

THE IDENTITY OF THE “WOOL-WORKERS” IN THE ATTIC MANUMISSIONS

ABSTRACT

In the second half of the 4th century B.C., the names of manumitted men and women and their occupations were inscribed on stones and displayed, presumably on the Athenian Acropolis. More than four-fifths of those identified as female are designated as “wool-workers” (ταλασιουργοί), and scholars have debated whether these women were domestic slaves, or professional slaves who were able to purchase their own freedom. Drawing upon iconographic, literary, and archaeological evidence, the author revisits the “spinning ἑταίρα” debate, arguing that the ταλασιουργοί were primarily prostitutes and that the designation ταλασιουργός was used essentially to avoid the stigma associated with their trade.

To date, 32 fragments of the Attic Manumissions, or φιάλαι ἐξελευθερικαί (“freedmen’s bowls”), have been recovered.¹ The fragments date to the second half of the 4th century and were inscribed within a span of about 20 years.² Although there is some variation in the formulas of the entries, the stones typically record the payment of φιάλαι, the names of the purchasers, their professions, demes (using the metic designation οἰκῶν/οὔσα ἐν), and the names of individuals who were probably the purchasers’ former owners. The participle ἀποφυγών/οὔσα, which occurs on most fragments and agrees in gender and case with the purchaser, is usually taken to show that the inscriptions record acquittals resulting from trials for abandonment brought by the action δίκη ἀποστασίου. This action, according to Harpokration, was intended to protect former masters when their freedmen

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suggestions of further bibliography; and finally, Karen Donohue for her patient correspondence and careful editing.

2. *Catalogi Paterarum Argentearum*, IG II² 1553–1578 and *Agora* I 4763, I 5656, I 5893, I 5927 (*SEG* XXV 177–180) + I 3183 (= *Hesperia* 28, 1959, pp. 208–238) + I 5774 (= *Hes-*

peria 30, 1961, p. 247, no. 43) and I 4665 (= *Hesperia* 65, 1996, pp. 452–453). For commentary, see Lewis 1959, 1968. See also Westermann 1946, pp. 94–104. The φιάλαι ἐξελευθερικαί appear later in the Parthenon treasury lists, IG II² 1469, lines 32–37; 1480, lines 9–11.

failed to perform the conditions of their manumissions.³ One fragment also has a partial heading that probably refers to the action.⁴

In light of the variety of occupations listed, it has been argued that the inscriptions record the unconditional release of individuals who were χωρὶς οἰκοῦντες (living-apart “slaves”); prior to the trials, they probably lived separately from their masters with some independence, maintaining their own households.⁵ The uniform payment of φιάλαι implies that there was a state levy required for each freedperson, probably for publication and perhaps also legal costs. Given the large number of entries, however, scholars are divided on whether the trials were real or whether they were fictitious with the predetermined verdict of acquittal.⁶ The difficulty of understanding the legal framework is compounded by the damaged state of the stones, the often poor execution of the script, and the highly abbreviated entries, but the most common interpretation—and the one that is accepted here—is that the purpose of the inscriptions was to register manumissions, thereby providing incontestable proof of the freedpersons’ status.

Since the majority of the freedpersons are identified with what are conceivably paid occupations, the lists appear to record individuals who were in the position to accumulate the funds necessary for manumission: some were involved with industrial work, such as smithing and tanning, some with vending, some with trade or transport, some with agriculture, and a smaller number with cooking, secretarial work, and entertainment.⁷ It appears to be no accident of survival that the inscriptions record the release of professional slaves, since in most cases slaves were probably responsible for purchasing their own freedom. Inscriptional and literary evidence suggests that manumission was primarily limited to those who were involved in relatively lucrative trades or had useful personal connections with free persons.⁸ It is significant that each individual was required to deposit a φιάλη worth 100 drachmas, most likely in addition to a further, unrecorded, fee to the master. Eighteen of the identifiable freedpersons secured loans

3. For a discussion of conditional manumission, see Zelnick-Abramovitz 2005, pp. 222–248. Earlier theories held that the inscriptions record slaves who sought asylum in a temple and were awarded freedom on the agreement that they provide votive φιάλαι, or, more simply, that the φιάλαι were thank offerings; see Tod 1901–1902, pp. 199–200, for a discussion. Harpokration defines δίκη ἀποστασίου as follows: “It is a kind of action against freedmen permitted to those who have freed them if they (the freedmen) abandon (their former owners) or register another person as patron and do not carry out those things which the laws command” (*Harpokrationis Lexicon in decem oratores Atticos*, s.v. ἀποστα-

σίον, trans. Westermann 1946, p. 95, n. 24).

4. *IG* II² 1578. See Westermann 1946, p. 95.

5. The phrase χωρὶς οἰκοῦντες is used by modern scholars to describe slaves who were already living apart from their masters in a self-supporting condition. There is evidence for slaves who lived apart from their masters, supported themselves with their earnings, and paid their masters, probably a monthly fee (ἀποφορά). Syros in Menander’s *Epitrepontes* (379–380) is one example; similarly, Demosthenes mentions a slave called Lampis, who had a wife and children (34.37). See Cohen 2000, pp. 130–132, for a discussion of χωρὶς οἰκοῦντες.

6. For the most recent detailed discussion of these documents and related scholarship, see Zelnick-Abramovitz 2005, pp. 282–290.

7. Nine men are identified as γεωργοί (*IG* II² 1553, line 24; 1554, line 19; 1556, line 37; 1557, line 100; 1558, line 65; 1559, line 52; 1566, lines 22, 40; 1570, line 69). Although γεωργός is a general term for an agricultural worker, the small number of men with this occupation suggests that they functioned in a more specialized capacity, perhaps as farm managers or bailiffs. See Tod 1950, p. 6.

8. Finley [1951] 1985, pp. 104–105; Faraguna 1999, p. 72; Kruger 2001, p. 153.

from ἔρανοι (financial contributors), just as Neaira does (Dem. 59.30–32) in collecting funds for her manumission (see below).⁹

While it is not surprising that some slaves could eventually raise the funds necessary for manumission, the presence of a considerable number of women designated as ταλασιουργοί (wool-workers) is puzzling.¹⁰ Fifty-one of the 63 women listed, or 81%, are identified as ταλασιουργοί, and they account for 32.3% of all the individuals on the stones.¹¹ What is at issue in the present study is the identity of these women: were they former professional slaves, in line with the others listed, or former domestic slaves?

