

THE GREEK WEDDING OUTSIDE ATHENS AND SPARTA: The Evidence from Ancient Texts

Résumé. — Cet article présente les informations fragmentaires fournies par les textes anciens sur les rites et coutumes de mariage des cités grecques en dehors d'Athènes et de Sparte. Bien que rares, ces informations peuvent éclairer le sujet et apporter une contribution utile, car nous en savons davantage sur les mariages athéniens et spartiates que sur les rituels de mariage dans les autres cités grecques. Comme on le verra, les sacrifices et les offrandes avant le mariage, l'institution de la dot, les bains nuptiaux, les processions nuptiales, les cadeaux et les repas de mariage étaient particulièrement populaires dans les cités grecques. À plusieurs reprises, des similitudes avec les rituels et les coutumes de mariage athéniens ont été identifiées.

Abstract. — This paper presents the fragmentary information provided by ancient texts on wedding rituals and customs of Greek cities other than Athens and Sparta. Although scanty, this information can shed some light on the subject – a helpful contribution, since we know more about Athenian and Spartan weddings than about wedding rituals in any other Greek cities. As will be seen, premarital sacrifices and offerings, the institution of dowry, nuptial baths, bridal processions, wedding gifts and meals were particularly popular among Greek cities. On several occasions, similarities with Athenian wedding rituals and customs have been identified.

Our knowledge of the ancient Greek wedding rituals and customs mostly derives from ancient texts and scenes of wedding vases. As is usually the case, we know more about the wedding in ancient Athens than in any other city¹. However, the Spartan wedding ritual is not unknown to us,

1. On the Athenian wedding, see J. OAKLEY, "The Anakalypteria", *AA* (1982), p. 113-188; I. JENKINS, "Is There Life After Marriage? A Study of the Abduction Motif in Vase Paintings of the Athenian Wedding Ceremony", *BICS* 30 (1983), p. 137-145; R. HAGUE, "Marriage Athenian Style", *Archaeology* 41 (1988), p. 32-36; C. REINSBERG, Ehe, *Hetärenentum und Knabenliebe im antiken Griechenland*, Munich, 1989; R. SUTTON JR., "On the Classical Athenian Wedding: Two Red-Figure Loutrophoroi in Boston", in R. SUTTON JR. (ed.), *Daidalikon. Studies in Memory of R. V. Schoder*, Wauconda, Bolchazy - Carducci, 1989, p. 331-359; B. MCMANUS, "Multicentering: the Case of the Athenian Bride", *Helios* 17 (1990), p. 225-235; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, Madison, 1993; E. REEDER (ed.), *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*, Baltimore, 1995, p. 126-128, 161-174; R. SUTTON JR., "Nuptial Eros: The Visual Discourse of Marriage in Classical Athens",

as it is described in good detail by Plutarch ². On the contrary, very little is known about the wedding rites and customs of the other Greek cities. In most cases, the information comes from short references in ancient texts. This evidence, scanty as it is, can shed some light on the subject of Greek wedding outside Athens and Sparta. It is with the hope that it may be useful to scholars working on the subject that this fragmentary, yet interesting information is presented in this paper.

We shall begin with a brief account of the Athenian and Spartan wedding rituals for the sake of comparison with the evidence from other Greek cities.

The wedding ceremony in Athens lasted for three days ³. It was a private ceremony that did not involve any priests or priestesses ⁴. Athenian weddings were normally conducted during the month Gamelion (“the month for weddings”), which was sacred to Hera, the goddess of marriage ⁵. In preparation for their wedding, Athenian brides and grooms bathed with water from the Enneakrounos spring ⁶. A festive procession was formed in order to fetch the water from the Enneakrounos ⁷. A child closely related to the bride or groom carried the λουτροφόρος (*loutrophoros*), the ritual vessel containing the water for the nuptial bath ⁸. The brides dedicated part of their hair, their childhood toys and items of clothing to Artemis, the goddess who watched over all young unmarried females helping them to complete their

JWalt 55/56 (1997/1998), p. 27-48; A. M. VÉRILHAC and C. VIAL, *Le mariage grec du VI^e siècle avant J.-C. à l'époque d'Auguste* (BCH, Suppl. 32), Athens, École Française d'Athènes, 1998; A. C. SMITH, “The Politics of Weddings at Athens: an Iconographic Assessment”, *Leeds International Classical Studies* 4.1 (2005), p. 1-32.

2. Plut., *Lyc.*, 15, 3-5. See also, Xen., *Const. Lac.*, 1, 5 and 1, 6; Paus., III, 13, 9, 1-3; Ath., XIII, 2, 2-8; W. DEN BOER, *Laconian Studies*, Amsterdam, 1954, p. 215 (and n. 4), 228-230; D. MACDOWELL, *Spartan Law*, Edinburgh, 1986, p. 72-77; S. POMEROY, *Spartan Women*, Oxford, University Press, 2002, p. 39-44.

3. Hsch., A 4345; Pherec., 2, 10-21; A. C. SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 3.

4. R. GARLAND, *Daily Life of the Ancient Greeks*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 1998, p. 51.

5. Phot., *Lex.*, Γ 27; Hsch., Γ 120; Eust., II, 739, 11-13 and IV, 228, 20 - 229, 1; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 10.

6. Ar., *Lys.*, 378; Men., *Sam.*, 713-714; Eur., *IT*, 818; Phot., *Lex.* Α 231, 5-10 and 17-25; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 43, 4-6; *Etym. Magn.*, 343, 42-45; Harp., 195, 6-14; Thuc., II, 15, 5; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 15-16, figs. 10-13, 20-21; A. C. SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 4.

7. J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 15, figs. 14-19; A. C. SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 4-5.

8. Phot., *Lex.*, Α 231, 15-21; Hsch., Α 1280, 1282; Harp., 195, 6-14; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 43, 4-6; Men., *Sam.*, 729-730.

transition into adulthood and marriage⁹. Premarital sacrifices were offered to a series of deities related to marriage and fertility by both the bride's and the groom's family¹⁰. Of particular importance was the *προτέλεια* (*proteleia*), the sacrifice offered to Artemis by the bride's father. The *προτέλεια* has been interpreted as a propitiatory sacrifice seeking to appease the goddess for the bride's impending loss of virginity¹¹.

