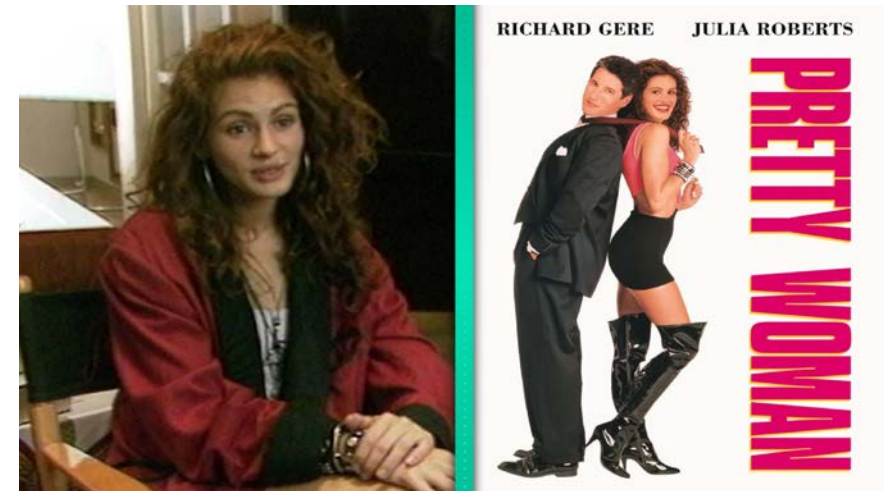
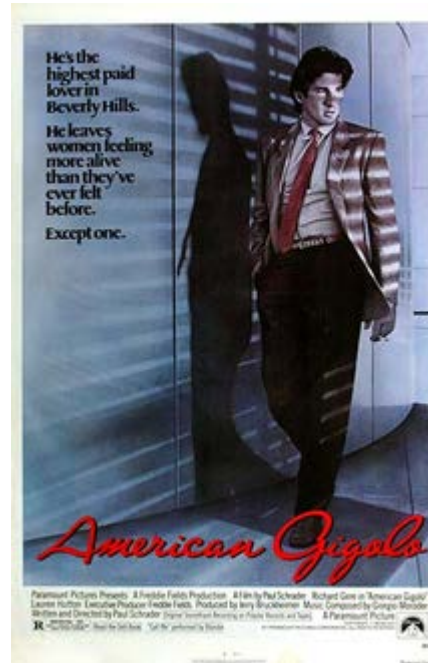


Prostitution in Classical Athens

Questions of words

- [Hetairios and hetaira](#) – two very different meanings (or not...)
- [Gamete](#) – a weird position in society
- The [pallake](#) (concubine?)
- The plain [prostitute](#) -



Different uses for different classes

- For this is what living ([συνοικεῖν](#)) with a woman as one's wife means—to have children by her and to introduce the sons to the members of the clan and of the deme, and to betroth the daughters to husbands as one's own. Mistresses ([ἐταίρας](#)) we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines ([παλλακὰς](#)) for the daily care of our persons, but wives ([γυναῖκας](#)) to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households. If, therefore, Stephanus had previously married an Athenian woman, and these children are hers and not Neaera's, he could have shown it by the most certain evidence, by delivering up these women-servants for the torture. Dem 59.122

