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Problems with Greek clothing terminology

Abstract

The Greek vocabulary of clothing and textile production is rich and varied. It contains hundreds of words that have survived in literary texts or in epigraphic resources. Ancient lexicographers attempted to compile these terms but the meaning of many of them has disappeared, only a few can be identified with certainty in visual representations. The clothing nomenclature used today was mainly established by German academics in the 19th century and has become widely adopted. However, modern studies show that some of these interpretations could be questioned. In this situation, what words should be used to designate Greek garments represented on artworks? There are different propositions: continue to use Greek terms conventionally or try to establish alternative nomenclature. In this paper it is argued that the use of modern generic terms could minimise problems of interpretation in the study of Greek clothing

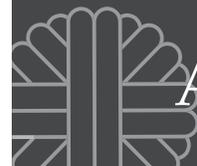
Key words: Greek clothing, terminology, historiography, nomenclature, terracotta figurines, *peplos*, *chiton*, *ependytes*

Introduction

“There is no part of Antiquities more curious and useful than that which treats of the habits; and none also more obscure. We are equally at a loss to find out the shape of a great many habits mentioned by Greek and Latin authors, and to discover by what terms they called other habits which monuments shew us the form of, without their name” (Montfaucon 1724, 3; Lee 2015, 11). Even 300 years after this statement by Bernard de Montfaucon and despite research by many modern authors, problems in the comprehension and interpretation of Greek garments persist. Our knowledge of ancient clothing is based on literary and epigraphic evidence and on iconography. Which terms did the ancient Greeks use to name the variety of clothes in their wardrobes and how should they be understood? Reconciling the terms with artistic representations is one of the main difficulties in the study of ancient Greek dress. Even if ancient Greek terms used by modern scholars were also used by the ancient Greeks themselves, it has been suggested that some of them have been wrongly interpreted by modern authors. The study of multiple sources of various kinds is crucial, since it allows the collection

of a large number of terms linked to textiles. However, the meanings of the majority of these words have disappeared over time and are now hard to understand. There are garments known from the iconographical sources, whose ancient names are unknown, and there are terms in ancient Greek texts whose characteristics are unknown (Papadopoulou and Roche 2017, 77). How should ancient Greek terms be used if their exact meaning is not secure?

Some scholars have attempted to interpret various Greek words and propose a coherent terminology. Terminology appeared as an independent and discreet discipline in the 20th century thanks to the works of Wüster (1968) and connected to the study of linguistics (Depecker 2002, 7; Roche 2012, 2626). According to Roche, the goal of terminology is “to eliminate ambiguity from technical languages by means of standardisation” (Roche 2012, 2626). This approach could be useful for other disciplines such as art history. The vagueness of terminology in costume studies “is perhaps one of the causes of communication difficulties between researchers” (Delaporte 1981, 12; translation by the author). Indeed, ancient Greek terms are not clearly defined in descriptions of artworks,



material or archaeological artefacts and this can lead to misunderstandings.

After outlining the problems of comprehension with the most common ancient Greek terms used in descriptions in art history or archaeological studies, the goal of this paper is to show that they should be used with caution or replaced with generic terms when describing works of art.

Terms attested in epigraphic and literary sources

Epigraphy is an important source for the study of Greek terminology. In many sanctuaries of the Greek world, it is attested that garments were dedicated to the gods and goddesses as costly offerings. According to Brøns, garments were in most cases worn by women before being offered to the gods (Brøns 2015, 70). The sacred property of the divinities was kept in treasuries and registered in temple inventories on stone for administrative purposes (Linders 1988, 37-40; Grand-Clément 2014, 4). These inventories have been found extensively in the Greek world: for example, at Tanagra (Brøns 2015, 45-50; Brøns 2016, 37) or Delos (Prêtre 2018) over a period from the fifth century BCE to the second century CE (Scott 2011, 240; Brøns 2015, 44). Although the textiles have disappeared, the terms for them have been preserved.

The inventories from the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia on the Athenian Acropolis are among the central documents for the study of Greek clothing: a total of six *stelae* from 349/348 BCE to 336/335 BCE. Cleland has demonstrated that many terms are used without specific descriptions (Cleland 2005). Although it is not known what these garments looked like, it is certain that they were present in Athens in the fourth century BCE. Some words refer to aspects of the clothing: there is occasionally information concerning the colour, the decoration or the state of the textile. Some are in rags, and they may have been damaged through use by the dedicant or in the sanctuary (Brøns 2015, 47-50).

