

HOMOSEXUALITY IN ANCIENT GREECE

THE MYTH IS COLLAPSING

[May 10, 2021- Note that the actual book this PDF has been made from contains example images of extreme illustrations on vases. This PDF does not contain any images, however.]

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ADONIS ATH. GEORGIADES

**HOMOSEXUALITY
IN ANCIENT GREECE**

THE MYTH IS COLLAPSING



ATHENS 2004
GEORGIADES

To my mother,
whom I always remember with love

ΖΕΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΙΣΧΥΝΗ

Ζεὺς πλάσας ἀνθρώπους τὰς μὲν ἄλλας διαθέσεις εὐθὺς αὐτοῖς ἐνέθηκε, μόνῃς δὲ αἰσχύνῃς ἐπελάθετο. διόπερ ἀμυχανῶν, πόθεν αὐτὴν εἰσαγάγη, ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὴν διὰ τοῦ ἀρχοῦ εἰσελθεῖν. ἢ δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἀντέλεγε καὶ ἀνηξιοπάθει, ἐπεὶ δὲ σφόδρα αὐτῇ ἐπέκειτο, ἔφη· «ἀλλ' ἔγωγε ἐπὶ ταύταις ταῖς ὁμολογίαις εἴσειμι ὥς, ἂν ἕτερόν μοι ἐπεισέλθῃ, εὐθὺς ἐξελεύσομαι». ἀπὸ τούτου καὶ συνέβη πάντας τοὺς πόρονους ἀναισχύντους εἶναι.

Β' γραφή

...ἂν Ἔρωσ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ...»

ὁ μῦθος δηλοῖ, ὅτι τοὺς ὑπ' ἔρωτος κατεχομένους ἀναισχύντους εἶναι συμβαίνει.

Αἰσώπου Μῦθοι

ZEUS AND SHAME

When Zeus created men, he put in them every moral quality, but forgot to put Shame. He couldn't find where he should introduce her from, so, he ordered her to get in through anus. She objected, at first, and became resentful. As she went on disagreeing, she said: "I won't agree, unless I have the right to get out, if someone else gets in, after me, through the same passage".

After that, everyone who prostitutes oneself is considered shameless.

2nd version:

"(...) Love should not get in through the same passage."

That means that those who thus express their love are shameless.

Aesopus, Proverbia

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PREFACE

People who deal with questions of historical self-knowledge are familiar with the fact that, until recently, as far as Greek history and culture were concerned, ignorance was prevailing in our country. We had to accept whatever we were told about who our ancestors were without the possibility to react. Luckily enough things have changed. Readers' interest is wider and the number of published books relevant to these issues becomes larger.

Lectures on Ancient Greece organised by both the National Metsovion Polytechnic School of Athens (when Mr. N. Markatos was rector) and *Ἰδεοθέατρον* by Andonis Anas-tasakis were among the first attempts aiming, these last years, to revive, if I may say, Hellenism. Becoming gradually more and more successful, they demonstrated that modern Greeks had finally decided to take things in hand in the most Hellenic of ways, Knowledge.

These lectures, which were in essence presentations of original scientific works, were given by impressively instructed personalities and decisively overthrew certain stereotypes staining for years our country. Questions such as Homer's identity, the alphabet's origins or the continuity of our manners and customs were treated scientifically with substantial evidence.

Personally, I took part in the organisation of these lectures during their second (1994), and their third and last year, since the Polytechnic School denied further cooperation, once Mr. Markatos' term was over.

I was then asked to give an account of a so far unspoken subject, the real extents of homosexuality in Ancient Greece, which from the very beginning rose great interest in the overcrowded amphitheatre and kept me busy ever since.

I am deeply convinced, and my conviction is supported by substantial evidence rather than personal belief, that, in this subject too, different people have told us impudent lies for different reasons.

All the necessary proof leading to this conclusion will be given to you in the following pages. I can only say in advance that this proof is but a small part of what I managed to track down.

I hope other searchers will undertake and complete this research.

Adonis A. Georgiades

INTRODUCTION

It is not in the purpose of this research to take a position in favour of, or against homosexuality, but to find out ancient Greeks' own views on the issue.

I believe that the idea, that Greeks were, so to speak, much more tolerant as far as homosexuality is concerned, and that it was not only accepted by, but almost imperative to every educated Greek, is deliberately diffused.

There is no doubt; in the context of the New Age we live in, where everything is being trivialised, this diffusion is neither innocent nor accidental, but maintained by those who use the authority of our classical civilisation to corroborate their own views. Let us not forget that, nowadays, there are people who not only try to protect the rights of individuals having made this personal choice, which we find absolutely legitimate, but also try to convince us that homosexuality is natural. Those who don't adopt it would be sort of inferior compared to the rest. Models standing in the centre of the stage tend to follow this direction.

We live in the age of extravagance, moving from mass hysteria against homosexuals, which dominated Europe only some decades ago, to the other extreme by making all equal. Does anybody consider how devastating can such actions be to traditional institutions such as family? To throw down some so called taboos seems to be the only thing that counts for the moment. There are limits, though, to everything and once hubris is committed, it is inevitably followed by Nemesis.

The idea is simple. If during the, as generally admitted, greatest era of classical Greece, people found it natural to be involved in homosexual relations with adult or even under age individuals to serve "educational purposes", then pederasty and homosexuality acquire a different, favourable dimension.

Yet, was this really the case? Or this is what it is convenient for the era of the politically correct to think? Here is the real question.

To sustain my fundamental point of view, that homosexuality was never accepted by Greeks, I followed the only reliable method I could think of, the only one significant to the objective searcher regardless of what Dover, Siamakis or anybody else says, extensive reference to ancient texts.

It is right here that stands the huge problem of education in our country. How can one ask people to study a Greek text when, during their school years, they only learn to abhor them? This is by all means no fortuitous. But answers lie there only. So trust no one –no matter how many diplomas one might have– speaking to you about ancient Greece. Just study the texts yourself.

Let me clear once and for all that I don't claim homosexuality to be unknown in ancient Greek society. That would be both senseless and unnatural, since homosexuality has always existed in every human society for either biological or psycho-social reasons. Being as old as our species, this sexual choice existed also in the ancient Greek world.

But how was homosexuality treated then? It was treated in a particularly negative way, as you will find out through this book.

So it cannot be permitted to those who want to attribute to classical Greece contemporary attitudes to do so.

CHAPTER ONE
SOCIAL CONTEXT

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Homosexuality in ancient Greece is a major issue, which has been keeping me busy in the past, as it has done with many of you, I dare say. For no other reason than the continuous accusations sustained by sources, ranging from cheap weekly reviews and newspapers to the so called “reliable” and “scientific” books, which, when bringing it forward, try to convince us that ancient Greece was homosexuals’ paradise.

If this was to be true, it would deserve thorough study, since Greeks were widely known to leave nothing to luck. Their social life and civilisation have provided answers to the slightest details of human needs. So such an attitude of theirs should be subject to further analysis.

Being myself, as I imagine most of you, convinced about the accuracy of such views, I started my research. To my great amazement, I found, in the process, that I was deeply mistaken and that nothing of the kind was happening. The treasure was a hoax.

I will proceed by presenting all different points of view relevant to this question. Researchers who promote the idea of generally spread and totally accepted homosexuality in ancient Greece don’t usually do so. They never allow readers to nourish some doubts or just inform them of the existence of opposite views.

This is rather impressive and even suspicious as to the underlying objectives, since arguments put forward by some of the most serious scientists are not good enough to justify the conclusions they reach to.

Up to date studies vary from scientific books to cheap readings full of vulgar designations. As we cannot answer to every single work, we will use two books representing each one of the two extremes. We chose Dover’s Homosexuality in ancient Greece as an example of a scientifically attempted approach of

the subject. In Greece as well as worldwide, this book, considered as the most seriously documented, is the main reference of those who claim that homosexuality was widely adopted in the ancient Greek world. This is why it deserves our attention and the answers I believe I can give to its author, despite the fact that I deeply respect him as a professor.

(Other important studies such as *Love in ancient Greece* by Robert Flaceliere or *Marriage, hetaerae and pederasty* by Carola Reinsberg are also available in our country and will unconditionally be quoted when necessary.)

To represent the second group of readings, I chose a book which it is impossible to classify among the serious studies regardless of whatever good faith one may have, since its lack of self-control in the characterisations takes away the slightest element of a scientific approach.

Mr.Siamakis' book *The perverted* obviously echoes his personal views with some effort to support them by quoting ancient writers. What it finally does, as far as I am concerned, is to distort them.

Since I only wanted to treat the subject from a scientific point of view, it would be better not to deal with such a book and the whole category it represents. Yet, his author is a professor of theology and gives the, one has to admit vague, impression to talk on behalf of the Aristotelian University of Thessalonica which didn't bother to condemn the book for the insulting image it gives of our ancestors. So I found myself compelled to respond after quoting it, as nobody can prevent us from defending with irrefutable arguments the sacred memory of Leonidas, Socrates or Plato. Reference to this particular book is by no means intending to insult the author, whom I don't even know. It simply aims to inform readers upon matters which have to be treated with a far more keen sense of responsibility and respect. After all, when published, a study is automatically subject to

positive or negative judgment. I will just avoid insults and try to put things within their real proportions. Wishing to give readers the possibility to form a clear view about homosexuality in ancient Greece, I will examine, at first, what ancient writers generally say about Sparta and Athens and, then, compare it to what researchers say in order to check their fidelity to the sources. The wholly preserved Athenian legislation will be following. Then, it will be necessary to clear up, according to the sources the exact meaning of the words [that are translated as "lover" and "loved-one".] This is where lays the most significant misinterpretation. I will finally focus on specific questions such as myths, great personalities and vase representations, which have repeatedly been used as an indication of ancient Greek society's approval of homosexuality.

CHAPTER TWO
SPARTA-ATHENS

In this chapter I will focus on the two major cities of the ancient Greek world, Sparta and Athens, for very specific reasons.

First of all, a considerable amount of information concerning these two cities is available. Let us not forget that we are trying to find out what was happening 2500 years ago. So, we'd rather search in those cities we are most familiar with, thanks to their frequent mentions or descriptions in ancient sources. Occasional hints to other regions such as Crete or Elida are too brief and vague to draw any reliable scientific conclusion from them.

Second and most important, the two cities being leading powers in their time, one can normally expect them to function as models for the rest. After all, our knowledge about Sparta covers the whole period of the city's leadership, while in the case of Athens we know mainly what was going on between 6th and 4th centuries B.C., the city's Golden age.

One can generally expect minor cities to follow, more or less, either Sparta or Athens. So, studying them should be enlightening for what was going on in the ancient Greek world in general. Athens will inevitably draw most of our attention, since an overwhelming rate of the available sources thoroughly describes most aspects of life (and not only the Athenians' attitude to homosexuality) in the city. We try to reach safe conclusions and not just to support one view against another.

Let us then begin with a first, very important, observation, typical of the generalised prejudice in favour of homosexuality being socially accepted in ancient Greece.

In the light of a so called progressivism which enables him to approach the question objectively, Pr. Dover tries to convince us that our idea of homosexuality did not stand at all in ancient Greece and almost invites us to share ancient Greeks' 'liberal' opinion in the matter. In the first footnote of his book's first page claims that Greeks knew that human's sexual preferences differ, their language though had no substantives equivalent to the English terms "homosexual" and "heterosexual" since they believed that a) indeed, in different moments, everybody reacts in homosexual and heterosexual stimuli and that b) no man has both active and passive sexual intercourse in the same period of his life.

Something goes wrong with this very first argument. I can hardly imagine pr. Dover trying to write such an important book without consulting a Greek lexicon. To start this very book I went to at least seven major ones, most of them being editions of ancient lexicographers, which this scholar is undoubtedly familiar with. How is then possible for him to make such a tragic mistake from the very first page?

Were it true, his argument would be most valuable, but it is not. Greeks had created the perfect language, an instrument of the greatest possible accuracy. If they didn't make the difference between the two sexual choices, they certainly had a serious reason. Is that so? Or is there something else going on, which inevitably drives us to the exact opposite conclusions despite the fact that we follow the same reasoning about word meaning as pr. Dover does?

It is true that terms "homosexual" and "heterosexual" are not found in the ancient texts, but not for the reason pr. Dover sustains. In our ancient language homosexuals were described with a very hard word, they were referred to as *Κίμαιδοι*.

This word's meaning is clearly insulting and highly disapproving of those having made this particular choice. In modern Greek it could be accurately translated as “damned”. Homosexual in ancient Greek is equivalent to “damned” in modern.

To eliminate any doubt, I quote the most authoritative Greek-English Lexicon by H.G.Liddell and R.Scott in page 951:

Κιναιδεία: unnatural lust, Aeschin. I. 131, Demetr. Eloc. 97

Κιναιδεύομαι: to be **κίναιδος**

Κίναιδος: lewd person.

This issue deserves our attention, for it is a most important one: Pr. Dover is right to start with the language, but for a reason I cannot explain, seems to ignore the most valuable clue.

Nowadays, by the use of terms such as “homosexual” and “heterosexual”, we simply describe a phenomenon, without making either a positive or a negative appreciation.

In ancient Greece, on the contrary, language showed the greatest possible accuracy. Epictetus used to say: “Inquiry about words is the first step to cleverness”. There is nothing fortuitous in this language, and in this case it takes a clear and particularly negative position.

It has also to be noted that Αἰδώς (Reverence, Awe, or Respect) was a very important divinity and whoever defied her would be most severely punished by Nemesis (divine Retribution), always coupled with her. Αἰδώς is etymologically connected to Αἰσχρός (shame, disgrace/ ugliness, deformity), which means that this particular deed meant dishonour to the doer.

So, although the majority of public opinion, in our country, as well as abroad, and writers like pr. Dover share the

view that homosexuality was approved, if not imperative in ancient Greece, one can already suspect from this very first remark that quite the opposite was true.

A) SPARTA

As previously explained, I will examine closely the two great cities of the ancient Greek world.

I will begin by quoting Mr. Siamakis' book *The Perverted*. I already qualified it as a non scientific book and it would be unethical if I didn't present some of the extracts which, from my point of view, justify this qualification. I will refute these extracts referring to Sparta and then follow the same procedure for those referring to Athens.

To refute them it will be enough to quote some ancient writers. Readers can then draw their own conclusions and no one could say that, what I claim is my own device put forward to serve personal views.

So here is what Mr. Siamakis says:

1. "As far as sex is concerned, Sparta was really nothing less than a whorehouse, a queer and hermetically close lunatic asylum for abnormal." (page 36)
2. "While unmarried, a Spartan woman was used by many sodomites; but when she got married, she was forced to abstinence and then harassed by envious old hags with wild lesbian inclinations; and after several years of marriage she could have many men, her own brothers included, and the duty to treat other young girls or newly-wed women in the same way; she was finally becoming a heartless hag herself who was sending her own husband or son to the war giving him a shield and saying to him " *"Η τὰν ἡ ἐπὶ τᾶς"*, that is

“come back either alive with it or dead on it”. This so called and unjustifiably admired farewell is but a sadistic “go to hell”, worthy of adulteresses, whores and unnaturally used hags and lesbians who hated men because they felt they did not need them.” (p. 38)

3. “Lycurgus’ laws specified that young men were to train themselves naked for older ones to watch them. This was a sight worth seeing according to Xenophon the pederast. Sodomite peepers were arranging pleasures for their old age by such laws.” (p. 40)

“By “speaking laconically is the soul of wit” they meant that pederasty is some kind of philosophy.” (p. 44)

Let us now read some revealing extracts from our ancient writers relevant to what Mr. Siamakis claims:

Xenophon, *Respublica Lacedaemoniorum* II, 13

«Ὁ δὲ Λυκούργος ἐναντία καὶ τούτοις πᾶσι γνούς, εἰ μὲν τις αὐτὸς ὦν οἷον δεῖ ἀγασθεῖς ψυχὴν παιδὸς πειρωῖτο ἄμειπτον φίλον ἀποτελέσασθαι καὶ συνεῖναι, ἐπὶ ἡνείκε καὶ καλλίστην παιδείαν ταύτην ἐνόμιζεν· εἴ δέ τις παιδὸς σώματος ὀρεγόμενος φανείη, αἰσχιστον τοῦτο θεῖς ἐποίησεν ἐν Λακεδαίμονι μηδὲν ἦττον ἐραστάς παιδικῶν ἀπέχεσθαι ἢ γονεῖς παίδων ἢ καὶ ἀδελφοὶ ἀδελφῶν εἰς ἀφροδίδια ἀπέχονται».

“Because Lycurgus was against all these, he approved only of when a person, being such as he had to be and admiring a boy’s moral and intellectual self, tried to be his blameless friend and associate with him; he (Lycurgus) even thought of this as the most noble form of education. But, when one turned out to yearn for the boy’s body, which was the basest thing to do according to Lycurgus, he ordered that lovers should hold themselves off the loved boys, just as parents or brothers ab-

stain from having sexual intercourse with their children or brothers.”

Xenophon, Symposium VIII, 55:

«Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ οἱ νομίζοντες, εἴαν καὶ ὄρεχθῆ τις σώματος, μηδενὸς ἂν ἔτι καλοῦ καγαθοῦ τοῦτον τίχειν, οὔτω τελέως τοὺς ἐρωμένους ἀγαθοὺς ἀπεργάζονται ὡς καὶ μετὰ ξένων κἂν μὴ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ [πόλει] ταχθῶσι τῷ ἐραστῇ, ὁμοίως αἰδοῦνται τοὺς παρόντας ἀπολείπειν. Θεὰν γὰρ οὐ τὴν Ἀναΐδειαν ἀλλὰ τὴν Αἰδῶ νομίζουσι».

“Lacedaemonians, on the contrary, believe that a loved boy cannot succeed anything noble, when one yearns for his body, and they bring the loved ones to such moral perfection that, when they find themselves in battle among strangers and not with their lover, they never think of deserting their comrades—in arms, because they honour *Αἰδῶς* (Reverence) as a goddess and not *Ἀναΐδεια* (Shamelessness).

Plutarch, Vitae parallelae, Lycurgus XVII, 4:

«Ἐκοινώνουν δὲ οἱ ἐρασταὶ τοῖς παισὶ τῆς δόξης ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέρα καὶ λέγεται πότε παιδὸς ἐν τῷ μάχεσθαι φωνὴν ἀγενῆ προεμένου ζημιωθῆναι τὸν ἐραστὴν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχόντων. Οὔτω δὲ τοῦ ἐρᾶν ἐγκεκρομένου παρ’ αὐτοῖς, ὥστε καὶ τῶν παρθένων ἐρᾶν τὰς καλὰς καὶ ἀγαθὰς γυναῖκας, τὸ ἀντερᾶν οὐκ ἦν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἀρχὴν ἐποιοῦντο φιλίας πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ τῷ αὐτῷ ἐρασθέντες, καὶ διετέλουν κοινῇ σπονδάζοντες, ὅπως ἄριστον ἀπεργάσαιτο τὸν ἐρώμενον».

“Lovers took part in the boys’ good or bad repute. It is said that when, once, a boy shouted improperly during the combat, the authorities punished his lover for that. So, this kind of love

was approved and honourable women were encouraged to love virgins, but there was no rivalry in such relationships. On the contrary, lovers of the same boy found to this a motive to become friends and work together to bring the loved boy to moral perfection.”

As far as women of Lacedaemon and their love for their husbands are concerned, here’s another revealing and totally denying Mr. Siamakis’ claims extract from Plutarch’s work. Leonidas’ wife, Gorgo is questioned on this subject and her answer demonstrates how women of Sparta “hated” their men.

Plutarch, *Vitae parallelae*, *Lycurgus XIV*, 4:

«Ὅθεν αὐταῖς καὶ λέγειν ἐπήει καὶ φρονεῖν οἷα καὶ περὶ Γοργοῦς ἰστορεῖται τῆς Λεωνίδου γυναικός. Εἰπούσης γὰρ τινός, ὡς ἔοικε, ξένης πρὸς αὐτὴν ὡς «Μόνοι τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἄρχετε ὑμεῖς αἱ Λάκαιναι»· «μόνοι γάρ» ἔφη, «τίκτομεν ἄνδρας».

“So every woman of Sparta used to think and speak as Gorgo, Leonidas’ wife, is said to have done. When a stranger woman told her “only you, women of Lacedaemon, rule your husbands”, she replied “this is because only women of Lacedaemon give birth to real men”.

That is the true extent of Spartan women’s esteem for their husbands.

Plutarch, who is, by the way, the main source to those who write about homosexuality, also makes clear that:

«ἐρᾶν τῶν τὴν ψυχὴν σπουδαίων παιδῶν ἐφεῖτο ὁ δὲ ἐγκληθεὶς ὡς ἐπ’ αἰσχύνῃ πλησιάζων ἄτιμος διὰ βίου ἦν», that is “The aim was to love the moral and intellectual self of

earnest boys and, when a man was accused of approaching them with lust, he was deprived of civic rights for life.” (Λακεδ. Ἐπιτηδ. 7,237c).

And Maximus Tyrius confirms this testimony in his work Lectures (20. 8de):

«ἐρᾷ Σπαρτιάτης ἀνὴρ μειρακίου λακωνικοῦ, ἀλλ’ ἐρᾷ μόνο ὡς ἀγάματος καλοῦ καὶ ἐνὸς πολλοί, καὶ εἰς πολλῶν. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἐξ ὕβρεως ἡδονὴ ἀκοινώνητος πρὸς ἀλλήλους».

“A man of Sparta loves a boy, but he loves it the way many people love and admire a beautiful statue or one many statues. But sensual pleasure coming from lust is prohibited among them.”

Finally let us see what Aelianus says about Sparta in his work *Varia Historia* III, 12:

«Σπαρτιάτης δὲ ἔρωσ ἀισχρὸν οὐκ εἶδεν εἴτε γὰρ μειράκιον ἐτόλμησεν ὕβριν ὑπομεῖναι εἴτε ἐραστὴς ὕβρισαι, ἀλλ’ οὐδετέροις ἐλυσιτέλησε τὴν Σπάρτην ἐγκαταμεῖναι ἢ γὰρ τῆς πατρίδος ἀπηλλάγησαν ἢ καὶ τὸ ἔτι θερμότερον καὶ τοῦ βίου αὐτοῦ».

“Spartan love had nothing base because neither the boy dared to accept lewdness, nor the lover dared to be lewd, since it was no good for any of them to dishonour Sparta. If this ever happened they were either exiled or, what was worse, killed.”

Such extensive quoting may be wearisome to some readers, but such live testimonies seem to me more important than any personal views. And it has to be said that the preserved ancient

texts represent no more than a 3% of ancient Greek literature. Those who chose which texts were to be saved and which to be burned were people interested in tarnishing the ancient world, since they were fighting against it. We must not forget that the major part of these priceless treasures which were not left to perish was preserved by monks in monasteries in the first centuries of the Christian era.

People were obliged by the laws of the first emperors to hand over whatever text they may have in their possession for this selection to be made. Penalties for those who did not follow the laws were virulent, ranging from confiscation of their fortune and exile to tortures and execution. Edicts of this kind were issued by emperors such as Theodosius (the unjustifiably called Great), Arcadius, Justinianus and others.

It is, in my opinion, completely documented that, in contrast to the later development of Christianity, when Orthodoxy rose as a prodigious union of the two Worlds, there was a huge conflict between Christianity and ancient Greek legacy during the first centuries of our era. The so called Greek Fathers of the Christian church were, certainly, remarkable scholars capable of studying thoroughly the Greek texts, but the general tendency, serving of course the dominating ideology, was to portrait the former world as sunk in vice and corruption, a world awaiting for the new message Christianity was about to spread.

So, it would be a rather valid hypothesis to presume that all the preserved texts refuting the theory of generalized homosexuality, at least as far as the classical era is concerned, are only those which escaped destruction.

I considered it then not merely likely, but absolutely certain that much more straight evidence for moral questions would be in our disposition, if so vehement an ideological conflict had not taken place. In any case, though, what is left is undoubtedly more than enough.

Also of great importance is the meaning of the words **ἔραστής** (lover) and **ἑρόμενος** (loved boy/one). Although a whole chapter will be devoted to their exact interpretation, it must yet come dimly into sight that they were not used in a sexual meaning, as they are today, but in another, obviously educational one.

The reading of the so far mentioned extracts must have already made us suspicious about that, since, despite the use of the word “lover”, any sexual affinity of the term seems inconceivable. Yet, if “lover” had its modern meaning, this would be irrational. So there should be another meaning for this word and it will be soon revealed what this was.

B) ATHENS

We will now hear what Mr. Siamakis says about the other pole of the ancient Greek civilisation, Athens. I shall only remind my readers that I quote faithfully Siamakis’ book *The perverted*, to make clear to everybody how this particular misunderstanding carried on through the years.

1. “Actually, as a pederast, Solon was sexually involved also with young Peisistratus, by several years his eldest, who succeeded him and became tyrant of Athens.” (p.25)
2. “Plutarch and Athenaeus confirm that Aeschylus was perverted and praised pederasty.” (p. 54)
3. “Sophocles was also a perverted and uncontrollable pederast.” (p. 54)
4. “Euripides praises pederasty and dressing like women.” (p. 54)
5. “Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Parmenides, Empedocles, and Zenon of Elea, are among those who were or seemed to be scientists and, in their texts, refer to perversion or are proved to be perverted themselves.” (p.59)

6. "Plato proves why sexual intercourse between male and female is unnatural, while it is natural between two males or two females." (p.61)
7. "The first [the author refers to philosophers preceding Socrates] were hard working scientists, while the second were idlers, wasters, envious imitators and babblers who faked up lewd stories in stead of laborious proof. As for Socrates and the charlatans of his lot, they had no other occupation but the daily and daylong pursuit and seduction of beautiful underage boys to satisfy their lust. In the symposia, after guzzling and vomiting and practising sodomy, they also occupied themselves with emitting their fanciful conceptions. Parmenides and his followers invented this so called philosophy, but it was Socrates and his circle who gave it its final shape, although Socrates is mainly a creation of his students." (p.62)
8. "Comical poets, such as Telecleides, Aristophanes and others, give testimony about Socrates before his own students, and they all portray him as a scab, foolish beggar, looking forward to when and where symposia are given, in order to throw himself to food and booze, and offer in exchange to his host and fellow-diners his funny rubbish to make them laugh. He obviously was the show of contemporary banquets." (p.62)
9. "Although Xenophon's and Plato's portraits of Socrates differ substantially, they share one widely known feature, which was surely the person's main one: he should have been the cheekiest and grossest pederast to ever exist in the ancient world" (p.63)

I could go on with endless quotations, since the whole book is written in the same spirit. Yet, I don't intend to expose its author, but to give a tribune to his views and then answer to them to avoid the distorted claim that no answer can be given.

Let me say again that I find this book extremely insulting to my ancestors and, if it hadn't been published by a teacher, I wouldn't have bothered mentioning it. I would have regarded it as an insignificant text written by someone who is obviously not aware of the importance of his sayings to the universal and not only the Greek civilisation.

