

Prostitution: The Appetites of Athenian Men in the Classical Period

Olakunbi O. Olasope

*Department of Classics,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria*

Introduction

Prostitution is not regarded as an attractive and worthy vocation for respectable women. It involves a great deal of pretence, at a great emotional expense to the practitioners and it also exposes women to social ills and dangers. In antiquity for instance, Athenian prostitutes worked in demeaning anatomical conditions, and they could be compelled to capitulate to the specific demands of their clients. Yet, from the time of Solon, in the 6th Century BC, women engaged in prostitution, in spite of the contempt that profession was held, and societal ostracization to which they were subjected though men were not penalized or sanctioned for their involvement in the oldest profession on earth or their patronage of prostitutes. In other words, prostitution guaranteed the security of wives from other men who could seek sexual release from those women. The perceived role of the prostitute as some kind of societal safety valve, and as a requirement for the maintenance of a serene home environment were there to provide services one would not ask of a wife. Prostitutes were held in ignominy then just as the lifestyle is abhorred today (Johnson & Ryan, 2005: 88-89).

However, scholars have now accepted that the study of prostitution deepens our understanding of political, economic, and cultural history. Affirmatively, studies on prostitution penetrate to the root of social attitude towards gender and to societal constructions of sexuality. For Leslie Kurke, the creation of the category *haetaera* by male aristocrats in the archaic period is a function of those men's identity formation (1997). In this view, elite men needed specifically to distance themselves from the *porne*, whom they associated with the emerging middle class. David Halperin (1990) argues that

prostitution was essential to the Athenian understanding of male citizenship. In contrast to the prostitute's penetrated body, the male body was sacrosanct. James Davidson describes *haetaerae*, along with food, as part of the appetites of Athenian men of the classical period (1998). Other scholars examine the exchange systems that categorise prostituted females as "one of many objects of exchange in a society" (von Reden 2003: Glazebrook & Henry, 2011:3). Heterosexual intercourse is usually graphically etched on cups and other shapes used for the consumption of wine, exhibiting Graeco-Roman sexual dichotomy between passive (penetrated, symbolically female) and active (penetrator, male) sexuality. These Vases often appear in these scenes to define the setting as either *komos* or symposium, neither of which was patronised by respectable women.

Defining Prostitutes: Pornai, Pallake and Haetarae

Demosthenes says that the Athenian man could have three women: the wife (*damar* or *gyne*) for the production of legitimate children, the concubine (*pallake*) for the care of the body that is for regular sexual relations, and the *haetera* for pleasure (Pseudo-Demosthenes, 122). This division of three female functions poses certain problems that arise from the difficulty of defining the boundaries of the role of concubine. In daily life, a man's relationship with a *pallake* was fairly identical to his relationship with his wife. The social reality explains why many of the ancient sources deal with sexual activity, lust and love between a male and a prostitute rather than a husband and wife (Cantarella, 1987:48-49). But the demarcation lines were not always that clear. For instance, Sophocles' *Trachiniae* about a wife's attempt to win back her husband's love from a new concubine demonstrates a departure from the acceptable norm (Glazebrook & Henry, 2011).

Pornai

The Athenians were not morally averse to prostitutes/prostitution. They had sexual partners of diverse types. Most men in the city could probably have afforded to visit a prostitute often, and the practice may not have been regarded as anything out of the ordinary. Even the gods were not immune because religion and mythology specifically records Zeus' and Odysseus' amorous escapades. However, the most

affordable category of prostitutes were the *pornai*, purchased foreign women, they were the prostitutes working in the dinghy brothels, who were generally slaves owned by the brothel-keepers. Female dancers, flute-players and acrobats, hired to provide entertainment at *symposia*, often rendered sexual services too. According to one law-court speaker, the sons of some of the most respectable men in the city used to give themselves appellations according to the size of their reproductive organ, and had torrid sex with prostitutes (Blundell, 1998: 96).

The *haetaera* and *porne* were regarded as distinct, the former serving the elite in the symposium and the latter, as enslaved, serving the poor in the brothel. A prostitute could be slave or free, be a citizen or noncitizen, work in a brothel or serve under a contractual arrangement with one or more men. Some were highly paid, while others earned less. There was a category which consisted of trained and gifted dancers, flutists or harpists, and another group was made up of less skilful practitioners. The heroism, notoriety, or wealth of women like Leaina, Phryne, and Pythionike are at the apex of a pyramid whose lower tiers are established by the poverty and despair of women far more numerous but less well known: those who, likely foreign slaves or free poor, remain unremembered as individuals (Glazebrook A & Henry M, 2011: 8).