These epigraphic documents are complemented by preserved literary texts. Homeric texts in particular provide several descriptions of Greek garments. Prior to the sixth century BCE, attestations in Greek texts are sporadic (Lee 2015, 5) but drama, philosophy and further genres of the Classical Period provide various designations for clothing. The poet Losfeld compiled a list of 360 words connected to garments or textile production in ancient Greek texts (Losfeld 1991, 327-339). However, some of them are unexplained or unclear. Although Losfeld's work has been criticised by several authors (Holtzmann 1995, 515; Morizot 1999, 115-117; Lee 2015, 17), it nevertheless shows the

extent and variety of Greek terminology relating to clothing in the literary sources.

From the first centuries of our era onwards, lexicographers compiled terms found in ancient texts and established a rich vocabulary. The most important of these is Julius Pollux who, in the second century CE, provides short sections of clothing terminology in his *Onomasticon*. Hesychius of Alexandria is also a noteworthy author, whose work dates to the fifth century CE. He compiled one of the richest lexicons and provided some words from poetry and non-Attic dialects in his *Lexicon*. These terms have largely fallen out of use but expand the Greek terminology (Llewellyn-Jones 2010, 34). Some terms may have been used only in a specific region. Ancient lexicographers do not provide an exhaustive terminology nor a detailed description of individual items of clothing and these texts were written several centuries after the Hellenistic period.

It is difficult to establish how the meanings of terms vary according to time periods and regions. It is possible that some words had a limited lifespan, appearing in Greek vocabulary before disappearing, going out of style or being used in a different way. "We must consider that ancient clothing terminology was open to a wide degree of flexibility and ... dress terms might have been changeable" (Llewellyn-Jones 2010, 24). In fact, the meaning of some words could have evolved significantly from Homeric texts to the time of the lexicographers in the first centuries of our era. Many interpretations could thus be correct only for a limited time period. Eustathius of Thessalonica claims that the same garment was called *chitoniskos* (χιτωνίσκος) by some and *ependytes* (ἐπενδύτης) by others (Eustathius of Thessalonica, *Comm. ad Iliadem* 18.595, p. 1166, line 51; Miller 1997, 176). The denomination *ependytes* is not attested before the Hellenistic period whereas *chitoniskos* is listed several times in the Brauron catalogues (Miller 1997, 176). Both terms may refer to the same garment for which the name has evolved over time.

Spantidaki argues that ancient Greek is characterised by a semantic richness, incomparable to modern European languages (Spantidaki 2016, 97). A single word could have different meanings with subtle nuances. A common word used to describe clothing decoration is *poikilos* (ποικίλος), attested in both epigraphic and literary sources. This is a polysemous adjective, employed in highly different contexts. Spantidaki defines it "as adorned with colours" and links it to the Stoa Poikile, a porch erected in the fifth century BCE on the Agora of Athens and decorated by the painters Micon of Athens and Polygnotos of Thasos



(Spantidaki 2016, 102). However, Grand-Clément points out that ancient authors used *poikilos* not only to describe colourful fabrics, but also to refer to a snake's skin, the feathers of birds or the shrewd skill of Odysseus (*Homer, Odyssey*, 3.163; Grand-Clément 2015, 406–407). In the last case, it means a manifold degree of competence. Plato is the first author to use this word in a negative sense, by comparing a *poikilos* coat to the political anarchy of Athens (Plato, *Republic*, 8.557c–558c; Villacèque 2010; Grand-Clément 2011, 257).

A translator should therefore interpret a word according to its context. When the text is not explicit or fragmentary, this could lead to errors in comprehension and translation. In her study of the perception of colours in archaic times, Grand-Clément alludes to the same difficulty: “The terms can therefore only be understood in relation to each other, they are integrated into a complex and mobile network, made up of associations and oppositions” (Grand-Clément 2011, 82; translation by the author). Thus, a term should be understood in a larger context. It is therefore difficult to interpret a word when the surviving text is largely incomplete.

Criticism of interpretations

The renewed interest for ancient literature in the renaissance brought the discovery of clothing terms. Lazare de Baïf was one of the first to be interested in Greek clothing terminology. In *De re vestiaria libellus*, he proposes a compendium of Greek and Latin clothing terms and establishes a parallel with dress in his own time period (Baïf 1535; Lee 2003, 124; Lee 2015, 11). His work is mainly based on texts by lexicographers and Latin authors. In the early 18th century, Bernard de Montfaucon was also a pioneer in the study of Greek garments. Lee notes that Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who studied ancient art, contributed surprisingly little to the study of Greek clothing (Lee 2015, 11). However, the real starting point for the investigation of Greek terminology came in the 19th century with the work of German academics. Several scholars proposed definitions for Greek words but their conclusions were often criticised. There were few certainties and the majority of the interpretations proposed were widely discussed. The following is a short overview of the main terms used in Greek clothing terminology and the associated problems.

