

THE FABRIC OF THE CITY

IMAGING TEXTILE PRODUCTION IN CLASSICAL ATHENS

ABSTRACT

Scenes of textile production on Athenian vases are often interpreted as confirming the oppression of women, who many argue were confined to “women’s quarters” and exploited as free labor. However, reexamination of the iconography—together with a reconsideration of gender roles and the archaeology of Greek houses dating to the 5th and 4th centuries B.C.—suggests that these images idealize female contributions to the household in a positive way. The scenes utilize the dual metaphor of weaving and marriage to express the *harmonia* of oikos and polis, a theme particularly significant under the evolving Athenian democracy.

The past 30 years have witnessed significant change in the study of ancient Athenian iconography.¹ Of particular importance has been the increased attention given to so-called genre scenes or “scenes of everyday life” in Athenian vase painting, a response to the dominating focus of earlier scholarship on mythological subject matter. This trend began in the late 1970s, and escalated in the 1980s with a series of publications primarily by French authors, most notably the groundbreaking volume *La cité des images* in 1984 (translated into English in 1989). Several scholars have questioned the efficacy of the image and the apparent reality of genre iconography.² All too often, the tendency has been to treat scenes on Athenian vases as mere illustrations, but recent iconographic studies have asserted the opposite: that images are constructions in which each element is consciously or unconsciously chosen as part of a larger system of signs and symbols.

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Olynthian house diagram (Fig. 12).

2. Bérard et al. 1984, 1989; see also Schmitt Pantel and Thelamon 1983; Bérard 1986; and Lissarrague 1990, pp. 1–12, for discussion of method. See Zinserling 1977 for the question of imagery versus “real life.” I use the term “genre scene” here for convenience, recognizing the limitations of the phrase.



Figure 1. Woman spinning wool in an oikos scene, hydria akin to the Clio Painter. Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek SL 476. Photo courtesy Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München

The scenes operate like a text or language that requires decoding in order to be understood. They should not be taken at face value, nor should they be interpreted as straightforward illustrations of daily life.

Hand in hand with these methodological developments has come an increased investigation into the lives and representations of Athenian women, ushered in by the publication in 1975 of Sarah Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* and followed by a myriad of international publications on the subject. The desire to throw a brighter spotlight on ancient Athenian women has helped promote the study of genre iconography, given the thousands of women represented on Athenian vases. The relative paucity of extant textual sources that discuss the lives of women—and especially of sources written by women themselves—renders the vases seductive potential glimpses into quotidian female activities and concerns. But the scholar searching for women's reality in ancient Athens faces a conundrum: as tempting as it is to interpret scenes of women in a literal way, especially in the absence of other evidence, one must be cautious.

In this article, I focus on a genre subject that has received particular emphasis in studies of Athenian women and of female iconography: textile production. To describe images of textile production as fiercely debated is no understatement, for interpretations have been diverse and often divergent.³ Depictions of women's work—including representations of women spinning (Fig. 1), weaving, combing wool into thread (Fig. 2), or simply standing or sitting with a wool basket (κάλαθος)—raise numerous

3. For recent discussions, see Lewis 2002; Sebesta 2002; and Ferrari 2002. Sutton (2004) discusses woolworking scenes in the context of oikos imagery.



Figure 2. Woman combing wool into thread and standing woman, tondo of kylix by Douris. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Antikensammlung 2289. Photo courtesy Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, New York

questions about gender roles in Classical Athenian culture, male attitudes toward women, domestic practices, and related issues, making them a natural choice for discussion.

For all the scholarly conversation about these scenes, an important aspect has been too little explored: the virtual chronological confinement of images of textile production to the period spanning the late 6th and 5th centuries B.C., in other words, from the Kleisthenic reforms of 508/7 B.C. through the Periklean years and the Peloponnesian Wars. While this time span is admittedly broad, I believe it is significant that the popularity of these scenes coincides with the gradual development of Athenian democracy as well as the growth (and decline) of Athenian military prominence. Political changes in Athens, most notably the movement toward a more demos-centered radical democracy and the simultaneous growth of military imperialism, fostered tremendous economic, social, cultural, and even psychological changes; the *oikos*, as the building block of the polis, naturally formed part of these developments. Not surprisingly, then, *oikos*-centered images gained a new prominence in Athenian iconography as the 5th century progressed, and the subject of textile production fits within this larger theme. The prominence of textile production in 5th-century imagery does not imply that Athenian women suddenly increased their weaving output, but rather that contemporary Athenian painters and consumers found this subject of special interest. It remains for us to consider why the motif was on the agenda at this time.⁴

My approach to textile production scenes is multifaceted, in keeping with what I perceive as the multivalence of the images themselves. I begin with two fundamental questions: who was the audience for these scenes, and who is represented in them? The gaps in our evidence for Athenian women as well as the Athenian vase trade make these questions difficult to answer. Relying on statistical and iconographic analysis, I contend

4. For the "agenda," see Osborne 1991, p. 270.

that an Athenian female audience (rather than an Etruscan one) was the primary consideration for painters and that the scenes overwhelmingly depict Athenian citizen women, especially married women. Even scenes most commonly interpreted as showing hetairai can be argued to represent citizen women.

Confronting these initial questions leads to larger considerations of sociocultural context and the function of these scenes within the larger schema of Athenian iconography. The relationship between image and reality is ambiguous and sometimes contradictory, but one must ask what these scenes do and do not say. Many have suggested, for example, that they are negative in tone, demonstrating the oppression and even physical seclusion of women in Classical Athenian society.⁵ As we shall see, however, this proposition cannot be upheld in the face of recent investigations into women's roles and domestic space.⁶ I argue below that these scenes exalt the role of women in maintaining the literal and metaphorical *harmonia* of the oikos, a message consistent with larger sociopolitical attitudes of the day. The images show the important economic and even managerial contributions of women to the household and suggest the essentiality of these roles for the city as a whole. These are, however, extremely idealized presentations: not all Athenians lived in the state of self-sufficient financial security suggested in the scenes, nor was the city itself enjoying a period of peace and stability. Power and economic prosperity, yes, but not peace and stability—a consideration that lends even greater nuance to genre scenes of blissful domesticity, which refract rather than represent reality.

DEFINING THE GENRE

Iconographic analysis of textile production scenes, including discussion of their chronological development, is a more challenging task than one might suppose. In contrast to other scene types such as fountainhouses or weddings, the iconographic parameters of textile production scenes are not clearly defined. Given the flexibility of iconographic signs pertaining to textile production (kalathoi, distaffs, etc.) and their ideological importance, the number of scenes incorporating them is quite large. Essentially there are three subsets of what I describe here as textile production scenes: (1) scenes in which actual work (e.g., spinning, weaving, or carding wool) is being done (Figs. 1, 2); (2) scenes in which figures hold or are otherwise near implements of textile production (distaffs, looms, kalathoi), but the figures themselves do not engage in work (Fig. 3); and (3) scenes that do not feature textile production as the primary subject but include props related to textile production (most notably, kalathoi) somewhere in the image (Fig. 4). Of these three subsets, the first is the smallest and the third is the largest.

Despite the difficulties in studying textile production scenes as a group, one can formulate and test hypotheses with the aid of statistical analysis and a substantial sample of representative vases (Tables 1–3). Undertaking statistical analysis of Athenian vases, however, brings its own problems that must be acknowledged. First, the number of Athenian

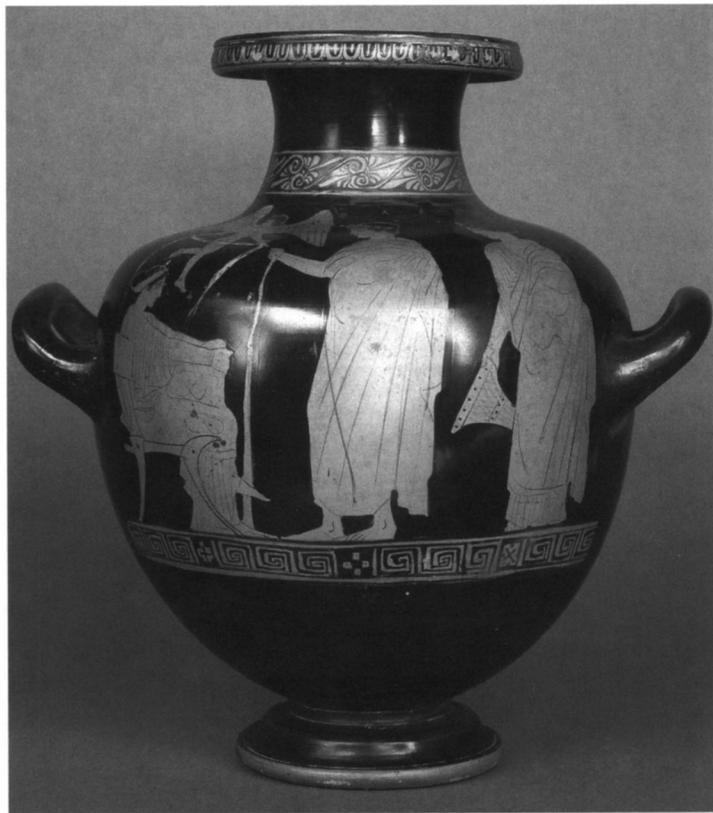
5. E.g., Keuls 1983, 1993.

6. E.g., Nevett 1999; Cahill 2002.

Figure 3. Woman with distaff and woman with hand loom, pyxis by the Painter of the Louvre Centauro-machy. Paris, Musée du Louvre CA 587. Photo courtesy Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York



Figure 4. Woman with Eros and husband, and standing woman with kalathos, hydria akin to the Clio Painter. San Simeon, Hearst Castle 529-9-589. Photo Z. Barov, © Hearst Castle, California State Parks



vases known today compared to those that originally existed is very small. Scholars have estimated that the surviving corpus represents 1%–3% (and possibly less) of what existed in antiquity.⁷ Second, the evidence is skewed in terms of findspot and patterns of excavation. In particular, the evidence is weighted toward Italian funerary sites because of the tendency of the Etruscans to place vases in tombs. Domestic sites—in Greece, Italy, and elsewhere—have been explored less often because of the difficulties they

7. E.g., Boardman 2001, p. 162, with further references.

TABLE 1. CHRONOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION OF VESSELS WITH TEXTILE PRODUCTION SCENES

<i>Vessel Shape</i>	<i>Late Archaic</i>	<i>Early Classical</i>	<i>High Classical</i>
Alabastron	0	12	1
Amphora	0	5	0
Epinetron	0	0	4
Hydria	0	11	53
Kalathos	0	0	1
Krater	1	0	0
Kylix	18	32	2
Lekythos (RF)	6	61	2
Lekythos (WG)	2	19	3
Nuptial vase	0	2	9
Oinochoe	1	0	0
Pelike	0	0	11
Pyxis	1	24	15
Skyphos	0	1	2
Stamnos	1	0	0
Total	30	167	103

Abbreviations: RF = red-figure; WG = white-ground.

present (e.g., often lying underneath modern towns), and even sanctuaries, where vases were presented as dedications, often yield fragmentary vessels with incomplete scenes. Problems of undocumented provenance and looting further complicate analysis, making it impossible to speak conclusively about patterns of iconographic popularity and chronological development. That said, the analysis of a sample of vessels, as shown below, can produce suggestive results.

For this study, I have used a sample of 300 vases, all red-figure or white-ground, nearly all attributed to a specific artist or workshop, and most documented by Beazley (Table 1).⁸ Vases from the three subsets described above are incorporated to provide a sufficiently broad cross-section.⁹ This sample by no means encompasses all scenes related to textile production, but does include enough examples to give a rough notion of chronological development, which studies of genre scenes have too often ignored. Indeed, one of the perceived weaknesses of the semiotic or structuralist approach to iconography is a relative lack of emphasis on chronology.¹⁰ Tracking the chronology of specific scene types is, however, an essential tool, for it reveals

8. The sample was collected primarily using the following sources: Webster 1972, the Beazley Archive online database (search terms: kalathos, spinning, distaff, spindle, loom), the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, and the Beazley volumes (*ARV²*, *Paralipomena*, and *Beazley Addenda²*). Studying vases in museum collections and consulting photographs in secondary sources (e.g.,

Ferrari 2002) further refined the sample.

9. Omitted from the sample are the few scenes of erotic pursuit that feature a pursued woman holding a kalathos, and usually show Poseidon and Aithra. Despite the inclusion of a kalathos, these scenes are not related to textile production.

10. See, e.g., the objections voiced in Osborne 1991.

much about the popularity of certain subjects and possible connections to contemporary sociohistorical circumstances.¹¹ I have divided the sample into three chronological periods corresponding to Beazley's stylistic divisions: Late Archaic (ca. 510–480 B.C.), Early Classical (ca. 480–450 B.C.), and High Classical (ca. 450–400 B.C.). For the purposes of this analysis, the goal of which is to establish general trends, greater chronological precision is not necessary.

What *is* necessary is attention to vase shape, an essential component of statistical analysis. In Gloria Ferrari's recent book, which includes a lengthy catalogue of scenes related to textile production arranged by subject rather than chronology, the author eschews consideration of vase shape, believing that although "scenes of women working wool are found predominantly, but not exclusively, on certain vases . . . which may plausibly be said to be used by women . . . the exceptions are too many and their nature too poorly understood to speculate based on a tentative correlation of shape to imagery."¹² This is a significant omission, for even if we do not fully understand the subtleties of vase usage, vase shapes provide clues to audience and function, and thus to the interpretation of specific scenes. In the case of textile production scenes, especially considering the broad chronological span during which they appear, vase shape is an important factor in defining the development of these scenes over time.

The chronological tabulation of vase shapes in the sample (Table 1) reveals a shift in popularity for certain vase shapes, a trend consistent with larger patterns among Athenian vases.¹³ The Late Archaic sample is dominated by stemmed cups (kylikes), with 18 examples representing 60% of the total. Kylikes with textile production scenes appear to remain popular during the Early Classical period, although in a smaller proportion (32, or 19.2% of the Early Classical sample). Generally, decorated kylikes are thought of as sympotic vessels, and are accordingly assumed to have had an intended audience of males (and hetairai). On seven cups in the sample, the women engaged in or identified with textile production interact with men; some of these scenes have been conventionally identified as showing hetairai with customers, partly on the basis of the kylix shape.¹⁴ Others

11. This approach points up the continuing usefulness of connoisseurship and attribution, despite objections from some quarters that connoisseurship as a methodology is outdated or contrived. Attribution of vases to specific artists or workshops can aid in determining when specific themes were popular, and thus refine iconographic analysis. See, e.g., Oakley 1998, defending the utility of connoisseurship against the charges of Whitley (1997).

12. Ferrari 2002, p. 9. Neils (2004b, p. 163) also draws attention to this "neglected aspect" in her review of Ferrari's book.

13. In order to ensure that the observed frequencies found in the table cells of Tables 1–3 are not the result of chance, chi-square tests were conducted for all three tables. For Table 1, the test yielded a chi-square value of 233.99; for Table 2, 70.04; and for Table 3, 11.67. Comparison of these results with probability charts (calculating the appropriate degree of freedom for each table) demonstrated that the observed frequencies listed in all three tables have a less than 1% probability of resulting from chance or coincidence. I thank Susan Toler of the Department of Psychology at the University of South

Florida St. Petersburg for her guidance in conducting the chi-square analysis of the data.

14. London E 51, manner of Douris (*ARV*² 449, no. 4); Berlin F 3240, manner of Foundry Painter (*ARV*² 405, *Beazley Addenda*² 232); Boston 10.205, manner of Onesimos (*ARV*² 331, no. 11); Oxford 1966.483, Brygos Painter (*ARV*² 376, no. 85); Vatican, Makron (*ARV*² 469, no. 154); Hannover L.1.1982, Douris (*ARV*² 437, no. 115); once Basel/Munich private collection, Ambrosios Painter (Immerwahr 1984).

show one or more women, usually in the tondo, engaging in work or otherwise associated with accoutrements of textile production (e.g., Fig. 2). Judging from the small number of kylikes in the High Classical sample, the popularity of this shape for textile production scenes faded around the middle of the 5th century. This finding is not surprising, for stemmed cup production in general dwindled around this time. Aside from kylikes, sympotic shapes such as amphoras and kraters are not widely represented in any period of the sample, although a few isolated examples are known, such as a Late Archaic column krater by the Harrow Painter.¹⁵

The reverse trend can be observed among shapes in the sample presumed to have had a predominantly female audience. Small vessels for perfumes and oils—alabastra and lekythoi (both red-figure and white-ground)—represent a larger proportion of the Early Classical sample than the Late Archaic sample, but are far less visible in the High Classical sample.¹⁶ Eighty lekythoi in the Early Classical sample constitute 47.9% of the total. The majority of these show a woman working alone, in keeping with the limited space for decoration on this vessel shape, and most of these single-figure compositions possess a stock or generic quality. While a small number can be attributed to fine painters such as the Brygos, Berlin, or Villa Giulia Painters, many belong to lesser painters such as the Bowdoin or Karlsruhe Painters, who apparently specialized in the mass production of lekythoi with images of women.¹⁷ This distribution of quality implies a wide audience and demonstrates the growing popularity of such scenes during the Early Classical period. In at least one instance, the Karlsruhe Painter seems to have parodied his own work; on a lekythos in Tübingen, the figure standing before a kalathos and holding a length of wool is not a woman, but a satyr.¹⁸

Other vase shapes showing textile production scenes and presumed to have had a female audience also escalate in popularity over the course of the 5th century. Indeed, the range of vase shapes with these scenes broadens, implying a varied audience as well as varied associations for the images. No hydrias appear in the Late Archaic sample, and only 11 in the Early Classical sample, but 53 hydrias make up the majority (51.5%) of the High Classical sample (e.g., Figs. 1, 4). Only one pyxis appears in the Late Archaic sample, but there are 24 in the Early Classical sample (14.4% of the Early Classical

15. Villa Giulia 1054: *ARV*² 275, no. 50; *Beazley Addenda*² 207.

16. The following five lekythoi are included in the High Classical sample: one red-figure lekythos by the Achilles Painter, Louvre G 444 (*ARV*² 993, no. 91; *Beazley Addenda*² 312); two white-ground lekythoi by the Achilles Painter, Vienna 3746 (*ARV*² 998, no. 164; *Beazley Addenda*² 313; Oakley 1997, p. 144, no. 222, pls. 116:a, 117; Lewis 2002, p. 180, fig. 5:4; Oakley 2004, p. 173, pls. 134, 135); and Amiens 3057.172.33 (*ARV*² 1000, no. 200; *Beazley Addenda*² 313; Oakley

1997, p. 151, no. 275, pl. 142:c, d); a white-ground lekythos in the manner of the Achilles Painter, Geneva 16839.1939 (Oakley 1997, p. 161, no. M33); and a red-figure lekythos by the Washing Painter, Oxford 1925.69 (*ARV*² 1132, no. 189).

