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Courtesans and Kings: Ancient Greek Perspectives on the *Hetairai*

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to evaluate the historical veracity of the accounts of *hetairai* in the early Hellenistic period. Thus, the first three chapters discuss the important questions of the reliability of sources, the influence of an ever developing Greek pornographic discourse, and the impact of precedents set by the apparently historical lives of earlier *hetairai*. Chapters four to six then attempt to evaluate the extant information about the historical courtesans of some of the early Hellenistic kings, the purpose being to emphasize the difficulty in accepting at face value information, even ostensibly historical, about a particular subject, when ideas about that subject have been so heavily influenced by a multi-faceted and often contradictory discourse. We find that not only pornographic discourse but also traditional discourse on politics and the orient often had a significant impact on the tone and character of the predominantly Greek sources that discuss *hetairai*.

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## DEDICATION

For  
Jasmine Alexandra  
&  
The Baby

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## CHAPTER 1

*INTRODUCTION: Sources & Methodology*

The purpose of this study is to determine the reliability of the many sources, historical and literary, that describe the interaction of those prostitutes who are styled *hetairai* with the various kings of the early Hellenistic period. In doing this we shall have to delve further back into the beginnings of 'pornographic discourse'<sup>1</sup> in archaic Greece as well as Classical Athens where precedents for the phenomenon of the influential and wealthy prostitute were set. One of the most important tasks before us will be to evaluate how a fictitious or culturally constructed idea about the *hetaira* shaped the accounts of historically attested individuals who were involved erotically with powerful men. This warns us that a purportedly historical source does not necessarily represent historical fact; it could equally have been influenced by the cultural perceptions and norms that affected the writing of fictional works, among which the most prominent were the comedic genres. Some of this influence was inevitably part of the male authors' general outlook and was unavoidable, but in many cases it represents a conscious attempt by a writer to level effective criticism against his subject. Here is another important aspect of source evaluation, namely that the women on whom we wish to focus and whose lives, or life-patterns, we seek to elucidate are very often not in fact the actual subjects of the passages that mention them. They are instead foils with which to characterize the actions and nature of a particular man. In the majority of cases this characterization is extremely negative and should make us suspicious of the sensational details about the woman under discussion—to the point on occasion of questioning the woman's very identification as a *hetaira*.

The perhaps surprising ease with which elements of fiction could pass over into 'reliable' genres such as historiography and legal oratory can be seen in the instance of the remarkably famous Aspasia of Miletus (post c. 470– post c. 428 B.C.). This historical individual was ridiculed in contemporary Old Comedy.

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<sup>1</sup>For our purposes, 'pornography' and 'pornographic' will have the restricted meaning of

Although no corroborative evidence from non-hostile sources remains, the picture of her as a prostitute and even the owner/operator of a brothel who misused her beauty to exert influence over her powerful lover, Pericles, not only in erotic matters but in matters of the utmost political significance, dominated her characterization for centuries. We shall look more closely into this specific case in Chapter Three, where the possibility that she was not even a prostitute but a metic bound to Pericles by the closest state to marriage available to her—concubinage—will be carefully evaluated. One important and extremely influential aspect of Old Comedy, whose primary representative was Aristophanes, was the prevalent use of prostitutes as tools to discredit and shame politicians.<sup>2</sup> To see just how influential this practice was we need only look at forensic oratory, in which there are many apparently historical attacks on particular individual's actions, wherein even blatant falsehoods are employed in order to score points against the opponent.<sup>3</sup> Given the concurrent factor of the popular characterization of demagogues as men without restraint in matters of pleasure and excess<sup>4</sup>—an area in which allegations of involvement with prostitutes was a commonplace—we can see that both of these genres, apparently so different, were very often running on the same premises.<sup>5</sup>

If we turn to the genre of history, on which we shall be concentrating our efforts to glean information about historical courtesans, there are a number of factors that come into play in evaluating its reliability. Primarily we have the significant difficulty of the lack of contemporary historical documents. It is

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'writings about prostitutes (*pornai*)'. Cf. p. 4 above.

<sup>2</sup>Henry 1988: 13-28; on the development of the biographical traditions of individuals derived from Aristophanes' works and his preeminence in the genre see Lefkowitz 1981: 105-113, 115-116.

<sup>3</sup>Harding 1987: 30 gives the example of Demosthenes' attack on Aeschines' parentage as an example of this. In *On the False Embassy* (281) Demosthenes denigrates Aeschines' father as a school teacher and his mother as a minor priestess, possibly of Dionysus. Later in *On the Crown* (126-31) Demosthenes decides to go all out, calling Aeschines' father a foreign slave who worked for a school master and his mother a former lowly prostitute brought out of the gutter by a slave. These accusations were false but were employed to hold the audience's attention with their scurrilous humour.

<sup>4</sup>On these traits as part of the traditional polemical image of the demagogue see Cooper 1995: 307-308, with n. 14

<sup>5</sup>For an excellent explication of the similarities in audience assumptions for comic poets and

generally agreed that the closer in time a source was to the events being described, the better the chances that the account paints a relatively accurate historical picture. We must keep in mind, however, that, particularly with the advent of Alexander, the spread of his empire, and its subsequent partition into kingdoms, political history was often dominated by competing apologetic and hostile accounts. Clearly these biases in favour of, or against, a particular subject would have played a significant role in shaping contemporary accounts, but the notion that there were potentially other eye-witnesses around who could contradict one's version may have encouraged authors to maintain a semblance of truth.<sup>6</sup> The main problem with our knowledge of contemporary sources for the early Hellenistic age is that it remains only in fragments: in quotations, direct or paraphrased, or in abbreviations and epitomes like those of Hieronymus of Cardia in Diodorus and Arrian or of Hieronymus and Duris in Trogus.<sup>7</sup> While quotations are sometimes quite reliable, since ancient historians very often still had copies of works which have been lost to us, a significant problem is the lack of an explanation of the context from which a quote may have been taken.

A prime example of this is Athenaeus' work, the *Deipnosophistai*, which is a mine of citations and quotations from works of which we have at times no mention in any other ancient source. In terms of quotations from historical works there are a significant number from the historians of the age of Alexander and the Diadochoi, Duris of Samos and Theopompus of Chios. In the case of both of these authors, modern scholars have warned against characterizing either the historian or his overall work definitively based on the passages quoted in Athenaeus, or elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> Athenaeus had a specific agenda in composing his work (specifically for our study in Book XIII), namely to search out anecdotes

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orators see Harding 1987: 28-31.

<sup>6</sup>For an excellent discussion of the variety of impulses that influenced an ancient historian, including the very important aspect of polemic in historical writings, see Marincola 1997: *passim*, esp. 218-236

<sup>7</sup>Both Arrian (*The Events after Alexander*) and Trogus (*The Philippic Histories*) survive only in the further compressed versions of Photios and Justin respectively. For the source-question see Schubert 1914.

<sup>8</sup>Kebric 1977: 10-17; Flower 1994: 185-187.

about the activities of prostitutes and often about their relations with powerful men, usually in close connection with the detailing of various gastronomic fantasies. This evidently coloured his selections from those sources he had at hand. At times the most sensational and vivid details were chosen from a work of which little else remains, giving the impression that the author was equally a sensation-monger with very little interest in historical details or methods. In fact, according to Flower, this is precisely the case with Theopompus, the majority of whose historical fragments come from Athenaeus.<sup>9</sup> This issue will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four, where an attempt will be made to reach some conclusions about Alexander's treasurer Harpalus and his infamous courtesans, Pythionice and Glycera—about whom the most detailed information comes from Athenaeus' quotations of Theopompus. What is clear about the historical works of the day is that, even if they were not on the whole sensational, there seems to have been a tendency to pepper historical works with anecdotal details of the private—often scandalous—lives of great men.

This feature was not new to Greek historiography<sup>10</sup> but its prevalence was very likely affected by the popularization of biography.<sup>11</sup> The anecdotal nature of biography appears to have continued to affect authors long after the Hellenistic period—one needs only to look at Plutarch, as we shall do in detail in our discussions of both Alexander and Demetrius I, to find this. An important aspect of biography was the defining of a man's character (*ethos*) through anecdotes, which were often generic rather than historically specific, in such a way that all the significant events in his life contributed to the revelation of an ultimate character type. In much the same way, anecdotes involving prostitutes were often generic ones, providing little real information about a particular woman but offering corroborative information about the character (often morally corrupt

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<sup>9</sup> Flower 1994: 6-9; from the "some 83 verbatim quotations..., representing 598 lines of text, 412 of those lines are quoted by Athenaeus"(8).

<sup>10</sup> Kébric 1977: 15-16 notes that "tragic history", the central aim of which was to involve the audience emotionally in the events described, was never absent from Greek historiography, even as far back as Herodotus and Ktesias.

<sup>11</sup> Momigliano 1993: *passim*

and given to excess in every aspect of living) of the man with whom she was reportedly involved. It is in this aspect of historical writing that the influence of *hetaira* literature, or pornography, from genres not specifically concerned with historical accounts of great men and events can most clearly be discerned. Though pornographic discourse, as Davidson and Kurke call it,<sup>12</sup> was shaped by all manner of diverse writings, *hetaira* literature in particular, although it did at times mention women known to be historical, was more concerned in general with the stock characterization of prostitutes. This is a trend found especially in Greek New Comedy.

New Comedy, a genre perfected in the opinion of ancient literary critics by Menander of Athens (c. 342-290 B.C.),<sup>13</sup> was important to the development in the wider discourse on the typical courtesan because of the sheer prevalence of the *hetaira* as a central character in the plays. While only a small portion of Menander's plays survive relatively intact, and even less remains of the many other authors who contributed to the genre, there was a particular innovation over time that saw an unprecedented positive role for the *hetaira* as well as a recognizable individuality or subjectivity that seems to have been entirely lacking in earlier types of comedy.<sup>14</sup> An important aspect of Menander's *hetaira* plays is that they show quite diverse descriptions of *hetairai*—revealing how difficult a straightforward definition of the prostitute was. We find that *hetairai* could be slaves owned by pimps, free women who were foreigners and thus unable to marry an Athenian legitimately, or—an especially popular

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<sup>12</sup> Davidson 1997: 134-136; Kurke 1997: 109-110; on this see also Henry 1995: 58-59

<sup>13</sup> Ancient assessments of Menander are collected as Testimonia 32-49 in Vol. II of the Teubner edition, Koerte-Thierfelder (=K-T) 1959: 7-11. The most famous comment by Aristophanes of Byzantium: 'O Menander, did you imitate life, or did life imitate you?' (ὦ Μένανδρε καὶ βίη./ πότερος ἄρ' ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμήσατο; [Test. 32 K-T]. cf. Arnott 1979: xix-xxiii; Lefkowitz 1981: 113-114 where she notes that one of the main features of Menander's biographical tradition was the contention that he was "absolutely mad for women" [Suda, 'Μένανδρος' = Test. 1. K-T].

<sup>14</sup> Henry 1988: 32-48. In fact, this innovative approach applies to Menander's characterization of the full gamut of his inherited stock figures. As Arnott 1979: xxxii puts it: there is a controlled tension in both characterization and plot construction "between the familiar and unfamiliar, convention and reality, the typical and the unexpected." Each stock figure, whether a selfish courtesan, a greedy parasite, or a braggart soldier etc., is defined immediately in the audience's mind by certain established characteristics yet each one somehow clashes against the type by



scenario—they could be citizen women exposed at birth and recognized as such at the climax of the play. As noted by Hunter in his study of New Comedy, the significance of the courtesan's role in the genre as a whole reflects to some degree the fact that such women were a conspicuous feature of the social life of the upper classes in major Hellenistic cities.<sup>15</sup> We can see that the various scenarios involving *hetairai* would allow the playwright to express a wide range of characterizations of the women, depending on his purpose in the comedy. Significantly, the overwhelming impression provided by the interaction in the plays between prostitutes and the citizenry in general is that attitudes towards these women were still predominantly negative, including assumptions of invariable fickleness, extreme greed and a dangerous ability to ensnare men even against their will. In view of this, we may infer that Menander's purpose in particular in using them so often as characters was to provide a twist to conventional stereotypes.

According to Henry, the explosion of pornographic discourse in the fourth century saw the transference of sensational (quasi-)historical anecdotes concerning prostitutes from comedy to genres such as history, prosopography, poetry, philosophical dialogue and miscellany.<sup>16</sup> We can find clear examples of this in the amusing bits of typical *hetaira* wit applied to different courtesans in Machon's comedic *Chreiai* and Lynceus of Samos' writings.<sup>17</sup> Gow suggests in his introduction to the fragments of Machon that Lynceus was likely to have been one of the main sources for Machon's *hetaira* anecdotes.<sup>18</sup> This possibility does little to inspire confidence in the historical accuracy of such stories since it appears that an author, perhaps directly consulting another for a specific type of anecdote, does not find it important to ascribe them to the same individual.

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his/her actions or reactions xxxiii-xxxv.

<sup>15</sup> Hunter 1985: 92

<sup>16</sup> Henry 1995: 58

<sup>17</sup> So Athenaeus records Machon's version of abusive remarks between the courtesans Mania and Gnathaena regarding an ailment known as 'the stone' [XIII. 578E]. The same remarks are found being exchanged between Phryne and Gnathaena in Athenaeus' citation of some fragments of Lynceus [XIII. 584C].

<sup>18</sup> Gow 1965: 20

Another example of this type of confusion in the process of crossover between genres can be found in the remarkable similarity between the anecdotal stories of a famous courtesan basically equating the corruptive nature of the *hetaira* with that of the philosopher which are found in Satyrus' biography of the philosopher Stilpo (*FHG* iii. 164 ap. Ath. XIII. 584A) and Alciphron's account of Euthydemus (7): the first philosopher exchanges remarks with a certain Glycera, the second with a courtesan named Thaïs. At least two problems are brought to light by this particular example. Firstly, the stereotypical nature of the debate described here calls into question the historical reliability of both accounts. Often the presumed nature of the subject under discussion, in these cases philosophers, called for entertaining anecdotes to demonstrate a particular characteristic, whether they contradicted the content of his professed philosophy and thus showed him a hypocrite<sup>19</sup> or provided an instance where the philosopher was shown to be faithful to whatever claims he made about himself and his lifestyle. Secondly, the popularity of the names given to the courtesans (Glycera and Thaïs) makes it impossible even to identify either one definitively as a historical individual whose life we can supplement from other stories in other sources.

The prevalence of the crossover of themes relating to prostitutes between diverse genres of Greek writing attests to the significance of the *hetaira* as a cultural icon. A single or definitive reason behind this extreme popularity is difficult if not impossible to pin-point, but it seems reasonable to suggest that it had as at least one of its main premises the generally misogynistic outlook of the Greek (most specifically Athenian) male. There were a number of factors influencing this outlook, the first being the primary importance of maintaining

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<sup>19</sup>This type of vilification is found in the biographies of all sorts of important figures (see Lefkowitz 1981); a specific example related to our discussion of prostitutes and philosophers can be found in the anti-Platonic treatise by Herodicus of Babylon, *Against the Socratophile*. Here the philosopher Socrates, described by Plato as "sublimative and sublime", is shown to be a man tormented by his *pothos* (longing) for the handsome Alcibiades. Additionally, he is advised to press the suit by his prostitute *erotodidaskolos* ("teacher of erotics") Aspasia [Henry 1995: 64-65, citing Duering frag. 4 ap. Ath. V. 219D].

secure control over the activities and habits of respectable women.<sup>20</sup> It seems that consequently there developed a desire for a class of women *not* bound by these rules but somehow restricted from those benefits that respectability brought to marriagable citizen women. This means that prostitutes had to be carefully excluded from adopting the appearance of 'normal' feminine values and that their ostensible freedoms of lifestyle and independence were undermined by the reality of a male-centred society.<sup>21</sup> The competing notions of what characteristics made a woman desirable helped to form a discourse on prostitutes that was inherently confused and multi-faceted. On the one hand, there is the idea that prostitutes (specifically the *hetairai* or 'companions' who seem to have been in many ways set apart, or above, some of the more depressing aspects of commercial prostitution that affected the common brothel slave or *porne*) were desirable and uniquely satisfying for men because they were outside the bounds of propriety. On the other hand, this freedom, often seen as a luxury granted by foolhardy men with more wealth and power than self-control, made such women dangerous and repeated attempts were made to restore them to the anonymous drudgery of a male- and state-controlled sex trade. This is the debate that we shall see active in almost every aspect of our discussion of Hellenistic *hetairai*; our task will be to try to evaluate what information we can take away from the debate as reflecting real historical details about individual women and how much of it must be set aside as stereotypical details conforming to a culturally based construct of the prostitute.

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<sup>20</sup>This notion can be seen in Apollodorus' speech, *Against Neaera*, where the author describes the danger of allowing the criminal actions of a prostitute to go unpunished: not only will men be unable to face their womenfolk without shame but these same women will be receiving a signal that they could do as they pleased without discretion [59. 110-114].

<sup>21</sup>An excellent summary of the contradictions inherent in the concept of the *hetaira* can be found in Fantham 1975: 51 which deserves to be quoted in full. "In one sense the *hetaira* was the only woman in Greek society who enjoyed a freedom comparable to that of men, running her own household and finances, with the right to choose the company she admitted to her home, and to attend the symposia and dinner parties of the men-folk. At the same time she had little or no protection against unwelcome advances, and her status would limit the fairness of her treatment in a court of law."

## CHAPTER 2

*Status, Names, Origin, and Lifestyle*I. TERMINOLOGY

The terminology used to describe prostitutes in ancient Greece was widely varied but the most basic opposition that distinguished between categories of women within the profession was that of the *hetaira* and *porne*. Although the term *hetaira* was not invariably a favourable description, it could have positive connotations as a result of the connection to the archaic aristocratic use of the masculine form of the term “companion” (*hetairos*) to describe its own members. Conversely, the term *porne* was used exclusively in a negative context to emphasize the base and common nature of the woman to whom it was applied. The term developed from the verb “to sell” (πέρνημι) and in particular referred to the sale of slaves<sup>22</sup>

Other terms created in the archaic period which served to designate a woman as a prostitute (including *demos*—one common to the entire population, *ergatis*—working girl, *misete*—a lewd woman, and *leophoros*—much trafficked), were connected to the category of the *porne* and all served to associate the woman under discussion with lewdness, pollution, the humiliating need to work for pay and an excessive commonality in the public sphere.<sup>23</sup> It is noticeable that in the context of economic discourse among ancient Greek aristocratic elements, to call someone a ‘hired hand’ or a banausic worker was an equally derogatory distinction when applied to men or women. Trades plied either indoors or for the purpose of subsistence were often considered indications of a man’s foreign or servile origins; as Xenophon’s Socrates explains, the proper spheres for free men were politics, military pursuits and agriculture [*Oec.* IV. 2-3].<sup>24</sup> Hence the

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<sup>22</sup> Kurke 1997: 108

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 112-113, 124-127; for further lists of terms describing the lower end of the scale of prostitution see Davidson 1997: 78

<sup>24</sup> Pomeroy 1994: 235-237. Further ancient corroboration for this attitude that working for pay, and in particular at sedentary indoor jobs, was vulgar are noted here, including Aristotle *Pol.* 1278<sup>9</sup>8; Plato *Rep.* 495 D-E. 522 B, *Laws* 848 A, 919 C. Pomeroy also notes that there *were* socially acceptable ways for the free citizen and even the aristocrat to make money but these did not include blatantly commercial activity such as manufacturing products solely for sale in the agora.

characterization of both men and women who practiced a trade, in the full range from prostitution to craft-making, which was developed in the archaic period continued to be applicable among certain of the wealthier class even into the classical period. As Fantham explains, later Latin terms used in comedy (such as *meretrix*, “she who earns,” and *quaestum facere*, “to earn a living,”) denoted the negative sense of the prostitutes’ lifestyle. This was also true in Greek discourse; terms like ἐργασία, “work/ a job,” ἐργάζομαι, “to work,” and ἐργαστήριον, “factory”, usually applied in connection to male artisans, were used in discussions of women to refer condescendingly to prostitution.<sup>25</sup> While some of the early terms for the common prostitute seem to have gradually fallen out of popular usage in the discourse on prostitutes, a number of other descriptions maintained their popularity right up into the Hellenistic period. These terms often were attempts to deflate whatever pretensions the title of *hetaira* (with its connection to the elite aristocratic symposium) may have given a prostitute. Hence even women like Pythionice who were involved with powerful men and receiving rather extravagant honours were derisively called *pornai* (Theopompus, *Letter to Alexander*, FGrH 115 F253 ap. Ath. XIII. 595AB). Other terms used consistently in the ancient sources include the description of a female prostitute, most often called at some point a *hetaira*, as an *auletris*, “flute girl” (as in the case of the famous mistress of Demetrius Poliorcetes, Lamia, in Machon, XIII l. 176 Gow, and Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 16. 3-4), *orchestris*, “dancing girl”<sup>26</sup> (as Oenante, the mother of Ptolemy IV Philopator’s *hetaira*, Agathoclea is described in Plutarch, *Moralia* 753D) and *gunaion*, “little woman/hussy”<sup>27</sup> (as Phryne is described in Plutarch, *Moralia* 401C; Plutarch also describes Ptolemy II Philadelphus’ mistress Bilistiche with this term as a “barbarian female (sc. slave)” at *Moralia* 753F).

As Kurke explains, the negative associations bound up in *porne* and

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<sup>25</sup>Fantham 1975: 61 n. 41

<sup>26</sup>For a discussion of the collocation of entertainers—dancers, singers, flute and castanet-players—and prostitutes, male and female, see Montserrat 1996: 116-120

<sup>27</sup>Gow 1965: 126 gives “hussies” as the translation of *gunaia* in his commentary on l. 398 of Machon, fragment XVII.

related terms were formulated in the sixth century B.C. by an elite aristocratic group. This group created an ideology based in part on a lifestyle that reflected a “cult of *habrosyne* (luxury)”. This was in opposition to a more egalitarian ideology (which gradually developed into the democratic ideology of Athens) in which all excess was frowned upon as a barrier to the equality of citizens beneath the supreme authority of the *polis*. Within these two opposing ideologies each group used various methods to distinguish itself from the other, with the circulation of women being used as one of the models that represented the group’s ideology as a whole. In the case of the elitist aristocratic group, the distinction between themselves and the rest of the *polis*’s subordinated citizenry was effected in part by their creation of a new category of sexually available women—women who were in fact prostitutes but who were often not defined clearly as such. These women were distinguished from their cheap and common counterparts (as the category of the *porne* was defined) by their attendance at the aristocratic symposium and the attempt made to disguise any economic element in relations with them by replacing the fee—*misthos*—with the concept of *charis* (“favour”). In addition there was a general lack of moral disapproval in descriptions of the *hetaira*, precisely the opposite of the descriptions of *pornai* found in the same authors.<sup>28</sup>

It was not, however, the group which had ‘invented’ the category of the *hetaira* that actually used the term, at least in as much as the surviving fragments of archaic poetry allow us to surmise. Within the works of those who were proponents of this elite ideology, the women assumed to be *hetairai* were often described in indirect ways, without the use of terminology associated with prostitution. We find this exemplified in archaic poetry like that of Anacreon where women who are most likely *hetairai* are, with positive connotations, called φίλη “dear”, ἄβρη “dainty/ luxurious” [Anacreon frag. 93 Gentili].<sup>29</sup> In fact, it

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<sup>28</sup>Kurke 1997: 110-112, 115

<sup>29</sup>Ibid, 114-16. A later example from the classical period is Xenophon’s description of the *hetaira* Theodote: “the sort of woman who keeps company with any man who has persuaded her” [*Mem.* III. 11,1]. We find further positive evaluations later in comedy: for example, Antiphanes in the *Water Jar* mentions a *hetaira* “possessing a golden character in the matter of virtue” ἡθός τι

was those outside the elite aristocratic ideology who used the term *hetaira* and they did so as a way of ridiculing the attempt to assimilate a prostitute into an equal partner in the world of the symposium.<sup>30</sup> The first known occurrence of the term is found in Herodotus [II. 134-5] and refers to Rhodopis, a former slave who made a name for herself as a courtesan in the Egyptian city of Naucratis. Apparently her fame was so great that it was soon celebrated throughout Greece. The mention of her involvement with the brother of the poet Sappho confirms the fact that the *hetaira* was indeed a recognizable phenomenon of elite discourse by the archaic period.<sup>31</sup> Hence James Davidson relates that the identity of the *hetaira* in classical Athens continued to be a matter of great contention as *hetairai* themselves (in so far as we can infer from the writings about prostitutes—literally ‘pornography’—by men who both praised and attacked this class of women) attempted to maintain sharp distinctions between her own lifestyle and the profession of the *porne*, while their enemies attempted to undermine precisely those differences.<sup>32</sup>

In time that section of the male population which had taken over using descriptions of the *hetaira* category with positive connotations did in fact use the term *hetaira* to describe the women. In order to distinguish their own use of the term from that of men who used it derisively, they emphasized the simplest meaning of the term—“companion”—shunning the sexual implications or keeping them as remote as possible. So in Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae*, the symposiasts at one point argue about the nature of prostitutes: the character Myrtilus cites evidence from the comedy *Breezes* of Metagenes for the type of *hetaira* he wishes to describe and praise, not the dancers and flute-girls who perform for a price [4 K-A ap. XIII. 571B] but “true companions” (αἱ ὄντως

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χρυσοῦν πρὸς ἀρετὴν κεκτημένης... [210 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 572A].

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid*, this section summarizes 110-119 of the article. Note also that the ‘equality’ mentioned was a symbol used by the elite aristocratic members to differentiate themselves from the rest of the citizen population. It does not represent an absolute or even a true sense of equality beyond serving the ideological needs of this group. Reality often saw this pretense of equality falling prey to the more negative and violent aspects commonly associated with prostitution (137-140).

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid*, 106-07; cf. Henry 1988: 12. For further discussion of Rhodopis and the controversy surrounding her proper name see the section devoted to her in Chapter Three.

<sup>32</sup>Davidson 1997: 112

ἑταίραι). He goes on to describe these women as those who could preserve friendship without trickery (a topical criticism of prostitutes in general) and who could be called 'friends' after the manner of their patron Aphrodite *Hetaira* [Apollodorus of Athens *On the Gods* FGrH 244 F112 ap. Ath. XIII. 571C; cf. Philetaerus *Korinthiaste* 5 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 559A]. The emphasis on friendship reflects the earlier aristocratic notion that *phile* was one of the defining characteristics of their ideology and lifestyle. To call a *hetaira* 'phile' was to emphasize her nobility and her standing with her client; it contradicted the notion promoted by those who were hostile to these women as a class that every one of them was simply a deceitful money-hungry professional trying to use the guise of nobility to overstep the proper bounds which prostitution, by definition, imposed on its practitioners. We should keep in mind also that another important element of the hostile side of the debate over *hetairai* is the "enduring...idea that the power of prostitutes could lead to social and physical annihilation"—they could "endanger the world of men."<sup>33</sup> In literary terms this notion usually seems related to the fear that men might be stripped of their wealth while in a historiographical context it would appear often to have represented the fear that men in positions of power would turn over the political reins to a woman, a scenario that was even more dangerous when political power was concentrated in the hands of one man, as in the Hellenistic age.

The purpose of this prostitution specific terminology is, according to Davidson and Kurke, to function as a discursive strategy which distinguishes between those areas which are most awkward and problematic to differentiate.<sup>34</sup> Thus in the case of the terms *hetaira* and *porne*, as well as related professional terms like *auletris* and *orchestris*, there is no clear-cut empirical distinction that always applies in discussions of these women. They can be slave or free, have a pimp (*pornoboskos*) or pander or be self-employed; among the related professionals there is often no direct mention of the women's profession, yet their

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<sup>33</sup> Montserrat 1996: 114-115

<sup>34</sup> Kurke 1997: 109-110



sexual availability seems to go without question.<sup>35</sup> One of the most important considerations in the discussion of terminology and the “slippage and confusion” among the individual terms is the emotional attitude and the ultimate goal of the speaker in influencing his audience. Thus, when an author speaks about a particular woman or class of women using the various terms (as has already been seen in the above discussion of the uses of the term *hetaira*), that terminology can take on relatively positive or negative connotations, depending on his hostility or sympathy for the particular group under discussion.<sup>36</sup> The terminology itself does not convey a clear meaning without the content and context of the surrounding discussion.

While the term *porne* never seems to reflect a positive evaluation of the particular woman which it describes, it can be used to contrast favourably the entire category of women who are *pornai* (encompassing brothel workers, street walkers etc.) with the category of the *hetaira* when it is defined in such a way that it maintains a degree of inequality incompatible with democratic ideology—an inequality created by the pretensions of such women which allowed them to charge fees only wealthy men could afford. This preference for a despised category of sexually available women (*pornai*) as a show of solidarity for the Athenian citizen’s equal opportunities with his peers is reflected in Athenaeus’ record of the verdict of various comedians concerning the desirability of brothels in which anonymous *pornai* work for a set fee and remain, after the transaction, *allotria* (“nothing/ not of one’s family/property”<sup>37</sup>) to the client [Philemon, *Brothers* 3 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 569DF; for more such judgements cf. Epicrates, *Anti-Laïs* 3 K-A ap. Ath. XIII 570B; Eubulus, *The Vigil* and *Nannion* 82 K-A, 67 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 568EF; Xenarchus, *The Pentathlum* 4 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 569A-D]. It was men of this opinion about the value of prostitutes, namely that the women should function as a safety valve for the immorality of young men, who despised the pretensions of the *hetairai*. So, for example, Xenophon’s Socrates [*Memorabilia*

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 108

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 108-109; cf. Dover 1989: 21 and Henry 1986: 147

<sup>37</sup> As Kurke explains the term, 129

II. 2,4] observes the prevalence of such ‘safety-valves’ on the streets of Athens such that men would not be driven to wrongful acts with inappropriate women by the inevitable pressures of lust. To judge by Socrates’ description in the *Oeconomicus*, I. 13, of the effect on a man of purchasing a *hetaira*: he becomes, “because of her, worse in body, worse in soul, and worse in the matter of his household” (διὰ ταύτην κάκιον μὲν τὸ σῶμα ἔχοι, κάκιον δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν, κάκιον δὲ τὸν οἶκον...), we may imagine that this is confirmation of the notion that a man’s occasional use of a *porne* is preferable. Those authors hostile to the *hetaira* as a distinct form of prostitution—offering companionship in an emotional, intellectual and sexual sense as Pomeroy defines it<sup>38</sup>—considered these women to have been given credit far beyond their deserts and the notion that they were worthy of men’s devoted attentions and great expenditure to be no more than a fraud. The exact opposite of this evaluation can also be found among men who praise the *hetaira* precisely because she is not anonymous and not entirely businesslike—i.e. she is not like the *porne* [Timocles, *The Marathonians* 24 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 570F-571A].

Clearly the definitions of terminology used in the prostitute profession are important for understanding the simple connection of a woman to the profession, but of more importance is the evaluation of the attitude of the author to his particular subject, since a presumably positive designation can easily become a negative one, depending on the surrounding context, and vice versa. Even in classical Athens when the connection of a politician with a prostitute (or prostitutes) was set forth in a hostile account as evidence of the man’s corruption and worthlessness<sup>39</sup>, if the woman was a *hetaira* the description differed from cases where the accusations involved *pornai*. At times the *hetaira* was named and perhaps even described in further detail, thus to some extent personalizing her (though not necessarily positively as can be seen in the case of Pericles’ Aspasia). A slanderous attack made by connecting the man with *pornai* generally took the form of accusing him of being involved endlessly with a mass of anonymous

<sup>38</sup>Pomeroy 1994: 220-221, commentary on I. 13

<sup>39</sup>Henry 1988: 29 for Old Comedy; 35 for Middle Comedy.

brothel women. This was part of the discourse developed in an earlier period which mapped the circulation of women onto the differing political ideologies of aristocrat and democrat. The statesman rumored to spend all his time engaging brothel prostitutes was one whom the vice of being enslaved to passion would leave unfit for office since he could not place the interests of the citizenry above his own desires.<sup>40</sup> This critique could be applied equally to an attack on a man who wasted vast sums on expensive *hetairai* instead of unostentatiously making use of cheap prostitutes when necessary.<sup>41</sup> Clearly the ability to use both categories of *hetaira* and *porne* to attack a man emphasizes the impossibility of giving one a positive definition and the other a negative.

## II. FEE VS. GIFT—STATUS

The distinction between *hetaira* and *porne* was further emphasized from the earliest developments within the categories of prostitution by the opposition of the gift—*doron*—and the monetary fee/payment—*misthos*. This is likely because of the introduction, during the archaic period, of coined money and the type of market economy which accompanied it. Whereas the gift-receiving *hetaira* represented the female element in the aristocratic circulation of *charis* among elite equals, the *porne* who worked anonymously and without any distinction of clientele represented the public circulation of any commodity for money.<sup>42</sup> While the *hetaira* could become ‘personalized’ as a companion and lover of a particular

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<sup>40</sup>Halperin 1990: 98 Here Halperin notes that the male politician who was characterized either as a frequent user of prostitutes or a prostitute himself was thought to have ceased to be an “autonomous actor in his own right”, i.e. he had become a slave either to luxurious tastes or to his own straightened circumstances. The best men among the propertied classes, it was agreed, were those who mastered their desires and did not expend money on prostitutes. To visit the brothel was to show that a man was of no account. Yet, at the same time, it was better by far to visit brothels than to engage in attempts to seduce citizen women, thus becoming an adulterer (93). Thus while many men may not have realized the ideal in the hierarchy of acceptable behaviour, they could still maintain their position by making sure they did not sink too low into sexual deviance.

<sup>41</sup>See Davidson 1997: esp. 220-222 on the power of rumor to convict a man, particularly if he has been seen (whether in fact or just by hearsay) flaunting his wealth by keeping the company of expensive *hetairai*, shopping extensively at the fishmarkets, and generally expending great sums on his own pleasures.

<sup>42</sup>Kurke 1997: 115-16

gentleman, the *porne* remained anonymous. Such distinctions were hardly clear cut, yet the effect was to allow a semblance of vagueness and mystery into the reality that the *hetaira* was sexually purchasable. In time, as the circulation of money grew to dominate the economy and the gradual entrenchment of democracy at Athens made the criticisms of the elite aristocrat somewhat obsolete, this plain distinction between *dora* and *misthos* seems to have become less pronounced.<sup>43</sup> This can be seen in the descriptions of *hetairai* at Athens during the classical period.

The classical period may be seen as a sort of intermediate stage in the development of the categories of prostitution and their definitions. While archaic discourse attempted to maintain as clear a distinction as possible between the “dear/ beloved” (φίλη) *hetaira* and the “common and easy” (κοινὴ καὶ ῥάδια) *porne*, in particular by shunning any obvious connection between the *hetaira*’s companionship and whatever payment she received for it, the classical sources appear instead to mention the *hetaira*’s monetary pay as a given fact, whether the source is hostile or sympathetic. Gifts are of course mentioned and while they continue to emphasize the personalized nature of relations with the courtesan, there is little doubt as to the woman’s profession and often gifts are given with other cash sums as payment. The emphasis, in sympathetic accounts of *hetairai*, is not so much on the fact that the women are receivers of gifts, but rather on the amount they receive as pay. The higher the amount of pay, the higher the stature and reputation of the particular woman. This heightening of status and reputation based on pay was also reflected in the nature of the activities or type of companionship for which she was hired. When a woman was paid a great deal for her favours and her reputation soared, it often translated into a long term relationship where sex was no doubt a part of the bargain but even more significant was the exclusivity of her relationship with her client. Hence, although the courtesan is a hired wage-earner, one of the archaic criticisms of the

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<sup>43</sup>For a detailed discussion of the fees charged by prostitutes and the sources for this information see Appendix 2 “Prices” in Halperin 1990: 107-112.

*pornai*, she is, to use Davidson's term, the *megalomisthos hetaira*<sup>44</sup> and distinguishable from the cheap *porne*. Numerous instances, particularly from comedy record the exorbitant fees charged by the most famous *hetairai* such as Laïs, Phryne and Gnathaena.<sup>45</sup> Even women who had once been wretched *pornai* are on occasion noted to have risen from their previous misfortune to the height of wealth. We have noted the case of Neaera in the classical period, a later example from the Hellenistic age can be found in Polybius. In a moralistic passage on the state of affairs in Alexandria under Ptolemy II, he notes that the finest houses in the city were owned by three women, two by former lowly *auletrides* and the other by a woman who had formerly exhibited herself to the public [as for sale] (ἀποδεδειγμένη κοινή) [Polyb. XIV. 11, 2 ap. Ath. XIII. 576F]. Here we see that the ability to charge exorbitant fees and to make ostentatious displays of wealth were two of the more prominent features of the *hetaira* category as it developed over time.

The types of conditions which made the *hetaira*-client relationship one of relatively long term companionship applied specifically to those relations where the client was a man of considerable wealth, fame, or political importance. Hence the distinction was strikingly applicable during the Hellenistic period when the many historical characters heavily involved with courtesans were some of the most powerful men in the world. Relationships with *hetairai* were, at this time, mystified once again on a level akin to that of the archaic period—often times the exact status and position of the *hetaira* as a prostitute was even in doubt. Among the most infamously wealthy courtesans of the Hellenistic period, the sexual aspect of their relationships with powerful lovers was often the vaguest while the adoration of their lovers was emphasized by descriptions of the quantity and quality of their gifts to them. Even when the stigma of being paid for services becomes less obvious, the giving of gifts seems to have maintained a large role in defining the *hetaira* as distinct from the *porne*. Clearly though, the intermediate

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<sup>44</sup>Davidson 1997: 104-107

<sup>45</sup>A few examples include: Epicrates *Anti-Lais* 3 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 570CD; Timocles, *Neaera* 25 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 567DE; Amphis, *Kouris* 23 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 567F; Machon XVII Gow = Ath. XIII. 581AB.

developments concerning these women as a class/category influenced the way they presented themselves as well as the way sympathetic accounts portrayed them. Ironically, the quality that distinguished the *hetaira* and gave her extensive popularity, namely the inaccuracy of defining her as a paid prostitute, also enraged her opponents. What some men saw as a seductive affair worth considerable expense, others despised as an intolerable fraud. Thus the hostile sources often seem desperate to belittle *hetairai* as much as possible, in effect classing them with the lowest dregs of the prostitute profession.