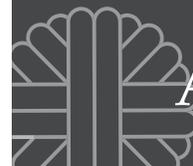
Peplos

The one we believe we know best” (Lee 2003, 118) is the term *peplos* (πέπλος), which was identified early. In modern studies, it is understood as a large wool tunic

(Bieber 1928, 17; Ridgway 1984, 30–31) worn by men and women. It was folded lengthwise, and the sides could be open or partially sewn. The upper part is also folded and held with dress fasteners. This term, for example, is used to describe the garment of Attic and Boeotian terracotta figurines in the Classical Period



Fig. 1: Boetia, Statuette of a woman, c. 450 BCE (Image: Art Institute Chicago, 2014.969)



(fig. 1), which is called *peplophoros* (Poulsen 1937, 48–59; Uhlenbrock 2016, 5). The Boeotian statuette held in the Art Institute of Chicago (United States) shows well preserved polychromy with red and yellow paint. Indeed, this indicates that dyeing was widely practised in the Greek world (Grand-Clément 2011, 164–173; Spantidaki 2016, 86–90).

The *peplos* was identified for the first time by the French humanist Claude Saumaise, but he limits the word to the sacred garment of Athena and other goddesses (Saumaise 1656; Lee 1999, 15; Lee 2003, 125). The study of Wolfgang Helbig represented a turning point. He suggested that in Homeric texts, the *peplos* is worn only by women and goddesses while the *chiton* is worn only by men. He thought that the *chiton*, and therefore the *peplos*, had Phoenician origins (Helbig 1884, 115–128; Lee 1999, 32–33; Lee 2003, 125). Franz Studniczka argued against this and proposed an Indo-European origin for the word *peplos*. He identified the same etymological root (**plo-* in *peplos*) and in the Latin words *palla* and *pallium* (Studniczka 1886, 15–16; Lee 2003, 132–136). Conforming to a passage in Herodotus' *Histories* (5.87–88), Studniczka interpreted Dorian fashion to refer to the *peplos*. This interpretation was widely adopted by scholars. Gabriel Leroux proposed a wider interpretation: he applied the term *peplos* to any garment pinned to the shoulder or folded (Leroux 1907, 385; Lee 2003, 134–135). According to Lee, by the Classical Period the *peplos* was no longer used in everyday life but was linked to ritual practices and the mythological world (Lee 1999, 357). This could explain why this term is uncommon in the Brauron catalogues. Indeed, Brøns has demonstrated that garments dedicated to Artemis Brauronia were the same as those worn in everyday life (Brøns 2015, 74).

Marinatos, in his study of Homeric clothing, disputed Studniczka's opinion and rejected the vision of the *peplos* as the main dress of women. He also proposed a broader meaning: the term could be used to designate a veil, but also any piece of textile (Marinatos 1967, 42–43). Abrahams had already argued that the Greek world used large quadrangular fabrics for clothing but also, for example, as covers or sheets (Abrahams 1908, 17; Lee 1999, 353). Homer provides an example of a *peplos* used as a cover on chariots (*Homer, Iliad* 5.193–195). It may seem that there was no fundamental difference between a garment and a woven cloth displayed on a wall as a tapestry (Jeammet 2003, 27; Von Hofsten 2011, 9). Riis compared this notion to the travel story of the ethnologist Carl Gunnar Feiberg who saw one of his assistants in Iran use her veil as a coat and as a sheet (Riis 1993, 160). Therefore, the

term *peplos* is often only used for describing a specific garment in modern scholarship whereas ancient authors seem to have used it for various pieces of clothing.

Chiton

The *chiton* (χιτών) is, in modern studies, also often interpreted as a tunic. The main difference from the *peplos* is the material: the *chiton* is made of linen rather than wool, and it is sewn at the sides. The linen fibre allows for a fine pleated fabric which created decorative effects: for example, fragmentary terracotta oenochoe attributed to Euthymides Potter (fig. 2) shows garments understood as a *chiton* because of its many pleats.