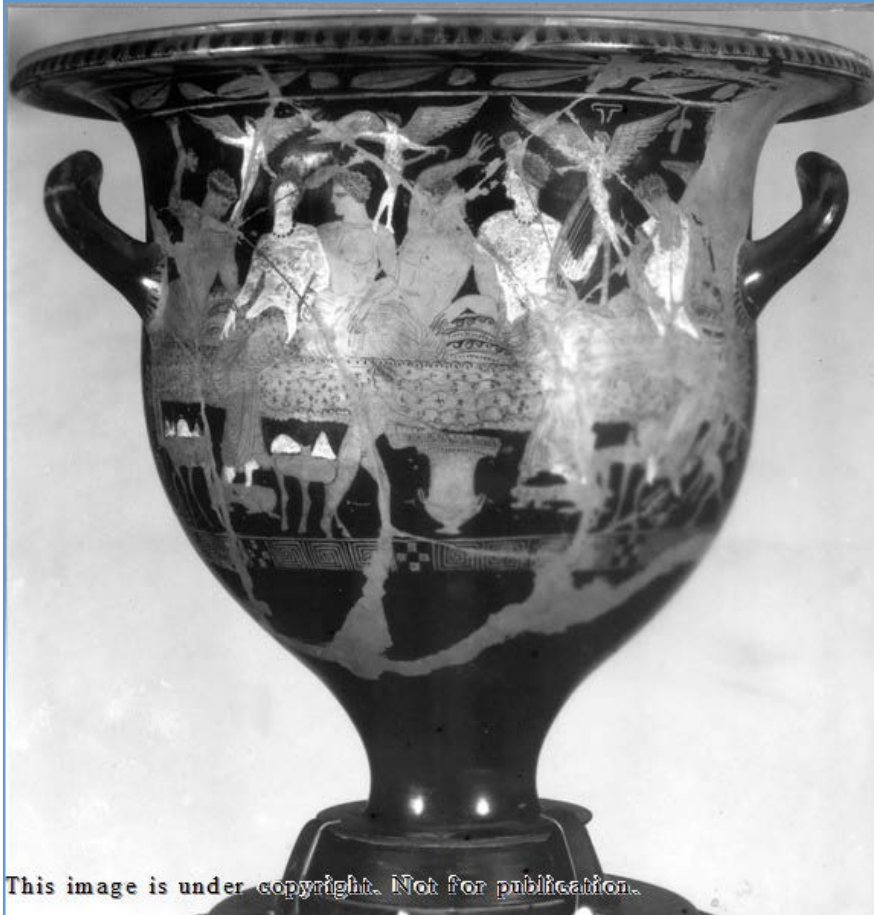
Changes over time

- Read another statute. “Law
- If a man kill another unintentionally in an athletic contest, or overcoming him in a fight on the highway, or unwittingly in battle, or in intercourse with his wife ([δάμαρτι](#)), or mother, or sister, or daughter, or concubine ([παλλακῇ](#)) kept for procreation of legitimate children, he shall not go into exile as a manslayer on that account.”
- Dem. 23.53
- The question of the [DAMARTI](#)

Changes over time II

- And so strongly was the lawgiver convinced of the justice of this in the case of wedded wives ([γαμεταῖς γυναιξί](#)), that he even applied the same penalty in the case of mistresses ([παλλακαῖς](#)), who are of less account. Now surely it is clear that, if he had had any heavier punishment than this for the case of married women ([γαμεταῖς](#)), he would have imposed it. But in fact, as he was unable to devise a severer one for this case, he ordained that it should be the same for that of mistresses also. Please read this law besides. “Law” Lys. 1.31

Identification of Hetairai



This image is under copyright. Not for publication.

