

Higher Love:
Elitism in the Pederastic Practice of Athens
in the Archaic and Classical Periods
by
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ABSTRACT

Modern perceptions and stigmas have long been the bane of historical scholarship, and ancient Greek pederasty is no exception. Pederasty was a multifaceted practice which reflected the ideals and self-perception of the elite in Athens, while simultaneously propagating the hegemony of that class, yet it is often unfairly subjugated under the overly broad categorization of “homosexual practice.” By examining the individual societal areas of pederasty – warfare, gymnasia, symposia, and hunting – through an analysis class, the discussion of pederasty can be shifted to assess the practice as "homosocial." Through this analysis of class, it can be demonstrated that the practice was one which had motivations that lay in the complexities of Greek social structure and not simply in eroticism. Through a class analysis, pederasty can also be seen as the ultimate, tangible expression of a union between male citizens and the profound desire for interpersonal connection.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents for their continual love and support, for inspiring within me a passion for learning, and for providing me with all the tools for success, both in academia and in life. Without them this thesis would not have been possible.

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Chapter 1

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Pederasty, a practice originating in ancient Greece, can be generally defined as a pedagogical and erotic relationship between an adult male, known as an *erastes*, or “lover,” in ancient Greek, and an adolescent boy, an *eromenos* or “beloved,” and it has long been placed under the heading of “homosexuality” in scholarship. The topic of homosexuality in ancient Greece has proved to be a difficult one. Early scholarship on Greece ignored the topic altogether. By the early nineteenth century, academics writing about Greece acknowledged homosexuality was present in the society but impressed upon the practice the puritanical morals of contemporary civilization, creating an academic dialogue that confined homosexuality in ancient Greece to an expression of sexual depravity. Moving forward in history, scholars of the twentieth century sought to correct the mistakes of their historical peers, seeking to discuss homosexuality more openly and less judgmentally, though their efforts, too, were hampered by the prejudices of their time. While scholars who produced seminal texts on the topic of homosexuality in ancient Greece, such as Kenneth Dover, improved upon the discussion by avoiding moral condemnation of homosexual practices, an element was still lacking from the academic dialogue. Though scholars no longer

sought to condemn, they did seek to justify; their explorations of homosexuality were often marked by a desire to defend the motives of Greek society, so auspicious in the eyes of the Western world, for including homosexuality in their culture with any sort of prominence. The result of decades of scholarship, then, was an ancient Greece wherein there was at first no homosexuality, then a deviant homosexuality, and finally, in scholars' eagerness to correct prejudiced views, an excess of homosexuality and discussions seeking rationalization for the phenomenon.

Modern scholars, however, can now discuss homosexuality in ancient Greece in the way in which it must have been experienced by its ancient practitioners: as a practice of richness and nuance that wove itself into the tapestry of society in a manner that both enhanced and emboldened. Previous scholars have been integral in setting the stage for this modern discussion, and current scholars benefit greatly from a period of historically unprecedented acceptance of a topic such as homosexuality. No longer confined to condemnation or justification, modern scholarship can truly investigate what factors of Greek society fostered and motivated homosexuality. Additionally, scholars need not merely discuss homosexuality but, instead, analyze homosocial institutions, such as pederasty, that contained homosexual components. The distinction between "homosexual" and "homosocial" allows a

depth of discussion not previously found in scholarship, as well as for an acknowledgment of the subtleties present in all societies, both ancient and modern, that create the variegated and rich fabric that is generated when populations coalesce as organized groups. Additionally, utilizing the term “homosocial” to describe activities like pederasty allows for an emphasis on the way in which pederastic practice operated at an interpersonal level and prevents superfluous focus on the sexual aspects of the practice.¹ Today’s modern landscape will allow scholars to discuss ancient Greek homosexuality in a way that does not denounce it as a practice of the “other” but encourages it to be seen as a fascinating part of the human experience, still valid for contemporary society.

Pederasty was a homosocial practice which originated in the seventh century in ancient Greece but has endured, in forms impure in comparison to the activity’s Greek predecessor, well into the 21st century; despite its lasting presence, now is the first time the practice can be analyzed not simply as an expression of

¹ For the purposes of this thesis, “homosexuality” will be defined by as a sexual propensity for one’s own sex; sexual activities with a member of one’s own sex. Within the realm of this thesis, “homosexuality” as a term will be applied to male prostitution and instances wherein reference is being made to a person’s propensity for sexual activity with members of the same sex; the term will not be used to indicate typical Greek fluidity in sexuality or sexual contact with members of the same sex that is not habitual or is associated with a specific scenario, such as pederasty. Pederasty, owing to its multifaceted nature, cannot be adequately described as a “homosexual practice,” since elements of education, initiation, and sociality motivate the practice. The term “homosocial” will instead be applied as it focuses attention on the social aspects of the institution, which were paramount in antiquity.

homosexuality, but as a facet of society influenced by a panoply of economic, social, and political motivations. This thesis will critically analyze the Attic practice of pederasty in the archaic and classical periods in an economic and political context to determine that it was an elitist practice, a reflection of the political state of Athens and motivated by issues of class. The results of this analysis will be the illustration of homosexuality in ancient Greece as a complex and multifaceted institution motivated by hegemony, economics and politics.

State of Research

As stated previously, the earliest scholarship on ancient Greece did not discuss homosexuality or pederasty – it was simply ignored for its impropriety. The first notable analysis of pederasty came from John Beazley, who published a series of articles inconspicuously titled “Some Inscriptions on Vases” in 1935.² Beazley’s iconographic analysis of pederastic courtship scenes effectively organized the visual evidence of the practice into three categories which future scholars would continue to utilize; this iconographic typology also allowed for a more systematic and organized method of inquiry into the subject matter by creating order through categorization. The so-called “Beazley’s Three

² John Beazley, “Some Inscriptions on Vases III,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 39 (1935): 475 – 488.

Types” divided pederastic scenes into three categories: a) the courtship-gifting scene, b) the up/down gesture, and c) the consummation. Thus, as the first scholar to discuss homosexuality in Greece, Beazley sought to order the topic as a means of understanding it, which was a crucial first step for scholarship.

Following Beazley, the next set of scholars to engage meaningfully the subject of homosexuality in Greece were Michel Foucault and his student, Félix Buffiere. Foucault wrote *The History of Sexuality* in 1978, the same year Kenneth Dover produced his seminal text, *Greek Homosexuality*. Foucault’s work consisted of two volumes,³ and Buffiere produced the work *Eros adolescent – Pédérastie dans la Grèce antique* in 1980.⁴ Both texts represented a new direction in scholarship regarding homosexuality, one which no longer sought justification or defense, but critical analysis, though an element of moral judgment was still present, however subtle. Foucault and Buffiere, as well as Dover, discussed pederasty primarily in terms of a dominant/submissive dichotomy, which they believed was the most critical element and motivation of the practice. Pederasty was analyzed as an atypical masculine relationship which required

³ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: the use of pleasure*, Volumes 1 and 2, translated by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985).

⁴ Felix Buffiere, *Eros Adolescent: La Pederastie Dans La Grèce Antique*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1980).

a male citizen to submit to the will of another, a relationship which seemed to be at odds with the Greek conception of manhood and citizenship, which involved dominance.

Kenneth Dover's pivotal text, *Greek Homosexuality*, represented the first in-depth overview of the various aspects of homosexuality, supported by literary evidence from the archaic, classical, and Hellenistic periods.⁵ Dover discussed both pederasty and prostitution and briefly explored the variance of the practice by city state. A fair amount of analysis was devoted to the legal aspects and ramifications of homosexuality, as Dover discussed court cases involving homosexuality, including the ubiquitously cited *Against Timarkhos*, as well as legal repercussions that allude to homosexual acts, such as the penalty for male adultery;⁶ the focus on the law in relation to homosexuality preempts David Cohen's discussion of law and homosexuality in 1987.⁷ The majority of Dover's analysis, however, like Foucault's and Buffiere's, was predicated primarily upon literary evidence and not the visual record of homosexual practice as represented on Attic

⁵ Kenneth Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

⁶ *Against Timarkhos* is considered to be a case particularly pertinent to the topic of homosexuality as it contains a wealth of information relating to Athenian laws regarding prostitution and homosexuality, while simultaneously providing insight into how both elements were perceived in Attic society.

⁷ David Cohen, *Law, sexuality, and society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

black and red figure vases. Thus, a certain aspect of homosexuality and, more specifically, pederasty, was underrepresented. William Percy's 1996 text, *Pederasty and Pedagogy*, followed in the footsteps of Dover's book, providing an overview of the topic, but with an emphasis on the educative aspect of the practice.⁸ Again, however, a discussion of visual evidence was quite understated.⁹

More recent scholarship on Greek homosexuality has begun to delve into the subtleties and nuances of the practice. With Foucault, Buffiere, Dover, and Percy having successfully engaged the topic broadly, the necessity for more specific analyses had arisen. The source of tension inherent in homosexuality previously discussed by scholars was the necessity of a male citizen assuming a passive role creating a passive/dominant dichotomy; this source of tension, however, began to be replaced with other areas of tension.¹⁰ In identifying a passive/dominant area of tension,

⁸ William Armstrong Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

⁹ Modern scholars have the benefit of a larger corpus of visual evidence as continued research has added to the types of scenes typically associated with homosexuality, including gymnastic scenes and scenes of the hunt.

¹⁰ Previously scholars, particularly Foucault, noted that a societal tension seemed to exist regarding homosexuality, but this tension applied much more specifically to prostitution. Dover presented a lengthy analysis of Aiskines' *Against Timarkhos* in his *Greek Homosexuality*, but this case concerned prostitution. The majority of early scholars' commentary on homosexuality used laws, oratory, and Attic comedy concerning prostitution as a general guideline for the conception of homosexuality, in general. Prostitution, however, was perceived quite differently from pederasty by the Greeks, and more casual

previous scholars were applying a retroactively perceived source of tension associated with homosexuality to pederasty. Pederasty, however, was not a strictly homosexual practice and, therefore, the application of the dominant/submissive area of tension was ill-suited. Pederasts practiced a specific form of sexual expression labeled “intercrural copulation” by academics, and this form of sexual expression did not require the passivity or dominance noted in the forms of copulation associated with homosexuality or male prostitution.¹¹ As scholars began to delineate the definition of homosexuality from pederasty, analyses of pederasty began to indicate, more accurately, tension from sources such as class and legality. This new set of scholars included, most notably, David M. Halperin, David Cohen, and Thomas Hubbard.

Halperin edited two notable texts: *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* and *Before Sexuality: the construction of erotic experience in the ancient Greek world*.¹² Both texts were collections of essays which discussed homosexuality in more

homosexual tendencies would not have been viewed with the same severity by ancient Greeks as a man receiving payment from another man for sexual gratification.

¹¹ “Intercrural” can be crassly translated as “between-the-thighs,” and it involved no penetration. Additionally, it should be noted that sexual desire was expected only from an *erastes* and never from an *eromenos*.

¹² David Halperin. *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love*, (New York: Routledge, 1990); David Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality: the construction of erotic experience in the ancient Greek world*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

nuanced terms, analyzing aspects such as homosexuality in mythology and female homosexuality. Also presenting a more subtle analysis of homosexuality was Cohen, who included a cursory examination of the possible elitist ties of pederasty in some of his articles, though the legal sanctions associated with homosexuality dominate his works.¹³ One scholar specifically noted for discussing elitism in pederasty is Thomas Hubbard, who has published on various facets of the practice in an attempt to link each aspect of pederasty with elitist roots. “Sex in the Gym” and “Popular Perceptions of Elite Homosexuality in Classical Athens” both constitute an effort on Hubbard’s part to dissect the individual societal aspects of pederasty and place them in exclusively elitist contexts.¹⁴ Hubbard, however, is a literary critic, and so the majority of his work is predicated almost entirely on literary evidence. Thus, only in the first half of the 21st century is the academic discussion concerning homosexuality in ancient Greece beginning to temper itself to allow for nuance and more cautious consideration of the relative prevalence of the practice.

¹³ Most notably *Law, sexuality and society*, and “Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens,” *Past & Present* 117 (1987): 3 – 21.

¹⁴ Thomas Hubbard, “Sex in the Gym: athletic trainers and pedagogical pederasts,” *Intertexts* 7 (2003): 1 – 26; “Popular Perceptions of Elite Homosexuality in Classical Athens,” *Arion* 6 (1998): 48 – 60.

Methodology

The investigation of pederasty in ancient Greece in this thesis will primarily utilize Marxist theory to examine the political and economic factors that resulted in the classing of the institution, with “classing” here used as a term denoting the transformation of a practice into an entity restricted by class. The ideology behind the institution of pederasty will be discussed, analyzing in what ways the practice was used as a means of furthering the perception of itself as elitist. In its inception, pederasty was not a political or classist practice. Though it is difficult to determine which element of the practice came first, sexual or pedagogical, it can be relatively safe to assume that there existed no class element, especially given the fact that Pre-Indo European society, credited with the origin of the practice, most likely did not possess the sophisticated class stratification required to demarcate certain activities as belonging specifically to the elite; the economy of the society simply would not have allowed for the type of economic stratification seen in late archaic and early classical Greece.

It seems that as the economy grew in ancient Athens, so, too, did pederasty’s link to elitism. Early images of black figure vases feature pederastic scenes that implicate ritual much more heavily than later red figure scenes which focus on courtship, the buying of expensive gifts to woo young men, and the placement of

pederastic couples in elitist surroundings, such as gymnasia.¹⁵ Additionally, during the archaic period when wealthy families were synonymous with politics, pederasty and its accompanying imagery may have been used to ensure the continued hegemony of the families. One key function of pederasty, such as it was practiced in ancient Athens, was the introduction of the *eromenos* to members of society that could advance him politically or economically.¹⁶ Boys from the lower economic class, such as farmers' sons, would most likely not have engaged in pederastic relationships. Often, a lower class boy's status inherently prohibited him from becoming an *eromenos*; it is unlikely his father would be able to forgo his son's labor to allow the boy to spend his hours with an older man at a symposium or in the gymnasium.¹⁷ Similarly, it is unlikely that an *erastes* would choose a lower class boy or that a lower class man would become an *erastes*. The *erastes* was required to court a youth, and often the lavishness of his gifts reflected well on both himself and his young conquest. A poor farmer would have little chance of wooing a boy,

¹⁵ Black figure imagery often includes dancing and wine kraters, which are absent in later red figure imagery, leading scholars to believe the imagery may indicate the performance of rites.

¹⁶ Many scholars have noted this fact; see particularly Dover (1978), Hubbard (1998), and Hans Licht, *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

¹⁷ Grundy Steiner, "Farming" in *The Muses at Work*, ed. Carl Roebuck (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), 151.

as the likelihood that he would have superfluous funds for courting would be quite slim. Additionally, no upper class *erastes* would spend his time courting a poor boy, as this courtship would not increase his social standing. Thus, the ideological motivations behind pederasty, when examined through the lens of Marxist theory, are seen to be primarily political and economic; pederasty was not simply a pedagogical practice meant to initiate young men into manhood; rather, it was motivated by class and intended to secure the hegemony of that class through its inherent exclusivity.

Being a materialist theory, Marxism holds that artistic production is a part of a society's superstructure; the superstructure is said to naturalize class differences, and in relation to pederasty, vase painting and Greek comedy were used to naturalize pederasty as a pursuit of the elite, further strengthening the idea that the practice was inaccessible to lower classes. In the case of comedy, this idea of inaccessibility was achieved through the presentation of pederasty as a ridiculous and unenviable form of elitism, though distinctly elitist all the same. In vase painting, inaccessibility was achieved by the reinforcement of pederasty as elitist through symbols, such as comically lavish courting gifts, like leopards. Both artistic media present the class difference as concrete and unable to be changed – the chance of a farmer or painter being able to afford a leopard to present as a courting gift is impossible, and

pederasty's consistently negative presentation in comedies would discourage any lower class citizen from envying it as an institution, effectively preventing any citizen from wishing to incite more universality in the practice.

Evidence

The evidence which will be utilized in this analysis of pederasty in ancient Greece is primarily visual and literary. Constituting the visual evidence are Attic black and red figure vases, spanning a period approximately from the sixth through the fifth centuries BC and representing the middle archaic and early classical periods. By examining both the earlier BF representations of pederasty and courtship in comparison with the later RF examples, the manner in which pederasty evolved toward a more elitist practice can be more easily examined. Certain examples of white ground funerary *lekythoi* from the mid-fifth century will also be utilized, as recent scholarship has proposed that the imagery on some of these vessels is symbolic, with scenes of the hunt alluding to the pursuit of *eromenoi* in pederastic relationships.¹⁸ *Kalos* inscriptions, produced during the specific period from 555 BC to 480 BC will be utilized for the role they played in the symposium, their augmentation of homosexual

¹⁸ Barringer, Judith M, *The Hunt in Ancient Greece*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

imagery and attitudes, and their connection to political hegemony, and some scholars, such as Niall Slater and David M. Robinson, have indicated that the persons named in numerous *kalos* inscriptions were members of prominent families and that the praise of certain persons as *kalos* was kept within certain family lines.¹⁹ Since the connection between class and pederasty will be examined, *kalos* inscriptions will provide a uniquely specific instance of family hegemony.

Literary evidence to be utilized for this thesis comes from a broader time frame than that of the visual evidence. Given that there is no ancient text that specifically discusses the customs of pederasty, it is necessary to examine a myriad of sources which allude to the subject, often discussing it from the viewpoint of a cultural insider. Fifth-century Attic courtroom oratory will be used as many cases, such as the famed *Against Timarkhos*, discuss the legality of issues concerning pederasty and homosexuality, while also indicating the class standing of the individuals involved in the case and alluding to the appropriate social conduct of classes in regard to the homosexual practice. Archaic poetry, such as that of Pindar, Theognis, and Anacreon, will also be utilized as it provides insight into the way in which youthful male beauty was

¹⁹ Niall Slater, "The Vase as Ventriloquist: *Kalos*-inscriptions and the culture of fame," in *Signs of Orality*, ed. E. Anne Mackay (Boston: Brill, 1999): 143 – 161; David M. Robinson, *A Discussion of Love Names, Including a Discussion of Pederasty and Prosopographia*, (New York: Arno Press, 1979).

conceptualized and the norms of homosexual practice, as well as by whom the poetry was meant to be enjoyed, which may indicate class bias. Fifth-century Attic comedy will provide insight into the social norms of pederastic and homosexual practice. A *parabasis* from Aristophanes' *Wasps*, for example, indicates pederasty to be "aristocratic" according to Thomas Hubbard.²⁰ Finally, numerous works by Plato reference pederasty and homosexuality, including *The Symposium*, *Phaedo*, *Charmides*, and *The Laws*. Plato's texts, from approximately the late fifth century to the mid-fourth century BC, can be utilized in a manner similar to the previous texts to determine both whether an elitist bias existed in pederasty and the general conception of the practice within society. Other literary evidence will include the laws of Solon, which provide information regarding the regulations associated with homosexuality and pederasty, and the laws posted on schools in Beroea during the Hellenistic period, which provide insight into possible reasons for the decline of pederasty.

