

CHAPTER 2: DOWRY, THE LINCHPIN OF A WOMAN'S WEALTH

THE DOWRY IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

	<i>Grosia</i>
a. Construction of a domicile "above the great store (magazi)"	883
b. Repairs of houses in "Anó Mera"	300
c. "Krebbatostrósi, ¹ the gold . . ."	150
d. "cash for her dowry"	1,500
e. "her clothes and expenses for the marriage"	1,100
<i>Total</i>	3,933 ²

WHEN HADJI-ANTONIS BATIS OF MYKONOS MARRIED his daughter Erinaki, like the good merchant that he was, he made a list of his expenses, a rare practice that gives us a glimpse into the costs parents had to bear in order to marry their offspring. Of course this was not an average wedding as the mere assignment of monetary values, unheard of before the establishment of the Hellenic kingdom, indicates. This chapter will examine whether women in Ottoman Greece were owners of property, and, if so, how significant were their holdings in comparison to men's, and in particular their husbands' and siblings'. By getting an idea of the economic dynamics of marriage, we should be able to examine aspects of power, authority and control, as much as this is possible from the surviving documentation. Coupled with this question, we must also address the precise legal nature of the dowry in each region, and the authority a husband had over it as the administrator. Then we must try and track what changes, if any, occurred during the decade-long Greek War of Independence, before finally drawing comparisons with the post-independence period.

From a regional viewpoint, we can separate Greece into two areas where dowry practices shared common elements. The first was maritime Greece – the Aegean islands and particularly the Cyclades – where parents generally provided dowries to sons as well

¹ The word means bedding and included all linens and similar household items needed to equip a new house.

² Krenmydas 1993: 44.

as daughters at the time of marriage, an eminently practical solution to the problem of property transmission from one generation to the next. This simplifies our task in many ways since all we have to do is compare the male and female dowries. The overarching principle of property allocation there was more or less governed by the *paterna-paternis*, *materna-maternis* concept, which also led to a form of matrilineal household, not in the pure meaning of the term but in the sense of the establishment of the new household in property originating from the family of the bride.³

The mainland, on the other hand, appears rooted in what is generally perceived as the "classic" patriarchal familial model, characterized either by patrilocality or neolocality. Even in most mainland regions however, women received significant properties as dowries, giving them the potential at least for an assertive economic role under certain conditions. The mainland stuck closer to the household model envisioned by Roman-Byzantine law. The role of the male head of the household was elevated in comparison to the islands, a practice fully in accord with the concept of *paterfamilias*, and, as a result, the role of the mother appears diminished in comparison.⁴

Dowries in the islands are often encountered in two types of documents, the *proikósymphóno*, the standard dowry contract which was contracted with the expectation of an imminent marriage, and the *abantario*, where parents provided or promised a dowry to their sons or daughters but where there was no indication that marriage was pending.⁵ In Naxos men as well as women could receive dowries at the time of their marriage, but women were more likely to receive a dowry generally. Often men appeared in the documents without their parents and simply stated their wealth, an indication that they had already received their patrimony, while there were some dowry contracts where mention of men was entirely absent. This admission to wealth was not legally required, but there may have been social pressure to do so in order to provide surety for a wife's dowry.

On Mykonos and Naxos the surviving parents of the bride, or their epitropoi, had to be present, alongside witnesses, the notary, the groom, and (or) his parents. Mykonos, however, was a bit more flexible than Naxos, especially as far as men were

concerned. Grooms frequently appeared alone or with their mothers, instead of the nearly mandatory father of Naxos. Furthermore not all dowry contracts were written by the notary; many apparently were crafted by priests or monks and later deposited in the notarial archives. Nearly all were composed in the house of one of the parents of the couple, usually the bride's, a more intimate locale than the offices of the notary, as was the practice in Naxos. In both islands the blessing of the parents was essential and, when necessary, the epitropoi gave the blessings of the deceased parents to the new couple.⁶ Nearly all documents involved women but, unlike Naxos, most did not include men. The latter had a much smaller role in this process, rarely receiving separate dowry contracts, although quite a few of them received property in dowry contracts with their wives.

Athenian dowry contracts were also composed by a notary, in a rather more formulaic manner, with three distinct segments often separated by drawn lines. The first part identified the bride, usually referred to as the *neomphos*, and the person providing the dowry, without any of the religious references encountered in the islands. The second part was a list of the dowry, always starting with a chest, proceeding to describe the *trousseau*, then orchards, fields, and houses, and any cash that might be provided, ending with a simple benediction from both parents, even if only one, or none, was present. The third part was clearly defined at all times and involved the groom, who gave a premarital gift (*progamiaia dórea*) or dower to his wife, and occasionally may have received some property from his own parents, usually the father.⁷ This was followed by the signatures of the notary and the witnesses, which were, compared to the islands, quite numerous – the bigger the dowry, the more of them. Visually therefore, Athenian dowry contracts looked quite different from the ones in the islands, and a few of these documents seem to have been "notarized" by Muslim officials either in Greek⁸ or in Arabic script,⁹ a very rare occurrence in the islands.¹⁰

In Athens the dowry was mostly, or one may say exclusively, a female institution. Nearly all available dowry contracts involved women, while male dowry contracts were almost unheard of. Future husbands did appear in the documents, but their role was that of donor and not recipient. Where men did receive property, the latter was hardly

³ True matrilineal marriages were also present in some islands like Kea (Alexakis 2004: 371). The residence of the family is often indicative of other practices. For example, patrilineal descent groups are often characterized by patrilocality and virilocality, while matrilineal groups and many bilateral ones have more complex structures (Goody 1969: 188).

⁴ The issue of male "dowries" will occupy us because of the impact it can have on how female "dowries" were perceived. It can be, and has been argued, that there was no such thing as a male dowry on the mainland though there were occasional similarities to the male dowries found in the islands. Men did receive property in dowry contracts, but, as I will argue below, this property should not be considered as a dowry in the sense of the male dowries seen in the islands (Gerontas 1964: 27).

⁵ *Abantaria* follow the formulas of dowry contracts, both in the wording of the documents and in their context, and I chose to look at them together. *Abantaria* are not found only in Naxos but are present in Kea, Ios, Sikinos, Sifnos, Milos, Paros, Santoriní, Anaphó, Andros, Tinos, Syros, and Kimolos. Some *abantaria* were contracted after a marriage had taken place in order to legitimize an oral agreement (IEEB Naxos 3649, 30 September 1767); see also Visviziá 1968: 22, and Zepos and Zepos 1931: 72.

⁶ GAK Mykonos F9/081, 26 July 1763.

⁷ A groom had to be present, even if only through an epitropos (representative), as in the case Nikolis Panagioti Kazatzis, who for unspecified reasons could not be present but sent an epitropos, Dimitrios Tyropoulos, there to represent him (GAK Athens F12/43.3, 30 January 1820/1821).

⁸ GAK Athens F11/104.1, 25 April 1804, among others.

⁹ GAK Athens F12/46.1, 15 February 1820/1821, among others.

¹⁰ In Athens, before the dowry contract was drawn up and deposited in the notarial records, another document, known as the *sophylli*, was often drafted. These documents stated the agreement reached by the two families involved and the dowry contract was often merely a formal copy of such documents after the marriage had taken place. The *sophylli* was drawn up in the presence of the matchmaker, who was an important element in the marriage practices of many regions in Greece and seen as an actual profession (Kampouroglou 1969, 332). Certain dowry contracts explicitly refer to the *sophylli* as the basis for the terms stated (GAK Athens F11/53.1, 25 November 1797).

comparable to that of their brides. At most they received one or two pieces of property, or a handful of items, a gift from his parents to help the new couple set itself up. Sometimes this allocation of property to sons by parents was stated as a "dowry." This could be, on some occasions, indeed significant, such as in the case of Giannis, the psychogios, or foster son, of Mitros Roupas, who received for his work two vineyards, a house and significant chattel,¹¹ or of Leonardos Gianni Koupoutzmadis, who received from his parents a house, a vineyard with three (olive) trees, two fields, and chattel.¹²

Our sample for Leónidio comprises a mere eight dowry contracts composed between 1707 and 1819, all of them previously published.¹³ Only female dowries were recorded and the format somewhat haphazard, possibly due to the absence of a notary and the fact that the drafting of these contracts was by various monks or priests; they are at least refreshingly personal in language. Despite the commercial links of the Tsakónes to the islands and major commercial centers, none of the surviving documents exhibit influences from those regions, and in accordance with the mainland traditions, also seen in Athens, the dowry is seen in these few samples as a female institution.¹⁴

SOURCES OF THE DOWRY

Women in Naxos predominantly received their dowry from both parents or solely from their mothers (see table 2.1).¹⁵ Property followed gender lines as far as women were concerned, while fathers may have played simply a supporting role in the provisioning for their daughters. When parents were unavailable or, as was more commonly the case, deceased, other relatives assumed their roles. Thus brothers or uncles provided dowries for their sisters or nieces,¹⁶ as could foster parents even, though these roles could be combined such as in the case of the uncle who "adopted" his nephew and wrote him a dowry contract that would remain valid for as long as the uncle failed to produce children "of his own blood."¹⁷ There were also cases when brothers, sisters, uncles and other relatives appeared in the documents in order to augment the dowry that was being provided by the parents of the bride. Forty percent of the Mykoniate dowry contracts included

some participation of kin and, unlike Naxos, Mykoniate men also received assistance from relatives: their sisters, female cousins, and even people who were not blood relatives such as a sister-in-law or a brother-in-law.¹⁸

Such allocations were not the marriage gifts that were traditionally given by families on the occasion of a marriage, even though much of these family additions were in the form of jewelry, especially gold rings. Many of the additions were too valuable and extensive to constitute marriage gifts. Giorgos Psaros, for example, was willing to add a house to his sister's dowry, although he complained that his family kept sending letters to Smyrna (Izmir), where he lived, asking him for money or goods for her trousseau when he had none to give.¹⁹ Such largesse can be traced to the different socioeconomic conditions of each island and the corresponding different concerns and strategies of the involved parties. The maritime culture of Mykonos, and the presence of commercial "companies" or associations, often led families to seek marital "alliances" for commercial purposes.²⁰ To cement these alliances, kin were eager to offer property even to male relatives, especially if the groom was marrying "up," and his parents were unable to provide him with sufficient property, necessary in part to ensure the bride's dowry.²¹ Kin may have done so in good conscience, but self-interest certainly played a role since they expected the benefits of the marriage to extend to them as well. Such marital-commercial links have been identified by other researchers in the islands in general and Mykonos in particular.²²

The presence of kin and siblings in particular was often connected to the deaths of the parents. Older, usually married siblings assumed the legal obligation to provide the dowries of their unmarried brothers and sisters, as in the case of four brothers who provided the dowry for their sister including "her maternal houses."²³ Occasionally a parent might be simply unavailable, like Ekaterini's mother who was "absent." Her dowry was provided by her three siblings instead, and she also included her own property amassed "from her work in the 'Ruling City'" (Basilevousa Polé), that is Constantinople (Istanbul), the only woman to have done so in a dowry contract from Naxos, although such practices were in fact quite common in other regions such as Athens.²⁴

¹¹ GAK Athens F11/122.1, 28 August 1815.

¹² GAK Athens F11/105.2, 2 May 1804.

¹³ See Makrymichalos 1971.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 298; and Lekos 1920: 12; and Finlay 1971: 26.

¹⁵ Eva Kalpourtzi, who examined Naxos in the seventeenth century, came to different conclusions, namely that the father of the bride was the main provider of the dowry, albeit often stating that he did so "with the opinion and consent of his noble lady" (Kalpourtzi 2001: 100). Kalpourtzi, however, examined the records of Kastros, where the Catholic aristocracy was prominent, while I have looked into the records of the peasants of Drymalia. Class and economics can be as powerful shaping forces as traditions and the law. Kasdagli, who also examined Naxos in the seventeenth century, found that three-fourths of dowries were presented by parents, 29 percent by both parents, 26 percent by mothers alone and 20 percent by fathers alone (Kasdagli 1999: 214).

¹⁶ IEEE Naxos 4684, 8 February 1805.

¹⁷ IEEE Naxos 6037, 14 September 1820.

¹⁸ GAK Mykonos F9/091, 7 January 1765.

¹⁹ IEEE Mykonos 22609, 2 January 1772.

²⁰ Kremmydas 1993: 33, 59, 179, 186.

²¹ See also Doxiadis 2010: 238–55.

²² *Ibid.*, 83. In some cases, however, the presence of brothers and sisters resembled more an exchange of properties rather than an augmentation of a bride's dowry, as in the case of a brother who ceded a house to his sister in return for a workshop (argastér) from his mother. These were attempts to correct mistakes or imbalances from previous dowry contracts, with the new dowry contract giving an opportunity to correct past errors. This was clearly the case in a son's dowry contract written by a mother but where all the property involved originated from his siblings (IEEE Naxos 4365, 3 September 1797; IEEE Naxos 4786, 21 January 1807).

²³ IEEE Naxos 4846, 21 November 1807.

²⁴ IEEE Naxos 4101, 10 February 1788.

The contracts of dowered men were more balanced than in the case of women. Unlike the dowries of the latter, where mothers dominated when only one parent was mentioned, in the case of sons there was an equal chance that a mother or a father would provide the dowry, although when mothers appeared alone in the dowry contracts of their sons, they were almost always widows, substitutes for the father whose property was supposed to be passed on to the offspring of the same gender, just as daughters received theirs from their mother.

The strong gendered patterns of property transmission are also evident in certain contracts involving a parent giving as a dowry property belonging to the other spouse. In two such documents a man and a woman respectively validated a dowry contract for an offspring that was composed by their spouses, probably in their absence.²⁵ In two other documents another man and woman mentioned that they allocated property belonging to their spouses and inserted conditions for the absent spouse to "karpotrógei" (eat the crop) the property or to receive their "gerontomoiria" (old person's share), in essence to receive the usufruct of the properties.²⁶ The most clear example, however, is that of a man who stated that his wife had passed away before having a chance to divide her property among her children, and thus he did so himself "as a mother," showing a realization that mothers and fathers were expected to divide their properties in different ways.²⁷ In a similar vein, a woman provided the dowry for her son because, as she stated, her husband had given dowries "from his own things" to four female children.²⁸ In many of these occasions, it is clear that spouses were uncomfortable giving away property that belonged to their partner and felt the need to justify doing so. We can also deduce from this reluctance that in Naxos there was no concept of common property between married people, meaning that each individual, male or female, had sole rights over his or her property. Much the same can be seen on Mykonos, where women's dowry contracts were drawn with the mother present in over seventy-seven percent of the cases. Fathers, of course, were equally significant, appearing in over half of the contracts, although we do get hints that, as in the case of Naxos, a daughter's dowry was mostly the responsibility of the mother.²⁹

²⁵ IEEE Naxos 3738, 19 March 1774; IEEE Naxos 4905, 12 November 1808.

