



# The Sacred Band: A History of Lovers and their Belovèds

*Michael Hone*

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## **The Sacred Band: A History of Lovers and their Belovèds** Michael Hone

As in all my books, the crucible here will be the love between men and boys, the Sacred Band being the finest, the most concrete example in the entire history of not only Greece, but the world. Love as a means of education, the task of the man being the betterment of his belovèd, standing loyally by his side, instructing him in the ways of men which are the ways of survival. A step-by-step apprenticeship, the end result the inculcation of courage so strong that, when captured, a lover begged the enemy to spear him in the chest and not the back, so his belovèd would not blush when he found the body. The man would have a daily story for the lad, that of the most glorious battles of them all, the Trojan War, eternal Marathon and Thermopylae, a suicide pact between friends, many of whom were lovers, all of whom died so that we, today, live free. This fully-illustrated book is an in-depth study that far exceeds the bounds of the Sacred Band, and encompasses the full history of Athens and Athenian lives, Sparta and its militaristic destiny, the historiography of Persia from its first king, Cyrus the Great, to its very last: the Great Alexander. There is not a single chapter on the love between men and boys, but let there be no doubt that such is the constant leitmotif from beginning to end, for it was the motor of Ancient Greece, beginning with hallowed Homer and the equally hallowed Achilles and Patroclus, and ending with Alexander and Hephaestion. And should the reader think I exaggerate the sexual aspect of Greek lives, Arrian claims that this is what Alexander himself said: "Sex and sleep alone make me conscious that I am mortal." I'm so convinced that this is the best book on the Sacred Band, and am so eager to have it read, that I'm offering it at the lowest price permitted by the editors.

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