Eros Dikaios. De praktijk en de verbeelding van homoseksualiteit bij de Grieken (deel 1). Plato en Sokrates: de Ware Eros. Een analyse van het 'symposium' van Plato (deel 2)
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SUMMARY

Part I of this study on Greek homosexuality is mainly concerned with the practice of homosexual behaviour in Athens from the sixth to the fourth century B.C. We will show that the general picture K. J. Dover has drawn in his study Greek Homosexuality (1978) should be corrected. One of my main objections to his method is that his study starts with an analysis of Aeschines' speech Contra Timarchum, our most important source for homosexual practice in the fourth century B.C. In this speech legal restrictions are formulated on homosexual prostitution. By using this as his starting point Dover misses important historical developments of homosexual practice in Athens and the moral attitude towards it. Apart from this, another very important source is provided by the vase-paintings from c. 560 to c. 450 B.C. We disagree with him on many points concerning the interpretation of this material. Various studies published after Dover's book show serious shortcomings, because on the one hand they are based insufficiently upon certain conclusions of Dover, and on the other hand hardly take into account the evidence provided by the vase-paintings, with the effect that these studies give an incomplete picture of homosexual practice in Athens.

Furthermore, we will show that several modern studies on Greek homosexuality presuppose a very simplistic view of the place and role of sexuality in Athenian society, and that their findings on homosexuality therefore imply a simplified reconstruction of the way homosexuality functioned in the Athenian polis.

In the study of homosexual behaviour in Athens from the sixth to the fourth century we follow Dover in refusing to accept the diachronical approach as relevant. This approach wants to reduce the several forms of homosexual behaviour to one common source and to explain this cultural phenomenon as an initiation rite. We are convinced that the ritual practised on the island of Crete has no relation whatsoever with the homosexual practice in Athens. The inscriptions found on rocks on Thera and Thasos have probably nothing to do with initiation rituals.

Central to our research are the following questions:
1. It is often alleged that homosexuality in Greece had a primary pedagogical function. The friendship between man and boy would form an excellent base for the education of the boy. In exchange for sexual services to his erastes, his friend, the boy would be initiated in the world of adults and learn moral values and standards in order to be a good citizen. This aspect is questioned in my research. To what extent did an affair between an erastes and eromenos, apart from the erotic aspect, have a pedagogical function?
2. Is difference in age a necessary condition for a homosexual relationship? Must the erastes be older than the eromenos and are the roles of both partners very different?
3. Regarding sexuality, we discuss the following problems:
   a. is intercrural copulation the only legitimate form of sex between a man and a youth?
   b. is it impossible, as is commonly held, that the eromenos had any interest in the sexual contact with his lover and felt eros for his friend?
4. Was the cinaedus, the openly effeminate man, a real person, or simply fiction, an image, an anti-type of masculinity warning men about what was acceptable and what not?
5. Was there something like a subculture of men who practised homosexuality?
6. To what extent do social structures play a central role as an explanation of important changes in sexual behaviour or in the representation of sexual behaviour?

7. Was homosexuality exclusively connected to an aristocratic lifestyle, as is often suggested?

In chapter 3 we analyse the homoerotic lyric poems, especially those by Theognis (the second book of the Corpus Theognideum), Solon, Anacreon and Pindar. The information these poems provide forms a framework for the interpretation of the vase-paintings dating from the period of archaic poetry. Our conclusions are as follows:

1. The relation between an erastes and eromenos is one of reciprocity, of giving and taking. The erastes expects the boy to comply with his sexual desires and to be loyal to him, in exchange of the δαυδα he gives. But the erastes is often deceived: his craving for a long-lasting relationship, based upon πισε, is usually not fulfilled. He blames his friend, because the latter is unfaithful to him and shows no respect.

2. The erastes often is dependent on his eromenos instead of the other way around. The eromenos is the stronger one and cunningly takes advantage of the emotional dependence of his lover.

3. The asymmetry in age is not a necessary condition. Both erastes and eromenos are called υεος and sexual contact between peers is mentioned.

4. The eromenos displays promiscuous habits; he has erotic needs and sexual desires himself. There are allusions to anal penetration by the erastes, which the eromenos seems to like. There are also allusions to adult men desiring to be penetrated, a behaviour that is connected with a feminine attitude. This negative association is not found with youths who have these desires. Male prostitutes for men are referred to.

5. In the erotic poems the aristocratic lifestyle hardly comes to the fore.

6. Nowhere in the erotic poems is a pedagogical role for the erastes mentioned. The focus of the poems is solely erotic. Only in the first book of the Corpus Theognideum the erastes advises the boy on practical issues - which lifestyle has to be chosen, which friends are good, the importance of showing δεπην, and the right attitude towards wealth and certain political matters. But it is unlikely that there is a connection between the contents of the poems of the first book and that of the second book. Therefore, it seems plausible to conclude that according to these erotic poems, paederasty has little to do with an explicit pedagogical purpose. The relationship could accidentally have had a pedagogical effect, but the principal motives are eroticism, sexuality and friendship.

7. The poets use euphemisms and metaphors when dealing with sex between erastes and eromenos. This is not exceptional: in other forms of poetry the poets also speak in veiled terms. The important thing is, that there are many allusions in homoerotic poetry to sexual activity.

In chapters 4, 5 and 6 the information is discussed which is provided by the vase-paintings with homosexual courting scenes from the sixth and fifth century. We studied Corinthian vase-paintings, attic black-figure vase-paintings with komoi- and courting scenes, and attic red-figure vase-paintings with courtship-, symposia- and komoi-scenes. Especially in the case of the courting scenes we have tried to make my collection as complete as possible. All in all, we have studied 268 black-figure vases with 383 courting scenes, and 360 red-figure vases with 507 courting scenes. This part of our research has led to the following conclusions.

