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# **A Homosexual Subculture in Classical Athens: An Analysis of a Marginalised Man's Role in Greek Homosexual Relationships**

*Shakeel Ahmed*

## **Abstract**

A study of the social and cultural lives of Greek men involved in long-standing homosexual relationships remains under-explored. Several studies have highlighted the importance of forensic oratory in shedding light on the complex social realities of the ancient world.<sup>1</sup> Using an Athenian lawcourt speech, Lysias' speech *Against Simon*, this paper investigates the significance of citizen-status males dispensing with the obligation of marriage and forming an enduring companionship with a socially and politically marginalised man to Greek norms and culture. Much of the scholarship on Greek homosexuality ignores the role of subaltern groups in same-sex relationships. Consequently, it underestimates the existence of homosexual practices beyond the codified structures of the conventional pederastic relationship model. Moreover, current studies on ancient sexuality and gender have overlooked the tension such unconventional relationships created with mainstream culture and values. Applying a multidisciplinary lens to Lysias' speech *Against Simon*, the author considers how its narrative on same-sex desire, relationships, shame, and masculinity reveals a complex and diverse image of Greek homosexuality. By focusing on the participation of a subaltern man, I argue for the existence of a subculture in Classical Athens that sustained unconventional homosexual relationships and non-conforming gender behaviour.

## **Keywords**

Greek Forensic speeches, Homosexual relationships, Subculture, Social status, Marginalised group.

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<sup>1</sup> Carey 1989: 90-91; Fisher 2001: 36-67; Hubbard 2003: 118-20; Todd 2007: 4, 276.

## Introduction

Greek homosexual relationships are long understood to have been an essential feature of Greek cultural life.<sup>2</sup> However, it is generally assumed that such relationships were formed within the codified structures of gymnasia and wrestling grounds where youths and young men from economically well-off families exercised and groomed their bodies for athletic competitions. In this well-known pederastic model, the older male lovers (*erastēs*) aggressively pursued youths (*erōmenos*) to prove their masculine prowess. But, on the other hand, the youth, not yet of citizen status, submitted to the older male's desire in exchange for wisdom and patronage.<sup>3</sup> This paper argues that Greek homosexual relationships were diverse and complex, existing beyond the conventional pederastic model. Indeed, some were products of a homosexual subculture.<sup>4</sup> In this subculture, Greek men constructed a self-image in defiance of their society's limits and restrictions. This inquiry attempts to portray a more inclusive image of Greek homosexual relationships by exploring the diversity of relationship models present in the sources and examining the participation of a man from a subaltern group in these relationships. The focus is on the speech of the Athenian orator Lysias *Against Simon* (Lysias 3) delivered before the Council of the Areopagus in 394 BCE.<sup>5</sup>

Simon, the prosecutor, is also revealed as a rival of the speaker's current non-citizen beloved, Theodotus (3.5). The substantive adjective *φίλος* used by the speaker to refer to Theodotus as his friend in the speech means that his relationship with Theodotus is a long-standing one in which physical intimacy is implied.<sup>6</sup> Theodotus' presence in

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<sup>2</sup> This paper is a part of my major research project (MRP) for my MA programme completed in the summer of 2022 at Brock University, St. Catharines (Ontario, Canada). Ahmed, Shakeel (2022) *Homosexual Subculture in Classical Athens: an analysis of unconventional same-sex relationships in the speech of Lysias Against Simon*. Classics MRP, Brock University, St. Catharines. In Brock University digital repository, <http://hdl.handle.net/10464/16523> (Accessed: 13/02/2023).

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<sup>3</sup> Pausanias' speech in Plato's *Symposium* sheds light on conventions governing Greek pederastic homosexuality. Kenneth Dover's (1978) *Greek Homosexuality*, examining literary sources and Andrew Lear and Eva Cantarella's (2008) *Images of Greek Pederasty*, examining visual evidence, deal with Greek pederastic homosexuality in detail.

<sup>4</sup> Recently published essays by Emma Stafford, Konstantinos Kapparis, and Thomas K. Hubbard and in *Sex and the Ancient City: Sex and Sexual Practices in Greco-Roman antiquity* (ed. Andreas Serafim 2022) highlight the need to further the scope of this investigation to argue for a queer culture in classical Athens, a broader and holistic theoretical framework.

