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On Honor and Palimpsest Patriarchal Coloniality in Greece, the Western Balkans, and the Caucasus: Anthropological Comparative Accounts from a Post-Ottoman Decolonial Perspective

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Abstract: This study introduces a comparative framework to understand patriarchal genealogies and technologies, with reference to an anthropological commentary concerning the broader forms of coloniality of power between dominant male and dominated female bodies in Greece, the Balkans, and the Caucasus. It argues that the patterns of patrilineality, practices and representations of male honor, and female exclusion from the native family are literally and symbolically feeding on the matrix of patriarchal coloniality in the regions. The analysis is based on representative ethnographic research and historical approaches. Patrilineal kin structures, customs of captivity (i.e., bride kidnapping, sworn virgins, and honor crimes), and generalized practices of young virgin exogamy seem responsible for women's minor status in the social stratification. Traditional hierarchies and modern social inequalities seem to motivate dispositions and regulate behaviors for female, minor, subordinate, and dispossessed bodies, as well as dominant male protectors and patriarchs. The text adopts a postcolonial and decolonial black feminist critique. It argues that in a *longue durée* process, a palimpsest pattern of patriarchy emerges, made upon the *habitus* of gendered ideology. Shaped by patriarchalism, paternalism, and patronage, patriarchy motivates a generalized pattern of coloniality within post-Ottoman geographies, thus regulating multiple material and symbolic inequalities, and even multiplying antagonistic hierarchies among family units, communities, central nation/state, periphery, and borders.

Keywords: male honor; female otherness; customs of captivity; palimpsest of patriarchy; matrix of coloniality; Post-Ottoman Greece; Western Balkans; the Caucasus



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1. Introduction: How Does the Matrix of Patriarchal Coloniality Work in Greece, the Western Balkans, and the Caucasus, as a Zone of the Post-Ottoman Condition?

The present analysis, aiming to reconsider Westernized studies and their cultural assumptions on the area, combines anthropology, postcolonial, decolonial, and black feminist critique. The text goes further with a discussion on 'patriarchy after patriarchy' (see Kaser 1997, 2008), a historical account of the "ideology of 'patriarchalism'" (Hristov 2014a, 2014b), the socio-economic transformations of "Balkan family structures" (Todorova 2006), and exotic representations of the Balkans and their Oriental customs and rituals (Todorova 1997; Makdisi 2002; Boyar 2007). I attempt to relate the issue of patriarchy, spread as a modality of domination through accumulation of women's and younger generations' reproductive activities and/or labor in the broader Anatolia (Mies [1986] 1998), with the study of 'honor' in Greece, the Western Balkans, and the Caucasus. Beyond its instrumental use as a cultural value of traditional people in the Mediterranean world, the Balkans, and Anatolia (Peristiany 1965; Peristiany 1989; Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers 1992), male honor seems to be the signifier for male domination over women and other minor bodies, modeling patriarchy as a palimpsest that regulates complex asymmetrical social stratifications within and

beyond the family. Drawing from approaches that see ‘honor’ as a multi-dimensional value (Peristiany 1989; Giordano 2001; da Col and Shryock 2017), as well as an ambiguous value to deal with personhood in bordering areas and liminal conditions—facing the authority mechanism of state formation (Peirce 2011; Sirman 2014; Blumi 2014)—I will also critique feminist assumptions relating honor and aggressive control masculinities over women, as an issue of primordial patriarchy. In this framework, I continue the postcolonial thesis of Maria (Mies [1986] 1998, pp. 74–144), seeing patriarchy in the ‘longue durée’ process of ‘housewifization’ of women through the appropriation of their labor forces within the family, and the imposition of male control and paternalistic (patriarchal/protectionist) authority over their reproductive to give birth bodies. Within broader asymmetrical social landscapes and the passage from empires to nation-states, and then to the present trans-border migrations of the studied region, patriarchy seems still to feed and motivate a palimpsest of old and new asymmetric dominations.

The present paper challenges the concept of ‘patriarchy’ as an exclusive category of women’s subordination to men, mostly promoted through modern white Western feminist liberal and radical discourses (Acker 1989; Mies [1986] 1998). Using a comparative approach and moving beyond the mainstream Eurocentric views on gender and kinship (Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991), I suggest engaging with decolonized feminist critique on coloniality and borders (i.e., Mignolo 2000; Quijano 2000; Lugones 2010), production, reproduction, and intersectionality in the broader society, before and after European colonial modernization (Mohanty 2003; Yuval-Davis 2011). Coloniality spread through overlapped submissions moderating social bonds through the exchange of female bodies, and does not only regard the control of men over women within domestic and kin groups (Collier and Yanagisako 1987). In addition, following Engels’ path, Weber’s analysis, and postcolonial thinking (Engels [1884] 2004; Weber 1947; Mohanty 2003; Moghadam 2004; Fassin 2009), I attempt to consider the broader control mechanisms over female and other minor bodies, and the appropriation of their agency in the frame of the house, the neighborhood, and the state (Mies 1988; Sirman 2014).

An anthropological reading of patriarchy with a decolonial lens¹ should reconsider the transformation and the idioms of family in Greece, the Western Balkans, and the Caucasus, under the modalities of specific material and symbolic dominations, distributions, and dispossessions, excluding women also from social, material, and symbolic capital and knowledge, and thus multiplying masculine domination through dispositions for additional habitus of consent (Bourdieu 2001). In this framework, I will focus on paradigms, marital practices, rituals, and symbolic representations of female otherness, alienation, and expropriation of their agency that are taking place in broader social networks of female dispossession and domination over minor/subaltern bodies in captivity. Last but not least, I intend to follow the impact of the meanings of the moral value of ‘honor’, as a signifier that continues to motivate hegemonic masculinities and past patriarchal norms of authority and control, as well as present modern sexist practices (Gallant 2000; Mutluer 2011; Burda 2012). I am searching for the material justification of the honor morality of the so-called authorized males, appropriating female labor and the reproductive capacities of their bodies. Male honor that works at the intersection of overlapping old and new patriarchies, imposed by patriarchs within the family, the state, ethnic conflicts, and the market, becomes a justification for the control and appropriation of female labor and reproduction. Misogynic Abrahamic religious Truths, keeping female bodies in birth-giving roles of modesty and self-captivity motherhood, and the Modern European colonial sexist bourgeois patriarchal order of labor and ‘housewifization’ seems to expropriate not only women’s emancipation, but in analogy other minor/subaltern bodies too (Mies 1988; Gimbutas 1996; Borgeaud 2001).

Patriarchy, within post-Ottoman topologies and geographies, beyond any white Western feminist homogenizing understanding as simply masculine domination within nuclear families, should be reconsidered in its material basis (Walby 1990), for the first and everlasting colonized female bodies were within the domestic group, the village, and society

at large (Mies 1988). As a matrix of coloniality, to use Mignolo's (2000) and Quijano's ([1992](2007) terminology, patriarchy works as a palimpsest of diverse praxis, symbolic acts, and ideologies. Patriarchy, as a palimpsest knowledge of practical ideology, seems to aspire habitus and motivate dispositions for generalized masculine domination (Bourdieu 2001), as power/control of specific gendered generational authorities. The latter are generating socio-cultural justifications of superiority/supremacy for dominant gender statuses (i.e., patriarchs and matriarchs), as well as modalities of consent for female and other minor/subaltern bodies. In more decolonial terms, this palimpsest modality allows us to understand the gender bias inherent to the ways particular people in specific Post-Ottoman geographies connect with space, time, knowledge, property, and power, before and after the Western colonial encounter of capitalist modernization.² The palimpsest as method and methodology, first suggested by black feminist analysis, could help us to deface these hidden "black shoals"³ of patriarchy embodied in the flesh and the dispositions of the dominant and dominated people, in a broader Post-Ottoman topology.

