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Paiderastía and Homoeroticism on Greek Vases from Polish Collections. Introduction to the Paper by Włodzimierz Lengauer

In its vast holdings, the National Museum in Warsaw hides, and sometimes reveals and exhibits, examples of Greek painting on ceramic vases featuring homoerotic images of the male body (**figs. 1–3**),[1] as well as taking up the topic of *paiderastía* (παιδεραστία; *eros paidikos*), or homosexual love. The former – erotic, sexually charged representations of male youths – conform to the description of the figure of the eromenos in Martha C. Nussbaum's classic book, *The Fragility of Goodness*: "[...] a beautiful creature without pressing needs of his own. He is aware of his attractiveness, but self-absorbed in his relationship with those who desire him. He will smile sweetly at the admiring lover; he will show appreciation for the other's friendship, advice, and assistance. He will allow the lover to greet him by touching, affectionately, his genitals and his face, while he looks, himself, demurely at the ground. [...] The inner experience of an *erōmenos* would be characterized, we may imagine, by a feeling of proud self-sufficiency. Though the object of importunate solicitation, he is himself not in need of anything beyond himself. He is unwilling to let himself be explored by the other's covetous curiosity, and he has, himself, little curiosity about the other. He is something like a god, or the statue of a god."[2]

The other group of representations are those of evidently homoerotic and homosocial subject matter. The interior of an early red-figure kylix by the so-called Thalia Painter, dated to c. 515–510 BC (**fig. 4**), shows the figure of an archer during the *phylobolia*, a ceremony where the spectators shower a victorious athlete with flowers and leaves as he parades around the stadium after the completion of an agon; the exterior depicts a komos, i.e., a ritual procession of drunk men, the komasts (*kōmastaí*).[3] Among those we see a youth drinking wine from a crater and a man touching his buttock in a caressing gesture as he approaches from behind. A scene of passionate homosexual caresses, clearly leading towards an oral intercourse, is depicted – in all its glory and beauty – in the interior of another vase, an Attic red-figure kylix from c. 420 BC (**fig. 5**).[4] The vessel is damaged, making the details illegible, so it is not clear

[1] The National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 142463 MNW, 198059 MNW, and 142290 MNW. See also Kenneth J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), cat. nos. R12, R231, R737.

[2] Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness. Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1986; revised edition: 2001), p. 188.

[3] The National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 198514 MNW.

[4] The National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. 142306 MNW.

whether this is an illustration of *paiderastía* between a young eromenos and an older erastes (ἐραστής – ἐρώμενος) or of an ordinary homosexual relationship between peers. The latter seems to be the case, although the man standing upright, unlike the boy leaning forward, wears a faint stubble (not a full beard, however, characteristic for an adult citizen); he has a rather athletic body, whereas the other one looks more like an ephebe.

It is not only the Warsaw museum that holds examples of Greek painting with homoerotic themes. We will also find them in the collection of the Princes Czartoryski Museum, a division of the National Museum in Krakow. These are two items, recently annotated and published by Dorota Gorzelany.[5] The first one is a large amphora with decoration in the style of the Achilles Painter, made in the mid-fifth century BC (**fig. 6**).[6] On its belly a nude Poseidon has been depicted, with a himation on his shoulders, its tail flapping behind in the air, emphasizing the figure's brisk movement. His left arm outstretched, he marches vigorously leftwards, as if towards the opposite side of the amphora, where a youth, dressed in a voluminous himation that completely covers his body, runs forward (leftwards again), fleeing from the god's rapacious desire. In Greek mythology and iconography, Poseidon is seldom shown demonstrating an inclination towards the male sex,[7] being usually represented as a passionate wooer of attractive women. He appears only sporadically in the company of young men. The theme of a man chasing a boy or male youth he is enamoured with was a popular one in Greek vase painting from c. 500 BC. It was revisited throughout the following century, one example of which is the scene *Zeus and Ganymede*on an Athenian red-figure kylix by the Penthesilea Painter (c. 475–425 BC) at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Ferrara (**fig. 7**), or on an amphora in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, c. 480–470 BC.[8] The Achilles Painter, an outstanding artist active in Athens between c. 470/460 and 430/425 BC, executed a composition with Poseidon and a youth (similar to the scene on the vase from the Czartoryski collection) on an amphora held today at the Cabinet des medailles of the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris,[9] and it probably served as a prototype for the paintings on the Krakow amphora.[10] The scene of Poseidon in amorous pursuit of a male youth is also depicted on a column krater by the Harrow Painter, in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, from c. 470 BC.[11] Dorota Gorzelany believes that these depictions have their literary basis in Pindar's *First Olympic*

[5] Dorota Gorzelany, "'Młodości kwiat.' O dwóch przedstawieniach związków homoseksualnych w malarstwie wazowym z kolekcji Muzeum Książąt Czartoryskich," in Edward Dąbrowa, Tomasz Grabowski, Maciej Piegdoń, eds, Florilegium. *Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Aleksandrowi Krawczukowi z okazji dziewięćdziesiątej piątej rocznicy urodzin* (Krakow, 2017), pp. 47–58. The following remarks are based on this paper.