17. Brygos Painter, Boston 13.189 (*ARV*² 384, no. 214; *Beazley Addenda*² 228); Berlin Painter, Taranto 8241 (*ARV*² 211, no. 207); Villa Giulia Painter, Paris, Cab. Méd. 1657 (*ARV*² 624, no. 81). Bowdoin Painter: two white-ground and 14 red-figure exam-
ples (= 23% of the Early Classical red-

figure lekythoi sample), including Geneva 18043 (*ARV*² 682, no. 104bis; *Paralipomena* 406; Ferrari 2002, pl. 15) and Oxford 1914.8 (*ARV*² 681, no. 79). Karlsruhe Painter: one white-ground and 17 red-figure examples (= 27.9% of the Early Classical red-figure lekythoi sample), including Mannheim, Reiss-Museum 190 (*ARV*² 733, no. 61); Oxford 1927.4461 (*ARV*² 732, no. 51); and Munich 7821 (*ARV*² 732, no. 50, and 1668).

18. Tübingen 7358 (O.Z. 158): *ARV*² 734, no. 83; *Beazley Addenda*² 283; Lissarrague 1998, p. 182, fig. 29.

TABLE 2. VESSELS WITH TEXTILE PRODUCTION SCENES AND DOCUMENTED PROVENANCE

<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Late Archaic</i>	<i>Early Classical</i>	<i>High Classical</i>
Italy	14	40	14
Greece	6	56	39
Total	20 (of 30)	96 (of 167)	53 (of 103)

total) and 15 in the High Classical sample (14.6% of the High Classical total; see, e.g., Fig. 3). Noteworthy in the High Classical sample is the inclusion of red-figure epinetra and pelikai, neither of which is represented in the Late Archaic or Early Classical samples.¹⁹ Nuptial vases (loutrophoroi and lebetes gamikoi) also represent a higher percentage in the High Classical sample compared to the Early Classical sample, although their numbers remain small. The advantage of all the shapes mentioned in this paragraph is that they allow for multifigured and thus iconographically complex scenes, in contrast to the plethora of Early Classical lekythoi. While elements of these scenes could be termed generic or perhaps even stereotypical, and there are consistencies of composition among many examples, overall a great deal of variety exists as well.

In tandem with chronology and vase shape, a third aspect of textile production scenes that bears examination is the provenance or findspot of the vases in the sample. The issue of provenance is especially difficult to confront; while a specific provenance is documented for many extant vases in museums and collections around the world, for the majority it is not. Tables 2 and 3 list vases in the sample with recorded or highly likely provenances.²⁰ While the number of vases with known provenances represents two-thirds of the Late Archaic sample, the percentage is much lower in the Early Classical (57.5%) and High Classical (51.5%) samples. This disparity should be taken into account when considering the implications of the statistical analysis, for if all provenances were documented, our picture might well be transformed. For convenience, in Tables 2 and 3 I have used Italy and Greece as the two broad categories. "Italy" includes Etruscan cities (Vulci, Orvieto, and Cerveteri most prominently), as well as the Greek cities of South Italy and Sicily. The vases that fall into the category of "Greece" are largely from Athens or Attica (including Eleusis and Brauron), with a small number coming from other mainland sites, from the Rheneia deposit (and thus originally from Delos), and from Rhodes. For a few vases in the sample, the provenance is simply documented as Greece and is not further specified.

The patterns of provenance for vases with textile production scenes are once more consistent with larger trends in Athenian vase painting. Table 2 shows that among the 20 Late Archaic vases with documented provenance in the sample, a high 70% have a known Italian provenance, and only 30% were found in Greece. Among the 96 Early Classical vases with documented provenance, 41.7% have a known or suspected Italian findspot, while a majority (58.3%) have a known or suspected findspot in Greece. The High Classical sample displays a continuation of the trend toward increased numbers of vases found in Greek contexts as opposed to

19. A small number of black-figure epinetra with allusions to textile production date from the Late Archaic period, e.g., an epinetron attributed to the Golonos Group, New York 10.210.13 (*ABV* 480, no. C), and a poorly drawn example by the Diosphos Painter, Leiden I.1955.1.2 (Lewis 2002, p. 184, fig. 5:7). On one side of the latter appear two seated men and a seated woman next to a kalathos (but not evidently working). To ensure a more consistent sample, I excluded black-figure scenes, though their numbers are so small that the findings are not affected.

20. Included in this sample are vessels in Italian museums whose exact provenance is unrecorded but almost assuredly is local. Not included in these tabulations are three vases with provenances listed only as "possibly Italy" or "possibly Greece," in museums outside Italy or Greece.

TABLE 3. VESSELS WITH TEXTILE PRODUCTION SCENES AND KNOWN PROVENANCE: SELECTED SHAPES

<i>Vessel Shape</i>	<i>Provenance</i>	
	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Greece</i>
LA kylix	9	3
LA lekythos	4	2
EC kylix	19	1
EC hydria	2	3
EC lekythos (RF)	8	27
EC lekythos (WG)	6	4
EC pyxis	0	14
HC epinetron	0	4
HC hydria	13	16
HC nuptial vase	0	7
HC pyxis	1	10
Total	62	91

Abbreviations: LA = Late Archaic; EC = Early Classical; HC = High Classical; RF = red-figure; WG = white-ground.

Italian, with 73.6% of vases with documented provenance in the sample coming from Greece, and only 26.4% coming from Italy. These percentages mesh well with previous observations that, over the course of the 5th century, the domestic market for Athenian vases gradually supplanted the Italian export market.²¹

The degree to which the Italian (particularly Etruscan) export market affected the production of Athenian vases—especially the choice of vase shapes and subject matter—has received increased attention in recent years.²² Were Athenian painters specifically targeting Etruscan/Western Greek consumers in their choice of subjects? Does the export of Athenian vases mean that we cannot read their iconography as an index for Athenian tastes and concerns? The lacunae in our knowledge leave us at a major disadvantage in answering these questions; even so, some scholars have asserted that the Etruscan market influenced the iconography of Athenian vases to a greater extent than is usually discussed. Some go so far as to imply or claim outright that the choices made by Athenian painters were primarily dictated by the Etruscan export market.²³

The sample of textile production scenes collected here suggests that the Etruscan market did not play a major role across the board. Among the different vase shapes, kylikes are the only category in which a large majority of examples were exported to Etruria. Among Late Archaic kylikes with documented provenance, 9 out of 12 come from Italy. Of those 9, 6 were discovered at Etruscan sites (e.g., Fig. 2). Among Early Classical kylikes in Table 3, 19 of 20 come from Italy, with 16 of those 19 apparently found in Etruscan contexts. In contrast, none of the red-figure or white-ground lekythoi in the sample with documented provenances (granted, this is a small percentage of the overall total of lekythoi) come from Etruscan sites; all those with documented Italian findspots were found in South Italy or

21. This pattern is readily observable among the documented provenances in Beazley's lists and has been noted in many standard books on Athenian vase painting, e.g., Boardman 1989, pp. 235–236; Robertson 1992, p. 267.

22. See discussions in Spivey 1991; Lewis 1997; Shapiro 2000; Osborne 2001; Lewis 2002; Marconi 2004; and Osborne 2004.

23. E.g., Lewis 1997, 2002.

Sicily. Aside from the kylikes, only four vases in the entire sample with known Italian provenance can be said to have come from an Etruscan site as opposed to a Western Greek (South Italian/Sicilian) one.²⁴

Among so-called women's shapes, the majority of vases in the sample with documented provenance were found in mainland Greece, especially Athens, Attica, and areas with close connections to Athens (such as Eretria and Rheneia/Delos). Even those exported to Italy were predominantly found in Western Greek cities and so were presumably meant for Greek customers. The majority of Early Classical lekythoi (combining red-figure and white-ground) have a Greek provenance (31 at 68.9%), with the rest found in South Italy or Sicily (14 at 31.1%). Among Early Classical red-figure lekythoi specifically, an even larger majority have a Greek provenance (27 at 77.1%) as opposed to Italian (8 at 22.9%). Among Early Classical hydrias in the sample, the division between Greek and South Italian/Sicilian is roughly even, with three of the former and two of the latter. Among High Classical hydrias in the sample, again the percentages are fairly equitable between Greek (55.2%) and South Italian/Sicilian (44.8%) findspots. Other shapes with known provenances in the sample—Early and High Classical pyxides, and High Classical nuptial vases and epinetra—come almost exclusively from Greece (Table 3).

The fact that so many textile production scenes, even if not a majority, were found in Italian contexts—be they Etruscan or Western Greek—raises questions about the intended audience for the vessels and whether scenes were meant to have a particularly Athenian meaning. While recognizing that a vase's ultimate findspot does play a role in understanding its "life," I subscribe to the prevailing viewpoint that Athenian painters would have most likely built upon their personal experience in Athens and awareness of their immediate environment in the design of scenes and selection of subjects.²⁵ Basic laws of economics suggest that if a particular item sells, the craftsman will make more of that item to satisfy the demand, and in this way the export market may have influenced Athenian painters, but I do not believe that the export market was the primary motivation behind a painter's choice of scene.

Even if Athenian painters were not specifically targeting non-Athenian viewers, textile production scenes are likely to have carried multiple levels of meaning depending on the viewer. An Etruscan customer who purchased a vase with the intent of placing it in a tomb may have interpreted its scenes

24. Hydria by the Chrysis Painter from Vulci, Sydney 54.03 (*ARV*² 1159, no. 6); skyphos by the Penelope Painter (name vase), Chiusi 1831 (*ARV*² 1300, no. 2; *Beazley Addenda*² 360; Geijer 1977; Buitron-Oliver and Cohen 1995, pp. 44–45; Fig. 5, below); and two vases in Florence whose exact provenance is not documented but which can be presumed to have come from Etruscan sites in the area: pyxis by the Painter of Florence 4217 (name vase, *ARV*² 1222,

no. 2); and amphora by the Dresden Painter, Florence 4018 (*ARV*² 655, no. 11). A fifth vase comes from Falerii, which is technically a Faliscan site despite the close contact between the Faliscans and Etruscans: column krater by the Harrow Painter, Villa Giulia 1054 (see n. 15, above). Given the high incidence of looting and illicit excavation of Etruscan sites, these percentages may well be skewed.

25. This viewpoint is also held by

Shapiro (2000) and Osborne (2001, 2004), although Shapiro discusses a possible exception. It does seem that some categories of Attic vases exported to Etruria were intended to appeal directly to the Etruscans (and certain shapes in particular, such as Nikosthenic amphoras; see Spivey 1991), but beyond these cases, there is little evidence to confirm direct marketing to the Etruscans.

in a way that an Athenian consumer would not; it is, therefore, useful to consider the Etruscan “second life” of a vase.²⁶ Conversely, to an Athenian viewer, the image of a woman spinning in a domestic environment would have summoned up meanings relevant to the democratic polis that an Etruscan or even Magna Graecian viewer might not see. Even an Athenian man and Athenian woman probably reacted differently to the same image. The fact that women spun and worked wool throughout the ancient Mediterranean gave the subject universal appeal regardless of the owner’s identity, but it also meant that a large number of associations could have been conjured up, depending on that identity. These associations need not, however, have been mutually exclusive. Here I concentrate on the specifically Athenian meanings for textile production scenes and how these images functioned within the larger context of the 5th-century city.

IDENTIFYING THE CHARACTERS

A question with significant implications for the meaning(s) of textile production scenes concerns the identity and social status of the women represented. It is a question that appears straightforward but is laden with difficulties, and predictably has inspired much scholarly discussion.

A small number of these images have inscriptions or some other iconographic criteria that allow the women to be identified as mythological figures. Some vases clearly represent aristocratic mythological women, including the well-known skyphos by the Penelope Painter found at Chiusi (Fig. 5), which depicts Penelope being visited by her son Telemachos, an episode not found in the *Odyssey*.²⁷ A standing warp-weighted loom (ἰστός)—an object rare in the imagery—serves as backdrop, with the elaborate shroud of Laertes shown in progress. Penelope is not working at this moment, however; she mourns Odysseus’s absence, her hand to her chin and her face shown in three-quarter view. She does not make eye contact with Telemachos, who stands with twin spears and regards his mother with concern. Just as the textile behind Penelope is in a half-finished state, so too the viewer understands that Penelope’s family is in limbo, although the weaving also recalls her cunning intelligence (μητις), and her attempts to control the situation. But hope lies on the horizon: on the opposite side

26. Cf. Spivey 1991 and Marconi 2004; but see Osborne 2004, p. 42: “I hope to show here that an approach to the iconography of Athenian pottery that emphasizes the importance of the final consumer cannot account for the peculiarities of that iconography, and that explanations of Athenian iconography have to be found in Athens itself. This does not, of course, involve the signifying potential of the iconography being limited to Athens, or their decoration and their subjects being ignored elsewhere, but it does involve Athenian

painters producing what interested Athenians, although they did so in the sure knowledge that the Italian and Sicilian markets had never failed to display a voracious appetite for Athenian vases of all sorts, regardless of imagery.”

27. Chiusi 1831: see n. 24, above. Surprisingly, this is one of the few securely identified images of Penelope to survive on Classical Athenian vases. Also note a kylix by the Oedipus Painter (ex Borowski Collection), which may show on one side the arm-

ing of Achilles preparing to depart the island of Skyros, and on the other the spinning daughters of Lykomedes: *ARV*² 451, no. 3; *Beazley Addenda*² 242; Ferrari 2002, pp. 89–90, pls. 113, 114. A Late Archaic kylix by the Briseis Painter from Cerveteri that shows Paris returning to Troy includes a seated spinner who may be one of Priam’s daughters (Polyxena?); Louvre C 1005 (G 151): *ARV*² 406, no. 8; *Beazley Addenda*² 232; Ferrari 2002, p. 30.



Figure 5. Penelope and Telemachos, skyphos by the Penelope Painter. Chiusi, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 1831. Photo courtesy Alinari/Art Resource, New York

of the vase, Odysseus's old nursemaid (enigmatically named by inscription as Antiphata rather than the Homeric Eurykleia) recognizes her master in disguise as she washes his feet.²⁸ This scene reassures the viewer that it will not be long before the family will be reunited and made whole again.

More iconic than narrative in conception, an Early Classical pyxis by an undetermined follower of Douris would probably not be recognizable as “mythological” were it not for the inscriptions.²⁹ Helen, Iphigeneia, Danae, Klytemnestra, and Cassandra appear in a domestic setting, together with a sixth unnamed woman. Helen sits before a kalathos with wool in her hands, not inappropriate given her occupations in the *Iliad* (3.121–128 and 6.323–324) and *Odyssey* (4.131–136). Once again, woolworking is clearly associated with mythological aristocratic women. It seems an incongruous gathering, though, particularly with the inclusion of Cassandra, and perhaps the artist simply wanted to liven up the scene by adding famous mythological names. Near the end of the 5th century, woolworking appears in even more exalted company, referenced in images of the glamorous Nereids (on a pyxis by the Kalliope Painter in Athens), as well as Aphrodite and her companions, including the personifications Eunomia (Good Order) and Eukleia (Good Repute).³⁰

The majority of textile production scenes fall into the more amorphous genre category and do not have clearly discernible mythological references. While most women in the scenes can be readily identified as citizen women (see below), a small number of representations—almost all from the Late

28. See Havelock 1995.

29. Pyxis by an undetermined follower of Douris, London E 773: *ARV*² 805, no. 89, 1670; *Paralipomena* 420; *Beazley Addenda*² 291; Lissarrague 1995, p. 98, figs. 9–12; Ferrari 2002, pl. 2.

30. Nereids: pyxis by the Kalliope

Painter, Athens, Ephoreia Athinon A 1877: *ARV*² 1707 (1263, no. 84bis); Ferrari 2002, p. 28, pl. 39, with further references. Aphrodite and her circle: see, e.g., a pyxis in the Manner of the Meidias Painter, New York 09.221.40: *ARV*² 1328, no. 99 (Aphrodite, Peitho,

Hygieia, Daimonia, Eukleia, and Eunomia); lekanis lid in the Manner of the Meidias Painter, Mainz, Johannes Gutenberg Universität 118: *ARV*² 1327, no. 87; *Beazley Addenda*² 364; Ferrari 2002, pls. 40, 41 (Paphia [= Aphrodite], Eunomia, and Eukleia).

