CONTENTS

EDITORIAL STATEMENT .................................................. 5
LESŁAW MORAWIECKI (1949–2004) ......................................... 7
PIERRE VIDAL-NAQUET (1930–2006) ......................................... 11
Mario Liverani, NEW DISCOVERIES IN THE LAND OF THE GARAMANTES: ON THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF LIBYAN SAHARA .................. 15
Rafał Koliński, OLD ASSYRIAN OR OLD BABYLONIAN? THE CULTURAL SETTING OF NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 2ND MILLENIUM B.C. ................................................. 33
Edward Lipiński, SOZOMÈNE II 4 ET LE SITE DE RAMAT AL-HALIL .......................................................... 55
Włodzimierz Lengauer, EROS AMONG CITIZENS .................. 67
Krystyna Bartol, THE LOST WORLD OF INVENTORS: ATHENAEUS' SENTIMENTAL HEUREMATOGRAPHY ........................................... 85
Adam Pałuchowski, LE NOMBRE DES BOULEUTES ET LE PRÉSIDENT DE LA BOULE DANS LES CITÉS CRÉTOISES AUX DEUX PREMIERS SIÈCLES DE L'EMPIRE .............................................. 97
Andrzej Wypustek, Izabella Donkow, CHRISTIANS AND THE PLAGUE IN THE 2ND CENTURY ASIA MINOR .................. 123
Michał Stachura, STADT UND PERIPHERIE IN DER HÄRETIKERPOLITIK DER FRÜHBYZANTINISCHEN KAISER (CA. 325 BIS 455) ............. 133
VARIA, REVIEWS
Jan K. Winnicki, EINE DEMOTISCHE VOTIVINSCHRIFT AUS SACCARA 153
Girls of this age have much need of surveillance. For then in particular they feel a natural impulse to make usage of the sexual faculties that are developing in them; so that unless they guard against any further impulse beyond that inevitable one which their bodily development of itself supplies, even in the case of those who abstain altogether from passionate indulgence, they contract habits which are apt to continue into later life. For girls who give way to wantonness grow more and more wanton; and the same is true of boys, unless they be safeguarded from one temptation and another.

This extremely important passage from Aristotle (*Historia animalium* 581b 11–18; tr. D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson), concerning the sexual maturation of youngsters, has not, to my knowledge, been hitherto analysed in works on eroticism in Greek culture, especially those referring to the issue of Greek homosexuality, or rather *paiderastia*. On the other hand, this is the passage referred to by the title of the second volume of *The History of Sexuality*, the famous and fundamental, indeed classic work by Michel Foucault, *L’Usage des plaisirs*, translated into English as *The Use of Pleasures*. Among the criticisms, which this volume met with from the classical scholars was the view that Foucault erroneously reduces eroticism to the sphere of *hedone* (‘pleasure’), whereas it belongs to a complicated realm of culturally determined institutions, relationships, norms and social traditions. The title of Foucault’s volume devoted to *paiderastia* should, however, be understood in accordance with Aristotle’s conception of ἀφροδισιάν χρήσις,² manifest in the above passage and translated into English as ‘making usage of the sexual faculties’.

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² This has been pointed out by D.M. Halperin, *One hundred years of homosexuality and other essays on Greek love*, New York–London 1990, 67.
The scholarly inattention to this passage is probably attributable to a number of reasons. Firstly, the Latin title of the Greek original, which is universally used in the scholarly literature, is slightly misleading, since *Historia animalium* means literally ‘the history of animals’ or, according to the original Greek meaning of the word *iōtopia*, ‘research on animals’. An historian or cultural anthropologist studying classical antiquity is rarely interested in texts on nature; at best he may look into the Hippocratic corpus, a collection of medical literature. What is forgotten is the fact that Aristotle’s treatise was, in antiquity, known under its Greek title (it does not matter whether the title was given to the work by Aristotle himself or by the later editors of his texts): αἱ περὶ τὰ ζῷα ἑρμηνεία, which can be understood as ‘research on living beings’, and among the zoia Aristotle counted both humans and animals. The seventh book of *Historia animalium*, in which the passage in question is found, he began with issues surrounding the development of a human being.

There is yet another reason for the embarrassed silence of scholars regarding this passage; namely, it does not correspond to our notions of how the Greeks understood eroticism, or rather to what was, according to modern specialists on the subject, the Greek conception of eroticism, sexuality, and human sexual life.

In practically all works on this topic it is today a scholarly paradigm to maintain that the Greeks thought of matters of sexuality in terms of gender, not sexus. It is indeed striking that the Greek language does not even possess a word that would be equivalent to this Latin term. A Greek word referring exclusively to the biological sex of a human or animal simply does not exist; there is no word similar in meaning to the Latin sexus, which, incidentally, is also rare and appears in sources relatively late. The *locus classicus* in this case is a passage from Cicero (*De inventione* 1.35): *hominum genus et in sexu consideratur, virile an muliebre*. Thus, Latin applies the term sexus both to the *genus virile* and the *genus muliebre*, the term refers only to the anatomical sex of a human being. A Greek, however, can speak only of *genos andron* (‘the kind’ or ‘the breed of men’) and *genos gynaikon* (‘the kind’ or ‘the breed of women’).