Additionally, ancient authors including Thucydides, Aristotle, Xenophon, Lysias, and Lucian will be consulted for a range of information ranging from military pay to political commentary regarding symposia. It necessary to utilize a wide variety of authors from a large variance of dates to provide as

²⁰ Aristophanes' *Wasps*, 1023 – 1028, Hubbard, trans.; Hubbard, "Popular Perceptions of Elite Homosexuality," 51.

much detail as possible regarding aspects of society such as recreation and politics. Though it would be ideal to have ancient sources who always hearken from a period contemporary to the issues or institutions being discussed, it is often necessary to make temporal allowances when discussing ancient culture given the general scarcity of sources. As such, some authors consulted, like Lucian, are quite late; sources containing information which refers to periods outside the chronological context of their own time period, however, are used cautiously.

In regard to geographical restriction of this thesis, due to the overwhelming predominance of Attic literature and art within the corpus available to scholars, the focus of this thesis will necessarily be limited to Athens. Owing to the expansive variance among city states in all critical facets of society – economic structure, social customs, social roles and expectations, military organization, political structure – it is extremely difficult to assess accurately any city state outside of Athens to a satisfactory degree. By limiting the discussion of pederasty to Athens, a comprehensive amount of evidence, both visual and literary, can be utilized to present a more complete analysis. In certain cases, however, alternate areas and city states may be referenced to augment or clarify points made concerning pederasty.

Chapter 2

THE BASICS OF PEDERASTY

Inception

Many theories have been raised throughout the relatively brief history of scholarship on homosexuality which attempt to trace the roots of homosexuality and, thus, pederasty in Greek history. *Mos Graecorum*, the “Greek custom,” formed an integral facet of Greek society and culture in the eyes of foreigners, but determining when and how homosexuality entered into the quotidian practices of Greece is difficult. Two areas of inquiry are most relevant to a discussion of the inception and rise and homosexuality in relation to pederasty: the time at which homosexuality gained popularity and the time at which it was institutionalized in society as a socially acceptable practice.

When homosexuality was initially discussed in the academic dialogue, the tendency was to over-estimate its prevalence, with Greece visualized as a culture in which rampant homosexual activity was the norm.²¹ While it seems clear that pederasty was a limited and elitist institution, unorganized, nascent homosexuality was quite another matter. Theories as to how and why homosexuality gained favor in Greek culture are varied,

²¹ Homosexual is used in favor of homosocial here as the issue focused on in the discussion is simply the sexual activity and proclivity, not societal dictates on homosexuality.

although most scholars agree with Dover's assertion that the seventh century BC marked the first instance of publicly acknowledged and supported homosexuality.²² If this is held to be true, homosexual practice in its recognizable form – meaning a form that would not have conflicted greatly with the aspect practiced in its pederastic counterpart – was born in the archaic period. Homosexuality prior to the seventh century represents a murky area of scholarship as no evidence exists to refute or confirm its existence. Even in Homer's *Illiad*, the presence of homosexuality in relationships is quite subtle, and some scholars would argue non-existent. The early versions of Achilles and Patroclus found in Homer's writing have a relationship that does not seem to be explicitly pederastic to most scholars, despite the fact that the couple's mythology would later stress their pederastic relationship. Homer's texts and their historic validity are already inherently problematic, so attempting to assess whether later generations were imposing homosexual proclivities where no proclivities originally existed is almost futile. Thus, it must be enough to theorize the inception of homosexuality in the seventh century and leave particulars about how it may have been practiced to the veil of time.

²² Dover, 1-17.

Though homosexuality seems to have manifested in Greece during the archaic, many scholars have noted the roots of pederasty may lie in a Pre Indo-European initiation ritual, but precisely when and how homosexuality entered into the ritual is highly debated.²³ The issue is whether the ritual was a sexual one which became didactic, or a didactic ritual which gained a sexual component. Some scholars have noted a desire in early scholarship to shift the inception of homosexuality and pederasty away from Greek origins, attempting to credit what was viewed as a societal flaw to early academia to an outside source.²⁴ Eva Cantarella notes that initial efforts to trace the roots of homosexuality attributed the proclivity to the Dorians, not the Ionians. This attribution, Cantarella states, cleansed the Greeks of any blame for the deviancy of homosexuality, preserving Greece as an unblemished paradigm for Western civilization.²⁵ Excluding Athens, the second

²³ For pederasty as initially Indo-European see: See Eva Cantarella *Bisexuality in the Ancient World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); David B. Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone *Initiation and Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives* (London: Routledge, 2003); Kenneth Dover *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Mark Golden *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Thomas Hubbard "Popular Perceptions of Elite Homosexuality in Classical Athens" *Arion* 6 (1998): 48 – 60; and Thomas F. Scanlon *Eros and Greek Athletics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); etc

²⁴ Andrew Lear and Eva Cantarella, *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty: Boys were their gods* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 6-8.

²⁵ Dorians are believed to have originated in northern Greece, i.e. Macedonia, and are associated with a set of three tribes (*phylai*) which were thought to be separate from the four *phylai* from which Ionian Greeks descended. In Greek mythology, Dorians were the children of Heracles and had been driven out of

greatest amount of information on pederastic practice in Greece involved Doric Sparta. Xenophon and Plutarch insist that Spartan pederasty was chaste.²⁶ It should be noted, however, that Xenophon and Plutarch were lakonizers who actively purveyed an idealized image of Sparta which was a distorted version of reality.²⁷ Regardless of ancient writers' biases, it is problematic to attribute to Dorians a chaste pederasty and to imply that this resulted in a sexual version in Ionian Athens, especially when one wished to place the responsibility of inciting homosexuality in a non-Attic context. Certainly Athens felt its expression of pederasty was superior to the Dorian city states of Sparta and Elis. Sparta was overly rigid in matters of pederasty while Elis was home to libidinous men, male beauty contests, and general lack of regard for anything outside of aesthetics in matters of love, according to biased Attic writers like Plato.²⁸ Dorians aside, the inception of pederasty has also been credited to sport in ancient Greece.

Greece by Eurystheus of Mycenae, but reclaimed the Peloponnesus several generations later. Dorians were thus associated with the Peloponnesus, not mainland Greece proper, where Athens can be found.

²⁶ Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*; Plutarch, *Lycurgus*.

²⁷ Cartledge, 93.

²⁸ Plato, *Symposium*.

Athletics formed an integral role in the propagation of homosexuality and pederasty, and this has led some scholars to suggest the rise in popularity of the gymnasium resulted in a surge of homosexual expression.²⁹ Certainly both homosexuality and gymnasia seem to have risen to prominence at similar periods, the seventh century, and the gymnasia was an area intimately associated with masculine bonding and erotic expression. The theory does not, however, attempt to indicate what relationship is thought to exist between homosexuality and athletics: Is the idea that some aspect of athletics inherently encouraged homosexuality, or perhaps that athletics provided a natural outlet for homosexuality? Or was the practice of athletics shaped by homosexual desire? Though the theory is somewhat vague, it should still be considered for its acknowledgement of the close association athletics and homosexual expression shared.

Still other scholars argue in favor of situational homosexuality introducing and popularizing the idea of same-sex pairing into the Greek mindset.³⁰ It is thought homosexuality arose naturally from certain situations, such as deployed armies with no access to women, decreases in the female population, or the Greek

²⁹ See particularly: Cartledge (2001).

³⁰ See: Dover (1978); Lear and Cantarella (2007); Percy (1996).

age differential in married couples.³¹ This theory proves quite difficult to assess accurately. The military of Homer certainly had access to women. A decrease in female population is difficult to prove, and would need to be quite dramatic to result in a search for additional outlets for sexual expression. Finally, given the access Greek men had to prostitutes and other females of dubious repute, homosexuality arising purely from impatience before marriage seems equally unlikely. The theory of situational homosexuality may very well be valid, but the commonly suggested scenarios are not unproblematic. Problems, though, are intrinsic in all theories which attempt to explain the inception of homosexuality in Greece, and while no singular theory explains flawlessly the presence of homosexuality or pederasty, each attempts to understand a societal facet of ancient Greece which would foster homosexuality.

³¹ Women on average were married off quite young, at thirteen or fourteen, and men rather late: mid-twenties to thirty.

Practice³²

Pederasty was certainly not limited to Athens. Indeed, sources indicate that pederasty existed in unique forms in other city states, like Sparta and Elis, and in other areas, such as Crete. The difficulty of discussing pederasty in locations outside of Athens arises from a lack of adequate information. In fact, the evidence for pederasty in Crete depends upon a single source: Ephoros. Thus, the relative abundance of Attic sources allows for an in-depth discussion of the manner in which pederasty was practiced which favors Athens. An analysis of the general mechanics of the practice can aid in the indication of elitism within the practice. By “practice” of pederasty, the various stages of courtship and consummation are referred to, including the meeting and presentation of gifts.

The first stage of pederasty involved searching for a suitable young man to mentor. Literary and visual evidence indicate the gymnasias were the most popular place for *erastes* to

³² When discussing the general practice of pederasty, including the modalities of courtship, all the scholarship which covers the topic of homosexuality necessarily covers the basic practice of pederasty. Thus, no specific authors will be referenced in discussion of the general practice, though particularly helpful authors include Eva Cantarella *Bisexuality in Ancient Greece* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), Kenneth Dover *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), Thomas Hubbard “Popular Perceptions of Elite Homosexuality in Classical Athens” *Arion* 6 (1998): 48 – 60 and “Pederasty and Democracy: the marginalization of a social practice” in *Greek Love Reconsidered*, ed. Thomas Hubbard (New York: Wallace Hamilton Press, 2000), and William Armstrong Percy *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

prowl, for obvious reasons, “In the gymnasium we couldn’t help but notice how he oiled his body...and how in wrestling with the boys he always clung more tightly to the ones who were more manly.”³³ In Plato’s *Symposium*, Alcibiades discussed his failed attempts to seduce Socrates, “I invited him to the gymnasium with me, and exercised with him there, thinking I might make some progress that way.”³⁴ Plato’s quote is also interesting for its introduction of the idea of an *eromenos* attempting to seduce an *erastes*, underscoring the idea of choice. A later source, Plutarch comments, “And when the boys reached this age [twelve], lovers from among the distinguished young men began to associate with them, making more frequent visits to their place of exercise.”³⁵ Plutarch not only includes a reference to the appropriate age of an *eromenos*, but also notes that his suitors were “distinguished,” of high class. A large number of pederastic Greek vessels featuring courting scenes taking place in a gymnasium, usually indicated by the careful inclusion of a gym kit hung on the wall, a strigil, or a turning post. The gymnasium provided the most obvious of locales for admiring young boys, but it was by no means the sole location to find appropriate young men. *Erastes* could also seek their

³³ Mark Golden, trans., Tattius’ *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 8.9.

³⁴ Dover, trans., Plato’s *Symposium*, 216c-223d.

³⁵ Mark Golden, trans. *Lycurgus*, 18.4.

eromenoi at symposia, in the street – anywhere significant social contact could be sustained.

The second stage in the pederastic process was the courtship of a potential *eromenos* by the *erastes*:

Think of the way lovers behave toward the boys they love – think of the begging and entreating involved in their demands, the oaths they swear, the nights they spend sleeping outside the boys' front doors, the slavery they are prepared to endure (which no slave would put up with)...Custom attaches no blame to [a lover's] actions, since he is reckoned to be acting in a wholly honorable way.³⁶

A key facet in the practice is the wooing of young men and the knowledge that those young men might refuse the overtures of a potential lover. Within the corpus of pederastic courtship scenes, refusal and competition are common motifs. It is clear, and significant to the practice, that both *eromenoi* and *erastes* had a choice of whom to pursue and accept. A red-figure skyphos by the Lewis Painter contrasts the acceptance of a courtship gift with a refusal. On one side of the vessel, a young boy is shown nude, having removed his cloak, arms outstretched to accept the offering of a strigil from an older man carrying a walking stick. On the reverse, an older man, again with a walking stick, offers a strigil to a youth who remains cloaked, his proper right hand perched impatiently on his hip and his proper left hand holding a lyre; Lear and Cantarella have suggested the lyre may represent a gift

³⁶ Hubbard, trans., Plato's *Symposium*, 183.

accepted from a competing lover.³⁷ Both scenes feature imagery which alludes to the privileged status of the participants: a lyre, a strigil, walking sticks. As will be discussed later, the lyre reflects a musical education, something lower class individuals would not have received, and the walking stick is thought by scholars to represent a “leisured” status. Additionally, the skyphos highlights the autonomy boys had in choosing their *erastes*. The luxury of choice in mentor and mentee, lover and beloved, set pederasty in a position outside anything as base as prostitution or lust. It was important in the Greek mind that both *erastes* and *eromenos* choose their partners, as the conceptualization of pederastic courtship as a “hunt” was beneficial to both parties involved.

A red-figure kylix by Makron illustrates the competition between *erastes*. The vessel features three youths of similar height and age and seems to be taking place in a gymnasium, indicated by a gym kit hanging on the wall at the far left near one of the kylix’s handles. One boy, the *eromenos*, is positioned at the center, with a potential *erastes* on either side. The *eromenos*’ cloak is draped over his shoulders, allowing for the display of his body. In his proper right hand he holds a hare which had just been given to him by the *erastes* standing to the viewer’s left. The boy’s proper left hand is reaching out for the gift presented by a competing *erastes*,

³⁷ Lear and Cantarella, 48.

who is offering a bag of *astragaloï*.³⁸ Despite the similarity in age, it is clear who is being courted by whom. The vessel underscores the idea of competition and choice within pederastic practice. It is the victory in competition for an *eromenos* which lends meaning to the practice and bestows honor on both victor and prize. Courtship was an important facet, and appears to have been a popular subject for illustration.

The presentation of the courting gift was a common motif and generally featured the *erastes* thrusting a gift of a hare or cockerel at an apathetic or accepting *eromenos*. A distinction can be made in the presentation scenes which appear on earlier black-figure vessels and the later red-figure, though whether this marks a change in the actual practice of courtship is difficult to determine.

Early black-figure vessels which feature courtship gifting scenes often include movement which some scholars, notably Koehl DeVries, have postulated may be ritual dancing.³⁹ Pederastic couples are often placed, compositionally, between dancing men. Certain vessels portray the couple themselves dancing. The inclusion of dancing has led some scholars to

³⁸ *Astragaloï* were the knuckle bones of sheep or goats; they were used as dice in games.

³⁹ Keith DeVries, "The 'Frigid Eromenoi' and Their Wooers Revisited: A closer look at Greek homosexuality in vase painting," In *Queer Representations: Reading Lives, Reading Cultures*, Martin Duberman, ed.(New York: New York University Press, 1997).

theorize a ritualistic link or context for early pederasty.⁴⁰

Additionally, black-figure vessels portrayed pederastic couples as more mature than later red-figure vessels on which *eromenoi* were often depicted as young boys and *erastes* appeared as slightly older youths with sideburns as often as they were depicted as older, bearded men. In contrast, pederastic couples on black-figure vessels were sometimes comprised of two bearded individuals, which is not seen in red-figure examples; one example of this proclivity for pederastic couples which appear to be close in age can be found on a black-figure amphora by the Affecter, two men stand facing one another beneath a handle. Both men appear bearded, are nearly equal in height, and the musculature of their bodies is similarly developed. The man on the right grasps a hare in one hand, a pederastic courtship gift, and the man on the left seems to be extending his proper left hand to seize the gift. The age differential between the men is quite slight if, indeed, there is meant to be any difference. Furthermore, the representation of *eromenoi* on black-figure vessels appears to depict them as more mature: the *eromenos* is usually identical or very near in size to his *erastes*, as was seen in the previous example by the Affecter, and he appears to have a similarly mature physical build. Often, it is merely the lack of beard which establishes the *eromenos* as

⁴⁰ Ibid; Dover (1978).

physically different from the *erastes*. Examples exist in black-figure of *eromenoi* who appear quite young, but these illustrations represent a minority in the corpus. As a final point, the interactions between *erasteis* and *eromenoi* in black-figure tend to be wooden and much less affectionate than those seen in red-figure images; this lack of affection has often led to the description of *eromenoi* in the images as “frigid.”⁴¹ Noting a tendency for frigidity in the *eromenoi* of earlier vessels, however, may simply be a retroactive bias – in comparing black-figure examples to the much more explicit affection found in red-figure vessels, the beloved of the earlier vases appear more stoic than they might otherwise be considered without the later vessels.

In the later red-figure vessels which feature pederastic scenes, all vestiges of ritual or dancing have been eliminated, replaced with scenes of competition and more explicit displays of affection. These later vessels introduce the motif of the kiss, not present in black-figure vessels. The moment just before a kiss was favored by artists, who usually chose to depict the couple with faces drawing close, but lips not yet touching. It is interesting that some vases which feature the kiss motif also show the *eromenos* exhibiting *anteros*, or “counter passion,” for his *erastes*. Only the *erastes* was meant to feel *eros* – it was frowned upon for an

⁴¹ DeVries.

eromenos to feel passion as well. An illustration of *anteros* can be found on the tondo image of a red-figure kylix by the Carpenter Painter. The kylix features a young man, seated and half-dressed, pulling an older, bearded man down for a kiss. The older man cradles the youth's head with one arm while the youth, with both arms outstretched, grasps his lover's head. The *eromenos* is clearly instigating the action, and the *erastes* seems neither reticent nor surprised. Exterior scenes on the cup indicate the scene to be taking place in an athletic context.⁴² An early classical kylix by the Briseis Painter features a pederastic couple on the tondo image in a domestic scene, evidenced by the inclusion of a column at the left of the couple and a chair to the right. This time it is the *erastes* initiating the kiss; he bends slightly downward toward his *eromenos*, his proper left hand grasping his walking stick and his proper right behind the head of his beloved. The *eromenos* tilts his head upward and also places his proper right hand behind the head of his lover. Later images, it can be seen, became much more affectionate, especially when compared to much earlier black-figure examples, which contain interactions that seem stilted and "wooden" in comparison. This may indicate the evolution of the practice into a form less concerned with stringent practices or a more casual form resulting from a larger number of participants in

⁴² Lear and Cantarella, 61.

the practice. Additionally, red-figure vessels featured a more marked age differential, or at the least a greater desire to demarcate age. *Eromenoi* appear quite young in red-figure examples – clearly they are young boys – and *erasteis* always possess a beard or carefully included body hair and/or sideburns to indicate they are at an age past puberty; they are clearly the mature partner. What, precisely, the shift in the depiction of ages represents is unclear, though it may represent an attempt to stress the appropriate form for a pederastic couple and differentiate pederasty from any less honorable institution.

