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Textiles in Alkestis' *thalamos*

Amy C. Smith

In Greece, as elsewhere, marriage is or has traditionally been the key to maintaining the family unit that occupies the house in which it resides. Despite the resulting importance of marriage to the household and to the preservation of its inhabitants—that is, family—scholars have hardly tried to understand the role of the house and its furnishings in Greek marriage rituals. By furnishings I refer particularly to bedding and other textiles that cover furniture, drape house interiors and thus endow a home not only with warmth and comfort but also visible wealth.[1] Part of William Shakespeare's will —"I gyve unto my wife my second best bed with the furnishings"—famously emphasises the value of the textiles in relation to the bed itself.[2] In early modern times, as in pre-modern times, furniture was kept for a lifetime or more: Shakespeare's 'second' bed and its furnishings therefore may have been the marriage bed that he shared with his wife, Anne. Textiles have therefore predominated as dowry or other wedding gifts, also because they bring comfort and visible wealth, thus luxury, to the bride's new home.[3] While this volume more broadly seeks to clarify evidence for houses in antiquity, this paper addresses these elements that, at least in Greece, have traditionally made a house into a home, namely the marriage on which was built the *oikos* or family unit and the and furnishings that were provided for that unit, initially through the wedding rituals.

[1] As noted by Andrianou 2009: 90, the 1601 inventory from Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, demonstrates that beddings and other fabrics could hold a greater pecuniary value than wooden furniture in premodern times. For that inventory see Boynton and Thornton 1971. For the evaluation of domestic material evidence as wealth indicators (in a contemporary Kurdish village) see Kramer 1979: 149–56.
[2] 25 March 1616. UK National Archives PROB 1/4A.
[3] Herzfeld 1980. On chests that held the textiles used for dowry see Brümmer 1988.

In this chapter I bring together marriage and textiles in the *thalamos* or private chamber that housed the bed on which the marriage was consummated. I suggest moreover that bed furnishings played a larger part both in the ancient marriage festivals than hitherto recognised. The marriage festivals and textiles are those of any Greek woman, but I use the unlikely heroine Alkestis as 'every woman' because the bedchamber and furnishings are highlighted in her story.[4] As evidence of the bedchamber, its furniture and furnishings, like marriage ritual, is scant in the philological and archaeological records, I also employ ethnographic analogies and consider more recent Greek folklore studies in my reading of the visual and textual sources.

THALAMOS

Scholarly interpretations of ancient Greek marriage and its constituent parts, especially the *gamos* or three-day wedding, have long relied on selective interpretation of the evidence, whether textual, material, or both, as in Oakley and Sinos' *The Wedding at Ancient Athens* (1993). From these sources we understand that the culminating moment of an ancient Greek wedding was the transfer of the newly wedded couple and particularly the bride from her own *oikos* or family home to that of her groom.[5] The event was accompanied by an elaborate procession conducted by family, attendants, and onlookers, with music, song, and perhaps a few gifts. While the visual evidence, mostly on vases given as wedding gifts or otherwise used in wedding processions,[6] amply documents the preparations and processions, there is less evidence of the actual

[4] Schmidt 1981a: 533–44.
[5] Smith 2011: 83–84, 91–92.
[6] Smith 2011 and 2005.

transferral of the bride, seemingly at the door of the groom's house, and no evidence of the union itself in the *thalamos*, or chamber that housed the marriage bed.[7]

<INSERT FIGURES 1-2 HERE>

The modest reluctance of the artists to show the most intimate of private moments of the wedding, within the *thalamos,* is understandable. The best we can hope for is a glimpse into the *thalamos*, through an opened door. The door is, in fact, the most potent symbol of the bride's transition in the visual arts of ancient Greece. On a black-figure *dinos* in the British Museum, Sophilos, Athens' first named painter, shows King Peleus at the door to his palace, where he receives the divine guests to celebrate his wedding to the sea nymph Thetis (figure 1).[8] The door is opened just far enough to reveal from behind it an elegantly presented bed.[9] The bed identifies the room into which the door opens as the *thalamos*. The bed and *thalamos* in turn symbolise the nuptial nature of the scene of which they are a part. Likewise, the Amasis Painter's *lekythos* in New York (figure 2) shows the marriage procession approaching a double door, presumably the outside door (because of its size), on the other side of which we see the *thalamos*, symbolised by the bed within. Rarely is the nature of the door clarified.[10] Just as the door shown in figures 1-2 symbolises the home,[11] the bed—barely visible—serves a

[7] Xen. *Oik*. 9, 3; Nevett 1999: 37.
[8] Hom. *Il*. 18, 432–436; Hom. *Il*. 24, 58–63; Hes. *Theog*. 1006–1007; Pind. *I*. 8, 25–48; Pind. *N*. 4, 62–68.
[9] Oakley and Sinos 1993: 35-37.
[10] Smith 2016.
[11] Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 71.

symbolic function to indicate the wedding. In juxtaposition with the bed, therefore, any single door is metaphorically the *thalamos* door.

<INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE>

The room known as *thalamos* is hard to find in archaeological contexts because it might be any room used for the purpose of conjugal activity (on one or more occasions) with the imposition of a bed. Beds might be made of perishable materials, so are archaeologically elusive, as is discussed below. Beds were used for other purposes, moreover, so the presence of a bed does not necessarily identify a *thalamos*. That is, a bed distinguishes the *thalamos* as a bed chamber primarily on the occasion of a marriage. Ancient artists present a sumptuously covered bed behind a door as a symbol of the *thalamos*, therefore of the culmination of the *gamos* and, in turn, the wedded relationship, as noted above (and shown in figures 1-2). The *thalamos* is important as a symbol of marriage also in ancient literature. It is central to the aetiology for pre-nuptial sacrifices to Artemis, for example, in the story of Admetos of Pherai's efforts to win the hand of Alkestis, daughter of Pelias, for which he was required to yoke a lion and a boar to a chariot.[12] An Attic black-figure *lekythos* in the Yale University Art Gallery (figure 3) illustrates this yoking of wild animals, an allusion to the (equally challenging) yoking of a woman in marriage.[13] Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague suggest Artemis' presence recalls Admetos' failure to make a pre-nuptial sacrifice to Artemis, the

[12] According to Apollod. *Bib.* 1.9.15, followed by Hyg. *Fab.* 50-51, Apollo yoked the animals for Admetos. Paus. 3.18.10-12, 18.15-16 tells us of Bathykles of Magnesia's sculptured representation of this story on the throne of Apollo at Amyklai, showing that Admetos yoked the animals himself.
[13] Matheson 2016: 33-35; Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarague 2009.

punishment for which (again, according to Apollodoros) was that his *thalamos* or marriage chamber was filled with coiled snakes.[14]

In tragedy as elsewhere in Greek thought, however, this *thalamos* is symbolised by and perhaps synonymous with the marriage bed. Some time later, Alkestis died in the place of her husband, Admetos, because Apollo had persuaded the Moirai to release Admetos from death should someone die for him. This story, as poignantly told Euripides in *Alkestis*, unfortunately encourages us to concentrate on the deathbed rather than the marriage bed. Even in this tragicomedy, however, the bed serves both for marriage and death, because Alkestis is returned to life by Persephone/Kore or Herakles.[15] *Kline*, the Greek word for a banqueting couch, might also be used of the funerary bed or bier. For a marriage bed the usual word is *lektron* or (Homeric) *lechos*,[16] as a result of which *alochos* is wife or bed companion. As Sanders notes, however, these and other bed words—*eunê* and *koitê*—are commonly used in Greek tragedies to denote sex as well as marriage, no less than 36 times in Euripides' *Medea*, with reference to both Jason's old marriage to Medea and his new marriage to Glauke.[17] Pindar makes a verbal allusion to the marriage bed in his 7th *Olympian Ode*:

> "As when a man takes from his rich hand a bowl foaming inside with dew of the vine and presents it to his young son-in-law with a toast from one home to another—an all-golden bowl, crown of possessions—as he honors the joy of the

[14] The coiled snakes are not known, however, in ancient imagery. See Schmidt 1981b: 218-21.
[15] Halleran 1988; see also Buxton 1987 and Rehm 1994.
[16] *IG* I^3 423, l. 8, 425 l. 11; Poll. 10.35.
[17] Sanders 2013: 45.

> symposium and his own alliance, and thereby with his friends present makes him envied for his harmonious marriage."[18]

This translation gets the point right, despite having reconfigured the verb *eunao* (εὐνάω, for εὐνάζω), 'to lay,' into the marriage itself.

BEDS

As with the *thalamos*, however, the marriage bed is more of a concept than an archaeologically attestable entity, yet without a single noun.[19] Both Greeks and Romans had words for bed that were used interchangeably for dining, sleeping and sex. The Latin *grabātus* and its Greek equivalent *kravatos* may have emerged simultaneously and were widely used in the Common Era[20] but Pollux (10.35) informs us that the Greek term was used in new comedies—Rhinthon's *Telephos* (late fourth–early third centuries BCE) and Kriton's *Messenia* (early 2nd century BCE)—while a scholiast on Aristophanes' *Clouds* 254 also uses it. Eusthathius *ad*. *Il*. 16.608, writing in the fourth century AD, calls it an Attic word referring to a 'cheap and low bed which is near the ground' while Phynichos (frag. 44), writing in the second century AD, emphasises that the Attic equivalent was *skimpous*, which is more broadly understood as a small couch or hammock on which, for example, Sokrates sits in Plato's *Protagoras* (310c). As it turns out, whether because of its Latin equivalent or itself, *kravatos* is the bed word that

[18] Pind. *Ol*. 7.1-6: trans. Race 1997: 121.
[19] Further to this brief discussion see the mention of bed words above and Andrianou 2009: 31–33.
[20] Mols 1999, 127; Kramer 1995.

has been in continuous use ever since, not only in (modern) Greek (*krebáti*), but also Turkish (*kerevet*), Albanan (*krevat*), Portuguese (*gravato*), Russian (*krovát*), and even French (*grabat*). Whatever might have been the form or composition of these later beds, the term *kravatos* may have derived from a Macedonian-Illyrian word for 'oak' through use of oak for wooden bedframes.[21] The literary sources suggest wood, such as maple and olive—was most commonly used for frames and legs.[22] Wooden bed parts are archaeologically attested, moreover, both in houses and in tombs. The Macedonian evidence emerges more strongly from tombs and there is as much evidence of metal parts.[23] Later literary references are awash with gold and silver couches[24] and elegant 'Chian' and 'Milesian' beds with incisions and inlays.[25]

Beds made of yet more perishable materials, such as straw (e.g. mattresses, baskets, or cribs) either haven't survived in the archaeological record or have been overlooked in excavations.[26] Yet no intact bed has survived in a domestic complex, so we must rely on the funerary evidence, namely bed-shaped structures and bed bases made of both stone (for inhumations) and wood (for cremations) primarily found in Macedonian

[21] Beekes 2009: 766.
[22] Hom. *Od*. 23.195 and Poll. 10.35.
[23] Tubular legs made of hollow bronze (Déonna 1938, 2-3) or wood (Siebert 2001: 91, pl. 42.4; Siebert 1976: 799-821 esp. 813, figs. 24-25); arm- or headrests (Andrianou 2009, 34); and fulcra made of wood or metal (Kyrieleis 1969 compares the visual evidence on 5th-century BC Athenian vases and, because of the paucity of references to metal furniture in contemporary literary sources, suggests wood was used for the rails at the back of fulcra exclusively until the middle of the 4th century).
[24] See e.g. Arr. *Anab*. 6.29.5-6; Dem. 24.129; Ath. 5.197a-b and 6.255e. For a synthesis see more recently, Faust 1989.
[25] Chian and Milesian beds are often cited in temple accounts as well as the Attic stelai. See Ransom 1905, 54.
[26] Ath. 4.138f. uses *stibas* to refer to rough couches (of wood) used at a festival, while Men. *Dys*. 420 uses the same term to refers to straw mattress outside a cave during a ritual celebration.

tombs.[27] It remains unclear, however, whether even movable funerary beds (whose use and decoration are suggestive of real life) replicate the beds ancient Greeks used for sleep or other daily activities.

<INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE>

Beds were clearly used and reused for other activities after the marriage, until and including death, as amply illustrated by the story of Alkestis, mentioned above. The iconographic evidence also gives us a picture of multitasking beds. Beds that seem to have appeared on stage, as in a purported dramatic scene on the upper frieze of an Apulian krater in the British Museum (figure 4), might have been stage props that served alternatively as altars, benches or even tombs.[28] Sympotic images suggest that *klinai*, beds or couches on which heroes or symposiasts recline, are bedecked with similar cushions and covers, yet preceded by tables that indicates some sort of ritual dining (figure 5).

<INSERT FIGURE 5 HERE>

Although metal and ivory parts and inlay might add luxury to a bed frame, the literary evidence overwhelmingly suggests that textiles mattered to the ancient Greeks more

[27] Andrianou 2009: 39–41 updates Simanidis 1997.
[28] Taplin 2007, 131–32.

than bed frames or bases.[29] Philokleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps* 1215, for example, is told to admire the woven hangings in the court. The furnishings, however, are also lost from the archaeological record, although a few Macedonian funerary beds were found with leather or cloth coverings, at Veroia and Foinikas, in Thessaloniki.[30] There is no archaeological evidence of covers or pillows, however, from any domestic complex.[31] The elegant 'Milesian' beds noted above might have earned this name because they were bedecked with luxurious Milesian bed covers, which garnered admiration in Aristophanes' *Frogs* 544.[32] Other exotic textile centres noted in ancient literature include Akragas (mattresses),[33] Sardis (carpets),[34] and Phoenicia (curtains).[35] Lydia had an ancient gold weaving tradition, although Pliny places the invention of embroidery (decorative stitching with a needle) to King Attalos in Phrygia and damask (fabric woven with many threads) to Alexandria.[36] The best fifth-century BC source for furnishings, as indeed furniture, are the so-called Attic Stelai,[37] which list the property confiscated from Alcibiades and his followers, in 415/14.[38] Alcibiades' own property

[29] Emerging literature on textiles includes Walter-Karydi 1994 (from High Classical); Andrianou 2009, passim and 2006 (from Late Classical); and Sanidas 2011 (Hellenistic). Richter 1966, 118 pioneered in collecting the visual sources for textiles in connection with her study of ancient furniture. See also Carroll 1965, 37–64 and, more recently, Vickers 1999.
[30] Drougou and Touratsoglou 1980, 93 (Veroia, tomb A); Tsimbidou-Avloniti 2005, 81 (Foinikas).
[31] See Moraitou and Margariti 2008.
[32] Aristoph. *Ran*. 544.
[33] *FGrH* 3B, 566, F26a, 607.
[34] Noted by Klearchos of Soloi according to Ath. 6.255e.
[35] Greenewalt and Majewski 1980: 134.
[36] Greenewalt and Majewski 1980: 136-7; Plin. *HN* 8.196. For more on the history of damask (a modern term) see Galliker 2017, 368. Ten fragments of silk (?) cloth, enriched with silver and gold threads, from Koropi, in Attica (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London), however, are said to have been found with bones in a bronze kalpis (now lost), dated to late 5th-early 4th centuries BC. See Andrianou 2009: 92-93 cat. 90; Gleba 2008; Carroll 1965, 7–8; Beckwith 1954: 114-15.
[37] Poll. 10.97 and 148.
[38] Lalonde et al. (eds.) 1991: 70 cat P1; Amyx 1958, 163-31; Pritchett 1956: 178-317; Pritchett 1953: 225–99.

included two of the many words for pillow (*proskephalaion* and *knephallon*),[39] while Pollux later mentions that pillows made of wool, leather,[40] and linen were sold from this property.[41] *Pleroma*, woollen flock for stuffing pillows, is also noted in these stelai.[42] By the second century AD, Pollux amasses a long list of diverse adjectives for bed covers, describing colours, including gold, their shining effect, border decoration, thread quality, fineness and of course crafts(wo)manship.[43] Hesychios and Suidas, lexicographers writing in the fifth and tenth centuries AD, respectively, are similarly effusive. Together Pollux and Athenaios have furnished us with a bewildering array of words for bedclothes,[44] including carpets and curtains that might serve multiple purposes, as in Berber tents. Aristophanes tells of a *sisyran*, a goat-hair cloak used as a coverlet by night.[45] Likewise the same mattress might serve for sleeping or sitting and the *kline* or couch on which it lay might be use in life and death, as discussed above. This is completely in line with Nevett's observation that Greek rooms themselves were multifunctional.[46]

<INSERT FIGURE 6 HERE>

[39] *IG* I^3 422, 257, 259–60; *IG* I^3 421,190-914: see Pritchett 1956: 253-54. Cushions are attested also in Aristoph. *Plut.* 542; Plato *Rep.* 328c; and Plut. *Mor.* 59c.
[40] See also *IG* I^3 422, 257-8.
[41] Linen pillows are also included in the Delian accounts: *IDélos* 104 (26bisC) 11-12.
[42] *IG* I^3 421, 108; 422, 261.
[43] Poll. 10.42; see Andrianou 2009: 90.
[44] Poll. 10.42, Ath. 2.48b-3, 6.255e. These are listed and translated by Andrianou 2009: 97, following Richter 1966: 118.
[45] Aristoph. *Av*. 122; *Neph.* 10; *Ran.* 1459.
[46] Nevett 1999.

