ABSTRACT

GENDERING THE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF WINE AND OLIVE OIL IN ANCIENT GREECE

by Lisa Marie Elliott

A thesis which examines the ways production and consumption of wine and olive oil in ancient Greece was gendered from the Early Bronze Age through the Hellenistic Period. The paper is divided into two large sections. The first examines the social and political institutions of the Early Bronze Age and Archaic Period which influence the production and consumption of wine and olive oil by men and women. The second section examines how those same institutions changed in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods. In conclusion, by the Classical Period, both the production and the consumption of wine and olive oil became sexed. Production of wine and oil became controlled by men and the consumption of wine became regulated based directly on sex, but the consumption of olive oil remained unrestricted.
GENDERING THE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF WINE AND OLIVE OIL IN ANCIENT GREECE

A Thesis

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Miami University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History

by

Lisa Marie Elliott

Miami University
Oxford, Ohio

2006

Advisor _______________________________________________________

Dr. Judith P. Zinsser

Reader _________________________________________________________

Dr. Osama Ettouney

Reader _________________________________________________________

Dr. Denise E. McCoskey
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- List of Figures ........................................................................................................... iii
- Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
- Chapter I: Production and Consumption ................................................................. 6
  - Beginnings of Agriculture ......................................................................................... 6
  - The Domestication of the Grape .............................................................................. 6
  - The Domestication of the Olive .............................................................................. 8
- Chapter II: Early Production and Consumption of Wine and Olive Oil ................. 11
  - The Case of Myrtos ................................................................................................ 11
  - The Case of Zakros ................................................................................................ 15
  - The Case for Knossos and the Mycenaean Invasion .............................................. 16
- Chapter III: Later Production and Consumption of Wine and Olive Oil ............... 26
  - Production in the Classical Period .......................................................................... 26
  - Consumption in the Case of Athens and Sparta .................................................. 29
- Chapter IV: Summary of Conclusions ...................................................................... 38
- Bibliography .............................................................................................................. 42
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wine Press and Collecting Pithos</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psykter</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beam and Lever Press</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Study of Production and Consumption: The Case of Wine and Olive Oil

Introduction to the Thesis

Commodities, such as wine and olive oil, are praised for the value they bring to the consumer, the producer or to the “culture” of a society. Increasingly, the political and social ideologies that lie behind the producers exchange or consumption of those commodities are being brought to the foreground. Production and consumption became political acts because they were organized according to the political agendas and social systems of various groups in society. In other words, the producer or consumer’s identity became attached to the ways in which they produced or consumed. This was true even in antiquity. The development of the wine and olive oil industries exemplified how the production and consumption of commodities could be politicized and gendered through a gradual process. When the production and consumption of wine and olive oil moved from private ownership and regulation to control by the state government, the state then became accountable for its production and use and thus made the processes a matter of public concern. The regulations about who could produce wine or oil, who could consume them and in what ways they could be produced or consumed, created a social distinction between those who could and those who could not produce and use the products. Perhaps the most visible distinction between these various groups was sex. This separation between men and women as producers and consumers evolved after the rise of a ruling (patriarchal) government during the Classical and Hellenistic periods (ca 500 BC-323 BC and 323 BC-146BC, respectively) from the more communal settlements of the Bronze Age (3,000 BC-1100 BC).

Wine and olive oil were two of the most important products for the household and the state during antiquity. Production of both products began in the household economy, and became state controlled. During the transition from one phase of production to another, the mechanical means for producing both the wine and oil also changed. Presses became larger and had to be moved outside of the smaller interior of the house, and into
larger spaces specifically designed to support the new press. In addition to the new increased physical demands of the larger presses, came new control or supervision of labor. The formerly private manufacturing of oil and wine became a public and state regulated endeavor, and awarded men new exclusive authority over the production of wine and oil. Although the evolution of changes in production was similar for wine and oil, they were distinguished as two very different products of consumption. While gender and sex were characteristics that increasingly determined who produced wine and oil; they were initially not a determinate for who used the two products. Although both wine and olive oil could be consumed by men and women in the earlier period of Greek antiquity, by the Classical Period, wine acquired a social value and became a product for male consumption, while olive oil consumption remained sex and gender neutral.

There have been a number of different methodologies that scholars have used to study agriculture, trade, and the consumption of products. Although each are significant for their contributions in their respective fields, I intend to look at the larger system by using these contributions holistically. I will use the history of trade, the history of production and consumption, and cultural approaches to history, for their individual contributions, but I will combine them into a larger reading of history.

The history of trade encapsulates antiquity as a system, but does so from an external perspective. In other words, the history of trade often groups societies of the antiquity together or societies of similar geographic regions together, without distinguishing between the subtleties of social systems in those individual societies. The Ancient Economy (edited by Walter Scheidel and Sitta von Reden, 2002) and Sailing the Wine Dark Sea: International Trade and the Late Bronze Age Aegean (by Eric H. Cline, 1994) both take an intensive look at how olive oil and wine were traded and valued among the ancient Greeks as a whole and without acknowledging differing characteristics between villages or communities. The thousands of amphorae with traces of olive oil or wine, and olive and wine presses and mills, coming from both underwater sites such as the Uluburun shipwreck or the Cypro-Mycenaean Wreck at Point Iria, as well as excavated sites across the Mediterranean landscape from royal palaces to estates also provide evidence of trade, but is also used to support larger histories of trade routes and tradable goods in antiquity. Rather than using broad terms like “the ancient economy,” I
will show, through the production and consumption of wine and olive oil, how trade in individual communities and societies were affected by both geographic region and temporality but more importantly, I am interested in looking at the roles of men and women within these systems.

In the past decade, historians have created a new field of inquiry: the study of production and consumption. However, the history of production and the history of consumption often divided. These historians tend to concentrate on either the production or the consumption; rarely do they address both. *Wine and Olive Oil Production in Israel and Other Mediterranean Countries* by Rafael Frankel (1994) bridges both the history of production of wine and olive oil by writing a history of presses consisting mainly of descriptions of the mechanics of the presses along with photographs and illustrations. Likewise, *Ancient Oil Presses and Mills* by A.G. Drachman (1932) carefully reconstructs the mills and presses to precise dimensions and provides a methodical and mechanistic look at the technology of the press itself. However, neither of these sources discusses the consumption of wine or oil. Andrew Dalby’s *Siren Feasts* (1996) covers the food that was eaten, its preparation, anecdotal stories (including the use of olive oil and wine) and the day-to-day use of the wine and oil, but does not discuss the production of that food. Further, *Ancient Wine* by Patrick McGovern (2003) uses paleobotany and art history to explore the production and use of wine in ancient cultures. McGovern’s book uses physical evidence such as residue of the wine inside amphorae, vase paintings, and wall paintings from tombs in Egypt and frescos from Greece. In contrast to examining the mechanics of the production of wine, *The Origin and Ancient History of Wine* (edited by Patrick E. McGovern, Stuart J. Fleming and Solomon H. Katz, 1995) looks exclusively at the paleobotanical origin of grape cultivation. It examines DNA evidence of the grape vine to show how viticulture spread throughout the Mediterranean, thereby spreading the production and consumption of wine. Much like the history of trade, both the history of production and the history of consumption are valuable on their own, but together function in a larger single system, society. I will use both these histories in collaboration with the history of trade in writing this thesis.

The final methodology that I will use comes from cultural studies. Cultural studies often asks questions like those I am interested in, such as what are the roles men
and women take in various locations and times like ancient Greece, or how wine and olive oil were used in rituals. Literary scholar, Timothy Morton has examined food and eating through literary and cultural representation in books such as *Cultures of Taste/Theories of Appetite: Eating Romanticism* (2003), which raise questions similar to those I ask in my thesis. Morton along with other cultural anthropologists like Wolfgang Schivelbush (*Tastes of Paradise, 1993*) explores the cultural motivations behind product consumption. Specifically, Schivelbush situates events such as women’s coffee circles as an economic and political resistance to what had become a male dominated coffee house. *Wine & Words*, by Hanneke Wilson (2003) studies wine in antiquity by dissecting literary, legal, and political texts of the period not to discover the origins of olive oil or wine, but instead to understand how wine functioned within the literature of the period. In so doing, the author’s goal is to uncover the culture’s perceptions of wine, who used it and how it was used, questions similar to those which I have asked not only about wine, but also about olive oil. Likewise, gender historians such as Judith Bennett (*Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England*, 1996) use ale production to demonstrate the gendering of men’s and women’s roles in 17th century England and to show the gendering of commodity production and sale. I use her work, along with other gender historians as models for deciphering and explaining the gendering of the production and consumption of olive oil and wine in ancient Greece.