Still, the real problem is that such, though not always so extremely phrased, views are unfortunately often put forward. Thus we have to take a clear position. (In fact, according to Siamakīs' book, the only ancient people to have held out against degeneration were the Jewish, since they were protected by the Law of Moses. They met serious danger when conquered by the "perverted" Greeks, but finally managed to resist.)

I will begin my refute by quoting ancient texts referring to homosexuality, as I did in the case of Sparta, especially Plato, since he is the one to be mostly accused as the main supporter of homosexuality.

What is the real paradox in this case, is that Plato specifically makes clear his position about homosexuality, which is a completely negative one. In his most mature work, *Leges*, where he crystallises his whole philosophy, he goes as far as to propose the institution of a severely forbidding law against homosexuality. Judging by the numerous references found in all his works, I can conclude that he was rather preoccupied with this issue. One can only wonder, then, how the partisan of platonic love ended being considered, nowadays, as the theorist of homosexuality. This must be rather attributed to misinterpreted extracts of another of his major works, *Symposium*, to which I will further thoroughly refer to.

Plato, *Leges* 636c:

«Εννοητέον ὅτι τῆ θηλεία καὶ τῆ τῶν ἀρρένων φύσει εἰς κοινωνίαν ἰούση τῆς γεννήσεως ἢ περὶ ταῦτα ἡδονὴ κατὰ

φύσιν ἀποδεδόσθαι δοκεῖ, ἀρρένων δὲ πρὸς ἄρρενας ἢ θηλειῶν πρὸς θηλείας παρὰ φύσιν.»

“It is understood that, since their birth, nature urges females and males to have sexual intercourse with one another, and it is obvious that sensual pleasure is given to them according to nature, while against nature between two males or two females.”

This is quite the opposite of what Mr. Siamakis claims to have read in Plato.

Plato, *Leges*, 836c–e:

«...εἰ γάρ τις ἀκολουθῶν τῇ φύσει θύσει τὸν πρὸ τοῦ Λαίου νόμον, λέγων ὡς ὀρθῶς εἶχεν τὸ ἀρρένων καὶ νέων μὴ κοινωνεῖν καθάπερ θηλειῶν πρὸς μεῖξιν ἀφροδισίων, μάρτυρα παραγόμενος τὴν θηρίων φύσιν καὶ δεικνὺς πρὸς τὰ τοιαῦτα οὐχ ἀπτόμενον ἄρρενα ἄρρενος διὰ τὸ μὴ φύσει τοῦτο εἶναι, τάχ' ἂν χρωῶτο πιθανῶ λόγῳ...»

“If someone, following nature, proposes the re-institution of the law as it was before Laius [thought to be the mythical inventor of homosexuality, after he raped Chrysis, and punished by being murdered by his own son] and claims that it is not right for men and boys to have sex with one another, as they have with women, and calls upon male animals which do not touch sexually one another, since this is not in their nature, he would have a rather strong argument.”

Plato, *Leges*, 840de:

«...ὡς οὐ χείρους ἡμῖν εἶναι τοὺς πολίτας ὀρνίθων καὶ ἄλλων θηρίων πολλῶν, οἱ κατὰ μεγάλας ἀγέλας γεννηθέντες, μέχρι μὲν παιδογονίας ἡίθεοι καὶ ἀκήρατοι γάμων τε ἀγνοοῦσι, ὅταν δ' εἰς τοῦτο ἡλικίας ἔλθωσι, συνδυνασθέντες

ἄρσιν θηλεία κατὰ χάριν καὶ θήλεια ἄρσενι, τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ὀσίως καὶ δικαίως ζῶσιν, ἐμμένοντες βεβαίως ταῖς πρώταις τῆς φιλίας ὁμολογίαις· δεῖν δὴ θηρίων γε αὐτοὺς ἀμείνους εἶναι».

“Our citizens should not be inferior to birds and many animal species, which are born in great herds and live purely and chastely without copulating to the age of bearing children, but, when they reach this age, males mate with females and females with males to their will, and live the rest of their lives sinlessly and justly, remaining faithful to the commitment they made in the beginning of their relationship. So, citizens must prove themselves even better than beasts.”

Plato, *Leges* 841d:

«Ἡ μηδένα τολμᾶν μηδενὸς ἄπτεισθαι τῶν γενναίων ἄμα καὶ ἐλευθέρων πλὴν γαμετῆς ἑαυτοῦ γυναικός, ἄθυστα δὲ παλλακῶν σπέρματα καὶ νόθα μὴ σπείρειν, μηδὲ ἄγωνα ἀρρένων παρὰ φύσιν· ἢ τὸ μὲν τῶν ἀρρένων πάμπαν ἀφελοῖ-
μεθ' ἄν...»

“No one should dare have sex with the brave and free but their own wives, nor should he be allowed to have illegitimate offspring by concubines or childless and unnatural intercourse with men; even better, sexual intercourse between men should be once and for all prohibited.”

Can you imagine how such a proposition would be qualified nowadays?

Those were only some of the enlightening extracts of Plato. I can now proceed to quoting Xenophon, another student of Socrates, whose views undoubtedly reflect, as well as Plato's, those of his teacher, which have also been completely distorted.

Xenophon, Memorabilia, A, II 30:

«Κριτίαν μὲν τοίνυν αἰσθανόμενος ἐρῶντα Εὐθυδήμου καὶ πειρῶντα χρῆσθαι, καθάπερ οἱ πρὸς τ' ἀφροδίσια τῶν σωμάτων ἀπολαύοντες, ἀπέτρεπε φάσκων ἀνελεύθερόν τε εἶναι καὶ οὐ πρόεπον ἀνδρὶ καλῷ κάγαθῷ τὸν ἐρώμενον, ᾧ βούλεται πολλοῦ ἄξιος φαίνεσθαι, προσαιτεῖν ὥσπερ τοὺς πτωχοὺς ἰκετεύοντα καὶ δεόμενον προσδοῦναι, καὶ ταῦτα μηδενὸς ἀγαθοῦ· τοῦ δὲ Κριτίου τοῖς τοιοῦτοις οὐχ ὑπακούοντος οὐδὲ ἀποτρεπομένου, λέγεται τὸν Σωκράτην ἄλλων τε πολλῶν παρόντων καὶ τοῦ Εὐθυδήμου εἰπεῖν ὅτι ὑἱὸν αὐτῷ δοκοίη πάσχειν ὁ Κριτίας, ἐπιθυμῶν Εὐθυδήμῳ προσκνησθαι ὥσπερ τὰ ὕδια τοῖς λίθοις, ἐξ ὧν δὴ καὶ ἐμίσει τὸν Σωκράτην ὁ Κριτίας».

“When he realised that Critias was in love with Euthydemus and tried to use him like those who just want to enjoy sexual intercourse, Socrates was trying to dissuade him, by saying that it was unworthy of a free and improper of a morally well instructed man to importunate like a beggar the one he loves, and of whom he wants to prove himself worthy, by asking him to concede to something not good. But Critias didn't want to hear, nor was he dissuaded, so Socrates is said to have remarked, in the presence of others and of Euthydemus himself, that Critias seemed to him to suffer like pigs, since he wants to rub himself against Euthydemus like pigs against stones. And that is exactly why Critias hated Socrates.”

From this particular extract one can safely conclude that the words **ἐρῶστίς** (lover) and **ἐρώμενος** (loved boy) had, by that time, a completely different meaning than they have in the present time. Otherwise, just imagine how absurd this text would be, had they referred to actual sexual intercourse, as they do today. It would be totally senseless.

It is so far obvious to me how unfounded the usual arguments of those who share Mr Siamakis views are. They can only be diffused thanks to ignorance of the texts that most of us have due to a policy, systematically promoted for several decades, if not centuries, by those who rule. This policy permits just anybody to mislead us by expressing scientifically inadmissible theories. We remain, alas, too ignorant.

As to the particular way of writing Mr. Siamakis shares with other writers, who want to serve specific ideological purposes and because these views are recently diffused through television, I would like to open a small parenthesis to my subject, in order to show in which way texts are distorted.

I repeat that this could not be happening, if Greeks had immediate access to ancient Greek texts. Unfortunately, this does not happen in the majority of cases, and if someone has in his library the necessary texts, he cannot study them, since he got used, during his school years, to abhor them.

One can, then, write whatever he wants, claim to have found it in an ancient text and have it accepted and even as a totally documented theory. That is why I insist on quoting the original ancient Greek texts, to avoid any suspicion, and to ensure complete and utter, not apparent reliability.

Mr. Siamakis, prolific as he is, has published, among others, a book about the origins of the alphabet. In page 310 of this very book he says verbatim (my emphasis):

“That Phoenicians were not exactly the barbarians who invented, used and transmitted the alphabet to Greeks, after the Dorian descent, is a piece of information which the Greeks became familiar with in the 4th century before our era, when they took control of the Eastern countries and acquired further knowledge of them. It is then made clear that the Syrians, and in particular the Jewish invented the alphabet. Diodorus Siculus, who, in his historical work, appears to have conducted his own or consulted

others' serious researches, says: 'Syrians are the inventors of the alphabet; Phoenicians learned from them and then transmitted it to Greeks. They navigated to Europe after Cadmus, so, Greeks called the letters Phoenician. And Phoenicians are said not to have invented the letters in the first place, but just to have changed their position. But, because most of them used the letters, they were named after them.' Apart from the alphabet's Syrian, that is to say Jewish, as I am going to prove, origin, Diodorus also pointed out its unique and universal character."

Mr. Siamakis is so determined to prove his theory about the origins of the alphabet by sustaining it through Diodorus' Siculus text, that he even quotes it (5, 74, 1) to eliminate any doubt on its authority.

Where does he lean? No doubt, to the regrettable fact that less than few Greeks can check his quotation, they do not have access even to the most well-known texts of the ancient writers, not to mention Diodorus Siculus' work (which, however, has been published in our editions, "Georgiades– Library of the Greeks", several years ago).

You can then imagine my surprise, when I first read Mr. Siamakis' book and his reference to Diodorus. I immediately looked to our edition of the original text, which follows the Leipzig edition.

Diodorus Siculus, book five, paragraph 74 (my emphasis):

«Ταῖς Μούσαις δοθῆναι παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς τῆν τῶν γραμμάτων εὔρεσιν καὶ τὴν τῶν ἐπῶν σύνθεσιν τὴν προσαγορευομένην ποιητικὴν. Πρὸς δὲ τοὺς λέγοντας, ὅτι Σύροι μὲν εὔρεται τῶν γραμμάτων εἰσὶ, παρὰ δὲ τούτων Φοίνικες μαθόντες τοῖς Ἑλλήσι παραδεδόκασιν, οὗτοι δ' εἰσὶν οἱ μετὰ Κάδμου πλεύσαντες εἰς τὴν Εὐρώπην, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τοὺς Ἑλληνας τὰ γράμματα Φοινίκεα προσαγορεύειν, φασὶ τοὺς Φοίνικας οὐκ ἐξ ἀρχῆς εὔρεϊν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς τύπους τῶν γραμμάτων μεταθεῖναι μόνον, καὶ τῇ τε γραφῇ ταύτῃ τοὺς πλείστους τῶν

*ἀνθρώπων χρήσασθαι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τυχεῖν τῆς προειρημέ-
νης προσηγορίας».*

“The invention of the letters and the combination of words to make poems was given to the Muses by their father. And as an answer to those who claim that it was the Syrians who invented the letters and the Phoenicians learned the letters from them and then, transmitted them to the Greeks, I say that it is about them who sailed with Cadmus to Europe. And so the Greeks named the letters Phoenician. Phoenicians are said not to have invented the letters in the first place, but just to have changed their position. But, because most of the people used the letters, they were named after them.”

So Diodorus says quite the opposite of what Mr. Siamakis claims. He even feels the need to explain the reason of his statement. Because when he writes, in the first century before our era, Jewish have come to the front of history, while, before the Hellenistic years, there was no mention of them, apart from the Old Testament of course.

It is then possible that some of them, with their known, and in some way legitimate, tendency to extend their passage from history (see the Judaic Archaeology of Iosepus) have claimed that Syrians invented the alphabet, in order to corroborate their position.

Anyway, the deciphering of the Linear B tablets has made all this meaningless. Besides, even the Athens University Rector, Mr. Babiniotis, in an article in the newspaper Βῆμα τῆς Κυριακῆς (July 7th 2002), makes clear that there is no scientific doubt about the Greek origins of the alphabet.

Mr. Siamakis uses then the same tactics in treating other subjects as in the case of the homosexuality in ancient Greece question. According to me, he has recourse to misquotation, twisting, distortion. If only I knew why.

CHAPTER THREE
ATHENS' LEGISLATION ABOUT
HOMOSEXUALITY

ATHENS' LEGISLATION ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

We have the incredible luck, which would have normally freed anyone from any doubt about ancient Greeks' attitude towards homosexuality, to have in our hands the whole Athenian legislation relative to this question. It came to us through a speech of the orator Aeschines, the speech Against Timarchus. I will proceed to a general presentation of the political context in which the speech is placed, in order to make the extracts more understandable.

In the middle of the 4th century B.C. the Second Athenian alliance lives a major crisis due to the huge increase of power of Philip II, Macedonia's king, who was also the father of Alexander the Great.

Athenians, like most Greeks of their time, are divided in two parties: the anti-Macedonian, which considers Philip to be a barbarian conqueror wanting to enslave Greece, and which has Demosthenes and Hyperides, the two orators for leaders; and the pro-Macedonian, which believes that Philip is the only hope for Greece to be united under one government and conquer the barbarians, and which has Isocrates, the orator, as theorist and Phocion and Aeschines as leaders.

The two parties are violently opposed to each other, as it often happens to us Greeks. Accusations for treason, bribery and other misdeeds of the kind are being made from both sides. This is a battle to the last and no stratagem is spared.

Aeschines is particularly detested by the anti-Macedonian party, not only as an adversary, but mostly as a defector, since he was against Philip in the beginning of his political career. Then, he went to Philip, along with a ten member's delegation, and concluded the Philocratean peace, which practically put an

end to the Second Athenian alliance to the benefit of Philip, and was thus considered as a great achievement of the pro-Macedonian party.

The anti-Macedonian party wants by all means to revoke this treaty and confront again Philip. Thus, they bring Aeschines to court accused of faithlessly executing his embassy, of bribery, in other words. It was widely known that Philip used to offer generous “gifts” to his friends, having by this way subdued quite a few cities.

Aeschines must have received some presents from Philip, although we cannot be absolutely sure that he signed the treaty for that, since, by that time, he was pro-Macedonian after all. He certainly represents the vulnerable spot of this peace to his opponents. They will, hence, accuse him, not without committing one, fatal to them, mistake.

They chose Timarchus, until that moment a distinguished member of their party, to be his accuser and prosecutor. Aeschines chooses, then, not to defend himself from this specific accusation in court, and to take his adversaries by surprise. To avoid judgment at all, he invokes a law in force since the age of Solon, as he claims, according which a citizen can be completely deprived of his civic rights, if his conduct was reprehensible. And if he has a conviction of this kind, he cannot accuse another citizen, since this is considered as part of his civic rights in Athens.

So, Aeschines sued Timarchus for unchastity (*περὶ ἐταιρήσεως*) and avoided the judgment of his own case. In his speech, he preserves every single detail of the whole hearing, from the secretary of the court reading the laws to the testimonies, and gives us full access to the Athenian legislation for homosexuality.

Just for the record, Aeschines won his case and Timarchus was sentenced to be deprived of his civic rights. The latter, to

avoid public dishonour, is said to have committed suicide before the verdict, which would probably order his execution.

Let me warn you that I will make the best of this work, which is a gift from God to the unraveling of our case.

A first general remark is that there is no other republic in the world to have adopted such a rigorous legislation about pederasty and homosexuality as Athens did. Sources allow us to conclude that even Solon's legal system, the first organised one that we know of, as far as Athens is concerned, had relative laws, which were rather severe.

We insist on the dating of these laws because it has been sustained that only the extent of the "problem" in classical Athens can explain the severity of the laws dealing with it.

But, as legislation was rigorous enough in the archaic period as well, we understand that the extent of this phenomenon and the severity of the legislation were two separate issues.

Laws in force in Athens have nothing in common with contemporary tolerance. If someone had tried to pass them today, he would have easily been qualified as racist.

Given this, the generally accepted idea about ancient Greeks' perception of homosexuality is not only false, but completely reversed. Whether this was done on purpose or not, I will let my readers to decide.

I will quote the laws unedited and without abridgments to enable further commentary and examination of the objections Pr. Dover and others have on the laws. To ensure credibility, I will cite the ancient Greek text, in the Leipzig edition as followed by the Library of the Greeks of Georgiades' Editions.

Aeschines, Against Timarchus 12:

«Οἱ δὲ τῶν παιδῶν διδάσκαλοι ἀνοιγέτωσαν μὲν τὰ διδασκαλεῖα μὴ πρότερον ἡλίου ἀνιόντος, κλειέτωσαν δὲ πρὸ ἡλίου δύνοντος. Καὶ μὴ ἐξέεστω τοῖς ὑπὲρ τὴν τῶν παιδῶν ἡλι-

κίαν οὐσιν εἰσιέναι τῶν παίδων ἔνδον ὄντων, ἐὰν μὴ υἱὸς διδασκάλου ἢ ἀδελφὸς ἢ θυγατρὸς ἀνήρ· ἐὰν δέ τις παρὰ ταῦτ' εἰσῆ, θανάτῳ. Ζημιούσθω καὶ οἱ γυμνασιάρχαι τοῖς Ἑρμαίοις μὴ ἐάτωσαν συγκαθιέναι μηδένα τῶν ἐν ἡλικίᾳ τρόπῳ μηδενί. Ἐὰν δὲ ἐπιτρέπη καὶ μὴ ἐξείργῃ τοῦ γυμνασίου, ἔνοχος ἔστω ὁ γυμνασιάρχης τῷ τῆς ἐλευθέρων φθορᾶς νόμῳ. Οἱ δὲ χορηγοὶ οἱ καθιστάμενοι ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου ἔστωσαν τὴν ἡλικίαν ὑπὲρ τετταράκοντα ἔτη».

“Teachers should not open the schools before sunrise and they should close them before sunset. No one above the age of thirteen is allowed to enter the school when children are still in, unless he is the son, brother or brother-in-law of the teacher. The law-breakers will be sentenced to death. During Hermes’ celebrations, gymnasts must let no one of age, and in no way, sit with the children. The gymnast, who permits this and doesn’t chase the law-breaker out of the gymnasium, is guilty according to the law about the corruption of free children. Patrons named by the people should be above forty years old.”

It is obvious from this first law that, in Athens of the antiquity, no effort was spared to keep the children pure in every way. Precautions taken could appear exaggerated.

To ancient Athenians, someone’s presence in the schools was implying lewd intentions and was enough to cause his sentence to death. You can imagine the impact of the mere proposition of such a law nowadays.

Of course, it has been said that such severity only reveals the extent of the problem. But, this is also what I want to prove; whenever and no matter to what extent this problem appeared, it was faced as a problem and not as an institution or something of the kind.

Unless, one wants us to believe that contemporary laws

against drugs - which can be severe, but never as hard as death penalty prove undoubtedly, not only how much frequent this addiction is, but, also, how necessary it is considered to children's education. At least, that is the allegation of those who, to prove their ideas about homosexuality in ancient Greece, appeal to the severity of the law. But, from a jurist's point of view, severe laws do not always confirm the existence of a problem; they are also applied to crimes judged as hideous. When this possibility is combined with

the meaning and impact of κίναδος, as exposed above, it then becomes more than probable.

Aeschines, Against Timarchus 16:

«Ἄν τις Ἀθηναίων ἐλεύθερον παιῖδα ὑβρίσῃ, γραφῆσθω ὁ κύριος τοῦ παιδὸς πρὸς τοὺς θεσμοθέτας, τίμημα ἐπιγραψάμενος. Οὗ δ' ἂν τὸ δικαστήριον καταψηφίσῃται, παραδοθεὶς τοῖς ἕνδεκα τεθνάτω αὐθημερόν. Ἐὰν δὲ εἰς ἀργύριον καταψηφισθῇ, ἀποτεισάτω ἐν ἕνδεκα ἡμέραις μετὰ τὴν δίκην, ἐὰν μὴ παραχρῆμα δύνηται ἀποτίνειν· ἕως δὲ τοῦ ἀποτεῖσαι εἰρχθήτω. Ἔνοχοι δὲ ἕστωσαν ταῖσδε ταῖς αἰτίαις καὶ οἱ εἰς τὰ οἰκετικὰ σώματα ἐξαμαρτάνοντες».

“If an Athenian insults a free boy, his tutor should sue him [the wrong doer] in front of the six junior archons [Athens’ legislators] and ask for his punishment. If he is found guilty by the court, he should be consigned to the eleven executioners and given death that same day. If he is convicted to pay a fine, he must do so within eleven days’ time; if he is not able to pay it immediately, he remains in prison until he does. Those who do such things to slaves are equally guilty.”

In this second law, we must note the verb “insult” [ὕβριζω] which has also the meaning of “being lustful to someone”. And here is another law attributed to Solon which says that

Demosthenes, Against Meidias, 47, 1

«Ἐάν τις ὑβρίσῃ εἰς τινὰ ἢ παιῖδα ἢ γυναῖκα ἢ ἄνδρα τῶν ἐλευθέρων ἢ τῶν δούλων ἢ παρὰ νόμον τι ποιήσῃ εἰς τούτων τινά, γραφῆσθω πρὸς τοὺς θεσμοθέτας ὁ βουλόμενος Ἀθηναίων, οἷς ἕξεσιν οἱ δὲ θεσμοθέται εἰσαγόντων εἰς τὴν Ἡλιαίαν τριάκοντα ἡμερῶν, ἀφ' ἧς ἂν γραφῇ ἐὰν μὴ τι δημόσιον κωλύῃ εἰ δὲ μὴ ὅταν ἢ πρῶτον οἷόν τε. Ὅτου δ' ἂν καταγνῶ, ἢ

Ἡλιαία τιμάτω περὶ αὐτοῦ παραχορήμα, ὅτον ἂν δοκῇ ἄξιως εἶναι παθεῖν ἢ ἀποτεῖσαι».

“If someone insults a child, woman or man, free or slave, he should be denounced by any Athenian to the six junior archons and they should bring the case before court within thirty days, if there aren’t other urgent public affairs; if there are, whenever this is possible. And, when he is found guilty, he must immediately be sentenced to pay a fine or be executed.”

It seems, then, that insulting a child was considered as a serious crime. I insist on this because both Pr. Dover and Mrs Reinsberg try to convince us, that lovers sought to win their would-be loved ones favour by some gifts (money or hares).

What I am saying is that, if there was sexual intercourse in pederasty, officially and legally, it could only be done with the parents’ permission. But if the would-be lovers were secretly attempting what they wanted to do, then, according to the above laws, they were putting their lives in danger; if the parents of the children got to know their intentions, they could sue them and ask for their execution.

A well-intentioned lover, on the contrary, had nothing to hide from his loved one’s parents, as many sources confirm. It is then more than obvious that something else was going on.

Aeschines, *Against Timarchus* 21:

«Ἐάν τις Ἀθηναῖος ἐταιρήσῃ, μὴ ἐξέστω αὐτῷ τῶν ἐννέα ἀρχόντων γενέσθαι, μηδ’ ἱερωσύνην ἱερώσασθαι, μηδὲ συνδικῆσαι τῷ δήμῳ, μηδὲ ἀρχὴν ἀρχέτω μηδεμίαν, μήτε ἔνδημον μήτε ὑπερόριον, μήτε κληρωτὴν μήτε χειροτονητὴν, μηδ’ ἐπὶ κηρυκείαν ἀποστελλέσθω, μηδὲ γνώμην λεγέτω εἰς τὰ δημοτελεῖ ἱερά εἰδίτω, μηδ’ ἐν ταῖς κοιναῖς στεφανηφορίαις στεφανούσθω, μηδ’ ἐντὸς [τῆς ἀγορᾶς] τῶν περιωρανηρίων πο-

ρυνέσθω. Ἐὰν δέ τις ταῦτα ποιῇ, καταγνωσθέντος αὐτοῦ ἔταιρειν θανάτῳ ζημιούσθω».

“If an Athenian turns out to be unchaste [ἐταιρήση, that is, if he is involved in a homosexual relationship], he is not allowed to become one of the nine archons; or to become a priest; or to be prosecutor in a public trial; or to have any office, within the boundaries of the Athenian republic or beyond them, whether he is appointed by lot or after an election; or to serve as a public messenger or judge other public messengers; or to enter public sacred places, to participate in [religious ceremonies of] wearing of wreath, to be in the parts of the market–place sprinkled with lustral water. But, if he breaks the law and does any of the above, once he is found guilty of being unchaste, his sentence must be death.”

So, the law not only deprives the offender of all his civic rights, but also reduces him to nothing, from a social and political point of view, and, in some cases, leads him to the executioner. This is revealing of the contempt Athenians showed to such deeds, of the fact that they wanted, by all means, to send lewd persons away. They didn't harm someone who declared such a preference, but they denied him the possibility to be a part of the city's life. He was no longer treated as an Athenian citizen, but as an alien resident in the city of Athens (*μέτοικος*).

And, if an alien resident or a slave had such an inclination, this meant absolutely nothing to the Athenians, who were a rather closed group, almost never letting someone else to join them, and who, in any case, treated the other residents of Attica as socially inferior.

They had nothing against homosexuality itself, only they didn't want it to come out within their circle, probably because, to them, it signified corruption and degeneration.

In Athens, as already said, any citizen could accuse, in front of justice, a lewd person of unchastity (*γροφή περι ἔταιροῦσεως*) and ask his expulsion from the group of citizens or his conviction to death. We know that not only from Aeschines, but also from Demosthenes, Timarchus' defender. In his speech *Against Androtion* he makes a reference to the same law (paragraph 21), and, further (paragraph 30), to a law of Solon, which said that those, who were found unchaste, should not speak nor accuse anybody in a court of law.

«μήτε λέγειν μήτε γράφειν ἐξεῖναι τοῖς ἡταιροκόοισιν»

As to this third law, we should examine in particular the verb *ἔταιροῶ* which is the key to our case.

Pr. Dover writes pages over pages in his book to analyse the laws and refute the theory that they refer to homosexuality in general. (But, he never quotes the text of the law to let the reader form his own opinion.)

He claims that the law punished only male prostitution. But, he doesn't explain, why the legislator uses not the verb *πορνεύω*, "to prostitute oneself", but the verb *ἔταιροῶ*, "to keep company with", which can also mean from "to have a meretricious friendship with someone" to "to be unchaste", but it is not the same as prostitution.

