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MAN THE TAMER

*Case studies in masculine ideology, power and the
domestication of the wild in Ancient Greek social thought*

A Thesis Submitted to
The National University of Ireland
in Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the role of the structural opposition between “wild” and “tame” in preserving social hierarchies in Ancient Greece. Using a wide range of literary sources, and occasionally drawing on iconographical materials, it argues that the symbolism of taming the wild frequently accompanied descriptions of hegemonic masculine behaviour in Ancient Greek societies.

	Abbreviations	
Author	Work	Abbreviation
Aiskhines (Aiskhin.)	<i>Against Timarkhos</i>	Tim.
Aiskhylos (Aiskh.)	<i>Agamemnon</i>	Ag.
	<i>Eumenides</i>	Eum.
	<i>Hepta epi Thebas (Seven Against Thebes)</i>	Hept.
	<i>Khoephoroi</i>	Khoe.
	<i>Persai</i>	Pers.
	<i>Prometheus Desmotes (Prometheus Bound)</i>	Prom.
Alkman (Alk.)	<i>Fragments</i>	Fr.
Anakreon (Anak.)	<i>Fragments</i>	Fr.
Andokides (And.)	<i>Against Alkibiades</i>	Alk.
Anonymous (Anon.)	<i>Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite</i>	Aph.
	<i>Beowulf</i>	Beo.
	<i>The Book of Genesis</i>	Gen.
	<i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i>	Gilg.
	<i>The Herculaneum Papyri</i>	VoluminaHercul.
	<i>Homeric hymn to Zeus</i>	Zeu.
Apollodoros (Apoll.)	<i>Library of Greek Mythology</i>	Lib.
Aristophanes (Ar.)	<i>Batrakhoi (Frogs)</i>	Bat.
	<i>Lysistrata</i>	Lys.
	<i>Nephelai (Clouds)</i>	Neph.
Aristotle (Arist.)	<i>Constitution of the Athenians</i>	Con.Ath.
	<i>Generation of Animals</i>	Gen.An.
	<i>History of Animals</i>	Hist.An.
	<i>Nikomacheian Ethics</i>	Nik.Eth.
	<i>Posterior Analytics</i>	Post.An.
Arkhilokhos (Arkh.)	<i>Fragments</i>	Fr.
Athenaios (Athen.)	<i>Deipnosophistai</i>	Deip.
Bakkhylides (Bakkh.)	<i>Poems and fragments</i>	
Diodoros (Diod.)	<i>Bibliotheka historika</i>	Hist.
Euripides (Eur.)	<i>Andromakhe</i>	And.
	<i>Hekabe</i>	Hek.
	<i>Helen</i>	Hel.
	<i>Hippolytos</i>	Hipp.
	<i>Iphigeneia en Taurois</i>	IphT.
	<i>Orestes</i>	Or.
	<i>Rhesos</i>	Rhes.
	<i>Troades (Trojan Women)</i>	Tr.
Herodotos (Hdt.)	<i>Historiai (The Histories)</i>	Hist.

Hesiod (Hes.)	<i>Erga kai Hemerai</i> (<i>Works and Days</i>)	Erg.
	<i>Theogony</i>	Theog.
Homer (Hom.)	<i>The Iliad</i>	Il.
	<i>The Odyssey</i>	Od.
Isokrates (Isok.)	<i>Areopagitikos</i>	Areo.
Lysias (Ly.)	<i>Against Alkibiades</i>	Alk.
	<i>Defence of Mantitheos</i>	Mant.
	<i>Funeral Oration</i>	Or.
	<i>On the Murder of</i> <i>Eratosthenes</i>	Er.
Ovid (Ov.)	<i>Metamorphoses</i>	Met.
Pausanias (Paus.)	<i>Hellados Periegesis</i> (<i>Description of</i> <i>Greece</i>)	Hellad.
Phokylides (Phok.)	<i>Fragments</i>	Fr.
Pindar (Pind.)	<i>Isthmian Odes</i>	Isth.
	<i>Nemean Odes</i>	Nem.
	<i>Olympian Odes</i>	Ol.
	<i>Pythian Odes</i>	Pyth.
Plato (Pl.)	<i>Apologia (Defence of</i> <i>Sokrates)</i>	Apol.
	<i>Gorgias</i>	Gor.
	<i>Kharmides</i>	Kh.
	<i>Lysis</i>	Lys.
	<i>Meno</i>	Men.
	<i>Nomoi (Laws)</i>	Laws.
	<i>Phaidrus</i>	Phaid.
	<i>Politeia (Republic)</i>	Rep.
	<i>Symposion</i> (<i>Symposium</i>)	Symp.
	<i>Theaitetos</i>	Theait.
	<i>Timaios</i>	Tim.
Ploutarkhos (Plout.)	<i>Agesilaos</i>	Ages.
	<i>Lykourgos</i>	Lyk.
	<i>Lysander</i>	Lys.
	<i>Theseus</i>	Thes.
Semonides (Sem.)	<i>Fragments</i>	Fr.
Seneca (Sen.)	<i>Phaedra</i>	Ph.
Simonides (Sim.)	<i>Fragments</i>	Fr.
Sophokles (Soph.)	<i>Aias</i>	Aj.
	<i>Antigone</i>	Ant.
	<i>Elektra</i>	Elek.
	<i>Oidipous at Kolonos</i>	Oid.Kol.
	<i>Philoktetes</i>	Phil.
Theognis of Megara	<i>Fragments</i>	Fr.
Thoukydides (Thouk.)	<i>Historiai (History of</i> <i>the Peloponnesian</i> <i>War)</i>	Hist.Pel.

Xenophanes (Xenoph.)	<i>Fragments</i>	Fr.
Xenophon (Xen.)	<i>Hellenika</i>	Hell.
	<i>Hieron</i>	Hier.
	<i>Hipparchikos</i>	Hipp.
	<i>Kyroupaideia</i>	Kyr.
	<i>Lakedaimonion Politeia (Constitution of the Lakedaimonians)</i>	Lak.
	<i>Memorabilia</i>	Mem.
	<i>Oikonomikos</i>	Oik.
	<i>Peri Hippikes (On Horsemanship)</i>	Hipp.
	<i>Symposion (Symposium)</i>	Symp.

CHAPTER 1

PREFACE

THE WILD AND THE TAME

1.1.1. Reading Ancient Greek sources over the years, I was struck by a peculiar feature of the language. This is the frequency with which one verb, *damazein*,¹ primarily meaning to tame,² was applied by ancient authors in a variety of contexts where it appeared, at first observation, to have little relationship to its primary meaning. This is so much the case that, according to Liddell and Scott's *Ancient Greek Etymological Dictionary*, the verb in Ancient Greek can be taken to mean not only "to tame" but also "to subdue", "to make subject to", "to overpower", and "to kill". Perhaps most revealingly of all, it can also mean "to marry". Beyond this, I soon realised that the same verb, and indeed the concept of taming more generally, was also used to describe aspects of the socialisation, or education, of young men. The poet Simonides of Keos (Plout.*Ages.* 1), for instance, was said to have described the state of Sparta as the "tamer of men" (*damasimbrotos*), referring, it seems, to a rigid system of state education: the *Agoge*.³

With hindsight, I was naïve not to recognise what linked all of these concepts together, for it seems obvious now that the metaphorical applications of the verb evoked relations of social power in one sense or another. Yet I hope that my initial failure to recognise this is also understandable. For the reader in our own, technological age, the significance of the act of taming to social relations and interactions between people, or indeed groups of people, can appear strange. Nowadays, even if it is not unheard of for someone to speak of "taming" another human being in a certain context, it would be archaizing at best, at worst inflammatory and offensive. We in the west proclaim to believe in Enlightenment values that support the liberty of the individual and the sovereignty of law, after all. When the mid-20th century American journalist Walter Lippmann described the mass of citizens in the complex

¹ Alternatively *damasso* or *damao*.

² The root is of Indo-European origin. For some discussion on the social significance of its origins and its relationship to the concept of the house or construct, cf. E. Benveniste (1973, 242, 250-251). For further thoughts, cf. I. Hodder (1990, 45).

³ For more evidence of Spartan education as taming, cf. Plato on colts (Pl.*Rep.* 413d).

modern world as a “bewildered herd”, who must be governed by a specialised class, he was using language repellent to the sensibilities of our age (2011, 2).⁴

For the agriculturalist Greeks, though, the notion of taming was apparently so fundamental to their worldview that the entire *kosmos* was thought to be ruled by a sort of arch-tamer, whose imposition of order on the universe was conceived of as an act of “taming”. According to Hesiod’s *Theogony*, one of the oldest surviving literary texts from Ancient Greece,⁵ Zeus overthrew the first generation of ruling gods, the Titans, led by his father, the wily and scheming Kronos, by casting them into the dark pit of Tartaros. He had good cause to resent his father. Fearing a prophecy that one of his offspring would usurp his rule, Kronos had devoured each of his children as they were born, to prevent the loss of his throne. After he swallowed the first five children born to his wife, Rhea, she contrived to rescue the sixth, the new-born baby Zeus, by wrapping a stone in swaddling clothes and presenting the bundle to the father in place of the child:

τὸν τόθ’ ἐλὼν χεῖρεςσιν ἔην ἐσκάτθετο νηδὺν
σχέτλιος: οὐδ’ ἐνόησε μετὰ φρεσίν, ὥς οἱ ὀπίσσω
ἀντὶ λίθου ἐὸς υἱὸς ἀνίκητος καὶ ἀκηδῆς
λείπεθ’, ὃ μιν τάχ’ ἔμελλε βῆη καὶ χερσὶ δαμάσσας
τιμῆς ἐξελάειν, ὃ δ’ ἐν ἀθανάτοισι ἀνάξειν.

And seizing it with his hands he gulped it down,
the wretch. He knew not in his mind that he left behind,
in the place of a stone, his own son, unvanquished and unperturbed,
who was destined soon to *tame* him by compulsion,
drive him from honour, and rule over the immortals.

(Hes.*Theog.* 487-491)

⁴ Indeed modern social justice movements, such as the civil, women’s and gay rights movements, have been engaged in a constant struggle against this kind of dehumanisation in the language of historically dominant groups. That these movements have been successful in opposing dehumanising speech seems obvious enough, though not entirely so. For example, one need not go as far back in time as Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, for instance, to find the rather brash concept of woman as a “wild” creature to be tamed by male assertiveness. The character Frank T.J. Mackey in the 1999 movie *Magnolia*, an alpha-male “pick-up-artist” played by Tom Cruise, was hardly going far beyond the parameters of normal misogynist male dialogue when he told his students to “respect the cock and tame the cunt”.

⁵ Predated only by the Homeric poems, according to most scholars. Cf. G.S. Kirk (1960), R. Janko (1982) & R.M. Rosen (2011). Unlike the Homeric poems, the *Theogony* provides a coherent view of the genesis of the world and the universal hierarchy.

As Hesiod puts it, by eventually rising up and overthrowing Kronos, Zeus would “tame” (*damassen*) his sire. It is difficult to classify this as a creative, literary metaphor since, as already observed, the verb *damazein* is commonly applied to social interactions in Greek sources, including the Homeric epics which very likely predate Hesiod. Therefore, the critic might propose that the poet’s application of the verb here is an example of a dead metaphor. That argument would maintain that the verb *damazein* was so frequently used to describe the application of force, in so many social contexts, that it had lost all metaphorical significance even by Hesiod’s time. In this context, *damassen* means only “to subdue” or “to overcome”, and is removed from the concept “to tame”.

But as Zoltan Kovecses illustrates, arguments about the “dead metaphor” miss an important point, which is that “what is deeply entrenched, hardly noticed, and thus effortlessly used is most active in our thought.” (2002, xi). Kovecses’ attitude to metaphor is based on Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) cognitive linguistic approach which, among other arguments, maintains that metaphor functions to help us understand certain concepts, and is not merely for artistic or aesthetic purposes. The approach also argues that metaphor is not always based on similarity, but is used in everyday life by ordinary people. From this point of view, we can see that, while Hesiod’s use of the verb *damazein* may be mundane rather than creative, its mundanity has wider social implications: it reveals that speakers of the Ancient Greek language were inclined to think about social power dynamics in the language of animal domestication. Just as speakers of modern English tend to express the conceptual domains of life and love in the language of the journey (Kovecses 2002, 3-7), so the material indicates that in Ancient Greece the social, political or martial domination of another individual or group, as a broad conceptual domain, was understood through evocation of a second conceptual domain: that of imposing culture on wild nature (i.e. taming). This, to use Lakoff and Johnson’s term, was a metaphor the Greeks lived by.

The inference that Kronos was “tamed” by his defeat also presupposes Zeus’ ethical superiority to his father.⁶ Taming implies wildness and wildness stands in opposition to the social and the civilised. And Kronos is, indeed, anathema to the fundamentals of Greek society in many ways. Hesiod tells us that he is *deinotatos*, most terrible (Hes.*Theog.* 138).⁷ Watchful and repressive, preoccupied with self-preservation and the retention of personal power even at the expense of his peers and the lives of his children, Kronos is an absolute individualist with no sense of social obligation. He does not rule with the consent of his fellow Titans, but by means of personal strength and a prodigious capacity for scheming. He is, in the contemporary sense, a despot. His intelligence does not serve, or even pretend to serve, a communal good; but only his own survival and the preservation of his authority. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Kronos is the offspring of the earth (Ge) herself, and that his primary loyalty appears to have been to her rather than to his father, as would be the case in an established patriarchy: at Ge’s command he had castrated his sire, Ouranos, in his youth (Hes.*Theog.* 175-181).⁸

These traits of the Hesiodic Kronos are hardly surprising, for his was a primordial and unordered world in which justice (*dike*), that prerequisite of civilised society in Greek thought, had not yet been conceived, and social customs had not been established. As P.H. Vellacott (1956, 10) pointed out, in the introduction to his translation of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, “the age of Kronos was in general characterised as the age of anarchy, the time before the institution of property, the establishment of cities or the framing of laws”. Because Kronos’ rule was unjust and oppressive of his peers, his efforts at

⁶ In a sense, Zeus’ taming of Kronos actually represents a reversal of a trope that appears frequently in later Greek literature. The youth on the cusp of adulthood was often depicted as being wild, akin to an animal who must be “tamed” by an older, more socially senior man, though usually a lover (*erastes*) rather than a father. Cf. sections 3.4.2 – 3.4.4.

Fathers, of course, held considerable power over their children in Greek society.

⁷ Homer applies the term *deinos* to the sea monster, Kharybdis, a powerful and destructive force of nature (Hom.*Od.* 12.260).

⁸ In a patriarchal social system, sons should succeed fathers when they reach manhood. The immortality of the gods obviously complicates this process, leading to excessive competition between father and son. Yet these myths also suggest that the “untamed” male, such as Kronos, is too closely associated with his mother and the maternal sphere to strike a bond with his father, and become his chosen successor. For the importance of the development of the father-son relationship in patriarchal Greek thought, cf. section 5.3. For male socialisation as taming, cf. chapter 3.

eternal self-preservation as perverse and savage as might be expected from a chthonic being, the framing of Zeus' victory as an act of taming evokes a conception of an essential change in the condition of the universe. On a fundamental level, it represents the imposition of culture on nature. Zeus is not born of the earth, as his oppressive and authoritarian father (Kronos) and grandfather (Ouranos) both were. He is removed from Ge, the earth-mother, by a generation. His rule therefore constitutes something new, and different from the world of nature than the bestial individualism of Kronos.⁹ As the 5th century BCE Athenian dramatist Euripides would have one of his characters say, in apparent reference to the role of Zeus in bringing the world out of a state of savage anarchy: "that god I do praise, who first raised humans above beastly chaos [...]" (Eur.*Supp.* 201).¹⁰

An understanding of Zeus' activities following the overthrow of his father can help us to contextualise further his triumph over Kronos as an act of taming. When he replaced his earth-born father as ruler, he structured the universe, its material, gods, and the other creatures and beings of which it was composed, according to norms not unlike those of a proto-Greek patriarchal society. Private property came into existence; custom and a sense of justice were established to keep antisocial behaviour in check. To ensure the stability of the primordial forces and the establishment of an ethical *kosmos*, Zeus, chosen as king by his peers though certainly also the most powerful among them, apportioned to each of his fellow Olympian gods, his brothers, sisters and later his offspring, a realm of authority befitting their character. Most notable among these actions was his division of the world into three primary

⁹ An absolute adherence to this polarity is of course problematic, because Kronos is not the very embodiment of antisocial savagery that other chthonic beings of the Hesiodic universe, such as Typhon and the Nemean lion, are. Rather, he seems to represent an intermediary figure between chaos and order, savagery and civilisation. In comparison to the mindless lust of his own father Ouranos, who appears to have known nothing but the biological impulse to procreate by repeatedly raping and impregnating Ge, Kronos represented some sort of primitive effort at ordering the world, reliant on force and cunning but with no understanding of justice. He is the first to possess political titles, that of king (*basileus*) in particular (Hes.*Theog.* 476); but he has little understanding of the duties of reciprocity with his peers that this title should imply. In his treatment of his own family and his peers he exhibits the crime of *hubris* characteristic of antisocial men; in his disregard for community interest, he reveals his primitiveness in comparison to what constituted "civilisation" and real social order.

¹⁰ For the conception of humanity as occupying the realm between gods and beasts, cf. G.E.R. Lloyd (2011).

spheres of influence, one belonging to himself, and the others to his brothers, Poseidon and Hades (Hom.*Il.* 15.187-193). Hades was given sovereignty of the underworld and rule over the countless dead. Zeus himself was to rule over the high sky, physically embodied by Ouranos, his grandfather. Poseidon, on the other hand, ruled over earth and sea.

The dawn of civilisation, as opposed to the anarchy of the age of Kronos, is manifest in Zeus' coupling with Themis, the Titaness and personification of social custom. From this union, Hesiod tells us, was born Dike, the personification of justice (Hes.*Theog.* 901).¹¹ For the Greeks, *themis* and *dike* were prerequisites for civilised society, and the fact that they enter the stage, in Hesiod's narrative, only after Zeus came to power by "taming" his father, Kronos, is revealing.¹² There is no place for custom, law or justice in a universe governed by wildness, which is anathema to those concepts. By embracing custom and begetting justice, Zeus, who had tamed the chthonic forces that governed the universe previously, established the foundations of society.

Kronos' "taming", then, was a necessary step on the path to the creation of a social order; for as Hugh Lloyd-Jones pointed out in his classic work, *The Justice of Zeus*, "besides meaning justice, *dike* meant the preservation of the established order" (1971, 4). Indeed, it is revealing that customs at the Kronia festival, held in honour of Zeus' chthonic father and celebrated annually at Athens, was apparently concerned with the upending of ordinary power relations within the *polis*. According to the Roman playwright, Accius, masters would wait upon their own servants during the festal period (Bremmer 2004, 38).¹³ Similar behaviour is attested in the Roman Saturnalia, when many social norms were overturned temporarily, with masters giving gifts to their slaves. These role reversals were associated with the temporary liberation of Saturn, the Roman Kronos, from his bonds and his short-term assumption of the throne he had lost to Jupiter (Zeus). Such religiously

¹¹ The Homeric *Hymn to Zeus* (Anon.*Zeu.* 23.1) also tells us that Zeus kept Themis by his side at all times.

¹² For *dike* as a moral term in the poems of Homer and Hesiod, cf. M.W. Dickie (1978).

¹³ For the relevance of Kronos' myth to the Kronia rituals of role reversal, cf. H. Versnel (1994, 89-135).

sanctioned reversals are well attested anthropologically, and are often connected with purification rituals. The underlying thought process is, apparently, that a return to the state of chaos is necessary only for order to be imposed once more.¹⁴ Kronos, then, was the symbolic agent of the chaos that temporarily upends social order in Greek religion.

1.1.2. So long as Zeus, the king and father, rules on Olympos, there is social order; there is also an overarching sense of justice that contrasts with the destructive anarchic or primordial forces, often born of the earth, that he had overcome in taking power on Olympos. Yet Hesiod also informs us that, even after Zeus became king, the earth-mother, Ge, would give birth to creatures which threatened to plunge the ordered world that he had established into a state of wild disorder unknown to custom or justice.

When Ge mated with the dark pit of Tartaros and birthed the enormous monster Typhon, for instance, the stability of Zeus' patriarchal *kosmos* was placed in jeopardy. In contrast to Zeus, anthropomorphic like the other Olympian gods, Typhon had a bestial, hybrid-animal appearance, reflecting his lack of familiarity with the norms of civilisation, and his status as the progeny of Ge. He had numerous heads in the forms of wild beasts, including serpents and lions. In the minds of the Greeks who created this monster, he was the antithesis of all that Zeus stood for. Hesiod tells us:

Zeús δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν κόρθυνεν ἐὸν μένος, εἴλετο δ' ὄπλα,
βροντὴν τε στεροπὴν τε καὶ αἰθαλόεντα κεραυνόν,
πλήξεν ἀπ' Οὐλύμποιο ἐπάλμενος: ἀμφὶ δὲ πάσας
ἔπρεσε θεσπεσίας κεφαλὰς δεινοῖο πελώρου.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ μιν δάμασεν πληγῆσιν ἰμάσσας,
ἤριπε γυιωθεὶς, στενάχιζε δὲ γαῖα πελώρη.

And when Zeus had whipped up his battle-fury and seized his weapons – thunder, lightning and the blazing bolt – he sprang down from Olympos and struck: all of the beast's heads he burned around him. And when he had *tamed* him and flogged him with lashes, he tossed him down, an impotent wreck, and great Ge groaned her displeasure.

(Hes. *Theog.* 853-858)

¹⁴ For some anthropological discussion of this, cf. P. Rigby (1968) M. Marriott (1966) & J. Pandian (2001).

Typhon is a beast of the feminine earth who comes from beyond the civilised realm, and constitutes an existential threat to the social norms that Zeus had established. Just as he had done with Kronos when he chained him in Tartaros, Zeus did not kill the chthonic monster but merely “tamed” (*damasen*) him. He did this by casting him underneath Mount Etna – the mountain which, as a consequence, vomits forth lava from time to time and threatens to wreak destruction on the world once again. The opposition between society governed by custom, and the lawless savagery of nature against which it stands, is repeated. Once again, Hesiod, whether consciously or not, persists with the language of taming, and thus implies an ethical dimension. The father of gods and men, in defending the grip that he holds on the ordered world, acts as an animal husbandman by compelling dissident or “wild” elements to live under his hierarchy, or renders them unable to revolt against it.

The structuralist historian, J.P. Vernant, expressed what was at stake in this conflict between Zeus and his chthonic rival as follows: “His (Typhon’s) victory would mean the regression of the world to the primordial, chaotic condition. What would have happened? The long struggle among the gods would be nullified. The world would return to a kind of chaos. Not by falling back into the primordial chaos of the beginnings – since out of that one an organised world had already emerged – but by collapsing into a general shambles” (Vernant 2001, 31).¹⁵ Zeus’ rule, exemplified by his tendency to “tame” dissident, often chthonic, elements for the sake of order, is justified by evoking the alternative: the chaos embodied by a wildness that has its genesis, like Kronos, in the female earth/natural world. The threat is ever present, for even in his victory over Typhon, Zeus does not prevent the emergence of a new threat from the realm of nature. Out of the earth-born Typhon comes unpredictable and destructive winds that cannot be overcome, cannot be tamed and controlled either by Zeus or any other god (Hes. *Theog.* 869).¹⁶ For all Zeus’ efforts to place order on the wild, then, the risk it poses

¹⁵ Trans. L. Asher.

¹⁶ Other chthonic forces, too, had threatened to destabilise Zeus’ rule in a similar manner. The *gigantes* or giants, also born of the earth, took up arms against the gods (Apoll. *Lib.* 1.6.1–1.6.2). Such forces, in the Greek mind, represented the threat of a violent and disordered world, a world devoid of the customs that the gods sponsored and that governed the lives of civilised men.

is ever-present and never fully destroyed. Man, the myth of Typhon suggests, can never entirely overcome nature and the destabilising forces that a female earth can engender. Instead, he is constantly engaged in a struggle to control them and contain their destructive power.

1.1.3. Hesiod's reliance on the language of taming does not end with the activities of Zeus, the king and father. On the mortal plane of Greek myth, the contest between civilised man and savage beast, and between social order and the anarchy of the chthonic, implied in Zeus' conflict with the earth-born Typhon and Kronos, was also expressed through the activities of the race of heroes. These were intensely virile mortal offspring of the gods, and were believed by the Greeks to have lived in the distant past. Among the foremost activities of the heroes were warfare, rustling sheep and cattle from neighbouring territories, taming horses, those flightiest of domesticated animals, and abducting and sexually assaulting women from the wild, in what was apparently a ritual metaphor for marriage.¹⁷ Often half-wild themselves, they were also "tamers" of nature insofar as they hunted and slew, or otherwise domesticated, monstrous chthonic creatures: dangerous beasts that still populated the earth in that distant time, threatening the practices of agriculture and trade. Like Zeus, they were protectors of society against the savage and uncivilised.

The most illustrious of these early, beast-slaying heroes was Herakles, Zeus' son born to Alkmene, queen of Thebes. Herakles was a famously uncivilised hero, who embodied many of the characteristics of the wild beasts he slew, particularly in his enormous appetites and boundless libido. Indeed, it seems that his divinely pre-ordained purpose was to purge the earth of the savage beasts that still stalked the wild regions, and thereby to preserve and protect the *agron*, the hinterland, for human exploitation. Only by clearing such primordial creatures would territories be rendered safe for permanent tillage and pastoral activities. One of the earliest traditions about Herakles, tellingly, is that he slew the most menacing of man-killing wild beasts: the lion. While still a youth at Thebes, he fought and killed the lion of Kithairon, a beast that

¹⁷ Cf. sections 4.2 and 4.3.

had been ravaging the flocks of the kings Amphitryon of Thebes and Thespios of Thespai (Apoll.Lib. 2.4.10). So long as the lion existed, yields from the *agron*, the sphere beyond the settlement walls, would not be secure; nor could the welfare of the community be guaranteed.¹⁸

This episode was less famous than Herakles' other encounter with a lion. In the *Theogony*, Hesiod provided the earliest extant allusion to Herakles' slaughter of the Nemean Lion, a chthonic creature, the offspring of the monsters Ekhidna and Orthos, which had been scourging the territory of Nemea in the Peloponnese:¹⁹

ἦ δ' ἄρα Φῖκ' ὀλοήν τέκε Καδμείοισιν ὄλεθρον
Ὅρθῳ ὑποδηθεῖσα²⁰ Νεμειαῖόν τε λέοντα,
τόν ῥ' Ἥρη θρέψασα Διὸς κυδρὴ παράκοιτις
γουνόισιν κατένασσε Νεμείης, πῆμ' ἀνθρώποις.
ἔνθ' ἄρ' ὁ οἰκείων ἐλεφαίρετο φύλ' ἀνθρώπων,
κοιρανέων Τρητοῖο Νεμείης ἠδ' Ἀπέσαντος:
ἀλλὰ ἐῖς ἐδάμασσε βίης Ἡρακληείης.

She (Ekhidna) then mated with Orthos and bore
the deadly sphinx, ruin to the Kadmeans, and the Nemean lion,
which Hera,²¹ the lusty wife of Zeus, raised
to live in the hills of Nemea, a calamity for men.
There he made prey of the tribes of men,
lording it over Tretos of Nemea and Apesas.
But the force of strong Herakles *tamed* him.

(Hes.*Theog.* 326-332)

The choice of verb (*edamasse*), the third-person aorist of *damazein*, is an imperfect match for its usage in relation to Zeus' actions. This, indeed, might appear to indicate an inconsistency in the poet's usage of the verb. Technically, Herakles did not "tame" the Nemean lion, not even in the abstract sense that Zeus had tamed Kronos or Typhon. Rather, he slew it. The

¹⁸ It is also noteworthy that, during the adventure that saw him tame the lion by slaying it, the young Herakles demonstrated his virility by bedding all of King Thespios' 50 daughters (Apoll.Lib. 2.4.10).

¹⁹ Plate 1.

²⁰ This verb is also derived from *damazo*, and thus implies the concept of taming in sexual relations between men and women. Cf. sections 4.2 & 4.3.

²¹ Note that Hera, a female divinity, was responsible for nurturing this bestial threat to civilisation, just as Ge was responsible for nurturing Typhon. On the association between female power and wildness in Greek thought, c.f. sections 4.1 – 4.3 in particular.

verb is the same, but action and outcome, ostensibly, are quite different. The commonality lies, rather, in the cause of the action: in the fact that both the god and his son use force against a monstrous creature, with the aim of preserving and protecting society. Zeus protects and preserves the *kosmos* by locking away bestial foes who are, at any rate, immortal; while Herakles slaughters the Nemean lion – a beast too savage to be domesticated in the traditional sense – to protect vital social practices, namely agriculture and, perhaps, trade.

Indeed, the notion that the great hero's purpose was to protect society from bestial threats is confirmed again and again in his myths. While the first of his 12 labours obliged him to kill the lion, for example, the second saw him slay the Lernean hydra, which had scourged the plain of that region, killing and devouring livestock and thereby rendering agricultural production unsafe. It is no coincidence, indeed, that this monster was said to be the offspring of Typhon, the chthonic beast that Zeus had "tamed" in order to preserve his universal, patriarchal order from a collapse into chaos (*Hes.Theog.* 310).²² Herakles' immense strength and virility is channelled towards the preservation and protection of civilisation from external threats, just as his father fulfils the same function on an expanded, universal level. Social stability and safety from the wild can only be achieved and preserved by immense acts of "taming" which, as the situation requires, may imply domestication, imprisonment, or slaughter.

This function of purging the land of menacing, socially destructive beasts, and thereby carrying out an act of "taming" for the sake of social preservation, was also fulfilled by other, even earlier, heroes.²³ Bellerophon had slain

²² W. Burkert provides an excellent summary of Herakles' beast-slaying function in myth: "First and foremost Herakles has to do with animals: he slays the most dangerous, the lion and the serpent, and he captures the others, those which can be eaten, to bring them to men. He hunts down the wind-swift hind, he drags in the wild boar, he steals the man-eating horses from Diomedes the Thracian; and from Erytheia, the Red Island beyond Okeanos, he fetches a whole herd of cattle which belonged to the three-headed Roarer, Geryoneus. He cleans out the stable of the cattle of the sun in order to obtain a tenth of the herd from Augeias, the son of the sun, and he captures the birds of Stymphalos" (Burkert 1985, 209).

²³ The conception of social power defined by the hero who tames the wild of beasts, and thereby renders terrain safe for settlement and agricultural exploitation, accords with material evidence for the elite male ethos of stratified Bronze and Iron Age societies of Europe and the Near East. Herakles as tamer and slayer of the beasts that threaten civilised social transactions has considerable precedent, for instance, in Near Eastern expressions of

the beastly hybrid Khimaira (Apoll.*Lib.* 2.3.2), and Perseus the snake-headed Gorgon, Medusa (Apoll.*Lib.* 2.4.2).²⁴ Elsewhere, Oidipous vanquished the man-eating sphinx that plagued Thebes, not by means of martial courage but by a wholly different skill-set: he used his wits (Apoll.*Lib.* 3.5.8). Some wild-beast foes were so powerful that they were beyond the powers of a single hero to tame. A whole generation of heroes had been assembled to hunt the Kalydonian boar. This was a beast which, as (pseudo) Apollodoros records, had ravaged the regions around Kalydon, preventing the land from being sown and killing livestock and people alike (Apoll.*Lib.* 3.13.2).



Plate 1. Athenian black-figure amphora. Herakles fighting the Nemean Lion, watched by the goddess Athene. Herakles is the foremost and most distinctive of the Greek heroes who functioned as a frontiersman /tamer for the expansion of cultivable land. (550-500 BCE) (Beazley 5695, Geneva, Musee d'Art et d'Histoire, 14989.1937). © 2003-2020 Classical Art Research Centre, University of Oxford.

elite male social power. This is particularly true of images of the royal hunt on Neo-Assyrian royal friezes at Nineveh. In the earlier Bronze Age versions of this motif, the monarch is usually shown hunting a bull, ibex or other large animal, preparing to kill it with his spear. In later versions, notably those pertaining to Ashurbanipal and Ashurnasirpal II, the king is shown hunting a lion from the back of his chariot, spear in hand, or fighting the lion face to face and skewering him with his sword (Cassin 1981; Dick 2006). For important distinctions between the Greek and Neo-Assyrian use of lion symbolism, cf. section 2.5.1. The same conception of the man-of-power figure can be observed in Gilgamesh's slaying of the monster Humbaba of the mountain woods (Anon.*Gilg.* 9-10); and in the Anglo-Saxon tale of Beowulf, who slaughters the murderous marsh-dwelling giant Grendel (Anon.*Beo.*86-1254).

²⁴Herself perhaps also a metaphor for another wild "other" in Greek society, the unmarried *parthenos*. Cf. K. Topper (2007; 2010). Also J.P. Vernant (1991).

1.1.4. Among the heroes who took part in the hunt for the Kalydonian Boar, according to some versions at least, was Theseus, the Athenian hero celebrated for slaying the bull-headed Minotauros on Crete (Apoll.*Lib.* Epit.1.9). Theseus is an interesting figure, for he appears to have been considered a slightly later hero than Herakles, and some of his exploits were clearly based on the latter's. Yet his relative lateness is revealed by the fact that his wilderness-clearing exploits focus less on the slaughter of wild beasts and monsters, and more on conflict with wild, hubristic men living beyond the urban settlement – i.e. those who do not subscribe to the rules of a god-respecting society, and who therefore remain liminal figures, operating in defiance of the demands of civilised life.

This is particularly true in the case of Theseus' journey across the Korinthian Isthmos from Troizen to Athens as a youngster. The only animal he killed on this journey was the Krommyan sow: a creature that had been ravaging the land and was, not coincidentally, supposed to be another of the offspring of the monstrous Typhon that Zeus had once tamed (Apoll.*Lib.* Epit.1.1).²⁵ Yet Theseus also slew a number of murderous wild men who had behaved against all social custom by committing the ethical crime of *hubris*: the club-wielding Periphetes, Sinis the Pine Bender, and Skiron, who killed passers-by by kicking them off a cliff.²⁶ Much like the Nemean Lion, the presence of these men in the Isthmian border territory represented a threat to the safe conduct of travel, trade and cross-community social interaction.

The crucial point is that, in Theseus' myths, we witness a scaling down in representations of the wild figure whom the hero tames for social preservation or expansion. This is a scaling down in the nature of heroic taming that I will argue, in the next chapter, is also present in the case of Homeric epic, which dealt with heroes of an even later generation than Theseus (Hom.*Il.* 1.260-270). In Homer's poems, too, the wildness to be tamed by the hero exists

²⁵ The Lernean hydra, slain by Herakles, was also the offspring of Typhon (Hes.*Theog.* 310).

²⁶ Cf. Apoll.*Lib.* 3.16 & Epit.1. The fact that these men do not wield metal weapons marks them as uncivilised, and therefore at odds with the symbolism of hegemonic social masculinity. They are objects of taming, rather than the wielders of the cultural instruments of taming. Cf. section 4.5.2.

largely in the human realm, since the more overtly monstrous manifestations of antisocial savagery had been cleared from the world by earlier heroes like Herakles and Perseus.²⁷

In the scaling down from beast/monster to hubristic human as the object of heroic wilderness-clearing, as implied by the myth of Theseus' adventures on the Isthmos, we can perceive a metaphorical association between the bestial wild and the antisocial human who commits *hubris*, in Greek thought. The analogy between beast and antisocial man appears time and again in Greek sources, and is best embodied by the mountain-dwelling *kentauroi*, who are half-man and half-horse, and whose inclination towards *hubris* and rejection of fundamental social norms brings them into frequent conflict with heroes in Greek myth.²⁸ This insight, that metaphorical taming evokes the subordination of a figure whose character or conduct threatens social norms, or is supposed to threaten them in some way, also helps to explain the semantic range of the verb *damazein* in the Ancient Greek sources beyond Hesiod. It explains why Zeus tamed not only the chthonic Kronos and bestial Typhon, but also, in other sources, less obviously uncivilised figures: the renegade Titan Prometheus, a transgressor against Zeus' rule who had defied the god's wishes when he brought fire to man, by chaining him to a rock (Aiskh.*Prom.* 1010);²⁹ and the sea-nymph Thetis, with her remarkable, destructive generative capacity, by marrying her off to a mortal man, Peleus (Hom.*Il.* 18.432-434).³⁰ It also goes some distance towards explaining why the king of the gods struggles to "tame" his own wife, the ever rebellious Hera, who regularly sought to thwart his plans for the universe. In much the same way, the Spartan state system is thought to "tame" the exuberant future citizen through education, a citizen army tames an invading force of foreign

²⁷ A point that Nestor, indeed, alludes to in the first book of the *Iliad* (Hom.*Il.* 1.267-268).

²⁸ For more on the significance of the *kentauroi* in relation to male social behaviour, cf. sections 2.2.1. & 3.2.3. For the *kentauroi* as embodiment of *hubris* in Greek thought, cf. D. Johnson (2005, 195).

²⁹ The ethics of Zeus' assumption of the role of tamer is questioned throughout the *Prometheus Bound*, and the god appears to be more a tyrant than a benevolent ruler when he "tames" by compulsion. Not only does the justice of his treatment of Prometheus merit questioning, but Io laments that her father, Inakhos, had thrown her out of the house because the "bridle" (*χαλινὸς*) of Zeus had prompted him to do so (Aiskh.*Prom.* 672). For some commentary on the broader significance of taming symbolism in the *Prometheus Bound*, as part of a dialectic about force and persuasion, cf. S. Benardete (1964, 134).

³⁰ For more on Thetis' marriage as taming, cf. section. 4.2.1.

enemies, and the bridegroom tames his new bride through marriage, sex and, we might hypothesise, force. All of these “tamed” figures – social renegades, women, youths, enemy forces – if left unchecked would represent dangers to the extant power structures and the stability of the *oikos* (household) or the state. The language of taming, in other words, appears to justify the imposition of social constraints on those who are socially and politically disfranchised, or only partially franchised.

On that note, it is striking that, in all of the instances cited above, taming is carried out by a male: a man who either establishes or preserves power over his sphere of authority, whether that be the universe (*Zeus*), the boundary territories (*Herakles* and *Theseus*), the household (the husband) or the state (the Spartan elders and constitution). On those rare occasions when females are described as tamers in relations of social struggle, there is a clear hint of subversion.³¹ This is unsurprising, first of all because the ownership of livestock was restricted to free adult males in Ancient Greece, the socially dominant group. For a man to equate his livestock with those members of his household (*oikos*) over whom he would often have held almost unlimited power – a wife, a child or a slave for instance – would very probably have seemed a natural conflation.

But there is also the fact that the Greeks lived in a world without advanced technology in the modern sense, in which the forces of nature, though usually controlled by man, would have felt much more immediate, and threatening, than they do for most modern readers.³² Association between subaltern groups and nature was understandably engrained in the prevailing worldview, perhaps primarily because both the natural world, and the various ruled groups in society, represented the most real and constant dangers to the existing patriarchal social order.³³ Put bluntly, it was always groups of men

³¹ Consider, for instance, the examples of *Aphrodite* and *Kirke* as probable Greek literary responses to the “Mistress of Animals” motif. Cf. section 4.5.2.

³² Though this conception of man’s control of nature is, for many people at least, beginning to alter as climate change becomes a more pressing issue. Cf. section 7.2.1.

³³ Control and exploitation of one provided a perfect metaphor for control and exploitation of the other. Animals, and man’s relationship with them, is key to understanding much about Greek thought and life, as scholars of Greek social thought have begun to note. Cf. S.T. Newmyer (2010) & G.L. Campbell (ed.) (2014).

who stood to lose the most from any change in the social order, though the size and composition of the enfranchised group varied greatly from place to place, and from period to period. In Homer, the elite male class was made up of the heroic *basileis*; in Classical Sparta, every Spartan peer over the age of 30; in democratic Athens, every free citizen male over the age of 18.

1.2.1. The fact that taming metaphors overwhelmingly attend social activities that are categorised as masculine in the Greek tradition,³⁴ such as political supremacy, martial violence, sexual domination, and the control of women, and the fact that they were so consistently applied to the ideal behaviour of the enfranchised man, underpins my view, argued throughout this thesis, that social taming is inextricable from ideas of masculinity and male power. More specifically, I propose that metaphorical taming generally attends descriptions of ideal, socially sanctioned male behaviour: what many sociologists would now regard as hegemonic masculinity.

Drawing on the Gramscian model of hegemony,³⁵ the sociologist R.W. Connell has argued that hegemonic masculinity is male behaviour that legitimises men's dominant position in society. It justifies the subordination of women and the common male population, and marginalises other ways of being a man by branding them as "feminine" (Connell 1995; 2000; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). While Connell's work has not been without its critics,³⁶ it is irrefutable that the hegemonic masculinity model provides a useful tool for the study of gender-power relations and the ideology of patriarchy, for which ideals of male behaviour that focus on activity and domination might be viewed as a precondition.³⁷

³⁴ And in the scholarly literature.

³⁵ For a discussion on the concept of hegemony, cf. T.J. Jackson Lears (1985), P. Ives (2004), & R. Howson & K. Smith (eds.) (2008).

³⁶ Cf. D. Demetriou (2001).

³⁷ Furthermore, since we possess no conclusive evidence for a historical human society that was not patriarchal to an extent, consideration of hegemonic masculinity is of obvious relevance to all studies of the structure of oppressive, hierarchical social systems, reliant on the othering of disenfranchised groups. In a sense, then, studies in hegemonic masculinity can be viewed as a necessary companion to feminist and subaltern studies, since it can always be viewed as an aspect of the worldview of the dominant group in the social hierarchy.

The scholarly literature has made great strides in identifying and exploring ideals of male behaviour in the Greek *poleis* in recent decades, as masculinity studies have entered the mainstream of Classical scholarship.³⁸ Within the developing field of Ancient Greek masculinity, Lin Foxhall and J.B. Salmon (1998a; 1998b) have pioneered excellent research, beginning with two edited books in the late 1990s that shone the spotlight on masculinity in the Ancient World as a field of study in its own right. Obviously, warfare was among the foremost arenas for expressions of hegemonic masculinity in Ancient Greece, and scholars such as Hans van Wees (1992, 148-152; 1998; 2004, 38) and Paul Cartledge (1993; 1998, 54-67) have explored the relationship between citizen warrior ideals and masculine social standing in Homeric, Archaic, and Classical Greece. These studies have demonstrated, first of all, that correct masculinity in the Ancient Greek *poleis* was built on claims to the possession of manly courage (*andreia*) and rational self-control (*sophrosyne*) (van Wees 2004, 37, 192; 1998, 16; Cartledge 1993, 85).³⁹ Notionally speaking, these were the qualities most needed to contribute to the public good as a free adult citizen, through participation in hoplite warfare and in politics. Cartledge (1998) has argued that, after the advent of hoplite warfare in Ancient Greece, this heavily armed citizen of middling means, who fought on the battlefield in defence of the state, was the ultimate representation of the Ancient Greek masculine ideal: he was the courageous, restrained man, dedicated to the collective good of the community. Other forms of military participation, such as service as an archer, peltast, oarsman or cavalryman,⁴⁰ tended to be compared, unfavourably, to the hoplite ideal in the prevailing ideology.

Studies have also demonstrated that a man's public honour and reputation for possession of the cardinal manly virtues was closely connected to the sexual

³⁸ For a digestible overview of ideals of masculinity in Ancient Greece, cf. M. Masterson (2014).

³⁹ Studies on *sophrosyne* as social ideals predate the study of masculinity in the Classics. For *sophrosyne*, cf. H. North (1966). Studies on *andreia* as a social concept are now numerous. For some examples, cf. R. Rosen & I. Sluiter (eds.) (2002). Cf. K. Bassi, in particular, for an account of the semantic range of the term (2002, 25).

⁴⁰ The case of cavalry participation is particularly interesting. While it obviously retained a degree of aristocratic prestige in the *poleis*, it was also unfavourably compared to hoplite participation and may have been associated with cowardice (Xen.*Hell.* 4.5.11-17; Lys.*Alk.* 22). On the social/ideological significance of horse ownership in the Archaic and Classical Periods, cf. chapter 6. On the status of archers, cf. D.M. Pritchard (2018).

chastity of his domestic subordinates: namely his wife and children, but also, perhaps, his slaves. In Classical Athens, as Lloyd Llewellyn Jones (2003) has shown in *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, the wives and daughters of citizens were expected to wear veils in public, at least partially to protect the masculine honour of the *kyrios*. The cuckolded citizen, or he whose daughters engaged in premarital sex, or were even suspected of having done so, was liable to experience public shame and a sense of emasculation, having had the impious, antisocial crime of *hubris* committed against him by a fellow citizen.⁴¹ The evidence indicates that strong laws existed, at least in Classical Athens, to prevent such eventualities, as Nick Fisher (1990; 1992) has explored thoroughly. Ancient Greek masculinity has often been seen as consistent with other Mediterranean masculinities in this sense: a point that David Gilmore (1990, 38-49) has made, observing similarities in the representation of Odysseus' relationship with Penelope in Homer's *Odyssey*, and expressions of public honour and shame in 20th century villages in Spain and Italy.

Also broadly consistent with hegemonic masculinity in other Mediterranean societies is the Greeks' apparent tendency to view "passivity" in sexual relations as indicative of femininity and incompatibility with the cardinal masculine virtues of *andreia* and *sophrosyne*. Michel Foucault (1990) famously argued that Ancient Greek sexuality, and by extension adherence to correct masculinity, was not defined – as it has been in the modern era – by the sex of the partners so much as by the roles they assumed in the sex act itself. Sexual acts between two men were not necessarily considered evidence of femininity nor, for that matter, as a deviant form of masculinity per se. Much more important was the fact that there was a gulf in social status between the two participants, because sexual intercourse was implicitly linked to social status. Other scholars with a more encyclopaedic knowledge

⁴¹ Male reactions to even the suggestion of emasculation in this context may have been radical. Cf. the response of the cuckolded Euphiletos in Lysias 1, *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*. Also, consider the reaction of the father of the unchaste *parthenos* in Aiskhines 1.182, as studied by A.L Edmunds (1997). Homeric epic, too, serves up relevant examples. The cuckolded Menelaos, alongside Agamemnon, takes the Akhaian expedition to Troy to recover his honour or *time* (Hom.*Il.* 1.159); while Odysseos slaughters the suitors who have tried to seduce and marry his wife in his absence (Hom.*Od.* 22).

of Greek sources than Foucault, such as Sir Kenneth Dover (1974; 1989) and David Halperin (1990), have elaborated on this point, demonstrating that the free adult citizen was always expected to assume the active, penetrating role in sexual relations; and that a reputation as a sexual passive was liable to meet with public approbation, accusations of femininity, and exclusion from citizen status. In essence, then, a man's assumption of an active sexual role constituted an expression of his adherence to a social ideal of masculinity that focussed on assertiveness, manly courage and dominance of social inferiors; but also on a strong sense of solidarity with fellow citizens and the exercise of personal restraint (*sophrosyne*) in one's dealings with them.

Joseph Roisman's approach in *The Rhetoric of Manhood* (2005) constituted an important breakthrough in the study of masculinity in Ancient Greece, and has had a considerable impact on the approach to the concept of hegemonic masculinity taken in this thesis. Roisman's study, though confined to 4th century Athens, made the important step of outlining not only what the ideals of masculinity were in that society, but also of recognising that men of different ages were expected to have very different relationships to that ideal. As Roisman has demonstrated (2005, 11-17), young men in Ancient Greece were expected to lack the ideal *sophrosyne* of the mature adult citizen, and were therefore considered the most likely to commit *hubris* against fellow citizens; while older men, on the other hand, were often suspected of lacking the *andreia* associated with the ideal (2005, 205). As Roisman's study has shown, it is therefore important to recognise a strain, in Athenian thought of the 4th century at any rate, which assumed that the masculine ideal was most readily achieved in the middle years of a man's life.

The advent and development of feminist studies in the Classics has yielded much important discussion about the lives of Greek women living under what were often rigidly patriarchal and deeply repressive societies. The work of Sarah B. Pomeroy (1975; 1991) was seminal in this respect, and her findings have since been greatly elaborated on by Sue Blundell (1995; 1998). Blundell's work, with its strong emphasis on gender relations in daily life in the Ancient Greek *polis*, has been an important secondary source here and has served as a constant reminder that one cannot hope to study masculinity in

any society, without regard for the practical consequences of hegemonic male behaviour for the groups it endeavoured to control and marginalise.

While the scholarly literature on male behaviour and masculinity in Ancient Greece is rich and still developing, it is my view that few studies have placed sufficient emphasis on the images that attend and often pervade narratives of hegemonic male social behaviour. The focus on the mechanics of Ancient Greek masculinity has been to the general neglect of the frequency with which male social norms and expressions of hegemonic masculinity, such as political authority, martial violence, sexual activity, articulations of masculine *sophrosyne*, and the control of women, are all frequently cloaked in the language of taming in sources from the Archaic and Classical Periods. This is a gap in the literature that the current thesis aims to address.

There are a few partial exceptions to the general neglect of taming symbolism in Greek social power relations, however, and it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the influence of a certain strain of scholarship on my own thought processes in writing this thesis. Most of the relevant texts, in terms of the methodology applied here, come from the structuralist school of anthropology, or are at least indebted to its tradition. This is hardly surprising, since the overarching theme of this thesis is the notion that the imposition of culture on nature, i.e. taming, was fundamental to the Greek man's conception of his masculine socio-political role and his relationships with social subordinates. While this exact argument, which weaves the threads of structuralism with more recent masculinity studies, has not been made before, the theoretical essentials have a long history in anthropological scholarship. In the 1960s, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963; 1964) pioneered the reconstruction of sociocultural formations using binary oppositions drawn from everyday life. Among these, perhaps the most famous and fundamental was that essential opposition between civilisation and savagery, as embodied in the title of his case studies from Amerindian mythology, *The Raw and the Cooked*.⁴²

⁴² Originally published, in French, as the *Le Cru et le Cuit* (1964).

This work had a considerable and lasting influence on Classical scholarship, particularly through the writings of the French Classicists J.P. Vernant, Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Nicole Loraux. Vidal-Naquet's exploration of the fundamental oppositions in the forms of thought in Greek society, most notably in "Recipes for Greek Adolescence" (1986, 129-158) and "The Black Hunter" (1986, 106-128),⁴³ has particular relevance to this thesis, and I will rely on elements of his approach throughout. His opinion that the institutional, social and economic history of a society assumes full value only when placed alongside an analysis of the images that accompany and even pervade the institutions and practices of political and social activity (1986, xviii), represents an ideal summary of my approach to the theme of taming as symbol of hegemonic masculinity in this thesis. Like him, I consider that the politically enfranchised male was held to be singularly on the side of "culture", while all of those groups excluded from enfranchisement were plainly located more on the side of nature and the wild.⁴⁴ As Vidal-Naquet points out, this was an opposition that the Greeks, at least from the time of the Pythagoreans, gave considerable thought and attention to.⁴⁵

Others writing in the tradition of structuralism, or at least utilising elements of it, have also understood the importance of the concept of wildness, and the attendant notion of taming, as metaphors for male social behaviour and masculine self-assertion in Ancient Greece.⁴⁶ This is particularly true of those who have studied iconographical materials from Archaic and Classical Greece. Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (1987; 1991), in her studies of erotic pursuit scenes on Athenian vases of the 6th century, has written extensively and well about the opposition between nature and culture in the representation

⁴³ In *The Black Hunter* (1986).

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the universality of man's association with culture, and the male tendency to view woman as closer to nature, cf. S.B. Ortner (1974).

⁴⁵ In support of his argument, Vidal-Naquet (1986, 141) cites Aristotle's reference to the Pythagoreans in the *Metaphysics* (986a 22-26).

⁴⁶ While it is true that structuralism is not so highly regarded as it once was in Classical scholarship, and some structuralist theory has received staunch and legitimate criticism from scholars since the 1970s, I would nonetheless suggest that the structuralist oppositions, such as that between wild and tame, provide a useful lens through which to observe and comment on the history and meaning of Greek social institutions and behaviours. For a notable critique of structuralism, cf. A. Giddens (1993, 121). Giddens takes particular issue with what he views as structuralism's mechanical view of the reproduction of social systems.

of these heavily gendered scenes, which often equate sexual union and marriage with the hunt.⁴⁷ While Sourvinou-Inwood's works predate the great surge in masculinity studies in Classical literature that started in the mid-1990s, symbols of masculinity are clearly at play in her argument that "erotic pursuit" scenes on vases express the idea that female wildness is purged by men through the social act of marriage. As she astutely observes, the notion that a girl is a wild thing that needs to be tamed through marriage is expressed in scenes where a *parthenos* is pursued/hunted by a youth who is often, though not always, armed with a sword or spear (1987, 138).

Perhaps even closer to the objectives of this thesis is Judith Barringer's *The Hunt in Ancient Greece* (2001), which focussed on hunting scenes on Ancient Greek vase-painting. While Barringer's study is not, in its essence, about the symbolism underlying ideals of male behaviour in Ancient Greece, she nonetheless recognises that the human/animal relationship, and particularly the pursuit and slaughter of wild animals in the hunt, provided a metaphor for elite male social power on vase paintings from the Archaic Period (Barringer 2001, 71). In a similar spirit, and equally influential on my own thought processes, are the works of Claude Calame (1999; 2001). Calame's studies have placed emphasis on the social significance of the notion of taming the wild, particularly as it related to initiation rituals, etiological myths of marriage and narratives of pederastic courtship. Though Calame deals primarily with fragments of female choruses from the Archaic Period (2001), and iconographical evidence from 6th century Athens (1999), his consistent illustrations of the association between taming and male social practice provides a useful touchstone for the literary evidence collected and analysed in this thesis.

1.2.2. None of the literature to date, however, has recognised that the repeated emphasis on the enfranchised male as tamer, particularly in literary texts, can be read in terms of the imagery that accompanies and pervades⁴⁸ hegemonic male behaviours, and masculine social institutions, in the ancient *polis*. Looking at the sources for Ancient Greek society through an anthropological

⁴⁷ For more on these, cf. section 4.3.3.

⁴⁸ To borrow a phrase from Vidal-Naquet (1986, xviii).

lens, and building on a certain amount of the structuralist theory of Vidal-Naquet in particular, my aim in the following chapters will be to carry out a number of case studies, from Homeric, Archaic and Classical Greece, investigating how the concept of taming the wild features in narratives of hegemonic masculinity in Ancient Greek social thought. The broad argument linking the chapters together is that the enfranchised male group,⁴⁹ a group whose size and composition varied from period to period, and from *polis* to *polis*, tended to define its subordination of subaltern groups within society, and its maintenance of the social hierarchy, through the language of taming as a metaphorical “purging” of antisocial wildness for the benefit of society.⁵⁰

Chapter 2 will constitute a case study of the ways in which the idea of “taming”, expressed through the verb *damazein* and its variants, and often entirely removed from the context of the hunt, provided a metaphor for social control in Greek thought even during the Homeric period. Indeed, as shall be demonstrated in that chapter, the verb *damazein* in Homeric epic was often applied within the context of removing internal threats to the stability of the ruling male group. Individual elite men or heroes, though members of the power-holding group, were often depicted by Homer as inclined towards savagery. The powerful impulse to attain personal honour and glory that defined heroic society, as well as other motivations, could often drive an individual hero towards antisocial behaviour significantly aligned with that of wild animals. This meant that maintenance of solidarity within the ruling group of *basileis* in epic was a constant problem, and the punishment that the group meted on excessively individualistic behaviour by any Homeric prince could be communicated through the metaphor of taming a wild or unruly animal.

