Treaty's terms caused neighbours to 'suspect, distrust, and indeed to hate each other' (Rossos 2015: 19). For the Macedonians, Rossos (2015: 20) argues the legacy of partition brought with it 'foreign rule' based on 'national denial and repression' and was largely 'rejected by the Macedonians'.

Towards the end of the 19th century (1893) Macedonian nationalists founded the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO), a revolutionary national liberation movement founded in Salonika. Initially the aim was to gain autonomy for the regions of Macedonia and Andrianople from the Ottoman Empire (Biondich 2011: 67 – 69). The first

nationalist treatise published by Kste Misirkov, *On Macedonian Matters*, gave voice to a separate Macedonian nation-state (Roudometof 1996: 263). Misirkov had hoped that this publication would improve the situation by allowing the Macedonians to imagine 'themselves as part of a distinctive Macedonian nation-state distinct from Bulgaria, Serbia or Greece' (cited in Maxwell 2007: 176). But Misirkov's contribution also included his codification of the Macedonian language and he is now considered 'the founder of the modern Macedonian literary language' (Danforth 1995b: 66).

The Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO), a revolutionary liberation movement, was founded in Salonika in 1883 (Biondich 2011: 67-69). In 1884 Gotse Delchev joined the IMRO, and by 1896 he was elected to the Central Committee. The aim for IMRO was to gain autonomy for the regions of Macedonia and Adrianople from the Ottoman Empire but increasingly members were aware of the groups on their borders that dismissed their claims and had ambitions to include Macedonia in their nation-state. In this political climate Delchev became increasingly aware the region had become 'a field for cultural competition among the peoples' (Yavoroy 1977: 13). In 1889 Delchev spoke in his last interview of his worry that Macedonians now suffered from 'one common disease', a weakness which was 'not present in our ancestors' and he imagined this would lead to a future of 'splits and splintering' (Michailov 2001: 20 -21).

In the years before his death, Delchev aim was to form a nation-state from 'all the dissatisfied elements in Macedonia and the Adrianople regardless of nationality or region, in order to win through revolution full autonomy' (Maxwell 2007 127- 55; Pribichevich 1982: 121). Macedonia in theory would be a nation-state that acknowledged and accommodated the diversity of ethnicities, languages and religions in the region (Hupchick 2001: 299). The result would be a Macedonian nation-state based on a multi-national polity; this idea of regional autonomy at the turn of the 20th century was revolutionary (Schopflin 2000).

Delchev's aim of self-determination, expressed in the slogan 'Macedonia for the Macedonians', was supported by the leader of the English Liberal Party, William Ewart Gladstone, and his aim of a federation of states 'where different ethnic of religious could

coexist peacefully' was never realised (Maxwell 2007: 169; Schopflin 2000: 359). The Treaty of Bucharest (August 1913), and later in Paris (1919) the Question of Macedonia was finalised with the partition of the region and of the Macedonians. It has proved not to be a viable solution for the Macedonians, the Greeks, and Bulgarians as they continued to suspect, distrust and indeed hate each other, as none could agree or to mutually accept the terms as their aims remained unreconcilable and contradictory (Rossos 2015: 19). The 'antagonists' had wanted to conquer new lands': 'to enhance its power position vis-à-vis the others and to establish its dominance in the Balkan peninsula and as Rossos argues (2015: 20) the legacy of partition brought with it foreign rule based on 'national denial and repression' and was largely rejected by Macedonians.

Delchev was killed on 4 May 1903, before partition, by Turkish police during the preparations for the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising and thought to have been betrayed by local villagers. Delchev had warned the organisers of the Uprising that it was 'unrealistic, inappropriate and premature' (Yavorov 1977: 62). His prediction of outside intervention which would result in 'Macedonia being torn apart' came to pass in 1913 when Macedonia was annexed by its neighbours (Michailov 2001: 20). Since his death, he has been celebrated as a revolutionary hero, freedom fighter and scholar both in Macedonia and Bulgaria. Monuments have been erected and towns, mountains, an island and a university have been named after him. His final resting place is a tomb in the Church of the Ascension of Jesus, Skopje, in the Republic of North Macedonia. In the Macedonian diaspora, Delchev is considered a political figure, someone to whom Scolari would apply the label 'secular martyr' (2017: 71). In the local Church hall, photographs of him have been hung on walls, amongst the pantheon of Macedonian heroes.

The result of Macedonian partition

The signing of the 1913 Treaty of Budapest resulted in the annexation of Macedonia and its division between Greece, Albania,[18] Bulgaria and Serbia. Half of Macedonia became known as Aegean Macedonia (Greek-dominated), 39% became part of Serbia, 10%

[18] Albania became an independent nation-state after the Ottoman defeat at the end of the first Balkan War.

became Pirin Macedonia (Bulgarian-dominated) and the remaining 1% became part of Albania (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 1). This division led to immediate disagreements among the new nation-states,[19] resulting in years of war (1913-1922). The 'modern states took advantage of military conflict to pursue long range demographic goals' (Mazower 2000: 118). In 1914, Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia and the United States of America set up *The International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, to investigate the causes and conduct of the violence in the region (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 1914).[20] Its report concluded that violence was 'prompted more by revenge than by genocide' and that the means for killing employed by 'Greek against the Bulgarian, by the Turk against the Slav, by the Serbian against the Albanian, is no longer extermination or emigration: it is an indirect method which must, however, lead to the same end, that of conversion and assimilation' (Mazower 2000: 118).

In what remained of the Balkans, 'the principle of nationality' justified any claim to 'their neighbours' land' resulting in a region consumed by 'irredentism' where 'few Balkan borders were uncontested' (Mazower 2000: 114). This outcome had been predicted during conferences and meetings by an Ottoman representative, Tala Pasha,[21] who not only predicted the violence but also claimed that it would continue. He wrote of the 'wood-panelled rooms of London' where the Great Powers 'thrashed out' the finer 'details of territory appropriation' (Hughes 2017: 561). Pasha referred to a 'deadly surgeon' who 'freely cut up the map of Balkans' and warned that this intervention would 'not yield the desired results but cause a sickness to spread to other parts' and to 'all parts of Europe' (Hughes 2017: 561). A decade of wars had destroyed the empires that had ruled the Balkans and other regions in eastern Europe, but the anticipated peace promised by Western liberals was short lived: it had created ethnic minorities and

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[19] Macedonia's division left the Bulgarian nationalists feeling cheated of the land they believed was rightfully theirs, which had been allocated to Serbia and Greece. One month later, the Bulgarian army attacked Greece and Serbia, leading to the Second Balkan War.

[20] D'Estournelles de Constant writes in the Commission's Introduction 'the most suitable title for this report would have been, "Europe Divided and her Demoralizing Action in the Balkans"' (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 1914: 19)

[21] Tala Pasha, the Grand Vizier of what remained of the Ottoman Empire, was present at discussions that led to Macedonia's annexation (Hughes 2017: 560).

intensified differences between the powers of Europe (Mazower 2000: 114). It was these factors that Mazower suggests led to a 'sharpening of rivalries' in which the history of the 20th century was much like the 19th, 'scarred by the bloody intersection of regional Balkan quarrels and Great Power competitiveness' (2000: 115).

The colonisation of Macedonia

The term 'Macedonian Question' was first used during the Congress of Budapest (1879-1908) and became the descriptor for regional disputes, replacing 'Eastern Question'; after Macedonia's division in 1913 the conflict and the term took on new meanings (Yosmaoglu 2006: 74).[22] The division resulted in 1% of the region becoming part of Albania (Vardar Macedonia), 39% was included in Bulgarian dominated Serbia (Pirin Macedonia) and nearly half of the region became provinces in norther Greece (Aegean Macedonia or Greek Macedonia). The result to families who lived in the region was a loss of cultural and national identity. Unlike the citizens of the newly-created states, who enjoyed the characteristics of other free nations, Macedonia's annexed people now faced a different fate. Redrawn borders shaped new nation-states and people living in the annexed lands were forced to acquire new identities. Annexation always creates winners and losers and the latter are the 'minority'. Power struggles led to social and political tensions. Each national government dealt with 'ethnic minorities' by imposing laws and regulations to homogenise the community, where language, religion and culture were 'standardised' (Stojanovski et al 2014: 296).

Now as part of northern Greece in a region which had previously tolerated ethnic and religious difference, the Greek authorities, imposed regulations that aimed to encourage the population to identify as Greek. As in other newly annexed regions, the Macedonians there were banned from speaking their language, practising cultural rites, or worshipping in Macedonian Orthodox Christian churches, in an effort to 'engineer', 'create' and shape a national framework (Stojanovski et al 2014: 296). The names of towns and villages were

[22] While Danforth (1995) uses the term 'Macedonian Question' to describe the ongoing tension within Aegean Macedonia, he also uses it to describe the tensions between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece, and to bring into the discussion the tensions which exist within the Macedonian diaspora.

changed, as were family names, to reflect members' new status as citizens of a Greek nation-state.

Minorities living in the northern 'colonies', the New Lands within Greek borders, were actively assimilated. The Greek government called it the 'hellenisation' of newly-gained regions, but 'colonisation' is always violent and understood by the 'minority' as a 'demarcation of time', into 'before' and 'after', and as Cynthia Cockburn argues, becomes 'a line inside our heads, and in our hearts, too' (2004:1).[23] The effects of 'demarcation', which nation-states officially refer to as 'partition', has long-term effects on communities; as noted above, van den Berghe describes these groups as belonging to 'multi-statal nations' (1981: 62) . 'Hellenisation' meant that many families had little choice but to accept a new national heritage or emigrate. In the second half of the 20th century, after the violence of the war years and assimilation, a there was a mass migration of Aegean Macedonian communities to Europe, America, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Reshaping a national identity in new locations

Since federation, Australian governments have limited immigration. The first act of the newly federated nation-state was the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, restricting non-Europeans and giving preference to those of British heritage. However, during WWII, the Labor government saw an urgent need to change the immigration policy and by the end of the war, the slogan 'populate or perish' summed up the new sentiment (Price 1963a: 115–129). The federal government realised that if Australian infrastructure were to be built, industries and manufacturing developed and Australia to be defended, a larger population was needed, and this would require a different immigration policy. Selection widened to include those from southern Europe and by the 1950s, people from Aegean Macedonia were moving into Australian towns and suburbs. In the early 1970s, a new Labor government policy, that of 'multiculturalism', replaced 'assimilation', and immigrants during and after this policy change encountered a very different environment.

[23] Cockburn (2004) wrote this with reference to the troubled history of Cyprus, during the partition.

Australia developed an extensive post-war immigration program with the aim to 'populate or perish', so by the end of the Civil War (1946 – 1949) many migrant workers from Aegean Macedonian resettled in the suburbs of Melbourne (Jupp 1988). The post-war Macedonians from Aegean Macedonian spoke of fearing their Greek neighbours and Greek authorities but in the late 20th century Macedonians from the Republic spoke of distrusting the Albanians (Theissen 2007: 42). The mass movement of peoples (1950s to1970s) who arrived from the provinces of northern Greece decimated populations in villages and towns in the region (Afentoulis & Cleland 2013: 4). Later, those who left during the unmaking of Yugoslavia began to arrive in the late 20th century and as they settled, they began to form a new Macedonian-Australian identity.

In the diaspora, Macedonians share in family news, community events and celebrations from 'home' and political issues remain matters of family discussions. Earlier debates about the Macedonian Question focussed on a 'contest mainly over territories' and 'regional and international security', but it evolved into questions of identity, and 'heritage' (Kofos 2010: 1).The 'claims over territories have been dealt with by wars, uprising [and by] persistent insecurity' and today the Greek government does not 'raise claims over lands outside their borders' (Kofos 2010:1, 3). More recently, debate centres on 'contested identities' and the Greek government has 'certainly been embroiled [in] the "name issues"' (Kofos 2010: 4). This, according to Kofos, may be difficult for an outsider to decipher, a matter that seems incomprehensible or a mere nuisance, but those living in the Macedonian diaspora see themselves as 'the rightful holders of the title deeds to the land, the peoples and the historical/cultural heritage of Macedonia' (2010: 1, 3).

The continuing question, both at 'home' and in the diaspora, is who has the right to use the name Macedonia? The Greek government, and the Greek populations in both Greece and Melbourne assert that Aegean Macedonians are not Macedonians, they are Greek. With the annexation of Macedonia in 1913 the newly created Serbia began to colonise the region. By the end of WWII the People's Republic of Yugoslavia was created, which included the Republic of Macedonia. Until then the name Macedonia had officially

disappeared from Europe. But the region named Macedonia sitting on the Greek border brought a very strong reaction from the Greek government at the unmaking of Yugoslavia (Thiessen 2007: 23, 34). Conflict between Macedonian and Greece intensified in September 1991, with the success of the referendum on Macedonian sovereignty and independence and the adoption of a new Constitution, and later in April 1993 Macedonia became a member of the United Nations (Thiessen 2007: 27). While headlines told of violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, for those living in the Republic of Macedonia the tension involved an ongoing, bitter dispute over the name Macedonia. Yet the debate is not only about the name but also about the national identity of heroes such as Philip and Alexander and symbols such as the sun of Vergina used on the Republic's flag (Danforth 1995).

In 1946 the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was established and within the federation the Republic of Macedonia now could develop as a free 'ethno-specific nation with a recognised official language, education system, literature and socio-political life' (Stankovska &Petrovska 1994: 1). With the break-up of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Macedonia sought to establish an independent nation-state. Once ratified by the Macedonian parliament, it sought to gain membership of the European Union and entry into NATO but was denied. In addition, the new flag of the Republic and the use of the name Macedonia became a matter of dispute. The Greek government was successful in arguing that the new Macedonian flag[24] and the use of the name Macedonia was part of 'hostile propaganda' as the new Republic was attempting to promote their 'territorial claims' (Annex 2, December 16, 1991).[25] Negotiations over the name began in 1995 under the scrutiny of the United Nations and Macedonians changed the name from the Republic of Macedonia to the FYROM (Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia).[26] The Greek government had other objections to Macedonia, including its entry into the United

[24] Between 1992 and 1995 the Macedonian flag had a red background with the golden (yellow) sun of Vergina in its centre. Due to objections by the Greek government, since 1995 to the present the red flag has a golden-yellow eight rayed sun, with rays extending to the edge. The flying of the earlier flag has been banned, but in the diaspora, this flag is flown defiantly (Danforth 1997: 166).

[25] This is part of the Greek submission to the EU in support of their objection to the use of 'Macedonia': Declaration on Yugoslavia (Extraordinary EPC Ministerial Meeting, Brussels, Recognition of States - Annex 2,16th December 1991).

[26] The Republic declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 and was admitted to the United Nations in 1993 under this provisional name.

Nations and its recognition by the European Union. At the heart of the problem is a concern about the annexed land of Aegean Macedonia. The regions now share a border and the Greek authorities see this as a threat to Greek sovereignty, as Macedonian citizens are recognised, free to speak their own language, free to worship in the Macedonian Orthodox Church and to defend their Macedonian identity.

Protests in Europe and in the diaspora over who has the right to call themselves Macedonian began. One of the largest was held in 1992 on the streets of Salonica, where over one million Greek Macedonians participated in a 'rally for Macedonia' (Roudometof 2002: 32). In the diaspora, Macedonians are free from the constraints of 'home' and can remember a location 'with or without national borders' aided by narratives, memories and artefacts which are 'powerful icons of conflict in the construction of national identity' (Schwartz 1997: 871). The result of this was seen in street protests held in Australia which large numbers of Macedonians attended (Jupp 2001: 147). In 1994, a street march in Melbourne brought out a reported 100,000 Macedonians to protest Greek interference.[27]

Owning the name – protest in the diaspora

Despite attempts by the Greek government to block the Republic of Macedonia's entry into NATO and the EU, citizens of the Republic have stood firm, though this has negatively affected economic development and their ability to travel in Europe (Theissen 2007: 37). In January 2018, negotiations restarted in Europe with the aim of ending the name dispute. It was thought that a name change could resolve the impasse, with a prefix that could include include 'North, Gorna, Vararska' (Kofos 2010: 5). Talks conducted between the prime ministers of Macedonia (Zoran Zaev) and Greece (Alexis Tsipras) led an agreement to change the name to the Republic of North Macedonia, though this had to be ratified by referendum in both countries. Opponents in Greece thought that the use of the name 'Macedonia' to describe the nation-state would inevitably result in the

[27] The head of SBS news, Shayne Mooney made this claim when he covered the Greek Macedonian Rally in 1994.

recognition of a Macedonian language and Macedonian nationality separate from Greek identity. Macedonian nationalists argued that changing the name was an assault on their country's identity. In the Macedonian diaspora, protests were planned to make clear that Macedonians saw this as more Greek interference in the affairs of the sovereign state of Macedonia.

Disputes over land, language, religion, names, and identity spilled over borders as protesters marched in cities of Europe and in diasporic Macedonian communities in cities in America, Canada, and Australia. On the 12 February 2019, the 'name-game' ended with an agreement reached between the Republic of Macedonia and the Greek government. The agreement meant that the name was changed to the Republic of North Macedonia. It would lead to the Greek Government lifting the ban it had imposed on the Republic joining NATO and the European Union.

One of the protests took place in Melbourne on March 4, 2018. That it took place illustrates that identity is indeed part of 'an ongoing process', and that 'long distance nationalism' is alive (Skrbis 1999: 5). The 'past' may shape identity but it is the communities' lived experiences that ensure the reimagining of identity in the diaspora (Bhabha 1994: 2). In this public display, Macedonians demonstrated a multi-layered history in response to a current issue. Macedonian-Australians expressed their identity in a public performance shaped by elements from their history, which dealt with the present to ensure that that identity is part of their future.

In the weeks leading up to the protest march, the name change plebiscite was a much-discussed topic within the community. The initial response of those from both Aegean Macedonia and the Republic was anger. I was constantly asked what I had heard or what I thought about this issue. Women in the church congregation often react quietly to political matters about the region but most said that 'this goes too far'. Congregation members wondered how they could attend both the Divine Liturgy and get into the city for the march. Finally, the church organised for a bus to take the congregation to the city so they could take part in the march. People who were not Macedonian often spoke to me of the wisdom of a 'name change', believing it would start a process of further

compromise between Macedonians and Greeks. But in the weeks before the march many of those at the church thought the change unacceptable and they did not believe that any compromise would occur.

In the first week in March 2018, rallies were held in Macedonian communities around the world; around noon on Sunday the 4th, Macedonian protestors in Melbourne began to gather at the Carlton Gardens; buses unloaded members from several suburban Macedonian Orthodox churches. Other people came by train, tram and car. In front of St. Vincent's hospital and at other locations, people wearing red and yellow scarves stood ready to guide marchers to the meeting place. These colours immediately identified them as Macedonians protesters. The flags that were flying were copies of the flag first proposed by the Republic of Macedonia; it has an image taken from the surface of Philip II's golden larnax,[28] the golden sun of Vergina, on a red background (see Image 1 below). In the diaspora, flying this flag has a symbolic meaning, it is an act of defiance. The Gardens gradually filled with people, families and church groups, and others waited on footpaths for friends to join them. By the beginning of the march, what appeared to be thousands had spread over the grass, stood under trees, and spilled onto the footpath and to Victoria Parade.

[28] Philip's golden larnax was a small golden closed box or coffin that archaeologist Manolis Andronikos found when excavating a royal tomb at Vergina (once part of northern Macedonia). It is thought that the remains in the box are those of King Philip II of Macedonia. A golden motif of a sun is on the surface (now known as the Sun of Vergina). Ownership of this motif continues to be disputed by Macedonians and Greeks. This larnax is an example of 4th century BCE craftsmanship (Andronikos 1981).

Image 1: The official flag of the Republic of North Macedonia has a golden sun with eight golden rays which thicken over a red background. The earlier flag (1992 – 1995) displayed the ancient disputed icon – the Vergina Sun

On the edge of the Gardens, facing the street, stood four parish priests dressed in their black cassocks, silver crosses around their necks (see Image 2 below). The priests were to lead the marchers, and their place at the head of the protest was a clear indication of the political position of the Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church in the diaspora. Following the priests were young women dressed in Macedonian costumes with bandeaux in their hair decorated with red and yellow flowers and following them was a truck with a sound system playing popular Macedonian music. Next came the lines of marchers who would make their way down to the steps of Parliament House. One very large flag with the royal symbol of Philip II was held aloft by groups of men. This symbol was also printed on t-shirts; some wore the flags as scarves tied around their necks, and one girl had painted her face red with the yellow Vergina Sun.

Image 2: Members of the Macedonian community and parish priests protest at the name change from the Republic of Macedonia to the Republic of North Macedonia.

Image 3: Marchers, wearing and carrying the red and yellow flags as they made their way to Parliament House to the protest against the name change.

The marchers waved flags, held up banners and signs, and sang national songs (see Image 3 above. The banners had messages such as: 'Macedonian Never Greek', 'Who gave you the right to negotiate my identity!', 'Our name is Macedonia.' Others carried large signs with maps tracing the outline of an 'imagined' Macedonia in red. Some people carried large photographs depicting violent scenes, with headings such as: 'Mass Execution' and 'End the Macedonian Genocide'. As they marched, there were spontaneous shouts of 'Long Live Macedonia'. Some people stood on pavements clapping the marchers as they

moved down the street, others photographed and recorded the marchers on their phones.

On the steps of the state parliament building, the official party assembled, and the speeches began. By now the marchers had moved into Bourke Street and on both sides of Spring Street. People stood speaking, finding friends, as young boys dressed as ancient warriors of Macedon, in pleated golden tunics, and golden helmets, played with toy swords and shields. The use of gold in costumes and paint is supposedly a reference to Alexander's golden locks which his is said to have sprinkled with gold dust (Spivey 2005: 181). Another man had printed the distinctive face of Gotse Delchev on the front of his t-shirt and another had brought his dog, muzzled and on a lead, proudly telling everyone who came to pat the dog that he was the newly-recognised Macedonian shepherd dog.[29] Many young girls dressed in regional national costumes stood talking and laughing as parents and friends leant on walls of the Windsor Hotel or sat on the tables in front of the Imperial Hotel. As speakers addressed the crowd, shouts of 'Long Live Macedonia' were heard, and people began to relax. A group of young people took the large Macedonian flag to the roof of the Imperial Hotel and to much clapping and shouting, they unfurled it and draped it down the side of the hotel wall.

The march to protest the name change invoked a past in a long European history but it also embraced experiences of living in Australia. The marchers used colour, clothing and symbols from the ancient world, and also more contemporary items, seen in the banners, flags, maps and costumes. These expressions of national identity are associated with modernity, streets were occupied as people marched, songs were sung, speakers inspired, chants spontaneously erupted, and flags and banners were carried to show that identity was being remembered but also now reimagined in a new location.

In contrast to the festive atmosphere of that afternoon, over the following days Macedonian community buildings were targeted. On the wall of the Lalor United Sloga Football Club, anti-Macedonian slogans had been sprayed, along with 'Death to you all'.

[29] The Macedonian shepherd dog, the sarplaninac, is a very large strong animal and had been used in the region to guard sheep. The owner claimed that the dog was capable of bringing down and killing a bear.

Graffiti was sprayed on the fence of St. Nikola's Macedonian Orthodox Church in Preston. This read 'fuck Skopje' (the capital of the Republic of Macedonia). Father Mile Talski, the parish priest, replied in a message to his congregation that those 'who did this have nothing spiritual in them, probably wanted to create tensions or to increase tension'. Macedonian churches have often been the target of arson and firebombing, but on the afternoon of the protest march, the feeling was one of a Macedonian festival. (The attacks on Macedonian churches and other public buildings are discussed in Chapter Three below).

In the weeks that followed, I was surprised by reaction in the Macedonian community. Because of the passion people felt in the weeks before the march, I had imagined that they would feel disappointed and angry about the violence in the graffiti and the damage to Macedonian property. Instead, it was as if their anger had been spent during the protest. On that occasion, as the afternoon stretched into the early evening and people made their way home, the protest seemed to have become more like a public celebration of being Macedonian. People of all ages seemed very relaxed and happy. One of the parish priests told me happily that 'It was a festival, a celebration of Macedonia'.

During the 19th century, ancient myths 'triggered and stimulated' political developments in the Balkans and nowhere were ancient myths of descent more readily adopted than by 'Orthodox Slavic speakers in Macedonia' (Kofos 2016: 229; Vangeli 2010: 13). 'Contemporary 'antiquization', can be used as an 'efficient tool for political mobilization', and this later invention can be used to mass-produce traditions (Vangeli 2010: 13). However, Vangeli also suggests that 'mythological and metaphysical narratives' based on the 'origin of the nation' re-create new ceremonies by shaping different interventions, as witnessed in the public protest in Melbourne in 2019 (2013: 13) The march was created both as an intervention in a political matter and as a defence of a re-imagined Macedonian-Australian identity.

In the diaspora, Macedonians adapt customs and traditions from 'home' but this has not stopped them from reshaping their identity. I asked Peter, my-son-in-law, if he was angry about the agreement on the new name. His answer seemed to reflect attitudes held by

other Macedonians: 'If you ask people in Ireland who they are, they answer "I am Irish"'. That is the same for me. Whether the region is called the Republic or the Republic of North Macedonia when I am asked who I am, I shall answer "I am Macedonian"'.

Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the historical context of south-eastern Europe where, during the decline of Ottoman Empire, the interference of the Great Western Powers and ideas of nationalism began to influence the region. From the early 19th century to the 20th century the region would be reshaped forever. During the struggle for ascendency the name and region of Macedonia became a contested issue: the 'Macedonian Question'. In the 19th century the nearly 500 years of Ottoman power was in decline and this was met by expansionist aims of the west: of France, England, Russia, Austria-Hungary and Prussia. For the Macedonian nationalists it was a time to create a nation-state but as a region with no formal recognition or borders, that had been settled by a mixture of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups, it became the focus of others' expansionist ambitions. In 1913, Macedonia was divided, annexed and colonised by its neighbours.

Macedonian nationalists began to construct a national identity that depended on ancient history, symbols, names and heroes, yet this also was a contemporary movement which was used to shape Macedonia. The decision was undertaken to annex Macedonia to solve a problem, a 'Question', which was seen as the cause of violence in the Balkans. The long-term consequence of annexation and colonisation has been ongoing friction between the Macedonians and the Greeks. The emigration of Macedonians has meant this friction is not only restricted to the Balkans and continues to be played out in the diaspora.

The following chapters explore the current aspects of the 'Macedonian Question' to show how memory, narratives and practices of the past can be used to establish a Macedonian national identity in the Melbourne diaspora and to shape its future. In the next chapter, the related experiences of everyday life, war and colonisation, suggest that the story tellers are custodians of the memories of 'home'. In the diaspora, members of households can locate a 'home', where family myths continue to shape their heritage. Later chapters

illustrate how narratives are influenced by performance, focusing on women's roles to show that their practice of ancient elements can be creatively applied to make the past relevant to the present and form a contemporary Macedonian identity.

Chapter Two: *Decata Bagalci:* Stories from the 'scattered seeds' in the diaspora

The first chapter related the key events in Macedonian history that led to mass migration and the growth of the diaspora, illustrating how these continue to express and shape national identity. The chapter included analysis of a street 'performance' to show how a protest march became an affirmation of a past but also a re-imaging of identity in the present. Chapter Two shifts the perspective from the public to the personal, showing how family stories remain linked to a time and a place and play an active role in re-creating identity in the diaspora. The story's location is important, and maps often accompany the storyteller in order both to locate the event and to maintain links to the past and to 'home'.

The Macedonian Question was originally about land, but after annexation it shifted to revolve around problems of regional and naming issues (Kofos 2010: 1-2). Kofos argues that the 'question' is now limited to those he labels 'ethnic Macedonians' who live in regions now within Greece though he does refer to a 'fourth Macedonia', comprising the 'others' now in diaspora, who use 'maps and historical literature' to challenge the official 'geographic and ethnic boundaries' whose aim is to create and defend a Macedonian identity (2010: 1-2).[30] Many families left Aegean Macedonia to resettle in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s (Cleland 2013: 483; Jupp 2001). In post-war Australia, migrants who identified as Macedonians were recorded in Australian census data as 'Bulgarian-born', 'Greek-born' or 'Yugoslav-born', so the exact number of Macedonians was not known (Jupp 1988: 124; Hill 1988: 691). Women told of the social and political upheavals in the region which had influenced their family to move to Melbourne. These women from Aegean Macedonia immigrated with their families after the trauma of the Civil War and later the political upheaval during Yugoslavia's breakup led other families to make the made decision to move. This chapter examines how women from different regions of

[30] Kofos has also referred to Macedonian peoples as those who have been 'immunized with a "Macedonian" national ideology' (1989: 259).

Macedonia tell their stories and, like the 'scattered seeds', are able to adapt to and change in different environments.

Maps of desire and attachment

Maps are used to claim identity through tracing journeys and locating stories as reminders of the past, and to introduce places of identity to young listeners. In public rituals, performances encourage the expression of emotions and sentiments that play a part in identity construction and similarly, stories told within families also connect members, as they create a sense of belonging. Personal stories of family experiences offer an alternative perspective on the official history of a region and of a time. Different narratives allow for fragmented versions of events, which are used to build the family story. This chapter presents some of the stories that families tell of 'home', of events during the war years, and of settling and making a life in a new location. The stories are often contradictory but taken together they form a complex history of social life.

Migrants are always 'accompanied by countless travelling objects' which are 'embedded with memories and play a central role in anchoring identity and the past during displacement' (Savas 2014:185, 189; Tolia-Kelly 2004a, 2004b). Solid objects, Divya Tolia-Kelly writes, 'are charged with memory'; while they relate to the past, they figure in 'diasporic positioning, and identity politics' (2004a: 314). Memories can be found in the everyday: in photographs, books, DVDs, stories, maps and other objects. These create 'memory spaces' where 'trails of collective memory' act to connect immigrants to 'another place and time' (Breckenridge & Appadurai 1989: i; Kelly 2016). While artefacts help to bind the immigrants to their past, they play a complex role in immigrants' lives, in the maintenance and reshaping of identity, from which an 'individual life narrative can be constructed' (Hinchman & Hinchman 1997: 187).

In the Macedonian diaspora, stories are framed by memories of annexation, colonization and war, now told in in a new place. Artefacts and narratives express regional diversity but in Melbourne this has fostered a shared Macedonian identity, of an imagined 'home' and the development of a 'long distance' national identity (Skrbis 2000; Danforth 1995).

Here, national identity is established in maps and maintained in artefacts, treasured because they continue to connect families to a 'home' built on memories and stories. Family stories are told by different people and in different contexts and become fragments from which family myths are constructed. These stories are the oral histories of a community, based on personal experiences of a time or event offering an alternative to 'official' histories.

Members of the Gelis family, Rose, her sister Lydia and Lydia's husband, Jovan,[31] arrived at an early interview well prepared. As explained earlier, the three are members of the large extended family into which my daughter married. They had arrived in Melbourne in the 1960s and early 1970s from Peshosnitsa village in Florina, a province now in Aegean Macedonia. Lydia and Jovan brought with them some treasured artefacts: family photographs, family stories, a DVD sent by members of a Macedonian community now living in Canada and an old map.

The map was packed along with their possessions for the journey from the village to the suburbs of Melbourne. I had brought the very large and very heavy *The Times: Atlas of the World* to the interview. The Times' map of the region was dismissed with a swipe of Jovan's hand as he unfolded with care his own torn and battered map. 'This', he announced, 'is the true one'. He had little faith in anything English as they had 'collaborated with the Greeks' and were responsible for the boundaries that 'ignored the wishes of Macedonians'.

With the map spread on the table Rose, Lydia and Jovan pointed to places familiar to them: the region, their village and surrounding towns considered their 'neighbourhood' and told stories of their childhood, family and community celebrations, and later the violence and trauma associated with the war years. To me, their map made no sense; the map in *The Times' Atlas* was a quite different from theirs, which stretched across the page

[31] Neither woman is sure of her date of birth. Rose thought she might be 86, while Lydia believed she was 70; she had gone to Greek school so she thought she may have been born after the war. Rose spoke of the war years, of poverty and of German occupation. Lydia's husband Jovan is older than his wife, though he was not sure of his age either. He had been born in the village.

and made no reference to the south (i.e. Greece). I knew that their map represented 'home' in a familiar shape that made sense to them, but it made no sense to me. It was a reminder that for the 'outsider', maps can be 'incomprehensible' and make little sense (Kofos 2010:1).

Some months later, a similar map was presented during an interview that began with an introduction to the term *decata bagalci*, the scattered seeds. This time, the interview was with Mariana, who was born in Melbourne in 1972, and told me of family members who had been scattered and were now lost to her. She gave me a photocopied map titled *Carte Ethnographique de la Macedoine,*[32] which refers to the Western powers' interest in the Balkans. It also refers to revolutionary and French teacher Gotse Delchev, who while teaching in Bansko, Strumica, in Macedonia told his students: 'I will teach you French so you can tell the world that you are Macedonians'.[33] The most confusing aspects of the map for me were its shape, the vivid colours and the black lines drawn over the space. In contrast, the *Times Atlas* map shows Macedonia on the edge of the page, easily overlooked as its map focuses on the south, the sea, the islands and Athens.

Mariana's map shows the region of Macédoine spreading across the paper and I notice that on one side is the Aegean Sea coloured a pale yellow, a colour which also is used on the land which surrounds a brightly painted Macedonia. One firm black line links the port of Salonique (Salonika) to the west, while lines of small black crosses divide the region into sections, a political statement being made by the cartographer and meant to confront the viewer. The lines of crosses show the annexed regions, a land dissected by borders of barbwire. The symbols appear to illustrate Talat Pasha's comment: 'a deadly surgeon … freely cut … the map of the Balkans' (cited in Hughes 2017: 561). Danforth's research refers to Macedonian maps that circulated in Melbourne at the end of the 20th century often drawn with barbwire boundaries (1995).[34] These maps contain a visual

[32] The map's full title is: Carte Ethnographique de la Macédoine: Enquête dans les Balkans: Points de vie Bulgare.
[33] Retrieved from https://en.wikiquote.org/w/index.php? title =Gotse_Delchev&oldid=2290012.
[34] In Danforth's research (undertaken in Melbourne in the 1990s) he includes the maps given to him. These offered different versions of Macedonian and Greek history, territories and of national identity (Danforth 1995).

memory of partition, a suggestion of the brutality felt by the population at annexation and the violence of 'hellenisation'. To the families in the diaspora it is a reminder of what had been their imagined nation-state.

Symbols on a map's surface act as 'memory codes' (Kelly 2017), places where knowledge is fixed, identified and shared. For the communities now settled in new locations, maps of the homeland are memory spaces which aid in the remembering of family and of historical events. Mariana pointed with her pencil to places and traced journeys on the surface of the family map. With dots and circles, she marked villages and towns, pointed to rivers and mountains, and traced a pencil line to mark the journeys her family had made. The stories she told of the war years[35] were those told to a young Australian woman born to a Macedonian family in Melbourne. With this map, she can recite stories of her Macedonian heritage; as teller, she is both Macedonian and Australian. These stories are now told by older members of Mariana's family to her children and to grandchildren, so that they will become part of the family's collective memory.

Some weeks later I had a lunch meeting with a group of women members of the local Macedonian Christian church (a church recently consecrated). All but one were widows and all were retired. Rose, Suzie, Fisa, Petti, Rosa and Mariana had migrated from different areas in the Republic to the suburbs of Melbourne at the end of the 1900s, but shared language, culture, religion and Macedonian identity meant that they connected with the women from Aegean Macedonia and were all part of the Church congregation. On this first visit, we met at their local shopping mall and I had brought a photocopy of Mariana's map with me. Initially I was reluctant to show it to them as I wondered if they would recognise it. The map had been printed in 1914 and marked the territory of a homeland imagined by those who had lived in Aegean Macedonia. But during the conversation, I took the map and put it in the middle of the table. The women immediately jumped up from their seats and rushed to stand behind Rosa, who now had put it in front of her (see Image 4 below).

[35] These are the years between the end of WWII and the years during and after the Civil War (1945-50).

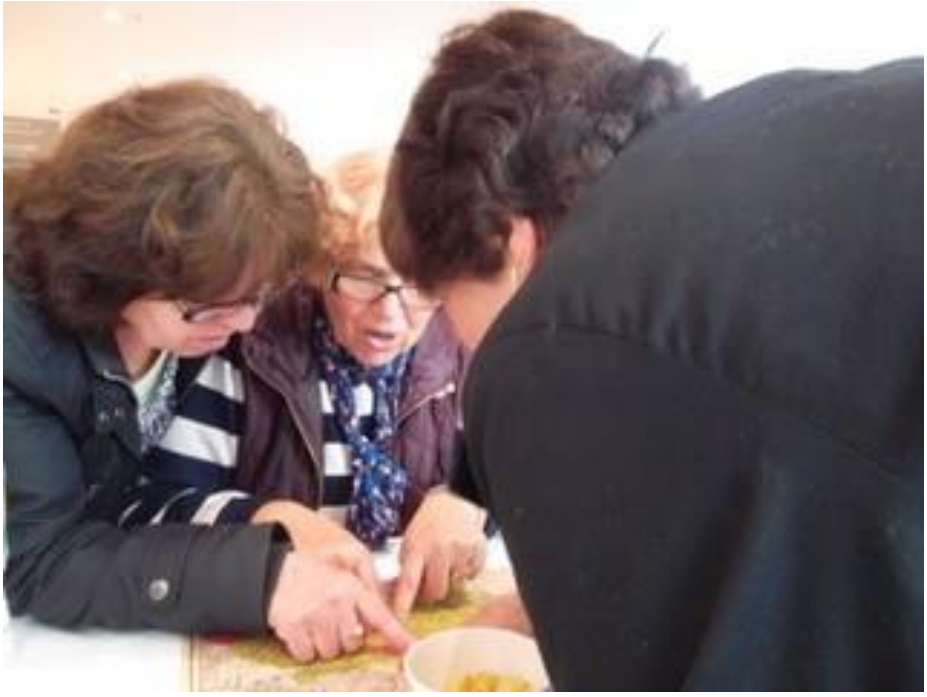

Image 4: After placing the map on the table, without any warning to the women, this was their first response.

The women looked carefully at the map, recognising familiar places on the surface, pointing and telling each other stories. They traced trails between towns, villages and regions. They overlooked the barbwire borders as their fingers moved over the map. I had imagined that these borders would stop communication, movement and a shared national identity. I asked if I should make photocopies of the map, but they laughed and held up their mobile phones, with which they had already photographed it. As I watched, they continued to use the surface of Mariana's map as a landscape of memories and of the 'home' they had left.

Image 5: The women insisted that I take this photograph of them holding the map of Macedonia. Later, when asked, Fasa told me the map was painted in the colours used in icons and surrounded in the pale yellow which suggested illumination.

The stories the women tell include all aspects of family life, stories of the happiness of village and family life but also of the sadness of separation and death. The term *decata bagalci* refers to family members both young and old who were scattered during the Civil War, lost to their families but still remembered. We might also apply the term 'scattered' to the Macedonians who now live in the diaspora in America, Canada and Australia, where with stories and maps they shape vibrant Macedonian communities.

Aegean Macedonia: From 'home' for village women to the suburbs.

Changes to the restrictive immigration policy were forced on a post-WWII Australia that wanted to 'populate or perish', and to build the country's profile in the region. While people from Macedonia had settled in Australia from as early as the 19th century, it was only after the war that mass immigration from the Aegean Macedonia began. During the early years of research into these communities, many studies took the 'outside view' (Mee & Wright 2009: 842), which overlooked the contributions made by immigrants to 'business, political and religious organisations' (Savas 2014: 186). The perspective also

underestimated the importance of social construction and identity formation in the diaspora (Mee & Wright 2009: 842). To help to redress the imbalance, this section concentrates on personal stories and experiences both at 'home' and in Melbourne. Stories help to shape a region, reveal personal reasons for leaving and describe experiences of settling in Melbourne. They also show the complex ways in which national identity is created and how it adapts in the new location.

Stories told in households are 'myths', and as such, seen by some as 'overpower[ing] truth in family histories' (Ali 2015).[36] This argument assumes that family stories are untrue, but narratives supported by artefacts provide the substance used to help make sense of a personal history. This section focuses on Macedonian family 'myths', the oral histories told in migrant communities. The importance of family myths is that they keep alive the memory of 'home', the reasons for leaving, the establishment of new households and communities in the diaspora. Myths are fragmented, offer other versions of shared histories, help to connect communities, and foster group identity. In each re-telling, they are like fragments in a kaleidoscope to the listener but forming a picture of the family and of the past. Yet these myths do not speak only of the past –the fragmented stories are always also about the present; the meaning of a myth is always found in the now.

Studies of migrants once concentrated on feelings of 'rootless mobility' (Ahmed 2000: 3), but these overlooked the immigrants' ability to 'make spaces' and to '(re)create landscapes in order to revitalise a sense of community and belonging' (Baker 2012: 26; Trudeau 2006: 437; Tweed 2006). Often, research has neglected the stories told of a 'historic homeland' where in the diaspora women's stories challenge expectations and views held by the wider community. In stories told by Rose and Lydia, younger women like Sophie and those born in Australia, like Mariana, heard of 'home'. The family stories all refer to 'home' as a place where 'the family worked together', and women's roles were crucial in the life of the family. Research into Aegean Macedonia undertaken in the 1930s tell of villages formed by large extended families, the *zadruga,* where brothers with wives (often from the surrounding regions) worked together as independent economic units

[36] Ali uses this proposition to explore a family's history in *The Stone Woman*, (2015) Verso, London

(Karavidas 1931: 242). There are also stories told by women who refused to 'marry out', they did not want to leave their village, even if this was against their father's wishes (further discussed in Chapter Five below). In all families, the roles and responsibilities of married women were crucial to the performance of secular and sacred rites.

Older women tell stories about the households they lived in during the war years, but most speak of economic security. Fani described her village and the surrounding area as 'green and fertile' not like in the south (Greece) which is 'dry and barren'. Her description captured the region's geography 'where rainfall is abundant' and land arable while in the 'south, it is a different story: good farming land becomes scarcer, the ground is more broken and rain less frequent' (Mazower 2000: 19). Rose and Lydia used Jovan's map to point to their village and spoke with affection of their household, tracing the trails that led them to the surrounding villages. They also referred to the abundance of land and spoke of their household and memories of 'home'; 'this is the place where our family lived. There were 20 members: grandmothers and grandfathers, mothers and fathers and their children'. Their photographs show their house as a two-storey structure and they described it as having a cellar for storage. The ground floor was used for eating and sitting, and the first floor had eight bedrooms. The family also kept pets: 'four dogs, three cats and chickens.'

Other women who spent their childhood in Florina remember a fertile land producing an abundance of vegetables, fruit and crops both for the family and for cash. Animals were kept for meat and milk, often in front yards. Families were largely self-sufficient in food and handmade goods were given as gifts, exchanged or sold in nearby towns. Women remember the region as 'plentiful' and believed that annexation was due to the 'envy' of their neighbours to the south. Through annexation Macedonian land nearly doubled the size of Greece, but more importantly, added fertile land which stretched from the north-west to the eastern port of Salonika.

Fani's photographs, on display in a glass cabinet in her house, include one of the house in which she was born. She believed that the house had been built at the end of a lane which led to the Via Egnatia (the Roman road). The house, a large brick structure, had

two storeys, no veranda and four windows set into the front wall. Under the house was a large cellar used to store foodstuffs, which could be accessed by a door at the front of the house. Twenty-five people lived in the house, her grandparents and their three sons, their wives and their children. One son had seven children, the other had six, and Fani had three siblings. The formal entrance to the house was a large central front door. The sons and their families had rooms upstairs, while the grandparent's rooms were downstairs. Opposite the grandparent's rooms were rooms for eating, sitting and entertaining. Outside and on the same side as the kitchen was the kitchen garden. Fani pointed to her family's room on the first floor. She, her parents and her siblings all slept together on a large straw pallet. Her parents, she said, slept at opposite ends of the pallet with their children between them. However, she laughed and said they were always surprised to find that 'somehow my parents always ended up on the same side of the bed'.

Mariana also used her family map to show the location of her grandparent's home. It is a place she came to know from family stories told during her childhood in Melbourne. She said of the region, after a visit there in 2000 with her husband and child:

> This was where my father's family's property used to be. It was taken away from them; anyway, it is beautiful. The countryside is beautiful with beautiful landscapes and orchards. I can't explain how fruitful it is. It is amazing.

Stories of this 'home' are now retold to Mariana's children in Melbourne. Unlike Mariana, Sophie was born in a Florina village and her memories of the village are those of a young child. She too told similar stories of a childhood home to her children when they were young:

> [My parents] lived with my grandparents, so there were six people living in the house. It was small, I don't know the meterage. But during my childhood I thought it huge. We had everyone else around us: the cousins across the road, my grandfather's brothers occupied the surrounding houses and everyone in my mother's family were in a block up the street.

When I interviewed Sophie, she had returned recently from a visit to the village to see her childhood household for the last time:

> I was born post war and so everyone in the village was just happy. There were about eleven hundred people living there. We owned a dairy farm and we had goats, so we made feta cheese and sold milk and transported the dairy products to the surrounding villages on the back of donkeys.

She remembers a household that was largely self-sufficient. Surpluses of foodstuffs and other items were shared with other villagers during difficult times:

> Everyone looked after each other. if there was a death in one family, you would divide what you had in your food rations and out of what you grew and sent it out [to the family] and you had a little less. Even when I went back to the village people would pull me aside and say, you won't remember this but your father did this: 'When I lost my husband in the war ….' It was very moving but that was what we did, we looked after each other. And in my mind, we never had a shortage of anything.

She says she would have liked her three adult children who are always 'talking about sustainability' and 'wellness' to have spent their childhood in her village.

> What goes on here [in the village] was this 'wellness' that we pay a fortune for now. Everyone had their specialities, their little 'wellness', these were things that they could do for one another. One would grow something and then share seeds and what you made you shared around. It was a very different lifestyle to here [in Australia].

Before the region was due to be destroyed by a mining company, Sophie visited her village one last time. She said:

> People in the village had been very happy but it is different now. A couple of years ago most of the people left. Now the whole town has been taken over by the mine.[37]

Other stories, too, refer to an abundance of food and self-sufficiency in the villages. In the family of Rose and Lydia, a cautionary tale is told of hives, bees and two boys. Rose's son and her nephew, when very young found two long sticks and threatened to prod the beehives. Women busy with duties in and around the household, told the boys that bees would attack them if they did. After a time, the women realised they had not heard from the boys and went looking for them. The boys were finally found hiding, crying and trying to cover their swollen faces. The story ends with the boys going in a taxi to Salonika for a stay in the hospital. The story told to young family members in Melbourne is a warning to the young of the importance of obeying one's elders. But it also tells of a household enterprise in which all adult family members worked to be self-sufficient and this included the keeping of bees.

Older women in Melbourne, who had grown up in Aegean Macedonia, tell of a life which is different to that of women who live in the south. In northern Greece (Aegean Macedonia) women's roles were valued as bearers and transmitters of cultural reproduction (Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1989: 7; Karakasidou 1966: 106). In the diaspora women are still seen as a 'cultural matrix, the keepers of culture (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 7). Villages in Florina had a 'long uninterrupted historical presence' and were part of a 'strong urban tradition' important to the 'wider Balkan urban network as industrial and administrative centres' (Koumaridis 2006: 223). Populations in these towns included women from many different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups who lived together.[38] Village women had agency different from those in the south: they played important roles

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[37] Sophie said the 'people thought the mine was terrible' as they 'just wanted to keep the village' but as they were not wealthy 'the majority had been bought out' by the mine company,

[38] An exhibition of photographs and clothing held at the William Mora Galleries in July 2017 gave a glimpse of the skills and diversity of women who lived side by side in Florina in the early 19th century. 'Girls in Our Town: Women in the Shadow of "The Magnificent Empire" gives insight into the Florina Prefecture from 1900-1918 and 2017 a photographic exhibition showing the different groups of women who lived in the Florina area: Gypsy [Roma] women, Oriental [Asian] women, Muslim women, Orthodox, Jewish women' (text taken from material distributed at the exhibition).

in family life, both in secular and sacred rites. In the south, land and settlements had a 'different appearance', as they were 'small, semi-agricultural towns' which lay within 'the boundaries of the Greek state' (Koumaridis 2006: 223). In the south women had comparatively limited roles, restricted to the house (Karavidas 1931; Karakasidou 1996).

In the 1930s, researchers in Florina found that 'conditions [were] somewhat different to those in other parts of the country' (Karakasidou 1996: 102). Women and men in the *zadruga* were 'engaged in both agricultural and handicraft production' (Karakasidou 1996: 102). Research also describes women in the region as 'being of a "special kind'"; they 'worked not only the family's land but in cottage industries', they were teachers of Macedonian and the 'ark of the specialised knowledge … and traditions' (Karavidas 1931: 239; Karakasidou 1996: 102). Stories told by women in Melbourne show that their roles were understood as vital to family and village success. Rose and Lydia tell of the variety of foodstuffs grown by the family: peppers, watermelons, tomatoes and tobacco, and the animals they kept included cows, lambs, chickens and bees. They also consumed goods produced in households and exchanged or sold some in surrounding regions. Sophie tells a similar story about all the members of her family owning an enterprise that made feta cheese, which was sold in the village and elsewhere, transported on the backs of donkeys. Rose's son Peter told of their 'mother's sister's husband's brother's family' who operated a bakery in the village from which women took the baked bread on wagons to sell in the surrounding district. Peter reported that the 'bakery is still operating in the village today'.

Lydia told a story that sheds light on her relationship with her father. Her father was the village tailor and made 'dresses and other things for women'. She tells of the beautiful dresses he made for her mother and sisters. Lydia packed one of the dresses that her father made for his wife when she came to Melbourne: 'I can show you sometime when you come to my house … I took one from my mother'. When Lydia 'finish[ed] school [she was] 12 or 13 as we never go to high school anyway' and she asked her father to train her as a tailor. She explained:

> We were six girls, but I am the only one who learnt to sew. [It was] because nobody wanted to learn because nobody was interested. You have to like sewing and maybe that is why my father taught me and I took the job.

When Rose arrived in Australia as a young mother, her first paid work was sewing electric blankets at home. Later, she also began to make clothes for clients within the Macedonian community. After her daughter completed a course in dress design, it was suggested she run the business with her, but she refused: 'I can't make a business with her, but I always help [in its running]'.

Women are the spiritual centre of Macedonian households. Lydia tells of her favourite space in the household at 'home' which was on the first floor, where a place had been made for the family's icons. At the beginning of each day, it was her mother's responsibility to light a candle, to make the sign of the cross and pray. Lydia recalled:

> In a long family room we kept an icon-space, it was in the corner of the room. And every night and morning, my mother would say when I was younger. 'put the candle in". Because there was a little cup in front of the icon like the one in the church.

Sophie talked about a similar space made for icons and candles in other houses:

> Every Macedonian woman has this sacred space with the light. It is called a *candillo*. There is always an icon of Mary, and the icon of your [own] saint as everyone has a name day, the saint you are named after. But you always have an icon of Mary.