After a young man had been successfully wooed, the function of the relationship was primarily pedagogical, or that is the facet of the relationship ancient writers catering to upper class readers wished to stress, “...the boy [is satisfied] because he is justified in submitting, in any way he will, to the man who can make him wise and good.”⁴³ An *erastes* was meant to teach and mentor his *eromenos*, and the feelings associated with each partner in the relationship were rather strictly delineated. An *erastes* was meant to feel *eros*, desire, for his beloved, but it was inappropriate for a young man to feel passion or desire for his *erastes*. In fact, the only desire an *eromenos* was meant to feel was a desire to improve in wisdom and goodness as a result of his relationship

⁴³ Plato, *Symposium*, 184, Hubbard, trans.

with his *erastes*. Desire was dangerous in the Greek mind, and the emotion of desire was at odds with reason. Young boys needed to be conditioned to be reasonable, not to lose themselves to their passions, “How will the young in this city abstain from the desires that impel many to their wit’s end? For these are desires which reason, which is endeavoring to become law, bids them abstain.”⁴⁴ For Athenians, pederasty was pedagogical and certainly not an outlet for passion or desire. In the literature, a curious dichotomy exists among texts which stress the importance of restraint and admiring mind over body, and those which extoll the physical beauty of boys.

Plato’s *Symposium* provides the most abundant source of instances which illustrate the way in which aristocratic Greeks conceptualized pederasty and how they wished it to be conceptualized by others. Plato consistently emphasizes the fact that it is the mind and spirit, and not physical desire, which guides men and boys in pederastic relationships: “Open love is regarded as better than secret love, and so is love of the noblest and best people, even if they are not the best looking,”⁴⁵ “The wrong person is the common lover I was talking about – the one who loves the body rather than the mind. His love is not lasting, since *what* he

⁴⁴ Hubbard, trans. Plato, *Laws*, 835E.

⁴⁵ Hubbard, trans. Plato, *Symposium*, 182.

loves is not lasting either;”⁴⁶ “...the man who loves a boy for his good character will stick to him for life, since he has attached himself to what is lasting.”⁴⁷

In Aristophanes *Clouds*, a later source, a debate is staged between Better and Worse argument to convince the youth Pheidippides to attend Socrates’ school. Better argument lists several ways in which young boys were instructed on how to avoid inciting the physical passions of older men, since this would be wrong. At the gymnasium, boys should “cover themselves with their thighs, so as not to expose to the onlookers anything that was – cruel;” when boys stand, they should sweep the sand clean and “take care not to leave behind for their lovers the impress of their manhood;” finally, “no boy would anoint himself [with oil] below the navel.”⁴⁸ Though this play carries a late date, Better argument notes that the model he extolls is based on “how the old education was managed,” thus indicating the references to appropriate behavior stem from a period earlier than that of the play itself.

Earlier sources, specifically Archaic poetry, tend to focus on the physicality of homosexuality and the senses: admiration of beauty, desire, love, touch, sight, etc: “Boy with a maiden’s

⁴⁶ Ibid, 183.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 949-1113.

glance/ I seek you out, but hear you not/unknowing that you are the charioteer of my soul,”⁴⁹ “Boy, my passion’s master, listen. I’ll tell no tale/ that’s unpersuasive or unpleasant to your heart/Just try to grasp my words with your mind. There is no need/ for you to do what’s not for your liking.”⁵⁰ It is interesting to note that literary evidence from later dates begins to shift away from simply extolling the beauty of boys and begins to introduce and stress the idea of responsibility and self-control in the face of desire. This may mark a change in the perception of the way in which pederasty was practiced or an actual change in the practice. Given the rise of laws which sought to protect boys from unsavory older men, the most notable in Beroea, it is entirely possible that pederasty became much more widely practiced with increased democracy. The increased number of participants may have led to a more casual form of the practice, which resulted in the elite members of society wishing to stress their version of pederasty as a rigid practice and delineate it from the other, less stringent forms gaining popularity.

A pederastic relationship had several functions: a “divinely inspired” older man was given a beautiful companion he would mentor and, presumably, transform into an ideal citizen, thus

⁴⁹ Anacreon, fragment 360, *Poetae Medici Graeci*.

⁵⁰ Theognis, *Theognid Collection*, 1235-38.

making the *erastes*' role in pederasty quite philanthropic for the *polis* in the eyes of aristocratic Greeks; a naïve *eromenos* was made good, wise, and noble, and obtained connections in society which would benefit him later in life. Pederasty was a rather ingenious institution that created intimate bonds where no bonds would naturally exist. Aristophanes joked that “everyone long-haired is pollinated,”⁵¹ making a jest that all those in power who had once been *eromenoi* were now *erasteis*. Jest aside, pederasty created a tapestry of bonds within the *polis* of Athens at a time when the aristocracy was, essentially, the entirety of the city state in terms of hegemony. The practice of pederasty represented much more than an elaborate courting system for the privileged of Athens – it was a means of strengthening the *polis*, creating unique bonds which resulted in the aristocracy united as an intimate, insoluble entity.⁵²

Prostitution

Male prostitution is a subject which often receives only passing acknowledgement in texts which discuss sexuality or homosexuality in ancient Greece. A failure to discuss male prostitution in a profound way is, as is often the case in academia, due to a lack of information. A discussion of pederasty would be

⁵¹ Hubbard, trans., Com. Adesp fr. 12.

⁵² For a discussion of precisely what way politics, hegemony, and pederasty interacted, see chapter 6.

lacking, however, without the inclusion and acknowledgement of male prostitution as a typical institution in Greece. The significance of the topic to pederasty is given further pertinence by its ability to counter the claim that pederasty as a practice existed merely for sexual gratification or represented a form of sexual deviance. It seems evident that the presence and acceptance of male prostitution would call to question the validity of the theory that pederasty was merely an excuse to engage in sexual activities with young men.

The evidence for male prostitution proves to be somewhat problematic. Despite the plethora of Greek vessels which feature female prostitutes, no scenes of male prostitution exist in the corpus. The lack of visual evidence could be the result of several factors: no market may have existed for the images, there may have been a societal stigma regarding the illustration of male prostitution, or male prostitution is alluded to in the visual corpus in an ambiguous or inconspicuous manner. It then falls to literary evidence to provide the entirety of contemporary knowledge regarding male prostitutes.

Aiskhines' *Trial of Timarkhos* provides a relatively significant amount of information regarding legal conceptions of male prostitution. From the trial scholars learn that male prostitutes were denied access to the political realm in Athens "because the

legislator considered that one who had been a vendor of his own body for others to treat as they pleased would have no hesitation in selling the interests of the community as a whole.”⁵³ This exclusion from politics meant that the majority of prostitutes in Athens were foreigners, as it seems highly unlikely that any significant number of male, free-born Athenian citizens would voluntarily cede their civic rights to earn the no doubt nominal income of a prostitute. There are no Attic documents, however, that indicate free citizens were forbidden from pursuing prostitution. In fact, in Plato’s *Charmides*, “sitting in an *oikema*,” the working place of male prostitutes, is listed alongside selling salt fish and making shoes;⁵⁴ James Davidson notes that the inclusion of male prostitution with that of selling fish and making shoes meant that the profession was disreputable, but not unthinkable.⁵⁵ Additionally, the fact that male prostitutes seem to have resided in *oikema*, which were small cubicles or rooms, indicates a level of privacy and autonomy somewhat more significant than their female counterparts. Aeschines notes that some boys would operate from private lodgings called *stegoi*.⁵⁶

⁵³ Dover, trans., Aiskhines’ *Trial of Timarkhos*, 29-32.

⁵⁴ Plato, *Charmides*, 163B.

⁵⁵ James Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: the consuming passions of Classical Athens*, (London: HarperCollins:1997), 90.

⁵⁶ Aiskhines, *Trial of Timarkhos*, 1.36; Werner A. Krenkel, trans.

Some later references indicate male prostitutes may have plied their trade in brothels among female prostitutes. Socrates' Phaedo had once been stationed in an *oikema*, but had originally been purchased for an Athenian "bawdy house."⁵⁷

The chronology of male prostitution proves to be as difficult to discern as other aspects of the practice. Homer makes no mention of either prostitutes or organized prostitution, only slaves and, according to later sources, concubines.⁵⁸ The majority of references to Greek men involved in or with prostitution come from fourth-century BC courtroom oratory: Aiskhines' *Against Timarkhos*, Lysias' *Against Simon*, Demosthenes *Against Androtion*, etc. It can perhaps be argued, based on the abundance of cases and laws which arose in the fourth century regarding male prostitution, that prior to that period male prostitution was practiced to an extent limited enough that few issues arose which required legal action. The rise of litigation in which men were accused of prostitution or sought recompense for purchased prostitutes failing to provide the expected sexual compensation, in conjunction with the instigation of laws during the same period which barred prostitutes from entering the gymnasias and schools,

⁵⁷ Davidson, 91; Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 2.18.1-4.

⁵⁸ Werner A. Krenkel, "Prostitution," in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean*, Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger, eds. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), 1291; for Homeric references to female slaves see: *Illiad* 1.111; 8.284; 9.449; *Odyssey* 1.433.

would both seem to indicate prostitution became widespread enough to be problematic only during the fourth century and subsequent years.

A final issue regarding prostitution which negates the view of pederasty as seeking to fill a similar sexual need on the part of men is the way in which Greek society viewed male prostitutes: the prejudice against male prostitutes was quite vehement.⁵⁹ Quite problematic for the Greek mind was the issue of sexual subordination involved in prostitution. Male prostitutes necessarily took a passive role in sexual intercourse, as no male citizen would have played subordinate to a non-citizen.⁶⁰ Passivity in sexual intercourse between men was viewed as demoralizing, “homosexual [passivity] is treated neither as an expression of love nor as a response to the stimulus of physical beauty, but as an aggressive act demonstrating the superiority of the active to the passive partner.”⁶¹ Indeed, this distaste for sexual passivity is reflected in the specificity of intercrural copulation, which involved no penetration, as the only acceptable form of sexual

⁵⁹ Though not pertinent to this discussion, it must be noted that female prostitutes fared little better in the minds of Greek society, and evidence both visual and literary indicated their treatment was quite rough.

⁶⁰ It has been previously noted that the majority of male prostitutes were foreigners, but there are additional literary references to “beautiful boys” being captured, imported, sold, and hired out as prostitutes. While many of the sources are later Roman accounts, Aristophanes pokes fun at the practice in his *Knights*, 1069.

⁶¹ Dover, 104.

contact within the practice of pederasty. Regardless of whether or not the Greeks actually adhered to the idea of intercrural copulation as the only tolerable form of sexual contact with fellow citizens, the fact that literary and visual evidence highlighted and touted intercrural sexual contact indicates, at the very least, the practitioners' desire for pederasty to be viewed as inherently different from prostitution and motivated by more august intentions.

A discussion of prostitution, however brief, is critical to any discussion of pederasty as it aids in the illumination of pederasty as a practice too complex simply to relegate to the over-generalized term "homosexuality." Prostitution indicates that sexual desire for young men most likely did not form the primary motivation for the practice of pederasty. Additionally, several aspects of pederasty directly work against associating prostitution and lust with pederasty. In addition to the careful distinction between the sexual contact that occurs with prostitutes and that which occurs in pederasty, certain Greek vessels previously discussed also make clear the idea that a young man accepting money as a "gift" from a lover is inappropriate, as it blurs the line between soliciting sex and an ostensibly pedagogical practice. Pederasty, as the Greeks conceived of it, was not a sexual institution, but merely a social institution with a sexual component.

Chapter 3

THE AFFLUENCE OF ARMOR: ELITISM IN THE PEDERASTIC PRACTICE AND MILITARY OF ATHENS

The connection between pederasty and the Attic military is a multidimensional one. Perhaps the most basic and explicit of connections between the military and pederasty is the fact that eligibility for service definitively marked the end of a young man's eligibility for acting in the role of an *eromenos*, as the transition into manhood was believed to have been complete when one was old enough to serve his city state. Additionally, some of the courting gifts associated with pederasty were intimately connected with military service, such as the fighting cock. Within the visual corpus of evidence, numerous vases make implicit or explicit connections between pederasty and soldiers or war. Several black figure vases juxtapose images of soldiers in battle or departing for battle with scenes of pederastic courtship. Numerous vases categorized in Beazley's "Cock Group" present images of battle and soldiers with the inclusion of the cock as a decorative element, often on shields or the shoulder of *lekythoi*.⁶² The cock represents one of the most ubiquitous courting gifts on vases with scenes of pederastic courtship. A final connection between pederasty and warfare or military service can be seen in numerous literary and

⁶² Many vessels in this group feature separate design motifs on the shoulders which feature the cock.

visual references which indicate the previously discussed leisure activity of hunting was often conceptualized as training for warfare in antiquity. Thus, the link between pederasty and the military is one which is subtle but necessitates discussion, as the way in which Attic military service is believed to have been organized paints it as a highly elitist institution. Before delving into a discussion of the classist tendencies of the military in Athens, however, it is first necessary to establish a general overview of the workings of the military in Athens.

The history of the military in Athens is one which, during the Archaic age, must be broached cautiously. Much scholarly debate is devoted to in what way, precisely, the military manifested itself prior to the Persian Wars, when information from ancient writers such as Thucydides and Aristotle provides more concrete details. For the purposes of this thesis, it is most relevant to discuss early class distinction and soldier status in the military during the Archaic and early Classical periods.

Perhaps the defining feature of the Attic military was the famed *hoplite* phalanx, which seemingly provided a more tangible and visceral manifestation of the concept of unity so critical to the Greek *polis*. Indicating an exact date for the creation of the phalanx is difficult, but it is known that the phalanx was in existence by the seventh century, despite the fact that, as Snodgrass has noted, all

the equipment used in hoplite warfare was in existence prior to the actual formation of the phalanx and presence of the *hoplite*.⁶³ Prior to 650 BC, artistic representations of battle do not feature the phalanx, but rather illustrate battles taking place in the skirmish warfare of the Dark Ages.⁶⁴ The *Chigi Vase* (c. 650BC) is the earliest example of a clear representation of a phalanx; it features fully armed *hoplites* in ranks, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder against an opposing phalanx.

The *hoplite* phalanx was comprised, as the name suggests, of *hoplites*, a term generally used to designate heavy-armed infantrymen within the Greek army which comes from the Greek *hopla*, “arms,” or from the name for a round shield used by the soldiers, the *hoplon*. Though the term “*hoplite*” is sometimes used in scholarship to refer to infantrymen as a general class of soldier, it is necessary to delineate the heavy-armed infantryman from the light-armed infantryman. The so-called heavy-armed infantryman wore a breastplate and helmet of bronze. Greaves, which protected the shins, were also worn and were generally made of bronze as well. Depending on the relative wealth of the soldier, armor could be purchased and worn which would protect the upper and lower

⁶³ A.M. Snodgrass, *Early Hoplite Warfare* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965); Tim Everson, *Warfare in Ancient Greece* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004), 69.

⁶⁴ Everson, 73.

arms, the feet, the thigh, and the neck. Light-armor soldiers usually wore no armor, may have carried a shield and/or spear, and sometimes wore a helmet. The issue of armor and the distinction between heavy and light-armed infantrymen is significant as the price of armor contributed heavily to the class restriction noted within the military. Additionally, it is believed that heavy-armed *hoplite* soldiers may have been compelled to fight, while light-armed infantrymen represented those individuals fighting voluntarily. To say that heavy-armed *hoplites* were compelled is not to imply that mandatory conscriptions existed – it is difficult to determine mandatory service prior to the fourth century when the *katalogos* or tribe lists were created specifically for conscription needs – rather, citizens who could afford the panoply of armor required of a *hoplite* were obligated by duty and status to serve.

The *hoplite*, however, was but one of several types of Greek soldier. Two other military positions relevant to the discussion of class in the military are *nautai*, of which the navy of Athens was comprised, and *hippeis*, cavalrymen. *Nautai* were almost exclusively composed of the lowest class, the *thetes*.⁶⁵ Conversely, the *hippeis* were almost exclusively men of the highest

⁶⁵ *Thetes* is a designation which stems from the classes established by Solon's reforms in the sixth century B.C. These classes were based on land holdings and the approximate value of the harvest of that land. Thus, the highest class, the *pentakosiomedimnoi*, or "five-hundred bushel men," owned land which produced 500 measures of grain, which is the equivalent of approximately one and one half modern bushels.

class, as they were required to supply not only their own armor, but a horse as well. Some scholars have conjectured that the name for the *hippeis* class was derived from the ability of persons in that class to feed and maintain horses, a luxury throughout much of the history of ancient Greece. These two classes of soldier existed on either side of the *hoplite*, which scholars often point to as a middle ground, though this designation is often skewed by the aforementioned tendency to include both light and heavy-armed soldiers under the title of *hoplite*. Recently, Hans van Wees has argued that the “middle-class” nature of the hoplite soldier referred only to middling individuals within the ranks of the hoplites which contained a large number of *zeugitai*, which he argues represented a middle-class amongst the leisured elite.⁶⁶ The existence of three very distinct military positions with very distinct class associations begins to allude to the facet of the Attic military which is most pertinent to this discussion: its classist nature and elitist bias.

