

* A slightly different version of this review was published previously in February 2009 on the Hist-Sex list of H-Net.

<http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-hist-sex&month=0902&week=b&msg=Ug%2bYuljwHAbmjyw%2bhMXhQ&user=&pw=>

The Greeks and Greek Love: A Radical Reappraisal of Homosexuality in Ancient Greece. By JAMES DAVIDSON. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007. Pp. xxii + 634. Cloth, \$42.00. ISBN 978-0-297-81997-4.

Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty: Boys were their Gods. By ANDREW LEAR AND EVA CANTARELLA. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. Pp. xviii + 262. Cloth, \$115.00. ISBN 978-0-415-22367-6.

Study of Greek same-sex relations since Sir Kenneth Dover's influential *Greek Homosexuality* (London, 1978) has been dominated by a hierarchical understanding of the pederastic relations assumed to be normative between older, sexually and emotionally active "lovers" and younger, sexually and emotionally passive "beloveds." Michel Foucault's subsequent *History of Sexuality: Vol. 2, The Use of Pleasure* (New York, 1986) was heavily influenced by Dover's collection of evidence and concretized these roles into formalized "sexual protocols." Self-consciously invoking Foucault was David Halperin's *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (London, 1990), which envisioned phallic penetration as a trope for the asymmetrical political empowerment of adult citizen males over "women, boys, foreigners, and slaves—all of them persons who do not enjoy the same legal and political rights and privileges that he does" (Halperin, p. 30). This orthodoxy, conditioned by the academic hegemony of feminist theory and contemporary anxieties over child sexual abuse, has begun to be seriously challenged only during the last several years. Both of the books reviewed here aim, with varying degrees of success, to offer a more nuanced and multi-dimensional picture of relations that were often mutual, not always radically age-different, and seldom crudely exploitive in the way implied by the Dover-Foucault-Halperin approach.

However, in Davidson's book, we find a new form of political correctness substituted for the old: instead of socially constructed relations of power and domination, Davidson gives us an ancient Greece in which there was no physical sex with those under 18, male prostitution was condemned, gays openly served in the military and engaged in long-term monogamous relationships that were acknowledged in public "wedding" ceremonies. If this sounds a little

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too much like the assimilationist preoccupations of the mainstream lesbian and gay rights movement today, the reader may with some justification wonder whether he is being sold a bill of goods.

Davidson is the author of an excellent, highly readable first book, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (London, 1997), and an important 50-page article on the present subject in the respected historical journal *Past and Present*. However, fans of his previous work (among whom I would count myself) cannot fail but be dismayed by this turgid, self-indulgent, interminable tome of 634 pages, in which the author with free abandon mingles fact, fantasy, speculation, mistranslation, misleading paraphrase, and arguments of such impenetrable convolution and improbability that even the experienced scholarly specialist is left with head spinning. This is a genuine shame, as there are actually many valuable observations within the book, but one must wade through quite a bit of muck to find them.

It is unclear just who the intended audience of this book is. Bound between handsome, color-illustrated endpapers and heavily promoted by a British trade press (although no American distributor has yet seen fit to pick it up), the volume would appear to be intended for a general public of well-educated, but Greekless readers. But few of these are going to have the patience to make their way through a book on this subject that is both so long and long-winded, that indulges in so many allusive in-jokes, and that casually refers back to factoids or theories last mentioned 300 pages ago as if they were still in the forefront of the reader's consciousness. The scholarly specialist, on the other hand, is likely to be put off by the author's breezy style, erratic annotation, outright mistakes, and repeated assertions of erroneous dogma as established fact.

A major problem that this book shares with much work in the field of ancient sexuality is a failure to distinguish between primary sources that are credible and those less deserving of our trust; even sources contemporary with the practices described need to be interpreted through the rhetorical inflections and ideological biases of the author or genre. Anecdotes gleaned from authors like Ephorus, Theopompus, Sosicrates, Nepos, Aelian, Athenaeus, and Maximus of Tyre should not automatically receive our credence: some of them wrote history to be colorful and entertaining, others wrote miscellanies full of tidbits and curiosities from the distant past. What is most interesting in these authors is not the facticity of what they report, but what their selection of anecdotes reveals about their own ideo-

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logical prisms and contemporary concerns.