When asked if she has one in her Australian home:

> Yes, I have kept it, it actually is my mother's. It is a beautiful icon with beautiful colours. It is colourful and I have kept it as you can't not keep it.

Lydia and Rose also have icons and an 'icon space' because, they told me, it is a 'women's responsibility to protect the family and the home'. [39] Rose is now living in the household of her son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter and when she arrived, she made a new shrine with a collection of icons. Some of these had been brought from the household she had shared with her husband, but now after his death other icons and religious artefacts had been given as gifts by friends. In this space she has also placed photographs of family members.[40] In the front of the icons are small bowls for fresh flowers and candles that she changes on a weekly basis, according to the seasons and to her fancy.

Stories of the war years

Many stories retold in families are based on memories of those who lived during the war years. They tell of the trauma resulting from witnessing violence during the German invasion in WWII. Other stories relate to the later violence of the Civil War and 'hellenisation'. While such stories form a family's collective memory, in the diaspora this memory connects and strengthens the bonds among people from Aegean Macedonia and Serbia, divided since 1913. These stories can be heard in documentaries stored on mobile phones, where at a moment's notice they can be brought up and shared with others, including interested outsiders.

The German invasion[41] was the background to many stories told by older women from the Aegean Macedonia region. But not all stories are of the horror of war, including some that Rose and Lydia tell of when the German came. In their village the arrival of the invaders sent villagers hurriedly hiding food, knowing what would happen to it if they did not. Pigs were kept and fattened by villagers to be slaughtered before winter to keep people alive during the fallow. The sisters tell a story of men digging a large hole in the ground where they placed a live pig and covered it with soil. Everyone laughed as they

[39] Icons are auctioned in the Church on 25 January each year and must be returned in 40 days, to be put back in the sanctuary. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four below.
[40] The photographs are of two people who died recently – her daughter and her husband. She has photographs of grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but they have been placed elsewhere.
[41] In many areas in the Balkans, the local people supported the Germans and their invasion, but they were not seen as liberators in the villages of Aegean Macedonia.

remembered the squealing pig making so much noise that the Germans quickly discovered it. And they laughed at their disappointment as they watched the pig being driven away.

A very different story, told many times, was that of the Jewish butcher. Villagers were aware that Germans would arrest their Jewish neighbours, and so they knew that the Jewish butcher would be deported. Many thousands of Jewish people from the region were taken to Salonika and then deported to Auschwitz or Bergen-Belsen. But the following story shows that this did not always happen. Aspects of the story highlight differences in memories of the event and while elements in the story may differ and some are too young to remember or were yet to be born when the events occurred, all tell it as their story. Family 'myths' express underlying patterns, suggesting that even during the chaos and violence of war life does have 'meaning and value' (Armstrong 2005: 2).

Rose often starts the story with reference to her brother, of whom she rarely speaks, as someone who worked for the butcher. In versions told by others in the family, this brother is described as 'someone who cared for animals in fields outside the village'. Learning that German soldiers were to arrive, villagers hid the butcher 'in plain sight', in a large wooden wine barrel in the centre of the village. In the telling, there is much laughter, but it is defiant laughter: the Germans may have stolen their food but not their butcher. After the Germans left, the butcher was helped out of the barrel and he ran 'very fast' through the village cemetery and to freedom. I asked how long the butcher had hidden in the barrel and it came as a surprise to hear that it was 'about a week'. My question why the Germans and their dogs did not find him was promptly dismissed by Rose, who said that village children (which included a four-year-old Rose), took turns in sitting on the top of the barrel, and playing around it. But the narrative is composed of conflicting 'fragments' and told in different versions, especially with regard to what happened to the butcher once he had escaped from the barrel.

All versions of the story tell of him being let out of the barrel when the German soldiers left the village, then escaping by running through the cemetery. Some are not sure what happened to him after that. Lydia's husband says that he escaped to the West and later

emigrated to Canada. Rose and Lydia say that villagers in the region hid his wife and son and at war's end they joined him in Canada. Regardless of the differences, each time the story is told, it is told with defiance, expressing the resilience of one community that outwitted the enemy. The story ends with an image of the Jewish butcher running from certain death, through the cemetery to his freedom, and is accompanied by laughter and smiles from the listeners, because 'they' had saved him from the enemy.

Fani, now living in Melbourne, had a different memory from a time when she was very young, so chilling that for many years she was never sure of its truth. The story became so disturbing to her that in 2001 she went to Belgium to ask an older sister if her memory was 'true or a dream'. As a child, she lived in with her family in a village in Florina, near the via Egnatia. Her memory is of an event that she witnessed in 1947. One morning, it was cold, and the rain was very heavy. She remembers looking out of a window and seeing an old man with his coat on one shoulder as he walked holding a stick. She thought he may have been a farm labourer, because the stick had a hook and a 'nail' to prod the bulls as they pulled the plough. This was the morning of her mother's arrest.

> My parents were arrested because they would not sign the paper [the language oath].[42] When my mother was arrested, she was driven away. We and other relatives ran after the vehicle. I still have the memory of running and running and getting stuck in the mud. I knew that other villagers had heard us crying and weeping, but they shut their doors and would not come and help us. They did not help me.

Fani was only three at the time but still remembers her mother's face on that morning. She remembers her being dragged to an army jeep and running after it as it drove away. The ground was so wet that she got stuck in the mud and fell. For many years, she thought it was a dream but says: 'it burns me'.

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[42] Danforth writes that in contrast to Yugoslavia after 1945, in Greece 'under the Metaxas dictatorship of 1936-40' began the 'repression of the Slavic speakers'; later 'conservative governments continued a policy of persecution and assimilation. Perhaps the most egregious examples of this were the "language oaths" administered in several Macedonian villages, which required Macedonians to swear that they would renounce their "Slavic dialect" and from then on only speak Greek' (1995a: 110).

Her mother had been arrested for not signing the language oath, for which her father and grandfather had also been arrested earlier.

> I thought my mother would have been taken to the nearest prison and stay there. But my mother was taken to the courts in Lerin [and found guilty] and then taken to a prison in Salonika. The prison's name was the Eptapyrgio Fortress [Fani cried as she held a small photograph of the prison and pointed to the place where she thought her mother had been held]. It would have been terrible for my much-loved mother to stay in that small cold space. Some of the prisoners were executed.

Her mother was spared and Fani thinks that she spent less than a year in the prison. During her mother's absence she and her siblings suffered but her older sisters looked after the younger ones and kept them safe. After her parents and grandfather were released, she learned that the village people, even people in her family, had acted as spies for the Greeks. As soon as they could, her older brother and sisters left for Germany and later Fani applied for a tourist visa to Australia, with the aim of applying for permanent citizenship as soon as she could.

Sophie told a childhood story of her parents and other villagers continuing to speak in Macedonian amongst themselves but always in the privacy of their home:

> We only spoke in Macedonian at home. It was only when in the presence of our school teachers that we spoke Greek. They were very authoritarian, and they were Greek and if my parents spoke to them, they would to do so in Greek. I don't think they [the teachers] even spoke Macedonian. Now that I am thinking back to that time, I realise that they couldn't speak Macedonian but everyone in the village spoke Macedonian.

Mariana talked about the enduring effect of the language policy on Macedonians living in the diaspora. She tells of her friend's Macedonian parents still 'terrified and when they

came here [to Melbourne] they were so scared that they still continued to follow the Greek tradition. They went to the Greek church and only spoke Macedonian at home but when they were outside, they only spoke Greek'. The father was 'so scared' because the man had had 'three of his fingers cut off … and he is still very scared, poor thing as he still thinks that there are people around [ready to report him to the Greek authorities]'.

In stories told by older family members, the arrests of those not willing to learn or to speak Greek was a common element. These stories often become a reference for the discussion of events in the present. One such story that was re-told during a conversation about the plight of children in Syria illustrated this. The story was told on a Christmas Eve in Melbourne 2016 by a man born in a village in Florina, to his teenage daughter. Sarah, Rose's granddaughter, asked about the situation in Syria they had been talking about. Her father explained that there were people being pushed off their land and robbed of their identity, and then gave the example of indigenous peoples in Australia. But finally, he retold a story told to him by his mother, suggesting that it was an everyday event for women like Sarah's grandmother when she lived Florina. He spoke of his mother, Rose, being forced to work in the fields at the end of WWII. One day, she and a group of women were walking back to the village after working all day in the fields picking tobacco, and as they neared the village, they were confronted by a group of Greek solders who approached them with rifles drawn and began to shout at them.

The women were asked if they could speak Greek, and to check if they could, the soldiers asked each woman a question to which they had to reply in Greek. One of the older Macedonian women could not or would not speak Greek; perhaps she had refused to learn. There was much shouting as the soldiers demanded an answer from her. The women were terrified and knew that they might all be punished. Finally, one of the younger women stepped forward and told the soldiers that this old woman could not speak because she was mute. The women finally persuaded the soldiers to let them all pass and return to the village. Sarah asked: 'What would the soldiers have done to her if she couldn't speak Greek?'. Her father answered: 'They would have shot her'. The next day at a large family Christmas Day feast, Phoebe questioned her grandmother Rose and her aunt Lydia, perhaps because she could not believe her father's story. Lydia answered

immediately: 'That is not correct. It is not true. She would not have been shot. Her tongue would have been cut out'.

At the time of the incident it was compulsory for all children to attend Greek schools, and Lydia was of an age to have been at school that day, so her 'memory' depends on her sister Rose's story. In this way, stories become collective memories of families and part of a community's narratives. In their retelling, aspects are changed as they are influenced by both the person telling the tale and the new setting in which it is being told. While it may refer to a history and a past, the context of the story is always the present. While it might refer to a history and a past, the context of the story is the present, and the story reminds the listeners that as members of a community they remain linked to images of a violent civil war but also to the beautiful landscape of Aegean Macedonia.

Mariana's stories tell of her family, who left the farm and the village 'literally [leaving] everything, a dairy farm … we left everything there'. When her parents arrived in Australia, they did not speak about what had happened; only 'towards at the end of their lives they did'. She now feels that if they had talked about their experiences, 'a lot of pain would have been taken away … made acceptance a lot easier … but they didn't'. For Mariana, an Australian-born Macedonian, family stories are linked to her map, which contains 'memories' of a time before her birth. With the aid of the map, she tells of a pregnant grandmother forced to flee her burning village. Using her pencil, she points to a place on the map:

> I think it was on the bank of that river [whose name] means 'black river', this is where she gave birth. It was in the middle of the night and she was heavily pregnant, and she and her family went over the mountains. And her husband was taken away and sent to the army and never came back … He was sent to Russia and was never allowed back into Macedonia or Greece.

During the traumatic years of the Civil War, Mariana told me, 'they were all scattered'. Her grandmother's 'older brother was killed by the Greek army at the age of nineteen and then her young sister died as well, her sister was thirteen and her brother was

nineteen. They both died'. After the family's flight from the village, her grandfather joined the army. Rose and Lydia also refer to relatives who were killed during these years, some who joined the army and some who were killed in the fighting. These are the memories of those who lived in Aegean Macedonia, but most families in the diaspora have such stories, which end in sadness and separation.

Mariana's grandfather's story came to a conclusion many years later when Mariana was a child:

> He [her grandfather who had joined the army] lived in Tashkent in Russia, so the family was separated, so they [her parents] never had their dad. So, years later when I was twelve or thirteen, I remember he came to meet his family. Although he had remarried, he didn't have any children. He came to the border of Macedonia and Bulgaria as that was that was the only place they would allow him in. There were all his kids [children and grandchildren] and they were all crying. It was a very emotional thing that we witnessed. He was never allowed back so they grew up without a father.

Sophie also reports that it was not only men who had joined the army who were not allowed back into Aegean Macedonia; she also spoke of children being 'imprisoned in certain places and they lived there as prisoners for quite a time … and the effect of that!' These children she also referred to as the 'scattered seeds' and many of the older women had stories about them. One younger woman contacted me to say that her mother was one of these children, but later the mother contacted me to say she did not want to be interviewed. Other women in the congregation spoke of an older man who had been one of the 'scattered' children, but now it was too late to interview him as he was in an aged care facility suffering from dementia, so hopefully he would not remember the events.

Settling in the suburbs

Aegean Macedonian migrants to Melbourne experienced some difficulties settling into the suburbs, due to their origins in largely rural settings and extended family structures,

lack of understanding of prevailing values in the new place and just as important, the 'racism' of institutions 'constructed by and for the English-speaking population' (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 3). However, once settled, Macedonians in Melbourne 'found Australia to be a land of freedom [and] a refuge from [the] violence and oppression which had earlier been their way of life and which had marked the history of these people' (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 3).

When I asked Lydia why she and her husband and children had left Florina, she said, 'The Greeks took our life and left us with nothing'. Many other older women from the Church also originally from Florina gave similar reasons for leaving 'home', but also mentioned the economic situation of post-war Europe. Sophie's stories tell of the violence felt by her family at losing their dairy. She said that her family left everything 'because my parents did not see any future for their children. That's it!' Selina's father left the Republic of Macedonia in the late 1960s which she explained as due 'simply [to] poverty'. Once in Melbourne, it took him three years to complete a fitter and turner's apprenticeship and to learn to read and write English at night school. With these qualifications, he felt he would be guaranteed work, so he then sent for his wife and children to join him in Melbourne.

Making a home and feeling secure is often difficult for migrants, and research into 'expatriate homemaking' often refers to the importance of women's roles because they hold the 'imaginative and materialised' skills needed to make the 'interconnection between the lived space and sense of belonging' (Walsh 2006: 273). Stories about homemaking in the diaspora refer to women but also to husbands, sons, uncles and grandfathers. Family men and friends who had settled earlier often helped the new settlers, offering accommodation and other support. Selina recalls that when she arrived on the docks of Melbourne with her mother and sister, they were met by her father and his friend, who drove them in his white station wagon to the suburb of Thornbury. They lived in the friend's house until her father had saved a deposit for their first house in Springvale.

Lydia, who arrived in Melbourne with her husband and children in 1965, tells a similar story. They moved in with her husband's uncle in Richmond because the house had 'lots of rooms'. Then her sister and brother-in-law bought a new house, in Lalor, and 'he took us there [where] Jovan could find work'. The four children, her two and her sister's children, slept in the same room. 'Yes', Lydia says of the children: 'they were more than cousins, they were more like brothers and sisters.' Lydia's husband 'found work' and they were able to 'line up a little money'.

Sophie's story about accommodation includes sharing with close family members:

> We came here as a family, as a group of four. We moved in with my dad's brother. They had three children and our family was four, and there was another cousin and we all lived together in a tiny terrace house. It was Northcote. It was tiny, tiny and we all lived there. The lounge room became my cousin's bedroom. She had this fold up mattress and when everyone went to bed, she would take out her mattress. Our family of four lived in one bedroom.

Both of Sophie's parents worked and a 'couple of years later' the family moved again, when Sophie's mother's brother immigrated to Melbourne. The two brothers, her father and uncle, bought a house in Fairfield together. 'That was the only way they could afford not to pay rent. And they lived together until they had saved enough money to buy their respective homes. Then we lived in this gorgeous wooden house in Fairfield'.

Researching into homemaking often focuses on the roles of women, but in these stories in the diaspora, women tell of men willing to share household tasks. Selina also spoke of her father 'cooking, cleaning, gardening and building the garage. As my mother also worked, he took a lot of the responsibility both inside and outside the house'. This supports Sophie's claim that her father not only grew vegetables but also cooked meals:

> My father was actually good on all of that. He cooked a lot, as much as my mother. Perhaps more as he worked shift work. I still remember him going to

> the Vic [Victoria] Market and I have a memory of him getting up on Saturday morning very early as it was never a problem … he always wanted to source the best ingredients. He grew all our veggies. My uncle, whom I am looking after at the moment … said wherever we moved, 'your father made a garden and he didn't just provide for the family but he provided enough for the whole street'.

In suburban backyards, men made gardens and grew, tended, harvested and shared produce. Rose's husband had established a very productive back garden with vegetables and citrus trees, and he shared the produce with neighbours, members of the Church and relatives. This is also true of her sister's husband, Jovan, who still tends his backyard garden and grows vegetables used in the household or given to neighbours. Sophie believes that her father found 'great relaxation in working in the garden'; he 'worked very long shifts and in order to unwind, he would garden before he went to sleep'. She believes that spending 'time in the garden is what many men did'. This is not always be passed down: Sophie's brother 'can't grow anything while most of my relatives from Florina …[can grow] capsicums … peppers …' Women also tend gardens and in the Church, older widows bring their seasonal fruit, vegetables and flowers as gifts for other women. Most women who go to the Church grow the herbs, especially basil, that are used in rituals and given as gifts.

Lydia said that for Macedonian settlers, finding work in the 1950s was 'thanks God, easy to find for anyone who wanted to work in the factories.' Lydia and Rose laughed as they said, 'you arrive one day [on the boat] and the next morning you have a job'. Many factory workers, both women and men, were asked by their bosses if they knew of anyone who was looking to work as they were always looking to find other people to do factory work. Women spoke with pride at being seen as hard working and reliable, valued workers in the factory. But they also spoke of the difficulty of getting to work. Some had to get up very early as there was no transport running at the time, or there was no direct transport to the factory. Others spoke of walking together in groups with sticks (or armed in some way) as it was cold and dark and they were frightened, but they needed to get to work on time.

Fani's experiences of the early years in Australia were somewhat different from those of many others. After surviving the traumatic events of her early life, she applied for a tourist visa and was 'promised' training by Australian migration officers in Greece. With the idea of becoming a permanent citizen and a view to enter professional training, she decided to move to Australia. Her first glimpse of the country seemed promising. The ship had docked in Fremantle and she 'thought it the most beautiful place I had ever seen'. However, she soon found she was not to disembark here but in Adelaide. When she first saw Port Adelaide, she thought it 'was an ugly dirty place' and was immediately unhappy about her choice. As she got off the ship, she was confronted by a 'very large photograph of an unpleasant looking, overweight man with outstretched arms welcome[ing] me to Australia'.[43] Fani soon found there was no training or education available, so with little English and fewer skills, the only work she could find was as a labourer in market gardens on the outskirts of Adelaide. She worked in a market garden in Salisbury; the work was hard and the hours were long and each day she was 'dirty with mud after working all day in the fields.' She believed that the Greek government had paid money to the Australian government to take 'the Macedonians off their hands'. She believed that she had been sent as a 'slave' to Australia; 'everything about Australia was wrong'. She 'knew' she was being treated differently because she could not understand, because she could not speak English.

Australian immigration policy since Federation had been based on restriction of access, accepting only those of 'British' stock. One of the first acts of the newly formed Commonwealth of Australia was legislation referred to as the 'White Australia Policy'. Assimilation of migrants was seen as essential, so difference was not encouraged and this included language. Workers from southern European countries felt discriminated against because of their difficulties with English.[44] Many Macedonian women and men worked in factories side by side so, which made it more difficult to learn English; hence, everyday difficulties – travel, work, shopping and dealing with authorities – increased. Because

[43] She later found out that the photograph was of Prime Minister Robert Menzies.

[44] In contrast, 'guest workers' who moved to post-war western European countries were given classes in the local languages; Germany, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway adopted this policy (Koop 2002).

there was little training or language instruction, Macedonian institutions and churches were established so that people could mix together and support each other. Still, Lydia told me that over time she:

> didn't miss much because we found the [suburbs of Melbourne] more and more comfortable. I know we were happy. My husband was working, and everything was handy. I like my country [Macedonia] but for now it is not easy. I didn't miss much. But I did miss my sisters [those who remained in the village].

Maintaining links to 'home'

The election of a federal Labor government in the early 1970s led to the adoption of 'an explicit policy based on two fundamental principles: "the recognition and affirmation of the diverse cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of the Australian people, and the promotion of equality of opportunity for all Australians regardless of their backgrounds"' (Jupp 1988: 926). From the 1960s, Macedonian settlers in Melbourne maintained links to family and friends at 'home' through visits, phone calls and letters. Macedonians established churches and social clubs in the diaspora, but the Labor Party policy of multi-culturalism led to significant changes (Jupp 1988; 926). The establishment of SBS radio (1975) and television station (1979), which broadcast in languages other than English recognised the diversity of the Australian population. By the beginning of the 21st century it was cheap and easy to keep in contact using mobile phones. Rose still receives evening phone calls from her sisters in the village. (Family members ring her, as phone calls made from Aegean Macedonia are much cheaper than those made from Australia). At the Church, women told me news of village life, of weddings and births and the sorrow of a family member or friend's death. Many of the older women fast during the period of mourning and visit the Church to acknowledge the death.

Many of the women, including those born in Melbourne to Macedonian parents tell their stories of going 'home'. Sophie, who had visited her village in 2016, rang her daughter, who worked in Italy as an architect, to ask her to come to the village and photograph the

houses before they were destroyed to make way for a mine. She told me that her daughter not only photographed each house but also documented all the houses which had belonged to family members, as a record of the family's past. Mariana, born in Melbourne, also spoke of a holiday in 2000 when she and her husband and their young son went 'home'. The first stop was Santorini but on entering the mainland, Greek officials at the border, seeing that her husband's place of birth was Skopje, now the capital of North Macedonia, detained the family, even though they were all travelling on Australian passports:

> We were held up for two and half hours with my little son [who] was two and we were really shocked. We didn't know what to say as we were interrogated, and they laughed at us. My son was crying as it wasn't a nice experience. But that's what happens all the time and it's their way of saying that they can.

Fani told of a visit to Salonika to see the place where her mother had been jailed. While she was there, she visited the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki looking for evidence of her Macedonian heritage. She looked at beautiful tombs and ancient paintings of women with plaited hair. While she was looking at Macedonian artefacts, a female museum guard asked her where she was from, about her family and if she had any children. After the conversation, Fani went to another part of the museum. Again, someone approached her and asked her about her family and where they lived. She began to think that she was being watched and felt that even though she spoke in Greek perhaps she speaks it with a Macedonian accent. She, like others, think that family members and officials act as spies for the Greek government. Fani said that many Macedonians were still frightened to speak anything but Greek and nothing has changed. When she finally left the museum, one of the museum staff was waiting for her behind a wall, a space with no cameras. When she saw Fani, she approached her and asked about her family and about where she lived. As Fani was about to answer she said: 'tell me in your language' and Fani knew that she was Macedonian so answered her in Macedonian.

By the early 1970 Fani was troubled because of her family's past and what she saw as the Australian government's deceit. She had asked the Australian immigration officials if she

could train when she arrived in Australia. She was told her she could. However, when she arrived in Adelaide the only employment she was offered was at a market garden. Later she trained as a hairdresser and ran a successful business from her home so that she could look after her children. It was not until then that she began to feel financially secure and she began to apply for a visitor's visa for her father. Her father had starting ringing from the village begging her to arrange a visa so he could at least visit his grandchildren, whom he had not met. In 1972, Fani had arranged for her mother to come and visit, and while arranging the visa an immigration official told her that the Greek Government had 'files as big as this' [she shows me with her hands] on her father, so she felt that she had exhausted all avenues and now thought it impossible to get a one for her father. The same official also told her that since the 1940s, the Greek government had been collecting a file on her mother's political activities, so she wondered why her mother had been granted a visa.

Fani felt that time was passing, her father was getting older and he kept asking to come to Australia; in her words, 'my mood got as hot as a pepper'. She told me that on an afternoon sometime in 1973 while she was dressing the hair of one of her regular customers, who 'was rich but down to earth', and who noticed Fani's mood. She asked: 'Fani, what is wrong', and so: 'I opened my heart and told her everything'. She told of her family's suffering, of her parents' incarceration, of her sister' and brothers' trauma and of continuing Greek persecution. She told her client that she had tried everything because her father wished to see his grandchildren before he died. And as she talked, 'the anger got bigger and bigger and nothing could calm me down'. Her customer said: 'Finish my hair and I shall drive you to someone who can help you'.

When the customer's hair was done, she drove Fani to meet a Labor member of the state government, a Mr Reg Cross. At the end of Fani's story he told her: 'I can do nothing but I will drive you so you can tell your story to a member in the federal government'. The two women were then driven to meet a federal member of parliament. Fani told the story again: 'My father is 65 years old and he is old, he only wants to see his children and grandchildren. He is not dangerous. I am much more dangerous than my father'. She told them: 'Australians were given many hard-working Macedonians, we worked like slaves

and we did all the hard work, and the Greeks got us off their hands'. She asked the federal member: 'Did my father murder anyone?'. He listened quietly and then told Fani he was flying to Canberra the next day for a dinner, and he would speak to Al Grassby and tell him her story. Fani felt she could do no more.

A few weeks later she received a phone call from the Nic Nicolson, the federal MP she had met, and he asked her: 'What are you doing tomorrow, Fani?'. She told him, 'I will be working', he then suggested she should be at the Adelaide airport tomorrow as her father would arrive at 2.30 pm. Fani was at the airport, her father arrived and then lived with her until he died.

When I asked Lydia and Rose about 'home' and being Macedonian in Australia, Lydia answered:

> I know now they have got human rights [in Greece] but it depends on which people [have those rights]. My father and my father's family are not embarrassed to be Macedonian. But other people like my uncle are. They now support the Greeks but before my father passed away, it was something he said before Easter which I shall translate: 'we are different, you are different, and I know it is very hard. It is always very hard'. But my father never changed, never changed, and even his kids did not change. It depends on how stubborn you are.

'Being Macedonian' in the diaspora was summed up by an old woman at a memorial held for Rose's daughter, a young woman who had died of cancer. As the family and friends gathered to 'eat for her' at the cemetery, Elizabeth was asked if she regretted coming to Australia. She told me that she had gone 'home' for visits, but all her children were here, and she and her family had a happy life. When she ended speaking, she smiled: 'I don't regret coming to Australia because it is only here [that] I can be Macedonian'.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the oral histories of Macedonians who settled in Melbourne from the 1960s, who had brought maps and artefacts with them to trace family history and to claim their identity. The telling of these stories helps keep memories alive through the generations; they are not only fond memories of households, of villages life, of family members and friends and food but also darker memories of the consequences of annexation, WWII and the Civil War. Those who moved to Australia and settled in the suburbs of Melbourne have maintained ties to their homeland, and though they have made permanent homes here they value the ties they have with their extended family and with the wider Macedonian community.

Fani's story has been told here to show the difficulty she had in settling, which ended with the effort she made to bring her parents to Australia. In Fani's voice, the story of her struggle becomes the story of person who has learnt to confront her family's history and deal with it. While this is about a particular family's history, the stories speak of the resilience of an immigrant community that has learnt to adapt, re-shape and defend its national identity in Australia. Her story not only illustrates the impact of immigrant communities on post-war Australia but also shows the implications of changing a policy of assimilation to one of multiculturalism.

The following chapter discusses how ancient stories and more recent events at 'home' are crucial to the maintenance of Macedonian identity, where narratives both written and visual are the backdrop for performances in the multi-functional spaces of the Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church. Rites performed in this familiar space use symbols, colours, gestures and songs in front of icons, and the smells of basil and incense become elements that shape the performance of Macedonian identity in the diaspora, while also maintaining and defending the Church.

Chapter Three: The Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church in Australia: An expression of faith and politics

Chapter One discussed narratives from Macedonia's long history to highlight how these remain part of the current political-diplomatic dispute between Macedonia and its regional neighbours. In Macedonian diasporic communities, familiar elements from 'home' are told in stories in private and public spaces to express national identity, as shown in Chapter Two above. The discussion in this chapter focuses on the Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church to illustrate how ancient stories became part of the highly complex relationship between religion and the nationalism of Eastern Europe. Chapter Four describes seasonal rites performed in the Church and in Chapters Five and Six the focus shifts to rites which celebrate stages in a person's life, as rites express faith but in performance these also are expression of identity.

It is important to discuss aspects of religious history to show how narratives and symbols continue to influence design, art and performance. The suburban Macedonian Orthodox Church on which I focus in this thesis not only remains linked to the 'homeland'[45] through shared religious practices but has also become a central place for the performance of faith, culture and politics. In recounting the history of the Church, this chapter focusses on those aspects most relevant to establishing the context for the analysis of rites during which culture and national identity continue to be expressed in the diaspora.

For most Macedonian families, the household (discussed in Chapter Seven below) and the local church are centres that continue to provide spaces for language maintenance, enactment of custom and social interaction. The Church was established in the diaspora by first generation immigrants who demonstrated their commitment to their faith, but over time it became a space to express and to re-imagine national identity. As the Australian Macedonian Orthodox Church is linked to the past and to 'home', it is also linked to the Church's struggle for autocephaly and recognition by the Ecumenical

[45] Macedonians are linked through their faith to the ancient city of Ohrid, the spiritual and administrative centre for the Church in the Australian and New Zealand diaspora.

Patriarchate of Constantinople (discussed later in the chapter). For many members of the Macedonian Orthodox Christian congregation in the diaspora, the issue of the Church's independence is not only about religious faith but is also fused to the defence and recognition of a national identity.

Religious spaces for migrant communities remain important because they provide both religious and cultural foundations. Churches provide the familiarity of the liturgy, cycles of feasts and fasts, life-crisis celebrations and a space in which to communicate and socialise. In religious performances, communities remain connected to 'home' by the repetitive ritualised practices. While public performances encourage an expression of identity, they also allow identity to be contested and to be 'played out and imagined' (Ehrkamp & Nagel 2012: 624; Goulbourne et al. 2010; Kallis et al. 2018: 2). This chapter begins from this assumption and discusses the place of a local Macedonian Orthodox Church in Melbourne as a space of faith but also of creativity, a place where both faith and politics are evident and where identity is re-imagined.

To understand this mixture of faith and politics, the following section provides a short history of the early Church in the region of Macedonia, including the influence of ancient religion and rites on its establishment. The impact of the Edict of Milan on the new religious movement is examined to see how this began to change the structure of the Church. The East-West Schism, along with the impact of the imperial systems of Rome, Byzantium and the Ottomans are briefly considered, along with the impact of nationalism on the Orthodox Church. The chapter concludes with an examination of the impact of immigration and contemporary ideas on the Church.

The early Christian movement in the region of Macedonia

Within 20 years of Christ's crucifixion, the Christian Gospel reached the Roman province of Macedonia. According to The Acts, missionary activity began with Apostle's Paul's visit to the region beginning something that Jan Bremmer calls 'the meteoric rise of early

Christianity' (2017: 3).[46] Salonika (Solon), the Macedonian capital, quickly became an important centre for missionary activity. It was from this port that the Via Egnatia connected traders and travellers with the commercial centres in Macedonia, and it was from these centres and surrounding towns and villages that the new ideas of the religious movement spread. Dimitris Krytatas' work shows Macedonia as a centre of 'god-fearers, pagans and Jews' which, he argues, is testament to the success of Paul's missionary work there (1987: 591). However, as he warns, it was difficult to separate the Jewish from the Christian as 'the practices of Christians [were] still commonly regarded as [those of] a Jewish sect' (Krytatas 1987: 588).

The visit of the apostle Paul from Asia Minor to Macedonia was prompted by a vision recently dated to be around 53BC (Kyrtatas 1987: 586).[47] In his vision, Paul was begged by a man to come to help the people of Macedonia:

> During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia to help us.' After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready to leave for Macedonia concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them (Acts 16:9 - 10)

Paul and his missionary companions took the commonly travelled sea route from Troas (in Asia Minor) to the coast of Macedonia. Once in Macedonia, the group journeyed to Philippi; although not known as a 'flourishing Jewish community', it had an established synagogue and from here, they made their way to Salonika, the 'major commercial centre' where the Via Egnatia 'transversed its centre' (Kyrtatas 1987: 591).

During the first centuries of the Christian movement, Roman laws enabled the persecution of its followers however converts often made to suffer and 'a record of eleven (seven named and four unnamed) martyrs' during the Great Persecutions is, as

[46] In the first two centuries, early converts identified not as Christians but as 'the Way', 'the believers', 'the saints' or 'God's people' (Brenner 2017: 7).
[47] This dating 'depends on an inscription found in Delphi', which suggests that 'it was about 53' (Kyrtatas 1987: 586 fn5).

Kyrtatas (1887: 596) suggests, not impressive, though possibly the majority defected or fled, and hence, left no trace in records. While the initial missionary work in Macedonia attracted only an 'extremely small proportion of the total population', those who converted were 'inspiring believers who remained steadfast during persecution' (Kyrtatsas 1987: 585).[48] And nevertheless, Macedonia was crucial to the spread of ideas in Europe, as it was along the paved Roman highway that 'travellers and craftsmen' journeyed and helped to spread Paul's message (Cooper 2013: 13).

The role of independent women in the early church

The journeys of Paul and his companions to eastern Macedonia led to the establishment of a movement to convert both 'Jew and pagans', with a leadership in which a 'number of "leading women", [who presumably] belonged to the wealthier classes'(Kyrtatas 1987: 591) 'played a central and a visible role' (Cooper 2013: 4); . Influenced by the new teachings, women made up the majority of followers in the early Church (Blainey 2011: 20). The reasons for this, Geoffrey Blainey suggests, can be found in the organisation itself – it was informal and flexible and offered roles for women within the movement (2011: 29-30). Kate Cooper supports this view, arguing that the fledging organisation 'sought out women', accepted their support and saw them as 'invaluable' allies (2013: 15). During the first century, Jewish women in the region, Deborah Sawyer claims, may have been driven to the new religion as a reaction to Judaism's preference for males, and the religious taboos and rites relating to the menstrual cycle (1996). Under Paul's leadership, 'God-fearers' as they were known,[49] were Jews and Gentiles, and valued members of a 'multi-cultural movement' (Cooper 2013: 15). Influenced by Paul's teachings, women gave him property and money, and women who were heads of businesses and households encouraged other member of their households to convert (Cooper 2013: 11).

[48] In the early years of the Christian movement, followers of Jesus used their faith as 'a term of honour, legitimised by the blood of those women and men who preferred to die for their faith instead of sacrificing to the Roman Empire' (Bremmer 2017: 12).
[49] This name was coined by first-century Jewish writers to describe a Gentile interested in Judaism (Cooper 2013: 15).

Apart from the records which concern 'matters of institutional interest' the history of the early Church is largely undocumented and the 'informal happenings' in the lives of followers 'rarely gets a look in' (Cooper 2013: xviii). The new religious movement 'benefited from the network of female supporters', suggesting that early Christian leadership was flexible in its attitude towards women, although this attitude was to change under later leadership (Cooper 2013: 11). Early Christians 'prayed together not in buildings called churches, but in one another's homes, often sharing a communal meal of thanksgiving' (Cooper 2013: xviii). Cooper claims that 'some [later] historians would be "shocked" at the church's attitude towards women but argues that the 'ancient leaders had no trouble accepting [Paul's description of women as] "'outstanding among the apostles'" (2013: 10). Women's attitudes and their participation in the early church was due to a combination of reasons: narratives of ancient goddesses worshipped in the region, other religious taboos that discriminated against women and restricted their participation, and stories of women and their role in Jesus' inner circle as steadfast supporters who were chosen to witness his resurrection.

But it was the lives of ordinary people, who according to historian Cooper (2013: xviii), ensured the new religious movement to 'snowball into an empire wide spiritual movement'. From the port city of Salonika that Paul's teachings were spread by village people and traders to the west and into all regions in the Roman Empire. The largest group of followers were women, both Jewish and Pagan, and with no formal spaces for worship women met in households for communal meals of thanksgiving and helped spread Paul's message. It was this Cooper suggests (2013: xviii) was 'part of the genius of the early Christian mission [which] put the invisible rhythms of family life and hospitality to new use, as the framework to spread the faith'.

At the end of the fourth century the Christian movement was now a powerful organisation , no longer a 'grass roots, minority' movement 'where its appeal had been 'limited to the weak and despised' (Hughes 2017: 121; Breasted 1945: 763). Now recognised in the Empire numbers in the religious moved increased and so too did its influence. Men of ability and experience, it was decided, should manage the 'great Christian community and their churches' and this resulted a 'new arena' which attracted

men who were to become the 'most influential men of the age' (Breasted 1945: 762). For women, their roles and stories, may have been substantial and some did survive, but as Cooper argues (2013: xix) it is not clear 'whether they are [based on] truth or pious fiction. Earlier religions now seen as cults, and this began a period of destruction: statues were 'burnt, melted down or dismantled and temples razed however more often than not, as Hughes and Spivey argue (2017: 121 – 122; 2005 228) local and regional traditions are not easily obliterated, and rituals, beliefs and practices are difficult to abandon and many were repurposed to meet the requirements of the new religion.

The early Church 'wrangled' over Christ's 'paradoxical designation' of a god-man and also were forced to accommodate 'the divine feminine' (Spivery 2005: 228). The latter debate had led the Bishop of Constantinople, at the Council of Ephesus to ask the question 'Has God a mother ? If so, we may excuse paganism for divine mothers to its deities' but by the 420s a number of prominent church men began to compose hymns and sermons to the Mother of God, 'defending her honour', often 'drawn quite brazenly' from those which had been used to praise the Emperor and his family (Cooper 3013: 271 – 272).

Not only does the 'divine feminine' re-shape and survive, but so too does the pagan idea of 'heroization'. This process is still used in the Christian Church, which continues to celebrate a member's 'heroic virtue' in an anniversary or feast day as a saint (Spivery 2005: 228). The Christian Church also adopted pagan festivals and used these dates to stage religious festivals. The divinity associated with the winter solstice was appropriated by the Christian Church and became the period to celebrate Christ's nativity (Spivey 2005: 226). Early Christian Churches were often built inside pagan temples with the result architectural features can be found in the diaspora where the orientation is towards the rising sun (Spivey 2005: 228). The pagan goddess was difficult to remove and as Bettany Hughes argues (2019: 142) 'in the monotheistic climate of Christendom, Aphrodite survived the Christian revolution – no less in the guise of the Virgin Mary herself'. At the local Macedonian Church I attended in the Melbourne diaspora, Mary as Mother, as Hughes suggests (2019: 142) is central and remains 'a strong sympathetic female presence' and a 'intercessor with the supernatural'.

The attitudes towards women, along with narratives from an ancient religion, may shed light on that echo of female voices still heard in women's participation in the rituals at the local Orthodox Church discussed in this present study. Connections between ancient and Christian rites are discussed later in the chapter, showing that women's participation is still evident in rituals performed in the diaspora.

The Christian Church as state institution

The aggressive policies adopted against Christian and other religious communities who refused to honour the Roman Gods were enforced with strict punishment (Cooper 2013: 132; Odahl 2004: 67-69; Potter 2005: 168).[50] This often sporadic and regional persecution of Christians and others in the Roman Empire was brought to a 'formal end' with the Edict of Milan (Hughes 2017: 607). In 313, religious tolerance was adopted and set out in Emperor Constantine's 'imperial initiatives.' While historians acknowledge Constantine's change of heart, there is less agreement as to why this occurred (Cooper 2013: 133). Constantine may have been influenced by his mother's conversion to Christianity, others suggest his need to repent 'after slaying some of his closest relatives [including] his own son', or because of his success in battle due to his instructions to soldiers to 'mark the heavenly sign of God on the shields' (Cooper 2013: 137).[51] What is clear is that 'his decision to adopt Christianity as the religion for the Empire' led in the province of Macedonia, one that had remained largely pagan, to an increase in conversions to Christianity (Cooper 2013: 133; Kyrtatas 1987: 588).

The rapid spread of Christianity in Macedonia during the fourth century is seen in the evidence uncovered by the excavations of church buildings dated to this period (Kyrtatas 1987: 599). Its new status brought significant changes. In the early church it was women, the 'village people and traders', who had held the crucial positions especially in 'remote provinces in the great empire' where women 'spread the message' (Cooper 2013: xviii).

[50] Persecution had included torture, executions, cutting out of tongues and the razing of churches, justified in the Diocletian's 'Edits of Christians' (Odahl 2004: 67; Potter 2005: 168).
[51] While the reasons for Constantine's conversion are inconclusive, we know that he left it until his death bed to be baptised.

Rome's adoption of Christianity as the state religion resulted in changes to church structure and management. Once adopted as the state religion, it seemed clear that the 'great Christian community' was best served by those with 'ability and experience' and left to 'the guidance of able men' (Breasted 1945: 762). Men in Rome were involved in the politics of the empire, and the Christian Church would now provide another arena for 'gifted men' to become 'statesmen' and the most 'influential men of the age' (Breasted 1945: 762).

Convened in 325 by pagan Emperor Constantine, the Council of Nicaea was organised along the lines of the Roman Senate and set out to bring consensus to the new Christian Church. The assembled fathers of the Ecumenical Council decided matters of canon law: the divinity of Christ and the date for Easter and wrote an expression of faith known as the Nicene Creed.[52] The efficiency of the organisational structure differed greatly from the first centres of the Christian movement. The informality of the early church had been due to women's leadership, but with its incorporation into the empire, roles for women within the Christian church were less important. Women continued to celebrate religious festivals and rites within households. Aspects of this are seen found in current religious performances, where rites and festivals are held in the Macedonian Orthodox Church and practiced by women in Melbourne both in private households and at the Church.

The Split - the division in the Christian Church

In 285 CE, the Roman Empire had been divided by Emperor Diocletian into two separate empires (Djuvara 2014: 49). By the seventh century, this split had led to the separation in the Christian church: a Western church, which 'adopted Latin as its language, and the Eastern [which adopted] Greek' (Djuvara 2014: 49). The result was the development of two separate forms of Christianity and a rivalry between the pope in Rome and the patriarch in Constantinople. By the year 1054, this 'Great Schism' had resulted in the 'two heads of church excommunicat[ing] each other', and the 'Western Church calling itself

[52] The Nicene Creed is still recited by the congregation each week in the Divine Liturgy by Christians in both Orthodox and Catholic churches.

"Catholic" and the Eastern Church taking the name "Orthodox"' (Djuvara 2014: 49). Differences remain between them: the head of the Catholic church is the pope, whose judgements are believed to be infallible, the Catholic Church adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1582 and during the 12th century, celibacy became a discipline and only unmarried men can be ordained. In the Orthodox Church, the attitude to young children becoming full members of the church after baptism and chrismation is a point of difference with the Catholic Church.[53] The Orthodox Church's liturgical year follows the Julian calendar and a disagreement remains over the celibacy of priests: in the Orthodox Church, the parish priest is required to marry. The parish priest at the Church in Melbourne explained to me that there is 'no dogma in the Orthodox Church', nor can a church leader claim they are 'preserved from the possibility of error'.

Ottoman rule and the effects of nationalism on the Orthodox Church

During the nearly 500 years of Ottoman rule, the region of Macedonia was united not by nationalism or ethnicity but by the 'local church' (Payne 2007: 846). In each region, the religious community, the *millet,* was administered by its own ecclesiastic hierarchy, guaranteeing a degree of religious tolerance. For decades after the Great Schism, rivalry continued between the two branches of Christianity, but tension now also began to arise within the Orthodox Church. In the east, in 1010, those belonging to the ancient Macedonian Church felt the need to guarantee their dependence, so they established a Macedonian archbishopric in the ancient city of Ohrid (now in the southern region of the Republic of North Macedonia). Tensions remained between the Churches and in the last years of Ottoman rule, the Macedonian Church's security was threatened when the Ohrid Archbishopric was demoted and placed under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (Shea 1997: 173-174).

[53] Chrismation is often referred to as confirmation, as the child is confirmed as a full member of the Orthodox Church.

The independence of each Orthodox church was thought necessary to the success of nationalism and by the end of the 19th century, regions in Eastern Europe saw the 'local church' as a hinderance to the development of a civil society and a nation-state (Payne 2007: 831). The relationship between nationalism and the Orthodox Church is complex, 'rooted in the particular histories of the various peoples' (Payne 2007: 833). In the Balkans, by the late 19th century, communities understood that the independence of their church was linked to the establishment of a nation-state, and with this they began to defend their canonical territories with the argument that 'there cannot be more than one Orthodox Church in a particular locale' (Payne 2007: 846). In 1832 and with the help of powerful allies Greece gained independence from the Ottomans and set out to establish a Greek Orthodox Christian Church, to gain autocephaly for what was now to be a 'modern National Church' (Murzaku 2028: 4).[54]

Greece's action resulted in a 'blossoming' of Orthodox autocephalies and caused inter-Orthodox ecclesial tensions (Murzaku 2018: 5).[55] These tensions were in part due to the centuries of Ottoman rule, where the possibility of national identity had been suppressed, but as the empire weakened, autocephaly became increasingly connected to regional political ambitions and 'ethno-nationalism' (Payne 2007: 832). In the Balkan regions, the ambitions of different 'ecclesiastical organisation[s]' became powerful voices for change and increasingly fused with the creation of sovereign states (Murzaku 2018: 5). This change from a 'local' to 'national' church, Ines Murzaku suggests, was a betrayal of the older Orthodox Church, referring to the work of Orthodox theologian, Alexander Schmemann (1921- 1983) who believed that during the 20th century the Orthodox Church's past imperial tradition of universalism had dissolved 'into narrow nationalism and exclusivism' (Murzaku 2018: 5).

[54] Autocephaly is an 'intricate matter' in Orthodox churches, and the Greek Orthodox Church had to wait 17 years before it was granted (Murzaku 2018: 4).

[55] John Meyendorff argues that 'the idea of "autocephaly" came to be thought of as the nation's ecclesiastical equivalent: each nation had to establish its own autocephalous church' (1982: 22). On the difficulty that the Macedonian Orthodox Church had in gaining autocephalous status, see The Encyclopaedia of Christianity, Vol 3 (Fahlbush. & Bromley 1994: 381).

In the 19th century, in a climate of nationalism, politics and religion blended to become a unifying force (Payne 2007: 833) This blending of religion and nationalism Eric Hobsbawn called 'proto-nationalism' (1990). Danforth argues that as the politics of the Balkans became increasingly unstable due to Ottoman decline, the nationalist ambitions of its neighbours and outside interference, Macedonians attempted to establish a 'national church' (1996: 95). Initially, belief in the unity of the Orthodox Church meant opposition to the nationalisation of churches, but this was abandoned and the idea of the Church as 'a nation-building institution was promoted' (Payne 2007: 834). Daniel Payne suggests that the 'ecclesiastical conflicts in the 19th and early 20th centuries' destroyed the 'Orthodox commonwealth', and replaced them with 'independent nationalist churches' (2007: 834).The Church now administered to a linguistically homogenised society and both the institution and religion became a 'powerful additional support for … national unity and external aspirations' (Payne 2007: 834). The position adopted by Orthodox churches played a part in Macedonia's annexation in 1913; the Macedonian Church was placed under the authority of the Serbian Holy Synod and the Greek Orthodox Church, and any attempt to be recognised as an independent church seemed lost.

The official history of the Macedonian Church tells that in 1767 the Ottoman leadership disbanded the autocephalous Ohrid archdiocese and submitted it to the jurisdictional control of Constantinople until the annexation of the region (Payne 2007: 838). However, in 1943, a modern assembly of the Macedonian clergy was held in Ohrid ; the next year, the assembly established an Initiative Board; and by 1945 a synod formed by members of the Macedonian congregation and clergy had adopted the 'Resolution for an Ohrid Archbishopric' (Fahlbusch & Bromley 1994: Vol 3: 381). To the Macedonian Christians living in the Balkans, neither their church nor their identity was 'new', it was part of an ancient church.[56] This view was reflected in 1994, when the Holy Synod, led by the archbishop of Ohrid, published a statement asserting that the Macedonian Orthodox Church, its people and their state were independent:

[56] Until 1767 the Macedonian Orthodox Church had been known as the 'autocephalous Ohrid archdiocese' (Payne 2007: 383). The Ottomans had put the church under the control of Constantinople but after WWI it came under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church (and in Aegean Macedonia under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Church).

> The autocephalous status of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and the interests of the Macedonian people and state are holy and inalienable values which it has no intentions of ever giving up (Fahlbusch & Bromley 1994 Vol 3: 381).

The statement made clear the interests of the Macedonian congregation who saw the church and state as linked. It argues that the Macedonian church is ancient, had been 'illegally abolished', and suggests that the congregation would defend and protect Macedonian values (Fahlbusch & Bromley 1994: 381). The statement reflects what has become the 'new reality' of the modern Orthodox church: a 'national layer' was adopted and there was a move from the old 'universalism' to a 'narrow nationalism and exclusivism' (Murzaku 2018: 5; Payne 2007: 838). The root of the continuing tensions between the Orthodox churches was the support for nation-building in each region. However, after the annexation of Macedonia, the need to assimilate the peoples who had been made part of Serbia resulted in forced personal and regional name changes, the removal of Cyrillic inscriptions from gravestones, the closure of Macedonian churches and a ban on speaking the 'local language' (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997: 66; Simpson 1994: 24). The objection that Orthodox churches had to nation-building was based on the belief in 'one, catholic and apostolic Church', yet the church played an important role in the colonisation of the annexed regions (Payne 2007: 381).

Orthodox Churches in the Melbourne diaspora

Tensions in the Balkans between regional communities over land and populations also included a complicated ecclesial-political dispute between Macedonia and its neighbours. The history of the Orthodox Church was connected to the Roman and Byzantium Empires, but became more complicated as in 1453 the Church was absorbed and functioned as an important administrative element in the Islamic Ottoman Empire. The position of the Patriarchate (Archbishop) of Constantinople was that of a servant and his power depended on the Sultan who considered all Orthodox Christians to be members of the Greek Orthodox Church (Ribolov 2013: 10 – 11). During the seventh century Orthodox bishops transferred from the Patriarchate to the Ohrid Archbishopric, but later decisions

made in Istanbul led to its abolition, where its records were erased and the bishops placed once again under the domain of the Archbishopric in Istanbul (Borisov 2017: 33). Lay members in the Church had complained about the abuse of the high clergy in the Ohrid Archbishopric but to many who identified themselves as Macedonian Slavs – not as Bulgarians, Serbs or Greeks – their church had functioned not 'simply as an ecclesiastical institution' but to them 'it was also a cultural, traditional and national and connective tissue' (Borisov 2017: 34).

In 1878 the power of the Patriarchate and the Greek Orthodox Church had been undermined as the Ottomans recognised the Bulgarian Orthodox Church as a separate entity (the Bulgarian Exarchate), and for members of the Macedonian dioceses their ecclesiastical situation became increasingly complicated as they were now divided between two jurisdictions (Borisov 2017: 44 – 45). While still part of the Ottoman Empire tensions had developed between Bulgaria and Greece and they both expressed a similar aim, to incorporate Macedonian lands and populations into their nation-states (Karakasidou 2000: 55). Later Serbian patriots as well as Greek and Bulgarians began to wrestle for 'the allegiance of the Orthodox peasants of Ottoman Macedonia' where the use of soft power as well as 'military units were used to implement their policies in Macedonia' (Mazower 2000: 50; Borisov 2017: 45, 45).
To the nationalist, religion became the foundation of the modern state and 'the meaning of religious affiliation [became] the equivalent of de facto national belonging (Roudometof 2014: 85). The Bulgarian and Greek Orthodox Churches remained active participants in the dispute over Macedonia, and assisted 'in the twin projects of nation-building and state formation' and became not only an expression of nationality but later was used as 'an engine of assimilation' (Danforth 2000b: 28).