<sup>5</sup> Carey 1989: 86, 88. From this point onward within the text, numbers in a bracket refer to Lysias' speech *Against Simon*, e.g., (3.2).

<sup>6</sup> Dover 1978: 49-50.

the court and the speaker's frequent use of the plural form of the personal pronoun, *ἡμεῖς*, ('we' 3.18, 23, 25) further strengthens the impression of their enduring relationship.<sup>7</sup> The English translation of *φίλος*, 'friend', does not convey the emotional complexity that the context demands. The speaker neither uses the term beloved, *ἔρωμένος*, to avoid pederastic connotation nor does he say *ἐταῖρος*, to prevent the jury from considering his relationship based on money. Discrediting Simon's claim of a contract with Theodotus for his companionship, the defendant questions how Simon could hire someone for companionship for more money than he possesses, *ἐταιρήσοντα πλειόνων ἐμισθώσατο*, (3.24). Aeschines uses the similar phrase combination that Lysias uses to mean paying someone, *μισθεῖν*, for companionship *ἐταίρειν*.<sup>8</sup> The modern term 'boyfriend' or 'live-in companion' comes very close to what the speaker intends, a friendship with erotic elements; 'By treating him well, I expected he would become my friend' (3.5).' The speech presents two perspectives of desire, one of the citizens and the other of a non-citizen. I highlight details surrounding same-sex desire and relationships from this elite narrative to shed light on a subculture in Classical Athens. The defendant's statement that he participates in public life and performs liturgies (3.9, 47) emphasises his wealth and elite status. Only wealthy Athenians had enough resources to fund public events like choruses and races and had the leisure to participate in the city's political life.<sup>9</sup>

I argue that the defendant's speech reveals a complex and unconventional image of homosexual relationships based on intense desire (*ἐπιθύμειν*) and love (*ἔρᾶν*) between politically empowered citizens and a socially and politically marginalised non-Athenian man. Their association is unconventional because it defied the strict protocol that marked the pederastic model by lacking any pedagogical aims. Moreover, these unconventional relationships between men function beyond the age group typically associated with traditional pederasty— an older lover, *ἔραστής* (20 years or older, but not beyond 25) and an adolescent boy or youth as the beloved, *ἔρωμένος*.<sup>10</sup> The defendant is possibly in his 40s, evidently unmarried; the defendant admits it is embarrassing for him to be involved in a passionate homosexual relationship at his

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<sup>7</sup> I further discuss Theodotus' presence in the court in the section on Theodotus' agency.

<sup>8</sup> Aeschines *against Timarchos*, 1.13.

<sup>9</sup> Aristotle 1309a15-120. See also Hubbard 1998: 60; Carey 1989: 86,87, 1997: 75; Todd 2007: 278-79.

<sup>10</sup> Hubbard 2003: 120; Davidson 2007: 68-98; and Todd 2007: 310.

mature age (3.4). Simon's military career and estate handling indicate he is in his 30s (3.22, 45). Theodotus is most certainly in his 20s, closer to the appropriate age to court an Athenian young man in a pederastic relationship. However, his social status would prevent him from seeking such associations.<sup>11</sup>

### **Contesting Dover's and Foucault's views of Greek homosexuality**

I argue against Kenneth Dover's ground-breaking study, *Greek Homosexuality*. This work examined power dimensions in Greek homosexual relationships — mainly from the privileged adult male citizen's perspective. His analysis overlooks the agency of the beloved — an age-differentiated peer or subaltern group partner.<sup>12</sup> Since Dover's work, scholars of ancient sexualities have given disproportionate attention to sexual acts in homosexual relationships.<sup>13</sup> His work formed the basis of the influential French philosopher Foucault's elite male-centric power-driven theory of masculine sexuality.<sup>14</sup> Scholars applying Foucault's ideas on Greek homosexuality continue to downplay any notion of homosexual culture and community centred around same-sex desires and operating outside mainstream values, such as one that emerges from a close examination of the lawcourt speech of Lysias 3.<sup>15</sup> Focusing only on elite discourse on homosexual ethos in Plato's and Xenophon's *Symposiums* and iconographical evidence — the majority of which depicts scenes from the gymnasium and symposium — some scholars view pederastic homosexuality as the only available and authentic image of ancient same-sex behaviour and practices.<sup>16</sup>