Archaic and Early Classical periods—are more ambiguous and have invited scholarly controversy.³¹ Should some female woolworkers be identified as hetairai rather than housewives?³² This theory was first advanced in the early 20th century to describe scenes of men presenting money pouches or other apparent gifts to women who were spinning. Iconographic criteria such as money pouches, nudity, and the presence of men are often read as indicators of a female figure's lack of respectability, and sometimes vase shape—if a scene appears on a cup or other sympotic vessel—inspires the identification of a hetaira. One particular “spinning hetaira” theory posits that these are woolworking courtesans, either attempting to earn extra money by producing textiles for sale or assuming the trappings of virtue to better lure their clientele. A related theory suggests that some of these scenes show virtuous poor girls being tempted by wealthier males into lives of corruption.³³

In truth, none of the women in textile production scenes can be definitively identified as hetairai, even in those scenes that appear more ambiguous. The visual boundary between hetaira and housewife is not as clearly delineated as originally thought.³⁴ Consider again, for example, the early-5th-century cup by Douris in Berlin, originally found at Vulci and illustrated above (Fig. 2): the cup juxtaposes the male world of the symposium on the exterior with the domestic world of women on the interior.³⁵ The viewer, presumably male, would have first noticed the images of the all-male komos; then, as his drinking progressed, he would have reached the scene in the cup's tondo. One female figure plucks at her drapery (elsewhere considered a nuptial gesture), while a seated woman combs wool, winding it into thread before a kalathos. This occupation allowed Douris to show the woman's bare leg, an opportunity similarly taken on a cup by the Stieglitz Painter in Florence and a skyphos by the Phiale Painter in Palermo.³⁶ Douris even omitted the epinetron, which in reality would have covered the leg and aided the process, to increase the viewer's titillation. This saucy side of woolworking—the exposing of the leg—is referenced decades later in Aristophanes' *Ekklesiazusai* (81–90) in

31. Among the High Classical exceptions is a hydria by the Washing Painter with naked spinner: Copenhagen, National Museum CHR.VIII.520 (153): *ARV*² 1131, no. 161; *Beazley Addenda*² 333; Reeder 1995, pp. 216–217, no. 50. The figure on the Copenhagen hydria is identified as a hetaira by Williams (1983, p. 96), Reeder (1995, pp. 216–217), Neils (2000, pp. 208–209), and Sebesta (2002, p. 125). Sabetai (1993), followed by Lewis (2002, p. 104), urges consideration of the vase's funerary context at Nola and suggests a relation to marriage ritual. Sutton (1992), while not discussing this particular vase, points out that female nudes (e.g., in bathing

scenes) appear with greater frequency on hydrias, pyxides, and other vases associated with women as the 5th century progresses, suggesting a more respectable female audience. Compare also a pelike by the Washing Painter showing on one side Eros, a nude girl carrying a box, and a kalathos, Univ. of Mississippi 77.3.196: Shapiro 1981, pp. 26–27, no. 6 (identified in the catalogue entry by L. Turnbull as a hetaira with Eros).

32. For discussion, see Rodenwaldt 1932 (an early advocate of the spinning hetaira theory); Sutton 1981, pp. 347–369; Keuls 1983; 1993, pp. 258–266; Davidson 1997, pp. 86–90; Neils 2000, pp. 208–209; Badinou 2003b, pp. 4–7;

Sutton 2004, pp. 333–337 (with further references); Rosenzweig 2004, pp. 68–71.

33. See, e.g., Crome 1966.

34. For the problem of identifying hetairai on vases, see Kurke 1997; Lewis 2002, pp. 91–116.

35. Berlin 2289 (joins fragments in Florence 7 B 28 and Villa Giulia): *ARV*² 435, no. 95; *Beazley Addenda*² 238; Buitron-Oliver 1995, p. 81, no. 143; Ferrari 2002, pl. 1.

36. Cup by the Stieglitz Painter, Florence 3918: *ARV*² 827, no. 7; *Beazley Addenda*² 294; Keuls 1983, p. 222, fig. 14:29. Skyphos by the Phiale Painter, Palermo, Mormino Collection 788: Oakley 1990, p. 92, no. 154ter, pls. 131:d, 132:c, d.

Figure 6. Detail of woman spinning and women with youths, kylix by the Euaion Painter. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Antikensammlung F 31426. Photo courtesy Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, New York



regard not to hetairai, but citizen women. On Douris's cup, the inscription arching above the women—ὁ παῖς καλός, “the boy is beautiful”—further augments the playful nature of the scene, but does not preclude an identification of the women as citizens. Are the women whores or wives? Some have tried to designate them as one or the other, but to categorize them is ultimately irrelevant for the meaning of the scene. The intended humor is clear regardless of the women's specific social status.

Any perceived ambiguity in so-called genre scenes may have been a deliberate choice by the painter, a strategy for marketing his (or her) product. The viewer sees what he or she wishes to see. This idea is supported by the fact that none of the images described as “spinning hetairai” are blatantly erotic, even the few showing female nudity. Keeping the women's identities purposely vague would allow a scene to appeal to a broader range of potential consumers, whether in Athens or anywhere the vase might be exported. Perhaps certain customers *would* read a particularly ambiguous scene like that on Douris's cup as depicting hetairai, but they did not *have* to.

A cup attributed to the Euaion Painter from ca. 460 B.C. (Fig. 6), also in Berlin, provides another example of a seemingly ambiguous scene often identified as representing hetairai.³⁷ A seated spinner appears in frontal view, directly addressing the spectator. She is surrounded by women who hold various objects (chest, alabastron, oinochoe, and phiale), and converse with young men carrying staffs. The tondo similarly shows a draped woman and a draped youth in conversation in an interior setting, indicated by a stool. Presumably on the basis of the cup shape and the male-female interactions, this scene has been described as taking place in a brothel, with the frontal-faced spinner herself seen as a madam.³⁸ But what exactly about this scene says “brothel”? Everyone is decorously dressed, and the objects depicted are consistent with those in hundreds of respectable domestic

37. Berlin F 31426: *ARV*² 795, no. 100; *Beazley Addenda*² 290.

38. For this identification, see, e.g., Keuls 1993, pp. 258–259; Rosenzweig 2004, pp. 69–70.



Figure 7. Young man kissing woman as others watch, including woman with hand loom, hydria by the Leningrad Painter. Chicago, Art Institute 1911.456. Gift of Martin A. Ryerson through the Antiquarian Society. Photo R. Hashimoto, courtesy Art Institute of Chicago

scenes. As discussed below, Athenian citizen women did not live in the strict seclusion from men that is often assumed. Why could this scene not represent young men and women of a contemporary Athenian household going about their day?

Perhaps a viewer could read this particular scene mythologically if he or she chose. The seated spinner could be interpreted as Penelope, distanced from those around her, lost in her own thoughts (as the frontal face suggests—compare the three-quarter view on the Chiusi skyphos, Fig. 5), yet surrounded by her female attendants and potential suitors. If one interprets the scene in this way, the suitors have brought gifts and are attempting to ingratiate themselves with Penelope's ladies, while she herself remains apart and aloof. Locking eyes with the vase's spectator—perhaps an upper-class man in the context of an Athenian symposium—"Penelope" shows her allegiance to her absent spouse. Indirectly, the drinker is assured that back home, his own wife (if he has one) is remaining faithful even as he wanders among the *andrones* of Athens.

More brazen behavior appears on a hydria by the Leningrad Painter, dating to ca. 460–450: a wreathed, beardless man bending to kiss and fondle a peplos-clad young woman forms the compositional focus (Fig. 7).³⁹ The gesture, certainly unusual in a domestic setting, seems at first glance

39. Chicago, Art Institute 1911.456: *ARV*² 572, no. 88; *Beazley Addenda*² 261. Identified as a scene of hetairai by Moon and Berge (1979, pp. 170–171, no. 97), Jenkins and Williams (1985), and Keuls (1993, pp. 191, 193, figs. 175, 176, described as “the welcoming of a customer”).

more characteristic of a sympotic or komastic scene. At left stand another draped young man with staff and a draped woman, both watching the couple at center. At right appears a second draped woman, holding up the edge of her himation as though she has just walked into the scene. In her left hand she holds a hand loom or textile frame; these objects appear more frequently than standing warp-weighted looms in textile production scenes and may have been used for smaller embroidered textiles or even sprang hairnets.⁴⁰ Because of the kissing couple, this scene has been read as a brothel with a trio of female prostitutes greeting the evening's customers. But perhaps the young woman at right is the mistress of the oikos, catching her young husband as he romances a maidservant.⁴¹ The wife's hand loom, by stressing her industry and virtue, makes her husband look all the more roguish. Instead of being a salacious scene set in a brothel, this scene could be the ancient Athenian equivalent of a comedy of domestic manners.

The inclusion of money pouches in textile production and other domestic scenes appears to be a particular iconographic sticking point in identifying these women.⁴² One of the vases brought into the "spinning hetaira" debate is a now-lost alabastron attributed to the Pan Painter (ca. 470–460 B.C.) on which three figures appear: a seated and diligently spinning veiled woman, a young man draped in a himation who holds a purse out to her, and a standing woman holding a kalathos.⁴³ A second kalathos rests behind the spinning woman's chair, while a lekythos and mirror hang in the field. Because of the woman's spinning, Beazley identified the couple as husband and wife,⁴⁴ but given the money pouch, others have suggested something more scandalous. Johann Crome proposed that the scene represents a young man trying to seduce a respectable woman, a theory recently upheld by Robert Sutton.⁴⁵ Others maintain that this and similar scenes show hetairai and male clients.⁴⁶

To assume that money pouches denote only sex or sexual power is to assume a narrow perspective.⁴⁷ Spinning may or may not be limited to "respectable" women, nor does money necessarily indicate a caddish man. Here one should consider images of money pouches in their chronological context: rare in black figure, they first appear on red-figure vases at the end

40. Clark (1983) suggests that these small frames were used for making items with the sprang technique, e.g., hairnets and *sakkoi*; her thesis builds upon earlier, similar suggestions, e.g., Six 1919. This identification is further explored in Jenkins and Williams 1985; their article includes an appendix of scenes showing the small handheld frames/looms, to which add those listed in Ferrari 2002, p. 257, n. 90.

41. The short stature and contrasting dress of the kissing girl support this possibility. For the iconography of female servants, see Oakley 2000,

although he does not discuss this particular vase. For husbands dallying with servants, cf. Lys. 1.12: a wife jokingly admonishes her husband not to play around with the maid (although she is secretly having an affair herself).

42. See Meyer 1988 for images with money pouches. Ferrari (2002, pp. 14–16) argues unconvincingly that these are bags of knucklebones (*astragaloi*) presented as gifts.

43. Formerly Berlin F 2254: *ARV*² 557, no. 123; *Beazley Addenda*² 259; most recently, Sutton 2004, pp. 333–334, fig. 17:5.

44. Beazley 1931, pp. 24–25.

45. Crome 1966; Sutton 2004, p. 336.

46. E.g., Davidson (1997, pp. 86–90); Badinou (2003a, p. 88); and see the sweeping statement of Rosenzweig (2004, p. 69): "The identification of the women as prostitutes is now generally accepted," following upon the assertion that "by offering gifts or money, they [the men] could only be after one thing: sex."

47. For money pouches as evocative of sexual power (an "economic phallus"), see Keuls 1993.

of the 6th century and are found mostly before the mid-5th century, with a few later exceptions.⁴⁸ Coinage itself first appeared in Athens in the 6th century, beginning with the so-called *Wappenmünzen*, or didrachms, during the reign of Peisistratos, followed by the better-known and long-lived silver tetradrachms (the “owls”) either near the end of the tyranny or soon after the Kleisthenic reforms (the date is disputed).⁴⁹ In the period when money pouches were most popular on Athenian vases, coinage was still new, so it may have been fashionable to depict these *au courant* Athenian men with purses suggesting their use of the new medium.⁵⁰

One could go farther. Although the introduction of Athenian silver coinage may not be directly tied to the advent of democracy, nonetheless the “owls” had symbolic links to the democratic citizen.⁵¹ Precious metal that had been the purview of the aristocracy was given a civic stamp and put into broader circulation. The men with money pouches on vases fit squarely into this new economic system and the new democratic polis, providing male viewers with a model to which they could aspire. That money pouches can appear in scenes with a more aristocratic bent, for example, scenes of homosexual conversation or courtship, is also suggestive, perhaps serving as exhortations to the elite to make the new coinage part of their daily lives.

Money pouches can thus proclaim the social status of the bearer as a successful inhabitant of the Athenian democratic polis. In the case of domestic scenes as on the Pan Painter’s alabastron, this figure could be the husband, who engages in financial matters beyond the *oikos* and oversees the flow of goods and resources in and out of the house. As H. A. Shapiro states in a recent discussion of a cup by Douris, which shows a scene of homosexual conversation including a man with money pouch:

The purse . . . is simply a token of the adult citizen male. That it is so conspicuously displayed on many vases of this period has both practical and symbolic reasons. Because the himation had no pockets, the only way to carry money securely was to keep a firm grip on it at all times. At the same time, the purse symbolized something else (as it always has): the economic power and thus freedom and independence of the bearer. In the Greek household, it was the husband and father, and he alone, who literally held the purse strings at all times.⁵²

On the Pan Painter’s alabastron and other vases that depict a spinning woman confronted by a man with a money pouch, the husband makes his contribution to the household (money) and the wife makes hers (textiles).

48. Meyer (1988) notes the chronological placement but does not explore it in detail with regard to historical context. Vases dating after the mid-5th century include a pelike attributed to Polygnotos from Rhodes, Athens 1441: *ARV*² 1032, no. 56; *Beazley Addenda*² 318; Matheson 1995,

p. 339, no. P 61, pl. 48 (she dates this pelike transitional to late in the artist’s oeuvre, ca. 435–430 B.C., and identifies the figure as a “spinning hetaira”); and an epinetron, Painter of Berlin F 2624 (name vase), from Athens, ca. 440–430: *ARV*² 1225, no. 1; Lewis 2002, p. 196, fig. 5:16.

49. See Trevett 2001, pp. 25–28, for the debate over chronology.

50. See Shapiro 2003, p. 102.

51. See Trevett 2001 for discussion; also Kurke 1999, esp. pp. 299–331.

52. Shapiro 2003, p. 102, citing further Meyer 1988.

That his coinage is emblematic of the newly democratic polis and her textiles of the traditional gift-exchange system (still in use) also seems significant. The husband offers money freely to his wife, suggesting a harmonious economic partnership (*κοινωνία*) within the *oikos*. The scenes also recall the fact that many women would have had charge of the family's finances, looking after money and household expenses even though their capacity to engage in public transactions was limited. Ischomachos tells his wife in Xenophon's *Oikonomikos* (7.35–36):

... you must receive what is brought inside and dispense as much as should be spent. And you must plan ahead and guard whatever must remain in reserve, so that the provisions stored up for a year are not spent in a month. And when wool is brought to you, you must see that clothes are produced for those who need them.⁵³

The men's gesture on the vases, handing over control of the money pouches to the women, demonstrates respect and trust in their wives' managerial abilities.

While iconographic ambiguity exists in some textile production scenes, the majority—especially those Early and High Classical scenes appearing on “women's shapes”—can be more easily identified as scenes relating to the *oikos* and representing Athenian citizen women. These images are likely to have invoked mythological parallels with Penelope, Andromache, or even Helen, but the lack of inscriptions also allows for a contemporary reading, permitting female viewers to engage with the images by eliminating the illusion of distance.⁵⁴ The aristocratic weavers and spinners of myth and epic are transformed into the citizen spinners and weavers of democratic Athens. We have already postulated a largely female, largely Greek audience for most Early and High Classical textile production scenes, and certain themes and iconographic consistencies resonate through these images. There is variety as well, despite the occasional charge of stereotyping among Classical scenes of women. A range of quality exists from finely painted to more carelessly drawn scenes, implying a broad range of popularity across economic strata.

A favorite theme is the gathering of women engaged in various tasks, including textile production, in a domestic setting. In the Archaic period this subject was rare (appearing most notably in the well-known black-figure *lekythos* by the Amasis Painter in New York),⁵⁵ whereas it was much more prevalent in the 5th century. Like the Amasis Painter's *lekythos*, the High

53. Trans. Pomeroy 1994, p. 145; see also commentary on pp. 281–282 with other literary references. Cf. also Xen. *Oik.* 3.15, spoken by Socrates: “Property generally comes into the house through the exertions of the husband, but is mostly dispensed through the housekeeping of the wife” (trans. Pomeroy 1994, p. 121). See also Blundell 1995, pp. 140–141, citing Ar. *Lys.* 492–

497, in which Lysistrata claims that women are capable of running the city's economy because they have always had charge of the households' finances, and Pl. *Leg.* 805e.

54. Cf. Osborne 1991, p. 262 (in speaking of hunt scenes with men).

55. New York 31.11.10: *ABV* 154, no. 57; *Beazley Addenda*² 45. Also note a black-figure neck amphora attributed

to the Three-Line Group, ca. 520 B.C., Louvre F 224: *ABV* 320, no. 5; Neils 1996, pp. 186–188, fig. 8:7. Neils has persuasively argued that the seven wreathed women working on one side of the neck amphora are preparing the Panathenaic peplos, an interpretation supported by the representation of Athena (together with other deities) on the opposite side.

Classical pyxis by the Painter of the Louvre Centauromachy illustrated above (Fig. 3) alludes to several steps in the woolworking process, including a woman with a distaff and another with a hand loom or textile frame.⁵⁶ These two women appear before an open door leading to a bedchamber (*θάλαμος*), with the *kline* inside clearly visible and decorated with patterned bedding. The woman with a distaff—like the seated spinner on the Euaion Painter's Berlin cup (Fig. 6)—turns her head to gaze with frontal face, a gesture that brings the presumably female viewer more actively into the image and invites her to see elements of her own experience.⁵⁷ Elsewhere a standing woman displays a finished textile, perhaps preparing to fold and store it in the open chest held by the woman next to her. This figure recalls the responsibility of a wife to oversee the household's goods and belongings.⁵⁸ We can compare a now-lost stamnos by the Copenhagen Painter, with a scene representing two women folding a length of patterned cloth next to a large chest.⁵⁹

Similar genial gatherings can be found on a pyxis by the Phiale Painter in Vienna (Fig. 8), and one by the Painter of Philadelphia 2449 in New York, the shape of the pyxis lending itself well to such compositions.⁶⁰ The Phiale Painter's Vienna pyxis again depicts an open *thalamos* door with *kline* visible inside (Fig. 8, left). Here a woman busily spins in front of the door, as another woman stands before her with an alabastron and small chest. The seated and standing women throughout this scene hold objects typical of domestic settings, including a mirror, hand loom (Fig. 8, right), more chests, and so on. A kalathos rests on the ground, and a second alabastron hangs in the field. The New York pyxis by the Painter of Philadelphia 2449 includes six standing and seated women in a domestic environment indicated by an Ionic column. One of these is a woman carding wool over her bare leg, the cheeky motif of the Douris Berlin cup (Fig. 2) transposed into a less suggestive setting.

56. Louvre CA 587: *ARV*² 1094, no. 104; *Beazley Addenda*² 328; Lewis 2002, p. 63, fig. 2:1 (describing it, without explanation, as a wedding scene). Keuls (1993, p. 118, fig. 101) describes the scene as "anxious woman with distaff in front of bridal chamber" (caption). Note that although most identify the object in the woman's hand as a distaff, it also resembles a mirror. Sometimes the distinction between mirror and distaff is difficult to discern; see Frontisi-Ducroux 1995, esp. pp. 122–123, on this vase and similar scenes, and Frontisi-Ducroux 1997.