One of the primary arguments of this thesis is that skilled horse-taming was a powerful symbol of desirable masculine character traits in Ancient Greece, signifying a man’s capacity to impose and preserve social order. In Greek

⁴⁹ Or individuals within the group operating, one can assume, in accordance with a prevailing ideology.

⁵⁰ It is likely that hunting, in agricultural societies, has always been a heavily gendered act. For a discussion on gender, social power and hunting in early farming societies, cf. Y. Hamilakis (2003).

literature, the horse often serves as a surrogate for social inferiors, whom the adult man controls or educates, either by force or persuasion. In many ways, this is easily understandable. Among domesticated animals the horse occupies something of a unique position. While the taming of other ruminants, such as cattle and sheep, occurred once in the history of human civilisation, every horse must be trained and tamed. More to the point, if taming is unsuccessful, the animal becomes an immense threat to the safety of the rider. As Jeremy Bell writes of the horse's utility as a stand-in for man in the works of Plato, for example, "if one examines the horse further, if one looks it in the mouth, as it were, one sees that it likewise bespeaks the idiosyncrasy of an animal that, like a human, is tame by nature yet wild by birth, and that, therefore, requires supplementary practices, practices of care, in order to return to its nature" (2015, 116).

This idea will be developed in chapter 3, a case study which focusses on the perceived threat to social order posed by young men in the Ancient *polis*, and how they too were "othered" as a threat to the established order through association with the wild. This was particularly true of the adolescent male or *ephebos*, whose initiation focussed on his proximity to animals, and his similarity to horses, in particular; and on his need to overcome his horsey character in order to fulfil an ideal male social role associated with the "tamer". The central paradox that the chapter will seek to tease out is how, in order to become free citizens of the *polis*, to become tamers in an ideological sense, the *ephebos* or young man himself had to be "tamed" of his own wild, horse-like character.⁵¹ However, this was achieved by means of education rather than coercion and subordination, which would have implied an unacceptable degree of slavish or feminine passivity in a prospective citizen.⁵²

⁵¹ Childhood in Ancient Greece was understood as a period of wildness and proximity to a feminine natural world. Cf. M. Golden (1990, 9). Cf. J. Bell (2015, 116), quoted above, which negates the paradox.

⁵² Indeed, the model is consistent with Xenophon's argument, in his treatise *On Horsemanship*, that horses respond better to gentle, kind treatment than to force (*Xen.Hipp.* 2.1.-5).

Chapter 4 will assess the representation of woman as wild “other” in Greek social thought during the Archaic and Classical Periods in Greece, demonstrating that the prevailing ideological narrative focussed on the role of marriage as a taming force on women. As shall be seen, myths that probably explained marriage rituals for young girls often depicted *parthenoi* as horses, fillies or wild beasts living beyond the city, who had to be spatially and metaphorically relocated to the interior sphere, to be tamed to the *oikos* by her husband. One of the recurring themes in the relevant sources is that female sexuality, in particular, was conceived of as a wild force which, if not adequately controlled by men, could result in the destruction of society by undoing man’s taming (through education) and unleashing wildness in him.

Chapter 5 will constitute a case study in the concept of man-as-tamer as it was subverted by Euripides in his tragedy, *Hippolytos*. It will argue that Euripides, being keenly aware of the tradition equating taming with adult male social control and concepts of citizen freedom, inverted the trope by presenting Hippolytos, his protagonist, as a candidate for social taming by women. This is embodied by Phaidra’s desire to assume the masculine role of horse-tamer by subordinating her stepson through sex/marriage. The chaste, virginal hunter Hippolytos, whose symbolism is in many ways anathema to that of the free man as tamer, incites women to assume active social and sexual roles and thus, unwittingly, represents a threat to social order akin to other subversive male figures such as Adonis, Dionysos, and Kronos.

While much of this thesis focusses on the use of horsemanship to symbolise the association between male social power and taming, it is important to note the traditionally aristocratic perspective that this implies. Given that horsemanship was such a prominent feature in narratives of male social power, chapter 6 will explore how the ethical value attributed to it was heavily contested in the Archaic and Classical Periods. It will be argued that, as features of hegemonic masculinity began to shift in response to political developments during the Archaic Period, so too did the value that groups of free men could attribute to this particular cultural activity. In the case of democratic Athens, for instance, horsemanship and notions of “taming” were used in state monuments, such as the Parthenon, to communicate traditional

manly virtues such as self-control (*sophrosyne*). At the same time, however, the activity of *hippotrophia* appears to have been problematic for the mass of citizens, who viewed it as characteristic of reviled aristocratic excess, of femininity or, indeed, of a feminised masculinity.

By the end of this study, I hope to have demonstrated that the concept of taming nature was central to conceptions of male power in the Ancient Greek psyche and to suggest, tentatively, that the Greek tradition of applying man's taming of the wild to his subordination of subaltern groups has cast a shadow over western masculinity and patriarchal attitudes, which is comparable to that cast by the Christian tradition, with its emphasis on "man's dominion over nature".⁵³

Finally, in terms of primary source material, the thesis will focus to a large degree on literary sources, though it will draw on material culture where this has relevance to the argument. As already touched on, my efforts to apply the methodology of structural anthropology to the study of masculinity does have some pretext in the works of scholars of material culture, most notably Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood and Judith Barringer. In a sense, then, this study should be defined as one that analyses Ancient Greek literary sources through the lens of structural anthropology, in order to understand the symbolism that attends Ancient Greek masculinity. The relative dearth of literary sources, ever a problem for the classicist, necessitates that I cast quite a wide net in search of evidence. Yet the novelty of my approach, which views taming symbolism in narratives of hegemonic masculinity as a universal feature of Ancient Greek societies, allows for this.

While much of the focus of the thesis will rest on Classical Athens, on account of the relative richness of literary source material for that *polis* in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, I will also seek to draw on material from earlier periods where possible, and later where necessary. For the most part, I will rely on sources from the Archaic and Classical Periods (approx. 800 – 323 BCE), with Homer and Aristotle representing the extreme upper and lower limits. However, from time to time I will be forced to rely on later sources,

⁵³ Cf. Genesis 1.26.

particularly for some variations of Greek myths. The *Library of Apollodoros* and some of the texts of Plutarkhos, though composed long after the time of Aristotle, nonetheless preserve details about variations of very old myths, which have their origins in the earliest period of Greek history. I will also draw, occasionally, on evidence from material culture where this casts light on, and provides support for, my argument.

CHAPTER 2

WILD BOYS AND CIVILISED MEN IN THE HOMERIC EPICS

2.1. This chapter, which is indebted to a paper written by Barbara Graziosi and Johannes Haubold in 2003, will explore the social and political significance of the use of wildness, animality and taming as metaphors¹ for interactions between elite men² in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Like Graziosi and Haubold, it takes for granted that masculinity need not always be studied in opposition to femininity, and that relationships between men are also an important aspect of social masculinity.³

The chapter will argue that the epic poet presents heroic male character as inclined towards antisocial behaviour associated with the bestial;⁴ and recognises that such inclinations, if not "tamed", are liable to damage social bonds between the ruling men, and thereby destabilise society. The obligation to tame those within the ruling group who exhibit the attributes of wild beasts, and thereby help to preserve the prevailing social order, therefore constitutes a feature of the symbolism of correct elite male conduct. In other words positive heroic masculinity, which balances the individualist impulse to obtain personal honour (*time*), renown (*kudos*) and fame (*kleos*) with a regard for solidarity with fellow elite men (Graziosi & Haubold 2003, 60),⁵ could be framed in terms of the hero's ability to tame the wild. These findings support the theory that the subordination of the wild was a feature of the imagery that

¹ Again applying the cognitive linguistic approach to metaphor, and viewing the application of the language of "taming" to social interactions as evidence of a "lived" metaphor that reveals much about Greek social thought.

² Heroes or *basileis*.

³ A fairly uncontroversial assumption. Cf. Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994).

⁴ As J.M. Redfield correctly put it, the hero "is a man on the margin between culture and nature" (1975, 103). Amusingly, this categorisation may be applied to modern vigilante heroes of the comic-book variety, such as Batman, Spiderman, and the Black Panther, who often overcome figures of the antisocial and bestial wild (villains) by embodying a controlled, socially-acceptable form of that same power. It should be noted, though, that they resemble the ancient hero in few other ways.

⁵ I consider that this ideal of heroic male behaviour in epic can be viewed as part of the value-system of an exploiting "class" of the poet's own time (Finnegan 1977, 242-243).

attended elite male social power in early Greece, as indicated by the Hesiodic examples discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis.⁶

2.2.1. Greek myth contains many images of the savage, animalistic male “other”: the semi-human who knew nothing of divine *themis* or respect for civilised institutions, and who therefore represented the antithesis, in terms of character and behaviour, of the socialised man. Such figures tended to indulge their base animal impulses, pursuing immediate self-gratification irrespective of the cost to others. Social institutions were often completely alien to them. They generally lived alone, like many male mammals in nature, in the wild expanses rather than in social settings. Physically removed from civilisation, they embodied a lack of self-restraint, and an inclination towards violence and the ethical crime of *hubris*.

One striking example is provided by the all-male *kyklopes*, whom Odysseus maintains have “neither assemblies for council nor appointed customs,⁷ but live in the peaks of high mountains in hollow caves” (Hom.*Od.* 9.112-114). Political and social organisation, markers of the civilised human community, and of men in particular,⁸ are unknown to them. Prior to encountering the *kyklops* Polyphemos in *Odyssey* book 9, Odysseus has a premonition that he is about to meet a wild (*agrios*) man (*aner*) who knows neither justice (*dike*) nor custom (*themis*) (Hom.*Od.* 9.215). Here, being *agrios* is explicitly associated with the *man* who is ignorant of, or indifferent to, the fundamental social concepts sponsored by the gods; and which, in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, are explicitly associated with Zeus’ assumption of power on Olympos.⁹

Odysseus soon discovers the cause of his sense of foreboding about the wild man when he finds himself trapped in the *kyklops*’ cave. Instead of welcoming the wandering hero and his men into his home as honoured guests, as Odysseus would expect as a man of society, Polyphemos proceeds to eat them

⁶ The extent to which Homer evokes features of a real society has been hotly debated by scholars, and cannot be dealt with in detail here. The details remain open for debate. For a general sense of the arguments, cf. A. Snodgrass (1974), M.I. Finley (1978), I. Morris (1986) & P. Rose (2009; 2012).

⁷ οὐτ’ ἀγοραὶ βουλευφόροι οὔτε θέμιστες.

⁸ Political participation in assemblies and councils being, for the most part, exclusionary of women in Ancient Greece.

⁹ Cf. section 1.1.1.

alive while drinking wine to the point of extreme intoxication. This is a violation of the custom of *xenia*, or guest-friendship, which guaranteed the safety of strangers in the *oikos* and was sponsored by Zeus in his function as *xenios*. Polyphemos' behaviour is reminiscent of that of the cannibal Laistrygonians, those eaters of raw flesh whom Odysseus encounters in book 10 (Hom.*Od.* 10.80-130), and stands in marked contrast to that of the civilised Phaiakians in book 8 and of Aiolos, also in book 10 (Hom.*Od.* 10.14). These representatives of civilised society demonstrate familiarity with the gods, and with the *themis* and *dike* they sponsor, through their pious regard for the custom of *xenia*.¹⁰

In myth, the all-male *kentauroi* (centaurs) appear to serve a similar function to that of the *kyklops*. These semi-humans had the torso of a man and the hindquarters of a horse, and, like the *kyklopes*, they lived in the liminal, wild space of the mountain:¹¹ the realm unknown to *themis* and *dike*, removed from the urban human community and the rule of civilisation. Myths in which they appear point to their wildness and their insatiable appetites, especially their cyclopean tendency to become intoxicated from unmixed wine, their eating of raw flesh (Theog.*Fr.* 542), and their boundless masculine libido, which causes them to transgress against the institutions of civilised human society.¹² All of this behaviour was typically characterised as *hubris*, a trait inconsistent with life in the *polis* community, and therefore consistent with their occupation of the mountain hinterland.

The *kentauroi*'s encounters with civilisation, generally represented by the heroes in myth, tend to end badly. Herakles, that great heroic tamer of wild beasts, had slain the *kentauros* Nessos. He had tried to rape Deianeira, the hero's wife, after making an agreement with Herakles to take her safely across

¹⁰ For the relationship between Zeus and the concept of *themis* in Greek thought, cf. J. Harrison (1912). The ability or inability to observe *xenia* is, of course, a recurring theme in the *Odyssey*. Cf. S. Reece (1993).

¹¹ They are described as mountain-bred beasts in the *Iliad* (Hom.*Il.* 1.267-268). From a Greek perspective, the structuralist significance of the mountain should not be underestimated, as J. Bremmer (2012, 27) notes: "In Greece, the landscape can easily be divided into the fertile plains and the wild mountains. In a structuralist manner we can see the plain as the civilised area of the *polis* that was in opposition to the sea and the mountains."

¹² For more on *kentauroi* as figures opposed to the institution of marriage, cf. P. duBois (1979; 1991).

the river Evenos (Apoll.*Lib.* 2.7.6). Another group of *kentauroi* had gotten drunk and attempted to rape Hippodameia, the bride of Peirithoos, king of the Lapithai of Thessaly (Apoll.*Lib.* Epit.i.21).¹³ Again, in this instance, the result was a major conflict between heroes and *kentauroi* in which the heroes were, predictably, victorious. It is scarcely surprising that the *kentauroi* should exhibit this kind of overbearing male virility, for their ancestor was Ixion, that libidinous embodiment of human *hubris* who held the gods and the institution of marriage in such contempt that he sought to seduce Hera, the wife of Zeus and goddess of female marital chastity.¹⁴

In practical terms, marriage and *xenia*, those customs rejected strikingly by the *kentauroi* and *kyklopes*, are, in early Greek thought, institutions that differentiate man from beast, being sponsored by Zeus himself (*xenia*) and his wife, Hera (marriage). Marriage created bonds between the men of different families, while restraining the potentially subversive force of female sexuality¹⁵ and ensuring the birth of legitimate heirs; *xenia* similarly helped to foster ties of friendship, and political alliance, between men of the same social rank from different parts of the world.¹⁶ Such ties, then, serve to solidify the social security of the ruling male group. The male who cannot restrain his impulses out of respect for the inviolability of these institutions is therefore a threat to the fundamentals upon which patriarchal Greek society is based. He is implicitly bestial, belonging to the wild, having no share in self-restraint or the regard for group solidarity required of socialised man.

The *kyklopes* and the *kentauroi*, as well as the monstrous, libidinous *satyroi* who follow the subversive “nature” god Dionysos, also associated with the devouring of raw flesh (*omophagia*):¹⁷ all of these figures evoke a world of pre-civilisation (or anti-civilisation) where men do not live in organised urban communities, but instead dwell in the wilderness, free to pursue immediate, individual self-gratification without the concern for socio-political

¹³ Cf. Hom.*Il.* 1.265-299.

¹⁴ For the possible ritual significance of the *kentauroi* in early Greek thought, cf. section 3.2.3.

¹⁵ For female sexuality as a wild and subversive force in patriarchal Greek thought, cf. chapter 4.

¹⁶ Cf. G. Herman (1987).

¹⁷ Cf. A. Heinrichs (1978, 144).

organisation and the ruling (male) group solidarity that this necessitates.¹⁸ In Lévi-Straussian structural terms, these semi-humans belong on the side of the raw as opposed to the cooked (Lévi-Strauss 1964). Theirs is a chaotic world unknown to social and political order, culture or, crucially from a symbolic point of view, the divine force of fire that cooks meat.¹⁹

2.2.2. The semi-bestial, but indisputably male, form of *kentauroi*, *kyklopes* and *satyroi* implies that their excessive behaviour is associated with the conduct of subhuman males, subordinate to a state of nature, in opposition to culture. Put neatly, they might be considered representative of masculine appetites for sex, food and wine,²⁰ unrestrained by regard for the social boundaries that should keep the civilised, socialised man in check. While the horsey *kentauroi* receive scant attention in the Homeric poems, but are elsewhere tellingly referred to as hubristic eaters of raw meat (Theog.*Fr.* 542), the raw-eating and mountain-dwelling *kyklopes* are characterised as *hyperenor* (Hom.*Od.* 6.5). This term derives from the Greek words *hyper* (exceedingly or extremely) and *aner* (man); and it therefore evokes the concept of extreme, antisocial and unconstrained maleness.

Where it is used in Homer, it implies a complete disregard for *themis* and *dike* on the part of a male actor or actors. Agamemnon uses the term to describe the Trojans' lawless *hubris* and lack of regard for their own oaths, after one of them – Pandaros – fires an arrow at Menelaos in contradiction of an oath sworn between Akhaians and Trojans (Hom.*Il.* 4.155-159). Here, as in the

¹⁸ For the *satyroi* as embodiments of uncivilised or subhuman male conduct, cf. S. Langdon (2007, 168).

¹⁹ Indeed fire, in Greek myth, appears to mark man's introduction to civilised conduct. This element the renegade Titan Prometheus (Forethought) had stolen from the gods themselves, who had guarded it jealously from man, and given it as a gift to humankind. Fire brought men closer to the world of the gods whence it had come, a world of culture and civilisation, even as its theft earned Prometheus a terrible, agonising punishment – to have his liver eaten raw by an eagle during the day, only for it to grow back at night and be devoured once again at sunrise (Hes.*Theog.* 520-525). In neat, structuralist terms, eternal sacrifice to nature was Prometheus' lot for having been the bearer of civilisation. But man, for his part, did not escape without punishment either. The gods had exacted retribution from him for his receipt of a share in their society, for they had given him woman (Hes.*Theog.* 570-578): the most populous of human "others", thought to be inherently bound to the wild and the raw in cultures across the world (Ortner 1974, 68-87).

²⁰ Wine, in Homer (*Od.* 4.622), is regarded as *euenor*, manly in a positive sense. Just like a healthy appetite for food and sex, however, to indulge it to the point of excess and transgression was clearly a negative trait, indicative of a subversive masculine character.

more extreme case of the *kyklops*, masculine appetite seems to be at the heart of the issue. Placed in context, the Akhaian leader's use of the term suggests that his enemies have allowed their specifically male desire for *kleos* (Hom.*Il.* 4.197) to lead them to transgress against the oaths they have sworn to the gods: an act for which, Agamemnon is confident, Zeus will eventually exact retribution (Hom.*Il.* 4.160-176).

2.2.3. Passages from both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* suggest that even the fully socialised man, the hero who should advocate for divine order against the monstrous and bestial, runs the risk of descending into transgressive behaviour. The competitive nature of elite male society in the epics dictates that this is often the case. The Homeric hero's enormous masculine appetites, most notably those for individual honour (*time*), renown (*kudos*) and immortal fame (*kleos*), and his attendant drive to achieve a status superior to other men through demonstrations of personal excellence, mean that he risks crossing ethical boundaries. This, indeed, is precisely what happens to the *hyperenor* Trojan Pandaros, who is prompted, by the goddess Athene in disguise, to violate the divinely-sanctioned pact between the Trojans and the Akhains by firing an arrow at Menelaos. Athene convinces him to commit this crime against the gods by reminding him of the personal renown (*kudos*) and gratitude (*kharis*) that he might hope to gain by slaying one of the foremost *basileis* in the Akhaian army, albeit in defiance of custom (Hom.*Il.* 4.95).²¹

A neat foil for the *hyperenorie*²² of Pandaros, which results in conflict despite oaths of non-aggression, occurs in book 23 of the *Iliad*. The reckless young Antilokhos takes second place in the chariot race at the funeral games of Patroklos by pulling off a dangerous and illegal stunt to overtake Menelaos and his team (Hom.*Il.* 23. 428-440). Menelaos, his honour slighted by an unmerited defeat, rebukes the younger man for his reckless lack of concern

²¹ *Kharis* is a social bond, so the objective here is not merely self-gratification. The soldier hopes to place others in his debt by committing the act.

²² Though Agamemnon accuses all of the Trojans of *hyperenorie*, it was Pandaros alone who committed the impious, *hyperenor* act.

for the rules (Hom.*Il.* 23.570-585).²³ In support of his argument that Antilokhos has won by illegal means, Menelaos calls upon the younger man to swear by the god Poseidon that he did not win the race illegally. Antilokhos, perhaps out of regard for the god and for elite male social solidarity, declines to perjure himself by doing so. Instead, he acknowledges that he is in the wrong on this occasion, that he has gone too far in his youthful pursuit of honour and fame, and excuses himself for his rashness (Hom.*Il.* 23.590).²⁴ In recognition of this, he duly offers to give Menelaos the prize for second place: a valuable mare. Menelaos, his honour restored by the younger man's show of humility and recognition of his seniority and superiority, now demonstrates his own magnanimity by declining the award (Hom.*Il.* 23.602-611).

In stark contrast to the case of the delusional Pandaros, the potential for further conflict in this case has been prevented by Antilokhos' respect for group solidarity, oaths to the gods and the social institutions they oversee. Order and amity have won out over the kind of hubristic masculine individualism, and extreme hunger for *kudos*, *kleos* and attendant honours, that might have led to a charge of *hyperenorie*.

2.2.4. Of course, the more light-hearted tone of the latter example reflects, among other factors, the reality that it takes place in the lower stakes *agon* (contest) of the chariot race.²⁵ War, rather than organised athletic contest, is ever the most prestigious and most dangerous arena of masculine competition for status and pre-eminence in epic, and this may explain Pandaros' indulgence in the impious masculine extreme of *hyperenorie* in the martial context.

It is difficult to overstate the extent to which masculinity is defined in terms of martial display, particularly in the *Iliad*. Hektor, Nestor and Agamemnon – three of the foremost *basileis* – all admonish their soldiers to “be men”

²³ The passage represents an ethical inversion of the events of *Odyssey* book 9, where the *hyperenorie* or extreme manliness of the savage *kyklops* is plainly related to his complete ignorance of *themis* and *dike*.

²⁴ For the intergenerational aspect of this same scene, cf. section 3.2.1.

²⁵ In the Antilokhos passage, the poet may be implying that men are more likely to adhere to the demands of correct social masculinity when there is less at stake. The higher the stakes of the contest, the greater the possibility of antisocial masculine conduct.

(*aneres este*) by advancing courageously in battle and demonstrating prowess in arms (Hom.*Il.* 5.592-32; 8.174; 15.659-67). Hektor clarifies this connection between masculinity and conduct in warfare when he tells Andromakhe that “war is for men” (Hom.*Il.* 6.492-93). This he contrasts with what he considers obviously feminine social concerns by telling his wife to return to her work at the loom (Hom.*Il.* 6. 490-494). While Andromakhe and other women are not confined to the *oikos*,²⁶ and are free to travel around the *astu* of Ilium, Hektor points to an essential regulation which custom places on the activities of the sexes in Homeric epic. The primary place of women is indoors, working in the production of textiles and the care of children; the place of the men is outdoors, fighting on the battlefield, competing in games, or speaking in the assembly.²⁷ Man, in other words, is defined primarily by public display; by his desire for public contest and victory, as well as social pre-eminence and recognition. Woman, conversely, is distinguished by her productivity inside the household and her relative anonymity.

Success in battle is the hero’s route to pre-eminence among his elite peers, and he strives to attain their approval with an obsessive and, potentially, destructive energy. The heroes Meriones and Idomeneus, for instance, competitively compare the wealth of prizes they have stripped from defeated enemies in battle as an apparent measure of courage and skill that accounts for their social standing as men (Hom.*Il.* 13.247-295). Akhilleus, on the other hand, removes himself from the Akhaian army because he feels that Agamemnon, as leader of the expedition, has not given him reward proportionate to his contribution on the battlefield (Hom.*Il.* 1.148-171). His undeniable status as *aristos Akhaion*, or best man of the Akhaians, is determined by his supremacy on the battlefield, and this should dictate that he receive the pick of the spoils of war. Instead, Agamemnon reneges on this expectation, keeping the best prizes for himself in spite of the fact that he does

²⁶As well-to-do Athenian women of the Classical Period were. Cf. S.B. Pomeroy (1975) & S. Blundell (1998). For more work on women in Classical Greece, cf. E.D. Reeder (ed.) (1995)

²⁷ On oral communication and self-assertion as a feature of Homeric masculinity, cf. K. Bassi (1997).

not possess martial prowess comparable with that of the younger hero (Hom.*Il.* 2.244).

In the case of the feud between Agamemnon and Akhilleus, neither man is willing to accept that he is in the wrong for a very obvious reason. The accumulation of wealth from spoils, as recognition of a man's status, honour and lasting fame, also has a bearing on the political pecking order. At any rate, the most powerful men are also the wealthiest men, and there is a general assumption that wealth stems from manly achievements in combat.²⁸ The hero Sarpedon, fighting on the Trojan side, tells his companion, Glaukos, that they must go forth and demonstrate their prowess in battle because, otherwise, they will risk being considered craven by the people over whom they rule, and the wealth and power they feel they have earned in the past might be called into question (Hom.*Il.* 12.310-321). These men firmly believe in their own natural, as well as social, superiority over their countrymen of lower rank. Yet they feel that they can continue to enjoy the honour they receive as the best men in Lykia, only if they prove themselves the best on the battlefield. Social status and warrior prowess are inextricably linked: the best men (*hoi aristoi*) must be the bravest and most skilled in battle. Should they fail to live up to this expectation, they would not be the *aristoi*, being no better than the men they lead and rule over.

Hektor expresses a similar sentiment when he points out that war is for him more than other men (Hom.*Il.* 6.492-93), and that he cannot risk appearing a coward before the people of Troy (Hom.*Il.* 6.442). To be a ruler or *basileus*, a man must show himself to be a great warrior.²⁹ As shall be seen, the sheer

²⁸ Though elsewhere, ideology rather than practical contribution fulfils this role. Nestor claims that the authority of *basileis* comes from Zeus (*Il.* 1.278). It is, in other words, divinely sanctioned as opposed to meritocratic in nature.

²⁹ It should follow, of course, that the best ruler is also the best warrior. On the Trojan side, this rings true, for Hektor is indeed the greatest proponent of martial prowess amongst the men of Ilion, though this is compromised somewhat by the fact that his position is also hereditary. He is Priamos' heir because he is Priamos' son. Yet Agamemnon's rule of the Akhaian forces rests on even shakier foundations, as far as meritocracy is concerned. As the common soldier Thersites points out, Akhilleus is by far the greatest warrior in the army. Indeed, it seems that much of Agamemnon's reluctance to acknowledge Akhilleus' contribution and status stems from a fear that the younger man might seek to usurp him, since his rule undercuts the idea of meritocracy that pervades the heroic dialogue. Cf. Hom.*Il.* 1.288. On Thersites' role in the *Iliad* and its relationship to heroic ideology, cf. W.G. Thalmann (1988).

weight of significance attached to individual success in combat sometimes accounts for the possibility that the heroes will go too far in their pursuit of honour in this form of manly contest, slipping into bestial and antisocial behaviour associated with wild, raw-eating beasts, and ultimately becoming candidates for “taming” for the preservation of elite male group solidarity.

2.3.1. In the martial context, the masculine quality that the ideal warrior demonstrates is not *andreia*, a term used in the Classical Period to denote the hegemonic masculine trait of manly courage in battle, and especially associated with the valour of the citizen hoplite (van Wees 2004, 192; Cartledge 1998, 16). Rather, Homeric men should display *enorie* (ἠνιορέη) in combat. This, like the *hyperenorie* of the savage *kyklopes*, derives from the Greek word for man, *aner*, and serves as a forerunner to *andreia*, apparently having many of the same connotations of male bravery. A man ideally displays this quality when he advances in battle. It denotes martial prowess, and awareness of his *enorie* impels the hero towards exceptional action. Indeed it seems that, alongside a sense of *aidos* or inhibitory shame before one’s peers, *enorie* ranks as the foremost characteristic of the successful *promakhos*.³⁰

In book 17, for example, Apollo admonishes a group of Trojan soldiers to demonstrate their *enorie* by fighting together as a unit and winning the day (Hom.*Il.* 17.327-332). Aias and Akhilleus, the two greatest warriors in the Akhaian army, are said to have trusted sufficiently in their *enorie* to place their tents on the extreme wings of the camp (Hom.*Il.* 8.220-226). Graziosi and Haubold (2003, 62-63) point out that, in these contexts, solidarity between men, and concern for the group wellbeing, are essential features of *enorie*, indicating that hegemonic masculinity in Homeric epic is less ruggedly individualistic than scholars such as Redfield (1975, 104) had once thought.³¹ In this case, as the most dangerous parts of the camp are its flanks,

³⁰ Hektor (Hom.*Il.* 6.442) stresses that he would feel *aidos* were he not seen to go forth in battle and defend the city. In a sense, indeed, one might argue that these two aspects of heroic masculinity, *aidos* and *enorie*, serve as forerunners for *sophrosyne* and *andreia*, the pillars of hegemonic masculinity in the Archaic and Classical Periods. For a rounded study of *aidos* as an ethical term in Greek thought, cf. D.L. Cairns (1993).

³¹ Redfield having described heroic society, incorrectly, as “an anti-community of combat”. H. van Wees correctly points out that this is a false assertion: “The heroes do not [...] seek

being vulnerable to enemy raids, the manly courage of Akhilleus and Aias serves to ensure the safety of the entire community of soldiers. While it is a show of heroic individualism on the part of two intensely competitive *basileis*, whose honour (*time*), renown (*kudos*), and lasting fame (*kleos*) are boosted by the act, such an individual masculine display also serves the collective interest by deterring nighttime raids from Hektor's marauding forces. In this case, then, the masculine quality of *enorie* is associated with agonal man operating in accordance with social regulations that stress the importance of group solidarity rather than outright individualism.

The fact that *enorie* is a gift from the gods (Hom.*Il.* 6.156) is indicative of its place within the boundaries of correct, divinely-sanctioned behaviour for Homeric men. This marks a strong contrast to the *hyperenorie* of which the oath-breaking Trojans stand accused by Agamemnon, and which the cannibal *kyklops* Polyphemos exhibits. Yet Homer's text also indicates that the man who possesses *enorie* must not trust in it too much, or overestimate the extent to which he possesses it. Knowing the limitations of one's manly prowess is also an important feature of socially acceptable masculine conduct. Nestor, in book 4 of the *Iliad*, tells his men that no individual should trust too much in his *enorie* and seek to fight ahead of the rest (Hom.*Il.* 4.303-305). Such action would only imperil himself and, perhaps, the entire group.

Nestor's comment reminds the men that trust in their own *enorie* is desirable, but only insofar as it does not constitute reckless and needless endangerment of oneself and, perhaps more significantly, one's peers. This is probably why, when Menelaos nominates himself for tasks beyond his abilities, notably in situations where group-welfare is at stake, Agamemnon rebukes him by pointing out that such endeavours are best left to superior men (Hom.*Il.* 7.108-118; 10.241-242).³² For Akhilleus and Aias to trust in their *enorie* in most situations is acceptable primarily because this confidence is proportional

glory selfishly and obsessively, at the expense of all else and to the detriment of their communities, as has often been claimed. Personal fame goes hand-in-hand with communal glory in Homer, and many motives other than fame play a prominent part in combat" (2004, 162).

³² Agamemnon is, of course, also looking out for the welfare of his younger brother, whom he knows to be a distinctly mediocre warrior in comparison to many other Akhaian heroes.

to their abilities, and therefore does not imperil the welfare of the group. It is problematic, however, when a man's trust in his *enorie* exceeds his actual ability in circumstances where the collective welfare is at stake.

2.3.2. When a hero's indulgence of his masculine appetites, whether for *kleos* and *time*, or for sex or wealth, causes him to damage social relations with his peers, to transgress against custom, or to endanger his allies needlessly, it may be attributable to the more ambiguous masculine trait of *agenorie* (Graziosi & Haubold 2003). Again, this word derives from *aner* (man). The prefix, *ag-*, most likely from the Greek verb *ago*, denotes "very" and thus it can be translated as "great manliness". It is also noteworthy that the adjective *agrios*, evocative of rusticity and wildness, and standing in opposition to the socio-cultural units of *oikos* and *astu/polis*, derives from the same root; and, as shall be seen, the epic poet was quite possibly aware that *agenorie* could, in some contexts at least, evoke the concept of male wildness in fundamental opposition to civilised male conduct.³³ Ultimately, at any rate, *agenorie* in some, though not all, contexts describes male conduct at odds with socially sanctioned masculine norms.

The related adjective *agenor*, on the other hand, we might translate as "very manly". Heroes are often described as possessing a *thumos agenor*, a very manly spirit, in contexts that imply that it is a feature common to many of the foremost princes. Thus, as shall be argued here, it is their response to their *thumos agenor*, rather than its presence, that testifies to the individual's relationship to the kind of social masculinity towards which the most virile and successful men should strive. There are circumstances in which great individual manliness is required or desirable; but others when it is potentially dangerous and destructive.

That *agenorie*, or possession of a *thumos agenor*, are not universally negative traits, but rather heroic qualities that enable the greatest warriors to exhibit immense masculine prowess, courage and daring is indisputable. In the 10th book of the *Iliad*, for instance, Diomedes points out that his *thumos agenor* (Hom.*Il.* 10.221) prompts him to volunteer for a dangerous but necessary

³³ Even if he was not aware of the actual etymological link.

action: that of spying on the Trojan camp in the dead of night. In other words, the *thumos agenor* appears, in this context, to be linked to an act that might be described as a laudable exhibition of *enorie*. It prompts Diomedes towards an individual display of manly courage that benefits the collective war effort. Indeed, when Diomedes proposes that Odysseus be his comrade in the task of spying out Hektor's location on the plain of Troy, he does so in recognition of the fact that Odysseus also possesses a *thumos agenor* (Hom.*Il.* 10.243). For a dangerous mission that requires great daring, the hero's *thumos agenor* is evidently a useful attribute. Indeed, Odysseus' *thumos agenor* appears to serve him well on more than one occasion, for in the *Odyssey* it is responsible for the sense of foreboding he feels upon landing on the *kyklops*' island, and prompts him to take with him the wine that he uses to overcome Polyphemos (Hom.*Od.* 9.213).

While even the most negative applications of *agenorie* may not denote the levels of male brutality and impiety implicit in the *hyperenorie* of the *kyklops*, it often describes activities that might offend the boundaries of acceptable masculine social behaviour. Even in the martial context, where *agenorie* or a *thumos agenor* should generally be positively defined, since they are masculine traits that enable heroes to act courageously,³⁴ they may still imply reckless individualism that imperils not only the hero himself, but also his companions. Hektor's apparent³⁵ *agenorie* during the battle in the 12th book of the *Iliad*, for example, is certainly problematic. Here, the term is linked to his proposal that he will attack the Akhaians' well-protected defensive ditch, and he encourages his men to do likewise (Hom.*Il.* 12.41-48): an action that, as Polydamas advises his commander (Hom.*Il.* 12.60-66), will likely result not only in his own death, but theirs as well.³⁶

³⁴ Cf., for example, Sarpedon's link to the leonine *thumos agenor* which, though not unproblematic, implies a useful degree of courage (Hom.*Il.* 12.299-309).

³⁵ He is compared to a lion that is *agenor*. On the significance of the lion, cf. section 2.4.1 (below).

³⁶ Because Hektor is fighting against the enemy, one might expect that, in this instance, his demonstration of leonine *agenorie* would be positively defined. Since it propels him towards action that may be destructive of the group interest, however, it seems to be negatively defined in this context.

It is possible, too, that Diomedes' *thumos agenor* prompts him to go further than advisable in his night time foray into Trojan territory in book 10 of the *Iliad*. In his overpowering desire to achieve ever greater personal glory (Hom.*Il.* 10.503-505), he puts himself at increased risk of capture. Indeed, as Graziosi and Haubold indicate (2003, 66), this would very likely have been the outcome, had not Odysseus, despite also possessing a *thumos agenor*, had the wherewithal to signal to his companion to stop slaying sleeping Thracians and return to the safety of the Akhaian camp (Hom.*Il.* 10.500-502). At this point, Odysseus has clearly recognised that they have achieved more than the mission had originally set out to do, and should be content with their successful night's work: a sentiment that the goddess Athene, tellingly, shares with him but which the young Diomedes appears to struggle to accept (Hom.*Il.* 10.488-93, 502, 513-14).³⁷

In demonstrating such characteristic wisdom, one must assume, Odysseus had to restrain his own *thumos agenor*, which would have impelled him, like Diomedes, to seek ever greater personal honour and glory by continuing the slaughter of sleeping Thracians. This might indicate that Odysseus, the hero famed for his intelligence (*noos*) and cunning (*metis*) but not lacking the stuff of manly courage (*thumos agenor*), is perhaps the one most capable of recognising the point at which the heroic impulse for individual glory and honours is self-defeating and socially damaging. In this instance, he possesses sufficient restraint to transcend the individualist, masculine impulse to acquire greater *kudos* and *kleos* by inflicting further casualties on Hektor's newly-arrived Thracian reinforcements.

2.3.3. Yet it is outside of the martial context that the problematic aspects of heroic *agenorie*, or *thumos agenor*, are brought into starkest relief, emphasising male behaviour that is damaging to elite male social relations; and which, if left unchecked, might lead to outright wildness in the offending hero. Akhilleus, ever problematic both on and off the battlefield, is considered the most *agenor* of men for obvious reasons. Diomedes asserts that there is

³⁷ Though the situation is becoming increasingly perilous, Diomedes hesitates to leave the scene of the slaughter, planning a spectacular display by seizing the chariot and armour of Rhesos and, perhaps, by slaying yet more Thracians.

something exceptionally antisocial about Akhilleus' prodigious masculinity as early as book 9, when the great hero has just rejected Agamemnon's conciliatory gifts. Though Akhilleus is peerless among men, Diomedes says, he is also *agenor* (Hom.*Il.* 9.699-700). Agamemnon's offer of lavish gifts has only rendered him more so. Here, the term clearly evokes a haughtiness that is linked to Akhilleus' overbearing, though undeniably manly, desire for personal recognition of martial achievements beyond those of his peers.

Agamemnon himself should have predicted the outcome of his attempted reconciliation, for he has long been aware of Akhilleus' obsession with individual honours and his capacity to reject social norms. In book 1 of the *Iliad*, the Akhaian leader points out that, because Akhilleus possesses exceptional individual talents in the primary arena of manly contest, he wishes to set himself above others at whatever cost to the group interest (Hom.*Il.* 1.287-289). That is to say Akhilleus wishes to be a king above kings because he feels it is his right as *aristos Akhaion*. In his case, obsessive pursuit of social recognition of his martial superiority renders him less considerate of the need for solidarity with the other leading *basileis*. Agamemnon also refers to Akhilleus as *ekpaglotatos*, most extreme (Hom.*Il.* 1.146): a term that elsewhere refers to the *hubris* of King Laomedon when he threatened to bind the hands and feet of Poseidon and Apollo, and feigned to lop off their hands with his sword (Hom.*Il.* 21.450-450).

From a more normal hero's perspective, custom dictates that Akhilleus should return to battle following the embassy in book 9, his public honour and status restored by Agamemnon's gifts. But, as scholars have long recognised, it is precisely at this point in the poem that the extent of Akhilleus' difference from the other heroes becomes most apparent (Bowra 1930, 19; Whitman 1958, 193; Redfield 1975, 7). His rejection of Agamemnon's attempted reconciliation, and his continued isolation from the army, mark him out not only as subject to his *thumos agenor*, but as guilty of indulging it to the point that he is, in Aias' words, utterly *agrius* (Hom.*Il.* 9.629). As Aias points out,

even the relative of a murder victim can restrain his *thumos agenor*³⁸ and accept compensation; but not so Akhilleus (Hom.*Il.* 9.629). Here is a key point. His inability to restrain his *thumos agenor* by accepting compensation and resocialisation, as custom dictates, leads to the accusation of wildness by a member of his peer group. Even at this relatively early stage in the poem, long prior to Akhilleus' vengeful frenzy upon the death of Patroklos, the hero is accused of a subhuman beastliness, and of having no place in regular human society. He has started down a path of rejecting fundamental social norms that will, ultimately, see him fully embrace the status of a predatory beast of the wild.

2.3.4. In a different context, entirely removed from battle and its associated contests for masculine honour and prestige, the suitors in the *Odyssey* are also referred to as possessing a *thumos agenor* (Hom.*Od.* 1.106, 144; 2.235, 299; 16.462; 17.65, 79, 105; 18.43, 346; 20.284, 292; 21.68; 23.8). Theirs is perhaps the most interesting case of all, because it is apparent that their excessive manliness refers not to an obsession with individual fame and glory, since they are plainly a cowardly and dishonourable group by heroic standards. Rather, the application of the term to them confirms that it relates to great and potentially destructive masculine appetites, since it seems that their *thumos agenor* is manifest in their lasciviousness and their rapacious desire for wealth. They are consumed, in other words, by masculine desires other than the competitive ones that motivate the majority of the *Iliad*'s heroes; and, as a result, they commit *hubris* by transgressing against the most fundamental social customs. They ignore a man's right to lordship over his household, as *kyrios* or master of the *oikos*. They intrude on Odysseus' household in his absence; they eat his food in his hall, pursue marriage with his wife, sleep with his female servants, and attempt to murder his son. It is notable that much of this behaviour is reminiscent of that of the beastly, rapacious *kentauroi* of myth.

³⁸ Which presumably drives him towards vengeance to preserve his own masculine honour and social standing. Again, in this instance, the *thumos agenor* relates to a masculine desire or appetite which, if not restrained, might escalate into a socially destructive situation.

Yet the suitors' transgressions are also reminiscent of the *hyperenor* and *agrioi kyklops*, Polyphemos, for they too fail to show due respect to strangers and thus offend the custom of *xenia*, especially in their violent treatment of the beggar Odysseus (Hom.*Od.*17.343-348).³⁹ The haughtiest and most violent of the suitors, Antinoos, indulges in such impiety even to the point where he threatens to have Iros' testicles thrown raw to a dog to eat (Hom.*Od.* 18.87). As Charles Segal (1974, 298) notes, this constitutes the very apex of violence in the Homeric poems. Just as the *kyklops* does in eating Odysseus' men raw (Hom.*Od.* 9.369), Antinoos shows such disregard for *themis* and the gods that he might return to a state of human pre-civilisation associated with the eating of raw flesh. In other words, the suitors demonstrate the behaviour of the wild, subhuman male; of excessive, antisocial and bestial masculine appetites in the language of early Greek patriarchy. Each of them is an absolute individualist whose primary concern is his own insatiable appetite for personal wealth and status, not through participation in war, but through demonstrations of power and sexual potency that defy *themis* and *dike* at every turn. They are, collectively, *agenor* on this account.

2.4.1. The fact that *agenorie*, and the possession of a *thumos agenor*, are traits that the heroes share with ravenous male animals is most revealing. In the *Iliad*, in particular, the conduct of wild beasts who are *agenor* or have a *thumos agenor* – primarily boars and especially lions – provides a simile for the behaviour of heroes. As Michael Clarke has pointed out, the beast similes in Homeric epic do not merely amplify the narrative but are also intended to “assimilate aspects of the appearance and personality of the warrior to those of the animal” (Clarke 1995, 140). That is to say that Homer uses them in contexts that serve to highlight something in particular about the hero's appearance or emotional state at a precise moment in the narrative.

In Ancient Greek thought, the lion, the animal evoked most frequently to describe heroic *agenorie*, symbolised the ideal martial qualities of courage

³⁹ Indeed, this aspect of their behaviour becomes apparent as early as book 1, when they show scant regard for Athene, disguised as a travelling merchant. It falls to the young Telemakhos to show hospitality to the stranger, Mentos (Hom.*Od.* 1.116-118), and thus to give the first indication that he is ready to assume adult male duties, to become a proper and functional member of elite male society.

and strength, and so its association with the martial hero finds obvious and immediate explanation. Crucially, however, the lion also represented extremes of subhuman wildness and ravenous appetites.⁴⁰ Presumably because it was considered utterly untameable, Greek myth tended to associate the lion with opposition to civilised custom, as a man-killer and eater of raw flesh. The most famous lion in Greek myth was the Nemean lion, to which I have already alluded in chapter 1.⁴¹ A scourge to shepherds and farmers by feasting on their flocks, and a potential menace to travellers, this creature was one of the monsters slain by Herakles, that great tamer of the lawless and primordial forces of nature that stood in opposition to patriarchal human civilisation.⁴² Apparently, the spectacle of even the Nemean Lion's pelt within the walls of the city was more than King Eurystheus could tolerate (*Apoll.Lib.* 2.5.1). There was no place for such a creature, or perhaps for the club-bearing hero capable of killing it with his bare hands and metaphorically assimilating its power, in the civilised urban setting.

The sphinx that had plagued the city of Thebes prior to the arrival of Oidipous was also a devourer of raw flesh (*Apoll.Lib.* 3.5.8) whose physical appearance reflected its wildness: it was half lion and half woman in most accounts. Similarly, the goddess Kybele had transformed the huntress Atalanta and her lover, Hippomenes, into lions after they had sex in a temple of Kybele. Their crime in this case was a transgression against the sanctity of the goddess' shrine, and the punishment reflected the impious and antisocial nature of the act. This image of the lion as a menace to civilisation and metaphor for subversive social conduct retained its lustre in later Greek thought. In Aristophanes' *Batrakhoi* (*Ar.Bat.* 1431-1433), the brilliant but controversial general Alkibiades, whom many Athenians held responsible for Athens' downfall in the war, was referred to as a lion cub raised in the city.⁴³ The

⁴⁰ For the symbolism of lions in the Ancient Near East, from which much of the lion symbolism in the Greek tradition appears to have come, cf. C.E. Watanabe (2000). For lion similes in Homer, cf. M. Clarke (1995).

⁴¹ Cf. section 1.1.3.

⁴² Herakles' role in mastering the forces of nature is referred to in Pindar's *Isthmian 4*, in which he points to the hero's role in taming the sea (*Pind.Isth.* 4.65).

⁴³ “οὐ χρὴ λέοντος σκύμνον ἐν πόλει τρέφειν, μάλιστα μὲν λέοντα μὴ ν' πόλει τρέφειν, ἦν δ' ἐκτραφῆ τις, τοῖς τρόποις ὑπηρετεῖν.” (*Ar.Bat.* 1431-1433).

playwright's intention, of course, was to suggest that the general, although born in the civilised community, was not naturally of it. Alkibiades was famous (or infamous), after all, for great dash and courage; but also for greed, lasciviousness, and committing acts of immense masculine *hubris* against his fellow citizens.⁴⁴

The boar, as reflected in the myth of the Kalydonian boar hunt, also possessed a similarly savage destructive capacity since it ravaged the region. It had been sent by the goddess Artemis, mistress of the wild, as a punishment for king Oineus' failure to honour her – a reminder of the destructive capacity of nature, to be sure (Apoll.*Lib.* 1.8.2). It need scarcely be pointed out, of course, that pigs are, and always have been, associated with an insatiable appetite for food; while the menace that a wild boar could pose to the man who hunted it is emphasised in the *Odyssey*, where the elderly slave Eurykleia recounts how Odysseus had been gored by a wild boar when he went hunting with his grandfather in his youth (Hom.*Od.* 19.390-400). The idea that wild pigs, generally, were representatives of violence and destructiveness in Greek thought is also communicated in the myth of the Krommyan sow, which the young Theseus slew on his way to Athens from Troizen (Apoll.*Lib.* Epit.1.1).⁴⁵

2.4.2. It seems, therefore, that the Homeric beast similes – when used to describe the conduct of a hero – sometimes articulate the potential extremes of behaviour towards which his *thumos agenor* might drive him. When the simile is employed, the hero's behaviour recalls in some way the beast that he might, under other circumstances, have been commissioned to slay in the interests of human society, as advocate of social order and divine *themis*. When Hektor recklessly assaults the Akhaian ditch without regard for the welfare of his fellow men, his destructive *agenorie* resembles that of a lion,

⁴⁴ Cf. Andokides' speech *Against Alkibiades*. Alkibiades was particularly renowned as an adulterer (And.*Alk.* 4.10), and was even alleged to have had an affair with Timaiia, the wife of the king of Sparta, Agis II (Plout.*Lys.* 22; Plout.*Ages.* 3). For more on male sexual incontinence as *hubris* associated with wildness, cf. sections 3.3.2. & 3.3.3.

⁴⁵ Even domesticated pigs can be aggressive, particularly at the smell of blood. Sows, when defending their piglets, are famously violent.

which has no regard for the boundary that separates the realm of man from that of beast when seeking to satisfy its hunger:

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἄν ἔν τε κύνεσσι καὶ ἀνδράσι θηρευτῆσι
κάπριος ἢ ἑ λέων στρέφεται σθένει βλεμαίων:
οἱ δέ τε πυργηδὸν σφέας αὐτοὺς ἀρτύναντες
ἀντίον ἴστανται καὶ ἀκοντίζουσι θαμειὰς
αἰχμὰς ἐκ χειρῶν: τοῦ δ' οὐ ποτε κυδάλιμον κῆρ
ταρβεῖ οὐδὲ φοβεῖται, ἀγνηορὴ δέ μιν ἔκτα:
ταρφέα τε στρέφεται στίχας ἀνδρῶν πειρητίζων:
ὄππῃ τ' ἰθύσῃ τῆ εἴκουσι στίχες ἀνδρῶν.

As when among dogs and hunting men
a wild boar or a lion spins around, exulting in his might;
and they, forming into ranks against him,
hurl a mass of spears from their hands;
not even then is his glorious heart alarmed,
it fears not, and so his *agenorie* kills him;
and wherever he may attack, at that place
the lines of men fall back.

(Hom.*Il.* 12.41-48)

Here, comparison with the ferocity of both the boar and the lion draws attention to Hektor's isolation from the group and the potentially destructive nature of his manly courage at this moment in the battle. The simile tells us that, just as the spears of the men do not kill the beast so much as the *agenorie* that prompts him to fight against them despite the odds, so Hektor's *agenorie* impels him to take rash and dangerous action that will get himself and others killed. His behaviour goes beyond the desirable limits of heroic individualism. His *agenorie*, which always prompts him to fight for greater glory, has temporarily clouded his judgement and made him forgetful of his social responsibilities. But, as Graziosi and Haubold point out (2003, 64), the hero's essential difference from the lion is eventually underscored when he accepts the advice of Polydamas to refrain from his current course of action. Unlike the savage and isolated lion, Hektor is a social man who can rely on the solidarity and advice of his peers to restrain his more destructive masculine impulses.

Similarly Sarpedon, in breaking through the Greek defensive line, resembles a hungry lion with a *thumos agenor* (Hom.*Il.* 12.298-301). On this occasion,

the categorisation is not necessarily negative, since his leonine aggression is directed successfully against enemies on the battlefield. The lion that Sarpedon is compared to is impelled, by its hunger, to stray into the folds of men and thus to endanger himself (Hom.*Il.* 12.299). Given the nature of Sarpedon's ensuing speech, in which he reminds Glaukos of their mutual duty to demonstrate their manly prowess in battle (Hom.*Il.* 12.310-328), the objective of the simile is clarified. Just as the hungry lion's *thumos agenor* drives him to commit potentially self-destructive action, so Sarpedon's desire for social honours and manly status compels him to take risks, making him almost as heedless of danger as the wildest of wild animals. Indeed, the metaphor and subsequent speech appears, once again, to imply that the hero's need for honour and glory is comparable to a lion's ravenous desire for meat. At the same time, however, the fact that Sarpedon justifies his action in social terms testifies to his place within, rather than outside of, society (Graziosi and Haubold 2003, 63). He is like the lion (*leon os*) in terms of his hunger for what he desires or needs; but he is not wholly so, since he, like Hektor, is bound to social obligations and is, ultimately, motivated by the need for social honours. The masculine hunger to attain honour, wealth and lasting fame through martial exploits may occasionally lead a hero to transgressive, individualistic behaviour; but it is, still, a social motivation that stands at odds with the solitary lion's primal hunger.

2.4.3. The significance of the lion simile, in particular, as a symbol of a potent and, if misdirected, personally and socially destructive masculinity can best be appreciated in relation to Akhilleus, that hero who, as we have seen, goes far beyond the rest in indulging his *agenorie*. He does so by openly embracing the more antisocial conduct that his *thumos agenor* impels him towards. Whereas other heroes typically manage to restrain their impulse towards damaging and antisocial *agenorie* in most contexts, Akhilleus eventually engages with it to the extent that he does not merely risk behaving like a lion, but feels that he has *become* one.

For instance, his mutilation of Hektor's corpse is related specifically in terms of the savage *agenorie* of the act. His reckless disregard for all social decency and concern for divine *themis* is alluded to by Apollo, who appeals to the

other gods to ensure the return of the body to Troy for burial. Always prone to the crime of excessive masculine pride on account of his extreme (unique among his own generation at least) virility, now in his quest to exact vengeance for Patroklos' death he offends against the most fundamental laws of gods and men:

ἀλλ' ὄλοῦ Ἀχιλῆϊ θεοὶ βούλεσθ' ἐπαρήγειν,
ὧ οὔτ' ἄρ φρένες εἰσὶν ἐναΐσιμοι οὔτε νόημα
γναμπτόν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι, λέων δ' ὧς ἄγρια οἶδεν,
ὅς τ' ἐπεὶ ἄρ μεγάλη τε βίη καὶ ἀγήνορι θυμῷ
εἴζας εἴς' ἐπὶ μῆλα βροτῶν ἵνα δαῖτα λάβησιν:
ὧς Ἀχιλεὺς ἔλεον μὲν ἀπώλεσεν, οὐδέ οἱ αἰδῶς
γίγνεται, ἢ τ' ἄνδρας μέγα σίνεται ἠδ' ὀνίνησι.

But it is deadly Akhilleus you gods wish to aid,
he whose mind is unrighteous and whose breast-thought
is unbending, even as a wild lion
who yields to his great force and his *thumos agenor*,
seizing on the sheep of men to feast.
Just so has Akhilleus utterly destroyed pity; nor does shame,
great harm and help to men, trouble him.