Many ancient authors provide commentary on class contention in the military. Plato notes the class tension within the military in his *Republic* when he mentions that “The wiry, sunburned working man [sees] a rich man, who lives his life in the shade and carries lots of superfluous flesh, all out of breath and

⁶⁶ Hans van Wees, “The Myth of the Middle-Class Army: Military and social status in ancient Athens,” in *War as a Cultural and Social Force*, Tonnes Bekker-Nielsen and Lise Hannestad, eds. (Denmark: Stougaard, 2001), 45-71.

without a clue,” beside him in battle and thinks “These men are ours; they are nothing.”⁶⁷ Though Plato writes at a time much later than the Archaic period, the commentary on class antagonism remains relevant. It seems, however, that the ability of lower classes to fight despite their inability to afford appropriate armor was much more a phenomenon of the Classical and Hellenistic periods than of the Archaic. The Persian Wars marked the beginning of mass combat, which required a much more lax policy toward who would be placed on the field. Aristotle notes that “in Athens, when they were unsuccessful with the infantry, the notables became fewer,” and goes on to claim that entire armies from certain conscription lists were killed during the Peloponnesian War.⁶⁸ With the loss of notable, i.e., upper class men, it was necessary to extend the right of service to the lower classes. Even in later periods, however, the allowance of lower class individuals onto the field did not eliminate class tension. Thucydides remarks of the Sicilian expedition that 1,500 men were mobilized from the list (*ek katalogou*) and an additional 700 *thetes* served as sailors on the ships.⁶⁹ It seems that conscriptions lists named only heavy-armed *hoplites*, from the *zeugitai* class or

⁶⁷ Plato, *Republic*, 556ce, van Wees, Trans.

⁶⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1303a8 – 10.

⁶⁹ 6.43.1.

higher, and that *thetes* were omitted from the lists. This exclusion meant that only the dead *hoplite* soldiers would have been known by name. If class delineation within the military was so pronounced during the later periods of Greek history which were privileged with a much more extensive democracy, it can be logically presumed that these delineations would have been equally, if not more, pronounced prior to the fifth century. Xenophon remarks that “the best thing is to govern the state together with those most able to serve with horses and shields,” and Aristotle says “the body politic must consist only of those who possess arms and armor,” as well as that political offices at the time of Solon were reserved for the “notable and wealthy.”⁷⁰ Indeed, pay for political offices was not even offered until after the 450s B.C. Thus, it seems that at least as early as the late Archaic period military service and political service were synonymous with the upper classes.

It must also be noted that the way in which warfare was waged in Greece prior to the Peloponnesian War would have discouraged those who could not afford arms to participate, even voluntarily. As Victor Davis Hanson has noted, the idea of “warfare,” of multiple engagements over an extended period of time, was a concept alien to the Greeks. From 650 B.C. well into

⁷⁰ Xenophon, *Hellenika*, 2.3.48; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1297b1, 1273b36-9, 1274a16-22.

the fifth century, the way in which city-states clashed was through a single battle, a head to head confrontation between two phalanxes. Strategy and tactics were minimal. When one considers that Greek war consisted of two groups of men crushing into one another, the idea of entering the battlefield as a light-armed soldier begins to sound impractical. “The landless, rootless poor who could act either as light-armed skirmishers or guerillas in difficult, mountainous terrain were unwelcome, and, thus, they were relegated to rowing in the fleet or occasional harassment;”⁷¹ a man without armor would be little more than “cannon fodder” in the context of a Greek battle. Thus, the necessity of armor excluded those too poor to afford it on yet another level, one outside of monetary considerations – the existence of armor had shaped the way in which Greek battles were fought and created a fighting style in which armor was a necessity; the relationship between armor and battle was cyclical and created an inherent favoring of the upper, wealthier, classes.

The detail of Attic military service most singularly implicating the institution as elitist, however, was the necessity that soldiers supply their own armor: “With regard to military expenses, it is to be noted that, certainly down to the outbreak of

⁷¹ Victor Davis Hanson, “The Ideology of the Hoplite Battle, Ancient and Modern,” in *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London: Routledge, 1991), 5.

the Peloponnesian war, the armed forces of the state were composed of citizens who provided their own equipment.”⁷² The necessity of providing one’s own armor applied to more than foot soldiers, “The Athenian state...laid expensive public duties upon its citizens rather than making them pay taxes, and one of these duties was cavalry service, for which the trooper had to furnish his own horse and arms.”⁷³ A fragmentary stele found on the Athenian acropolis, which was restored, contained a provision which noted that Athenians on Salamis must give military service to Athens, that they were responsible for arming themselves, and that the archon was to pass judgment on the arms which the soldiers provided.⁷⁴ Knowing, however, that soldiers in Athens were required to supply their own armor is only one part of the equation whose sum indicates an elitist military. The price of armor and the average pay for military service are also required to assess adequately the classist tendencies of the military in Athens.

Determining a specific price for a panoply of armor in antiquity is extremely difficult as there are few ancient sources

⁷² M. Michell, *Economics of Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940): 361.

⁷³ J.K. Anderson, *Ancient Greek Horsemanship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 128.

⁷⁴ Benjamin D. Meritt, “Notes on Attic Decrees,” *Hesperia* 10 No. 4 (1941): 307; Russel Meiggs and David Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988): 25 - 27.

which allude to the possible price.⁷⁵ Additionally, the ability of scholars to estimate the relative prices of metals and labor is entirely dependent upon records from antiquity, which are sparse and provide information from specific time periods which may or may not be retroactively applied to earlier periods. It is useful, however, to consider what little information is available to obtain a general idea of what cost a soldier might have incurred when purchasing arms. One clue is found in Aristophanes' *Pax*. In the play, the signing of an armistice raises the prices of helmets and breastplates to 1000 *drachmai* for the former and 100 *drachmai* for the latter.⁷⁶ Though the prices in the play are exaggerated for comedic purposes, even if one were to assume the prices had been increased by one hundred percent, breastplates would still have been 100 *drachmai* and helmets 10. Aristophanes, however, wrote in the fifth century, and comedy at that, so it is problematic to apply the playwright's reference outside of a Classical context. Referring back to the previous restored fragment from the Acropolis, the Athenians on Salamis were to furnish 30 *drachmai* worth of armor. It is unclear from the fragment, however, whether this price represented the lowest amount a hoplite should

⁷⁵ A panoply of armor represented approximately 70lbs of bronze: Pamela Vaughn, "The Identification and Retrieval of the Hoplite Battle-Dead," in *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, Victor Davis Hanson, ed. (London: Routledge, 1991), 38-61.

⁷⁶ Aristophanes, *Pax* 1210-1251.

contribute or the general price of a panoply of armor. In the *Illiad*, Diomedes' armor is said to be worth nine oxen; it has been calculated that an ox was worth five drachma, which would put the cost of Diomedes' armor at forty-five *drachma*, a figure not too far distant from the one specified for Athenians in Salamis.⁷⁷ Also of use in determining armor prices is the worth of the metals utilized in armor.

Most typical of the material used in metal armor is bronze. Ingots discovered from as early as the Archaic period seem to be evidence of the transportation of metals. Snodgrass theorizes three stages of transportation during the Archaic period: mining site to smelting site, ingots to metalworking shop, and finished objects to customers.⁷⁸ If, indeed, such involved methods of transportation existed, the price of metals would be driven up as a result of the added effort.⁷⁹ Regardless of the validity of a tri-pronged transportation method, the existence of ingots underscores transportation as possessing some role in metallurgy, and a corresponding impact on metal pricing. Bronze, an alloy consisting primarily of copper and another metal, most often tin in antiquity, represented a unique material for pricing, as it allowed

⁷⁷ Homer, *Illiad* 6.235; Allen Rogers Benner, trans.; Van Wees, 46-50.

⁷⁸ Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece: The Age of Experiment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981): 139-140.

⁷⁹ The high cost of transportation created the need for shipping of ingot via sea routes, as this method of transportation was more cost effective.

suppliers to capitalize on the more expensive metal in the alloying process.⁸⁰ Epigraphical evidence from the Classical period indicates the price of tin to be 6.5 times the price of copper: an inscription detailing the expenditures on the Athena Promachos notes the purchase of 150 talents of tin for 34,853 *drachmai* and 37 talents of copper for 1,301 *drachmai*; this means that, in regard to this specific document, the price of tin was approximately 232 drachma per talent and copper was 35 drachma per talent.⁸¹ Examining the alloy of the two metals, W.M. Murray has calculated the price of a talent of bronze to be 60 *drachmai* and 1.5 obols, though this pricing is based in the late Classical.⁸² To achieve another extremely relative pricing for a panoply of armor, the price point set by Murray can be combined with the approximate weight of a panoply of armor, which has been calculated as 70 pounds by Pamela Vaugh.⁸³ If a talent is 56 pounds, the average panoply of armor would have needed 1.25

⁸⁰ Michail Yu Treister, *The Role of Metals in Ancient Greek History* (Leiden: Brill, 1996): 240.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 249; Treister uses IG I₃.

⁸² W.M. Murray, "The Weight of Trireme Rams and the Price of Bronze in Fourth-Century Athens," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 26 (1985): 144; the weight of the ram has been approximated by Murray, and so the price is mere estimate.

⁸³ Vaugh, 56.

talents of metal.⁸⁴ If bronze is priced at 60 *drachmai* per talent, a panoply of armor made from bronze would have cost a Greek soldier 75 drachma, slightly more than 1 drachma per pound of bronze. The number 75 represents a point in between the 45 drachma of Homer, the 30 drachma of soldiers in Salamis, and the comically exorbitant 1,100 drachma of Aristophanes. The price point of 75 drachma is quite suspect, however, as it is dependent upon a number of hypothetical calculations. Nevertheless, it is of use to obtain as many approximate prices for armor as possible given the lack of specific information from antiquity. Taking into consideration ancient writers' synchronicity of armor possession with wealth and the four general monetary figures indicated by the Acropolis fragment, Homer, Aristophanes, and epigraphical data, it can be safely assumed that armor was costly enough that its purchase indicated a fair amount of disposable income, most certainly outside the financial grasp of a lower class citizen. A method for further contextualizing the price of armor can be found in a brief discussion of military pay.

As previously noted, the state bore little expense for its soldiers. A hoplite paid for his own armor and clothing. In regard to the daily pay of those in the military, Thucydides notes that the

⁸⁴ Neda Leiden, *Athena Parthenos: A reconstruction* (Ontario: Hunter Rose Company, 1971), 19. Leiden's calculations of the approximate weight of a talent are based on information from Herodotus regarding the height of the Athena Promachos on the Acropolis and the records of materials.

daily pay for 3,000 hoplites at Poteidaia was two drachma per day, with one drachma going to the *hyperetes*.⁸⁵ The Athenian sailors blockading ships at Poteidaia received one drachma a day, but sailors in the Peloponnesian fleet in 412 B.C. received only three obols a day,⁸⁶ which seems to have been the norm.⁸⁷ Thus, even if a soldier were not required to supply arms prior to conscription, he would be unable to accumulate the necessary funds from that occupation to purchase a set of heavy armor – there was no chance a light armed soldier, for instance, would have an opportunity to serve long enough to purchase a panoply. It can be assumed a breastplate alone would require a month’s salary, perhaps more, which would simply not be a feasible cost for a soldier to incur, post or pre-service. Precluding the ability of an individual to amass the monetary backing required for armor from his occupation, it would seem the only way a citizen could afford his arms would be to have the disposable income prior to service.

Calculating the hypothetical disposable income of different classes from ancient Greece is a difficult undertaking that requires an unfortunate amount of guesswork, especially given the fact that

⁸⁵ 3.17; *hyperetes* refers to any person who acted as the assistant to another, though it was also used to refer to rowers. Thus, one drachma went to the hoplite and one to his assistant.

⁸⁶ Three obols is half of one drachma, which is equal to six obols.

⁸⁷ Thucydides, 3.9.18-19, Crawley, trans.; W. Kendrick Pritchett, *The Greek State at War: Volume II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974): 16.

the economic system of ancient Greece was one in which a citizen's estate and income were composed of how many measures of grain, oil, or wine were produced on his farm. To determine disposable income, it is necessary to estimate the general size and total amount of produce for a farm, subtract seed grain, food amounts for family members, general family size, and livestock feed. Additionally, all of these hypothetical numbers must then be individually tailored to the different classes within Athenian society.⁸⁸ Though the calculations are, indeed, the very definition of "speculation," it is worth noting that scholars have hypothesized the disposable income of men in the *hippeis* class was approximately 240 *medimnoi* for one year.⁸⁹ Lysias, however, did note that some soldiers received funds from rich neighbors to serve, though the only funds he specifies are "travel money."⁹⁰ It can be assumed, then, that the majority of soldiers would have incurred the cost of their armor and that this cost was prohibitory to the lower class.

Knowing now the way in which the military functioned within the economic stratification of Athens, the connections between pederasty and the military can be discussed. Pederasty

⁸⁸ Again referring to Solonian reform, thus indicating the sixth century or later.

⁸⁹ Van Wees, 47-51.

⁹⁰ Lysias, 16.14.

marked a time of transition for a youth in Athens, and, as has been previously noted, military service represented a definite end to the transition of a youth from boyhood to manhood. Thus, several elements of pederastic practice reflect the impending transformation of youth to soldier. Among pederastic courtship scenes one of the most ubiquitous gifts offered to a potential *eromenos* was a fighting cock. Cock fights were a popular pastime for wealthy youths, and the bird itself was viewed as an analogue for a hoplite soldier. From its vibrant comb, which visually echoed the hoplite helmet, to its ferocity in battle, the fighting cock mirrored the ideal traits of a soldier. Additionally, a late version of the myth in which Hephaestus discovers Aphrodite's unfaithfulness clearly indicates an effort to link the myth with pederasty. In this later myth, the adulterous couple are discovered when the soldier Alektryon, the *eromenos* of Mars, falls asleep and fails to warn the couple when dawn arrives. For his failure, Alektryon is transformed into a cock and tasked with heralding the dawn for eternity.⁹¹ This unique adaptation of the myth introduces not simply a pederastic relationship, but also the liminal associations of the cock, which heralds a transitional period of the day, just as pederasty marks a transition period in a wealthy

⁹¹ Lucian, Gallus, 3.

youth's life.⁹² The fighting cock, then, represented an extremely appropriate courting gift, indicating both the transitional period a youth was currently in as well as the end of that period, when he was eligible for military service. The cock's connection with both war and youth help to explain why it appears as a motif so frequently on Greek vases which illustrate soldiers, pederastic imagery, or both. The majority of vases which feature the cockerel in conjunction with military scenes are featured on *kylikes* and *skyphoi*, both vase types which would have been used in *symposia*, a central, exclusively male social arena for pederastic expression. A black figure amphora from the sixth century, attributed to the Affecter, features men armed with spears acting as spectators on the periphery while a bearded man, presumably an *erastes*, presents a young man with a cockerel at the center of the image. Within the "Cock Group," a series of black figure vases from the sixth century, often *lekythoi*, the cock is used in conjunction with ivy on the shoulders of the vessels as a decorative motif. The scenes adorning the belly of the vases feature soldiers or pederastic scenes. One particularly interesting example of the apposition of military and pederastic imagery is a black figure amphora from the mid-sixth century. The obverse of the vessel features a generic battle scene from the Amazonomachy, while the reverse features

⁹² Eric Csapo, "Deep Ambivalence: Notes on a Greek Cockfight," *Phoenix* 47 (1993): 1-28.

courting youths. The juxtaposition of men engaged in combat against foreign women with young men participating in the early stages of pederasty presents an interesting dichotomy between the life of an adult male citizen and that of a maturing youth. Based on the visual evidence, it becomes clear that the Greeks acknowledged a connection between the military and pederastic practice.

Evidence within the visual corpus can also be utilized to underscore the idea of an elitist military. Given the fact that the necessity of purchasing one's own armor acts a qualifier for an elitist military, the inclusion of armor in military scenes on Greek vessels can be interpreted as a symbolic feature of wealth, as can the inclusion of horses, which also represented a hallmark of a wealthy owner; this association is more pertinent in scenes outside of the battlefield where armor and horses, often attached to chariots, is expected. The motif of "warriors departing" was a popular one, and generally featured men arming themselves or mounting horses or chariots to depart for battle. Analyzing a small sample of the corpus of this iconographic type, one finds the inclusion of elements symbolic of wealth quite extensive. Within the Beazley archive, even if one considers only vessels listed under the motif of "Warriors Departing" with the date range of 575BC through 525BC, nearly every vessel features shields and helmets,

and more than half include horses.⁹³ The presence of armor and horses can thus be seen as fairly stereotypical of the motif.

Oftentimes the armor illustrated is quite elaborate, as it frequently was in reality, indicating wealth. Moreover, multiple horses are frequently included, especially in the presence of a chariot, further stressing the presumed wealth of the individual departing. The careful inclusion of such symbols, therefore, reinforces the idea that hoplites and warriors were wealthy men.

Returning to the issue of pederasty, horses were another favored courting gift. The horse referred to both the leisured hunt and military service simultaneously, and certainly to present a boy with a horse required a considerable amount of expendable income. Additionally, it would be illogical to give such an expensive gift to a poor boy; he would have little cause to utilize the animal and his family would be burdened with the additional expense of feeding more livestock. A wealthy young man, however, could use a horse to train for warfare through hunting and possibly use the animal as a cavalryman. Archaic poetry often compared *eromenoi* to horses; Theognis wrote “Boy, you’re like a horse. Just now sated with seed/ you’ve come back to my stable/ yearning for a good rider, fine meadow/ an icy spring,

⁹³ The entire corpus of vessels in the Beazley archive listed under “Warriors Departing” contains similar numerical proportions.

shady groves,”⁹⁴ as well as “Happy the man who’s got boys for loving and single-foot horses.”⁹⁵ Aristophanes pokes fun at a greedy *eromenos* in his *Wealth*; the boys are compared to Corinthian whores who ignored poor clients in favor of attracting a rich one; it is said “One wants a good horse, another asks for hunting dogs.”⁹⁶ That horses and *eromenoi* were so closely associated indicates aristocratic and militaristic associations. The horse was a symbol of wealth and battle and pederasty was connected with both concepts.

The military in Athens, as has been demonstrated, was an elitist institution, exclusionary to those citizens who could not afford the price of armor. Beyond that, ancient writers and modern scholars both indicate that, even if one were to volunteer as a light-armed infantryman or serve as a sailor, the power and nobility associated with hoplites came from their status as wealthy citizens, hence the ancient commentary indicating political power should be left in the hands of the only those who could afford to serve as hoplites. Pederasty’s elitist associations are highlighted by its connection to the equally elitist military, and both literary and visual evidence underscores the connection between the two

⁹⁴ Theognis, 1249-52.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 1253-56.

⁹⁶ Aristophanes, *Wealth*, 149-59; Hubbard, trans.

institutions. Pederasty fostered wealthy young men until they reached the age at which they would become wealthy warriors. It is easy to see how an institution dependent on the cooperation and close relationships of men would naturally encourage pederasty; the phalanx formation required men to work as a single, bonded unit, protecting their fellow man and trusting that they, in turn, would be protected. The military, however, was but one aspect of Greek male society associated with pederasty which marked its classist nature and homosociality.

