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To the memory of Carolyn Hamm

To Barbara

To the memory of Saguiv Hadari

To my sisters, Nancy and Sarah

To the memory of Linda Jindra Zannmiller

For Deborah and Osias

For Annie and Eve

To Frances A. Joshel

To the memory of my sister, Joan Ellen Sorkin

To my sister, Susan Shapiro

To M, my brother

To Paul

To the memory of Kyle M. Phillips, Jr.

1

Pornography and Persuasion on Attic Pottery

Robert F. Sutton, Jr.

In *Antigone*, Sophocles lists various techniques by which the human race prevails, including “the emotions that sustain the city” (*astynomous orgas*, 355). This phrase transcends our notions of “civic spirit” or patriotism to cover the full range of cultural values on which classical Athenian society was based, including those related to sexuality and gender. Social patterns were both manifested and maintained by several means, including myth, ritual, and language (Versnell 1987: 78), as fused, for example, in Attic drama and the visual arts, particularly the paintings on Athenian vases. Vase painting was a popular medium that as the Democracy arose and flowered provided the Athenian people with a set of changing self-images with which they could define themselves as individuals and in respect to one another. While other scholars have recently explored a variety of themes through which this was accomplished (*La cité des images*; Hollein 1988), this chapter considers how attitudes on sex and gender were expressed and transmitted to various elements of Athenian society by comparing the explicit representation of sexuality on Athenian vases with representations of weddings and other scenes where sexuality is expressed in polite terms. In contrast to the analysis of Eva Keuls (1985; reviewed in Shapiro 1986), who recently surveyed much of the same evidence, the emphasis here is on vase painting as a medium of social communication.

In examining such products of popular culture, it is best to have evidence both of the work of art in question, whether text, object, or performance, and of audience attitudes and reactions. The model I adopt here is that used most notably in recent studies of the romance novel, especially Thurston (1987), who discusses the feedback response between consumer and producer. Unfortunately, in analyzing Greek

vase paintings we have only the product to look at. My suggestion is that the change in content of these paintings reflects a change in their target audience; that, along with what we know about the oppressive nature of marriage at Athens at the end of the fifth century B.C. (e.g., from Xenophon's *Oikonomikos*), we must also consider the trend toward romance in popular art. Over the course of two centuries, vase paintings moved from a strictly male-oriented, egocentric eroticism to one that was emotionally based, aimed in good part at a feminine audience that had previously been neglected. Whether this represents an advance or a sidestep remains to be seen. The replacement of pornographic themes by romantic ones links this study to current feminist discussions of the romantic in terms of the pornographic (e.g., Snitow 1983). Meanwhile, before these ideas can be explored in detail, it may be useful to consider the nature of vase painting as an artistic medium and some difficulties encountered in interpreting its sexual imagery.

The vases under discussion were made in Athens and the surrounding region of Attica (whence the term *Attic*) during the sixth, fifth, and fourth centuries B.C.,¹ the Archaic and Classical periods. We shall generally avoid evidence from other times or places because each age and every Greek state had its own institutions, which were sometimes radically different from those of Classical Athens. By the middle of the sixth century, Attic potters achieved a virtual monopoly in the export of fine pottery painted with scenes drawn from both myth and daily life (Cook 1960; Boardman 1974, 1975, 1989; Scheibler 1983; Bron and Lissarague 1989). More than thirty thousand painted Attic vases survive from the seventh through the fourth centuries, apparently only a small proportion of the original production (Webster 1972: 3–4). This quantity indicates that we are considering a popular art that is comparable in relative scale to contemporary mass-market media. Around 530 B.C., the painters reversed the older black-figure technique (as seen below in Figure 1.1) to create the more expressive red-figure technique (below, Figures 1.2–1.12), and the two techniques coexisted until about the time of the Persian invasion in 480. The vases were decorated by several hundred painters, largely anonymous personalities whose individual styles can be recognized through the life's work of Sir John Beazley (Kurtz 1985; Boardman 1974, 1975, 1989).² These painters were drawn from a range of Athenian society including middle-class citizens, resident aliens, slaves, and even a few women (Scheibler 1983: 107–33; Kehrberg 1982; Beazley 1989). Almost all vases can be dated confidently on the basis of style to a twenty-five-year span, and most even more closely (see cautionary remarks in Robertson 1976; the revised chronology of Francis and Vickers 1983 is not persuasive).

To reconstruct the audience of the vase paintings, we must rely heavily on the evidence of the vases themselves and their archaeological context, for we cannot observe them actually in use or interview their users, and they are barely mentioned in surviving written sources (Scheibler 1983; Bron and Lissarague 1989). We must rely on inference and a statistical form of proof that makes our reconstruction necessarily hypothetical: we propose an ideal norm that reflects the apparent perception by the painters en masse of their intended market rather than the actual market itself as measured by objective means. The hazards of such an approach are obvious (see Thurston 1987: 4–7), and must be kept in mind.

Greek vases were designed for actual use, like china, although in Attica much

red-figure and black-figure was reserved for ritual and special use (Scheibler 1983: 137–44). From its shape one can deduce the general use each vase was intended to serve, whether as drinking cup, water jar, or perfume bottle (see Moore and Philipides 1986). A demonstrated connection between vase shape and subject (Webster 1972) suggests that the painters had a clear notion of an audience and context in which various scenes were to be seen, regardless of what may actually have been done with the particular vases that survive, though that, too, is useful for our purpose. We know the city or region in which many were found and can trace general patterns of trade that can help identify pieces designed specially for domestic use or export (Webster 1972; Boardman 1979; Scheibler 1983: 136–86). Most well-preserved vases have been found in or near graves; some were intended specifically for the tomb, while others show wear and repairs indicating prior use. Sanctuaries yield many fragments of vases that were dedicated to the gods or used in mortal feasting. Domestic, commercial, and civic sites yield enough sherds, battered as they are, to suggest that painted pottery was also in everyday use. But there is virtually no detailed information on how vases were marketed at any level. While it is said that in Athens respectable women did not venture from the seclusion of their homes to shop, the evidence is scanty at best, delivered by males, and skewed to the ideal of a leisure class; it should not be used to suggest that women played only a minor role in selecting vases for their own use, whether individual women actually left their houses on occasion, dealt with itinerant vendors, or acted through second parties from their own households.

