This was an old custom on a small scale, but grew in importance from the late fifth century when both the Persian empire and its adversaries resorted to hiring Greek soldiers. A third comprised spasmodic, politically motivated consignments from non-Greek rulers, such as the payments made by Persia to one side or another for a century from the 420s till Alexander's conquest. (pp. 393-394)

**PERIODIC DESTRUCTIONS OF SILVER SYMPOTIC WARE**

After most Athenian silver sympotic ware, during the last desperate days of the Peloponnesian War, had been melted down to make coins, Lysias found himself in a situation in which he was forced to reveal the treasure chest that held his most prized possessions:

When he had sworn, invoking annihilation upon himself and his children if he did not save me on receipt of the talent, I went into my bedroom and opened the money-chest. Peison noticed it and came in; on seeing its contents he called two of his underlings and bade them take what was in the chest. Since he now had, instead of the agreed amount, gentlemen, three talents of silver, four hundred
cyzicenes, a hundred darics and four silver cups, I begged him to give me money
for my journey; but he declared that I should be glad enough to save my skin.

(Lysias XII, 11)

It may be observed, as also noted earlier, that no clay objects appear in Lysias’s treasure chest, nor, for that matter, in the treasure chest of any other Athenian that we read about. Peison—the thug sent by the Thirty Tyrants—displays no interest in collecting “precious clay objects” as ransom; and we do not find Lysias following Boardman’s lead and lauding the wonderful plastic qualities of clay or appealing to Peison to raid the cupboards of his kitchen. If Peison and his contemporaries had been Boardman’s disciples, they would have valued “clay objects” to such an extent that Lysias would have used such, had he had them, to bargain for his life: but alas! Peison and Lysias were Ancient Greeks rather than modern Classical scholars, archaeologists, or curators, and their values were different.

As for the preponderance of ceramics and dearth of silver in the archaeological record, Vickers provided a simple and convincing explanation: it was caused by the combined vicissitudes of looting, war, and greed, not to mention Christian iconoclasm (Artful Crafts, 1994, chap. 3). Little silverware survives simply because the metal itself was too valuable, and was melted down. Although sanctuaries such as the one at Delphi served as repositories for objects made of
precious metals, when faced with hardship, money was more useful than relics, and this plate was often melted down for currency. Another fate—common to both sanctuaries and cities—was looting. Examples include the repeated sackings of Miletus, when Xerxes looted its temple, the repeated looting of Delphi by Philomenus during the Sacred War, then later by the Gauls and by the Roman general and statesman Lucius Cornelius Sulla. Like other valuables, silver cups and vessels were seized by the victors, then over time recast, much as the Spanish did with the Inca and Aztec treasures and the Greeks did with what they had seized from the Persians. Gold and silver jewelry was also often melted down and recast—every generation in some periods, and at times even more frequently—as fashions changed. As a result, very little silver has survived in its original form . . . but such has been the fate of valuable commodities throughout history (See Artful Crafts, 1994, pp.55–66).

The main melting down of most of the best silver—perhaps even the gold—can be connected with confidence to the last desperate stages of the Great Peloponnesian War of 431-404 BCE and the period directly following it, the time of the Thirty Tyrants and their overthrow. The less ornate silver sympotic ware produced later (after 394 BCE, when Athens was under the Second Delian League) was also melted down, to fund the desperate attempt to fend off Philip of Macedon, and later Alexander. The fate of silver sympotic ware at Thebes and Corinth, as well as in the West, was the same, which was also the case in Ionia and the Aegean Islands. Few
such items survived into the Hellenistic Age, much less the Roman period. Fake antiques were
doubtless foisted off on Hellenistic and Persian collectors and connoisseurs. But hardly any of
these or of the authentic ones survived Christian hostility to homophobia.

The confident Athenians of the 5th century who made a lavish display of silver kraters\(^\text{29}\) to
celebrate the launching of the great expedition against Syracuse in 416 BCE (Diodorus Siculus
13.3.2) saw their silver dwindle by 403, so much so that \textit{in extremis}, they were even forced to
coin gold and bronze instead (Burn, \textit{Greece}, 297). The display of kraters in 416 marked the high
point of the elaborate use of silverware in symposia. The Athenians melted down gold and
bronze for the first time amid their desperate last stand before surrendering to the Spartans. As
for silver, two details reveal its absolute scarcity, and both show the difficult conditions into
which Athens had fallen: first, it ran out of silver because its slaves had escaped to Deceleia,
leaving its mines no longer productive; second, there was no more silver plate available to melt
down. While the Thirty Tyrants left in charge of Athens by Sparta (including two of Plato’s
uncles) and the other pro-Spartan oligarchs were in a good position to preserve some of their
silver plate, everything else the city could collect—\underline{including the silver plating that covered

\(^{29}\) A krater was a large vessel used to mix wine and water. At a symposium, kraters were placed in the center of the
room. Being large, they were not easily portable when full. Thus, the wine-water mixture would be withdrawn
from the krater with other vessels. At the beginning of each symposium a symposiarch, or “lord of the common
drink”, was elected by the participants. He would then assume control of the wine servants, and thus of the degree
of wine dilution and how it changed during the party, and the rate of cup refills. The krater and how it was filled
and emptied was thus the centerpiece of the symposiarch’s authority. An astute symposiarch should be able to
diagnose the degree of inebriation of his fellow symposiasts and make sure that the symposium progressed
smoothly and without drunken excess.
Phidias's colossal statue of Athena in the Parthenon—seems to have been melted down. That the city could find no more silver is strongly evinced by its sudden use of gold and bronze for coinage.

Similar fates befell the collections of silverware in the other great centers of the region—such as Syracuse, Taranto, Corinth, and, possibly even Thebes, which may have adopted silver symphotic ware—a destruction that happened long before the brutal Roman conquest of those once rich metropoleis. Thus, the conquering Romans acquired very few of the residual 5th-century pieces, though others were doubtless made, on a less elaborate scale, during the 4th and even the 3rd century in Alexandria, Antioch, Taranto, Syracuse, and Pergamon. Perhaps most of these had already been lost during the wars against Philip, Alexander, and his successors, and during those against Agathocles and Pyrrhus.

**Hellenistic and Roman Symphotic Ware**

Although we know less about Hellenistic dinnerware, often described paraded in Roman triumphs, we know about Roman. We do know the wealthy Romans of Pompeii had no such qualms as the Classical Greeks about depicting all sorts of orgies with boys. Clarke discusses the finding of the explicitly erotic "Menander Cups" mingled together with the other table silver in
Pompeii: “In particular, the secure archaeological context of the cups from the house of the Menander—found intact as their owner left them, together with 116 other silver articles—implies that such silver vessels with sexual representations could belong quite usually with the serving ware of a wealthy household” (Clarke, Lovemaking, 70). In his review, Bowersock emphasized another metallic cup showing “four sober philosophers in a bookish environment who reappear in the object’s upper register in four vivid scenes of copulation with boys.” (G.W. Bowersock, “Men and Boys,” NY Review of Books, September 24, 2009)

THE WARREN CUP: NOT AT ALL TYPICAL

Although far removed by time, place, and material, the 1st century silver cup acquired by Edward Perry Warren—a skyphos featuring scenes of homosexual pedication and thought to come from Bittir, a town near Jerusalem—has a few iconographical connections with the well-known erotic Greek ceramic vases made before 470 BCE. The iconographic sequence laid out by Beazley includes gift giving, the up-and-down gesture, and intercrural intercourse. Depictions of anal sex—pedication—in the early ceramics are extremely rare, with only some five specimens known. This practice was conceptualized as “treating the boy like a woman.” The proportion of