

## THE CHASTE CONSECRATION OF THE THIGHS: POST-HOMERIC REPRESENTATIONS OF ACHILLES AND PATROCLUS IN CLASSICAL GREEK LITERATURE

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### Abstract

Although Homer's *Iliad* does not explicitly portray Achilles and Patroclus as lovers, they were characterized as such by many later authors in antiquity. A number of post-Homeric texts attempt either to redefine Achilles' and Patroclus' friendship as a sexual relationship, or to argue against such redefinition. Previous scholarship has tended to focus on the difficulty of adapting the Iliadic Achilles and Patroclus to the paradigm of Classical Greek pederastic homosexuality. This article demonstrates and analyzes how Classical and Hellenistic interpretations of Achilles' and Patroclus' relationship reflect the literary agendas of the works in which they are contained. We suggest that rather than "misreading" Homer, ancient authors creatively re-interpret the *Iliad* in order to present Achilles and Patroclus as the quintessential example of whichever type of bond between men they wish to praise, problematize, or otherwise evaluate.

### Introduction

IN the *Iliad*, Homer's eight century BCE epic poem set during the Trojan War, Achilles is portrayed as the greatest Greek warrior and Patroclus is his dearest companion. The question of how best to define the relationship between these two characters was first raised in antiquity and continues to be a source of both interest and anxiety in receptions of the *Iliad* up to the present day. In Homeric epic, their bond is never explicitly described as having a sexual element. It is, however, characterized by an emotional closeness and a passionate intensity that is not seen in any other male friendship in the poem.<sup>1</sup> When Achilles refuses to save the Greek army from the Trojans because he has been dishonored by the Greek commander Agamemnon, it is Patroclus who at last convinces him to show mercy, after he has denied the pleas of his other friends. Although he still refuses to fight himself, Achilles gives Patroclus his armor and lets him lead his soldiers into battle to drive back the Trojans from the Greek ships. Patroclus succeeds, but is then killed by the Trojan prince Hector. Achilles is overcome with inconsolable grief, and takes a terrible vengeance by killing Hector and

repeatedly dishonoring his corpse, to the dismay of both mortals and immortals. Apollo, the god of balance, declares that Achilles' sorrow for Patroclus exceeds what is appropriate to feel for a friend, or even for a brother or a son (24.46-49). Achilles himself laments that Patroclus' death is more painful to him than the death of his own father or child would be (19.321-327). What Achilles and Patroclus feel for each other in the *Iliad* is something wholly extraordinary, a love that exceeds the boundaries of ordinary human relationships. It is likely for this reason that in the early fifth century BCE, a number of extant texts begin either to redefine Achilles' and Patroclus' friendship as a sexual relationship, or argue against such a redefinition.

The most pressing issue these works grapple with is the fact that the Homeric portrayal of Achilles and Patroclus does not fit into the paradigm of pederastic homosexuality that was the norm in certain parts of Greece, particularly among the Athenian upper classes from the sixth through the fourth centuries. Such relationships involved an older, dominant partner, called the *erastês*, and a younger, submissive partner, called the *erômenos* or *paidika*. The *erastês* was usually an adult, while the typical *erômenos* was an adolescent boy who had not yet grown a beard.

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<sup>1</sup> Clarke 1978

The grammatical construction of these terms reveals the inherent inequality of the two roles: *erastês* is active, “he who loves,” while *erômenos* is passive, “he who is loved.” Sexual dominance is associated with social dominance. There was virtually no conception of reciprocal male sexual desire between equals (Dover 1978 16), and for a younger man to act as an *erastês* to an older man was seen as a form of perversion and sexual deviance (cf. Xen. *Anab.* 2.6).

Achilles and Patroclus in the *Iliad* do not conform to this accepted pattern of homosexuality in a number of respects. Most importantly, Patroclus is older (*Il.* 11.785-89), but plays a subordinate role, acting as Achilles’ servant and obeying his orders (*Il.* 9.199f). He is also, like all the other Achaeans, less skilled in battle than Achilles. In order to depict Achilles and Patroclus as a pederastic couple, classical authors were compelled to alter significant aspects of the original Homeric representation of these two characters, either ignoring Patroclus’ age to portray him as Achilles’ *erômenos*, or ignoring his social and martial inferiority to depict him as Achilles’ *erastês*.

These attempts to force Achilles’ and Patroclus’ relationship into the framework of pederasty may indicate that a profound cultural change occurred between the eighth and fifth centuries with regard to the way Greek, particularly Athenian, society characterized intense emotional relationships between men. In classical Athens, pederastic *erôs* was a conspicuous form of male love among the upper classes, and it was natural for many Athenians to view Achilles’ devotion to Patroclus in this context. The fact that the *Iliad* does not characterize Achilles and Patroclus as pederastic lovers, and that there are in fact no *erastês/erômenos* relationships at all in Homeric epic, is often taken as evidence that pederasty was much less normal, perhaps even non-

existent, in Homer’s time (Levin 47).<sup>2</sup> It is also possible that pederasty is absent from Homeric epic for other reasons, such as genre convention.<sup>3</sup>

Previous scholarship on this topic has tended to focus on the difficulty of adapting the Iliadic Achilles and Patroclus to the model of classical pederasty, and on their inherent incompatibility with such a dynamic.<sup>4</sup> Little attention, however, has been paid to the creativity of post-Homeric authors in presenting Achilles and Patroclus as the quintessential example of whichever type of bond between men they wish to praise, analyze, or otherwise evaluate. The shared trend in these texts is that each seeks to make a specific point about male relationships and cites Achilles and Patroclus as evidence, often emphasizing particular details in the *Iliad* which support their argument while disregarding others. The concern of these authors is not with interpreting Homer accurately, but with interpreting Homer usefully. No piece of classical rhetoric was complete without a Homeric precedent, and an important part of a Greek education was learning how to

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Hubbard implies that pederasty existed in some areas of Greece but not in others: “Epic tradition is generally reticent about same-sex love because, whatever may have been going on in Crete or Sparta at this time, it lacked sufficient Panhellenic status to be acknowledged in poems that were meant to appeal to all Greeks. Homosexuality is thus left as a possible reading for those members of the audience inclined to it, but it nowhere forces itself upon us” (Hubbard 790).

