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PRIESTLY PERSONNEL OF THE EPHESIAN ARTEMISION: ANATOLIAN,
PERSIAN, GREEK AND ROMAN ASPECTS

by

JAN N. BREMMER

The Indo-Europeans had neither a separate priestly class nor a specific term for priests or priestesses. This tradition probably is one of the reasons why the Greeks had no clearly defined priestly class either. Every city could develop its own organisation and vocabulary,¹ and the larger the city, the more specialised and developed priesthoods could become. This absence of an established order also means that we are perhaps too quickly inclined to impose our own Judaeo-Christian ideas of priesthood on the Greeks. In other words, whereas we may be inclined to think of one particular kind of person, the Greeks had subsumed several kinds of religious officials under the term ‘priest(ess)’, who had neither the same duties nor the same training as ‘our’ priests.

The lack of a sharply defined function must have favoured the incorporation of native institutions in areas like Ionia, where the Greeks were relatively late arrivals. One such example is undoubtedly the complex of Artemis of Ephesus. Hers was a particularly hospitable cult that in the course of time incorporated Anatolian, Persian, Cretan and Roman influences. The last full survey of all ‘priestly’ functions of Artemis’ cult was in 1922, when Charles Picard brought out his still valuable study of Ephesus and Klaros.² Since then, we have seen only two more, if much less detailed, attempts at surveying the major priesthoods.³ Now recent decades have witnessed an increasing interest in the

¹ See the still useful survey by E. Kretschmer, ‘Beiträge zur Wortgeographie der altgriechischen Dialekte’, *Glotta* 18 (1930) 67-100 at 81-89. For priests see now A. Motte, ‘Figures de prêtre dans la littérature grecque’, in A. Motte and P. Marchetti (eds), *La figure du prêtre dans les grandes traditions religieuses* (Louvain, 2005) 1-31.

² C. Picard, *Ephèse et Klaros* (Paris, 1922) 162-97 (Megabyxos, *essênes*, priestesses), 277-87 (Kouretes).

³ C. Talamo, ‘Sull’ Artemision di Efeso’, *PP* 39 (1984) 197-216 (no discussion of the priestesses); W. Burkert, ‘Die Artemis der Epheser: Wirkungsmacht und Gestalt einer grossen Göttin’, in H. Friesinger and F. Krinzinger (eds.), *100 Jahre Österreichische Forschungen in*

Anatolian background of Greek religion,⁴ a growing knowledge of ancient Persian onomastics,⁵ a steady stream of publications of new Ephesian inscriptions and new insights on the relation between myth and ritual.⁶ A new analysis, then, is not out of place – the more so, since not even the whole of the literary evidence has been exploited. Taking these developments into account, I will discuss in my contribution those religious officials of the Artemision, who are called priests in our sources, carried out tasks of priests, such as sacrificing, or are called priests in modern discussions. Subsequently, I take a look at the Megabyxos (§ 1), the male of the Roman period (2), the priestess (§3), the *essênes* (§ 4) and the Kouretes (§5). I conclude my discussion with a few considerations regarding Greek priesthood in general (§6).

1. *The Megabyxos*

As the Old Persian (DB IV 85), Elamite (DB elam. III 91) and Babylonian (DB babylon. 111) versions of Darius' famous inscription on the rock of Behistun attest, there was a Persian named Bagabuxša among the seven conspirators against the false Smerdis (§ 68). At least from Herodotus (3.70.3) onwards, the Greeks transcribed the name as Megabyxos, and the same name is attested as the title of the temple warden of Artemis of Ephesus.⁷ Although it literally means 'He who serves (satisfies) God',⁸ there is no reason

Ephesos (Vienna, 1999) 59-70 (no discussion of the Kouretes), who has incorporated the pages on the Megabyxos (62-3) in his *Die Griechen und der Orient* (Munich, 2003) 113-15.

⁴ W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution* (Cambridge Mass., 1992), *Die Griechen und der Orient* and his *Kleine Schriften II: Orientalia* (Göttingen, 2003); M.L. West, *The East Face of Helikon* (Oxford, 1997).

⁵ See especially the many studies of Rüdiger Schmitt, cf. the bibliography in his *Selected onomastic writings* (New York, 2000).

⁶ See now W. Burkert, 'Mythos and Ritual: im Wechselwind der Moderne', in H.F.J. Horstmannshoff *et al.* (eds.), *Kykeon. Studies in honor of H. S. Versnel* (Leiden, 2002) 1-22; Bremmer, 'Myth and Ritual in Ancient Greece: Observations on a Difficult Relationship', in R. von Haehling (ed.), *Griechische Mythologie und Frühchristentum* (Darmstadt, 21-43).

⁷ See now my 'The Spelling and Meaning of the Name Megabyxos', *ZPE* 147 (2004) 9-10. The discussion of the name and function of the Megabyxos by J.O. Smith, 'The High Priest of the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus', in E.N. Lane (ed.), *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults* (Leiden, 1996) 323-35 is not very helpful.

⁸ E. Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres en Iranien ancien* (Paris, 1966) 108-17, accepted by D.G.

to assume that the warden demonstratively accepted the Persian title to stress his relation to the goddess.⁹ After all, our oldest known Megabyxoi were not temple officers either. We simply do not know how and when the Ephesian Megabyxos acquired his name. Yet his name strongly suggests that in due time a Persian had replaced a Greek after the Persian conquest of Ephesus around 500 BC, just like the Galatians had taken over the wealthy priesthood of Pessinous after their invasion of Asia Minor in the third century BC.¹⁰ Yet the fact that Megabyxos became a generic proper name may have been an Anatolian feature of the cult: the main priests of Pessinous called themselves Attis and those of Cilician Olba usually Teukros or Aias.¹¹

Our oldest source for the Megabyxos probably is the comedy *Tolmai* of Crates (c. 450-430), where a character says: ‘He cajoles the victual-seeker, but though shivering in the house of Megabyxos...’,¹² clearly meaning ‘starving in the house of plenty’ (thus Gomme on Thuc. 1.109.3). The Ephesian Artemision surpassed all other Greek sanctuaries in wealth, except Delphi, because of its extensive possessions of land.¹³ This must have meant that its warden (below) greatly surpassed similar officials of other Greek temples; and indeed, his wealth long remained proverbial.¹⁴

The first, absolutely certain reference to the function of the Ephesian Megabyxos is found in Xenophon, who relates in his *Anabasis* that he left a tithe for Artemis with the

Miller, *Language* 44 (1968) 846; M. Mayrhofer, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch* I 2 (Vienna, 1979) 16; R. Schmitt, *Die Iranischen und Iranier-Namen in den Schriften Xenophons* (Vienna, 2002) 63.