A second major issue is the author's lack of careful engagement with or, in many cases, even acknowledgment of relevant recent scholarship that contradicts his assertions. We shall note several specific cases in the body of this review. Even in cases where he has read something, he may misrepresent the author's argument. For example, on p. 184 he states, "In the real world, any Athenian caught assaulting a boy under Eighteen ... could be punished with death on the same day." The attached footnote identifies David Cohen's 1991 book *Law, Sexuality, and Society* as his source for this bold assertion, but Cohen nowhere says anything of the sort; Cohen merely cites Aeschines 1.7–8 with reference to "acting as a procurer for a free boy." Aeschines 1.16 does say something about the death penalty for assault, but editors of Aeschines universally agree that this quotation of a law (like all such quotations in the speeches of Demosthenes and Aeschines) is a later fabrication with no evidentiary authority for the 4th century.

But the worst problem with this book is its carelessness in translation and paraphrase of the ancient sources, which often results in serious misrepresentation of the information they convey. Sometimes the errors are inconsequential to the broader argument, as when he identifies Pelops as "Zeus's attendant on Olympus" (p. 2—a misunderstanding of Pindar's Greek in *Olympian* 1.41–5) or claims, with no specific citation, that Agathon in Plato's *Symposium* is "barely 18" (p. 27); Plato nowhere says any such thing, although *Symp.* 175e does identify him as *neos* (a term usually referring to young men in their twenties). Similarly, he claims that Vergil identifies Jupiter's rape of Ganymede as "the reason" (p. 177) for Juno's hatred of the Trojans, when in fact, as every Latin student knows, he merely includes it as third on a list of three possible motivations (*Aeneid* 1.25–8). Few competent Greek scholars would believe that *Phaedrus* 263d could possibly be read as "speeches of Cephalus" (p. 213).

He is no better in dealing with material remains: he states, as if it were a well-known fact not even needing to be footnoted, that the splendid François Vase in Florence once contained remains of the dead (p. 260). No Greek vase found in an Etruscan tomb ever did; indeed the Etruscans did not even practice cremation during this period. He misreads the inscription on a jug by the Eretria Painter to identify a character as Kephalos (p. 213), when even the most cursory examination of the secondary literature on this piece would have revealed that the character was Kephimos.

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More serious, however, are the occasions when tendentious translations are used to undergird substantive arguments, as when he mistranslates Plato, *Symposium* 182b, to mean “it has been straightforwardly laid down by law [*haplôs nenomothetêtai*] that it is beautiful to graciously gratify” a lover (p. 353, italics in original). Although the verb *nomotheteô* may indeed refer to the action of a lawgiver, the notion of *nomos* Pausanias employs throughout this speech in the *Symposium* is clearly with reference to “custom” and not “law” in our usual understanding of the term; laws can hardly dictate what we find “beautiful.” In another chapter, he tries to argue that the Greek word *katapygon* refer to those with a proclivity to take the active role in anal sex: in support of this notion, he mistranslates Aristophanes, *Knights* 640–1 to suggest that a character “bends over and thrusts his anus” (p. 63) toward a *katapygon*, whereas in fact the Greek must mean that he made a quick obeisance to the gods and then used his rear end to break down the gate into the Council meeting, a move that would have him facing the *katapygon* rather than turning his back. He is equally misleading in translating *sophrosynê* as “chasteness” (p. 70); the word denotes a more general concept of restraint and moderation, which in pederastic contexts might mean something other than “abstinence only” (e.g. being careful and selective in choosing a lover/beloved).

Another substantive contention is that Greek boys encountered puberty much later than boys nowadays: to support this idea, Davidson must discredit the testimony of the Aristotelian *History of Animals*, which clearly states that male puberty hits at 14 (*HA* 581^a13–17). To do so, Davidson claims (p. 527 n. 30) that the Aristotelian text must be wrong, since it also says beard growth does not occur until 21 and there cannot be such a long gap between the onset of puberty and growth of a beard. However, he misinterprets the Aristotelian text, which in fact asserts (*HA* 582^a16–34) that beard growth occurs at some point “until three times seven years” (*mechri tôn tris hepta etôn*); in other words, rather than saying that 21 is the normal age of beard development, as Davidson claims, the text says that 21 is the latest point at which males, whose individual development varies, show a beard.

Even worse are the cases where he blatantly misrepresents the content of texts. Nothing in either Xenophon’s *Hellenica* 7.4.13 (cited on pp. 346–7) or *Symposium* 8.34 (cited on p. 492) supports the claim that the Eleans had an elite military band of lovers like the Thebans: the texts merely refer to a group of 300. Nothing in Maximus of Tyre

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20.8 characterizes Spartan relationships as age-equal (p. 85). Nothing in Ibycus fr. 282(a) identifies Polycrates as a “boy” (p. 412). By all accounts, Ibycus’ association with Polycrates of Samos was limited to the latter’s period as a tyrant ruling the island; the praise of his beauty is an encomiastic topos frequently used of adult patrons in encomiastic poetry. [[1]] Nothing in Plato’s *Lysis*, which he cites on p. 425 without specific identification of the passage, says or implies that there was a “law against ‘mingling’” between older and younger boys in the gymnasium. Indeed, *Lysis* 406d specifically shows them doing so at the festival of Hermes, and nothing says they were not allowed to do so on other occasions as well; indeed, Attic vase painting reveals such interaction in the gym to be ubiquitous. I have by no means checked all the references within this book, and indeed the style of reference is often so inexact that they cannot be checked. However, the number that do not check out when I do track them down leaves me with a deep suspicion of any claim the book makes that I do not already know to be true from independent knowledge. This is not a book that the non-specialist reader can rely upon for accuracy.

