

Shame, *Stasis*, and Gifts: *Aidos* and Revolution in Archaic Greece

Aidos, often translated as “shame” or “modesty,” is a difficult term to render in English. It implies an expectation of adherence to social norms, one that is enforced by social pressure (Gernet 1981). Its function in individual relationships such as those between aristocratic *philo*i is wide-ranging. Commonly in these relationships, *aidos* is referenced in gift-exchange where a gift is given with the expectation of reciprocity (Cairns 1993). The goal of this paper is to shed light on *aidos*' role in political relationships, namely between political actors and city-states.

Herodotus' accounts of the Peisistratids' war in Book 1 and the Syloson episode in Book 3 suggest that *aidos* played a significant role in the rise of tyranny in the Archaic age. This study examines his use of the verb *προαιδεῖμαι*, “to place one under an obligation.” In Book 3, Syloson places Darius under the obligation of *aidos* by gifting a cloak in exchange for the tyranny of Samos, and Peisistratus marshalls forces from Thebes because of a prior gift-exchange. From this analysis, I identify four main mechanisms which underpin political movement in these accounts: 1) reciprocity in gift-giving was not only required but failing to reciprocate a gift was seen as unthinkable. 2) The values of the gifts exchanged did not necessarily need to be equivalent (e.g. a tyranny for a cloak). 3) Political power flowed through the gift-giving process, and an individual could shore up this power through preemptive gifting. 4) The Greeks possessed a great deal of self-awareness surrounding these processes.

Viewing Archaic age politics through this lens provides a new perspective on how actors accumulated political power as well as potential insight on the motivations behind political relationships in the Archaic period and beyond.

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