⁹ *Contra* Burkert, ‘Artemis’, 63 ~ *Die Griechen*, 114.

¹⁰ See my detailed re-evaluation of the earlier stages of this cult in ‘Attis: A Greek God in Anatolian Pessinous and Catullan Rome’, *Mnemosyne* IV 57 (2004) 34-73.

¹¹ Pessinous: see my ‘Attis’. Olba: Strabo 14.5.10.

¹² Crates F 37 KA, tr. Gulick, Loeb, adapted: the rest of the fragment is corrupt.

¹³ Cf. Call. *Hymn.* 3.250; D. Knibbe *et al.*, ‘Der Grundbesitz der ephesischen Artemis im Kaystrothal’, *ZPE* 33 (1979) 139-47; R. Strelan, *Paul, Artemis, and the Jews in Ephesus* (Berlin and New York, 1996) 76-79 (‘The wealth of Artemis’); several studies in U. Muss (ed.), *Der Kosmos der Artemis von Ephesos* (Vienna, 2001); B. Dignas, *Economy of the Sacred in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor* (Oxford, 2002) 141-56, 172-77.

¹⁴ Ap. Ty. *Ep.* 2 Penella; Luc. *Tim.* 22.

Megabyxos, who later, perhaps in 384 BC, returned the money to him when he visited Olympia (5.3.6-7). Like many Greek sanctuaries,¹⁵ the Artemision functioned as a bank,¹⁶ as must have been the case in Menander's *Dis exapatôn*,¹⁷ although, unfortunately, the context of the mention of the Megabyxos in the play (F 5 Sandbach) cannot be established.¹⁸ Apparently, the Megabyxos was so important that he seems to have represented his hometown at the Olympic Games. He may also have participated in some ways in Xenophon's founding of the cult of Artemis Ephesia in Scillous, where his presence not only must have contributed to Xenophon's status but also must have increased his own importance.

A 334/333 BC inscription from Priene (*I. Priene* 3) speaks of 'Megabyxos, son of Megabyxos'. As he had helped to pay for the completion of the temple of Athena (one more indication of his wealth), the city had voted him the usual privileges in such cases, such as a bronze statue, for which he had to pay himself (!).¹⁹ At first sight, it seems striking that the city decree did not extend the privileges to the descendents of the Megabyxos, as is pretty normal in such inscriptions. However, one need not look far for the reason of this omission, as in this case continuity in naming could have led only to the fiction but not the reality of filial succession. The explanation is supplied by Strabo, who relates that the Ephesians 'had eunuchs as priests, whom they called Megabyxoi (they always tried to get from elsewhere some who were worthy of such a wardenship), and they held them in great honour' (14.1.23). The castration is confirmed by the pseudo-

¹⁵ Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford, 2003³) 32.

¹⁶ Timaeus *FGrH* 566 F 150b; Caesar, *BC*. 3.33, 105; Dio Chrysost. 31.48, 54; *Forschungen in Ephesos* I (Vienna, 1906) 261f.

¹⁷ As we can infer from Plautus, *Bacch.* 306ff., where the Megabyxos is called Megalobulus. Plautus' dependence on Menander's *Dis Exapatôn* is now firmly established by E.W. Handley on *P.Oxy.* 64.4407; see also O. Zwierlein, *Zur Kritik und Exegese des Plautus, vol. IV, Bacchides* (Mainz, 1992).

¹⁸ Menander, *DE* F 5 Sandbach, which calls him *zakoros* instead of *neôkoros* (below). For the term see J. Nollé on *I. Side* 228.1.

¹⁹ As is noted by F. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Inschriften von Priene* (Berlin, 1906) on no. 231.

Heraclitean letters of the second century AD that situate a process against Heraclitus in Ephesus.²⁰

Eunuch priests were typically of Anatolia.²¹ Those in the cult of Cybele and Attis in Pessinous were famous, but they are also attested for the cult of Hekate of Carian Lagina, and in the temple of the Galli in Phrygian Hierapolis.²² Evidently, then, the Greeks had incorporated (parts of) an existing indigenous cult into the Artemision after their arrival in Ephesus; we may even still have the name of the original indigenous goddess: $\hat{\Upsilon}$ pis.²³ Yet it is also clear from Strabo's words that the Ephesians themselves were less keen to suffer 'the unkindest cut of all', as they imported males from elsewhere to occupy this high position. The French king Henri IV may have thought that Paris was well worth a mass, but well-bred Ephesian males clearly did not think that the priesthood of Artemis was worth the loss of their testicles!

In the middle of the first century BC the Megabyxos was still so important that the Ephesians put in a plea for him with Cleopatra, when Antony intended to bring him to court.²⁴ Soon after, the function must have been abolished, as Strabo, who visited Ephesus in, perhaps, the very last decades of the pre-Christian era, already speaks of him in the past. As *ca.* 30 BC Vedius Pollio, a freedman's son and *amicus* of Augustus, had reorganised the cult of the Artemision,²⁵ wealthy members of the Ephesian elite may well

²⁰ Heraclit. *Ep.* 9. Quint. 5.12.21 mentions the Megabyxos as an example of effeminacy.

²¹ For other Anatolian aspects of Artemis see most recently the studies of Sarah P. Morris: 'The Prehistoric Background of Artemis Ephesia: A Solution to the Enigma of her 'Breasts'?', in U. Muss (ed.), *Der Kosmos der Artemis von Ephesos* (Vienna, 2001), 135-51 and in R. Laffineur and R. Hägg (eds.), *Potnia* (Liège and Austin, 2001) 428-34.

²² Pessinous: my 'Attis'. Lagina: *I. Stratonikeia* 513, 544, 1101. Hierapolis: Strabo 13.4.14.

²³ Timotheus F 778 Page/Hordern = Alex. Aet. F4 Magnelli (with Hordern and Magnelli *ad loc.*); Antimachus F 99 Matthews; Call. *Hymn.* 3.204, 240, 4.292 (with the scholia *ad loc.*); W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1979) 130.

²⁴ Appian, *BC.* 5.1.9, which has been overlooked by L. LiDonnici, 'The Ephesian Megabyzos. Priesthood and Religious Diplomacy at the End of the Classical Period', *Religion* 29 (1999) 201-14 and refutes her theses; note also the reserves of Dignas, *Economy*, 190.

