

- difficulties ('the wall') as they approach sexual maturity.
- 26 Strauss 1993.
- 27 Hesiod, *Theog.* 886–93, 924–6; cf. Zeus' refusal to marry Thetis because of a similar prophecy: Aesch., *Prometheus Bound* 755–74, 907–15; Pindar, *Isthm.* 8.27–37.
- 28 Cf. Delaney 1986: 6–8, 298–303, who links the stories of Laios and Abraham with the Islamic Festival of Sacrifices.
- 29 Dean-Jones 1994: esp. ch. 3; cf. Lloyd 1983a: 87–94 for 'alternative theories of the female seed'.
- 30 Delaney 1991: 11; Delaney 1986 for basic exposition.
- 31 Zeus in charge in *HHD*: decision to marry Kore to Hades (I. 9); decision to bring Kore back from Hades and approve the one-third down/two-thirds up arrangement (II. 441–8); Zeus as father (II. 321, 347, 364).
- 32 *Aniemi* and hiding in *HHD*: II. 306–7, 332, 353, 451–2, 471. The plants (pennyroyal, etc.) were perhaps thought to operate in a similar fashion, helping or rejecting the seed, rather than stimulating or preventing female contribution. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the possibility of some earlier stage in Greek religion when goddesses were perhaps more powerful and there might also have been a less male monogenetic view of human fertility. But cf. again Arthur's analysis of the *Theogony* (1982a); cf. the inverse relationship between Christian elements and powerful heroines like the Goose Girl in fairy tales: Bottigheimer 1987: 46–7; and note in particular the effects of Christianity on matrilineal mythology in New Mexico: Gutiérrez 1991: 162.
- 33 Certainly marriage and children go together in the *HHD*; Kore was to have been a *thaleren* . . . *akoitin*, I. 79; Demeter as nurse wishes for husbands and children for Keleos' daughters, I. 136.
- 34 Cf. Taggart 1990: esp. 219–24, where he suggests that versions of the same story will vary according to the gender of the story-teller.

Women's ritual and men's work in ancient Athens¹

Lin Foxhall

THE BACKGROUND

From the early days of the study of Greek religion the connection between agriculture, seasonality, fertility and females has been a favourite theme of scholarship. Though these elements may constitute a significant matrix, their integration, and hence the precise meaning of that matrix, is seriously problematic. For this reason it is difficult to say anything sensible about what the significance of the relationships between these elements might be.² Moreover, we all suffer now from a legacy of over-the-top Frazerian and other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century approaches to religion. These studies, set in an evolutionary framework and drawing on the social science of the period, perceived Greek religion, especially early Greek cult, as located towards the lower end of the developmental scale. The religion of classical Greece could therefore be 'mined' for the archaic customs which were held to be vestiges of an earlier and more primitive era (as, for example, in Nilsson's³ and, more recently, Burkert's⁴ work). Hence a concern with origins, roots and beginnings characterised this mode of scholarship. And so the cosmological ties between the cycles of farming and females, 'obvious' as they are to those of us steeped in that heritage of scholarly tradition, were (and often still are) eagerly held up as an explanation, indeed, as *the* explanation, for many Greek rites.⁵

Subsequent generations of scholars have coped with this groundwork in rather different ways. A surprising number⁶ still focus on the primordial – the elements of classical religion which were supposed to be especially meaningful because they survived from the dim and distant past. Others have found it rather off-putting and dismissed the whole line of argument as irrelevant. Even a dyed-in-the-wool

evolutionist such as Burkert (who frequently uses ancient roots and beginnings as explanation)⁷ is prepared to state that there is little correspondence between the festival calendar of Athens and the agricultural year.⁸

The most interesting insights have emanated from and been inspired by the work of French structuralists, such as Detienne's⁹ work on the Thesmophoria and the Adoneia, Zeitlin's¹⁰ incisive analysis and Winkler's¹¹ re-evaluation. This school of thought locates the many and varied practices of women's ritual firmly in the contemporary present of classical Athens, and there is much in it that is persuasive. But Detienne's structuralist patterns of oppositions are so carefully arranged that they are rendered inflexible, and Detienne is thus unable to accommodate 'discrepancies' in the data which do not fit his scheme.