Pallake

The status of women who worked as prostitutes was flexible and there were instances of sex-practitioners changing their status for various reasons. An enslaved prostitute could become a concubine of one man *pallake* or even graduate to the position of a free agent (and even become wealthy, as commonly understood by the use of the term *hetaera*). This movement across class could also be in the opposite direction, with a *hetaera* becoming a *pallake* or an impoverished prostitute of an important man. The fourth-century orator Antiphon's first speech recounts events in the life of *pallake* whose lover is planning to hand her off to a brothel (Antiph. 1.14-15). Menander's comedy, *The Woman from Samos*, recounts the misadventures of Chrysis, who is currently a *pallake* but whose status can reverse to that of streetwalker the instant her lover wants it to

(Henry, 1985: 61-73). In a corollary example from oratory, Alke begins her career working as a slave in a brothel, but is eventually freed and becomes the favourite of a wealthy Athenian (Isae. 6.19-20: Glazebrook & Henry, 2011:5).

A concubine could be a lower-class Athenian, an immigrant, or a slave. The Greeks were monogamous, and no doubt a wife was satisfactory to most citizens. But a man might like to keep a concubine also, if he could successfully deceive his wife and children. The discovery of this clandestine relationship sometimes dissolved the marriage. Alcibiades' wife sought to leave him because he brought his mistresses home. Pericles, on the other hand, married off his wife to someone else, thus liberating himself in order to take on the Milesian courtesan Aspasia. Aristotle, after his wife's death, had an erotic relationship with the courtesan Herpyllis, mother of Nicomachus, for the rest of his life, and made provision for her in his will. A woman might become a concubine because of her servile origin and had no choice but to become one, or to improve her physical circumstance, or even for love. Timandra, the mistress of Alcibiades, stuck to him when he was outlawed and gave him the best burial she could afford. She was the mother of the famous courtesan Lais; this is evidence that prostitution could sometimes become a family trade.

Haetaerae

The third woman in the life of an Athenian male, though not bound to him legally, was elevated above a casual companion. She was the *haetaera*. She was usually more educated than a woman destined for marriage, and groomed to accompany men where wives and concubines could not tread. The *haetaera* was a sort of improvisation by a society of men which, having restricted its women mainly to the domestic front, still considered that the company of some of them could brighten their social activities. This double standard was meant to be gratifying for the man, even on the intellectual level, and was thus a complete departure from men's traditional relationships with either wives or prostitutes. *Haetaera* would be equated with the 19th and 20th century concept of Mistress.

The Athenian Greeks developed a reputation among the Romans and in later Western culture for having raised prostitution to a unique level of refinement. The keys to this alleged achievement were said to be the education and grooming of the woman and her ability to translate her charms into a high enough economic status so that she could feel autonomous. The *haetaera* has come to refer to this ideal (Keuls, 1985: 194). The Greek courtesan or *haetaera* is described as an uninhibited and cultivated spirit, a match for men's wit and education. In the case of the most elegant *haetarae*, the relation between services rendered and payment received was not made explicit: gifts were given to the women, favours were exchanged. Avoiding definition was a part of the courtesan's business. By being elusive, and not blatantly offering themselves as commodities to be purchased, like *pornai*, these high-class prostitutes maintained some degree of dignity that increased the demand for their company. Significantly, the most successful *haetarae* differed from *pornai* also in that they were able to select the men on whom they would bestow their favours, and they determined when and under what conditions a man's attention to them would be repaid (Hamel, 2003:12-13).

Wealthy *haetarae* such as Aspasia¹ lived fortunate lives, but such women were a rarity. While Neaera was often regarded as living a relatively opportuned existence, having finally settled with a rich Athenian man, her childhood years were spent in brothels and undergoing training in the arts of pleasing clients (Johnson & Ryan, 2005: 88-89 cf. Keuls 1985:198). Socrates in Xenophon once went to visit a *haetaera*, Theodota, who was renowned for her beauty and expresses surprise at finding her house so elegant. The house was lavishly furnished and had a number of charming slave-girls. She could not have been able to afford all this without the financial generosity of her male friends (Blundell, 1998: 97).