Since the other freedpersons, aside from the παιδία, are listed with professions, some scholars have argued that the women were professional wool-workers and were employed in workshops perhaps similar to those owned by the families of Demosthenes and Lysias (although neither family was said to have been involved in wool-working).¹² In the most recent extended discussion of these inscriptions, Vincent Rosivach maintains that this suggestion is problematic primarily because there is no evidence, outside of the inscriptions themselves, for a large-scale wool industry in Athens.¹³ As Guy Labarre points out, however, little evidence survives for the distribution of persons in any trade, regardless of their status.¹⁴ There could have been medium- and small-scale operations that have failed to leave traces in the surviving sources.¹⁵

Because some of the women seem to have been freed as parts of male/female pairs (they have the same demes and masters as the men listed directly above them), Rosivach argues instead that most of the women’s manumissions were paid for by their “husbands” (in quotation marks because slaves could not legally marry).¹⁶ If a woman did not have an occupation of her own, she was simply identified by the work commonly associated with women, in which case the designation ταλασιουργός probably meant something like “housewife” or “homemaker.”¹⁷ On the other hand, when it was suitable for an “unemployed” slave to be identified by her partner’s occupation (that is, if the partner held a job also suitable for a woman), the woman was identified by the feminine form of the noun (e.g., καπηλίσ, σησαμόπωλιν).

9. *IG* II² 1553, lines 7–10, 20–23; 1556, lines 27–29; 1557, lines 105–107; 1558, lines 37–43; 1559, lines 26–31; 1566, lines 27–29; 1568, lines 18–23; 1569, lines 18–21; 1570, lines 24–26, 57–62, 82–84; 1571, lines 8–13; 1572, lines 8–11; Lewis 1959, face A, lines 141–142, 566–567; face B, lines 2, 153; 1968, line 8. Harrison states (1968, pp. 182–183) that the φιάλαι ἐξελευθερικαί probably indicate “a similar pattern of procedure” to that seen in the case of Neaira.

10. Although the names of some of the ταλασιουργοί are missing, the majority can be positively identified as

women. The term ταλασιουργός does not appear to have been used for men. See Tod 1950, pp. 10–11.

11. Rosivach 1989, p. 366.

12. Dem. 27.9; Lys. 12.19. See Whitehead 1977, p. 123, n. 35.

13. Rosivach 1989, pp. 366–367.

14. Labarre 1998, p. 795.

15. Socrates’ suggestion to Aristarchos that he utilize the women in his household as wool-workers for extra income might provide some evidence for the existence of such operations (Xen. *Mem.* 2.7). Although most textiles were probably made domestically, there is some evidence of a small-scale

retail trade in wool: in Dem. 57.45, Euxitheos claims that many women had become “laborers at the loom” because of poverty; Aristotle speaks of wool-working in the same passage as making shuttles and casting bronze (*Pol.* 1256a6–10); Aischines (1.97) mentions one female flax-worker and a male embroiderer; and Plato speaks of an old man who was a ὑφαντός (*Phd.* 87b–c).

16. *IG* II² 1554, lines 10–17; 1556, lines 14–25; 1558, lines 66–76 (with three children); 1570, lines 51–56; 1576, lines 57–64.

17. Rosivach 1989, pp. 365, 367.

Rosivach's ideas about the identification of the manumitted women are problematic for two reasons. First, there is the very real possibility that some of these women did work wool professionally. Labarre makes an argument in favor of this idea, but without concrete evidence it remains conjectural.¹⁸ Second, it is difficult to support the assumption that most of the freedwomen relied upon male partners to purchase their freedom. Although some might have relied upon such help, in spite of the ideology often reflected in the literary sources, there is evidence to indicate that women, especially slaves and metics but also lower-class Athenians, could and often did undertake paid work. As Roger Brock notes in his study of female labor in Classical Athens, there was a conflict between the ideal of female exclusion and the practical reality of many women.¹⁹ Moreover, only five out of 45 *ταλασιουργοί* are freed as part of an apparent couple and, although some of the freed men and women received help from *ἔρανοι*, none of the legible *ταλασιουργοί* is listed with any. One *ταλασιουργός* even has three unrelated owners, which seems inconsistent with her being called a "housewife."²⁰ In addition, 25 out of 26 *ταλασιουργοί* with identifiable demes are registered in urban demes, which might further suggest that these women were employed and were not merely housewives dependent upon partners.²¹

Considering that women could earn wages and that the majority of the freedwomen appear to have been released without partners, most of the women, like most of the men, were probably able to secure the financial means for their own manumissions. But how did they earn their money? Some scholars have attempted to connect wool-working with prostitution and have subsequently raised the question of whether wool-working was these women's only, or even their primary, trade. Although the idea of the "spinning *ἑταίρα*" has been rejected in much recent scholarship concerned with images of spinning women,²² in this study I would like to revisit what I feel is, in fact, a plausible connection between wool-working and prostitution. Edward Cohen identifies the *ταλασιουργοί* as prostitutes in making his argument that the stigma modern historians associate with ancient prostitution is anachronistic. This in turn raises a question, however: if the *ταλασιουργοί* really were *ἑταίραι*, which Cohen

18. Labarre points out (1998, pp. 798–799), for instance, that most of the *ταλασιουργοί* are registered in urban demes, where the majority of manufacture and commerce took place, and he posits that there must have been a considerable demand to make sails and other textiles used for naval equipment, such as ropes and nets.

19. Brock 1994. See also Foxhall 1989; Harris 1992. Aristophanes provides several references to female retailers: *Ach.* 478; *Lys.* 457, 562; *Plut.* 427–428; *Ran.* 840; *Thesm.* 387, 456; *Vesp.* 497. Curse tablets frequently mention taverns (*καπηλεῖα*), some of

which had female slaves as proprietors (indicated by names such as *Θραῖττα*, a common slave name and ethnicity). For a discussion of *καπηλεῖα*, see Davidson 1997, pp. 53–61.

20. *ᾠκτιμον*: *IG II²* 1558, lines 58–61.