The military in Athens was exclusionary, charging only those citizens of means with the defense of the *polis*, just as pederasty charged only those older men of means with the defense of the *polis* through the fostering of the young men who would someday wield power within that *polis*. Both the military and pederasty concerned the defense of the *polis*, the former overtly and explicitly and the latter through socialization and mentoring. Once again, mirroring the practice in the facet of society, a dichotomy between passivity and activity is present: active defense and indirect, impassive defense. Ancient commentary makes clear the idea that political hegemony should be left only in the capable

hands of those able to serve as hoplites, and both modern and ancient writers agree that the power and nobility associated with hoplites resulted from their status as wealthy citizens. Pederasty was no different.

Chapter 4

WINE, WEALTH, AND WOOING: THE SYMPOSIUM AND PEDERASTY

The symposium represents a critical aspect of pederastic practice because it was the medium through which the pedagogical aspects of pederasty were stressed, and it was this educative function of pederasty which made the institution so noble in the minds of the ancient Greeks. A passage from Plato's *Symposium* highlights the general idea behind the social gathering, "Drink with me, play music with me, love with me, wear a crown with me, be mad with me when I am mad and wise with me when I am wise,"⁹⁷ Francois Lissarrague has noted the repetition of the word "with," *syn-*, in Plato's quote underscoring the *symposium*'s emphasis on social interaction.⁹⁸ The *symposium*, however, was not merely a gathering place for men but also a meeting area of the elite and an important societal aspect of pederasty.

The *symposium* was an important social event for upper-class Greek men; Peter Garnsey has commented, "It belonged to the...political sphere, in the sense that the people who came together in [the symposium] were precisely the citizens of the early

⁹⁷ Plato, 176e and 177d.

⁹⁸ Francois Lissarrague, *The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 8.

polis and the men who formed its political and, in the Homeric period at least, its military leadership.”⁹⁹ The “betrothal symposia” of early Greece attested in various myths are thought to be the predecessors of the well-known later version of the drinking party from the sixth and fifth centuries. During betrothal *symposia*, bachelors would seek permission to marry from the fathers of young women, and the symposia often took place after festivals, sacrifices, or games, “The whole custom is bound up with the love of contest and display that typifies aristocratic society.”¹⁰⁰ *Symposia* were the realm of the aristocracy, and the historical record traces the decline and loss of favor of *symposia* with the decline of the aristocracy. Not only did the symposium and its guests fall from favor, but sympotic imagery also declined toward the end of the fifth century. The symposium was intrinsically elitist, so much so that its existence could not continue in the face of growing democracy; the various elements of the “after dinner party” indicate its class bias.

⁹⁹ Peter Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 130.

¹⁰⁰ Noel Robertson, “The Betrothal Symposium in Early Greece,” in *Dining in a Classical Context*, ed. William J. Slater (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 25. Evidence for ceremonial drinking parties can also be found in Minoan and Mycenaean palaces on frescoes and the presence of thousands of drinking cups; see Walter Burkert, “Oriental Symposia: Contrasts and Parallels,” in *Dining in a Classical Context*, ed. William J. Slater (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 7.

Taking place in the *andron*, or “men’s room,” after the meal proper, or *deipnon*, the purpose of the symposium was ostensibly discussion, entertainment, and drinking. Couches, on which men would recline, and tables for food were brought into the *andron* and the night was filled with recitations of lyric poetry accompanied by lyre playing, drinking, and discussion on a variety of topics. Men would recline on their left elbows on the couches, which were placed against the walls and numbered anywhere from three, which was most common, to upwards of thirteen. The designation of *andron* was highly appropriate, as proper Greek women were forbidden from the drinking party, the exception being those women granted access for entertainment purposes, such as *hetairai* or flute girls. To provide a sense of order, *symposia* were presided over by a *symposiarch*, whom all guests obeyed, and who was responsible for decisions such as the musical themes for the evening and ratio of water to wine as well as how many kraters were to be consumed.¹⁰¹

In relation to the specifics of the symposium, the most fruitful ancient written sources are Plato’s *Symposium*, Xenophon’s *Symposium*, Plutarch’s *Dinner-Table Conversations*, and Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae*. These works, however, do not

¹⁰¹ Plutarch, *Table Talk*, 1.4.620a – 622b; Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 596; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 10.423-426.

necessarily reflect the actualities of the *symposium*, but rather idealized niceties and nostalgic reflections. It was Plato who established the literary genre of the “symposium,” and so these works are utilized cautiously, as they are written at a time when *symposia* had fallen from favor and do not attempt to recreate accurately the experience of a true *symposium*.¹⁰² The visual evidence for *symposia* is quite abundant, with *kalos* inscriptions and images of sympotic revelry remaining popular well into the fifth century. Sympotic drinking vessels, which will be discussed in detail later, further contextualize and illuminate the intricacies of the *symposium* but possess the problems inherent in all Greek vase imagery: an ambiguity between reality and artistic representation. Using ancient writings and vessels, however, scholars can begin to dissect in what ways the *symposia* catered to the upper-class men of Athens.

It is not difficult to understand why the symposium would have been considered elitist. An issue which is readily apparent is the expense of providing anywhere from three to fourteen men with superfluous food and drink, which would necessitate a comfortable amount of disposable income. Furthermore, evidence indicates that rural housing rarely included space for an *andron*, as socializing was much more conducive in urban areas with close

¹⁰² Garnsey, 130.

quarters, rather than rural areas which required travel.¹⁰³ Wealthy individuals tended to reside in the urban epicenter of the *polis*. If, theoretically, a farming home were to possess an *andron*, the idea of a poor farmer providing *kraters* of wine and tables of food, in addition to the food required to sustain both himself and his family, can be seen to be rather improbable. In addition, the way in which farming was conceptualized in Greece meant that the lower classes did not think in terms of maximizing profit with crops but instead, focused on “minimizing the risk of subsistence failure;” crops were diversified to ensure starvation did not linger at the edge of every failed crop.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the very notion of a farmer producing an excess of food for a dinner party would most likely have been completely in contrast to the way in which lower-class farmers conceptualized food cultivation.¹⁰⁵ To a certain extent, the

¹⁰³Lisa C. Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 152. Archaeological evidence for rural housing in ancient Athens is quite scant when compared with the evidence available for urban Athens. The most complete examples of rural houses come from Thorikos, located in southeast Attica. One key difference between rural housing and urban housing seems to be a decrease in importance in the courtyard in rural houses in comparison to urban homes, as well as less conformity to the “social ideals of the *oikos*” in rural homes, which did not possess the inter-connectivity of rooms in urban homes, 83-85.

¹⁰⁴ Garnsey, 25; Thomas Gallant, *Risk and Survival in Ancient Greece: Reconstructing the Rural Domestic Economy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

¹⁰⁵ The Mediterranean diet was composed primarily of cultivated cereals, with vines and olives comprising the remainder of the Greek diet. Garnsey has noted that the only “truly ubiquitous” element of the tri-pronged diet was cereals, as vines and olives were not unilaterally cultivated across Greece. Meat was consumed rarely and, even then, almost always in a religious context. In fact,

hallmark of *symposia* was excess, as well as the balance of excess with reason and restraint; *komos* scenes represent the former.¹⁰⁶ Excess as half of the binary of the symposium is partly what made it prohibitive to the lower class in Greece: the superfluous would not have been known to the poor.

Cereals represented the staple food of the Greek diet, but numerous culinary options outside of cereals were available for *symptotic* hosts.¹⁰⁷ Dinner was concluded with the sweeping away of shells and bones, so it seems likely that, at the very least, nuts and meats were consumed during the dining portion of the evening.¹⁰⁸ Fish was a popular meat which never gained the reverent associations of beef, pork, and mutton, which were usually consumed during religious festivals. Within the spectrum of fish, tuna was considered a delicacy, while salted fish represented the “bottom of the barrel:” in *Wasps*, the phrase “cheaper than salt-fish” is used.¹⁰⁹ Birds were on occasion

only wealthy landowners who could afford to reduce their arable land would have been able to raise livestock. Garnsey, 1-16.

¹⁰⁶ *Komos* scenes refer to images featuring *symposiasts* reveling in the street, either on their way home or possibly on the way to another *symposium*. The images frequently feature costume, musicians, and vomiting.

¹⁰⁷ Within the visual record, *symptotic* vases focus on wine, though several foods were common as pederastic courting gifts and may represent a connection to the *deipnon* of *symposia*: Bread, legs of meat, etc.

¹⁰⁸ James N. Davidson, *Courtesans & Fishcakes: The consuming passions of Classical Athens* (London: HarperCollins, 1997): 45.

¹⁰⁹ Aristophanes, 491; Davidson, 6-10.

consumed in Greece, with Goose and the domestic fowl as favorites, though other species, such as the guinea fowl, were present in Greece by the fifth century.¹¹⁰ In regard to nuts, certain types were prevalent in Greece, the most popular of which were the date, which was not native to Greece, and the fig. Acorns were also popular and had been in use since the Neolithic period in Greece; they were even noted for their value by Hesiod.¹¹¹ Fruit was also available and the Greeks were familiar many varieties: the plum, pomegranate, apple, cherry, peach – known as “Persian fruit” – jujube, consumed by Homer’s lotus-eaters, grapes, and various citrus, most likely brought from Arabia.¹¹² Thus, a variety of foods were available to serve at *symposia* to provide a break from the monotony of cereal grains. These foods, however, would have possessed a much higher value than the grains which primarily composed the Greek diet, especially in the case of non-native foods such as dates.

In addition to both food and wine, several other costs were associated with the *symposium*. One such cost incurred by *symposiasts* was entertainment. *Hetairai* and/or *auletes* could be

¹¹⁰ Don and Patricia Brothwell, *Food in Antiquity: A survey of the diet of early peoples* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 53-55.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 148-149. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 225 ff.

¹¹² Ibid, 130-141.

hired for the evening's entertainment, and while their rates were most likely far from exorbitant – it is difficult to discern a standard price, but one to two drachma seems to represent a middle-ground in terms of price – they still represent one of the handful of unnecessary expenses. A lower-class citizen would have, it seems, spent a day's wages to purchase an average *hetaira*.¹¹³ A second form of entertainment provided at *symposia* was produced by the guests themselves: the recitation of lyrical poetry to the accompaniment of the lyre or some other form of stringed instrument. This facet of the symposium can also be analyzed for evidence of elitism. The musical instruments omnipresent in scenes of *symposia* would necessarily have indicated an upper-class individual, given that the upbringing of wealthy men included a musical education. Within the corpus of *symptotic* and pederastic representations, various musical instruments indicate class division.

The lyre is a ubiquitous element in both pederastic imagery and in *symptotic* imagery, and both literary and visual evidence indicate the instrument had aristocratic associations. The

¹¹³ Eurpides in *Theismophoriazusae* lists a charge of one drachma for a flute-girl. Two drachmai was the maximum price set by Astynomoi for flute girls, also indicated by Theopompus to be a middling price for *meses hetairai*. There is no sufficient evidence for pricing in the Archaic period, and, in general, price was subject to chance based on age and other external factors, making the discernment of a standard price quite difficult. Some price figures are listed as high as 100, 500, and even 1000 drachmai. James N. Davidson, *Courtesans & Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (HarperCollins: London, 1997), 194-198.

popularity of stringed instruments was somewhat particular to ancient Greek culture, with numerous variations of the instrument in existence under the generic classification of “lyre”: Chelys lyre, *phorminx*, *barbitos*, and *kithara*.¹¹⁴ Most pertinent to a discussion of pederasty and symposia are the *barbitos* and Chelys lyre; the former is symbolic of pleasure and leisure and the latter associated with education and amateurism.

The *barbitos* as an instrument is intimately associated with sympotic imagery, both for its prevalence in visual depictions of symposia and its symbolic tie to Dionysian activities.¹¹⁵ It appears in great frequency on red figure vessels during the late sixth century and for the majority of the fifth century, and it is most often played by followers of Dionysus, sympotic guests, or by drunken revelers in *komos* scenes. Sheramy Bundrick has noted that “the *barbitos* was overwhelmingly associated with the *symposium*, *komos*, and retinue of Dionysos” as well as the fact that “The *barbitos* [in images] implies luxury, complacency, and leisure.”¹¹⁶ The *barbitos* can be seen as quite an apropos reflection of the shared aspects of both pederasty and symposia: aristocratic

¹¹⁴ The harp should also be included in this list, but evidence for the instrument, both literary and visual, is too sparse to provide fodder for adequate discussion.

¹¹⁵ The *barbitos* is believed to be an eastern Greek import and is associated with Eastern Greek lyric poets; this connection with eastern Greece also makes the instrument’s association more pertinent to Dionysus.

¹¹⁶ Sheramy D. Bundrick, *Music and Image in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), 22-23.

leisure. It is also interesting to note that the *barbitos* fades from the visual record roughly in conjunction with the disappearance of pederastic imagery and that both pederasty and the instrument lost favor due to their connection to the elite of Athens, who lost influence with the growth of democracy in the fifth century. Indeed, Aristotle comments on this very connection as well as the loss of favor for the *barbitos* in his *Politics*: “[Athenians] rejected many of the instruments used by the ancients, such as *pektides* and *barbitoi*, and those that promote the pleasure of the people who hear their executants.”¹¹⁷ The *kithara* and *lyre*, in contrast to the *barbitos*, continued to be depicted in art at a steady frequency well into the fifth century.¹¹⁸ In addition to the *barbitos*, the Chelys lyre also appears frequently in sympotic imagery.

The Chelys lyre was associated with education – it is this lyre which appears in scenes illustrating youths receiving musical lessons – and, thus, the non-professional musician. Of the Chelys lyre, Bundrick notes “From early on, the Chelys lyre seems to have been associated with an aristocratic education, serving as a [sic] indication of social status in the imagery.”¹¹⁹ Women are never

¹¹⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1341a; here “the ancients” refers to the aristocracy of old in Athens.

¹¹⁸ Martha Maas and McIntosh Snyder, *Stringed Instruments of Ancient Greece* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 127.

¹¹⁹ Bundrick, 14.

shown playing the Chelys lyre,¹²⁰ making the instrument distinctly masculine and reemphasizing the symposium as the particular domain of men, an aspect which makes the institution ripe for pederastic inclusion.¹²¹ The presence of the youthful Chelys lyre, associated with inexperience, in conjunction with the leisured, pleased *barbitos* in sympotic scenes creates an interesting parallel with pederasty: the instruments seemingly act as stand-ins for their human counterparts in pederastic relationships, with the Chelys lyre representative of the *eromenos* and the *barbitos* representative of the *erastes*. Within the visual language of Greek pottery, the mere presence of a Chelys lyre suggested both wealth and education, and the *barbitos*, as previously noted, indicated leisure and aristocracy. Further emphasizing the classism of the symposium, in the context of musicality, is the *aulos*.

Always seen in the hands of those alien to the symposium, those hired to entertain, was the *aulos*. Though often equated with a flute, the *aulos* more closely resembled a modern clarinet or oboe, as it possessed a reed mouthpiece. To play the lyre or *barbitos* was to accompany oneself as lyric poetry was recited; hence, the association of the instruments with education, but the

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ In contrast, women are sometimes shown playing the *barbitos*, and at least one vessel places the instrument in the hands of a bride.

aulos prevented its player from speaking, creating an association of the instrument with the more base members of society.¹²² Those who played the *aulos* would have been unable to sing, a fact also true of other woodwinds in Greece, such as the lute, and the memorization and recitation of lyric poetry were key facets of a musical education. In Greek mythology, Marsayus, a satyr, when challenging Apollo, plays the lute, while the god plays his lyre, one of his attributes. The myth underscores the association of the wind instruments with the base – it is the wild, uncouth satyr who plays the lute, an instrument which some versions of the myth claim Athena invented and promptly tossed away for its uselessness. Additionally, *auletes* often wore *phorbeia*, two leather straps, one of which went over the mouth and tied behind the head, the second strap was tied around the head. *Phorbeia* held the *aulos* steady while being played. The use of these straps introduced an unfortunate linguistic connection that seemed to imply a bestial facet to both musician and instrument: *Phorbeia* literally means “halter,” used elsewhere to refer to the halters of horses.¹²³

As has often been the case in numerous cultures across various time periods, the addition of musical knowledge to a

¹²² Playing the *aulos* also caused strain to the lips and face, eventually resulting in deteriorated muscle movement, providing further negative association with the instrument.

¹²³ Bundrick, 35.

youth's education tends to indicate a privileged upbringing. Indeed, education, in general, was viewed as the territory of the rich, "...the aristocratic class supported the professional teachers of Classical Greece, seeking out their services to educate their children, and so created the impression that education was the domain of the moneyed class."¹²⁴ The relative intimacy and privacy of the symposium as a forum for education was also reminiscent of private tutoring, which was undoubtedly reserved for the elite, "the very rich could afford tutors for their children... aristocrats preferred teaching their children at home."¹²⁵ It then seems a parallel is drawn between the educational model observed in pederasty and the preferred model of the elite – a one-on-one didactic pair.

Also relevant to a discussion of ancient symposia, pederasty, and class are *kalos* inscriptions, which frequently appeared on the drinking vessels which were utilized at the event. *Kalos* inscriptions have a very specific timespan in which they were created and thrived, 550 BC to 480 BC. The precise dating attributed to *kalos* vessels is invaluable to scholars as it allows for the confirmation of certain individuals in Athenian society at a

¹²⁴ Yun Lee Too, *The Pedagogical Contract: The economies of teaching and learning in the ancient world* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 63.

¹²⁵ William Armstrong Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 118. Aristocrats and "the very rich" are meant to be synonymous terms.

particular date, and dating the lives of specific persons has allowed scholars to begin the process of tracking family lines. In addition to their specific date, *kalos* inscriptions also have a specific geographic region; the vast majority of *kalos* inscriptions are Attic, and they were placed on vessels or written as graffiti in community locations, such as wells and the columns of public structures. The inscriptions, whether written on a vase or on a tree, praised individuals for being *kalos* – beautiful.¹²⁶ This praise is not necessarily referencing aesthetics but can refer to the concept of beauty, which might extend to beauty of spirit, mind, or body.¹²⁷

The way in which *kalos* inscriptions functioned is highly varied, and many scholars have looked to the production of the vessels to discern use. It has long been debated whether *kalos* inscriptions were the affectionate declarations of vase painters or their customers. Certain vase painters certainly seemed to have favored select individuals; the *Leagros* painter is so named for his penchant for praising the youth *Leagros* on vessels. H.A. Shapiro recently theorized that vase painters engaged in pederasty vicariously by praising young men through their vessels, as poor

¹²⁶ “*Kale*” the feminine form of the word, appears much less frequently, primarily the result of male dominance in all facets of Greek society.