57. Frontal faces: Frontisi-Ducroux 1995; MacKay 2001. MacKay posits a conceptual similarity between frontal faces in black-figure vase painting and the poetic device of the apostrophe (literally, "turning away"). She points

out that "black-figure vase painters use the immediacy of their frontal-faced figures to provoke an emotional reaction" (p. 31). The same could be said of red-figure painters like the Euaion Painter and the Painter of the Louvre Centauromachy. Frontisi-Ducroux also discusses the apostrophe theme. I thank Bonna Wescoat for leading me to MacKay's work.

58. Cf. Jenkins 1985, pp. 111–112.

59. *ARV*² 257, no. 17 (once Paris); Lissarrague 1995, p. 93, fig. 2; Goldberg 1999, p. 147, fig. 9:4. The reverse of this stamnos depicted the departure of a young man as a woman poured a libation. Lissarrague (1995, p. 93) describes the juxtaposition of these two scenes as an "opposition," but I would instead describe them as com-

plementary, alluding to the "things outside" and "things inside" that form the domain of the respective genders (Xen. *Oik.* 7.30; see below, p. 310 and n. 92). The viewer is reminded that while the young man is away, the woman looks after the household goods. See also a white-ground lekythos near the Providence Painter in a German private collection, which shows a woman preparing to place folded textiles in a large decorated chest: Oakley 2004, p. 25, fig. 6.

60. Pyxis by the Phiale Painter, Vienna 3719: Oakley 1990, p. 90, no. 144bis, pls. 118, 119. Pyxis by the Painter of Philadelphia 2449, New York 06.1117: *ARV*² 815, no. 3; *Beazley Addenda*² 292; Lewis 2002, p. 65, fig. 2:3.



Figure 8. Woman spinning and woman with alabastron and chest (*left*), and women, including one with hand loom (*right*), pyxis by the Phiale Painter. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum 3719. Photos courtesy Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

In her recent book, Ferrari argues that scenes such as these do not reference the *oikos* at all, but instead represent young *parthenoi* before marriage:

It is apparent that the scenes of wool-working concern neither domestic husbandry nor, strictly speaking, the persona of the dutiful wife in the context of the family. These pictures show that spinning is the mark of females who are maidenly, beautified by scents, rich clothes, and ornaments, and attract suitors who come bringing tasteful gifts. They are blushing maidens, *parthenoi aidoiai*, who live together in nymphlike community, sharing simple tasks and pleasures, such as working wool, gathering flowers and making garlands, playing ball, and dancing. Marriage puts an end to this state of affairs: in the depiction of beauty and courtly love there are few, if any, references to homes and husbands. One concludes that, while in real life, making clothes may have been the most important task of the good wife, in the imaginary world depicted on the vases, signs of wool-working are predominantly attached to pretty girls. . . . it is a fact that in the literary representations of women wool-work is predominantly an emblem of maidens.⁶¹

These broad generalizations do not mesh well with the visual imagery, nor indeed with the literary sources. In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Helen, Penelope, and Andromache—all married women—are prominently associated with weaving and textile production. Ferrari attempts to make Helen and Penelope fit her model by saying that while Odysseus is away, Penelope is “in the same position as a *parthenos*” and that Helen “is the paradigm of

61. Ferrari 2002, p. 57.

the temptress, not the wife.”⁶² These explanations do not do justice to the way in which the woolworking of these two women is presented in the epics. Helen weaves (*Il.* 3.125–128) and supervises her attendants’ weaving (*Il.* 6.323–324) when she is the “wife” of Paris at Troy, lending an element of legitimacy to their relationship. She then spins and weaves in the *Odyssey* after she has been reinstated as the wife of Menelaos (*Od.* 4.131–136), a textual image that metaphorically reinforces the return to normalcy in their marriage, and she makes a gift of a robe she wove to Telemachos (*Od.* 15.104–108, 123–129). Meanwhile, Penelope’s weaving in the *Odyssey* signifies her *metis* in attempting to maintain her oikos and her marriage to Odysseus, suggesting by extension her like-mindedness (*ὁμοφροσύνη*) with her husband; both are suggested visually on the Penelope Painter’s skyphos (Fig. 5).⁶³ Penelope refers to herself as a “wedded wife” (*Od.* 16.431–432) and does not consider herself eligible, regardless what the suitors think.

In the same way, textile production on Classical Athenian vases—especially spinning, since representations of carding wool and weaving are less common—is placed within a larger series of symbols that reference marriage or otherwise evoke the world of the oikos. We cannot go so far in most cases as to call a specific figure a bride, but the concept of the married woman is prevalent. Glimpses of the marriage bed, as on the pyxides by the Painter of the Louvre Centauromachy (Fig. 3) and the Phiale Painter (Fig. 8), are prime indicators, implying the existence of a husband even when he is not physically present. So too the occasional inclusion of children (Fig. 1), a motif discussed below. Even adornment as a general theme recalls the world of the wedding and of married women. In a few specific cases, for example, textile workers are joined by female figures who tie their sashes or girdles (sometimes while holding the overfold of their chitons in their teeth), a motif that has been linked to nuptial adornment. One of these is an unattributed kalathoid vase in Durham (Fig. 9), dating to ca. 440 B.C., with six figures: a standing woman with kalathos, a seated woman working on a hand loom, a standing draped woman, a young woman tying her girdle, a seated woman with mirror, and a standing woman with plemochoe and alabastron.⁶⁴ Perhaps this unusual vase—a ceramic version

62. Ferrari 2002, pp. 57–58.

63. See Vetter 2005, pp. 33–61, for Penelope’s weaving and the theme of *homophrosyne*.

64. University of Durham: Williams 1961; Keuls 1993, p. 115, fig. 100. First published in Stackelberg 1837, pl. 33, where it was said to have been excavated on the Mouseion: Williams 1961, p. 27. The vase is unattributed, but Williams posits some relation to the Barclay Painter. The vase has a break at the face of the girl tying her belt (Fig. 9:d, restored in the line drawing), so it is not clear whether she originally

held part of her belt in her teeth as is sometimes seen on contemporary vases. Keuls (1993, pp. 114–115) believes the figure instead to be loosening her belt, a more overtly sexual suggestion. Two other scenes juxtaposing belt-tying and textile production can be seen on a hydria by the Persephone Painter, Naples 126055 (*ARV²* 1013, no. 13; Sabetai 1997, p. 323, fig. 8); and a hydria akin to the Clio Painter, Newton, Walston Collection (*ARV²* 1083, no. 1). For the motif of a young woman tying her girdle, see Sabetai 1997, pp. 321–328.



Figure 9. Drawing of women on kalathoid vase, one holding hand loom. Durham, University Museum. Stackelberg 1837, pl. 33

of an actual object employed in textile production—served as a wedding present or a funerary offering.⁶⁵

While groups of women alone are popular, men occasionally appear in woolworking scenes. Although Ferrari suggests they are suitors for the hands of *parthenoi* and classifies the images as “reception scenes,”⁶⁶ more likely the men are husbands shown in the context of the *oikos*. These representations can have an iconic, tableau-like quality; the husband often does not interact with other figures in the scene, but instead watches quietly. On a hydria akin to the Clio Painter in Munich, illustrated above (Fig. 1), the wife who sits spinning becomes the fulcrum of the composition, her wool shown in added white to give it special emphasis.⁶⁷ At right stands her young husband, holding a staff signifying that he is an active contributor to the household, someone who goes out into the city and takes care of business. The staff also communicates his manliness (*ἀνδρεία*) by making clear that he does not spend his whole day at home with the women and children, a situation that would be most shameful (cf. Xen. *Oik.* 7.30). A woman with chest, at left, and a small nude boy with toy hoop complete

65. For ceramic kalathoi, see Williams 1961, with a list of the six such vessels known to the author. Of those known, the kalathoid vase currently in Durham (the focus of Williams’s article) and another in Berkeley (Lowie Art Museum 8/3342) feature scenes of women and are likely to be wedding presents. Kalathoi are represented on a number of funerary white-ground lekythoi, e.g., an unattributed white-ground lekythos showing woman and kalathos, Compiègne, Musée Vivenel 1045; unattributed white-ground lekythos with woman, alabastron, and kalathos, Brussels A 1687; unattributed white-ground lekythos with seated woman and kalathos, Berlin, private collection, Gehrig 1975, no. 230; unattributed white-ground lekythos with woman, wreath, and kalathos, current location

unknown, once Sotheby’s New York, May 16, 1980, no. 181; white-ground lekythos attributed to the Bowdoin Painter, Houston 34.131 (*ARV*² 687, no. 210bis; *Paralipomena* 407; *Beazley Addenda*² 280; Keuls 1993, p. 250, fig. 226); white-ground lekythos by the Timokrates Painter with two women and kalathos, Athens 12770 (*ARV*² 743, no. 7; Oakley 2004, p. 45, fig. 15).

Two white-ground lekythoi by the Achilles Painter show kalathoi standing on women’s tombs, Vienna 3746 and Amiens, Musée de Picardie 3057.172.33 (see n. 16, above). Compare a stone grave marker in the form of a kalathos and chest, Athens 1052: Lissarrague 1995, p. 96, fig. 7. Compare also grave stelai that depict Athenian citizen women working wool together with female companions (servants?)

and sometimes children, e.g., Berlin K 61: Kosmopoulou 2001, p. 301, n. 220; Stears 2001, pp. 110–111, fig. 3. Other gravestones showing single women working wool (see Kosmopoulou 2001 and Stears 2001 for lists and discussion) may depict citizen women, but may also show lower-class Athenian working women, metics, or slaves; the evidence is inconclusive. As Stears (2001, p. 113) points out, the relative paucity of scenes on gravestones with references to woolworking (only about 14 examples) is surprising.

66. Ferrari 2002, pp. 235–240.

67. Munich SL 476: *ARV*² 1083, no. 2; *Beazley Addenda*² 327; Beaumont 2003, p. 76, fig. 12; Sutton 2004, pp. 340–341. Sutton points out the significant detail that the woman is veiled, confirming her status.

the scene. The *kalos* inscription above the heads of the figures may specifically refer to the seated woman, literally labeling her a beautiful wife and mother,⁶⁸ or it may be a more generalized comment on the larger scene (e.g., proclaiming it a *kalos oikos*).

Depicting husband and wife together in the physical space of the house points up the legitimacy of their relationship. Athenian marriage was defined not by a single procedural moment or a legal document, but by a series of “communally witnessed rituals and household events,” a social process.⁶⁹ The formal betrothal, wedding procession (a common subject on vases), and wedding feast were among these, but so were “the setting up of a new household [*synoikein*] and the birth and recognition of children [*paidopoiein*].”⁷⁰ Scenes such as that on the Munich hydria visualize these ideal circumstances of a legitimate marriage, opening up the normally reclusive *oikos* for all to see. A similar composition appears on the name vase of the Painter of London E 215, where the spinning woman is flanked by a female attendant holding a chest and a bearded, wreathed man with a staff.⁷¹ On a hydria by the Kassel Painter in Brussels, two women frame the spinner, the entire trio observed by a wreathed, beardless man with a staff; here and on the hydria London E 215, the wreaths suggest that these men are bridegrooms.⁷²

The theme of the *oikos* is further reinforced in scenes in which the husband is shown bringing money or other objects to his wife.⁷³ The motif of the money pouch has already been discussed with reference to the debate over “spinning hetairai”—with the suggestion that many scenes presumed to depict hetairai may show a husband presenting money to his wife as a sign of his financial prosperity—but men can bring other objects as well. An unattributed alabastron in Paris (ca. 470 B.C.) shows a young man leaning on his staff and presenting a fillet to a young woman, who sits before a kalathos and holds a wreath. Inscriptions confirm their status as a married couple: ἡ νύμφη καλή (“the bride is beautiful”) and Τιμόδημος καλός.⁷⁴

Most practical in terms of textile production scenes are images in which the husband brings raw wool to his wife. On a pyxis by the Veii Painter (ca. 470–460 B.C.), a woman wrapped in her himation sits before a kalathos filled with wool (indicated in added white), holding a ball of wool in her hand (Fig. 10, left).⁷⁵ A young man, presumably her husband, stands on the other side of the kalathos, a leg of meat in his right hand and a ball of wool

68. Sutton (2004, p. 341) suggests that the viewer is probably meant to understand καλλός (beauty) or καλῶς (with the term used as an adverb) rather than the masculine adjective καλός.

69. Patterson 1998, p. 109; see also Patterson 1991.

70. Patterson 1998, p. 109.

71. London E 215: *ARV*² 1082, no. 1; *Beazley Addenda*² 327; Beard 1991, p. 22, fig. 4.

72. Brussels A 73: *ARV*² 1085, no. 25. Compare another hydria by the Kassel Painter with centrally seated spinner (frontal body, profile face) holding both spindle and distaff, woman with box at left, and beardless standing man with staff at right, London E 193: *ARV*² 1085, no. 30; *Beazley Addenda*² 327. A mirror is suspended above this spinner's head.

73. Gift-giving is the focus of Sutton's doctoral dissertation (Sutton

1981), and is further discussed in his later work, most recently Sutton 1997–1998 and Sutton 2004. Lewis (2002, esp. pp. 185–189) also discusses these scenes.

74. Paris, Cab. Méd. 508: *ARV*² 1610; Sutton 1992, p. 20, fig. 1:6; Lewis 2002, p. 32, fig. 1:16.

75. Mount Holyoke 1932.5.B.SII: *ARV*² 906, no. 109; *Beazley Addenda*² 303; Buitron 1972, pp. 116–117, no. 63.



Figure 10. Woman sitting by a kalathos (*left*), and man holding leg of meat and ball of wool (*right*), pyxis by the Veii Painter. South Hadley, Mass., Mount Holyoke Art Museum 1932.5.B.SII. Purchased with the Psi Omega Fund in honor of Mary Gilmore Williams, class of 1885.

Photos courtesy Mount Holyoke Art Museum

in his left, the latter extended toward the seated woman (Fig. 10, right).⁷⁶ The leg of meat recalls the meat obtained from public sacrifices that could be brought home and eaten, with both meat and wool demonstrating the capabilities of the husband to look after his family. A pair of closed doors (not visible in Fig. 10) emphasizes the house setting.

Sutton has persuasively argued that the principal scene on an unattributed epinetron found in Attica and dated to ca. 430–420 (Fig. 11) also shows a husband's contribution to the oikos, bringing "raw materials from the outside into the house for his wife to transform."⁷⁷ Like the Veii Painter's pyxis, this scene stresses true partnership between husband and wife in the maintenance of home and family. The composition is bracketed by a standing loom, or *histos*, at left and a partially open door at right, both of which visually anchor the image but also provide symbolic focus. Left of center sits a woman combing or carding wool into a kalathos, an epinetron placed on her knee. Behind or beside her at far left is a woman working at the *histos*. A third woman to the right of the seated figure seems to be a spinner with a distaff, although the scene is badly preserved in this area. A young bearded man dressed in a himation has just emerged from the open door at right, holding a basket with a handle; the round objects inside the

76. Buitron (1972, p. 116) identifies the woman and man as both holding a ball of wool, but identifies the alleged leg of meat as a length of cloth. The leg-of-meat identification is found on the Beazley Archive online database and is followed by Lewis (2002, p. 186); Lewis, however, identifies the object

the woman is holding as a fruit and describes the man's second object only as "another round object." Ferrari (2002, p. 31) identifies the scene as one of courtship and says the young man and seated woman hold balls (of the recreational variety). However, the proximity of the two round objects to the kala-

thos, and the use in all three cases of the added white, suggest balls of wool.

77. Athens 2179: Badinou 2003b, p. 152, no. E57, pl. 30; Sutton 2004, pp. 336–337, fig. 17:7; cf. Sutton 1981, p. 224. Sutton believes the epinetron may be attributable to the Codrus Painter.

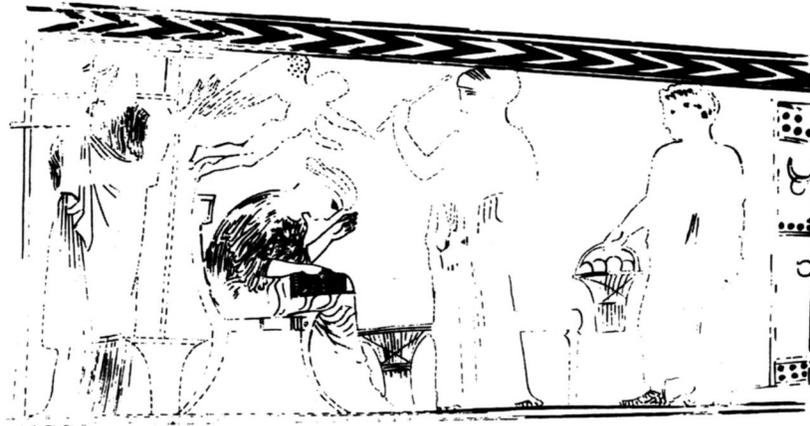


Figure 11. Drawing of oikos scene, including man bringing wool to working women, on an unattributed epinetron. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 2179. Robert 1892, pl. 13

basket have been plausibly identified as lumps of raw wool.⁷⁸ The shape of the epinetron itself is meaningful, since an epinetron was placed over a woman's knee to assist her in combing wool. Decorated ceramic epinetra such as this one, however, were surely not meant to be used. Such decorative objects would have been appropriate as wedding gifts, votive offerings, or funerary equipment.⁷⁹

Mortals are not the only characters depicted on the epinetron. The winged figure of Eros appears in the scene as well, suspended above the seated woman and preparing to crown her. His presence elevates the scene and the occupation of the woman while introducing the theme of marital affection. Eros is a frequent visitor to women in Classical imagery; whereas previously he had been associated with aristocratic themes of homosexual affection and courtship, his power is now harnessed for the democratic oikos.⁸⁰ Sometimes Eros is the only male character among women, serving as almost a visual replacement for a husband. Thus, on a hydria attributed to the Kensington Painter in London, a woman sits demurely before a kalathos as a life-size Eros flies in from the right bearing a fillet or sash.⁸¹

In other cases, Eros appears together with a couple, personifying their attraction and marital bond. On a hydria akin to the Clio Painter in the Hearst Collection, illustrated above (Fig. 4), a seated woman at left waits for her bridegroom or husband, clasping her knee in eager anticipation.

