

ACCOMMODATION ADDRESSES IN ASCLEPIADES

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In addition to what Prof. Giangrande has written concerning Asclepiades and prostitution¹ I should like to point out the fact that Prof. Cairns has misunderstood the legal position. There existed in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt no such thing as a permit allowing a woman to indefinitely practise the profession of prostitute. The two documents quoted by L. Bringmann (*Die Frau im ptolem.-kaiserl. Aegypten*, Diss. Bonn, 1939, p. 120, n. 132), one of which is the *ostrakon* 1157 explained by Sudhoff and by Schneider in *RE, loc. cit.*, are not permits allowing the prostitute concerned to "ply her trade" (so Cairns), but rental contracts explicitly and solely allowing her to receive her clients on premises which are not her home, because she rented and used them, as an accommodation address, for one day: Thinabdella rented the premises mentioned in *ostr.* 1157 from the two tax-collectors (who evidently also acted as *affittacamere*²), as Sudhoff and Schneider have explained. If the premises belonged to Thinabdella, as Cairns surmises, how could she be permitted to "ply her trade" there for only one day?

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¹ Cf. "Asclepiades and Prostitution". *Myrtia* 15, 2000, pp. 255-258.

² To sum up. Permits allowing prostitutes to "ply their trade" (to use Cairns' words), i.e. to practise their profession, did not exist, and, even if they did, they could not possibly be issued by the *τελώναι*, who were clerks of the lowest rank, not legally empowered to permit or prohibit anything (on such matters, cf. R. Taubenschlag, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt*, Warsaw 1955): the minimum duration of rental contracts concerning dwelling places to be used by normal tenants was for one year (cf. O. Montevecchi, *La Papirologia*, sec. ed., Milano, 1988, p. 215), whereas Thinabdella used the premises for one day only. The *τελώναι* mentioned in the *ostrakon* studied by Sudhoff were, as Sudhoff, Schneider, Licht and Giangrande have understood, the owners of the "Gebäude" where they allowed Thinabdella to receive her clients for one day. Thinabdella may have rented for one day either the "Wohnung" (so Schneider, *RE, loc. cit.*), or not the whole "Gebäude", but only one room, as Licht surmises ("Zimmer auf Stunden"): rooms were commonly rented, cf. e.g. *Pap. Bodl.* I, N° 36 and *Pap. Kell. G.* I, N° 32 and N° 33.