To understand the effect of sexual scenes in vase painting on ancient viewers, we must also understand Athenian sexual mores. Reflecting the articulation of ancient Athenian society, sexual norms varied according to one's social status as free or slave, citizen or foreigner, male or female, rich or poor, and young or old (Henderson 1988 and Pomeroy 1988 with earlier references; Foucault 1985; Halperin 1986, 1989; Blok and Mason 1987). Chastity was required of female but not male citizens, marriage was by arrangement, the seduction of respectable women was regarded as a greater threat to society than rape, prostitution was legal, homosexuality was relatively acceptable, and aspects of sex formed an important part of religious belief and cult. As a potential source of shame, sex was approached with discretion by the well-bred, although their boundaries were not the same as ours, and there were certain occasions (often ritual) when sexual matters were publicly displayed and discussed, such as in Old Comedy. To clarify this practice, we can follow Henderson (1975: 2) in distinguishing between obscenity and pornography (see Dworkin 1981: 1, 199–202), terms often used interchangeably. *Obscenity* signifies the mention or representation of sexual and other taboo matters (e.g., those concerned with bodily elimination) for nonsexual purposes, including good luck, apotropaic magic, and religion, and to insult, amuse, or enrage (Henderson 1975; Johns 1982: 38–96). In contrast, *pornography* is material designed to cause sexual arousal and pleasure (see Roth 1982: 1). The former is essentially extroverted and social, the latter introverted and personal, tied as it is to the individual psychology of the user. These are not strictly separate categories but two different aspects that must be considered in evaluating sexually explicit material from classical antiquity.

The current debate on pornography has focused on the social impact of sexual

and other representations (including ethnic stereotypes, violence, and children's advertising), particularly their relation to socially undesirable action and attitudes (e.g., *Film Comment* 1984; Rubin 1984; Eysenck 1982: 305–12). A dominant school of thought argues that the representation of undesirable acts and attitudes is harmful since it actualizes them, thereby providing an external model that serves as a stimulus for imitation (see studies listed in Byrne and Kelley 1984: 6). Using the Greek term for "persuasion," we shall call this the *Peitho* model, since the representation can be said to persuade the viewer to imitation. Many psychologists believe that this model is valid for our own society (Donnerstein 1984; Zillman and Bryant 1984; but see Brannigan and Goldenberg 1987), and ancient Athenians believed it was operative in theirs (Aristophanes *Frogs* 1009–1097; Plato *Republic* 401). In opposition to the *Peitho* model, an opposing *cathartic* model has also been proposed, one whose name betrays its Aristotelian inspiration (*Poetics* 6.1449b). According to this model (whatever Aristotle may have meant by *katharsis*), images of undesirable acts can be a positive force by releasing dangerous passions that cannot be and are not actually realized. Though the validity of this model in our society is debated (Roth 1982: 18), it seems to operate in modern Japan, which has a very low incidence of rape despite prevalence of rape, bondage, and violence in its pornography and romantic fiction (Abramson and Hayashi 1984; Thurston 1987: 219 n. 2). Abramson and Hayashi connect this effect strongly to Japanese reliance on shame rather than guilt as a means of controlling antisocial impulses, factors that may make it applicable as well to classical Greece.

The *Peitho* model has been the basis of most contemporary feminist (and other) opposition to pornography. Some feminist critics target scenes that link sex and violence, others reject all heterosexual depiction because of the objectification implicit in the process, while yet others extend this objection to include all forms of representation on the grounds that it denies the existence of a female subject (Dworkin 1981; Kappeler 1986). The *Peitho* effect is, of course, not always thought to be negative, even when applied to sexual imaging. While most work on pornography assumes a male gaze, or the cultivation of a female market that reflects and advocates the values of patriarchy (Kaplan 1983), Thurston's (1987) study of modern mass-market romance novels suggests that this is not always the case. Using reader surveys and other information provided by authors, publishers, and readers, she shows that the rise of a new class of erotic romances aimed at a female audience reflects a new feminine outlook occasioned by the modern women's movement. The creators of these new romances are involved in a feedback loop with their mass audience: not only have producers solicited the reaction of their audience and responded to it by reshaping their narratives, but readers report that these novels have helped them reorient themselves and make major life decisions that fly in the face of traditional feminine roles and values.

Such discussion of representation is crucial to the ancient social historian, for most of our evidence is representational (Cantarella 1987: 5–6); the few hard data that survive are very hard indeed and rarely can be interpreted on their own. These modern studies help us recognize that the representations surviving from the ancient world are valuable not simply as passive, albeit biased, reflections of ancient life that can help us reconstruct it; in addition, they actively molded popular opinion and mediated between individual psychology and collective group identity. The follow-

ing discussion will show how the popular, mass-produced genre (daily life) scenes on Athenian pottery of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. helped the people (*dēmos*) of Athens acquire the sense of corporate identity that made possible the radical democracy of the fifth century. Whatever we living twenty-five centuries later may find deficient in this ideology with respect to the position it accorded (for example) women and slaves, the package formed a coherent whole that worked fairly well in its own day, was widely accepted throughout its own society (whatever the personal cost, to our eyes), and supported the discussion of far more liberal notions whose fruition has occurred only in our own day. This chapter does not seek to condemn or to glorify this ancient ideology but rather to identify one of the social mechanisms through which it gained popular acceptance even from those who would seem to have had little to gain from their adherence—Athenian women.

