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Pederasty in ancient Greece: a view of a now forbidden institution

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PEDERASTY IN ANCIENT GREECE: A VIEW OF A NOW FORBIDDEN INSTITUTION

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Through Anthropological Lenses

The social institutions considered in this paper do not exist today. Today these ancient practices are considered so abhorrent as to have been made illegal. Specifically, this ancient Greek behavior is characterized today as pedophilia, forbidden under U.S. Code Title 18 Chapter 110 section 2251. Under the general rubric of child exploitation, this law states:

> Any person who employs, uses, persuades, induces, entices, or coerces any minor to engage in, or who has a minor assist any other person to engage in, or who transports any minor in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, or in any Territory or Possession of the United States, with the intent that such minor engage in, any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or for the purpose of transmitting a live visual depiction of such conduct…

Being found guilty of violating the laws of Title 18 Chapter 110, "Sexual Exploitation and Other Abuse of Children," results in a large fine and at least fifteen years of incarceration. Individuals with additional offences against this code, depending on the number of times they have violated it, receive the higher sentence of at least twenty-five years to thirty-five years imprisonment.[1]

However, in direct contravention to basic modern Western moral codes, this paper will discuss how upper-class male citizens of 5th century BCE Athens would have viewed pedophilia – especially pederasty – as not only a regular social interaction, but one blessed by the gods and essential to the function of a strong and stable society. In order to examine human behavior not tolerated today, the socially scientific viewpoint provides a rare tool which allows us to study events in the past which today are considered abhorrent or even illegal.

The ancient Greeks considered homosexuality between males of all ages, not just pederasty, quite differently than our modern concepts. A good example of adult male bonding is

[1] "Sexual Exploitation of Children," Title 18 *U.S. Code*, Sec. 2251. Available: https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/2251; accessed 3/26/2014.

given in "the Sacred Band of Thebes," CA 385 BCE. Here soldiers were intentionally recruited as 150 pairs of male lovers, the reason being that a soldier would fight for one he loves more strongly than for a citizen beside him.[2]

While attitudes on adult male homosexuality are rapidly changing today, it is apparent that socially accepted pederasty must be studied and examined through the lens of social sciences, and in the cultures far removed from our own.

Words of Love

The ancient Greek lexicon contains an abundance of words to describe love. In order to facilitate our discussion as to how the ancient Greeks spoke about love, sex, and relationships, we must find English definitions that consider the nuances of the vocabulary's cultural provenance. Just as more context is needed when an English speaker uses the word "love" to describe how they feel about someone or something, so too is the context necessary for each of the Greek words translated to "love" despite their comparatively increased specificity. The terms of particular interest to this discussion are *philia* and *eros*, and Aristotle's works provide contextual support for their cultural peculiarities.

Philia

The word *philia* describes a fondness and appreciation for one another. To the ancient Greeks, this included loyalties one would have to their family, job, and political community. It did not just mean friendship, yet friendship is the closest English term that approximates

[2] Louis Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization* (Harvard University Press, 2006), 70-72. David Leitao, "The Legend of the Sacred Band," in *The Sleep of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Greece and Rome*, ed. Martha Craven Nussbaum and Juha Sihvola (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 143-145.

Aristotle's explanation of *philia*. As Aristotle specifies, "things that cause friendship are: doing kindness; doing them unasked; and not proclaiming the fact when they are done."[3]

Aristotle subsequently enumerates three kinds of friendship:

a. Based on utility, where both people receive some benefit from each other, like a business partnership
b. The second describes relationships build on pleasure, where both people are drawn to each other because of personal traits like humor or good looks
c. long-term friendships constitute the third kind

The first two friendships form out of mutual need, in which the motive for friendship implies a pragmatic exchange. These kinds of friendships are more likely to be short-lived, as one's needs and pleasures change over time.

The third type, the long-term friendship, by comparison, essentially includes a moral dimension. Long-term friendship is based on goodness, *arete*, where both people admire each other's goodness and help each other strive for goodness. The foundation for the endurance of this third type of love or friendship requires the mutual appreciation of each member's cultivation of their innate qualities that lead to good practices.[4] The cultivation takes time, as does the mutual appreciation, and are not inhibited by the fickle motivations of self-interest. Since goodness is an enduring quality, friendships based on it are long lasting. This third type of friendship can also include the other two types specified above. This union of friendship types

[3]Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book II, 35.

[4] Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 356; Arthur W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study of Greek Values* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1975), 70-73; Victoria Wohl, *Love Among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 36, 38.

occur because friends who strive for goodness can also be attracted by other qualities of utility and pleasure; the enduring friendship does not categorically exclude utilitarian or pleasure motives. Friendships of this third type are rare and take time to develop, but Aristotle considers the best. *Kakos*, or bad, people can have the first two kind of friendship, but not the best kind, as through their inherent qualities, they cannot be friends for each other's sake.[5]

Eros

The word *eros* is often translated as nothing more than pure sexual desire, which may be often paired with obsessiveness. It is characterized by *love* and *lust* without altruism, but always a sense of *longing*. While we can consider these general terms for the ancient Greek meaning of *eros,* the nuance introduces another dimension of emotional complexity including ambition, political aspirations, and patriotism. There can even be an aggressive and horrific aspect to *eros.* And yet, it does not necessarily always imply sexual arousal. As long as there was intense yearning, bodily or spiritually, it was usually viewed as *eros* by the ancient Greeks.[6]

While Aristotle's writings offer deep and colorful insights into *philia* and *eros*, his view is not monolithic. For example, when reading Plato, *eros* may be the main topic of his essay, but it is not exclusive of *philia*.[7] While *philia* is used as a description for the love towards for a sibling or parent, *philia* can also be used it to declare love for a sexual partner in the ancient Greek cultural setting. Thus, *philia* and *eros* were not mutually exclusive ideals of friendship.

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[5] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII; Juha Shivola, "Aristotle on Sex and Love," in *The Sleep of Reason*, 201, 202.

[6]K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 42-45; Paul W. Ludwig, *Eros and Polis: Desire and Community in Greek Political Theory*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9; Bruce S. Thornton, *Eros: The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview of HarperCollins, 1997), 5.

[7] Reeve, *Plato On Love* xvi; Louis Pratt, *Eros at the Banquet: Reviewing Greek with Plato's Symposium*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 5; Daniel H. Garrison, *Sexual Culture in Classical Culture* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 153-157.

The complexity and juxtaposition of the recognized elements which define ancient Greek concepts of love illustrate the difficulty of choosing appropriate terminology which will satisfy the modern reader while preserving the ancient subtleties. Historians must be aware that, while Aristotle and Plato are the authorities on the philosophy on ancient Greek love, we cannot assume that these philosophical values were widely shared or honored by other members of the ancient Greek world. Nonetheless, their examples reveal a practical foothold by which we can investigate ancient Greek sexual practices.

More Vocabulary[8]

Now that we have discussed the Greek vocabulary for love, we need to establish the terminology for the pederastic actors. In other words, how did the Greeks call themselves as older male lover and how did they address the objects of their affection and desire within pedarastic and homosexual relationships.

The passive partner in a pederastic relationship was called various terms which seems to have depended on context. In poetry, the word *pais* (plural *paides*) is the most often used. The poetic use of *pais* makes a specific reference, while general use is very non-specific, meaning 'child,' either male or female, as well as a 'slave.' In a homosexual relationship, *pais* primarily refers to a male youth who has already grown to full height, but is yet to grow facial hair. We shall discuss the appearances of the pederastic pair below when we examine exemplar vase paintings. Scholars, however prefer the specific ancient Greek name for the passive partner, *eromenos* (plural *eromenoi*), this is the masculine passive participle of *eron*. The term *eromenos* means ‘being passionately desired.’ This term can also mean ‘beloved.’ The associations

[8] Unable to read ancient Greek, I must defer to the translations of the authors of my secondary sources with additional advice from my advisor Dr. Bazemore.

between *eromenos* and *pais* is further emphasized the form of *paidika*, the neuter plural form of the adjective *paidikos*. While technically plural, *paidika* is often treated by ancient Greek writers syntactically as if it were masculine singular, meaning 'childlike things.'[9]

While the terms discussed above reflect the role played in the pederastic relationship the term *kalos*, meaning beauty, is used to express the physical attributes of the beloved. *Kalos* is used not only in poetry and literature, but, on vase paintings, was often written next to the figure, frequently after the depicted person's name. When applied to a human, an animal, an object, and a place, it encompasses the English words 'beautiful,' 'handsome,' 'pretty,' 'attractive,' and 'lovely.' There is no distinction between 'beautiful' and 'handsome' for females and males like there is in English, scholars state that we can only understand to which gender *kalos* is applied based on its declension. One was not *kalos* in ancient Greece based on their morals, actions, or intelligence: being *kalos* was purely aesthetic.[10]

In the pederastic relationship as well as the adult homosexual one, the senior and more active member of the couple is called the *erastes* (plural *erastai*) while this word is obviously also derived from the participle *eron,* the *-es* ending is that of an agent noun, one who does things.[11]

For the purpose of our discussion, we will limit our terms to *eromenos* and *erastes* for the pederastic couple. Poetry however, using the word *pais* is translated as 'boy;' in this event the translator's words will be used.

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[9] All terms were discussed with Dr. Bazemore. Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (New York: Harper, 1883).

[10] Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 15, 16; Wohl, *Love Among the Ruins*, 42, 43, 45.

[11] K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 16; Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ; Whol, *Love Among the Ruins*, 57.

Symposium

The term *symposium* literally translates to "drinking together." To the Greeks it was a social institution where elite male citizens would recline on couches, drink, and converse. Women were not a part of a symposium with the exception of non-Athenian or lower class Athenian women who were hired as entertainment. The men reclined on couches that were arranged in a rectangle around the room. *Symposia* could have as many as fifteen participants or as few as three.[12]

Age of *Eromenos*

The only indication that we have of the age of the *eromenos* is the use of the word *pais* and *paidika.* While *pais* does mean a prepubescent child, the use of *pais* for *eromenos* is akin to the modern use of 'kid' from anything from a newborn to a mature adult. From the evidence scholars are led to believe that boys were eligible to become *eromenoi* from the first evidence of puberty until they were able to grow a full beard. Considering the biological evidence from ancient Greece, these parameters would provide us with an estimated age range of about 15 to 18. We cannot rule out the fact that younger boys were not the object of sexual desire, howver, these considerations present us with the ideal which society wished to represent.[13] The flexibility of the meaning of *youth* reflects the fluid nature of social labels and that, with any society, social rules and guidelines are always challenged and changed.

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[12] Pratt, *Eros at the Banquet*, 14; J. Bremmer, "Adolscents, *Symposia*, and Pederasty," in *Sympotica: A Sympoisium on the Symposion*, edited by Oswyn Murray (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 137-139.

[13] Marilyn B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, (Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 10, 11; Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 20; Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 275.

The Differences between Modern and Ancient Attitudes

Having now established a working set of definitions for this analysis, we can begin to compare and contrast the modern and ancient attitudes regarding homosexual relationships. In pursuit of verbal precision, let us begin with differences in vocabulary. Pedophilia is the term commonly used today to describe the attitude of children as sexual objects. These children could be either male or female. Pederasty on the other hand is a much stronger term focusing on the physical sexual relationship. In the gender segregated world of the ancient Greeks, society did not recognize erotic relationships between women. The term pederasty therefore is specific to male relations.

Throughout the ancient Greek world pederasty was a deeply engrained social customs whose terms and conditions were often codified in law. An *erastes* would court an *eromenos*, who, joining in a union, became a combination of something akin to a protégé *and* a sexual object. Both partners were expected to benefit from this relationship. The youth would be taught the political and social mores of their upper-class society in order to mature into a respectable citizen. The adult would have an opportunity to pass on his knowledge, gain companionship, and enjoyed the respect of his peers for this relationship.[14]

Origins of Greek Pederasty

The origin of socially institutionalized pederasty of ancient Greece is heatedly debated among scholars. Although many scholars would like to look to earlier civilizations, such as the Minoans in Crete and Myceneans from the Peloponnese, there is however, no act of pederasty

[14]Skinner, *Sexuality*, 10; Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus*, 286, 287; David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 54-56.

depicted in their own art. No written literature survives from this time.[15]

Greek legend however does preserve the origins of pederasty. The legend states the Mycenaean king, Eurystheus (ca. 1250 BCE), who banished the sons of Heracles (Roman Hurcules) from the Peloponnese. These sons roamed about the land, lingering in Doris in central Greece. From their settlement there, they receive the tribal name Dorians.[16]

A peculiar practice spread by the Dorians through their conquest of the surrounding territory was the tradition of having youths attach themselves to older warriors for social initiation. The older warrior would then provide military training and practical instruction to his protégé. Further, Aristotle records that the Dorians themselves believed their laws were descended from the Minoan King Minos. Aristotle concludes that the Dorians on Crete institutionalized pederasty to control their population.[17]

Archaeological evidence for Cretan pederastic relationships can be found on the island of Thera (modern Santorini). In the vicinity of what later became a gymnasium, graffiti inscribed on the rocks of a cliff there chronicles in vivid language the anal penetration of the youths. Some graffiti appears to be harmless boasting, saying such things as "Lakydidas is good," "Eumelos is the best dancer," and "Pykimedes is the best of the family of Skamotas." Other graffiti unambiguously declares sexual activity: "Pheidippidas fucked, Timagoras and Empheres and I fucked". Other explicitly describe pederasty, "By Delphinos, Krimon fucked a boy, Bathykles' brother [or son]" and "Krimon fucked with Amotion here". The name Krimon is

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[15] Jacob Burckhardt, *History of Greek Culture* (Mineola, N. Y.: Dover Publications, 2002), 34, 45; William A. Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 17, 18, 25, 26.

