Greek Homosexuality and Initiation

1. THE NEED FOR EXPLANATION

In my book *Greek Homosexuality* I was chary of offering explanations, believing that the prime need was for adequate description and classification of the phenomena. Explanation of the importance of homosexuality in Greek society is not just a matter of explaining why so many Greeks desired boys as well as girls; wherever there is a more and a less we shall find a most and a least, and the causes of the most are not necessarily different from the causes of the second most, or third most, and so on, but may well be attributable to minor fluctuations in a few out of a very large number of variables. There are no social surveys from the ancient world, and we are not in a strong position to assert that the average Athenian citizen copulated with adolescent boys more often or less often than the average citizen of Uruk or tribesman of Illyria; we can only know what the documentation (not intended for our eyes) reveals and what writers and artists chose to present. It is precisely there, however, that the fundamental, provocative question arises. If we look at the ancient civilizations of the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, acknowledging that as yet we do not know anything about the Babylonian and Hittite attitudes to homosexuality, we find that homosexual copulation was treated in Egypt as a sin from which the soul after death needed to be purified (*ANET* 34ff, Maystre 40ff, 82, 88), in Israel as a grave sin meriting death (Lev. 18: 22, 20: 13) and in Assyria as a crime incurring savage punishment (*ANET* 181, Driver and Miles 390ff, Cardascia 133ff); as for Persia, Hdt. i 135 regards ‘copulating with boys’ as one of the ‘good things of life’ (*εὐπράξεις*) which the Persians learned from the Greeks.

Herodotus’s words bring out starkly the novelty of the Greek situation. It is not just homosexual relations, but *outr* homosexuality, which is the distinctive feature of the Greeks. From the end of the seventh century BC they used the same words for homosexual as for heterosexual emotion (the *ἐρως, ἐρῶν* group; *GH* 42ff) and the same for its physical consummation, whether coarse (*GH* 40ff) or polite (*GH* 44ff, 63ff, 83). Since they regarded homosexual desire as natural, normal and universal (*GH* 60ff), a Greek who said ‘I’m in love’ would
not mind being asked 'With a boy, or with a girl?', nor would he mind answering 'With a boy', in the assurance that he would get sympathy and encouragement from his elders and peers (GH 82ff). The law did not penalize homosexual copulation per se, nor were there religious sanctions against it. Serious poetry and the visual arts attributed homosexual affairs, and on occasion homosexual rape, to gods and heroes.

2. ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

During the last few years an explanatory hypothesis first put forward by Bethe in 1907 has been substantially developed by Bremmer, Patzer and Sergent, with an incidental contribution from Devereux. The essential features of what I call ‘Theory B’ are:

(I) A system of initiation procedures for young males was part of the Indo-European inheritance of the Greeks in the prehistoric period.

(II) Homosexual copulation was an integral part of those procedures.

(III) Where initiation procedures lapsed in historical times – that is to say, practically, though not quite, everywhere – the homosexual ingredient survived, and its ethos and conventions reflected its origins.

(IV) The absence of overt homosexuality from early epic – I stress ‘overt’, and shall return to that topic – is the product of conventional reticence (Sergent 239ff; Patzer 93ff treats the question with greater subtlety).

Bethe treated Greek homosexuality as specifically Dorian in origin; that limitation is not now part of Theory B.

For the purpose of this paper I am prepared to concede proposition (I), founded on the work of Jeanmaire, Brellich and Calame, although I have considerable doubts (see section 3 below) about the adequacy of the evidence for it. The data on which propositions (II) and (III) are based are the following:

1. Those archaic, classical and Hellenistic myths which are concerned with the homosexual desire of a god or hero for a younger male (and they are numerous) show many reflexes of a teacher/learner relationship, much symbolism of death and rebirth, and other ingredients found in the initiation rituals of non-Greek peoples. This is Sergent’s contribution (passim) to the theory, and it must not be assumed that Bremmer or Patzer agrees.

2. According to Ammianus Marcellinus xxxi 9.5, among a certain Germanic tribe, the Taifali, it was customary for adult males to contract homosexual ‘marriages’ to younger males; when the younger one had captured a boar single-handed or killed a big bear, he was ‘freed from this foul contamination’ (Bremmer 289, Patzer 88ff, Sergent 17ff). (Bremmer 288ff adds to this Procopius’s remarks about the Heruli, to the effect that (a) Goth.
iii 14. 36 'they perform unholy copulations, notably of men with donkeys', (b) Pers. iii 25. 28, a Herulian slave – i.e. squire, apprentice fighter? – may not carry a shield until he has distinguished himself by a feat in battle).

3. In the south-west Pacific (Melanesia, New Guinea, Australia) some of those cultures which have age-graded initiation procedures incorporate homosexual copulation in them. Of those which do that, some assign the initiate to an individual 'mentor' or 'tutor' (with copulatory rights); also, some believe that a frequent intake of semen is absolutely necessary for a boy’s maturation. Evidence from this area is used by Bethe 463ff, Bremmer 290ff, Patzer 69ff, 74ff, Sergent 57ff. A useful synthesis of the material from New Guinea and Melanesia, greatly exceeding what was known in Bethe’s time, is now available in Herdt.

Material comparable in one respect or another may be assembled from other parts of the world; e.g. among the Azande (Evans-Pritchard 1971. 199f) a soldier in a prince’s company takes a boy-wife by arrangement with the boy’s parents, copulates with him intercrurally over a long period, teaches him the skills of soldiering and terminates the relationship with the gift of shield and spear when the boy grows up.

4. Ephoros FGist Hist 70 F 149, 21 (cited by Strabo x 4) describes a form of institutionalized homosexual eros which is, he says, peculiar to Crete. The erastês lets it be known that he hopes to carry off a certain erōmenos, and if the family and friends of the erōmenos consider the erastês a good enough man they put up only a token resistance to the ‘rape’ (ἀστυπᾶσι). The erastês takes the erōmenos to his own διδαχείον (in Crete, as at Sparta, males of different age-bands were segregated into communal messes), and from there to a place of his own choice in the uncultivated territory of the city. Those who were present at the carrying-off go with them. They feast and hunt together for two months, and then return to the city. The erōmenos (termed παρασταθής, lit. 'stander-beside') receives gifts from the erastês, which are numerous and expensive – to such an extent that the friends of the erastês contribute towards them – but must by prescription include an ox, a drinking-cup and πολεμική στολή (not arms and armour; Herakleides’ epitome of Aristotle (Arist. fr. 611. 15) says ἐκδήσις, 'clothing'). The erōmenos has the opportunity to say whether he was subjected to force, and if he chooses to say so, he can repudiate his erastês. Otherwise, he will wear at festivals the clothing given him and will be reckoned κληρικός, 'of high repute'. Analogies between these Cretan customs and initiation procedures have been pointed out by Bethe 453, Bremmer 283ff, Patzer 72ff, Sergent 15ff.