<sup>3</sup> A potential analogue can be seen in Apollonius’ treatment of the Hylas story in the *Argonautica*. He does not portray Hylas’ and Hercules’ relationship as sexual, although his near contemporary Theocritus does so in Idyll 13. Apollonius is likely imitating the lack of pederasty in Homeric epic, but it is possible that Homer himself was influenced in a similar way by an archaizing poetic tradition that looked back towards the Mycenaean Era and did not necessarily accurately evoke the details of eight-century society.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Halperin 1990, Clarke 1978

quote or gloss Homer to one's own advantage (Ford 231-256). The perception of Achilles as an admired figure, worthy of emulation, made his bond with Patroclus ideal for exploitation.

The idea of a "correct" interpretation of Achilles' and Patroclus' sexuality is, for the purposes of this paper, neither relevant nor useful. I intend instead to offer a comprehensive survey of classical Athenian texts which comment on the nature of Achilles' and Patroclus' relationship, while paying particular attention to how each interpretation reflects the literary agenda and cultural context of the work in which it appears. A comparison of these texts sheds light on the techniques authors used in adapting Homer to their own uses and the ways that classical conceptions of sexuality influenced receptions of Homeric epic.

## Aeschylus

The first known literary work to characterize Achilles' and Patroclus' relationship as sexual is Aeschylus' *Myrmidons*, which dates from the early fifth century BCE. This play is now lost, but the plot may be partially reconstructed from surviving fragments and references to it in other texts. It appears to coincide with the action of Books 9-18 of the *Iliad*, and deals with the consequences of Achilles' decision to withdraw from battle due to his anger at having been dishonored by King Agamemnon. The portrayal of Achilles and Patroclus in the *Myrmidons* differs in important ways from their portrayal in Homeric epic. By making them a pederastic couple, Aeschylus transforms their complex bond in the *Iliad* from something exceptional and difficult to define into a conventional relationship that fits neatly into the social framework of classical Athens.<sup>5</sup> The play also has a distinctly democratic flavor that is foreign to the aristocratic world that Homer portrays. From

<sup>5</sup> For the complex construction of Achilles' and Patroclus' relationship in the *Iliad*, see Halperin 1990, Mills 2000.

the information we have about the *Myrmidons*, it seems that Aeschylus' intention was not to reproduce the *Iliad* without alteration, but to adapt and reinterpret the story of Achilles in order to explore socio-political issues that were important to the early fifth-century *polis* (Michelakis 22).

The pederastic nature of Achilles' and Patroclus' love in the *Myrmidons* is made clear by a line in which Achilles reproaches the dead Patroclus: σέβας δὲ μηρῶν ἄγνόν οὐ κατηδέσω / ὃ δυσχάριστε τῶν ποικνῶν φιλημάτων, "And you did not respect the chaste consecration of the thighs, oh ungrateful that you were for those countless kisses!"<sup>6</sup> (fr. 135). Another fragment reads, μηρῶν τε τῶν σῶν ἠὲ σέβησ' ὀμιλίαν / κλαίων,<sup>7</sup> "I honored the intimacy of your thighs by bewailing you" (fr. 136). The phrases *sebas mērōn hagnon* and *mērōn tōn sōn homilian*, the "chaste consecration" and "intimacy" of Patroclus' thighs, are references to intercrural sex, the socially acceptable form of sexual conduct in a pederastic relationship. The practice is described in Dover's *Greek Homosexuality*. "The erastes and eromenos stand facing one another; the erastes grasps the eromenos round the torso, bows his head on to or even below the shoulder of the eromenos, bends his knees and thrusts his penis between the eromenos' thighs" (Dover 1978 98). Achilles' erotic devotion to the thighs of Patroclus confirms his status as the *erastēs* and Patroclus' status as the *erōmenos*<sup>8</sup> Halperin comments:

[This] was no more than what was consistent with the differential distribution of power in the relationship for, as we have seen, Achilles had both personal and narratological precedence over his

<sup>6</sup> Translations by Sommerstein, 2008

<sup>7</sup> An alternate reconstruction is μηρῶν τε τῶν σῶν εὐσεβῆς ὀμιλία (cf. Snell 15)

<sup>8</sup> This is corroborated by Plato's Symposium 180a, in which Phaedrus says that Aeschylus made Achilles the erastes of Patroclus.

comrade: to Aeschylus' mind, it was obvious that Achilles must have been on top in other respects as well (classical Greek pederasty, after all, tended to assimilate social and sexual roles) (Halperin 86).

Although pederasty does not appear in the *Iliad*, it was ubiquitous among the Athenian elite in the sixth, fifth, and fourth centuries, making it an obvious context in which to situate a close emotional relationship between two epic male characters. In a similar reflection of the fifth-century social reality, the *Myrmidons* focuses not on the quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles, but on a clash between Achilles and the body of the Achaean army that is not portrayed in Homeric epic. Interactions between heroes and common soldiers are given little attention in the *Iliad*, but this theme was of the highest relevance in the context of Athenian democracy. Aeschylus uses the story of Achilles to dramatize the contentious relationship between the egalitarian Athenian *demos* and the exceptional individuals it produced (Michelakis 24-30).

The play opens (Sommerstein 146-147) with the chorus of Myrmidons berating Achilles for abandoning his fellow Greeks: τὰδε μὲν λεύσσεις, φαίδιμ' Ἀχιλλεῦ, / δοριλυμάντους Δαναῶν μόχθους, / οὗς σὺ προπίνεις <θάσσων> εἴσω / κλισίας, "Do you see this, glorious Achilles— /the toils of the spear-ravaged Danaans, / whom you are betraying [by sitting idle] within / your hut...?" (fr. 136). The use of the verb προπίνειν is significant: they are accusing Achilles of treason. We know from another fragment that the Achaean army also threatens to stone Achilles if he will not rejoin the battle (fr. 132c.1). This episode is not in the *Iliad*, and it reveals how Aeschylus has altered the story to give it relevance to a democratic context:

When the Greeks threaten Achilles with stoning, they are claiming for themselves a right: the right to punish him. In the *Iliad*

the legation can attempt to persuade Achilles, can offer him gifts so that he desists from his anger, can convince him (245) that he himself will be in difficulties if the Greeks are defeated, and can ask him, even if he is angry with Agamemnon, to have pity on the other Greeks (301); but they claim no pretext for taking legal proceedings against him, indeed they do not even appeal to something like comradeship. The stoning is a death penalty in which every member of the community has the right to take part...[It] is above all the punishment for deserters (Snell 4-5).

