

THE OXFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF
ECONOMIC
HISTORY

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Editor in Chief



VOLUME 1

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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS
2003

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ETIENNE VAN DE WALLE

MARRIAGE PAYMENTS. Marriage payments consist of wealth transfers between spouses (or their families) before, during, or at the termination of the marriage, and wealth transfers from parents to their children at the time when the children get married. The term *dowry* designates the wealth transfer provided by the bride's family to the bride at the time of her marriage. The dowry can be managed and used by the groom and his family, but the bride retains the ownership, and she is entitled to get her dowry back should the marriage dissolve. *Brideprice* indicates the wealth transfer from the groom's family to the bride's family; the kin of the groom transfers wealth to the kin of the bride in exchange for the bride, who joins the groom's family. *Marriage gifts* refer to gifts and wealth transfers from the groom to the bride herself. Regretably, there is no uniform taxonomy across disciplines on this topic.

Customs of Ancient Civilizations. With some exceptions, past civilizations characterized by dowries were also virilocal (the bride moved into the groom's household) and monogamous; husbands often simultaneously gave marriage gifts (or endowments) to their wives. The relative importance of dowries from parents to their daughters and marriage gifts from husbands to their wives greatly varied from time to time.

Dowries (*sheriktum*) existed in such ancient civilizations as the Sumerian, Akkadian, and Babylonian in the third and second millennia BCE. At the time of the betrothal, the groom offered a marriage gift (*terhatum*), usually in cash, to the bride's household, who in turn bestowed it to the bride herself together with the dowry: unlike the dowry, however, it was optional, and in later Babylonian times it became less frequent. If the husband died or divorced his wife, she was entitled to keep both her dowry and the marriage gift.

Dowries were also central features of marriage customs in both ancient Greece and Rome. In the Greece described

in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (ninth to eighth centuries BCE), the groom paid a brideprice (*hédna*) to the bride's household and offered gifts to the bride in addition to those given by the bride's father. Later, in the Greece of the city-states (eighth to fourth centuries BCE), the brideprice disappeared and the dowry (*proix*) became the prominent marriage transfer. In Rome in early times, most women married *cum manu*: dowries became part of their husbands' estates. At the marriage's dissolution, wives together with their children had the right to inherit an equal share of their husbands' property. In contrast, by the first century BCE, most marriages were *sine manu*: although the husband could manage the dowry, at the marriage's dissolution he had to return it to his wife's family or directly to his wife. Marriage gifts from husbands to wives (*donatio ante or propter nuptias*) became widespread in the late period of the empire in the third century CE.

Among Jews in Biblical times, the groom family paid a brideprice (*mohar*) to the bride's household, who in turn partly gave it back to the bride herself. At the same time, bride parents provided their daughter with a dowry (*chiluhim*), which consisted of her share of the inheritance from her father. Unlike the brideprice, whose value was customary, the size of the dowry varied according to the wealth of the bride's household. The biblical brideprice later disappeared. From the Mishnah and Talmudic period (200–600) onward, instead of paying a brideprice to the bride's parents, the groom provided a marriage gift directly to the bride.

Medieval Western Europe and the Muslim Empire. The pattern of marriage payments in western Europe in the second half of the first millennium looks like a patchwork reflecting the influences of Roman law, the customs of Germanic tribes, and the rules promoted by the Catholic Church in favor of monogamy and against incest. In ancient times, among Germanic tribes, grooms paid brideprices to the bride's parents at marriage. From the sixth to the tenth century, women received wealth transfers from both their paternal families and their husbands. At marriage, daughters moved into their in-laws' households and received dowries (under Roman law) or fathers' contributions (under Germanic law) from their natal families. The ancient brideprice of Germanic descent disappeared and was substituted with the marriage gift given by the groom to the bride herself. The balance between the dowry and the marriage gift gradually shifted. Around the tenth to eleventh centuries, the dowry regained prominence everywhere in western Europe, and by the thirteenth century it had become the main marriage transfer.

In the Muslim Empire, according to the norms established in the Qur'an, transfers of wealth associated with marriage occurred in both directions. The groom offered a brideprice to the bride's family in compensation for the



MARRIAGE PAYMENT. Women carrying a bride's dowry and her belongings to the groom's home, Lendak, Czechoslovakia, 1987. (© John Eastcott/Yva Momatiuk/Woodfin Camp and Associates, New York)

loss of a daughter, and he made a promise to provide the *mahr* (dower or marriage gift) to the wife during and/or at the termination of the marriage. The bride's family also provided a dowry for their daughter at the time of her marriage. When receiving a dowry, a daughter was usually excluded from the inheritance if her brothers were alive at the father's death.

Asia. At the same time, when in Europe the dowry was reemerging as the major wealth transfer at marriage, in Song China (960–1279) dowry payments grew in importance with respect to the marriage gifts conveyed by the groom's family. During the Tang dynasty (617–907), aristocratic grooms paid substantial brideprices (in land, livestock, or silk) to bride families. Three centuries later, in Song China, the dowry from the bride's family became the major marriage payment across all social and economic groups. In contemporary China, there seems to be a divergence between urban and rural environments. In cities, both grooms and brides contribute to the constitution of a conjugal fund. In contrast, although both dowries and brideprices exist in rural communities, brideprices are much larger than dowries.

