

Notes on Quiz #4: Women and the Athenian Polis

1. For an Athenian woman from a wealthy family, marriage typically
 - a. was arranged by her guardian and the groom
 - b. included a dowry for her support
 - c. could be easily ended without stigma
 - d. all of the above

For families with property, marriage was normally arranged between the two families and involved the passing of a dowry commensurate with the bride's family's economic status to the groom, to be kept by him intact for her support only, throughout her entire life. Divorce was easily obtained by mutual content or by either party and involved no stigma.

2. Modern historians have disagreed about the status of women in Athens. According to Pomeroy, recent scholarly opinions about Athenian women have included all of the following EXCEPT:
 - a. They were respected and enjoyed freedom
 - b. They were despised and kept hidden
 - c. They were prized and shared between neighbors
 - d. They were secluded but revered in the home

Some historians have argued that women in classical Athens were despised and kept in extreme seclusion, like eastern harems (according to Pomeroy, a position severely colored by the historians' own views of a woman's proper place). Others have countered that they were respected and enjoyed freedom comparable to women of most other ancient societies (citing fictional heroines like Antigone and Elektra). A third position has argued that they were secluded, but in that seclusion they were both respected and, within the house, dominant (emphasizing that the seclusion was primarily a means of protection something cherished against male strangers). — Pomeroy presents this debate as part of a broader concern regarding the best interpretation of our limited sources for Athenian women, and is flawed in treating Athenian women as if they were all the same. Within the Athenian culture there are major differences across class, region, and period. What's more important, from her point of view, was that the state considered the duty of citizen women to be the production of legitimate heirs to the oikoi, and thus to the citizenry.

3. In the play *Eumenides* by Aeschylus, Orestes is tormented by the Furies for killing a parent (his mother, Klytaemnestra). All of the following beings oppose the Furies' torment EXCEPT:
 - a. Orestes, because he was ordered to kill her, and because his mother was "twice afflicted with pollution" for killing a husband and father
 - b. Apollo, because "the mother ... is not the parent, but the nurse of the newly-sown embryo"
 - c. Athena, because she had no mother and "in all things, except for marriage, wholeheartedly I am for the male and entirely on the father's side"
 - d. Bacchus, because Orestes was "filled with the sweet wrath of wine" at the time of the murder

In the play, Orestes, Apollo, and Athena presented the arguments given above in opposition to the Furies, who act as the Chorus. Bacchus is not present in the play.

4. Athenian religious cults in which women played an important role included all of the following EXCEPT:
- the festival of the Spangeti Teras
 - the cult of the Olympian goddess Athena
 - the mysteries of Demeter and Korē at Eleusis
 - the exclusively female celebration of the Thesmophoria

Women were involved in a number of religious cults and festivals, providing opportunities for community among women in Athens and other cities. [Spangeti Teras is Greek for Spaghetti Monster.]

5. Education for propertied women in Athens normally consisted of
- tutoring in art and music by the father's patron
 - instruction in domestic arts by the mother
 - physical education with the soldiers
 - training in rhetoric by the city archons

Athenian women did not have access to formal education, whereas education was required and expected for men. This education gap contributed to the treatment of women as less than full members of the community.

Optional Extra Credit

EC. Which story from Herodotos in today's reading did you find most interesting or surprising?

This is subjective and could include any number of key moments, including the nature of the Amazons, Artemesioa, Gorgo, Candaules, or the famous brooches of Athens.