Neither does iconographic evidence for beds and other furnishings help us to distinguish marriage beds or their textiles, except in the context of wedding stories. The partial and even fragmentary nature of our corpus of Greek art means that many other images of beds might be lost. It is a challenge for even the experienced iconographer to reconstruct a bed from the image of lion's paw leg of furniture or a tasselled cushion. Of course some vase painters were more precise (or know their textile or woodworking) better than others.[47] The painter of an image on the side of an *epinetron* or knee thimble conveniently labelled the woman at far right, who leans on the bed end, as Alkestis (figure 6). Our recollection of Alkestis' sad tale helps us to understand the furniture on which she leans as a bed. This artist, the so-called Eretria Painter, however, has remembered that beds are made most easily recognisable through the frame of a door and has therefore also shown the door to the *thalamos*. Alkestis' bed has been decorated in preparation for the wedding, yet she is shown already there, for which reason this scene is normally and rightly interpreted as the *epaulia* or aftermath (day after) of the *gamos*, meaning that the marriage has already been consummated. When was the bed decorated and was it ever put on display in the ancient Greek ritual? A diachronic consideration of Greek marriage rituals reveals a longstanding emphasis on the decoration of the marriage bed, particularly through the *krevatia* or ritual through which the bed is decorated up until modern times.[48] A synthesis of Greek folklore[49] and ancient sources might then aid in building a more thorough understanding of the importance of the marriage bed and its room, the *thalamos*, in the ancient Greek home and through wedding rituals. The *thalamos* and its bed provide an opportunity for us to unite the modern *krevatia*, literally the festival of the bed, with the ancient

[47] Simpson 2002.
[48] Foster 2003: 128–29.
[49] See, e.g. Friedl 1963; Campbell 1964; and Sant Cassia and Bada 1992.

anakalypteria, an unveiling festival. Before we can understand the unveiling rituals, however, it is necessary to seek a better understanding of the relevance of textiles to the ancient Greek wedding.

Sumptuous textiles were present throughout the three days of the wedding and many would decorate the marriage bed. The marriage bed was not merely a symbol of the physical union of the couple, but embodied the importance of the textile tradition in marriage. In marrying a woman skilled in textiles, a man added textile production to his household assets. "Textile production was among those skills that were thought to have enabled man to create civilization; thus, a wife who spun or wove not only conformed to society's expectations, but helped to sustain that civilised society."[50] According to Hesiod *Op*. 63–64, Athena had taught women the art of weaving, so it was both a divine gift and a fundamentally feminine activity.[51] The latter point was emphasised in Classical Athens by the suspension of a tuft of wool over the entrance door to mark the birth of a girl.[52] Plato speaks of male textile workers, such as sail makers (*histiorrhaphoi*) and rope makers (*styppeioplokoi*, later called *kalostrophoi*), in Athens' Agora or marketplace, although some scholars have suggested he is referring to women weavers.[53] Yet most ancient Greek textile manufacture was accomplished in the home, sometimes in a special space inside the *gynaikeion* or women's quarters. An *histeon*, meaning 'space dedicated to the loom'[54] can be attested archaeologically from post-holes indicating uprights of a warp-weighted loom, together with grouped loom-

[50] Sebesta 2002, 127. See more recently Berg 2016.
[51] Spantidaki 2016: 9; Lewis 2002: 62
[52] Hesych. *Lex*. 1791.2. For discussion see Loraux 1981, 169 n. 46 and Kissel 1918, 236.
[53] Plat. *Plt*. 308d6-308d11; Reuthner 2006: 256-60
[54] Men. *Sam*. 234.

weights, as in houses at Olynthos.[55] Weaving paraphernalia, however, does not necessarily identify a domestic or industrial space in which weaving was done, but might represent votive dedications in ritual contexts. Dedications of loomweights and spindle whorls have been found throughout the Mediterranean from all periods. Both because weaving and—by association—textile production were divine gifts, as noted above, and because of the important role women played in religion, there is a large overlap between domestic and ritual contexts that provide evidence of both textile production and the textiles themselves. The best iconographic evidence of the ritual use of textiles comes from a group of votive terracottas found at Lokroi Epizephyroi in South Italy, which seem to indicate textile dedications to a goddess.[56] Which goddess? Aphrodite and Persephone were the primary deities here, while Demeter was also worshipped at a nearby Thesmophorion. Persephone is the best candidate because here she was relevant to maturation, marriage and childbirth, as were Artemis and Hera on the mainland, and thus received *proteleia* or pre-marriage dedications, perhaps textiles.[57] Gaifman rightly cautions us, however, that votive reliefs like all religious art are visual constructs related to cultic realities, not direct reflections of actual realities.[58] Yet written sources also inform us of textile offerings to deities in connection with the wedding.

GAMOS

[55] Wilson 1930: 118-28; see also Spantidaki 2016: 10.
[56] Brøns 2017: 25-26. See also Boloti 2017.
[57] Larson 2007: 83; Maclachlan 1995.
[58] Gaifman 2008: 99.