¹ Aspasia was the foremost *haetarae* of the Classical age, who was a free immigrant from Miletus. In Athens, she undoubtedly started as a prostitute. She was described as a *porne*, or harlot, one of the more disparaging Greek terms for prostitute. She traded in prostitutes. But she gained notoriety more by her intelligence, and the protection of Socrates, than by wantonness

The *haetaera* came to incorporate such excess as representatives of the wild and uncontrolled female body. They were the only significant group of financially buoyant women in Athens and the display of affection was part of *haetaera* life. Therefore, far from being precluded from attending men's parties, such women were often the sole attraction of such gatherings, and young unmarried men mainly sought their company. They were often foreigners from non-Greek speaking states. Not everyone would enjoy the life even of the famous Thais, in Menander's words 'loving no one but always pretending', not to mention depreciation as the years went by, charging less and not attractive or appealing enough to younger men. They were not within the purview of the law and it was hard for them to save up for old age when land, the safest investment, could not be held by women. The proviso to this was to be taken on as a concubine of a man of substance, which incidentally meant exemption from the tax on prostitution.

Courtesans were more expensive than other types of slaves, and much sought after. In the 4th Century, Nikarete's prostitutes were trained in techniques that made them become adept at the trade: sex manuals proliferated, and a daunting range of sexual positions was obviously employed by professionals. Neaera was "working with her body," and the fact that she ate and drank with men is emphasized to establish her promiscuous nature. Phrynion's treatment of Neaera illuminates Athenian sex culture. He took her to eating and drinking parties, and to revels, *komoi*, and openly made love to her in the presence of others. In fact, at one particularly lavish feast, given by one Chabrias, Phrynion and Neaera were drunk, and several men, including some of the host's slaves, had sexual intercourse with Neaera, while Phrynion slept. Eventually, she left Phrynion and co-habited with an Athenian called Stephanos.

In 340 BC, Neaera was brought to court on a charge of living with Stephanos as his wife, for, by that time, it was illegal for citizens to marry non-Athenians. Her accusers were particularly shocked by the fact that Stephanos had passed off Neaera's children as his own, and had twice given her daughter in marriage to Athenian citizens. In an emotional appeal, they urged members of the jury to remember that

their own wives, daughters and mothers, 'should not be held in the same esteem as a prostitute...or appear to be sharing their privileges with a woman who in so many obscene ways has consorted so many times a day with so many men'... (Demosthenes, 59. 114) Needless to say, no-one took any account of the fact that as a slave Neaera had no choice at all about becoming a prostitute in the first place (Keuls, 1985:157-158 : Blundell, 1998: 97-98).

Sex and Slaves

Scholarship on female slaves has devoted little attention to commoditised slaves. Yet, in war, the connection between prostitution and the state can be seen very clearly, for warfare is a critical phase of state formation and state maintenance. The rape and sexual enslavement of women are frequent consequences of war. Violent conflicts between men almost invariably include the act of sexual violence to women and children. Men's kidnap, seizure, or purchase of females for the purpose of sexual and other uses was inevitable (Henry, 2011: 15). A small group of metic women had come to Athens independently and registered in their own right as resident aliens (Blundell, 1998:94). Prostitution was their livelihood because as a trading centre with a busy port, prostitution was lucrative business in Athens. Most of these were female, although male brothels were apparently common. Male and female prostitution was a rewarding trade in Classical Athens, Port Piraeus and Corinth. In Greek society, prostitutes were no threat to the social norms, since they were irrevocably outside them, but they were doomed to spend their lives in triple degradation of being females, slaves and prostitutes (Keuls, 1985: 154-156).

Sexual workers displayed themselves for the approval, purchase and pleasure of the male. Sexual activity involving individuals of unfree or slave status was prevalent in pre-industrial societies. Sex is often a tool through which power relationships and dominance can be asserted; however, sex can also be means through which power relations are blurred and inverted. Women as slave prostitutes were vital for patriarchal state formation and state maintenance. These are women who are available for sexual gratification and other work, to whom and to whose children no obligations are owed, through whom

property is not transmitted, and whose virginity has value only as something that can be purchased and destroyed (Henry, 2011:14). There were no clear boundaries between non-marital relations, such as concubinage, adultery and harlotry. The exclusion of the female slave was fundamentally because of her lower class status and not specifically as a result of her sex. She was different from both free men and free women and equal only to slaves of the male sex.