With these prefatory caveats, let us proceed to examine the book’s arguments chapter by chapter. The first two chapters are largely concerned with issues of terminology. Chapter 1 surveys the various Greek words for love, focusing particularly on Eros, both as an abstract concept and a divine personification. Davidson defines *erōs* as a longing for the absent, which may be, but need not always be overtly sexual. Scant notice is taken of Bruce Thornton’s *Eros: The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality* (Boulder, 1997), which deals with this subject at length. Chapter 2 turns its attention to *charis*, which in an erotic context refers to sex offered freely as part of a gracious interpersonal exchange; as such, Davidson argues that it can only characterize homoerotic transactions in the Greek world, since women had no capacity to choose. This is unexceptionable (and unoriginal) enough, but he is on less firm ground with some of the other terms covered in this chapter: contrary to previous interpreters, he argues that the comic word *euruprōktos* (literally “with a wide-open anus”) possessed no sexual implications, but was merely a vulgar variant of *eurustomos* (“with a wide-open mouth”), referring to orators and other wordsmiths who are always farting (i.e. talking). However, Aristophanes, *Clouds* 1083–1104 makes it very clear that *euruprōktos* is synonymous with *kinoumenos* (“being fucked”); it is not caused by breaking wind, but by having foreign objects introduced into the anus. He usefully notes that the pejorative term *kinaidos* is not used in comic authors, but in serious authors of the 4th century BCE and

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later. I believe that he is right to reject the usual translation of “sexual passive,” since, as he notes, lexicographers associate the term with general lewdness and debauchery. However, he is wrong to believe that the term refers specifically to a corrupting seducer or abuser of other males; it and closely related words are too often coupled with the term *moichos* (“adulterer”) in reference to the same person.

Chapter 3, “Age Classes, Love-Rules and Corrupting the Young,” is one of the most important in the book, as it is here that Davidson undertakes to demolish “the fable of paedophile Greeks” (p. 70) by arguing that physical intimacies could be practiced legally only with “boys” 18 and older. However, his evidence for this sweeping assertion is extremely thin. He misinterprets Aeschines 1.139 to affirm that the Law of Solon forbade such associations with any boy who is *akuros* (i.e. “not yet in control of his own affairs legally”). What Davidson fails to see is that Aeschines is throwing sand in the jurors’ eyes with almost all of his legal citations throughout the speech, something the Attic orators did commonly; if one examines the original Greek, it is clear that this particular sentence (embedded within a paragraph quoting Solon’s actual law, which merely forbade slaves to enter the gymnasium or pursue free boys) [[2]] is bracketed as Aeschines’ own opinion (note the opening verb *oimai*) of what the law ought to do (note the present tense verbs, in contrast to the past tense always used of the lawgiver himself).

Equally amazing is the assertion that “Laws forbade anyone of Twenty or over from entering the gymnasium when under-Eighteens were exercising: The strictest penalties, not excluding the death penalty, were imposed on those who transgressed” (p. 69). No textual citation or footnote is attached to this grand statement, but it continues to be repeated throughout the rest of the book as an established fact. But at least for Athens in the classical period, it is pure fiction. We do possess an inscription from the Macedonian town of Beroea in the 2nd century BCE that tells the gymnasiarch to prevent young men and boys from mingling in the gymnasium, but it contains no reference to the death penalty. Although Davidson does not mention it, some scholars interpret Aeschines 1.10 as referring to an Athenian law with similar intent, but that view is based on a mistranslation of the verb *eisphoitaô* to mean that young men of a certain age could not “enter” the gymnasium, whereas the verb is actually a frequentative that means “attend regular classes at” the gymnasium; the supposed text of the law in 1.12 (which must be the source for Davidson’s nonsense about the death penalty) is univer-

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sally bracketed as spurious.