According to the law which Aeschines describes in §§ 29–32, with selective verbatim citation, a citizen who was *peporneumenos* or *hetairekos* was debarred from the exercise of his civic rights:

«...because the legislator considered that one who had been a vendor of his own body for others (o treat as they pleased (lit. 'for hubris'; cf Section 4) would have no hesitation in selling the interests of the community as a whole.

The two categories of conduct which the law explicitly named are in fact two distinct species of the genus 'sale of one's

own body'. *Peporneuemenos* is the perfective participle of the verb *porneuesthai*, 'behave as a *porne* or *pornos*'. *Porne*, cognate with *pernanai*, 'sell', was the normal Greek word (first attested on the seventh century B.C. [*Arkhilokhos* fr .302]) for a woman who takes money (if a slave, on her owner's behalf) in return for the sexual use of her body, i.e. 'prostitute'. We find also a masculine form *pornos* applied to men or boys who submit to homosexual acts in return for money (Xen. Mem. ? 6.13, Ar. Wealth 153–9; first in an archaic graffito on Thera, IG XII. 3. 536). *Hetairekos* is the perfective participle (infinitive *hetairekenai*) of the verb *hetairein*, cognate with *hetairos*, the normal word for 'companion', 'comrade', 'partner'. *Hetaira*, the feminine form of *hetairos*, often denoted a woman who was maintained by a man, at a level acceptable to her, for the purpose of a sexual relationship without formal process of marriage, implicit promise of permanence or intention of raising a family, but not without hope on the man's part that she might love him; hence it is sometimes nearer to 'mistress' than to 'prostitute'. In the classical period the verb *hetairein* and the abstract noun *hetairesis* do not seem to have been used of a *hetaira*, but exclusively of a man or boy who played a homosexual role analogous to that of a *hetaira*.

Whether a woman was regarded as a common prostitute or as a *hetaira* depended to some extent on the number of different men with whom she had intercourse and on the duration of her relationship with each man. Plainly a woman in a brothel, dealing with a queue of customers every day, was a *porne*, and equally plainly a woman who was kept in luxury by a wealthy man for a year or more, during which time she never (well, hardly ever) had intercourse with anyone else, was a *hetaira*, but the dividing line between the two categories could not be sharp; how, for instance, should one classify a woman who had intercourse with four different men in a week, hoped on each occa-

sion to establish a lasting and exclusive relationship, and succeeded in doing so with the fourth man? Moreover, whether one applied the term 'porne' or the term 'hetaira' to a woman depended on the emotional attitude towards her which one wished to express or to engender in one's hearers. Anaxilag, fr. 21 draws a distinction in terms of loyalty and affection, but fr. 22, an indignant vilification of the greed and deceitfulness of women who sell themselves, begins and ends (lines 1, 31) by calling them hetairai but in the middle (line 22) calls them pornai. Perikles had children by Aspasia, who was certainly distinguished and accomplished, probably fastidious and probably also faithful to Perikles; but Eupolis fr. 98 represents one of these sons, Petikles the younger, as shamed by the appellation 'the whore's son'.

The law cited by Aiskhines, in saying "... or peporneumenos or hetairekos", implies a distinction in respect of homosexual conduct analogous to the distinction between the porne and the hetaira..."

In paragraphs 29–30 of his speech, Aeschines makes it clear that the legislator didn't use *ἔταιρῶν* by accident:

«... τρίτον τίσι διαλέγεται; ἢ πεπορνευμένος φησίν, ἢ ἡταιρηκώς· τὸν γὰρ τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἐφ' ὕβρει πεπρακότεα, καὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῆς πόλεως ῥαδίως ἡγήσατο ἀποδώσασθαι».

"...thirdly, whom does the clause include? Those who prostituted themselves or those who kept company to someone? For the legislator thought the one who sells and abases his own body capable of selling public interest in the same easiness."

The answer to the question lies in the interpretation of the verb *ἔταιρῶν*.

Those who claim that homosexuality was frequent and totally accepted in ancient Greece explain it as ‘prostitute’. But, I repeat that Aeschines makes an explicit difference between the two, which can only mean that we have to do with two separate notions.

A prostitute is certainly much more condemned than someone who has an affair with another man, but, as I see it, a sexual affair even with a single man was enough to condemn him.

At least this is what another extract of the speech proves, when witnesses against Timarchus begin to testify.

Aeschines, Against Timarchus, 51:

«Μισγόλας Νικίου Πειραιεύς μαρτυρεῖ. Ἐμοὶ ἐγένετο ἐν συνηθείᾳ Τίμαρχος ὁ ἐπὶ τοῦ Εὐθύδικου ἰατροῦ ποτὲ καθεζόμενος, καὶ κατὰ τὴν γνῶσίν μου τὴν πρότερον αὐτὸν πολυωρῶν εἰς τὴν νῦν οὐ διέλιπον».

«Εἰ μὲν τοίνυν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, Τίμαρχος οὐτοσί διεμεινε παρὰ τῷ Μισγόλα καὶ μηκέτι ὡς ἄλλον ἦκε, μετριώτερον ἂν διεπέπρακτο, εἰ δὴ τι τῶν τοιούτων ἐστὶ μέτριον, καὶ ἔγωγε οὐκ ἂν ἐτόλμησα αὐτὸν οὐδὲν αἰτιασθαι ἢ ὅπερ ὁ νομοθέτης παρρησιάζεται, ἡταιρηκέναι μόνον· ὁ γὰρ πρὸς ἓνα τοῦτο πράττων, ἐπιμισθῶ δὲ τὴν προᾶξιν ποιούμενος, αὐτῷ μοι δοκεῖ τούτῳ ἔνοχος εἶναι. Ἐὰν δ' ὑμᾶς ἀναμνήσας ἐπιδείξω, ὑπερβαίνων τούσδε τοὺς ἀγρίους, Κηδωνίδην καὶ Αὐτοκλείδην καὶ Θέρσανδρον, [καὶ ἐπιδείξω] αὐτούς [δέ] λέγων ὧν ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις ἀνειλημμένοις γέγονε, μὴ μόνον παρὰ τῷ Μισγόλα μεμισθαρηκότα αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῷ σώματι, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρ' ἑτέρῳ καὶ πάλιν παρ' ἄλλῳ, καὶ παρὰ τούτου ὡς ἕτερον ἐληλυθότα, οὐκέτι δήπου φανεῖται μόνον ἡταιρηκῶς, ἀλλὰ (μὰ τὸν Διόνυσον οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως δυνήσομαι περιπλέκειν ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν) καὶ πεπορνευμένους· ὁ γὰρ εἰκῆ τοῦτο καὶ πρὸς πολλοὺς πράττων καὶ μισθοῦ, αὐτῷ μοι δοκεῖ τούτῳ ἔνοχος εἶναι».

“I, Misgolas, son of Nikias, resident of Piraeus, testify that Timarchus settled down in Euthidicus’ surgery, became involved with me and since our first acquaintance I never stopped taking care of him.”

«Now, if Timarchus has settled down only in Misgolas’ house and in no one else’s, I could say that there was some moderation in what he did, if the word ‘moderation’ can be used to describe such actions. Anyway, I, for myself, would accuse him only of having an affair with a man, as the law determines it. Because guilty of this offence is, whoever does this with a single man and gets paid for it. If I leave these savage people aside, and remind you Kydonides and Autokleides and Thersandrus, who all received him in their houses, again Misgolas is not the only one whom Timarchus gave his body to for money. There is also a second and a third and a fourth one. So he is not only guilty of having an affair with one man, (may Dionysus help me with periphrasis all day long). He is guilty of prostituting himself with many men, since whoever does it so easily with so many men is guilty of it.”

Things start to clear up.

The first witness against Timarchus is also his first lover, in the modern sense of the word. Misgolas testifies that he was living with Timarchus, he says nowhere that he was paing him, on the contrary he insists on the fact that he was taking care of him, in the same way a man, who, nowadays, lives with his girlfriend, takes care of her, especially if she is not working. Does this make her a prostitute? No, they are just not a married couple.

The fact that, at least for Misgolas, this was not a client-to prostitute relationship, but a love affair, is proved by his reaction when Timarchus abandoned him and went to live with Anticles, after he had found out that Misgolas could no longer offer him what he wanted. Misgolas was so hurt, that he decided

to testify in court against his lover. This is a typical case of love frustration. Misgolas wouldn't feel that way for a prostitute.

The idea of paying a lover has nothing in common with paying a prostitute. To be guilty of unchastity, one should not sell his body for money. In this case he is a prostitute. But, if he was taking gifts, that the lovers use to offer to their loved ones, then he could be accused only of unchastity. So even this aspect of a relationship between two men, natural by our standards, was illegal in ancient Athens. Although it would be irrational to think that these couples didn't exchange gifts at all.

To make this completely understandable, as it represents the whole essence of our subject, ancient Athens was, what we would call, a most conservative society, which, in these questions, reminds us of how was Greece some decades ago.

A young woman, who was not slave or prostitute, but had a sexual relationship outside marriage, with someone not being her legitimate husband, was a courtesan *ἑταίρα*. It was unconceivable for a woman in classical Athens to have an affair outside marriage.

Just think of how many women we know, which were qualified as courtesans once and for all, although they lived their whole lives with two or three men, only because they were not married to them.

Aspasia is certainly the most famous of all.

She was a well-known courtesan, but also Pericles' concubine. As long as they lived together, that is for twenty years, (in which they also had a son, Pericles junior, who was a general in Arginoussae), did she prostitute herself to other men for money? Of course not. She would then be a whore and Pericles would be the scoff of his contemporaries, if he was living with a prostitute that anyone could have. In this case he would be considered as a procurer, a pimp.

But, why was everyone blaming Aspasia, since she was considered to be faithful to Pericles for as long –and it was long enough– as they lived together?

Because, she was living with him before his divorce from his legitimate wife, and before she got married to him. This was enough to have her qualified as courtesan for the rest of her life. They did marry after all, but Aspasia remained a courtesan to public opinion.

It is widely known how scandalised were Athenians by Pericles living together with a courtesan. His political enemies always tried to hit him in this point. In his *Life of Pericles*, Plutarch reports that the comical poet Hermippus tried to sue him for impiety and procuring, although accusations fell in court. Morals of the conservative Athenians were so shocked that they used to hold Aspasia responsible for every mistaken political decision of Pericles.

Here is another example. Timotheus, a great general, was the son of Kimon, another general, and a courtesan. One day, to someone who was teasing him to be an illegitimate child, he said that he was grateful to his mother, who had chosen Kimon to be his father. Themistocles, the Salamina's winner, was also said to have a courtesan for mother.

Of course, most of these women were pushed to a disguised prostitution, since their social rank was low and they were mainly alien residents in Athens.

But they always differed from common prostitutes, both because of their rare beauty and great education. In such a case, they were seducing men with their spirit and knowledge, which could never occur to a free woman of Athens. So, some of them became prostitutes and, hence, immensely rich, since they were in a position to choose their “protectors” among the wealthiest citizens and live with their opulent gifts. Phryne and Lais are typical examples.

Ἐταίρα: 2. Courtesan, opp. **Πόρνη** (a common prostitute), opp. **Γαμετή** (a legitimate wife).

As the Lexicon also verifies, *ἔταιρα* is not simply a prostitute with less clients than a *πόρνη* but a woman with whom someone is in love with but cannot marry, despite his own will. And, to leave no doubt at all, it also specifies (page 342, volume II of the Greek edition):

«ἔταιρεῖ μὲν οὖν καὶ πορνεύεται ὁ πασηγιῶν, ἀλλ' ἔταιρεῖ μὲν ὑπὸ ἐραστοῦ, πορνεύεται ὑπὸ τοῦ τυχόντος», that is to say, “The man who gives himself to unnatural lust is unchaste and a prostitute, unchaste when he is with his lover, and a prostitute when he is with an occasional lover”.

The legislator uses then the verb *ἔταιρω*, for its meaning is ‘to have a sexual relationship, to have an affair not sealed with marriage’. It is the only verb signifying what he wants to say. If he had wanted to focus on the money exchange, he would have used *πορνεύομαι*. He seeks to be as precise as possible, because he wants to expand the criminally punishable notion.

Could he have made it even clearer in order to leave no ground for misinterpretation?

But, it is clear enough to him as to the Athenians he addresses himself to, that, since two men could never marry each other, no matter how much they wanted to, any sexual bond between them was illegal. This law was written to be understood by Athenians of the 6th century B.C., not by whoever reads it 2600 years later.

Aeschines himself tries to leave no doubt that he does not only mean prostitution, when he further insists: *«Ὁ Τίμαρχος οὐκέτι δήπου φαίνεται μόνον ἡταιρηκῶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ πεπορνευμένος»*. that is “Nothing proves Timarchus to have been guilty only of unchastity, but also of prostitution”.

It is unambiguous; these two are not the same. So, and beyond any reasonable doubt, homosexuality was not at all socially accepted; on the contrary, it was disgraceful and punishable by law. Read what Aechines says in another part of his speech (paragraph 185):

«185. Ἐπειθ' οἱ μὲν πατέρες ὑμῶν οὕτω περὶ τῶν αἰσχρῶν καὶ καλῶν διεγίνωσκον, ὑμεῖς δὲ Τίμαρχον τὸν τοῖς αἰσχίστοις ἐπιτηδύμασιν ἔνοχον ἀφήσετε; Τὸν ἄνδρα μὲν καὶ ἄρρενα τὸ σῶμα, γυναικεῖα δὲ ἁμαρτήματα ἡμαρτηκότα; Τίς οὖν ὑμῶν γυναῖκα λαβὼν ἀδικοῦσαν τιμωρήσεται; Ἡ τίς οὐκ ἀπαίδεντος εἶναι δόξει **τῇ μὲν κατὰ φύσιν** ἁμαρτανούση χαλεπαίνων, **τῷ δὲ παρὰ φύσιν** ἑαυτὸν ὑβρίσαντι συμβούλω χρόόμενος;»

“This is what our ancestors thought of moral and immoral women. And you, are you going to pronounce Timarchus not guilty, although he is guilty of the most obscene habits? This man, who, although he was born a man, did wrong in a way that only suits to women? If this happens, which one, among us, will ever have the right to punish a woman for the same error? Who will be so uneducated to be severe to a woman who does wrong, but following her nature, and use as a counsellor someone who dishonoured himself, by behaving unnaturally?”

This does not only prohibit prostitution, as some would like us to believe, but homosexual relations in general.

One could claim that the legislator disapproves of the relationship between two men, not the sexual act itself. If there were just occasional intercourse with prostitutes, how were they judged by society according to this law? The one who prostituted himself was rejected, of course, but this wasn't so important, since he was no Athenian citizen for sure. The one who gave him the money to satisfy his own lust, though, could he remain unpunished?

The text answers all these logical questions in turn.

When money is given to a child's tutor by someone who wants children to satisfy his lust, no doubt is left.

Aeschines, Against Timarchus, 13:

«ἐάν τινα ἐκμισθώσῃ ἐταιρεῖν πατήρ ἢ ἀδελφός ἢ θεῖος ἢ ἐπίτροπος ἢ ὄλως τῶν κυριῶν τις, κατ' αὐτοῦ μὲν τοῦ παιδὸς οὐκ ἔῃ γραφὴν εἶναι, κατὰ δὲ τοῦ μισθώσαντος καὶ τοῦ μισθωσαμένου, τοῦ μὲν ὅτι ἐξεμίσθωσε, τοῦ δὲ ὅτι, φησί, ἐμισθώσατο».

“If a child's father, or brother, or uncle, or tutor, or relative of any kind, receives money to give the child for unchaste purposes, the child is not prosecuted, but the one who paid and the one who received the money are.”

Not even a slave or an alien resident could do so. Had he wanted to gain some money in this way, he was putting both himself and the potential “client” in danger.

It is important to stress on the fact that this was considered as crime among slaves too. Those who repeatedly confuse Greece and Rome, when slavery is concerned, tend to think that every one, with unnatural inclinations, could easily find satisfaction with some slave. This was not true.

Aeschines, Against Timarchus, 17:

«Ἰσως ἂν οὖν τις θαυμάσειεν ἐξαίφνης ἀκούσας, τί δή ποτ' ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῷ τῆς ὑβρεως προσεγράφη τοῦτο τὸ ῥῆμα, τὸ τῶν δούλων. Τοῦτο δὲ ἐὰν σκοπῆτε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, εὐρήσετε ὅτι πάντων ἄριστα ἔχει οὐ γὰρ ὑπὲρ τῶν οἰκετῶν ἐσπούδασεν ὁ νομοθέτης, ἀλλὰ βουλόμενος ὑμᾶς ἐθίσαι πολὺν ἀπέχειν τῆς τῶν ἐλευθέρων ὑβρεως, προσέγραψε μηδ' εἰς τοὺς δούλους ὑβρίζειν. Ὅλως δὲ ἐν δημοκρατίᾳ τὸν εἰς

ὄντινοῦν ὑβριστήν, τοῦτον οὐκ ἐπιτήδειον ἡγήσατο εἶναι συμπολιτεύεσθαι».

“Maybe someone, who has heard the law, cannot understand why the legislator included the slaves in it. But, if you think better about it, you will see that it was the best thing to do. The legislator was not so eager to protect the slaves; but, as he wanted to accustom us to avoid any lewd insult against free people, he also defended insults to slaves. And he thought that those who live in a democracy and behave in such a way do not fit in the political life of their city.”

And what about adults? Who was guilty, the active or the passive lover? The text is once again most enlightening.

Aeschines, Against Timarchus, 46:

«Ἐὰν μὲν οὖν ἐθελήσῃ ὁ Μισγόλας δεῦρο παρελθὼν τάληθῆ μαρτυρεῖν, τὰ δίκαια ποιήσει· ἐὰν δὲ προαιρηῆται ἐκκλητευθῆναι μᾶλλον [ἢ τάληθῆ μαρτυρεῖν], ὑμεῖς τὸ ὄλον προᾶγμα συνίδετε. Εἰ γὰρ ὁ μὲν πράξας αἰσχυνεῖται καὶ προαιρησεται χιλίας μᾶλλον δραχμὰς ἀποτεῖσαι τῷ δημοσίῳ, ὥστε μὴ δεῖξαι τὸ πρόσωπον τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ὑμῖν, ὁ δὲ πεπονθὼς δημηγορήσει, σοφὸς ὁ νομοθέτης ὁ τοὺς οὕτω βδελυροὺς ἐξείργων ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος».

“If Misgolas wants to stand and testify about the truth, he will do the right thing. If he prefers to avoid testifying, you can draw your own conclusions. Because if he, who was the active one, is ashamed and prefers to pay one thousand drachmas to the state instead of showing his face in front of you, but the other, who was the passive one, dares to come and plead, then the legislator, who prevents these corrupted people from pleading in court, was really wise.”

So, according to the above extract, the law deprived both of them of their civic rights. But things become even clearer in the following paragraphs.

Aeschines, Against Timarchus, 72:

«Ὅν γὰρ ἔγωγε ὑπολαμβάνω οὕτως ὑμᾶς ἐπιλήσμονας εἶναι, ὥστε ἀμνημονεῖν ὧν ὀλίγῳ πρότερον ἠκούσατε ἀναγινωσκομένων [τῶν] νόμων, ἐν οἷς γέγραπται, ἐάν τις μισθώσῃται τινα Ἀθηναίων ἐπὶ ταύτην τὴν προᾶξιν, ἢ ἐάν τις ἑαυτὸν μισθώσῃ ἔνοχον εἶναι τοῖς μεγίστοις καὶ τοῖς ἴσοις ἐπιτιμίῳς».

“I, at least, do not think that you forget so easily, as to not remember what you have heard a little while ago, during the reading of the laws, in which it is said that whoever pays an Athenian to do such things, or gets paid [for the same reason], is guilty and severely punished, in both cases.”

In other words, in ancient Athens, he, who had a homosexual inclination, could not have an affair with another man, nor could he pay somebody to have sex with, and maintain, at the same, time his rights as an Athenian citizen.

This does not mean that there were no homosexuals. The so far quoted laws, with their many details, point out, as I did from the very beginning, that there were.

Yet, they had to declare it in public and, consequently, loose their civic rights. They could continue on living in Athens, since no one would harm them, but they could not be a part of the political, social and religious life of the city. They were becoming private individuals and doing what they were doing away from limelight.

A **Κίναϊδος** could not represent his city, in no case and in no way. If he did, being sacrilegious himself, theoretically, he was

also putting the city in danger. And he should be punished for that. His homosexuality forbade him any public office.

Will still some people continue on considering ancient Greece as the homosexuals' paradise? I don't think they can.

H.I. Marrou, in his work *History of education in Antiquity*, resumes the situation as follows:

“They wanted to depict ancient Greece as the paradise of the perverted, which was an exaggeration. Greek vocabulary and most cities' legislation confirm that perversion never stopped to be treated as unnatural.”

While Robert Flacérière in page 230 of the Greek edition of his book *Love in ancient Greece* (Papadimas editions) says:

“It is wrong to pretend that this form of love enjoyed general approval and appreciation.”

CHAPTER FOUR
ΕΡΑΣΤΗΣ-ΕΡΩΜΕΝΟΣ
LOVER-LOVED ONE

If what was so far said is true, those who say that homosexuality were not only accepted in ancient Greece, but almost compulsory, at least in the upper class of Athenian society, between the 6th and the 4th B.C. century, where do they lean on? Mainly on two elements.

Firstly, the words **ἐραστής-ἐρώμενος** (lover-loved one) and **παιδεραστία-παιδεραστεῖν** (pederasty) are too often found in the texts. Secondly, there are vases, which, as they claim, depict homosexual –always pederast– love scenes. I will then examine these two elements, to find out which are worth of believing and what to respond to those who appeal on them.

It is important to say that those who support the existence of pederasty, in the meaning of a sexual intercourse with an under-age, confine it in the classical era only, between the 6th and the 4th B.C. centuries.

Robert Flacérière, in the first chapter of his book *Love in ancient Greece* where he examines the Homeric period (page 22), says:

“There is no doubt about it: Homer never attributes to a god, nor to a human ‘love for the boys’, as will do the poets to come.”

And later on, in page 40:

“It is necessary to have in mind that in Homer we find no trace of misogyny or homosexuality.”

I start with Homer for a simple reason. Ninety per cent of my compatriots assure anybody who wants to hear, that Homer describes Achilles and Patroclus as a notorious homosexual couple, although they have never read a single Homeric rhapsody. Unfortunately, this happens also in many sites in the Internet, where Achilles is celebrated as the first known homose-

xual hero. Although Iliad is but the epic relating the grieves Greeks suffered from Achilles' wrath, because Agamemnon took his concubine, Vreseis, away from him.

Let me also note that the meaning I give of the words **παιδεραστία-παιδεραστεῖν** in ancient Greek is not a personal interpretation, but also supported by other scholars too.

Robert Flacérière, in page 65 of his book, says something else, which I find very important:

“As everybody knows by ‘Greek love’ we mean the love for boys, and in particular pederasty. But, in French, this word, ‘pederasty’ means almost always ‘perversion’, while in the Greek texts ‘pederasty’ is a pure and disinterested love, and not homosexual relationships.”

You remember, as I imagine the extract of Xenophon's Memorabilia, where Socrates advises his pupil Critias not to have sexual desire for Euthydemus, his loved one. The first thing to conclude from this extract is that the word ‘lover’ is not used in the current meaning. Otherwise, why should Socrates accuse Critias, to the point of later humiliating him, of something he had every right to desire as a lover?

And we also talked of people in Sparta, who wouldn't tolerate someone touching the young men's bodies, specifying that they meant the lovers who are responsible for the morals of their loved ones. Once again, words do not seem to mean the same thing to us and to ancient Greeks.

Here is what Plato says in Euthydemus, 282b:

«Καὶ παρὰ πατρός γε δήπου τοῦτο οἰόμενον δεῖν παραλαμβάνειν πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ χρήματα καὶ παρ' ἐπίτροπον καὶ φίλον τῶν τε ἄλλων καὶ τῶν φασκόντων ἐραστῶν εἶναι καὶ ξένων καὶ πολιτῶν δεόμενον καὶ ἰκετεύοντα σοφίας, μεταδι-

δόναί οὐδὲν αἰσχρὸν, ᾧ Κλεινία, οὐδὲ νεμεσητὸν ἔνεκα τούτου ὑπηρετεῖν καὶ δουλεύειν καὶ ἐραστῇ καὶ παντὶ ἀνθρώπων ὁτιοῦν ἐθέλοντα ὑπηρετεῖν τῶν καλῶν ὑπηρετημάτων προθυμούμενον σοφὸν γενέσθαι».

“As I see it, wisdom more than money one must have from his father or his tutor or his friends and other, but also from those who claim to be lovers, and from strangers and from citizens; for, there is nothing disgraceful to the one who begs for wisdom, Clenias, nor is there something worthy of indignation in serving and subduing oneself to one’s lover or to any person one wants to serve, with honorable services of course, if it is out of eagerness to become wise.”

Plato adds the phrase ‘with honorable services’, because in a previous work, *Symposium*, 185d4, he had said exactly the same thing, and despite his clarification, «ὅτι ἀρετῆς γ’ ἔνεκα», that is, ‘aiming to virtue’, some malevolent readers may have misinterpreted it.

This same extract of *Symposium*, from 184c7 and on, literally clears up any misunderstanding, since it says that questions of ‘pederasty’ should be solved according to the same law that treats questions of philosophy and virtue. That is to say, as it suits an institution which aims to the acquisition of Virtue.

How, then, can these sacred texts be confused with sexual impulses, is really puzzling. But, maybe, this was just what served the purposes of those who encouraged this confusion.

In the Greek edition’s second volume of the Liddell–Scott Lexicon, which I often quote as it is the most authoritative, one can read:

”**Ἔραμαι**: desire strongly, love, be in love with, love passionately.

Ἔραστής: (comes from **Ἔραμαι**) lover of somebody.

Ἐρώμενος: (comes from **ἔρως:** love. Usually signifying passionate love between individuals of different sexes).

Ἔρως: strong love, sexual passion between individuals of different sexes.

We see that the general meaning of these expressions is “to love someone strongly”, but curiously enough the lexicon always stresses on “between individuals of different sexes”. But, as far as love between individuals of the same sex is concerned, as in the case of the controversial texts, it doesn’t enlighten us.

To give definite proof about the interpretation I think as correct, I will use the most misinterpreted work of Plato, Symposium. I am more than certain that all of you have, at least once, heard that Plato is the theorist of homosexuality. Is this really true though?

Plato, Symposium IX (Oxford edition):

«Οὕτω δὴ καὶ τὸ ἐρᾶν καὶ ὁ Ἔρως οὐ πᾶς ἐστὶ καλὸς οὐδὲ ἀξιὸς ἐγκωμιάζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ ὁ καλὸς προτρέπων ἐρᾶν.

