

Ancient Greek Textile Production in Action

The production of ancient textiles, from fiber preparation through finished garments, was a large part of the life of most ancient Greeks. References to fiber and textiles abound both in written literary Greek and in Greek visual art. Despite this, many classicists are not very familiar with the processes of ancient fiber production, and even those who are don't always have the chance to visualize these materials and technologies in 3D. What would it look like for a girl to be εἰεἰεἰεἰλίσσουσα (“spiiiiining,” Ar. *Ran.* 1349) like the dreaming girl imagined by “Aeschylus” in the *Frogs*? Who are Plato’s ξαίνουσι (“carders,” Pl. *Polit.* 308e) who stand in for a piece of the political machine?

The goal of this workshop is to introduce ancient Greek textile production through physical interaction and demonstration for a broad audience. The workshop will offer an introduction to the archaeology of ancient Greek textiles and fiber, including experimental archaeology, and provide physical examples of fibers, spinning, and weaving. Including the presenter, there will be three presenters, including two professors conducting interdisciplinary archeological research into textile production in classical Greece, and a modern spinner and weaver with an interest in ancient textiles. Attendees need not have any previous experience in ancient or modern textile production, but should come prepared to engage physically with fiber and tools, if desired.

The first part of the workshop will contain demonstrations of materials and tools alongside relevant images and terminology. Presenters will first discuss briefly the pre-spinning stage of fiber preparation and show samples of wool and flax in various stages of preparation. Presenters will then demonstrate spinning on reproduction drop spindles and discuss the process of designing and creating a reproduction spindle. Following that, presenters will explain the warp

weighted loom and evidence of other loom types and demonstrate their functioning on smaller models.

After the demonstrations, presenters will give a brief talk and lead a discussion on a) incorporating reproduction tools and models in the classroom, and b) the application of textile knowledge to research, including literary and philological research.

The remaining 30 minutes or so of the workshop will be dedicated to giving attendees a chance to interact with the demonstration tools. The presenters will staff several “stations” for interaction, including raw fiber and felting, looms and DIY loom models, and drop spinning. Attendees will have a chance to circulate, touch and use the tools, and ask any further questions.