¹²⁷ For additional information on *kalos* inscriptions: David M. Robinson, *A Discussion of Greek LoveNames, Including a Discussion of Pederasty and Prosopographia* (New York: Arno Press, 1979); John D. Beazley, “Some Inscriptions on Vases III,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 39 (1935): 475-488; Hans Licht, *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

artists were unable to achieve the wealth and status needed to participate in a pederastic relationship.¹²⁸ Vase painters would have been unable to mentor a young boy of their own, but through a *kalos* inscription, they might have been able to communicate their affection. Additionally, when a man of means purchased the vessel as a pederastic courting gift, the painter could experience courtship vicariously, allowing the text on the vessel to both communicate an idea and fulfill a desire society denied. Difficulty arises, however, when one considers the fact that painter and potter were often separate occupations. Thus, it is difficult to assess whether the praise comes from the potter of the vessel or the painter. It has been noted that potters enjoyed a higher social status than painters, though both livelihoods were considered to be fairly low in the social hierarchy; it is unclear whether either a potter or painter would have had the opportunity to associate with pederasts in any meaningful manner.¹²⁹ However, there do exist rare examples of potters explicitly indicating their intentions, “I throw this for you, handsome Euthymides,”¹³⁰ but such examples are extremely infrequent. Class represented a clearly prohibitory

¹²⁸ Alan Shapiro, “Leagros and Euphronios: painting pederasty in Athens,” in *Greek Love Reconsidered*, Thomas K. Hubbard, ed. (New York: Wallace Hamilton Press, 2000): 12-32.

¹²⁹ Niall Slater, “The Vase as Ventriloquist: *Kalos*-inscriptions and the culture of fame,” in *Signs of Orality* ed. E. Anne Mackay (Boston: Brill, 1999): 143 – 161.

¹³⁰ ΣΟΙ ΤΕΝΔΙ ΕΥΘΥΜΙΔΕΙ ΚΑΛΟΙ (Munich 2421: ARV2 23.7, 1620).

aspect for those of the lower classes, though it is interesting to consider that this denial of activity in the practice did not intrinsically exclude less direct forms of engagement with the institution of pederasty. It also appears to indicate that the inability to engage in pederasty does not automatically indicate a lack of desire to participate. Outside of production, *kalos* inscriptions may have possessed a function which seems to reflect particularly the elitism and hegemony associated with pederasty.

Fame is a concept intimately linked with *kalos* inscriptions. As Niall Slater has noted, “In a society where writing is a relatively new phenomenon within a still predominantly oral culture...*kalos*-inscriptions...invited the audience’s participation in a larger economy of the creation and circulation of fame.”¹³¹ While the instances of “*kalos*” appearing as graffiti could perhaps be disregarded as extemporaneous expressions of admiration, the appearance of the word on vases negates the spontaneity of its use on public structures; this premeditation would then seem to indicate a planned function for the writing. It has been more recently argued that *kalos* inscriptions were used to secure the hegemony of prominent families in Athens by propelling certain members of those families into the public consciousness and

¹³¹ Slater, 143.

affording them a certain amount of fame.¹³² There are instances of men popularly praised as *kalos* who then have sons so-praised. *Kalos* inscriptions which followed familial lines would have allowed families of prominence to remain prominent in the minds of the public, especially those key members of the public drinking and reclining at symposia. Since *kalos* inscriptions referenced general knowledge, the youths they praised would be universally acknowledged as beautiful even if that were not necessarily true prior to the inscription: The text, to a certain extent, could create the praise it presumably only originally augmented. Pederasty, as has been continuously noted, was practiced by the elite, and within the sympotic expression of the practice can be found a desire to sustain the hegemony and atmosphere of class bias within the practice. The idea that a sympotic drinking vessel could not only reflect the fame of an individual but also create and maintain that fame is quite extraordinary. *Kalos* inscriptions, however, are still but one aspect of several which contribute to the elitism of the symposium and pederasty.

As a final note regarding why the symposium was surely an elitist affair, *symposiasts* were usually waited upon by slaves, and the ability to afford slaves was reserved for those with the necessary income to both purchase and maintain the slaves.

¹³² David M. Robinson, *A Discussion of Greek Love Names, Including a Discussion of Pederasty and Prosopographia*, (New York: Arno Press, 1979).

Michael Vickers has noted of the symposium, “It was clearly a luxury to recline on a couch and be waited on, and those who belonged to the underprivileged classes...did not indulge in the habit,” and “it was clearly an institution enjoyed by men of means.”¹³³ *Kylikes* which illustrate *symposia* often include youths, usually nude, waiting upon reclining men. Thus, the very concept of a leisurely evening spent drinking, conversing, and being waited on, would seem exclusionary to individuals from the lower classes. Unquestionably an activity enjoyed by the upper classes, more discussion must now be devoted to explaining the interaction between pederastic practice and the symposium.

The young men who served wine were frequently the objects of lustful thoughts,

“Hermesileus, his own friend and consular representative of Athens, was hosting [Sophocles], when there beside the fire, ready to pour out his wine, was a boy...of course, and he said, ‘Do you want me to like my wine?’ and the boy said yes. ‘Then hand me the cup slowly, and take it from me slowly.’ The boy was now blushing more and more, and Sophocles said to his neighbor, ‘Phrynicus put it so beautifully!’ ‘Shines on his crimson cheek the light of love’.”¹³⁴

Young boys serving wine often acted in the role of a pederastic muse. Similar to *kalos* inscriptions, which could act as a vessel for

¹³³ Michael Vickers, *Greek Symposia*, (London: Joint Association of Classical Teachers, 1978): 5 and 7.

¹³⁴ Athenaeus, 604, Hubbard, trans.

inciting reflections on the beauty of youths,¹³⁵ serving boys provided a tangible inspiration for cogitations on beauty and youth. A clear delineation existed, however, between the serving boys who inspired admiration and the upper-class youths who would actually act as the recipient of that admiration – a serving boy was a muse and no more. Thus, pederastic courtship was a natural outcome of a social practice which had as one of its facets a focus on the beauty of young men.

Within the corpus of visual evidence, *kylikes* often juxtapose scenes of symposia with thematic images associated with pederastic courtship. A red figure *kylix* from the early fifth century, for example, features a typical symposium scene on the exterior of the cup – men and youths reclining on their elbows and drinking, an *aulos* player – and the tondo image features a youth, back exposed, grasping a hare in one hand and a walking stick in the other. The image of a youth with a hare is typical of pederastic courtship iconography as the animal was a popular gift. Thus, the drinking vessel, which itself might have been used in the context of a symposium, creates a visual link between the sympotic event and pederastic practice. Once the drinker had finished his wine, the image of the aristocratic courting youth would appear, reminding

¹³⁵ Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne, eds. *Performance culture and Athenian democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

the drinker of another activity in which he might engage during the evening: wooing a potential *eromenos*.

Yet another red figure *kylix*, from the sixth century, features men at a symposium on either side, a case for an *aulos* in back of the man on side A, and on the tondo image two youths engage in an loving embrace, typical of the tendency toward more explicit displays of affection seen in later pederastic vessels. Surrounding the youths are a dog, a hare in a cage, and an athletic kit (sponge, aryballos, and strigil). This cup, then, links not only the symposium and pederasty, but another institution associated with pederasty: the gymnasium. It would seem that the pederastic activity which occurred at the symposium, both the erotic and the pedagogical, is highlighted. The owner of a drinking vessel, upon finishing his wine, would be provided with an image which would remind him of the possible result of successful wooing over wine or merely that he might begin his courtship amidst the discussion and witty banter.

It is interesting to note that the artistic representations of the symposia which reference pederasty often highlight the courtship which occurred. This fact can be seen in a black figure *kylix* from the sixth century which shows a man and a youth reclining on a couch, behind them an *aulos* player and before them a man who appears to be dancing. The tondo image presents an

eagle hunting a hare, seemingly moments from success. Here a parallel is drawn between the *erastes* as hunter and the *eromenos* as prey, a concept reinforced by the connection between hunting and pederasty and the abundance of courting gifts which alluded to the nature of the *eromenos* as an object of pursuit – the fox, the hare, etc.¹³⁶ Yet another tondo image presents the viewer with a bearded man reclining on a couch at a symposium. His head is tilted back and his mouth is open in song – a string of words drift from his mouth which read “oh most beautiful of boys” – while his proper right hand strokes a hare. Here, the hare is used as a synecdoche for an *eromenos*, its mere presence alluding to pederastic courtship.¹³⁷ The image embodies the practice of pederasty quite well: The older man is singing, educating, and the youth, the hare, is acting as the passive recipient to both the words and the *erastes*’ caress. Vase painting commonly depicted youths stroking hares, received as gifts, so the presentation of an older man lovingly stroking the animal clearly references a pederastic couple. Visually, the arm of the bearded man, positioned vertically in a nearly straight line, forms a conduit from the sung words drifting into the black ether and the hare, underscoring the role of *erastes* as the means through which boys learn.

¹³⁶ See chapter 6 for a discussion of hunting and its connection to pederasty.

¹³⁷ Andrew Lear and Eva Cantarella, *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty: Boys were their gods* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 34.

It is interesting to note that many *kylikes* reserve the tondo image for the crescendo of the pederastic relationship: the embrace, the hunter ensnaring his prey. This mirrors the actuality of pederastic practice in that the public face of the institution was courtship and education, seen in the courting gifts, music, and discussion of sympotic imagery, and yet beneath the surface lay the consummation of the relationship, the more private and physical aspect of the practice. Just as the symposium was a careful balance between reason and passion, so, too, was pederasty. It is possible that sympotic vessels, which were often rife with jest, poked fun at the pretense of reason in pederasty and the underlying subtext of passion which was certainly present in the practice, though not stressed in the rhetoric. The clever concealment of allusions to consummation “under the wine” makes fun of the reasonable face of pederasty and the passion of intercrural copulation; the fact that the imbibing of wine is the means by which one might lose one’s reason again plays into the connection between the visual organization of sympotic vessels and the practice of pederasty: boys were as intoxicating as wine. Additionally, the subtlety of the allusion would have appealed to the minds of the educated elite.

Within the gamut of pederastic activities, the symposium most readily illustrates the elitist associations of the practice. A

drinking party which required food to be provided for numerous visitors, money for entertainment, kraters of wine, slaves to serve that wine, and a room specifically set aside for leisure was innately prohibitive to the lower class. Within the masculine realm of the *symposium*, pederastic courtship took place in an environment which seemed perfectly tailored to allow for relationships to be broached. Considering a sizeable portion of pederastic imagery appears on sympotic vessels, it seems logical that the vessels were marketed to pederasts and that pederasts held *symposia*. Chronologically, as the elite fell from favor, so, too, did pederasty and *symposia*. It can be seen that pederasty, the domain of the wealthy, flourished only within the facets of society associated with the elite, and that this association, in turn, implicated pederasty as an elitist institution, reflected both socially and within visual and literary evidence. Several other aspects of Greek society, however, had both elitist and pederastic connections.

Chapter 5

EXERCISE OF THE ELITE: PEDERASTY WITHIN ATHLETICS AND THE GYMNASIUM

“Happy is he who loves as he exercises himself and upon going home sleeps all day long with a fair boy.”¹³⁸ Both literary and visual evidence make clear that one of the aspects of society most closely associated with pederasty, perhaps the most closely associated, was the gymnasium. Black figure and red figure vases often portray pederastic courtship as occurring in a gymnasium, usually indicated by the careful inclusion of a gym kit hung on a wall in the background.¹³⁹ Additionally, the strigil appears frequently on vases depicting the presentation of a pederastic courting gift as a popular present. Literary references to the role of the gymnasium in courtship are numerous. Plutarch notes, “And when the boys reached this age [twelve], lovers from among the distinguished young men began to associate with them, making more frequent visits to their place of exercise.”¹⁴⁰ In a Greek romance by Achilles Tatius, a man says of a youth, “In the gymnasia we couldn’t help but notice how he oiled his body...and

¹³⁸ Theognis, 1335-36.

¹³⁹ A gym kit usually included a sponge, aryballos, and strigil. A strigil was a curved tool used to scrape excess oil from the body after exercise, and an aryballos was a small, rounded vessel which would have held oil.

¹⁴⁰ *Lycurgus*, 18.4.

how in wrestling with the boys he always clung more tightly to the ones who were more manly.”¹⁴¹ In Plato’s *Symposium*, Alcibiades discusses his failed attempts to seduce Socrates, “I invited him to the gymnasium with me, and exercised with him there, thinking I might make some progress that way.”¹⁴² The evidence clearly indicates both that the gymnasium was, as some scholars have titled it, a hotbed of homosexuality, and that the gymnasium was, for a significant period of time in Greek history, associated with the upper class. Various aspects of the gymnasium and the conceptualization of athletes and athletics underscore the elitism of pederasty.

D.G. Kyle defines the later gymnasium as “a public facility for physical education, controlled by municipal officials and open to all citizens.”¹⁴³ The earliest gymnasia sites lacked architecture and were simply designated open air spaces for athletic practice. Later gymnasia became architectural, transitioning into closed air structures and, by the Roman Empire, could be quite grandiose.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 8.9.

¹⁴² Plato, *Symposium*, 217.

¹⁴³ D.G. Kyle, *Athletics in Ancient Athens* (Leiden: 1987) quoted in Mark Golden, *Sport and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 64.

¹⁴⁴ Early funeral games, such as those seen in the writings of Homer, may have served as the origin of organized athletics in Greece, given that the aristocratic nature and informality of the funeral games most likely had an early Athenian parallel; D.G. Kyle, “Solon and Athletics,” *Ancient World* 9 (1984): 93.

Gymnasia, excluding the earliest open air versions, consisted of a running track and grounds for wrestling, known as *palaestra*.

Ancient writers frequently use the terms *palaestra* and *gymnasia* interchangeably, however, and this can, at times, complicate discussions of class in Greek athletics.

The literary corpus regarding Greek athletics provides several examples in which an author alludes to a possible class restriction within gymnasia. In Xenophon's *Athenaion Politeia*, the Old Oligarch complains that the poor have begun to use athletic facilities, which had previously been an option for only the wealthy.¹⁴⁵ Though his criticisms are partly hyperbole, they do indicate that the poor using the facilities was a new phenomenon and that, traditionally, athletic facilities had been reserved for the wealthy. Additionally, though the precise date of the text is disputed, it seems to be a Classical one, indicating a class preference in athletic facilities may have existed during the archaic period. The viewpoint held by elite citizens, to whom ancient writers would have appealed, was that "proper contestants are those of good families and financial resources."¹⁴⁶ When athletic contests were democratized in the fifth century, it became a point

¹⁴⁵ Ps.Xen.Ath.Pol. 2.10. Xenophon, it should be noted, wrote during the early fourth century.

¹⁴⁶ Waldo E. Sweet, *Sport and Recreation in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 121.

of contention between the upper and lower classes; in Isokrates' speech, Alcibiades speaks of his father, who "considered athletic contests to be beneath him, for he knew that some of the competitors were members of the lower classes, came from small cities, and were not well educated."¹⁴⁷ Xenophanes, who wrote approximately during the latter half of the sixth century, in Athenaeus' *Doctors at Dinner*, notes the importance and prestige of athletes, but also claims that success in athletics does not aid the state or benefit the city;¹⁴⁸ wisdom, which presumably required an education, was a far greater quality than mere strength. Thus, though athletics could potentially allow lower-class individuals to achieve fame and wealth,¹⁴⁹ the idea of the elite as inherently possessing the qualities necessary for political hegemony remained firmly ingrained in the upper-class psyche.¹⁵⁰ The character of

¹⁴⁷ Isokrates, *Team of Horses*, 32-34.

¹⁴⁸ Athenaeus, who wrote during a much later period – the second and third centuries AD – quotes Xenophanes.

¹⁴⁹ Evidence indicates that the sums awarded as prizes for athletic contests could be quite large indeed. The victor of the men's stade in the Panathenaic Games (in the late fifth century) received 100 amphorae of olive oil. David C. Young has calculated that the lowest value for an amphora of oil would have been twelve drachma, giving the prize of 100 amphorae a monetary value of 1,200 drachma. Sweet estimates the average daily wage at the time to be 1.417 drachma a day, and so the prize was by no means a small sum. Sweet, 119.

¹⁵⁰ "For these athletic abilities are honored without thought, and it is not right to put physical might ahead of noble wisdom. For if an athlete were one of the citizens, a man good at boxing or good in the pentathlon or in wrestling or in swiftness of foot, which is the most honored of all events in which men compete in the games, his city would not be better governed because of his ability, and little happiness would the city gain if one of her athletes should win beside the

Athenaeus expresses a similar sentiment when he asks, “For what does it benefit the state if a man wins a crown by wrestling well...will they fight better in battle with a diskos in both hands or will they drive out their country’s enemies by striking them with their bare hands instead of using their shields?”¹⁵¹ Again, the usefulness of athleticism to the polis is questioned. Athletics play no role in the realm of politics, the realm of the elite. In addition to literary sources, the practical nature of athletics in conjunction with pederasty was often inherently elitist.

Potential *erasteis*, in order to court their future *eromenoi*, needed to possess a significant amount of leisure time in order to prowl the gymnasia and enjoy the anatomical display. Only aristocratic personages in Athens would have had such superfluous time. D.G. Kyle writes that “At Athens, athletics demonstrably were related to wealth and social prominence.”¹⁵² It has also been noted that those who sponsored athletes were often older men in pederastic relationships with their young athletes.¹⁵³ To sponsor an athlete was to possess superfluous income that could be spent on the non-essential, and this would logically indicate an individual in

banks of the Pisa River, for such achievements do not increase the resources of the state.” Athenaeus, *Doctors at Dinner*, 10.414.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 10.413.

¹⁵² Kyle, 158.

¹⁵³ Thomas Hubbard, “Sex in the gym: Athletic trainers and pedagogical pederasts,” *Intertexts* 7 (2003): 1-23.

the upper tiers of society.¹⁵⁴ In naming a young athlete who has been victorious in boxing, Pindar composed the following: “Victorious as a boxer in the Olympics, let Hagesidamus give thanks to Ilas, just as Patroclus did to Achilles. A man aided by the arts of a god would whet one who is born to excellence and spur him toward awesome fame.”¹⁵⁵ Key to note, aside from the prominence the trainer/sponsor Ilas is afforded in the passage, is the comparison of the relationship between Ilas and Hagesidamus to Achilles and Patroclus. While originally the myth of the epic hero Achilles and his companion Patroclus contained no homosexual aspect, or at least none that Homer saw fit to indicate in his works, with the rise of homosexuality in the seventh century, many legends, including that of Achilles and Patroclus, were retrofitted to include homosexual elements. The connection between athlete and sponsor or trainer seems to have been, if not overtly sexual, at the very least generally perceived to be erotic.¹⁵⁶ Visual evidence also supports this theory, as many vases conflate athletic admirers with trainers.¹⁵⁷ On a red figure plate signed by Epictetus,

¹⁵⁴ Sponsoring an athlete involved paying for travel, food, and training expenses, and generally overseeing the career of the athlete. The monetary support of a sponsor would have been less critical for wealthy youths.