Ὅ μὲν οὖν τῆς Πανδήμου Ἀφροδίτης ὡς ἀληθῶς πάνδημος ἐστὶ καὶ ἐξεργάζεται ὅ,τι ἂν τύχη· καὶ οὗτός ἐστιν ὃν οἱ φαῦλοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐρῶσιν. Ἐρῶσι δὲ οἱ τοιοῦτοι, πρῶτον μὲν οὐχ ἦττον γυναικῶν ἢ παίδων, ἔπειτα ὧν καὶ ἐρῶσι τῶν σωματίων μᾶλλον ἢ τῶν ψυχῶν, ἔπειτα ὡς ἂν δύ-
νωνται ἀνοητοτάτων, πρὸς τὸ διαπράξασθαι μόνον βλέπον-
τες, ἀμελοῦντες δὲ τοῦ καλῶς ἢ μῆ· ὅθεν δὴ συμβαίνει
αὐτοὺς ὅτι ἂν τύχῃσι τοῦτο πράττειν, ὁμοίως μὲν ἀγαθόν,
ὁμοίως δὲ τοῦναντίον... Ὁ δὲ τῆς Οὐρανίας, πρῶτον μὲν οὐ
μετεχούσης θήλεος ἀλλ’ ἄρρενος μόνον –καὶ ἔστιν οὗτος ὁ
τῶν παίδων ἔρως– ἔπειτα πρεσβυτέρας, ὕβρεως ἀμοίρου·
ὅθεν δὴ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄρρεν τρέπονται οἱ ἐκ τούτου τοῦ Ἔρωτος

ἔπιπνοι, τὸ φύσει ἐρρωμενέστερον καὶ νοῦν ἔχον μᾶλλον ἀγαπῶντες».

“Thus, being in love with someone and Love is not always good and praiseworthy, but only the one which leads to a noble relationship.

So, love of the *Πάνδημος* (belonging to all people, vulgar) Aphrodite is, just as its name signifies, vulgar and acting occasionally. And it is the one which takes control of the vulgar people. These people, first of all, fall in love unconditionally with women or with young boys; second, whoever they fall in love with, they care for their bodies rather than their souls; third, they love the most foolish, since they care only for the sexual act itself and are neglectful of whether it is moral or not. Thus, they do whatever they do, good or wrong, without distinction, only by chance. (...) But love of *Οὐρανία* (celestial) Aphrodite is the one where women do not take part, only men. This is pederasty. And it is the older and the chastest kind of love. So, those who are animated by this form of love, turn to males, because they love the most vigorous and thoughtful.”

In other words, men who want to be ‘lovers’ of young Athenians are driven by celestial Aphrodite, who, in opposition to the vulgar Aphrodite, cares for the souls and the beautiful works. This may seem obscure to us, but when we try to understand a very complex society of 2500 years ago, we must expect to find such difficulties.

Let us now see another extract from the Symposium. The work reaches its culmination, all dinner guests have already spoken, yet the one who expresses Plato’s own point of view, Socrates, remains to be heard. Other guests’ views are presented only to have a full range of opinions on the subject. The definite conclusion of the whole work is expressed through Socrates, who is supposed to have discovered the nature of true

love thanks to Diotima. Listen to him: «Πολλοῦ γε δεῖ ἔφη· ἀλλ' οἶμαι ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ τοιαύτης δόξης εὐκλεοῦς πάντες πάντα ποιοῦσιν, ὅσῳ ἂν ἀμείνους ᾧσι, τοσοῦτῳ μᾶλλον· τοῦ γὰρ ἀθανάτου ἐρῶσιν. Οἱ μὲν οὖν ἐγκύμονες, ἔφη, κατὰ τὰ σώματα ὄντες πρὸς τὰς γυναικας μᾶλλον τρέπονται, καὶ ταύτῃ ἐρωτικοί εἰσιν, διὰ παιδογονίας ἀθανασίαν καὶ μνήμην καὶ εὐδαιμονίαν, ὡς οἴονται, αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον πάντα ποριζόμενοι. Οἱ δὲ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν – εἰσὶ γὰρ οὖν, ἔφη, οἱ ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς κνοῦσιν, ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν, ἃ ψυχῇ προοσῆκει καὶ κνησαι καὶ τεκεῖν...

Τούτων δὲ αὖ, ὅταν τις ἐκ νέου ἐγκύμων ἢ τὴν ψυχὴν, θεῖος ὢν καὶ ἠκούσης τῆς ἡλικίας τίκτειν τε καὶ γεννᾶν ἤδη ἐπιθυμῇ, ζητεῖ δὴ, οἶμαι, καὶ οὗτος περιῶν τὸ καλὸν ἐν ᾧ ἂν γεννήσειεν· ἐν τῷ γὰρ αἰσχροῦ οὐδέποτε γεννήσει. Τὰ τε οὖν σώματα τὰ καλὰ μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ αἰσχροῦ ἀσπάζεται ἅτε κνῶν, καὶ ἂν ἐντύχη ψυχῇ καλῇ καὶ γενναίᾳ καὶ εὐφρεῖ, πάνυ δὴ ἀσπάζεται τὸ ξυναμφοτέρον, καὶ πρὸς τοῦτον τὸν ἄνθρωπον εὐθὺς εὐπορεῖ λόγων περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ περὶ οἷον χρὴ εἶναι τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἃ ἐπιτηδεύειν, καὶ ἐπιχειρεῖ παιδεύειν. Ἀπτόμενος γάρ, οἶμαι, τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ὁμιλῶν αὐτῷ, ἃ πάλαι ἐκύει, τίκτει καὶ γεννᾶ, καὶ παρὼν καὶ ἀπὼν μεμνημένος, καὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν συνεκτρέφει κοινῇ μετ' ἐκείνου· ὥστε πολὺ μείζω κοινωνίαν τῆς τῶν παίδων πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἴσχουσι καὶ φιλίαν βεβαιότεραν, ἅτε καλλιόνων καὶ ἀθανατωτέρων παίδων κεκοινωνηκότες. Καὶ πᾶς ἂν δέξαιτο ἑαυτῷ τοιούτους παῖδας μᾶλλον γεγονέναι ἢ τοὺς ἀνθρωπίνους, καὶ εἰς Ὅμηρον ἀποβλέψας καὶ Ἡσίοδον καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιητὰς τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς, ζηλῶν, οἷα ἔκγονα ἑαυτῶν καταλείπουσιν ἃ ἐκείνοις ἀθάνατον κλέος καὶ μνήμην παρέχεται, αὐτὰ τοιαῦτα ὄντα· εἰ δὴ βούλει, ἔφη, οἶους Λυκοῦργος παῖδας κατελίπετο ἐν Λακεδαίμονι, σωτῆρας τῆς Λακεδαίμονος καί, ὡς ἔπος εἶπεῖν, τῆς Ἑλλάδος».

“I believe that everybody does everything to gain eternal virtue and an illustrious reputation; and the better they are, the more they try, because they are in love with immortality. Those who have fecund bodies, turn to women, fall in love with them and, thus, assure, through their children, immortality, remembrance and happiness, as they believe. But, there are also those with fecund souls, those who bear, in their souls more than in their bodies, the things that deserve to be born from the soul (...) So, if someone is fecund in this way, has a divine soul and feels that it is time for him to give birth to such things, he searches for the proper setting to do so; for, he cannot give birth to something good in an ugly environment. And, since he is waiting to give birth, he embraces beautiful bodies rather than ugly ones, and, if he meets a beautiful, brave and noble soul, he embraces more eagerly this combination of body and soul. To such a person he speaks, without difficulty, of virtue, of how an honest man should be, of which activities suit him; and he tries to educate him. So, I believe that, when he is in contact with a beautiful companion and, in associating with him, he gives birth to the things he was bearing in his soul, he has beauty in his mind regardless of it being present or absent. And, along with his partner, he nourishes what he gave birth to. Their communion is greater than that of a father with his offspring, and their friendship more assured, since they are united by their common children who are more beautiful and immortal. Everyone would prefer to have such descendants, of the mind than of the body, especially when he thinks of Homer and Hesiodus and the other poets and admires their posterity, which, by their quality, give them eternal fame and memory. Or, think of the children Lycurgus has left in Lacedaemon, which saved their city, if not the whole of Greece”.

Plato's Symposium then supports not sexual love, but tries to explain, in many different ways, why intellectual love, love of the souls and of virtue, is the truly worthy one.

Xenophon too, in that chapter of his *Respublica Lacedaemoniorum* where he describes Sparta's education system and explains the duties of the Supervisors of education (Παιδονόμοι), the Teachers and the Gymnasts, also refers to pederasty in the most natural way, as one very known educational means. He says, «*Λεκτέον δέ μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι καὶ περὶ τῶν παιδικῶν ἐρώτων ἔστι γάρ τι καὶ τοῦτο πρὸς παιδείαν*» that is, "I think I must speak of pederasty, since it is a way of educating".

So, if you replace the word *ἐραστής*, 'lover' by the word *διδάσκαλος*, 'teacher' in the texts, then you will be, in my opinion, very close to the truth. We should, of course, take 'teacher' in a wider sense, probably closer to 'adviser' or 'mentor'.

To confirm my theory about the meaning 'teacher/mentor' – 'pupil' of the terms *ἐραστής-ἐρώμενος* I will cite Socrates' own view about what is the correct attitude of a lover to his loved one, which may also clarify the meaning of the expression *παιδεραστεῖν ὀρθῶς*, 'loving boys properly', that Plato frequently uses.

Xenophon, Symposium, VIII 7:

«*Ὅτι γε μὴν σὺ, ὦ Καλλία, ἐρᾷς Ἀντολύκου πᾶσα μὲν ἡ πόλις οἶδε, πολλοὺς δ' οἶμαι καὶ τῶν ξένων. Τούτου δ' αἴτιον τὸ πατέρων τε ὀνομαστώων ἀμφοτέρους ὑμᾶς εἶναι καὶ αὐτοὺς ἐπιφανεῖς. Αἰεὶ μὲν οὖν ἔγωγε ἠγάμην τὴν σὴν φύσιν, νῦν δὲ καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον, ἐπεὶ ὀρθῶ σε ἐρῶντα οὐχ ἀβρότητι χλιδαινομένου οὐδὲ μαλακία θρυπτομένου, ἀλλὰ πᾶσιν ἐπιδεικνυμένου ῥώμην τε καὶ καρτερίαν καὶ ἀνδρείαν καὶ σωφροσύνην. Τὸ δὲ τοιούτων ἐπιθυμεῖν τεκμήριόν ἐστι καὶ τῆς τοῦ ἐραστοῦ φύσεως. Εἰ μὲν οὖν μία ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη ἢ διτταί, Οὐρανία τε καὶ Πάνδημος, οὐκ οἶδα· καὶ γὰρ Ζεὺς ὁ αὐτὸς*

δοκῶν εἶναι πολλὰς ἐπωνυμίας ἔχει ὅτι γε μέντοι χωρὶς ἑκατέρω βωμοί τε καὶ ναοί εἰσι καὶ θυσίαι τῇ μὲν Πανδήμῳ ῥαδιουργότεραι, τῇ δὲ Οὐρανίᾳ ἀγνότεραι, οἶδα. Εἰκάσαις δ' ἂν καὶ τοὺς ἔρωτας τὴν μὲν Πάνδημον τῶν σωμάτων ἐπιπέμπειν, τὴν δ' Οὐρανίαν τῆς ψυχῆς τε καὶ τῆς φιλίας καὶ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων. Ὑφ' οὗ δὴ καὶ σὺ ὦ Καλλία, κατέχεσθαί μοι δοκεῖς ἔρωτος. Τεκμαίρομαι δὲ τῇ τοῦ ἐρωμένου καλοκαγαθία καὶ ὅτι σε ὁρῶ τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ παραλαμβάνοντα εἰς τὰς πρὸς τοῦτον συνουσίας. Οὐδὲν γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἀπόκρυφον πατρὸς τῷ καλῷ τε καγαθῷ ἐραστῇ».

“Everyone in this city and many of the strangers, as I think, know well, Callias, that you love Autolycus. This is due to the fact that you both come from renowned fathers, but also are remarkable yourselves. I always admired your character, but now I admire you even more, because I see you in love with a young man who does not live in splendour, revelling in luxury, nor is he unmanned; on the contrary, he is known to everybody for his vigour and perseverance and bravery and prudence. Loving such a man is a proof of the character of the lover. And I can't say if there is only one Aphrodite, or two, celestial and vulgar; although Zeus seems to be one, he has many surnames. What I do know is that there are altars and temples for each one of the two, where sacrifices are being offered separately, base to the vulgar Aphrodite, pure to the celestial. You can thus conclude that love of the bodies is sent by the vulgar one, while love of the soul and of friendship and of beautiful works is sent by the celestial one. This is, I think, the love that possesses you, Callias. I can see that from the virtue of your loved one, but also from the fact that you admit his father to your company. For, an honest lover has nothing to hide from the father of his loved one.”

And he goes on as follows:

Xenophon, Symposium, VIII 26:

«Καὶ μὴν καὶ τῶν παιδικῶν ὅς μὲν ἂν εἰδῆ ὅτι ὁ τοῦ εἶδους ἐπαρκῶν ἄρξει τοῦ ἐραστοῦ, εἰκὸς αὐτὸν τᾶλλα ῥαδιουργεῖν ὅς δ' ἂν γιγνώσκῃ ὅτι ἂν μὴ καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς ᾖ, οὐ καθέξει τὴν φιλίαν, τοῦτον προσήκει μᾶλλον ἀρετῆς ἐπιμελεῖσθαι. Μέγιστον δ' ἀγαθὸν τῷ ὀρεγομένῳ ἐκ παιδικῶν φίλον ἀγαθὸν ποιήσασθαι ὅτι ἀνάγκη καὶ αὐτὸν ἀσκεῖν ἀρετὴν οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε πονηρὰ αὐτὸν ποιοῦντα ἀγαθὸν τὸν συνόντα ἀποδειξαι, οὐδέ γε ἀναισχυντίαν καὶ ἀκρασίαν παρεχόμενον ἐγκρατῆ καὶ αἰδούμενον τὸν ἐρώμενον ποιῆσαι».

“Those from the young men, who know that their body’s beauty will command their lover, tend to intrigue in everything; but those, who know that without being virtuous they will lose this friendship, care more about virtue. Besides, it is a major good to the one who seeks the friendship of a virtuous young man that he finds himself bound to behave in the same way. For, it is not possible for him to act basely and make his companion good; nor is it possible for him to be vulgar and uncontrollable and make his companion temperate and modest.”

In this extract, Xenophon, through Socrates, and by using the Greek rationalism, leaves no doubt. What is he saying? He says that if someone corrupts a young man to the satisfaction of his lust, he cannot expect to form an ideal and noble citizen. So, there is no room for the usually supported theory, because it makes no sense in such contexts. No one seems to question the educational dimension of ‘pederasty’ in ancient Greek texts. But the lover is supposed to give presents to win his loved one’s favour; he offers him wine to be able then to ask him to make ‘concessions’. Yet, Xenophon is unequivocal and solves the mystery. To ask his loved one to be honest and noble, a lover should, first of all, give

the example of such conduct. So, this excludes any possibility of sexual intercourse, as modern theories about homosexuality in ancient Greece want us to believe.

Plato, *Republica* 403b:

«Οὕτω δὴ, ὡς ἔοικε, νομοθετήσεις ἐν τῇ οἰκιζομένῃ πόλει, φιλεῖν μὲν καὶ ξυνεῖναι καὶ ἄπτεσθαι ὥσπερ υἱέος παιδικῶν ἐραστήν».

“So, it seems that, in the city which is about to be inhabited, you will appoint by law that a lover should love and be with and touch his loved one just like a father does to his son.”

What was then really going on? In ancient Greece, apart from the teacher–to–pupil relationship in school, the family bonds and the friendly relations between individuals of the same age, there was another type of relationship, a most educational one. Its aim was to initiate the adolescent Athenians not in mathematics or music, but in the secrets of social life, the way the system of government was functioning, the good manners, the moral values, virtue and, also, the dangers of life.

An elder Athenian was assuming this role towards an adolescent, between 12 and 18, that is, until the boy was old enough (“until he starts having a beard”, the texts say) to have no need of such guidance.

That is why it was a disgrace to continue this relationship beyond adolescence; it had no reason to exist, since the lover should have already taught his loved one all he had to learn; otherwise, it would raise suspicion as to its real nature and signify that there was a homosexual involvement, which, as we have explained, was inadmissible.

This explains the lack of equality in this relationship, recognized by everyone, even Pr. Dover, yet unconceivable in a love relationship, as we understand it today. It also explains

why, as another text confirms, it was so shocking for a lover to be younger than his loved one (Xenophon, *Anabasis*, II.6.28). Athenaeus, the historian, when he wants to stress on the unreliability of Menon, accuses him of having Tharyp as a loved one, whose beard has already grown, while he didn't had his own beard yet. It also explains how it was possible for someone to be lover and loved one, but not in relation to the same person.

In other words, if we accept what is usually said about homosexuality in ancient Greece, the same man should be a passive and never an active homosexual, with his lover, but an active and never a passive with his loved one. What kind of people were these ancient Greeks, after all?

We can't help being irrational. Yet, no one of those who support the opposing theory about homosexuality in ancient Greece questions what I have quoted so far. They just form the most extravagant hypothesis to explain the above cited ancient texts.

At some point this relationship was over; yet, a deep friendship remained, and the attachment was so close and so exempt of jealousy, that the former loved one could sit in a symposium along with his former lover, though the latter was accompanied by his new loved one.

This explains how Aeschines, while he accuses Timarchus of unchastity and wants to see him deprived of his civic rights, does not hesitate to admit, in another extract of his speech, that he had been lover to many boys, aiming always to good.

Aeschines, *Against Timarchus*, 136:

«Εγὼ δὲ οὔτε ἔρωτα δίκαιον ψέγω, οὔτε τοὺς κάλλει διαφέροντάς φημι πεπορνεῦσθαι, οὐτ' αὐτὸς ἐξαρονῶμαι μὴ οὐ γεγονέναι [τ'] ἐρωτικὸς καὶ ἔτι καὶ νῦν εἶναι... Ὅρίζομαι δ' εἶναι τὸ μὲν ἐρᾶν τῶν καλῶν καὶ σωφρόνων φιλανθρώπου πάθος καὶ εὐγνώμονος ψυχῆς, τὸ δὲ ἀσελγαίνειν ἀργυρίου

τινὰ μισθούμενον ὑβριστοῦ καὶ ἀπαιδευτοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἔργον εἶναι [ἡγοῦμαι]· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀδιαφθόρως ἐρᾶσθαί φημι καλὸν εἶναι, τὸ δ' ἐπαρθέντα μισθῶ πεπορνεῦσθαι αἰσχρόν... Οἱ γὰρ πατέρες ἡμῶν, ὅθ' ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων καὶ τῶν ἐκ φύσεως ἀναγκαίων ἐνομοθέτουν, ἃ τοῖς ἐλευθέροις ἡγοῦντο εἶναι πρακτέα, ταῦτα τοῖς δούλοις ἀπέιπον μὴ ποιεῖν... Δουλὸν ἐλευθέρου παιδὸς μήτ' ἐρᾶν μήτ' ἐπακολουθεῖν, ἢ τύπτεσθαι τῇ δημοσίᾳ μάστιγι πενήκοντα πληγᾶς. Ἄλλ' οὐ τὸν ἐλεύθερον ἐκώλυσεν ἐρᾶν [καὶ ὀμιλεῖν] καὶ ἀκολουθεῖν, οὐδὲ βλάβην τῷ παιδί, ἀλλὰ μαρτυρίαν σωφροσύνης ἡγήσατο συμβαίνειν... τὸ δ' ἐπακολουθεῖν καὶ ἐφορᾶν φρουρᾶν καὶ φυλακὴν σωφροσύνης ἡγήσατο εἶναι μεγίστην».

“I don’t accuse beautiful love. I don’t call a prostitute who ever stands out because of his beauty. Nor do I deny that I have loved and still love boys (...) And let me have determined that to love beautiful and wise boys is a passion for noble people. But to be lewd and pay for such acts is typical of an unchaste and uneducated person. And it is good for a young man to be loved without being corrupted, whether it is base to be given money and, thus, be treated as a prostitute (...) When our ancestors determined by law, which occupations and human nature’s needs were fit to free people, they forbade them to the slaves (...) The law says that a slave cannot be lover to a free boy, nor can he follow him in this purpose. If he does, he must receive fifty whips in public. But the law didn’t keep a free man from loving a boy and following his growing up; it didn’t think of that as harm to the boy, but as a sign of good upbringing (...) The legislator thought of following boys and keeping an eye to what they do as a way to secure their upbringing.”

What more and better than ‘keeping an eye to’, or, ‘secure their upbringing’ could ancient writers have said to us?

Can you imagine Aeschines admitting that he has been and still is lover of many boys, and, thus, putting his own life in danger, while he is trying to get Timarchus convicted for his homosexual affairs? It would be as if he was accusing himself for the same reason.

Another revealing comment of whether ancient Greeks tolerated homosexuality is the one made by Xenophon in his Symposium, when he speaks of a boy who prostitutes himself and his involvement with his client during the intercourse.

Xenophon, Symposium, VIII, 21–22:

«Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ παῖς τῷ ἀνδρὶ ὥσπερ γυνὴ κοινώνει τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἀφροδισίοις εὐφροσυνῶν, ἀλλὰ νήφων μεθύοντα ὑπὸ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης θεᾶται».

“The boy [who prostitutes himself] has no communion with the man, as the woman does in sexual pleasure, but watches him enrapture indifferently.”

From ancient Greeks’ point of view, it was unconceivable for a passive lover to feel pleasure. Only the corrupted who was using him as a woman could feel pleasure. The former was forced, out of violence or need for money, to suffer such a humiliation, but he couldn’t have possibly sought pleasure through it.

This also explains the law of Solon, whom Mr. Siamakis condemned as the most absolute protector of homosexuals.

Plutarch, Life of Solon, I, 1:

«Ἐκ τε τῶν ποιημάτων αὐτοῦ λαβεῖν ἐστὶ καὶ νόμον ἔγραψε διαγορεύοντα δοῦλον μὴ ξηραλοιφεῖν μηδὲ παιδεραστεῖν, εἰς τὴν τῶν καλῶν μερίδα καὶ σεμνῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων τιθέμενος τὸ πρᾶγμα, καὶ τρόπον τινὰ τοὺς ἀξίους προκαλούμενος ὧν τοὺς ἀναξίους ἀπήλυνε».

“We can reach to this conclusion both from his poems and from a law he made out. This law of Solon didn’t allow to slaves to rub dry with oil [that is, to practice sports] or to love a boy, because this, Solon thought, belonged to the noble and revered occupations; so, by this law, he wanted to encourage honest citizens to noble works, from which he was excluding the unworthy.”

Can you imagine a young Athenian having as a mentor, as an initiator to social life, a slave, who had no civic rights at all? This was not just impossible, but also irrational and insulting, beyond the specific person, to the entire city.

This explains too something puzzling to me as to many others who deal with these questions: how was it possible for the Sacred Company at Thebes to be composed of three hundred couples of lovers and loved ones? How was total (according to Polyaeus’ account) discipline achieved under these circumstances, while it has been, and still is in modern armies, common practice to prevent unpleasantness due to rivalry, by avoiding co-existence of men and women in a military unit?

Well, it was possible, because when the texts speaks of ‘lovers’ and ‘loved ones’, they refer to this special bond between a teacher and his pupil, which couldn’t let the former show cowardice in front of the latter and fall back without covering him (since in the phalanx one was covering the other), and vice versa.

Epaminondas relied not on the sexual bond of ‘lovers’ and ‘loved ones’, which could not happen in an army, but on their deep friendship as a result of the lover being a model to his loved one.

Especially as far as the Sacred Company at Thebes is concerned, it seems that, even during the antiquity, partisans of homosexuality believed its members to be sexually involved with

each other. That explains why Plutarch, who writes in the 2nd century A.C., after having experienced the demoralisation of the Roman period, puts in the mouth of Philip, the winner of the battle in Chaeronia, these touching words, when he speaks of the lovers and their loved ones who fell heroically in the field to the last, struck not in the back, but in the chest:

«Ἀπόλουντο κακῶς οἱ τούτους τι ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν αἰσχρὸν ὑπονοοῦντες».

“I wish a bad end to those who dared to insinuate that something base was going on between these people”.

The only point still to be cleared up, then, is the importance of the loved one being beautiful too. Pr. Dover and Mrs. Reisberg base their whole reasoning on this. They say that, during the classical age, as vases and some texts tend to confirm, all the prominent citizens of Athens were competing, even through present offers, for the favours of the most beautiful boys. This interest for physical beauty hides, according to them, desire for sexual intercourse.

To be fair, I have to admit that both Pr. Dover and Mrs. Reisberg think that when there was sexual intercourse, it was no sodomy, but a peculiar habit, typical of ancient Greece as it seems, called femorum diductio.

Mrs. Reisberg says about this in page 262 of her book *Marriage, hetaerae and pederasty in ancient Greece* (my emphasis):

“The relevant extracts from comedies, which speak of sodomy, confirm that this way of sexual intercourse was thought to be humiliating for the one who endured it. Being actually or having been resigned to sex through anus leads always to the defamation of the passive partner and is normally connected with reproach of prostitution.”

But remember the implications of such a reproach to an Athenian citizen. He was completely deprived of his civic and

sacerdotal rights. So, even those who support the idea of tolerated pederasty, in its sexual meaning, accept that it was impossible for an Athenian citizen to have homosexual relationships and preserve, at the same time, his citizenship. Then, are we still talking about a paradise for homosexuals?

In a vase of the age of the Persian wars, painted to signify the intention of humiliating the barbarian enemy, an Athenian soldier is shown ready to sodomite a Persian one. The message, of course, has nothing to do with initiation in social life and moral values...

But, to come back to the question of the beauty of the loved one, why was it so important to generate a competition of gifts for winning the most beautiful adolescent? (This offering, though, was not so necessary; Socrates was a destitute, yet he had the greatest number of loved ones.)

In studying any other, ancient or modern, civilisation, we might have some difficulties in trying to explain this phenomenon, but, when ancient Greek civilisation is concerned, the answer can be found rather easily and quickly.

This civilisation raised elegance and beauty, *Κάλλος*, to a major component of its political and social expression. That is why, when it wanted to build an impressive temple, it didn't choose to make it big one, just a perfect one in harmony and beauty, and built the Parthenon. And, following again its need for perfect harmony, it created the statues of Polyclitus, Praxiteles and Pheidias.

In this civilisation, where virtue and wisdom had to be followed also by beauty, to meet the ideal of *καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός*, distinguished citizens, the only ones invited to play the part of lovers, were naturally seeking to have as a pupil and a protégé that young man who incarnated this ideal; because, as ancient Greeks put it, physical beauty is a reflection of the moral one. So, it was the biggest success for an Athenian to be known as the mentor and shaper of an ideal citizen.