The court speech of Lysias *Against Simon* contains an unusual narrative about homosexual relationships that challenges the entrenched understanding of Greek homosexuality as an expression of masculine power, as Dover and Foucauldian

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<sup>11</sup> Aeschines (*Against Timarchos* 1.138-39) cites laws concerning non-citizen status men's exclusion from gymnasia and courting citizen youth. Dover (1978: 62) views the speaker's involvement in homosexual pursuit as extraordinary because of his mature age. Carey (1989: 87, 94, 1997: 75) believes the speaker is in his 40s and Simon in his 30s.

<sup>12</sup> Leo Strauss (2001: 253), commenting on Alcibiades' seduction of Socrates in Plato's *Symposium* draws attention to the ambiguity in Greek sources on the age of lovers and beloveds and their roles in a homosexual relationship.

<sup>13</sup> Davidson 2001 and Percy 2005.

<sup>14</sup> See Foucault (1985: 85-98, 126-135) on domination theory defined in terms of the domination of the masculine model.

<sup>15</sup> Some notable scholars who follow the Foucauldian approach include Halperin 1990: 34-5; Winkler 1990: 52,54; Skinner 2005: 9. Richlin 1998: 138-70; Hubbard 1998: 48-49; Percy 2005: 14, refuting this approach, describe it as Foucault's dogma.

<sup>16</sup> Eve Cantarella (2008: 2) argues that the Greeks only approved of pederastic homosexual relationships between an adult man and an adolescent boy in the social spaces of gyms and wrestling schools. See also Lear 2014.

scholars insist.<sup>17</sup> Still, Dover was the first scholar to discuss Greek homosexual practices as a legitimate academic pursuit and inspired French philosopher Foucault's famous three volumes, *The History of Sexuality*.<sup>18</sup> Foucault's influential work led to several scholars arguing that Greek homosexuality was a power game in which one party won at the expense of the other.<sup>19</sup> The defendant states, 'We (Simon and the speaker) fell in love with the young Plataean man, Theodotus. Since I treated the young man well, I expected him to be my lover.' On the other hand, Simon thought he could force him to do whatever he desired by acting arrogant and lawless towards the young man (3.5). Although the speaker is wealthy and politically empowered, he understands love as a powerful emotion ('Members of the jury, do not consider me a weaker man; you understand that all human beings are susceptible to falling in love' 3.4) that is blind to the beloved social status. The speaker's narrative reveals the tension between homosexual love and social norms. It also highlights the complexity of the Greek homosexual ethos created by Theodotus' socially marginalised role in his relationship with the two Athenian men.

The scholars who subscribe to the Foucauldian view posit that Greek homosexuality was a one-sided affair dictated solely by the adult citizen male, for whom the gender of the object featured little in the expression of his sexual desire.<sup>20</sup> In other words, homosexual behaviour was acceptable by Greek society because homosexual urges were a minor and transitory phase of male sexuality.<sup>21</sup> Dover's and Foucault's view of Greek homosexuality helped establish what Davidson calls 'a new consensus'.<sup>22</sup> This view is presented as an authentic representation of Greek homosexuality in the fourth edition of *the Oxford Classical Dictionary 2012*.

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<sup>17</sup> Dover 1978: 62, 144-47. See Davidson's introduction (2007) for the preeminence of these ideas concerning Greek homosexuality in current discourse. Halperin (1990), a follower of Foucault's theory of Greek homosexuality, argues most intensely for the sexual act as an affirmation of masculine domination. Halperin (1990: 32) argues that Greeks did not have sex for pleasure but 'committed' sexual acts.

<sup>18</sup> Davidson 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Halperin 1990: 34-35; Winkler 1990: 46-48.

<sup>20</sup> Halperin 1990: 30-32; Winkler 1990: 48-54.

<sup>21</sup> Dover 1978: xxix, 80-81. Kapparis (2022) builds a strong critique of Dover's understanding of Greek homosexuality being pseudo-sexuality that gradually subsumed into heterosexuality.