The historical origin of the dowry system in India has been traced to the Hindu marriage among high castes in North India. Until the end of the medieval period, Brahma marriage practiced by high castes involved the giving of a daughter together with a dowry from the bride's family to the groom family, whereas in the Asura marriage, common

among lower castes, a brideprice was paid by the groom to marry the bride. During the colonial period, marriages with dowries became the only legally accepted form of marriage among all social groups and castes. Brideprices are common in South India among the Dravidian kinship groups.

Dowries versus Brideprices. Anthropologists, demographers, economists, and historians have advanced various theories to explain under which conditions dowries instead of brideprices are more likely to prevail. According to the economist Gary Becker, brideprices and dowries are pecuniary transfers that clear the marriage market when sex ratios are unbalanced; in a society where women (men) are less numerous, a man (woman) will pay a brideprice (dowry) in order to attract a bride (groom). Historical and demographic research has been unable to confirm or reject that hypothesis conclusively.

The anthropologist Jack Goody maintains that a dowry is a *pre-mortem* inheritance from the bride's parents to the bride; in societies with dowries, daughters receive wealth transfers from their parents through dowries at the time of the marriage, whereas sons are bequeathed the family estate. "Diverging devolution" is the term Goody coined to describe this difference in wealth transfers according to gender. Dowries are more likely to emerge in stratified societies (like the Eurasian ones), in which there is a significant wealth and status inequality. Parents provide their daughters with dowries to ensure that their married

daughters continue to enjoy the same wealth and social status they had in their natal families. In societies such as many cultures in Africa, where there is little social and economic stratification, brideprices are more likely to emerge. Unlike dowries, which are transfers from the kin of the bride to the bride herself, brideprices are transactions from the kin of the groom to the kin of the bride in exchange for the transfer of the bride. The bride's father will then use the brideprice received from the son-in-law's kin to find brides for his sons.

Ester Boserup has suggested an alternative theory for the origin and the development of dowries and brideprices. Brideprices are more likely to emerge in economies, such as most African societies, in which agriculture is based on light tools (e.g., the hoe) and women are actively engaged in agricultural tasks. In these economies, by paying a brideprice to the bride's family, a groom acquires her labor force and her ability to bear children. In contrast, in economies like medieval Europe, in which the emergence of the heavy plow resulted in mainly men engaging in agriculture and limited the economic role of women, a bride's parents provided their daughter with a dowry as a way to compensate the groom's household for taking care of the bride.

Finally, we can note that the provision of dowries and brideprices also has the potential of altering the bargaining power of the spouses within the household. A bride with a large dowry might have a larger say in intrahousehold resource allocation than a bride with a small dowry. The provision of dowries from the bride's parents to the bride and of marriage gifts from the husband to his wife also contributes to the standard of living of a married woman in case of divorce or widowhood. This was clearly the purpose of dowries and marriage gifts in many past societies.

[See also *Inheritance Systems and Marriage.*]

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MARISTELLA BOTTICINI

MARSHALL, ALFRED (1842–1924), British economist.

Marshall was born in Bermondsey, South London, the son of William Marshall, a clerk at the Bank of England, and Rebecca Oliver. Educated at Merchant Taylors' School, he then went to Saint John's College at the University of Cambridge. He was elected to a fellowship at Saint John's, where his initial design to study physics fell victim to an interest in philosophy and ultimately in economics. In 1866, he started working through John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* (1848). In 1868, Saint John's appointed him to a special lectureship in moral science. For the next nine years he worked to establish political economy as a serious subject at Cambridge. Among his early pupils were H. S. Foxwell, John Neville Keynes, Henry Cunynghame, and Mary Paley (with whom he published his first book *Economics of Industry* in 1879). Marriage to Mary Paley in 1877 led to the loss of his fellowship and his move to University College, Bristol, as principal and professor of political economy. Ill health made him resign as principal in 1881; then in 1883, a position became available at Balliol College, University of Oxford, as a fellow and lecturer in political economy. His Oxford career was brief: Henry Fawcett died on 7 November 1884 and, on 14 December, Marshall was elected to his post as professor of political economy at Cambridge, one he would hold until 1908.

Although Marshall's characteristic doctrines were far developed by the mid-1870s and were taking their final form by 1883, with the exception of two papers, "The Pure Theory of Foreign Trade" and "The Pure Theory of Domestic Values," which were privately printed by Henry Sidgwick in 1879, nothing substantial appeared in print after his *Economics of Industry* until his *Principles of Economics* (1890). The latter was intended to be the first of a two-volume text, but Marshall had difficulty realizing his plan. Successive revised editions of that volume (there were six before he replaced it with *An Introductory Volume* in 1910) prevented progress on the later volume(s)—or on later volumes of its simpler version *Elements of the Economics of Industry* (1892). The project also grew to five volumes. To