The bride's and groom's houses were decorated with wreaths, branches of plants and *ταινίαι* (*taeniae*)¹². Laurel and olive branches decorated the doors of both houses, thus stating to the community that a wedding was taking place¹³. The bride and groom were wreathed¹⁴ and dressed in very fine clothes¹⁵. The bride wore a saffron-colored veil¹⁶, special shoes called *νυμφίδες* (*nymphides*)¹⁷, jewelry¹⁸ and a bridal diadem (*πλανίς* [*planis*])¹⁹.

9. *Anth. Pal.*, VI, 276 and VI, 280; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 14-15; L. ROCCOS, "Back-Mantle and Peplos. The Special Costume of Greek Maidens in 4th Century Funerary and Votive Reliefs", *Hesperia* 69 (2000), p. 240; M. DILLON, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 229; L. LLEWELLYN-JONES, *Aphrodite's Tortoise. The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece*, Swansea, The Classical Press of Wales, 2003, p. 219.

10. Sacrifices were offered to Teleios Zeus and Hera Teleia (Diod. Sic., V, 73, 2, 6-3, 1), Ouranos and Ge (Procl., *In Ti.*, 3, 176, 26-28), the Eumenides (Aesch., *Eum.*, 834-836; *Scholia vetera in Aeschylum Eumenides*, 835) and the Tritopatores (*Suda*, T 1023; Phot., *Lex.*, T 604, 4-17; Harp., 237, 4-6) – all of them related to marriage and / or fertility. See also, J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 11-12.

11. For the *προτέλεια*, see Harp., 262, 14-16; *Suda*, Π 2865-2867; *Lexica Segueriana - Glossae Rhetoricae*, Π 293, 5-6; Phot., *Lex.*, Π 464, 6-10 and 16-21; Hsch., Γ 133, Π 3974 and 4156; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 38, 1 - 39, 3; Eur., *IA*, 718, 433-439; *Scholia vetera in Aeschylum*, 65b-c; W. BURKERT, *Homo Necans: the Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, Berkeley, 1983, p. 62-63; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 11-12; A. M. VÉRILHAC and C. VIAL, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 291-293.

12. J. REDFIELD, "Notes on the Greek Wedding", *Arethusa* 15 (1982), p. 195-196; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 21.

13. Plut., *Amat.*, 755a, 2-5; *Etymologicum Gudianum*, K 338, 13-19; Luc., *Dial. meret.*, 2, 3, 11-15, 2, 4, 13-14; *Etym. Magn.*, 531, 54 - 532, 3.

14. Eur., *IA*, 905; Eur., *Tro.*, 353; Philostr., *Her.*, 733, 2-3; Men., *Sam.*, 74; *Suda*, N 597, Y 107, 1-2; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 43, 3; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 16.

15. *Suda*, B 96; Plut., *Amat.*, 755a, 1-2; Ar., *Av.*, 1693; Hom., *Il.*, XIV, 170-189; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 16.

16. Luc., *Symp.*, 8, 3-4; Aesch., *Ag.*, 239, 1178-1179; Eur., *IT*, 372, 1149-1152; D. ARMSTRONG and E. RATCHFORD, "Iphigenia's Veil: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 228-48", *BICS* 32 (1985), p. 10; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 7, 16, 24, 30, 32-33, and 133, n. 20; L. LLEWELLYN-JONES, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 219-227.

17. Hsch., N 720; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 16, figs. 31, 35.

18. Diod. Sic., X, 34, 12, 2-3; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 16, fig. 22; E. REEDER, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 127.

19. Hsch., Π 2450; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), figs. 28-30, 39, 72, 82, 121.

A woman called νυμφεύτρια (*nympheutria*) attended to the bride throughout the ceremony²⁰. Marriages were celebrated by wedding feasts with music, singing and dancing²¹. The singing of the wedding song ὑμέναιος (*hymenaios*) was central to the celebrations²².

The ancient sources also mention the ἀπαύλια (*apaulia*), during which the groom slept with a little girl whose parents were still alive at the bride's house²³. On that day, the bride sent a mantle as a gift to her groom (ἀπαυλιστηρία γλάνις)²⁴.

The νυμφαγωγία (*nymphagogia*, "leading the bride to her new home") took place at night, under the auspicious light of the full moon to which the ancients assigned special fertility powers²⁵. The groom led the bride to his home by taking her from the wrist in a ritual gesture known as χεῖρ' ἐπὶ καρπῶ (*cheir' epi karpo*)²⁶. The relatives and friends of the couple formed a festive procession that accompanied them to their new home with music and songs²⁷. The bride's mother led the procession carrying lit torches²⁸. The groom's mother awaited for the new couple in their home, also bearing lit torches²⁹. When the couple arrived, they were led to the hearth of the house by the groom's mother. It was there that the ritual of the καταχύσματα (*katachysmata*) was performed: dried fruits, figs and nuts were poured over

20. Hsch., N 715, N 723, Π 604; Ar., *Ach.*, 1056-1057; Phot., *Lex.*, N 304, 8-10; *Suda*, N 592; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 41, 4-5; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 16; A. C. SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 5.

21. Eur., *IA.*, 718-723; Plut., *Symp.*, 666f - 667b; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 44, 1-2; Ar., *Av.*, 1688-1689; Ar., *Ach.*, 1049-1050; Men., *Sam.*, 287-289, 730; Ath., IV, 9, 4-5, XIV, 52, 11-14; Luc., *Dial. Meret.*, 2, 3, 11-15; Plut., *Amat.*, 755a, 5-6; Eur., *IT*, 1143-1152; Eur., *Ion*, 1474-1475; Hom., *Od.*, XXIII, 133-136; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 22-25, figs. 54-58; A. C. SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 5.

22. Phot., *Lex.*, Y 618, 16-18; Hsch., 177-178, 181; Eust., *Il.*, IV, 231, 7-21; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 37, 4-7; Ath., I, 9, 27-31; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 11.

23. Phot., *Lex.*, A 2287, 2; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 39, 5-6 and III, 40, 1-4; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 37.

24. Poll., *Onom.*, III, 40, 1-2.

25. Eur., *IA*, 716-717; Phot., *Lex.*, Z 52, 22 - 53, 5; *Suda*, Z 33, 20-22; Eur., *Hel.*, 723-725; Plut., *De mul. vir.*, 244d, 10 - 244e, 5; A. CARSON, "Wedding at Noon in Pindar's Ninth Pythian", *GRBS* 23 (1982), p. 122; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 26-34, figs. 62-95; R. SUTTON JR. (1997/1998), *op. cit.* (n. 1), 28-30; A. C. SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 6-7.