21. *Kydathenaion*: 8 (*IG II²* 1554, line 6; 1557, lines 76–77, 84, 96; 1558, lines 4–5, 29–30; 1566, line 31; 1570, line 51); *Melite*: 7 (*IG II²* 1554, lines 32–33; 1559, lines 88, 92, 94, 99; 1570, lines 15; 1576, line 32); *Piraeus*: 5 (*IG II²* 1554, line 14; 1557, line 55; 1570, lines 48, 66; 1576, line 61); *Keiriadai*: 2 (*IG II²* 1558, line 69; 1570,

line 39); *Alopeke*: 2 (*IG II²* 1554, line 53; 1558, line 54); *Leukonion*: 1 (*IG II²* 1559, line 41); *Skambonidai*: 1 (*IG II²* 1572, line 4). See Traill 1975, pp. 37–54, for a breakdown of the city, coastal, and inland demes of Attica. The one *ταλασιουργός* who is not registered in a city deme is probably part of a family group comprising a male secretary and a child, all of whom are registered in the coastal deme *Thorikos* (*IG II²* 1556, lines 14–25). See n. 16, above.

22. On the "spinning *ἑταίρα*," see below, with references in n. 27.

argues was "an acceptable independence of occupation" (in contrast to the lowly πόρνοι), why were they not designated as such in the Attic Manumissions?²³

In the following pages I reexamine the possible connection between the ταλασιουργοί and prostitution, using iconographic, literary, and archaeological evidence that, in light of recent studies, poses difficult but not insurmountable problems. Contrary to Cohen's assertion, I suggest that there are indications of a moral stigma associated with prostitution that might have contributed to an intentional ambiguity in the women's official designation in the Manumissions.

ICONOGRAPHIC AND LITERARY EVIDENCE

PROBLEMS OF IDENTIFICATION

Iconography is both the most tempting and the most contentious source for the relationship between wool-working and prostitution. One difficulty is that the majority of iconographic sources date to a period much earlier than most of the literary and inscriptional sources. Yet, as we shall see, there is also a correlation between wool-working and prostitution in images belonging to the period of the Attic Manumissions, so there is little reason to doubt a continuity between the earlier and later sources. Another notoriously stubborn issue is the difficulty of determining the status and identity of individuals depicted in Greek imagery.²⁴ Since weaving was the primary task of women in ancient Greece, the spindle came to symbolize the dedicated housewife. As a result, Greek literature often associates weaving with feminine virtue.²⁵ Wool-working, however, was not restricted to virtuous women but was associated with *all* women. Although there are wool-working scenes that fit the archetype of the feminine ideal, there are several others that associate this work with women who were far from idealized figures.²⁶

The identity of spinning women on Greek pots has become a contentious topic, in part because scholars proposing a connection between wool-working and prostitution have not satisfactorily resolved the difficulties arising from this association. Gloria Ferrari has been notably critical, stating that Gerhard Rodenwaldt's 1932 article "Spinnende Hetären" "brought into existence the 'spinning hetaira,' who has cast her shadow since over every nameless spinster on the vases."²⁷ A number of compelling questions have been raised regarding the interpretation of iconographic "symbols" such as spinning, work baskets, money pouches, and nakedness, as well as the extent to which the intended audiences of particular vessel shapes might have influenced the interpretation of an image.

Art historians are rightly critical of associating wool-working scenes with prostitution: many scenes carry no overt connotations of the sex trade, and symbols that have been taken as signifying prostitution—such as female nakedness and men holding pouches—need not be read in this way. Although scholars tend to identify (mortal) women on pots as either wives or ἑταίραι, Sian Lewis has convincingly argued that "on pottery no

23. Cohen 2003, p. 214 (quotation). See also Davidson 1997, pp. 87–90; Cohen 2006, pp. 105–108.

24. See Lewis 2002, pp. 189–190, for an interesting discussion of this problem in the context of courting scenes.

25. For a discussion of wool-working and its iconography, see Keuls 1985, pp. 252–258; Lewis 2002, pp. 62–65.

26. Stears (2001, p. 111) argues that "from the epigraphic evidence we discover conclusive proof that spinning was thought suitable for the monuments of both the citizen Kleonike and the slave Pithane." However, she also notes (p. 113) the rarity of wool-working scenes in sepulchral iconography and suggests that in wealthier households, at least, the repetitious task of wool-working was usually allotted to slaves.

27. Ferrari 2002, p. 13. For the "spinning ἑταίρα" debate, see especially Keuls 1985, pp. 258–259; Davidson 1997, pp. 87–90; Lewis 2002, pp. 188–189, 194–199.

consistent indicator of sexual status can be found” and she further warns that “a determination to establish female status can . . . be damaging to our understanding of an image.”²⁸ Certainly some images, such as scenes showing brides bathing prior to their wedding ceremonies, are not suggestive of prostitution, and, as Lewis points out, it is simplistic to associate all unclothed females with a lack of respectability. Money pouches, likewise, need not always indicate commercial transactions. Sheramy Bundrick notes that images of money pouches became popular on pots when “coinage was still new,” and so it might have simply been fashionable to depict this new medium.²⁹ It has also been suggested that money pouches are, more generally, symbols of persuasion and identified men as suitable partners in courtship or marriage scenes.³⁰ Ferrari has even proposed that the pouches in question did not contain money at all, but knucklebones,³¹ although this suggestion seems at odds with the fact that knucklebones are associated with children, not grown women.

In rejecting the idea that all spinners who are naked or are in the presence of men are prostitutes, however, scholars may have gone too far, arguing that *none* of the women shown spinning or accompanied by objects associated with spinning are prostitutes. Ferrari argues that it is a fundamental error to identify images of wool-working with prostitution because the symbolic function of wool-working in imagery “is to give the illusion of virtue,” which is in opposition to the reality of the “creatures who sat naked in the brothels of Athens and could be had for two obols.”³² At the same time, however, it is generally agreed that images on pots are not intended to mirror reality, but comprise a series of symbols that require, in Bundrick’s words, “decoding in order to be understood.”³³ Ferrari notes that wool-working, far from being shown as a chore, seems to impart a kind of “glamour” to the spinner, who is often shown dressed in fancy clothing and receiving gifts in the presence of Eros.³⁴ If spinning can be “glamorized,” then, it is fair to ask whether prostitutes could also have been objects of idealization, in much the same way that Greek literature sometimes idealizes the *εταίρα*. Fancy clothing, the presence of Eros, and the depiction of gifts received need not mean that the spinners must always be respectable women in courtship or domestic scenes. The symbols often thought to indicate the inside of Greek houses—such as doors, furniture, architectural features, mirrors, garlands, and even work baskets—might just as well signify brothels, or even the houses of prostitutes who maintained their own residences. Moreover, although the work basket may have signified femininity, industriousness, beauty, and *μητις*, these qualities need not be restricted to respectable women. The idea of woven fabric as a woman’s weapon of choice is symbolic of female *μητις* and is associated with women in general, not only virtuous housewives; Clytemnestra and Medea famously use textiles to exact their revenge.³⁵ One may also recall the beautiful courtesan Theodote, who relies upon “friends” (*φίλοι*) to furnish her with lavish gifts and who Socrates claims traps her admirers in her “net” (*δίκτυον*) (Xen. *Mem.* 3.11.4–16).