### III. NAMES

Another factor in the classification and defining of prostitutes was their names. Certain names were used by prostitutes (or their owners) to identify women as such. Names that had particularly coarse meanings seem to have been reserved for the most part for base *pornai*—considering the prevalent anonymity of such professionals, there are few such names preserved. In the archaic period when elements of archaic discourse attempted to make the initial separation between the *hetaira* and *porne*, it was the ‘elitist’ element that most forcefully criticized the *pornai* as an attempt of course to distinguish their own professional companions from the rest of the women in circulation. Thus while for the most part anonymity and insignificance were the main characteristics of the *pornai*, some archaic poetry took special care to further define them as despicably common. This is where some of the few graphic names for prostitutes which we have preserved come from: Anakreon mentions a woman who was likely a public prostitute in a two-line fragment and gives her name as Eurypyle, “Wide-gate.” Kurke notes that the obscene sense of *pyle* is found in Aristophanic comedy as well as in Hesychius’ gloss of the words δημίαισι πόλαις as “common whores”.<sup>46</sup> One of the few other examples we have for names of *pornai* comes from a brothel scene depicted on a late sixth century cup on which one of the women is called Obole. In this case, which Davidson identifies as the extreme of

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<sup>46</sup>Kurke 1997: 123 with n. 44

“commodifying discourse”, the prostitute’s name is also the advertisement of her price.<sup>47</sup>

Contrary to the general anonymity of the *pornai*, an abundance of names is preserved for *hetairai*. Athenaeus records that in the Hellenistic period the Alexandrian compilers of prosopographical lists of Athenian *hetairai* outdid themselves adding names to the 135 initially recorded by Aristophanes of Byzantium [XIII. 583E]. Some *hetaira* names reflected the seductive side of the profession (e.g. Ocimon—“Sweet Basil” [Eubulus, *Kerkopes* 53 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 567BC], Glycera—“Sweety”, Aspasia—“Pleasant”), others its more sinister side (e.g. Lamia—“Vampire”, Lyka—“She-Wolf”, Barathron—“Ravine”<sup>48</sup>), while some give no clear indication of any particular reason behind choosing a name beyond the fact that we know that a particularly successful courtesan had borne the name and thus it gained popularity in the profession (e.g. Neaera, Laïs, and Thaïs<sup>49</sup>). Another possibility is that some names were chosen specifically to counter the expectation that a woman was in fact a *hetaira* by the apparent dignity or respectability of the name (e.g. Pythionice, Hierocleia or Plangon and Myrrhine, the latter two of which are found as the names of respectable citizen women). There were also certain names which were chosen to reflect the foreign origins of a woman, sometimes undoubtedly to emphasize some sort of exotic difference (e.g. the fabled *hetaira* chosen to initiate Alexander into the pleasures of love was called Callixeina—“Beautiful Foreigner”, or in another case a woman

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid, 130; cf. Davidson 1997: 88. Further on *pornai* names see Kurke’s discussion of Anakreon frag. 60 about Herotime whose name is an ironic criticism of a woman who has a name suitable for a high class *hetaira* but behaves like a common whore, 123-127. Also note that another ‘commodifying’ name found cited in Athenaeus—Clepsydra—is said to have been a historical individual spoken of in Asclepiades’ *History of Demetrius of Phalerum* [FGrH 157 F1 ap. Ath. XIII. 567CD] originally named Metiche, whose name was taken by Eubulus as a title for one of his comedies [54 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 567C]. It means ‘water-clock’ and refers to the prostitutes’ habit of charging for her favours by the minute as it were.

<sup>48</sup>The name Barathron, mentioned in a fragment of a comedy by Theophilus cited by Athenaeus [*Philaulos* 11 K-A ap. XIII. 587F], is glossed in Gulick’s note as synonymous with the name of the ravine at Athens into which the bodies of executed criminals were thrown.

<sup>49</sup>The problem with the popularity of *hetaira* names and the resultant confusion in differentiating between historical courtesans bearing the same names was noted in Chapter One above. For a detailed account, focussed on the Hellenistic royal courtesans, of the complications involved in evaluating the significance of names and whether they can definitively identify an historical courtesan see Ogden 1999: 247-252.

is called Thalatta—"Woman from the Sea".) Noticeably foreign names were also commonly used simply to denote that a woman was of lowly or slave origins. This seems to have been the case with the name Habrotonon which is found in the ancient sources as the name of the Thracian *hetaira* said to be the famous Athenian statesman Themistocles' mother [Amphicrates, *On Famous Men* FHG iv. 300 ap. Ath. XIII. 576C; Plut., *Them.* 1; Aelian V.H. XII. 43], Menander chose Habrotonon as the name of the slave *hetaira* in his comedy the *Epitrepontes*, and Plutarch in his *Moralia*, 753CD, relates the opposing opinions of men about the virtue of either lawfully marrying a respectable woman or of bringing home a purchased foreign woman, generalized as a "Thracian Habrotonon", as a concubine. Regardless if a name represented a woman of relatively lowly status, as compared with the more independent wealthy *hetairai*, such names still belong to women outside of the anonymity of the brothel. Certainly none of the names are as coarse as any of the ones mentioned for *pornai*.

That a name could be a reflection of a person's standing seems to be indicated in the anecdotal stories about the enmity between the rival Successors, Demetrius Poliorcetes and Lysimachus. Athenaeus records the historian Phylarchus' observation that jibes passed between the two men's courts over the names of those who held the position of friends of the king, Demetrius claiming that just as in the typical comic scene where slaves held the stage, so too did Lysimachus' friends bear names suited to slaves by virtue of their being disyllabic [Phylarchus *FGrH* 81 F12 ap. Ath. XIV. 614F-615A]. Gulick points out in his note to this passage that in general slaves did in fact bear short names. While this criticism applies to the male companions of the powerful, there is the possibility that this was also the case among the female *hetairai*. Although multisyllable names are quite often found for *hetairai* and it is not certain that this reflects any special dignity of the sort that Demetrius claimed for his "Peucestes, Menelaus and Oxythemises", it is interesting that a number of the most famous historical courtesans on record did in fact have shorter names: e.g. Phryne, Laïs, and Thaïs.



#### IV. ORIGINS

Certain types of *hetaira* names are connected to the significance of origins. Since Athens appears to have been the most prominent and popular of places in the Greek world for the *hetairai* to practice, in combination with the fact that many of our sources were written by Athenians or about events at Athens, it seems that particularly later in the Hellenistic period when Athens was looked upon as a place of the glorified past, a courtesan's Attic birth was to some extent a measure of her status. Just as some names would have emphasized a woman's foreignness, and because many courtesans were in fact from outside Athens (from the earliest famous courtesan Aspasia of Miletus to the infamous Neaera who started out as a slave prostitute in Corinth), Attic names or birth were something rather special among courtesans. Even those who did not keep their birth names, favouring instead more professional names (so Mania, the mistress of Demetrius Poliorcetes, abandoned the proper sounding name Melitta in favour of the Phrygian name Mania), seem to have had some kind of special standing because of their origins.

It seems that a significant number of the courtesans involved with great Hellenistic men were said to have originated at Athens, or at least to have been summoned from their practice at Athens. This is said to have been the case for both of the *hetairai* of the dissolute treasurer of Alexander, Harpalus [Theopompus *On the Chian Letter*, FGrH 115 F254 ap. Ath. XIII. 586C; *Letter to Alexander*, FGrH 115 F253 ap. 595A]. There may have been at work the assumption, influenced by the popularity of *hetairai* in all kinds of prominent Athenian literature, that the women who were from Athens had some share in those qualities that made Athens so famous—namely her intellectual and cultural sophistication. It must also be kept in mind, however, that Athens remained for a long time the place to succeed as an author. Thus writing by literati at Athens about events there and about the activities of Athenians maintained a sort of false predominance even when important current events were no longer happening so much there. A fragment from the comedy *Hydria* by Antiphanes relates that a citizen woman could be forced into prostitution by

the death of her relatives. In the case of the woman he describes, her “golden character” (which reflects her citizen birth) shines through despite her occupation [210 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 572A]. Another instance of the character of an Athenian born courtesan can be found described in ironic terms in Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander* where he recounts the speech made by Thaïs to the banqueting Macedonians at the Persian capital. He notes that the content of her speech (namely that the burning of Persepolis would be fitting revenge for the Persian sack of Athens) was fitting for one born in Athens but not one of her station in life—that is a prostitute [*Alex.* 38].

The origins of a prostitute were important for other reasons as well. Just as foreigners at Athens were of lower status than those of citizen birth, foreign birth was often an indication of slave status among prostitutes. In her study of the social realities of prostitute’s lives in Hellenistic Athens, Elaine Fantham notes that even the free *hetaira* at Athens was at a natural disadvantage if she were a foreigner because the law afforded her no protection.<sup>50</sup> This contention is given substance by the events played out in Menander’s comedy, the *Samia*, where the foreign *hetaira* Chrysis is faced with life on the streets should her lover Demeas decide that her disobedience is cause enough to evict her from his household. This portrayal, even if it does come from a literary rather than historical genre, likely emphasizes the reality of the time, namely that having a male guardian or *kurios* was a woman’s primary source of security. According to Roger Just’s study, women who came under the categories of slave, freed, or foreigner—i.e. including *pallakai* and *hetairai*—were “by definition...outside the boundaries of the Athenian kinship system” (the *oikos*). All women, even citizens, were completely incompetent before the law and thus entirely dependent on their

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<sup>50</sup>Fantham 1975: 51. Further to the status and legal position of foreign women (metics) see Henry 1995: 12 where she explains that some of the most drastic changes that affected these women, particularly their children by Athenian citizens, came about as a result of Pericles’ citizenship laws of c. 440 B.C. Prior to this time, mixed parentage did not seem to prevent a child from becoming a career politician: examples apparently included Themistocles, Cleisthenes, Cimon and Miltiades. Ironically, Pericles was said to have contravened his own law in order to have his bastard son by the metic Aspasia recognized as a citizen, having lost his legitimate sons to the plague.

*kurioi* under whose protection and control they spent their entire lives; without such a *kurios*, women had no recourse.<sup>51</sup>

There are aspects of the institution of concubinage which seem to indicate that, just as much as the categories of prostitution, it was not defined entirely in black and white. This is reflected by Demosthenes' statement that concubines "kept for the production of legitimate children" were considered to have been violated by an adulterer if caught with another man [*Against Aristocrates* 23. (53—statute), 55: citation of the seventh century law of Dracon]. This seems contradictory to the generally held notion that the children of non-legitimately married women were *not* legitimate but rather *nothoi* or bastards. In addition, not a few incidents found in legal oratory seem to provide evidence that women of questionable status (concubine or *hetaira*) could, with any luck, manage to recruit someone to defend her interests under the law—Aspasia apparently had Pericles, Neaera had Stephanus, and Phryne had Hypereides—in other words a sort of *kurios*, though clearly outside the *oikos* nonetheless. The consensus among scholars, however, seems to be that even when a woman entered into the quasi-marital state of concubinage with a fully explicit contract, she was nonetheless severely disadvantaged by convention and law.<sup>52</sup> Returning to our literary example in Menander, without Demeas' protection and provisions, Chrysis, even though a free woman, would have been relegated to a detestable lifestyle which Demeas takes some satisfaction in describing to her: running to dinner parties, making only ten drachmas, and drinking unmixed wine until she dies, or starving if she does not die first (ll. 393-5).<sup>53</sup> Clearly simple freeborn status did not necessarily assure the *hetaira* of a comfortable or safe standard of living.

While *hetairai* could be slaves, it is generally assumed that the most

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<sup>51</sup>Just 1989: 27-29. Just also notes that there were certain special women who, even without a *kurios*, were entitled to the law's protection, specifically that of the eponymous archon: these were orphans of citizen parents, widows claiming to be pregnant by their late citizen husbands and heiresses 31.

<sup>52</sup>Henry 1995: 14 with her citations on this topic: 134 n. 16

<sup>53</sup>Note that this passage in particular is often cited in studies relating to the social conditions which afflicted the *hetaira* often presumed to be a relatively successful and independent class of women: Fantham 1975: 66; Henry 1992: 265.

successful women in the profession were not, or at least that they had at some point become freed women. Certainly even former slave status is often found as a line of attack used against a *hetaira* (and her lover) by hostile sources. The fact that she was once a slave emphasizes that a woman has overstepped the bounds of her station in by flaunting great wealth and the devotion of a powerful man. Such is the case with Theopompus' criticism of Pythionice, the lover of Harpalus, whom he claims was formerly the slave of a *porne* [FGrH 115 F253 ap. Ath. XIII. 595AB]. It was not only slave origins that caused a successful courtesan to be reviled, but also one who had once been very poor. So the character in Timocles' comedy *Neaera* bemoans the fact that he had engaged the famous Phryne when she was poor and unknown but after spending a fortune on her she haughtily turned him away from her door [25 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 567E]. Once again the implication is that *hetairai* were encouraged to step beyond their proper station when men gave them too much. In literature this complaint becomes a topical criticism of the *hetaira*: these women were to be despised and avoided because they became inevitably fickle and haughty with wealth and popularity. Another factor connected to slave prostitutes which elicited a certain amount of hostility among the male population in ancient Greece, especially evident in comedy, was the purchase of a prostitute's freedom. There are many anecdotal accounts of older family members trying to prevent their young and impressionable sons from falling in love with a prostitute and then bankrupting themselves and their parents by buying her freedom. An actual case of this type of buyout, outside of comedy, can be found in Apollodorus' *Speech against Neaera* in which Neaera's freedom is jointly purchased from her original owner Nicarete by two of her clients ([Dem.] 59. 29-32).<sup>54</sup>

It is noticeable that anecdotes about *hetairai* often note the presence of a particular courtesan's mother or other female relative. This may be of significance because the identification of a person through their mother rather

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<sup>54</sup>It is important to keep in mind that this freedom was strikingly different from that which was the prerogative of the free born individual. The freed-woman, including Neaera, owed certain

than their father in the ancient world could be a sign of base or even slave origins.<sup>55</sup> This seems to be the case most often in passages that criticize or attack an individual, particularly a male, such as blame poetry. While the context of a description of a female within a typical women's sphere could at times lead to the identification of a woman by her metronymic without any pejorative connotations, when discussing prostitutes, the presumably more advanced age of a mother whose daughter acts as a *hetaira* and for whom she likely acts as the procuress would both be factors that called for a stereotypically negative evaluation. However, in the majority of instances where a mother's name is used by way of identification, there is no further information given about her. Ogden points out in his study of Hellenistic royal courtesans that Oenante, the mother of Agathoclea is the only mother of a royal courtesan about whom we know anything.<sup>56</sup> This makes it difficult to extrapolate any conclusions about the significance of the use of a metronymic. Generally in those instances where a *hetaira's* mother is mentioned it is done anonymously, as in the case of Mania's humorous remark about Demetrius' fondness for women of her mother's age [Plutarch, *Demetr.* 27].

Aside from the criticism possibly implied by the identification of a person by their matronymic, it appears that in terms of status the close association of a mother with her prostitute daughter also could, at times, have been a sign of the abject poverty of the women. As victims of this poverty they are forced into prostitution by necessity, primarily because it was potentially more profitable than a more respectable trade such as weaving.<sup>57</sup> Halperin points out that among

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obligations to the person(s) who helped her buy that freedom—to the extent that in some ways she appeared even to remain a slave to their interests.

<sup>55</sup>Kurke 1997: 120-22 in her discussion of Anacreon, fragment 82 which reviles a certain Artemon and calls him the "child of Kyke", notes that the mention of a man's mother by way of identification can indicate illegitimate birth. Cf. Cropp 1988: 161; commentary on ll. 933-5 with citations.

<sup>56</sup>Ogden 1999: 246

<sup>57</sup>We do also have examples of successful courtesans living with their mothers and continuing to carry out their businesses with substantial financial gain. These are women like Xenophon's Theodote, who is presented in a fine house with her mother and maid servants, and Gnathaena and Gnathaenion (whether mother and daughter or grandmother and granddaughter), who are

the citizen class at Athens effeminization was seen as a risk which accompanied poverty. A man who was impoverished was introduced to the possibility of being deprived of his autonomy, assertiveness, and freedom of action.<sup>58</sup> Of course women did not generally have these avenues of self expression open to them but poverty is nonetheless despised and the poor prostitute is all the more despicable than the wealthy one. This is certainly found to be the case in certain literary accounts: in his study of Menander, Webster notes that the poet saw only three alternatives for the poor unmarried/widowed woman and her supposed daughter: weaving, a long-term liaison or becoming a prostitute. Lucian, writing much later, relates in the sixth of his *Dialogues of Courtesans* the attempt of the poor widowed mother Crobyle to persuade her daughter to become a professional *hetaira* and in this way support her in her elder years. There is evidently yet another incongruous set of assumptions at work here in the attempt to define prostitutes: there is a set of women associated with their mothers or the older female generation who become enviably rich through prostitution and have presumably made the trade a success by carrying it on over the generations. They are not typically defined as erstwhile citizens who had met with poverty through the loss of their guardians but rather are generally admired. Conversely, women who were once in the position of respectable (but poor) citizen but were at some point forced by tragic circumstances into the trade seem to be especially despised as prostitutes.

The naming of a courtesan's father, on the other hand, while the instances that we do have preserved are equally as uninformative as those where a mother is mentioned in terms of characterizing the father in any way, can be taken as an indication of citizen birth. This is a rare occurrence in the sources that discuss *hetairai* and apparently was usually meant to indicate that the woman had a distinguished character. In Athenaeus' discussion of particularly famous courtesans [XIII. 596B-F] he notes that two courtesans in particular were of high

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often found in one another's company with the older woman acting as the younger's agent exacting the highest fees possible from potential clients.

<sup>58</sup>Halperin 1990: 99

repute because of their ancestry, Nicarete of Megara<sup>59</sup> and Bilistiche the Argive *hetaira*.<sup>60</sup> In the other instances where a courtesan's patronymic is cited, the woman is noted to have had relations with the most distinguished of lovers: Phryne, daughter of Epicles of Thespieae [Ath. XIII. 591C], Lamia, daughter of Cleanor of Athens [Ath. XIII. 577C] and Agathoclea, daughter of Diognetus the Alexandrian<sup>61</sup> [Ijsewijn 1961: no. 71]. The suggestion seems to be that in certain circumstances, citizen or respectable birth made *hetairai* more appealing to distinguished men since this fact made them somehow more unique and attractive.

## V. LIFESTYLE

A final avenue to be explored in the investigation of factors by which the status of a prostitute might be determined is lifestyle. Evidently the lifestyle of the successful *hetaira*, namely the type of historical courtesan of the Hellenistic period on which this study is focused, could sometimes entail a significant degree of financial and social independence. While this clearly appears to be the case in later accounts of royal courtesans, the position was quite precarious for most *hetairai*, in particular those who may have enjoyed considerable reputation but who were subject either to the whims of their *pornoboskos* (pimp/procuress) or to the fancies of a current lover.<sup>62</sup> Athenaeus cites a comic fragment of the poet

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<sup>59</sup>This woman is mentioned briefly in Athenaeus as οὐκ ἄγεννής, "not lowly born," and as desirable on account of her parentage and her education (*paideia*), having studied with the philosopher Stilpo[(?) Nymphodorus, *Voyage Round Asia FGrH* 572 F6 ap. Ath. XIII. 596E]. Nothing further is known of this particular woman but the Megarian philosopher Stilpo (mentioned in Plutarch's *Demetrius*, IX. 5) seems to have acquired quite a reputation for involvement with courtesans—he is described in conversation over drinks with the *hetaira* Glycera regarding the corruptive nature of *hetairai* [Satyrus, *Lives*, *FHG* iii. 164 ap. Ath. XIII. 584A].

<sup>60</sup>Bilistiche was a favourite mistress of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. She is reported to have claimed to be descended from Argive nobility. For further discussion of her see Chapter Six and the prosopographic catalogue at the end of the paper.

<sup>61</sup>It should also be noted, however, that in the historical sources which give accounts of Agathoclea and her lover Ptolemy IV Philopator, she is derisively called the daughter of a Samian dancer Oenanthe. This conflict reveals just how significant the method of identification was in the ancient world, a mother's name often connoting low-birth while a father's name could often place a character in a more positive light.

<sup>62</sup>Note that this supposition conforms well to Apollodorus' account of Neaera and her fellow prostitutes' early life: at 59. 26 he mentions that even as Nicarete's slave at Corinth, Neaera

Amphis which illustrates this last point well. In a discussion which pits the pleasantries of the *hetaira* against the haughtiness of the wife, a man claims that a *hetaira* is certainly more kindly than a wedded wife because if she is not she will lose her man and have to search for another to support her while a man's wife cannot be abandoned by him unless he is prepared to lose the dowry which accompanied her at their wedding [*Athamas* 1 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 559]. Thus the average courtesan who could not rely on stores of wealth and expensive presents to maintain her in the event that she should for a time be without a lover/client was obligated to act in such a way as to keep a client affectionate and interested at all times.

The courtesan who 'owned' or simply ran her own house at which she might entertain her lover(s) at symposia was likely on surer ground when it came to her ability to accept or reject particular lovers. According to Alexis' comedy *Isostasion* (or *Fair Measure*), these wealthy prostitutes first made their own fortunes by trickery, then proceeded to fill their houses with fresh young women whom they trained in their art (τέχνη) [103 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 568AD]. This would appear to have been the method of success for the mistress (*pornoboskos*) of Neaera and her fellow slave *hetairai* at Corinth—she purchased these girls when young, trained them (presumably in her home) and reaped the profits from hiring them out [[Dem.] 59. 20-9]. Regardless, however, as Davidson points out, while this seems to have been a significant phenomenon in the Hellenistic period with *hetairai* named as the owners of the most lavish houses [Polybius XIV. 11, 2 ap. Ath. XIII. 576F], the reality of women owning property at Athens remains uncertain. In the case of the infamous *hetaira* Neaera, even when she had managed to purchase her freedom and become her own mistress she was content to subject herself to the guardianship of her lover Stephanus and to live under his roof.<sup>63</sup> The ultimate reality for *hetairai* in ancient Greece, even the free

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earned some celebrity and had poets and actors among her lovers. Despite this she was subject to Nicarete's whims, as were her lovers. Apollodorus also mentions another of Nicarete's girls and tells of how one of her more devoted lovers was forced to think of a creative gift to give the girl so that her mistress could not take it from her (59. 21-23).

<sup>63</sup>Davidson 1997: 104-105 Noteworthy is the fact that even when 'free' Neaera was dragged about



and seemingly independent ones, seems to have been that it was preferable to have one stable lover on whom she could rely for protection as well as financial support, in effect to be her *kurios*, than to have a string of lovers. It is true that encouraging competition for her favours was an effective way for a *hetaira* to successfully extort higher fees in general<sup>64</sup>, but the financial advantage, while considerable, was not equivalent to the protection a single committed lover could afford her in a crisis.

This seems to have been a factor still in effect in the later period since the most famous of Hellenistic *hetairai* are notably connected with a single man. Perhaps the main reason for this prominence is that the source material for earlier periods is more full, describing women from the lowest to the highest levels of prostitution. In the sources which discuss Hellenistic courtesans on the other hand, the main emphasis is on the historical events surrounding the powerful men who ruled the various parts of Alexander's empire. There are exceptions of course as some of the literary and comedic works which deal with Hellenistic courtesans mention women who were involved with many men but even in these cases the women appear to have reserved a special place for a particularly favoured lover—as in the case of Gnathaena and her comic poet Diphilus [Machon, XVI Gow]. The simplest explanation for this discrepancy is that the *hetairai* of kings and other important political figures felt assured of a continued source of income and support—these men after all controlled incomes generated from entire countries—whereas those involved with poets and philosophers were not so certain of continued success.

The evaluation of the types of men with whom *hetairai* were involved leads to another consideration of lifestyle: learning or cultural sophistication.

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to all manner of parties and abused by the purchaser of her freedom, Phrynon, to the point that she ran away from him to Megara ([Dem.] 59. 34-5). Apparently freed status did not afford her all that much more protection than slave status had done.

<sup>64</sup>This is the case in the descriptions in Athenaeus of both Laïs (here she is said to have had a large crowd of lovers, making no distinction between them because of her rivalry with Phryne [XIII. 588E]) and Phryne (here the comic character complains that after spending vast sums on her that he eventually was shut out by her—one assumes that the consistently growing fees were drawn in response to the clients desire to keep the increasingly popular beauty to himself [Timocles, *Neaera* 25 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 567DE]).

This particular aspect of the characterization of the courtesan was apparently an important one and shows up considerably often in literary accounts. Throughout Athenaeus' thirteenth Book concerning women, much of which is devoted to the discussion of prostitutes, the most consistent aspect of a *hetaira's* character that draws praise is her quick wit and decorous behaviour amidst company. Indeed, as Kurke points out, the commentary on the eating and drinking habits of *hetairai* became a topos in Athenian and Atticizing literature. The purpose of these literary prescriptions is to emphasize that the most attractive and successful courtesans were those who presented themselves as a mirror of her client, i.e. a well-bred young lady.<sup>65</sup> This apparent incongruity of sexual availability and the behaviour of a decorous virgin seems to have been the primary attraction of the *hetaira*. Certainly it is not so often the erotic feats of these women which the sources dwell on but rather their ability to amuse and entertain their clients—granting that the majority of preserved witticisms are coarsely sexual, if subtly so. The *hetaira's* ability to imbue such things as impressive literary quotations with an underlying sexualized meaning—an ability which seems to have struck the ancient Greek male as particularly amusing<sup>66</sup>—was an important part of her overall presentation of herself as an individual with any number of mysterious qualities not immediately apparent to her companion.<sup>67</sup> According to Athenaeus the ability of courtesans to make quick answers was fostered by the interest they took in education (παιδεία) and by their habit of spending a certain amount of their time on learned studies (μαθήματα) [XIII. 583F]. This accords well with the many accounts of learned men, from poets to philosophers to statesmen, being involved with *hetairai*. Clearly this is one of the significant factors, beyond the physical act of sex, that set these women apart from the *pornai* available cheaply on street corners and in brothels.

In conclusion, there were many factors within Greek pornographic

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<sup>65</sup>Kurke 1997: 141-142

<sup>66</sup>Given the extreme prevalence of blatantly coarse sexual humour in the plays of Aristophanes, which represented the pinnacle of achievement in comedy, this is quite understandable.

<sup>67</sup>Davidson 1997: 135

discourse for evaluating prostitutes that could clarify a woman's status. While a great deal depends on the context of the discussion and the attitude of the speaker toward his subject (which, in historical accounts often is not the *hetaira* but instead the man with whom she was involved), it seems clear that there were in fact women who enjoyed a degree of success as prostitutes despite the precariousness of that success that resulted from the nature of the profession. Many of the aspects of the generic 'courtesan character' could be formulated for use in accounts that attacked *or* praised her. It does seem that terminology is one of the least accurate methods of determining the status of a particular historical courtesan. There seems no question though that a woman's status was augmented by her involvement with an important lover, particularly if that relationship was exclusive, by her display of wealth in extravagant gifts and honours, by her claim to distinguished parentage, and by her mastery of the decorous behaviour and witty conversation at symposia which seem to have been in such demand among men of means in the ancient Greek world.

## CHAPTER 3

*Precursors of the Hellenistic Courtesan*

This chapter will investigate the precedents for the behaviour and expectations of the great *hetairai* of the Hellenistic period set by women of the archaic and classical periods. It was the small number of extremely famous (or infamous) women whose lives and *bioi* (the stories of their lives as written by contemporary men or those living much later) both inspired the women who became the *hetairai* of great men in the Hellenistic age and helped to mold the culturally influenced views of men who wrote about these women, both favourably and critically. Especially significant is the fact that men writing in the Hellenistic period (and those writing later about the Hellenistic period) saw the *hetaira* as one of the elements of the late classical “golden age”; even prostitutes had a place in this value judgment it seems and scholars have noted that the fourth century was a veritable ‘golden age of *hetairai*’<sup>68</sup>. The most famous courtesans from the periods before the Hellenistic age were, for the most part, foreign women who had practiced at various locations around the Greek world, in particular Corinth<sup>69</sup>, but at some point either ended up in Athens or involved with an Athenian. Of all the most renowned early courtesans, while some were Greek, none was a citizen woman of Athens: Rhodopis of Thrace, Aspasia of Miletus, Neaera of Corinth, Laïs of Hyccara, and Phryne of Thespieae.

I. RHODOPIS / DORICHA

The earliest example of the influential *hetaira* was Rhodopis (or Doricha). She is recorded in the *Histories* of Herodotus (II. 136), a poetic fragment of Sappho (frag. 15 West) and, according to Athenaeus, in the poetic works of much later authors, Cratinus and Poseidippus (369 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 596C; Edmonds i. 148 ap. Ath. XIII. 596D). It is notable that the identification of even this woman, the earliest of renowned courtesans, was subject to

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<sup>68</sup>Henry 1995: 58; cf. McKechnie 1989: 153 [cited by Henry 154 n. 2] and Ogden 1999: 219

<sup>69</sup>Keuls 1993: 196

confusion and attempts to sort out the precise deeds attributable to a particular historical *hetaira*. Of the four ancient sources that mention the courtesan from Naucratis, three call her Doricha while only one—Herodotus—calls her Rhodopis.<sup>70</sup> Yet because Herodotus is an ostensibly historical rather than literary source, his naming and his version of events surrounding her seem to have received the most serious treatment. According to Herodotus, Rhodopis was originally a slave, born in Thrace, who, after being moved to Naucratis in Egypt for the sake of earning her owner the profits of her trade, had her freedom purchased for her by Charaxus of Mytilene. Not only is this a contention made plausible by what was to become a commonplace in the discourse on prostitutes (i.e. the regrettable extravagance of men who, overcome with infatuation, expended considerable funds to free their slave mistresses) but also by the content of the fragments of this very Charaxus' sister, the poet Sappho. The small remains of her poem give the prostitute in question the name Doricha and admonish Aphrodite to make her brother turn from love, having felt its harsh treatment, and not to let Doricha boast of her charms drawing him back to her yet again. Although the fragment is short it can certainly be interpreted as referring to a brash and haughty woman who is proud of her ability to hold on to a presumably wealthy lover no matter how he tries to rid himself of her.

The idea that an alluring *hetaira* had some kind of inexplicable hold on her lover can be found in later literature as well, particularly comedy, and seems to have developed into something of a topos. In the *Samia* of Menander, in which the truly precarious nature of a *hetaira's* lifestyle was brought to light, the main character Demeas has a foreign *hetaira* for a mistress. Facing a scandal in the community which could be detrimental to his son, he attempts to convince himself to forget his affection for the woman

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<sup>70</sup>There is the possibility of course that the name Doricha was chosen as a poetic pseudonym so that the poets might emphasize the Greek or Doric origins of the prostitute who was bringing renown to the Egyptian city.

and turn her out on the street, despite the distress it seems to cause him and the other members of his *oikos* (II. 349-52; 440-4).<sup>71</sup> Athenaeus records a similar admonition from a play of the comedian Anaxilas, *Neottis* or *The Chick*. Having explained the treacherous nature of being involved with prostitutes by listing the prominent *hetairai* of his day and comparing them to mythological monsters, the character claims that the man who escapes them, however reluctantly, has saved himself. Other men, unfortunately, are blinded by the women's charms, thinking that they will enjoy love when they are in fact the prey of wild beasts [22 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 558AE]. In both cases the theme revolves around the alluring nature of the courtesan which causes men nothing but grief and heartache if they allow themselves to fall prey to it. Here, in the case of Rhodopis/Doricha, although she is the first historical Greek woman to be called a *hetaira*<sup>72</sup> (by the sources which remain extant), we have an account of actions on her part and on that of the man with whom she was involved which came to be integral to one side of the characterization of the *hetaira* in later literature and history. Thus the story of her life, albeit incomplete and confused on the matter of her precise name and identity (the third century BC poet Poseidippos claims that Herodotus had attributed to his Rhodopis the affair with Charaxus which in fact was that of Doricha and that this Doricha was in fact the woman who dedicated her spits at Delphi<sup>73</sup>), provides an early prototype for the lives and the accounts of the lives of later courtesans.

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<sup>71</sup>For a discussion of Menander's use, often favourable, of *hetairai* as characters see Henry 1985: *passim*.

<sup>72</sup>See above, chapter 2 n. 10.

<sup>73</sup>This last point too can be applied to the idea that a commonplace expectation of action and character developed around the *hetaira*. Rhodopis is the first among many famous courtesans who were renowned for dedicating extravagant gifts in religious contexts: Alexis of Samos, in the *Samian Annals* (FGrH 539 F1 ap. Athenaeus XIII. 572F), records that the prostitutes who accompanied Pericles' army on the siege of Samos dedicated a statue of Aphrodite "In the Reeds or Swamp" at Samos with their earnings; Polemon the geographer in his work *On the Dedicatory offerings in Lacedaemon* (Preller 48 ap. Ath. XIII. 574CD) notes that the courtesan Cottina made a votive offering of a small bronze cow and an image of herself which were set up near a statue of Athena; Athenaeus records the story that Praxiteles allowed his beloved Phryne to choose one of his statues to have as her own and that, having chosen his Eros, she set it up as a votive offering in her home town of Thespieae (XIII. 591B).

## II. ASPASIA OF MILETUS

One of the most successful courtesans of the classical period was Aspasia, the Milesian *hetaira* of the great Athenian statesman Pericles. Her *bios* is one of the most interesting and detailed of any woman of her period, prostitute or otherwise, and as such we will expend considerably more space in investigating her and this tradition than on some of the other precursors. Unfortunately, as Madeleine Henry concludes in her excellent study of this biographical tradition, there is very little in it that can be taken as reliable fact. A great many of the anecdotal stories about Aspasia appear in sources written long after her death and the majority of the contemporary evidence for her life comes from the often scandal-ridden and exaggerated plays of Old Comedy. Henry does a detailed study of all the sources, contemporary and otherwise, which mention Aspasia with a view to evaluating their reliability.<sup>74</sup> There are a number of surviving fragments from Old Comedy poets, both contemporary and closely contemporary, to the relationship of Aspasia and Pericles (post c. 440 to a *terminus ante quem* of 430/29), which mention Aspasia. The first is from Cratinus' *Cheirons*, written in the late 440s or 430 BC. The two short fragments are conjectured by Henry to belong to the *parabasis* of the play and are a critique of both Pericles' power as well as his improper attempt to share his rule with a woman. The impropriety of this situation is clear firstly because in the thematic context of Old Comedy a woman had no natural place in the state. A second consideration was that the type of "marriage"—concubinage—that Pericles had with Aspasia was legally and socially inferior; thus any issue would have no place in the *polis* or family. Henry believes that this fragment, in calling Aspasia Pericles' *pallake* ("concubine"—see note 101 below), reflects her true status and notes that the theme of politicians' involvement with women of ill repute was of great importance in Old Comedy.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Henry 1995: *passim*, for ancient sources esp. 3-81

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 20-1 note Henry's translation of the fragments in question: Stasis and elderborn Time,/ mating with one another/ birthed a very great tyrant/ whom the gods call "head-gatherer."

This prominent theme may very well be the reason for the further debasing of Aspasia's status in other and later comic fragments; although the mention of her in the fragment of Cratinus is in no way favourable, neither is she the *porne* or *pornoboskos* found in Eupolis (*Demes* 110 K-A, from 411 BC) and Aristophanes (*Acharnians* ll.516-39, from 425 BC). While no related fragments remain of the comic poet Hermippus, Plutarch, writing about 550 years later, claims that it was he who both prosecuted Aspasia on charges of *asebia* and accused her of ensnaring free-women for Pericles' dalliances (*Per.* 32. 1). The historicity of the trial cannot be determined with any certainty and Henry notes the possibility that the trial may well have taken place on stage as a fantasy of comedy. In addition, the charges of pimping free women are also leveled against Pheidias without a named accuser in Plutarch (*Per.* 13. 14) and were, notably, a tool for criticizing popular politicians who felt themselves above or beyond the law. This allegation of sexual excess would be a particularly meaningful criticism of Pericles, if true, in view of the purpose and spirit of his citizenship laws.<sup>76</sup> The construction of Aspasia in comedy remains, in view of the lack of historical evidence to the contrary, a potent one. According to Henry, the precise misogynistic scenario of Greek comedy could not really have cast her as anything other than a sexually dominant woman near the inner circle of power, even *if* the reality was that she was a war refugee placed in concubinage with an important politician. The portrayal of Aspasia as a prostitute would go on to influence the next stage in the development of Aspasia's *bios*—that of the philosophical dialogues. In these dialogues, influenced by both tragedy and comedy, she was further defined as the "erotically alluring and intellectually formidable woman among men."<sup>77</sup> As we saw in our discussion of the typical *hetaira* lifestyle, this sort of 'sexualized' education became a definitive characteristic of the successful courtesan.

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(258 K-A) Shameless Lust bears him Hera-Aspasia,/ a dog-eyed concubine (259 K-A).

<sup>76</sup>Ibid, 24-5

<sup>77</sup>Ibid, 28



The Socratic dialogues, written in the fourth century, represent two developmental strands in the Aspasia *bios*: a negative and a positive one. The former resembles the invective seen in comedy and was perpetuated by Antisthenes and Plato. The latter one, in which Aspasia was portrayed as a woman in whom *eros* and the philosopher's peculiar search for *arete* were fused, was perpetuated by Aeschines of Sphettos and Xenophon.<sup>78</sup> Antisthenes was the closest contemporary of Pericles and Aspasia, having lived c. 445-360 BC, and of his ten volumes of works one was the philosophical dialogue entitled *Aspasia*. Little remains of this dialogue, including any discussion of Aspasia's own character, but it was roundly abusive of members of Pericles' family, in particular of their indecent sexual habits, and as such is assumed to have portrayed her in an equally unfavourable light. It appears that Antisthenes was especially abusive about Aspasia's sexual relationship with Pericles because, following the tradition of comedy, he assumed an excessive devotion of Pericles' part which was inconsistent with his own prized philosophical virtue of *autarkeia* ("self-sufficiency").<sup>79</sup>

Plato, representing the other half of the negative strand of Aspasia's *bios*, not only overshadowed his fellow Socratic philosophers, but his Aspasian dialogue, the *Menexenus*, is the only one to have survived intact. Plato (427-347 BC), while he may have known Aspasia, would have been a much younger contemporary. He used his dialogue on the funerary *epitaphios*, placed in Aspasia's mouth, to discredit her claims to advise the *polis* with what Socrates ironically calls her *politikos logos*. On Henry's analysis of Plato's choice of Aspasia to deliver this critique of epitaphian topoi, Plato brilliantly reverses the interchangeability and commodification of Aspasia (which comedy had created by defining her as a *porne*) in making her the speaker of the *epitaphios*. In every way, Aspasia's authorship and delivery of the speech are aspects which underline Plato's disapproval of the genre's

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid, 30

<sup>79</sup>Ibid, 30-32

interchangeability and its ultimate absurdity: while it celebrates *andreia* ("manly courage"), the speaker is not a man but a woman; not a citizen, but a foreigner; not a wife, but a whore; not the parent of a citizen, but of a bastard.<sup>80</sup> These things are all clearly aspects of what made prostitutes, *hetairai* and *pornai*, in the context of a negative discourse despicable persons unfit for relations, except the most fleeting and carefree, with citizen men—particularly with citizen politicians. These concerns were to influence the portrayal of prostitutes in the ancient sources, from historical to comic, right into the Hellenistic period. Even though the dialogue, in view of its ironic tone, seems undoubtedly hostile to Aspasia and what she represents, nevertheless those sections which reinforce the negative image found in comedy (specifically Callias' *Pedetai* \*21 K-A) that Aspasia was an instructor of men in the arts of speaking (235e3-7)<sup>81</sup> also helped to feed the more positive strand of her *bios*. In addition, it seems to have influenced the development of the positive side of the discourse on *hetairai* which liked to portray these women as intellectually as well as erotically stimulating.