[16] Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy*, 28; William H. Stiebing, "The End of the Mycenean Age," *Biblical Archeologist* 43, no. 1 (1980): 8.

[17] Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy*, 29-31; Karl Otfried Müller, *The History and Antiquities of the Doric Race: Volume 2* (South Carolina: Nabu Press, 2011) 310;Aristotle, *Politics,* 1271b, 1272a 12; Bernard Sergent, *Homsexuality in Greek Myth*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 11-12, 40-45.

mentioned quite often, so much so that when the graffiti was first published in 1898, Krimon was believed to be one very licentious pederast.[18]

In art, the oldest depiction Greek pederasty is an Archaic bronze plaque from Crete, dated to the second half of the seventh century BCE. A man with a bow is grabbing the forearms of a young hunter carrying a wild goat. They both have short tunics, but the younger hunter's genitals are revealed, leading scholars to interpret a scene of pederasty. Several other bronze plaques found in the same area have representations long-haired youths and bearded older men, with hunting equipment and animals.[19]

Rituals of Institutionalized Pederasty

The Greek historian Ephorus (ca. 400-300 BCE) describes a Cretan ritual which is widely accepted as the origin for Greek pederasty. Further, Cretan pederastic relationships, because of extensive legal rulings, are the most well documented of all in Greece. A youth of the aristocracy, before his entrance into society, is ritually kidnapped by an adult male of aristocratic standing. This is done with the consent of the boy's father or guardian. The man took the boy into the wilderness for a "honeymoon," where they spent two months hunting and feasting with their friends. The youth then lived in a type of public intimacy with his lover. The function of the institution, besides teaching the youth adult skills, was supposed confirm the status of the best man and to offer both the lover and beloved the chance to give proof of a noble character.[20]

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[18] Percy, *Pederasty and Pedagogy*, 31; John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 47.

[19] John Boardman. *Greek Sculpture: The Classical Period: A Handbook* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 47; Robert B. Koehl, "The Chieftan Cup and a Minoan Rite of Passage," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 106 (1986): 108.

[20] Gloria Ferrari, *Figures of Speech: Men and Maidens in Ancient Greece* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 127; Srtabo, *Geography*, 10.21.4; D. B. Dodd, "Athenian Ideas about Cretan Pederasty," in Thomas K.

As a sign of his new status, the youth would then receive a suit of armor, a mantle, an ox, and a cup, tokens that would admit him into the army, the assembly, and the symposium. Spreading from the Dorian Cretans influenced by the Cretans, a young Spartan would be attached to an older male teacher, t, the Dorian Spartans as well are known to be attached to an older male teacher, though sources say sexual acts between the two was forbidden.[21]

Strabo gives a detailed account of the importance of the social institution of pederasty:

> It is disgraceful for those who are handsome in appearance or descendants of illustrious ancestors to fail to obtain lovers, the presumption being that their character is responsible for the [pederastic couple] receive honors both in dances and the races, they have positions of the highest honor, and are allowed to dress in better clothes than the rest given to them by their lovers. Even after they have grown to manhood, they wear a distinctive dress which is intended to make known the fact that each wearer was an *eromenos*.[22]

Strabo also notes that it is not beauty but courage, which made a young boy desirable for this relationship.[23]

Whether pederasty had been practiced in earlier ages or not, it was only in the middle Archaic Age that a great shift in art occurred with its focus on pederastic depictions. Vases of an earlier date were decorated in a different manner, covered in geometric shapes and designs with occasional depictions of human forms, animals and objects which appear only at the later stages of this artistic style. Abruptly after ca. 650 BCE vase paintings began to emphasize human figures. The pederastic influences of archaic art will be discussed in detail below. It is at this time that the institutions associated with socialized pederasty begin to play a prominent role in Greek culture. These institutions include: the symposium, the physical seclusion of women, and

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Hubbard (ed.), *Greek Love Reconsidered*, (New York 2000). 33-41; Ephorus of Cyme, Fragment 149, found in Thomas K. Hubbard, *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 72-73.

[21] Ferrari, *Figures of Speech*, 127; Strabo, *Geography*, 10.21.4.

[22] Strabo, *Geography*, 10.21.4.

[23] Strabo, *Geography*, 10.21.4; Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 56-57.

gymnastic nudity. Whatever date or point of origin for the practice of pederasty in Greece, it is an undeniable fact open pederastic relationships began to be connected with the state form of the polis starting about the end of the seventh century BCE. Pederasty became a vital institution in the life of the polis rather than a remnant of old forgotten customs.[24]

The Social Upheavals of Pederasty

Adapting the Mythological Tradition to Emerging Pederastic Norms

With the emergence of the intuition of pederasty in classical Athens, myths which originally had no homosexual erotic elements were changed to include these types of relationships, especially that of pederasty.[25] Although myths recorded before 600 BCE portrayed Greek gods and heroes as heterosexually promiscuous, after that time pederastic episodes were introduced into the established mythology. As it did not exist before, these pederastic scenes became newly created literature. Again, we will examine the evidence of vase painting for this transition below. It is the lyric poets who first present us with these new mythological episodes. While neither challenging the heterosexuality of the Olympians, nor restructuring the basic society of Olympus these poets assigned at least one *eromenos* to every important god as well as many legendary figures. It is noteworthy that the only male deity not subjected to a pederastic episode was Ares, the god of war. Almost two centuries later, the Greek comic poets, would use the introduction of the immortals' *eromenoi* as a satirical routine on stage.[26]

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[24] Percy, *Pederasyt and Pedagogy*, 48, 49; Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 185-203, 205-206; Ferrari, *Figures of Speech*, 129.

[25] H. A. Shapiro, "Eros in Love: Pederasty and Pornography in Greece," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* edited by Amy Richlin. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 58.

[26] Percy, *Pederast and Pedagogy*, 54; Shapiro, "Eros in Love," 60; Halperin, *One Hundred Years*, 77, 82, 86.

In these new stories, the *eromenoi* of the gods were heroes, either half or fully mortal. These heroic *eromenoi* would in turn, upon reaching adulthood, become *erastes* themselves. They did not invent pederastic myths about the gods to excuse a human custom that they found immoral, but rather they considered pederasty an improvement over an earlier, and what they considered more primitive, system. Immortal approval of pederastic couples provided mythological legitimization for this growing custom.[27] Among the numerous examples of the changing of mythology to include pederastic relations, this paper will provide only two, that of Zeus and Ganymede, and that of Achilles and Patroclus.

Zeus and Ganymede

Zeus, as most school children know, was the king of the gods of the Greek pantheon. Ganymede was a young half divine Trojan boy, son of a great hero and of the daughter of the river Scamander. Homer described the relationship between Zeus and Ganymede in the following way:

> … Tross [was] king among the Trojans, and from Tross three peerless sons were born, Ilus, Assaracus, and godlike Ganymede who was born the fairest of mortal men; wherefore the gods took him up on high to be cupbearer to Zeus by reason of his beauty, that he might dwell with the immortals.[28]

Homer does not depict in anyway, or even infer, a sexual relationship between Ganymede and Zeus.

However lyric poetry of the sixth century BCE presents a vastly different picture. For at least one poet depicts Zeus and Ganymede as the perfect model of a pederastic relationship. Indeed, the example of the king of gods is used as a justification for pederasty on earth:

> The love of boys is sweet. Even the king

[27] Sergent, *Homsexuality in Greek Myth*, 262-265; Percy, *Pederast and Pedagogy*, 55.

[28] Homer, *Iliad*, 20.230-235.

> Of gods, the son of Kronos, loved a boy
> Ganymede, and he took him to his home
> Olympus, and he gave divinity
> To him, because he had the lovely bloom
> Of youth. Don't be surprised, Simonides,
> To see me love and serve a handsome boy.[29]

Achilles and Patroclus

A similar situation occurs with Achilles' relationship with Patroclus. In the *Illiad*, Homer depicts this pair as very close, but not physically intimate:

> Patroclus-the man I loved beyond all other comrades, loved as my own life-I've lost him… My spirit rebels-I've lost the will to live… Let me die at once… since it was not my fate to save my dearest comrade from his death.[30]

Although Homer is specific in describing the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus as one of love, Homer is also specific in indicating that the sexual partner of Achilles is Bryseis, his slave woman. However, by the time of Plato, it is generically accepted that Patroclus and Achilles:

> … the man whom the gods honored above all was Achilles… they sent him to the islands of the blessed… Out of loyalty to his lover Patroclus, he chose without hesitation to die-not to save him, but to avenge him; for Patroclus had already been killed. The gods were full of admiration and gave him the highest possible honor, because he valued his lover so highly.[31]

Because of the closeness in age between Achilles and Patroclus, arguments occurred in the ancient world as to who was the *erastes* and who was the *eromenos*. A speaker in Plato's *Symposium*, Phaedrus, contends that Achilles was the *eromenos* and Patroclus the *erastes*:

> Incidentally, Aeschylus' view, that it was Achilles who was in love with Patroclus, is nonsense. Quite apart from the fact that he was more beautiful than Patroclus…and had not yet grown a beard, he was also, according to Homer, much younger. And he must have been younger because it is an undoubted fact that the gods…are most impressed and pleased, and grant the

[29] Theognis of Megera, 1345-50. The dates of Theognis cannot be more exact than the general sixth century BCE.

[30] Homer, Illiad, 16.95-117.

[31] Plato, *Symposium* 179-180.

> greatest rewards, when the younger man is loyal to his lover, than when the lover is loyal to him.[32]

Ideal Masculinity

Stories of heroes give good insight into the ideals of cultures to define masculinity. Homer's *Iliad*, one of the earliest pieces of literature from Ancient Greece, gives us the story of Achilles and his heroic exploits during the Trojan War (1260-1180 BCE). While heroes are usually portrayed as larger-than-life, and set up standards almost impossible to achieve, their actions reveal an ideal that the ancient Greeks admired and revered. Throughout the *Iliad* Achilles is driven by a competitive ambition to distinguish himself from others. An ancient Greek man would strive to distinguish himself in such a manner.[33]

Documented Pederastic Relationships

As pederasty was an institutionalized aspect of the upper-class and the elite males' life, it was by necessity documented in the historical record. We will examine a few of the more well-known examples of pederastic relationships of ancient Greece.

Perhaps the most famous example of a pederastic couple in ancient Greece would be that of Harmodius and Aristogiton. Their pederastic relationship was also politicized in a highly visible act of assassination and revolution. In considering this act we must note that Harmodius did not reach out to other older members of his social class, but rather limited his actions to that of his lover.

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[32] Plato, *Symposium*, 178a-185c: 183.

[33] Thomas Van Nortwick, *Imagining Men: Ideals of Masculinity in Ancient Greek Culture*, (California: Praeger Publishers, 2008), 1-22; Daniel Ogden, "Homosexuality and Warfare in Ancient Greece," in *Battle in Antiquity*, edited by Alan B. Lloyd (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2009), 123-125.

After the death of the tyrant Peisistros in 527 BCE, his two sons Hipparchus and Hippias then took control of the affairs of Athens. Among the many abuses of these tyrants, Hipparchus, against all moral practices, attempted to seduce Harmodius. Having rejected the tyrant, Harmodius told his *erastes*, Aristogiton, about this attempt at seduction. Hipparchus, retaliated for this rejection in a brutal and public shaming of Harmodius' family. The quadrennial Panathenaic festival was the single most important event for the state and people of Athens. It was only at the Panathenaic festival that young citizen women of marriageable age were allowed to show their faces in public. Participation in the Panathenaic events brought great public honor and visibly established the members of the ruling elite among their community. Hipparchus invited Harmodius' younger sister to play the very visible and honorable roll of *kanephoros,* the carrier of a ceremonial offering basket for the dedication of the goddess Athena. When the young girl went to perform her duties, Hipparcus publicly chased her away proclaiming that she was not a virgin and could not participate in these rites. So great was his humiliation that Harmodius began to plan for the assassination of the tyrants and abolish their tyranny.[34]

When the day arrived in which the assassination was to take place, the two lovers were managed to kill only one of the tyrants, Hipparcus, before they themselves were captured and killed.[35] Although Harmodius and Arisotgiton's attempt at assassination was only partially successful, their bold action incited the Athenians to revolt and overthrow this tyrant. With these events, the reputation of the lovers was cemented as the defenders of democracy, as tyrannicides who saved Athens from the Tyranny of Hippias and Hiparcus. To the ancient Greeks, these two

[34] Heroditus, *The Histories*, 6.123; Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 6.54-6.56; S. Sara Monoson, "The Allure of Harmodius and Aristogeiton," in *Greek Love Reconsidered* edited by Thomas K. Hubbard (Wallace Hamilton Press: New York, 2000), 42.

