

WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS:  
ILLUMINATING THE FEMALE PEDERASTIC TRADITION

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A thesis  
presented to the University of Waterloo  
in fulfilment of the  
thesis requirement for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in  
Classical Studies

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2020

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### *Author's Declaration*

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## *Abstract*

In scholarship, the study of male pederastic practices in the ancient Greek world has been used time and time again to reinforce the existence of homosexuality across time, though the same attention has not been given to a feminine equivalent, let alone for the same intentions. This is an extension of the tradition set by antique writers that chose to address male relationships and same-sex love as the ideal, making treatments on the female type much more difficult to perform. This pattern surfaces in discussions of pederastic homosexuality the world over, leaving modern scholars with only scant conclusions on the possibility of a feminine equivalent without any further efforts to elaborate. The following study aims to address this glaring hole in scholarship. First, in looking to the initiatory origins of male pederasty in the Greek world in order to build and account for the feminine; Second, in establishing the feminine's own origins in mythology and initiatory practices; And, finally, in identifying how it was practiced throughout the ancient Greek world in surviving poetry from the Archaic and Hellenistic periods.

## *Acknowledgements*

Firstly, I would like to thank the department of Classical Studies at the University of Waterloo for being such a welcoming and encouraging environment for pursuing this topic of study. The diversity of thesis topics and interests within the field of Classics that I have been exposed to during my time here at Waterloo has been an incredible inspiration to pursue my own interests, no matter how daunting they may have seemed. And without the collaborative community fostered amongst the Graduate students in my cohort, I do not believe I would have been able to complete this thesis.

Of course, I would also like to thank my committee, Dr. Craig Hardiman and Dr. Riemer Faber, for taking the time to read and comment upon my thesis despite the difficulties that have arisen due to the current pandemic. Both of these professors have been nothing but encouraging as I have pursued this topic and they have done a great deal to allow my pursuits to coincide with course material as I worked to complete this study.

And finally, my sincerest gratitude must go to my supervisor, Dr. Christina Vester, who has consistently shown an inspiring amount of excitement and a passion for my research. Through her oversight as an advisor, I have grown as a writer and maintained my own excitement and passion for putting together this study. And, most significantly, for her dedication to helping me complete this thesis in a timely manner despite the restrictions put in place due to COVID-19, I am indescribably grateful.

Thank you,  
Julia

## *Dedication*

For Anna Marie, who endured my typing at all hours, and for my cats, who insisted on sitting on my lap as I did so.

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# *INTRODUCTION*

Modern discussions of Ancient Greek pederasty have been utilized time and time again to reinforce the existence of male homosexual relationships across time, though the same consideration has not been given to the existence of a female equivalent in general, let alone for the same intentions.<sup>1</sup> Pederasty, a system wherein an elder male *erastes* was engaged in an homoerotic relationship with his younger *eromenos* that was both socially didactic and sexually gratifying, has been analysed nearly *a nauseum* as part and parcel of the *male* sexual experience in Greek antiquity. And, rather habitually, such studies have, perhaps unintentionally, shied away from similar treatments of female homosexuality, preferring, much like ancient writers, to give more attention to the relationships between men and how such interactions have impacted society and vice versa.<sup>2</sup> This trend is the result of a tradition of male voices preferring discussions of male experiences over those of women. Though women are considered in ancient texts, their content is dwarfed by the prevalence of male subjects and objects – leaving those interested in studying women in antiquity to often peer into the shadows cast by discussions of men in order to formulate valid studies of their lives. While this provides a challenge to scholars, one only needs to take these steps, as many have done before, to access a comprehensive world for women in the ancient world. And so, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate that, in taking these steps to study female sexuality in antiquity, a case can be made for the existence of an equally homoerotic and didactic social practice for women in the ancient world.

<sup>1</sup> For a brief example of this trend, see the introduction of Thomas K. Hubbard, ed., *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (University of Californian Press: Berkeley, 2003), 2, where Hubbard claims that a, “close examination of a range of ancient texts suggests... that some forms of sexual preference were, in fact, considered a distinguishing characteristic of individuals [in antiquity],” then goes on in this 20 page introduction to primarily address the nuances of attraction between men, lending roughly one and a half pages at the end of his introduction to the subheading “lesbianism,” 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> See note 36 in this introductory chapter for a breakdown of texts on homosexuality in antiquity and how they inherently favour material on and discussions of the male type.



## *Sexuality in the Shadows: a cross cultural survey*

This brings us to the study of the female pederastic tradition, one that scholars have not adequately addressed in one body of work. Instead, those who discuss the topic prefer to mention offhand in greater studies on gender and sexuality that a practice similar to male pederasty *could* have existed for women in antiquity. Again, this is a continuation of the trend perpetuated by ancient writers that neglects the treatment of female sexuality in favour of the practices of men – a habit observed in discussions of homosexual tradition the world over. Before building up an argument that ancient female pederasty existed in ancient Greece, it has to be acknowledged that the ancient evidence is not bountiful. Furthermore, the study of female pederasty is likewise hindered by a reticence of cultures to acknowledge the existence of sexuality between women. But that does not mean that it does not exist. What follows is a brief semi-historiographical survey of pederastic homosexuality between women provided in juxtaposition with discussions of the male experience that is meant to argue one point: homosexual desire between women was and is present in many cultures. I have provided this survey so as to show that sexual desire between women is equally lightly documented. But it is present in each of them, nonetheless, and this has been enough for other scholars to conclude that certain pedagogical and homoerotic social practices *could* have been in place for women that mirrored the more explicitly studied male versions. And, as for the Greek world, it is this same kernel of evidence that I intend to explore through a thorough examination of initiatory practices, pederastic material evidence, and Archaic and Hellenistic poetry in order to properly begin the discussion of female pederasty in antiquity.

The following survey concerns several Islamic and Asian cultures which have clearly demonstrated the practice of transferring social status and imparting cultural knowledge from an elder party unto a younger via an erotic relationship. In the early Islamic world, a culture with

tightly controlled heterosexual relationships surrounding male heads of families, homosexuality was popular among young unmarried men, resulting in a rather nondescript version of pederasty.<sup>3</sup> Under the Abbasid rulers of the East and the Umayyad of Spain, a rich tradition of writings on homosexual love surfaced that both judged homosexuality in prose while praising the indescribable beauty of such love in poetry.<sup>4</sup> In turn, homosexual love could be observed among Islamic leaders and, relatedly to pederastic tradition, in Ibn al-Farra, a school teacher and scholar who wrote love poems to his young students.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the *Thousand and One Nights*, amongst a number of homosexual themes throughout the book, features the poet Abu Nawas, who sets out to find a boy and ends up enticing three beardless youths with gifts to spend the night with him.<sup>6</sup> Though not as clearly fleshed out as Greek pederasty, the Islamic version perceptibly features the pattern of erotic relationships between young males and older men.

Within these rigid restrictions on heterosexual relations observed in Islamic culture, we also see evidence of female homosexuality, once again in the poetry and prose produced therein. An 11<sup>th</sup> century poet, Walladah bint Al-Mustakfi, the daughter of the Caliph of Cordova in Spain, became known as the “Arab Sappho,” as she wrote poems to her female lover Muhjah, another poet, and suggests a female pederastic system within Islamic society.<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere, in the *turath*, men voice their tolerance of lesbian love as one responds to information of his own wife’s intimacy with another woman, “let her do what she wants.”<sup>8</sup> Additionally, once more in the *Thousand and One Nights*, we receive *The Story of the Baibars and the Sixteen Captains of Police* wherein a

<sup>3</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 302.

<sup>4</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 303.

<sup>5</sup> Louis Crompton, “Male Love and Islamic Law in Arab Spain,” in Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe eds. *Islamic Homosexualities* (New York University Press: New York, 1997), 152-153.

<sup>6</sup> Vernon L. Bullough, *Sexual Variance in Society and History* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1976), 227.

<sup>7</sup> Leila J. Rupp, *Sapphistries: A Global History of Love Between Women* (New York University Press: New York, 2009), 47.

<sup>8</sup> As’ad AbuKhalil, “A Note on the Study of Homosexuality in the Arab/Islamic Civilization,” *The Arab Studies Journal* 1 (1993): 34.

woman expresses the love she feels for a younger girl.<sup>9</sup> Again, only hints of a pederastic tradition can be observed in these examples, echoing the age divide and erotic intimacy.

Where we begin to perceive a much more structured form of pederasty is in China, whose history has a great deal of documented instances of homosexual relations spanning nearly three thousand years, all of which have been highly visible within Chinese society.<sup>10</sup> As Western Eurocentric travellers are wont to do, much evidence of this can be observed in their criticisms of Chinese culture, praising their society outside of “the abominable vice of sodomy.”<sup>11</sup> Where our interests lie in this tradition, though, is in the dynastic practice dating back to the Zhou dynasty wherein a sovereign lord engaged in an intimate relationship with a younger male lover of a lower social status.<sup>12</sup> Within this practice the threads of a pederastic system are revealed in which an older male party of higher social position engages in an intellectual and erotic relationship with a younger male. Chinese poetry can be observed for more personal observations of this practice, addressing the desire between emperors and their boy favourites.<sup>13</sup> The early education system of China also saw this pattern as young boys needed sponsors to succeed, making them potential subjects to the homosexual desires of patrons.<sup>14</sup>

As China can be observed for its detailed history of male homosexual relations and its own pederastic tradition, so too can instances of female homosexuality and its own version be extracted.

While the practice of female homosexuality was accepted in China, there are few resources

<sup>9</sup> *Al-Malik al-Zahir Rukn ai-Din Bibars al-Bundukdari and the Sixteen Captains of Police in Arabian Nights in 16 Volumes: Vol. XII Supplemental Nights to the Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* trans. Sir Richard F. Burton (Cosimo Classics, 2008), 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 234.

<sup>11</sup> Bret Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1988), 162.

<sup>12</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 236.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of Emperor Jianwen’s poetry regarding his sexual love for a male companion and other examples, see Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 250.

<sup>14</sup> Bullough, *Sexual Variance in Society and History*, 302.

detailing it as they are generally silent on the sex lives of women.<sup>15</sup> What *is* seen in the historical record are terms such as ‘sisterhood’ and ‘friendship’ dominating considerations of such relationships, though female same-sex eroticism clearly had its place within Chinese society.<sup>16</sup> Evidence of pederastic practices is identifiable in a Chinese short story, *The Pearl-Sewn Shirt*, in which an older woman helps her male patron seduce a young woman, though this only hints at pederasty via the age division and inherent eroticism.<sup>17</sup> During the Ming dynasty, further written accounts appear, most notably the novel *Pitying the Fragrant Companion* where a married woman is in love with a younger, unmarried woman – eventually convincing her husband to take the younger as a concubine.<sup>18</sup> Admittedly, though, these examples display rather simplistic representations of female pederasty – accounting only for eroticism and an age divide with none of the intellectual exchange observed in male examples.

Here we can turn elsewhere in Asia for another version of pederasty that draws ever closer to the Greek system - Japan. Much like the previous survey of China revealed, homosexual relationships between the upper class and young men of lower social status had long been a part of Japanese court life.<sup>19</sup> This later evolved into a system wherein both parties came from the aristocratic class with the added expectation that the younger party be bettered by the elder in regard to spiritual and educational matters.<sup>20</sup> Much like pederastic structures within the Greek world, this practice soon bled into the Japanese military as samurai rose in prominence and the militaristic government of the Shogun had homosexual love prized among warriors.<sup>21</sup> As such, the

<sup>15</sup> Bullough, *Sexual Variance in Society and History*, 299.

<sup>16</sup> Rupp, *Sapphistries*, 15.

<sup>17</sup> Rupp, *Sapphistries*, 53.

<sup>18</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 261.

<sup>19</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 277.

<sup>20</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 277.

<sup>21</sup> Gary P. Leupp, *Male Colours: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1995), 51.

centuries following these developments further refined pederastic practices into a tradition of noble love that called for its own forms of etiquette, ideals, and standards of honour.<sup>22</sup>

In accordance with the previous example of Chinese and Islamic society, female versions of Japanese pederasty are much less prominent than male instances – even less so than in our previous studies. Though instances of sexual acts between women in Japan have been recorded in literature, they had much less attention given to them and the intricacies of these relationships were not elaborated upon.<sup>23</sup> What *is* discussed in literature generally involves women of differing status, such as a mistress and servant, engaging in homoerotic relations, a pattern quite familiar at this time.<sup>24</sup> For one such instance, the Tokugawa period poet Saikaku wrote of a young female sex-worker in *The Life of an Amorous Woman* in which she is employed by a much older widowed woman and an erotic relationship ensues.<sup>25</sup> This is, of course, one such instance of only a few examples and despite this lack of content, scholars have not shied away from concluding that there could have been a feminine system paralleling the masculine in Japan.<sup>26</sup>

To this point, the overarching pattern of the male pederastic systems can be identified in Islamic society, China, and Japan wherein an aristocratic youth and an older man engage in a mutually beneficial relationship that imparts social gain for the younger, primarily in China and Japan, and sexual and mental stimulation for both parties in all examples. In James Neill's rather comprehensive analysis of homosexual relations across cultures and time periods, he concludes his discussion on China and Japan by stating that while relations between women were given little attention by the men of each society, this pattern allows for a parallel system in which women

<sup>22</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 279.

<sup>23</sup> Mark McLelland, "From Sailor-Suits to Sadists: 'Lesbos Love' as Reflected in Japan's Postwar 'Perverse Press'," *U. S. – Japan Women's Journal* 27 (2007): 28.

<sup>24</sup> McLelland, "From Sailor-Suits to Sadists," 28.

<sup>25</sup> Greg P. Leupp, "'The Floating World is Wide...': Some Suggested Approaches to Researching Female Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan (1603-1868)," *Thamyris* 5 (1998): 11.

<sup>26</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 297.

could have found intimate relationships with other young women – stating nothing more on the matter.<sup>27</sup> Though his treatment of the subject at hand has been invaluable to this introductory discussion, he also has neatly demonstrates the crux of our core issue; male relationships have been given a great deal of attention within scholarship and have become the default type in treatments on homosexuality, while intimate relations between women continue to be tacked on as an afterthought. Many cultures, perhaps most, decided that the masculine experience was the important one to study and the model to emulate – a cultural phenomenon that bleeds into scholarship treating such cultures, though the lack of feminine examples has not led to a denial of their existence. In briefly treating the scant evidence for female homoerotic desire in other cultures and the assumptions of scholars that these bear implications of pederastic practices similar to the male type, I intend to argue that the same conclusion can be drawn regarding the Greek world while exploring the evidence much more thoroughly.

### *Highlighting Greek Pederasty*

This all brings us to the source of our interest in pederastic relationships, the Greek world, wherein pederasty, as we know it by name, has its impetus. There is a wealth of knowledge on the customs and values of Greek pederasty within various city-states, though the core practices remain the same – an elder *erastes* engages in a mutually beneficial relationship with a young male *eromenos* wherein the younger gains social clout and becomes a proper citizen and the older receives sexual gratification.<sup>28</sup> In plentiful treatises from philosophers like Plato and Xenophon and the nearly innumerable depictions of such relationships within the material record, it is

<sup>27</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 297.

<sup>28</sup> On the purpose of pederasty to educate and prepare the youth for adulthood, refer to Pausanias' speech in Plato, *Symposium*, 184e.

understood that the nuances of these relationships and values instilled in the younger party varied from *polis* to *polis*, a trend easily demonstrated in a brief examination of Athenian and Spartan pederasty, which make up the bulk of our knowledge on the issue. And, much like our previous survey, treatments on these types of male pederasty have all but ignored discussions of a possible feminine type.

Athenian pederasty strives to transform young boys into the ideal citizen, allowing for the growth of a moralizing and aesthetic philosophy exemplified by Plato that claims male homoeroticism as the highest form of desire.<sup>29</sup> This moralization led to the formulation of an active versus passive dichotomy wherein the older *erastes* was characterized as the dominant subject acting upon the submissive young *eromenos*. Athenian male homoeroticism was structurally defined by the permissible and impermissible and legalities regulated the behaviour appropriate to pederastic courtship.<sup>30</sup> The ideal relationship itself was also governed by societal expectations that called for a balance wherein the *erastes* was granted sexual favours by his *eromenos* but the *eromenos* himself would not take pleasure in the act.<sup>31</sup> Of course the reality of these relationships would have blurred the lines defined by philosophy and literature, though the end-goal remains the same; the *erastes* would instil Athenian civic values into his *eromenos* so that he could become a proper citizen.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Naomi Segal, *Andre Gide: Pederasty and Pedagogy* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1998), 12; As exemplified in Plato, *Symposium* 184a ff.

<sup>30</sup> David Cohen, "Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens," *Past & Present* 117 (1987): 5; Plato, *Symposium* 182ff.

<sup>31</sup> Cohen, "Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens," 20. This is also commented upon in Plato, *Symposium*, 184ff.

<sup>32</sup> Paul W. Ludwig, "Politics and Eros in Aristophanes' Speech: Symposium 191e-192a and the Comedies," *The American Journal of Philology* 117 (1996): 539. For a satiric commentary on the breakdown of Athenian pederastic values, see Aristophanes *Clouds*, and for a discussion of how this is expressed in Aristophanes, see Cohen "Law, Society and Homosexuality," 20.

Pederasty in Sparta takes on its own form through the *agoge* system as a facet in shaping a young Spartan into the ideal warrior. What is known of Spartan pederasty primarily comes from non-Spartan resources such as Plato, Xenophon and Plutarch, though they still provide scholars with a system far removed from the rigidity of its Athenian counterpart. In Xenophon, Lycurgus encouraged the relationship between an honourable and respected Spartan adult man and a young boy, in whom he would reinforce the obedience, respectfulness, and self-control established by the *agoge*.<sup>33</sup> According to Plutarch, when the boy reached 12 he was entrusted into the care of this respected Spartan warrior with whom the boy would live in order to gain these qualities, they would also become lovers.<sup>34</sup> The elder Spartan would then supervise the military training of the *erastes* figure and was held accountable for his beloved's behaviour and performance – creating the ideal Spartan warrior in the process.<sup>35</sup>

In accordance with the variances observed between just two Greek city-states, scholarship has latched on to the diversity observed within the male pederastic tradition, resulting in an assortment of works treating pederastic pedagogy, law, politics, paradigms, and love, to name a few.<sup>36</sup> Greater studies on homosexuality at-large in the Greek world have consequently surfaced as well, many of which continue to address male homosexuality as the default type under analysis, once again only appending short, albeit valuable, discussions on female homosexuality therein.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Paul Cartledge, "Politics of Spartan Pederasty," in Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson eds. *Homosexuality in the Ancient World* (Garland Publishing: New York, 1992), 78; Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians*, 2.13, note here, as well, that Xenophon claims that Lycurgus forbid sexual relations between these two parties, though he acknowledges that others do not believe this statement in 2.14, and contradicted by Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 18.4.