²⁶ IEEE Naxos 4365, 3 September 1797; IEEE Naxos 5460, 28 August 1814.

²⁷ IEEE Naxos 4444, 22 April 1800.

²⁸ IEEE Naxos 5561, 24 June 1815.

²⁹ IEEE Mykonos 22618, 28 June 1797. In this document the mother, Anezo, provided a dowry for her daughter Elenakio but some time later, on 9 December 1809, her father added to her dowry because his daughter gave him "great pleasure," a trope used mostly in wills and donations where the testator is under no obligation to give property to the specified individual. We should not try to be too structural in our approach, however. Legal documents at the time were not as formulaic or strictly focused as we tend to assume from our modern preconceptions. The personal, emotional, or opportunistic insertion should not be ignored and there were many examples of such "deviations." A husband could, for example, write a vineyard into his wife's dowry contract because of an "agreement" he had made prior to the marriage just as easily as a mother-in-law could

In Athens things were a bit different. Athenian mothers also played a significant role in their daughters' dowry contracts, but fathers had a more pronounced presence in their dowering than was the case in the islands. They were clearly under obligation to provide the dowry as we can infer from the case of a dowry contract that was originally drafted by Maria, the grandmother of the bride Ekaterini, with the provision that the father, on his return, would finalize the dowry by providing what was "missing." Indeed, several months later, the father, Liberios, joined the grandmother in a new dowry contract.³⁰ Similarly, Andreas Pefanis drafted the dowry contract of Ergina Giannaki Gounaraki based on a letter giving him this authority from her father, who happened to be away in Smyrna (Izmir).³¹ Even mothers needed such written authorization when the father was away.³² The importance of the father and his influence as the paterfamilias is further exemplified by the case of Ekaterina Hadji Benardou Leloudi. Although this woman was marrying for the second time, and although she was receiving her dowry from "her own self" (autè kath' autè), meaning she already had possession of it, the marriage took place only with the permission of her father, which was the only role this man played in the entire document.³³

In Athenian dowry contracts another group emerges as significant donors, the psychogoneis. This was a very broad term referring to godparents or foster parents, but it frequently also involved an element of servitude, as was often the case in Athens. If we combine the cases where there was a clear relationship of servitude with the psychogoneis, we see that over ten percent of women's dowry contracts involved girls who received their dowry as payment after a time in service to either a psychogonios or master. If we also consider the significant number of women who provided their own dowries, by "her own self" as the documents stated, then almost a fifth of all dowries in Athens involved "working" women. The servile element was a result of the urban character of Athens, where servitude was much more pronounced than in the islands, as was also the case with other cities like Smyrna (Izmir) or Constantinople (Istanbul).³⁴ The presence of such women was often a result of migration to the city from the countryside, which was implied in several documents involving servants,³⁵ or a second marriage when older women were involved. In Athens, therefore, there was a significant number of women

add some pieces to her son-in-law's trousseau for no obvious reason (IEEE Mykonos 22640, 8 November 1785; and IEEE Mykonos 22268, 5 November 1805).

³⁰ GAK Athens F11/46.1, 24 July 1798; and GAK Athens F11/46.2, 4 December 1796.

³¹ GAK Athens F11/85.2, 18 October 1802.

³² GAK Athens F12/42.2, 6 January 1820/1821.

³³ GAK Athens F11/104.1, 25 April 1804.

³⁴ Liata 1987: 36.

³⁵ Many men added place names to their surnames such as Kostas Mastrothanas Kougoumtzi Giannioti (the word Giannioti probably indicates descent from Janina) (GAK Athens F12/40.1, 27 September 1820). Such toponymics include Syros (GAK Athens F12/39.2, 25 September 1820), Thebes (GAK Athens F12/29.1, 19 October 1819), Corinth (GAK Athens, F12/26.1, 30 September 1819), Levadia (GAK Athens F12/21.2, 20 July 1819), and others.

who were either active in the labor market, or who had managed their own affairs for some time.

Muslims also appeared in Christian dowry contracts in Athens, not only in order to "notarize" them, but also as providers of dowries, usually to Christian servants. There may also be evidence of more intimate relationships, and on at least one occasion, a Muslim, Asan [Hasan?] Agas Kinalis, augmented the dowry of a Christian girl, Sideri Mitrou Fraggou, who was being dowered by her mother, Bitzi, and sisters Evgenia and Kalomoira, with no mention of a servile relationship and with a rather small sum (101 grosia) in comparison to the rest of the dowry.³⁶ Clearly Christians and Muslims had fairly extensive contacts with each other, also evident in the language of the documents, with certain implications regarding influences, legal as well as social.

Other kin, including brothers, uncles, sisters, cousins, and grandparents, also appeared in the dowries of Athenian girls, adding wealth to their dowries. Maria Athanasi [Skizi], for example, was dowered by her siblings Kalomoira, Smyrouda, and Evangelis and her stepmother, Sofia, in a manner that brings to mind the practices of the islands.³⁷ Siblings, however, also appeared in these contracts without any mention that they had augmented the dowry, which was not evidenced in the islands. They were there to make sure that their material interests were protected, and a few dowry contracts had to be redrawn after brothers objected to the way the property was divided in the first version.³⁸ The presence of siblings also served as a security for the married couple, since those siblings could hardly challenge the dowry contract at a later date if they had been present at the original drafting of the document. The presence of brothers and sisters therefore also served as a means to diffuse potential conflicts within families. Finally, their presence also indicates the tight control that birth families held over women, even when they had already been married, and widowed, as in the case of Golfi Theodori Pierou. Despite the fact she was marrying for the second time, and was thus already in possession of her dowry, the document stated that she was "receiving" it from her two sisters Zoi and Bitza and, significantly, from their husbands as well, although this was clearly a fiction.³⁹

The most significant difference in Athenian dowries, however, was the fact that men did not generally receive them, nor did they have to state their own property, as is evident from the negligible number of men that did so. They did occasionally receive property in the contracts of their future wives, and these "dowries" were provided by the fathers who were present in nearly seventy percent of the documents that mentioned their sons. Mothers were less involved but, as in the case of women, psychogoneis played a prominent role. The similarity we see regarding property allocations to economically disadvantaged individuals, regardless of gender, highlights the significance of the economic

and social environment of the region as a determinant for the composition of dowries. Poor men in Athens needed aid in order to marry, as did poor women.

In Leonidio our small sample points to rather similar circumstances to those of Athens with fathers being the most significant providers of dowries. Mothers could be present, presumably if the father was dead, but they were accompanied by their sons. Other relatives could also be involved, and on one occasion we have uncles and their nieces (perhaps the bride's sisters) crafting the dowry contract, in obviously extraordinary circumstances. As in Athens, this male prominence points to an increased significance of fathers in the role of a paterfamilias.

THE MATERIAL COMPOSITION OF DOWRIES

The monetary values of the dowries and even the size of real properties were almost never mentioned in the documents of the period. We are thus limited to discussing the composition of dowries in terms of types of property and their social function rather than value. Any categorization is more or less arbitrary, and my choice has been to look at the function of the various properties. The categories I use are houses, land, chattel, livestock, money, and "other." The category of houses includes domiciles but also such things as cookhouses (mageireia), cellars (kelaria), workshops (ergastêria), and shops (magazia). Land refers to vineyards (ambelia), olive trees (elies) and other fruit-producing trees,⁴⁰ and a variety of field types (chôraphia, tetartia, potamides, klêsmata, potistika, and so on). Chattel is in essence the trousseau, usually composed of women's clothing, jewelry, and various household items. Livestock mostly consists of sheep and goats, as well as the occasional cow or beasts of burden (mostly donkeys) and beehives.⁴¹ Money is cash given in a variety of currencies, and the final category involves all other possible properties, such as churches or shares (meridia) in ships and windmills.⁴²

The most common type of property that both men and women received at the time was land.⁴³ Nearly all women in Naxos received some sort of land and so did the women of Mykonos and Athens (see table 2.2). Land was a source of wealth and sustenance and was particularly well placed to be part of a dowry since it was clearly defined, difficult to secretly dispose of, and of more or less stable or increasing value. Furthermore, parents could, and did, relinquish the ownership of land but maintain their usufruct of it to sustain them in their old age. Some of the differences encountered in the documents

³⁶ In Ottoman Greece, trees and the land they were planted on constituted two separate properties in many regions and could be sold or given as separate entities (Siatras 1992: 110).

⁴¹ Surprisingly, no dowry contract in Greece that I have seen mentions chickens a staple of any modern Greek country home.

⁴² Shares of ships, or windmills for that matter, could be quite valuable. On occasion such shares were even converted into waqfs (Kermeli 2002: 215).

⁴³ In the seventeenth century, only 4 percent of men and women were landless according to their dowry contracts (Kandaghi 1999: 218).

³⁶ GAK Athens F11/572, 17 April 1798.

³⁷ GAK Athens F11/73.1, 5 August 1801. See also GAK Athens F11/95.1, 12 July 1803.

³⁸ GAK Athens F12/23.1, 11 May 1819.

³⁹ GAK Athens F12/9.3, 31 June 1818.

stem from local conditions, the smaller size and aridness of Mykonos, for example, led to fewer allocations of fields or vineyards, although the notorious winds of the islands made windmills a significant source of wealth in contrast to other regions.⁴⁴

In Naxos a woman was expected to receive a house in her dowry contract, and most (sixty-seven percent) did so.⁴⁵ This tendency was even more pronounced on Mykonos, where nearly all women (ninety-eight percent) were recipients of one or more residences.⁴⁶ The remarkable high ratio of female ownership of buildings on Mykonos can be attributed to the reduced importance of agriculture in comparison to other forms of economic activity, and the greater concentration of the population in the main town and a couple of other villages. Many of the buildings mentioned on Mykonos had possible commercial purposes, and although they could be used as residences, the way cook-houses could be used in Naxos and elsewhere for elderly parents, they were also productive units that could generate income. The ownership of these *magazias* (shops) and *ergastéria* (workshops) by Mykoniate women, coupled with the possible absence of men engaged in agricultural activities out of the town or employed as sailors and merchants, could have led to a significant participation of women in the economy.⁴⁷ These wives would either run shops themselves, or rent them out, but in any case they would have had greater involvement in the actual running of their own property than was envisioned by Roman law or the practices in much of Greece. Much the same can probably be said regarding other commercial islands, some of which were even more heavily dependent on shipping, fishing, and other maritime activities, which took a significant part of the male population away from the homestead for extended periods of time.

Chattel was of course present in the majority of the dowry contracts involving women, but unfortunately we cannot be certain of its exact value. It was not negligible, however, as later documents from the post-independence period indicate, and could occasionally match the rest of the dowry in value.⁴⁸ Dowry contracts were generally concerned only with female clothing and artifacts even when men were the recipients,

⁴⁴ A windmill was divided into shares according to the number of "antennas" or sails it had. An entire windmill had eight sails, half a windmill four and so on. The value of windmills is indicated by the fact that entire windmills were almost never given in dowry contracts (GAK Mykonos F9/081, 26 July 1763).

⁴⁵ The percentage was even higher in the seventeenth century, reaching 90 percent of female dowry contracts (Kasdagli 1999: 216). See also (Davis 1976: 301; see also Lison-Tolosana 1976: 305–306).

⁴⁶ This is in marked contrast to other parts of the Balkans where houses, and often real estate in general, was solely given to sons (Todorova 1993: 128). However, although the tradition of allocating houses to daughters has been well established for the Aegean islands even in the modern period (Dimitriou-Kotsoni 1993: 66), in other areas of Greece, and especially in parts of Northern Greece, research has indicated that women were often excluded from "productive" property (Caltanzoglou: 1994: 94). The same can be seen in other parts of the Balkans where the dowry was solely composed of the trousseau, some money, and furniture (Rheubottom 1980: 223).

⁴⁷ Kremmydas 1993: 79.

⁴⁸ The value of land and houses was low compared to movables as can be seen in the case of seventeenth-century Mykonos, when houses averaged less than twenty *grosia*, vineyards between ten and twenty *grosia*, and a large copper pot (*charani*) could be worth as much as 7.5 *grosia*, and a cow nine to fifteen *grosia*.

with the sole exception of weapons. Mykoniate and Athenian women received more significant trousseaux, in quantity at least, than was the case in Naxos, and the greater preponderance of jewelry and ornamentation in Mykoniate dowry contracts compared to those of Naxos may be an indication of greater value as well. On Mykonos several dowry contracts included ten or fifteen gold rings, often set with precious stones, as well as necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and other pieces of jewelry.⁴⁹ Even more luxurious items like gilded mirrors, Venetian furniture, and "frames" (*kadra*), presumably paintings, were included, which point to a wealthier lifestyle partly modeled on western European practices, again a consequence of the commercial nature of the island and its greater links to the rest of the Mediterranean.⁵⁰ Livestock was less significant in female dowries. Although present in those from Naxos, it was rather rare on Mykonos and in Athens, which were more urban environments.⁵¹

Money, though scarce in Naxos, was quite common in Athens. Athenian women, in addition to the trousseau, frequently received cash allotments either as part of their dowry, or through two institutions absent in the islands: *nachti*, and *progamiaia dorea* or premarital gifts, in essence a dowry, and a handful received additional money "for their virginity" (*gia parthenia*). The premarital gift had been part of the dowry in Byzantium and was roughly equivalent to the dowry. The husband promised his future wife a sum of money: in the examples I found ranging from fifty-one⁵² to thousands of *grosia*, depending on the wealth of the groom and the size of the dowry involved. On some occasions jewelry and, even more rarely, land or houses were added, but the vast majority involved only cash. The premarital gift was present in Leónidio as well, but not in the four earliest documents, appearing only after 1798. The practice coincides with the inclusion of monetary allocations in the dowries, as some researchers have already stated,⁵³ indicating a link between the two where the premarital gift represented a form of insurance for the monetary component of the dowry which, unlike land, was much harder to keep track of. Simultaneously such monetary promises could represent an acknowledgement on the part of the groom of the need to provide some form of interest to the monetary part of the dowry, which would have otherwise been considerably devalued by the time the bride had need of it. Both in Athens and Leónidio, however,

(Dimitropoulos 1997: 161–62, 274, 287). The same was true in early modern Europe as late as the mid-eighteenth century, when land began to rise in value (Erickson 1993: 65–66).

⁴⁹ GAK Mykonos F10, 16 February 1777.

⁵⁰ HEE Mykonos 22617, 6 April 1797.

⁵¹ The terms for animals were *zba*, and productive animals, *zba kamatera*, which primarily referred to goats (Kasdagli 1999: 106).

⁵² All premarital gifts end in one (101, 201, 151), probably the work of some superstition.