He could care for virtue and wisdom, but beauty has to be already there. And if there was, then he wouldn't hesitate to quarrel with his fellow citizens and to compete with them in trying to win the boy with presents. But, if these presents were given to ensure him sexual intercourse with the loved one, then the lover could be accused of unchastity and even lose his life, as I already demonstrated.

To close this subject, I find it necessary to quote an amazing extract of Xenophon's *Anabasis*. The writer wants to qualify somebody as a barbarian, not a Greek, and gives a most interesting explanation of this difference.

CHAPTER FIVE
VASES

Vases' indications relevant to our subject cannot be overlooked, even if we wanted to. All those sustaining that homosexuality and, what is worse, pederasty, was tolerated and even approved of, in ancient Greece, make an extensive use of them. What is curious, though, is that they all refer to a few specific vases. This repetition can't but make a searcher of good faith suspicious.

Let us not forget some very important things about vases and the scenes they represent. Vases are found early enough in the Greek world. In the Neolithic settlement of Sesklon (7000 B.C.) one finds the 'the potter's house'. So, one can expect vases to have different themes in different ages.

The vases I want to present were made between the 6th and the 4th centuries B.C. and come almost exclusively from Athens. That makes them an inevitably restrained sample, since they were fabricated, more or less, in the same time and place and follow the same technique.

But, although they are mainly Attic, and sometimes Corinthian, they were destined to be exported all over the ancient world. Greek vases have been found everywhere, from east and the Black Sea to the north of Europe and Gibraltar.

Their themes vary, as I said, through the centuries. Between 11th and 9th centuries, they are exclusively geometrical, painted with canon and compass. The whole era was named, after them geometrical. Then, in the years of our interest, they usually represent mythological and heroic themes; artists turn, gradually, to other subjects without abandoning their favourite ones. But, in this enormous amount of vases, you inevitably find whatever scene you are looking for, even if it is about ancient flying machines or food habits.

What I am trying to say is that there are scenes on the ancient vases referring to practically any aspect of life, ways of combat, dressing habits and hairdressing styles or anything one could think of. If you are patient and sharp enough, it won't slip your attention. And even a parcel of imagination is enough to drive you to incredible 'discoveries'.

So, Pr. Dover, trying hard to reconstitute a vase collection with homosexual scenes, cites in total almost 600. I choose to examine this collection and, hopefully, deny his conclusions, because it is the reference point of the rest of the authors (i.e. Reisenberg), who use the vase argument.

First of all, this is certainly one immense collection, although not all of the 600 vases have homosexual scenes. Still, the rest of them are considered as appropriate to enlighten the question of homosexuality in ancient Greece.

Pr. Dover himself, when presenting the catalogue of this collection, states that "The vases listed here are those mentioned in the book. By no means all of them portray homosexual behaviour or bear erotic inscriptions; a great many vases which did portray such behaviour or do bear such inscriptions are not listed."

That is to say, those of the presented vases which have nothing to do with his subject are cited because they are thought to be subsidiary; and there are many others, (but how many and where, is left peculiarly vague) more relevant to his point of view, which he omits.

This does not make his sayings accurate. He ought to have told us, first, how many of the 600 vases have really homosexual scenes, and, second, how many exactly, or even appreciatively, are those he does not refer to or replaces with others less relevant.

Now, the truth is that according to my generous calculations, no more than 30 out of 600 vases have a homosexual scene. The other 570 are totally irrelevant, showing heroes, battles or

mythological themes, or represent heterosexual scenes, on which Pr. Dover comments in a way that I will further present.

Mrs. Reisenberg also presents some vases, but not one not belonging to the Dover's collection, and sends everyone wishing to find some more to consult it, because she holds it to be the most exhaustive. Yet, according to its creator, many relevant vases are not included in it.

In a small research I have conducted in the Web, in sites where such vases should be found, I discovered no mention of any other than the already known. Pr. Dover is the only one to sustain they exist. But since his book is not exempt of errors or omissions, I am allowed not to give much credit to this piece of information. Had he other vases to use as proof of his theory, he should have used them, instead of the completely irrelevant he

presents. Or, he should have, at least, mentioned them, in order to enable us a further examination of them.

One of our country's finest publishing houses, Ekdotiki Athinon, published a major collection about Greek art through the centuries, in several volumes. In the one dedicated to the vases, when the question of their number arises, it is stated: "Attic vases only, which came whole to us, are estimated to 80.000 (without counting the potsherd). Given that we have less than 1% of the attic decorated ceramics produced in the archaic and classical periods, we can, grossly, figure out the huge amounts of such production during the antiquity."

It is obvious that, in such a context, 30 vases out of 600 are too small a sample to lead us in safe and scientifically valid conclusions; it only intends to impress us.

As to the scientific substance of the commentaries on vases with heterosexual scenes, you can judge by the following:

"If one looks carefully, he will remark that the coitus is through anus. That means that the artist subconsciously wants to paint a homosexual scene, but he can't."

Yet, it is the remarks on what I call the irrelevant vases that are beyond any imagination. I will quote, word for word, some extracts, really comic I must say, from Dover's book, which, let me repeat that, stands as the most authoritative reference to everyone. They are from the very enlightening chapter 'Predilections and fantasies'.

"This small penis is combined as a rule with a scrotum of normal size, and the contrast is sometimes striking; the youth in R373* has a normal scrotum but a minute penis, and the youth's scrotum in R638 is massive. (...) even a hero such as Heracles is no exception to this rule; in R328* he has very small genitals, and his large scrotum in RL28 is unlikely, in view of examples given above, to be a deliberate reference to his virility." (page 126, 126)

Patroclus in R39, while his wound is being bound up by Achilles, sits on his right heel in such a way that his genitals rest on the upper surface of his foot; it is as if the painter were under a powerful constraint not to conceal the genitals. R216 is in some ways similar, on a humbler plane: a man shown in the act of climbing a wall, at the moment when his genitals are resting prominently on the top of the wall. Alternatively, when a male is seen in profile squatting, crouching, half-kneeling, jumping or in violent movement, the genitals may be partially visible below the thigh. In portraying such positions and movements the painter commonly makes the genitals wholly visible, and he makes them far larger, in proportion to the other dimensions of the body, than when a similar person is standing, sitting, lying down, walking or fighting." (page 130)

But, it is in page 133 that Pr. Dover surpasses himself, when he develops the artist's subconscious homosexual hints that according to him "must" be hidden in some simple and quite usual, in ancient Greek art, scenes of battle.

“The following examples have no obvious humorous intentions, and may reveal unintentionally the ‘penile’ fantasies of their creators: R 177*, Orestes, advancing to kill Aigisthos, holds a broad-bladed, curved, sharp-pointed sword in a position where it covers his genitals and appears to be projecting from him; R 837, a spear, carried pointing half downwards, prolongs the line of a youth’s penis, and its blade and blade-socket symbolise the glans and retracted foreskin; R 821, a youth holds a long javelin so that it appears to pass through the genitals of another youth; (...) B 588, Iolaos holds his club so that it looks like his own erect penis, and Heracles, fighting the lion, appears to have his scabbard going up his anus.”

What can really be said about these commentaries? Fantasies they are, only not of the ancient artist who simply paints warriors holding javelins; they belong to those who are not afraid of becoming picturesque, as long as they can hence sustain that homosexuality and pederasty were tolerated and widely approved of in ancient Greece.

Of course, in the different collections which are supposed to prove, in so pompous a way, the above theory, there are some vases which have true homosexual scenes, but never a scene of actual sexual intercourse between two men. Only satyrs take part in such scenes, and satyrs were known to be perverted and were represented as such. And when a homosexual scene was painted on a vase, obviously to avoid general outcry, it shows either simple caresses or a curious position called, as I found out, *femorum diductio*.

In this position, both men are showed head-on and the lover tries to press his penis between the thighs of his loved one, which is supposed to give him pleasure.

From my point of view, such an intercourse didn’t exist, strange enough as it is; but the artists who wanted to show two

men having sex and couldn't do it openly (perhaps there was a law, which didn't come to us, forbidding it), had no other means but this strange position to illustrate their objective.

Pr. Dover, on the contrary, believes it existed. He considers it to be the only permitted way for a lover to have an intercourse with his loved one; for he recognizes, along with everyone, that it was inadmissible and punishable for a man to offer his body passively, in the way a woman does. The vase treasure was a hoax then! Readers can understand that it is too risky, after all, to reach any valid conclusions based on those few vases. Nothing excludes their making by a homosexual artist or for a homosexual client, probably living too far from Attica, or even a barbarian; attic vases were exported to where they were commanded, that is, all around the world.

When someone uses the vase argument (even if more of them were to be found, their percentage would be still negligible) to claim that ancient Greeks were homosexuals, his theory has the same, if not less value, with the theory of a future historian, who based on a single episode of a random sit-com having a homosexual among the three or four main characters, sustains that in Greece of the early 1990's one out of four men was homosexual; or, he claims that homosexuality was an institution in Greece of the beginning of the 21 st century, based on a homosexual magazine, one remaining out of the many in circulation in the newsstand.

What I am saying is that these vases, because of their, limited, number and because of their unrealistic way of depicting things, are not enough by themselves to drive us to reliable conclusions, as some insist on believing. It must also be noted that pottery was at that time a real form of art and, as such, it didn't mean to show everyday life, but to provoke and even to shake common beliefs.

And there was an undeniable commercial aspect, since pottery was Attica's hard industry. It is possible then that fabricants were trying to satisfy all kinds of demand in order to increase their sales (just as contemporary television networks broadcast all kinds of shows, even pornographic ones, to increase rating and, consequently, profit).

I will say it again: what comes out from the vases is that, even in homosexual scenes, the artist never shows an actual intercourse, but only a femorum diductio, which means that sodomy was considered too base to be shown, even in the relevant vases.

Vases convince no one but those who want to be convinced by passing and superficial impressions. On the contrary, they reveal a most conservative, compared to our standards, society, where certain things, even when they are done – and they were surely done, at that time as at all –, must never come to the light.

CHAPTER SIX
MYTHOLOGY

Mythology is a major component of ancient Greek civilisation and capital to its study and understanding. It contains the most secret aspects of the Greek thought and offers to the attentive searcher an epitome of the Greek conception of gods, heroes and ordinary people.

There are too many myths referring either to the two gods who, according to this concept of Divine, represent love, Aphrodite and Eros, or to love stories of gods and humans. Greeks have been particularly accused of their liberal treatment of the gods, but this is subject for another book. Back to our subject, myths about heterosexual love are among the most touching stories ever created.

The war of Troy is the first one of them. According to modern historians, who propose only rational interpretations, Achaeans fought the Trojans for the control of the passages from the Aegean to the Black sea, or, in other words, for economical reasons, as it happens with every war through the ages. It is always a question of power and who will have it.

But these motives are not satisfying the Greek spirit; they don't seem good enough to explain why the Greeks engaged themselves in such bloody and long civil war.

On the contrary, the need of Menelaus to have Beautiful Helen back explains perfectly this war to the Greek mind. And in every Homeric rhapsody, as I have already noted, the love which unites a man and a woman is depicted in vivid expressions.

Achilles withdraws from the battles and leaves his fellow Achaeans to their destiny, only because Agamemnon took Vre-seis away from him. And when she is leaving, Homer, wanting to draw our attention to the love that unites them, insists on the fact that "her heart doesn't want to follow". In the final rhapsody

sody of the Iliad, after the august and most touching meeting between the Trojan king Priam and Achilles, the latter finds comfort in Vreseis' arms.

The other great hero of this epic, Hector, has with Andromach, his wife, the perfect relationship. Her mourning for his death is the one of a woman deeply in love.

In the second Homeric epic, Odyssey, the main character, Ulysses, fights hard to find his way back home. He lives many adventures, and love stories, with Circe or Calypso, are an important part of them.

I deliberately insist on Homer because he was like the Bible to ancient Greeks. Even Plato, who does not count among the poets' partisans, admits that "this poet was Greeks' true instructor". In his epics Greeks used to search the origins of every model, every attitude, every value they thought worthy.

Yet, among all these love stories Homer speaks of, there is not the slightest reference to a relationship between individuals of the same sex.

And Greek mythology as a whole, apart from the epics of Homer, has great love stories to show. No other people expressed such an admiration to divine Eros, the one presented in the Antigone as unbeatable in battle, *"Ερως ἀνίκητε μάχαν*.

Let us remember some great and tragic love stories from our mythology, which, as I believe, is our legendary proto-history.

Myrtilus, king Oenomaus' charioteer, falls in love with his master's daughter, Hippodamia. She persuades him to take a pin off the royal chariot's wheel before the beginning of a race between Oenomaus and Pelops. Oenomaus gets killed and the winner Pelops abducts Hippodamia and kills Myrtilus, who curses him and his posterity before he dies. In a single story two great passions are described, Myrtilus' for Hippodamia, which is strong enough to make him betray his king, and Hippo-

damia's for Pelops, which leads her to practically accept the idea of her father's death. For Greeks, Eros is really unbeatable.

He is so unbeatable that makes another daughter betray her own father. Ariane, the daughter of Minos, saves Theseus and helps him escape from the prison her father had prepared for him.

Do not think that Greek mythology gives accounts only of women's great passions for men.

Amphiaraus, the renowned seer, knew that, if he took part in the campaign of the Seven against Thebes, his death was certain; so, he denied participating. Polynices though, manages to change his mind by using Amphiaraus' love for his wife, Eriphyle. He gives her a splendid present, the necklace of Harmony, and, for his wife's sake, Amphiaraus joins the campaign and gets killed.

But, there are even more tragic love stories, tragic beyond imagination. Among the most amazing and superbly illustrated in a vase, is the myth speaking of the love between Achilles and Penthesilia, the queen of the Amazons. She went to Troy to fight by Trojan's side. During the battle she finds herself in a tremendous single combat with the son of Peleas, the swift-footed Achilles. He beats her after a hard fight, but when he gives her the final stroke with his sword, while looking her in the eyes, he realizes she is the only woman worthy of him. A complete and utter love takes instantaneously hold of him, yet, it is too late. Penthesilia is already gone and the hero's heart is broken, for he has just killed the woman he loved and is never going to have.

Hopefully, there are also love stories with happy ending, like the story of Perseus, son of Zeus and Danae, and Andromeda. He first saw her when passing from Ethiopia; she was tied to a rock, as an offer to appease a sea monster.

At this sight, he can't but fall in love with the young and beautiful girl. He promises her father to save her and, if he manages

to do so, he asks to become her husband. The father agrees, Perseus kills the monster and marries Andromeda.

Heracles, the greatest of all heroes, also accused by those with vivid imagination, of homosexuality, was known, apart from his labours, for the passionate love he felt for quite a few women. At the end, coming back from Lydia and having the beautiful Iole, daughter of Euripus, with him, he will die out of a poisoned robe, sent to him by his jealous wife, Deianira, and impregnated in the so called love potion the Centaur Nessus gave her.

One should ask whether there is any mention of love story between two men in the mythology. Actually, there is, and a very instructive too; it is, in a sense, the continuation of Pelops and Hippodamia myth.

The two lovers were cursed, as you may remember, by the dying Myrtilus for having betrayed him. So, as the myth continues, Laius, who was offered a refuge by Pelops, fell in love, stimulated by the vulgar and not the celestial Aphrodite, with his adolescent son, the charming Chrysippus, kidnapped him and raped him.

After that Pelops naturally cursed Laius; and this forced sexual relationship became the cause of all the misfortunes that stroke the family of Lavdacus.

For a Greek mind Laius is guilty of such an odious deed, that he deserves to be killed by his own son, Oedipus. This punishment is not enough though, more is about to come and hit the coming generations. Oedipus, innocent in essence, but carrying the curse fallen on his father, marries, without knowing it, his own mother and has children with her. When the truth, finally, comes out, she kills herself, while he takes out his own eyes. But the curse continues to pursuit Laius' posterity to its complete extinction. Oedipus' sons, Eteocles and Polynices, will engage themselves in a bloody civil war and die beaten by each other's

hand. Antigone will be the last victim of this curse and, with her sacrifice, will free her sister Ismene from it.

Having in mind this mythical family's history, I can't think of a more explicit way for the Greek mythology to state its repulsion, the complete abhorrence of the ancient society towards homosexual acts.

Their language called homosexuals **Κίναιδοι** and their mythology associates them with the greatest curse and tragedy of the ancient world, the destruction of the house of Lavdacus.

Yet, there is another chapter in mythology which needs to be examined: Zeus and the myths connected to him.

Zeus is widely known as the father of all gods and men. He was married to Hera, but was not faithful at all to her. This attitude of his may scandalise modern morals, but is, in fact, symbolic, relevant to the way divine essence fertilises anything. The greatest Greek heroes were sons of Zeus and of several mortal women.

His love affairs with simple women as well as with goddesses are countless; the artifices he uses to approach them are often beyond imagination. Yet, a single myth, the abduction of Ganymede, was enough to acclaim him, according to some people, as the eternal protector of homosexuals. Pr. Dover has even chosen a vase with this scene as a cover for his book, obviously to relate the father of gods and human, the king of Olympus with homosexuality.

The myth is known from Homer; Zeus sees Ganymede, an incredibly beautiful young man, and abducts him to Olympus, where he makes him his cup-bearer, because he didn't want such perfect beauty to be lost in the world of mortals.

There are many, although not perceptible at first sight, interpretations to this myth, which has been used, even since the antiquity, to sustain a homosexual aspect of Zeus.

Robert Flacérière, in page 22 of his book, says (please note that this author doesn't share my opinion, but believes that pe-

derasty had a physical dimension too; yet, he cannot close his eyes to the undeniable):

“There is no doubt about it: Homer never attributes to a god, nor to a human ‘love for the boys’, as will do the poets to come. He does, of course speak of Ganymede, in the twentieth rhapsody of the Iliad (...), but, to Homer, Ganymede is just Zeus’ cup-bearer.”

But it is Socrates, who gives a truly disclosing interpretation of this myth, in Xenophon’s Symposium, where he also clears up, once and for all, the question of the friendship between Achilles and Patroclus.

Xenophon, Symposium, VIII, 28–32:

«...ἐπιθυμῶ δέ σοι, ἔφη, ὦ Καλλιὰ, καὶ μυθολογῆσαι ὡς οὐ μόνον ἄνθρωποι ἀλλὰ καὶ θεοὶ καὶ ἥρωες τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς φιλίαν περὶ πλείονος ἢ τὴν τοῦ σώματος χρῆσιν ποιοῦνται. Ζεὺς τε γὰρ ὄσων μὲν θνητῶν οὐσῶν μορφῆς ἠγάσθη, συγγενόμενος εἶα αὐτὰς θνητὰς εἶναι ὄσων δὲ ψυχῆς ἀγαθαῖς ἀγασθείη, ἀθανάτους τούτους ἐποίηε ὧν Ἡρακλῆς μὲν καὶ Δίωσκουροὶ εἰσι, λέγονται δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι. Καὶ ἐγὼ δέ φημι καὶ Γανυμήδην οὐ σώματος ἀλλὰ ψυχῆς ἕνεκα ὑπὸ Διὸς εἰς Ὀλυμπον ἀνενεχθῆναι. Μαρτυρεῖ δὲ καὶ τοῦνομα αὐτοῦ· ἔστι μὲν γὰρ δήπου καὶ Ὀμήρῳ γάνυται δὲ τ’ ἀκούων. Τοῦτο δὲ φράζει ὅτι ἤδεται δὲ τ’ ἀκούων. Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλοθί που πνικινὰ φρεσὶ μήδεα εἰδῶς τοῦτο δ’ αὐτὸ λέγει σοφὰ φρεσὶ βουλεύματα εἰδῶς. Ἐξ οὖν συναμφοτέρων τούτων οὐχ ἠδυσώματος ὀνομασθεῖς ὁ Γανυμήδης ἀλλ’ ἠδυνγώμων ἐν θεοῖς τετίμηται. Ἀλλὰ μὴν, ὦ Νικήρατε, καὶ Ἀχιλλεὺς Ὀμήρῳ πεποίηται οὐχ ὡς παιδικοῖς Πατρόκλῳ ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐταίρῳ ἀποθανόντι ἐκπρεπέστατα τιμωρῆσαι. Καὶ Ὀρέστης δὲ καὶ Πυλάδης καὶ Θησεὺς καὶ Πειριίθους καὶ ἄλλοι δὲ πολλοὶ τῶν ἡμιθέων οἱ ἄριστοι ὑμνοῦνται οὐ διὰ τὸ συγκαθεύδειν ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ ἀγα-

σθαι ἀλλήλους τὰ μέγιστα καὶ κάλλιστα κοινῇ διαπεπραχθαι. Τὶ δέ, τὰ νῦν καλὰ ἔργα οὐ πάντ' ἀνεύροισις ἔνεκα ἐπαίου ὑπὸ τῶν καὶ πονεῖν καὶ κινδυνεύειν ἐθελόντων πραττόμενα μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐθιζομένων ἡδονὴν ἀντ' εὐκλείας αἰρεῖσθαι;»

“Finally, I wish to prove to you, Callias, by using mythology, that human as well as the gods and the heroes, prefer friendship of the soul rather than use of the body. It is well known that, after their intercourse, Zeus let the women he fell for to remain mortal, if he loved them for their physical beauty; but he made immortal whomever he loved for the beauty of their souls. Among them you can see Heracles, the Dioscouri and others.

I also claim that Ganymede was brought to Olympus for the beauty of his soul, not of his body. His very name confirms what I am saying, as it is said about it in a passage from Homer, ‘*γάνυται δὲ τ’ ἀκούων*’. That means one takes pleasure in listening to him. There is also another passage from Homer which says ‘*πυκινὰ φρεσὶ μῆδεα εἰδώς*’. That means again ‘the one who had wise thoughts’. So, if Ganymede has got his name after these two, he has been honoured among the gods not for his pleasant body, but for his wisdom.

Achilles, my friend Nikeratos, has also been shown by Homer to have avenged in the most dignified way the death of Patroclus, not as the death of a loved one, but as the death of a friend. Orestes and Pylades too, Theseus and Peirithous, and many of the best of the semi-gods are being praised not because they were sleeping together, but because they were admiring each other and have accomplished together the greatest and most beautiful deeds. As to the contemporary works, one would not always find them accomplished by those who want to labour and dare to risk, but by those who tend to prefer pleasure rather than glory.”

Greek thought, as reflected in the mythology, reveals a world where socially approved sex tends to be confined in the heterosexual model.

Eros, as a divinity, is nevertheless a rather complex case. I already mentioned Aphrodite and the crucial differentiation between her vulgar and celestial versions.

But what about Eros?

He was an attendant to Aphrodite, and as such, he figures already in Hesiodus, where he is described as the primary cause of everything that exists. Eros, the strong desire for something, according to the dictionaries, is then the Power that brings the Chaos in Order.

Orphics place him in the center of the universe. Phanes – Eros will come out of the Orphic Egg and bring the whole Cosmos onto the light. Just enjoy this unique Orphic Hymn to Eros/Love:

*«Κικλήσκω μέγαν, άγνόν, έράσιμον,
ήδύν Έρωτα τοξακλή,
περόεντα, πυρίδρομον, εϋδρομον όρμη,
συμπαίζοντα ήδè θεοίς
θητοίς άνθρώποις·
εϋπάλαμον, διφυή, πάντων κληίδας έχοντα,
αιθέρος οϋρανίου,
πόντου, χθονός...
ήδ' όσα Τάρταρος εϋρύνς έχει...»*

“I summon the great, pure, lovely, sweet Eros,
who is mighty with the bow,
the flying one, fiery in his course,
swift in his ardour, playing with gods
as well as with the mortal humans;
the handy one, the one with double nature,

who is praised by everyone,
by the celestial ether,
the sea, the earth ...
and everything contained in Tartarus
[the nether world] ..."

So, Eros, just like Aphrodite, has double nature. He is that flying god we all have in mind, who can fluster anybody with his tricks, from Zeus and Apollo to the simplest human. But, he is not only that. He is also the creative principle of all that exist. What gives birth to the Cosmos, the ornament, is the harmony between the opposing natural forces of Love and Feud.

Eros the god is, then, the symbol of the Purest , Creative Universal Power . This Eros -Creator , and not the ordinary love , has Athenaeus in mind when he writes that:

“It was so strange to the Athenian way of thinking to consider Eros responsible for any sexual relationship, that, in the Academia, which was devoted to Athena, the virgin goddess, a statue was set up in honour of Eros and sacrifices were offered to him, as to Athena.”

Of course, this was not done to honour the love of the bodies, but the one of the souls and the beautiful works, as Socrates has explained to us. Besides, Academia, Plato’s school, was the perfect location to place a statue of this Eros, since Plato had described this form of love. He couldn’t have imagined how distorted his words would be after several thousands of years.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE COMICAL POETS

Homosexuals' description in the works of different poets of the classical era is certainly important to those who try to understand how homosexuals were treated by the citizens of the same period.

As far as tragic poets are concerned, there is never an open mention to the question, obviously because of the general conservatism we have already described. Anyway, tragic poets usually reflect the opinions of the higher, rather closed social groups.

The comical poets, on the contrary, express the views of larger, popular classes, and they do speak openly about this issue.

They often use the word “*εὐρύπρωκτος*”, ‘wide-breeched’, needing no further explanation, if I may say so, but being undoubtedly pejorative.

People known to have this inclination, like the poet Agathon, are often designated with this word, in a clearly depreciatory context. In Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*, Agathon is also described as «*καταπύγων*», ‘given to unnatural lust’. This word, of the same family as ‘*πυγή*’, ‘buttocks’, clearly means the passive homosexual. It is also remarkable that Aristophanes, willing to express his aversion towards this act, never uses the words «*ἐραστήης-ἐρώμενος*», ‘lover-loved one’.

Homosexuals are also, pejoratively, presented, according to Pr. Dover, as «*λαικαστάς*» ‘wenchers’, those who like to suck.

In the *Nubes*, when Aristophanes wants to make the difference between the moral and the immoral young man, he uses the words «*σώφρων*» and «*καταπύγων*». In the same play, the main character, Strepsiades, when he swears his son for having heat him, calls him «*λακκόπρωκτον*», ‘loose-breeched’, and

«πατροκτόνον», ‘parricidal’, considering the two terms as equally condemning, to his as to the spectators’ ears.

In ancient Greece there is a specific word to signify ‘bravery’, the word ‘ἀνδρεία’. In Athens, to reach the state of the citizen, adolescents had to give a solemn oath to the “Sacred Arms” and serve in the army. A man who denied carrying arms in battle was ridiculous and could not have civic rights.

A comical poet wrote a play to satirize the “dissenters” of his age and called it «Ἀστράτευτοι» ‘those who have never seen service’, but also «Ἀνδρόγυνοι», ‘the Effeminated’. That means that womanish men, homosexuals, were put in the same range as the men who didn’t serve their city and were disapproved for that.

Aristophanes is never tired of humiliating homosexuality at every chance.

