Pompeii: “In particular, the secure archaeological context of the cups from the house of the Menander—found intact as their owner left them, together with 116 other silver articles—implies that such silver vessels with sexual representations could belong quite usually with the serving ware of a wealthy household” (Clarke, Lovemaking, 70). In his review, Bowersock emphasized another metallic cup showing “four sober philosophers in a bookish environment who reappear in the object’s upper register in four vivid scenes of copulation with boys.” (G.W. Bowersock, “Men and Boys,” NY Review of Books, September 24, 2009)

**THE WARREN CUP: NOT AT ALL TYPICAL**

Although far removed by time, place, and material, the 1st century silver cup acquired by Edward Perry Warren—a skyphos featuring scenes of homosexual pedication and thought to come from Bittir, a town near Jerusalem—has a few iconographical connections with the well-known erotic Greek ceramic vases made before 470 BCE. The iconographic sequence laid out by Beazley includes gift giving, the up-and-down gesture, and intercrural intercourse. Depictions of anal sex—pedication—in the early ceramics are extremely rare, with only some five specimens known. This practice was conceptualized as “treating the boy like a woman.” The proportion of
incidents of actual anal sex to incidents of sex was doubtless far greater than the proportion of representations of those acts, which is remarkably low at less than five per thousand. Where the Greek symposiasts might well have felt it prudent not to display scenes that would disincline boys to come to their symposia (and a fortiori, their fathers to bring them!), the Romans were less scrupulous, since their sex objects were, by definition, never chosen from the free boys who would need to have a care to preserving their reputations.

From this lack of other silver vases with similar images, some have argued that the Warren Cup is a fake; others find the Warren Cup all the more rare, precious, and beautiful because they imagine it to be the sole surviving example of what may once have been in Hellenistic and Roman times a popular type of tableware. We simply cannot use the Warren Cup to reconstruct the lost body of Classical Greek homoerotic silver, as tempting as that prospect may seem. The record in ceramic portraits noble, well put-together couples engaged in culturally sanctioned courtship behaviors, a category which does not include sodomy; and it portrays a few satyrs engaging in sodomy, as well as other uncivilized and thus satyr-like behaviors. But the merest glance at the Warren Cup is enough to verify that the couples are both noble and well put-together, and are engaged in sodomy. Indeed, the Warren Cup is the only extant echt homosexual silver cup, though some might consider the Hoby Cup depicting Philoctetes to be rather homoerotic in sensibility.
Given the importance of Warren's role as a collector of Greek vases, a role that has been overlooked since his death in 1928 (the same year that saw the private printing of the first and third volume of his *Defence*), we would do well to consider to some extent the motivations and circumstances behind his acquisition of what would later be dubbed "The Warren Cup," motivations and circumstances that are provided in Dr Kaylor's insightful biographical introduction to Warren's "magnum opus," *A Defence of Uranian Love*, as well as in some of the sources on which he draws: Osbert Burdett's *Edward Perry Warren: The Biography of a Connoisseur* (1941; completed by E. H. Goddard), Martin Green's *The Mount Vernon Street Warrens: A Boston Story, 1860–1910* (1989), and David Sox's *Bachelors of Art: Edward Perry Warren & The Lewes House Brotherhood* (1991). Kaylor's description of an early Warren purchase—a ceramic cup—testifies to behavior outside of upper-class Boston norms:

In May 1892, the Adolphe van Branteghem sale was held in Paris, and Warren made several exquisite purchases there—the most notable being an Attic red-figure *kylix*, or drinking cup, fashioned and signed by Euphronios\(^{30}\) (perhaps the greatest Greek potter) and decorated by Onesimos. At this sale, Warren, assisted by Marshall, began a decade-

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\(^{30}\) Euphronios was active as a painter and potter in Athens in the late 6th and early 5th centuries BCE. As part of the so-called "Pioneer Group," (who pioneered the change from black-figure pottery to red-figure), Euphronios was one of the most important artists of the red-figure technique. The discovery of the first signature of Euphronios in 1838 revealed that individual painters could be identified and named, so that their works might be ascribed to them.
long career as a prominent collector, a collector so astute that "He and Marshall had the market so effectively in their hands that [Alexander] Murray of the British Museum could observe: 'There is nothing to be got nowadays, since Warren and Marshall are always on the spot first.'"\(^{31}\)