Davidson rightly argues that Ancient Greece was an “age-class” society, but goes too far in implying that the Greeks did not count years: Solon fr. 27W proves that they did. The same fragment also shows that the Greeks did not consider 18 a particularly important dividing line, so much as 14 (the onset of puberty) and 21 (full physical maturity); see also Aristotle, *Pol.* 1336^b37–37^a1. Davidson’s view that the Greeks must have experienced puberty at 18.5 contradicts not only what Solon tells us, but virtually every other ancient source until late Roman times. [[3]] Davidson’s argument is based on accounts of puberty from the 18th century and anthropological estimates drawn from very early civilizations unconnected with Greece, but surely Aristotle and the ancient medical writers are better witnesses. Davidson also misses the mark when positing that the term *meirakion* refers only to 18–19 year olds; Hippocrates (*ap. Philo, Opif. Mundi* 36.105) and Aristophanes of Byzantium (fr. 42–54 Slater) both say that the term covered the entire range 14–21. Both associate *pais* as a technical term not with under-18s, as Davidson does, but with children in the 7–14 range. Although Davidson is right to point out that *pais* is often used in a more generic sense, he strains credulity in claiming that any use connecting that word with sexual activity must refer to 18–19 year olds.

Given this degree of philological carelessness at the outset, most of what Davidson says about age throughout his book should be dismissed. However, he does stray into Truth when speculating that sexual relations among classmates may have been more common than literary sources reflect. As he notes, the art historian Charles Hupperts estimates that as many as one-third of the erotic scenes in red-figure painting involve age-equal youths.

The second major section of the book, consisting of Chapters 4–6, looks at the history of modern scholarship on Greek homosexuality, with particular focus on the intellectual influences that shaped Sir Kenneth Dover’s and Michel Foucault’s views of it. While some readers may be put off by the *ad hominem* (e.g. snide remarks about Foucault’s anti-Semitism or Dover’s self-pleasuring habits), this is arguably the strongest part of the book. He traces Dover’s preoccupation with physical sex and the shamefulness of being sexually passive to the influence of his collaboration with the notoriously homophobic ethno-psychanalyst Georges Devereux, who labelled the Greek practice “pseudo-homosexuality”—all a matter of acts rather than perverted orientation, and thus in Devereux’s clinical

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view less pathological. While I agree with the basic thrust of Davidson's critique of Dover, he goes too far when he claims that the Greeks did not at all share the modern concept of penetration as a form of aggression: Aristophanes, *Knights* 364–5 and the so-called "Eurymedon vase" (Fig. 3.5 in Lear and Cantarella) make it clear that they did, particularly when it involves two adult males. However, I think Davidson is right to interpret the conventions of Greek pederasty outside of this framework and to emphasize that it is not "all about sex."

Chapter 6 turns its attention toward Foucault, whose intellectual genealogy is traced through the influence of the Boas–Sapir–Benedict–Mead school of cultural anthropology on the one hand, and on the other that of the French classicist Paul Veyne, obsessed with what he saw as "Mediterranean sexuality." The real target here is the doctrine of "social constructionism," a term Davidson avoids, but one is left wondering, what does he propose in its place? A return to essentialism and its transhistorical categories of identity? Davidson never makes it altogether clear just where he stands in this debate.

The third section of the book, consisting of Chapters 7–9, aims to connect Greek Love with "Greek Religions," conveniently playing up to those who wish to integrate gay sexuality into contemporary religion. However, these chapters actually have very little to say about religious ritual or belief; they instead treat various myths which are literary in nature and have no connection with cult observance. On the one myth that actually may have had ritual connections, that of Hyacinthus, he is unaware of the fundamental work of Michael Petersson, *Cults of Apollo at Sparta* (Stockholm, 1992); he is also ignorant of the relevant epigraphic evidence (e.g. *SEG* 28.404) about "Hyacinthian" love in ancient Laconian ritual. One finds throughout a lack of familiarity with even the most basic principles of myth interpretation. He ignores the diachronic evolution of literary and artistic variants, conflating together details from sources that are centuries apart (see, for example, p. 170). He confuses separate characters, like the Cephalus (son of Hermes) loved by the Dawn and the Cephalus (son of Deion) married to Procris; the two are distinct until Ovid conflates them. As if all of this were not enough, he subjects us to an utterly incomprehensible and irrelevant theory about the position of the constellation Auriga in the sky, when seen from the Erechtheum, as an explanation for why Poseidon is involved in Pindar's version of the myth of Pelops.