¹⁵⁵ *Olympian*, 10.

¹⁵⁶ Hubbard, “Sex in the gym,” 1-16.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 10-13.

an athletic trainer, identified by the forked staff he carries, reaches out to tie a fillet around a young victor. While the tying of a fillet symbolized athletic triumph, ribbons were also pederastic courtship gifts.¹⁵⁸ Both trainer and athletic victor are presented as close in age, a iconographic feature of pederastic couples in red figure imagery, and the placement of the trainer's hands, reaching down with his proper right to tie the fillet near the victor's thigh and up with the other hand holding the staff, echoes the "Up Down Gesture" Beazley identified as one of his three types of pederastic courtship imagery. Furthermore, red-figure vase-painting also indicates a consistent visual rendering of *erasteis* who appear in a gymnastic setting as leisured; this leisured status is indicated by the presence of a walking stick and the frequent "leaning posture" of the *erastes* on that stick.¹⁵⁹ Though it is fairly safe to imagine the sponsor and lover of an athlete as a privileged member of society, it is somewhat difficult to determine whether athletes were from the upper classes of Greek society.

Money played a significant role in athletic contests, and this fact would seem to necessitate that, at least prior to the democratization of athletics, athletes would have come from

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 10.

¹⁵⁹ Andrew Lear and Eva Cantarella, *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasts: Boys were their gods* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 39.

families with expendable income. The ability to afford travel was usually a necessity for athletes, who needed to participate in various games across Greece; Mark Golden notes, “We may also wonder how poorer athletes could afford the time and expense of training and travel.”¹⁶⁰ Moreover, evidence in the fourth century B.C. concerning the addition of publicly elected gymnasiarchs and *paidotribai* to the gymnasium may also indicate a desire to democratize the gymnastic environment, which seems in turn to allude to a previously elitist bias.¹⁶¹ At the very least, it seems logical that those athletes with monetary access to private trainers and the funds necessary for specific diets would be more successful in athletic contests; this fact hinders scholars’ ability to assess accurately the role of the poorer classes in contests of which only victors were recorded, because the poorer participants would not have been named unless they had been victorious. When athletic victors are listed as coming from the lower classes, the victory is presented as anomalous by ancient writers, though whether this anomaly is motivated by the class bias of the writer or an actual statistical truth regarding victors is unclear.¹⁶² A passage

¹⁶⁰ Golden, *Sport and Society*, 143.

¹⁶¹ Hubbard, “Sex in the Gym,” 5. *Paidotribai* were similar to modern-day coaches or trainers and oversaw the physical education of athletes. Gymnasiarchs were officials who oversaw athletic schools and/or events.

¹⁶² Golden, *Sport and Society*, 143.

from Euripides, which starts out quite hyperbolically, “For of all the many thousands of evils which now beset Greece, nothing is worse than the breed of athlete,” continues on to note, “. . .not being accustomed to prosperity they cannot help sliding into helplessness.”¹⁶³ This statement would seem to imply athletes competing from the lower classes, since prosperity is indicated to be foreign to them. Following the democratization of athletics, a subtle shift can be noted in the ancient sources directed at the elite in which is demonstrated a desire to stipulate that prowess in the field of athletics does not supersede wisdom as the most laudable characteristic of a man. Wisdom was a trait achieved through vigorous education, which was associated with the upper classes. Ancient authors often highlight the fact that athletes were not benefiting their city, only themselves, and that service to the state in the form of sense and logic were still to be valued over athleticism.¹⁶⁴ This desire to remind readers that men involved in facets of society such as politics were still illustrious became necessary during the fifth and fourth centuries when athletes could achieve considerable fame and wealth as a result of their career.

As has been previously noted, the prizes which were awarded for victory at the Olympic and Panathenaic games became

¹⁶³ Athenaeus, *Doctors at Dinner*, 10.413.

¹⁶⁴ Particularly Plato, Aristotle, and Euripides.

quite high after the fifth century, potentially enabling a man to bring home 1,200 drachma for victory in a single competition.¹⁶⁵ Given scholars' estimation of a daily wage of 1.417 drachma, the prize of 1,200 drachma potentially represented more than two years' (28 months) worth of wages.¹⁶⁶ It certainly becomes clear that those members of the upper classes would be dismayed at the new found opportunity for lower-class individuals to amass such large sums of money so quickly. Pausanias, somewhat sensationally, indicates that the famed athlete Theagenes amassed 1,400 victories in his lifetime. Steven Miller has noted that a victory at the Panathenaic games in the pyx and *pankration* was "worth at least \$25,000," this would mean "Theagenes won something in the neighborhood of \$44,400,000 during his career."¹⁶⁷ If the monetary sums indicated by Miller reflect the truth even partially, athletics represented a very real source of class antagonism, making clear the source of motivation for the upper classes to keep athletics private and to stress the necessity of athletics as the realm of the elite. Plutarch acknowledged in his *Solon* that winning an Olympic victory would qualify a man as a

¹⁶⁵ Sweet, 119.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. David C. Young calculated the lowest value of an amphora of oil to be 12 drachma, and 100 amphorae were awarded to the victor of the men's stade. The sum of 1200 drachma, when divided by the wage of 1.417 results in approximately 847 days' wages, which amounts to 28 months of pay, using a modern calendar and generally calculating for an average of 30-day months.

¹⁶⁷ Miller, 213.

pentakosiomedimnos, and Kyle notes “financial awards did affect the social mobility of later athletes,” though he stipulated that “early Athenian athletes did not need...financial support.”¹⁶⁸ Pindar’s Victory Odes, written in the fourth century, present images of noble and laudable athletes which often stress the necessity of wealth for athletic success. These odes were often commissioned by wealthy individuals, however, and so would necessarily extoll the athlete for whom the patron had specifically paid money to commission an ode and underscore class bias. Simonides and Bacchylides also stress the importance of wealth as a necessity for successful athletes, and even Aristophanes, not likely to be overly concerned with pandering to the wealthy, notes in *Plutus*, “For wealth is always highly sympathetic with literary games and games athletic.”¹⁶⁹

In relation to pederasty, Pindar’s odes praise an athlete’s beauty nearly as often as his skill. Athletes possessed ideal and beautiful forms which were to be admired, and so the idea of desire (*eros*), a quality an *erastes* was meant to feel for his *eromenos*, was inherent in the conception of an athlete. Literary references make clear the fact that the gymnasium was an arena of society

¹⁶⁸ Plutarch, *Solon*, 23.3; Kyle, “Solon and Athletics,” 97-96.

¹⁶⁹ 1161 – 1163; Nancy Serwint, “Greek athletic sculpture from the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.: An iconographic study” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1987), 9.

associated with pederasty. In Plato's *Lysias*, Socrates comes across a group of boys standing outside a *palaestra* and asks them what they do there; one boy replies, "We pass our time here – we and many other beautiful boys." When Socrates inquires who one of the young men's favorite "pretty boys" is, the boy blushes and Socrates comments, "I see for myself that not only are you in love, but that the passion is already far advanced. I may be a dummy and useless in other things, but god has given me the ability to recognize a lover and a beloved."¹⁷⁰ Lover and beloved refer, of course, to an *erastes* and *eromenos*. In Aischines' *Against Timarkhos*, laws are presented which were designed to protect *paides* in the gymnasium from inappropriate male attention, since the gymnasium naturally attracted men who wished to admire and court young boys. Aischines notes that laws dictate the *palaestra* not open before the sun rises and that it close before the sun sets, that a *choregos* must be at least forty years of age, which is the "most self-controlled" time, and the number of *paides* who should be in a group.¹⁷¹ These regulations, when considered in conjunction with laws in Beroea which required boys to sit with their legs crossed in front of them so as not to inflame the passions of any men watching them exercise, indicate the gymnasium to be

¹⁷⁰ Plato, *Lysis*, 203a-211a; in Miller, *Arete*, 129.

¹⁷¹ *Against Timarkhos*, 9-12; in Miller, *Arete*, 135

very intimately associated with passion and pederasty, at times to the detriment of the practice.¹⁷² Given the connection between pederasty and the gymnasium, it seems logical that the athletic facility would serve as a motif in artistic depictions of courtship.

Courtship scenes, as was noted earlier, are often set inside gymnasia and can feature multiple men seeking the favor of a youth through the presentation of gifts. These explicit scenes, predominantly red figure vessels, feature youths indicated to be exercising, as they are depicted nude and usually wear headbands, which were used by athletes during exercise. The iconography of these scenes mimics the iconography of *kalos* inscriptions, which very often featured youths cleaning themselves after exercise or currently engaging in exercise. Since images with *kalos* inscriptions were similar to a certain extent to the contemporary “pin-up,” it seems the erotic charge of the gymnasia created an extremely convenient connection with pederasty’s expectation that an *erastes* feel passionate desire for his *eromenos*.¹⁷³ Additionally, in regard to pederasty references in scenes of athletes being

¹⁷² Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 949-1113. The laws in Beroea, a city in northern Greece, also regulated who could enter gymnasia, and made certain that any men looking to court young boys were not allowed inside. These laws come from the fifth century, when concern existed in regard to protecting boys from overzealous men; similar exclusionary laws existed to prevent men from courting boys in schools houses as well.

¹⁷³ Hans Licht, *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 371-380.

admired, Thomas Hubbard has noted athletic admirers were often visually conflated with *erasteis*, sometime carry walking sticks to allude to a leisured or upper-class status.¹⁷⁴ On an amphora from the Andocides Painter (525-500BC), an early example of red figure, is a scene featuring a highly effeminate trainer delicately sniffing a flower while he watches two pairs of athletes wrestle. The feminization of the trainer is evidenced by his loose, flowing hair, white skin, ornate clothing, and adornment with flowers. The scene makes an allusion to pederasty and, more specifically, to the commonality of *erasteis* prowling for young men while exercising at gymnasia, as well as the frequency of trainers acting as *erasteis*. On the far right of the scene, opposite the trainer, two men wrestle; the younger, un-bearded of the pair has lifted the older, bearded man and prepares to throw him. Thomas Hubbard has noted that this is most likely a humorous commentary on the ability of young men to “throw” older men in the context of pederasty, wherein strength of young men is not physical, but aesthetic. It is an interesting comment on pederastic relationships in that the usually superior quality of age is superseded by youth and beauty.¹⁷⁵ The juxtaposition of the objects held by the effeminate trainer, a rod in

¹⁷⁴ Thomas Hubbard, “Sex in the Gym: Athletic Trainers and Pedagogical Pederasty,” *Intertexts* 7, 1 (2003), 10.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

one hand and a flower in the other, contrast beauty and the physicality of the senses with experience and training, since the rod would have been used to correct body position. Furthermore, class is clearly referenced in the ornate garb and hairstyle of the trainer. The richly decorated fabrics he wears, cascading in an excess of folds are established visual indicators of wealth on Attic vessels.

On an amphora by the Dikaios Painter, pederastic courtship and exercise in the gym are presented simultaneously. Three pairs of youths appear in the scene: on the left an older and considerably taller youth crowns a boy holding a discus and weights with a wreath; at the far right, an older youth watches a boy stretch; in the center, a pair embraces, drawing close for a kiss. Of the vessel, Andrew Lear has noted, “Indeed, this scene does not only represent courtship in the gymnasium: It blends courtship and athletics into one activity.”¹⁷⁶ This conflation of athletics and courtship was quite common on pederastic vessels featuring gymnastic activity, underscoring the intensity of connection between the two institutions; athletics and pederasty were so interconnected as to merge into a singular activity.

The gymnasium provided perhaps the most visceral arena for pederastic expression in Greece. It seems only logical that

¹⁷⁶ Cantarella and Lear, 95.

pederasty would insinuate itself into an institution wherein youths were primed to become spectacle and older men were free to admire the physical and aesthetic displays. Athletics were also well-suited to pederasty given their early connection with the upper class. Prior to the introduction of democracy, athletes were men from families with good standing, men who could devote their time to training and traveling and who could hire trainers and spend money on the food required for an athlete's diet. Notable in many of the social institutions linked to pederasty, the elitist associations of athletics faded with the introduction of democracy into Greece, just as pederasty faded. Athletics, in the minds of the ancient Greeks, were profound, an activity that brought men closer to the gods. Both pederasty and athletics sought excellence. The training of athletes would transform them into more perfect men, just as pederasty would transform boys into more perfect citizens. That athletics brought men closer to the gods and that pederasty was viewed as a noble pursuit is no coincidence. Both sport and pederasty were areas of Greek society that rose above the banalities of daily life. The associations of both institutions with education is indicative of the elitism associated with both, as the focus is on education and nobility, both aspects of a person traditionally associated with the upper classes. Reading pederasty through athletics contextualizes pederastic practice as one of the

facets of society through which men pursued excellence, making it a complex social interaction which reflected both the qualities esteemed by the elite and ancient Greece.

Chapter 6

PRIVILEGED PURSUIT AND PREY: PEDERASTY IN THE LEISURE SPORT OF HUNTING

The hunting of land animals was the special pursuit of the elite, and the connection between the aristocratic hunt and pederasty is perhaps the most explicit of all the various facets of Greek male society previously discussed. Symbolically, the wooing of young men was likened to the skilled hunter conquering the swift deer or agile hare. The connection between *eromenoi* and animals is often underscored in ancient art through the courting gifts presented to youths, which were predominantly and popularly animal gifts, such as the aforementioned deer and hare, foxes, fighting cocks, dogs, wild cats, and horses. Though hunting was by no means the exclusive domain of the elite, the lesser forms of hunting, fowling and fishing and the night hunt, were the dishonorable pursuits of the lazy and the poor. The leisure hunt was the practice of the aristocracy and was explicitly related to pederasty, again coloring the practice as a facet of Greek society distinctly aristocratic.

In assessing the modalities and specifics of hunting, it must first be noted that the overwhelming majority of texts which concern hunting are from the fourth century BC, and the majority of visual evidence for hunting is comprised of vases from the sixth

century and later, though some examples do exist as early as the Geometric Period.¹⁷⁷ This discrepancy in chronology is reflective of the overall problematic nature of evidence in relation to pederasty previously noted; it is perhaps most prudent, then, to keep in mind that a discussion of hunting as an elitist practice in association with pederasty is most safely applied to the fourth century BC and later, though this chronological limitation does not render the discussion moot. If hunting in Athens was viewed as elitist after the period which resulted in a considerable increase in democracy, it seems logical that this view would not have been wildly different prior to that extension of democracy. Additionally, the literary evidence is used in conjunction with the earlier visual evidence to indicate elitism in the sport of hunting, which provides a certain cushioning within the limited timeline.

Hunting in the Greek city-states was an activity of the upper classes which was practiced as sport. The connection between hunting and education was well-known, extolled by both Plato and Xenophon, “I charge young men not to neglect hunting, or any other branch of education.”¹⁷⁸ A connection to education and the elite placed hunting comfortably on the list of activities

¹⁷⁷ 800-700B.C.

¹⁷⁸ Xenophon, *Hunting*, 1.18. Plato notes a need for young men to learn hunting as part of their education in numerous passages within *The Laws*.

associated with pederasty, in addition to the symposium and gymnasium. Another aspect of the sport which made it pertinent to pederasty was the idea which existed in ancient Greece that “one should take up hunting just as one is changing one’s time of life from boyhood.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, just as pederasty represented a shift from youth, embodied in *eromenoi*, to adulthood, embodied in *erasteis*, so, too, did hunting as an activity represent the transitional period of youth to manhood.

Hunting as an activity possessed the same class stratification seen in Greek society. The elitist leisure sport was not to be confused with the lowly “hunting by night,”¹⁸⁰ which involved the “snaring of small game for the market.”¹⁸¹ A clear distinction was made between those who sought animals out of necessity or boredom and those who brought down animals to enhance skills. A man hunting at night, usually alone, used snares and traps to catch his prey, a passive hunting style that involved little more than waiting for prey to catch itself, essentially. Fowling was viewed negatively for similar reasons – a bow or sling would not catch a bird, so nets were used, decreasing the degree of skill required to a significant degree. Fishing fell into a

¹⁷⁹ Xenophon, *Hunting*, 2.1.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 12.1-8.

¹⁸¹ J.K. Anderson, *Hunting in the Ancient World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 18.

similarly passive categorization in regard to the types of hunting. Of night hunts, Plato notes, “This is the sport of idle men, and deserves no praise.”¹⁸² In contrast, to hunt by land during the day was to set out on foot or horseback and track prey, often large animals like stag or boar, across the countryside. Given the dangerous nature of the day-hunt, it was often undertaken in groups. Spears were primarily used, and the contrast between the honorable leisure hunt and the night hunt become clear when the setting of a snare is compared to the tracking of an animal and the killing of that animal by means of an expertly thrown spear. After dismissing the night hunt, Plato notes that “the hunting and chase of land animals remain for our athletes.”¹⁸³ Hunting, thus, also seems to have been associated with athletes, many of whom were, as previously discussed in Chapter Two, upper-class young men who could spend the precious hours of the work day training in the gymnasium. Similar to athletics, a fair amount of leisure time was necessary for hunting, which would most likely exclude any citizens who depended on their labor for economic survival.

The hunt of the aristocracy was honorable because it involved effort, just as courting a youth reflected well on an *erastes* because of the skill and determination it took to win a

¹⁸² Plato, *The Laws*, 824a.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

youth's affections. The "hunting by night" reviled by Plato was the domain of the lazy, as was fishing or fowling with traps. In the Greek mind, one's manhood in relation to hunting depended on the energy exerted. After all, the activity of hunting trained boys and helped condition men for war, and war was certainly not a passive activity. Plato highlights the energy of hunting as its honorable trait, "...all of which men overcome by coursing them and striking them and throwing missiles at them, and taking them with their own hands. Those who hunt in this way have their thoughts fixed on godlike manhood."¹⁸⁴ It is significant that *eromenoi* do not receive as gifts any animals associated with lowly forms of hunting – they do not receive fish or rodents, and the only fowl with which they are presented is the fighting cock, a far cry from any bird caught via net or footsnare in the woods. The fighting cock was an animal which called to mind the helmet of the hoplite and, as has been previously discussed, represented warfare and soldiers.¹⁸⁵

The construction of the hunt as a leisure activity¹⁸⁶ stems also from its continual literary and visual connections to training for warfare, which would not seem to indicate that its participants

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ See Chapter Two for a discussion of fighting cocks.