In this thesis, Chapter I discusses the domestication of the grape and the olive. Chapters II and III chronologically explore how the political and social culture of ancient Greece influenced the technological development of wine and olive oil presses and likewise the impact of those technological developments on the political and social culture of Greece. Further, they discuss how the consumption of wine and olive oil became a political act attached to hierarchical gender identities. Chapter II begins with the earliest evidence from ancient Greece, the tubs or wine and oil presses of the Early Bronze Age that could have been operated by men or women. Then Chapter III traces the development of the presses chronologically through the Hellenistic period where women could no longer operate the new, large presses. These Chapters will begin in the Bronze Age settlements of Myrtos and Zakros, then move on to the chiefdoms of the Archaic Period, and finally to the city-states of the Classical and Hellenistic Periods including
such city-states as Athens and Sparta to show the sequence of stages that changed the production of wine and oil from a shared household production by men and women to a male controlled, public enterprise. Chapter IV concludes that the political and social changes that occurred from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Period, influenced the ways women could produce wine, and further, the ways they could consume wine. Further, this essay will show the relationship between the changing social roles assigned women with the ways they were subsequently allowed to consume or prohibited from consuming wine and oil.
Chapter I: Production and Consumption

Beginnings of Agriculture

The production of oil and wine began with the domestication of the olive and the grape. Although it is not entirely necessary to domesticate either fruit to produce oil or wine, the domesticated varieties yield far more than their wild counterparts and the intentional domestication of each fruit indicates the conscious desire to produce a better tasting, greater harvest. In this Neolithic era, women not only acted with men but may also have been the first instrumental producers of wine and olive oil. Anthropologists argue that the initial agricultural domestication of all plants was instigated by women during the Neolithic period. They reason that the model of food acquisition, Woman the Gatherer and Man the Hunter meant that women would have had the most familiarity with plant life and therefore would have been the most likely to attempt plant domestication as a more stable and regular supply of food. In 1991, two anthropologists, Patty Jo Watson and Mary C. Kennedy, used the Eastern Woodlands of North America to illustrate women’s roles as gatherers turned agriculturalists.

“If we populated Smith’s evolutionary stages with gendered human beings chosen to accord with the four operating assumptions for the division of labor already noted, and with the ethnographic record for the Eastern Woodlands, then we must conclude that the adult women are the chief protagonists in the horticultural drama of the domestilocalities. Although the entire human group contributes to the sunlight and soil fertility factors, it is the women who are primarily responsible for soil disturbance and continual introduction of seeds.”

Although, there is no direct evidence that women were the first domesticators of the olive and the grape, I take this theory as a compelling model of social theory that can be applied to the Neolithic Mediterranean.

The Domestication of the Grape

Early grape ancestry dates back to the Tertiary period in the Near East, 50 million years ago where we have evidence of fossil seeds and leaf impressions of the family Vitiaceae. According to archaeologists and botanists, this plant may even trace its

---

ancestry back much earlier—to Ampelopsis, a climbing vine of 500 million years ago.² It is believed that the wild Eurasian grape (*Vitis vinifera* L. subsp. *Sylvestris*) survived in pockets through the cold and temperate spells of the Ice Age in low valleys and plains. Foraging humans (possibly Neanderthals) came across the wild grape and began to collect it for food, and then later possibly during the Neolithic period the gatherer-women began to domesticate the grape. The Paleolithic theory states that foraging humans (likely women) first came into contact with the wild grape and began to collect it for food.³ Attracted to the sweetness and tartness of the grapes, they gathered bunches in collecting vessels. Some of the berries’ skins ruptured under the weight of the mass of berries and exuded juice. In that juice, if left to sit at the bottom of a container, a pouch of animal skin, shell, bone, or crevice in the rock, natural yeasts began to bloom and a low-alcoholic wine was produced. Had the Neanderthal discovered this early wine, she may have been prompted to continue collecting the berries in an attempt to recreate the discovery.

The supporting evidence for this theory comes from two main sources, the survey of contemporary wild relative of grapes and the identification of its wild ancestor, and the model of early female-driven horticultural.⁴ The first source is botanical. Surveys assess the traits that distinguished the wild and cultivated varieties and determine the genetic basis for those changes. Also, evidence comes through the analysis of grapevine remains retrieved from archaeological excavations, as well as analysis of artifacts associated with grapevine cultivation, wine production and storage.⁵ Further physical evidence comes from residue of wine left inside amphorae, vase paintings, and wall painting from tombs in Egypt and frescos from Greece. According to these studies, the wild Eurasian grapevine extended from Central Asia to Spain, and north to south from the Crimea to Northwest Africa. It was somewhere in this region that the grapevine was taken into cultivation, perhaps occurring in more than one place. According to McGovern, the earliest grape remains whose morphologies are consistent with domestication, are those


³ See Watson and Kennedy, 261-2.

from early Neolithic sites in Transcaucasia, including Shulaveris-Gora and Shomu-Tepe.⁶ Both wild and domesticated varieties have been reported from other sites such as Korucutepe, Tepecik, Kurban Höyük, Hassek Höyük, Hacinebi, and Cayonu during the early Neolithic period (ca. 8,000 BC). By the end of the 5th millennium BC, cultivated grapes had spread to the Aegean, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt.⁷ Known as the Noah hypothesis, (similar to the Eve Hypothesis of human evolution which claims that all of humanity can be traced back to a single ancestor) it suggests that grape varieties originated from a single progenitor and were named for the biblical account of Noah’s vineyard planted after he reached Mount Ararat (Genesis 9.20).

Since the wild grape is dioecious by nature, some vines only bare female flowers with developed pistols. These plants must receive pollen from a male vine to produce fruit. In this wild variety, it is usually only the female plants that bare fruit, which is fairly astringent, small with many seeds, relatively low sugar, and high acidic values. In contrast, the cultivated variety of grape is hermaphroditic in nature, producing larger fruit, with higher sugar contents and a variety of tastes. Thus, the grapes used for organized wine production, would have been from the cultivated variety. If women were the first cultivators of grapes, then it follows that they were also the first practitioners of wine production.

The Domestication of the Olive

There is no direct evidence for women’s cultivation of the olive (or the grape), however, the evidence for women’s cultivation (see Watson and Kennedy) suggests that women were responsible for all kinds of plant cultivation, which would likely include olives as well as grapes. An ideal climate for the cultivation of the olive, much like that of the grape, is around the Mediterranean Basin. It is assumed that cultivation first occurred somewhere in the Syria/Palestine region during the Bronze Age probably close to the same time as the domestication of the grape, but the incomplete botanical evidence means it must remain only a theory. The archaeological evidence, for the domestication of the olive is less clear than evidence for the domestication of the grape. Many scholars

believe it is nearly impossible to distinguish cultivated olives from wild varieties because the seed of even the domesticated olive, often referred to as the stone, does not produce another domesticated olive. Instead it produces a wild-looking olive, often called “feral” as opposed to the pure “wild” olive. Cultivated olives are propagated by grafting and cuttings but feral olives are the escapees from cultivation.\textsuperscript{8}

The theory that some of the stones from Crete are a transitional type (between wild and cultivated olives) supports the belief that cultivation had been achieved either first or independently in Crete.\textsuperscript{9} Evidence for this supposition must be drawn from the nature of the olive, from bits of material remains, and from areas of current cultivation. The main characteristics that distinguish the wild olive from the cultivated variety are the larger fruit and higher oil content, indicating that olives had likely been domesticated and were being used to produce olive oil. Pollen grain analysis, stone analysis, and wood analysis has concluded that indeed we cannot distinguish wild from domestic olives, but the more frequent occurrence of olive timber and stones in archaeological finds (starting with the Early Bronze Age), together with the first appearance of olive oil installations, pottery oil lamps and pottery containers for oil preservation imply the existence of numerous olive trees and olive oil industry in Israel since the Early Bronze Age.\textsuperscript{10}

Olive cultivation is more labor intensive than grape cultivation. It takes many years for the olive tree to reach maturity and to produce fruit. Thus, it is better suited to a more permanent, agriculturally centered settlement. Archaeological evidence supports the argument that the olive was used in Neolithic communities, but the botanical limitations make it difficult to confirm that these were cultivated varieties. Olive stones have been found at the underwater site South of Haifa dating to the Pottery Neolithic (5,500 BC) and even in the Natufian site on the Carmel and in the Nahal Hemer cave, a site that dates to Pre-pottery Neolithic B.\textsuperscript{11} Other archaeological evidence that potentially shows cultivation are stones at Teleilat Ghassul, a Chalcolithic site in the Jordan Valley, which

\textsuperscript{9} J. Boardman “The Olive in the Mediterranean: Its Culture and Use,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 188.
\textsuperscript{11} Rafel Frankel, *Wine and Oil Production in Antiquity in Israel and Other Mediterranean Countries* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 37.
is hot and dry. Olive growth would have had to have been sustained by an irrigation system or would have been brought to this site from another region. Further, twenty-seven samples of wood at a Chalcolithic site in the Golan region, Rasam Harbush and trough-like crushing basin and pottery oil separators found at Chalcolithic sites also support theories of domestication. Either way, if olive cultivation started before the Early Bronze Age (or EBA), it certainly gained its significance during the EBA.¹²

Both the grape and the olive had been domesticated by the Bronze Age in Greece. The domestication of these two fruits indicates that they were important crops to the societies that grew them. Since I use the Watson-Kennedy Model for crop domestication, which argues that women were the first domesticators of crops, then women could have been the first domesticators of grapes and olives in the Mediterranean. Further, this domestication must have taken place some time just before, or during the Early Bronze Age.