A man seeking amorous relationships and indiscriminate sex in ancient Greece had a wide range of girls to select from. There were Freeborn girls who had been exposed as infants and were rescued for the purpose of putting them to work as prostitutes. Clients paid more for the privilege of sleeping with a free girl than with a slave. There were also male prostitutes in abundant supply. Sexually, as in all other ways, slaves were at the mercy of their owners. In fact, slaves, whether owned by public and private brothels or by individuals, provided men habitual sex outlets. This associated sex with domination and female slaves carried a double burden of oppression (Keuls, 1985: 6). Athenian men who were legitimately married could also have sexual relations with prostitutes. Slaves were equally available to their masters' friends for sexual purposes. Some men lived with concubines in more or less permanent union. When a man lived with a concubine, she was considered his sexual property in much the same way as a legitimate wife (Pomeroy, 1994: 90).

With regard to female slaves offered by their owners for sexual purposes, men who had money had every conceivable option. They could visit brothels for quick release; rent the more desirable prostitutes and slave entertainers for a night or for a party; lease them for longer periods, or buy them outright (Keuls, 1985: 269). Far more than in modern societies, where sexually liberated women could casually sleep with men to whom they are not married, prostitutes in ancient Greece provided a necessary service. Men who were inclined towards promiscuity had limited options available to them. They could engage in homosexual sex with a male lover; they could seek sexual release from one of the slaves of their household, male or female; or they could buy sex from a prostitute of either sex.

Sex and the Symposium

The Symposium simply meant ‘drinking party’ and the party was usually celebrated in the *andron*. The *andron* was peculiar in the Greek house in being dedicated in its architectural form to a particular function: sympotic dining. The *andron*, however, in its narrower sense of dining room, gave concrete expression to the larger sense of the word as “the men’s quarters”: an actual space restricted to male access in the *Oikos*. The symposium did not take place in secret. It is crucial to its meaning and function that it was an open house celebration to which the doors of the *oikos* stood ajar literally. Sympotic hospitality operated in terms of a fluid and mutable social network rather than of membership in a club. What we see here is that the symposium brought the brothel into the *oikos*—in the sense, that is, of taking a man out of his family and bringing him into the community of nonkin men who share in the enjoyment of an extramarital, antiproductive, antidomestic sexuality (Corner, 2011: 66).

The *andron* was essentially a dining room, identifiable because it contained raised podiums of plaster or stone on which the dining couches (*klinai*) stood. Men and *haetarai* reclined on these for eating and drinking, and the same *klinai* served for sleeping and sex. Reputable women also used this type of couch to sleep on, but reclining on them was apparently forbidden to wives and daughters. The dining room was entered through a vestibule, which was directly accessible from the street, so that guests could come and go without disturbing the *gynaikonitis*. However, the women who attended such events provided not only sex and music but various other kinds of entertainment (Keuls, 1985:162-164).

Sex with a wife, however, while an experience for the man of his freedom in his mastery of her as autonomous master of his household, was at the same time considered a form of bondage (Corner, 2011: 66). As Semonides says in his Ode on Women, “a wife makes a man a *philos* by necessity”. Marriage was a condition of natural necessity and exclusive bonds. Wife and husband were yokemates, *suzugoi*. A man was not bound to sexual exclusivity as his wife was, but only she could bear heirs to his patriline, and he

was bound to her too in the economic partnership of the *oikos*, which, while certainly not equal, was nevertheless not a relationship of active subject and passive object. She was in her own right free, a member of her free natal *oikos*, and in her marital *oikos*, she and her husband were bound in mutual co-dependence, in the *koinonia* necessary for the survival and subsistence of the *oikos*. Although, people derived pleasure in marital sex, but this was not its purpose, its ultimate goal. The sphere of the wife was wool working and procreation and not the affective and hedonistic bonds of *eros* (Corner, 2011: 66-67).

If the sexual conduct of the respectable woman is restricted to marital intercourse, while the corresponding male is permitted to be promiscuous, it must of necessity follow that the female population is divided sharply into two classes: those who have limited sexual contacts in the course of a lifetime, probably far less than their physical nature could accommodate, and those who have sex in great abundance, far more than they could possibly experience in a meaningful way. The last category consists largely of prostitutes. In Attic society, this basically unhappy pattern must have been aggravated by the fact that the social ethos discouraged rather than encouraged marital sex and, as a result of female infanticide and the high incidence of death in childbirth, the male population far outnumbered the female except after periods of especially costly wars (Keuls, 1985: 204-205). On the contrary, it might be going too far to assume that most men made regular use of the sexual services which were obtainable outside the home: even the liveliest of drinking sessions did not, it seems, automatically end up in sex. At the conclusion of an upper-class party described in Xenophon's *Symposium*, the guests watched an erotic ballet. The spectators were very enthusiastic about this performance, and when it was all over, the married men hurried home to their wives, while the unmarried resolved to tie the knot speedily (Blundell, 1998: 96).