Zeitlin's subtle study, full of important insights, has been much inspired by structuralist thought in this same tradition combined with American cultural anthropology. Again her interpretations focus on symbolic oppositions that are conceived as largely fixed and relatively inflexible, especially in relation to the meanings of space.

Winkler has convincingly modified Detienne's approach in a way which allows more malleable understandings by the participants. But he has construed women's rites entirely as a political expression of and reaction to oppressed femininity, not (as I would argue) as an on-going discourse which regularly reasserts and readjusts men's and women's cosmic and social places in relation to each other.

Discussion of women's cult practices in Greek religion has in some senses painted itself into a corner. The frustration with the present state of intellectual immobility is nicely summed up by Sally Humphreys:¹²

we must be particularly careful, in studying the symbolic discourses of another culture to suppress our own intuitive assumptions about the real. It should not be taken as self-evident that if a ritual refers to political organisation, social categories and agricultural processes, its 'original' concern must have been agricultural. This assumption has given us a very unsatisfactory account of the Thesmophoria, which leaves a lot of questions unanswered.

Any attempt to relate religious festivals closely in date to agricultural activities rapidly becomes problematic, both being subject to considerable local variation, but the Thesmophoria certainly came at a time when farmers were busy.

Undoubtedly Humphreys¹³ is right that the presence of agriculture and its cycles in ritual belong to quotidian reality rather than primordial vestiges. But where do we go from here? It is precisely because farming was such a significant part of daily reality that there is a need to look carefully again at its relationship to ritual as a formulator of meanings. It seems to me that the relationships of the matrix with which we started, farming, females and their cycles of reproduction, need to be considerably fine-tuned if we are to get beyond the level of the simplistic and the blatant. Few discussions which specifically focus on this matrix have got much beyond the Frazerian level – Allaire Brumfield's *The Attic Festivals of Demeter* (1981) is a notable exception. Far from having a simple or obvious relationship to the sequence of farming tasks, I will attempt to show that the rhythms of the festival year and the agricultural/working year weave in and out of the social and political structures of family and civic life. Though functionalist, it has avoided many of the interpretative pitfalls and wilder speculations of earlier works. She attaches Demeter festivals to critical points in the farming year – times of crisis and uncertainty. Generally her arguments are convincing, though she runs into trouble in trying to explain the timing of all festivals, for example, why there are sowing festivals but not harvest festivals dedicated to Demeter. Sensibly she does not try to fit everything to that single paradigm.

The central project of this paper is to reconsider the relationships between women's rites to Demeter (including 'women's mysteries' which are part of festivals celebrated more generally by both sexes) and the seasonal cycle of farming and gendered work patterns in ancient Attica. I shall attempt to examine them in the broader ritual setting of other gendered rites and celebrations in the official Athenian festival calendar. This means I shall concentrate on three state festivals which wholly or partially exclude men: the Thesmophoria, the Haloa and the Skira. Far from being a simple or obvious relationship, I will attempt to show that the rhythms of the festival year and the agricultural/working year weave in and out of the social and political structures of family and civic life. The arguments which follow refer to the calendars in Table 6.1.

THE FESTIVALS AND THE CALENDAR

The fact that there was an official state calendar in Athens (as in other Greek *poleis*) which included some, but not all of the celebrated

religious occasions is itself significant. The Athenian state used its religious calendar to construe itself as both a cosmic and a political order. At this point it is a truism that religious festivals were polysemic and no self-respecting scholar would talk about *the* meaning of a festival or ritual. Further, meanings obviously changed over time (though exactly how is generally not clear from our scattered and fragmentary sources). And religious ritual plainly held different meanings for different groups and individuals. Winkler¹⁴ is surely correct that male and female insights, perspectives and experiences of women's rites were different. But it is surely also significant that the existence of these separated and distinct perspectives was state-sanctioned.