5. (i) Ephoros states that what made a boy ἐφάρμος (‘attractive’, ‘desirable’) among the Cretans was not his physical beauty, but his good character.

(ii) Archaic graffiti adjacent to the main sanctuary on Thera (IG xii. 3, 536ff) include a number of acclamations of persons comparable with the well-known formula ὅ ἄγαν καλὸς with which erastai celebrated erōmenoi in the Greek world, but differing from the norm in
predicating ἄγαθος, 'good', 'brave', or ἄνιστος, 'best', instead of καλός, 'handsome'. The contrast is made more striking by the existence of one Theran καλός-agraffito in what is plainly the script of a later period. (Bethe 450ff, Bremmer 283, Patzer 84ff, Sergent 140ff).

6. It appears from Theocritus 12. 13 and Callimachus, fr. 68. 1, that at Sparta εἶσπνήλας or εἶσπνήλος, 'breather-in', was a word for erastés. Aelian, VH iii 12, says that Spartan erōmenoi asked their erastai to εἶσπνεῖν αὐτοῖς. If this means, as it is normally taken to mean, 'breathe into them', there is an analogy between the Spartan concept of homosexual ἔρως and New Guinea beliefs in the power of semen. (Bethe 460ff, Sergent 219, but not Patzer 13; Devereux 1967. 20, 1978. 106 takes the passage to imply that Spartan erōmenoi felled their erastai.)

7. The homosexual relationships which were conventionally approved by classical Greek society were strongly asymmetrical. A younger male was desired by an older, but did not himself desire the older; mutual desire between peers was not recognized, and consent to act in the role of erōmenos on the part of a man whose beard was already grown incurred ridicule and contempt (GH 52f, 84ff, 144, 194). For this reason Patzer 44ff takes exception to my use of the term 'homosexuality' and presses for the substitution of Knabenliebe, 'pederasty'. I prefer, however, to treat pederasty as a species of the genus homosexuality, defining the latter solely in terms of the identity of sex between the desirer and the object of desire.

8. The erastés commonly professed admiration for the character and abilities of the erōmenos and undertook to educate him in military, political and philosophical skills (GH 91, 159, 202).

I do not believe that these data demand explanation by Theory B, and I offer an alternative hypothesis ('Theory D'), of which the essential propositions are:

(I) Overt homosexuality began in the Greek world, and spread rapidly to take in the whole of it, at the end of the seventh century BC.

(II) In consequence, new (homosexual) variants of existing myths, and in some cases new (homosexual) myths, were generated by poets, who in this as in other fields accommodated their material to the tastes, interests and beliefs of the society in which they worked. Wherever there existed procedures analogous to age-graded initiation, these procedures became charged with an overt homosexual content.

(III) The didactic relationship between erastés and erōmenos was superimposed on the erotic, not vice versa.

It is common ground to both theories that the didactic element in the relationship was beneficial to the erōmenos. They differ in that Theory B argues for a primeval belief that the copulatory element was also in itself beneficial, and Theory D rejects that argument. I base my rejection on
(a) Negative criticism of item (1).
(b) Denial of the inferences drawn by Theory B from items (2)–(6) and (8).
(c) What I believe to be an adequate demonstration that Proposition (IV) of Theory B is false.

3. WHAT IS INITIATION?

Suppose that one day, towards sunset, a group of adult males of the community appear in the centre of the village, painted blue from head to toe, and carry off all the boys who are aged about ten. The boys' parents lament them as dead and perform funeral rites. The boys are taken to a building deep in the forest, where they are beaten, starved, humiliated and threatened. They are also taught many myths, songs, spells and rituals, and warned that dreadful consequences will follow if they divulge a word of all that to any younger child, female or stranger. They are subjected to some injury which serves both as a test of endurance and pain and as a lasting mark of transition to a new status, e.g. cutting off the foreskin or knocking out one of the front teeth. Then they are brought back into the community, dressed as white birds. Their parents greet them as born again and perform birth rites. An all-night dance is held. From the following day the boys are allowed to wear a penis-wrap and carry a spear.

I suppose we would all agree in calling that procedure 'initiation'; and we would all agree that the procedure by which we segregate our children, graded by age, into special buildings called 'schools', where they are taught what we think grown-ups ought to know, is 'education'. Where is the boundary? It will hardly do to base the distinction on the opposition between science and magic or between history and myth. In a culture which lacks historical documentation and possesses only a rudimentary technology, myth performs the function of history, and magic, spells, songs and dances are perceived as a practical system of relations between the community and its ambience. The most important criterion of initiation is in fact secrecy, which is absent from our kind of education; we do not forbid one sex to divulge the second law of thermodynamics or the history of the Civil War to the other sex. The intensity of symbolism is a secondary criterion. The elements of secrecy and of symbolism in initiation procedures are, of course, variable between cultures. It would be prudent to consign almost everything that the anthropologist calls 'initiation' to the genus 'education' (along with all kinds of training, apprenticeship, etc.), and then consider what ingredients in the educational system of any given culture (not exempting our own) merit the species-label 'initiation'. I say 'almost' everything, because the rituals and ordeals sometimes involved in the admission of postulants to clubs, gangs and conspiracies need not include the imparting of knowledge or skills; but that is not the kind of initiation which is at issue here.
The classification is not just a debating-point. It is one thing to be alert to
reflexes of initiation procedures in myth, but quite another to see such a reflex
in every myth in which anyone learns anything from anyone else. All relation-
ships whatsoever between a more experienced human and a less are necessar-
ily invested to some degree with the character of tuition, training or
apprenticeship.