Within the Socratic tradition, a positive discourse developed around Aspasia which was found in the works of Socrates' pupil Aeschines of Sphettos and in Xenophon (c. 430-356 BC) who is thought to have derived his portrayal<sup>82</sup>, at least in part, from Aeschines. Aeschines' dialogue *Aspasia* is lost but has been reconstructed from citations found in works of the period from the first century BC to the second century AD during which Aeschines was held in high regard. Though she does not appear to speak for herself, Socrates' report of her speech appears to be the first instance of a woman's ideas being reported for their own sake rather than to attack or support a man.

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid, 32-35

<sup>81</sup>Ibid, 35

<sup>82</sup>Ibid, 45; note that the sections believed to be based on Aeschines are *Memorabilia* II. 6,36 and *Oeconomicus* III. 14. For further detailed discussion of Aspasia's portrayal see 45-54. Henry concludes that while Xenophon's portrayal is positive in so much as she is a legitimate authority on male-female relationships, she remains overall mired in her position as "secondary to the interests and requirements of men's discourse" while Socrates is shown appropriating the attributes of women and femininity to his own ends. 46

Henry also believes it quite unlikely that she was in fact portrayed as a *hetaira*, given that she is portrayed as associating with the respectable wives of citizen men. We should keep in mind that it is equally true here in the philosophical dialogue as it was in Old Comedy that the representation of Aspasia reflects a fictional construct, shaped to suit the author's particular aims, rather than a verbatim account of a historical meeting and conversation. The account of this association is recorded in a fragment of the dialogue found in Cicero [frag. 31 Dittmar = Cic. *Inv. Rhet.* I. 31.51ff.] and describes a conversation between Aspasia and Xenophon and his wife. She is shown employing what was to become Socrates' famous dialectical method to the discussion of finding the best possible spouse. A similar instructional capability in the realm of matchmaking and wife training is attributed to Aspasia by Xenophon's Socrates in the *Memorabilia* (II. 6.36) and the *Oeconomicus* (III.14) respectively.<sup>83</sup>

Returning to Aeschines' *Aspasia*, fragments show Socrates attempting to provide Callias with evidence that Aspasia was qualified to teach his son. Socrates mentions two men who had profited from her teaching: Pericles and Lysicles, the latter an even greater success than the former given his general mediocrity—to have made a success of him emphasizes her ability.<sup>84</sup> Here is an early example (whether it is ironic is uncertain but it seems not to be considered so by scholars<sup>85</sup>) of a woman with significant political influence and instructional expertise in the area. While the reason for the relatively positive portrayal may be that Aspasia was, in this case, not defined as a prostitute, the fact that she was predominantly considered to be such could have contributed to the trend in men's apparent expectation that such women would attempt to insinuate themselves into positions of influence. While this was considered a supremely negative situation, it nonetheless was

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid, 44; 48; 51

<sup>84</sup>Ibid, 40-43

<sup>85</sup>Ibid, 41; also cf. Ehlers 1966: cited by Henry, 149-51 notes 43-52.

given credence in various sources as having occurred on occasion, particularly in later times, on quite a grand scale.

Further to the development of the tradition of Aspasia's prowess as a teacher and especially in relation to her purported position as Socrates' instructor (in particular the accounts of these two philosophers who displayed something of a positive attitude to Aspasia), was the later development of "perverse and puerile" anecdotes about Socrates' unrequited love for Aspasia [Hermesianax *Leontion* frag. 7 CA ll. 90-94 ap. Ath. XIII. 599 AB].<sup>86</sup> Since Old Comedy's practice of attributing involvement with prostitutes to politicians seems to have been transferred to philosophers and literati in later genres, it is no surprise that in the case of a supposed *hetaira* as famous as Aspasia, known to have at least conversed with classical Greece's most famous philosopher, such stories would continue to develop. It seems that it was not sufficient that she should have ensnared the day's greatest politician; for the sake of providing a dazzling precedent to the later affairs of women like Laïs with Aristippus and Diogenes the Cynic, Aspasia and Socrates were given a love connection.

The final area which we will look at in the development of Aspasia's *bios* is that which covers a long period from the mid-fourth century BC up through the Hellenistic period and into Roman imperial times during which the biographer Plutarch wrote, within the context of his *Life of Pericles*, the most concentrated and connected account of Aspasia's life. As Henry points out, the tradition that preserves anecdotes about Aspasia is a mass of "protoprosopography, subhistory, and subbiography" in which, most important for our purpose here, one of the prevalent interests was that in exceptional women—most of whom were prostitutes. Most of these late and diverse texts which do in fact discuss Aspasia operate on the assumption that

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid, 57; related to this was the anti-Platonic philosopher Herodicus' attack on Plato by making aspersions on his mentor Socrates. He did this in part by writing a poem which he attributed to Aspasia and in which he advised Socrates to pursue his passion for Alcibiades (64-65). In both of the latter developments we can see how an initial account can be used to create all manner of fanciful stories.

she was a *hetaira*.<sup>87</sup> As such, Aspasia must have played some part in developing the characteristics of this genre—"protopornography"—as well as influencing the types of sensational and (quasi) historical anecdotes that came to be applied to 'important' *hetairai* in general. The majority of the stories about Aspasia in this developing discourse can be traced back to Old Comedy (which is understandable in view of the penchant of scholars in the Hellenistic period for compilations and commentaries on the literary genres and works of the classical Greek, especially Athenian, past) although certain new stories do continue to surface.

Henry believes that the allegation that Aspasia's influence with Pericles precipitated Athens' involvement in the conflict between Samos and Miletus originated with the historian Duris of Samos (*FGrH* 76 F65).<sup>88</sup> This is significant since, in the absence of any other historical or even literary evidence to corroborate this late allegation, it may be assumed that the idea was formulated on the basis of Aristophanes' parodic account in the *Acharnians*, of the beginnings of the Peloponnesian War (ll. 516-39). As was noted in the earlier discussion of sources and methodology (Ch. 1), this type of reduplication of anecdote in application to more than one historical character or event causes quite serious problems with the reliability of evidence. Significant for us is the fact that this type of ludicrous allegation could filter from the fantastic world of comedy into the relatively serious and factually concerned world of historiography.<sup>89</sup> Another interesting inheritance in connection with Aspasia's *bios* was her place in philosophic discourse. From the negative strand of the Socratic discourse in which

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<sup>87</sup>*Ibid*, 57-58

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid*, 58

<sup>89</sup>It should be noted that the methodology and style of Duris' work, based on what fragmentary remains we have, has been evaluated by Kebric as falling into the category of "tragic history". Kebric 1977: *passim*, esp. 15-18 This may explain to some extent his interest in sensational details. Also significant perhaps is his brother Lynceus of Samos' penchant for what Kebric calls "inconsequential chatter" relating to the extravagance and luxury of the day (20) in which prostitutes and their witticisms play a good part. This type of interest may have also influenced his brother and the two are considered by Henry to be the earliest contributors to fourth century's discourse on prostitutes (58).

Aspasia (or more accurately a construction of Aspasia) plays a part, found in Plato's *Menexenus* which Henry notes has been termed "the dream of a world without women",<sup>90</sup> developed a place for Aspasia in the later philosophic discourse on pleasure and luxury. Heraclides Ponticus, (SA fragment 59 ap. Ath. XII. 533D), created a newly explicit opposition between mistress and wife, claiming that Pericles, falling prey to the madness that generally characterizes extreme pleasure, dismissed his wife in order to live with Aspasia and squandered much of his property on her.<sup>91</sup> This concern with the corruptive nature of *tryphe* or excessive luxury was significant in the Hellenistic period when a decadence promoted by centralized and absolute power was often seen as one of the negative characteristics of the age.

Another significant development of the discourse on prostitutes shows up in the third century B.C. scholarly treatises known as *Peri Hetairôn*. Several of these treatises are recorded in Book XIII of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* but there are no substantial remains of any of them. Henry surmises that they were likely prosopographical in nature (an outgrowth of the *Komoidoumenoi* treatises), recording specific prostitutes' names, nicknames, parentage and children and differentiating between individuals of the same name. The most important point to note in regard to these sources is that the prostitutes portrayed in these works, whether 'factual' oratorical texts, semi-factual Socratica and memorabilia, or purely fictional New Comedy plays, are a construction to which all of these discourses similarly contributed. "The prostitute", including Aspasia, has become, over an extended period of development, a generic and stereotyped construction of the various genres of Greek literature. A prime example of this situation, noted by Henry, is that the rather suspicious story of Hypereides saving the famous *hetaira* Phryne from the jury's conviction.<sup>92</sup> This sensational anecdote echoes quite closely the story that Pericles saved Aspasia from her

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<sup>90</sup>Henry 1995: 40, citing Katz 1983: 97-116

<sup>91</sup>Henry 1995: 59-60

<sup>92</sup>For an investigation of the reliability of the events of the trial and their influence on the *bioi*

conviction (a story told in Plutarch but not corroborated by contemporary testimony) and yet is taken as evidence of an historical event whose validity is backed up by the other similar yet unverifiable story.<sup>93</sup> Aspasia seems to have been invoked as an early example of the prostitutes who dominate their “clients”, a tendency which showed up significantly in accounts of powerful Hellenistic political figures.

One final example of the power of Aspasia’s *bios* (Henry maintains that this biographical tradition created a cultural icon out of Aspasia<sup>94</sup>) was the development of the tradition, found in Plutarch’s *Life of Pericles* (24. 11-12), that her name was so famous that other prostitutes took or were given it as some kind of tribute to her reputation. According to Plutarch, the brother of the Persian king, Cyrus the Younger, although far from events in Athens, was so impressed by the reputation of Aspasia that he renamed his favourite concubine (μάλιστα τῶν παλλακίδων) Aspasia.<sup>95</sup> He notes that she was from Phocaea and was the daughter of one Hermotimus. Her charms were apparently significant enough to maintain her position as a concubine of the king even when her own lover Cyrus was defeated by his brother Artaxerxes; in fact she even acquired “great influence” (πλεῖστον ἴσχυσε) over him. Each of these notes corresponds to certain details found in Aspasia’s *bios*: that she was Pericles’ concubine; that she was from a foreign city but was potentially of relatively respectable birth (i.e. was not a slave) given that her patronymic is cited; she began as the lover of one powerful man who was quite devoted to her and after his death (though it is not certain that Aspasia’s relationship with Pericles continued until his death in 429) she went on to become the mistress/concubine/lover of another powerful man. The coincidence is quite remarkable and seems to reinforce Henry’s notion that the whole discussion

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of both Hypereides and Phryne see Cooper 1995: 303-318.

<sup>93</sup>Henry 1995: 61-63

<sup>94</sup>Ibid, 58

<sup>95</sup>For this Aspasia’s capture at Cunaxa in 401 see Xenophon, *Anab.* I. 10,2; see also Plutarch’s *Life of Artaxerxes* 26.

of prostitutes was, by the time of Plutarch, basically a generic one.<sup>96</sup> This scenario of a prostitute's lifestyle and actions, although lacking detail, certainly would have influenced the ideas that men, and perhaps women too, held about what avenues were open to prostitutes and what possibilities they might exploit—whether or not the accounts portray the *hetairai* positively or negatively.

### III. NEAERA OF CORINTH

Another *hetaira* of the classical period whose *bios* influenced the development of male discourse on prostitutes was the Corinthian Neaera. It is important to note that this *bios* is recorded from the standpoint of extreme enmity in the prosecution speech of Apollodorus ([Demosthenes] 59). This is important because it establishes a possibility for outright falsehood at worst or for exaggeration, which is little more reliable (although, as Steven Johnstone points out, the argument that any such lies could not have been utterly implausible is often raised). This, and the fact that ancient Athenian legal orations in general are very often substantiated by no independent information, leaves the historian unable to definitively evaluate the factual claims of either side of a dispute.<sup>97</sup> The importance therefore in the investigation of the significance of Neaera as a *hetaira* is not so much the historicity of the chronological events of her life but how what was said about her influenced societal perceptions of the *hetaira*. In addition, the predilection of Apollodorus for citing Athenian laws allows us some insight into the legal status of prostitutes in general, particularly those who were foreign born—as most seem to have been.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, 63

<sup>97</sup>Johnstone 1998: 221 cf. 226-234 for Johnstone's discussion of the nature of plausibility in legal orations. He concludes that even more so than the plausibility of the events narrated in a case was the importance of the acceptable pattern of legal narrative—i.e. the particular shape that the law gave to conflict in general.

<sup>98</sup>For a political interpretation of the speech see Patterson 1994: 199-216. Patterson argues that Apollodorus' speech aims to define the unique and key element of Athenian public ideology which underpinned the democratic state as marriage and its creation of the *oikos*. Stephanus



Apollodorus' account of the career of Neaera as a prostitute demonstrates the possibility of 'upward mobility', at least if we accept that the life of a woman who was to all appearances respectable was considered superior to that of the prostitute. Noteworthy here is Sarah Pomeroy's point that although we privilege the intellectual life of Athens, and thus have had a tendency to idealize the life of the *hetaira* and to pity that of the respectable wife, there remains in the case of Neaera evidence that there were *hetairai* who attempted to become wives, yet no such evidence remains for any respectable woman<sup>99</sup> wishing to become a courtesan.<sup>100</sup> We may consider 'respectable' to denote a woman eligible for marriage and everything this institution entails, namely conditions such as citizenship, chastity, and membership in an *oikos*. In as much as it is possible we should take into consideration the attitudes of such respectable women about themselves, as distinct from non-respectable or prostitute women. Of course all we have to base our assumptions on is the say of male authors but if we give credence to the words of Apollodorus for instance, the women of Athens, wives and daughters, would have been utterly outraged to have their prerogatives—child-bearing of citizens and religious positions—usurped by prostitutes. Certainly it seems that in terms of the 'official' benefits conferred by respectability there was legal protection afforded women of 'respectable'

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and Neaera are attacked for having attempted to undermine the very institution of marriage and the legitimate *oikos*, thus undermining the political order of the state as a whole.

<sup>99</sup>Exceptions to this point may be found in comedic fragments as Antiphanes' *Water Jar* [210 K-A ap. Ath. XIII 572A] or the much later dialogue of Lucian "Crobyle and Corrina". In both cases stress is laid on the fact that the women in question, although 'citizen' (*aste*) or respectably married, fell into a position of utter penury by their loss of a legal guardian—a *kurios*—and were thus forced in the first case to become a *hetaira* and in the latter to resorting to convincing her daughter to become a *hetaira* so that she might support her in her old age.

<sup>100</sup>Pomeroy 1975: 92. It must also be noted, however, that exactly what type of 'share' these women may have had in Athenian intellectual life is very uncertain. While the anecdotes of conversation between great intellectuals and *hetairai* give the impression that at least some men considered such non-sexual interaction an integral part of the relationship with the *hetaira*, there is no way of determining what in these anecdotal accounts represents male fantasy and what represents historical reality. Davidson 1995: 135 makes the excellent point that the fabled facility of the *hetaira* with literary quotations was recounted not to demonstrate her erudition, but rather her ability to use a high-sounding quote to disguise an obscene proposition; such accounts emphasize her enigmatic character, and her facility with

status—i.e. those who had a *kurios*. As such, even the concubine, when established as being the sexually exclusive property of a particular man<sup>101</sup>, was at an advantage over common prostitutes. These were women whom, according to Apollodorus' citation, the Athenian law excluded from legal protection: "those who sit in a brothel or those who openly offer themselves for sale" (ὅπόσαι ἂν ἐπ' ἐργαστηρίου καθῶνται ἢ πωλῶνται ἀποπεφασμένως) [67]. Apollodorus claims that Neaera continued, even while living under Stephanus' roof as his wife and having her children passed off as citizens, to practice the trade of prostitution, first with her own person (41) and then via her daughter Phano whom the couple passed off as a legitimately born girl (67). This is probably no more than malicious slander since it would be of considerable difficulty to operate a publicly recognized house of prostitution while at the same time maintaining that the household was that of a respectable citizen family. Of significance for social perceptions and expectations in relation to prostitution is the fact that, according to Apollodorus, Neaera's practice flourished and her asking price rose as a direct consequence of her newly acquired position as a respectably married woman. The implication is that men in general preferred to enjoy the favours of a reputable woman and were willing to pay for them over and above what could be expected by a more "common" prostitute. This perception is found as a topos in all types of Greek literature that deals with prostitutes (both those who despise the men and women who promote this hierarchy and those who think it justified and worthwhile) and here it can be seen to have filtered into the 'factual' world of legal oratory—or at least into the description of events that the speaker wishes to present to his audience as having recently happened, witnessed by himself or 'people' in general.<sup>102</sup>

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parody and pun.

<sup>101</sup>See Halperin's 1990: 110-11 discussion of the social status and legal standing of the institution of concubinage, in which he concludes that it fulfilled, in many cases, some of the same functions as prostitution. cf. also Fantham 1975: 48-50.

<sup>102</sup>As Harding 1997: 30 notes, the appeal to common knowledge (something that "everybody knows") by an orator is often a signal to the audience (or for us the readers) of the untrustworthiness of the claim.

Another significant section of Apollodorus' speech that has had great influence on the discourse on prostitutes was his attempt to define neatly the roles of the three most basic categories of women in Athenian society. Near the end of his oration, Apollodorus declares: "We have *hetairai* ("companions"/"courtesans") for pleasure, *pallakai* ("concubines") for the daily attendance of the body, but *gunaikes* ("wives") we have for the production of legitimately born children and for the trustworthy guardianship of our property within the home" [59. 122]. Davidson provides a comprehensive discussion of the pitfalls, experienced in both the ancient discourse on prostitutes and the modern interpretations of it, involved in accepting this neat and pithy division of women as conclusive evidence for the reality of women's lives at Athens. He concludes that despite the proliferation of attempts even in ancient writing (literary, historical, and oratorical) to use this as an acceptable and definitive distinction, in fact this is not possible. Even within Apollodorus' own speech the distinctions are often blurred when it suits the orator's own purposes: while he presents his case as if these categories were definitive and incontrovertible, he also tries to win by inspiring fear in his audience over the relative ease with which Neaera and Stephanus managed to achieve precisely such a contraversion of the proper order of things.<sup>103</sup>

The confusion surrounding the definition of prostitutes continued to operate throughout the long span of time during which the discourse seemed to retain importance. One symptom of this confusion is that aspect which we have discussed as positive and negative sides of the issue of definition. Each side of the debate provides a contrary definition of the *hetaira* in comparison with the wife: on the negative side, the *hetaira* is invariably voracious and dissipates a man's wealth while the wife guards her husband's property for the sake of her children's futures; on the positive side the wife is denigrated as a woman whom a dowry and the protection of the law make proud and unbearable to live with while the *hetaira* is praised because she must be

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<sup>103</sup>Davidson 1997: 74-77

pleasant and entertaining always. Clearly the speech against Neaera, to whatever extent it represents historical details, is a mine of information about male perceptions of *hetairai*. We may assume too that, given the influence of the speech and in particular of the definition cited above, Neaera's life and her *bios* would have exerted considerable influence on the development of the ancient Greek pornographic discourse.

#### IV. LAÏS OF HYCCARA & PHRYNE OF THESPIAE

We will turn briefly now to the lives of the (very late) classical period's last two famous courtesans: Laïs and Phryne. Both women's *bioi* were likely influential in elevating the expectations of ambitious courtesans and were fodder for the scandal-loving writers of the Hellenistic age. Each of the two women was renowned for having ensnared some of their day's wealthiest and famous men. It is noticeable however that neither are recorded as having been involved to any great extent with men in political power. This may be a reflection of the decline of Old Comedy and its characteristic connection of powerful politicians with whores which was replaced by New Comedy and similar genres whose main focus were generic and stock figures rather than satire of current political figures and events. We should however point out that this type of criticism met with something of a revival in the historical works of the early Hellenistic age. Laïs and Phryne were renowned predominantly for affairs with philosophers and artists, both of which groups of men had begun to receive treatment in earlier pornographic discourse. Xenophon, *Mem.* III. 11.1-18, had recorded that the *hetaira* Theodote, whether a fictional construct or historical person, attracted the best painters of the day. With Laïs and Phryne in particular this connection achieved its greatest coup: both women were depicted in the form of the goddess Aphrodite and each by one of the men whom the ancient world recognized as the best sculptors and painters ever, Praxiteles and Apelles respectively.<sup>104</sup> There seems to have

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<sup>104</sup>Phryne herself won great renown as the model for Apelles famous painting, the Aphrodite Anadyomene, as well as for Praxiteles' Cnidian Aphrodite [Ath. XIII. 591A]. Both artists are

been a longstanding connection between Aphrodite and the *hetaira*, in particular at Corinth<sup>105</sup>, and this, combined with the tradition of the *hetaira*'s phenomenal beauty, may well have encouraged the creation of an association between a great *hetaira* such as Phryne with the first fully nude female sculpture.<sup>106</sup>

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said to have been the lovers of the woman and Apelles, characteristically licentious, was also reputed to have turned Laïs into a courtesan after seeing her as a maiden [Ath. XIII. 588CD]. Laïs' connection with Aphrodite is brought out in the story, recorded in Polemon's *Reply to Timaeus* (ap. Ath. XIII. 588C), that when she came to Corinth, Aphrodite Melaenis used to appear to her by night to inform her of lovers who would come bringing "many talents." In addition, she is said to have been murdered at the hands of some jealous Thessalian women right in the temple of Aphrodite which was then renamed the *temenos* of Anosias (Sinful) Aphrodite [Timaeus, *FGrH* 566 F24 ap. Ath. XIII. 589AB].

<sup>105</sup>Athenaeus records a vast number of ancient sources that promote this very connection, from poems by the great poets of the archaic age (Seimonides and Pindar) about the customary addition of *hetairai* prayers to those of the city when supplicating Aphrodite [XIII. 573CE; 573F-574B], to the many mentions in comedy and history of shrines and festivals to Aphrodite. *Hetaira* instituted in praise of *hetairai* or by *hetairai* themselves in praise of their patron goddess [e.g. Ehippus, *Empole* 7 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 571EF; 572B-573A citing Philetaerus, *Kunagis* or the *Huntress* 8 K-A; Pamphilus; Neanthes, *Legends FGrH* 84 F9; Alexis of Samos, *Samian Annals FGrH* 539 F1; Euacles, *Ephesian Chronicles FGrH* 418 F2; and Clearchus, *Love Stories FHG* ii. 314]. Note also the distinction, found in dialogues of Plato (*Symp.* 180D-181B) and Xenophon (*Symp.* 8. 9-10), between the spiritual love associated with Aphrodite Ourania (the Heavenly Aphrodite) and the more physical type associated with Aphrodite Pandemos (the 'Promiscuous' Aphrodite). As Rosivach 1995: 2-3 points out, the reality of these cult associations for Aphrodite are not supported by what other information we have about the public cult of Aphrodite Pandemos, other evidence that suggests that Pandemos did not reflect sexual promiscuity but rather political harmony and union of a polis' citizenry. Regardless, the notion that there was in fact such a cult of Aphrodite is no less part of the social outlook of the community; even if people did not specifically believe it, any more than they truly believed that Solon had founded state subsidized brothels, they knew about it and it likely affected their perception of prostitution in general. Another instance in which this type of misconception may be at work is the notion, found in citations of Athenaeus, that there was a festival, the *Hetairideia*, celebrated by the Magnesians and the kings of Macedonia, which honoured the *hetairai* [Hegesander *Commentaries FHG* iv. 418 ap. Ath. XIII. 572DE]. In fact, the festival was instituted in honour of Zeus Hetaireios—the god of good fellowship, yet it was no doubt often assumed nonetheless to refer to a festival to prostitutes. Indeed, Ogden 1999: 232; 263; 280 makes this claim with specific reference to the Antigonid dynasty based on this very passage in Athenaeus.

<sup>106</sup>As Havelock 1995: 47 contends in her discussion of Praxiteles and Phryne, the erotic link between the two was very likely invented long after they were both dead. It is also coincidentally appropriate that the two artists that instituted the depiction of Aphrodite in the nude should be renowned as sensualists involved with courtesans; cf. 'The Romantic Pairing of Praxiteles and Phryne: Artist and Model' 42-9. For additional discussion of the connection between Aphrodite and pornography, *hetairai* and the revolution of the nude female in art, see Spivey 1996: esp. 173-175; 178-186. Of further interest in the characterization of the artists is the anecdote concerning Apelles and the beautiful mistress of Alexander. In typical fashion, Alexander asks his artist friend to paint his favourite lover Pankaste's portrait, in the nude, and when Apelles falls in love with her she is generously given to the artist as a gift [Pliny

In the area of philosophers and their often hypocritical devotion to prostitutes, the Hellenistic poet Hermesianax, cited earlier, recounts the affairs of many philosophers and *hetairai* [CA frag. 7 ll. 90-94 ap. Ath. XIII. 599AB]. Another interesting account, found among the fragments of Satyrus' *Bioi*, FHG iii. 164 ap. Ath. XIII. 584A, recounts the conversation, over drinks, between the philosopher Stilpo and the courtesan Glycera. In addition to this anecdote where Stilpo condemns the prostitute for corrupting men whilst passing his time drinking with her, he was also reputed to be the teacher of a *hetaira* of considerable reputation and education—Nicarete of Megara [Nymphodorus, FGrH 572 F6 ap. Ath. XIII. 596E]. What we have at work here may once again be the typical penchant of the biographer for characterizing a member of a particular class/occupation with stereotypical and often hypocritical traits. The philosopher accuses the *hetaira* of corrupting young men and encouraging them to waste their time but she counters that each group, *hetairai* and philosophers, was equally guilty of corrupting the young, hers by teaching them erotics, his by teaching them eristic sophistries. Such criticisms became commonplace in Hellenistic philosophical commentary and disputes, perhaps, according to Henry, as a reflection of the "hostility both to the outgrowth of philosophical schools... and to women's participation (albeit limited) therein."<sup>107</sup>

While both women were said to have been involved with an important orator—the former with Demosthenes (Polemon *Reply to Timaeus*, Preller 75 ap. Ath. XIII. 588C), the latter with Hypereides (Idomeneus FGrH 338 F 14 ap. Ath. XIII. 590D)—there is some question as to the reliability of both the source traditions and the conventions of legal oratory in general.<sup>108</sup> These conventions deserve some special attention here

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NH 35. 36, 86-7 note too that this account states that this Pancaste was the model for Apelles' Aphrodite Anadyomene, not Phryne; Aelian VH 12.34; Lucian 43.7].

<sup>107</sup>Henry 1995: 65. Note too the argument between the philosopher lovers of Laïs, Aristippus and Diogenes the Cynic, on the propriety of consorting with a "common whore" (κοινὴ πόρνῃ) [Ath. XIII. 588F]

<sup>108</sup>For further discussion of lack of historical reliability among orators, see Fairweather 1974: 231-275, esp. 236-237, 255-256.

since they would appear to have had a significant impact on ancient Greek pornographic discourse. It is noteworthy that there are a number of speeches on record in Athenaeus that apparently mentioned or were directly concerned with these two most spectacular courtesans—at least to judge by their titles.<sup>109</sup> While Phryne's defense speech by Hypereides is the most famous and apparently also influential in the whole rhetorical genre<sup>110</sup>, like so many of the other speeches very little survives. In many cases we have no more than a title or, on occasion, an extremely brief summary which may itself be contradicted by other summary accounts of the speech. This is the precise case in Hypereides' *Peri Phryne*. One summary description of the speech, according to Cooper the earliest known, is found in fragments of the comic play *Ephesia* by Poseidippus that won victories from 289/8 B.C. onwards [13 K-A ap. Ath. 591E].<sup>111</sup> Here the poet claims that Phryne had saved her life by her own tears and lamentations, having taken each of the judges by the hand. The other, later, accounts state that Hypereides, when it looked as though the trial was proceeding towards a conviction of Phryne, resorted to the desperate and theatrical measure of baring Phryne's bosom and bursting into lamentation, thus awing the judges to such an extent that they acquitted her. According to Cooper's study, the later accounts (Ath. XIII. 590DE and ps.-Plutarch *Mor.* 849DE) derive from the third century biographer Hermippus' adaptation of the account found in Idomeneus of Lampsacus.<sup>112</sup> Not only were the details of the trial based on a characterization of Hypereides (and demagogues in general) as sexually unbridled—Pericles being the ultimate model for such behaviour—but so are the further descriptions of his character in general. These demonstrative incidents include his eviction of his own

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<sup>109</sup>In *Defense of Phryne*, by Hypereides, XIII. 590DE; *Against Phryne*, one by Aristogeiton, another by Euthias or Anaximenes, XIII. 591E; Hypereides mentions Laïs in his second *Speech Against Aristagora* XIII. 587CD; Lysias may have written a speech *Against Laïs* XIII. 592E

<sup>110</sup>As Cooper 1995: 305 n.8 notes, Quintilian [X. 5. 3] reports that the speech was translated into Latin with its subtlety and delicacy preserved by the great Roman orator Messala Corvinus. Ps. Longinus [*De Subl.* 34. 2-3] claims that the speech surpassed even Demosthenes' skill.

<sup>111</sup>Cooper 1995: 314

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*, 304-307

son from the ancestral estate in favour of keeping his courtesan Myrrhine there, his contemporaneous maintenance of Aristagora in the Piraeus and of Phila, not only a *hetaira* but one that he had purchased, freed, and made his *oikouros* or household manager, at Eleusis. As such, the characterization and the trial itself can be seen as aspects of the polemical tradition which, in the case of orators, centered on sexual proclivity and the squandering of large amounts of money on various disreputable pursuits. In fact, based on the dating of the available evidence, it appears that the disrobing scene, although the most famous of all the details in Hypereides' *bios*, was in fact a later invention based on a parody of courtroom displays of Athenian demagogues in general.<sup>113</sup>

Each of the accounts of the famous trial resembles in some way the equally famous trial of Pericles' Aspasia. In the first, because the action that brings the courtesan's acquittal involves the piteous shedding of tears and this in turn inspires the judges' forgiveness. In the second a powerful political figure and orator saves the woman's life, at least in part, by an emotional display. Whether either trial actually took place—the possibility remains that the idea filtered into later historical accounts from comedy (although there is the further evidence in the case of Phryne's defense speech of fragments preserved in the corpus of Hypereides' speeches<sup>114</sup>)—the similarity between

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid, 308; 314

<sup>114</sup>It is noticeable that there are a striking number of speeches recorded that purport to deal with *hetairai*, whether we presume this to be the case because the titles refer to the names of courtesans or because some other information remains about the trial. It is hard to imagine that so many women of this type were tried before the Athenian courts and even more so to imagine what the predominant charges would have been. Johnstone's 1998: *passim* esp. 224-6, 234 observations about the nature of Athenian legal oratory show that even in cases like that against Neaera where the activities of a woman seem to be a major focus of the prosecution, Athenian law was formulated in such a way as to consistently exclude any direct representation of women or slaves as subjects. Instead disputes were conventionally formulated to the utmost simplification, one in which there were two parties, a prosecutor and defendant, and each of these was almost invariably a male citizen. Perhaps, in some cases, charges were brought by slighted lovers, as Cooper suggests may have been the motivation behind Euthias' prosecution of Phryne (he notes that later reports about the rhetorical flourishes of Hypereides include comments on his biting wit with which he berated Euthias for initiating a trial on such frivolous grounds as his personal wounded pride at rejection by the famous courtesan (310-312). This, however, as much as the stereotypical characterization of orators as men prone to



the accounts, even where they diverge in detail, is striking. This very similarity, in conjunction with what Harding calls the “typical prejudices” of Athenian society which were at play constantly in ancient oratory<sup>115</sup>, could be the reason for the development of the subsequent tradition that Hypereides was not only Phryne’s lawyer but also one of her lovers. This detail meshed well with the biographical tradition in which Hypereides was given the detailed characterization of an archetypal demagogue. Not only did he become a sort of ‘composite’ orator, one who was “without restraint in the matters of love” (ἀκόλαστος περὶ τὰ ἀφροδίσια), but Phryne, his most distinguished *hetaira*, also became a composite of the various characterizations that attached to the women involved with such demagogues. That this is the case is seen by the development of confusion in the tradition as time went on as to whether there had been more than one Phryne. The later Hellenistic compilers of *hetairai* prosopography and comedic characters noted a Phryne nicknamed Clausigelota (“Teary Smile”), one Saperdion (“Goldfish”) [Apollodorus, *Peri Hetairon* FGrH 288 F208-212 ap. Ath. XIII. 591C], one Sestus (“the Sifter”), and one the Thespian [Herodicus, *Persons Mentioned in Comedy* ap. Ath. XIII. 591CD]. In addition, there was the notion that her ‘real’ name, reflecting perhaps a more respectable birth than generally expected for a courtesan, was Mnesarete.

In any case, the affairs are adduced to be symptoms of these men’s addiction to luxury and pleasures and no stories remain which point to political influence on the part of the women. This presumption was to change in the accounts of courtesans in the Hellenistic age. It is clear, however, from the preceding discussion that the development of a

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involvement with courtesans also sounds suspiciously molded to conventional prejudices. Havelock 1995: 44-46 accepts the probable historical genuineness of the trial but provides a good discussion of those elements likely to have been invented after the fact.

<sup>115</sup>Harding 1987: 29. Harding notes the similarity in assumed attitudes made by a comedian like Aristophanes and an orator like Demosthenes, concluding that public opinion was molded equally by prejudices like pride in Athenian citizenship (as manifest in aspersions on someone’s origins and in particular on the accusation that that person’s mother has practiced a trade) and the corruption of politicians (in particular its manifestation among the wealthy as licentiousness and excess), whether in the law-courts, the assembly, or the theatre.

pornographic discourse in archaic and classical Greece showed its predominant points in all manner of writings, regardless of the expectation that a genre display fictional characteristics (like comedy) or factual ones (like history or oratory). This will keep us on our guard against accepting all the details in the accounts of women who were presumably historical figures of the Hellenistic period, even though the sources tend to be historical works. In particular we should be alert to polemical characterizations of rulers (the predominant focus group for involvement with *hetairai*) through association with courtesans. While the *hetaira* was undoubtedly an influential cultural phenomenon, there was clearly a tendency both to characterize women as *hetairai* who may not have actually been such and to apply the customary anecdotes about *hetairai* to all and sundry, whether or not they had actually occurred.

## CHAPTER 4

*Hetairai of Alexander's Lifetime*

In the transitional period between the classical and Hellenistic periods when Alexander conquered the world for Macedon, there were the stirrings of a return to the type of political commentary that had placed Aspasia in a position of powerful influence over her lover Pericles. The main difference was that at this time such commentary began to occur in 'historical' genres rather than predominantly in the comedic ones. This type of commentary is witnessed in the anecdotal stories about some rather generically characterized women like Callixena and Pancaste, said to be lovers of Alexander, as well as such grand and apparently more historical *hetairai* as Thaïs, the lover of one of Alexander's foremost generals Ptolemy Lagou (and according to Athenaeus also of Alexander himself), and Pythionice and Glycera, the courtesans of his profligate treasurer Harpalus. We shall be investigating the accounts of these women, particularly the more detailed ones, based on the various categories of identification found in chapter two as well as on the conclusions reached in the previous chapter about the influence of Greek pornographic discourse and the lives of great classical *hetairai*. Another important factor in our discussion will be the evaluation of specific sources, keeping in mind the conclusions reached in the initial chapter on methodology. Of particular interest at this stage is the apparent renewal of focus on the men involved with courtesans, to the increasing exclusion of any real characterization of the women themselves. We shall look at the reasons behind this development, in particular at how typical Hellenistic biography encouraged the stereotyped characterization of "great men" through anecdotes.

I. ALEXANDER: i. Callixena

Although the stories which connect Alexander to *hetairai* have an even less reliable flavour to them than those applied to other prominent figures, it is important to look at them since he himself had such a great influence on the rulers that followed him, as did the character of his biographical tradition on the historians and biographers of his successors. Most important to note up front is

the general secondary nature of the sources that we have at our disposal, even though many of these late sources can be shown to have used more contemporary writings as their own sources.<sup>116</sup> The story of Callixena, whose name perfectly complements her profession, meaning 'Beautiful Stranger', is said to have been the first lover of Alexander. Her only characterization is that she was exceedingly beautiful and, obviously though it is not directly spelled out, erotically skilled. Certainly the purported relationship with Alexander is not given out to have been any more than a casual, albeit hard-won, erotic affair. Thus, even if she is no more than a literary construction, she suits well the general ancient definition of a prostitute. Further characterization within the *porne* or *hetaira* categories is not provided but we assume that, given Alexander's status and the position of who procured her services for him—his mother and father, the queen and king—, she was meant to represent the type of woman who was in the higher echelon of the trade. Aside from her apparent mobility from her home in Thessaly to the Macedonian court, which seems to have been another quality of the *hetaira* lifestyle, there is little we can say to define this Callixena as an individual.

Hence we can now turn to the important task of source criticism—through which we might determine how much of this story can be taken as representing actual historical events and how much represents the purpose of an author and the influences of his cultural assumptions about courtesans. The sole extant account of the affair comes in Book X of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*, but cites as the source, via Hieronymus of Rhodes, the peripatetic philosopher Theophrastus. This is an important factor since the source cited is very closely contemporary with Alexander—Theophrastus became the head of Aristotle's Lyceum at the time of Alexander's death in 323 BC when he was close to fifty years old.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> For a discussion of the likely sources used by our extant material see Errington 1990: 299-301. It is further acknowledged that while we may have some confidence in attributing an original source when the author states outright that he used a particular source, in many cases the basis for attribution is little more than stylistic considerations: cf. Tarn 1948: 127-133; Hammond 1983: *passim*; Hornblower 1981: 3; 16-17; Flower 1994: 3-4.