It is seemingly easy to contradict this argument by recalling the Greek words τὸ ἰθήμον and τὸ ἄρρητον (or τὸ ἄρρητιν), which refer to both humans and animals. Indeed, they mean, according to what is being described, ‘femininity’ or ‘femaleness’ and ‘masculinity’ or ‘maleness’. In both cases they are neuter adjectives used as nouns; hence a certain difficulty in translating them, as well as understanding their meaning. But, in any event, their existence does not change the core of the issue: the lack of a general term denoting the anatomical sex, either male or female. Secondly, these words, which are equivalent to the Latin adjectives *femininum* and *masculinum*, in the context of human beings refer to the entirety of a man’s and
a woman's behavioural patterns, especially to social behaviour and social roles—and thus again to the sphere of gender, where 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are determined by a man or woman's social position and social role and not by their anatomical characteristics.

The conclusion of such analyses by many scholars applies to the entire sphere of human sexuality. The conduct of Greeks with regard to this issue (or perhaps rather the Greeks' idea of what their conduct ought to be) was shaped, classified and judged only by the social position of the individual in question. As a result the rationale for the application of the term 'sexuality' is questionable, since the term appears devoid of an objective and universal meaning. Consequently, of course, the use of terms 'homosexuality' and 'heterosexuality' is erroneous in reference to eroticism in Greek culture, as well in many other cultures. This view is to a large extent valid, if for no other reason than that the Greco-Latin neologisms coined in the 2nd half of the 19th century are hardly applicable to the actions of the ancient Greeks or to the initiation practices described by ethnologists. Although Kenneth Dover, whose work (a classic today) once met with such criticism, persuasively defended this viewpoint in his review of Harold Patzer's book, the opposing view also has its arguments, mostly revolving around the opinion that the phenomenon of exclusive homosexuality can be observed neither in the pre-nineteenth-century European culture, nor in many traditional societies, and that homosexual practices were to a greater or lesser extent accepted or, conversely, stigmatised no more and no less than any other form of unacceptable sensual passion seen as lasciviousness or lechery (e.g. adultery, pre- and extramarital sex and others). Moreover, the Greek paiderastia apparently differs from homosexuality in that it never assumes the form of a relationship between equal partners, but instead is a relationship between an active, older partner (erastes - 'lover', 'the loving one') and a passive, younger boy (eromenos - 'the loved one'). According to the customary roles the eromenos was only to accept the courtship of the older lover and agree to physical contact to show him 'gratitude' (charis).

Closely connected with this attitude is the Greek understanding of the term ta aphrodisia, which most generally denoted all sexual acts. Grammatically it is

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3 See Halperin, One hundred years of homosexuality, 35–36.
5 Halperin, One hundred years of homosexuality, 41–53.
6 On the history of both terms and the rationale for their application, see Halperin, One hundred years of homosexuality, 15–40.
9 See Halperin, One hundred years of homosexuality, 39–53.
a plural neuter adjective, thus signifying the ‘issues’ or ‘works’ of Aphrodite. The act of love in its physical aspect is called, simply, ἄρωσθαι (‘act’, ‘work’ or ‘achievement’ of Aphrodite). The verb ἀφροδισιάζω means ‘to fulfil the act of Aphrodite’, that is, the sexual act, thus ‘to make love’. And here appears a certain difficulty. The verb aphrodisiaze is the active, not reflexive form, and can be used without a complement; the same is true of other verbs denoting actions done by the subject, such as ‘sleep’ or ‘eat’. The oft-quoted Halperin, a competent philologist, stresses the fact that aphrodisiazin always denotes an action by somebody, not with somebody.

This understanding of sexual actions is best illustrated by a passage from Artemidorus quoted by Halperin. The author of the only extant dream-book of antiquity enumerates the types of private dreams (θεία) which ‘do not regard one’s neighbors but only the subjects themselves and are not done in regard to or through others’. Among various actions of the dreamer (speaking, singing, dancing, fist-fighting, competing, hanging oneself, dying, being crucified, diving, finding a treasure, vomiting, moving one’s bowels, sleeping, laughing, crying, talking to the gods) Artemidorus mentions also aphrodisiazin.