During the establishment of Orthodox Churches in the Melbourne tensions which had developed at 'home' were reflected and continued within the Church. In the diaspora members of Bulgarian and Greek communities used the Church as a space to make proprietorial claim to the Macedonian region, to its history, heroes and symbols. Members of the family and women from villages in northern Greece (Aegean Macedonia) who attend the local Macedonian Orthodox Church, tell stories of being frightened that

members of the Greek community would report them to Greek officials, if they did not attend the Greek Orthodox Church and family members who remained in the village would be harmed. In the late 1980s when my daughter married into the Gelis family the decision was made to marry in a Greek Orthodox Church. The church was chosen, I was told, as members of their family who still lived in the village were to attend the marriage celebrations and the family were worried that they would be harmed when they returned. At the time I accepted this explanation however, after attending the local Macedonian Church some of the women suggested that this was probably as the Church was not opened until the 1990s.

By 1945, the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had been created and the Macedonian region became known as the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. For the first time since annexation, those living in Macedonia were allowed 'to develop as an ethnospecific nation with a recognized official language, education, education system, literature and socio-political life' (Stankovska & Petrovska 2013: 1). With the Republic's establishment, the Macedonian Church again claimed independence but again the Serbian religious authorities rejected the resolution of the Ohrid Archbishopric. However, 'the Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church was founded again' in 1958 but only with the 'co-operation of Marshall Tito', and as Thiessen argues, it was a demonstration of the continuing close links between secular political interests and those of the Church (2007: 31). In the mid-1900s, the Church petitioned the Serbian Church and this time was granted the right to employ native-born clergy.[57] A year later, in 1959, the Serbian Orthodox Church granted the Macedonia Church autonomy, and while it was another step towards autocephaly, the Church remained under the authority of the Serbian Church. Another attempt in 1967 by the synod to have the Macedonian Church's autocephaly recognised also failed because of the Serbian Church's opposition (Fahbusch & Bromley 1994: Vol 3 381). Institutional conflicts and misunderstandings between the Orthodox churches at 'home' continue and while this remains a topic of conversation in the diaspora, the establishment of the multi-functional spaces of the Macedonian Church has allowed practices both social and religious that defend and reshape national identity.

[57] In 1958 a native-born member of the clergy was enthroned as the archbishop of Ohrid (Payne 2007: 838).

The Macedonian Orthodox church in the diaspora

Due to the 'disruption of place and identity' Macedonian families from the provinces in Aegean Macedonia found immigration 'essentially inevitable and necessary' (Afentoulis & Cleland 2013: 3). Beginning at the end of WWII, towns and villages in Aegean Macedonia emptied as people left to build new communities in new locations. The first Macedonian Orthodox Church was opened in Young Street, Fitzroy, in 1950, offering both spiritual and secular support to the local community. The patron saints after whom the church was named were brothers from Salonika, Cyril and Methodius, whose alphabet and vernacular liturgy gained the approval of Pope Adrian 1 and are still used today. The alphabet they developed has taken on a political significance for Macedonians in the diaspora. A liturgy written in the vernacular that allowed services to be sung and spoken in Macedonian meant that churches became more than places of worship, taking on a political dimension. Soon after the Fitzroy church was established, an Anglican church in Bayview Street, Northcote, was bought to serve the needs of a growing Macedonian community. In 1960 Saint George's Macedonian Orthodox Church in Epping became the first parish church to be consecrated outside the homeland.

Later in the century, people began emigrating from the Republic of Macedonia, joining those who had earlier established communities in Victoria. These two populations had been divided by 'barbwire' borders of the 1913 annexation but were reunited in the suburbs of Melbourne. In the 1990s the community in the southern suburbs purchased a Serbian Church and began to renovate the space into a Macedonian Orthodox church. It was to be a place for both religious and social celebrations, which would allow 'values, identities and traditions' to be shared and new ways of being Macedonian to be practised (Ehrkamp & Nagel 2012: 626). Religious spaces created by immigrants are 'complex and shifting', as religious practices 'are not [a] simple transplant' from home (Ehrkamp & Nagel 2012: 626). Nazila Isgandarova adds that complexity is due not only to the responses of the newcomer to the new environment, but also because religious spaces offer migrants (and hosts) the opportunity to adapt and change (2009: 61). For this reason, the Church at the centre of this study too, is a complex space where both sacred

and secular rites are conducted, a place for informal meetings, for teaching young people Macedonian language, customs and history. Members of the congregation encourage friends, neighbours and others who are interested, to attend sacred rites and secular celebrations. The congregation welcomes those who marry into Macedonian families and encourages them to become members of the Church. The local Macedonian Church recognises people from Aegean Macedonia and the Republic of North Macedonian as all sharing a Macedonian identity.

The architecture of the Orthodox church

English traveller and classical scholar George Frederick Abbott wrote of his travels at the beginning of the 20th century, including the festivals he witnessed in Macedonia:

> There is hardly a popular festival or ceremony which does not exhibit in a more or less pronounced degree, this tendency to symbolic representation and interpretation. The same spirit can be discerned in the Eastern Church: every part of the sacred building in the minutest architectural detail, every article to use or ornament: every vessel or vestment employed in the divine service a meaning, often too occult for the ordinary laymen's comprehension but sometimes so simple as to suggest itself to the dullest intelligence ([1903] 1969: 118).

Abbott's comments could in some ways describe suburban Macedonian Churches in Melbourne. The spaces of the church and the rites performed are complex and layered with meaning. As Thiessen suggests, this is not just a religion 'but a demonstrator of identity' (2007: 60). While Thiessen argues that in North Macedonia religion is also 'connected to oppression' (2007: 60), in the Macedonian diaspora the Church is held in 'deep affection' as it plays 'so prominent [a] part' in 'further[ing] Folk-nationalist interests' in the new home. (Price 1963a: 72-73; Price 1963b). This view was supported in surveys undertaken in Macedonian communities which showed that a 'clear majority' believed that money 'should be spent on building a church' (Kris 1970: 30; Hill 1989: 85). It is also seen in how the number of people who attend the important religious and

secular rites in the local churches. Churches, 'in the wake of migration', became an active force, a 'physical anchor' to encourage a positive group identity (Raijman and Pinsky 2012: 169; Warner 1993).

The suburban Macedonian Orthodox Church referred to here was named after one of the first Macedonian saints, known as the defender of Solon (Salonika), and referred to in prayer as the 'myrrh-flowing and wonderworking saint' who died at the hands of Roman soldiers as he prayed. Its appearance sets it apart from Western Christian places of worship. Macedonian Orthodox churches adopted their distinctive shape from Macedonian burial sites and elements of Solomon's ancient temple of Jerusalem.[58] The former Protestant church had to be adapted to meet the architectural norms of an Orthodox church. The clergy and members of the congregation tell stories of struggling to reshape the building. Originally, it was a Presbyterian church, but with the creation of the Uniting Church in the late 1970s it was sold to the Serbian community. In the early 1990s, it was sold again, to the Macedonian community. To commemorate the opening of the church (and its Community and Education Centre) on Sunday 11 February 1996, a plaque in English and Macedonian was erected on an outside wall under the verandah. The inscription explains that the church was 'built with by donations from members of this parish, Macedonians from Victoria and Australia and with the financial assistance of the federal government of Australia'. It was officially opened by Senator Barney Cooney and the Macedonian spiritual leader, Bishop Petar[59] along with the South/East Region Macedonian Orthodox Community President.

In the fourth century, Christian Macedonians borrowed designs from ancient tombs for the burial places of their saints and martyrs, and these designs were later adapted for places of worship. The Melbourne Church's distinctive red-tiled peaked roof, with its two eight-sided domes set with small windows and crowned with simple crosses make it immediately recognisable as an Orthodox church. The alterations began soon after its

[58] The Temple built by Solomon is now thought to have been borrowed from earlier temples built by the Phoenicians (Finkelstein & Silberman 2001). The temple had been divided into a vestibule (porch), the main chamber (nave) and the sanctuary (the Holy of Hollies).

[59] His Eminence, Bishop Petar, is the Bishop of Macedonian Orthodox Diocese of Australia and New Zealand.

purchase; members of the congregation gave money and time for the renovations. People speak of the Church as built, owned and governed by members of its congregation.

As a suburban church, its location makes it central for the large Macedonian and even though from distant suburbs attend special services. The church is set off a main road in a side street, and opposite a park. Half of the site is given over to a car park, which also provides extra space for important rituals when the congregation spills out of the church, and during processions and performance. There are other buildings on the site, too: a church hall, kitchen and spaces for amenities. These buildings are connected by a verandah. Seen from the carpark, the Church presents an elaborate wooden door covered by two peaked verandahs, used in the most important of rites (see Image 6 below).

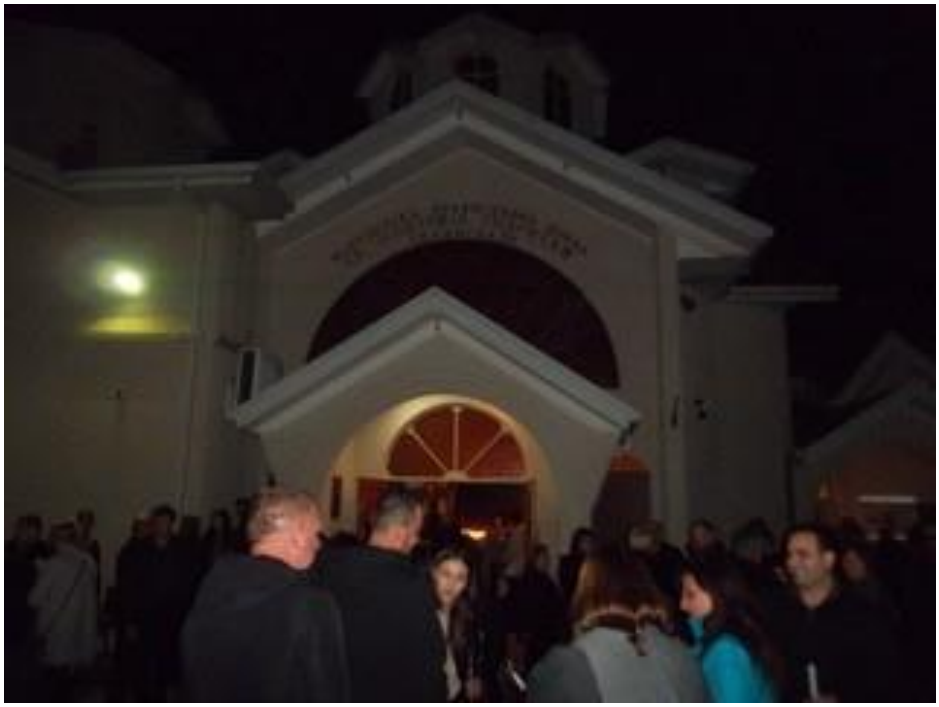

Image 6: The congregation waiting to enter the Church for a midnight service.

The sacred building - Internal spaces

Entering the church for the first time, I immediately felt that I was in a familiar place, even though my childhood memories of a sacred space are of an Anglican country church, with

plain white walls, devoid of colour, illustration or ornamentation. Nigel Spivey writes that Orthodox churches are 'premises of worship' beautified 'like a bride', places where colour, light and smells make for 'a heady experience' which over centuries have been 'layered with [much] adornment' (2005: 230). The dark interior is made even darker by the ornately carved wooden furniture, lit by the soft flames of candles that create a sense of difference and mystery, a place for performing sacred rituals (see Image 7 below). Most of the illumination comes from candles that worshippers place in sandboxes in the vestibule, or on the two tables in front of the nave, while small enamelled lamps hanging in front of the icon screen glow. Light also comes through some small windows set in the sides of the domed roof, high on the walls of the nave, and inside the sanctuary.

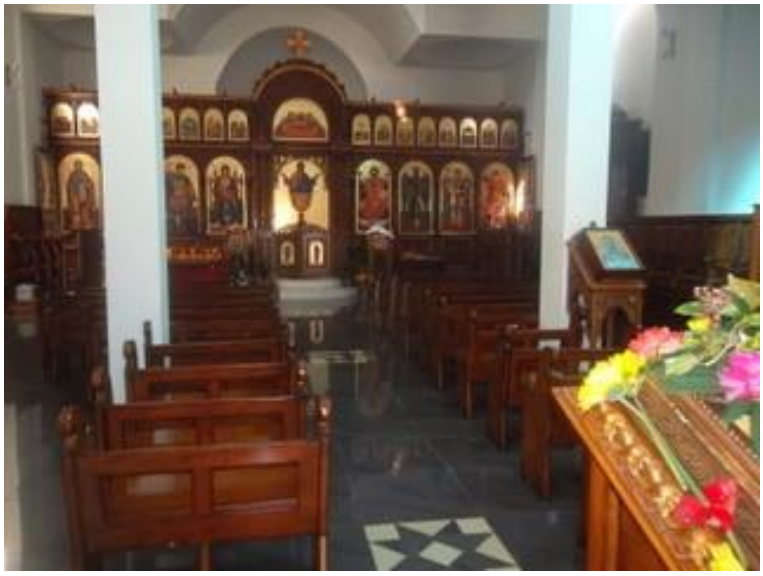

Image 7: Interior of the Church

The church needed some reorganisation because in the past, sanctuaries in all Christian churches faced the west. But in an Orthodox Church, the sanctuary must face east. Reasons for this include: ancient religions worshipped the sun, in Europe and Jerusalem is in the east; others quote Matthew who suggests that religious spaces must face the east because the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, a reference to the return of Christ (The Dictionary of Christian Art and Architecture 2013: New Testament, Matthew 24: 27). The most significance part of this sacred space, the holy of holies, is the place where the altar and other sacred implements are stored. This realignment of the sanctuary was a matter of great concern to the congregation and I was shown how it was

achieved. The sanctuary floor has been raised above the nave and two white curved stairs connect the two levels allowing access through the 'Beautiful gate', the central opening in the iconostasis. The priest and archbishop stand at the dais to deliver readings, teachings, sermons and at the close of the Divine liturgy for the priest's blessing of the congregation.

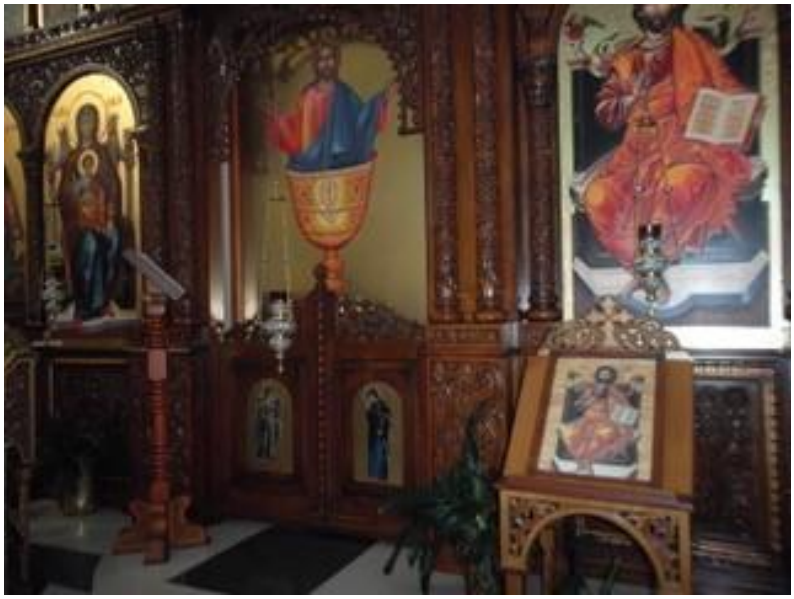

Image 8: The interior of the church looking towards the sanctuary with the Beautiful Gate closed

A large screen and pillars divide the internal space of the church: two pillars separate the vestibule from the nave, and the nave and the sanctuary are separated by a large, finely carved wooden screen covered in richly coloured icons, the iconostasis. These divisions are adapted from spaces found in Solomon's Temple. The inside of the church is decorated with elaborately carved dark wooden furniture, with ornaments and vessels, and other props employed by deacons, priests, archbishops and members of the congregation in the performance of services. Large pieces of furniture sit along walls, many carved with designs of animals and flowers. Flora and fauna carvings are repeated in the wooden structure that supports the iconostasis. The latter has three rows of icons; the bottom is wooden and carved in some sections, each repeated on either side of the steps leading to the sanctuary. The central section of the icon wall consists of eight large icons, four on each side of the central door known as the Beautiful Gate (see Image 8 above), sometimes also referred to as the Heavenly Gate. Above these are eight smaller

illustrations of Christ's life from his birth to his resurrection, and high in the centre of the screen, is an icon depicting the last supper.

In the ancient world, images in public spaces - frescos, mosaics, on coins - emphasised the connection between secular leaders and higher powers: the gods[60] or deified heroes.[61] Art had been used in this way to link communities to their leaders and emphasised a connection between the leaders and their gods. While Christianity from its outset was a religion of the word rather than the image, the question posed by Spivey and Squire is whether Christianity was so different form 'the cults which it initially existed alongside?' (2004: 84). There may have been crucial differences; in 'terms of visual imagery, however, early Christians do not seem to have been averse to appropriating "pagan" iconographic schemes' (Spivey & Squire 2004: 84). The 'images with which early Christians surrounded themselves differed little' from the ancient, but 'what had changed was the new variety of ways in which those images could be interpreted' (Spivey & Squire 2004: 84). The early Christian movement borrowed 'endemic elements of the ancient religion' using icons and relics in the 'glorification' of their heroes' (Spivey & Squire 2004: 85).

The appropriateness of the 'process of heroization' of Christian saints and its associated art form, the icon, the worship of God began to be questioned (Spivey 2005: 230). As a result, in the Iconoclastic Controversy of 726, Emperor Leo III to outlaw the use of all images of Christ and Mary; the 'purge of the icons' is now referred to as iconoclasm or the 'breaking of the images' (Spivey 2005: 228). But others argued in favour of icons because they suggest that Christians worship a creative god, one that would approve of art for divine purposes (Spivey 2005: 228). In 843CE, Empress Theodora emphasised the importance of icons in worship in the Orthodox Christian Church and 'prescribed' them. This is now doctrine, spoken before annual feasts:

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[60] Makedon, the mythical ancestor of the Macedonians, was said to be a son of Zeus. The spiritual centre for the Macedonians was Dion in Pieria where Zeus was honoured and worshiped in festivals (Gagarin 2010: 39).

[61] Herodotus and Thucydides both repeat the legend that Macedonian kings, Philip II and his son Alexander had kinship ties to Zeus' son Herakles (a deified hero) and Plutarch also refers to Alexander as a descendent of Heracles (Herodotus, Histories 5.22; Breasted 1945: 495; King 2010: 376; Spawski 2010: 127).

> We paint icons, we venerate them with our mouths our hearts and our will - images of Christ and the saints. The honour and veneration directed toward the likeness guide us to the original. That is the doctrine of the Fathers inspired by God (cited in Spivey 2005: 230).

The practice continues, including at the local Church in Melbourne. When I first entered this church, one of the older women, Elizabeth, mentioned icons and repeated later on a number of occasions something that other women also believe: 'people do not worship icons, but they use them to worship'. The next time I arrived at the Church, Elizabeth gave me two books, both wrapped in cloth, about icons, along with stories of the saints' lives. In Chapter Four below, I discuss the auction of icons, held during Theophany (January 19) to illustrate how, for women, icons remain an important element in worship. On the walls of the Church this ancient art form uses colour, symbols, themes and placement, to tell stories of saints and martyrs. In the church hall, a new form of iconography is also to be found, in the photographs of heroes, the modern martyrs who struggled for an independent Macedonia (discussed later in this chapter).

Three gates or doors offer access from the nave to the sanctuary, the most sacred space in the church. There are strict rules about who can go into the sanctuary: no-one can enter without the blessing of the priest or the archbishop. No animal products (other than wool or beeswax), including leather-bound books can be taken into the sanctuary. Money is also forbidden, as is the wearing of personal jewellery by anyone serving in the sanctuary. The largest door, set in the icon-wall, is the 'Beautiful Gate' and may only be used by priests and archbishops. Deacons and other assistants to the priests gain access to the sanctuary through two smaller doors, the 'angel doors', so named because they are covered by icons of the archangels Michael and Gabriel. As the congregation stands in the nave a glimpse through the Beautiful Gate shows them the 'holy of holies', the sanctuary. This is the space where all sacred articles, ornaments, vessels and vestments used in the Divine Liturgy are stored. Behind the altar stands the icon depicting Jesus on the cross and to each side are the icons of Mary and the disciple John. In one of the most important rites in the Orthodox religious calendar, the large icon is taken out of the

sanctuary in a procession to be 'dressed' by women in the congregation (this is described in the next chapter).

In the nave, the dome of the Orthodox churches usually depicts Christ as ruler of the universe. The dome is modelled on the ceiling of ancient Macedonian burial tombs, found in the tomb of Philip ll at Vergina. In the Orthodox Christian tradition, domes are painted so that from the nave, the congregation members are reminded of Christ above them in heaven, and of their place in the universe. At this local church, the dome is not painted; in a conversation about the meaning of the dome, Lydia told me the Church had not enough money to complete its painting. She told me that the Church is poor and she hopes that one day it might be completed. On the tiled floor of the nave is another reference to the ancient world: set into three of the large marble tiles are smaller fragments, which form eight-sided 'suns.' Tiles have been laid near the stairs leading to the sanctuary; others have been laid in the nave and in the vestibule. These tiles are often used as markers for the placement of items used in ritual performances but also refer to a more secular past, that of an ancient leader of the first kingdom in the European continent.

Performances in the Church are influenced by its architecture and decoration but also by songs, prayers, gestures, language, symbols, smells and sounds. Hymns and prayers are not accompanied by instruments, they are sung, either by priests or deacons, and by the choir, thus creating a sense of shared identity. Women are quick to help any newcomers to follow the service, and at the end of my first visit to the church the parish priest offered me a copy of the Divine Liturgy with English on one side and Macedonian on the other. Most of the older women know the prayers and hymns by heart and appear, when singing, to enter a place of memory. People stand throughout the Divine Liturgy, as prayers and songs must be 'exclaimed'. I was told that one stands before God; only the old and the young sit on the wooden pews. Most older women sit or lean on the high arms on the seats in the choir stalls to the left of the nave. There are similar seats attached on the right side of the nave and a few older men use the arms of the seats to steady themselves as they stand during the service.

Women are the first to arrive at the Church before any service and they usually comprise the majority of the congregation. As prayers and hymns used in the Divine Liturgy change with the seasons, the cyclical pattern of the northern agricultural year, they must come prepared. After settling in the pews, they take photocopied sheets in plastic sleeves and prayer books out of their bags in order to follow the service. I was constantly helped to follow; women would take my Divine Liturgy, with its English translation, and flip through the pages until they found the prayer being sung. In this tradition, there is a dialogue between the choir (the congregation) and the priests or deacons, so it is crucial for the choir to sing the correct response. At this church, most of the service is sung or spoken in Macedonian. The exception is the reading of the Lord's Prayer and the Nicene Creed, which are recited in both Macedonian and English. After the texts are read in Macedonian, one of the younger women reads them in English.

The behaviour of congregational members and visitors to the Church is respectful. I was told before I entered the church that I must not eat, chew gum, or put my hands in my pockets, and must remain standing, because I was entering the house of God. However, a certain amount of licence is offered to babies and younger children, those with disabilities and those not acquainted with the norms. On one of my first visits to the Church I learned that it was a mistake to assume that seating arrangements are ascribed, or that women and men sit on different sides because of a gender hierarchy. I had asked for somebody to photograph the women's side of the Church and was very quickly told, by women, that women and men sit on different sides of the church to emphasise that the sexes are equal in the eyes of God. After the service, the parish priest took me aside on the steps outside the Beautiful Gate, to explain the differences between the Judaic tradition and the Orthodox tradition. Women, he said, had not been allowed into Solomon's temple and had been discriminated against because of their sex. Women in the Macedonian Orthodox Church, he said, sit to emphasise visually their closeness to God.

The men who attend the Church often spend time on the verandah smoking and talking. One visitor to the church was an Armenian, known to the women of the congregation. It was understood that his wife had died and as there are no Armenian churches in the area,

he attended the Church. He always attended for important rites, but he performed his own set of rituals. Many of them were quite strenuous and I observed people in the congregation watching and holding their breath as he bowed and touched the floor with his hands. He then walked to the small wooden table in front of the icon wall to perform more of what looked like exercises. As he performed, people watched quietly, hoping he would not fall, and smiling when he left after his prayers.

Ritualised gestures associated with patterns of behaviour are part of the performance in the Orthodox church. Each week the congregation repeats these gestures on entering the vestibule (or narthex) from the outside world. The performance of entry begins with the purchase of the thin yellow votive candles. The flames of candles already lit are used to light the new ones which then are placed in the large sand boxes. The space in front of the boxes is a place to pause, to stop, to reflect and to pray. This performance is used to make the transition from the everyday into a place of worship. When this is completed, the women greet each other. They kiss on both cheeks and ask about each other's health. From this right side of the church, they make their way to the centre of the vestibule to the icon stand of the patron saint, where they leave money and flowers, and kiss his image (see Image 9 below). From the icon, they make their way to the left side of the church to stand in front of the icons of Mary, the *Bogoroditse* (as she is referred to in the Divine Liturgy, p.99). Mary's stand is a women's space, covered with her icons and there are more on the wall (see Image 10 below). I watched women kiss the icons and make offerings of money and gifts to her each week. Gestures are made and repeated three times: the kissing of the icons, the sign of the cross, and then some women touch the floor with their foreheads. Other gestures include the kissing and touching of the priest's robes. This occurs during the procession, which the clergy make down the left-hand isle of the church, and past Mary's icon stand which he blesses with incense, and then to the central isle.

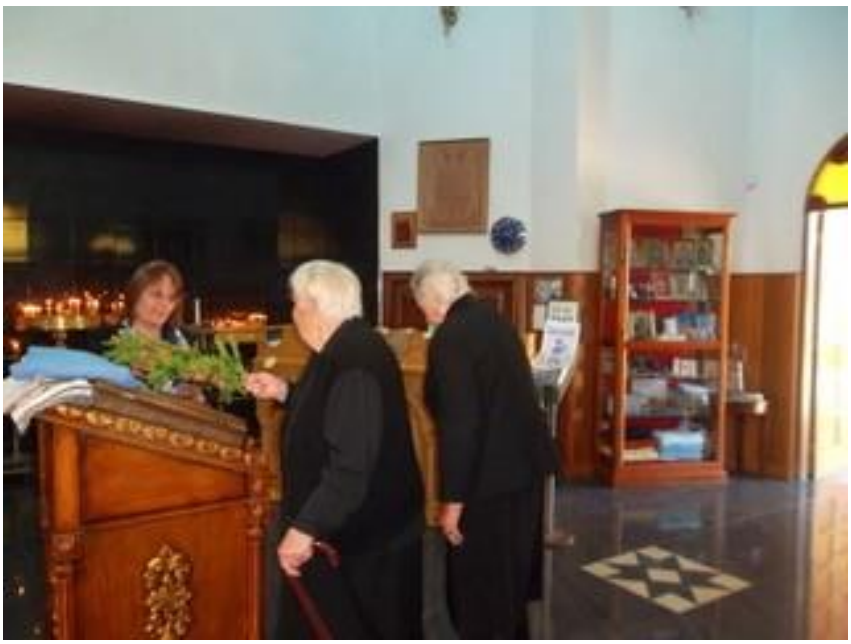

Image 9: Women arrive early to decorate the icon-stand of the patron saint

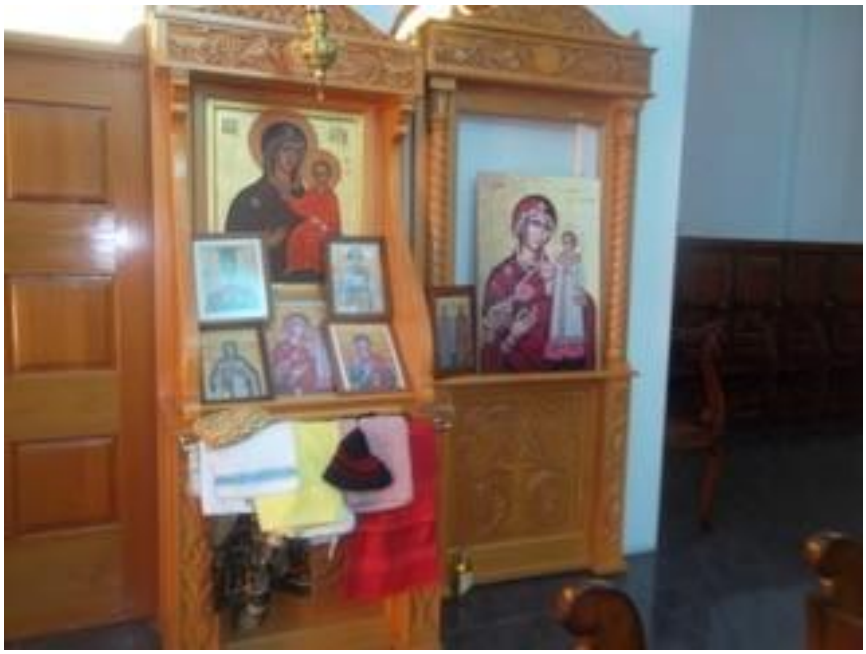

Image 10: Left side of the church. Women make offerings of prayers, kiss Mary's icon and bring gifts to place on her stand.

On the right side of the church, opposite Mary's icon stand is another, which holds icons of Jesus. Men leave money on this stand and I have seen a few kiss the icons, but since there are not many men in the congregation, this space does not receive the same attention as Mary's. A procession led by helpers holding lit candles and deacons swinging

incense holders is followed by the parish priest from the sanctuary to the vestibule. As the priest stands on the right side of the church, he blesses the icon stand and then places the Bible, covered in silver, on it. The use of incense reveals Christianity's Jewish beginnings, when incense was burnt in the great temple of Solomon as an offering during worship because frankincense signifies the sweetness of prayers to God (Psalm 141: 2; Revelations 5: 8; 8: 4). In services at the Church, incense is placed in golden censors attached to three chains which represent the trinity. Attached to the chains are 12 bells representing the 12 apostles. When swung by priests or deacons, they release clouds of sweet incense that fill the church. Incense is used to venerate the altar, church, clergy, holy gifts, icons and the congregation.

The church hall

The church is arranged into spaces, and different areas become 'centres of meaning' where individual members and the congregation are linked by emotion to each spatial context (Tuan 1975: 15). The church hall is connected to the Church by two doors: the external door accessed from the verandah, and an internal door. While the two spaces seem different, on closer inspection, the differences superficial and to some degree they disappear. Performances in the Church meet the congregation's spiritual needs and those in the church hall are complementary; practices in both spaces are expressions of 'being Macedonian' both national and religious. The hall includes an open space for entertainment, with tables and seating, a dance floor and stage, and areas for food storage, cooking and serving, dishwashing and serving drinks. The focus of the large L-shaped room is a raised alcove, the stage and the wooden dance floor, around which, and facing the stage, are set large round tables and chairs.

Photographs of Macedonian places and people hang on the wall (see Image 11 below). Some are of members of the Church, others are of people in Macedonian costumes, members of sporting teams; there is also a photograph of the 'founding' mothers and fathers. They are the members of the congregation who worked to buy and rebuild the church, and their picture hangs beneath a large photograph of Gotse Delchev dressed as

freedom fighter in an army uniform, with implements of war over his shoulders.[62] When seated, the congregation's gaze is drawn to a wall that has been set back to accommodate the stage. The space is accessed by two sets of stairs; the walls are painted a deep red, the colour on the Macedonian flag. On the wall are ancient symbols which now represent modern Macedonia. The most disputed of them, the sun of Vergina, has been positioned under the six photographs of secular martyrs who fought for Macedonian independence, all bearded, mostly in suits; only one is shown in his army uniform.

Image 11: The wall of the church hall

Flanking Philip's golden sun are two large golden lions. Both sun and lion are ancient symbols and today, the lion remains a national symbol in Macedonian heraldry, and holds a memory of an ancient world where lions were hunted. But these lions on the wall also refer to the last battle in a long series of hostilities, in which in 338 BCE, Philip's Macedon army won a decisive victory over the combined forces of Athens and Thebes (Breasted 1945: 493). With Philip's murder, the southern city-states appeared unwilling to submit to Macedonian rule and Alexander realised that he must give the states a lesson that they 'would not soon forget' (Breasted 1945: 495). However, in current debates about this history, Philip's and Alexander's quarrels with Athens and their conquest of Greece remain part of the complex 'infamous "Macedonian Question"' (Borza 1990: 8,19). The

[62] In other photographs, Delchev is pictured as a teacher or a prominent member of the IMRO.

golden lions on the wall of the church hall make reference to the Philip's marble lion,[63] erected outside the village of Chaeronea after the success of the Macedonian army. The lion was made to face south, to look on the two vanquished city states where a battle had shifted the balance of power in the region. The outcome favoured the Macedonian kings and their kingdom, so it is little surprise that lions with golden crowns leap on the wall of the local Macedonian church, a reminder to the viewer of Macedonia's glorious past.

High on the church hall wall is a row of photographs of Macedonian nationalists, men who in the late 19th and early 20th centuries fought and died but failed to achieve a nation-state for the Macedonians. There is a visual link between the saintly icons in the church and the photographs of these 'freedom fighters in the hall. In the Church, the saints, archangels and gods hold crosses and artefacts, symbols of their faith, a statement of their sacred cause. Depictions of the national heroes also show them holding artefacts, symbols of their faith in a sacred Macedonia. Baldassare Scolari suggests there is a trend associated with 'the emergence of a national state in modernity' where the 'figure of martyrs' has undergone a 'transition from the sacral and theological to the profane and political sphere of meaning' (2017: 71). These 'martyr figurations' (Scolari 2017: 71) legitimise 'political authority'. Macedonians in the diaspora make links between symbols and images from their history, connect heroes from an ancient history to those in the modern world. Icons and symbols of Macedonian kings, saints from early Christianity, and heroes who gave their lives in the struggle for a Macedonian identity hang side by side in the suburban Macedonian churches in Melbourne. Amongst the symbols and photographs of ancient kings and the freedom fighters is only one representation of a woman: a very young Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen's photograph shares a similarly prominent position to that of Mary, the Mother of God, in the Church.

The church hall is used for both secular and sacred festivals. Celebrations and festivals mark the cycle of seasons, the cycles of a person's life, and offer an opportunity to congregate for secular reasons. Meals are provided in the hall for the congregation

[63] The Chaeronea lion was made of marble and set on a plinth and over six metres high.

following rites held in the church, and this is where coffee and food is served at the end of the weekly Divine Liturgy. Some feasts are special celebrations, one of which is Mary's Dormition, which remains important to women, when the competition for the honour of organising the feast is keen. It is also where the Monday luncheons that are open to all are held: where feasting, bingo, raffles, dancing and speaking Macedonian is encouraged. Special events such as Mother's Day and the Melbourne Cup, are also celebrated, showing that women in the Church have embraced events celebrated by their host nation. But one of the most anticipated events is a luncheon held to mark the independence of the Republic of Macedonia, on September 8 every year. Here, everything is Macedonian: music, food, songs and dancing. On this day, women can hardly wait for the music to begin and they edge towards the dance floor as the DJ sets up his equipment. When the music begins, at each end of the dancing line, women and sometimes men twirl little red scarfs printed with yellow symbols of the sun, or fringed with red jewels and as they dance, they cry as they sing the familiar songs from home.

Conclusion

The modern Macedonian Orthodox Christian church has been influenced by ancient narratives and rites, shaped by Paul's teachings; and by women sharing meals to spread the message of the new religious movement. With the establishment of Christianity as the state religion, the church became an institution for men, and women's practices were overlooked. The church gave men a means to gain political influence when the division between clergy and congregation grew.

The Macedonian Church became increasingly connected to Macedonian politics, especially in the diaspora, where both congregation and clergy express their national identity in rites and celebrations. The Church continues to defend identity, in the use of the Macedonian language, and the recognition of history, artefacts and culture. Women in the diaspora make crucial contributions in their practices to the re-shaping of an identity that is Macedonian but also Australian. The role of identity maintenance at 'home' in the 19th and 20th centuries was part of women's practice but also appears in

the writings of early Macedonian nationalists, who understood that Church and national identity were closely linked.

Macedonian churches in new locations have become complex arenas where past and present find expression in faith and politics. These spaces incorporate ancient architectural structures and clothe them in art, symbols, designs and performance in which in congregational practices help to create a community. Increasingly in the diaspora, the Macedonian Orthodox Church exists as not only a place for worship or the celebration of rites, but also as a social, educational, friendship and cultural centre for Macedonian communities, their friends and neighbours, all of which respond to the influences of the new locations and the needs of the congregation.

The thesis focuses on a local Macedonian Orthodox Church and on women in the congregation to illustrate how women create a space which is a complex mix of national and ethnic identity. Which has helped to shape an identity both Macedonian and Australian. In the final months of this research discussions of the 'name-change' plebiscite had been held in households and at the Church. And this event provided an appropriate post-script for many members at the Macedonian Church as the 'name-change' was understood as 'ground breaking', historic as it led to an agreement between the Macedonian and Greek Prime Ministers, Zoran Zaev and Alexis Tsiprs, and began the transformation both domestically and abroad of South East Europe (Murzaku 2018: 40). While issues between North Macedonia and Greece had been formally resolved, the status of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and its relationship with the Bulgarian Orthodox Church still remains unresolved. However, in 2018 the Macedonian Orthodox church celebrated the 1000th anniversary in Ohrid, North Macedonia. But now the matter of the name has been recognised, the problem of the Macedonian Church still remains. But members in the congregation at Saint Dimitrij's, the Church is part of an institution – the Archbishopric of Ohrid – an ancient church now settled in the suburbs of Melbourne.

The largely unexamined history of women and their role in religious rites has led historians and anthropologists to explore those rites so as to shed light on women's roles

and understand the parallels which exist between modern rituals and the official cults of the ancients (Haland 2010: 248). In the early years of the religious movement it was both pagan and Jewish women who reorganised and institutionalised the ancient gods so as to bring Christianity into local relevance, so it could become the 'source of authority, morality, power and myth' (Frankfurter 2010: 29). At Saint Dimitrij's, the local Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church, women sing to *Bogoroditse,* the Tree of Life, the origin of immortality, who remains the deity who protects families and the Macedonian community.

In communities around the Mediterranean ancient rites are re-imagined and ancient deities institutionalised into new ideologies and in public events they become linked to the modern discourse of nationalism. Nurit Stadler (2015: 136) explores the roles of women in sacred spaces to show how in a contemporary context, places, ancient stories and heroines are used to comment on contemporary geopolitical strife. Her research concluded that 'two devotional matriarchs' at two sacred venues, Rachel's tomb and Our Lady of the Wall, are now religious symbols and have become places for protest. Both had been 'highly militarised [by] masculinised violence' and now have become symbols of religious and national yearnings. Zlako Skrbis (2005: 457) explores the path to nationalism to show that in Croatia apparitions of the Virgin can be 'analysed through the prism of nationalist discourse' and this has helped confirm and 'reinforce them and make them ring true'. Haland also (2012: 89) shows in her research a similar pattern as the authorities in the nation-state of Greece associate Mary's Dormition with the official celebrations where religion and patriotism is combined. In this chapter I suggest that under new conditions myths become endowed with new meaning and relevance, and ancient deities shape shift and prove particularly difficult to dethrone. Karen Armstrong argues (2005: 11) 'that every time men and women took a major step forward, they reviewed their mythology and made it speak to the new conditions'.

In the three chapters that follow, descriptions of the practices of the seasonal and life-cycle religious rites will illustrate that the Macedonian Church continues to be a space where Macedonian identity is defined. While religious performances are based on memory and celebrate a past in the present, they are constantly re-shaped and re-

imagined by those who taking part. While the following chapters focus on religious rites, they also show how women in the present perform the central roles that women played in the early church, as crucial and necessary performers.

Chapter Four: Seasonal rites in the local Macedonian Orthodox Church

Chapter Three examined the long history and current politics of the Macedonian Orthodox Christian church and its struggle to gain recognition as an autocephalous entity within the wider Orthodox Christian Church. The Church claims ecclesiastical jurisdiction over churches in the Republic of North Macedonia and the diaspora but remains unrecognised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and other canonical Orthodox churches (Fahlbusch & Bromiley Vol 3: 381). In the diaspora, the 'Macedonian Question' includes the Church's autocephaly and assumes a political dimension. An element of Macedonian independence, discussed in Chapter One, concerns the change in name from Macedonia to North Macedonia in 2018 which, among other things, resulted in a protest march in Melbourne. Thousands attended to show their displeasure, and the leaders of the protest were suburban parish priests. However, it is not only on Melbourne streets that Macedonians demand to be recognised as a separate nation but also during the weekly Divine Liturgy. The focus of this chapter is the expressions of identity observed in the performances of seasonal rites at the local Macedonian Orthodox Church that reflect the history and identity of the Macedonian communities.

Seasonal rites can be traced to ancient narratives associated with agricultural phases, announcing the seasons for sowing, growing, harvest and fallow. Rites performed during these periods acknowledged, communicated and made offerings to the 'divine female force' who embodied 'cyclicality and resurrection' (Håland 2009a: 104; 16 – 17). During the first century in the Balkan region, ancient narratives and rituals based on cycles of birth, growth, death and rebirth, were reshaped to incorporate the message of the new religious movement. At 'home' the pattern of the liturgical year, as in all Orthodox Churches, is established through Mary, *Bogoroditse,* 'the Sovereign of all Creation'. In the diaspora, rituals performed in Macedonian churches continue as expressions of faith by families and congregations, but like the early religious movement, the performance of them has been reshaped to express the Church's independence and the politics of identity.

According to Arnold van Gennep (1960) and Victor Turner (1969), religious activities can be categorised in two ways: those associated with seasonal cycles and those that mark important transitions in a life. Both embody cyclical patterns where birth, life, death and rebirth explain the changing seasons and the stages of an individual's life. Seasonal rites are associated with the agricultural year and according to Turner, they are 'derived from pre-Christian autochthonous sources' that were celebrated at 'well-defined points' in the 'annual productive cycle' (1969: 171; Håland 2012b: 91). In his early work, Van Gennep (1960) identifies life-crisis rites (discussed in the next chapter) as universal transitions that mark the stages of a person's life. (Chapter Five focuses on the rites of passage conducted at the Church to celebrate the different stages in a person's life).

Seasonal rituals, celebrated in the Macedonian diaspora, continue to be based on the agricultural cycle of the northern hemisphere. At 'home' the ancient narratives began as explanations for the seasonal changes which were often attributed to the actions of ancient goddesses and gods. Rituals celebrate the different stages in the agricultural year and are held during the transitional periods, times of plenty (at the end of the harvest: celebrated as Mary's Dormition) or times of scarcity (during the winter months: Christmas, the birth of Mary's son, Jesus). Other celebrations celebrate the appearance of first fruits, events connected to the land's fertility or the abundance of produce (Håland 2012b: 91). In Macedonian Orthodox churches in the diaspora these events are important celebrations for both congregations and families. This chapter focuses on three significant celebrations: the feast of Dormition (Mary's 'falling asleep'),[64] the Theophany of Jesus (the baptism of Mary's son) and rituals performed on Great and Holy Thursday (Good Friday),[65] the first rite of Easter.

The focus adopted in this chapter, and the following chapters, is an exploration of women's practice and performance of seasonal rites, and others held at the local work,

[64] In the Eastern Orthodox tradition Mary is believed not to have died but to have ascended to heaven. The Catholic Christian Church takes a different position in the Doctrine of Assumption of Mary. Pope John Paul stated (in a General Audience 25 June 1997) that 'the Mother is not free from original sin … and is not superior to the son who underwent death'. In the Orthodox view, Mary is regarded as holy as she was the mother of God.

[65] In the Orthodox church, days begin, as they do in the Jewish calendar, at sundown, not at sunrise.

and was suggested by the work of Edward Said (Bayoumi and Rubin 2000: 284). He recognised what was a fundamental problem: 'the crucial absence of women'. He understood that with few 'exceptions, women seem to have played little more than the role of hyphen, connective, transition, mere accident'. It was for this reason Haland (2012: 239) refers to Said's *Orientalism* (1979), because women's roles in daily and public life go unexamined and still appear to have little importance in the telling of the 'Great History'.

Rites celebrated in transitional periods are needed to 'guarantee' that each seasonal stage 'will pass properly', and in the cyclical pattern of the seasons, birth and death require community members to 'reinforce the bonds' between them and 'their supernatural patrons' (Håland 2012b: 89; 2012a: 267). Production and reproduction have since ancient times been linked to the agency of goddesses, and in agricultural families the focus is on the seasons in which the fertility, death, health and rebirth of vegetation, animals and humans remain important. Håland's stated purpose is to demonstrate that in the performance of fertility, agriculture and cultivation rites, the recurring ritual cycle of the Orthodox year, women's roles are 'in fact the centre' (2012b: 107), and to show research seen from a male view 'only presents part of the society' (2012a: 275). In the diaspora, Macedonian women believe that fertility and health will be guaranteed by their prayers and offerings. Performances in the Church for this reason become a type of cyclical communication in which women's prayers and offerings dedicated to Mary express their gratitude and guarantee the well-being of family members. Women accept Mary's agency, but as Carole Christ suggests, while 'giving-and-receiving' is at the heart of women's practice during performance, and crucial to the ritual's success, more importantly it is an expression of 'gratitude for what "I have been given"' (2011: 139).

The ancient narrative that gave shape to Mary's Dormition developed from an end-of-harvest ritual in which were held in the region, and in the ancient kingdom of Macedon. A unique perspective into ancient Macedonian culture can be found in visual arts imagery where goddess and gods – Demeter, Persephone, Zeus and Dionysus – dominate (Palagia 2018: 22). The visualisation of deities and their narratives were used in the performance of rites during the transitional stages of the seasonal year. One important rite was held

at the end of summer to express thanks for the harvest of grain, fruits and the health of animals, which would be followed by a season in which, it was believed, the land 'fell asleep'. In the ancient kingdom of Macedon, evidence of a story of seasons was unearthed in an illustration of Hades' abduction of Persephone painted on the wall of the king's tomb.[66] Persephone's mother, Demeter, the goddess of fertility, agriculture and the controller of life and death, immediately set out to find her daughter. While she and her companion, Hecate, searched, her attention was diverted, and she was increasingly distracted from the health of the earth. The result was a dry and barren land that led to famine and death. Thanks to Demeter's perseverance, Persephone was found and returned to her mother but only for six months of each year. When mother and daughter were reunited the earth was reborn and fertility restored; when her daughter returned to Hades, the land went to sleep.

In ancient communities, dependence on agricultural production led to a complex set of rituals associated with the seasons and rites dedicated to deities who controlled fertility, growth and protected crops. The anxiety experienced in agricultural families about harvests ('will the crop flourish or fail?'), is seen in the performance of 'the most sacred of all regular annual ceremonials' whose 'avowed purpose is to bring supernatural production of the crops' (Leach 1970: 173). As all members of agricultural societies were dependent on production, rites involved large groups of people, usually the whole community (Turner 1969: 157). During seasonal rites women's prayers and gifts were necessary offerings to the goddess, the controller of life who presided over the fertility of crops, animals and women (Kraemer 1992: 22). In south eastern Europe, women were principle performers, as they, like Goddesses, 'have control of the process of production and reproduction, 'the basic life processes' (Håland 2012a: 272). Ancient narratives of Demeter and Persephone, Aphrodite and Adonis can be found in the performance of rituals which celebrate the events of Mary's life. In the local Church women associate Mary with birth, death and rebirth and continue to understand their responsibility is for

[66] Archeological evidence from the royal tomb of Philip II in Aigia (Vergina), the ceremonial capital of Macedon, has uncovered a fresco that tells of Persephone's abduction, illustrating the cycle of birth, death and rebirth and thus helping to explain seasonal changes (Palagia 2018: 22). It This tomb was 'plundered in antiquity, rendering [it] undateable: the dates proposed so far range from the middle of the third quarter of the fourth century' (Andronicos 1984: 86-95).

the well-being of family members. In public rituals women's performance is often the focus and their actions are necessary for the completion of the rituals. It is in this context, the following discussion of women's performance in seasonal rites at the local Macedonian Church suggests that their roles are central, not 'peripheral' (Håland 2012a: 270).

Danforth suggests the 'limitations and weaknesses' to an approach where gender roles are exclusively based on binary oppositions where women are associated with 'the private, the natural, the profane and the polluting' (1983: 157). This suggests that women's roles may not receive the attention they deserve, and Håland's research supports the view that analysis needs to more fully account for women's roles and the female sphere (2012a 270). Religious performance has been viewed from an 'official male perspective', and Håland suggests women's roles have been 'at best seen as practical', as an extension of their domestic role and limited to decoration, cleaning and cooking. In reality, Håland argues, women's actions, prayers and offerings in public rituals connect them to the 'creative power of the universe' (2012b: 268; 2009a: 109). In the Macedonian community in Melbourne, the connection between the performance of household rituals and church rituals is seamless (Chapter Seven discusses this further). According to the local Church *Parish Newsletters*, the month of August is the 'month of feasts.' This transitional phase in the agricultural year include the feasts to celebrate Saint Elias' Day, 'the transfiguration of our Lord' and the celebration of the Dormition of Mary. The latter is one of the most important feasts in the Orthodox Christian calendar, affirming Mary's status as *Bogoroditse*, the 'All-Holy One', she who gave birth to God.[67] In hymns, women sing of Mary as 'more honourable than the Cherubim, and more glorious than Seraphim', the 'Tree of Life' and the 'Origins of Immortality' (Divine Liturgy 2014: 103). In one hymn sung every week during the Divine Liturgy Mary is honoured as mother, 'the port of salvation', 'of all heavenly Powers holier you are' (Divine Liturgy 2014: 99 – 103).

[67] In the Orthodox faith Mary's appellation is not '"the Virgin" [but] "the All Holy one"' (Håland 2012b: 89). This title was 'a title already given to pre-history Goddesses, [along with] … "God bearer", … "Mother of God" and "divine Wisdom" attributes which derived from the Church's conflict during the early centuries' (Haskins 1993: 44).

The Dormition of Mary, the mother of God

On the morning of Monday 28 August 2017, a celebration for Mary's Dormition was held at the local Macedonian Church. From early in the morning, women in the congregation had been at the Church, transforming it 'to be beautiful like a bride'. Lydia and her sister Rose had fasted and as for other older women in the congregation, the fast was accompanied by 'prayer and charity, as a way of disciplining our entire person, not just the body' (Macedonian Church Calendar 2017: 32). In honour of Mary's Dormition, women had 'disciplined' their bodies by fasting for 40 days, doing good works and abstaining from meat, milk, oil and sugar.[68]

To step inside the vestibule of the Church on any festival day is always a sensuous experience. The space is layered with meaning, with the images and gods, saints, angels, the heavy, carved furniture, icons and artefacts decorated with flowers and basil, and surrounded by gifts. In the study of ritual performance, objects, artwork and actions have often been overlooked, but Christoph Uehlinger suggests what is visible is public and must be understood as part of the performance (2015: 393). He argues that the objects used in rites help qualify the space but also 'frame the rituals performed in the space' (Uehlinger 2015: 393). On this morning's visit, visual elements shaped and influenced the performance, helping to make clear the religious practice and intensify of belief. Red and yellow flowers and bunches of basil decorated the icon stand in the vestibule, but it was Mary's icon stand on the left-hand wall that was given special attention.