The difficulties of interpreting iconographic evidence mirror problems with the literary sources, which sometimes obscure the nature of the relationship between client and prostitute by imagining a courtship in place

28. Lewis 2002, pp. 101, 98.

29. Bundrick 2008, p. 300.

30. Lewis 2002, pp. 196–197.

31. Ferrari 2002, p. 15.

32. Ferrari 2002, p. 13.

33. Bundrick 2008, p. 284.

34. Ferrari 2002, p. 12.

35. For discussion, see Ferrari 2002, pp. 11–12.

of a sexual transaction, and by maintaining “a fiction of respectability that increased the demand for [the prostitute’s] company.”³⁶ In Athenian society, there were strict rules of conduct between men and women, and one can imagine that overstepping these boundaries, if only in play, might have been part of the attraction of hiring a woman for sex. This is certainly true in the case of Theodote, who coyly describes her suitors as φίλοι, whose “generosity” allows her to live luxuriously.³⁷ Similarly, Apollodoros in his speech *Against Neaira* (Dem. 59) draws upon what were presumably familiar stereotypes of sex workers when he portrays Neaira as a beautiful, well-dressed, and cunning woman who had managed to procure her freedom with the help of her clients and who had masqueraded as a respectable Athenian wife for a number of years, even marrying off her daughter of dubious origins to an Athenian citizen.³⁸ Athenians were well aware of the difficulties in determining a person’s status, and litigants used this to their advantage. These difficulties in identification can be said to extend to iconography, where figures are usually unlabeled and symbols can be read in a number of different ways. What appear to be courtship scenes on Greek pots might in some cases show clients “courting” the women they are about to hire.

IMAGES OF WOOL-WORKERS

A Greek association between female work and erotic appeal might further help explain an iconographic connection between wool-working and prostitution. Eva Keuls contends that “the female qualities of industry, obedience, and fear of husbands, which surely at first were cultivated for purposes other than sex appeal, wound up being sensuously attractive to men.”³⁹ Although some wool-working scenes appear perfectly innocent, several scenes sexualize this activity. Some sympotic vessels, whose intended audience was presumably male, show women carding wool without knee protectors, their bare legs exposed to the viewers.⁴⁰ The tondo of an Attic red-figure cup attributed to Douris depicts one woman sitting with her leg exposed while another woman stands, seductively lifting her own garment (Fig. 1). Behind her is a κλίνη (couch), adding further to the erotic overtones.

Because an exclusively male scene of revelry appears on the exterior of the vessel, it has been suggested that the cup depicts an outdoor/indoor motif: the husbands are at their revelry outside the house while their wives

36. Hamel 2003, p. 13. See also Cohen 2006, p. 113, who argues that both Socrates and Theodote are “playing appropriate roles.”

37. The coquettish and gentle tone of this representation of a ἑταίρα is also found in Archaic literature. For instance, a fragment from Anakreon (fr. 93 Gentili [= Page, *PMG* 373]) describes the speaker enjoying the company of “a dear and dainty girl” at

α κόμος. The adjectives φιλή and ἀβρή associate this young woman with aristocratic luxury, while the term παῖς in this context connotes affection (rather than merely “slave”). For a discussion of this and similar fragments, see Kurke 1997, pp. 113–115.

38. See Glazebrook 2006, pp. 126–130, for a discussion of stereotypes attributed to courtesans.

39. Keuls 1985, p. 256. See also

Kruger 2001, pp. 53–86.

40. Lewis (2002, p. 189) notes that most of the “spinning ἑταίραι” are found on alabstra, which is “the courting shape *par excellence*.” In practice, women would place terracotta knee protectors (ὄνοι ἐπίνητρα) on their bare legs, both to protect their knees and to keep their clothing from getting in the way of the wool carding. See Kissell 1918, p. 235.



Figure 1. Woman working wool and standing woman. Tondo of kylix attributed to Douris. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin–Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Antikensammlung F2289. Photo courtesy Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, New York

await their return inside.⁴¹ This might be an erotic representation of women awaiting their husbands' return, perhaps along the lines of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. Yet, given that the breasts of one of the women clearly show through her garment and that both women, wearing exotic σάκκοι and jewelry, are dressed rather extravagantly, it is also possible that this scene depicts prostitutes awaiting male revelers who will soon be their clients. It is exceedingly difficult for us now, over 2,000 years later, to determine the identity of the women. It is tempting to consider, however, that the ambiguity may have been intentional, leaving the male viewer to decide whether these are sexy housewives or prostitutes. Literature sometimes blurs the line between the two, and it is certainly possible that artists might have also manipulated conventional ideas about "good" and "bad" women.

Such ambiguity might have also served a commercial purpose, allowing wool-working scenes to be used on any number of vessels. Bundrick has charted the distribution of vessels with textile-production scenes in Greece and Italy in the Late Archaic and Classical periods, showing that this subject was popular on a number of shapes, in particular the lekythos (51), kylix (32), hydria (29), and pyxis (25).⁴² On the lekythos and the pyxis, shapes traditionally associated with female audiences, images of spinning women approached by men with pouches can be taken as innocent domestic or courtship scenes, while on the kylix the images might assume a very different meaning. The symbolism is anything but straightforward: the virtuous and beautiful female at her work, awaiting her husband or suitor, can double as an industrious prostitute awaiting a client, and the suitor or husband holding a pouch can double as a client negotiating with a prostitute.