Unlike the Homeric Achilles, the Achilles of the *Myrmidons* is answerable to the people, and the people attempt to enforce their power upon him. In another fragment, Achilles voices his rage against Agamemnon and the army. He declares that the reason for his inaction is anger because of bad leadership (literally *poimenos kakou*, "because of a bad shepherd," fr. 132c.8), and that fear of the Achaeans will not induce him to rejoin the battle. He points out that if the soldiers stone him, they will not get what they want, which is for him to save them from the Trojans. He says they will not dare to harm him:

....] περ εἶς ὄν, ὡς λέγουσι σύμμαχοι,  
.....]ν τοσαύτην ἔκτισ' οὐ παρὸν μάχη  
.....]μ' ἐγὼ τὰ πάντ' Ἀχαιϊκῶ στρατῷ

[If] all on my own, as our allies claim, I caused so much [harm] by my absence from battle, then I [alone] am everything to the Achaean army (fr. 132c.9-11).

This is said with characteristic Achillean arrogance, but it is not exaggeration. The soldiers are left in an untenable position, as Achilles is both the cause of their present peril and the only thing that can save them from it. Here Aeschylus' narrative choice reflects the unease that the individual glory of certain political leaders aroused in the democratic citizen body. Fifth-

century Athens produced a number of brilliant men whom the *demos* both loved and hated, whose talents proved indispensable to the *polis* but whose personal power made them objects of suspicion to a tyrant-fearing citizenry.<sup>9</sup> The characterization of Achilles in the *Myrmidons* seems to emphasize the painful paradox at the heart of Athenian democratic politics: that the exceptional citizens who threatened the egalitarian *ethos* were nevertheless necessary to the city.

Significantly, it is Achilles' relationship with Patroclus that leads to a resolution of the stalemate with the army. In the *Myrmidons*, as in the *Iliad*, Patroclus causes Achilles to rejoin the war by going to the defense of the Achaean ships and being killed by Hector. However, the sexual element of Achilles' and Patroclus' relationship in the play adds a thematic layer to these actions which is not present in the original. Against the backdrop of Achilles' conflict with the people, Aeschylus explores the role of pederastic love in society, touching on both its positive and negative aspects.

Both Michelakis and Snell speculate that the *Myrmidons* may to some degree have problematized Achilles' love for Patroclus. The evidence for this lies in Achilles' use of the word *sebas* to describe their sexual relationship, which both scholars argue the audience would have found excessive and inappropriate (Snell 14,

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<sup>9</sup> The fifth-century practice of ostracism, in which the Athenian *demos* voted to exile powerful citizens by writing their names on pieces of pottery, highlights the Athenian fear that any politician who was too prominent and successful might harbor ambitions of becoming a tyrant (cf. Michelakis 25-26). A scholiast on Aristophanes' *Knights* 885 writes: "Virtually all the most accomplished men were ostracized: Aristides, Cimon, Themistocles, Thucydides, Alcibiades."

Michelakis 44).<sup>10</sup> Snell asserts, "It must have shocked even the Athenians when Achilles looks on the friendship as something sacred and speaks of the 'chaste consecration of the thighs' and the 'devout union of the thighs'" (Snell 15). Michelakis suggests that Achilles' use of *sebas* to describe his devotion to his beloved is symptomatic of his lack of proper respect. Rather than the exhibiting the correct reverential response to Agamemnon and the Achaean army, the sources of power which society expects him to obey, Achilles perversely shows inordinate reverence for Patroclus' thighs while scorning the authority of the army and its leader. In the *Myrmidons*, Achilles' immoderate love for Patroclus becomes something that divides him from the rest of his fellow Greeks.<sup>11</sup> This characterization of pederasty suggests that erotic devotion to individuals may function to undermine social obligations to one's community. Michelakis writes, "The *Myrmidons* questions the premise that private and public interests can be mutually supportive" (Michelakis 44).

On the other hand, it is pederastic love which ultimately overcomes the division between Achilles and the army. Achilles rejoins the war, and in doing so rejoins his community, because of his love for Patroclus and his desire to avenge his death. Michelakis suggests that in this situation, pederasty functions as a mediating factor in a social conflict, and homosexual desire is portrayed as a link which binds individuals to a common cause: "homosexual desire serves as a means of achieving social solidarity—even without consensus" (Michelakis 44-45). One may compare this idea to that of the army of *erastai* and their *eromenoi* in Plato's *Symposium*,

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<sup>10</sup> In the *Iliad*, Achilles is frequently censured for his excessive emotional reactions: by Ajax 9.632-638, by Patroclus 16.21-45, by Apollo 24.46-49.

<sup>11</sup> Just as it does in the *Iliad*, as exemplified by Achilles' wish at 16.97-100 for the annihilation of the rest of the Achaean army other than himself and Patroclus.

who, Phaedrus suggests, would be able to conquer the world because of their courage inspired by *erôs* (Plat. *Sym* 178e-179a).<sup>12</sup>

This complex representation may reflect the double valence of pederasty in classical Athenian society. In some sources, it is associated with undemocratic sentiment and the values of the aristocracy, as in the speech of Just Argument in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (960-1020). On the other hand, pederasty was often characterized as *essentially* democratic, enshrined in the democracy's founding myth and exemplified by the self-sacrificing love of Harmodius and Aristogeiton who died to free the *demos* from tyranny (Pl. *Sym* 182c, Aeschin. *Tim* 132). The portrayal of pederasty in the *Myrmidons* perhaps toys with the first idea, but seems ultimately to agree more with the second.

The characterization of Achilles and Patroclus as a pederastic couple in the *Myrmidons* is part of a larger effort on Aeschylus' part to adapt the story of Achilles to an early fifth-century frame of reference. Not only would a classical audience have seen a pederastic relationship as a natural context in which to express homoerotic affection, but the complex position of pederastic *erôs* in Athenian society would have made it an ideal subject for dramatic exploitation. It is unknown if Aeschylus was the first author to

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<sup>12</sup> An army composed entirely of pederastic lovers did in fact exist during the classical period: the Sacred Band of Thebes, which was founded circa 378. According to Dover, it was "the hard core of the Boiotian army, a formidable army at all times, throughout the middle period of the fourth century, and at Khaironeia in 338, where Philip II of Macedon crushed Greek opposition, it died to a man" (Dover 1978 192). Whether or not the notion of "social solidarity" can properly be used to describe the effect of such an organization is debatable, as a man who fights out of love for his beloved is motivated by loyalty to an individual, not to a society. The fact remains, however, that pederastic *erôs* could and did benefit the common interest of the *polis* by motivating men to fight bravely.

portray Achilles and Patroclus as lovers, but the fact that a number of later authors cite the *Myrmidons* when discussing Achilles and Patroclus and/or homosexual desire suggests that this play became to some extent paradigmatic.<sup>13</sup> When considering later literary representations of Achilles and Patroclus, it is often relevant to inquire whether or not the work in question is influenced by or reacting against Aeschylus.

