

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 Cynrus, 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 Cynrus 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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