26. I. JENKINS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 140; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 32, figs. 82-88, 90-91, 94, 97, 106, 110; R. REHM, *Marriage to Death. The Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rituals in Greek Tragedy*, Princeton, 1994, p. 36-39.

27. Diod. Sic., XIX, 34, 3, 10; Eur., *Hel.*, 722-725; Eur., *Alc.*, 916; Men., *Sam.*, 730; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 26-27.

28. Eur., *IA*, 732-734; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 26.

29. Eur., *Med.*, 1027; Eur., *Phoen.*, 344-346; A. CARSON, *op. cit.* (n. 25), p. 122-123; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 26.

the bride and groom, ritually incorporating the new couple into the household³⁰. According to the ancient sources, it was also customary for the bride to sleep with a little boy whose parents were still alive at the groom's house, just like the groom had slept with a little girl at the bride's house during the ἀπαύλια (*apaulia*)³¹.

The ἀνακαλυπτήρια (*anakalypteria*, ritual unveiling of the bride) was the culminating moment of the Athenian wedding and must have taken place on the third and final day of the ceremony³². The bride unveiled herself, thus showing her face to the groom for the first time. The gifts she received from her new husband for the occasion were called ἀνακαλυπτήρια³³. The consummation of the wedding marked the end of the ceremony. However, the bride's transition to adulthood that begun with her marriage was not considered complete until the birth of her first child³⁴.

The ancient texts also refer to the celebration of the ἐπαύλια (*epaulia*), during which the bride and groom received gifts from her father³⁵. The gifts were called ἐπαύλια and were carried in procession to the couple's new

30. Phot., *Lex.*, K 145, 2-16; Hsch., K 1525; *Suda*, K 878; A. CARSON, *op. cit.* (n. 25), p. 123, 127; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 34-35, figs. 60-61; R. SUTTON JR. (1997/1998), *op. cit.* (n. 1), 34; A. C. SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 6.

31. Hsch., Γ 123, E 4259; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 39, 4 and 40, 1-4; *Suda*, E 1990, 1-10, E 1991, 1-2.

32. Pherec., 2, 10-21; Hsch., A 4345; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 36, 3-4; J. OAKLEY, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 113-118; J. REDFIELD, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 192; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 7, 16, 25-26, 30; E. REEDER, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 127; S. BLUNDELL, "Clutching at Clothes", in L. LEWELLYN-JONES (ed.), *Women's Dress in the Ancient Greek World*, London - Swansea, Duckworth Classical Press of Wales, 2002, p. 159-161; L. LEWELLYN-JONES, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 98-110, 114, 227-249; A. C. SMITH, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 6.

33. Pherec., 2, 10-21; Apollod., *Bibl.*, III, 25, 5-6; Heliod., *Aeth.*, IV, 15, 2, 5-9; Phot., *Lex.*, A 1502; *Suda*, A 1888; Harp., 31, 13-32, 2; Plut., *Tim.*, 8, 8, 1-3; Diod. Sic., V, 2, 3; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 26.

34. H. KING, "Bound to Bleed: Artemis and Greek Women", in A. CAMERON and A. KUHR (ed.), *Images of Women in Antiquity*, London, 1983, p. 112, 122; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 10, 14; L. BEAUMONT, "Constructing a Methodology for the Interpretation of Childhood Age in Classical Athenian Iconography", *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 13.2 (1994), p. 87; N. DEMAND, *Birth, Death, and Motherhood in Classical Greece*, Baltimore, 1994, p. 17; L. BEAUMONT, "The Social Status and Artistic Presentation of 'Adolescence' in Fifth Century Athens", in J. S. DEREVENSKI (ed.), *Children and Material Culture*, London, Routledge, 2000, p. 48; J. LARSON, *Greek Nymphs*, Oxford, University Press, 2001, p. 100; R. SUTTON JR., "Family Portraits: Recognizing the *Oikos* on Attic Red-Figure Pottery", in A. P. CHAPIN (ed.), *Χάρτις: Essays in Honor of Sara A. Immerwahr* (Hesperia, Suppl. 33), Princeton, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2004, p. 338.

35. Hsch., E 4259; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 39, 4-6; *Suda*, E 1990, 1-10, 1991, 1-2; Eust., II., IV, 865, 4-10; *Ety. Magn.*, 354, 1-14; Phot., *Lex.*, Λ 213, 6-8; J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 38-42.

home³⁶. Various stages of the Athenian wedding ceremony are depicted on Athenian vases, thus supplementing the evidence from ancient texts³⁷.

We know far less about the Spartan wedding than we do about the Athenian wedding ceremony. According to Plutarch, the Spartans abducted the girls they wanted to marry³⁸. Herodotus on the other hand refers to both arranged marriages and bride abductions in Sparta³⁹. It has also been suggested that the Spartan wedding involved a ritual abduction of the bride by the groom, who had previously reached an agreement with the bride's father⁴⁰. The only piece of information we have about the wedding preparations in Sparta is provided by Pausanias, who states that the bride's mother sacrificed to Aphrodite Hera before her daughter's wedding⁴¹. The Spartan wedding ceremony as described by Plutarch⁴² began with the bride's abduction (whether ritual or real). The groom carried the bride to his home, where the νυμφεύτρια (*nymphēutria*) cut her hair off close to the head and dressed her in male attire. The bride was then laid on a pallet and left in the dark to wait for her groom. When he arrived, he would carry his bride to the marriage bed in the dark, undo her belt and consummate the marriage.

The Spartan wedding ceremony was nothing like the Athenian one. It was a very private, brief and frugal ceremony of secretive and austere character, as befitted the Spartan way of life⁴³.

Mainland Greece

Argos. — In Argos, it was customary for a type of flat cake (πλακοῦς) called κρήμιον (*creïum*) to be brought to the groom from the bride⁴⁴. It was served with honey and the friends of the groom were invited to eat it.

36. Eust., *Il.*, IV, 865, 6-10; *Etym. Magn.*, 354, 1-14.

37. See J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1).

38. Plut., *Lyc.*, 15, 3, 1; S. POMEROY, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 41-43.

39. Hdt., VI, 57, 22, VI, 65, 9 and VI, 72, 1.

40. W. DEN BOER, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 215 (and n. 4), 228.

41. Paus., III, 13, 9, 1-3; P. MARCHETTI and K. KOLOKOTSAS, *Le Nymphée de l'Agora d'Argos : fouille, étude architecturale et historique*, Athènes, École Française, 1995, p. 209, 215-216.