<sup>117</sup> Hornblower and Spawforth (eds.) 1996: 1504-05 s.v. Theophrastus.

Unfortunately, however, the fact that an anecdote comes from a contemporary source, while it may give a story further plausibility through the possibility of eye-witness experience, does not make it a factual statement. The first factor to take into account is the context of the story. In Athenaeus, the quote is recorded as part of a long excursion concerning the views of philosophers and others on the detrimental effects of drinking (or more precisely being a “drink lover”—*philopotes*) as further corroboration to Aristotle’s view that excessive drink impairs a man’s virility [*Problems* III. 4]. This link between drink and indifference to sex is elaborated on in the case of Alexander. Theophrastus claims that his lack of interest in sex was so alarming that his mother and father, fearing he might become a *gunnis* “womanish man”, procured this alluring courtesan Callixena to seduce him. Despite the *hetaira*’s charms, Olympias had to ask Alexander to get together with her many times.

Clearly the context of the anecdote in a moralizing passage on the ill effects of luxury<sup>118</sup> and the further attempt to adduce actual examples in order to prove a physiological theory bring the reliability of the anecdote into question. Of further cautionary moment is the fact that Theophrastus belonged to a school of thought—the Peripatetic (Aristotelian) school—which was at this point hostile to Alexander for having abandoned the government of a free Greece in favour of the Persian tyranny over an empire. In particular this had been made manifest by Alexander’s execution of Aristotle’s nephew, the peripatetic (and official royal) historian Callisthenes for presuming to criticize him.<sup>119</sup> This action apparently provoked an onslaught of attacks on Alexander’s character and his inability to control himself under the pressures of absolute rule as well as the pleasures of banqueting and drinking. Here the substance of later criticism is projected back

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<sup>118</sup>As Flower 1994: 92-93 points out, the general trend of fourth century popular thought on personal morality was the control of appetites—including drinking—while on a higher philosophical level, one of the central issues of debate at this time was the moral status of *hedone* “pleasure”. Flower notes that Antisthenes, Speusippus, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Xenocrates wrote treatises *On Pleasure* while Plato treated pleasure in various dialogues and the historians Heraclides and Clearchus both recorded anecdotes on the ill effects of luxury.

<sup>119</sup>Possibly his execution was related to his implication in the so-called “conspiracy of the Pages” in 327, though nothing was ever proved.

onto Alexander's younger days at the Macedonian court and a suitable anecdote concocted to support the trend. This is not to say that banqueting and the heavy drinking that could accompany these parties were not in evidence at the Macedonian court; this was, in fact, how it was often characterized, particularly under Philip [Theopompus *FGrH* 115 F236 ap. Ath. X. 435BC; cf. Demosthenes *Second Olynthiac* 17-19<sup>120</sup>]. The notion that Alexander had a problematic lack of interest in sex or women in general is a difficult theory to adduce clear evidence for since there are instances given on both sides of the issue. In a number of cases this indifference to sexual relations with women, particularly those among the enemy captives, is praised as evidence for Alexander's monumental self control and even moral uprightness [e.g. Plut. *Alex.* 21]. In any case this is not our main concern here in evaluating the historicity of the Callixena story. It seems clear that while the possibility that available women (likely to be called *hetairai* in Greek sources even if their status was possibly distinct from the category of prostitute) were a feature of the Macedonian court<sup>121</sup> where riotous banqueting, drinking, and indiscriminate sexual encounters were believed to be commonplace, the notion that a prostitute had to be hired by his own parents to cure his lack of sexual desire appears clearly to be a scandal invented to discredit Alexander.

## ii. Pancaste

Turning to the other significant *hetaira* account involving Alexander, we find Pancaste mentioned in the works of Pliny, Lucian, and Aelian. None of these accounts specifically calls the woman a *hetaira*, instead she is described in two instances as Alexander's *pallakis*, and in another as his *torus* ("bedmate"—literally

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<sup>120</sup>Ibid, 104-111. Flower notes that both Theopompus and Demosthenes had every motive to exaggerate, yet their agreement would seem to confirm at least that this picture of Macedonian court life was fairly widespread, not to mention confirmed by accounts of life at Alexander's own court (cf. Plut. *Alex* 9. 6-11; 50-51; 70; Arr. 4. 8-9; Curtius 8. 1-2).

<sup>121</sup>Certainly the case of the disreputable/licentious woman who was married by a young man (Monimos) of the Macedonian court—Pantica of Cyprus is the name given by Phylarchus *FGrH* 81 F21 ap. Ath, XIII. 609C—would contribute to proving that such women were indeed about the court attracting men's attentions and affections.

"mattress"). Although there are certain features which distinguish a *pallakis* from a *hetaira*, as discussed earlier, the general assumption is that the often temporary nature of the relationship would have led to intermediate periods in the lives of women who fit into this category—namely times when they found themselves between stable relationships—during which she would have been engaged in a more typical form of prostitution until she found another man willing to initiate concubinage with her.<sup>122</sup> Often, once in an established relationship, a woman seems to have been treated more like a secondary or non-legitimate wife than a prostitute. Certainly at least some of the women who were engaged in concubinage, particularly with an important figure, would have been of less than mean status in their own home countries by virtue both of wealth and birth. It is unlikely that such women would have been engaged in the more indiscriminate hired prostitution which characterized 'lower' levels of the trade. In fact, this very quality appears to have been a distinctive characteristic of the *megalomisthoi hetairai* in general: apart from the promiscuous nature of having successive affairs, she was known for the reality or expectation of monogamy with her particular lover.<sup>123</sup> We may note that Aspasia, although her reputation as a *hetaira* is questionable from a historical standpoint, was called such in many accounts over a long time span and yet is said to have been involved in only two (monogamous) relationships in her lifetime—first with Pericles and then with Lysicles.

As for the characterization of Pancaste, it is once again very thin. She is said by Aelian to have been originally from Larissa (VH 12. 34), a plausible statement given Philip's involvement in that area as well as the convention of *hetaira* lifestyle which made travel an expected aspect of these women's lives. In addition, the assumption that she was neither from Macedonia nor from Athens

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<sup>122</sup>This rather shady distinction between *pallakis* and *hetaira* is demonstrated well by Dover 1989: 21

<sup>123</sup>Of course we will notice that this is no more of a rule than most other generalizations applied to *hetairai*. One exception, on a grand scale, is the reputation of the famous Laïs who was said (notably with an element of the unexpected) to have engaged hoards of lovers without distinction in her rivalry with Phryne [Ath. XIII. 588C; cf. Plato *Epigr.* 15 on her "swarm of lovers" (ἐραστῶν ἑσμών)].

also fits the general portrayal of *hetairai* as 'foreign' women. The rest of her attributes are further stereotyped *hetaira* characteristics: she is exceedingly beautiful, she is presumably skilled in erotics, and she is a suitable model for portrayal nude. The last of these features, discussed in the previous chapter, was evidently becoming one of the *hetaira* signature traits. As was the case with Callixena, the main purpose of the anecdote is to give further detail to the biographical portrait of the men with whom she is involved—in this case for both Alexander and Apelles. This particular story emphasizes two of Alexander's famous traits: his mastery of his appetites and his extravagant generosity. Here we see Alexander relinquishing his favourite *pallakis*, obviously disdaining whatever distress it might cause him in the bedroom, simply to please his friend Apelles who had, in the process of painting the woman's nude portrait, fallen in love with her. Pliny states outright that the incident was direct proof of his fabled self control, a trait which Plutarch emphasizes on many occasions in his biography of Alexander (21. 4-23. 6; 30. 5-6). The fact that Apelles could not control his desires even in his professional life and in view of the fact that the woman belonged to a friend, and a very powerful one at that, provides corroboration of the other anecdotes which portray the artist as a sensualist.<sup>124</sup>

The variants in the accounts of Pancaste reveal the problems with accepting the details of these types of stories as historical fact. We must note straight off that all of the accounts that we have were written considerably later than the events described: Pliny's version, which is the most detailed, is nonetheless from the first century A.D.; Lucian's and Aelian's short versions are even later, the former from the second century A.D. and the latter likely from the early third. While the extant passages may have as their source(s) more contemporary accounts, we have no way of knowing what these may have been since none of the authors cites his source. In addition there is the possibility that the anecdotal story developed out of both typical characterizations of the men

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<sup>124</sup>For example: Ath. XIII. 588CD on his vow to make a delectable courtesan out of the maiden Laïs of Hyccara; Ath. XIII. 590F on his choice of Phryne as the model for his Aphrodite Anadyomene.



and out of the prevalence of discourse on *hetairai*. Even within this small story there developed divergences which emphasize just how confused and embellished biographical accounts could become over time. The first instance of confusion concerns the woman's name: Pliny calls her Pancaspe, Lucian calls her Pacate, while Aelian gives her name as Pancaste.<sup>125</sup> While the changes in spelling in this instance are relatively minor, they show how confusion over the identity of a historical individual can develop. In other cases the duplication of names of *hetairai* rather than changes to them leads to the confusion. We shall look more closely at this aspect in the discussion of Demo, the supposed *hetaira* of an uncertain number of generations of the Antigonid family. It will also suffice to recall the noted reduplication of the names of historical courtesans like Aspasia and Phryne and the popularity of *hetaira* names that passed between historical women and literary characters such as Glycera, Habrotonon, and Neaera.

More significant in this case is the confusion over who had modeled for Apelles' famous Aphrodite Anadyomene. Pliny's is the earliest account we have and he states that "there are those who believe" (*sunt qui... putent*) that Pancaspe was his model, implying that variant traditions existed. When Lucian mentions Pacate in his discussion of the depiction by the best Greek artists of the particular sections of the most beautiful woman, he states that the body of this ideal beauty would have to be painted by Apelles, as he had painted Pacate. It seems clear that, since the Aphrodite Anadyomene was Apelles' most famous portrait, Lucian had chosen to accept the tradition that made this woman the model. In a contradictory version of the story, as we saw earlier, it was the famous Phryne of Thespieae who, because her exhibitionism at the Eleusinia, was credited with having inspired Apelles to paint this portrait [Ath. XIII. 590F-591A]. We also saw that this very tradition was quite possibly an invention fostered by Greek pornographic discourse and the biographical tradition of the revolutionary artist of the female nude. Here once again the details are applied to yet another

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<sup>125</sup> Additionally, in the apparatus to the Loeb edition of Pliny's account of Pancaspe, *campaspen* (-em) is given as a variant of the name and *Pancasten* is shown as found in *Sillig*. Thus Fox 1973 gives Campaspe as her name, which reflects the version used during the Renaissance.

woman, more than likely on the basis of the same circular sort of method of biography—namely that the artist who painted a nude portrait of Aphrodite must have been an extreme sensualist, that the model must have been a *hetaira* since these were the only type of women who could do such a thing without losing respectability (they had none in the traditional sense of women's reputations<sup>126</sup>), and finally that the artist must have been erotically involved with the model given his character and her profession. The further connection to Alexander and how the artist came to possess the mistress of the great commander is explained in terms of his characteristic generosity and is emphasized by Pliny's description of Apelles' respected position as his admired friend and sole portrait artist.

One final note is Aelian's evidently transferred anecdotal detail that this Pancaste was Alexander's first lover. This tradition seems to have been a prevalent one in Alexander's biography but the possibility of sorting out its veracity is virtually nonexistent since the detail seems to have been transferred from woman to woman depending on the author. In most cases attributions of this type are made as an attempt to elucidate some other aspect of the subject's characterization: there are three different stories in which different authors claim to provide the name of Alexander's first lover. Theophrastus, when he named the *hetaira* Callixena as this first lover, meant to prove (somewhat anachronistically) that Alexander's lack of interest in healthy sexual relations was a symptom of his alcoholism—this is one of the negative traits which fed the development of the hostile tradition. Plutarch on the other hand, extols the virtuous side of Alexander's character which the sympathetic or apologetic tradition defined in part as his temperance in the matter of love affairs. Thus in his description of Barsine as Alexander's first lover, Plutarch explains that Alexander

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<sup>126</sup>Just how closely modelling for artists was construed as an occupation or pastime for licentious women can be seen in Plutarch's account of the Athenian citizen woman Elpinice who was said to have been proven to have engaged in an illicit love affair with the painter Polygnotus of Thasos by virtue of the fact that he gave his painting of Laodike, one of the Trojan women that he painted on the Stoa Poicile, the features of Elpinice [*Cimon* 4. 5-6]. Here we see not only the tendency to associate disreputable women with posing for artists (nude or clothed) but also the consequent assumption that the woman was the lover of the artist who depicted her.

condescended to have relations with her outside of marriage, contrary to his custom, because of her extraordinary high birth and beauty (*Alex.* 21. 4-5). Aelian makes the claim that the first woman Alexander slept with was Pancaste, his *pallakis* whom his friend Apelles fell in love with. (*Var. Hist.* XII. 34).<sup>127</sup> In this case the anecdote is too short to reveal conclusively what type of characterization it was meant to give Alexander, it is simply told in the context of a list of particularly prominent love affairs among the ancients. More than likely the source for Aelian would have been similar to that of Pliny and thus would have conformed to the positive evaluation of Alexander's generosity and self-control. If Aelian was aware of any anecdotal traditions about Alexander's love life, in particular any that involved *hetairai*, he may simply have conflated the details of more than one such account. The main difference in characterization with the Pancaste anecdote is that Alexander is shown as a man with mistresses to spare—a 'ladies man'—since he has no qualms about giving his favourite up to a friend in need, while its application to Callixena makes him indifferent to the physical charms of women. Thus two versions of an anecdote of similar content can be shown by their context to have entirely different meanings or aims.

## II. HARPALUS: i. Pythionice

We will turn now to a discussion of the two most famous courtesans of Alexander's day—Pythionice and Glycera—although they were said to be involved with Alexander's treasurer Harpalus rather than with Alexander himself. Harpalus was an important figure among Alexander's chief administrators and he was appointed treasurer some time after Alexander's accession to the Macedonian throne. Evidence of Harpalus' profligacy—which was to become increasingly notorious as time went on—came to light not long after. Unfortunately we have little detail in our sources for the nature of the

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<sup>127</sup>For further anecdotal stories which relate to Alexander's attitude to *hetairai* we may note stories like that of the anonymous harpist—ψάλτρις who was the lover of Antipatrides [Plut. *Mor.* 180. 19-20]; or of Unna/Ounna, the concubine of Alexander [Ps. Call. II. 41, 3ff]; and, realting to women with whom Alexander was not personally involved but had some sort of dealings

misdeemeanors which caused his 'first' flight or self imposed exile not long before the battle of Issos. The general assumption is that the flight was the consequence of Harpalus' established weak disposition—evidently some physical ailment prevented his participation in military exploits (Arrian 3. 6.6). This ailment, perhaps after promoting the development of a self-indulgent character, led eventually, despite Alexander's forgiveness of his crimes once, to his scandalous absconding with a great part of the treasury in his second flight some time in 324 B.C.<sup>128</sup> It is in the context of this second flight that Harpalus' involvement with *hetairai* is recorded, although other instances of his increasingly decadent behaviour were by this time starting to stack up [Diod. XVII. 108. 4; Plut. *Mor.* 648 CD; *Alex.* 35. 15; Curt. X. 1. 43-5]. Pythionice is the first woman that Harpalus summoned from Athens from his post at the treasury in Babylon. We shall attempt once again to evaluate her position by applying our earlier conclusions to the various accounts of her relationship with Harpalus, keeping in mind that, as seems to be the case in more and more of these accounts involving political figures, her characterization is very limited and serves primarily to elucidate the faults of the man under discussion.

Pythionice is mentioned in a surprising variety of sources, including contemporary ones. The first thing we shall do is look at the terminology used to define her in these sources in an attempt to evaluate both her position and the attitudes of the sources which mention her. The most detailed account of Harpalus' relationship with Pythionice comes from the historian Theopompus of Chios, a contemporary of Alexander. Unfortunately his account also shows the most blatant hostility and bias against Harpalus, and consequently Pythionice as well, and thus gives the reader cause for caution in accepting all the details of his

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through his men, Telesippa, the *hetaira* of either Eurylochus [Plut. *Alex.* 40. 4-5] or Antigones [Mor. 180F, 20-181A, 21] and Antigona, *hetaira* of Philotas [Mor. 339 EF].

<sup>128</sup>For a summary of other theories about the nature of Harpalus' first flight see Heckel 1992: 215-16. The notion that the misdemeanors were symptoms of Harpalus' "weak moral fibre" represents Heckel's theory on the matter 216-17. For a clear chronological discussion of Harpalus' life and activities see 213-221 "Harpalus son of Machatas" with its own short bibliography on 213.

account as historical fact.<sup>129</sup> In his *Letter to Alexander*, likely written after the Pythionice's death in 325/4 B.C.<sup>130</sup>, Theopompus reports what he considers to be Harpalus' most scandalous crimes against Alexander [FGrH 115 F253 ap. Ath. XIII. 595AC]. The attack is in three stages, each one worst than the last because it represents more and more extreme disregard for Alexander's dignity. In the first section, Theopompus uses his characterization of Pythionice as "not only thrice a slave but even thrice a whore" (μὴ μόνον τρίδουλον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τρίπορνον) to show first how depraved Harpalus' tastes in sexual affairs were and second how he had no regard for the proper use of the treasury over which he had control. That he should have spent more than two hundred talents (presumably of Alexander's money) on his two monuments for her was likely despicable in Theopompus' view to start with. That she was the slave of an *auletris* (Bacchis) who was in turn the slave of a barbarous Thracian *porne* (Sinope) who had chased her clientele from Aegina to Athens was even more shocking. Each of the elements in this characterization, noticeably vicious as they are, can be seen clearly to have been derived from the typical hostile discourse on prostitution that had been developing since at least the sixth century B.C. (as we saw in the preceding chapters). The term *porne* which Theopompus uses to describe Pythionice is meant to emphasize her baseness and is supported by his calling her a slave as well. However, it seems questionable that a man of Harpalus' station and power should send all the way to Athens, as other accounts maintain that he did, for a woman who was not of a certain reputation—even if that was a

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<sup>129</sup>Flower notes in his study of Theopompus that the greater part of what fragmentary remains of Theopompus' writings are extant are found in Athenaeus, a writer interested primarily in anecdotes of scandalous and licentious living. While this will have undoubtedly influenced posterity's impression of the character and style of Theopompus' work, nonetheless the notion that he was an extremely harsh critic is confirmed by his reputation even in antiquity and the prevalence of moralizing passages in what is preserved of his writing demonstrate that whatever else he may have written about, moral explanations and motivations were a primary concern to him. 1, 8-10 cf. 185-6 where Flower notes in addition that at times Theopompus had a style that was excessively influenced by rhetoric—a style which at times prompted him to write such sensationalistic moralizing passages as F 225B [ap. Ath. 260D-261A]. This passage, whose vulgarity was condemned by ancient and modern critics, reviles Philip's companions, calling them bed-mates (ἑταίραι) rather than companions (ἑταίροι), harlots (χαμαιτύπαι) rather than soldiers (στρατιῶται) and men-sodomizers (ἀνδρόπορνοι) rather than men-slayers (ἀνδροφόνου).

<sup>130</sup>Ibid, 258

disreputable or notorious one. As we saw earlier, the single most prominent characteristic that defined a *porne* in contrast to a *hetaira* was her anonymity. That a lowly slave prostitute should have reached the attention of a man like Harpalus in Babylon where he no doubt had access to all kinds of women (and, as Diodorus suggests, he had long since been taking full advantage of using the local female population for his sexual gratification [17. 108]) is somewhat beyond the pale of reasonable expectation.

Of further interest in calling the credibility of this characterization into question is Ogden's suggestion that the malicious motivation behind it is shown not only by the general tone but by the contradiction inherent in the claim that Pythionice's owner as well as that woman's owner were both slaves. In Greek slave law, a slave could not own anything, let alone another slave.<sup>131</sup> Nonetheless, we must keep in mind that based on the influential elements of pornographic discourse found in New Comedy, it was commonplace for a *hetaira* to be depicted as possessing two maids. Fantham points out that even the vile and abusive lover who kept Neaera after she had gained her freedom, Phrynion, provided her with her two maids. In Greek New comedy and early Roman comedy which was so reliant on Greek precedents, two maids appear to be a kind of "routine prerequisite, on par with a woman's wardrobe and jewelry."<sup>132</sup> Even if Pythionice's status as a slave prostitute is not contradicted by this point (since it applies fairly specifically to free(d) prostitutes, no matter how slave-like their lives appear to remain) it would suggest that there is some fairly intense rhetorical exaggeration at work here. If Pythionice herself was in fact a slave, the plausible assumption is that her owner was not—and perhaps she was even a successful and shrewd business woman, like Neaera's owner Nicarete, who managed to turn out alluring girls with rather far reaching reputations. In any case we can see that very likely elements of the fictional or literary side of pornographic discourse have entered into or at least had an influence on the shaping of the historical narrative. Related to this apparent cross over are the

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<sup>131</sup>Ogden 1999: 247

<sup>132</sup>Fantham 1975: 65-6 n. 48

suspiciously coincidental names and origins of the slave prostitutes connected to Pythionice: both Bacchis and Sinope are generic prostitute names, found particularly in literary works, and the lead whore in the operation is a native of the typically barbarous Thrace. We can see how the whole discussion of Pythionice incorporates the most prominent negative elements in pornographic discourse—not that the discourse necessarily always represented a fictional construct, but the possibility is there. One final aspect which conforms to the topical elements of the discourse<sup>133</sup> is the notion that Pythionice, despite her lowly and presumably anonymous initial position, overcame all of this to become wealthy and adored beyond all expectation thanks to a powerful man's depravity. The literary topos of freeing a slave lover, combined with the 'historical' precedents of Rhodopis/Doricha and Neaera, provide ample evidence that men on both sides of the debate saw this as a real possibility.

The second phase of Theopompus' attack on Harpalus is his claim that he was so taken with his *porne* that while her monuments stood spectacular and completed for some time, he had taken no initiative to adorn the graves of men who actually deserved some kind of monuments—namely those who had fought and died in Cilicia on Alexander's behalf. And while Theopompus himself considers this a step lower even than Harpalus' involvement with Pythionice, he implies that even those who thought nothing of his extravagant love for a prostitute were shocked by this dereliction of duty on Harpalus' part. In the third phase of his attack on Harpalus, Theopompus lays out the last and worst of Harpalus' crimes with rhetorical flourish. Whereas the first of Harpalus' crimes is reported to show how he offends the sensibilities of the virtuous individual and the second those of the general population who may be more forgiving in the manner of moral lapses, the third of his crimes is presented as the worst because it deliberately offends or insults both the gods and Alexander himself,

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<sup>133</sup>We should note that, as discussed in the section on prostitute names in Chapter Two, a name could be of significance to a *hetaira*, reflecting either her pretensions of grandeur (as we saw with Herotime—Hero's Honour) or an aspect of the profession (as with Aspasia—Welcoming). Pythionice is a quite elevated sounding name, meaning Pythian Victory, and contrasts her depiction as a base-born slave.

specifically his 'honours' (τίμαι).<sup>134</sup> It was all bad enough for Harpalus to choose a morally disreputable companion to spend his time with and for him to be utterly derelict in his administrative duties but for him to honour an unworthy *porne* with assimilation to the goddess Aphrodite was an act of presumptuousness that called for dire punishment by the gods and by Alexander, himself a worthy recipient of such honours. We may be tempted to see this last accusation as yet another element of Theopompus' irrational attempt to condemn Harpalus by any means possible, no matter how exaggerated or unfounded. On top of all the other morally corrupt and criminal activities of Harpalus, he adds the further sensational detail that Pythionice was a whore so common that she accepted the same price to submit to whoever propositioned her.<sup>135</sup> The reality is, however, that we have all manner of corroborative ancient evidence that he did in fact erect these monuments for his mistress. This is a very important development because, just as the tradition that women of questionable reputation were the models for artists' portraits led to the assumption that a prostitute modeled for the nude depictions of Aphrodite, so here we have a precedent whereby a prostitute has been raised not only to enjoy the lifestyle of a queen but has come to be considered worthy of assimilation to the goddess of love. That the first element of this precedent was hereupon established is shown by the fragment of the comic play of Philemon found in Athenaeus in which a character states, likely to an ambitious courtesan<sup>136</sup>: "you will be queen of Babylon, should it chance to happen thus:/ you know about Pythionice and

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<sup>134</sup>Flower 1994: 259 argues that the precise meaning of this claim, despite the "highly rhetorical and hyperbolic style", is that Harpalus' act of erecting a deifying shrine to Pythionice Aphrodite belittled those monuments which were being erected to a deified Alexander. Although Flower states that few scholars agree with this assessment and new treatments of Alexander's deification ignore this passage, the essay of Fox 1986: 118 corroborates his opinion.

<sup>135</sup>Cf. Davidson 1994: 117-19 who concludes that according to the conventions of discourse on prostitutes, a woman's cheapness and blatant vulgarity was advertised by her up front charge of a particular fee. This is shown, for example, by the evidence adduced for Laïs aged fall from glory: she is no longer haughty and overpaid, she accepts the lowest fees from any and all petitioners and even takes the money right out of the client's hand (ἀπὸ τῆς χειρὸς ἡδὲ λαμβάνει) [Epicrates, *Anti-Laïs*, 3 K-A, ap. Ath. XIII. 570BD].

<sup>136</sup>As Henry 1988: 44 suggests.



Harpalus" (βασιλίσσ' ἔση Βαβυλῶνος, ἅν οὕτω τύχη / τὴν Πυθιονίκην οἶσθα καὶ τὸν Ἄρπαλον) [15 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 595C].

Turning to the other main contemporary source that gives us an account of Harpalus and Pythionice, Python of Catana's satyr play the *Agen*, we find once again that she is called a *porne*. The claim that she was deified as Pythionice-Aphrodite is also repeated here, although it is not found specifically stated in any of the later sources. According to Snell, the play was produced in 326 B.C. during the campaign in India and the play was written for the celebration of the Dionysia.<sup>137</sup> There is some confusion about the dating since Athenaeus states before citing the fragments of the play that it was produced after Harpalus had fled to the coast—i.e. c. 325/4. In any case the infamy of Harpalus' activities clearly had reached far and wide by this point. The emphasis in this portion of the comedy is Harpalus' pathetic obsession with his prostitute mistress, an obsession which was likely emphasized to mark the difference between what Alexander expected of himself as well as his officials—self control and propriety—and what he was actually getting from them.<sup>138</sup> This accusation is further underlined by the name given to Harpalus, Pallides, which according to Snell is a pun on Harpalus' name and means 'Son of Phallus'—an entirely fitting name for a man overcome by his erotic obsession with courtesans.<sup>139</sup> The notion that Harpalus had deified his Pythionice is expressed both outright by the poet's description of him languishing despondently beside "the famed shrine of the whore" (...πόρνῆς ὁ κλεινὸς ναός...), as well as the parody in these lines of Sophocles' tragedy *Electra* in which Orestes, returning to his long lost home is prompted to recognize his surroundings by his pedagogue who points out 'the famed shrine of Hera'.<sup>140</sup> Certainly the suggestion, however subtle, that the

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<sup>137</sup>Snell 1964: 100

<sup>138</sup>This theme is also found in Plutarch's description of Alexander's disappointment in his men who grew gradually more enslaved to luxurious behaviour as his conquests brought more and more wealth. He apparently tried to show by his example the proper mode of restrained behaviour, but this was for the most part to no avail [*Alex.* 40-41].

<sup>139</sup>Snell 1964: 104; but note Sutton 1980: 96 who believes that the name Pallides is a pun on Pallas (Athena).

<sup>140</sup>This is the observation of Gulick in his notes to the 1937 Loeb translation of Athenaeus, 211 n.g.

shrine to Pythionice resembled in some way a famous shrine to the queen of the gods, was a serious criticism of Harpalus' outrage. It seems possible too that the connection made between Harpalus and the eastern magi who offer to summon up his lost mistress' soul was further proof of his utter abandonment of suitable Macedonian/Greek self-comportment. In any case, there is no real characterization of Pythionice as an individual in the fragments that remain and the main focus of what we do have is to mock Harpalus.

We find further details about the grandeur of Harpalus' treatment of Pythionice in some of the other brief accounts. In most of these Pythionice is described as a *hetaira* but for the most part this is not a reflection of a positive evaluation by the source. As was noted earlier, depending on the author's outlook, the term *hetaira* could be meant in an equally negative way as the term *porne*. This is clearly the case in Dicaearchus' moralistic attack on the extreme vulgarity of the monument to Pythionice in Attica which Harpalus had the effrontery to erect right along side the Sacred Way at the point where the town and Athena's temple first come into view. While Dicaearchus uses the term *hetaira* to describe Pythionice, it is not meant to distinguish her among the ranks of prostitutes as somehow set apart or special; instead it simply reflects the despicable nature of the entire trade of prostitution in which all women involved, regardless of the often significant differences between the various categories in terms of lifestyle and expectations, are lumped into an equally negative evaluation. The most shocking element of the whole business is that the monument surpasses all others in size, and presumably impressiveness, giving the approaching traveler the impression that it must have been erected in praise of a state hero or at the very least with the permission of the demos, when the truth of the matter is that a renegade Macedonian, with no concern for the wishes of the people who actually live in the area and in particular how the identity of the recipient of the monument might cause them shame, went ahead and defaced the countryside with his celebration of harlotry it is truly beyond comprehension. An interesting duplicate of sorts of this story is found in relation to the golden or gilded statue of Phryne the courtesan, executed by Praxiteles and dedicated by

the people around Delphi [Alcetas, *On the Dedicatory Offerings at Delphi* FGrH 405 F1 ap. Ath. XIII. 591BC].<sup>141</sup> The similarity to our story comes in the reaction of the Cynic philosopher Crates (or Diogenes) to the sight of the statue standing midway between one of the Spartan king Archidamus and Philip, son of Amyntas. The morally offended philosopher states that the image was a dedication to “the lack of self control of the Greeks” (τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀκρασίας)—once again we see how the discourse on morality of the day used prostitution as a focus for many of its attacks.

We may keep in mind two important factors that could have influenced Dicaearchus to present an exaggerated or excessively negative picture of events: the first is that the author was both a prominent member of the Peripatetic school of Aristotle and, apparently, an associate of Alexander’s implacable enemy Cassander<sup>142</sup>; the second consideration is that the moralist attack on Harpalus’ actions was also an indirect way of attacking the sinking morals of the Athenians in general since the scandal had revealed that many top citizens had apparently accepted his extravagant bribes in return for supporting his cause before the people. Whatever his personal biases may have been however, the amount of corroborative evidence for this monument warns us not to dismiss such stories simply because they sound fantastic and contrived according to the philosophical and popular moral discussions of the day. Especially significant is Pausanias’ apparent eye-witness account of the monument to Pythionice. While he was travelling and writing a distant four centuries after the monument had been erected, he states that the monument to her, surpassing other of the ancient ones in size, beauty and noteworthiness, was still standing in Attica [I. 37, 5].

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<sup>141</sup>Given the possibility, discussed earlier, that Praxiteles choice of Phryne as his model for the Aphrodite Anadyomene as well as his relationship with the courtesan were details invented after the fact as both sensational elements of his biography and as confirmation of trends in pornographic discourse, it is interesting that this story should gain popularity in later fourth century discourse on morality. Versions of it are recorded in Aelian, *VH* IX. 32; Pausanias, IX. 27; Plutarch, *Mor.* 401A, and Diog. Laert. VI. 60

<sup>142</sup>Lesky 1966: 173. Thus, there is a presumed bias against Alexander and given that Harpalus, even though he may have in the end fallen from favour, was placed in a high position with a great deal of power by Alexander the connection would have provided fodder for criticism of both men.

Flower notes that the foundations of the monument and a plausible reconstruction of it suggest that it echoed the design of the temple of Athena Nike on the acropolis; these have been discussed by A. Scholl.<sup>143</sup> This similarity may confirm that this monument, as well as the one in Babylon at which Python's comic magi promise to summon up Pythionice to comfort Harpalus, was also a place of religious significance and represented Pythionice's assimilation to Aphrodite at Athens. As Flower posits, this would have set a powerful precedent, and evidently it did given that Demetrius Poliorcetes' flatterers apparently erected shrines of an Aphrodite assimilated to two of his favourite mistresses.<sup>144</sup>

Of further interest in our attempt to characterize Pythionice and to evaluate her position is Pausanias' statement that Harpalus had "married" (ἔγημε) Pythionice some time before his flight to Attica. He says that he did this despite the fact that she "practiced the trade of the *hetaira* in both Athens and Corinth" (ἑταιροῦσαν δὲ ἔν τε Ἀθῆναις καὶ ἐν Κορίνθῳ). This is an interesting suggestion, whether it contains any truth in the formal sense of the term 'to marry' or not. It provides us with confirmation of the fact that according to conventional perceptions of Pausanias' day, it was believed that prostitutes, even those who had a reputation for indulging in somewhat excessive commerce, had insinuated themselves into formal marriage with important men. One added complication is that we can not know if this evaluation represents an assumption current in Pausanias' time or if it reflects later criticisms of what was perceived as a Hellenistic practice. This latter suggestion seems quite plausible given the reputation of the age, and particularly its top representatives, for having suffered a decline in moral standards.

The many extravagant honours bestowed on Pythionice by Harpalus aside, Plutarch offers an additional detail not found elsewhere that suggests that their relationship was of a more serious nature than a casual hired affair. In his *Life of Phocion*, Plutarch focuses on chronicling his subject's consistently virtuous

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<sup>143</sup>Flower 1994: 259-60 nn. 18, 21; Scholl 1994: 254-268; on the reconstruction see 259.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid, p. 260 with n. 21

behaviour and it is in this context that mention of Harpalus comes up [21. 2-22. 3]. Of all the many important men that Harpalus attempted to gain as supporters via his bribes, Phocion was one of the very few whom he could not sway. Ironically this virtuous bent seems not to have influenced Phocion's son-in-law, Charicles since Harpalus used his purchased influence over him to achieve every wish he had, including securing the erection of his monument for Pythionice. Plutarch emphasizes the disgracefulness of the undertaking, likely hinting, as Dicaearchus had done, at the shame which Charicles allowed to come to Athens for the sake of money, as well as the ignoble character of Charicles who was both corruptible by bribes and foul enough to cheat Harpalus by overcharging him for the monument. Plutarch notes that based on his own impressions of the tomb, which he claims was still visible in Hermus between Athens and Eleusis, it was not worthy of the thirty talents charged by Charicles. This would seem to be significant evidence for the existence of the monument. While the chronology of Harpalus' activities at Athens seems somewhat compressed in Plutarch's account, the interesting detail that he adds to the story is that Harpalus brought his daughter by Pythionice with him to Athens on his flight from Babylon. Whether or not he arranged with Charicles and Phocion, in advance of his final desperate flight to Crete, to have her kept at Athens and cared for by these men, this is evidently what occurred.

Although it seems that having children was not unheard of for prostitutes (Neaera was said to have brought her two sons and her daughter along with her when she came to Athens to live with Stephanus [[Dem.] 59. 38-9] and the mention of generations of courtesans in a family is recorded on a number of occasions—for example Gnathaena was either the mother or grandmother of Gnathaenion [Machon, XVI, XVII Gow] while Theodote is said to live in her luxurious surroundings in the company of her maids and her mother [Xen. *Mem.* III. 11]), one imagines that the rearing of any offspring by the father would be the exception rather than the rule. In the case of Neaera, the concentration in his attack on her offspring, male and female, by Apollodorus occurs not because the children are of interest of themselves but because they had been passed off as

legitimate Athenians by Neaera and Stephanus and had to be cast back into their proper station. Certainly the acknowledgment of the younger Pericles by his father late in his life has been seen as an exceptional occurrence, not only because it violated his own citizenship laws but also because he was forced into such a radical move by the death of his grown legitimate sons. Although we have no confirmation of this detail about Harpalus' daughter from any other source, the very fact that it is so unusual would seem to suggest that it was not invented—especially in view of the fact that it serves no apparent purpose such as blackening or brightening either Phocion or Harpalus' reputation. In addition, the fact that the supposed offspring was a female would likely not have inspired much further comment from our male centered sources, particularly if the daughter was indeed respectably raised by Phocion; respectable women in general were not considered a very worthwhile topic of investigation among ancient Greek authors unless they did something that set them apart from the norm of behaviour (namely, for the most part, something *disreputable*). Therefore the possibility that he did indeed continue to rear such a daughter reinforces just how seriously he apparently took his relationship with the courtesan.

Our concluding remarks about Pythionice will reinforce once again the difficulty in characterizing these women who were at once infamous and popular subjects in a variety of sources. Despite the many accounts, we can say little about Pythionice as a person, precisely what types of things she did or aspired to, beyond what can be inferred from the more detailed characterization of Harpalus. In most ways, Pythionice conforms to the stereotyped vision of the prostitute that we have seen developing over the preceding couple of centuries: she was originally a slave and not from Athens but in time she gravitated to Athens where the most numerous and best of all courtesans went to achieve their greatest success. In the same way that the trade at Athens attracted her attention (or that of her owner) so did it attract the attention of Harpalus—steeped as he was in the ways of indulgence he would have known that Athens was the place to look for the best *hetairai* in the Greek world. While the extremely derogatory

term *porne* was applied to her on occasion as a way of slandering Harpalus' degeneracy, she is also called the "very famous/ most brilliant *hetaira*" (ἐπιφανεστάτη ἑταίρα) of her day at Athens [Diod. XVII. 108. 2-8]. The notion, seen before in the case of Neaera as well as in the anecdotal stories about Laïs and Phryne in their youth, is that a woman who was once unknown, perhaps even a slave, could, by her beauty and a certain will of character, carve out a reputation for herself, eventually winning a man who was in a position to support her materially, and in whatever other ways a devoted man might treat his lover—in Pythionice's case this devotion lasted even beyond her death, no doubt a development beyond either her or any hostile moralists' wildest expectations. Unique aspects of Pythionice's success, or at least those that may have had stirrings in earlier instances involving other women but perhaps had never reached such heights, were two-fold. The first was Harpalus' consistent provision of "royal gifts" (βασιλικά δῶρα) to her while alive and the second the honours of a religious nature that she was granted after her death. While we have seen many ways in which courtesans had been connected to Aphrodite, including the special shrines for Aphrodite Hetaira, her band of courtesan supplicants at Corinth, and the various *hetairai* proposed as models for Greek artists' most famous depictions of the goddess, this assimilation of an actual historical woman to the goddess and the notion that she had her own divine cult is a seemingly unprecedented honour and evidently an influential one.