<sup>22</sup> Davidson 2001: 7.

## **Adopting a multidisciplinary approach**

The philological analysis of Greek terms and expressions that define desire, love and emotions is essential in determining the complexities of Greek men's sexual lives.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, I recognise that the text of Lysias 3 projects elite views and ideals. His wealth and active public life make him a privileged man. He claims that an outsider never sees women in his household, proving that he upholds traditional values (3.6,7). The speaker's household lacks a wife and children; the only women in the house are his widowed sister and nieces; he is a mature man, and Theodotus, too, sometimes resides there, as Simon's alleged visit to the speaker's house indicates, revealing a more complex social reality. By reading against the grain and focusing on representations of disruptive social behaviour in primary sources, feminist, queer and transgender studies methodologies allow us to recover such glimpses of social reality and the subaltern groups' experiences, and explore power dynamics in same-sex relationships from the beloved's perspective.<sup>24</sup> This multidisciplinary approach is unique in the discipline of Classics in its consideration of social constraints on same-sex desire and investigation into the lives of homosexual men in antiquity. This research model hopes to inspire researchers to apply modern critical theories in examining the social history of the ancient world, where subordinated groups played important roles.

Feminist scholars Page DuBois, Amy Richlin, and Nancy Rabinowitz, arguing against a Foucauldian view of ancient sexualities, draw attention to the male bias around sexuality and gender identity in Greco-Roman literary sources and advocate for a critical analysis of all ancient texts.<sup>25</sup> Lin Foxhall observes that Foucauldian sexuality theory has blurred our true understanding of Greek homosexuality in that it ignores the complexities of emotions and desire in same-sex relationships.<sup>26</sup> Appealing to the students of Greek cultural history, John Boswell, a gay Classicist, notes, 'If no effort is made to compensate for centuries of neglect of some groups and focus on the ruling male elite, a realistic view of human history will never emerge.'<sup>27</sup> The zero-sum

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<sup>23</sup> To this end, I follow the research model that examines the genre of Athenian forensic speeches such as Dover 1978, Davidson 1997, Fisher 2001, Carey 1989, and Todd 2007.

<sup>24</sup> See Stryker (2006) and Devun and Tortorici (2018) on the innovative methodology of transgender studies.

<sup>25</sup> Rabinowitz 1992; Richlin 1993b,1998; DuBois 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Foxhall 1998: 65.

<sup>27</sup> Boswell 1995: xxviii.

narrative pays scant attention to the role of sub-status and marginalised men of Greek society. Redeeming the subaltern group's agency helps us to view the unconventional aspects of the Greek homosexual relationship model that broaden our understanding of ancient homosexuality.

British social theorist Dick Hebdige (1979) premises his cultural study on non-conforming behaviour and well-articulated expressions of resistance of some community members — including homosexual men and minority groups. Although Hebdige's study focuses on a minority group's opposition to mainstream culture, his theory of subculture as a social process operating beneath the surface of a mainstream culture provides a useful methodological lens. This lens, when applied to the defendant and the prosecutor in the speech, shows that by persisting in their pursuit of homosexual companions, these two men subverted conventions and norms. Aristophanes and Demosthenes observe that marriage is an important social and civic duty for an adult male citizen.<sup>28</sup> Hebdige argues, 'Similarly, spectacular subcultures express forbidden contents (consciousness of class, consciousness of difference) in forbidden forms (transgressions of sartorial behavioural codes, law-breaking, etc.). They are profane articulations, and they are often and significantly defined as "unnatural".'<sup>29</sup> Hebdige's subculture lens enables us to view the defendant's hesitancy in admitting his homosexual affair and his shame as a reflection of society's prejudices against men in same-sex relationships, 'I am reluctant to speak about the matters should they become public knowledge it would be a source of shame for me' (3.3). The speaker's defence of his homosexual relationship is not a rejection of mainstream cultural values but a well-articulated appeal to maintain his homosexual lifestyle.