¹² Frankel, 37.
Chapter II: Early Production and Consumption of Wine and Olive Oil

Following the domestication of grapes and olives in the Early Bronze Age, this chapter examines how wine and olive oil were produced and consumed from the Early Bronze Age through the Archaic Period. And further, I ask, how was gender a determining factor in these processes? These questions can be answered by examining palace centers which prospered during these periods (specifically Myrtos, Zakros, and Knossos) as well as the literary evidence of Homer and Hesiod. These show that while women maintained a relatively high position in society during these periods, the increasing patriarchal political culture began to displace their functions as producers of wine and oil, and further began to change the ways in which they could consume wine. Household economies developed into mercantile economies and women’s involvement in production began to diminish. Even so, women still were able to consume (use) wine and oil in a variety of ways, as food and for ritual, and for medicinal uses. In the Archaic Period wine and oil consumption had not yet become a strictly female or male activity. However, the political changes that were occurring during this period would influence how and by whom wine and oil would be consumed in the subsequent Classical and Hellenistic Periods.

The Case of Myrtos

Myrtos, an Early Bronze Age settlement on Crete (2600 BC-1400 BC) was a relatively small egalitarian community where households were centered on the family, and women and men maintained relatively equal status socially. According to the archaeological evidence, Myrtos was one of the first communities in the Early Bronze Age Aegean to produce wine. The pithoi and the wine and oil pressing tubs found at Myrtos support the theory that wine and oil production in Early Bronze Age settlements, like Myrtos, were centered around the household and local bartering, and could not have been used for large scale production. The analyses of the Myrtos pithoi represent the
earliest chemical evidence for resinated wine from ancient Greece. The pithoi which were examined measured roughly 4000 liters (450 cases of modern bottled wine) if indeed all the pithoi were filled with wine. Considering that Myrtos would have only housed 100-120 people, it is unlikely that all of the wine would have been intended for consumption within the community but instead, indicated a surplus in production. This surplus may have been traded with neighboring Knossos, also on Crete whose large population could not be supported by local wine processing. However, in contradiction to the pithoi, the archaeological remains of the presses indicate that production could not have occurred on a massive scale. Instead, the tubs indicate that their purpose was for household production and support. Therefore, while the pithoi suggest enough wine could have been produced for trade between neighboring cities, the small size of the tubs suggest that this kind of production would not have been a regular event. Rather, when the season produced a high yield crop, the surplus could have been stored in the pithoi or traded with local communities.

There are two types of tubs present. One type is circular and the other is circular with a trough spout. The tubs without the spout measure roughly 20 centimeters high with a diameter of 40 centimeters and the tubs with a spout measure around 30 centimeters high with a diameter of about 60 centimeters. The spouts indicate that these tubs were used in the preparation of liquids. Most were found in close proximity with pithos or amphorae and could have been used for collection or storage of the processed liquid. (Figure 1) Eleven sites in Crete dating from Early Minoan II at Myrtos (ca. 2170 BC) to Late Minoan IIIB at Kommos (ca. 1300-1200 BC) have wine pressing installations which consist of plastered pressing floors, or more commonly of shallow terracotta vats with base sprouts, set on platforms above receptacles. The vats are large enough for only one person to tread at a time, and seem geared toward small-scale, household production rather than large-scale manufacture of wine. The tubs are located in communal areas of the settlements, which may have been available to everyone in the community.

The type of construction at Myrtos implies that the functions of society (such as food processing) had not yet become gendered, segregated, or socially stratified. Men and women could work equally within the settlement producing wine or even oil. The presence of store-rooms, kitchens, work-rooms and probably living-rooms (in the southern area) suggests that the settlement was thought of as a single unit with different parts having different functions, and since no space in the complex stands out as the ruler’s or chief’s, it indicates communal living.\textsuperscript{17} The presses, for which evidence remains, could be easily operated by women and anyone could have access to them. Grapes would have been pressed or treader in the large tubs and either left to ferment, or drained off into an amphora or pithos and left there to ferment.

To produce olive oil, the olive would first need to be crushed into a mush, and then pressed, possibly in the same presses used to produce wine. An alternative could have been that the olives were first steeped in hot water, and then pressed. The resulting mixture would contain more water than oil. However, the oil would rise to the top and could either be siphoned off, or if it had been produced in a tub with a spout (Figure 1), the water and mush could be drained out, leaving the oil to be later drained out into collecting jars. Since there are no indications for olive crushing installations, it is likely that the oil was produced in the latter manner.

Although there is not evidence specifically for olive pressing, there is significant evidence of olive cultivation in Myrtos. “The great majority of the wood charcoals analyzed are olive (Olea europaea L.) and the type and condition of the wood was

\textsuperscript{17} Peter Warren, \textit{Myrtos: Early Bronze Age Settlement} (Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1972), 266.
apparently the result of pruning. The single olive stone found suggests that the tree was
domesticated. The timber was certainly used in roof construction and probably for
ladders in rooms like 76, which was entered from the roof. The olives themselves must
have been for oil. When burnt earth samples from the store jars in Room 22 were
immersed in water in flotation tests for grain the mixture appeared distinctly greasy with
an oil-like film. It is most probable that these jars contained oil.” 18

Though some of the pithoi found at Myrtos appeared to have contained oil, the
presses, nonetheless, are still considered to be for wine. Without further evidence,
however of separate structures for producing oil, they should be considered as both wine
and oil presses. Comparisons of other wine and oil pressing installations found in Israel
and the surrounding regions used during the late Chalcolithic or Bronze Age are only
identified as oil presses or wine presses given the introduction of the olive or the grape
into the region as compared with the date given to the press. For example, the Mediggo
Installation 01 dating to the Chalcolithic period has been labeled an olive press, simply
because it predated the introduction of the vine into the region. “However, up to the
present, simple treading installations are used to tread grapes (i.e. Balat, Hebron district,
Masada), and without doubt these served mainly for producing wine, while other
installations evolved to process olive oil.” 19 Although these types of rock-cut installations
are not found in the Aegean, some have been found in Italy and Greece. Theoretically
simple rock cut installations or the Myrtos tubs could have been used to produce either
oil or wine, and possibly both. Since the time for processing a wine harvest is usually
finished by September, there would be plenty of time to clean the presses for the olive
harvest in October. Whether or not the cross use for wine production and oil production
would have harmed the taste of either is debated. 20

There are no apparent social restrictions that limit wine or oil production to one
sex or the other. The remains of pithoi, presses, and the architectural structure of Early
Bronze Age settlement at Myrtos, indicate the production of oil and wine occur in similar
or the same presses, and further both can be physically produced by women or men. The
economic structure of the settlement indicates that production was still for subsistence or

18 Warren, Myrtos, 27
19 Frankel, Wine and Oil Production, 51.
20 Frankel, Wine and Oil Production, 188.
local bartering with neighboring settlements for other goods but not traded in large quantities for profit.

The evidence at Myrtos suggests that during the Early Bronze Age, the control or supervision of wine and oil production was probably communal, in the hands of the producers and not an authoritarian government. Further, it was probably a communal effort between men and women in a household centered economy. Since the production of wine and olive oil were not on a large scale, the small tubs and the household economy could support the communities’ need for both products.

The Case of Zakros

Zakros, in Crete, is another important archaeological site for the production of wine and olive oil. The Zakros valley, excavated by David George Hogarth in 1901 uncovered a dozen buildings on the northeast and southwest hills at Zakros. These buildings (or houses) are separate from the palace at Zakros, which was originally built around 1900 BC, rebuilt around 1600 BC and finally destroyed around 1450 BC, roughly 500 years after the settlement at Myrtos (which was occupied between 2600-2300 BC). The houses which surrounded the palace included up to 30 rooms, including storage rooms and wine presses which were often found in each of the houses individually, not just in communal spaces of the “town.” 21 For example, House J (Hogarth labeled each of the houses with a letter such as House A- House B- House C) contains twenty rooms with recognizable installations like wine-presses connected to a vat for the collection of the liquid, and storerooms containing wide-mouthed jars, pitchers, wine amphorae and other jars. Evidence of numerous loom weights as well as dyeing installations in many of the houses from the settlement also testifies to home textile production. 22

Further evidence from Zakros of wine or oil pressing comes from the houses comprised of roughly twenty rooms, located on the southeast slope of the hill of the palace. Each of these houses also had its own storeroom which contained pithoi, amphorae, jugs, pitchers, and winepresses with vessels for extraction and collection. The

---

21 Ian Swindale. Minoan Crete. 2002. Available from: http://www.uk.digiserve.com/mentor/minoan/zakros.htm Internet, accessed May 15, 2006. “It is almost certain that some of the buildings were not houses, however, but buildings belonging to the palace.”
presses found in situ at Zakros, are almost identical to those found at Myrtos.\textsuperscript{23} Perhaps at Myrtos, the entire community of men and women shared the enterprise, where wine and oil was stored in a large communal storehouse, but as palace centers developed and socio-economic classes emerged, household production and storage replaced parts of the communal production. Presses owned by the ruler would then supply the palace, such as the presses found on the southeastern hill at Zakros, while the presses in the Hogarth Houses would have been for subsistence with any surplus used for barter or sent to the palace center. Although the Linear A, a written language of the Minoan era, has not yet been deciphered, the numerous tablets found at Zakros no doubt indicate the inventories of the palace as later Linear B tablets do from the Mycenaean palace centers after 1400 BC.