<INSERT FIGURE 7>

The *Proaulia*, meaning literally the day before the *gamos*, comprised the bride's time among female relatives, friends, and servants, who were all involved with preparations, as well as the dedication of *proteleia* or offerings, as expressed, for example, by Euripides in *Iphigenia at Aulis* 433–439.[59] Textile offerings would be childhood garments[60] and new garments, manufactured for this votive purpose, and even dolls' dresses.[61] The belt used in maidenhood was supposed to have been dedicated to Artemis before marriage,[62] as was the veil that she had begun to use at *menarche,* the onset of menstruation[63]. A *pyxis* in Mainz shows a bride, with her mother, bringing offerings to the temple of Artemis (within which Artemis herself is shown) (figure 7). Pollux calls this first day of the wedding (or day before) the *apaulia*, when he discusses it in the context of sleeping arrangements.[64] He reports that, on the *apaulia*, the bride would sleep with the *pais amphithales*, a small boy with parents on both sides, while the groom would sleep with a little girl, also with both parents living.[65] He informs us that the bride on this occasion gave an *apaulisteria chlanis*, or luxurious garment, probably woven by herself, to the groom, thus recalling the literary *topos* of the weaving bride, especially Homeric paradigms of Penelope and Helen at their looms[66] and the role of

[59] cf. Eur. *IphA*. 718–719; Poll. 3.38; Xenophon of Ephesus 1.8.1; Plut. *Arist.* 20, 7–80; *SEG* 9, 72, 84–85.
[60] E.g. *Anth. Pal.* 6.200.
[61] Anth. Pal. 6.280.
[62] Cf. *Anth. Pal.* 6.201. Athena also received belts, at least at Troizen (Paus. 2.33.1). See also Suda s.v. *lysiziones gyne*; Dillon 2002, 210f.
[63] *Anth. Pal.* 6.133. For a collection of further examples see Losfeld 1991, 322–323. See also Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 215–218.
[64] See Deubner 1913 on differentiating *apaulia* from *epaulia*
[65] Poll. 3.39–40.
[66] Hom. *Od.* 2, 94, *Il.* 3.125–128.

Athena Ergane dressing Hera and Pandora, the first brides, for their weddings.[67] Neither Pollux nor any other sources, however, divulge the purpose for this cloth, the only gift from the bride. The relative absence of textiles in the archaeological record, let alone names for textiles in particular contexts, hinders our ability to identify the format of the *apaulasteria chalnis*. Was it necessarily a garment to be worn? Or could it have been a textile with another function?

<INSERT FIGURE 8 HERE>

Textiles may have been used in connection with the ritual bathing that accompanied perhaps every religious event but was conducted by both bride and groom in anticipation of the wedding. For the marriage bath at Athens the water was fetched, usually in a *loutrophoros* (bath carrier) from the Enneakrounos spring.[68] Like the *proteleia*, or marriage sacrifice, this procession took place in the outdoors, accompanied by ritual songs, and was thus a conspicuous sign of the approach of the wedding.[69] A *pyxis* in New York shows a bathing scene but also the next stage after the bath, that is, the adornment of the bride (figure 8). Particularly with such images of the ritual procedures, it becomes unclear to us whether successive events or a single moment are depicted. There are ample inclusions of textiles in images of these and other preparations so it is clear that a variety of textiles were prepared, used, and displayed throughout the 3-day festival.

[67] Hes. *Erg.* 72; Hom. *Il.* 14.178.
[68] Mösch-Klingele 2006; Winkler 1999; Weiß 1988.
[69] Smith 2005.

Perhaps the most important wedding textile—for which there is alas mostly post-classical evidence—was the *pastos* or *aulaeum* (as it was called in Latin), a broad rectangular piece of woven fabric that covered the bed on which the marriage would be consummated, but by association symbolised the union.[70] In a textile sense the *pastos* is the cover, yet the same word came to refer to the bridal bed, chamber, and even hymn (LSJ[9] s.v. *pastos*). In the procession it might also serve as a canopy—forming a sort of shrine—and as such would symbolise the couple's care for each other. In the Roman wedding it was the backdrop for the *dextrarum iunctio* (joining of right hands).

<INSERT FIGURE 9 HERE>

The *gamelia* refers to the second day, the wedding feast,[71] and the torchlit procession from the bride's home to the groom's[72]—perhaps also known as the *nymphagogia*—to the sound of proclamations, such as "Get up! Make way! Carry the torch!"[73] This most public and elaborate event of the three-day wedding, with dances, music, and vases, as well as torches, was the most popularly represented scene on Athenian vases, such as a scene that wraps around a *pyxis* attributed to the Marlay Painter, now in London (figure 9). The procession, led by the *proegetes*, or usher, approaches the groom's house, indicated by the door on the far right. The *parochos* or best man, entrusted with the bride's safety during this journey, is followed by several women carrying containers.

[70] Scheid and Svenbro 2001: 88.
[71] Hom. *Od.* 1.275–278.
[72] Hom. *Il.* 18.490–496.
[73] Aristoph. *Vesp*. 1326 and *Av.* 1720.

The bride herself might carry household vessels to symbolise or advertise her domestic skills; textiles might have been enclosed in some of the boxy containers. Behind the procession is the opened door of the bride's family's house, which they have left. On the far right, at the house of the groom, Eros and the mother-in-law wait to welcome the new couple. A glimpse of the *thalamos*, with the bridal bed revealed within, is visible through the partially opened door. This latter door was guarded fiercely by another of the groomsmen, a *thororos*.[74]

<INSERT FIGURE 10 HERE>

The *ekdosis* or transfer of the bride from the *kyrios* or guardian to another man, i.e. the groom, took place on arrival at the groom's home, where the marriage was consummated. Again, it is a challenge to identify the handover of the bride. In what manner, by whom, and with what accoutrements might the bride have been handed over? Perhaps with a handshake, as shown on a few vases, e.g. a *loutrophoros-amphora* in Boston (figure 10). Both the red wreath that hangs above the bearded father-in-law and clean-shaven groom in this image and the wedding scenes on the other side of the same vase allude to the wedding and thus confirm its nuptial context.[75] But the handshake was the hallmark of the *engye* or pledge of marriage, i.e. betrothal, which may have happened years before the wedding and had nothing to do with the women, but was rather an oral agreement, sealed with handshake, between the men.[76] Herodotos