Simon and the defendant's relationships with Theodotus show that some Greek men found avenues to seek homosexual companionship beyond the structured institutions of gymnasia. A homosexual subculture could allow a socially marginalised Theodotus to find male citizens seeking same-sex relationships. Examining the material and forensic oratory evidence, James Davidson and Allison Glazebrook argue that the Piraeus Harbour and Kerameikos locales were the haunts of Athenian men seeking other men for sexual companionship.<sup>30</sup> Sometimes, a sexual encounter in these

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<sup>28</sup> Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium* 192a-b; Demosthenes *against Neaira* 59.122.

<sup>29</sup> Hebdige 1979: 53-59, 60-64.

<sup>30</sup> Davidson 2007: 62-63; Glazebrook 2021: 48-49.



quarters led to a couple forming an enduring relationship, as in Lysias 3. Under the lens of Hebdige's methodology, a homosexual subculture emerges in Lysias 3, as Richlin has argued for the scorned and despised passive homosexual male in ancient Rome.<sup>31</sup>

### **Theodotus' agency in his relationships**

Homosexual relationships were generally understood to form between citizen men within the institution of the gymnasium, as Pausanias describes in Plato's *Symposium*. The enduring relationship between the speaker and Theodotus challenges the conventional model. By repeatedly alleging Simon's violent behaviour towards Theodotus, 'He behaved lawlessly and using force acted dishonourably towards the young man' (3.17, 23-26), the speaker attempts to compound Simon's guilt and makes Theodotus party to the case. Theodotus and the defendant have been together for over four years; the conflict between the two Athenian men began four years before the trial (3.19). The speech provides an excellent opportunity to investigate Theodotus' agency in this love affair and examine love and desire from a low-status individual's (beloved's) perspective.

The legal status of Theodotus remains vague in that being an outsider and non-citizen, he is socially and politically marginalised.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the defendant frequently uses demonstrative pronouns and first-person plural in reference to Theodotus. For example, 'So much evil this man here (*ἐκεῖνος*) has suffered from him, 3.5; 'If this boy (*τοῦτό*) ...' 3.33. Examples of first-person pronouns in the plural (*ἡμεῖς*, we 3.18, 23, 25-28) are too numerous to cite. The textual evidence indicates that Theodotus is present in court, a fact overlooked by Davidson.<sup>33</sup> Theodotus' presence in the court and the speaker's carefully articulated defence suggests that the alleged attempted murder incident occurred in a brawl over the young man's affection ('Simon alleges that we came to his house bearing broken pieces of pottery,' 3.28). The reference to a contract (*συνθήκη* 3.22) that existed between Simon and Theodotus means that Theodotus, at first, was involved with Simon. However, it is safe to hypothesise that he left Simon for the speaker, a wealthier, mature man of higher social status, because

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<sup>31</sup> Richlin 1993a: 524-28, 1998: 162-68.

<sup>32</sup> Dover (1978: 32-33) is correct in his assessment that Theodotus is not a naturalised citizen or an enslaved man.

<sup>33</sup> Carey (1989: 92) also notes that Theodotus is with the speaker. Davidson 2007: 448.

of mistreatment and better opportunity.<sup>34</sup> The speaker claims that Simon served as a hoplite under a commanding officer, indicating that Simon is not as rich or of higher status as him (3.45).

Amy Richlin and Nancy Rabinowitz outline a classicist feminist strategy that resists removing the marginalised voices from the position of a desiring subject and denying them agency, thus turning the single-voiced narrative into a story containing multiple actors.<sup>35</sup> Transgender studies scholars Leah Devun and Zeb Tortorici advocate using strategic imagination to ‘rethink the past.’ This strategy is appropriate for lawcourt oratory, providing only the (elite) speaker’s narrative. The classicist feminist methodology of resisting interpretation and queer studies’ strategic speculative approach illuminates Theodotus’ active role in his decision to leave Simon (3.31) and pursue another wealthier man — the beloved’s aggressive rejection and pursuit are subtly concealed in the speaker’s narrative.<sup>36</sup> Considering Theodotus’ decision to end the relationship with Simon and choose to live with the defendant is an affirmative indication that the role of citizen male power and expression of domination in a sexual relationship has been exaggerated by Foucauldian scholars.