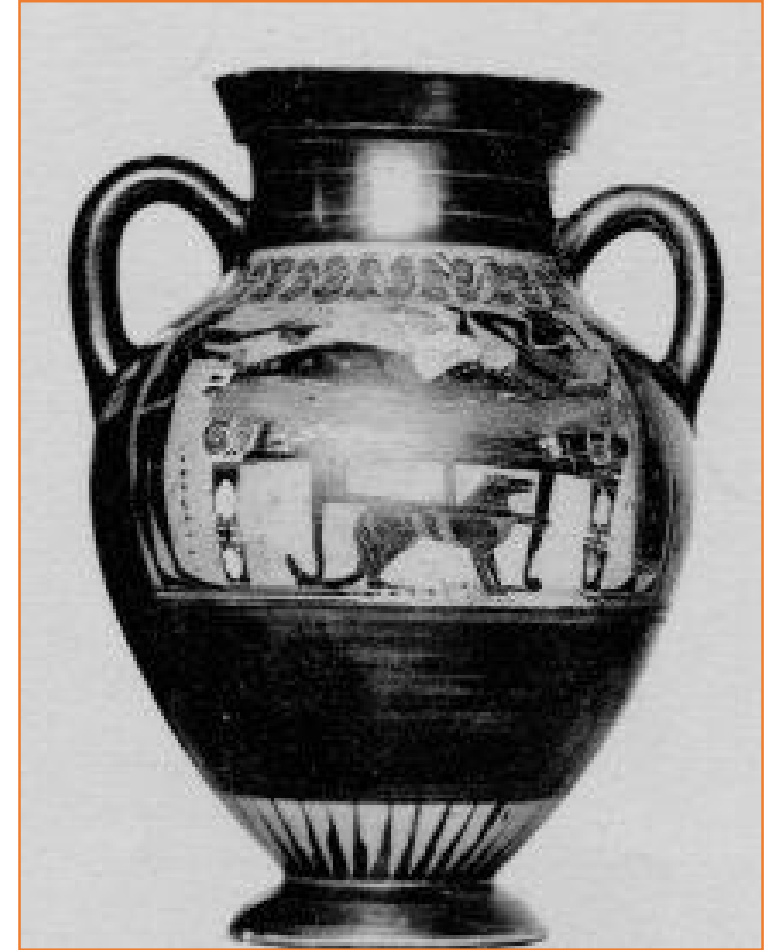
8020, ATHENIAN, Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, 82924

Decoration: A: SYMPOSIUM, YOUTHS AND WOMEN (HETAIRAI), WITH HARP, CUP, DRINKING HORN, EROTES, YOUTH AT CALYX KRATER, BIRD

-400 to -300

10707, ATHENIAN, Paris, Musee du Louvre, Campana Collection, F2

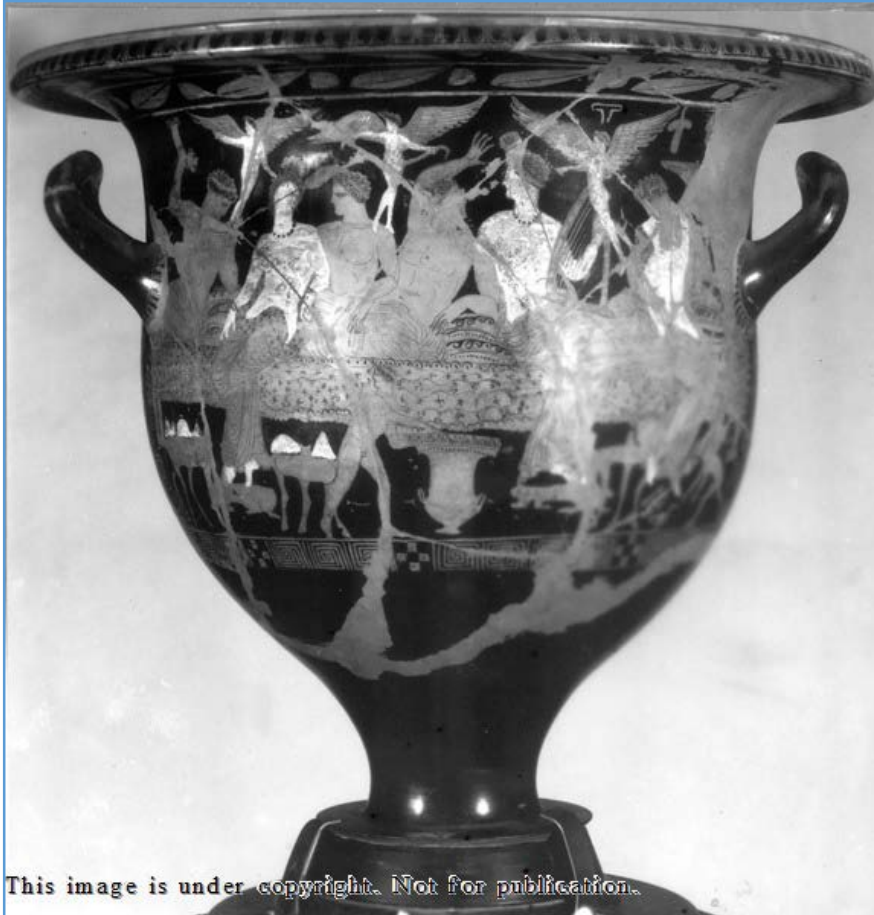
B: SYMPOSIUM, MAN WITH PHIALE AND WOMAN (HETAIRA) PLAYING PIPES, YOUTH WITH OINOCHOE AND CUP (?) -575 to -525