It is obvious that in the passage from Aristotle, quoted at the opening of the present article and never mentioned by Halperin, the expression ton aphrodisia chesis has a slightly different meaning. The first fact to draw attention to is that Aristotle begins his discussion of sexual needs in the period of adolescence from girls. However we have just seen the exclusively active and one-sided character of aphrodisia, and the viewpoint that erotic acts were influenced by the notion of gender and not sex holds that in Greek culture l’usage du plaisir practically excluded women, for whom it was not seemly to draw pleasure from the sexual act. Erotic pleasure was to be the domain of adult men; to them belonged the power over the polis and over the bodies of other, subordinate members of the community (youths, women, strangers, slaves). Indeed, such opinions are easily found in ancient sources; for instance, this is more or less the opinion of one of the protagonists of Plutarch’s The Dialogue on Love (Erotikos = Moralia 748e–771e). This text, however, is rarely referred to in the discussions on Greek eroticism (both Halperin and Dover overlook it completely), primarily because it is, true enough, mainly a declaration of Plutarch’s personal views (i.e. the eulogy of marital love). Another objection is that it is an expression of relatively late morals and customs.

10 Halperin, One hundred years of homosexuality, 30.
11 Halperin’s translation.
12 This view is most fully and most consistently (as suggested by the title itself) expressed by E. Keuls, The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens, New York 1985.
13 Henceforth, I refer to the English translation by E.L. Minar, Jr., F.H. Sandbach, W.C. Helmbold (Plutarch, Moralia [Loeb], vol. IX).
it is mentioned how Critobulos, proud of his beauty, and already married, is loved by older men, and himself is in love with Cleinias. Critobulos does not say anything about his wife's feelings, but obviously his marriage is not an obstacle to his being still loved by men. About another protagonist of this dialogue, Niceratos, Socrates says that 'he loves his wife and is loved by her' (VIII 3), and significantly this is also expressed by the verb ἐρω (δρῶν τῆς γυναικὸς ὄντως ἄντως), which leads to the conclusion that Xenophon treats the female eros in the same way as the eros of men.

Thus, it is obvious that the concept of erotic love experienced and requited by both men and women is well known to Plutarch as well as to Xenophon. This love remains in accordance with Aristotle’s usage of the term aphrodision chresis. Aristotle writes about a biological phenomenon, but remains faithful to the basic notions and conceptions of his time: both girls and boys experience the call of Eros equally. But what should the chresis, the ‘use’ or ‘usage’ of Aphrodite’s works be? And what should be ‘avoided’, ‘kept away from’ (doulabathos)?

The improper use of aphrodisia leads to lasciviousness (akolasia; Aristotle uses the adjectival form akolastos); this concerns both girls (néai) and male youths (arreones). In the case of girls it is clearly stated that they ought to ‘abstain altogether from passionate indulgence’ (μηδεν χρομανόν ἄφροδισίας), while the boys should only be ‘safeguarded’; although in their case aphrodisia with both sexes is mentioned (ἐπὶ θάτερα...τ’ἐπὶ ἄμφοτέρα).16

Aristotle’s opinion on the physical needs of maturing girls and the need to control them is fully in accordance with the social norms and customs of a Greek polis, and coincides with the basic paradigm of thought established in the popular culture by myths and beliefs. It is sufficient to recall the popular motif of young girls’ madness, best known from the myth of Proitos’ daughters in the version recorded in Bacchylides’ Epinikon XI. Madness is a state of young women ready to marry, and their wildness is unrestrained sexuality which finds its vent in marriage. Using scientific discourse Aristotle openly states what the myth expressed symbolically. The only difference is that Aristotle perceives both sexes as entirely equal.

Or is it entirely? In the case of girls aphrodisia are connected (although it is not literally stated) only with the opposite sex, and therefore chresis aphrodision signifies married life, in which, according to Xenophon and Plutarch, eros is present,

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15 II 3; VIII 2 and IV 10–18.
16 The English version used in the present translation ('unless they be safeguarded from one temptation and another') is less explicit than the original text.
and which for Aristotle clearly has the same meaning for both spouses. Boys are different, since their *aphrodisia* involve both sexes.

This seems at variance with a notion, today almost universally accepted, that *paiderastia* was a relationship in which only the active *erasēs* derived physical pleasure from carnal contact; it is maintained that in this relationship the boy derived no pleasure at all. On his part there is supposed to have been no physical attraction towards the apparently always-older partner. This relationship is never seen as ‘homosexual’ in the modern meaning of this term precisely because of the lack of equal involvement of both sides. David Halperin offers an elaborate interpretation of the well-known myth told by Aristophanes in Plato’s *Symposium*, trying to prove that even there the male halves searching for each other are not homosexual partners, acting equally, in the modern sense. Here I profoundly disagree with Halperin.