(Hom.*Il.* 24.39-45)

In indulging his *thumos agenor* beyond reasonable limits, Akhilleus has strayed into the territory of the wild predator. He remains *agrios*, like the lion, showing no regard for social decency or the divine laws that should regulate his impulsive, and supposedly exclusively masculine, urges. Not even the adulation of his peers and the guarantee of undying fame can appease him now, though this was what he formerly sought (Hom.*Il.* 1.243-244). Social motivations do not factor in his behaviour, as they did for Sarpedon and Hektor when they were compared to *agenor* lions earlier in the poem. He will not allow Hektor's family even the fundamental social grace of tending to his corpse. Instead, his treatment of the body reflects a refusal to acknowledge the law of the gods, and renders his behaviour more appropriate to an animal of the wilderness, of mountain and forest, the realm of uncivilised nature. The *aidos* that should prompt correct heroic behaviour, as it does for the other *basileis*, is completely lacking in him now. Overcome by frenzy, his primary

interest is the pursuit of personal vengeance far beyond the realms of normative male social behaviour.

At this point in the story, Akhilleus has already turned entirely away from society and divine law. Having indulged his bloodlust to such extremes, he does not differentiate between himself, a man, and the male lion who cannot respect social institutions, or even exist within the boundaries of civilisation. In book 22, when Hektor has come to realise that he cannot escape Akhilleus' vengeful fury, he seeks to make a basic form of social pact with his enemy – the sort that relies on both parties having respect for the gods as guarantors. The loser, Hektor says, will give the winner all of the proper burial rights, so that the dead man may not be left as prey for birds, his spirit doomed to wander the earth. Akhilleus dismisses the request, famously stating: “Just as there are no faithful oaths between lions and men, and wolves and sheep cannot live in peace but must always plan to harm each other, even as these you and I cannot be friends” (Hom.*Il.* 22.262).

Here is a pinnacle of sacrilege to which no other hero has climbed. It is no coincidence that the manliest and most virile of all men, the best man of the Akhaians (*aristos Akhaion*) and the most *agenor*, is also the one who allows his antisocial impulses to gain mastery of him, even to the point that he assumes the very persona of the man-eating animal without social motivations. Whereas correct masculine social conduct is distinguished by regard for the gods, and the ability to swear by and stand by divine oaths, Akhilleus now openly acknowledges his animalistic inability to engage in such a social contract. He rejects, openly, everything about the social and cosmic order over which Zeus and the other gods preside. Just as Agamemnon accused the Trojans of being *hyperenorie* for their impious refusal to obey the oath of non-aggression sworn by Priamos in book 4, so Akhilleus here acknowledges that he, like the *agenor* lion, is incapable of even making any such oath in the first place. In the language of structural anthropology, he has drifted entirely over to the side of the raw and the wild. He will, consequently, subject Hektor's corpse to the most brutal of indignities, to be eaten raw by dogs like a common beast (Hom.*Il.* 23.21).

2.4.4. Discussion of the association between lions and demonstrations of excessive masculinity brings me around to my concluding point for this chapter. This is the underappreciated emphasis on the hero's ideal role as tamer of "wild" male impulses, and its relation to both the divine realm and the maintenance of male solidarity, in Homeric epic. Like Zeus and Herakles in Hesiod's *Theogony*, taming is described in the epic poems in contexts where the hero preserves society and its norms against the threat of another's (or his own) antisocial masculine appetites through a metaphorical act of taming associated with the verb *damazein*.

In cases where a hero exhibits hyper-masculine behaviour, which explicitly borders on the savage and animalistic through indulgence of his *thumos agenor*, there are only two possible outcomes. Either he stops short of committing the antisocial act that he intends, and is reintegrated by the social group, as Hektor is by Polydamas for instance; or he is killed by a god or another hero, as the suitors, Dolon and Patroklos are as punishment for behaviour that essentially constitutes *hubris*.⁴⁶ Akhilleus, the lion among men, represents only a partial exception to this rule. Because he is the greatest and most virile warrior, he goes further in his *agenorie* than any other hero, but even he must eventually relent and accept resocialisation. This he does most conspicuously in book 24, when he finally agrees to return Hektor's body to Priamos, and reflects on his own impending death. His re-engagement with proper custom and the laws of the gods constitutes a return to the realm of civilised conduct, a reversal of the process that saw him become an *agrios* lion during the course of the poem. His *agenorie* has finally subsided and he recognises the need to behave according to custom by accepting Priamos' gold as ransom for his son's body, as the gods demand (Hom.*Il.* 24.138-140).

Perhaps the finest example of an effort at the social reintegration of an *agenor* hero, through metaphorical taming, can be found in the 11th book of the *Odyssey*. In this case Aias, now a shade in the underworld, refuses to speak to Odysseus and remains aloof of the other shades of dead heroes. As Odysseus tells it, Aias retained a personal grudge against him on account of

⁴⁶ Indeed *agenorie*, when indulged, appears to constitute a kind of *hubris* that is unique to men.

the infamous contest to secure the arms of Akhilleus at Troy. This was a contest between the two eminent heroes that Odysseus won, and which had resulted in Aias's suicide, following a classically *agenor* and lion-like act of antisocial slaughter.⁴⁷ Feeling that his honour had been slighted when the arms were awarded to Odysseus, Aias had resolved to murder his enemies. However, Athene confused his mind so that he slaughtered a herd of cattle instead (Soph.Aj. 15-35). Here, then, is perhaps the most perfect example of the Homeric masculine appetite for personal honour and status taken to a destructive extreme.

That masculine excess is key to understanding Aias' conduct in life is apparent, since his ghost exhibits his *thumos agenor*, as Odysseus points out, by continuing to remain isolated from the group in death. In recounting the tale of his journey to the underworld, Odysseus explains that he had sought to make amends with the belligerent and unforgiving hero. "Come here lord", Odysseus recalls calling out to Aias, "so that you may hear my words and speech, and tame (*damason*) your anger and your *thumos agenor*" (Hom.Od. 11.561-562). Here, in the first instance, is further confirmation of the association between masculine appetites, antisocial behaviour and the *thumos agenor* that we have already explored. It is also the sole example which directly infers that there is a connection between *agenorie* and a quality in the hero that, if indulged to excess in social relations, must be tamed, either by himself or by his peers, to protect the collective interest of the elite group.⁴⁸ As a dissident member of the group, even in death, Aias' resocialisation can only be achieved through an act that is metaphorically communicated in terms of taming the antisocial, wild masculinity linked to his *thumos agenor*. It is also notable, of course, that Odysseus, in trying to appease Aias, leaves the act of taming to Aias himself. He does not propose to be the tamer which would, perhaps, have constituted a further insult.

⁴⁷ Though it is, admittedly, impossible to be sure if Homer was aware of this version of the Aias myth, since we find no reference to it prior to Sophokles' *Aias*. It seems likely, however, that Sophokles was drawing on sources from the epic cycle. Homer, at any rate, also alludes to Aias' leonine qualities (Hom.II. 11.548).

⁴⁸ My argument is that, in other circumstances, it can be inferred.

Emphasis on the notion that disruptive male behaviour within the ruling group must be tamed to protect the interests of that group is repeated in a number of situations that have much higher stakes than the case of Aias' brooding in the underworld. Often in contexts where the excessive and antisocial behaviour of the individual hero is brought to attention, his death at the hands of another is also described as an act of "taming": a term evocative of the hero's traditional masculine role as the conqueror of nature, as slayer of wild beasts and as preserver of civilisation and the patriarchal, divine *kosmos*. When Odysseus plots to destroy the *agenor* and *hyperenor* suitors who have intruded on his house in his absence, behaving savagely and contrary to custom, he prays that the gods will allow him to "tame" (*damase*) them (Hom.*Od.* 21.213-216). In a similar sense, when Hektor is being pursued by the *agrioi* and uniquely *agenor* and lion-like Akhilleus, Athene (disguised as Deiphobos) urges the Trojan to stand and fight, and convinces him there is a chance that he can "tame" the wild hero with his spear (Hom.*Il.* 22.243-246). In much the same way, when Patroklos gives himself over to reckless, antisocial and leonine conduct (Hom.*Il.* 16.751-754) in his pursuit of glory on the battlefield, he is ultimately brought down by Apollo's arrow. This forces him to concede that he has been "tamed", not by Hektor, but by the god (Hom.*Il.* 16.841). Indeed, it may be significant that it is Apollo, that emblem of civilised masculinity and the quality of *sophrosyne*⁴⁹ in later Greek thought, who ultimately slays Akhilleus, the most socially disruptive, *agenor* and lion-like of men.

The same essential concept appears to be at play when Paris agrees to fight Menelaos in book 3 of the *Iliad*. Prior to engaging in combat, Menelaos, like Odysseos, prays to Zeus to allow him to tame his opponent by killing him:

Ζεῦ ἄνα δὸς τίσασθαι ὃ με πρότερος κάκ' ἔοργε
 δῖον Ἀλέξανδρον, καὶ ἐμῆς ὑπὸ χερσὶ δάμασσον,
 ὄφρα τις ἐρρίγησι καὶ ὀπιγόνων ἀνθρώπων
 ξεινοδόκον κακὰ ρέξαι, ὃ κεν φιλότητα παράσχη.

King Zeus, grant me restitution on him who first wronged me,
 Alexandros, and *tame* him under my spear,

⁴⁹ Which Akhilleus undoubtedly lacks. Cf. H. North (1966, 2).

so that all among men born hereafter
will shudder to wrong a host who shows friendship.

(Hom.*Il.* 3.351-354)

While Paris is never explicitly described as having a *thumos agenor*, or as being *agenorie*, there is no doubt that he embodies a problematic masculinity that is, in some ways, reminiscent of the *agenor* suitors in particular.

It is clear, at any rate, that his behaviour is openly hubristic and he is possessed of problematic masculine appetites. Like the suitors, he shows no concern for a man's status as *kyrios*, or for the custom of *xenia*, for he eloped with Helen while he was staying in her husband's house. He lacks *aidos*, that sense of inhibitory shame that impels a man towards solidarity with his peers: the precise quality that Akhilleus also lacks when he indulges in his lion-like behaviour (Hom.*Il.* 24.44). Indeed, Paris' lack of concern for proper civilised conduct, and his individualist tendency to pursue his own gratification at the expense of his peers, is reflected in his wearing of a panther-skin (Hom.*Il.* 3.16). The panther, in this case, represents a different set of antisocial traits to the lion or even the boar, for as H.J. Walker (1995, 102) has noted, this was an animal noted primarily for its seductive qualities rather than its strength, courage or violence. An abundance of examples from Greek myth and history remind us, of course, that seductiveness was also an extremely socially destructive male quality,⁵⁰ and it is precisely within this context that Menelaos prays that Zeus, the patron of guest-friendship, will "tame" Paris under his spear. By kidnapping Helen, Paris has acted savagely and against *xenia*, and Zeus, therefore, is expected to restore order by ensuring that his animalistic *hubris*, like that of the suitors in the *Odyssey*, is tamed.

2.5. CONCLUSION

To fully appreciate the significance of the examples, discussed in this chapter, of what I call the taming of antisocial masculinity, it is worth considering the

⁵⁰ Cf., for instance, Lysias' *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* (Ly.*Er.* 1.32-33.). For discussion of this point about the relative immorality of seduction vs sexual assault, cf. E.M. Harris (1990).

semantic range of the verb *damazein* in the Homeric epics⁵¹. While most scholars translate this word as “subdue” or perhaps to “conquer” or “kill” in the examples used above, it is used elsewhere in the poem to describe the domestication of previously untamed animals (Hom.*Il.* 23.655; Hom.*Od.* 4.637). Numerous heroes, though most notably Hektor and Diomedes, receive as their epithet *hippodamos*, the one who tames horses. A man, for it is always a man or a god who carries out the action, civilises a creature that was previously wild in some sense. As I shall discuss in much greater length in chapter 4, the verb is also used, both in epic and in later Greek literature, to describe a woman’s marriage as an act of subjugation to her husband, her *kyrios*. Similarly, Zeus uses the related verb *damnumi* when he reflects on his struggle to retain control of his wife, Hera, because the goddess’ activity constantly threatens to undermine his regal and paternal authority.⁵² In the *Odyssey*, the verb also describes Odysseus’ outwitting of the savage, *hyperenor kyklops*, embodiment of masculine excess, by feeding him wine (Hom.*Od.* 9.516).

To return to the cognitive linguistic approach to metaphor, then, the material covered in this chapter appears to confirm that the hierarchical relationship between human and animal, which focusses on taming, has been transposed onto human relationships within society. Moreover, it has been used to justify interactions with the established nexus of power: a nexus which is male-dominated and, at least in the human realm, is always occupied to some extent by a collective rather than an individual. When an individual’s masculine appetites run to destructive extremes, taming takes place for the preservation of extant norms of social and political power relations between men. In this sense, Homer’s usage accords well with the usage in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, where it describes Zeus’ overthrow of his father, the terrible Kronos, and his subsequent establishment of the universal patriarchal order (Hes.*Theog.* 490); as well as his defeat of the chthonic monster, Typhon, who threatened that order. It is also consistent with the example of Herakles and the Nemean Lion (Hes.*Theog.* 326-332). In all cases, the preservation or restoration of order

⁵¹ Alternatively *damaein*, or *damassein*. For more, cf. *Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*.

⁵² Cf. section 4.4.2.

and civilised behaviour through the act of taming is the prerogative of the elite male, operating within the bounds of regular social behaviour, or the gods who are concerned with the idea of balance, as well as social and universal order (*kosmos*).

CHAPTER 3

TAMING THE HORSE OF YOUTH

3.1. Assumptions about the character of young men are expressed frequently in Ancient Greek literature. As Joseph Roisman (2005, 11-17) has shown in the case of Classical Athens, there was a social expectation that the conduct of young men, roughly from the time of puberty until middle-age, would lean towards the antisocial and hubristic.¹ Their likely character and conduct were considered to be in certain ways antithetical to the masculine ideal of the free adult *kyrios*, especially in terms of an undeveloped rational faculty and attendant lack of self-control (*sophrosyne*). Young men could be viewed, therefore, as a potential threat to existing power structures in society.² This chapter will explore how, in terms of symbolism, the marginal status of boys and young men in relation to the masculine ideal could be expressed through symbolic alignment with nature. This also meant that the young man's internal psychological development towards a socially desirable character, and especially his growing control over his own masculine appetites,³ could be conceived of as the taming of internal wildness.⁴

This concept of subordinating internal wild impulses as part of the youth's educational process was often communicated metaphorically, in Greek art and literature, by association with horse-taming and horse-riding. The central argument of this chapter will be that the consistency with which horses and horsemanship form part of the social narrative of a boy's transition to manhood indicates that engagement in this cultural practice signified the young man's developing *sophrosyne*. By demonstrating his capacity to tame

¹ For modern studies on male aggression during puberty, cf. R.J. Nelson (ed.) (2006, 89); K.J. Karriker-Jaffe et al. (2008).

² Cf., for instance, the comments of H.J. Walker (1995, 98).

³ Such as victory in contest and the accumulation of personal honour, as well as the desire for sex and wine. Cf. sections 2.2.2 & 2.2.3.

⁴ The Sokrates of Plato's *Republic*, in speaking of the education of the young, as future guardians of his perfect state, was employing some of the normal symbols of hegemonic ideology when he contrasted the *andreia* and *sophrosyne* of the ideal ruler with the timorousness and rusticity of lesser men. [τοῦ δὲ ἀναρμόστου δειλῆ καὶ ἄγροικος] (*Pl.Rep.* 411a). That mastery of impulse was a crucial aspect of correct masculinity is made clear by Aristotle: "the deliberative faculty (*ho bouleutikos*) in the soul is not present at all in a slave; in a female it is present but ineffective, in a child it is present but undeveloped" (*Arist.Pol.* 1260a). Trans. T.A. Sinclair.

and subordinate a wild animal, most notably the flighty and often dangerous horse, to his will, the youth was implicitly proving his ability to control his own antisocial, biological impulses and adhere to a key criterion of hegemonic, citizen masculinity. While similar arguments have been made in the past with respect to the symbolism of hunting, the metaphorical significance of horsemanship to narratives of masculinity and male ethical development in the Greek *polis* has received comparatively little attention.⁵

3.2.1. The earliest extant literary texts in Ancient Greece, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer, offer important insights concerning how Hellenic culture understood the “typical” character of the young man in relation to the hegemonic masculine ideal.⁶ Perhaps the most important passage in this respect has already been touched on in the previous chapter,⁷ but is worth returning to here. In the 23rd book of the *Iliad*, Antilokhos, the youngest of the Akhaians at Troy in most accounts of the Trojan War,⁸ falls foul of Menelaos, a middle-aged hero and one of the foremost princes, following the chariot race at the funeral games of Patroklos. During the race, Antilokhos carries out a dangerous move to overtake Menelaos (Hom.*Il.* 23.400-450). When the youngster consequently seeks to claim the prize for second place,⁹ which he has won illegally, Menelaos objects. The older man argues that the prize belongs to him, since he has the better horses and would obviously have won the race had Antilokhos not cheated. He calls on his opponent to swear by Poseidon, the god of horse-racing, that he has not won by illegal means.¹⁰ Antilokhos, recognising that he has acted against custom and offended Menelaos in the process, invokes his youth as his primary defence:

ἄνσχεο νῦν: πολλὸν γὰρ ἔγωγε νεώτερός εἰμι
σεῖο ἄναξ Μενέλαε, σὺ δὲ πρότερος καὶ ἀρείων.
οἷσθ' οἷαι νέου ἀνδρὸς ὑπερβασίαι τελέθουσι:
κραιπνότερος μὲν γάρ τε νόος, λεπτή δέ τε μῆτις.

⁵ For the social significance of hunting during the period of ephebic transition, cf. P. Vidal-Naquet (1986, 106-128); also J.M. Barringer (2001) and C. Calame (1999, 104).

⁶ For some interesting examples of the place of aristocratic youth within elite society, consider the interesting case of Nestor’s attitude towards Diomedes (Hom.*Il.* 9.50-60). For commentary on this, cf. C.A. Querbach (1976)

⁷ Cf. section 2.2.3.

⁸ A title that later falls to Neoptolemos upon his arrival at Troy, following his father’s death.

⁹ First place having gone to Diomedes (Hom.*Il.* 23.508-510).

¹⁰ Cf. section 2.2.3.

Restrain yourself, for I am much younger than you,
King Menelaos, and you are the more eminent and better man.
You know of what sort are the transgressions young men commit:
For they have hasty minds, and little wisdom.

(Hom.*Il.* 23.587-590)

Here is a clear articulation of how the heroic elites view the character of young men in relation to their society's masculine ideal. Being young, Antilokhos argues, he has an unrestrained mind (*noos*) and a dearth of wisdom (*metis*).¹¹ This, of course, stands in contrast to the qualities of Odysseus, the Homeric hero famous for his *noos* and *metis*, and who appears to embody a complete, mature masculinity.

There is no mention in this passage, as there was in the examples discussed in the previous chapter, of *agenorie*, or a *thumos agenor*, that drives Antilokhos to pursue personal victory and honour to a socially damaging degree. It is unclear, therefore, to what extent this was a factor in his behaviour. Rather, he holds his underdeveloped rational or thinking faculties responsible for his lack of control over his masculine appetite for honour attained through victory in contest. This youthful dearth of *noos* and lack of *metis* implies what later Greeks would have considered a lack of manly *sophrosyne*.¹² As Helen North (1966, 3) has noted, at any rate, it seems that the earliest articulations of the concept of *sophrosyne*, the Archaic *saophrosyne*, involved soundness of mind or an unimpaired intellect. It described, in other words, the correct functioning of the *noos* in controlling the desires. This connection is confirmed by a fragment of the 6th century BCE poet, Phokylides, who pointed out that “many who are empty-minded (*elaphronooi*) appear to be *saophrones* because they move in orderly fashion” (Phok.*Fr.* 11). While those marching in order give the appearance of being

¹¹ *Metis*, not incidentally, was the foremost trait of that ideal heroic man of mature years, Odysseus. Cf. section 2.3.3.

¹² *Sophrosyne* does not appear to have been an important ethical term in the Homeric epics. At any rate, there is no indication that the term had the social significance in Homer's time that it would acquire in the Archaic and Classical Periods. Nonetheless, as I have explored in chapters 1 and 2, the concept is very much implicit in the Homeric epics, even if otherwise expressed. On the development of *sophrosyne* as an ethical term in Greek thought, cf. H. North (1966).

saophron, the poetic fragment suggests, they are in fact empty-headed. It can be inferred that a deficiency of *noos*, the rational faculty, precludes one from being truly *saophron*, no matter how well he marches.

Antilokhos' evocation of the young man's character is therefore anathema to the early Greek conception of *saophrosyne*, as well as the Classical *sophrosyne*. The typical shortcomings of the youthful *noos* account for his reckless pursuit of success in manly contest and its attendant rewards, at the expense of Menelaos' honour and reputation.¹³ Antilokhos therefore humbly seeks the older man's pardon, having recognised that he is in the wrong. Menelaos' reaction to this defence is telling, for although he demonstrates elsewhere his own shortcomings in relation to the heroic masculine ideal, in this instance he exhibits a commitment to the social good that is a key component of correct conduct for enfranchised men in the Homeric world¹⁴ and, indeed, in later Greece too. The mature hero is delighted with Antilokhos' humble recognition of his youthful error of judgement, and gladly allows the younger man to keep the prize (Hom.*Il.* 23.600-615).

For present purposes, we should take two further points away from this interaction. The first important observation is that the conflict meets a peaceful resolution only when the young man recognises that he has failed in an important criterion of hegemonic masculinity, by allowing his desire for personal victory and honour to govern his behaviour to the point that he has offended a fellow member of the ruling elite. The second important point is that, even in a social group as intensely competitive and honour-obsessed as that of the Homeric warrior-elite, the mature man takes a fairly benevolent attitude towards youthful excess, as if considering such conduct to be an inconvenient but inevitable part of the young man's maturation process.

3.2.2. What Antilokhos expresses in book 23 of the *Iliad* is an early articulation of the commonest prejudices against youth in Greek literature: namely, that young men are possessed of an intense and fiery virility, while

¹³ Though aristocratic youths in Archaic Greece were certainly encouraged to partake in competitive sports. Cf. Z. Papakonstantinou (2012).

¹⁴ For the heroic masculine ideal as blend of competitiveness tempered by sensitivity to elite male social solidarity, cf. chapter 2 especially (above). For Menelaos' failings in relation to the ideal, cf. section 4.5.1.

their mental faculties are underdeveloped and therefore ill-suited to resist the power of impulse. Generally, their large appetites drive them towards acts of *hubris* that pose a threat to social order.¹⁵ Aristotle, who described the young as *megalopsychos* (Arist.*Rhet.* 2.12.11), meaning high-minded and more concerned with victory and honour than material wealth, maintained that their inclination towards *hubris* is the result of their neglect of the maxim of Khilon, “nothing in excess”. He meant, in other words, that the young lack the power to control their desires and passions (i.e. *sophrosyne*). In his view they are, alongside the very wealthy,¹⁶ the most likely to commit destructive *hubris* on account of the particular pleasure (*hedone*) that they feel in assuming a position of superiority over others (Arist.*Rhet.* 2.12.6).¹⁷ This unrestrained appetite for pleasure extends beyond contests for status and honour, for Aristotle points out that, of the desires of the body, the young are least equipped to resist their sexual urges (*aphrodisia*) (Arist.*Rhet.* 2.12.3). It is telling that both Homer and Aristotle, who constitute two ends of a timeline in terms of the primary source material collected for this thesis, make essentially the same point about young men. There is no denying the thematic continuity. An anonymous elegiac poet of the Archaic Period, an intermediate source between those two poles, was less tolerant of the antisocial inclinations of young men, claiming that “youth is a curse because of its rashness (*propeteian*)”.¹⁸

¹⁵ For some examples of the typical prejudices against the excesses of youth, cf. Aiskh.*Pers.*744; 781; Soph.*Phil.*96-99; Eur.*Hik.*230-235; Eur.*IA.*930-935. For an early scientific explanation for the character of young men, cf. Aristotle (*Rhet.* 2.12; *Gen.An.* 1.18-19). One adjective that Aristotle uses of the young, *megalopsychos*, is one closely associated with *hubris* (North 1966, 2). He attributes it elsewhere to the heroic figures Aias and Akhilleus: two men who, as alluded to in chapter 2, were renowned for their lack of *sophrosyne* (Arist.*Post.Anal.* 13.97b; North 1966, 2) and their failure to recognise ethical boundaries in their heroic pursuit of personal honour. He specifically states that their inclination towards *hubris* is due to their neglect of the maxim of Khilon (*Rhet.* 2.12.14): i.e. their lack of Apolline *sophrosyne*.

¹⁶ Cf. section 6.3.5 for more on the *hubris* associated with wealth, at least in Classical Athens.

¹⁷ For Aristotle, biology was a powerful determinant of character. For commentary on Aristotle’s views on the biology and character of women, cf. M. Cline-Horowitz (1976), L. Dean-Jones (1991), H. King (1998, 10) & V.L. Yates (2015). For a history of constructions of body and gender from the Greeks to the 20th century, cf. T.W. Laqueur (1990). For studies on the human body in the Ancient World, cf. D. Montserrat (1998).

¹⁸Scholiast on Euripides’ *Andromakhe*. Cf. Loeb Classical Library, *Greek Elegiac Poetry*. Anonymous elegiacs 25.

This supposition about the “otherness” of young men, their lack of a strong rational faculty and the need to help them develop it in order to control their appetites, was clearly articulated in terms of an association with “wildness” from a period pre-dating, by many centuries, the scientific enquiries of Aristotle. Indeed, an association between the appetites of the young and those of animals was probably a feature of rituals of initiation to manhood stretching back into the so-called “Dark Age” at least.¹⁹ Susan Langdon has argued that, in its initial conception, the mythical *kentauros*, being a hybrid of man and horse, was probably a guardian of the male transition from childhood to adult status. She suggests that the dedications of figurines of *kentauroi* at various Dark Age Greek sanctuaries relates to the process of male social initiation (Langdon 2007, 173-192; 2008, 96-99). Homeric characterisation of the young man as deficient in terms of *noos* and *metis* (Hom.*Il.* 23.590) certainly is consistent with the Archaic epic poet Peisander’s characterisation of the mountain-dwelling *kentauroi* as being without *noos* (Bremmer 2012, 29).²⁰ And indeed, this characterisation of the *kentauroi* as lacking *noos* further reinforces *sophrosyne*’s association with the rational faculty, since the *kentauroi* were infamous, in the Classical Period, for their lack of that particular quality of the ideal citizen (Castriota 1992, 36).

If Langdon is correct in her assessment, as I believe she is, then the *kentauros*’ infamously unrestrained conduct, lack of *noos* and proclivity for *hubris* constitute a manifestation of cultural suppositions about the young man’s antisocial appetites and his inability to restrain them. For present purposes, then, it might be stated that the early *kentauros* represents social anxieties about young masculinity. More specifically, given the fact that the *kentauroi* are normally figures who reject social institutions such as *xenia* and marriage,²¹ their alignment with young men attests to a sense of the danger that rampant young masculinity might pose to the established institutions of social power, from a period in Greek history predating the literary record.

¹⁹ A term used primarily in English language scholarship.

²⁰ Cf. M. Davies, Peisander (*Fr.* 9) Also R. Kassel and C. Austin’s translation of the fragments of Telekleides (*Fr.* 49).

²¹ Cf. section 2.2.1.

The fact that the *kentauros*, as surrogate for the young man, possessed the torso and head of a man, but the hind-quarters of a horse, is also significant, since it implies a conflict between the human male mind (*noos*), with its capacity for rational thought, and the animalistic appetites of the body.²² Indeed, stallions and colts provided the ideal symbol of socially destructive masculine appetites, for male horses were associated not just with great strength and vigour in Greek thought; but also with *hubris* and strong sexual desires (Hom.*Il.* 6.503-514; Hdt.*Hist.*3.85-86; Xen.*Kyr.* 7.5.62; Xen.*Hier.* 10.2).²³

Yet the *kentauros*' duality also supposes the mind's capacity to triumph over such appetites: a triumph that was perfectly embodied by the figure of Kheiron, the civilised *kentauros* and half-brother of Zeus. Nor is it likely to be mere coincidence that Kheiron's role in Greek myth was to educate young heroes, on the cusp of adulthood, in correct masculine social conduct. In the standard narrative of the adolescence of heroes such as Akhilleus, Jason and Asklepios, the youth journeys into the wild of Mount Pelion, where he is educated by the good *kentauros* in the foremost cultural activities of the adult male: not only warfare and hunting, but also medicine and the composition of music. It is noteworthy, indeed, that music, which Kheiron taught the young heroes, was the activity most associated with Apollo, the civilised, lyre-playing ephebic god of *sophrosyne*, who often represented the youth's successful transition to manhood in Greek thought.²⁴

The significance of the good *kentauros* as teacher of civilised masculine conduct is not difficult to appreciate, given the fact that he is something of an anomaly for his kind. As Langdon puts it in her analysis of Geometric *kentauroi* figurines:

In the same way that the horse implies taming, the Geometric centaur provides a paradigm of nature already tamed, a model clearly

²² Recalling that in Homer, Antilokhos points to the undeveloped *noos* as typical of the young man.

²³ Cf. M. Griffith (2006a, 198).

²⁴ For Apollo as ephebic god, cf. W. Burkert (1975). Greeks in the Classical Period associated music with the development of *sophrosyne* in the young. Cf. Pl.*Rep.* 404e; 410a. Also Arist.*Pol.* 1340a.

applicable to adolescence and the desired outcome of the maturation process. (Langdon 2008, 99)

Straddling the categories of nature and culture, physically embodying the internal clash of rational clarity and bestial desires that the young man was assumed to experience, Kheiron is symbolic of the youth's maturation struggle to subordinate his wild, horsey impulses to a higher social objective.

In the very fact of Kheiron's undeniably civilised status, the impulsive youth finds a perfect role model to enable his rational, human quality to overcome his *hubristic*, animal appetites. While it was quite clearly recognised that the young man was unlikely to subordinate his animal urges entirely until he was much older, it was nonetheless an ideal to which he should aspire. The youth who could overcome relatively low expectations and demonstrate a degree of personal restraint was, quite clearly, something of an ideal in Ancient Greece. In the *Iliad*, for instance, Nestor praises the youthful Diomedes because he exhibits a wisdom beyond his years (Hom.*Il.* 9.53-60). That ideal of the restrained youth was represented, in the Classical Period, by an abundance of monumental sculpture glorifying the young male body;²⁵ but it was also embodied by the figure of Apollo himself, normally depicted as a beardless *ephebos* who was, also, the incarnation of manly *sophrosyne*.²⁶ The words inscribed above the door of his sanctuary at Delphi, *gnothi seauton*, know yourself, was advice that all young men were encouraged to aspire to. To know oneself implies, of course, the victory of the rational faculties over the biological; as does the other famous maxim of Delphi, *meden agan*,²⁷ nothing in excess.²⁸

²⁵ The Kritian boy being a perfect example (Plantzos 2016, 144).

²⁶ His opposite, of course, was Dionysos, the god associated with wildness and excess often depicted as a beardless youth in the Classical Period. It is reasonable to argue that Apollo and Dionysos be read as representations of two ephebic prototypes: the civilised ideal, and the likelier reality of reckless abandon. For the opposition between Apollo and Dionysos, cf. F.W. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, first published in German in 1872 as *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*. I have referenced, in the bibliography, an excellent translation by R. Speirs (1999).

²⁷ Μηδὲν ἄγαν. These words were inscribed on a column in the pronaos of Apollo's temple at Delphi (Pl.*Kh.* 165a). Not coincidentally, this was also the maxim of Khilon, which Aristotle believed young men ill-equipped to adhere to.

²⁸ For another example of the ideal of the restrained youth, possessed of self-control beyond his years, cf. Demosthenes (Dem. 61.5-28).

3.2.3. Use of the horse as symbol of the vigour and related conduct of adolescent boys or young men still deemed to be controlled by their desires was not restricted to the myth of the bestial *kentauroi*. In fact, as alluded to in chapter 1 (1.2.2), the horse's unique status as an animal that is, like a human, "tame by nature yet wild by birth" (Bell 2015, 116) meant that many Greek authors evoked the character, conduct and appearance of horses as an analogy for those of boys and youths. In the pederastic love poetry attributed to Theognis of Megara, for example, the poet compares his boy beloved to a horse on more than one occasion where problematic youthful appetites, in particular, are implied (Theog.*Fr.*1249-1252; 1267-1270).²⁹

The Greek tragedians, too, refer to the vigour, folly or potentially problematic appetites of certain young men by comparing them to colts (*poloi*). The chorus, in Aiskhylos' *Libation Bearers*, refers to the young Orestes, destined to kill his own mother, as an orphan colt "who has hitched himself to a troubled cart" (Aiskh.*Khoe.* 794-796).³⁰ In what is likely a piece of intertextual game-playing on the poet's part, Elektra in Euripides' *Orestes* also compares her brother to a colt, describing his waking terror, following his murder of Klytaimnestra, to the behaviour "of a colt when freed from the yoke" (Eur.*Or.* 45).³¹ In Euripides' *Rhesos*, the "colt" metaphor is striking but much less complex. The vigorous young Thracian king, ostentatiously arrayed for battle and likened to the haughty and savage war god Ares, is referred to as "Strymon's colt" (Eur.*Rhes.* 386): a reference, perhaps, that also

²⁹ Cf. sections 3.4.2. & 3.4.3. While the poetry attributed to Theognis of Megara was likely the work of a number of poets, hereafter I refer to the author of all poems in the *Theognidea* as Theognis, for the sake of convenience.

³⁰ In this instance, the cart clearly refers to the curse that afflicts the house of Pelops and fuels its murderous internecine feuds. The chorus prays to Zeus to control the flighty colt's pace so that he can run his course to the end, meaning that he will follow through with the desperately impious and savage act of matricide that will, ultimately, bring the family curse to an end. The metaphor, then, evokes the commitment and youthful energy required to fulfil the act; while the crime's association with Apollo – the god who incites Orestes to kill his mother – implies that it will result in the youth's eventual attainment of full adult status.

³¹ Euripides was well-known for burying references to Aiskhylos' works in his own plays. Cf. G.W. Bond (1974); & W.G. Thalmann (1993). In this instance, the Euripidean image evokes the notion that, at this point, Orestes as colt has "run his course to the end" by killing his mother, and might *expect* to be freed from the yoke and "troubled cart" of the family curse. The reality, of course, is very different since he remains subject to the curse.

pre-empts the *hubris* of Rhesos' fatal decision to set up his camp so close to the Akhaian ships.

It is clear that comparison with colts is intended, in the above examples, to evoke a youthful energy that is lacking in older men. As with heroic *agenorie* in Homeric epic, context dictates the extent to which this youthful strength and energy is problematic. At any rate, *hubris* in connection with the horsiness of young men is laid out elsewhere in tragedy, too. In Aiskhylos' *Seven Against Thebes*, the hubristic frenzy into which the young warrior Tydeus has whipped himself is explicitly compared to a horse chomping at the bit:

τοιαῦτ' ἄλύων ταῖς ὑπερκόμποις σαγαῖς
βοᾷ παρ' ὄχθαις ποταμίαις, μάχης ἐρῶν,
ἵππος χαλινῶν ὡς κατασθμαίνων μένει,
ὅστις βοὴν σάλπιγγος ὀρμαίνει μένων.
τίν' ἀντιτάξεις τῷδε; τίς Προΐτου πυλῶν
κλήθρων λυθέντων προστατεῖν φερέγγυος;

Raging so in his arrogant armour
he cries out on the river bank, lusting for battle
like some bridled horse, struggling forcefully against the bit,
waiting impatiently for the war-trumpet's blast.
Who will you send against him? Who is to stand
before the Proitid Gate when its barrier is loosened?

(Aiskh.*Hept.* 391-396)

Here, the horse image appears to evoke both the physical vigour of the young warrior and the dangerous masculine appetites that attend that vigour. The animal's desire for battle, akin to Tydeus', is related in terms of what is, probably, a sexual desire (*eros*). There is little reason to think that this *eros* for battle was intended to be regarded positively by an Athenian audience. While *hubris* is not specifically mentioned in this passage as an aspect of Tydeus' "horsey" behaviour, it is clearly to be inferred. Much of the early part of the text, after all, reflects on the overbearing arrogance of the Argive invaders; and, at line 571, Amphiaras refers to Tydeus' *hubris*, while the device on his shield is described as "insolent".³² Furthermore, Tydeus appears

³² For more on the theme of *hubris* in the *Seven Against Thebes*, cf. H. North (1966, 41).

to have provided something of a paradigm for the hubristic young man in the mythical tradition. According to one variant of the myth of the Seven Against Thebes, he was punished by Athene for indulgence in the most appalling act of impious savagery: eating the brains of his fallen victim (*Apoll.Lib.* 3.6.8).³³

3.2.4. Comparison between the character of young men, and that of horses or colts, is taken to a higher plain in the works of Plato, who frequently used the image of the flighty colt as a metaphor for the strength, vigour and attendant antisocial inclinations of young men.

In the *Republic*, when describing the education of the young men of his ideal state, he maintains that they should be trained as “colts” (*poloi*) are trained, leading them into “noise and racket” to see if they are afraid (*Pl.Rep.* 413d).³⁴ In one section of his *Laws*, his Athenian character is critical of the Spartan and Cretan education systems, pointing out that in these states they put all of their colts into one pen as if they lived in a military camp rather than a society. They do not allow any man to “take his own colt” away from the group and put him in the hands of a private groom, to comb him down and stroke him (*Pl.Laws.* 666e).³⁵ In what is perhaps Plato’s most humorous example of comparison between haughty young men and colts, Sokrates appears to scorn a young philosopher, Polos of Akragas, whose name is comically fitting. “This colt (*polos*) here is young (*neos*) and edgy (*oxys*)”, Sokrates tells Gorgias during their discussion (*Pl.Gor.* 463e), plainly pointing out that Polos has precisely the kind of character – i.e. wild, “horsey” and prone to arrogance – to be expected of someone of his age with such a name.

If the horse was used as a signifier³⁶ of young masculinity, it would seem logical to assume that horse-taming or “breaking” was symbolic of the

³³ Cf. J. Beazley (1947, 1-9).

³⁴ Forcing a colt to endure noise and racket would have ensured that the animal was capable of tolerating a crowd in warfare, public ceremony, and on the racecourse, without taking flight and endangering the rider. The metaphor evokes the need to “tame” young men in a similar way, rendering them appropriately restrained in the primary arenas of masculine display for the adult citizen: warfare and public life.

³⁵ A reference to the communal living of the Spartan *agoge*. The private groom who would comb and stroke the colt presumably refers to the practice of pederasty as aristocratic educational ideal. Cf. sections 3.4.1. – 3.4.4.

³⁶ At least within aristocratic circles. For horsemanship as symbol of aristocratic masculine exceptionalism, cf. chapter 6.

process of education and the ultimate triumph of rationality and self-control over impulse and appetite. A passage from Plato's *Apology* certainly implies as much. Here, Sokrates responds to Meletus' charge that all Athenian citizens make the youth of Athens better through instruction, with the exception of Sokrates. He alone corrupts them (Pl.*Apol.* 25a). The philosopher's response to this charge is telling, for he points out that, as in the case of horsemanship, those who improve young men are small in number, while those who injure them and make them worse are the majority (Pl.*Apol.* 25b). For Sokrates, horse-taming is the natural analogy for the schooling of young men in citizen virtues of courage and restraint; but, as in the case of horsemanship, only a small number of men, himself among them, are capable of doing this well; while the majority are more likely to corrupt the youth by means of poor instruction.

It may be within this tradition of associating youth with an inclination towards "horsey" excess that one should read the famous "chariot of the soul" passage from Plato's *Phaidrus*.³⁷ Here the philosopher provides an account of the development of individual *sophrosyne* that draws quite explicitly on the notion that the horse represents the tendency towards problematic animal appetites in the human *psyche*. Consider the following passage, in which one of the horses that draws the chariot is quite explicitly associated with desires that need to be kept in check:

ἔοικέτω δὴ συμφύτῳ δυνάμει ὑποπτέρου ζεύγους τε καὶ ἡνιόχου. θεῶν μὲν οὖν ἵπποι τε καὶ ἡνιόχοι πάντες αὐτοὶ τε ἀγαθοὶ καὶ ἐξ ἀγαθῶν, τὸ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων μέμικται. καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἡμῶν ὁ ἄρχων συνωρίδος ἡνιοχεῖ, εἶτα τῶν ἵππων ὁ μὲν αὐτῷ καλὸς τε καὶ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἐκ τοιούτων, ὁ δ' ἐξ ἐναντίων τε καὶ ἐναντίος· χαλεπὴ δὴ καὶ δύσκολος ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἢ περὶ ἡμᾶς ἡνιόχησις.

We will liken the soul to the composite nature of a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. Now the horses and charioteers of the gods are all good and of good descent, but those of other races are mixed; and first the charioteer of the human soul drives a pair, and secondly one of the horses is noble and of noble breed, but the other quite the opposite in breed and character. Therefore in our case the driving is necessarily difficult and troublesome.³⁸ (Pl.*Phaid.* 246a-246b)

³⁷ For the significance of horse-taming as metaphor for control of desires, cf. J. Bell (2015, 115-130).

³⁸ Trans. H. North Fowler.

Now it seems that, in Plato's metaphorical evocation of the human soul, the charioteer represents the rational faculty, while the noble (*kalos*) horse is symbolic of a sort of social and moral impulse that generally keeps individuals in check: it is the friend of honour (*time*), restraint (*sophrosyne*) and modesty (*aidos*) (Pl.*Phaid.* 253d).³⁹ The other horse of the pair (Pl.*Phaid.* 253d), however, obviously constitutes a metaphor for many of the worst appetites that the rational element struggles to control (Nussbaum 1986, 215). It seeks to pull the chariot down to earth even as the moral and *sophron* impulse of the white horse attempts to drag it in the direction of the heavens. This horse, Sokrates argues, is the friend of *hubris* and deceit (*alazoneia*) (Pl.*Phaid.* 253d). It is that very impulse that the young man, in particular, must learn to control by "taming" it. Some souls, as Plato points out, have difficulty in controlling the ignoble horse even with the help of the noble one.⁴⁰

This function of horse-taming as metaphor for internal control of emotions and appetites also explains why there are no female *kentauroi* in Greek myth, and why they are unattested in Greek art until relatively late.⁴¹ If the *kentauroi* were symbolic of dangerous appetites and impulses, they also provide a reminder – through the positive example of Kheiron, the "good" *kentauros* – that the ability to subordinate such appetites to the rational faculty is also, in the patriarchal Greek conception of the matter, a specifically male capacity.⁴² When women are associated with animals in Greek myth and literature, they

³⁹ Although, as E. Belfiore (2006, 189) notes, the white horse's "love of honour" may also be a problematic trait that might lead the chariot astray. As in the case of the Homeric hero (cf. chapter 2), the pursuit of honour is a noble masculine trait, but it is also potentially problematic.

⁴⁰ This observation may suggest a danger inherent in masculinity: that a man's wild impulses can never be fully tamed, but only restrained.

⁴¹ Plate 3a shows a mosaic from Roman Tunisia featuring two *kentaurides*. Kentaurides are also mentioned in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Ov.*Met.* 12.210), a Latin text of the 1st century AD.

⁴² It is worth asking whether or not Plato intended for this description of the human soul to apply to both men and women. Did he view women as capable of overcoming their natural impulses, of "taming" the wild horse of the soul, or was he writing purely with men in mind? Based on a famous passage from the *Republic* (Pl.*Rep.* 455d), Plato (or Sokrates) appears to have been unusual in acknowledging that women possess rational faculties equal to those of men, so it is not impossible that his description here is gender neutral. However, women were not usually charioteers, so we might assume that he is referring exclusively to men in this passage. For a discussion on the supposed equality of women in Plato, cf. B. Calvert (1975).

are rarely presented as being half human in terms of character, but rather as being purely animal. When female monsters are presented as semi-human in myth, as in the case of the sphinx or the sirens for instance, they tend to be universally wicked and socially destructive – that is to say, they are entirely subject to an animal nature, with no indication of a capacity for restraint and, by extension, civility.⁴³ The male *kentauros*, by contrast, is defined by the duality of man and beast, the constant psychological struggle between bestial desires and rational, human faculties.

3.3.1. While the literature describes various circumstances in which youthful lack of restraint and wildness might be problematic in society,⁴⁴ there can be little doubt that the foremost complaint about the character of young men in the literary tradition is their perceived lack of control over their sexual impulses. Stallions, as already noted, are famous in Greek literature for their large sexual appetites; and it is no coincidence, indeed, that the black horse in Plato's *Phaidrus* is linked to the sexual impulse (Pl.*Rep.* 254a), or that the *kentauroi* were infamous for their sexual incontinence.⁴⁵ If the *kentauroi* were indeed figures originally representative of the period of a youth's transition to adulthood, their reputation as anti-marriage rapists in myth indicates that the young man's rampant sexuality was a potentially socially destabilising force. At any rate, Aristotle was apparently describing a typical prejudice

⁴³ As shall be outlined in the next chapter, especially in sections 4.3 and 4.2.

⁴⁴ One fear appears to have been concerned with the idea of youth infringement on the sphere of political and military decision-making (Aiskh.*Pers.* 744; 781 Eur.*Hik.* 230-235; Thouk.*Hist.* 6.12-13). For some interesting expressions of the fear that the youth, upon returning from the wild, might instil in the *polis*, see Bakkhylides' 18th dithyramb, and Pindar's 4th *Pythian* ode. In the former example, the poet describes how a youthful Theseus, making his journey across the Isthmos of Korinth, constitutes a figure of fear for his father, King Aigeus, who suspects that the young man will steal his throne and bring ruin to the city. In Pindar's ode, on the other hand, Jason is represented, upon his return, as both a citizen and a "wild man", wearing a panther skin, representative of his marginality and wildness, and a *chiton* that points to his place in the civilised world. H.J. Walker reads in these passages evidence of a cultural unease about the destructive capacity of the younger generation: "The advent of a new generation does not just promise a renewal of society; it also threatens a revolution in society. The marginal position of these new adults means that they will not necessarily feel themselves bound by the rules of their society" (Walker 1995, 98).

⁴⁵ Blackness, indeed, may have been related to the notion of an undeveloped rational faculty. Vidal-Naquet, in *The Black Hunter*, has demonstrated that black was associated with the liminal activities of young men who had not made the successful transition from adolescence to adulthood, remaining as tricksters and black hunters who used nets to capture their quarry (Vidal-Naquet 1986, 110; 118). Cf. section 5.3.1.

against the young when alluded to their susceptibility to *aphrodisia* (Arist.*Rhet.* 2.12.3).⁴⁶

Plate 3a. Venus crowned by female centaurs. Roman mosaic from Elles, near Makthar in Tunisia. 2nd century AD (Bardo Museum). The female *kentauris* was a late innovation. The earlier *kentauroi* were exclusively male, underscoring the creature's early association with the ethical development of boys. (Photo courtesy of the Bardo Museum).

Image redacted for copyright reasons.

Nor do we lack other such references to the young man's lack of sexual *sophrosyne*, and its potentially disastrous consequences for the community if not adequately controlled. Perhaps the most concise statement about the threat that some perceived in the young man's sexual proclivities comes from the mouth of Theseus in Euripides' *Hippolytos*. In this text of 428 BCE, the young Hippolytos is falsely accused of having raped his stepmother, Phaidra, and thereby been responsible for her suicide. Hippolytos' father, Theseus, is all too willing to believe in his son's guilt precisely because, for him, such a crime would be typical of the behaviour of young men. "I know that young men are no more steadfast than women when Kypris confuses their youthful

⁴⁶ The suitors of the *Odyssey* may provide the earliest extant literary example of sexually incontinent young men who ultimately transgress against custom on account of their lechery. Other instances from the literature of the Archaic Period, however, also point to a suspicion about the sexual proclivities of young men, and their ability to disrupt society as a result. Cf. Theog.*Fr.* 629-30.

hearts”, he proclaims, “but the fact that they are men works to their advantage” (Eur.*Hipp.* 967-970).⁴⁷

Theseus, of all men, would have been conscious of this failing of young men because he was, traditionally, the embodiment of youthful sexual appetites. In Classical Athenian art and literature, the mythical king and founder of democratic principles was frequently portrayed as a beardless *ephebos*, a young man on the cusp of adulthood who had questionable control over his own carnal desires.⁴⁸ The number of *parthenoi* that he was said to have abducted or seduced was long indeed, and included Ariadne, Korone, Antiope/Hippolyte and Helen. In one myth, he even attempted to abduct the goddess Persephone from the underworld (Apoll.*Lib.Epit.*1.23): a textbook example of mortal *hubris*. In fact, a version of the myth appears to have existed in which Theseus did not return from this expedition. A passage attributed to Theognis indicates that the myth provided a paradigm for lack of control over maddening and destructive *eros*.⁴⁹

This does not mean that Classical Athenians, having adopted Theseus as the symbolic vehicle of the imperial democracy at the end of the 6th century, approved of such conduct. While an appetite for sex, and the assumption of an active, penetrative role in sexual matters were key to a good masculinity in Ancient Greece generally,⁵⁰ Theseus’ mythical conduct in repeatedly abducting and raping women plainly left him open to the charge of *hubris*, and made him a problematic model for the Classical citizen. Indeed, his reputed lack of *sophrosyne* in the sexual sphere had disastrous social and political consequences on more than one occasion. His abduction of the young Helen from Sparta, as Herodotos records, prompted her brothers, Kastor and Polydeukes, to lead a campaign into Attica to recover her. Arriving at

⁴⁷ The implication, in fact, is that unchecked male sexuality, such as that embodied by young men, is even more dangerous than that of women.

⁴⁸ Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (1987) has argued that the many vases showing a beardless youth, normally wearing a *petasos* and carrying a spear while pursuing *parthenoi*, on Attic vases can normally be assumed to represent Theseus. For more on Theseus as emblematic of the Athenian *ephebos*, cf. section 5.3.3. Cf. H.J. Walker (1995, 83-104).

⁴⁹ “Cruel Eros [...] Because of you Troy’s acropolis was destroyed, and great Theseus, Aigeus’ son, and noble Aias, Oileus’ son, through your acts of recklessness” (Theog.*Fr.* 1231-1234). Trans. D.E. Gerber.

⁵⁰ Cf. K.J. Dover (1989); also D. Halperin (1990).

Athenian-controlled Aphidna, they reclaimed Helen and kidnapped Theseus' mother, Aithra, for good measure (Hdt.*Hist.* 9.73.2; Apoll.*Lib.* Epit.1.23). This myth, likely very ancient by the Classical Period, must have been particularly embarrassing for the Athenians because, according to Herodotos at least, Theseus had abducted Helen when he was fifty years old and was, therefore, of an age when he should no longer have been subject to such vehement carnal desires.⁵¹

The inescapable reality of Theseus' problematic sexual history may in fact have prompted the initial decision to depict him as a youthful, ephebic figure in the 5th century, for only the impulsivity, impetuosity and wildness of youth could have accounted for the sheer chaos of his sexual transgressions. At any rate, Athenians of the Classical Period clearly did not appreciate reminders of some of the more unsavoury sexual conduct traditionally ascribed to their democratic hero, and preferred to depict him as an Apollonian ideal of youthful restraint and model for young citizens and future citizens alike. Certainly, the 5th century tragedians seem to have studiously avoided reference to his more outrageous sexual behaviour. In the *Suppliants* and the *Herakles* of Euripides, for instance, the young Theseus is presented as an essentially honourable young man with a well-developed sense of correct masculine social conduct despite his tender years.⁵²

⁵¹ In 5th century art, however, when Theseus abducts Helen he is depicted as a beardless *ephebos* (Shapiro 1992, 233-234). Herodotos (Hdt.*Hist.* 9.73.2) probably uses the myth as an indirect commentary on the politics of his own day. By commenting on the *hubris* of Theseus at the end of his *Histories*, we might assume that he is actually making a point about contemporary Athenian military expansionism. Presumably, the myth of Helen's abduction by a fifty-year-old Theseus was originally symbolic of the immense, destabilising power that Helen's sexuality exercised over men. For Helen's sexuality, cf. section 4.5.1. On the myth as a poor reflection on Theseus, cf. S. Mills (1997, 8).

⁵² Some scholars even speculate that when a playwright did dare to evoke some of the hero's less palatable sexual activity, his work was likely to be rejected by the audience at the City Dionysia. Hannah Roisman (1999b, 403) has suggested, for instance, that one of the reasons for the failure of Euripides' original Hippolytos play, the *Hippolytos Veiled*, was the poet's allusion to Theseus' attempt to abduct Persephone as the reason for his absence from Troizen at the opening of the play. To remind the Athenians that their democratic hero had been, in the mythical tradition, hubristic and sexually incontinent was obviously not a wise decision for the playwright seeking to win first place in the city's dramatic contest, since the audience decided the outcome. It was more prudent by far, it would seem, to depict the youthful hero as the embodiment of *sophrosyne* on the public stage.

3.3.2. The realities of daily life in Classical Athens, where women of citizen status tended to be closeted away, kept indoors lest they should shame their *kyrios* by inspiring gossip, presumably reduced the possibility that notionally wild and unrestrained young men would actually have the chance to encounter the wives or daughters of citizens in day to day life. Few young Athenians, in other words, could have enjoyed a sexual career like Theseus', and one can assume that the case described in Lysias' *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* was actually relatively uncommon.⁵³ In that text, only an exceptional circumstance – a public funeral – provided the would-be adulterer, Eratosthenes, with a sighting of Euphiletos' wife (Pl.*Lys.* 1.8). This, of course, is one of many instances in Greek literature that reveals male unease about the public visibility of women.⁵⁴

Some have argued that the absence of citizen women in the public domain was one of the causes for the apparent prominence of the practice of pederasty, at least among the aristocratic class. While anecdotal evidence suggests that prostitution was thought to prevent young men from indulging their natural urges (*physis*) where they should not (Athen.*Deip.* xiii, 569),⁵⁵ the transactional character of sexual encounters in a brothel would rarely have left room for the youth's emotional development or expression of more tender feelings. Some scholars have suggested that the practice of pederasty fulfilled, at least in the ideal scenario, a role similar to that of medieval courtly love.⁵⁶ Like the usually unconsummated love of the medieval bard for the highborn lady, pederasty was a socially sanctioned form of romantic pursuit for the young man of a certain class. It also appears to have had many of the

⁵³ Female seclusion, except at specifically sanctioned times, or when accompanied by a *kyrios*, was the ideal, even if lived reality did not always adhere to this. It is likely that the wives and daughters of poorer citizens would have been obliged to appear out of doors during the day. At any rate, J.W. Porter (1997) argued that Lysias 1 was, in fact, fictional.

⁵⁴ Cf. Phaidra's appearance onstage in Euripides' *Hippolytos* (Eur.*Hipp.* 170-300), and Medea's occupation of the external space in the *Medea* (Eur.*Med.* 96-110). More on this in chapter 5.