²⁵ *I. Ephesos* 17.47-8; 18b.6; 18c.10-1; 18d.4; R. Syme, *Roman Papers* II (Oxford, 1979) 526

have bribed him to abolish the function of the Megabyxos for their own profits (§ 3) – perhaps after the death of the last incumbent.

It is clear from this outline that we have only the sketchiest idea of the nature of the place of the Megabyxos within the Artemision and Ephesian society at large. The combination of castration and the name Megabyxos could conceivably mean that the first Persian was a court eunuch who had taken up the function after the Persian conquest of Ephesus.²⁶ Yet this has to remain speculative, as lack of information prevents us from knowing if the Persians made any changes to the organisation of the Artemision. Regarding his function, Xenophon tells us that he was a *neôkoros*, a ‘warden’, the official responsible for the financial affairs of a sanctuary,²⁷ and the function is confirmed by a 334/333 BC inscription from Priene (*I. Priene* 231). In other words, the Megabyxos was not a priest proper and therefore perhaps not the one who sacrificed at Artemis’ impressive altar.²⁸ That may well have been the priestess (§ 2), as we know that in several sanctuaries the most important officials were the *neôkoros* and the priest(ess), although the functions sometimes also had been combined into one hand.²⁹ On the other hand, the difference between the two functions cannot always have been that big. Diogenes Laertius (2.51), in his summary of Xenophon’s life, calls the Megabyxos a ‘priest’, and male priests are attested after the end of the office of the Megabyxos (§ 3).

Despite all these uncertainties, it can still be noticed that the Megabyxos was much concerned with his self-representation. Already around 400 BC we hear of Parrhasios painting his portrait (Tzetses, *Chil.* 8.400) and of Zeuxis commenting on his

(date); W. Eck, *Der Neue Pauly* 12/1 (Stuttgart and Weimar, 2002) 1154.

²⁶ For the Persian eunuchs see P. Briant, *Histoire de l’empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre*, 2 vols (Paris and Leiden, 1996) I.279-88; L. Llewellyn-Jones, ‘Eunuchs and the royal harem in Achaemenid Persia (559-331 BC)’, in S. Tougher (ed.), *Eunuchs in Antiquity and Beyond* (London, 2002) 19-49.

²⁷ For an interesting case see Dignas, *Economy*, 139f.

²⁸ For the altar see now U. Muss and A. Bammer, *Der Altar des Artemisions von Ephesos = Forschungen in Ephesos* XII/2 (Vienna, 2001), to be read with the devastating review by G. Kuhn, *Gött. Gel. Anz.* 255 (2003) 197-226.

²⁹ See, for example, also *SEG* 40.303 (Corinth); *IG* XII,5 186 (Paros); *I. Prusias Hyp.* 53 (highpriestess and *neôkoros*); *I. Pergamon* 3.152; *I. Magnesia* 100a; *I. Labraunda* 2, no. 45, etc.

clothing and his slaves (Ael. *VH.* 2.2). Unfortunately, the latter anecdote is also told of Apelles (Plut. *M.* 58d, 471f),³⁰ but the latter certainly painted a procession of the Megabyxos (Plin. *NH.* 35.93), just as, around the same time, Antidotos painted his grave (Plin. *NH.* 35.132). The evidence is, of course, anecdotic,³¹ but the employment of the most famous painters of Greece indicates a feeling of self-esteem and importance that seems to have been unique among Greek temple officials.

2. Priestesses

Strabo supports the suggestion that the Megabyxos performed priestly functions, as he, in the sequel to the passage we already quoted, tells us: ‘and maidens had to be joint priests with them (the Megabyxoi)’. Like Burkert, Picard suggests that these words prove the existence of a group of priestesses in the sanctuary.³² He supports his case with the mention of the maidens (below), whereas the former’s opinion seems to rest on a misunderstanding of Strabo’s mention of both Megabyxoi and priestesses. As Strabo clearly uses the plural in the case of the Megabyxos in order to refer to all those priests in the past, he must have meant the same in the case of the priestesses. Consequently, we have to accept a single maiden priestess for Artemis of Ephesus.

In fact, both literature and epigraphy confirm the existence of such a single priestess. Strabo supplies our first and oldest example. He mentions that when the Phocaeans left their city after the Ionian invasion of the Persians, they first landed at Ephesus, as they had received an oracle to accept a guide from Artemis Ephesia for their journey. In Ephesus an upper-class woman, Aristarche, told them that Artemis had appeared to her in a dream and had ordered her to take along a copy of the goddesses’ image and to join the Phocaeans on their long distance journey. Consequently, Aristarche

³⁰ For the anecdotes see also K. Gschwantler, *Zeuxis und Parrhasios* (Vienna, 1975) 123. For Zeuxis see W. Ameling, ‘Die Herkunft des Malers Zeuxis’, *Epigr. Anat.* 9 (1987) 76 (probably from Heraclea Pontica).

³¹ For stimulating reflections on the value of such anecdotes see R.P. Saller, ‘Anecdotes as Historical Evidence for the Principate’, *G&R* 27 (1980) 69-83; H.-H. Kortum, ‘Zur Typologie der Herrscheranekdote in der mittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibung’, *Mitt. Inst. f. Österr. Geschichtsf.* 105 (1997) 1-29.

³² Picard, *Ephèse et Claros*, 182-90; Burkert, ‘Artemis’, 73.

became the first priestess in Massilia,³³ and the Massaliote cult image of Artemis was even copied by the Romans and dedicated on the Aventine.³⁴ Unfortunately, we do not know how old the Massiliote tradition is, but the lack of details suggests that it served an aetiological function, viz. to explain the resemblance of the Phocaeian cult image and its female priesthood to the Ephesian cult. It is important to note that the absence of any mention of Aristarche's husband suggests that the first Massiliote priestess was still a maiden. Evidently, the Phocaeians had copied the Ephesian model. If they had already done this at the moment of the foundation of Massilia, the institution of a maiden priestess must go back to the Archaic period.

A virgin priestess of Artemis also appears three times in the ancient novel.³⁵ The closing of Achilles Tatius' novel is situated in Ephesus and contains an ordeal in a cave of Artemis that no woman who was no longer a virgin could enter. The detail can be paralleled with the similar prohibition for women to enter the Ephesian temple of Artemis, as Artemidorus, an inhabitant of Ephesus, tells us.³⁶ Yet it seems more important to observe that the place was supervised by a virgin priestess (6.8.14)!³⁷ The same function is also mentioned in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* (1.22), which brings us to the first decades of the third century.³⁸ In this novel, Charikleia explains that she and her

³³ Strabo 4.1.4, cf. I. Malkin, *Religion and Colonization in Ancient Greece* (Leiden, 1987) 69-72; T. Scheer, *Die Gottheit und ihr Bild* (Munich, 2000) 244-47.