4. THE USE OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL DATA

Among the Pacific cultures which incorporate homosexual copulation in their
initiation procedures three different techniques of insemination are used:
fellation (esp. 173ff, 323), sodomy (18ff, 97f) and rubbing semen into incisions
(306ff). The fellators are apt to think sodomy disgusting (34, 47, 78f; cf. Evans-
Pritchard 1970. 1430 on the disgust at sodomy felt by the Azande, who favour
the intercultural mode) and the sodomizers to think fellation ridiculous (17).
Some of the cultures believe that insemination is indispensable for a boy’s
growth (19, 21, 35ff, 181ff), or at least for the growth of his genitals (92, 137),
or desirable for growth though not essential (36), or a necessary contribution to
growth but not sufficient in itself (306). Wherever such beliefs are held, older
males have an inescapable social obligation to inseminate. At the same time,
the treatment of the boys as sex-objects is a way of humiliating and devaluing
them (133, 135ff; ‘the men ... mockingly call them “girls”’). This accords
with the privations and threats which are a widespread feature of initiation,
although the Zande boy-wives fully accepted their temporary role as females
(Evans-Pritchard 1970. 1429), which was reflected in the language and social
procedures of the warrior’s ‘marriage’ to his boy. In one part of the New
Hebrides initiands are threatened with rape by men dressed as ghosts, but
apparently the threat is not fulfilled (85, 103). In some cultures the boy is
assigned to a mentor (e.g. a maternal uncle [132, 315] or paternal grandfather
[89f] or someone chosen by the boy’s father [35]), who has exclusive copula-
tory rights (91, 276); the terminology may reflect the analogy of marriage (91)
or of parenthood (293, 304). In others there is a free-for-all (173, 306; ‘seven or
more men ... during the same night’). In others again, chiefs, like the biggest
stags in the herd, collect a harem of boys and girls (94ff). It goes without
saying that wherever this ‘ritualized’ homosexuality occurs it is an ingredient
in a complex system of theory and practice concerning male and female in the
world, semen and milk and blood (112, 118) and the distribution and inheri-
tance of power (e.g. 136ff, 171, 194ff, 222ff, 274); what should not pass
unnoticed is that the logic of the theory is by no means the same in all cultures
which practise the same technique or construct a similar pattern of relation-
ships, nor, despite some correlatory tendencies, is there a direct and obvious
correlation between the presence or absence of ritualized homosexuality on

1 All page references in the first paragraph are to Herdt.
the one hand and, on the other, the relations between the sexes implied by marriage rules, segregation, sexual tabus or marital affection (58, 66-73, 131, 139, 272, 349ff, 355ff).

It is suggested by Bremmer 290 that the south-west Pacific is 'a marginal area . . . where we can expect to find the more archaic features of social institutions'. This seems to point to an inference that a phenomenon common to New Guinea, a Germanic tribe and Crete (an archaic backwater of the Greek world) is a prehistoric universal. I question the axiom underlying the inference.

Has a false analogy perhaps been drawn from comparative philology? If we find a language in which the words for 'man', 'fire' and 'iguana' are respectively tama, diriki and ikata, a second in which they are than, jirikh and ikhat, and a third in which they are teme, dirgi and igete, we naturally formulate the hypothesis that the three forms for 'man' are differentiated from a common original, and so too for 'fish' and 'iguana'. That is because, the linguistic sign being arbitrary, there is no reason why the word for 'man' in any language should be tama or anything like it, rather than momps or iae'eo; purely coincidental convergence is therefore unattractive as an explanation of similarities. But there is nothing arbitrary about copulation; it is sought as an end in itself, so that there is always a reason for importing it into a variety of social procedures, to say nothing of inventing new procedures in order to give it more scope.

More illuminating analogies could be found in other aspects of language. For example, in many (not all) languages demonstrative pronouns and adjectives have been converted in the course of time into definite articles. The conversion of Latin illc in the Romance languages is a case in point, but note also that the original Slavonic demonstrative has become a suffixed article in two very widely separated and otherwise dissimilar parts of the Slavonic area, Bulgarian at one end and North Russian dialects at the other. Many (not all) languages classify substantives into animate and inanimate and subclassify the animates into masculine and feminine; some, in the northern Caucasus (Comrie 208) and northern and eastern Australia (Dixon 273f) further divide inanimates into classes, while the Bantu languages of central and southern Africa and some languages of north-eastern New Guinea (Wurm 218ff, 230) have developed a classificatory system to which gender is irrelevant. Obviously we are concerned here with the totally separate and independent realization, in different areas, of a universal potential. Again, cultural contact can affect languages simultaneously at a very deep level and a very limited spread; in the Balkans, Greek, Albanian, Bulgarian and Macedonian, representing three different subfamilies of the Indo-European family, but geographically contiguous, have all replaced the infinitive by alternative constructions.

These analogies encourage us to suppose both that the homosexual potential of initiation was realised independently in different areas and that its wide distribution in the south-west Pacific can be accounted for by positing limited
diffusion from a few points of origin. All except one of the Papuan cultures in Herdt’s list (10f) – but not, of course, the Austronesian cultures in the same list – belong linguistically to the ‘Trans-New Guinea Phylum’ (Herdt 51ff; see the maps in Wurm 14–17); but the phylum is very large (over 500 languages), only a minority of the peoples within it practises ritualized homosexuality, and the one exception (Humboldt Bay [Herdt 30ff]) is a long way from the nearest others which have the practice. The linguistic evidence points to the strong possibility of major migrations within New Guinea (Wurm 238ff), and the diffusion-pattern of any phenomenon is likely to be complex.

We can take it for granted that stone tools preceded metal, hunting and gathering preceded agriculture, and therefore that contemporary cultures which operate at a very low technological level are representative of prehistoric conditions. But when we are concerned with social structures and procedures and the concepts and purposes which determine their form, the equation of contemporary primitive with prehistoric universal may be rather misleading. Most of what we know about the cultures of New Guinea has been discovered since 1945. In the case of some parts of Africa we have a longer historical perspective. The Azande, for example, adopted universal male circumcision from a neighbouring people at the end of the nineteenth century (Evans-Pritchard 1971. 90, 103); a hundred years earlier, the Zulu and Swazi abolished circumcision, while their fellow-Nguni further south retained it (Bryant 98f, Wilson and Thompson 25), and their tradition throws no light on the motives and circumstances of that change. I choose circumcision as an example because of its importance to initiation and ceremonial rites of passage, but other organizational and cultural changes among the Azande (Evans-Pritchard 1971, chapter 7) are an interesting reminder of the scale and pace of change which can occur in the undocumented history of non-literary cultures.