It was not only food and drink that were, in the symposium as opposed to the household, objects of liberal pleasure, but also prostitutes. In this sense, the *haetaera* and *porne* were parallel figures, and it is in this sense that the symposium could be said to

bring the sexuality of street and brothel into the house. The symposium constructed itself as a sphere of pleasure as opposed to work, and where sex with one's wife was work, sex with a *haetaera* was for the sake of pleasure. Significantly, all women of the household, maidservants, as well as wives and daughters, were excluded from the symposium. Thus, all productive, domestic femininity was excluded, and productive sexuality was excluded in favour of a sexuality directed to boys and to women outside the *oikos*. It is in this context that one can say that prostitution coincided with pederasty in sympotic sexuality and of the *haetaera*'s ambivalent quality as objectified, subordinated woman and yet as quasi-equal "female companion" and honorary male (Corner, 2011: 69). A form of sexual contact as habitual and free from societal restraint as that between Athenian youths and prostitutes inevitably led to a great variety of human relationships. There is evidence for behaviour ranging from the coarsest exploitation to affection and mutual accommodation. The benefit was to the male all the way: his were the privileges of free status, citizenship, money, class and gender. Another way of expressing man's superiority in his relationships with women is the addition to any scene of a money pouch, where men are bargaining for the services of prostitutes. It establishes the fact that the man is paying for his sex (Keuls, 1985:174,180).

The resulting frequency of contact with bought sex partners goes a long way to explain not only the Athenian preoccupation with *haetarae* life, but also the social and moral sanction given to prostitution. In later Western societies, the double standard also prevailed, but prostitution was concealed and treated as the sewer side of society. In Classical Athens, the rift between the notions of sex for pleasure and release, between Demeter and Aphrodite, was so complete that it left its marks on almost all facets of organised society. Did the Athenians also develop the corresponding notion, still strongly represented in the modern world, that these two functions, of childbearing and of sex for its own sake, represent two antipodes of the feminine character, in other words, that there are natural-born mothers and natural-born whores? (Keuls, 1985: 205).

Male Prostitution

Male prostitution certainly existed in Athens, and it was considered a sufficiently serious problem that legislation attempted to control it and punish offenders (Shapiro, 1992: 55). First, the relationship had to be hierarchical: for a sexual contact between males to be deemed respectable, the persons involved could not stand in a reciprocal or socially symmetrical relation to one another but had to be differentiated from one another in terms of their relative degrees of power or status. Every male couple had to include one social superior and one social inferior. Second, the sexual acts performed by a male couple had to be congruent with the power-differential according to which the relation was structured: the superior partner took sexual precedence- he alone, that is, might initiate a sexual act, penetrate the body of his partner, and obtain sexual pleasure. Thus, the lack of social reciprocity in the relation was mirrored by a lack of sexual reciprocity (the goods and services exchanged between male lovers were both unlike and unequal in value). So long as a mature male took as his sexual partner a statutory minor, maintained an “active” sexual role *vis-a-vis* that person, and did not consume his own estate in the process or give any other indication that he was “enslaved” to the sexual pleasure he obtained from contact with his partner, no reproach attached itself to his conduct (Halperin, 1990: 47).

Paidierastia, pederasty is erotic relations between adult men and adolescent boys. Once a boy started to exhibit pubertal signs such as growing a beard and body hair, he lost his appeal to an *erastes*, and he was ready to seek an *eromenos* of his own as well as patronise prostitutes. In heterosexual scenes, the dominant motifs are power and abuse, and the *haetaera* is doubly subjugated, as a woman to a man and as an alien to a citizen. The typical Athenian gentleman started his sexual exploration in youth as the ‘beloved’ of a mature man, who would copulate with him and offer social and intellectual favours. The youth was introduced to heterosexual intercourse at a symposium, where he could develop a supremacist stance by making slave prostitutes submit to dorsal sex. The practice of humiliating and battering older prostitutes at drinking parties helped him to overcome the lingering mother image in his soul. Soon, he began

frequenting brothels and private pimps to rent a succession of prostitutes, with whom he engaged in revels and symposia. Society afforded him a long rope of tolerance, promiscuity, group sex, drinking, and violent ‘pranks’ were standard ingredients of this phase. With the onset of middle or old age, he began to yearn for more tender attentions, regular companionship, and personal care; at that time, he would take a concubine *pallake*. With her, he entered into an informal, essentially monogamous, quasi-marriage of undetermined duration, in which he held all the power (Keuls, 1985: 208).