³⁴ Strabo 4.1.5, cf. R. Turcan, 'Une Artémis d'Éphèse trouvée sur l'Aventin', *CRAI* 2000, 657-69.

³⁵ For the passages see also C.M. Thomas, 'At Home in the City of Artemis. Religion in the Literary Imagination of the Roman Period', in H. Koester (ed.), *Ephesos Metropolis of Asia* (Valley Forge, 1995) 82-117, who neglects their mention of the virgin priesthood.

³⁶ Artemid. 4.4, cf. H. Schwabl, 'Nachrichten über Ephesos im Traumbuch des Artemidor', in Friesinger and Krinzinger, *100 Jahre Österreichische Forschungen*, 283-87; similarly, Achilles Tatius 7.13

³⁷ For the ordeal see my 'Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus in Christian East Syria', in H. Vanstiphout (ed.), *All those nations...Cultural Encounters within and with the Near East* (Groningen, 1999) 21-29, which overlooked H.S. Versnel, 'Πεπρημύνοϛ. The Cnidian Curse Tablets and Ordeal by Fire', in R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence* (Stockholm, 1994) 145-54 at 152f.

³⁸ For Heliodorus' date see my 'Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus', 26-7.

brother Theagenes, who belong to the Ephesian nobility, both became priests. Whereas her brother was a priest of Apollo, she became priestess of Artemis for the duration of one year. The evidence, then, suggests that the priestess of the Ephesian Artemis was a maiden whose office lasted for only one year.

Additional information is found in the *Historia Apollonii regis Tyrii*, a novel originally written *ca.* 215 AD,³⁹ but surviving only in two later, Christian recensions (RA, RB). In our present text, the young wife of Apollonius was sent to the *sacerdotes Dyane feminas* where *omnes virgines inviolabiliter servabant castitatem* (RA 27). Here the wife, a king's daughter, soon held *inter sacerdotes principatum* (RAB 48). After Apollonius had recognised her in the temple, she abdicated her priesthood and *ipsa vero constituit sacerdotem, que sequens ei erat et casta caraque* (RB 49).⁴⁰ It is highly interesting that this notice confirms a hitherto isolated passage of Plutarch (*M.* 795E), who mentions that there were three degrees, the *melliera*, *hiera* and *parhiera*, the 'future', 'present, and 'past' priestess. The conclusion must be that at least from the second century onwards there was a group of priestesses of whom one was clearly the 'high priestess'. We have even the mention of a *parthenôn* in Ephesos, a not uncommon institution in the (South-)West of Asia Minor,⁴¹ which may well have been the place where the maidens (below) and, later, the priestesses had to stay.⁴²

A maiden priestess may seem strange to us, but in several cults in the more conservative areas of Greece, such as the Central and Northern Peloponnese, youths could indeed function as priests. Given her importance as initiatory goddess, it is not surprising that Artemis' cult supplies the majority of adolescent priests. This is the case in the

³⁹ For the date see Bremmer, 'The Novel', 169f.

⁴⁰ For the passage see S. Panayotakis, 'The Temple and the Brothel: Mothers and Daughters in *Apollonius of Tyre*', *Ancient Narrative*, Suppl. 1 (Groningen, 2002) 98-117 at 112-4.

⁴¹ Cyzicus: Ch. Michel, *Receuil*, 1900, 538. Didyma: *SEG* 35.1097. Magnesia: *I. Magnesia*, 100. Apollonia Salbake: L. and J. Robert, *La Carie*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1954) 281. Bargylia: *SEG* 44.868. Olymos: L. Robert, *Rev. Arch.* 6.6 (1935) 159.

⁴² *I. Ephesos* 900-900A.

repeatedly analysed initiatory cult of Artemis Triklaria of Patrae,⁴³ the Artemisian cult of Aegeira, where the priesthood ended with marriage (Paus. 7.26.3), and the cult of Artemis Knagia in Sparta.⁴⁴ An epigram in the *Anthologia Palatina* mentions a dedication by a priestess of a statue of Artemis in an unknown sanctuary reserved for girls, and the fact that the priestess is named after her father, not her husband, also suggests a virgin priest.⁴⁵ Finally, we have a lacunose epigram from Patmos, which relates that Artemis herself made ‘Kydonia, the daughter of Glaukies, priestess and *hydrophoros* ... to bring minor sacrifices’.⁴⁶ *Hydrophoroi* are well attested in Didyma and Miletus and it seems clear ‘both from consistent lack of reference to husbands, and from the fact that frequently the *hydrophoros*’ father held the prophecy (at Didyma) at the same time, that normally the *hydrophoros* was a young, unmarried girl’.⁴⁷ It will not have been different on Patmos or, for that matter, in Ephesus.

Our evidence about adolescent priests is mostly late, but we are lucky in knowing that during the destruction of Siris in 530 BC, the attackers killed fifty youths together with the priest, a male adolescent dressed as a girl, in the sanctuary of Athena Ilias.⁴⁸ Apparently, the phenomenon of the adolescent priest developed from the directorship of choruses, as fifty is a well known number of Greek choruses. After the disappearance of the choruses

⁴³ C. Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece* (Lanham, 1977) 137 (with full bibliography); G. Baudy, ‘Ackerbau und Initiation. Der Kult der Artemis Triklaria und des Dionysos Aisymnetes in Patrai’, in F. Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1998) 143-67.

⁴⁴ See my ‘Transvestite Dionysos’, *The Bucknell Review* 43 (1999) 183-200 at 189-90, of which I have taken over this paragraph, if abbreviated and updated.

⁴⁵ *Anth. Pal.* 6.269, cf. F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte* (Rome, 1985) 237f.

⁴⁶ R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten I* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1998) 169-70G.

⁴⁷ *SEG* 39.855, cf. R. van Bremen, *The Limits of Participation* (Amsterdam, 1996) 90 note 31.