## ii. Glycera

Also worth at least brief mention is Harpalus' second Athenian mistress Glycera, whom he summoned after the untimely death of Pythionice. This woman is mentioned in both of the two main contemporary sources which discussed Pythionice, the letters of Theopompus and the satyr play of Python—to each of which the caveats mentioned above apply—but not in the other later accounts which deal with Harpalus, except that of Diodorus. According to Theopompus, Harpalus' treatment of Glycera, whom he also calls a *porne*, was more in the same vein as what he had meted out for Pythionice. He

lavished the woman with gifts suitable for a queen not only in private but even in his official capacity and demanded that Alexander's subjects treat her as a queen by crowning her when they crowned him, by addressing her as queen, performing proskynesis to her and honouring her with the other gifts deservedly being received by Alexander's mother and his wife [FGrH 115 F254b ap. Ath. XIII. 595DE]. Returning to Flower's observations on the significance of the divine honours granted to Pythionice, he suggests that the force of the other gifts (ταῖς ἄλλαις δωρεαῖς) refers back to the acts of hailing a woman as *basilissa* and of performing proskynesis before her.<sup>145</sup> That these things should be appropriate to Alexander's mother and wife would, according to Flower, corroborate that Alexander had by this time begun receiving official divine honours since in Macedonia the only condition that would allow for a mortal woman such as Olympias to receive proskynesis would be if she were the mother of a god.<sup>146</sup> As far as the slander of Harpalus goes in this passage, the outrages he is continuing to perpetrate in his licentiousness clearly involve his usurping the homage of the population for himself and his courtesan. It is as if he were undertaking to have himself treated as another Alexander—it is no wonder that Diodorus claims that Harpalus was meanwhile sending benefactions to Athens so that he could rely on a refuge in case his fortunes were reversed [17. 108] and that Curtius states that Harpalus did not even consider awaiting Alexander's return but rather fled before him since he despaired of any chance of pardon after all he had done for so long [X. 1, 43-5].

In evaluating Glycera, who is characterized even more scantily than Pythionice, we may note once again that the term *porne* is used to describe her,

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<sup>145</sup>Contrary to Flower's theory, Carney 1991: 158 posits that the relationship between the honours bestowed on Harpalus' courtesans and the practices of the Macedonian court should not be considered interdependent. While she notes that these honours (in particular the title of *basilissa* and the performance of proskynesis) may well refer to Persian or Near Eastern court practice and may have become a model for the royal trappings and titles of later Macedonian women, she does not believe that the circumstances or inspiration were in any way Macedonian.

<sup>146</sup>Flower 1994: 261. We should note that the practice of proskynesis was prevalent in Persia and caused much outrage among Greeks and Macedonians when Alexander attempted to introduce the practice at his own court. For a good discussion of the incidents in the ancient sources as well



thus debasing her even further than the connotations in the term *hetaira* would have done. Although there is little background provided for her, the implication is that she had an established practice at Athens—as is the assumption for most courtesans in both literary and historical accounts. In addition, the notion of travel being a significant aspect of the *hetaira* lifestyle is confirmed by her long journey to join Harpalus in Asia. Her treatment by Harpalus echoes that which he gave Pythionice, although perhaps to a slightly lesser degree, and the same observations apply about the possibility that the notoriety of these actions—even ones which may have been elaborately embroidered—caused a shift in the expectations of individual *hetairai* as well as those who were the stock characters as it were of male discourse on them. One interesting detail in relation to the account of Glycera that differs from that of Pythionice is the suggestion in Python's satyr play that the extravagant donations of grain to Athens by Harpalus in fact belonged to Glycera. Whether the insinuation is no more than an invention for the purpose of getting a laugh or if it represents a real action on Glycera's part, the idea is conveyed that the prostitute used her own wealth to provide assistance to her home town. Even if the main purpose was to give a surety for herself and Harpalus at Athens should it become necessary, this is another instance of a prostitutes' apparent consciousness of her ability to achieve fame through some kind of philanthropic act. We saw a similar tradition grow up around Phryne who was rumored to have offered to use some of her vast wealth to rebuild the walls of Thebes which Alexander had destroyed if her name were inscribed as the benefactor [Callistratus, *On Courtesans* FGrH 348 F1 ap. Ath. XIII. 591D].<sup>147</sup> Similar is the motivation given by the *hetaira* Thaïs in Plutarch's version for her wish to burn down Persepolis, namely that she and the other Athenian women in Alexander's train should be known to have exacted a

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as scholarship on them see Hamilton 1969: 150-53 commentary on 54. 3-6, 'The Affair of the Proskynesis'.

<sup>147</sup>Note that the fame of these women did persevere, Propertius writes about the wealth of Phryne that could have rebuilt Thebes' torn down walls: ...*quae deletas potuit componere Thebas,/ Phryne tam multis facta beata viris*. (Book II. 6 ll.5-6).

greater revenge on Persia for wrongs done by Xerxes than all Greece's famous admirals and generals [*Alex.* 38. 2].

In conclusion, it seems that the important *hetairai* of the period of Alexander's lifetime, the activities ascribed to them and their place in the historical and literary genres of the day, were significant in both perpetuating the already established elements of Greek pornographic discourse as well as in providing new and more astounding models for those that came after them. It is important to note how integral prostitutes are to other genres of discourse at this time, in particular popular morality and philosophic discussions on the effect of luxury. These elements also played a part in evaluating the new politics of the day, as can be seen in the biographical traditions and historical anecdotes about Alexander's successors, to whom we will turn in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

I. *Early Hellenistic Courtesans:**Historicity & Status, Truth & Propaganda**The Antigonid Successors: Demetrius I Poliorcetes*

According to Plutarch, Demetrius was, in the matter of pleasure, reputed to be by far the worst of all the kings of his day. He displayed this weakness of character through a number of actions: he made light of the institution of marriage by having many wives at one time and even slighted these legitimately married wives by showing no restraint whatever in consorting with many *hetairai* and many freeborn women [*Demetr.* 14. 2-3]. Certainly in vying with the other successors of Alexander for the dubious honour of having the greatest number of mistresses, only Ptolemy II surpassed him and from the records that remain extant, no others even came close. We should note that although Antigonus Monophthalmos was more properly a first generation successor of Alexander, little remains in the sources to indicate that he had a particular interest in *hetairai*. As a result we will mention him only in the context of the rather convoluted case of the *hetaira* Demo who is variably called the mistress of Demetrius I and Antigonus I or Antigonus II Gonatas.

Plutarch's *Life of Demetrius* is our longest and most detailed surviving account of Demetrius and his work is influenced both by the sources that he chose to use as well as by his own self-professed program in writing, namely biography. There are three main traditions which have been identified as having influenced the biographical tradition on Demetrius as we have it in Plutarch. These are: the history of Hieronymos of Kardia<sup>148</sup> which favoured the Antigonid dynasty; an Athenian source that was hostile to Demetrius on account of Athens' subject status, and an Epirot source that favoured Demetrius' enemy Pyrrhos, the king of Epirus. The mix of these three sources in Plutarch's account provides some explanation for the often contradictory characterization which he provides

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<sup>148</sup>According to Hornblower 1981: esp. 1-4, Hieronymos has often been noted for his reliability and honesty. Thus the material that can be traced back to him, primarily the epitome in Diodorus, has acquired an almost "celebrated trustworthiness". cf. also Wehrli 1968: 24

of Demetrius.<sup>149</sup> In addition we must note that Plutarch, while he provides a mine of historical details, wanted primarily to provide a biography of a great man—a biography that was composed for the most part of anecdotes and apophthegmata. These were features not only of biographical writings but also, notably, of writings on prostitutes. Certainly we find abundant examples in the mass of fragments recorded by Athenaeus in Book XIII of his *Deipnosophists*, in particular those of the comic poet Machon of Sicyon whose *Chreiai* (“Bright Sayings”), from c. 250 BC, exemplify these features most clearly.<sup>150</sup> Just as these anecdotal stories in comedic genres give some cause for suspecting their reliability because of their apparent interchangeability, the same caution applies to evaluating them when they appear in biographical works, despite the frequent affinity of the genre, when focused on a king or politician, to political history. According to Momigliano’s study, one of the distinctive features of Hellenistic biography in particular was the change from encomium and apology to “a detached, slightly humorous account of events and opinions characterizing an individual.” This was in addition to the preservation of the typical elements of biography throughout its history: elegant gossip, frivolous erudition, scholarly zeal and realism of details.<sup>151</sup>

### i. Lamia

One of the primary elements in Plutarch’s characterization of Demetrius is the contradiction in traits inherent in the personalities of the greatest men—those who enjoy the greatest success also experience the most disastrous setbacks because they have no moderation either in good or bad qualities. On the negative side of this extreme character was Demetrius’ attachment to luxurious living as

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<sup>149</sup>Wehrli 1968: 25

<sup>150</sup>For a short explanation of the genre of Machon’s writing and his dating etc. see Gow’s Introduction 1965: 3–32. Cf. also Davidson’s 1997: 93 comments on Machon and the genre of *chreiai* in the Hellenistic period. These types of works he regards on the whole as a popular new sub-genre which focused on the obscene witticisms of *hetairai*. Machon’s book in particular he views as an ironic counterpart to the collections of philosophical anecdotes like Xenophon’s *Memoirs*. Note too that Demetrius’ mistresses in particular seem to be a popular subject for Machon who records anecdotes about Lamia [frags. XII, XIII] and Mania [frags. XIV, XV].

<sup>151</sup>Momigliano 1993: 102–104

manifested predominantly in his affairs with women (marriages, affairs and abuses of free women (and boys) and engagements with *hetairai*). Apart from the briefest mention of a number of other courtesans, generally no more than in a simple naming, Plutarch's focus when it comes to Demetrius' individual *hetairai* is on Lamia. It is a point of agreement in all the ancient sources that mention Demetrius' courtesans that Lamia was his favourite mistress; in Plutarch she is mentioned in five different chapters in the context of fourteen separate anecdotes. Despite the apparent wealth of information provided, we find once again that there is very little in the way of character definition for Lamia. Instead most of the anecdotes about her are geared towards revealing a particular aspect of Demetrius' own character—in most cases his shameless lack of self-control in matters of pleasure. We will approach the information provided by these various anecdotes in the same manner as was applied to Pythionice, namely by looking at how the variables used to define the 'generic' *hetaira* (as discussed in Chapter Two) stack up when applied to her individual case. In doing so we will concentrate on Plutarch's rather fuller account, using the various other sources which mention her to corroborate or supplement his portrait.

The chronologically first piece of information about Lamia provided by Plutarch is that she was, before meeting Demetrius, a member of Ptolemy I Soter's entourage [*Demetr.* 16. 3-4]. He suggests that she was famous (περιβόητος) not in the erotic arts of the *hetaira* but as an *auletris* (flute player). As we saw earlier, the connection between women who played musical instruments and the prostitute's trade was virtually automatic in ancient Greece. This does not, however, prove that she had also been a mistress of Soter since Plutarch goes out of his way to emphasize that she was not at the time an established *hetaira*.<sup>152</sup> Despite the lack of evidence that Lamia was a prostitute before her engagement with Demetrius, the influence of male cultural perceptions of unmarried women skilled in musicianship who spent time in the company of men was

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<sup>152</sup>Ogden's 1999: 241-242 suggestion that Lamia, by virtue of her intimate connection with the Egyptian king, would have been free to return to Egypt with the rest of the courtiers whom

overwhelming enough to label her as such in virtually every ancient source that mentions her. Given that Lamia was not reputed to have been a prostitute before her affair with Demetrius and that she appears—at least from the evidence that remains—not to have been involved with any other men, we may notice a relatively new development in the definition of *hetairai* at this time: that *hetairai* involved with kings were noticeably monogamous. While we did note in the context of classical prostitution that some of the more prominent women of the day were known for establishing exclusive relations with a specific man for as long as such an arrangement remained lucrative, there is little suggestion that they managed to engage one man and never found a need to move on to another. Daniel Ogden notes that this apparent lack of promiscuity, although it was not a hard and fast rule, was one of the distinctive features of the Hellenistic royal courtesan—a feature that would have defined the woman as a ‘non-courtesan’ outside of the royal context.<sup>153</sup>

There are a number of other indications that Lamia was not the typical *hetaira* of the sort that we have met up to this point, at least in so far as the sources do not seem to have taken quite as many liberties in slandering her reputation. If we look back to a comparison with Pythionice, the most-well known precedent for the royal courtesan, we have no scandalous details of Lamia’s earlier life as a slave *porne* during which she was engaged by one and all without discretion. Instead we find, in a fragment of the periegete<sup>154</sup> Polemon<sup>155</sup> recorded by Athenaeus, further positive evidence that Lamia was not a typical prostitute: Polemon states that Lamia was the daughter of the Athenian (presumably citizen) Cleanor and that she had built the stoa or art gallery at

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Demetrius magnanimously allowed to return home after their capture seems to be stretching the reliability of the connection between Lamia and Soter a little too far.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid, 216

<sup>154</sup>For a definition of the genre known as periegesis, of which Polemon was the earliest famous proponent, see Habicht 1985: 2-3. Cf. also 144-146 for a good description of the uncertain value to the researching periegete of local informants and guides whose aim was to make money, often by impressing the traveller with wildly colourful anecdotes about particular monuments.

<sup>155</sup>For a summary of the works, character and dating of Polemon see Lesky 1966: 780, where Polemon is described as a scholar intent of finding the truth through careful personal

Sicyon as a benefaction to the people [*On the Painted Stoa at Sicyon* ap. Ath. XIII. 577C]. As Ogden notes, the naming of a father is both significant and unusual—she is one of only three royal-courtesans of the time to have a patronymic listed—since in the ancient world this generally would have indicated citizenship and perhaps also high birth.<sup>156</sup> How she came to be a musician in Ptolemy's entourage and then a well-known courtesan can be answered with no more than speculation but given the apparent prevalence of interaction between important Athenians (or those who wished to become important by joining the ranks of flatterers/courtiers of the various Hellenistic kings) we might imagine that Lamia had been trained in musicianship and brought to Alexandria by her father and that when she was captured by Demetrius and managed to insinuate herself into his affections that she was labeled an *hetaira*—and even in one case one among “those [infamous] whores” (πόρναι ἐκείναις) of Demetrius [Plut. *Demetr.* 24. 1]. Such labels would have served well to discredit Demetrius' taste in women as well as being a natural assumption among Athenian male authors.

Also a clear possibility, however, given the definite hostile bias of many of the sources on Demetrius, is that Lamia was in fact not a musician at all and that the label of *auletris* was attached to her name in order to both undermine her status as one of Demetrius' favourites as well as to implicitly condemn Demetrius for initiating such an attachment. Also significant in evaluating the nature of Lamia's original status is that if she were in reality the legitimate daughter of an Athenian citizen, there would be very little precedent for a socially acceptable education in musicianship. While things were undoubtedly changing in the Greek world during the Hellenistic period with the gradual mixing of oriental and European cultures—according to Pomeroy there is evidence for an at least rudimentary education for girls in the traditional boy's

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investigation in nearly all Greek areas. It is also noted that he was active at Alexandria from 202 to 181 BC, making him relatively close in time to the events in question.

<sup>156</sup>Ogden 1999: 245-246. We must also bear in mind however the possibility that, even if her father was a citizen and even an important or wealthy one, her mother was a foreigner or even a slave

curriculum of athletics, music, and reading in some areas of the Greek world—it is unlikely that the traditional expectation that women be educated in matters which pertained to the protection of the household and nothing beyond this would have changed much by this time.<sup>157</sup> In addition, as Marrou explains in his study of education in antiquity, music had gradually changed from the archaic period and become elaborately technical, thus losing its place in typical boys' education by the Hellenistic age. It was professionals who took the place of a population 'liberally educated' in music (and similarly in dancing as well), professionals who were popular and well paid but despised not only as people of questionable morality but also as *banausoi*—"tradespeople".<sup>158</sup> Undoubtedly if music and dancing, when mentioned in the context of women's participation, had been traditionally associated with prostitutes, the growing trend of associating even male practitioners with questionable backgrounds and lifestyles would have further emphasized the non-respectable nature of being a musician. It seems, from the emphasis in the sources on Lamia's skill in flute playing, that the aim was to portray her in no uncertain terms as a professional. If this representation reflects more than simply the hostility of the source, there can be little confidence in assuming a respectable citizen birth for her.

Leaving aside the question of Lamia's precise origins, it is clear that there was no dissension in the sources which remain about her being identified as a prostitute. As noted in part above, she was on at least two occasions called a *porne* [*Demetr.* 24. 1; Phylarchus *FGrH* 81 F12 ap. Ath. XIV. 614F<sup>159</sup>], on numerous others she is called an *auletris* [Lynceus of Samos *Banquet Letters* ap. Ath. III. 101E and IV. 128B; Ath. XIII. 577C; Machon XIII Gow; Plut. *Demetr.* 16. 3; 27. 4], and

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and as the offspring of such a union that she would have been excluded from the typical lifestyle of a citizen daughter.

<sup>157</sup>Pomeroy 1975: 74 on Classical Athenian women's education; 136-137 on Hellenistic women's education.

<sup>158</sup>Marrou 1956: 137-141

<sup>159</sup>It must be noted that in the case of the second instance the context is exchange of jibes between the two successor kings apparently most hostile to one another—Demetrius and Lysimachus. Clearly their disdain for one another could have easily encouraged them or their courtiers to embroider, exaggerate, or even invent scurrilous details to accompany their often humorous slanders.



still others a *hetaira* [Plut. *Demetr.* 27. 1; Ael. *VH* XII. 17; Clem. *Protrept.* IV. 48]. We may assume therefore, based on the apparent lack of conformity in Lamia's characterization to the general definition of a prostitute, that there was a sort of expansion within the category of the *hetaira*. This may reflect a swelling in the numbers of *hetairai* as a result of the sheer popularity of the women (i.e. the ranks were being filled by women who would not typically have been seen or have seen themselves as prostitutes). From another perspective, this newly atypical category of women called *hetairai* but not easily defined as prostitutes, may have been a development spurred on by the style and organization of the courts of the various newly established monarchs. Some of these were situated in the east and thus likely were influenced by the customs of the previously established oriental monarchies; as such they would nonetheless have been defined by Greek authors using Greek terminology. The notion that a typical eastern king had always had a great supply of women available from his exclusive harem—many of whom were in fact the daughters of important or at least ambitious families—may have had some influence in the development of court organization. It is possible that Greek authors would have seen this practice as involving women whom they conventionally referred to as *hetairai*. This would not necessarily define them as prostitutes in the sense that *pornai* were defined, but more as captivating women whose goal it was to benefit (primarily financially) from engaging in sexual relations with powerful men outside of the socially acceptable role for 'respectable' women of legitimate marriage and procreation. The unusual circumstances in the eastern, but in many ways still Greek, Hellenistic scenario, where the women also were apparently Greek, were in part that their involvement with a particular king did not, in so far as the sources provide us with any evidence, seem to confer any benefit on their families. While it is not a hard and fast rule, in particular in the case of a number of Demetrius' mistresses, the possibility exists that the *hetaira* in the new context of Hellenistic royalty represented at times a woman of reasonably respectable birth engaged in an exclusive relationship with a king who might never move on to pursue other attachments (as would tend to be one of the more concrete aspects which defines

prostitution in general).<sup>160</sup> Thus, although Lamia's presence in the train of Ptolemy I's navy presents the slight possibility that she had been his mistress, it seems equally possible that the extent of Lamia's practising of the *hetaira* trade as it were was her involvement with Demetrius.

Unfortunately there are no clear cut answers regarding any of the courtesans in our study, a problem which is the result in part of the sparseness of sources and of their often questionable reliability. There are a number of aspects to Lamia's characterization which might contradict the above theory that perhaps she was not in fact a prostitute. The first is Plutarch's statement that she was one among a number of 'well-known/ infamous' prostitutes [*Demetr.* 24. 1] and secondly there is the fact that her name is quite suited to a *hetaira* of the professional variety—according to Gow's commentary on Machon's *Chreiai*, Lamia is approximately translated as "Vampire".<sup>161</sup> In connection to the name we find that one of the prostitutes in another famous *hetaira* anecdote (involving Themistocles and his prostitute-drawn chariot) is also named Lamia, giving the impression that the name was a common one for prostitutes [*Idomeneus ap Ath.* XIII. 576C=FG<sub>GrH</sub> 338 F4<sup>162</sup>]. In addition, Pape and Benseler's list of the name in their prosopographical dictionary of Greek proper names gives a great number of occurrences of the name Lamia in ancient sources, only a single one of which could be taken as referring to a 'respectable' woman rather than our *hetaira*.<sup>163</sup> None of these factors can, however, be used to define Lamia conclusively as a

<sup>160</sup>Note Ogden's 1999: 216-217 attempt to set forth criteria which may have differentiated royal-courtesans from non-royal ones and the problems with creating a paradigm for either category.

<sup>161</sup>Gow 1965: 94. cf. OCD III 812, where Lamia is explained as a mythological nursery room bogey who snatched away children.

<sup>162</sup>We may keep in mind here that this Idomeneus of Lampsacus appears to have been something of an unreliable and sensationalistic source given Cooper's discussion of his part in the development of the tradition that Hypereides, like most orators and demagogues, had an unhealthy obsession with prostitutes. His typecasting of politicians in general as these types of characters should cause suspicion in evaluating such anecdotes. Cf. above, Chapter Three. Of course the observation that Lamia was a typical *hetaira* name holds true regardless of the veracity of the particular anecdote.

<sup>163</sup>Pape and Benseler 1959: 767 no. 4; cf. Osborne and Byrne (eds.) 1994: 279 s.v. Λαμία no. 3=IG ii<sup>2</sup> 11941. Cf. also Ogden's 1999: 249-250 comments on the name Lamia about which he agrees that despite the occurrence among respectable women in Boeotia, it was primarily a name adapted to the *hetaira* profession.

prostitute since the accusation that she was a *porne*, an *auletris*, or even a *hetaira* could very well be the exaggerated slander of a hostile source and the name Lamia is just as likely to be a nickname as a real name. It may well replace a different birth name, perhaps even a more respectable sounding one. The practice of assuming or being given a nickname appropriate to the trade was apparently quite commonplace among *hetairai*: Phryne is said originally to have been called by the noble sounding name of Mnesarete [Aristogeiton, *Against Phryne* ap. Ath. XIII. 591E], while Aspasia of Phocaea was originally called Milto [Xenophanes, ap. Ath. XIII. 576D], and Mania apparently exerted a great effort to have her childhood name of Melitta lapse from general use [Machon, XIV Gow]. If the sources, determined to attack Demetrius for his obsessive involvement with women and luxurious banquets of the sort that prostitutes would be expected to be in attendance, desired to find a suitable nickname for her Lamia would certainly have been an effective one. More likely than this rather fantastic scenario however, is that Lamia herself was aware of the allure of the *hetaira*, as exemplified by the most successful women who had preceded her, and based on this she chose the name Lamia as a manner of identifying herself and giving herself further appeal. If Plutarch's statement that she was already famous as a flute player before she had taken up with Demetrius is accurate then her choice of name was likely already well established—or else we would likely have an instance of another name for her cited somewhere in the sources, as we do for many other famous courtesans.

Another significant aspect of Lamia's biography is the divine honours which she and her fellow courtesan Leaena were apparently granted by the Athenians. While such actions—namely the dedication of temples to the *eromenai* ("beloveds") of the Macedonian king—were to become almost commonplace during the Hellenistic period, whether bestowed on the kings themselves, their legitimate wives and children, or even important members of their court, the phenomenon was still relatively new at this point. The major precedents that existed were honours granted to Alexander and those reputed to have been bestowed on Pythionice by Harpalus. As such it is important to note how such

historical incidents, even when involving prostitutes, seem to have had a profound impact on the shape of later events; evidently the precedents provided by the lives of earlier *hetairai*, keeping in mind the influence on them by the incorporation of various elements found in pornographic discourse (fictional and historical), did in fact influence the expectations of these women and their evaluation by their male commentators. This aspect of evaluation is particularly important here in the case of Lamia because we find that two of the major sources (those found in Plutarch's *Life* and the fragments recorded by Athenaeus) that report the honours given her are based on the accounts of authors both hostile to the still relatively new monarchical government at Athens and given to a moralizing agenda.<sup>164</sup>

The predominant authors of these types of negative anecdotes likely made up what was noted earlier as the hostile Athenian strand of the biographical tradition on the Antigonid dynasty. Included among these authors whom we can identify are the tragic and moralizing historian Duris of Samos and Demochares, the anti-Macedonian orator (and relative of the quintessential opponent of Macedonian expansion Demosthenes). Although Duris does not specifically describe the incidents involving temples for Aphrodite Lamia and Aphrodite Leaena, he goes into detail recounting the hymn composed in honour of Demetrius as the divine son of Poseidon and Aphrodite. Given the strong resemblance of passages in Plutarch which aim to characterize Demetrius as a slave to excess and luxury to the fragments of Duris' history, in addition to his recognized disdain for flatterers and his noted fondness for the use of courtesan anecdotes to exemplify moral degradation,<sup>165</sup> there seems little doubt that his history contributed to those portions of Demetrius' biography which dealt with

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<sup>164</sup>An additional significant source for the existence of such a temple to Aphrodite Lamia is found in a fragment of Polemon's *On The Painted Porch in Sicyon* where it is the Thebans rather than the Athenians who dedicate the temple in their scramble to flatter Demetrius [frag. 15 Preller ap Ath. VI. 253B]. Given that Polemon was involved in writing literature based on personal investigation, there is a possibility that he either saw the temple which had been so dedicated or else that he was shown a temple and told the local tradition that it had been dedicated on behalf of one of Demetrius' mistresses. In this case we have no way of telling the biases if any of the original source or report.

<sup>165</sup>Wehrli 1968: 26; Kebric 1977: 55-60

*hetairai*. Notable as well is the apparent natural connection in Greek writing on the *hetairai* and the *parasitoi/kolakes*; according to Davidson these two categories of individuals were presented as counterparts to one another, particularly in comic literature like Machon's *Chreiai*.<sup>166</sup> Returning to the reported identification made by the flatterers between Demetrius and Poseidon, the significance lies in the fact that Demetrius himself had promoted his connection to Poseidon, at least since his naval victory at Cyprus in 306 B.C.—when he is supposed to have acquired Lamia—by using depictions of Poseidon on one side and himself on the other of some of his coinage.<sup>167</sup>

Clearly, the successful flatterer, a category of individuals who were quickly proliferating at this time (Athenaeus devotes a great deal of the sixth Book of his *Deipnosophists* to describing their activities and the attacks on them by various prominent authors) would have gauged the potential success of his flatteries by the disposition of the recipient. It would seem then quite likely that Demetrius, just as much as he promoted his connection to Poseidon, would not have been adverse to encouraging his association to Aphrodite through his apparently well-publicized relations with all manner of women. Although the hostility of various writers to the practice of extreme flattery of powerful men could have led to exaggeration and even invention of ever more shocking instances of such activities, the prominence of the practice in such a great number of contemporary sources shows that it was in fact a reality of the times. Perhaps Demetrius' indecent activities in the back rooms of the Parthenon are not so much slander to be dismissed automatically as they might first appear. Certainly we may keep in mind that he was, according to Phylarchus (*FGrH* 81 F12 ap Ath. XIV. 614EF), renowned as "one fond of jesting" (φιλόγελως); the comedic atmosphere, notably quite coarse and vulgar, surrounding many of the anecdotes involving him and his mistresses is very clear and seems to confirm

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<sup>166</sup>Davidson 1997: 93

<sup>167</sup>Wehrli 1968: see coin plates between 192-3 and Appendice Numismatique 2. Demetrios, 232-4. Notably, such an assumption had been made by a prominent Macedonian general before Demetrius—by "White" Cleitus in 323/2 BC after the battle against the Athenians at Amorgus.

this characterization (cf. Machon, XIII Gow). We should also note that there are additional stories describing the deification of Demetrius' legitimate 'first' wife (this is not a certain fact but when kings were polygamous it is often assumed that the mother of the heir is to be considered the chief wife) Phila: in a comic fragment of Alexis' *Crateias* a symposiast calls for libations to be poured to Antigonus and Demetrius, the Saviour gods, and to Aphrodite Phila [116 K-A ap. Ath. VI. 254A] and in a fragment of Dionysius' *Onomasticon* the claim is made that 'those around Adeimantus of Lampsacus' (perhaps the same one named as a parasite of Demetrius who also received divine honours—see below) set up statues and a temple for Aphrodite Phila as well as naming the location Philaeum [ap Ath. VI. 255C].

If we accept that such honours were being granted, apparently on quite a grand scale, to Demetrius, his father<sup>168</sup> and wife, and certain of his (likely chief) courtiers, the subsequent step of granting divine honours to his apparently favourite representatives of Aphrodite (despite the fact that they had earned the reputation of being *hetairai*) may not have been as shocking as the opponents of these acts would have us believe. Demochares states that Demetrius himself was appalled by the depths to which the Athenians had sunk when they went so far as to honour not just him but his parasites and *hetairai* as well [FGrH 75 F1 ap. Ath. VI. 252F-253B]. This could clearly be a rhetorical flourish aimed at convincing his audience of just how disgraceful the Athenians had become rather than a factual report of Demetrius' actual reaction to the actions. In view of the probability that the term *parasitos*, used to describe the men connected to Demetrius before whom the Athenian population apparently abased themselves, is a misinterpretation of at least some of these officials' actual roles at the court, we may once again stress the possibility that the women so honoured had a

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Plutarch, *Mor.* 338A, states that he "had himself publicly named Poseidon and carried a trident" (Ποσειδῶν ἀγορεύθη καὶ τρίαιναν ἐφόρει.)

<sup>168</sup>For a good discussion of the Hellenistic ruler cult in connection with the Antigonids and the Greeks see Billows 1990: 233-36. The Antigonids were apparently the first living men after Alexander to receive extensive honours from the Greeks, likely as a result of their official propaganda by which they represented themselves as the restorers and protectors of Greek autonomy.

status and role not precisely defined by the derogatory Greek concept of the *hetaira* as prostitute.<sup>169</sup>

Whether it has any significance for the status of Lamia at Demetrius' court, there are a number of details relating to her which are strikingly similar to those about Phila. There is, of course, the dedication of temples and other honours in the joint name of Aphrodite and each of the women mentioned above. Another detail is that like Phila, whom Demetrius had married on his father's advice despite the disparity in their ages, Lamia was said to have captivated Demetrius for the long term in spite of the fact that she was "already past her prime" (ἤδη παρηκμακυίας) [Plut. *Demetr.* 27. 4, cf. 16. 3 where Demetrius is described as "by far younger than her" (πολὺ νεώτερον ἑαυτῆς)]. Plutarch states that because of her father Antipater and because she had been married to Craterus whom the Macedonians respected, Demetrius held her in the greatest esteem and honour of all his wives—certainly it was his son Antigonus by her who became Demetrius' heir. Ironically, Plutarch goes on in the very same chapter to describe how lightly Demetrius took his marriages and how he slighted Phila by engaging many *hetairai* and free born women [*Demetr.* 14. 2-3]. Given the fact that according to at least one (unfortunately unidentified) source in Athenaeus, XIII. 577C, Demetrius had a daughter by Lamia and named her Phila, there is little doubt that Demetrius did not feel much in the way of loyalty—at least not in terms of respect for her position—to his wife Phila. And

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<sup>169</sup>See the brief discussion above (p. 83). In our case here the derisive terms *kolax* ("flatterer") and *parasitos* ("parasite") are applied to courtiers who were officially known as *philoi* ("friends") of the king and held significant administrative positions. For a summary of the ranking of the various groups attached to the royal Ptolemaic court (and likely other Macedonian based kingdoms) see Fraser 1972: 102-103. Of the five groups ranked, the one known as οἱ φίλοι was fourth and formed a 'privy council' of the king. So Demetrius' close associate Oxythemis, who is recorded travelling to negotiate with other rulers in an official capacity as Demetrius' representative (Diodorus, 21. 15), as well as being apparently held up as an example of the fine quality of friends at his court by Demetrius himself (Phylarchus, *FGrH* 81 F12 ap. Ath. XIV. 614F) is slandered along with Burichus and Adeimantus as one of the king's *kolakôn* for whom the Athenian population had disgraced themselves by making altars and shrines, pouring libations and chanting paeans to. Undoubtedly, the bitterness of Demochares, a proponent of democracy who found himself now a king's subject, influenced his evaluation of the circumstances, especially in view of the apparent ease with which many Athenians seemed to be accepting this new position in the form of attempting to outdo one another with gross flatteries of the new ruler (as seen not only here but throughout Plutarch's *Life of Demetrius*).

of course, from Lamia's perspective it may have been something of a coup to have achieved such a lasting place in Demetrius' affections that the choice of such a name would be acceptable.<sup>170</sup>

As far as the other criteria that seem to have been part of defining a *hetaira* in the various genres of ancient Greek pornographic discourse we find that Lamia was renowned not only for her beauty and charm—which, unusually, she maintained even in her later years [Plut. *Demetr.* 16. 4]<sup>171</sup>—but she also possessed that sharp, and often subtly coarse, wit for which the greatest *hetairai* of the preceding period were renowned. This feature appears to have remained prominent for the most part among the Athenian *hetairai*, at least when the anecdotal accounts of Athenian women involved with Demetrius are compared with those told of the courtesans of other kings. The majority of such anecdotes are to be found in Athenaeus who was particularly interested in such scandal-rich and scurrilous stories; he records in particular those fragments of Machon's *Chreiai* which display this wit. Gow notes that despite Machon's incorporation of more public figures into his comedic writings than was the custom at this time in New Comedy, the concentration was nonetheless still on figures drawn from the *demimonde*: courtesans, gourmands, and parasites. Even where powerful politicians are drawn into the discussion, these men are usually the jokers or protagonists while the affect of their sharp wit on their subordinate victims is

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<sup>170</sup> The statement that Lamia and Demetrius had a daughter together comes in the context of a listing of prominent men who were either said to be the sons of prostitutes or to have had children by such women. A source is cited for both the anecdote before this one (Carystius' history) and after (Polemon) but whether this one belongs to one of these two authors is indeterminable. Ogden 1999: 262 citing the anecdote about Phila's temple, statues and namesake town which was discussed above, mentions the possibility that the Phila here mentioned could be Demetrius' daughter by Lamia rather than his wife Phila. Given that the precise woman is not specified and there is no other corroborating evidence for this daughter while the comic fragment of Alexis seems to allude to Phila the wife, I would not push this identification. Additionally, we may consider that this divine association of Phila had some influence on the subsequent (?) equivalent divine association, when she was married to the Seleucid Antiochus, of Stratonice, daughter of Phila and Demetrius, with Aphrodite in Smyrne Macurdy 1932: 82 citing *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 990.

<sup>171</sup> We should remember, in the context of pornographic discourse how often older prostitutes are reviled and despised, even once famous women like Laïs and Gnathaena are mocked mercilessly once they have passed the point when they can no longer attract wealthy lovers [Epicrates, *Anti-Laïs* ap. Ath. XIII. 570BD says that in her old age Laïs is now "tamed" (τιθασός); Machon XVI II. 300-01 calls Gnathaena a "a perfect coffin" (τελέως σορός)].



where the humour is drawn from.<sup>172</sup> This change in the focus of comedy during the early Hellenistic period is a very important development since it would have influenced pornographic discourse on a much wider spectrum than just within comedy.

Certainly this change of focus would seem to have encouraged the development of the sort of literature being written by men like Lynceus of Samos. His *Banquet Letters* would have been historical to the extent that they were accounts of actual events—such as Lamia’s banquet in honour of Demetrius [ap. Ath. III. 101E; IV. 128AB; Plut. *Demetr.* 27. 2]—but more than likely the demand for scandalous and gossipy details would have exerted a powerful influence on the shape given to the events witnessed. Interestingly, Lynceus is given by Gow as the most probable source for Machon’s tales about *hetairai*,<sup>173</sup> thus showing how these anecdotal stories passed back and forth between genres. Also influential would have been the debates raging in philosophy and popular morality at this time<sup>174</sup> in which these figures of the *demimonde* played an important part as representatives of the baser side of men’s character. As noted above this concentration on moral evaluation was an important aspect of Plutarch’s biographical account of Demetrius and it is likely that at least in part, he used Duris of Samos and his brother Lynceus as sources.<sup>175</sup> Both Duris and Lynceus were contemporaries of Demetrius and although they were writing in quite diverse genres—Duris a ‘tragic’ history and Lynceus “inconsequential chatter” about a range of life’s pleasures<sup>176</sup>—each of them was noted for the prominence of courtesans in their accounts.

It is in relation to this popularity of *hetaira* conversation or witticisms that we meet some of Demetrius’ other mistresses, although none are characterized nearly as fully as Lamia—at least in the context of describing their relationship to Demetrius. Also in connection with his other mistresses we meet one of the

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<sup>172</sup>Gow 1965: 19

<sup>173</sup>*Ibid.*, 20

<sup>174</sup>As noted earlier in Flower’s discussion of Theopompus’ moralizing passages, cf. n 129 above.

<sup>175</sup>Kebric 1977: 58; for Duris’ background see esp. 1–9

<sup>176</sup>*Ibid.*, 15–18, 20

distinctive differences which apparently distinguished these Athenian *hetairai* from their 'royal courtesan' (as Ogden calls them) counterparts at other early Hellenistic courts, namely how much more closely they fit the paradigm or construct of the *hetaira* which was developed in the classical period. There are two, possibly three, other mistresses connected with Demetrius who were said to be Athenian women; these included Leaena, Mania, and Demo (if this woman was not one and the same as Mania, as Plutarch suggests, 27. 4). Leaena, while she may have been important enough at Demetrius' court to inspire the Athenian flatterers, has next to nothing said about her to fill out her characterization. We have already discussed the various problems surrounding the possibility of her divine honours in the section on Lamia above. Currently all that can be said about Leaena is that, like Lamia, she possessed a name which was apparently quite popular among courtesans, it means "Lioness".<sup>177</sup>

## ii. Mania [Melitta]

Mania on the other hand receives quite a full characterization, especially in the matter of her distinguishing sharp wit. Mania in particular seems to resemble more closely the top *hetairai* of the earlier period than the exclusive royal mistresses of her own day. In addition to her relations with Demetrius [Plut. *Demetr.* 27. 4-5; Ptolemy of Megalopolis, *Histories of Philopator* ap. Ath. XIII. 578A; Machon XV ll. 226-30, Gow], she is said to have been involved with two famous Olympic victors—the pancratiasts Leontiscus and Antenor [Machon XV ll. 218-25, Gow]—as well as being hired out for symposia at which an unspecified number of men were intimate with her [Machon XIV ll. 199-210, Gow; XV ll. 231-57, Gow]. It is noticeable that although other *hetairai* were at times slandered for being involved with an excessive number of clients (as Theopompus accused Pythionice), the abundance of details in these anecdotes about Mania is quite extraordinary. Unfortunately, the considerable confusion surrounding her name likely amounts to an increase in the possibility—already common it seems in

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<sup>177</sup>On the popularity of this and other names for *hetairai* drawn from the animal kingdom see Gow 1965: 93 where he also cites, for the inscriptional instance of Leaena *I.G.*<sup>2</sup> ii/iii. 11960.