[35] Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 6.57-6.59; Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, XVIII, 2. Aristotle claims it was another son of Peisistras, a half-brother to Hipparchus named Thessalos who attempted to court Harmodius.

men were considered the ideal pederastic couple and were remembered in history as tyrannicides who saved Athens from the tyranny of Hipparchus, a member of the ruling class.[36]

Another well documented example of pederasty is that of Agathon and Pausanias. Even in the ancient world, this couple was known for their extreme devotion to one another. Agathon, the *eromenos*, was a tragic poet in ancient Athens, and most famously hosted the banquet which is the setting for Plato's *Symposium.* In this work, Agathon is given a central role in the description of the god Eros, or love. Little is known of Pausanias beyond his relationship with Agathon, however ancient authors depict this relationship has an ideal pederastic relationship. Pausanias was a decade older than Agathon and their relationship began when Agathon was eighteen years old. So devoted were they to one another that neither man took a wife and when Agathon emigrated to Macedonia, Pausanias followed.[37]

Pederasty as a Political Tool

Pederasty was a custom by its very nature limited to the aristocracy. Courtship required the requisite amount of both leisure time and money, resources available only to the wealthier classes. *Erastes* were expected to provide to their *eromenos* a substantial amount of attention and a wide variety of courtship gifts. In a society where a majority of Greek men existed at the subsistence level, pederastic relationships were denied to any but the rich.[38]

Pederastic relationships, limited as they were to the upper classes, became a topic of controversy in class conflicts. Athenian tradition strongly associated pederasty with politics. Scholars identify attempts by upper-class pederasts to attempt to fit the practices into Athens'

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[36] Heroditus, *The Histories*, 5.55; Monoson, "The Allure," 43-45; Ludwig, *Eros and Polis*, 30.

[37] Plato, *Symposium*, 178-185: 180-182; Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 84; Ludwig, *Eros and Polis*, 48-50.

[38]Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 9; Ludwig, *Eros and Polis*, 28, 29. Skinner, *Sexuality*, 140-144.

developing constitution by giving pederasty a noticeable place in the foundational mythology of their democracy, as seen with Harmodius and Aristogiten above. The institution of pederasty therefore was used by the upper class to consolidate wealth and power, by using the exclusivity of this relationship, with its secret influences and connections, to the perceived detriment of the poorer classes. [39]

Indeed, the opposition to homosexuality in ancient Greece had no relation to the form of sexual intercourse practices but was rather due to its association of pederasty with elitist self-indulgence and corruption. In order that the pederastic relationship be legitimate, the ancient Greeks, in contrast to modern morés, regarded adolescent male citizens as independent actors able to make rational decisions about sex while being capable of maintaining their dignity and behaving with honor in a homoerotic relationship. [40]

Pederastic Space

Pederasty was so highly institutionalized in ancient Athens that the entire educational system was designed to ensure a monogamous pederastic relationship. One primary objective was to protect young boys from the unwanted attentions of their school masters. All relations between the schoolboy and school master were highly regulated and public officials were even appointed to make sure that good moral orders were kept. Aeschenes reports that the law forbade the schools to open before sun rise or stay open after dark, and strictly regulated who could enter and under what circumstances.[41] Further, the age of sudents and teachers were

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[39] Skinner, *Sexuality*, 146, 118; Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 9.

[40] Hubbard, *Homosexuality* 55-57; Skinner, *Sexuality*, 124, 16.

[41] Aeschines, *The Speeches of Aeschines*, trans. Charles Darwin Adams (Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2007), 184, 185; David William Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 176.

regulated. Others made it illegal for unauthorized people to even enter schools. Among these laws were regulations about specific ages for those attending and teaching in these schools. Even accompanying slaves were put under supervision, and in some contexts were prohibited from entering the *gymnasia*. This in turn ended up making the *gymnasia* a sort of venue for freeborn individuals to court each other:[42]

> Solon the great lawgiver lays down explicitly the time of day when a free boy should go to school, how many other children should go with him, and the time he should leave. [Solon's laws] forbid the teachers to open the schools and the athletic trainers to open the wrestling schools before the sun is up and instructs them to shut before sunset. [Solon] holds seclusion and darkness in particular suspicion. As to the young pupils, [Solon] prescribes who they should be and what ages, and the official who is to be responsible for them.[43]

Pederasty and Class: Emerging Social Tensions

Athens was unique among the ancient Greek world for its development of democracy. This growing belief of equality between the classes stands in direct contrast to all aristocratic ideals, among them pederasty. But even with its citizens theoretically equal, Athenian politics was still controlled by an elite and wealthy group of citizens who were all interconnected through marriage. If all citizens were truly equal under law, then those with more should no longer display their greater means through the conspicuous display of their wealth and possessions, including their *eromenoi*.[44] These social tensions were recorded by the Athenian historian Thucydides, who, writing in late the fifth century BCE, says:

> …it is only lately that [Athenian] rich old men left off the luxury of wearing undergarments of linen, and fastening a knot of their hair with a tie of golden grasshoppers… a modest style of

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[42] Aeschines, 184, 185; Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, 106; T. F. Scanlon, *Eros and Greek Athletics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 272.

[43] Aischines, *Against Timarchos* 6.2-11, in Hubbard 131-132.

[44] Skinner, *Sexuality*, 112-15; Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus*, 302.

> dressing, more in conformity with modern ideas, was first adopted by the Spartans, the rich doing their best to assimilate their way of life to that of the common people.[45]

Despite these democratic ideals, however, there existed still a great disparity between the distribution of wealth between the classes.[46] Most of the Athenian population worked for a living, usually as craftsmen or small farmers. Only five to ten percent of the population was able to live off of their investments, such as farms or trading ships. Out of the entire Athenian population, only a few hundred families possessed enough wealth to sponsor the arts or afford to outfit a warship for the benefit of the state. On the other extreme of the economic scale, the stipend given for attending the assembly or serving on a jury equaled only about half a workman's daily wage. Despite this, Athenians themselves rarely acknowledged the division between the classes out of fear of civil disturbance. Rather, they glossed over the economic gap, and the wealthy, as Thucydides has told us, often voluntarily toned down their shows of wealth. Some wealthy went even so far as to forgo living in opulent housing, while those of lesser means comported themselves as though they were not at a material disadvantage.[47]

When discussing the complexity of pederastic relationships, it must be noted that the idea of "class" was determined solely by wealth, *aristoi*, a metric which could fluctuate or disappear. "Status," on the other hand, was determined by birth, patrimony, and actions of *arete*. This second group the Athenians designated as *eupatridai*. An *aritos* could be an *eupatridai,* but an *eupatridai* did not necessarily have to be an *aritsos*. In other word the *eupatridae* could have lost their fortunes but could retain their noble name. The most famous example of the latter is Solon,

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[45] Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian* War, 1.6.3-4.

[46]I. Morris, *Archaeology as Cultural History: Words and Things in Iron Age Greece* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 113-119; J. Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 192.

[47] J. N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1997), 233-34; Skinner, *Sexuality*, 115.

the great law giver of Athens and one of the seven sages of ancient Greece.[48] Another example of an impoverished member of the *eupatridae* was Hesiod, the famous Beotian lyric poet.[49] Class and status were the deciding factors of a citizen's social rank.[50]

The class of the *aristoi* and those of the *eupatridai* who could afford it pursued activities like athleticism, horse breeding, participating in *symposia*, and, most important for the present study, homoerotic pederastic love affairs. The pursuit of this lifestyle came with the of effort maintaining traditions established by their aristocratic and *eupatridai* ancestors. While internal rivalry was rampant within this group, group identity was very strong in the effort to distinguish themselves from both those with wealth but of lesser birth as well as the general poor. The aristocracy maintained the ideal that high-birth was linked with the desirable traits of being physically attractive, *kalos*, and the possession of moral excellence, *arete*. *Kalos k'agathos* was a term used among the upper class to describe these two characteristics of, "beautiful and good."[51]

Ancient Greek moral thought dictated that personal ethics were directly related to personal wealth. In such an ethical code, poverty made someone morally suspect. The necessity for work was frowned upon as the need of money, by its very nature, made the poor person greedy, wicked, and ignorant in the eyes of the wealthy elite. On the other hand, for the wealthy Athenian nobleman, the appreciation of merit and beauty was the defining characteristic which influenced the discourse of their pederastic relationships. The ideal of the virtue of the older lover, the *erastes*, were especially stressed. The *erastes* was expected to uphold the epitome of integrity, courage, and manliness, and to be able to pass the qualities down to his *eromenos*.

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[48] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1273b 35-1274a 21; Plutarch, *Solon's Life*; Herodotus, *Histories* 1.30.

[49] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, *passim*.

[50] Skinner, *Sexuality*, 116.

[51] Garrison, *Sexual Culture*, 157; Skinner, *Sexuality*, 116.

This pedagogical aspect of their relationship is the primary justification of pederasty as a social institution.[52] In other words, pederastic relationships were formed for the very purpose of passing down aristocratic ideals in a manner which is strictly contained within the aristocratic class.

An especially useful area in which to contrast modern sexual morés with those of ancient Athens is their attitude towards their wedded wives. Being attracted to women in Ancient Athens was not a matter of nature but of preconceived ethical laws. For a young Athenian male citizen in the fifth century BCE being attracted to women was completely incompatible with being attracted to male youths. As Plato so vividly tells us, lust for a female, either free or an educated courtesan, demanded the male to surrender to his lust and his impulse while placing himself in subjugation to a courtesan's will. This was an undesirable and, to the ancient Athenian, risible situation for a full Athenian male citizen. [53]

At the other extreme of the erotic spectrum, desiring a boy was a pure form of love that was separate from just base carnal desire that was separate and far exceeded. One arena, which we have briefly discussed above, of homoerotic pederastic behavior is securely based in the political arena. Although in this paper we have concentrated our attention on Harmodius and Aristogiton, there were also other pederasty relationships which were politically charged. [54]

The association between pederasty and politics were so close that oligarchs also viewed the bond between *erastai* and *eromenoi* as a device especially poised to overthrow despotism.

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[52] Skinner, *Sexuality*, 116, 117; K. J. Dover, "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behavior," in *Sexuality and Gender in the Classical World: Readings and Sources*, edited by Laura K. McClure (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 27-29.

[53] Plato, *Symposium*, 184e, 182d,192b; Dover, "Classical Greek Attitudes," 29-31.

[54] T. K. Hubbard, "Popular Perceptions of Elite Homosexuality in Classical Athens," *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 6 no.1 (1998): 48-78.

The legend of Harmodius and Aristogiten, told and retold not only by Athenians but by important authors such as Herodotus, a Halicarnassian, established the pederastic relationship as a symbol of courage, and their relationship the foundation upon which the courage was based. [55] As the story was told and retold generation after generation Greek mythological tradition transformed pederastic relationships into the primary form of opposition to tyranny. Therefore, the social, moral, and emotional ties of pederasty has been placed into a position of ethical superiority, extolled by supporters as something better and more productive of a good citizen than ties of tribal and kinship relations. Pederastic relations among aristocratic actors then became the institution which established themselves as the protectors of freedom and civic life.[56] Pausanias, the famous lover of the poet Agathon, the same Agathon who was the host of Plato's *Symposium*, explains this sentiment of pederastic opposition to tyranny in the following way:

> … in places like Ionia and almost every other part of Persian empire, taking a lover is always considered disgraceful. The Persian empire is absolute; that is why it condemns love as well as philosophy and sport[two of the main occupations of aristocratic Greek men]. It is no good for rulers, [*tyrannoi*, *basileuoi*] if the people they rule cherish ambitions for themselves, or form strong bonds of friendship [pederasty] with one another. That these are precisely the effects of philosophy, sport, and especially of Love is a lesson the tyrants of Athens learned directly from their own experience: Didn't their reign come to a dismal end because of the bonds uniting Hardmodius and Aristogiton in love and affection?[57]

In addition to philosophical notations, references to Harmodius and Aristogiton as founders of the contemporary Athenian political system of democracy were emphasized by a number of Athenian orators, vividly illustrating how this pederastic couple was honored as popular heroes and how their homoerotic love was transformed into a democratic ideal of a pure

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[55] Herodotus, *The Histories*, 6.123.

[56] Skinner, *Sexuality*, 117.

[57] Plato, *Symposium*, 182b-c.

and lawful political and emotional relationship.[58] This does not mean that disapproval of pederastic relationships did not exist, however.