As noted earlier, the lighting of the votive candles is part of the entry ritual, but on this morning groups of women moved, and we moved with them, first to stand in front of the icon-stand of the Church's patron saint and then on to Mary's icon stand. Women stopped to kiss the image of the patron saint and to leave silver coins on the corners of his image, then, as always, they spent longer in front of Mary. They kissed each of her icons as they whispered quiet prayers and crossed themselves three times. As always, only when these gestures have been completed did the women greet each other, kissing

[68] The fast preceding the Feast for the Mother of God begins each year on August 14 and lasts until the day of the Feast (Macedonian Church Calendar 2017: 33).

both cheeks three times and then shaking hands. On this day, they then made their way to the seats or pews in the nave and moved quickly to the left-hand side of the iconostasis.

Set into the left side of the wooden iconostasis is a large icon of Mary and positioned on the right side of the Beautiful Gate, the central opening, is Jesus, her son. In front of Mary's icon is a smaller icon, placed on a carved wooden stand near the steps which lead into the sanctuary. Mary's icon depicts her as both human and divine, she is dressed in a blue gown which symbolises her humanity. A red cape placed over her shoulders shows her as divine. Both Mary and her son Jesus have golden haloes, an ancient symbol indicating divinity. Colours used on the painted icons are bright and 'this paintwork is heightened by an "assist" or hatching of gold, the lustre of which reveals divine energy and radiance, while its value testifies to the devout motivation of the icon-maker' (Spivey 2005: 231).

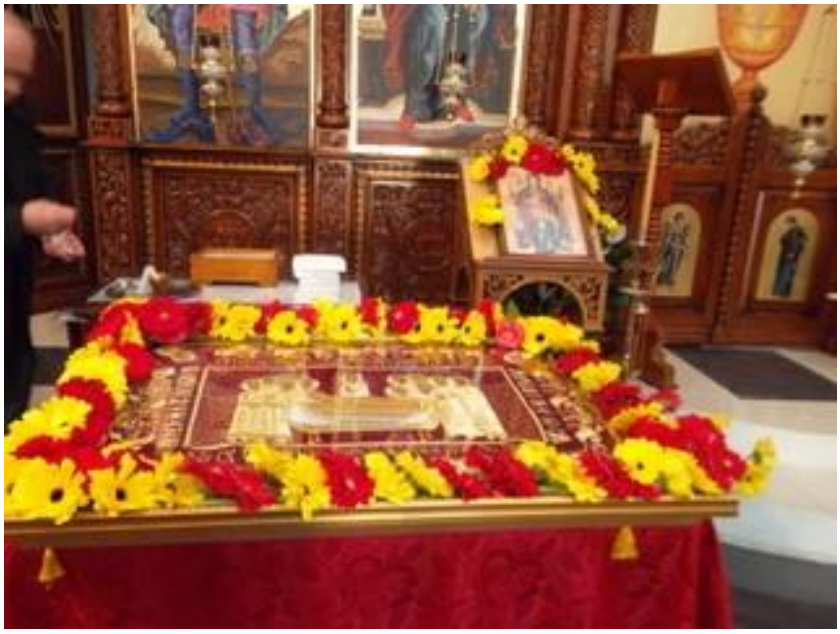

Image 12: Early morning and women at the church have decorated Mary's tomb, and placed red and yellow flowers around a tapestry of Mary, surrounded by the disciples with her son, Jesus holding her soul in his hands.

A wooden table that usually stands in front of the iconostasis has been moved to the left of the stairs leading to the sanctuary (see Image 12 above). It too has been decorated,

with a long red satin cloth, edged with golden tassels, and covered with a tapestry of the 'sleeping' Mary – it has been transformed into Mary's tomb. Golden braid borders the tapestry, which is embroidered with vine leaves and grapes. The tapestry shows Mary dressed in gold, resting on a golden couch. At her head and feet stand the apostles, who look down on her sleeping form. They too are dressed in gold and have golden haloes. Jesus is at the centre of the group; he too is dressed in a golden robe and holds in his arms what seems to be a small image of a baby who is looking at the viewer. This, I was told by the women, is Mary's soul that Jesus holds in his arms. At the edge of the tapestry, women have placed fresh red and yellow flowers, forming a colourful frame. They have also decorated the smaller icon with a frame of flowers and a white scarf draped across the top. Others have set vases of flowers and wrapped gifts at its base. Mary's tomb, on the left side of the church, has become the focus of women's devotion.

The flowers, leaves and herbs used in decorations during the Dormition celebrate the end of the harvest season and mark the beginning of a transition period, a time of uncertainty, '"dangerous" both in the life of a person and in social life' because 'we do not know how things will turn out' (Håland 2012a: 268). However, Turner suggests that a single symbol used in a ritual performance can be multi-vocal, signifying many things at the same time (1969: 24). Mair also refers to rites where 'objects and acts' will be common in 'other rites of a single society' so therefore should be interpreted within that culture (Mair 1971: 104). In the Macedonian Orthodox Church, flowers, herbs and leaves are linked to rites held during different seasons which are expressions of religious sentiments. However, the choice of colours used in the diaspora, can also be understood as political – these colours are now associated with Macedonian identity. In the Church, these colours are often chosen for priests' copes, deacons' gowns, the ties that decorate candlestick holders and covers for the sacred artefacts used in the Divine Liturgy.

On this day basil was used to decorate artefacts, placed in vases or simply held by women in the nave. In the cycle of the agricultural year, basil is used in rituals associated with Mary. Rose and her friend Buba Mika sit in the high-armed choir chairs in the nave, holding small bunches of basil that they offer to women as they pass. I was given a bunch,

with instructions (translated by Rose), about how I must care for it.[69] The story of the myrrh- bearing women[70] of the New Testament underlines for women in the diaspora the importance of their roles in the Macedonian Orthodox Church. This story tells of the seven women who were Jesus' companions, who remained defiant at the foot of the cross and were the first to find the empty tomb. The women of the congregation say that basil grew at the foot of the Cross and outside the empty tomb. When asked if they used to eat basil at 'home' they say it was considered sacred in villages in Florina and thus not eaten. Women also say that in Aegean Macedonian, it grew wild in the mountains near lakes and streams, and at 'home' they collected it to decorate the church. They began to eat basil only after they arrived in Australia. Many women both young and old have told me about, or shown me, their pots of basil plants.

As Mary's Dormition is an important celebration, two priests conducted the service, helped by the deacon and two helpers. There were many more women than men at the service, and most of the men smoked and talked on the verandah throughout the service, though a few older men sat on the high-armed seats on the right side of the nave. During this celebration in 2017, sections of the Divine Liturgy were sung in English, a first for this Church. Appropriate to the day, grandmothers attended with their daughters, and young mothers brought babies and young children to celebrate Mary's divinity, and to sing in both Macedonian and English. Most older women from Aegean Macedonia cannot read Macedonian because all schooling in the region was conducted in Greek; others, like Rose, worked in the fields and did not go to school, so she and her friends have learnt the service by heart. The younger women, born in Australia, can understand and speak Macedonian (though few can read it) so the parish priest's choice to have the most sacred section of the Divine Liturgy sung in English was a surprise. The singing in English began with some hesitation, and women turned to me and other, younger women, urging us to sing loudly to help them. Months later, these sections of the liturgy were still being sung in English by both priests and the choir.

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[69] I did listen and persevere with trying to grow my sprig of basil, but my success was short lived.

[70] The parish priest told me that these women were named Mary (mother of Jesus), Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Salome, Mary, Susanna, Mary and Martha of Bethany. The first five, he said were known to be outspoken women, while several of them were wealthy. He claimed that it was their money that Jesus was about to use to finance his ministry.

At this was an important ritual, many in the congregation chose to receive communion so this part of the service was unusually long. After the Lord's Prayer and Creed, the priest stands in front of the Beautiful Gate, raises the communion cup, and signals the congregation to form a line. Old women and very young children always receive holy communion first so members in the line move to position them in front of the queue. At the end of communion, helpers put a table that usually stands on the right side of the iconostasis, behind the sun tile, in front of the stairs leading to the sanctuary. On the table are loaves of high-sided, home-made white bread and bowls of boiled wheat decorated with white sugar; golden crosses stand next to bottles of wine and oil. Standing next to the priest and deacons are two women who have sponsored the celebration. At the previous Dormition (in 2016), they had offered to provide a meal for the congregation after the service the following year. The priest and the women held hands to form a circle over the table, and as the priest sang, he blessed the bread. The priest and the women held the bread above their heads as they circled the table. This circling seems like a dance and when they were finished, the priest took the bread and sprinkled it with wine. He then cut it into three large pieces with a knife with a wooden handle. The bread was later cut into smaller pieces to be handed out in a blessing at the end of the service, in the church hall.

During the memorial, young women and children also stood near the table, some named Mary.[71] At the end of the memorial, the priest asked loudly who will volunteer to organise next year's Dormition. The woman standing next to me (a widow, migrant from the Republic of North Macedonia) called out that she would host the next feast; later when I congratulated her, I learned how much of an honour this was for her. She said that she would need to complete a number of tasks, to be instructed by the priest about the service, and would need to provide a meal of food and drink for over 100 congregation members. At the end of the service, other women quickly made their way to congratulate her; many of them would help her to provide the feast.

[71] For some women, this day was their name day, thus it was a celebration for both Mary's Dormition and the saint they had been named after.

After the sermon, the congregation formed a long line to be blessed by the priest and be given a piece of the blessed bread. As they left the Church, women congregated on the verandah talking, while others made their way through the internal door to help in the kitchen. While we had been at the service, women had set up the hall with 10 large round tables covered with long white tablecloths and placed 10 chairs around each (see Image 13 below). The tables had been set with condiments, glasses, plates and flowers. In the centre, women placed platters of sweet cakes, nuts, sliced watermelon, shredded cabbage, cheese and olives. They also brought plates of bread, peppers and cooked food to the tables while others circulated, selling raffle tickets. Others took orders for alcohol, soft drink, tea or coffee. Around the feasting congregation, the Macedonian 'freedom fighters' and Queen Elizabeth looked down from the walls, and the star of Vergina and the leaping lions on their beautiful red background reminded the congregation they were Macedonian as well as Australian.

Image 13: Women celebrating Mary's Dormition in the Church Hall. One of the women sitting at the table had volunteered at the end of the service to provide and supervise the meal at the following year's Dormition.

Theophany, the baptism of Mary's son.

In the northern hemisphere, the 12-day transitional period celebrates two rituals, Christ's birth (January 7) and his baptism (January 19). This occurs 'around the spring equinox', a time of food scarcity in the seasonal calendar; in pagan times, this was a period for making offerings, accompanied by rituals performed 'to conciliate the supernatural beings and persuade them to be favourable' in the coming growing period (Håland 2012a: 268). During this period, women's practices both at home and in public made their responsibilities clear. At 'home', the celebrations were held in households and in the local church, and this continues in the diaspora. At the local Church in Melbourne, Theophany is performed with prayers, basil, the blessing of water, and an auction of icons; women's performance in it is central. On the morning of Theophany, the Church vestibule is filled with the powerful scent of basil. Flowering basil is placed in bunches on the icon stands in the vestibule and in front of the iconostasis in large vases where red and yellow bunches of flowers are mixed in with it.

An important activity in Theophany is the auction of icons after the Divine Liturgy. At the conclusion of the communion, three large cardboard boxes are taken from inside the sanctuary and placed on the right side the nave. The boxes contain icons and other sacred artefacts, the most sacred of which is a silver cross. The priest and the deacon become auctioneers and the order of items to be auctioned always begin with a silver cross, followed by the icons packed in boxes (see Image 14 below). All members of the congregation look forward to the auction and even men who have been sitting on the verandah come in to sit next to their wives, or if there is no space, stand along the right-hand wall of the nave or at the back in the vestibule. The atmosphere starts off solemn, but the women soon initiate a change with their easy banter, which brings an immediate response from the priest and deacon. The dialogue becomes full of jokes and quips, answered with laughter from both congregation and clergy. For an outsider, this is a surprising performance in the centre of a place of solemnity. The dialogue between the women and the clergy seems to be driven by a desire to have the last word, and on many occasions, it is the women who have it.

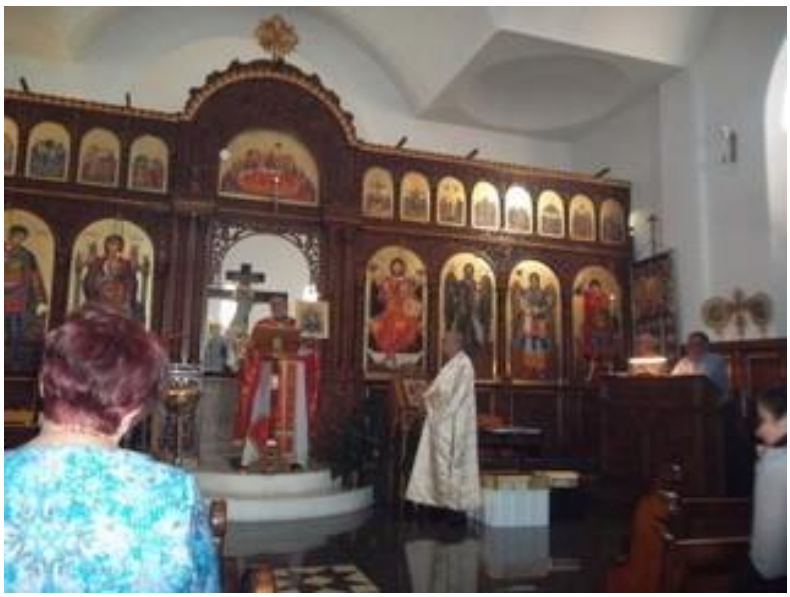

Image 14: The auction of icons.

The auction is important because it makes money for the upkeep of the Church, but the women see it as more than this. The sacred icons are taken home for display and kept for 40 days, ensuring health and prosperity for the family. At the end of the 40 days, the icons are returned to the Church and the sanctuary, where they remain until the next festival. At the auction, women are likely to buy more than one icon, but it seems that the silver cross is most coveted by the men. A few men do sometimes buy icons at the auction, but they mostly seem to consider it their wives' duty to select the icons and to decide how much they should pay.

At one auction I asked a young woman in her 30s, who often sat next to me in the church, how much she had paid for her icon. As a very young child she had come from the Republic of Macedonia, and she told me that in her region, there were no such auctions. She wanted to 'buy' an icon and put it in her house, as she felt would help her during her studies. When she returned to the pew clutching her icon, I asked her: 'how much?'. She told me she had paid $50 but Lydia told me later that it had been $300. Some women 'bought' three or more icons; I watched one woman stack 12 icons beside her on the pew to take home.

After the auction, Lydia told me that each year the icons become more expensive. She had bought two the previous year, but this year but could only afford one. Her sister Rose

had bought three icons the year before: one for each of her children, the icons of saints for whom her children are named. I was told that one woman had bought five very large icons, for $500 each. I asked them why women bought icons and was told that it guaranteed the safety of their children and household. I was reminded that at the first auction I attended, one woman, who had a very sick son, had bought 11 icons. Lydia did not seem surprised and she told me that this is 'what a woman [does], as it [is] a woman's duty to look after the family'. I later asked her what had happened to the woman's son, and she said that there had been a miracle and he was now cured. Miracles were often talked about during church rituals associated with Mary, with icons, and the 'blessed' water and other items blessed to protect the family.

The blessing of the water occurs several times during the Church calendar year, and it is always possible to purchase small bottles of blessed holy water, to be found on a large wooden stand on the left-hand side of the nave. However, the most important blessing of water occurs after the auction at Theophany. This begins with a procession led by the parish priest, deacons and helpers, followed by the congregation into the car park, where a large plastic pool has been filled with water and is surrounded by members of the clergy and congregation. The congregation listens to prayers sung by priest and deacons while the priest holds a silver cross bound with bunches of basil and traces the sign of the cross three times over the surface of the water. Some very young boys wait in their bathers for the signal to jump into the pool and claim the cross. The winner, who is perhaps is too young to understand its significance, is congratulated by the priest and his happy family. The suggestion is that this part of the ritual represents the baptism of Jesus and variations of this rite can still be found in Orthodox churches both at 'home' and in the diaspora. As the blessing of water falls in the northern hemisphere's winter, a transitional period, these rites guarantee a new agricultural year and good fortune for families and community.

At the local Church, as soon as the water had been blessed and the cross retrieved, and the small boys had scrambled out of the pool, the women made their way with much haste to the blessed holy water. With plastic and glass bottles, they bent to scoop the holy water into containers to take home. Many women brought more containers than

they needed and shared them with others who had forgotten to bring any. The next time I attended Theophany, Lydia and others seemed pleased to see that I had brought my own bottles and again gave me instructions on how to use the holy water to bless my household: some water should be stored, some used when I felt unwell, sprinkled on dishes or added during cooking, and the rest should be sprinkled around the house. In their village 'home' women from Aegean Macedonia told me that after the service the parish priest would visit each household of congregation members. He would bless their houses, going from room to room sprinkling the holy water in each corner. Women said that in Melbourne, the priest did not do this anymore. Some believe that it is too difficult for priests because congregations are spread across the suburbs. So, for women in the diaspora, the blessing of houses had become their task, and they told me, often with a shrug and smile, that this is how it is now. At the end of this celebration of Theophany, the parish priest told me that he was about to visit members of his parish who were old or sick or otherwise not able to attend the service. He would bless them and their houses with holy water.

The use of water in ritual performances is part of an ancient tradition found around the Mediterranean and throughout Europe and the Middle East. Water is associated with women, as springs are considered life-giving, necessary for germination of grain and for growth and are connected to purity, as women use the blessed water to heal family members and to purify their households (Håland 2009b: 83). Women tell stories of villages in Aegean Macedonia surrounded by lakes and streams, as beautiful places where they went to gather basil. In the diaspora at the local Church, water is blessed twice yearly and each time with basil tied to a silver cross. The holy water is used during baptisms and the celebration of Jesus' own baptism, Theophany. In the early years of the Christian church, the leaders transformed a Hebrew system used to purify their members into a rite of Christian initiation (see Meeks 1986: 99). This *rite of passage* is discussed in Chapter Five below.

Great and Holy Thursday- the first rite of the Easter celebration

Great and Holy Thursday[72] is the first in a five-day period beginning with the death of Jesus and ending with his resurrection.[73] The 40 days before Easter have been prescribed by the Church as a period for fasting and preparation for the end of the northern hemisphere winter, marking the transition to the new spring, and rebirth. The first day of Easter in the Orthodox Church is influenced by its Hebrew heritage: the first of the Easter services begins on Thursday evening at 7.00pm, as sunset is considered to mark the beginning of the day in the Hebrew calendar. The service that I observed at the local Church ended for most of the congregation at 11.30pm, but later on Thursday night, Lydia and a number of other women stayed overnight in the church. This acknowledges not only the loyalty of the myrrh-bearing women but also their bravery as it was they who remained with Mary while her son died and went later with her to claim his body. Women at the local Church mimic the ancient rite, staying to decorate Jesus' tomb, then to 'watch and pray' during the night, and perhaps even to ensure his resurrection.

[72] I observed this event on 13 April 2017; it was the second time I had attended the rite.

[73] Bettany Hughes claims that every year, women in a pre-Christian world made 'an image of Aphrodite's dead lover, Adonis, and lay it on a wooden plank and decorated it with flowers' as Aphrodite would to effect his resurrection (2019: 212). While this may have been due to the 'pain of love' women remembered Aphrodite 'so enraptured with her lover that she affected his resurrection' and Hughes suggests that women in the new religious movement mimicked her efforts to achieve the same results, the rebirth of Mary's son Jesus (2019, 212). She also suggests that this rite illustrates unity, compassion and companionship between women and the night where women decorate the wooden structure underlines this.

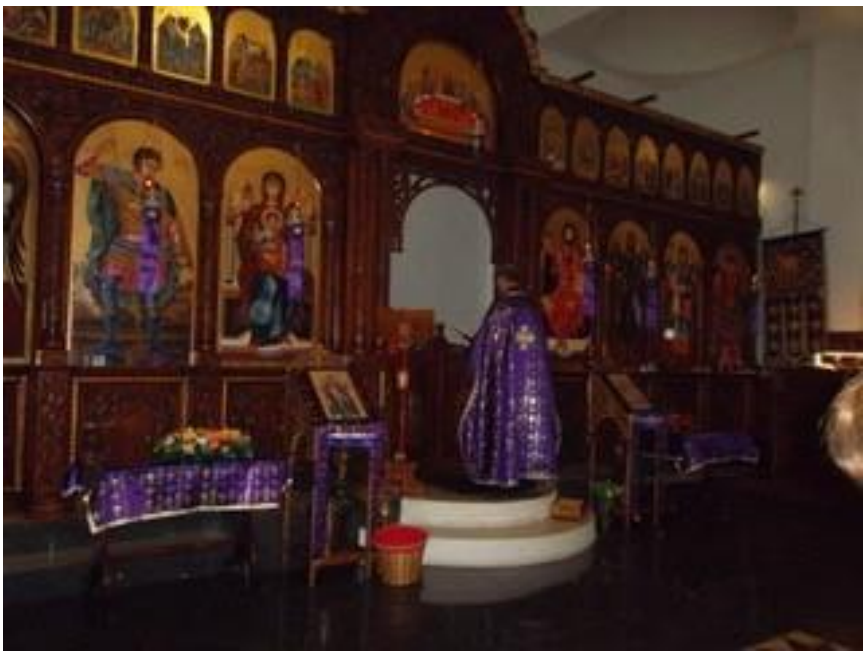

Image 15: The Church decorated for Holy Thursday. The deep purple gown for the parish priest, the coverings for the table and the small ribbons which are tied onto the small enamelled lamps which hang in front of the iconostasis. One a side wooden table, now covered with a purple cloth the crown of flowers which will be placed on the icon of Jesus.

The Church had again been dressed for this most solemn ritual: icons, tables and lamps in front of the iconostasis had been decorated with dark purple fabric embroidered with crosses in gold thread (see Image 15 above). When I arrived at the Church, a number of women were in the vestibule, moving a large wooden structure which was to be transformed by early morning into the tomb of Jesus (see Images 16 and 17 below).[74] Fresh flowers were being sorted into piles of red, yellow and white, their ends being trimmed and being put into plastic buckets of water. As more women arrived, the piles of flowers grew, and we had to negotiate our way around the workers. The smell of flowers and basil was strong in the nave, as women had also put many vases of flowers on the side of the steps leading to the Beautiful Gate. Other women had placed basil and flowers of the patronal Saint's icon stand, which is placed in the centre of vestibule.

[74] This tradition goes back to antiquity where women would decorate Aphrodite's dead lover Adonis with flowers and remember Aphrodite so 'enraptured with her lover that she effected his resurrection' (Hughes 2019: 211 – 212).

Image 16: Women will decorate the wooden structure which rests on the left-hand side of the entrance to the church. The wooden structure is usually a place for women to leave gifts and offerings. However, on this evening women will transform it into the tomb of Mary's son Jesus.

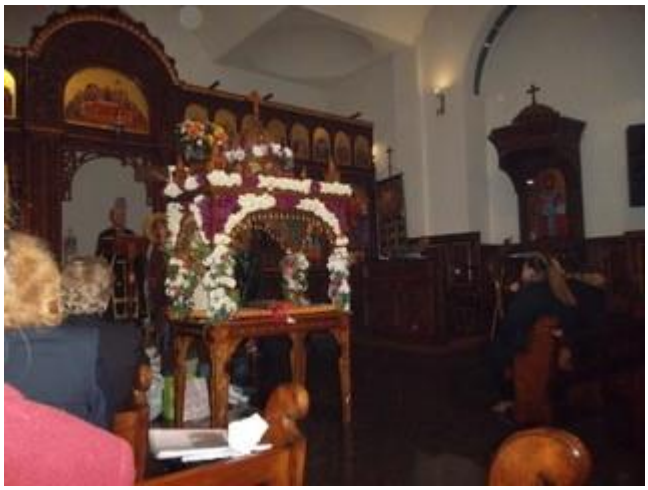

Image 17: The decorated tomb of Christ, represented in a tapestry of Christ surrounded by his disciples which had been place on a flat wooden surface, has been covered by flowers. This structure now stands in the nave, in front of the icons brought from the sanctuary, where offerings of gifts have been placed in front of it.

During Holy Thursday the sanctuary remains in darkness, and the lower section of the Beautiful Gate remains closed. The priest leaves the sanctuary through the 'Angel Door' and joins the deacons in the deacon's choir seats on the right side of the nave. Both priest and deacon are dressed in garments of purple cloth covered with golden crosses.[75] The

[75] Lydia told me that she made the decorations on the sacred artefacts and the cope worn by the priest and the deacon.

service began with a scripture read by the priest who stands on the right side of the stairs. During this service, he accessed the sanctuary through the Angel Door on the right side of the nave. A purple satin cloth covered the small wooden table standing on the left-hand side of the iconostasis. From the vestibule Lydia brought a garland of flowers, a 'crown of thorns', and put it on a wooden table in the nave.

Alternating sections of prayers were sung by the deacon on the right side of the nave and an older woman who on the left in front of the first pew. Another member of the clergy arrived, an old priest who helps out at important rituals, who quickly donned a deep red cope, and began to share the responsibility of singing the prayers. From inside the sanctuary, the deacon sang a prayer while the parish priest and older priest holding a censor made their way down the right side to the church to the empty archbishop's throne, which they blessed with incense. The older priest followed the parish priest and they moved to the left-hand aisle but this time, no women moved to kiss the priest's cope as they do in most services. The Church filled with clouds of incense and the sound of tinkling bells. When the priest finally entered the sanctuary, the bottom part of the Beautiful Gate is opened.

At this point, women in the nave took candles from their handbags and carefully placed them beside them on the pew. Women who had forgotten candles quickly went to the vestibule to purchase some. Lydia, who is always prepared, put her candles on the pew beside her. Another older woman in the high-armed chair held aloft a lighted candle to signal to the other women to begin the rite of candle lighting. Some women had wound foil around the base of their lit candles, others paper (see Image 18 below). The priest began to read from the silver-covered Bible as everyone stood up. The only men present during the service were members of the clergy and two elderly men sitting on the right in the high-armed chairs along the wall. At the beginning of the service, there were 20 women in the nave, other women were working in the vestibule, and more women continued to arrive.

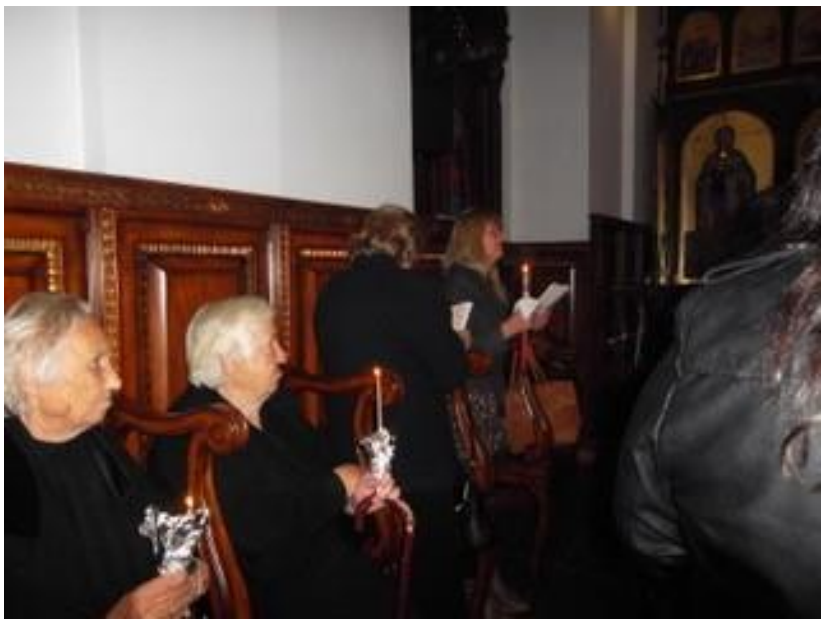

Image 18: Rose and friend sit with others with their lighted candles listening to the readings.

Twelve separate readings were made either by the priests or the deacon, standing by the stairs leading to the sanctuary. At the end of each reading, an older woman named Kola, who stood in the front pew by the central isle, walked to the reader, took his lit candle and replaced it with another. She put the used candle in a small sand box and then returned to the pew (see Image 19 below). In the darkening Church during this evening rite, the lighting of candles accompanies each prayer and seems to enhance the mood. Keeta continued, at the end of each reading, to replace the old candle with a newly lit one. As the space darkens, the small candles that the women and the readers hold remind a believer of the word of God and of Christ as the light of the world. During the service more women arrived, and they too used the already-lit candles of women standing in the congregation to light their own; spent candles piled up on the pews. There were no men in the Church apart from the clergy. Yet the performance symbolises not gender differentiation but rather a sharing of responsibilities, and while only the clergy sing prayers, it is the women who provide the light in this most sacred rite. As most of the older women know the service by heart, and those who own prayer books are helped by others to find the right place, they can continue to make the appropriate gestures, light the candles and leave the used ones on the pew – all which makes this performance look carefully choreographed.

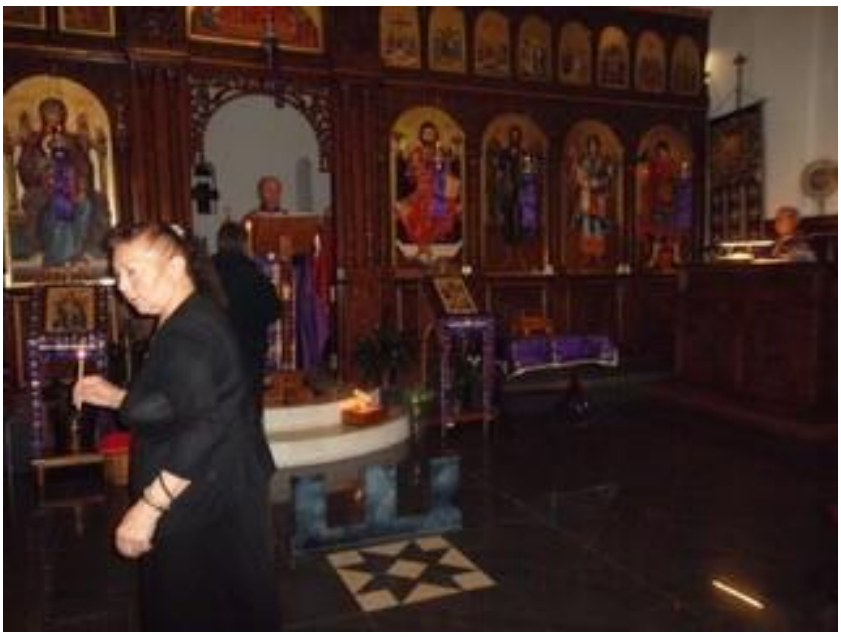

Image 19: The priest holds a candle as he reads the text. At the end of each reading a woman in the congregation takes this candle and replaces it with a new. The candles are then placed in a container of sand which rests on the steps to the sanctuary.

As the deacon continued to sing, the focus of the congregation shifted to the sanctuary. The light from the nave was the only illumination there. The altar, stripped of its usual artefacts, was covered with dark velvet trimmed with gold and silver threads and embroidered with flowers and crosses. The congregation watched as the clergy, deacon and helpers detached the icons of Mary and John from the large icon of Jesus behind the altar. The separated icons were brought in a procession through the Angel Door and down into the nave. They carried them down the left aisle to the icon stand of the patron saint, and then down the central isle to the base of the stairs, near the central tile decorated with the sun of Vergina, and reattached each icon to its metal base – first Christ, then Mary and finally John (see Image 20 below). Once the icons were reassembled, the priest blessed each with holy water, then other members of the clergy kissed each icon.

When the clergy had finished blessing the icons, the women moved in great haste to the icon stand. Their performance began with a series of gestures: deep bows, the sign of the cross, kissing the icons and Christ's feet and knees, then Mary and finally John. In these performances, the women are claiming, giving thanks for, respecting and honouring their 'supernatural patrons'. Older women are given priority, they are the first to go before the

icons. After giving thanks, the women then begin to make offerings of money and gifts to the divine beings. Packages that had been placed on the floor or on the pews were now taken to the icons.

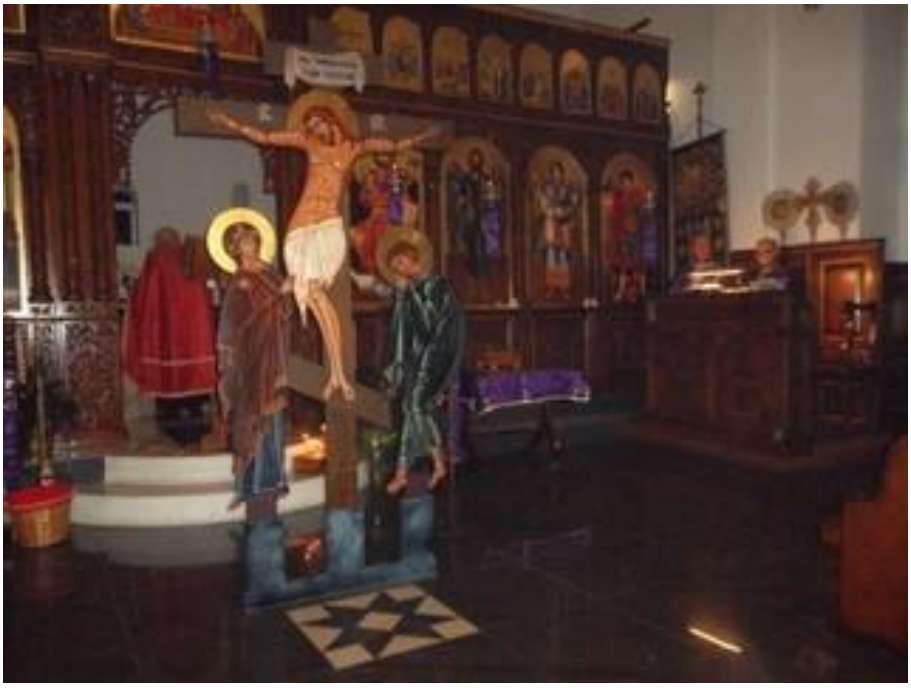

Image 20: The icons of Mary, her son and John which usually are kept in the sanctuary have been reassembled on the marble floor.

Most offerings are domestic and include many towels, flowers and basil. Gifts are placed in front of the icons while many towels are thrown over the icon of Christ on the cross (see Image 21 below).

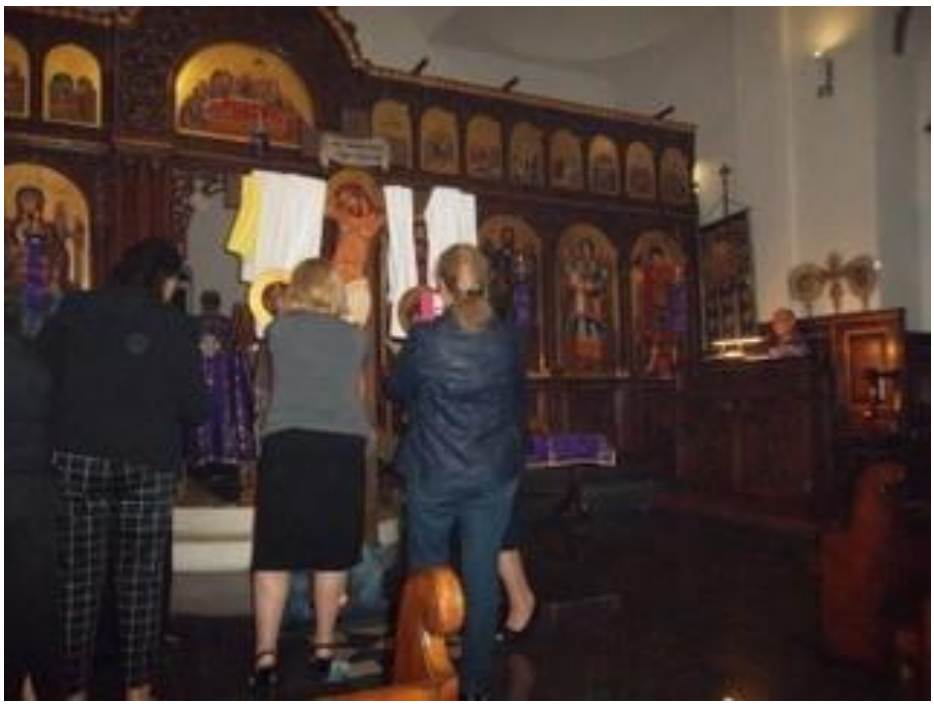

Image 21: Women begin to bring gifts as offerings to the cross and hang them over it.

The gift giving is part of a reciprocal and circular process that binds the women in the congregation to divine beings, especially to Mary. Lydia told me that many years ago, she prayed to Mary and hung towels over the cross. She had then given the towels to a neighbour in her street, who was not an Orthodox Christian, but wanted a child. Mary had intervened, I was told, and her neighbour now has a 'grown-up son'. According to Lydia, this was a miracle, and often during services she pointed to other 'miracle' children, those who had been brought into being by prayer, or others who had recovered from ill-health, all due to Mary's intervention. On this night, she admonished anyone who put money or eggs near the large icon stand; she reminded me that Christ does not need money and certainly not on the evening of his death.

The pile of unwrapped or beautifully wrapped gifts in front of the icons grew, as did the bunches of flowers, money and sprigs of basil. After the offerings were made, a ladder was brought from the right side of the church and put at the bottom of the cross. A male helper brought the circle of flowers representing the crown of thorns, climbed the ladder and put it on the bowed head of Christ (see Image 22 below). Songs and prayers were sung and the women continued to light candles. The silver Bible was then taken to the

central stand and the women blew out their candles. In front of the large icon, the parish priest delivered his sermon. He blessed the congregation, signalling the end of the service.

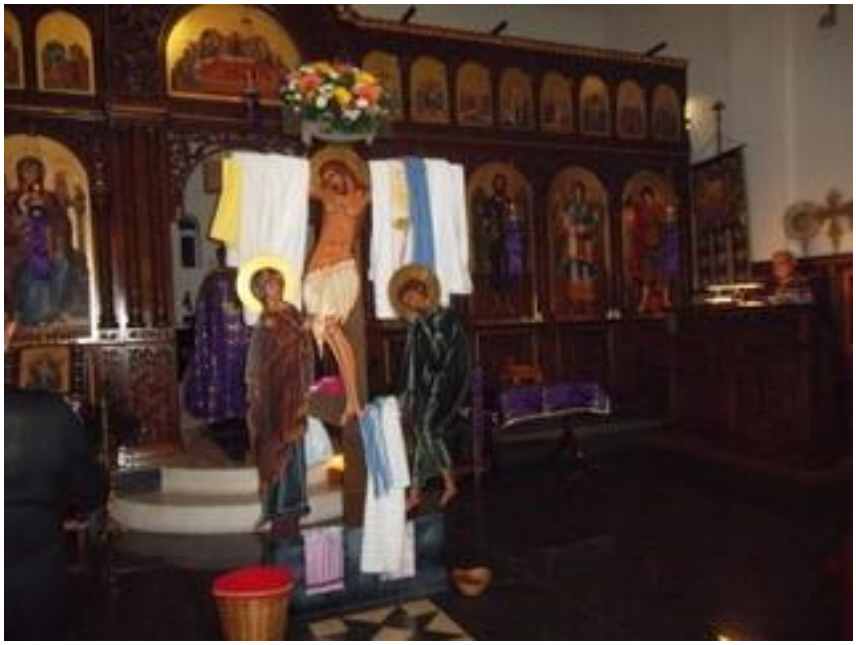

Image 22: A crown of flowers is hung on Christ's head to represent the Crown of Thorns.

As the congregation left, women in the vestibule continued to sort and cut flower stems to the required length and put them in the plastic buckets. These bundles of red and yellow flowers and smaller bunches of white flowers would be used to decorate the 'tomb' that would be the focus of rituals over the next three days. Other women farewelled those staying in the Church and went home; those who remained decorated the tomb or simply stayed to 'watch and pray', like the myrrh-bearing women in the original story. Women sat in the pews overnight, reading religious texts and praying until the morning. This part of the rite remains the responsibility of women of the congregation, and no men may remain in or enter the Church during this night. In the morning, the wooden structure has been fully decorated with flowers and covered with a tapestry of Jesus surrounded by saints and disciples. Women have control over life and death, and the women in this Church are regarded, like Mary, as capable of the responsibility of dealing with death.

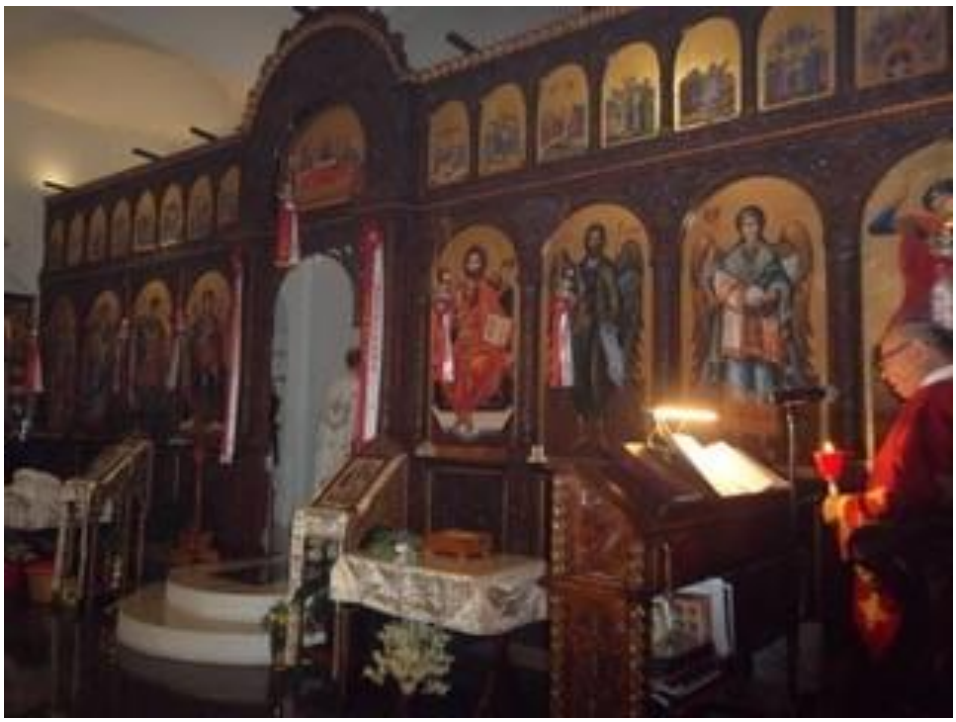

Image 23: The newly decorated church for the resurrection of the deity.

The following morning, the decorated tomb was placed in the nave, where it remained as a reminder of Jesus' death, until Saturday evening when it was held aloft by three men and became part of a procession that circles the Church three times. Young boys holding embroidered standards led the procession, followed by helpers and deacons with golden artefacts, followed by the parish priests and the congregation. At the conclusion of the procession, the tomb of Jesus is put in front of the stairs leading to the sanctuary and in the early hours of Sunday morning the doors to the Church were opened and the empty tomb showed the congregation that Jesus was resurrected.

Giving and receiving

Marcel Mauss' study of gift giving in 'archaic societies' led to an understanding of exchange as collective; from this perspective, exchange is based on communal values and trust rather than on self-interest (1925). Edmund Leach explored this idea further and concluded that those who gave 'gifts to the gods' did so to compel the gods 'to give back benefits to man' (1986: 132). His work led to many studies of ancient and contemporary Mediterranean communities in which gift giving is regarded as incurring an obligation to return the favour. Håland's study of Greek communities suggests that the system of

clientela is based on the belief that 'the recipient [of the gift remains] morally obligated for return giving, a favour for a gift' (Håland 2014a: 31). From this perspective, the gift giving practiced in both ancient and Orthodox communities, and the making of offerings to goddesses or God, was done in the hope of a 'return gift'. Gifts were given on the assumption that the recipient would reciprocate with other gifts and offered to divinities on the understanding that they would provide fertile productive seasons, and healthy crops, animals and humans. The assumption here is that reciprocity is based on 'a favour for a gift'.

Håland's view is that offerings in the form of gifts seal relationships, and guarantee protection and good health for the coming season (2012b: 89). While in Mediterranean regions, 'giving and receiving rituals' are at the 'heart of culture', they are far more complex than they appear when 'approached from the perspective of modern individualism (Christ 2011: 139). Christ believes that the giving of gifts has been corrupted by capitalistic greed and that the purpose has shifted to one in which individuals are encouraged 'to accumulate and hoard' (2011: 140). She suggests that the 'primary motivation' of offering gifts during rituals is 'not to ensure "you will give to me" but to express gratitude for what "I have already been given"' (Christ 2011: 140). Her argument also rests on the 'relation of the individual to the community and of the relation of death to life', not 'easily understood if approached from the perspective of modern individualism' (Christ 2011: 140).

In seasonal rituals witnessed at the local Melbourne Church, giving and receiving is part of each celebration, and gifts are given not only to the deities but also to the members of the congregation. In the cycle of life, death and rebirth, these remain aspects of both natural and human life. The description of Mary's Dormition, the birth and Theophany of her son Jesus, and his death, reminds the congregation of the cycle of seasons in the Orthodox calendar year. Many aspects of giving are found in rites, from the libations of wine poured into the earth by the priests to the gods, to the communal feasts held in the church hall or in households, which remain part of a complex pattern of gift giving. Holy water, bread, candles, flowers, boiled wheat and household goods are made and given both to Mary and to members of the congregation. Many aspects of Macedonian

Orthodox Church rites involve reciprocity; inside the door of the vestibule is the wooden structure that becomes Jesus' tomb for a few days each year, but for the rest of the year, it is where women put items of clothing to be used by others.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been the seasonal celebrations held at the local Church as part of the yearly cycle of rituals of Macedonian Orthodox Christian churches. The three festivals discussed here are held during transition phases of the agricultural year and in Macedonia had been celebrated at crucial stages of production. Mary's Dormition celebrates the end of the harvest, marking the time when the earth begins its winter 'sleep' before its rebirth in spring. The birth and Theophany of Jesus is celebrated in a 12-day period during the northern winter solstice. This echoes an ancient rite which heralded the return of the sun to the northern hemisphere. The rite of Holy Thursday begins with the death of Mary's son and ends three days later with his resurrection. In ancient times this celebrated renewal as it was held at the beginning of spring and the agricultural year. These rites were part of an ancient system of beliefs relating to 'questions of continuity and change' and celebrated those divinities who controlled the seasons (Håland 2014a: 44). In the Orthodox Church, the 'orthodox liturgical year' is established by Mary's biography, connecting ancient narratives and rites from this region, where once goddesses were regarded as the controllers of life, death and rebirth (Håland 2012b: 90). In the Macedonian diaspora, women sing to *Bogoroditse*, addressing her as 'the Sovereign of all Creation' suggesting that they still see Mary as the controller of important events in family life.

During these rituals, performances are often based on ancient stories told to make sense of the changing seasons, where the actions of divine beings influence the fertility of the earth and the cycle of human life. Divine beings were understood to be the controllers of seasons and the cycle of life, and gifts were given in recognition of what the goddess has already given and to encourage their continuing support. In the diaspora, seasonal rites are performed using the familiar; a structure brought from 'home' and based on events that make up the calendar year. While the meaning of these rituals remains familiar to

the congregation, their performance is creatively reshaped by the circumstances of the community and the influences of the wider society.

In Chapters Five and Six, discussion focuses on the transition periods linked to the various stages of a person's life. The rites follow the seasons of a person's life with a focus on birth, change of status, death and renewal, illustrating how elements used in seasonal rites are creatively reimagined in these performances. Part of the performance is the giving of gifts, but decorations, gestures, colours, light, and feasting remain important aspects of the life-cycle rituals. Chapter Six describes weddings in the diaspora to illustrate the importance of households in ritual activities and to show that in all rituals women's participation is complex, practical and necessary, despite being often overlooked.

Chapter Five: Performing life-crisis rituals

The previous chapter examined the cycles of the Orthodox Church's ecclesiastical year, showing the links between ancient narratives and the form and function of contemporary church rituals. At the local Church, seasonal rites mark points in the northern hemisphere productive year where festivals were held to reinforce 'bonds between members of the community and their supernatural patrons' (Håland 2012b: 89). Orthodox rites adapted the pattern of such ancient celebrations to mark the birth, death and rebirth of divine beings, where gifts and prayers were offered to acknowledge the deity's agency in life-cycle transitions and to guarantee members' safe passage through life. Although these rites have pagan beginnings, to those who worship at the local Church, the performances express religious belief, though in practice they are also expressions of Macedonian identity. In Chapter four, women's participation was discussed to show that their roles are necessary to the performance of these seasonal rites; this chapter illustrates how in practice and performance, women's roles in life-cycle rites, too, remain expressions of faith but in the diaspora are also important in the creation of identity.

According to ancient narratives and traditions, both seasonal and life-crisis rites celebrate the agency of a deity, often female, who controls fertility, birth, healing and death. The focus of this chapter is on life-cycle rites, to show how past and present combine seamlessly in rituals that express faith, culture and politics. The chapter discusses rituals that mark certain stages in a person's life; these rites of induction 'are almost always rites of status elevation' (Turner 1969: 158); for individuals, they mark the stages of birth, puberty, marriage and death. To celebrate these transitions 'with suitable observances [is to] to impress the significance of the individual and the group on living members of the community' (Warner 1959: 303).

Van Gennep identified rites of passage as having three stages: the preliminary stage, liminality or the 'in between' stage and post-liminality - the stage of re-integration into the community (1960) [1909]). Unlike seasonal rites, which are celebrated by the whole community, the focus of life-crisis rites is on an individual's transitions and so are often restricted to the family or a small group of people. Life-crisis rites discussed in this chapter

were held at the local Macedonian Orthodox Church and involved families and other members of the congregation.

The first section of this chapter describes a series of rituals – the Churching of Women, baptism and chrismation – with a focus on the most crucial of them, the child's first communion, which announces to the congregation that the child is now a member of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. The second section focuses on the archbishop's visit, to illustrate how status elevation, an aspect of all life-cycle rites, becomes a performance combining faith and ideology in the diaspora. The final section of the chapter examines the series of rites that begin with the death of a church member and are held to recognise the person's final transition from this life into the next. Rites conducted for someone who has died begin in the home (discussed further in Chapter Seven), but the public rites are complex, held at different locations: the Church, the cemetery and the church hall. These are followed by memorials held to 'feed' and remember the person who had died.