Traditional scholarship assumes that the defendant lured Theodotus away from Simon because of his citizen status and wealth, thus denying Theodotus any agency.<sup>37</sup> Theodotus, however, successfully exploits the system and his lovers to elevate his social position from being an escort (*ἔταιρος* 3.24) to a wealthy man’s lover and companion (*φίλος* 3.5). In their assessment, Christopher Carey and Steven Todd overlook that his contract with Simon makes Theodotus an active participant in their relationship. Glazebrook argues that even an enslaved man ‘may have had some independence in attracting clients and negotiating contracts, similar to those skilled in craft and living apart from their owners.’<sup>38</sup> Theodotus is not an enslaved man; therefore, he is more likely to have exercised his will in breaking off his relationship with Simon. The defendant states that Theodotus ‘hated (Simon) most of all humanity’ (3.31-32). Suppose we trust the defendant’s statement in this instance. In that case, I

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<sup>34</sup> On the speaker’s and Simon’s wealth and status, see also Carey 1997:75; Todd: 278-79.

<sup>35</sup> Richlin 1992: xvi-xxii, 1993b: 275-83; Rabinowitz 1992: 36-50.

<sup>36</sup> Devun and Tortorici 2018: 520.

<sup>37</sup> Carey 1989: 95.

<sup>38</sup> Glazebrook 2021: 98.

suggest we do since a marginalised voice is given an agency capable of generating action that changes citizens' lives.

Theodotus' alien status renders the pederastic component implausible, highlighting the unconventional aspect of his relationship with Simon and the defendant. Theodotus had previously been living with Simon as his sexual companion or partner (3.24), as Davidson translates *ἑταίρος*.<sup>39</sup> Arguing against Davidson, who assumes Theodotus was an enslaved man and not present with the speaker, I contend he was living with the speaker at the time of the speech in his principal residence in Athens or his second house in Piraeus (3.31), a strong indication of the defendant and Theodotus' enduring relationship. I noted above that the speaker frequently uses the first person plural pronoun in the speech to include himself and Theodotus. Despite different social positions, Simon and the speaker are comparable in their unconventional relationship with Theodotus.

The defendant contrasts Simon's hubristic behaviour towards Theodotus with his own by using language that gives the object of desire agency, 'By treating him well, I expected he would be my lover' (3.5). Using the verb *ἀσκιόω* (to expect/think someone worthy of something), the speaker refers to winning over Theodotus. The inherent meaning of the verb implies volition on the part of the object and an idea of reciprocity in a subject's thinking or resolve — the subject's action makes him worthy of the object's attention.<sup>40</sup> The nuanced meanings in the verb action that anticipates action from the object — are difficult to convey in the English translation. Todd's translation, 'I was resolved to win him over by treating him properly,' renders Theodotus somewhat inert. The feminist studies lens lets us focus on the suppressed meaning in ancient sources.<sup>41</sup> The speaker's (as the verb's subject) good actions expect Theodotus to react positively and with reciprocity. The language highlights equal participation from Theodotus and the defendant in terms of their emotional commitment to the relationship.

The good treatment on the defendant's part (*eu poiein* 3.5) is not a reward for Theodotus' insensate attachment but is a token of gratitude that the lover feels towards

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<sup>39</sup> Davidson 2007: 447-49.

<sup>40</sup> The L.S.J. s.v. *ἀσκιόω*, II, III.

<sup>41</sup> Richlin 1993a: 527, 1998: 139-42; Dubois 1998: 87.

his beloved.<sup>42</sup> Theodotus, an autonomous subject in this love triangle, offers something that Simon and the speaker desire: love; he can keep or break a relationship with higher social status men of his own volition. Considering Theodotus ended the relationship with Simon and chose to live with the defendant is an affirmative indication that the role of citizen male power and expression of domination has been exaggerated by Foucauldian scholars. The highly regulated structures of gymnasia would not be open for men like Theodotus to attract a male lover.<sup>43</sup> On the contrary, his relationship model points to a homosexual subculture that allowed socially marginalised men to form sexual relationships with citizen men, lead a comfortable life and be part of the household.