⁵³ Makrymichalos 1971: 314–15. Similar developments in other parts of Europe can be seen in late medieval Siena, where dowries were increasingly transformed into cash payments, in southern France, and in Renaissance Italy. The aim was often to limit or prohibit female acquisition of real property. Though some have seen this as a positive development for women's property rights (Kriemer 1985: 66), these researchers tend to ignore the effects of inflation which, at times, were particularly devastating.

and unlike Byzantium, the premarital gift was not a substantial part of the dowry, rarely exceeding even what Athenian parents provided as *nachti*. Furthermore, the wording of the documents makes clear that the premarital gift was not delivered at the time of the marriage. Words like *etaxe*, meaning promised, imply a commitment rather than a realized donation.⁵⁴

Unlike the premarital gift, *nachti* was given by the providers of the dowry, and was indeed delivered at the time of the marriage in cash, or when this was not possible it was substituted by land or some other type of property of, presumably, equal or greater value.⁵⁵ Maria Spyrou Adami's mother, Sophia, and her brothers Giorgis, Mitros, and Christos, who were unable to find all of the 250 *grosia* they had promised for her *nachti*, substituted four olive trees for the outstanding fifty-six *grosia*.⁵⁶ The documents, however, did not always make clear whether these payments were made to the groom, in which case they would represent a continuation of the Byzantine *trachōma*,⁵⁷ or whether they were considered part of the wife's dowry. The statement of Anna Gianaki Limberiou, who mentioned the return of her *nachti* and premarital gift after her husband's death, does seem to imply that both were her property.⁵⁸

The function of these two monetary elements was similar but separated in time. The *nachti* was supposed to assist the newly married couple establish itself until the fields and other productive aspects of the dowry could be literally brought to bear fruit. This was particularly significant since the current crop of the trees and fields provided was not necessarily considered to be part of the dowry, as shown by the dowry contract of Golfi Theodori Pierou.⁵⁹ The premarital gift, on the other hand, played a role similar to the *nachti*, but for a later stage in life and uniquely for the wife. In case of widowhood, or even divorce, it would be a very useful aid until the widow was able to resolve potential disputes over her husband's property and until she could get her hands on her own wealth. Both the *nachti* and the premarital gift were significant enough to have ensured the survival of the couple or widow for a few months or more, ample time to allow for the resolution of any disputes or disruptions. Some have compared the premarital gift to

⁵⁴ Despite its name the premarital gift was not a "gift" in the legal sense. Gifts, by the legal standards of the time, were revocable while the premarital gift clearly was not. It was thus much closer to the concept of the European dower, or perhaps the Islamic *mahr*, being inalienable and secure.

⁵⁵ *Nachti* is not present in the Athenian dowry contracts before 1793 (the first mention is in GAK Athens F11/12.1, 2 March 1793) but is almost universal after that date. In a dowry contract of that year what is obviously *nachti* was called *moulki* (a derivation from *mulk* or private property), but this term was rarely used (GAK Athens F11/7, 31 August 1791). Athenians apparently borrowed words from their Muslim neighbors, like *moulki*, and thus the etymology of the word *nachti* may stem from *naqd* or *naqid* meaning cash, perhaps an attempt to distinguish this type of property from the more common, material components.

⁵⁶ GAK Athens F12/33.2, 16 November 1819.

⁵⁷ Several authors mention the presence of *trachōma* in Athens (see Filadelfeos 1902, 1:343). I have not encountered it in the records.

⁵⁸ GAK Athens F11/54.1, 21 December 1797.

⁵⁹ GAK Athens F12/9.3, 31 June 1818.

the Morgengabe, or dower or morning gift of German origin that was tied to the bride's virginity, but the premarital gift of Athens was obviously not tied to virginity since it was offered even to women who entered into second marriages, who could hardly be expected to be virgins.⁶⁰ Furthermore, there were cases where offering a different payment for virginity, *gia parthenia*, was offered. The rarity of that tradition, however, makes me doubt that the concept of female Morgengabe existed in Athens, or, if it did, that it was common. But it did exist for men as we shall see.

Male dowries relied heavily on agricultural land. Nearly all Naxian men who received a dowry and only slightly fewer Mykonians got land, but only about half of them got houses, livestock, or chattel.⁶¹ In Naxos men were as likely to receive money as women (17.77 and 17.57 percent respectively), an indication of the rural nature of and the relative scarcity of bullion in the region, a scarcity also seen, surprisingly, on Mykonos.⁶² In Athens, as I have already mentioned, dowries were reserved for women, although when men received property they overwhelmingly received houses. Nearly three-quarters did so, more than twice the percentage of women that received houses from their parents. In most cases there was very little else that men received and, unlike women, almost none received money. Clearly, Athenian men did not receive their patrimony at the time of their marriage.

SOCIAL TRENDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Nothing we have discussed undermines the familiar image of the patriarchal family. Men received productive properties (land) and women a variety of complementary goods (chattel and houses). The dominance of women in the housing market of the islands, however, had important social consequences. If married couples lived primarily in houses owned by the wives, this meant that grooms moved into the social environment of their spouses and, since offspring often inherited only a part of a housing complex (for example one floor of a house, the cookhouse, the cellar), the rest going to other siblings or retained by the parents for their old age, which meant that, practically, couples frequently lived with the wife's relatives.⁶³ In unforeseen events, such as the death of a husband or divorce, a woman, even if her income was reduced through the loss of a husband, could go on living in the same house in which she always had, not to mention the possibility of her

⁶⁰ GAK Athens F11/104.1, 25 April 1804, among others.

⁶¹ Men in their dowries did receive considerably greater numbers of fields than women did, but a field could vary significantly in value, and in almost no case is there even a mention of the size of the allotment.

⁶² Boats and ships are also quite rare for an island so heavily involved with the sea. There are less than a handful of dowry contracts that mention what constituted a major economic activity for the island (GAK Mykonos F9/08.1, 26 July 1763; GAK Mykonos F10, 2 April 1798).

⁶³ ISEE Naxos 3559, 3 November 1763.

soliciting material and emotional support from her own family, which would be situated around her.⁶⁴

Researchers have argued that matrilocality in Greece was only encountered in certain demeaning circumstances such as in the case of the *sôgampros*, a groom who became a member of his wife's family, and that the preferred circumstances were either neolocality or patrilocality.⁶⁵ In the strict definitions of the terms, it is quite clear that neolocality was the preferred path, and there are indications that couples would build, or buy, houses during their lifetimes and possibly move into those at a later stage of their married life. In many dowry contracts there was clear mention of offspring receiving the "maternal" houses, with an implication that these houses were different from the ones the couple lived at the time of the drafting of the dowry contract.⁶⁶ That does not negate the possibility of an earlier matrifocal tendency, with the couple evolving through different household formations at different life stages.⁶⁷ With over two-thirds of women on Naxos and almost all women on Mykonos receiving houses as part of their dowry, a significant number of newly married couples began their conjugal lives in houses owned by the wife. When this premise was violated, people had to explain what had led them to such deviations. Fratzesca of Kalergos, for example, had to insert a clause that her daughter Maroula and her husband, Giannis, would live at the latter's house and not at the one she mentioned in her daughter's dowry contract because she planned to spend the rest of her life there.⁶⁸ Although this practice cannot technically be described as matrilocality, we should differentiate between a neolocal settlement owned by the wife, and thus with closer ties to her family, and a neolocal settlement owned by the husband, because the social and cultural ramifications would be quite different.

Many properties that comprised a dowry were expected to remain within a direct line of descent, and conditions were often inserted in the dowry contracts to ensure this. Parents insisted that their daughter produce children "of her flesh" in return for the dowry they provided. One dowry contract stipulated that, if the daughter died before she could do so, the parents would take back half of the property in question immediately while the husband could "eat" from the other half as long as he did not remarry. Another was even more strict, mandating that the daughter, even while living, could not sell or give away more than five hundred *grosia* worth of property from her dowry as long as she was without child. She could only sell the remainder of her property to her parents and siblings for five thousand *grosia*.⁶⁹ In most cases, however, such conditions were not necessary since much of the property given as a dowry did not come under the

immediate control of the beneficiary. Parents usually retained the usufruct of some of this property until their death, and only then did the beneficiaries assume full control of it. The phrase "eat his (or her) *gerontomoirio*" was repeated throughout the documents, pointing to the complicated nature of property ownership at the time.⁷⁰

Individuals were allowed great latitude in crafting their legal documents, and Greeks, from the peasants of Drymalia to the better-off Athenian or Mykoniate families, were quite capable of exploiting this. Parents often tried to control not only the property but the very lives of their offspring, like the priest who wrote an abantario for his daughter with two unusual conditions. The first would reward the daughter with half a church but only if her future husband became a priest. The second gave some land to a man called Stefanis Anagnosti Promponas if he married his daughter (a case of *trachôma*, perhaps?) and even more land and fifteen *grosia* if he also became a priest.⁷¹ Other parents were concerned about the possible emigration of their children and especially their daughters. Parents could provide the dowry under the provision that the couple remained in their region; if they failed to do so, part or even the entire dowry would be taken back.⁷² Conversely other parents specifically gave dowries to their offspring on account of their moving away.⁷³

More commonly, parents were concerned that their children would have descendants of their own in order to continue the bloodline,⁷⁴ to do their *psychika*, that is to carry out the customary provisions for the soul of the deceased,⁷⁵ or to watch over them in their old age, like Maroula who provided her daughter Vgenoula with a vineyard on the condition that the daughter looked after her; "if she did not love [her]," she reserved the right to take it back.⁷⁶ The link between providing a dowry and being looked after when one became old was recognized and legally enshrined. When the "old man" Dimitrios Skordos appeared before the *proestoi* (notables) of the island, the local notables, to claim that his wife, Anousa, had given his property as a dowry for their daughter, leaving him unable to support himself, the notables called on his son-in-law Pero to assume responsibility for the maintenance of the old man or to return some of the dowry, despite the fact that the dowry contract had a provision for the maintenance of the mother but not the father.⁷⁷ In some cases the parents were unable to fulfill the

⁷⁰ In seventeenth-century Naxos, 48 percent of marriage contracts included explicit provisions for *gerontomoiria* (Kasdagli 1999: 290).

⁷¹ IEEE Naxos 5306, 11 May 1813.

⁷² GAK Mykonos F11, 1 January 1802; GAK Mykonos F11, 22 October 1802.

⁷³ IEEE Mykonos 22616, 25 March 1797.

⁷⁴ GAK Mykonos F9/062, 8 January 1761.

⁷⁵ GAK Mykonos F10, 6 January 1772.

⁷⁶ GAK Mykonos F10, 5 August 1778. In another case a father added to his daughter's dowry on the condition they lived together and she took care of his soul after his death. On 21 April 1763 the father stated that the agreement was not being kept and thus he was taking back half of what he had given (GAK Mykonos F9/072, 8 January 1763).

⁷⁷ GAK Mykonos F10, 7 April 1798.

⁶⁴ Note that spouses had no inheritance rights over the property of their partners, and if there were no offspring in the marriage, the property reverted to the family of the deceased.

⁶⁵ Psychogios 1986: 114–15.

⁶⁶ IEEE Naxos 4846, 21 November 1807.

⁶⁷ Wheaton 1975: 606.

⁶⁸ GAK Mykonos F10, 5 September 1795.

⁶⁹ IEEE Naxos 3780, 26 February 1778; IEEE Naxos 4793, 13 March 1807.

promises they had made and thus husbands had to forego some of their wives' dowries.⁷⁸ In more interesting cases like the one above involving Dimitrios Skordos, the parents miscalculated, but Skordos' wife was not the only one to do so. Hadji-Anastasis made a dowry contract for his daughter, but a mere five days later he had to appear again before the notary saying that he had been "mean-hearted" (*kakokardos*) toward his wife since he had given away her property and, thus, attempted to convince his son-in-law to return a field.⁷⁹

Parents had to be very careful in drafting dowry contracts since they distributed nearly all their property through them. Furthermore, at a time when mortality was high, there was a significant chance that a son or daughter would die before they did, possibly before he or she was able to produce offspring of his or her own to continue the bloodline. By keeping control of the property until their own deaths, parents had the opportunity to reassign the dowry of a deceased child to ensure that the property remained within their bloodline. Through their control of the dowry, parents also retained a measure of social control over their offspring even after the latter married, which usually freed them from the legal control that parents had over their children. That meant that children had to continue to respect the wishes of their parents and see them through their old age in order not to risk their wealth. Thus, offspring were never completely free from their parents until the latter's deaths, with repercussions on the internal dynamics of marriage. Parents retained mechanisms to supervise the lives of their daughters and to intervene if they considered it necessary, limiting the effective authority of the husband over his wife.

It is often assumed that in the patriarchal Greek society of the time the husband had almost complete authority over his wife. What the dowry contracts of the islands at least point to, however, is a more complex relationship. Parents retained considerable economic influence over their sons and daughters even after their marriage, and this influence, coupled with the possibility that married couples established their households within the environment of the wife's family, ensured that married women navigated among competing authorities and influences. In fact, from an economic perspective, the influence of their blood family was probably superior to that of their husbands' since men were not truly independent agents either but had to consider the wishes of their own parents.

In Athens dowry contracts contained some peculiarities, the most significant being the presence of *ergenliki*, or *pallékariatiko* as it was better known in the rest of Greece. This was a payment made by the bride to her future husband and would occur if the woman was marrying for a second time to a man was marrying for the first; in essence, it was compensation to the groom for his bachelorhood. Presumably the rationale behind it was that the groom had not been married previously, and was thus a virgin, while the bride clearly was not since she was entering her second marriage. This imbalance

⁷⁸ GAK Mykonos F9/090, 12 January 1765.

⁷⁹ GAK Mykonos F10, 22 December 1782.

was compensated by the gift offered by the wife to her husband, although there was at least one occasion where a woman entering a second marriage did not offer *ergenliki*.⁸⁰ Compared to the dowry, this "gift" was minimal, and by this time its purpose seems to have been more ceremonial than real, the tradition being present in Leónidio and surrounding areas as well.⁸¹

Through dowry contracts we can also get some idea regarding the age of marriage in these areas even if it was not explicitly stated in the documents. For example, whether a person received his or her property at the time of marriage or not is an indicator of the relative youth or maturity of the said individual. In maritime Greece, where both men and women received dowries, the absence of a man from the dowry contract, or his recitation of the properties he already had in his possession, would indicate an older man marrying a younger woman. If both received their fortunes through the dowry contract, their ages could not have been too far apart. Our data make it clear that most Naxos men received considerable property as "dowries" in their marriage contracts. This might indicate that in Naxos men as well as women married relatively early in life or at least before they could amass significant property or receive their share of the patrimony through inheritance. On Mykonos fewer men received dowries, and thus they probably married later in life after they had received their patrimony or had amassed sufficient wealth themselves to use it in order to guarantee the wife's dowry. The significant number of men who stated the wealth already under their control is indicative, and when this is seen together with the much smaller number of men who appeared in these contracts, it becomes a fair supposition that men were older at marriage. This also meant that on Mykonos the vehicles for property transmission differed according to gender while in Naxos they were roughly the same.⁸²

The same can be said regarding Athens, where the small number of men who received any sort of property through dowry contracts indicates that men received their share of the patrimony through different channels than women. Athenians did not state their property in these dowry contracts, so if they married early in life, they entered marriage without property, wholly dependent on the wealth of their wife and their own labor to

⁸⁰ GAK Athens F11/90.3, 20 May 1802.