Pederasty and Social Tensions

We have preserved from the ancient literary record a series of orations by famous Athenian speakers written to appeal to a panel of jurors made up of primarily lower-class Athenian citizens. These jury appeals are extremely revealing for the topic of lower-class opinion of upper-class pederasty. Many passages show that on numerous occasions the erotic pastimes of the wealthy were at the center of the attention, and disapproval, of the impoverished Athenian masses.[59] For example, one lawsuit talks about the relationship of Aristion of Platea:

> This young man was once outstandingly beautiful and lived for a long time in Demosthenes' house—as to what he did and what was done to him, the allegations vary, and it would be quite improper for me to discuss the matter.

Thus Ariston and Demosthenes were trying to negotiate Athenian freedom from the tyrant Alexander the Great, again showing that pederasty and politics were closely intertwined. *Eromenoi* however, were often denigrated in these orations. Pseudo-Demosthenes has argued in front of a jury:

> observing that certain of those who are loved and possessed their share of good looks make the right use of neither one of these blessing but put on grand airs because of there comeliness of their appearance and exhibit reluctance to associate with good men… such young men not only defeat their own interest but engender evil habits in the community. [Many men] have never yet seen such a friendship turn out well.[60]

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[58] Ann Steiner, "Private and Public: Links Between *Symposion* and *Syssition* in Fifth-Century Athens," *Classical Antiquity* 21 no. 2 (2002): 347-379; V. J. Wohl, "Standing by the Stathmos: the Creation of Sexual Ideology in *Odyssey*," *Arethusa* 26 no. 1 (1993): 19-50.

[59] Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 1; Skinner, *Sexuality* 119; Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 118.

[60] Pseudo Demosthenes, *Erotic Essays*, 2-4, in Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 155-157.

Pederastic relationships could negatively impact inheritance. Isaios a lawyer arguing a complicated inheritance case, states "It is not enough for Xenainetos to have wasted the estate of his grandfather on the love of boys…" [61]

Male Prostitution in the Ancient World

While the voluntary exercise of sexual choice in the ancient world was praised and exalted, on the other hand, a free Athenian male citizen who engaged in sex for monetary compensation was met with deep social disapproval. For it was believed that no citizen should ever debase himself so low as to sell his own body. Such practices, rather, were preserved for slaves and non-citizens. Hiring a youth for sex was essentially considered as coercion rather than an act of free will. This idea of coercion would incite extremes of anger and disapproval from the masses, especially in the law courts.[62]

By far the most damaging charge one could make against an opponent was that he had been a male prostitute in his youth. If a male citizen were ever to be convicted of prostitution they would be denied their legal right to hold political office or dress a political body. It was believed that a man who would sell his body for money would sell his vote for money.

> Indeed either show that you were never a prostitute or accept punishment for whatever legislation you wrote… if we do not seek to punish you in every way the law allows… believe that you should not be punished at all… Our laws forbid those who have prostituted themselves from speaking in the assembly and writing legislation… he forbade those things for the sake of our form of government. For he knew indeed… that the form of government most hostile to men who live these disgusting lives is… democracy. [For you would try] to overthrow the democracy altogether… or, by corrupting the people, to bring them down to their own level. For this reason, Solon forbade such men from taking any part in political deliberation, so that people would not be tricked and led into error.[63]

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[61] Isaios, *On the Estate of Aristarchos*, 25, in Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 127.

[62] Skinner, *Sexuality*, 121.

[63] Demosthenese, *Against Androtion*, 21-32 in Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 128-130.

Whereas socially institutionalized pederastic relationships were considered the mark of *arete* withint the elite society, homoerotic relationships with male prostitutes of a younger age were considered as undermining the ideals of the state.

Abnormal Masculinity: The *Kinaidoi*

Whereas we have seen the Greeks uphold many ideals which we today would consider abnormal, even illegal, the Greeks too had standards of behavior which they considered unnatural, immoral, and disgusting. There existed two stereotypes of abnormal masculinity for the ancient Greeks. Only the second involved sexual activity, for the first definition of abnormal masculinity was that of a tyrant who imposed his power arbitrarily, or who seized what he wanted without restraint, for in his absolute power no one could stop him and restraint was no longer needed.[64]

This second type of abnormal masculinity for the ancient Greeks was rooted in sexual and social behavior. It was the example of the *kinaidos,* or the effeminate male. *Kinaidoi* would be described in modern terms as "foppish," in other words elaborately dressed with affected language and gestures while also appearing feminine in appearance or demeanor.

A *kinaidos* was considered as an adult male who preferred to be penetrated anally for sexual stimulation. To the ancient Greeks as an adult male, being penetrated was a near unspeakable act. The mythology concerning *kinaidos* included the idea of total passivity so much that they were said to not even experience an erection as any normal man would. It was believed semen, that should normally travel to the testicles and penis to create an erection, would collect into the anal region and cause sexual arousal there instead. This was also believed to be

[64] Skinner, *Sexuality*, 127, 128.

the reason why they experienced sexual voraciousness as was usually assigned women.[65] This further pushed the idea that *kinaidoi* being any sense of the word "man" ended solely in the fact that they possessed a physical penis, albeit an almost completely ineffectual one. Everything else, this anti-manliness, was too much like a woman, which, as we have seen, was not a preferred position for an ancient Greek.

There are very few ancient references specifically for the *kinaidoi*, however what remains is instructive, "… the life of perverts [*kinaidoi*], isn't this life terrible and shameful and to be pitied?"[66] "Are we… to grab hold of perverts [*kinaidoi*], since they are by far the basis of all base men."[67] "Which do you thing they would rather pray to have –ten thousand hoplites like Philon, with bodies as well-made as his and souls so disciplined, or thirty thousand *kinaidoi* like you?"[68]

Although the habits of the *kinaidoi* were considered shameful, there was an entire genre of poetic effort which paradied the *kinaidoi*. The poet Sotades in the third century BCE composed pederastic and obscene satirical poems in the Ionic dialect (of Athens). This extremely clever poetic dialogue consists entirely of palindromes i.e. phrases that read backwards and forwards the same. An example in English is, "llewd did I live, evil did I dwell."[69]

These were the antithesis of Greek ideas of masculinity. Because of the disdain for this class of people, we have little literary evidence for them. We do not know what percentage of

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[65] Skinner, *Sexuality*, 128.

[66] Plato, *Gorgias*, 494c-495a, in Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 179-180.

[67] Archilochos, *Fragment* 294w in Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 26.

[68] Aiskhines, 2.150-1, in *The Constraints of Desire* 47.

[69] Plutarch, *Paidagogos (On the Edication of Children)* 11a; Athenaeus, XIV.621a.

the population this category represented, but they were used as the ideal of what males should *not* be. Such prohibitory attitudes enforced social norms to ensure that citizens would act with appropriate public decorum.[70]

Art of Pederasty: Vase Paintings and Poetry

The literary evidence which we have examined above is limited in time and space and governed by the destruction which accompanies ancient artifacts. For details not mentioned in our scant literary sources, we turn now to the visual representation of pederastic relationships which were so commonly depicted in Athenian vase-painting. This is a short examination of the categories of pederastic relationships as depicted by ancient Athenian artists.

This paper will examine two types of vase painting techniques categorized as black-figure and red-figure paintings. Black-figure emerged in the early seventh century BCE and the red-figure technique began ca. 530 BCE. Though red-figure painting essentially replaced black-figure painting, the black-figure technique was still used until about 480 BCE.[71]

Courtship

The first step of these relationships is, as in most modern-day relationships, courtship. Furthermore, these are the most common scenes of pederastic relationships found from ancient Greece. Their commonality is in part due to the exaltation of pederasty itself, but also due to the ideal version of pederasty. Scenes of penetrative sex were reserved for the less glamorous side of society like prostitutes and uncivilized mythological creatures. That is not to say that kind of

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[70] J. J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 45-46; Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 174.

[71] Helen Gardner et al., *Gardner's Art Throughout the Ages: The Western Perspective* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2017), 105.

sex did not occur in these relationships. However, like in modern day society, the ideal is represented much more often than reality. Following the pioneering work of Sir John Beazley, on which other scholars base their work, this paper will address his three types of courtship scenes, type *alpha, beta,* and *gamma*.

Scenes of Courtship

A majority of what scholars recognize as explicit scenes of pederasty in art consists of courtship scenes. [72] Sir John Beazely was the first scholar to collect and analyze a wide variety of vases depicting homosexual courting scenes. His 1947 study established a typology for courtship scenes which continues to be able to accommodate the vast majority of new vases and scenes that have come to light since.[73]

Beazley recognized three motifs which repeatedly occurred in courtship scenes between an older man with a beard and a beardless youth, or less often, a youth with just the beginnings of a beard (sideburns) and a slightly younger boy. These motifs are called *alpha*, *beta*, and *gamma*.[74]

Type *Alpha*

In type *alpha*, the *erastes* and *eromenos* face each other and maintain specific hand gestures. [75] Figure 1 illustrates these gestures quite clearly. The *erastes* touches the *eromenos'*

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[72] Andrew Lear, "Courtship," in Andrew Lear and Eva Cantarella, *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty: Boys were their Gods*, (New York: Routledge, 2010) 38.

[73] H. A. Shapiro, "Leagros and Euphronis: Painting Pederasty in Athens," in *Greek Love Reconsidered* edited by Thomas K. Hubbard, (Wallace Hamilton Press: New York, 2000) 12; John Beazley et al., *Some Attic Vases in the Cyprus Museum* (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1989), 195-247.

[74] Beazley, *Some Attic Vases*, 4-10.

[75] Beazley, *Some Attic Vases*, 4-25; Lear, "Courtship," 39-42.

chin with his left hand, while his right hand reaches for the youth's genitals. These postures are indicative of their roles in the scene. The bent knees of the *erastes* indicate the hope and intention of engaging in intercrural intercourse, a type of sex that's non-penetrative, to preserve the masculinity of the passive partner, where a male places stimulates his penis between his partner's thighs. The *eromenos'* posture in which his legs are not bent does not indicate his refusal to engage in intercourse. The young lover is simply acting in a disinterested manner which the Greeks considered the appropriate attitude for *eromenoi*.

As is typical for pederastic couples on black-figure vases, both figures are nude with very defined muscles. The nakedness is highly suggestive that this scene takes place in a gymnasium; symbols within the scene support this conclusion. Both the *erastes* and *eromenos* wear wreaths, which were typical prizes for athletic victories awarded in the *gymnsasia*; the *erastes* wears his over his arm. Such adornment was characteristic of prize-winning athletes in vase-paintings. The *eromenos* also carries a spear, which is a documented gymnasium as well, for an *ephbes*, young men, learning the military arts. [76]

Theognis is a famous poet of sixth century BCE about whom little is known. Theognis was an aristocrat from the city of Megera, either that on the Corinthian isthmus or the city in Sicily. Much of his work is addressed to Kurnos, a younger aristocrat whom scholars perceive as his younger *eromenos.* Much of Theognis' poetry discusses his love of young boys, of these are but some examples:[77] "He who loves not boys and strong-hoofed horses/ and dogs, never knows

[76] Lear, "Courtship," 27, 58; Claude Bérard, "Entering the Imagery," in *A City of Images*, edited by Claude Bérard et al., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 22-37.

[77] Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 89.

joy in his heart."[78] "Don't drive me back to the wagon, pricking hard – I won't go,/Kurnos, though you drag me all too deeply into your love."[79]

Theognis' poetry is illustrative of the general Greek aristocratic view towards pederasty. As we have discussed above who else but the aristocrats could afford a horse, let alone a young lover? These excess of the rich, as we have seen, were often a point of contention between the classes of Athens.[80] Class warfare aside, poetry concerning the loving and longing for youths exploded in popularity during sixth century BCE. Anacreon writes:

> Boy with a maiden's glance,
> I seek you out, but you hear not,
> Unknowing that you are the charioteer
> Of my soul[81]

In association with this strong poetic tradition and equally strong visual representation arose, representing men courting, or attempting to court, these beautiful youths who captured their hearts.

Our second scene figure 2 is still within Beazley's *alpha* type of courtship. Again the men are nude and muscular, the *erastes* has a beard and the youth has long hair but is beardless. Again the *erastes* stands in the pre-intercrural position and touches both the chin and genitals of the *eromenos* who remains upright. However this scene is more complex than that of figure 1 above. While in figure 1 the *eromenos* holds his spear in his right hand, but in figure 2 the youth makes a communicative gesture and holds the *erastes'* wrist in an act of acceptance. In another

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[78] Theognis, 1255-1256.

[79] Theognis 371-372.

[80] Ludwig, *Eros and Polis*, 9.