The basis for Halperin’s interpretation is the terminology introduced by Aristophanes (or perhaps rather by Plato, although there is no reason to doubt that it was really Aristophanes who related the myth, and Plato who only noted down his words). Speaking of two halves of a once-male being Aristophanes has recourse to the terms *erasēs* and *erōmenos*, and he changes them only insofar that a boy who comes from a male being, and consequently ‘pursues the masculine’ (191e), he calls *philerastēs* (‘loving a lover’), and an adult man seeking fulfilment in a relationship with a ‘male half’ he calls *paiderastēs*. He does not call the boy *erasēs*; neither does he use the active participle *erōn* (‘loving’). This appears to be the result only of the accepted linguistic usage, since simultaneously Aristophanes stresses that ‘he is eagerly greeting his own kind’ (192b). *Philerasteia* itself is active, as evinced by Alcibiades’ story about his attitude to Socrates and the philosopher’s joking complaints on Alcibiades’ behaviour (213d). Aristophanes concludes his story by saying that only finding the ‘proper favourite’, and not just ‘a favourite whose nature is exactly to our mind’, guarantees a return to the lost wholeness, which is thus seen as a union of both male halves (193c). Earlier he says of such men (*paiderastēs* and *philerastēs*) that ‘they are quite contented to live together unwedded all their days’ (192b), and stresses that the (male!) halves who have found each other are ‘they who continue together throughout life’ (*ibidem*). It is absolutely clear that Aristophanes knows well and accepts a homosexual relationship between two adult men, i.e., a steady, stable attachment which is an alternative to marriage. The same can be said of Plutarch, who writes of ‘union with males’ (*ὁμιλία πρὸς ἴππον, 751c*), stressing that it also involves ‘a lover’s tenderness’ (*τὴν ἔρωτικὴν εὐδοκίαν*).

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18 Halperin, *One hundred years of homosexuality*, 18–21.
19 Henceforth, for English translation of Plato’s *Symposium*, I refer to that of W.R.M. Lamb (Loeb Classical Library).
Thus, the Greeks were perfectly aware of the existence of homosexual relationships to which young boys can also aspire, which involve the reciprocal pleasure and love of both partners, and which may last for a lifetime to the exclusion of marriage. What is more, difference of age was not obligatory – these could have been relationships between peers. It is possible that the relationship of Achilles and Patroclus was sometimes interpreted as such. A separate question remains whether Homer regarded this relationship in terms of an erotic attachment, and also whether he was at all familiar with homosexual love.\(^{20}\) The first to show them as lovers was probably Aeschylus in the lost tragedy *Myrmidons*, a famous passage which is quoted by Plutarch in *The Dialogue on Love* (751c). Obviously there was a controversy among the ancients as to which of them was eromenos, and which *erastes*.\(^{21}\) Aeschylus presented Achilles as the loving one, which in Plato’s text is violently contradicted by Phaedrus. The issue was that Achilles was younger and should therefore be the passive partner, the loved, not loving, one; on the other hand, as having a higher social standing he should be the dominant partner, loving Patroclus, who was of lower standing and subordinate to him. It seems, however, that for the 5th-century readers of Homer, and even for Plutarch and his contemporaries, Achilles and Patroclus were of the same age; it is not improbable that this was also the opinion of the author of the *Iliad* and his audience. In both epics there appears no literary situation which would necessitate the need to present their relationship as an erotic one; there is also no space to present any other relationship of this kind. However, some erotic accents – which perhaps were clear to the listeners – or even allusions to sexual life may be detected in the case of Telemachus and Peisistratus in the *Odyssey*,\(^{22}\) and these two are most certainly of the same age.

The image of Greek *paiderastia* formed on the basis of literary texts is to a large extent altered by the iconography of vases. Scenes on vases often show partners of the same age, as Kenneth Dover has noted, without however taking under consideration all iconographic material.\(^{23}\) It turns out that very often in scenes showing partners of different ages the younger man is the active partner, for instance, on a red-figure Attic vase (*kylix*) dating from the end of the 6th century, now in Paul Getty Museum,\(^{24}\) or an equally famous Florence vase from


\(^{21}\) See Plato, *Symposium* 180a.

\(^{22}\) This can be found in both authors cited in n. 20.


the early 5th century. What is even more striking are images of boys in the state of arousal (erect penis) and sexual acts, including anal copulation, between two adult partners (both bearded). Scenes in which both partners (or in fact a larger number of participants in a clearly erotic game) are of the same, youthful age can also be found. On a certain black-figure vase, where anal copulation is shown, penetration is performed by the younger partner. Although it is the only such image in our currently available material, it has to be remembered that, as with any image from a vase, it attests to a wider phenomenon than just the individual preferences of a given client. The entire social circle of a vessel’s owner was familiar with the vase, and the commission must have accorded with the tastes prevalent in his social sphere. Also the painter had to be familiar with the requested type of image.

It has also been proved, contrary to the claims of Dover, that homosexual acts and overtly erotic situations as well as the and manner of depicting them do not disappear in the 5th century and are well represented in red-figure vase painting, which would attest to a full acceptance of the phenomenon in the culture of a classical polis, and especially in Athens of this period.

It can therefore be inferred that, firstly, the Greeks were perfectly aware of the phenomenon of homosexuality in its many variations, of which paiderastia was only one, and, secondly, that all forms of homosexual behaviour included in the sphere of eros and aphrodisia were accepted equally with all forms of heterosexual behaviour and judged according to the same criteria. It does not, however, mean that everything was allowed. Sexual life, or rather, to use Aristotle’s term, aphrodisia chresis, was subject to the same norms of judgment as the entire life of a citizen.

