

tamental texts repeat and amplify the Biblical injunctions against homosexual behavior, even in the neighborhood of host peoples who tolerated such activity and knew no religious taboo against it. While the exclusiveness of the Jews and their disdain for the polytheism of the other peoples of the Hellenistic world precluded general adoption of their laws, Christianity was to retain the sexual provisions of the Mosaic code after it seceded from Judaism in a bid to become the universal religion of the Greco-Roman world.

Warren Johansson

INVENTOR LEGENDS

In some traditions, the introduction of homosexual conduct to human society has been ascribed to a single individual. Some Greek writers held that same-sex relations among men had been devised and spread by **Orpheus**, perhaps as a result of his disappointment over the loss of Eurydice. In this story homosexual behavior is not regarded as a misfortune, but as a gift on a par with Orpheus' celebrated musical accomplishments. **Pederasty** in fact had a divine archetype in Zeus' love for **Ganymede**. Other Greek sources attribute the invention of human homosexuality to King **Laius**, who kidnapped **Chrysippus**, the beautiful son of his host **Pelops**, during his exile from Thebes. It was this outrage that set in motion the tragic fate of his son **Oedipus**, a fact rarely cited by interpreters of Sophocles' trilogy or by those who adhere to the psychoanalytic construct known as the "Oedipus complex." The **Chrysippus** story was the subject of a lost play by **Euripides**. **Apollo** ascribes pederasty to yet another figure, the singer **Thamyris**.

Among the Arabs a curious reversal occurred in that **Lot**, urged by God in the Hebrew Bible to flee **Sodom** because of its devotion to vice (*Genesis 19*), was actually made responsible for the practice itself, so that in Arabic homosexuals may be called *ahl Lūt*, "the people of Lot."

Did homosexuality, as an aspect of human culture, in fact have an inventor, or at least a phase of introduction to human society? Any answer to this question, like that of the appearance of human language, would have to be hypothetical. To the extent that homosexuality is found among animals, it would not seem to be a human discovery at all. Yet historical sequences show that homosexual behavior has undergone changes in social organization—as from the Greeks to the Romans, through the Middle Ages, and down to modern times. Where these changes can be monitored, as in this sequence, they seem to be the result of the gradual shift of ideological, economic, familial, and other factors, which could not readily respond to the suggestion of any single individuals. Thus while the inventor question is useful to raise social elements in the origins of particular forms of homosexual behavior, in its literal sense it seems to be a false quest.

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INVERSION

Since the end of the nineteenth century some medical and other writers have equated homosexuality with inversion. For some, the term meant simply the reversal of the current of attraction from the opposite to one's own sex. Others believed that inversion entails also an adoption of patterns of thinking, feeling, and action that are characteristic of the other sex. In this broader sense it amounts to **effeminacy** in the male, and **viraginousness** in the female, but it would not include the majority of male homosexuals and lesbians who do not show these traits. Studies of **androgyny** have also suggested that there is a continuum rather than a sharp separation between the two poles of male and female, so that inversion in the sense of a complete volte-face does not seem to occur. In any event, the terms *inversion* and *invert* have acquired a negative, clinical aura, and for this reason they are less commonly used today.