As there are no written sources to turn to for information, it is more difficult to establish relationships between men and women, their functions in society, their gender roles, and their relative status. The status of women in society (in social roles and labor roles) must be extracted from archaeological evidence. The absence of fortifications indicates the Minoans were not concerned with warfare; instead the archaeological evidence of various kinds of pottery suggests that they were concerned with trade. As society changed, so did the priorities of society, including the roles of women.

\textbf{The Case for Knossos and the Mycenaean Invasion}

Knossos, another Minoan palace-center on Crete, very similar in structure to Zakros, has been well excavated. Archaeological finds at Knossos from Early Minoan I (EMI) reveal large amounts of pottery, of which more than half consist of drinking and feasting vessels.\textsuperscript{24} Peter M. Day and David E. Wilson argue that large scale feasting and drinking ceremonies may have been used by emerging elites in part as a means of legitimating their power and indicating a source of prestige. These elites were the first chiefs or rulers of the palace-center. Therefore consumption of food and drink played a

\textsuperscript{23} Other presses are found at Knossos and Vathypetro.
\textsuperscript{24} Day and Wilson state: “They are mostly what might be termed vessels of communal consumption, in contrast to the individual drinking and eating vessels of later periods. Far from being a normal domestic assemblage, this pottery was most likely used for ritualized drinking/feasting practices on a significant scale at Knossos at the very beginning of the Minoan period.” Peter M. Day and David E. Wilson, “Landscapes of Memory, Craft, and Power in Pre-Palatial and Proto-Palatial Knossos,” in \textit{Labyrinth Revisited: Rethinking ‘Minoan’ Archaeology}, Yannis Hamilakis, ed. (Oxbow Books Limited, 2002), 149.
role in the construction of social personas and served as an event or spectacle which helped justify positions of power. These rulers would have had control over the palace, and would have a certain degree of control over the surrounding households. They could then have used the palace to function as a redistributive center. Surpluses of wine and oil could be called into the palace from the surrounding households for storage. The rise of a patriarchal government would be the first step in the transfer of power between women and men in the production of wine and oil. Woman’s production was now affected by the needs of the “palace” as well as the needs of her own household. In other words, commodities such as wine were increasingly becoming “public” commodities because of their social prestige. Household demand for products no longer controlled the production of wine and oil, but rather, the public demanded larger quantities for consumption and for trade.

In Knossos, food and drink also had important religious functions. Religious worship and religious festivals were places that women maintained license to act in a variety of social roles though Greek antiquity. During the Bronze Age, the religious practices of the Minoans show leadership by a female figure, a mother goddess or snake goddess often depicted in statues and frescos. The Knossos Libation Fresco, which has been dated to 1500 B.C.-1450 B.C. has been restored from several small fragments. One fragment is relatively well known as “La Parisienne,” a woman depicted with the typical white skin. Little remains of her but the uppermost part of her torso and head. In the far right part of the fresco is another fragment which is a bit larger. It shows a “woman” seated and receiving a drinking vessel from another woman. I use the word woman in quotation marks because not all of the women depicted in this particular fresco follow the traditional constructions of women; some have the traditional white skin, but others have the darker skin that is normally attributed to men. This darker skin poses questions about origin and position in society, if it is not simply artistic convention. If the woman’s dark skin indicates that she is not an aristocratic woman (i.e., who would have been able to remain inside and out of the sun) then perhaps she is of a lower-peasant class. Perhaps her dark skin could indicate that she was from a lower region of Egypt and possibly came to Knossos with her own aristocratic standing. We know that trade lines had been well

---

established between Crete and Egypt during this period, and this might offer an explanation as to how she could have arrived on Crete. Whatever her social status, it is clear that she performed an important role in religious worship as a woman and that worship included the consumption of wine by women as well as men.

At Palaikastro (first constructed in the Early Minoan period and flourished during the Late Minoan Period between 1550 and 1220 BC) houses contain storerooms, installations that have been labeled olive presses, and pithoi for storage. Although some scholars debate the function of these installations, when considering the influence of earlier Minoan culture and technology on the Mycenaean populations alongside the records of distribution, it can be shown that similar methods of production of oil and wine were occurring at the Mycenaean palace centers and settlements as had occurred in the Minoan settlements. If the household economy of Mycenaean settlements was similar to the Minoan settlements, then it is reasonable to assume that women were still involved in the production of oil and wine, from the organization to the physical production. The wine and oil presses are still small in structure and could easily have been used by women or men.

The household arrangement of Mycenaean palace centers resembles those of the Middle Minoan period with a palace at the center, surrounded by other houses. Considering the remains of the Mycenaean palace centers, in comparison with the Minoan palace centers, I believe there was continuity in social roles and probably labor roles. Although there are key differences between the Mycenaean culture and the Minoan culture, men’s and women’s probably functioned in relatively similar ways as they had during the earlier Minoan period. Women’s responsibilities would have still included maintaining the family and food production, such as the household production of wine and oil. The settlements at Vathypetro and Palaikastro which were Cretan palaces occupied during the Mycenaeans’ control of the island have very similar structures to earlier Minoan complexes. J. Driessen and Y. Sakellarakis consider the Vathypetro complex (their term) as the main building of a large village. In its first phase its functions

---

27 See Schliemann’s excavation at Mycenae and Tiryns.
included administrative, ritual, residential and storage. In the second phase it was given over to domestic agricultural and industrial production. The building on the western side of the complex had both oil and wine presses.

Still, there was a significant change in the palace structure between the Minoan and Mycenaean settlements. The increasing population needed more space, to function as a storage and redistributive center. It is a widely held opinion that the citadel of Mycenae, as well as other palace complexes both on the mainland and on Crete, began as this type of center for storage and redistribution of agricultural surpluses. Further, Linear B tablets indicate that the population density had reached a critical level which necessitated a system of rationing by the palace. The redistributive economy meant that wine and oil would have either been produced in presses owned by the palace, or in presses of the surrounding houses and sent to the palace for storage where it was then rationed. Examples of Linear B tablets found at Pylos indicate how resources were divided:

Thus the wine of Pa-ra-we-
has been distributed:
50 to Pi-*
50 to Metapa,
100 to Pe-to-no
35 to Pa-ki-ja-ne
35 to Aipy
30 to A-ke-re-wa
50 to E-ra-to
40 to Kharadros (250=Vn01 [20])

Although women may have been responsible for producing the wine and oil in these household presses, the supervision of production increasingly shifted to the ruler of the palace. The king, or chief, would be the central administrator of trade and therefore

---

29 Swindale, Minoan Crete.
31 Earlier in the Bronze Age, villages of peasant families, perhaps spurred by an increase in population brought about by favorable climatic conditions or agricultural innovations, began coming together in a process known as village nucleation. The entrenched, precautionary habit of setting aside their small surpluses as a hedge against occasional famine years continued, especially since the household now had the numbers to construct centrally located storage facilities to be used in common. Thomas and Conant, Citadel to City-State, 10.
could demand production beyond the individual or household need, thus moving production from a private enterprise to a public one. There is good evidence to suggest that the rulers of these lands had a hand in virtually everything to do with trade in those days. Examples can be readily found for independent commercial merchants, but even more frequently for merchants sponsored by the Crown, and diplomatic merchants and emissaries representing the Crown.\textsuperscript{34} Pottery found around the Aegean and Mediterranean show that the Mycenaeans were active in “international” trading, especially wine and olive oil. “Within the LBA Aegean area, there are a total of 942 imported Italian, Egyptian and Near Eastern objects found in good LH/LM I-IIIC contexts. Of these 265 are on the Greek mainland, 325 are on Crete….197 are on the Ulu Burun (Kas) shipwreck…”\textsuperscript{35} If the trade lines were controlled by the (patriarchal) monarchy, then the ruler had a growing stake in the organization of the production of oil and wine.