42. Plut., *Lyc.*, 15, 3-4; S. POMEROY, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 41-43.

43. S. HODKINSON, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, London, Duckworth, 2000, p. 230.

44. Ath., XIV, 53, 33-36. In Athens, a mantle was brought to the groom from the bride (ἀπαυλιστήρια χλανίδα): Poll., *Onom.*, III, 40, 1-2.

As P. Marchetti and K. Kolokotsas have proved, a nuptial rite took place in the Numphaeum of Argos⁴⁵. The rite consisted of the bride's κατάβασις in an underground area of the Numphaeum where a river was flowing. This was where the bridal bath / purification of the bride took place.

Ermioni (Argolid). — All future brides, including any widows that were to be married again, had to offer a premarital sacrifice to the local temple of Aphrodite⁴⁶.

Troezen. — Before marriage, every maiden has to dedicate a lock of her hair to the temple of Hippolytus⁴⁷ and her girdle to the temple of Athena Apaturia⁴⁸.

Megara. — According to Pausanias, the future brides of Megara offered χοαί (funerary libations) at the tomb of maiden Iphinoe and dedicated to her some of their hair⁴⁹.

Boeotia. — After being veiled, the Boeotian brides were crowned with wreaths made of asparagus – a highly symbolic act, as explained by Plutarch: “for this plant yields the finest flavoured fruit from the roughest thorns, and so the bride will provide for him who does not run away or feel annoyed at her first display of peevishness and unpleasantness a docile and sweet life together”⁵⁰.

It was customary for every bride and groom to offer premarital sacrifices to the maiden Eukleia, who is associated with Artemis⁵¹. An altar and a statue of her were set up in every market place of Boeotia, as well as Lokris.

Thebes. — In Thebes, water from the Ismenos river was invariably used for the nuptial bath⁵².

45. P. MARCHETTI and K. KOLOKOTSAS, *op. cit.* (n. 41), p. 233-248.

46. Paus., II, 34, 12, 1-5.

47. Paus., II, 32, 1, 1-10.

48. Paus., II, 33, 1, 1-2.

49. Paus., I, 43, 4, 1-9.

50. Plut., *Conjug. Praec.*, 138d, 10 - 138e, 7. English translation by F. C. BABBITT, *Plutarch's Moralia II*, Cambridge, 1928. For the meaning of wreaths, see Ath., XV, 16, 39-50; Eust., II, IV, 159, 18 - 160, 3; Artem., IV, 5, 1-5. For the wreaths of the Athenian wedding, see p. 321.

51. Plut., *Arist.*, 20, 7, 1 - 8, 3; D. C. BRAUND, “Artemis Eukleia and Euripides’ Hippolytos”, *JHS* 100 (1980), p. 184-185.

52. Eur., *Phoen.*, 347-348.

Haliartos. — The brides of Haliartos offered a premarital sacrifice (προτέλεια, *proteleia*) to the Nymphs of Kissoessa Spring⁵³. The wedding was celebrated with a feast⁵⁴.

Lokris. — As was the case with Boeotia, the brides and grooms of Lokris sacrificed to the maiden Eukleia (or to Eukleia Artemis) before their wedding⁵⁵.

Naupaktos. — The widows of Naupaktos who wished to marry again had to offer prayers to Aphrodite⁵⁶.

Thessaly. — After the performance of the wedding sacrifice and the offering of libations, the Thessalian groom leads a harnessed horse dressed for battle to his bride, handing the reins to her⁵⁷. The Thessalians were famous horsemen and breeders of horses in antiquity⁵⁸. According to Maria Mili, it is very likely that the horse was a symbol of married life and reproduction for the Thessalians⁵⁹. Such an interpretation fully explains the meaning of this wedding ritual⁶⁰.

Macedonia. — Macedonian weddings were celebrated with feasts⁶¹.

Islands

Delos. — The Hyperborean maidens were the recipients of premarital offerings of hair by the males and females of Delos⁶². The females cut off some of their hair and placed it on the tomb of the Hyperborean maidens

53. Plut., *Am. Narr.*, 772b, 9-10.

54. Plut., *Am. Narr.*, 772b, 5-6 and 9-10.

55. Plut., *Arist.*, 20, 7, 1 - 8, 3.

56. Paus., X, 38, 12, 5 - 13, 1.

57. Ael., *NA*, XII, 34, 17-23.

58. P. SABIN, H. VAN WEES and M. WHITBY (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare. I: Greece, the Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome*, Cambridge, University Press, 2007, p. 117-118; M. MILI, *Religion and Society in Ancient Thessaly*, Oxford, University Press, 2015, p. 121, 260.

59. M. MILI, *op. cit.* (n. 58), p. 121-122.

60. See also, M. MILI, *op. cit.* (n. 58), p. 83: "What is striking in the Thessalian ceremony [...] is precisely the prominent role of the woman as the end recipient of the war horse, as well as the placing of marriage in the same conceptual sphere as warfare, that is to say in the competitive world of intercity connections."

61. Ath., IV, 2, 1-3. As E. Voutiras points out, there is no evidence that polygamy was customary among common people in Macedonia, at least from the classical period onwards: E. VOUTIRAS, *Διονυσιοφρόντος γάμοι: Marital Life and Magic in Fourth Century Pella*, Amsterdam, 1998, p. 88-89.

62. Hdt., IV, 34, 3 - 35, 1.

wound around a spindle. The males did the same, only their hair was wound around a green stalk⁶³.

Kos. — The bridegrooms of Kos were dressed in female attire for their wedding⁶⁴. In order to offer an explanation for this custom, Plutarch cited the myth of Heracles, who dressed up as a woman in order to save his life in the island of Kos⁶⁵. After the hero prevailed over his enemies, he married the king's daughter dressed up as a woman for the occasion, in memory of the disguise that had saved his life.

Rhodes. — In Rhodes, it was customary for a herald to bring the bride to the groom⁶⁶. The bridal procession was called ἀγωγή (*agoge*)⁶⁷. The Rhodian girls who had reached the age of marriage were called ἀνθεςτριάδαι (*anthesstridae*) or ἀνθεςτριάδαι (*anthesstriadae*)⁶⁸.

Thasos. — The dowry in Thasos was called πενθέριον (*pentherion*)⁶⁹.

Lesbos. — The wedding gifts offered to the bride by her relatives were called ἀθρήματα (*athremata*)⁷⁰.

Chios. — The bride travelled to her new home on a carriage or chariot, in a festive atmosphere⁷¹.