Why the state appropriates some but not other rites is sometimes obvious, but sometimes it is not. Given that the position of women *vis-à-vis* the state is often portrayed as marginal (both by the ancients themselves as well as by modern academics)¹⁵ it is interesting and significant that 'women's mysteries' celebrating Demeter are fully included in the state calendar, and thus fully sanctioned by, and incorporated as part of, the *polis*.¹⁶ Other women's celebrations, such as Detienne's 'opposite' to the Thesmophoria, the Adoneia, are not. Indeed though we have considerable evidence that these Demeter rites excluded men, we have little evidence to suggest that most religious festivals excluded either men or women.¹⁷ Hence the state festival calendar constitutes an official version of the dynamics of gender on many levels, in terms of cosmology, work and social relations. This resides at the heart of the state, along with the continual discourse of gender relations which is constantly manipulated and modified by the participants.

It has long been recognised that the Thesmophoria is one of several festivals attached to (among other things) the autumn sowing of cereals. The other significant ones were the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Proerosia, which did not exclude men, indeed they were run by them.¹⁸ The latter may have been celebrated in several locations in Attica,¹⁹ but the best documented Proerosia is the Eleusinian sacred ploughing of the Rarian field. It seems most likely that this was a 'moveable feast', which occurred sometime in Pyanopsion. In the Eleusinian calendar (*JG II*² 1363) the announcement of the Proerosia is recorded, but not the festival itself, presumably because it depended on the inception of the rains in any particular year.²⁰ The Eleusinian Mysteries, celebrated in Boedromion, had a complex symbolic paradigm of their own in the classical period, in which the relationship to the agricultural year and the growth cycle of cereals was

significant but not pre-eminent. Its emphasis was more on the general *fact* of the cultivation of cereals and the civilising effect on humanity of that gift of Demeter, than on the particularities of the cycle of farming.

The Thesmophoria consisted of three days proper plus two days of related festivals. This festival was celebrated with many local variations throughout Greece at both city-state and village level – conceptually a bit like the local and national variations on Christmas – but everywhere it was restricted to women.²¹ In Athens the women took over the city, held their own sacrifices and performed a series of confusingly described rituals involving piglets and things that were composted into a 'sacred goop' (to pinch Winkler's²² wonderful term) which was then mixed with the seed-corn. The timing of local and city Thesmophoriae varied from place to place, but they all fall in our months October and early November – the official Athenian celebration fell 9–13 Pyanopsion, which would be late October in most years.

Virtually all commentators have described the Thesmophoria as a sowing festival.²³ In fact, it occurs before the main period of the cereal sowing in November,²⁴ which coincides with the busiest time of year for farmers (November-mid December). In the most usual Attic farming systems, vines and fruit trees were also pruned and trenched at this time of year – the latter was particularly arduous and time-consuming work. In the years when the olives fruited, it was also the period of the olive harvest and pressing. So the group of autumn Demetrian festivals, and the women's Thesmophoria in particular, coincided with the period just before the busiest, most frantic and most critical period of the farming year for men. Significantly, during this busy time, more or less coinciding with the month Maimakterion, there are no major religious festivals and not a single recorded instance of a meeting of the assembly.²⁵ Though Mikalson²⁶ attributes this to the inclement weather it is much more likely to be sheer pressure of agrarian work.

It is also interesting to note the proximity of the Thesmophoria to the Apatouria,²⁷ dedicated to Apollo and celebrating male descent groups via phratries, a point to which I shall return later (p. 107).

The Haloa took place at the end of Poseidon. Despite the resemblance of the name to *halos*, threshing floor, the festival has nothing to do with threshing or threshing floors. Whether the name is derived from the word for threshing floor²⁸ or has something to do with another word, *aloi*, which means vineyards or orchards or even

fields,²⁹ is irrelevant for my argument. Although not all the festivities excluded men, there seem to have been raucous, all-female bonfire parties, held at night, as well as a special, all-female meal. The deities on whom the celebrations centred were Demeter and Dionysos. Rites were held at Eleusis ([Demosthenes] 59.116). In the Eleusinian accounts of 329 BC (*IG II² 1672*) there were substantial purchases of wood and vine prunings at the time of the Haloa. This backs up the confused literary evidence for bonfires. The specific mention of vine prunings perhaps emphasises both the preceding autumn season's work, as well as the connection with Dionysos.