When the Mycenaeans took over the Minoan palace centers on Crete, they maintained much of the Minoan traditions and imagery but made significant differences in their religious practice. The Minoans worshiped outside of the palace, in caves and sanctuaries in the mountains, while the Mycenaeans moved worship to the megaron, a great rectangular reception hall within the palace.\textsuperscript{36} Further, they created images of male deities as numerous as female deities, as shown by Mycenaean Linear B texts. As the worship took place in the megaron, the palace controlled the religious organization of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{37} According to Classicist Sarah Pomeroy, the tight economic and political control exercised by the king over the sanctuaries and the priesthods is an indication that the king was able to claim divine sanction to rule as the undisputed sovereign.\textsuperscript{38} Although the control of the Mycenaean religion by the palace seems to be different from a more communal control of religion by the Minoans, women continued to function in religion as goddesses and as priestesses. Frescos and statuary depict various religious festivals or

\textsuperscript{34} Eric H. Cline, \textit{Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: International Trade and the Late Bronze Age Aegean} (Archaeopress, 1994), 85.
\textsuperscript{35} Cline, \textit{Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea}, 9.
\textsuperscript{36} The megaron was a "great hall" of Minoan-Mycenaean culture, a rectangular hall, fronted by an open, two-columned porch and a more or less central hearth.
\textsuperscript{37} Sarah B. Pomeroy et al., eds., \textit{Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History} (Oxford University Press, 1999), 34.
\textsuperscript{38} Pomeroy, \textit{Ancient Greece}, 34.
ceremonies, in which they offer or consume wine. We can assume that men consumed wine during the Minoan period as well, either as food or for rituals.

During the Mycenaean invasions of Crete and their control of the mainland Greece, elite women’s role ‘declined’ with respect to their political and religious power. Even so, they maintained relative power in the household. By the Late Bronze Age and early Archaic Period, however, gender roles seem more hierarchical and were being fixed in terms of differentiated labor and restrictive social behavior. Homer used language like *agathos* (good) when speaking of men who are brave in war or skilled fighters, and *kakos* (bad) for those who are cowardly. For women the *agathos* qualities center around her domestic skills as a wife and a mother.39 Hesiod also discusses women’s social role, but without the same praise that Homer gives. He calls into question all women’s fidelity and suggests that a man should marry a much younger virginal woman. For Hesiod, women’s virtue is important for the procurement of a legitimate son. Although Homer does not directly state why virtue is important, he (and other male characters) clearly favor and respect the women who are paradigms of virtue like Penelope and Andromache. These roles are idealized as the early city-state is beginning to form from the palace structure.

If social and political roles had become gendered in the Bronze Age and Archaic Period, then it seems reasonable that consumption of an important social and economic product like wine also collaborated in such ideological systems. By that I mean, how and when wine was consumed was directly dependent on the consumer’s sex and the social roles attributed to that sex much like the control of production of wine and oil. And during this period, the production of these products had moved from communal (but female-controlled) to public (and male regulated).

The sexed-consumption of wine is probably most clear in the arena of the symposium, a small private drinking party for which there is evidence in the form of vase paintings as early as the Archaic Period. Respectable women, were expected to remain segregated from men, even within the house. They would certainly not have ventured into a symposium. The only women to attend were flute girls or courtesans, who occupied a different social sphere than respectable women. However, even at these drinking parties, we do not have clear indications of women’s (or the courtesans’) consumption of wine.

We have only one example: ARV2,16,15; FR,pl.63, a psykter from the late archaic period.\textsuperscript{40} The scene is a symposium, but the difference between this

![Figure 2: A Psykter, used as a wine cooler. It was either filled with wine and placed in a krater with cold water, or filled with cold water and floated in a container full of wine.](image)

and other symposium scenes is that this is composed only of women. They are reclined in the typical male fashion, drinking. Because of the rarity of the image, in literature as well as in art, we can interpret this as the exception not the rule. It is likely an image of fantasy, something that the courtesans would have taken part in during a symposium.\textsuperscript{41} Other standard images depict men, such as the Tomb del Tuffatore North Slab (dating to 480 B.C.) which shows five men reclining and drinking in the same manner as the psykter. In this scene, there are no women, not even courtesans, present. Images such as this are frequent and together indicate that drinking (or the consumption of wine) in ancient Greece was gendered male.

So, why are wine and olive oil differently consumed based on sex even though they are similarly processed? The psychotropic effects of wine were not unknown to the Greeks, and Homer makes clear references to being drunk and the effects of drunkenness in Book 18 of the Odyssey when he says:

> Surely wine has mastered thy wits, or else thy mind is ever thus, that thou dost babble idly.\textsuperscript{42}

The knowledge that wine somehow “masters thy wits” or influences thought and behavior could justify to the Greek audience the limitation of wine consumption by the agathos woman outside of a ritualistic sphere, and could threaten what little virtue Hesiod

\textsuperscript{40} A psykter is a type of Greek pot that is characterized by a bulbous body set on a high, narrow foot. It was used as a wine cooler. The psykter would be filled with wine, and then be placed in a krater full of cold water or ice.

\textsuperscript{41} Laura McClure discusses the participation of courtesans in comedy at the symposium in \textit{Courtesans at Table} (2003).

feared women had. The evidence does not show that all women were entirely restricted from drinking wine, but it does show they certainly were in when and where they consumed wine, and on what festive occasions, if any.

There are numerous references to wine in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. For example, the *Iliad*, Book 6 line 312 states, “Don’t offer me mellow wine, mother, not now- you’d sap my limbs, I’d lose my nerve for war. And I’d be ashamed to pour a glistening cup to Zeus with unwashed hands.”  

From this passage, it is shown that both men (Hector) and women (Hecuba) served wine, and that it was used both for consumption and for ritual offerings by men. Although it is unclear from this specific passage if women also consumed the wine, other passages from Homer at least suggest access.

…the old man mixed the wine bowl for them with wine set to drink which the housekeeper had opened in its eleventh year… The old man mixed the wine in the bowl...  

Into the wine of which they were drinking she cast a medicine of heartsease, free of gall, to make one forget all sorrows, and whoever had drunk it down once it had been mixed in the wine bowl, for the day that he drank it would have no tear roll down his face, not if his mother died and his father died, not if men murdered a brother or a beloved son in his presence with the bronze and he with his own eyes saw it.

Both of these passages show men were consuming wine, for non-ritual purposes, and the second passage even shows women handling the wine and serving it to men, but neither of the passages state that women partook in that consumption. There was one example in the *Odyssey* of women having access to wine and suggest its use for food purposes as opposed to ritual or medicinal purposes.

Meanwhile her mother put in a box all manner of food, which would preserve strength, and put many good things to eat with it, and out wine in a goatskin bottle, and her daughter put that in the wagon.

This passage seems to indicate that Arête, Naussica’s mother, was giving her daughter wine for drinking. Additionally, the passage implies that wine is used for food purposes, as opposed to a ritual purpose. Therefore, we can probably interpret the literary evidence to show that both men and women could consume wine during the Late Bronze Age, although women’s consumption of wine appears to be more infrequent and more private.

44 Homer, the *Odyssey* 3.387 trans. Lattimore.
45 Homer, the *Odyssey* 4.220 trans. Lattimore.
than men’s consumption. Private in that women’s consumption occurred within the home, for ritual or for meals, and probably most frequently in the company of other women. Men’s consumption of wine could also have been for ritual or meals, but could have occurred outside the home and in the company of men and courtesans.

So how was olive oil being used in comparison with wine during this period? The evidence shows that at this time, olive oil was freely used without limitation based on sex. Again, looking at the previous passage, in addition to having access to wine, Arête and Naussica also have access to olive oil. Later in the scene, Naussica gives Odysseus oil for bathing. “As Naussica, daughter of great-hearted Alkinoos had told them to do, and laid out for him to wear a mantle and tunic, and gave him limpid olive oil in a golden oil flask, and told him he could bathe himself in the stream of the river.” (Odyssey 6.215) Although, the multitude of pottery suggests that olive oil was widely used, written records of its use are fairly uncommon. The literary evidence from Homer requires certain interpreted assumptions. For example, the passage above mentions both oil and wine casually. Without counter evidence, we must assume that all consumption of oil and wine would be equally as casual. However, other evidence for the consumption of wine indicated that its use though still relatively casual in the Bronze Age, it became gender distinct and separate in the Classical period and later.

From the Early Bronze Age to the Archaic Period, a political culture took root that changed the status of men and women in society. Women, who had been producers and involved in production for both wine and olive oil were affected by the increase in trade. Although they might still have worked as the physical producers of oil, the chief or king commanded the merchant ships that traded these products and therefore would have been in control of the demand of production. Political involvement infiltrated the

47 John Chadwick and Michael Ventris, Documents in Mycenaean Greek, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1974), 217.
48 I must acknowledge that there is a problem with using Homeric evidence to establish the production and consumption of wine and oil during the Bronze Age. Though Homer theoretically wrote at the end of the eighth century, he tried to capture life during the reign of the Mycenaeans. Homeric societies are governed by a basilileus or a king, but women were very visible as functional members of society in the Odyssey. Both wine and oil are also mentioned throughout the Iliad and the Odyssey as they are consumed, but their production is not discussed in detail. It is difficult to tell if the little production that is mentioned is a reflection of what was happening during the Dark Ages, when home was writing, or if it was a memory of production from the Late Minoan Period (during the height of the Mycenaean society).
household economy that had flourished during the Early Bronze Age. The effects of this involvement continued to grow through the Classical and Hellenistic periods, when the presses changed to accommodate the increasing demand for trade, and women’s role as the physical producers declined.