*hetaira* anecdotes in general—that some of these stories were simply popular for their amusement value and were not in fact specific to a particular courtesan. A case in point is the exchange of abuse between Mania and Gnathaena recorded in fragment XIV of Machon; the same scenario is recorded in a fragment of Lynceus' *Reminiscences*, only this time the abusive remarks are exchanged between Phryne and Gnathaena [=Ath. XIII. 584CD]. It is interesting that a *hetaira* such as Mania who appears to have had more in common with famous courtesans like Gnathaena (who, despite her great popularity in the sources, was the lover of a famous comic poet and even some insignificant men but never anyone in a position of ultimate power) managed to initiate an affair with Demetrius. Ogden aptly concludes, in relation to the confusion over attributing anecdotes to specific courtesans and in particular these Athenian ones involved with Demetrius, that the world described by the sources is “an idealized and largely confected [one] in which all the courtesan ‘names’ could be associated with above all Demetrius... and after [him] any number of famous Athenians of the early Hellenistic period”.<sup>178</sup>

### iii. Demo [Mania]

Another factor that leads to confusion in this case is that the appellation Mania was a nickname that came to be so popular that the courtesan's real name Melitta fell out of use. Further, a *hetaira* that may or may not be the same as this Melitta/Mania is called Demo by Plutarch and described as having the ‘surname’ Mania (ἡ ἐπικαλουμένη Μανία) [*Demetr.* 27. 4]. It is impossible to sort out the identity of these women based on their names and it is made even more difficult by the apparent popularity of the name Demo among *hetairai*. As we saw earlier in chapter two, it was already a common prostitute name in the archaic period. It may be that the content and tone of the witty anecdotes that Plutarch tells of Demo suited so well the accounts that he had of Mania that he assumed them to be one and the same person. Plutarch mentions this Demo again, 24. 1, along

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<sup>178</sup>Ogden 1999: 234. We should note also that a relationship between the famous Gnathaena and Demetrius is vaguely implied in the very late fictional letters of Alciphron (4. 16).

with Lamia, Chrysis, and Anticyra, all of whom he categorizes as the *pornai* with whom Demetrius reveled in his lodgings at the Parthenon, defying decency in the presence of the virgin goddess. While not all the names of the courtesans are repeated we also find this anecdote in a comic fragment of the contemporary poet Philippides [25 K-A ap Plut. *Demetr.* 26. 4] as well as much later in the Christian writer Clement of Alexandria's attack on the deification of mortal men by pagans. In Clement's account the Athenians are ridiculed for having proclaimed Demetrius a god, a man who, since he could not consummate his marriage to Athena herself, brought Lamia into the goddess' bridal chamber to take the her place [*Exhortation to the Greeks* IV. 48].

Although Chrysis and Anticyra are for us no more than names, an interesting if confused story is told of the courtesan Demo. Athenaeus records two contradictory fragments about whose lover Demo was. The first, from the history of Ptolemy of Megalopolis, states that Demo was the lover of Antigonus (whether Monophthalmos, the father, or Gonatas, the son, is not supplied) who bore him a son named Alcyoneus [*FGrH* 161 F4 ap Ath. XIII. 578A]. Noteworthy is the fact that we have only small fragmentary remains of this historian but he is renowned for the scandalous nature of his writing.<sup>179</sup> This Alcyoneus is mentioned by Plutarch in his *Life of Pyrrhus*, 34. 34, as the son of Antigonus II Gonatas, but no indication is given of his mother's identity. If we assume that Ptolemy's reference is correct it would seem to indicate that the reputation of a woman who bore a king a child, whether she was called his *hetaira* or his *pallaxis* did not preclude that child playing some kind of role in his or her father's official policy. This suggestion is corroborated by the instances of the children of some of the other Hellenistic kings whose mothers were reputed to have been courtesans: Ptolemy I had three children, Leontiscus, Lagus and Eirene, by Thaïs (Cleitarchus, *FGrH* 137 F11 ap. Ath. XIII. 576E; Justin XV. 2,7); Ptolemy Physcon had a son Apion by either Eirene/Ithaca or another *paelex*=*pallakis* (Josephus,

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<sup>179</sup>See Walbank's 1957: Vol. I 30 ; Vol. II 33 comments on Polybius' use of Ptolemy as a source.

*Against Apion* 2.5; Diodorus, 33. 13; Justin, 39. 5,2); and Eumenes III may have been the son of Eumenes II's 'lyre-playing concubine' (Justin, 36. 4,6; Eutropius, IV. 20).<sup>180</sup> We will discuss this possibility further in the section on the early Ptolemies. Ogden argues that this Alcyoneus was even, up until the birth of Demetrius II Aetolicus, the designated heir of Antigonus II.<sup>181</sup>

The contradictory version of the story of Demo is more detailed in some ways but far more frustrating. The source for the account is cited by Athenaeus as the *Histories* of Heracleides Lembos [*FHG* iii. 168 F4 ap Ath. XIII. 578AB] who wrote under the sixth Ptolemy but may have used the closely contemporary second century B.C. *Diadochai* by Sotion of Alexandria.<sup>182</sup> According to this version, Demo was in fact Demetrius' mistress, as apparently confirmed by her mention in Plutarch's *Life* (if Demo-Mania is in fact one person), but his father Antigonus "fell madly in love with her" (ἦ ἐπιμανῆναι). In the *Icaromenippus* ("The Sky-Man"), 15, of Lucian, although it is a very late source, we may have a confirmation of sorts of this story: the character Menippus claims that whilst flying above the earth he observed "Antigonus committing adultery with the wife of his son" (Ἀντίγονον μοιχευοντα τοῦ υἱοῦ τὴν γυναῖκα). Presumably, if it is based on the same story that we have here, the son is Demetrius and the woman Demo. However, this is not stated outright and given the number of wives Demetrius had it could conceivably have been referring to an affair with any one of them.<sup>183</sup> In the course of some unknown circumstances in which Demetrius

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<sup>180</sup>These citations are from Ogden's 1999: 232-237 notes on the discussion of possible offspring of Hellenistic kings and their courtesan mistresses, specifically notes 11, 13, and 14, 252-3. Ogden gives further possibilities but they do not concern us here at this point.

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid*, 233 with n. 24—citing Plutarch, *Pyrrhus* 34 and Diogenes Laertius IV. 41,2 and VII. 36, 253. Also noteworthy are the other biographical details about (H)Alcyoneus cited here by Ogden: he was educated by a distinguished Stoic—Persaeus; he was an important general in his father Gonatas' army; after his death he had an extravagant annual festival instituted in his honour. For Ogden's account of the possibilities for confusion in the literary traditions on Demo herself see 247-248.

<sup>182</sup>Lesky 1966: 690

<sup>183</sup>We should keep in mind that these are mere speculations and it is just as possible, when recalling the fame of Antigonus and Demetrius' amiable relations, that this story was invented either to discredit the truth of their unusual closeness and that Demetrius' phenomenal fondness for women, wives and otherwise, provided a good starting point for the creation of a feud between the two.

and his friend Oxythemis jointly “committed crimes” (συνεξαμαρτάνοντα) of some sort and Oxythemis had Demo’s maids tortured to death, Antigonus punished Oxythemis for his actions by having him put to death. We are given no indication of what these crimes may have been but the vague content of the anecdote implies that the crimes and punishment of Demetrius’ friend, who was, based on the number of times his name occurs in the sources, a close and important associate of Demetrius, were connected with the affair by Antigonus with his son’s mistress. All we can speculate is that the story sprang up as anecdotal confirmation in Demetrius’ biographical tradition of the man’s extremes when it came to women. Perhaps the fact that he would conspire in perpetrating some kind of crimes in retaliation to his father’s theft of his mistress is meant to show just how desperately obsessed with love affairs Demetrius was—to go so far when he and his father enjoyed such a close and reputedly respectful relationship. What the details were surrounding Oxythemis’ punishment and the exact nature of the crimes he committed will remain a mystery given the state of our sources but it seems more probable than not that there were some kind of political reasons behind it involving more than just a spat over a *hetaira*.

In conclusion, while Demetrius’ fondness for women and the fame of his involvement in particular with *hetairai* have given the Antigonid dynasty the reputation of prominence in courtesan history (Ogden notes the possible relationships between later Antigonids and courtesans as well as the apparent prominence of the offspring from them), there is not a great deal in the way of hard and fast evidence for an especially powerful or influential position for these women in affairs of state. The only direct identification of a child who went on to enjoy a powerful position is Alcyoneus yet the confusion surrounding the identity of his mother prevents us from drawing any significant conclusions from the story. In addition, the short mention of the Samian courtesan Myrrhine, to whom Nicolaüs of Damascus claims that Demetrius “made her a partner in his royal estate excepting the diadem” (ἔξω τοῦ διαδήματος κοινωνὸν εἶχε τῆς βασιλείας) [FGrH 90 F90 ap. Ath. XIII. 593A], seems to show that the benefits that

he conferred on his mistresses in general did not include any official recognition of their position in terms of the political hierarchy. Even though it seems clear that certain of the mistresses of Demetrius received his favour in terms of financial benefits, we may note that the clearest instance of this type of success for the royal courtesans has its reliability brought into question first by the distinct tone of a hostile bias from the source as well as by the clearly anecdotal quality of the story as exemplified by its interchangeability. The story occurs in Plutarch's *Demetrius* and involves his hasty leveling of an exorbitant amount of money from the Athenian population as though for some important state expense only to have it passed to Lamia and her fellow courtesans to buy soap and perfume with [27. 1-2]. While Arsinoë II is said to have received the revenue from a small city from her husband Ptolemy Philadelphus to cover the cost of her unguents and personal adornment, a daily amount of one silver talent,<sup>184</sup> the fabled wealth of Egypt and the precedents for luxury among royalty would have made this more understandable in the circumstances. At one moment Plutarch states that this action was by far the most distressing to the Athenians of all the things that Demetrius had done to them and their city, as a result of the shame it caused them—presumably to have come to the point where their integrity meant nothing as compared to the luxuries of prostitutes. He then goes on, directly following this accusation, to say that other sources claim instead that this was done to the Thessalians rather than the Athenians. The kernel of truth as it were behind the anecdote is likely that Demetrius was resented by any number of subject cities for usurping their wealth for his own purposes, while the notion that he made a habit of using those funds to support the luxuries of prostitutes is a fitting moral criticism with which to emphasize the injustice done to those who had suffered the treatment.

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<sup>184</sup>Pomeroy 1985: 14, cf. n.45 177: the source of this information is Diodorus, I. 52, 5-6. Ogden 1999: 129 (cf. n. 74 for source information, mainly inscriptional) also notes the generosity of Antiochus II toward his divorced wife Laodice, to whom he sold for a nominal sum, lands at Babylon and Borsippa, relieved them of taxation and granted her the revenues so that she might maintain herself lavishly.

It seems clear however, that whatever the moral and political biases of the sources, Athens remained strongly under the influence of Greek pornographic discourse and thus also it is likely that *hetairai* themselves remained a prominent feature of the Athenian landscape. The notion that the Hellenistic period was an age of unusual decadence and moral decay, exemplified prominently by the greatest men of the day, probably reflects reality as well as the influence of tradition and social perceptions. It may also reflect some of the more pronounced limitations on political commentary (brought about by the new structure of kingdoms with absolute rulers) for the literati who wrote the important works of the times. One of the most noticeable developments in the characterization of *hetairai* themselves is the gradual distinction whereby the courtesans of royalty began to be distinguished from even their most famous earlier counterparts. This change becomes even more well defined when we turn from Athens to investigate the activities and status of courtesans at the early Hellenistic court of Alexandria—itsself the city which would come to replace Athens as the artistic and intellectual center of the widely expanded Greek world.



## CHAPTER 6

*Ptolemaic Successors*I. Ptolemy I Soter: Thaïs

Ptolemy Lagou, one of Alexander's foremost Macedonian generals, founded the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt—a dynasty that ruled this kingdom for the entire Hellenistic period; indeed, it was the collapse of the Egyptian kingdom upon the death of Cleopatra VII in 30 B.C. that has come to define the terminal date of the era. Ptolemy's activities are important because they set the tone for the court founded at Alexandria as well as providing precedents for his own successors (just as Alexander had done). The precedent which he set in relation to affairs with courtesans is an important one since he is unequivocally named in a variety of sources as the father of three children by the well-known Athenian *hetaira* Thaïs. The significant factor is that these children were apparently recognized by Ptolemy—whether simply acknowledged or legitimized is uncertain—and they seem to have had an official role in his governing policy. Reconstructing the chronology of events that led to such prominence for Thaïs is a more complicated matter. Apart from the record of her children's names and their acknowledged royal paternity, there is only one major incident recorded in Thaïs' own biographical tradition—her involvement in the firing of the palace at Persepolis by Alexander in 330 B.C. Even this incident does not in most versions connect her with Ptolemy and her part in the proceedings relates to an evaluation of Alexander's character without any reference (as we might have expected) to an erotic attachment. There is a general consensus in scholarship on Alexander that the details of the event are greatly sensationalized in the sources and some important early scholars even dismissed Thaïs' involvement as sheer invention.<sup>185</sup> We shall look at the details of the accounts with a view once again to determining not only how pornographic discourse played a role in shaping the story but also just how accurately Thaïs can be defined as a prostitute. It will be

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<sup>185</sup>Brunt 1976: 514-516; on the invention of Thaïs' role by hostile sources see Tarn 1948: 48 and Hammond 1983: 85

important as well to evaluate any significant differences between her role as an Athenian courtesan and as the mistress of an Egyptian king.

The Persepolis incident evinces a number of quite important divergences within the source tradition, from attributing to Thaïs the position of chief instigator of the firing to giving her no part at all. Interestingly, her connection with Ptolemy at this early stage is not established in any of the main sources except the late *Life of Alexander* by Plutarch, whose original source for this particular piece of information we cannot determine with certainty. The earliest traceable sources for the firing are curiously contradictory: Athenaeus records the statement of the contemporary historian Cleitarchus that “she was responsible for setting fire to the palace at Persepolis” (αἰτίας γενομένης τοῦ ἐμπρησθῆναι τὰ ἐν Περσεπόλει βασιλεία; *FGrH* 137 F11 ap. Ath. XIII. 576E). Arrian on the other hand, often considered reliable because of his extensive use of the contemporary works of participants in the recounted events (namely Ptolemy himself and the historian Aristoboulus), is silent about anyone but Alexander precipitating the firing. He states additionally that he was advised *against* it by his general Parmenio rather than goaded on to it [*Anab.* III. 18, 11]. Regarding the supposed romantic/sexual connection between Ptolemy and Thaïs, even the contemporary Cleitarchus, on whom many of the later sources that mention Thaïs may very well be based, does not mention any such relationship—at least in the form that Athenaeus preserves it. Directly following the Cleitarchan fragment Athenaeus, XIII. 576E, states that after Alexander’s death, she “was married” (ἐγαμήθη) to Ptolemy. It is not clear, but the source for this information about Thaïs *may* be the *Commentaries* of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II which are cited in connection to the fragment right after it—a late but presumably well-informed source, *FGrH* 234 F4. Apart from this brief statement and the inscriptional evidence mentioning their offspring, Plutarch also connects her to Ptolemy, calling her “Thaïs, a woman of Attic birth, the *hetaira* of Ptolemy who later became king” (Θαῖς ἡ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ βασιλεύσαντος ὕστερον ἑταίρα, γένος Ἀττικῆ; *Alex.* 38. 1).

Athenaeus is alone in making the suggestion that Thaïs was the *hetaira* of Alexander himself; this is very likely an assumption based on nothing more than his own inference. While Athenaeus implies that she was engaged in relations with Ptolemy—and significantly he speaks of legitimate marriage—only *after* her relationship with Alexander ended as a result of his death, we may safely question the reliability of this interpretation. This is because the ages of Ptolemy's and Thaïs' children, who are mentioned here in Athenaeus and elsewhere, have been roughly calculated to show that a relationship between the two would necessarily have been under way before Alexander's death, and even likely by the time of the firing.<sup>186</sup> In addition, Plutarch's statement implies that the relationship was initiated before Ptolemy became king of Egypt. Although Thaïs' presence at one of Alexander's banquets may have caused Athenaeus to assume that there was a relationship between them, it is more reasonable to assume that she was there mixing with the foremost generals because of her attachment to Ptolemy. Her presence and supposed influence over Alexander could still be an effective tool for criticising Alexander but any personal connection between them is unsupportable. Evidently, it seems that it is not amiss to doubt the validity of a source, even where another account appears to back it up.

One subject upon which all the extant sources seem to agree is the fact that Thaïs was (or at least had at some point been) a *hetaira*. As is common in many cases where a variety of sources describe a particular woman, the terminology varies as does the meaning of a particular term in the context; thus it is difficult to say precisely whether Thaïs had ever been involved in commercial prostitution. Diodorus and Curtius imply that she was one of the many women accompanying the army's train in Asia (i.e. *hetairai*, *pallakai* and slave/captive women among others)—the former calling her simply a *hetaira*, 17. 72, 2, the latter describing her more fully as one of the "women whom it certainly would not be an abomination to violate, seeing as how they were concubines

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<sup>186</sup>Tarn 1948: Appendix 18 324, citing for evidence of the son's ages Dittenberger, *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 314 and Justin XV. 2, 7.

accustomed to living with armed men more licentiously than is fitting" (*feminae... non quidem quas violare nefas esset, quippe pelices licentius quam decebat cum armato vivere assuetae*) and as an "a drunken whore" (*ebrium scortum*), V. 7, 2-4. Curtius' history has had its reliability called into question for its blatant conforming to the hostile tradition concerning Alexander in which the king's innate character flaw allows him eventually to succumb to wickedness and megalomania.<sup>187</sup> The account of events involving Thaïs strives to characterize Alexander as utterly lacking in self-control and as a man with an inherent love for luxury and excess—ironically both qualities are emphatically denied in accounts sympathetic to Alexander. The depths to which he has sunk are evinced by his mindless acquiescence to the whims of the drunken whore, the criticism being that this military leader, capable of every brilliant feat of tactics and planning, should out of the weakness of drunkenness and love of flattery, behave completely without foresight. As we have seen so many times in accounts involving great men and courtesans, the woman receives no more than a stereotyped characterization—she is drunken and entirely without the feminine virtue of *sophrosyne*<sup>188</sup>—meant only to elucidate further the critical evaluation of the man.

Diodorus' version of the incident is quite similar in the chronological order of events to that of Curtius, yet the characterization of Alexander and the evaluation of his behaviour are less blatantly hostile. Rather than representing Alexander's inappropriate devotion to debauchery, the banqueting and drinking are presented as justified activities after a long bout of campaigning and victorious battles; there seems to be very little negative moral judgment here. The *hetaira* Thaïs is described as having made the initial suggestion that the achievements of the Persians be destroyed but this soon erupts into a clamour by Alexander's companions who themselves give the noble reasoning that firing

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<sup>187</sup>Ibid 1948: 47-8

<sup>188</sup>For an excellent discussion of the Greek concept of *sophrosyne* as the ultimate feminine virtue see North 1977: 35-48. Tellingly, the greatest aspects of this multi-faceted virtue as North calls it, are quiet, inconspicuous behavior, obedience and chastity. All of these, we have seen, are antithetical to the qualities that define the *hetaira*.

would be appropriate retribution for the outrages perpetrated by the Persians against Greek temples in the Persian wars. The satisfied tone of Diodorus in this passage reveals his bias in favour of Greek interests and likely also explains the absence of the subsequent regret of Alexander over his actions which is found in the other accounts. Once again we can see the extent to which the biases of an author can shape his narrative—in this case through his selection of sources. Diodorus likely chose sources that reflected Alexander's official panhellenic propaganda and also that praised him for it.

Regarding Thaïs, little is added to what we already know of her but Diodorus' note, 17. 72, 6; 2, that this *hetaira* was a "female citizen... whose origin was Attic" (γυνὴ πολίτις... Ἀττικὴ δὲ τὸ γένος), reinforces his apparent Greek bias even though he is not overtly positive in his attitude towards prostitution. As we noted earlier, free Greek and specifically Athenian birth was apparently at times indicative of special status for *hetairai*. Unfortunately we can give no particulars of what this special status may have entailed in terms of benefits to the woman and, in this case, nothing is said about a specific man to whom Thaïs may have been attached. If we assume that she was in fact Ptolemy's mistress at this time but that it was simply not mentioned in this version, we could infer that her supposed citizen status and whatever qualities it entailed attracted the attention of a particularly high-ranking general and that the attraction was strong enough to maintain a lasting relationship that saw the production of at least three children. There is no question, though, of her portrayal as a *hetaira*, to whatever extent this was a positive evaluation in the case of Diodorus, as opposed to a respectable woman since her presence at a banquet in the midst of heavy drinking and male company would have sufficiently defined her as such<sup>189</sup>—particularly in accounts written from the Greek point of view. One final important detail, and perhaps the most concrete one, that the story provides us with is the confirmation of the fact that prostitutes (who could have been *hetairai*,

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<sup>189</sup>So Apollodorus, in providing proof of Neaera's identity as a prostitute, mentions repeatedly how she drank wine in the company of men—as was the custom of any *hetaira* [[Dem.] 59. 24; 28; 33; 48].

*pallakai*, captured slave women or transient *pornai* attracted to following the camp as it passed through their villages) were indeed a part of the army's train.<sup>190</sup> This same picture of typical army makeup and organization is also found in Plutarch's account of the incident, to which we will turn presently.

Plutarch's (*Alex.* 38) version of the Persepolis incident displays elements of the strands found in both Curtius and Diodorus. Relating to the conclusions reached above for the nature of the Macedonian army's composition, Plutarch records that Thaïs, both to flatter and amuse Alexander, made a speech in which she referred to the long hardships she had endured wandering over Asia. We may assume that *hetairai* were indeed among the camp followers and that the motivation behind their attendance, despite the hazards, was the profits they hoped to share with their lovers upon the distribution of booty at victorious battles. Very likely, the most common aspect of the relationships formed on campaign was their transitory nature—even in the, apparently numerous, cases where children were produced.<sup>191</sup> If this abandonment at the end of the conflict happened even in rarer cases such as legitimate marriages to local women of noble families, as may have been the case with all but one of the wives from the mass weddings at Susa (namely Seleucus and Apama)<sup>192</sup>, the likelihood that relationships with prostitutes and concubines were terminated is even stronger.

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<sup>190</sup>Not only is this confirmed as a practice popular in the east in general [see Montserrat 1996: 31 on the commonness of this practice in Egypt] but we find precedents in accounts of Greek battles as well. In Alexis of Samos' *Samian Annals*, FGrH 539 F1 ap. Ath. XIII. 572F, we find the anecdotal story that the Athenian prostitutes who accompanied Pericles' army on the siege of Samos dedicated some sort of monument to Aphrodite 'In the Reeds' with the profits they had raised from their seductions. Xenophon, *Anab.* IV. 3.19, mentions that the many *hetairai* in the camp of the Ten Thousand joined in celebrating the favourable sacrifices undertaken right before the battle.

<sup>191</sup>In Plutarch's *Life of Eumenes*, the Argyraspides are said to have betrayed their own commander Eumenes to the enemy Antigonus over the return of their baggage without which they claimed it was not worth to live out their old age after all the fighting and hardships they had endured [17. 1-2; 18.1]. Apart from booty they had won, this baggage is outright said to include their *gunaikes* ("wives/women") and no doubt children as well.

<sup>192</sup>Ogden 1999: 119. It should be noted, however, that it is not certain whether Seleucus retained Apama after Alexander's death or simply renewed the relationship when he became satrap of Babylonia in 320 BC. In addition, as far as concrete evidence goes, only Craterus among Alexander's officers is known to have repudiated his barbarian wife, Amestris, and he did so only after providing her with a new husband, Dionysios of Heraclea Pontica, Memnon, FGrH 434 F1 § 4.4 = Phot. *Bibl.* 224.

Thus, the fact that Thaïs, after managing to establish herself exclusively with Ptolemy and bearing him three children, was presumably taken to Egypt after Alexander's death along with her children is an unusual coup.

Returning to the specifics of the Persepolis incident, Plutarch places full responsibility for the exhortation to burn the palace on Thaïs, while at the same time noting that the reasoning was in itself noble and just. In this case it seems that the positive evaluation of the burning by Greek sources (as a tribute to Alexander's concern with avenging the wrongs done to them) influenced Plutarch, but the negative portrayal of the fact of its instigation by a prostitute is also present. We cannot know where the attachment of the story to the courtesan originated but given the plausibility of the true motivation being a political statement by Alexander to the newly subjugated Persians<sup>193</sup> (a scenario which Plutarch alludes to as one of the other stories in circulation, *Alex.* 38. 4), the fact that he later abandoned this tack in favour of presenting himself as the legitimate successor to the Persian throne and as a rightful *Persian* king may have spurred those Greeks and Macedonians who resented this change of heart to attribute the motivating force behind the action to a disreputable source, thereby criticizing Alexander. It is easy to see how a hostile source would have maximized the validity of its criticism by attributing the inspiration for the action to a *hetaira*, thus playing on the fear of the corruptibility of powerful men by women and of the possibility of such women (indeed any women) influencing important political decision-making. The reality of any such influence is more than a little doubtful but it certainly exercised the imaginations of all kinds of Greek authors and particularly a good number of the historians of the Diadochoi.<sup>194</sup> In any case,

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<sup>193</sup>Brunt 1976: Appendix 10 514-516.

<sup>194</sup>As was noted earlier, the fear of prostitutes' innate ability to wreak havoc on male society was not restricted to Greek cultures. Montserrat 1996: 114-115 states that such fears equally exercised the imaginations of early Egyptians, citing as evidence the popular Demotic story-cycle of Setne, a son of Ramesses II, and the nightmarish Tabubu who extracts from him a deed for all his material possessions and leave for his children to be murdered in return for sex. It seems possible that the growing prevalence in Greek accounts of Hellenistic politics of connections between courtesans and kings was influenced by the traditional fear that eastern cultures were naturally corruptible by women. This likely combined with a fear inspired by the growing significance of women in a monarchical government. A perception of an increase of influence among even

Plutarch's description of Thaïs is clearly not favourable: he states that although the speech she uttered befitted the character of her native country—Athens—it was “rather more lofty than proper for one like her” (namely a *hetaira*) (μείζονα δὲ ἢ κατ’ αὐτήν, *Alex.* 38. 1-2). Thus in a somewhat contradictory manner this version manages to praise those elements of the firing which reflected a favourable motive of revenge for Greeks while at the same time criticising Alexander for having to rely on the exhortations of a woman. This criticism is further intensified by the fact that the woman was a prostitute. Although, as an Athenian, she was rightly inspired by patriotism, her lifestyle in the company of soldiers and drinking, far from the duties in the home of a respectable woman, nonetheless defined her as disreputable.

An important innovation found in Plutarch's version of the story, as we have mentioned above, is his statement that Thaïs was the *hetaira* of Ptolemy, the one who later ruled as king. Here we have a corroborative piece of evidence for the involvement between the two starting while the Macedonian army was still on the campaign trail in Asia. If this is the case, it is likely that, similar to other royal mistresses, she would have conducted a monogamous affair with Ptolemy over a relatively extensive period. In any case, we have few instances clearly attributable to our specific courtesan, beyond Athenaeus' uncorroborated statement that she was the mistress of Alexander, that she had any other lover(s). We should note here that there *are* in fact three brief mentions of a Thaïs in other contexts from ancient literature—a play of Menander, lost but for the title *Thaïs* and a scattered fragment of speech, and two anecdotes from (possibly) Aristodemus' *Ludicrous Memoirs* in which Thaïs' witty speech to “a swaggering lover” (ἀλαζών ἐραστής) and another about a particularly smelly lover are recorded [Ath. XIII. 585DE]. These instances allow us to entertain two unique

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legitimately respectable women such as the king's wives and his mother was bound to lead to exaggerated reports of the concurrent infiltration into positions of influence of dangerous women—illegitimate corruptive prostitutes. In either case the criticism was against women stepping outside their proper sphere into areas which rightfully were the sole concern of men and the criticism gained even more force and effectiveness if the women were themselves as prostitutes already one step outside the proper bounds of feminine behaviour. Clearly, this is the desired effect of the present criticism leveled against Thaïs.



scenarios about the life of this courtesan. The first is the possibility that these generic anecdotes<sup>195</sup> may have been placed in the mouth of Thaïs, and/or that the play was named for her without necessarily displaying any specific historical factuality, because she had gained a particularly spectacular reputation. In this scenario, the fame of the historical Thaïs would have made her name a by-word for the clever or audacious prostitute. Conversely, it remains possible too (although this seems quite remote) that here we have proof that Thaïs did indeed engage in the typical promiscuity of the Athenian commercial *hetaira* in her life before she so engaged Ptolemy. In either case her notoriety is affirmed.

The fact that Thaïs' children are shown to have been brought to Egypt and even to have played active military and political roles makes it quite likely that she too went to Egypt with him in 323 B.C. Although their two sons seem not to have had claims to the succession after Ptolemy's death, they were, nevertheless, not abandoned or hidden away as nameless *nothoi*. Traditionally, the eldest son of a Macedonian noble received the family name.<sup>196</sup> The fact that Ptolemy's son by Thaïs was named Lagus would appear to have some significance in this context since it would mean that the son of a *hetaira* who was presumably not legitimately married was in fact considered legitimate by Ptolemy. The question of whether any such legitimacy was recognized later on in the context of

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<sup>195</sup>Tellingly, the joke about the lover who smells like a goat—an animal considered to be characteristically malodorous and lustful—is told with a slight variation in connection to Phryne directly following our witty response of Thaïs.

<sup>196</sup>Ogden 1999: 69 Also notable, though perhaps not entirely accurate, is Macurdy's 1932: 102 observation that the Ptolemies did not give the dynastic name to illegitimate children. We have at least one possible instance in Athenaeus where an illegitimate son goes by the name Ptolemy: the Ptolemy who commanded the guard at Ephesus and who was accompanied to his death by his faithful *hetaira* Eirene is said in Gulick's note on the passage to be the son of Ptolemy II and a concubine (the citation appears in Athenaeus, XIII. 593AB, between fragments of Nicolaüs of Damascus, *FGrH* 90 F90 and Phylarchus, *FGrH* 81 F24, leaving the exact source uncertain). Gulick further directs the reader to Bevan's *House of Seleucus* 1902: I. 174 for more detailed information. Ogden further notes that there is a great deal of confusion over the identity of this son, known variously as "Ptolemy the Son" or "Ptolemy of Ephesus". He may be the same Ptolemy as the one found described as Philadelphus' coregent in papyri from 267-59 BC as well as the one described as the governor of Ephesus. If these identifications are correct he is, according to Ogden, "surely the eldest son of Philadelphus and Arsinoë I" who, after being named crown-price, revolted from his father and was dispatched. It was Bouché-Leclercq who dissociated the two Ptolemy's and conjectured that the one at Ephesus was a bastard son by a concubine. 79-80

Egyptian royalty has resulted in various claims by Hellenistic scholars<sup>197</sup> but it does seem unlikely in view of the apparent ineligibility of these eldest sons for the kingship. Perhaps their legitimacy was recognized in the context of Ptolemy as a Macedonian general but once he assumed the role as king of Egypt and founder of a dynasty and chose Ptolemy as the dynastic name, the significance of the name Lagus fell away. Even so, the apparent position of Leontiscus, the second son, as a military/naval officer at the battle of Salamis against Demetrius I Poliorcetes in 306 [Justin, 15. 27] and the marriage of Eirene to the Cypriot king Eunostus of Soli at an uncertain date [(?)Ptol. VIII Euerg. II ap. Ath. XIII. 576E] which was more than likely an arrangement that reflected political considerations both give credence to the notion that Thaïs and her children held some kind of favoured position at Ptolemy's court.

The final important question is why Thaïs was not mentioned in that detailed account of the Persepolis incident which was apparently based on Ptolemy's own history, that of Arrian. We can do no more than speculate, but the possibility exists that if Thaïs' reputation as a *hetaira* was so definitively established, Ptolemy would not have wished to bring up her participation in any events while they had been on the campaign trail, thereby exposing her reputation to further suspicion. In addition, noting that Ptolemy wrote his history late in his life at a time when he would have been sorting out the complications surrounding the naming of his heir—namely the steps he apparently took in giving an account to the people about his unusual choice of his youngest rather than eldest son to succeed him [Justin, 16. 2,7]—it would have been unwise to bring to mind other potential rivals as well.

As noted earlier, there existed two traditions that influenced the development of Alexander's *bios*: a hostile one and a positive or apologetic one. Ptolemy, deriving the legitimacy of his claim to Egypt from his significant position in Alexander's hierarchy of officials, was a representative of this

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<sup>197</sup>So noted by Ogden 1999: 69: according to Ellis 1994: the children were 'probably not legitimized' but the union that produced them had a quasi-legal status; the daughter Eirene is

apologetic strand and thus would have been interested in countering the hostile accounts of Alexander as a drunken despot. These qualities were likely contradicted by emphasis on Alexander's military genius, his great self-control in all matters of appetite (be they food, drink, or sexual), and his unstinting generosity with his friends, all of which we saw in the earlier evaluation of source material on Alexander (Chapter Four). The notion that Alexander had been influenced to an action by his drunkenness and the exhortations of a woman, whether she was the mistress of Ptolemy himself or a notorious camp following prostitute, would have been seen as a black mark on Alexander's reputation and thus have required revision. This presumably would not have been a difficult task for Ptolemy, nor would it have come as a surprise to his readers since, at least in so far as we can judge from the use made of his writing by Arrian, the overwhelming focus of the work was on military and political events—leaving little space for such sensational or personal details as relations with women. From this observation we might assume that Ptolemy was less influenced by the trend towards biography and its anecdotal style than many of the other authors who wrote about this period. Whether the account as we have it in Arrian represents the truth as seen by a direct participant or a cover-up by a sympathetic source is uncertain. It should be kept in mind that even in Arrian's account Alexander is not portrayed entirely favourably since he is shown to have rejected the competent advice of one of his leading generals. Nevertheless, it is certainly not as damaging as those stories in which Alexander was hopelessly drunken (with the result that he became prey to any wild suggestion set forward) and surrounded by a mob of rowdy prostitutes. The very existence of so many possibilities shows how difficult it can be to evaluate the truth behind a story, especially where contradictory versions abound.

We may conclude in evaluating the status and position of Thaïs that although there is little reliable evidence for her life before she took up with Ptolemy, she would very likely have set aside the element of promiscuity

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said by Pomeroy 1984 to have been legitimate but by Bouché-Leclercq 1903-7 to have been a bastard.

involved in being a commercial *hetaira* in favour of maintaining the benefits of an exclusive relationship with a very powerful man. The emphasis in almost all the sources on her Athenian or Attic birth could perhaps represent a false portrayal of her as a *hetaira*<sup>198</sup> but whatever the respectable quality of her life at Athens may have been, her attendance of the army's train in Asia as well as of the celebratory banquets of soldiers—even though the fact that they were the top nobles and generals would have put her in a class above many of the other women 'in the baggage' as they called it—would have quickly dispelled any such appearances. Whatever the truth may have been and despite the virtual unanimity of the sources regarding her profession and character, there seems little doubt that becoming a mistress to such a powerful man (and perhaps she was still his mistress when he became king) changed her life dramatically. The fact that Ptolemy acknowledged the paternity of his children by Thaïs may represent his esteem for her in spite of her background or perhaps her own adherence to the lifestyle of a respectable woman—in all but name a wife, if an insignificant one. This latter scenario seems quite plausible given the fact that like any respectable Greek woman she fades into proper obscurity once she is well established with Ptolemy. We may be seeing here once again the profound influence of pornographic discourse on the shape of an account and evaluation of an historical individual. At least a strikingly similar scenario is played out in one of the *hetaira* plays of Menander, the *Perikeiromene* (or *Closely Cropped Locks*). Here the *hetaira* Glycera, the concubine of a soldier, is proven to be a citizen abandoned at birth and thus qualified for a legitimate marriage. Her marriage is arranged at once between her newfound father and her erstwhile lover, while she, once outspoken and independent, fades into the silent background.<sup>199</sup>

It seems clear that even if this nominal legitimacy would have cleared her reputation, as would likely have been necessary in order for her daughter's

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<sup>198</sup>Ibid, 245

<sup>199</sup>For a good evaluation of the outcome for the concubine in this play see Konstan 1987: 127. See also 134 where Konstan quotes the excellent observation of Nicole Loraux that upon her marriage, the Athenian girl "earns the right to be quiet."

reputation to be pristine enough to warrant a royal marriage, it did not make her a queen as was suggested by at least one early scholar on the subject.<sup>200</sup> In this respect Thaïs is less notorious than a number of grand courtesans who had preceded her (particularly Pythionice and Glycera) as well as some that followed her (such as Ptolemy IV Philopator's Agathoclea). Yet the example set by Ptolemy's 'official' use of the children produced by their union was not followed by his direct successor, even though he was the most notorious courtesan user of the long lasting Ptolemaic dynasty and, for that matter, of all the successor dynasties. The primary difference would seem to lie in the respective reputations both of the two kings themselves (Soter being renowned primarily as a military man while Philadelphus was described as "amorous" (ἑρωτικός) [Theocritus, XIV. 61]) as well as of the women with whom the two were involved. We will complete the present investigation of Hellenistic courtesans by discussing the *hetairai* of this second Ptolemy.

## II. Ptolemy II Philadelphus

Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who ruled from 282-46 B.C., although he had a reputation for womanizing, nonetheless appears to have displayed a great deal of competence in ruling Egypt, a notion contrary to the assumed prerequisites for kingship in the ancient Greek world. Of course this applied especially to the exploitation of the country for the benefit of royalty, a governing policy at which he was extremely effective, in particular through his institution of one of the most extensive taxation systems ever seen in the ancient world.<sup>201</sup> This excellence in administration would seem to mitigate the impression that certain sources give that Ptolemy II was incapable of any activity but pleasure seeking [Ptol. VIII Euerg. II *FGrH* 234 F4 and Polybius XIV. 11.1 ap. Ath. XIII. 576EF]. Nevertheless the fact that the entire administration functioned for the sole purpose of

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<sup>200</sup>Licht 1932: 343-4. Here he calls Thaïs "the first splendid star in the heaven of Greek prostitutes...[who was] one of the many *hetairai* who misused the power of their beauty in political affairs." The notion that Thaïs became Ptolemy's queen is refuted by the utter lack of involvement in the succession decisions of Ptolemy by their two sons who were clearly the eldest of his 12 children.