It is not clear how the issues of marriage were regulated in Sparta. Most probably there was an age limit, at least for men, at which they were allowed to marry (perhaps thirty years of age), or, when marriage at a younger age was sanctioned, only from this age onward were they allowed to set up a family home. In any case, limitations of rights, and even humiliating penalties for bachelors, are known, as well as cases of childless men allowing another citizen

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25 Notice and analysed by Dover, Greek Homosexuality, 96, no. R. S39 in his catalogue (with pertinent references and bibliography).
27 The Orvieto Amphora. See J.D. Beazley, Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters, Oxford 1956, 102, no. 100.
29 For a recent discussion and full bibliography, see R. Kulesza, Sparta w V–IV wieku p.n.e. [Sparta in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., in Polish], Warszawa 2003, 116–118.
access to their wives so that a child could be conceived, or particularly prolific women being given to another citizen.\textsuperscript{30} These Spartan customs, perhaps not entirely clearly understood and described by the authors of our sources (Xenophon, Plutarch), are first and foremost an attestation of an important rule present to a greater or lesser extent in every polis: the community regulates also the private life of its members. The political terminology, known especially from the speeches of Athenian orators, does differentiate between the private sphere (\emph{ta idia}) and the public or political one (\emph{ta demosia}), but in the practice of the social life the latter dominates over the former. The Athenian model seemingly contradicts this assertion: in Thucydides (II 37.3; tr. R. Warner) Pericles in the famous funeral speech maintains that the Athenians ‘are free and tolerant in [their] private lives (\emph{ta idia}); but in public affairs (\emph{ta demosia}) [they] keep to the law’. This sentence, however, as much as the preceding one (‘we do not get into a state with our next-door neighbour if he enjoys himself in his own way, nor do we give him […] black looks’), is above all an allusion to Spartan customs and a juxtaposition, absolutely understandable in times of war, of Athens and Sparta. But even in Athens the law did intrude into matters of married life, which clearly shows that the marriage was seen as \emph{ta demosia}. This conception of the issues of married life is corroborated by a law known from Plutarch (Solon 20) which obliged the husband of an \emph{epikleros} (an heiress of an \emph{oikos} of the father who did not leave male issue) to have sexual intercourse with his wife three times a month.\textsuperscript{31} The laws of the \emph{polis} are concerned, then, in our view, with even the most intimate matters of a citizen’s life. \emph{Ta aphrodisia} are thus classified as \emph{ta demosia}. Also, it is difficult here to avoid the conclusion that it seemed natural for a man to seek \emph{ta aphrodisia} outside marriage, since the fulfilling of marital duties (in a not very strenuous measure) had to be imposed on some men by law. Of course, in the case of an heiress of an \emph{oikos} the lawgiver was concerned with the necessity of assuring the birth of a legal heir, a citizen of the \emph{polis}, who thus inherited the \emph{oikos} from his maternal grandfather. All the laws concerning marriage (the guarantee of a wife’s dowry, the penalty for adulterers disgracing a citizen’s wife, the assurance of a wife’s origin from the citizen class) may be interpreted in the following manner: the \emph{polis} cares for the preservation of its character as a community of citizens with full rights, descended from families that have been Athenian for generations, and for the preservation of the inherited \emph{oikos} which constitute its basis.

But another, rarely cited source points to the inclusion of all \emph{aphrodisia} into the public sphere. The source in question is the passage from a comedy-writer


Philemon (late 4th or early 3rd century) quoted by Athenaeus (XIII 569d) and analysed by Halperin. It is a fragment of the comedy *Brothers* (*Adelphoi*), in which one of the protagonists, probably a young man, relates a decree by Solon concerning sexual life. He proposed introducing in Athens state-owned brothels, open to all young men, and, insisting on making them equally accessible to all regardless of their financial situation, set the fee at one obolus. This is, of course, a fictitious comic situation, but it is based on the assumption that the lawgiver’s concern with the erotic life of citizens is at least possible, if not desirable. Athenaeus himself must have been sure of the legitimacy of such an attitude, since he quotes from another author, Nicander of Colophon (third or second century), the information that from the profits coming from the female supervisors of such houses Solon founded a temple of Aphrodite Pandemos.

This temple is mentioned by Pausanias (I 22.3; tr. W.H.S. Jones), who writes that ‘when Theseus had united into one state the many Athenian parishes [dēmōi], he established the cult of Aphrodite Pandemos’. The issue here lies in the understanding of the epithet. It may mean ‘All-People’s’ or only ‘of All the Demes’. The latter agrees with Pausanias’ explanation: Theseus had simply established in the city a cult of Aphrodite which replaced the separate cults of the goddess in the heretofore politically independent Attic ‘parishes’, or demes. The epithet ‘All-People’s’ may have a different meaning: it would signify an Aphrodite ‘belonging to all the people’ or ‘accessible to all the people’. This meaning could have been intended by Nicander in the passage quoted by Athenaeus. In Plato’s *Symposium* (180d-e) two Aphrodites are mentioned by one of the participants of the symposium, Pausanias, and his thought is continued by Eryximachus. One of them is called Heavenly (*Ourania*), the other is Pandemos. This last epithet has here the meaning ‘common’, or even ‘vulgar’, ‘low’. Both Pausanias and Eryximachus agree that there are also two types of Eros.