## Plato

Phaedrus' speech in Plato's *Symposium* offers a different interpretation of Achilles' and Patroclus' relationship from the one in the *Myrmidons*. That they were a pederastic couple is taken for granted, but Phaedrus challenges Aeschylus' portrayal of Achilles as Patroclus' *erastês*, claiming that it contradicts the information presented by Homer; he cites textual evidence in the *Iliad* which "proves" that Achilles must have instead been Patroclus' *erômenos*:

Αισχύλος δὲ φλυαρεῖ φάσκων Ἀχιλλεῖα  
Πατρόκλου ἐρᾶν, ὅς ἦν καλλίων οὐ μόνον  
Πατρόκλου ἀλλ' ἅμα καὶ τῶν ἡρώων  
ἀπάντων, καὶ ἔτι ἀγένειος, ἔπειτα νεώτερος  
πολύ, ὡς φησιν Ὅμηρος.

Aeschylus is talking nonsense when he says that it was Achilles who was in love with Patroclus, because Achilles was more beautiful not only than Patroclus, but than all the heroes, and his beard was not yet grown, moreover he was much younger, as Homer says<sup>14</sup> (180a).

Phaedrus is likely referring to *Il.* 2.673-75, where Achilles is called κάλλιστος ἀνὴρ ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθε / τῶν ἄλλων Δαναῶν, "the most beautiful of the Danaans who came under Iliion," and to *Il.* 11.785-89, where Nestor suggests that Patroclus

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Plato, *Symposium*, 180a; Plutarch, *Moralia* 61a and 751c; Athenaeus 13.602e; Lucian, *Erotes*, 54

<sup>14</sup> Translation by Tom Griffith, 1989

should act as an advisor to Achilles because he is older and wiser.

The *Iliad* does state that Achilles is younger and more beautiful than Patroclus, which to a classical audience would have meant that it would be inappropriate for him to be Patroclus' *erastês*. Phaedrus has picked out specific details from the *Iliad* which bolster his claim, but his characterization of Achilles as Patroclus' physically immature *erômenos* is no more supported by the original text than is Aeschylus' adolescent Patroclus. The passage in Book 11 does not say that Achilles is younger *by far* (*neôteros polu*), as Phaedrus claims, but only that Patroclus is older (*presbuteros*) by some unspecified amount. Phaedrus ignores Patroclus' subservient role as Achilles' *therapôn* ("servant/charioteer") and the multiple passages which refer to Achilles as larger and stronger than the other heroes. Furthermore, the portrayal of Achilles as a beardless youth that Phaedrus cites is not Homeric, but rather a convention of vase painting that was especially popular in the second half of the fifth century (Dover 1980 95).

Phaedrus' insistence that Achilles was Patroclus' *erômenos* has less to do with a desire for accuracy than it does with furthering the central argument of his speech in praise of *erôs*. He argues that *erôs*, more than anything else, produces excellence in human beings. For evidence he offers the fact that "lovers alone" (*monoi hoi erôntes*) are willing to die for their beloveds. In this category, he includes not only men, but women as well, since the first example he cites is Alcestis, who alone was willing to die in place of her husband Admetus because she surpassed his father and mother in her *philia*<sup>15</sup> for him *dia ton*

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<sup>15</sup> Friendship/familial love, used to denote a strong bond of loyalty, unlike erotic passion, which is perceived as more fickle and does not involve an inherent sense of mutual obligation. However, *philia* and *erôs* are not mutually exclusive, and may

*erôta*, "because of her *erôs*" (179b-c). In the model Phaedrus presents, it is *erôs* which "generates that extreme *philia* which leads to self-sacrifice" (Dover 1980 93). It is clear that in this case Phaedrus envisions Alcestis as an *erastês* and Admetus as the object of her love. For a woman to be characterized in this way in classical Greek literature is highly unusual, and at the very least, aberrant (women, like boys, were meant to be objects, not subjects of *erôs*). According to Phaedrus' argument, *erôs* is so powerful that it can motivate even women to perform extraordinary acts.

Orpheus is presented as a counterexample—he was not brave enough to die for his beloved and so the gods rejected his supplication.<sup>16</sup> Phaedrus then says that it was Achilles who provided the greatest example of self-sacrifice motivated by love by dying for Patroclus. Although Achilles' divine mother Thetis had told him that his own death would follow soon after killing the Trojan prince Hector, he still chose to avenge Patroclus by doing so, and in that sense sacrificed his life for him (179e). Phaedrus believes that it was this act which led the gods to honor Achilles and send him to the *μακάρων νῆσοι*, the "Islands of the Blessed," because for an *erômenos* to die for his *erastês* is an extraordinary thing.<sup>17</sup> For an

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coexist in the same relationship, as Phaedrus suggests.

<sup>16</sup> Dover suggests that the version of the Orpheus myth to which Phaedrus refers may differ from the well known version which appears in Vergil's *Georgics* and other sources (Dover 1980 93-94).

<sup>17</sup> The reference to the *μακάρων νῆσοι* further demonstrates Phaedrus' willingness to freely adapt Homer to his own needs, as neither the Islands of the Blessed nor the tradition of Achilles being granted a blissful afterlife are Homeric. The Islands of the Blessed first appear as the home of dead heroes in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (171). This idea is similar to the Elysian Plain that Homer describes in his other great epic, the *Odyssey* (Od. 4.561-569) as the destination of Menelaus after death, but not of Achilles. Rather, Homer depicts Achilles in the *Odyssey* as a shade in the underworld (Od.

*erastês* to die for his *erômenos* is natural, Phaedrus suggests, because an *erastês* is *theioteron*, “more divine” than the one he loves. He is *entheos*, possessed by the god Eros. His love is expected and not at all surprising (180a-b).

