Rituals of death, food and life in Greece

Abstract:

Food is important in modern and ancient Greek religion, because the religious rituals are performed to ensure the food. Since the dead control the fertility, the deathcult is a central feature in religious festivals. Today the festivals are dedicated to saints, the holy dead. In antiquity, the heroes and heroines were central along with the vegetation gods/goddesses who oscillated between life and death. But the ordinary dead are and were also dedicated rituals and offerings at their tombs. It is important to be on good terms with the dead, because they influence the living and the stronger powers who control the fruits of the earth. As the ancient vegetation gods/goddesses and heroes/heroines, the saints become mediators for the living. The dead person has a magical influence, and also mediates between the subterranean powers, who are responsible for the fruits of the earth. It is important to manipulate these powers for the benefit of the living world. At critical situations people pray to the dead for help, and by way of their dead the farmers communicate their wishes for an abundant crop. The article explores the annual rituals dedicated to the dead to ensure the food in ancient and modern Greece.

Keywords: *Greece, modern, ancient, Death-cult, death-rituals, Communication, Gifts, Food.*