

VASCANO
THE GREEK EVIL EYE

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It was a hot afternoon in August, around 3 p.m. Our regular mid-day meal was on the table, which would then be followed by the traditional afternoon nap while the sun was at its hottest on the Athenian streets outside. I had just passed the olives when my dear, Christian father-in-law suddenly asked me, "If you don't believe in the 'evil eye', if you don't take precautions to ward it off - what do you do? How do you Americans live? I cannot understand this!"

This question out of the blue, really took me off guard, as did many practices I observed while I lived with my husband's Greek Orthodox family in Athens for eight months in 1976.

The purpose of this paper is to acquaint the reader with the above mentioned Greek practice which is still much believed in by Greeks today: the concept of the 'evil eye' or 'Vascano'. By the end of this paper the reader should have an understanding of what the evil eye is, how you get it, and what you do to get rid of it. It will also become apparent that it is indeed a very ancient tradition in Greece.

The term evil eye is not a term easily defined without first gaining a little understanding of Greece and Greeks. It is an ancient custom, a modern belief, a Greek idea and a religious practice and it is impossible to understand at first glance. At this point a very basic definition will be given for the evil eye from the Encyclopaedia of Superstitions: "The basic conception is that certain persons can bring misfortune or illness to human beings and animals, and destroy or damage inanimate objects, simply by looking at them. Hence, the term 'overlooked,' which often applied to those who were thought to have fallen under some enchantment" (Hole, 1961:155). This is a very incomplete definition, particularly in certain aspects of the "Greek" evil eye, but it is enough to let us begin. As one follows through this

paper noting the various cases and cures one should be quite well informed on the subject by the close. And it really is only by observing the cases that one can get the true concept as the Greeks see it.

Along with a number of books on the subject, interviews were held with a number of people from different parts of Greece. It should be noted that by far the more information was gained from older people who had raised children in the traditional Greek setting; it is one thing to hear an old tale from your grandmother and quite another to actually live the tale.

Before one can really understand the many ancient religious customs still practiced in Greece, of which the evil eye is only one among many, one must realize it is not only ancient religious customs these people carry on - it is an ancient life style in the full sense of the word in many areas. But it must be also stated that radio, TV, and easy travel are now making more changes in a few years than had previously been made in generations.

Travelling through Greece, one is amazed at the contrasts. Athens, a city of nearly 3 million people is modern in most aspects. Everyone downtown, who is anyone, is wearing the latest Paris fashions. Yet, everywhere you turn you are also hit by the contradictions - the ancient customs still there alongside the new; the old women in mourning black from head to toe, possibly for fifty years, the man in the business suit going to work on his bicycle, the fruit and vegetable market in the center of the street.

The villages are very beautiful, so picturesque that you can truly wonder if they are really there. They have a certain dreamlike quality. Yet, they really do exist, for a while, anyway.

Greece's geography is very mountainous and rough in most areas. Transportation, although easier than before, is still very difficult and some villages, even today, can not be reached in a wheeled vehicle.

Today, most of the villages have radio, some even a television or two, and a good number have a bus through town every few days. Monastirakion, like a good many of the small villages, has only one place in the entire village where the bus could turn around. Most of the mountain villages and some of the larger towns have streets which a car or bus -

or even a jeep can not travel. Some streets may be four feet wide paths with steps the entire length.

Life has always been difficult in Greece. The land does not give itself freely and anything which is received is only through hard labor, attested to by the stooped backs and wrinkled brows of the villagers. Thus, all the young who get even half a chance to get out and get to Athens do so, or to Germany, or America or to almost anywhere outside the village. For while a village is a fantastic place to visit (with lots of foreign money) it is a most difficult place to live. There are no real conveniences as we know them.

This is one reason Athens has grown so tremendously these last fifty years. It is also why, when you visit a village there are so many old folks and so few young ones. Thus, unless something happens to change things quickly, these villages will become ghost towns. Although the Greek government has been trying to figure out a way to encourage people to remain in their villages, they have thus far been unsuccessful.

This continuous exodus of villagers to Athens and other areas is also a large part of the reason that in Athens you can hear any number of old folktales and see all kinds of village beliefs and practices. It is, at the same time, the reason many of the practices and folktales are close to becoming lost.