Certainly the Heavenly Aphrodite is an idealised love, juxtaposed to the ‘common’ or ‘ordinary’ Aphrodite. The first kind of love is felt only by educated people, the other by all, although it has none of the sophistication of the first. Undoubtedly every Athenian, on hearing of Aphrodite Pandemos, thought of the Athenian cult well known to him; it is the goddess that Plato sees as the patroness of the ‘common’ love. He is certainly right here: in the eyes of his fellow-citizens it was due to Aphrodite ‘of all the demes’ that all the citizens could fulfil the ‘works of Aphrodite’. Nicander’s explanation of the genesis of her cult reflects the feelings of the Athenians. The citizens’ aphrodisia had their proper cult in the *polis*.

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The example of Harmodius and Aristogiton, two Athenian national heroes, well illustrates how a love relationship can become a political affair. Demosthenes in the speech *On the False Embassy* says that the Athenians offer sacrifice to them and sing their praise as the equals of gods and heroes (XIX 280). The yearly sacrifice performed by the archon polemarch is mentioned by Aristotle (or rather Pseudo-Aristotle) in the *Athenaion politeia* (58,1). Both assassins of Hipparchus the tyrant were accorded not only a monument on the Athenian agora, but also heroic cult status. But their deed, committed in the year 514, was by no means decisive to the fall of tyranny in Athens: the murdered Hipparchus was at most a co-governor with his brother Hippias; the tyranny fell only a few years later, and then after an intervention from Sparta, inspired by the powerful family of the Alcmaeonids, who had been the traditional enemies of Pisistratus and his family since they were exiled by the tyrants. Nevertheless, the popularity of the two tyrannicides, in whose praise songs were composed immediately after their deed, was immense throughout the entire period of Athenian democracy, although both Thucydides (VI 54) and Herodotus (V 62 and VI 123) attempted to correct the erroneous views of their fellow-citizens on the reasons for the fall of the tyranny. Neither succeeded. Although the reasons for the popularity of the two conspirators in the last years of the 6th century can be found in the complex political situation of that time, and their popularity itself can be seen as resulting from the propaganda against the Alcmaeonids and perhaps even against Cleisthenes himself, still the failure of both historians' efforts and the immutable conviction of the Athenians that the tyrannicides belonged to 'the greatest benefactors of the people' may seem surprising.

Interestingly, Thucydides begins his explanation of the fall of tyranny with the following passage (VI 54,1; tr. R. Warner): 'In fact the bold action undertaken by Aristogiton and Harmodius was due to a love affair. I shall deal with this in some detail, and show that the Athenians themselves are no better than other people at producing accurate information about their own dictators and the facts of their own history'. Barely a generation after Herodotus, Thucydides has to remind the Greeks what the real course of events was.

What is more, it does not seem that in relating in detail the love story (*erotike synthyxia*) of Harmodius and Aristogiton, Thucydides says anything of which the Athenians were not aware. It is equally familiar to the author of *Athenaion politeia*. The fact that Pseudo-Aristotle (28,2-6) gives a slightly different

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version than Thucydides (it was Thessalus, the youngest son of Pisistratus, who fell in love with Harmodius; Hipparchus was almost an accidental victim) and some additional details (an insult to Harmodius' sister) shows that, having drawn his data from different sources (including the Attidides), he chanced upon a different, larger and perhaps more romantic version. Two lovers, Harmodius and Aristogiton, were thus heroes not only of symptomatic songs (skolia), but also of many stories originating from the late-sixth-century tradition; in this tradition it was obvious that the political assassination was motivated by personal insult. When Harmodius was slighted by Hipparchus, Harmodius' erastes, Aristogiton, came to his aid. The slight was Hipparchus' attempt to seduce Harmodius. Thus, the relationship of Harmodius and Aristogiton was praiseworthy, and Hipparchus' lust and attempt to conquer the younger man was an insult to both lovers. Eros led them both to becoming heroes. Once again ta idia and ta demosia converge. It may be assumed that this was precisely the reason for the two heroes' popularity and for the fact that it was to them that the fall of the tyranny was ascribed - since their life and death constituted a noble example of how an erotic relationship can bring profit to a polis. In the eyes of the Athenians the tyrannicides were exemplary lovers; they fulfilled the ideal of a mutually loving couple, faithful and mindful of each other's honour. Thus, their deed inflamed the imagination more strongly than the Spartan expedition and the fight of Alcmaeonids with the Pisistratus' family. They were perfect to make heroes of, precisely because they were lovers; thus, in Harmodius and Aristogiton an Athenian had, apart from the mythical example of Zeus and Ganymede, an example of homosexual love - real and human, yet heroic. In addition, it appears that although Harmodius is consistently perceived as the younger partner (eromenos), the difference of age between the lovers was not great. There are reasons to suppose that Harmodius, despite being so young, loved by Aristogiton and seduced by Hipparchus or Thessalus, was nevertheless married. In the 5th and 4th century his descendants are mentioned; yet some scholars maintain, quite without proof, that Harmodius was very young and thus his marriage is ruled out, and that his descendants are in reality the descendants of his family or his house, and not his own.35