More specifically, I turned my attention to a bordering zone from Western Balkans to the Caucasus, as part of the broader zone of patriarchy, sealed by the three monotheistic religions in the Eastern Mediterranean world (see Kandiyoti 1988; Mies [1986] 1998). Beyond geographical proximity, regional determinations and cultural assumptions (Pina-Cabral 1989; Todorova 1997; Albera and Blok 2001), the present text considers these Post-Ottoman worlds in Greece, the Western Balkans, and the Caucasus (Gocek 2013) in order to suggest a productive comparative scale on the significant basis of the patriarchal modality. A decolonial return⁴ to these post-Ottoman geographies and topologies (Bryant 2016; Argenti 2019) could help us, beyond orientalist and Balkanist denominations, deduce the modalities of coloniality in this area, against any Eurocentric understanding. The latter usually ignores the main characteristic classifications of these geographies and topologies, i.e., 'extended family' and 'master of one's own home' / *efendi/authendes*, lit. in ancient Greek with self-realization and agency', 'the neighbor's right', and 'neighborliness' / *komşuluk*, peace / *huzur*, etc.⁵ All of the above, as material and social structures based on gender and age discrimination, in addition to class stratifications between city and country people during the modernization process, are being re-shaped in intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991) to account for patriarchal values of control and patterns of dispossession from agency for female and other subaltern bodies. Thus, elder's ordering, rules and norms of dispossession, and otherness for women at the occasion of heritage or marriage are establishing complex antagonistic inequalities of bordering, as well as practices of reciprocity, proximity, and hospitality among kin groups, affines, and neighbors.

Within Ottoman and post-Ottoman geographies, male honor, female patrilineal descent, and patrilocal practices, as well as its relevant customs, signifying women's otherness, captivity, and permanent minority status, are strongly related to enclosure in motherhood, control of sexuality, and modesty justified through religious morals (Mies [1986] 1998; Asad 1993; Borgeaud 2001). In addition, the encounter with colonial European modernity had inspired sexism and established the new patriarchal order, related to the capitalist bourgeois family model of productivity and expectations, or state liberal and socialist ones, both having invested in the female capacity for reproduction for the prosperity of the family or the state (Mies [1986] 1998; Kaser 1997, 2008; Moghadam 2000, 2004; Federici 2020). This analytical twofold meaning of patriarchy in its premodern despotic and modern colonial version has generated broader post-Ottoman geographies and topologies of submission, captivity, and alienation of female bodies in the idiom of family, religious modesty, and male honor morality (Sirman 2004, 2014; Blumi 2014). Patriarchal despotism, of the past even if it relies on a double bind submission, i.e., the submission of female bodies to male ones, and the submission of minor to senior status, seems to be an interesting field to search for the impact of coloniality in this post-Ottoman border zone.⁶



The present analysis works in complementarity with critical approaches to honor and shame (Herzfeld 1980; Gilmore 1987; Sirman 2014; Blumi 2014), by exploring the modalities of historical transformation that keep women away from 'honor' and power (Herzfeld 1991; Herzfeld 1985; Dubish 1986), and/or positioning them as men's property (Hirschon 1983). In other words, I am trying to understand how female reproductive bodies could become exchangeable commodities. I reconsider violence against them as a matter of broader management of hierarchies and social inequalities, modernization and colonial bordering, and ethnic and racial technologies for state apparatus administration, from late Ottoman to modern times (Quijano [1992](2007)). I suggest reconsidering the impact and the diverse meanings of the colonial technologies of appropriation, captivity, and domination, imposed through the presence of successive empires (Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman), favoring inter-cultural conflicts at their borders, capitalist monetary modernization, gender segregation between public and private spheres, and multiple broader minoritization processes over the domestication, the commodification, the exoticism, and the coloniality of female and other minor bodies, through the lens of overlapping patriarchal dominations shaping a palimpsest over time (Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Daher-Nashif 2013; Federici 2014, 2020; Lugones 2010).

By paying attention to the local patrilocality customs, including female exogamy among patrilineal kin groups, blood connection distributions, and honor moral values, attributed to men and the family at large, I aim to deface overlapping patriarchies, as a gendered ideology pattern, justifying hierarchies and inequality in the region, from pre-modern to post-modern contexts. This analytical path can lead us to the matrix of coloniality in the region and its main characteristics, i.e., the significance of women's exogamy and dispossession from material goods, their captivity in the patrilocal house and the patrilineal motherhood, the embodiment of the religious modesty, and the strong moral intimidation on femininity, excluding females from positive moral values of honor and its added value for social transactions. The above are shaping women's everlasting colonized bodies that submit, consent, subvert, or resist, under permanent surveillance, accusations/gossip, and punishments. Equally, I will search for the significance of paradoxes, i.e., matriarchy within patriarchy and the power of female otherness, justifying the ever-ending female status of minority, liminality, and ambiguity that treats male ordering and priorities (Campbell 1964; Hirschon 1978; du Boulay 1974; Dubish 1986; Lacoste-Dujardin 1985; Sirman 2004).

Thus, I will return to the issue of 'crimes in the name of honor' in Greece and extend my analysis to productive patterns of female otherness, dispossessions, and expropriation, customs to control or avoid sexuality, practices to escape from moral accusations (i.e., bride patrilocality and honor crimes in Greece, kidnapping in Caucasus, transgender roles in Albania and Western Balkans), of people mostly living at the margins, the highland peoples, the segregated societies of vendetta, and people living at the borders or at the margins of the state (Danforth 1983; Grant 2005; Herzfeld 1985; Makris 1992; Kenna 1976; Mustafa and Young 2008; Seremetakis 1991; Tsantiropoulos 2008, 2013; Tsibiridou 2000, 2009; Vernier 1995; Werner 2009; Xanthakou 1993; Young 2001; Young and Twigg 2009; de Rapper 2000, 2012a, 2012b; Avdela 2002; Brković 2021; du Boulay 1991; Handman 1983; Hasluck 1954; Kamm 2012). Their customary ritual and social practices in this regional version uncover, in more obvious ways, the matrix of the broader palimpsest patriarchal coloniality: captiv-

ity/slavery/dispossession of the female, as ever-lasting colonized bodies in the encounter with modernization, and in the middle of broader traditional, i.e., imperial patriarchal order, paternalist hierarchies, and patronage practices. These are regulating hierarchies and inequalities between dominant and dominated bodies. Under these circumstances of overlapped dominations in the name of honor among domestic and kin groups/tribes of the mountains, and under modern antagonistic clashes of economic interests and ethnic conflicts, negative female reciprocity practices, among mates and between generations (see late aged matriarchy), are established. Thus, beliefs and representations of female otherness, modern sexist stereotypes on motherhood, domesticity, and religious modesty remain the only options and fields for women to develop agencies of empowered subjectivities. However, as these politics are “weapons of the weak”, they seem condemned to remain always weak.

2. Patrilocality, Exogamy, and Dispossession: From the Late Ottoman Legacy to Early Greek Modernity

In a comparative context, the practices of women’s exogamy when living in patrilineal groups during early modernization (18th, 19th, and 20th centuries), and highlighting how marital compensations become regulators of material goods and affective relations, a very interesting map of Greece is highlighted; one that shows the areas of extreme female alienation from family goods, property customs, law, and juridical practices. First, the exogamy practices for women are based on the almost inviolable principle of the patrilocal settlement after marriage, which always seems to be violated for practical and financial reasons, and not without the cost of symbolic capital lost for the families resorting to the status of *sogambros*, *spitogambros* (lit. “a man who married “in to his wife’s house”). Patrilocal settlement is associated with the type of compensation, which while in the past in the north part of Greece (i.e., Macedonia and Thrace) was the bride price, the opposite, namely the dowry, was associated with the entry of continental rural and island societies into the money market economy. Since the 18th century, the endowment of girls in the wider northern Greek setting has been established as a method of social rise, but also as a strong competition between families that leads to a transformation of the type of family from patrilineal descent to that of an indifferent/bilateral linearity (Tsibiridou 1988, 1996b; Σκουτέρη-Διδασκάλου 1984).