The twentieth century has been a time of accelerated change in all the world and Greece is no exception. The great mobility has led to much moving about and loss of lifestyles which had previously continued in the same way, in the same place, generation after generation for hundreds and hundreds of years.

The older generations were not put under the same pressure to change as are the Greek youth today. For the old, things are that way, they have always been that way and that is just the way things are.

The priests did not encourage change in their villages. They held complete control over the lives of the villagers. As Frank Fotopoulos said "If the priests were angry with you all they had to do was excommunicate you or refuse to baptize your baby." Straight to hell in either case. You did not upset the priest! These people are strong in their Orthodox faith and to be unbaptized is the worst thing that could happen to you. The priests controlled all aspects of religion.

Today this has changed somewhat, particularly with the younger people. Nevertheless, the church has helped retain many of the ancient practices of Greece that would possibly have been lost otherwise. The evil eye is a good example, for if it had been merely a superstition of the area, first - the church would have tried to root it out, second - as the people move from the area and leave behind many of their old customs, they do not leave behind the Church and their faith. And since the evil eye is incorporated into the Greek Orthodox Church, with a special prayer to exorcise it, it is just as strong in Athens as in the rural village. Even in America, a good many Greeks believe in the evil eye, including the priests.

At this point, it is hoped the reader has a better idea of the Greek people and their environment than previously, and therefore realize that the evil eye is real to these people and must be dealt with. And it is dealt with. It is dealt with in a multitude of ways, as we shall see in the following exorcisms.

As mentioned earlier, the Greek Orthodox Church has a prayer to exorcise the evil eye from people who have been "overlooked." Below is a translation by Father Nicholas Dufault. This prayer is taken from a Greek religious book, The Efhologion.

O Lord, our God, King of the ages, Who holds all creation and is all powerful, Who made all things and wrought all things by a single command; Who changed the seven-fold furnace and flame in Babylon into a cool rain and Who protected the three holy children unharmed; the physician and healer of our souls; a bulwark of all those who believe in You; we pray to You and we beseech You, remove and cast away every diabolical energy, every satanic assault and every attack, every harmful and wicked curiosity and the evil eye of the wicked and sinful persons from your servant name; and whatsoever has happened, either by beauty, or by courage or prosperity of jealousy or envy or by the evil eye, do You, O loving Master, stretch forth Your strong hand and Your mighty arm, and visit this, Your creation, and send to him an angel of peace, a strong guardian of soul and body, who will cast out and drive away every evil will and every poison and the evil eye of the envious and evil people; so that Your servant,

who is guarded by You, may sing with praises; "the Lord is my help and I will not fear what man may do to me;" and again, "I shall not fear evil, for You are with me; for You are the Lord, my strength, the Prince of peace, and the Father of the age to come." Yea, O Lord, our God, save Your servant from every evil thing keeping him above all evil; by the intercessions of Your all-holy and glorious Lady, Theotokos and all-virgin Mary, of the Arch-angels of light, and of all Your Saints. Amen.

Although the Church has this prayer and the priests are sometimes called on to exorcise the evil eye, it is by far the most common to go to an old woman in the village or town who is well known for her power over the evil eye. In Crete you would often go to an old man.

I interviewed a very sweet lady from a village around Thessaloniki. Her name is Vassilliki. She came to the United States with her family in 1978. She has two grown children and a wealth of information on customs and beliefs. Below is her number one choice cure for the evil eye.

They take a plate and fill it with water. Then they pray the following prayer three times as they make the sign of the cross on the overlooked person:

"Jesus Christ is conquering and he scatters all evil. He scatters all evil to the mountains and to the highest mountains."

Following the prayer, the old lady drops some holy oil in the plate of water and observes it.

The prayer and the crossing is performed three more followed by another drop of oil in the water. This is the final time.*

Each time the oil is dropped into the water it is observed. If it remains a drop you don't have a bad eye, but if it dissolves into the water it reflects the evil eye being dissolved.

* It is interesting to note that in this cure for the evil eye, as well as those following, the ancient Greek idea of the good number 3 and the best number 9 (3x3) is carried throughout. The person is generally always crossed and prayed over three times, and then three more times until in the end he has been prayed over and crossed 9 times.