<sup>34</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 158. Plut. *Lycurgus* 7.1.

<sup>35</sup> Plut. *Lycurgus* 7.1.

<sup>36</sup> For examples of these discussions, see Segal, *Andre Gide*; Cohen, "Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens,"; Ludwig, "Politics and Eros in Aristophanes' Speech"; David Konstan, "Women, Boys, and the Paradigm of Athenian Pederasty," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13 (2002): 35-56; and Clifford Hindley, "Xenophon on Male Love," *The Classical Quarterly* 49 (1999): 74-99.

<sup>37</sup> To account for the books I consulted in this study alone, in Ruby Blondell and Kirk Ormand eds., *Ancient Sex: New Essays* (Ohio State University Press: Columbus, 2015), only 1 chapter of 7 directly discusses female homoeroticism, totalling just under 30 pages out of over 340 on the topic; Eva Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, trans. Cormac O Cuilleain (Yale University Press: London, 1992), features one chapter on women and homosexuality



Much like the diagnostic examples in Islamic, Chinese, and Japanese pederastic structures, the wealth of knowledge on male pederasty has not triggered a thorough enough discussion of a female counterpart, instead making use of a short conclusion sprinkled here and there that states a similar practice *could* have existed in Greece, with no further discourse.<sup>38</sup>

### *Finding Sexuality in the Shadows*

In keeping with the pattern demonstrated by studies of homosexuality in other ancient and early cultures, the existence of a female pederastic tradition within the Greek world has been sorely underexamined. Much like Neill's study, tacking on a nod to a potential female parallel to the male practice of pederasty has been the trend among scholars of antiquity. And so, the following study will work to address and build a case for the existence of a female pederastic tradition within the Greek world in three chapters. In the first, this thesis will consider the origins of the male pederastic tradition in order to account for the feminine through an address of its mythological basis in the homosexual relationships of Apollo and other gods and its roots in Dorian initiatory practices, which will begin the characterization of female initiatory ritual as a parallel origin. In the second,

with 6 pages outside of this chapter referencing the topic out of 284 pages; Kenneth James Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1978), discusses female homosexuality in 14 out of 240 pages.; Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson eds., *Homosexuality in the Ancient World* (Garland Publishing: New York, 1992), only 1 of 28 papers collected within set out to discuss female homoeroticism, and outside of that chapter only 13 pages of over 400 discuss the topic; Bernard Sergent, *Homosexuality in Greek Myth* (Beacon Press: Boston, 1984), has no mention; Marilyn B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester, 2014), again features only 1 chapter of 10 directly discussing female homoeroticism and another 26 pages of 426 pages elsewhere; and Beert C. Verstraete and Vernon Provencal eds., *Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West* (Harrington Park Press: New York, 2005), has one chapter out of 14 on Sappho and homoeroticism with another 25 of 490 pages appearing elsewhere on the topic. This, of course, is not exhaustive, nor is it meant to discredit the efforts of scholars to address female homosexuality in antiquity, rather it is a common observation that was characteristic of my research.

<sup>38</sup> Some examples of these brief conclusions can be observed in Raymond de Becker, *The Other Face of Love*, trans. Margaret Crosland & Alan Daventry (Grove Press: New York, 1969), 27: "... also allowed for a type of female homosexuality which was less talked about but was no doubt complementary to pederasty."; Page duBois, *Sappho* (I. B. Taurus: London, 2015), 50: "perhaps – among especially aristocratic circles of archaic cities, men and women's desire for members of the same sex was central to social life"; Segal, *Andre Gide*, 22: "there is a probability that she [Sappho] may indeed, as the philologists claimed, have had pedagogic as well as pederastic interests." All of which are concluding thoughts that are not expanded upon further in their respective discussions.

this study will move forward to thoroughly flesh out the foundation for a female pederastic tradition beyond the confines of the male version in identifying its own mythological basis with Artemis, expanding upon the initiatory experiences of young women at temples to the goddess, and detailing how this translates to pederastic experiences through the resultant choral system as expressed in the material record. And in its third and final chapter, this thesis will identify how the previous conclusions were put to into practice in an analysis of poetry throughout Greek antiquity from the Archaic into the Hellenistic in the works of Alcman, Sappho, Telesilla, Corinna, Erinna, and Nossis. Through these respective chapters, the following thesis will argue for the existence of a female pederastic tradition in the ancient Greek world in identifying its own origins separate from the masculine model in the mythology and initiatory practices surrounding Artemis, how this translates to a homoerotic and didactic relationship between a woman and her pupils, the nature of this relationship, the values instilled in the younger party as a result, and the variant realities of its expression in poetry.

# ***1** CASTING THE SHADOW: THE ORIGINS OF PEDERASTY IN MYTHOLOGY AND INITIATION*

In order to establish the presence of a female pederastic tradition within the Ancient Greek world, we must first identify that an original model for the practice even existed. As the sources dictate, this means that we begin with the overarching characteristics of the masculine practice. Masculine pederasty, as ancient art and literature suggests, is a relationship between an older and a younger party; there are sexual relations and the element of teaching/learning in which the older individual imparts knowledge, and the younger learns. I will note here, as well, that sources detailing this practice are both disparate and diachronic, painting a more widespread picture of male pederasty in Greece that cannot simply be adhered to one locale or time period. That said, prior to and during the Archaic period, before the development of a clear acknowledgement of pederasty and the defined roles of the *erastes* and *eromenos*, there existed, in ancient art and literature, scattered fragments of evidence of some sort of initiatory sexual relationship marking the transformation from youth to adult. There is not sufficient evidence to state that this type of initiation into adulthood was a universal practice in the Ancient Greek world. However, we do have the following: 1. sufficient early myth – older gods and young gods – establishing and normalizing this as a process, 2. history on the origins of pederasty on Dorians, most notably in Crete and Sparta, suggesting that ancient authors and culture acknowledged and accepted pederasty as a part of their socialization, and were interested in determining how it came to be, 3. religious ritual on the transformation of young men – and women – as they move from one state to another, and how this is linked to sexual intimacy for the men, and how this suggests that a feminine corollary was being exercised. So, let us explore these existing elements of the initiatory

origins of pederasty in order to lay the groundwork for our discussion of the female pederastic tradition.

### *The Masculine: Mythological Origins*

Numerous myths exemplify this form of homoerotic initiation, including those of Zeus and Ganymede, Dionysus and Ampelos, and Poseidon and Pelops.<sup>39</sup> In each of these tales a youthful boy is pursued by a god or hero and ends their role within the tale as a transformed figure – though the catalyst of their transformation varies between heroic gesture and death. As Zeus carries off the young Ganymede to Olympus he undergoes his elevation to a higher status as cupbearer to the gods, Ampelos, beloved satyr-boy of Dionysus, was killed and transformed into a vine plant, and the young Pelops, like Ganymede, spent time amongst the gods where Poseidon carried him off as a result of his own homoerotic desire.<sup>40</sup> Regardless of these varying types of transformation, whether by death or elevation, the nature of these pursuits by a mythical god of a youth is always homoerotic in nature and in the ensuing transformation we find the mythological basis for this type of initiatory ritual within Greece.

Outside of these brief examples, though, Apollo provides a prime example of the early mythological roots of pederasty in his consistent homoerotic depiction with young men and later importance to the tradition of pederasty.<sup>41</sup> Apollo can first be observed as a participant in the

<sup>39</sup> For further discussion on this list of initiatory ritual, see Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 6.

<sup>40</sup> Zeus' homoerotic pursuit of Ganymede can be observed in the *Homeric Hymn 5 to Aphrodite* 203ff; For the homoerotic and transformative myth of Dionysus and Ampelos, see Ovid, *Fasti* 3 407 ff; and for an illustration of the myth of Poseidon and Pelops, as well as a comparison to Zeus and Ganymede, see Pindar, *Olympian Ode 10* 102 ff.

<sup>41</sup> Hesiod characterised Apollo as the god who “brings young boys into manhood” in his *Theogony* 345ff. This is not meant to discredit our previous examples, in particular, the Zeus and Ganymede myth, as this myth was undoubtedly key to the Dorian roots of pederasty and later material records, for a discussion of this relationship see Jan Bremmer, “An Enigmatic Indo-European Rite: Paederasty,” in Dynes and Donaldson, *Homosexuality in the Ancient World*, 55-56. That said, I work here primarily with Apollo due to the number of his pederastic relationships, their respective impact on later pederastic tradition, and our later discussion on his sister, Artemis, and her importance to female pederasty.

mythical archetype of homoerotic initiation in the tale of Cyparissus, a young boy that the god is enamored with. According to Ovid, Cyparissus himself undergoes his transformation through his metamorphosis into a cypress tree following the death of his favourite stag, similar to our Dionysus and Ampelos example.<sup>42</sup> Apollo's relationship with Hyacinthus provides another example, as the young prince dies at the hand of the god and undergoes a rebirth that elevates him to a higher status.<sup>43</sup> This erotic pursuit and symbolic transformation of Hyacinthus becomes tantamount to the development of Spartan initiatory ritual, as I will discuss later on. Apollo himself is the agent of these metamorphoses and clearly fits into the mythological basis for Greek homoerotic initiation as he, the "older" figure by virtue of his divinity, triggers his beloved's symbolic transformation.<sup>44</sup> With the mythological cornerstone of male initiation figuratively set up with Apollo, let us move forward to an examination of the practice of initiation and how pederasty finds its origins therein.

### *The Masculine: Initiatory Origins*

Before the rise of city-states within the Greek world, the progression of a male youth into adult society called for rites of passage and initiatory practices and many cite the Dorians for the pederastic flavour this takes on.<sup>45</sup> The Dorians, according both to scholars and ancient Greeks, centred the initiatory progression of youths around their explicitly sexual relations with an adult

<sup>42</sup> See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.106 ff and Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 11.362 ff for this myth.

<sup>43</sup> Bernard Sergent, "Paederasty and Political Life in Archaic Greek Cities," *Journal of Homosexuality* 25 (1993): 152; For this myth, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.184.

<sup>44</sup> Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 6. I say "older" in quotations here as Apollo himself appears a rather youthful god as he is beardless, a contradiction to visual representations of the relationship as the elder is bearded and the *younger* was clean shaven, see the Athenian Red-Figure cup. 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford of a man offering a rooster to a young boy for a visual example of these age characteristics. For further reading on this age divide in the material record, see Andrew Lear and Eva Cantarella, *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty: Boys Were their Gods* (Routledge: London, 2008).

<sup>45</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 153; Claude Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece: Their Morphology, Religious Role, and Social Functions* trans. Derek Collins and Janice Orion (Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, 2001), 10-11 asserts that rites of tribal initiation were common to almost all populations living in tribal patterns, a tradition that carried into the Archaic period – in particular – with Sparta.

warrior.<sup>46</sup> Crossing the age boundaries characteristic of tribal pre-city-state Greek societies originally required that the initiate spend a period of time far away from the community, a process of segregation at the end of which he would be reborn as a member of the higher age category.<sup>47</sup> During this segregation, boys would learn the values of adulthood while living in the company of an older man who took up the positions both of educator and lover.<sup>48</sup> This is the origin point for pederasty – though a venture into the specifics of initiatory ritual in practice should be done before we address the initiatory origins of female pederasty.

By virtue of the Dorian origins of this type of initiatory ritual, much of the evidence to the practice surfaces in dialogues regarding Crete.<sup>49</sup> Beyond debated antique statements that Crete was the setting for Zeus' abduction of Ganymede, Cretan society was deeply embroiled in this initiatory ritual as Strabo proves in his discussion on Ephorus' thorough breakdown of Cretan upbringing.<sup>50</sup> According to Ephorus, Cretan society's form of initiatory homosexuality called for the ritual abduction of the youth by the lover after he had informed the former's parents and friends. The lover then appeared at the home of his chosen beloved and, if he was approved, the family and friends of the youth would allow the pursuit after a customary protest – upon capture the older man

<sup>46</sup> Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 6; Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 153; for further discussion on Dorians as the root of pederasty and this type of initiation, see Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 6, where she also states that in the Homeric Age homosexuality was of a military type rather than initiation. I don't believe that this contradicts my stating that the Dorians created initiatory ritual; rather, it discredits statements that the Dorians were the source of all homosexual practices in ancient Greece, which would be an incorrect statement. As for the ancient understanding, Strabo, *Geography* 10.4 describes this necessity for the Cretans, and Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 7.1 for the Spartans.

<sup>47</sup> Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 6. Strabo further illustrates this tradition in great detail in his *Geography* 10.4.

<sup>48</sup> Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 6. For more on this period of segregation, see Calame, *Choruses of Young Women*, 12, in which he explicitly details these rites for young girls as well.

<sup>49</sup> The most relevant of these discussions to our study is in Strabo, *Geography* 16.4.12, though Plato, *Laws*, 636b-d and 836b-d, Athenaios, *The Learned Banqueters*, and Claudius Aelianus, *On the Characteristics of Animals* 4.1 discusses the Cretan origins of pederasty as well.

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of the Ganymede myth as origin for initiatory homosexuality on Crete, see Vernon Provençal, "Glukus Himeros: Pederastic Influence on the Myth of Ganymede," in Verstraete and Provençal eds., *Same-Sex Desire and Love*, 88; Strabo, *Geography* 10.4.

would present a gift to his intended and then take him away to the countryside for roughly two months.<sup>51</sup> The male friends of the youth who were present at the abduction would follow after them to the countryside and participate in the feasting and hunting that would take place during their absence from the city – from this they would gain a measure of the status achieved by the initiate.<sup>52</sup> This initiatory process was expected of outstanding members of Cretan society, who were meant to commit themselves to the education of youths, making this practice a public institution.<sup>53</sup>

Elsewhere in the Dorian world, other elements suggesting at initiatory pederastic initiation can be perceived, particularly on Thera. A rock wall adjoining a temple of Apollo Karenios on Thera provides a series of promising archaic graffiti which describe homosexual intercourse, particularly notable here is one reading, “By the Delphian God, here Krimon penetrated the son of Bathycles...” which celebrates the completed penetrative intercourse, either anal or intercrural, between a *παῖς* and the writer, Krimon.<sup>54</sup> Though graffiti can typically be observed as a simple boast or taunt, the evocation of Apollo, its location adjacent to the main sanctuary of a temple to the god, and Apollo’s own position within mythological archetype of homoerotic initiation can allow the suggestion that this was a celebration of completed initiation.<sup>55</sup> Of course, this is but a taste of the Dorian influences on initiatory practice beyond Crete, so this study can move forward

<sup>51</sup> de Becker, *The Other Face of Love*, 39.

<sup>52</sup> Stephen Hodkinson, ed. *Sparta: Comparative Approaches* (The Classical Press of Wales: Swansea, 2009), 97.

<sup>53</sup> Hodkinson, *Sparta: Comparative Approaches*, 97.

<sup>54</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 155. For the original Greek and a full translation of this inscription, see Edward Brongersman, “The Thera Inscriptions: Ritual or Slander,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 20 (1990): 32.

<sup>55</sup> Kenneth James Dover, “Greek Homosexuality and Initiation,” in Dynes and Donaldson, *Homosexuality in the Ancient World*, 138; Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 7. Another point worthy of note here is that the discoverer of these inscriptions, Hiller von Gärtringen, concluded that these sexual inscriptions were testaments of sacred acts – aligning with our conclusion of initiation. That said, see Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 123 for an argument against this conclusion as he maintains that these are just boasts and slanderous comments, an argument with which I disagree given the context of these inscriptions.

to a *polis* where we receive an opportunity to consider mainland Greece and a potential lead into female initiatory pederastic origins - Sparta.

Much like our earlier discussion of Greek tribal structures, Sparta divided itself into age categories – creating a segregated society that lends to the incorporation of initiatory ritual to cross such barriers.<sup>56</sup> As has been mentioned previously, a Spartan boy would live with other members of his age class and when they reached the age of transition, 12, according to Plutarch, he was entrusted to an adult lover chosen from the noblest warriors.<sup>57</sup> Within this relationship, the young party would receive military training and knowledge and his behaviour and performance would reflect upon his adult lover.<sup>58</sup> The natural purpose of this relationship was to build Spartan youths into perfect warriors with virtuous character – though this was a result of the *agoge* process as well, the proto-initiatory relationship between a youth and their adult lover was key to their success.<sup>59</sup> The archetype of such a relationship in visual culture is oft expressed through depictions of Achilles and Patroclus (Fig. 1) where Achilles appears the youthful, beardless warrior, and Patroclus his elder bearded lover.

The importance of this initiatory stage within Spartan society, though, is reflected within the Hyacinthia festival, one celebrated annually in Southern Sparta at Amyclae.<sup>60</sup> As we know, Hyacinthus was one of the early mythological examples of this initiatory process as he, through his homoerotically charged relationship with Apollo, transformed symbolically through his death. For the Spartans, Hyacinthus had deep ties to their royal family in mythical times, himself being the youngest and most handsome son of Amyclas, an early Spartan king, which allowed for their

<sup>56</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 158, additionally Neill mentions here the initiatory progression across age groups outside of the Greek world in the youths of the Marind-Anim of New Guinea.

<sup>57</sup> Plut. *Lycurgus* 7.1.; For more on the pairing of warriors in antiquity, see Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 13.12 and Plato, *Symposium* 178e-179b; and on the Spartan type specifically, Xenophon, *Symposium* 8.34-35.

<sup>58</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 158; Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 11.

<sup>59</sup> Bremmer, “An Enigmatic Indo-European Rite,” 52; Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 158.

<sup>60</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 146.



adoption of the figure in their own initiatory processes.<sup>61</sup> In iconography, the Spartans displayed Hyacinthus' symbolic rebirth through facial hair, being without any in adolescence and bearing a full beard, like Spartan warriors, upon his transformation.<sup>62</sup> The festival itself celebrated this transformation of Hyacinthus, which, for Spartans, was its own mythic cornerstone for their tradition of sexual initiation as the youths, through their educational and erotic relations with their assigned lovers, became men.<sup>63</sup>



Figure 1. Sosias Painter. Berlin Attic Red-Figure Kylix ca. 500 BCE. Antikemuseen, Berlin.