[6] The Princes Czartoryski Museum, division of the National Museum in Krakow, inv. no. MNK XI-1451. John D. Beazley, *Greek Vases in Poland* (Oxford, 1928), p. 50; id., *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1956)(2nd ed.: 1963), p. 646, no. 6; Kazimierz Bulas, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum Pologne. Collections de Cracovie* (Warsaw–Krakow, 1935), table 11[65]2; Sophia Kaempf-Dimitriadou, *Die Liebe der Götter in der attischen Kunst des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Bern, 1979), p. 80, no. 42; John H. Oakley, *The Achilles Painter* (Mainz, 1997), p. 162, no. L2; Beazley Archive Pottery Database (hereinafter: BADB) 202986.

[7] Kaempf-Dimitriadou, op. cit., pp. 12, 80, nos. 41, 42.

[8] Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. no. 1871.84. See John D. Beazley, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1* (Oxford, 1927), table 15.5–6; Kaempf-Dimitriadou, op. cit., p. 77, no. 14.

[9] Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des medailles, Paris, inv. no. 363. See Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure...*, op. cit., p. 988, no. 11; Oakley, op. cit., p. 35, table 11A; BADB 213832.

[10] Gorzelany, op. cit., p. 48.

[11] Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. no. 3737. See Fritz Eichler, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum Cambridge: Wien Kunsthistorisches Museum 2* (Vienna, 1959), table 87.1–2; Dover, op. cit., p. 93; Kaempf-Dimitriadou,

Ode written in 476 BC in honour of Hieron I and speaking of Poseidon's love for Pelops. His mind "overcome with desire," the enamoured "god of the splendid trident" seized Pelops and carried him away "on his team of golden horses to the highest home of widely-honoured Zeus, to which at a later time Ganymede came also, to perform the same service for Zeus."[12] Afterwards, Pelops stayed at Olympus, serving, like Ganymede, as a cupbearer during the gods' banquets. Theoretically, the scene could represent Poseidon's passion for Nerites, a youth who reciprocated the god's affections and accompanied him in his marine thiasos. This, however, is a much later story, known from Roman literature, recorded by Aelian in *On the Nature of Animals* (14.28) and never depicted on classical Greek vases.

The second homoerotic image in the Czartoryski collection is a shard of a pylike by Syriskos from c. 470 BC (**fig. 8**).[13] It shows two young male lovers – probably Critobulos and Cleinias (as Gorzelany suggests) – standing face to face, bent over in an intimate bowing gesture, and presenting one another with gifts: a fruit and a lotus flower. Gorzelany connects this image with scenes of courtship and gift-giving between male lovers depicted in other works by Syriskos: a column krater in the Martin von Wagner-Museum in Würzburg, where there is an age difference between the lovers and they form a canonical erastes–eromenos couple conforming to the *paiderastía* model,[14] a psykter in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore from c. 480 BC,[15] and an amphora in the Museo Civico in Orvieto.[16] The Krakow pelike shows an image of male passion between age-mates, seemingly different from the *eros paidikos* model, but, as Dover writes, it was possible to perform the roles of the erastes and eromenos at the same age, albeit not in a relationship with the same person. This is confirmed by the example of Critobulos as the erastes of Cleinias and eromenos (or would-be eromenos) of Socrates himself and several other elder men (Xenophon, *Symposium*, 2.3; 8.2; 4.10–18; 4.27–28).[17] What could be shocking was the situation where the erastes was younger than the eromenos, as in the relationship of the beardless, i.e., younger, Menon with the bearded, i.e., older, Tharypas (Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 2.6.28).

Cleinias (Greek *Kleinias*), son of Axiochus and cousin of Alcibiades, the disciple of Socrates, is described in Plato's *Euthydemus* (273a) as a handsome boy, forever surrounded by a group of youthful and somewhat older *erastai*, among whom are Ctesippus, Critobulos, son of Crito, and who are joined by a pair of Sophists, Euthydemus of Chios and his brother

op. cit., p. 80, no. 41, table 5.1–2; Andrew Lear, Eva Cantarella, *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty: Boys Were Their Gods* (London–New York, 2008), p. 149, fig. 4.9 (A); BADB 202658.