While in Greece, I myself, saw this particular method used by my sister-in-law. The only difference being that instead of a plate of water, she used a cup of water.

My husband and I had been in Greece only a short time when we had a nephew born. Before the allotted 40 days were up we went to the house to see the baby. At this time I was totally unaware of the customs and beliefs of the Greek people. And I really must have worried them to death. Naturally, I wanted to make a good impression and the baby was really very beautiful. So I made a fuss over what a beautiful child he was. Of course, the baby proceeded to not act so well. So they performed the above described ritual and yes, he had been overlooked, and they got rid of the evil eye. They performed this cure on the baby on three different occasions when I was present.

Although it sounds like they thought I was terrible, this is not necessarily the case. Our term "evil eye" is really rather misleading, for the Greek term is not really translated evil eye, but the "bad eye." They don't really connect that much EVIL to it as our term implies, particularly the common people. To the Greeks the bad eye is to be expected, it is a part of life so to speak. Anyone can give the evil eye quite unintentionally. Thus, whenever you compliment someone or something you always spit three times (like we knock on wood.) This will prevent you from giving the person a bad eye. When I say spit, I mean they say "phtou, phtou, phtou," in imitation of spitting. However, some of the old villagers actually spit. And I had two people tell me they were actually spit on by older folks when they were young. But this is no longer the rule.

Although it is understood anyone can give a bad eye quite unintentionally, some people tend to give it much worse than others. According to Father Nicholas Dufault, unbaptized people (hence, unorthodox foreigners) tend to give it badly* as do people with black eyes, or those whose eyebrows meet. Blue eyes generally do not tend to give it so much. Other sources state that cross eyes or any type of unusual eyes are to be guarded against (Hill, 1968).

One man was said to have had an extremely evil glance especially first thing in the morning. Every morning he would get up and immediately go look out at the fruit tree in his front yard. He did this to save his friends and neighbors this terrible glance. Of course, the fruit tree died eventually (Hole, 1961).

*It can now be clearly seen that my sister-in-law had reason to worry for her baby; a foreigner, unbaptized and making compliments to the child without spitting. They would have been in mortal fear had they known that my grandfather and great grandfather both had unusual right eyes.

Two people whom I interviewed told me stories concerning people who tended to give the evil eye. These people who claim to have the power of the evil eye are usually women, as are those who generally have the power to exorcise it. Father Dufault said that people who are able to exorcise the evil eye live to be very old.

The first case was told to me by Mr. Frank Fotopoulos. He spent the first 16 years of his life in Monastirakion, a village in the middle of the Peloponnese. When he returned home in 1972 after 44 years in the United States he was met by his sister. She told him to look at a certain house ahead of them. Then she told him that a woman would come to the window. The woman claimed to have an evil eye and the people in the area all knew this was the case. The sister told her brother that if this woman would compliment him it would be very bad. Well, the lady came to her window and called to the man's sister, "You have a very nice brother from the United States." As soon as they arrived home, the sister ran to the garden in the back yard and took a piece of a plant and immediately stuck it in her brother's coat pocket. Mr. Fotopoulos said it smelled worse than a skunk; he didn't know the name of the plant but it was wild garlic. Father Default said he has seen wild garlic used in the same manner by people. Anyway, the brother was forced to carry this in his pocket all the while he visited and he still had it in his pocket when he arrived back in the United States. It worked - he made it home. It might be noted that his pocket stunk for several months even after washing.

In another case, there was a wake held in Boston. The deceased man's son arrived with his wife and six month old daughter from New York. While at the wake, an old lady kept looking at the pretty little baby. She probably complimented the child also. The baby, almost immediately, went comatose; wouldn't eat or anything. The next day the lady who had looked at the baby called and asked how the baby was, she said she had a tendency to give the evil eye and she was concerned about the child. So the grandmother took some of the baby's clothing to a very old lady there in Boston who was well known for her power to exorcise the evil eye. My informant did not know what the old lady did but before the grandmother had even arrived back home the baby was fine. (This baby is now Father Dufault's wife.)