A joint celebration of Demeter and Dionysos was particularly appropriate for the time of year since the most fraught work on the vineyards and the cereal sowing would have just finished, for at the time when the Haloa generally fell, late December-early January, the weather would be too cold and wet in most years for work in the fields to be feasible. In balance with the group of festivals before the sowing (and generally busy farming period) earlier in the autumn, the Haloa provides a ritual termination point celebrated by women when this busy and critical season of men's work has come to an end.

It has frequently puzzled northern European commentators that there is no harvest festival dedicated to Demeter in the Athenian festival calendar. The one excuse for a harvest festival (which frequently has been identified as such, though it is much more complicated than a simple 'harvest home') is the Thargelia, which occurs in late May-early June in most years. In fact, as Brumfield³⁰ has noted, the cereal harvest in most of southern Greece is drawn out over a period of two months or so, depending on the variety of cereal and the specific micro-climate of the plot where it is planted.³¹ The Thargelia in fact does not really coincide with the cereal harvest (despite the dedication of *pansperma*, a kind of ancient *kollyva* or frumenty), since the festival really falls too early in most years. If there were any genuine overtones of harvest celebration attached to this festival in classical Athens (and I am rather dubious about that), it would bear the same relationship to the 'real' harvest that the Thesmophoria, etc., bore to the sowing – that is, taking place before the event. Again, if there is any relationship to the cereal harvest, it is perhaps significant that it has been appropriated by Apollo, the ultimately masculine deity.³²

The Skira has sometimes been interpreted as a harvest festival,³³ though never convincingly, since it falls at an inappropriate time in June, usually mid-June.³⁴ Even Brumfield³⁵ has considerable difficulty

making it fit the cycle of cereal growth.³⁶ Like the Thesmophoria, it was celebrated in individual demes as well as by the City.³⁷ In fact it can be shown to fit the pattern of 'boundary marking' festivals or groups of festivals already observed. After the long period of harvest, when the sheaves are stacked up to await threshing, there is a short lull before the threshing begins in earnest in mid-July or so. This lull nicely corresponds with the Skira.

Moreover, the word *skiron* has as one of its basic meanings what the Greeks rather imprecisely called 'white earth', *ge leuke*.³⁸ This term generally seems to refer to various calcium compounds such as gypsum (calcium sulphate) that frequently occur as natural deposits. Toponyms which include this root (such as Skiras in Attica or the island of Skyros) frequently have deposits of such compounds. Indeed those which occur on the island of Skyros are today used for plastering flat roofs.

There is evidence of another activity for which gypsum (*vel sim.*) (and other similar calcium compounds) was used (and the best evidence for it comes from a ritual context): sealing and repairing threshing floors. In Attica both earth and stone threshing floors were used. Most Attic limestone, and even some of the schist, is rather lumpy, while the surface of earth threshing floors was not particularly durable. A coat of gypsum would give a smooth, hard, strong finish, though it would need regular renewal since on a threshing floor it would be exposed to the weather.

The Eleusinian accounts for 329/8 BC (*IG II² 1672*) contain an entry for the tenth prytany (which should have fallen in the month Skirophorion) for the cleaning of the sacred threshing floor (232–4), followed by the cost of hiring a roller(?) (*trochilea*) and labour costs (234–7). Lines 238–43 contains a contract for *enkausis*, 'burning' – gypsum has to be heated before it is used as plaster/cement – and *koniasis*, plastering. I suggest this is in preparation for the celebration of the Skira.³⁹

So one major symbolic element of the procession of women and the sacred objects (*skira*) they carried in the Skira festival must have been the ritual (and probably practical) plastering of threshing floors in preparation for crop processing. Again work on the threshing floors and the threshing itself was men's work for which women were ritually responsible.⁴⁰

CONCLUSIONS

A detailed consideration of the timing of the three best documented (most important?) 'women's mysteries', celebrated as part of state festivals to Demeter, in relation to both the festive and the farming calendars is helpful in understanding how these rites were performed and interpreted, in both symbolic and practical terms. It is clearly inappropriate to talk about 'sowing' or 'harvest' festivals as if these celebrations happened simultaneously with the seasonal task in hand. In fact these festivals serve as markers before and after periods of intensive and critical work. They are moments in which the community ritually takes a deep breath before the rush hits, or lets out a sigh of relief when it has finished. There are both symbolic and practical reasons for this. In fact, during the busiest periods of agricultural work ritual and political activity is at a low ebb. Further, the intensive and critical work which women's festivals of Demeter bound and celebrate is stereotypically men's work.⁴¹ It is as if men's practical activities are ineffectual without the partnership of women's ritual activities.