Samos. — The coupling of the bride and groom “secretly” preceded the wedding ceremony in Samos. Thus, the Samian couples followed the divine example of Zeus and Hera, who slept together in Samos before they were married⁷².

63. According to J. Redfield, “this seems to show us that the male is the natural partner to the marriage, the female the cultural and acculturating partner”: J. REDFIELD, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 194.

64. Plut., *Quaest. Graec.*, 304e, 3-4. For an explanation of the ritual, see E. J. AMENT, “Aspects of Androgyny in Classical Greece”, in M. DEFOREST (ed.), *Woman's Power, Man's Game: Essays on Classical Antiquity in Honour of Joy K. King*, Wauconda, Bolchazy - Carducci, 1993, p. 14-18. As it has been mentioned earlier in this paper (p. 324), the brides in Sparta had their hair cut off close to the head and were dressed in male attire.

65. Plut., *Quaest. Graec.*, 304c, 4 - 304e, 4.

66. Plut., *Quaest. Graec.* 297c, 12 - 297d, 2. In Athens, when a groom was being married for the second time, he was not allowed to fetch the bride himself. In such cases, a friend of the groom was sent to fetch the bride, thus becoming the wedding's νυμφαγωγός (*nymphagogos*, the one who leads the bride): Hsch., N 711-712; Eust., II, II, 351, 2-11; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 40, 4-41, 4; Phot., *Lex.*, N 304, 5.

67. Hsch., A 937. From the Greek verb ἄγω (“to lead”, “fetch”, “bring”).

68. Hsch., A 5127; *Lexica Segueriana - Glossae Rhetoricae*, A 215, 16-17.

69. Hsch., II 1397.

70. Hsch., A 1621.

71. Plut., *De. mul. vir.*, 244d, 10 - 244e, 5. For the Athenian νυμφαγωγία, see p. 322.

72. *Scholia vetera in Homerum Iliadem*, XIV, 296a, 10-13. Thus, the Samian custom separated the private from the public aspect of marriage. In contrast to Athens,

The second century AD sophist and rhetor Polemon of Laodicea describes the incident of a bride abduction in Samos⁷³. The abduction took place during the bridal procession and was witnessed by Polemon himself. Instead of reaching the house of the groom to whom her father had promised her, the bride was carried off to become the wife of the young man she loved. Besides the reference to the bridal procession which was brutally interrupted by the group of armed men who seized the bride killing everyone who attempted to stop them, the text provides no further information about the Samian wedding ceremony.

Crete. — The Cretan girls returned to their father's home after their wedding, and only went to live with their husbands when they were fully capable of assuming their responsibilities as married women and housewives⁷⁴. This leads us to the conclusion that the girls in Crete married at a very young age⁷⁵.

The dowry of the Cretan brides was half the size of their male siblings' share of the paternal property⁷⁶.

Phaistos. — According to a local myth, the Phaistian maiden Leukippe was turned into a youth (named Leukippos) by Leto. It was customary for the people of Phaistos to lay down beside the statue of this Leukippos before their marriage⁷⁷.

where the couple retired to the wedding chamber after the wedding ceremony was completed, the Samian wedding ceremony made the union of couple (that had already taken place) official and known to the community.

73. Polemo, *De Physiognomia Liber* 69, in R. FOERSTER (ed.), *Scriptores Physiognomici Graeci et Latini*, Lipsiae, Teubner, 1893; J. WINKLER, "The Constraints of Eros", in C. A. FARAONE and D. OBBINK (ed.), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 214-243.

74. Strab., X, 4, 20, 1-6.

75. Thus, marriage did not mark the passage to adulthood for the Cretan girls. In Athens, females were generally considered to be ripe for marriage after entering puberty and they often got married around the age of fourteen or fifteen: Xen., *Oec.*, 3, 13, 7, 5; Soph., fr. 583, 6-10; Arist., *Ath. Pol.*, 56, 7, 4-6; W. K. LACEY, *The Family in Classical Greece*, Ithaca, 1968, p. 107, 162; L. BEAUMONT, *op. cit.* (n. 34), p. 87, 93; S. BLUNDELL, *Women in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 119; P. BRULÉ, *Women of Ancient Greece*, Edinburgh, University Press, 2003, p. 130. Marriage marked the transition to adulthood for females in Athens, but this transition was completed only after the birth of their first child (see n. 34). The age of marriage for the girls of Sparta is not known, but Plutarch states that the Spartan females married "in full bloom and wholly mature": Plut., *Lys.*, 15, 3, 1-3. See also, Xen., *Lac.* 1, 6; Plut., *Apophth. Lac.*, 228a, 3-6; W. DEN BOER, *op. cit.* (n. 2), p. 229-230.

76. Strab., X, 4, 20, 1-6.

77. Ant. Lib., *Met.*, 17. The text does not specify whether it was only the bride that had to sleep beside the statue of Leukippos, or the custom also applied to the bride-groom. For an explanation of the custom, see W. BURKERT, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, Berkeley, 1982, p. 29-30; E. J. AMENT, *op. cit.* (n. 64),

Gortyn. — If there were no male siblings, the daughter(s) inherited the entire paternal property. A heiress was called πατριῶκος (*patroiokos*) and was obliged to marry her nearest male relative, so that the property would remain in the family⁷⁸.

The widows of Gortyn were free to remarry, if they wished to do so⁷⁹.

Asia Minor

Troad. — During their bridal bath in the river Scamander, the brides of Troad would exclaim: “Take my virginity, Scamander!”⁸⁰.

Magna Graecia

Sicily. — The matchmakers of Sicily were called προμυθίτριαι (*promythiktriae*)⁸¹.

Before they were married, the Sicilian girls had to become κνηφόροι (*kanephoroi*) in honour of Artemis⁸².

p. 18; D. D. LEITAO, “The perils of Leucippus. Initiatory transvestism and male gender ideology at the Ekdysia at Phaistos”, *CLAnt* 14 (1995), p. 130-163.

78. *IC*, IV, 72, 7, 15-29. The same practice was valid in Athens, where the heiress was called ἐπικληρος (*epikleros*): A. HARRISON, *The Law of Athens*. I, Oxford, 1968, p. 132-138; D. M. SCHAPS, *The Economic Rights of Women in Ancient Greece*, Edinburgh, 1979, p. 25-42. Heiresses also existed in Sparta, but we do not know whether they also had to marry their closest relative. On this, see *Suda*, Π 799; *Phot.*, *Lex.*, Π 402, 19-20; *Hdt.*, VI, 57, 20-22.