[81] Anacreon, fragment 360 PMG, in Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 37.

act of acceptance, he holds in his left hand a wreath. The *erastes'* knees are bent even more than the one in figure 1.[82]

This vase also has a more complex decorative scheme. The shoulders and belly of the vase are painted on both sides. The belly on the other side depicts a youth in a chariot, connecting the two sides in a theme illustrating the life-styles of elite males.[83] Both of the shoulders of the vase portray wrestling. This is a connecting motif to tie all the scenes together in gymnasium, which, as we have seen, is most often the location of pederasty scenes.[84]

Another element that differs from figure 1 is the inscriptions. Some black-figure painters include words in their compositions. Most often they serve the purpose of identifying the people meant to be presented in the painting.[85] In this case, despite their position next to the figures, the inscriptions are strings that are meaningless. While reasons for this are uncertain, it is postulated that painters would write gibberish to show their state of semi-literacy. In other words, they knew how to make letters, but not necessarily how to make words out of them. This may be because at this period (ca. 540 BCE), Athens was still mainly an oral society. For an artisan, even semi-literacy was most likely an achievement of which to be proud.[86]

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[82] Lear, "Courtship,", 30-31; Keith DeVries, "The 'Frigid Eromenoi' and Their Wooers Revisited: A Closer Lookat Greek Homosexuality in Vase Painting," in *Queer Representations: Reading Lives, Reading Cultures* ed. M. Duberman (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 14-24.

[83] Alain Schnapp, *Le Chasseur et la Cité* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997), 254.

[84] Lear and Cantarella, *Images*, 31; Schnapp, *Le Chasseur*, 67-83.

[85] H. A Shapiro, "Courtship Scenes in Attic Vase-Painting," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 85 no. 2, (1981): 133-135.

[86] Lear and Cantarella, *Images*, 31, 37.

Type *Beta*

Beazeley's type *beta* of courtship scenes involves a common motif where a gift is presented to one of the figures. The gift may be an animal, in which case it is limited to deer, foxes, cats, and possibly hunting dogs. However the most common animal gift is that of a fighting rooster (cock) or a hare. This gifts of animals can either symbolize the connection between pederasty and pedagogy, or it can symbolize how the *eromenos* has the role of prey in the pederastic relationship. If the gift is not an animal, it is typically some sort of musical instrument like a lyre, or it could be toys, fruit, flowers, or foodstuffs like meat and bread, or even money.[87]

While often depicted in vase-painting, gift-giving is mainly absent in the literary sources. Writing in the late fourth century BCE, Phanias of Eresus, a student of Aristotle, who wrote historical essays on tyrants, and on pederastic love.[88] Phanius writes of a beautiful boy named Hipparinus, and his hopeful *erastes* who loved him and tried everything to win his affection, unsuccessfully. As Hipparinus was a regular at the gymnasium, Antileon would find him there, and chase after him. Antileon would declare his love, pledging to do anything the boy told him, endure any hardship Hipparinus could think of, and Antileon would not fail because he wanted Hipparnius so much. The boy, not being serious, told him to fetch a special bell that was carried by guards to signal their comrades. The bell that Antileon was to fetch was "from a certain rocky place that was kept under especially close guard by the Heralean tyrant," and Hipparinus

[87] Judith M. Barringer, *The Hunt in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 70-124; Lear, "Courtship," 39.

[88] Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 62.

did not expect him to succeed. Antileon succeed and returned to the boy who "became very fond of him and from that time onwards they loved each other dearly."[89]

An artistic example of this literary relationship is represented in the red-figure tondo (circular image) of the drinking cup, *kylix,* in figure 3. The kit hanging to the right of the couple in this scene illustrates that this is taking place in the gymnasium. Here, the bearded *erastes* stands leaning on a staff in front of his *eromenos*, and holds his courting gift behind him. The staff or cane occurs quite frequently in such scenes. It is suggested that this staff symbolizes the leisureliness of the courtship and the leisured status of the *erastes*.[90] The *erastes* holds the hare in his right hand behind him, as he has not yet presented it to the *eromenos.* His left hand is up on his chest in a conversational gesture. The *eromenos* is modestly wrapped in a cloak that comes up to his chin and up on his head like a hood. This is a symbolic costume, not only does it keep the *eromenos'* nude body from the sight and touch of the *erastes,* is also momentarily impedes his accepting the gift.[91]

The next step of courtship can be seen in the tondo of figure 4. Here, the *eromenos* is wrapped in a cloak which reaches above his chin and is sitting down, while the *erastes* is offering him a hare. In this example, the hare is being held up in the face of the *eromenos,* perhaps implying that the *erastes* is being explicitly belligerent in his offer. Once again, the *erastes* leans on a cane. Here however he lacks the ebard that is so often representative of the older *erastes*. This seems to be an artistic tradition in the red figure vase scenes which, by the mid fifth century BCE had shifted from the older tradition of bearded *erastes* to a newer tradition

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[89] Phanias of Eresus, Fragment 16 FHG, in Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 62.

[90] Shapiro, "Courtship Scenes," 135.

[91] Gloria Ferrari, "Figures of Speech: The Picture of Aidos," *Mètis* 5 no. 1 (1990):185-200; Ferrari, *Figures of Speech*, 72-81; Lear, "Courtship," 40, Shapiro, "Courtship Scenes," 136.

which depicts both people as clean shaven.[92] The clean-shaven nature of the *erastes* may not be an indication of age, but rather the increasing accessibility of shaving blades.

In addition to the love between an *erastes* and an *eromenos*, Theognis also wrote about the ethical lessons to be learned by an *eromenos* about leading the good life:

> These things I tell you, Kurnos, for your good:
> I learned them, as a boy, from gentlemen [*arestoi*];
> Rule one: no honor, prize, or cash reward
> Can justify a base of crooked act.
> The second rule: avoid 'low' company,
> Mix only with the better sort of men.
> Drink with these men, and eat, and sit with them,
> And court them, for their power is great; from them
> You will learn goodness. Men of little worth
> Will spoil the natural virtue of your birth.
> Do this and you'll acknowledge, in the end,
> Theognis gave good counsel to his friend.[93]

It is to be inferred that these "gentlemen" of whom he speaks who taught him this advice when Theognis himself was young could well have been Theognis' own *erastes* and the older man's friends. This interpretation would be consistent with Theognis' own words to "mix only with the better sort of men," implying that Theognis himself drank, ate, sat, and courted these very men. Thus Theognis set out the ideals of a Greek *eromenos* to any youth who read his poetry.

Figure 5 portrays yet a further step in courtship. Once again the *erastes* is clean shaven. However, there are other indications of an age difference between the two. Since both figures are standing, the painter has depicted the *erastes* as the taller of the two. The *erasties* also has clearly defined sideburns, while the younger of the two has cheeks which are hairless. In this scene, the *eromenos* is shown in the initial stages of accepting the gift. Without taking off his cloak, as one would have to do in real life, his hands peeks out of the top to pet or examine the

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[92] Lear, "Courtship," 41; Beazely, *Some Attic Vases*, 32.

[93] Theognis, 27-38.

hare. This gesture illustrates the non-naturalistic nature of vase painting, and further emphasizes the role of the cloak as symbolism for modesty more than an indication of the current fashion. [94]

While the vase-paintings we have examined all show single scenes of courtship, a rare and fascinating *kalyx* figure 6a depicts the different stages of courtship side-by-side. In other words, each set of figures depicts a different stage in courtship. Here, all of the *erastai* are taller than their associated *eromenoi* and all the *erastai* lean on their canes. One *erastes* is holding a gift in the face of a youth wrapped up to his chin in a cloak. The next *eromenos'* cloak is half-way removed, exposing his chest as he gestures acceptingly towards the gift. In this case the *erastes* holds his hare by his side, possibly to lure his *eromenos* closer now that he has indicated interest. In the last scene on the side of the *kylix*, the action has progressed farther. The *erastes* is also holding his rooster next to himself, but the gift is no longer the center of attention. The *eromenos* has already accepted and has opened his cloak to display his genitals. The other two *erastai* who are presenting gifts focus on their eremenos' face, but the last *erastes'* attention is drawn to the boy's genitals. These scenes bring to life Theognis' portrayal of erotic love:

> Boy, as long as your cheek is smooth, I'll never
> Stop praising you, not even if I have to die.
> For you to give still is fine, for me there's no shame in asking,
> Respect me, boy, give me pleasure, if you're ever
> To have the gift of Cypris[95] with her wreath of violets,
> When it's you who's wanting and approach another. May the goddess
> Grant that you get exactly the same response.[96]

While the outside of this *kylix* shows the stages of courthip, the interior, figure 6b, represents the zenith of the progression. The gift is not even featured in this scene. for it is no longer necessary. The *erastes* is a youth with sideburns, and the *eromenos* is an even younger

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[94] Ferrari, *Figures of Speech*, 72; Lear, "Courtship," 41, 42.

[95] This is another name for the Goddess of love, Aphrodite. This is in reference to her place of birth, Cyprus.

[96] Theognis 1327-1334

boy who has opened his cloak to expose himself. As in the middle of the frieze depicted on the outside of the *kylix*, his arm is in the acceptance gesture, perhaps to accept or reach out for the *erastes'* wrist.

Type *Gamma*

Beazeley's type *gamma* cocnentrates on the scences which display body language that can indicate the role and intent of each figure. Here the actions concentrates on the bent knees of the *erastes*, indicating his hope and intention of engaging in intercrural intercourse. The great Athenian law-giver, Solon, writing in the late sixth century BCE, speaks specifically of this stage of courtship: "…While one loves boys among the lovely flowers of youth,/Desiring their thighs and sweet mouths."[97]

Even the gods are depicted as having intercrural sex. Figure 7 and figure 8 are vases depicting the god Eros and his *eromenos* Hyacinth. They both depict Eros holding his lover Hyacinth in an act of intercrural sex.[98] While in the first figure Eros has small non-erect genitalia, in what is left of the second figure, his erection penetrates through the boy's cloak to reach his thighs.

The *eromenos'* posture in which his legs are not bent does not mean he is refusing to engage in intercourse. He is simply acting in a disinterested manner which the Greeks considered the appropriate attitude for *eromenoi*, especially if he was attractive for he could prove to be too tempting for men. As Theognis describes here:[99]

Boy, since the goddess Cypris gave you a lusty

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[97] Solon, fragment 25 West, in Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 36.

[98] Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University press, 1996), 156; Sergent, *Homsexuality in Greek Myth*, 81, 85-89.

[99] Lear and Cantarella, *Images*, 27.

> Grace, and your beauty's every boy's concern,[100]
> Listen to these words and for my sake take them to heart –
> Knowing how hard it is for a man to bear desire.[101]

Sex Without Bonds of Love

It is not uncommon to see scenes with mixed variations of the paintings mentioned above. Figure 9 is of a red-figure painting in which the *erastes* with bent knees is offering a rooster while holding out his right hand to reach for the *eromenos'* genitals, who is still wrapped in a cloak. This suggests a simple exchange: the older man will give the youth a gift if they have sex. The conclusion to this exchange is seen in figure 10. Though badly damaged, we can see that the bearded *erastes* knees are bent, crouching, and holding on to the *eromenos'* shoulder. His erect penis is penetrating the *eromenos'* thighs. The *eromenos*, with his open cloak and left hand on his hip, stands upright and looks over his *erastes'* head. The object of his gaze is held out in his right hand: the *erastes'* gift. The hare is the object of the *eromenos'* interest, and is the price which he gets in return for access to his body. Simple sex without the accompanying bonds love was not good behavior for an Athenian youth and was frowned upon:

> Boy and horse, a similar brain: the horse
> Doesn't cry when its rider lies in the dust;
> No, it takes on the next man, once it's sated with seed.
> Same with a boy: whoever's there, he loves.[102]

It is clear from some of his poetry to Kurnos that Theognis had a tempestuous relationship with the youth. Not only did some of Kurnos' actions spur the poet to compare him to a horse, as seen above, but it is apparent that Kurnos was not the epitome of youthful modesty that Theognis cautioned him to be:

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[100] Kurnos is so beautiful even boys his own age desire him.

[101] Theognis 1319-22.

[102] Theognis 1297-70

> Boy, your slutting around has wrecked my affection,
> You've become a disgrace to our friends.
> You dried my hull for a while. But I've slipped out of the squall
> And found a port as night came on.[103]

"But I've slipped out of the squall/And found a port as night came on." It is apparent by this phrase that Theognis did not have qualms about being unfaithful himself.

Hares were not the only gift in this *quid pro quo* exchange figure 11 depicts. Figure 11a and 11b are the different sides of a *skyphos*, or drinking cup. In both scenes, a *strigil* is emphasized. A *strigil* is a small, curved, metal tool used to scrape dirt and sweat from the body after strenuous exercise. The *strigil* is associated particularly with the gymnasium. There, a youth would often rub himself down and clean himself off with a *strigil* in front of other men. Indeed, the turning-post on side A places the viewer just outside of a gymnasium entrance. The two sides of the cup are related by showing the different responses to a request of courtship: acceptance and rejection. The youth on side A accepts the gift, and the youth on side B is refusing. The visual cues about their decisions are depicted in their gestures and clothes. By undressing, the youth on side A can use the gift the *erastes* is giving him, and also allows for access to his body. The youth on side B, though not wrapped up to his chin as seen before, does keeps his cloak on. The lyre in his left hand may be a gift from another *erastes*, and the youth holds it away from the suitor as contrast to the gesture of acceptance for a gift. His right hand, placed on his hip, gives the youth an air of impatience. This gesture also points away from the *erastes*, once again in contrast to a gesture of acceptance[104] similar to the handshake-like gesture in figure 6b.