41. Keuls 1985, pp. 252–253.

42. Bundrick 2008, p. 292, table 3.



Figure 2. Female flute player in symposium setting. Kylix attributed to the Brygos Painter. London, British Museum E71. Photo © Trustees of the British Museum

There is also no reason to assume that symbols must always have the same meaning. Nakedness is a case in point: in the context of a maiden at her bath, nakedness can be said to signify the girl's purity, while in the context of the prostitute it signifies her sexual availability. At the same time, nakedness could signify traits both figures could share, such as erotic beauty and vulnerability. Moreover, as Ferrari has pointed out, images might represent “things that are thought not to exist but may be imagined.”⁴³ A good example is an Attic red-figure psykter showing prostitutes as participants (rather than as the entertainment) at a symposium.⁴⁴ Women were imagined as taking the place of men in literature as well, notably in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, but also, for instance, in Herodotos's ethnographic account of the Egyptians (2.35).⁴⁵

WORK BASKETS AND BROTHELS

While the current trend to contest the idea of the “spinning ἑταίρα” has led to compelling questions being asked of the evidence and has done much to encourage scholars to approach such images with caution, it nevertheless seems imprudent to reject the idea altogether. Recent discussions do not address several komastic images in which woven work baskets of the type often depicted in wool-working scenes are shown hanging on the walls of what are almost certainly brothels. Although the baskets do not directly link prostitution with wool-working, their presence in scenes involving prostitutes strongly suggests a connection between the two. An Attic red-figure kylix dating to ca. 490 B.C., for example, shows a female flute player entertaining men in a lively symposium setting with at least three work baskets hanging on the walls (Fig. 2).⁴⁶ The exterior of another Attic kylix depicts

43. Ferrari 2002, p. 19.

44. St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum 664. For the image, see Ferrari 2002, fig. 10.

45. See Ferrari 2002, pp. 19–20, for discussion.

46. Two work baskets are clearly visible in the image provided, while the third is just visible “below” the left handle of the cup.



a comparable scene: several young prostitutes entertain male revelers and at least three work baskets can be seen hanging on the walls (Fig. 3). In the tondo of another cup, a man is shown fondling the breast of a naked female flute player, whose hair is cropped like a slave's, and to her right a work basket hangs on the wall (Fig. 4). The outside of another Attic red-figure kylix shows several older prostitutes providing sexual services for the male revelers, and in the background between two of the couples a work basket is clearly depicted (Fig. 5). Yet another cup, sometimes referred to as the

Figure 3. Banqueting scene. Two views of kylix attributed to the Tarquinia Painter. Basel, Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig Ka 415. Photos A. F. Voegelin, Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig



Figure 4. Man and female flute player in an embrace. Tondo of red-figure kylix attributed to the Gales Painter. New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery 1913.163. Gift of Rebecca Darlington Stoddard. Photo courtesy Yale University Art Gallery



Figure 5. Symposiasts with aged prostitutes. Kylix attributed to the Brygos Painter. Florence, Museo Archeologico 3921. Photo Scala/Art Resource, New York

"Komas of Aging Prostitutes," shows older women rather unceremoniously vomiting, fondling each other, and defecating, while a work basket hangs prominently on the wall behind them.⁴⁷

These scenes of older prostitutes in particular challenge the idea that the work basket always symbolized feminine virtue, unless of course the artists intended the scenes to be ironic. In each of these images, the artists evidently wanted to make sure that the baskets would not be missed by the viewer, and frequently included not one but several in the background. As James Davidson suggests, the work baskets in sympotic scenes might have been intended to indicate the location and, perhaps, the time of day (e.g., work baskets in use indicate daytime, while work baskets hung up indicate nighttime).⁴⁸ In short, although work baskets can indicate a domestic setting, their presence in sympotic settings underscores that they were not limited to the domestic sphere or to scenes involving respectable women.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The connection between wool-working and prostitution is not solely iconographic and literary. A building excavated near the Sacred Gate in the Athenian Kerameikos provides archaeological evidence for a link between wool-working and brothels and suggests that the iconography of the vessels discussed above reflects a historical reality that prostitutes did actually work wool. The building, excavated by Ursula Knigge and referred to as "Building Z," was a maze of courtyards, corridors, and at least 20 rooms.⁴⁹ The building was damaged and rebuilt five times between the 5th and 3rd centuries B.C., but throughout this period it retained the same dimensions.

Although in its earlier incarnations the building was probably a private dwelling, by the second half of the 4th century the third incarnation (Z3) appears to have served another function. Inside were found three large cisterns and sympotic pottery in situ, as well as over a hundred loom weights, some in each room. Several statuettes and amulets depicting goddesses, including Aphrodite, were also discovered. The location and shape of the building and the objects recovered there might lead to several different interpretations, but if we consider the evidence together, it seems likely that by the 4th century this building was primarily a brothel as well as a place of wool-working. Knigge suggests that female slaves might have lived in the building, "perhaps courtesans who attended both to the loom and to the guests."⁵⁰ As Davidson has pointed out, the word most commonly used for "brothel," ἐργαστήριον, simply means "workplace," and there is no reason to doubt that prostitutes not engaged with clients might have busied themselves with the generic female task of wool-working.⁵¹ As will be discussed below, most women in the sex trade in ancient Greece were probably slaves and presumably would have been required to make themselves useful when not providing sexual services.⁵²

47. The vessel is now lost. See Sutton 2000, pp. 196–199, fig. 7.9 (drawing by F. Lissarrague, after Des Vergers 1862–1864, pl. 11). The prostitutes' age might be indicated by double chins and sagging breasts and bellies. In images where older sex workers are shown naked, they also appear particularly degenerate and subject to abuse.

48. Davidson (1997, p. 89) notes that work baskets can be symbolic "not of virtue but the time of day."

49. See esp. Knigge 1991, pp. 88–94 and fig. 80:a–d. See also Lind 1988; Davidson 1997, pp. 85–87.

50. Knigge 1991, p. 93.

51. For a discussion of the term ἐργαστήριον, see Davidson 1997, pp. 84, 87.

52. Glazebrook 2005, p. 163: "Although evidence exists that ἀσπαί also became prostitutes, prostitutes of such status seem rare, and an ancient attitude persisted that such women were not prostitutes." Χρηστός ("useful") is the epithet commonly found for slaves in sepulchral inscriptions; see Stears 2001, pp. 107–108, who suggests that this description and the inexpensive material used indicate that the stones were erected by the slave owners. See Joss 2006, pp. 116–117, for discussion and further sources.