### *The Feminine: A Comparative Approach*

Where Sparta becomes key to this study as it pertains to female pederasty is in its incorporation of women into the Hyacinthia and, by extension, its tradition of homosexual initiation.<sup>64</sup> Before this development is addressed, though, let us reflect upon the characteristics of

<sup>61</sup> Sergent, “Paederasty and Political Life in Archaic Greek Cities,” 152.; Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 146.

<sup>62</sup> Sergent, “Paederasty and Political Life in Archaic Greek Cities,” 152.

<sup>63</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 161. This motif is engaged with in later Hellenistic epigram, such as Crinagoras *AP* 6.161, where the young warrior leaves home beardless and returns a man, victorious and bearded: Ἐσπερίου Μάρκελλος ἀνερχόμενος πολέμοιο ἢ σκυλοφόρος κραναῆς τέλσα πάρ’ Ἰταλίας, ἢ ξανθὴν πρῶτον ἔκειρε γενειάδα· Βούλετο πατρις ἢ οὕτως, καὶ πέμψαι παῖδα καὶ ἄνδρα λαβεῖν. “Marcellus, returning from the western war, spoil laden, to the boundary of rocky Italy, first shorn his blonde beard. His fatherland wished such, to send out a boy and receive a man.”

<sup>64</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 161.

male initiatory ritual and how they can be related to the experiences of girls and women in antiquity. We have maintained our core patterns in age division and eroticism, though we have expanded upon the purposes and practices therein. First, the educational component has received greater attention and, as a result, the purpose of these relationships becomes one that brings youths into adulthood and instills within them the values of their society. Initiation brings ritual practice into these relationships which shapes the transformation of the youth into an adult via their sexual relationship with the elder and, to varying degrees, their segregation from others. Where, then, can we look for evidence of female initiatory ritual as the origin of a pederastic tradition for women? As with the Hyacinthia festival, we must first address the ritualistic experiences of young girls and women as it pertains to religious rites.

Addressing female ritual beyond pre-Archaic Greece has its difficulties by virtue of their gendered exclusion and the inability of many of the written resources to accurately describe them, though there is enough to make some educated suggestions. In his discussion on the early tribal traditions of initiation, Claude Calame explicitly incorporates young girls into the previously reviewed practices of segregation, claiming that they too were introduced to the customs and norms of adult sexuality in these liminal spaces.<sup>65</sup> In approaching the Archaic period, one such ritual comes from the festivals surrounding the Athena Polias wherein young girls played important roles. The *arrhephoria*, to name one such event, was performed once a year and involved a selection of young girls, the *arrhephorroi*, who would begin weaving the peplos for Athena Polias followed by a performance of secret rituals about which we know very little.<sup>66</sup> From what is known, though, this ritual called for the *arrhephorroi* to make some form of nocturnal journey that

<sup>65</sup> Calame, *Choruses of Young Women*, 13.

<sup>66</sup> Helene P. Foley, "The Conception of Women in Athenian Drama," in Helene P. Foley, *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (Gordon and Breach Science Publishers: New York, 1981), 131.

ended, according to Pausanias, at a sanctuary to Aphrodite in the gardens on the North slope of the Acropolis.<sup>67</sup> Some suggest that this location indicates a secret fertility rite held in honour of Athena, and others conclude that the *arrhephoroi* underwent a period of seclusion upon the acropolis – both bear similarities to our previous treatment of male initiation.<sup>68</sup>

These trends can be further expanded upon in a brief examination of the Athenian Acropolis itself, as it was key to the Athena Polias rites and displays iconography that complements our discussion of female initiation. At the east end of the Parthenon itself, four separate images of the gods are present which stress the importance of marriage – a key event in the lives of women following their ‘transformation’ from youth to maiden.<sup>69</sup> Although Athena herself remained unmarried and virginal, she was patron to the art of wool-working which was quintessential to the lives of women, giving credence to the suggestion that the weaving performed by the *arrhephoroi* was part of this transformation.<sup>70</sup> As *arrhephoroi*, young women would be close to or going through puberty and their transition from childhood to marriageable status was imminent – what if rituals such as those surrounding the Athena Polias concerned this transformation as an initiatory event?<sup>71</sup> To this point we have only briefly touched on the debated erotic connotations of these rites and have provided no basis for an argument that older women had any part in this presumed

<sup>67</sup> Edward Kadletz, “Pausanias 1.27.3 and the Route of the Arrhephoroi,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 86 (1982): 445; Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece* 1.27.3.

<sup>68</sup> Efrosyni Boutsikas and Robert Hannah, “‘Aitia’, Astronomy, and the Timing of the Arrhephoria,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 107 (2012): 236; Hugh Lloyd-Jones, “Artemis and Iphigeneia,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 103 (1983): 92; Sue Blundell “Marriage and the Maiden: narratives on the Parthenon” in Sue Blundell, *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece* (Routledge: London, 1998), 52. This is not meant to suggest that these are the only theories on the rites performed by the *arrhephoroi*, as others are more willing to disregard Aphrodite’s influence over these rituals altogether, see Kadletz, “Pausanias 1.27.3,” 445-446. For such an argument.

<sup>69</sup> For a greater discussion of these scenes as they appear on the acropolis, see Blundell “Marriage and the Maiden,” 50ff.

<sup>70</sup> Blundell “Marriage and the Maiden,” 52.

<sup>71</sup> Blundell “Marriage and the Maiden,” 52.

initiatory practice – leaving this study with only half of an example and no immediate evidence available to complete it.

Let us return to the discussion of Sparta, then, for a fuller example of female initiatory ritual as observed in the context of a festival. As girls and women were also party to the age-class structure of Spartan society, so too were they incorporated into the initiatory processes inherent to climbing these age categories. In Spartan society, initiatory ceremonies for young women held rather high importance, calling for their added participation within the Hyacinthia.<sup>72</sup> The Hyacinthia festival, as has been demonstrated, was an event steeped in the Dorian tradition of sexual initiation, so the relationship demonstrated by Apollo and Hyacinthus found parallels in pedagogical relationships between Spartan women and girls.<sup>73</sup> Pausanias surfaces once more to inform us that the Spartan myth of Hyacinthus gives the young prince a sister, Polybea, who also undergoes a transformation and served the model for Spartan girls.<sup>74</sup> Though both Hyacinthus and Polybea die and are reborn into adults of marriageable age, she does not experience the homoeroticism observed in her brother and Apollo, which demonstrates the greatest difficulty in this ongoing discussion of female pederasty, as little to no evidence for homoerotic mythological models surface as it does in male pederasty.

Where we do receive a greater deal of mythological contexts to the female initiatory ritual is in Apollo's own sister, Artemis, and her various cults throughout the Greek mainland, as they are key to transitional periods throughout the lives of girls and women. Traditionally, Artemis, a goddess associated with young women and their maturation, was frequently worshipped at the

<sup>72</sup> Sergent, *Homosexuality in Greek Myth*, 90; On Polybea, see Pausanias *Description of Greece* 3.19.4; For ancient discussions of the Hyacinthia at Amyclae, see Strabo, *Geography*, 7.1.2 and Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece*, 3.10.1.

<sup>73</sup> Sergent, *Homosexuality in Greek Myth*, 90.

<sup>74</sup> Sergent, *Homosexuality in Greek Myth*, 89.

physical borders of a *polis* where temples to the goddess often stood.<sup>75</sup> The rituals that took place for Artemis at these locales primarily concerned mythology about acts of devotion, failure to perform the act, punishment sent by the goddess, and reparations by symbolic repetition of the act of devotion as at Ephesos, Brauron, and Samos.<sup>76</sup> Additional rites would mark transitions throughout the lives of women and celebrate them – these stages encompassed the times before puberty and marriage, between marriage and first pregnancy, during pregnancy, and at the time of childbirth.<sup>77</sup> In relation to this study, where the transition from youth to adult as observed in male pederasty concerns the development of the young boy into a citizen instilled with the societal values of their *polis*, the values instilled within a girl prepare her for marriage – the expected endgame of women in the ancient world.<sup>78</sup> As such, the transition from the time before puberty to a girl of marriageable age is most important to the development of the female pederastic tradition.<sup>79</sup>

The existence of the cult of Artemis as Lysizonos, she who loosens belts, gives further weight to the importance of Artemis to the transition that occurred between child and maiden of marriageable age. This version of Artemis specifically presided over the sexual evolution accompanied by marriage as a woman's belt served as some sort of invisible boundary by which she held her virginity.<sup>80</sup> As such, the untying of a woman's belt, as Artemis Lysizonos does in this form, represented the intercourse that would occur after marriage. Upon reaching this stage of life, girls would customarily dedicate their children's clothes and their belt or girdle to Artemis Lysizonos – such an event is the subject of a red-figure lekythos dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> century where a

<sup>75</sup> Susan Cole, "Domesticating Artemis" in Blundell, *The Sacred and the Feminine*, 24; Jennifer Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults: A Guide* (Psychology Press: London, 2007), 101; These temples include Brauron at the borders of Attica and Orthia at the Spartan borders; For discussions of these temples in antiquity, see Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece*, 1.23.7 for Brauron and 2.24.5 for Orthia.

<sup>76</sup> Calame, *Choruses of Young Women*, 100.

<sup>77</sup> Cole, "Domesticating Artemis," 28-29.

<sup>78</sup> Lloyd-Jones, "Artemis and Iphigeneia," 98.

<sup>79</sup> Lloyd-Jones, "Artemis and Iphigeneia," 98.

<sup>80</sup> Cole, "Domesticating Artemis," 30.

woman unties her girdle before Artemis.<sup>81</sup> Artemis herself, then, is demonstrably significant to this ongoing development of female initiatory ritual and the transition from girl to maiden that occurs.

We can now turn to evidence of temples to Artemis and their relevance to this discussion of female initiatory ritual, once again looking to Sparta. The temple of Artemis Orthia on the borders of Sparta offers a great deal of textiles and weaving equipment, materials bearing strong association with women, which suggests either private worship or formal rites.<sup>82</sup> It can be assumed that these dedications represent the concerns of women, though we also see significant evidence of masculine offerings such as figurines of hoplites and archers – so, perhaps these concerns mirrored one another in their intent.<sup>83</sup> Artemis Orthia has been acknowledged as a patron of an important phase in the initiatory process for boys as well as girls, and in reflecting back on her brother's relationship with Hyacinthus as the catalyst for Spartan initiatory worship both in young boys and girls, we have more credence to the suggestion that Artemis had a dual importance as well.<sup>84</sup> There is also evidence suggesting that the cult of Orthia involved choruses and dances performed by young girls, and though this will become more important to later discussion on the development of the female pederastic tradition, it is worth mentioning here that these dances, while performed by the virginal initiates, were hyper sexualized and erotic in nature.<sup>85</sup>

Our greatest and perhaps most compelling discussion of initiatory rites comes from the temple of Artemis at Brauron, this time at the eastern borders of Athens in the Attic countryside.

<sup>81</sup> Henrik Simon Versnel, *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Brill: Leiden, 1981), 90-91; Achilles Painter, Athenian Red-Figure Lekythos c. 475-425 BCE, Museo Arch. Regionale Paolo Orsi, Syracuse (Beazley Archive 213901)

<sup>82</sup> Lin Foxhall, *Studying Gender in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2013), 151. For more on the findings at Orthia, see R. M Dawkins ed., *The sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta" excavated and described by members of the British school at Athens, 1906-1910,"* (Macmillan: London, 1929)

<sup>83</sup> Foxhall, *Studying Gender in Classical Antiquity*, 151.

<sup>84</sup> Sergent, *Homosexuality in Greek Myth*, 90.

<sup>85</sup> Lloyd-Jones, "Artemis and Iphigeneia," 91; Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults*, 106.

Much like the Orthia temple, weaving equipment and textiles were common votive offerings, though there is a much greater inventory of feminine dedications over the masculine.<sup>86</sup> Much like the *arrhephoroi*, girls were chosen to participate in the cult of Artemis at Brauron where they would be sequestered from ages 5 to 10.<sup>87</sup> During this time, they would undergo initiatory practices by serving as basket bearers, water carriers, and corn grinders in religious processions.<sup>88</sup> These Athenian girls would also become known as *arktoi* “she-bears” as they played the parts of bears during the Arkteia rite yearly and the Brauronia every five years.<sup>89</sup> The success that these girls achieved during this state of segregation on the borders of Athens would allow them to transfer from Artemis to Aphrodite and embrace their next role in life – note here the similarities to the Cretan tradition of male segregation in order to achieve transformation.<sup>90</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Though the evidence regarding the goings-on within temples of Artemis is promising, the initiatory processes beyond what we know from the historical record can only be inferred. To this point, while a transition from child to maiden has been identified as the parallel to the male transformation from boy to citizen, and a similar separation from the city as in Dorian tradition from Crete is present – there is nothing concrete to suggest that homoerotic initiation occurred between an older woman and one of the initiates. Save, perhaps, the eroticism of the chorus at Orthia and existence of Artemis *Lysizonos* and the potential eroticism inherent to a girl loosening

<sup>86</sup> Foxhall, *Studying Gender in Classical Antiquity*, 152. For more on the findings at Brauron, see John Papadimitriou, “The Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron,” *Scientific American* 208 (1963): 110-123.

<sup>87</sup> Ellen N. Davis, “Youth and Age in the Thera Frescoes,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 90 (1986): 403. On the age groups assigned to women in antiquity, see Pausanias, *Descriptions of Ancient Greece* 5.16.3.

<sup>88</sup> Foley, “The Conception of Women in Athenian Drama,” 131.

<sup>89</sup> Cole, “Domesticating Artemis,” 28. Blundell goes on to mention here that this rite was done in preparation of first childbirth as girls in Thessaly played the parts of fawns in another ritual. For a tenth century discussion of these she-bears and their age groups, see Suidas, “Arktos e Brauroniois” in *Byzantine Greek Lexicon*.

<sup>90</sup> Cole, “Domesticating Artemis,” 29. On serving Artemis before Aphrodite, see Libanios, *Oratio* 5 and for success to be had during their relationship with Artemis, see Theocritus, *Scholia* 2.66.

their girdle before the goddess to transform into a maiden. Outside of these elements, our one-to-one comparison between the male initiatory model and the female falls short. So, a deeper exploration of Artemis herself could be what is needed to fully flesh out a mythological foundation for female pederasty. Here, I think we can separate from the single-pair structure observed in the mythological origins of male pederastic tradition with Apollo and his male lovers, as we have not found a full duplication in female examples, and instead continue to use Artemis to form a separate model for a female pederastic tradition.



## 2 *THE SILHOUETTE OF THE FEMALE PEDERASTIC TRADITION*

Our discussion of the initiatory origins of male pederasty began with an acknowledgment of mythological origins, a study that fell short in building a feminine model in line with the masculine. In these origins, a single male god was drawn to an attractive youth who he would pursue and, in turn, trigger the figurative apotheosis that would transform him into a higher status. Such an archetype was exemplified, as I have argued, most significantly in Apollo and his male lovers. The prototype set by Apollo cannot be duplicated in mythology around goddesses, though the Spartan inclusion of women and girls into their Hyacinthia supplies a bridge to this gap. As the Spartans gave Hyacinthus a sister in Polybea for girls to model themselves after, Apollo's own sister can be used to formulate a mythical model for female pederasty. Artemis herself has already been proven to be a highly important goddess to the transition of young girls into women and with greater attention I believe she can be developed into the model for female pederasty as, 1. early myth links her consistently with young, pre-marital women, a practice that continues into the Roman period, 2. Artemis is enveloped with music in the context of learning and training, 3. desire and fulfillment can be developed as a part of Artemis' retinue, and, 4. temples to Artemis display material evidence of dance, song, teaching, and eros.

### *Mythological Origins*

Though there is no basis to suggest the single pairing of Artemis with a youth in mythology as is observed with Apollo, there is a consistent linking of Artemis to a group of nymphs within myth as a basis for the feminine counterpart. This characterization appears in the *Odyssey* Book 6 when Nausicaä and her female companions are compared to Artemis and her nymphs dancing

about her, or in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* which mentions a chorus in which Artemis was dancing with nymphs and marriageable maidens.<sup>91</sup> Callimachus expands this further in *Hymn 3 to Artemis* wherein the goddess requests from Zeus a retinue of young nymphs for her choir, later describing them encircling the goddess in a dance.<sup>92</sup> This characterization continues well into the Roman period as Virgil's *Aeneid* compares Dido and her escort of young maidens to Diana leading her dancing nymphs about her.<sup>93</sup> Relatedly, the dual-meaning of the Greek νόμφη is tantamount to this element of her mythology, as, while it can indicate a nymph as a proper name, it also connotes a young bride or girl of marriageable age, as would a female pederastic tradition. Another indication to this association is the uncharacteristic sexual chastity of Artemis' "nymphs" – a quality expected of young girls, but not often observed in their mythological counterpart.<sup>94</sup> The existence of choral groups and their ties to young girls as they begin their transition into maidenhood, then, allows for the argument that the nymphs of Artemis had their origin in this choral tradition and became a mythic complement – a divine chorus to model themselves upon.<sup>95</sup>

The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* lends more substance to Artemis' mythic character as a chorus leader as she exercises authority over a chorus of divine participants including the Horai, Harmonia, Hebe and Aphrodite.<sup>96</sup> The hymn describes them in a classic ring dance as Artemis herself, though a young goddess, towers over the participants in her chorus and outshines them in her beauty, even though Aphrodite herself is among them. This harkens to the tradition of young girls learning and performing choral dancing to acquire the qualities deemed desirable for

<sup>91</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* 6.100ff.

<sup>92</sup> Callimachus, *Hymn 3 to Artemis*, 1ff & 170.

<sup>93</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.496-500.

<sup>94</sup> See, Jennifer Larson, "Handmaidens of Artemis?" *The Classical Journal* 92 (1997): 257, where she concludes that the nymphs under Artemis were a subgroup of nymphs unlike their more amorous counterparts. For examples of eroticism in nymphs, see Theocritus, *Scholia* 2.1-1, 23 and Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece* 7.23.1.

<sup>95</sup> Larson, "Handmaidens of Artemis?" 257; Calame, *Choruses of Young Women*, 24.