But as well as acting out a ritual partnership with men, these festivals of Demeter simultaneously provide arenas in which women may constitute themselves as a distinct social and political group. However much men may have wanted to believe that women were under control within the limited space allowed them in women's ritual activities, the general unease in the sources about what the girls got up to strongly suggests that women did not necessarily passively accept men's ideas about how they ought to behave.⁴² Moreover, though women celebrate these festivals as a community of women, it is clear that within the larger gathering they attended and celebrated in smaller groups of their own choosing.

Sometimes these are not always what one might expect, as, for example, the wife of Euphiletos who in *Lysias* 1.20 is alleged to have gone to the Thesmophoria with her adulterous lover's mother! Younger married women must often have arrived with mothers-in-law, while younger unmarried women must have gone with their mothers and other older female relatives.⁴³ But particularly at the Thesmophoria, and to a certain extent also at the Haloa and the Skira, women gathered together from all over the city – indeed from all over Attica. This must have provided an opportunity for women to socialise and maintain the links with their natal families, especially their mothers and probably also their sisters.⁴⁴ Under Athenian law

and social practice girls were never fully detached from their natal families on marriage and might expect to return there if the marriage dissolved.⁴⁵ Regular meetings in these religious contexts, even for girls who had married into households located some distance away from their natal families, reinforced these legal and social precepts.

These social practices also have cosmological significance. Like most societies, the Athenians construed kinship in several different ways simultaneously (depending on the context) and manipulated and played off these different notions of kinship with each other (again depending on context). The myth of Demeter and Kore celebrates and elevates to cosmological pre-eminence the ties between mother and daughter. Brumfield⁴⁶ has argued that Kore's abduction/marriage reflects the severing of that mother-daughter relationship by marriage and conjugal sex. I disagree. Even in the myth though Kore's relationship with Demeter is changed forever, it is only modified, not broken – hence the significance of the reunion of Kore and Demeter which might well parallel the 'real' reunions of mothers and daughters at the women's festivals of the Two Goddesses.⁴⁷ Lines of mothers and daughters always remained one way of construing kinship, even if most of the time in everyday reality (and in our sources) that relationship was suppressed by patriarchal and patrilineal constructions of kin. Though men might understand women's role in the bilateral kindred as linking man with man, the ties of mothers and daughters could not be completely obliterated.

Hence it is interesting to note the proximity in the official state calendar of 'masculine' festivals to the female celebrations which made men uncomfortable. I am sure it is not accidental that the Apatouria, dedicated to Apollo and celebrating the patrilineal clans (phratries) in which only men actively participated is just a week or two after the Thesmophoria.⁴⁸ The Skira is followed two days later by the Dipoleia, in honour of Zeus Polieus, the male tutelary deity of the city. The victim offered to him at this unusual sacrifice was man's best friend, the plough ox that had tilled the land for Demeter's corn, and whose hooves had trodden the seeds from the ears. It is as if there is a need to reassert male constructions of kinship and community after the celebration of lines of mothers and daughters and the community of women in the Thesmophoria and the Skira. The 'appropriation', if that is what it is, of the Thargelion by Apollo might be similarly construed.

Finally, the cycle of festivals of Demeter and Kore that include 'women's mysteries' in the Athenian state calendar reflect one major

aspect of the cosmological construction of the state as based on a farming community. That it probably was not altogether economic reality in the fifth and fourth centuries BC was irrelevant. Cereals were not only the most important food staple in practical terms⁴⁹ but also the most important agricultural signifier of civilisation.⁵⁰ And cereal cultivation was held to have been a gift of the Two Goddesses, the Mother and the Daughter, the human relationship with whom was largely mediated by the women of the Athenian community.