⁸¹ Makrymichalos 1971: 302; Zepos and Zepos 1931: 33. The language of some of these documents seems to imply that part of the dowry in general was given to the groom as statements like "[this field] to belong to the groom" (Makrymichalos 1971: 285), but one must keep in mind that the groom would administer the dowry in any case, so possession does not necessarily imply ownership. If, however, this is analogous to Byzantine *trachónia*, it would represent a great departure from the practices of Naxos, Mykonos, and even Athens.

⁸² See GAK Mykonos F10, 1 August 1770. In this document the wife received a house, five fields, a significant trousseau, as well as livestock as her dowry, while the husband received only some livestock and a single field. Such disparity in wealth is highly unlikely when the ideal for marriage was supposed to be equality of wealth and station, so the husband must have had some property already under his control. The tendency to marry within a socioeconomic and religious group has been identified for these areas by other researchers as well (Kandogl 2004b: 270).

support themselves.⁸³ There was, however, a very important legal reason that would make early marriage for men very difficult: the requirement that men ensure the inalienability of their wives' dowry, which in Athens was compounded by the requirement to provide her with the premarital gift. On quite a few occasions, men explicitly reserved some of their property as a surety for their wives' fortune, an indication of how seriously the inalienability of the dowry was taken at the time. Sideris Kartalas, for example, put up his house as a surety for the 101 grosia he promised as premarital gift to his wife and so did Konstantis Tzakonas.⁸⁴ A number of men (a fifth) did receive property from their parents at the time of their marriage, which, though small, may have been sufficient to secure their future wife's dowry. The remainder would have married at a more advanced age than their wives, probably after the death of a parent or at least when the parents had become old enough to "retire" and their property was passed on to their offspring. Only then would sons have the required wealth to be able to begin their own families by ensuring their future wives' dowries and premarital gifts. The significant number of women who married for a second time in Athens is further evidence of such great age difference in couples since a woman was able to consider a second reproductive marriage after her first husband had passed away.⁸⁵ These young widows may have been the cause of the dowry inflation that the Athenians and even the patriarch of Constantinople lamented and tried to legislate against.⁸⁶

The age difference between spouses is a significant element with regards to the power dynamics of a marriage, and we can see that our regions present very different pictures.⁸⁷ In Athens men were older, more experienced, and probably owned the family house, bringing them closer to the Roman ideal. Even small indications like the presence of the veil or *feretze*⁸⁸ point to a society where young women and wives were closely monitored, segregated, and supervised, as many foreign travelers also indicated in their writings.⁸⁹ At the same time, however, nearly a fifth of all Athenian women were active members of the labor force from a young age, and they were involved in a variety of professions, including medicine.⁹⁰ Furthermore, young brides lead to young widows,

⁸³ Some researchers have claimed that this was precisely the case in Greece, and the new household had to depend on the property of the wife in order to establish itself (Goody 1990: 460).

⁸⁴ GAK Athens F11/17.1, 6 November 1793; GAK Athens F11/103.1, 10 February 1803.

⁸⁵ There were many causes that could explain the great number of young widows: the eighteenth century was not kind to Athens, which endured an outbreak of the plague (Saint Cassia and Bada 1992: 26) as well as social and political conflict, and at one point was left almost uninhabited (Filadelfeos 1902, 2:61; and Pitsios 1980: 12).

⁸⁶ Kampouroglou 1969, 3:69–70.

⁸⁷ Other parts of the Balkans have also revealed significant variety regarding the age at the time of marriage, especially between urban and rural areas (Todorova 1996: 445).

⁸⁸ The significance of the veil is not only indicated by the near universal presence of this article in the Athenian trousseaux. It is also shown by the fact that often, when absent, it was replaced by money earmarked for this purpose (GAK Athens, F11/89.1, 6 December 1802).

⁸⁹ Simopoulos 1973: 293, 307.

⁹⁰ Kampouroglou 1969, 3:254.

and many Athenian women had to shoulder the responsibilities of a patriarchal family after their husband died. Perhaps their great numbers diminished the suspicions that Mediterranean societies traditionally hold regarding the remarriage of widows, as the number of men willing to marry them indicates. Nearly three percent of women, as the Athenian dowry contracts were entering into second marriages,⁹¹ possibly even in the men or to men of lesser means. These second marriages, however, would have been quite different from their first since they involved older, more experienced women. Even those that did not choose to remarry would have been offered some opportunities as a result of their widowhood at a fairly young age, unlike widowhood at an advanced age which was almost uniformly a time of particular hardship. As "natural guardians" (*physikoi epitropoi*) of their underage children, they would control and manage the entire family fortune and arrange the marriages of their offspring.⁹² Thus, Athenian society may have seen tensions between these quite different societal norms, not to mention the presence of Muslim marriage practices that would have added to the multiplicity of experiences and tensions in the region.

DOWRIES IN OTHER REGIONS

The information we have about the rest of what became Greece again points to the fact that Greeks lived in a patchwork of markedly different legal traditions regarding the institution of the dowry and, as a result, women had different rights and opportunities depending on the region in which they lived. In general, we have seen that the distinction between mainland practices and the islands held true, with the maritime traditions making a greater or lesser differentiation between the patrimony and matrilineal traditions. Karpathos, an admittedly extreme example, the first-born son, the *kanakarès*, and first-born daughter, the *kanakara*, inherited the entire property of the father and the mother respectively, leaving nothing to the rest of their siblings.⁹³ Travelers inform us that on Paros the first-born daughter received half the property of the family and the mother home, although other daughters also received houses apparently.⁹⁴ Male "dowries" were common and were encountered in the Sporades,⁹⁵ on Paros,⁹⁶ and Karpathos.⁹⁷ The practice of providing the groom with his patrimony when he married is indicative of a close

⁹¹ With the addition of *ergenliki* the percentage was closer to 4 percent.

⁹² A caveat is necessary at this point. My assertions are, I believe, accurate for Athens, but local customs on the mainland were equally, if not more, pronounced than those of the islands. Widows were assumed to be natural guardians of their children throughout Greece, as they apparently were in Athens. In some regions the responsibility was assumed by a family council, as was often the case in many parts of Europe.

⁹³ Michalidia-Nouaros 1984: 11.

⁹⁴ *Zet* 1994: 59.

⁹⁵ Hatziaevastos 1977: 132.

⁹⁶ *Zet* 1994: 60.

⁹⁷ Michalidia-Nouaros 1984: 11.

support themselves.⁸³ There was, however, a very important legal reason that would make early marriage for men very difficult: the requirement that men ensure the inalienability of their wives' dowry, which in Athens was compounded by the requirement to provide her with the premarital gift. On quite a few occasions, men explicitly reserved some of their property as a surety for their wives' fortune, an indication of how seriously the inalienability of the dowry was taken at the time. Sideris Kartalas, for example, put up his house as a surety for the 101 grosia he promised as premarital gift to his wife and so did Konstantis Tzakonas.⁸⁴ A number of men (a fifth) did receive property from their parents at the time of their marriage, which, though small, may have been sufficient to secure their future wife's dowry. The remainder would have married at a more advanced age than their wives, probably after the death of a parent or at least when the parents had become old enough to "retire" and their property was passed on to their offspring. Only then would sons have the required wealth to be able to begin their own families by ensuring their future wives' dowries and premarital gifts. The significant number of women who married for a second time in Athens is further evidence of such great age difference in couples since a woman was able to consider a second reproductive marriage after her first husband had passed away.⁸⁵ These young widows may have been the cause of the dowry inflation that the Athenians and even the patriarch of Constantinople lamented and tried to legislate against.⁸⁶

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⁸³ Some researchers have claimed that this was precisely the case in Greece, and the new household had to depend on the property of the wife in order to establish itself (Goody 1990: 460).

⁸⁴ GAK Athens F11/17.1, 6 November 1793; GAK Athens F11/103.1, 10 February 1803.

⁸⁵ There were many causes that could explain the great number of young widows: the eighteenth century was not kind to Athens, which endured an outbreak of the plague (Sant Cassia and Bada 1992: 26) as well as social and political conflict, and at one point was left almost uninhabited (Filadelfeos 1902, 2:61; and Pitsios 1980: 12).

⁸⁶ Kampouroglou 1969, 3:69–70.

⁸⁷ Other parts of the Balkans have also revealed significant variety regarding the age at the time of marriage, especially between urban and rural areas (Todorova 1996: 445).

⁸⁸ The significance of the veil is not only indicated by the near universal presence of this article in the Athenian *trousseaux*. It is also shown by the fact that often, when absent, it was replaced by money earmarked for this purpose (GAK Athens, F11/89.1, 6 December 1802).

⁸⁹ Simopoulos 1973: 293, 307.

⁹⁰ Kampouroglou 1969, 3:254.

and many Athenian women had to shoulder the responsibilities of a *paterfamilias* after their husband died. Perhaps their great numbers diminished the suspicions that Mediterranean societies traditionally hold regarding the remarriage of widows, as the number of men willing to marry them indicates. Nearly three percent of women in the Athenian dowry contracts were entering into second marriages,⁹¹ possibly to younger men or to men of lesser means. These second marriages, however, would have been quite different from their first since they involved older, more experienced women. Even those that did not choose to remarry would have been offered some opportunities as a result of their widowhood at a fairly young age, unlike widowhood at an advanced age which was almost uniformly a time of particular hardship. As "natural guardians" (*physikoi epitropoi*) of their underage children, they would control and manage the entire family fortune and arrange the marriages of their offspring.⁹² Thus, Athenian society may have seen tensions between these quite different societal norms, not to mention the presence of Muslim marriage practices that would have added to the multiplicity of experiences and tensions in the region.

DOWRIES IN OTHER REGIONS

The information we have about the rest of what became Greece again points to the fact that Greeks lived in a patchwork of markedly different legal traditions regarding the institution of the dowry and, as a result, women had different rights and opportunities depending on the region in which they lived. In general, we have seen that the distinction between mainland practices and the islands held true, with the maritime traditions making a greater or lesser differentiation between the patrimony and matrimony. On Karpathos, an admittedly extreme example, the first-born son, the *kanakarès*, and first-born daughter, the *kanakara*, inherited the entire property of the father and the mother respectively, leaving nothing to the rest of their siblings.⁹³ Travelers inform us that on Paros the first-born daughter received half the property of the family and the family home, although other daughters also received houses apparently.⁹⁴ Male "dowries" were common and were encountered in the Sporades,⁹⁵ on Paros,⁹⁶ and Karpathos.⁹⁷ The practice of providing the groom with his patrimony when he married is indicative of a close

⁹¹ With the addition of *ergenliki* the percentage was closer to 4 percent.

⁹² A caveat is necessary at this point. My assertions are, I believe, accurate for Athens, but local differences on the mainland were equally, if not more, pronounced than those of the islands. Widows were not always assumed to be natural guardians of their children throughout Greece, as they apparently were in the case in Athens. In some regions the responsibility was assumed by a family council, as was often the case in many parts of Europe.

⁹³ Michalidia-Nouaros 1984: 11.

⁹⁴ *Zet* 1994: 59.

⁹⁵ Hatziaevastos 1977: 132.

⁹⁶ *Zet* 1994: 60.

⁹⁷ Michalidia-Nouaros 1984: 11.

age proximity between men and women, and of the simultaneous property acquisition which, in turn, could indicate greater participation of women in the management of their properties since they would not in their formative years have the disadvantage of relative inexperience and immaturity that characterized other marriages in Greece.⁹⁸

The gendering of certain types of property was also evident in many areas including Mélos⁹⁹ and Trikeri.¹⁰⁰ Particularly common was the almost mandatory inclusion of a house in a daughter's dowry. This practice has been described on Seriphos,¹⁰¹ Mélos,¹⁰² Lesbos,¹⁰³ as well as Paros and Karpathos. The establishment of a newly formed household in a house owned by the bride in maritime Greece ensured closer ties between the new couple and the maternal family,¹⁰⁴ and this, in turn, would provide women with more avenues of support, possibly a greater say in the management of their property, and could even lead to a more prominent social life. Naturally the ties to the paternal family were not in any way compromised or diluted but were rather enhanced and supplemented by closer ties to the bride's family, creating a more elaborate network of kinship that a woman could navigate or even manipulate.

Unlike maritime Greece, the mainland appears closer to the "traditional" model of a patriarchal society, and includes extreme examples like Mané, where women were only given the equivalent of the *trousseau* but no land or houses.¹⁰⁵ On the contrary it was the groom and his family that had to provide gifts and even cash payments to the family of the bride, a form of bride price. Souli and the mountain culture of the *klephtes* shared some similarities with Mané, but they were not representative of the mainland. They were, however, an extreme example of the dominant system of property transmission which considered the dowry as the total share of a woman to her patrimony and even blurred the distinction between the property of a husband and a wife for the duration of the marriage, unless certain extraordinary circumstances emerged.

The mainland was predominantly characterized by patrilocality with all that this might entail. A few men may have received property at the time of their marriage, which in some places like Athens was even called occasionally a dowry,¹⁰⁶ and more commonly a father could give his son some property without this being included in the dowry

contract: a verbal agreement for a charisma, or gift, as seen in Mané.¹⁰⁷ This property was, however, too small to be the full extent of their patrimony as was often the case with female dowries, or even male dowries in certain islands. It was meant as a "gift," a seed to help the new couple establish its own household and may have served as a guarantee for the dowry of the bride.

The differences between the mainland and the islands, however, should not mask the fact that both regions shared many common characteristics, and naturally so since the traditions of both were a result of the evolution of the same principles and laws. The responsibility to provide the dowry quite clearly belonged to the parents, and in their absence to brothers or assigned guardians. The basic composition of a dowry was also similar, if not identical. In all regions land was a significant element of a dowry, as was chattel. Although there were differences in the allocation of the rest of the property, much could be ascribed to different socioeconomic structures which impacted the significance of currency, jewelry, or livestock. From small to gaping differences, the regions of Greece were able to develop and maintain different structures and customs, unhindered by their Ottoman overlords. There was nothing at the time that insisted on or tried to impose uniformity, not even the Church, beyond certain doctrinal aspects of the religion, of course. The structure of the Ottoman state in Greece allowed each region to develop separately and according to local conditions and needs. Though hardly absent, the Ottoman government cared very little about the transmission of the property of its Christian subjects from generation to generation or about its gendered aspect, as long as taxes were promptly paid and order was maintained. This diversified structure of the Ottoman state, however, was about to be eliminated.