79. *IC*, IV, 72, 3, 17-22.

80. Aeschin., *Epist.*, 10, 3, 2-5.

81. Poll., *Onom.*, III, 31, 1-4; *Ar. Byz.*, 278, 14-15. As the ancient texts cited here inform us, matchmakers also existed in Athens.

82. *Scholia vetera in Theocritum*, II, 66 - 68a-b. The same applied to the Athenian girls. For the κνηφόροι and the κνηφορία (*kanephoría*), see *Ar.*, *Lys.*, 641-647; *Harp.*, 168, 5-9; *Hsch.*, K 654; *Phot.*, *Lex.*, K 129, 18-130, 2; *Suda*, K 308; *Lexica Segueriana - Glossae Rhetoricae*, K 270, 32 - 271, 2; G. M. A. RICHTER, “The Basket of the Kanephoroi”, *AJA* 30 (1926), p. 422-426; S. B. POMEROY, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*, New York, 1975, p. 75-76; M. WALBANK, “Artemis Bear-Leader”, *CQ* 31 (1981), p. 276-281; P. BRULÉ, *La fille d'Athènes. La religion des filles à Athènes à l'époque classique. Mythes, cultes et société*, Paris, 1987, p. 301-335; L. B. ZAIDMAN, “Pandora's Daughters and Rituals in Grecian Cities”, in G. DUBY and M. PERROT (ed.), *A History of Women in the West. From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints*, Cambridge (MA) - London, Belknap Press, 1994, p. 344-346; L. J. ROCCOS, “The Kanephoros and Her Festival Mantle in Greek Art”, *AJA* 99 (1995), p. 641-66; M. R. LEFKOWITZ, “Women in the Panathenaic and other Festivals”, in J. NEILS (ed.), *Worshipping Athena: Panathenaia and Parthenon*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1996, p. 79-80; R. SCODEL, “Δόμιον ἄγαλμα: Virgin Sacrifice and Aesthetic Object”, *TAPA* 126 (1996), p. 112-114; M. DILLON, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 37-41; J. NEILS, “Looking for the Images: Representations of Girls' Rituals in Ancient Athens”, in M. PARCA and A. TZANETOU (ed.), *Finding*

Egypt

Naukratis. — Eggs and sweets with honey were excluded from the wedding feasts at Naukratis⁸³.

Discussion

Premarital sacrifices and offerings (especially of hair) are the most frequently mentioned practices in the texts mentioned above. Sacrifices were performed in Athens, Sparta, Ermioni, Boeotia, Lokris and Thessaly, libations and *χοαί* (funerary libations) in Athens, Thessaly and Megara respectively. Hair offerings were customary in Athens, Troezen, Megara and Delos, with the Troezenian maidens also dedicating their girdles before marriage. It is reasonable to assume that in every Greek city sacrifices⁸⁴ and premarital offerings⁸⁵ would precede the wedding ceremony.

The girdle is a symbol of maidenhood, its loosening signifying the loss of virginity and the consummation of marriage⁸⁶. Thus, the brides-to-be dedicate the symbol of the virginity they are about to lose to the virgin goddess Athena, in the hope that she will watch over them during their impending transition from maidenhood to adulthood, married life and motherhood⁸⁷.

The offering of hair is a common and highly symbolic premarital offering for the Greek maidens, since the hair is part of oneself⁸⁸. Therefore the

Persephone: Women's Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2007, p. 57-58, 63, 66, 75.

83. Ath., IV, 32, 30-32.

84. According to Diodorus, prenuptial sacrifices were offered to Teleios Zeus and Hera Teleia in every Greek city: Diod. Sic., V, 73, 2, 6 - 3, 1.

85. The brides of Athens dedicated to Artemis their childhood toys, items of clothing and part of their hair (see p. 320-321). The Athenian premarital offerings to the gods also included libations: Diod. Sic., V, 73, 2, 4-5.

86. Hom., *Od.*, XI, 245-246; Eur., *Alc.*, 177-178; *Scholia in Aristotelem Rhetorica* 184, 17-19; *Anth. Pal.*, VII, 164, 3-4 and VII, 324. Women also loosen their girdles in order to give birth: Callim., *Hymn* 4, 209; Hyp., *fr.* 67, 1-13; *Scholia vetera in Pindari Olympionicas*, 6, 67; *Scholia in Lycophronem (Isaac et Joannis Tzetzae)*, 1278, 6. In his description of the Spartan wedding ceremony, Plutarch specifically states that the groom loosens the bride's girdle before consummating the marriage. For the girdle of Greek women, see H. KING, *op. cit.* (n. 34), p. 120-122.

87. For Athena as *κουροτρόφος (kourotrophos)*, nurturer and protector of the young, see TH. HADZISTELIOU-PRICE, *Kourotrophos: Cults and Representations of the Greek Nursing Deities*, Leiden, 1978, p. 2-3, 8, 11, 52, 59-60, 66, 101-104, 138, 148, 168, 220, 222. As a *κουροτρόφος* deity and a maiden goddess, Athena is suitable to watch over the Troezenian girls' transition from maidenhood to marriage.

88. Eur., *IT*, 820-821 (Iphigenia cuts off part of her hair before she is led to the altar to be sacrificed and sends it to her mother so as to bury it instead of her body). See also, J. REDFIELD, *op. cit.* (n. 12), p. 190-191.

cutting and dedication of hair acquires the symbolic meaning of a propitiatory sacrificial offering for the maiden's impending loss of virginity through marriage. The brides-to-be offer part of their virginal self to a virgin deity, in the hope that such an offering will avert the deity's anger for the girls' loss of virginity⁸⁹. By doing so, the girls die symbolically, sacrificing their virginal self so that through their successful transition to marriage they can be "reborn" as adult women, wives and mothers⁹⁰. In Megara and Delos the recipients of such offerings are dead maidens, whose death prevented them from completing their transition to adulthood. In Troezen, the hair is offered to the local hero Hippolytus, the youth who shuns the world of Aphrodite and is loyal to the virgin goddess Artemis⁹¹. It is his devotion to the latter that provokes Aphrodite's anger and brings about the tragic death of Hippolytus. Thus, the eternally chaste young son of Theseus is an appropriate recipient for the premarital offerings of the young brides. In Athens, the brides dedicated part of their hair to Artemis, the goddess who watched over all young unmarried females until they successfully crossed the threshold to adulthood⁹². It is in the hope that they will meet with a better fate and their transition to adulthood and married life will be auspicious that the girls of Megara, Delos, Athens and Troezen dedicate their most personal offering to the maidens and the chaste youth who never crossed the threshold to adulthood.