[74] Poll. 3.41, Hesych. s.v. *thyroros*; Theoc. *Id*. 15.77, Apol. *Arg*. 4.1141–64.
[75] Sutton 1989.
[76] *N.b.* Pind. *Ol*. 7, quoted above.

also describes the significance of the handshake at the engagement of Megakles of Athens to Agariste, daughter of Kleisthenes, the tyrant of Sikyon.[77]

Neither is the crowning of the bride with her *stephane* a symbol of the *ekdosis*.[78] This moment, shown on the name vase of the Painter of Athens 1454, a *lebes gamikos* (wedding bowl), shows another procession of women with containers, jewelry, and garments approaching the bride, as she is crowned (figure 11).[79] The illustration of bridal crowns, in adornment or even procession scenes, however, is quite inconsistent. Such scenes frequently decorate ointment and perfume containers—*alabastra, lekythoi,* and *plemochoai*—and jewelry boxes—*pyxides* and *lekanide*s—used for the prenuptial preparations. These scenes almost never include men and so it is clear that the crowning occurs as part of the preparations, thus *proteleia*, and not as part of the *gamos* or 2nd day. And there is no evidence for a bridal crown in the primary written sources on the topic.[80]

<INSERT FIGURE 11 HERE>

The symbol of *ekdosis* to which scholars have most readily acquiesced is an unveiling of the bride, perhaps the best evidence for which is found on side A of the Boston *loutrophoros-amphora*, which shows the *nympheutria*, or bridesmaid, assisted by

[77] Hdt. 6.130.
[78] Although crowning both parties is an essential element of the modern Greek wedding: Foster 2003: 123–24; see also Antzoulatou-Retsila 1999.
[79] Cf. Sgorou 1994.
[80] The *pais amphithales* might wear a crown of thistles mixed with acorns (Zenob. 3, 98).

Erotes, adjusting the bride's veil (figure 10).[81] Again, however, this symbol is not evidenced in the ancient texts, let alone other vase images.[82] Scholars have searched in vain for some indication, from the visual evidence, of the timing and importance of a veil ceremony, but aside from a little nip and tuck from Eros and his brothers, little is done with it. It is unclear whether the veil is being put on or taken off, and most of the images of the taking of the bride, with the *xeir epi karpo* wrist grabbing gesture, would suggest a veil is not even needed. The (un)veiling of the bride has persisted in scholarship, however, since Deubner connected it with the *anakalypteria* festival in his pioneering article on the *epaulia*.[83] Yet there is no evidence that the veil has ever been necessary at a Greek wedding.[84] Since Deubner, however, scholars have struggled to understand the timing, role, and even meaning of the *anakalypteria*, whose name indicates some sort of veiling. After a brief discussion of the *epaulia* or third day of the wedding, I will disentangle the *katachysmata* and *anakalypteria*, festivals that—according to primary sources—occurred on the third day but which scholars have preferred to understand as happening on the second day, after the *gamelia*.

The newlyweds were awakened for another day of festivities, at dawn on the third day, known as the *epaulia*, with more food, songs, and dances. Most descriptions and images (e.g. figure 6) indicate that the foci of attention were the bride and the gifts that she received. Eustathius gives a full description of the *epaulia*, which suggests that it was an even more elaborate procession than that which had taken place the night before: [85]

[81] See especially Oakley 1982.
[82] See, however, the discussion of another Boston *loutrophoros*, figure 12, below.
[83] Deubner 1900; see also Deubner 1913.
[84] Foster 2003: 125.
[85] In quoting the 2nd century lexicographer Pausanias.

> "… the day of *epaulia* is that after the bride is first quartered [*epaulistai*] in the groom's house, and *epaulia* are also the gifts brought by the bride's father to the bride and groom in the form of a parade, on the day following the wedding. He [Pausanias] says that a child led it, wearing a white cloak and carrying a flaming torch, and then came another child, a girl, carrying a basket [*kanephoros*], and then the rest, bringing *lekanides*, unguents, clothing, combs, chests, bottles, sandals, boxes, murrh, soap and sometimes, he says, the dowry."[86]

Gifts are held by female companions and are similar if not identical to those used in preparations. In more recent, but traditional Greek weddings, the big feast occurs also after three days of preparations, particularly involving preparing the bridal chamber.

<INSERT FIGURE 12 HERE>

ANAKALYPTERIA AND *KREVATIA*

An ancient ritual that occurred at the groom's home involved *tragemata* or *katachysmata*,[87] a medley of dried fruit and nuts seemingly poured over the couple, as illustrated on a fragment of the Phiale Painter's *loutrophoros* in Boston (figure 12),

[86] Eustathius *ad*. *Il.* 24.29.
[87] Schol. Aristoph. *Plut.* 798; Theop. *PCG* VII *fr.* 15; Harp. *s.v. katachysmata*; Dem. 45.74; Hesych. *s.v. katachysmata.*

showing a basket containing the *katachysmata* held above the groom.[88] The bride, who is barely visible here, seems to be hiding under a veil held by the *nympheutria* or bridesmaid. Oakley and subsequent scholars have used this 'evidence' of the (un)veiling of the bride to conflate the *katachysmata* with the *anakalypteria*, and prefer to see both as occurring on the second day of the wedding, after the *gamelia*, on arrival at the groom's home. Deschodt rightly warns that these images aren't photographs and that the artist may have intentionally combined three separate 'pictures' of the wedding in one: unveiling, *katachysmata*, and adornment.[89] I might add that any (un)veiling might be easily confused or conflated with adornment. This necessitates a thorough analysis of the *anakalypteria* that steps beyond over-interpretation of the fact of a bride wearing a veil.