It may appear logically inconsistent for Phaedrus to present the self-sacrifice of an *erômenos* as his greatest proof of the power of *erôs*, since he has said that only *erôntes*, those who experience *erôs*, will sacrifice themselves. The word *erômenos* is the same as the passive participle of the verb *eraô*, by definition it signifies the object of *erôs*, never the subject (Dover 1978 16). The Greeks did not conceive of *erôs* as a mutual emotion. If a woman or a boy reciprocated a man’s love, this sentiment was given the designation *anterôs*, “love in return,” which was viewed as a response to or replica of the original *erôs* of the adult male lover.

It would likely have startled the Greeks to hear Alcestis, a woman, characterized by Phaedrus as being motivated by *erôs*, but it would have been even more startling for them to hear an *erômenos* described in this way. Women were expected to experience *anterôs*, but in classical texts, the use of the term *anterôs* for the feelings of an *erômenos* is relatively uncommon, with Plato’s *Phaedrus* providing a rare example (255d). A more usual way of describing an *erômenos* is that he is *philerastês*, “fond of his *erastês*” (cf. Plat. *Sym.* 192b). Dover writes, “In a homosexual relationship...the *erômenos* is not expected to reciprocate the eros of the erastes” (Dover 1978 52). In any case, the verb Phaedrus uses to describe Achilles’ love for Patroclus is not *anteraô*, but *agapaô*, a word which has the

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11.488f and 24.1-200). In the lost epic *Aethiopsis*, however, Achilles is granted an afterlife on Leuke, the White Island (Proclus, *Chrestomathia*, suppleta ex. Apollod. epit. 5.1-6; cf. West 111). This appears to be the story that Phaedrus is referring to. The White Island was associated with the Islands of the Blessed from an early date, and the two names may have been used synonymously (Ivantchik 133).

general meaning “love” or “show affection for,” but which could also be used in Classical Greek to denote a love which had a sexual element to it (LSJ I; cf. Dover 1980 2). This does little to clarify the role of *erôs* in Achilles’ decision to die for Patroclus.

One must either assume that Plato intended to make Phaedrus invalidate his own argument, or that Phaedrus has purposely assigned Achilles to the set of *erôntes*, despite his seemingly contradictory role as *erômenos*, in order to make a point about the greatness of *erôs*. Support for the latter hypothesis can be found in the text. Plato has written:

ἀλλὰ γὰρ τῷ ὄντι μάλιστα μὲν ταύτην τὴν ἀρετὴν οἱ θεοὶ τιμῶσιν τὴν περὶ τὸν ἔρωτα, μᾶλλον μέντοι θαυμάζουσιν καὶ ἄγανται καὶ εὖ ποιοῦσιν ὅταν ὁ ἐρώμενος τὸν ἐραστὴν ἀγαπᾷ, ἢ ὅταν ὁ ἐραστὴς τὰ παιδικά.

The gods especially honor the virtue which arises from *erôs*, however they are more amazed and pleased and grant rewards when the *erômenos* loves the *erastês* than when the *erastês* loves his *paidika*. (180a-b)

This sentence seems to imply that an *erômenos* dying for an *erastês* is an example of τὴν ἀρετὴν τὴν περὶ τὸν ἔρωτα, “virtue which arises from *erôs*,” just as an *erastês* dying for an *erômenos* would be. The *agapê* of Achilles for Patroclus could therefore be said to arise from *erôs*, just as the *philia* of Alcestis did. The wording of this passage is perhaps too ambiguous to draw any definite conclusions, but it seems to be attributing *erôs* to an *erômenos*.

The key to these lines likely lies in Phaedrus’ use of Alcestis as an exemplar. If he is prepared to argue that *erôs* is powerful enough to motivate *even women* to sacrifice themselves for the ones they love, it would logically follow that the still more unlikely example of an *erômenos* being

motivated by *erôs* to sacrifice himself for his *erastês* would in fact be the most perfect proof of Phaedrus' argument. That an *erômenos* is generally considered to be incapable of feeling *erôs* merely strengthens his case: *erôs* has the power to engender self-sacrifice even in those who should by their very natures be immune to it.

By assigning Achilles the role of an *erômenos* who dies for his *erastês*, Phaedrus has characterized the love between Achilles and Patroclus as something surprising and out of the ordinary. Unlike the more traditional *erastês/erômenos* relationship depicted in Aeschylus' *Myrmidons*, the relationship described in Plato's *Symposium* transgresses societal expectations. Indeed, there is a strong suggestion that Phaedrus dislikes Aeschylus' interpretation because of its conventionality. He prefers a story about an *erômenos* sacrificing himself for his *erastês* because it is something beyond the natural order of things, and is therefore a greater cause for amazement.

## Xenophon

Achilles and Patroclus are also used as an exemplary paradigm in a different context in Xenophon's *Symposium*, which many scholars believe was written, either in whole or in part, as a response to Plato's *Symposium* (Thesleff 157-170). Chapter VIII of Xenophon's *Symposium* is largely comprised of a long speech by Socrates on the superiority of non-sexual friendship to pederastic relationships based on sexual desire. The benefits of spiritual love and the inferior nature of physical love are themes frequently expounded by Plato's Socrates (e.g. *Sym* 199c-212b; *Phaedrus* 244a-257b), but Xenophon's Socrates is more didactic and censorious in his disapproval of pederastic sexual relationships, especially in comparison to the Socrates in Plato's *Symposium*. Rather than suggesting that his listeners should sublimate their sexual desire to the higher *erôs* of philosophy, Xenophon's

Socrates unequivocally condemns sex with an *erômenos* as degrading for the man and unpleasant for the boy:

οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ παῖς τῷ ἀνδρὶ ὡς περ γυνὴ κοινωνεῖ τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἀφροδισίοις εὐφροσυνῶν, ἀλλὰ νήφων μεθύοντα ὑπὸ τῆς ἀφροδίτης θεᾶται. ἐξ ὧν οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν εἰ καὶ τὸ ὑπερορᾶν ἐγγίγνεται αὐτῷ τοῦ ἐραστοῦ.