<sup>201</sup>Grant 1982: 44

enriching the royal family and those upon whom they chose to confer benefits (mainly the Greek and Macedonian population of Alexandria) leaves little doubt that there was an excess of affluence at the Ptolemaic court which could, in turn, have led to the types of indulgences that are repeatedly mentioned in the sources. In addition to this there remains a popular notion that Philadelphus achieved his success in economics and empire building thanks to the inspiration of his sister-wife Arsinoë II<sup>202</sup>, an idea that supported the traditional western (Greek) view of the east as a place where men became feminized by great wealth and submitted themselves to the whims of “unnaturally ambitious” women.<sup>203</sup> This type of criticism, at this time in particular, may have been influenced in part by the various hostile reactions attributed to the Greek and Macedonian populations to the brother-sister marriage of Ptolemy and Arsinoë. Apparently the outraged reaction was given written verse form by the *kinaidologos* Sotades of Maronea. Athenaeus cites the historian Hegesander for the reaction of Philadelphus to the crass abuse Sotades had heaped on him and his wife: his general Patroclus caught Sotades at sea, sealed him in a leaden jar and sank him [Powell F1 ap. Ath. XIV. 620F-621B]. No doubt, further hostile propaganda sprang up among those who wished to condemn the unnatural union; some of it branched out to include attacks on Philadelphus’ other erotic activities. Of

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<sup>202</sup>Ibid, 195-96; Macurdy 1932: 121-130; the legitimacy of this claim is challenged by Burstein 1982: 202-203 (cf. the comments on the scholarly debate by Pomeroy 1984: 17-20) on the basis of the ancient sources which claim little in the way of political influence on the part of Arsinoë II, certainly her greatest honours were granted to her after her death. Burstein acknowledges that the influence of queens (and whoever else was in a position to influence the decisions of kings) was a clear feature of the Hellenistic kingship, as attested in inscriptions. Very often the queens were honoured for particular benefactions and intercessions on behalf of cities. Arsinoë was without a doubt no different—it is rather with claims of her outright control of the government and of foreign policy in general that Burstein takes greatest issue (205-212) This would corroborate our suggestion above (n. 194) that a significant position for a woman, even a respectable one, was a sure sign of a man’s weak and corrupt character. The sheer number of accusations of Philadelphus’ involvement with courtesans, in particular where nothing but a name exists, may reflect an attempt by the sources to confirm that he was indeed under the control of his wife.

<sup>203</sup>For example, Plutarch [*Cleom.* 33]; Polybius [XIV. 11.1] and Strabo [*Geography* XVII. 1.11] all refer to the corruption of the Egyptian king Ptolemy IV Philopator by luxurious living and its ultimate end in women wielding power. cf. Pomeroy 1984: 53, notes that this was a theme prevalent throughout Ptolemaic history. The connection between the effeminacy of men and the

further interest is Dominic Montserrat's discussion of the general characterization of Egypt in the ancient world in relation to erotic matters, and in particular to prostitution. The notion of Egypt as "a garden of earthly delights, the *ne plus ultra* of libidinosity where sex was easily available," is expressed as early as the third century BC in the mimes of Herodas [I. 26-35] and continues through to Athanasius' treatise *Against the Pagans* [25], from the fourth century AD.<sup>204</sup>

In the volumes of the *Prosopographica Ptolemaica*, there are 18 *hetairai* (or, if not specifically *hetairai*, women who fall into the category of assumed prostitute) listed as being attached in some way to the Ptolemaic court; over half of these belong to the reign of Ptolemy II.<sup>205</sup> Like the large numbers of lovers attributed to Demetrius I, little is recorded about most of the mistresses of Ptolemy II beyond their names; we learn, for example, of Agathoclea, Myrtion, Glaucē<sup>206</sup>, Didyme<sup>207</sup>, and Stratonice,<sup>208</sup> brief descriptions of whom appear in the catalogue at the end of this study. The exceptions to this include Philadelphus' favourite Bilistiche and, to a lesser extent, his cupbearer Cleino. We shall deal briefly with Cleino and then turn to Bilistiche, about whom more extensive source material remains. It must be kept in mind that although some of these women at the Egyptian court were called *hetairai*, their very position as royal mistresses—moving in court circles, sometimes occupying significant priestly positions in state cults, and taking part in lucrative economic activities—made them a phenomenon distinct

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consequent rule of women (notably promiscuous women in particular) is especially strong in Greek evaluations of Persia; on this see Hall 1993: 108-133; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1993: 20-33.

<sup>204</sup>Montserrat 1994: 106.

<sup>205</sup>Peremans and Van't Dack 1968: 41-45.

<sup>206</sup>Although she is mentioned in a number of primary sources (see the prosopographic catalogue at the end of this study), there is nonetheless little information to supplement her *bios* or elaborate on her position with Philadelphus. For a discussion of possible artistic remains that may depict her and her fabled goose see Thompson 1964: 314-322.

<sup>207</sup>This Didyme is relatively unique because of her apparently native Egyptian origins (despite her Greek name, "Twin", as Ogden points out 249) which are mentioned by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, *FGrH* 234 F4 ap. Ath. XIII. 576EF, and extolled in Asclepiades' poem V, cf. Gow and Page 1965: Vol. I 45 (for commentary see Vol. II. 120). For a discussion of the poem and the significance of the native origins of this mistress see Cameron, 1990: 287-95 specifically section I "Didyme and Asclepiades."

<sup>208</sup>For a brief discussion of these mistresses and the sources that mention them see Bevan 1927: 77-78.

from the “working” prostitute: they were, as Montserrat fittingly describes them, courtiers of a kind.<sup>209</sup> Daniel Ogden also makes this differentiation an important point in his discussion of methodology and evidence in his study of Hellenistic royal courtesans. He notes the difficulty in defining a ‘royal courtesan’ as distinct from ‘non-royal’ and common courtesans, one of the main obstacles being that certain attributes belonging to ‘royal courtesans’ would, in a non-royal context, define the women as ‘non-courtesans’, if not respectable women—qualities such as their potential good birth, lack of promiscuity, and significant religious roles.

We have also seen the suggestion of these types of qualities in relation to courtesans like Lamia, who was apparently the daughter of a citizen and the recipient of divine honours in praise of her relationship with Demetrius (see above, Chapter Five, 82-3, 87-90). The characterization nevertheless seems even stronger in the Egyptian than the Athenian context. This may reflect the distinct cultural background in Egypt which in turn influenced public perceptions of royal mistresses. It seems that two significant factors were at work in Athens that influenced the definition of even royal *hetairai*. The first would have been the deeply entrenched dichotomy between respectable and non-respectable women in Athenian society, and the second the interplay of pornographic discourse with historical biography. Here typical *hetaira* characteristics, such as the mercenary approach to men and the use of both subtle and coarse wit, seemed to play a large part in stereotyping courtesans, regardless of the actual individual historical incidents.

The difference in Egypt, and likely other eastern kingdoms, is the possibility that oriental customs, such as the choice of even noble women to become mistresses or concubines of pharaohs with relatively respectable positions (certainly they would not have been equated with prostitutes), influenced how these women were regarded, even where the label of *hetaira* was applied. In fact, based on Montserrat’s study of papyrological documents from Hellenistic Egypt, the terminology used to describe prostitutes in general

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<sup>209</sup>Montserrat 1994: 108.



(whether *porne* or *hetaira* was used) provided, for the most part, an indistinguishable designation of a humble prostitute. Only in the case of royal mistresses who were labeled *hetairai* by habit in Greek sources did the notion of 'high-class courtesan' retain any meaning.<sup>210</sup>

The difference, again, between the Egyptian royal mistress and the phenomenon of the Athenian *hetaira* can also be seen in the fact that the possibility existed that these women could, as Ogden puts it, "shade into other types of courtier," in particular the ladies-in-waiting of Hellenistic queens. In addition to the above-mentioned difficulties in defining these women is the fact that we find a group who were often considered complementary or a counterpart to the courtesan, namely the parasites or male lovers of the king (whether eunuchs or not), and who were just as scantily described in the sources as the courtesans often were. The abusive propaganda that influenced descriptions of king's mistresses is as prevalent as that which can be detected in those of king's male-lovers or even simply his flatterers; we should recall here the earlier discussion of the questionable reliability of the term *parasitos* as it was applied to friends of Demetrius I such as Oxythemis. This does not however apply to our present discussion since, perhaps surprisingly, no male lovers are recorded for Philadelphus.<sup>211</sup>

#### i. Cleino

Returning to the first of Philadelphus' mistresses whom we will be discussing, it is noteworthy that neither of the two historians cited by Athenaeus as having mentioned Cleino actually call her a *hetaira*. She is, however, mentioned in the lists of women with whom Philadelphus was involved and was thus reputedly one of his mistresses. A fragment from Polybius' *Histories* preserved by Athenaeus, XIII. 576C, (cf. also Ath. X. 425EF, citing Ptolemy of

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<sup>210</sup>Ibid, 107-108.

<sup>211</sup>Ogden 1999: 216-218

Megalopolis *Inquiries relating to Philopator* FGrH 161 F3<sup>212</sup>) claims that Cleino was Philadelphus' cupbearer (οἰνοχοῦσα). While this office may have been innocuous enough (although the mythological precedent of Zeus and his cupbearer Ganymedes would seem to suggest some sort of romantic connection between two parties in this relationship, a connection usually involving a man and a boy or youth), the state of relative undress (μονοχίτων, that is, wearing only a chiton) in which Philadelphus had her depicted on the statues he set up all over Alexandria would seem to have left little doubt as to what sort of connection she had to him. Ogden states that the description of her clothing was "perhaps suited particularly to the symposium",<sup>213</sup> as would have been her official duty of pouring wine for the king. Although the precise significance of Cleino's clothing is uncertain given that we have no actual copies of her statues, we may guess that the description referred either to the fact that Cleino's chiton was short, like that of a boy and thus inappropriate for a 'respectable' woman, or that she wore it alone<sup>214</sup> without the himation which was generally expected in depictions of women. If we compare the courtesan's depictions to those of Arsinoë and other queens of the Ptolemaic dynasty who commonly appeared on the *oinochoai* connected to the ruler-cult we find that both are shown holding the cornucopia (single or double) but the queens wore, in addition to the the Greek chiton, the himation wrapped around the waist and draped over the left arm.<sup>215</sup> It is uncertain whether the similarities in the depictions would have identified Cleino with the queen in the minds of the viewers or signified an obvious difference.

Of even greater significance was the fact that Cleino was depicted holding a *rhyton* or cornucopia. The cornucopia was a symbol of fertility and was,

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<sup>212</sup>It is, perhaps, curious that Cleino is mentioned in an inquiry into the fourth Ptolemy, but given that we have no context for the quote we may guess that the author was either comparing his subject with an ancestor who was also renowned for a somewhat excessive love of women, or else that, as is often the case, the mistress of one king has accidentally been attributed to another.

<sup>213</sup>Ibid, 239.

<sup>214</sup>The term μονοχίτων was earlier in the classical period applied to literary descriptions of Spartan women and reflected the scantiness of these women's clothes as compared to the Athenian woman's; the specifically short chiton was apparently the costume of girls who ran in the races at Olympia. Johnson 1964: 53.

<sup>215</sup>Pollitt 1986: Appendix II: The Ruler Cult and its Imagery 271-275, esp. 273.

apparently, a particular attribute of the queen Arsinoë II.<sup>216</sup> In fact, according to E.E. Rice, the *rhyton*, also known as the *keras* became, in its particular depiction as being filled with produce, a symbol of the cult of the goddess Tyche in the fourth century and was, in turn, a symbol adopted by Arsinoë II. This is confirmed by the inscription on a faience *oinochoe* discussed by Pomeroy which reads: “of the good luck of Arsinoë Philadelphus” (ἀγαθῆς τύχης Ἀρσινόης Φιλαδέλφου). The dating of the adoption of the symbol by/for Arsinoë is uncertain and may have also been granted to her after her death. This was the case with the *dikeras* or double cornucopia, distinctively associated with Arsinoë on coinage minted after her death when she had been deified as one of the Theoi Philadelphoi. While the association of the cornucopia with the goddess Tyche would have been a significant honour when connected to Cleino, the notion that the depiction was a conscious representation of this woman as the king’s wife, now a goddess, is less certain than Pomeroy implies.<sup>217</sup> As Rice points out, the assimilation of Arsinoë to the goddess Philadelphia was represented symbolically by her holding the *dikeras*. This particular symbol was that given to the official royally supported cult of Serapis and Isis who had been assumed into Greek tradition by the Ptolemaic dynasty as husband and wife. Each of these gods traditionally held a cornucopia and their pairing, which gradually came to represent the joint rule of the Ptolemaic king and queen as the manifestations of these gods, resulted in the development of the intertwined or double cornucopia.<sup>218</sup> Hence the religious significance of Cleino’s honours does not seem to have been as clearly bound up with those of Arsinoë as they might have seemed.

Unfortunately, this is as far as our information about Cleino can take us, a fact that emphasizes the scarcity of definitive characterizations of *hetairai* of the Hellenistic period in general. The main purpose of the descriptions that we have, it must be remembered, is to criticize the moral degeneracy of Philadelphus and as such does more to characterize him than Cleino, just as Theopompus had

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<sup>216</sup>Pomeroy 1984: 54.

<sup>217</sup>Ibid.

<sup>218</sup>Rice 1983: Appendix II, esp. 205-208

likely exaggerated in his negative portrayal of Pythionice in order to emphasize Harpalus' terrible moral laxity (see above, Chapter Four, 66-8). We may justifiably assume that the action of erecting so many distinct statues to this woman was in at least some people's minds a disrespectful one and clearly the quickest path to the most damaging criticism from a Greek perspective was to imply that a woman of ill repute had been raised above her rightful station. This is the precise scenario that we have identified in both literary and historical accounts in which women play a significant role.

## ii. Bilistiche

Lastly we shall look at Philadelphus' reputed favourite, Bilistiche. She is an interesting case both for the greater amount of source material on her as well as for the diversity of that material: there are descriptions in the works of various ancient historians as well as contemporary papyrological documents. Certainly Bilistiche's prominence in the sources seems to be confirmed by the extraordinary length of time during which she retained the king's favour and reaped the benefits of it (presumably from about 267/68<sup>219</sup> until 251/50). We do not know exactly when Philadelphus became involved with Bilistiche but it was perhaps some time before her Olympic victories in the horse races in 268 and 264 B.C., assuming that he would have taken care of the extraordinary expense associated with sponsoring horses. Her reputation as Philadelphus' mistress seems to have been established in the tradition by this time, if the rather uncertain restoration of the description of Bilistiche as a *hetaira* ([*het*][*ai*][*r*][*a*) in *P. Oxy.* 2082 = Phlegon of Tralles (?) *Olympic chronology* FGrH 257a F1 § 6 is accepted. Later sources in Athenaeus do call her *hetaira* [(?) Nymphodorus, *Voyage Round Asia* FGrH 572 F6 ap. Ath. XIII. 596EF] or, with similar implications, *erômenê* [Ptol. VIII Euerg. II, *Commentaries* FGrH 234 F4 ap. Ath. XIII. 576EF], *pallakis* [Clem. *Protrept.* VI 48. 2], and even "a common barbarian female"

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<sup>219</sup>Notably, Fraser 1972: Vol. II 210 n. 206 places Bilistiche's Olympic victories in 264 and 260 BC. Even with these later dates, Bilistiche would have maintained the affection and generosity of Philadelphus for about 13 years.

(βάρβαρον...γύναιον) [Plut. *Mor.* 753F]. Evidently the terminology employed in describing women of specifically 'non-respectable' status was no more definitive at this time than it had been since it began to be employed in the archaic period.

Reflecting on our earlier suggestion that at least some of the so-called courtesans were not in fact commercial *hetairai* in the sense that we have defined them in the course of this study, we may leave open the possibility that Bilistiche was indeed a woman of high birth. The fragment of Nymphodorus, mentioned above, occurs in the context of a discussion of *hetairai* who were "not lowborn/held in repute" (οὐκ ἀγεννῆς/ ἔνδοξος) and names Bilistiche as one such courtesan, stating that she was of Argive origin and specifically a descendant of the Atreidae. This may represent a claim on her part to be descended from the former royal family of Macedon, the Argeads, who themselves had claimed decent from the Argive Perdiccas<sup>220</sup> and the suggestion that she was ethnically Macedonian occurs also in Pausanias, V. 8. 11, and perhaps *P. Oxy.* 2082 ll. 6-8 (see above p. 121). In addition, relating to a possibly respectable origin, we find her father's name given as Philon in the *Zenon Papyri*<sup>221</sup>, which is a significant piece of information since, as mentioned earlier, it was quite rare for women of questionable background to have a patronymic cited for them. Thus the possibility exists that Bilistiche was a woman from a Macedonian family that was connected to the court and that she in time became erotically involved with the king, thereby earning the reputation in later literature as a *hetaira*. In such a scenario, there would be a distinct possibility that her own family wealth had provided her with the funds for the Olympic horse race undertaking, as would have been the case for the other women who are recorded to have won both previous to her victories (members of the Spartan royal house) and after her (the Ptolemaic queen Berenice III).<sup>222</sup> Notably, Bilistiche's victories would still have been an unusual case if they had occurred before her relationship with

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<sup>220</sup>See Ogden's 1999: 244-245 discussion of the various traditions about her origins.

<sup>221</sup>Ibid, n. 135 256 for citation; cf. also his discussion of Bilistiche, 244-246.

<sup>222</sup>Pomeroy 1984: 54

Philadelphus began since she would have still been a private citizen, not a member of the royal house as is the case in the other female victories mentioned.

Plutarch's moralizing remarks concerning Bilistiche would, if taken at face value, contradict the above proposition regarding the 'true' status of this woman. In direct contrast to the sources which claim Macedonian or Argive decent for Bilistiche (a contradiction which is itself given a possible explanation by Ogden<sup>223</sup>), Plutarch states in his *Moralia* that she was "a barbarian common woman out of the marketplace" (βάρβαρον ἐξ ἀγορᾶς γύναιον) [753F]. Given the preponderance of evidence for other more favourable origins for Bilistiche, we may assume that this particular ethnic, if it qualifies as such and is more than simply a generalized term of abuse, has resulted from Plutarch's use of a hostile source, selected by the author in confirmation of an overall moralizing agenda in his particular work. Also noticeable in later Greek accounts is the tendency to assume that the people of Alexandria, often seen as a sort of 'melting pot' of people of diverse origins, were an unruly mob of barbarians; as, for example, Curtius does in his discussion of them, 4. 8. 6. It is noteworthy that his short attack on Bilistiche is part of a larger general discussion of kings who have been overwhelmed by worthless women, even to the point handing over their rule to them. The reason given for this aberration in the proper scheme of love is that the men have fallen "because of their own weakness and effeminacy" (δι' ἀσθένειαν ἑαυτῶν καὶ μαλακίαν), more specifically, their predilection for erotic pleasures. Notably, this characterization of Philadelphus has retained its popularity throughout almost all later accounts of his reign, regardless of the fact that in spite of all his love-interests, there are no claims that he neglected political or military affairs or allowed Egypt to degenerate or fall prey to the imperialist designs of other powers. In fact, given the sheer span of his reign, from 282-246 BC, we must assume that he took a diligent interest in maintaining his position as the head of the country.

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<sup>223</sup>See n. 220 above

Granted, Plutarch's criticism stems not as much from Philadelphus' neglect of the government in favour of revelry (as was the complaint leveled against some of the later Ptolemies), but rather from the honours he granted Bilistiche. It is an offense to Plutarch's moral sensibilities that a woman of her kind, a barbarian and in his opinion a slave, should have come to so dominate a king that he would grant her divine honours as "Aphrodite Belestiche". As we have seen much earlier in the case of Harpalos' Pythionice, as well as with Demetrius Poliorcetes' Lamia and Leana, this type of glorification of women who were considered prostitutes caused a great furor among certain Greek elements. It seems, however, that the Ptolemies were particularly fond of these type of honours, be they full deification—as is possible in the case of honours granted to members within the immediate family and in special cases like Bilistiche's—or even partial or symbolic divine associations—as in the case of Cleio.

There is the further consideration that Bilistiche was at an earlier stage granted the very important religious honour of being the eponymous priestess or *canephore* of the cult of Arsinoë Philadelphus in 251/50.<sup>224</sup> According to Ijsewijn, based on the scholiast of Callimachus, this position was instituted by Philadelphus in honour of his deified wife Arsinoë in imitation of the Athenian *canephorai* of the festival for Athena, the Panathenaea. The *canephorai* who carried the golden basket in Athens were "noble and respectable maidens"<sup>225</sup> and presumably this practice was meant to be reflected in the yearly processions at Alexandria. Yet we must presume that Bilistiche's position as Philadelphus' mistress would have precluded her being a virgin. If an exception were made for her as the king's lover, the patronymic cited for her in the lists would seem to be further confirmation of her otherwise respectable birth.

## CONCLUSION

<sup>224</sup>Ijsewijn 1961: 25, no. 35 citing testimonia PCZ II 59289 vv. 2-3; vv. 13-14; P. Zen. dem. 6b vv. 2-3 (2) cf. also notes on 72-73; 136.

<sup>225</sup>Ibid, 136; cf. Pomeroy's 1984: 55-59 discussion of the Ptolemaic priestesses at Alexandria.

In conclusion, it seems clear that a certain change had taken place in the character of *hetairai* from the earlier context of Athenian democratic society to that of the various kingdoms in the early Hellenistic period. The elements of pornographic discourse, formed from many diverse genres of Greek writings, continued to play a role in how *hetairai* were presented in the predominantly Greek sources. It seems that the many contradictions inherent in the characterization of royal courtesans point to a further distancing between literary construction and historical reality. We can see this in cases like those, for example, of Lamia and Bilistiche where the predominantly negative associations—associations made almost unconsciously by the reader based on his extensive exposure to prostitute characterizations in almost every genre of writing he might have chosen to indulge—of the terms used to define them as prostitutes promotes a connection with the baser aspects of commercial prostitution. Even though such a connection often lacks historical corroboration, or, for that matter, even the type of rather untrustworthy proof found in fictionalized anecdotes, the association remains strong. This is more than likely the case because of a renewed use, particularly among historians, of the connection between politician and prostitute as a tool for political criticism, at least during the early Hellenistic age before the fear of a growing despotism among monarchs prevented such criticism. In addition there was the enhanced interest in the biography great men in which the flaw of excess was a predominant theme brought to light very often by that man's indiscriminate or excessive devotion to prostitutes.

The fact that the Hellenistic era by definition was dominated by monarchies and in many cases was evaluated by formerly politically active citizens of free Greek *poleis* made for an overwhelmingly negative judgement of the newly established tiny minority of absolute rulers. The notion that this type of power was corruptive is prevalent in the sources and it was manifest in part by the long standing assumption that women in general and particularly women outside the boundaries of reproductive marriage were both causes and symptoms of that corruption. Whether it is possible to equate the mistresses of



Hellenistic monarchs who were classed as prostitutes by Greek writers with the definitions of those classifications that developed over an extremely long period of time in Greek pornographic discourse is in fact impossible without a great deal of often subjective source evaluation. While it seems unlikely that our disbelief in a certain amount of the source material should be questioned (be it because it shows undue bias against its subject or because it blatantly relies on generic fictional rather than specific historical anecdotal material), the fact that the terminology and descriptions used to define these women may reflect the historical 'kernel of fact' that the women were indeed prostitutes (granted of an elevated sort) must be allowed for. At the same time we must allow for the fact that traditional Greek stereotypes of the east or orient as part of a dissolute and corrupted culture where women and men veritably switched roles played a part in the rhetoric used to describe the rulers of these kingdoms. Clearly, Alexander's initial attempt to balance oriental and Greek cultures in his quest to legitimize his world empire continued to influence the actions of kings and the perceptions of the Greek subjects writing accounts of events. It is perhaps surprising to us that the role of the generic or constructed prostitute was so prominent in the historical texts but it simply testifies to the significant power of the *hetaira* as a cultural icon—just as we saw had been the case with the earliest so called *hetaira* involved with a powerful statesman, Aspasia of Miletus.

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## APPENDIX

### *Prosopographic Catalogue of Courtesans:*

**AGATHOCLEA:** daughter of the Samian courtesan Oenante and an Alexandrian, Diognetos/ Theognetos. She held the religious office of *canephore* in 216/15 BC [Ijsewijn, 1961: 34; no. 71 84]. Her brother Agathocles was, in his youth, cupbearer of Ptolemy IV Philopator (r. 221-205 B.C.) [Polyb. XV. 25,33]. The ἐρωμένη of Philopator, Agathoclea and her mother Oenante, a *pornoboskos*, managed government affairs while the king and court indulged in excessive wantonness and drunkenness [Plut. *Cleom.* 33]. The two women (described variously as *hetairai*, *auletrides*, and *orchestrides*) made an abject slave of the king, trampling on his crown [Plut. *Mor.* 753; Polyb. XIV. 11,2 ap. Ath. XIII. 577A]. Strabo, recounting the order of the Ptolemaic succession, mistakenly calls Agathoclea the mother of Philopator whom he describes as one of the dynasty's three most corrupt and licentious kings [XVII. 1,11]. Agathocles usurped the regency of Ptolemy V upon Philopator's death, at which time he also presented Agathoclea to the Macedonian guard as the woman to whom Philopator had entrusted the care of his young son. She also claimed to have served as wetnurse to the young king. Thanks to the detestable actions of her brother while he was in power, Agathoclea and her mother Oenante, along with all their relatives, were torn limb from limb by the Alexandrian mob [Polyb. XV. 25-29].

**ANTICYRA:** one of Demetrius' *pornai* with whom he shared his dissolute life on the Athenian acropolis [Plut. *Demetr.* 24]. Another Anticyra was a courtesan mentioned by Lysias in his speech *Against Medon* for perjury. Aristophanes of Byzantium says this woman's name was originally Oia but the name was chosen either because she drank with men mad with passion (Anticyra/anticyricon = hellebore) or because her lover, the physician Nicostratus, bequeathed her a large quantity of hellebore on his death bed [Ath. XIII. 586F].

**ANTIGONA:** originally from Pydna [Plut. *Alex.* 48] (or Pella) she was a *gunaiion* captured at Samothrace who became the *eromene* of Alexander's general Philotas, son of Parmenion, after being brought to Damascus. As his lover, she gained complete control over him and was privy to all his secrets and disgruntlement with Alexander. When her gossip about these discussions reached Craterus, he told Alexander who proceeded to enlist her as his spy on Philotas [Plut. *Mor.* 339; *Alex.* 48].

**ARISTAGORA:** a speech *Against Aristagora* is recorded by Athenaeus as having been written by Hypereides in which he mentions courtesans called "Anchovies" (Ἀφύας) as well as Laïs, Ocimon, and Metaneira [XIII. 586A; 587D; 588C]. Athenaeus also notes the story that Aristagora was one of the three *hetairai* kept simultaneously at various locations by Hypereides [XIII. 590CD = (?) Clearchus, *FHG* ii. 310].

ASPASIA (a.): the daughter of Axiochus of Miletus [Plut. *Per.* 24. 2] known most commonly as the *hetaira* of Athens' leading statesman Pericles.

First mentioned in contemporary Old Comedy as Pericles' *pallakis* or concubine [Cratinus, *Cheirons* 259 K-A]; Aspasia bore the *nothos* Pericles junior to Pericles, [Eupolis 110; 192 K-A; cf. Plut. *Per.* 37. 2, where Pericles is said to have applied for special permission to acknowledge his *nothos* (although it is not stated that Aspasia was his mother)]. The comic poet Hermippus prosecuted Aspasia on the charge of *asebia* and accused her of ensnaring free women for Pericles' dalliances [test. 2 K-A = *Per.* 32. 1]. The Peloponnesian War broke out after a retaliatory theft of two of Aspasia's *pornai* had been carried out by the Megarians in response to the theft of one of their own *pornai*, Simaetha [Aristoph. *Acharn.* ll. 516-539; cf. Ath. XIII. 569F-570B, Clearchus, *Erotica* frag. 30 Wehrli, and Plut. *Per.* 30. 4]. Aspasia taught Pericles how to be a successful speaker [Callias *Pedetai* \*21 K-A = schol. Pl. *Menex.* 235E].

The Socratic tradition at times expanded on the portrayal of Aspasia to reach beyond the prostitute characterization: Aspasia was the embodiment of *hedone* (pleasure) and as such she corrupted her lover Pericles to such an extent that he would visit her twice daily at her house, perhaps even bestowing kisses on her on each visit [Plut. *Per.* 24. 6], and when she faced her capital charge he pleaded on her behalf, weeping excessively and entreating the jurors [Antisthenes *Aspasia* C 34, 35 = Ath. V. 220D; XIII. 589E; cf. Plut. *Per.* 32. 3]. Aspasia is said ironically to have composed and recited speeches to Socrates, one of which is recounted in full—the *epitaphios*—which he then passed on for their educational value to his friend Menexenus; she is presented as skilled in advising many men, including Pericles, with her *politikos logos* [Plato, *Menex.*]. She was recommended by Socrates as a suitable teacher for the son of Callias since she had so successfully taught Pericles and Lysicles before; she also emulated the powerful Ionian courtesan Thargelia [Aeschines *Aspasia*, frag. 17, Dittmar = Max. Tyr. 38. 4; cf. Plut. *Per.* 24. 6; 24. 3 and Lucian, *Imagines* 17 who claims that the ideal woman's intellect would be reflected by the 'experience in affairs, acumen in politics, and quickness of wit' of Aspasia, who had lived with Pericles]. She also associated with the wives of respectable men, having advised Xenophon and his wife about *arete* (virtue) in *eros* (love), the role of the honest matchmaker and the education of a wife by her husband [frag. 30 Dittmar = Plut. *Per.* 24. 5; frag. 31 Dittmar = Cic. *Inv. Rhet.* I. 31, 51; cf. Xen. *Mem.* II. 6, 36; *Oec.* III. 14].

From much later treatments of Aspasia we return to the predominant characterization of her as a *hetaira* [Lucian, *The Dream* 19, 20; *The Dance* 25] although this is nonetheless closely bound up with her connection to philosophy [Alciphron, *Letters of the Courtesans* 7. 6-7]. The conflict between Athens and Samos was undertaken by Pericles to gratify Aspasia (since the Samians were at war with Miletus) [Duris of Samos ap. Plut. *Per.* 24. 2]. Pericles dismissed his wife from his home, taking in Aspasia instead and squandering much of his property on her [Heraclides Ponticus frag. 59 ap. Ath. XII. 533D; cf. Plut. *Per.* 24. 5-6 where the separation with his wife was said to have been by mutual agreement]. Aspasia inspired the passion of Socrates who frequented her house [Hermesianax *Leontion*, frag. 7 CA ap. Ath. XIII. 599AB] and also advised him, in

her position as his teacher of erotics, about winning the love of Alcibiades [Herodicus *Against the Socratiphile* frag. 4 Duering = Ath. V. 219D]. Socrates derived an enjoyment of philosophy from Aspasia and Pericles of rhetoric (in Didymus' 1<sup>st</sup> century BC/AD (?) version, Aspasia is not presented as a *hetaira* but rather as a 'wise woman' [Didymus frag. 7 Schmidt = Clem Al. *Strom.* 4. 19], similarly, she is called one of the eminent ancient philosophers by Philostratus, *Letter* 73 and Themistius, *Oration* 26. In the fullest account of her *bios*, Plutarch summarizes the majority of these earlier traditions, *Per.* 24. -25. 1.

ASPASIA (b.): also called Aspasia the Younger [Clearchus, *Love Stories* FHG ii. 314 ap. Ath. XIII. 589D], she was from Phocaea, the daughter of Hermotimus, and was taken by Cyrus on his expedition against his brother. Although a *hetaira* she was, like her namesake, very wise and beautiful (she had been born of free parents and been fittingly educated [Plut. *Artax.* 26. 3]); Xenophanes says her original name was Milto [Ath. XIII. 576D; cf. Plut. *Per.* 24. 7]. Cyrus' *pallakis* (concubine), she won his favour by her 'free and unperturbed' character which she displayed when she was brought to his banquet table with the other captured women. She refused to cavort with the king or approach him when he summoned her, daring the king's men to lay a hand on her at their own peril [Plut. *Artax.* 26. 4-5]. She was captured after Cyrus' defeat at Cunaxa in 401 and taken as part of the booty by Artaxerxes' soldiers [Xen. *Anab.* I. 10. 2]. She was brought to the king at this point and acquired great influence with him [Plut. *Per.* 24. 7]. She became the long time favourite of the king and his son Dareius, upon being named crown prince, asked to have her. Although this aroused the king's jealousy, he offered her to his son only if she was willing, since she was a free woman. She chose to go with Dareius but soon the king took her back and made her a priestess of Artemis—who had to remain chaste, thereby preventing his son from having her and punishing him for having the insolence to ask for something he so cherished. This caused great resentment in Dareius since he loved the courtesan and felt mocked and insulted by his father; in time he plotted with another disgruntled courtier to assassinate his father [Plut. *Artax.* 27-29.7].

BILISTICHE: daughter of Philon [Zenon *Papyri* ii. 59289 (ed. Edgar)] she was a Macedonian [P. Oxy. XVII 2082 F6]/a woman from the coast of Macedonia [Paus. V. 8, 11] or an Argive—she herself derived her ancestry from the Atreidae [writers on Argive history, Ath. XIII. 596EF] or a barbarian commoner slave purchased in the market place [Plut. *Mor.* 753F]. She was identified variously as the *hetaira* [Ath. XIII. 596E; P. Oxy. XVII 2082 F6 = Phlegon of Tralles (?) *Olympic Chronology* FGrH 257a F6], an *eromene* (one of many) [Ptol. VIII *Euerg.* II FGrH 234 F4 ap. Ath. XIII. 576EF], and the *pallakis* (whom the king honoured by burying beneath the shrine of Serapis at Rhacotis after she died at Canobus) [Clem. Alex. *Protrep.* IV. 48. 2] of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. She was victorious with her colts in the Olympic Games in (?) 268 [P. Oxy. XVII 2082 F6 = Phlegon of Tralles (?) *Olympic Chronology* FGrH 257a F6] and in 264 [Paus. V. 8, 11; Euseb. *Chronicles* i. 207 Schöne]. In 251/50 Bilistiche served as eponymous *canephore* at Alexandria in the cult of Arsinoë Philadelphus [Ijsewijn 25 no. 35]. Philadelphus, because of his

devotion to her, dedicated temples and shrines to 'Aphrodite Bilistiche' which the people of Alexandria maintained [Plut. *Mor.* 753EF]. A poem 'On (?Against) Bilistiche' was composed by the cinaedic poet Sotades [*Suda* s.v. *Sotades*].

CALLIXENA: a very beautiful Thessalian *hetaira* secured by Olympias and Philip to sleep with Alexander when he was showing too little interest in sexual commerce. Since they feared Alexander might become 'womanish', Olympias often entreated him to lie with this courtesan [Hieronymus of Rhodes *Epistles*, citing Theophrastus ap. Ath. X. 434F-435A].

CHRYISIS: another of the *pornai* who shared with Demetrius I Poliorcetes his dissolute lifestyle on the acropolis at Athens [Plut. *Demetr.* 24]. She may also be mentioned in a list of aged prostitutes recounted in a fragment of Timocles' *Orestautocleides* [27 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 567EF] (it should be noted that this was one of the more popular courtesan names in the fourth century—a Chrysis is mentioned in Menander's *Kolax* [ap. Ath. XIII. 587DE] and as one of the main characters in his *Samia*. Assuming that the name refers to a particular historical courtesan is impossible).

CLEINO: *oinochoos* (cupbearer) of Ptolemy II Philadelphus [Ptol. of Megalop. *FGrH* 161 F3 ap. Ath. X. 425EF], she is not outright called a *hetaira* in the sources. Many statues depicting her in a chiton alone (*monochiton*) and holding a cornucopia (*rhyton*) in her hand were set up all over Alexandria [Polyb. 14. 11,2 ap. Ath. XIII. 576F].

DEMO: one of the *pornai* of Demetrius I Poliorcetes [Plut. *Dem.* 24. 1], her surname was Mania and she was often in competition with Lamia, the king's favourite, at dinners that both courtesans attended [*Dem.* 27. 4-5]. According to Ptolemy of Megalopolis, Mania, mistress of Demetrius, was separate from Demo, the mistress of Antigonus (I or II is not specified) and she bore him Alcyoneus [*FGrH* 161 F4 ap. Ath. XIII. 577F-578A]. This Alcyoneus is described as an officer in his father Antigonus II Gonatas' army [Plutarch, *Pyrrhus* 34]; he had a prominent Stoic philosopher Persaeus as his tutor [*SVF* i. 441 Arnim], and when he died his father instituted a yearly festival at Athens marking his birth date [Diog. Laert. 4. 41-2]—factors that would make the courtesan Demo's position as his mother, if accurate, quite significant. In another version, while she was Demetrius I's mistress, his father Antigonus I Monophthalmos fell madly in love with her. After unknown crimes were perpetrated by Demetrius and Oxythemis, which included Oxythemis torturing Demo's maids to death, Antigonus had Oxythemis executed [Heracleides Lembus *FHG* iii. 168 F4 ap. Ath. XIII. 578B].

DIDYME: an exceedingly beautiful Egyptian native woman, she was another *eromene* of Ptolemy II Philadelphus [Ptol. VIII *Euerg.* II *FGrH* 234 F4 ap. Ath. XIII. 576EF]. Her origins may have caused some scandal at the Alexandrian court since Asclepiades wrote an epigram praising her beauty and making light of the significance of her dark skin [*Pal. Anth.* 5. 210].

GLAUCE: a famous harp player (*citharode*) whose 'drunken sportive songs' Theon, the popular accompanist of the mimes on stage, played [*Pal. Anth.* 10. 1883-4, Hedylus]. Her songs also inspired the playing of the character Corydon in his conversation with the goatherd Battus [*Theocr.* 4. 31 Dover]. The scholia on this Theocritan Idyll says that Glaucē was a 'stringed instrument player' from Chios. Her playing attracted the adoration of a dog, or a ram [*Plut. Mor.* 972F; *Ael. NA* 8. 11] or a goose [*Ael. NA* 1. 6]. She inspired a rivalry between the ram that loved her and the king Ptolemy II Philadelphus [*Ael. NA* 8. 11 (apparatus, n. 1)] for whom she played the harp [*Pliny NH* X. 26]. She sang as well to accompany herself on the lyre in purer tones even than Apollo's Pythia [*Plut. Mor.* 397A]. An Alexandrian clay alabastron may in one of its panels depict Glaucē playing her harp and being approached adoringly by a goose [Thompson: 1964, esp. figs. 1-4].