With the exception of the island communities of the Aegean archipelagos, where from a very early age material goods and social capital (i.e. first names) are inherited by daughters (Kenna 1976; Vernier 1995), who thus practice matrilocality or uxerolocality, in the patrilineal communities of the northern Greek setting, in Peloponnese, Epirus, and central Greece, patrilocal settlement comes along with competition between patrilineal clans and households’ hard bargaining in an attempt to avoid the transfer of material goods to daughters, especially land and houses, other than trousseau and/or other movable property, like money and animals (Friedl 1962; Campbell 1964; du Boulay 1974; Handman 1983; Caftanzoglou 1994; Tsibiridou 1996a, 1996b). Concurrently, where the social capital of the family is at stake due to market economy competition, control of sexuality and female reproduction are ever increasing, framed by the rhetoric of ‘honor’ and ‘blood’, as is the case in Peloponnese and in Crete, for instance (Seremetakis 1991; Τσαντηρόπουλος 2010).

The return to studies that primarily focus on practices of marital compensation, the connection with socio-economic activities, ritual customs, and also the symbolic systems and representations (Tsibiridou 1988, 1996b), should be directly related to ethnographic and historical research. Issues of the value, persistence, and continuity of the code of ‘honor’, honor crimes, ‘blood feuds’, and aggressive masculinity should be joint discussions on kinship and gender (Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991; Dubish 1986, 1995). In the present analysis, I suggest returning to and reconsidering the honor/shame dipole that was most prevalent in the British and American anthropological presence in Greece (Gilmore 1987). Modern historical analysis of legal regulations on honor and transaction with the state (Gallant 1997; Αβδελά 2002; Avdela 2002, 2010; Vassiliou 1973; Γαζή 2011), ethnographies

that explicitly refer to the honor moral codes of the time (Campbell 1964; Friedl 1962; Handman 1983), and old and new feud narratives (Seremetakis 1991; Tsantiropoulos 2013) in most antagonistic environments seem significant in defacing patriarchy in terms of its historical, geographical, and cultural characteristics, as well as the matrix of coloniality for gender subjectivities.

3. In the Name of Honor! Expropriating Female Agency in the Modern Greek Context

In the long life of this Greek map, female otherness is mostly reproduced through exogamic practices. The exchange value of female bodies, as commodities to establish transactions and allies, aligns with male honor domination based on blood, patrilineality, patrilocality, the monetary economy, and competitive patronage transactions with the state colonial apparatus. In any case, honor crimes can be traced in regions where female otherness is associated with strong rivalry among 'soya' / clans (see Mani, Epirus) and/or the kind of hegemonic manhood of hospitality/xenophobia, like in Crete (Herzfeld 1985, 1987; Tsantiropoulos 2008; Τσαντηρόπουλος 2010). Equally, honor crimes peaked during the mass rural exodus of the working class, as former rural people were established in the capital from the 1950s up until the country's political transition to a democracy in 1974 (Avdela 2002, 2010). However, as relevant studies suggest, pertaining to populations from the above-mentioned regions with strong habitus and dispositions towards an unequal allocation of value and power between men and women, a strong framework of female otherness and matriarchy within patriarchy continues to exist in parallel with new masculine domination through sexist stereotypes. In the process of urbanization, after the rural exodus, honor crimes and the way in which courts, witnesses, and public opinion intertwine, what is noted is first and foremost the withdrawal of every voice and the lack of agency of the involved women, whether they were victims or simply accused for their provocative (i.e., not modest) behavior (Avdela 2002). This allows us to read the intertwining of the successive patriarchies in the Greek context, beyond asymmetrical traditional conditions. In the modern contest, the state and its mechanism of justice continue to blame women, thus justifying male domination based on the female modesty transgression of moral values in the way of their independence and emancipation. This paternalist modality shapes a continuum—a palimpsest tool tank for hegemonic masculine domination based on morality. Today, we still discern the power and dynamics of this palimpsest hierarchy under the conditions of male honor, protection, and domination. In prolonged crisis conditions and in dialogue with the ever-increasing culture of sexism on a national and global level, the instances of increasing domestic violence and femicides at the expense of disobedient female bodies are showing a futile, skyrocketing rise (Τσιμπιρίδου 2009; Τσιμπιρίδου and Νεσέ 2017; Βαίου et al. 2019).

More particularly, as shown by ethnographic studies regarding Greece, that are included in the discussion of honor/shame in the post-war context (Campbell 1964; Gallant 1997, 2000; du Boulay 1974; Handman 1983; Herzfeld 1985; Seremetakis 1991; Xanthakou 1985; Tsantiropoulos 2008), but also the historical investigation of crimes 'in the name of honor', as referred to by the courts and the press during the 50s, 60s, and 70s (Avdela 2002), honor and shame are far from a pair of traditional values. Honor, established as a male privilege value and in accordance with Western bourgeois dignity, and its Modern Greek cultural version of 'philotimo' (Vassiliou 1973), seem to matter within antagonistic environments in order to expropriate any female positive agency, esteem, and self-making, as:

- Honor is a comparative advantage with exchange value in societies, related to the monetary economy. An indicative example is the case of Sarakatsani, studied by Campbell in the 60s. This case not only did not have archaic features, but it also highlights the type of clientelism and patronage, i.e., patron/client relations, of masculine domination, as the modality of interactions among pastoral and agricultural communities, as well as with state bureaucracy and politicians (Campbell 1964).
- Honor is associated with aggressive manhood and violence in the patrilineal communities of Crete and Mani (see in Herzfeld 1985; Τσαντηρόπουλος 2010), but also with

the negative reciprocity of matriarchal femininities that often act against women (see in [Xanthakou 1993, 1995](#); [Seremetakis 1991](#)). However, women seem to be considered homologous with ‘objects’, along with all other material and symbolic goods that men possess. In an antagonistic environment for material and symbolic accumulation, in the middle of a complex social network of patronage that relates families and clans of the mountains to their transaction with the state, women are treated as ‘kseni’/alien, non-human bodies, calling each other ‘skyles’/female dogs (i.e., in Mani and the Caucasus (personal communication)). The motivating aggressive manhood of ‘kapetanaioi’/lit. ‘Captains of the mountain’ matters more when state mechanisms become visible, i.e., police control, tourist economy, tax control, etc. (see in [Herzfeld 1985](#); [Τσαντηρόπουλος 2010](#)). Performing the poetics of manhood implies the control over ‘blood’ and minor bodies, i.e., women as sisters, daughters, and wives that violate or are accused of violating moral norms of modesty, submission, and intramarital domesticated sexuality. Desire and love are expropriated by women’s agency through arranged marriages and kidnapping. Female disobedience could launch an honor crime, implicating clans into vendettas between them, equally to other material resource and property claims. Mothers and sisters are the only respectful female bodies and voices with agency to solve or split further the opposing sides ([Seremetakis 1991](#); [Xanthakou 1985](#); [Γαλανάκη 2006](#)).