<sup>96</sup> Note as well that, like her brother, a lyre is one of Artemis' iconographic markers, complementing her characterization as a chorus leader. For this attribution, see *Homeric Hymn 5 to Aphrodite* 18ff.

marriageable girls as the figures in Artemis' chorus embody their expected beauty in Aphrodite, youth in Hebe, vocal talent in Harmonia, and the fertility inherent to the Horai.<sup>97</sup> The refinement of the participants is marvelled at as well, as anyone who viewed the divine chorus would take joy in its grace.<sup>98</sup> The mythological archetype demonstrated by Artemis, then, has the goddess at the head of a choral group of marriageable maidens – discrepancy of Aphrodite's inclusion aside – in whom she has instilled the ideal values of Greek society, making her our best mythological counterpart for the initiatory tradition of young girls into maidens

That said, as indicated in the masculine model and the nature of pederasty itself, this mythological origin also calls for the incorporation of homoeroticism and transformation, something that has only been hinted at in addressing Artemis Lysizonos. And so, beyond this persona, the greatest indication of homoeroticism in the mythology about Artemis comes from the tale of Callisto, as it is the only tale that suggests a homoerotic relationship. The most familiar version of this story comes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* which focuses on the tale due to Callisto's own transformation, though our interests here lie in Zeus' mode of seduction. Callisto is either an Arcadian nymph as observed in the Ovidian version, or the daughter of King Lycaon as seen in the Hesiodic – existing in the tradition either as a nymph or a maiden – though she is a companion and follower of Artemis in both. As a follower of Artemis, she is to remain virginal – an expectation of young girls in choral groups as well – but Zeus wants her and attempts to seduce her. What I find key here is the fact that Zeus, in order to seduce Callisto, takes on the form of his own daughter, Artemis.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Steven H. Lonsdale, “Homeric Hymn to Apollo’: Prototype and Paradigm of Choral Performance,” *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 3 (1994-1995): 35

<sup>98</sup> From *Paneguris* on Delos, “πάντων γὰρ κεν ἴδοιτο χάριν, τέργατο.”

<sup>99</sup> That being said, scholars have indicated that this version of the deception has been attributed to the Hellenistic comic poet Amphis, who saw irony in Callisto telling Artemis that the goddess herself was responsible for her pregnancy. For a discussion of this discrepancy, see William Sale, “Callisto and the Virginité of Artemis,” *Rheinisches für Philologie, Neue Folge* 108 (1965): 15; and William Sale, “The Story of Callisto in Hesiod.” *Rheinisches Museum*

From the myth according to Ovid, as his is the most complete surviving edition, Callisto is characterized as the most beloved companion of Artemis, “*nec Maenalon attigit ulla // gratior hac Triviae.*” making Zeus’ choice in disguise obvious.<sup>100</sup> When Zeus first approaches Callisto as Artemis, she is pleased to see him and, when Zeus-as-Artemis first kisses her, she does not immediately protest.<sup>101</sup> It is only when Zeus forcefully embraces her, revealing his true form, that Callisto begins to fight back, “*impedit amplexu, nec se sine crimine prodit. Illa quidem contra, quantum modo femina possit.*” Having un-maidenly relations with Artemis, the pseudo-chorus leader in this mythic example, then, is not initially protested by the mythic choral-member in Callisto – this is important to our model thus far. But what of the transformative aspect? It could be said that this instance was not a true union between the mythic choral-leader and choral-member stand-in, and, thus, a transformation need not occur – though, one does follow.

The purveyor of Callisto’s transformation varies across versions of the myth, in Ovid, Hera transforms her into a bear, in others Zeus does it, but in the Hesiodic version, Artemis performs the transformation upon the discovery of her pregnancy.<sup>102</sup> It would follow, according to the male homoerotic initiatory origin myths, that Artemis be an agent in Callisto’s metamorphosis, though I hesitate to draw too many equivalencies. Rather, I would like to return to Brauron once more and

*für Philologie* 105 (1962): 126. The greater difficulty here is in the fact that this iteration of the myth would have come after the initiatory origins of our female pederastic tradition, muddying my claim that this myth is at the origin of such practices – though one could also argue that this version was inspired by our female pederasty, potentially making this a chicken versus the egg dilemma.

<sup>100</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.415-416, in reference to Callisto, “Not any of Maenalus set foot in this place more beloved to Diana.”

<sup>101</sup> When awoken by Zeus, she greets him (as Artemis) “*salve numen,*” “be well, goddess” and then calls him (Artemis), “greater than Jupiter,” “*maius iove.*” Ovid, *Met.* 2.427-429; Callisto does not immediately protest his many kisses, although they are not done as a virgin should permit, “*oscula iungit nec moderata satis nec sic a virgine danda*” Ovid. *Met.* 2.430-431; and only when Zeus embraces her forcefully, revealing himself, does Callisto begin to fight back, “*impedit amplexu, nec se sine crimine prodit. Illa quidem contra, quantum modo femina possit.*” Ovid. *Met.* 2.433-434. Additionally, all translations in this study were done by the writer.

<sup>102</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.410; Hesiod, *The Astronomy Fragment 3*; and for Zeus changing Callisto into a bear, see Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.100; Pseudo-Hyginus, *Astronomica* 2.1 mentions these differing transformations as well.

the potential importance of bears – both to this temple and the tale of Callisto. Every five years at the festival of the Brauronia, a number of the young girls selected to undergo this initiatory experience at Brauron donned saffron-coloured robes and took up the title *arktoi*, these *arktoi* would imitate bears and take part of the Brauronian procession.<sup>103</sup> Back in Athens, every Athenian girl made a sacrifice to Artemis known as a *proteleia* and the ritual sacrifice of a bear marked the end of a young girl's life with her entry into the adult world.<sup>104</sup> The transformation of one of Artemis' followers into a bear following sexual relations and the repeated motif of bears in initiatory ritual tied to Artemis is promising, though, as I have stated, I hesitate to draw too many conclusions from these commonalities alone.

Hesitancies aside, the mythological foundation for the female pederastic tradition has found its basis – namely in the characterization of Artemis as a choral leader surrounded by her nymphs, in whom she instills the aesthetic qualities valued by her society. And while this accounts for the didactic relationship between the instructress and her pupil, one half of the pederastic relationship, the potential for homoeroticism in the myth of Callisto allows Artemis to step forth as a complete mythological archetype for the tradition. What stems from Artemis' example, then, much like the relationships of Apollo, is an initiatory practice for young girls that encompasses the characters of chorus leader and members and adheres to the pedagogical and sexual relationships synonymous with the pederastic experience. The following will examine how the mythical was put into practice through initiatory processes surrounding Artemis, namely within the choral tradition.

<sup>103</sup> John Papadimitriou, "The Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron," *Scientific American* 208 (1963): 118.

<sup>104</sup> Lloyd-Jones, "Artemis and Iphigeneia," 97.

## *Initiatory Origins*

Beyond Brauron and Attica, other temples of Artemis are closely tied to choirs and dances of young girls, such as the Spartan Carynae temple on the border between Laconia and Arcadia.<sup>105</sup> Surviving evidence, both literary and material, reinforces the existence of these girls' choruses appearing in cults of Artemis – both Brauron and Halai Araphenides on the coast of Attica display such.<sup>106</sup> As for the literary, the Tauropolia festival in Halai, as mentioned in Menander's *Epitrepontes*, features a girls' chorus from which Pamphile wanders and is later raped by her future husband, Charisios. The hetaira Habrotonon goes on to describe this scene and then detail that such choruses were performed both by women and girls during the festival each year.<sup>107</sup> In the material evidence, which ranges in dates from around 560 BCE to the late fifth century, as in Habrotonon's statement, there was clearly a long-running tradition of female choral song and dance with great ties to Artemis.<sup>108</sup> On these vases found at shrines of Artemis, young girls are identifiable, some donning short chiton and others naked, running toward altars or palm trees – objects associated with Artemis and Apollo – as others dance and carry garlands.<sup>109</sup> Scholars have noted that, with the context of these remains, a dozen or so *krateriskos* fragments show girls, some prepubescent and others more mature, possibly even married women who oversaw their younger counterparts, engaging in their own form of choral dance.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Sergent, *Homosexuality in Greek Myth*, 90. For additional liminal temples to Artemis, see Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 3.10.7 for Karyai, 3.2.6 and 3.7.4. for Limnai, 3.23.10 for Epidaurus Limera. For further discussion of each of these locales, see Nicholas Richer, "The Religious System at Sparta," in Daniel Ogden ed. *A Companion to Greek Religion* (Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester, 2010) 243ff. on all of these

<sup>106</sup> For further discourse on the initiatory processes occurring at such temples, see Jennifer Larson, *Understanding Greek Religion* (Routledge: London, 2016), 148ff.

<sup>107</sup> F. Budelmann and T. Power, "Another Look at Female Choruses in Classical Athens," *Classical Antiquity* 34 (2015): 267.

<sup>108</sup> Budelmann and Power, "Another Look at Female Choruses," 265.

<sup>109</sup> Lloyd-Jones, "Artemis and Iphigeneia," 93.

<sup>110</sup> Budelmann and Power, "Another Look at Female Choruses," 265.

To identify the pederastic and inherently erotic qualities of such imagery, we must diverge from our discussion of Artemis and choral groups to address another form of feminine pederastic tradition within material culture. As has been observed in the examination of initiatory ritual, it is difficult to produce an exact copy of the masculine tradition within the feminine – the age distinctions are not so easily made in vase paintings beyond size, whereas men have the benefit of a beard to indicate this divide. The setting for these pederastic depictions are disparate as well, as the homosocial spaces required to perform pederastic rites would have barred the other sex – leaving the gymnasium, or *palaestra*, as a core hub for male interaction and the bathhouse a potential venue for the feminine – though temples to Artemis stand as an additional setting. Each of these venues allowed for the emergence of homoerotic imagery in their opportunity for nudity, though the pursuit imagery and garlands that commonly occur therein will be key to the Artemisian remains as well.<sup>111</sup>

The first stages of male pederastic courtship observed in analyses vase paintings, these being the pursuit and what I have named the request scene, will prove particularly important to this reflection on the Artemisian remains. This first stage, the pursuit, is articulated by Plato in his *Symposium* with regard to the formal customs of the Athenian institution of male pederasty, encouraging the elder party to chase after their intended beloved and the latter to resist being caught until deemed appropriate.<sup>112</sup> This chase is an important stage within the pederastic ritual prior to an exchange of love-gifts that is seen when the courtship properly begins. The *eromenos*, as the younger party becomes named once evolved from the initiatory origins discussed to this point, was encouraged to flee from his pursuer before accepting gifts, which can include animals, fillets,

<sup>111</sup> Martin F. Kilmer, *Greek Erotica on Attic Red-Figure Vases* (Duckworth: London, 1993), 26.

<sup>112</sup> Plato, *Symposium* 184ff.

garlands, flowers, or netted bags, in order to select the best suitor to be his *erastes*.<sup>113</sup> This can be traced back to Crete and its own initiatory process for males as the older party would symbolically pursue his chosen beloved across town before their transformative departure to the countryside.

In the material record of this stage of male pederasty, the *erastes* chases the *eromenos* as the latter flees, sometimes carrying a love-gift to amplify the pederastic message within. These roles are predominantly filled by the mythological prototypes of Zeus and Ganymede on vase paintings – with Zeus as the bearded *erastes* chasing the youthful Ganymede, his intended *eromenos*.<sup>114</sup> As much is seen in an Attic red-figure amphora by the Providence Painter (fig. 2), where the bearded Zeus holds his sceptre in one hand and reaches out to Ganymede with the other, as his beloved holds a cock, a common gift observed in courtship. Ganymede appears to be opening up his clothing, revealing his nude body further to the viewer – a motif that demonstrates the consent of the *eromenos* to the suitor’s advances.<sup>115</sup> Their eye contact is also key to the depiction of this stage as Ganymede looks back to his pursuer, which is an intimate gesture that is further qualified as erotic within courtship imagery.<sup>116</sup> This also mirrors the marriage ritual practiced in Athens that had the groom abducting his wife and parading her through town in a pseudo-kidnapping – further emphasising the erotic implications of such scenes.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>113</sup> For material remains depicting such gifts, see Brygos Painter, Attic Red-Figure Cup c. 470 BCE. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, which features a netted bag; Kleophrades Painter, Attic Red-Figure Hydria 500-450 BCE, Mus. Naz. Etrusco di Villa Giulia, displaying a rabbit; Makron. Attic Red-Figure Kylix c. 490 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for fillets; and Providence Painter. Attic Black-Figure Amphora, Rhode Island School of Design, Rhode Island, for several animals including a stag, cock, and dog.

<sup>114</sup> For other images of Zeus and Ganymede, see Eucharides Painter, Attic Red-Figure Kylix, ca. 490-480 BCE. Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection, New York for Ganymede as cupbearer; Berlin Painter, Attic Red-Figure Krater ca. 500-490 BCE. Musée du Louvre, Paris for Ganymede bearing the courtship gift of a cock given by Zeus; and The Penthesilea Painter, Attic Red-Figure Kylix ca. 475-425 BCE. Archaeological Museum, Ferrara, for a scene post-pursuit and pre-consummation.

<sup>115</sup> Verstraete and Provencal, *Same-Sex Desire and Love*, 149. Of course, Ganymede could also be pulling his clothing back on, though the gesture of removing one’s clothing has more symbolic weight within pederastic imagery, which this amphora clearly depicts in accordance with the Zeus and Ganymede myth.

<sup>116</sup> Verstraete and Provencal, *Same Sex Desire and Love*, 147.

<sup>117</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of this trend see, Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, “A Series of Erotic Pursuits: Images and Meanings,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 107 (1987): 131-153. The heterosexual depiction of such pursuits can





Figure 2. Providence Painter. Attic Red-Figure Amphora. 475-425 BCE.  
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. IV 652.

Much like representations of the male pederastic pursuit in Zeus and Ganymede, a female pursuit scene has an *erastes* figure chasing their intended *eromenos*, though their roles are mostly distinguished by their positioning in the scene rather than by size or facial hair. Predictably, very few complete surviving examples of such a female amorous pursuit are extant, though one survives on an Attic red-figure cup by the Pedieus Painter (fig. 3). Here, a bathhouse scene is quickly recognizable where the pursuit is in full effect as a nude woman on the far right, the *erastes* figure, runs after another nude woman in the centre of the piece, the *eromenos*, as a third woman on the far-left side washes at a laver. A double *kalos* inscription also appears, one above the woman at the laver and another on the laver itself, a word closely associated with male pederastic imagery

be observed in images depicting the union of Peleus and Thetis, such as Douris, Attic Red-Figure Kylix ca. 490-470 BCE, Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich (*Beazley Archive* 205230). For a breakdown of this heterosexual pursuit stage in imagery, see John Howard Oakley and Rebecca H. Sinos eds. *The Wedding in Ancient Athens* (University of Wisconsin Press: Wisconsin, 2002), 41.

and the beauty of the *eromenos*.<sup>118</sup> Additionally, the rather phallic shape of the clothing draped over their arms creates another layer of eroticism. That all being said, for some scholars, nothing in this depiction would suggest explicit eroticism beyond the strikingly similar composition to Zeus and Ganymede pursuit scenes – notice the intimate eye contact – and the obvious nudity.<sup>119</sup>

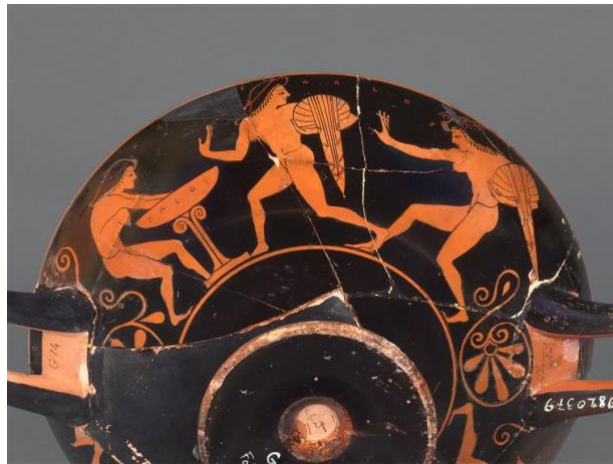


Figure 3. Side A. Pedieus Painter. Attic Red-Figure Cup 525-475 BCE.  
Musée du Louvre, Paris. G14.

In the surviving *krateriskoi* fragments from temples to Artemis, similar pursuit imagery can be identified in what others have labelled races or choral dance scenes.<sup>120</sup> Each of these depict young girls and women dancing, racing, or in a procession near an altar steeped in cultic imagery tied to the *arkteia* ritual.<sup>121</sup> As such, these vases reflect essential moments within the initiation rites for young girls that have been detailed up to this point – and their inclusion of age ranges and similarities to established male pederastic imagery allow for the interpretation of these events as homoerotic. Beyond positioning in the pursuit scenes to suggest the age dichotomy of older to

<sup>118</sup> For a discussion of the *kalos* inscription and its weight see Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 114-115, where it is used primarily to describe the beauty of a boy and only rarely the beauty of a girl. However, the *kalos* inscription is not exclusive to describing male youths, but the beauty of the vessel itself in some cases; see Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 120-122 for a more in-depth breakdown of these nuances where he concludes that the inscription predominantly concerns society's preoccupation with the beauty of boys and youths in a pederastic context.

<sup>119</sup> Kilmer, *Greek Erotica*, 27.

<sup>120</sup> Richard Hamilton, "Alkman and the Athenian Arkteia," *Hesperia* 58 (1989): 470-471.

<sup>121</sup> Hamilton, "Alkman and the Athenian Arkteia," 449.

younger within these images, the Artemis fragments also make use of hairstyle, size, and breast development to connote an older woman.<sup>122</sup> For an example of the older *erastes* pursuer from the Brauron collection, Figure 4 features a fragmentary woman with hair up in a bun running rightward with her hand outstretched toward an unknown subject or object. I would argue that this mirrors the imagery of the example set by Zeus (fig. 2) as she, an older woman by virtue of her hairstyle, reaches out in a similar fashion and the active pursuit is indicated by her bent knee. This example, of course, is not complete as only the pursuer is depicted, though the pursued *erastes* figure appears in other *krateriskoi* fragments.



Figure 4. Krateriskos fragment, Brauron Museum krateriskos no. 5. in Kahil (1965), fig. 8:1.