⁴⁸ *Lyc. Alex.* 984-92 with scholion on 984; Iustinus 20.2.3, cf. F. Graf, ‘The Locrian Maidens’, in R. Buxton (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion* (Oxford, 2000) 250-70 at 267-69.

with their initiatory function in the course of the classical and Hellenistic era, the priesthood must have continued to exist.⁴⁹

The same development apparently occurred in Ephesus, where maiden choruses are well attested. However, the oldest testimonies do not concentrate on human maidens but on the Amazons. According to Pindar (F 174 Maehler),⁵⁰ they had founded Artemis' sanctuary during their fight against Theseus. In his *Hymn to Artemis* (237-58), Callimachus supplies more details. He relates that Hippo, the queen of the Amazons, set up a statue to Artemis on the shore and performed a ritual for the goddess, whereas the Amazons themselves danced a war dance with shields and in armour, followed by a circular choral dance. The description of the dance fits the way the *prylis* was danced in Crete, where the Kouretes shielded young Zeus with their dances (Hyg. *Fab.* 193.3; Apollod. 1.1.7). The dance clearly was quite an ecstatic one, since the syrinx produced the accompanying music and the feet loudly beat the ground.⁵¹ Versions differed whether Amazons had founded the sanctuary or set up the statue,⁵² but Amazons were clearly at the basis of Artemis' cult and sanctuary, even though a competing version, mentioning Koressos and Ephesos as founders, did exist.⁵³

Pausanias adds an interesting detail to his version of the sanctuary's foundation.⁵⁴ He relates that even before Theseus some Amazons came as refugees to Artemis' temple, fleeing for Dionysos. The combination of Dionysos and Artemis is not uncommon in Greek mythology and cult. Where we have more details, it is clear that Artemis ends the

⁴⁹ K. Dowden, *Death and the Maiden* (London, 1989) 157-8; Calame, *Choruses*, 22-23 (choruses of fifty members); Bremmer, 'Transvestite Dionysos', 188-9 (development from initiation).

⁵⁰ Maehler wrongly ascribes the notice to Apollo's sanctuary in Didyma.

⁵¹ For the dance and its relationship to the *pyrrhichê* of the Kouretes see P. Ceccarelli, *La pirrica nell'antichità greco romana* (Pisa and Rome, 1998) 135f.

⁵² Pliny, *NH* 34.53; Dion. Per. 827-29 and schol. *ad loc.*; Hyg. *Fab.* 223, 225; Paus. 4.31.8.

⁵³ Paus. 7.2.7; note also Koressos as Ephesian place name (Kreophylos *FGrH* 417 F 1; *Anth. Gr.* 5.59.5); the Koressian gate (*I. Ephesos* 212, 425, 566) and the neighbourhood of the Koresseitai (*I. Ephesos* 9); W. Alzinger, 'Koressos', in *Festschrift für Fritz Eichler zum achtzigsten Geburtstag* (Vienna, 1967) 1-9 (location of Koressos).

⁵⁴ Paus. 7.2.8; see also Tac. *Ann.* 3.61; Paus. 4.31.8.

marginal period caused by Dionysos through either healing a person or, further removed from the ritual, through killing him/her. Thus Ariadne is killed by Artemis on Dionysos' indictment, and the Proitids are healed from their Dionysiac madness by Artemis, just like Eurypylos by Artemis Triklaria; the *katabasis* of Dionysos ends in the temple of Artemis Soteira in Troizen.⁵⁵ In the case of the Amazons, the restoration to normality is connected with their being granted asylum, an important function of the Artemision.⁵⁶ The dancing Amazons must have been the model for the real girls. Our sources start in the later fifth century with Aristophanes' mention of the 'maidens of the Lydians' revering Ephesian Artemis (*Clouds* 598-600),⁵⁷ and they become more specific with Autocrates in his comedy *Tympanistai* (F 1 KA), where he mentions the ecstatic, slightly lascivious dancing of the 'maidens of the Lydians'.⁵⁸ The maidens also occur in Menander's *Kitharistes* (93-7 Sandbach), where they participate in a '*deipnophoria* of maidens'. This is perhaps the precursor of the *deipnophoria* that took place during the reign of Antoninus Pius (*I. Ephesos* 221), which in turn may well be the same as that referred to in a third-century (AD) inscription (*I. Ephesos* 1577).

It seems reasonable to suppose that the combination of maidens and a 'meal' was inspired by the yearly ritual in honour of Artemis that is described by the *Etymologicum magnum* in an explanation of Artemis' epithet Daitis. The *aition* relates that once upon a time the maidens and boys of Ephesos under the leadership of the daughter of the king, Klymena, carried the statue of Artemis out of the city to a field near the sea, where they danced and sung. After they committed a fault by not repeating the previous offering of salt, the goddess became angry, and she was expiated only after the Ephesians repeated

⁵⁵ *Od.* 11.325 (Ariadne); Hes. F 131 MW (Proitids); Paus. 7.16.6-9 (Eurypylos); Paus. 2.31.2 (Troizen); Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, 242-3, who also compares Artemis' killing of Aktaion (Hes. F 217A MW; Stes. F 236 Davies), but in that case Dionysos does not play a role.

⁵⁶ For this function see now K.J. Rigsby, *Asyilia. Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1996) 385-93.

⁵⁷ Calame, *Choruses*, 96 also compares Ion *TrGF* 19 F 22 and Diog. Athen. *TrGF* 45 F1, but in both cases the reference is clearly to maidens from Sardis.

⁵⁸ For the dancing see Calame, *Choruses*, 93, who well compares Aristophanes F 29 (wrongly quoted as 30) and 147 (wrongly quoted as 148) KA.

the ritual that is still attested at the end of the first century BC.⁵⁹ As Calame persuasively concludes regarding the ritual, ‘its substance is characteristic of several rites of adolescence, such as that begun by the *Proitides* at Lousoi or the one honoring Artemis at Brauron’.⁶⁰

A procession of boys and girls in connection with the Artemision is also mentioned in the middle of the second century AD in the famous opening scene of Xenophon of Ephesus (1.2.2-3).⁶¹ We are told that all the Ephesian boys and girls went in a procession from the city to the sanctuary. Both groups were led by the most beautiful boy and girl, Habrocomes and Antheia. The event was, as it were, the completion of adolescence, since the festival was the occasion of match making for the youths, as we are explicitly told. Even though no longer properly ritualised, the coming off age of the Ephesian adolescents was still clearly connected with the city goddess.

The various sources supplement one another and, as Calame saw, all point to an ensemble where the collectivity of maidens performs a procession and choral dances at an event that completes their adolescence. Naturally, the leader of the girls in Xenophon’s novel, Antheia, excels in beauty, as the Greeks customarily entrusted the position of the director of the chorus to the most beautiful people.⁶² Yet one element seems not to fit in these descriptions. As we have seen, the *aition* of the ritual of Artemis Daitis mentions that both boys and girls were led by the daughter of the king, Klymena. Now we do hear of boys leading choruses of girls, but never of girls leading choruses of boys.⁶³ This pattern leads us to believe that the *aition* is of relatively late date and perhaps reflects the situation where the priestess was the most important cult official.