According to Geddes, the *chiton* was unwieldy and did not permit movement. It is thus not a garment suitable for work, but rather for leisure (Geddes 1987, 311). The oriental origins of this garment are widely accepted in modern scholarship and some scholars point out the Semitic origins of the word (Abrahams 1908, 19; Bieber 1928, 19; Riis 1993, 153; Lee 2015, 107). The poet Sappho is the first writer to describe a *chiton* worn by a woman (*Sappho, fragment 103*). Many authors use a passage of Herodotus' *Histories*, cited earlier, to explain the abandonment of the *peplos* for the benefit of the *chiton* in the middle of the sixth century BCE (Evans 1893, 27; Leroux 1907, 383; Abrahams 1908, 57; Bieber 1934, 19; Pekridou-Gorecki 1989, 72; Riis 1993, 153; Lee 2015, 107). However, some scholars have criticised this interpretation. Evans was the first to express reservations concerning the historical truth of this passage (Evans 1893, 28), a view shared by Schmaltz and Morizot (Schmaltz 1998, 9; Morizot 2001, 17). Dewald argued strongly that Herodotus' story is probably inspired by misogynist tales popular in Athens (Dewald 1981, 98).

Ependytes

The term *ependytes* is less common than the previous two, both in ancient literary and epigraphic sources, but it is used by some authors to describe garments depicted on works of art. Miller argued that this garment is better known in iconography than in texts (Miller 1997, 170). It is understood as a short linen or wool tunic worn over another tunic. This garment was surely an oriental import into Greece (Miller 1989, 327–329; Miller 1997, 170–171). Hauser understood this piece of clothing as a sleeveless tunic and insists that it is a slim fitting garment (Hauser 1905, 33–34). Thiersch had suggested a specific link with theatre and cults, but Miller showed that this interpretation is erroneous (Miller 1989, 314). The



Fig. 2: Fragment of a terracotta oenochoe, attributed to Euthymides Potter, c. 520 BCE, Attic (Image: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983.11.1)

word is regularly used in several descriptions in *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* (for example, CVA Deutschland, Band 87, München Antikensammlung, 108–109; CVA USA, Fascicule 32, The J. Paul Getty Museum, 32) or to describe the costume of Athena on Panathenaic amphorae (Bentz and Eschbach 2001). However, it is not always used to characterise a garment worn close to the body but sometimes as a large wool or linen tunic. On the Panathenaic amphora by Eucharides Painter in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the garment understood as an *ependytes* is decorated with a chequered pattern and worn over a pleated tunic. The uses of the term *ependytes* to describe garments depicted on Greek vases are often fanciful. There are still difficulties in understanding this term: it is not certain if it was ever worn over a tunic or if it was worn close to the body. Therefore, it is used differently by different authors, which can lead to misunderstandings.

Words describing parts of garments: *kolpos* and *apoptygma*

As with the terms for pieces of clothing, the words describing parts of garments are also widely discussed. One is the *apoptygma* (ἀπόπτνγμα) which has been understood to describe the upper part of the garment folded over on the chest. Böhlau was the first one to propose this interpretation after studying the *Hekatompedon* inscriptions (Böhlau 1884, 5–17; Lee 2004, 222). The idea was picked up by Studniczka and subsequently widely disseminated despite the objection of Heuzey (Heuzey 1922, 157). Burr Thompson showed that this perception is based on an error of translation and argued that *apoptygma* was used for the unfolded area of the garment for which no other category was obvious. She remarked that “archaeologists are making a scientific term of a vague one” (Burr Thompson 1944, 198). The same remarks could be applied to the name *kolpos* (κόλπος), identified by the classical philologist, archaeologist and ancient historian Karl Otfried Müller as either an excess length of textile hanging folded or a girdle (Müller 1820; Lee 2004, 221). This interpretation was criticised by



Studniczka who thought that this term referred to the body and not to the clothing (Studniczka 1886, 101). Leroux supports this idea and argues that the word *kolpos* designates the chest in Homeric texts (Leroux 1907, 383).

As Lee states “the *kolpos* and *apoptygma* are products of 19th and early 20th century scholarship, not ancient Greek nomenclature” (Lee 2004, 224). This remark is crucial in the study of Greek terminology because it stresses that interpretations of ancient Greek words could be, at least for some terms, a creation of modern scholars, without any relationship to the way ancient authors used them.

The interpretation of some terms is still debated, and in some cases, they derive from errors by modern authors. Few interpretations can claim to be certain, and it cannot be ruled out that future studies will challenge further interpretations. The terminology used by modern scholars is probably not what was used in the ancient world. In 1989, Pekridou-Gorecki spoke of a “scientific wasteland” (Pekridou-Gorecki 1989, 80; Fendt 2017, 129), but she was optimistic and thought that it could become a “flourishing terrain” with further work.