A boy doesn't share the pleasures of sex with a man as a woman does: he's sober, facing a sexual drunk. It's no wonder if as a result he even develops disdain for his *erastês* (8.21-22).<sup>18</sup>

Socrates' speech in chapter VIII of Xenophon's *Symposium* attacks several ideas presented in Phaedrus' speech in Plato's *Symposium*, specifically the assertion that Achilles died for Patroclus because they were lovers,<sup>19</sup> as well as the idea that *erôs* is effective as a motivation for martial courage. First Xenophon's Socrates makes it clear that there was no sexual element to Achilles' and Patroclus' friendship:

ἀλλὰ μὴν, ὦ Νικήρατε, καὶ Ἀχιλλεὺς Ὀμήρῳ πεποιῆται οὐχ ὡς παιδικοῖς Πατρόκλῳ ἀλλ' ὡς ἐταίρῳ ἀποθανόντι ἐκπρεπέστατα τιμωρῆσαι. καὶ Ὀρέστης δὲ καὶ Πυλάδης καὶ Θησεὺς καὶ Πειρίθους καὶ ἄλλοι δὲ πολλοὶ τῶν ἡμιθέων οἱ ἄριστοι ὑμνοῦνται οὐ διὰ τὸ συγκαθεύδειν ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ ἄγασθαι ἀλλήλους τὰ μέγιστα καὶ κάλλιστα κοινῇ διαπερᾶσθαι.

Now, Niceratos: Homer has made Achilles take that spectacular revenge for Patroclus

<sup>18</sup> Translation by A.J. Bowen, 1998

<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting that although Plato's Socrates comments on Phaedrus' interpretation of Achilles and Patroclus, he does not explicitly contradict Phaedrus' assertion that they were lovers. All he says is that Achilles died to avenge Patroclus out of a desire for undying fame rather than out of devotion to Patroclus as an individual (208d).

because it was his companion?] (*hetairoi*) that died, not his *paidika*; and Orestes and Pylades, and Theseus and Pirithous, and many others of the best of the demigods, are celebrated in song for having achieved their great and glorious deeds together not because they slept together but because of their mutual esteem. (8.31)

These lines are likely meant to remind Socrates' audience of the lack of pederastic terminology in the *Iliad*. Fourth century readers were certainly capable of discerning this lack and commenting upon it, as Aeschines proves in *Against Timarchus* (see below).

Xenophon's Socrates also disparages the idea that an army composed of *erastai* and their *paidika* would be an effective fighting force. This seems to be meant as a rebuttal to the famous passage from Plato's *Symposium* in which Phaedrus says that an army of lovers could conquer the world (178e-179a). Xenophon's Socrates thinks that this would in fact be the worst kind of army, due to the poor moral character of men who have sex with boys:

τούτους γὰρ ἂν ἔφη οἴεσθαι μάλιστα αἰδεῖσθαι ἀλλήλους ἀπολείπειν, θαυμαστά λέγων, εἴ γε οἱ ψόγου τε ἀφροντιστεῖν καὶ ἀναισχυντεῖν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἐθιζόμενοι, οὗτοι μάλιστα αἰσχυνοῦνται αἰσχρόν τι ποιεῖν.

He said he thought these people would be the most ashamed of deserting each other, a remarkable thing to say if the people who would be most ashamed of doing something ugly were those in the habit of disregarding censure and trampling on the other's feelings (8.33).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> If this passage is indeed meant as a reference to Plato, Xenophon has misattributed the quote, assigning it to Pausanias, another speaker in Plato's *Symposium*, rather than to Phaedrus: Πανσανίας γε ὁ Ἀγάθωνος τοῦ ποιητοῦ ἐραστὴς ἀπολογούμενος

Xenophon's Socrates uses Achilles and Patroclus as an example of an ideal relationship between men, one based solely on *philia* rather than *erōs*. Their prowess comes not from a sexual bond (οὐ διὰ τὸ συγκαθεύδειν), but from mutual respect and admiration (τὸ ἄγασθαι ἀλλήλους). He has chosen to characterize them this way in order to provide proof for the overall argument of his speech: that pederastic sex is without benefits, especially in a martial context.<sup>21</sup>

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ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀκρασία συγκυλινδουμένων εἴρηκεν ὡς καὶ στρατεύμα ἀλκιμώτατον ἂν γένοιτο ἐκ παιδικῶν τε καὶ ἐραστῶν. "Pausanias, *erastēs* of the poet Agathon, speaking in defense of those who wallow in intemperance, observed that out of *erastai* and their *paidika*, a most valiant army could be made" (8.32). It is probable that Xenophon simply made a mistake, as Pausanias' speech comes directly after Phaedrus'. The less likely alternative is that Xenophon is referencing not Plato's *Symposium*, but a speech by the historical Pausanias (Hubbard 219n85).

<sup>21</sup> Clifford Hindley has argued convincingly that Xenophon himself did not share the extreme views on pederasty that he attributes to Socrates. There are a number of instances in Xenophon's writings where pederasty in a martial context is positively portrayed, such as the story of Episthenes, a *paiderastēs* who was willing to die to save the life of a beautiful boy (*Anab.* 7.4.7); the devotion of the Greek soldier Plisthenes to the captive son of an Armenian village headman (*Anab.* 4.6.1-3); the love affair between Archidamus, son of King Agesilaus of Sparta, and Cleonymus, son of Sphodrias (*Hell.* 5.4.25-33; 6.4.13f.); and the account of the Spartan general Anaxibius, whose *erōmenos* refused to abandon him as he fought to the death (*Hell.* 4.8.38-9). These examples show that Xenophon does believe that *erōs* can sometimes inspire loyalty, devotion, and heroism in soldiers (Hindley 80). Furthermore, in the *Memorabilia* when Socrates warns Critobulus of the dangers of kissing Alcibiades' son, Xenophon remarks that this is the sort of risk he himself would be willing to take (*Mem.* 1.3.10). From this we may assume that Xenophon is neither immune to the charms of beautiful boys nor unaccustomed to acting upon his desires. According to Hindley, Xenophon does not appear to have been opposed to pederastic

## Aeschines

The latest extant classical text which attempts to define the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus is *Against Timarchus*, a speech delivered by Aeschines in 346 or 345 BCE. At that time, Demosthenes and Timarchus, a minor politician, were bringing a suit of misconduct against Aeschines for his role in the Athenian embassy to Macedon in 346. Aeschines retaliated by launching a prosecution against Timarchus, the less formidable of his two opponents, on the grounds that he had prostituted himself in his youth and was therefore forbidden by Athenian law to address the assembly. The accusation was successful and Timarchus was convicted, more because of Aeschines' rhetorical skill than because of any solid evidence (Carey 18). This prosecution speech is significant because it is a goldmine of information about classical Athenian laws and attitudes regarding male homosexuality. Unlike Plato's works, which were written for an elite and highly-educated minority, *Against Timarchus* was composed with the average Athenian juror in mind, and therefore likely reflects viewpoints which would have been acceptable to the majority of Athenian citizens (cf. Dover 1978 19-109).