5. TAIFAILI AND CRETANS

If we read Ammianus’s brief note on the Taifalii with Ephoros fresh in mind, it is easy for us to imagine that the Taifalian system resembled the Cretan in some respect other than the bare *foedus concubitus nefandit*; important, then, to remember that this is imagination and not data. Ammianus does not say whether the ‘insertor’ taught the ‘insertee’ (I borrow Herdt’s terms) to hunt, or indeed taught him anything; nor whether the relationship was consummated away from the community, or in a segregated ‘men’s house’, or within a mixed community; nor whether an insertee adhered to one insertor (though I would infer that from *foedus*) or was available to older males generally. Sergent 23f sees an affinity between the young Taifalian’s killing of a bear and the young Cretan’s sacrifice of the ox which his *erastēs* gave him on their return to the city. Sacrificing an ox, however, is not a hunting feat, but a necessary condition of a lavish feast in a culture which likes to eat beef; and the
dissolution of the séjour en brousse of Cretan erastés and erômenos did not depend on the performance of a feat by the erômenos, but solely on the lapse of time.

What did the Cretan erômenos learn from his erastés? Ephoros, after all, does not present Cretan erôs as an aspect of the Cretan dywôph, but its exploitation of the dywôph as a distinctive feature of Cretan erôs. They hunted together, and no doubt at the end of the period the erômenos might be a better hunter, but he had already learned much about hunting from his father (Ephoros F 149. 20). Sergent 46 interprets the Cretan bronze Louvre MNC 689, in which a man accosts a youth who is carrying a dead wild goat, as illustrating the stage at which the youth, 'déjà grand, est capable de chasser seul'. The accosting is sexual (I was wrong to doubt that in GH 204), but if the bronze had come from some other part of the Greek world it would not call for any explanation in initiatory terms. The only thing in Ephoros which brings initiation into one's mind is withdrawal from the community. There is no special significance in the erastés' gifts to the erômenos. Since we quite often give presents to people to whom (for a variety of reasons, including e.g. the achievement of sexual happiness) we owe gratitude and affection, it is no matter for surprise that gifts by insertor to insertee are not unknown in New Guinea either (Herdt 135) or that among the Azande, when the boy-wife of a soldier has grown up, he receives from his erastés a shield and spear (Evans-Pritchard 1971. 200). When giving presents, we try to give things which will be useful to the recipient and appropriate to his or her age. A drinking-cup comes in that category. In reminding us that ποτήριον is the word used (not surprisingly) of the chalice at the Last Supper in Mt 26. 27 al., Sergent 24 seems to be seeking to invest drinking-cups with religious significance; and in citing Aelian VH ii 28 and Athenaeus 429B as evidence for the proposition that a wine-cup is an important symbol of transition to a new age-group (27), he overlooks that they are speaking of Roman usage, not Greek (the visual arts provide plenty of evidence for the participation of beardless youths in Greek symposia, to say nothing of the presence of Autolykos in Xenophon’s Symposium).

6. INSPIRATION

Aelian’s statement (VH iii 12) is not altogether plain sailing: αὐτοῖς γοῦν (sc. oĭ ἐν Λακεδαίμονι καλοί) δέουντας τῶν ἑραστῶν ἐλασνεῖν αὐτοῖς· Λακεδαιμονίων δὲ ἐστὶν αὕτη ἡ φωνή, ἐρᾶν λέγουσα (the last few words are textually corrupt, but ἐρᾶν at least is firm, not any word meaning ‘kiss’ or ‘copulate’, let alone ‘compel to fellate’). Does ἐλασνεῖν αὐτοῖς mean ‘breathe into them’? A wind can ἐλασνεῖν into a house (Hep. Cam. 6. 2 ἐν οἰκήματι, ὡστεν ἄνεμος μὴ ἐπυνθή; cf. Philostr. VA ii 8), and a smell carried on the breeze can ἐλασνεῖν into a person (Ar. Ra. 313f καὶ δάκδων γέ με [not μοι] / αἴφα τις ἐλασνεύειν μυστικώτατα), but when ἐλασνεῖν is used with a person or animal as subject it means ‘inhale’, ‘breathe (air) into (one’s own lungs)’. 135
A contribution to the solution of these problems may be sought from Plu. Cleom. 3. 2 'He had a friend, Xenares, who had been his erastês — and this the Spartans call ἐμπνεύσαι — . . .'. ἐμπνεύσαι is the ordinary word for 'inspire', in the sense in which a god inspires valour in a mortal (e.g. Xen. HG vii 4. 32, cf. Pl. Smp. 179b). The passive can be used of the person in whom the emotional state is inspired, e.g. [Longin.] Sbl. 16. 2 καθάπερ ἐμπνευσθεῖς ἐξαίφνης ὑπὸ θεοῦ. This suggests that the god Eros inspires (ἐμπνεύσαι) the erastês, and the erastês inhales (ἐλπνεύν) the inspiration; in that case, αὐτοῖς in Aelian means not 'into them' but 'for them'. The notion is used in a modified form by Xen. Smp. 4. 15 ἐδά γὰρ τὸ ἐμπνεύν τι ἡμᾶς τοὺς καλοῖς τοῖς ἐρωτικοῖς (and Xenophon, if anyone, was familiar with Spartan beliefs and conventions). Here the inspiration proceeds from the ἐρόμενοι themselves, whose beauty arouses ἔρως in the erastai. In Σ Theocr. 12. 12 παρὰ τὸ ἐλπνεύν καὶ ἐλπνεύν τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸν ἔρωτα it is not immediately clear whether τὸν ἔρωτα is the subject of the infinitives (cf. Et. Gen. s.v ἐλπνήλης: ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔρωτος ἐλπνευ- ὕμενος) or the object, the ἐρόμενοι being understood as subject; perhaps the latter, since the scholion takes account of the other 'technical term' used by Theokritos in the passage, ἑτὶς ἐρόμενος, and is probably thinking of that as an agent-noun of the verb δῆναι 'blow' (ἐλπνεύν, a compound of δῆναι transferred to the thematic conjugation, is not in LSJ). In either case the breath does not come from the erastai. The recipient of the inspiration, τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι, is however put into the dative, so that there are no purely linguistic grounds for denying that Aelian could have meant 'breathe into them'. That does not much matter, because, whatever Aelian may have thought, Xenophon and Plutarch offer very strong non-linguistic grounds for saying that ἐλπνήλης at Sparta meant someone in whom eros was created by 'inspiration' from without.