Our earliest source on the subject, Pherekydes of Syros (ca. 6 c. B.C.), specifies that the *anakalypteria* occurred on the day of the *epaulia* or third day of the wedding and thus in connection with the presentation of gifts.[90] Confusingly, however, Pherekydes also cites it as the occasion of the *ekdosis*, which has been assumed to have occurred on the 2nd day, at the end of the *gamelia*, as noted above. So Deubner and subsequent scholars have preferred to push the *anakalypteria* back to the second day, before or after the procession, to align the timing with that noted by Bekker.[91] Yet Pherekydes is the only ancient source that connects the *anakalypteria* with the *gamelia*. In any case, the *anakalypteria* is connected with and seems synonymous with gifts.[92] Those given

[88] Following Sutton 1989: 353–54.
[89] Deschodt 2011: 3.
[90] As do two of the lexica, by Harpokration and the *Suda*; see also Deschodt 2011: 2, following Gherchanoc 2009.
[91] In *Anecd. graeca* Bekker 1: 200, 6–8.
[92] Gherchanoc 2009.

through the *gamos* are alternatively called *opteria, theoretra,* or *anakalypteria dora*.[93] The first two words for the gifts, i.e. *opteria* and *theoretra*, both derive from words for seeing,[94] stressing perhaps the importance of the entire community serving witness to the scene and the gifts. Yet there are no ancient sources to back up this supposition. The assumption that gifts might have only been given on one occasion, and that therefore the *anakalypteria dora* would necessarily be the same as the *opteria* and *theoretra*, is unwarranted. Some textile gifts are given also on the first day, moreover, in the form of the *apaulasteria chlanis*, as noted above.

The assumption that *anakalypteria dora* were synonymous with *opteria* and *theoretra* has, however, encouraged scholars to understand a visual aspect as essential to the *anakalypteria*.[95] An (un)veiling of the bride would satisfy this visual emphasis, insofar as underlining the importance of the groom finally seeing the bride's face. The best and perhaps only reason to connect the *anakalypteria* with an (un)veiling (of the bride), however, is the meaning of the word *anakalypteria* and a lexically related word, *anakalypsis*, now commonly used in transliteration by iconographers with regard to every veiling or unveiling of a female figure. There remains a disagreement about its meaning: while some interpret it as an unveiling of a bride[96] others see rather it as a veiling, a gesture to hide the face.[97] In any case, I would agree with those who see the veil as a status symbol.[98] Quite simply put, a married woman wears a himation, with

[93] The latter meaning literally 'gifts on the occasion of the *anakalypteria'; cf.* Lys. *ap. Theon*, *Progymnasmata* 2, p. 69 Spengel.
[94] See Poll. 2.59.
[95] As emphasised particularly by Gherchanoc 2006.
[96] Deubner 1900: 149; Neumann 1965: 66; Oakley 1982: 114.
[97] Tartaglia 1983: 264.
[98] Mayo 1973: 200, Pemberton 1976: 116.

which she can veil herself, and thus the fact of veiling or having a veil simply indicates that a woman is or is about to be married. Deschodt rightly notes that holding a veil is not identical to unveiling[99] and that there is a great variety of nuptial images showing veils in different contexts.[100] She thus removes the presence of the *anakalypsis* gesture from any possible interpretation of the *anakalypteria*. Another reason to see it as a veiling rather than unveiling is understanding of the prefix ana, which normally conveys a sense of 'up', 'on', or 'upon'.

As it turns out from an investigation of the textual material, *anakalypsis* is never used to refer to the (un)veiling of a woman in Greek literature. If we look to the literature for uses of the verb, *kalypto*, moreover, we find that it is not used for bridal veils but rather for poetic unveilings, which range from the exposure of a sand bar or island by receding seas[101] to the covering or uncovering of furniture, even beds, with cloths.[102] So it turns out that Deubner's *anakalypteria* and the *anakalypsis* that was supposedly central to it are, in fact, modern constructs.

If not an (un)veiling of the bride, what then was this *anakalyptria* that was the focus or at least culmination of the ancient Greek wedding, particularly during the *epaulia* (or 3rd day), but also the destination of the festival procession on the *gamelia* (or 2nd day), and reason for such preparations on the *proteleia* (or 1st day). If indeed the *anakalypteria* was a veiling or unveiling, was the bride (un)veiled once, after the

[99] Deschodt 2011: 6, following Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 102.
[100] Deschodt 2011: 7.
[101] E.g. Strab. *Geog*. 1.2.31.
[102] E.g. Flav. Joseph. *AntJ* 6.218.

gamelia (day 2)[103] or in the *thalamos*[104]; or was it a series of (un)veilings, as ingeniously suggested by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones,[105] or was something else (un)veiled? While Ferrari has exhorted us to overcome the idea that there was a ceremonial unveiling at all, scholars have hitherto failed to offer an alternative.[106] A solution that suits the evidence, would have occurred over three days and finds a parallel with the post-Classical Greek nuptial traditions, however, is that the *anakalypteria* concerned the decoration, redecoration and unveiling of the marriage bed, with richly decorated fabrics, perhaps even the *apaulasteria chlanis*, discussed above.

The dominant three-day wedding festival in Greek weddings through to the present is the *krevatia*, which comprises dressing—and in some variations successive undressing and redressing—of the bridal bed with the elaborate and precious bed coverings that made up the dowry.[107] Women from both sides and nowadays men too would gather in the bridal chamber. Fruit and nuts, other fertility symbols like rose petals, cash, even children might be thrown on the bed, with good wishes, often sung, for the bridal couple. An emphasis on seeing the bride at this ritual is suggested in this modern *krevatia* song:

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[103] Following Deubner 1900: 149; Erdman 1934: 256; Sutton 1981: 192; Brulé 1987: 141–42; Redfield 1982: 109; Halleran 1988: 127; Paterson 1991: 68, n. 40, Oakley and Sinos 1993: 25; Cairns 1996: 80; Brulé 2001: 187; Ferrari 2002: 187.
[104] Following Toutain 1940: 349; Buxton 1987: 167; Sissa 1987: 119; Hague 1988: 35; Garland 1990: 221; Rehm 1994: 141–44; Vérilhac and Vial 1998: 312.
[105] Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 230-38, following Rehm's suggestion that private and public unveilings might have occurred separately: Rehm 1994: 142.
[106] Ferrari 2003; cf. Ferrari 2004.
[107] For the wealth of furnishings and furniture in Greek dowry documents in modern and premodern times see Imellos 1990: 124-28 and Fillipidis 1998: 132-34.