Just as Section Three pandered to the religious gays, Section Four

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addresses the militarist gays. Chapter 10 surveys homoerotic elements in warrior myth, especially those of Achilles and Heracles. Davidson is convinced that homosexual love was present in 8th-century Greece (despite a void of independent evidence) and is thus at the heart of epic tradition, even though nowhere explicitly mentioned. He believes that the contemporary audience of the *Iliad* could not but have read the emotional bond of Achilles and Patroclus in homosexual terms, even though the language of Eros and lovemaking, so common in heterosexual contexts within epic, is nowhere applied to them. He seems not to notice that even the four appearances of the Ganymede story in epic tradition say nothing about Eros as a motivating factor. He is so eager to read homosexuality into myths that he even tries to reconstruct the lost *Aethiopsis* to feature Antilochus as a new beloved of Achilles (pp. 271–8), based on little more than Achilles increasing his prize in *Iliad*.

Chapter 11 looks at the historical evidence concerning pederastic relations in Crete and Sparta. Davidson credits the 4th-century historian Ephorus' account of a special abduction ritual the Cretans practiced with noble youths; not all would agree with his description of Isocrates' pupil (p. 301 "by all accounts, a pretty good historian"). He appears to be unaware that some sceptics have argued that this unusual ritual is Ephorus' entertaining concoction of different practices designed to appeal to contemporary Athenian tastes. [[4]] Davidson's attempt to integrate Ephorus' evidence with that of later sources like Aelian and Maximus of Tyre is interesting, but it is unclear whether the Cretan practices they describe are the same one; Crete was the "land of 100 cities," each with its own customs and laws. Moreover, he proposes that the abduction ceremony was a "wedding ritual," which implies a permanent relationship between the man and boy, something none of our texts suggest. Even he so much as admits that his reconstruction of a Spartan male wedding ritual (pp. 331–4) is pure fantasy. He does make the interesting suggestion, albeit based on thin evidence, that the contradictions among sources as to the chasteness of Spartan pederasty may be explained by the peculiar nature of Spartan intercourse, intercrural through clothing (pp. 326–31).

Chapter 12 turns its attention to some other parts of Greece that less often form part of the discussion concerning Greek love. The chapter begins with speculation about Elis, largely based on an enigmatic vase (his Figure 33) depicting a scene of anal intercourse that no one has ever understood, but nothing specifically connects this piece with Elis. More intriguing are his ideas about Thessaly and Mace-

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donia, which he believes were societies that did not follow the same age-structured protocols we reconstruct for Athenian pederasty. In treating erotic anecdotes about Alexander the Great, Davidson shows the appropriate scepticism toward our sources that he elsewhere lacks; indeed, he even doubts that Hephaestion was actually the beloved of Alexander, but thinks he was a politically serious character of some importance. Davidson credits accounts of the Sacred Band of Thebes as an elite corps of lovers and even treats it as the model for similar military groups in Elis and Macedon; he is aware that David Leitao has recently challenged this assumption even in relation to Thebes, but refuses to engage with Leitao's arguments in any serious way. [[5]]

The short Chapter 13 is a complete mystery to me, but Chapter 14 turns its attention to the Aeolic and Ionian lyric poets of the 7th and 6th centuries. Little new interpretation is offered. He appears to be unaware (p. 398) that the late Thomas Rosenmeyer long ago debunked the canard that elegy is sung to the accompaniment of a double-flute. [[6]]

Chapter 15 focuses on Athens: like many other critics, Davidson makes the mistake of using Pausanias' speech in Plato's *Symposium* as reliable evidence for Athenian social history, ignoring the ideological tendencies engendered by Pausanias' need to defend his own rather deviant form of love for the intelligent, beautiful, grown-up, albeit effeminate Agathon. Davidson is troubled that the usual interpretation of Athenian vase painting yields such a different picture from the one he finds in Pausanias' speech, so he concludes that we must have been interpreting the vases wrongly. In his view, all these scenes of men or youths fondling or having intercrural intercourse with boys were really meant to be condemnatory illustrations of the "improper." This theory is both naive and bizarre: these vases were meant for use at often wild drinking parties (those in both Plato's and Xenophon's *Symposium* were exceptional in their sobriety), where well-to-do men of the world would hardly be in the mood to receive moral lectures on dignified behavior from the artisans who painted their drinking ware. Symposia themselves are frequently the subject-matter of vase painting and seem anything but dignified and moralistic. No experienced critic of ancient vase iconography would interpret visual details with Davidson's eye: it is incredible that he can describe the vigorous, hairy-chested man on the Brygos Painter's cup, of which he does not give us a picture (but Lear and Cantarella do, as Figure 1.13), as "a *kinaidos*, sex pest" (p. 443) and "a Senior even, with his pectoral muscles having drooped to mid-chest" (p.