In Pax, Trygaeus has brought a beetle to his house and feeds it with excrements to use it as transportation to the summit of Olympus. The slave, who is responsible for it, asks someone to bring him an ‘excrement-pie’ from an ‘unchaste man’, obviously because, as ‘wide-breeched’, he should make the best pies of this kind!

Aristophanes’ comments sound ‘racist’ and ‘sexist’ to us; should a modern writer use such depreciating terms for homosexuals in his works, he would have been subject to the hue and cry of everyone, especially the intellectuals.

Modern attitude towards this particular inclination is probably fairer and more human, but, in this book, we are trying to determine the opinion ancient Greeks had on the subject, not ours.

There is another element which can add to our argumentation; it is known to those who support the opposite view, but they tend to explain it in a different way. It is about one of Aristophanes most successful plays, Lysistrata.

In this play Athenian women decide not to have sex with their husbands, in order to force them to stop the war with Sparta. If

homosexuality was so widely practiced, this decision would mean nothing to men, since they could turn to each other to satisfy their desires. But this is not what happens. On the contrary, men give way rather quickly, because they cannot stand this compulsory abstinence.

This is usually explained as an attitude typical of the popular class, while upper class preferred pederasty.

But this is not true. Theatre was a major interest of all Athenian citizens and members of the richest and most illustrious families eagerly assumed the, usually enormous, expenses of the representations. It would be incredible for comical poets, and, in particular Aristophanes, who was the most prolific one, to insult, systematically and in the most provoking way, their patrons. They would, at least, attenuate, if not pass it over in silence, so as not to risk their grantors' ire.

It is also sustained that poor Athenians didn't need to turn to homosexuality, because, in popular neighbourhoods, women, who hadn't enough slaves to help them, used to be more often out of their house, and this made it easier for men to find a sexual partner. It was much more difficult, on the contrary, for rich citizens, whose wives and daughters were confined to their residence. This 'lack' of women made the rich Athenians to choose men for partners and provided the comical poets with a 'difference of attitude' between rich and poor, which made a constant source of juicy jokes

Yet, in ancient Athens, a rich man had more opportunities to enjoy sex, if he wanted to, than a poor one. He had the possibility to pay and have access to a brothel. There were dozens of them in the city, but even more in Piraeus, the biggest port of that age.

He could also, as I mentioned before, turn to a courtesan and have a permanent relationship, for as long as he wished, with a woman of distinguished beauty and culture, whose company, though highly expensive, was much in request.

He could, finally, buy a female slave from the market, to have her as a concubine and maidservant. After all, it was not a problem for a rich Athenian who wanted to find a woman to do so.

This silly assumption though is the one supposed to explain the differences in morals between rich and poor.

To conclude this chapter, I can only repeat that homosexuals are presented in a most depreciative way in ancient comedies; this means that these plays offer us one of our strongest arguments in our effort to prove that homosexuality was not the widely tolerated, if not imperative, 'Greek way'.

CHAPTER EIGHT
FEMALE HOMOSEXUALITY

In my first study about homosexuality in ancient Greece, which was presented, some years ago, in the National Metso-vion Polytechnic School of Athens, I didn't touch the question of female homosexuality. It was not out of lacking evidence, but because I considered it of minor importance, compared with the issue on its whole. The scarce references in ancient texts and the 'accommodating' association of pederasty with male homosexuality explain, to a certain extent, this negligence. Since only men were qualified as 'lovers' and 'loved ones', the 'Greek love' described by Robert Flacérière should be between men.

But, if this is the case, how can one explain the Greek etymology of the word for female homosexuality? In almost every language, it is designed by the word 'lesbian' and, thus, associated with the Greek island of Lesbos. The answer is simple; it is because of Sappho, the most praised poetess of the ancient world.

Sappho, or Psappha, as was her name in the Aeolian dialect, was for ancient Greeks 'The Poetess', just as Homer was 'the Poet', without further specification. She lived in the 7th century B.C., when lyric poetry reached its bloom, and was recognized by the Alexandrian scholars, as one of the nine greatest lyric poets of all times. Her poems, mainly written in a special metre named after her, covered seven books, but only a few verses survived.

Even these few verses are so fragmentary, that they only make it more difficult for those trying to understand where things stood, as far as Sappho's sexual profile is concerned. And this is because, although Sappho is widely thought to have been homosexual, nothing in the real evidence we do possess can confirm this claim.

Pr. Dover, in page 173 of his book, says (my emphasis):

“The evidence for her homosexuality is fragmentary in the literal sense: only one of her poems survives complete (quoted by a literary critic of the roman period), the rest being represented by scraps of ancient copies, in which a complete line is a rarity, and by later writers’ quotations of short passages, individual lines or phrases. The evidence is also fragile and ambiguous (...). Comment on Sappho’s erotic relationships with women does not begin, so far as the extant evidence goes, until Hellenistic times.”

Robert Flacérière, in page 98 of his book, in the chapter he writes about the so called ‘Greek love’, says (also my emphasis):

“In the early beginning of the 6th century B.C., when Theognis and other, major, lyric poets were to their zenith, Sappho or Psappha, a poetess from Lesbos reached her maturity; she was a unique creature, a ‘miracle’ according to Strabo (XIII, 617), the only woman whose poems, even since Antiquity, were compared, as equal, to the Homeric ones, “the tenth Muse” as described in an epigram of the *Anthologia Graeca* attributed to Plato.

Yet this is the moment to deal with a preliminary question: is it fair to include Sappho in a chapter dealing with homosexual love? The accusations for ‘sapphism’ and ‘lesbianism’, made against the poetess in the Antiquity, are, according to numerous Hellenists and historians, pure slander.”

What is the meaning of all this? Even the scholars who tend to consider homosexuality as a major social phenomenon in ancient Greece, hesitate in calling Sappho homosexual, although the rest of people do so, without even caring to prove it. This is a typical example of something being considered as true, only because that is the general feeling about it.

There is a simple test one can make to find out how many invalid myths of this kind concerning ancient Greece are widely spread. Just ask ten persons to tell you in which rhapsody of the Iliad Homer describes the Trojan horse and the fall of Troy. With a few exceptions, almost everyone will choose one rhapsody, since everyone is convinced that the Iliad ends with the fall of Troy. Yet, the Iliad's final scene is the one between Achilles and Priam.

Mr. Vassilis Lazanas, Ph.D in the University of Tübingen in Germany, writes in his book *Ancient Greek epigram poets of the Aegean* (Athens 1995, page 170):

“A major issue, related to the poetess' morals and personality, is her relationship with the circle of female disciples she had in Mytilene (...) Strabo says about her: ‘Sappho was such an admirable creature; we have never known so far any other woman who could be, even remotely, compared to her as far as the poetic grace is concerned’, while, on the other hand, many writers, especially Christians, are more than unequivocal as to her morals. Tatianus, for example, proclaims that Sappho ‘is a slut, a sex-maniac prostitute who makes poetry out of her own lewdness’.

Yet, during these last decades the question has been seriously and insistently examined by distinguished scholars, such as F.C. Welcker and others. Their studies conclude as follows: girls taking part to Sappho's circle came from different areas of Lesbos and even from outside the island. This circle was obviously not some School for music, poetry and dance; nor was it a circle devoted to worshipping Aphrodite. It is most probable that these girls were gathering there to concentrate on learning music and dance, on reading and reciting poetry, on teaching good manners and so on. Let us also not forget that, in

Lesvos, social structure and morals were completely different from the rest of Greece. Women were emancipated, at least to a certain point. Mytilene civilisation was of a high level, at this age, and girls' education was considered important and necessary. So, the question of Sappho's relationship to the girls who were frequenting her house must be examined through this particular aspect, and not on the basis of irresponsible and untrustworthy information or of scandal insinuations the comical poets did. It is, after all, almost certain that the poetry Sappho wrote, describing and inspired by the relation she had with her disciples as well as the relation they had with each other, would be misinterpreted. When Sappho expresses her emotions about being separated from a girl who gets married and leaves the 'circle', when she describes admiringly the beauty of a friend, when she speaks with delight about how close she feels to another one, she couldn't help being misunderstood and calumniated by those who tended to be suspicious for their own reasons (political). But there is not a single word in her poems to be read as a hint to lesbian love."

So, what do we know for certain about Sappho?

First, she was a great poetess whose works were unfortunately lost during the 11th century A.C., when they were thrown to fire, along with the works of Alcaeus. Lyrical poetry was, obviously, too 'daring' for the barbarian taste of the Middle Ages.

We then know that, though she was exceptionally praised by several ancient writers, she was also accused, by several others, of being homosexual, especially after the Hellenistic years, that is, centuries after her death.

This accusation made more than one ancient writer willing to defend her.

Lucianus in particular felt this need and wrote *Calumniae non tenere credendum*, that is, "How not to trust easily the calumny",

in order to help readers understand why Sappho, the tenth Muse, was unjustly accused of “having indecent friendships”.

The Suidas lexicon uses the same terms, “*Σαπφώ, διαβολήν ἔσχε αἰσχρᾶς φιλίας*”.

Another lexicographer, Hesychius from Alexandria, says that “*αἰτίας εἶχον ἀτόπους αἰ ἀπὸ Λέσβου*”, that is “to the women of Lesbos were addressed unfounded accusations”.

It is obvious that Sappho was a major surprise to the ancient Greeks who were deeply impressed with her. She was a super star.

Plutarch compares her with Anacreon and expresses his profound admiration to both of them by saying that when their poems are sung he is ashamed of even touching his glass.

We understand then why Sappho was a victim of false accusation. In an extremely conservative society, where a free woman should remain silent in her house, Sappho was representing the shocking model of a talented and independent woman. And, what was even more provoking, as I believe, she was experiencing a ‘lover-loved one’ relationship with the girls who attended her school. This was really high treason to ancient Greeks.

As I have already explained, men only could have a lover that is, a mentor and educator, since they were the only ones to become citizens and, consequently, needed to be initiated in every aspect of the city’s life.

Women could not have such a privilege because it was no necessary to them. That is why Sappho was so shocking and why she became an easy prey to false accusations.

Christianity undoubtedly contributed to this. The new religion gained ground by promising to eliminate ancient Greek corruption. A homosexual Sappho was a convenient example for the believers to repudiate and her shockingly libertarian

texts were ideal for destruction. This ensured also the possibility for anybody to say whatever they wanted against her, since her poems could not be evoked to refute them.

But, there is another amazing thing we know about this so called lesbian poetess and it concerns the way she died.

She actually committed suicide, by throwing herself out of a cliff in the island of Lefkada, in the Ionian Sea; she did so because her love, Faon from Mytilene, left her and that broke her heart. Yes, the world's 'most famous lesbian' killed herself out of love frustration.

Suidas' lexicon:

«...Σαπφὼ Λεσβία ἐκ Μυτιλήνης, ψάλτρια, αὕτη δι' ἔρωτα Φάωνος τοῦ Μυτιληναίου ἐκ τοῦ Λευκάτου κατεπόντωσεν ἑαυτήν»

“Sappho was a poetess from Mytilene, in the island of Lesbos, and she threw herself from the island of Lefkada because of her love for Faon.”

This particular love story was much known among the ancient writers, which explains how the compilers of the Suidas lexicon found the relevant information. Athenaeus, for instance, says the Sappho's love for the beautiful Faon was 'περιβόητος', "famous".

So, to strengthen my point that some searchers, either deliberately or out of carelessness, perpetuate some clichés by misinterpreting the texts, let me use another example, which Mrs Anna Tziropoulou was the first to draw to our attention.

A certain Yves Battistini wrote a book about Sappho published by Papadimas editions in 1996. In pages 41-42 he mentions a quatrain of Anacreon which is said to have been written for Sappho:

«*Ἡ δ' ἐστὶν γὰρ ἀπ' εὐτίκτου
Λέσβου, τὴν μὲν ἐμὴν κόμην,
λευκὴν γὰρ, καταμέμφεται,
πρὸς δ' ἄλλον τινὰ χάσκει.*»

This epigram seems to me more than explicit.

“She who comes from Lesbos, the island of the well-born, scorns my white hair and giggles for someone else”.

I want to draw your attention to the last verse which Mr. Battistini translates as follows:

“Someone else is the object of her desire: a girl”

You understand, of course, that this ‘translation’ is everything but an exact one. Mr. Battistini creates verses of his own. Who can check what he writes by referring to the original epigram? Only a few people actually can. The rest are sentenced to the darkness of ignorance.

I have just proved, beyond any doubt, as I believe, that the idea we have about Sappho is far from being accurate. But, strong financial interests do not want anymore this image to change, no matter how false and unreal it is for Sappho. Lesbian unions from all over the world, as I learn, constantly promote Eressos of Lesbos, as their birthplace and urge their sympathisers to visit it on their vacation.

The truth, however, has to be spoken, regardless of the interests at stake.

CHAPTER NINE
ALCEBIADES

ALCEBIADES

Alcebiades is one of the personalities that have been repeatedly presented as partisans of homosexuality.

He was son of Cleinias and nephew of Pericles and marked the Athenian history of the 5th century B.C. It became apparent that he would be a major trouble to the citizens of Athens from his early youth. Plutarch relates many incidents having him as a protagonist, the following being the most characteristic.

Timon the Misanthrope, an Athenian who hated deeply his fellow-citizens, was once in the market-place, but not gloomy and silent, as he used to be, whenever compelled to be among them for his business. That day, on the contrary, he was walking smiling and high spirited...

Everyone present was watching him trying to figure out the reason of his good mood. They saw him then approaching the young Alcebiades, kissing him and saying "I am glad to meet the man who will cause the greatest calamities to the Athenians!"

It was also said that Greece could not have borne two personalities of such kind.

So, this man, who was thought to be the most beautiful adolescent and, later, the most handsome man of his age, is presented as bisexual. He is said to have had affairs with men or women according to his whims. But was that really true?

When I first became involved with this question, some years ago, I was convinced that Alcebiades really had such inclinations. References in ancient texts are, after all, numerous and almost unequivocal. Plutarch, Diodorus, Lysias and Plato have written about it, to mention only some writers.

With the exception of Plato all writers present Alcebiades in rather dark colours. No one doubts his immense competence, but, as far as morals are concerned, he is considered as the worst

specimen of man. So, in his case homosexuality is not just an aspect of a normal person's life, but mostly a naturally immoral sexual choice of an impudent man. Let me put things in a different, clearer way: in the 4th century B.C., whatever feature was attributed to Alcebiades was by no means an example to imitate, but only to avoid. The facts should confirm that.

As a descendant of a noble Athenian family, Alcebiades took immediately part, once being of age, in the city's politics and met with success. By the end of the first period of the Peloponnesian War, with the signing of the Nician treaty, and when Cleon died in Amphipolis, Alcebiades became chief of the Democratic Party.

It is obvious, since the very beginning, that he is too competent but also too ambitious. This uniquely charming man could very easily make keen friends, if not followers, and sworn enemies.

While trying to distinguish himself, he will make his fellow-citizens forget Pericles' most precious political advice, to avoid undertaking distant campaigns, and will convince them to engage in the biggest campaign of this war, against Sicily. He will take the lead of it, along with Nicias and Lamachus, bearing the, never given before in the history of Athens, title of 'general-emperor' (meaning a general with exceptional authority).

But, once the campaign began, his political opponents seized the occasion to accuse him of what was a random event, the cutting of the Hermae (pillars surmounted by busts of the god Hermes used in ancient Athens as signposts). Using a cheap procedural and political artifice, they left him part without being judged in a proper trial and taking with him as comrades-in-arms all his supporters. Then, they called him back to appear in court.

Alcebiades was aware of the fact that they would undoubtedly kill him, if he went back, since all his political friends would be

away and that, according to the legal system of Athens, could mean even sentence to death. So, he escaped and made the one move that would tarnish his life through the centuries. He took refuge in the great rival city, Sparta, where he managed to reverse the course of the Peloponnesian war by using his infinite charm as well as his many abilities.

Until that point Athenians and their allies were actually prevailing. But from that moment on, and thanks to their ruin in Sicily, the fortification of Dekeleia and the building of an entire Spartan fleet due to Persian financing, all of which happened after Alcebiades' moves and counsel, Athens lost gradually her power until its definite defeat in 404 B.C. In the meanwhile, however, Alcebiades managed to return to his city, be re-elected as general and, finally, get sentenced once again. As the first Athenian alliance falls apart, along with the dream of the hegemony, he offers the perfect scape-goat to his fellow-citizens.

Alcebiades will be executed by the satrap Pharnavazos in the house where he lived with the courtesan Timandra who even gave him a child.

His appeal to women obtained him a great many conquests. Among others he even seduced the wife of the Spartan king Agis, Timaea, and had a son with her, Leotychides, who, later, became king for a short period.

He was certainly one of a kind...

But to return to our real interest, I believe that the accusations—they are presented as such—of Alcebiades homosexual relationships during his adolescence are not true. You will ask, of course, where I found my reasoning when so many ancient writers portray him as a shameless lewd.

First of all, Thucydides, the most reliable author of this period, never makes the slightest allusion of this kind on his behalf. Being Alcebiades' contemporary, it would be strange enough for Thucydides not to make a reference to this subject, while

many of the posterity took it almost for granted. Did this image of him emerge after his death, in the defeated Athens, where everyone was putting the blame of the ruin on him?

I think I have the most eloquent proof of that. Thucydides describes in his history (book 3, chapter 53) the many ruses his enemies used to ensure testimonies against him, in order to stop him from acquiring absolute power, after he has been elected 'general-emperor'. Still, they could not have achieved their goal without the 'accidental' event of the cutting of the Hermae. This enabled the opening of an enquiry for the alleged mocking of the Eleusis' Mysteries committed by Alcibiades and his friends.

But, the big question is the following: since Alcibiades was living so dissolute a life, since he was supposed to change constantly male partners, since he was accused of so many things, why wasn't he sued according to the law for unchastity, the very same Aeschines would invoke to manage Timarchus' conviction?

This law, as Aeschines says, was in force since the age of Solon, several years before the time in which Alcibiades lived. One could, of course, claim that Aeschines is lying and falsely attributing the law to Solon only to give further authority to his accusation. But the verses 876-880 of the comedy *Equites* (Knights) of Aristophanes clearly refer to this law, fully in force in 424 B.C., when this comedy was written.

So, since this law was valid when Alcibiades was living his debauched life, it should have been easier for his rivals to have him convicted. It was offering a much better accusation than the extravagant and obviously artificial one they finally used. The latter was, after all, found to be false a few years later and those who had made it up were sentenced to death and executed (see Plutarch, *Vitae...*, Alcibiades, XIX, XX, XXI)

In Symposium Plato tries to seize the opportunity to exonerate Socrates from any accusation of illicit sexual intercourse

with his loved ones. This accusation was also presented in the *Apologia*, where Socrates says he was charged with the corruption of the youths.

Plato, then, uses Alcebiades as the most handsome of Socrates pupils and feels he can easily portray him expressing lewd desires for Socrates without fearing to shock his readers who hate Alcebiades anyway.

Plato, *Symposium* XXXIII, XXXIV:

«Ὅρατε γὰρ ὅτι Σωκράτης ἐρωτικῶς διάκειται τῶν καλῶν, καὶ αἰεὶ περὶ τούτους ἐστὶ καὶ ἐκπέπληκται... Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οὖν, ᾧ ἄνδρες, ὃ τε λύχνος ἀπεσβήκει καὶ οἱ παῖδες ἔξω ἦσαν, ἔδοξέ μοι χοῖναι μηδὲν ποικίλλειν πρὸς αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ἐλευθέρως εἰπεῖν ἅ μοι ἐδόκει. Καὶ εἶπον κινήσας αὐτόν· Σώκρατες, καθεύδεις;

Οὐ δῆτα, ἦ δ' ὅς.

Οἴσθα οὖν ἅ μοι δέδοκται;

Τὶ μάλιστα; ἔφη.

Σὺ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἐμοῦ ἐραστής ἄξιος γεγονέναι μόνος, καὶ μοι φαίνει ὀκνεῖν μνησθῆναι πρὸς με. Ἐγὼ δὲ οὕτως ἔχω· πάννυ ἀνόητον ἠγοῦμαι εἶναι σοὶ μὴ οὐ καὶ τοῦτο χαρίζεσθαι καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο ἢ τῆς οὐσίας τῆς ἐμῆς δέοιο ἢ τῶν φίλων τῶν ἐμῶν. Ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστι πρᾶσβύτερον τοῦ ὡς ὃ τι βέλτιστον ἐμὲ γενέσθαι· τούτου δὲ οἴμαι μοι συλλήπτορα οὐδένα κυριώτερον εἶναι σοῦ· ἐγὼ δὴ τοιοῦτῳ ἀνδρὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἂν, μὴ χαριζόμενος αἰσχυνοίμην τοὺς φρονίμους, ἢ χαριζόμενος τοὺς τε πολλοὺς καὶ ἄφρονας.

Καὶ οὗτος ἀκούσας μάλα εἰρωνικῶς καὶ σφόδρα ἑαυτοῦ τε καὶ εἰωθότως ἔλεξεν· ᾧ φίλε Ἀλκιβιάδη, κινδυνεύεις τῷ ὄντι οὐ φαῦλος εἶναι, εἶπερ ἀληθῆ τυγχάνει ὄντα ἅ λέγεις περὶ ἐμοῦ, καὶ τις ἔστ' ἐν ἐμοὶ δύναμις δι' ἧς ἂν σὺ γένοιο ἀμείνων. Ἀμήχανόν τοι κάλλος ὀρώης ἂν ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ τῆς παρὰ σοὶ εὐμορφίας πάμπολυ διαφέρων· εἰ δὴ, καθορῶν αὐτὸ κοι-

νώσασθαί τέ μοι ἐπιχειρεῖς καὶ ἀλλάξασθαι κάλλος ἀντὶ κάλλους, οὐκ ὀλίγω μου πλεονεκτεῖν διανοεῖ, ἀλλ' ἀντὶ δόξης ἀλήθειαν καλῶν κτᾶσθαι ἐπιχειρεῖς, καὶ τῷ ὄντι [χρῦσα χαλκείων] διαμείβεσθαι νοεῖς... Πουήσαντος δὲ δὴ ταῦτα ἐμοῦ, οὗτος τοσοῦτον περιεγένετό τε καὶ κατεφρόνησεν καὶ κατεγέλασεν τῆς ἐμῆς ὥρας καὶ ὕβρισεν... εὖ γὰρ ἴστε, μὰ θεοῦς, μὰ θεάς, οὐδὲν περιττότερον καταδεδαρθηκῶς ἀνέστην μετὰ Σωκράτους, ἢ εἰ μετὰ πατρὸς καθηῦδον ἢ ἀδελφοῦ προεσβυτέρου».

“You see Socrates in love with beautiful boys whom he approaches to admire (...)., Then my friends, as the oil lamp had fainted and the slaves were out of the house, I thought it was the proper time to speak to him bluntly about my intentions. So I pushed him and asked him:

–Socrates, are you asleep?

–Of course not, he replied.

–Do you know what I was thinking about?

–Exactly what? he said.

–I believe that you have proved to be the most deserving lover of mine, but you seem to me hesitating to show this to me. I for myself have the following intentions: I find it silly not to make this favour to you as well as any other, even if it was my fortune or my friends that you should ask me. There is nothing more important to me than to become perfect; yet, I could not find myself a better help in this (than you). So, if I didn't give myself to such a man, I would feel more shame in front of the wise men than I would have felt in front of the silly crowd, had I given myself to him.

And he said to me in his characteristically ironic style after having heard what I had said:

–Alcebiades, my dear friend, you do seem smart enough, if what you say about me is true, and if there is really a force with-

in me that could make you a better person. Then, you could see in me a beauty that cannot be spoken in words, by far superior to your, exterior, beauty. So, if you want to communicate with me, because you discern this interior beauty, and to exchange your beauty for mine, you do have in mind to take not a small advantage of me, since you are trying to exchange illusory beauty for the real one, and in reality you are asking gold in exchange for copper...

And while I was doing all these, he remained untouched and looked down on and made a fun of and offended my beauty... I swear to all the gods and goddesses that I woke up by Socrates' side as if I had slept side by side with my father or my elder brother."

This extract is from the last part of Plato's work, where the author really achieves most of his goals.

It is obvious, once again, that the words *ἐραστής* (lover) and *ἐρώμενος* (loved boy) have nothing to do with sexual intercourse, but are related only to intellectual, interior communication. This is made clear since Socrates is openly presented as the lover of many boys; yet, when provoked by an immorally eager of his loved ones to reveal his intentions by sleeping with him, he turns down his proposals and tries to advise him, to direct him to explore his inner world.

Curiously enough, in this very work where Plato is widely thought to approve homosexuality, probably by those who did not even bother to read it, he does quite the opposite by refuting at the same time all the false accusations made against his teacher.

Remember that, although Socrates categorically and even scornfully rejects Alcebiades' advances, all through the text he is referred to as Alcebiades' lover. This is another proof that these terms do not describe sexual intercourses. No matter how

hard this seems to be for us to understand it, the texts leave us with no doubt.

To conclude, all references to Alcebiades being supposedly homosexual come from writers who lived after him and evidently aimed to mud-slinging him. If they were true, his prosecutors would have had an easy job to do. Since they had to forge false accusations, there simply was nothing blameworthy in his attitude.

CHAPTER TEN
ALEXANDER THE GREAT

PHILIP II

ALEXANDER III THE GREAT

By the time I first wrote this book, I had decided to have just a few pages dedicated to Alexander the Great; for the simple reason that there is not one serious writer who leaves the slightest allusion for Alexander having such inclinations. There ought, however, to be a relevant, though short, answer to the, widely spread in our own country, opinion, that Alexander was homosexual; just to mend the harm distortion had done to this as to many other subjects. To be plain and clear, I have to say that both pr. Dover and Mr. Siamakis (although one's level cannot match the other's) are categorical when referring to Alexander; the former insists on having not a single convincing proof on the subject, the latter is even more assertive: Alexander was by no means homosexual.

Under normal circumstances a book about homosexuality should not include a chapter on Alexander the Great. But an incident, which took place in our country a few years ago and made me really furious, gave me the spark.

A former coach of the Olympiakos football club, Mr. Diamantopoulos strongly disagreed with some of his players and said in a radio interview: "I come from Macedonia and I will have their heads just in the way Alexander the Great used to do it."

The following day one of these players, Mr. Skartados, said in another interview: "Mr Diamantopoulos should rather be careful, because Alexander was not only a great general; he was also a great pansy".

Then, the press in its whole reacted by saying: "Mr. Skartados should be ashamed of insulting his coach in this way!" But no one spared a word for Alexander the Great. Everyone accepted resignedly that he was a pansy!

Trying to protest we sent a letter to the sports newspaper "O Filathlos", which had since the beginning covered the whole story, only to receive an answer with the following general idea: "Do not make such a fuss about it, everybody knows that Alexander was not ashamed of it; after all, Plutarch confirms too." I need not say that those who wrote the letter didn't have the courtesy to quote the exact lines of Plutarch in order to enable us to share their knowledge.