As for the recipients of the premarital sacrifices mentioned in our texts, these are Aphrodite, the maiden Eukleia who is associated with Artemis and the Nymphs of Kissoessa Spring. In Athens, the *προτέλεια* (*proteleia*) was offered to Artemis⁹³. In Sparta, the mother of the bride sacrificed to

89. W. BURKERT, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, Oxford, 1996, p. 70. The death of women in labour was considered a result of their failure to propitiate the virgin goddess for their loss of their virginity: Hom., *Il.*, XXI, 483-484; Callim., *Hymn*, 3, 126-128; Eust., *Od.*, I, 127, 2-7; *Etym. Magn.*, 150, 15-17; S. COLE, "Domesticating Artemis", in S. BLUNDELL and M. WILLIAMSON (ed.), *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece*, London - New York, Routledge, 1998, p. 30; S. COLE, *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space: the Ancient Greek Experience*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004, p. 212; N. LORAUX, *The Experiences of Tiresias: the Feminine and the Greek Man*, Princeton, University Press, 2014, p. 30-31. See also, J. OAKLEY and R. SINOS, *op. cit.* (n. 1), p. 12.

90. P. VIDAL-NAQUET, *The Black Hunter. Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World*, Baltimore, 1986, p. 149.

91. Eur., *Hipp.*; J. E. FONTENROSE, *Orion: the Myth of the Hunter and the Huntress*, Berkeley - London, 1981, p. 160-167; F. I. ZEITLIN, "The Power of Aphrodite: Eros and the Boundaries of the Self in Hippolytus", in P. BURIAN (ed.), *Directions in Euripidean Criticism. A Collection of Essays*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1985, p. 52-111.

92. See p. 320-321.

93. See p. 321.

Aphrodite Hera⁹⁴. All of them are appropriate recipients of prenuptial sacrificial offerings: Aphrodite as the goddess of love and sexuality⁹⁵, Artemis as the virgin goddess who protects all maidens watching over their transition from maidenhood to adulthood⁹⁶, Hera as the goddess of marriage⁹⁷, the Nymphs as youthful nature deities of fertility and mythical representatives of the Greek maiden⁹⁸.

The ancient texts under consideration include references to the wedding feasts of Haliartos, Macedonia and Naukratis. It is reasonable to presume that wedding feasts were held in every Greek city, with the exception of Sparta⁹⁹. Athenaeus informs us that eggs and honey were forbidden in the wedding feasts of Naukratis¹⁰⁰. The prohibition of eggs could be due to their special connection with death and the dead, the eggs thus being considered too ominous for such occasions¹⁰¹.

Bridal baths and bridal processions¹⁰² must have been popular among the Greek cities, even though references to them in the texts studied here are limited. The prenuptial bath had a ritual and highly symbolic signific-

94. See p. 324.

95. It is to this goddess that the widows of Naupaktos pray in the hope that they will be remarried.

96. H. KING, *op. cit.* (n. 34), p. 115; L. B. ZAIMMAN, "Le temps de jeunes filles dans la cité grecque : Nausicaa, Phrasikleia, Timareta et les autres", *Clio* 4 (1996), p. 2.

97. Eust., *Il.*, IV, 228, 20 - 229, 1; Hsch., Δ 2184; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 38, 5-6; *Suda*, T 270 and 271, 1-4; Diod. Sic., V, 73, 2, 6 - 3, 1; P. BRULÉ, *op. cit.* (n. 75), p. 147.

98. J. LARSON, *op. cit.* (n. 34), p. 5, 8-11, 27, 109-110.

99. Plut., *Lyc.*, 15, 3, 7-9. For the Athenian wedding feasts, see p. 322 above.

100. For the Athenian wedding sweets made of sesame and honey, see Men., *Sam.*, 74-75, 125; Phot., *Lex.*, Σ 510, 7-14; *Scholia vetera et recentiora in Aristophanis Pacem*, 869a and 869b, 1-2. As it has been mentioned earlier in this paper (p. 324), the cake sent to the groom by the bride in Argos was served with honey.

101. The eggs are common offerings to the dead. Terracotta eggs have also been found in graves. See, C. W. BLEGEN, H. PALMER and R. S. YOUNG, *Corinth 13. The North Cemetery*, Princeton, 1964, p. 84; R. GARLAND, *The Greek Way of Death*, London, 1985, p. 158; J. FERGUSON, *Among the Gods: Archaeological Exploration of Ancient Greek Religion*, London, 1989, p. 126; J. OAKLEY, *Picturing Death in Classical Athens. The Evidence of the White Lekythoi*, Cambridge, University Press, 2004, p. 206-208 and n. 143-144. For the association of the egg with the idea of rebirth after death, see I. ALGRAIN, "Entre naissance et renaissance. Réflexions sur le symbolisme de l'oeuf dans le monde grec aux époques archaïque et classique", *Annales d'Histoire de l'art et d'Archéologie de l'ULB* 35 (2013), p. 51-62.

102. The bridal procession gives an official character to the transfer of the bride from the οἶκος of her father to that of her husband, making it known to the public. See A. CARSON, *op. cit.* (n. 25), p. 127. In Sparta however, there was no bridal procession. For the nuptial bath and the bridal procession (νυμφαγωγία) in Athens, see p. 320, 322.

ance¹⁰³. It was a purification¹⁰⁴, as well as a fertility rite that was performed in the hope that the marriage would be fruitful¹⁰⁵. In this light, the phrase “Take my virginity, Scamander!” acquires a special meaning: by dedicating her virginity to the river, while at the same time coming into contact with its water, an element associated with the fertility powers of nature¹⁰⁶, the bride prepares herself for an auspicious fertile marriage. The ancient texts tell us that the water for the nuptial bath came from a specific river or spring in each city¹⁰⁷ – the Ismenos river in Thebes, the river Scamander in the Troad, the Enneakrounos / Kallirrhoe spring in Athens¹⁰⁸.

Providing the bride with a dowry was a well-established institution all across the Greek world¹⁰⁹. It was not obligatory for a father to provide a

103. For the prenuptial bath, see R. GINOUVÈS, *Balaneutikè. Recherches sur le bain dans l'Antiquité grecque*, Paris, 1962, p. 265-282; R. SEAFORD, “The Tragic Wedding”, *JHS* 107 (1987), p. 107; A. CARSON, “Putting Her in Her Place: Woman, Dirt and Desire”, in D. M. HALPERIN, J. J. WINKLER and F. I. ZEITLIN (ed.), *Before Sexuality: the Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, Princeton, University Press, 1990, p. 152; R. GARLAND, *The Greek Way of Life. From Conception to Old Age*, London, 1990, p. 220; M. DILLON, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 219-220; L. LLEWELLYN-JONES, *op. cit.* (n. 9), p. 219.