- The view that the gifts used by the erastai for seducing the boys have a symbolic meaning and stress the role of the erastes as a tutor, seems to be wrong. The
material gifts (animals, meat and several kinds of objects) have an economic value and sometimes an erotic, not a pedagogical function. Only the lyre, the aulos and the diptychon could sometimes have such a association. The absence of gifts on the majority of the vase-paintings is interpreted as a representation of homosexual practices. This means that the supposed asymmetry in roles between the erastes and eromenos was not as big as is usually assumed.

The view that the homosexual relation always implied a relation between an adult and a youth or boy, is wrong. It is true that young boys (from 12 years onwards) were popular and that the growing of a beard might end the relation, but a lot of vase-paintings show youths, of equal age, involved in a seduction scene, or even grown-up men courting each other. Particularly red-figure vase-paintings show youths of the same age in a courting scene (one-third of all courtship scenes bear upon this category of lovers).

The view that the eromenos is a shy, bashful boy, unresponsive to the avances of the man, is wrong. The boy rarely refuses the attention of the seducer. His usual attitude of indifference indicates that he is not the one who takes the initiative. Being wrapped in a mantle does not point to a shy or timid attitude. Sometimes the boy shows explicit interest in eroticism.

The view that the eromenos does not experience sexual pleasure in the contact with his erastes, is very doubtful. The fact that a boy's scrotum is touched by an erastes, must be considered as an attempt to excite the boy. Moreover, there are a few paintings in which the boy is depicted with an erect penis, and, more important, on most pictures the erastes does not have an erection at all. Many scholars think that the usual form of sex between a man and a youth was intercrural copulation. Admittedly, on vase-paintings this is the normal way of depicting the final stage of seduction. But there are a lot of more paintings which show men who are interested in the posterior of another man. This is especially the case with pictures of komoi on black-figure vase-paintings. Sometimes a dildo is carried around. We assume that intercrural copulation is a euphemism for anal penetration.

From ca. 500 onwards the purse appears as a gift in seduction scenes. After 450 they disappear, with one single exception. There is no difference in iconography between a 'common' eromenos and one that accepts money for his services.

The vase-paintings confirm the custom of promiscuity. This must have been a general characteristic of homosexual behaviour.

Especially the red-figure vase-painting show that the painters follow a rather strict moral code in depicting homosexual encounters: their way of representing a seduction in homosexual images functions as a pictorial euphemism. Many homoerotic pictures have a strong prospective significance: the onlooker has to use his imagination to break the moral code.

In chapter 7 we discuss several important aspects of homosexuality in the sixth and fifth century. We refute the common view that the paederastic vase-paintings reflect exclusively an aspect of an aristocratic life-style, and that the disappearance of paederastic scenes has to do with anti-aristocratic feelings during the period of democracy.

We discuss the close connection between homosexuality and sports. The evidence of several sources is conclusive for the view that the sports centres were visited not only for training, but also for homosexual contacts. We may even describe the gymnasiums as what nowadays is known as 'cruising' places for homosexual encounters, and we claim that homosexual behaviour was standard in those centres.

We consider it very probable that the law on hetaeresis was introduced around 450. From that period onwards the purse disappears almost completely from the seduction
scenes on vase-paintings. Besides, we think that in the middle of the fifth century political and social developments gave rise to moral changes in sexual practice. Sexual freedom had led to behaviour that did not square with the political responsibility of the citizens. Several forms of homosexual behaviour such as promiscuity and prostitution and the breaking of the boundaries of paederasty were considered excessive. We link this development with the motives which led to the Citizenship-law of 451-450 of Pericles.

The evidence indicates that it is not sufficient to say that Athenian society considered the *kinaidos* contemptuous and reprehensible. There were, of course, Athenians who despised the men who were openly effeminate and liked to be penetrated, but the fact that thousands of citizens appreciated the jokes of Aristophanes about the 'wide-arsed' men, proves that this type was a well-known figure in urban life, and that Athenian society accepted them as a component of their culture.

We conclude this chapter with the god Dionysos: there are enough sources to warrant the conclusion that in the cult of this god men were allowed to reverse sexual roles. In the Prosymnos-myth the god is said to have penetrated himself on the grave of his friend with a branch, an aetiological myth for the ritual of erecting or carrying the phallus. Vase-paintings show that the komoi allowed men to be excited by the posterior of others. In Euripides' *Bacchae* we are confronted with an aspect of the Dionysiac reality that is connected with the sexual ambiguity of the god: Pentheus is punished by being compelled to wear women's clothes.

In chapter 8 we discuss the homosexual practice of the fourth century, based on an analysis of the speech of Aeschines (1), in which he accused Timarchus, a prominent Athenian politician, of prostitution. There was the law on the *hetairesis*, which stated that when an Athenian citizen had prostituted himself and practised political functions, he would be liable to severe punishment. We make clear that in this speech Aeschines tries to deceive the jury and wants them to believe that there were only two irreducible forms of homosexual behaviour: paederasty (the *eros dikaios*) and prostitution. Aeschines constructs this dichotomy in order to safeguard his own position, because he himself is a well-known paederast. We recognize several characteristics of the homosexual practice of the sixth and fifth century: promiscuity, the absence of any pedagogical aspect, the blurring of the distinction between paederasty and prostitution. We read about adult men living together and having a sexual relation. Furthermore, the speech indisputably makes clear that there was a wide gap between the moral code implied in this law and the sexual morals of daily life in Athens. It is certain that the law had fallen into disuse and that the contemporary Athenian society tolerated politically prominent men prostituting themselves.