Which nomenclature could be used for Greek clothing?

In the light of the above and the rich discussion in current scholarship, the question must be asked: which nomenclature should be used to describe representations of Greek clothing on artworks? Early scholars were well aware of this problem. Baif established comparisons between Greek garments and the clothing of his time with the aim of making his texts more understandable and accessible to his contemporaries. Montfaucon was quite careful and did not use Greek terms systematically to describe ancient works of art. Instead, he used generic terms such as tunic or mantle (Lee 2003, 126–127).

Different kinds of terminological conventions are possible for the study of Greek representations. The first option is to keep using Greek words although they may be wrongly identified and to use them as conventional terms. The question of Greek clothing terminology has come to the fore in recent studies, notably in the important works of Lee. She noted that “although it may be impossible, or undesirable, to create a new system of dress terminology, it is important to note that many words for ancient Greek garments have been erroneously identified” (Lee 2004, 221). She thought the use of terms such as *kolpos* and *apoptygma* should be retained. Pekridou-Gorecki argued along the same lines, and, after posing

questions concerning the term *peplos*, she proposed retaining its use despite these problems (Pekridou-Gorecki 1989, 80; Fendt 2017, 129). The advantage of this approach is that it does not provoke a break with studies since the 19th century, but it must then be clearly indicated that the words are a modern scholarly convention. A disadvantage is that this system gives the false impression that Greek vocabulary is limited. Only three or four terms are used today to name a multitude of visual representations. Ancient historians and classical archaeologists tend to call any coat they identify in ancient works of art *himation*, whereas ancient authors used a very broad range of words: for example, Aristophanes successively employs four terms that could denote a coat of different forms in the *Assemblywomen* (Aristophanes, *Assemblywomen*, 318–322; Harlow 2017, 156): *himation* (ἱμάτιον), *hemidiploidon* (ἡμιδιπλοῖδιο), *krokotidion* (κροκοτίδιον)



Fig. 3: Panathenaic amphora, attributed to the Eucharides Painter, c. 490 BCE, Attic (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 56.171.3)



and *egkukklon* (ἔγκυκλον). Although the characteristics of each garment were perfectly understandable for an Athenian in the fifth century BCE, it is now hard to distinguish these words clearly.

This nomenclature is widespread in modern studies but not universally adopted. Some scholars have proposed another nomenclature for the study of Greek clothing. In his work upon the veiled woman of ancient Greece, Llewellyn-Jones discussed artworks presenting veils that are difficult to designate with a Greek word. He was confronted with a major problem: it was hard to clearly define terms that are rarely used, such as *kredemnon* (κρήδεπνον) or *kaluptre* (καλυπτρή). Therefore, he proposed using some Arabic terms for specific veil types such as *shaal*, *maghmuq* or *litham* in order to comment on Greek veils. He admitted that this solution “might not be the most satisfactory answer, but at least it is expedient” because it avoided interpretation or translation errors (Llewellyn-Jones 2010, 35). By trying to solve terminology problems, this proposal creates new issues because it leads to the introduction of other terms in Arabic which also need definition.

Recently, Papadopoulou and Roche have devoted themselves to the problem and proposed the creation of an ontoterminology of ancient Greek garments. They propose combining the terminology with the ontology or conceptualisation. Using digital resources, they created notes on 250 terms that will be translated into English, French and Modern Greek. This approach takes into account a linguistic and conceptual dimension and distinguishes the term from its concept (Papadopoulou and Roche 2017). There are differences between the traditional discipline of terminology and the more novel approach of ontoterminology. Indeed, the latter allows two kinds of definitions for a term: the first explains the concept and the second the linguistic usage (Roche 2012, 2628).

A fourth solution to nomenclature could avoid misunderstandings in the description of Greek garments depicted in works of art. Féret showed that describing the garments is one of the major difficulties in the study of Greek terracotta figurines. This challenge is not limited to Hellenistic artworks. Consequently, she asked whether it is necessary to use the Greek and Latin terms (Féret 2018, 143) and chose to use modern terms in her study. This approach is interesting and could be applied to other studies in Greek art history which also deal with representations of garments.

When the meaning of a Greek term is not perfectly defined and understood by everyone, it can be problematic to use it in discussions of works of art.