104. For the use of water in purification, see R. PARKER, *Miasma. Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*, Oxford, 1983, p. 226-227.

105. *Scholia vetera in Euripidis Phoenissas*, 347, 4-7; *Eust., II.*, IV, 702, 9-10.

106. *Scholia vetera in Euripidis Phoenissas*, 347, 4-7; *Scholia vetera in Homeri Iliadem*, XXIII, 142a2, 1-2; *Scholia vetera in Apollonii Rhodii Argonautica*, 125, 3-5; Nonnus, *Dion.*, III, 88-89; Porph., *De antr. Nymph.*, 17, 5.

107. Hsch., N 719; Phot., *Lex.*, N 305, 1-2.

108. Thuc., II, 15, 5; Poll., *Onom.*, III, 43, 4-6; *Etym. Magn.*, 343, 42-45; Harp., 195, 6-14; Phot., *Lex.*, Λ 231, 5-10 and 23-25.

109. D. M. SCHAPS, *op. cit.* (n. 78), p. 74-88; J-P. VERNANT, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, London, 1982, p. 46; C. A. COX, “Sibling Relationships in Classical Athens: Brother-Sister Ties”, *Journal of Family History* 13 (1988), p. 382-384; L. FOXHALL, “Household, Gender and Property in Classical Athens”, *CQ* 39 (1989), p. 11-13; R. GARLAND, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 56; P. BRULÉ, *op. cit.* (n. 75), p. 123. For the dowry in Athens, see D. MACDOWELL, *The Law in Classical Athens*, Ithaca, 1978, p. 87-88; L. FOXHALL, *op. cit.*, p. 32-39; C. A. COX, *Household Interests: Property, Marriage Strategies, and Family Dynamics in Ancient Athens*, Princeton, University Press, 1998, p. 69-77. According to Plutarch, Lycurgus had passed a law against providing dowry for the girls in Sparta: Plut., *Apophth. Lac.*, 227f, 7 - 228a, 2. See also Ath., XIII, 2, 2-6. On the contrary, Aristotle claims that large dowries were given to the Spartan girls: Arist., *Pol.*, 1270a, 23-25. The dowry was not a prerequisite for the marriage of Spartan females (Plut., *Apophth. Lac.*, 242b, 11-12), but as the story concerning the daughters of Lysander proves (Plut., *Lys.*, 30, 5, 2-7), it must have been a strong motive for choosing a certain bride over another. S. Hodkinson has suggested that the Spartan daughters inherited a share of the family property and this inheritance might have been given to them in advance when they got married: S. HODKINSON, *op. cit.* (n. 43), p. 98-103.

dowry for his daughter(s), but not doing so could result in these girls receiving no offers of marriage ¹¹⁰.

With the obvious exception of Sparta ¹¹¹, wedding gifts must have also been customary among the Greeks. Of particular interest is the name of the wedding gifts offered to the bride in Lesbos: ἀθήματα (*athremata*). The word comes from the Greek verb ἀθρέω: ‘to gaze at’, ‘observe’. This inevitably brings in mind the wedding gifts offered to the bride during the ἀνακαλυπτήρια of the Athenian wedding, when the bridal veil is removed to reveal the bride’s face ¹¹². These gifts were called ἀνακαλυπτήρια ¹¹³, but also ὀπτήρια (*opteria*) ¹¹⁴. The latter comes from the verb ὀράω, ὀρῶ: ‘to see’. A suitable name for the gifts offered after the bride’s veil has been removed and everyone can see her face. Could the ἀθήματα of Lesbos have had a similar meaning? Unfortunately, there is not enough evidence to either support or refute this hypothesis, but the similarity to the Athenian ὀπτήρια is certainly noteworthy.

Conclusions

It is a sad fact that only brief references to certain wedding rituals and customs of the Greek cities besides Athens and Sparta have come down to us. Nonetheless, even this fragmentary information can lead us to certain conclusions facilitating our better understanding of wedding rituals and customs in ancient Greece. We have therefore identified specific rituals, customs and practices that seem to have been particularly popular among the Greek cities: premarital sacrifices and offerings (especially of hair) to deities associated with marriage and fertility, or to deceased παρθένοι, the institution of dowry, nuptial baths and bridal processions, wedding gifts and meals. On several cases, similarities with Athenian wedding rituals and customs have been noted ¹¹⁵. On the contrary, possible similarities with the

110. D. MACDOWELL, *op. cit.* (n. 109), p. 87; S. BLUNDELL, *op. cit.* (n. 75), p. 115; R. GARLAND, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 48-49.

111. For the secretive and non-celebratory character of the Spartan wedding, see p. 324 above.

112. For the ἀνακαλυπτήρια, see p. 323.

113. See p. 323.

114. Hsch., O 1063; Poll., *Onom.*, II, 59, 3-5.

115. Such as the bridal veil (Athens, Boeotia), the heiresses’ obligation to marry their nearest relative (Athens, Gortyn), the matchmakers and the κνηφόροι (Athens, Sicily), the wedding gifts (Athens, Argos, Lesbos), the premarital sacrifices and offerings (Athens, Ermioni, Troezen, Megara, Delos, Boeotia, Lokris, Thessaly), the nuptial bath (Athens, Thebes, Troad), the wedding feast (Athens, Haliartos, Macedonia, Naukratis), the bridal procession (Athens, Rhodes, Chios), the dowry (Athens, Thasos, Crete).

Spartan wedding ritual are scarce ¹¹⁶. In conclusion, local variations of the same wedding customs and rituals have been identified in several Greek cities, even though the fragmentary nature of the evidence does not allow us to reconstruct the wedding ceremony in cities other than Athens and Sparta ¹¹⁷.

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116. The prenuptial sacrifice to Aphrodite Hera, the ‘dowry’ or inheritance of the Spartan girls and possibly also the Spartan heiresses, although we do not know whether they were obliged to marry their closest relative.

117. I am truly indebted to the anonymous reviewer for their valuable suggestions and bibliographical additions to the present paper, to the Editor of *Les Études Classiques* and to Dr. Ann M. Merriman.