7. BEAUTY AND VIRTUE

Did a Cretan erastês fall in love with the courageous, truthful, resolute character of an ugly Cretan boy? Or did he fall in love with handsome boys and declare that it was their virtuous souls, not their beautiful bodies, that attracted him? One sentence in Ephoros strikes an interesting note: 'For those who are good-looking (καλοῖς τὴν ἰδέαν) and of distinguished ancestry it is a disgrace (ἀλαχρόν) to have no erastai, for it is assumed that this has befallen them because of their character'. In other words, looks did matter (as observed by Halperin 43). Bethe 473 omits the words 'good-looking and' from his reference to this portion of Ephoros's account, and so does Patzer 73; in fact, Patzer 72 omits the whole sentence from what is otherwise a close paraphrase.

Good looks matter also in the ritualized homosexuality of the Pacific. The mentor of a handsome boy incurs jealousy (Herdt 25, 134; on jealousy among the Azande, cf. Evans-Pritchard 1970. 1431); in the New Hebrides, he may
profit materially by hiring the boy out to other men (Herdt 95). Among the Jaqai of New Guinea pimping is a source of income for the boy's father, and one or other of the clients may form a stable relationship, becoming the boy's 'anus-father' (Herdt 29). However stringent the obligation to make boys grow by insemination, the process is also enjoyable (Herdt 188). The Sambia consider that ejaculation into a boy's mouth is pleasurable 'play', and fortunately also indispensable for the boy's growth, whereas ejaculation into a vagina for the procreation of children is 'work' (Herdt 176). Among the Sambia, too, fellatio may give older boys sensations which they like, and it has developed its own aesthetic: 'they are fascinated with the forms, textures and tastes of semen, which they discuss frequently, like wine-tasters' (Herdt 189, 210 n. 7).

Ritual can be enjoyed; but when a ritual involves a pleasure which is also sought for its own sake in other contexts, how does one draw the line between 'ritual' and 'erotics' (cf. Herdt 63) or decide that it is 'primarily' or 'purely' ritual of a sacral character (Patzer 65, 77f)? If the Greeks in the prehistoric period believed that insemination of adolescents was a duty, and yet overt enthusiasm for homosexual copulation continued long after such a belief was discarded (the belief is not, after all, directly attested for the historical period), it must have continued for other reasons; and if those reasons were enough to sustain it then, why should we not accept them as enough to generate it in the first place?

Sex-objects do not like to be told that they are only sex-objects. The wise seducer professes to find interesting and admirable qualities in the person he desires, and since desire commonly generates love, and love notoriously suffers from perceptual distortions, sincere flattery comes easily. Love also ensures that the older male wishes the younger to acquire a good reputation for physical achievements, courage, skills, integrity and wisdom. The simple fact that a boy grows into a man, whereas a girl does not, unavoidably invests homosexual relationships with an element absent from heterosexual; the older male can, and does, guide and educate the younger and serves as a model for imitation by the younger. It is not possible to bully a boy of citizen family into homosexual submission; the older male can only persuade and seduce by earning admiration and gratitude.

It is not surprising that a relationship between erastês and erōmenos should sometimes mature into a lifelong friendship, in the Pacific (Herdt 305) as in the Greek world, and that fact feeds another tributary into the complex motivation of Greek homosexuality. An erōmenos of a politically influential family is a good catch; so is an influential erastês (cf. Cartledge 287ff on known examples at Sparta). It is perhaps more tactful to praise the character of a boy with powerful connections than to praise his looks, especially if he is patently ugly, and worse than tactless to confess that his potential political usefulness is the real attraction.

General considerations of this sort must be kept in mind in interpreting the Theran acclamations which use ὑποθεσ and ἄρστος. Those acclamations
must also be seen as one part of a complex of graffiti which includes a jocular obscenity, no. 540. III ‘Krimon was the first of all to warm up Simmias κονιαλωυ’; κονιαλως is a priapic supernatural being (Ar. Lys. 982) or (Hsch. κ 3522) a satyric dance performed by men wearing an artificial erect penis or (Hsch. κ 3521) in the plural ‘(dances?) to do with Aphrodite’, and since intervocalic σ > h is a phenomenon known from Lakonian and some other west-Greek dialects it looks as if κονιαλωυ means Krimon’s own penis—surely a jocular term. This man Krimon, plainly of high libido, declares (no. 538) that he ‘copulated here with Amotion’ and in no. 537 swears by (sc. Apollo) Delphinios that he copulated with another named (male) person. Nos. 536 and 539 state that certain men copulated but do not say with whom; no. 536 ends with the words ‘Empedokles engraved this and danced, by Apollo’, a banal oath (in the manner familiar to us from comedy) which makes it hard to attribute to no. 537 the solemnity which advocates of Theory B see in it.

We have to consider the possibility that the sexual graffiti are boasts and taunts but those which predicate ‘goodness’ political (in the broad sense) or indeed acclamations of erastai by admiring eromenoi. The two elements are not combined in any one graffiti, unless ‘dance’ is sexual slang (540. II ‘. . . best dancer’, 543 ‘. . . dances well’; cf. 536 above, and Watkins 18f). There is another, more interesting possibility: that the conventional pretence that the erastes was interested in the soul, not the body, of the eromenos was particularly strong in parts of the Dorian world. This would cover the Cretans’ claim, repeated by Eophoros, the dyathos-graffiti of Thera, and the remarkable Spartan assertion (Xen. Lac. 2. 13) that ‘Lycurgus’ had regarded physical contact between erastes and eromenos as no less heinous than incest. Xenophon’s Socrates, pretending to be a coquettish eromenos of Antisthenes (Smph. 8. 6), reveals by parody the part that such a convention played in classical Athenian society also. He goes on to claim (8. 28ff) that myths which portray the homosexual relations of gods and heroes are vulgar distortions of the reality, which was love of the soul. Plato’s Socrates had a better understanding of the agonizing difficulty of ‘platonic’ eros (Phdr. 253e–256e).

8. REFLEXES OF INITIATION IN MYTH

It is possible to find many reflexes of homosexuality-plus-initiation in Greek myth provided that:

1. Wherever an eromenos learns something from an erastes, this is classified as initiatory.

2. Wherever a younger male learns anything from an older, a homosexual relationship is presumed if it is not already attested in the myth.