78. Robert 1892, followed by Sutton 1981, p. 224; 2004, p. 337. Compare an unusual hydria by the Painter of the Yale Oinochoe depicting a standing woman who bends over a kalathos, either removing from it or placing in it a bundle of raw wool, Houston 80.95: Shapiro 1981, pp. 132–133, no. 51; Lewis 2002, p. 64, fig. 2:2. Raw wool is held by the central standing woman on a hydria by the Leningrad Painter, Rhodes 13261: *ARV*² 571, no. 82; *Beazley Addenda*² 261; Keuls 1983, p. 227, fig. 14:37. The man with an empty sack at left may have brought

the wool to the group of working women in the scene.

79. Some undecorated ceramic epinetra have a rough surface at the top where unspun wool could be carded; on these and other decorated examples, however, the surface is smooth and painted to resemble working epinetra. For epinetra in general, see Mercati 2003; Badinou 2003b.

80. For this theme of Eros, see Sutton 1997–1998.

81. London E 187: *ARV*² 1071, no. 2.

Above her head flutters a smaller figure of Eros, holding a long fillet or length of cloth; perhaps this is the belt or sash that will be put on by the bride/wife, only to be taken off later by the groom/husband.⁸² The woman's gaze locks with that of the man standing before her, who is wrapped in a himation, wears a wreath, and holds a staff indicating his social status. Inscriptions proclaim their mutual desirability: *kalos* above the head of the man, *kale* next to the seated woman. At the right of the scene and observing the couple stands a woman holding a kalathos, an object that suggests the domestic occupations of the women of the household and, as I propose below, also acts as a metaphor for the woven fabric of marriage and the oikos.

TEXTILES IN THE OIKOS AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN

In the last few decades, as the issue of the roles of Athenian women in society has come to the scholarly forefront, scenes of textile production and other "women's work" have played a significant role in the discussion of the status of women. With these discussions come questions: Do scenes of women's work suggest oppression, or empowerment? Often using the same visual evidence, scholars have reached drastically different—even diametrically opposed—conclusions.

Central to the debate, whether explicitly stated or not, is the physical relation of women to the space of the house. Traditionally, building on Vitruvius's description of Greek houses and on other ancient literary sources (e.g., Xenophon's *Oikonomikos*), scholars have assumed that certain spaces of the house were set aside for the exclusive use of women, the so-called women's quarters (γυναικωνίτις, alternatively, γυναικεία).⁸³ The most extreme interpretations building upon this assumption posit a scenario in which women were not allowed to enter areas of the house where they might encounter men. An influential article by Susan Walker published in 1983 helped promote these ideas.⁸⁴ While Walker's article represented a watershed in archaeological inquiry by focusing on Greek domestic space, with little evidence she took Athenian house plans and labeled parts as "women's quarters" and the rest as areas frequented by men. Her conclusions have been unquestioningly accepted by many scholars working subsequently on women's issues and iconography, despite the extensive critique they have received in scholarship devoted to Greek domestic space.⁸⁵

82. San Simeon, Hearst Collection 529-9-589 (formerly 10004): *ARV*² 1083, no. 3. Cf. the expression "loosening the belt," a metaphor for marital sex. Belts or sashes could be dedicated to Artemis prior to the wedding night: Oakley and Sinos 1993, pp. 14–15.

83. For the literary sources, see Antonaccio 2000 (who ultimately

debunks the seclusion scenario).

84. Walker 1983.

85. For the adoption of Walker's thesis, see, e.g., Fantham et al. 1994, pp. 103–104 (reproducing Walker's plan as fig. 3:17) and Blundell 1995, pp. 138–139. References to "women's quarters" abound in Reeder 1995. Leader (1997, p. 689) speaks of the

"gendered division" of the Greek house, also citing Walker. Walker's methodology and conclusions have been critiqued by Jameson (1990a, 1990b), Nevett (1999), Goldberg (1999), and Antonaccio (2000), all of whom provide specific studies of domestic space (as opposed to historical or iconographic discussions).

Those who have followed Walker in her interpretation of house plans have tended to read scenes of textile production on vases as confirming the repression of Athenian women, who were thus confined to the *gynaikonitis* and exploited as free labor by a domineering patriarchal society.⁸⁶ Eva Keuls, for example, remarks when speaking about weaving and fountainhouse images, that “the two chores both manifest the economic exploitation of women as a source of cheap labor, but the societal consequences of each are different, and in fact opposite: home textile-working was and, in some parts of the world, still is, a mechanism for the restriction of women to private quarters.”⁸⁷ Spinning and weaving are seen by Keuls and others as dull, tedious chores that keep women in their place, in this case a literal, circumscribed space. From such a perspective, the closed doors sometimes visible in scenes of textile production are read as evidence for women’s enforced seclusion and signs of their virtual imprisonment.⁸⁸ By extension, the men who sometimes appear in textile production scenes are seen as at best visitors, at worst intruders, into the women’s space (or, alternatively, the group is interpreted as clients with hetairai to explain the male-female interaction).⁸⁹

Recent historical scholarship has modified this traditional interpretation of women’s roles within the *oikos* and questioned the paradigm of seclusion. Indeed, the concept of female seclusion in Classical Athens originated with 19th-century male perceptions of women’s ideal roles, fed by Victorian sensibilities with more than a hint of Orientalism; ironically, this view continues to be promoted by many feminist scholars with a different agenda.⁹⁰ More moderate in perspective, but no less feminist in outlook, is the proposition that gender roles in the Athenian family were fluid, and that seclusion was a literary construct more than a working reality.⁹¹

There is no denying that certain activities were considered appropriate for men, and others for women; Ischomachos in Xenophon’s *Oikonomikos* speaks of the activities of men as τὰ ἔξω (things outside) and those of women as τὰ ἔνδον (things inside).⁹² Textual and iconographic evidence, however, suggests that citizen women were not demeaned through this separation of functions. Both genders were considered important for the propagation of the *oikos* and the city as a whole.⁹³ In Aristotle’s *Politics*, although the husband is portrayed as ruling over his wife, the

86. E.g., Keuls 1983, 1993; Petersen 1997. Also, Sebesta 2002, p. 127: “Through marriage, she [the bride] becomes a woman whose sexuality is contained by the household, and her working with wool signifies her sexual submission to the order of her husband and her city.”

87. Keuls 1983, p. 210.

88. E.g., Keuls 1983, p. 216, referring to the closed doors seen on some pyxides with woolworking scenes.

89. E.g., Beard (1991, p. 23), who

speaks of the husband on the hydria London E 215 (see n. 71, above) as if he “can only be a passing visitor in the confines of the women’s quarters.” Keuls (1993, p. 243) misreads the staffs held by men in many of the domestic scenes: “When men do appear in the *gynaikonitis* in a vase painting, they are frequently shown with a walking stick, as if they were making a visit to an alien realm.”

90. See the historiographical discussions in Katz 1995; Patterson 1998,

esp. pp. 39–42, on late-20th-century scholarship; and Spencer-Wood 1999.

91. See Cohen 1989 and Patterson 1998, pp. 125–129, as well as the archaeological discussions noted below.

92. Xen. *Oik.* 7.30; see Pomeroy 1994.

93. For the idea that both men and women shared a concern in the maintenance of the *oikos* and its relationship to the polis, see, e.g., Foxhall 1989; Patterson 1998; and Nevett 1999, pp. 13–20.

marital relationship in general is classified as a *koinonia*, a type of partnership (1259a–1259b10),⁹⁴ and a similar attitude is found in Xenophon's *Oikonomikos* (e.g., 7.12–30). In the *Rhetoric* (1361a), Aristotle states: “The community needs both male and female excellences or it can only be half-blessed.”⁹⁵ Although Athenian-born free women were not classified as true citizens in the sense of political participation, texts do describe them as *ἄσται*, a term comparable to the male *ἄστοί* with regard to membership in the community.⁹⁶

Recent reexamination of Greek house architecture supports the model of gender fluidity in spatial environments and similarly proclaims the idea of seclusion an oversimplification.⁹⁷ Here one is faced with a challenge in that few domestic sites have survived intact, and those which have were not always excavated thoroughly or with exacting documentation of household finds. In Athens, study of 5th-century dwellings is complicated by the continuous occupation of the city. Even those few ancient houses that have been uncovered, while they may have been initially built during the 5th century, underwent substantial modifications in design during the centuries that followed. It is not possible to discern their 5th-century plans with precision, even at ground level; missing too are any upper floors that they may have had.

The extant remains of Classical Athenian houses suggest variety of size and plan according to the location of the house (urban, suburban, or extraurban) and the financial means of the homeowner.⁹⁸ In general, these houses are relatively modest in size and design. One is reminded of Demosthenes' hyperbolic comparison between houses of his day and those of previous generations (i.e., the 5th century):

Out of the wealth of the state they set up for our delight so many fair buildings and things of beauty, temples and offerings to the gods, that we who came after must despair of ever surpassing them; yet in private they were so modest, so careful to obey the spirit of the constitution, that the houses of their famous men, of Aristides and Miltiades, as any of you can see that knows them, are not a whit more splendid than those of their neighbors.⁹⁹

Some of the urban houses, especially those in the block of houses discovered south of the Agora's South Stoa on the northern slope of the Areopagos, are so small that any postulated separation of the sexes does not appear

94. In the full passage (*Pol.* 1259a38–1259b10), Aristotle compares the husband-wife relationship to that of one citizen ruling over the other, but different from the “despotic” relationship between master and slave and the “monarchical” relationship between husband and child. See discussion of this passage in Patterson 1991, p. 53, n. 32. Also compare the discussion of the relationship between husbands and wives set forth in Aristotle's

Nicomachean Ethics (1160b34–35, 1162a16–24).

95. Trans. Blundell 1995, p. 186.

96. Patterson 1986. The feminine designation *πολίτις*—equivalent to the male *πολίτης*, which implies a citizen with political participation—is rare in the literary sources. Athenian *ἄστοί*/*ἄσται* are clearly differentiated in texts from *ξένοι* (outsiders, foreigners).

97. E.g., Jameson 1990a, 1990b; Nevett 1994, 1995, 1999; Goldberg

1999; and Antonaccio 2000.

98. See Nevett 1999, pp. 83–91; Goldberg 1999; and Tsakirgis 2005 for recent discussion.

99. *Olynthiac* 3.25, trans. J. H. Vince, Cambridge, Mass., 1930. Compare discussion of this passage in Ault 2005, p. 141. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the grander residential neighborhoods of ancient Athens, if they existed, may have simply not been discovered yet.

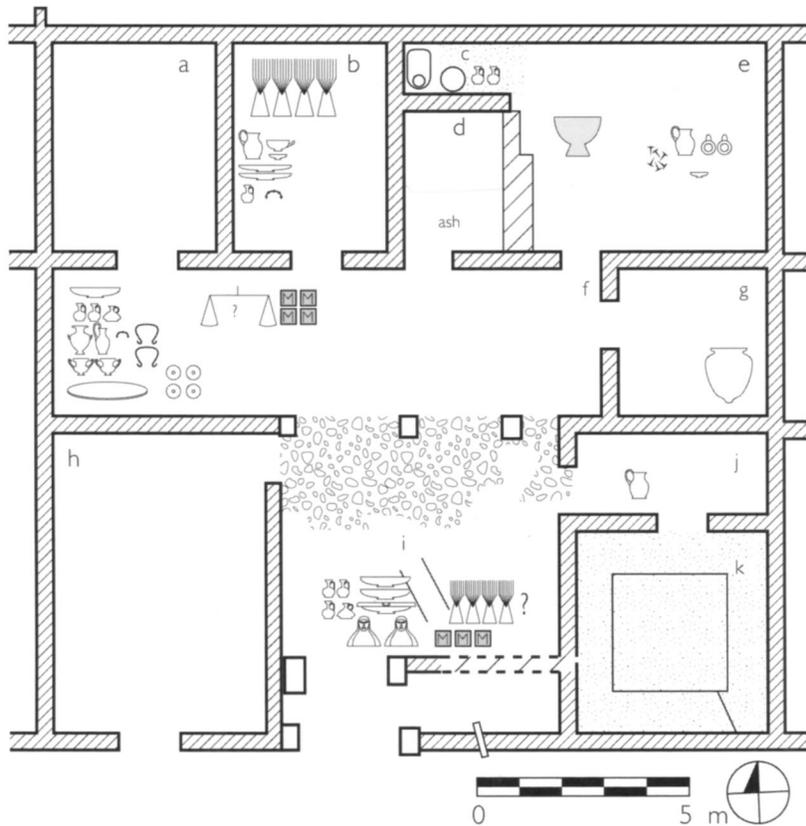


Figure 12. House Avii4 at Olynthos, plan indicating artifact distribution. Tentative functions of the rooms: (a) unknown; (b) multipurpose room, probably used for weaving and storage; (c–e) kitchen complex and flue; (f) *pastas*; (g) storeroom; (h) shop or workshop belonging to homeowner; (i) court; (j, k) anteroom and *andron*. Cahill 2002, fig. 22, courtesy N. Cahill and Yale University Press

physically possible.¹⁰⁰ Even in larger houses, such as houses C and D near the Great Drain, or the more rural Dema house outside the city,¹⁰¹ the spatial design seems more concerned with protecting the property and privacy of the entire *oikos* rather than segregating male and female family members from each other. Female residents may have avoided unfamiliar male visitors, but this is not synonymous with strict segregation.

Comparison with house plans from other sites (and again there is a paucity of 5th-century remains) supports this general model. Both in Athens and beyond, the courtyard (*αὐλή*) formed the spatial focus of the house plan, with the most common configuration featuring an *aule* onto which a series of rooms directly opened. The *aule* could be bracketed on one side by a covered portico if there was space for it; this portico (often termed a *παστάς*) could include one or more columns or piers, and rooms opened onto it. Few rooms opened into spaces other than the *aule* or *pastas*. The 4th-century houses at Olynthos exemplify the *pastas* house type (Fig. 12), although some surviving houses in Athens also suggest the incorporation of covered porticoes, usually smaller in scale than those at Olynthos.¹⁰² The inward-facing design of the *oikoi* implies fluid communication between domestic spaces and their inhabitants.

Most houses at Olynthos and other sites include a room that can be recognized as an *ἀνδρῶν* (literally, man's room) for sympotic use, by virtue of its off-center doorway and, at Olynthos, sometimes elaborate mosaic floor. The evidence for specifically designated *andrones* in Athenian houses

100. Thompson 1959, pp. 98–103; *Agora XIV*, pp. 177–180. See also Goldberg 1999, pp. 149–150; Nevelt 1999, pp. 86–87; and Tsakirgis 2005, pp. 67–69, for recent reexamination of the house plans and archaeological evidence. This block of houses is among those that Walker (1983) attempted to split into men's and women's quarters.

101. For houses C and D, see Young 1951, pp. 202–228; *Agora XIV*, pp. 173–177; see also Nevelt 1999, pp. 88–90 and Tsakirgis 2005, pp. 76–77, for recent consideration. For the Dema house, see Jones, Graham, and Sackett 1962; Nevelt 1999, pp. 83–85.

102. E.g., three of the houses in the block on the north side of the Areopagos, where each small portico seems to be supported by a single column: Thompson 1959, pp. 98–103; *Agora XIV*, pp. 177–180; Nevelt 1999, pp. 86–87.

is less clear; among houses that have been excavated, only two have such a distinctive space.¹⁰³ In Athens, it is possible that even the *andron* space was a fluid one, with certain rooms being used for domestic activity during the day and pressed into service as a sympotic space when necessary.¹⁰⁴ Literary sources suggest that Athenian *andrones* could be finely decorated, including with textiles (e.g., Ar. *Vesp.* 1215). The *andron* was not necessarily segregated spatially from the rest of the house. At Olynthos, the *andron* was often located in the center of the house, and male visitors had to pass through the *aule* to reach it (Fig. 12). Presumably on such occasions female residents avoided making contact with male visitors with whom they were not acquainted. The space of the temporary or permanently fixed *andron* might rightly earn its sobriquet of “men’s room,” but the term *gynaikonitis*, rather than describing an equivalent, separate women’s space, may simply indicate the rest of the house beyond the *andron*, that is, the places where the family’s women can be found.

In addition to the study of house plans and design, the burgeoning archaeological investigation of domestic assemblages supports the idea of fluidity in domestic spaces, and is of particular interest for the interpretation of textile production scenes. Unfortunately, domestic finds were not always carefully catalogued in past excavations; the site of Olynthos is an important exception, given the diligent work of David Robinson and the excavation team from the University of Pennsylvania.¹⁰⁵ Nicholas Cahill’s recent analysis of the site’s domestic finds greatly enhances our understanding of activities within the *oikos*.¹⁰⁶ For example, loomweights and other domestic objects in Olynthian houses indicate that women’s work took place in a number of different spaces, not all located in the same part of the house and not all indoors. Looms were set up in well-lit rooms directly accessible to the inner courtyard or adjacent to some other light source. Alternatively (although apparently less commonly), looms could be placed in the courtyard itself or in the adjoining *pastas*. The finds of house Avii4 (Fig. 12) included 16 loomweights on the floor of the court (room i on the plan), perhaps from a loom, while seven loomweights were found in the court of house Aiv9.¹⁰⁷ House Biv5 included 19 loomweights against the south wall of the *pastas*.¹⁰⁸

Cahill estimates that of those spaces that appear to have been used for weaving at the time of Olynthos’s abandonment, about a quarter (at most) are courtyards and *pastades*, with the rest being enclosed or semienclosed

103. One of the three Classical houses beneath the Late Roman house on the north slope of the Areopagos (Shear 1973, pp. 146–156), and the so-called House of the Greek Mosaic in the valley below the Pnyx (Thompson 1966; *Agora* XIV, pp. 180–182). See also Tsakirgis 2005, p. 69.

104. Goldberg 1999, pp. 152–153; Tsakirgis 2005, pp. 69, 77–78.

105. Published in the *Olynthus* series (1929–1952).

106. Cahill 2002, esp. pp. 74–193.

107. House Avii4: Cahill 2002, p. 104. The loomweights in the court were scattered about, so they may have been left over from a loom set up earlier. House Aiv9: Cahill 2002, p. 109. As Cahill points out in the latter case, seven loomweights are not enough to outfit a loom, so he suggests that they represent debris from an earlier time, and that a loom was not actually set up in that spot at the time of the house’s

abandonment. In general, it is not easy to tell whether small groups of loomweights represent a loom set up earlier in that place or some other form of debris. In a later article, Cahill (2005, p. 58) suggests that house Aiv9, by virtue of the large number of loomweights found in the house and its proximity to the agora, may have been a professional weaving establishment that provided textiles for sale.