⁵⁵ Quoting a joke attributed to the Attic comic poet Philemon. "But you found a law for the use of all men; for you, they say, Solon, were the first to see this – a thing democratic, Zeus is my witness, and salutary (yes, it is fitting that I should say this, Solon); seeing our city full of young men, seeing, too, that they were under the compulsion of nature, and that they went their erring way in a direction they should not, purchased and stationed women in various quarters, equipped and ready for all alike". Trans. C.B. Gulick.

⁵⁶ Cf. C.S. Lewis (1943, 78).

characteristics of courtly love, including the glorification, however unrealistic in practice, of a chaste or “platonic” relationship that did not compromise the love-object’s honour.⁵⁷ As K.J. Dover’s work (1989) has demonstrated, there were clear taboos about what constituted correct behaviour in pederastic relationships between an adult man (usually young and unmarried) and a boy of citizen birth.

While it is clear that erotic activity was a feature of many pederastic courtships, certain types of sexual activity were at least notionally off-limits. The tendency, in Greek culture, to equate socio-political status with sex-role meant that it was prohibited for a boy of citizen status either to prostitute himself to an *erastes*, or to assume a passive – and therefore feminine – sexual role, especially by submitting to anal penetration.⁵⁸ Dover’s work (1989), though heavily reliant on Aiskhines’ law court speech *Against Timarkhos* for literary testimony, has illustrated that a boy who had been “used as a woman” in a sexual relationship, that is to say subordinated through penetration or prostitution, forfeited all of the rights and freedoms of citizenship (Aiskhin.*Tim.* 21).⁵⁹ To indulge in this sort of behaviour would, Aiskhines claims, ultimately turn the boy into a dissolute adult with no restraint over his impulses. This, of course, is the very accusation that Aiskhines levels against Timarkhos in his attempt to tarnish the latter’s reputation. The essential argument is that Timarkhos, having prostituted himself as a youth, has turned into a dissolute adult with no regard for correct masculine conduct in any aspect of his life (Aiskhin.*Tim.* 11; 26; 31).⁶⁰ In gendered terms, the logic appears to have been that, once a boy had acted like, or been treated like, a woman in sexual relations, he could never become a proper, restrained man. Instead, he would be forever subject to his appetites.

⁵⁷ Notably that the *erastes* or active partner would compose love poetry for the *eromenos*.

⁵⁸ For some strong work on this topic, cf. D. Halperin (1990).

⁵⁹ K.J. Dover has argued, based only on the visual testimony of vase-painting, that the preferred alternative to this outcome was intercrural penetration (Dover 1989, 98). A counter-argument has been made by J. Davidson (2007), who focusses more on the realities of daily life as opposed to the moral code of the Greeks. On the whole, though, I continue to find Dover’s argument compelling, at least in terms of the prevailing ideology.

⁶⁰ The idea that indulgence in such behaviour in youth would lead to a failure to develop manly *sophrosyne* in adulthood is also echoed by Aristotle in his *History of Animals* (Arist.*Hist.An.* 7.1).

Given such high stakes for the boy or *eromenos*, both political and ethical, his father was likely to be suspicious of the motivations of the *erastes*, conventionally an unmarried young man in his twenties. Conscious that such young men were likely to lack control over their carnal desires, the father would have to be careful to protect his son's reputation for chastity, and to ensure that he did not spend too much time alone with his suitor. The unease that a *kyrios* might feel about an *erastes*' pursuit of his son is reflected in Pausanias' claim, in Plato's *Symposion*, that a father was liable to put attendants in charge of his son upon hearing that he had caught the eye of an *erastes*. On the other hand, Sokrates, in Xenophon's *Symposion*, praises Kallias for inviting the father of his *eromenos* to their meetings, because an ideal *erastes* would "keep nothing hidden" from the boy's father (Xen.Symp. 8.11).

Sokrates⁶¹ was obviously expressing his personal feeling that sexual consummation should not be the primary aim of the pederastic pursuit, at least in the ideal case; rather, the objective of the courtship should be the development of the boy's manly character, most notably his education in *sophrosyne*. This apparent objective of the practice makes for a sharp contrast, indeed, with the suspicion that a certain kind of pederasty would result in dissolute behaviour. Yet it is abundantly clear that training in self-control was the professed purpose of the courtship process. In Xenophon's *Lakedaimonians*, for instance, the author praises Spartan pederasty, as he understands it,⁶² because of its non-sexual nature and strict focus on the boy's personal ethical development (Xen.Lak. 2.13). That the development of *sophrosyne* in the *eromenos* was the stated objective of Spartan pederasty is apparent; for Ploutarkhos recounts a story of how, when a Spartan boy had cried out in pain during a fight, and thus shown a lack of manly self-control in the martial context, his *erastes* was summoned by the authorities and fined (Plout.Lyk. 18.4). Ideally, then, the *erastes* would be a young man with an

⁶¹ Or Plato, using the vehicle of Sokrates, depending on how one views the veracity of Plato's dialogues.

⁶² We must always be wary, in non-Spartan representations of that state, of the tendency to idealise Sparta (Lakonophilia) or represent it as an inversion of Athens (the Spartan mirage). On Lakonophilia among members of the Athenian aristocracy, cf. I. Jordovic (2016).

exceptionally high reputation for honour and restraint, and his primary objective in pursuing a relationship with a boy would be to mould him, through *philia*, into a restrained, manly citizen like himself. This is the kind of pederasty that Aiskhines refers to as just (*dikaios*) *eros* (Aiskhin.*Tim.* 136; Dover 1989, 42): a form of pedagogy that contrasts with unjust *eros*, which an *erastes* might pursue if seeking only sexual gratification from the boy, without regard for his honour.⁶³

3.3.3. Wildness and taming featured as metaphors for this process of socialisation, too. For instance, the *erastes* motivated by carnal lust, who pursued unjust *eros*, was presumably guilty of *hubris*; and, as such, he was subject to metaphorical association with the wild. Aiskhines describes a group of young men, alleged to have used the boy Timarkhos as a prostitute, as *agrioi* (Aiskhin.*Tim.* 52). Here, as in many Homeric examples, the term *agrioi* clearly evokes excessive appetites at odds with civilised masculine conduct, and better suited to the *agron* beyond the cultivated area (Vidal-Naquet 1986, 117). As Dover (1989, 37-38) has pointed out, there is a probable connection between the *agrioi* young men to whom Timarkhos allegedly prostituted himself, and the ‘son of Xenophantos’ (i.e. Hieronymos) in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes: a young man who was apparently notorious for his sexually aggressive, unchaste pederasty.⁶⁴ Like the “wild” lovers of Timarkhos’ youth, who used him as a prostitute and compromised his legitimacy as a citizen, Aristophanes describes Hieronymos as long-haired, wild (*agrioi*) and shaggy. Significantly, Aristophanes goes on to compare Hieronymos to a *kentauros* due to his *mania* (madness), in what is clearly a reference to his unrestrained, and by extension “horsey”, appetites (Ar.*Neph.*

⁶³ Some form of sexual relationship between boys and older men, as a feature of developing masculinity, is not unheard of in other societies. Among the Sambia of the highlands of Papua New Guinea, for instance, boys are obliged to perform fellatio on older men on account of a belief that the transfer of semen ensures the development of a healthy masculinity (Herdt 1997, 10). While the focus among the Sambia appears to be on biological rather than ethical development (as in the case of Greek pederasty), the comparison is nonetheless useful.

⁶⁴ Here is a negative model of youth, which we might contrast with the ideal youth whose antisocial inclinations are inhibited by a sense of shame or *aidos*. Cf. Arist.*Nik.Eth.* 1128b20. Also Telemakhos in Homer’s *Odyssey* (Hom.*Od.* 4.155-160) and Xenophon’s depiction of Spartan youths (Xen.*Lak.* 2.14).

348-350).⁶⁵ He is, in other words, the young man who has not developed *sophrosyne*, has little regard for ruling group solidarity, and remains subject to a hubristic, equine nature that stands in opposition to the masculine ideal of the *polis*. As Dover points out, it is possible that some of the young men whose supposedly bestial behaviour was criticised by society at large may actually have enjoyed such labelling, since there was no law against wildness in itself, even if the crimes associated with it, such as *hubris*, were a cause for consternation.⁶⁶ Furthermore, as noted in the Homeric example of Antilokhos (Hom.*Il.* 23.587-590), and again in Theseus' remarks in Euripides' *Hippolytos* (*Hipp.* 967-970), it is likely that such youthful conduct, though viewed with distrust, was tolerated to a certain degree by social elders in parts of Greece as necessary or inevitable.

3.4.1. At any rate, the measures that the Ancient Greek *poleis* took in order to keep the metaphorical wildness of such young men in check appears to have varied from place to place. It is clear, for instance, that the Athenian state took some steps to prevent young men from indulging their sexual appetites to the detriment of future citizens. Leaving aside Philemon's implausible suggestion that prostitution had been introduced in the Archaic *polis* for this reason, Aiskhines mentions a law which stated that a man could not hold the office of *khoregos* until he had reached the age of 40 (Aiskhin.*Tim.*11). The reason for this, the orator implies, is that the *khoregos* would have had plenty of time alone with boys of a particular age and, if he were younger than 40, would be deemed too likely to indulge his *physis*, and to compromise the boy's integrity as a future citizen by engaging in unjust *eros*.

While most *poleis* presumably had some laws, such as that of the age limit for the *khoregos*, which were designed to curb the worst excesses of young

⁶⁵ Hairiness was associated with an extreme and savage sexual potency. In the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata*, the author asks: "why are birds and hairy men lecherous?" It is worth considering, within this context, that pubic hair begins to grow at precisely that time in life when youths were regarded as most socially problematic. This observation can help to contextualise the connection between young men and *physis*.

⁶⁶ "[...] the gangs or clubs of randy and combative young men to whom a certain Ariston, the speaker of Dem. liv, refers with distaste and indignation were proud to earn such names as 'Triballoi' (a Thracian tribe, proverbially uncivilised; the scholion on Aiskhines 1.52 gives this too as a name for the 'wild men') or *ithuphalloi* ('with penises erect')" (Dover 1989, 38).

men, these would have been hard to enforce, and offences difficult to prove. For this reason, as Aristotle pointed out, social convention was the most powerful constraint. It was considered good, the philosopher maintains, for young men to show a strong sense of shame in front of their elders because they are always likely to be on the verge of committing some unsavoury act, or at least they are thinking about it (Arist.*Nik.Eth.* 1128b10–35). The interaction between Telemakhos and Menelaos in the *Odyssey*, in which the young Telemakhos is ashamed even to speak in the presence of his illustrious host (Hom.*Od.* 4.158-160), indicates that this sort of personal sanction was not a recent development of Aristotle's day.

The Spartans, on the other hand, took a much more hands-on approach towards the containment of young masculinity, forcing boys into communal gatherings from the age of seven, and subjecting them to rigorous and often brutal training regimes throughout their adolescence and young adult lives.⁶⁷ That many Greeks saw this totalitarian approach as an effective means of preventing the young from succumbing to antisocial *physis* is clear. Xenophon maintained, for instance, that at Sparta a young man would never raise his eyes to even look an elder in the face (Xen.*Lak.* 3). Such was the Spartan reputation for inhibiting the worst excesses of youth that the poet Simonides described the state, in apparently glowing terms, as *damasimbroton*, the “tamer of men” (Plout.*Ages.* 1).⁶⁸ As Ploutarkhos points out, this was because Sparta's customs made her citizens obedient to the laws, and as compliant as horses that are broken in while still colts (Plout.*Ages.* 2).

3.4.2. It is possible, however, that Simonides' reference to Sparta's ability to tame its young citizens evoked its renowned enforcement of the practice of pederasty as part of a boy's education. To understand how the Greeks conceived of pederasty as a process of taming the wild, antisocial elements of

⁶⁷ For a full account of this, cf. the *Lykourgos* of Ploutarkhos and the *Lakedaimonians* of Xenophon.

⁶⁸ The semantic range of the verb *damazo* means that this word could also mean “manslaying”, though Ploutarkhos certainly took it to mean “tamer of men”. Nothing in his usage refers to pederasty, but since pederasty seems to have played an important part in the education system of Sparta, I assume that it is part of the taming process. The insistence on comparing youths in pederastic contexts to wild animals, and especially to horses, invites the conclusion.

a youth's character, and the central place of the horse in articulating this idea, it is useful to return to the poetry of Theognis of Megara. Theognis, as shall be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6,⁶⁹ was a notoriously aristocratic poet whose work frequently deals with his own pederastic relationships with boys (*paides*).⁷⁰ It is clear, from the poetry attributed to him, that he was a believer in the benefits of just *eros* and in the *erastes*' obligation to educate the *eromenos* in civilised masculine virtues. Generally, when the poet addresses a boy-beloved, he does so in the context of giving him advice about the development of his character, or highlighting the benefits that his *philia* will bestow on the boy. In one passage, for example, he points out to his *eromenos* that “youthful impetuosity makes a man's mind frivolous and arouses the heart of many to wrongdoing” (Theog.Fr. 629-630).⁷¹ In another passage, Theognis gives his boy beloved some important advice:

γνώμην, Κύρνε, θεοὶ θνητοῖσι διδοῦσιν ἀρίστην
 ἀνθρώποις· γνώμη πείρατα παντὸς ἔχει.
 ἄ μάκαρ, ὅστις δὴ μιν ἔχει φρεσίν· ἢ πολὺ
 κρείσσων ὕβριος οὐλομένης
 λευγαλέου τε κόρου:

Judgement (*gnome*), Kyrnos, is the best gift of the gods to mortal men: judgement holds the key to everything. Blessed is he whose mind possesses it. Indeed it is much superior to accursed *hubris* or baneful excess.⁷²

(Theog.Fr. 1171-1176)

What the poet here refers to as *gnome* evokes the rational or thinking faculty,⁷³ as Theognis perceives it, which prevents a man from submitting to the inclination to commit *hubris*. It constitutes, therefore, a prerequisite for the possession of manly *sophrosyne*. He prompts his *eromenos*, a youth named Kyrnos, always to favour *gnome* over the *hubris* and excess towards which a young man will inevitably feel compelled by nature. In other words, we are dealing here with a poet who presents himself as the ideal *erastes*, who

⁶⁹ Cf. section 6.2.3.

⁷⁰ Though it is possible that the poet is assuming a literary persona in such works.

⁷¹ Trans. D.E. Gerber.

⁷² Trans. D.E. Gerber. Gerber translates *hubris* as “lawlessness”.

⁷³ Being related to the verb *gignosko*, to know.

instructs his boy beloved in manly virtues and guides him away from antisocial conduct. Theognis is at pains, to use Aiskhines' terminology, to stress that his *eros* for Kyrnos is just (*dikaios*).

3.4.3. The references to horses in the pederastic poetry of the *Theognidea* form part of this same ethical narrative of *erastes* prompting the *eromenos* towards good and noble actions, and the exercise of *sophrosyne* rather than *hubris*. In using horse metaphors in his pederastic poetry, he evokes the fickleness of the boy's youthful character and alludes to his role, as pederast, in taming the *pais*. One passage, which compares the *eromenos* to a horse, hints metaphorically at the *erastes*' duty to care for the boy and, perhaps, to ensure his personal, ethical development:

παῖ, σὺ μὲν αὐτῶς ἵππος, ἐπεὶ κριθῶν ἐκορέσθης,
αὐθις ἐπὶ σταθμοὺς ἤλυθες ἡμετέρους
ἠνίοχόν τε ποθῶν ἀγαθὸν λειμῶνα τε καλὸν
κρήνην τε ψυχρὴν ἄλσεά τε σκιερά.⁷⁴

Boy, you're just like a horse; when you got your fill of
barley, you came back to my stable, longing for your
skilled charioteer, lovely meadow,
cool spring water, and shady groves.⁷⁵

(Theog.Fr. 1249-1252)

Leaving aside the likely sexual implications of the metaphor,⁷⁶ it is also apparent that the poet perceives of the relationship in terms of his benefaction of the boy, whose association with the horse is linked to his pursuit of his own self-interest. Like the horse with his charioteer, the boy recognises that it is to his own benefit always to return to his pederast. The difference in tone between this poet's attitude towards his *eromenos*, and that of other Greek lyric poets who use horse-taming as a metaphor for the sexual pursuit of (or marriage to) a *parthenos*, is striking.⁷⁷ The *erastes* does not seek to coerce or violently subordinate the *eromenos*. Instead he implies that he offers a gentle,

⁷⁴ This passage is from book 2 of the *Theognidea*, and may date to the Classical Period rather than the Archaic. Cf. R. Lane-Fox (2000, 35). Its value as a source for Greek thought regarding pederasty is undiminished by this, however.

⁷⁵ Trans. D.E. Gerber.

⁷⁶ For the erotic connotations of horses in Greek lyric, cf. R. Platte (2017, 4.2 - 4.34).

⁷⁷ Much more on this in the next chapter. Cf. section 4.3.1.

guiding hand, security and personal friendship for the *pais*. The poet's relationship with the boy is akin to that of a horse-whisperer. Taming will take place only through the provision of various good things, which are analogous to the benefits that a skilled charioteer would provide for a flighty horse: a stable, clear water, a meadow, and shady groves. The boy himself must recognise that these things are for his own benefit.⁷⁸

However, that the comparison to a horse is also a slight intended to remind the boy of his failings, and to encourage him towards greater expression of a good social masculinity by overcoming his equine impulses, becomes apparent in another passage from the *Theognidea*. In this passage, the poet describes the difficulty of helping an *eromenos* to overcome his character flaws because he is horsey by nature:

παῖς τε καὶ ἵππος ὁμοῖον ἔχει νόον· οὔτε γὰρ ἵππος
ἠνίοχον κλαίει κείμενον ἐν κονίῃ,
ἀλλὰ τὸν ὕστερον ἄνδρα φέρει κριθαῖσι κορεσθείς·
ὥς δ' αὐτῶς καὶ παῖς τὸν παρεόντα φιλεῖ.

A boy and a horse have a similar outlook. A horse does not weep for its charioteer lying in the dust, but carries the man who comes next, when it's had its fill of barley. In the same way also a boy loves the man who is at hand.⁷⁹

(Theog.Fr. 1267-1270)

The poet implies here that taming a boy is often a difficult assignment because his desires impel him towards the wildness associated with *hubris* and sexual incontinence. Once again, as in the case of the semi-human *kentauros* as metaphor for the excessive appetites of youth, association with the horse serves to communicate the boy's lack of mastery over his biological appetites in particular.

3.4.4. A passage from Plato's *Lysis* can help us to bring together the threads that connect pederasty, horsemanship, and the development of masculine self-mastery through education in Hellenic thought. In that text, Plato recounts

⁷⁸ While we would see this sort of behaviour as an example of predatory "grooming", the poet evidently did not. For him, he was helping the boy to overcome the wildness of his horsey aspect and make the transition towards an acceptable citizen masculinity.

⁷⁹ Trans. D.E. Gerber.

how Sokrates met with two young men, Hippothales and Ktesippos, by the Panops spring in Athens. During their conversation, Ktesippos reveals that Hippothales is in love with a young boy of noble birth called Lysis. It is clear, to Sokrates, that Hippothales' love for Lysis is problematic because the young man is stricken by a powerful sexual desire and has been behaving with considerable excess in expressing it. Ktesippos tells Sokrates that Hippothales has been writing love poetry about Lysis, though he has not yet approached the boy, and prefers to hang around the *gymnasion* observing him at exercise with his peers.

Hippothales is obviously in danger of committing what Aiskhines called unjust *eros*, insofar as his attraction appears to be purely sexual and has little to do with a desire to instruct the boy in virtue. In expressing his distaste for the way in which Hippothales is approaching his courtship of Lysis, Sokrates points out that he should not be writing poetry in praise of the young Lysis' beauty, since this will only give the boy a big head and, presumably, make him prone to *hubris* (Pl.*Lys.* 206a-206b). Sokrates first articulates this point using the language of the hunt. He points out that the more swell-headed the *eromenos* gets, the harder he will be to catch, just like a wild animal (Pl.*Lys.* 206b).⁸⁰ In concluding this point of instruction, he alludes to what he regards as the ultimate objective of pederasty by taking aim at Hippothales' use of praise poetry: "isn't it a gross misuse of language to drive things wild (ἐξᾶγριαίνειν) rather than to soothe and charm?" (Pl.*Lys.* 206b) Again, wildness and a lack of manly virtue are clearly aligned; as are adherence to the adult male role of *erastes*, on the one hand, and the essential duty to tame antisocial, notionally wild elements on the other.⁸¹ The objective of the good *erastes*, Sokrates points out, in perfect adherence with Theognis, should be to soothe and charm the inherent wildness of youth, rather than to make it wilder, and therefore more prone to *hubris*, with excessive compliments.⁸² These

⁸⁰ For the symbolic significance of the hunt to pederastic narratives and the transition to adulthood, cf. section 3.5.1 (below).

⁸¹ A point that accords with the findings of our study of Homeric epic in chapter 2.

⁸² This, not incidentally, is also how Sokrates describes the objective of the good politician in his *Gorgias* (Plat.*Gorg.* 516b), where he discusses Perikles' role as leader of the people, and the virtue or lack thereof that he instilled in them, in terms of the opposition between wildness and tameness. Once again, in the example of Perikles, the capacity to "tame"

remarks, of course, are most reminiscent of Sokrates' comments about horse-taming as analogy for the education of youth in the *Apology*.⁸³

Having established this connection between the senior, socialising role of the *erastes* and the concept of taming, Sokrates appears to express the same idea, tangentially, with reference to the art of horsemanship. He decides to accompany the young men to the *gymnasion* to meet with the boy, Lysis, and to find out if he is indeed a noble youth who is worth Hippothales' time and affection in "taming". During the ensuing interrogation, the philosopher asks the boy if he is allowed to ride his father's chariot, or even to harness the mule team (Pl.*Lys.* 208a-208b). When Lysis tells him that his father does not allow him to do so, Sokrates illustrates that this is because he does not yet possess sufficient knowledge (*phronein*) to engage in such a dangerous activity (Pl.*Lys.* 209c).⁸⁴ This is news to Lysis, who previously assumed that his father does not allow him to ride his chariot because he has not yet come of age (Pl.*Lys.* 209a-209d).

The distinction is an important one, for by making it Sokrates implies that the right to take the reins of a chariot, or to mount a horse, was a marker of social recognition of the boy's development of a degree of *noos*, the rational faculty, beyond that of a *pais/eromenos*. It is a symbol of maturity as opposed to age, constituting, for Sokrates at least, an unofficial but important recognition of a developing mastery over youthful impulse and appetite. To place it alongside the use of the *kentauros* as signifier of youthful wildness, then, one might conclude that the ability to control the flighty and hubristic horse constitutes an external manifestation of a capacity to subordinate one's own biological impulses to the rational faculty. Just as Diomedes' status as *hippodamos* in the *Iliad* may have reflected his relative maturity for a young

others is evidently associated with possession of the qualities of hegemonic masculinity, most notably self-control (*sophrosyne*).

⁸³ Cf. section 3.2.5 (above).

⁸⁴ At this point Sokrates, as narrator, says that he considered pointing out to Hippothales, the would-be *erastes* who is watching the conversation at a distance, that this is how a lover should engage with his beloved. He points out once again that in writing love poems of praise of the boy's beauty he will only give the boy a large head – that is to say, presumably, that he will encourage him towards arrogance and vice (Plat.*Lys.* 201e). Rather, the boy should be made conscious of his own shortcomings in order to strive all the more towards an ideal. The *erastes* should tame by instructing in virtue, rather than giving excessive praise.

man,⁸⁵ so Lysis will be permitted to seize the reins of his father's chariot only when he has shown sufficient mastery over the horse's wildness of youth. This, as Sokrates hints, is a level of maturity that the good *erastes* should help the boy to achieve. Indeed, to extend this point to its logical conclusion, promotion to the status of *hippodamos* may have communicated the youth's readiness to graduate from the status of *eromenos* to that of *erastes*, indicating, in Sokrates' words, an ability to soothe and charm wild things, to tame them, rather than drive them wilder.⁸⁶

Sokrates' dialogue with Lysis merits a degree of comparison with a number of examples where failed horsemanship apparently communicates a failure of manly *sophrosyne* attributable to youth. It recalls, for instance, the false report of Orestes' death at the beginning of Sophokles' *Elektra*, when the young man was said to have been killed after falling from his chariot (Soph.*Elek.*735-750). It also evokes Antilokhos' exhibition of immaturity and lack of *noos* in seeking to overtake Menelaos in the chariot race in the *Iliad*.⁸⁷ Even more so, however, it is reminiscent of one infamous incident from Greek myth: the sad fate of Phaethon, the son of the sun-god, Helios. According to the extant version of the myth, the young Phaethon had so desperately wished to prove that he was Helios' son that he nagged his sire into allowing him to ride his chariot of divine horses across the sky.⁸⁸ In doing so, of course, the youth demonstrated his lack of maturity. He was unable to control the great animals and so he had been dragged all across the sky, clinging to the chariot, before being shot down and killed with one of Zeus' thunderbolts. That Phaethon should be read as emblematic of the *hubris* and *aphrosyne* typical of the young man seems to be an obvious point; but it is curious, though certainly fitting and perhaps significant, that this should be communicated symbolically through his failure at horsemanship.

⁸⁵ Since Nestor praises him for possessing wisdom beyond his years (Hom.*Il.* 9.53-60).

⁸⁶ In questioning Lysis (Pl.*Lys.* 208a-208b), he appears to be suggesting that access to his father's horse and chariot was among the ultimate signs of a father's trust in his son's maturity. It might be comparable, in this sense, to a parent allowing a teenage son or daughter to drive the family car.

⁸⁷ Cf. sections 2.2.3 and 3.2.1 (above).

⁸⁸ For a late, but beautifully expressed, account of this myth, see Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (2.1-328)

Perhaps more than any of these examples, however, Sokrates' emphasis on skilled horsemanship as symbol of mature masculinity is reminiscent of a passage from Aiskhylos' *Persai* (Aiskh.*Pers.* 180-200). In this passage, Atossa, queen of Persia and mother of the Great King Xerxes, has a bizarre dream in which her son yokes two women to a chariot, one dressed in Persian garb, the other in Greek. The dream is an obvious metaphor for Xerxes' failed invasion of Greece and his effort to subordinate all of Hellas to him. While the woman in Persian garb happily accepts the yoke, the woman who represents Greece rebels against it, tearing it off and throwing Xerxes to the ground.

Now there is much about this scene that merits attention. For instance, the metaphorical association between women and horses implied in this section is something of a trope in Greek literature,⁸⁹ the social significance of which will be discussed at length in the next chapter.⁹⁰ Of more relevance to the current argument, however, is the fact that Xerxes' inability to control the Greek woman, as surrogate for a horse, is obviously a metaphor for his barbarian *hubris* and lack of *sophrosyne*. However, there is reason to recognise that Aiskhylos does not assume Xerxes' lack of control over his appetites to be merely attributable to his barbarian status. It is also very clearly a consequence of his youth and inexperience. The ghost of his father Dareios, for instance, twice laments that youthful impetuosity drove his son to invade Greece with such disastrous consequences (Aiskh.*Pers.* 744; 782). Indeed one might reasonably argue that, in this text, the dichotomy between the wisdom of age and the folly of youth is a theme as prominent as that between rational Greek and incontinent barbarian.

⁸⁹ Elsewhere in Greek literature (Theog.*Fr.* 257-260), it is implied that a woman, metaphorically compared to a horse, is only receptive to the yoke of the right man – namely an aristocrat rather than a commoner. In this instance, Greece, imagined as a horse-like woman, will not be tamed by a weak and tyrannical barbarian ruler, but only by the Greek *aner* who appreciates her spirit and independence, and who will nurture her rather than enslave her.

⁹⁰ Cf. section 4.3.



Plate 3b. Athenian red-figure cup showing youths, wearing characteristic *petasoi* and *khlamydes*, leading horses. The scene is, possibly, an allusion to the youth's developing *sophrosyne*. (500-450 BCE). [Beazley: 204483, ATHENIAN, Berlin, Antikensammlung, Berlin, Schloss Charlottenburg, F2296.] © 2003-2020 Classical Art Research Centre, University of Oxford.



Plate 3c. Red-figure lekythos from Eretria. Youth, wearing *petasos* and *khlamys*, on horseback. Note his control of the horses, implying his possession of *sophrosyne* (500-450 BCE). [Beazley: 205859, National Museum, Athens, National Museum. CC1367.] © 2003-2020 Classical Art Research Centre, University of Oxford.

CONCLUSION

3.5. Perhaps it is unwise to force this point any further, since much of this material might be considered circumstantial. Suffice it to say, however, that consideration of the above literary examples provides a socio-political explanation for the seeming consistency with which horses and horse-taming appear in the literary sources as metaphors for the youth's developing character, beginning with the image of the *kentauros* and continuing down to Plato's *Phaidrus*.

As a closing thought, I would suggest that such a conclusion can help to shed new light on the abundance of black-figure vase-painting from 5th century Athens, in particular. On such scenes, beardless youths are shown mounting horses, standing beside horses, or calmly sitting astride a horse. In some of these cases, an adult man stands beside the youth, apparently overseeing the event or observing the departure.⁹¹ While it is difficult to deny that these can be interpreted as depictions of youths engaged in cavalry training, or – as is much more likely given their garb – departing for the hunt,⁹² the literary evidence discussed in this chapter indicates that the youth's control of a horse, or horses, in these scenes may also have signified, for the aristocratic Athenian male viewer at the *symposion*, the youth's attainment of a desirable degree of manly self-control.⁹³ Here was an image that evoked the youth's attainment of the capacity to tame his own equine impulses, and by extension those of others.

Furthermore, we know that the hunt, on which these equestrian youths appear to be departing, was an activity closely bound to the male maturation process

⁹¹ Plates 3b and 3c. Note, in particular, the presence of the older, bearded man on the extreme left of plate 3c, who observes the youth's interaction with the horse. Note, also, the youth's hand is extended towards the horse's muzzle in what is, perhaps, a calming gesture.

⁹² Cf. P. Schertz & N. Stribling (eds.) (2017). The hunt is more likely than cavalry participation for another reason. A passage from Lysias' *Against Alkibiades* (22) suggests that youths had to participate as hoplites before they could register for the Athenian cavalry. We might suppose that those who had not yet attained a beard would not normally have been permitted to partake in cavalry actions.

⁹³ The horses used for cavalry participation and hunting, after all, would have been stallions or geldings: fast, powerful animals that would not have been considered appropriate mounts for an impetuous and reckless young man. Of course, we should also assume that there was a physical dimension to this, too. A boy would not have been permitted to ride a horse until he had attained the level of physical strength required to do so.

in Ancient Greece (Vidal-Naquet 1986; Barringer 2001, 112). Drawing on a passage from Plato's *Laws* (7.822d-24a), Vidal-Naquet argues in *The Black Hunter* that there is a clear distinction between two types of hunting in Ancient Greek thought. The first takes place at night and involves the use of nets, traps and trickery. This form of the chase is characterised negatively by Plato, and seems to be associated with the anti-citizen who, according to Vidal-Naquet's structuralist approach, belongs firmly on the side of the wild and the "raw" (1986, 117). The other form of hunting involves the use of horses, spears and one's bare hands. This latter style is the "heroic" form of hunting consistent with the *ethos* of the adult citizen hoplite (Vidal-Naquet 1986, 117-118). The youth who engages in this sort of hunting, as opposed to that reliant on darkness and trickery, could therefore be said to adhere more closely to the ideals of the citizen hoplite, which focussed on *andreia* and *sophrosyne*.⁹⁴ The *epheboi* of images 3b and 3c, then, are likely departing on a form of hunt that was closely associated with a mature manhood; and their attendant skill at horsemanship similarly evokes the concept of manly character attained.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that hunting, like horsemanship, was used as analogy for pederastic pursuit and the *eromenos*' education in *sophrosyne*: a fact that Sokrates, in the *Lysis* (206b), makes quite explicit. As Claude Calame (1999, 104) notes in his analysis of the significance of hunting scenes, juxtaposed with scenes of pederastic pursuit on Athenian vase-painting of the 6th century, there is a clear alignment between the animal captured and "tamed" in the hunt and the *eromenos* that the *erastes*, as the active partner or "hunter", pursues at the *gymnasion*. In other words, just as in the case of

⁹⁴ For more on the significance of the hunt to narratives of social initiation and demonstrations of masculinity, cf. section 4.3.3. As shall be seen, the hunt provided a metaphor for hierarchical sexual and social roles generally. On 6th century Athenian vase-painting, the male *ephebos* or young citizen is depicted "hunting" a *parthenos*, sword or spear in hand, as an apparent metaphor for marriage. Such scenes apparently stress the fundamental patriarchal concept that the youth was expected to demonstrate *sophrosyne* in "taming" (i.e. subordinating) his bride. Hunting and generally penetrating "nature" with the spear retained their association with masculine social and political potency. Athenian colonisation throughout the 6th and 5th centuries, for instance, was evidently perceived as the penetration of a feminine earth by a masculine Athenian character. Cf. C. Dougherty (1993); also P. Cartledge (1998). This conception of male penetration of nature as a feature of colonialism and territorial expansion was echoed in Alexander the Great's reported spear-cast upon launching his campaign into Asia (Diod.Hist. 17.17.1).

horsemanship, the roles of tamer and tamed are clearly assigned to the two participants as an expression of their expected character traits at a particular age. Whereas the *eromenos* must be tamed of his animal appetites through pederastic education, the *erastes*, often in his late teens or twenties, was a man who would soon be expected to marry, and was therefore assumed to possess the adult, masculine qualities necessary to “tame” the young *eromenos* of the worst excesses of youth.

Indeed, as the next chapter will propose, it may have been imperative for the *erastes* to demonstrate his own capacity for *sophrosyne* in the context of pederastic courtship, since this would, notionally, have constituted a demonstration of the manly self-control and metaphorical taming capacity expected of a married citizen, in a society where women were regarded as duplicitous, sexually insatiable, and permanently subordinate to nature; and where their sexuality, in particular, was deemed to be potentially destructive of men and the fabric of male society.

CHAPTER 4

SEX, POWER AND THE TAMING OF WILD WOMEN

4.1. It is well-established, among Classical historians, that women's lives in Ancient Greece were often difficult. As Sarah B. Pomeroy (1975) and Sue Blundell (1995) have demonstrated,¹ Ancient Greek *poleis* enforced strict gender roles. In contrast to the ideal masculine role, which focussed on a free man's duty to partake in warfare and politics, and to be assertive in both public and private affairs, the female social role, or at least that assigned to women of citizen birth, appears to have been defined almost entirely in terms of her duty to marry, run the family home, and produce legitimate heirs for her *kyrios*. This meant that many women from the families of power-holding men were, at least notionally, largely confined to the *oikos*, and were only permitted to leave the domestic quarters on specific occasions such as religious festivals. Moreover, hegemonic masculine ideology tended to "other" women, marking them out as opposite to the free citizen male.

This chapter will explore how female otherness was often defined by metaphorical alignment with the wild, and especially with animals, in patriarchal Greek thought. Principally, it will argue that this much-attested association between the feminine and the wild functioned as a facet of the ideology of male rule, by justifying the universal social subordination of women. Yet it will also suggest that female alignment with the wild reveals a deep unease in the Greek male mind about the capacity of women to destabilise the patriarchal status quo. When women are associated with wildness in male-authored Ancient Greek texts, it is often to evoke the detrimental impact of their sexuality on the male rational faculty. In other words, the male-authored literature suggests that men understood that their

¹ For more recent literature on aspects of women's daily lives in Ancient Greece, which adds to our understanding of them, cf. L. Llewellyn-Jones (2003) & L. Foxhall (2013). For articulations of women's daily work in Ancient Greek poetry, cf. A. Karanika (2014). For poetic performance and women's work in Ancient Greece, cf. B. MacLachlan (2012) & P. Chrystal (2017).

biological urges were strong and difficult to control, and sought to deflect the blame for this onto female allure.

To push this point slightly further, there is a strong sense in many sources that a high degree of female sexual freedom could cause complications for inter-male social solidarity, by destabilising the male rational faculty and rendering men entirely subject to masculine appetites. The underlying thought-pattern appears to have been that, because female sexuality was a wild, insatiable and socially-destructive force, and because women were presumed willing to exercise that force to the detriment of men, the fully socialised man demonstrated his adherence to civilised ideals by metaphorically taming them. This helps to place the taming symbolism that pervades descriptions of male ethical development in Ancient Greece, discussed in chapter 3, within a broader context that accounts for male views of women.

4.2.1. In the 18th book of Homer's *Iliad*, Thetis, the mother of Akhilleus, speaks these words to Hephaistos:

ἐκ μὲν μ' ἀλλάων ἀλιάων ἀνδρὶ δάμασσε
Αἰακίδῃ Πηλεΐ, καὶ ἔτλην ἀνέρος εὐνήν
πολλὰ μάλ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα.

I alone of the sea-born he (Zeus) *tamed* to a mortal man,
Peleus the son of Aiakos, and I suffered the man's bed
greatly against my will.

(Hom.*Il.* 18.432-434)

Perceiving that Akhilleus' death is imminent, the goddess has visited the smith-god to request that he forge a new suit of armour for her son (Hom.*Il.*18.135-140), so that he may return to battle, win honour (*time*) and lasting fame (*kleos*), and avenge Patroklos' death by slaying his killer, Hektor. In this passage, Thetis recalls how Zeus forced her to marry Akhilleus' father, Peleus, and, consequently, to bear a son whose life will be all too brief.

The scene provides a moment of great *pathos*, capturing the bitter grief of a mother doomed to outlive her child, and her desperate attempt to compensate him for his life's brevity. From an anthropological perspective, however, Thetis' lament also reveals something of the lot of women in a rigidly

patriarchal society, often forced into marriage unwillingly and perhaps even unwittingly, used as bargaining chips in transactions between two men: namely the girl's father and her future husband.² In this instance Zeus, as king of the gods, acts as surrogate father³ when he gives the maiden goddess in marriage to Peleus, the prospective son-in-law. Thetis, despite being an immortal divinity, is reduced to an object of exchange between two male actors, denied any right to choose a partner for herself or to decide her own sexual destiny.⁴ Hers, it seems, is a fate identical to that of almost all Greek women (Blundell 1995, 67-68).

Moving past this fundamental observation, however, Thetis' claim that she was tamed (δάμασσειν) by her marriage and sexual submission to Peleus can and should be read within a broader socio-ideological context. First of all, there can be little doubt that the choice of verb here reveals an essentially masculine worldview. The notion that unmarried *parthenoi*, and indeed women more generally, are inherently subject to nature (*physis*) is a common feature of Ancient Greek literary sources from Homer down to the end of the Classical Period, all of them the work of male authors.⁵ Perhaps the best known example of this comes from the poet Semonides of Amorgos, who wrote a now infamous diatribe against the female sex, in which he categorised the various "types" of women by comparing them to different animals and forces of nature (Sem.Fr. 7).

While Semonides offers a variety of negative examples of female excess, such as the vain and high-maintenance "horse-woman" (Sem.Fr. 7.57-70), the slovenly "pig-woman" (7.2-6), the tempestuous "sea-woman" (7.27-42), the

² Or, in this case, between a god and a man. Both are male, at any rate. Sourvinou-Inwood (1991, 67) points out that in this case Peleus is an honorary god. Daughters were evidently used as bargaining chips in male transactions fairly often. Elsewhere in the *Iliad*, Agamemnon offers one of his daughters to Akhilleus in marriage in exchange for the latter's return to service in the Akhaian army (Hom.II. 9.144-150).

³ Her biological father is Nereus, the old man of the sea.

⁴ For some discussion on the social significance of exchange in early Greece, cf. S. Langdon (1987), S. von Reden (2003) & D. Lyons (2003). For exchange as manifestation of social hierarchy, cf. C. MacCormack (1981).

⁵ In contrast to the work of Sappho, the only female poet whose work survives from the period in question. As Sue Blundell notes (1995, 90), Sappho's poetry actually challenges the hegemony of association between quintessentially male activities such as horse-riding and "taming", and sexual relations. For more on the *parthenos* as wild and in need of taming, cf. H. King (1998, 22; 75).

gluttonous “earth-woman” (7.21-26), and the nosy “bitch-woman” (7.34-36), he offers only one positive type. This is the industrious “bee-woman”, who is wise and incurs no blame, since she does not indulge in the kinds of animal vices that other women are supposedly prone to. “Life blooms and grows because of her”, Semonides writes, “she grows old with her husband, loving and beloved, a mother to good and renowned children” (*Sem.Fr.* 7.83-93). From this, one might infer that the only innocuous expression of adult womanhood that Semonides can imagine is that of a woman confined to the affairs of her own *oikos*. This woman is dedicated to her roles as wife and mother, and her identity is defined solely in terms of these responsibilities. She is chaste and bears and rears children to be her husband’s heirs. She does not challenge her *kyrios* or compromise his honour, or that of their progeny, in any way. For Semonides, such a woman is a rare thing in comparison to all those who embody negative “animal” traits, since he qualifies his praise of the “bee-woman” by stressing that “woman is the greatest ill that Zeus has made”.⁶

The power and consistency of this assumption about the unrestrained, wild character of women was such that it retained its potency throughout the history of Ancient Greek literature. Hesiod, in his *Works and Days*, maintained that the gods had given to Pandora, the first woman, the mind of a bitch (*Hes.Erg.* 67).⁷ In the early 5th century, the tragic poet Aiskhylos had his Eteokles, in the *Seven Against Thebes*, berate the female chorus for their lamenting and shrieking, pointing out that this sort of typically female excess

⁶ Semonides’ evocation of the bee-woman is remarkably similar to the ideal wife of Xenophon’s *Oikonomikos*. In that work, the character Iskhomakhos provides an account of how he prompted his young wife towards competence in the most important female duties (*Xen.Oik.* 7.5-35). In fact, Iskhomakhos even refers to this kind of domesticated wife as a bee who stays in the hive and does not suffer the other bees to be idle (*Xen.Oik.* 7.35). It is, however, likely that the lot of Iskhomakhos’ wife was more comfortable than it would have been for many women.

⁷ κύνεόν τε νόον. Presumably this partly refers to a bitch “in heat”, in terms of how they behave – i.e. sexually available to any passing male, but also able to drive the male wild with desire. Cf. section 4.4.2 & 4.5.2. Also G.S. Kirk (1985, 77) & S. Lilja (1976, 22). This, at any rate, would appear to be one of the consequences of Agamemnon’s assertion that there is nothing more like a bitch than a woman (*Hom.Od.* 11.427); and Helen’s self-deprecating claim that she is a bitch (*Hom.II.* 6.355), or bitch-faced (*Hom.Od.* 4.145) for having eloped with Alexandros. Having the mind of a bitch may also suggest a woman who is curious, interfering, and overly assertive. Cf. Semonides (7.12-16).

of emotion constitutes “wildness” (Aiskh.*Hept.* 280).⁸ Euripides, for his part, described many of his female characters through the use of animal imagery, clearly expressing a common masculine perspective equating female character with the alterity of beasts.⁹ In the *Oikonomikos*, Xenophon’s Iskhomakhos maintains that his young bride had to be tamed (*tithaseuein*)¹⁰ before she could be engaged in conversation (Xen.*Oik.* 7.10). Writing at the end of the 4th century BCE, the comic poet Menandros had one of his characters proclaim that, of all the wild beasts of land or of sea, woman is the wildest (McKeown 2013, 23). Much later, in the 2nd century, Oppian described how Poseidon “tamed” (*damasse*) the daughter of Nereus, “though she was unwilling” (Op.*Hal.* 1.390).¹¹

4.2.2. The patriarchal belief that women are inherently as wild as animals, in the sense that they are naturally prone to all of the kinds of emotional and physical excess, appears to have impacted the development of Greek intellectual thought. Indeed, Greek natural scientists sought to give the notion of female animality, and proximity to nature, a veneer of scientific legitimacy. Aristotle, writing in the 4th century BCE, claimed that unmarried girls from the time of puberty require much surveillance because they are compelled, “by nature” (*para physin*), to explore their newfound sexual capacities (Arist.*Hist.An.* 7.1).¹² It seems most likely that he was here referring to masturbation: a behaviour which, the philosopher argued, her *kyrios* should prevent because indulgence in such behaviours in youth would cause extreme wantonness in adult life (Arist.*Hist.An.* 7.1).¹³ Naturally, such sexual licentiousness was entirely incompatible with the chaste and isolated life

⁸ It is *agrioi*.

⁹ Cf. Eur.*And.* 621; Eur.*Hek.* 142; 1273. He is particularly prone to referring to women either as fillies, or as being “dog-like”. More on this in chapter 5.

¹⁰ A word for taming that is much less frequently attested than *damazein* and its variants, and which appears to be a milder term, lacking the potentially violent implications of the more common word.

¹¹ Since Poseidon was the god of horsemanship, the implication here is that the daughter of Nereus is like a filly: a common theme in the Greek tradition. Cf. section 4. (below).

¹² This is also a prejudice expressed against boys of the same age – a matter that I will discuss in the next chapter. For more thoughts on views of puberty in antiquity, cf. E. Eyben (1972).

¹³ Greek men appear to have believed that part of a woman’s “wildness” related to her extreme sexual appetites. For example when the seer Teiresias, who had lived as both a man and a woman, was asked whether men or women enjoy sex more, he said “of ten parts, the man enjoys only one” (Apoll.*Lib.* 3.6.7.).

expected of the tame wife and mother under the control of a *kyrios*.¹⁴ For Aristotle, only male intervention and control, even in a girl's youth, could prevent her from becoming entirely beholden to her sexual impulses in adulthood, and rebelling against the role assigned to her by society.

Aristotle's argument here ultimately reflects a common tendency, among Ancient Greek authors, to define female character and behaviour purely in terms of a woman's body.¹⁵ As Sherry B. Ortner has demonstrated in a much-quoted paper, this tendency is not specific to Ancient Greece. Women have been classified, in almost every recorded society, as belonging more on the side of nature than culture (Ortner 1974, 68-87; Shore 1981, 192). Many Greek men appear to have believed that a woman's behaviour was inevitably dictated by her *soma* (body), in contrast to the free adult male who had, ideally, tamed the body's wild impulses and instead was governed by his rational, deliberative qualities.¹⁶ Again, Aristotle provides a useful point of reference: "The deliberative faculty (τὸ βουλευτικόν) is absent in the slave,¹⁷ is present but *ineffective* in woman, and in the child (*pais*) is present but undeveloped" (Arist.*Pol.* 1260a).¹⁸ It is the unique capacity of his rational, deliberative faculty, the mastery of his *noos*, which made the free man the "ruler by nature", as Aristotle saw it (Arist.*Pol.*1259b). "The one who rules (i.e. the citizen male) must possess a complete virtue of the mind" (Arist.*Pol.* 1269a).¹⁹

The Hippocratic author of the text *On Virgins* gave a more detailed account of how a woman's wild behaviour is dictated by her body rather than by rationality, while also pointing – rather crudely – to the importance of male

¹⁴ It is clear that the ideal woman in Classical Athens, in particular, was expected to be as invisible as possible. The situation for aristocratic women appears to be less grim in Homer, and somewhat more appealing in Classical Sparta. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable to conclude that all of these societies could be characterised as patriarchal in essence. In all, women unquestionably occupied a position of social inferiority. On the relative freedoms of Spartan women, cf. S.B. Pomeroy (2002).

¹⁵ For Aristotle's views on women, cf. M.A.C. Horowitz (1976). For discussion of Aristotle's views on women and slaves, cf. W.W. Fortenbaugh (2006).

¹⁶ Cf. chapter 3.

¹⁷ On Aristotle's theory of natural slavery, cf. M. Heath (2008). For discussion of such theories in the Greek tradition as racism, cf. B. Isaac (2004) & S. Lape (2010).

¹⁸ He is here referring to male children, clearly. On the ideology of the development of the male rational faculty, cf. (especially) sections 3.1.1, 3.2.2 & 3.3.1.

¹⁹ διὸ τὸν μὲν ἄρχοντα τελέαν ἔχειν δεῖ τὴν διανοητικὴν ἀρετὴν.

action in controlling such behaviour. He maintained that girls at the time of menarche are liable to suffer from hallucinations, to become feverish and even to push insanity to the point of suicidal tendencies. They are prone, in other words, to *mania* and wild frenzy, on account of their biological situation. This, he claims, is because the mouth of the womb has not been opened through sexual intercourse, meaning that all the blood cannot escape and instead rushes into the heart and lungs (Blundell 1995, 99). The author's solution, rather unsurprisingly, was to ensure that the girl was married off to a man as quickly as possible following the onset of menarche, so that she might become pregnant. This development would enable the blood to escape.²⁰

An even stranger example of the Greek male tendency to associate the female bodily condition with wild or excessive behaviour is provided by an apparent belief in the "wandering womb". This is a narrative that appears in Plato's *Timaios* (Pl.*Tim.* 91), where the speaker maintains that a woman's womb is an animal (*zoos*) that wishes only to bear children. If this desire goes unfulfilled for a long time, the womb-animal begins to wander around the body, leading to all manner of unspecified complications and maladies (Pl.*Tim.* 91c). Once again, the solution to this problem is for the woman to have sex with a man and become pregnant. The womb-animal can only be prevented from driving the woman wild, in other words, through the power of the male member and the generative capacity of male semen.

There is obviously a clear sense in both of these instances, the Hippocratic and the Platonic, that male sexual action in impregnating a *parthenos* can have a soothing effect on the woman, rendering her more passive and, presumably, accepting of a maternal role in society: a role that stands in marked contrast to the supposed madness and wildness of her pre-marital

²⁰ The notion that women operating outside the confines of marriage and male social control were prone to *mania* is clearly articulated in myths relating to mainadism. For an excellent account of the association between *mania*, spatial relocation to the wild, and female liberation from marriage through mainadism, cf. R. Seaford (1993, 115-146). It is notable that the *mainads*, free from social control and living under the control of the raw-eating Dionysos (Eur.*Bakch.* 139), were associated with the rending of raw flesh. For *mainads* as part of a wider discussion about women in Greek religion, cf. M. Dillon (2003, 139-142).

state. The underlying belief is obviously that marriage and sex impose civilised conduct on women. More specifically, according to this logic the penis becomes the instrument of both medical aid and socialization: a finding that has profound implications for our interpretation of images on Greek vase-painting, which shall be discussed at length below, where swords or spears clearly provide a metaphor for the penis in images of erotic pursuit.²¹

Bearing such assumptions of the Classical Greeks about the biologically dictated, irrational wildness of *parthenoi* in mind, it becomes easier to appreciate the paternalistic, patriarchal thought-processes that lurk behind the Homeric definition of marriage as “taming”. It implies a view of women, and the male role in socialising them, in perfect accordance with those of the Hippocratic author, Aristotle, and Plato, despite their temporal difference. In order to prevent *parthenoi* from exercising their “wild” impulses in socially damaging ways, it was necessary to “tame” them through marriage, sex and impregnation at a young age. The “tame” woman, we must assume, was the wife who, like Semonides’ “bee” woman, was confined to the internal space of the *domos*, who was entirely chaste, and whose activities were focussed on the maintenance of the household, the bearing and rearing of children, and the production of textiles. This ideology of gender/power relations in marriage and sex presumably lies at the heart of a seldom-used but clearly attested Ancient Greek word for one’s wife, *damar*: a term that evokes the concept of the domesticated woman.²² Indeed, Greeks of the Classical Period were also inclined to think of marriage and sex as acts of “taming” or “yoking” the *parthenos*.²³

That the tame state, implied by sex and marriage, was entirely dependent on her continued state of subordination to a husband within the *oikos* is heavily implied in myths depicting mainads: women who were often married but who,

²¹ Cf. section 4.3.3.

²² Cf. Hom.*Il.* 3.122, Pind.*Nem.* 4.57, and Aiskh.*Prom.* 834. The alignment of acts of sexual penetration and impregnation, in particular, with an essential idea of “taming” may also be reflected in the best-attested sexual position on erotic vase-painting scenes featuring a man and a woman from Classical Athens. On these vases, the most common position is “from behind” (Dover 1989, 101; Blundell 1995, 101), a position that obviously implies a degree of depersonalisation and subordination, but which is also obviously reminiscent of the animal world.

²³ Cf. Eur.*Med.* 804. More on this in chapters 4 and 5.

under the influence of Dionysos, the god of the vine and of excess, could be driven into a state of frenzy associated with escape from male control and spatial relocation to the wild, where they would engage in all manner of bestial behaviour.²⁴

4.3.1. Though we lack the data to confirm it, it seems likely that the categorisation of the female sex as wild animals in need of taming would have had a deep psychological impact on women, perhaps contributing to female acceptance of a subordinate social status. This is a reasonable hypothesis because the othering of women as closer to nature was more than a mere feature of male-composed literature in Ancient Greece. In fact, it seems that girls were taught from an early age, through social practice, to play the role of animal subordinate to a male actor, often explicitly characterised in the symbolism of socio-sexual relations as a hunter or tamer. Ancient Greek rituals of initiation, and the myths invented to explain them, seem to have communicated a fundamental idea that girls, especially around the time of menarche and marriage preparation, were akin to wild animals; and that successful achievement of their social destiny was dependent on their taming by a husband (*kyrios*).²⁵

The Swiss scholar Claude Calame (2001) has hinted at this in his classic anthropological study, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece*. Calame's study of the choruses of adolescent girls who performed dances and songs in honour of initiatory deities, most notably Artemis, has shown that these often focussed on the supposedly animal nature of girls being prepared for marriage, the event that would expunge their wildness and tame them. Calame gives considerable attention to the extant poetic fragments of the 7th century Spartan, Alkman, in particular (Calame 2001). He points out that a group of Alkman's poems, the *Partheneia* or maiden songs, were composed for performance by choruses of young women as part of their preparation for

²⁴ At least in the male mind. Cf. the *Bakkhai* of Euripides (23-40). Also R. Seaford (1993) & M. Dillon (2003). Dionysos frees women from the confines of marriage and enables them to return to the wild, pre-marriage state.

²⁵ This sort of rigorous indoctrination on the part of the ruling group would likely have led to widespread acceptance of the notion of female wildness in society, being a concept so perpetuated in the social superstructures as to constitute what Antonio Gramsci called hegemonic common sense (Crehan 2016).

marriage and fulfilment of their social destiny as wives and mothers. In one poem, the chorus appears to celebrate the beauty of two of the girls in the choir. The most beautiful girl, Agido,²⁶ is like a Venetic racehorse (Alk.*Fr.*1.45-50), while the second most beautiful, the chorus-leader (Hagesikhora), is compared to a Colaxaian steed who runs alongside the swifter horse (Alk.*Fr.*1.55-58). As Blundell (1995, 81) has pointed out, the language clearly indicates that, while the chorus singing the song was presumably female, the lyrics are masculine in tone, reflecting the cultural interests – namely horseracing – of the male poet. It therefore “others” the girls, even as it praises them.