[12] Pindar, *First Olympian Ode* 40–45, translated by Diane Arnson Svarlien (1990). Perseus Digital Library.

[13] The Princes Czartoryski Museum, division of the National Museum in Krakow, inv. no. MNK XI-1320. See Beazley, *Greek Vases*..., op. cit., table 7.4; Bulas, op. cit., p. 10, no. 2; Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure*..., op. cit., p. 262, no. 32; BADB 202986.

[14] Martin von Wagner-Museum, Würzburg, inv. no. 527A. See Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure*..., op. cit., p. 261, no. 17; BADB 202971.

[15] Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv. no. 48.7728. See David M. Robinson, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery 1* (Cambridge, 1934), tables 27.3, 28.2; Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure*..., op. cit., p. 263, no. 2; BADB 202734.

[16] Museo Civico, Orvieto, inv. no. 1045. See Giovanni Becatti, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Musei Comunali Umbri 1* (Milan,1940), table. III I c 4: 3; Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure*..., op. cit., p. 261, no. 21; BADB 202975.

[17] Dover, op. cit., s. 87; Włodzimierz Lengauer, "Eros, polis, obywatel," *Konteksty. Polska sztuka ludowa. Antropologia kultury, etnografia, sztuka*, vol. 8, no. 1/2 (2004), p. 131; id., "Eros among citizens," *Palamedes*, no. 1 (2006), p. 71. See also Joanna Sowa, "*Eros paidikos* kontra miłość małżeńska w *Uczcie* i *Ekonomiku* Ksenofonta – początek starożytnego sporu," *Collectanea Philologica*, vol. 16, no. 19/20 (2013), p. 24.

Dionysodorus, both excellent gymnasts and wrestlers too. Socrates instructs Cleinias: "Since we all want to be happy [...] and [...] happiness is given by knowledge, then [...] everybody ought to try, by any means possible, to make himself as wise as he can. [...] And a man who agrees with this ought to [...] ask and beg those [...] who say they love him [...] to impart wisdom to him; it is not dishonourable at all, Cleinias [...] for a man to serve and offer himself for this, and to be ready to provide any honourable service [...] to an erastes [...] in order to gain wisdom."[18] Cleinias as an eromenos (*paidika*) of Ctesippus and Critobulos[19] is mentioned by Xenophon in *Symposium* (2.18; 4.12–14; 4.24–26) and in *Memorabilia* (1.3.8–14). In the latter, he cites the rumour that Critobulos kissed a beautiful boy, the "son" (in fact cousin) of Alcibiades, i.e., Cleinias, who was so "very good-looking and in the prime of his beauty" that Xenophon confesses to his interlocutor, Socrates: "if that is the foolhardy adventure, it is a danger which I could well encounter myself." To which Socrates was to reply in a moralizing tone: "Poor soul! and what do you expect your fate to be after that kiss? Let me tell you. On the instant you will lose your freedom, the indenture of your bondage will be signed; it will be yours on compulsion to spend large sums on hurtful pleasures; you will have scarcely a moment's leisure left for any noble study; you will be driven to concern yourself most zealously with things which no man, not even a madman, would choose to make an object of concern."[20] Critobulos' hyperbolic praise of his eromenos Cleinias in Xenophon's *Symposium*: "And at this instant I feast my eyes on Cleinias gladlier than on all other sights which men deem fair. Joyfully will I welcome blindness to all else, if but these eyes may still behold him and him only. With sleep and night I am sore vexed, which rob me of his sight; but to daylight and the sun I owe eternal thanks, for they restore him to me, my heart's joy, Cleinias. I know that riches are a sweet possession, yet sweeter far to me to give all that I have to Cleinias than to receive a fortune from another. Gladly would I become a slave – ay, forfeit freedom – if Cleinias would deign to be my lord" (*Symposium*, 4.12–14)[21] – seems somewhat scandalous to us today since Critobulos had recently got married, but, as Dover points out, such a situation was normal in Greece at the time and raised no eyebrows.[22]

Socrates attracts a clearly homosocial and homoerotic company; his youthful friends are in amorous relationships with boys and he accepts, even praises this, even if he calls first and foremost for paideic, intellectual and moral love, rather than merely physical. The couples in this circle include not only Ctesippus with Cleinias and Critobulos with the latter, but also Socrates himself with Alcibiades (Plato, *Gorgias*, 481d), Hippothales with Lysis (Plato, *Lisys*, 204cd), Aristippus with Meno (Plato, *Meno*, 70b), Callias with Autolycus (Xenophon, *Symposium*, 8.9–10), Glaucon as the eroticos (lover) and erastes of many boys (Plato, *Republic*, 474d–475a), and so Charmides (Xenophon, *Symposium*, 8.2–3).[23] Towards the end of Xenophon's symposiac banquet, Socrates declares: "For myself I cannot name the time at which

[18] Plato, *Euthydemus*, translated with a foreword and annotations by Władysław Witwicki, 10.282a, p. 22 [translation revised by Antoni Ziemba; English retranslated from the Polish by Marcin Wawrzyńczak].