The chapter discusses rituals that I observed at the Church between 2014 and 2018. In this public space women play crucial roles in the performance of the rituals; their practices maintain the link between women and the ancient deities who controlled the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. In their performances, women show how they adapt habits, routines and associations from 'home' to new environments to maintain the past and also to express something new.

The Churching of Women, baptism and the first communion

As Van Gennep suggests, during a person's social development, rites of passage mark in very public ways those changes. The first of these discussed here is the Churching of Women, a public rite that involves a limited number of people: the mother, her new-born child and a few close family members. It is conducted in the vestibule by the parish priest as the congregation leaves the church. I witnessed these at the local Church where, as in all Orthodox churches, the Churching of Women is held after the weekly Divine Liturgy and is an intimate interaction between the mother, her new child and the priest. This ritual was established by the early Christian church and continues in some form in both

Orthodox and Western Churches. Members of the early Christian church were influenced by traditional Judaism which was concerned about the 'ritually unclean' [who are] unable to enter the temple in accordance with the Law of Moses' and the biblical passages which refer to women's uncleanliness associated with childbirth (Leviticus 12: 2-8).[76] Feminists – and anthropologists – have been involved in debates recently about the Christian Churching of Women rite, and also more broadly about the place of women in the church.

Mary Douglas' research (1966) investigates what is considered sacred, what is seen as clean or unclean in different societies at different times. She acknowledges that ideas of uncleanliness were present and purification practices were observed in ancient European religions and in the Judaic tradition, but questions whether 'uncleanliness' was a feature relevant in the practices of the early Christian church (Douglas 1985: 61). She is aware that in some early Christian churches, women were instructed to 'spend 40 days of purgation after the birth of a child' however she believes that this practice was not widespread (Douglas 1985: 61). [77] She argues that these practices, based on laws of ritual pollution, could not be maintained in the Christian context. It did not conform to Christ's teachings, in which the 'physiological condition of a person … is irrelevant to their capacity to approach the altar' and she claims that it is 'now difficult to find instances of ritual uncleanliness in Christian practice' (Douglas 1985: 60 – 61). Within the Orthodox Christian churches there is no universal statement about the Orthodox practice of the Churching of Women. In the 1990s, Orthodox women's groups called for some clarification of church interpretations and practices. They were concerned about those 'practices and prayers' that 'do not properly express the theology of the church regarding the dignity of God's creation of women and her redemption in Jesus Christ'.[78] So far, their calls remain unanswered.

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[76] Leviticus (12: 2-8) suggests that women are unclean for 40 days after the birth of a male and 80 days after the birth of a female. Luke (2: 22-24) refers to Mary bringing the child Jesus to the temple to make offerings but makes no mention of purification.

[77] Douglas refers to the Penitential of the Archbishop of Canterbury, (688 - 690) who required women's penance of three weeks fast if they entered during this time, or during menstruation (1985: 61).

[78] This is part of an official statement made by women at the *Discerning the Signs of the Times* Conference, Istanbul held in May 1997 (Cf. appendix of Fitzgerald 1998: 220).

However, Douglas believes that laws of ritual pollution were not maintained in the Christian context because it does not conform to Christ's teaching: the 'physiological condition of a person … is irrelevant to their capacity to approach the altar' (1985: 60). She also claims that it is 'now difficult to find instances of ritual uncleanness in Christian practice' (1985: 61). Within the Orthodox Christian churches, there are no universal statements about Orthodox practice.

A mother brings her child

After the Divine Liturgy on the morning of Sunday 11 December 2016, I witnessed the arrival of a small family group which included Rose's grandson John, his wife Anthia and their young baby Charlotte, to be blessed by the local parish priest. The family stood in the vestibule between the entry door and the patronal saint's icon stand waiting for the mother and her baby to be welcomed into the Macedonian Orthodox Church. At the end of the service, people made their way to the verandah or to the church hall for coffee, tea and conversation. The Churching of Women, a simple rite, is the first in a series which begins the elevation of the young child to the status of full member of the Orthodox Church. The priest made his way from the sanctuary to the vestibule where the family waited with two sponsors,[79] John's aunt and uncle. Dressed in a simple long black cassock, the priest greeted the family. Over his cassock he wore a stole that reached the bottom of his gown. The background colour of the stole was red, and it was embroidered with a line of large golden flowers that could be mistaken for suns. He turned to speak to the mother and father in English, asking them if they were members of the Orthodox church.[80]

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[79] The child's sponsor at this rite, and at baptism and chrismation, must be a baptised member of the Orthodox Christian Church and above the age of 12 (Macedonian Church Calendar 2017: 30).

[80] Previously, I had witnessed another Churching of Women service at which the father confessed that he was a member of the Roman Catholic Church. On that occasion the priest smiled and told him he understood, as his son had recently married a young woman who was Italian and Catholic. Hearing this the family relaxed. Parish priests in the Macedonian Orthodox Church are required to be married for at least two years before ordination. Perhaps this requirement gives the priest an understanding of what it is to be a father.

The mother explained that her family was Portuguese, so she had been baptised in the Catholic church but after marriage had decided to bring up her children in the Macedonian Orthodox Church. The mother, her new daughter, husband and the two sponsors stood on the left side of the vestibule near the large entry doors (only used for processions). People from the congregation walked past and turned to smile at the mother, who cradled her child swaddled in a white shawl with a blue bow on her head. After the priest had welcomed the family, he began by blessing both the mother and child. While the mother held her baby and lit two candles, the priest placed his long red and golden stole over the mother's head and her baby, said prayers and blessed them both (see Image 24 below).

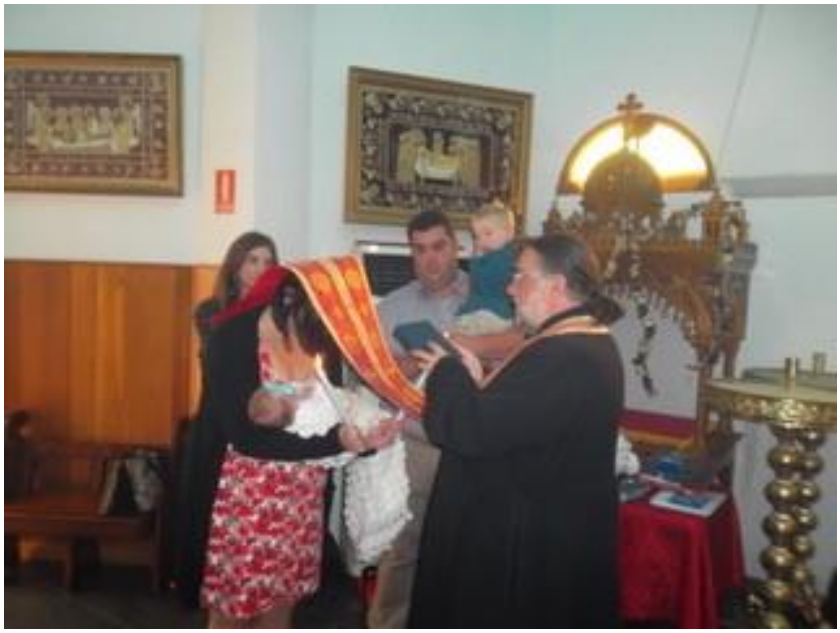

Image 24: The blessing in the vestibule, showing the long thin yellow and red stole that was placed over the mother and baby, as she held candles, and the priest offered prayers.

Once blessed, the child was handed to her father, and the priest accompanied the mother to the iconostasis. This section of the service is performed by the mother and priest. Two small icons of Mary and her son Christ placed on each side of the white stairs leading to the sanctuary were the focus. After kissing Jesus' icon on the right side of the church, Anthia moved to the large icon of Mary-as-mother set into the iconostasis. Underneath this was a small wooden icon of Mary; the mother kissed Mary's face. Liturgical theologian Alexander Schmemann says that this celebration demonstrates a special

relationship between Mary, 'sovereign of all creation'[81] and all earthly mothers (1976: 146). This entry rite comes after the mother's separation from the church because of childbirth and the weeks of settling in a new member of the family and signifies publicly her re-entry into the life of the church community. Schmemann suggests that a mother's prayers unite 'two motherhoods, fills human motherhood with the unique joy and fullness of Mary's divine Motherhood … and [with] this grace … each mother receives yet also gives as she brings her child to God' (1976: 146).

As it is performed at the local Church in Melbourne, the Churching of Women has little to do with a woman's purification; it celebrates the change in status of the mother and her child. For the child, it ushers in a series of rites through which the child enters the church to become a member of the congregation. Mother and child are blessed with prayers, and lighted candles are used not to purify but as symbols of illumination – the light of Christ who dispels darkness. But the mother's participation is more complex than that, as she is taken to the icons of Mary who in the Orthodox tradition is seen as 'the tree of life, and origin of immortality' (Divine Liturgy 2014: 99-100). The kisses the mother bestows connect her to the ancient narratives of female goddesses, controllers of fertility, and with the divine power of Mary who gives birth to God. The prayers sung, candles lit, gestures made, and colours and symbols used, all suggest that the ritual expresses a past, but in its performance the rite continues as an aspect of the present and of the roles that women play within the church.

Baptism and chrismation

A child is usually baptised within the first twelve months[82] and I was told by Slavica, a woman I spoke to at the Church, that her nearly 12-month-old daughter had to be

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[81] This phrase is taken from a hymn sung with great passion by women during the Divine Liturgy suggesting that Mary is 'superior to angels', 'brighter than the heavens',' more radiant than light' 'and port of salvation' (Divine Liturgy 2014: 99-100).

[82] Kate Cooper argues that in Macedonia, a tension arose amongst the early Christians around the baptism of adults. Thecla, the 'first apostle among women', 'self baptised' so this practice was given Paul's authority, and he also allowed women to baptise those wanting to join the early church (2013: 92). She claims that others such as Tertullian believed that baptism was 'an activity reserved for men' (2013: 92). Currently most baptisms involve young children, but non-Orthodox Christians wishing to enter the Orthodox Church

baptised in the church hall as the Church was still being renovated. The baptism ceremony in the Orthodox church is more complex than in Western Churches, and reference to ancient European rites is still apparent. The church ceremony is a performance of stages where the child, and her sponsors, are taken from the vestibule (the narthex) to the font in the nave. This symbolically illustrates the child making a journey from the vestibule into the place of worship (the nave). Baptism has been likened to other rites in the Orthodox church. In the rite of marriage, a 'journey' is taken by the wedding party led by the parish priest who meets them in the vestibule and leads them through the nave to stand in front of the sanctuary (marriage is discussed in Chapter Six).

As prayers are sung, the child is washed in holy water, gestures made with the aim to expel 'evil powers' from the child, in a similar vein to exorcisms (Stewart 1991: 14) In the early Christian church theologians made connections between baptism and circumcision, while 'not with a fleshly circumcision of Christ' but as the regeneration and 'the force of resurrection, replacing an early tradition' with one more favourable to Christianity (Hilary of Poitiers 359, 4: 24-31). This view was later supported by Saint Augustine who believed baptism to be a 'parallel of circumcision, which was received by God's people' (Augustine 400: 4: 24-31). Today Christian theologians treat some beliefs as 'purely survivals', as 'fragments dislodged from culture', while the Orthodox Christian church claims that it does not 'accept folklore and superstitions as valid, [but there remain] certain acts and rituals the church performs to avert evil' (Stewart 1991: 14).[83]

In the Macedonian Orthodox Church, baptism is performed so a child receives 'full forgiveness of sin'[84] and 'puts on Christ, becoming members of His Body, the Church' (Macedonian Church Calendar 2017: 39). Before Rose's great-granddaughter, Charlotte, was twelve months old she was baptised in the Church. Her parents and sponsors, the

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are received by the Sacrament of Holy Chrism, if they have previously been baptised in the Name of the Holy Trinity' (Divine Liturgy 2014: 39*).*

[83] Charles Stewart (1991) set out the different discussions of theologians as to 'survival' and 'continuity'. He explains that Schmidt, Politis and Lawson support the argument that Orthodox rituals are borrowed from a pre-Christian culture, making a transition from paganism to Christianity. Others such as Alexia question why certain elements have survived and other have not (Stewart 1991).

[84] 'Eastern theologians sometimes refer to Adam's sin as the "original" sin, meaning the *first* sin, but their theological teaching concerning this is quite distinct from the Western doctrine of original sin, which uniquely concerns an inherited guilt passed on to every human being' (Boyce 2014: 206).

aunt and uncle who were present at the Churching of Women, were met in the vestibule by the priest. Before the group entered the priests asked them to renounce the devil on behalf of the child. The child was now turned to face the east, the place where the sun rises, and the child's sponsors were asked to renounce Satan and his angels on her behalf. The priest made the sign of the cross over Charlotte to signify that the child now belonged to Christ, and the Nicene Creed was read by the sponsors making a promise to bring her up in the Orthodox Christian faith. Her Christian name, Charlotte, was given and candles were lit to symbolise that she would adhere to her new faith.

After the naming Charlotte was marked by the priest three times with the sign of the cross. Her clothes were then removed, to represent her nakedness at birth, and now naked again she was blessed by the priest with oil, applied to her face and body, and her life was dedicated to Christ. She was then covered in oil, fully immersed in the font's water three times, while the priest repeated three times the prayer of baptism. She was then taken from water in the font and wrapped in a new white sheet and given to her sponsors to hold. After her baptism the sacrament of chrismation was immediately administered. The anointment of 'chrism'[85] consecrates the young child in the service of God, and she was now able to receive communion within the Orthodox church. The 'dance', a circling of the font, was performed three times by the priest and the child's sponsors and this performance is a marker in many rites of passage in the Macedonian Church. The priest then announced to the family and others present that Charlotte was baptised, illuminated, anointed and washed clean and blessed by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As she lay on the cloth she was dressed in white garments, an expression of the child's purity, as now she had been washed free of first sin.

After these rituals, a meal is held either in the church hall or at the parent's home, and for Charlotte it was within the household. And as part of all rites of passage this is a time for gift giving. As well as gifts given to the child, gifts also are given by the parents of the

[85] The child is anointed with Chrism (olive oil mixed with sweet smelling perfumes) on the forehead, eyes, mouth, ears, nostrils, breast, hands and feet. For adults the oil is washed off after seven days, but for young children this does not apply, and they are washed at least twice daily, like all young babies (Gialopsos 1997: 35).

child to family members and to those at the meal. These are usually gifts of sweets. After Charlotte's baptism my gift of white coated almonds came in a pink container with a silver cross which hung from a deeper pink bow placed on the top, as well as a fine grey scarf and a blue home-made apron. The giving and receiving of gifts is part of every ceremony and usually includes gifts made by the woman or others in the congregation, which are given with flowers and fruit from home gardens. The giving of gifts and their domestic nature will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

First communion at the local Church

Now baptised as a member of the Macedonian Orthodox church, the young child is permitted to take communion at the local Church. In Western Christianity most, if not all, members of the congregation receive communion, but at the local Church, members of the congregation seem to take literally the instructions set out in the Macedonian Church Calendar (2017).[86] Lydia and Rose and others told me that they would only take communion if they had fasted at least for a week. The most common reason given for not taking communion was that they had not taken the proper steps to prepare their body and mind to receive the sacred sacrament. Women like Rose and Lydia seemed suspicious of churches whose members were required to take the sacrament every week. Rose spoke of the church as having a complex function in its giving of religious sustenance, but just as important is the social and practical support it gives, so attendance at the Church is important. There were Sundays at the Church when no one in the congregation came forward to take communion, though this was rare. Special celebrations meant a line of communicants all down the central isle into the vestibule. However, unlike in Western Christian Church services, whether one receives communion or not, or whether one is a visitor or a member of the congregation, one is offered by women the blessed slices of the high-sided bread from baskets on the verandah after the service.

[86] In the Church Calendar under the heading of 'What to do before the Orthodox Christian Communion?' rules make clear how Orthodox members must prepare themselves for communion. This is linked to 'the hope of obtaining forgiveness of sin, peace of mind and physical health, and in the next life - in the Kingdom of Heaven' (Macedonian Church Calendar 2017: 64, 65).

In the Orthodox tradition children, many only babies, take communion in their parents' arms (see Image 25 below). When this happens, those at the start of the line make way so that parent and child can go to the head of the line. Children and babies are always beautifully dressed, not only for the first communion, but for all communions they receive, which often coincide with important festivals. The child stands or is held by a parent before the priest, who holds the chalice with the blessed wine. The home-made communion bread is placed by a woman on the table in front of the iconostasis, but during the service the bread is taken into the sanctuary to be blessed by the priest. The deacon or helper slices the bread with a wooden handled knife which designates that this item is usually stored in the sanctuary.[87] Some slices are wrapped in paper napkins and given to those who have taken the wine and others are put in wicker baskets and offered to members after the final blessing.

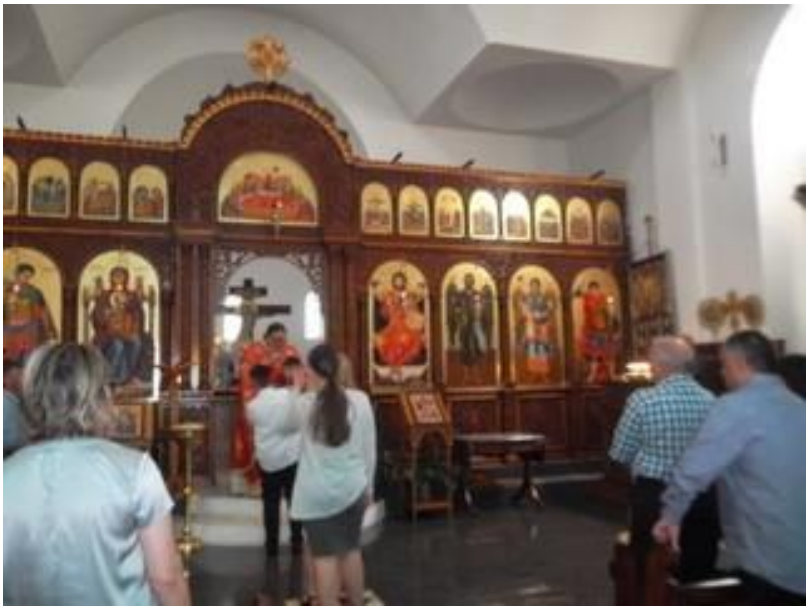

Image 25: A young child being held by his father to take communion for the first time.

Giving communion to a small child is a delicate matter. The deacon places a red satin cloth around the child's neck while he holds the child's head still. He then puts a small

[87] Items stored in the sanctuary and used in the Eucharist cannot include animal products except for wool or beeswax. Books have metal covers, and priests cannot wear leather shoes or personal jewelry or carry money. The knife with the wooden handle is stored in the sanctuary and only used for cutting loaves of bread for communion or at memorials.

silver spoon with a small amount of wine into the child's mouth. If this is the child's first communion the child may cry, but once the white communion bread is placed into their hands the crying stops. On a Sunday morning soon after his daughter Charlotte's entry into the Church in the Churching of Women, I watched as Rose's grandson took his son, Sebastian, to receive communion. He stood in the line with his son in his arms and quietened him when he cried. As his child ate the white communion bread, his father smiled at him, and on their way back to the pew he smiled at others in the congregation. On several occasions, I have seen the parish priest's wife adopt the role of the deacon, assisting her husband in delivery of the sacrament. When this happens because there are not enough helpers, she is the one who places the red satin cloth around the shoulders of the communicant, and when necessary holds the head of the young child as they receive communion.

The archbishop's visit to the Church

The visit of the archbishop to the local Macedonian Orthodox church not only acknowledges his status within the Australian Macedonian Orthodox Church but is also a celebration of the survival of the Church at 'home' and its establishment in the diaspora. In Melbourne suburbs, the Church remains a crucial focus for Macedonian people's struggle for recognition as church autocephaly is linked to national identity. For this reason, the visit of the archbishop to the local Church is a highly anticipated event. The women had spoken to me of his visit, planned the day, and on the morning had arrived early with flowers and herbs and took special care to decorate the church, to honour his status and the importance of this Divine Liturgy.[88] In this rite, the archbishop is stripped of his office and then reinstated to preside over the Divine Liturgy. This celebration is elaborate and contrasts with the simple, intimate status elevation found in the Churching of Women.

[88] During the visit of the Archbishop I was told by the Deacon that he visits each Macedonian Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand at least three times each year.

Chapter Three discussed the changes that occurred in the early religious movement when a hierarchical structure replaced the flexibility of the earlier system (Cooper 2013: 39; Breasted 1945; Blainey 2011). Hierarchical systems such as those found in Christian churches, Turner argues, are based on institutionalised differentiation where positions become 'ambiguously grasped behind the social persona' (1969: 166). He suggests that in hierarchical societies, role-reversal rituals are performed at strategic points during the seasonal year or performed at other times to bring social structure into the 'right mutual relation once again' (Turner 1969: 167). Rites performed in Macedonian Orthodox churches, too, aim to set right hierarchal relationships, but can also make political statements; the archbishop's visit in the diaspora 'righted' the relationship between clergy and congregation, and expressed something of the politics associated with the Macedonian Orthodox Church.

On the morning of the archbishop's visit, six older women arrived early bringing flowers and herbs, and began the decoration of the church.[89] During the service, as mentioned, the archbishop would be symbolically stripped of his elevated office, after which a reversal would restore him to presidency over the Divine Liturgy and the communion service. This ritual of elevation is complex and elaborate but despite its importance, it follows a familiar structure: the archbishop is welcomed outside the Church and, dressed in the black robes of a parish priest, he is taken into the vestibule through the nave, and into the sanctuary. He then returns to the nave to stand before the Beautiful Gate ritually dressed in the robes of an archbishop. He then assumes his role and responsibilities within the Church.

On Sunday 11 September 2016, I stood with a group of women who had dressed the Church with flowers and herbs, waiting on the verandah outside the vestibule for the archbishop's car to arrive. We were joined by the parish priests, deacons, helpers and other women. When the archbishop arrived, he was greeted by the clergy and deacons and then the group entered the vestibule. The archbishop's dress was a simple black cassock, the dress of the parish priest, and around his neck was the amulet of Mary and

[89] During this visit of the archbishop, the deacon told me that he visits every Macedonian Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand at least three times each year.

her child. His long grey hair had been pulled back into a bun at the base of his neck (see Image 26 below). A black 'veil' hung over his head and down his back, and he carried a silver cross and a small round carpet. From the verandah, he was taken into the vestibule where five women and one man bowed and kissed his jewelled cross and his hand.[90]

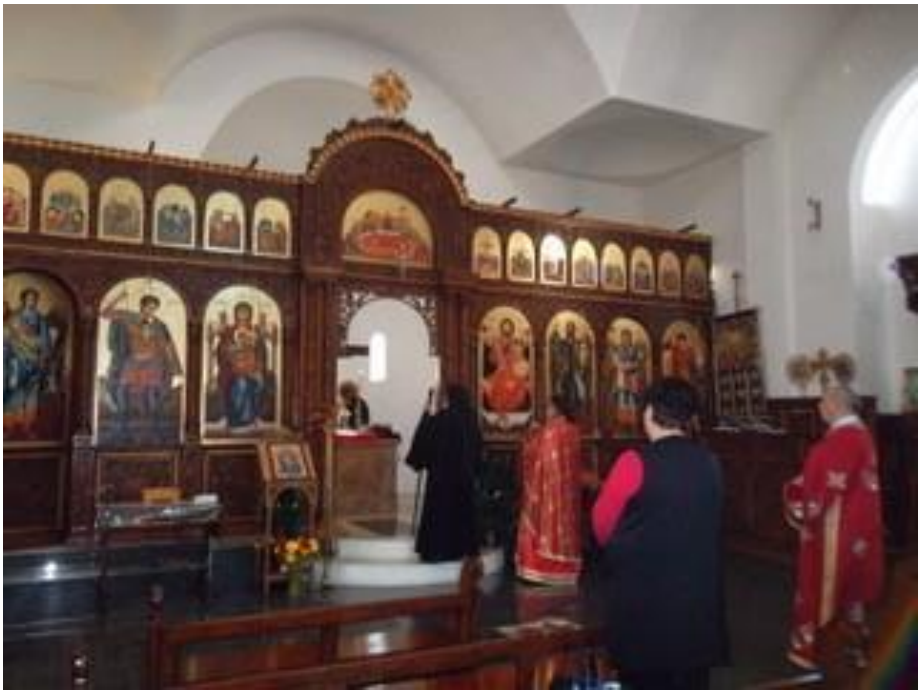

Image 26: The archbishop has entered the local Macedonian Orthodox Church dressed in a simple black gown of a parish priest.

The service began as the archbishop was led by members of the clergy from the vestibule to the nave and through the Beautiful Gate into the sanctuary. From there he returned to the nave, and stood in front of the white stairs, dressed in a thin white gown which now covered his black cassock. The clothes of the office of archbishop had been brought from the sanctuary by the deacon and now hung over a stand. On a side table, the heavily jewelled golden archbishop's crown had been placed. The archbishop stood on his small red and gold carpet, near the sun of Vergina tile. As he stood in his white cassock, the parish priest helped him to dress (see Image 27 below). For this visit, the latter was assisted by a young priest, recently ordained, and three older deacons. The newly ordained priest entered the sanctuary and began to sing the service; he was the only

[90] I was invited to join the line; the archbishop quickly realised that I was an outsider and kindly overlooked my poorly executed gestures.

member of the clergy who was dressed in a beautifully embroidered white gown rather than the usual red and gold.

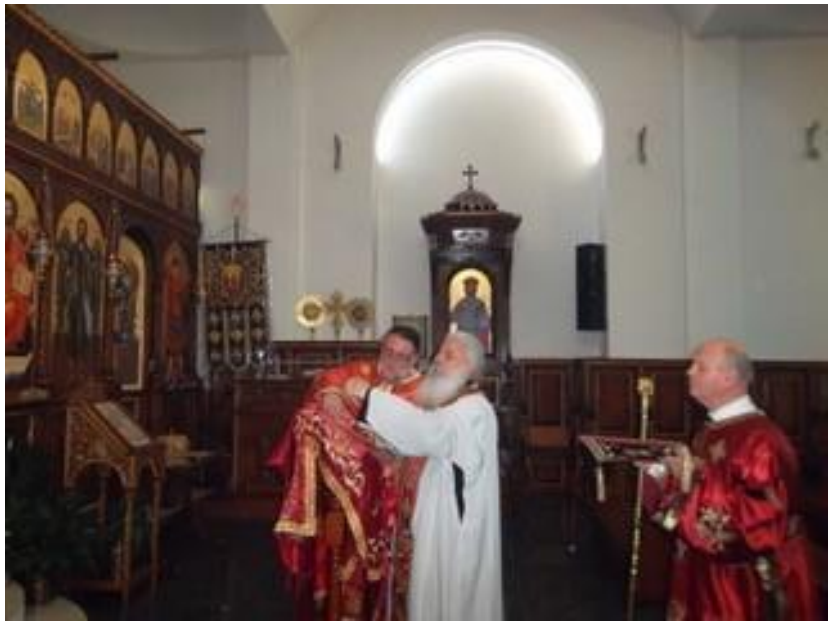

Image 27: The archbishop is brought into the nave and is assisted by the clergy and deacons to dress in the gown of office.

In the nave, the archbishop kissed each piece of clothing as the priest helped him to dress. The first item was a red and golden stole, now placed around his neck. A red and gold belt was then tied around his waist. The large cope of red and gold was placed over his head and straightened up. Another, larger, stole was draped over the cope and around his shoulders and then a fabric-covered, diamond-shaped shield was hung on his shoulder to rest below his waist. The parish priest later told me that the shield is a reminder to the archbishop of his responsibility as protector of the Macedonian congregation in Australia and New Zealand. As there are no buttons on the gown, it is tied with cords. When he is fully dressed he receives the golden crown of the office, set with small icons, on his head. He is then led to the large, wooden bishop's throne. This is on the right side of the church and for once, the thin red cord usually hung between the carved arms had been removed and at its base the small carpet had been placed. As the archbishop took his seat, he was signalling to the congregation that his status as archbishop had been restored. Behind the throne[91] was an icon of Christ, and above him was the carved cupola with a small

[91] In was not until 1996 that Macedonian Orthodox churches installed bishops' thrones in all churches.

wooden cross (see Image 28 below). The congregation turned to the archbishop on his throne and he blessed them. The congregation responded making the sign of the cross three times on their chests. After the blessing, the archbishop was led by the clergy and deacons to the base of the stairs leading to the sanctuary.

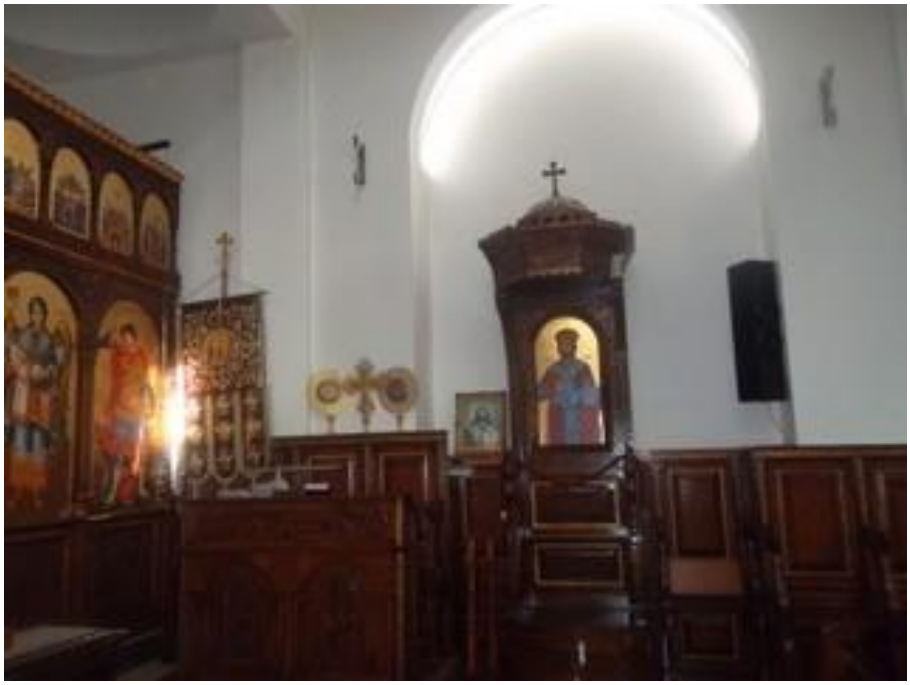

Image 28: The archbishop's throne placed in the nave on the right side of the church. When the archbishop is not present a thin red cord runs from arm to arm.

The 'humbled' archbishop was re-dressed and symbolically re-established in his elevated status within this local Macedonia Church, as spiritual leader of the Macedonian Orthodox Church (Ohrid Archbishopric) in the Diocese of Australia and New Zealand. He was then surrounded by priests and deacons and began his ritual washing and blessing. He removed the crown and began by washing his hands, splashed water over his face and hair, then turned to splash holy water over the congregation, cleansing them as well (see Image 29 below). The archbishop and the clergy returned to the sanctuary to prepare the wine and bread for communion and while doing so, sang prayers. On this day, the singing at the local Church was especially beautiful, thanks to the combination of voices, especially that of the young priest who answered the voices of women in the nave, led

on this day by the priest's wife,[92] providing a balance between the women's and the men's voices.

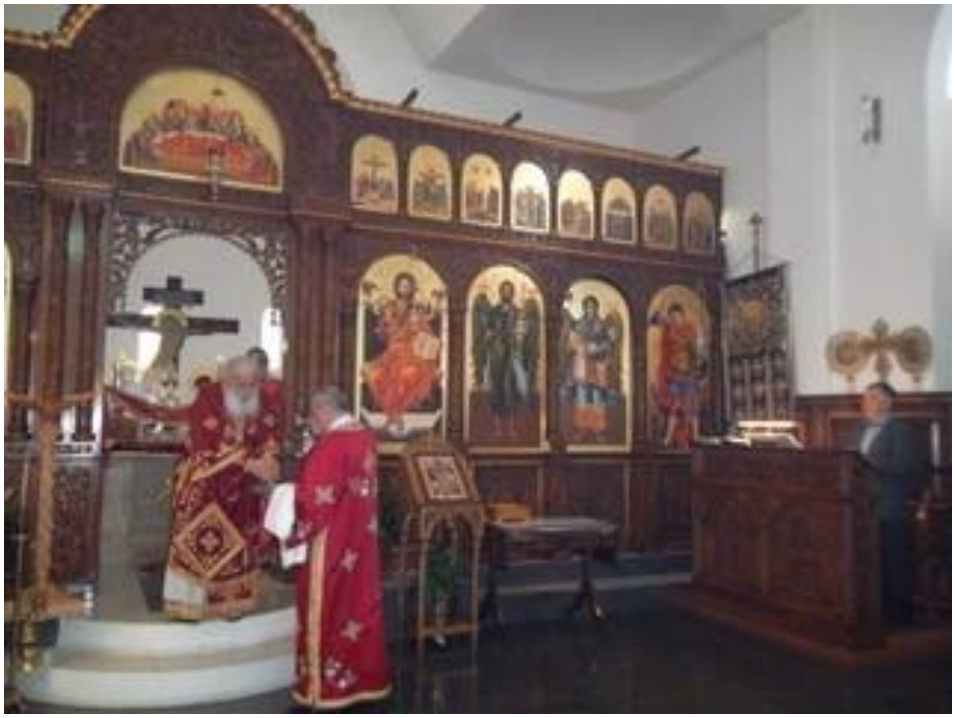

Image 29: In the Macedonian Orthodox Church a common element is water and again this is used to cleanse and make pure.

The archbishop's visit comprised a number of stages performed to restore him symbolically to the elevated role he fulfils in the Macedonian Orthodox church in Australia. From the perspective of the congregation, the morning service had restored the archbishop to his rightful position and the hierarchical order in the Church (see Image 30 below). As after all rites, this one was followed by a celebratory feast in the hall. But this performance of faith in the church was also a celebration of national identity in the diaspora.

The history of Orthodox Churches in the Balkan region has been often been presented as an aspect of nationalism as Churches used religion to defend 'their canonical territories based on the idea of the nation-state' (Payne 2007: 846). Other Church historians suggest

[92] As there is no visible list of hymns on a board, it is the responsibility of the priest's wife to be familiar with the order and to direct the service. On this occasion, the priest's wife took her work very seriously, singing over the deacon in order to direct him to the correct place in the service.

that the restoration of the abolished Ohrid Archbishopric (the Macedonian Orthodox Church) began at the end of WWII, but according to Dejan Borisov (2017: 33,52), the attempt to re-establish the Church began as early as 1767 and has now lasted for over 200 years. Historical evidence supports this as an autocephalous church (the Archbishopric of Ohrid) already existed in the Middle Ages, in Ohrid, a region in Macedonia (Murzaku 2008: 45). Dejan Borisov claims that there has always been a people's movement for the Church's independence because Macedonian 'people realised that if they [left it] in the hands of the clergy they would lose it' (Borisov 2017: 35). This sentiment still remains in the Macedonian Orthodox congregation at the local Church, where the Ohrid Archbishopric is a 'connective tissue' (Borisov 2017: 52) between communities at 'home' and those in the Australian suburbs.

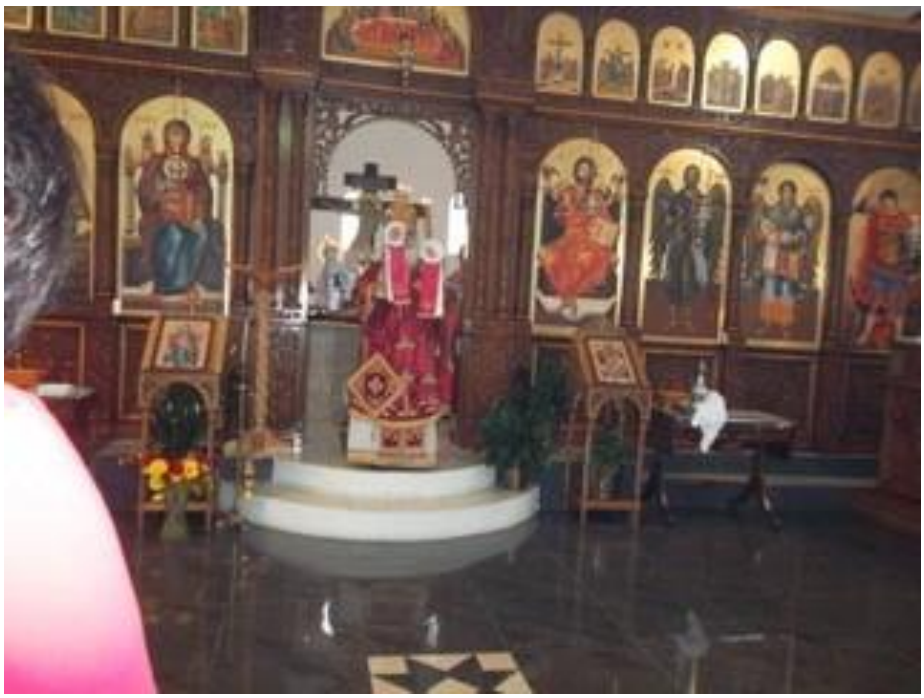

Image 30: The archbishop blesses the congregation dressed in his gown and wearing his crown

Funerals and memorials

In relation to anthropological research on southern Mediterranean communities, Neni Panourgia asks: 'why is there such a production of ethnographic literature on death?' and why does the focus remain on the role of women? (1994: 261). Women are sometimes

seen as 'regulators of death' because they are at the centre of its rituals and practices, but research shows women's roles, their practices and performances are far more complex than that (Alexiou 1974; Danforth 1982; Garland 1985; Håland 2014a; Holst-Warhalft 1992; Pangourgia 1994). Håland's research describes women as 'practical performers' in the cycle of life: when there is a death in the family, it is women who wash, anoint, dress and lament the dead before the 'official', men's rituals can begin, suggesting that women are ascribed the 'preliminary work' (2014a: 272; 2014b). Håland shows in her studies that these rites reflect gender relations within the wider society and therefore have wider cultural and national meaning. (2014a: 272). Other researchers ask 'whether women are really as powerless as they appear in ethnographies' that deal with death (Panourgia 1994: 264; Wallace 1984). Panourgia suggests that death rituals have been reduced to 'sort of National Theatre Performance':

> endlessly unquestioned repetitions of gestures, movements, expressions, and feelings - a script in which, finally, adherence to the cultural dialogue that is always already written guarantees solace from the pain caused by the death of our beloved (1994: 266).

At the local Church, public expressions of grief involve, as Panourgia suggests, 'movements, gestures, expressions and feelings' appropriate to each space: the Church, the cemetery, and at the feast held in the church hall (1994: 266). Over the following days, then weeks, months and years, memorials are held in a pattern that acknowledges the family members' death. Some of these are held in a household. This section of the chapter focuses on ancient memorial rites traditionally controlled by women and shows that in the diaspora, memorial rites continue to be performed by women but under their influence, they are being reshaped into complex expressions of the past and of present cultural and national identity. Here, I discuss the public aspects of funerals. Chapter Seven focuses on the rites performed by women in the private spaces of households after the death of a family member.

In diasporic populations, 'social practices surrounding death' have become 'perhaps the deepest and most permanent foundations for settlement and belonging' (Matthey et al

2013: 42; Hunter 2015: 3). In his studies of 'deathscapes', Alistair Hunter argues that home is not 'passively bequeathed by long associations with one place' but rather 'is built or made' in new locations (2015: 3: Jacobs 2004: 165). Defined as 'the material expression in the landscape of practices relating to death' (Teather 2001: 185), deathscapes not only include durable markings on the landscape but also 'more ephemeral manifestations and artefacts' (Hunter 2015: 2). While these spaces are associated with the dead and dying, 'meanings are attributed to such spaces by the living (Hunter 2015: 2; Maddrell & Sidaway 2010). Hunter claims deathscapes (2015: 1) are a neglected area of study and suggests cemeteries, funerary and memorial practices can reveal the connection between migrant communities and their places of origin. He argues that 'diasporic deathscapes … are a yet more intense site of contested place-making, due to the symbolic re-inscription of space which they invoke' (2015: 13). My research suggests that 'deathscapes' in the Macedonian diaspora are important places and practices for maintaining and defending a sense of cultural identity.

In 2014, I attended a funeral service at the local Church for Jim, an elderly Macedonian man, Rose's husband and a member of the Gelis family. As a young man, he had worked the land in a village in Aegean Macedonia and like many others from his region, he emigrated in the 1960s to make a new life for his family in Melbourne. He finally settled with his wife, children and his father in East Bentleigh. Others from Aegean Macedonia already there had established a support network and community, so he immediately found employment as a wire weaver at a local factory where he spent his entire working life.

On the morning of Jim's funeral, though I had arrived early, the only space I could find was in the vestibule of the Church as the nave had already filled with family, neighbours and friends. By the time the service was over the large carpark outside was also filled, with people who stood quietly through the service. Standing in the vestibule, I was constantly pushed by new arrivals who continued to fill the church until I stood in front of the candle boxes. Each person who arrived went through the entrance ritual: with bowed heads and closed eyes, they whispered prayers and lit the thin yellow candles and put them in the sand boxes. They did this for Jim, a man who had been a friend, workmate

or neighbour, and the small flickering flames soon brightened this dark corner of the church.

Jim lay in an open coffin in front of the iconostasis on the left side of the church. A lit candle had been placed near a bowl of boiled wheat mixed with honey. Members of the family stood on the left in front of the seats. Rose, Jim's wife, stood at the front of a line of grieving relatives, comforted by her sister and other women in the family. Two priests led the service and with crosses and other artefacts, gestures and sung prayers, they ensured Jim's safe passage to the afterlife. The only departure from tradition was a eulogy in English by Jim's daughter-in-law (my daughter Stella), about her father-in-law's life.

Her eulogy referred to something that her mother-in-law had revealed only recently, since Jim's death. Rose, in her grief, had told Stella and other young women in the family that she had been discouraged from marrying Jim. Her father told her there were too many sons in Jim's family so he would not have enough land, that it would be better to marry into a family with fewer sons and perhaps someone from one of the surrounding villages. Rose had replied that she would never marry if she could not marry Jim.

In her eulogy Stella compared the love between Rose and Jim with that of Romeo and Juliet because their families had not approved of it and had hoped that their children would make different choices. Happily, Jim and Rose's story had a very different ending – their marriage had been a long and happy one in Australia. At the end of the eulogy came this quote from Shakespeare:

> Give me my Romeo; and, when he
> shall die, take him and cut him out in
> little stars,
> And he will make the face of heaven
> so fine
> That all the world, will be in love
> with night

And pay no worship to the garish sun.

A young woman, a friend of my daughter, who stood next me at the service said that this was a fitting eulogy for a gentle and loving husband and father, and said she was pleased that it had been read in English. Peter, my son-in-law, told me later that this was the first time a woman and someone who was not a member of the Orthodox Church had read the eulogy in English at the Church. He was pleased because he felt that his father would have been happy about it. At a later memorial service in the local Church, for a man of a similar age to Jim, the man's daughter-in-law, Mia, told me that her daughter had delivered her grandfather's eulogy in English at another Macedonian church. Mia believed that speaking in English was important because many family friends spoke only English, and while the service must be conducted in Macedonian, having the eulogy spoken in English meant that the friends were included in the service.

When the service ended, I waited at the end of a very long line of people to kiss the cheeks of family members and to shake their hands. Many of Jim's old friends said their last goodbyes by kissing and touching him as they moved past his coffin. This was the first time I had been inside this Church, so I asked Victoria, who stood in front of me, a question about the icon behind the altar. Victoria was surprised at my question but then told me that she was not sure. She added that she knew the one on the cross was Jesus but did not know who the other two figures were. This was a reminder for me that what I was seeing was for Victoria a familiar expression of religious beliefs and practices which did not need to be questioned. It was familiar, an aspect of one's identity.

Håland's research into death rites in the Balkans emphasises women's roles as mediators in death cults (2010; 2014a). She emphasises the connection between contemporary and pre-Christian rites, suggesting that the role of women has remained central over time. Women's performance is critical to all rites, including those celebrated during the agricultural year, which Håland refers to as the 'fertility cult', and also to the 'death cult'. The fertility of the land is linked to growth, growth and health but it is also linked to death because the subterranean world is both the resting place of the deceased and where all life begins (Håland 2012a: 267).

In seasonal transitions and during life-crises, offerings are made to goddesses and gods to guarantee their blessings. In Macedonia, the 'most popular divinities were Persephone, Demeter, and Dionysus, whose mysteries offered [community members] solace in the afterlife' (Palagia 2016: 95). Olga Palagia's research on funerary art describes ancient Macedonians as preoccupied with death and the 'mysteries of the afterlife', and she discusses recent archaeological research at Palatitsia (near Vergina) which shows that these art forms, both two-dimensional and statuary, were 'recut and embedded' as ancient ideas were adopted in new places of worship as in this early Christian basilica (2016: 73, 91, 95). In diasporic communities, ancient myths and visual representations may also be influenced in the present by circumstances of the host country and reshaped and adapted accordingly.

After Jim's funeral service at the Church, a long procession of cars made its way to the Springvale cemetery. Since the Macedonian Orthodox Church prohibits cremation, there was no question of Jim not being buried. Close family members arrived first, then friends and a few from the congregation. The group surrounded the family and others approached to comfort them. Women cried, and Rose called his name and also that of her daughter who had died two weeks earlier. People then came forward to place flowers for both the father and the daughter, who were now to lie side by side. The priest arrived and performed a rite, sang prayers and poured libations of wine, and sprinkled grain on the ground.

Jim's feast at the Church hall

The church hall had been opened during the funeral service and friends had laid out a feast there for the family. About 120 people attended. Others made their apologies as they had to return to work, but members of Jim's large extended family from Melbourne and Adelaide, and friends, neighbours and work mates filled the 12 tables in the hall. The space had been visually transformed; a large screen was attached to the wall, underneath the photographs of the Macedonian 'martyrs'. The golden sun of Vergina and the two leaping lions on each side had been covered. On the screen, photographs were projected

of Jim – as a child in his village, with his wife to be at their *daroy*, (engagement celebration) wearing the red satin apron men wear on such occasions; with his young son lying in the grass outside his village before leaving for Melbourne, and many other photographs taken with his family in Melbourne. One emotionally powerful image was taken at a special family event shortly before his death. Jim and Rose had not celebrated birthdays, but instead celebrated their name days, as was the tradition in their village. Neither of them knew their exact date of birth, and Jim had said that he did not even know the year. Peter, Liliana and Valentina, their adult children, felt that it was time for their parents to celebrate an Australian birthday. A date was chosen, and then family, friends and neighbours were invited. The photograph was of this first birthday party and shows Jim and Rose, sitting side by side with crowns on their heads, with their children and their partners, and grandchildren and their partners behind them.

The 12 circular tables in the church hall had been covered with white circular clothes, each set with 10 paper plates and napkins, cutlery sets, and at the centre of each table were bottles of water and small plates of food. Large trestle tables covered with tablecloths had been put on the dance floor. As each family group arrived, women brought with them home-made Macedonian food that was unwrapped and put on the trestle tables or taken to the kitchen to be warmed. The tables quickly filled. The quantity and quality of the food showed the generosity of families in the congregation and also the practical skills of the women. A bar had been set up next to the kitchen where two men dispensed bottles of wine, glasses of spirits and bottles of soft drink. Tables were set aside for family members and another for the priests, deacons and Church committee members. Other members of the congregation acted as waiters, bringing water and wine and clearing used plates from tables.

After everyone was seated, they were silenced by the deacon, and the priest blessed the food with prayers. Then the feast for Jim began. People made speeches in both Macedonian and English in which they talked about Jim and listeners responded with laughter and tears. Later, people moved from table to table, first making their way to the immediate family's table, then to the priest's table then on to friends of Jim whom they had perhaps not seen for some time. This meal was one of many public celebrations held

to memorialise Jim's life at the Church, in the cemetery and at home. For the family, this was the beginning of a three-year mourning period in which restrictions are applied to clothing (including its colour), behaviour, activities, and foods to be eaten. (These restrictions are discussed in Chapter Seven below, because such matters are controlled in households by women).

Memorials for the dead

Memorials for a family member who has died are held on particular days, weeks, months and even years after his or her death, and performed by the priest and family members in church at the end of the Divine Liturgy. This practice is not a modern development but one adopted by early Christians from ancient traditions. In the first century, those who converted to the new religion were members of the large Jewish community in Macedonia, so aspects of the Judaic tradition influenced their early Christian rituals (Kyrtatas 1987: 586). The days of mourning still observed in Judaism after the death of a family member, are similar to Orthodox Christian memorials. Håland found that ancient rites held in the region after the death of a family member included feasts held at set times (2010: 221). She also suggests that contemporary domestic rituals performed for the dead are based on practices which 'reveal many parallels with the official cult of the ancients' (2010: 221). Feasting at cemeteries and outside the church are reminders of this ancient tradition, and during the feasts people often use the phrase 'eat this for them', suggesting the connection between the living and the dead. After Liliana's death, memorials were held at the Church, and because Jim died only two weeks later, joint memorials for them were held at the Church and later at the cemetery.

On the first anniversary of Rose's daughter's death, an important memorial was held. When the communion service finished, Rose and Lydia supervised the moving of a small table into the centre of the nave (see Image 31 below). On the table were candles, round, home-made loaves of white bread, three bowls of boiled wheat covered in white sugar, and small bottles of holy water and oil.

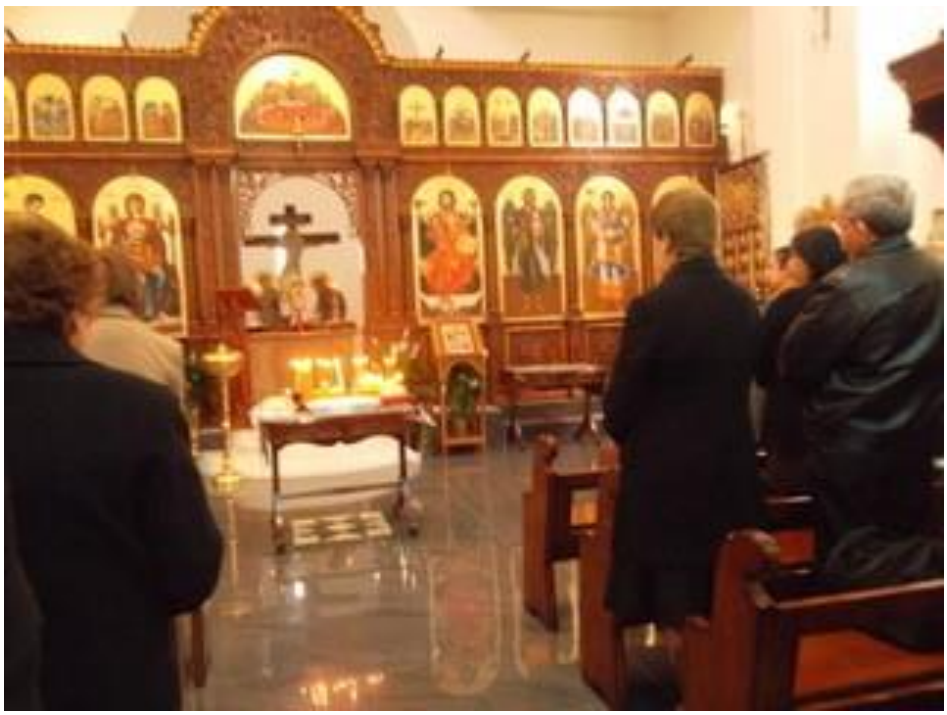

Image 31: In the nave before the sanctuary the table is laid with candles and food waiting to be blessed at a memorial for family members.