Copulation

We begin with the scenes that are most obviously pornographic, those showing sexual congress in explicit terms. Though earlier avoided by scholars or published with censored illustration, since the 1920s this material has been collected in a number of specialized picture books and is now one of the most completely illustrated and conveniently studied categories of the genre scenes on Greek vases (Brandt 1925–28; Vorberg 1932; Marcadé 1962; Grant 1975; Boardman and LaRocca 1975; Johns 1982; Keuls 1985). Otto Brendel's groundbreaking interpretative article of 1970 remains basic, despite correction of details occasioned by recent more specialized study. One should not from this abundance of illustration misrepresent the vase painters' lack of inhibition in portraying sexual themes, for only about one hundred fifty vases show figures actually engaged in copulation, a scant proportion of the thirty to forty thousand vases that survive. We only mention in passing the far more numerous (two thousand or more) scenes of male drinking parties in which there is often a strong sexual element even when graphic illustration of copulatory acts is avoided. Vase painters distinguish two distinct types of such parties: the more sedate *symposia* ("banquets") and the wilder *kōmoi* ("revels"), the former characterized by horizontal arrangements of reclining figures set indoors, the latter by more varied compositions of more or less vertical ones set both in and out of doors. These relatively restrained scenes are often clearly pornographic in intent and show in more presentable form the same values expressed in the few really explicit examples. The sexually explicit representations are chronologically restricted almost exclusively to the years 575–450. There is a significant drop after about 480, very few after 450, and only one from the fourth century. Even if these subjects moved to other artistic media like (lost) painted panels and mirrors (Brendel 1970: 30), their eclipse on Attic vases is as significant a sign of changing taste as the later elimination of obscenity from Attic comedy.

Heterosexual

Explicit heterosexual intercourse is usually found on cups and other shapes used for the consumption of wine. Vases of the same types often appear in these scenes to

define the setting as either komos or symposium, neither of which was attended by women with a reputation to uphold. The scenes would have provided models for imitation to elicit behavior appropriate to the occasion from both the men and their female companions in the sex industry. This argument is somewhat undercut by the observation that the overwhelming majority of these vases have actually been found in parts of central Italy inhabited by the Etruscans, the non-Greek neighbors of the Romans. As will be seen, Attic potters first introduce explicit sexual subjects on a special class of vases that seem from their geographical distribution to have been produced largely for export to the west; though painters quickly move the theme onto more generalized production, most still finds its way to Etruscan lands. While one is tantalized by this prospect of specialized Athenian production of pornography for the Etruscan market, we know virtually nothing of the way Attic vases were actually marketed for export, and there may be a variety of factors at work, including a marked Etruscan fondness for cups, or possible demand for commodities carried in certain types of vessels. The precise meaning of this remarkable distribution must therefore be set aside for exploration elsewhere, as must the interesting problem of how the scenes were interpreted by the Etruscans, whose imperfectly known culture was different from the Athenian in several respects, including the treatment of women (Bonfante 1981; Warren 1973a and b). Athenian painters, we assume, were reproducing their own cultural experience in these scenes; if so, the effect would likewise have been greatest on their fellow Athenians, to whom all details would have been familiar. Certainly Athenians and other Greeks did not eschew such scenes; they do occur in Greek lands, in unspectacular quantities but with consistency, throughout the period of their manufacture. Examples have even been found on the Athenian Acropolis; that they were dedications or used in religious feasts receives support from fragments of two votive plaques depicting explicit sexual subjects, one from the Acropolis, the other of unknown provenance (Greifenhagen 1976; Boardman 1975: fig. 18).

A probable explanation for the popularity of these scenes during the Archaic period and decline in the Classical period is that their representation of individualistic self-gratification, often shown in almost countercultural terms, runs contrary to the trends of vase imagery under the fifth century Democracy, which comes to stress a channeling of emotion into socially beneficial avenues. In most of the sexual scenes, one notices a strong connection between the drinking of wine and sexual activity; whether their original impulse is to be sought in the cult of Dionysos or not (pro, Brendel 1970: 15–18; con, Carpenter 1986: 86–90), they emphasize a release from social restraint that is similar to what is later associated with the god, as seen in Euripides' *Bacchae* and the unrestrained language of Old Comedy. These scenes seem to portray male emotional self-expression (*orgê*) of various forms; sex is not associated here primarily with affection and sensual pleasure, but more often with hostility and even anger. While in the earliest scenes the sexes appear on more or less equal footing, perhaps reflecting the release provided by Dionysiac worship, there soon emerges a pattern of male dominance and female submission that is appropriate to the social situation of ancient prostitution. The choice of sexual acts and the manner of their depiction emphasize male orgasmic gratification. Female pleasure and even comfort are often disregarded, and while women are several times

shown performing fellatio (without pleasure), there is no explicit portrayal of cunnilingus (see Keuls 1985: fig. 131). While female pleasure is occasionally portrayed by the Archaic artist and then consistently developed in the Classical period, it serves only as an aspect or stimulus of male pleasure and is not treated as a theme of interest for its own sake.

Both hetero- and homosexual congress are introduced on Attic pottery in the second quarter of the sixth century on a large group of vases known as the Tyrrhenian amphorae, whose name derives from their discovery almost exclusively in Etruria (=Tyrrhenia) and the west.³ On at least eleven of these vessels (*ABV*: 102.95–102; *Paralipomena* 41; Keuls 1985: figs. 135–36; Dover 1978: B51, B53; Boardman and LaRocca 1975: 76–78), sexual intercourse is included in komoi that descend from groups of padded dancers that appear on several Greek wares during the early years of the sixth century, and especially on Corinthian vases (Seeberg 1971; Boardman and LaRocca 1975: 76). These dancers, wearing costumes padded to emphasize the buttocks and belly, perform an unseemly drunken dance in which they often bend to extend and slap their prominent buttocks, occasionally display grotesque genitals (Seeberg 1971: 38–40, 73–74), and even defecate and conduct sexual intercourse in public (Stibbe 1972: no. 64). The general character of these activities in respect to Greek notions of propriety is illustrated by Herodotus's tale (6.126–130) of the noble Corinthian Hippokleides whose drunken dance at a public banquet cost him the hand of Agariste, daughter of Cleisthenes, the dignified tyrant of Sicyon. What seems to have particularly irked Cleisthenes was Hippokleides' finale, in which he inverted himself on a table, thereby exposing his genitals to public view (a natural consequence of Greek dress that Herodotus did not need to spell out to his audience), and waved his legs in the air. This notorious event is roughly contemporary with the vases under discussion, and Hippokleides' proverbial response to losing his bride, which might be rendered as "Hippokleides couldn't care less!" admirably sums up the irreverent, unconventional tone of the Tyrrhenian Group's revels.