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444). He again reveals himself unaware or unwilling to engage with the work of major scholars, even in reference to the specific artifacts he discusses: both the Brygos cup and the Getty psykter (a wrap-around scene of four courting couples), to which he devotes a silly discussion on pp. 439–43, have been discussed far more perceptively by Alan Shapiro. [[7]]

The thesis of Chapter 16 is that the 4th century BCE is the time when “homo-whorishness” arrives in Athens in the form of “sex slaves who might serve their masters as live-in lovers; handsome cithara-boys ... and mercenary politicians” (p. 446). What he fails to take into account is that this impression is merely the accident of which sources happen to survive from which periods: the kind of documents where we would hear about these types of characters (Comedy and forensic oratory) are only extant from the last quarter of the 5th century forward, not because comedies and speeches in court did not occur earlier, but because it was only with the growth of more widespread literacy and a developing book trade that it became worthwhile for people to preserve these “lower” genres in written form.

Davidson argues that there was never any negative public attitude toward elite pederastic practices because both Timarchus’ defenders and Aeschines speak of pederasty respectfully in orations aimed at the general public of the jury (pp. 459–60). He seems unaware that the portion of the speech in which Aeschines speaks favorably of an ideal, Platonic pederasty was almost certainly added later only in the written version of the speech, directed at a much more elite audience. [[8]] And Timarchus’ defenders praise traditional pederasty with literary and historical examples precisely to defend his undeniable homoerotic relationships before a public which might be suspicious of the practice. Davidson is surely aware of my “Popular Perceptions of Elite Homosexuality in Classical Athens,” [[9]] but he nowhere mentions it or engages seriously with its arguments, just as he ignores other scholars whose findings are inconvenient for his scenario.

The 51-page Conclusion, which rather self-importantly advertises itself as “A Map of Greek Love,” complements Davidson’s previous pandering to the “gays in the military” and the “gays in the church” crowds by again addressing the gay-marriage fetishists. “The fact of pairing and the identities of any particular pair must have been known to the authorities; by some signal means or another, each same-sex relationship must have been concretized as a public and

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archaeologicable fact" (p. 476). He ultimately traces these weddings back to Mycenaean chariot-pairs and even Indo-European ritual (pp. 512–16). As with so many other grand statements, his evidence is thin: the figures dancing around pairs having intercrural sex in black-figure vase iconography cannot be, as he supposes, witnesses or celebrants in a public ceremony of union. They are either rival suitors or servants bringing gifts; as Lear and Cantarella's book shows, scenes in vase iconography should not be interpreted as photographic documentation of what went on simultaneously so much as symbolic juxtapositions.

* * *

In contrast to Davidson's sensationalism, this book offers a more subtle and less tendentious analysis in much shorter compass. Cantarella's contribution is limited to a 23-page survey of the literary material, which unfortunately shares many of Davidson's faults, pressing thin evidence to make sweeping claims. Whereas Davidson errs in denying sex to boys under 18, Cantarella makes the opposite mistake of positing a uniform "social code" in which the beloved was never over 18 and the lover under 20, even though evidence suggests that both the Stoics (Athenaeus 13.563e) and the Spartans (see Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 25.1) loved youths in their late 20s. Strato's epigram *AP* 12.4 (from the 2nd century CE) on his preferred ages should hardly be used as evidence for practices 600 years earlier, which were likely not uniform throughout Greece anyway. Like Davidson, Cantarella assumes that pederastic myths necessarily derive from early ritual origins, rather than arising as literary inflections of previously non-pederastic stories. She also makes the mistake of reading highly colored literary passages from authors like Aristophanes, Aeschines and Plato as if they constituted evidence of universal attitudes.

However, the heart of this book is the iconographic survey offered by Lear, from which both novice and experienced scholars can learn much. Lear warns us that we should not treat Attic vase painting as a naturalistic transcription of lived experience. Instead, it operates within the context of aesthetic preferences and idealizing conventions: for example, genitals are usually rendered in smaller proportions than is natural, suggesting moderation and restraint, but are represented as larger than natural in orgies or scenes featuring satyrs (fantasy projections of man's unrestrained, bestial side). The presence or absence of erections in scenes of intimate interaction should not be construed as evidence of who is or is not receiving pleasure,

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but must be interpreted within the framework of the general idealization of small, boyish members. Similarly, the ubiquitous presence of oil flasks or strigils (scrapers used to wipe dust and oil off athletes' bodies) in the hands of boys or on the wall in the background of red-figure scenes should be construed as a kind of synecdochic shorthand for the gymnasium as the most frequent setting of pederastic courtship.