DOWRIES IN A TIME OF WAR

Despite the devastation wrought by the Greek War of Independence (1821–1829), people continued to get married, receive dowries, write wills, and try to live in what normality the conflict allowed. Even in Athens, from where the population had to flee repeatedly to the relative safety of the neighboring islands of Salamina and Aigina, dowry contracts were drafted, even in exile, with the expectation of return. Yet change was unavoidable as the earlier political, economic and even legal framework was dismantled. This change is least visible in the areas that escaped much of the conflict like Naxos, where, with the exception of the apparent disappearance of *abantaria*, little seems to have altered. Men continued to receive dowries as they had before the revolution, in nearly identical ratios, and women continued to be the main recipients of houses and chattel, as they did earlier (see tables 2.3 and 2.4).

Much of the same can be said about Mykonos, with one notable exception: the near disappearance of combined male–female dowries which used to be fairly common in

⁹⁸ Male dowries were not an exclusively Greek phenomenon and have been encountered in other parts of Europe as well (Fine 1980: 39).

⁹⁹ Vaos 2005, 1:157.

¹⁰⁰ Beopoulou 1987: 283.

¹⁰¹ Liata 1987: 62.

¹⁰² Vaos 2005, 1:154.

¹⁰³ Papataxiarchis 1995: 222.

¹⁰⁴ The preference shown by women toward houses is at odds with the practices in other parts of the Ottoman empire where women valued vineyards and personal objects much more than houses, perhaps because it was harder for women to gain control and work land or houses (Petice 2003: 221, 225).

¹⁰⁵ Daskalakis 1974: 87.

¹⁰⁶ GAK Athens, F11/98.2, 9 January 1803/1804; GAK Athens, F11/73.1, 5 August 1801, and others.

¹⁰⁷ Skopateas 1955: 100.

the earlier period. This discrepancy must be ascribed to the absence of men due to the war, since Mykonos witnessed a much more active participation in the naval and even land campaigns of 1821–1829 than Naxos. Although marriages were taking place, the parents of young men were apparently unwilling to risk their property on sons whose lives were in grave and frequent danger due to the war. Since these risks did not apply to women, they continued to receive property as they had before, and may have thus enjoyed a comparative advantage over their male siblings.

We should expect greater change in Athens, which was so horribly impacted by the war, but in fact once again almost nothing changed from the earlier period.¹⁰⁸ Women continued to receive the bulk of the property assigned in dowry contracts in roughly the same ratios as before. The only significant change involved the allocation of livestock, which probably suffered great losses, becoming loot or food for the invading armies. There were surprisingly few instances of *pallēkariatiko* or *ergenliki* compared to the earlier period and the category of “virginity price” disappeared, but even this custom had been hitherto very rare. In all three regions not only did older practices regarding the allocation of properties continue more or less unchanged, they also continued to exhibit the same differences from each other.

The war, however, does appear to have had an impact on the people who provided the dowries. On Mykonos the role of relatives diminished as the rationale behind earlier participation, the forming of mercantile alliances, was no longer a factor in the circumstances of the war. But the greatest disruption occurred in Athens. Fathers, psychologists, and masters appear much more infrequently, their roles assumed by mothers, siblings and other relatives. Brothers became the most common providers of dowries to their sisters in this period, and not only solely as administrators of parental properties.¹⁰⁹ Sisters also became quite prominent in the drafting of the dowry contracts of their siblings, often in the absence of parents or male relatives.¹¹⁰ This was an effect of the war, graphically indicated by the number of women who were mentioned as orphaned or half-orphaned in their dowry contracts. In the documents, 130 brides were without

a father, nineteen without a mother and seventy one without both parents, a total of 220 orphaned women out of 322 dowry contracts. The fact that sixty-eight percent of women had already lost one or both parents by the time of their marriage, coupled with the fact that the overwhelming majority of those were paternal orphans,¹¹¹ is a grim reminder of the conditions that prevailed in Athens as a result of the constant hostilities, which transformed the structure of families and the roles of individual members.

In many households somebody had to step up and assume the responsibilities of the absent or deceased father and this was usually the mother or the brothers, but sisters and all sorts of other relatives often did so as well. Since the adult male members of a family were at greater risk of death, through their participation in the hostilities but also due to the customs of war at the time, the female members of the family could be allowed, forced by circumstances, or even encouraged to assume greater responsibilities and authority to conduct the family's affairs. That would be particularly the case during the periods of exile in Salamis or Aigina, where the entire female and adolescent population was evacuated but not necessarily all the adult males, who were needed for the defense of their homeland. Thus women found themselves in a foreign place, as the heads of their impoverished families and not knowing whether this would be a temporary or permanent situation. These hardships, however, could also provide women with experience in the management of family affairs that Athenian women, unlike island women, may have lacked before.¹¹²

The war also caused an anxiety, one could say preoccupation, with death. Even as late as 1829 in the dowry contract of Evgenia, daughter of Hatzimitros Fotakis, her new husband made a curious addition after his premarital gift, stating that if “God forbid, death comes to me, all that I have from money or other things to be hers, and no relative of mine has the right to give her any trouble.”¹¹³ This anxiety intensified the preexisting concerns of people regarding their old age, and many scrambled to ensure that they and their spouses would be taken care of. Evdokia, the widow of Glimakis Tzotis, insisted that everything she gave as a dowry to her son Ioannis was conditional on the caring for

¹⁰⁸ This was particularly true of wealthier women like Roxani, daughter of Nikolaos Spiridonos Zacharitzos, whose three-page dowry contract included an enormous trousseau (forty shirts, forty undergarments, twenty gold-thread head scarves, silver cutlery, etc.), extensive land holdings amounting to 1,943 acres of “*zeugra* *choraphia*” (fields which could be plowed by livestock-drawn plows), thirty-eight acres of vineyards, and 204 other acres of fields, with their crops and livestock and their “*koligous*” (sharecroppers) as well as 6,000 *grosia* cash, while the husband-to-be promised 3,001 *grosia* as a premarital gift. The document was signed by thirty-six witnesses in addition to the notary (GAK Athens F1/37, 15 May 1824).

¹⁰⁹ The role of brothers seems enhanced even when parents were alive and present in the dowry contracts of their daughters. There are instances where brothers provided the dowry for their sisters “in the presence of the parents” (GAK Athens F1/38, 18 May 1824), or where brothers were the only ones mentioned as providing a dowry, yet provisions mentioned that the parents were to live in the houses given (GAK Athens F1/64, 9 November 1824). Brothers often gave their sisters property they had amassed themselves, or owned on their own right (GAK Athens F14/14.1, 18 November 1826; GAK Athens F1/31, 23 April 1824; GAK Athens F14/15.1, 17 July 1827).

¹¹⁰ GAK Athens F1/33, 27 April 1824.

¹¹¹ The dowry contract of Maria, for instance, named her as the daughter of the “late” Spiros Skouperis. Her dowry was provided by her mother and brother (GAK Athens F1/58, 1 October 1824). Five days later the “late” Spiros Skouperis appeared and signed the document. Such mishaps were unavoidable especially with regards to people involved in the war, as Skouperis probably was. I should note that in 1829, in the marriage of his other daughter Margio, Skouperis was once again mentioned as deceased, presumably this time with more solid evidence (GAK Athens F16/19.2, 15 December 1829).

¹¹² The forced migration necessitated a number of innovations in dowry contracts, including leaving certain portions of the dowry contracts blank, probably with the expectation of filling them in at a later date (GAK Athens F1/174, 13 July 1827), giving cash payments instead of a trousseau or fields (GAK Athens F1/6, 19 January 1824), or making promises to purchase land and other properties upon returning to Athens (GAK Athens F13/4.1, 21 August 1827).

¹¹³ GAK Athens F16/37, 19 October 1829.

his mother in her old age, and she reserved the right to take it back if failed to fulfill this obligation.¹¹⁴

Not only were such statements in dowry contracts unheard of in the previous period, they were also against the inheritance practices of the region and Greece as a whole, and an indication of social breakdown evident at the end of this long period of conflict. Nor was this fear irrational. The authority of parents seems to have been significantly undermined, and many offspring apparently succeeded in marrying against their parents' wishes. Despite this, parents generally did write them dowry contracts, albeit at a later date. For example, the evidently furious parents of Georgis Papis provided him with a dowry in the end,¹¹⁵ and so did Maria, widow of Georgis Vasalakis, to her son Iakovos.¹¹⁶ In the case of Georgis Margaritis, his father, Markos, refused to give his permission for the marriage, or even to allow his wife, Zambeta, to provide a dowry, but after Markos' death Zambeta drafted a dowry contract for her son "from her own things."¹¹⁷ And these were not the most egregious transgressions seen in dowry contracts.

One very strange situation occurred at the end of September 1821. In two dowry contracts, dated 25 September and 29 September, Margarita, the wife of the late Manolis Pitropakis, gave in marriage the same son, Georgios, to two different women. In the first she gave him to Marketa, the daughter of Georgis Dimitriou Chomatas,¹¹⁸ and in the second she gave him to Maroula, the daughter of Stefanos Detzis.¹¹⁹ No bigamy could be so blatant, so we have to assume that the first marriage never took place for some reason, despite the very seriousness of engagements at the time. However, the setting up of a second marriage within four days indicates a level of desperation which was unheard of in the earlier period. What we observe is the breakdown of earlier practices and traditions under the strain of war, a breakdown particularly evident in Athens but hardly absent in maritime Greece either. Individuals used the troubled times to achieve what would have been impossible previously, thus demonstrating that the structures of familial and local authority had been compromised or were being perceived as vulnerable to manipulation. This partial breakdown of earlier rules is not often blatant in the documents but becomes apparent through the accumulation of various deviations from the standards in place in the pre-revolutionary period as, for instance, the participation of stepmothers in the dowry contracts of women whom they were under no obligation to support, and the more flexible attitudes toward allocations compared to the earlier period.¹²⁰ Such an erosion of boundaries is also evident in the relaxation of the differences between adopted

and biological children, as the former became more common, like Margio, whose foster mother, Fratzesko Kavoupanoulou, dowered her "as my natural daughter." For her part, Margio assumed all the obligations of a natural daughter.¹²¹

Another barrier that was breached by the war was that of interethnic marriage. Not only did this involve different Christian ethnic groups, like Margio, the daughter of the late Spiros Spouperis, who married the Serb Iosif Strati Myrovitz,¹²² but it also involved Christian men marrying converted Muslim (or Jewish?) women, the "newly baptized" (neophōtistes) or those who had "recently seen the light," like Maria "descended from Kounorchi."¹²³ These dowry contracts were not drafted using the same formulas as the ones seen thus far, either due to a level of mistrust regarding the actual circumstances of foreigners like Myrovitz or in order to explain Christian practices to people like Maria.

The war also disrupted family life by making travel more difficult and by imposing forced separations between family members. People who had settled in different parts of the empire found themselves cut off from and without information about their families, beyond the general news and rumors of massacres, atrocities, victories or defeats. Such a lack of information influenced property decisions as in the case of a woman called Katerina, who married off her daughter Frantzesca, giving her as a dowry a house she had previously allocated to another daughter, Sophia, about whom, however, she had "not heard whether she was alive."¹²⁴ One can imagine that Sophia would not be very happy if she happened to resurface, not an unlikely possibility. Two years into the conflict, Aneza, the daughter of Ioannis Pantelios, who had married a man from Smyrna (Izmir), managed to find her way back to Mykonos, where her father proceeded to give her a dowry now that he was certain that she was alive and that the property would not be compromised.¹²⁵ Many women who used to work in Constantinople (Istanbul) managed to return to their homelands as we can see from dowry contracts composed during or after the war where women stated their own wealth.¹²⁶ By 1829 people seemed to have found ways to cope with the new circumstances and were once again able to

¹¹⁴ GAK Mykonos F11, 21 December 1827. Margio, unlike the vast majority of women, knew how to write.

¹¹⁵ GAK Athens F16/19.2, 15 December 1829. This was quite possibly a Serb that had participated in the Greek Revolution, maybe even in the earlier Serbian one, as did many non-ethnic Greek Orthodox throughout the Balkans.

¹¹⁶ GAK Athens F1/60, 12 October 1824.

¹¹⁷ GAK Mykonos F11, 15 October 1823.

¹¹⁸ GAK Mykonos F11, 21 October 1823.

¹¹⁹ GAK Athens F1/54, 21 September 1824 and IEEE Naxos 6475, 19 August 1826; IEEE Naxos 6648, 12 May 1829; IEEE Naxos 6469, 29 July 1826. Such women, often poor and with little, if any, real property, may have had different dowry practices than the remainder of the population of the island, influenced by their stay in Constantinople (Istanbul), where most served in the households of the wealthy Phanariot Greeks. Their sudden returns were probably due to the difficulties faced by the Greek community of the Ottoman capital. A remarkable case of a woman stating her wealth was Artemis, who included in her dowry the properties she was to receive from the wealth of her first husband. She was apparently planning a second marriage before even the property of her first husband had been divided among those with claims to it (GAK Athens F16/20, 21 September 1828).

¹¹⁴ IEEE Naxos 6171, 22 December 1822.

¹¹⁵ IEEE Naxos 6104, 9 October 1821.

¹¹⁶ IEEE Naxos 6145, 17 July 1822.

¹¹⁷ IEEE Naxos 6165, 20 September 1822.

¹¹⁸ IEEE Naxos 6098, 25 September 1821.

¹¹⁹ IEEE Naxos 6099, 29 September 1821.

¹²⁰ GAK Athens F16/37, 19 October 1829; GAK Athens F1/115, July 1825; GAK Athens F12/50.1, 6 December 1822.

move throughout the Aegean basin, like Paraskevi who married a man from Aivali (Ayvalik) and planned to relocate there, and since she would not be around to look after her father in his old age, she had to promise along with her husband to send him grains, beans, and olive oil worth thirty grosia every year in return for her dowry.¹²⁷

DOWRIES IN THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

The establishment of the Kingdom of Greece with its Bavarian king, regents, army, and bureaucrats, is often seen as a momentous event in modern Greek history, and in many ways it was. The mechanics of authority and the functions of the state were revamped, and Greece deliberately embarked on a path of transformation toward a European ideal, which arguably it is still trying to attain. We could thus expect radical changes in the property allocation practices throughout Greece, especially in view of the centralizing tendencies of the early Bavarian administrations. Yet, when we turn to the data, there seem to be remarkably few ruptures. Some change was unavoidable, of course, both as a result of the interference of the modern Greek state with its centralizing, bureaucratizing tendencies, and due to the effects of the decade-long conflict and the socioeconomic transformations that were taking place. Although local customs regarding the compositions of dowries were theoretically left untouched, the mechanics of dowering was affected by the determination of the government to implement and expand the revolutionary-era law on notaries, now hellenized into *mnémones* and later *synvolaio-graphoi*. Thus, an institution that was originally limited to maritime Greece and major urban centers was expanded throughout the newly formed state and was made indispensable. The new state also imposed a stamp duty, the *chartosémo*, on dowry contracts for whose calculation all dowered goods had to be assigned a monetary value. Even by 1850, however, this systematic valuation of dowries was still in its infancy, but, even so, we can draw some comparisons between land and movable property, thus casting the wealth a woman received in a new light.