Moving cultures: Etruria



Back to the Hetairai



This image is under copyright. Not for publication.

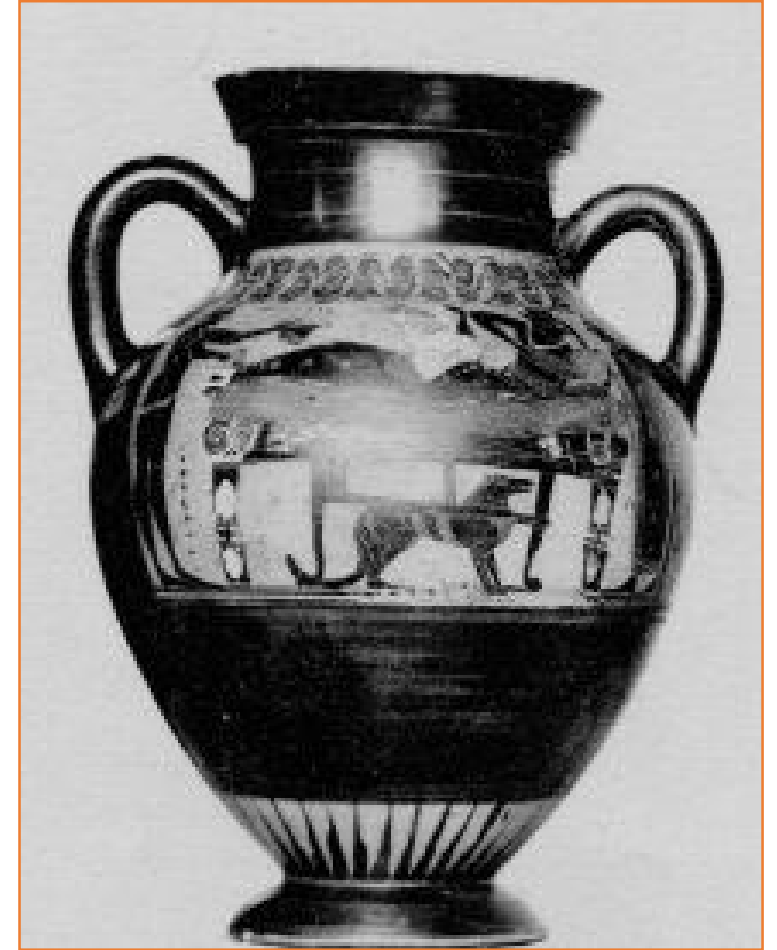
8020, ATHENIAN, Naples,
Museo Archeologico
Nazionale, 82924

Decoration: A: SYMPOSIUM,
YOUTHS AND WOMEN
(HETAIRAI), WITH HARP, CUP,
DRINKING HORN, EROTES,
YOUTH AT CALYX KRATER,
BIRD

-400 to -300

10707, ATHENIAN, Paris, Musee
du Louvre, Campana Collection,
F2

B: SYMPOSIUM, MAN WITH
PHIALE AND WOMAN (HETAIRA)
PLAYING PIPES, YOUTH WITH
OINOCHOE AND CUP (?) -575 to
-525 **Provenance:** ITALY, ETRURIA



The Question of Aspasia

- **Socrates**

That I should be able to make the speech would be nothing wonderful, Menexenus; for she who is my instructor is by no means weak in the art of rhetoric; on the contrary, she has turned out many fine orators, and amongst them one who surpassed all other Greeks, Pericles, the son of Xanthippus.