108. Cahill 2002, p. 172.

rooms adjoining the courtyard or some other space (including the *pastas*).¹⁰⁹ Working in rooms that in some cases may have had windows opening into the courtyard, allowing for light, seems to have been the preference. In house Avii4 (Fig. 12), for example, one of the rooms off the *pastas* (room b), whose doorway is on axis with the courtyard, contained 23 loomweights.¹¹⁰ Cahill concludes, however, that this distribution “does not seem to result from a desire to restrict this activity to a more private or secluded part of the house,” noting that some of the areas used for weaving were “conspicuously close” to the main entrance.¹¹¹ Once looms were set up and weaving begun, it would have been difficult to move them, so the risk of inclement weather (either rain or extreme heat) may have kept women from placing their looms in the courtyard on a regular basis. Spinning, on the other hand, was a more mobile activity that could be accomplished wherever the spinner saw fit.

Such interpretations of the archaeological record force a rethinking of the notion that women worked in dingy interior rooms, locked away from the eyes of men. This realization in turn has important ramifications for the reading of textile production scenes. Keeping in mind that painters were not always interested in visual verisimilitude, if we examine the physical environment inhabited by woolworkers on the vases, we can see a great deal of variety that mirrors the flexibility implied by extant house plans and domestic assemblages. Often the women in the scenes are assumed to be working in interior rooms, although distinguishing interior from exterior is difficult. Furniture, after all, is movable. Objects that seem to be hanging on walls could be hanging on a wall within a shaded portico rather than a wall in an enclosed room (see, e.g., Fig. 8).¹¹² Even in scenes where women are presumably working indoors, there is no visual indication that they are confined within their environment.

The inclusion of architectural features such as doors and columns sometimes suggests more open spaces, the courtyard of a house or the shady space of a portico. Columns, in particular, as on the pyxis by the Painter of Philadelphia 2449 in New York (see above, p. 302), can perhaps be interpreted as columns separating the portico from the courtyard, with the women working in either space. On the pyxis by the Painter of the Louvre Centaureomachy (Fig. 3), the column placed next to the open *thalamos* door suggests that the figures are in the courtyard. Similarly, the open *thalamos* door on the Phiale Painter's Vienna pyxis (Fig. 8, left) implies that the women are in the courtyard, although there is no column to suggest a portico space. In contrast, on a hydria by the Leningrad Painter in the Hearst Collection, the five figures—two seated young men, a standing woman with handled basket, and two seated, spinning women—are likely to be shown under a portico adjoining a house courtyard.¹¹³ Two columns appear among the figures, but given the limitations of technique, the viewer is probably meant to read the figures as being *behind* the columns instead of *beside* them. Here, as elsewhere, the men and women are best interpreted as members of a citizen oikos.

Closed doors in a scene can be spatially ambiguous, although they need not indicate the doors of a *gynaikonitis*, as is commonly proposed by scholars in support of women's seclusion.¹¹⁴ Rare in black-figure vase

109. Cahill 2002, p. 177; see pp. 169–179 for detailed analysis of individual houses and rooms.

110. Cahill 2002, p. 106. Twelve of the loomweights were “clustered closely,” and the others were “scattered nearby.”

111. Cahill 2002, p. 178. As Cahill stresses, the loomweights found in the various houses may have fallen from upper-story rooms no longer preserved.

112. See also Cahill 2002, pp. 89, 99–100, 105, 109, for instances at Olynthos where shelves are postulated to be in *pastades*.

113. San Simeon, Hearst Collection 529-9-631 (formerly 9933): *ARV*² 571, no. 81.

114. E.g., Keuls 1983, p. 216.

painting, doors—while still relatively uncommon—appear with greater frequency in red figure; while this may be partially explained by technique (i.e., it is easier to show open or even closed doors in red figure), we can also postulate the influence of theatrical stagecraft. In 5th-century Athenian drama, a number of the extant tragedies feature the house or palace door as a backdrop, a visual symbol that emphasizes themes of family.¹¹⁵ In the same way, doors in contemporary vase painting may plausibly be seen as an allusion to the house or *oikos*, especially in domestic or wedding-procession scenes.

Rather than being the doors of the “women’s quarters,” closed doors in most domestic scenes are likely to represent the front doors of the house, protecting the entire *oikos*—not just the women—from strangers.¹¹⁶ House doors in life could be a mark of wealth when finely crafted of expensive wood, broadcasting the household’s prosperity to the world outside. Objects hung on the doors advertised special events in the life of the family, such as branches for weddings, wreaths for the birth of a son, or wool for the birth of a daughter.¹¹⁷ Vase painters sometimes emphasized the craftsmanship of house doors by depicting various metal fittings. On the vases, the doors emblemize the *oikos* as a self-contained, self-sufficient family unit, independent and orderly, an impression given in life by not only the front door but the centripetal design of the house itself.

On the pyxis by the Veii Painter in Mount Holyoke discussed above, to give an example, the viewer can understand the prominent double doors (not visible in Fig. 10) as opening to the street, and the three figures to the left and right as being *behind* them, that is, inside the house (in the courtyard or otherwise). It is theoretically possible that the figures are in the courtyard and the closed doors lead instead to the *thalamos* or some other interior room, although the fine quality of the doors is more appropriate for the house’s front doors. In either case, there is no reason to believe that doors on this vase or others carry the negative implications of confinement and seclusion with which they are often bestowed.

Ferrari’s recent discussion of the architecture of woolworking scenes illustrates how the traditional model of women’s seclusion continues to influence iconographic scholarship. She too discusses the likelihood that many of the scenes take place in the relatively open environment of a house courtyard, but arrives at conclusions different from those presented here. She notes:

The possibility that the portico of a court is where the women in the scenes spend their day in virtuous pursuits and within the reach of men affords the means to resolve the ambiguity scholars have seen in these representations. The well-documented seclusion in which respectable females were kept from their adolescent years onward stands in apparent contradiction to what the pictures show: men of various ages freely approaching girls who are pointedly demure, beautiful, and soigné.¹¹⁸

Ferrari further argues that these scenes cannot show “everyday life,” that instead they must be set “in the imaginary world of myth and epic,” specifically, in the *prothura* of a palace.¹¹⁹ I would argue, however, that

115. E.g., Aesch. *Ag.*, Soph. *OT*, and Eur. *Bacch.* and *Med.*, to name a few well-known examples.

116. Goldberg (1999, p. 154) briefly discusses doors in actual houses and in vase painting.

117. See Neils 2003, p. 143, for the objects celebrating a birth.

118. Ferrari 2002, p. 36.

119. Ferrari 2002, pp. 36–37.

the contradiction does not lie within the scenes themselves but within the assumption that women were kept secluded in the house's interior spaces. Once that assumption is dismantled, there is no pressing need to identify these women as mythical or to explain them as anything other than contemporary Athenian women working in contemporary Athenian houses.

Taking away the seclusion scenario from the textile production scenes opens them up to more optimistic interpretations than have generally been proposed.¹²⁰ It remains precarious to read the scenes as illustrative of Athenian women's experience, but it is still possible to read them symbolically and metaphorically as evocative of contemporary ideals. The representation of woolworking activities in the domestic environment demonstrates, in a positive way, the woman's ability to maintain the *oikos* by providing for it with the work of her hands or by supervising the work of others. This reading takes us far from the idea of a patriarchal sweatshop¹²¹ and instead suggests women as sharers in their own *oikos*. Indeed, there appear to be multiple levels of meaning at work, with textiles serving not only as literal indicators of women's contributions to the home, but also as symbolic metaphors for the *harmonia* of both *oikos* and larger polis.

A Polygnotan hydria at Harvard (Fig. 13), said to be from a tomb at Vari, can be used as a springboard for discussing the multilayered socio-cultural symbolism of textile production scenes.¹²² While virtually unique among surviving examples in its prominent inclusion of a standing loom, the scene shares much with other contemporary textile production scenes. The mistress of the *oikos* takes center stage, seated on a high-backed *klismos* with her feet resting on a stool. The prominent wreath above her head draws further attention to her. Not only does the wreath allude to her wifely status and possibly the wedding or even her son's birth, but wreaths in general carry positive connotations related to victory and exaltation.¹²³

The lady of the *oikos* hands her infant son to a second woman, perhaps a nurse; if this is a nurse or servant, then her presence quickly characterizes this particular *oikos* as prosperous, reminding the viewer that overseeing servants was an essential aspect of a wife's duties.¹²⁴ Gesture and gaze unite the central trio of wife, child, and nurse(?). They are framed in turn by two

120. For use of the terms "optimistic" and "pessimistic" in interpreting depictions of Athenian women, see Antonaccio 2000, p. 518, following Richlin 1993.

121. "Sweatshop": Keuls 1993, p. 124.

122. Hydria attributed to the Group of Polygnotos, Harvard 1960.342: Reeder 1995, pp. 218–219, no. 51. Reeder uses the term "guest, or intruder" to refer to the male figure depicted on the vase, and describes the setting as "probably in the women's quarters."

123. A similar wreath appears above

a seated bride with *loutrophoros* on an unattributed *loutrophoros* near the Eretria Painter, Athens 12540 (*ARV*² 1256, no. 11; Oakley and Sinos 1993, p. 71, fig. 39), as well as above a bride holding a male infant on a *lebes gamikos* attributed to the Washing Painter, Munich 7578 (*ARV*² 1126, no. 3; *Beazley Addenda*² 332; Oakley and Sinos 1993, p. 72, fig. 40).

124. Most commentators on this vase readily identify the standing figure as a nursemaid or servant: Williams 1983, p. 94; Reeder 1995, p. 219; Lewis 2002, p. 15. Sutton (2004, p. 340), however, urges caution, pointing out

that she "could be either a relative or a nurse, whether free or slave." Oakley (2000) does not comment on this particular vase, although he too advocates restraint in the automatic identification of certain female figures as servants. Miller (1997, p. 158) suggests that the standing woman is the mother and the seated woman is the nurse, on the grounds that the baby is reaching for the standing woman; however, I find this proposal implausible given the seated (and therefore dominant) position of the mother and the wreath above her head.

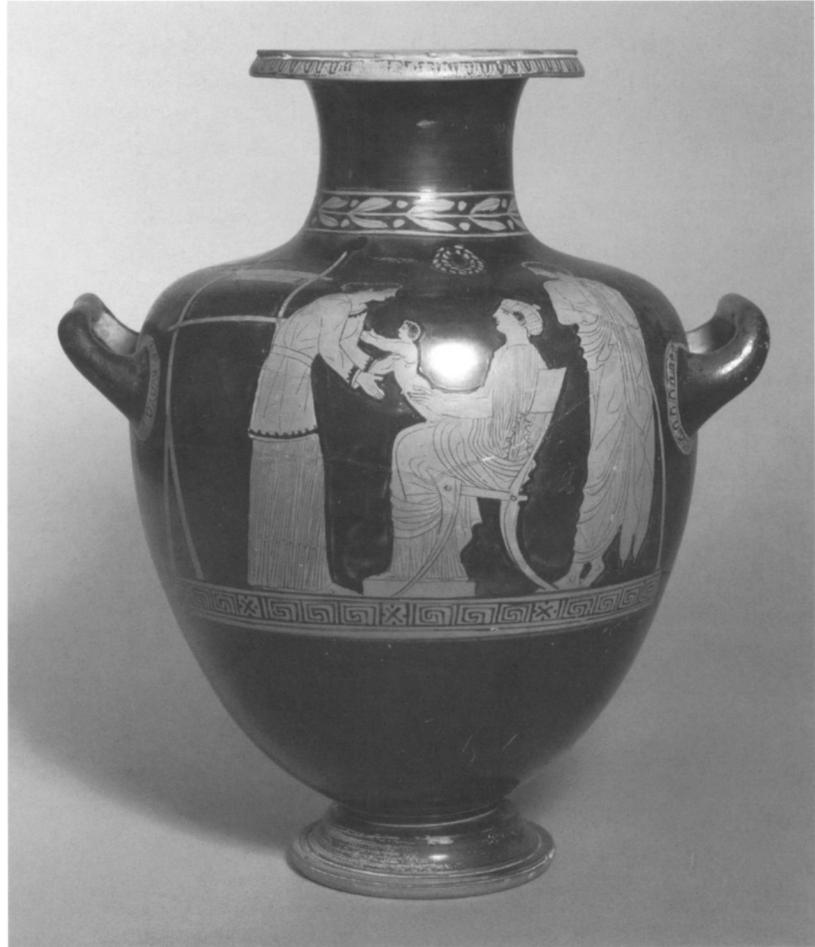


Figure 13. Family group, hydria attributed to the Group of Polygnotos. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University, Arthur M. Sackler Museum 1960.342. Bequest of David M. Robinson. Photo M. A. Nedzweski, courtesy President and Fellows of Harvard College

vertical compositional elements, a standing loom (with textile in progress) at left, and a standing, beardless man at right with a staff, almost assuredly the husband.¹²⁵ The loom, serving as a visual counterpoint to the husband, suggests the wife's contributions to the *oikos*, whether she is doing the weaving herself or supervising someone else's work.

This and other textile production scenes impart an atmosphere of prosperity and privilege. Visual emphasis is placed upon possessions, recalling the multiple meanings of the word *oikos* itself: referring to the house building proper (evoked by the aforementioned doors and columns on vases), the persons of a given household, and the household's goods and property.¹²⁶ In addition to the accoutrements of textile production, we find fine clothes and headwear; chests, baskets, and boxes of various kinds; perfume vases and other vessels; mirrors and other objects related to female adornment; the occasional household pet (e.g., a bird); and objects relating to education, such as scrolls and musical instruments.¹²⁷ We are reminded

125. Williams (1983, p. 94) suggests instead that this is "probably the eldest son" because of his beardlessness; Sparkes (1996, p. 138) suggests an older child or a brother. As Sutton (2004,

p. 329) points out, however, beardlessness is an iconographic convention for bridegrooms as well as husbands.

126. See MacDowell 1989 and Roy 1999 on the terminology of the *oikos*;

also Cox 1998, pp. 130–135.

127. For representations of musical instruments in domestic scenes and their implications, see Bundrick 1998; 2005, pp. 92–102, and *passim*.

of Perikles' oblique reference to the world of the *oikos* in his famous funeral oration:

... in our own homes we find a beauty and a good taste which delight us every day and drive away our cares. Then the greatness of our city brings it about that all the good things from all over the world flow in to us, so that to us it seems just as natural to enjoy foreign goods as our own local products.¹²⁸

This passage and other literary sources imply, however unrealistically, that fine goods and a leisured lifestyle—no longer restricted to the aristocracy—were widely available to the Athenian *demos* as an economic benefit of the democratic system and Athens' status as a world power.¹²⁹ The vases may relay a similar message.

The textiles themselves formed part of the wealth of the *oikos*. Even though by the 5th century Athens largely functioned as a coin-based economy, textiles continued to be thought of as a form of wealth that could be traded for goods or translated into cash.¹³⁰ In the description of a prosperous 4th-century household in Xenophon's *Oikonomikos*, Ischomachos details the various kinds of textiles in the household's possession (9.3, 9.6), even mentioning that the "most valuable bedding" was kept in the *thalamos* for safekeeping.¹³¹ On the pyxis by the Painter of the Louvre Centauromachy shown above (Fig. 3), the patterned pillows and bedding visible through the *thalamos* door are likely to represent the fruits of women's labors. A white-ground lekythos by the Pan (or Brygos) Painter shows a woman stuffing a pillow with wool, flanked by a *diphros* and kalathos; although she is sometimes identified as a hetaira because of the inscription (ἡ παῖς καλή, "the girl is beautiful"), it is more probable that she is a young woman of the *oikos* engaging in household work.¹³²

Representing a married woman among the goods of the *oikos* and depicting her as an active contributor to the household's *oikonomia* through textile production affirm her important role in maintaining the house as well as her economic power within it. Such an interpretation runs counter to much of modern scholarship. The chests, boxes, and baskets in such scenes, for example, have often been explained as symbols of containment and confinement, and compared to the confinement of women within the house.¹³³ As we have seen, the idea of seclusion is problematic at best; the various containers in the scenes need not have negative connotations. On the contrary, I would argue that they have positive connotations, alluding to the woman's valuable economic contributions to the *oikos*. The items inside could include the woman's own handiwork in the form of textiles (compare Helen's woven goods in *Od.* 15.104–108), or else objects that she brought to her husband's house in the form of a dowry or gifts.

128. Thuc. 2.38, trans. R. Warner, London 1954.

129. See the brief but important discussion in Braund 1994.

130. Pomeroy 1994, p. 62, also Pomeroy 1995, p. 189. As Pomeroy points out, the buying power of textiles has a long history; in the *Iliad* and

Odyssey textiles "were a significant commodity in the gift-exchange system." See too Lyons 2003, esp. pp. 104–108.

131. Trans. Pomeroy 1994, p. 155.

132. Harvard 1991.28: Oakley 2004, p. 24, fig. 5. For the identification of hetaira, see, e.g., Reeder 1995, pp. 211–212, no. 46. This type of *kalos*

inscription, however, commonly occurs on white-ground lekythoi. For the identification of the figure as a respectable woman, see Lewis 2002, p. 98; Oakley 2004, p. 26.