These changes, and the utter transformation of the state structure, had some impact, both in what was dowered as well as in how the dowering process was viewed and practiced. By centralizing government functions and demanding the inclusion of the new notaries, who often doubled as justices of the peace, the state removed other individuals who, in certain areas, used to have a role in the process (monks, priests, matchmakers), and in doing so standardized the procedure throughout Greece. The need to assign monetary values to the dowry weakened the earlier preference for land, which was harder to separate from women since the value of the dowry was now better defined. Comparisons between various property types – houses, fields, or livestock – were easier, and thus the differences between such types became less significant over time. This monetarization gave greater emphasis to the cash component of dowries, reinforced by

the demographic changes taking place, which in turn affected the significance assigned to land. Many of the changes seen in the dowry contracts can be attributed to these demographic transformations, such as the devastation of the war with the corresponding breakdown in family and social structures identified earlier, the great numbers of widows and fatherless brides, the forced migration of population, and so on. One outcome of all these was a tendency for the dowries of different regions to begin to resemble each other, or at least to begin to move in converging paths, eliminating the strong regional variations seen earlier. Almost everywhere the dowry was becoming more and more a female institution, with the island tradition of dowering men as well as women being slowly abandoned. Even though the sample from Mykonos and Naxos is very small for the post-independence period, it is notable that, in the documents available, men either stated their property, as was the case on Naxos, or simply received token properties, as was the case on Mykonos.

The nature of the property that women received, however, did not undergo such a radical change. The property composition of the available dowries from the islands corresponds quite well with our earlier data. Women continued to receive varied properties, and houses in particular continued to be an indispensable part of their dowries. Thus, our earlier conclusions continued to apply, and we can safely talk about a continuing form of matrilocality in maritime Greece. The data (see table 2.5) also points to an increased importance of the female component and greater emphasis on the *materna-maternis*, *paterna-paternis* principle. In the dowries given to women in both islands, not one originated exclusively from a father, while over half on Mykonos were provided by the mother alone or with the participation of other relatives, usually the brothers of the bride.

Unlike the islands, the effects of the war were unmistakable in Athenian dowries. Dowry contracts continuously referred to ruined houses,¹²⁸ and cut-down or burned olive trees,¹²⁹ indicating the devastation of the Athenian countryside. So common were the instances of destroyed olive trees, the staple of Athenian dowries, and so unsure were Athenians about the condition of the properties they were receiving as dowries that a new trope emerged. Many contracts now specified that the groom would be responsible for the restoration of “up to ten or fifteen” of those “burnt” olive trees, the remainder being the responsibility of those bestowing the dowry.¹³⁰ Such widespread destruction was bound to have a great impact on Athens, especially since buildings and property are rarely the only things destroyed in war. Loss of life inevitably accompanies such devastation, even if the Athenian population, in millennia-old fashion, repeatedly sought refuge in the neighboring islands to escape the depredations of invaders.

¹²⁸ GAK Athens F13/6, 2 February 1831; GAK Athens F14/2, 17 September 1833; GAK Athens F14/4.1, 28 January 1834; GAK Athens F1/202, 13 August 1832; GAK Athens F1/213, 22 January 1833, among others.

¹²⁹ GAK Athens F1/192, 12 July 1832; GAK Athens F1/205, 22 October 1832, among many.

¹³⁰ GAK Athens F1/191, 11 April 1830.

¹²⁷ GAK Mykonos F107, 19 May 1829.

Beyond these effects, I believe that there were two very significant differences between the dowries in Athens in the Ottoman period and those following independence. First, although most categories remained unchanged regardless of the gender involved, there is a notable exception. In post-independence Athens, over fifty percent of women's dowries included a house as compared to thirty-six percent in the earlier period. The impact of this change was even greater when one considers the circumstances of post-war Athens, which saw that city chosen as the capital of the new state, the seat of the government, the location of the royal palace and, later, the parliament. Athens experienced rapid growth, from a small town of ten thousand before the war to a town of sixty-five thousand by 1860.¹³¹ Living accommodation soon became highly sought after in the city, and, coupled with the destruction of townhouses caused by the war, the combination led to the skyrocketing of house values. An 1832 survey carried out by the demogerontia of Athens found a mere 160 habitable houses in the city, which may explain, even if the number appears ridiculously low, why house rents could be as high as 20–30 percent of the value of a house, especially since the Athenian property market was influenced by speculative action of foreigners, especially British and Americans.¹³²

The second difference has to do with the origins of spouses, that is the people Athenian women, and, to a lesser degree, Athenian men, married. From the dowry contracts that allow us a glimpse of the origins of the people involved, we can see that a significant number of the newly married men were strangers to the city. Some were quite possibly refugees from areas where the revolt had failed, or volunteers who could not go back to their place of origin. Thus we have a man from Thessaly,¹³³ four from Cyprus,¹³⁴ one from Janina,¹³⁵ three from Samos,¹³⁶ two from Lesbos,¹³⁷ two from Karpathos,¹³⁸ one from Crete,¹³⁹ one from Kos,¹⁴⁰ two from Constantinople (Istanbul),¹⁴¹ and two "Easterners" (Anatolites).¹⁴² There were also numerous men who

came from regions within independent Greece or foreign territories such as Tinos,¹⁴³ Mesologgi,¹⁴⁴ Andros,¹⁴⁵ Corfu,¹⁴⁶ and even Hungary.¹⁴⁷ In total, thirty-six men were clearly identified as foreigners, either from other parts of the new Kingdom of Greece or from other regions of the Ottoman Empire or Europe, representing over fifteen percent of all grooms mentioned in the dowry contracts used in this study. There were also a few foreign women but nowhere near the numbers of men, a mere six or less than three percent of all brides, of which only two came from regions outside the new kingdom, namely Crete¹⁴⁸ and Rhodes.¹⁴⁹ The willingness of Athenian women to marry foreigners can be traced once again to the effects of the war. Athens experienced significant loss of life, especially among men since most women fled the approaching armies to the safety of neighboring islands. Those losses caused a significant gender imbalance in the immediate post-independence period, especially regarding those of marriageable age (which is, after all, identical to the fighting age), a gap bridged by the massive influx of immigrants to the city.

These two developments – the increased number of foreign grooms and the increased number of houses given as dowries to women – are related. Unlike most Athenian men, who owned their own houses, foreigners did not and to them the inclusion of a house was of great value, especially in view of the intense pressures on the housing market. These pressures made the inclusion of a house in the dowry contracts of women if not a necessity, then at the very least a very attractive proposition, and thus Athens moved closer in this respect to the practices seen earlier in the islands. There was, however, a significant difference between the two practices. In the case of the islands, we have discussed the preponderance of matrilocality over patrilocality in those societies, as women received houses while men did not. In Athens the situation was not truly comparable because Athenian men apparently continued to receive, or at least own, housing in greater numbers than Athenian women. Nevertheless, the influx of non-Athenian Greeks, and especially males, who had no locality to call their own, changed the dynamics of the city and began to influence the dowry practices there. These men, who arrived and began to marry in Athens a mere handful of years after the Ottoman troops finally evacuated the city, were already in such significant numbers as to compose over fifteen percent of the population of marriageable-age of the city, and the influx would become greater as time went by and the new capital would begin to attract ever-increasing numbers of workers, functionaries, and various others seeking a better life.

¹⁴³ GAK Athens F16/115, n.d.

¹⁴⁴ GAK Athens F16/64, 20 February 1832.

¹⁴⁵ GAK Athens F16/91, 10 December 1833.

¹⁴⁶ GAK Athens F16/51.1, 15 February 1831.

¹⁴⁷ GAK Athens F16/111, 14 July 1834.

¹⁴⁸ GAK Athens F16/111, 14 July 1834.

¹⁴⁹ GAK Athens F16/76, 9 April 1833.

¹³¹ The exact numbers of the Athenian population during these years are rather contested. Moskoﬀ describes an Athens of 10,000 inhabitants in 1820, 20,000 in 1830, and 65,000 by 1860 (Moskoﬀ 1972: 152). Sant Cassia and Bada, on the other hand talk of an Athens of 10,000 inhabitants in 1834, 31,500 by 1848 and 179,700 by 1896 (Sant Cassia and Bada 1992: 19). Although the numbers are certainly very different, the rate of growth is remarkable in either case.

¹³² Stasinopoulos 1963: 13–14.

¹³³ GAK Athens F16/138, 21 January 1835.

¹³⁴ GAK Athens F16/109, 31 May 1834; GAK Athens F16/137.1, 21 January 1835; GAK Athens F16/58.1, 18 October 1831; GAK Athens F16/79.1, 15 July 1833.

¹³⁵ GAK Athens F16/126, 4 November 1834.

¹³⁶ GAK Athens F16/117, 19 August 1834; GAK Athens F16/53.1, 10 June 1833; GAK Athens F16/65.1, 14 August 1832.

¹³⁷ GAK Athens F16/116, n.d.; GAK Athens F16/84.1, 5 October 1833.

¹³⁸ GAK Athens F14/16.1, 3 July 1832; GAK Athens F16/75.3, 3 April 1833.

¹³⁹ GAK Athens F16/93.1, 5 November 1833.

¹⁴⁰ GAK Athens F16/57.1, 4 October 1831.

¹⁴¹ GAK Athens F16/123.1, 1834; GAK Athens F16/50, 7 November 1830.

¹⁴² GAK Athens F16/131, 11 November 1834; GAK Athens F16/48.1, 14 July 1831.

Such a rapid influx of people would also bring new customs, which merged with older traditions, transforming Athens.¹⁵⁰

The allocation of property to brides in Leónidio shares some similarities with that in the other regions we have examined thus far but includes some differences. Nearly all brides received some agricultural land and chattel in their dowry contracts, and like Athenian brides they also generally received premarital gifts from their husbands-to-be. Unlike the brides in the islands, however, or even Athens, less than twenty percent received houses in their dowries, which seems to indicate that the traditions of Kynouria strongly favored patrilocality or neolocality. Unlike Athens, which was rapidly expanding throughout this period, thus making housing a particularly attractive good, Leónidio, though a relatively new town, was much more stable and was growing a lot slower, probably as a result of local migration, which thus did not disrupt the customary practices of the region.

A significant number of dowry contracts allocated cash payments to the wives-to-be, above and beyond the premarital gifts promised by the grooms. The number of dowry contracts that included such monetary payments, forty-seven percent of the total, closely matches the number of Athenian dowries that received the so-called *nachti* (fifty one percent), which was nearly always a monetary allocation. Although the word *nachti* was not used, the function of these payments were probably identical, a means to facilitate the new couple in establishing its own independent household. The dowries are also indicative of the greater monetarization of Greece, which apparently had sufficient quantities of bullion to make cash payments such a common practice. Although that is hardly surprising for Athens, which was, after all, a major urban center and the capital of the new state, it is rather surprising for Leónidio, a rather remote and relatively inaccessible town in a rather sparsely populated province. This monetarization shows the determination of the early Greek governments to transform their inherited state into a European polity with a market- and cash-based economy, a drive that inadvertently impacted and transformed dowry practices. The same drive can be deduced by the gradual disappearance of the practices of *ergenliki* or *pallékariatiko*, already underway in Leónidio, as evidenced by the dowry contracts of women who married for a second time,¹⁵¹ in an attempt perhaps to conform more closely to Roman-Byzantine law, which had no such provisions.¹⁵² Despite this difference, however, there was a close correlation between Athens and Leónidio regarding dowering practices with the sole exception of houses, where Athens may have been a unique phenomenon, or rather an extreme example of

¹⁵⁰ Alexakis has determined that in the post-1850 period the Arbanites of Attica had almost equal chances of matrilocality and patrilocality and a few cases of neolocality (Alexakis 1996: 37).

¹⁵¹ GAK Leónidio 2992, 27 October 1844; GAK Leónidio 380, 29 September 1850.

¹⁵² On the other hand, the practice may have continued, but outside the purview of legally notarized documents, as *ad hoc* payments. Much the same happened with the institution of *syggria* in Mané that we discussed in Chapter one, which was strongly opposed by the state as well as by the Church and yet continued for some time under the Greek kingdom.

the rapidly expanding cities of the new state, which shows that, despite the slow process of fusion, the differences in marital traditions between maritime and continental regions continued into the early decades at least of the Greek kingdom.

SOURCES OF DOWRIES IN THE NEW KINGDOM

The abovementioned wartime deaths and devastation naturally had a great impact on the identity of the individuals who supplied the dowries in post-independence contracts. We can identify a sudden rise in the number of widows who provided dowries to their daughters, as well as in the numbers of brothers, whose presence ensured that the paternal property was divided fairly and that their sisters were not favored by their mother (see table 2.6).¹⁵³ There was also a continuing concern from the parents, and especially the widows, regarding the ability of their children to support them in their old age. Aneza, the wife of Stafanis Tzotis, provided a dowry for her daughter Liani but with strict conditions:

... that the things she wrote [to] her daughter Liani[,] if she married in the City [Constantinople] and did not marry in her land, [Liani is] to have authority only over the field of the vineyard ... [and three other fields she describes] ... the rest [is] to remain under the authority of Nikolas and Manolis and Kali (her siblings) and if she does not enter the world [she does not marry] [but] only remains free, [Liani is] to be able to eat the crop of all of them as long as she lives but not to have authority either to sell or to donate; only after her death [is the entire property] to become three parts, one to Nikolas, the other to Manolis, and the other to Kali.¹⁵⁴

The new geopolitical situation, with the breakaway kingdom severing old political ties with some of the previously favored migration destinations, affected the ways in which people allocated their properties, especially since there was already a strong parochial preference even before the division of the region into separate states. The war itself had left many unresolved issues. Marriages had taken place while fathers or brothers were away, the payment of dowries was delayed, or marriages had been entered into without a dowry contract, and in general a number of unsettled issues had to be tackled by people separated as a result of the war. Peros Hademenos, for example, returned to Mykonos to find his sister Marouso married to a man named Stamatis Diamantaris from the island of Poros. He proceeded to dower his sister on the condition that, if she died childless, the

¹⁵³ Their participation would also serve as a guarantee to the newly married couple that they would not have to face future problems regarding the division of the deceased father, since the other heirs had acquiesced to the portion given to them.