However, since "Greek pots were not then much appreciated in Boston," his Euphronios purchase elicited little interest on the other side of the Atlantic. In fact, Warren felt compelled to justify this and similar purchases to his mother, which he does in a letter from autumn 1892, this young connoisseur expounding to her the significance of such Greek vases: "They are particularly needful for an American museum because only in vases and coins can it hope to obtain a collection representing all phases and times, and illustrating all that we read about." ("Introduction," in Defence, iv–lvii)

The *kylix*\(^{32}\) in question—signed "Euphronius made [me]" and inscribed "Panaitios is beautiful!"—is now cataloged as MFA 95.27 at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, which

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\(^{31}\) Kyler is here quoting Burdett & Goddard pp.78-9.

\(^{32}\) The *kylix* (a word from which "chalice" is derived) is a type of wine-drinking cup with a broad, relatively shallow, body raised on a stem from a foot and usually with two symmetrical horizontal handles. The almost flat interior circle on the interior base of the cup, called the tondo, was the primary surface for painted decoration in the black- and red-figure styles. As the representations would be covered with wine, the scenes would only be revealed in stages as the wine was drained. They were often designed with this in mind, with scenes created so that they would surprise or titillate the drinker as they were revealed.
describes its exterior as a “Procession (komos) of eleven men intoxicated, dancing and staggering” (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Regarding such acquisitions, Kaylor later adds that, seen in a larger context, this collecting was motivated by the same impulse that infused his paederastic apologia, *A Defence of Uranian*
*Love.* He cites Warren’s own words, from an autobiographical fragment, on the origin of both.

They both arose from:

... rebellion against [my brother] Sam and against all to whom I had objected from youth, the worldly wisdom which was inconsistent with love and enthusiasm....I have always said and believed that it was hate of Boston that made me work for Boston...The collection was my plea against that in Boston which contradicted my (pagan) love. (*Defence* p. lx)

In a footnote on the same page, Kaylor adds an observation from Martin Green’s *The Mount Vernon Street Warrens,* saying “Green glosses this as: ‘Ned openly hated all that “Boston” stood for and intended his nude Greek sculptures to lead to the subversion of Boston values.’ ” (*Defence* p. lx).

Warren’s “love and enthusiasm” is a coded expression for pederasty, similar to Walter Pater’s famous “To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life” (*Renaissance* [1893 (1873)], 189). However, Warren’s expressions of “pederastic interest” extended beyond his collecting and writings, for he intended his legacy to be more than a tribute to the representations of Greek pederasty found in art and literature. He endowed a
Praelectorship in Greek at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. This academic position was to be filled by a man, preferably a bachelor, who specialized in passing Grecian values on to his male students, a scholarly Hercules of the sort that populate his Defence, a figure offering inspiration and comfort to fainthearted and confused youths resembling Warren while a student at Harvard. Ned stipulated that the praelector was to live in college annex comprising some houses nearby:

... and was to have his house connected to the college by means of an underground tunnel. The tunnel was never built and due to the slump in the stock market at the time of Ned’s death (the beginning of the Depression), the value of his shares plummeted. No appointment to the praelectorship was possible until 1954. The first holder of the position was Hugh Lloyd-Jones who says he was “supposed to connect with the young men as Socrates did with the young Athenians. I don’t think I could quite manage that; I was a kind of Senior Research Fellow . . . Clearly the praelector was an image of Warren himself as he was during the first war when Case# gave him rooms in college.”

(Sox, Bachelors, 102)

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33 At Oxford, a praelector is a tutor responsible responsible for running an honours school in place of a fellow, though a praelector may hold a fellowship elsewhere.
34 Thomas Case, president of Corpus Christi College from 1904-1924.
Despite his other acts or intentions, it is likely that the boldest and most significant of Warren's acquisitions—the silver skyphos now dubbed "The Warren Cup"—will remain his lasting tribute to the Greco-Roman pederastic interests who dominated his life.