THE DESIGNATION ΤΑΛΑΣΙΟΥΡΓΟΣ

In view of the iconographic, literary, and archaeological evidence for a correlation between wool-working and prostitution, it is certainly conceivable that the Attic Manumissions identified prostitutes as “wool-workers.” In practical terms, these women were probably prostitutes who also worked wool. Even though for some women wool-working served as a professional (rather than a solely domestic) occupation, there was evidently little money to be made from this alone.⁵³ A prostitute, on the other hand, had the potential to make a significant amount of money, as well as useful personal connections, and is more likely to have been able to earn the funds necessary to free herself.⁵⁴

Evidence for this comes from Hellenistic epigrams in which women wish to replace their meager income from wool-working with prostitution.⁵⁵ Although the sources are fragmentary, as they are for wages in general, there is some indication that prostitutes could demand up to a thousand drachmas in one transaction.⁵⁶ This price was certainly not the standard, but even the lowest rate of two drachmas for an upper-level prostitute might eventually provide her with the necessary funds. The literary image of wealthy *ἐταίραι* adorned in expensive clothing and jewelry became so conventional that any woman dressed in such a way was at serious risk of being accused of prostitution.⁵⁷ Apollodoros takes advantage of this idea when he describes Neaira as having “extravagant taste” (*πολυτελής*) and owning expensive clothing and jewelry (Dem. 59.35–36). Such taste, of course, might connote not only what might be considered weak moral values but, more feasibly, the personal wealth that some prostitutes could accumulate.

If the *ταλασιουργοί* referred to in the Attic Manumissions were well-paid prostitutes rather than just wool-workers, this might explain why they make up over 80% of the freedwomen listed. It certainly would help to account for the apparent absence of a group of female slaves who were the most likely to be in the position to purchase their own freedom; it is noteworthy that none of the women in the inscriptions are designated *πόρναι* or *ἐταίραι*. If the designation *ταλασιουργός* was used for prostitutes, it would further help explain why one, Okimon, was owned by three

53. For a discussion of wool-working as a professional occupation, see Labarre 1998. Woolen goods might also have been sold outside the home during times of strained finances; see Xen. *Mem.* 2.7.

54. The case of Neaira offers the best example of how personal connections could be used to gain one's freedom. Two of Neaira's “lovers,” Timanoridas and Eukrates, purchased her from Nikarete and later offered to manumit her for a sum. Neaira gathered together her own savings and enough

money from other “lovers” to secure her release (Dem. 59.30–32). For the large sums that a prostitute in ancient Greece could earn, see Loomis 1998, pp. 166–185, 309–312, 334–335.

55. *Anth. Pal.* 6.48, 285. See Cohen 2003, pp. 225–226; 2006, pp. 106–107.

56. Machon 333–348 (Gow). This fee was eventually negotiated down to a more reasonable, but still high, fee of 5 minae, or 500 drachmas. For the passage and a discussion, see Loomis 1998, p. 182, no. 41, n. 62.

57. This is one of the main accusations Apollodoros makes against Neaira (Dem. 59.36). There is some evidence that Athenian *ἄσται* could only own a modest number of garments (Plut. *Sol.* 20.4). Glazebrook 2005, p. 171: “Spending lavishly and adorning oneself with jewelry and expensive clothes were commonly associated with *hetairai* and considered definite negative traits for *γυναῖκες*.” For wealthy and famous prostitutes, see Boardman 1980, p. 132.

unrelated men—joint ownership of a slave is uncommon except among family members.⁵⁸ Yet, as noted above, Neaira was at one point allegedly owned by two unrelated men, Timanoridas and Eukrates (Dem. 59.29).

Although scholars are divided on whether some figures in Greek imagery can be identified as prostitutes on the basis of their names,⁵⁹ it is worth mentioning that there is also a correlation between names found for sex workers and those of some of the *ταλασιουργοί*. One *ταλασιουργός* is named *Ῥόδια*, a derivative of *Ῥόδων* (see below).⁶⁰ Another is called *Γλυκέρα* (“Sweetie”), like Polemon’s concubine in Menander’s *Perikeiromene*, a *ἑταίρα* in Athenaios’s *Deipnosophistai* (13.584a, 605d), and a prostitute in Philostratos’s *Epistles* (38).⁶¹ Two other names, *Χρυσίς* (“Goldie”) and *Μαλθάκη* (“Softie”), are also suitable for prostitutes.⁶² *Χρυσίς*, a common name for *ἑταίραι* from the 4th century on, is particularly appropriate for a moneymaking slave and might also be a reference to the woman’s possible foreign ethnicity, as blond hair was associated with barbarians.⁶³ The name is also recorded for a *ἑταίρα* in a fragment from Menander’s *Kolax*, a possible reference to a notorious *ἑταίρα* who was a mistress of Demetrios Poliorketes.⁶⁴

These names are similar in tone to those found on the outside of a kylix, now in a private collection in Munich.⁶⁵ Because the cup shows a lively gathering of animated men and women, one of whom is playing a flute, it has been suggested that it depicts a brothel scene. Several of the women shown are also involved in wool-working (two are spinning and two appear to be placing spindles into a basket). Henry Immerwahr, who provides a detailed discussion of the cup and the names of the women, argues that it “settles, once and for all, the controversy whether spinning women can be *hetaerae*.”⁶⁶ Three of the women are called *Ἀφροδισία*, *Ῥόδων*, and *Ὀβολή*. Although, as Lewis points out, there are hardly any names exclusive to *ἑταίραι*, the names in this context are suggestive of the women’s function as sex workers.⁶⁷ This is the only extant instance of the name *Ὀβολή*, which is doubtless a joke about the woman being “cheap.”⁶⁸ The two other names, *Ἀφροδισία* and *Ῥόδων*, are also suitable for prostitutes. *Ἀφροδισία* in its adjectival form means “Aphrodite-like,” or in its noun form “sexual pleasures.” Immerwahr suggests that the name *Ῥόδων* (“Rose”) might have obscene connotations.⁶⁹ Moreover, a derivative of *Ῥόδων*, *Ῥόδιπος*, is also

58. See n. 20, above.

59. For a recent discussion of this issue, see Lewis 2002, pp. 107–110.

60. *IG II²* 1556, line 18; see n. 69, below.

61. *IG II²* 1558, line 88. For a discussion of Menander’s *Glykera*, see Konstan 1987. Philostratos: Wehrli 1948, p. 16, fr. 23.

62. *Χρυσίς*: *IG II²* 1576, line 32; Plut. *Demetr.* 24.1. *Μαλθάκη*: *IG II²* 1558, lines 68–69. *LGPV II* records eight instances of the name *Μαλθάκη* for Athenian women, so it is also not uncommon for more respectable women.