Still, this incident is not unique. If you visit the relevant, mainly foreign, sites in the Web ([HYPERLINK "http://www.gayheroicus.com"](http://www.gayheroicus.com) www.gayheroicus.com for example) you will find Alexander listed in the top ten of the most famous homosexuals. It is understandable for those who have an interest to present things in a way that permits them to share a fraction of Alexander's glory.

But what about us? For how long are we going to remain inactive?

Things got even worse since this book's first edition. Two more major incidents of this kind arrived. They will unfortunately not be the last ones. A definite answer must then be given. That is why I have decided to give a thorough analysis of the questions relevant to Alexander and his father Philip.

It was a congress held in Thessalonica at the beginning of October 2002 and organised by the Society of Studies for the Aemous Peninsula in the Society of Macedonian studies Congress room that made me include Philip in this analysis. Among the various announcements concerning important issues there were three, made by three individuals who presented themselves as professors and claimed having proof that Philip's murder in 336 B.C had to do with his homosexual relationships!

The saddest thing about it is that, in contrast to other really important ones, this announcement was the only one to be fully

covered by the media which created the, false, impression of a congress exclusively dedicated to this question. Articles such as “Magic, homosexuality and murders in Philip’s court” occupied several days before the Athens newspapers’ pages (while, in the same time, a most important congress about the “Uninterrupted habitation of the Greek country since 9000 B.C” organised by the Aegean University and held in Rhodes didn’t attract their attention at all, despite the proof it supplied for the Greeks being indigenous in this geographical area).

The situation made several citizens of Thessalonica, rightfully to my opinion, furious and caused their energetic, but not at all violent, as it was falsely sustained, intervention. During the third day’s session, presided by pr. E. Mikroyannakis, journalist Kyriakos Velopoulos entered the room holding my book and asked one of the intervenients, Mr. Badian, (the two others being Mr. Augden and Mrs Mortensen) to read aloud some extracts from ancient writers relevant to this subject.

What followed can only be qualified as pandemonium. People outside the room strongly disapproved of the congress’ participants and organisers; the scenes reported by the TV. cameras were, no doubt, unpleasant. But this intervention also brought important details onto the light. Only one out of the three introducers, Mr Badian, turned out to be professor of the Harvard University, while the other two were mere scientific contributors. Then, Mr. Badian, the so called specialist of Greek history, who used to participate in congresses of the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia about ancient Macedonia, revealed in front of the cameras that he could not read the ancient writers from the original Greek text and was, hence, using only English translations. And, what was really crucial, he possessed

none of the new evidence (new texts supposedly found in papyrus) he had insinuated having.

Those who protested were severely criticised by numerous Greek professors and journalists of major newspapers (mainly responsible for the ridiculous coverage of the story the previous days). I strongly feel I must express my support to those who had the courage to defend by this protest their inheritance, as all people who respect themselves do all over the world. Historical personalities who are perceived as national symbols cannot be insulted in the name of any academic freedom. Just imagine the reactions raised by an intervenient who would go to Tel-Aviv, invited by Israeli authorities, to speak about Abraham's ... homosexuality. He simply wouldn't have survived.

There is no need for such speculations, after all. In September 2002, according to the international and Hellenic press, a Scottish professor was about to prove in an imminent congress, in London, that queen Victoria was homosexual. Once the congress' organisers were informed of his intentions, they simply cancelled his invitation. What was more serious, soon after that, and because of an insignificant pretext, he was fired by his University.

Was there not any academic freedom involved? Of course there was, but it was not more important than the respect due to national history and symbols, which cannot be tarnished just to ensure one's reputation. Especially, since this kind of accusation, promoted to the range of a scandal by the media, is very difficult to be scientifically refuted. There is always enough room in the media for a libel, but never for the answer to it.

So we are confronted to a new problem, coming practically out of nowhere: Philip's reputation is tarnished. Why then should we be the only ones to allow such provocation against our ancestors? No one of the professors who condemned the reactions to that announcement did explain this to us; nor did they

condemn any of the media which gave the whole issue such coverage. They are really worthy of their pay.

What I am saying is this: Mr. Badian of Harvard of the United States should first find answers to why Americans have committed so many crimes through the last centuries (Indian's genocide, supporting dictatorships all over the world) and then turn to Philip. Then, we can argue about academic freedom.

But it was the Greek organisers who ought to be more careful, since the congress, where Philip and Alexander were presented as homosexuals, wasn't taking place in Australia or in the United States, but in Thessalonica. Unfortunately, history and politics cannot be dissociated from each other, whether we want it or not. Let us, at least, do not make things easier for those who have interest in lowering historical personalities such as Philip and Alexander.

Back to our subject, I can only qualify the accusations made against Philip (to follow the chronological order) as nonsense. I allow such terms to myself, although they don't correspond to this book's style, because, during the 2339 years that have passed from his death to our era, no one ever dared to describe him like this.

Even the most weak in history student knows Philip's soft spot for women, which, according to ancient writers drove him to seven marriages, countless affairs and a considerable number of, legitimate and illegitimate, children. Even Ptolemy of Lagos is thought to be Alexander's brother, born from a different mother.

I repeat that such a hint was never made either by an ancient or by a modern writer who studied questions about Philip. On the contrary, we do know that, out of concern for Alexander's continence (which would be further explained), his father deci-

ded one night along with his mother Olympias, to send a beautiful concubine (Callixeina) to Alexander's room to inflame him sexually, so that they would not worry anymore.

Athenaeus from Naucratis, *Deipnosophistae*, X, 45:

«Ιερώννυμός τε ἐν ταῖς Ἐπιστολαῖς (Fr. 10 Hill) Θεόφραστον φησι λέγειν ὅτι Ἀλέξανδρος οὐκ εὖ διέκειτο πρὸς τὰ ἀφροδίσια. Ὀλυμπιάδος γοῦν καὶ παρανακλινάσης αὐτῷ Καλλιξειῖναν τὴν Θετταλὴν ἑταίραν περικαλλεστάτην οὖσαν, συνειδότης τοῦτο καὶ τοῦ Φιλίππου (εὐλαβοῦντο γὰρ μὴ γύννις εἶη), πολλάκις ἤτει αὐτῇ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον συγγενέσθαι»

“Jeronymus in his letters reports Theophrastus’ saying that Alexander wasn’t inclined to sexual pleasure. Olympias sent, then, Callixeina, the very beautiful courtesan from Thessaly, to his bed. Philip was also informed of this, as they both feared Alexander becoming effeminate, and they both asked him several times to sleep with her.”

This extract is most revealing, as to this book’s subject. For it shows Philip having homosexuality for something bad, since he thought (like any father of any age) of his son having such inclination as an insult to his honour. He couldn’t have been something he feared and despised.

It is also revealing of the dominating views of the whole era, which some people are trying to present as a paradise for homosexuals. If that was the case why Philip and Olympias were so worried? Obviously, because it was a total disgrace to have a son who was homosexual, that is, according to the word used in the text, (*γύννις*), effeminate, womanish, weak; especially when you live in a society of worriers, like the Macedonians, you are their king and this ‘womanish’ son is your heir!

But what is most revealing in this extract is the image it draws of Alexander himself. The idea of a shameless lewd is not compatible with the continence he showed. The very same he showed in every aspect of life, as Plutarch reported to us, the one it made him, once he saw Roxanne, ask her immediately to marriage, for he didn't want to take her before and have her thus dishonoured.

What was then the source evoked by the 'professors' to sustain their conception of Phillip's sexual preferences? It was a text of Diodorus Siculus, already known to the scholars, which gives a certain piece of information about Philip's assassination.

Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, VI, 93–94:

Πανσανίας ἦν τὸ μὲν γένος Μακεδὼν ἐκ τῆς Ὀρεστίδος καλουμένης, τοῦ δὲ βασιλέως σωματοφύλαξ καὶ διὰ τὸ κάλλος φίλος γεγονὼς τοῦ Φιλίππου. οὗτος ὁρῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀγαπώμενον ἕτερον Πανσανίαν ὁμώνυμον ἑαυτῷ ὀνειδιστικοῖς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀχρήσατο λόγοις, φήσας ἀνδρόγυνον εἶναι καὶ τοὺς τῶν βουλομένων ἔρωτας ἐτοιμῶς προσδέχεσθαι. ὁ δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῆς λοιδορίας ὕβριν οὐκ ἐνέγκας τὸ μὲν παρὸν κατεσιώπησεν, Ἀττάλῳ δέ τινι τῶν φίλων ἐπικοινωσάμενος περὶ τῶν μελλόντων πράττεσθαι ἐκουσίως καὶ παραδόξως ἑαυτὸν ἐκ τοῦ ζῆν μετέστησεν. μετ' ὀλίγας γὰρ ἡμέρας τοῦ Φιλίππου πρὸς Πλευρίαν τὸν τῶν Ἰλλυριοῶν βασιλέα διαγωνιζόμενον πρὸ τοῦ βασιλέως τὰς ἀπάσας τὰς φερομένας ἐπ' αὐτὸν πληγὰς ἀνεδέξατο τῷ ἰδίῳ σώματι καὶ μετήλλαξεν. διαβοηθείσης δὲ τῆς πράξεως ὁ μὲν Ἄτταλος, εἷς ὢν τῶν ἐξ ἀγλῆς καὶ πολὺν δυναμένων παρὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ, ἐκάλεσεν ἐπὶ δεῖπνον τὸν Πανσανίαν καὶ πολὺν ἐμφορήσας ἄκρατον παρέδωκεν αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα τοῖς ὀρεωκόμοις εἰς ὕβριν καὶ παροινίαν ἐταιρικῆν. ὁ δὲ ἀνανήψας ἐκ

τῆς μέθης καὶ τῇ τοῦ σώματος ὕβρει περιαλγῆς γενόμενος τοῦ Ἀττάλου κατηγοροῦσεν ἐπὶ τοῦ βασιλέως. ὁ δὲ Φίλιππος παρωξύνθη μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ παρανομίᾳ τῆς πράξεως, διὰ δὲ τὴν πρὸς Ἀττάλου οἰκειότητα καὶ τὴν εἰς τὸ παρὸν αὐτοῦ χρείαν οὐκ ἐβούλετο μισοπονηρεῖν. ἦν γὰρ ὁ Ἀττάλος τῆς μὲν ἐπιγαμηθείσης γυναικὸς ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως Κλεοπάτρας ἀδελφιδοῦς, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς προαπεσταλμένης δυνάμεως εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν στρατηγὸς προκεχειρισμένος, ἐν δὲ τοῖς πολεμικοῖς ἀγῶσιν ἀνδρεῖος. διόπερ ὁ βασιλεὺς προαῦναι βουλόμενος τοῦ Πανσανίου τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ πάθει γεγενημένην δικαίαν ὀργὴν δωρεὰς ἀξιολόγους ἀπένευεν αὐτῷ καὶ κατὰ τὴν σωματοφυλακίαν προῆγεν αὐτὸν ἐντίμως. ὁ δὲ Πανσανίας ἀμετάθετον φυλάττων τὴν ὀργὴν ἔσπευδε μὴ μόνον παρὰ τοῦ πράξαντος λαβεῖν τιμωρίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τοῦ μὴ τιμωροῦντος αὐτῷ συνεπελάβετο...»

“There was a certain Pausanias, Macedonian, from the city called Orestis. He was one of the king’s guards and a favourite one because of his beauty. But when he saw the king having sympathy for another Pausanias, with the same name as he, he insulted him [the first Pausanias insulted the second Pausanias, not Philip] by saying that he was a hermaphrodite who eagerly accepts everyone’s love. The latter, though he could not suffer this insult, remained silent for a while; then, he confided in one of his friends, Attalus, what he had in mind, and committed suicide in a spectacular way. A few days after that, when Philip was fighting Pleurias, the king of Illyria, this [second] Pausanias stood in front of him and received on his own body every blow destined to the king and, thus, died.

When this incident became widely known Attalus, being one of the most influential persons in Philip’s court, invited the first Pausanias to dinner and after having served to him a considerable quantity of wine, he consigned him unconscious to the mule

drivers (*ὄρρωκόμοις* in the ancient text) to drink and treat him lewdly (*εἰς ὕβριν καὶ παροινίαν ἔταιρικῆν*). When Pausanias [the first one] regained consciousness and realised his having been humiliated, he was deeply grieved and accused Attalus in front of the king. Philip got really angry with the roughness of this deed, but didn't want to punish Attalus by that time, because he was a member of his family and a useful one by that time. Attalus was a nephew of Philip's second wife, Cleopatra, and, because of his courage in battle, he had been elected general of the first armed force to be sent in Asia. For these reasons, the king, trying to soothe Pausanias' rightful indignation, gave him great presents and invested him with extra honours in his guard.

Pausanias' indignation, though, remained unappeased and he was yearning to avenge not only upon the abuser, but also upon the one who didn't want to punish him.”

Pausanias, according to Diodorus, murdered Philip for that reason. This text does not mention Philip to be homosexual. He had spotted one of his many guards for his beauty (Aristotle was saying that “beauty is the best letter of recommendation” according to Diogenes Laertius). Then, he spotted another guard, and the first one, wanting to insult the second, without any proof, accused him of having lustful desires for Philip. He obviously wanted to eliminate this rival in order not to lose the positions he was dreaming about.

Do not overlook the fact that this accusation was so degrading that the accused killed himself in such a way as to show to everyone how brave he was. He saved his king's life in battle, taking all the blows destined for him to prove that he was not only a man, but a hero, and, by no means, womanish, to remember Athenaeus' text.

This extract also confirms what we have already said about the meaning of the verb *ἔταιρω* and the relevant Athenian law.

This kind of hubris, as designed in the ancient text, has nothing to do with money, it is no prostitution, but just an unnatural intercourse between men. It is obvious that Pausanias didn't go with the mule drivers for money; he didn't even go at his own will. He was deeply insulted by the lewdness of this act, which was so humiliating that royal presents and honours, destined to appease him and convince him to go on with his life, meant nothing to him. To repair the severe damage done to his honour, he ends up murdering the king since he holds him responsible of the impunity of those who wronged him.

Had he truly had a sexual relationship with Philip, he would not have felt so insulted. And, had the king had an affair with either of them, he would have punished those who harmed his partner. But he only had sympathy for both of them. Maybe, when he found out by Attalus the accusations the first Pausanias made against the second, he was offended himself and thought that the punishment, thought cruel, was what the accuser really deserved. Attalus was, after all, his actual favourite, neither for his beauty nor for any other reason, but because he was the closer relative of his beloved Cleopatra.

He even had a quarrel with Alexander about Attalus, in a well-known episode, shortly after his marriage to Cleopatra. He was so much in love with her at the time that he didn't want to displease her by punishing Attalus, which shows us quite the opposite of what the so called professors claimed. Philip was not the victim of homosexual affairs; on the contrary, he was so much in love with Cleopatra that, by not punishing Attalus as he should, he exposed himself to the rage of his future killer.

The whole story clearly shows the loathing in which homosexuality was held at the time, since the merest allusion of it led one of the protagonists to suicide and the second one, ashamed of his humiliation, to the murder of his king. Doesn't this prove

the treasure to be a hoax and justify the protest of the citizens of Thessalonica? For, this simple and sensible reasoning unfortunately did not find its place in the newspapers or the TV. What remained unquestionable, then, was the ‘new’ and ‘documented’ theory about Philip being homosexual.

Let us now turn to the dominating figure of these days, Alexander, the main subject of this chapter. I remind you, once again, that despite the repeatedly promoted idea, no scholar writing about homosexuality in ancient Greece has ever sustained that he had such inclination. Then, what is all this fuss about?

Unfortunately, Hollywood decided to make films about Alexander. This wouldn’t necessarily be bad, if we hadn’t already seen the laughable presentations it did of our history. I will only remind you of the indescribable TV series about Heracles.

Still, things are getting more serious when Alexander is involved. Many movies are said to be in the making, yet, the first to come out is going to fashion the general tendency. And this first film presents Alexander as a Macedonian king, a barbarian butcher who conquered Greece only to be conquered by his ‘boyfriend Hephaestion’s thighs’, as states the film’s script presented in a major Australian magazine!

I will not respond to the first two parts of this claim. Several renowned scholars have done it in a much extended way, it should take me another volume only to resume their conclusions. To refute the third one though, I shall present all the evidence we have to prevent the sacred image of Alexander from being so vulgarly insulted.

I will not have anyone accusing me of racism against homosexuals, as it often happens with almost everyone daring to

speak of such issues. I feel myself obliged, as an admirer and one of his posterity, to defend him, mostly because he was himself considering this accusation base and utterly insulting for him and had answered it in the most absolute way. I cannot leave unanswered those whom Alexander would have severely punished, if he was alive.

To avoid the habitual sensational features I will only quote those extracts in which Alexander himself answers if he was lewd or not, womanish or homosexual:

Plutarch, *Moralia*, About Alexander's good fortune or argument about virtue A, 12:

«*Ἀλέξανδρος δέ, Φιλοξένου τοῦ τῆς παραλίας ὑπάρχου γράψαντος, ὅτι παῖς ἐν Ἰωνίᾳ γέγονεν οἷος οὐκ ἄλλος ὄραν καὶ εἶδος, καὶ πυνθανομένου διὰ τῶν γραμμάτων εἰ ἀναπέμψη, πικρῶς ἀντέγραψεν, ᾧ κάκιστ' ἀνθρώπων, τί μοι πώποτε τοιοῦτο συνέγνων, ἵνα τοιαύταις μὲ κολακεύσης ἡδοναῖς;*»

“When Philoxenus, ruler of the coast wrote to Alexander that there was a boy for whose beauty there was no match and asked him if he wanted to have it sent to him, Alexander wrote back to him and asked him in a severe tone: ‘you, the foulest of all men, tell me when you have ever seen me involved in such dirty business, to try to flatter me with the promise of such pleasures?’”.

Plutarch, *Vitae parallelae*, Alexander, 22:

«*Ἐπεὶ δὲ Φιλόξενος ὁ τῶν ἐπὶ θαλάττης στρατηγὸς ἔγραψεν εἶναι παρ' αὐτῷ Θεόδωρόν τινα Ταραντῖνον ἔχοντα παίδας ὠνίους δύο τὴν ὄψιν ὑπερφνεῖς, καὶ πυνθανόμενος, εἰ πρήγεται, χαλεπῶς ἐνεγκὼν ἐβόα πολλάκις πρὸς τοὺς φίλους*

ἔρωτων, τί πώποτε Φιλόξενος αἰσχρὸν αὐτῷ συνεγνωκῶς τοιαῦτ' ὀνειδή προξενῶν κάθηται. Τὸν δὲ Φιλόξενον αὐτὸν ἐν ἐπιστολῇ πολλὰ λουδορήσας ἐκέλευσεν αὐτοῖς φορτίους τὸν Θεόδωρον εἰς τὸν ὄλεθρον ἀποστέλλειν. Ἐπέπληξε δὲ καὶ Ἄγνωνι [νεανικῶς] γράψαντι πρὸς αὐτόν, ὅτι Κρωβύλον [νεανίσκον] εὐδοκμοῦντ' ἐν Κορίνθῳ βούλεται προιάμενος ἀγαγεῖν πρὸς αὐτόν».

“Philoxenus, the coast ruler, once wrote to him of a certain Theodorus from the city of Taras who had two beautiful boys for sale and asked him whether he wanted to buy them. Then, Alexander crying out furiously asked his friends whether he, Philoxenus, had ever heard of him having done anything base and dared to propose such shameful acts to him. And he wrote to him a letter, where he was cursing him and ordering him to send Theodorus and his merchandise to hell.

He responded in the same terms to young Agnon who offered to buy a boy much talked about in Corinth, Crovylus, and sent him to Alexander.”

There are, of course, those who say that Philoxenus wouldn't have taken such an initiative, if he hadn't known something about Alexander's inclinations. But he just thought he could go on sending all kinds of presents he used to send to the court of the Great (Persian) king, in order to ensure the favour of the new king.

This text speaks for itself and should be enough to prove that Alexander strongly disapproved of this habit. But, it is often necessary to assert the obvious. So, in the perspective of the coming films, some people proclaim that, according to ancient writers, Alexander was in fact homosexual. What a lie, when every ancient writer clearly states the opposite: unlikely his fa-

ther, who was always giving in to his passions, Alexander was remarkably temperate in everything.

To understand the essence of this unique personality, let us go back to Plutarch.

Plutarch, *Vitae parallelae*, Alexander, 21:

«...τὰς δ' ἄλλας αἰχμαλώτους ὁρῶν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος κάλλει καὶ μεγέθει διαφερούσας, ἔλεγε παίζων ὡς εἰσὶν ἀλγηδόνες ὀμμάτων αἱ Περσίδες. ἀντεπιδεικνύμενος δὲ πρὸς τὴν ἰδέαν τὴν ἐκείνων τὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐγκρατείας καὶ σωφροσύνης κάλλος, ὥσπερ ἀψύχους εἰκόνας ἀγαλμάτων παρέπεμπε».

“When Alexander was looking at the female captives who stood alone for their beauty and general appearance, he used to say, humoring, that they were a torture to his eyes. But he responded to their beauty with the splendour of his continence and he was sending them away, as if they were lifeless statues.”

Plutarch, *Moralia*, About Alexander’s good fortune or argument about virtue, 9:

«Οὐκοῦν πρώτη μὲν ἢ τῆς στρατείας ὑπόθεσις φιλόσοφον τὸν ἄνδρα συνίστησιν, οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τρυφήν καὶ πολυτέλειαν ἀλλὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὁμόνοιαν καὶ εἰρήνην καὶ κοινονίαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους παρασκευάσαι διανοηθέντα».

“First of all, the aim of this campaign proves the man to be a philosopher, for he did not have in his mind to acquire wealth and enjoy opulence and pleasure, but to unite all people in peace and communication.”

Plutarch, *Moralia*, About Alexander’s good fortune or argument about virtue, 11: «...ἰδεῖν γοῦν ἔστιν ἐν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τὸ

μὲν πολεμικὸν φιλόανθρωπον, τὸ δὲ προᾶον ἀνδρῶδες. τὸ δὲ χαριστικὸν οἰκονομικόν, τὸ δὲ θυμικὸν εὐδιάλλακτον, τὸ δ' ἐρωτικὸν σῶφρον, τὸ δ' ἀνεμμένον οὐκ ἀργόν, τὸ δ' ἐπίπονον οὐκ ἀπαραμύθητον».

“One can see in Alexander military virtue united with philanthropy, mildness with virility, offering with temperance, placated rage, chaste love, comfortable but not lazy life, endurance but not without recomfort...”

Plutarch, *Moralia*, About Alexander's good fortune or argument about virtue, 11:

«...κάμοι δὴ ταῖς Ἀλεξάνδρου πράξεσιν ἔπεισιν ἐπιφωρεῖν αἰεὶ «φιλοσόφως» ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ πάντ' ἔνεστι. Ῥωξάνης ἐρασθεὶς τῆς Ὀξυάθρου θυγατρὸς ἐν ταῖς αἰχμαλώτισι χορευούσης οὐχ ὕβρισεν ἀλλ' ἔγημε φιλοσόφως».

“I can but recognize that, in all situations, Alexander acted like a ‘philosopher’, because this term includes everything. When he fell in love with Roxane, the daughter of Oxyathrus, while she was dancing among the other captives, he didn't dishonour her, but married her, just like a philosopher.”

Plutarch, *Moralia*, About Alexander's good fortune or argument about virtue, B, 2:

«...γεγόνασι δὲ κατ' αὐτὸν τραγωδοὶ μὲν οἱ περὶ Θετταλὸν καὶ ὁ Ἀθηνόδωρος, ὧν ἀνταγωνιζομένων ἀλλήλοις, ἐχορήγουν μὲν οἱ Κύπριοι βασιλεῖς ἔκρινον δ' οἱ δοκιμώτατοι τῶν στρατηγῶν. ἐπεὶ δ' ἐνίκησεν Ἀθηνόδωρος, «ἐβουλόμην ἄν» ἔφη «μᾶλλον ἀπολωλέναι μέρος τῆς βασιλείας ἢ Θετταλὸν ἐπιδεῖν ἠττημένον». ἀλλ' οὐτ' ἐνέτυχε τοῖς κριταῖς οὐτε τὴν κρισίον ἐμέμψατο, πάντων οἰόμενος δεῖν περιεῖναι, τοῦ δικαίου δ' ἠττᾶσθαι».

“There were two great tragic poets by the time Alexander was king, Thessalus and Athenodorus, who, when competing with each other, had the kings of Cyprus as patrons and were judged by the greatest generals. And when once Athenodorus won the competition, Alexander said: ‘I had rather lost a part of my kingdom than to have seen Thessalus beaten’. But he made no request to the judges nor did he accuse them of their judgement because he used to say that everyone should obey him and he should obey justice.”

Plutarch, *Moralia*, About Alexander’s good fortune or argument about virtue B, 6:

«...ἔγρημε δὲ Ῥωξάνην ἑαυτῷ μόνης ἔρασθείς· τὴν δὲ Δαρειῶν Στάτειραν τῇ βασιλείᾳ καὶ τοῖς πράγμασι (συνέφερε γὰρ ἢ τῶν γενῶν ἀνάμιξις)· τῶν δ’ ἄλλων Περσίδων ἐκράτησε τοσοῦτο σωφροσύνη, ὅσον ἀνδρεία Περσῶν· ἄκουσαν μὲν γὰρ οὐκ εἶδεν, ἃς δ’ εἶδε μᾶλλον ἢ ἃς οὐκ εἶδε παρηλθε. καὶ πᾶσιν ὦν τοῖς ἄλλοις φιλάνθρωπος, μόνοις ὑπερηφάνως τοῖς καλοῖς ἐχορῆτο. περὶ δὲ τῆς Δαρειῶν γυναικός, εὐπρεπεστάτης γενομένης, οὐδὲ φωνὴν ἐπαινοῦσαν τὸ κάλλος ἤκουσεν· ἀποθανοῦσαν δ’ οὕτω βασιλικῶς ἐκόσμησε καὶ συμπαθῶς ἐδάκρυσεν, ὥστ’ ἄπιστον αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶφρον ἐν τῷ φιλάνθρωπῳ γενέσθαι καὶ λαβεῖν ἀδικίας ἔγκλημα τὴν χρησιμότητα. Δαρειῶς γὰρ οὕτως ἐκινήθη πρὸς τὴν ἐξουσίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν· εἷς γὰρ ἦν καὶ αὐτὸς ἔτι τῶν νομιζόντων διὰ Τύχην κρατεῖν Ἀλέξανδρον· ἐπεὶ δὲ τάληθές ἔγνω βασανίσας πανταχόθεν, “οὐ πάντως” εἶπεν “ἄρα φανύως ἔχει τὰ Περσῶν, οὐδέ τις ἐρεῖ παντάπασι κακοὺς ἡμᾶς οὐδ’ ἀνάνδρους ὑπὸ τοιοῦτου κρατηθέντας. ἐγὼ δ’ εὐτυχίαν μὲν εὐχομαι καὶ κράτος πολέμου παρὰ θεῶν, ἵν’ εὖ ποιῶν Ἀλέξανδρον ὑπερβάλωμαι καὶ μέ τις ἔχει φιλοτιμία καὶ ζῆλος ἡμερώτερον αὐτοῦ φανῆναι· εἰ δ’ οἴχεται τὰ ἐμά, Ζεῦ πατρῷε Περσῶν καὶ βασιλῆιοι θεοί, μηδεὶς εἰς τὸν

Κύρου θρόνον ἄλλος ἢ Ἀλέξανδρος καθίσειε”. τοῦτ' εἰσποίησις ἦν Ἀλεξάνδρου διὰ θεῶν μαρτύρων».