The comparison with horses in this instance may have referred to the fact that the girls, as part of their preparation for marriage, had to participate in a footrace.²⁷ The Hellenistic poet Theokritos records (Theok.*Hel.*18.22-23) that Helen, obviously the most beautiful *parthenos* among her peers, raced with them along the river Eurotas in Sparta. Yet it is also likely that the equestrian metaphor had a more deeply embedded cultural significance, as it did in the case of male ethical development. The horse was often considered to embody *hubris* and general excess more than most other animals,²⁸ and these were characteristics that men in patriarchal Greek culture tended to attribute to women as figures of the “other”. Calame also hints at this, pointing out that one of the essential, underlying concepts of the girls’ *hippomorphisation* was to communicate the idea that they were “wild”, and that by marrying them in the near future, their male suitors would turn them into “tame” women (i.e. wives and mothers) (2001, 243).

Accounts of certain myths, which Calame views as etiological, also attest to an essential equation between horse-taming and marriage. Most notable among these is that of the Spartan sons of Tyndareos, Kastor and Polydeukes, and their abduction of the Leukippides – a name that means “white mares” – from the neighbouring territory of Messenia in the southwestern Peloponnese.

²⁶ A name perhaps signifying the girl’s royal status, since one of the two Spartan ruling dynasties was the Agiad dynasty.

²⁷ For the seminal anthropological account of *rites de passage* from cultures across the world, cf. A. van Gennep et al. (1960).

²⁸ Cf. section 3.2.3.

The sons of Tyndareos were famous in the tradition for their skill at horsemanship, indicating that ritual celebration of their abduction of, and marriage to, the “white mares” was drawing a direct analogy between marriage and the general socio-sexual subordination of women, on the one hand, and the typically male preoccupations of horsemanship and horse-raiding on the other.²⁹ In other words, a uniquely male social activity, horse-taming, was being applied to describe, and perhaps to justify, hierarchical social relations between men and women in society. Indeed, the evidence from the previous chapter, which suggests that mounting a horse, or horse-drawn chariot, was a moment that signified the young man’s development of the manly *sophrosyne* necessary to be a tamer in social relations, serves to reinforce this point.³⁰

Calame also points to the myth of the daughters of Proteus of Argos, which he interprets as an etiological myth of female preparation for marriage.³¹ According to the surviving details of that myth, the daughters of Proteus had gone mad and been driven into the wild by Hera as punishment for intruding on the goddess’ sanctuary before they were of marriageable age. Here evocation of the wild *parthenos* obviously recalls the Hippocratic author’s argument, and indeed that of Plato’s *Timaios*, about the madness that virginal *parthenoi* are prone to prior to marriage, sex, and childbirth. In the myth, the daughters of Proteus are captured and brought home by the heroes, Bias and Melampous; and Bias, of course, married one of them. As Calame correctly points out, it is no coincidence that Bias was celebrated, like the sons of Tyndareos, as *hippodamos*, the horse-tamer (Hes.*Fr.*37.13; Calame 2001, 242). He also points out that Bakkhylides refers to the young, unmarried daughters of Proteus as “untamed” (*adamatoi*), and that Hera, the goddess of marriage, succeeded in placing the yoke on them (Bakkh. 11.39; Calame 2001, 242). Similar themes, Calame astutely observes, can also be read in the myth of Pelops’ contest against Oinomaos and his subsequent marriage to Hippodameia: “these are [...] the two horsemen who enter into competition,

²⁹ C. Baldassi (2019) has written a recent PhD thesis on the topic of the Leukippides. She, too, stresses the importance of taming as metaphor for marriage in the myth (2019, 91).

³⁰ Cf. section 3.4.4.

³¹ Cf. M. Dillon (2003, 67).

the one to defend, the other to lead away and tame through marriage the young mare that is Hippodameia” (Calame 2001, 243).³² The maiden’s name, of course, means “horse-tamer”. This myth came from Elis and was associated with the establishment of the Olympic Games there, perhaps indicating that myths that drew analogy between unmarried *parthenoi* and wild horses originated in the marriage rituals of the Peloponnese.³³

4.3.2. Broadly similar conclusions about the underlying message of female initiation rituals in Ancient Greece can be drawn from study of the foundation myth for the festival of the *arkteia*, attested in Classical Athens. During their stay with Artemis at her sanctuary at Brauron, it seems that young girls being prepared for marriage were expected to “play the bear”. While it is unclear what this meant in practice,³⁴ study of the etiological myth suggests much about the nature of the ideological instruction behind the narrative. According to the myth, an Athenian girl had been savaged by a bear sacred to Artemis at Brauron, and a group of young men had retaliated by hunting and slaying the animal. This incurred the hostility of Artemis, who demanded as restitution that Athenian girls, prior to marriage, serve her at her sanctuary by acting as surrogates for the slaughtered bear.

The girls’ association with the bear in this case obviously indicates a sense that unmarried *parthenoi* are, by their nature, an adequate replacement for the wild animal. Furthermore, this ritual substitution of girl for bear implies that Artemis’ role as mistress and caretaker of the wild was notionally aligned with her status as the goddess who prepared young girls for the transition from childhood to fulfilment of their social destiny as wives and mothers. It may also suggest that, in certain instances, a man’s hunt and slaughter of a wild animal sacred to Artemis provided a metaphor for his marriage to a *parthenos* and the taking of her virginity: a possibility that would reinforce the proximity

³² Trans. D. Collins & J. Orion.

³³ The Athenian urban myth of the horse and the maiden, described at Aiskhines 1.182, and studied by Edmunds (1997), may be rooted in the same tradition of association between the character of unmarried maidens and that of horses. In the tale, a girl who had committed adultery was enclosed with a wild horse which killed her.

³⁴ For more on the cult of Artemis at Brauron and the etiological myth associated with it, cf. T.C.W. Stinton (1976), M. Walbank (1981), S.G. Cole (1984), R. Hamilton (1989), C. Sourvinou-Inwood (1991) & M. Dillon (2003, 220-222).

between horse-taming and hunting as metaphors for socialisation in Ancient Greece.³⁵

At any rate, from the perspective of masculine ideology, comparison of the Brauron myth with those of the Peloponnese points to the consistency of the cultural association between the *kyrios*' control or slaughter of animals, on the one hand, and his socio-sexual subordination of women on the other. This association is supported by the number of myths in which girls are abducted by men from a frontier region, often from a meadow (*leimon*), as an apparent metaphor for marriage and sex. Consider, for instance, the examples of the virginal Europa, abducted from a Tyrian meadow by Zeus, and carried across the sea to Crete to bear his children (*Apoll.Lib.* 3.1.1.); the abduction of Kore/Persephone, the mythical archetype of the *parthenos*, who is seized, while picking flowers in a meadow, by death (Hades) himself and then forced into marriage (*Apoll.Lib.* 1.5.1.);³⁶ Theseus' reported abduction of the horse-like maiden Helen from the sanctuary of Artemis in Sparta (*Hdt.Hist.* 9.73); and the potential fate of Nausikaa, when she ventures beyond the city walls of Skheria in order to wash her clothes, and is confronted by a potential future husband, Odysseus (*Hom.Od.* 6.130).

While none of these maidens was directly compared to animals in their respective myths,³⁷ their location in the meadow again attests to the cultural assumption that the unmarried maiden is an uncivilised creature that men must purge of wildness or "tame".³⁸ On the other hand, when Zeus transforms Kallisto (*Apoll.Lib.* 3.8.2.) and Io (*Apoll.Lib.* 2.1.3.) into animals in an effort to disguise his liaisons with them from Hera, one might argue that he is attempting to disguise them as virginal *parthenoi* still bound to the wild realm

³⁵ At any rate, a very similar pattern, according to which Artemis demands a young girl as restitution for the slaying of a wild animal sacred to her, is presented by the myth of Iphigeneia, also probably a story explaining rituals of female initiation. In this case, the maiden Iphigeneia must be sacrificed to Artemis to pay a debt that her father, Agamemnon, owes to the goddess for having slain a deer sacred to her. An association between virgin *parthenos* and deer is also alluded to in a poem of the 7th century poet Arkhilokhos (*Arkh.Fr.* 196a42-53). Cf. L. Swift (2016).

³⁶ On the association between death and marriage in Greek thought, cf. Rush (1994).

³⁷ With the possible exception of Helen. As noted above, she appears to have been compared to a horse/filly in the Spartan tradition. Cf. section 4.3.1 (above).

³⁸ Of course, the girl may also have been perceived by men as being like the meadow itself: quiet, passive, beautiful, uncultivated and fertile.

of Artemis. The argument for this is much more compelling in the case of Kallisto. Indeed, when the young Arkas, the hunter son of Kallisto and Zeus, attempts unwittingly to kill his own mother (who remains in bear form), we are possibly witnessing a metaphor for a Freudian near-miss.³⁹

4.3.3. Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood has read these overarching themes in the extant visual evidence for Ancient Greek culture. In her study of “erotic pursuit” scenes on 6th century Athenian vases, Sourvinou-Inwood showed how a common *typos* on vase paintings of this period, depicting an *ephebos* dressed for the mature, adult form of hunt in a *khlamys* and *petasos*,⁴⁰ and often carrying a spear while pursuing a *parthenos*, constituted a metaphor for taming in marriage (Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 66, 76).⁴¹ Some of these scenes are depicted taking place at the house of the girl’s father, for instance, and thus emphasise the notion of marriage as a seizure and removal to a new home under the governance of a new *kyrios*, her husband (Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 72). In some versions, the king-like figure of an older, bearded man appears, apparently representing the girl’s father, and presumably indicating his consent to the pursuit and implied taming in marriage.⁴²

A curious variant, however, appears to locate the erotic hunting scene elsewhere, at a location marked by a palm tree and an altar. These features obviously evoke a rural shrine, which presumably indicates divine approval of the pursuit. Sourvinou-Inwood has remarked that this is likely a reference to the pre-nuptial rituals performed at the *arkteia* at Brauron:

[...] erotic pursuit reflects the same perception of the *parthenos* as that articulated at the *arkteia*, which stresses the girl’s animality in order to purge it, as the pursuits represent metaphorically the institution which will complete that purge. (Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 76)

³⁹ Recorded in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (*Ov.Met.* 2.400-500), but presumably a much older story.

⁴⁰ Cf. section 3.5.

⁴¹ Cf. also K. Topper (2012, 144).

⁴² An important detail. While abduction and/or sexual assault may have provided a popular metaphor for marriage, in reality the consent of the girl’s *kyrios* would have been an important aspect of the marriage contract. The abduction or rape of the daughter of a fellow citizen in Classical Athens, for instance, incurred considerable penalties and, perhaps, could have resulted in capital punishment. Cf. chapter 3.

In other words, girls playing the bear at the sanctuary of Artemis in preparation for marriage, and images of girls being pursued by spear-bearing *epheboi*, both communicate the same essential concept: namely marriage, as the imposition of male control of female behaviour, communicated through the metaphor of taming.

In these pursuit scenes, the spear (or less frequently the sword) that the *ephebos* carries was intended as a surrogate for the penis, as indicated by the fact that it is generally directed towards the *parthenos*' midriff or rear as he pursues her.⁴³ This "pursuit" or "hunt", implying an impending thrust from behind, is evocative of one of the most common sexual positions that Athenian men assumed in sexual relations with women, with the woman on her hands and knees, and the man standing to penetrate her from behind.⁴⁴ This position may have been favoured to reinforce the notion of female animality, or was perhaps symptomatic of the existing tendency to think of women as animals in need of domestication.⁴⁵ The prominence of this depersonalising position on vase-painting would therefore recall both the Hippocratic author's claim that sex serves to soothe the worst excesses of female character, and Plato's claim about the womb as a wild animal that must be tamed by sex with a man and subsequent impregnation.

It seems reasonable, at any rate, to assume that the average Greek viewer of the erotic pursuit scenes on these pots – though perhaps especially free adult males – would have understood such themes. After all, the vast majority of vases not exported to other parts of the Mediterranean would have been made for use at *symposia*: events where the women of high society were not allowed to enter, and where bawdy male humour was presumably the order of the day. That such vase-paintings appear to glorify the male youth on the cusp of

⁴³ Cf. plates 4a and 4b.

⁴⁴ These scenes sometimes depict anal penetration, though it is not always possible to be sure. Cf. plate 4c. Cf. Dover (1989, 100-102); also Blundell (1995, 101).

⁴⁵ The prevalence of this sexual position may go some distance towards explaining the female comparison with horses in the rituals at Sparta and elsewhere. For instance, in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (*Ar.Lys.* 660-670), the chorus of old men suggests that women assuming the dominant position of "horse-riders" (a position commonly referred to as cowgirl in modern parlance) in sexual affairs was associated with emasculation and the male ceding of social and political power to women. Although Aristophanes was trying to make his audience laugh, this probably evokes real male views about dominant sexual positions.

adulthood as violent hunter/tamer,⁴⁶ while the *parthenos* of marriageable age was being taught to think of herself in relation to wild animals ripe for either slaughter or domestication, is perhaps one of the more chilling realities of the ideology of male social power in Ancient Greece.



Plate 4a. Athenian red-figure *stamnos*. Erotic pursuit. Note the direction of the spear, and its implied association with the penis (500-450 BCE). [Beazley 205633, Krefeld, Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, 1034.1515]. © 2003-2020 Classical Art Research Centre, University of Oxford.



Plate 4b. Athenian red-figure bell krater. Youth armed with sword, wearing *petasos* and *khlamys*, pursuing a *parthenos* (425-375 BCE) [Beazley 8514, ATHENIAN, London, market, Christie's]. © 2003-2020 Classical Art Research Centre.

⁴⁶ Participation in the hunt was clearly an important developmental step for the young Greek aristocrat, as outlined by Xenophon in his treatise *On Hunting* (1).

Sourvinou-Inwood's analysis of vase-paintings invites further consideration of Thetis' metaphorical "taming" through marriage in the *Iliad* – the subject with which this chapter began. Thetis appears to have been a sort of mythic prototype for the animal alterity of *parthenoi* in Greek myth (Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 62-65).⁴⁷ As pseudo-Apollodoros recounts, when Peleus sought to capture and tame her in marriage, she transformed into a number of wild animals in her efforts to escape his clutches, while he hung on (Apoll.*Lib.*3.13.5).⁴⁸ This, of course, was the same response that Zeus' earlier assault inspired in Metis, another prototype *parthenos*, when he attempted to seize her in marriage (Apoll.*Lib.* 1.3.6). In both instances marriage takes place when the animalistic maiden submits, following a period of resistance, to her young male pursuer, who assumes the role of tamer.⁴⁹ It is therefore unsurprising that Thetis appears, pursued by Peleus, the metaphorical hunter/tamer in this scenario, on a number of the "erotic pursuit" vases⁵⁰ (Sourvinou-Inwood 1987, 1991). As virginal goddesses, Thetis and Metis are *parthenoi* who retained something of the wild and animalistic, something which could only be purged by the aggressive action of the prospective husband.

4.4.1. On the other hand, one might argue that study of the amply attested Greek male tendency to categorise women as wild animals in need of taming relates to masculine anxieties about the capacity of female sexuality to manipulate men and thereby destabilise society. Some narratives about female wildness certainly suggest that Greek men, though generally vociferous in their proclamations about the uniquely developed rational faculty (*noos*) of the male citizen, and his ability to exercise personal restraint (*sophrosyne*), were also aware that this much-vaunted masculine trait was little more than a thin veneer of culture that could be wiped out by the dark and mysterious power of a woman's sexuality. There was clearly a belief that the man who lacked adequate self-restraint, who had not learned to tame his own appetites, could be rendered as weak, wild and impulsive as a wild beast

⁴⁷ Cf. F. Frontisi-Ducroux & F. Lissarrague (2009, 95-96).

⁴⁸ Cf. plate 4d.

⁴⁹ Zeus being a "young" divinity at this point, having just overthrown his father, Kronos.

⁵⁰ And by Theseus on one occasion – Theseus being the paradigmatic ephebic hunter.

when faced with the power of feminine allure. From the point of view of Greek patriarchal thought, in other words, female sexuality presented the potential to destabilise the civilised and rational male mind, and by extension the entire patriarchal order – an order that, as already discussed, was understood to depend on a high degree of solidarity within the ruling group of enfranchised men.⁵¹ This, too, may account for the prevalence of scenes, on vase-painting, in which women are penetrated from behind (4.3.3), for it seems that the destabilising power of feminine allure was thought to be communicated through the eyes.⁵²

Suspicion about the power of female sexuality is apparent in the stories the Greeks told about their gods. Among these, that of Zeus' pursuit of Thetis and her eventual "taming" to Peleus in marriage provides, once again, a particularly useful case study. First of all, it is worth considering why Zeus felt the need to see Thetis, alone among the nymph daughters of Nereus (Hom.*Il.*18.432-434), tamed in marriage at all. We know from sources other than Homer that Thetis embodied a dark and mysterious force that the interested male parties – primarily Zeus – sought to regulate, because failure to do so would have jeopardised the stability of his patriarchal *kosmos*. This power, of course, is closely connected to the animality of the *parthenos*, of whom Thetis was representative. It is the power the Greeks attributed to Aphrodite, as the goddess of sexual allure and, indeed, of female reproductive capacity. It is also a power which, we are reminded time and again in Greek myth and literature, possesses the potential to drive men to extremes of wild, antisocial behaviour, should they fail to subordinate and control it.

According to the *Library* of Apollodorus, for instance, both Zeus and Poseidon desired Thetis, and competed against each other, perhaps even with the threat of violence, for the right to marry her. They had quickly come to their senses and set aside their quarrel, however, when Themis prophesied that the sea nymph would give birth to a son greater than his father (Apoll.*Lib.*

⁵¹ Cf. chapters 2 and 3.

⁵² As in Euripides' *Trojan Women*, where Hekabe warns Menelaos not to make eye-contact with Helen, lest she should strike him with desire (Eur.*Tr.* 892). Cf. Blondell on the power of Helen's eyes (2013, 5). In Classical Athens, women were expected to veil in public, presumably for this exact reason. Cf. L. Llewellyn-Jones (2003).

3.13.5). Zeus had cause to fear usurpation by his own progeny. As already observed in the introduction to this thesis, he had overthrown his father, Kronos, who had himself come to power by castrating his own father, Ouranos (the sky).⁵³ With this family history of inter-generational male violence in mind, Zeus could hardly risk allowing any god to sire a son by Thetis; and so he forced her to marry a mortal man, Peleus, the son of Aiakos – a prodigious hero, to be sure, but a mortal nonetheless, and therefore incapable of fathering a son with the potential to overthrow the extant patriarchal *kosmos*.

Image redacted for copyright reasons.

Plate 4c. Sex scene, featuring a much-attested sexual position for male/female intercourse, from inside of a *kylix*. (The Getty Museum, 86.AE.294) (Photo courtesy of the Getty Museum).

⁵³ Cf. section 1.1.1.



Plate 4d. Plate fragment. Peleus and Thetis, with the *parthenos* Thetis transforming into various animal forms. (500-450). [Beazley: 7908, ATHENIAN, Glasgow, Hunterian Museum, D131.] © 2003-2020 Classical Art Research Centre, University of Oxford.

This sort of pre-emptive behaviour, attempting to control female sexuality and reproductive capacity in order to prevent the birth of offspring superior to himself, was not unprecedented for Zeus. He had previously taken the seemingly radical step of eating his first wife, Metis, to avert the birth of a son capable of seizing his throne (*Apoll.Lib.* 1.3.6). The end result of this action was the emergence of Athene, the embodiment of chaste female loyalty to father and patriarchy, from his head.⁵⁴

4.4.2. The circumstances that demanded Thetis' taming invite us to see male paranoia about female sexuality, and particularly its capacity to destroy the male deliberative faculty and thereby destabilise the existing socio-political order, in the subtext of the Homeric passage.⁵⁵ First of all, it is significant that Thetis' sexuality was a source of conflict between the two most powerful Olympian gods, the brothers Zeus and Poseidon, respective lords of the sky

⁵⁴ Instead of a powerful son born of, and perhaps influenced by, a mother, the most masculine of daughters is born to a father. This in itself is revealing of a masculine suspicion about the potential power of female sexuality and reproductive capacity, since it probably reflects an unease about the influence that a mother could exercise over her male offspring, at the father's expense. The fact that Kronos had overthrown Ouranos at his mother's instigation, and Rhea had played an important role in Zeus' defeat of Kronos, reinforces this argument.

⁵⁵ The universe over which Zeus rules is conceived of as an eternal monarchy, after all. Cf. section 1.1.1.

and the earth/sea.⁵⁶ Even more dangerous is the fact that desire for Thetis might prompt Zeus to plant the seed, literally as well as metaphorically, of his own destruction, and thereby to imperil the stability of the *kosmos*. Had it not been for Themis, the personification of divine law and order in the world, by whom Zeus had fathered the personifications of *Dike* and *Eunomia* (Apoll.*Lib.* 1.3.1), this would surely have been the outcome. Zeus would have seduced or raped the goddess, as he did many other *parthenoi* in myth, thereby guaranteeing the birth of a son capable of overthrowing his rule. If Zeus had established male authority and a universal order by taming or subordinating the wild forces spawned by Ge, as Hesiod implies,⁵⁷ the case of Thetis suggests that female sexuality, free from the control of a male *kyrios*, was capable of undoing that progress by casting the universe back into a state of chaotic inter-male violence.

Perhaps tellingly, susceptibility to female sexual allure appears to have been an ever problematic aspect of Zeus' character, compromising his ability to exercise his administrative duties as king and father. While there is never any hint of a liaison with Aphrodite,⁵⁸ it is nonetheless abundantly clear that he is vulnerable to her destabilising power. For example, when Hera dons Aphrodite's famous girdle and seeks to seduce Zeus in book 14 of the *Iliad*, she distracts him from the Trojan War and thereby enables Poseidon to rescue the Akhaian forces from their impending destruction against Hektor (Hom.*Il.* 14.352-365).⁵⁹ In an amusing passage, Homer describes Zeus' urgency in lying with his sister-wife, emphasising his utter subordination to her sexuality in the moment. Ruler of the universe and architect of the existing order of all things Zeus may be, but he is nonetheless vulnerable to influence by feminine allure.

⁵⁶ That such a conflict could have a disastrous outcome is alluded to in the *Iliad*, when Zeus threatens to overpower Poseidon if he does not desist from helping the Akhaian forces to repel Hektor's assault on the ships. While Poseidon objects to Zeus' warning, arguing that he is Zeus' equal in honour, he nonetheless obeys (Hom.*Il.* 15.184-200).

⁵⁷ Cf. section 1.1.1.

⁵⁸ The goddess of sexual love herself, who in Homer's account is actually Zeus' daughter (Hom.*Il.* 5.131).

⁵⁹ The fact that Zeus is here overcome with desire for his own wife, rather than another woman such as Thetis, renders this scene comical. The cosmic order is not imperilled by his subordination to his sexual impulses in this instance, because it takes place within the patriarchal institution of marriage.

The Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* (Εἰς Ἀφροδίτην), certainly a later composition than the *Iliad*, is also revealing in relation to this theme, for it points out that there are only three divinities that Aphrodite cannot ensnare with her power. These are the virgin goddesses Athene, Artemis and Hestia (Anon.*Aph.* 7-25).⁶⁰ Even the mind (*noos*) of Zeus is led astray by her charms, the poet tells us, for she caused him to pursue love with many mortal women (Anon.*Aph.* 36-38). While the outcome of these unions was unquestionably less destructive than the potential union with Thetis would have been, since they resulted in the birth of mortal heroes, they are clearly problematic insofar as they question the absoluteness of Zeus' ability to rule the universe and maintain order over it. When Aphrodite forces individuals, including Zeus, to succumb to their biological impulses, she tames them to *her* (Anon.*Aph.* 3, 17): an accomplishment which, as we have already seen, is normally reserved for men (and male divinities) in socio-sexual relations. The subtext is easily interpreted: Aphrodite possesses the ability to make all but a few her subordinates, both men and women, gods and goddesses. But, as she is female, her powerful feminine sexuality holds the capacity to upend normal gender relations, rendering men irrational in their pursuit of copulation; they become like animals under *her* control, tame to *her* will.

That this loss of rationality was associated with a collapse into the animal state in males is emphasised, later in the poem, by the fact that the goddess is followed, as she makes her way across Mount Ida, by a retinue of wild animals: wolves, lions, bears and leopards, who fawn on her and in whom she incites only the desire to mate (Anon.*Aph.* 70-75). Aphrodite's presence clearly makes male creatures behave as they do when the female is "in heat": an observation that would have been very familiar to the agriculturalist Greeks. The unease that free Greek men felt about this feminine power to destroy rationality is expressed in the mythical, semi-bestial figures of the *satyroi*, those absurd, permanently randy male figures who accompany the god Dionysos and are often depicted, pursuing the female mainads, with erect penises.⁶¹ It is also conveyed by the bestial, mindless *kentauroi*, those figures

⁶⁰ There is no such thing as a virgin (male) god.

⁶¹ Cf. plate 4e.

of wild male excess who are unable to contain their lust in the presence of alluring women. At any rate, Aphrodite's ability to compromise Zeus' *noos* is something that he, at least according to the hymn, is resentful enough of to seek vengeance. He does this by incurring desire in her for a mortal man (Anon.*Aph.* 45), Ankhises.⁶²

The political consequences of Hera's use of the power of Aphrodite to distract Zeus at *Iliad* 14 reveals precisely how Greek men thought about the ethics of submission to active female sexuality. By seducing Zeus, Hera draws his attention away from the Trojan War and thereby subverts his plan to give honour to Akhilleus by allowing Hektor to torch the Akhaian ships: a plan that he had earlier settled on (Hom.*Il.* 1.520-527) and was apparently determined to fulfil. This explains why Zeus should seek to exact vengeance on Aphrodite in the *Homeric Hymn*, for he recognises that her power can "lead him astray" (Anon.*Aph.* 36), subvert his ability to exercise the *metis* of his *noos* in order to administer the *kosmos* as he desires. In other words, the sexual, and most notably the sexual feminine, compromises his political administrative capacities: precisely the kind of activity that defines correct masculinity in Greek literature from Homer to Aristotle.

Of course, Hera's machinations in deploying the primordial power of Aphrodite against Zeus, while typical of her scheming character in Greek myth, contrasts strongly with what we know of Thetis' response to Zeus' sexual attentions. There is no clear indication in Thetis' words at *Iliad* 18.432-434, or elsewhere in Greek literature, that she had sought to manipulate the king of the gods in any way when he tried to court her at his own unwitting peril. It cannot be inferred that she employed her sexuality actively to seduce Zeus and render him as mindless as an animal, or that she intended to upset the existing patriarchal order in doing so. There is no evidence, in fact, that she was even aware of the prophecy that she would bear "a son greater than his father". In one version of the myth, Zeus forced her to marry Peleus because she had rejected his advances out of respect for Hera

⁶² This is obviously a humiliation for Aphrodite, as a goddess. It is reminiscent of claims, during the Archaic Period, that an aristocratic woman's marriage to a lower-status man was also a humiliation, since it implied subordination to a male of inferior rank. Cf. section 6.2.3.

(*VoluminaHercul.* 2.8.105.): an action that would be in keeping with mythical representations of Thetis as a chaste female figure, unconcerned with political machinations and primarily preoccupied with her son's tragic fate.⁶³ Like Briseis, the slave girl over whom Agamemnon and Akhilleus quarrel, or the maiden Iole pursued by Herakles with disastrous results,⁶⁴ Thetis is apparently an unwitting cause of unrest in the masculine political sphere.⁶⁵ She, like many other female figures in Greek myth, is merely the instrument through whom Aphrodite, as the embodiment of female sexuality, acts to the potential detriment of civilised conduct and the patriarchal *kosmos*.

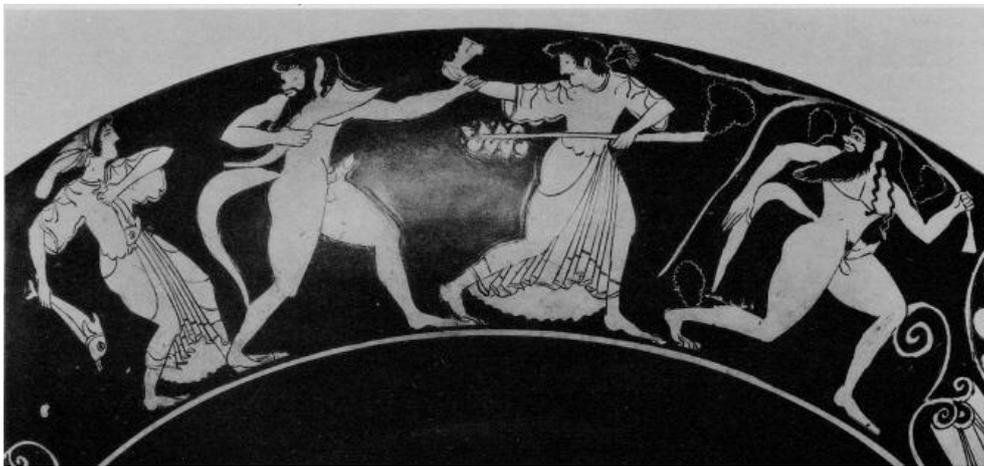


Plate 4e. Athenian red-figure cup showing satyrs pursuing mainads. Note their erect penises and animal-like appearance, which reflects their antisocial character. They are the embodiment of the male driven wild by wine and lust for women. As attendants of the wild, wine god, Dionysos, they represent the opposite of Apolline *sophrosyne* (525-475 BCE). [Beazley 287, ATHENIAN, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Lamberg Collection, 137]. © 2003-2020 Classical Art Research Centre, University of Oxford.

⁶³ In this, she was probably thought to represent the proper, womanly concerns of motherhood.

⁶⁴ For more, cf. section 5.2.3.

⁶⁵ Most would agree that the quarrel between Agamemnon and Akhilleus is primarily over honour (*time*), of which Briseis is merely an external representation. However, Akhilleus' apparent acknowledgement of his sexual desire in book 9 (*Hom.II.* 9.335-337), and Agamemnon's vow that he did not sleep with her (*Hom.II.* 9.130-135), indicates that sexual jealousy is at least a factor in the quarrel.

4.4.3. The fear that women might do as Hera does in book 14 of the *Iliad* – might consciously use Aphrodite’s power to enslave men to their biological impulses, and thereby distract them from masculine duties, cause them to transgress against or forget social norms, and prompt them to extremes of antisocial and self-destructive behaviour – is a pressing concern in Greek myth and literature. Certainly sexual appetite ranks alongside the uncompromising pursuit of individual fame and glory as a primary cause of male impiety or savage violence in Greek sources.⁶⁶ Men and gods who allow their sexual impulses to govern their behaviour, even when it prompts them to irrational extremes of violence and lawlessness, are often shown to be emasculated by it in equal measure. Those whose sexual appetites make them easily manipulated by the opposite sex are prone to the accusation of being ruled by women: a slight that carried a heavy weight of social disapprobation because it implied the upending of normative gender relations.

It is telling that, having been hoodwinked by Hera’s deployment of her sexuality against him, Zeus must reassert his authority by threatening violence against her, demonstrating that he, and not she, holds the real power on Olympos (Hom.*Il.* 15.10-30).⁶⁷ Such accusations could be levelled against one regardless of whether true or not. In Sophokles’ *Antigone*, a text of the mid-5th century BCE, king Kreon of Thebes accuses his son, Haimon, of being a woman’s slave (Soph.*Ant.* 747). The implication, clearly, is that the young man has been led astray and is rebelling against his father’s royal and paternal authority out of sexual desire for his bride-to-be, Antigone; for Kreon had previously admonished his son not to allow the pleasures of woman (*hedone gunaikos*) to expel his mental faculties (*phren*) (Soph.*Ant.* 648-649).⁶⁸

5th century literature in general sought to delegitimise eastern barbarians, by presenting them as deficient in manly *sophrosyne* and ruled by their womenfolk as a result (Hall 1989). A striking example of this trope can be found in Herodotos’ description of King Xerxes’ behaviour, following his

⁶⁶ As described in chapter 2.

⁶⁷ On violence against women in Ancient Greece, cf. L. Llewellyn-Jones (2011).

⁶⁸ μή νύν ποτ’, ὃ παῖ, τὰς φρένας ὑφ’ ἡδονῆς γυναικὸς οὐνεκ’ ἐκβάλλης.

disastrous campaign against the Greeks, in the final book of the *Histories* (Hdt.*Hist.*9.107-114). Here, Xerxes is guilty of precisely the behaviour of which Kreon accuses Haimon. His lack of the stuff of correct masculinity is underscored by his willingness to be dictated to by a woman in order to gratify his sexual desire. Not only does he seduce and begin an affair with his own niece and daughter-in-law, but he is so in thrall to her that he gives her, at her request, a mantle that his own wife made for him. Inevitably, this leads to a major conflict inspired by female jealousy and male weakness. This event, indeed, appears to mirror the famous story of the death of the Lydian king, Kandaules, in book 1 of the *Histories*. According to Herodotos, the ruler had been so obsessed with his wife's beauty that he had forced his bodyguard, Gyges, to spy on her as she undressed: an act that ultimately brought about Kandaules' own death at Gyges' hand (Hdt.*Hist.* 1.8-13).⁶⁹ Such, indeed, was the reputation of eastern barbarians for enslavement to their sexual appetites that the Persian hordes, which invaded Greece in 480 BCE,⁷⁰ were apparently depicted as *kentauroi*, those embodiments of savage male *aphrosyne*, in Greek art of the Classical Period.⁷¹

4.4.4. In the partnership of the Olympian gods Ares and Aphrodite, we also get a strong impression of what male subservience to female sexuality looked like in the Homeric mind. Ares is in many ways a hypermale god, associated with a savage and unrestrained masculine appetite for violence,⁷² and despised by the other deities for his indifference to *themis* (Hom.*Il.* 5.761). It is telling, indeed, that his worship in Greek city-states almost always took place outside the religious centre of the acropolis (Burkert 1985, 169). But myth also makes him the god most clearly subject to the power of Aphrodite. As a pair, they seem to represent Greek ideas about extremes of masculinity and femininity, embodying social violence and unrestrained allure

⁶⁹ The theme of the barbarian woman's capacity to destroy the household and the state – the two pillars of patriarchal society – also appears in Euripides' *Medea*.

⁷⁰ Cf. J. Lazenby (1993).

⁷¹ For the *kentauroi* as Persians on the Parthenon metopes, cf. D. Castriota (1992). For the Persians as *kentauroi* in Xenophon's *Kyroupaideia*, cf. D. Johnson (2005). The fact that the Persians were excellent horsemen also facilitated this identification.

⁷² As the personification of war, Ares embodies everything that is savage and mindless about it. For this reason, he is often compared unfavourably to Athene, who embodies control and tactical nous in battle (Burkert 1983, 169).

respectively. Yet she, more so even than Zeus, possesses the ability to direct and control the hyper-virile Ares in his mindless bloodlust. At times, he appears almost enslaved to her in the *Iliad*, as when he apparently entered the Trojan War on the Trojan side at her behest (Hom.*Il.* 5.760), when he gives her his team of horses without protest so she may flee the battlefield (Hom.*Il.* 5.364), or when he re-enters the war when reminded that Diomedes has dared to raise his hand against her (Hom.*Il.* 5.455-460).

Furthermore, when Ares enters Hephaistos' house to sleep with Aphrodite in the famous lay of *Odyssey* book 8, he shows typically scant regard for correct masculine social conduct and pays a heavy price for it (Hom.*Od.* 8.270-320). His behaviour in the *Odyssey*, in particular, is reminiscent of that of the *agenor* suitors, who also neglect *themis* and regard for elite male group solidarity in their treatment of Odysseus' household.⁷³ He exhibits no regard for solidarity with his fellow gods, and his adultery would have been characterised in the Classical Period, at least, as a lawless act of *hubris*.⁷⁴ It is hardly a stretch to argue that the only loyalty the divine personification of unrestrained, lawless male violence shows, at any point in epic, is to the goddess of female sexuality. He represents the uncivilised man, lacking in the manly quality of rational self-control: what would become known, in post-Homeric literature, as *sophrosyne*. Such a man is no tamer, either of his own desires or of women. Instead, he is apt to be both socially destructive in his pursuit of sex, and servile to women when confronted by the power of their sexuality.

⁷³ Cf. section 2.3.4. A parallel between Ares and the suitors may be implied in the *Odyssey*. Certainly comparisons between Hephaistos and Odysseus are frequent in the *Odyssey* (Newton 1987; Olson 1989, 137), and it is within this context that many scholars have read the lay of Ares and Aphrodite in book 8, in which Hephaistos catches his wife (Aphrodite) in bed with the god of war. Odysseus' situation resembles that of the cuckolded Hephaistos, in that both he and the god have weak legs; and their homes are invaded by ostensibly younger and more vigorous men who have no regard for *themis*. Both use craft (*tekhne*) and intellect (*metis*) to overcome their adversaries. But while Ares is successful in his pursuit of Aphrodite, the suitors fail to win Penelope's hand primarily because she, in contrast to Helen, represents a chaste, wifely femininity. Furthermore, both Ares and the suitors are punished by the weak-legged man of craft, who uses his wiles to overcome his opponents. For further commentary on the thematic relevance of the lay to the narrative of the *Odyssey*, cf. B.K. Braswell (1982).

⁷⁴ On adultery as *hubris*, cf. D. Cohen (1991).

Indeed, the relationship between Ares and Aphrodite in myth provided Aristotle with a lens for explaining what he perceived as the relationship between excessive and antisocial male behaviour, liberal female sexuality, and the lack of social order that the Greeks associated with some barbarian peoples (Arist.*Pol.* 2.1269b). Ares was, after all, most associated, in Greek thought, with northern barbarian peoples, such as the Thraikes (Thracians) and the Skythoi (Scythians) (Hom.*Od.* 8.361; Hdt.*Hist.* 4.59; 4.62). These were peoples whom the Greeks considered to be wild, lacking many of the institutions of the civilised Greek *polis*. In Aristotle's mind, the supposed antisocial savagery and violence of the men of those wild barbarian societies, embodied by the god with whom they were most associated, is closely related to their society's obsession with sex and attendant failure to regulate female freedoms. Curiously, the philosopher argues that same-sex relations between men are a remedy for this, apparently implying that the promotion of sex between males might remove the threat of female influence in the political sphere, and the resultant social and political decay: perhaps another startling insight into the perceived function of Greek pederastic practices.⁷⁵ Since all excessively warlike peoples are obsessed by sexual matters, Aristotle appears to be arguing, sexual relations between males should be considered a way of preventing women from gaining power through sexual manipulation of men, as Aphrodite did with Ares.

4.5.1. Male fear and suspicion about the capacity of female sexuality to subvert the masculine rational faculty, compromise a man's ability to exercise his duties in the martial, political and domestic spheres, and thereby destroy the fabric of society by returning it to a state of shambolic wildness,⁷⁶ can also be read in the cause of the most famous catastrophe of the heroic age. For Greeks of the Archaic and Classical Periods, the Trojan War was an important historical event, and in its cause we can observe the same emphasis on the

⁷⁵ A view apparently shared by Pausanias, in Plato's *Symposium* (Pl.*Symp.* 180d-181d). There, the speaker differentiates between the power of Aphrodite Ourania and Aphrodite Pandemos, claiming that the baser kind was part female and was purely sexual in nature, whereas the other was purely male and focussed on the homosocial. For more, cf. P.M. Zych (1978).

⁷⁶ Akin to the world before Zeus had established his patriarchal *kosmos* by taming insurgent, wild forces. Cf. section 1.1.1.

ability of female sexuality to inspire great strife between men. The epic *Kypria*, a text usually assumed to date from the 7th century BCE, records how the sequence of events leading to the war began when Eris (the personification of strife) brought an apple to the wedding feast of Peleus and Thetis, upon which she had engraved the words “for the fairest”.⁷⁷ This led to a conflict between the three goddesses, Hera, Athene and Aphrodite, all of whom claimed to be the most beautiful. To solve the dispute, it was agreed that Paris/Alexandros, the young son of King Priamos of Troy who was living as a shepherd on Mount Ida, should act as judge of the contest.

Naturally, all three goddesses attempted to bribe the judge by offering him a gift within her ordinary sphere of influence. Hera, as the wife of Zeus, offered Paris political rule over all of Europe and Asia; Athene, as goddess of war, offered him unparalleled military supremacy; while Aphrodite offered him Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, for his bride. Paris, characteristically lacking in sexual continence or regard for correct masculine social conduct, chose to indulge his sexual impulses rather than accept supremacy in either of the two primary arenas of masculine pursuit: warfare and politics. His vulnerability to the power of female sexuality clearly complicated, and even subverted, Paris’ ability to succeed in the two areas of activity that young aristocratic men were prepared for, from childhood, in Homeric Greece. That weakness in both of these activities is a strong feature of Paris’ character in the *Iliad* is not a matter of coincidence, nor is the fact that he is constantly characterised by his relationship with women, either through his vulnerability to their allure, his prodigious ability to seduce them, or his proximity to Aphrodite, that most feminine of deities. In the *Iliad*, this subversive masculine character is, as noted in chapter 2 (section 2.4.5), communicated through his donning of the panther-skin (Hom.*Il.* 3.16): the panther being an animal always associated, not only with seduction, but also with male wildness and antisocial inclinations, as emphasised by its

⁷⁷ Cf. the epitome of Proklos’ *Khrestomatia* in M.L. West, Trans. (2003) *Greek Epic Fragments*, Loeb. 68-69.

connection with the god Dionysos, and with the long-haired *ephebos*, Jason, in Pindar's 4th Pythian ode (Pind.*Pyth.* 4.144).⁷⁸

It is also notable that Paris' lack of restraint in the face of female sexuality, which brings about his elopement with Helen (the human embodiment of the power of Aphrodite), then unleashed the vengeful fury of her cuckolded husband, Menelaos. Once again, it is hardly a coincidence that Menelaos is frequently given the epithet "dear to Ares" by Homer.⁷⁹ Though far more warlike than the dandyish Paris, Menelaos appears to be in many ways even more enslaved to Helen's sexuality than the Trojan prince. Like Ares with Aphrodite, he is so in thrall to her that, upon finding her after the Trojan War, he does not kill her as he had vowed to do, but rather takes her back as his wife and returns with her to Sparta.⁸⁰ That some Greeks of later periods took a dim view of this lack of manly *sophrosyne* is apparent. As Peleus tells Menelaos in Euripides' *Andromakhe*:

έλων δὲ Τροίαν — εἴμι γὰρ κἀνταῦθά σοι
οὐκ ἔκτανες γυναῖκα χειρίαν λαβών,
ἀλλ', ὡς ἐσεῖδες μαστόν, ἐκβαλὼν ξίφος
φίλημι' ἐδέξω, προδότιν αἰκάλλων κύνα,
ἦσσω πεφυκὼς Κύπριδος, ᾧ κάκιστε σύ.

And having taken Troy – for I will go there –
you did not kill your wife when you had her under your control
but, when you saw her breasts, you cast aside your sword
and you proffered her a kiss, flattering the treacherous bitch,
proving no match for Aphrodite, you wretched creature.

(Eur.*And.* 627-631)

Helen is Aphrodite's protégé, and Menelaos, associated with the mindless and savage war-god Ares, is incapable of resisting her power. The *Odyssey* finds

⁷⁸ A god who, as previously noted, was associated with the social liberation of women from male control and return to the wild, raw-eating state of the mainad. Cf. section 4.2.2 (above). Also R. Seaford (1993).

⁷⁹ ἀρηϊφίλος Μενελάος. Cf. Hom.*Il.* 4.430 etc.

⁸⁰ On an even more fundamental level, it might be argued that the two protagonists of the Trojan War are the most beautiful woman in the world (Helen) and the mightiest, most virile and aggressive warrior (Akhilleus). Where Helen represented an excess of feminine sexual allure, Akhilleus was emblematic of extreme male martial vigour. These gendered extremes were obviously symbiotic, the one possessing the capacity to unleash the other. Akhilleus' savage bloodletting at Troy, the focus of the *Iliad*, could not have been accommodated without Helen's sexuality as the cause of the war in the first place. Such is essentially the argument made in a fascinating book by R. Blondell (2013, 46).

them back in the palace, playing the happy couple, both having come out of the war essentially unscathed. In Menelaos' relationship with Helen, there is the clear implication of emasculation: a fact that is reflected in her control of the narrative of *Odyssey* book 4, in which she gives her husband and their guests a potion that causes them to forget the grief of the Trojan War (Hom.*Od.* 4.220). Through her use of *pharmaka*, she is able to manipulate and control, to negate the bitter memories of war and lost comrades which Telemakhos' arrival in Sparta might stir in her husband.⁸¹ In Euripides' version, Peleus implies this emasculation by stressing that Menelaos "cast aside his sword" when he saw Helen's breasts.⁸²

4.5.2. Such examples, in which active, unregulated female sexuality causes complications for the male *noos* and a loss of manly self-control, resulting in emasculation, antisocial male conduct, and a general disregard for *themis* and *dike*, can best be illuminated, once again, with reference to the man who, I have argued, represents the embodiment of correct masculine comportment in epic: Odysseus.⁸³ Unlike many other characters, Odysseus' interactions with women present him as a civilised man in control of his appetites.

This is forcefully demonstrated in Menelaos' account, delivered to Telemakhos, of the final days of the Trojan War. He tells Odysseus' son that, when the Akhaian soldiers were hidden inside the Trojan horse in the citadel of Troy, waiting to launch their nighttime attack on the city, Helen, that human embodiment of Aphrodite's power, had come down to the construction with her new husband, Deiphobos. Evidently aware that the men were inside, the ever complex and seductive Helen began to impersonate their wives so convincingly that most of the men were tempted to cry out in response, and thus betray their presence within. Only Odysseus was immune to her allure, as Menelaos acknowledges even while casting aspersions on his wife's actions (Hom.*Od.* 4.266-289). Here, in one of the earliest texts in

⁸¹ Indeed, female sexuality often appears to be embodied in the use of *pharmaka* to control and manipulate men. Cf. Kirke in the *Odyssey* (Hom.*Od.* 10.236), discussed in section 4.5.2; and Medea (Eur.*Med.* 718; Apoll.*Lib.* 1.9.23). Love is the drug, as Roxy Music put it.

⁸² The bearing of the breast was, of course, an established gesture of female supplication, but it seems that, in this instance, Euripides intended for it to have sexual connotations.

⁸³ As outlined in chapter 2 in relation to the hero's interactions with men of his peer group.

Greek literature, is the image of the man of *sophrosyne*, of self-restraint in all things, which would come to constitute the ideal man of the classical *polis*. Even when confronted by the divine sexual power of Helen, actively used against him, Odysseus remains entirely focussed on the military task at hand. He does not allow Helen's feminine allure to affect his performance in the "masculine" spheres of warfare and politics and this, perhaps, is the crucial point. Furthermore, he is even able to contain the impulses of those men who do not possess his self-control. In metaphorical language, this makes him the ultimate adherent of civilisation, the supreme tamer.

Odysseus' ability to reassert his adherence to correct male social values, even when confronted by the power of female seduction, can also be read in his interactions with Kirke in book 10 of the *Odyssey*: a scene that firmly stresses an association between male enslavement to female sexuality and male reduction to the status of a wild animal. When his men arrive at Kirke's door in search of assistance, they are clearly taken in by her physical beauty and by the feminine sweetness of her voice (Hom.*Od.* 10.220-221). They follow her into her house at her instruction, as though already under her spell. Articulated here is an essential concept that pervades patriarchal Greek thought: that external female beauty and sexual desirability mask a dangerous and destructive intent. Hesiod, for instance, maintained that Pandora, the first woman, was a beautiful evil (Hes.*Theog.* 585), and so Kirke proves to be for Odysseus' men. Having won their trust with her beautiful tresses and sweet voice, she immediately feeds them a potion that transforms them into wild boars. They join a host of other men whom the goddess has imprisoned by transforming them into animals, primarily lions and wolves. All of these animal-men are her entirely passive and fawning subjects, ignorant of their own enslavement to a beautiful and bewitching sorceress (Hom.*Od.* 10.212-213).

The transformation of man into wild beast is of course reminiscent of the reckless animal behaviour, the lion-like *agenorie*, of the ultra-competitive heroic warriors of the *Iliad* (section 2.4.3). It is far more evocative, however, of Aphrodite's retinue of wild animals, which follow her across Mount Ida in

the Homeric hymn, mindlessly coupling under her influence.⁸⁴ Furthermore, both Kirke and Aphrodite bear obvious resemblance to the Mistress of Animals theme. This apparent borrowing from the Near-Eastern tradition appears on numerous Greek grave or votive offerings from the 8th and 7th centuries BCE. It appears, in origin, to have been associated with royal power, and is presumed to have served an apotropaic purpose (Barclay 2013, 148). But it is interesting that, in the examples of both Aphrodite and Kirke, female control of animals is not represented in any such context, but is instead implicitly linked to sexuality and, more specifically, to female sexual *power* over men. Both narratives focus on the loss of control that men might feel when confronted by female sexuality, and this is linked to reduction to the status of an animal. This represents a marked diversion from the apparent original purpose of the Mistress of Animals motif.

The idea that the Greeks tended to think of the man subject to his sexual impulses as akin to a mindless animal was later expressed by Plato, in the same passage from the *Timaios* in which he compares the female womb to an animal. The male sex organ too, he argues, is akin to an autocratic, disobedient animal with a will to subordinate all in its frenzied lust (Pl.*Tim.*91b). This, we can presume, is the same internal animal, often associated with horses, which the young man must learn to “tame” in order to demonstrate adherence to the masculine ideal, as outlined in chapter 3. All, of course, are especially suggestive of the frantic behaviour of male animals when a female is in heat (section 4.4.2). The logical conclusion, then, is that a man’s subordination to his sexual impulses, or indeed any other overpowering bodily desire, is a sure way of ceding his status as a civilised being, and reverting to the pre-civilisation status of a beast incapable of thinking beyond immediate gratification.

In the case of *Odyssey* book 10, Kirke also plans to reduce Odysseus to the level of a fawning animal with her feminine charms and spells when he arrives in search of his men. The hero, however, has been forewarned of her scheme by the god Hermes, who gives him an antidote to her potion, which he is to

⁸⁴ Cf. section 4.4.2 (above).

swallow before he enters her palace (Hom.*Od.* 10.287-290). Some scholars, in fact, have read this antidote, called *moly* (Hom.*Od.* 305), as another early symbol of the quality of manly *sophrosyne*: a compelling argument, given the fact that Hermes, who delivers the antidote, is representative of the quality of reason (*noos*) (B. Clarke 1995, 127). In this scene, then, reason and self-control provide the means by which the man overcomes the woman's effort to reduce him to an unthinking animal. Upon entering the palace and drinking her potion to no effect, Odysseus draws his sword, threatening to kill the goddess (Hom.*Od.* 10.320-325). In what is apparently an act of submission to the hero, Kirke suggests that they should sleep together. Odysseus, however, initially declines, citing his fear that she will "unman" him once he is naked before her.⁸⁵ He therefore forces her, at sword-point, to swear an oath that she will not render him impotent in the sex act. Only after she has made this vow does Odysseus consent to go to bed with her (Hom.*Od.* 10.342-344).

The scene is fascinating, for it reveals a number of male fantasies about the potentially destructive nature of active female sexuality that can help us to better appreciate why marriage and sex were so often thought of, by men, as acts of taming. Kirke's power over men is presented as something that needs, first of all, to be resisted, as demonstrated by the hero's ingestion of the herb, *moly*, which renders him immune to the potion that she would seduce him into ingesting. Only when he has successfully repelled her effort to emasculate him in this way is he able to subordinate her, by drawing his sword and forcing her to submit to him. Self-control, coupled with a degree of menace, then, are here presented as essential features of a man's effort to overcome the threat of emasculation and animalisation which female sexuality presents.⁸⁶

The capacity of the feminine, as a force of nature, to emasculate and even destroy men is reinforced, metaphorically, in the *Odyssey* through the clearly feminine figures of Skylla and Kharybdis, the many-headed, man-eating cave-monster and the all-devouring whirlpool, which Odysseus must escape

⁸⁵ ὄφρα με γυμνωθέντα κακὸν καὶ ἀνήνορα θήης (Hom.*Od.* 10.341).

⁸⁶ The further implication, of course, is that a goddess will submit to correct masculinity, even when it is exhibited by a mortal.

in order to continue his journey home (Hom.*Od.*12.750-111); and in the sirens, those semi-bestial, bird-like maidens who also seek to destroy the hero by inviting him, through their song, to join them – not insignificantly – in their meadow (λεϊμῶν) (Hom.*Od.*12.159). The fact that these sirens dwell in a meadow reminiscent of the location of maidens abducted by a hero or god in traditional metaphors for feminine “taming” serves only to reinforce the idea that their allure is, at its core, sexual in nature.⁸⁷ Indeed, one might argue that siren songs are akin to the choruses sung by unmarried girls, which we know were performed at Sparta (Calame 2001).⁸⁸ Unlike the *parthenos* that submits to the hero in the traditional marriage narratives, however, these monstrous figures possess a supernatural feminine power that will ultimately destroy the hero.

In all cases, then, Odysseus is marked by his ability to overcome the related threats of emasculation, animalisation and death, when confronted with the most powerful and monstrous manifestations of active female sexuality. This is in keeping with his status as the hero who never allows his *thumos agenor* to impel him towards socially destructive action. He reasserts his adherence to the masculine ideal at every turn by escaping or overcoming female attempts to waylay him. Indeed it is noteworthy that his response to the threat of animal emasculation, as represented so strikingly by Kirke, is to draw his sword. This not only serves as a Freudian surrogate for the penis but also represents his status as a man of culture, a wielder of weapons, rather than the animal she seeks to make of him. Bronze, from which the sword is made, after all, is described elsewhere in the *Odyssey* as *euenor*: manly in the best possible sense (Hom.*Od.* 13.19).⁸⁹ Man’s manipulation of metal items, of tools and weapons that enable him to subdue nature, serves to differentiate him from the animal to which Kirke’s emasculating sexuality might reduce

⁸⁷ Perhaps significantly, in Euripides’ *Helen*, the sirens are referred to as *parthenoi* (Eur.*Hel.* 167).

⁸⁸ Cf. section 4.3.1. For some thoughts on the connections between sirens and the maiden songs at Sparta, cf. E. Bowie (2011).

⁸⁹ For the importance of weapons and tools to the definition of masculinity in Italian prehistory, for instance, cf. R. Whitehouse (1992). The idea of sex and marriage as the “yoking” of women, so prominent in Greek literature, is a further example of this association between tools and masculinity. Cf. section 5.2.1.

him, since it places him firmly on the side of culture as opposed to nature.⁹⁰ As in the case of the “erotic pursuit” vases of Archaic Athens,⁹¹ the weapon, as surrogate for the penis, serves as instrument of civilisation and “taming”. It articulates the triumph of civilised male *sophrosyne* over the menace of a destructive femininity, defined in terms of its relation to the wild – as wild itself, and possessed of a capacity to return civilised man to the wild state if not overcome.