The example of Harmodius and Aristogiton was appealed to, both by the prosecution and the defence, during the most famous Athenian lawsuit concerning misconduct. In early 345 B.C. an Athenian orator and politician, Aeschines, an opponent and rival of Demosthenes, indicted Timarchus, a minor but quite active politician in the circle of allies and associates of Demosthenes, for gross immorality. Aeschines thus forestalled his own trial, since Timarchus was ready to indict him for an offence which was in itself minor, but lay at the basis of the entire conflict.

In 346, Aeschines was a member of an embassy to Philip of Macedon, and the Athenian politicians, dissatisfied with the resulting treaty, prepared to prosecute him for treason, as well as for breaching the rules of the legation, that is for bribery, inept fulfillment of the mission, or both.\footnote{On the political background to the case, see E.M. Harris, *Aeschines and Athenian Politics*, New York-Oxford 1995, 57-106.} By indicting Timarchus, Aeschines made his own trial impossible. He was successful, since Timarchus was finally condemned; and as a man deprived of rights (*atimos*) he could not speak before court and, according to the tradition known to the later editors of Aeschines' speeches, committed suicide.

Aeschines' speech is a fascinating, unique example of Athenian morality and customs in the fourth century; this is because the accusation concerned Timarchus' private life, and especially his love life when a young man (although Aeschines did not limit himself to the past, speaking also of the defendant's present conduct). From the point of view of the prosecution, the decisive factor was that in his youth Timarchus prostituted himself, which, according to Athenian law, automatically limited a citizen's rights, reducing him to the state of partial *atimia*. Being legally an *atimos*, on reaching adulthood Timarchus acted against the law: he should not have been allowed to hold any public functions or posts (although he was twice a member of the Council of Five Hundred), or to speak in the Assembly, or to prosecute in a public case (*graphe*).\footnote{Athenian laws concerning the prostitution of citizens were analysed in detail in Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 19-109. His reasoning and conclusions are accepted and repeated in the latest commentary to the 1st speech by Aeschines: N. Fisher, *Aeschines* Against *Timarchos. Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Oxford 2001.}

By the time of his trial Timarchus was a mature man; his political career had begun fifteen years earlier, when in the Athenian year 361/360 he became a member of the Council of Five Hundred for the first time. Judging by some of Aeschines' remarks over this period he was a rather active member of the Assembly and was relatively well-known. Hitherto nobody had accused him of illegal participation in state business, and Aeschines himself remained silent.

In Aeschines' lifetime prostitution was a phenomenon common in Athens as much as in any other *polis*. The already-quoted passage from Philemon describes brothels having a regular staff; the case was similar with boy prostitution, as can be inferred also from Aeschines' remark (I 74). These institutions (*aithemata*) were staffed by boys of slave and metic origin. It was difficult to find evidence of an Athenian boy who engages in prostitution; such boys certainly did not live in public houses. Aeschines himself quotes only one example of a practically professional male prostitute who was probably an Athenian citizen: a certain Diophantes, dubbed the Orphan,
summoned a client before the court of an archon for unpaid fees (I 158). The other men enumerated in this passage of his speech could have been metics, although their citizen status cannot be altogether ruled out. According to Aeschines, prostitution, at least in the case of Timarchus, consisted in deriving material gain from an erotic relationship, or being kept by a lover – precisely what he accused Timarchus of.

However, the case was somewhat more complicated. Presents, sometimes costly ones, like artistic vases or wild animals killed in a hunt or caught alive, were an established, customary, socially accepted element of paiderastia.38 And it was difficult to prove that Timarchus actually received payment for his services. In many aspects Aeschines was walking on quicksand here. Many an Athenian could have given presents to his beloved boy, and could have once received such presents himself. Aeschines was well aware of that when he said that Timarchus’ first lover, a certain Misiglos son of Naucratus from the Collytus deme (41), was aner kalos kagathos (‘a good and decent man’). It has to be noted that this description was used in relation to a citizen who had had intercourse with a ‘youth’ (meirakion), an immature boy.