3. Wherever a young male performs a feat which makes it clear that from then on he is a person to be reckoned with, this too is classified as completion of an initiatory process. (Many cultures, of course, recognize particular feats
as marks of transition in status, and it would be surprising if they did not.
Davy Crockett, according to the song, ‘killed his bear at the age of three’, but
that is not evidence for ritualized homosexual child-abuse on the ‘wild
frontier’).

(4) Wherever a myth contains an ingredient which is associated with
metamorphosis, resurrection or precarious survival in another Greek myth or
with initiatory ritual in any other culture, that ingredient is treated as a reflex
of initiation, irrespective of its function in the narrative.

(5) Wherever there are two or more variants of a myth, the one which
supports Theory B is treated as original and those which do not as later distor-
tions designed to suit a changed ethos. This would be methodologically
unobjectionable if Theory B were firmly established on other evidence; as it
is, it begs the question completely.

I offer five examples which illustrate one or more of the procedures listed.
The first four are comparatively trivial, but the fifth requires more detailed
consideration.

Aristomenes, Sergent 260: ‘On ne sait de quelle manière la pédérastie
jouait un rôle dans son histoire’; it plays no part at all in the extant data.
Aktaion, Sergent 268f: ‘Arkhaias sera tué à son tour par son éromène – son
élève’; pourtant, puisqu’il lui avait confié le commandement d’un navire’;
Plutarch’s words are (Amat. Narr. 773b) ὑπὸ τοῦ Τηλέφου δολοφονεῖται, δὲ
ἐγκατείπε (not ἤν) μὲν αὐτῶν παιδικά, νεῶς δ’ ἀφηγούμενος συνέπλευσεν εἰς
Σικελίαν. Eurybatos and Alkyoneus, Sergent 273 (Alkyoneus was to be
sacrificed to the monster Sybaris, who lived in a cave near Krissa, but
Eurybatos, having fallen in love with him, took his place, dragged Sybaris out
of her cave and threw her down the rocks to her death): ‘la motivation
primitive d’Eurubatos – sans aucun doute,’ (my italics) ‘montrer à Alkuoneus
comment faire et l’encourager à l’imiter – a disparu au profit d’une motiva-
tion purement psychologique et érotique’. The young Achilles disguised as a
girl on Skyros, Sergent 289: ‘… Lukomedes, chez qui fut “caché” l’ado-
lescent, pour – il faut lire les textes dans une optique qui n’est déjà plus la leur
– qu’il y subisse les épreuves initiatiques qui l’habiliteront au mariage et à la
guerre’.

The most interesting case, to my mind, is the myth of Polyeidos and
Glaukos, found in Apollodoros iii 3. 1–2. Glaukos, son of Minos, drowned in
a vat of honey, and no one knew where he was. The seer Polyeidos solved the
mystery, and Minos, demanding that he should also restore the corpse to life,
imprisoned him with it. Polyeidos killed a snake, and, observing that another
snake brought a certain herb to resurrect its mate, used that herb to resurrect
Glaukos. Minos then compelled him to teach Glaukos seership; Polyeidos did
so, but when he was finally allowed to go home he told Glaukos to spit into his
mouth; Glaukos did, and at once forgot all that Polyeidos had taught him.
The interesting feature here is the notion that wisdom is transmissible in body
fluids, in this case spittle (Sergent 218 mistranslates, perhaps with Serv. Aen.
ii 247 in mind (cf. Muth 144ff) – Apollo spits into the mouth of Kassandra to
ensure that her prophecies will not be believed – and so spoils the point of the
dénouement by making Polyeidos spit into Glaukos's mouth). The other
elements which, according to Sergent 219, make the myth 'de la manière la
plus évidente, le récit d'une initiation' are unconvincing: 'la mort mystique (le
miel, dans lequel tombe l'enfant, est une matière qui confère l'immortalité), la
délégation de pouvoir du père à l'éducateur, le lien personnel et l'isolement
du maître et du disciple, l'éducation, la résurrection'. Glaukos is an infant (ἐν
νησίως ὑπάρξεως, and cf. Davies and Kathirithamby 68); Minos can hardly be
said to 'delegate' a task which he could not conceivably have performed him-
self; the 'personal bond' consists simply in the fact of teaching; the isolation of
teacher and learner is created by the imprisonment of the unwilling teacher;
the education of Glaukos does not lead to his resurrection, but follows it; and
whatever the immortalizing powers of honey, in this instance it kills Glaukos
and contributes nothing to his resurrection.

9. THE AGE OF HOMOSEXUAL MYTHS

According to a certain Peisandros, reported at length in the scholion on E. Ph.
1760, Laios fell in love with Chrysippos, son of Pelops, and carried him off;
Chrysippos committed suicide out of shame (cf. Σ Ph. 60). This was the myth
used by Euripides in his Chrysippos (Cic. Tusc. iv 71) and illustrated on three
Italiote vases of the fourth century ('Trendall and Webster III 3. 16–18;
Sergent 88 mistakenly says 'du Ve siècle'). Sergent 88 draws our attention to
the fact that Hellanikos FGrHist 4 F 157 summarizes the myth of Chrysippos,
but omits to tell us that in Hellanikos's version there is no homosexual
element at all; Chrysippos is murdered by his stepbrothers, who are
motivated by (non-sexual) jealousy, and that is the version implied by Thuc.
i 9. 2 (cf. also Σ Eur. Or. 4). The hypothesis that the homosexual variant
originated at some time later than the beginning of the sixth century, and
could well have originated in the fifth, must be taken very seriously in the light
of two other major inventions, of similar tendency, by fifth-century poets.

The first of those two is Aeschylus's well-known treatment of Achilles and
Patroklos. In Homer Patroklos is the older of the two (II. xi 786f) and there is
no overt indication of homosexual erōs in his relationship with Achilles.
Aeschylus, wishing to make the relationship overtly homosexual, with
Achilles as erastēs and Patroklos as erōmenos, reversed their ages in his Achilles
trilogy, a matter on which Pl. Smp. 180a remarks. Evidently Achilles' 
extravagant grief for the death of Patroklos seemed to Aeschylus the grief of a
lover for his beloved, and he simply changed the story to suit his purpose (not
too radical a change compared with the scale of his inventiveness and rejec-
tion of tradition in Eumenides on the origins of the Areopagus).