Economic Situation of Prostitutes

The law of the city concerned itself with prostitutes for only two reasons: to set a ceiling on their prices and to collect a tax on their income (Keuls, 1985: 208). Prostitutes were notoriously mercenary. They were the only women in Athens who exercised independent control over considerable amounts of money. The city supervisors *astynomoi* had as one of their specific functions the task of preventing prostitutes or their owners from charging too much. A brothel tax evidently threw a further financial burden on the operation. During their youth, when services were most in demand and most highly paid, prostitutes were likely to be slaves; the proceeds of their charms went to their owners, as did any sales price they might bring. By the time a *porne* could buy her freedom or wangle it out of accommodating lovers, she was heading towards retirement (Cantarella, 1987:50).

The *ergasterion*, (workshop) and the *porneion*, (brothel) at the bottom end of the market were dismal environment for the *porne* (harlot) and *pornos* (rent-boy) alike. We have no record of the conditions prevailing in the brothels of Corinth and Athens, but they could not have been any more commodious than the dark and stinking holes in which Roman whores practised their trade. On the low end of the scale were the common whores or streetwalkers, the *pornai*, who were often slaves. Among the numerous Greek words for “harlot,” a common one is “earthstriker” – charmaitype, which indicates that many girls culled the blossoms of delicate bloom not on lovely couches but on the bare ground (Keuls, 1985: 156). Some

prostitutes worked on the streets; others worked out of brothels, likewise providing fee-for-service sex at low prices. *Pornai* charged their customers per sexual act. Prices varied depending on the prostitute and the services rendered. The position assumed by participants could also affect the price. The most desirable and most expensive of these was evidently the “racehorse”, in which the woman sat astride the man. The cost ranged between an obol and a drachma (Hamel, 2003:5-6).

In fourth-century Athens, the maximum price that could be paid to flute-girls was established by law. Among the city’s numerous officials were the ten *astynomoi*, whose duties included making sure that the flute-girls, the harp-girls, and the lyre-girls were not paid more than two drachmas for an evening entertainment. “If a number of men are interested in hiring the same girl”, the author of the *Constitution of Athens* tells us “the *astynomoi* have the interested parties draw lots, and the officials hire her out to the winner” (Ath. Pol. 50.2, Hamel, 2003: 10-12). The need for such lotteries and price-fixing indicated that there was severe competition in Athens for the services of certain flute-girls. And it was possible for the law to be flouted. In the orator Hyperides’ speech delivered in the 320’s, he mentioned two men who were tried for having paid *auletrides* more than the price established by law. Some scofflaws were never found out, and there were certain flute-girls, who took home more than the law stipulated. It is also possible that sexual services were not included in the two drachmas that *auletrides* were paid for an evening entertainment (Hamel, 2003: 10-12).

In Classical Athens, a prostitute could aspire to modest financial autonomy by becoming an entrepreneur in the trade and stocking up on young slave girls (Glazebrook, 2011: 41). For example, in Isaeus 6, *On the Estate of Philoktemon*, Euktemon, a well-to-do citizen, operated several brothels staffed with slaves, a perfectly respectable line of business. A porne with the apt name of Alke (Strength) was exploited in one of these as she was young enough. Euktemon must have freed her at some point, and when Alke became too old for the general public, she still appealed to Euktemon. He put her in charge of another brothel, located in the Potters’ Quarter of Athens,

evidently closer to his home. Soon, he began to go there more often than necessary to collect his profits. Eventually, he moved in with Alke altogether, abandoning his wife and children, and he lived out the rest of his ninety-six years there (Keuls, 1985:196-197 cf Glazebrook, 2011: 41, 51).

Conclusion

The only social statuses available to women were as wives, concubines, courtesans or prostitutes. There was very faint demarcation between a wife and a concubine at Athens, but the superior status of wife must be maintained. However, the concubine enjoyed a certain prestige, or at least social position. The hierarchy of women, with the wife in the top position and concubine below, had to be both fully visible from outside and perceptible by the wife in the context of marital relations. Given that there was only one wife, concubinage was still a recognised bond. The *haetaera* was accepted into the intellectual life of Athens, which we nowadays treasure, and a popular courtesan who was not a slave had the right to be with whomever she found pleasure with. Some courtesans attempted to live as respectable wives, while we have no evidence of any citizen wives who wished to reverse roles.

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