The priest came from the sanctuary and, joined by deacons, sang prayers; later, he blessed the loaves and bowls of wheat, sprinkling them with holy water and wine (see Image 32 below). Friends of the family and members of the congregation stayed to take part in the ritual. At the end the memorial in the Church, Rose stood on the left in front of the high-armed seats as women formed a line to kiss both of her cheeks and to speak to her of her daughter Liliana. They all cried with her for the loss of a well-loved member of the congregation, someone they had all known.

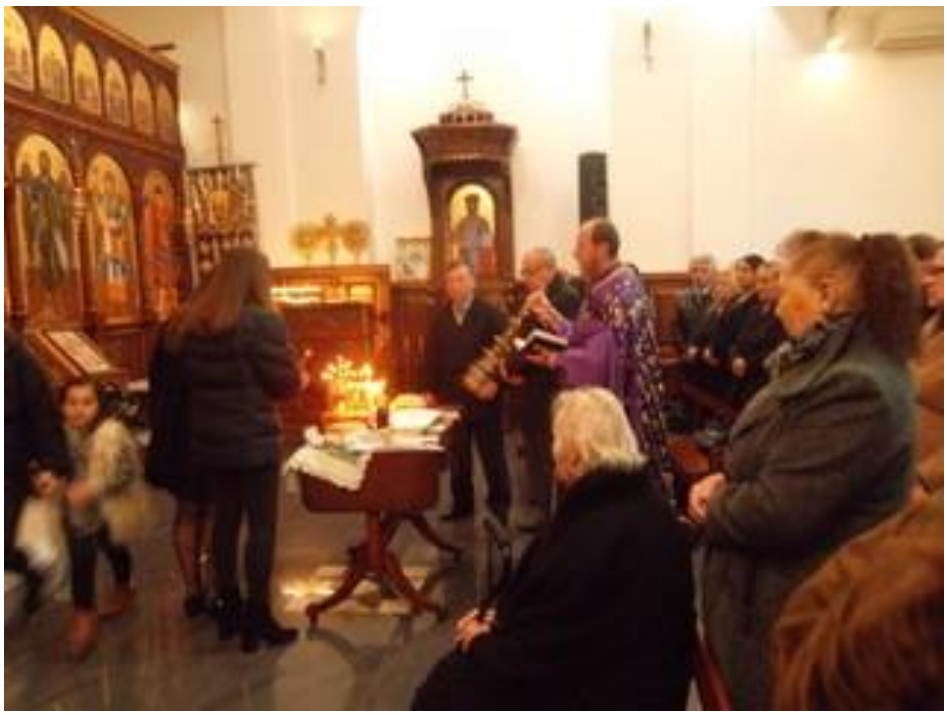

Image 32: Older members and younger members of the family watch as the parish priests blesses the tables and food

The congregation moved out from the vestibule onto the veranda. Here, several young women offered small paper cups filled with boiled, flavoured wheat and plastic spoons to the members. As the boiled wheat was handed to the members they were told 'eat it for them'. The congregation stood in the sun or under the verandah eating and talking to each other. Family members spent some time talking to friends, while other family members packed their cars to make the short journey to the Springvale cemetery.

Rose often visits Liliana's grave, sometimes with her sister, or her children. On important festivals such as Mary's Dormition, the anniversary of her daughter's death, on her birthday or on Mother's Day, Liliana's grave is visited by her mother, siblings, children and grandchildren. Rose always brings bunches of flowers to put on the grave. Turning into the road that leads into the Springvale cemetery one sees the graves of members of the Macedonian community; they are situated on both sides of the road. On one side, the hilly side, the more elaborate, large marble mausoleums are situated, but on the left side the land is flatter, and the layout differs. These graves are paired and set around trees. Liliana's grave is close to the entrance and as we arrived on this the first anniversary of her death, Rose became increasingly upset. Still inside the car, Rose began to call her

daughter's name, and once out of the car as she walked to the grave crying, calling out to her daughter that she had arrived. Other members of the family followed her to where Liliana and Jim now rest side by side.

The graves of father and daughter are at the edge of a small garden under a tree. On each grave is a plaque with a photograph, and inscriptions showing the father's approximate year of birth and the date of his death, the daughter's birth and death dates. Extended family members and their friends arrived carrying gifts of flowers and candles, which they put under the tree near the plaques, while other family members cleared the area of leaves and debris and washed the plaques; young family members arranged the flowers and gifts, and lit candles. Some older people stood talking as younger ones played with children as they all waited for the priest to arrive.

The priest arrived in his black cassock, carrying small containers of incense, wine and oil. He lit the incense, moving its holder over the graves. He sprinkled the graves with wine and oil and sang prayers for the two departed (see Image 33, below).

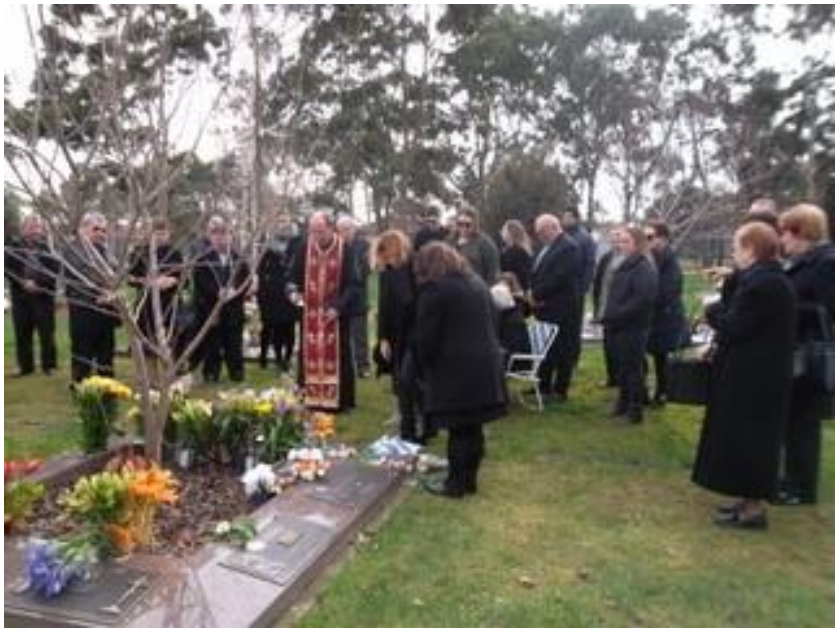

Image 33: At the cemetery the priest pours libations on the graves.

For this first memorial, Rose chose two members of the congregation to receive gifts from the family. One set of gifts was given to a woman and the other to a man; these were

people whom Rose felt had helped her during the difficult year. The gifts were packaged in large cardboard boxes[93] and as their names were called, Rose handed them the boxes. The priest sang prayers while other members of the family set up trestle tables under the pagoda further down the lawn. Other family members began to organise the meal. Once the prayers and blessings had concluded, the priest and the congregation made their way to the pagoda. The priest blessed those assembled and then the food and stayed to eat and drink and speak to family members (see Image 34 below).

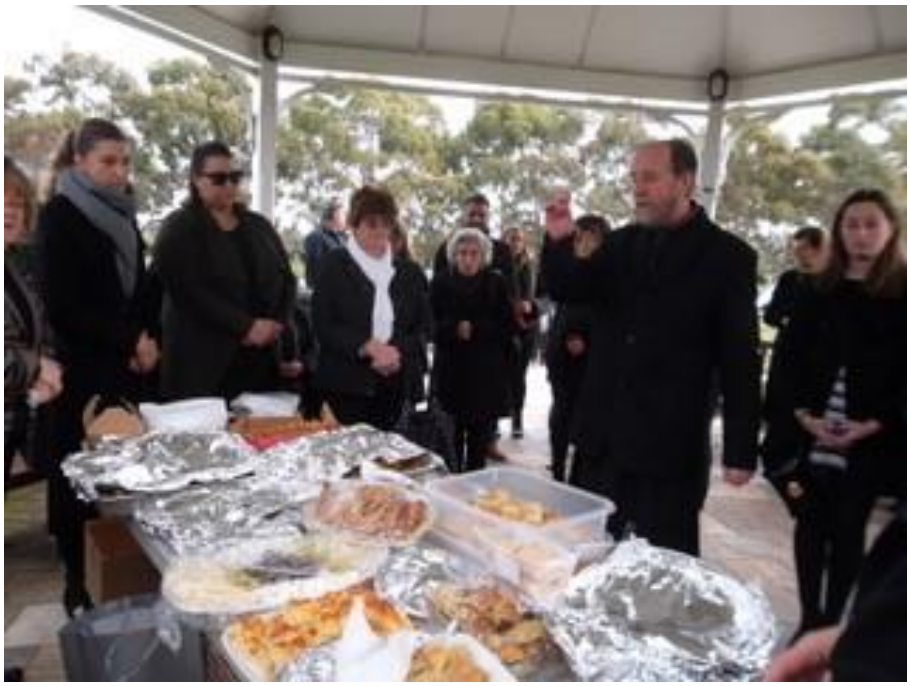

Image 34: Waiting for the priest to bless the food which will be eaten by family and friends at the memorial.

The family had provided a large quantity of food and soft drinks but as always after such a service family members and friends rushed to their cars to retrieve yet more food. Many were Macedonian dishes: fish, peppers, spinach and cheese pastries, salads, fruit, cheese and halva. I was told that no alcohol was consumed, though men did appear to be drinking alcohol, a clear, home-made liquid that was given out in small plastic cups. One

[93] While I do not know what gift was given to the male, the woman received items that Fila's daughter would have chosen for her. These were like gifts given during other religious rites. Always personal and domestic, this time it was a jumper, stockings and two cups and saucers. The cups and saucers related directly to Liliana, who collected crockery, as did the woman who received the gifts. In the other parcel, there were jars of honey, tins of fish, biscuits, chocolates, ground coffee and halva. About the giving of clothes at a memorial, a woman explained to me that one is expected to 'wear it for them'.

woman handed out dried figs and coffee chocolates, telling those who took them that they were given in memory of her husband. Two of Liliana's cousins went from person to person holding a large bag of assorted chocolates, telling those present that these had been Liliana's favourites. On many occasions after the Divine Liturgy, as I stood on the verandah at the Church, women I had not met would come and offer biscuits or sweets, saying that they were favourites of someone close who had died.

The priest left after the meal, which had begun around noon, but family and friends remained eating and drinking until it got closer to two o'clock and the packing up began. Containers were brought out of bags or retrieved from cars, plates of food, bottles of water and juice were pooled and the women made sure that everyone had something to take home. The trestles were collapsed and tablecloths folded, and the men carried these items and the food to the cars. A redistribution of food and drink always occurs at the end of religious feasts held in the church hall and at secular events held in houses. Containers always appear from out of women's bags and other women organise the distribution of food, bottles of water or soft drink. It is always good manners to accept, but the sharing of food at an event like this one is even more important as this is food to be taken home to be 'eaten for them'.

People were leaving in haste and the reason for that became clear from an overheard conversation: in 30 minutes, the AFL game between St Kilda and Melbourne would begin. People were leaving to get to the ground in time to see the first bounce. The Gelis family lived in Moorabbin, which meant that it was possible for them to walk to the Saint Kilda Football Club ground to watch their team train or play. Fathers took their children, boys and girls, and Liliana had been a passionate follower of Australian rules football and supporter of the St Kilda Football Club. From a very young age she had organised match tickets for friends and members of the family, which she continued to do even when she was ill. On this afternoon, attendance at the game seemed another type of memorial, adapted in the diaspora to fit the changed interests of Macedonian settlers and their children.

Memorial rituals for grieving family members are mainly organised by women –it remains largely their responsibility to deal with the grief that comes with the loss of a family member. Mariana, a young woman born in Australia, said that in her family, rites are held at intervals of 40 days, then six months and then a year to help the family deal with the loss. Some families finish then, but as Mariana said, each family will 'finish' at different times, and 'then maybe it is not until two or sometimes after three years they stop'. Mia told me that it is most important to continue to 'perform your grief and after the first few weeks you see people getting back to happiness'. This, she suggested, is because during the performance of memorials:

> you bring something [that] the person really loved, you cook their favourite bits and pieces, and it is such a joy, and you make such an incredible effort, and you [explain this] when you give [it] to people. You tell the person that this is what she loved, or this was their favourite … the boiled wheat given out on the verandah in paper cups is served along with their favourite food and when you hand it to people you say, 'let it go to them'.

Sophie believes that grief needs to be expressed and is best done in performance, which 'is like therapy' that 'aids the process of grief':

> after twelve months you start to celebrate their little eccentricities and you begin to laugh about it. So, you begin to see the lightness in the whole grieving process. Some people continue to celebrate memorials for months, as we are doing for Georg's father [her husband's father]. It will be six months since his death, and this is a wonderful way of remembering and letting go and it does aid the grieving process.

Conclusion

There are parallels between the pattern of seasons and the stages in a human life. Seasonal transitions are marked by festivals to acknowledge supernatural beings as controllers of fertility, health and death, and to persuade deities to look favourably on

human production. Celebrations held during the calendar year often occur during periods of transitions, the in-between stages that regarded as dangerous, when no-one can predict what will happen. The life-crisis rites, like those in the seasonal calendar, that are performed in Orthodox Churches, are complex and multi-layered, and acknowledge the change of status of family members. Transitions follow a universal pattern identified by Van Gennep and in Turner's later research, and acknowledge the three states of separation, liminality and re-entry. These are dangerous periods, so it is critical to ritualise, to mark them so as to impress on both the individual and the community the significance of the change in status.

The life-cycle rites discussed in this chapter were held at the local Church and were performed at the beginning, middle and end of life, all involving a change in status. A child becoming part of the Church community, the symbolic reversal and restoration of the archbishop's status, and rituals held for a member at the end of life, all involve performances in which members are assisted or restored to another stage. Meals always accompany Orthodox rituals, whether held at home, church, church hall or cemetery. These rites demonstrate the complexity and layered elements that shape Orthodox rituals and demonstrate how women are necessary and important performers of such public activities.

Life-cycle rites adapt over time and performances continue to change in the diaspora. Orthodox rites are founded on ancient European practices that link family and community in performance and in the sharing of food and gifts that marks each change in a person's status during her lifetime. Macedonian rites use ancient symbols: water for cleansing, candles for light, undressing and dressing, turning from the west to the east, the singing of prayers, burning of incense, gift giving and sharing of food. These remain familiar elements in performances in Macedonian Orthodox Churches. However, in the diaspora, these religious rites also make cultural and political statements associated with national identity. Orthodox symbols and prayers become political elements where a service is written and sung in Macedonian, where colours and images hold particular meanings, and they are familiar elements from which a community constructs and reaffirms

religious and national identity. The next chapter discusses marriage rites, one of the most important rites of passage for a Macedonian.

Chapter Six: Marriage rites - a life-cycle performance

Chapters Four and Five described rites which mark seasonal periods in the agricultural year and stages in individual lives. Both seasonal and life-cycle rites are celebrated in the Church, adapted from ancient forms, and constantly reshaped in Macedonian communities. This chapter investigates rites associated with marriage, to illustrate how traditional elements are changed in new circumstances, and more importantly, to show households as important ritual spaces in which women's roles are crucial. Marriage in the Macedonian Orthodox Church is a 'sacramental union' of a woman and man, and requires 'the blessing of a priest' (the Macedonian Church Calendar 2017: 38); in the Macedonian diaspora, marriage in the church is not only an act of religious faith but also an expression of cultural and national identity. Macedonian families celebrate marriage in a series of rites, linked to a sequence of events that are held in different spaces, involving the couple, their families, friends and clergy. The process signals that childhood is being left behind and at its conclusion, the couple, now adult members of the Church, assume new roles and responsibilities within the family. This important transformation is acknowledged by the two families, but the couple's union must also be recognised and celebrated by the wider community.

The first section of the chapter focuses on women's memories of Aegean Macedonian village weddings. These stories evoke memories of celebrations that highlight the significance of marriage, not only in their own lives, but also in the lives of their families. A detailed description of a marriage held in the Melbourne suburbs in the late 1980s is also given here. These rites celebrated the marriage between my daughter Stella, an Anglo-Australian, and Peter, a Macedonian. The description shows how elements of village weddings are interwoven into a new urban, diasporic form. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of contemporary wedding celebrations. In multi-cultural Australia, marriage often occurs between partners who do not share religion or heritage, and weddings incorporate these differences. In the Macedonian diaspora, marriage celebrations have become expressions of national identity and a way to celebrate Macedonian heritage. Women's roles in wedding rites are not restricted to planning, cooking and organising. As family households are central to performance, mothers and

other family women also control ritual performance. In this way their practices contribute to the creation and re-shaping of national identity.

Weddings as a key life-cycle ritual

In all cultures, marriage is understood as a crucial marker in an individual's life. The couple, after marriage, is ascribed rights, responsibilities and assumes new roles within the family and the wider community. As with other important stages in a person's life, marriage is irreversible, as 'one may be widowed or divorced, but once married, one has finally moved out of the ranks of the not-married' (Mair 1971: 104). In Chapter Five above, the 'processual form' of life-crisis rites made familiar by van Gennep (1960) was discussed. Turner describes this as a 'tripartite diachronic structure' (1969: 14-15), which can be applied to Macedonian marriage rites. These performances are divided into three phases: separation, liminality and re-entry with the public acknowledgment of the couple's new status. Lucy Mair describes the common analysis which accepts the 'three stages' as 'courtship, betrothal, marriage', but warns that while divisions are 'illuminating to look for', she finds 'these stages are not always apparent' (1971: 105). Early anthropological studies discussed rites as a consequence of biological changes, female initiation or puberty, but Mair challenges this and suggests that a deeper understanding of marriage depends on 'good ethnographic monographs' that put analysis in a social context where 'objects and acts' are not only limited to marriage rites but found in all 'rites of a society' (1972: 104).

At 'home', Macedonian families understand marriage as 'an important step in the social rhythm of life' (Schubert 2009: 108). This 'step', like birth or christening, is part of growing up, and getting married means that one day you will have children and later 'become a grandmother or grandfather' (Schubert 2009: 108). Conversations with women during my research were often about weddings, not only of family members living in Australia, but also those of relatives still living in villages a 'home'. Discussions about marriage are based on the view that it is a necessary step in a person's life, appropriate at a certain age, and so announcements of a couple's engagement are always welcome. To an

individual, his family and community, whether celebrated at 'home' or in the diaspora, ritual performances share actions and elements with other life-cycle and seasonal rites.

Marriage seasons in the Macedonian Orthodox Church

Like other rites, marriage rites in Macedonian Orthodox churches are performed according to the cycle of seasons and based on the agricultural year. As already noted, in the Balkans, the ancient social and economic calendar divided the year into periods of scarcity and plenty, which dictated when it was propitious to perform rituals. Spring and summer, a time of 'fertility of crops, animals and women', are an appropriate season for marriage (Håland 2012a: 268). In the diaspora, Christian rituals are still shaped by this calendar and in the Macedonian Orthodox Church, marriage is permitted during some periods but prohibited in others. In the early church, marriage had been prohibited in what was considered the most dangerous time of the ancient year: the 12-day period from Christmas to the Epiphany. This was a time of scarcity, and as rites include gift giving and feasting, they were not considered appropriate in this season. In agricultural societies, rituals must be planned around production and the food supply, so periods of scarcity are unsuitable for wedding celebrations (Håland 2012a: 268). In contrast, spring is associated with fertility, rebirth, germination and plenty, and thus was considered a more auspicious time for weddings. This period in the ancient world was adopted by the early Christians, who accepted the ancient belief that the season of 'agricultural fecundity, with fertility and increase' was also an appropriate time for marriage in the Church (Håland 2012a: 268).

In the Melbourne diaspora, couples who wish to marry in a Macedonian Orthodox church may not be limited by the food supply but are constrained to some extent by the liturgical calendar. The Church still has a number of 'strict fast days' when weddings are forbidden, such as anniversary of the beheading of Saint John the Baptist (29 August) and the Elevation of the Holy (14 September). But the main periods of prohibition are in the weeks between the birth and baptism of Christ (December 13 to January 19), the period of Lent, between Christ's death and his resurrection on Easter Sunday, and the weeks

leading to Mary's Dormition (August 14-27). These periods are considered transition periods.

Village weddings in Florina

Chapter One referred to Macedonia's strategic importance to the political leadership of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman empires, being crucial to the safe passage of goods, ideas and armies, and the provision of hospitality to travellers. I argued that since ancient times, the region had developed into a network of villages and as a result had remained relatively prosperous, but during the political upheavals of the 19th century it became of interest to its neighbours and the so-called Great Powers of the West. The 1913 Macedonian annexation saw Florina and neighbouring regions colonised by the new Greek nation-state. Before colonisation, villagers expressed their identity in Macedonian language and customs, in an ancient name, and in the celebration of rites in the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Increasingly by the turn of that century and through the next, Macedonians suffered persecution, restrictions and discrimination for continuing to speak their own language, identifying as Macedonian, and claiming a separate national and religious identity.

Continuing attempts by the Greek government to colonise the region of Aegean Macedonia provoked expressions of collective and national identity from its inhabitants. Dissent continued long after annexation, exemplified by the flying of family flags during weddings. The Greek authorities expected that the Greek flag would replace family banners, and some villagers did replace them with the new national flag. However, as late as the 1990s, Anastasia Karakasidou witnessed public expressions of 'ethnic identity' at weddings in Florina (Aegean Macedonia) where local residents claimed that 'their forefathers had refused to raise the Greek flag in such a context' and they did too (1996: 301). Karakasidou found no other Greek regions expressing this 'sentiment of dissent' which, she suggests, reflects 'the degree of success of Greek nation building efforts in these regions' (1996: 301).

The courtship stage, which Mair calls the first stage of marriage rites, was a topic of discussion in my interviews with women in the local Church. Earlier discussions with Rose and Lydia had led me to believe that it was common for young people of their generation to choose partners from within the village. However, I quickly learned that other women had made different choices, happily marrying men from surrounding villages and then moving away from their own village, family and friends. One of these women, Elizabeth, told me that she was not from Rose and Lydia's village but had moved there when she married George. Other older women like Elizabeth told me of the friends they had left but also of the friends they made in their new family and village, and often these 'new' friendships were maintained when families moved and settled in Melbourne.

Lydia and Rose had both wanted to marry men who lived in their own village and refused offers from men from other villages. Their stories had been repeated many times before I became aware that marrying someone from the same village was unusual for that time. Both women told me that their decision had been based on their mother's unhappiness at having to leave her village. But I also wondered if it might have been due to their feelings for two particular young men who lived in their village.

Rose's story always began with her telling me that she 'fell in love with Jim'. Jim lived with his father, mother, and five brothers. Her father's initial objection was due to Jim having 'too many brothers' and a worry about his daughter's economic future. The family myth of Rose and Jim's romance had been repeated many times, but it was only after her husband's death that she confided to her young female relatives that she had been allowed to marry Jim only after she told her parents she 'would never marry if she couldn't marry him'. It was this that finally led to her father relenting.

Lydia tells a similar story but tells it with rather more passion. She said, 'I defied my father':

> But my story is a little bit different to my sister's story. [Jovan and I] did not go [out] much like a boyfriend and girlfriend as it was a secret. But Jovan liked me from far away and I also liked him in this way. I couldn't say to my mother

> that I like him, no, never could I say that, no-one could say that. But after a while my mother and father began saying that the girls are getting older. I don't know who began this, I think it was my sister-in-law as she suggested that I could become engaged to a boy from another village. The boy was my cousin's friend and he had never liked me, so I don't know how my sister-in-law could suggest that he would marry me and have me kicked out of the house.

Lydia laughingly suggested, when asked what had prompted her sister-in-law's claim, that she needed to 'free the bedroom' which at the time hinted at some tension between the two. However, her father finally relented, as he had with her older sister, Rose, so Lydia and her 'secret boyfriend' married in an elaborate village wedding. She told me about her wedding celebration, which took weeks to plan, and lasted three days. Lydia, now in her late 60s, recalled the occasion:

> My wedding started on the Thursday night and we began to make the bread. The next day was Friday and we prepared the yeast to make more bread. This was a small loaf, like a biscuit, and we need to know how many people we are going to invite as we need to make one for each person. We sent no cards, so the bread was the villagers' invitation … the week before, we began to invite people from other villages. Women were given apples and when they saw someone from Florina [both a town and the name of the region], we say 'give this to your cousin and say "you are welcome to come to the wedding"'. No messages, no telephone calls, just one apple. This is how we invite people from other villages.

Before the wedding, Lydia's mother's sisters and brothers, from the surrounding villages, brought their young daughters to the house to perform important roles in the celebrations. By the Saturday evening, all the girls had arrived, dressed in their special clothes. Along with Lydia, they sang as they walked around the village. Lydia,

along with Jovan [her husband-to-be] and all the young girls were singing. We then arrive at Jovan's place. It is here the family has prepared tables and the family comes outside to welcome the girls. And then the girls go inside, and the family comes outside and say, 'How much?' [a reference to bride price]. And after that the boys go around the village playing music. And as the boys go to each of the houses they say, 'Come, welcome to the wedding'. And then we have a big party on the Saturday night. We have our relatives and lots of people and we dance and drink all night. We don't have 'bride's maids', but we have special girls.

Early the next morning, Lydia says:

> the boys come to my house along with all our relations. And we are all dressed up, and I am dressed up [in a white dress with a white veil]. I am given a sifter, you know, for flour, and then I am given a ring.

While the bride waited inside the house for her bridegroom to arrive, a simple but crucial rite took place: her mother gave her a flour sifter and a ring and told her to go the window and look for the bridegroom through the ring. She showed me how she looked for him as she held the sifter. When I asked about the significance of the ring and the sifter, she replied simply that 'It is our tradition'. This is often the answer that women give to questions about the reasons for doing things. The phrase 'our tradition', makes a claim to culture and identity and is a reminder to the listener that Macedonians do things differently. Lydia's statement also contains that 'sentiment of dissent' expressed by villagers who continue to fly family banners instead of the national flag at weddings. These are part of a past, in which ring and sifter and banners are associated with the politics of a region. In the diaspora, Lydia continues her 'tradition', one brought from an annexed village, based on early memories of weddings. These familiar items are associated with grain, fertility and the cycle of life and are still used during weddings and other Macedonian rites.

Gift-giving as an expression of cultural identity

An important feature of celebrations held in households or at the church is the practice of giving and receiving gifts of food and flowers. When speaking of their weddings held at 'home', Lydia and Rose referred to the gifts which were given to family members and others in the village. Carole Christ writes of ancient frescoes which illustrate rituals of giving and suggests that 'remnants of such practices remain in the Orthodox Church' and in social life these 'traditions of hospitality' are still practiced in Mediterranean villages (2011: 139). Gift giving was practiced during Stella and Peter's *daroy* (betrothal) and during the wedding. At each stage gifts of food and flowers were given between the families and between guests. In earlier chapters, I referred to gift giving among women as a common practice, witnessed at both informal meetings and religious events. Mauss argued that the gift implied an obligation, which shaped and preserved a social framework of rights and power (1950: 46, 57). Christ rejects this view, arguing that gift-giving has been misunderstood: the giver is not concerned with the preservation of rights or power, but rather is engaged a 'communal' exchange. Gift-giving by women around the Mediterranean does not imply the expectation of receiving something in return; the gifts are given as an expression of gratitude for what the giver has already received (Christ 2011: 139). Her analysis shows the ritual of giving and receiving, the spiral form of dancing and the measurement of time are all based on the 'circle of birth-death-and-renewal' found in agriculture and human seasons (Christ 2011: 138).

Lydia's flour sifter was a feature of the cyclical pattern of giving and receiving, but the object itself was a necessary reminder of 'the mystery of transformation' (Christ 2011: 137). Mair suggests that the study of objects used in marriage rites helps us to understand culture, as objects are used in rites in all societies (1972: 104). In agricultural cultures, grain symbolises fertility, so the yearly seasons deemed appropriate for weddings have been associated with times of fertility and production. At Macedonian weddings, ground grain, in the form of flour, is used to make bread and rolls to be given to guests, and the sifter refers both to gift-giving and to the transformation of the flour and the bride. The sifter symbolically highlights the transition that a young woman makes as she moves to adulthood during this life-cycle rite. Christ shows that props used in performance symbolically connect transitions in agricultural seasons to the transition of women during marriage rites (2011: 137). She argues that grain is transformed: as seed it germinates, it

dies when harvested, then is ground into flour; when this is kneaded with yeast and water and left to rise, it comes to life again (Christ 2011: 137). The power of grain and the swelling of dough, she says, is analogous to the 'rising of a pregnant woman's belly' and the analogy continues to be expressed in modern expressions that compare the 'rising of a pregnant woman's belly' to, for example, having 'a bun in the oven' (Christ 2011: 137).

Before Lydia went with her bridegroom to the church, an exchange was made between mother and daughter. Lydia was given the flour sifter, a gift which symbolised her transformation from girl to woman. This domestic gift not only drew attention to her changing status and the new roles she would take up in her husband's household but also made clear her new responsibilities in practical and ritual matters and made reference to her fertility. Marriage and fertility are linked in this final gift and based on ancient regional beliefs about the female deities who controlled fertility and procreation. Grain and its many products are still used in many Orthodox rituals, and a mother's gift is offered to guarantee that her daughter will be produce children during this next stage in her life. Couples like Lydia and Jovan, who marry in the Macedonian Orthodox Church, are in these ways still bound to a seasonal calendar in which elements, actions and symbols remain associated with fertility and production.

After receiving the gifts, Lydia she stood at the window and watched for her bridegroom to come to walk her to the church. She recalls:

> Jovan then comes inside the house and my mother then gets him special sweets. After this we all walk to the church and after the service we go from the church to Jovan's place. We [my father and I] have prepared for my mother-in-law a special petticoat, and for the little boys and girls, we have prepared little bags.

The newly married couple then walked together from the church through the village to her husband's family's home. Lydia gave the small bags she had made to the young children, and the petticoat to her mother-in-law. This first act of a married woman is that of giving, which connects her to the last gift she received in her own childhood home. The

gifts that women give are practical – household things, or items of clothing, they are often homemade and linked to what women produce in the home. Macedonian women bring gifts when they arrive and are offered gifts when they leave houses. This is a cyclical pattern of giving and receiving gifts is repeated in communities around the Mediterranean.

Weddings of the children of the post-World War II settlers.

According to Schubert, marriage at 'home' was considered a 'status upgrade', because for men it supersedes 'all standard criteria such as economic self- sufficiency' (2009: 108). She argues that the term 'man' is 'synonymous with "married man"' and if not married, a man continues to be referred to as a "youth" well past the age of adulthood', and this 'automatically situates [him] as being out of place and time' (Schubert 2009: 114, 115). Schubert's research found this a problem acutely felt by mothers of bachelor sons who were still 'waiting for marriage' (2009; 109). Her research was carried out in the 1990s and she found that mothers still felt that they 'stand out' and 'confess frustrations that would be socially dangerous to voice for fear of arousing gossip' (Schubert 2009: 110-111). During my research, nearly 30 years after Peter's marriage to my daughter, I asked if he was familiar with Schubert's term 'waiting', and he laughed. He did not marry until he was in his 30s and was aware of pressure put on other men. But he told me he had felt no pressure from his parents, and his father had told him not to worry about marriage until he met the right girl.

However, other unmarried sons do worry their mothers and sometimes Lydia speaks of the frustration she feels because her son appears not to be interested in marriage. She tells me he is 'too interested in golf and travel to settle down'. Her daughter Valentina told me that people still address as 'girl' because she has not married. But for sons, it is rather more difficult than for their sisters, as a daughter is not responsible for the care of her parents in their old age. After her husband's death, Rose went to live in her son's house with his wife and daughter, not with her own daughter. While Rose's son accepted his responsibility for the care of his mother, it was a different matter for Lydia. When asked if her unmarried son (in his thirties) was expected to look after her in her old age,

Lydia laughed and answered: 'Not now! I don't think so – not this generation!' She accepted that village responsibilities of sons towards their mothers had changed in a new culture, where ageing mothers are not seen as a son's responsibility.

Celebrating daroy – an engagement in the suburbs

In April 1988, two young people celebrated their engagement in the prospective bride's home in South Yarra and later in the prospective bridegroom's house in Moorabbin. This was the first meeting of the two families, and the first in a series of rites celebrated by them together. The bride's mother's family had arrived in Australia in 1853 and the bridegroom's family arrived from Macedonia in the 1960s. The betrothal rite, *daroy*, a day and evening event, began the process of 'detachment' that separates the bride-to-be from her family's household.

Daroy was the beginning of a year of wedding preparations for Rose's son, Peter and my daughter Stella. For both families, it was a day to celebrate, but also to meet each other and to navigate the beginnings of an important union. The couple had decided to follow the Macedonian tradition, so my family was on a steep learning curve. The first part of the celebration was held at the South Yarra household and involved both the immediate and extended families meeting. It included an exchange of gifts between the couple, the families, and friends of the couple. The evening event held in the Moorabbin house was a demonstration of the hospitality and generosity of the Macedonian family and the organisational and culinary skills of the women.

The morning – at the bridegroom's house

On the morning of *daroy*, the bridegroom's household was up early to prepare for the evening celebration. These activities began a 'rite of initiation', which includes a priest's blessing and a public reception, and ends with the bride's entry into the household as a wife (Håland 2012b). At 'home' in the village, *daroy* would have been celebrated closer to the time of the wedding, but in the diaspora, there were other considerations. The couple needed time to arrange six months leave from their employers because Peter was

to take his new wife to 'his' village at 'home'. Invitations also had to be sent early to family members who still lived in Aegean Macedonian villages, and to other relatives who had settled in Adelaide.

Female relatives of the bridegroom worked in the kitchen preparing the evening feast. An area in the lounge room was set with tables and chairs for the many guests and Rose, the bridegroom's mother, was in control. To a background of Macedonian music, she greeted each family member and friend, seated them and made sure they were given food and drink. She then encouraged everyone to join in the singing and dancing. Each arriving guest offered flowers for the household, and carefully wrapped presents for the couple. By the middle of the day, and after hours of singing, eating and drinking, the large extended family group moved to their cars to make their way to the bride's house.

The afternoon – At the bride-to-be's house

In South Yarra in the early afternoon members of Peter's family formed a line that stretched down the footpath in front of the bride's house (see Image 35 below). Adults and children waited to enter, holding parcels and bunches of flowers for the bride's family. As many as 40 members of the groom's family met with 10 members of Stella's family. At the front door, as each guest arrived, the bridegroom introduced his family members to me and to Stella's sister, Elizabeth. They moved into the dining room where they were offered food and wine, then made their way down the stairs into the garden. In a very crowded space, they talked and waited for the next stage to begin.

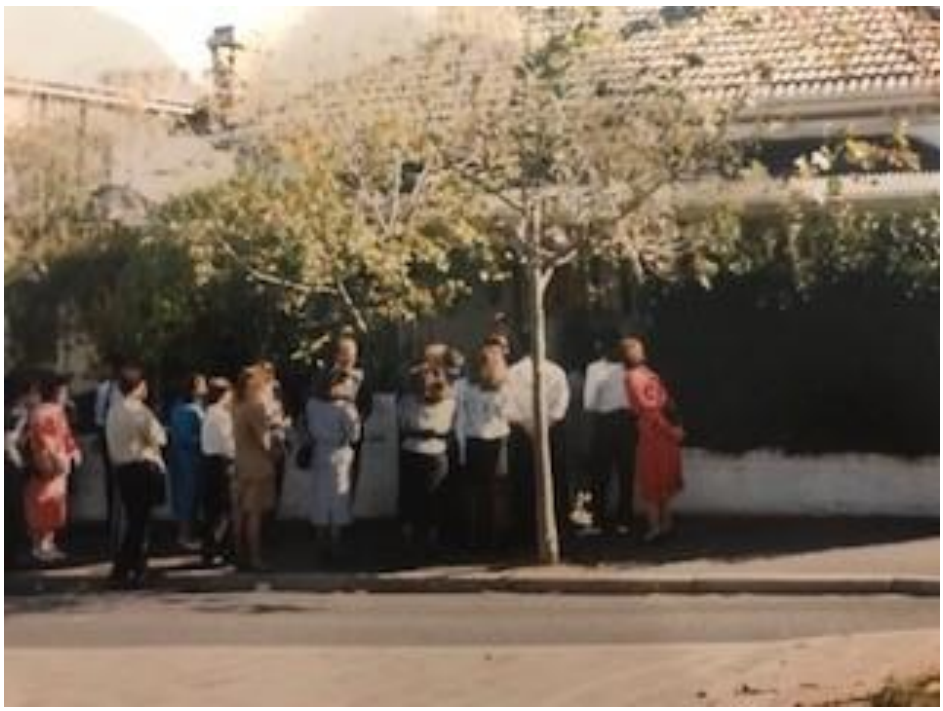

Image 35: The family lined up outside Stella's house before the couple are given new clothes

The rite of *daroy* begins a symbolic transformation of the couple. The performance signifies the passage from childhood to the adult world that the couple are about to undertake (Turner 1969: 16). On this first day, they are re-dressed in new clothes and stand side by side to show they are moving into the liminal stage. In their new clothing, they are taken to the man's house by his parents.

One important stage of *daroy* was held in the garden, when my younger daughter and I presented Peter with a new suit, shirt and shoes. His mother, Rose, then offered gifts of shoes, a dress and underwear to Stella, my older daughter. As each piece of clothing was unwrapped it was shown to the guests, who clapped and made supportive comments. The couple retired to Stella's bedroom to put on their new clothes. While guests waited for the couple to return, a few of them linked arms and danced in the cramped space, while others sang or drank. The newly attired couple returned to loud cheers from the guests. They were transformed by their new clothes: Peter in a new suit, shirt and shoes, Stella in a darker dress, her hair restyled, and decorated with a small bunch of red flowers. The bridegroom had received a watch from the bride's family and the bridegroom's mother placed a heavy gold chain around the bride's neck. I thanked the guests for

coming, then the best man (*koumbarie*) and some others made speeches wishing the couple good luck. A large engagement cake was brought out, which the couple cut, holding the knife together. The cake was taken back to the kitchen and cut into small pieces then served on paper napkins to all the guests.

When the ritual of gift-giving-and-receiving concluded, the guests and friends began to organise for the long journey from South Yarra to Peter's family household. In the village at 'home', this may have been a matter of walking from one house to another, but in Melbourne the passage was made in a caravan of cars. Mair argues that this change of residence is undergone to sever kin links between the bride and her family (1971: 209). She writes of the reluctance, often openly expressed by the bride (and her family), at having to leave her own house to go to her husband's (1971: 209). Mair notes that the bride's separation remains symbolically celebrated in Western Christian churches as well, when the 'bride enters the church on her father's arm, veiled … and leaves it on her husband's, with the veil thrown back' (1971: 209). Macedonian families living in the diaspora express little grief at weddings, apart from parents shedding a few tears. Marriage is seen as a joyful event and today most young couples move out to establish their own household when they marry, sometimes before.

Evening – The bridegroom's household

The morning of *daroy,* women from the bridegroom's family had worked in the kitchen to prepare to welcome Stella and her family and friends with feasting, dancing, singing and celebrating (see Image 36 below). During this rite, the house became a liminal space, where 'behaviour and symbolism are momentarily enfranchised from the norms and values that govern public lives' (Turner 1969: 155). The afternoon celebrations began with a formal meeting of the families, gift giving, re-dressing, speeches, and more dancing and singing, and ended when the bridegroom's family drove the bride to their house, where the celebrations continued. Symbolically, the journey represented a 'separation from an old situation or mode of life' and a move to a space where performance challenges 'the norms and values which govern the social structural positions' (Turner 1969: 155).

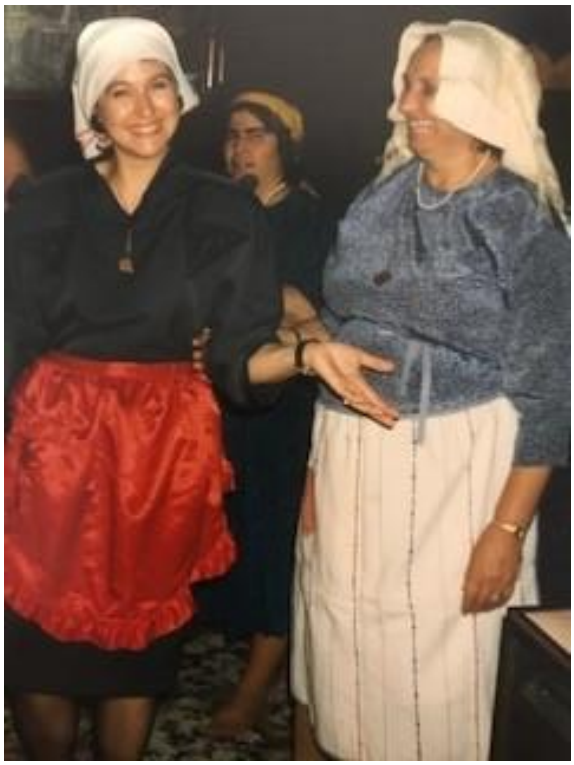

Image 36: Stella is welcomed into the household by Peter's mother

At the bridegroom's house, Peter and close male family members greeted guests and poured drinks, wearing red satin aprons. This apparel, usually worn by women, inverts social norms and community values and signals that the family is about to enter a 'dangerous' time. Aprons are popular gifts among women, worn in the everyday for practical reasons, but worn by men on this occasion for reasons of ritual celebration.[94] In this ritual context, the apron becomes more than a symbol of domesticity; it draws attention to the changing status of a male member of the family, where special care must be taken. This period is one of shifting roles: the roles, responsibilities and status of Jim, Peter's father, were being challenged as his son assumed new responsibilities within the family.

It was not only the behaviour of the men that broke with the usual norms, values and family standards that day; the women also openly challenged the rules by adopting behaviour usually associated with men. Late in the evening, a small line of women

[94] In chapter four a discussion of Jim's funeral referred to a photograph of him in his satin apron, which had brought smiles from women in the church hall.

interrupted the festivities and took over the dance floor. At each end of the line were women dressed in men's jackets. As the dancers circled the bride, a felt bag containing eggs was hung around her neck. A large pumpkin was placed before her and she danced on top of it as the women danced around her in a circle. Men did not join the dance but stopped to watch the women. These dancing women mimicked the aproned men, challenging an established order and usual gender behaviour. Later in the evening, the bridegroom's mother, Rose, encouraged women to sit on the floor and to sing and drink beer from bottles, like men. She also danced with a large zucchini on a string, swinging between her breasts. She swayed to the music eating the zucchini, and other family women did likewise. Different variations on this behaviour can be found in many communities, both traditional and contemporary – these familiar practices remain elements in rituals associated with a change in status (Bateson 1932; 1936). The references to pumpkins and eggs suggests that they may be a fertility ritual, performed at certain times in the agricultural year.

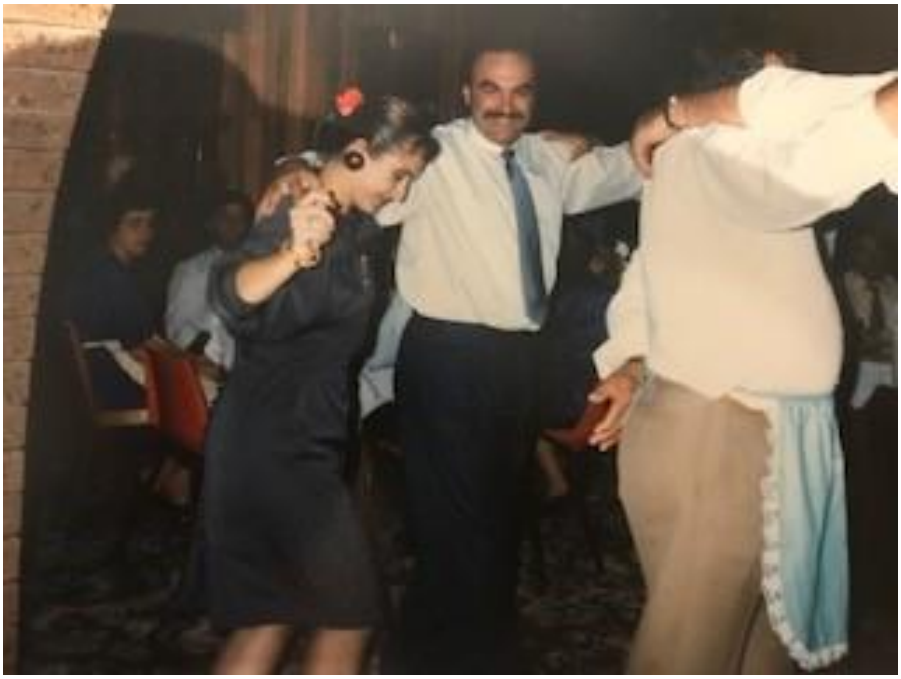

Image 37: Dancing at daroy *for Stella and Peter*

During the evening, musicians played popular Macedonian songs as guests joined the line of women to dance the familiar spiral dance (see Image 37 above). Rose brought a very large round loaf of bread into the centre of dancing line, held it aloft and placed it on her

son's head. The loaf was passed to each man who led the dance and later to the one who danced in the centre of the circle. Dancers twirled hats and the bread continued to be held by the dancers. The line became longer and longer as more people joined, and the spiral began to get tighter until it was difficult to move. People came and went, but as soon as someone left, another joined the line. With each new one song a different dance began. Dancers took turns at the ends of the line, some holding aprons or towels, others twirling small handkerchiefs.

At the centre of the spiral, the bridegroom's mother danced with her son. In another dance, mother and father of the bridegroom danced together; later the bridegroom, came into the centre and lifted his wife-to-be off the ground as dancers circled them. In other dances, hats and clothing were handed to dancers. People periodically left to sit at tables to eat and drink and talk with others, but always there was a line of dancers on the floor.

Lines of dancers at Macedonian celebrations include both women and men, linked together by their outstretched arms. The women told me that other regional communities separate the dancing lines by gender. Dances celebrate weddings, Christmas and Easter events in houses and are performed on Independence Day in the Church hall. At each end, a dancer leads the line and twirls a piece of cloth; the dancers move from side to side in a pattern of steps that changes with the music. This form of dancing is found in south-eastern Europe and the Middle East, with variations in each region that have developed over time. During *daroy* the dance starts with a small line, but the dancers call out for others to join them. The line lengthens as more people join and in the confined space the lead dancer is forced to move the dancers inside the outer circle. During the dance people join the end of the line or break in and dancers move to accommodate them. The lead dancer moves the dancers inwards and forms a line of smaller and tighter circles. When viewed from above the of dancers make a spiral and because of their steps they sway backwards and forwards. The dance, according to Christ, is yet another representation of the pattern of 'birth-death and renewal', underlining the cycle of seasons and life and shaping the act of gift giving and receiving (2011: 138). She

argues that the dance is shaped by an ancient pattern, a spiral, which has been found painted on pottery and other artefacts across the south-eastern Mediterranean.

Daroy went on until the early morning, by which time those who were left were seated, while the musicians and most of the guests had left. Some of the older guests were sitting on the carpeted floor singing songs, joined by those who remained sitting at dining tables. The kitchen was still busy. Women had taken turns during the evening to clear tables, wash dishes, heat, cook and plate the food then deliver it to the tables; now they were putting away the things that would be used at the next family celebration. The singing, feasting and drinking continued until much later, when Lydia and Rose stood in the morning sunlight waving goodbye to their last guests.

The Adelaide connection

A few weeks after *daroy*, a second betrothal event was held in Adelaide. This celebration was held in order to include other members of the couple's families. Stella had family and friends in Adelaide, and some members of Peter's family had settled in Adelaide instead of Melbourne. Stella's maternal grandmother, Shirley, provided both venue and supervised the catering for an afternoon tea for over 40 guests. Members of Peter's Macedonian family owned market gardens outside Adelaide, and they attended along with children and grandchildren. Stella's childhood friends, her aunts, cousins, grandfather, great-aunt and great-grandmother were present. In comparison with the feasting and dancing in the Melbourne Macedonian house, this was a quiet affair. Small white-bread chicken and walnut sandwiches, salmon and asparagus mornay, made by the women in the family, were offered, along with cakes, tea and coffee. At the end of the afternoon, bottles of champagne were opened to toast the couple.

The wedding: Three days of marriage rites

Thursday evening - making bread

The wedding took place in late March 1989. Thursday evening began the end of the liminal period, in Rose's kitchen, with the ritual of bread making. As the women arrived, Rose kissed and welcomed them and took them into the kitchen. A pile of new aprons and scarves had been put on a bench and as they arrived, women selected an apron; if they were married, they also put on a scarf. In the kitchen, 20 women stood, including widows in their black dresses and scarves, young mothers, unmarried girls and a few very young boys and girls.

One young girl had been chosen to be instructed on how to make wedding bread; she too was dressed in an apron and scarf. She started sifting the flour into a large metal bowl and then yeast was added. Before water was added, a sprig of basil was pulled through the flour to coat it. The floury basil was then taken from the kitchen to the wooden staircase, passed through the bannisters and then handed to the bridegroom as the women stood on the stairs watching. The stairway is considered a household's centre and as such is important for ritual performances After the bridegroom had received the basil, the women returned to the kitchen. One young woman held the bowl as another gradually poured water into the sifted flour. When I asked Valentina about the significance of the act of passing the floury basil, she told me that she was not sure. But as sifters, flour and bread are recurring items in other rites, it suggests an association with seasonal celebrations and fertility. As seen earlier, basil is grown at home and taken to the Church for decoration as it is considered a sacred herb. Women in the family pass the sprig through the bannister and then hand it to the bridegroom. This is a blessing which guarantees good health and fertility to the bridegroom's household but also a blessing from household women to the bride, who is to marry into the family.

The young girl then was shown how to mix the flour and water with her hands; the women watching gave instructions and offered support. As she began to knead the dough, the women standing behind her linked arms and began to sing. When the women believed that the kneading had been done correctly, a large clean tea towel was placed over the dough and it was left to rise. The women returned to the dining room and stood before the men who were seated, eating and drinking. A musician began to play a piano accordion and the women began to sing songs from Florina, then put their arms on each

other's shoulders and began to dance. They took turns leading the dance and twirling a handkerchief or scarf, and the spiral began to form. After a while, men started to join the line of female dancers, first the bridegroom, his cousin and father. The dancing continued late into the night.