⁵⁹ *Et. Magnum* 402; *Anecdota Oxon.* II.435; R. Heberdey, ‘ $\zeta\iota\epsilon\gamma\alpha\zeta$. Ein Beitrag zum ephesischen Artemiskult’, *JÖAI* 7 (1904) 210-15, *Beiblatt* 44 (*I. Ephesos* 14); Calame, *Choruses*, 94-6.

⁶⁰ Calame, *Choruses*, 95.

⁶¹ For Xenophon’s date see Bremmer, ‘The Novel’, 170.

⁶² Athenaeus 13.565ff, cf. Calame, *Choruses*, 43, 72; note also my ‘Kassandra’, in *Der Neue Pauly* VI (Stuttgart and Weimar, 1999) 316-18.

⁶³ Calame, *Choruses*, 48-73.

Ephesian inscriptions from the Roman period confirm the institution of the priestess of Artemis. The function evidently was one of great honour and by far the most common office taken on by upper-class women, apart from the priesthoods of the imperial cult.⁶⁴ In all the cases where we have more detailed information, the priestess appears to be an unmarried woman, as she is regularly associated with her father but not with a husband.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, we are not well informed about her activities. The priestess could wreath the temple and perform public sacrifice (*I. Ephesos* 987), reorganise the cult (*I. Ephesos* 3059), and share out money to the hymnodes on the birthday of Artemis (*I. Ephesos* 27). In the course of time priestesses started to combine several functions and became *prytanis* and/or *gymnasiarch* as well.⁶⁶ Can it be that this development was due to a diminishing of the importance of the function? Be this as it may, priestesses remain attested until the third century when male priests are no longer heard of.⁶⁷

3. *Male priests in the Roman period*

The disappearance of the Megabyxos did not mean that Artemis' sanctuary no longer had male priests. Although these latter are neglected in recent studies of the Artemis priesthood, they are attested in epigraphy and literature. The priests first turn up in the edict by the Roman proconsul of Asia in AD 44, Paullus Fabius Persicus, about corrupt practices in connection with the personnel of the Artemision. Apparently, the civic authorities had started to create priesthoods in order to enable the elite to enrich itself through the perquisites assigned to these priesthoods.⁶⁸ The close co-operation between the two groups shows that they came from the same background, the Ephesian elite.

⁶⁴ *I. Ephesos* 104, 411, 492, 615 (improved text: *I. Tralleis* 87), 661, 892, 980-90, 982, 989, 994, 1026, 3059, 3072, 3232, etc., cf. Van Bremen, *Limits of Participation*, 86.

⁶⁵ For a list see G.M. Rogers, *The sacred identity of Ephesos: foundation myths of a Roman city* (London and New York, 1991) 75, note 73.

⁶⁶ See the list in Van Bremen, *Limits of Participation*, 316-32.

⁶⁷ *I. Ephesos* 617, 892, 3233.

⁶⁸ *I. Ephesos* 18b, cf. Dignas, *Economy*, 150-3, 188-93.

Around AD 100 priests were still so prestigious that they belonged to the class of the ‘gold bearing’ citizens (*I. Ephesos* 27.456), but inscriptions do not seem to mention them afterwards.

It is somewhat different in literature. The anonymous author of the apocryphal *Acts of John*, who wrote ca. AD 160, mentions a resurrection of the priest of Artemis (46). His contemporary Achilles Tatius describes a priest of Artemis, who is clearly in charge of the sanctuary and who is evidently much respected by the population.⁶⁹ As both authors probably came from South-West Asia Minor,⁷⁰ they may have been well informed about Ephesian conditions. In both cases, the reduction to only one priest could of course be a dramatisation by the authors, but it could equally signal a change in the organisation of the priesthood. As we have much more epigraphical information about Artemis’ priestesses than the priests, it seems likely that in the course of time most male aristocrats shifted their interests to the imperial priesthoods, even though Artemis’ priesthood must have long remained prestigious due to its venerable age and wealth.

4. The *essênes*

We will be shorter about the next religious functionaries, the *essênes*, since sources are scarce and not always easy to interpret.⁷¹ At one time, they must have been important figures in the temple, since they are mentioned in a series of Ephesian inscriptions, ranging from the late fourth until the later third century BC. It is traditional to call them priests,⁷² but as far as I can see they are never called that way in our tradition, even

⁶⁹ Ach. Tat. 7.12, 15-16 and 8.3.

⁷⁰ For the date and place of origin of the *Acts of John* see Bremmer, ‘The Novel and the Apocryphal Acts: Place, Time and Readership’, in H. Hofmann and M. Zimmerman (eds.), *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel IX* (Groningen, 1998) 162 = J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas* (Louvain, 2001) 153-4, 167-8. For Achilles Tatius see Bremmer, ‘The Novel’, 167-8; E. Bowie, ‘The chronology of the earlier Greek novels since B.E. Perry: revisions and precisions’, *Ancient Narrative 2* (2002) 47-63 at 60f.

⁷¹ Picard, *Ephèse et Claros*, 190-97; Talamo, ‘Sull’ Artemision’, 207-13; Burkert, ‘Artemis’, 68; Dignas, *Economy*, 191.

⁷² Picard, *Ephèse et Claros*, 190: ‘un corps sacerdotal’; Talamo, ‘Sull’ Artemision’, 208: ‘essenisacerdoti’; Burkert, ‘Artemis’, 68: ‘Priesterkollegium’.

though they could be charged with sacrificing to Artemis for the city and were connected with the Artemision.⁷³ Unfortunately, the size of this group is never specified, but their activities are reasonably transparent. Their main function was the assignment of new citizens via a lottery into the phyle and chiliastus, subdivisions of the Ephesian citizenry;⁷⁴ in addition, they also seem to have sometimes handled money in connection with the sale of citizenship (*I. Ephesos* 2001). That is the sum total of our knowledge about their activities in the Hellenistic period. Burkert states that they will ‘sicher’ also have elected the Megabyxos, but I see no evidence for such a procedure.⁷⁵

In the same period Callimachus uses the word twice. In his *Hymn to Zeus* he sings: ‘not a lottery made you *essên* of the gods,⁷⁶ but the works of your hands’ (66). It seems reasonable to accept that Callimachus means here ‘king’, as the same meaning occurs in one of his fragments (F 178.23 Pfeiffer), where he calls Peleus ‘*essên* of the Myrmidonians’.⁷⁷ Given that the lexicographical tradition interprets *essên* as ‘king’ or ‘king bee’,⁷⁸ it is not surprising that the *Etymologicum Magnum* (383.30) combines all this information and states: ‘king according to the Ephesians’. Comparing the Athenian *basileus* and the Roman *rex sacrorum*, one scholar has even suggested that Ephesus knew a group of sacrificial kings,⁷⁹ but in Athens and Rome there was only one sacrificial king and the sacrificial duties of the *essênes* are nearly negligible in our sources. In short, we should not be led astray by the imaginations of lexicographers, who had evidently no more reliable information than we have. Even though the bee is prominent on Ephesian

⁷³ *I. Ephesos* 1448, 1473.