[19] Dover, op. cit., pp. 16, 55.

[20] Xenophon, *Memorabilia. Recollections of Socrates*, 1.3.8–14, translated by Henry Graham Dakyns, Project Gutenberg.

[21] Id., *Symposium*, translated by Henry Graham Dakyns, Project Gutenberg.

[22] Dover, op. cit., p. 171.

[23] Ibid., p. 154. On the couple Callias–Autolycus, see Bernhard Huss, "The Dancing Socrates and the Laughing Xenophon, or the Other 'Symposium,'" *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 120, no. 3 (1999), p. 383.

I have not been in love with someone. And Charmides here has, to my knowledge, captivated many a lover, while his own soul has gone out in longing for the love (ἐπιθυμήσαντα) of not a few himself. So it is with Critobulus also; the beloved (ἐρώμενος) of yesterday is become the lover (επιθυμεί) of to-day. [...] As to Hermogenes, which of us needs to be told that the soul of this fond lover is consumed with passion (ερωτι) for a fair ideal – call it by what name you will – the spirit commingled of nobleness and beauty" (*Symposium*, 8.2–3).[24] Critobulos and Cleinias, Ctesippus and Cleinias, Hippothales and Lisys, Aristippus and Meno, Callias and Autolycus, Glaucon or Charmides with their eromenoi – here is a wide repertoire of homoerotic couples from which one could pick the names of the protagonists depicted on the Krakow amphora.

This short presentation of artefacts from the National Museums in Warsaw and Krakow serves as an introduction to a paper by Włodzimierz Lengauer, who has devoted fundamental studies to the Greek *paiderastía*. Besides an article published in *Przegląd Historyczny* in 2007, which recapitulates and revaluates hitherto research into the phenomenon[25] (and is reprinted, slightly revised and with an English translation, in this issue of the *Journal*), he has presented a detailed analysis and a new "political" (from *polis*) interpretation of the Greek *paiderastía* in the paper *Eros, polis, obywatel* (2004) (English version: *Eros among citizens*, 2006).[26] The study of the iconography of Greek vase paintings in Polish collections is impossible without these texts, and they doubtless require significantly enlarging upon.[27]

Translated by Marcin Wawrzyńczak

[24] Xenophon, *The Symposium*, op. cit.

[25] *Przegląd Historyczny*, no. 98/3 (2007), pp. 315–28.

[26] Lengauer, "Eros, polis, obywatel," op. cit. (reprinted in Włodzimierz Lengauer, Lech Trzcionkowski, eds, *Antologia antyku greckiego. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów* [Warsaw, 2011], pp. 538–52); id., "Eros among citizens," op. cit. See n. 17.

[27] It is worth noting that since the abovementioned publications by Włodzimierz Lengauer, no significant synthesis of the issues he discusses has come out in either Polish or foreign literature. In *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome. A Sourcebook on Basic Documents in Translation* (Los Angeles, 2003), Thomas K. Hubbard provided a useful collection of Greek and Roman literary sources. In 2011, Daniel Orrells, professor at the University of Warwick, published *Classical Culture and Modern Masculinity* (Oxford, 2011), analyzing the significance of ancient Greek pederasty for the shaping of scientific historicism as developed by German and English thinkers and scholars from the mid-18th through the early 20th centuries. The subject of ancient *paiderastía* comes up, of course, in several general surveys of the history of homosexuality in European culture, but only in outline and without analytical reflection (e.g., James Smalls, *Homosexuality in Art*, New York, 2012). In Marc D. Schachter's *Voluntary Servitude and the Erotics of Friendship from Classical Antiquity to Early Modern France* (Aldershot, 2008), it is merely an introduction to and a background for modern French writers, especially Étienne de La Boétie, author of the eponymous *De la servitude volontaire*. Similarly, in Todd W. Reeser's *Setting Plato straight. Translating ancient sexuality in the Renaissance* (Chicago, 2016) it only serves the purpose of analyzing its modern notion.