Chapters 1 and 2 survey various types of courtship scenes, gifts and associated gestures, showing particular sensitivity to the way different phases of courtship and the varying responses to it are rendered through details of body position, clothing and gaze. In addition to the familiar settings of the gymnasium and symposium, Lear shows that even war may be a context for the display of pederastic eros, as we see beautiful young warriors arming themselves in front of admirers; I find this discussion novel and interesting, but am surprised that no reference is made to J.-P. Vernant's famous essays on the topos of "beautiful death" in archaic poetry. [[10]] While Lear does not see all courtship gifts as directly pedagogical in nature, he does believe that they at least associate the interaction of men and boys with realms of activity that are often pedagogical: e.g. music, hunting and athletics. I think he may be overly conservative in not acknowledging cockfighting among these: as unpleasant as we find such gratuitous animal cruelty, Greek men did regard it as a useful way of hardening boys and instilling a spirit of ruthless competitiveness. Another not infrequent gift that Lear does not discuss at all, despite its interesting implications (i.e. sacrifice, butchering, providing for one's family), is a large piece of meat.

One of Lear's most interesting findings is that the iconography does not distinguish between sacks of money and other gifts, as if to belie the "sacred boundary between the *eromenos* and the prostitute" (p. 80). However, I think Lear is not correct in believing that our ancient textual sources create such a clear boundary. This is largely a fiction of modern scholarship. Aristophanes' *Wealth* (149–59) notes precisely how little difference there is between receiving generous gifts and receiving money, implying that those who would distinguish the two (like the naive Chremylus) fail to recognize their essential sameness. Aeschines' prosecution of his political rival Timarchus for having "prostituted himself" as a youth is based on precisely the same definitional indistinction: Aeschines never offers evidence that Timarchus actually received bags of money from his many lovers, but suggests that the mere fact of Timarchus living with them and enjoying lavish entertainment without himself paying for it was tanta-

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mount to the same thing as being a prostitute.

Chapter 3 looks at the more explicit material, showing scenes of actual consummation as well as the various forms of physical foreplay. Lear shows that the familiar figuration of intercrural intercourse, where the lover crouches down into a rather awkward posture so as to rub his penis between a shorter boy's thighs, actually shows him in an inferior position, allowing his beloved to "overtop" and "overlook" him (p. 114). Similarly, the so-called "up-gesture," in which a lover touches the chin of the beloved, is correctly interpreted as a pose of supplication. However, I think that the corresponding "down-gesture," in which the lover fondles the testicles of the beloved, is not just a "request for trust" asking "a boy to surrender control over his most vulnerable parts," but like the focused gaze of many lovers upon the boy's genitals, suggests a fetishization of the developing pubescent member as a visible and tangible sign of development into sexual maturity and manhood.

As Lear notes, we do not find explicit anal sex depicted in pederastic contexts, but it does at least twice appear in scenes involving youths of the same age or, on Tyrrhenian amphorae, among drunken adults; other scenes may hint at the lover's desire for it or the beloved's offer of it. An interesting section of this chapter compares the courtship conventions on vases featuring courtesans with those involving boys: on the whole, they are quite similar, but courtesans do tend to show more initiative. A final section examines slave boys, whom he argues to be neither courted nor forced, but I am not certain that we can always tell who is a slave boy and who is not: it is quite possible that the boys who serve at feasts were in some cases freeborn boys who learned the rules of feasting by first attending upon the banqueters. [[11]]

Chapter 4 examines pederastic scenes involving the gods. Here alone do we see evidence of a lover forcing himself upon a boy, as if to imply that mere humans are subject to a code of propriety and restraint. Zeus and Ganymede are only depicted in red-figure painting of the 5th century, Lear suggests, as a more acceptable way to treat the theme after the explicit scenes of mortal consummation become rare. However, I think he is wrong in suggesting that the eagle sitting on Zeus' scepter in Figure 4.3 alludes to the means of Ganymede's abduction; the eagle is first introduced into the Ganymede myth in the 4th century, probably modeled on Apollo's seduction of Hyacinthus in the form of a swan (of which we do have solid 5th-century illustrations). Similarly, I think Lear's interpretation of

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Apollo as an *eromenos* in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 is clearly incorrect: the former depicts him about to battle Idas for the romantic favor of Marpessa, and the latter shows him providing epiphanic inspiration to a contemplative muse. That Apollo himself looks like a beautiful youth is not in question, but myth typically depicts him as an active (if rather ineffective) lover.

The second half of this chapter constitutes an interesting discussion of the god Eros as a character on pederastic vases. Figured as a beautiful youth himself, Eros is usually indistinguishable in age from the youth he pursues, penetrates, crowns or brings a gift to. As with the representations of Zeus and Ganymede, Lear argues that his presence is a more coded way of representing pederastic eros in a period when more explicit depictions had ceased. To this I would add the observation that his equality in age to the beloved youth yielded an intonation of adolescent frolic that was less offensive to late-5th and early-4th century tastes than the older scenes of highly age-differential courtship.