Elements of "Hippokleidian" dance long continue in subsequent depictions of heterosexual copulation on Attic vases. As on a black-figure cup painted around 540 by the painter Beazley named *Elbows Out* (Figure 1.1), sex usually is shown in a group setting, often with the figures arrayed like chorus lines. The preference for standing positions, with an emphasis on the buttocks, which are often prominently extended, and for approaches from the rear betray their origin in the dance. A humorous, outrageous, and almost slapstick tone that emphasizes the kinetic over the sensual and the obviously formal, almost abstract manner of composition serve to remove many of these scenes from the realm of actual experience. Many might be regarded as a sign for social catharsis rather than a persuasive model to emulate. In some, the mood of good-humored obscene merriment seems almost a social leveler that places all actors, nude and devoid of all social trappings outside those of the moment, on an equal footing and eliminates any sense of power except to grant or deny a frantic or pathetic suitor's request.

A gradual transformation occurs, however, whereby the female partner becomes increasingly objectified into a piece of sexual furniture, and the male actor becomes the subject of the scene. This process is effected in part by recourse to compositions

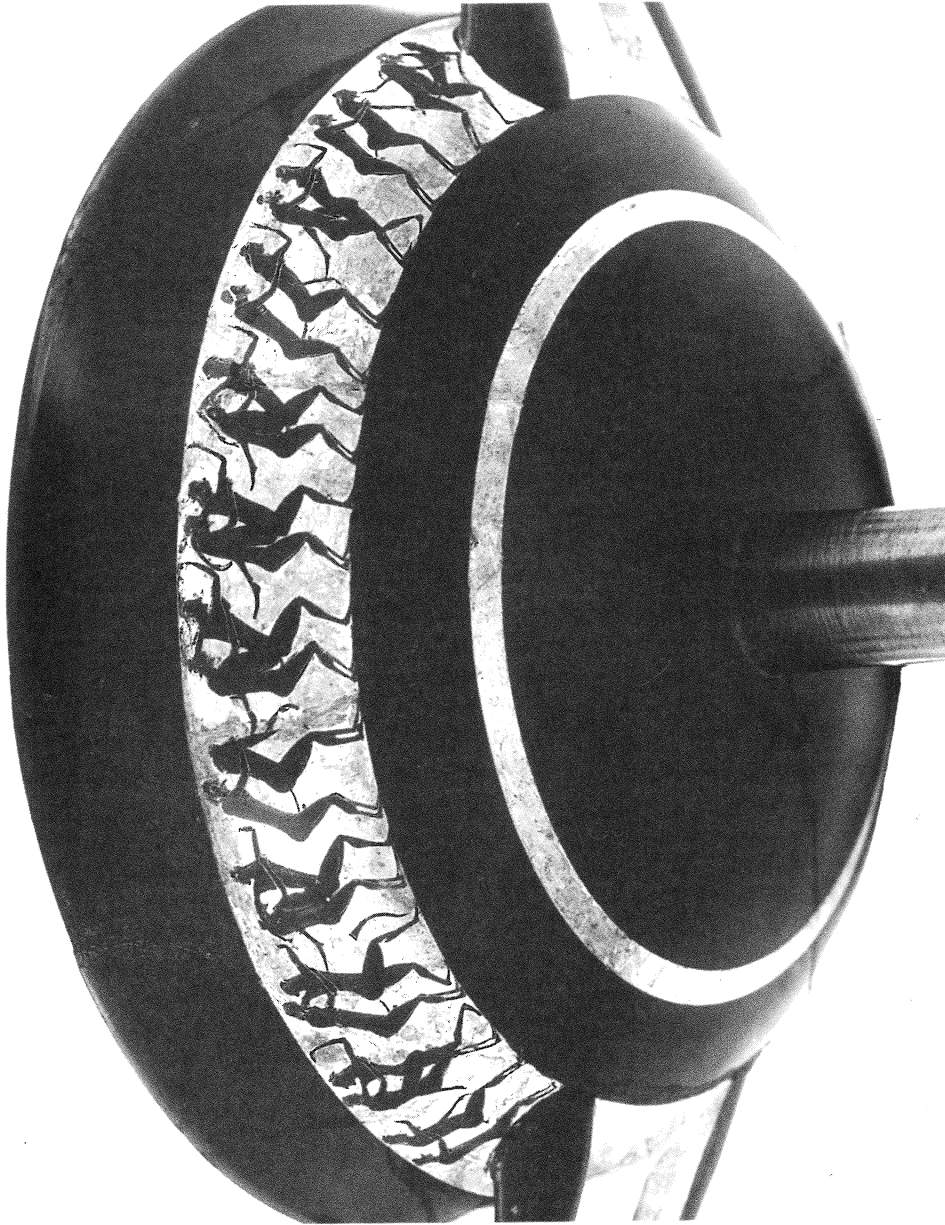


FIGURE 1.1. Exterior of a black-figure cup in the Vatican (34577) by Elbows Out, showing lovenaking as a chorus line. Ca. 540 B.C. (ABV, 250.23). Courtesy of the Vatican Museum.

featuring single couples framed by adjuncts (e.g., Marcadé 1962: 146–47) and compact, horizontal compositions in which male superiority in stance becomes visually translated into dominance.

In red-figure (Sutton 1981: 72–144), this domination is partially offset by compositional and thematic diversity coupled with growing social and psychological realism. We get our first isolated couples on the interior of red-figure cups, which become intimate representations that Brendel (1970) felt were the first to be truly pornographic in tone. There are a few tender scenes in which the female is treated as an active partner (Keuls 1985: fig. 173; ARV² 1208.41). The emotional engagement found here and elsewhere is achieved by the use of positions in which the lovers make eye contact (Marks 1978), a device that is characteristic of the Classical style in scenes that have nothing to do with sex.