Robertson's perhaps unconscious portrayal of the Athenian state's self-image constructed on male rituals in male festivals⁵¹ must be erroneous. Women were actively constituted as part of the state, cosmologically, socially and politically, and they did not always allow themselves to be passively constituted. There was a complex symbolic relationship between the state, the women who constituted it alongside men and the goddesses who carry the *thesmoi*, which, whether they are customs or corn⁵² or both, provided the foundations for the civilised *polis*.

NOTES

- 1 This paper owes a great deal to helpful discussions with Michael Jameson, Sally Humphreys and Hamish Forbes, who are, of course, neither responsible for any errors nor bound to agree with any of the views expressed. Thanks are also due to Helen Forbes for constructing the bibliography.
- 2 Cf. Lowe 1995.
- 3 Nilsson 1932, 1964.
- 4 Burkert 1985.
- 5 Even in Zeitlin 1982: 140.
- 6 Robertson 1992; Clinton 1988, 1992; Simon 1983.
- 7 Burkert 1985: 61.
- 8 Burkert 1985: 226.
- 9 Detienne 1977, 1989.
- 10 Zeitlin 1982.
- 11 Winkler 1990b.
- 12 Humphreys 1993: xxiv-xxv, her new introduction to *The Family, Women and Death*; xxxviii, n. 61.
- 13 Humphreys: personal communication
- 14 Winkler 1990b: 188-9, 206.
- 15 For example, Zeitlin 1982: 139, 142.
- 16 Farnell 1896-1909: vol. I: 45-6, 75-112; Zeitlin 1982: 139. On the celebration of the Thesmophoria and other Demeter rites in the demes see Parker 1987.
- 17 Despite Detienne's (1989) assertion that women were excluded from the act of sacrificing most of the time, it certainly does not follow that

- they were excluded from participating in civic festivals (and that some festivals like the Panathenaia, construing communality, were mixed is positively documented).
- 18 Dow and Healey 1965; Clinton 1992.
 - 19 See Dow and Healey 1965: 14-20; Parker 1987: 141.
 - 20 Dow and Healey 1965: 15; Brumfield 1981: 58-9.
 - 21 For the references to celebrating the Thesmophoria in the Attic demes see Parker 1987: 142.
 - 22 Winkler 1990b: 196 n.
 - 23 For example, Johansen 1975: 80; Zeitlin 1982: 138.
 - 24 As Winkler 1990b: 193 realised.
 - 25 Mikalson 1975.
 - 26 Mikalson 1975: 86.
 - 27 As Zeitlin 1986: 140-2 also has, though her interpretation heads off in a different direction.
 - 28 Simon 1983: 35.
 - 29 Brumfield 1981: 104-5.
 - 30 1981: 152, 232-3.
 - 31 Forbes 1982: 268-70.
 - 32 In fact there is another agrarian side to the Thargelia that I find much more convincing than an association with the cereal harvest. This relates to the custom of bedecking the two ugly old men who served as *pharmakoi* with necklaces of black (for men) and white (for women) figs (Simon 1983: 77-8; Hesychios s.v. *pharmakos*). Nowadays in late May-early June necklaces of 'wild', male figs, inhabited by the fig wasps which fertilise domestic figs, are flung by farmers on to their fig trees (Forbes 1982: 267-8). Aristotle (*History of Animals* 5.32 [557b 25-31]) and Theophrastus (*Causes of Plants* 2.9.5-15; *History of Plants* 2.8.1-3) document similar practices for antiquity. The black and white figs of the Thargelia necklaces worn by the *pharmakoi* were the two main classes of domestic fig varieties - 'white' figs (green to us) tend to ripen early in the season, while the dark reddish-purple, 'black' figs tend to ripen late. For a similar association with figs in sixth-century BC Kolophon, see Hipponax fr. 5-11 West.
 - 33 Simon 1983: 22.
 - 34 Brumfield (1981: 168) argued that it was too late for the harvest. Depending on the year, the crop and the location, however, some harvesting may still have been going on in some years. Unlike the sowing season, where the beginning is firmly marked by the inception of the autumn rains and the end is fairly clear because the weather becomes too wet and cold to continue any longer, the harvest has less marked starting and finishing points.
 - 35 Brumfield 1981: ch. 9.
 - 36 She interpreted it as relating to the storage of cereals in plaster-lined pits, a practice for which there is in fact no positive evidence in Greek sources (Brumfield 1981: 172-4).
 - 37 Dow and Healey 1965: 39; Parker 1987: 142.
 - 38 Brumfield 1981: 157-8, 169-72.
 - 39 *IG II²* 1672.232-9.