### **Exploring a homosexual subculture**

The speaker has no wife to contend with Theodotus; he is a bachelor, and perhaps Simon is too. If Simon mentioned a contract (as the defendant's rebuttal suggests 3.22), he must have mentioned Theodotus, too, indicating that Simon is not quite over the young man. Four years before the trial date (3.32), Theodotus lived with the defendant in his principal residence when the violent situation transpired between the speaker and Simon (3.39). This household includes his widowed sister and her children (3.6. 29). Does the speaker feel ashamed of confessing the unconventional aspect of his family before the citizen body? A non-kin male residing as a companion sharing a home lacking a wife and man's own children is a deviation from the cultural and social norms. It is not easy for the speaker to explain away who accuses Simon of bursting into the house and surprising the women who never saw a non-kin male (3.6). To this household, Simon kept coming looking for Theodotus. The speaker uses the participle form of the verb *φοιτεῖν* (to frequent a place 3.30) with the imperfect of *eis-eimi* (to go/come inside) to refer to Simon's forced entry into his house and to convey the sense to the audience that his opponent, having no regards for social norms, kept visiting his home to disturb the peace of his household and neighbourhood.

Most importantly, the present participle of the verb *φοιτεῖν* demonstrates that Simon developed a habit of visiting the speaker's house to find Theodotus there and, of

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<sup>42</sup> Davidson 1997: 110, Fisher 2013: 40, 53.

<sup>43</sup> Fisher 2001: 130-3; MacDowell 2000: 15-17.

course, to embarrass the speaker (3.29). The defendant's household is complex and unusual because it lacks a wife and children despite his mature age.<sup>44</sup> Not many people, the speaker says (3.3), know his household arrangement of Theodotus cohabiting with him as a partner. If they were to see, he feared he would become *περιβόητος*, a source of gossip and scandal in the community (3.30). The compound adjective *περιβόητος* (from the noun *βοή*, shouting, and the verb *βοάω*, I shout) explicitly refers to a matter discussed negatively in a community. Aeschines refers to a corruption case in Timarchos' political career as a scandalous episode (*περιβόητος*, used adverbially) with which everybody is familiar.<sup>45</sup> In Lysias' court speech, the absence of a wife and the presence of a non-related male living in the household is tantamount to gossip material; this aberration of social norms is a significant marker of a subculture.<sup>46</sup>

Hebdige defines a *subculture* as a set of distinct emerging features that might be reflected in vocabulary or actions not prevalent in mainstream culture and only become conspicuous in a crisis.<sup>47</sup> Examining the defendant's predicament by applying a multidisciplinary lens pushing against the privileged male social script in the textual evidence, we can see in Lysias 3 the most unconventional features of the same-sex relationship model thriving in a subculture in Athenian urban society. The struggle over a non-citizen man's affection between two mature citizens does not belong to the mainstream cultural arena and, therefore, needs to be explained by the speaker. The speaker's shame in mentioning his homosexual relationship and being part of the love triangle stems from the social reality that conflicts with the idealised image of Greek masculinity. Marriage is one of those conventions that is placed highly in the Greek masculine value system; as Demosthenes observes that a male citizen must bring a woman into his house as his wife to have children with her and to introduce the sons to the member of the tribe and of the deme, and to marry the daughters to husbands equal to his social status.<sup>48</sup> The two citizens are in an age bracket where they should not indulge in homosexual relationships. Their defiance of social norms (not marrying) on male behaviour and sexuality set them apart from mainstream cultural practices.

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<sup>44</sup> Fisher 2001: 34-6; Todd 2007: 314.

<sup>45</sup> Aeschines *Against Timarchos*: 1.113.

<sup>46</sup> Hebdige 1979: 91-94.

<sup>47</sup> Hebdige 1979: 4, 52-54, 73-78, 90-98.

<sup>48</sup> Demosthenes *Against Neaira* 59.122.