Since there are no literary sources from the Early Bronze Age, it is difficult to know how changes occurred in the production and consumption of wine and oil between the Early Bronze Age and the Archaic Period. However, the archaeological and literary evidence available from the Archaic Period suggests that women used wine and oil, probably as they always had for food, medicine, and for ritualistic purposes. In other words, during the Bronze Age and Archaic Period, while the consumption and trade of wine and oil was used politically to aid a king in establishing his position, the restriction of consumption based on sex had not occurred and therefore consumption had not become an act of gender identification.

Oddly enough, however, excess consumption of wine by a man was given gendered connotations. It feminized him. In other words, while both men and women consumed wine, when men consumed wine to the point of intoxication, they were admonished. It was believed that wine invoked illogical thinking and excessive emotion, and therefore is feminized, or has the characteristics of a female (excessive and uncontrolled emotionally and physically). Wine, itself, may have been considered feminine in larger quantities when consumed, but consumption was not strictly dependent on sex until later during the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Thus, wine contributed to the enduring misogynist characterization of women as inherently corruptible and requiring control.
Chapter III: Later Production and Consumption of Wine and Olive oil

Production and consumption of wine and olive oil in the Classical and Hellenistic periods was more strongly influenced by gender roles and sex than in the Bronze Age and Archaic Period. However, gender did not cause the change in production techniques and organization. Rather, the government (comprised and led by men) required new devices to increase the yield of wine and oil. Those machines developed in ways which moved production out of the household and women’s involvement, to presses controlled and owned by men. Further, the consumption of wine (but not olive oil) was limited for women. This chapter will also discuss why consumption was restricted based on gender, as well as why the consumption of wine was different from the consumption of olive oil. Further, I will slightly shift the language of this chapter from the previous ones in that I will address the producers (male or female) as being controllers of production or simply being involved in it. Previously, because of the communal structure of the Early Bronze Age and Archaic communities, it was unnecessary to distinguish between controllers and those were simply involved. However, this distinction becomes increasingly important through the Classical and Hellenistic Periods.

Production in the Classical Period

Since the economic drive was (in the Classical and Hellenistic periods) motivated by long range trade, and wealth determined (class) status in the city-state, olive oil and wine meant more power for those who controlled their production in the city-state. As the value of wine and oil increased, the production of wine and oil for profit moved from outside the household economy where women had roles in organization as well as physical production into a market economy where women might still participate but where production was organized and controlled by men.

The changes in economic organization regarding the household at the end of the eighth century B.C.E. in Crete and mainland Greece developed in response to pressure to increase the population and increase the wealth and had their effects on the production of wine and olive oil. The way these products developed as commodities in the market system suggests that the production of wine and oil moved from involving women (as
producers) to being under the control of men. Previously in the Bronze Age, wealth followed status in society. The king or the chief became wealthy because of his status as the protector of the surplus. However, a new economic market system reversed this relationship. Status in society depended on the wealth of the individual (or more likely the extended family). Thus, the beginning of private property, of debt, and of the polis influenced the behavior of labor systems rather than solely a state monopoly. The sale of olive oil and wine were a large part of the market. Producing more wine or more oil, increased the wealth of the producer which in turn increased status in society.\textsuperscript{49} Since men controlled property, they also controlled the wine and oil production technology housed on their property. Further, not only did men control the property, but it was controlled by the \textit{elite} men. Poor men and women could not control the use of land as they had in Bronze Age settlements like Myrtos. During this period the city-state form of government grew to maturity, colonization expanded, and warfare became much more frequent.\textsuperscript{50} The gap widened between the socio-economic classes and as the population grew, land became in shorter supply. The top families, or landowners, segregated themselves as aristocratic and superior to the lower classes. “They claimed exclusive entitlement to the term \textit{hoi agathoi}, ‘the good,’ purely on the basis of their birth into illustrious and wealthy families, and labeled as \textit{hoi kakoi}, ‘the bad,’ those who were not born into the landed nobility.”\textsuperscript{51} The aristocratic power was rooted in their hereditary control of the land.

Most significant for their profits was their ability to exploit the labor of the poorest farmers who were eking out a precarious existence on small plots of land or on marginal land. Some of those poor families rented land from the rich as sharecroppers in return for a portion of the harvest, while others mortgaged their land to the rich and were compelled to pay a stipulated amount of the crops as payment on the debt.\textsuperscript{52}

Thus, the control of land was one of the first factors to influence how the industry of wine and oil moved out of the hands of the common farmer (and the common woman) into the hands of elite men. However, the production of wine and oil also moved in a more literal

\textsuperscript{49} David Tandy, \textit{Warriors into Traders: The Power of the Market in Early Greece} (University of Californian Press, 2001) for the discussion of how early Greek communities developed market economies from the systems they had developed as warriors.

\textsuperscript{50} Pomeroy, \textit{Ancient Greece}, 82.

\textsuperscript{51} Pomeroy, \textit{Ancient Greece}, 95.

\textsuperscript{52} Pomeroy, \textit{Ancient Greece}, 96.
sense out of the hands of women. Looking at the presses in use by the Hellenistic Period may show how this happened.

Earlier simple installations or presses from the Bronze Age or Archaic Period, like those at Myrtos, Knossos, and Zakros were used in rural communities and for household production. But the production of wine and oil for the larger estates or the city-state needed presses that produced greater quantities. The improved lever presses such as the one described by Cato the Elder from the Roman period were rare, but three examples do exist from Greece; one from Halies, one from Laureatic Olympus, and one from Athens.

![Figure 3: Beam and Lever Press](image)

While the simple installations of the Bronze Age could have fit neatly in the home, and were operated by a person treading the grapes in a vat, the new presses were far larger and were operated by a series of levers, which required physical strength to operate.

“The fixed end of the press-beam (prelum) was narrowed to form a tongue (lingulum) which was anchored between two wooden piers (arbores) with slots (foraminae). The piers were secured in a stone pier base… the cross pieces that were inserted in the slots were perhaps termed cunei. On the press bed was a circular groove (canalis rotundis). Above the material to be crushed and below the beam was a pressing board (orbis olearius), constructed with ‘Phoenician joints’ (punicanus coagmenta). The free end of the beam was lowered by a drum (suculum) that was secured between two wooden piers (stipites) and turned by special levers/handspakes (vectes).”

The handspakes that Cato describes are key in shaping the operation of these presses and indicate women were no longer involved in production of wine and oil through the operation of the press. Pliny the Elder states in *Naturalis Historia* (written in 23-79 CE) in regards to the production of wine/oil on this type of press, “Within the last hundred years there have come into use presses, invented in Greece, spars with furrows running round them in a spiral, some people putting handles on the spar other making the

---

53 Frankel, *Wine and Oil Production*, 86.
spar lift up chests of stones with it, which is very much praised.” These larger presses, while creating greater quantities of oil and wine, changed the structure of production. When the desire to produce more wine and oil changed the technology of the press, women’s ability to participate presumably also changed. Previously, women were involved (if not controlled) the production of wine and oil from the home. That meant they had a significant role in the economy of the household. However, when the production moved out of the home and under the control of the state, as well as out of the hands of women producers, they lost the economic power they had in the Bronze Age and early Archaic Periods.

**Consumption in the Case of Athens and Sparta**

Likewise in the case of Athens and Sparta, consumption also became dependent on gender and further, the consumption of wine and olive oil became differentiated from each other. Written regulations such as the Spartan Constitution circumscribed the consumption of wine, while olive oil, in contrast, continued to be used freely without regulations. Part of the regulations which control the consumption of wine included limiting consumption based on sex. One of the ways in which women’s consumption of wine differed from men’s was in the location in which it was consumed. Why women were restricted from consuming wine in certain environments, such as a symposium, is probably less a question about concern for health and more a statement about social roles. These attitudes were concerned with where women drank and why they drank, which showed a social perception that was nervous about their consumption.

Through the examination of the socially acceptable patterns of drinking in ancient Greece, it can be inferred that these reflected men’s and women’s roles in other aspects of society. A gendered order spilled into all aspects of society, including consumption of staple products like oil and wine. Among the elite, as consumption was gendered, it became part of a gender identity. In other words, it reflected the institution of appropriate gender behavior throughout society rather than being, as some scholars have argued, an effect of patriarchal government efforts to maintain clear bloodlines. As women, it was socially unacceptable to be seen in the public spaces like taverns, or to interact with men.

other than husbands (such as they might if they were permitted to attend a symposium) which meant the feminine gender became identifiable by segregation. Rules about drinking wine reflected rules about confining and regulating elite women, both their behavior and the spaces they might occupy.

Further, the consumption of wine for men or women is marked socially by an ideal way of drinking. For the Athenians, the lack of restraint in drinking mixed wine (with water) or the drinking of unmixed wine in any quantity for men or women brought criticism. Plato, in Symposium, wrote:

Let us then discourse a little more at length about intoxication, which is a very important subject, and will seriously task the discrimination of the legislator. I am not speaking of drinking, or not drinking, wine at all, but of intoxication. Are we to follow the custom of the Scythians, and Persians, and Carthaginians, and Celts, and Iberians, and Thracians, who are all warlike nations, or that of your countrymen, for they, as you say, altogether abstain? But the Scythians and Thracians, both men and women, drink unmixed wine, which they pour on their garments, and this they think a happy and glorious institution.  