- Honor is crystallized from a very early modernity as ‘*philotimo*’/lit. ‘friend of the honor’, following the bourgeois French ethics for urban, individual, mostly male dignity (see in [Vassiliou 1973](#)). It should be noted that ‘*philotimo*’, which has often been an invocation of intimacy against selfishness and self-interest, throughout the 20th century ([du Boulay 1974](#)), was observed to hastily disappear during the sinful decade of 1990.⁷ Then, Greeks, by joining the euro, gradually, and indeed rather ironically, seemed to identify themselves in the daily idiom of social intercourse as ‘*lamogia*’/hustlers’ and ‘*malakes*’/‘assholes’. Both have strong sexist connotations of females becoming cunning. In this context, both honor as a moral value and the paternalist possessive manhood of ‘*egoismos*’/lit. egoism are components of the strong manhood interest. Desire for material accumulation and socializing through conspicuous consumption ([Herzfeld 1985](#)) seem to have been challenged, leading to more toxic and individualistic masculinities ([Τσαντηρόπουλος 2010](#)).
- In another context, as introduced in the case of a mountainous Pelion market-oriented rural society of the 1970s, M-E [Handman \(1983\)](#) showed that responses to honor are associated with the negative connotations, not so much of female ‘shame’, as the culturalists would suggest, but of the lateral survival strategies and adaptations addressed as ‘*poniria*’ lit. ‘cunning’ by subordinated female bodies. Handman’s ethnography shows how within specific antagonistic frameworks of local and imported male hegemonic and violent attitudes, based on extreme forms of economic competition between households in the rural environment of a market-oriented economy, cunning was the only path women could follow in Pelion during the late 70s in order to develop agency of resistance and subvert masculinized domination within the house and market economy.
- Lack of honor is often found in alliances with the devil ([Campbell 1964](#)), resorted to by dominant female bodies in which trading with the male-dominated church regime is not allowed (see [Campbell 1964](#); [Hirschon 1989](#); [Dubish 1995](#)). In an analogous framework, marginal rituals of death and pilgrimage as a modality for excluded and minority bodies, as female bodies are, are performed by women ([Danforth 1983](#); [Dubish 1995](#)). This agency of women with marginal and even negative connotations within Christian orthodox male hegemonic socio-religious political beliefs and practices is not unexpected. The misogynic patriarchal priorities of the latter became modern sexist ideology justifying female dishonorable practices, in association with magical knowledge and negative power, far from modern male dominant Christian moral ethics, orthopraxy, and the monotheistic Truth ([Asad 1993](#); [Federici 2014](#)). Ritual

practices performed by dominated bodies and minorities are usually based on female ontologically suspect and controversial myths. This is the case for the ethno-religious cosmology of *Anastenaria* (Danforth 1983), and other refugee communities where women became protagonists (Hirschon 1989). In an analogy, marginal cosmologies with miraculous icons and charismatic saints seem to regard mostly subaltern bodies, i.e., Roma people (on the pilgrimage of Tinos, see in Dubish 1995) and Sufi Muslim minority communities in the Balkans and Anatolia (see in de Rapper 2012b; and Duijzings 2001).⁸ In any case, female agency seems to work as negativereciprocity discourse, aspiring negative reciprocity in the way of necropolitics (Mbembe 2003). Laments are performed to keep the memory of conflicts alive, remind and support the patriarchal order of spit, revenge, and loss (Caraveli 1986). Aged women that perform laments in Mani (Seremetakis 1991), through the modality of ‘*antifonisi*’ lit. ‘counter voicing’, seems to invest in a negative agency to feed the circle of blood feuds, often blaming new brides for breaking the rules and norms of modesty, by missing submission to patriarchal principals. Brides, as bodies coming from outside through exogamic practices, are often targets of this xenophobia, as priority is given to the same blood, the broader society etc. (Xanthakou 1985, 1993).

- Last, but not least, it cannot go unnoticed that crimes in the name of honor are also taking place more in southern Greece than in the north and the islands. In other words, within Modern Greek society, there are places where ‘honor’ as ‘*timi*’, attributed to men (lit. honor and value), does not count as dignified virtue (Tsibiridou and Bartsidis 2016). This is the case in Thrace and other parts of northern Greece where I undertook ethnographic fieldwork among Christian, Muslim, Greek, and Slav-speaking populations. On its antipode of honor, I found ‘*besa*’ /trust and ‘*babesia*’ /trait, the Greeklish term for the Albanian honor/dishonor (Blumi 2014). In short, the lack of discursive references to (male) honor, value for logistics accounting, and imposing of protection goes hand in hand with the avoidance of gender-based violence (i.e., in honor crimes) among Christian, Muslim, and Pomak people, as I observed during ethnographic field research in Thrace (Tsibiridou 1996a, 1996b, 2000; Τσιμπιρίδου 2013a). Additionally, the lack of a traditional customary moral code (i.e., the *kanun*), and the lack of a competitive mountainous environment between households and clans, leads to an interesting hypothesis questioning how much the minority condition of Slav and Muslim people, as well as the broader peripheral positionality of northern Greece to the central Greek state apparatus, since 1912 and 1920 for Macedonia and Thrace, respectively, matter? Does this minority and peripheral to the old central state condition work as a matrix of coloniality for less competitive and non-hegemonic masculinities? This condition not only escapes the antagonist competition between men and households in order to establish a privilege with the state, as was the case with southern Greece since the 19th century (Κουλούρη 2020); on the contrary, northern Greece seems to be established as a colonial lab of surveillance and body control for minorities by the central state bureaucracy, over its lately integrated and heterogenous citizens. For reasons I cannot develop further here, state police control mechanisms, national education, and the Greek Orthodox church have spread nation-state and religious patriarchy, as an idiomatic modality of control and surveillance over Slav-speaking locals, and displaced Christian refugees and Muslim minorities, who represent the majority of people living at the northern periphery and the Balkan borders (Tsibiridou 2000, 2007; Manos 2004).

Taking into consideration other colonial-like environments, i.e., in Palestine and Kurdistan (Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Daher-Nashif 2013; Çağlayan 2021), and comparing with the neighboring areas, I feel the need to deface this patriarchal profile of the north and south of Greece in its idiomatic palimpsest patriarchal complexity, before and after capitalist modernity. In more decolonial post-Ottoman terms, I aim to deface the palimpsest of patriarchy located in the discourses, practices, habitus, and dispositions of dispossession that generate female otherness, motivating female bodies to inscribe their practices upon

old matrixes of coloniality, and equally to submit, consent, resist, or subvert the patterns of this idiomatic patriarchal domination.

Under these circumstances, in northern Greece, a patriarchal masculinity, with protective and affective implications, is more notable than an aggressive masculinity. This idiom, if it usually converses with local double minority syndrome of ‘fear and shame’, as is the case for the dominant moral value code among the Pomak people (Tsibiridou 2000, 2007), aligns with mild masculinity and extreme female modesty as moral obligation habitus. However, respect for fathers and patriarchs in both traditional and modern contexts does not discourage the development of strong female agency among homosocial environments of reciprocity in the neighborhood, openness with strangers, and strong bonds among peers and friends, beyond the family and the kin group. This is at least my feeling growing up in such a place of permanent surveillance, and that of my peers, a geography of feeling that I had to reconsider as given after returning for systematic ethnographic fieldwork (Tsibiridou 1996a, 2007; Τσιμπιρίδου 2013a). This is probably connected with the extended family domestic production and the spirit of *zadruga*, inheriting collectivism and solidarity among mostly Slavic-speaking rural Balkan environments to their national post-Ottoman present.⁹