As to its provenance, John Clarke quotes Strong: "A cup with scenes of homosexual love recently on the London Market is said to have been found in Palestine together with coins of Claudius, and R. V. Nicholls informed me about its provenance" (Lovemaking, 288, note 9); John Pollini is more tentative: "Although his Roman skyphos is said to be from the Greek East or Pompeii, its true provenance is unknown" ("Warren Cup," 21); and Williams, who dates it to 5–15 CE, asserts that it was found at "Bittir, six miles from Jerusalem" (Warren Cup, 45–47). If it had been commissioned by a Roman governor of the province, it might be thought to reflect what a 1st-century CE Roman thought or imagined Athenian symposia of the 5th-century BCE to have been like. Setting that speculation aside, the cup could well have been crafted for a rich Greek, or perhaps even a Hellenized Jew, who was then living in Roman Palestine. There is nothing to suggest it was made in Palestine rather than imported, which would seem more likely. However, since there is little chance that any further information regarding its provenance, commission, or intended use will surface, this paper now turns instead to the debate between the relative importance of clay and metal vases, though within the context of
homosexual pornographic sympotic ware: Were ceramic vases as predominant in the symposia of the 5th and 4th centuries as they are predominant in the museums of today?

Although the majority of Greek ceramic vases depict nonerotic scenes of general interest, many from c. 630 to c. 470 BCE are sexual, with the majority being homosexual erotica. However, the price that the Greeks and Etruscans put on such ceramic vases and other decorated ware (as opposed to silverware, which was, of course, always considered valuable) remains a matter of considerable, at times vitriolic, scholarly debate.

Both Boardman and Vickers have overlooked the influence of economic fluctuations on social tastes. The truth seems to lie between their contradictory positions. When Athenian elites began regularly using more and more silver items after 470 BCE, their tableware bearing erotic scenes intended for use at symposia may well also have been made in silver. Clearly, the production of erotic tableware made of ceramic ceased. No such ceramic items that can be dated after that year have been found. The switch to silver provides an economic and arresting explanation for this. Erotic ceramics disappeared because the elites—the sole users of sympotic vessels—began to use silver versions. None have survived, which is true of most ancient objects cast from precious metal, especially gold or ivory even more valuable.
There was perhaps no decrease in the quantity of erotic tableware, no upsurge in social stigma attached to explicitly pornographic sympotic ware, only an upgrading of the material, from clay to silver. Some scholars connect the disappearance of pornographic scenes in ceramic with the idea that the elite evolved an attitude of discretion, and quit flaunting their pederastic practices because they were intimidated by the disapproval of the rising middle and lower classes in an increasingly democratic society, one dominated more by oarsmen than by hoplites. I counterclaim that despite the lack of surviving visual depictions of the practice in sympotic ware, the characteristic aristocratic practice of pederasty likely remained an unaltered, recognizable feature of Greek high society long after the Persian Wars, through the hegemony of Pericles (ca. 455–429), reaching its peak in the *floriut* of his nephew Alcibiades (d. 404).

From a much later period, the Warren Cup, whether made for a Roman patron of the arts, a wealthy Greek, or a Hellenized lewd Jew who had abandoned the Mosaic prohibitions against homosexuality, remains the sole extant example of what *might* have been an elaborate genre of homoerotic silver during Hellenistic and Roman times. It is not as realistically suggestive of a lost world of sexual and artistic freedom among the Classical Greek elites as some might have wished. The surviving ceramics which the silver sympotic ware replaced after 470 almost never showed anal penetration of boys or of adolescents (except in a few instances, and then by satyrs). Such scenes would have embarrassed and perhaps even frightened potential *eromenoi*
from attending the symposia. After all, the eromenoi had their own pride and feelings, which it was well for the erastes to consider. Aristotle (Politics, 1311) tells of the incident that led to the revolt against Periander, the tyrant of Ambracia: while drinking at a symposium with his eromenos, Periander wondered aloud if the boy wasn't already pregnant—a clear and insulting reference to the boy's status as the tyrant's object of pedication. Evidently such matters were considered obscene, not for public display.