As mentioned earlier however, anyone can give the evil eye. Vassilliki also told me the following account of her

little sister's fatal case of the evil eye. Vassilliki had a very beautiful little sister. This sister had beautiful blonde hair which was very uncommon for the area. When the girl was three or four years old her Godmother visited. She asked the parents to send the little girl to her house the next evening because she was having out of town guests and she wanted them to meet her Goddaughter. So they dressed the child up in her very best and sent her to her Godmother's house. The evening went well, the guests just could not stop complimenting on how beautiful the child was, especially her lovely hair (probably foreigners). The child came home cranky and generally did not act well. She began shivering and within 24 hours she had died. They had not even time to try any of the bad eye remedies. She was gone so fast they had not even realized it was that serious. Now, as they look back on the events of the day it is obvious it was the evil eye.

Vassilliki also told me of a neighbor lady in Thessoloniki who went completely crazy. She had a little two year old daughter at the time, which was 1943. This child was the only person that the lady would let near her. She chased everyone else away with a board. She was then placed in a mental institution for a year. Her family finally decided to take her to the church and have the priest exorcise her with the prayer related earlier. She was kept at the church for 40 days for this. It took five men to pull her loose from the bed she clung to and to remove her bodily to the church. Afterward, she came home a perfect wife and had another child. She was gentle as a lamb and when Vassilliki left Greece in 1978, the lady was fine.

Father Dufault says the evil eye can be of different intensities, as these different cases would also seem to indicate. He also said that this last case could have been an actual possession by the devil, which the evil eye, in extreme cases, can lead to. (This is extremely rare.)

The above case was the only one related to me in which the priest performed an official exorcism. Most exorcisms of the evil eye in Greece are performed by old women or men in the village or town.

My husband related this story as often told him by his grandmother. His grandmother's father was a ranger officer in the country mounted police, and as such he had a very fine and beautiful horse. His job was to ride from village to village

to see that all was in order. He was stationed in Karditsa, somewhere between Athens and Thessoloniki. One day, while he was at a village about an hour's ride from Karditsa, he received a number of compliments on his horse. Many of the villagers were standing there admiring his fine horse when he came out to mount up and go. He had hardly arrived home in Karditsa when the horse laid down and died.

There are many different stories one can hear about the evil eye. People are not the only ones who get the evil eye. As we have seen animals also are susceptible. Most Greeks can tell you many cases of each type and they believe these. I even know a pediatrician, recently graduated in Athens, who absolutely believes in this idea.

Now that we have an idea what it is we are dealing with we will check out a few more cures. But, before one can really understand the evil eye cures or exorcisms I am about to relate, it would be good to explain where the practitioners get their cure ingredients: holy water, holy oil, holy flowers and holy salt.

During the many religious days of the Easter festivities there is a re-enactment of Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection. On what they call Big Thursday, Jesus is crucified on the cross, he is left over night on the cross in the church. That night people leave little containers of salt or oil or flowers near the cross which they pick up Friday morning when Christ is taken off the cross. (This is the only time all year that the cross and Christ are accessible to the people, the rest of the year being kept in the holy area of the church where only the priests may go).

That is where the people get their holy salt, oil and flowers for their various needs throughout the coming year. They receive holy water from the priests several days after Jesus' death (representing the day when Christ appeared to his disciples after the resurrection). On this day the priests give out holy water.

The people keep all these holy things at home in the econostasio (icon stand) in the east corner of their home, along with the couple's wedding crowns, and the holy lamp (wick in oil) which burns at all times. The oil from the holy lamp may also be used as holy oil. The themiato is also kept there in the econostasio along with a picture of Jesus, Mary, and possibly the saint special to the family.

HOLY SALT CURE

You take salt in your thumb and first two fingers (your first 3 fingers) of your right hand and as you pray make the sign of the cross of the overlooked person three times.

Then the overlooked person is given the salt.

He tastes some, throws some in the water and some in the fire as he says:

"As the salt is dissolved in the water and explodes in the fire. That is how the evil eye will go away from me."

The entire ritual above is performed three different times - total crossing, 9.

HOLY FLOWERS AND HOLY WATER CURE

You make the sign of the cross on the overlooked person in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit three times.

Then you take one of the holy flowers and dip it into the holy water and sprinkle the person three times and make the cross three times as you say a prayer.