63. Timokles fr. 27 KA; Men. *Sam.*; Lucian *Dial. meret.* 8. See Kurke 1997, pp. 116–117, who suggests that the name referred to the “golden nature” of the “true *hetaira*,” or the “hooker with a heart of gold” found especially in New Comedy.

64. Arnott’s commentary (*Menander* 2, trans. W. G. Arnott, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, p. 160 and fr. 4).

65. See the discussion by Immerwahr (1984), who includes several images of the cup.

66. Immerwahr 1984, p. 11.

67. Lewis 2002, pp. 108–109.

68. Compare with *Δίδραχμον*, which Athenaios suggests as a name for a prostitute (13.596f). There are varying opinions about whether the female flutist is called *Ὀβολή* or whether the letters form the end of a name (Immerwahr suggests *Ἀριστοβούλη*). Since the letters *OBOΛH* are clear and there is no room for subsequent letters without writing over the man standing in front of the flutist, I am inclined to think that the woman’s name is *Ὀβολή*. For further discussion of prostitutes’ names, see Bechet 2001–2003.

69. Immerwahr 1984, p. 11.

the name given to a courtesan in Herodotos (2.135). In short, although few names were restricted to prostitutes, there is no doubt that some were given names that suited their profession. Athenaios provides a number of further examples, among them Πάροινον (“Tipsy”) and Δίδραχμον (“Two-Drachmas Worth”) (13.583e, 596f).

THE STIGMA OF PROSTITUTION

If the *ταλασιουργοί* were prostitutes, it is necessary to address the question of why they were identified obliquely as “wool-workers.” It is possible that the designation functioned broadly for “female work,” as wool-working does in epitaphs.⁷⁰ This is unlikely, however, because it raises the question why all the women would not have been similarly identified. It is more feasible that the terms *πόρνη* and *ἑταίρα* were for some reason considered undesirable.⁷¹ The term *πόρνη* had a derogatory sense (meaning something like “harlot” or “common whore”), and one can easily imagine that this designation would have been unsuitable for a newly freed person, especially for display on a public inscription.⁷² Because the term appears to have been used largely for slaves who worked in brothels, Cohen argues that the designation was inappropriate for newly freed women because “it was a virtual synonym for ‘slave.’”⁷³ The term does seem to have been primarily reserved for lower-class prostitutes, rather than better-paid courtesans (*ἑταίραι*) who were more likely to be able to afford manumission.⁷⁴ If *πόρνη* is unsuitable, then, why not identify the women as *ἑταίραι*? It is possible that the term was not used in order to avoid confusion with free *ἑταίραι*.⁷⁵ Considering, however, that there are other women in the Attic Manumissions who are listed with occupations that could be and were held by free women (such as retailers), this explanation is unsatisfactory.

It is more likely that these women were designated as *ταλασιουργοί* in order to avoid the stigma associated with the sex trade. The term *ταλασιουργός* is much more innocuous and generalized than more explicit terms for sex workers. Cohen has argued, in contrast, that the Athenians did not stigmatize people for being involved in the sex trade, and that “a prostitute might enjoy esteem as a practitioner of a trade involving service for limited periods of time in individually-negotiated arrangements.”⁷⁶ His interpretation of the evidence for this statement, however, is controversial, not least the idea that prostitution was “lauded by comic poets as a democratic and ethically desirable alternative to other forms of non-marital sex.”⁷⁷ It need

70. Lewis (2002, p. 62) discusses how “wool-work” can stand in for general “female work.” See Stears 2001 for a discussion of the sepulchral evidence.

71. Todd 1997, p. 123.

72. Apollodoros uses the verb *πορνεύειν* (“to play a harlot”) to denigrate Neaira (Dem. 59.107). For further dis-

cussion of the negative view of *πόρνη*, see Kurke 1997, pp. 112–114, who argues that certain ideas were associated with *πόρνη* in Archaic sources, such as “lewdness, pollution, the humiliating necessity of working for pay, and excessive commonality in the public sphere” (p. 113).

73. Cohen 2006, p. 108.

74. For a discussion of the term *πόρνη*, see Davidson 1997, pp. 74–75. For a lengthy treatment of the distinction between the *ἑταίρα* and the *πόρνη*, see Kurke 1997 (although her focus is primarily on the Archaic period).

75. Cohen 2006, pp. 108–109.

76. Cohen 2003, p. 214.

77. Cohen 2003, p. 215.

hardly be said that it is risky to take comic poets at their word, particularly when the comments in question are fragmentary. Cohen further argues that because prostitution was associated with the goddess Aphrodite, it “gained social legitimacy.”⁷⁸ Because the profession might have had a degree of religious legitimacy, however, does not mean that this transferred to the social sphere. Moreover, the fact that prostitution was a legal trade and was widely practiced in ancient Greece need not imply that it bore no social stigma. Although any tradesperson might have been subject to derision by someone who did not have to work for a living, selling one’s body for sex appears to have been viewed as particularly distasteful. Aristotle, for example, includes “prostituting one’s body” in a list of shameful acts (*Rh.* 1384a18).⁷⁹

Furthermore, if it is true, as Cohen contends, that “Athenian morality . . . tended to focus on the structure of work relationships, and not on the actual nature of the labor undertaken,” the questions remain why legislation was in place to protect citizens from falling into prostitution, why citizens practicing prostitution could lose their civic rights, and why fathers could be prosecuted for prostituting their own sons.⁸⁰ We do not find such restrictions for practitioners of other trades, which strongly suggests that prostitution was not considered just any trade. As Douglas MacDowell contends, although “male prostitution was not forbidden . . . in law it was incompatible with the status of an Athenian citizen.”⁸¹ Aischines maintains that Timarchos was corrupted because he sold his body for sex and that, by speaking in the assembly, he was in danger of passing on his own corruption to the entire civic body (1.1).⁸² Any citizen who practiced prostitution even for a brief period could have severe, and evidently permanent, limitations placed upon his citizenship, and if he did not observe these limitations he was liable to prosecution (*ἐταίρησεως γραφή*), which might result in the penalty of death. Although Aischines was undoubtedly exaggerating (or even fabricating) his claim in order to besmirch his opponent, it can at least be assumed that he expected his audience to share his professed view of the trade. The likelihood that the jurors did indeed view prostitution as an unsavory occupation is compounded by the fact that Aischines’ case against Timarchos was based largely upon the accusation of prostitution, and that the prosecution was successful, even in the absence of corroborating evidence.⁸³

Although there is little to indicate how a woman might be affected by prostitution, it is feasible that if male prostitutes were viewed as corrupted,

78. Cohen 2003, p. 215.

79. The word Aristotle uses here is *ὑπηρετεῖν*, which suggests a menial type of service, hence *ὑπηρετεῖν σῶματος* is usually rendered as “prostituting one’s person.”