The pursued figures in these fragments are indicated by some, though not always all, of the following: nudity, courtship gifts, a backward glance, and a running posture. Several instances of these motifs are distinguishable (fig. 5 & 6), though once again they are fragmentary and have their own difficulties of interpretation. The *krateriskos* fragment depicting a nude figure bearing a garland while running (fig. 5) could be the presumed *eromenos*, but her developed breasts, forward facing posture, and hairstyle suggest otherwise. What appears here, potentially, is another *erastes*

<sup>122</sup> Hamilton, "Alkman and the Athenian Arkteia," 558.

figure pursuing the fragmented figure before her, who also bears a garland – though this could be more definitively stated if the positioning of her head could be discerned. The nudity of both parties within a pursuit scene is not unfamiliar and the presence of garlands is promising – a factor which will be examine further in a discussion of request scenes. Another *krateriskos* fragment from the same collection (fig. 6) delivers the opposite problem, as only the torso and upper left side of the pursued individual remain. Here, her backward glance and upheld garland provide some semblance of pederastic context as she resembles Ganymede (fig. 2), though she is not nude, and her posture cannot be sufficiently discerned enough to suggest that she is running. That being said, some likeness to pederastic pursuit imagery can be suggested in these fragments, though more can be done to enhance such elements in a discussion of request imagery.



Figure 5. Krateriskos fragment, Piraeus Museum, Kk55 (Palaiokrassa, 1983 pl. 52:a) in Hamilton (1989), fig. 23.

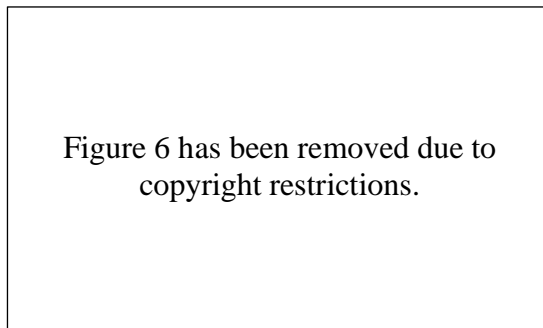


Figure 6. Krateriskos fragment, Piraeus Museum, Kk24 (Palaiokrassa, 1983 pl. 57:a) in Hamilton (1989), fig. 19.

The request stage of pederastic courtship vase paintings offers the largest selection of images, allowing for a thorough breakdown of what these requests via love gifts and gestures are and how they are represented in male and female versions. Much like with the pursuit, extant literature stands as an ancient Greek understanding of how the request stage was expressed via love-gifts. In particular, Aristophanes' comedies display such dialogue as his *Wealth* and *Birds* demonstrate the desires of potential *eromenoi* as opposed to sex-workers or poorer boys, listing horses, dogs, quail, coots, geese, and cockerels as courtship gifts.<sup>123</sup> Besides the gifts stated in Aristophanes, the exchange of hares, fillets, flowers, garlands, and netted bags which normally held edible treats or other knickknacks for the *eromenos* are seen.<sup>124</sup>

For a visual example of a number of other request gifts, a fifth century red-figure cup by Makron can be observed where, from left to right, a hare is offered to a youth while a garland is being placed on the head of another by his *erastes*.<sup>125</sup> In the centre, an oil flask and strigil hang on the wall, placing this series of gifts exchanges within the *palaestra*. On the reverse side this scene continues as another garland is offered by a suitor to his proposed *eromenos*, who already holds a gifted flower, and another youth who holds a gifted netted bag. What is key to these scenes as the stage following the pursuit is the efforts to which the hopeful *erastes* goes in order to gain the acceptance and approval of their intended, making this stage all about gestures of requesting permission from gift offerings to poses of supplication.<sup>126</sup>

Garlands themselves, as they are key to an analysis of the *krateriskoi* remains, surface not only in the material record as a means of *male* pederastic courtship, but in erotic poetry as well.

<sup>123</sup> Aristophanes, *Wealth* 149-159 and *Birds* 707.

<sup>124</sup> Kilmer, *Greek Erotica*, 20.

<sup>125</sup> Makron. Attic Red-Figure Cup 500-450 BCE. Mus. Naz. Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome (*Beazley Archive* 204880)

<sup>126</sup> The "supplication" or "request" pose generally has the *erastes* asking permission of the *eromenos* by placing their hand to the chin of the younger party, as if asking for a kiss, though the roles can be reversed. For an example, see Unknown, Attic Black-Figure Cup 575-525 BCE, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden (*Beazley Archive* 602).

The fragments of Anacreon, himself being an Archaic celebrant of and participant in male homoerotic love, display a great deal of erotic imagery, some referencing garlands as in fragment 397 he wrote, “they put over their chests woven garlands of lotus.”<sup>127</sup> Here, the garlands are presented in a sympotic context, bringing another level of homoeroticism to an already homosocial event. Other epigrammatists make use of the garland to similar effect as Asclepiades describes hanging up his garlands to shower tears upon his male beloved and, in another, the garland upon a man’s head falls as he weeps about love.<sup>128</sup> Of course, the use of garlands within a male homosocial space as an expression of erotic provocation is not insignificant to this study, as they also appear within the female sphere and bear, as I intend to argue, the same intent.<sup>129</sup>

For a fuller version of garlands used in a feminine request scene, a seventh century plate from Thera (fig. 7) must be mentioned, as it displays a remarkable depiction both of this courtship gift and the supplication pose observed throughout male pederastic imagery. Here, two women stand very close to one another, held in intimate eye contact, as the figure on the left reaches up to the other’s chin in a mirror of the supplication pose – their affection for one another is palpable.<sup>130</sup> This familiar pose aside, each woman also holds a garland which further eroticises this scene. Considering these – both the pose and the suggested gift exchange – this clearly mirrors the male pederastic request type as the woman on the left, holding a gifted or intended gift, either asks for or gives permission to the woman opposite her to engage in the next stage of pederastic courtship. The incorporation of garlands into these *krateriskoi* remains from temples to Artemis, then, can be read to bear similar pederastic connotations as observed in the Thera Plate.

<sup>127</sup> Sergent, “Paederasty and Political Life in Archaic Greek Cities,” 156

<sup>128</sup> Asclepiades *AP* 5.145, *AP* 12.132.

<sup>129</sup> Dimitrios Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2007), 218 & 282.

<sup>130</sup> Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 93; Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1996), 57. For another example of the male type of the supplication pose for comparison to the Thera Plate, see Group of the Courting Cups, Attic Black-Figure Cup, Otago Museum, Dunedin (Beazley Archive 6712).



Figure 7. Unknown. Plate c. 620 BCE. Thera.

In translating the potential eroticism of Artemis' mythology into reality through this material record, though, it must also be acknowledged that the third stage of pederastic vase imagery – the act – is not present in these *krateriskoi* fragments. This stage, for the masculine type, typically features the consummation of the pursuit and request images in scenes such as those depicted on an Attic black-figure amphora by the Berlin painter where two pairs are engaged both in intercrural copulation and the transition from request to consummation while surrounded by other couples still engaged in gift-exchanges.<sup>131</sup> No such evidence exists in the fragments under study here, though the parallels in circumstantial evidence between the male and female examples of pursuit and request scenes are not insignificant.<sup>132</sup> What can be taken from these similarities to male pursuit and request scenes is an implication of the final stage, not a denial of its existence due to lack of surviving evidence to the fact – an implication that will be explored further in the

<sup>131</sup> Berlin Painter. Attic Black-Figure Amphora c. 540 BCE. British Museum, London.

<sup>132</sup> This is not meant to suggest that *no* evidence of female consummation scenes exists, see Pezzino Group, Attic Red-Figure Cup 525-475 BCE, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, for two women, one clearly older as a younger girl stands before her in a bathhouse scene. Both figures are nude and the younger holds a phallic shaped alabastron between them, for a discussion of this vase see Kilmer, *Greek Erotica*, 27. See also, Apollodorus, Attic Red-Figure Kylix 515-495 BCE, Tarquinia, for two nude woman, one standing and the other kneeling before her with her hand on the standing woman's pubic mound, for further discussion, see Kilmer, *Greek Erotica*, 28.

final chapter of this study. And, in the reality that these Artemisian remains are steeped in cultic imagery, it can also be inferred that the eroticism and pederastic imagery identified therein was also a central part in the initiatory experience of girls and women at these locales.

### *Conclusion*

Now, I believe I can fully address the foundation of a female homoerotic tradition in initiatory ritual as exemplified in myth by Artemis and her circle of maidens. As an archetype, Artemis represents the choral leader surrounded by a retinue of young maidens whom she initiates into adulthood through education in choral training and presumably through an erotic relationship, as is potentially observed in Callisto. In practice, these rites would have incorporated a set of rituals marking the initiate's transition through preparing them for their eventual roles as a wife, mother, and participant in the community.<sup>133</sup> This training was seen as a form of education that involved learning myths, songs, and dances which would have encouraged appropriate behaviour for the initiates – according to Plato, these qualities included good order, temperance, and chastity.<sup>134</sup> The pattern of female pederasty is contained here as an older woman educates a group of younger girls to initiate them into adulthood, and an analysis of the material record has done much to allow for eroticism to enter this relationship.

Up to this point, what has allowed scholars to definitively speak on the traditions of male homoerotic initiation within the Greek world – ancient discussions directly about these customs – is, unfortunately, nonexistent for our feminine model. While the ability to create nuanced discussions on male practices is easily accessible, this study must continue to peer into the shadows of fragmented materials and offhand references to the lives of ancient women. From the male

<sup>133</sup> Wayne B. Ingalls, "Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters in Archaic Greece," *Phoenix* 54 (2000): 1.

<sup>134</sup> Ingalls, "Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters," 3; Plato, *Leges* 802e.



tradition I extracted what I could in order to build the foundation for a female pederastic tradition, though directly following the elements laid out by the masculine, of course, was not completely successful – but the attention given to Artemis and choral groups has been. In exposing an initiatory model based on the mythic example of Artemis as choral-leader and nymphs as choral members, I have identified a process for young girls that pulls them to the borders of their societies to undergo training through choral rites under older women who would prepare them for adulthood. The eroticism here can only be hinted at through reading into the Callisto myth, material remains, and reflecting upon the initiatory practices of men, but the succeeding growth of this choral system beyond the borders of city-states is where female pederasty becomes a more fully perceivable and nuanced practice.

### 3 ILLUMINATING THE FEMALE PEDERASTIC TRADITION

In the previous chapter we saw how various elements connected to Artemis, particularly cult practices such as choral song and dance, echo and reform the male pederastic system. In this chapter, poetry will be examined to argue that choral song and dance developed as a form of female pederasty. As the mythological archetype of Artemis surrounded herself with a group of young maidens as a chorus, the choral system practised throughout the Greek world allowed for a female choral leader at the head of her own retinue of young women to instill within the youths about her the values of their society and engage in homoerotic relations. Of course, that which developed from the initiatory ritual did not replace or eradicate the practice, but instead coincided with it and, much like male pederasty, became a much less formal practice as it evolved from its cult origins.<sup>135</sup> As was demonstrated in my observation of the material record at temples to Artemis, the depiction of initiatory rites for young girls spans from the late Archaic into the early Classical period, and evidence to the adoption of this model in pederastic choral practices, formal or otherwise, coincides with this timeline. Additionally, the education of young girls and its relationship to the pederastic choral group can only be traced to locals and time periods that valued the participation of its girls

<sup>135</sup> As male pederasty evolved from the strict initiatory practice observed in previous chapters, it turns its focus to the formal informality of aesthetic appreciation of the male youth as in Athens; the older man would admire the youth in homosocial spaces such as the gymnasias, some engaging in the pederastic tradition in pursuing an eromenos and casually teaching them of the adult world in politics, law, economics, and religion all while a sexual relationship was had, though the necessity of this relationship for every young male to achieve adulthood dissolves over time. I will touch more on this evolution for the female type in our discussion of Sappho's pederasty. For the erosion of the "ideal" type of pederasty, specifically the Athenian type, see Aristophanes *Clouds*, and for a discussion of how this is expressed in Aristophanes, see Cohen "Law, Society and Homosexuality," 20; For a discussion on the preoccupation with beauty that later characterizes pederasty, see Hindley, "Xenophon on Male Love," 87-93; and for further relaxation of the seemingly rigid structures surrounding Athenian pederasty, namely the age-divide, we can also turn to the suggested pederastic relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades or Zeno and Parmenides who were all well into adulthood, see Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations in Human Societies*, 170 for more on these relationships.

and women in various cult practices. As such, during the Archaic period we receive a great deal of evidence regarding the enactment of choral groups that is later eclipsed by male education in the Classical period, only to suggest a reappearance with other female poets in the Hellenistic Age.<sup>136</sup> The following will address these chronologically in the works of Alcman, Sappho, Telesilla, Corinna, Erinna, and Nossis.

### *Formal Pederasty in Alcman*

The Archaic period provided girls with some form of social education from their youth until their marriage, carrying them through the transformational period observed in initiatory ritual.<sup>137</sup> This sort of tutelage would take place in some type of school, religious fellowship, or, in what is most relevant to the choral female pederastic tradition, a *thiasos*.<sup>138</sup> In the Classical period the *thiasos* was associated with groups of maenads singing and dancing for Dionysus, who addresses the chorus as his *thiasos* – though the Hellenistic understanding reflects the Archaic in that it was some sort of guild or club.<sup>139</sup> For our purposes, we may think of the *thiasos* simply as a group that often came together for a purpose that bore musical connotations – a facet of the choral group system.<sup>140</sup> This *thiasos* would not always be a separate entity from the cultic nuance of the Classical definition, though, as many choral performances were a form of cultic expression often honouring Artemis in the case of young women.<sup>141</sup> The cultic flavour and setting of the songs that would be performed by these groups would reinforce images of mastery, guiding, leading, and

<sup>136</sup> Henri-Irénée, Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* trans. George Lamb (Sheed and Ward: New York, 1956), 35; Marilyn Katz, “Ideology and ‘The Status of Women’ in Ancient Greece,” *History and Theory* 31 (1992): 73.

<sup>137</sup> Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 34. We will return to Sappho’s character as a schoolmistress later on in this chapter.

<sup>138</sup> Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 34.

<sup>139</sup> Anne L. Klinck, “Sappho’s Company of Friends,” *Hermes* 136 (2008): 24 & 25.

<sup>140</sup> Klinck, “Sappho’s Company of Friends,” 25.

<sup>141</sup> Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults*, 106.

homoeroticism with words describing the beauty, charm, attraction, and the sexual energy of the performers – culminating in nods to their transition from youth to woman. In the more formal Archaic *thiasos* or choral group we can observe the perfect convergence of education, homoeroticism, and preparation for and transition to adulthood that defines the practice of female pederasty that I have worked to develop with this study – one exemplified most identifiably in Alcman’s *Partheneion*.

40 ὁ δ’ ὄλβιος, ὅστις εὐφρων  
 ἀμέραν [δι]απλέκει  
 ἄκλαυστος· ἐγὼν δ’ αἰίδω  
 Ἀγιδῶς τὸ φῶς· ὀρῶ  
 ’ ὅτ’ ἄλιον, ὄνπερ ἄμιν  
 Ἀγιδῶ μαρτύρεται  
 φαίνην· ἐμέ δ’ οὐτ’ ἐπαινῆν  
 οὔτε μωμήσθαι νιν ἄ κλεννὰ χοπαγὸς  
 45 οὐδ’ ἀμῶς ἐῆι· δοκεῖ γὰρ ἤμεν αὐτα  
 ἐκπρεπῆς τῶς ὥπερ αἴτις  
 ἐν βοτοῖς στάσειεν ἵππον  
 παγὸν ἀεθλοφόρον καναχάποδα  
 τῶν ὑποπετριδίων ὀνείρων·  
 50 ἦ οὐχ ὀρῆς; ὁ μὲν κέλης  
 Ἐνετικός· ἄ δὲ χαίτα  
 τᾶς ἐμᾶς ἀνεψιᾶς  
 Ἀγησιχόρας ἐπανθεῖ  
 χρυσὸς [ὠ]ς ἀκήρατος·  
 55 τό τ’ ἀργύριον πρόσωπον,  
 διαφάδαν τί τοι λέγω;  
 Ἀγησιχόρα μὲν αὐτα·  
 ἄ δὲ δευτέρα πεδ’ Ἀγιδῶ τὸ εἶδος  
 ἵππος Ἰβηνώι Κολαξαῖος δραμήται·  
 60 ταὶ Πεληάδες γὰρ ἄμιν  
 ὀρθρίαι φᾶρος φεροίσαις  
 νύκτα δι’ ἀμβροσίαν ἄτε σήριον  
 ἄστρον ἀνηρομέναι μάχονται·  
 οὔτε γάρ τι πορφύρας  
 65 τόσσοι κόροι ὥστ’ ἀμύναι,  
 οὔτε ποικίλοι δράκων  
 παγχρύσιος, οὐδὲ μίτρα  
 Λυδία, νεανίδων  
 ἱανογ [λ]εφάρων ἄγαλμα,  
 70 οὐδὲ ταὶ Ναννῶς κόμαι,

ἄλλ' οὐ[δ'] Ἀρέτα σιειδῆς,  
 οὐδὲ Σύλακίς τε καὶ Κλησισηήρα,  
 οὐδ' ἐς Αἰνησιμβρ[ό]τας ἐνθοῖσα φασεῖς·  
 75 Ἄστασίς [τ]έ μοι γένοιτο  
 καὶ ποτιγλέποι Φίλυλλα  
 Δαμαρ[έ]τα τ' ἐρατά τε εἰανθεμῖς·  
 ἄλλ' Ἀγησιγόρα με τείρει.  
 οὐ γὰρ ἄ κ[α]λλίσφυρος  
 Ἀγησιχ[ό]ρ[α] πάρ' αὐτεῖ,  
 80 Ἀγιδοῖ .... αρμένει  
 θωστήρ[ιά τ'] ἄμ' ἐπαινεῖ.  
 ἀλλὰ τᾶν [..]... σιοὶ  
 δέξασθε· [σι]ῶν γὰρ ἄνα  
 καὶ τέλος· [χο]ροστάτις,  
 85 εἰποιμί δ', [ἐ]γὼν μὲν αὐτὰ  
 παρσένος μάταν ἀπὸ θράνω λέλακα  
 γλαύς· ἐγὼ[ν] δὲ τᾶι μὲν Ἄωτι μάλιστα  
 ανδάνην ἐρῶ· πόνων γὰρ  
 ἄμιν ἰάτωρ ἔγεντο·  
 90 ἐξ Ἀγησιχόρ[ας] δὲ νεάνιδες  
 ἰρ]ήνας ἐρατ[ᾶ]ς ἐπέβαν.  
 τῶ]ι τε γὰρ σηραφόρῳ  
 αὐ]τῶς εδ[  
 τ[ῶ]ι κυβερνάται δὲ χρῆ  
 95 κ[ῆ]ν νᾶϊ μάλιστ' ἀκούην·  
 ἄ δὲ τᾶν Σηρηνη[ί]δων  
 ἀοιδότερα μ[ὲν] οὐχί,  
 σιαὶ γάρ, ἀντ[ὶ] δ' ἔνδεκα  
 παίδων δεκ[ᾶς] ἄδ' ἀείδ]ει·  
 100 φθέγγεται δ' [ἄρ'] ὄ[τ'] ἐπὶ Ξάνθῳ ῥοαῖσι  
 κύκνος· ἄ δ' ἐπιμέρωι ξανθᾶι κομίσκα<sup>142</sup>

Once more, Sparta sets the stage for the practice of female pederasty as choral song and dance are described in the First Partheneion of Alcman, a late 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE choral lyric poet. Alcman's Sparta was a *polis* in which choral training was a major component for the education of girls and their initiation into womanhood.<sup>143</sup> Alcman's *Partheneion* plays into this tradition in

<sup>142</sup> Alcman, *Partheneion* 1.37-101, see Appendix 1 for translation.

