



Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece

William Armstrong Percy III

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Combining impeccable scholarship with accessible, straightforward prose, *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* argues that institutionalized pederasty began after 650 B.C., far later than previous authors have thought, and was initiated as a means of stemming overpopulation in the upper class. William Armstrong Percy III maintains that Cretan sages established a system under which a young warrior in his early twenties took a teenager of his own aristocratic background as a beloved until the age of thirty, when service to the state required the older partner to marry. The practice spread with significant variants to other Greek-speaking areas. In some places it emphasized development of the athletic, warrior individual, while in others both intellectual and civic achievement were its goals. In Athens it became a vehicle of cultural transmission, so that the best of each older cohort selected, loved, and trained the best of the younger. Pederasty was from the beginning both physical and emotional, the highest and most intense type of male bonding. These pederastic bonds, Percy believes, were responsible for the rise of Hellas and the "Greek miracle": in two centuries the population of Attica, a mere 45,000 adult males in six generations, produced an astounding number of great men who laid the enduring foundations of Western thought and civilization.

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