> "Open up the windows so the doves can come in and see the bride and the dowry, the white sheets. With all my heart Anthea the man you picked for you to live with until you get old...."[108]

Might the *krevatia* derive from the ancient *anakalypteria*? Both entail covering and uncovering, involve presence of friends and family in this most 'private' of spaces, incorporate a *katachysmata*, or medley of dried fruits and nuts, and concern the revelation of the dowry and/or other gifts. The presence of the child on the bed—the so-called 'flipping of the baby' ritual[109]—might also correspond to the ancient ritual of the *pais amphithales* noted above. Pollux had confusingly included this sleeping with a child as happening on the first day, which he also called *apaulia*. Could that be a lexical mistake for *epaulia*? Pollux would then be vindicated in placing the *pais amphithales* tradition on the *epaulia* (third day) or eve thereof, in connection with the *katachysmata*, *anakalypteria*, and associated *dora* or gifts.

This suggested interpretation of the *anakalypteria* as a festival of (un)veiling the bed, inside the *thalamos* of the groom's house, either on or after the arrival of the wedded couple at their new home, brings together our scraps of ancient textual and material evidence for rituals that may have accompanied the *ekdosis* or transfer of the bride, from one man to another, from one home to another. These rituals involved not just (un)veiling of the bed—*anakalypteria*—but also symbols of fertility—*katachysmata*—associated gifts—*dora*—and community (both women and men) witnessing the joining

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[108] https://greekweddings.wordpress.com/2010/05/02/a-song-to-sing-at-the-krevatia/ consulted 15 September 2014.
[109] Mordecai 1999: 184.

of the newly married couple. It is certain that it occurred after the *gamelia*, both feast and procession. It is to some degree irrelevant whether it occurred late on the second day or more likely on the third day, as suggested by the majority of ancient sources. It does not help us determine when exactly the marriage was consummated yet that would have been a matter only of concern to the married persons. While my connection of the *anakalypteria* with the *krevatia* on present evidence cannot be proven, perhaps subsequent scholars will seek and find evidence to support this suggestion. And perhaps philologists will demonstrate more conclusively that the veiling at the heart of the *anakalypteria* festival, and therefore the ancient Greek wedding, was the decoration, redecoration and unveiling of the marriage bed, with richly decorated fabrics, in ancient as in subsequent times.

Images

Figure 1. Attic black-figure *dinos* signed by Sophilos, ca. 570 BC, showing King Peleus receiving guests at the door to his palace. London, British Museum 1971.11-1.1. BAPD 350099. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 2. Rolled-out view of the frieze decorating an Attic black-figure *lekythos* attributed to the Amasis Painter, ca. 540 BC, showing a marriage procession approaching an external door, with a view of the *thalamos* within. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 56.11.1. BAPD 350748. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 3. Attic black-figure *lekythos* attributed to the Edinburgh Painter, ca. 500 BC, showing Apollo mounting a chariot drawn by a lion, a lioness, a boar, and a wolf, with

Leto, Hermes, and Artemis in attendance. Yale University Art Gallery 1913.111. BAPD 3200. © Yale University Art Gallery.

Figure 4. Apulian red-figure calyx krater attributed to the Laodamia Painter, ca. 340 BC, showing a love scene perhaps from a tragedy (above) and a centaur carrying off Laodamia, the bride of Peirithoos (below). London, British Museum 1870,0710.2. *RVAp* 18/14. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 5. Attic red-figure bell krater attributed to the Meleager Painter, ca. 380 BC, showing two pairs of symposiasts. Reading, Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology 45.8.1. BAPD 217955. © University of Reading.

Figure 6. Attic red-figure *epinetron*, name vase of the Eretria Painter, ca. 430 BC. Side C, showing the *epaulia* of Alkestis. Athens, National Museum 1629 (CC 1588). BAPD 216971. Photo: Giannis Patrikianos © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Archaeological Receipts Fund.

Figure 7. Attic red-figure *pyxis* attributed to the Oppenheimer Group, ca. 450 BC. Mainz, University of Mainz 118. BAPD 220643. Photo used with permission.

Figure 8. Rolled-out view of the frieze decorating an Attic red-figure *pyxis*, ca. 430 BC, showing bridal preparations. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 1972.118.148. BAPD 44750. Drawing author.

Figure 9. Rolled-out view of the frieze decorating an Attic red-figure *pyxis* attributed to the Marlay Painter, ca. 440 BC, showing a bridal procession. London 1920.12-12.1. BAPD 216210. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 10. Rolled-out view of an Attic red-figure *loutrophoros-amphora*, ca. 430 BC, showing an *engye* or betrothal. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 03.802. BAPD 15815. Photograph © 2018 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 11. Attic red-figure *lebes gamikos* (wedding bowl), name vase of the Painter of Athens 1454, ca. 420 BC, showing a procession of women with containers and the crowning of the bride. Athens, National Museum 1454. BAPD 215616. Photo: Stephanos Stournaras © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Archaeological Receipts Fund.

Figure 12. Fragment of an Attic red-figure *loutrophoros* attributed to the Phiale Painter, ca. 440 BC, showing the *katachysmata*. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 10.223. BAPD 214222. Drawing author.

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