<sup>143</sup> Ingalls, "Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters", 3. On choral training as encouragement for marriage in Sparta, see Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 15.1:

“ἦν μὲν οὖν καὶ ταῦτα παρορμητικὰ πρὸς γάμον λέγω δὲ τὰς πομπὰς τῶν παρθένων καὶ τὰς ἀποδύσεις καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐν ὄψει τῶν νέων,” “and thus there were incentives for marriage in these – I speak of the conduct of maidens, and of those young men in seeing them [the maidens] undressed in such gatherings.”

describing the beauty of choral leaders and the preparation of its members for marriage in a piece clearly meant for performance. Toward the end of this work it becomes clear that this is a chorus of ten young girls, *παίδων δεκάς ἅδ' αἰείδει*, who marvel at the older members that serve as models for their behaviour – primarily naming Hagesichora and Agido.<sup>144</sup> From elements within the poem, a festival to a goddess associated with dawn Ἄωτι, Aotis, is suggested to be in occurrence, though scholars debate the occasion and no conclusion has been provided as of yet.<sup>145</sup> What *can* be inferred here, though, is a system for young Spartan girls that had them entering a choral group that educated and prepared them for marriage.<sup>146</sup> In the example set by Alcman, then, female pederasty is demonstrably put into practice as, 1. an expression of possession and education under a leader, 2. a clear demonstration of homoeroticism and desire, and 3. an acknowledgement of completion or transition.

In identifying the educational qualities of Alcman's choral group, Hagesichora pointedly serves as the choral leader, as her name indicates such and as she is described both as *χοπαγός* and *χοροστάτις*. As such, Hagesichora becomes the mortal counterpart to the divine example set by Artemis, and her outstanding beauty harkens back to the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* in which Artemis herself stands out amongst her own choral group.<sup>147</sup> Beyond her name and titles, her position as chorus leader can be read in the mastery of her own education through Alcman's use of the metaphor of horses needing to be broken, a traditional motif representing the education of young girls, as Hagesichora herself appears a tamed tracehorse, *ιρήνας*, as one who has already

<sup>144</sup> Elaine Fantham, *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1995), 58.

<sup>145</sup> For a discussion of the potential occasions for this performance, see Diskin Clay, "Alcman's 'Partheneion'" *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 39 (1991): 52-53; Alan Griffiths, "Alcman's Partheneion: The Morning after the Night Before," 26, suggests that Ἄωτι is actually a reference to Artemis, being the goddess tied to virginity and, thus, this chorus of young girls.

<sup>146</sup> Griffiths, "Alcman's Partheneion," 13; Once more, Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 15.1 states that these events following choral education were intended as an incentive for marriage.

<sup>147</sup> Ingalls, "Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters," 8.

undergone this training.<sup>148</sup> The speaker of the poem further distinguishes Hagesichora from the other named figures as a leader, highlighting that Hagesichora has the power to permit her in line 44, and acknowledges her pre-eminence in line 46. She is also highlighted toward the end of the poem as the point from which the young choral members achieved “lovely peacefulness” in acknowledgement of her tutelage. Implications to progressing education amongst the choral group can also be read in the advancement of another named figure, Agido, once again in Alcman’s horse metaphor, as, in comparison to the beauty of Hagesichora, Agido is described as a racehorse, κέλης – having already undergone a measure of the “taming” done by choral education.

With the educational elements of Alcman’s work addressed, the bulk of evidence implying a female pederastic tradition surfaces in the great deal of homoerotic imagery amongst the members of this choral group.<sup>149</sup> The speaker of Alcman’s poem focuses a great deal on sight, drawing attention to her own view of the beauty of the chorus members about her, namely regarding her leader, Hagesichora, and Agido – who seems the focus of this address. In its first lines ἀεῖδω // Ἀγιδῶς τὸ φῶς, the choral member is seemingly awed by Agido as she sings of her light and that she ὀρῶ // ὄτ’ ἄλιον, “sees her as the sun” as she shines. Later on, she mourns the fact that Agido holds the attention of Hagesichora, indicating that they cannot be separated as, οὐ γὰρ ἄ καλλίσφυρος // Ἀγησιχόρα πάρ’ αὐτεῖ, // Ἀγιδοῖ .... αρμένει, “beautiful-ankled Hagesichora cannot be found near the chorus, but remains by Agido’s side,” characterising her as Hagesichora’s favourite among the chorus members, much like the mythical Callisto.<sup>150</sup> More substance to her own relationship with Hagesichora is expressed in line 77, as the chorus leader is τείρει, “wearing me down,” which can be observed for its other meaning as “rub hard” and its similar connotations

<sup>148</sup> Ingalls, “Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters,” 10.

<sup>149</sup> Let us not here as well that the Spartans demonstrably participated in sexual relationships between younger and older women as stated in Plutarch. Fantham, *Women in the Classical World*, 58; Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 18.4.

<sup>150</sup> Neill, *The Origins and Role of Same-Sex Relations*, 161.

to τρίβω, which bears greater implications of female homoeroticism.<sup>151</sup> This line follows a list pining for other assumed members of the choir, as the singer cannot resist Nanno’s hair, divine-like Areta, Thilakis, Chleesithera, Astaphis, Philylla, Damareta, or lovely Lanthemis – though Hagesichora stands out in her irresistibility. A notable development here, then, is that the members of a choral group could have also engaged in homoerotic relations with one another, as the attraction amongst choral members as well as between them and their chorus-leader would have enhanced their training.<sup>152</sup>

What follows the educational and sexual expressions of the female pederastic tradition is the inevitable completion or transitional moment. Appropriately, there are suggestive hints to the next stage for these young chorus members in line 60 as Alcman makes reference to the Pleiades, and, though the reasoning of which is currently debated, we can reference here a potential allusion to a myth wherein the Pleiades are nymphs who dance in a chorus to Artemis when Orion attempts to rape them – perhaps a cautionary comment on the next stage for these young girls following their education.<sup>153</sup> Additionally, it has been suggested that Agido is one of the elder members of the *thiasos* and is reaching the end of her time with the choral group as the choir celebrates a marriage and she, perhaps, is the bride.<sup>154</sup> This, of course, lends to conclusions that this poem was directed to a bride and groom and performed at dawn to awake Agido, the new bride, who is soon to be separated from her choral-mates, now singing as a group of, “ten, instead of 11,” ἀντὶ δ’

<sup>151</sup> Fantham, *Women in the Classical World*, 58. Fantham also suggests here that both Agido and Hagesichora are chorus members who serve as models for the other girls, though I maintain Ingall’s argument that Hagesichora is the leader while Agido is an elder chorus member reaching the end of her time with the *thiasos*. Denys L. Page, *Alcman: Partheneion* (Arno Press: New York, 1979), 22, translates τρίβει as pining to convey the homoerotic desire the choral members have for their leader, though others are less liberal and maintain the sense of “wearing down.”; for a less homoerotic readings of this word, see Griffith’s translation.

<sup>152</sup> Anton Bierl, “Visualizing the Cologne Sappho: Mental Imagery through Chorality, the Sun, and Orpheus” in Vanessa Cazzato & André Lardinois eds. *The Look of Lyric: Greek Song and the Visual* (Brill: Leiden, 2016), 311.

<sup>153</sup> Ingalls, “Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters,” 9; For Orion’s pursuit of the Pleiades, see Hygin. *Poet. Astr.* ii. 21; and Pindar, *Nem.* ii. 17.

<sup>154</sup> Griffiths, “Alcman’s Partheneion,” 12.



ἔνδεκα.<sup>155</sup> The narrative voice of Alcman’s poem complements a transitional stage beautifully as the voice shifts from the single choral member describing the members of the chorus, namely Agido, and her leader, Hagesichora, hinting at education, then fawning after the other members of her group and their irresistibility, and her desire to express herself in the line, “let Astaphis be mine” and what follows – only to become a group of singers in the last lines as they commend the festival and acknowledge the lovely peacefulness that has come over the chorus following their education. They now sing as a group, and though they sing no better than the sirens, they are together as taught by their tracehorse leader, Hagesichora.

Alcman’s *Partheneion*, then, provides us with an important development of the foundation set by the Artemisian initiatory origins of the female pederastic tradition – intimately putting to verse the characters of chorus leader and her pupils and suggesting the educational and erotic exchange therein. Alcman not only emphasizes the beauty of the women within the choral group, but the supposed attraction of the choral members to each other, as well as their leader, Hagesichora.<sup>156</sup> Additionally, this poem is not completely divorced from the initiatory origins as scholars have identified that the ceremony or festival it celebrated fits into the rites of transition observed in Artemis’ worship; following the rites of separation and the education undergone at the boundaries of the *polis* this poem could have served the part of reincorporation into society as these young girls entered adulthood.<sup>157</sup> And so, Alcman and Sparta have provided sufficient implications to the practical archetype by which this study can move forward to examine the development of female pederasty elsewhere in the Greek world.

<sup>155</sup> Clay, “Alcman’s ‘Partheneion,’” 48-49.

<sup>156</sup> Fantham, *Women in the Classical World*, 14.

<sup>157</sup> Fantham, *Women in the Classical World*, 11. William D. Furley, “Prayers and Hymns” in Ogden, *A Companion to Greek Religion*, 118, more explicitly suggests that Alcman’s chorus performs a cult song for Artemis.

## *The Formal Informality of Sappho's Pederasty*

Alcman yokes education, age and stage transition with desire in his First Partheneion, and though Sappho (ca. 630 – 570 BCE), the near contemporary of Alcman, was geographically far removed from him, she provides further evidence to female choral pederasty in a practice much more casual than the formal cultic expression of his choral group. In looking to Sappho's poetry alone, a woman-centred world fueled by female voices is unmistakable and their environment is clearly aristocratic in nature.<sup>158</sup> But, in order to properly characterize this world as pederastic, an account of the modern scholarship on and ancient Greek and Roman reception of Sappho in her didactic role must be done first, then her poetry can be analysed for Sappho's own participation in the female pederastic tradition as it evolved from its initiatory origins and the formal system exemplified by Alcman.

*Thiasoi* surface once more in discussions of Sappho as these communities of women were clearly documented on Lesbos and the *Suda* names Sappho as a διδάσκαλος, "teacher," to her own retinue of pupils in accordance with this custom.<sup>159</sup> Scholars have gone on to suggest that Sappho could have been in charge of instructing her pupils on music, singing, and dancing which would have, as has been established in female pederastic tradition thus far, prepared them for womanhood.<sup>160</sup> Sappho does stand out from Hagesichora, though, in her ability to compose poetry for her own *thiasos*, as Alcman would have been commissioned by the latter for her own Spartan choral group.<sup>161</sup> Even further, scholars have suggested that other named figures in Sappho's

<sup>158</sup> Ellen Greene, "Subjects, Objects, and Erotic Symmetry in Sappho's Fragments" in Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Lisa Auanger, *Among Women: From the Homosocial to the Homoerotic in the Ancient World* (University of Texas Press: Austin, 2002), 83-84.

<sup>159</sup> Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 79; *Suda* s.v. Sappho.

<sup>160</sup> Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 79; Eva Stigers, "Sappho's Private World," in Foley, *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, 45. For further discussion of scholars that subscribe to this characterization, see Anne L. Klinck, "'Sleeping in the Bosom of a Tender Companion': Homoerotic Attachments in Sappho," in Verstraete and Provencal eds., *Same-Sex Desire and Love*, 197 ff,

<sup>161</sup> Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 79.

fragments, Andromeda and Gorgo, were rival leaders of their own respective *thiasoi* – contributing to my ongoing intention here to define a pederastic system seen across the Greek world.<sup>162</sup>

That all said, the perception of Sappho in scholarship as an instructress of her own formal choral group is not universal, though I do not believe that these valid criticisms of the belief detract from qualifying her as pederastic.<sup>163</sup> Judith Hallett provides one such study as she juxtaposes the choral poetry of Alcman to Sappho’s lyrics.<sup>164</sup> Here, Hallett inadvertently defines the separation between the formal expression of female pederasty closely related to its initiatory origins in Alcman’s work and the casual and seemingly private form of pederasty expressed in Sappho’s own poetry.<sup>165</sup> As Alcman composed his works for formal performance by a choir of young unwed maidens in Sparta, Sappho only harkens to the tradition expressed in Alcman through her more personal aesthetic praise of the girls about her and their relationships, rather than wholly participating in its formal cultic roots.<sup>166</sup> Sappho, then, cannot conclusively be characterized as a formal choral leader at the head of a chorus like Hagesichora, but as an individual engaging in this tradition as a pseudo-instructress participating in the informal tutelage of young women through undeniably erotic relationships stemming from her aesthetic preoccupation with their beauty.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>162</sup> Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 35; Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 79.

<sup>163</sup> For a sampling of these discussions, see Marilyn B. Skinner, “Aphrodite Garlanded: Eros and Poetic Creativity in Sappho and Nossis,” in Rabinowitz and Auanger, *Among Women*, where she makes no mention of tutelage; and Parker, Holt. N. “Sappho Schoolmistress.” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 123 (1993): 309-351, who is a fierce denier of Sappho’s role as schoolmistress.

<sup>164</sup> Judith P. Hallett, “Sappho and Her Social Context: Sense and Sensuality,” *Signs* 4 (1979): 460-464; Calame, “Choruses of Young Women,” 255ff also draws this comparison, though he does characterise Sappho as a more formal choral leader.

<sup>165</sup> I say “seemingly private” here in order to avoid claiming that Sappho’s poetry was private in the sense that they were not performed – rather, their privacy surfaces in the intimate voice expressed, which does not deny that they could have been performed for an audience in antiquity; For the performance of Sappho in 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens, see Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 110; For a more in-depth discussion of public versus private in Sappho’s work, see Jack Winkler, “Gardens of Nymphs: Public and Private in Sappho’s Lyrics” in Foley, *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*.

<sup>166</sup> Hallett, “Sappho and Her Social Context,” 461.

<sup>167</sup> For a discussion of this casual form of pederasty in the male type, see Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 120-122 where he concludes that *kalos* inscriptions of male pederastic vases describe the beauty of boys and youths, a key factor in the Classical Athenian form of pederasty.

Work still must be done to quantify Sappho's place within the female pederastic tradition, though, via an address of the core tenants of the tradition in educational exchange, homosexual eroticism, and transition in her ancient reception and poetry. In antiquity, Sappho's characterization as a pseudo-instructress surfaces outside of the *Suda* in Attica, where a tradition of vase painting emerged during the early to middle 5<sup>th</sup> century depicting her as such.<sup>168</sup> For one such example, an Attic red-figure hydria (fig. 8) shows Sappho seated among three other female figures. Sappho is indicated by an inscription and, as she reads from a book roll, one woman stands behind her with arm outstretched and two more before her, one holding a lyre. Above these figures, garlands are suspended on the wall, one above Sappho herself and another above the pair on the right – I need not dwell any longer on the erotic importance of garlands, except to post the argument once more that the inclusion of garlands in *male* homosocial sympotic scenes has been demonstrated to eroticise the space, so the same purpose can be observed here.<sup>169</sup> In short, a domestic scene is on full display in which Sappho carries out some form of poetry recitation and musicianship blanketed in erotic garland imagery.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Amy Richlin ed., *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1992), 31. For an overview of depictions of Sappho on Attic pots, see Jane M. Snyder, "Sappho in Attic Vase Painting," in Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow and Claire L. Lyons eds. *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality, and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology* (Routledge: London, 1997), 109ff.

<sup>169</sup> David M. Halperin, "The First Homosexuality?" in Martha C. Nussbaum and Juha Sihvola *The Sleep of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2013), 23 notes the homoeroticism present in this vase; Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 153 does note as well that these are wreaths indicating wedding songs on a hydria that would have been intended for a bride – I would argue that this still suits our development of the female pederastic tradition as the endgame of education under Sappho would have been marriage, on 282 he then goes on to highlight that garlands signaled the beginning of a symposium and served as a means of erotic provocation; see Plato, *Symposium* 213e for the use of garlands in a sympotic homosocial space.

<sup>170</sup> Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 149.



Figure 8: Group of Polygnotos. Athenian Red-Figure Hydria. 475-425 BCE.  
Athens, National Museum.

These Sapphic scenes become an archetype for the Group of Polygnotos all its own as they often depicted these female gatherings, though not always with Sappho in attendance, hinting at the goings-on of Athenian female homosocial spaces.<sup>171</sup> Around the same period as this vase, it is noted that Ameipsias composed a play entitled *Sappho*, and, though it does not survive today, it does indicate how publicly known Sappho was and the material record indicates to what extent she was understood in relation to female homosocial spaces.<sup>172</sup> For Athenians, Sappho served as a figurehead for the gathering of female musicians and private poetic recitations, becoming inseparable with the informal instruction of girls in Athens. This can be observed as a parallel to the equally homosocial and erotically charged space of the male symposia, wherein a similar intellectual exchange would have occurred on an equally casual basis as a setting for male

<sup>171</sup> For a greater discussion of the other domestic works by the Group of Polygnotos, see Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 146ff.