The second is Pindar's treatment of Pelops in O. 1. Pindar says (36) that he
will tell Pelops's story δρικα προστέχων, and (52) that he 'cannot call any god a
glutton'. The myth he is rejecting is given by Σ 26 ('40a' Drachmann), which
cites Bacchylides as having used it (fr. 42): Pelops was cooked by Tantalos and served up to the gods, but resurrected on Zeus’s instructions. Pindar’s story is that Poseidon, ‘overcome with desire’ for Pelops, carried him off to Olympos; when the boy’s beard began to grow, he was restored to the world, and the god, granting his prayer and accepting the reminder that gratitude was due for φιλία δώσα Κυνήγας, gave him the supernatural chariot and horses with which to overthrow Oinomaos. Sergent 80ff understandably prefers to believe that the relation between Poseidon and Pelops was not invented by Pindar in 476 BC. Others may (and, I hope, will) prefer to believe that Pindar’s δυνα προτέρων means what it says, and may not feel constrained to treat Himerius ix 6, to the effect that Poseidon taught Pelops how to drive a chariot-team over the waves of the sea, as an ingredient of great antiquity. Köhnen (not mentioned in Sergent’s bibliography) has satisfactorily explained the reasons for Pindar’s daring innovation.

Sergent 81 is of course quite right in saying that in mythology ‘c’est la variété qui est le donné initial’, so that a variant we happen to encounter in a given source is not necessarily older than a different variant known to us only from a later source. However, his further proposition (82) that ‘la variance n’est pas le résultat aléatoire d’une histoire, mais une propriété structurale du mythe’ is not consistent with his own frequent rejection, as late additions and distortions of a hypothetical original, of material which affects what I would call the fundamental structure of the myth. Since Greek culture was literate from the beginning of the seventh century, it was open to a poet to take material from a comparatively obscure earlier poet and give it a new lease of life; in dealing with non-literate cultures of the present day we have to presume that myths which ceased to perform any function responding to social needs (in the broadest sense of ‘social’) have perished, a presumption which cannot be tested but at least serves to guard against uncritically equating the primitive with the prehistoric.

There are, however, some other very important distinctions between Greek myths and those of non-literate cultures. The fragmentation of the Greek world ensured that different beliefs about the same hero were held, sometimes for political reasons, in different places. Interstate festivals ensured that everyone knew that and did not expect poets to agree. Consequently there was never a ‘canon’ of Greek myths, never a time when poets were not accorded great freedom to manipulate inherited material, assimilate one myth to another, and invent. Audience-response will have been by far the most important criterion in this process, and the fundamental structure of a myth could well be sacrificed if the poet’s ambition to excite, impress and move his audience demanded the sacrifice. Some myths are likely to have ended up much more alike, at the dates which for us constitute their first appearance, than they had been a century earlier.
10. HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY BC AND EARLIER

In Aeschines' view (i 142) Homer thought of the relation between Achilles and Patroklos as erotic but never made that explicit, relying on the educated among his hearers to understand what he had in mind. The distinction between 'overt' and 'covert' homosexuality could hardly be more neatly expressed. Those who seek covert homosexuality in Homer have a free hand, with Aeschines on their side, but they will not find the overt homosexuality which marks a boundary between early archaic and late archaic Greek culture.

There is no reason why we should follow Aeschines in the interpretation of Homer's treatment of Achilles and Patroklos, but Ganymede creates a problem. The most beautiful of mortal beings, he is given by the gods to Zeus, to serve as his wine-pourer (II. xx 231ff; contrast the Hymn to Aphrodite 202ff, where Ganymede is still a wine-pourer but carried off by Zeus because of his beauty, and Ibykos, fr. 289, where the seizure of Ganymede by Zeus is coupled with the (certainly sexually motivated) seizure of Tithonos by Dawn. It may be, as I suggested in GIf 196f, that beautiful servants are appreciated in a rich household, whatever its sexual orientation. Whether that is so or not, Homer's reference to Ganymede does not constitute an overtly homosexual reference, and it would be hard to find any myth more inimical to the theme of initiation. The point of initiation is to effect the initiate's transition from one status to another, but Ganymede is denied that transition; he becomes an immortal boy who, unlike Pelops, never grows up.

Sergent 287 compares the reticence of epic on homosexuality to the reticence of Xenophon, but the comparison is highly inappropriate. Xenophon, like all serious Greek prose writers, uses a polite vocabulary, but he does not conceal or shirk the fact that an erastēs desires copulation, nor does Plato; but Homer does. So does the Hesiodic corpus, and its bulk and variety of subject-matter make its silence significant: no warnings in Works and Days against falling in love with boys, nothing in the Shield of Herakles to suggest homosexual affection between Herakles and Iolaos, no reference to any homosexual myth in the Theogony or (so far) any of the fragments. Tyrtaios, fr. 10. 27ff, speaks of a young man in the flower of desirable youth (ἐρατός, 'desirable', because we desire to be young rather than old) as 'admirable' (ἀγαθός, 'worth looking at with admiration') 'to men and desirable (ἐρατός) to women'. The passage, modelled on II. xxi 66ff (Sergent 296 n. 36 does not accept that, but perhaps he has not seen my linguistic demonstration of the dependence in Dover 1963. 190f), seems distinctly heterosexual in tone; in any case, neither νέος nor ἤβης ἄνδρος need imply the age and status of an ἔρατος; Aineias ἔχει ἤβης ἄνδρος in II. xiii 484. There is in fact no passage in Tyrtaios in which either overt or covert homosexuality may be discerned.

The Greek world presented in epic is an imaginary world, an amalgam of early archaic realities with a perception of a heroic past, and the presentation
is notoriously selective, deficient above all in cult and ritual. Theory B requires us to believe that Homer eschewed a phenomenon which had once been so widespread and deep-rooted in Greek society that its ethos still determined attitudes to homosexuality in late archaic and classical times. Theory D says that Homer eschewed it because everyone did. He knew, as any members of any human society knows, that some people enjoyed copulating with others of the same sex, but the glorification of this desire and pursuit was yet to come. No reference to ‘conventional reticence’ will serve as an explanation, because Hesiod, while using epic language, has plenty to say on aspects of life alien to epic; and although the fragments of Tyrtaios do not amount to more than 150 intelligible lines, it is noteworthy that no later writer on the subject of homosexual eros (Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch) refers to anything said by Tyrtaios about the erastés setting an example of valour to his erōmenos.