HOLY FLOWERS AS INCENSE CURE

You put some charcoal in the themiato and burn some of the holy flowers.

You smoke the person and pray three times as you cross them and the evil eye will go.

(The themiato, mentioned above, is a little bronze incense burner with a hood topped with a cross. Little pieces of charcoal are put in this and then the incense or the holy flower.)

SPITTAL CURE

Older ladies would rub your forehead (sometimes with spit) They would say a prayer and spit three times.

Most practitioners will not tell you the prayer they use and they mumble so you cannot understand. This is their prayer and it won't work if they tell it to others. If the old parent is dying he or she will tell the prayer to one of their children. Usually, one member in the family knows the prayer at a time.

In my husband's mother's family, Auntie Tassia is the official one to rid other family members of the evil eye when stricken. She came quite often to rid me of the evil eye (which I had mistaken for colds.)

AUNTI TASSIA'S CURE

She would hold the overlooked person's hand
and mumble the prayer as she looked down
Then she crosses the overlooked person three
times and spits three times
Then she stops to see if she yawns
She repeats this entire process two more times.
Finally crossing the overlooked person and
praying nine times.
If she is yawning this is a sign that she has
exorcised the evil eye and if she is not
yawning, there was no evil eye in the
first place.

Father Dufault reported the following story to me. Ten years ago he had his three year old daughter overlooked by some Jewish visitors. She was a very pretty child. Almost immediately she became unlike her usual self and slept hours on end. Finally, he performed the prayer and he said he yawned for over an hour.

Yawning is the usual indication that the evil eye has been exorcised. The person who performed the exorcism will often yawn. However, the overlooked person will often sneeze and this is the evil leaving him.

Spitting is a part of many evil eye cures and a good prevention in all of Greece. "Spitting as a counter charm is a folklore practice of universal distribution." (Halliday, 1963).

Concerning the sneezing, Mr. Fotopolous of Monastrikion, recalled the following account. His younger sister had become very ill, she had fever and was very anemic. Finally,

the grandmother said to take her to the lady in the shack on the outskirts of town - a witch. The boy was very surprised because although he had been running errands and delivering mail for sometime he never knew this lady existed. Anyway, the lady mumbled something and put her fingers in some water and threw it in the face of his sister. She immediately sneezed and was pronounced well. And she was.

I might mention that this man is now a Baptist minister and does not believe in the evil eye, yet he has to admit that is exactly the way it happened.

A lady from a village on the island of Crete, Theodora, explained what her grandfather used to do to untie the evil eye. My husband's grandfather also came from Crete, although from a different village. Upon hearing this description, my husband remembered his grandfather doing the very same thing. So the following cure was the only one I found performed by old men. I do not know if women also used this cure.

TO UNTIE THE EVIL EYE #1

He would take a string and measure from the tip of his fingers to his elbow.
 He would cut the string at that point.
 Then he would tie a knot in the string.
 Holding the string in his right hand he would recite a prayer and cross the overlooked person three times.
 As in previous cures the prayer and crossing were were repeated two more times, totalling nine.
 Then he would untie the evil eye.
 If the string was shorter upon measuring, that meant it had been an evil eye.
 The victim must then wear the string for several days around his neck.

Upon hearing this cure, Vassilliki recalled a cure her family often utilized when she was a very small girl. It must be remembered that in those days everyone had handkerchieves. If you got an evil eye, you gave your handkerchief to a certain old lady who would then perform an exorcism.

TO UNTIE THE EVIL EYE #2

The old woman would tie a knot in the corner of the overlooked person's handkerchief as she mumbled a prayer

She would proceed to measure the length of the handkerchief (by palm measure which was common at the time).

She would spit three times.

She would do this measuring, mumbling and spitting three times each.

Then she would return the hanky and the person with the evil eye problem would untie the knot above their head so the evil could fly away.

This cure could be performed without the old lady ever seeing the overlooked person, just so long as she had the person's handkerchief. Vassilliki, as a young girl, was often sent to this old lady with a handkerchief of her mother's or aunt's.

Now that we are aware of a number of cures for the evil eye in modern Greece, it is quite interesting to read the song of Alpheisiboeus in Virgil's eighth Eclogue.