Plato, like many other orators, argues that wine consumption should not be forbidden by law, but must be governed by restraint and moderation, irregardless of the consumer and marks the fears of the way wine is consumed in ancient Greece.

Throughout this thesis I have taken the chronological approach in examining the gendered consumption of wine and olive oil in ancient Greece, however, as I get into the Classical period there is more evidence available which discusses or shows ways in which production and consumption differed between genders. During the Classical period, there are often differences in the regulations and social stigmas of production and consumption in various city-states that are occurring at the same time. Therefore, it is no longer enough to discuss production and consumption simply in terms of chronology, but they must be discussed in terms of geography as well.

Sources from the Classical Period of ancient Greece, either literature or artifacts, become more plentiful than in Bronze Age Greece. As mentioned before, neither the consumption of wine nor oil were strictly prohibited based on one’s sex, only rules guiding social behavior restricted the ways and times in which women could consume wine. In other words, the patterns of drinking, who could drink wine and in what environment it could be drunk, operated in larger social systems and institutions.

---

Consumption in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods became increasingly gendered, or regulated based only on the consumer’s sex.  

The palace center seen in the Mycenaean period developed into the city-state by the Classical period, and Sparta and Athens became the dominating political and social forces of Greek society. Legally, women across economic lines had little more rights than the slaves. Socially, they lost the status they had enjoyed in the Minoan period. However, Athens and Sparta developed very different guidelines for gender behavior. Both cultures were strictly regulated and controlled by the state, but Spartan women, regardless of status enjoyed more of their life outside the household. They were allowed to interact with men freely and openly. Spartan women and men were to produce the strongest and fittest children, which meant that marriage was not a fulcrum of society. Likewise, establishing paternity was unnecessary and did not influence determinations of citizenship or inheritance. Since Sparta left few written records, what we know about Sparta generally comes from the eyes and words of Athenians, or reconstructions from archaeological records. In contrast, upper-class Athenian women (the women most apparent in our sources), were expected to marry and to remain within the boundaries of the household and away from contact with males other than their husbands. Of necessity, this section must focus on the consumption of Athenians, where evidence is more available. However, there is one important piece of evidence from Sparta, the Constitution, a source which discussed consumption based on sex.

The Spartans limited women’s consumption of wine legally, as a type of preventative medicine. *The Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* (4th c. BC) by Xenophon states:

To begin at the beginning, here is this legislation about the procreation of children. Other people raise the girls who will bear the children and who are supposed to have a good upbringing with the most limited portions of food and the smallest possible amount of delicacies. They make sure they abstain from wine completely or give it to them mixed with water.

---

Women were treated more equally socially and politically than in Athens, but Sparta as a whole maintained greater control over both sexes, including upholding “communal” procreation. As the main goal of the Spartan government was to create the strongest possible citizen, the regulations for wine consumption (seen above) reflected that idea. Limiting wine for women was to ensure she produced the healthiest child for the state. Athens, on the other hand, justified the regulation of women’s consumption in a different manner.

To begin spatially, limiting the space in which a woman could occupy in Athens (because it was socially inappropriate to interact with men in such a setting) also affected the opportunities she had to consume wine. In Athens, the prescription of elite women’s behavior and movement were not always made clear through the law, but rather through combinations of ideal role models and examples, or stories and gossip.\(^{58}\) The regulation of consumption is apparent in the words of philosophers, playwrights and poets who indirectly or at times directly “advised” women that appropriate behavior involved selectively engaging in wine consumption.

At the most fundamental level, drinking in the open rather than some kind of shelter must be distinguished. The construction of even the most rudimentary shade or screen is, in itself, an act that is sometimes loaded with meaning as representing the creation of a crucial boundary between the natural world and the cultural or humanly constructed world.\(^{59}\) For the Greeks, that screen was located at the threshold of the house. Elite women’s spaces were specifically designated within the home, known as the *gynaeceum*, and were separate and distinct from the *andron* or the men’s quarters. Consumption of food within the home was divided between these spaces; therefore it is not surprising that the gendering of space contributed to the gendering of consumption. Although the symposium, an exclusively male gathering with the exception of courtesans, would have taken place in the house, it always would have occurred in the male quarters. With the guests of the symposium all being male, the space became too “public” for women family members to enter. It is, in the words of Sian Lewis, “a public occasion in the private sphere.

---

\(^{58}\) Heath, *Drinking Occasions*, 66.

When women consumed wine as food (and not for ritual or leisure) it took place in the home, as a private occasion within the family. However, even women’s consumption in the home could have been monitored. As an elite wife, one of the primary responsibilities in the household was to safeguard the family’s possessions, including consumables like wine. The food itself became partly a feminine signifier because it was a resource over which women had some control or at least involvement. The dilemma that men must have faced was that by confining their wife or daughters to the home, they also gave women the power to indulge their alleged weakness for food and drink. Perhaps a solution to the problem came in the form of male household servants, who limited women’s access to food and drink. 

According to the accounts of Athenaeus written at the end of the second century A.D., the household cook during this period had become a male role. If women in the upper strata of society were only the overseers of the household and not physically in control of their own consumption, then they remained dependent on the servants of the kitchen. However, could the authority of the cook as a male overrule the authority of the wife, a female?

It would appear that economics also indirectly influenced the gendered consumption of wine. Those women who remained in the majority (the lower-class), had different (and possibly easier) access to food and wine than aristocratic women. With no servants to process and serve their food, women of the lower-class would have controlled and produced food and wine within the home, which suggests that they had free access to that wine. Making these women visible as historical subjects is difficult because they left behind little record of their existence. However, Plato does make reference to these (non-elite) women in *Laws* who, “tilling the ground and minding oxen and sheep and toiling just like slaves” are labeled as a kind of barbarian, far from the social and labor roles of elite women. If these women were involved in the production and the harvesting of food, then certainly they would have been involved in the allocation of food in the household,

---

60 Peter Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 109. He quotes a passage (Oik. 7.5-6) and show Isomachus and a young woman whose words are “how can I possibly help you? What power have I? Everything depends on you. My duty, as my mother told me, is sophronen.” “The virtue of sophrosyne is immediately defined by Ischomachus as adding to one’s possessions and safeguarding them (by implication), rather than depleting them, consuming them, running them down.

including their own.\textsuperscript{62} Thus, the economic class of a woman also made a difference in how she consumed. In short, women’s access to wine consumption was also a reflection of the social order. Sources such as Hesiod or Homer, depict an ideal form of consumption for women, though their limited scope does not encompass they ways in which all women would have behaved in ancient Greece.

Women were permitted considerable leeway in using wine for medical purposes. However, the evidence of women as health care providers is far from straightforward. In the Hippocratic corpus, women in such roles are very rarely mentioned; there is an omphaletomos, ‘cord-cutter,’ a few akestrides, healers who help in labour, and a iatreousa, ‘female healer,’ but it is assumed that midwives were in control of normal labour.\textsuperscript{63} Although it appears that males were generally the administrators of medicine, their pharmacology did not limit prescriptions of wine to men. Rather, they freely prescribed wine in a variety of potions or regimens in order to aid the health of women. Two remedies written in the mid-fifth century B.C., use wine. In hysterical suffocation wine is consumed internally:

If her mouth is closed tight and she is unable to speak, make her drink castoreum in wine.\textsuperscript{64}

The second remedy uses wine as a vapour. For displacement of the womb and if there is no menstrual flow, Hippocrates advised:

Put wild figs into the wine, and heat it and put a gourd around the mouth of the vessel in which the wine is heated. Then do as follows: cut the gourd through the middle and hollow it out, and cut off a bit of its top, as if you were making a nozzle for a bellows, so that the vapour can go through its channel and reach the womb.\textsuperscript{65}

Similar prescriptions also appear that prevent conception and induce abortion. Since all treatments are for conditions specific to women, they are intended to be used by (and only by) women, which means women were encouraged to use wine by men, in a specific environment and for a specific cause.

\textsuperscript{62} Garnsey, \textit{Food and Society in Classical Antiquity}, 111.
Finally, women also used wine in rituals. Much like the symposium, rituals occurred in public and private environments. Unlike the symposium, however, the ritual was a private occasion in a public space. Some rituals in which women took part were exclusive to women, and men could not attend or witness the event. Here women were free to act outside of male supervision. Traditional roles of elite women kept them relatively confined within the house, and occupied with the duties of maintaining the house. By participating in ritual, women shed the confinement and duties of the house, and likewise, were free to consume wine without consequence. Whatever occurred during these festivals, “must have provided a safety for parties, male as well as female: the women had their own festivals, at which, for a limited period, they escaped male domination; the men would know that this escape was temporary and strictly controlled-by them.”

Since men were not allowed to partake in festivals exclusive to women, and since men’s writings are almost the only source of written historical information, reporting the behavior of women during these festivals was inherently biased.