4. Imaginaries of Female Domestication and the Expropriation of Their Agency

In addition to the patterns of kinship, marital exchange practices, and customs in a traditional and modern context, producing and reproducing patriarchy, and by following Pierre Bourdieu’s (2001) analysis on masculine domination, i.e., the symbolic and performed embodied experiences motivating habitus and creating dispositions of male superiority/supremacy,¹⁰ the Greek imaginary could be a useful data source for the present analysis. The latter is overwhelmed by patriarchal connotations of exogamy/alienation and otherness of female bodies, just like the ones we encounter in customary wedding rituals and oral literature (Σκουτέρη-Διδασκάλου 1984; Γκασούκα 2008; Τερζοπούλου and Ψυχογιού 1984). There, women are portrayed as exotic and rebellious, while legends, myths, and songs, especially those of wedding celebration, are supposed to remind us of the duty of domestication of female bodies, as housewives and mothers. Later, much more than oral literature and popular culture was the popular cinema of the 60s that trained women into the role of housewife, with motherhood as a dominant bourgeois distinction from rural popular brutal ethics. The expropriation of female bodies in the context of a marriage out of romantic love, but also the sexist stereotypes of masculine domination and female submission, become as prevalent with the success of these movies as a kind of pleasure for all subsequent generations up until today (Kosma 2007). Nevertheless, it is the same cinema that concurrently, or even more than social sciences, introduces a cultural critique to the patriarchal dystopias of the Greek family, trapped in practices and fantasies that haunt its members, which in turn suffocate within it in multiple ways, as they do not name passions and pathogenesis.¹¹ From these patriarchal dystopias we can learn how silences and concealments can shape the coloniality of the repressed sexuality, as well as the self-referential autism, within which we have been trapped as a Greek society for multiple crypto-colonial reasons (Herzfeld 2002). Trapped in the fantasy of the Greek patriarchal family, as a way to support gender subjectivity and develop citizenship through patronage, it shapes a coloniality framework for multiple submissions, hegemonies, dependences, and paternalistic possibilities; an interesting field of patriarchy upon which we should start a decolonial defacement (Santos 2016; Tsibiridou 2021). In the Greek context, paternalism and patronage seem to inspire masculine domination and pervasive sexism, increasing femicides and domestic violence, and raising toxic, fascist masculinities related to Greek Christian Orthodox nationalism (Γαζή 2011; Παπανικολάου 2018; Τσιμπιρίδου 2013a), football, sexual representations, and civic rights (Avdela 2005; Γιαννακόπουλος 2005; Yan-nakopoulos 2009; Apostolidou 2017). All these forms of male violence and the overlapping patriarchal domination are linked not only with migrants from Albania and Caucasus, upon which I will further concentrate (de Rapper 2002; Ζάχου and Καλεράντε 2009; Τσιμπιρίδου

2009, 2013b), but also with the hidden stories of violence and repression within the Greek family. Drawing on material from an example of oral literature that could make sense for the anthropological hermeneutics, including the impact of symbolic constructions to the embodiment of dispositions, I would like to allude to the story that is narrated in *The Song of the Dead Brother*,¹² which presents an almost catholic diffusion from the Balkans to Caucasus. The song speaks of the great mistake of Areti's brother, Konstantis, in urging his mother to give her only daughter as a bride to a foreign country. The deadly spree that follows this journey and the mother's curses on her son's grave haunt him to the point that he rises from his grave to bring back Areti and restore orderliness. In a wider framework of relationships and representations that highlight and point out female foreignness, women's inferior position as a 'kseni' /stranger in her new house, as almost all marriage songs in the Balkans very distinctively mention (Τερζοπούλου and Ψυχογιού 1984), *The Song of the Dead Brother* seems to reveal repressed emotions, passions, and untold injustices at the expense of women. With regards to the loving and non-confrontational relationship between mother/daughter, and even the repressed prohibitions of incestuous fantasies, the relationship between brother/sister, and the highly hostile attitudes towards the bride on behalf of the sisters in law, seems to be the norm (Xanthakou 1985, 1995). Over time, this song and its symbolic meaning seems to come to heal conflicts, wounds, and voids for untold passions and mistakes, which no reality and no ethnographic realism can depict, as they are never stated explicitly. According to the analysis of Margarita Xanthakou, *The Song of the Dead Brother* marks an imaginary justification of the paradoxical affects, incest prohibitions, and traumas, connotations of fantasies about female re-appropriation, and counter kidnapping by a beloved brother. In my ethnographic fieldwork among Pomak people in Thrace, counter kidnapping of a young woman is a moral obligation of the collective response, accomplished by her brother and his friends, who act with solidarity within the community when it happened against her will (Tsibiridou 2000). On the contrary, in Mani and Crete, within patrilineal and patrilocal antagonistic environments with a high investment in honor as men's social capital, the bride's kidnapping literally and symbolically attributes added value, as a male achievement, to his *egoismos*. This is a common practice of representation and knowledge among the Cretan people of the mountainous areas, and a common theme for literary texts (see Γαλανάκη 2006). It relates to the mode of circulation and appropriation of 'pramata' /lit.things, commodities, praxis/events in the Cretan social dialect, which could include material commodities, animals, and appropriation of other human's agency, i.e., that of women. Beyond the rhetoric that builds on the poetics of manhood (Herzfeld 1985), I noted the lack of study on the appropriation of female bodies' agency through the local matrix of patriarchal/patronage coloniality detected in material and symbolic acts, as well as the fields of the imaginary (folk songs, literature, cinema, etc.).¹³

The aforementioned patriarchal order results in interesting national and religious gender identities, as well as over identification with the role of motherhood for the sake of the family and the nation (Apostolidou 2017). Following the matrix of every colonial technology and genealogy,¹⁴ Greek nationalism, Christian Orthodox religious misogynist representations, bourgeois hypocrisy, and female negative reciprocity or modesty habitus seem to have been interwoven to promote the toxic militaristic manhood of captivity and masculine domination as control over vulnerable female and other minor/subaltern bodies. This critical discussion on masculinities should be open in comparison with other minority conditions and more decolonial terms.¹⁵

5. On Family at Risk and Female Dispossession: How Women Become Men in Albania

The Song of the Dead Brother constitutes a key to comparative understanding, allowing us to move from the aforementioned representations of female foreignness to extreme customary practices of sworn virgins in Albania and other Western Balkan areas. I suggest observing these extreme practices of gender crossing and sexual deprivation far from the exoticism that could distinguish them (Šarčević 2004); the multiple compressions of their symbolic meanings could work as a metonymy for social practices that aim to add value

to the family by distorting female agency. I see the case of sworn virgins as a custom-signifier for the extreme expropriation of the female body and alienation of female agency in the male-centric patriarchal environment of the Western Balkans. In other words, by following what sworn virgins can do through transgender embodied practices, not only the restrictions women should face in order to develop agency and autonomy could be discovered, but equally obvious would become those challenges and risks male bodies should face in order to act as heads of the family within extreme rival social environments.

As relevant studies suggest, from the 18th century onwards, a family unit without male heirs in northern Albania and other Western Balkan countries resorted to the solution of “sworn virgins” in order to continue to control rural properties, fields, pasturelands, and other sources (Young 2001; Young and Twigg 2009; Brković 2021). These women were driven to this solution of sexual deprivation for life (i.e., to remain virgins) in an attempt protect the rights of a family, domestic group/household that was left with no representation by a male head, and sometimes also to undermine unwanted matchmaking.