Yet red-figure painters preferred to show rear-entry positions in which there is an emotional distance between lovers; very rarely does the woman look back to meet the eye of her lover in these scenes, though this device is exploited for its emotional effect in Hellenistic and later art (Keuls 1985: figs. 156–60, 162; see Brendel 1970: figs. 27–29). Although many who discuss these paintings assume that they portray anal rather than vaginal intercourse (Keuls 1985: 176–79; Dover 1978: 100), there is little to justify such a conclusion, for the small scale of the pictures vitiates discussion based on the position and angle of penetration (Marks 1978; Sutton 1981: 82–87). The issue of anal penetration was of insufficient interest to vase painters and their patrons to require the creation of unequivocal anal representations in the manner of modern pornography, for the appeal of these scenes is not so specialized in terms of sexual preference. Certainly the rear-entry stance allows the painter to show women being used impersonally, as mere sexual tools whose response and emotional reaction is of no concern to their male lovers. For example, in a cup by Douris in Boston (Figure 1.2), the impersonal rear-entry position without eye contact is enhanced by a stiff awkwardness in the figures that shows their lack of accord; that this is not simply a result of clumsy drawing is clear from the rare bit of dialogue that the painter has added: the man says *heche hēsychos* (“Keep still” or “Be quiet”), a peremptory command that captures well the master’s voice.

Scenes in the old komos tradition show a variety of treatment, some merrily celebrating a zany Hippokleidian outlook (Sutton 1981: 106–7; ARV² 113.7, 132). Yet the tone changes, as seen especially on a number of well-published vases, moving from mere indifference to active hostility, and the abuse and degradation of prostitutes becomes the dominant theme (listed in Boardman 1976). These date from the years around 510 to 470 B.C., the period of the early Democracy and the Persian Wars, and find a parallel in a scene of brawling drunks found on a contemporary cup (Leningrad 651, ARV² 325.77). All express hostility, perhaps exacerbated by tensions in Athenian society during this turbulent time of class struggle and foreign threat, best characterized by the figure of the politician Themistocles. The most extreme example is a cup by the Pedieus Painter (ARV² 86α; Keuls 1985: fig. 166; Marcadé 1962: 138f.; CVA [France 28] III I b pl. 68–69), which Brendel (1970: 27, fig. 17) saw as social protest but which was surely intended to achieve a brutal humor. The women there are beaten with slippers as they serve male gratification fore and aft; they are shown as middle-aged and fat, in striking contrast to the idealizing conventions of vase painting, and the unusual creases shown around their



FIGURE 1.2. Interior of a red-figure cup in Boston (1970.233) by Douris, showing sexual intercourse between a man and woman; inscription running down from the man's mouth: "Keep still" or "Be quiet." Ca. 475 B.C. (ARV², 444.241). Gift of Landon T. Clay. Courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

mouths express the disfiguration caused by performing fellatio. The power expressed here is not just male over female but also young over old, free over slave, and employer over employee. It stands as a clear statement of social dominance, and submission without protest. A cup in Florence by the Brygos Painter (Figure 1.3) belongs in this tradition but sounds a different note. There a man standing on the right edge of the scene with a lamp shouts in protest across the room beyond the couple beside him to a second man who threatens a flabby woman; this second man holds up what seems to be a wooden flute to strike her in order to force her to perform fellatio, as she pleads with him. This might be seen as a dispute between the two men over the possession of the woman rather than her treatment, but one would expect the men to be more closely engaged. Here alone, in the person of the man with the lamp, do we find the representation of a negative reaction. From modern psychological studies, one might suggest that this detail may have dissuaded ancient viewers from emulating the abusive activity depicted (Zillman and Bryant 1984).

Homosexual

The male homosexual analogues of these scenes are strikingly different, a graphic