- **Menexenus**

Who is she? But you mean Aspasia, no doubt.

- Plato Men. 235e

Aspasia in Plutarch

- And so Aspasia, as some say, was held in high favour by Pericles because **of her rare political wisdom. Socrates sometimes came to see her with his disciples**, and his intimate friends **brought their wives to her to hear her discourse**, although she presided over a business that was anything but honest or even reputable, since she kept a house of young courtesans. 4 And Aeschines says that Lysicles the sheep-dealer, a man of low birth and nature, came to be the first man at Athens by living with Aspasia after the death of Pericles. And in the "Menexenus" of Plato, even though the first part of it be written in a sportive vein, there is, at any rate, thus much of fact, that the woman had the reputation of associating with many Athenians as a teacher of rhetoric. 5 **However, the affection which Pericles had for Aspasia seems to have been rather of an amatory sort.** For his own wife was near of kin to him, and had been wedded first to Hipponicus, to whom she bore Callias, surnamed the Rich; she bore also, as the wife of Pericles, Xanthippus and Paralus. After, since their married life was not agreeable, he legally bestowed her upon another man, with her own consent, and himself took Aspasia, and loved her exceedingly. 6 **Twice a day, as they say, on going out and on coming in from the market-place, he would salute her with a loving kiss.** Plut. Per. 24

Calling a woman a whore

- I detest the Lacedaemonians with all my heart, and may Poseidon, the god of Taenarus,² cause an earthquake and overturn their dwellings! My vines also have been cut. But come (there are only friends who hear me), why accuse the Laconians of all our woes? Some men (I do not say the city, note particularly that I do not say the city), some wretches, lost in vices, bereft of honour, who were not even citizens of good stamp, but strangers, have accused the Megarians of introducing their produce fraudulently, and not a cucumber, a leveret, a suck[ling] pig, a clove of garlic, a lump of salt was seen without its being said, "Halloa! these come from Megara," and their being instantly confiscated. Thus far the evil was not serious and we were the only sufferers. But now some young drunkards go to Megara and carry off the courtesan Simaetha; **the Megarians, hurt to the quick, run off in turn with two harlots of the house of Aspasia; and so for three gay women Greece is set ablaze.** Then Pericles, aflame with ire on his Olympian height, let loose the lightning, caused the thunder to roll, upset Greece and passed an edict, which ran like the song, "That the Megarians be banished both from our land and from our markets and from the sea and from the continent."³ Meanwhile the Megarians, who were beginning to die of hunger, begged the Lacedaemonians to bring about the abolition of the decree, of which those harlots were the cause; several times we refused their demand; and from that time there was horrible clatter of arms everywhere. Aristo. Ach. 500-540

Intertextuality and the issue of women

- The Persian learned men say that the Phoenicians were the cause of the dispute. These (they say) came to our seas from the sea which is called Red,¹ and having settled in the country which they still occupy, at once began to make long voyages. Among other places to which they carried Egyptian and Assyrian merchandise, they came to Argos, which was at that time preeminent in every way among the people of what is now called Hellas. The Phoenicians came to Argos, and set out their cargo. On the fifth or sixth day after their arrival, when their wares were almost all sold, many women came to the shore and among them especially the daughter of the king, whose name was Io (according to Persians and Greeks alike), the daughter of Inachus. **As these stood about the stern of the ship bargaining for the wares they liked, the Phoenicians incited one another to set upon them. Most of the women escaped: Io and others were seized and thrown into the ship, which then sailed away for Egypt.** In this way, the Persians say (and not as the Greeks), was how Io came to Egypt, and this, according to them, was the first wrong that was done. **Next, according to their story, some Greeks (they cannot say who) landed at Tyre in Phoenicia and carried off the king's daughter Europa.** These Greeks must, I suppose, have been Cretans. So far, then, the account between them was balanced. But after this (they say), it was the Greeks who were guilty of the second wrong. Hdt 1.1-2