<sup>172</sup> Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 153. That said, this public perception of Sappho did not overtly characterize her as homoerotic, choosing instead to reference her male lovers as in Ovid, *Heroides* where she complains of the faithlessness of her beloved Phaon.

pederasty.<sup>173</sup> All of this is an important antique understanding of the work being done here to develop Sappho's place within the female pederastic tradition.<sup>174</sup>

While the example set by the Group of Polygnotos heavily indicates Sappho's position as intellectual figurehead in the Athenian psyche and only provides circumstantial evidence of eroticism through garlands, clearer pederastic interpretations in the material record can be identified. A rather striking example of this comes from the Bochum Vase (fig. 9), a kalyx-krater on which Sappho and another girl are seemingly walking away from each other in circles.



Figure 9. Tithonos Painter. Attic Red-Figure Kalyx-Krater. 500-450 BCE.  
Wuppertal, Von de Heydt Museum. (*Beazley Archive* 4979)

Sappho, identified by an inscription on her left, is seen carrying her lyre as she swings her right foot forward, potentially in a dance step, and her right hand reaches backward appearing to walk away from the second figure.<sup>175</sup> The female figure on the reverse side appears to be walking

<sup>173</sup> For more on Sappho's own relation to symposia within the Classical Athenian psyche, see Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 153; The subject of pederasty itself is discussed at a symposia in Plato, *Symposium* and Xenophon, *Symposium*. Of course, I acknowledge that equating the 5<sup>th</sup> century Attic perception of Sappho as pederastic in line with Athenian male pederastic values is anachronistic, though I do not think that their perception should be discredited.

<sup>174</sup> Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 153. For more on this characterization, in particular discussions of Sappho's potential homosexuality in antiquity, see Horace, *Odes* 2.13.24-25; Ovid, *Heroides* 15.15-19, *Tristia* 2.365.

<sup>175</sup> Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 103.

forward and looks backward to Sappho, Η ΠΑΙΣ, “the girl,” is inscribed above her, though her gaze is not returned. Having examined the early stages of pursuit scenes as observed in the stages of pederastic courtship, I would argue that this is a rather subdued pursuit motif as the Η ΠΑΙΣ inscription could perhaps be a type of *kalos* inscription used in erotic imagery.<sup>176</sup> Additionally, the motif of a youth wrapped in their mantel, suggesting elements of modesty, is another element observed in courtship scenes as they are presented as the object of desire for other figures in the scene.<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, an aulos bag has been identified to be hanging from Sappho’s lyre, a commonplace image in sympotic scenes – once again engaging with the symposia and intellectual eroticism in the reception of Sappho.<sup>178</sup>

Of course, much more can be done to delve into the pederastic character of Sappho in accounting for the eroticism inherent to her poetry and how it displays motifs similar to the choral group exemplified in Alcman and initiatory practices before him. To this point I have addressed that Sappho had some form of female audience – though a closer reading of her work can further define her relationship with this audience. In Alcman’s example, the setting for the choral group is some sort of celebration regarding dawn, Ἀώτι, that finds its end in the marriage of one of its members, presumably Agido. This all reflects the pederastic choral system that I have established thus far in which young girls undergo a period of education, taking on the qualities desired in young women, engage in erotic relations with each other and their choral leader, and leave the group as a marriageable maiden. Sappho’s own expression of each of these elements; the

<sup>176</sup> Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 104. That being said, Η ΠΑΙΣ is a rare inscription and occurs elsewhere on a Boston red-figure lekythos attributed to the Brygos painter near a female figure at the loom, a scene that has no inherent erotic implications, and on a red-figure cup attributed to the Antiphon Painter whereupon a nude girl holds an alabastron and boots, she could be in preparation for bathing, as Yatromanolakis suggests, and I believe these elements all indicate eroticism.

<sup>177</sup> Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 107. Also, note similarities here to the Makron Attic Red-Figure Cup, on which several youths wrapped in clothing are being presented with gifts by their suitors.

<sup>178</sup> Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 108.

educational exchange, homoeroticism, and transition, all contribute to the construction of a more complex female pederastic tradition that develops beyond the formal cultic initiatory origins expressed prior.

Much like the setting surrounding Ἀώτι in Alcman's work, discussions of Dawn appear in Sappho, though they remain equally mysterious. Dawn is addressed four times in Sappho's surviving poetry in the Aeolic form Αὔως, Eos, with fragments 58, 103, 123, and 157. These are simple evocations of sorts in fragment 123 "ἃ χρυσοπέδιλος Αὔως" and fragment 157 "πότνια Αὔως," though more substance appears in other fragments. In fragment 58, Sappho surrounds Eos with incomplete imagery about her own waning youth, perhaps comparing herself to Tithonus, the withered lover of the dawn goddess.<sup>179</sup> And, though a wife, ἄκοιτιν, is mentioned a few lines later, Sappho's fragments have come no closer to the setting exemplified by Alcman and his use of Eos. Fragment 103 offers more imagery surrounding a young bride, νύμφαν, and dawn, though, once again, reading beyond this is difficult. To enhance this reading, I should highlight here that in Sparta, the character of Eos-Aotis symbolized a young girl being initiated on the night before her wedding, while in mythology she bears similarities to the previous discussion of Artemis as she leads her own circle of dancers and takes members of this chorus into her home.<sup>180</sup> It has been suggested here that in the above fragments, Sappho has likened herself to the mythological character of Eos as a chorus leader, rather than the symbolic maiden in the Spartan Aotis, better fleshing out her use of the goddess.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Klinck, "Sappho's Company of Friends," 21.

<sup>180</sup> Bierl, "Visualizing the Cologne Sappho," 321. I should note here that it has been argued that Artemis' chorus is still more divine and rich than that of Eos, see Peter Bing & Volker Uhmeister, "The Unity of Callimachus' Hymn to Artemis" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 114 (1994): 19-34, 33ff; In Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Fall of Troy* 2. 549-815, Eos is attended by the twelve young Horai, who were members of Artemis' chorus in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*;

<sup>181</sup> Bierl, "Visualizing the Cologne Sappho," 321.



As I briefly addressed in the development of the education present within the pederastic choral system, the qualities mandated for young girls are exemplified in *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* as beauty, youth, harmony, fertility, and grace and Sappho demonstrates the growth of the young women about her accordingly. In Sappho, the gracefulness, vocal talent, and beauty of these girls are most identifiable as in fragment 108 she addresses the beautiful and graceful girl, “ὦ κάλα, ὦ χαρίεσσα κόρα,” or the sweet-voiced maiden in fragment 153, “πάρθενον ἀδύφωνον” and in fragment 27 she addresses an unnamed figure who was once a child and evokes her to sing and give the audience her grace. Fragment 49 describes a named figure, Atthis, as once loved by Sappho and who seemed a graceless child long ago. Fragments 27 and 49 imply the addressee’s physical growth, with Atthis appearing graceless, κᾶχαρις, in her youth and the unnamed maiden, who, having grown, is able to sing and give her grace to the audience. From these, some form of pedagogy is discernable by which Sappho is able to know these girls as children and oversee their aesthetic growth to become graceful beauties, and eroticism can be more readily deduced from this relationship in further analysis.

As Alcman suggested in his poem, an element of the homoeroticism practiced within the pederastic choral groups involves the attraction between members of the group. In fragment 22, a girl whose name may be Abanthis is urged to sing of her once beloved Gongyla, who appears to be a member of the choral group who had left them.<sup>182</sup>

.] . ε . [...] . [...κ]έλομαι ζ . [  
 . . ] . γυλα. [...] ανθι λάβοισα . α . [  
 πᾶ]κτιν, ᾗς σε δηῦτε πόθος τ . [  
 ἀμφιπόταται  
 τὰν κάλαν· ἀ γὰρ κατάγωγις αὔτα[  
 ἐπτόαις ἴδοισαν, ἔγω δὲ χαίρω.

I urge [you, sing]  
 [of Gon]gyla, [Aba]nthis, take up

<sup>182</sup> Skinner, “Aphrodite Garlanded,” 66.

Your lyre, as long as longing  
Flutters about you  
beautiful one. For her dress,  
seeing it stirred you. And I myself rejoice.

(Sappho, *Fragment 22*, 9-16)

According to the fragment, memories of Abanthis' desire for Gongyla were sparked by seeing a dress that once belonged to her. In another instance with fragment 96, an unknown figure addressed by Sappho longs for Atthis, an already named choral member.

πόλλα δὲ ζαφοίταις ἄγανας ἐπι  
μνάσθεις Ἄτθιδος ἱμέρωι  
λέπταν ποι φρένα κ[.]ρ... βόρηται·

often, when she goes wandering,  
she is reminded of gentle Atthis by longing  
with all the heart in her delicate chest

(Sappho, *Fragment 96*, 15-17)

Remembering Atthis when wandering, the addressee is consumed with longing in her heart, echoing the feelings of Abanthis for Gongyla. Fragments such as these have been used to define the attraction amongst women and girls in Sappho's circle as an expression of passionate love, expanding the understanding of female pederastic love once more to incorporate the didactic function of erotic relations between young girls.<sup>183</sup>

The eroticism present in Sappho's own relationship with her circle is equally, if not more, tangible in her poetry as a firsthand expression of homosexual desire. The intense emotion that Sappho felt toward those about her is clearest in fragment 31, where she is made speechless by looking upon a girl.

καὶ γελείσας ἱμέροεν, το μ' ἦ μὲν  
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν·  
ὥς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε' ὥς με φώνη  
σ' οὐδὲν ἔτ' εἴκει,

<sup>183</sup> Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, 83.

ἀλλὰ καμ μὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγε, λέπτον  
δ' αὐτικά χρωῖ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμακεν,  
ὀπάτεσσι δ' οὐδὲν ὄρημ', ἐπιβρό  
μεισε δ' ἄκουαι,

έκαδε μ' ἴδρωσ κακχέεται, τρόμος δὲ  
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας  
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης  
φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὐται.<sup>184</sup>

In these lines, Sappho plainly demonstrates the intense feelings she has for the girl before her, as, in addition to being made speechless, the girl's laughter, γελαίσας, makes the heart in her chest stumble, ἐπτόαισεν. Her desire is subsequently indicated in the fire racing under her skin, χρωῖ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμακεν, as her senses are veritably overcome by her reaction to this unnamed girl. In antiquity, Callicratidas alludes to this fragment in a speech defending pederasty in the philosophical idealization of the male type and tolerance of love between women.<sup>185</sup>

In deducing the presence of eroticism within Sappho's poetry, garlands and their pederastic context can be returned to once more. As Anacreon has been previously identified to make use of garlands in an erotic sense, so too can Sappho be recognized for the same purpose. Quite similarly, indeed, to Anacreon, fragment 94 has Sappho recalling the garlands woven between her and a departed girl who had once been part of her circle.

πόλλοις γὰρ στεφάνοις ἴων  
καὶ βρ[όδων ...] κίων τ' ὕμοι  
κα . . [            ] πὰρ ἔμοι περεθήκαο

καὶ πόλλαις ὑπαθύμιδας  
πλέκταις ἀμφ' ἀπαλαι δέραι  
ἀνθέων ἐ[            ] πεποημέναις.

For, many garlands of violets  
and roses [...], going together

<sup>184</sup> Sappho, *Fragment 31*, 5-16, see Appendix 2 for translation.

<sup>185</sup> For more on this speech by Callicratidas, see duBois, *Sappho*, 162-163; and for the speech in question, see Callicratidas 46.

[        ] you put on at my side

and many woven garlands  
made of flowers  
about your soft throat

(Sappho, *Fragment 94*, 12-17)

Sappho reminisces here on the times when this unnamed girl would put on garlands of violet and roses, στεφάνοις ἴων // καὶ βρόδων, at her side – the motif of an older woman next to a younger donning garlands is strikingly familiar to our previous discussion of love gifts on material remains, particularly the Thera Plate (fig. 7), not to mention the palpable eroticism of the remainder of this fragment where the unnamed girl satisfies her longing upon a soft bed. Elsewhere, in fragment 81, Sappho describes a girl named Dika binding her hair with garlands, and in the short fragment 125, Sappho reminisces that she used to weave garlands, ἀνταόρα ἐς τεφαναπλόκην. I would argue that these are nothing less than love-gifts exchanged between Sappho and her pupils

Now that the *means* of these relationships in the pseudo-educational and erotic exchange between Sappho and members of her circle has been established, the *end* can be extracted. The departure from or close of this relationship is generally believed to be for marriage, as observed in Alcman and in the initiatory ritual at temples to Artemis, though this is not a universal conclusion. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of substance to departures within Sappho; they are often heartfelt and bittersweet moments peppered throughout her fragments. One such departure is seen in the first half of fragment 94 as Sappho recalls the tearful separation from one of her circle members, who she claims went against her will. Sappho bids that she remember her and know that they cherished her, using the plural first person πεδήπομεν, suggesting once more that there was love between the members of Sappho's circle as well. In fragment 116, Sappho gives a direct farewell

to a young bride, νύμφα, twice bidding her well. And, once again harkening back to Alcman, in fragment 168B Sappho details the setting of the moon and the Pleiades, leaving her to lie alone.

Δέδυκε μὲν ἅ σελάννα  
καὶ Πληιάδες· μέσαι δὲ  
νύκτες, παρὰ δ' ἔρχετ' ὄρα,  
ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω.

The moon has set,  
and the Pleiades; and at mid  
night, as the hour passes by,  
I myself lie alone.

(Sappho, *Fragment 168B*)

As I have mentioned prior, the Pleiades allude to the young girls and their transformation into marriageable maidens, either in reference to their escape from Orion into the sea, or, as a mythic chorus of girls elevated to the stars as in Ovid's *Fasti*.<sup>186</sup> In either case, the Pleiades indicate the transformation of young girls, and here Sappho lies alone as the Pleiades, her pseudo-choral members, have figuratively set and moved forward to the next stage of their lives, her role as their *erastes* complete.

### *The Female Pederastic Tradition in Subsequent Poetry*

Alcman and Sappho present a rather straightforward evocation of the elements associated with female pederasty in choral training as Alcman reflects the cultic formal institution of female pederasty and Sappho reflects the formal informality of pederastic desire in practice. With the exception of suggested visual representations, literary sources for such a practice fade during the Classical period and during the Hellenistic period only hints at a revival of the pederastic tradition survive. In continuing this chronological treatment, the Archaic poet Telesilla (ca. 510 BCE),

<sup>186</sup> Griffiths, "Alcman's Partheneion," 20; Ovid, *Fasti* 4.169 ff.

living a century or so after Sappho, provides us with snippets suggesting her own formal tutelage of girls for choral performance.<sup>187</sup> With Telesilla, Artemis surfaces once more as Pausanias states that she mentions a temple to the goddess and her fragment 717 *PMG*, which references Alpheios' attempted rape of Artemis, harkens to what was observed in the Pleiades with Alcman and Sappho, while coinciding with another Artemision ritual act at the Argive shrine of Artemis Alpheionia.<sup>188</sup> Here, rather than the little bears observed at Brauron and in congruence with the myth of Alpheios in which Artemis and her nymphs cover themselves in mud to escape their attacker, the young initiates would undergo the same method of disguise and when they washed afterward, they would be revealed as marriageable maidens.<sup>189</sup> Beyond the eroticism inherent to the myth of Alpheios, though, Telesilla offers no substance to the homoeroticism of female pederasty, only the close ties between Artemisian ritual and the choral education of young girls.

A transitional figure of sorts arises in Corinna, whose dates are debated between the Archaic, alongside Telesilla, or the Hellenistic – though a date within the 5<sup>th</sup> century is most agreed upon.<sup>190</sup> Corinna, a Boeotian poet, once again delivers only hints at her instruction of young girls within a chorus, bearing much more of the pedagogical influence her poetry would have had upon her pupils. What survives of her work thematically addresses daughters, female sexuality, and – like Telesilla – male violence as instruction for young women about marriage.<sup>191</sup> Fragment 655 has been restored by some editors to include a description of the functions of a chorus leader and

<sup>187</sup> Ingalls, "Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters," 14.

<sup>188</sup> Ingalls, "Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters," 15; Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece* 2.28.2.

<sup>189</sup> Ingalls, "Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters," 15; For the mythology itself, see Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece*, 6.22.9.

<sup>190</sup> Ingalls, "Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters," 16.

<sup>191</sup> Ingalls, "Ritual Performance as Training for Daughters," 17; Corinna, fragment 655 *PMG*, ties her directly to the choral training of girls as she details "adorning stories from our fathers for the *parthenoi*." And the "leading off" of a chorus.

it later mentions Orion's intercourse with nymphs, a similar motif to the function of the Pleiades.<sup>192</sup> Other surviving ancient references cite Corinna for telling the story of Metioche and Minippe, daughters of Orion, amongst other discussions of daughters.<sup>193</sup> Once again, much like Telesilla, though there is very little to suggest any semblance of homoeroticism within the few remains of Corinna's work, an instructive quality as evidence to a choral group about her can be supposed here.

As resources dictate, I now must jump forth to the early Hellenistic period to look for poetesses who bore evidence to the continued practice of female pederasty. Erinna (ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE) survives as the first of two examples, supplying the opposite sort of evidence to Telesilla and Corinna – none of the pedagogical or choral evidence, but a greater deal of the homoerotic. The majority of works attributed to Erinna, these being her 300 line *Distaff* and two epigrams, concern her close relationship with a childhood friend, Baucis, who leaves Erinna to be married and dies soon after.<sup>194</sup> In antiquity, Erinna was often compared to Sappho and the *Suda* even claims they were contemporaries, though the take-away from these discussions is an Hellenistic understanding of the poetic relationship between the two.<sup>195</sup> From this alone, a continuation of the tradition Sappho took part in can be understood. And in an examination of the extant lines of

<sup>192</sup> This restoration was put forth by Lobel in *PMG*, Ingalls uses it in his study and it is accepted by Campbell (1992:36) as well.

<sup>193</sup> Antoninus Liberalis, *Met.* 25.

<sup>194</sup> I should acknowledge here that the authorship of these epigrams is debated within scholarship, as, though they are attributed to Erinna within the Greek Anthology, there is no mention of Erinna being an epigrammatist in extant discussions about her antiquity – she is primarily noted for her hexameters and the *Distaff*. It is equally possible, then, that another poet wrote these epigrams in admiration of Erinna and styled them after her *Distaff* – though, I would argue that this still maintains the intention of our discussion in that the antique perception of Erinna has her consumed by the death of her dear friend, a complement to what will follow in our ongoing discussion. For further discussion on the authorship of these epigrams, see John Rauk, "Erinna's *Distaff* and Sappho Fr. 94" *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 30 (1989): 103-104.