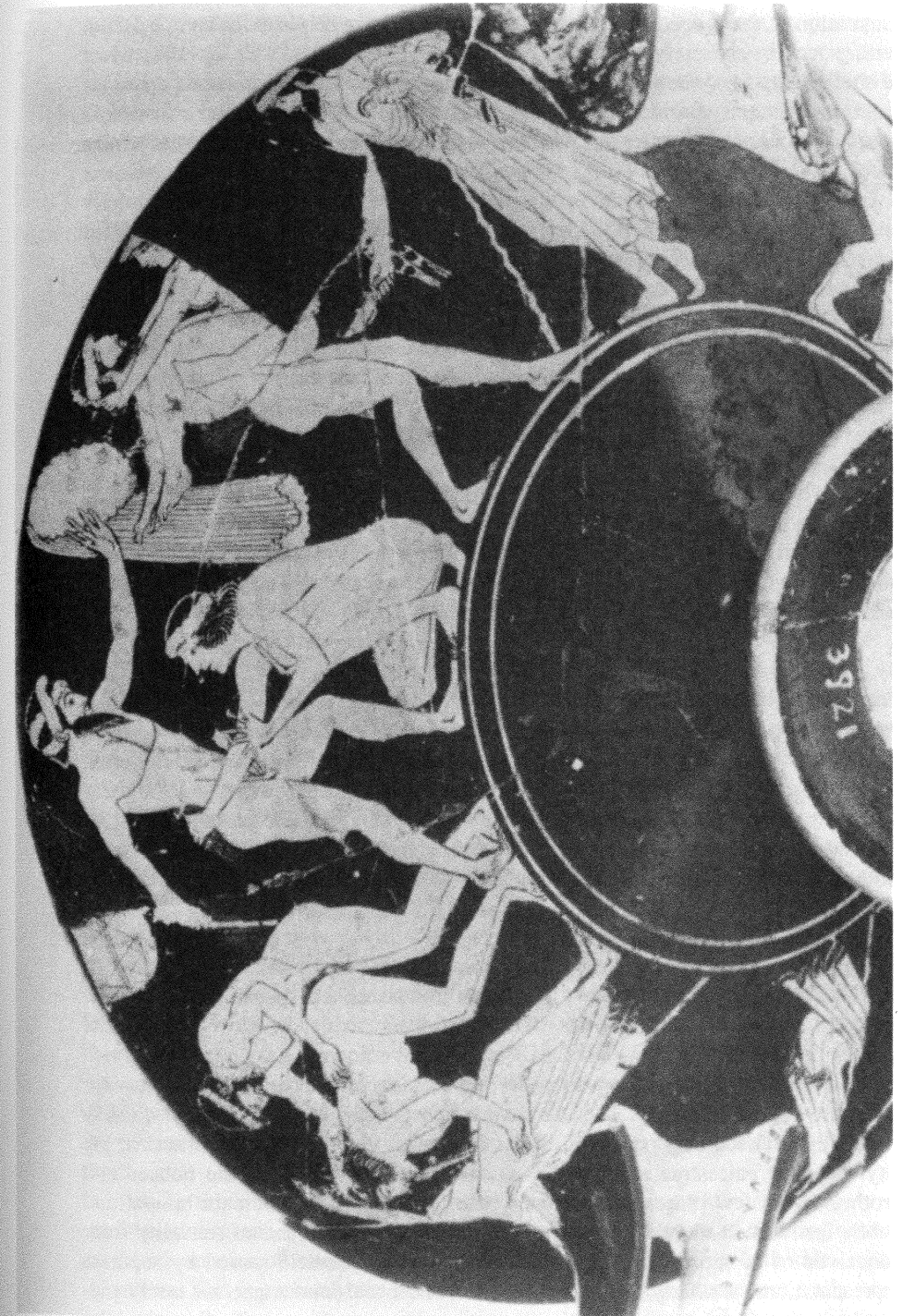


FIGURE 1.3. Exterior of a red-figure cup in Florence (3921) by the Brygos Painter, showing orgiastic sex. Ca. 490 B.C. (ARV², 372.31). Courtesy of Soprintendenza Archeologica della Toscana, Gabinetto Fotografico.

illustration of the practice's relatively high status. Abuse between males in a sexual setting occurs very rarely (e.g., *ABV* 102.100; Koch-Harnack 1983: fig. 108). Most of the vases portray homosexuality as pederasty, a relationship between a boy or young adolescent who is the passive partner and an older male, either a beardless youth or an adult, who takes the aggressive role (see Shapiro, Chapter 3 herein). On vases, pederasty is treated with great sympathy in scenes that are radically different both in type and tone from the heterosexual scenes. Pederastic intercourse usually takes place not in the komos or symposium but in a new type of group scene called courting (Figure 1.4; compare Figures 3.1, 3.2). This new type emerges in the mid-sixth century B.C. and lasts for about a century, though most are Archaic (Beazley 1947; Dover 1978; Shapiro 1981b; Koch-Harnack 1983; Sutton 1985; Keuls 1985: 274–99). Men and older boys are shown as suitors who try to win the sexual favors of their young partners, making full use of gifts and other tactics. While there is a variety of responses, in a quarter to a third of these scenes the payoff is shown, invariably taking the form of standing “intercrural” intercourse in which the partners face each other, embracing, as the older partner thrusts his penis between the thighs of the younger (Figure 3.1; Keuls 1985: figs. 249–50). Penetration by anal intercourse or fellatio is scrupulously avoided, as is mutual masturbation, though the suitor may fondle his partner's genitals in foreplay. The tone is never impersonal or hostile, and affection is frequent. In contrast to the heterosexual scenes, one is struck by the idealized romantic tone found here.

Courting

Pederastic courting is popular in the second half of the sixth century but comes to be supplanted in the early fifth by its more common heterosexual analogue (Sutton 1981: 276–447; Keuls 1985: 187–273; Meyer 1988). These scenes, which clearly derive from their pederastic prototypes, are most popular in the years 480 to 450; they survive well into the second half of the fifth century and die out before its end. Both types of courting occur on a range of vase shapes and show a wide geographical distribution, a sign of their diverse appeal. The theme appears on cups and other symposium ware, but its common occurrence on small oil containers for scented oil and pyxides (boxes for toiletries, etc.), some of the former even inscribed *prosgoreuô* (“I greet [you]”; *ARV*² 103–4) as the vase itself speaks to the viewer, indicates that many of the vessels were themselves designed as love gifts whose decoration was intended to enhance their persuasive power (Knigge 1964).

Despite their similarities, pederastic and heterosexual courting, with few exceptions, are treated separately. The suitors in a scene pursue either boys or girls, rarely both. This division only partially reflects the spatial distribution of the sexes in the city: boys in palaestrae and gymnasia, women and girls in private houses and brothels, with few places to encounter both together except fountain houses and public festivals. It more importantly suggests that the two forms of sexuality were conceived of as separate entities, each with its own clientele served by separate representations; similarly, heterosexual and homosexual intercourse are rarely pictured together (compare the situation today; see Shapiro, Chapter 3). Occasionally, as in later literature, the two worlds are contrasted on the same vessel, like a cup of the late sixth century in Berlin signed by a painter Peithinos (Figure 3.2; *ARV*²

115.2; Dover 1978: R196; Keuls 1985: figs. 37, 196–97)—a name, or perhaps a pseudonym (note Beazley's difficulties, *ARV*² 115), that bespeaks the artist's interest in persuasion. On the two sides of the exterior, heterosexual and pederastic Peitho are compared (the former surprisingly more demure, as many have remarked), while on the interior, Peleus's wrestling match with his divine bride Thetis is a heroic version of the same theme. The cup's total message is something like “Woo girls with sweetness, and boys more directly, but force may be needed to subdue an unwilling noble bride and sire a son like Achilles” (see Sourvinou-Inwood 1987; Shapiro, Chapter 3).

An even more important scene for illustrating the painter's personal involvement in the world he portrayed occurs on a contemporary psykter (wine cooler) in the Getty Museum by the painter Smikros that shows the vase painter Euphronios chucking the chin of Leagros in the company of other named pairs in the palaestra or gymnasium, including several youths who appear in a variety of other scenes (Melas, Ambrosios, Antias) and one (Euthydikos) who was later wealthy enough to dedicate a *korê* (statue of a girl) on the Acropolis (Figure 1.4; Frel 1983: 147–51). Euphronios, the mentor of Smikros, was the foremost vase painter of the day; Leagros, an aristocrat who was later elected general, has long been known as the youth whose beauty is most often praised in the *kalos* inscriptions common on Attic vases,⁴ including eleven by Euphronios (*ARV*² 1591–94). This scene by a close associate of Euphronios seems, then, to reflect the artist's feelings, whether it accurately portrays reality or is simply a wishful or humorous fantasy. Members of the Pioneer Group of vase painters, to which Smikros and Euphronios belonged, are unusually fond of portraying each other and friends in a variety of gentlemanly leisure-time activities; Euphronios also shows Smikros at a symposium, and Smikros even portrays himself with the flute girl Helike at another symposium on one of his signed vases. That Leagros's family was resident in the township Kerameis (Davies 1971), which took its name from the potters' quarter, helps explain his popularity with vase painters and makes it likely that he was well known to Euphronios and even passed time at his shop in the manner of Socrates a century later. While Frel properly expresses reservations that a mere vase painter could have been romantically involved with a leading aristocratic youth, Scheibler (1983: 120–33) assembles evidence to suggest that the gulf between a successful artist-potter like Euphronios and a Leagros may not have been insurmountable in the social climate of the years that gave birth to the Democracy. For our purposes, in fact, it matters little whether the scene is historically accurate, for it and the others confirm the painters' interest in the courting and other activities of the city's leading circles: they interpose themselves in the same situations, becoming both representer and represented, creating and participating in the social feelings that made their city work.