for cleaning the sacred ? at Eleusis [...³⁴...] and the sacred threshing floor to Aristokrates and Archi(ades?) 23 dr. [...³⁶...] for the 16 [m]en, 3 per day, for 12 days 96 dr. [...³⁴... to the public]

235 slave 2 dr. to Pamphilos Otryneus, the contract(or) for the rolle[r(?) ...³⁴...] in the towers 100; four bronze cauldrons for the[...³⁵...] minas, to(tal) 40; from Kallikrates out of the Thesio[n ...³⁴...] and the burning to Leukon from Skambonidai 40 dr. 1.25 ob.; for carrying off to El[eusis ...²⁴... to the con-] tractor for plastering, the leftover 100, for the iron roll[er? or pulley? ...²⁸...]

- 40 This is in contrast to the cereal harvest itself in which both men and women, ideally and really, took part.
- 41 Winkler 1990b: 205.
- 42 Cf. Winkler 1990: 188–9 and *passim*; Zeitlin 1982: 146–8.
- 43 I would guess (though as far as I know there is no positive evidence one way or the other) that only post-menarcheal daughters attended the ‘women’s mysteries’, which might have served almost as a kind of informal female initiation, remotely analogous to the women’s secret societies and initiation groups found in Africa and the Pacific. It is clear from Sourvinou-Inwood’s (1987) work that the Brauronian festival was not really ‘female initiation’ in any sense, and that most of the participants were between 5 and 10, and thus pre-pubescent.
- 44 Other large official festivals, not exclusively female but which women regularly attended, such as the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Panathenaia, must also have served as meeting-places for female relatives on occasions. And ‘private’ religious celebrations, whether family sacrifices or the Adoneia, must have been facilitated gatherings of female relatives if they lived close enough (cf. Winkler 1990b: 200).
- 45 Foxhall 1989.
- 46 Brumfield 1981: 225–7.
- 47 Significantly, in some versions, this reunion was brought about by Demeter’s mother, Rhea, and is depicted on some fifth-century BC Athenian vases (Simon 1983: 26–7, plates 8.2, 9).
- 48 Pyanopsion 19–21 or 26–8 are the most likely dates (Mikalson 1975: 79). See also Zeitlin 1982: 140–2.
- 49 Foxhall and Forbes 1982.
- 50 Cf. Johansen 1975: 86–7.
- 51 He barely mentions female festivals at all, and only then to marginalise them (Robertson 1992: 25–6).
- 52 Perhaps seed-corn?

Women’s identity and the family in the classical *polis*

Sarah B. Pomeroy

Knowledge of the family and kin groups is fundamental to understanding the development of the political and legal framework of the *polis*, and the study of the family as an institution has always been part of the mainstream of Athenian history.¹ Since W.K. Lacey (1968), and other scholars including myself, first published our views on women and the family in Athens, a different scenario for the creation of the *polis* has been envisioned. Many historians have abandoned the evolutionary view which had posited that social structures such as phratry and *genos* were vestiges of an early tribal society whose members were linked by descent from male ancestors.² According to the revisionist view, phratry and *genos*, like *deme*, are part of the political fabric of the mature *polis* traceable back to the Cleisthenic reorganization. Using the old evolutionary framework based on actual family relationships, scholars were obliged to carve out a place for women. This framework was made able to accommodate women by importing ideas about early Roman history. Roman historians have now discarded most of these ideas, but the Greek version persists. The new historical model not only provides a better explanation of the development of the Athenian *polis*, but is more consistent with what is known about women. The revised view also sheds light on the subject of the identity of individual Athenian women and on the difficulties facing the historian of women. In this paper I will discuss some of the important implications of the paradigm shift for women’s history and historiography.

FAMILY IDENTITY AT FUNERALS

It was not unusual for the *polis* to dictate the parameters of funerals to be conducted by private families. Our most detailed legal information