Fortunately, Theory D does not have to rely on the negative evidence of serious, ‘epicizing’ poetry alone. We have a great many citations from Archilochos (supplemented by papyrus fragments), and they show us a poet who expressed sexual emotion, jealousy and hostility in terms which are never less than robustly explicit and often grossly obscene. There is no reference whatever in Archilochos to homosexual desire, pursuit or love. Sergent 295 n. 35 displays an extraordinary misunderstanding and misuse of fr. 270 West (= 181 Lasserre and Bonnard). This citation consists of the name Μύκλος, and Lasserre and Bonnard put it with ten other citations into their ‘Epode II’ for reasons which do not amount to reasons at all. Myklos, according to Σ Lycophr. 771 and EtGen., was a piper mocked by Archilochos for μαχλότης, ‘lustfulness’. Bonnard, adopting a linguistic dogma which is disproved for later Greek by Luc. Alex. 11, thought that this word ‘désigne la lascivité propre aux femmes; appliqué a un homme, il est clair qu’il fait du personnage un inerti’. Even if that were true, it would only indicate that adult males who sought and enjoyed the role of insertee were treated with contempt by Archilochos, as they always were in the Greek world (and in New Guinea, Herdt 191). In fact, Σ Lycophr. explains μύκλοι as κατωφερείς εἰς γυναῖκας, ‘womanizers’ (cf. Hsch. ῥ 431, 433, 435). It is not, therefore, as curious as Sergent finds it that I did not mention Archil. fr. 270 in GH.

11. CONCLUSION

About 600 BC Greek poets, artists and people in general brought homosexuality, both male and female, ‘out of the closet’; not long after, females were put back into the closet, while males stayed out (GH 172ff; so among the Azande [Evans-Pritchard 1971. 199 – 1937. 56] delight in copulating with ‘boy-wives’ goes with fear and punishment of erotic contacts between women). Asked to ‘explain’ this phenomenon, Theory D can only confess an inability to do so, beyond the general observation that a very slight shift in one social variable
can trigger major and lasting changes, and once social approval has been
given to an activity which is physically, emotionally and aesthetically gratifying
to the adult males of a society it is not easily suppressed. In some parts of the
world men are aroused by very fat women; in other parts they are repelled by
fatness and prefer women who might elsewhere be regarded as pathologically
emaciated. If that can happen, any shift of convention in the acceptance of
diverse sexual orientation can happen. Evans-Pritchard explained male and
female homosexuality among the Azande (1970. 1428, 1433) in terms of the
system which allowed the nobility to collect large harems of women and to
inflict ferocious mutilations as a penalty for adultery. He also explained the
significant decline of homosexuality in the present century as a consequence
of colonial rule, which broke up the Zande military power and forbade some
traditional punishments. We should not be surprised if the explanation of the
sexual orientation of half a dozen different cultures turns out to be half a
dozen different explanations.

But the dice are undeniably loaded in favour of Theory B; it satisfies the
contemporary demand for broad explanations, and by offering such an
explanation it acquires simultaneously the prestige of the physical sciences
(which rightly seek the most general explanation of the widest range of
phenomena), of religion (‘but we know how the world began . . .’), of art (it is
an original, imaginative, attractive theory) and of fashionable preoccupation
with ‘underlying structures’ (personally I sympathize with Jake’s plaintive cry
in Kingsley Amis, Jake’s Thing: ‘Why do you always think that what’s deep
down is more important that what’s up on top?’).

Dumézil, in his preface to Sergent’s book, says (9): ‘Comme pour toutes les
études fondues sur des analogies, il est probable que des discussions vont
s’ouvrir. On ne peut que souhaiter que les éventuels contradicteurs ne perdent jamais de vue l’éclairage d’ensemble, non plus que la cohérence interne de chaque démonstration.’ But coherence in itself is not a recommendation. To take
an extreme case, there can be spectacular coherence in a paranoiac’s view of
persecution by his colleagues and friends, but we do not treat it in such a case
as evidence of truth, because it is created by the paranoiac’s own imputation
of motives, criteria of significance and disregard of heterogeneous explana-
tions. The historian has to reckon all the time with heterogeneity of causal
processes. That is particularly true if he is a student of the history of linguistic
behaviour, a topic from which the student of other kinds of human behaviour
can learn much.

For example, there are so many languages in which the subject of a verb
precedes the object that this order has on occasion been rashly designated a
‘linguistic universal’. But it is not; orders in which (irrespective of the position
of the verb) the object precedes the subject are widespread among languages
of South America, especially Carib languages (see Derbyshire and Pullum).
How is this ‘perversion’ to be explained? And how do we explain the fact that
some Amazonian languages seem at present to be undergoing a change from
‘natural’ to ‘unnatural’ order, unless we postulate a causal chain started by
some other change within the language, a change which at first sight might not be thought capable of affecting something so fundamental as the relative position of subject and object? Derbyshire does in fact explain it very persuasively on just such grounds, with reference to a comparable process in some Austronesian languages which genetically have nothing to do with Carib. In some circumstances (I do not know how far this applies to the Amazonian region) it would be wise to consider also the influence of one language on another; loan-syntax and loan-morphology are no less powerful a phenomenon than ‘loan-words’, as Dawkins’ work on Greek enclaves in Turkish-speaking areas amply demonstrated.

A historical theory founded on erroneous or inadequate interpretation of minutiae is as vulnerable as a theory in the physical sciences founded on erroneous calculation in experimental results, and some of the most important details on which Theory B rests have been misinterpreted by its proponents. Theory D, which seems to me indicated by the evidence available up to January 1988, is itself vulnerable to new evidence; it could be rocked, even overthrown, by a new fragment of Hesiod tomorrow or the day after – but that does not guarantee that there would be no Ἐρεθίς to challenge Theory B.

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**ADDITIONAL NOTE**

P. 127, on the disguised Achilles. Sergent is here following Jeanmaire 353f, 581, and Jeanmaire cites A. E. Crawley, CR vii (1893) 243ff, the first to suggest that the story of Achilles on Skyros was a reflex of initiation procedures. Crawley was writing at a time when British classicists were understandably excited by the perspectives which the anthropological interests of Sir James Frazer had opened up. Frazer, however, was not impressed (ibid. 292ff) by Crawley’s hypothesis, and pointed out the wide variety of reasons for which, in real life or fiction, a boy may be disguised as a girl.