While Euphronios and his companions on the Getty psykter rely entirely on nonmaterial means of persuasion, gifts are a prominent feature of courting scenes, and both species of courting show economic man writ large on both sides of the equation. This is probably not because the ancient Athenians were especially venal and prone to see money as an aphrodisiac (though one notes the theme of bribery running through contemporary literature and history), but because vase painters could illustrate the power of material goods much more clearly than intangible



FIGURE 1.4. Red-figure psykter (cooler) in Malibu (82.AE.53) by Smikros, showing the vase painter Euphronios embracing the fair Leagros, among other courting pairs. Ca. 510 B.C. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California.



FIGURE 1.5. Red-figure skyphos in Leningrad (4224) by the Penthesilea Painter, contrasting styles of courting. Ca. 460 B.C. (*ARV*², 889.166). Courtesy of the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad.

Side A: Man offers woman a coin drawn from his purse.

forces like social status, family connection, political favor, and natural charm. In both life and representations, there is an implicit inequality between the partners, and the exercise of power to persuade, as opposed to compel, is the major theme of these scenes, as it is in many modern romances (Thurston 1987). This is especially true of the heterosexual courting scenes where, in contrast to the homosexual type, intercourse is never represented. The emphasis is strictly on persuasion per se and on a woman's freedom to accept, reject, and even select a partner, for women and girls, unlike courted boys, sometimes take the initiative (Figure 1.5B). This last motif could appeal to viewers of both sexes who might appreciate the freedom to choose as well as the pleasure of being sought out.

The two sexes are also differentiated by the gifts they are offered. Boys receive hares, cocks, dogs, and other items connected to aggressive masculine pastimes appropriate to freemen and aristocrats: hunting, cockfighting, and active sport (Koch-Harnack 1983). Females, on the other hand, are offered flowers, fruit, wreaths, birds (but neither cocks nor hares), games, jewelry, and toiletries—items



FIGURE 1.5. *Side B*: Woman holds out a flower as she offers youth a lekythos (oil jar).

that characterize the feminine ideal as tender, sweet-smelling, sensuous, and child-like (Sutton 1981: 276–447). Members of both sexes, however, are offered purses, as in Figure 1.5A, where the coin is displayed as well, and uncooked meats, a nonmonetary form of payment; the purse is the most common gift for women, and for boys it is not rare (Sutton 1981: 290–304; Koch-Harnack 1983: 129–72; Keuls 1985: 260–66; Meyer 1988). There is little to suggest that the boys are not freeborn and even noble Athenian youths, aside from these purses, which are freely mixed with more noble offerings in the same settings, making it difficult or impossible to distinguish professionals from amateurs in the field of love. This is odd, for, at least in the fourth century B.C., a male citizen could be disenfranchised for prostituting himself to other men, and the very speech that reveals this law (Aeschines 1.19–32 [*Against Timarchos*]; Dover 1978: 13–109) makes clear the difficulties of disproving such a charge and the dangers inherent in acquiring such a reputation. While it is possible that the risk was not as great in the era of these vases, we must remember that the paintings, themselves often evidently intended as gifts, are no more than hopeful expressions of what might be, shown largely from the suitor's point of view

(Shapiro, Chapter 3); some were presumably more acceptable to their intended recipients than others.

In contrast, most of the women, particularly those who are shown courted publicly in groups, probably were to be thought of as prostitutes and not as respectable citizen women. (Vase painters unfortunately use dress to mark status only imprecisely, evidently reflecting the situation in real life, to judge from the cranky complaints of a conservative writer known as the Old Oligarch that it was impossible to distinguish among free, slave, or citizen on the streets of Athens [ps.-Xen. *Constitution of Athens* 1.10–12].) In Athenian society, marriage was normally arranged and respectable women secluded; an unmarried woman who yielded to seduction could be sold into slavery, a husband was legally required to divorce not only a wife who had been willingly seduced but also one who had been raped against her will, and a male adulterer caught in the act could be killed by the offended husband (Pomeroy 1975: 86–87). Direct amorous approach to a respectable woman (other than one's wife) would therefore have been highly illicit and is clearly not shown in most of these scenes. The appeal of such forbidden fruit to certain individuals is noted in the fourth-century speech *Against Neaira*, which alleges that she could charge more as a prostitute once she claimed to be married (Ps.-Demosthenes, 59.41), a predilection apparently commemorated in a much-debated scene by the Pan Painter that has been convincingly explained as the attempted seduction of a married woman (ARV², 557.123; Crome 1966; Keuls 1985: 258–59). She, seated and properly veiled as she spins, is offered a purse by a youth; a snoopy maid turns around to watch, emphasizing the exceptional nature of the interaction (note her complacent counterpart in Figure 1.6, discussed below). This anomalous vase by an artist with a recognized taste for bawdy humor simply points out how conventional the interaction is in the majority of courting scenes.