80. Cohen 2003, p. 217. For the law against prostituting one’s sons, see Aischin. 1.13. Laws were also in place to protect boys against sexual corruption by older men (Aischin. 1.12).

For limitations on the civic rights of prostitutes, see Aischin. 1.21. For discussion and further sources, see Harrison 1968, pp. 37–38.

81. MacDowell 1978, p. 126.

82. While Athenian law appears to regulate the sexual behavior of citizens for political reasons, forensic evidence suggests that Athenian litigants nevertheless interpreted the laws moralistically. For a discussion of this in relation

to Aischines’ speech *Against Timarchos*, see Lape 2006, who argues that “although the explicit content of Athenian laws is not moral in emphasis, Aischines successfully argued that the laws were intended to promote and protect the morality of democratic citizens” (p. 140).

83. For the successful outcome of the trial, see Dem. 19.284, 285, 287.

female prostitutes were also considered in some sense corrupted. Aischines, for instance, states that anyone caught prostituting (προαγωγεία) either freeborn boys or women was liable to the “heaviest penalties” (1.14), and women who practiced prostitution were evidently forbidden to participate in the Thesmophoria, which points to their being in some way tainted (Isai. 6.48).⁸⁴ In Athenian society, free women’s sexuality was closely watched and laws were in place to guard against seduction. Although it appears peculiar from the modern viewpoint, adultery was perceived as being worse than rape because a woman who willingly had sexual intercourse with anyone but her husband was considered to be morally corrupt (Lys. 1.33).⁸⁵ Apollodoros clearly expected the jurors to share his view of Neaira’s alleged former occupation, which is presented not only as a taint on her character, but, more importantly for his purposes, on the character of her husband by association (Dem. 59).

The belief that a person might become corrupted through practicing prostitution or even, in the case of women, by engaging in extramarital sex, might help explain why the trade appears to have been largely limited to slaves. This might be further explained by the danger that conceivably existed for a man hiring a free woman for sexual services. Even though there were no laws against prostituting free women, in a society where status was so hard to prove one can imagine scenarios in which a man might be prosecuted by a sycophant for adultery (μοιχείας γραφή), which also carried with it a penalty of death.⁸⁶ Hiring a slave prostitute, then, would appear to be much “safer.” Considering the evidence that prostitution was a profession charged with its own special stigma, there might have been a desire to avoid explicitly and publicly designating even freedwomen as prostitutes.

It is further possible that at least some of the women might have wanted to retire from prostitution and live out their lives in a more socially acceptable manner. It is true, as Rosivach contends, that a few of the *ταλασιουργοί* do appear to have been freed along with children and partners.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, the lists do not indicate who chose the designation: the women themselves, the epigraphers, the magistrates, the former masters, or family members (or even a combination of the above). No doubt, if some of the freedwomen did have partners, presumably the partners would likewise have preferred the more innocuous designation. The same might be true of the magistrates involved, who may have wanted to avoid publicizing the manumission of so many sex workers and their subsequent integration into Athens’ metic class. The former masters, too, whose names were included alongside those of the manumitted women, might have wanted to avoid

84. The Thesmophoria appears to have been restricted to married women: Isai. 3.80. Versnel (1992, p. 34) suggests that the festival might have been even further restricted to upper-class women.

85. MacDowell 1978, p. 124.

86. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 59.3. For a discussion, see Harrison 1968, pp. 34–37;

MacDowell 1978, p. 125.

87. Rosivach 1989, pp. 369–370. See *IG II²* 1554, lines 10–17; 1556, lines 14–25; 1558, lines 66–76; 1570, lines 51–76. Rosivach (pp. 368–369) argues that the *παιδία* were children. Since *παῖς* was also a term used for slaves of any age, it has been argued that these “children” were actually

household servants or even prostitutes: see Tod 1950, p. 9; Cohen 2006, pp. 107–108. However, since all of the identifiable *παιδία* are listed in conjunction with males or females directly preceding them (the *παιδία* have the same masters and demes of the people directly above them), these suggestions are not persuasive.

being associated with pimping; pimps are hardly laudable figures in Roman sources, and the same might have been true in the Greek context.

It is perhaps noteworthy that the second-most expensive slave on the Attic Stelai was a Macedonian woman who sold for 310 drachmas.⁸⁸ Considering her high value, there is a good possibility that this woman was a prostitute, yet she was not listed with an occupation, even though the slaves directly above her were.⁸⁹ Some literary sources are similarly coy when representing a higher class of prostitute; Leslie Kurke notes that “the presentation of the *hetaira* is delicate and indirect . . . indeed so indirect that we need some ingenuity in locating the *hetaira* in Greek verse.”⁹⁰ This suggests a degree of reluctance to designate individuals as sex workers, whether it was to protect the women themselves from stigma or those who were involved with them. This avoidance of explicit terminology might well have been observed in the epigraphic sphere as well.

CONCLUSION

Until further evidence comes to light, it is not possible to answer definitively the question of who the *ταλασιουργοί* listed in the Attic Manumissions really were; however, the evidence connecting wool-working with prostitution, the large number of *ταλασιουργοί* mentioned, the apparent absence of prostitutes in the inscriptions, the names of a number of the women, and the stigma associated with the sex trade strongly suggest that *ταλασιουργοί* were not just wool-workers or “housewives.” Manumission was costly, and it is virtually certain that freedpersons had to have been in a financial position to purchase their own freedom. In their former lives as slaves, the *ταλασιουργοί* almost surely kept busy working wool when not entertaining clients, so their designation is not false.⁹¹ Nevertheless, it is misleading and, as I have argued above, intentionally so. The designation *ταλασιουργός*, therefore, can be said to have suited several purposes: it followed the standard name-plus-occupation formula found on the majority of the fragments, it described an activity these women also engaged in, and it was diplomatically vague in that it did not directly associate the newly freed women with the stigma of the sex trade.

88. *IG* I³ 422, line 79.

89. See Pritchett 1953, pp. 225–299, for a detailed discussion of this inscription.

90. Kurke 1997, p. 113.

91. See Cohen 2003, pp. 221–222, for a discussion of the multiple occupations that could be held simultaneously by slaves.

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