Given Warren's fervent interest in collecting and open interest in pornographic matters, the Warren Cup may well even have been fabricated by a skilled forger of ancient art objects with Warren's tastes in mind. From his extensive reading he had learned that the Athenians and other elites of the 5th and 4th centuries had dined from silver, but no pornographic silver cups were known in Warren's day (nor indeed have any been found since, even through the Hellenistic period, up to 30 BCE, the death of Cleopatra).

35 As indicated earlier, this has been strongly asserted by the ever-combative Michael Vickers. In the online history forum H-Net in 2010 Vickers was quoted thus: "The Warren cup is now thought to be a work of the early 20th century. See M.T.B. Moews, "Per una storia del gusto: riconsiderazioni sul calice Warren". Bolletino d'Arte 146 (2008) 1-16. The dealers saw poor old Warren coming and made something to his taste."
Even Beazley acknowledged that from 323 onwards the Greek elite supped from silver, but Warren had to settle for an item from the first century CE, a mere derivative or rather satire of Classical Greek models. Hellenistic Greeks often sought out slaves, street urchins, shop boys, or other working-class youths, as both *The Greek Anthology* and the *Anacreontia* demonstrate, and in the Roman age, the best analogy to the Warren Cup, as well as the one with the four philosophers, is the *Satyricon* of Petronius and *Satires* of Juvenal and the Epigrams of Martial. Plutarch and Lucian, on the other hand, demonstrate that classical symposia continued in Greece itself.

For this reason, the importance of the Warren Cup, and the genius of Ned Warren who intuited its existence, sought after it, and acquired it, need to be acknowledged with caution and circumspection. Consider the atmosphere of *damnatio memoriae* that surrounds Warren, and what Warren called “love and enthusiasm,” even today. Given the magnitude and quality of Warren’s efforts on behalf of his hometown, Boston, and its Museum of Fine Arts, this deliberate neglect serves as a poignant example of Puritanical ingratitude directed toward one of New England’s leading cultural patrons. David Sox, for instance, delivers a subtle, yet damning observation about Boston’s coldness towards Warren, noting that, although the major

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36 Anacreon (582 BC – 485 BC) was a Greek lyric poet, notable for his drinking songs and hymns. Later Greeks included him in the canonical list of nine lyric poets.
focus of Warren's collecting had always been Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, it was neither Boston, nor its museum, nor its neighbor, Harvard University (Warren's alma mater), that has properly valued or appreciated him . . . but rather Bowdoin College, a small liberal arts college in Brunswick, Maine, to whose Walker Art Gallery Warren donated a flurry of choice items: "A third of Warren's 600 gifts are on view in the college's museum, and nowhere in America is he more honored" ("Bachelors," 253–255, emphasis added). To show their appreciation, "In 1926, Bowdoin College awarded Warren an honorary degree—Doctor of Humane Letters (Litterarum humanarum doctor, or L.H.D.)" (Kaylor, "Introduction," in Defence, cxiii–cxiv).

Because Warren is—as Thomas Hubbard noted in a comment on the back cover of Kaylor's edition of Warren's Defence of Uranian Love—"the most important American collector and connoisseur of Greek art" and "the man whose enthusiasm laid the foundation for the great collections of Boston and New York," why has Warren been so ignored by Boston, its Museum of Fine Arts, and Harvard University? What prompted Robert Manuel Cook in his Greek Painted Pottery (1960) to leave Warren and his lover John Marshall unmentioned? What has prompted similar decisions—in the museums and academic institutions of America—to diminish or ignore Warren's role as "the most important American collector and connoisseur of Greek art" and "the man whose enthusiasm laid the foundation for the great collections of Boston and New York"? Perhaps the answers reside in a certain aversion for the eroticism that infuses the
antiquities he collected, studied, and prized, an eroticism that also infused his life, for he ever cast his role and that of his acquisitions as “a pædorastic evangel,” as he phrases this himself (“Introduction,” in Defence, lxi).