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[103] Theognis 1271-74

[104] Lear, "Courtship," 48.

Once again Theognis' poetry displays the poet's experience in not only the joys, but the heartaches of love:

> Boy, how long will you be on the run? I'm following,
> Tracking you down. I only wish I'd reach the end
> Of your anger. But you, lusting and headstrong,
> Run off reckless as a kite.
> Stop now, do me a favor. You won't
> Hang on to the gift of Cypris, violet-wreathed, much longer.[105]

In this verse he is pursuing Kurnos who is apparently angry with him. He also adds a warning at the end: Kurnos will one day grow old and no longer have the beauty that the love goddess placed upon him. He warns of time's decay on several occasions, especially when he asks for relief from Kurnos' rejections:

> Knowing in your heart that the flower of lovely youth
> Is briefer than a footrace, loosen my chain.
> For even you, mightiest of boys, may some day be compelled
> And meet the hard work of the Love Goddess,
> Even as I do now with you. Beware!
> A boy's wickedness may one day conquer you.[106]

Fortunately, the spurned poet recovers:

> I no longer love the boy, I've kicked away terrible pains
> And fled in joy from crushing sorrows.
> I've been freed from desire by Cytherea[107] of the lovely wreath.
> Boy, you hold no charm for me at all.[108]

Hopefully, the rejected *erastes* encouraged by the freedom Theognis described in this poem did not dwell in their sorrow for too long:

> Being good-looking and loving vice, you hang out with worthless
> Men, and for this you get ugly reproaches,

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[105] Theognis 1299-1304.

[106] Theognis1305-10

[107] Like Cypris, this is another name for Aphrodite based on her cult from the island of Cythera.

[108] Theognis, 1337-40.

> Boy. But though I lost your love against my will,
> I've won, can act a free man.[109]

Erotic Rivalry

Rivalry for the affection of an *eromenos* was also the subject matter of courtship scenes. This rivalry was called *anteros*, a term now usually used to label the return of affection the *erastes* hoped to receive from his *eromenos*.[110] Figure 12 is a *kylix* that represents such a rivalry. The three figures are all youths of the same height, but there are visual cues to show that the central youth is the *eronmenos* with the ones on either side are *erastai*. The youth on the left youth, with his side-burns, has a cane like the *erastes* on the other vase paintings. The youth on the right has an erection, another characteristic of an *erastes*. The central youth has opened his cloak to display his genitals in a typical *eromenos* gesture. He reaches to the bag being offered to him from the youth on the right while holding the hare from the one on the left. Perhaps he is tempted to run away, or perhaps the placement of his body suggests he is dancing. Nevertheless, the *erastai* are competing for the *eromenos*, and though he already accepted one gift he is clearly considering the other as well.

This kind of rivalry was illustrated in Aristophanes' *The Knights*. This famous Athenian comic and playwright was active between 427 and 388 BCE. In *The Knights*, which was written around 424 BCE, a politician named Paphlagon and a sausage seller named Creon compete for the favor of a man named Demos. Paohlagon and Creon both offer Demos numerous gifts and benefactions. In the play, when one suitor offered a gift, the other suitor berated and ridiculed it.[111]

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[109] Theognis, 1377-80.

[110] Barringer, *The Hunt*, 70.

[111] Aristophanes, *The Knights*, 875-880.

In a scene which is far less common than scenes of competition between the *erastai*, figure 13 shows a competition between two *eromenoi* for a gift, or perhaps for an *erastes*. A bearded *erastes* offers a hare to the youth on his left. This youth is shown taking off his wreath in an example of the gesture in which an *eromenos* gives his *erastes* his wreath in exchange for the accepted courting-gift. The *erastes* does not look at this youth, but rather at the one to his left who is looking at and reaching out for the hare. A number of situations could be portrayed here: the left-hand youth may be jealous; he may have been the original *eromenos* but held out for too long so the *erastes* sought someone else; perhaps there is some sort of rivalry between the two youths that extend beyond the gift and the *erastes*. Unfortunately, this scene is impossible to decipher without other comparable scenes. Scholar may never agree on the details of the narrative, but clearly this is a courting/gift scene depicting two *eromenoi* and only one gift-giving *erastes*. [112]

As we have seen, black-figure courtship iconography has as its common denominator iconography which depicts the *erastes* reaching for or touching the *eromenos'* chin and genitals. However now we would like to discuss variations. Figure 14 has the typical bearded and short-haired *erastes*, and the typical beardless *eromenos* with long hair. The *eromenos* has thick thighs and is almost as tall as his *erastes*, indicating that he is probably a youth despite having the small genitalia of a young boy. The *erastes* reaches for the *eromenos'* chin and genitals, and the *eromenos* responds by holding his wrists. There is a dead hare hanging behind the *erastes*. The element which is strikingly different is the cloak which hangs over both members of the couple; though like the *eromenoi* before, this one's genitals are exposed. This cloak represents the cloak

[112] Barringer, *The Hunt*, 85; Lear, "Courtship," 49-52.

in which the couple will be wrapped when they reach the next phase of courtship and thereby points to the eventual consummation of the relationship.[113]

Hieronymus of Rhodes, a philosopher and historian living in third century BCE Athens, writes how one Sophocles persuaded a good-looking boy to come outside the city walls to have sex with him: "This boy laid his own cloak on the ground under them, and they wrapped themselves in Sophocles' cape. After the act the boy snatched Sophocles' cape and went off leaving Sophocles his own boyish cloak."[114] As the vase discussed above has shown, it is common that Sophocles and the youth would use their cloaks for the intercourse.

Figure 15 is a simple red-figure version of the gestures usually found in earlier black-figure vases. Once again the gift is not present. The bearded *erastes*, whose open cloak displays his genitals, leans on his cane and makes the downwards gesture towards a youth or boy who responds by reaching out toward him. Although he does not provide what the *erastes'* gesture requests, he makes a gesture of acceptance.

Figure 16 is more complex. It combines many of the scene-types mentioned above. The *erastes* makes what might be called a successful downwards gesture, with his fingers beneath or around his *eromenos'* scrotum. The *eromenos* holds a bag which he has received as a courting-gift. Although the *erastes* seems to be sitting, in fact he has no chair. Rather, his bent kneed indicate preparation for for intercourse. Both members of the couple have extraordinarily developed chest muscles, and we can understand that the scene is set in a gymnasium by a clearly depicted rub-down kit. A *strigil* and a sponge can be distinguished, as can the hook and the cord from which the kit hangs. There are several aspects worth noting about this scene.

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[113] Lear "Courtship," 54; Shapiro, "Courtship Scenes," 1335-137.

[114] Hieronymus of Rhodes, *Historical Notes*, quoted by Athenaeus, 11a, in Hubbard, *Homosexuality*, 81.

First, the exchange of a gift for sexual contact is extremely clear: the *eromenos* holds his bag out behind himself as if he were swinging it triumphantly. Second, the *erastes* here has a quite realistically portrayed erect penis; which conversely emphasizes the non-erectness of the *eromenos*' penis. Finally, the *eromenos* has his arm around his *erastes'* neck in a gesture that goes beyond acceptance to affection. There have been several gestures by which an *eromenos* can indicate acceptance, but now we see the portrayal of *anteros* in the other sense: the return of affection.

Other vase paintings show what happened when an *eromenos* has accepted the *erastes'* advances. Figure 17 is a red-figure *psykter*, a vessel in which wine was cooled, dating from around 510 BCE. Once again the gift is no longer present in this scene, as it is no longer necessary in the narrative. The *eremonos* has already accepted the gift, and with open robe has his right arm around the *erastes* and left hand on his own side. The taller *erastes* had his left arm around the youth's shoulders and right hand touching his genitals. His robe has not been opened and is still wrapped around him. His left knee is bent and his left foot slightly raised to show he was the one that moved forward. Their faces are so close their noses are touching as they are about to kiss.

Scenes of *Symposia* and Pederasty

As we have noted above, the Greek *symposium* was an aristocratic male activity. *Symposia* were designed to encourage males' higher intellectual efforts, in direct opposition to a poor person's physical labor. One definitive visual clue of a *symposium* is the act of reclining on a couch. Men gathered together to drink wine and discuss a wide range of topics like philosophy, politics, and poetry. A common theme of the discussion of *symposia*, as Plato tells us, centered upon heterosexual and homosexual love, and the inevitable fading away of such

pleasure with the coming of old age.[115] So too Anacreon of Teos, writing in sixth century BCE, did not believe war was a suitable topic for *symposia*, but rather preferred the themes of wine and love:

> I like him not, who when he drinks by the full bowl
> Tells only of disputes and tearful war,
> But [rather I like him] who blends the Muses' boon with Love's,
> And turns his mind to good cheer and delight.[116]

Pederastic scenes at *symposia* is a common theme in Greek vase painting. Indeed, scholars propose that even a larger number of scenes on these vases would have been recognized by the ancient Athenian as implying a pederastic relationship, however with our modern limitation of understanding, other than making educated guesses, scholars are generally limited to scenes in which the gestures and actions are more obvious. In figure 18 a bearded man reclines behind a youth on the same couch. As is typical of men depicted in scenes of *symposia*, both of their torsos are bare as their cloaks have been pushed down around their waists. The beardless youth is handing a deep drinking vessel called a skyphos to another bearded man on another couch while holding his own kylix in his left hand. The adult behind the youth has his arms wrapped around the youth's torso, and the adult on the other couch is making conversational gestures. A valid interpretation of this scene might be that in which two *erastai* are competing for the attention of one *eromenos*.[117]

Two youths reclining on a couch is the subject of figure 19. As before, their torsos are bare. The lower youth is lying back on the upper youth, who, instead of wrapping his arms

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[115] Sarah B. Pomeroy et al. *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) 139.

[116] Anacreon Elegy 2 West.

[117] Lear "Courtship," 58; Richard Neer, *Style and Politics in Athenian Vase-Painting: The Craft of Democracy ca. 530-460 B.C.E.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 56.

around the bottom youth, has suggestively placed his right leg around him. With his right hand he holds his *kylix* in a game of *kottabus*, a game where someone flung the deposit of yeast (lees) from their wine at a target and toasted a loved one. His left hand is placed on the lower youth's head perhaps to stroke his hair. It is entirely possible that the object of the upper youth's toast is the young man reclining on his legs.[118]

Kissing

A black-figure example of a probably *symposium* scene is on figure 20. N While they are not shown reclining on couches as in their red-figure counterparts, the emphasis here is on wine. Wine was an essential part of a symposium, and on this *skyphos* it is the grape vines with oversized, emphasized grape clusters that indicate this scene is *sympotic*. Furthermore, this painting is an example of scenes in which the lovers prepare to kiss. Once again the *erastes* reaches forward with his right hand to touch the *eromenos'* genitals, but instead of cupping the youth's chin with his left hand as we have seen before, his hand reaches around the youth's head to pull him up for a kiss. It is the *eromanos* who reaches up for the *erastes'* chin with his right hand in a gesture of *anteros*: the return of the *erastes'* affection.[119]

A domestic kissing scene is the subject of the tondo in figure 21. The column behind the *erastes* indicates that this scene takes place indoors. Here, there is no nudity or athletic tools from the scenes in the *gymnasium*, and instead of the couches typical in a *symposium* scene, there is only a chair found in other domestic scenes. In this scene, both figures are fully clothed, and the *erastes* wears both an under- and outer- garment. While the *erastes* is the only one with a beard, both figures have a similar hair style which is a stark contrast with the depiction of other

[118] Lear, "Courtship," 58; Neer, *Style and Politics*, 63.

[119] Lear, "Courtship," 59.

couples on vases. Unlike figure 20, they do not reach for each other with their left hands. Rasther the *erastes* uses his left hand to lean on his cane, while the *eromenos'* left hand remains at his side and inside his cloak. Their right hands reach out to hold each other's' heads.[120] In another act of *anteros,* the *eromenos'* head reaches up, his nose just touching his *erastes',* who's face is reaching down for the kiss.

Figure 22 shows the *eromenos* as the instigator of the kiss. The *eromenos* is sitting while his *erastes* is standing; the *eromenos* reaches out with both arms to pull his lover's mouth towards his own. The *erastes* holds the youth's head with his left hand and bends forward so that their faces are almost touching.[121] It is difficult to understand how an Athenian man of fifth century BCE would react to such forwardness by his *eromenos*. As mentioned before, an *eromenos* was not supposed to show interest in sexual activity, but rather act in a humble and modest manner.[122]

Theognis wrote of *anteros* in his poem about kissing:

> As long as your cheek's so smooth, my boy, I won't
> Stop kissing you, you wouldn't even stop
> If the punishment for doing so were death.[123]

Here he not only proclaims his own desire to embrace a youth so long as he is too young to grow a beard, but he also mentions the reciprocation of kissing. Apparently, Kurnos' *anteros* is so great he would not want to stop kissing if it killed him. As the youth on figure 22, it is obvious that Kurnos does not act in a modest manner. This is an excellent example of how art often reflects the ideal of society: in most vases the *eromenos* is indeed represented as a modest and

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[120] Lear, "Courtship," 61.