133. E.g., Keuls 1993, pp. 122–123; Lissarrague 1995; Reeder 1995, esp. pp. 195–199.

The dowry, in particular, gave a wife considerable economic power within the marriage.¹³⁴ It essentially served as her patrimonial inheritance, linking her not only to her new oikos, but also to her birth oikos. Literary sources suggest that money, furniture, and portable goods could be included in the dowry, and thus the chests, baskets, and boxes in vase painting could symbolize it. Even though women were restricted in their opportunities to carry out financial transactions and dispose of property in the public sphere, nonetheless, the dowry was regarded as the wife's contribution to the household. If a divorce was initiated (by either party), by law she would take the dowry with her back to her birth oikos, a circumstance that surely helped her wield power within her husband's oikos.¹³⁵ Pomeroy points out that, on Crete, the 5th-century law code of Gortyn decreed that a woman who divorced in that community was entitled to take away with her half of the textiles she had woven during the marriage, but it is not known whether similar provisions existed in Athens.¹³⁶

In highlighting the economic prosperity of the oikoi, the vase paintings imply that the family has sufficient resources that the women of the house do not have to produce textiles for outside sale; in other words, they are not professional woolworkers (ταλασιουργοί).¹³⁷ On the Harvard hydria (Fig. 13), a small but important detail reinforces this point: the textile in progress on the loom has the same border as on the *chiton cheiridotos* worn by the nurse/companion. The weaver is evidently making textiles for the oikos. This is an important distinction, given the apparent prejudice against Athenian citizen women earning money outside the home. Literary sources (e.g., Xen. *Mem.* 2.7) indicate that at times of financial need (and the Peloponnesian War may well have brought on the need), citizen women could make textiles or wreaths for sale at market, but this was not the ideal.¹³⁸ The reality may have been different, but the vases show an idealized world, where whatever work is done does not look particularly strenuous or difficult. More laborious activities, such as cooking or cleaning, are largely omitted from the iconographic repertoire. Showing a citizen woman spinning or weaving had the added cachet of associating her with aristocratic women of myth and epic, such as Penelope or Andromache. For female viewers who were already part of a well-off citizen household, the images provided an affirmation of their worldview, and for those of a lower social class, a fantasy of a better life.¹³⁹

134. For the dowry and women's property, see Foxhall 1989, pp. 32–39, with further references; also Blundell 1995, pp. 115–116; Schaps 1998, pp. 170–171; Cox 1998, pp. 75–77. Foxhall's interpretation of the dowry as potentially empowering contrasts strongly with traditional scholarship, e.g., the reading of the dowry given in Keuls 1993, pp. 100–101 (where she erroneously states that the dowry was a "legal requirement"). Patterson (1998), in her work on the Athenian family, aligns herself with Foxhall on issues of property and the dowry. Leader (1997,

p. 692) suggests that some scenes on Classical grave stelai, such as those showing a woman with jewelry, could refer to the dowry.

135. See, e.g., Dem. 27; Isaios 3.35. Foxhall (1989, pp. 37–39) speaks of the "power of veto" that a dowered woman is likely to have had: "The law gave women covert rather than overt rights, in accord with the public view about the roles of men and women in society."

136. Pomeroy 1994, p. 61.

137. For professional woolworkers, see, e.g., Kosmopoulou 2001, p. 301.

138. See Brock 1994 for discussion

of women working outside the house. For the selling of textiles outside the home for money, see Brock 1994, p. 338; Pomeroy 1994, p. 64; 1995, p. 190. Ar. *Ran.* 1346–1351 refers to a poor woman selling textiles in the market.

139. See Walker 2000 for an appropriate modern comparison of advertisements in postwar American women's magazines from the 1940s and 1950s, which represented idealized images of housework with intimations of social status, consumerism, and conspicuous consumption.

There was a fine line to tread, however, in the representation of wealth and leisure, and textiles may have formed part of this discourse as well. An overly ostentatious display of wealth might recall the aristocratic *habrosyne* of past generations, which by the mid-5th century was considered offensive to democratic sensibilities.¹⁴⁰ Despite the fine trappings, therefore, the aesthetic of the oikoi represented on vases is fairly restrained. Take, for example, the men who appear in the textile production scenes and in other domestic images. As is typical on 5th-century vases, they wear the himation with no chiton beneath, a garment which by its complex drapery and restriction of arm movement suggests leisure and time spent in political activities rather than hard work.¹⁴¹ Their himatia are not elaborately decorated or trimmed, in contrast to the fancier Ionian-style clothes worn by the aristocracy in Archaic and Early Classical scenes of the symposium and komos. Presumably, the juxtaposition of these himation-clad men with spinning or weaving women suggests that the wives made the fabric for the garments with homespun wool. Is this part of an overall message of restraint and *sophrosyne*, of rejection of *habrosyne* among both men and women?¹⁴² The vase painters apparently attempted to tread the line between austerity (which in the late 5th century could be taken as too Spartan) and ostentation in an oikos by using textiles to reinforce the distinction.

TEXTILE PRODUCTION AND FABRIC AS METAPHOR

The motif of woven cloth in vase paintings—whether symbolized by the loom, distaff, or kalathos—implies the domestic *harmonia* of the oikos not only in a literal way, but metaphorically as well. The idea of fabric as metaphor is familiar from Greek literary sources. As John Scheid and Jesper Svenbro have shown in their important discussion of weaving metaphors in texts, the word *σμπλοκή* (“interlacing”) can describe the interlacing of warp and woof in weaving (e.g., Pl. *Plt.* 281a), and can similarly refer to the sexual union of husband and wife (e.g., Pl. *Symp.* 191c).¹⁴³ So too on vases such as the hydria akin to the Clio Painter in Munich (Fig. 1) and the Polygnotan hydria at Harvard (Fig. 13), the juxtaposition of textile production and children literally and symbolically marks two of women’s significant contributions to the oikos: economic self-sufficiency through domestic work, and male children who assure the continuity and future of the household.

On a hydria attributed to the Painter of Munich 2528 in London, a nursemaid or companion hands a male infant to his seated mother, passing the boy over a kalathos; the symbolic link between the bearing of children and weaving of fabric is obvious.¹⁴⁴ This connection was also promoted in contemporary ritual practice: to celebrate a successful childbirth, Athenian

140. See Kurke 1992.

141. Geddes 1987, esp. pp. 312–313, 321–331.

142. An interesting Roman parallel is the assertion by Augustus that his clothes were handmade by his wife

Livia (Suet. *Aug.* 73), thus suggesting his simplicity and modesty.

143. Scheid and Svenbro 1996, pp. 13, 176, n. 21. The metaphorical connection between weaving and the oikos is also discussed in McEwen

1993, esp. pp. 107–110; I thank Bonna Wescoat for this reference.

144. London E 219: *ARV*² 1258, no. 3; *Beazley Addenda*² 355; Beard 1991, p. 24, fig. 5.

women could dedicate textiles to Artemis at the sanctuary of Brauron or its annex on the Athenian Acropolis.¹⁴⁵

We have already seen connections between marriage and textile production in the imagery on vases; a few scenes make the metaphorical associations even more explicit by associating textile production with female figures who can be identified as brides. On one side of a skyphos by the Phiale Painter in Palermo, the young bridegroom, recognizable by his prominent wreath and staff, stands inside the front door of his house or before the entrance to the bridal chamber (in either case, the figures seem to be in the courtyard).¹⁴⁶ The opposite side of the skyphos features the bride, her identity assured by a bridal crown (στεφάνη), together with a bridal veil. Oblivious to her observing bridegroom, she cards wool into a basket without benefit of an epinetron, her foot placed against a support and her calf exposed.

As in the tondo of Douris's cup (Fig. 2), an element of titillation is evident here, but in a nuptial context. This image is not intended to be realistic—what bride would card wool in full wedding garb?—but symbolic, both of the bride's future role as domestic provider and of the bond between husband and wife. Part of the wedding ceremony featured the gift of a *chlanis*, or wool garment, given by the bride to the groom as evidence of her skills and a sign of their union.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, this image is an unusual case of a High Classical textile production scene appearing on a drinking vessel (another is the Penelope Painter's name vase, Fig. 5). If intended for a male viewer (although one cannot claim that women did not use skyphoi as well), the Phiale Painter's skyphos provided him with the pleasurable domestic fantasy of a sexy, skilled wife and a well-appointed house.

A nearly contemporary hydria by the Orpheus Painter in New York (Fig. 14) intertwines these themes in similar fashion.¹⁴⁸ At left, a woman spins busily as a female companion stands before her with chest and empty kalathos. Like the female figure on the Phiale Painter's skyphos, the seated woman wears an elaborate *stephane*, suggesting her status as a bride.¹⁴⁹ Her industriousness advertises her domestic accomplishments while hinting at her future as mistress of the oikos. A couple appears at right in another vignette, in all likelihood the bride repeated with her husband. She sits on a *klismos* looking up at the man standing behind her, their locked gazes romantically suggesting their union. *Kalos* inscriptions above their heads proclaim their beauty and desirability, while a hanging string of

145. Ridgway 1987, p. 403; Cole 1998, esp. pp. 36–42; Dillon 2002, pp. 19–23. At Brauron, such dedications were associated with Iphigeneia; cf. Eur. *IT* 1462–1467. See also Linders 1972 for epigraphical evidence concerning the sanctuary on the Acropolis. An unusual depiction in art of textiles dedicated to Artemis appears on a late-5th-century votive relief from Echinus in northern Greece:

Cole 1998, p. 35, fig. 3.1; Neils 2003, p. 145, fig. 6. As Cole notes, the dedication of textiles (or other objects, such as mirrors and jewelry) to Artemis could mark other moments of female transition in addition to childbirth, e.g., the advent of puberty and marriage.

146. Palermo, Mormino Collection 788; see n. 36, above.

147. Redfield 1982, p. 194; Oakley

and Sinos 1993, p. 39. Both cite Poll. 3.39–40.

148. New York 17.230.15: *ARV*² 1104, no. 16; *Beazley Addenda*² 329; Richter and Hall 1936, pp. 173–174, no. 138; Sutton 1997–1998, p. 36, fig. 15; Lewis 2002, p. 143, fig. 4:8.

149. Sebesta (2002, p. 133) identifies without explanation the women as hetairai and the man as a client.

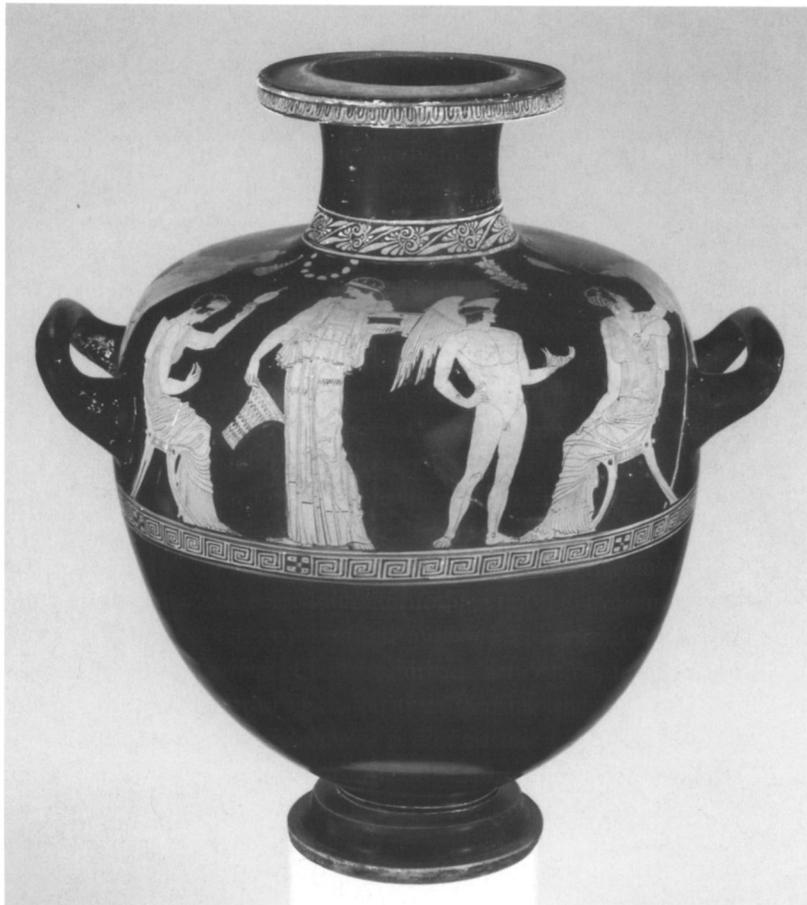


Figure 14. Working women and couple with Eros, hydria by the Orpheus Painter. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1917 (17.230.15). Photo © Metropolitan Museum of Art

pomegranates hints at the woman's fertility.¹⁵⁰ The figure of Eros standing with them helps confirm their attachment; he holds a pair of shoes, convincingly suggested by Gisela Richter to be wedding slippers (*νυμφίδες*).¹⁵¹ While the combination of these two groups is logically representative of hearth and home, we can also read it as emblematic. The act of spinning, wherein disparate threads are brought together and consolidated in preparation for the final act of weaving, is in that respect not unlike the wedding ceremony itself. As spinning will ultimately result in the completion of a finished textile, so marriage is hoped to result in the production of children.

The idea of textile production as a metaphor for *harmonia* in a marriage or in the *oikos* is paralleled by contemporary representations of Athenian citizen women as musicians in domestic settings. Domestic scenes of female musicians (citizens rather than *hetairai*) first become significant in Athenian iconography during the Early Classical period and continue in popularity through the remainder of the 5th century, a chronological development comparable to that of textile production scenes.¹⁵² Drawing upon the iconography of the Muses, these images, while suggesting the education and leisure enjoyed by some citizen women, also imply women's capability of bringing *harmonia* to the *oikos*, and by extension, the polis. In this way, images of women as musicians and women as producers of textiles share a common symbolism and are metaphorically linked. Even linguistically there is a connection: *κρέκειν* ("to strike") can refer "either to throwing

150. Sutton 1997–1998, p. 36.

151. Richter and Hall 1936, pp. 173–174. The term *νυμφίδες* for bridal shoes is found in Hesychius. We can compare scenes where Eros helps the bride bind her sandals: see Oakley and Sinos 1993, p. 18, for examples. Note that two other vignettes appear on the Orpheus Painter's hydria to the far left and right beyond the handles, although they are usually not illustrated or discussed. At far left stand a youth and a woman with a *plemochoe*; perhaps this is the courtship of the couple. At far right stands a woman wrapped in her *himation* and wearing a *stephane*; she faces a woman holding out a chest. Could this be the bride as household supervisor?

152. Bundrick 1998, 2005.



Figure 15. Woman holding a kalathos, Eros with hand loom and aulos case, and man with money pouch, hydria by the Hephaistos Painter. Once Stettin, now lost. Cramer 1908, pl. 3:28

the shuttle through the warp of the loom or to striking the strings of a lyre with a *plektron*,” while metaphors of poet as weaver and songs as textiles abound in Greek poetry.¹⁵³ In the vase paintings, women weaving on small hand looms (e.g., Fig. 9) can conspicuously resemble women with *chelys* lyres or *barbitoi* in pose and posture.¹⁵⁴

Musical instruments and symbols related to weaving (especially kalathoi) are juxtaposed in some scenes of women in domestic settings. Thus, on a lebes gamikos by the Washing Painter in New York, a bride holds a harp on the body, while on the stand other women, presumably attendants, hold kalathoi.¹⁵⁵ A now-lost hydria by the Hephaistos Painter (Fig. 15) goes a step further.¹⁵⁶ At left a seated woman balances a disproportionately large kalathos in her hand as she is approached by two figures: Eros carrying a hand loom and aulos case at center, and a young, draped man (presumably

153. Snyder 1981, p. 194, and *passim*.

154. As recognized by Pomeroy (1978) and further discussed by Keuls (1983, p. 219).

155. New York 07.286.35: *ARV*² 1126, no. 1; *Beazley Addenda*² 332. Two other lebetes gamikoi by the same painter juxtapose musical brides with women holding kalathoi, both on the stands and in the reverse scene on the

body: Athens 14791 (*ARV*² 1126, no. 5) and New York 16.73 (*ARV*² 1126, no. 6; *Beazley Addenda*² 332). A hydria by the Kleophon Painter features a woman playing a *barbitos*, with a kalathos filled with wool on the ground beside her: Munich 6452 (*ARV*² 1147, no. 62).

156. Once Stettin (Szczecin), Vogell Collection: Cramer 1908, pp. 114–115,

no. 110, pl. 3:28; *ARV*² 1116, no. 47; the vessel is briefly discussed without illustration by Sutton (1981, p. 359). According to Witold Dobrowolski, curator at the National Museum in Warsaw (*pers. comm.*), some vases from the Vogell Collection found their way to Warsaw after World War II, but the majority of the vessels remain unaccounted for.

her husband) carrying a money pouch at right. Here, as elsewhere, Eros embodies the forces of heterosexual love and marital harmony; it is therefore appropriate that he extends two significant symbols of *harmonia* to the wife (or perhaps bride) in the scene. Some may question the inclusion of an aulos, an instrument that has negative connotations in some ancient literary sources and is often read that way in modern scholarship.¹⁵⁷ Although some scholars believe auloi more appropriate for hetairai than respectable women,¹⁵⁸ in Classical Athens the aulos could be associated in imagery with citizen women as well as Muses.¹⁵⁹ On the Hephaistos Painter's hydria, the aulos is probably intended as a positive comment on the woman's education, desirability, and capacity for leisure, even as the hand loom reflects her domestic accomplishments. Together, aulos, loom, and kalathos suggest the wife's ability to bring *harmonia* to the household, an ability paralleled by the husband as a good provider with his money pouch.

In literary sources, myth, and imagery, textile production is associated not only with marriage, childbirth, and music, but also with *metis*. The word ὑφαίνειν itself can mean "to weave" as well as "to contrive or plan schemes that require craft."¹⁶⁰ The myth of Penelope is the most conspicuous example, although not frequently represented in Athenian vase painting (save for Fig. 5); her *metis*, expressed through her weaving, was a positive attribute that helped deflect the suitors until the return of her husband and the resurrection of their oikos. Indeed, her *metis* complements that of her husband Odysseus, indicating their *homophrosyne*.¹⁶¹

The motifs of *metis* and weaving with respect to mythological women were certainly familiar to 5th-century Athenians, thanks to plays such as Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* (458 B.C.) and Euripides' *Medea* (431 B.C.), in which Klytemnestra and Medea, respectively, use textiles and their *metis* for violent ends.¹⁶² Fabric for these two women becomes a weapon and therefore a subversion of the norm; the visual centrality of textiles as stage props in both plays reveals Athenian awareness of the power of this symbol. In scenes of Athenian mortal women engaging in textile production, the idea of *metis* was surely implicit, although it is harnessed for the good, rather than the destruction, of the oikos.

The fabric metaphor in literary sources extends beyond the oikos to the larger polis and to the Athenian political system.¹⁶³ One need only think of the well-known speech in *Lysistrata* (411 B.C.), in which Lysistrata

157. Aristotle, for example, claimed that the aulos was "not a moral instrument but rather one that excites the emotions" (*Pol.* 1341a, trans. Barker 1984, p. 177); see also *Pl. Resp.* 399b–c. Among modern scholars, see Wilson 1999. See Bundrick 2005, pp. 35–42, for further discussion.