The shepherdess tries to bring back her lover, Daphnis, by performing elaborate rites, accompanied by an incantation. In these magic rites, lustral water, sacred boughs, and frankincense are used. The homoeopathic element appears when the enchantress winds about the image of Daphnis three threads of different hues, in each of which is a knot, thus, as she binds the image of Daphnis, she hopes to bind Daphnis three threads of different hues, in each of which was a knot; thus, as she binds the image of Daphnis, she hopes to bind Daphnis himself to his sweetheart, with the aid of an incantation, 'Lead Daphnis from the city, my charms, lead Daphnis home', repeated nine times during the rites. The enchantress employs two images of Daphnis, one of clay, representing him in his attitude toward other girls, toward whom he will harden as the clay hardens; the other, of wax, which melts and causes Daphnis to melt with love for his sweetheart. 'As this clay hardens and this wax melts with one and the same fire,' she sings, 'so may Daphnis melt with my love.' In these rites, some personal affects which Daphnis has left behind are hidden by the witch in the earth under the threshold. (Burriss, 1972).

Note the similarities to some of the evil eye cures related earlier: the number three, reciting the chant nine times, knots, lustral water - holy water, sacred boughs -

holy flowers, frankincense - holy oil, "As this clay hardens and this wax melts with one and the same fire, so may Daphnis melt with my love" - "As the salt dissolves in the water and explodes in the fire, so may the evil eye go from me," and the use of the personal belongings - handkerchieves or the baby's clothing.

Most of these evil eye cures are full of ancient ideas of superstition and magic and are often a form of sympathetic magic, containing both contagious and homoeopathic aspects.

According to Nilsson, "In ancient Greece the difference between religion and superstition was a difference of degree rather than kind," and that "There were also merely popular superstitions, but even these were not sharply distinguishable from certain religious ideas." (Nilsson, 1981). This was not a problem confined only to ancient Greece. For Nilsson's statements could also be made in Greece today. Even here, in Wichita, Father DuFault has trouble explaining to some of the older ladies in the church that certain practices they still carry on in the name of the church have absolutely nothing to do with the church. But you cannot convince them otherwise because "my mother did it that way, my mother's mother did it that way and it was always done that way!"

This concludes the different methods of evil eye cures and types of exorcisms which I was able to uncover in my interviews and my studies. However, to be sure, there are a vast number more and any number of combinations and elaborations on the one outlined here.

Although there are many different methods of cure, there are common themes throughout - beauty and prosperity creating jealousy and evil will. This is also made very plain in the Greek Orthodox Prayer related earlier in the paper which the Church uses to combat the evil eye.

Beautiful babies and children are always seen as especially susceptible and you can usually find charms against the evil eye attached to their pillow or clothing. This is much the same as in early Rome and Greece where young children usually were also protected from evil with amulets. "The mother, in anxiety for her child's safety, usually fastened an amulet or charm of some kind around its neck to keep away unfriendly spirits " (McClees, 1924).

According to the Oxford Classical Dictionary, "Amulets are charms or objects worn for magical use, to protect the wearer against witchcraft, the evil eye, sickness, accidents, etc. The efficacy of the amulet might be enhanced by engraved

figure (deities) of symbols . . . , inscriptions (magical formulas, unknown magic words, etc.) are here often added, but such inscriptions were also thought effective by themselves."

In Greece today, the most common charms for the evil eye are various blue eye symbols, the cross, and the felato. The felato is a copy of the Church's prayer for the evil eye which is folded in a triangle again and again (note the three corners) until very small, then it is sewn into a cloth with a cross embroidered on it. My husband made the long trip to America in 1969 with a very old and worn felato pinned inside his coat by a very worried grandmother.

In ancient Greece, "Artemis and other divinities were invoked to protect the child, and special precautions were taken against the 'evil eye' and malignant spirits which might bewitch and harm it (Gulick, 1902). Birth and new babies are surrounded by superstitions in nearly all early societies. But it seems a likely assumption that in this Greek setting, babies could also be especially susceptible due to the fact that they are always beautiful. (What mother's baby is not beautiful and what mother is not proud?) And healthy children are the very symbol of prosperity and good fortune. Beauty, prosperity, good fortune - the very bringers of the evil eye.

