

= Neaira (hetaera) =

Neaira (/ n??a?? / ; Greek : ?????) , also Neaera (/ n????r? /) , was a hetaera who lived in the 4th century BC in ancient Greece . She was brought to trial between 343 and 340 BC , accused of marrying an Athenian citizen illegally and misrepresenting her daughter as an Athenian citizen .

The speech made against Neaira in this trial by Apollodorus is preserved as Demosthenes ' fifty @-@ ninth speech , though the speech is often attributed to Pseudo @-@ Demosthenes , who seems to have worked on many of the speeches given by Apollodorus . The speech provides more details than any other about prostitutes of antiquity , and consequently a great deal of information about sex trade in the ancient Greek city @-@ states (poleis) .

= = Speech Against Neaira = =

The speech Against Neaira is the source of most of the details of Neaira 's biography . It concerns a case brought against Neaira when she was about fifty by Apollodorus ' son @-@ in @-@ law Theomnestus , though apart from a brief introduction of the case given by Theomnestus , Apollodorus delivered the entirety of the speech . The case revolves around the accusation that Neaira , a foreigner , married an Athenian citizen , and that she was attempting to pass off her own children as Athenian citizens .

While the speech revolves around the life of Neaira , this is of little importance to the substance of the accusations . The details seem to be part of the speech in the hope that the salacious accusations will hide the weakness of Apollodorus ' case . The accuracy of the evidence given in the speech has been questioned , and is known to contain both lies and inaccuracies . Despite this , the speech tells us much about the life of an accomplished hetaera , and is extremely valuable to historians as a source on women 's lives in classical Greece . Indeed , it is our most reliable extant source on prostitution in the classical world , and one of our best sources on women 's lives and gender relations in general for the period .

= = Biography = =

= = = Life with Nikarete = = =

Neaira was probably born in the first decade of the fourth century BC . Her place of birth is unknown , and the earliest event in her life that we know of is her purchase when she was a young girl by Nikarete . Nikarete trained the girls she purchased to be hetaerae , calling them her daughters in order to increase the price her customers would pay , and lived with them in Corinth .

Neaira 's work as a prostitute started before she reached puberty . She is twice described by Apollodorus as having sex for money before she came of age , though possibly due to her age he implies that she was not yet a hetaera . During this time , the orator Lysias was a prominent guest in Nikarete 's brothel and a regular customer of Metaneira , another of Nikarete 's girls . In order to reward her for her services , he arranged for her to be initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries , and funded the journey . Neaira was at this time about twelve or thirteen , and Nikarete accompanied them . Neaira visited Athens again for the Great Panathenaea of 378 , this time accompanying Simus of Thessaly , a young aristocrat .

= = = Leaving Nikarete and Corinth = = =

Around 376 BC , Timanoridas of Corinth and Eukrates of Lefkada paid thirty minae to purchase Neaira from Nikarete , at the high end of prices for hetaerae . When the men married , they agreed to let Neaira buy her freedom for twenty minae , which , with the aid of gifts and loans from her former customers , she did . As part of this deal , Neaira agreed to no longer work as a prostitute in Corinth , and so left the city for Athens with Phrynion , who had helped her buy her freedom .

Neaira was certainly living with Phrynion in Athens by 373 BC , when he took her to a feast given by the general Chabrias to celebrate his victory in the Pythian Games . During this celebration , Apollodorus says , Neaira was sexually assaulted by the guests and slaves of Chabrias while she was drunk and asleep . Due to this and other mistreatment by Phrynion , in 372 BC Neaira left his household and went to Megara , taking with her her clothing and jewellery , two maids , and other possessions belonging to Phrynion .

= = = Life with Stephanus = = =

In Megara , Neaira continued to work as a hetaera , and in 371 met Stephanus . Stephanus offered to act as her patron if she returned with him to Athens . Apollodorus claims that with her she brought two sons and a daughter to Athens , but modern commentators have largely concluded that the sons in question were in fact those of Stephanus , by an Athenian woman . Indeed , Christopher Carey points out that one of the sons , at least , was probably a legitimate son of Stephanus , being named after his father , and John Buckler notes that Apollodorus contradicts himself on whether Neaira 's alleged sons were hers by another man , or hers by Stephanus .

Phrynion learnt that Neaira was back in Athens , and attempted to take her back from Stephanus . Stephanus resisted , claiming that as Neaira was a free woman he had no right ; a claim which Phrynion proceeded to challenge in court , though he was persuaded to settle the case by arbitration instead . The arbitrators decided that Neaira was indeed free , and that in addition to this she was her own kyria (mistress) ; this was an extremely unusual decision in a society where all citizen women , at least , had a kyrios (master) . Despite this unusual level of freedom , however , Neaira was compelled to split her time between the two men as they agreed , without any input herself .

= = = Trial = = =

Sometime between 343 and 340 BC , Neaira was brought to trial by Theomnestus on behalf of his father @-@ in @-@ law Apollodorus , accused of xenias (representing herself as a citizen when in fact she was not) . If she was convicted , the maximum penalty Neaira faced was being sold into slavery and having her property sold . Neaira herself would not have been permitted to speak at her trial , though she was probably present .

The only surviving record of the trial is the speech given by Theomnestus and Apollodorus against Neaira and Stephanus , and the outcome is unknown . No records of Neaira exist after the trial . Modern commentators have noted the weaknesses in Apollodorus ' arguments , though as the outcome of an Athenian trial depended heavily on what the parties involved could persuade the jury to accept , and how much of their dishonesty they could get away with , we cannot say for certain that the suit failed .