¹⁸⁶ In this sense, leisure is used to indicate an activity which is not required for survival.

sought their quarry for food or to sell at market.¹⁸⁷ Youths could gain the skills they would need to fight on the battlefield out in the woods chasing down prey, handling weapons, practicing their aim and growing more adept. The great warrior Achilles had spent his youth hunting.¹⁸⁸ Xenophon extolls, “Hunting brings bodily health, improves sight and hearing, is an antidote to senility, and excellent training in the art of war.”¹⁸⁹ Additionally, ancient sources allude to the extensive amount of equipment needed on a hunt, “Hunting had ceased to be necessary for subsistence long before the Classical period and had evolved into the pastime of the aristocracy, who had ample leisure time and the money to afford the attendant slave-bearers, horses, and dogs.”¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, hunts required a considerable amount of leisure time, as hunting involved tracking animals through both tilled fields and the wilderness. In regard to the visual evidence, it has been noted that the popularity of hunting imagery significantly decreased after the

¹⁸⁷ Animals were skinned and, depending on the species, used for food. Some animals however, like the fox, would only contribute a pelt.

¹⁸⁸ Alan Shapiro, “Father and Sons, Men and Boys,” in *Coming of Age in Ancient Greece*, Jenifer Neils and John H. Oakley, eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 91.

¹⁸⁹ Xenophon, *Hunting*, 12.1-8.

¹⁹⁰ Steven Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 166.

sixth century in conjunction with a transition from aristocratic power toward democracy.¹⁹¹

Within the corpus of visual evidence for hunting, many vessels often feature a conglomeration of aristocratic male activities: warfare, athletics, and the act of hunting itself. The frequent presentation of these three themes together seems to underscore the association of hunting as an aristocratic activity.¹⁹² An Attic black-figure hydria dated to 520 B.C. depicts a scene of battle on the register below the neck of the vessel, the image of an activity involving a chariot in which weapons are not predominant on the register of the vessel's belly, seemingly indicating the athletic event of chariot racing, and a scene of a boar hunt on the bottom register. Three parts of citizen's leisure are juxtaposed on an Attic red-figure kylix (Figs 7 and 8) which shows wrestling and a deer hunt along the exterior of the vessel, and on the interior tondo image an *erastes*, holding both a walking stick and a courting gift.¹⁹³

While it is impossible to prove whether or not Greek youths who received animals as courting gifts understood their meaning, it

¹⁹¹ J. K. Anderson, *Hunting in the Ancient World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Barringer, 70-124.

¹⁹² Judith M. Barringer, *The Hunt in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 35.

¹⁹³ Eva Cantarella and Andrew Lear, *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 92.

cannot be denied that those gifts possessed some specific meaning, as only certain animals were deemed fit to serve as presents.¹⁹⁴ Nearly all the creatures presented to young boys – stag, hares, hunting dogs, foxes – were explicitly associated with the hunt. Several scholars have posited, and the inference seems logical given the heterosexual imagery of pursuit, that on a surface level the connection between animal gifts and the hunt was meant to mirror the conception of the *eromenoi* as the prey of their pursuer, the skilled hunter, the *erastes*. Judith Barringer has noted that this connection would work to the mutual benefit of both parties;¹⁹⁵ the *erastes* would be seen as an adept hunter and have his accomplishment in successful capture imbued with greater merit, and the beloved would be seen as properly modest in his appropriate “flight” from his pursuer, as well as obtaining additional value in making himself a prize worthy of extensive pursuit. The fact that all the animals associated with the *eromenos*, the stag, hare, and fox, were thought of as fleet of foot, timid, and difficult to catch, further supports the theory of pursuit being reflected in courting gifts of animals.¹⁹⁶ Additionally, each animal gift reflects the elitist aspects of pederasty in that all the animals

¹⁹⁴ Barringer 85-89; Lear and Cantarelle, 38-62.

¹⁹⁵ Barringer, 87.

¹⁹⁶ Barringer, 89-101; Lear and Cantarella, 38-62.

gifted were those associated with the leisure hunt or, in the case of the fighting cock, with the youthful aristocratic sport of cock fighting.

The inclusion of a leopard or large cat in the litany of courting gifts has presented scholars with a challenge. A large cat is depicted on only three different pieces of pottery in which the animal is set in the context of the presentation of a courting gift. The cat, represented in two of the instances with spots, is believed to be a depiction of a leopard;¹⁹⁷ it is presented to an *eromenos* in the same manner as a hare or stag, though the leopard, unlike the hare and stag, is always depicted in a live state. While Judith Barringer has theorized that there may be a link between the leopard and the irresistible smell of an *eromenos* or the ability of an *eromenos* to be lured by the wine of the symposium,¹⁹⁸ this theory is based solely upon the infrequently scattered references to the animal in literature¹⁹⁹ and is thus rather tenuous. Leopards appear frequently on North African mosaics in grand hunting

¹⁹⁷ The animal may also be a cheetah or civet.

¹⁹⁸ Barringer, 101. The leopard was thought to be lured by the scent of wine, and Barringer notes the animal may have acted as a metaphor for the ability of a *eromenos* to be lured by wine via *symposia*. However, given that leopards were also said to have a sweet smell, and so could represent the luring of an *erastes* through scent.

¹⁹⁹ For the pleasant scent of the leopard: Theophrastus (*Caus. Pl* 6.5.2), Aelian (NA 5.40, 8.6), and Plutarch (*Mor.* 976d); leopard as lured by wine: Oppian (*Cyn.* 4.320-53).

scenes, and Xenophon mentions the leopard as hunted in foreign areas; therefore leopards were viewed as rare, exotic prizes in the sport of hunting.²⁰⁰ Finally, some vases seem to indicate that aristocratic youths kept cheetahs and leopards as pets.²⁰¹ A series of vases depicts high-class youths playing with leopards or cheetahs in the same way a modern youth might play with a domesticated cat. On each vase, the youth carries a walking stick, iconographic of the upper class, as previously discussed. Given the close connection between pederasty and elitism, it is entirely possible the animal was meant to function as a symbol for the elite status of an *erastes* – a leopard would be an extravagant and exotic gift, indeed, and would require either travel or importation to obtain. It is also entirely possible that the cats were used symbolically by artists to represent profligate wealth; Greek youths may not have owned the animals in reality, but the cats would certainly have connoted a sense of extravagance for viewers of the vessels and, when combined with other markers of wealth, such as the walking stick, implied the young men featured were meant to be viewed as elite members of society. As one considers the connection made between *eromenoi* and animals, it is beneficial to devote a brief discussion to the Greek attitude toward fauna.

²⁰⁰ Anderson, 135, 141, 143.

²⁰¹ Ann Ashmead, "Greek Cats," *Expedition* (1978): 38-47.

Pervasive throughout the psyche of ancient Greeks is the idea of duality. Much of the Greek conceptualization of the world revolved around binaries, often reflected in mythology: good and evil, father and son, civilization and wilderness, chaos and order, rationality and passion.²⁰² It is no surprise, then, that the Greek view of animals represented a duality. Animals were tools to be used by man, but also wild beasts which represented the dangers of nature. The Laconian hound, a domestic animal, had multiple alleged sires, all wild creatures which underscored the notorious fierceness of the hound: lion, tiger, civet, fox, jackal, wolf, and cat.²⁰³ Thus, animals were creatures which needed to be controlled and taught order, but which also represented the irrationality and passion of the natural world: a dual force which man both could and could not control. The comparison of animals to a potential lover becomes much more apt: *eromenoi* needed to be mentored and taught the ways of a proper citizen, but the passion one felt for a beloved was ever dangerous to his lover. Young boys, like the swift deer men sought out on the hunt, were both desirable and dangerous, capable of being controlled, but ultimately ungovernable. No man could ever entirely control a youth's

²⁰² It should be noted that this tendency toward binaries dominated many facets of the Greek conception of the world outside of mythology, as it can also be seen in the philosophical and physical worlds.

²⁰³ Steven H. Lonsdale, "Attitudes Towards Animals in Ancient Greece," *Greece & Rome* 26, 2 (1979): 151.

affections – one could not force a boy to choose a particular lover. Traps could be set, and young men could be driven in a certain direction, but there was never a guarantee for *erasteis*.

The Greek attitude toward animals can be seen throughout ancient texts. Aristotle reasons that “If then nature makes nothing without purpose or at random, it is necessary that nature has produced all these things for the sake of man” in reference to the purpose of animals.²⁰⁴ Animals are tools for man, put on earth for man’s use. The earliest reference to animal/human relationships comes from Homer’s *Odyssey*, which, as previously mentioned, is always utilized with caution given the author’s date versus the times about which he writes. Steven H. Lonsdale has noted that Homer references the idea of reciprocity in animal/human relationships when Odysseus addresses a ram shortly after blinding the Cyclops, “My dear old ram, why are you leaving the cave last of the sheep?...Perhaps you are grieving for your master’s eye...If only you could think like us and be given a voice...”²⁰⁵ Also appearing in the *Odyssey* is the touching interaction between the returning Odysseus and his faithful hound which, upon seeing his

²⁰⁴ *Politics*, 1256b 15-23. The purpose referred to is wide-ranging, from the labor of beasts of burden to the vigilance of hounds.

²⁰⁵ *Odyssey*, 9.447-57.

old master one last time, dies, bringing tears to Odysseus' eyes.²⁰⁶ On a related note, evidence regarding hunting dogs suggests that the sense of the reciprocity seen in the *Odyssey* between Odysseus and the ram also applied to dogs.²⁰⁷ Hesiod notes the importance of dogs when he warns, "Look after your sharp-fanged hound, and don't grudge him his food, or someday the Day-sleeper may rob you of your belongings."²⁰⁸ Dogs not only provided protection but aided on hunts as well. A popular motif on vases ranging from the eighth century into the fourth century is that of hounds felling a stag or boar. The Greeks did not give human names to their dogs but rather named them after abstract qualities or forces of nature. Xenophon provides a list in his *Cynegeticus* which includes names like *Psyche* (soul), *Chara* (Joy), *Lailaps* (whirlwind), *Methepon* (helper), and even *Hybris*.²⁰⁹ Thus, dogs could share some of the qualities of man, creating a link between humanity and the animals which served humanity. Dogs are frequently found in pederastic courtship scenes, though it is often difficult to discern whether the animals are being given as gifts or simply belong to the *eromenos*. The dogs generally wear leashes and the *erastes* is usually shown presenting a courting gift, possibly in addition to the dog. Dogs

²⁰⁶ *Odyssey*, 17.326-327.

²⁰⁷ Lonsdale, 149.

²⁰⁸ *Op.* 604 f.

²⁰⁹ *Hunting*, 7.5; Lonsdale, 149.

were also utilized extensively in hare hunts, and another common hunting motif on many Greek vessels from the Geometric period forward features hounds, sometimes in conjunction with their masters, trapping a hare. It is interesting then that the dog could represent either the *eromenos*, who receives the gift, or the *erastes*, who is involved in the hunting.

The connection between *eromenoi* and animals was strong enough in the mind of the Greeks that a considerable number of vessels parallel animals with *eromenoi*. In a kylix by Douris, the tondo image of the kylix features a seated youth with a walking staff gazing at a hare sitting in his lap.²¹⁰ The eye contact between *eromenos* and hare establishes a connection between animal and youth, as was frequently true of eye contact on Greek vessels. On another kylix by the Ambrosios Painter, a youth, again pictured with a walking stick, grasps a hare in his proper right hand.²¹¹ The posture of the hare mimics the posture of the youth, creating a parallel S-curve in both bodies. Given the numerous examples of vessels wherein youths are paralleled with courting gifts, it seems logical that the animals themselves could act as analogues for the youths in vessels which feature older, bearded men stroking or interacting with animals such as the cock or hare. That the animals

²¹⁰ Musée du Louvre, Paris.

²¹¹ Sezione Etruria Meridionale.

indicated the upper classes has already been noted. There would be little meaning in comparing a lower-class boy to a stag, hare, or hound, as he would have no practical connection to these animals. Thus, animal courting gifts simultaneously indicate aristocracy and pederasty.

Though the connection between pederasty, hunting, and *eromenoi* as animals would later become quite explicit in the myth of Actaeon, a handsome youth who spies the virgin Artemis at her bath and is literally transformed into a stag, later to be torn apart by his own hunting dogs, vessels and texts make clear the relationship between the elite, hunting, and pederasty. The animals used to woo boys connoted the aristocratic hunt, an activity meant to train young aristocrats for war. Hunting required extensive leisure time, horses, equipment, and in some cases slaves, placing it outside the grasp of the laboring class of Greece. In comparing pederastic pursuit and the leisured hunt, Athenians implied the act of wooing was one of honor and nobility, an act which reflected well on both hunter/lover and hunted/beloved. Thus, pederastic courtship is transformed into an intricate social process involving skill and patience, setting pederasty outside the realm of mere homosexual expression and into a position of societal complexity and nuance.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION: THE PASSION OF THE POLIS

In exploring the relationship between various facets of society and pederastic expression, the practice can be seen as an intricate social institution, a far cry from a simple outlet for homosexual expression. Pederasty played a crucial role in the aristocracy of Greece, underscored by the assimilation of the practice into the majority of areas pertinent to the Attic elite. By investigating the ways in which pederasty was incorporated into aristocratic activities, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the purpose and motivation of homosexuality in ancient Athens. Certainly it becomes clear that perception was a critical issue in the minds of the wealthy, as pederasty was designed to reflect a carefully constructed image regarding the ideal qualities of both men and youths in Athens. Evident in the ancient texts which discuss pederasty as well as the vessels which depict the practice, pederasty represented a model for the aristocracy and a manifesto which outlined the persona aristocrats wanted to confer to the lower classes and those outside of Attica. Regardless of the intricacies of the actual practice – scholars will never be able to discern definitively precisely how pederasty was practiced in reality – the fact that literary and visual evidence both work in conjunction to construct a similar impression of pederasty's

function in society implies a unified ideal regarding pederastic relationships.

The various facets of society with which pederasty connected itself emphasize a masculine society in which the key factors of male relationships were honor, diligence, and respect. Hunting, warfare, athletics, and *symposia* all represent areas of society in which Greek men came together to improve both themselves and the *polis*. Pederasty within the aristocracy concerned both the soul and the mind, and this focus excluded the lower classes until the introduction and dissemination of democracy following the sixth century. That pederasty was exclusionary is evident from the areas in which it was practiced – pederasty never extended into those areas of society in which the elite were not dominant. Even the artists who depicted pederastic practice were excluded from the institution. While this association with elitist areas within society could be attributed to the bias of ancient authors and the presumed market bias for Greek vessels, the nature of the practice – superfluous income and time – and its goals also underscore the elitist nature of pederasty.

Scholarship has only recently begun transitioning into an era in which homosexuality in Greece can be discussed in the manner in which the Greeks themselves most likely experienced it; the practice was complex and subtle. By studying the different

areas of Greek society which hosted pederasty, one is able to glean insight into the Greek conception of homosexuality while simultaneously holding a mirror to the aristocracy to discover in what way the elite of Greece viewed themselves. Pederasty was a powerful force in the society of Athens. Indeed, Plato credited the practice with ending tyranny in Greece: “The relationship between Harmodius and his lover, Arstogeiton, was strong enough to put an end to the dictator’s rule.”²¹²

The dignity and significance of the practice resulted from the practitioners, making the institution very much an active construct of the ancient mind, allowing scholars to use pederasty as a conduit for conceptualizing homosexuality in ancient Athens. Pederasty strengthened the *polis*, creating an intricate mapping of social pairs that in turn bolstered the unity of Athens. In a society in which fathers and sons interacted only rarely, and even then predominantly during formal occasions such as religious festivals and holidays, pederasty allowed for the creation of masculine bonds which would augment the father/son relationship and create a *polis* of men with social and emotional connections. Pederasty, long defined by the aspect of the practice most at odds with the modern conception of morality, was far too complex a process to be discussed in terms of sexuality.

²¹² Plato, *Symposium*, 182C.

If pederasty were merely concerned with satiating a sexual need, there would be no need to woo young men – male prostitutes were readily available in Athens. Just as the honor of the hunt lies within the chase, so, too, did the honor of pederasty lie within courtship. Boys were meant to respond to offers with modesty, and men were meant to make those offers with a purity of intention. It becomes clear through the inclusion of pursuit and the idea of wooing and gifting that the relationships within pederasty were far from simple couplings of men and boys. Pederasty was another means of establishing the honor of an upper-class individual, another means by which the elite could distinguish themselves from the lower class. Those from the lower classes would not have had the opportunity to prove themselves, their divine spirit, in daily life. By transforming the act of wooing into a noble act, pederasty provided yet another arena within society in which the elite could prove themselves better – even in loving the aristocrat gains honor. Given the rhetoric of ancient writers, which stressed the capability and inherent right of the elite, regardless of any bias on the part of those writers given that perception is being examined, it seems natural that the elite would seek to construct pederasty as an expression of higher love, as a spiritual pursuit which bettered all those involved.

Modern perceptions and stigmas have long been the bane of historical scholarship, and ancient Greek pederasty is no exception. Pederasty was a multifaceted practice which reflected the ideals and self-perception of the elite in Athens, while simultaneously propagating the hegemony of that class. It is difficult for the modern mind to conceptualize a relationship between a young man and an older man without falling prey to the stringent morals of modern society. This natural but nihilistic predisposition has resulted in an unfair assessment of pederasty for a large portion of historical scholarship. Examining the individual societal areas of pederasty through the lens of class allows for a discussion of pederasty as a homosocial practice, one which had motivations which lay in the complexities of Greek social structure and not simply in eroticism. The practice of pederasty was an elitist activity that created a strong union among those most powerful in the city, which, in turn, strengthened that most critical of entities, the *polis*. The expansion of democracy meant the fall of pederasty, but to acknowledge the nature of pederasty is to understand what Greek culture valued so highly: reason, restraint, and noble love. Pederasty was the ultimate, tangible expression of

a union between male citizens and the profound desire for interpersonal connection, a connection which was inextricably woven into the tapestry of Greek civilization. The love of pederasty truly was a higher love.

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