“His real marriage was with Roxane, as he fell in love with her. He married Stateira, the daughter of Darius, out of state’s interest (for it was important to encourage such marriages between the two people). And he showed himself so chaste in front of the other Persian women, as he was brave in front of Persian men. Because he saw no woman against her will, and he passed over those he saw in more wisdom than those he didn’t see. And although he was good to everyone, he treated the beautiful only with arrogance. He didn’t bother to hear a single word about the beauty of Darius’ wife. But, when she died, he honoured her as a queen and cried with such compassion, that his sadness compromised his humanity and generated rumours against his chastity. Darius also shared this opinion for Alexander’s age and power, thinking, along with others that Alexander was ruling only because of his good luck. But, after having made a thorough enquiry and having found the truth, he said: ‘Ours is not such a bad luck after all, no one should say that we are totally coward to have been beaten by such a man. I pray the gods to grant us good luck and the victory to this war, so that I can surpass Alexander’s deeds and, out of enthusiasm and self-esteem, I want to prove myself more civilised than him. But, if this could not be in this way, Zeus, god of my fathers and of all Persians, and you, the other gods of my kingdom, please, let no one but Alexander sit in the throne of Cyrus.’ That is how Darius recognized Alexander’s superiority in front of gods.”

I could go on with similar extracts about Alexander’s personality, but it would be pointless. He was unique in everything, which explains how he managed to do everything he did. It is a pity, though, to see this man, so temperate in every aspect of his

life, calumniated by some men ignorant of history 2326 years after his death and his descendants watching this calumny without reacting.

Where do these people who speak about Alexander's homosexuality find their arguments? In an extract cited by both Athenaeus and Plutarch, which I will immediately present before commenting it.

Athenaeus from Naucratis, *Deipnosophistae*, XIII, 80, 1:

«φιλόπαις δ' ἦν ἐκμανῶς καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ βασιλεύς. Δικαίαιρος γοῦν ἐν τῷ περὶ τῆς ἐν Ἰλίῳ Θυσίας (FHG II 241) Βαγῶου τοῦ εὐνούχου οὕτως αὐτόν φησὶν ἠττάσθαι ὡς ἐν ὄψει θεάτρον ὅλου καταφιλεῖν αὐτόν ἀνακλάσαντα, καὶ τῶν θεατῶν ἐπιφωνησάντων μετὰ κρότου οὐκ ἀπειθήσας πάλιν ἀνακλάσας ἐφίλησεν».

“King Alexander loved excessively young children. Dikaearchus, in his work about the sacrifice in Iliion, says that he submitted himself to Vagoas the eunuch; in fact, in the theatre, when all the spectators were urging Alexander with vivid exclamations to kiss him, he didn't disobey the crowd, turned to him and kissed him.”

Plutarch, *Vitae parallelae*, Alexander, 67:

«Λέγεται δ' αὐτόν μεθύοντα θεωρεῖν ἀγῶνας χορῶν, τὸν δὲ ἐρώμενον Βαγῶαν χορεύοντα νικῆσαι καὶ κεκοσμημένον διὰ τοῦ θεάτρον παρελθόντα καθίσει παρ' αὐτόν. Ἰδόντας δὲ τοὺς Μακεδόνας κροτεῖν καὶ βοᾶν φιλεῖν κελεύοντας, ἄχρι οὗ περιλαβὼν κατεφίλησεν».

“They say that Alexander, once drunken, was watching a dancing competition, in which won his loved one, Vagoas. The

dancer went across the theatre and sat by Alexander's side. When Macedonians witnessed what has happened, they didn't stop applauding, acclaiming and asking the king to kiss the dancer, until he finally embraced him and did so."

This 'revealing' extract, which is supposed to confirm Alexander's homosexuality, shows nothing but a king answering, in an immense gathering, to the crowd which urges him to reward Vagoas for his victory by giving him a kiss. This does not mean that they retreated in a private place afterwards. It was common those days for a sovereign to manifest his favour to someone by kissing him in public, as a reward, not as a proof of love.

What confirms this theory, apart from the fact that, in the echo of the two Pausanias story (we are in 327, only a few years after 336 B.C, when it happened), if Alexander wanted to give a love kiss to an eunuch, he should have done it in private, is the following incident between Alexander and Callisthenes about the beginning of their mutual animosity.

Alexander had allowed the barbarians to kneel in front of him, since they were used to do so. He never imposed it to the Greeks, although some claim falsely that he did. But there were a few flatterers, as there always is, who did kneel. Once then, by the end of a banquet, everybody, Greeks along with barbarians, were passing in front of the king and kneeling; and, in order to show his sympathy, he was pouring them some wine and kissing them on the cheek.

Callisthenes didn't knee. He had every right to do so, he was Greek, a pupil of Aristotle and this barbarian attitude didn't suit him. But Alexander was told about it by one of his guards who wanted to show his 'loyalty' to the king and insinuate that Callisthenes wasn't worthy of the king's favour. He was momentarily lured by the flattery and decided not to kiss Callisthenes.

The latter left unharmed, which proves that kneeling was not imposed by Alexander, and didn't bother at all for this lack of favour. No other interpretation of the kiss to Vagoas seems convincing to me, especially after the light the last episode brought to this anecdote.

Arrianus, *Anabasis*, book D, 12, 6:

«...καὶ τὰ τῆς προσκυνήσεως ἐπιτελῆ τῷ Καλλισθένῃ ἐγένετο. ἀλλὰ Δημήτριον γὰρ τὸν Πυθώνακτος, ἓνα τῶν ἐταίρων, ὡς προσῆει αὐτῷ ὁ Καλλισθένης φιλήσων, φάναι ὅτι οὐ προσκυνήσας πρόσσεισιν. καὶ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον οὐ παρασχεῖν φιλῆσαι ἑαυτόν, τὸν δὲ Καλλισθένην, φιλήματι φάναι, ἔλαττον ἔχων ἄπειμι».

“Here is what happened with Callisthenes’ kneeling. One of his guards, Demetrius, son of Pythanax, told Alexander not to kiss him, because Callisthenes hadn’t knelt before him. Alexander did so and Callisthenes said: ‘I am just leaving once without a kiss’.”

What is really strange in the description of the Vagoas incident, though, is the, slight at first sight, but really significant to those who study the texts, difference in his characterisation by the two authors. Athenaeus designs him as a eunuch, while Plutarch as a loved one.

According to what I already said in the previous chapters these two attributes are incompatible in the same person. Since the relationship with a loved one was of an educational nature, why should Alexander choose a eunuch as a loved one? But even if he wanted to do so, why should he choose a eunuch of Darius and present him in public, at the theatre, without being ashamed? This is inconsequent of someone who married Rox-

ane as soon as he saw and desired her ,to avoid what he thought as dishonour both for himself and the young woman. Why, then, did he blame Philoxenus of his proposals , why did he ask, offended , his friends whether they had ever seen him do something base? Something is obviously missing here.

Eunuchs, coming from [a Greek word] meaning ' bed', were used to serve concrete purposes in the Asian palaces, mainly to guard the royal wives, which explains why they weren't usually seen in public, nor were they familiar to the people, since access to the royal house was restricted to a minority. It is understandable that they didn't participate to festivities or any other public manifestations. That is why the idea of a eunuch taking part, as Alexander's loved one, in a dance competition is totally out of bounds.

So we had better turn to Plutarch whose description of the episode is more detailed and complete; he explains where was Alexander, why the crowd was asking him to kiss Vogeas etc. Athenaeus, on the other hand, says that Alexander loved excessively young children, after he had read in the book of Dikaearchus the description of the same incident, without gi-

ving more details, probably because he didn't have any other source.

This proves why, in history everyone has the reputation he deserves. Despite his charming work, full of information about recipes, anecdotes about renowned personalities and everyday habits, Athenaeus from Naucratis cannot and must not be regarded as a historian. Plutarch, on the contrary, is widely accepted as one of the three reliable sources, along with Arrianus and Diodorus. And he refers to Vagoas as the loved one and not the eunuch. Those who quote this incident, in the two versions, didn't remark, and that includes Athenaeus as well, that it makes no sense, unless there were two individuals named Vagoas.

One of them was actually a eunuch. The second was obviously a member of the court of Alexander, which had both Greeks and barbarians, and he was free and sound in limb. But, mere speculation in such cases is useless, so I searched the sources to find that there really was a eunuch named Vagoas. Plutarch speaks of him in two different extracts.

Plutarch, *Vitae parallelae*, Alexander, 39:

«Παρμενίῳ μὲν οὖν τὸν Βαγῶου ἔδωκεν οἶκον, τὸν περὶ τὰ Σοῦσα ἐν ᾧ λέγεται ἱματισμὸν χιλίων ταλάντων εὑρεθῆναι».

“He gave to Parmenion the house of Vagoas, near the city of Sousa, where garments of a thousand *τάλαντα* value are said to have been found.”

Plutarch, *Moralia*, About Alexander's good fortune or argument about virtue, 5:

«Ὀάρση καὶ Δαρείῳ Βαγῶας ὁ ἐννοῦχος ἀράμενος ἐπέθηκε τὴν Περσῶν βασιλείαν».

“Vagoas the eunuch put on the heads of Oarses and Darius the royal crown.”

Arrianus also mentions him (*Anabasis*, book B, 5) as a member of a conspiracy which ended in murder and usurpation of the throne. Yet, it is Diodorus (in the sixth and seventh books of his history) who narrates in many details how this eunuch arrived to the Persian court and how he was finally poisoned by Darius, after having helped him with his machinations to take the throne.

Vagoas was indeed very famous for having taken part in every machination in the Persian court. He was an ex Egyptian chiliarch, who also betrayed his country and helped the Persians to re-conquer Egypt. He was then taken back to Persia, was made eunuch and served kings Artaxerxes and Ochus. He poisoned the latter to help Darius to the throne hoping to control him and rule through him. But he didn't make it this time as we have already said.

This was the eunuch. He died long before the beginning of Alexander's campaign.

Yet, in the numerous entourage of the king, there was also another Vagoas, young enough to be Alexander's loved one, which explains why Athenaeus says the king loved young children, but, who, for the same reason, cannot be a eunuch. Athenaeus was no biographer, did not exactly know what persons or dates he is referring to and, thus, gets confused and leads others to confusion. After all, in the fourteen volumes of his work, he does not refer to Alexander more than ten times.

Plutarch, on the other hand, knows exactly what he is talking about, for he wrote Alexander's biography, and insists on mentioning the lover, not the eunuch, whose house Parmenion received as a gift.

Besides, there is another extract from Athenaeus work, not far enough from the previous one, where Alexander is presented as a continent man.

Athenaeus from Naucratis, *Deipnosophistae*, XIII, 80,:

«Καρύστιος δ' ἐν Ἱστορικοῖς Ὑπομνήμασι (FHG IV 357) Χάρωνι, φησί, τῷ Χαλκιδεῖ παιῖς καλὸς ἦν καὶ εἶχεν εὖ πρὸς αὐτόν. ὡς δ' Ἀλέξανδρος παρὰ Κρατερῶ αὐτόν ἐπήνεσεν γενομένου πότου, ὁ Χάρων ἐκέλευσε τὸν παιῖδα καταφιῆσαι τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον. καὶ ὁς μηδαμῶς, εἶπεν, “οὐ γὰρ οὕτως ἐμὲ εὐφρανεῖ ὡς σὲ λυπήσει” ὥσπερ γὰρ ἦν ἐρωτικὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς οὗτος, οὕτως καὶ πρὸς τὸ καθῆκον ἐγκρατής».

“Karystios, in his work ‘Historical memoranda’ says that Charon from Chalkis had a beautiful young man as his loved one. Once, in the middle of a wine–drinking, when Alexander praised him to Craterus, Charon asked his loved one to kiss Alexander. But Alexander didn’t allow this kiss and explained to Charon that, if this were to happen, Alexander wouldn’t be as pleased as Charon displeased. For, this king was easily inspiring love, yet absolutely continent at the same time.”

So, what does Athenaeus really think of Alexander? For, in the Vagoas incident, he portrays him as someone loving excessively children, while in the Charon incident, as someone continent. Well, in the first case, Athenaeus must be in some kind of confusion, since, in that particular chapter of his book, he characterises almost everyone in the same way, speaking of Celts, Persians or Egyptians. So, his point shouldn’t be taken into account.

Let us now examine the question of Alexander’s relationship to his best friend, Hepheastion, which, in contrast to the, insignificant to the public Vagoas incident, would, almost certainly, be presented as a homosexual one in the coming film.

To clear this point, a short historical review is inevitable. It has to explain what the exact role of the royal partner was (*βασιλικὸς ἑταῖρος*) in Macedonia of that time.

Succession to the throne was rarely regular in the Macedonian court. Had the king not been killed in one of the numerous battles he had to give, he would, most probably, be murdered by some member of the Macedonian aristocracy, who could, afterwards, claim the throne.

To deal with this phenomenon, it had become an institution to raise the royal heir along with the sons of the most illustrious families of the court. This served a double purpose: to exercise some sort of control over these families, the most probable to counterclaim the throne, since their sons were disguised hostages; and to create bonds of real friendship among these children, which shared the same teachers and the same gymnasts, were playing together with the future king and were, gradually, brought up to become his personal guards or generals.

Alexander has as royal partners, among others, Philotas, son of the general Parmenion, Ptolemy, son of Lagos, Craterus, and Eumenes. But Hephaestion was, since his early childhood, his closest and dearest friend.

Their friendship was legendary. After the battle in Issos, Darius' mother is said to have knelt, by mistake, in front of Hephaestion, being taller than the king. Alexander not only did not bother at all, but also said to her: "There is nothing to worry about, he (Hephaestion) is Alexander as well (*Καὶ γὰρ ἑκεῖνον εἶναι Ἀλέξανδρον*)!"

These feelings were known to everybody. And when Alexander was, once, asked to intervene in a quarrel between the, otherwise, friends Hephaestion and Craterus, he said that Hephaestion is a friend of Alexander and Craterus a friend of the king

(τὸν μὲν Ἡφαιστίωνα φιλαλέξανδρον εἶναι, τὸν δὲ Κρατερόν φιλοβασιλέα); he meant that the latter was absolutely necessary to him as his best general, but the former was his best friend. And, when things between these two seemed to have reached a point of no return, he solemnly swore to Ammon that, if they quarreled again, he would kill them both.

There is not a single reference to them having more than a pure friendship which had nothing to do with erotic jealousy. Photius, for instance, writes about marital arrangements made by Alexander:

Photius, Bibliotheca, Codex 91 Bekker 68b

«Ἐπιτελεῖ δὲ καὶ γάμους αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ἐταίρων λαμπρούς, αὐτὸς μὲν τὴν προεσβυτάτην τῶν Δαρείου παίδων ἀγόμενος καὶ τὴν νεωτάτην δὲ τῶν Ὀχου θυγατέρων. Ῥωξάνη γὰρ ἤδη προηγμένη ἐτύγγανε. Τὴν μέντοι Δρυπέτιν, θυγατέρα καὶ αὐτὴν οὖσαν Δαρείου, Ἡφαιστίωνι δίδωσι, Κρατερῶ δὲ Ἀμαστρίνην, Πτολεμαίῳ δὲ καὶ Εὐμένει τὰς Ἀρταβάζου παῖδας Ἀρτακάμαν καὶ Ἀρτόνην...»

“He arranged excellent marriages for himself and his friends; he took Darius’ elder daughter and Ochus’ eldest one. He had previously married Roxane. He gave Hephaestion another daughter of Darius, Drypetis, gave Amastrine to Craterus, and Artakama and Artone, the daughters of Artavazos to Ptolemy and Eumenes respectively...”

And Diodorus adds:

Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca historica, 17, 107, 6:

«αὐτὸς δὲ παρελθὼν εἰς Σοῦσα τὴν μὲν προεσβυτέραν τῶν Δαρείου θυγατέρων Στάτειραν ἔγημεν, τὴν δὲ νεωτέραν Ἡφαιστίωνι συνώκησε Δρυπητίν...»

“When he arrived at Sousa, he married Darius’ elder daughter, Stateira, while he gave the eldest one, Drypetis, to Hephaestion...”

It would be rather curious for Alexander to have a sexual involvement with him and try to find him a suitable bride. It would be also curious, during the Hephaestion–Craterus quarrel, not to hear a single word about this alleged relationship, when the two protagonists were brought up together, in the royal court of Philip, where a simple allusion to a ‘womanish’ attitude could lead to suicides and murders. Why would Craterus have spared Hephaestion? Why would Philotas, Parnenion’s son, not have spoken about it, before his execution for treason, only to hurt Alexander? Instead, everyone speaks only and repeatedly of friendship. Finally Hephaestion seems to be for Alexander the brother he never had.

Who spreads then these shameful things? Probably those who, suffering from their own complexes, cannot stand the existence of pure feelings. Or, those who want to serve certain interests...

Yet, these two men, being friends since their early youth, shared among other things the same love for Homer and used to call each other ‘Achilles’ and ‘Patroclus’. Alexander never distinguished himself from his friend, thus illustrating in the best way the ancient Greek saying “a friend is another self” (*φίλος ἄλλος ἐγὼ ἐστί*).

And when Hephaestion died, Alexander overreacted. He demolished the bastions of the cities all over his empire to show that they were grieving too for his friend’s death. He organised great games to honour his memory and burned his body in the highest

pyre ever seen. All these are narrated by Arrianus, in the seventh book of his *Anabasis*, by Plutarch in his biography of Alexander and by Diodorus in the seventieth book of his history.

But is this really overreaction, when it comes from the master of the whole, known at that time, world, son of Ammon-Zeus, who built an entire city to the memory of his favourite horse, Bucephalus? What couldn't he do to honour the memory of Hephaestion?

Let us not forget that, due perhaps to his mother's influence but also to his exceptional destiny, Alexander had a strong tendency to the metaphysical. Hephaestion's death was to him an omen of his own death and made him say: "Now that Patroclus is dead, for how long will Achilles live?" His mourning for Hephaestion's death was like a salutation to the world he sensed he would be soon leaving himself. It is sadly ironic that the dancers and athletes destined to participate to the celebrations in memory of his friend finally took part in Alexander's obsequies.

Yet, among the thousands of volumes written since Alexander's death until today, what was chosen to tarnish this beautiful friendship and support the obscene theories of vulgar minds? The words of Tatianus!

Tatianus was a Christian writer of apologies (texts defending the new religion), of obscure origins but surely born in the Middle East, pupil of another writer of the same kind of texts, Ioustinus. He lived during the second century of our era and wrote in his work *To the Greeks or Apology* (34,3):

«Λαῖς ἐπόρνευσεν, καὶ ὁ πόρνος αὐτὴν ὑπόμνημα τῆς πορνείας ἐποίησεν. Διὰ τί τὴν Ἡφαιστίωνος οὐκ αἰδεῖσθε πορνείαν;...»

"Lais was a prostitute and this is how everybody remembers her. Why aren't you then ashamed of Hephaestion's prostitu-

tion?"

Lucianus, however, responded as he should in his work cited in the chapter dedicated to Sappho.

To understand the real motives of Tatianus I will remind you that he belonged in a group of writers called 'defenders' who, after having adopted the Christian religion, wrote speeches or essays to defend it. They usually do it by pretending ancient Greece as a world of corruption, homosexuality and debauch. Tatianus' main argument in his work, which we possess integral in the Patrologia Graeca (Migne 6, 804 889), is that the whole and Greek literature is not worthy since it merely copied the Old Testament!!! To prove the authority of what he claims, he evokes his teacher, Loustinus, born of Roman(!) parents in the city of Sychem in Israel.

Is there any need to further test of the quality of his writings or, what is more important, his credibility? A recently converted Christian, possibly of Jewish origins, a defender and, in any case, an admirer of the Old Testament creates or reproduces a libel against Hephaesrion, without bothering to mention his sources. How identical to the contemporary 'Tatiani' ..

I believe this chapter, in its present enriched form, closes once and for all the question of the moment, Philip's and Alexander's presumed homosexuality; should it raise again, I hope its few but eloquent ancient texts' extracts should be useful to those who will, naturally, according to their sense or duty towards their ancestors, rush into their defense.

In any case, those who profane the memory of such a sacred freindship as the one between Hephaestion and Alexander should stop this sacrilege. Let them present the texts which can prove their theory.

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Varsine: According to Plutarch she was Memnon's of Rhodes wife. After his death she had an affair with Alexander, but never married him or had children with him. Diodorus doesn't mention her origins, but says he married her and had a son with her, Heracles, murdered later by Polysperchon with Cassandrus' agreement.

According to Arrianus, she was Darius' elder daughter, named Stateira by the other authors, and didn't have children with Alexander.

Parysatis: Mentioned only by Arrianus, she was the daughter of Ochus, the former king, and Alexander married her to strengthen his position to the throne, but had no children with her.

Stateira: Daughter of Darius, mentioned by Plutarch and Diodorus, having the same name with his mother (who died just before the battle in Gaugamela). Alexander married her. Arrianus mentions her as Varsini.

Roxane: Daughter of Oxyathros, king of Sogdiani, unanimously recognized as Alexander's greatest love. He loved her the moment he saw her and immediately asked her to marriage in order to avoid dishonouring her. She gave him the only legal heir he had, Alexander IV. Unfortunately, the boy was born after his father's death and was involved in the Successors' conflict. He was transported along with his mother to Macedonia, where they were both murdered by a certain Glaukias following

CONCLUSION

At this point of a really thorough research conclusions must be drawn.

I first want to apologise for the, dangerously, extensive quotations of the ancient texts. But I made it clear from the beginning that any theory which can't be confirmed by the sources is of no value to me. It is for the same need of credibility that I decided to precede every quotation by the ancient Greek original. This seemed to me the safest guarantee to whatever conclusions I would reach.

I repeat that it was not part of this book's aims to prove homosexuality unknown by ancient Greeks. It was known and, as it happens with all social phenomena, had various degrees of manifestation through the ages.

Nor was this book written to declare some kind of war to homosexuals, since, from my point of view, everyone has the right to make his own sexual choices, if he does no harm to others. I only wish they didn't try to impose them as an example to be imitated, as I get the feeling that certain media do, thus creating confusion as to what is normal or not.

This book meant, and to my sense, did prove that ancient Greece was a society far more severe than ours to this question. So, any effort to 'justify' this habit by suggesting that Greeks approved of it seems senseless to me.

I am sure that this essay doesn't include all the relevant evidence, yet I consider those included as more than enough.

Homosexuality existed in ancient Greece but was not socially approved. This reality, despite the impressions some people try to create, is undeniable and no author doubts it.

Those who tend to present homosexuality as approved by ancient Greeks specify that they are talking about sex with

young boys, pederasty, and only under certain conditions, rather severe, if not intolerable by modern standards.

Let us hear them from pr. Dover himself (page 103):

“If an honourable eromenos [loved one] does not seek or expect sensual pleasure from contact with an erastes [lover], begrudges any contact until the erastes has proved himself worthy of concession, never permits penetration of any orifice in his body, and never assimilates himself to a woman by playing a subordinate role in apposition of contact, and if at the same time the erastes would like him to break rules (iii) and (iv), observe a certain elasticity to rule (ii), and even perhaps bend rule (i) a little on occasion, in what circumstances does a male in fact submit to anal penetration by another male, and how does society regard his submission? There seems little doubt that in Greek eyes the man who breaks the rules of legitimate eros detaches himself from the ranks of male citizenry and classifies himself with women and foreigners.”

Were we to accept this irrational theory about a certain form of pederasty seen as “legitimate eros”, the following amazing, but ‘absolutely normal’ things should happen:

1. The lover should always be the elder and the loved one the eldest. There could never be a shameless violation to this rule.
2. The same person could not be active and passive with the same loved one. But he could be, during the same period of time and with no further complication, lover to someone younger than himself and loved one to someone older than himself.
3. Lovers aimed to indicate the way to virtue to their loved ones. That is why parents of a young boy with many would-be lovers should be proud of their son. The fee for this educa-

tion to virtue was for the loved one to offer his body to his lover's satisfaction (always in the name of virtue), but never through anus. This would expose them both to condemnation and even punishment; still, there was no problem with the femorum diductio.

4. Once the loved one could have a beard this relationship should end, in order to avoid unpleasant comments.
5. Soon after this separation the former loved one could naturally meet his ex-lover and watch him, without protesting, to pursue another loved one.

All these I have just described to you is considered a much better and more reasonable explanation than the simple interpretation I have proposed for the two key words, lover [erastes for Dover] being the mentor, the teacher, the initiator, and loved one [eromenos] being the pupil he was guiding, free from any sexual intercourse of any type, in a exclusively intellectual involvement.

One should ask whether there were no deviations. There were of course, as in every human law, but they were treated as such, that is, as something worthy of condemnation and punishment.

And what about references of the poets, like Theognis? Famous modern painter Yannis Tsarouchis used to paint young men, mostly in uniforms. Should that mean to the future historian that in the 20th century Greece all men wearing uniforms were homosexuals? What would then become of the freedom of artistic expression?

It is not the poetry which makes laws or imposes social behaviour; not to mention, risking another repetition, that when selection was made as to which texts were worthy of being saved, there was a specific policy to present the former age as a corrupted one. Poems condemning homosexuality could then

have been thrown to fire. Still, the surviving texts are more than enough to prove our theory correct. And should one conduct a more thorough research others could be found among these to prove the real meaning of the key words.

Xenophon, Symposium VIII, 41:

«**Ἀγαθῶν** γὰρ φύσει καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς φιλοτίμως ἐφιεμένων ἀείποτε τῇ πόλει ὧν **συνεραστῆς** διατελῶ».

“I always share and have shared love of the town with those who are good men and are moved by the sacred ambition of virtue.”

Let me conclude by expressing my thanks to those who have dealt with this subject before and inspired me in the writing of this book, the Greek review *Δαυλός*, being the first to have examined the question in a different light and Mr Goudelis and Mr. Vrisimdzis for giving in their enlightening books most valuable to the understanding of this issue information.

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