[121] Lear, "Courtship," 61-62.

[122] Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 188.

[123] Theognis, 1327-1328.

humble youth willing to allow the *erastes* to look and touch, but little else. But figure 22 and the frustration Theognis writes about when dealing with his promiscuous *eromenos* offers a glimpse of the reality behind the ideal.

Consummation

It was very rare that an explicit reference of consummation was made in a pederastic scene. Literary sources also offer little information about the different ways in which pederastic couples conducted intercourse. Rather, poets concentrated upon the aspects of longing and despair, sacrifice and humiliation. Most sources only speak of pederastic consummation through euphemisms, though some comics mention anal intercourse in a humoristic or mocking way. Though some vases do show sex between an older man and a youth, such scenes these constitute only five percent or less of depictions which scholars believe are pederastic. Perhaps intercrural intercourse was something that was meant to be an ideal between an *erastes* and *eromenos*. However there is also evidence that pederastic couples participated in anal sex as well. Given that the written sources used euphemisms for sex, vase-paintings of intercrural intercourse were perhaps euphamisms themselves, a way to avoid portraying less admirable forms of different kinds of sex.[124]

Leagros and Euphronios

In some instances the artwork itself speaks. The so-called "*kalos* inscriptions" are when the word *kalos*, 'beautiful,' is written on the vase to describe the figure by which it is written. Based on the number of signatures which we have on vases, Euphronis was a popular vase-

[124] Lear, "Consummation," in *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty: Boys were their Gods* (London: Routledge, 2010) 106; Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love*, 101. The Government of Greece does not allow the viewing of certain vases which they consider obscene.

painter who, based on his signed work, was infatuated with the youth Leagros. Leagros was depicted in a number of vases with the word *kalos* placed next to his name. Euphronis was a contemporary to other famous vase-painters Smikros, Euthymides, and Phintias, four of the most prominent painters whom Beazley dubbed the Pioneers. [125]

Leagros was very active in his love life, as documented by Euphronios and other in his workshop. In 1983 a *psykter* (wine-cooler) was discovered and credited to Euphronios' contemporary, Smikros (figures 23a and 23b) dated around 510 BCE. On this vase, four pairs of youths and two single athletes are depicted in the gymnasium. Each couple shows a different step of seduction and courtship, ever-growing in intimacy. Inscriptions name all but two figures on the *psykter*, and some of these names are found on other vases of this workshop.[126]

Two of these figures situated next to each other are labeled "Euphronios," a youth, who is reaching to the boy who has been styalized "Leagros *kalos*." Although this vase has been attributed to the workshop of Smikros, the vase-painter Euphronios seemed to have been well-known, and much parodied. While Euphronios was indeed a well-known and popular vase-painter, it is true that he was born of a low status. Leagros, however, was an attractive and beautiful aristocrat, who became the subject for many painters in both black and red-figure vases. Some scholars would see Euphronios as an *erastes*, and believe his relationship with Leagros is strong evidence of pederasty extending beyond the confines of the Athenian aristocracy. There is a line of scholarly argument which denies that Smikros was the painter of this vase, but rather was an artist offensively imitating the style of Smikros' workshop. If this vase is indeed an

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[125] Shapiro, "Leagros and Euphronios: Painting Pederasty in Athens," in *Greek Love Reconsidered*, edited by Thomas K. Hubbard (New York: Wallace Hamilton Press, 2000), 25-27; Beazley, *Some Attic Vases*, 59.

[126] Shapiro, "Leagros and Euphronios," 25.

imitation, scholars conclude that having Euphronios as one of the painters was a rude attempt to mock the pretentiousness of a painter who enjoyed success and elite patronage. [127]

On the other hand, if Smikros was the painter of this *psykros*, we are obliged to compare a *krater* from Euphronios which depicts a young *symposiast* named Smikros. The decoration is described in the following way. The handsome Smikros is placed next to a bearded companion on a couch. The painters could have been playfully mocking each other by putting each other in congregations of the rich. A good example of the painters' sense of humor and self depiction is apparent on Smikros' large wine jar which shows scenes of the *symposium*. One of the partakers is a young dandy labelled 'Smikros'; could this be a self-portrait? Therefore we can confidently claim that the Pioneer painters all knew and referred to one another in their works. Among these playful and teasing scenes, the couple Euphronios and Leagros are frequently depicted together on their vase-paintings. [128]

Within the entire corpus of Athenian vase-painting of the sixth century BCE, Leagros seems to have been the most popular figure who was deemed "*kalos*." To date there have been found at least eighty examples of pottery with "Legros *kalos*" written upon their figured scnenes.[129] In the years 515-500 BCE, over a dozen painters are noted to have admired Leagros, but in the Pioneer group only Euphronios was interested in courting him. While Smikros' psykter was the only citation of Leagros in thie workshop output, the painter Phintias ignored Leagros altogether. Euphronios, on the other hand, has no less than sixteen vases which carry

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[127] Shapiro, "Leagros and Euphronios," 25, 26; Martin Robertson, *The Art of Vase-Painting in Classical Athens* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 26-27.

[128] Shapiro, "Leagros and Euphronios," 27. As noted by Shapiro and many other scholars, many of the more obscene depictions on Athenian vase paintings are very difficult or impossible to access and often permission to photograph is denied. This is the circumstance with this vase, and that is the reason no photograph is supplied.

[129] Boardman. *Greek Sculpture*, 48.

Leagros' name. This number consists of about half of Euphronios' artistic output. The other Pioneers took great interest in each other's lives and work, and they must have noticed Euphronios' penchant for naming Leagros in his paintings. In response to Euphronios' public longing, other lesser-known painters created vases that suggest a special relationship between the two.[130]

One example of this fascination of the two is the tondo of a cup by Euphronios portrays a fashionably dressed youth on horseback. Indeed, his costume was the most fashionable of the day: a thin chiton under a stiff, Thracian-style patterned cloak, high boots made of animal hide with flaps, and a traveler's hat. "Leagros" is the label around the youth. [131]

Another *psykter*, this one by Euphronios, depicts nude prostitutes enjoying their own *symposium*. Such a scene would not have occurred in real life, suggesting the subject is a fantasy. A figure labelled Smikra (perhaps making fun of Smikros) plays the game of *kottabos* with the accompanying phrase saying the ancient Greek equivalent "this one's for you, Leagros."[132] This implies that either Leagros was fond of prostitutes, or perhaps because of his good looks, they were fond of him. Regardless, it was Euphronios that chose to compliment Leagros. Smikra appears on a cup by another painter that is the most drastic example of group sex. [133] She sleeps beneath a couch while on the couch a prostitute holds a sandal. She is about to spank a bearded man while a youth watches and masturbates. "Leagros Kalos" is written

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[130] Shapiro, "Leagros and Euphronios," 27.

[131] Shapiro, "Leagros and Euphronios," 28. Figure not reproduced

[132] Lear, "Consummation," 120.

[133] Robertson, *The Art of Vase-Painting* 40.

across the scene. [134] With two different painters painting the same two people, one scene in a symposium and one in an orgy, it is perhaps more than coincidence.

The sandal was most likely one of Leagros' favorite sex toys. One of Euphronios' Leagros vases (figure 24), shows a man with his upper body exposed leaning forward in his chair while holding a sandal. He appears to be about to hit a boy, who had been moving away, but stopped and turns to look back. Some scholars even believe the boy has an amused grin on his face. [135] His right arm hangs at his side, and his expression is not tense. He has a very long penis that is almost erect but still points down. The words "Leagros kalos" are inscribed between the two figures. Perhaps the boy was caught masturbating and is about to be punished, [136] but his demeanor does not suggest the sandal inspires fear, but rather the arousal that also inspired him in the vase he masturbates in, along with other scenes. [137] This is the only instance where a boy his age is depicted with such a penis, but such a well-developed scrotum shows how mature he was. Dated just after 520 BCE, this is the first Euphronios "Eleagros kalos" vase, and possibly the first of any vase with his name. Leagros grew to have a reputation of having great sexual appeal. [138] To sum up in our study of pederastic relationships, Leagros was a typical Athenian aristocrat who lived during the first years of their democratic institutions. Leogros was a stylish horse-rider, a lover music, and a participant in the *symposia*.

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[134] Shapiro, "Painting Pederasty in Athens," 28-29.

[135] Martin F. Kilmer, *Greek Erotica on Attic Red-Figure Vases* (London: Duckworth, 1993), 184.

[136] Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus*, 285-86.

[137] Boardman. *Greek Sculpture* 76.

[138] Shapiro, "Leagros and Euphronios," 29.

Conclusion

From both the literary and artistic evidence it is clear that pederasty was a prominent form of relationship in ancient Greece. For there to be such a vast amount of artistic representation, courtship was an important part in these pederastic relationships. Not only were there specific gestures involved in the initiation of this tradition, but presenting gifts was an important part of the whole courtship process. It not only showed one's interest, but displayed some of the amenities an *eromenos* could expect from the relationship. As seen in the relationship between Theognis and Kurnos, not all pederastic couples were ideal, and could often be turbulent just as any other relationship could be. Both Kurnos and Leagros were not always loyal to just one *erastes*, as both had a reputation for breaking hearts.

While many scenes confirm the idealization depicted in the literary sources, we have also examined certain instances where the ideal was *not* represented. Occasionally a painter must find a sort of symbol to represent something a poet could describe using words, or, in the case of gift-giving, much more evidence is presented through the art than through the literary sources. At the same time, the age of the *erastai* seems to differ than what some literary sources claim. The social rule dictates that an *erastes* must be an adult, as only an adult can take on the role of a teacher. Since shaving one's beard rarely happened in ancient Greece an adult male would have a full beard by the time he took an *eromenos*. Yet clearly many *erastai* in vase-paintings were represented as youths themselves, older than their *eromenoi*, but clean-shaven all the same.

Regardless, it is through the literary and artistic evidence that wee can view how pederasty was an integral and significant part of an elite Athenian male citizen's life. Both the *erastai* and *eromenoi* served as models of important values such as wisdom, modesty, restraint, and moderation. The rules of pederasty defined this ideal model life and ensured that the

e*erastes*, *eromenos*, and ultimately the city of Athens itself would benefit from such relationships.

Through Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy it is evident that homosexual pederasty and adult relationships were not seen unnatural to the ancient Greeks. Indeed, conflicts surrounding pederastic relationships were of a political nature rather than a sexual nature, which is very different from our modern society. Sexuality was integrated in class issues forcing the emerging democracy to take a prominent role in defining sexual norms. While lower-classes viewed pederasty as a symbol of old oligarchical attitudes, practitioners of pederasty sought to justify this institution through transforming myth and exalting the bond of pederastic relationships by associating pederasty with ending tyranny.

Figures

Figure 1 *Amphora* by the Phrynos Painter. Photo: Martin-von-Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg.

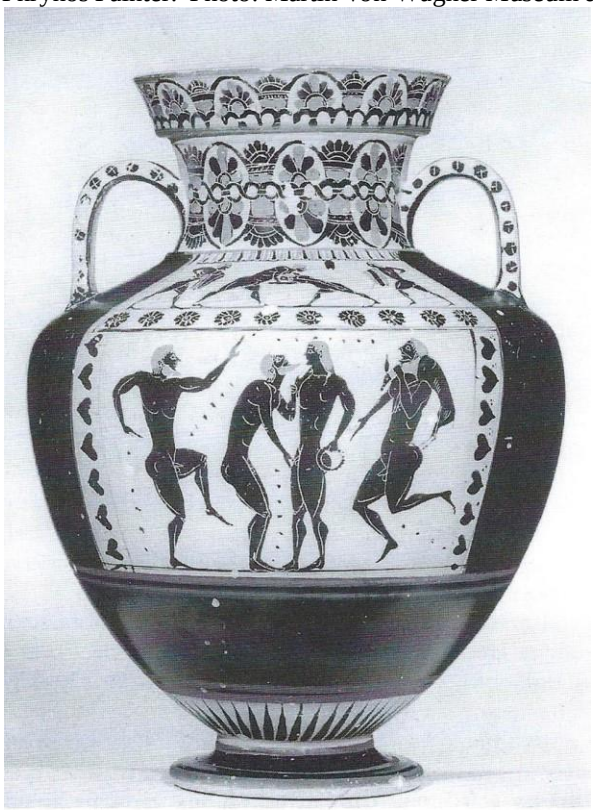

Figure 2 *Amphora* by thee Painter of Cambridge 47. Photo: Staatliche Antikensammling und Glyptothek München.

Figure 3 *Kylix* by Douris. Photo: Martin-von-Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg.