Achilles and Patroclus are mentioned in the section of the speech where Aeschines anticipates and refutes the arguments of the defense. He conjures up a hypothetical opponent:

τῶν στρατηγῶν τις, ὡς ἀκούω, ὑπιάζων καὶ κατασκοπούμενος ἑαυτὸν, ὡς ἐν παλαίστραις καὶ διατριβαῖς γεγωνῶς (132).<sup>22</sup>

One of the generals will take the stand for the defense, I'm told, carrying himself arrogantly and preening himself, with the air of a man who has frequented the

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sexual relationships that were conducted with self-control and moderation (Hindley 97).

<sup>22</sup> Translation adapted from Chris Carey, 2000

wrestling schools and the philosophers' haunts.

Aeschines predicts that this general will denounce him for attacking the institution of pederasty and instigating δεινῆς ἀπαιδευσίας ἀρχήν, "the beginning of a terrible lack of cultivation," because pederastic *erōs* has been proven to confer great benefits. Among his imagined examples are Harmodius and Aristogeiton, whose love freed Athens from tyranny, and the φιλίαν δι' ἔρωτα, "friendship arising from *erōs*," of Achilles and Patroclus (133). The hypothetical general will then accuse Aeschines of hypocrisy for condemning pederasty when he himself has been πλείστων ἐραστής, "the *erastēs* of many," and furthermore he will produce and read aloud a number of love poems which Aeschines has written to beautiful boys (135).

In response to these anticipated claims, Aeschines says that he does not criticize *dikaios erōs*, homosexual desire which is appropriate and legitimate, nor does he deny that he has experienced such desire (136). He draws a sharp contrast, however, between *dikaios erōs* and Timarchus' alleged behavior:

ὀρίζομαι δ' εἶναι τὸ μὲν ἐρᾶν τῶν καλῶν καὶ σωφρόνων φιλανθρώπου πάθος καὶ εὐγνώμονος ψυχῆς, τὸ δὲ ἀσελγαίνειν ἀργυρίου τινὰ μισθούμενον ὑβριστοῦ καὶ ἀπαιδεύτου ἀνδρὸς ἔργον· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀδιαφθόρως ἐρᾶσθαι φημι καλὸν εἶναι, τὸ δ' ἐπαρθέντα μισθῷ πεπορνεῦσθαι αἰσχρόν.

According to my definition, desire for those who are noble and decent is an emotion of the generous and discerning spirit, but debauchery based on hiring someone for money I consider characteristic of a wanton and uncultivated man. And to be loved without corruption I count as noble, while to have been induced

to prostitute oneself by money is shameful (137).

Aeschines associates himself and all other good Athenians with the *erōs* that is *dikaios*, “just,” and *kalos*, “beautiful/good,” the kind of *erōs* which is praised by the general, and sets Timarchus up as the enemy of that *erōs*, turning the general’s argument on its head.

At the same time, he sides with the common citizen in opposition to the elitism which he attributes to the defense. The general is linked to aristocratic snobbery by his association with *παλαίστραις καὶ διατριβαῖς*, “wrestling schools and philosophers’ haunts,” and Aeschines portrays him and Timarchus’ other supporters as talking down to the jury in a condescending manner. Using a disingenuous first person plural to associate himself with his audience, he asserts that the defense are not the only ones who know how to interpret Homer:

ἐπειδὴ δὲ Ἀχιλλέως καὶ Πατρόκλου μέμνησθε καὶ Ὀμήρου καὶ ἐτέρων ποιητῶν, ὡς τῶν μὲν δικαστῶν ἀνηκόων παιδείας ὄντων, ὑμεῖς δὲ εὐσχήμονες τινες καὶ περιφρονοῦντες ἱστορίᾳ τὸν δῆμον, ἴν’ εἰδῆτε ὅτι καὶ ἡμεῖς τι ἤδη ἠκούσαμεν καὶ ἐμάθομεν, λέξομέν τι καὶ περὶ τούτων.

But since you mention Achilles and Patroclus and Homer and other poets, as though the jurors are men without education, and represent yourselves as impressive figures whose erudition allows you to look down on the people, to show you that we have already acquired a little knowledge and learning, we too shall say something on the subject (141).

This allows Aeschines to engage in a neat bit of textual criticism without being accused of elitism himself. There follows a long passage in which he sets out to prove that Achilles and Patroclus were lovers in the *Iliad*, and that they for this

reason can be seen as an example of *dikaios erōs*. He acknowledges that Homer does not explicitly mention a sexual relationship between the two heroes, but argues that it can easily be inferred by intelligent readers:

τὸν μὲν ἔρωτα καὶ τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν αὐτῶν τῆς φιλίας ἀποκρύπτεται, ἠγούμενος τὰς τῆς εὐνοίας ὑπερβολὰς καταφανεῖς εἶναι τοῖς πεπαιδευμένοις τῶν ἀκροατῶν.

He hides their love and the name of their friendship, thinking that the remarkable strength of their affection is obvious to the educated among his audience (142).

He then goes on to cite several passages from the *Iliad* which he feels are indicative of Achilles’ *erōs* for Patroclus, including the lines in Book 18 where Achilles declares that he will take vengeance on Hector despite the fact that his own death will soon follow (18.333-335), and the scene in Book 23 where the ghost of Patroclus appears to Achilles in a dream and tells him to bury their bones in the same vessel, just as they were raised together as boys (23.77-91). However, it is lines 18.324-329 which prove for Aeschines that Achilles and Patroclus were lovers. In the *Iliad* the lines read thus:

ὦ πόποι ἦ ῥ’ ἄλιον ἔπος ἐκβαλον ἤματι κείνῳ  
θαρσύνων ἦρωα Μενόϊτιον ἐν μεγάρῳσι·  
φῆν δέ οἱ εἰς Ὀπόνετα περικλυτὸν υἱὸν ἀπάξειν  
Ἴλιον ἐκπέρσαντα, λαχόντα τε ληϊδος αἴσαν.  
ἀλλ’ οὐ Ζεὺς ἀνδρεσσι νοήματα πάντα τελευτᾷ.  
ἄμφω γὰρ πέπρωται ὁμοίην γαῖαν ἐρεῦσαι

Vain indeed was the word I uttered on that day when I sought to encourage the warrior Menoetius in our halls, and said that when I had sacked Ilion I would bring back (*ἀπάξειν*) to him to Opus his glorious

son with the share of the spoils that would fall to his lot. But Zeus fulfills not for men all their purposes; for it is fated for both of us to redden the same earth.