⁷⁴ *I. Ephesos* 1408-09, 1413, 1440, 1443, 1447-48, 1451, 1453, 1455 etc.

⁷⁵ Burkert, ‘Artemis’, 68.

⁷⁶ The reference is to *Il.* XV.184-99, cf. Burkert, *Orientalizing Revolution*, 88-93 for its dependence on the Akkadian epic *Atrahasis* (but note the reservations of West, *East Face*, 110).

⁷⁷ Pfeiffer wrongly writes *essên* with a spiritus asper in his edition, cf. O. Masson, *RPh* 88 (1962) 49.

⁷⁸ King: Hsch. 1/8 6335 Latte. King bee: *Et. Gud.*, *Suda* s.v. 66®₁.

⁷⁹ D. van Berchem, ‘La gérousie d’Éphèse’, *MH* 37 (1980) 25-40 at 29f.

coins,⁸⁰ we are totally in the dark about the associations of the Ephesians at the time that they started to call this group of men *essênes*. Our only certainty is that they derived the word from a neighbouring Anatolian language that has not yet been identified.⁸¹

After Alexander the Great we no longer hear of a connection between the *essênes* and citizenship. Their function must have clearly lost in importance. Although particulars are lacking, they seem to have become the victim of the restructuring of the temple organisation that took place during the Diadochi (*I. Ephesos* 26). Our information starts to flow again with Pausanias, who notes the lifelong chastity of the priest and priestess of Artemis Hymnia in Orchomenos and observes: ‘I know of similar things that last a year and no more in the case of the *histiatores* of Artemis Ephesia, those called *essênes* by the citizens’ (8.1.13). It is interesting that the term *histiâtôr* is found with this spelling only in a fragment of the archaic lawgiver Charondas (*apud* Stobaeus 4.2.24). Yet the term was quite normal in the Greek world and even used by Apollonius of Tyana (*Ep.* 65 Penella) in connection with Ephesus. Apparently, the *essênes* not only had to be chaste for a year but also to give banquets. As in Greek religion the latter usually went concomitant with sacrifice, the notice may well be an indication of a sacrificing activity of the *essênes*. In the course of the late second and third century, the office seems to have lost even further in importance. It now became incorporated among the *neopoioi*, and members often recorded that they had fulfilled two terms of *essêneia*. Moreover, we now so regularly hear of only two *essênes* that it seems fair to conclude that the corporation seems to have become limited in size in the later Roman period, like the Kouretes (§ 5), before disappearing altogether.⁸²

The origin of the office is lost in the dark of time. Yet the oldest known duties were not such that we have to conclude to a major priesthood or a most important office. The obligation of remaining chaste for a year hardly fits an older male, as such a temporary celibacy during male adulthood seems to be totally out of place in the Greek

⁸⁰ S. Karwiese, *Die Münzprägung von Ephesos* (Vienna, 1995) 152-64, 168-84, 197-207.

⁸¹ E.J. Furnée, *Die wichtigsten konsonantischen Erscheinungen des Vorgriechischen* (The Hague, 1972) 172 note 118 with a collection of other words ending on ⁻⁵₁.

⁸² *I Ephesos* 956-58, 963, 1582, 1588, 3263, 4330.

world, even in that part that was influenced by Anatolian traditions. That is why we suggest that the *essênes* developed from a group of upper-class adolescents that had to stay in the sanctuary for a year. It would fit with this interpretation that, in a neglected notice, Aristophanes of Byzantium explains the term as *hêlikia tis* (F 100 Slater).⁸³ In fact, we do hear of young men officiating in the service of Artemis. Strabo relates that during an annual festival in Ortygia in honour of the goddess young men (*neoi*) ‘vie for honour, particularly in the splendour of their banquets there’ (14.1.20, tr. Jones, Loeb). He does not call them by a technical term, but were these *histiatores* perhaps the *essênes*?

5. The Kouretes

When the *neoi* officiated in the sacred grove of Ortygia, there was also another corporation active, the Kouretes. Strabo mentions that they held symposia and performed some ‘mystic [probably: secret] sacrifices’ (14.1.20).⁸⁴ The corresponding myth related that they had helped to keep Hera away from Leto when she gave birth to Artemis and Apollo in Ortygia. The Kouretes were thus clearly connected with Artemis and it is therefore no surprise that they were also connected with the Artemision in two inscriptions around 300 BC, one about a business in frankincense (*I. Ephesos* 4102) and the other about a request for citizenship (*I. Ephesos* 1449). In both cases, the Kouretes are mentioned after the *neopoioi*, who seem to have been their superiors.⁸⁵ From the names in the former inscription we can also infer that the corporation must have counted at least four members at that time, which suggests that the regular number of six in the imperial era went back to olden times.⁸⁶ However, after the Augustan period we hear no longer about a connection with the Artemision. The building of the new prytaneion will have

⁸³ Slater (*ad loc.*) observes that no example of this usage exists, but that can hardly be an argument against the reliability of this gloss, as the same can be said about other glosses (F 11A, 14, 25, 30, 31, 103 etc.). He also approves the suggestion of A. Nauck, *Aristophanis Byzantii grammatici Alexandrini fragmenta* (Halle, 1848) 106 that the gloss is a corruption of the preceding one (F 99:° 56iZ̃, but such a corruption is hard to imagine.

⁸⁴ For other connections of Kouretes with sacrifice see Istros *FGrH* 334 F 48; Paus. 4.31.9.

⁸⁵ For the Ephesian *neopoioi* see Dignas, *Economy*, 192f.