<sup>195</sup> On comparing Sappho and Erinna, see the anonymous epigram *AP* 9.190; For claims of their companionship, see *Suda* s.v. Erinna.

Erinna's *Distaff* for their great thematic similarities to Sappho fragment 94, the continuation of the female pederastic tradition can be suggested.

[λε]υκᾶν μαινομέν[οισιν ἐσάλατο π]οσσὶν ἀφ' ἴ[π]πω[ν]·  
 [αἰ]αῖ ἐγώ, μέγ' ἄυσα· φ[ί]λα. τὸ δ' ἔοισα] γελύννα,  
 [ἀλ]λομένα μεγάλας [ἔδραμες κατὰ] χορτίον ἀλᾶς.  
 [τα]ῦτα τύ, Βαυκὶ τάλαι[να, βαρὺ στονα]χεῖσα γόημ[ι]·  
 [τα]ῦτά μοι ἐν κρα[δίαι . . .] παίχνια κεῖται  
 θέρμ' ἔτι· τῆν[α δὲ τοῖσιν ἀθ]ύρομες ἄνθρακες ἤδη,  
 δαγύ[δ]ων τε χ[ιτῶνες . . .] ἴδες ἐν θαλάμοισι  
 νύμ[φαι]σιν [ . . . .] ἔες· ἅ τε πὸτ ὄρθρον  
 μάτηρ ἀείδοισα [ . . .]οῖσιν ἐρείθοις  
 τήνας ἤλθε [ . . .] μέγα ἀμφ' ἀλίπαστον,  
 ἄϊ μικρᾶι στ[ . . .] μέγαυ φόβον ἄ[ ]γαγε Μορμώ,  
 τᾶς ἐν μὲν κορυφᾶι μεγάλ' ὄατα, ποσσὶ δὲ φοιτῆι  
 τέτρασιν· ἐκ δ' ἐτέρας ἐτέραν μετεβάλλετ' ὀπωπᾶν.  
 ἀνίκα δ' ἐς λέχος ἀνδρὸς ἔβας, τόκα πάντ' ἐλέλασο,  
 ἄσσο' ἔτι νηπιάσασα τεᾶς παρὰ ματρὸς ἄκουσας,  
 Βαυκὶ φίλα· λάθαν [ . . .] ε[ . . .] Ἄφροδίτα.  
 τῷ τυ κατακλαίοισα τα[ . . .]ε λείπω·  
 οὐ γάρ μοι πόδες ἐντὶ λιπῆν ἄπο δῶμα βέβαλοι,  
 οὐδ' ἐσιδῆν φαέε[σσι θέλω νέκυν, οὐδὲ γοᾶσαι  
 γυμναῖσιν χαίταισιν, ἐπεὶ φοινίκεος αἰδῶς.<sup>196</sup>

In accordance with the discussion of female pederasty, Erinna's *Distaff* has taken from Sappho the theme of separation as the Hellenistic poet mourns the loss of her dear friend to marriage and recounts the happier times they spent together. In fragment 94, Sappho follows a similar pattern in her close relationship with the individual leaving her as she accounts for their separation and urges her to remember their mutual pleasant memories. As such, Sappho's character is that of a woman who loved another who has set off to be married, a definitive end to the relationship shared between them, and though this is a relationship she may forget, Sappho urges her to remember it. Much subtler nods to eroticism appear in Erinna's work, these being the scene where her and Baucis played young brides together in their room, which echoes Sappho's own description of her beloved's longing. What Erinna has truly taken into her *Distaff*, though, is a

<sup>196</sup> Erinna, *Distaff*, 21-40, see Appendix 3 for translation.



similar motif of separation and memory, as she, now alone like Sappho, grieves for Baucis and recognizes the forgetfulness of her beloved once she had gone to her marriage bed.<sup>197</sup> The pederastic tradition, then, survives only in Erinna's imitation of Sappho as she mourns the loss of her young beloved to marriage – though no evidence to a choral group or education can be readily understood in the extant lines of the *Distaff* beyond the intimacy shared between two young girls.

Much like Erinna to Sappho, then, our next Hellenistic female poet, Nossis (ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE), was tied to Erinna in the literature discussing her work and character. Herodas, another Hellenistic poet who was well established amongst the learned elite of Alexandria, makes a mockery of middle-class housewives in his 6<sup>th</sup> *mimiambi* sketch as they shop for leather dildoes together. The 6<sup>th</sup> mime states that Nossis, “daughter of Erinna,” owns one of these implements, mocking her for the homoeroticism perceived in her work, and her characterization as Erinna's daughter hints at a Hellenistic belief in a literary affinity between the two.<sup>198</sup> As a woman living in the Dorian society of Locris, Nossis had access to higher education and, perhaps, the pederastic tradition under study thus far, though, much like Erinna, her works primarily concern her own homoeroticism.<sup>199</sup> Going deeper, though, her epigrams can also be read for evidence to a female audience in their close ties to the concerns of women, and her description as “female tongued” by Antipater of Thessalonica enhances this statement.<sup>200</sup> Where the ancients and modern scholars compare her to Sappho, then, is where the continuation of the female pederastic tradition can be inferred as well.<sup>201</sup>

<sup>197</sup> For more on this parallel between Erinna's *Distaff* and Sappho, see Rauk, “Erinna's *Distaff* and Sappho Fr. 94.”

<sup>198</sup> Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 243-244.

<sup>199</sup> Anne L. Klinck, *Woman's songs in Ancient Greece* (McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal, 2008), 233.

<sup>200</sup> Klinck, *Woman's songs in Ancient Greece*, 234; AP 9.26.7.

<sup>201</sup> Nossis invites a comparison of herself to Sappho in her 2<sup>nd</sup> epigram (*Anth. Pal.* 7.718); For an example of their comparison in modern scholarship, see Skinner, “Aphrodite Garlanded.”

Nossis' 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> epigrams can be examined here for their resemblance to Sappho's concerns for the aesthetic qualities of women, a group setting, and a potential departure.<sup>202</sup> In 8, Nossis addresses Melinna, a young girl who she calls gentle-faced – Nossis also highlights that she looks at “us” sweetly, using the Doric plural “ἄμῃ.” This plural could reflect that of Sappho fragment 94, *πεδῆπομεν*, where I have translated that the poet and her circle cherished the unnamed girl, or the mutual pining of Alcman's example in a choral group engaged homoerotically amongst themselves and their leader. In epigram 9, Nossis comments on Sabetha's stateliness, beauty, good sense, and gentleness – ending with a bidding of farewell to the girl. Once again Sappho's concerns with the aesthetic qualities of the young girls around her are echoed, all while bidding farewell to the woman.<sup>203</sup> These claims fall short, though, in acknowledging that these were epigrams found on offerings of portraits depicting the women in question – drawing these conclusions away from the personal voice observed in Sappho.<sup>204</sup> An evocation of Artemis does emerge with epigram 12, though it is in her role as goddess of childbirth unlike the evocations of Telesilla and Corinna.<sup>205</sup> So, though Nossis' poems may hint at pederastic similarities to Sappho, their contextual meaning makes any assertions here difficult, though we may maintain her homoeroticism in the descriptions of women in her work and the Hellenistic perception of her character in literature.

### *Conclusion*

In laying down the foundation and building a case for the existence of a female pederastic tradition within ancient Greece, a great deal of the aforementioned shadows have, I think, been illuminated. While setting up the origins of the masculine tradition in mythology and initiatory

<sup>202</sup> 8 (*Anth. Pal.* 6.353); 9 (*Anth. Pal.* 9.604)

<sup>203</sup> For further remarks upon Nossis' praise of female virtues, see Jane Snyder, *The Woman and the Lyre: Women Writers in Classical Greece and Rome* (Bristol Classical Press: London, 1989): 81.

<sup>204</sup> Klinck, *Woman's songs in Ancient Greece*, 240.

<sup>205</sup> *Anth. Pal.* 6.273.

ritual did not initially provide this study with a simple duplication for the feminine type, it did open the floor for an exploration of Artemis. In Artemis, this study found the grounds for a mythological focal point from which the tradition under study could expand – one that had a choral leader at the head of a retinue of maidens in order to bring them to adulthood through a sexual and educational relationship. From here, this study was able to pull together the admittedly circumstantial evidence in the material and literary record in order to identify the potential realities of such a practice in antiquity. And, in the poetry that can be observed as an extension of this practice, the nuances of female pederasty are able to be explored.

The female pederastic tradition was most identifiably in practice within the Archaic period as Alcman fleshes out the formal experience of a choral leader and her members engaged in educational and homoerotic exchanges while Sappho reflects the practical experience of pederasty similar to the Athenian male type. Telesilla and Corinna demonstrate scant evidence to the formal cultic practice of Alcman, though reading deeper than their pedagogical elements is impossible. The Classical period leaves no perceivable literary evidence as to its continuation, though the material representations extend from the Archaic into the Classical in the remains of Artemisian temples and the depictions of Sappho and other pederastic motifs on Attic pots. As female poets enter the mainstream once more with the Hellenistic period, only scant hints at the continuation of female pederasty surface, as Erinna and Nossis primarily account for homoeroticism and none of the pedagogical pursuits – though, perhaps this is an unfortunate consequence of the brevity of their respective works as epigrammatists, and the loss of the majority of Erinna's *Distaff*. Having recounted these potential expressions of the female pederastic tradition, though, caution must be taken in reading this as a phenomenon observed across the Greek world. Although the fragmentary visual evidence from Athens is suggestive, the volume of information that surfaces in Sparta and

Lesbos might be the product of a location-specific practice. So, until further evidence has been discovered, I must restrict the female pederastic tradition developed in this study to the locales in which implications of the practice have been observed. Suffice it to say here, though, this tradition was demonstrably in practice throughout the Archaic period as an extension of the initiatory origins observed in temples to Artemis – from then on into the Classical and Hellenistic periods only shadows survive to modernity, though, perhaps, the antique and modern assertions that Erinna and Nossis carry on the tradition of Sappho are enough to sustain the conclusion that a female pederastic tradition did, in fact, exist within ancient Greece.

## CONCLUSION

The study of Greek pederasty as a facet in the grander study of homosexuality across time is a valid and important one, and the work of scholars both before and contemporaneously to myself have done a great deal to contribute to this – though more can still be done to establish the validity of female homosexuality. The preoccupation with the masculine types of homosexual relationships is a trend that spans time and geography, leaving discussions of the feminine a far rarer and more difficult study to approach. That said, valuable treatments on the lives and sexualities of women the world over have been and continue to be published – though, where the pederastic tradition is concerned, these fall short.<sup>206</sup> As observed early on, across discussions of pederastic cultures in Asia, the Middle East, and Greece itself, a great deal of attention has been given to the male type and only a brief nod to the possibility of a feminine counterpart has been considered. And though this study has made no efforts to account for this discrepancy in treatments on Asian and Islamic cultures, I would argue that a valiant effort has been made to rectify the Greek in order to construct a case for the existence of a female pederastic tradition.

In approaching the study of female pederasty, the masculine type needed to be addressed in order to create a foundation for everything to be built upon – this came in the form of the Dorian initiatory rituals as an origin for the male pederastic tradition. In identifying a mythological basis for this, and the key factors of education, homoeroticism, and transformation, the formula to move forth with and build a case for the feminine was found. Of course, translating the factors of the masculine in an identical manner to the feminine was an impossibility as the mythology of Apollo

<sup>206</sup> For a selection of these invaluable resources, see Sue Blundell, *The Sacred and the Feminine* (Routledge: London, 1998); Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (University of Chicago: Chicago, 1996); Helen P. Foley, *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (Gordon and Breach Science Publishers: New York, 1981); and Leila J. Rupp, *Sapphistries: A Global History of Love Between Women* (New York University Press: New York, 2009).

and other gods being paired with a single male beloved and its practical application to solo-pairs in Crete and Sparta, cannot be conclusively observed in the initiation of young girls in antiquity. Nevertheless, having identified the importance of Artemis to the transitional period of young girls into women and the rituals about her temple being steeped in initiatory and potentially homoerotic elements allowed this study to progress.

Artemis became the new mythological focal point for building up a model for the female pederastic tradition – as she was inseparable from the lives of young women in a ritual context and surrounded by nymphs and maidens in the mythological sphere. In mythology, Artemis is characterized as the choral leader, instilling within her chorus the grace and beauty expected of them as young maidens. In translation to the mortal plane, temples to Artemis became linked with choral groups enacting their own forms of initiatory and cultic education. At these locales, such as the Spartan Orthia or the Attic Brauron, young girls would venture to the borders of their respective societies and undergo choral training under the tutelage of a choral leader and end their time there as marriageable maidens ready to embark upon the next stage of their lives. In the material record observed from these locals, imagery steeped in pederastic scenes of pursuit and request allow for the conclusion that, much like the male tradition, female pederasty had its origins in its own mythological tradition, adopting from Artemis an initiatory system wherein young girls could transition to maidenhood through choral education and homoeroticism – a system expressed in practice through poetry.

In examining the poetry of Alcman, Sappho, Telesilla, Corinna, Erinna, and Nossis, the female pederastic tradition becomes a much more tangible. Alcman's *Partheneion* survives as an expression of the female pederastic tradition in a thorough breakdown of the educational, homoerotic, and transitional relationship between a chorus leader and her pupils, both formalized

and closely tied to the initiatory cultic roots set by Artemisian tradition. Sappho's poetry, then, offers a complementary expression of the tradition along the lines of Classical Athenian pederasty as a paradoxically formal, yet informal, experience. Where Alcman's work speaks to a strict tradition required for young girls to transition to adulthood, Sappho adheres to a version representative of the leisure class that values the homoerotic and pedagogical relationship between an older, educated figure and their beautiful, youthful partner – praising the aesthetic growth of her companions removed from the rigid institution of Alcman's poem. What follows these examples is fragmentary and nearly inconclusive as Telesilla and Corinna speak to the formal choral education of Alcman with none of the homoeroticism while Erinna and Nossis carry forth in Sappho's tradition as expressions of homosexual desire with very little to suggest at the pedagogical.

And so, as long as one has a great deal of patience and the drive to move past the scarcity of sources, addressing the existence of a female pederastic tradition in ancient Greece can be done, as it has been endeavored here. Though one must build off of the male tradition in order to find a basis for the feminine, we can still unlock a rather complex world for the transitional period within the lives of young women in Ancient Greece. This world stems from the mythology surrounding Artemis and her close association with young girls, allowing for the origin of a system that placed young women in the hands of a choral leader who, through education and homoerotic relations, prepared them for their lives as adults – and though the rigidity of this practice demonstrably erodes over time, one only needs to peer into the shadows cast by grander studies to acknowledge everything collected in this thesis as expressions of a female pederastic tradition within the Greek world.

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*Appendix:*

Appendix 1: Translation of Alcman, *Partheneion* 37-101.

The blessed one who cheerfully  
weaves through the day  
without tears. And I myself sing  
40 the brilliance of Agido; I see  
her as the sun, which, for us,  
is invoked by Agido  
as she shines; For me, neither to praise  
nor to blame her is permitted  
45 by our glorious chorus-leader. For that one seems  
to us pre-eminent, as if one should set  
among the grazing beasts a horse,  
sturdy and victorious, with thundering hooves,  
out of a dream below a rock.  
50 Don't you see? One is a riding horse  
from Enetikos; but the mane  
of the other, my kinswoman,  
Hagesichora, blooms  
like pure gold;  
55 and of her silver face,  
what can I say openly?  
She is Hagesichora.  
But whoever is second to Agido in form,  
she is a Colachaeon horse against an Ibenian.  
60 Thus the Pleiades, as we bring  
the cloak of dawn  
passing through the ambrosial night,  
like Sirius the star, fighting with us.  
For neither an abundance of purple  
65 so great can be resisted,  
nor the dappled serpent  
of solid gold, nor the Lydian  
garland, the delight  
of soft-eyed maidens  
70 nor Nanno's hair,  
and not divine-like Areta,  
nor Thylakis or Cleesithera.  
And, going to Ainesimbrita you wouldn't say  
"let Astaphis be mine,  
75 or let Philylla gaze at me,  
Damareta too, and lovely Lanthemis"  
Still, Hagesichora wears me down.  
For is she, beautiful-ankled,

Hagesichora beside us?  
80 She stays close by Agido,  
commending our festival.  
But... from them  
receive! The fulfillment of the gods,  
and the end! Chorus-leader,  
85 let me say, I am her,  
the maiden who sounded forth in vain,  
an owl; I myself, as well, most of all  
desire to please the dawn goddess;  
for out of our work, she has become the healer.  
90 From Hagesichora, the maidens  
Have come upon lovely peacefulness.  
For the tracehorse...  
In this way...  
Just as the helmsman must  
95 be heard on board a ship.  
[We are not] more tuneful than  
the Sirens,  
for they are goddesses,  
and we 10 children, instead of 11, sing pleasantly  
100 singing as a swan upon the streams  
of Xanthus; but she, with her lovely golden hair.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>207</sup> All translations in this thesis have been done by the author.

Appendix 2: Translation of Sappho Fragment 31, 5-16.

and lovely laughing, which indeed has always  
put the heart in my chest trembling  
for as soon as I look at you,  
it is not possible for me to speak,

rather, my tongue is fixed in silence  
and fire courses under my skin  
nor is it possible to see with my eyes  
and my ears hum

and a cold sweat covers me, shaking  
seizes my whole body, I am greener than grass  
it seems that I will soon be dead...



Appendix 3: Translation of Erinna, *Distaff* 21-40

From a white horse, wandering into the mad deep;  
“Ah!” I shout aloud, “I caught you, dear one” a tortoise,  
you ran leaping through the yard of a great court.  
These I lament, wretched Baucis, I groan deeply for you  
these memories, dear one, still lie glowing in my heart.  
All we once enjoyed is now embers.  
In our chambers, clinging to our dolls,  
playing young brides without care. And near dawn  
your mother, who allotted wool to workers, came  
and called you to help with the salted meat. Oh the  
great fear Mormo brought on us then, as little ones!  
On its head were huge ears, walking on  
four feet, turning quickly from one face to another.  
But when you went to a man’s bed, you forgot  
all you heard from your mother in childhood,  
dear Baucis. Aphrodite set forgetfulness  
in you, and lamenting deeply, I am gone.  
For my feet are not to leave the house,  
my eyes cannot behold a corpse, nor  
can I moan with unbound hair, so I am red with shame.