There have, however, been rare and notable exceptions to this aversion. In her article “Some Erotica in Boston” (1969), Emily Vermeule, wife of Cornelius Vermeule, who became Curator of the Greek and Roman Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, paid the following fine and subtle tribute to Warren’s taste as a collector and his importance to Boston’s cultural life, though it is notable that her article was published in a European periodical, Antike Kunst—thus not made readily available to the “general reader” in Boston:

Mr. Warren’s gifts to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston formed the core of the collection in the years between 1885 and 1910, and his personal collection of classical erotica shows the same high quality as many famous objects he once acquired. The Warren Gift Collection had the reputation of being one of the finest of such groups outside the Vatican and Naples; the majority of pieces described here were donated by the owner in 1908 and were kept in dark storage for over fifty years. Museum officials may have felt they would be offensive to the eyes of the Boston public, but since they went on public
exhibition in 1964, along with many master bronzes whose themes are allied, no protest has been registered with the museum staff or with local arbiters of taste. On the contrary, the possibility of viewing the fragments, like the removal of over-paint from such famous vases as the name-piece of the Pan Painter, has elicited approval from scholars and laymen alike. It seems safe to assume, then, that the delicacy of earlier generations has been replaced by a sturdier capacity to enjoy original works of art without intervention by extraneous ethical views, and that the Warren Collection may be studied with direct appreciation of its fine Greek quality and humor. ("Some erotica in Boston", Emily Vermeule, Antike Kunst 12. Jahrg., H. 1. (1969), pp. 9-15)

It is a pleasure to observe Vermeule's sophisticated awareness of the deliberate, measured, way in which Warren's legacy was slowly unfolding in the consciousness of "the Boston public." It is this slow unfolding, reminding one of Walter Pater, that Kaylor considered at the close of his introduction to Warren's Defence:

   About Warren's benefactions to Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, his friend John Davidson Beazley, Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology at Oxford, commented insightfully: "A coin, a gem, a vase, a statuette, would speak of
Greece in the heart of Maine; and sooner or later there would be a student
whose spirit would require them. There was no hurry: an acorn in the forest.”

Warren’s *Defence of Uranian Love* is another of those precious acorns—planted
alongside such volumes as John Addington Symonds’s *A Problem in Greek Ethics*,
Edward Carpenter’s *Ioläus: An Anthology of Friendship*, William Paine’s *New
Aristocracy of Comradeship*, and the anonymously edited *Men and Boys: An
Anthology*. Eighty years after Warren’s death, the time has come for this oak to
sprout, as he knew it eventually would. (*Defense*, cxiii–cxiv)

Because it was addressed to the select readership of *Antike Kunst*, an art journal headquartered
in Basel, Switzerland, rather than to the readers of the Boston *Herald* or another local paper,
Vermeule could, in an article given the wonderfully casual title “Some Erotica in Boston,”
address and dismiss American Puritanical values with phrases such as “extraneous ethical
views.” The “local arbiters of taste” are here evoked, then circumvented. She posed the
concepts of “delicacy” versus “sturdiness” in a way that makes “delicacy” seem laughable and
highlights the ways that the eroticism inherent to Warren’s 1908 donations proved too much
for the “delicacy” of those silly “local arbiters of taste,” such that those items needed to be
“kept in dark storage for over fifty years.” The naughty glee of corrupting Boston, little by little,
with erotic art—and getting away with it.—is demurely covered by the bland locution: “No
protest has been raised” (well, at least, not yet). Would that Emily Vermeule were alive today, to see the Bostonian reaction to the publication of Warren’s Defence; perhaps she would find that “No protest has been raised” . . . perhaps she would find otherwise.

Just because something is hidden or ignored does not imply its nonexistence—or its inability, like that proverbial acorn, to take root, put forth roots and leaves, and in time mature into the most solid of oaks. The same is perhaps as true of our understanding of Ancient Greek erotic silverware as it is for Warren’s Defence and the neglected collection of erotic artworks that he donated to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. By placing the Warren Cup where it properly belongs, by aligning it with the world and values it was meant to evoke and to which it emotionally corresponds, it can reveal much, not only about sympotic objects—whether cast in silver or molded from clay—but about pederasty and the stylistics of Hellenistic and Roman eroticism. These are two topics that many Americans today, with their residual Puritanism and newfound demonization of pedophilia (understood nowadays to embrace pederasty), hope will forever remain “in dark storage,” rather than publicly displayed in all their polished, silvery shimmer.