⁸⁶ For the number see D. Knibbe, *Der Staatsmarkt. Die Inschriften des Prytaneions = Forschungen in Ephesos IX/1/1* (Vienna 1981) 97.

gone concomitant with a restructuring of the ancient corporation and its assignment to cultic functions in the prytaneion.⁸⁷

Originally, the Kouretes were groups of young men on the brink of adulthood, but their once widespread corporations had survived only in marginal areas of the Greek world, such as Acarnania, Messene and Aetolia. Yet the connection of the term with the process of coming off age was still felt in the Hellenistic period, witness the Greek-Egyptian term *mallokeurêtes*.⁸⁸ The Kouretes were especially worshipped on Eastern Crete, as is illustrated by the famous hymn of Palaikastro on Zeus and the Kouretes.⁸⁹ It is thus conceivable that the term was exported from Crete to Ephesus in the early archaic period: architects from Knossos built the archaic temple of Artemis, and Cretan artistic influence on early Ephesus is well attested;⁹⁰ Zeus Kretagenes and the Kouretes appear in neighbouring Mylasa and Amyzon.⁹¹

Yet in Ephesus the Kouretes were not connected with Zeus, but with Artemis. This tie may well be old, as in Aetolia she was also closely associated with the Kouretes.⁹² On the other hand, in Knossos the Kouretes were associated with Rhea,⁹³ and such connections of groups of men with a goddess, often with an initiatory background

⁸⁷ Thus F. Graf, 'Ephesische und andere Kureten', in Friesinger and Krinzinger, *100 Jahre Österreichische Forschungen*, 255-62 at 258; Dignas, *Economy*, 200. For the social status of the new Kouretes see also H. Rozenbeek, 'Another Archiatros from Ephesos?', *Epigr. Anat.* 21 (1993) 103-5.

⁸⁸ *P.Oxy.* 24.2407, cf. B. Legras, 'Mallokeurêtes et mallokeurêtes. Un rite de passage dans l'Égypte romaine', *Cahiers du Centre G. Glotz* 4 (1993) 113-27.

⁸⁹ For text, translation and commentary see now W.D. Furley and J.M. Bremer, *Greek Hymns*, 2 vols (Tübingen, 2001) I.67-76, II.1-20. For a full enumeration of the Cretan worship of the Kouretes see K. Sporn, *Heiligtümer und Kulte Kretas in klassischer und hellenistischer Zeit* (Heidelberg, 2002) 389.

⁹⁰ U. Muss, 'Das Artemision von Ephesus – Wege von und nach Westen', in H. Friesinger (ed.), *Die Ägäis und das westliche Mittelmeer* (Vienna, 2000) 149-55.

⁹¹ *I. Mylasa* 102, 107, 806; *I. Amyzon* (ed. L. Robert), 14f.

⁹² See the excellent observations of P. Grossardt, *Die Erzählung von Meleagros* (Leiden, 2001) 15, 238f.

⁹³ Sporn, *Heiligtümer und Kulte Kretas*, 124.

(as in the cases of the Kabeiroi,⁹⁴ Kouretes and Korybantes), regularly point to pre-Greek traditions.⁹⁵ Although in eastern Greece Artemis is occasionally associated with the mother of the Korybantes and the Meter,⁹⁶ the presence of the *essênes* perhaps makes a Greek origin of the Kouretes more probable. Otherwise we would have to postulate the original existence of a goddess with two groups. However this may be, the Kouretes clearly were no priests, even if they may have, on occasion, officiated as sacrificers in Artemis' cult.

6. Conclusion

The priesthood of Artemis, then, had a complicated history. On the one hand we find Artemis' traditional supervision of the coming off age of girls as visible in the choruses of maidens and the role of the priestess. On the other hand, her cult had also incorporated a pre-existing Anatolian goddess with her eunuch priest and a group of young men. It is even feasible that the Ephesians had combined native (priestess) and Anatolian (eunuch) elements in the Artemis priesthood from a relatively early stage onwards.

What can we now conclude from our discussion as regards Greek priesthood? I would like to single out four aspects of Artemis' cult that are typical for Greek priesthood but at the same time rather different from the priests encountered by most of us in the West. First, it was evidently acceptable that a eunuch came to occupy one of the most important, if not the most important functions in Artemis' cult. Whereas the organisation of the Christian Church has guaranteed that, before and after the Reformation, the Catholic priesthood and the Protestant ministry have remained identifiable and fairly strictly defined offices, Greek priesthood was clearly characterised by a flexibility that could continuously adapt to new circumstances.

Second, this flexibility made the Greek priesthood much more liable to political manipulation than the Christian one. We do not know how and when the Megabyxos

⁹⁴ For the initiatory background of the Kabeiroi see now R. Wachter, *Non-Attic Greek Vase Inscriptions* (Oxford, 2001) 326f.

⁹⁵ See especially Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, 115-20; R.S.P. Beekes, 'The Origin of the Kabeiroi', *Mnemosyne* IV 57 (2004) 465-77.

⁹⁶ *I. Chios* 33, cf. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, 55, 117.

received his name, but this must have been due to the Persian conquest of Ephesus. Whereas the Orthodox Church in Greece preserved Greek identity in the times of the Ottoman empire and the Polish priests nationalism in the face of communism, the most important religious functionaries of Ephesos apparently had no trouble in co-operating with the occupying powers, be they Persian, Macedonian or Roman. In this respect, the Greek priesthood was perhaps more different from the clergy familiar to us than we might always have thought.

Thirdly, in many religions priests have managed to monopolise the performance of sacrifice. It was different in ancient Greece, where in principle everybody had this right.⁹⁷ This means that the performance of sacrifice alone is not sufficient to call somebody a priest or priestess.

Fourthly and finally, the existence of adolescent priests and the temporary character of many Greek priesthoods, as exemplified in our case by the priestess and, probably, the *essênes*, shows that for the Greeks a priesthood was not necessarily something for life, as is the case in the Christian, Judaeian and Muslim tradition. Neither did the function require years of training, such as is obligatory for modern priests, ministers, imams and rabbi's. These factors made that the priesthood was no competition for the Christian bishops when the confrontation between Christianity and paganism became of vital importance for the survival of paganism.⁹⁸ Greek priesthood was perhaps a more problematic institution than we like to think.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Bremmer, *Greek Religion*, 28

⁹⁸ For the importance of the early bishops see, for example, P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (Madison, 1992); H.A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops* (Baltimore and London, 2000).

⁹⁹ I thank Beate Dignas, Jitse Dijkstra and Stelios Panayotakis for information and comments.