More specifically, in an adverse mountainous environment with harsh male antagonisms for the control of the sources of wealth in the western part of the early modern Ottoman Balkans, women—who must practice exogamy—were exchanged among households and tribes, remaining foreign and constituting bodies of extreme labor exploitation and reproductive capacities. This is a customary practice in the context or in dialogue with the codified customary law of *Kanun*,¹⁶ a means of regulatory common law still in practice until recently in northern Albania (Shryock 1988), and more widely in regions of the Western Balkans (Kosovo and Montenegro) (Mangalakova 2004). This custom concerns a means of deviation in the *Kanun* code, the reference to which allows us to read the main characteristics of the rule of patriarchy in the region: bearing of male children in succession and handover of goods on the basis of blood; living among competitive domestic groups and clans ‘fis’, in Albania, that are governed by hierarchies of territoriality and power under conditions of captivity and expropriation; and practicing exogamy of exchanged women, whose virginity ensures their exchange value, while their modest behavior entails their ultimate submission to male protectors: father, brother, husband (de Rapper 2000).

According to Margaret Hasluck [1954]’s (Hasluck [1954] 2003) study, which focused on the competitive and regulatory framework of *Kanun* for blood feuds/vendettas among males, a woman does not count, as she is not considered ‘blood’, which points to a human soul or living being (using murder of a dog as a counter example):

“A woman was a sack for transferring things” (translation of the expression from Albanian); namely she was the means with which family survived and her murder meant a great loss for her husband’s family. Besides, women did not bear arms and thus they had the same fate as the elderly, children, crazy, so they had to protect themselves from avengers. What is more, they were always considered as objects of property that belonged, while unmarried, to their father and later on to their husband. Their father had the right of exploitation of their labor until their marriage and their husband bought them in delight. Objects of property were not to suffer during vendettas. After all, what was prevalent was the feeling of shame for a “strong” man to kill something as inferior as a woman”. (Hasluck [1954] 2003, p. 214)

Her murder did not create any further vendetta complications, as her ‘blood was lost’ within the family. Typical rituals for her murder usually concerned the case of a concurrent murder of her lover as well, so that a vendetta between new families would not start. In any case, every woman was represented as a minor of the man-protector-guarantor:

“If the offense was more serious, her vow was not accepted. A man—her man, her son, her brother—had to swear on her behalf just like he would do for his elderly father or his underage child”. (Hasluck [1954] 2003, p. 149)

In such a strictly patriarchal framework, exception for the jurisdiction of control is given as a possibility to women only if they socially mutate to males as sworn virgins. An inviolable term for the change of social gender is the promise, by means of a vow, to

be lifelong deprived of sexual life and the right to reproduction. The oath of virginity comprises a premise and tactic of temporary living in a house that we encounter in the tribes of northern Albania, Kosovo, and among the Slavs of southern Serbia and Montenegro. In these regions, upon a sworn virgin's death, material things are handed down to collateral biological relatives, while the house and the name are lost. In societies where we encounter cases of sworn virgins, women are destined to become working hands and a means for reproduction, while protection and the totality of the fortune and the household comprise an ultimate jurisdiction of male leaders of the family, seniors in the confraternity, the tribe, and the community. The division between houses of 'dominant conquerors as invaders' and houses of 'natives' proves the kind of patriarchal enclosure in northern Albania. The expropriation of females as subaltern bodies that takes place under captivity terms becomes apparent in relation to the inferior feminized position of *sogambbron*/groom that lives in the house of her wife's parents in southern Albania (de Rapper 2000). Lastly, as honor in Albania is conceptualized through its local socio-cultural meanings of '*besa*'/lit. trust, its genealogy shows the importance the concept acquires when males of the household are contacted by the state apparatus, both in its Ottoman and modern state version (Blumi 2014).

With the end of the Cold War, the interest in the phenomenon of sworn virgins was revived (Young and Twigg 2009). Along with the interest in the *Kanun* code, the vendetta phenomenon, and the 'Albanian mafia', sworn virgins comprised yet another case of gender exoticism in the chain of balkanization of the Balkans (Young 2001; Mustafa and Young 2008; Šarčević 2004; Brković 2021). This forced captivity of another gender and the loss for sexual life that emerges through antagonism among households, among dominant invaders and local houses, which Ottoman governance intensified in the past, works as a signifier of the local patriarchal coloniality, resounding also in the present. In the present analysis, the case of 'sworn virgins' metonymically translates the patriarchal coloniality of distorted captivity, according to which female subaltern bodies are condemned to live in a dominant masculinity apparatus without sexual life, or in the shadow of male masculinity. As the socialist past progressed, patriarchy was intensified as a kind of dual subordination of women to the state (obligation of public employment) and to the house (housework, reproduction, care), while women had to return home and take care of children and family, while males had to migrate, after the 1990s (de Rapper 2002; Ζάχου and Καλεράντε 2009). The prolonged period of transition to neoliberal capitalism after the fall of the socialist regime, the consecutive neoliberal crises, and the compulsory movements of women with their exit from the country and later the house, seemed to turn the nuclear family into a field of conflicts and doubt over male supremacy. Not accidentally, as we read ever more often in the Greek press, incidents of domestic violence and femicides are increasing, while women of Albanian origin revolt, demonstrating defiance and expressing a desire for emancipation (Τσιμπιρίδου 2009). However, the substrate of the family trap of protective and emotional patriarchy supports enclosures and captivities like domestic violence and the exploitation of female labor inside and outside of the house. In any case, customary practices, and representations of this pattern of patriarchal disposition, are still in force. Additionally, any other historical and social analysis of this extreme cross gender practice makes it possible to speak more eloquently of female otherness and the permanent risk of expropriation of their agency and autonomy, as well as the possibilities of transgenderism as an ambivalent empowering practice of self-assertion.¹⁷

6. Captivity and Bride Kidnapping in the Caucasus

At the antipode of the imaginary counter-kidnapping of Areti by her dead brother Konstantis, significant narratives about bride kidnapping in Greece and other areas of the Balkans in the past, as well as symbolic wedding rituals and songs, are urging us to turn our attention to the kind of customary practices that are still applied in Georgia or, after insistence, to other neighboring countries in the Caucasus. At this point, I suggest we pay closer attention to patriarchal enclosures of literal bride captivity in the Caucasus as a means of expropriation of female bodies, after the customary practice of 'bride kidnapping'. Often,

‘bride kidnapping’, as relevant studies from Georgia (Werner 2009; Kamm 2012; Tsibiridou 2009) suggest, is a strategy to avoid the costs of the wedding ceremony, which involves a large audience of guests. A wedding in Georgia, before and even during the Soviet regime, was not considered an interpersonal affair of the couple, as it also implicated families through female exogamic practices.¹⁸ This is also the case among clans (*fares*), kin members, and partners, as well as among Rom families, in Greece.¹⁹ On the other hand, intensification of the phenomenon in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, as we read in anthropological studies (Werner 2009), is linked to the invention of a tradition by populations of the steppe in the post-Soviet era. Tradition entails kidnapping as the main action of the wedding’s realization, especially from the moment that the kidnapped bride wears, not always of her own will, the bandana of a married woman. The invention of this tradition in the post-Soviet condition (Kamm 2012) obviously comprises a new enclosure of female bodies that are sacrificed in the altar of culture, for postcolonial reasons, as Russian hegemony and Soviet governmentality are seen locally. Nevertheless, this tradition attributes symbolically and metonymically the trope of the family-exogamy-virginity patriarchal pattern, with terms of literal and symbolic captivity. In the Caucasus, authority and subordination are given relations with terms of dependence, “captivity”, and hospitality, which comply with hierarchies and hegemonies among dominant and subordinate people, within contrasting environments, fields of overlapping dominations, bordering processes, and Orientalistic imagination of Western civilized and Oriental uncivilized customs (Dragadze 1988, p. 107; Grant 2005; Sideri 2016; Τσιμπιρίδου 2018).

