



Greek Homosexuality: The History of Eros

Michael Hone

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A people existed whose political system, whose art, whose literature, whose valor in turning back Eastern hordes of barbarism and totalitarianism, bequeathed to the world freedom and intellectual curiosity as we know it now. Immensely outnumbered, the Greeks protected our heritage at Marathon, at Salamis and at Thermopylae. They literally died so that we can live. In a word: We owe them our civilization in its entirety. It was a people who lived to be moved. To laugh with Aristophanes, cry with Euripides, thrill to the poems of Pindar, wonder at the verse of Homer, the adventures of Xenophon, the stories of Herodotus, our first historian. A people moved by the speeches of Pericles, the philosophies of Aristotle and Socrates, and the sensationalism of Alcibiades. Yet what marked them as much was the simplest of human gifts, as clear as the azure sky over Sounion, as pure as a Spartan mountain cascade, as calm and yet as roaring as the seas at the foot of Athens. It was the quest for the Platonic missing half necessary to absolutely all of us: the person with whom we can find completion, run, swim, work and ride, philosophize and share the latest drama by Sophocles, wander through the convoluted streets of Plaka, strip naked and plunge into the warm, still ebb and flow of the Aegean, share a meal, a drink, a banquet, share memories and experiences and exploits. The missing half for whom it is a privilege to die, begging the enemy, when captured, to be run through in the chest and not the back, so that he who found the body would know his lover died bravely and not running away. He. He who would share what was the best and the most valiant in life. For the inspiration for what made Greece, for what it became, was the love of a man for a boy, and no matter how ardently we turn our backs on the fact, the fact remains. Education, Xenophon hammered again and again, was the key to male love. Mutual education. And sharing. The transfer of qualities. The need of bodily contact. Of bodily love. Of shared release. The inescapable truth is this: the Greeks had the wisdom to invent their own gods and to shape their needs and hone their sexuality to their own specifications. The Greeks formed themselves, and perhaps with modern knowledge tomorrow's men will take us a step further: accept total responsibility for our acts, accept that external superstitions and gods are no longer indispensable. Today we must let our children freely choose their sexuality and place them in an ambience, male and female, which will ensure that choice. We must cease disfiguring them physically with circumcision and disfiguring them mentally with religious hocus-pocus. We must introduce them to the heroes that have fashioned our lives and made progress possible--the very essence of this book--true heroes, not comic-book surrogates. Nature chose my own personal camp for me, sexually, and I'm going to do my best, in this volume and those to come, to prove that I've received a truly proud heritage--a heritage to be truly proud of--thanks to the fabulous men who preferred other men. With that in mind, we can begin.

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