In the ancient times, as today, they had methods of exorcism. "Persius describes how the old wives who are skilled in averting the 'burning eye' spit on their middle finger and rub saliva upon the infant's forehead" (Halliday, 1963), reminding one of the almost exact practice still carried on in parts of Greece today.

This Greek idea that extreme prosperity and good fortune bring on the "evil eye" or misfortune is a very ancient one dating as far back as Homer. These two concepts are defined as hybris and nemesis. "Hybris is haughtiness in word and deed, presumptuous conduct; nemesis is the ill will or indignation (of the Gods or others) which such conduct arouses (Nilsson, 1969).

Although I had never heard the word hybris and nemesis, I witnessed these concepts every day I lived in Greece. To give you one small example: If a Greek woman is getting dressed just perfect to go out for the evening and at the last minute she runs her stocking, invariably, the Greek with

her will say, "Never mind, that's for the evil eye" - meaning it would not be good to be perfect anyway, you would get an evil eye, - misfortune would befall you.

This reminds one of the story of old Cresus and his tremendous luck. This same story is a popular history which reflects the attitudes of the people of the ancient times. In folktale it is known as The Rings of Polycrates. It runs as follows (greatly shortened):

"Because Polycrates conquers and prospers, he takes the advice of his friend, the Egyptian king Amatis, to rid himself of a prized possession, and casts into the sea his most precious ring, that other (including the gods) will not envy him. But a fisherman gives a fat fish to Polycrates as a gift and in its belly is found the ring. Amatis then sorrowfully severs his friendship with the too lucky Polycrates, who meets a horrible death of crucifixion." (Megas, xxxi)

The first time I heard this ancient story it immediately reminded me of today's Greeks always saying, "That's OK, it's for the evil eye." It's not good to be perfect; excessive admiration of a person or his goods invites danger.

Another example of the timeless quality of the evil eye be seen in the sixth Idyll of Theocritus.

"The love-sick Polyphenus, after looking at his reflection in the sea, persuades himself that he is not so hideous after all, nay, positively good looking. "Then to shun the evil eye did I spit thrice, in my breast; for this spell was taught me by the crone, Cottytaris, that piped of yore to the reapers in Hippocoon's field." Halliday, 1963:35).

It becomes apparent from interviews and observations of modern Greeks and from studies of ancient Greek literature and history that the evil eye is, and was a common concept to both groups. Greeks throughout time have been painfully aware of the "evil eye." It was something that was a part of life and it had to be dealt with. The ancient Greeks, much like the Greeks today, had their cures for the evil eye, some of these rituals being identical throughout all ages. So, although the names of the Gods have changed, the basic idea is still very much alive in modern Greece as it has been throughout most of its history.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Vassilliki - An older lady, around 50 years old, born and raised near Solonika. She was born shortly after her parents arrived from Asia Minor during the great population exchange between Greece and Turkey in the 1920's.

She married and raised two children. Seven years after the marriage, the family moved to Athens and then in 1980 the family finally moved to Wichita, Kansas to be with their son. She now lives in Wichita with her husband and a grown son and daughter.

Frank Fotopoulos - He was born and raised in the village of Monastirakion, in the middle of the Peloponnese. He left Greece at the age of 16 years in 1928. He is now a Baptist preacher here in Wichita. He was very helpful to me in my research.

Father Nicholas Dufault - He is the priest for the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Wichita, Kansas. He was previously from New England. He translated the Church's prayer against the evil eye for me. He also related several incidents he had witnessed or been told. He also was very helpful.

Theodora - A thirty year old woman born and raised in Crete. Five years ago she married an American who was there teaching agricultural studies. She now lives on a farm near Newton, Kansas with her husband and two young children.

Varvarigos Raftopoulos - My husband also related a number of incidents to me. He was born and raised in Athens, where he was the constant companion to his grandmother and grandfather. Here he was told many stories and trained in the old traditional ways.

He was a great help to me in providing information and especially in helping translate some of the material. He has been in the United States since 1969.

* Of course, I used some of my own experiences of 1976 when my husband and I lived in Greece for 8 months, as well as my experiences among Greek Americans these last eleven years.

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