¹⁵⁴ IEEE Naxos 6689, 10 February 1830.

properties were to be returned to him, with the exception of five hundred *grosia* which his brother-in-law was allowed to keep.¹⁵⁵

The effects of the war are naturally more evident in the areas that had been hardest hit by the fighting. In Athens, new or previously rare types of dowry providers appeared, presumably because the people who should have been doing so, parents or brothers, were no longer living, or their financial situation was too desperate to provide sufficient dowries. In addition to uncles and grandparents, we have cases of brothers-in-law who provided dowries for their sisters-in-law,¹⁵⁶ maternal uncles,¹⁵⁷ stepfathers,¹⁵⁸ sisters,¹⁵⁹ and even a case where the bride declared that "having come of legal age she wished to marry herself" and wrote down her dowry.¹⁶⁰ A considerable number of women were marrying for a second time, often without giving *ergenliki* as was the case earlier.¹⁶¹ Some of these women had spent some time managing their own affairs, buying property or livestock, like Glikeria, who wanted to make certain that the properties she had amassed in addition to the dowry given to her by her father for her first marriage were recorded.¹⁶² Many Athenian dowry contracts were composed in the early 1830s, confirming marriages arranged while in exile to various islands. Such marriages had taken place in Aigina,¹⁶³ Salamis,¹⁶⁴ or Skyros,¹⁶⁵ and it should be kept in mind that in 1830 there were still Ottoman troops in Attica, and while some Athenians, braver than most, had returned to their town, the majority were still living in exile. These had to make certain adjustments when making marital arrangements as seen in the dowry contract of Kasiani, half of whose *nachti* was to be given "six months after we return to Athens."¹⁶⁶

The position of the newly converted women, whose families were most likely victims of the war, must have been particularly difficult after the withdrawal of the Ottoman forces, and they must have been desperate to secure some standing, or protection, in the rapidly changing circumstances. They may have, however, had significant

property holdings from their families and would thus be acceptable spouses, especially to new immigrants.¹⁶⁷ Some of these women were married like everyone else, often even with the participation of their mothers,¹⁶⁸ but on occasion they appeared in documents that are truly unique, as in the case of Maria, who donated a paternal field to her husband-to-be Spyros Konstanti Ziapas as a "premarital gift" while he, in turn, promised a "premarital gift" of five hundred *grosia*, with no other mention of dowry.¹⁶⁹

Is Athens, however, indicative of the conditions in the mainland, or is it an aberration? If we exclude from the data that which was probably a direct effect of the war, table 2.6 presents an almost identical picture to that of the Ottoman period, pointing to some continuity,¹⁷⁰ while a comparison between Athens and Leónidio does show that significant differences existed between the two. In the latter, the role of parents was of the utmost and undisputed importance, against which nearly all other categories faded into insignificance. Even brothers, who after the various parental combinations appear as the next most significant grouping, were considerably underrepresented compared to their Athenian counterparts. While thirty-three percent of dowry contracts in Athens involved brothers in some form, in Leónidio brothers appear in less than half that number (13 percent), making it more similar to islands like Mykonos (15 percent), as is the case with other categories as well. Athens, therefore, was a special case, but not necessarily a unique one since so many regions of Greece had been laid waste by the war.

In Leónidio, however, women did play an important role in dowry contracts, a more prominent one than the handful of earlier documents seemed to indicate. Mothers appeared in nearly sixty percent of all dowry contracts, implying that their presence, if physically possible, was required in order to compose the document. Legally there could be only one explanation why their presence was mandated, and it had to do with the allocation of their own property to their daughters. The traditions in the new state, therefore, continued to see the properties of men and women as separate, even after marriage, and thus any property belonging to a mother that was being transferred to a daughter in a dowry contract required the former's approval.

¹⁵⁵ GAK Mykonos F107/7, 8 August 1830.

¹⁵⁶ GAK Athens F16/110, n.d.

¹⁵⁷ GAK Athens F16/108.1, n.d.

¹⁵⁸ GAK Athens F16/60, 13 November 1831.

¹⁵⁹ GAK Athens F16/90.1, 4 December 1833.

¹⁶⁰ GAK Athens F16/116, n.d.

¹⁶¹ The absence of *ergenliki* may be related to the second marriage of their husbands, as opposed to the diminished influence of the institution since *ergenliki* were still present, as the table shows. On occasion, certain properties were given as "donation" (*dia charén*) when they were clearly meant as *ergenliki* (GAK Athens F14/6.1, 22 February 1834). The practice continued at least until 1866 and was even mentioned in court decisions as, for instance, in a Supreme Court (Areios Pagos) decision (in 1845), an Athens Appeals Court (Epheteio) decision (5533/1845) and a Supreme Court decision (227/1862). It was also mentioned in a dowry contract from the region of Kalamos in 1866 (Zepos 1962: 323, 330).

¹⁶² GAK Athens F1/217, 25 January 1833.

¹⁶³ GAK Athens F16/83, 29 October 1833 (the marriage was actually performed on 19 August 1825).

¹⁶⁴ GAK Athens F16/82.1, 6 November 1833 (the marriage was performed on 18 May 1830).

¹⁶⁵ GAK Athens F16/117, 19 August 1834.

¹⁶⁶ GAK Athens F16/42, 10 February 1830. This was one of the few documents where the bride-to-be signed the document herself accepting the conditions with the word "I agree" (*atergo*).

¹⁶⁷ A decree from 23 September/4 October 1830 stipulated that all Muslims, or "Turks," who converted to Christianity could, if they wished, remain in Greece and keep their property, unlike those Muslims who retained their religion, who had to evacuate the country (Maurer 1976: 303).

¹⁶⁸ GAK Athens F16/81.1, 22 September 1833.

¹⁶⁹ GAK Athens F1/195a, 26 October 1831. I should note that I have not included this document in the tabulation of data along with many other examples that were difficult to clarify. Gerontas explains such behavior as an attempt by the newly converted to give emphasis to her wedding (Gerontas 1964: 64).

¹⁷⁰ Eleftherios Alexakis, in his survey of 363 dowry contracts from the post-1850 period of Arbanite (Albanian-speaking) inhabitants has found that dowering was conducted by fathers (37 percent), mothers (16 percent) and both parents (30 percent) in most cases (Alexakis 1996: 28).

WEALTH AND MARRIAGE IN POST-INDEPENDENCE GREECE

From 1843 onward dowry contracts in Leónidio provide monetary values for all the properties and artifacts included in the dowry in order for the notary to impose stamp duty. Not all dowry contracts followed this requirement, but over half of them did, and thus we have evidence for the actual values of dowries at the end of our period (see table 2.7). This monetary enumeration of the dowry allows us a glimpse into the socioeconomic status of the various women, and their families, as well as the significance of the various types of property. The values of the dowries varied substantially from a rather impressive one valued at 13,500 drachmas to a rather meager one at 350 drachmas. The average dowry of the region at this time was a little over 4,500 drachmas and, with the addition of the premarital gift, the average property a woman received upon her marriage was over 5,300 drachmas, although the range was rather wide. In comparison, an *eparchos* (prefect) received a monthly salary of two hundred drachmas in 1845 while a *klétaras*, a court clerk or bailiff, received thirty drachmas per month.¹⁷¹

The premarital gift also varied from the rather significant two thousand drachmas to the relatively insignificant twenty drachmas. It ranged in relation to the dowry from a stingy two percent to a generous thirty-eight percent, though most were between six percent and twenty percent with a median at thirteen percent of the value of the dowry. The premarital gift was considered part of the dowry for the calculation of stamp duty, a clear indication that it was seen as belonging to the wife even if no actual exchange was taking place. Furthermore, the value of the premarital gift was higher than a mere token payment, and represented a real and important part of a woman's property. These values did not change much from the first to the second half of the nineteenth century as a comparison of the data above with that of region of Lechaines from 1857 to 1905 indicates.¹⁷²

The mere monetary value of a dowry is not a very useful piece of data unless it is compared to the values of goods and services which allow for a relative understanding of wealth. Although data from the period are hard to come by and only somewhat reliable, the work of some scholars provides information that can serve as yardsticks. Eftychia Liata, for example, has published the ledgers of a rather prosperous Athenian merchant named Christodoulos Eftimiou, while Dimitris Psychogios includes in his work some estimates of agricultural household expenses. In comparison to his contemporaries in Leónidio, Eftimiou was not simply prosperous, he was stupendously wealthy. He spent forty-three thousand drachmas on his Athenian house, and in fact owned another house worth twenty-eight thousand drachmas, while on his death in 1846 he left behind a fortune of 120 thousand 0 drachmas in addition to the two houses.¹⁷³ That is almost ten times more than the biggest dowry from Leónidio, but we should keep in mind the infla-

tionary tendencies of a rapidly expanding city like Athens. Eftimiou's ledgers indicate that he was paying 15–18 drachmas per month for his female servants, whose responsibilities were to cook and maintain his household, and 24–25 drachmas for his male servants, whose responsibilities included shopping in the market and heavy chores.¹⁷⁴ He actually complained that Athens was more expensive than Corfu, then under British rule, or even Vienna.¹⁷⁵ Eftimiou would actually spend between 952 and 2,386 drachmas a year, mostly on foodstuffs like bread, meats, wine, dairy (mostly butter), spices, fruits, and so on,¹⁷⁶ several times more than what an average household needed.

An "average" seven-member rural family in 1855 needed roughly 506 drachmas to survive, while, according to other data, the monetary expenses of a five-member family in 1853 could be as low as a mere 101 drachmas.¹⁷⁷ The wealth of the latter family was estimated at 2,530 drachmas in immovable and 3,010 drachmas in movable property,¹⁷⁸ a total of 5,540 drachmas, well within the range of our dowries, especially if we consider that the dowries represent only one part of a household's wealth. Furthermore, that family was considered a rather well-off rural household,¹⁷⁹ and indeed their landed property appears significant in size if not in monetary value. This seems to indicate that perhaps it was primarily the wealthier segments of Leónidio society that composed wills.

The formalized character of the post-independence documents, which included information that the state needed, or wanted recorded, allows us to examine more aspects of the economic life of the region and its population. From the recorded professions of the men involved in the dowry process (see table 2.10), grooms and fathers, we can deduce the social makeup of the people involved. Most grooms who stated a profession (forty-three percent) claimed to be merchants, but only fourteen percent of those who provided dowries identified themselves as such. As regards fathers, the most common profession was that of landholder as well as that of farmer, a distinction that probably indicates the greater prestige and wealth of the former. It seems that merchants were particularly attracted to the daughters of landholders, for the obvious reason that the latter possessed the property required for dowries. These numbers indicate the different professions a rather wealthy Greek might have gone through in his lifetime. When young, presumably before he had amassed property through his work or inheritance, a man might have been employed in trade, but as he accumulated property he could choose a more sedentary and prestigious lifestyle, becoming a landholder or a farmer.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁷⁷ Psychogios 1995: 113–14. Being rural, these households would have produced and consumed a lot of their own food, clothing, etc., which a merchant in Athens could not do.

¹⁷⁸ This does not seem to include clothing, household goods, etc., but only farm livestock and farm tools (*ibid.*, 115).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁷¹ Liata 1984: 51, 60–61.

¹⁷² Psychogios 1995: 173.

¹⁷³ Liata 1984: 41.

There were also significant numbers of individuals employed by, or associated with, the state in these matrimonial arrangements. These included a mayor, a few doctors, a pharmacist, justices of the peace, court clerks, military officers, and a teacher: a total of eleven individuals or nearly eight percent of the total. Though not necessarily indicative of wealth, these "new" professions carried significant prestige, making their occupants attractive grooms to the landowners. If one considers the fact that the state was barely two decades old, such a rapid establishment of its functions and functionaries was a truly remarkable achievement. It is also an indication of the influence the state would have on the regions of the new kingdom, and its ability to exercise control and pressure over these localities, abilities often ignored because of the prevalence of banditry in nineteenth-century Greece, which gives an impression of lawlessness and a lack of state control. If, however, so many people mentioned in dowries were somehow connected to the state in the relatively remote, inaccessible, and small region of Leónidio, what would be the impact of the state and its people on wealthier, bigger, and more easily accessible regions, towns and, of course, islands?

If we accept that the dowry contracts reflected a representative segment of the population of the region, then we may determine that the vast majority of the population was composed of merchants and property owners, with almost no laborers, shepherds, or farmhands. Of course, nearly half of the people involved in these documents chose not to state their profession, which hints that wealthier people were more likely to state their employment as a badge of significance, influence, or honor. Even so, the discrepancy remains, and we may want to consider a second, strictly conjectural, possibility. It has been shown regarding other parts of Europe that the nineteenth century experienced an increased level of illegitimacy and unsanctioned unions, particularly since marriage licenses in many areas were expensive and often dependent on wealth qualifications.¹⁸⁰ To my knowledge this has not been shown as far as Greece is concerned; however, we do have indications that marriage was not necessarily cheap. After all, people had to pay at the very least the new stamp duty on the dowry, not to mention the fees that priests, notaries, and other functionaries may have imposed for a sanctified, official union.¹⁸¹ The absence of the underprivileged in the dowry contracts of Leónidio, which as a record are remarkably intact and comprehensive, may be an indication of unofficial, perhaps even unsanctioned, unions as evidenced elsewhere in Europe, although much more research is needed before a definitive conclusion can be reached.

Several marriages in Leónidio present a departure from other practices seen thus far with regards to the age of marriage. Although young, and even underage, betrothals existed in all regions, the practice seems to have been more widespread in Leónidio,

and marriages continued to be arranged involving offspring that were too young to be physically married. Christos Damaskis and Pagona, the widow of Konstas Dikaïou and natural guardian of her underage children, for example, decided to betroth their children, arranged the dowry, and then stipulated that the wedding would take place in three years' time, presumably when the children would be of an appropriate age.¹⁸² In a very similar manner, Thomai M. Gkani, as the natural guardian of her daughter Kirana, married and provided her with a dowry from her late husband's property as well as her own and stated that:

[she gives the dowry] to the son-in-law Theodoros G. Kalatzis and because the daughter of the above-mentioned Thomai M. Gkani has not reached in years the legal age to be married to the latter, and since it is possible that before her marriage she could die, God forbid, and because the above-mentioned Th. G. Kalatzis is obliged to wait, for this she promises that, if death happened to her daughter Kirana before her marriage with Theodoros G. Kalatzis, to recognize and have the latter as a genuine and complete heir to all the mentioned paternal and dowered, moveable and immovable things, bestowing all these to his immediate possession and authority without Thomai M. Gkani or anyone else having the right to oppose the son-in-law Theodoros G. Kalatzis, or to give these things as they would wish.

The son-in-law, for his part, promised to wait until Kyraa reached the age of fourteen in order to marry her, as to take care of his mother-in-law, and if Kyraa did die, that he would not force his mother-in-law to leave the house.¹⁸³ In some cases the rush to marry a daughter may have been tied to her status as an orphan and clearly the guardians wanted to be free of the responsibilities of their position. This seems to be the case with Thomai Dimitriou Trochani, whose guardians Theodoros Georgiou Kalligas, Ioannis Anagnostou Trochanis and Stamatios Michail Trochanis, along with the orphan's great-uncle, promised a dowry to her "fancée" according to the wills of her deceased parents.¹⁸⁴ Similar motivations guided Ioannis Anagnostou Trochanis, who was appointed by the *prótolikeyio* of Sparta as the guardian of his late brother's underage daughter Aggelina and quickly proceeded to marry her off.¹⁸⁵ On occasion, the dowry of an underage girl was simply recorded, even without the benefit of a marriage, simply to ensure it would occur, especially following a mother's death, in which case the concepts of dowry and inheritance become indistinguishable.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁰ Smith 1989: 158.
¹⁸¹ Psychogios has also identified the greater likelihood of the "wealthier classes" to compose dowry contracts, though he also sees increasing use by the poorer segments of the population toward the end of the century (Psychogios 1995: 174).