Aeschines knew he found himself in a delicate situation. He could have aroused suspicions of being an opponent of paiderastia; he openly admits he expects such accusations from the defence, which will desire to present him as an unsophisticated man. This is an important piece of evidence concerning the prevalence of homoerotic relationships and the level of their acceptance. Aeschines was speaking in front of a tribunal of at least five hundred citizens (in political cases the tribunals consisted of five hundred, a thousand or a thousand five hundred judges chosen from the panel of six thousand helaists). Before this body he issued a peculiar declaration:

‘Now I do not criticize erotic love that is just, and I do not say that those who are exceptional in beauty have prostituted themselves; nor do I deny that I have myself been engaged in erotic passions, and am still today; nor do I deny that the competitions and fights which arise from this activity in other people’s cases have arisen in mine’ (136; tr. N. Fisher).

For the judges (and then for the readers of the speech when published) it was clear that a cultured man has many affairs with beautiful boys. There is no mention whatsoever of the role of paiderastia in the upbringing of the boys, or of the long-lasting character of such relationships. This is a picture much different than the one gained from Plato’s Symposium.

However, in the entire, rather long passage (132–137) concerning the character of love relationships with boys, Aeschines differentiates between ‘decent’ and ‘disgraceful’ love. He maintains that everyone knows that Timarchus was a *pornos* (the masculine from *porne*), and that his listeners in the Assembly can hardly stop themselves from roaring with laughter since they constantly imagine references with sexual matters (130; 82–84). The Athenians’ laughter was supposedly provoked by a member of the Areopagus, Autolycus, during an Assembly debate concerning the cleaning of some parts of town: ‘on the subject of that deserted spot and the place on the Pnyx, you should not be surprised, Athenians, if Timarchos is more experienced than the Council of the Areopagus’ (82; tr. N. Fisher). This is not in any way proof of young Timarchus’ prostitution; the issue is his present conduct, and Aeschines is alluding to some places in Athens in which passing contacts could be made, where Timarchus, by now no longer young, could have been the client. It is not known where such places could be found in Athens, but the archaic graffiti from Thera are the best evidence of the existence of such spots in Greek cities. Aeschines, instead of proving that in his youth Timarchos had indeed been a male prostitute, is trying to arouse the judges’ dislike towards the defendant by painting a picture of his dissipated life. The ‘disgraceful’ love does not, therefore, consist only of seeking clients and taking money for the rendering of erotic services.

For Aeschines, a positive model is found in the relationship of Achilles and Patroclus (the nature of which is, to him, obviously erotic) and of course the relationship of Harmodius and Aristogiton. In the case of the latter couple he stresses the advantage the *polis* had from their love (i.e. the assassination of a tyrant), but also the fact that they were ‘educated by that chaste and legitimate [love]’ (140). Aeschines underlines the way of life or inclination (tropos) of both heroes and their joint action. This can suggest that ‘chaste love’ means for him fidelity and constancy, since Harmodius rejected the advances of the tyrant and Aristogiton paid with his life for the defence of his lover’s honour. Additionally, it is noteworthy that Aeschines’ words may signify that the lovers were close in age, and that their relationship was of a relatively long standing, or at least it did last for some time. This does not mean that such was the relationship of the tyrannicides in reality, but rather it attests to a certain model of a homosexual relationship of two citizens. In the case of Achilles and Patroclus (132–137), too, Aeschines brings to the forefront the issue of fidelity and emotional involvement, which was, incidentally, equal on both sides. In Aeschines’ interpretation it is a perfect example of, to use Plutarch’s phrase, *erōtike eunōia*.

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In his speech Aeschines devoted some space also to Timarchus’ financial matters, telling how he squandered his inheritance and the entire fortune he made himself. Again, this argument has nothing to do with the issues of the trial; it is meant to arouse the judges’ suspicion that Timarchus is a bad citizen. Aeschines states this straightforwardly by invoking a conviction, prevalent in Athens, that only that citizen is able to conduct state business well who can well govern his own oikos. After all, the oikos is both a basis for the existence of the polis, and in fact a polis in miniature. So a citizen will act in the issues of the demosia as he does regarding idia.

It seems that this is the key to understanding the role of eroticism in the life of a citizen of the polis, and to the criteria of assessment of erotic behaviour. Eroticism and erotic behaviour did not belong to the intimate, private sphere of a man’s life; rather they were an element of his citizenly conduct. A citizen faithful in love was also trustworthy in public life; fellow citizens could count on him. Constancy and erōtike eunōia towards another citizen, or a son of a citizen who in future was to become a member of the community, was a measure of loyalty and respect towards others.

This, of course, does not mean that homosexual relationships were a universal model in Athens. But what was crucial was the application of the same ethical norm to erotic life and to public issues. Constancy, as in marriage, did not equal fidelity at all. But the ‘use of pleasures’ was perceived as subordinate to the interests of the polis, in which the relationships among citizens were to be based on mutual loyalty. Since the private and public spheres of life closely coincided, the term sophrosyne (‘judicious decency’, ‘moderation’) applied equally to both.

Włodzimierz Lengauer
lengauer@wp.pl
Institute of History
Warsaw University
Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28
00-927 Warsaw, Poland

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