As a migrant friend who traveled from Georgia to Greece, and key informant, very distinctively used to tell me, when she referred to the power of the custom until today, not only in Georgia but also among Georgian migrants in Greece, “the bride has not only to be a virgin, but also to be somewhat like a kid (*‘kalislivi’* /lit. ‘woman-kid’). In this way, she will neither complain, nor talk back, because she will feel like a stranger in her husband’s home” (Tsibiridou 2009, p. 44). Since 2000, I have often heard stories of Georgian women’s disobedience that are expressed with a wish of undermining male control over their bodies. This control is associated with a constant supervision over their modesty, as well as the prevention, from a negative rumor for a dissipated sexual life, of suspicions capable of destroying their lives and their family reputation. In discussion with other female informants, migrants from Georgia and Armenia, I noted that my interlocutors were dressed and primped excessively and provocatively, danced and consumed alcohol moderately in contrast to men, had affairs in secret, and were over-invested in the role of mother, waiting for reciprocation from their son while annoyingly supervising their daughter-in-law lives. They called upon religious modesty in order to legalize their everyday autonomy, they escaped even their husband’s or son’s supervision with masterful maneuvers, even when they themselves became the providers of the house, working as migrants in another country. Traveling to the Caucasus, one cannot but recognize the significance that women’s otherness acquires in creating and sustaining patriarchy under the terms of female otherness and alienation. Female reproductive bodies acquire additional exchange value among competitive houses for conspicuous consumption and hospitality (Dragadze 1988),²⁰ sharing, among other material and symbolic goods, negative female reputations. Selective affinities with neighboring areas, such as with Russia (Kukhterin 2000), Armenia (Ishkanian 2002), Azerbaijan, and even Afghanistan and Kurdish Anatolia, could lead us to the issue of honor crimes, as well as to other practices of captivity and femicide as extreme control over female bodies (Tapper/Lindisfarne 1991; Moghadam 2004), alongside struggles for female emancipation from this trope of patriarchal coloniality. However, these are topics and dimensions that are even more complicated and difficult to address in the present analysis. Even if they raise a challenging comparative possibility of the momentum of state apparatus and its administrative concentrative control mechanisms (Sirman 2014) for how local female bodies respond in order to surpass or reproduce the patriarchal coloniality of captivity and its devastating characteristics over female embodied experiences of consent and revolt, I think it is better to associate them with other productive

comparative post-colonial frameworks: the ones where new patriarchal captivities relate to long lasting slavery and colonization processes, technologies, and experiences. From Central Asia and Kurdish Anatolia to Sub-Saharan Africa, a challenging field in the study of other palimpsest patriarchal versions/patterns becomes apparent, shaped by multiple processes of colonialism, slavery, islamization and missionary conversion to christianity, male honor, and overlapping dominations, captivity of female agency, and dispossession and loss of embodied autonomy (Lindisfarne 2005; Τσιμπιρίδου 2021; Peteet 1994; Τσεκένης 2020).

7. Conclusions: Whose Agency, Whose Coloniality? When the Ethnography on the Post-Ottoman Condition Meets with Decolonial Feminist Critique

The above analysis has drawn from some representative anthropological and historical data on family structures and gender representations, based on the ethnographic literature and my previous ethnographic experience in Greece and Anatolia, as well as research on migrants from the Western Balkans and the Caucasus (Tsibiridou 1988, 1996a, 1996b, 2000, 2009, 2011, 2016, 2017; Τσιμπιρίδου 2006, 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2018, 2021). Typical patterns and narratives served as data to set up a comparative methodology for the study of patriarchy from Greece to the Western Balkans and then to the Caucasus, as a palimpsest modality of domination that regards females as subaltern and colonized bodies. Male honor, patrilineality, patrilocality, and female exogamy, as well as extreme customary practices, are placing female alienation, exclusion, otherness, and dispossession at the very base of a palimpsest pyramid of multiple patriarchal dominations, naturalizing women's dispossession and the expropriation of their agency. In addition, I have identified how the moral codes of 'honor' are adapted to cultural, nationalist, and modern bourgeois patriarchal assumptions through liberal capitalist and socialist modern colonial male 'orthopedic' thinking norms and civic virtues (Santos 2007). This approach, even if it takes into consideration the previous studies on 'honor' in the Mediterranean context (Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers 1992), aimed to reopen the agenda from another, non-male-centric gaze on family and endogamy as the main reason for the expropriation of female agency. Instead of anchoring the analysis on Abrahamic, Roman and Hellenic traditions, emphasizing their centrality to Mediterranean society as myth, history, and moral frame (da Col and Shryock 2017), from a female embodied positionality that is common to critical feminist approaches, i.e., black, indigenous, and peripheral feminisms (Lugones 2010; Çağlayan 2021; Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Daher-Nashif 2013), I have tried to emphasize and illuminate the added value of the reproductive and labor force capacities of female bodies (Mies [1986] 1998; Federici 2020). Using a decolonial approach, by putting emphasis on female exogamy producing otherness and the expropriation of their agency as vulnerable/subaltern bodies, I discussed the meanings of patriarchal palimpsest coloniality in specific settings. The latter worked as matrices for male superiority/supremacy dispositions that surpass the colonial statement on honor and shame in the Balkan and Mediterranean countries.

More specifically, as the above analysis engages with decolonial feminist critique (Lugones 2010; Piccardi 2021), I have sought to deface patriarchies shaped upon different local and similar global matrices of coloniality. The "coloniality of power", according to Quijano (2000), seems to be located in the complexity of overlapped hegemonies, but equally in the counter power of the powerless. Both seem to generate some so-called paradoxical subversive practices: matriarchy within patriarchy, where aged women and mothers act as guardians of patriarchal moral values and male honor (Simi 1983; Lacoste-Dujardin 1985; Handman 1983; Seremetakis 1991), or negative reciprocity among female mates (Xanthakou 1985, 1993, 1995). Self-enclosure, according to Western stereotypes of bourgeois ethics, monotheist religious modesty, and national ideals, work through trivial *habitus* and dispositions. According to the insights of Bourdieu (1977, 2001), coloniality is established by the constant interaction between the symbolically structured and socially inculcated dispositions of individual agents and the social field structured by symbolically mediated relations of domination (Bourdieu in Yuval-Davis 2011). In this framework, this palimpsest patriarchy seems to act as an inclusive matrix for diverse forms of domination between

the two genders, within the same gender, and also between dominant and subaltern bodies within asymmetric environments of inequality and multiple hegemonies. Thus, patriarchy seems to become more and more the matrix of coloniality, established by colonial technologies, promoted by modern state racist and sexist capitalism, and at some point, by state socialism too.

However, female bodies in this part of the post-Ottoman world, from Greece to the Western Balkans and then to the Caucasus, are bodies that were exchanged for centuries among families for reasons of honor and interest. They were constantly supervised, punished, and controlled by the family and the community, while religious justification was establishing female embodied inferiority in a *longue durée* process. Female bodies had to endure invisible borders of modesty and decency, enclosures, amputations, and honor crimes; practices that draw upon customs, rituals, and representations producing female otherness and second-class citizenship in the framework of modern states. In such a context, matriarchy within patriarchy as male superiority/supremacy and technologies of domination matters. In a palimpsest way priority is given to husbands through modern romantic love and to dictators and oligarchs running the state and the capitalist economy, along with a patriarch God, who guarantees moral individual ethics of gender segregation and heteronormativity. Domestic violence is multiplied at the expense of female bodies as long as they claim visibility and independence, resorting to actions of disobedience and claiming emancipation in the name of civic virtues and human rights (Tsibiridou 2017, 2021; Tsibiridou and Bartsidis 2016; Τσιμπιρίδου 2018, 2021). Under these circumstances, female bodies often function through the agency colonized bodies can enroll: implementing borders and gossip accusations and embodying self-control through modesty, religious enclosure, motherhood, and sexual abstinence. Any vindication of emancipation, following the dispositions for submission, often collides with strong denial by female bodies themselves to recognize the invisible borders of the local patriarchal colonial order. Going back to modern Greek reality and bearing in mind the local dysfunctional patriarchalist coloniality of male honor and female otherness and/or modesty, as well as similarities with those of migrants and refugees coming from the Western Balkans and the Caucasus, we realize how important it is to compare regionally the post-Ottoman condition, and follow through feminist agendas, postcolonial critique, and the palimpsest methodology the encounter with European colonial genealogies and technologies over subaltern bodies, which are usually female ones. Thus, patriarchy as a palimpsest of overlapping dominations for the first and everlasting colonized female bodies, works, in its local version, as a matrix of dispositions for dominant and dominated bodies too, feeding it with habitus and symbolic representations, specific social discriminations, gendered subjectivities, and citizenship.