¹⁸² GAK Leónidio 155, 11 May 1848.

¹⁸³ GAK Leónidio 885, 19 January 1839.

¹⁸⁴ GAK Leónidio 115, 14 April 1849.

¹⁸⁵ GAK Leónidio 159, 7 May 1849.

¹⁸⁶ GAK Leónidio 124, 19 April 1849.

Guardianship figures quite prominently in these documents, understandably so after such a brutal conflict, and the rules governing it strictly follow Roman-Byzantine provisions. In the absence of a will, the "natural" guardian was the mother or the father, as the case may be. Parents had the right to nominate other individuals as guardians in their wills as we saw above in the case of Theodoros Georgiou Kalligas, Ioannis Anagnostou Trochanis, and Stamatis Michail Trochanis. If one parent was still living, she or he was a guardian as well but had to consult and gain the agreement of the other guardians whom his or her spouse had nominated. Thus Stamatou, the widow of Emmanouil Krimitzou, had to gain the approval of the six other guardians named by her late husband Dimitrios Hadjigeorgiou Krimitzas in order to marry her daughter Anastasoula.¹⁸⁷ Although these provisions more or less corresponded to many earlier traditions, there was a radical departure in the cases where both parents had died without leaving a will appointing guardians. In earlier times a family council would have selected the new guardians, but now this became the responsibility of the state, represented by its courts, which usually appointed the "closest relatives."¹⁸⁸

If one word describes the developments that took place in Leônidio, it is standardization. This applies both to the format of dowry contract but also to the practices that did not seem to conform to the new legal perceptions, such as the *pallékariatiko*, and which were eliminated. The state was intruding into the everyday life of its citizens, shown by the professions, the appointment of guardians, and even the imposition of new taxes and fees. The presence of state employees, most of whom were not locals, is also indicative of the remarkable demographic mobility experienced by Greece in these decades, a pattern even more clearly visible in the case of Athens and the great numbers of foreign-born men in Athenian dowry contracts. The relatively isolated and self-contained nature of the communities under Ottoman rule had disappeared and was replaced by one of mobility, closer supervision by, and presence of the state, and the arrival of foreigners or the departure of locals, all of which impacted dowry practices.

Nonetheless, these practices display a remarkable continuity. The primary role of parents was maintained if not enhanced, including that of the mother, though legal options were available which could limit the influence of a mother if the husband so wished. Excluding adaptations to the new economic realities, property continued to be allocated according to earlier patterns, and whenever possible by the same people. The dowry continued to be a very significant source of wealth, the average dowry being equivalent to several years' salary of a government official and perhaps decades' worth of the wages of a regular laborer. At the same time, at least for this period, dowry contracts seem confined to the wealthier segments of the population as seen by the professions mentioned in them (see table 2.8).

DOWRIES IN THE REST OF THE HELLENIC KINGDOM

Unfortunately, little research has been done on dowries, women, or property in general in the early years of the modern Greek state, and most of the information available deals with much later periods. The only truly relevant information can be found in two surveys conducted by Georg Ludwig von Maurer in his capacity as a member of the triumvirate regency for the young King Otto, in charge of judicial, religious, and educational matters. Maurer, who drafted the legal codes of the new state, was a strong believer in the functionality of legal customs as representing the spirit of a nation's laws and legal tradition, and thus he set about discovering these legal customs by dispatching a questionnaire to all the communities of the new kingdom. This questionnaire, which was re-administered in order to clarify certain points, is priceless to our discussion since it represents the only countrywide data that is available, and it has served as the basis for nearly all later discussion on the topic by modern scholars as well as contemporaries, despite its serious problems resulting from misconceptions and misunderstandings in the communities to which it was addressed, as well as deliberate misinformation and non-compliance by quite a few.¹⁸⁹

On the issue of the dowry and related matters, Maurer assumed the universal presence of the custom but wanted to discover the differences among the various regions, especially as they related to the ties between dowry and inheritance. Among other concerns, his first questionnaire sought to learn whether daughters could inherit if they had been dowered, and whether brothers had to assume the task of dowering their sisters if the father had passed away, as well as any particularities regarding the institution that may have existed. The replies he received indicated that in nearly all regions a dowered daughter was not included in the inheritance of the father. At least that is what the replies from Andros, Mykonos, Santoriní, Syros, Naxos, Siphnos, Paros, Amorgos, Kea, Ios, Koróné, Ampelaki, Mikromané, Andritzaina, Kalabryta, Patras, Pyrgos, Tripoli ('Tripolitsa'), Karytaina, Hagios Petros, Krabara and Apokouro, and Mesologgi stated, while most also affirmed the obligation of the brothers to dower their sisters. However the general principles masked considerable differences. The Mykoniates, for example, responded that the father did not only have to dower the daughters but was obliged to dower the sons as well, which is perfectly in line with our findings.¹⁹⁰ In Skyros, the first-born daughter was dowered with nearly all the family fortune,¹⁹¹ in Skopelos daughters were dowered with houses,¹⁹² while in Amorgos sons inherited houses from the father

¹⁸⁹ To offer an example, von Maurer received two separate replies from the island of Tinos, one from the *démogerontes* of the island and one from a separate group of inhabitants, each claiming the other group was lying about the local customs (Maurer 1976: 159).

¹⁹⁰ The same was true in Naxos though the *démogerontes* of that island presented it as an option, rather than an obligation, in the manner of their counterparts from Mykonos (*ibid.*, 152, 155).

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁸⁷ GAK Leônidio 257, 28 June 1850.

¹⁸⁸ GAK Leônidio, 7 May 1849, with an attached decision of the *Protodiketo* of Sparta, no. 86/1710 of 15 June 1839.

and the daughters from their mothers, though the father could add from his fortune to the daughters' portions.¹⁹³ Considerable variation existed in the details regarding the dowering of sisters by their brothers: from Aigio, where the eldest son assumed the position of the father and was obliged to dower his sisters, and, if he refused, he could be forced to do so by the courts,¹⁹⁴ to Tripoli and Karytaina, where although brothers and undowered sisters inherited equally, the brothers were under the obligation to dower their sisters from their own fortunes in the absence of "maternal" property.¹⁹⁵

These conclusions seem to support the experiences of the French Saint-Simonean Gustave d'Eichthal, who briefly served in the Greek statistical office (officially the Office for Political Economy). D'Eichthal stated that in Athens, Argos, and elsewhere, the primary duty of the father was to dower his daughters, but if he could not, the task fell on his sons, who worked particularly hard to provide the dowries required and did not marry before this duty had been concluded. D'Eichthal, however, made a distinction between "good" families and the common people, saying that in the former daughters inherited as well as sons, after the value of their dowries had been considered.¹⁹⁶ Similarly Christian Friedrich von Glück, yet another Bavarian legal scholar who worked in the administration of the new kingdom, mentioned several later court cases which ruled that dowered daughters had no more claims to the patrimony according to customary practices.¹⁹⁷ Parents could, of course, choose to bestow additional property to a daughter in a will, as had always been the case.

Maurer was trying to find the common ground of the customary legal practices in order to incorporate them into the law codes he was personally drafting. He was soon convinced that Greek practice did not allow for the common property of married couples, even though in some areas like Chios or Syros that may have been the case.¹⁹⁸ His second questionnaire aimed at clarifying these more complex points, including the extent and duration of paternal authority, and who had the right to exercise it. The question was particularly important because the new legislation already envisaged the father as the sole beneficiary of paternal authority, excluding the mother.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, the planned legislation stipulated that guardians (epitropoi) could make significant decisions, such as selling parts of the patrimony, but only with the permission of the

courts,²⁰⁰ and Maurer wanted to learn the powers of guardianship under customary law, as well as the individuals entrusted with it.

On this occasion, the replies indicated a potential conflict between the new law and customary practices, since nearly in all areas the mother assumed the paternal authority upon the father's death.²⁰¹ Maurer himself accepted that almost universally the mother inherited the "paternal authority" at the death of the father, despite the occasional exception and he found great similarities between "Roman law" (the western European version with which he was familiar) and Greek practice regarding the termination of such authority. The question of the guardianship was even more complicated with many regions giving the guardianship to the eldest brother (Nauplio, Epidaurus, Tripolitza, Kynaithi, Doris, Levadeia, Karystos), a combination of the eldest brothers and the mother (Mesologgi, Gortyni/Karytaina, Poros, Leontari), the mother alone (Argos, Mykonos, Patras, Aigio), and even on an ad hoc basis or according to the will of the deceased (Hydra, Amorgos, Naxos, Leontari, Sparta). The same range of possibilities existed regarding the treatment of adopted sons from the very practice being illegal if the father had natural children (Gortynia/Karytaina), to the absolute lack of inheritance rights (Mykonos), to the same rights as a natural son (Kirtziai). In some places an adopted son could inherit only through wills (Epidaurus), while in others the rights depended on the specific adoption agreement (Argos).²⁰²

The questionnaires revealed that, despite significant variations, the role of the mother was almost nowhere as diminished as Maurer seemed to have originally believed. In our four regions women quite clearly, or "naturally" as the documents often stated, acted as guardians for their children and arranged for their weddings, even if on occasions other guardians were also present. The persistence of the practice as evidenced by the data from Leonidio, where women continued to act as "natural" guardians of their children, is perhaps an indication of the intellectual flexibility of Maurer, in contrast to his remarkable political inflexibility which led to his recall. Despite his earlier rigid Roman legal concepts, Maurer was quite willing to bend them to the reality he found in Greece. Ultimately, Maurer recognized the diversity of Greek legal practice regarding the dowry, especially in the matter of its composition.²⁰³

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 169, 170.

¹⁹⁶ D'Eichthal 1974: 73.

¹⁹⁷ Such regions included Olympia (Nauplio Court of Appeals, no. 119), Arachova (Nauplio Court of Appeals, no. 165/1838), Megara (Athens Court of Appeal, no. 3065/1844), Lamia (Athens Court of Appeal, no. 1156/1837), Athens (Athens Court of Appeal, no. 3622), Naxos (Athens Court of Appeal, no. 3137), Siphnos (Athens Court of Appeal, no. 2984 and Areios Pagos no. 165 and 735/1838) (Glück 1853: 53–54).

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 122, 125.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁰¹ Nauplio, Argos, Epidaurus, Poros, Hydra (in Hydra daughters, even when adult, were subject to the authority of the mother), Tenos, Anaphé, Amorgos, Syros, Naxos, Paros, Antiparos, Mykonos, Kyparissia, Kalamata, Gortynia/Karytaina, Tripolitza (in the absence of an adult son), Gytheio, Sparta/Mistras, Kirtziai, Aigio (as long as she remained a widow), Kynaithi (as long as she remained a widow and there was no adult son), Mesologgi, Ypaté/Nea Patras, Doris, Levadeia (as long as she remained a widow), Skyros, and Skopelos. In some areas, the paternal authority was exercised jointly by the father and the mother like Patras, Kalamata, Koróné, and Anó Syros (Maurer 1976: 186–218).

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 179–232, 687, 693.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 685.

In general, what the data from the four regions has shown seems to apply for the remainder of Greece as well, even in relatively prominent families like the Deligiannis,²⁰⁴ who already held official positions in the new state. For instance, the "colonel and landholder" Kanellos Deligiannis and his wife, Anastasia, married their daughter Maria to a second lieutenant of the cavalry, Dionisios Chrisospathis, and stated in her dowry contract that they were "satisfied" with their son-in-law and that they consented to the marriage, and awarded her their entire fortune since she was their only legitimate heir. This, of course, was to take place following their deaths and with the understanding that the parents-in-law would continue to live with the newlyweds.²⁰⁵ The only rather unique element in this dowry contract was the addition of the title of property holder (*idioktéttria*) to the name of Kanellos' wife, Anastasia, a practice not encountered in all Leónidio dowry contracts and a possible indication of the family's prestige.

The Deligiannis documents also illustrate the impact of the rapid rise of Athens compared to other regions. Several members of that prominent family moved first to Nauplio, the first capital, and then to Athens, often leaving behind their wives to manage the financial affairs of the family while they entered the political arena in the capital. The effect of women managing the family wealth would have been significant in those early formative years, and would have affected both the prominent families like the Deligiannis, the Zaimis or Lontos, as well as the poor families whose male members flocked to Athens in search of a living. The impact of male migration has been demonstrated in other studies, where women filled the vacuum left by the outgoing men through "household administration, representation and mediation," mostly in relation to other women and with almost no male interference, as was the case in the village of Mouria, in Lesbos, in the period following the scope of this examination, where men migrated to Asia Minor in search of work.²⁰⁶

What the dowry contracts of this period seem to indicate more than anything else is that dowering practices were not changed by fiat, law, or decree, but they were influenced by economic and political circumstances, as in Athens, where the increased value and scarcity of housing, coupled with the increasing numbers of new arrivals of men from other regions, led to a greater degree of female ownership of housing, and a form of matrilocality.²⁰⁷ In Leónidio, where such conditions were not present, the practice of patrilocality continued as before, while there is no reason to doubt that earlier practices continued in the islands as well. On the other hand, the long conflict brought these islands into greater contact with the neighboring mainland, which had had very different practices, such as the more feminine character of the dowry. Familiarity, not to mention

increased and increasing interaction, was rapidly transforming the practices of the new state, especially in areas affected by its new laws. At the same time, the great poverty and destruction, the significant loss of life, the almost utter elimination of the Muslim and Jewish populations from the new kingdom, migration from the highlands to the now relatively empty plains as a result of the removal of the Muslim landholders, migration to Athens and certain other cities like Hermoupolis or Patras, the withering of formerly prominent economic centers like Hydra or Spetses, and the rise of new ports like Piraeus, contributed to local changes regarding dowries, with greater emphasis toward monetarized dowries, or, in some areas, greater value attached to houses, as well as to the identity of the people who arranged the marriages.

²⁰⁴ The Deligiannis family was one of the most powerful in the Ottoman Peloponnese, and played an equally prominent role during the revolution and in the post-independence period well into the nineteenth century.

²⁰⁵ EFL Chrysospathis Archive, BV/2 no. 73, 5 September 1841, dowry contract no. 1285.

²⁰⁶ Papataxiarchis 1995: 229, 234–35.

²⁰⁷ The migration of men into towns can increase, according to Jack Goody, the occasions of in-marrying sons-in-law, as seen in Finland (Goody 1973: 11).