To further substantiate the theory of homosexual subculture in Classical Athens, a comparison study is worth considering. The purpose is not to view the ancient world through twentieth-century experiences. Instead, the goal is to show how subculture functions in a society that, on the one hand, does not condemn homosexual relationships legally. On the other hand, it displays significant moral anxiety and negative perceptions towards same-sex behaviour. The defendant's predicament at being discovered in a relationship with a marginalised man — a scandalous scenario for a politically active citizen (3.30) — is not dissimilar to the British liberal party leader, Jeremy Thorpe, who pursued homosexual activities and was secretly involved in a relationship with a gay man. In the 60s and 70s, Thorpe, from a privileged background, much like the defendant, feared society's dislike for his sexual behaviour and lifestyle despite the decriminalisation of homosexuality by the British parliament in 1967.<sup>49</sup> Unlike the British politician, who never admitted his homosexual relationship with Norman, an openly gay man from a working-class background, the speaker in Lysias 3 reveals his pursuit of a homosexual lifestyle and relationship with a person from a marginalised background. Not discounting different value systems existing in the ancient and contemporary world, what is common is the idea of shame and society's prejudices against practising homosexual men, 'I kept quiet (not prosecuting Simon for his outrageous behaviour) so that I would not become notorious,' (3.30). The defendant draws the jury's attention to all the services he and his family performed for the welfare of the *polis* to mollify their opinion of him. The conflict created by unconventional same-sex relationships and the pressure such relationships exert on social norms and assumptions connect the ancient and modern worlds. Legal protection or tradition does not necessarily compel a society to welcome unconventional expressions wholeheartedly. Furthermore, as Hebdige's study shows, a subculture does not represent a total abnegation of social values. By applying the transgender studies lens, we can analyse this tension as a social phenomenon where some citizens, who have a stake in society, resist conforming to expected social roles and statuses expected by their community.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The Amazon mini-series, "A Very English Scandal" (2018) focusing on the conspiracy to murder, captures Thorpe's struggle in coming to terms with his sexuality and against the social expectations of the British elite class.

<sup>50</sup> Stryker 2006: 3.

## Conclusion

Making the subject of ancient homosexuality a mainstream topic of great scholarly interest is Kenneth's most outstanding contribution. However, in concluding remarks in his seminal work, *Greek Homosexuality*, Dover presents the pederastic homosexual relationship model between the *erōmenos* and *erastēs* as the most prominent feature of Greek homosexuality.<sup>51</sup> In his view, even the most intimate same-sex relationships were borne out of a political and social system that put the adult male citizen at the helm of all community affairs. Thus, *Greek Homosexuality*, owing to its considerable influence in Greek sexuality studies, made power and submission-domination theory crucial in understanding ancient same-sex behaviour and practices. Dover's great work has also rendered the issues of desire, gender, and sexual identity insignificant. The view, however, does not accurately reflect the complex social reality, which also featured unconventional homosexual relationship models between citizens and non-citizens and the beloved as a desiring subject.

By adopting a multidisciplinary approach to Greek homosexuality, this paper highlights the significance of the desire and participation of the beloved, the object of desire in Greek same-sex relationships. This textual analysis demonstrates that Theodotus still lived with the speaker during the trial. The speaker is neither married nor has children on his own, as he is expected to under the social conventions of the time; his description of the household reveals only his widowed sisters and nieces. The speaker worried that Simon's repeated visits to his house would make his relationship with Theodotus public knowledge resulting in society's scorn for him and perhaps his household. The speaker's narrative provides glimpses of Greek men's sexual lives beyond the elite institutions of pederasty, gymnasia and symposia. A marginalised man, Theodotus, connects the lives of two Athenian citizens and their love struggles. This investigation invites readers to imagine the speaker's hesitation and shame in revealing his relationship with Theodotus to the jury in light of a British scandal involving a leading politician and a working-class homosexual man. The 'strategic anachronism' of transgender studies enables us to see the process of subculture formation connecting sexually marginalised groups across time.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Dover 1978: 185-203.

<sup>52</sup> Devun and Tortorici 2018: 520.

A homosexual subculture allowed a socially marginalised Theodotus to find male citizens seeking same-sex relationships. The archaeological evidence illustrates that the Piraeus harbour district and Kerameikos locales attracted Athenian men looking for men for sexual companionship.<sup>53</sup> Theodotus' agency in negotiating relationship dynamics must be part of our analysis to reconstruct a realistic and more human representation of Greek homosexuality. However, the speaker's argument also shows that men like him are part of a negotiating process on social values interacting between mainstream culture and a homosexual subculture.

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<sup>53</sup> Davidson 2007: 62-63; Glazebrook 2021: 48-49.



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