In the case of Odysseus, once Kirke has been subordinated by the sword, literally and metaphorically, and the hero is free to enjoy sex with her, she soon becomes a helper and adviser in his endeavours, rather than an obstructive force. We might therefore conclude that femininity, in Greek patriarchal thought, is only non-threatening and helpful to male social projects when it is entirely tamed by man.

CONCLUSION

4.6. In what many regard as one of the most important academic books of recent years, *Capital in the 21st Century* (2014), the French scholar Thomas Piketty described the rise in economic inequality that has characterised Western economies since the 1980s. In the sequel to this bestseller, *Capital and Ideology* (2020), Piketty explores how the hegemonic ideology of global capitalism functions to justify the glaring inequalities that the system fosters.

Piketty’s stress on the function of ideology for the maintenance of the status quo has relevance to this study, for while the ideological tropes that served to justify and perpetuate various forms of inequality in the Ancient World differed from those of today just as much as ancient societies differed from our own, the symbolism of hegemonic ideology can nonetheless be identified with relative ease in this case. Much of the material covered in this chapter indicates that the need to better control the menace of the wild provided a justification for the universal social subordination of women to men in

⁹⁰ Note the contrast with Euripides’ Menelaos in the *Andromakhe*, who drops his sword when confronted by Helen’s sexual power (Eur.*And.* 627-631; section 4.5.1).

⁹¹ Cf. section 4.3.3 in particular.

Ancient Greek societies. This was articulated, not in a merely abstract sense, but consciously, as a feature of the ideology of gender-power relations. Girls and women were defined, according to what constituted Gramscian hegemonic common sense, by an association with the wild and the bestial which, if not adequately controlled by men, represented a threat to the stability and survival of society itself. Literary examples outlining the capacity of female sexuality to render men as mindless as wild animals in the pursuit of copulation may indicate that Greek men, by and large, accepted this characterisation of the feminine as an essential truth. Moreover, it seems that Greek communities actively indoctrinated girls in this ideology from an early age, through the propagation of rituals and myths that focussed on their animality, and the necessity of their socio-sexual submission to the men who would tame them of their wildness.

CHAPTER 5

BACK TO NATURE: UNTAMEABLE YOUTH AND FERAL WOMEN
IN EURIPIDES' *HIPPOLYTOS*

5.1. This chapter will outline how an understanding of the social significance of horse-taming metaphors, which communicated the sexual and political domination of one group by another, can provide a useful lens for viewing the problematic gender/power relations at play in Euripides' tragedy of 428 BCE, *Hippolytos*. It will argue that Euripides, being familiar with the significance of horse-taming as an expression of social power relations, deliberately subverted the metaphor in order to comment on the irregular masculinity of his title character. Unable or unwilling to become the metaphorical "tamer", to fulfil the role required of the citizen male in the prevailing ritual narrative of aristocratic marriage, Hippolytos is instead cast in the role of the social and sexual passive on account of his devotion to virginity and to the goddess Artemis.¹ In the sexual relationship that Phaidra imagines with her son-in-law, Hippolytos becomes the female *polos* of the marriage rituals studied by Claude Calame (2001, 19-88), the object of the traditionally masculine project of taming to civilisation and culture. Hippolytos' problematic position in relation to the masculine ideals of the Greek *polis* means that Phaidra, for her part, can imagine herself assuming the role of the *erastes*, the erotic pursuer, the hunter and horse-tamer, normally assumed to be symbolic of the *machismo* of the Athenian citizen.

The objective here is not merely to explore the symbolism and the social consequences of Hippolytos' subversive masculinity, but to seek explanations in the text for his failure to achieve a good social masculinity, as Euripides' audience would have understood it. This analysis will focus on the protagonist's failure to undergo a normative transition to adulthood by following the path laid out for him by his father, the ephebic Theseus. Unable to identify with his father, and thereby to assert a strong masculine identity as

¹ Traits that place him alongside the properly-behaved Greek *parthenos*.

a citizen, Hippolytos follows the path of other illegitimate sons in Greek myth by regressing to a state of symbiosis with his mother, Hippolyte: an Amazon woman from a society whose social norms inverted those of the Greek *polis*.

5.2.1. The argument that horse imagery, and more importantly horse-*taming* imagery, is relevant to Euripides' construction of socio-sexual relations in the *Hippolytos*, and particularly to the central encounter between Hippolytos and Phaidra, is easily sustained. Yet it is also reasonable to point out that Euripides, more than any other ancient author, upends the standard metaphor with remarkable consequences for our understanding of the text. This is brought into stark relief by his evocation of Herakles' abduction of Iole, as an analogue for the potential encounter between Hippolytos and Phaidra. The chorus of Troizenian women, dismayed that Phaidra's nurse intends to proposition Hippolytos on her mistress' behalf, laments the immense, socially destabilising power of Aphrodite that now threatens to undermine Theseus' rule and even, perhaps, destroy the royal family:

τὰν μὲν Οἰχαλία
 πῶλον ἄζυγα λέκτρων, ἄναν-
 δρον τὸ πρὶν καὶ ἄνυμφον, οἴ-
 κων ζεύξασ' ἀπ' Εὐρυτίων
 δρομάδα ναῖδ' ὅπως τε βάκ-
 χαν σὺν αἵματι, σὺν καπνῷ,
 φονίοισι νυμφείοις
 Ἀλκμήνας τόκῳ Κύπρις ἐξέδωκεν:
 ὦ τλάμων ὑμεναίων

That Oikhalian filly
 until then unyoked to the marriage bed,
 unknown to a man, unwed,
 Kypris took from Eurytos and yoked
 her, like some frantic Bakkhant,
 with blood and smoke,
 the nuptials bloody,
 to Alkmene's son.
 Oh miserable the wedding!

(Eur.*Hipp.* 545-553)

This, of course, appears at first glance to be a normative example of gender relations communicated through the horse-taming image. Ultimately, the

maiden Iole is “yoked” (ζεύξασ’) to Herakles in marriage, as if she had been an untamed filly bound to a chariot. Coercion, rather than seduction, is emphasised, as elsewhere in Greek literature. One is immediately reminded of the poetry of Anakreon (Anak.*Fr.* 417),² or the myth of the Leukippides tamed by the sons of Tyndareos in the Spartan myth so brilliantly analysed by Calame (2001, 190).³ At a glance it seems that, as in those examples, focus rests on the supposedly wild femininity of a maiden metaphorically described as a filly or horse, and on the ability of the active and virile man, the hero as analogue for the free citizen, to “domesticate” her through abduction.⁴

5.2.2. Indeed, it is through the essential regularity of the gender/power relations at play in the metaphor of Iole’s yoking/taming that the poet underscores the irregularity of Phaidra’s imagined sexual encounter with Hippolytos, the ultimately unconsummated relationship at the heart of the narrative.

In order to appreciate this fully, we must first consider the role of Aphrodite in the above passage, in the play as a whole, and in the Greek mythical tradition more generally. It would be foolhardy, at any rate, to ignore the instrumental role the goddess plays in both examples. Perhaps Aphrodite’s most pronounced function in Greek myth is to accentuate female sexuality, to make women appear more sexually appealing and, therefore, to entice male sexual advances. This feminine power of seduction, as we have seen in chapter 4, misogynistic Greek authors frequently evoked as a bane or curse, something that is always potentially destructive of the bonds of male co-operation in the public arena.⁵ In Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, Aphrodite equipped Pandora, the first woman, with grace (*kharis*), painful longing (*pothos argaleos*), and wearisome cares (*guioborous meledonas*) for men (Hes.*Erg.* 65-67). In the *Iliad*, the goddess is most aligned with the sexual appeal of Helen, the cause of the outbreak of the Trojan War, and she delights in weaponising Helen’s allure. In the lost epic *Kypria*, her use of Helen as a

² Cf. section 6.2.3.

³ Cf. section 4.3.1.

⁴ A modern reader would recognise rape or abduction and coercion, rather than seduction, as the essence of this “normative” narrative.

⁵ Cf. section 4.4.2.

trump card sways the youthful Paris in her favour at the famous beauty contest between herself, Athene and Hera, and thus seals the fate of Troy.⁶ In book 14 of the *Iliad* (Hom.*Il.* 14.198-352), when Hera borrows Aphrodite's girdle to seduce Zeus, the king and father of the gods is unable to resist her, even at the consequence of taking his eye off the ongoing Trojan War and prompting a potentially destructive conflict with his brother, Poseidon.⁷ In what appears to be a paradox, the arch-tamer, the archetypal male ruler who gives order to the universe, is himself "tamed", albeit temporarily, by the charms of Aphrodite acting through Hera (Hom.*Il.* 14.353). His political will, his ability to maintain control over the *kosmos* and subordinate all inferiors to his universal plan, is ultimately damaged by the immense, destabilising power of Aphrodite.

As Homer says of Aphrodite's girdle, the object that embodies her power, "[...] in it is love, longing, flirtation – allurements that steal the intelligence even of the strong of mind" (Hom.*Il.* 14.216-217). For the Ancient Greeks, as for many other cultures studied by anthropologists, strength of mind was typically considered a civilised and masculine quality, associated with rationality, which contrasted with a notionally weak, feminine mind given to excess and hysteria.⁸ The Homeric message about Aphrodite's girdle is therefore clear. Through the goddess' guile, even the strongest, most socially minded and restrained of men might give in to the selfish and individualistic impulse, and be reduced to the antisocial and mindless behaviour of animals who seek to copulate at all cost.

5.2.3. The 5th century Athenians watching the performance of Euripides' *Hippolytos* in 428 were obviously uneasy about the destabilising power of female sexuality which Aphrodite embodied. It is possible to interpret an appreciation of the goddess' destructive potential in the fact that she was worshipped in two forms in the Classical *polis*. She was both Aphrodite

⁶ Cf. the epitome of Proklos' *Khrestomatia* in M.L. West, Trans. (2003) *Greek Epic Fragments*, Loeb. 68-69.

⁷ Cf. section 4.4.2.

⁸ Among the Trukese people of the South Pacific, for instance, men are characterised by "strong thought", women by "weak thought". Cf. D. Gilmore (1990, 65), & M. Marshall (1979, 85).

Ourania (the heavenly) and Aphrodite Pandemos (of all the people). The former embodied the chaste sexuality of the ideal wife “who rejects unlawful and sinful lust in favour of married love and wifely devotion” (Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 190). She was the woman who was submissive to her *kyrios*, and did not offend his honour by incurring gossip; who had concern for her own personal *aidos*, and whose sexual allure was channelled only towards the production of legitimate children in marriage.⁹ This Aphrodite was the embodiment of feminine virtue or *arete*, the name of a female figure who appears in Xenophon’s predictably moralising work, *Memorabilia*, where she assists the young Herakles on his journey towards ideal masculine moderation, self-restraint, courage and sense of civic duty (*Xen.Mem.* 2.1.22-26). As a tame woman, Aphrodite Ourania did not constitute a threat to the male order.

Aphrodite Pandemos, on the other hand, embodied the more dangerous manifestation of female sexuality. Acceptably the patron of prostitutes and courtesans, she represented the more problematic aspects of feminine allure: the kind of active sexuality that could “steal the intelligence” (*noos*) of civically minded men. She embodied, in essence, the woman without a sense of *aidos*, the bad and lustful woman (Llewellyn-Jones 2003) who would consciously use her sex appeal in order to manipulate men or, even worse, to emasculate them, reduce them to the status of animals, and thus make them her mindless subordinates, as Kirke did to Odysseus’ men in the *Odyssey*.¹⁰ In Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, it is the female personification of vice, Kakkia, in opposition to Arete, who seeks to corrupt the young Herakles, attempting to seduce him with images of the delights of excess (*Xen.Mem.* 2.1.23-25). Both Arete and Kakkia are beautiful women, but their interactions with the hyper-virile and impressionistic young Herakles are revealing. Arete’s eyes emit *aidos*, while she prompts him towards self-discipline and frugality, whereas Kakkia eyes herself and her shadow and hopes to be noticed

⁹ In his funeral speech as recounted by Thucydides, Perikles praised the woman who was least talked about by men (*Thouk.Hist.* 2.45.2).

¹⁰ Cf. section 4.5.2.

(*Xen.Mem.2.1.22*).¹¹ Here is the very image of the woman operating beyond male control, who might incite men to antisocial and destructive behaviour.

Indeed, powerful social mores existed in the Classical *polis* to prevent women from using the power of their seductive gaze, in particular, to drive men wild with desire. As Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones has demonstrated in his seminal work on the subject, respectable women, notably the wives of citizens, were expected to keep their heads veiled in public places, and to avert their eyes in the presence of men other than their *kyrios*, as a mark of their sexual purity (Llewellyn-Jones 2003). In *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, Llewellyn-Jones compares the clear evidence for the tradition of female veiling in Ancient Greek societies to the widespread Muslim notion of *fitna*. As he points out, women in many parts of the Muslim world today are expected to keep their heads veiled in the presence of men, on account of an underlying belief that uninhibited or actively expressed female sexuality might incur antisocial male behaviour:¹²

The Ancient Greek idea of feminine *aidos*, the notion of respectful modesty with strong overtones of sexual shame, can be likened to the Bedouin concept of female *hasham* and the widespread Islamic notion of *fitna*, a conception that female sexuality could destabilise society unless successfully controlled and contained, a theme that is particularly apparent in the Ancient Greek sources as well. *Fitna* is deeply feared in Muslim society, since it is a word that not only means 'disorder' or 'chaos' but also 'a beautiful woman who makes men abandon self-control'. In other words, that it could lead to a state of pandemonium, of chaos, between men and thereby cause the destruction of society (Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 157).

The consistent emphasis, in Athenian literature, on "taming" or subordinating women in order to prevent them exercising a destructive sexuality, renders it apparent that sexual relationships between a man and a woman, in or outside of marriage, were expected to follow a particular pattern. Preservation of the man's public reputation for manliness depended upon it. To protect the stability of both *oikos* and *polis* from the menace of active female sexuality by "taming" it – that is by rendering it "passive" and non-threatening – was,

¹¹ Another example in which female sexual allure is associated with the eyes, and with eye-contact, which accounts for the tendency to veil women in public, and, possibly, for the apparent popularity of sex from behind in Ancient Greece. Cf. 4.4.1.

¹² Cf. F. Mernissi (1975).

as has already been suggested in chapter 4, a test of manhood for the Greek man. A failure on the part of the *kyrios* to make his wife or other female residents of his household his subordinates, to ensure that they were firmly under his control and had regard for personal *aidos*, was held to be a failure of masculinity on his part. For the wife or unmarried daughter of an Athenian citizen to incite gossip was an affront to the honour and social standing of the *kyrios*.¹³ Indeed it seems that there were few figures more offended in Classical Athens than the cuckold, as implied by the law that apparently permitted the *kyrios* to kill any man caught cavorting with a woman from his household.¹⁴

5.2.4. The metaphor, according to which the hero or citizen tames the wild and potentially dangerous *parthenos* by yoking her to the *oikos* for the production of legitimate heirs, is precisely what the Chorus evokes in citing the union of Herakles, the hypermale of Greek myth who demonstrated his virility by taming the wild, and Iole, the beautiful *parthenos*. Yet it also heavily problematises the semantics of the traditional metaphor. When Aphrodite descends upon Iole, the *polos* (filly) that she intends to see “yoked”, her power drives Herakles into a destructive, murderous lust. In his pursuit of Iole, he sacks her city and slays her family in a bloody example of the goddess’ power to confuse the male *noos*, to render it irrational and thereby to unleash extremes of wild masculinity. Ultimately the filly Iole is “yoked” to Herakles in marriage, but the *Chorus* denies that social taming has taken place, as the standard ritual narrative of abduction would have it. There is nothing measured or controlled about Herakles’ behaviour. There is no sense that social cohesion has been served by his metaphorical capture of the *polos*, as might have been celebrated in the marriage rituals studied by Calame (2001).¹⁵ Yet we must also note that the chorus does not imply that Iole herself was to blame for this by seeking to manipulate Herakles into acts of savage violence and lawlessness, as some women in Greek myth –

¹³ Parallels to this observation have been identified in much more recent studies of Mediterranean societies such as those of Andalusia. Cf. Gilmore (1990, 43).

¹⁴ Lysias, at least, cites the existence of this law in his speech *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* (Ly.Er. 1.26). Whether or not such a law existed, he was clearly playing on the existing prejudices of the jurors.

¹⁵ Cf. section 4.3.1.

Klytaimnestra or Helen or Xenophon's *Kakia* – might have done. Iole was not complicit in Aphrodite's scheme. There is no reason to suspect that she is anything other than an ideal, chaste *parthenos*. Rather, the all-female chorus presents Iole and Herakles as victims of the same power. By placing her charms on one, Aphrodite incites the other to destructive action.¹⁶ In the Euripidean model there is, apparently, little that either party can do to prevent this outcome.

5.2.5. It is clear, then, that Euripides' evocation of the union of Herakles and Iole bears problematic comparison to the traditional ritual metaphor for social control through marriage. Though the gender power dynamics appear to be normative, with an active male and a passive female, Aphrodite's role and the devastation that Herakles inflicts on society as a result of the goddess' intervention make this an antisocial union. It is a marriage that does not serve social stability, and the virile man's ability to tame through domination is called into question, since he himself seems out of control, rendered wild by the power of female allure.

Yet, in the broader context, there is something even more subversive at play in the chorus' lament, which should not escape notice. As the potential relationship between Hippolytos and Phaidra is imagined in the play, the typical gender roles and the symbolism surrounding them are completely overturned. It is Hippolytos' beauty, like Iole's, that Aphrodite accentuates in order to drive Phaidra towards a sickening, destructive infatuation. It is Phaidra, like Herakles, who assumes the active role of lawless sexual pursuant. It is she, like Herakles, who is driven to socially destructive madness by *eros* or desire, who feels the impulse to actively pursue sex (and possibly marriage), and whose activity puts social and domestic stability at risk. It is she, at least for those few moments when she imagines a life in the

¹⁶ The idea of the "all-female" chorus speaking these words is interesting in itself, and deserves attention that I cannot give it here. Renunciation of the male narrative of "taming" is spoken by female characters played by male actors and written by a male author. We are not receiving a female perspective, but the idea of a female perspective from the pen of a playwright with a sophistic education. Nonetheless, to the male audience members, it may have seemed both authentic and dangerous.

wild beyond the boundaries of the city, who appropriates traditionally male roles and the symbolism of those roles.

At lines 215-222, driven mad by Aphrodite's power just as Herakles was, she expresses a wish to go beyond the limits of the city, to the mountain and the forest, "where the hounds chase the dappled deer". In this wild terrain, the symbolic opposite of the *polis* with all the laws that constrain her, she will engage in the hunt, will wield the spear, the penis-surrogate, as she chases her quarry through the untamed wild (Eur.*Hipp.* 221-222). She will also go to the temple of Artemis, outside the city walls, there to "tame" (*damalizomena*) young horses:

δέσποιν' ἄλιας Ἄρτεμι Λίμνας
καὶ γυμνασίων τῶν ἵπποκρότων,
εἶθε γενοίμαν ἐν σοῖς δαπέδοις,
πώλους Ἐνέτας δαμαλιζομένα

Lady of the salt lake, Artemis,
and mistress of the equestrian course,
would that I might be on your ground,
taming Enetic colts.

(Eur.*Hipp.* 228-231)

The iconography of erotic pursuits on Athenian vase-painting (Sourvinou-Inwood, 1987; 1991), in which the beardless male youth pursues a *parthenos*, spear in hand, is here consciously subverted.¹⁷ So too the ritual narrative of man as horse-tamer that we have explored in chapters 3 and 4, for there can be little doubt that the *polous*, the young horses she refers to here, constitute a thinly veiled reference to Hippolytos.¹⁸

5.2.6. Phaidra's fantasy about assuming the role of pursuant and tamer, and thus of making Hippolytos the feminised object of sexual pursuit or *eromenos*, was probably even more pronounced in Euripides' first attempt at dramatizing the story of Hippolytos. This was the *Hippolytos Veiled*, produced some years prior to the extant *Hippolytos* of 428, which appears to

¹⁷ Cf. section 4.3.3.

¹⁸ And, perhaps, to other young men as well. The use of the plural may indicate that Phaidra's imagined freedom and relocation to the wild would result in multiple pursuits of young men, just as the sexually-promiscuous heroes engaged in multiple sexual pursuits and metaphorical "taming" beyond the human settlement.

have been a dramatic failure. In this earlier effort at interpreting the Hippolytos myth, most assume that Hippolytos veiled his head on account of the *aidos* he felt when propositioned by a rather brazen Phaidra (Roisman 1999b, 407). Ashamed, appalled even, that his own sexual allure has become a cause of potential social upheaval and a threat to his father's control of his household, the young man averts his gaze and covers his face. Like the veiled Muslim woman seeking to avoid incurring *fitna* in men, Hippolytos also covers his eyes to prevent inciting further destructive desire in Phaidra.

One cannot overlook the fact that this would have been regarded as a characteristically feminine gesture by Euripides' audience, since veiling to prevent exciting sexual desire through the eyes was, as discussed above, a woman's way of demonstrating *aidos*, chastity and loyalty to her *kyrios*. Phaidra's actions in the extant version of the text confirm that a connection between veiling and chastity was in the playwright's mind. We know that, prior to the point when Phaidra emerges from the palace and removes her own veil or headdress (Eur.*Hipp.* 200-201), she has refused to give voice to the transgressive desire she has been feeling for Hippolytos for some time (Eur.*Hipp.* 131-140). Hidden behind the veil, her mental transgression remains obscure. Despite being afflicted by Aphrodite, she is determined to maintain her *aidos*, and is resolved to die without revealing the cause of her illness, lest it should shame her husband or her children.

The moment she removes her veil, however, she immediately and frantically expresses her desire to escape to the wild, to "hold the spear" and to tame horses: in short, she feels free to articulate an active sexuality denied her by the *nomoi* of society.¹⁹ In this sense, the removal of her veil represents a casting off of her concern for feminine *aidos*, her inhibitory sense of shame and regard for personal reputation. She is declaring an intention to turn her gaze on Hippolytos, and to inflame desire in him, as we might imagine the shameless seducer doing to a desirable but chaste *parthenos*.²⁰ In discarding her *aidos* she is also denying, at least momentarily, her subordination to

¹⁹ For F. Zeitlin, this is an example of "how far from domestic territory lies the site assigned to female desire" (1996, 243). In other words, female desire is linked to the wild.

²⁰ For seduction as a crime in Classical Athens, cf. E.M. Harris (1990).

Theseus as *kyrios*, and putting his masculine honour at risk. In her case, then, the power of king and *kyrios* has been jeopardised by the power of Aphrodite and the lust she feels for Hippolytos.

5.3.1. Hippolytos is not blameless for Phaidra's plight. His veiling in the earlier version of the play should alert us to the fact that, from the perspective of the ideology of Athenian patriarchy, his character bears moral culpability for creating the circumstances of Aphrodite's intervention, and his stepmother's resultant lust. It might be argued, from the point of view of Greek hegemonic masculine ideology, that his extreme eccentricity would inevitably inspire the kind of female transgression of established socio-sexual boundaries that Phaidra exhibits during her moment of frenzy. It is clear, at any rate, that Hippolytos' sexuality, at least as Phaidra perceives it in her moment of frenzy, is defined by an objectification and passivity that was ideally associated with women rather than free men and citizens.

His refusal to acknowledge the charms of Aphrodite in a healthy, "masculine" way, to pursue sexual targets and marriage actively, would have been highly problematic in relation to the citizen ideal, as depicted in both literature and the visual arts. Despite the prevalent suspicion in Athenian masculine culture that women might use their sexuality to manipulate men or inspire a state of antisocial chaos, it was extremely irregular and condemnable for a man to choose outright celibacy, as Hippolytos does. For the Greeks, celibacy meant a refusal to father children and contribute to the rejuvenation of *oikos* and state. More to the point, it also implied a refusal to accept an active, dominant social role. Because sex and social power in Ancient Greece were conflated, as Foucault so brilliantly demonstrated in his seminal work (1990), Hippolytos' apparently passive asexuality would have suggested, by extension, an inability to tame, subordinate, or master others, to rule over the subaltern as the free citizen was expected to do. It is noteworthy, for instance, that his celibacy is associated with an unwillingness to engage in public affairs more generally. He points out that he has no love of public-speaking (Eur.*Hipp.* 986), indicates that he has few friends (Eur.*Hipp.* 988), and

appears averse to carrying the weapons of the warrior.²¹ In other words, he flees from all of the duties characteristic of the citizen, and his problematic sexuality is merely the foremost manifestation of this.

My own assessment, then, is that, from a 5th century Athenian perspective, Aphrodite's punishment of Hippolytos can be read as the inevitable outcome for such a pariah. The only possible argument against this interpretation would depend on seeing him as a young adolescent or child, a *pais* rather than a grown man, for whom a chaste passivity in sexual and social matters was considered acceptable (Dover 1989). Yet it seems certain that Hippolytos, at least in Euripides' version of the play, is a man grown rather than an adolescent. Based on his assessment of the evidence in the play, D.L. Cairns has argued that Euripides' Hippolytos is in his mid-twenties (Cairns 1997, 58): the age at which an aristocratic Athenian would have long since transitioned from the status of passive *eromenos* to active *erastes*, from object of taming to tamer.²² Cairns' article, a lively and engaging contribution to gender studies in the *Hippolytos*, also concludes that the young man possesses many of the attributes of the ideal *parthenos*, rather than the *ephebos* par-excellence or the young citizen (Cairns 1997, 66). Whereas I have thus far focussed on Phaidra's perception of the gender power dynamics of a potential encounter with Hippolytos, and her planned assumption of the symbols of male socio-sexual dominance, Cairns' article examines Hippolytos' actual actions in the play. These are worth considering in a little more detail.

Cairns demonstrates that, when Phaidra imagines herself pursuing and taming Hippolytos, she is only creating a scenario that the young man's own behaviour has invited. For Cairns, Hippolytos' behaviour in the "meadow of Artemis" scene (Eur.*Hipp.* 58-113), which takes place at the beginning of the

²¹ All of this stands in contradiction to the ideal of adventurous manhood described by Perikles in Thoukydides, with its focus on public activity and participation in the activities of politics and warfare. Similar ideals of masculinity as public performance are shared by a plurality of cultures from all over the world, even among peoples of a largely pacifist disposition. Of the indigenous Mehinaku people of Brazil, for example, Gilmore notes: "Inside the village, men seek to make a dramatic appearance on centre stage. In contrast to the reticent women, men are continually involved in conduct that is more or less deliberately on display in central village areas for the benefit of the rest of the tribe." (1990, 91).

²² For the *Hippolytos* and aspects of the Athenian *ephebeia*, cf. R. Mitchell-Boyask (1999).

play and introduces Hippolytos as a priggish figure, is revealing of a problematic masculine character that contradicts the ideal of the citizen hoplite at almost every turn. Not only is the meadow typically symbolic of female virginity, but Hippolytos dedicates flowers to the goddess: an image that was associated with the abduction or rape of the *parthenos* in myths such as those of Persephone and Europa (Cairns 1997, 62-63).²³ Hippolytos, like the many female followers of Artemis, is committed to the idea of chastity, of remaining in the metaphorical meadow, and to notions of purity and the rejection of marriage in favour of the hunt.²⁴

Such an obsession also refutes the idea that Hippolytos represents a model of the ephebic persona, for his obsession with chastity and rejection of all sex is anathema to the expected ephebic character, with its stress on violent sexual impulses and an inclination towards hubristic sexual assault.²⁵ Whereas the ephebic transition from boy to citizen man and warrior was the point at which the youth was supposed to transition from being *eromenos* (recipient of sexual attention and object of taming) to *erastes* (erotic pursuer, dominant partner and metaphorical tamer), all sexual interactions are a stain that Hippolytos, like the huntress Artemis, intends to avoid. The virtue that he claims for himself is *sophrosyne*, but it is evidently a feminine *sophrosyne* that emphasises absolute chastity. Furthermore, Hippolytos never lays claim to possession of *andreia* (manly courage), the other quality most valued in the citizen hoplite (Cairns 1997, 54).

All of this irregularity is summed up in the fact that Hippolytos is famed for hunting with the net, an instrument of the hunt which, according to Vidal-Naquet (1986, 117), was associated with subversive trickery and with the youth who fails to make the transition from wild liminality to full adult status by hunting, and thereby imposing culture on feminine nature with the

²³ Cf. section 4.3.2.

²⁴ On meadows, female virginity and girls at play in Greek poetry, cf. P.A. Rosenmeyer (2004). For more discussion on the sexual meaning of the meadow in the Hippolytos, cf. C. Segal (1965, 122).

²⁵ Cf. chapter 3 for problems surrounding the young male/ephebic character in Greek thought, including its associations with antisocial wildness.

masculine, phallic spear or sword.²⁶ Indeed, it is not unlikely that the net was associated, in contrast to the spear/sword, with the female sex organ and, by extension, with feminine duplicitousness. Consider, for instance, Klytaimnestra's use of the net to trap and slay her prey, i.e. her husband, upon his return from Troy in Aiskhylos' *Agamemnon* (Aiskh.Ag. 1381-1383).

5.3.2. Few scholars, however, have thought to look for causes, either social or psychological, that might explain, from the point of view of Euripides' Athenian audience of 428, Hippolytos' subversive masculinity and apparent association with the activities of the *parthenos* of myth and ritual. It seems reasonable to ask: if Hippolytos is indeed to be seen as a sort of male *parthenos*, how would a 5th century Athenian audience, with its prejudices about normative gender roles, have accounted for the existence of such a character? Based on the extant evidence, I would suggest that Hippolytos' association with the imagery of the chaste *parthenos*, the untamed filly or object of the hunt in Phaidra's imagination, is indicative of a failed initiation to manhood. He is a young man and would-be citizen who, as a consequence of his illegitimacy and his status as a male Amazon, never undergoes the successful transition from boy to adult male citizen during the adolescent process of ephebic initiation. The circumstances of his birth and upbringing made it impossible for him to make the transition to adult male status through full reconciliation with his father and his culture. Instead, a sort of Neo-Freudian failure to separate his own identity from that of his mother ultimately leads him to gravitate more towards her wild, Amazonian culture: a culture that inverts almost all of the norms of Athenian/Greek patriarchy.

It is not by coincidence, I believe, that many of the details about Hippolytos' life, about his childhood and adolescence as we can assume them to have been, provide a near perfect inversion of the early career of his father,

²⁶ Cf. section 4.3.3. Hunting with the spear being an activity associated with the adult male. For a discussion on aspects of the hunt as social taming with regard to youth's development, cf. C. Sourvinou-Inwood (1987; 1991). Erotic pursuit scenes of a *parthenos* by a young man, framed as hunting, evoke the purging of wild nature in Athenian iconography. C. Calame (1999, 104) makes a similar point about pederastic courtship scenes: the *erastes* is the hunter, the *eromenos* to be "tamed" is aligned with the slain object of the hunt (often a hare). The youth's infantile wildness has been purged.

Theseus: a figure who was, as we know from chapter 3,²⁷ the prototype *ephebos* or young citizen in 5th century Athenian thought.²⁸ It is worth pointing out, in this context, that Theseus' journey from Troizen to Athens can be mapped quite perfectly onto Arnold van Gennep's tripartite division for the initiation ritual (van Gennep et al. 1960), which focusses on separation from society, a period of wild liminality, followed by a reintegration that celebrates the individual's new social status as an adult. The essential transition communicated in the young Theseus' journey across the Isthmos is from the status of child to that of adult male warrior and citizen of the *polis*. This is why 5th century artistic representations of Theseus so frequently depict him as a beardless youth. He is the model of the adolescent initiate of Classical Athens, the *ephebos* who must undergo social transformation from the obscurity of childhood to the full maturity of citizenship, and assumption of hoplite warrior status.

It is also worth noting how charged with imagery of paternal/filial solidarity this initiatory transition period was in Ancient Greece, as in other societies, and how this aspect of the initiation process can inform our interpretation of Hippolytos' anomalous masculinity. The myth of Theseus' journey across the Isthmos from Troizen to Athens reveals much about the conceptual role of both mother and father in the youth's transition to adult status in the Classical *polis*. It is apparent, based on the evidence for Ancient Greece and on comparative anthropological data, that a prominent conceptual theme of the period of initiation to full citizen status was the boy's separation from the domestic, feminine sphere of the *oikos*, associated with the mother (*mater*), and his movement towards an increased sense of identification with the father (*pater*), and with the citizen group that he represented. Neo-Freudian theorists would likely argue that this aspect of the initiation ritual has a psychological explanation. Their theory suggests that, for the boy to express a "male" identity, he must first recognise his essential difference from the mother with

²⁷ Cf. section 3.3.1.

²⁸ This is not the only myth in which a son appears to invert certain aspects of his father's character, or career. Diomedes and Tydeus is another case in point. Whereas Tydeus was infamous for his *hubris* and excessive violence (Aiskh.*Hept.* 571), Diomedes is known for possessing restraint beyond his years (Hom.*Il.* 9.53-60). While Tydeus died trying to take the city of Thebes, Diomedes succeeded in doing so (Hom.*Il.* 4.405-408). Cf. section 3.2.4.

whom he had assumed a shared identity during infancy. Robert Stoller has articulated this point well:

While it is true that the boy's first love object is heterosexual (the mother), he must perform a great deed to make this so: he must first separate his identity from hers. Thus the whole process of becoming masculine is at risk in the little boy from the time of birth on; his still-to-be-created masculinity is endangered by the primary, profound, primeval oneness with mother, a blissful experience that serves, buried but active in the core of one's identity, as a focus which, throughout life, can attract one to regress back to that primitive oneness. That is the threat latent in masculinity. (Stoller 1974, 358)

I do not necessarily subscribe to the Freudian theory unequivocally. Yet it is undeniable that initiation rituals for young boys in cultures all over the world place special focus on this theme of separation from the mother as a metaphorical "death". It is typically followed by rebirth and integration into the adult male group, frequently identified with the father and associated with the assumption of certain "masculine" activities such as hunting and warfare.²⁹

The idea that Theseus' journey from Troizen to Athens reflects this belief in Greek, or at least in Athenian culture, seems reasonable to me. For the Athenians, at any rate, a boy could not be a citizen without asserting his biological relationship and his personal identification with his father, and by extension with the patriline and with the *patria* – the fatherland – of which he was to become a full citizen.

First of all, let us consider the actual criteria for citizenship in Athens, for it points to the centrality of the father/son relationship to the obtainment of citizenship and, therefore, of the father's symbolic role in his son's attainment of a correct citizen masculinity, free from the potential interference of women and the various "other" groups that the youth must learn to tame. From an unknown point in Athenian state history, it had always been the young man's paternity that guaranteed him his citizenship. Prior to the introduction of the Periklean citizenship law of 451 BCE, the sole requirements for Athenian citizenship in the democratic *polis* were that the youth had to be eighteen

²⁹ Cf. D. Gilmore (1990); G. Herdt (1982, 1997).

years old, and the acknowledged son of an Athenian father.³⁰ The aristocrats of Archaic Athens defined their claim to exceptionalism and their right to rule with reference to the excellence of their patrilineal heritage: they were known as the *Eupatridai*, the men of good *fathers*, who possessed sole right to high political offices and certain cults as a result of their paternity. The notion that manly excellence was hereditary and that it was passed through the patriline is all-pervasive in Athenian political language, and is also manifest in the democratic myth of autochthony.³¹ By the late 5th century, the idealised constitution of the state was that which had been sanctioned by the male ancestors. Both democrats and oligarchs claimed to be advocates for the *patrios politeia*, the ancestral constitution (Strauss 1993, 16). The laws and customs of the patriarchal state, to which all citizens were expected to adhere, were known collectively as the *patrios nomos*, the paternal law (Strauss 1993, 25).³²

All of this emphasises the extent to which the Athenian state, and therefore qualification for membership of that state, was a men's club that revered a sense of patrilineal continuity as essential to the stability of society. So foundational was the ideal of father/son solidarity, as emblem of social stability and the strength of the citizen collective, that an appreciation of the fact goes a long way towards explaining why the upheavals of the late 5th century were understood in terms of filial rebellion against the authority of fathers (Strauss 1993). Sokrates, that surrogate father to many wayward aristocratic Athenian youths, was believed by his opponents to have taught his young followers how to make the weaker argument appear the stronger. He was found guilty and executed by the newly restored democracy in 399 BCE precisely because of the supposed role he had played in dismantling the *patrios politeia*, the traditions of the state, by corrupting the young (Xen.*Mem.* 1.1.). In Aristophanes' *Clouds*, it is Sokrates' teaching that

³⁰ For fairly recent reflections on the Periklean law, cf. J.H. Blok (2009).

³¹ On autochthony, cf. V.J. Rosivach (1987), & H.A. Shapiro (1999).

³² Aspects of this argument have been challenged in recent years. Cf. A. Duplouy (2018, 270). Duplouy argues that citizenship was defined, to a considerable degree, by "performance" and adherence to common values as much as by legal criteria. However, there can be no denying the centrality of paternity and paternal ideas in the language of Athenian social and political life.

enables the young Pheidippides to justify striking his own father (*Ar.Neph.* 1421-1426), in what was obviously a metaphor for the perceived crumbling of Athens' *patrios politeia*.³³

If increased loyalty to the father and identification with him was conceived of as essential to the youth's successful obtainment of citizenship, and adherence to the citizen ideal, it is also clear that the mother's status in relation to her son ideally grew more distant as he developed towards manhood.³⁴ True, having an Athenian mother became a prerequisite for citizenship following the Periklean law's introduction, but one should not read this as an effort to increase the socio-political power of Athenian women. Nothing in the historical evidence indicates this. It is most likely that the citizenship law was designed to curb the internationalist agenda of the aristocrats, since it would have placed a premium on Athenian *parthenoi* and might even have forced Athenian elites to marry into wealthier, non-aristocratic Athenian families.³⁵ After the introduction of the citizenship law, at any rate, a son's attainment of citizen status remained entirely dependent on a father's decision to recognise him as his son. The birth of a child, we can presume, must have been a tense occasion for an Athenian mother, for while maternity is always evident, paternity is not and the Athenians did not have our scientific means of determining it. At the child's birth, the father could legally expose the infant if he believed it was not his own offspring (Strauss 1993, 2). If he was satisfied that the baby was his own, he would wait until it was about a week old before carrying the child around the family hearth in a ceremony known as the *amphidromia*.³⁶ He would also name the child, and make a sacrifice at this ceremony.

³³ It is unclear to what extent the perception of social breakdown and the rebellion of Athens' youth against the older generation was real (cf. section 6.3.4-6.3.5 of this thesis). The obsession with male ancestry, and the veneration of the past characteristic of Classical Athenian imperialism, may indicate that it was to some extent imagined as a consequence of a more general breakdown of Athenian democracy following the death of Perikles who was, after all, a Zeus-like father figure for the democratic state

³⁴ With the ever-problematic exception of Akhilleus, few Greek heroes appear to have had close adult relationships with their mothers. The mother of Odysseus, the ideal, most completely socialised man in epic, is obscure.

³⁵ Cf. I. Morris (1986b, 113). At least prior to the 5th century, they had tended to marry outside of the *polis*. The law was evidently an attempt to curb this practice and was, in this sense, a democratic piece of legislation.

³⁶ Cf. Pl.*Theait.* 160e.

5.3.3. For Athenian men, fears about illegitimacy, and suspicion about the bond between mothers and sons – as future citizens and heirs to the patrimony – to the exclusion of fathers appear to have been real. There must have been a sense that mothers, in particular, might be able to wield undue influence over their sons as citizens: something that the Greeks believed to be the marker of the decadent east, and particularly of the Persian royal court.³⁷ At any rate, the notion that the loyalty that a son owed to his father, the *kyrios* and master of the household, should override any possible loyalty to the mother is a recurring theme in Athenian literature and in Greek sources more generally.

Perhaps the most famous example of the epebic youth who severs his connection with his mother, in order to confirm his masculine identity as his father's son and heir, is Orestes. His was a myth that Athenian tragedians were fond of retelling. In Aiskhylos' Oresteian trilogy, Orestes kills his mother as an act of vengeance for the murder of his father, Agamemnon. The youth, prompted by Apollo, the god of the successful *epheboi*,³⁸ chooses loyalty to his dead father over a sense of obligation to the mother who bore him, at the moment when he kills her. In doing so, he fulfils his duty as his father's son, while also severing the connection with his mother and fully asserting his own masculine identity. In the play, this severance from the mother at the point of the obtainment of adulthood is emphasised when Klytaimnestra bares her breast towards her son, to remind him of the fact that she is his mother, who nursed him:³⁹

ἐπίσχες, ὦ παῖ, τόνδε δ' αἶδεσαι, τέκνον,
μαστόν, πρὸς ᾧ σὺ πολλὰ δὴ βρίζων ἄμα
οὔλοισιν ἐξήμελξας εὐτραφὲς γάλα.

Restrain yourself, child, and feel *aidos*, my son,
to see this breast, at which, while sleeping, you often suckled
with your baby-gums the milk that nourished you.

(Aiskh.*Khoe*. 896-898)

³⁷ Cf. Atossa in Aiskhylos' *Persai* and in Herodotos' *Histories* (Hdt.*Hist.* 7.3). On powerful Persian women in Greek historiography, cf. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983, 20-33).

³⁸ Cf. section 3.2.3.

³⁹ A doubly significant act, as it is also a standard act of female supplication.

Orestes is moved by this action, but does not stay his course. He asserts his separateness from his mother by wielding the sword, the adult male weapon *par excellence*, to slay her. The crime is a terrible one, of course, and in no way reflective of the normal ephebic experience: we can reasonably expect that affectionate relationships existed between most mothers and sons. Nonetheless, the story of Orestes, as recounted by Aiskhylos at any rate, tells us something about a conceptual ideal for ephebic initiation in the patriarchal state: since mothers were not citizens or soldiers, and these were the positions for which the *ephebos* was being prepared, the youth's attachment to the maternal sphere where he spent his childhood represented a barrier to his assumption of a masculine identity. His loyalty to the *patrios politeia*, embodied on the domestic level by his citizen father, had to be affirmed by a renewed sense of identification between father and son.

This idea of severance from the mother and proclamation of paternity as features of the youth's transition to manhood is further emphasised in the final play of the trilogy, the *Eumenides*. In this text, Orestes, hounded by the hideous Furies or *Erinyes* as punishment for the crime of killing his mother, is eventually put on trial at Athens. At the end of the trial, Apollo declares him acquitted on the grounds that the true parent of the child is the father, not the mother, and therefore that Orestes' loyalty must be to the murdered Agamemnon rather than Klytaimnestra:

καὶ τοῦτο λέξω, καὶ μάθ' ὡς ὀρθῶς ἐρῶ.
οὐκ ἔστι μήτηρ ἢ κεκλημένου τέκνου
τοκεύς, τροφὸς δὲ κύματος νεοσπόρου.
τίκτει δ' ὁ θρώσκων, ἢ δ' ἄπερ ξένω ξένη
ἔσωσεν ἔρνος, οἷσι μὴ βλάβη θεός.

And this much I will say, and mark that I speak true:
she who is called the mother is not the parent,
but a nurse for the growing seed.
He who mounts engenders, while she protects the sprout,
as stranger does for stranger, if the god does not destroy it.

(Aiskh.*Eum.* 657-661)

Here the god of the *epheboi* appears to be voicing a sort of patriarchal fantasy that ignores biological maternity and sees the mother as little more than a

nurse, who tends to the needs of the child without having had any active role in its genesis.⁴⁰ Crucially, for Apollo the true parent is “the one who mounts”.⁴¹ The god argues that the genesis of the androgynous Athene herself is testimony to male parentage and paternal claims to loyalty, for she was born from her father’s head.

It is worth considering what this aspect of adolescent male initiation looks like in the indigenous societies studied by 20th century anthropologists, for it can give us some idea as to the power of the concept in other societies preoccupied with defining social masculinity. Some cultures show a much more marked ritual concern for severing the youth’s connection with his mother in order to become a functional member of “male” society.⁴² Among the Kurnai of Australia, in order for the male initiand to join the warrior community, to be initiated into the customs and behaviours expected of an adult man, he first had to be separated from the world of women and children that had defined his early years. Howitt wrote about this process in 1904:

The intention of all that is done at this ceremony is to make a momentous change in the boy’s life; the past is to be cut off from him by a gulf that he can never re-pass. His connection with his mother as her child is broken off, and he becomes henceforth attached to the men. All the sports and games of his boyhood are to be abandoned with the severance of the old domestic ties between himself and his mother and sisters. He is now to be a man, instructed in and sensible of the duties which devolve upon him as a member of the Murring community (Howitt 1904, 532).

⁴⁰ This assumption may have been based on a cultural understanding of agriculture. The seed is planted in “mother earth”, who acts as a nurse for the developing plant.

⁴¹ The concept of a “woman on top” in sex had connotations of emasculation for the man. Again, the equestrian metaphor could be used to communicate this alleged inversion of the norm. Aristophanes, in the *Lysistrata*, hints that the horse-taming Amazones assumed this position in sexual matters as a result of their equestrian skill. Although the point is comic, it made perfect sense in the Athenian worldview. Cf. chapter 4, footnote 45.

⁴² The belief in a sort of proximity between women and boys that was severed around the time of puberty was reflected in early Greek science. Aristotle, for instance, believed that women and children were biologically similar: “Further, a boy actually resembles a woman in physique, and a woman is as it were an infertile male; the female, in fact, is female on account of inability of a sort, viz., it lacks the power to concoct semen out of the final state of the nourishment (this is either blood, or its counterpart in bloodless animals) because of the coldness of its nature” (Arist.*Gen.An.* 1.20.15-20; Trans. A.L. Peck). It was at puberty that a boy’s body became “hot” and heat was ultimately responsible for his development into a man in the Aristotelian view.

This has obvious parallels in Greek literature, not only in the story of Orestes and Klytaimnestra but also in Athene/Mentes' advice to the young Telemakhos at the beginning of the *Odyssey*. Here the goddess advises the youth to leave aside his dependency on his mother and prove his kinship with his heroic father: an absent figure of whom Telemakhos has no recollection (Hom.*Od.* 1.206; 1.275-285). Indeed, Telemakhos is uncertain at this point if Odysseus truly is his father at all. His journey in the story from that point on becomes one of increasing identification with his father and assertion of his manhood,⁴³ culminating when father and son are finally reconciled and return to Odysseus' palace together to slay the suitors and restore order to the kingdom. Telemakhos' journey towards full manhood is only complete at the very end of the narrative, when his grandfather, Laertes, celebrates the fact that the youth has become a man and can compete, cordially, with his father for honour (Hom.*Od.* 24.512-13).

5.3.4. The extent to which the maternal feminine represents a sphere from which the youth must be separated in order to go through a period of "becoming a man", so to speak, varies from place to place. It appears to be more pronounced in those rigidly patriarchal communities that associate the female and the feminine with a pollution that must be excised from the boy before he can become a man. Among the Sambia tribe of Papua New Guinea, as studied by Gilbert Herdt, the feminine sphere from which the boy is removed is associated with extreme pollution which must be expunged. This is achieved by ritual nosebleeding (Herdt 1982). In order to become a man, the initiand is expected to perform fellatio on an older man: virility, it seems, can only be passed to the boy through the ingestion of semen, the very stuff of masculinity (Herdt 1997, 62).

Nothing so violent or painful is implied by the paradigmatic Athenian myth of ephebic initiation: that of Hippolytos' father, Theseus. Nor do I think that the above examples can be applied directly to the case of Classical Athens. The ephebic Theseus never undergoes any form of mutilation to expunge the feminine from him; nor does he kill his mother as in the hyperbolic and

⁴³ Helen, for instance, recognises Telemakhos as Odysseus' son immediately (Hom.*Od.* 4.140-145).

irregular case of Orestes, whose mother is among the archetypal bad women of Greek myth.

His transition, perhaps, bears more resemblance to that of Telemakhos in the *Odyssey*, at least insofar as it communicates a largely affable separation from the mother, and movement towards the assertion of manhood through a series of trials, and an increased identification with a previously absent, but famous, father. The young Theseus' separation from the feminine sphere and increased movement towards a masculine role in the political world of Athens is very clearly articulated and appears to me to indicate that a sense of detachment from the maternal sphere was a specific feature of Athenian ephebic initiation, even if there is little evidence for this in the extant material.⁴⁴

First, we must consider Theseus' status at the beginning of his life. Though he is apparently an illegitimate son or *nothos* at birth, insofar as his parents, Aigeus and Aithra, are not married or even in frequent contact, he appears to have been recognised, nonetheless, by his father even prior to his birth.⁴⁵ Upon learning that Aithra had fallen pregnant with his child, Aigeus placed his sword and sandals under a rock where his son, if worthy, could uncover them when he reached the cusp of adulthood. The sword and sandals provide surety of Theseus' paternity: they are the tokens that guarantee his right to Athenian citizenship and to the kingship of Athens. Yet he cannot obtain them unless he is blessed with the heroic strength that is his inheritance as a descendant of gods. In a sense, then, Theseus the boy is both legitimate and illegitimate, a future king and citizen, but also potentially a social outcast and failure. All depends upon a trial of strength to obtain the sword and sandals, his successful journey across the savage and dangerous Isthmos where several physical trials await him, and Aigeus' eventual recognition and acceptance of his own flesh and blood as worthy of a place by his side, as ruler and citizen.

⁴⁴ There is no concrete evidence at all of an *ephebeia* in existence prior to the 4th century. It is generally agreed, however, that the 4th century *ephebeia* was based on very archaic practices (Vidal-Naquet 1986, 106).

⁴⁵ In a sense, Theseus' illegitimacy and his father's dwelling elsewhere may reflect the distance that the Athenian child would have felt from the father figure during his childhood.

The power of refusal or acceptance remains ultimately with the father, who must judge the son's worthiness and masculine credentials.

When Theseus' mother reveals his paternity to him as an adolescent, the young hero successfully moves the rock to uncover the sword and sandals. In doing so, he affirms his worthiness to seek his father's recognition. From the point of view of the Athenian *ephebos*, the moment would likely have communicated the point at which the youth was ready to undertake the ephebic trials of manhood and to register as a citizen. We know that the retrieval of the items was a moment celebrated in monumental sculpture at Athens, for Pausanias tells us that there was a statue of the young Theseus retrieving his father's sword on the Acropolis of Athens: a sculpture that was probably erected around 460 BCE (Paus.*Hellad.* 1.27.8; Walker 1995, 64). There could be no clearer expression of the patriarchal ideal of Athenian citizenship than the image of the young and virile hero lifting an item that was simultaneously phallic, symbolic of the biological connection between father and son, and indicative of martial strength. As in the case of Orestes, the seizure of a classically masculine object, the sword or spear of the adult warrior, appears also to represent the moment of severance from the mother.

Having obtained the physical markers of his paternity, Theseus now leaves the security of the *oikos* at Troizen and has to undergo a period of separation from society, a period as a frontiersman, a wild man living apart from all society where he undergoes his trials of manhood. His metaphorical period of marginality is expressed when he travels across the frontier territory, the Isthmos of Korinth, in order to meet his father. During his travels, he affirms his manly credentials as a citizen and hero by taming the wild in the tradition of previous heroic figures.⁴⁶ Theseus' journey across the Isthmos stresses his own adolescent wildness, but it also emphasises his innate virility and his ability to subdue the wild. His marginality is expressed through a sense of duality, for he is halfway between the civilised "tamer", the adult citizen; and the wild "other", embodiment of a subversive and potentially destructive social masculinity. Whether or not he will make the transition from mother to

⁴⁶ Cf. section 1.1.3.

father, from “wildness” to “civilisation”, remains to be seen. In actively subordinating the most hubristic of the Isthmos’ residents, and thereby taming the frontier of the state for increased travel and agricultural exploitation, he demonstrates that he will not disrupt the established order but will, instead, serve to secure it.

The fear, expressed in Bakkhylides’ 18th dithyramb, that the young frontiersman, embodiment of the ephebic persona, might destroy the state upon his arrival (Bakkh.18.30-35) is ultimately quashed, in the Theseus myth, when the youth comes to his father’s palace and reveals the sword to Aigeus. The king, recognising his own son, accepts him as his heir. The potential usurpation of established order that the *ephebos*, whose allegiance to the *polis* remains untested and whose character is mistrusted, presents, has been nullified by his profession of loyalty to the patriline. The new generation and the old have been reconciled and the *status quo* preserved. It is noteworthy that, in one version of the myth, Theseus must overcome the threat posed by Medea, his father’s foreign wife. She is the consummate figure of the other, and a sort of surrogate mother, who must be subdued in order for the father/son bond to be fully asserted (Apoll.Lib.*Epit.*1.5-6). At the end of Theseus’ journey, then, his allegiance to the masculine civic ideal is affirmed and he becomes his father’s lieutenant, ensuring the stability of the throne against internal and external threats. For Classical Athenians, the reconciliation of Aigeus and Theseus is symbolic of the successful integration of the new generation. It ensures the continuation of the state and of the *patrios politeia*.

The mother, represented by Aithra, is, from this point on, a largely forgotten figure in her son’s career.⁴⁷ Presumably an idealised mother for the Ancient Athenians, in stark contrast to the negative model of Medea, she fulfilled her role as nurturer but did not complicate her son’s development towards identification with his father and incorporation into the elite male group.

⁴⁷ In myth, she was abducted from the Athenian border town of Aphidnai by the Dioskouroi as retribution for Theseus’ abduction of Helen. She became Helen’s attendant and, in Homer’s *Iliad* (3.144), appears at Troy in this capacity (Plout.*Thes.* 34)

5.3.5. When we compare this to what little we know of Hippolytos' upbringing, at least as Euripides recounts it, the sense of inversion of his father's paradigmatic ephebic career is stark. First of all, whereas Theseus was born at Troizen and travelled to Athens upon reaching manhood, in order to meet his father and obtain his recognition, Hippolytos was born at Athens (presumably) and sent by his father to live at Troizen. His Amazon mother having died when he was still a child, Hippolytos was not brought up by her but by his great-grandfather, Pittheus (Eur.*Hipp.* 11). The likely explanation is that, as the *nothos* of a foreign woman, the boy was sent away to Troizen, placed well beyond the Athenian public eye, where he could not inspire gossip or become a threat to Theseus' legitimate heirs by Phaidra. Acknowledged as Theseus' offspring he may be, but his upbringing at Troizen also constitutes a kind of rejection by his father that inverts Theseus' reconciliation with Aigeus at Athens. Whereas Theseus' illegitimacy is symbolically revoked at the end of his journey from Troizen to Athens, Hippolytos' is emphasised through his journey away from Athens and towards Troizen.⁴⁸ His status appears to be a source of resentment to him, moreover, for he points out that he is a *nothos*, and believes he has been treated harshly on this account (Eur.*Hipp.* 1082-1083). Some, including his own father, clearly suspect that he is likely to pursue legitimisation by subversive means (Eur.*Hipp.* 309; 1012-1013).