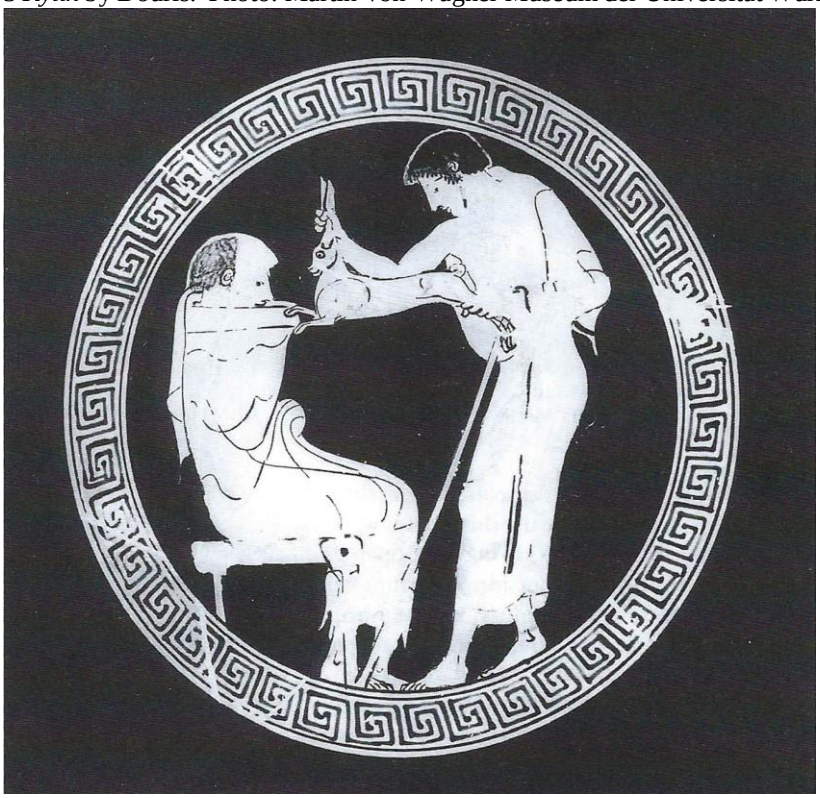

Figure 4 *Kylix* by Makrin. Photo: Martin-von-Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg.

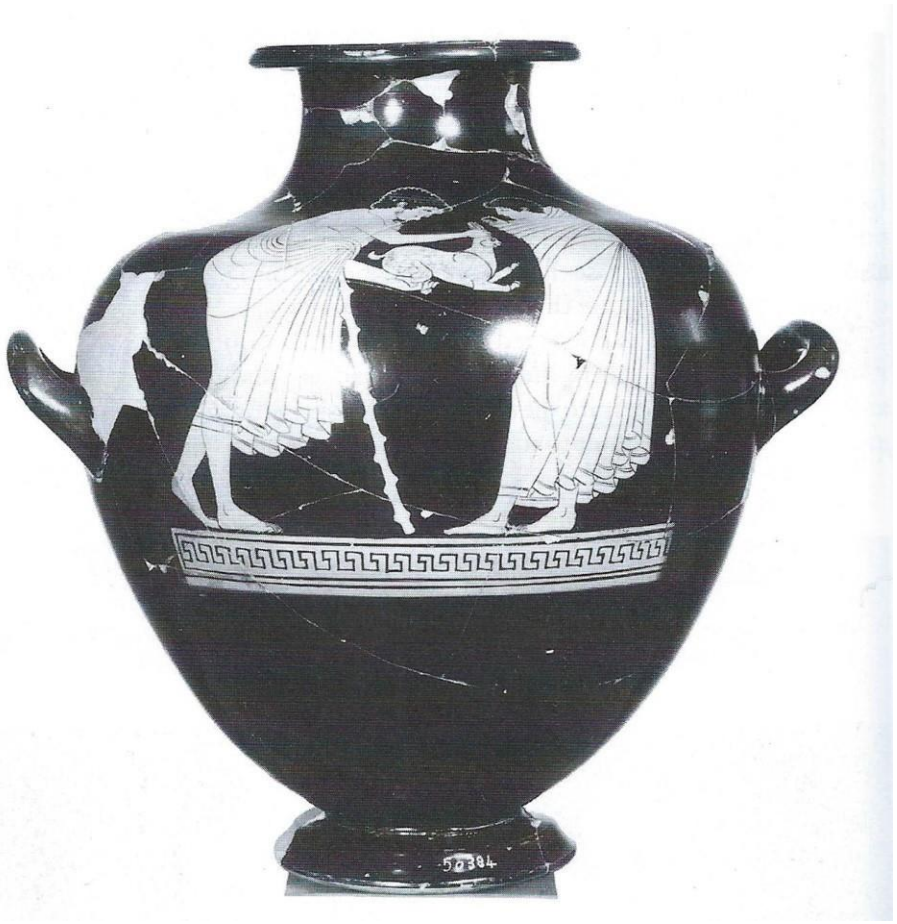

Figure 5 *Kalpis* by the Kleophrades Painter. Photo: Ministero per I Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per I Beni Archeologici del Lazio, Sezione Etruria Meridonale.

Figure 6a *Kylix* by Makron. Exterior. Photo: Staatliche Antikensammling und Glyptothek München.

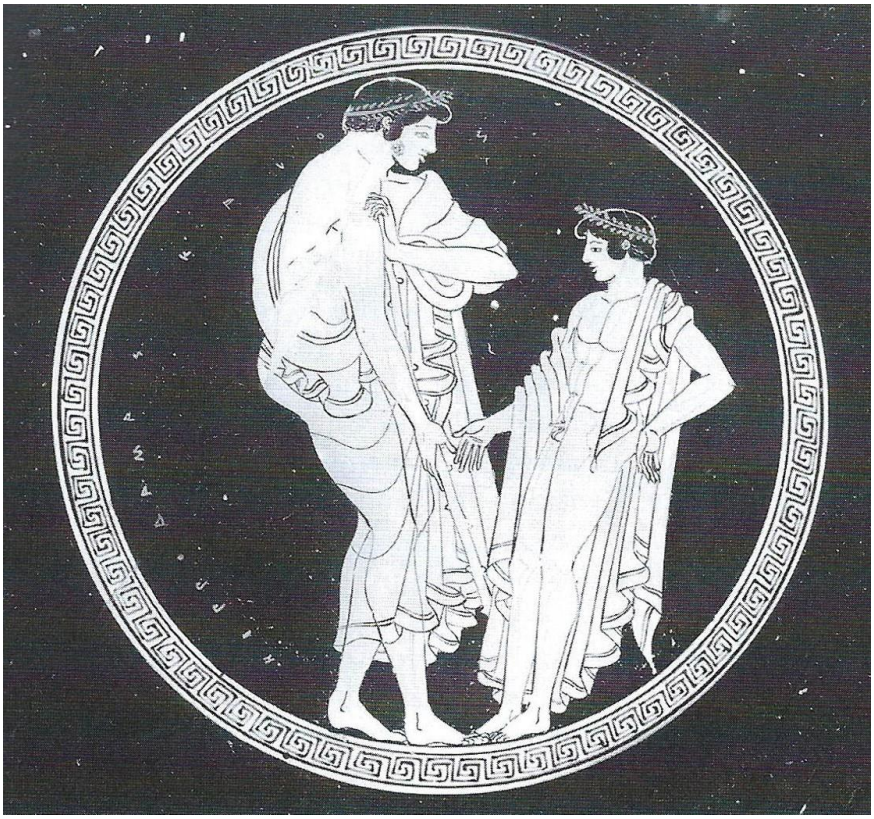

Figure 6b *Kylix* by Makron. Interior. Photo Staatliche Antikensammling und Glyptothek München.

Figure 7 *Kylix* in the manner of Douris. Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. F 2305. Photo: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbestiz.

Figure 8 *Kylix*in a style related to Douris. Gift of EEdward Perry Waston. Photograph © 2007 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 9 *Kylix* by the Euaichme Painter. Photo: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Figure 10 *Pelike* by the Triptolemos Painter. Photo: Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Culture, Mykonos Museum.

Figure 11a *Skyphos* by the Lewis Painter. Side A. Photo: Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.

Figure 11b *Skyphos* by the Lewis Painter. Side B. Photo: Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.

Figure 12 *Kylix* by Makron. Photo: Ole Haupt, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.

Figure 13 *Kylix* by the Brygos Painter. Photo: Arrchivo Fotografico della Direzione dei Musei dello Stato della Città del Vaticano.

Figure 14 *Lekythos*. The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

Figure 15 Neck *amphora* by the Harrow Painter. Photo: Archivo Fotografico della Direzione dei Musei dello Stato della Città del Vaticano.

Figure 16 *Kylix* by the Brygos Painter. Photo: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Figure 17 Red-figure *amphora*, Louvre G 45. Photo Réunion des Musées Nationaux.

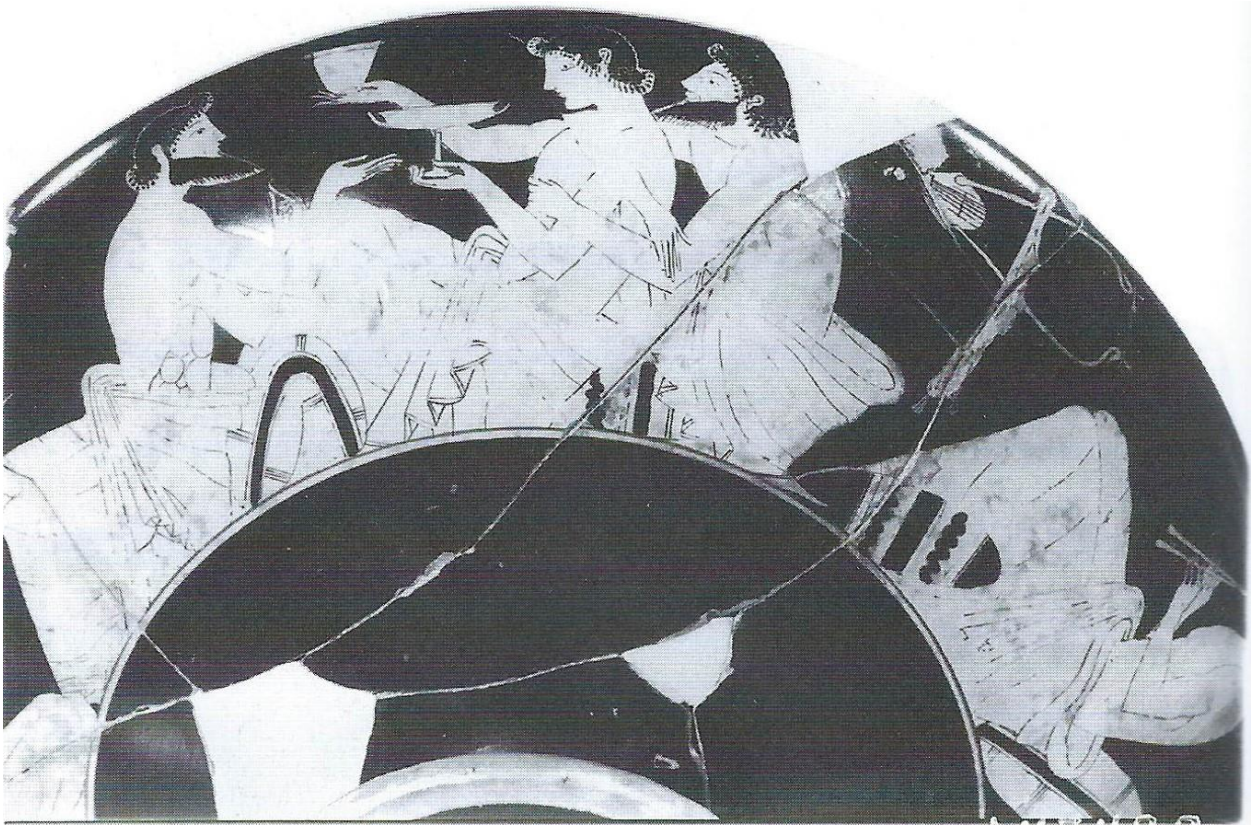

Figure 18 *Kylix* by the Ambrosios Painter. Photo: Ministero per I Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici del Lazio, Sexione Etruria Meridonale.

Figure 19 *Kylix* by the Epidromoos Painter. Photo: Archivio del Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna.

Figure 20 *Skuphos*. Gift of E. P. and Fiske Warren. Photograph © 2007 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 21 *Kylix* by the Briseis Painter. Photo RMN © Mussée du Louvre – Les frères Chuzeville.

Figure 22 *Kylix* by the Carpenter Painter. Photo: © The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California.

Figure 23a Red-figure *psykter*, J. Paul Getty Museum 52.AE.53. Photo: Museum.

Figure 23b Detail of the *psykter* Fig. 23a: Leagros and Euphronios. Photo: Museum

Figure 24 Pelike by Euphronios. Photo: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici del Lazio, Sexione Etruria Meridonale.

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