Chapter 5 deals briefly, but very ably with the so-called "*kalos*-" found on many vases, even many without pederastic subject matter, declaring that either a specific named boy or the generic "boy" is "beautiful" (*kalos*). Lear dismisses the theory that the vases were themselves meant as gifts, instead more plausibly explaining these inscriptions as toasts. He notes that some of these vases have the less appreciative word *katapygon* ("bugger") scratched into them by a later hand, although he does not speculate whether the motive was cynicism or moralistic indignation.

Chapter 6 treats the question of chronological development even more briefly. As many have previously noted, the familiar scenes of pederastic courtship and consummation largely disappear after the 470s BCE, but the same is also true of explicit heterosexual sex. Lear correctly points out that this does not mean that pederasty disappears as a representational focus, only that it changes: later in the 5th century, we see more scenes involving gods, symposia and "youths in conversation." The homoeroticism is either displaced into the realm of myth or it becomes more implicit and coded. He attributes this change not to any variation in the social status of pederasty, but to "a general trend toward prudery" (p. 175). However, I am not sure these two developments can be so neatly segregated: more prudish societies are generally less tolerant of minority sexual practices. Lear does not examine what factors contribute to this growing prudishness in the mid-5th century. I have elsewhere argued that

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pederasty was mainly an elite practice in Athens, and the rising political dominance of what one might call the “middle class” within Athenian democracy led to a privileging of middle-class taste, as reflected in the anti-elite posture of comedy, the simplified diction of Euripidean tragedy, the decline of erotically based pedagogy, and the marginalization of explicit sexuality in art. I would qualify that view now only with the observation that as the general living-standard of the urban populace grew at the height of the Athenian empire, painted vases ceased to be a luxury product, but became commonplace even in many non-elite households; this explains the inferior workmanship we see in the late 5th century, as painted vases came to be mass-produced, and the luxury market turned to silver vessels, which have almost all been melted down and have thus disappeared from our archaeological record.

One of the most valuable features of this book is the long appendix at the end, based on the work of the late Keith DeVries, listing over 700 vases with pederastic content, broken down by period, with descriptions of each side’s decoration. This supersedes the similar (and ideologically filtered) list at the end of Sir Kenneth Dover’s *Greek Homosexuality* (1978). This list will be of fundamental reference value to future researchers.

I have two complaints about the format and organization of this book, both related to the illustrations. Although over 100 vases are pictured within the book, the illustrations are so small that one often cannot see the details discussed in the text. For a book this expensive, we should expect larger photos, including, where appropriate, detail shots. My second complaint is that dating should be discussed throughout the text, rather than confined to one short chapter and DeVries’ appendix at the end. Every illustration should feature an approximate date as part of its caption, so that readers can judge for themselves the lines of chronological development and perhaps note some tendencies that may have escaped the authors’ notice. [[12]]

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[[1]] See F. Lasserre, “Ornements érotiques dans la poésie lyrique archaïque,” in J.H. Heller and J.K. Newman, eds., *Serta Turyniana* (Urbana, 1974).

[[2]] See D.G. Kyle, “Solon and Athletics,” *Ancient World* 9 (1984) 91–105.

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[[3]] See E. Eyben, "Antiquity's View of Puberty," *Latomus* 31 (1972) 677–97, an article of which, like so many others, Davidson is unaware.

[[4]] E.g. David Dodd, "Athenian Ideas about Cretan Pederasty," in my *Greek Love Reconsidered* (New York, 2000) 33–41.

[[5]] D. Leitaο, "The Legend of the Sacred Band," in M. Nussbaum and J. Sihvola, eds., *The Sleep of Reason* (Chicago, 2002) 143–69.

[[6]] T.G. Rosenmeyer, "Elegiac and Elegos," *CSCA* 1 (1968) 217–31.

[[7]] A. Shapiro, "Leagros and Euphronios: Painting Pederasty in Athens," in T.K. Hubbard, ed., *Greek Love Reconsidered* (New York, 2000) 12–32, especially Figures 13–14.

[[8]] See T.K. Hubbard, "Getting the Last Word: Publication of Political Oratory as an Instrument of Historical Revisionism," in E. A. Mackay, ed., *Orality, Literacy, Memory in the Ancient Greek and Roman World* (Leiden, 2008) 185–202.

[[9]] *Arion* ser. 3, 6.2 (1998) 48–78.

[[10]] J.-P. Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals* (Princeton, 1991) pp. 50–91.

[[11]] See J. Bremmer, "Adolescents, *Symposion*, and Pederasty," in O. Murray, ed., *Symptica* (Oxford, 1990) 135–48.