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Notes

- ¹ The present paper suggests returning to the use of ‘patriarchy’ in its double bind connotation, looking for the genealogies and the patterns of the submission of women to men with authority and minor to dominant bodies. From the pre-modern to late-capitalist era, masculine domination shaped ‘kyriarchy’, lit/in Greek, the ‘domination of the kyriarchos/master’s order’. This term could be an alternative for the replacement of the contested term, i.e., patriarchy—in the way it has been used by liberal and radical feminism, objecting to Marxist approaches (see in Walby 1990)—as it considers male authority, translated in Western languages as ‘domination’. In this approach, the so-called awkward relationship of feminism and anthropology (Strathern 1987) is reconsidered based on the impact of recognition of this double submission and the need for complementary dialogues between anthropological analysis, ethnographic research, and feminist methodologies. This discussion could not be further developed in the present analysis. However, under the lens and tools of postcolonial, decolonial, and black feminist critique, the comparative anthropological survey over such post-Ottoman patriarchal geographies could be an example.
- ² On uses of the palimpsest methodology for subaltern bodies in Turkey and Anatolia, see in: Fişek (2018); Iğsiz (2021); Τσιμπιρίδου in Çağlayan (2021).
- ³ “As a way to think with and through contact and frictions, a palimpsest methodological approach is in conversation with what King (2019) called the Black shoal, wherein, analytically, a shoaling effect signals disruption in movement and flow of normative time and space, routes, and knowledge systems. A shoal is indeterminate, unstable, and difficult to chart, as it forces a normative routine to shift, change direction, adjust, and pause. This process of movement and encounter transforms the qualities, and more specifically, the methodological questions involved, in ways that halt normative sensibilities and logics” (Okello and Duran 2021, p. 4).
- ⁴ For this reason I engage the present analysis with the critique on gender, coloniality, inequality and feminist critique, launched by Maria Lugones (2010). On coloniality see also in Mignolo (2000) and Quijano (2000, Quijano [1992](2007)).
- ⁵ See Barkey (2008) and Bryant (2016, pp. 14–25).
- ⁶ For a map of post-Ottoman Greece, the Western Balkans, and the Caucasus, I borrow a typical one from <https://georgiaphiles.wordpress.com/2012/12/17/the-balkans-and-the-caucasus/>, accessed on 7 June 2021.
- ⁷ After the fall of the communist regimes in the 1990s, the Greeks in power, mostly middle-class white collar workers and farmers, developed, mostly through political patronage, an attitude of prosperity, exploitation, and arrogance over their poor ex-communist neighbors, profiting from the labor of the migrants and spending, through conspicuous consumption, the European Union’s funds, which were supposed to target the monetary European integration of the country.
- ⁸ In a decolonial perspective I suggest considering these cosmologies performed by subaltern bodies, as dynamic counter hegemony practices, a field of material and symbolic actions, feeding minor bodies with the strength of suffering and therapy (Danforth 1983). To face multiple socio-cultural obstacles, discriminations, and exclusions, these minor/subaltern bodies present interesting analogies with the challenges faced by female bodies in the broader studied region. This is based on a work in progress in the field, so we cannot develop the idea more at the present, based on a theoretical hypothesis discussing patriarchy and seeing women as homologous to other subaltern bodies, as first and ever-lasting colonized ones (Mies 1988; Santos 2016).
- ⁹ Beyond the debate on the instrumental use of *Zadruga* for national-ideological reasons, the non-hierarchical and non-antagonist social and gender relations inside and between such extended family domestic groups, aspiring attitudes and habitus on the antipode of blood-feud societies, investing in male honor and negative reciprocity necropolitics, must be noted (see in Todorova 1997; Brunnbauer 2012; Hristov 2014a, 2014b).
- ¹⁰ From this insightful theoretical discussion I do not share Bourdieu’s generalized views on honor/shame for the Mediterranean world, and I missed the critical feminist discussion on patriarchy from the period of the writing of his study (Bourdieu 2001).
- ¹¹ See Παπανικολάου (2018) for a detailed analysis of such representative films, i.e., *Dogtooth* 2009, by G. Lanthimos and *Strella* (2009) by P. Koutras. Both films deal with paternal/patriarchal authority, affects, and troubled subjectivities.
- ¹² For an interesting analysis in the Maniot context see Xanthakou (1985, 1993).
- ¹³ This is from personal communication with people in Crete, but it can also be found through the ethnographies of (Herzfeld 1985; Τσαντηρόπουλος 2010), and in the literature (see in Γαλανάκη 2006) as is the case of the famous TV series *Sasmos* (reconciliation among hostile *soya/fares/oikogeneies*/kin dissent lines), shown on Greek television since September 2021.
- ¹⁴ For an interesting analysis relating aggressive masculinity to the resistance of the Intifada in Palestine see Peteet (1994).
- ¹⁵ Critical postcolonial knowledge on masculinities, as is the case of men coming from the Kurdish minority and displaced from Anatolia to Istanbul (Mutluer 2011), seem to open a path for defacing patriarchy in more decolonial terms and with comparative perspective (Τσιμπιρίδου in Çağlayan 2021).
- ¹⁶ For the code and the ritual of vendetta settlements, in which only men from antagonizing households are involved, which in turn fall in broader genealogical patrilineal teams of origin, see the study of Margaret Hasluck [1954] (Hasluck [1954] 2003). It is important to mention that, in the Greek space, the phenomenon of vendetta and male antagonisms primarily concerns the areas of Crete and Mani.
- ¹⁷ For an ambivalent commitment on transgenderism and its possibilities via artistic creativity, feminist critique, and queer subaltern politics see, among other interesting cultural studies, my ethnographic approach from Istanbul (Tsibiridou 2014).

- ¹⁸ “Through the rule that wives should be brought in from other villages, the network of affines and matrilineal kin are spread across the region...” (Dragadze 1988, p. 99). “Even in the royal family the traditional exogamic rules were respected” (ibid., p. 107).
- ¹⁹ Not to be kidnapped and thus implicate vendettas among the clans is the first reason to give, through arranged marriage, underaged daughters (Ιωαννίδου 2004). However, it is a common truth also among Cretan mountain villages, as we discovered from personal communications and the literature (Γαλανάκη 2006).
- ²⁰ Hospitality and captivity seem to lie on the same level of social values, not only in the Caucasus but also in Greece. In Greek, there is a typical relative expression in response to the other’s hospitable attitude: ‘me sklavosse me tin filokseniatou’/lit. ‘he/she has enslaved me with his/her hospitality’. For a return to the study of hospitality, see the study of Candea and da Col (2012). For Greece, see Herzfeld (1987) and du Boulay (1991). For Caucasus, see Voutira (2016) and Sideri (2016).

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