Therefore, it seems preferable to put aside all the Greek words usually employed and to use generic modern terms that are clearly defined and more neutral when describing a work of art: for example, by using tunic instead of *peplos* or *chiton* to describe any long or short garment belted at the waist and held at the shoulders by pins or fibulae. In certain cases, the fabric of the garment could be identified: a wool tunic generates large pleats as seen on Attic or Boeotian terracotta figurines from the fifth century BCE whereas linen tunics fall in fine pleats as on the fragment of a terracotta oenochoe, attributed to Euthymides Potter mentioned above. But it is necessary to be very careful in identifying the material represented in the artworks. In the same way, the term coat (or cloak) could be used instead of *himation* to characterise a heavy garment worn over one or both shoulders and usually over a tunic.

These generic terms could be easily adopted in the major scholarly languages such as English, French, German and Italian. They avoid all the preconceptions surrounding Greek terms. Even if the descriptions are longer with modern terms because paraphrases replace a single ancient Greek word, they will prevent misunderstandings between scholars. They would require more precision when describing an artwork and avoid the use of anachronistic terms.

Ancient Greek terms could be retained in exceptional cases when the context of a garment leaves no doubt. It is impossible to define a precise number of textual or epigraphic references needed to check if an ancient Greek term is correctly understood by modern authors. The use of an ancient Greek term in a description must be considered on a case-by-case basis: is it well attested at the time and in the context studied? For example, numerous ancient authors affirm that the fabric dedicated to Athena during the Panathenaic festival in Athens was called *peplos*, so this term can be used in this precise context.

Zanola has already pointed out the issue of diachronic terminology for the 18th century in Europe (Zanola 2014). Both clothing and language change over time but modern scholarship always uses the same terms from the beginning of the Archaic to the end of the Hellenistic periods. Homer used the term *chiton* to describe men's tunics, but it is possible that centuries later, the meaning of the word had changed and that the garment described by Homer had disappeared. Using the same ancient Greek terms with no regard to chronology is problematic. It is possible that the same term could have a different meaning depending on the period. Riis was among the first to point out that clothing nomenclature should not be based



only on philological studies (Riis 1993, 154) but he suggests no alternative. There should not be a strict dichotomy between epigraphy and art history, and this article does not propose to put aside philological studies. In the study of epigraphic sources, it might be beneficial to use the Greek terms since they are often impossible to translate into English or other modern languages.

Using these thoughts in other eras

Problems of comprehension in clothing terminology are not restricted to Ancient Greece. The question of clothing terminology is global, and scholars of different disciplines are facing the same problems. Boloti deplored the lack of a widely accepted terminology for Aegean prehistoric dress items (Boloti 2017, 371). Some authors have noted similar problems in the textile terminology of Ancient Egypt (Collombert 2002, 44–45) or in the Oriental world (Quillien 2017; Michel and Nosch 2010).

Terminology is also problematic in cultures where textual evidence is mostly lacking or even unattested. For the study of the Etruscan Dress, Bonfante chose to use ancient Greek and Latin terms to describe a piece of clothing. This can be questioned because she used ancient Greek terms for several garments that do not have a Greek origin (Bonfante 1975, 101–103). The use of ancient Greek terms is already complex for studies in the Greek world and using them for another culture is even more problematic. There are similar problems in the study of central European (Grömer 2016, 409–427) and Scandinavian clothing: for example, as with the use of the term *kaftan* (Mannerling 2017, 149–177). A universal approach cannot be accepted, but authors can draw inspiration from other disciplines in the establishment of a consistent clothing terminology.

Conclusion

This article points out that the interpretations of Greek clothing terms have been criticised by scholars. The interpretation of modern scholars may be different from that used in ancient Greece. This problem is an impediment for studies of ancient clothing and scholars have therefore proposed alternative nomenclatures. Some argue for the use of Greek terms, but only conventionally. Using generic terms such as tunic or mantle is not the only solution, but it permits clear descriptions and avoids misunderstandings. This study is limited to the main and the more common Greek words, but similar arguments could be made regarding other terms such as *paruphe* (παρυφή) or *zone* (ζώνη). Terms for textile production or textile tools also merit further scholarly attention. Scholars had initially

perceived the term *poikilos* as referring to embroidery, but Wace in particular showed that this interpretation is false (Wace 1948, 53; Patera 2012; Spantidaki 2016, 102); the appropriate term is polysemous (see above). The establishment of a regular clothing terminology is crucial in the study of Greek garments but also, and especially, in the study of ancient art history in order to describe the appearance of the many garments depicted in the various works of art.

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