If we assume that Hippolytos' journey from Athens to Troizen took place following his mother's death, we might also assume that this transition constitutes a rejection of the son by the father at a point when, presumably, the bond between father and son should have been reinforced. At a crucial point in his life, which called for identification with his father, his illegitimacy is underscored rather than revoked. This may go some way towards

⁴⁸ It must also be pointed out that, though Theseus' parents are not married, his illegitimacy would not have been so commented upon as Hippolytos' because his mother, Aithra, was a Greek princess. As M. Ebbott points out, the status of the mother tended to dictate the extent to which the child was characterised as a *nothos*, at least in Greek literature. "(...) despite protestations in mythical narratives of the formerly high status of one's mother, such as we see in Sophocles' *Aias*, when Teucer (Teukros) asserts that he is royalty on both sides of his family, or in Euripides' *Andromakhe*, where it is often remarked that Andromakhe (who is the mother of the only child left in the house of Peleus) was of the highest status in Troy before it fell, the narratives seem to take for granted that children of non-Greek "outsiders" are *nothoi*" (2003, 3).

explaining much of Hippolytos' irregularity in relation to the masculine ideal. Because his ephebic career inverts the standard set by his hyper-virile father, he ultimately continues to identify, in a Neo-Freudian sense, with his mother. Leaving aside his obviously Amazonian behaviour, which includes his devotion to Artemis, his association with his mother's foreign, Amazon identity is referred to more than once in problematic contexts (Eur.*Hipp.* 10; 307-310).⁴⁹ More to the point, Hippolytos appears to associate himself, and his own fate, with his mother and hers at the moment of his banishment by his father (Eur.*Hipp.* 1082). This association with his mother is implicit in his name, since it is merely the masculine version of the Amazon princess', suggesting that he is his mother's son rather than his father's. It would have been more normal for him to be named after his father or his grandfather. Instead, we see him as the male Hippolyte: a fact that implies what Stoller (1974, 358) regarded as a regression towards a childish oneness with the mother.

Theseus, that heroic figure of countless martial, political and sexual conquests, on the other hand, remains for Hippolytos an essentially distant and alien figure with whom he cannot, or perhaps is not allowed to, identify in order to assert a normative masculinity by his society's standards. The king cannot understand his son's behaviour, and presumes that it must be a sham. For him, Hippolytos' claims to chastity are merely a cover for an assortment of vices (Eur.*Hipp.* 946-980). In his mind, it is impossible that a man of his son's age could be so priggish, for he himself had been a sort of prototype for the randy and violent youth, who demonstrates his virility by making others his subordinates, by metaphorically taming them, sexually and socially.

Such a prolonged childish identification with the mother, and lack of association with the father, are not particularly surprising traits for a *nothos* such as Hippolytos in the Greek literary tradition. As Mary Ebbott has pointed out, in fact, illegitimate sons in Greek literature were generally more closely

⁴⁹ He is born of the Amazon, *Amazonos tokos* (Eur.*Hipp.* 10). The nurse, in speculating that Hippolytos has ill-intentions towards Phaidra's sons, refers to him as the offspring of the horse-riding queen of the *Amazones* (Eur.*Hipp.* 307). He also invokes his mother's name when he laments his mistreatment at his father's hands (Eur.*Hipp.* 1082-1083).

associated with their mothers, since there was always a question mark of sorts over their paternity:⁵⁰

The child of the illicit union remains with his mother and is associated with her in her enclosed space removed from sight. This narrative feature of the child's sharing in the characteristics of his mother is a key to the poetics of illegitimacy. (Ebbott 2003, 15)

Ebbott points to the archer Teukros as an example of this, focussing in particular on his representation in the *Iliad*, where he is depicted more than once as a childish figure, dependent on a mother-figure and essentially rejected by his father (Hom.*Il.* 8.266-272; Ebbott 2003, 40).⁵¹ Such a failure to separate his own identity from that of his mother, in order to assert his masculinity through identification with his father, may also account for Hippolytos' obsession with the goddess Artemis who was, after all, the goddess most worshipped by the Amazones (Mayor 2014, 151). It can also account for his rejection of marriage, as well as his love of the hunt.

In a gendered sense, however, Hippolytos' association with his mother is doubly complicated. This is because his mother, Hippolyte, was not a Greek woman, ideally submissive to the socially and sexually dominant Greek man in patriarchal thought. Rather she was an Amazon, a free woman who lived in the wild space, the anti-*polis*, and who engaged in what the Greeks regarded as masculine activities. Indeed, in Amazon society women performed all of the activities that were normally the preserve of men in Greece. So while there is much of the Amazon in Hippolytos, there is also no escaping the fact that he is a man. There would be no place for him in the gynocracy of his mother's society, just as there appears to be none for him in his father's patriarchal state. This complication seems to dictate that Hippolytos' sexuality is defined by behaviour reminiscent of the males that the Amazones were thought to take as their sexual partners: notionally weak and feminised men, easily made subject to female pursuit. Whereas a Greek hero would always be expected to subordinate an Amazon to him, "taming" her either by subjecting her to sex and marriage or to death by the phallic spear, the Greeks imagined that men

⁵⁰ On the status of *nothoi* in Athenian society, cf. C.B. Patterson (1990).

⁵¹ Of course, in Hippolytos' case, association with the mother is psychological rather than physical, since his mother is dead.

in the lands surrounding the Amazon homeland were the social and sexual subordinates of women. Herodotos' account of the origins of the Sauromatai, for instance, claims that the Amazones had chosen their own lovers from among the Skythian youths and that sexual equality had been essential to their marriage agreement (*Hdt.Hist.* 4.110-117). In his funeral oration, on the other hand, Lysias claims that the Amazones had subdued all of the men of the lands surrounding their homeland before they marched on Athens and were defeated (*Ly.Or.* 2.4).

5.3.6. Phaidra's behaviour surely lends credence to the idea that Hippolytos' sexuality, his status as the object of pursuit, might constitute a more normative masculinity in the context of the Amazon society whence his mother had come, where female activity and male passivity in social and sexual matters was not unusual.⁵² Certainly, at that point in the play when the queen emerges from the palace at Troizen and begins to fantasise about a sexual liaison with Hippolytos, the details of her sexual fantasy have clear parallels with Greek tales about Amazon procreation. When Phaidra dreams of escaping to the wild, of holding the spear and of taming horses, she is not only evoking a desire to partake in typically masculine pursuits that have obvious sexual overtones; she is also dreaming, perhaps unwittingly, of assuming the life of an Amazon and enjoying an Amazon's sexual freedom as the Greeks imagined it. A tradition appears to have existed, at any rate, that Amazones would take sexual partners of their choosing from among the neighbouring tribes of men, and that they would copulate with them in the open air. Some might even abduct men, subordinate them socially and use them sexually (Mayor 2014, 130-132).⁵³ Such a liaison, taking place outdoors and beyond the *polis* walls associated with male social control, is evidently what Phaidra desires. In other words, Hippolytos' subversive masculinity, perhaps a consequence of an over-identification with his mother, ultimately encourages Phaidra to seek the life of the Amazon. The core logic, of course, is that male passivity incites active and aggressive female sexuality.

⁵² Cf. A. Mayor (2014, 132) on a passage from Aelian (*Ael.Hist.Misc.* 12.38).

⁵³ The sexually aggressive female is doubly "othered", being both foreign as well as unnaturally masculine.

The idea that Phaidra dreams of appropriating the lifestyle of the Amazon, a notion with obvious Freudian overtones,⁵⁴ was possibly more pronounced in the *Hippolytos Veiled*. In Seneca's interpretation of the myth, which was allegedly based on the *Hippolytos Veiled* (Roisman 1999b, 403), Phaidra expresses her desire for the life of the Amazon directly. In the Latin text, the queen is far less inhibited by shame or concern for her husband's reputation:

sic temere iactae colla perfundant comae
umerosque summos, cursibus motae citis
ventos sequantur, laeva se pharetrae dabit,
hastile vibret dextra Thessalicum manus.⁵⁵
qualis relictis frigidi Ponti plagis
egit catervas Atticum pulsans solum
Tanaitis aut Maeotis et nodo comas
coegit emititque. lunata latus
protecta pelta: talis in silvas ferar..

So, tossed at random, let my locks fall down
upon my neck and shoulders and, moved by swift running,
stream upon the wind. My left hand shall be busied
with the quiver and my right wield the Thessalian spear.
In such guise as the dweller by Tanais or Maeotis,
leaving cold Pontus' tract behind, led her hordes, treading Athenian
soil,
and, binding her locks in a knot, let them flow free,
her side protected by a crescent shield; so will I betake me to the
woods.⁵⁶

(Sen.*Ph.* 394-403)

In this retelling of the story, Phaidra is ready to act on her impulse and to pursue Hippolytos, regardless of the consequences of such action. If Euripides' original Phaidra in the *Hippolytos Veiled* also expressed a desire to assume an Amazon lifestyle that would accommodate sexual and social dominance over her son-in-law, this may have been one of the causes of the play's failure. At any rate, the Amazon lifestyle was so closely linked to female efforts at socio-sexual domination of men in Greek thought, that such a statement on Phaidra's part would suggest her willingness to overthrow Theseus' rule and seize power through her control of Hippolytos: the flighty

⁵⁴ Since she intends to pursue the Amazon's son, sexually.

⁵⁵ Deleted: talis severi mater Hippolyti fuit. "Such was the severity of Hippolytos' mother". Cf. F.J. Miller (1917, 350).

⁵⁶ Trans. F.J. Miller.

polos that she would “tame” and make subject to her, as part of her political ascendancy.⁵⁷ In Athenian mythmaking the Amazones had, after all, sought to overthrow Theseus in a famous battle, which was commemorated time and again as one of the patriarchal ancestors’ greatest achievements in subordinating the “other”. Theseus’ masculinity, like that of other Greek heroes, was reinforced by his ability to subdue the Amazones.⁵⁸

5.4.1. Ultimately, then, Hippolytos’ inability to define his masculinity, through personal identification with his virile father and separation from his foreign mother, can be interpreted as the root cause of the devastation that Aphrodite brings on him. Unable or unwilling to assume the socially, sexually and politically active roles of the adult male citizen, to become a tamer in the tradition of his father, he is a failed *ephebos* and, as an adult, becomes a sort of anti-citizen. Most of the masculine social activities metaphorically associated with the act of taming are anathema to him. Instead of partaking in politics, he flees from the showiness of public oratory. Instead of engaging in the martial activities expected of a man of his age, he engages in the pursuits of Artemis and her retinue of nymphs or *parthenoi*. Instead of engaging in sex and preparing for marriage, he takes pride in his chastity, negating any possibility of begetting offspring and future citizens, of continuing the patriline as the properly masculine citizen was expected to do. He is a male who appropriates the imagery of the marriageable *parthenos*, and thus represents the inversion of the ephebic Theseus, who was sexually and politically active throughout his career. My own contention is that, from a Classical Athenian perspective, his failure to meet any of the demands of correct citizen masculinity means that, according to the zero-sum logic of

⁵⁷ This argument, too, can be sustained. According to Roisman (1999b, 401), who has done excellent work on this topic, when Phaidra approached Hippolytos in the *Hippolytos Veiled*, she had offered him the crown if he would only marry her. This offer, naturally, would have involved a plot to murder Theseus. Her sexual pursuit of Hippolytos was therefore probably also a pursuit of power, an effort to unseat the king of Athens who was also analogue for the democratic state in 5th century Athenian thought.

⁵⁸ On the Amazones’ female masculinity, cf. W.D. Penrose (2016). On their myths as a commentary on exogamy/endogamy in the second half of the 5th century, cf. A. Stewart (1995). For potential social significance of the development of Athenian Amazon myths over time, cf. W.M. Tyrell (1984).

Athenian socio-sexual relations, he incites active female sexuality within the *polis*.

In concluding the argument laid out in the previous sections of this chapter, it is helpful to consider the potential metaphorical significance of the protagonist's name, for I believe it communicates the essential lack of the stuff of masculinity that rendered him unfit for citizenship and brought about his downfall. Not only does it emphasise his connection with his mother, but it also predicts the destabilising role he will play, as an anti-citizen, in the *oikos* and the state. He is Hippolytos, the “freer of horses” in a metaphorical sense, the opposite of the ideal masculine tamer, because his behaviour and appearance ultimately incite women to revolt against the constraints of established socio-sexual behaviour within the patriarchal *polis*, and thereby put the security of male governance at risk. Aphrodite lays her charms on Hippolytos in order to punish him for his unmanly refusal to honour her, and so he becomes the object of female sexual desire, a figure who prompts women to free themselves from male social and sexual control. Desire for him leads Phaidra to dream of escaping to the wild, and of undoing her marriage to Theseus – an event that would have been described in ritual terms as an act of horse-taming⁵⁹ – and to assume active social and sexual roles typically reserved for men. Indeed she recognises, after her outburst, that some divinity has descended upon her and caused her to abandon her sense of *aidos* (Eur.*Hipp.* 240-242). The nurse, for her part, believes that Phaidra has been led astray by a god. In the verb *anaseirazo* (ἀνασειράζω) (Eur.*Hipp.* 237), there is the possibility of an equestrian symbol that fits well with this argument. Morwood (1998, 46),⁶⁰ at any rate, picks up on this possibility and translates it as “which god tugs at your bridle?”

Nor is Phaidra the only woman in whom Hippolytos has inspired an active and transgressive sexual desire that might threaten the control of citizen *kyrioi* over their womenfolk in the *oikos*. The chorus maintains that many of the

⁵⁹ Cf. section 4.3.1.

⁶⁰ Morwood's translation (1998) of the *Hippolytos* in *Medea and Other Plays*.

kourai, maidens of the city and daughters of citizens, had partaken in contest (*amilla*) against each other for the prize of marrying Hippolytos:

νυμφιδία δ' ἀπόλωλε φυγᾶ σᾶ
λέκτρων ἄμιλλα κούραις.

The contest of the maidens to be the bride
of your bed ended with your flight.

(Eur.*Hipp.* 1140-1141)

Here, again, Hippolytos' presence in the city causes a gross inversion of idealised socio-sexual roles. It was probably common in Archaic Greece for young aristocrats to compete for marriage to a particularly appealing *parthenos*. The suitors of Helen, for instance, had been invited by Tyndareos to compete for her hand (Hes.*Kat.Fr.* 68). Herodotos, on the other hand, tells us that Kleisthenes, the tyrant of Sikyon, invited many young noblemen to his city to compete for the prize of marriage to his daughter, Agariste (Hdt.*Hist.* 6.126-127).⁶¹ In these instances, the young men compete for the right to marry the beautiful and well-connected young woman. In ritual terms, they compete for the right to tame the *polos*. Here, however, the Chorus tells us that the girls of the city appear to compete in much the same way for the hand of Hippolytos, the male *parthenos* or failed *epebos* whose sexuality entices women and *parthenoi* to seek to escape from male control, and to imagine a life beyond the confines of the *polis*.

All of this emphasis on Hippolytos' ability to incite transgressive female activity confirms the suitability of his name in a metaphorical sense as much as a practical one (since he is killed by horses). We see, in his ability to "loosen" or "free" women from male social constraints, parallels with the liminal figure of Dionysos, especially as he is depicted in Euripides' *Bakkhai*. That god, too, was celebrated as Lysaios, the Loosener, whose power to incite antisocial behaviour in women, in particular, was much celebrated. As Richard Seaford has pointed out, Dionysos was particularly associated with releasing women from the bonds of marriage, and prompting them towards

⁶¹ In more subversive examples, numerous suitors also competed for marriage to Hippodameia (Apoll.*Lib.* Epit.2.5-2.9) and Atalanta (Apoll.*Lib.* 3.9.2).

transgressive behaviour: “Dionysiac frenzy typically causes women to abandon their weaving and go out to become warriors and hunters” (Seaford 1993, 116). There is also a similarity between Hippolytos, as metaphorical “freer of horses” and the rather feminised, passive hunter, Adonis, himself pursued sexually by Aphrodite on account of his beauty. According to the myth, Aphrodite and Persephone competed for his favour. His festival at Athens was apparently a counter-cultural event at which women mourned the passive and gentle young lover and assumed a certain freedom that they were not granted at other times of the year. “The figure of the kind, even timid, young lover in the Classical Greek context was, as it were, a counter-cultural male sex symbol, the antipode of the male model canonised by society and embodied by Herakles and Theseus, brawny, aggressive strong-men” (Keuls 1985, 24).

All three – Hippolytos, Adonis and Dionysos – are illegitimate sons born of transgressive relationships who subvert the expectations of Greek masculinity, and in so doing cause women to transgress against normal custom, to rebel against the *oikos*. Not coincidentally, all three also had pronounced associations with the east.

Image redacted for copyright reasons.

Plate 5a. *The Death of Hippolytos* by Lawrence Alma Tadema (1836-1912). [Private collection. Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hippolytus_Sir_Lawrence_Alma_Tadema.jpg]

5.4.2. Hippolytos' metaphorical position as the "freer of horses" obviously evokes a failure to adhere to the correct masculine standards often associated with taming in the patriarchal tradition. In this context of failure to meet the demands of correct masculine behaviour, we should not overlook the metaphorical significance of the fact that the protagonist dies when he loses control of his own horses and is thrown from his chariot. This death is meted to him as a direct result of his father's ultimate rejection of him, when Theseus banishes his son on the false assumption that he is an extreme sexual deviant and rapist: a charge that could be more adequately levelled at Theseus himself.

If the nature of his death points to Hippolytos' failure as a metaphorical "tamer", its circumstances underscore how this failure was related to his inability to identify with his father, and with the norms of the paternal state. As a closing thought, there is also potentially much of significance in the bull's emergence from the sea to ensure the young man's death (Eur.*Hipp.* 1200-1210), for the beast was sent by Poseidon, following Theseus' request that the god punish his son for his alleged crime of raping his stepmother (Eur.*Hipp.* 880-890). It is important to remember that the bull, that most masculine of animals, was the symbol most associated with the heroic pursuits of Hippolytos' father, who has banished and rejected him. The epebic Theseus, in demonstrating his virility and his capacity to tame the antisocial wild, had killed the Minotauros, a creature that was half bull and half man. He had also tamed the bull of Marathon that had been ravaging the plain north of Athens, in one version as part of his efforts to impress his father and earn his recognition (Apoll.*Lib.* Epit.1.6). When Poseidon sends the bull to emerge from the sea and frighten Hippolytos' horses, he chooses that animal, presumably, because it serves as an acknowledgement of the kinship between god and hero. By taking the form of the bull, Poseidon is acknowledging Theseus as his son, just as Aigeus had done by means of the sword. Theseus' status as an *epebos* capable of striking a bond with not one but two fathers, one mortal and one divine, is emphasised at precisely the moment that Hippolytos' inability to identify with this legacy, his incompatibility with the masculine norms of his father's society and his

continued association with his mother and her culture, bring about his own death by the freeing of his chariot horses from his control.⁶²

⁶² The moment is additionally symbolic of Hippolytos' rejection by his patriline, since Poseidon, his alleged paternal grandfather, was the god associated with horse-taming in Greek thought. Cf. *Soph.Oid.Kol.* 714-716.

CHAPTER 6

YOUR HORSE OR MINE? CONTESTED MASCULINITY AND THE USE OF HORSE-TAMING SYMBOLISM IN ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL ATHENS

6.1. This final chapter aims to examine how Greek authors, individual leaders, and state propaganda contested and exploited the symbolism of horse-taming during the Archaic and Classical Periods. First, it will consider the range of ethical values that could be attributed to horsemanship in the lyric poetry of the Archaic Period: a period when, according to some modern scholars, a more egalitarian, “middling” ideology developed to challenge the “elitist” aristocratic tradition.¹ My analysis of responses to horse-taming symbolism in the literature of the period fits well with this argument. It will be seen that, as groups of men from outside of the traditional Greek aristocracy began to articulate a different conception of ideal masculine conduct, which challenged the hegemony of the narrative equating birth and wealth with personal honour (*time*) and manly virtue (*arete*),² so a new range of ethical values associated with equestrian pursuits and horse-taming also emerged. While horsemanship was traditionally a symbol of the aristocratic man’s capacity to tame the wild, and therefore provided a metaphor for his social subordination of subaltern groups, the emergent ideology of the Archaic Period tended to frame it as evidence of elite decadence and *hubris*.

These findings will help to inform a study of the uses and potential meanings of equestrian ideology in 6th and 5th century Athens, beginning with a study of the equestrian monuments first produced during the Peisistratid era. Moving on to the democratic *polis*, it will be seen that horse-taming symbolism had an ambivalent relationship to the masculine ideology of the

¹ As outlined re lyric poetry by L. Kurke (1992; 1999; 2007). For the middling ideology in archaeology, cf. I. Morris (1987; 2000). This position has been challenged robustly. Cf. section 6.2.3 (below).

² On *time* and *arete* in the Homeric world, cf. M. Finkelberg (1998).

state.³ Aristocratic horsemanship was often associated, in popular ideology, with anti-democratic or tyrannical inclinations, and was rejected as the symbol of masculine restraint that contemporary aristocrats sought to promote it as. However, I would argue that a simple equation between antidemocratic *hubris* and horsemanship in popular Athenian ideology will not suffice either, for it is apparent that the democratic state was inclined to celebrate collective citizen exceptionalism by appropriating equestrian symbolism. It might be inferred, therefore, that the attribution of hegemonic masculine qualities to skilled horsemanship was only acceptable when it was notionally inclusive of the entire citizen group.

6.2.1. The tendency within Greek patriarchal discourse to use the horse as symbol of human alterity, and therefore to elevate skilled horsemanship to the status of an ethical demonstration of masculine virtue, had always been a feature of a specifically aristocratic ideology:⁴ an ideology whose hegemony was, presumably, largely unchallenged during the Homeric Age. At that time, it seems that the nascent *poleis* were largely governed by a closed, landowning aristocracy.⁵ The horse was the aristocratic animal *par excellence* even at this point,⁶ primarily on account of its high maintenance and the fact that it is unsuited to the impoverished, mountainous terrain that covers most of mainland Greece.⁷ This made it a luxury item in Greek society.⁸ It was a symbol of wealth and status rather than a useful and productive animal, and was employed more for aristocratic displays of difference than for agricultural

³ As G.R. Bugh (1988, ix) puts it in his study of the Athenian cavalry, studies of responses to equestrian matters in the Classical *polis* are intended to address the uneasy relationship between aristocratic and democratic ideologies.

⁴ For a full account of Ancient Greek horsemanship, cf. J.K. Anderson (1961). The horse has been a feature of aristocratic ideology in many societies. For the value of the horse as signifier of aristocratic status in Renaissance and early modern France, for instance, cf. D. Roche (2008)

⁵ Cf. W. Donlan (1985; 1997, 21-26).

⁶ The presence of the skeletons of horses in Mycenaean tumuli, as well as bridles and other objects of equestrian significance, indicate that the ownership of the high-maintenance and largely “useless” animal was the preserve of the ruling elites. Cf. E. Kosmetatou (1993). For horse sacrifice in Bronze Age Greece, cf. D. Reese (1995). For the significance of the horse in Indo-European culture, cf. J.P. Mallory (1989, 135) & D. Anthony (2007).

⁷ Cf. P. Sidnell (2006, 23-24). For breeds and appearance of Ancient Greek horses, cf. T. Donaghy (2014).

⁸ It was considered to be highly valuable (*agalma*), and was therefore a symbol of status. Cf. Gernet (1981, 115). For iconographical analysis of the horse as status symbol in Ancient Greece, cf. J. Camp (1998). For the social symbolism of the horse in the early modern period, as a comparison, cf. P. Edwards & E. Graham (2012).

production (Griffith 2006a, 200-201). For those outside the wealthy aristocratic class, the horse was both unaffordable and impractical. Donkeys and mules were used more frequently for load-bearing (Griffith 2006a; 2006b), while oxen served as draught animals (Hes.*Erg.* 45-47). Sheep, goats and cattle provided more obvious sources of milk and meat, where these were consumed.

An appreciation of the importance of the horse as a signifier of elite male status, even in the pre-Homeric period, can be garnered from the evidence of the tomb of the so-called “hero of Lefkandi”. For this important figure in a Dark Age community of Euboia, who is sometimes regarded as a chief or “big-man” figure, ownership of horses must have constituted an important symbol of his power as leader. Two horses were buried with him in the tomb, presumably having been sacrificed at the funeral ceremony (Lemos 2006, 505-530; Antonaccio 1995, 5).⁹ To have owned horses in what were, presumably, relatively impoverished agricultural societies was a demonstration of his wealth and capacity for further wealth accumulation.¹⁰ The Homeric poems suggest that the accumulation of material wealth, including horses as one of the highest value possessions,¹¹ was implicitly related to a man’s masculine honour in early Greece. Notionally speaking, the wealthier the man was in terms of livestock, slaves and fashioned metal objects, the greater his reputation for masculine exploits and political power. As a landed aristocracy began to replace the Dark Age “big-man” or chieftain system, a development that may signal the rise of the city-states,¹² it is clear that the ownership of horses, and the attendant status of horse-tamer (*hippodamos*), continued to be an important signifier of elite male status. 8th and 7th century aristocrats engaged in *hippotrophia* as a puissant symbol of

⁹ For more commentary on the Lefkandi site, cf. M.R. Popham, P.G. Calligas & L.H. Sackett (1993); also I. Morris et al. (1992; 1994). For the archaeology of Dark Age Greece, cf. I.S. Lemos (2002).

¹⁰ In accordance with the “big-man” model that many scholars have proposed for Dark Age Greece. Cf. W. Donlan (1985, 303); J. Whitley (1991).

¹¹ Horses being one of the gifts that Agamemnon offers Akhilleus as reparation for the previous insult to his honour (Hom.*Il.* 9.123).

¹² For discussion on Greek society between the end of the Bronze Age and the dawn of the Homeric Age, cf. A. Snodgrass (1971); J. Whitley (1991; 1991); S. Deger-Jalkotzy & I.S. Lemos (eds.) (2006).

their difference from the masses, and were clearly adept at employing it to communicate their exceptionalism. The aristocrats of the warring Euboian states of Eretria and Khalkis during the 8th century described themselves as the *hippeis* and the *hippobotai* respectively (Hdt.*Hist.* 5.77; Arist.*Con.Ath.* 15.2):¹³ a fact that is most revealing, especially taking into account that organised cavalry forces did not exist in Greece at this time.¹⁴ Furthermore, horse figurines were among the most popular dedications made at 8th century sanctuaries, and Susan Langdon has remarked that these were “the perfect symbolic offering for the pious aristocrat who could afford the rare and expensive animals” (1987, 109).¹⁵

The point about piety is well made, for myths about the Greek gods, presumably reflecting the interests of the aristocratic class, are also revealing of the symbolic value of horsemanship to narratives of elite difference in early Greece. Almost all of the gods possess horses, and use them as a means of transportation. On occasion, the gods in Greek myth even engage in gift exchange rituals with mortal heroes. Here, horses are a prestigious item of exchange, symbolic of the ties of genealogy between deities and ruling elites.¹⁶ This indicates that, among other cultural signifiers of personal wealth, to own, tame and ride horses, or to use them to draw a chariot, would have functioned as a reminder, for ruled groups, that the aristocrats of the late Dark Age and early Archaic Period were indeed closer to the gods than were ordinary men. In essence, possession of the animal served to reinforce the idea of kinship between the tall, wealthy and elaborately adorned aristocrat and the heroes and divinities that sponsored and protected the community.¹⁷

¹³ Cf. J. Hall (2007, 6). Hall raises the possibility that the Lelantine War was actually a fiction.

¹⁴ For the history and deployment of cavalry in Ancient Greece, cf. P.A.L. Greenhalgh (1973), L.J. Worley (1994) & R.E. Gaebel (2002). For the origins of mounted warfare in Asia and Europe, cf. M. Jankovich (1971) & R. Drews (2004).

¹⁵ For more on equestrian dedications at early Greek sanctuaries, cf. M. Voyatzis (1992).

¹⁶ For instance, Poseidon gave the horses Balios and Xanthos to Peleus at his wedding to Thetis (Apoll.*Lib.* 3.13.5).

¹⁷ It should be stressed that the general utility of horsemanship as a symbol of elite male exceptionalism was by no means specific to early Greece. Indeed, the animal appears to have served as such during much of the Near Eastern and European Bronze and Iron Ages. A.C. Frie (2018), for instance, has described the importance of the horse as symbol of hegemonic masculinity in the Dolenjska Hallstatt culture of Slovenia.

Furthermore, the gods Poseidon and Athene were believed in myth to have taught the art of horse-taming to heroic, aristocratic men (Pind.*Ol.* 13.61-90; Soph.*Oid.Kol.* 714-716; Paus.*Hellad.* 2.4.1): a fact that reinforces the essential notion that horse-taming was perceived, in elite masculine ideology, as an activity of the civilised man-of-power, signifying his ability to impose culture on wild nature. The two exceptions to divine engagement in horsemanship among the Olympians, Hephaistos and Dionysos, are, not coincidentally, distinctly non-aristocratic gods¹⁸ and are therefore more associated with the lower-maintenance, lower-status donkey or mule: beasts of burden used for manual work.¹⁹ Dionysos, as touched on elsewhere in this thesis, embodied a subversive masculinity, associated with the concept of loosening the restrictive bonds of society, destroying the social hierarchy, and inciting a return to the disordered state of nature.²⁰

Image redacted for copyright reasons.

Plate 6a. Black-figure amphora showing the return of Hephaistos to Olympos. The god is depicted, as is usual in such scenes, riding a mule or donkey, and accompanied by Dionysos. The fact that both deities were associated with the mule, rather than the horse, reflects their distinctly lower-class associations in a society where only the wealthiest elites could afford to keep horses. (500-550 BCE) [Beazley 24080, ATHENIAN, New York (NY), Metropolitan Museum, 56.171.1.] © 2003-2020 Classical Art Research Centre, University of Oxford.

¹⁸ Insofar as their cults attracted non-class specific worship and worship from particular types of workers.

¹⁹ Cf. plate 6a, where Dionysos leads Hephaistos back to Olympos on a mule.

²⁰ Cf. section 5.4.1. Some of these same traits also appear to have been associated with Kronos: that chthonic figure of pre-civilisation whom Zeus had “tamed”. Cf. section 1.1.1.

6.2.2. Yet the ideological hegemony of the *hippodamos* could last only for as long as the aristocratic power it supported remained unchallenged. Such a challenge to the *status quo* was clearly not long in coming, for the so-called Archaic Period, particularly the 7th and 6th centuries, seems to have witnessed a shift in terms of the criteria for holding social and political power in many of the Greek city-states. While most of the emergent *poleis* of the 8th century had been ruled by a small group of landowning aristocrats who maintained their grip on power through local patronage and an enthusiastic ideology of difference and exceptionalism, it seems likely that the power of these aristocratic groups came under increasing pressure during the 7th and 6th centuries.²¹ The general trend recognised by many scholars of Archaic Greece is one according to which wealth, as opposed to birth, became the primary criterion for holding high office (Murray 1993, 220). This was significant, given that this period saw increased levels of international trade and,²² consequently, an expansion in the number of ways in which a man could accumulate wealth. A passage from Homer's *Odyssey* (Hom.*Od.* 8.160-165), for instance, indicates that the aristocracy regarded trading as a dishonourable occupation, so one can presume that this opened up new opportunities for men from outside the old elite to become extremely wealthy, to obtain lands, and to press for a share in political decision-making processes.

It is not by chance that, during the same period, citizen rights were often expanded to incorporate all men in the state who could afford to purchase armour to fight as hoplites in the army. These changes were manifest at Athens in the political reforms implemented by the statesman Solon in the early 6th century, which changed the criteria for holding high political office. Under the Solonian reforms, as recorded in Aristotle's *Constitution of the Athenians* (Arist.*Con.Ath.* 7), only the very wealthiest men, those whose estate could yield a minimum of 500 *medimnoi* of wet or dried goods each

²¹ For ideological and political struggle in Archaic Greece from the 8th century, cf. I. Morris (2009, 64-80). For an alternative view of social developments in the Archaic Period, which places less stress on the opposition between non-aristocratic wealth and aristocratic birth, cf. van Wees (2004). Also Kagan & Viggiano (2013).

²² Cf. R. Osborne (1996).

year, could hold the office of *archon*. Men of peasant farmer status, however, garnered considerable political rights under the Solonian reforms.²³

6.2.3. Some scholars have argued that Archaic lyric poetry contains kernels of an ideological struggle within the Greek *poleis* during this period of political flux, even suggesting that some individuals of aristocratic birth must also have sided with reformists in agitating for constitutional changes. Lesley Kurke (1992; 1999; 2007) has written extensively on the ideological differences that are reflected in the poetry of the period. According to her, two relatively distinct outlooks can be identified in Archaic lyric, constituting a rift within the elite group between those who favoured the expansion of citizen rights beyond the landed aristocracy, to include the non-aristocratic wealth of the *polis* and its peasant farmers;²⁴ and the conservative aristocrats, who sought to preserve the status quo by maintaining political power in the hands of the traditional birth elite. These two perspectives Ian Morris (1996; 2000) and Kurke have defined as the “middling” and the “elitist” positions respectively.

Using their model as part of a gendered study, one might suggest that the masculine ideology of the elitists clearly focussed on the promotion of aristocratic difference through expressions of personal wealth and exhibitions of luxury. Many aristocrats of this ideological outlook tended to emphasise their difference through lavish consumption, perfuming their hair,²⁵ donning elaborate gold ornamentation and wearing purple robes, in imitation of the aristocrats of the kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor.²⁶ All of this behaviour was commonly referred to as *habrosyne*, and the elitist position tended to associate it, predictably, with the gods. Indeed, it seems likely that engagement in *habrosyne*, like *hippotrophia*, was another outward expression of the

²³ Possibly indicating that non-aristocratic wealth achieved political supremacy by forming a coalition with peasant farmers in agitating for political reform.

²⁴ i.e. the extension of citizen rights to any man who could afford to purchase arms and serve in the militia as a hoplite.

²⁵ Hair, and especially hair-length, was an important marker of identity in Ancient Greece.

²⁶ It is likely, indeed, that this behaviour began among the Greek aristocrats of Ionia, but was then exported to other parts of Greece. At the beginning of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, for instance, Thucydides maintains that Athenian aristocrats had, until fairly recently, worn their hair long in the tradition of elite *habrosyne* (Thouk.*Hist.* 1.6.3).

aristocracy's claims to greater proximity to the gods. Often characteristic of the elitist outlook was a tendency to view non-aristocrats, and especially non-aristocratic wealth, with disdain, referring to them as *hoi kakoi* (the dirty or wicked ones).

The middling ideology, on the other hand, was critical of elite *habrosyne*, viewing it as decadent and effete, and preferring shows of frugality and solidarity with lower status and less wealthy groups within the *polis*. In doing this, of course, it was also going against the Homeric tradition, by denying that wealth and conspicuous display were crucial criteria for claims to manly honour.²⁷ It might be argued that this ideological perspective developed as a result of a broad coalition of non-aristocratic wealth, anti-elitist aristocrats, and peasant farmers all striving for constitutional change. At any rate, Morris and Kurke maintain that the middling position was largely patriotic in outlook, favouring solidarity within a vastly expanded citizen group, and criticising elitist pretensions to difference.²⁸

Of course, there are problems with this approach to Archaic Greek social history, and it has been strongly challenged by scholars such as Dean Hammer (2004) and Alain Duplouy (2018), who contest many of the elitist/middling arguments on the basis that they reduce ideology and politics to forces of power and neglect the agency of individuals (Hammer 2004, 480).²⁹ While the counter-arguments are strong, and must give pause for thought when writing of the relationship between ideology and power in Archaic Greece, it seems nonetheless reasonable to concur with Walter Donlan's (1973) assertion that there is clear evidence of a rejection of elements of traditional aristocratic thought in Archaic Greek lyric. The number of examples that seem to refute the ideals that informed the behaviour of the Homeric *basileis*, for instance, is striking (Donlan 1980). The Homeric notion that great personal wealth is a manifestation of masculine virtue is obviously rebuked

²⁷ Cf. section 2.2.4.

²⁸ It may have been from this position that *andreia* (manly courage in battle) and *sophrosyne* (self-control in all things) first came to be articulated as the citizen ideal; though, as we have seen, these concepts were already present in the hegemonic masculine ideology of Homeric epic. In epic, it is less clearly expressed and apparently held to be the preserve of the aristocracy.

²⁹ Cf. A. Duplouy (2018, 272), who also rejects the notion of a longstanding conflict between mass and elite in Greek society.

in much of the poetry that Kurke and Morris characterise as belonging to the middling variety; as is the notion that noble birth is a strong indicator of personal character.

Analysis of attitudes to horsemanship in lyric poetry certainly supports the notion of two perspectives among Ancient Greek aristocrats during the period. There were those, among the archaic poets, who continued to valorise horse-taming as a manifestation of what they viewed as the inherent, ethical and physical superiority of the aristocratic man over the *kakoi*, and these authors coincide with Kurke's understanding of the elitist poets.³⁰ This is manifest, in particular, in the poetry attributed to Theognis of Megara.³¹ The prevailing attitude towards those not of aristocratic birth, throughout the *Theognidea*, is one of disdain and even disgust. Such individuals he refers to scathingly as *hoi kakoi*, and he maintains on more than one occasion that they are inherently inferior to those of noble birth (*hoi kaloi*). At one point, Theognis even admonishes his boy lover, Kyrnos, to avoid the company of the *kakoi*, for having such companions will inevitably stain his character and diminish his virtue (*arete*) (Theog.Fr. 101-112).

Aside from his frequent evocations of horses and horsemanship in his narratives of aristocratic pederasty³² as a process of male ethical development,³³ Theognis also uses the *kakoi*'s apparent lack of knowledge of horsemanship to cast aspersions on their masculinity. Irked by the fact that wealthy individuals from outside the aristocracy of his native Megara were beginning to marry into the nobility, and in doing so were perhaps gaining access to the channels of power within the *polis*, he wrote one poem in which he assumed the persona of an aristocratic woman who had been married off to a *kakos* man. Perhaps unsurprisingly he describes her, metaphorically, as a

³⁰ Part of this glorification of horsemanship is reflected in the evidence that many aristocrats rode to battle on horseback, and may even have fought from horseback, at a time prior to the development of functional cavalry in Greece. The gradual emergence of hoplite warfare, presumably associated with the rise of the middling ideology, would have inhibited such activity, since it demanded that one stand side by side with one's fellow countrymen, shields locked together, and repulse the enemy attack (Tyrt.Fr. 11.1-6).

³¹ Cf. section 3.2.4.

³² For a discussion on pederasty as aristocratic practice, and some potential popular attitudes towards it, cf. T.K. Hubbard (1998).

³³ Cf. section 3.3.1.

horse that seeks to shake off its rider. “I am a noble (*kalos*), prize-winning horse”, the speaker says, “but I bear a *kakos* man, and this to me is the greatest pain. Often I would break the bit, throwing the *kakos* rider and fleeing” (Theog.Fr. 257-260).

Given the association between women and horses in Greek social thought, it is reasonable to posit a sexual meaning here. The imagery may evoke the idea of a woman throwing off a man during sex. Yet in a broader, sociological sense it is best understood with reference to the clear tendency, particularly in the Peloponnese during the Archaic Period, to articulate the alterity of the unmarried girl in terms of the wild haughtiness of an unbroken horse.³⁴ It is apparent, at any rate, that horse-taming as metaphor for a girl’s education (Calame 2001, 238) was specific to the aristocratic class during the Archaic Period, and it is therefore tempting to assume that Theognis is mocking the pretensions of the *kakoi*, now marrying into the aristocracy, by alluding to what was a standard metaphor for aristocratic marriage in his society. The inference would be that, unlike the young aristocratic men who watched their future wives in the rites of passage at Sparta or Argos, for instance, the *kakos* is no horse-tamer. Due to his lack of aristocratic pedigree, he possesses none of the manly *sophrosyne* or divine pedigree required to tame an aristocratic woman.³⁵ In short, the *kakos* interloper lacks the capacity to be a social tamer in the traditional mould of the man-of-power. In seeking to marry into the aristocratic class, he has exceeded his capabilities and sought a position he cannot legitimately hold.³⁶

³⁴ Cf. section 4.3.1.

³⁵ The passage also indicates that it is an affront for a woman of higher social status to marry or be sexually subordinated to a lower-status man. In this it evokes Zeus’ vengeance on Aphrodite, by striking her with desire for the mortal Ankhises (Anon.Aph. 53-55; section 4.4.2); and his decision to “tame” Thetis to Peleus against her will (Hom.II. 18.432-434; section 4.2.1). According to this logic, it is acceptable for a higher-status man to engage in sex with a lower-status woman, as the gods do with mortal women. This does not contradict the social order. But because male-female sexual relations were perceived as being hierarchical, and typically implied male dominance, the woman’s status was demeaned by sex with a male of a lower rank. Indeed, all three of these examples question whether or not a man of lower status would ever be capable of “taming” a higher status woman.

³⁶ In Theognis’ view, such marriages will inevitably be a disaster because the couple are not only culturally incompatible; but also because, if the relationship produces children, the offspring will be degenerate. Elsewhere he points out that such marriages are akin to the breeding of prize-winning animals with the weakest beasts in the herd: “Wealth has

The same valorisation of horsemanship and equation between aristocratic masculine exceptionalism and being a *hippodamos* is observable in a poem attributed to another lyric poet of the Archaic Period, Anakreon. He compares his skill at horsemanship to sexual proficiency and potency, obviously to the exclusion of those less adept than he, the blue-blooded aristocrat. It is clear that Anakreon was writing somewhat tongue-in-cheek, for he applied all of the symbolism of the aristocratic female *rites de passage* discussed in chapter 4, notably those of the filly (*polos*), the meadow (*leimon*), and the skilled male horse-tamer, to what was apparently a purely sexual pursuit of a “wild” young Thracian girl:³⁷

πῶλε Θρηκίη, τί δή με
λοξὸν ὄμμασι βλέπουσα
νηλέως φεύγεις, δοκεῖς δέ
μ' οὐδὲν εἰδέναι σοφόν;
ἴσθι τοι, καλῶς μὲν ἂν τοι
τὸν χαλινὸν ἐμβάλοιμι,
ἡνίας δ' ἔχων στρέφοιμί
σ' ἀμφὶ τέρματα δρόμου:
νῦν δὲ λειμῶνάς τε βόσκειαι
κοῦφά τε σκιρτῶτα παίζεις,
δεξιὸν γὰρ ἵπποπείρην
οὐκ ἔχεις ἐπεμβάτην.

Thracian filly, why
do you glance at me
and flee stubbornly, supposing
that I am without skill?
Let me tell you, I could
easily put the bridle on you
and with the reins in my hand
wheel you round the turn-post
of the racecourse; instead,
you graze in the meadows
and frisk and frolic lightly, since you
have no skilled horseman to ride you

(Anak.*Fr.* 417)

mingled with birth, so do not be surprised, Polypaides, that the stock of the townspeople is enfeebled” (Theog.*Fr.* 183-192).

³⁷ Possibly a slave, given her origins. For a strong commentary on the passage, and particularly the erotic connotations of horsemanship, cf. M. Griffith (2006b, 326).

The social setting in which this poetry was performed is also important to bear in mind, for we may presume that it was sung, to the accompaniment of the lyre, at aristocratic *symposia*. The rather bawdy celebration of horse-taming as symbol of aristocratic male social supremacy should therefore be understood as an in-joke for groups of privileged men. One can easily imagine their delight on hearing their sense of exceptionalism expressed in song as they drank. Whether or not such invective was employed in the public sphere during this time is much more open to debate.

6.2.4. Such use of horse-taming as symbol of a manly capacity to subordinate “other” groups appears to have been rejected in poetry of the middling ideology. Instead, middling denigration of aristocratic horsemanship tended to draw comparison between the *habrosyne*-loving elitists and their horses. As Mark Griffith argues, the horse’s large size, attractive, lustrous appearance, long flowing mane, and general inefficiency as a beast of burden, particularly when compared to donkeys or mules, meant that the animal lent itself to characterisation as being lazy, vain and decadent: precisely the attributes that apparent adherents of the middling ideology attributed to the elitist aristocrats themselves, who so loved to engage in horsemanship as an expression of difference (Griffith 2006a, 198; 228).³⁸ From the middling perspective, in other words, a man’s obsession with horse-taming was not a symbol of a restrained mind or, indeed, of virility, proximity to the gods or right to social supremacy. Rather, it was emblematic of a feminine idleness and obsession with wealth, consumption, and adornment with the trappings of privilege.

This new perspective on the symbolism of horsemanship is clearly reflected in the poetry of Semonides of Amorgos, whom Kurke has identified as a middling poet critical of elitist *habrosyne* and amenable to moderation and solidarity with other men of the *polis* (Kurke 2007, 146).³⁹ In his diatribe

³⁸ For more discussion on the social status of the donkey, cf. J. Gregory (2007).

³⁹ In promoting the notion of a citizen collective that cut across class lines, the middling ideology may have “othered” women in a way that the elitist position did not, and thereby deepened the “otherness” of women as the antithesis of middling masculinity (Morris 1999, 312). It is certainly true that middling poets such as Hesiod, Semonides and Arkhilokhos appear to be more misogynist than Homer, Alkman or Theognis, for instance. However, one could hardly regard these latter poets as proto-feminists, by any means, but merely men

Against Women, for instance, Semonides had a significant and unique criticism for the woman whom he maintains was engendered by “the dainty, long-maned mare” (Sem.Fr. 7.57-58). This woman, he claimed, is averse to physical work, and tends only to her appearance, avoiding dirt, bathing twice or three times a day, combing her hair and wearing wreaths of flowers (Sem.Fr. 7.57-70). While such a woman may be beautiful to look at, Semonides admits, only a king or tyrant, men of extraordinary wealth and proclivity for excess, could have any interest in her and her adornments. Here, then, the horse-woman is not presented as wild or flighty; her “taming” by a man is no demonstration of manly *sophrosyne* or virility, as the narratives of Theognis and Anakreon presented it. Instead, she is merely vain, lazy and a drain on resources, while the man who finds her appealing is correspondingly removed from the interests of ordinary citizens and the expression of masculine *sophrosyne*. The poet is rejecting the elitist association between horse-taming and masculine character, instead associating the activity with problematic demonstrations of *hubris*, decadence and extreme idleness.

Semonides appears to have taken this point a step further, by making an explicit comparison, in terms of both appearance and character, between decadent aristocratic elites and the horses they liked to use as symbols of their difference. In one poetic fragment, which appears to have been a piece of invective against an aristocratic enemy, he explicitly compares the aristocrat’s feminised pomposity, presumably an expression of his *hubris*, to the gait of a horse (Sem.Fr. 18). He maintains that his enemy’s demeanour is *saula*, a word denoting femininity and vanity, since it is compared to the gait of a horse with an arching neck and high step.⁴⁰ This remark can be read as a repudiation of the corresponding aristocratic tendency to associate the horse’s gait with the terror that the rampant animal could instil in the enemy: a topic which J.P. Vernant (1991, 111-138) has written about in some detail.

for whom aristocratic birth appears to have been a more important identity even than gender. The evidence for *rites de passage* etc. indicates that women had always been treated as essentially other. It is certain, at any rate, that women, regardless of their social class, had always been a subaltern group in Ancient Greece.

⁴⁰ According to the author of the *Etymologicum Genuinum*, the adverb ‘saula’ calls attention to effeminacy or haughtiness of bearing, thus recalling Arkhilokhos’ typical aristocratic general who walks with swaggering gait and, horse-like, is conscious of his hair and general appearance.

Emphasis on the horse's terrifying aspect, like the tendency to dwell on its appetites, obviously served to glorify the virility of the elite *hippodamos* who could confront, control and socialise the animal.⁴¹

Semonides was hardly the only poet to challenge or subvert the traditional values of power and terror attributed to the horse, and to feminise the *habrosyne* of elitists, most notably their way of walking and their elaborately coiffed hair, by comparing them to their favourite animal. Making a statement about the disparity between an aristocratic military leader's magnificent appearance and his ineffective character, Arkhilokhos of Paros observed: "I do not love the tall and swaggering general, nor one proud of his hair, nor one part-shaven; instead give me a man short and sturdy on his feet, with much heart" (Arkh.*Fr.* 114). Griffith (2006b, 314) suggests that the poet intended for this passage to evoke an association of character and appearance between the splendid-looking, but ultimately hubristic and useless, horse and the pompous aristocratic general. According to this analysis, the shorter, sturdier man is representative of the hoplite class, who also more closely resembles the lower-status but ultimately more useful equids: donkeys and mules.⁴² In much the same way, Aesop's fables often depict a vain, snobbish horse, who refuses to share the workload with the lowly donkey in what is clearly an analogy for class relations⁴³ (Griffith 2006a, 203).⁴⁴

6.2.5. The Arkhilokhos fragment reminds us that the emphasis on the horse, *hippotrophia* and horse-taming, as contested symbols of masculinity, must also be placed within the context of changes in Greek warfare. Developments between the 8th and 6th centuries were depriving aristocrats of their traditional claims to exceptionalism in the foremost arena of masculine display. Prior to the growth of hoplite warfare during the Archaic Period, it seems likely that

⁴¹ At any rate, when Homer describes Hektor's assault on the Akhaian forces in the 15th book of the *Iliad*, and Paris' appearance before the walls in book 6, he compares them to a horse that has broken away from its stable and gallops towards the mares in a neighbouring field (Hom.*Il.* 6.503-514; 15.263-70). Griffith suggests that the warrior's lust for battle is equated with the horse's lust for mares (2006b, 313-314).

⁴² Similar ideas are attested elsewhere in Greek literature. For an interesting discussion on the mule as metaphor for men of mixed class parentage and exceptional abilities in Herodotos' *Histories*, cf. A.K. Strong (2010).

⁴³ Perhaps unsurprisingly, since Aesop was believed, by tradition, to have been a slave.

⁴⁴ Cf. B.E. Perry, Fable 319 (1952).

the aristocrats had dominated the battlefield, fighting “at long range with missiles and in close combat as individual “heroic” champions with swords” (Kagan & Viggiano 2013, xi).⁴⁵ Now, however, the implicit relationship that existed in the Homeric Age between noble birth, personal wealth and excellence in war was being eroded by the egalitarian, even fraternal, nature of citizen hoplite warfare. The masculine ideal was gradually coming to be represented by the heavily armed citizen soldier, the hoplite equipped with shield and thrusting spear, whose primary motivation was not personal *time*, *kudos*, and *kleos*, those concerns of the aristocracy; rather, the good citizen was preoccupied more with the defence and advancement of the state, and with the protection of his own *oikos* and homeland from external threat. Try as they might to stand out in military contexts by riding their horses to the battlefield,⁴⁶ and in some cases remaining mounted during battle, the steady development of hoplite warfare during the Archaic Period deprived the aristocrats of the fame and honour they had once been able to claim in the martial context. Indeed, Arkhilokhos’ fragment may indicate that aristocrats could no longer be sure of holding positions of military leadership at all.

It seems reasonable to suggest that the extravagance of *habrosyne* may have developed as a reaction to this aristocratic loss of significance in war. Certainly, in order to justify their social privilege and superior wealth in an era of change, the aristocratic class seems to have placed an increased emphasis on the athletic games to demonstrate its masculine excellence (Rose 1982, 55; Murray 1993, 202). The logic appears to have been that, if hoplite warfare was diminishing elite claims to supremacy in war, a new means of exhibiting aristocratic masculine exceptionalism had to be developed. Horses and horsemanship, viewed by adherents of the middling ideology as emblematic of elitist uselessness, had a very particular place in articulating the underlying elitist message of the athletic games. The most prestigious of all the events at the games, at least by the 6th century, was the four-horse chariot race: the event that was exclusive to the wealthiest of aristocrats,

⁴⁵ On the development of hoplite warfare in the Archaic Period, and the scholarly debate surrounding it, cf. also A. Snodgrass (1964; 1965), H. van Wees (2004) & V.D. Hanson (2009). On potential political consequences, cf. A. Pitsoulis (2011).

⁴⁶ For evidence of aristocrats riding horses to war, and even into battle, in the Archaic Period, cf. H. van Wees (2004, 70).

tyrants and kings, as Semonides indicates. Victors at these events paid poets to compose songs in praise of their achievements, which were compared to those of the heroes whom many of them claimed as ancestors.⁴⁷

At any rate, these games, like indulgence in *habrosyne*, did nothing to convince those who had long since rejected the legitimacy of elitist claims to inherent superiority. That those of the middling ideology were critical of efforts at self-justification through athletic display is abundantly clear from a passage from the poetic fragments of Xenophanes of Kolophon, in which the poet points out that intellect, *sophia*, is a more legitimate gauge of a man's worth to his city than participation and success in athletic contest. "My intellect (*sophia*) is better than the strength of men and horses", Xenophanes wrote. "Little would be the city's joy, if one were to win while contending by the banks of Pisa; for this does not fatten the city's treasury" (Xenoph.*Fr.* 2.11-22).⁴⁸

6.3.1. Though in many ways an extraordinary *polis*, it seems that Athens was, in terms of the social and political tensions that emerged during the Archaic Period, broadly similar to other parts of Greece. There the Solonian constitutional overhaul, which made wealth rather than birth the primary criterion for holding high political office and gave a degree of social security to previously marginalised groups, proved insufficient to prevent the rise of a tyrant, Peisistratos, by the middle of the 6th century (546 BCE).⁴⁹ The precise circumstances that accommodated Peisistratos' rise to power at Athens are still debated, and it seems scarcely necessary to provide a full overview of the likely causes here. For present purposes, however, it is uncontroversial to point out that, in order to maintain power once he had it, Peisistratos had to weaken the power of the Athenian aristocracy. In doing so, he exiled some of his most powerful aristocratic enemies, and in some cases may have confiscated their lands for redistribution among poorer citizens. It is also

⁴⁷ On the athletic games as aristocratic display, cf. N.J. Nicholson (2005). P. Rose (1982, 55) has seen this ideological function of the athletic games as akin to that of jousting in the Middle Ages.

⁴⁸ Trans Gerber. However, where Gerber translates *sophia* as expertise, I have chosen to translate it, more conventionally, as intellect.

⁴⁹ For a study of the relationship between wealth and power in democratic Athens, cf. J.K. Davies (1984).

likely that he broke the power of rural aristocrats, who may have been exercising a sort of “big-man” style of control over countryside communities, by advancing loans to small farmers and establishing circuit courts to resolve petty disputes in rural areas (Ober 1989, 66).⁵⁰

Within the context of Peisistratos’ promotion of a cult of personality aimed at popular unity under his authority as the state goddess’ chosen ruler, the advent of the equestrian stone monument during the second half of the 6th century constitutes a fascinating study in his manipulation of ideological symbols to achieve personal ends. In analysing the potential significance of these stone monuments, which were restricted to Attica and Athenian-controlled Delos (Eaverly 1995, 1), it is important to recognise that Peisistratos was himself a member of the birth aristocracy of Athens. He was of an ancient Athenian family, one of those belonging to the *Eupatridai*, which claimed descent from the gods through the line of the Homeric hero, Nestor of Pylos. As such, he had an aristocrat’s love of *hippotrophia* from early in life, giving his two sons, Hippias (Horseman) and Hipparkhos (Horse-rule), distinctly “horsey” names long before he seized power at Athens, while his own father was named Hippokrates (Horse-power).⁵¹ Yet it might also be argued that for a wealthy and powerful aristocrat to flaunt his love of horsemanship, while seeking to win or maintain the support of a broad coalition within the *polis*, would have been ill-advised. At any rate, we have already seen in previous sections the vehemence with which the Archaic Period’s proponents of the middling ideology tended to refute the ethical, hegemonic masculine values traditionally assigned to horses and horse-taming activities in aristocratic ideology.