Friday night - buying a bride

On the eve of the wedding, the best man and others in the wedding party arrived at the bridegroom's house. He welcomed them, and the men offered gifts to Peter and others in the family. They put on aprons, formed a line, and began to dance as they waited for the women to serve them a meal. Valentina, sister of the bridegroom, came from the kitchen holding a large circular loaf of white bread wrapped in red cellophane, tied with a thin white ribbon and decorated with a large bow and red flowers. She held the bread and led a dance and the men joined the line. Later in the evening, the bridegroom took this bread as a gift to the bride's family home.

After the meal, the bridegroom and his male companions made their way to the bride-to-be's house. When they arrived, she opened the door and was given the gift of wrapped bread. She then welcomed her bridegroom and his attendants into the house. My younger daughter, Elizabeth, and I were introduced to Peter's attendants and we welcomed them into the dining room where they were handed drinks. Then Stella put on an apron and stood next to Peter, and the men handed them the wrapped loaf of homemade bread. The couple unwrapped the bread, tore it apart and ate some, before handing pieces of it to the others.

The bride's trousseau, containing sheets, pillowcases, blankets and her lingerie, had been placed in the hallway. Wrapped presents had been put on top of the trousseau to be taken and given to the bridegroom's family. This was the trousseau that Stella would take to her new house and included items that only she and her husband would use (Karakasidou 1966: 101). The hallway and trousseau became the place for a protracted session of haggling. The bride's sister, Elizabeth, assumed the position as the family broker as she negotiated her sister's bride price. Mair writes that this pattern of

negotiation, typically ends with the bridegroom's family claiming that the bride's family is 'mercenary' but suggests that both parties know they are entitled to try to get 'the best they can' (1971: 112). This seemed an appropriate description of this negotiation. The demands that the bride's negotiator made were regarded by the bridegroom as 'too high'. Even after the deal had been settled, the bridegroom and his party continued to complain that 'the price was too high, no one has ever paid this much for a wife'. Elizabeth made counterclaims: 'She is my sister, so the amount was too low'. This exchange, Mair writes, is 'part of the fun', and so it was, as the 'procedure is essentially symbolic, prolonging and emphasising the transfer period' to show the strength of the bride's kin ties that are now being broken (1971: 112). We understood from the start that the negotiation was a game, played between two groups and conducted with good humour.

In the region of Florina, it was an established custom for the family of the groom to present a 'series of payments to the family of the bride' (Karakasidou 1996: 100). Lydia told me that before her wedding, the bridegroom's family arrived and called out 'how much?', but she did not know how much his family was finally prepared to pay. Karavidas reports that 'bridewealth payments could be quite substantial' and were 'considered a compensation for a loss of … one of its members' (Karavidas 1931: 214; cited in Karakasidou 1996: 100). After the payment had been negotiated, the boys in Jovan's family made their way around the village, playing music and calling on people to come to the wedding. Mariana told me a similar story of what happened at her wedding in the 1990s in Melbourne. This bride price ritual was still performed though her family from a different region in Aegean Macedonia and both she and her husband had been born in Australia. The negotiation did not occur on the evening before the wedding but the following morning. The *kombarie* (the best man) played a central role:

> What happens is that the best man comes to the front door and knocks, and then the family won't let him in until he buys his way in. This means that he must throw money, twenty dollars or whatever, and only then they will let him inside to see the bride. When he enters the bedroom, I was dressed but without my shoes. It is he who brings my wedding shoes with him. He has to put them on my feet, but he has to put money in the shoes. He then fills them

> with money and then we come out together. Then there is traditional dancing and music and then we go to the church.

Mariana talked of other traditions which involve not only the bride but also the bridegroom, including an event held at the bridegroom's house, at which the *kombarie* takes charge of some role-playing. One of the role-plays is to shave the bridegroom's beard and she says: 'it is all fun, and they drink alcohol, this is a traditional thing, it is what we do. I would like my children to continue this'. She tells me: 'it is nice to keep traditions.'

On the evening before the wedding, after Stella has been 'purchased', Peter and his entourage returned home, taking the trousseau, and the gifts of food and flowers for his family. In Peter's household, the bread which had been given to the bridegroom by the bride's family is now torn apart. This repeats the practice which occurred earlier in the bride's household, and the bread is now shared with the bride-groom's family who have been waiting for their return. Dancing began; now, the dancers wore large straw hats decorated with flowers, large tinsel bows and long green peppers that hung from the brims. Peter's mother and father were given necklaces of peppers, carrots, zucchinis, cucumbers and onions to hang around their necks. Vegetables refer to an agricultural past and to the seasons of growth and fertility. The bridegroom had a large red ribbon placed around his neck and he danced next to his parents in a line. The dancing went on for hours and different members of the family took turns leading the dance. The mother and father of the bridegroom were forced to bite large chunks of peppers, cucumbers and zucchinis, which was met with laughter and sexually suggestive joking.

While the dancing continued downstairs, in an upstairs bedroom, a bed was being prepared for the bride and bridegroom. Stella's bridesmaid's (Valentina, Ana and Marika) were watched by some of the older women from the door as Peter's older married sister, Liliana, supervised the making of the bed. Sheets, blankets, a cover and pillowcases were unpacked and placed on the bed. These were part of the trousseau that had been brought to the house earlier. Once the bed had been carefully made, money and sweets were thrown on it. The youngest boy and girl were then put on the bed and spent some time clambering to gather the money, and sweets to eat. The significance of the practice seems

to be similar to that of the small bags given to young children as Lydia and Jovan had left the village church in Florina. Gifts are given to children in the hope of a guarantee that there will be children in the new family, who will become part of an extended family.

Saturday - the wedding and reception

The morning of the wedding[95] began with celebrations at both the bride's and the bridegroom's houses. The bridegroom was woken early by members of his family, relatives from Adelaide, his best man, and his seven attendants. The generosity of the family was again shown in the abundance of food and refreshments offered to guests. There was music, and people began to sing familiar songs from 'home'. The dance line formed, and the dancers passed a straw hat from head to head. Hanging from the brim were vegetables, mainly red and green peppers. The bridegroom's mother was already dressed for the day and joined the dance wearing the hat. During the dance, she was again encouraged to put the peppers in her mouth and bite chunks from them to the laughter and smiles of other dancers. Later, the bridegroom's father wore the hat as he danced with his wife. The dancing carried on as people arrived to greet the family, offering 'good luck', congratulations and gifts for the couple.

At the bride's house, the bedroom was a centre of activity for the bride and her bridesmaids, flowers girls and her matron of honour. These included Stella's bridesmaids: five were Peter's cousins and sister and her own sister, Elizabeth. The role of the bridesmaids seemed similar to Lydia's 'special girls'. This morning came after a very late 'girl's night' which was similar in some ways to the evening before Lydia's wedding when she and her 'special girls' had made their way around the village. The bride-to-be's bedroom was full of undergarments, dresses, makeup and hairspray. The hairdresser arrived to make sure that the hair was styled and the flowers used to complement the dresses were securely attached. A makeup artist ensured that each young woman looked her best. These two 'artists' were on hand for each stage of the performance. While the

[95] The wedding was held on a Saturday in Parkvale. It was not a Macedonian Orthodox church as the Macedonian community had not yet bought what would become the Church.

days leading up to the wedding had been filled with different performances, this day would begin with the wedding at the Parkvale Church at 2.00pm. A photographer had been booked to meet them at a favourite site for wedding photographs at Melbourne University. Later, a reception was held in Northcote, at a venue owned by Peter's brother-in-law.

The Orthodox Church service formally and legally validates the union. Marriage rites held in houses are complex but the church, as Mair suggests, is 'the crucial validating act' and as in all Christian marriages 'the priest declares the couple to be husband and wife when they have exchanged the requisite vows, and they become legally married by signing the marriage register' (1971: 100). In structure, the wedding service shares elements with other life-cycle rites. In the vestibule, the couple is met by the priest, who leads them through the nave and the congregation, and takes them to stand in front of the iconostasis. It is here in front of the icons that most of the service takes place. Actions such as lighting of candles, saying of prayers and the dance are aspects of all life-cycle rites. The dance takes place after the bride and groom have been crowned with golden crowns, attached to each other by a thin blue ribbon, and as the priest and couple hold hands, they circle a table three times. This action, which occurs during baptism, when the font is circled, is repeated at weddings and memorials when a table is circled. The rites celebrate the beginning (baptism), the middle (weddings) and the end of life (memorials).

As Peter and Stella had been baptised in the Orthodox and Anglican churches respectively, they had asked if an Anglican priest who worked with Stella, could also bless the couple, but this time in English. Initially the Orthodox priest was reluctant to agree to the blessing, but finally he did. Nevertheless, during the service, just before the Anglican priest was to bless the couple, the Orthodox priests retreated to the sanctuary and closed the Beautiful Gate very loudly. At the end of the service, the newly married couple turned to face the congregation then made their way through the nave to the steps of the church, followed by a very large bridal party.

The evening meal was held in a reception centre owned by a member of Peter's family. Over 500 relatives and friends ate, danced and drank to celebrate the bride and groom

and to ensure the happiness in their new life. On this night, Macedonian and Australian traditions were both acknowledged: two bands, one that played Macedonian music and the other more contemporary music, different styles of dancing, and food that catered to both Macedonian and other tastes. Stella and the other women in the bridal party had gone to classes to practice the special dances to be performed on the night (see Image 38 below). Men danced in a long line in front of the women and the spiral dance was performed again, which everyone joined in.

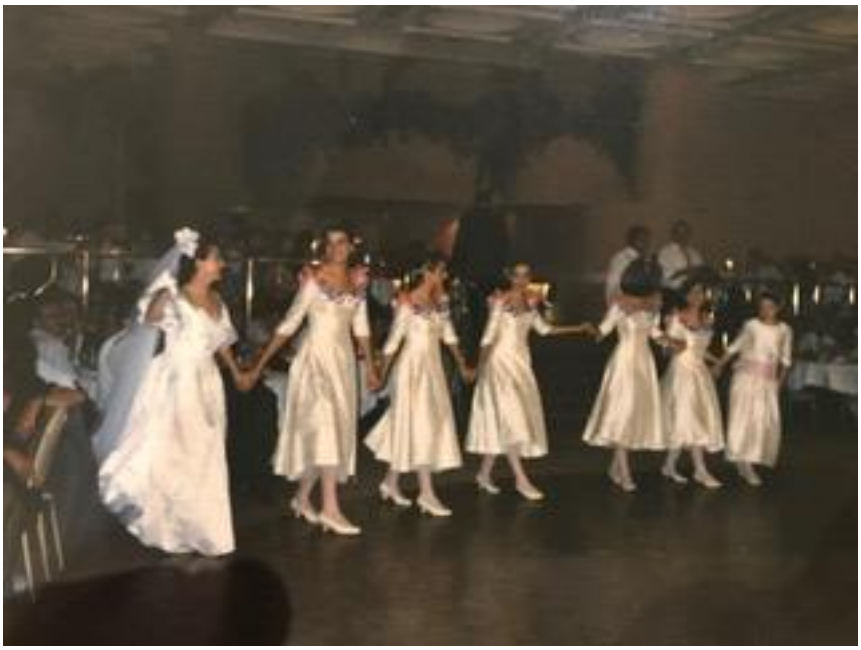

Image 38: The bride and bridesmaids dancing at the reception

Money in large amounts had been pinned to Stella's wedding dress or put in a small bag and stuffed into her dress. I was told later that the amount given would mean that Peter and Stella could have handmade furniture made to match their handmade, four-poster bed they had received as a wedding present. Perhaps not a Macedonian custom, but performed by her new husband, was the removal of a blue garter with his teeth from her thigh while she sat on a chair. This received much audible support from Peter's groomsmen, which prompted more gifts of money. The best man, the bridegroom and the bride made speeches; the dancing and feasting continued well past midnight. Bride and bridegroom retreated into a dressing room then returned in new clothes to go around the room saying their goodbyes and thanking their guests. Accompanied by shouts and cheers from the guests they left to stay in a city hotel overnight.

From early in the morning after the wedding, the groom's family house had been made ready to receive guests: tables set and meals prepared, as relatives, neighbours and friends waited for the married couple to return. Around lunchtime, Stella and Peter arrived and when the bride entered through the front door she was met with greetings and applause. Her mother-in-law, Rose, rushed forward and presented her with a new apron and scarf. After she had put them on, Stella went from table to table accompanied by Peter, to thank each family member for gifts and their attendance at the wedding. Soon, women from the bridal party arrived to help to open the presents, which had been piled in a separate room.

While the women sat talking and taking refreshments, the bride and younger members of the family carefully unwrapped the wedding gifts. The bride and her guests inspected each gift and the names of the givers were written down, along with a description of the gift, to help the bride write her thankyou notes later. Gifts given at life-cycle rites are practical, usually household utensils or items of clothing. Such practical gifts seem appropriate for a newly married couple, but since they had declined to include a 'gift list' with the invitation, many items were duplicated. At the conclusion of this three-day celebration, the couple left for a six-month tour of Europe, which was to include a stay in Peter's village. On their return, they would live in his parent's house.

Marriage rites and weddings in the 21st century

Weddings celebrated in the Macedonian diaspora continued to be planned by women and shaped by memories and stories of weddings at 'home'. Gift-giving within and between the two families still occurs, women still knead and bake the large white loaves that will be shared among family members. The marriage bed is still made by women of the family the night before the church service, and the days of feasting, singing and dancing still occur.

Soon after Stella and Peter's marriage in the late 1980s, Peter's cousin, John, married an Australian woman, and another cousin, Ana, married an Italian man. These couples, too, were assisted by Rose and Lydia and other women in the family. Both continued to attend

family weddings in the Macedonian communities in Melbourne and Adelaide, and when younger, they had spoken to me of going 'home' to attend a family wedding. At the beginning of this century, they were involved in the marriages of Rose's grandchildren. The first was for Mila, Rose's granddaughter who, during a holiday in Greece in 2011, had decided to marry her boyfriend, Tony. This was the first of Rose's grandchildren to marry so there was great excitement and plenty of planning. Liliana, Mila's mother, her grandmother and aunt were all involved in all aspects of the preparations. Two years later, Liliana's son, John, announced that he was to marry; this too caused great excitement, and the planning began again. Like Peter, John had chosen to marry a non-Macedonian partner – Anthia was of Portuguese background. If Rose had felt some hesitation about Peter's choice of partner in the 1980s, by the 2000s, such 'mixed' marriages had become commonplace.

During the weekly visits I made to the Church for the Divine Liturgy, religious festivals, and meals held in the hall, I became aware that many of the women who participated were wives of Macedonian husbands but not Macedonian themselves. Their attendance often was more consistent than that their husbands. Two of the women read the Creed and the Lord's Prayer in English during the service. One young wife had been taught by the older women in the congregation to make communion bread, and I was told that it was 'very good'. Mila, along with her Greek husband, attends the Church with her two children for important festivals and for her grandfather's and mother's memorials; John's wife is now a member of the Orthodox Church, and both of their young children have been baptised into the Church. It is the connection between home and church that allows marriage partners to join in rituals and to participate in religious rites.

For Lydia's wedding at 'home' she had designed and made her own gown and those for her 'special girls', and once settled in the diaspora she did this for others. For Stella's wedding she designed and made the dresses for the seven bridesmaids and the two flower girls, and a pageboy outfit. She had learned these tailoring and dressmaking skills from her father, in the village. For her niece's wedding, she made the wedding dress, bridesmaids' gowns and those of the flower girls. The priest's wife told me one day that her son was to marry so she had ordered a number of dresses to be made by Lydia; later

she told me how happy she was with them. Lydia's choices of materials, colours and design show that she is a bearer of an older tradition but is also willing to adapt to current trends. The number of dresses to be worn and the style of dress required at each step are reminders of the importance of weddings, and the need to have the transition they represent acknowledged, not only by the bride and the bridal party but also by all those who attend the events.

Certain practices performed at 'home' are still found in the diaspora. When Lydia had told me of the Saturday night before her wedding when she, her special girls and other young women from the village walked around the streets at night, it seemed to be implied that this was unusual behaviour for young women. In Melbourne, on the night before weddings, women, friends and bridal parties take part in what is now called a 'hen's night'. This includes drinking, dancing and having fun, behaviour that is more usual now for women in an Australian city. Peter also spent a similar evening with his seven groomsmen the night before the wedding. Mariana, too, told a similar story of her husband-to-be and the male members of the wedding party meeting on the eve of the wedding to play games – games that included drinking and being shaved. With the aim of having fun, these activities before the final stage of the marriage rites, held both at 'home' and in the diaspora, refer to an inversion of normal, expected behaviour, signalling the end of another stage in a person's life before they accept the responsibilities of the new.

One important change for women since their families left the Balkans to settle in Melbourne has been women's independence. At 'home' it would have been difficult, perhaps even impossible, for a woman to move independently from her family's house. In the diaspora, women's lives have changed and both fathers and mothers encourage change. Women I spoke to at the Church talked about their studies and their jobs, in the police force, nursing, teaching and computer technology. Fathers proudly told of their daughters' success in education and in the workplace. One of the parish priests said that his wife worked so their two daughters could get a good education and have secure employment. Rose's and Lydia's daughters moved out of home without marrying. Becca owns her own dressmaking and design business and has bought a house, which she

shares with her unmarried brother. Valentina showed the way, moving out of her parent's home earlier. She now works as a staff trainer in a large beauty product company. She travels overseas to work and trains staff in many outlets. While both Rose and Lydia are sorry that their daughters will not marry or have children, both are pleased about their daughters' independence. Many years ago, Rose confessed to me that she would have liked to have gone to school and then to university but had done neither. She would have liked to work in an office rather than in the fields at 'home' and then on an assembly line making electric blankets in Melbourne.

In the past, apples and bread rolls were used to invite people to weddings, and calculations of who would or would not attend was unnecessary. Weddings took place during seasons of plenty. Now, in the diaspora, printed wedding invitations are sent out, often double-sided, with a box that can be ticked and returned to the family so that the number of wedding guests can be accurately calculated, because reception centre meals are expensive. Lists of gifts in the form of marriage registries or 'wishing wells', or requests for money are also included. To Rose and Lydia, this is unthinkable and at Stella and Peter's wedding, and at all other family rites, not only the family but the whole community helps with gifts of food and alcohol.

During wedding rituals, women demonstrate how they guard the 'ark of the specialized knowledge … and its traditions' (Karavidis 1931: 239). In the diaspora, knowledge and tradition remain in the memories of older women and even though performances may be influenced by modern trends, weddings, for example, remain shaped and controlled by women. When I asked Mila if she remembered rites of 'the making of the bread' and 'the buying of the bride' at her wedding, she seemed unsure. Rose and Lydia assured me that 'of course, we made the bread, of course we danced and celebrated, Mila must have forgotten'. After the weekend of Stella and Peter's *daroy*, I asked Mia, a married Macedonian student of mine, if she remembered a dance where the women had dressed as men. She seemed cross and told me that 'it didn't happen'. I assumed that this dance had originated in a different region from that of her family. But the next week, rather embarrassed, she came to tell me that after the class she had gone home and told her mother and aunts my strange story. The older women told her 'of course it happened,

we always do that' and reminded her that it had been done at her own engagement celebration.

In conversation one day, Peter's sister, Valentina, told me of a promise she had made to her sister, Liliana, before she died, that she would help her sister's children, and especially the four grandchildren. She confided that this worried her because she did not know enough about Macedonian culture or history to pass it on them. But she talked about her early memories in the household, and of the family women who chatted in Macedonian as they made clothes or table ware. She is aware of the changes to that old culture, that it has been adapted in the new location. When I asked why she thought it important to teach the four young children about their Macedonian heritage, she answered simply: 'so they can be proud of it'. From her answer I imagine when these young children are ready to marry, they will benefit from an aunt's acquired knowledge. This will be part of the changes that women have made over time to accommodate the past while creatively transforming its practices and rites into something new.

Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on women's practices in rites associated with marriage. In the Macedonian diaspora, people continue to celebrate life-cycle rites: baptism, name days, funerals and memorials, which all recognise change and help people to adjust to the stages in their lives. Marriage rites are not only crucial for an individual's transition from youth to adulthood, but for the family, and like all other life-cycle rites, they cannot be undone. The three-stage structure of separation, liminality and re-entry has been adapted in the new location, but family and community still perform these rites to mark the period as an important status change. In performance, Macedonian marriage rites do not remain static; in the diaspora, they are constantly subject to change, but as Mair (1971) suggests, it is important to look for objects and acts found in community celebrations. Macedonian marriages use artefacts, symbols and patterns that are also used in other celebrations: Bread, crowns and basil are used in both private and public spaces, gifts are given and received and accompanied with dancing, singing, feasting and music.

Macedonian wedding rites continue to be shaped by ancient beliefs and contain elements from seasonal and life-cycle rituals. From villages to Melbourne suburbs, women's performances during weddings are a celebration of fertility, growth and production and they acknowledge the danger of the move from one status to another. In these rites, women demonstrate the transformative nature of grain into flour that can make bread and connect this transformation to show symbolically that this occurs in the young girl as she becomes a bride. During the risky period of transformation, women assume the role of controllers of the rites, and their authority challenges norms and ensures the change. This is crucial for the family, as each member will also transition to having new responsibilities and roles. Women's dancing, singing and drinking would normally be regarded as inappropriate, but at this critical time it highlights and ensures a safe transition.

In the Macedonian region, before and since annexation, the household has been the centre not only of family life but also of a matrix of religious and political life. The following chapter focusses on households to demonstrate how these spaces at 'home' and in the diaspora remain centres of culture, language, ritual and nationality, and as such have become the spaces in which identity is created, re-imagined and re-shaped.

Chapter Seven: Household rituals and women's spaces

This chapter shows that in their domestic practices, women are pivotal in the creation and reshaping of Macedonian identity. "Macedonia", and its history and religion, are still disputed, and remain a political problem in south-eastern Europe. Macedonians continued to struggle for national recognition and independence in the diaspora after they emigrated, but there, they have also re-imagined their identities. Women are leaders in rites conducted in public and private spaces that express those identities, religious and national. The conduct of seasonal and life-cycle rites reveals how women's roles in public spaces depend on their domestic roles, and thus how women's practices link the two spaces. Researchers have largely neglected both women's roles within households and their participation in celebrations and festivals, thus ignoring how their performance is crucial to their success in both areas.

In new locations, women's memories of 'home' have shaped domestic spaces into familiar places. The first section of the chapter discusses the establishment of households and kitchen gardens as spaces for domestic and sacred rites. In domestic spaces, women's mundane practices include cleaning, cooking laundering and entertaining, but this is also where stories are told and cultural practices taught in Macedonian, which remain crucial in the daily re-invention of national identity. Women's preparations in seasonal and life-cycle rites connect households with the Church. These rites mark the seasons of human life and the agricultural year, and are linked to fertility, birth and rebirth of the land, animals and humans. Rites held within the Church are opportunities for women to make offerings of household gifts to friends or to the Church in acknowledgment of Mary, *the Bogoroditse,* who controls families' health. This chapter challenges the view that assumes women make 'no viable contribution to the overall political situation' and claims instead that Macedonian women, as performers of household rites, are at the very centre of the politics of identity (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 7).

In earlier chapters the focus was on festivities held in public spaces, though it was always evident a strong connection existed between household practices and those in the Church. Over thirty years ago, my first meetings with women were held in their

households and I became aware of a pattern of practices which later was evident at the local church, a cyclical pattern which involved gift giving and expressed in other practices. The first I noticed was in household with the constant gift giving and gift receiving, but later this pattern was repeated in sacred spaces. Women brought gifts of 'bread' for communion, made weekly gifts of clothing, money and flowers to *Bogoroditse* (Mary) and at the yearly Dormition and on Holy Thursday made offerings to her. To an outsider this seemed an extravagance, as in many ways these women were frugal, but always at meetings, whether formal or informal, women always arrived with gifts. I noted that at the conclusion of such events, whether it was held in public spaces or at households, food and other items such as flowers and wine, were shared amongst those who attended. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, bread made by the women for communion, was cut and given by them to those still on the verandah. When I was offered bread, I was told it must be eaten, toasted or given to the birds, but never put in the bin. I first thought it was a warning not to discard blessed bread. But later it seem more than this, as other practices seemed more, and that it was part of a cyclical pattern of giving and receiving, a pattern which could be found in other practices, which were understood by women and an instruction to the young.

The cyclical pattern has shaped women's behaviour, but this was not clear during my research until I read research undertaken by Carole Christ (2011), where she referred to 'ancient rites' based on earlier an earlier cyclical pattern. She claims this pattern still influences women's behaviour in the Mediterranean today. This pattern, she argues, was a measurement of time, not lineal but cyclical but until recently time was measured by seasons in all agricultural societies. This is also referred to in the early research of anthropologists who studied agricultural societies. In a discussion by Edmund Leach (1970: 124 – 136) he suggests in some societies 'death and birth' are the same thing and suggest this is part of a cyclical pattern. The measurement of time depended on the change of season, both human and agricultural, were markers in birth, growth, death and rebirth. A pattern which is the basis of all Orthodox rites and a pattern which has echoes in women's practice in the Macedonian diaspora.

Establishing households in the suburbs

The establishment of Macedonian households in post-war Australia was told through women's stories in Chapter Two above. Women nearly all described a similar pattern in which, on arrival, the family moved to suburbs into accommodation with close family members, which allowed them to share expenses and childcare and to find work. Rose's daughter, Valentina, remembers when her family shared a house with her aunt Lydia and her family, so that the parents could work to save for deposits on their own homes. They lived in particular suburbs, usually close to factories or other jobs; later, they bought houses in the same suburbs so they could stay close to each other. Valentina said:

> My grandfather bought a house in Boundary Road and then the whole family began to move to the area. Other family members started buying into the area. Then my Mum and Dad bought a house near in East Bentleigh, and then they moved when they built a house in Moorabbin … then other relatives moved to be close, in Cheltenham, and even my cousin, his Mum and Dad moved up the road and then others did as well.

Many of the homes they bought were built in the 1960s and 1970s to house the many immigrants, close to transport and factories. While Valentina's parents' first purchase was one of these, the family was later able to save, and with the help of their son, to design and build a house to their specifications. Rose and Jim's Moorabbin house was built for an extended family, designed as a centre to accommodate family and friends for rituals and entertaining, which it remained until Jim's death. When I was shown photographs of the old houses in Aegean Macedonia, I saw the similarities between them and the Moorabbin house. The latter was a large, two-storey structure with five big bedrooms on the second floor with separate bathrooms, much like Fani's family house back in the village. The Moorabbin house had a central hallway described as 'wide enough for a game of cricket'. A large, carved wooden staircase connected the two floors, whose bannister was used to 'weave' the basil during the rite of bread making described in Chapter Six above.

The ground floor had a generous space for entertaining that could seat 40 people for a meal, with space for dancing. On the opposite side was a bar and a well-stocked cellar, and a door that led to the kitchen. All members of the family used the house for birthdays, name days, Christmas and Easter feasts, and after Rose and Jim retired the house became a space where friends from the Macedonian community and their neighbours often visited. On the occasions that I visited, there were always other visitors, and refreshments, food and drink, were always offered. Important family events were celebrated in household rites which accompanied church rites, such as Stella and Peter's wedding.

The dining room, when set for entertaining, was designed so that tables were placed along two of the walls, which left a dancing space. At family feasts, a long table was put in the middle of the room. The kitchen, which was at the back of the house, had a central counter, creating two separate spaces. One side was used for food preparation, storage and cooking, and washing up; it was here that bread and other stuffs were prepared, then cooked and used in rituals. On the right of the sitting room were comfortable chairs, a large settee and a television set. In this space, Jim would sit and look out on his garden as he watched women in the family prepare meals. A door led to a five-car garage, which routinely was used by younger members of the family for birthdays and parties. Opposite was a large study, another bedroom, bathroom and large laundry.

The house was in a court, facing other houses of similar design. The area had been settled by other immigrant families, and although Rose's family were the only Macedonians, they had all come from villages, and friendships developed through the exchange of food, fruit, vegetables and family gossip. Lydia and her family had moved nearby into a single-storey house which over time too has been modified for family and household celebrations. The front yard of Lydia's house has a well-manicured lawn, but it is the row of manicured trees, with lower branches removed and trunks painted white, that makes it stand out. I was told that this was a regional custom, but when one family member remarked that 'it was a Greek' custom, Jovan, Lydia's husband, abruptly countered, 'it is Macedonian'. The small backyard has a kitchen garden, a lawn to dance on, a space with a spit to roast lamb, and a large verandah abutting the house used for family celebrations and ritual feasts.

Kitchen gardens in suburban households

Kitchen gardens are shared spaces in the diaspora, and in Macedonian households, the tasks associated with it are gender divided. Both back and front gardens are used to grow produce. On my first visit to Fani's household, she spoke of her small garden as 'my little bit of paradise', then showed me the plot she had made in her front yard that was planted with vegetables, flowers, lemon and orange trees. Seasonal vegetables were planted in rows, and pots of flowers surrounded them. Garden produce is often a measure of women's generosity. This is seen during liturgical seasonal rites when women bring flowers and vegetables as offerings and gifts to others in the Church. During the year, lemons, oranges, persimmons, herbs and flowers are put on tables as centre pieces in the hall and given to those who attend the Monday luncheon.

Rose and Jim's back garden was planted with fruit trees and vegetables and it was here that the younger generations were taught growing techniques. Rose's youngest grandchild Sarah spent hours as a child with her grandparents in the 'veggie' patch. She was allowed to plant, water, fertilise and then watch the plants grow and help to harvest their fruits. She packed lemons, oranges, tomatoes and peppers into plastic bags, to be given away to family members and neighbours. While Sarah learnt how to grow produce for the table, she was also schooled in Macedonian language, about the seasons and Macedonian culture. Others, including Mariana and Mia, told me stories about their children learning to speak Macedonian while they were being looked after by their grandparents, as they worked together in the house or garden.

Work done by women in household gardens is evident in the weekly abundance of flowers, leaves and herbs they use to decorate the Church, which often include 'offerings of basil' (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 7). Lydia and others told me that at 'home' they had gathered basil from the banks of lakes and streams to decorate the church for important festivals, but they did not eat it. As mentioned earlier, basil was 'never eaten or cooked as it was considered a ritual plant'. (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 7). Women believed that basil was sacred because it grew at the foot of the cross and outside Christ's

tomb. In the Macedonian Orthodox Church, basil is also associated with the myrrh-bearers, the women who were the first to visit Christ's tomb, and celebrated in a festival held the second week after Easter. The participants in this research understood the significance of these eight holy women who brought ointments and funeral spices to anoint Christ's body, but found his body gone.

In the diaspora, basil is grown in pots to be brought to the Church in fragrant bunches and placed in vases in front of the iconostasis or on icon stands. During festivals such as Mary's Dormition and Theophany the perfume of basil filled the nave. Sprigs of basil are used during wedding rites while making bread to bless the union and the house. It is brought to the Church and given to other women as gifts. When I first visited Rose in the late 1980s, she showed me vases filled with water and small sprigs of basil on a sunny window ledge in her laundry. She was waiting for roots to appear so she could replant them into garden pots. Rose's basil now grows in a pot where it is easy for her to water, in a sunny space next to her chair near the swimming pool. Basil ready for planting was often brought as a gift to the church. Early one morning, Buba Mika stood in front of the choir stall with two small bunches of basil wrapped in damp tissue paper, one for her friend Rose and the other for me. The question of whether to eat this herb was often discussed; while older women told me that they had not eaten it in the village, since arriving in Australia they had begun to eat it in salads.

Households, like the Church, are Macedonian spaces and have similar functions: they are cultural hubs serving the religious, social, political, educational and economic interests of the family and community. In public spaces, the parish priest, deacons and helpers, officiate in weekly services and the cycle of Macedonian Church rites. However, in houses, it is women who are the chief officiates; through their performances they 'secure the family's life and health' (Håland 2012b: 106). Håland writes of a 'tension between the official priesthood and the representative of the individual family' in Orthodox Churches in the Balkans (2012b: 106), but among the diaspora at the local Macedonian Church in Melbourne studied here, this was not evident. At the house and at the Church, familiar Macedonian practices are performed by both women and men to 'create and maintain' identity (Kallis et al 2018: 1). This identity is fluid and is contested, being played out and

re-imagined in new forms (Ehrkamp & Nagel 2011: 626). In both spaces, women are regarded as 'the guardians of their family's spiritual health, which cannot be separated from physical health given the role of prayers and vows in healing and protection' (Håland 2012b: 106).

Caring for households and family members

The creation and maintenance of sacred spaces

Within Macedonian households, women create sacred spaces in the corner of the room, or on a wall where icons, candles, flowers and other religious artefacts are placed. Mia told me that it is a Macedonian woman's duty to create such spaces, and Rose and Lydia told me that in the village, it was always women who lit the small oil lamps in front of the family icons. Studies suggest that in the Balkans it is believed that through women's practices, all family members are connected to the spiritual world (Dubisch 1991: 41). In new locations, women memorialise the past in the present in the creation of icon spaces. After Jim's death, Rose settled into her son's household and as mentioned earlier, one of the first things she did was to decorate a wall in her sitting room with icons and family photographs; in front of these she put candles, flowers and other artefacts such as crosses given as gifts to her.

After a visit to the village in 2014, Lydia repeated the story of family icons and told me that as a child it was her duty to light the oil lamps each morning. However, during her time back in the village she had uncovered the family icon of Mary and Mary Magdalena kneeling at the feet of Jesus and showed me a copy of a photograph she had taken of it. She had found the icon in the cellar of an old house on the property and told me in some distress that 'it was ripped and wet' and the silver cross that had been attached to it was now missing. In its damaged state, it had come to represent more than a holy relic, so she wanted to bring it back to Melbourne and have it restored, but after some negotiation with members of her family in Aegean Macedonia, decided to leave it there in the cellar. Lydia told me: 'they have destroyed the icon so I do not want to take it back to Australia'. This icon was a reminder to her that family members back 'home' 'are not Macedonian

anymore, as they hid and destroyed the Macedonian icon'; she declared that they are now Greek. This connection between religious artefacts and women's practice remains an element which helps to make clear the construction and the re-imagining of Macedonian national identity.

Women's practical skills learnt at 'home' and practised in the suburbs.

Women at 'home' engaged in 'both agricultural and handicraft production (Karakasidou 1996: 100). Many of the stories I have been told tell of family members who had always been involved in domestic crafts. Village women were noted for their craft skills, which were important because they added to a family's resources. Lydia at 'home' and again in Melbourne was able to use her sewing and tailoring skills for her family and to make gifts and clothes for sale. It was thanks to her mother's skill that Becca was encouraged to complete a TAFE course after leaving school and now has her own dressmaking and design business. Many women make things at home to offer as gifts, especially during rites, or to leave them as offerings for others on the wooden structure inside the Church. I have been given home-made aprons, scarfs and other items; the first gift that Rose gave me was a beautiful pair of knitted slippers, the pinkies that are worn inside the house, because in the village, shoes are left at the front door. In Melbourne, these slippers are not worn as often as they were in the village, but in the evenings, members of Rose's household wear them. At the Church I noticed that pinkies look like the soft footwear worn by heroes, saints and deities in the icons. Over the 30 years I have known the family I have received many pairs, some of which I have given to others. The last pair I was given were slightly different in design, perhaps being reshaped in a new location.[96] The first pinkies I was given are very special; they are deep blue with a symbol on the top that I did not understand for some years. On the blue background, Rose had knitted two deep-red suns of Vergina, Philip's Star; personal gifts, too, can be political.

[96] When I visit Rose, she often sits knitting and I marvel at her skills. With fine circular needles she makes the complicated front which covers the top of the foot. She never seems to count the rows or even look at her work.

Women's sacred responsibility for family members

In other chapters, discussion focused on the Macedonian Orthodox Church and on rituals performed at the local Church. The adoption of ancient stories associated with the agency of goddesses who controlled production and reproduction was central to early religious life (Kraemer 1992: 22). Håland argues that women of the Orthodox Church in the Balkans now are more devoted to Mary than to God (2012a). In the diaspora, performances of seasonal and life-cycle rites in the Macedonian Church continue to illustrate that production and reproduction are still seen as being controlled by Mary, the *Bogoroditse*. Women, in their daily activities and household rites, are regarded as responsible for the physical and spiritual health of family members (see Image 39 below).

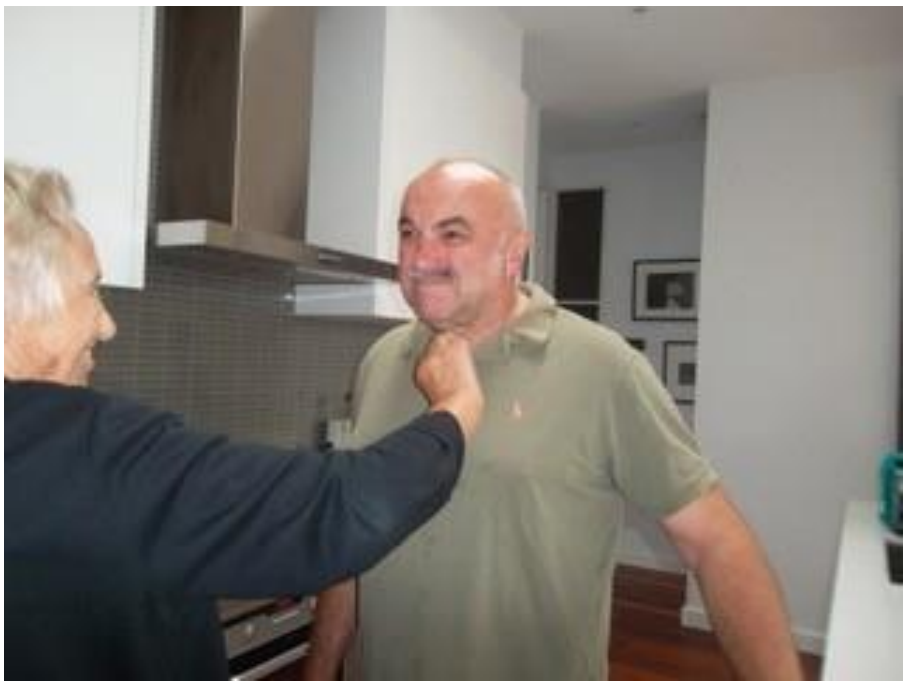

Image 39: A mother blesses her son as she does all members of her family

Caring for those at the beginning of life

Caring for family members begins at the start of life, when a child is brought into the world. Older women put a special value on the new member, because they fear that someone will manipulate supernatural forces to their personal advantage and caste the evil eye on the baby (Avdikos 2011: 102; Veikou 1998: 259). Very young children are

thought to be especially vulnerable to supernatural forces before they are taken to the Church to be blessed. Mariana recalled that when her first child was born, her mother-in-law hung 'something' over the cot to protect her grandchild. She left it there because her mother-in-law believed that without it, 'there is nothing to protect him during these forty days'. Mariana also said that her mother would go around the house sprinkling holy water: 'and I would say, "Mum'" and she answered: "this is what I need to do for my grandchildren because they are so precious". So, Mariana said, 'you leave it hanging over the cot and accept the holy water'.

Mariana also told me of other safeguards that her mother and aunts used, ones designed to protect babies from the jealousy of others:

> Every child is given an evil eye. If there is a belief in miracles, there must be a belief in evil. When a baby is born, all are given this 'little eye', and it is pinned on them. This will protect the child against jealousy, the evil of jealousy. In some form, this belief is perhaps in every culture, as the eye will protect you from one who is looking at you in a certain way. Someone may tell you know how lucky you are, but at the same time tries to bring you just the opposite. If there is death, there must be a belief in the opposite, the miracle of rebirth. There must be always two sides. If someone gives you a compliment you must spit three times. Or at least pretend to spit three times!

Valentina tells of a similar custom that her mother Rose taught her:

> You must have noticed the spitting thing? When you spit, you spit, spit, spit and say *marshalla* so that the evil eye does not cause you any harm. It is women who do this as I have never seen a man [do it]. Usually it is my Mum, aunties and other women. I think that there must be similar beliefs in other cultures.

Around the Mediterranean, certain village customs and practices have been of interest to anthropologists and folklorists because their 'strong overtones of sympathetic magic

[suggest that they are] more concerned with manipulating natural influences than with honouring the sacred world' (du Bouley 1974: 63). These practices, Juliet du Bouley claims, are customs which, 'while related to Orthodox thinking [are] not directly a result of dogma' (1974: 63). Holy water continues to be sprinkled and the evil eye is placed on babies and worn by others, and if all this appears to belong to an ancient past, Macedonian women in the diaspora do it because they still feel responsible for their family's spiritual health and well-being.

Women's responsibility at the end of life

Ancient death-rituals, Håland claims, are 'divided into two main parts: the mourning and the burial (2010: 227). Women's household rituals play the most significant role in the first part, which includes the immediate mourning, along with other family women, and it is these women who wash and prepare the corpse for burial (Håland 2010: 227). This preliminary work done at the end of a relative's life must be carried out by women, before the body can be handed over to men for burial. The description below passes over some aspects of the complex series of rites that women perform for the dead, because these are carried out in different places, over a period of time, where women play significant roles at each stage. But it is after death and within the home that women's ritual roles illustrate their central position and responsibility:

On an early morning in July 2014, Rose's elder daughter died at home. It had been Liliana's wish to leave hospital to return to her family home when she was close to dying of cancer. Her family nursed her and she was always surrounded by people. Rose told me this is what happened in the village, too –because it is best to be surrounded by family at such a time. Her sister and cousins had spent weeks arranging what they all knew would be Liliana's last birthday, but she died on that day.

Early on morning of her birthday, Liliana's relatives telephoned those who had been invited to celebrate the birthday to tell them of her death, but asked them to come to the party anyway, because this is what she would have wanted. Later, I was told that there had been a discussion about whether her body should be left in the house so that

guests could say goodbye. Liliana's children, Mila and John, who disagreed with their grandmother and tradition, made the decision to have their mother's body taken to the funeral home before the guests arrived. This was a break with tradition, but as on many other occasions, the house was filled with friends, family and neighbours who continued to arrive until the late evening.

Guests were welcomed at the front door and led to the back of the house, to the kitchen. Each guest brought with them food or drink; my daughter and I brought cakes that we knew Liliana had loved, to be eaten by others. Women stayed in the kitchen working on the tasks of hospitality, while men sat outside with other men, either on chairs or on the lawn. On the other side of the kitchen, Jim and Rose sat mourning their much-loved daughter in very different ways. Jim sat quietly in his large leather chair, inconsolable but apparently not able to grasp the situation. Rose's grief was openly expressed. As each party of guests arrived, she cried out her daughter's name and fell to the floor. Håland makes the point that women use a 'performative mode of communication' which is as 'important as the verbal communication', especially when 'related to death-cult[s]' (2010: 219). In the early Orthodox Church, the Archbishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom dismissed women's laments as 'this disease of females' (Dobrov 1994: 385). Håland suggests that the difference between Mediterranean women's responses to death and those of Western women is the value placed by the latter on suppressing and hiding 'emotions and suffering' (2010: 219).

Female relatives openly expressed grief and loss at Liliana's death as female guests offered food, flowers and words of sympathy. Accepting and sharing gifts, especially food, is central to this ritual. In the kitchen, some women stood at the sink washing and drying glasses, others filled the dishwasher as it was important that there was a stack of clean plates ready for each group of guests. Other women took charge of gifts, flowers and boxes and plates of food that had been brought. Food was stored or heated, some of it was immediately plated and put on the bench to be taken to the men. This offering of food continued for the next month, and the family provided food for all who came to the home.

Some women took food to those who sat in the kitchen, others took food to the men sitting outside. A large amount of alcohol was consumed, but the men were quiet and spoke softly. Peter, Liliana's brother, grieved silently as he served the male guests with alcohol from the bar. Women watched the men through the windows and glass doors, and voiced their concerns that men were not able to express their grief. They also worried that the men would drink excessively, so a constant supply of food was sent out to them. Two weeks later, Liliana's father Jim died and later at the Church, women spoke to me of Rose's grief, but also of Jim's death, which they took as proof of men's inability to express their grief.

Shortly after Liliana's death and funeral, Rose set out the rules that the family would follow. There would be a 40-day mourning period during which all family members would avoid all social gatherings outside the household. They were not to watch television or go to parties. All members of the family were to wear black clothing. Rose, like many older village women, chose to dress in black for the rest of her life. Today, however, this tradition is not followed by the younger generation of widows. Rose told me that before Jim died, he had asked her not to wear black and told her to marry again because he did not want her to sit alone at night.

In the days before the funeral, the house was open to members of the extended family, neighbours and Liliana's work mates and friends. Food was constantly being prepared, and Rose was constantly anxious about whether there would be enough for all the visitors. As in other Macedonian families, grief was shared and expressed in the offering and receiving of food. Christ suggests that this circle of giving and taking was part of an ancient agricultural tradition that continues into the present and finds expression in households and rituals overseen by women (2011: 139). Burial services conclude with a meal held in the church hall of food produced at home by women. After the service for Liliana, and two weeks after Jim's burial, large amounts of food brought to the hall by family and others fed the hundreds who participated in the feast. This food not only nourishes the congregation but is also given to each family to take home to be 'eaten for them' (as described in Chapter Five above).

Women also prepare food at home to take to the Church and the cemetery during memorials for the dead. Danforth suggests that food distribution during memorial services is based on a belief that the food makes its way into the other world, where it feeds the dead (1982: 105). Women say they give it to others 'so that the dead may eat' or 'whatever you give out becomes available for the dead' (Danforth 1982: 105). The boiled wheat, flavoured with honey and spices, is made at home and brought to the Church to be blessed. This blessing comes at the end of the Divine Liturgy, when the priest, accompanied by women from the family, perform a rite to bless the wheat. Danforth writes that the dead remain dependent on the living, and particularly on their kin to 'provide them with clothes, light, water and food' (1982: 105). Food eaten at memorials moves to the bodies of the dead, as those who consume food 'enable it to pass to the other world', or wear gifts of clothing to ensure the 'soul can enter paradise' (Danforth 1982: 105).

Gifts of food and clothing, described in Chapter Four above, are part of the tradition of memorials held at the local Melbourne Church and at the cemetery, where gifts are offered to close family members and friends who are told to 'eat for them' or with clothing, to 'wear for them'. However, this tradition was broken in 2019 for Liliana's memorial. Her children and their partners decided that her memorial would be held in a winery near Melbourne. Family and friends were invited to share a meal of food and wine, something her children thought that their mother would have enjoyed.

Fasting and feasting: A woman's responsibility in the household

While fasting is a religious discipline in the Macedonian Orthodox Church, supported by references to its practice in both the Old and New Testaments, it is considered a female practice. In the third century, the early Christian movement nominated days that would commemorate 'Christ's Betrayal and Crucifixion' and in the next century later, fasting was adopted, including the 40-day Lenten fast; still later, other periods were also added (Macedonian Church Calendar 2017: 32). Christ's 40-day fast in the desert, referred to in the New Testament, was seen as a period of self-denial and self-control. In the diaspora,

fasting before communion is still practiced and also involves abstaining from impure thoughts and deeds and replacing them with prayers and works of charity.

The Orthodox Church calendar prescribes major periods of fasting: the longest fast with the strictest rules – no consumption of red meat, poultry, dairy, fish, eggs or oil – is the 40-day Lent and Holy Week fast. One lasts from November to January, including Christmas and Theophany, another is held for the Most Holy Mother of God (August) and yet others for the Holy Apostles (July) (Macedonian Church Calendar 2017: 33). There are also regular weekdays for fasting: Wednesday for 'Christ's betrayal' and Friday for 'Christ's Passion and Death on the Cross'. On these dates, members must fast 'unless some important feast takes precedence over the fast' (Macedonian Church Calendar 2017: 32). During these periods, if Rose was offered food, she asked what ingredients it contained; if they included butter, milk, eggs, oil or meat then she declined it. In the Macedonian Orthodox Church, there are also periods when fasting is forbidden; these include January 7-17, and the weeks following Easter and Pentecost (Macedonian Church Calendar 2017: 33). This dietary schedule that restricts or encourages the eating of certain foods at certain times means that the community is dependent on women to plan menus and meals carefully.

Second-generation family members I spoke to do not strictly adhere to the rules of fasting, and do not try to hide the fact. Rose remarked that younger people are more interested in the feasting than the fasting, while older people continue to abstain from meat, oil, milk, eggs and butter at times, sticking to a diet based on vegetables and fruit. However, for those who have obeyed the rules, the breaking of the fast is very welcome and it seems that in the Gelis family, at least, the feasts that follow periods of abstinence have both religious and cultural meaning, as the foods prepared for them are based on menus brought from 'home'. What is eaten at these times, and how older members in the congregation celebrate the end of a fast, are described later in this chapter.

When women are planning a menu and preparing the food, much of their conversations concerns what some of the younger family members eat, the problem of how much is eaten and what is eaten. Eating and over-eating are not necessarily related only to the

church calendar of feasts and fasts, but also to ideas of good health. Some women, like Mia, often compare food from 'home' with what is available in Melbourne. She talked about the quality of food in her village and often compared food sold in Melbourne unfavourably. Her family, like other Macedonian families, had continued to grow fruit and vegetables in their gardens. Rose also expressed her concern about the types of food and more importantly the quantity of food that her grandchildren and now her great-grandchildren eat. Their consumption of fast food makes her worry about their health. When told that scientific evidence now suggests that feasting and fasting are good us, perhaps because humans have long lived through times of plenty and scarcity, she said that she was not surprised because this was how people ate at 'home', and why the church calendar dictates when to feast and fast. It seemed to her and other older women that abstaining and doing 'good works' are related not only to spiritual health but also to the physical health of their families.

Seasonal rites and women's performance

As discussed in earlier chapters, seasonal festivals held at the local Church follow the biography of Mary, who, like the ancient goddesses, controls fertility and offerings made guaranteed 'good offspring: animal, vegetable and human' (Håland 2012a: 265). This connection between Christian and pre-Christian traditions ensures that women remain 'the central performers of the fertility rituals' both at the Church and in the home (Håland 2012a: 265). As the agricultural year is marked by the periods of fertility, growth and production, grain remains a central element in the performance of rituals. With the return of spring, women wear martinkas (discussed below), eggs are dyed to symbolise life and candles are made to light the darkness before the return of a new agricultural season. Boiled wheat is made into food and eaten at memorials, flour is mixed with water, kneaded and shaped into bread for communion and eaten at family rites and shaped into musnik and baked for many important family events.

One important event in Macedonian households celebrates the first day of the year. At 'home' this celebration took place in winter, but in Australia it falls during summer and the holiday season. In the days before the first of January, women in the family meet to

prepare and make the much loved 'bread' called musnik, created from very thin layers of pastry. A mound of dough is pounded and stretched. Then the dough is stretched over a large table until it is thin and transparent. It is then cut into long strips, fillings are placed in the centre of the strip and then they are rolled into long cylinders. The end of the strip is now placed at the centre of the large round musnik tin then the rest of the cylinder is wound around and around until the tin is filled up (see Image 40 below).

