

(later copied by the Carthaginians) of 300 pairs of lovers, which defeated Sparta at Leuctra (371 B.C.) and Mantinea (362 B.C.) and liberated Messenia, ending Spartan hegemony. Epaminondas was slain at Mantinea with his second *eromenos* (beloved) bravely falling at his side. During the three-cornered struggle that ensued between a leaderless Thebes, a crippled Sparta, and an Athens that had not fully recovered from the Peloponnesian War, Persians interfered and Macedonians encroached. The Greeks were defeated at Chaeronea in 338 B.C., when the Sacred Band died fighting to the last man, and even Philip of Macedonia, the victor, paid tribute to their valor: "Let no man speak evil of such heroes."

Plutarch, a hereditary Theban noble who held a priesthood at Delphi, recorded the careers of notable pederasts in his *Parallel Lives of Famous Greeks and Romans*, and his *Dialogues on Love* debated the relative merits of women and boys.

The ancient city of Thebes possessed two *gymnasia*, one dedicated to Heracles, the other to Iolaus, often regarded in classic times as his *eromenos*. At the latter place pairs of male lovers were accustomed to pledge their troth. About three miles outside the city lay the Kabeirion, the shrine of a mystery cult revolving around the god Kabeiros and his Pais ("boy"); here modern archeologists have found votive offerings depicting a man and a boy, who is often portrayed holding an animal—a traditional courtship gift.

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THEOCRITUS (CA. 301—CA. 260 B.C.)

Hellenistic philologist and poet.

A native of Syracuse, he sojourned in southern Italy and Cos, but having failed to win the patronage of Hiero of Syracuse,

he finally won that of Ptolemy II, the founder of the Museum and Library that together with his munificent patronage made Alexandria the intellectual center of the Hellenistic monarchies. In the famous controversy about the Argonauts, he sided with Callimachus against Apollonius of Rhodes, both of whom resided in Alexandria and sang of pederasty.

Though set in Sicily, his bucolic poems were written after he moved to the east, perhaps while he tarried on Cos. He composed his mimes mostly in Alexandria. Like most other Hellenistic poets, he preferred short, polished, erudite, contrived poems. He often chose exotic or at least novel themes and made fresh observations and descriptions. Besides pastoral heterosexual love, he dramatized the love of Heracles for Hylas. Eight of his thirty *Idylls*, the authorship of two of which is uncertain, treat boy love exclusively.

Theocritus used two archaic terms: for lover *eispnelas* (inspirer), employed in Alcman, and for beloved the non-Dorian Thessalian *aites*, (inspired), employed by Alcman to mean "pretty girl" in the feminine. The *idyll* on Hylas (XIII), Heracles' beloved, gave Theocritus an opportunity to express his personal feelings on boy-love. It is not just mortals, but the immortals as well, who suffer the pangs of love. Heracles is determined to educate the curly-haired boy with whom he is enamoured, to make a brave and renowned man of him, and to bring him up as a father would his son.

In *Idyll* XXIX Theocritus gives advice to a boy that follows strictly the lines earlier drawn by Theognis: the youth is urged to be faithful to his lover, not to play the coquette or exploit his admirer in a venal manner. Youth is fleeting, but with manhood love will yield to a solid and enduring friendship. *Idyll* XXX depicts a man who has reached the age that disqualifies him for conquests in love, but cannot suppress the passion that he feels for a boy who, while not particularly handsome, has undeniable personal charm. This

piece may well contain genuine autobiographical elements.

The two idylls in which shepherds and goatherds compete in song about their pederastic loves differ: in VII it is poets disguised as shepherds who display their rival skill, in V the speech belongs to genuine rustics, direct and even slightly coarse. Idyll VIII, which may not belong to Theocritus, presents two youths at the very onset of puberty, one in love with a boy, the other with a girl. This poem therefore treats homosexual love between early adolescent agemates, which in the eyes of at least some Greeks was perfectly legitimate. Inspired by the poetic tradition of male love begun by *Ibycus*, *Anacreon*, and *Pindar*, Theocritus' work proves that the old motifs and values of *paiderasteia* remained alive, at least in literature, into the Hellenistic era.

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THEOGNIS (FL. CA. 544–541 B.C.)

Greek elegiac poet. Many of the 1,390 lines, often cited in later works and inscribed on vases, attributed to him are but slightly altered versions of verses by *Tyrtaeus*, *Solon*, and other early poets, along with repetitions that seem to come from a different hand. In addition, references to people and events in the *Theognidea* extend from 580 to 490, and the surviving verses differ from those cited by the tenth-century Greek lexicon of *Suda*. Consequently, the extant works seem to be a highly popular Athenian collection made in the fifth century to be sung at *symposia*, and it is difficult to tell which ones originated with Theognis himself.

The gnomicology (collection of maxims) addressed to *Cyrnus*, the poet's

beloved boy who appears in many of the poems, may be genuine. With a clear aristocratic bias, Theognis berated the boy, whom he was trying to improve, for flirtations and infidelities. Full of advice on friendship, loyalty, and other conduct befitting a gentleman, Theognis is often taken as the model for the supposed old-fashioned one-to-one erotic relationship used as the basis for *paideia* [instruction]. Theognis' collection of maxims, of which the last 158 deal exclusively with boy-love, served in antiquity as a manual of ethical conduct. The poet could not fail to "fawn on" the boy so long as the boy's cheek was beardless. Others, however, find his constant carping and complaints, his reproaches to ungrateful or self-interested boys, distasteful, especially in comparison with the free love advocated by his contemporaries *Ibycus* and *Anacreon*. Called by some the father of gnomic poetry, Theognis (whom Sir Kenneth Dover unconvinçingly dubs the most important early pederastic poet), taught ethics and statecraft in a context of male love, and otherwise emphasized the intellectual and moral formation of the youth as well. His verse thus reflected the role of pederasty in the golden age of Hellenic civilization. In elegies that he composed to be sung accompanied by the flute at symposia, he claimed (probably an interpolation after the fact) that his verse had given *Cyrnus* immortality, and that youths at symposia would always sing of him: "Woe is me! I love a smooth-skinned lad who exposes me to all my friends, nor am I loath; I will bear with many things that are sore against my liking, and make it no secret; for 'tis no unhandsome lad I am seen to be taken with."

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