GLYCERA (a.): the Athenian *hetaira* of Harpalus, treasurer of Alexander. A certain Glycera (that *may* be this particular woman) is called the daughter of Thalassia and someone, perhaps Mantitheus, is accused of having her accompany him in his two horse drawn chariot [*Hypereides, Against Mantitheus* ap. *Ath.* XIII. 586BC]. She was summoned from Athens by Harpalus after Pythionice died in Babylon and was ensconced in the palace at Tarsus where she was hailed "queen" (*basilissa*) by the populace, who also performed proskynesis to her. Unless they crowned (στεφανοῦν) Glycera, Harpalus refused to allow himself to be crowned and in Rhossus the people set up a bronze image of her beside that of Harpalus ([and the one of Alexander]—n. 8 emm. Jacoby) [*Theopompus On the Chian Letter FGrH* 115 F254B and *Cleitarchus Histories of Alexander FGrH* 137 F11 ap. *Ath.* XIII. 586C]. In another version of events, Theopompus states that this portrait in bronze was set up by Harpalus himself, at the same place where he intended to set up a monument to Alexander and himself. Additionally, the privileges and other gifts that he bestowed on Glycera befitted Alexander's mother or his wife, not Harpalus' *porne* [*Letter to Alexander, FGrH* 115 F253 ap. *Ath.* XIII. 595DE]. She gave Harpalus the thousands of bushels of grain with which he purchased for himself citizenship from the Athenians [*Python Agen* ap. *Ath.* XIII. 586D; 596B]. While living with Glycera, Harpalus kept her in a lifestyle of excessive luxury, expending fantastic expense on her, while making generous benefactions to the Athenians in case he should at some time need a place of refuge [*Diod.* 17. 108, 6].

GLYCERA (b.): since this was another of the very popular *hetaira* names, it is difficult to assign anecdotes to a specific historical individual. One of the most famous Glyceras (although no less certainly a real historical woman) was the mistress of Menander who is recorded conversing with him, when she was an old woman, about some bad luck he had had [(?) *Aristodemus, Ludicrous Memoirs FHG* iii. 310 ap. *Ath.* XIII. 585C; for an anecdote on a conversation between Glycera and another courtesan, Leontion, cf. *Ath.* XIII. 585D]. Their relationship was common knowledge but soured at some point, making Menander despise all women [*Ath.* XIII. 594D]. She shows up as one of the main

characters in his *Perikeiromene* as well as other plays (frags. 80, 280 Gomme-Sandbach 1973; cf. Kortē 1919 on the mistaken tendency to conflate the mistress with the comic character]. A fictitious correspondence between Menander and Glycera, in which Menander is said to have been invited to Egypt by Ptolemy to put on the play in which he had given Ptolemy a part, is recorded in Alciphron [IV. 19, 4]. Another prominent *hetaira* named Glycera is said to have conversed with the philosopher Stilpo about the equally corruptive nature of a courtesan's erotics and a philosopher's sophistries [Satyrus, *Stilpo* FHG iii. 164 ap. Ath. XIII. 584A]. Another anecdote which may refer to either (or an entirely different) Glycera is related in a fragment Clearchus; she admonishes philosophers against the love of boys since they are only attractive so long as they resemble women [FHG ii. 314 ap. Ath. XIII. 605D].

GNATHAENA & GNATHAENION: two popular courtesans at Athens, they were either mother and daughter or grandmother and granddaughter. Gnathaena's most famous lover was the comic poet Diphilus who was accustomed to ridicule her in his plays [Machon XIV ll. 212-13; XVI ll. 271-3 Gow]. She is reviled as a mythological monster in a comic play of Anaxilas [*The Chick* 22 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 557B]. Gnathaena was very quick and witty in repartee [Ath. XIII. 577D]. She and Mania, the mistress of Demetrius I Poliorcetes, exchanged abusive remarks [Machon XIV ll. 214-17 Gow]. Gnathaena and Diphilus often drank together, at times in Gnathaena's home, and exchanged witty remarks [Lynceus of Samos, *Reminiscences* ap. Ath. 583F]. He loved her madly [Ath. XIII. 583EF], was the most esteemed of her lovers (which pleased him greatly) and he brought extravagant gifts to her parties outshining the meager gifts of his competitors (such as one Syrian stranger) [Machon XVI Gow]. Gnathaena is recorded having many lovers, including a criminal [Machon XVI ll. 285-94 Gow]; a young man from Pontus [Machon XVI ll. 327-32]; a soldier and criminal pair [Aristodemus, *Ludicrous Memoirs* FHG iii. 310 ap. Ath. XIII. 585A] as well as anonymous *erastes* [Machon XVI ll. 311-18; Lynceus of Samos ap. Ath. XIII. 584C] and perhaps also king Demetrius I Poliorcetes—in a (fictional) letter Demetrius' favourite Lamia wonders if he prefers Gnathaena to herself [4. 16. 2]. She continued to socialize even when she was very old [Timocles, *Orestautocleides* 27 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 567EF] and apparently poverty stricken [Machon XVI ll. 300-10]. She often accompanied her daughter (or granddaughter) Gnathaenion at symposia or negotiated prices with potential clients for her [Machon XVI ll. 319-26; XVII 333-48; 380-86; Lynceus of Samos ap. Ath. XIII. 584C; 584DE; (?)Aristodemus, *Ludicrous Memoirs* FHG iii. 310 ap. Ath. XIII. 585AB]. Her name and that of her granddaughter were added by Gorgias to the list of 135 Athenian courtesans compiled by Aristophanes of Byzantium [ap. Ath. XIII. 583DE]. She compiled a *Rule for Dining in Company* for the lovers of herself and her daughter to follow which imitated the rules drawn up by philosophers. Callimachus recorded 323 lines of it in his *Rules* [(?)Aristodemus, *Ludicrous Memoirs* FHG iii. 310 ap. Ath. XIII. 585B].

LAÏS: there were apparently two Laïses, an elder (who died in 392 B.C. [schol. Aristoph. *Plut.* 179]) and younger, but the stories connected to them are indistinguishable for the most part. One anecdote states that an 'elder' Laïs was the daughter of Timandra [Ath. XII. 535C], the courtesan who cared for the dead Alcibiades [Plut. *Alc.* 39]. Another states that this *hetaira's* name was Damasandra (or "Man-crusher") and that she was the mother of the younger Laïs [(?) Lysias 346 Thalheim ap. Ath. XIII. 574E]. Laïs was from Corinth [Anaxandrides *Gerontomania* (*Old Men's Madness*), 9 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 570E; Machon XVIII l. 402 Gow; (?) Aristodemus *Ludicrous Memoirs* FHG iii. 310 ap Ath. XIII. 585D; Strattis *The Macedonians* or Pausanias 27 K-A ap. Ath. 589A (who states that she belongs to one Megacles)] or she was from the town of Hyccara in Sicily [cf. Nymphodorus of Syracuse *The Wonders of Sicily*, FGrH 572 F6 ap. Ath. 588F-589A; Timaeus *Histories* FHG i. 219 ap. Ath. XIII. 589A] but was brought to Corinth as a captive, at which time she became the mistress of the philosophers Aristippus and Diogenes the Cynic as well as the orator Demosthenes. Aphrodite of Corinth, known as Melaenis, used to appear to her and foretell the coming of wealthy lovers [Polemon, *Reply to Timaeus* Preller 75 ap. Ath. 588C]. Diogenes the Cynic apparently carried on relations with Laïs for free while Aristippus expended vast sums on her and kept her for two months every year at Aegina during the festival of Poseidon, much to the dismay of his friend Hicetas. Diogenes reproached Aristippus for living with a common whore (*koine porne*) saying that unless he professed a Cynic philosophy, this was inappropriate. Aristippus replied that living with Laïs, whom many men had enjoyed, was no different living in a house previously inhabited by others or sailing in a ship many had sailed in before [Ath. XIII. 588EF; cf. Diog. Laert. II. 8. 74; Plut. *Mor.* 750EF: Aristippus felt no more need for Laïs to love him than he did the wine and fish he enjoyed]. Aristippus fell so deeply in love with Laïs of Apidane (the Peloponnesus) that he renounced philosophical discourses and expounded a life of worthlessness [Hermesianax of Colophon ap. Ath. XIII. 599B]. Men were in terrible danger of falling into her clutches as her pimp (*mastropos*) worked tirelessly to entangle them [Theophilus *Philaulos*, 11 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 587F; her greed being the cause of her love for one Philonides may be mentioned in Aristophanes' *Plutus* ap. Ath. XIII. 592D]. Her beauty was so great that painters came to her to copy her breasts and chest; she was also in an intense rivalry with the famous Phryne of Thespiae, leading her to engage a large crowd of lovers, rich and poor alike, none of whom she treated disdainfully [Ath. XIII. 588E; cf. Plato *Epigr.* 15 on her "swarm of lovers"; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 767F: all of Greece was thrown into a fever of longing by her beauty and she was the object of contention from sea to sea]. Laïs was so successful in her youth that she could charge excessive golden fees [cf. Plut. *Mor.* 759EF: when men loved her she could earn fees worthy of the wealth of Tantalus or the kingdom of Gyges] and was harder to get to see than the Persian satrap Pharnabazus [cf. Plato *Epigr.* 15: she "laughed proudly at all of Hellas"]. But in her elder years, her body distorted by age, anyone could see her out and about, accepting the lowest fees from the very hand of any man who offered them, young or old [Epicrates *Anti-Laïs*, 3 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 570BD]. She quipped with Euripides once as he was strolling in his



gardens about his attack on women, quoting lines from one of his own plays to contradict him [Machon XVIII ll. 402-10 Gow]. Lysias may have written a speech *Against Laïs* [365 Thalheim ap. Ath. XIII. 586E] and Hypereides mentions her as the most beautiful of women who had ever lived in his second speech *Against Aristagora* [142 Kenyon = Ath. 587D]; perhaps in this same speech he relates the anecdote about her first meeting with the painter Apelles while she was still a maiden, not yet a *hetaira*, in Corinth. He took her to a symposium and promised his friends that he would make a fine courtesan of her in less than three years [(?) Hypereides *Against Aristagora*<sup>2</sup> 13 Kenyon = Ath. XIII. 588CD]. She died in the end from excessive commerce [Philetaerus *Kunagis* (*The Huntress*), 9 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 587E]. In the version Polemon, she was beaten to death with wooden footstools in the temple of Aphrodite in Thessaly, having inspired their envy and jealousy by falling in love with a Thessalian named Pausanias. Hence the temple came to be called that of Sinful (*Anosias*) Aphrodite. Her tomb, beside the Peneius river and bearing a stone water jar, was inscribed with an epigram noting that her beauty had enslaved all of Hellas, that she was begotten by Eros, nourished by Corinth and buried on the plains of Thessaly [Preller 75 = Ath. XIII. 589AB; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 768A: she escaped her vast throng of lovers and the hoards of *hetairai* for the sake of the Thessalian Hippolochus but once in Thessaly, the women were jealous of her beauty and thus stoned her to death in the temple of Aphrodite, earning for it the title of "Murderous (*Androphonos*) Aphrodite"]. Contrary versions state that she was buried in Corinth beside the Cornel Grove [Ath. XIII. 589C].

LAMIA: an Athenian *hetaira*, most commonly called an *auletris*, daughter of Cleanor [Polemon *On the Painted Stoa at Sicyon* ap. Ath. XIII. 577C], who became the favourite lover of Demetrius I Poliorcetes after being captured among the spoils at the defeat of Ptolemy I's naval force at Cyprus in 306 B.C. She was already at this time famous for her skill playing the flute (although not reputed to be a *hetaira*), and was, in fact, past her prime and much older than Demetrius himself. This proved to be no obstacle however as she mastered him to such a degree that she became his only lover while all other women loved him [Plut. *Demetr.* 16. 3-4; cf. 27. 4 where another of his mistresses, Demo Mania, mocks Lamia's age, comparing her to her mother]. Additionally, she was very confident of her place in his affections, judging by her haughty treatment of him recorded in Machon where the two exchange extremely vulgar jests [XIII Gow; although note that in Alciphron's *Letters of Courtesans*, 4. 16, 2, Lamia wonders if Demetrius prefers Gnathaena to herself]. The pair also had a daughter together who was named Phila (the name of one of Demetrius' legitimate wives) [Ath. XIII. 577C]. So renowned was his love for her that even his father Antigonus make jokes about it [Plut. *Demetr.* 19. 4] while it incited the jealousy of Demetrius' wives and his friends [*Demetr.* 27. 3]. Demetrius was even accustomed to go openly to visit Lamia at her house when she summoned him, wearing his full armour and crown [Ael. *VH* 12. 17]. She shared in Demetrius' dissolute life on the Athenian acropolis with a number of his other *pornai* [Plut. *Demetr.* 24. 1; cf. Clement *Protrept.* IV. 48]. Her reputation spread abroad as she was ridiculed as a *porne* on

Demetrius' self appointed tragic stage by his rival king Lysimachus, inspiring Demetrius to retort that any *porne* of his undoubtedly lived more chastely than a Penelope of Lysimachus [Phylarchus *FGrH* 81 F12 ap. Ath. XIV. 614F; cf. Plut. *Demetr.* 25. 6]. On an embassy to Lysimachus, Demetrius' ambassadors joked around, comparing the scars from the lion with which Lysimachus had been caged by Alexander to the bites of the beast Lamia that Demetrius carried on his neck [*Demetr.* 27. 3]. One of her most famous exploits was a lavish banquet which she held for Demetrius [Lynceus of Samos *Banquet Letters*, ap. Ath. III. 101E; IV. 128AB], having exacted the funds necessary for it from the citizenry of Athens [Plut. *Demetr.* 27. 2]. The event caused a comic poet to call her a real *Helepolis* (City Taker), a reference to Demetrius' famous siege engines that were renowned for capturing cities, while Demochares of Soli called Demetrius a *Mythos* (Fable) because he also had a Lamia [Plut. *Demetr.* 27. 2]. Her comment on the famous judgement of the Egyptian courtesan Thonis, who had charged a client for dreaming of sleeping with her but was then granted only to grasp at the shadow of the sum she had demanded, was also spread abroad [Plut. *Demetr.* 27. 5-6]. An incident which caused much outrage among the Athenians was Demetrius' hasty leveling of 250 talents from the people which he then handed over to Lamia and his other *hetairai* to buy soap with (others say he insulted the Thessalians rather than the Athenians with this treatment) [Plut. *Demetr.* 27. 1-2]. As a benefaction to the people of Sicyon, she built the Stoa (art gallery) [Polemon *On the Painted Stoa at Sicyon*, ap. Ath. XIII. 577C]. The Thebans, flattering Demetrius, founded a temple to Aphrodite Lamia [Polemon *On the Painted Stoa at Sicyon*, ap. Ath. VI. 253B] while the Athenians, humiliating themselves even in the eyes of Demetrius, erected temples to Aphrodite Lamia and Leaena to whom they chanted paeans [Demochares *Histories*, *FGrH* 75 F1 ap. Ath. VI. 253AB]. Note also that the name Lamia was already a known courtesan name since the anecdotal story of Themistocles driving a prostitute drawn chariot into the midst of the crowded Athenian agora had included a prostitute named Lamia [Idomeneus *FHG* ii 491 F5 ap. Ath. XIII. 576C].

LEAENA: Demetrius I Poliorcetes was in love with this Attic *hetaira* [Polemon *On the Painted Stoa at Sicyon*, ap. Ath. XIII. 577CD] and he shared his dissolute life on the Athenian acropolis with a group of *pornai*, of which she was one [Plut. *Demetr.* 24. 1]. She won great favour with Demetrius because of her erotic skills and she and Lamia often competed with one another to please him [Machon XII, Gow]. Along with the temples dedicated to Aphrodite Lamia, the Athenians set up ones to Aphrodite Leaena and chanted paeans to her [Demochares *Histories*, *FGrH* 75 F1 ap. Ath. VI. 253A]. The popularity of the name is attested by the anecdote about another Athenian Leaena who was the *hetaira* of Harmodius, the tyrannicide; she died under torture rather than reveal information about the plot to assassinate Hippias [Pliny, *HN* 7. 87; 34. 72; Pausanias I 23. 1-2; Ath. XIII. 596F; Didymus, frag. 7 Schmidt tells the story without calling her a *hetaira*].

MANIA: one of Demetrius I Poliorcetes' many mistresses, a witty remark by her in response to his request to enjoy her favours is a parody of the opening lines of

Sophocles' *Electra* [Machon XV ll. 226-30 Gow], she was of Attic birth and originally had the given name of Melitta. She assumed the Phrygian name Mania because of the associations of it with the word 'madness', which described the effect of her beauty on her many lovers, citizen and foreigner. Eventually, by encouraging the use of this word, her own name fell out of use and was replaced by Mania [Machon XIV ll. 188-210 Gow]. She and the courtesan Gnathaena were in competition with one another and are recorded exchanging abusive remarks [Machon XIV ll. 211-17 Gow]. She was kept exclusively by the Olympic pancratiast Leontiscus who got enraged when she was seduced by another Olympic pancratiast Antenor [Machon XV ll. 218-25 Gow; on the Olympic victors see Pausanias VI. 4. 3]. She attended symposia as the hired entertainment for strangers visiting Athens (even if they were uncouth) as long as the fee was met [Machon XV ll. 231-51 Gow]. She also held symposia at her own home at which all the guests, even the scoundrels, had a turn embracing her [Machon XV ll. 252-57 Gow]. (Note here that the confusion over the double names for individual courtesans (Melitta-Mania and Demo-Mania), especially where they are attributed as *hetairai* of the same historical figure (Demetrius), makes it difficult to attach specific anecdotal incidents to one woman.)

MYRRHINE: the Samian *hetaira* kept by Demetrius I Poliorcetes, to whom he gave a share in his kingship, though he withheld the crown from her [Nicolaüs of Damascus *FGrH* 90 F90 ap. Ath. XIII. 593A]. She may be the Myrrhine mentioned in a list of aged courtesans reviled for their greed in a comedy of Timocles [*Orestautocleides* 27 K-A ap. Ath. 567F]. This is likely not the same Myrrhine whom Hypereides took into his home at Athens after evicting his son Glaucippus at a time when she was Athens' most expensive *hetaira* (considering the distance in time between the orator and the king, she would have to be quite aged at the time of the second affair) [Idomeneus *FHG* ii 492 ap. Ath. 590C; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 849D, Alciphron I. 31, Sext. Emp. *Math.* II. 4, Quintil. II. 15. 9].

NEAERA: the Corinthian *hetaira* prosecuted by Apollodorus for impiety toward the gods, outrage toward the state and contempt for the laws of Athens via her pretense of legitimate marriage to the citizen Stephanus and his subsequent attempt to pass her children off as his own to his clansmen and demesmen [59. 12-13]. She was purchased as a small child along with seven other girls by a freedwoman, Nicarete, who was a madame in the business of training girls to become prostitutes. She passed them off as her own daughters, pretending that they were free girls so that she could charge higher fees and once they had earned her the profits from their youthful beauty she sold them to the highest bidders [59. 18-20]. Neaera began the trade of the prostitute ("working with the body") before she was even old enough to do so and was brought to Athens by Nicarete on a trip during which she was kept at the house of one Philostratus and was hired by anyone who would pay [59. 21-3]. Her next client was a Thessalian Simus who brought her to Athens for the Panathenaea and lodged her and her mistress Nicarete at the house of Ctesippus where she joined in the drinking with many men [59. 24-5]. She acquired some fame in plying her trade

at Corinth, with Xenocleides the poet and Hipparchus the actor as her lovers, among others [59. 26]. In fact, she travelled all over Greece plying her profession: in Thessaly and Magnesia with Simus of Larisa and Eurydamus, and in Chios and most of Ionia in the train of Sotades the Cretan [59. 108]. Next she had two lovers, Timanoridas of Corinth and Eucrates of Leucas. These men tired of paying Nicarete's extravagant fees so they purchased Neaera to be their slave for 30 minas. They kept her for their use until they wanted to get married and then they offered to allow her to purchase her freedom from them at the reduced cost of 20 minas so that they would not have to see her around Corinth prostituting herself for some pimp. She then summoned a former lover, Phrynion of Athens, and asked him to help her by putting up the remainder of the amount that she did not have so that she could buy her freedom. He did so and Neaera was free, on condition that she not practice at Corinth [59. 29-32]. Phrynion then brought her to Athens but he treated her outrageously, taking her to dinners and parties wherever he went even allowing slaves of his friends to sleep with her [59. 33-4]. In a rage, Neaera took all of Phrynion's household goods, all the clothes and jewelry he had given her and her two maids and ran away to Megara where she stayed for two years trying and failing to make decent profits from prostituting herself. When the war between Athens and Sparta ended, Stephanus happened to come to Megara and he lodged at Neaera's house and engaged her services. He agreed to become her patron so that she could live at Athens, to protect her from Phrynion and anyone else that might harm her, and even to keep her as his own wife, introducing her sons as his own and thus making them citizens. He then brought her and her three children, Proxenus, Ariston and Phano to Athens and set them up in his cottage. He wished by doing this to have a beautiful *hetaira* for free and to support his household expenses by her earnings from prostitution. When Phrynion heard that Neaera was living with Stephanus he went to their house and tried to carry her off. Stephanus would not allow it, stating that she was a free woman. Phrynion demanded that she post bonds with the polemarch to prove it, which she did, with Stephanus, Glaucetes and Aristocrtates as sureties. Neaera then took to charging higher fees from clients on the grounds that she was a respectable woman living with her husband and Stephanus joined her in extorting blackmail particularly from young inexperienced foreigners since she had to maintain the lavish lifestyle she had grown used to in addition to supporting her three children and the three household slaves [59. 35-42]. Rather than pressing his suit against Stephanus, Phrynion agreed to arbitration over the issue of Neaera's freedom and the goods she had stolen from him, the result being that Neaera was judged free and her own mistress but she had to return the goods she had taken and she would have to live on alternate days with each man, unless they mutually agreed to another arrangement, being maintained on those days by the one with whom she was staying. When the agreement was made, they all went together to the house of the man who got her that day and drank and dined together [59. 45-48]. Neaera's daughter, originally named Strybele but later Phano, came to Stephanus' house with her mother as a young child and was given in marriage as Stephanus' own daughter to an Athenian named Phrastor. When he found that she was not a

decent woman and was the daughter of Neaera not Stephanus, he drove her away and refused to repay the marriage portion, though he had lived with her for one year and she was pregnant. Stephanus tried to sue Phrastor to recover the marriage portion but Phrastor brought a counter indictment against Stephanus for falsely portraying the girl as his daughter. Stephanus came to terms with Phrastor in order to avoid the grievous penalties of giving the daughter of an alien in marriage, relinquishing his claim to the dowry and his action against Phrastor for alimony while Phrastor agreed to drop his indictment of Stephanus. Soon after this, Phrastor got very ill and since a family feud had made him unwilling to allow his relatives to get his property in case of his death, he was convinced by Neaera and Phano to adopt the son Phano had born after he evicted her. Although he tried to do so, he would not swear to the clansmen that the boy was his own by an Athenian woman betrothed according to the law [59. 50-60]. While Neaera was living with Stephanus, an old lover of hers who had expended vast sums on her in the past and was very fond of her, Epäenetus of Andros, the two plotted extortion against him by surprising him in adultery with Neaera's daughter, getting 30 minas from him. Once he was free of them though he brought an indictment against Stephanus for unlawful imprisonment on adultery charges—he claimed that he could not be an adulterer since the girl was an alien and her mother knew well that the two were together and their house was no more than a house of prostitution, making the inhabitants not libel for protection from the law. Stephanus feared being convicted of running a brothel and submitted to arbitration, dropping his claim to the 30 minas but asking for a contribution to Phano's dowry since they were poor and Epäenetus had already enjoyed her favours. This was settled, with Epäenetus giving one mina [59. 64-70]. The ultimate outrage perpetrated by Neaera and Stephanus was their betrothal of Phano to the king archon Theogenes, an Athenian of good birth, and married her to him as the daughter of an Athenian. As his wife she unlawfully undertook sacred religious rites forbidden to a non Athenian woman [59. 72-3]. The council of the Areopagus was suspicious of Phano and undertook an inquiry, after determining that she was the daughter of an alien Neaera they were going to fine Theogenes. Theogenes pled that he was innocent and had been duped at the betrothal by Stephanus, proving his innocence by evicting Phano from his house and expelling Stephanus, his assessor, from the board of magistrates [59. 80-4]. Although Apollodorus claims he would have withdrawn his indictment if Neaera and Stephanus delivered up her maids for torture regarding the parentage of the children, they refused [59. 120-22]. [Nothing is known of the outcome of the trial.] Neaera became a very popular name for courtesans, both Philemon and Timocles had a comic play entitled *Neaera* [49 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 590A; 25 K-A ap. Ath. 567DE, cf. 591D] and an aged prostitute named Neaera is mentioned in Philetærus' *The Huntress* [9 K-A ap. Ath. 587E].

OENANTHE: a Samian *auletris* and *orchestris*, she may have been the mistress of Ptolemy III Euergetes (r. 246-221 B.C.) [schol. Aristoph. *Thesmoph.* 1059]. She was the mother of Ptolemy IV Philopator's mistress Agathoclea together with whom she enjoyed immense power and trampled on the king's crown [Plut. *Mor.* 753].

Her son Agathocles was Philopator's companion and became regent to his son Epiphanes when Philopator died [Polyb. 14. 11. 1; 15. 25-33.6]. She, a *pornoboskos*, helped her daughter with the important affairs of government while the king reveled and conducted religious ceremonies [Plut. *Cleom.* 33]. When things started to go poorly for her son and daughter in their usurped position as rulers, Oenanthe went to the Thesmophoreum where she prayed feverently to the goddesses then sat beside the altar. It pleased most women around to see her in such a wretched state but some noble ladies approached her, intending to console her. She assumed that they wanted her harm because of events at the palace so she shouted vile threats at them and had the temple servants drive them away from her. This turned all the women against her even more [Polyb. 15. 29, 8-14] and when she was rounded up with the rest of Agathocles' relatives and delivered up to the mob, having been dragged from the Thesmophoreum, stripped naked and brought to the stadium, they tore her to shreds with the rest of her female relations [15. 33, 8-10].

PANCASTE: a woman from Larissa, she became the *pallakis* of Alexander after initiating him into the art of love. His good friend, the painter Apelles fell in love with her [Ael. *VH* 12. 34]. She inspired Apelles' famous painting of Aphrodite Anadyomene (Rising from the Sea) as her body was of an ideal sort of beauty [Lucian 43.7]. This is a tradition that only some believe however since Phryne was the more commonly assumed model [Pliny *NH*, 35. 36, 86; cf. Ath. XIII. 590F-591A]. She was Alexander's favourite mistress and he commissioned his friend Apelles to paint her portrait nude. When Apelles fell in love with her, Alexander bestowed her on his friend as a gift, disregarding his own feelings as well as those of the woman who had now gone from being the mistress of a king to the mistress of a painter [Pliny *NH*, 35. 36, 86-7]. (It should be noted that her precise name is indeterminable since each source we have calls her by a similar but slightly different name: Pancaspe, Pacate and Pancaste.)

PHRYNE: there are at least two Phrynes on record, perhaps more: one was nicknamed Teary-Smile, another Goldfish [Apollodorus *On Courtesans* FGrH 288 F208-12 ap. Ath. XIII. 591C] or one was called The Sifter by the orators, the other was the Thespian [Herodicus, *Persons Mentioned in Comedy* ap. Ath. XIII. 591C]. Phryne of Thespieae's given name was Mnesarete but she got the name Phryne (=Toad) from her sallow complexion [Plut. *Mor.* 401 A; cf. Aristogeiton, *Against Phryne* ap. Ath. XIII. 591E]. She was the lover and model for famous works by Praxiteles, including the *Meretrix Gaudens* (Merry Courtesan), from which one can discern the artists' love for her [Pliny *NH* 34. 19. 70-71], and his Aphrodite of Cnidos [Ath. XIII. 591A], he also sculpted a gilt statue of her, which she dedicated at Delphi and later stood next to two images of Apollo [Pausanias *Oz. Locr.* 15. 1] or by her neighbours in Thespieae who set it up between the statues of Archidamus, the Spartan king and Philip, son of Amyntas, the base of which reads "Phryne, daughter of Epicles, of Thespieae." When the philosopher Crates saw it standing there he cried out that it was a monument to the licentiousness of the Greeks [Plut. *Mor.* 336D; cf. Alcetas, *On the Dedicatory Offerings at Delphi* FGrH

405 F1 ap. Ath. XIII. 591B; *Mor.* 401AD]. Praxiteles, wanting to see which of his works she liked best, offered Phryne a choice of his works. She chose his famous statue of Eros and dedicated it as a votive offering at Thespieae [Ath. XIII. 591B; cf. Ath. XIII. 590F-591A: on the base of the statue, Praxiteles composed an epigram in honour of his intense love for Phryne which caused him to give it to her; Pausanias I. 20. 1-2: it was Phryne who asked Praxiteles to judge which was his best work, when he refused to say she pretended that his studio was burning down in order to see which work he would save. He ran for his Eros and gave it to her as a gift when he found out his studio was safe. It later stood in the temple of Dionysus; Strabo *Geog.* 9. 2. 25: Praxiteles gave the Eros to his mistress, the *hetaira* Glycera and she dedicated it to the Thespians, making their otherwise insignificant town well known]. She also became the model for Apelles' famous Aphrodite Anadyomene after she contravened her ordinary practice of keeping her body securely covered and, at the festival of Poseidon and the Eleusinia, she removed her cloak, let down her hair and stepped into the water [Ath. XIII. 590F]. Hypereides defended Phryne on the charge of *asebia*, brought against her by Euthias [Idomeneus *FGrH* 338 F14 and Hermippus *FHG* iii. 50 ap. Ath. 590D who gave up pleading cases all together after he lost; cf. Ath. XIII. 591E: Diodorus says that Anaximenes wrote the speech, not Euthias], because, as he admits himself, he was in love with her [Ath. XIII. 590D; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 849E]. It was his finest speech according to [Longinus] [*De Subl.* 34. 2-3] and Quintillian and was translated into Latin by Messala Corvinus [10. 5. 3]. It was not, however, the eloquence of the speech that won his case, but his dramatic gesture of bringing Phryne into the center of the court and tearing open her undervests, exposing her breasts, and inspiring awe in the jurors at her beauty [Plut. *Mor.* 849E; cf. Ath. 590E: the jurors feared to convict her as her beauty showed her to be a handmaiden of Aphrodite. The action led to a decree against excessive lamentation in the court room as well as exposing anyone's naked body to the court, male or female; Poseidippus *Ephesia* 13 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 591E: she was in fact acquitted by her own tears and by clasping the hand of each judge individually]. Phryne was exceedingly wealthy: she offered to rebuild the walls of Thebes which Alexander had destroyed if the people inscribed her name on them as the benefactor [Callistratus *On Courtesans FGrH* 348 F1 ap. Ath. XIII. 591D; cf. Propertius II. 6, ll. 5-6]. Timocles, Amphis, and Anaxilas [*Neaera* 25 K-A (cf. Ath. XIII. 567DE: in her youth she was very poor but as she gained wealth from devoted lovers she became very haughty), *Orestautocleides* 27 K-A ap. Ath. 567F; *The Tirewoman* 24 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 591D; *The Chick* 22 K-A ap. Ath. 558C: she is like a charybdis, swallowing the ship's captain along with his entire ship] both note the extravagant wealth of Phryne; the Areopagite Gryllion played the parasite at her dinners [Ath. XIII. 591E]. Phryne and Gnathaena were known to abuse one another in conversation [Lynceus ap. Ath. XIII. 584CD] and she and Laïs were said to have been, at one time, in competition with one another [Ath. XIII. 588E]. She once told one of her clients, Moerichus, that if he did not want to pay the mina she was charging for her favours, but a lesser fee, he would have to wait until she felt like indulging herself [Machon, XVIII ll. 450-55 Gow].

**PYTHIONICE:** Once Harpalus became custodian of the treasury at Babylon and had access to all its revenues he summoned from Athens Pythionice, the most brilliant *hetaira* of the day [cf. Theopompus *Letter to Alexander*, FGrH 115 F253 ap. Ath. 595AB: Pythionice was a slave who belonged to the lowly *auletris* Bacchis who was herself the slave of a Thracian *porne* named Sinope with whom she travelled about Greece, from Aegina to Athens, plying the trade of prostitution. In fact, she was the lowest sort of prostitute, granting her favours to all at a common price]. Harpalus loved her dearly and married her despite the fact that her family was unknown and she had practiced prostitution in Athens and Corinth [Paus. I. 37. 5]; he also had a daughter by her whom he brought to Athens with him on his flight from Babylon, leaving her in the care of Phocion and Charicles when he was forced to flee from the city [Plut. *Phoc.* 22. 2]. While she lived he gave her gifts worthy of a queen [cf. Ath. XIII. 594DE: Harpalus expended great sums on her] and upon her death he gave her a magnificent funeral [cf. Poseidonius *Histories* FHG iii. 259 ap. Ath. XIII. 594E: the procession was accompanied by a large choir of the most distinguished artists playing beautiful music] and erected an Attic style monument of great expense, Diod. 17. 108, 5 [cf. Dicaearchus *On the Descent into the Cave of Trophonius*, ap. Ath. XIII. 594F-595A: the grand monument is visible from a distance along the Sacred Way to Eleusis [at Hermus, Plut. *Phoc.* 22. 2], making one presume that it was dedicated to a famous hero at state expense or at least with the permission of the people; Pausanias I. 37. 5: hers is one of old Greece's most famous monuments, still to be seen standing in his day; Plut. *Phoc.* 22. 1-2: Harpalus commissioned Charicles, the son in law of Phocion, having bribed him heavily, to build the monument for Pythionice at the outrageous cost of thirty talents]. In fact, Harpalus erected two monuments to her, one at Babylon and one at Athens at the cost of more than two hundred talents, as well as setting up a shrine and a *temenos*, calling the temple that of Aphrodite Pythionice [Theopompus *Letter to Alexander*, FGrH 115 F253 ap. Ath. 595BC; cf. Python, *Agen* ap. Ath. XIII. 595F: Harpalus languished outside the temple of his beloved Pythionice, despondent over her death, leading the Persian magi to promise to summon up her spirit to cheer him up.]. Her fame became widespread as Philemon notes in the *Man of Babylon* [15 K-A ap. Ath. XIII. 595C]. She, or another courtesan named Pythionice, is also mentioned in Timocles' *Orestautocleides* [27 K-A ap. Ath. 567F] and Alexis' *Lyciscus* [143 K-A ap. Ath. 595D].

**TELESIPPA:** the *hetaira* of Eurylochus of Aegae [Plut. *Alex.* 41] or Antigenes Pellenaios [Plut. *Mor.* 180; 339], soldiers in Alexander's army in Asia. She so entranced her lover that he tried to have himself enrolled fraudulently among the sick so that he would be discharged. His ruse was found out and he was brought before Alexander where he confessed that he had acted as he did in order to accompany his lover on her journey to the coast [he could not bear to be left behind without her, *Mor.* 339]. Alexander asked to whom they had to speak regarding her and when he found out that she was a free woman [born of free parents, *Alex.* 41], he encouraged the soldier to persuade her [with gifts and promises, *Mor.* 339] to stay since to use coercion on a free woman was wrong



*Mor.* 180. 21-181. Thus Alexander showed himself ever ready with an excuse to help lovers at the expense of his own interests, *Mor.* 339.

THAÏS: a *hetaira* of Attic origins [cf. Plut. *Alex.* 38: she was the most famous of the *hetairai* in the train; Ath. XIII. 576D], she accompanied the train of Alexander's army across Asia. At the victory celebrations of Alexander and his men she exhorted the drunken men, and Alexander in particular, to join her and the other women present [cf. Curtius V. 7. 2-5: Thaïs was a drunken *scortum* amidst the crowd of licentious *pallakes* who joined with Alexander in his prolonged banqueting] in a *komos* and to set fire to the palaces [cf. Cleitarchus *FGrH* 137 F11 ap. Ath. XIII. 576DE], thereby allowing the Persians' famed accomplishments to be extinguished in a minute by the hands of women [cf. Plut. *Alex.* 38: the best recompense for her hardships in wandering over Asia, beyond reveling in the luxuries provided by the Persian spoils, would be to destroy the palaces of Xerxes, thereby having the women of Alexander's train exact greater punishment from the Persians for their destruction of Athens than all of Greece's great naval and military commanders; Curtius V. 7. 2-5: she claimed that Alexander would win the favour of all the Greeks by this act as well as doing what was expected by those whose cities had been destroyed by the barbarians]. The men joined in her proposal adding that the act would be vengeance for the destruction of Greek temples [cf. Plut. *Alex.* 38: it was her words regarding the fitting vengeance that inspired Alexander and the crowd to the act; words she uttered to amuse and please Alexander]. Alexander acquiesced, beginning the *komos* and was the first to throw his torch into the palace, followed by Thaïs and accompanied by the music of the many *auletrides* present [cf. Curtius V. 7. 2-5: Alexander led the torching, followed by his fellow banqueters, then the servants and finally the courtesans]. Thus her sport repaid the wrongs done by Xerxes' impiety, Diod. 17. 72. At the time of the Persepolis incident, Thaïs was the *hetaira* of Ptolemy, son of Lagus, who went on to become the first king of Egypt after Alexander's death [cf. Ath. XIII. 676D: when he became king, he married her]. She bore Ptolemy two sons, Leontiscus and Lagus, and a daughter, Eirene who was given in marriage to Eunostus of Soli, a minor king in Cyprus [(?) Ptol. VIII *Euerg.* II *FGrH* 234 F4 ap. Ath. XIII, 576E]. Leontiscus became an admiral in his father's fleet and after their defeat at the battle of Salamis by Demetrius I Poliorcetes he was returned home to Egypt with the rest of the royal entourage [Justin, 15. 2. 7]. Lagus won a chariot race at Lycea which was commemorated in an inscription [Dittenberger, *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 314]. Two rather generic *hetaira* anecdotes are recorded about a woman named Thaïs (who are/is likely not the same as our courtesan) by Aristodemus, *Ludicrous Memoirs FHG* iii. 310 ap. Ath. XIII. 585D. Each notes a witty response by Thaïs to a lover, one of whom was a braggart, the other of whom stank.