This passage is paraphrased by Aeschines in the following way:

λέγει γάρ που Ἀχιλλεὺς ὀδυρόμενος τὸν τοῦ Πατρόκλου θάνατον, ὡς ἔν τι τοῦτο τῶν λυπηροτάτων ἀναμνησκόμενος, ὅτι τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν τὴν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα τὸν Πατρόκλου Μενοίτιον ἄκων ἐψεύσατο· ἐπαγγείλασθαι γὰρ εἰς Ὀποῦντα σῶν ἀπάξειν, εἰ συμπέμψειεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν Τροίαν καὶ παρακαταθεῖτο αὐτῷ. ᾧ καταφανής ἐστιν, ὡς δι' ἔρωτα τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν αὐτοῦ παρέλαβεν.

At one point, when Achilles is lamenting Patroclus' death, he mentions, as one of his most painful memories, that he has betrayed his promise to Patroclus' father Menoetius, that he had declared he would bring (ἀπάξειν) the son safe back to Opus, if the father would send him to Troy and entrust (παρακαταθεῖτο) him to Achilles' care. And this makes it quite clear that it was for love that he had taken responsibility for his care (143).

Dover remarks that this last inference is not at all obvious (Dover 1978 53), but Andrew Ford points out that Aeschines' reading of this passage depends on an additional meaning of the verb ἀπάξειν which was present in Classical Greek but not in Homeric Greek. In Homer it means simply "to bring back home" (LSJ s.v. II), but by Aeschines' time it has also come to mean "return, render what one owes" (LSJ s.v. III). Aeschines invokes this second meaning by adding the verb παρακαταθεῖτο to his paraphrase of Menoetius "entrusting" Patroclus to Achilles. Both of these verbs can be used as technical commercial terms, παρακατατίθεμαι for laying down a deposit and ἀπάγω for returning a deposit. The suggestion is

not that money changed hands, but that Achilles has undertaken the ἐπιμέλειαν, or "supervision", of Patroclus in an agreement with Menoetius that has the weight of a formal contract. Ford sums up the subtext of Aeschines' argument as follows: "Of course, no sane father would contract with another man to supervise his son unless it were a noble contract, and so this *erōs* must have been of the noble sort that Aeschines practices and Homer, subtly, commends" (Ford 253). Here Aeschines makes it clear that he conceives of Achilles as the *erastēs* and Patroclus the *erōmenos*, as Aeschylus does in the *Myrmidons*.

Aeschines' use of Achilles and Patroclus in *Against Timarchus* is complex and subtle. His strategy is to appropriate for his own case the argument of the defense that homosexual *erōs* is noble and beneficial. His repeated use of words derived from *paideia*, or "education", is significant. The general attributes ἀπαιδευσία, literally "a lack of *paideia*", to Aeschines, and treats the jurors as if they are ἀνηκόων παιδείας ὄντων, "men ignorant of *paideia*". This allows Aeschines to seem to side with the jurors against these patronizing aristocratic sentiments and to prove that the common man is also educated enough to read what Homer has written about Achilles and Patroclus. When he says that the *erōs* of Achilles and Patroclus is obvious τοῖς πεπαιδευμένοις, "to the educated," he means to himself and to his audience, thereby avoiding the hostile reaction that such a statement might otherwise invoke from Athenian citizens of the lower class. Furthermore, the dangerous ἀπαιδευσία, "lack of cultivation," that threatens the noble tradition of pederastic *erōs* is properly to be associated not with Aeschines, but with men who exchange money for sex (137)—in other words, with Timarchus and other people like him.

The idea that pederasty (if correctly conducted) was beneficial, both to the individuals who participated in it and to the Athenian *polis* as a

whole, appears in the speeches of Phaedrus and Pausanias in Plato's *Symposium*, and the fact that it was invoked by both sides of a court case shows that it was accepted by a significant number of Athenian citizens. The associations of pederasty with the founding of Athenian democracy and the glory of Homeric heroes carried enough weight to make it detrimental to an orator's case if he were perceived as attacking the institution. Aeschines constructs an argument that manages to appeal to both elite *symposia*-goers and the lower classes: everyone can agree on the benefits of *dikaios erôs*, "just love," which is represented by Achilles and Patroclus, and they can similarly agree that the reprehensible behavior of Timarchus belongs in a different category.

## Conclusion

The popularity of pederastic relationships in classical Athens and other parts of Greece contributed to the inclination of some post-Homeric authors to portray Achilles and Patroclus as lovers. Achilles and Patroclus are cited repeatedly as the ultimate example of male devotion because their relationship is one of the most prominent bonds between male characters in Greek literature, regardless of whether one interprets their attachment as sexual or non-sexual. For authors wishing to include a heroic precedent in their treatment of classical pederasty, Achilles and Patroclus were an obvious choice. Authors desiring to assert the primacy of chaste friendship would similarly want to lay claim to these two significant Homeric characters, as Xenophon demonstrates by attributing this intention to Socrates. Examination of the texts in question has shown that each author makes his decision with a literary agenda in mind, altering Homer to fit his own needs. These writers are certainly influenced in their perceptions of the *Iliad* by the sexual practices of their own times, but the deliberate and careful way in which many of them use Homeric evidence suggests that they were aware

of the discrepancies between their source material and the interpretations they produced.

There is room for further research into how post-Homeric treatments of Achilles' and Patroclus' sexuality compare to receptions of other epic heroes. A close examination of other pairs of warriors who were perceived as pederastic lovers would contextualize the relationship of Achilles and Patroclus, and could shed further light on the interactions between classical sexualities and patterns of archaic "heroic friendship." It would also be interesting to examine receptions of Achilles and Patroclus in Latin as well as Greek texts, as this would integrate the study of Roman conceptions of Achilles with Roman attitudes towards pederasty, while highlighting the tensions between differing Greek and Roman ideals of masculinity. Achilles' place in the ancient sexual imagination is a complex and fascinating topic that is bound to generate further discussion.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my adviser Seth Schein for his help and insight. It was a great privilege to work with him and I am proud to have been his student. I would also like to thank my parents Julia and Peter Menard-Warwick for the emotional support they have given me in all my endeavors.

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