There are numerous potential explanations for the tyrant’s patronage of the equestrian monument as propaganda, if this was indeed the objective. It is not impossible, for instance, that Peisistratos, as an aristocrat of noble blood, merely assumed that such monuments should serve as a universal symbol of

⁵⁰ For some interesting thoughts on Peisistratos’ relationship with the aristocracy and the people of Athens, cf. G.L. Cawkwell (1995).

⁵¹ Well aware of the pomp and majesty that a horse-drawn chariot could communicate, he was said by Herodotos to have ridden one into Athens, upon reclaiming power for the second time, in the company of a tall woman, whom he claimed was Athene (*Hdt.Hist.* 1.60).

the majesty and divinely-sanctioned power of the ruler, expressing his *sophrosyne* and ability to subordinate an animal associated with frightening alterity. Given that his family claimed descent from the god Poseidon, the deity most closely linked to horse-taming and allegedly the father of the hero Theseus, this is certainly a reasonable conclusion.⁵² Similarly, the equestrian monument might have been intended to associate the tyrant, broadly speaking, with the heroic age, for skill at horsemanship was a strong and consistent feature of the heroic personality, as noted by C.M. Bowra (1952, 157).

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Plate 6b. The statue of the Rampin Rider, which was dedicated on the Acropolis circa 550 BCE, and is probably associated with the reign of the tyrant, Peisistratos. If so, it is an example of his skilful use of equestrian ideology for political ends. Note the oak wreath on the rider's head, which was worn by the winner in an equestrian event. (Photo courtesy of the Acropolis Museum, Athens).

These explanations appear to accord with the stance of M.A. Eaverly (1995, 70), who has compiled a thorough survey of the extant examples of these statues. However such conclusions, though tenable and certainly true to an extent, do not take into account the polysemic nature of symbols and the fact that their interpretation is subjective. It is difficult to believe that a politician

⁵² Theseus being Poseidon's son in some versions of his myths. Cf. section 5.4.2.

as obviously skilled as Peisistratos was not keenly aware of the ideological divisions within 6th century Athens, since he had presumably manipulated them in coming to power; or that he would not have considered the range of symbolic implications of any and all monuments erected under his rule and patronage. Based on this assumption, I would propose that Peisistratos did not expect that all citizens would interpret the statues in the same way. In fact, if these monuments were indeed erected at Peisistratos' behest⁵³ and were intended as propaganda, it seems logical to assume that he had chosen the symbol carefully, being well aware of how the two different positions, elitist and middling, would interpret it in relation to his own role as tyrant.

On the one hand, I would argue, Peisistratos hoped to communicate to the masses, to the *thetes* and the *zeugitai* and perhaps to the more community-minded of the elite groups, through the metaphor of the bridled and subservient horse, his effective subordination of the horsey *hubris* of the old aristocratic class and his weakening of their power over the masses. Such an interpretation seems reasonable, given that the insurgent and more egalitarian ideology of the Archaic Period stripped horsemanship of much of its traditional capital as symbol of aristocratic manly exceptionalism, identifying the appearance of equestrian elites, as well as their *hubris* and insatiable appetite for the trappings of wealth, with those of their horses. Indeed, it may have been common for tyrants to communicate their role to the masses as the taming or subordination of aristocratic *hubris*. Theognis, perhaps ironically commenting on the case of Megara, maintained that inter-aristocratic rivalries in the city would soon give birth to a tyrant to “set right our wicked *hubris*” (Theog.*Fr.* 39-52). Elsewhere, he reminds us that the tyrant's assumption of political control could be viewed through the interpretative lens of animal husbandry (Theog.*Fr.* 847-850).⁵⁴ Xenophanes, on the other hand,

⁵³ We cannot be sure that they date from a period of Peisistratid power, of course, so the argument here is based merely on the relative likelihood that they do. During the middle decades of the 6th century, Peisistratos was twice ousted from power. He also shared power with the Alkmaionid family for a period of time (Hdt.*Hist.* 1.60-61). Nonetheless, it is hardly unreasonable to consider the equestrian monument from the point of view of Peisistratid power.

⁵⁴ When describing the tyrant's relationship with the *demos* at large, it is clear that Theognis does not have horsemanship in mind, but rather is thinking of the abusive treatment that might be delivered against a pack-animal – perhaps an ox or donkey – rather than a horse. In the political context of tyranny, it seems probable that the human/horse

maintained that the tyrants of Ionia put an end to the “useless” aristocratic cultural practice of *habrosyne*: a culture associated with the notion of elite “horsiness” in the middling position, to which Semonides alludes (*Sem.Fr.* 7).⁵⁵

While these examples could hardly be considered conclusive evidence, they certainly suggest that Peisistratos’ power over the aristocracy could have been communicated by means of the symbol of the horse under the firm control of the equestrian tyrant. Such a position is further legitimised by the fact that two of Peisistratos’ foremost aristocratic enemies were the Alkmaionid and Philaid clans, both families famous for their *hippotrophia* and *habrosyne*.⁵⁶

On the other hand, for those aristocrats more inclined to accept the tyrant’s rule, and come to an accommodation with it, the equestrian monument may have been a reassuring sign: a reminder that Peisistratos was one of their own. He was not some upstart *kakos* seeking to usurp aristocratic rule but was, rather, a member of that traditional ruling group, a man of the noblest heritage who could claim descent from the equestrian god, Poseidon, and therefore was also kin to Theseus. The aristocrats’ way of life, their *habrosyne*, cultural preoccupations, and pretensions to difference, such statues might have said to the aristocracy, were not in danger under the tyrant’s rule.⁵⁷ Moreover, the tendency of traditional elitist aristocrats to associate horsemanship with the manly quality of *sophrosyne*, and with the subordination of wild, impious and

relationship was reserved as metaphor for the relationship between the tyrant and the aristocracy.

⁵⁵ On the tyrants as distinguishable or indistinguishable from lawgivers, cf. V. Parker (2007).

⁵⁶ For the Alkmaionid love of equestrian pursuits and even a likely association with the *hubris* of horses, cf. section 6.3.3. For Kimon the elder, cf. footnote 54 (below).

⁵⁷ The potential multivalence of the symbol of horsemanship to Peisistratid propaganda can be read in a story told in the 6th book of Herodotos’ *Histories* (*Hdt.Hist.* 6.102-104). Herodotos maintained that Kimon the Elder, when he had won the four-horse chariot race at Olympia, accepted the victory in Peisistratos’ name in exchange for his return to Athens from exile. When he won the same race again four years later, during the reign of Peisistratos’ sons, Hippias and Hipparkhos had had him murdered. They probably feared that his victory in the chariot race would facilitate an aristocratic uprising against their rule, with Kimon as leader. The indication, in other words, is that for the aristocratic class, ostentatious wealth and victory remained an indicator of manly excellence, even as the masses presumably viewed it more as symbolic of elite excess. We can presume within this context, for instance, that when Peisistratos, as benefactor of the masses, took Kimon’s victory, it would have been viewed by the masses as a defeat of the elitist aristocracy. Cf. Z. Papakonstantinou (2013).

anti-social elements within society, might also have rendered such monuments a symbol of comfort for aristocrats discomfited by the tyrant's stranglehold on power.

6.3.2. The establishment of the democratic constitution at Athens by Kleisthenes in 508 BCE constituted a threat to the security of the aristocracies of surrounding Greek *poleis*. The Spartans, always paranoid about the possibility of their own indigenous slave population of helots rising against them, were especially concerned by the democratic revolution. In 506 BCE, just a couple of years after the birth of the democratic constitution, the aristocratic states of Boiotian Thebes and Euboian Khalkis raised armies against Athens at the instigation of Sparta. The Athenians marched north and overwhelmed the Boiotian forces before crossing over to Euboea and routing the Khalkidians too. Democracy had been victorious in its first great test of survival.

In the wake of these two emphatic victories, as Herodotos tells us, the Athenians erected a monument at the gates to the Acropolis. Tellingly, it was an equestrian monument, which Herodotos describes as “a chariot drawn by two horses”. At its base, the inscription read:

ἔθνεα Βοιωτῶν καὶ Χαλκιδέων δαμάσαντες
παῖδες Ἀθηναίων ἔργμασιν ἐν πολέμου,
δεσμῶ ἐν ἀγλύοεντι σιδηρέῳ ἔσβεσαν ὕβριν:

The sons of the Athenians,
taming in war the company of Boiotians and Khalkidians,
with gloomy iron chains extinguished their *hubris*.

(Hdt.*Hist.* 5.77)

Here, in a monument celebrating the victory of the Athenian *demos* over its external enemies, one can perceive some of the essential contradictions that lay at the heart of Athenian democracy's stance towards equestrianism as symbol of masculine virtue and power. It is a stance that reveals much about the *demos*' resentment of elitist equestrianism, but also about the potent allure that aristocratic culture and ideology held for the masses.

First of all, it is certainly possible to read in the monument a jibe at aristocratic horse-taming ideology, which characterised the middling position of the Archaic Period. This middling perspective was the forerunner of democratic ideology in many ways, most notably in its glorification of the state and the citizen, rather than aristocratic birth. The states of Khalkis and Thebes were both famous for their aristocratic horsemen, and we have already observed that critics of the *hubris* of aristocratic elitism tended to equate the aristocrats with their horses.⁵⁸ It is therefore hardly a stretch to assume that, for many citizens of the Athenian democracy who had fought against the aristocratic states, this monument and its inscription were both a mockery of aristocratic “horsiness” and a celebration of democratic manly *sophrosyne* in taming it. In this sense, it was a message for elitist aristocrats in the tradition of the Peisistratid monuments.

Yet the very fact that the equestrian statue was deployed at all in democratic state propaganda betrays a degree of reverence for the traditional lustre of horse-taming as symbol of exceptionalism. It suggests a respect for the image of the *hippodamos* as metaphor for social and political power over marginalised groups which was, as discussed throughout this thesis, fundamental to Ancient Greek ideas about hegemonic masculinity. It also indicates, by extension, a certain acceptance of the semiotic relationship between horse-taming and the divine that was a survival from Greek myth and religion, for it is surely significant that the two Olympian deities with the strongest links to Athens – Athene and Poseidon – were both famous as instructors in horse-taming.⁵⁹

This tendency to appropriate traditional, aristocratic values for equestrian symbolism was reflected elsewhere in democratic Athenian state propaganda of the 5th century. For instance, we can perceive an indicator of the masculine prestige and divine associations attached to horsemanship in the sculptures of the Parthenon frieze. John Boardman has argued convincingly that the

⁵⁸ The Thebans deployed cavalry just a couple of decades later, during the Persian Wars, when they fought on the Persian side (Hdt.*Hist.* 9.40). The Khalkidians, on the other hand, had been famed for their equestrianism since the early Archaic Period, where their aristocrats were apparently referred to as *hippobotai* (Hall 2007, 6).

⁵⁹ Cf. section 6.2.1. For Athene’s role as horse-tamer, cf. M. Detienne & A.B. Werth (1971).

cavalcade shown on three sides of the frieze “represents the men of Athens who gave their lives at Marathon, here being led in the context of a Panathenaic procession into the presence of all the gods as a confirmation of the heroic status that they had won by their sacrifice, and acknowledging the debt that all Greece (in Athens’ view) owed them” (Boardman 1999, 325).

If Boardman was correct in his assessment, then the dead heroes’ representation on the frieze as horsemen, particularly when read within the context of a “divine procession”, surely has ideological significance.⁶⁰ Most of the Athenians killed at Marathon had fought as hoplites and, as such, we can assume that the majority belonged to the Solonian rank of *zeugitai*.⁶¹ This means that they were moderately wealthy small farmers, but not members of the horse-owning classes.⁶² Aside from once again emphasising the centrality of the horse to narratives of proximity to the divine in state propaganda, the fallen Athenian hoplites’ elevation to equestrian status in death emphasised the established association between mastery of the horse, on the one hand, and manly *sophrosyne* and the taming of *hubris* on the other. This opposition between *hubris* and *sophrosyne* is a theme that David Castriota (1992, 18) has read in the symbolism of the Parthenon metopes in particular, where he notes that the horse is associated with alterity and *hubris*, and its subordination by Athenian citizens⁶³ in the metopes can be read as an exhibition of manly *sophrosyne*.⁶⁴

This potential “marking up” of the Marathon hoplites to the status of *hippodamoi* alerts us to the fact that the *demos* was not averse to accepting aristocratic ethical values for horsemanship, at least as long as it served the

⁶⁰ Boardman’s interpretation of the frieze is by no means universally accepted. For a strong overview of the literature, and some insightful comments, cf. T. Stevenson (2003). Stevenson argues that the frieze represents an idealised depiction of the Panathenaic festival.

⁶¹ The term probably refers to those farmers who could afford to keep, and “yoke” together, a team of oxen. Cf. Stahl and Walter (2009, 147).

⁶² While the majority of Athenian citizens at the time of the Parthenon’s construction would not even have had the resources to serve as hoplites, but were oarsmen in the triremes. Cf. B.S. Strauss (1996).

⁶³ Or citizen-surrogates.

⁶⁴ In the case of the *kentauroi* killed by the Greeks, as well as the horsey Amazones. Both “horsey” groups, of course, were defeated by men led by the Athenian hero, Theseus.

glorification of the citizen collective.⁶⁵ Such an acceptance of traditional equestrian symbolism can be detected elsewhere in celebrations of the manly virtue of democratic citizens. Horses, and sometimes horse-racing events, were apparently used at democratic funeral ceremonies to add to the pomp and glamour of the event (*Pl.Men.* 249b3-6), just as they had previously been used to celebrate aristocratic funerals. Symbol of individual wealth and difference the horse may typically have been, but any and all wealth, when channelled towards the end of collective glorification of the virtue of democratic citizens, was clearly acceptable. As Nicole Loraux (1986, 23) reflected in relation to the funeral oration itself, the democracy failed to develop a language to express its own identity, and in many ways merely co-opted the traditional symbols of aristocratic masculine exceptionalism.

6.3.3. Yet these examples of horse-taming ideology in Athenian pomp, ceremony and national celebration should not be mistaken for evidence of mass reverence, during the democratic period, for the status of the aristocratic horseman as social tamer and embodiment of the masculine ideal. One must never forget, after all, that manipulation of the human/horse relationship in democratic state propaganda, in order to communicate the socio-political supremacy of the entire enfranchised citizen group, was likely the brainchild of aristocratic leaders in the *polis*.

Certainly, such glorification of the horseman never co-existed comfortably with the everyday realities of *polis* life in Athens. Here, class differences often remained glaringly visible, despite the political emancipation of the masses. Aristocratic horsemanship, and particularly chariot-racing, functioned as an outward display of the inequalities between citizens that still existed in the state. To observe an aristocrat mounted on his well-groomed horse, or horse-drawn chariot, in public would have reminded poorer Athenians that, despite their ideological elevation to the status of “horse-tamers” on state monuments, they lacked the means to be *hippodamoi* in practice. From such

⁶⁵ In this, it might be regarded as an example of emulation of the privileged class, as outlined by D. Miller (1985, 184-205). A similar opinion might be garnered from the gravestone, dated to the 390s BCE, of the Athenian warrior Dexileios. In this monument, the dead warrior as representative of the Athenian citizen is shown on horseback, while a Spartan hoplite is trampled underfoot. For more on the Dexileios stele, cf. Hurwit (2007).

a vantage point, equestrian monuments glorifying the democracy could be seen as hollow aristocratic window-dressing.

Careful avoidance or management of equestrian display, and indeed of other displays of aristocratic luxury, was therefore a concern for those Athenian aristocrats with political ambitions during the democratic period. According to Josiah Ober (1989, 76-86), in his excellent study of ideology in Classical Athens, it became increasingly important during the early decades of the democratic era for politically ambitious elites to avoid conspicuous displays of wealth, and to make shows of frugality that helped foster a sense of solidarity with the *demos*. Displays of aristocratic difference, which had in the Archaic Period served to demonstrate elite exceptionalism and thereby helped to justify the old hierarchy became, in the democratic period, more likely to leave an elite in danger of *ostracism* and exile from the city.⁶⁶

The finest example of the successful aristocratic politician, who consciously avoided lavish displays of wealth, was Perikles. An extremely wealthy elite of Alkmaionid descent on his mother's side, Perikles managed to cultivate a reputation among the *demos* for frugality and restraint in his personal life, and this public persona was key to the grip he held on Athenian politics for several decades.⁶⁷ In this, he resembled many powerful political players from less distant history, such as the Medici rulers of republican Florence during the Renaissance, some of whose most prominent members also cultivated a reputation for frugality in order to court the *popolo minuto* (Strathern 2007, 76).

In cultivating this persona, Perikles had likely learned from the fate of his maternal uncle, Megakles IV, whose devotion to horsemanship and other wealth-displays had been a significant factor in his ostracism in 486 BCE. A nephew of the reformer Kleisthenes and the head of the Alkmaionid family in the early 5th century, it should have been easy for Megakles IV to curry

⁶⁶ One striking example of this new emphasis on aristocratic frugality, as alluded to above, is the sudden decline of individual elite grave markers at the end of the 6th century. Individual glorification, especially when removed from the interests of the *polis*, was to be viewed as indicative of dangerous political views. By contrast, the so-called sumptuary laws of Solon, introduced in the early 6th century, appear to have failed to regulate elite spending on grave-markers to communicate exceptionalism.

⁶⁷ On Perikles' reputation for moderation and incorruptibility, cf. Thouk.*Hist.* 2.65.

favour with the *demos*. Indeed, it presumably would have been so, had he not engaged in some questionable behaviour at the time of the Battle of Marathon in 490 BCE, at least according to his political rivals. Herodotos reports that the people greatly suspected that he had been responsible for signalling to the Persian fleet to attack Athens when the citizen army was stationed on the plain of Marathon, about 25 miles from the city (Hdt.*Hist.* 6.123-124).⁶⁸ Megakles did little to help his own cause after that point, however, by engaging in the kind of lavish elitist displays of *habrosyne* that were, in the paranoia of the Persian War years, increasingly associated, not with Lydian aristocrats per se, but with the much more serious crimes of Medism, anti-democratic leanings and tyrannical ambitions among the Athenian aristocracy.

Analysis of the many surviving *ostraka* pertaining to the exile of Megakles from Athens reveals that his lifestyle contributed to his expulsion from the city. Scholarly analysis of these *ostraka* indicates that his extravagant equestrian displays were a strong aggravating factor in the *demos*' vote against him (Forsdyke 2005, 155-156). Inscribed on one *ostrakon* is the claim that not only Megakles, but also his horse, should be expelled from the city.⁶⁹ On another, the voter inscribed Megakles' name alongside a drawing of a horse, evoking the anti-elitist tendency to align aristocratic horse-owners with their horses, in terms of appearance and character: a sentiment that implicitly denied any association between horse-taming and desirable masculine characteristics.⁷⁰ Five *ostraka* in total mention Megakles' ownership of horses as a cause for his exile: a remarkable figure indeed, considering that the vast majority contain only his name. Others mention his appearance and especially his long hair, a fashion choice that, by the early Classical Period, bound together a number of concepts increasingly reviled in democratic state ideology: elite *habrosyne*, horsemanship, and a tendency towards Medism (Forsdyke 2005, 155).

⁶⁸ For more on this event, cf. L. Athanassaki (2013).

⁶⁹ Cf. Brenne (2002, 101-105.)

⁷⁰ Cf. section 6.2.4.

While his “horsiness” was hardly the primary cause for the accusation of Medism against Megakles, it certainly compounded his situation.⁷¹ We know that he won the four-horse chariot race (*tethrippon*) at the Pythian Games in 486 BCE, the year of his exile, because Pindar composed a victory ode to commemorate it. According to Pindar, it was jealousy of Megakles’ success in the chariot race that had resulted in his exile (Pind.*Pyth.* 2.18-22): a uniquely aristocratic perspective, which ignores the reality of a man entirely out of touch with the zeitgeist of the age. The testimony of the *ostraka* would suggest that the *demos*, no doubt prompted by Megakles’ political enemies, rejected the idea that equestrian displays were what tyrants and traditional aristocrats of the past had sought to present them as: namely as public affirmation of his right to political pre-eminence, as metaphorical tamer of the wild subaltern represented by the flighty, powerful and hubristic horse.⁷² Rather, popular democratic ideology seems to have viewed aristocratic equestrianism in the tradition of the middling ideology of the Archaic Period, as promoted by the likes of Semonides, Arkhilokhos and Xenophanes. Horse-loving elites were, according to that perspective, as hubristic as their beloved mounts, and of little use to the state. Indeed, it is revealing that we know of only one Athenian who was victorious at a major chariot-racing event from the time of the ostracism of Megakles IV in 486 BCE until the victory of Alkibiades in 416 BCE.⁷³ This victor, Megakles V, won the tethrippon at Olympia in 436 and was presumably the son of the former Megakles. He is almost entirely absent from the political records, perhaps indicating that he remained aloof of politics.

6.3.4. However, evidence for the Peloponnesian War era reminds us that the ethical value attributed to symbols in the formation of ideology can be subject to rapid change during periods of political upheaval. Some texts of the war

⁷¹ The adoption of certain Persian customs among Athenian elites may have been relatively common in the early 5th century. Cf. M.C. Miller (2012).

⁷² Hieron of Syracuse had made particularly effective use of this idea. Cf. Pind.*Pyth.* 2. For a comprehensive discussion of the democracy’s ambivalent attitude towards equestrian aristocrats on the political scene, cf. M. Golden (1997, 342; 1998). For Pindar’s role in promoting the Syracusan monarchy, cf. K.A. Morgan (2015).

⁷³ Cf. section 6.3.5.

era⁷⁴ hint at the advent of a revolution of aristocratic youth in Athens, aided by the new and potent weapon of sophistry, which sought to delegitimise and subvert the basis of democratic Athenian ideology. As part of this revolution, young aristocrats sought to challenge the prevailing democratic treatment of horsemanship as a symbol of aristocratic *hubris* and tyrannical leanings. They did so by resurrecting and promoting the historically powerful elitist tradition, dating back to the time of Homer at least, that being a skilled *hippodamos*, and possessing great wealth in horses, was evidence of individual manly virtue and virility that should be celebrated by the entire community.

Certainly, one might read this theme in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, first produced in 423 BCE, if one bears in mind that the comic poet tended to write from a conservative, democratic perspective common to the majority of his audience. The protagonist of the *Clouds*, an Athenian peasant farmer named Strepsiades, who married the daughter of a wealthy aristocrat, has run up enormous debts purchasing horses for his chariot-racing son, Pheidippides: a youth who clearly identifies more with his mother's noble family than with his father's rustic roots and, according to his father, suffers from a disease called *hippomania* (horse-madness). At its very outset, Aristophanes sets up three essential demographic conflicts in the relationship between Strepsiades and Pheidippides, which drive the narrative: these are between democratic commoner and elitist aristocrat, father and son, and old age and youth.⁷⁵ The place of the symbolism of horsemanship in the resolution of these conflicts is telling, for it serves as one of the most prominent symbols of the ideological difference between the categories represented by Strepsiades and Pheidippides.

First of all, the young man's name, Pheidippides, meaning "the thriftiness of horses", is a witty oxymoron that underscores the universality, in democratic

⁷⁴ Among these are Plato's *Apologia*, Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Isokrates' *Areopagitikos*.

⁷⁵ Since I have already touched on the importance of the father/son relationship in Athenian culture in chapter 5, I will focus here only on the relevance of the other two oppositions: that between commoner and aristocrat, and that between old and young. The fact that Strepsiades, the old man and father, is representative of the democracy is, perhaps, a marker of the extent to which democratic ideology was regarded as "traditional" and paternal by the time of the Peloponnesian War.

Athenian ideology, of the equation between horsemanship and extreme wealth and excess. This association is further emphasised when Strepsiades recalls that he and his wife had agreed to the child's name as a compromise because she, being an aristocrat from a wealthy family,⁷⁶ insisted that the boy be given an elite name bearing the word *hippos* (horse); Strepsiades, on the other hand, wished to name the boy after his own father, Pheidonides, "the son of thrift". In many ways, then, father and son, old and young, democrat and aristocrat, occupy ideological poles, and their respective attitudes towards horses underscore this difference.

Many passages from the *Clouds* appear to confirm that, by and large, young Athenian aristocrats with an avid interest in horses had tended, in the democratic *polis* of earlier decades, to remain aloof from politics for obvious reasons.⁷⁷ At the beginning of the play, the young and avowedly elitist Pheidippides shows no interest in learning the rhetorical arts of the sophists that might enable him to cheat his father's creditors and provide him with a head-start in the city's political life (*Ar.Neph.* 110-119). True to his aristocratic ideals, the young charioteer clearly views learning politically useful rhetorical skills from the sophists as a feminine activity, while he sees horsemanship as a manly pursuit. At lines 116-119, he contrasts the anaemic pale skin of the sophists' students with the tanned skin of his fellow horsemen. From a gendered perspective, this is a comment of great significance, for the Greeks associated pale skin with women, who spent most of their time indoors, while darker skin was linked with the outdoor activities of the free man, especially at the *gymnasion*.⁷⁸ The young Pheidippides, then, is unwilling to sacrifice his horse-racing for a career in the law courts and the *Ekklesia*.

⁷⁶ Not insignificantly, she was the "niece of Megakles" (*Ar.Neph.* 46), a name most associated with the Alkmaionids. The name may have been synonymous with elitist *hippotrophia* since the days of Megakles IV.

⁷⁷ The fear that it would result in ostracism. Cf. the fate of Megakles, section 6.3.3.

⁷⁸ For a striking example of this phenomenon in Greek culture, cf. *Xen.Hell.* 3.4.15, where the author describes how Agesilaos's Spartans were surprised to find that the Persian prisoners, when stripped, had pale bodies "like women". It is also clear in black-figure vase-painting, where women are often depicted with white skin. Men, on the other hand, are usually shown in black silhouette.

If this separation of the young, aristocratic *hippodamos* from the political sphere had indeed become something of a commonplace in the democratic *polis* during the 5th century, the *Clouds* suggests that this was beginning to change during the time of the Peloponnesian War. Initially, it is the old commoner and representative of the *demos*, Strepsiades, who has no qualms about pressing his son into learning from the sophists. He briefly attends Sokrates' think-tank himself, and when this fails he forces Pheidippides to attend (*Ar.Neph.* 865). When the youth emerges from his period of education, he has developed the rhetorical tools to “make the weaker argument appear the stronger”, and therefore to justify committing *hubris* against his father, the aged peasant citizen. During his stay with Sokrates, Pheidippides has learned from the personification of the Unjust Argument, who has encouraged him to challenge all traditional democratic values, even suggesting that it is acceptable to assault his parents, or to have affairs with the wives and daughters of citizens (*Ar.Neph.* 1068-1082). The personification of the Just Argument, on the other hand, is clearly the representative of traditional democratic values of citizen equality under the law (*Ar.Neph.* 960-962), but is tied in rhetorical knots by the Unjust Argument.

It is telling that, having committed the unspeakable offence of beating his own father and successfully defended this crime, Aristophanes' Pheidippides does not renounce his chariot-racing, though it has bankrupted his father. Instead he assures Strepsiades that he intends to return to it, but in a position of far greater power, for the aged democrat Strepsiades will no longer be able to challenge his son's lavish spending. Strepsiades has unwittingly given the youth the rhetorical skillset to defend and justify the kind of insolence towards which young aristocrats were thought to be the most prone of any demographic group (*Ar.Neph.* 1406-1408).⁷⁹ In other words, Aristophanes appears to be arguing that sophistry is enabling young aristocrats to rehabilitate an elitist, oligarchic ideology of aristocratic exceptionalism – symbolically embodied by horsemanship – in the political heart of the democratic *polis*.

⁷⁹ As Aristotle alludes to. For him, the wealthy and the young are the most prone to *hubris* (*Arist.Rhet.* 2.2.6).

6.3.5. Indeed, this emphasis on horsemanship as symbol of the ideology of the insurgent young aristocrat must rank among the strongest arguments for scholars who see a connection between the fictional Pheidippides and the contemporary Athenian statesman Alkibiades: the young Athenian aristocrat of the Peloponnesian War era, notorious for committing *hubris* against fellow citizens,⁸⁰ who made great and unashamed spectacle of his chariot-racing exploits when climbing the democracy's political ladder.

Alkibiades was renowned for using his dazzling rhetorical skill to challenge traditional democratic values. In one (probably fictional) account recorded by Xenophon, he challenges Perikles, arch-adherent of democratic ideology among Athenian elites, about the legitimacy of democracy, and suggests that democratic law is merely the use of force by the majority against the owners of property (*Xen.Mem.* 1.2.45). But one moment, in particular, demonstrates that the ethical value associated with being a *hippodamos* was a key tenet on which Alkibiades challenged traditional democratic ideology. Still a relatively young man in 416 BCE, he was becoming an increasingly important player in Athenian politics when he entered an astonishing seven teams of horses at the Olympic Games of that year, with three of his teams finishing in the top four places. His victory was clearly divisive, and appears to have split the *demos*. Many must have viewed it along traditional democratic lines, as a gross and morally reprehensible misuse of personal wealth during a time of political instability, when Athens' enemies were numerous and when aristocratic wealth could have been better spent on the state's defences.

Speaking at a meeting of the Athenian Assembly the following year, the elder statesman Nikias criticised Alkibiades' *hubris*, evoking the lavishness of his equestrian victories to support his case. Even worse than the implied *hubris* of his excessive chariot-racing exploits, Nikias implies that Alkibiades has proposed the invasion of Sicily not for the benefit of his city, but rather because he has incurred enormous debts from his equestrian pursuits, and now needs to pay these off with the loot of war (*Thouk.Hist.* 6.12.2). Himself a wealthy aristocrat, Nikias was clearly trying to play on the anti-elitist

⁸⁰ Cf. section 2.4.1, footnote 42.

prejudices of the *demos* in order to depict Alkibiades as the embodiment of aristocratic excess: the individual who seeks to use the state and high public office only to increase his own wealth, power, and fame, with little interest in the public good. It was an easy charge to make, of course, precisely because horsemanship had been associated with this kind of aristocratic behaviour in popular thought since the Archaic Period.⁸¹

The way in which Alkibiades justified his participation, and celebrated his victory, is revealing of his own flair for public propaganda. While his ancestor Megakles suffered ostracism for his *hubris* in flaunting his wealth in horses, Alkibiades elected to defend himself against the accusations of his enemies by evoking the traditional Pindaric defence of aristocratic athletic success: namely that a victory for the individual aristocrat in the Panhellenic Games is an honour in which the entire *polis* should feel involved. Speaking before the Assembly in response to Nikias, as Thoukydides reports it, the young general pointed out that his success brought honour not only to himself and his family but to the state (Thouk.*Hist.* 6.16.1). He then continued:

οἱ γὰρ Ἕλληνας καὶ ὑπὲρ δύναμιν μείζω ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν ἐνόμισαν τῷ ἐμῷ διαπρεπεῖ τῆς Ὀλυμπιάζε θεωρίας, πρότερον ἐλπίζοντες αὐτὴν καταπεπολεμηθῆσθαι, διότι ἄρματα μὲν ἑπτὰ καθῆκα, ὅσα οὐδεὶς πῶ ιδιώτης πρότερον, ἐνίκησα δὲ καὶ δεῦτερος καὶ τέταρτος ἐγενόμην καὶ τᾶλλα ἀξίως τῆς νίκης παρεσκευασάμην. νόμῳ μὲν γὰρ τιμῇ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ δρωμένου καὶ δύναμις ἅμα ὑπονοεῖται.

My outstanding performance at the Olympic festival made the Greeks revise and even exaggerate their estimate of the power of Athens, when they had expected the city to be exhausted by war. I entered seven chariots – more than any private citizen had ever done before. I won the victory, and second and fourth place too: and my whole display at the games was of a piece with my victory. Quite apart from the regular honour which such successes bestow, the plain fact of their achievement hints at reserves of power.⁸²

(Thouk.*Hist.* 6.16.2)

⁸¹ Cf. sections 6.2.4 & 6.3.3.

⁸² Trans M. Hammond.

Many citizens were probably beginning to suspect that the charismatic Alkibiades was aiming at tyranny, and Nikias, by alluding to the lavishness of the equestrian display, had obviously intended to hint at this. Characteristically unabashed by such suggestions, Alkibiades defended himself with recourse to precisely the kind of claim that tyrants and powerful aristocrats, victorious in the Panhellenic games, had made in the age of Pindar; and precisely the kind of self-justification that had failed to win reprieve for Megakles IV earlier in the same century: that an aristocrat's victories in the games benefited the entire *polis*. His victories, he maintained, were a demonstration to Athens' enemies of the strength of the state even in time of war.

That Alkibiades managed to avoid ostracism around this time, and actually achieved his objective of ensuring a vote for war against the Sicilian *polis* of Syrakousai (Syracuse), is a reflection of his success in persuading a considerable portion of the *demos* to accept the kind of lavish displays of wealth that democrats typically distrusted as evidence of oligarchic or tyrannical ambitions in an individual elite. As Aristophanes may have predicted when writing the *Clouds* in 423,⁸³ Alkibiades succeeded, at least in the short-term, in rewriting the rules of conduct for politically-engaged aristocrats in democratic Athens. He made it acceptable, once more, for an elitist to present his horsemanship as evidence of masculine virtue and fitness to assume a position of power.

CONCLUSION:

6.4. This chapter has attempted to analyse the shifting values attributed to equestrian symbolism as masculine ideology in Ancient Greece. It has paid particular attention to what it meant to be a horse-owner, and therefore to have an ideological claim to the symbolism of horse-taming, in the dialogue of social and political struggle during the Archaic and Classical Periods. Analysis of the lyric poetry of the Archaic Period has drawn heavily on Lesley

⁸³ And rewriting between 420 and 417.

Kurke's assumption (2007) that such poetry can be read as representative of two ideological positions, the elitist and the middling. While I am aware that this assumption has been challenged by some scholars, my argument here has been that analysis of opposing attitudes towards equestrian symbolism supports Kurke's hypothesis.

In the case of material pertaining to democratic Athens, analysis has been based on the assumption that democratic ideology tended to valorise demonstrations of frugality and civic virtue and was, traditionally, critical of aristocratic demonstrations of difference from the masses. In terms of the ethical value popularly ascribed to horsemanship, it is clear that democratic Athenian ideology, with its glorification of citizen *sophrosyne* and egalitarianism, was broadly similar to the position held by Archaic poets of the middling position, insofar as it tended to view elite *hippotrophia*, and especially chariot-racing, as emblematic of the worst excesses towards which aristocrats were typically inclined.

On the other hand, however, it is clear that the democratic state tended to accept, whenever convenient, the traditional aristocratic equation between horse-taming and ideal manly qualities such as *sophrosyne*, heroic connections, and divine approval. This ambivalence about the status of horsemanship as symbol of masculine ethical qualities is powerfully reflected in the contrast between the use of the equestrian monument to glorify the democratic state, and the frequent characterisation of individual aristocrats engaged in *hippotrophia* as antidemocratic, hubristic and feminine.

These findings have important consequences for the material studied in previous chapters. They suggest that one should hesitate to view the use of horse-taming as metaphor for manly *sophrosyne* and the social subordination of certain individuals or groups, attested in the works of the aristocratic authors referenced in this thesis, as representative of popular opinion. Rather such examples can only be viewed, with certainty, as a feature of the ideology of a small, powerful subsection of men in the community. The majority of men in Ancient Greece, excluded from the status of horse-tamer in practice and (often) in theory, may have felt a degree of reverence for the lustre of

Your Horse or Mine?

aristocratic equestrian wealth and its attendant symbolism of masculine power; but many also looked askance at this elite cultural activity, seeing it as evidence of decadence and *hubris* or, in the case of Classical Athens, of anti-democratic or Medizing sympathies.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION – LEGACY OF MAN THE TAMER

7.1.1. The foregoing chapters have sought to demonstrate that man's subordination of the natural world constituted a deeply embedded, cultural metaphor for the control of disenfranchised groups in the hegemonic masculine ideology of Ancient Greece. It has argued, in essence, that the language of man's relationship with nature was used to describe and to preserve the social order, which privileged an all-male elite group. This was the group that presented itself as "tamers": tamers of the powers of nature, spreaders of culture and civilisation, and masters of the subaltern groups whom it viewed as more beastlike. In essence, what the modern observer might call "law and order" was justified with reference to the need to tame the wild.

I hope that this study might open a new dialogue among scholars of the Classics, particularly regarding the social significance of horsemanship in relation to Ancient Greek ideals of masculinity; but also among those concerned with the social and political dilemmas of the present day. At any rate, it seems to me that human prejudices and fears about wild nature continue to have an impact on how we relate to each other as social beings. At any rate, the symbolism of taming cannot be removed entirely from the study of conceptions of social and political power, and more specifically male power, in the modern world. In fact, there is good reason to believe that the notion of social taming, which predates the era of Ancient Greece (Hodder 1990, 39), has remained influential in western thought for over two millennia and, I would suggest, continues to have significant bearing on how hegemonic ideologies in western civilisation conceive of society.

One might argue, for example, that the fundamental, patriarchal construct of man-the-tamer continues to represent an impediment to the development of a more egalitarian and sustainable world. While human proximity to nature has decreased on average in the industrial and technological eras, it is undeniable that the language of nature's subordination remains a facet of hegemonic

ideology in many modern societies, and has been employed, in the recent past, to justify and strengthen hierarchical structures of oppression. One striking example of this was the propagation of the myth of the “super-predator” in the United States during the 1990s. This idea originally developed as a consequence of an increase in juvenile homicides during the 1980s and 1990s in the United States, but the potency of the symbolism is demonstrated in its successful use and manipulation by the apparatus of the state. The idea of the existence of the super-predator was used to facilitate the introduction of a now infamous crime bill aimed at expanding juvenile detention. Passage of the bill led to increased rates of incarceration of one already vulnerable demographic group: young African-American men. As scholars have noted, the image of the super-predator that circulated in the American media was young, male, urban and often of colour (Feld 1999, 208; Linde 2011, 145). In other words, one can easily identify at the core of this narrative a modern manifestation of precisely the kind of ideological discourse that has been discussed in this thesis: namely, the tendency to “other” disenfranchised or disadvantaged groups by associating them with the bestial and, therefore, to suggest that their subordination – in this case via incarceration – is an act of taming on the part of those in power.

Nor can the rhetoric surrounding the super-predator myth be entirely divorced from the historical roots of masculinity and patriarchy. The language deployed during the period of the myth of the super-predator was very obviously intended to depict young African-American men as a threat to the safety of women. This was seen, in particular, in the case of the sexual assault of a white woman in Central Park, known as the “Central Park Jogger” case, for which a group of five young men, four of them African-Americans, the other Latino, were charged and served lengthy sentences before being declared innocent. Media articles from the period used language that othered the boys by associating them with savagery and wildness. One headline pertaining to the case read: WOLF PACK’S PREY.¹ The 2019 *Netflix* miniseries, *When They See Us*, tells the story of the boys’ wrongful

¹ Cf. H. Giorgis. *The Atlantic*, 3 June 2019, ‘*When They See Us* and the Persistent Logic of ‘No Humans Involved’’. <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2019/06/when-they-see-us-and-persistent-language-black-criminality/590695/>.

imprisonment and, as Hannah Giorgis of the *Atlantic* notes, “the series re-creates the glee with which people seized upon words such as *wildin*’, common slang for any range of boisterous behaviour, as evidence of the boys’ inherent criminality” (2019).

On a fundamental level, we are obviously seeing enacted here Lévi-Strauss’ conception of the universal human tendency to conceive of society in terms of the opposition between nature and culture, the raw and the cooked. Taken further, though, it reaffirms the relevance of the material studied throughout this thesis. The concept of *wildin*’, after all, evokes the notion that such young men are controlled by extreme, socially destructive masculine appetites for sex and violence. The *kentauroi* and the *hyperenor kyklopes* of myth and epic, their wildness subdued violently by heroes, spring immediately to mind. It need scarcely be said that labelling any particular group from outside the established nexus of social power as “wild” implies the need for it to be “tamed” or controlled by the dominant group, in order to preserve the integrity and security of society.

There is much historical precedent for such ideology in the United States. White American slave-owners, familiar with the theories of Aristotle,² traditionally justified the enslavement of black people by evoking their supposedly bestial lasciviousness. This tendency to other black men by presenting them as a menace to white women outlived the institution of slavery, as exemplified by D.W. Griffith’s 1915 film, *Birth of a Nation*: a highly controversial epic, which glorified the Ku Klux Klan’s violence against black men on the basis that it was done in defence of the chastity of white women. The title of Charles Carroll’s infamous attack on the immorality of black people, *The Negro a Beast* (1900), also provides a chilling example of the extent to which the attribution of wildness enabled racist whites to justify the use of force against an already marginalised group.

Within this context, it is telling that the concept of *wildin*’ came to prominence during a period when New York businessman, Donald Trump, was using the hysteria surrounding the Central Park Jogger case to advocate

² Cf. H. Wish (1949, 254-266).

for the reintroduction of the death penalty in the state.³ In an ad from May 1989, Trump wrote “civil liberties end when an attack on our safety begins”. For me, this evocation of the wild as menace to society, evoked as metaphor for the threat that a human “other” group poses to women, in particular, is reminiscent of the Ancient Greek images of *kentauroi* and *satyroi* discussed in this thesis. Here, too, it is the power-holding male who positions himself in the role of tamer and protector of society, the frontiersman hero who depicts himself standing against the supposedly bestial menace that threatens to plunge society back into a state of chaos.⁴

7.1.2. Of course there has never been, in the course of recorded human history, a more important time to reconsider the social implications of mankind’s relationship, and more specifically *man’s* relationship, with the natural world. It is imperative that scholars in all fields consider how man conceives of himself, his society and his culture in relation to the planet and the earth’s other living organisms. We are now living in an age when humanity’s reckless expansionism and exploitation of nature’s resources has brought us to the brink of unprecedented environmental destruction. The best science warns us that if current pollution levels and fossil fuel reliance continue, our planet could be uninhabitable within a few decades. In the last three years alone, enormous wild fires, unquestionably caused by an increase in global temperatures due to CO₂ emissions, have ravaged Portugal, Greece, Canada and California. In January of 2020, the Australian province of New South Wales burned for several weeks, with 23 human fatalities and an estimated one billion animal deaths.

Yet we are also living in the era of Fake News. With the increase in global temperature due to emissions set to hurtle over the two degree threshold within decades if systemic change is not delivered on the political stage, the most powerful man in the world, the President of the United States, denies the reality of climate change due to human activity. His continued support for

³ Cf. J. Ransom, *The New York Times*, 18 June 2019. ‘Trump Will Not Apologize for Calling for Death Penalty Over Central Park Five’.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/18/nyregion/central-park-five-trump.html>.

⁴ As one line of hyperbole from Trump’s “death-penalty” ad put it: “What has happened is the complete breakdown of life as we knew it.”

the fossil fuel industry is set only to drastically compound an already critical problem. At the same time, he has reportedly argued for counteracting some of climate change's worst effects with the use of bombs. I am referring here to President Trump's reported claim that he would prevent further hurricanes reaching America's east coast by firing nuclear missiles into the cyclones as they develop off the coast of Africa: an approach remarkably reminiscent of his 1989 desire to impose the death penalty for New York's supposedly "wild" criminals.⁵

President Trump is not the only rich, powerful white man who has proposed solving the climate crisis by further tampering with nature. Billionaire founder of *Microsoft*, Bill Gates, has invested millions in developing geoengineering tools such as the so-called StratoShield, which would spew sulphur dioxide particles into the sky to block the sun's rays, and a second shield that would block the force of hurricanes (Klein 2019, 106). The consequences of such geoengineering projects are of course unpredictable. They are essentially founded on the premise that mankind should not take a step back in its exploitation of nature's resources, in order to preserve what is left of it for the security of future generations. The geoengineers' conception of nature, and Trump's as well, seems to be that man is separate from it, insulated from it by his status as a social being. For this sort of worldview, nature is a force that should always be subservient to human cultural projects. When it is not, it can be coerced into submission by force and manipulation.

With all of this in mind, one might reasonably question how we have reached this point. How, in spite of all of the scientific data now sounding the alarm bells, as well as the clear evidence of climate breakdown, can our leaders continue to justify granting more licences for fossil fuel exploration, especially when renewable and ecologically sustainable alternatives are available? How can oil and gas industry CEOs, many of them well aware of the existential threat now facing humanity due to their activities, justify lobbying governments and investing billions of dollars in propaganda

⁵ Cf. *The Guardian*, 26 August 2019. "Trump suggests 'nuking hurricanes' to stop them hitting America". <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/26/donald-trump-suggests-nuking-hurricanes-to-stop-them-hitting-america-report>.

campaigns and pseudo-science denying the realities of climate change? The obvious answer, one that is increasingly being identified as the primary problem, is the prevailing capitalist ideology that governs western society. I do not disagree with the essence of this argument.

Yet it seems obvious that other social-historical developments, especially in the West, have also played a significant role. Some have argued, for instance, that historical blame for our current environmental trajectory should be laid at the feet of Christian ideology, and its insistence on man's divinely-granted dominion over the earth.⁶ According to the journalist Thomas Sancton, writing as early as the 1980s when climate change first entered the political dialogue, pre-Christian societies had had a much less exploitative attitude towards the earth: "(...) the earth was seen as a mother, a fertile giver of life. Nature – the soil, forest, sea – was endowed with divinity, and mortals were subordinate to it."⁷ Certainly, there may be a correlation between fundamentalist religious belief and climate change denial. The opposition that Pope Francis I has met within the Catholic Church following the release of his encyclical *Laudato si* in 2015, which argues for a fundamental change in man's attitude to the natural world, is revealing. A headline from 2015 in a right-wing online magazine, *The Federalist*, reads: "POPE FRANCIS, THE EARTH IS NOT MY SISTER". The same article, written by Hans Fiene, argues that "the fall into sin fundamentally damaged the harmonious relationship between man and the earth, resulting in a planet that frequently needs to be mastered and subdued".

The insistence, in the Ancient Greek material, on the application of the language of taming the wild to expressions of patriarchal order should remind us, however, that the essence of such a world-view comfortably pre-dates Christianity. Even if earth, Ge herself, was not necessarily conceived of as an inherently hostile entity in Ancient Greece, her potential hostility towards human civilisation is expressed in the fact that she gave birth to monsters such as Typhon, who threatened to overthrow the patriarchal order of Zeus.⁸ The

⁶ Cf. Anon.*Gen.* 1.26.

⁷ Cf. N. Klein (2019, 247).

⁸ Cf. section 1.1.1.

idea of social man as separate from and dominant over the earth's other progeny was clearly fundamental to the Greek worldview. The natural world, for the patriarchal Greeks, existed to be subdued to the greater purposes of social order by the man-of-power.

Research carried out by McCright and Dunlap (2011), which indicates that climate change denial in the United States is much higher among white males than among any other demographic, also merits consideration in this context. This is a demographic that voted for Donald Trump in the highest numbers in the 2016 election.⁹ McCright and Dunlap find that the high level of denialism among white men of both the elite and the general population should be understood in terms of their desire to maintain a socio-political system, namely capitalism, which has historically benefitted their group more than any other. Because acceptance of the reality of climate change might represent a risk to a system that tends to perpetuate their privilege, members of the demographic tend to close ranks against the external threat to their security. Right-wing groups tend, therefore, to classify climate action as a socialist plot, and indirectly associate it with the civil rights movements of marginalised groups that they have, traditionally, othered through association with the wild: namely women, people of colour and the LGBTQ+ community. For them, a loss of socio-political control is more terrifying than the extreme environmental consequences of their actions.¹⁰

The results of my thesis suggest that we might add to this by pointing out that western masculinity and male social power has been historically founded on the concept that nature exists to be subdued and exploited by man, and that the hierarchical, patriarchal structures of the forerunners of modern western society were built on that premise. In considering the hegemonic worldview that accounts for the current environmental and civil rights crises, it is useful to reflect on Zeus, the great patriarch of Greek thought, and his coercive ordering of the natural world, his taming of the earth-born Kronos and Typhon who threatened his *kosmos*, his efforts to tame his wife Hera, and his

⁹ Trump defeated Clinton among working-class white men by an enormous margin (71% to 23%). For a useful exploration of the significance of this margin, cf. R.D. Francis (2018).

¹⁰ Cf. N. Klein (2019, 70-103) for a report on one such right-wing lobby group, The Heartland Institute.

Conclusion

treatment of the renegade Titan Prometheus. We might also think of Apollo, that embodiment of the perfect civilised male in Greek thought, slaying the female python, daughter and oracle of the earth (Ge), at Delphi and establishing his own oracle there in her place; or of Bellerophon and Herakles and the other heroes, slaying the savage monsters that hindered shepherds, farmers and travellers; or, indeed, of the persistent ideology of “taming” as expression of male power in the historical period, in the poetry of Alkman, Theognis and Anakreon, as well as the equestrian monuments of Peisistratos, and the Athenian democracy in 506 BCE.

Now compare these examples to representations of the ideal man in 19th and 20th century American mythmaking about the westward expansion of the 19th century. Surely there is something of Herakles or Theseus, often uncouth and half-wild themselves, but also charged with clearing the wild of savage beasts and expanding the realm of civilisation, in those highly romantic representations of the cowboy of the American western. These figures were half-wild and cavalier, the very embodiment of an ideal of prodigious, even reckless, masculinity. As historian Richard White put it, scholars of the American westward expansion “formulated... an essentialist West, a west that produced... men to match its mountains – that is, men able to overcome and dominate a feminine nature. From their domination they derived their distinctiveness” (White 1991, 35).

That the myth of the American expansion masked a reality of genocide against indigenous populations othered as wild, uncivilised and savage is not to be overlooked either. Indeed, to underline the contrast between the European tradition of man-the-tamer and the worldview of many of the indigenous populations of North America seems an ideal point of conclusion for the arguments laid out in this thesis; for the latter is a worldview that demonstrates that the concept of an aggressive, zero-sum opposition between man and nature is not a universal in human social thought and need not, therefore, imply the inevitability of total environmental destruction hardwired into human society.

Conclusion

Many of the diverse Native American peoples, grouped together prejudicially as the “American Indians” by white European invaders from the 15th century onwards and gradually wiped out by them, held remarkable views about nature, and man’s relationship to animal and plant life, that contrasted heavily with the agricultural, Christian European outlook. For them, the domination and manipulation of the natural world had no association with correct social conduct or justification for a social hierarchy that benefited a small group of men; it was not, in fact, behaviour to be socially condoned but condemned. “Man does not weave this web of life”, said Chief Seattle, “he is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.” (Moss 2011, 3) Here is a conception of the world utterly divorced from that of the prevailing narrative of the European tradition, from the Ancient Greek hero to the western cowboy. “The American Indian is of the soil, whether it be the region of forests, plains, pueblos, or mesas. He fits into the landscape, for the hand that fashioned the continent also fashioned the man for his surroundings. He once grew as naturally as the wild sunflowers, he belongs just as the buffalo belonged” (Fitzgerald & Fitzgerald 2006, 111).¹¹

These native peoples lived in communities which, until the arrival of the whites, often subsisted through hunting and gathering. Even those groups that had developed agriculture do not appear to have practised animal husbandry (DeJohn-Anderson 2004). Here, I believe, is a crucial point. Unlike the Europeans, who had been domesticating animals for various agricultural purposes for millennia, the concept of “taming” was historically foreign to most indigenous tribes of North America, and therefore a social hierarchy that drew on the concept of the subjugation of nature was also alien to them.¹² Where the agriculturalist European invaders of the 15th and 16th centuries saw the natural world, and the supposed “savages” against whom they waged genocidal wars, as hostile to societal structure and as barriers to their westward expansion for the exploitation of natural resources, some Native

¹¹Words of Luther Standing Bear of the Oglala Sioux.

¹² Perhaps as they were to the pre-agricultural peoples of the European and Near Eastern Palaeolithic. Some of the later peoples to cross over to North America from Siberia, in around 8000 BCE, appear to have possessed the domesticated dog (Bastian & Mitchell 2004, 6).

American peoples viewed nature, philosophically at least, as a force whose cooperation their communities relied upon.

This tendency, in Native American thought, to view the natural world of plant and animal life as an integral part of the human community, rather than its antithesis, is best exemplified by the emergence myths of creation, particularly common among the native peoples of the American Southwest, such as the Hopi and Navajo of modern-day Arizona. In their myths of the world's creation, wild animals are not, as they are in both the Judaeo-Christian and Greek traditions, creatures that man must subordinate for the benefit of society. Rather, all manner of wild animals frequently appear as helpers in the formation of the physical world and the foundation of human society. Indeed there is often a blurring of the lines regarding what constitutes human and animal, civilised and wild in these myths, with many attesting to civilised "animal people" who are the entirely benevolent forebears of humans. According to the Hopi emergence myth, for instance, the good humans, who had escaped the destruction of the third world and emerged into the fourth, present world, were led to safety by the Spider Woman (Bastian & Mitchell 2004, 39).¹³ Among the Miwok people, on the other hand, human beings had originally been created by the Falcon and the Coyote, who at that time were among the first people. When the new generation of humans came into existence, the first people, the Falcon and the Coyote among them, realised that they looked just like them and so they became the animals we have today (Erdoes & Ortiz 1998, 12).

Such myths make it clear that, for many of the Native American peoples, human society could not exist without the willing assistance of flora and fauna. Nature is not conceived of as a menace to be controlled, but as a revered asset in the human social project. The general absence of a zero-sum, hierarchical attitude towards nature meant that its subordination could never have been appropriated as metaphor for social hierarchy and the domination of subaltern groups, as it was in the European tradition. Many of these societies therefore developed in less rigidly patriarchal, or indeed

¹³ On the Hopi myth, cf. also P.G. Beidler (1995).

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hierarchical, ways. At any rate, it is hard to imagine a starker contrast between the Hopi or Navajo creation myths of the animal-helper, and that of the “taming” endeavours of prototype Greek patriarchs such as Zeus or Herakles in Hesiod’s *Theogony*. Where the one focusses on the role of animals in sustaining human life and society, the other implies the need and the right of man to tame all of nature lest it should destabilise the extant social hierarchy. Perhaps in this, at least, it is time for western civilisation to reassess the merits of its debt to the ancient agriculturalist worldview of the Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian traditions, in particular, and to seek a more sustainable model of development. Such a reassessment could have considerable social, as well as environmental, benefits. We might move from a fundamental conception of man as tamer of nature to one of man as nature’s partner.

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