158. See, e.g., Neils 2000, p. 225.

159. A Muse plays an aulos, for example, on a bell krater attributed to the Danae Painter: Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum IV 697 (*ARV*² 1075, no. 11; *Beazley Addenda*² 326; Bundrick 2005, p. 40, fig. 25). For the

aulos in 5th-century iconography, see Bundrick 2005, esp. pp. 34–42, with further references.

160. Sebesta 2002, p. 132 (following LSJ). See also Jenkins 1985 for *metis* and textiles.

161. See Bolmarcich 2001; Vetter 2005, pp. 47–54.

162. See, e.g., Lyons 2003, pp. 116–119, and Morrell 1997 on the symbolism of fabric in *Agamemnon*. Morrell argues that Klytemnestra spreads garments on the ground in front of Agamemnon in the key scene when he enters the palace (*Ag.* 810–974) and

that these garments signify the wealth of the oikos and Klytemnestra's key role in it. In another recent study of this scene, McNeil (2005) suggests that the textile in question was a nuptial robe, possibly woven with mythological scenes of Philomela, situating this theory within a larger discussion of 5th-century textile and nuptial symbolism.

163. In addition to Scheid and Svenbro 1996, see Vetter 2005, including discussion of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and Plato's *Politikos*.

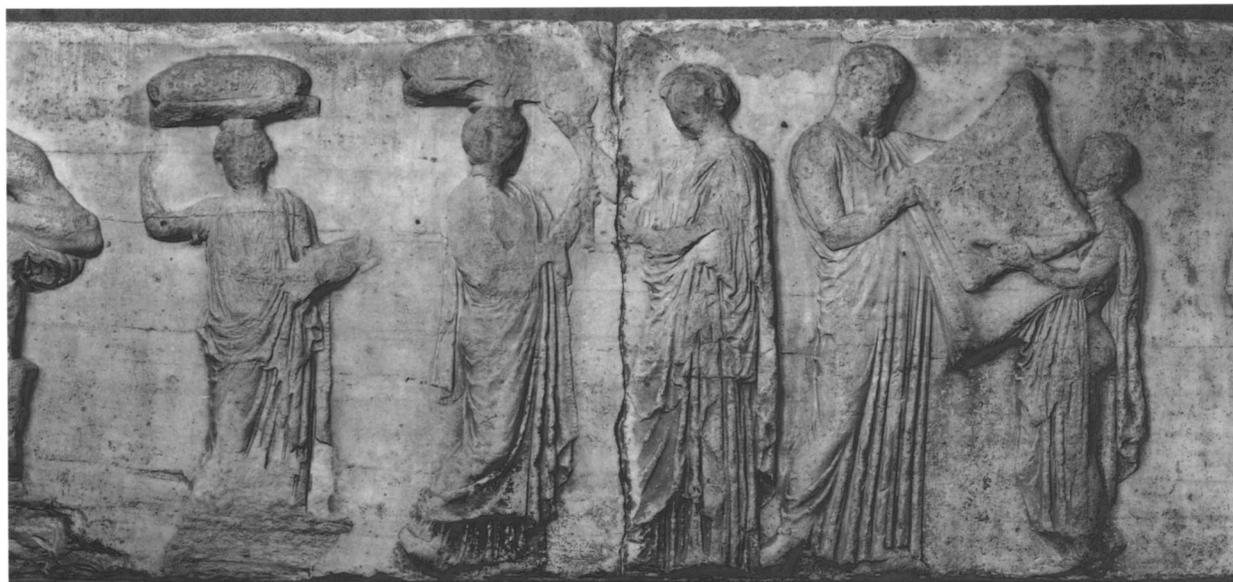


Figure 16. Central scene from the east frieze of the Parthenon. London, British Museum (East frieze V). Photo © Trustees of the British Museum

outlines a plan for uniting the city using the imagery of textile production and resulting in “a cloak for the people” (τῷ δήμῳ χλαῖναν ὑφῆναι).¹⁶⁴ In the following century, Plato employed similar metaphors in his dialogue *Politikos*, claiming that the craft of statesmanship in the city “weaves all into its unified fabric with perfect skill.”¹⁶⁵

Fifth-century imagery uses textiles to express the idea of political harmony as well. The most notable (even notorious) instance is the Parthenon east frieze; while vases focus largely on the act of *creating* textiles, a prominently displayed *finished* textile forms the frieze’s climactic symbol (Fig. 16).¹⁶⁶ Although there is much disagreement about the interpretation of the textile scene and the identities of its characters, most scholars believe the textile in question to be the Panathenaic peplos, presented to the ancient statue of Athena Polias as part of the Panathenaic festival.¹⁶⁷

The bearded man in the east frieze wearing a long, ungirt chiton and holding the peplos is assuredly a priest. Although it has been debated whether he is folding or unfolding the textile (important in determining which moment in the ritual is represented), recent scholarship favors the view that he is folding the newly offered peplos, and thus we are seeing the culmination of a successful ceremony.¹⁶⁸ He is joined by a young boy as helper, and behind him (i.e., to the left in Fig. 16) stand a woman and two girls, the latter perhaps the *arrephoroi* who assisted in setting up the loom for the weaving of the peplos at the Chalkeia festival. Keeping in mind that

164. *Ar. Lys.* 567–586. See Scheid and Svenbro 1996, pp. 15–18, for discussion of this passage.

165. *Pl. Plt.* 305e. Scheid and Svenbro 1996, pp. 21–34.

166. See Neils 2001 for a comprehensive discussion of the frieze, with references to earlier scholarship.

167. At the Greater Panathenaia held every four years, a second, larger

peplos, woven by Athenian citizen men, was paraded through the streets as the sail on a wooden ship. Most believe, however, that the peplos shown on the frieze is more likely to be the one intended for Athena’s statue. See Barber 1992 for discussion of the Panathenaic peplos generally; also Mansfield 1985. A notable exception to the theory that this textile represents the Panathenaic

peplos is offered by Connelly (1996), who develops a mythological argument around the family of Erechtheus. Connelly’s argument, however, has not been widely accepted; see, e.g., Neils 2001, p. 178; Hurwit 2004, pp. 225–228.

168. Harrison 1996, pp. 202–203; Neils 2004a, pp. 57–58.

the peplos would have been gaily woven with scenes of the Gigantomachy (perhaps made visible on the frieze by the use of painted details), the man's pose suggests that he is examining the peplos closely, even reading its story. We are reminded of vase paintings showing people reading book rolls, such as a cup by the Eretria Painter with Linos depicted in the tondo.¹⁶⁹

The fact that a textile is singled out on the Parthenon is highly significant. The Panathenaic peplos served as a focal symbol of the Athenian polis and its commitment to its patron goddess. The gift of a textile to Athena was all the more appropriate given the goddess's association with *techne* as Athena Ergane (the Worker), goddess of craft and especially of weaving. According to Hesiod (*Op.* 65), Athena taught Pandora (and thus all women) the art of weaving; appropriately, the birth (or at least outfitting) of Pandora appeared on the base of Pheidias's statue of Athena inside the Parthenon. Terracotta plaques depicting scenes related to weaving and textile production had been dedicated on the Acropolis during the 6th century, and an Archaic shrine, possibly to Athena Ergane, was incorporated into the Parthenon's design.¹⁷⁰

The textile on the Parthenon frieze can be interpreted not merely as an object—the Panathenaic peplos—but also as a larger metaphor for the fabric of the city and the Athenian “family.” With the presence of a bearded man, an adult woman, one young boy, and two young girls, the so-called peplos scene has an intimate, familial air, suggesting the promise of the future as well as the continuity of the city, its citizenry, and its rituals. Such a reading meshes well with other aspects of the Parthenon frieze: the theme of sacrifice, a ritual of commensality that serves to unite the city, and the overall theme of *koinonia*, or community itself—the community of Athenians and their relationship to the community of gods. One can find this basic theme repeated with different emphases throughout the frieze as well as in the larger sculptural program. The Panathenaic peplos on the east frieze, symbolic of relationships within the city as well as with the gods, brings all the threads together.

Similar in conception is a subject found in contemporary vase painting that also situates textiles within the larger context of Athenian cultural ideology while expressing themes of family and community. In several representations of the birth of Erichthonios, a subject highlighted in post-Persian War vase painting, cloth becomes a central symbol as Athena prepares to receive and swaddle the baby, presented by his earth-mother Gaia.¹⁷¹ On a stamnos by the Painter of Munich 2413 (ca. 470–455 B.C.), the reception of Erichthonios by Athena is observed by the boy's father, Hephaistos, and two Erotes,¹⁷² while on a calyx krater in the manner of the Talos Painter from later in the century, Hephaistos, Kekrops, and Nike complete the

169. Louvre G 457: *ARV*² 1254, no. 80; *Beazley Addenda*² 355.

170. In the recent restoration work on the Parthenon, remnants of a small *naiskos*, possibly dating as far back as the mid-6th century B.C., were uncovered in the aisle of the building's northern colonnade: see Hurwit 2004,

pp. 74–76, for recent discussion. While it is impossible to be certain, Korres (1997, pp. 227–229, 242) has suggested that the *naiskos* may have been dedicated to Athena Ergane.

171. For these images of the birth of Erichthonios, see *LIMC* IV, 1988, pp. 923–951, s.v. Erechtheus (U. Kron);

Oakley 1987; Reeder 1995, pp. 250–266; Shapiro 1998; and other references below.

172. Stamnos by the Painter of Munich 2413 (name vase, *ARV*² 495, no. 1, and 1656; *Beazley Addenda*² 250; Reeder 1995, pp. 255–256, no. 68; Shapiro 1998, p. 135, figs. 3, 4).



Figure 17. The birth of Erichthonios, hydria by the Oinante Painter. London, British Museum E 182. Photo © Trustees of the British Museum

scene.¹⁷³ Even more strikingly in terms of political allegory, a hydria by the Oinante Painter (ca. 460 B.C.) shows not Hephaistos but Zeus with his thunderbolt, as Nike rushes in with a cloth fillet to further adorn the child (Fig. 17).¹⁷⁴ In these three cases and other depictions of this myth,¹⁷⁵ the baby is framed by cloth, usually elaborately decorated (ποικίλος).

The prominence of textiles in scenes of Erichthonios suggests multiple allusions. A viewer might think first of the myth itself, which in one version has Athena wiping Hephaistos's semen off her leg with a bit of wool and tossing it to the ground. A viewer would also recall Athena's gift of *techne* in weaving, and the *poikilos* cloth might evoke the elaborately decorated Panathenaic peplos.¹⁷⁶ In these scenes Athena becomes the caregiver and protector of one of the city's autochthonous founders, just as she protects the city of Athens; we can compare the arrangement of figures, gestures, and gazes to those in scenes of mortal families (e.g., Fig. 13). The infant Erichthonios represents the promise of the future, as male children do elsewhere on vases. Images of Erichthonios also reflect 5th-century Athenian concerns with autochthony and, by extension, Athenians' belief in their own cultural supremacy.¹⁷⁷ How appropriate cloth and the idea of weaving become in that regard: a symbol of the self-sufficiency and harmony of the *oikos* when appearing in contemporary household scenes of textile production, here textiles express the *harmonia* and self-sufficiency of Athens itself.

173. Calyx krater in the manner of the Talos Painter, Palermo, Museo Archeologico Regionale 2365 (*ARV*² 1339, no. 3; *Beazley Addenda*² 367; Reeder 1995, pp. 262–264, no. 72).

174. London E 182: *ARV*² 580, no. 2, and 1615; *Beazley Addenda*² 263; Reeder 1995, pp. 253–255, no. 67;

Shapiro 1998, p. 141, fig. 11.

175. E.g., squat lekythos, ca. 420–410 B.C., Cleveland 82.142: Neils 1983; Shapiro 1998, pp. 146–147, figs. 16, 17.

It should be noted that not all of the Erichthonios birth scenes share the cloth motif. Reeder (1995, p. 251) believes there must be a prototype for

the birth scenes, perhaps a now-lost painting, but this does not have to be the case.

176. See Reeder 1995, p. 251, where the author also points out that the word peplos describes any “square expanse of fabric,” not just a woman's dress.

177. See, e.g., Shapiro 1998.

WEAVING FOR THE CITY

Images of women spinning, weaving, and otherwise engaging in textile production on Athenian vases stand for much more than a literal depiction of women's work. Although such images are somewhat stereotypical in linking women to these activities, their tone is not negative, but can be read positively within a larger framework of Athenian social practices, iconography, and metaphor. The scenes reflect significant social concerns under the democratic system, a connection highlighted by the fact that they first come to prominence in the years following the Kleisthenic reforms of 508/7 B.C. and remain popular through the end of the Peloponnesian War. It was not the nature of Athenian art to trumpet the democracy by showing, for example, the activities of the assembly or the lawcourts; rather, the benefits of democracy—and Athenian belief in the supremacy of democracy—were alluded to more subtly through myth or genre scenes. Important among the latter were scenes of the oikos and family life, which became especially popular after the Persian Wars and particularly in the second half of the 5th century.

Scenes of textile production, part of the larger category of oikos scenes, undergo transformation over the century of their greatest popularity. Their iconography becomes more complex as the 5th century progresses, with multiple figures and a wider range of vase shapes represented. Vases featuring textile production scenes are exported less often, increasingly remaining in Attica. It becomes easier to identify the women in the scenes as citizen women, with the ambiguity of possible hetairai fading away.

One is reminded of an especially relevant, contemporary political development. In 451/0 B.C., Perikles introduced legislation proclaiming that for a man to be an Athenian citizen, both of his parents had to be native born, a departure from earlier practice in which the father's citizenship alone dictated that of his sons.¹⁷⁸ The Aristotelian (or pseudo-Aristotelian) *Constitution of the Athenians* refers to the law and recounts Perikles' proposal that "anyone who has not been born from two *astoi* [native citizens] should not share in the polis."¹⁷⁹ In his *Life of Perikles*, Plutarch also alludes to the law, stating that citizens of Athens were "those born of Athenians."¹⁸⁰ While the so-called Perikleian citizenship law did not forbid marriage between Athenian men and non-Athenian women, it did considerably privilege the children of Athenian parents.

It has been proposed that the new legal emphasis on Athenian women and marriage influenced contemporary iconography, leading to the proliferation of scenes relating to weddings or scenes of women generally.¹⁸¹ I suggest that the imagery of woolworking forms part of this picture, given the clear iconographic association between marriage, textiles, and family. Some scholars have posited an ideological separation or conflict of interests between oikos and polis,¹⁸² but as I have argued above, these scenes

178. For commentary on the decree, see Patterson 1981; 1998, pp. 109–110; Boegehold 1994. For the relationship of the decree to contemporary art, see Sutton 1981, pp. 463–464; 1992, esp. pp. 27–35; Sabetai 1993, pp. 231–232.

Cf. Stears 1995, pp. 113, 115, on the possible relationship between the citizenship law and the iconography of grave stelai; also Osborne 1997.

179. *Ath. Pol.* 26.4, trans. Patterson 1998, p. 109.

180. Plut. *Per.* 37.3. Cf. also *Ar. Av.* 1661–1666; Patterson 1998, p. 110.

181. E.g., Sutton 1981, pp. 463–464; Oakley and Sinos 1993, p. 46; Osborne 1997.

182. See, e.g., Humphreys 1993.

suggest the opposite, that the two are inextricably bound. References to textile production in visual imagery proclaim women's contributions to the household and to the city in both an economic sense and a symbolic one: the Athenian woman, and by extension the Athenian family, is essential in maintaining the fabric of the democratic polis.

But even this scenario may not be the whole story. Much as these scenes do have a connection to reality (albeit idealized), they also subvert it. Vases with textile production scenes and other contemporary images of domestic life depict Athenian economic prosperity as a by-product of the democratic system—but one must remember the turmoils as much as the successes. Peace was hardly a reality of 5th-century Athens, for all the city's military and political prominence and for all the scenes of content Athenians in contemporary art. The Greeks had successfully fended off the Persians at the battle of Salamis (480 B.C.) and the battle of Plataia (479 B.C.), but not without first seeing Athens sacked by its enemies. Athenian forces continued to engage in conflict against the Persians for almost three decades after Plataia (including a campaign in Egypt that culminated in disastrous Athenian losses in 453 B.C.), and only with the so-called Peace of Kallias around 450 B.C. did fear of Persia begin to subside. Add to that ongoing problems with Athens' Greek neighbors, escalating with the undeclared First Peloponnesian War of 460–445 B.C. and coming to a head with the renewed declaration of hostilities by Sparta in 432 B.C. Three decades of war at the end of the century effectively ended Athenian military supremacy.

Considering the blissful domesticity of the vase paintings against this turbulent backdrop grants them an additional level of meaning. The way of life celebrated on the vases could be said to be endangered. The young men shown safe at home could another day be donning hoplite armor and going off to fight; numerous scenes of warriors' departures are also found on Athenian vases at this time. The women then bore the task of looking after the home by themselves, taking care of the sons who would grow up to defend the city too one day. Athenian families surely suffered anxiety at the looming threat of conflict and invasion. Perhaps the scenes of happy, harmonious oikos life on vases provided a measure of psychological comfort, reassurance that all would be well and that the comfortable lifestyle accessible under the democracy would continue unaltered. While communicating the sociocultural ideals of 5th-century Athenian life, these representations could also be viewed as escapist expressions of turning inward, "nesting" in the face of external stress.¹⁸³ No coincidence, then, that with the collapse of Athenian fortunes at the century's end, images of textile production and women's home life virtually disappear, as the women's world had itself forever changed.

183. Such a phenomenon has been recently witnessed in post-9/11 American culture; increased sales of items for the home (furniture, appliances, etc.), growing interest in home-improvement projects, increased popularity of craft activities (e.g., creating scrapbooks, knitting), and a bevy of home-make-

over shows on television suggest nesting instincts resulting from conscious or subconscious psychological stress. At the same time, since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Americans have tried to insulate themselves from the "war on terror" by turning to popular-culture outlets such as reality television. Burn

(1987, esp. pp. 18–19, 84–85, 95–96) has argued for the escapist nature of late-5th-century vase paintings of mythological subjects by the Meidias Painter and his circle. I argue here that genre scenes may have served a similar purpose.

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