The play, *The Bacchae*, shows how one of these rituals could be misinterpreted by suspicious or fearful men that believed women’s natures were immoderate.

While I happen to be out of the country I heard about strange new evils throughout the city—that our women have abandoned their homes for the sham revelries of Bacchus frisking about on the dark-shadowed mountains honoring with their dances the latest god, Dionysus, whoever he is. They’ve set up their mixing bowls brimming with wine amidst their cult gatherings and each lady slinks off in a different direction to some secluded wilderness to service the lusts of men.

Although the women were not drunk (simply in a state of madness brought on by Dionysus) this statement demonstrates how women’s behavior was a source of worry or suspicion, and the belief that their lack of self control where wine and sex were concerned was a sign of their inherent weakness. The ritual, became a space where women could abandon their gender roles (as assigned by society) if they chose. Although, other accounts of Bacchanals from Diodorus and the like do not report sexual promiscuity or drunkenness as shown in the fears of Penthus in the *Bacchae*, rituals

---

frequently include pouring libations to honor the gods. In some of these descriptions, both men and women participated.

Examples such as the Bacchae, demonstrate why drinking was considered dangerous when it came to women. It shows the concern for both where and why the women were drinking as well as the fears about the consequences of their consumption. Further, it demonstrates that female consumption takes place outside of the walls of the city even for a ritual purpose, it moved women closer to nature, and closer to madness as opposed to the culture of a male-controlled city. 68

The consumption of olive oil in contrast to wine in both Athens and Sparta, does not seem to have been affected by gender and the sex of the consumer does not change the way olive oil was used. Since there was nothing comparable to the symposium or tavern for olive oil, there was little opportunity for the gendering of consumption through location. In ritual offerings, there appeared to be no restriction on the consumption of wine based on sex. There are no comparable festivals in which oil was consumed as an integral activity to the rites performed exclusive to one sex such as a ritual or festival for Bacchus where women may have been the only participants, and wine was an integral part of worship. 69 Aside from ritual offerings, olive oil was used in perfumes (frequently by women), as a fuel in lamps, in cooking, as soap, by athletes (both men and women), and in medical prescriptions. 70 Each of these uses functioned in public displays, and was not limited in private uses. There is nothing to suggest that the use of olive oil was circumscribed by regulations in the way wine was. The only laws written about olive oil, more specifically olive trees, forbid the destruction of an olive tree because the olive was such an important crop and the trees took several years to mature and to produce olives.

Hypothetically, in Athens a belief that the intoxication of wine would lead the feeble-minded and unrestrained women into an orgy with multiple male partners could support the restriction on women drinking wine in the presence of men or even drinking wine entirely. However, since women were not entirely forbidden from consuming wine

69 “Oil was important in the rituals accompanying death and burial and oil flasks were regular offerings in tombs.” J. Boardman “The Olive in the Mediterranean: Its Culture and Use,” Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London Series B, Vol. 275, No. 936 (1973) 191.
or drinking wine, I believe that limitations placed on women regarding the consumption had little to do with assuring strict paternal bloodlines, but instead reinforced their social role as a mother, wife, and “watchdog” of the house. In other words, prohibiting women from consuming wine in certain public environments such as the symposium or the tavern, also restrict women in other ways. Prohibiting the consumption of wine was only one of the limitations women faced in those settings. Since women’s consumption of olive oil was not subject to the same regulations as their consumption of wine, the ways in which the two products were consumed must have been a reflection about the social fears or anxieties already present in each city, respectively.
Chapter IV: Summary of Conclusions

This essay began with several questions: If evidence unites men and women with oil and wine in their early mechanical processing then how did the development of Mediterranean, and particularly Greek society gender the processing and concurrently their consumption? What is the cultural context that explains these changes? Why were women and men able to consume olive oil freely (in its variety of forms such as medicinal, cooking, etc.) while only women were gradually restricted in their consumption of wine? How did the production of these commodities change and did the change in production contribute to the gendering of consumption? My argument relies mainly on the probability that women could have done the work, rather than showing that they actually did. Although showing that women could have been involved in the production of wine and oil is relatively new to the history of ancient Greece, the limitation of this is that we are no closer to proving their role but simply creating another possibility. Evidence like the presses themselves, the physical location of the presses, and evidence of the social roles in Early Bronze Age communities all suggest that women could have been involved in the production of wine and oil. However, the clear regulations regarding women’s consumption by the Classical period made me ask why consumption was restricted based on gender, and what events had come before to create this distinction.

This thesis created two primary categories, production and consumption of wine and olive oil during the Bronze Age and Archaic Period, and production and consumption in the Classical and Hellenistic Period. Within those chapters, a chronology of change was described to make the fluidity of time and causality clear.

With the production of wine and olive oil in the Bronze Age and Archaic Period, while women maintained responsibility for the production or processing of food for the household, men slowly gained control of production (or the organization of production) outside the household as market economies developed, spurred on by a warrior-trader cultural and a patriarchal government. As gender distinctions and hierarchies were being created in response to modes of production, the evolution of economic classes was also affecting production and the ways in which women participated in production.
Aristocratic women’s households employed servants to produce wine and oil as needed, but the economic limitations of rural peasant households and poorer urban families meant that the women participated in a different way. Lower-class women, without the help of servants, were still responsible for producing enough wine and oil for household use, as well as a surplus for the chieftdom or city-state. The labor movement from private economies to a public industrialization changed the space which wine and oil were produced as well as those who were producing them. The presses that women had used to produce oil and wine for their houses and communities during the Bronze Age and Archaic Period, developed into much larger installations that could no longer be physically operated by women by the Classical and Hellenistic Period, and likewise robbed women of their authority over production.

The transformation of production and consumption of wine and olive oil was completed in ancient Greece during the Classical and Hellenistic Period. The literary evidence available indicates that women’s consumption of wine was differentiated from the consumption of men not only because of the psychotropic effects (which influenced the behavior of the consumer and caused him or her to think irrationally and have unrestrained sexual behavior) but because the spaces in which wine was leisurely consumed such as the symposium or tavern were places that were prohibited to women. Denying women’s participation in events where wine was consumed in close quarters with men may indicate social fears of in determinant paternity in a state where paternity distinguished inheritance and citizenship. However, it is more likely that women’s consumption of wine was not a direct result of inheritance laws. Rather, the restriction of respectable women’s participation in the symposium or tavern was a result of social rules which limited women’s interaction with men. Wine consumption was not the central element of concern, as women were segregated from men in almost all areas of society, including those where wine was not consumed and so, the consumption of wine was a manifestation of broader ideologies.

Together, the history of the production and the history of consumption of wine and olive oil in antiquity suggest that women’s authority as producers and consumers in the Bronze Age falls to the male dominance of new political arrangements. Governments, motivated by market economies and international trade, drove the development of
technology which enlarged the presses (to create greater quantities of oil and wine). This meant that everyday households could no longer accommodate the presses and the storage containers. The elite patriarchal structure that occasioned a technology which came to exclude women, also was responsible for developing social guidelines which restricted wine consumption for elite and “respectable” women. Because women’s consumption of olive oil was perceived as non-threatening in all of its uses (cosmetics, medicine, and religion in addition to its use as food) it was not controlled by social policies. The division of these processes is significant in that it establishes a distinction between the two products. The potential reason for this division is one that I have explained in terms of social and political structures.

Overall the history of the ancient Mediterranean proves that both production and consumption, while dependent on factors such as economics and location, are cultural phenomena that reveal larger social relationships. In ancient Athens, women’s confinement and segregation from men led to their limitation of consumption of wine. Thus, the production of wine (and not olive oil) was an organized (but possibly unconscious) political act, because it became gendered and the consumption of wine reflected social standards for behavior. The images of gendered consumption still continue today. However, with the introduction of various other types of alcoholic beverages such as beer and liquor, wine has become a drink associated with female consumption, rather than male consumption as in ancient Greece. Perhaps now, beer or whiskey might be drinks that define masculine consumption. In other words, the ways in which men and women chose to consume these drinks still make political and social statements. The gendered consumption of wine and olive oil in antiquity shows one part of this history, and can lead to new ways of relating gender to various histories of production and consumption.

I wanted to ask large questions about women’s role in culture, but more specifically, I wanted to look at that role through the use of technology. Women’s roles in history have been analyzed through the fields of ancient history, economic history, the history of technology, and women’s history, however, only when all of these systems are combined does a more complete picture of women’s role in culture emerge, often displacing prior theories. I wanted to take a more holistic approach in my study. Greek
antiquity is often treated as a homogeneous structure where Athens is used to exemplify all of antiquity. I chose a method which would allow me to get beyond Athens as the representation of antiquity. Instead, I chose to use Athens as part of a broader trend in Greek antiquity. Overall, I hoped to add a different perspective to women’s history and ancient history, and show how a singular methodology is not sufficient in writing a complete version of history.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Chadwick, John and Michael Ventris, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek, 2nd ed.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

Cline, Eric H. *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: International Trade and the Late Bronze Age Aegean* (Archaeopress, 1994).