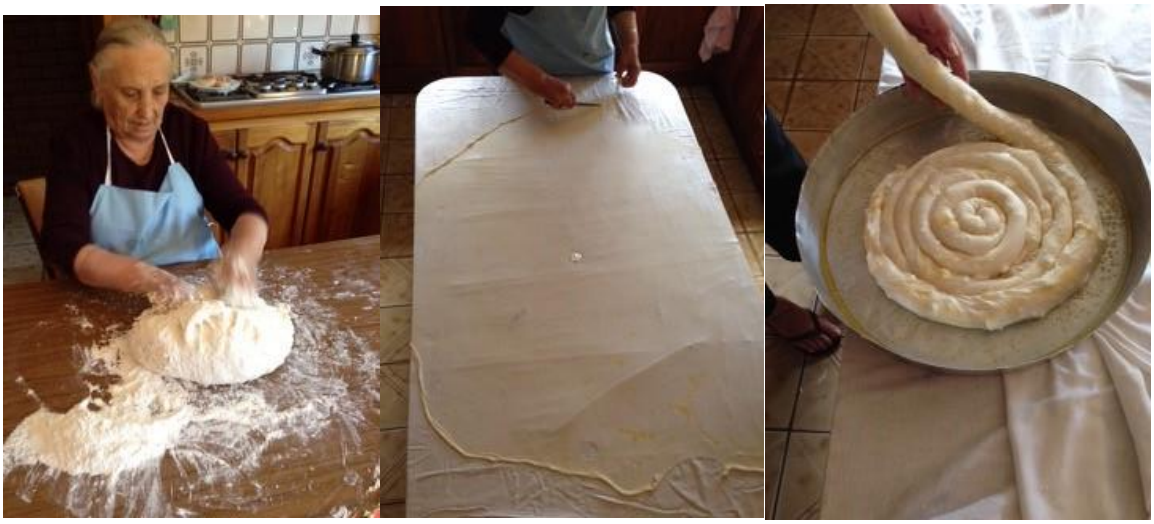

Image 40: A large mound of dough is prepared for musnik*, the dough is stretched across a table, then rolled and placed in a spiral in a* musnik *pan*

At 'home' in Aegean Macedonian and in the Republic of North Macedonia, each household prepared *musnik* in a slightly different way, and in the diaspora these styles are proudly continued. Women showed me their *musnik* style in photographs on their mobile phones. I once witnessed a friendly competition between cousins over the style of their mother's *musnik*.

Peter's cousin, John, explained how his mother had made *musnik*, using a long, thin wooden rod to stretch and roll the thin fine pastry. A later discussion about its making, in a coffee shop, with women from the Republic of North Macedonia illustrated the intensity of the debate on the topic. These women, a group of grandmothers, spoke passionately about how they made the bread. I remarked that John's mother used a wooden rod, and Rosa immediately produced her mobile phone and showed me photographs of her with a wooden rod pleating the thin strips. She explained that the pleating ensures that the filling will be evenly spread inside the cylinders of pastry. John's

mother did not pleat her cylinders, but he claimed that his mother was known in the community for making the best *musnik.* I repeated his comment to his cousin Valentina, and she explained:

> John's mother used to make a *musnik* which was a bit thick. But my mum [Rose] made hers light and fluffy and not too buttery. John's mother rolled hers with a stick and when you roll it with a stick the pastry is thicker. The way we make it is to pull the pastry and when you get it on the table you pull it to get it as thin as you can. Then when it is cooked it is thin and flaky.

Valentina counter-claimed that 'my mother was known as the "top cook" for *musnik,* she made the best out of everyone'.

Watching women make *musnik* is like watching someone making a piece of art, but its production is always collective. Older family women are the custodians of the knowledge, but it is their responsibility to pass it on. They stand behind younger women, watching, encouraging and demonstrating when needed; the very young stand and watch. When Valentina learned that her sister had cancer, she decided to learn traditional Macedonian cooking so that she could teach her nieces. She began not only to participate but also to photograph each stage in the process. She explained:

> It was more a realisation of what mum and dad had gone through and what we are going through now. I realised that we all like eating *musnik*, as did my sister, Liliana, who always helped my mum to make it. I took the photographs of each step right down to the *musnik* we make for New Year's Day (the one we put the coin in).

Valentina further explained:

> Traditionally, *musnik* was made on New Year's Eve and then eaten the next day, but when I was young, I didn't want to spend the day cooking, I just wanted to relax. We would have a family meal and the head of the house,

usually Dad, would cut the *musnik* into pieces for the family, and one piece would be kept for the house. When the *musnik* was cooked it would be put in the middle of the table and Dad would say 'Good luck' for the year. Then he would spin the round *musnik* pan around three times. When the pan stops you would take the piece in front of you. Then everyone searched, as they ate, for the coin. Whoever got the coin would get 'Good luck' for the year. You could if you wanted to, sell it back and say: 'Could you give me money for the coin'. Perhaps when I was young I did, but not now. I am older now and I want the coin to bring me luck.

If the silver coin is not found in any of the pieces given out to those present, it means it is in one of the remaining pieces and thus belongs to the household (see Image 41 below). This is thought of as a very propitious outcome for everyone in the family as all will share the good luck.

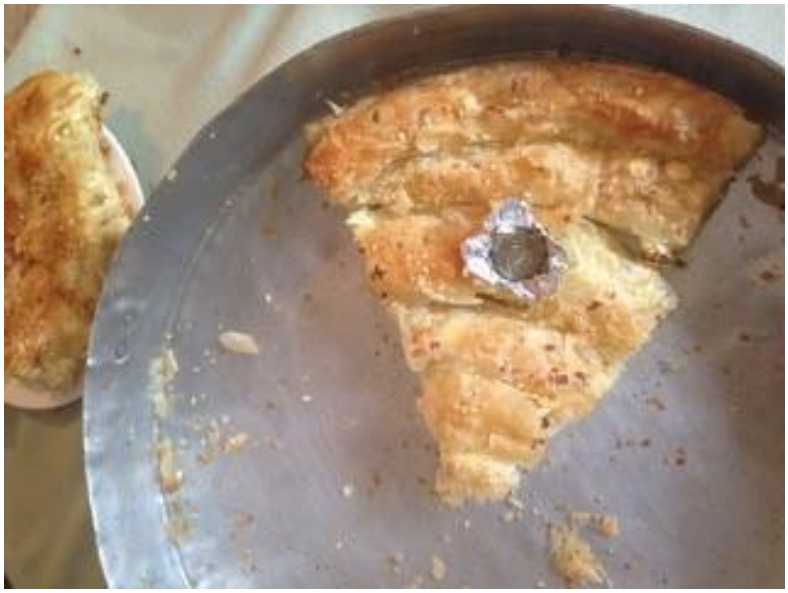

Image 41: Musnik *showing a wrapped coin that was hidden in the pastry*

Older women had been taught the recipe by their mothers and grandmothers, and now in Melbourne they supervise the younger women and show them the correct way to make it, the way they have been taught. As the instruction is always in Macedonian, it is also another way to teach the language. The ingredients are assembled and the quantities are measured by eye, mixed by hand, and constantly checked to ensure the right texture

of the pastry, before it is ready for the next stage. Valentina explains how her mother makes *musnik:*

> When my mother made it, she would say 'this is the flour'. They don't have to measure it [the flour] and when they do, they say 'I want to make two pans, so this is how much flour we need'. My mother will put in that amount or say 'I am going to make five pans' so we will have to put in more flour. The women never measure.

Christ suggests that the ancient spiral form of this bread is a symbol still used in contemporary communities of the Mediterranean. She believes that the spiral pattern refers to the yearly seasons and those of a person's life. As discussed in other chapters, this spiral pattern is also found in dancing at baptisms, memorials and weddings, in the church hall and in private houses. The spiral bread is made for all feasts and served on special occasions. This simple domestic ritual is a reminder of women's domestic practices and their preparation of special foods associated with smells, tastes, stories and memories, which are reminders of the past and of how families reproduce identity in the diaspora. When older women teach younger ones in Macedonian, the practice is more than a cultural statement, it is reminder of national identity.

Martinka – ***A celebration of spring in the Australian autumn***

At the beginning of the Australian autumn Macedonian women keep alive an ancient tradition by wearing a *martinka* in anticipation of the first signs of spring and to celebrate the beginning of what should be a fertile agricultural year. The women of each family gather to twist red and white threads to form a fine, thin bracelet, a *martinka* (see Image 42 below). They tie these bracelets around each other's wrists and onto the wrists of young children. The colours, I was told, represent purity (white) and life (red), and the wearing of the bracelet guarantees good luck for the wearer. But, Valentina said, it is not just for the wearer because once it is taken off and put in a tree 'it will bring a fruitful and prosperous season for the whole family'.

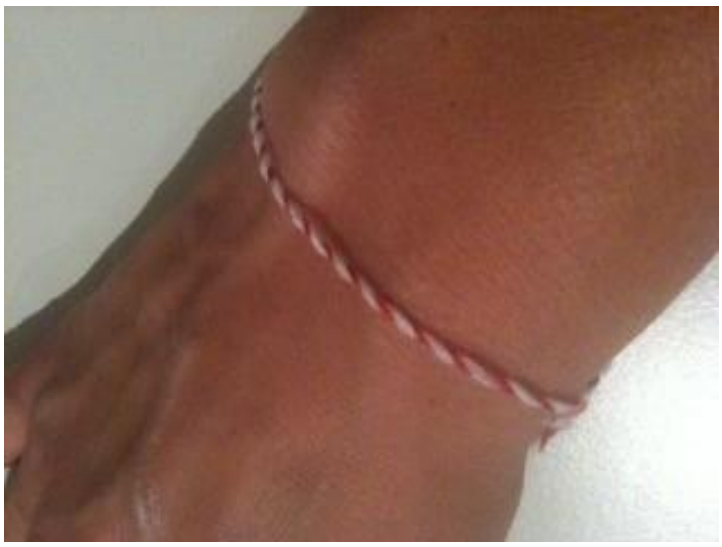

Image 42: Martinka *showing the red and white threads.*

Valentina explained: 'you put on the *martinka* on the first day of March and you take it off on March 25'; the date corresponds with the return of certain migratory birds from Africa. The return of the birds, she said, is a reminder of a change of season. I spoke to a Romanian woman, Christina, now living in Melbourne, about the practice the wearing of red and white bracelets to celebrate spring. She was familiar with the custom, because when she was very young, living in a Romanian village, all girls were given silver brooches to which they would attach ribbons of red and white. Valentina confirmed that the *martinka* tradition continued after the family migrated to Melbourne, where women still make *martinkas* for themselves and their children:

> My mother [Rose], or an auntie or grandmother made mine. It was made of red and white cotton, or wool or twine. After it was made, they wrapped it on my wrist and when they did, they would say 'good luck'. It doesn't match the seasons [in Australia] because over there [in Florina] the first day of spring is the first of March. This is the season which brings blossoming and newness. Once the birds are seen returning, you take it off, around the 25 March and throw it on a tree and make a wish thinking of what you want to flourish.

Martinkas, Valentina told me, are also put on 'little boys, [but] not on big boys' and stressed that 'only we females can put them on'. Valentina has continued the tradition, not only with her friends, but also with her nephew and his children:

> Over at my nephew's house I put them on his young children's wrists and told them when I visited next 'we would have to take them off.' When I cut them from their wrists, I took the children to a tree on the corner of the street and we threw them on it as we made a wish for the new year.

Valentina now lives closer to the seaside and has learnt to adapt the practice to her new location:

> I had been taught to throw the *martinka* on to a tree but over the years, things have changed and I now go to the beach and throw it into the water and make a wish. This is because I grew up in suburbs near the ocean and the beach has always meant a lot to me.

Household preparations for Easter: Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday

On the Thursday before Easter in 2016 (Holy Thursday), the women of the Gelis household came together to begin the preparations for Easter: grandmother Rose, her daughter-in-law Stella and her granddaughter Sarah. Later, her daughter Valentina, and granddaughter Mila arrived with her two small daughters. All had come either to participate actively, to learn or just to watch the production. By mid-morning, the kitchen had been made ready: four dozen eggs in flat cardboard cartons, bottles of food dye, large bunches of parsley in glass vases and several pairs of pink-beige pantyhose, all bought by Rose, had been assembled. She checked the quality of items, and when satisfied, began to organise the kitchen bench. She told the young girls and her great-grandchildren stories of how she watched the women in her own household prepare for Easter.

When all the women had arrived, Rose allocated tasks: one cut the panty hose into strips, another heated water in small saucepans, while the small girls tore parsley into small sprigs and put them in bowls of water. Rose inspected their work. Her skills, acquired through 80 years of practice, would be needed for this 'master class'. She demonstrated to the younger ones how to wet the egg, select the parsley, position it on the egg's surface and bind it on with the small strip of pantyhose. After a demonstration, it was the turn of the others. Everyone got involved, even the young ones who were anxious to help. For the novice, centring the parsley on the egg while trying to secure it was difficult. There was much laughter and joking in Macedonian and English, and Rose stood by to offer help and advice.

After the eggs were wrapped, they were put back into the cartons. Rose then checked the temperature of the water in which the eggs would be immersed along with the food dye. After a discussion, it was decided that two large saucepans would be filled with red dye, two smaller ones with blue and another with yellow (see Image 43 below). Rose kept stressing the importance of simmering and not boiling the water; when the correct temperature had been reached each egg was lowered on a spoon into the simmering dye. While the eggs were cooking and being dyed, it was time for coffee, snacks and storytelling. Rose constantly got up to check the eggs while she told of some of the mishaps she had encountered in the past: buying black pantyhose rather than pink-beige, buying an unsuitable dye when the family first settled in Melbourne, and the panic when she realised she had left the preparations for Easter until the afternoon of Holy Saturday. These stories were recounted as cautionary tales: Rose was warning the others to be prepared, organised and to ensure that they bought the right things.

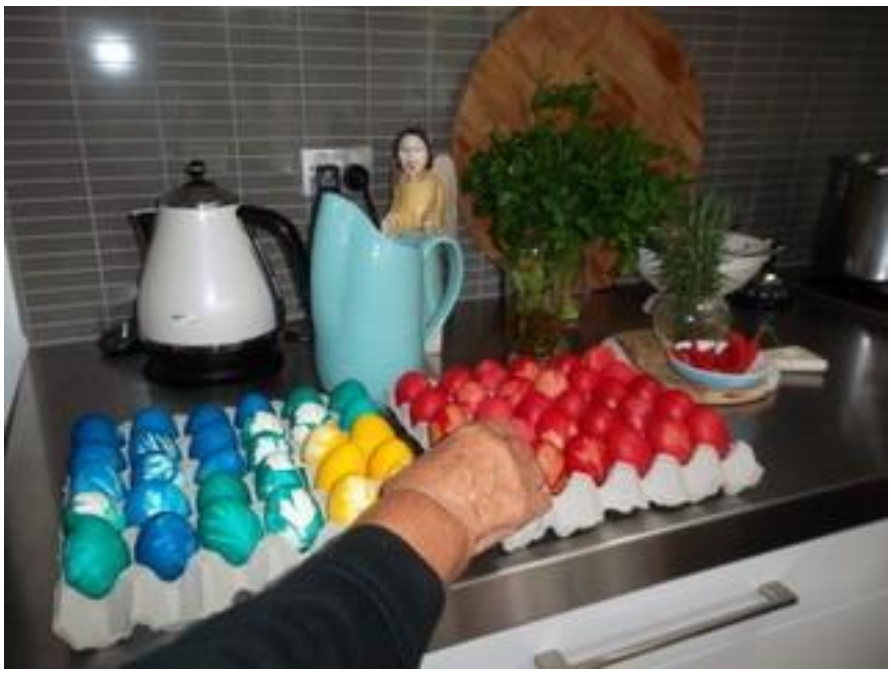

Image 43: The coloured eggs ready for Saturday night

Once the eggs had simmered for the correct length of time, the heat was turned off, but they were left in the water to keep cooking, and the women began their next task: preparing the candles to be carried during the Saturday night procession when the congregation circles the Church three times. Rose took charge again and brought the long white candles to the dining room table, with the paper cups and aluminium foil. Sarah, under her grandmother's supervision, cut the aluminium into large squares to be used to cover the paper cups. These cups act to shield the candle's flame from the wind. Holes were punched in the bottom of the paper cups and, once covered with aluminium foil, candles were pushed through the holes and secured it with tape. Finally, white ribbons were tied around the candles, and then they were placed in rows on the sideboard ready to take to church (see Image 44 below). On the Saturday night, the congregation gathered in the carpark outside the Church, then they followed a procession of young boys in white gowns, and parish priests and deacons, who held banners and religious artefacts, around the Church three times. The families followed, holding the candles, sharing flames, and offering candles to those who had forgotten to bring theirs.

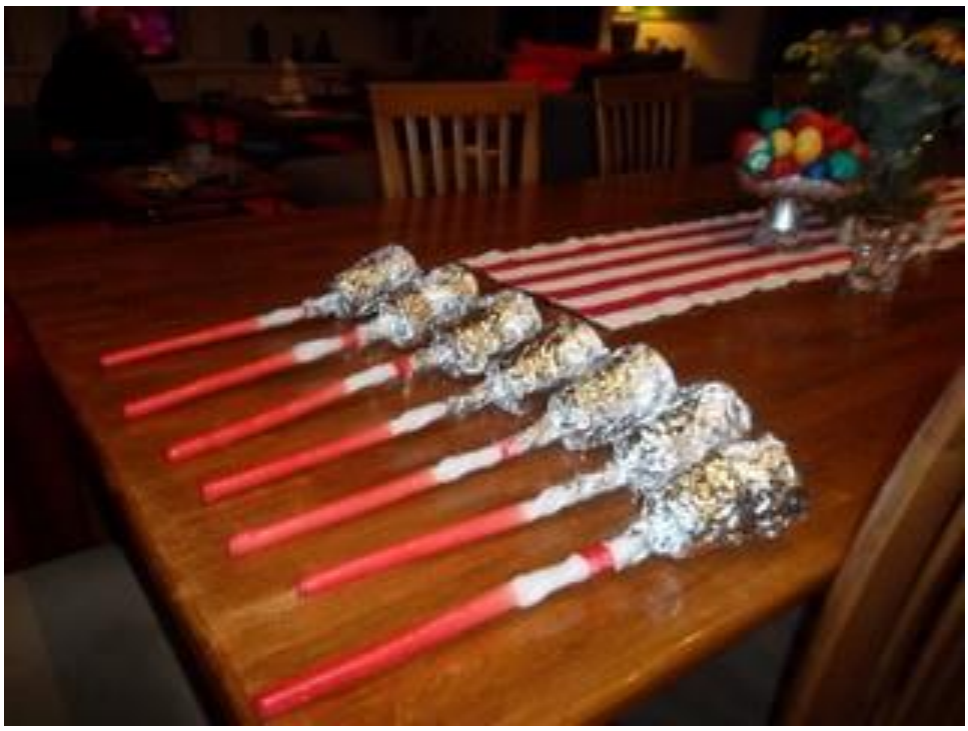

Image 44: The candles ready to light the procession held on Saturday night.

After the midnight service on Saturday, the family celebrations of the Easter resurrection begin, with meals at home. As family members arrive, they greet each other with cries of 'Christ is risen' which are answered with 'He has indeed'. That night I went to the newly acquired house of Lydia and Jovan's son, Philip, and daughter, Marika. As Jovan was a deacon at the local Church he officiated, blessed the food and said the appropriate prayers. As the house had been recently bought by the siblings it would be first feast celebrated in the house. Women had spent the day making the special fast-breaking menu, which included Macedonian specialties of chicken soup with noodles, eggs and lemon; braised liver and intestines; special cheeses and bread; as well as the not-so-traditional pavlovas and other desserts learned from neighbours.

Three generations of the extended family attended. At the end of the midnight service, Lydia and Rose learned that a recently widowed young woman and her children had not been invited to an end-of-fast meal so they offered them a place at their table, which the mother gladly accepted. The meal was held in the dining room, while the sitting room with comfortable seating and large television tuned to an English soccer match catered to the desires of the younger members. During the meal, shouts were heard coming from

the room, but as we left, we found younger children asleep on the lounges. Once seated in the dining room, Lydia and Rose were quick to break their fast with glasses of milk, and bread with oil and cheese. Apart from Lydia's husband, the deacon, nobody had observed the fast strictly. During such a fasting period, women can supervise family meals, but during the day, when people are at work and in other places, they have no control over what is being eaten. As discussed earlier, this concerned many of the older women, as they linked ill health to the lack of fasting, but on this evening, nothing was said about those who had not fasted.

Image 45: Father and son supervise the cooking of lamb for the midday Easter meal.

The next day, known as Holy Sunday, another family meal celebrates Easter. This one follows an early morning church service; members of the extended family are invited to a luncheon that includes the roasting of a whole lamb on a spit (see Image 45 above). As each family arrives, it is customary for the women in the family to take plates of food to others who are working in the kitchen. It is important to note that these offerings are not haphazard: hours of planning ensure that the menu is well organised, all items are homemade, from the condiments to the three courses. On each occasion that I am invited to a family meal, I am asked to bring an eggplant lasagne.

Image 46: The head of the family blesses the family and food at the Easter meal

For Easter 2016, the women had organised one long table on the verandah and set it for 24 people (see Image 46 above). The verandah was close to the kitchen, with a bar at one end, and looked out over the garden and vegetable patch. Women brought to the table plates of salads, flavoured rice balls, tomatoes and peppers and a special Easter bread baked by Lydia. While women worked in the kitchen, the deacon, in his red apron printed with 'I don't need a recipe: I'm Macedonian', spit-roasted a whole lamb. The lamb was slowly turned over hot coals and he basted it with rosemary and oil. After the main course, desserts were served on other tables so that guests could make their own selection. Young women took the children to the park to hunt for chocolate eggs. Men, now at one end of the table, watched AFL football on television. Women brought empty plates to be washed, while others set the uneaten food on plates. As each family left, they were given a plate piled with food and a slice of white Easter bread (see Image 47 below), to be taken home.

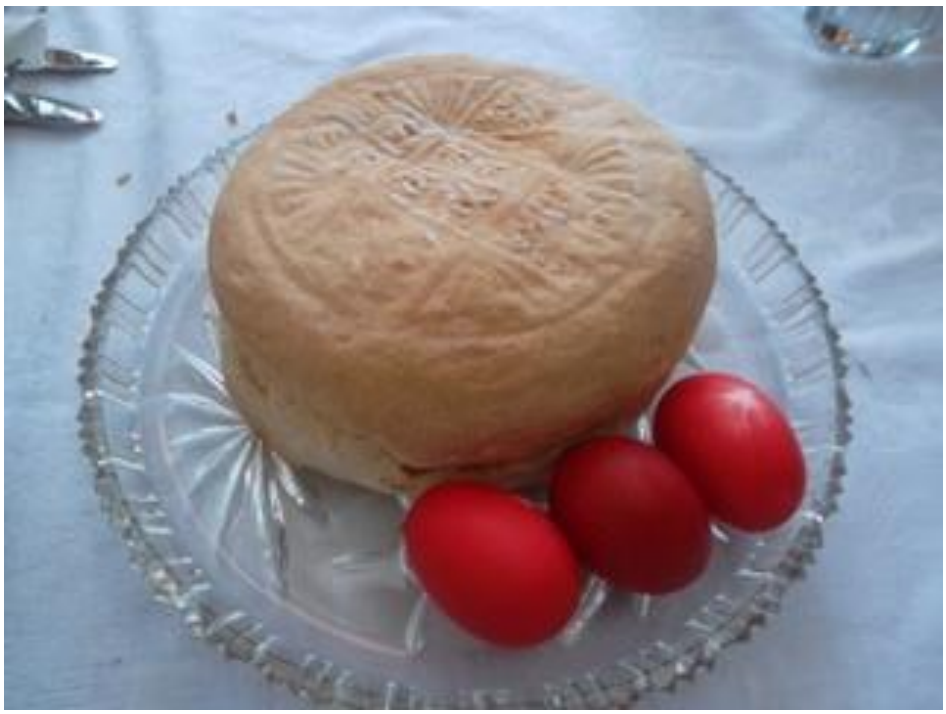

Image 47: Easter bread baked by the women

The two days of Christmas

At a Christmas meal that I had organised at my house for members of the Gelis family in the early 1990s, I was embarrassed to realise that 25 December falls in a period of fasting for Macedonians (that begins on 28 November and lasts until the Feast of the Nativity on 6 January. This means that the Gelis family has two Christmas meals, as do many Macedonians living in Australia, because older family members still obey the strict rules of fasting, while children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren celebrate with gifts and eat an Australian Christmas meal. I dealt with the mistake by defrosting vegetable soup and offering beans, salads, and more vegetables in place of the original main course and a sago pudding was accepted as dessert.

Since Stella and Peter married, I have visited family households for many Christmas celebrations. Each year, this meal is hosted in a different family member's household, always supervised by the women of the family. Like all family events, this celebration is a collaborative effort; women are asked to bring their special dishes. The menu includes musnik, rice balls, meats, salads, peppers, desserts and fruit. Over the years I have watched as younger members grow up, meet partners, marry and then bring their own

children to the family meal. The day includes gift giving; as each family arrives, they put boxes of gifts under a large Christmas tree, which becomes the focus of the young children's attention.

In 2015, when Stella and Peter were the hosts, the dining room table was extended to seat 24, and was set in the morning by younger members of the family while women organised in the kitchen. The men were outside roasting meat on the barbecue, and children stood waiting for gifts to be given. The older girls had arranged flowers in small glass vases and placed them along the centre of the table. This was the first Christmas since Rose's husband Jim and their daughter Liliana had died; Valentina decorated the table with some of her sister's favourite flowers. These were red and white camellias; she arranged them carefully then photographed them, and with the help of other relatives, wrote a message and posted it on Facebook. This was a memorialisation for a much-loved sister, daughter, niece, mother, cousin, mother-in-law and grandmother. It was also a demonstration of how younger people use new technologies to adapt ancient customs. Posting the message on Facebook linked family members in the suburbs to women at 'home' and was a modern way of remembering and expressing grief, which was still associated and controlled by women.

Conclusion

I have shown in previous chapters that the maintenance of identity is not a simple matter of transplantation from 'home' to a new location, because in practice identity is always 'contested, played out and imagined'. Ehrkamp and Nagel see 'religious hubs', the immigrant community's local church as 'tied to the multi-local reproduction of communal identity' (2012: 626). While these places for worship help to maintain cultural, social and political ties to 'home', family homes in diasporas perform similar functions. Macedonian houses at 'home' and now in the diaspora remain spaces for the performance of culture and identity. Similarities between family homes and churches show them to be connected by items made by women that are brought to be used at every religious and secular performance. However, homes and churches are linked in other ways: both are cleansed and blessed by holy water. In family homes, a space for icons is made by women,

and like the church, is decorated by women. Candles are lit here, and offerings of flowers and prayers are made by women to their favourite deity. Private homes, like churches, are important spaces in which to communicate faith, but like the Church in the performance of rites, they not only express faith but also a national identity.

Macedonian women who settled in Melbourne in the 1960s had come from generations of women already acknowledged at 'home' as 'the keepers of culture' (Karakasidou 1996: 100; Karavidas 1931: 242). After the 1913 partition, women found 'a way of maintaining their heritage and enabling … control over their lives in the potentially explosive situations which surrounded them' (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 7). Macedonian women learnt to maintain their heritage, and now in the diaspora, they continue to teach their mother tongue, pass on traditions and culture, and perform seasonal and life-cycle religious rites in households and at the Church.

At 'home', women are the matrix of ritual performance, and in the Melbourne diaspora, women remain at the centre of politics (Stankovska & Petrovska 1994: 7). Rituals in public and private spaces are linked to performances that rely on women's specialist knowledge. Women's roles include making and tending a domestic sacred space, performances to celebrate *martinka,* New Year's Day, Easter (death), Dormition (falling asleep), and Christmas (birth). Women also take responsibility for the protection of family members' health and spirituality; discussed in this and the previous chapter in relation to the start of life, during marriage and the end of life. These are women's responsibilities, linked to the agency of 'a strong, sympathetic, female presence as an intercessor with the supernatural world' (Hughes 2019: 142). In this context, cultural and national identities remain constant and fluid as they depend on the ability of women to support each other, to teach younger women, and to reproduce and re-negotiate Macedonian identity at home and in the public spaces of Church, Church Hall and cemetery.

Conclusion: Women performing identity in the home and church

This thesis has explored the question of national identity with a focus on the complex and fluid process by which Macedonian immigrant communities construct, defend and re-create identity in new locations. The early chapters set out the historical background to Macedonian resettlement in Australia, which goes back to the late 19th century when the term the 'Macedonian Question' was first coined. That period in European history saw the decline of an empire, interference by Western powers and attempts by Balkan communities to gain autonomy and dependence. The construction of the nation-state depended on struggle and resistance against an imperial oppressor and was necessary 'for membership of the European club' (Mazower 2000: 16). Not only were nationalist 'passions and anxieties' seen as necessary to 'produce the kind of historical pedigree … required by Europe' but communities also had to demonstrate that they shared ethnicity, religion and language and were settled within defined borders (Mazower 2000: 16, 103). Maps were drawn and statistics gathered to support the claims of nationalists in each region. However, since Roman colonisation, Macedonia had developed into a region ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse, a 'mix of different peoples' now threatened by the expansionist ambitions of newly-created states (Mazower 2000: 103-104).

In 1913 at the Treaty of Bucharest Macedonia was annexed by its neighbours: Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania. This annexation was executed to resolve the so-called Macedonian Question which continued as nation-states imposed their own identities on Macedonians. As I have shown, the Question had an impact on those who migrated and settled in Melbourne after WWII, and also on the generations born in Australia. This thesis has focused on members of the Macedonian diaspora who settled in the southern suburbs of Melbourne, to investigate women's roles in households and at the local Macedonian Orthodox Church. My analysis has shown that their public and domestic roles are essential to the maintenance, defence and re-imagining of Macedonian identity.

A community's identity is constructed from a shared history, formed by memory and experience, where symbols, artefacts, language and other elements are used in public

and in everyday life. In migrant populations, women play important roles in the maintenance of culture and tradition yet 'traditionally, the official political sphere has been the arena for male activity' (Håland 2009a: 106). In scholarly analysis, the ascription of roles has often been divided between those performed in private/domestic spheres and those in public spheres, and it was assumed that power in the latter always belonged to men. This study has explored how power is exercised in both social and political life and traditionally, as Håland suggests, 'in the hands of the women' (2009a: 106). An existing body of research shows the importance of women's roles in families and societies, including in the context of migration, yet there are still gaps in our knowledge, and the literature on the Macedonian diaspora has thus far contributed only limited accounts of women's roles in their communities. This thesis provides a detailed description of the roles played by Macedonian women in Melbourne, showing that their performances in both private homes and in the Macedonian Orthodox Church are crucial to the shaping and maintaining of cultural and national identity, which for Macedonians remain highly politicised.

As discussed in Chapter One, the political reasons for Macedonian villagers leaving the region had their beginnings in the period 1870-1913. This period in the Balkans was one of nation-building, when the descriptor the Macedonian Question referred to a regional dispute among 'ethnological[ly] mix[ed]' communities, in a region with 'no clear borders' or any 'formal existence as an administrative Ottoman entity' (Mazower 2000: 103). As the Ottoman Empire collapsed, Macedonia's neighbours worked towards independence and Western powers focused on their expansionist ambitions (Kofos 1989: 262); finally, with the signing of the Treaty of London in 1913 the dispute was settled: Macedonia was divided up to become provinces in the new nation-states of Greece, Serbia, Albania and Bulgaria, (Kofos 1989: 262). However, this did not bring the promised stability but rather led to tensions within populations, and among the states. In formerly 'Macedonian' regions, tensions continued as the new minorities were often imprisoned for speaking their own language, identifying as Macedonian, or claiming to be members of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. In Aegean Macedonia (northern Greece), the names of families, villages and towns were changed, and Macedonians were required to conform or suffer the consequences.

A result of political, economic and social turbulence during WWII and the Civil War Aegean Macedonians felt that they had little choice but to leave 'home' and settle overseas. Macedonian communities developed in the US, Canada and Australia and while some migrants may have imagined that they would return 'home' one day, others knew this was to become their permanent new homes. The research for this thesis began as a study of Macedonian women from Aegean Macedonia who had settled in Melbourne, but later it included women from the Republic of North Macedonian who had joined the Macedonian communities after the collapse of Yugoslavia.

Traditionally, within families, Macedonian women were responsible for the maintenance of culture and performing family rites; after the region's colonisation, women became central in the defence of practices which identified them as Macedonians. Later, in suburbs of Melbourne, it was Macedonian women who, in private homes, taught the distinctive practices, traditions and language, and so shaped national identity in the diaspora. With its focus on women's roles in families and the community, my research confirmed the findings of anthropologist Håland who argues on the basis of her own research that women in the region 'are often stronger and more assured than women both Dubisch [1995]and I know from our own societies' (2009a: 106). She suggests that the view that the public political sphere is an arena of male activity needs to change to accommodate other views, because 'the social and political underpinnings of the society have traditionally been in the hands of women' (Håland 2009a: 106).

In the diaspora, Macedonian women are intimately linked through their household practices to all performances that occur in the multi-functional spaces of the local Macedonian Orthodox Church. And at the local Church, women from Aegean Macedonia and the Republic of North Macedonia meet, worship, socialise and perform both sacred and secular activities together. In these spaces, they talk about 'home', which to them is a place not divided by state borders, where they speak a common language and share experiences, culture and a history that remain the basis of a national identity.

My research involved listening to women's narratives; it was mainly they who gave me an oral history of a region, a history told 'from below', based on memories, stories and experiences of those who lived it; this history was discussed in Chapter Two. While women described historical events, they also showed artefacts that were used to construct and challenge the history of Macedonia in narratives that continue to be told within families and at the Church. Many stories told by women of 'home' concern the everyday, the life of the family and village. They include cautionary tales like that of Peter and his cousin and the bees, of family sleeping and eating arrangements, of dances, picnics and weddings, all of which give glimpses of the lives of those in the village. But other stories were darker, such as that of the woman who was saved from having her tongue cut out for not having learned Greek, or of the villagers' successful hiding of the Jewish butcher in a barrel, and the failed attempt to hide a pig from German soldiers. Over the nearly 30 years that I have known the Gelis family, I have heard these stories told and retold, noticed new ones being added, and observed that different aspects are included at each retelling; they are all versions of aspects of Macedonian history, and become family myths told to new generations, who continue to shape heritage and identity.

Fani's story, also included in Chapter Two, was about her parents' incarceration in the late 1940s for identifying as, and continuing to speak, Macedonian. She reminded me that both the Greek and Australian governments had an assimilation policy in place, so it puzzled me why families in Aegean Macedonia would leave home to settle in Australia. However, Fani's story illustrated how her family's circumstances changed when in the early 1970s the federal government adopted a policy of multiculturalism. The significance of this change was noted in many casual conversations I had with older women. These women still talk about the Whitlam Labor government and how 'things changed' for them then. A shift from assimilation to multiculturalism meant that they had a different relationship with their new homeland. Macedonian women now felt able to openly practice their culture, to publicly speak their language and to celebrate difference. Early in the research, at a memorial service, I spoke of 'home' to a sister-in-law of Rose and Lydia who had also migrated in the 1960s. When asked if she had ever had second thoughts about leaving the village, she answered she had visited 'home' many times, but

she and her husband had a good life, and successfully and safely brought up their two sons in Melbourne so she had never regretted moving. She told me that only in Melbourne could she really be Macedonian, because there she can openly speak Macedonian and claim her national identity. A change in Australian government policy allowed them to have both Macedonian and Australian nationality, and thus become official citizens of Australia.

Women's stories as told to me underpin this research, but as Dorothy Hodgson (2001) says in an introduction to ethnography, those listening to stories or watching performances are affected by more than the text and the language used; they are influenced by visual images, artistic styles, by practices, gestures and smells. During this research, as I listened to stories or watched performances, my reaction to them came from an experience that was more than linguistic. Visual images in the familiar shape of the Macedonian Orthodox Church were of icons both sacred and political, their colours, the smells of basil and incense, the glow of lit candles and the by-now familiar gestures of the women during performances. In households, guests are often greeted by the smell of basil, lemons and freshly baked *musnik.* In family houses and at the Church, women's performances remain the answer to the Macedonian Question because they constantly address Macedonian national identity. For them, identity includes both faith and politics and in women's performances in the Church and in family homes, their practices remain an important element in the expression of Macedonian identity.

Chapter Three described the history and status of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which is still in dispute in Europe. In the Australian diaspora, the Church is an important focal point for the community. The Church that I focused on during this research is a multi-purpose space, purchased and renovated by the Macedonian community in Melbourne in the late 1900s. It continues to serve that community and is both a reminder of Macedonia's ancient beginnings and of more recent political events. The New Testament refers to the Macedonian region and its capital Salonika, in the establishment of the new religious movement. It was from the port on the Aegean Sea and along the main Roman highway, that the teachings of a new religious movement spread westward and into Europe. In its nascent stage, this movement was shaped by pagan and Hebrew

rites and was largely dependent on the financial support and hospitality provided by women. It was not until the fourth century that the Roman Empire legally recognised the Christian Church, and later Christianity became the state religion. With this change, women's central position in the church came under attack, and in the Roman Empire the most influential men were church statesmen (Breasted 1944: 762; Cooper 2013).

However, the Macedonian Orthodox Church, in both structure and performance is still shaped by its early beginnings, and women's practices have not been erased. Chapter Three included a physical description of the Church, with its internal shape formed by the icon stand, furniture and artefacts to become a multi-layered place for religious performance. In the three chapters that follow, descriptions of important Orthodox rites showed that in the diaspora the performance of rituals acknowledges the early religious movement and makes many references to women's central roles in liturgical celebrations. Women participate in prayer, the giving of food, flowers, herbs and clothes – all associated with their practical, domestic roles. Much of the symbolism in the rituals concerns areas of life considered to fall into women's domains: birth, death and rebirth.

Women are offered a space in the Church, and they are found visually in the icons of female saints, but most importantly, in the large icon of Mary set into the iconostasis on the opposite side of the Beautiful Gate, next to her son. Her image is repeated in her icon-stand on the left side of the church where women make offerings of gifts and prayers every week. She is also celebrated in the Orthodox church at her Dormition. In private homes, she is found in icons and in the many daughters named after her. When I asked interviewees what pseudonym they wanted me to use for them, it was often Mary. This is a result of that early religious movement, only formalised in the fourth century, in which most followers of Paul's banned teachings were women, pagan and Jewish, who found meaning in a religious movement that recognised them. As an underground movement, it had its beginnings in family houses, where meals were held to spread the new messages throughout the region.

It is important to recognise women's performance in the Macedonian Orthodox Church and to re-evaluate their domestic roles as not limited to the domestic sphere, but as

crucial in the politics of the defence and creation of Macedonian identity. In the diaspora, the Church has played an important role in the formation of Macedonian communities, as local churches have become social, religious and political centres. There are crucial connections between the Church and Macedonian communities, and nationalist sentiments are expressed in visual images that can be at one and the same time religious and political. In the local Church in Melbourne at the centre of this study, icons of the archangels Michael and Gabriel, on the Angel Gates, guard the sanctuary. They are dressed as warriors and hold crosses like weapons, and can be visually linked to Macedonian freedom fighters, whose images hang on the walls of the Church hall. These latter men are dressed not for a religious war but for the defence of a nation-state.

During my research, participants spoke of the Macedonian Orthodox Church having to be re-shaped by and for the local community and, like other immigrant groups, they also used other religious spaces. The congregation made extensive renovations to meet both the architectural norms of the Orthodox church and their own religious and social requirements. Chapter Three described each space to show how, from the car park and verandah to the interior of the Church and the hall, the spaces are used for the performance of rites. These spaces also included the local cemetery, where women's practice and performance were central, found in familiar actions, prayers, songs and gestures, and thus playing crucial roles in the performance of Macedonian culture.

Rites in the Macedonian Orthodox Church celebrate the cyclical pattern of the seasons and of human life. This thesis has drawn on the work of van Gennep and Turner, which provided a framework to highlight the complexity of performances that assist community members to move successfully from one stage of life to the next. It was evident that in the life-cycle rites of this Macedonian community, women's practices, prayers and performances are central to the timeless 'eternal issues of health, children, death and birth' (Håland 2012b: 108). Chapters Five and Six showed how women's roles connect households to the Church and how women successfully assist in individuals' transformations. The performance of life-cycle rites marks stages of life, birth, baptism, name days, marriage, and death, and assists not only the individual but also the family, to acknowledge the new stage that one of their members has entered.

From the time that her child is born, the mother is responsible for her child's health and safety, so at 40 days old, she brings the child to the Church to be acknowledged as a church member by the priest and blessed by him. During this blessing, the place of women as mothers is clear: after the blessing, mother and priest make their way to Mary's icon where the mother kisses, offers prayers, gifts and thanks to Mary, the mother goddess, the protector of life. At weddings and at the end of life Macedonian women are principle performers in the rituals which begin in family households and continue in the Church, church hall or cemetery. Later, during memorials for the dead, women assume responsibilities during ritual performances of gift-giving and offerings of prayer, food and gifts to others.

In pre-Christian times, women were seen generally as connected to birth, nurture and the care of the dead, and now in the Macedonian diaspora women still assume these responsibilities and remain central performers in rites that secure their family's life and health (Håland 2009a: 103). In the diaspora, the annual liturgical celebrations are still shaped by the ancient calendar that revolved around the northern hemisphere's agricultural seasons. As with life-cycle rites, women's performances in these rites are celebrated at the Church but find their beginnings in their domestic practices. Chapter Four discussed the rituals adopted from rites that celebrated early pagan goddesses who controlled the seasons, fertility, abundance and the harvest. In the Orthodox Church, Mary's biography as 'sovereign of all creation' shapes the liturgical calendar, which includes the birth and death of her child and her 'falling asleep', all connected to goddesses who control the agricultural year. Over the year of seasonal performances, women begin each week by decorating the appropriate space.

Many of these roles remain practical, and in the days before an important ritual, there is much planning and anticipation as women produce goods, props and decorations. They always arrive early and seem to have planned exactly how the Church would be dressed. Items used to decorate are either home-made or home-grown by women and the Church is dressed, like a theatre, in a manner appropriate to the upcoming performance. At the weekly Divine Liturgy, it is usual for the older women to arrive with baskets of flowers,

leaves and home-made bread to be used during the communion. Women work together to transform the Church with special flowers, leaves, ribbons to be tied to lamps and candles, and particular decorative items for Christmas, Easter and Dormition, and during these rites, women admire and comment on them. The colours used, and the herbs or flowers selected, express their faith, but the repeated choice of red and yellow, the colours of the Macedonian flag, is also a political statement. Women's roles are necessary and as in any performance they are crucial to its success, guaranteeing the participation of the congregation, the pride in an Orthodox Church service, and in their Macedonian identity.

The dressing of the church remains an important creative practice, but so too are women's performative roles, which show them as crucial practitioners in the completion of rites. Each week a few women of the congregation rise early to bake the bread to be blessed, cut and given to members at the communion, and shared within the Church and outside on the verandah. At each ritual, women in the congregation stand to answer each prayer in song, and each week, women read the Lord's Prayer and the Nicene Creed in English to the congregation. Sometimes women in the choir prompt or correct deacons when the wrong prayer is sung, and on occasions the priest's wife assists her husband in the delivery of wine to those in the congregation taking communion. On other occasions, I saw women stop holy water from leaking out of its container onto the floor; others helped to balance a circle of herbs placed on the top of the patron's icon-stand; and some held a ladder for a man while he placed the crown of thorns on the icon of Jesus.

Women often act as directors, helping to ensure the success of a performance, from simple services between a mother and priest at the Churching of Women, to the most holy of days, Holy Thursday, when women's actions complete the most complex of rites. On that evening, from the moment that the icons of Mary, Jesus and John are taken from the sanctuary, women assume control. The nave become a women's space, where they make offerings of gifts and prayers and then remain in the Church to decorate Christ's tomb and to watch and pray during the night. The mood of the ritual always seems to be influenced by the women present. With their performances, women establish the tone, especially at Mary's Dormition and at memorials to honour the *Bogoroditse* and the dead,

which suggests the responsibility that women have for these rites associated with death. In contrast, at Theophany, during the auction of the icons, with jokes and laughter, they create a different mood. Women's participation in all these rituals is crucial, not simply as passive viewers but as shapers, controllers and participants in the performance when needed.

Women's roles in the diaspora are pivotal because they connect private and public spaces and 'provide a cultural matrix' for the survival of community identity (Stankovska and Petrovska 1994: 7). This is seen in the roles they play at the local level to help shape a community out of families from Aegean Macedonia and the Republic of North Macedonia. While the Macedonian Question is still debated at 'home', Macedonian families in the diaspora celebrate their cultural identity and continually reshape it. Women's efforts to reproduce customs and traditions in the diaspora form part of a creative enterprise, shaped from ancient and contemporary elements, as witnessed in the Melbourne protest march described in Chapter One. On this march, elements from old and more recent histories of 'home' were used to express a Macedonian-Australian identity. Reference was made in the Introduction to a Macedonian/Aboriginal flag, created as a background for the performance of peoples who share experiences of violent colonisation. These two events illustrate the complex, multi-layered responses made by ordinary people, including women, who in both practice and performance participate in the production of an ever-changing national identity.

Women's domestic roles at 'home' in the Balkans and now in diaspora households discussed in Chapter Seven showed that women have been concerned with not only domestic duties but also their public responsibilities, including teaching Macedonian language, culture and history. The connection between the Church and private spaces is complex and today in Macedonian communities the use of family homes is a reminder of the early religious movement women who for over four centuries gave financial support and provided spaces and meals, helping to establish Christianity. More recently, women in colonised communities and in the diaspora have found that their duties are central to the maintenance of religious and national identities. In a number of women's practices, there is an emphasis on the link between the Church and the family home. This is seen in

the everyday planning of menus that control fasting and feasting, a reminder of the suffering of others, and a preparation of the body before a feast. While in the diaspora women speak of fasting as more a matter of physical than spiritual health, it is still women's practice. The auction of icons and the blessing of water during Theophany also link Church and households. Women 'buy' icons to take home for 40 days, to ensure the good health of families over the coming year, and they use holy water to bless their homes, sprinkling it in each corner of each room and putting what is left over into food for the family. All these actions remind the family that the home too is a sacred space. These practices form part of women's responsibilities, perhaps best illustrated in the creation of a sacred space in the house, decorated with religious icons, candles, artefacts, flowers and family photographs. It remains women's responsibility to begin the morning ritual of lighting candles and arranging flowers, and this practice connects women to their Macedonian origins.

The practices performed by women in households connect families to seasonal and life-cycle rites, some which take place in the Church. Performances often begin in the family home, such as those associated with birth, weddings and death, and then move to the public spaces of the Church, which allows the participation of all members of the community. Other celebrations such as Christmas and Easter are held in both private and public spaces but conclude in family homes, where the activities are always controlled by women. The making of candles and coloured eggs, the choice of offerings to be put in the Church, and the preparation of home-made food for the weekly service all require a great deal of organisation and co-operation among women. Other rituals are exclusively undertaken in the home, initiated by women, including the rite of spring that celebrates the new season and the hope of fertility and growth. Important rites are associated with women's responsibility for keeping family members safe: fasting, and the care of young children and others. I found that these tasks are usually carried out by grandmothers. In important rites of passage such as weddings and death, women's roles are crucial to the complex domestic performances. These performances both celebrate Macedonian identity and defend it.

Over almost 30 years of participating in activities of the Macedonian community in Melbourne, I have many times witnessed the importance of *musnik* in Macedonian life, eaten at public celebrations but also closely associated with household rites (see Image 48 below). At celebrations held at the cemetery and at the church hall, *musnik* is made by women and always shared. It is made for name days and other important family events, but the family meal at home that celebrates the first day of each year is the one I most enjoy. In the days leading to the celebration, the long complex process of *musnik*-making begins, involving all the women in a family. Children often boast of their mother's skills and of the superiority of her bread; the differences are often an expression of family or regional traditions. As there are no written recipes, older women must teach the young through practice.

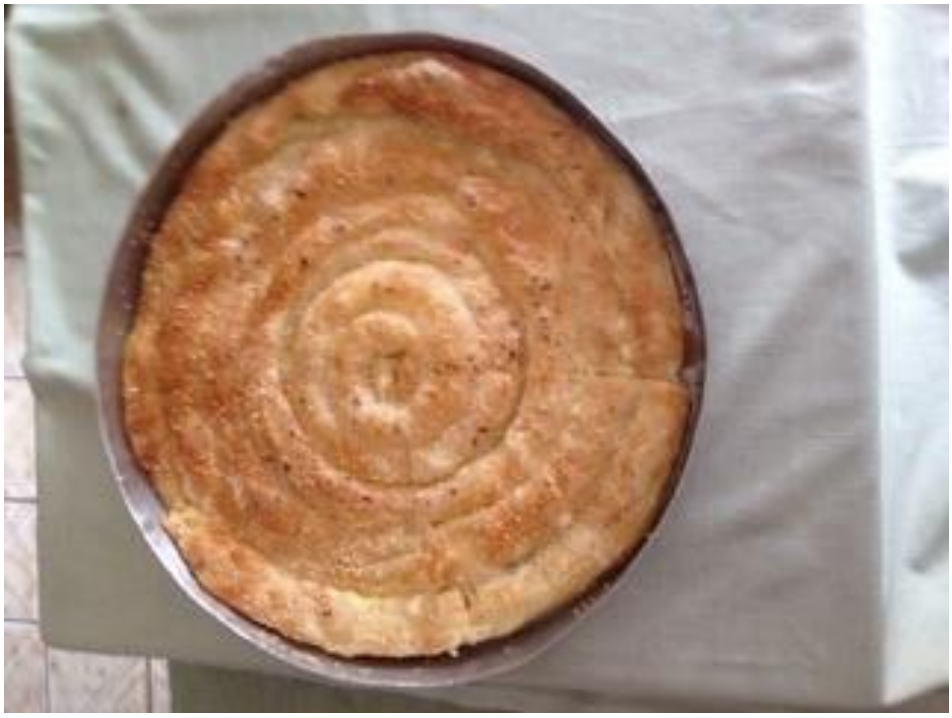

Image 48: Musnik*, showing the spiral form of the pastry.*

On the morning of the first day of the year, the uncooked bread is put in the oven and when ready, the *musnik* is brought out to the waiting family who watch as it is put in the middle of the table, then cut and shared between them and the 'house'. To make this spiral of flaky pastry, some women stretch the pastry over a large table, others use a long wooden rod to stretch it, some pleat the pastry on the rod so it can better hold its fillings. But always, the spiral begins at the centre of a circular pan and turns until the pan is filled.

Some women learn from their mothers when they are young, and others learn to make the bread after their mother's death, but all say that they want to teach their daughters how to make *musnik*. In the diaspora, women's *musnik* continues to express difference and brings into focus regional styles, suggesting women's acceptance of these. Made from memory and feel, and expressing regional and family differences, the bread remains a symbol of the link between home and church where women's roles are integral to political expressions of a shared national identity.

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