The painters illustrate comparative approach and response by both male and female, including female initiation, competition by suitors for lovers, haggling over price, outright rejection, and probably even an attempt to seduce a respectable woman, as we have seen. A skyphos in Leningrad by the Penthesilea Painter (Figure 1.5A–B, above) compares a bearded man wooing a woman with a coin to a youth detained by a woman who offers him a flower and a lekythos (oil jar) presumably containing scent: the mature must pay, while the young get by on looks alone. The painter's interest here in showing a variety of action and response is typical, and the heterosexual theme is treated with far more complexity than one finds in the pederastic sphere, where initiative is pretty much a one-way street and response fairly formalized. What is interesting here is that both the freeborn youth and the female prostitute must be wooed and persuaded, both within and by means of the vase; this attitude toward prostitutes is familiar from later epigram and comedy, where prostitutes are often depicted as hard to get and lovers as importunate. We are a long way in iconography from the pleading woman of Figure 1.3; yet prose sources (see *Against Neaira* for some grim vignettes) suggest the reality had not changed much. The choice of what to depict has shifted; the mood is different.

Our word *courting* is more often employed in the context of intended marriage rather than the engagement of a prostitute or lover; by the early Classical period, the romantic courting theme is indeed adapted to the context of marriage, as sentimental

gifts are exchanged by husband and wife. This surprising portrayal of married life in terms of iconography developed for pederasty and prostitution is consistent with the general transformation of the visual imagery of marriage during the fifth century traced below; such evidence is a welcome correction to those who use the one-sided testimony of works like Lysias's *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* to argue that in ancient Athens love and marriage were regarded as worlds apart. The transition is made absolutely certain by the combination of form and imagery in an unattributed alabastron (woman's oil jar) in Paris dated about 470–460 (Figure 1.6; Reilly 1989: 425, plate 80a). There, as a small girl looks on holding up a vessel of the same type, a youth identified by inscription as the fair Timodemus offers a head covering to a woman who sits holding a wreath, perhaps a nuptial wreath she has plaited either for herself or for him. Though she is identified in the inscription as the fair bride (*hê nymphê kalê*, in a unique transformation of the *kalos* formula), her name is not included, presumably reflecting the social convention whereby respectable women were left nameless in public (Schaps 1977). The depiction of the vase shape as an offering in the scene indicates that the persuasive power of the vase in the courting tradition was now extended to marriage, which, as we shall see, comes to be regularly portrayed in romantic terms at just this time.



FIGURE 1.6. Scene on a red-figure alabastron in Paris (Cabinet des Médailles, 508), showing courting adapted to marriage. Timodemus holds out a fringed scarf to his wife as a girl stands by with an alabastron; the two principals are identified in *kalos* inscriptions. Ca. 465 B.C. (ARV², 1610). Drawing from Fröhner 1872, pl. 40.2.

Nudes

Via the evolution of courting scenes we have passed from the vase painters' "hard-core" treatment of sexual relations in explicit terms to scenes, though fundamentally pornographic in both intent and content, in which sex takes a back seat to social gamesmanship and sentiment. Before turning to marriage and other romantic scenes evidently aimed at a feminine audience, one should mention another soft-core pornographic subject: the many nudes, both male and female, on Attic vases. Male nudity was a common convention in Greek art which attracts little attention except when first encountered, whereas female nudes are rare in Archaic and Classical Greek art except in the private medium of vase painting (see now Bonfante 1989).

Pervasive male nudity is one of the more peculiar conventions of Greek art, one that is not easily explained (Bonfante 1989: 543–58; Ridgway 1977: 53–54). The naked men, youths, and boys that are ubiquitous in genre and mythological settings probably do represent an artistic convention as much as actual practice (*contra* Boardman 1985: 238–39), for the well-bred were evidently expected to keep themselves modestly covered in most social situations, as indicated by the tale of Hippokleides and the introduction to Plato's *Charmides* (see also Hollein 1988). This idealized nakedness is closely connected to the Greek custom of exercising in the nude, which they themselves recognized as peculiar (Herodotus 1.10). Though this idealized nudity in exercise and art may not have been motivated primarily by pornographic purposes, its pornographic effect cannot be dismissed, given the high visibility of pederasty and homosexuality in ancient Greek culture (Arieti 1975). Nude athletes and other figures could stand as both role model and a source of sexual pleasure not only for different members of society but even for the same individual. The Getty psykter (Figure 1.4) and the *kalos* inscriptions on vases indicate that vase painters were as susceptible as their (male) customers to the sexual charms of the many nude athletes, bathers, and workers they represented in a variety of settings.

Female nudity (Bonfante 1989: 558–62), in contrast, did not develop as an artistic convention until the transition from Classical to Hellenistic style during the second half of the fourth century, when Praxiteles created a nude cult statue of the goddess Aphrodite that established a canon for the female body (Richter 1970: 200–201). According to tradition (Pliny *Natural History* 36.20–21), this statue was one of two offered to the city of Kos, whose citizens preferred the other one that was modestly clothed, and so the nude passed on to nearby Knidos; there, set up in a circular temple (whose foundations were uncovered in the late 1960s by a colorful American archaeologist appropriately named Iris Love) where it could be seen and studied from all angles, it became one of the classical world's most renowned sights and spawned a number of poems (*Anth. Plan.* 4.159–70) and tales that highlight its pornographic effect on the ancient viewer. A famous anecdote, which goes back at least to the first century B.C. when it was apparently recorded by the Stoic philosopher Posidonius (Harmon 1925: 262n.), is noted briefly by several authors (Valerius Maximus 8.11.4; Pliny *HN* 7.127; Lucian *Eikones* 4; Tzetzes *Chil.* 8.375) and recounted with considerable embellishment in the anonymous fourth-century A.D. *Amores* (15–16) preserved among the works of Lucian. There it takes the form of an

etiological tale told by a female temple attendant to explain a small dark blemish visible on one leg of the white marble statue. A youth had become so obsessed by the masterpiece that he surreptitiously had himself locked in the temple overnight and achieved intercourse with the statue, evidently in the intercrural mode (see Figure 3.1), leaving behind as evidence the discoloration on one of its thighs. Though this ribald “just so story” is much later than our vases, like the related tale of Pygmalion as told by Ovid (*Met.* 10.243–97) it illustrates the recognized hazards of combining the related powers of art and Aphrodite (see Henry, Chapter 12 on a similar tale from Samos).

Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite was shown as a bather, and it is in the same guise that we encounter, long before the development of the artistic convention, the first sizable group of female nudes in Western art: the bathing women on Attic vases (Sutton 1981: 46–48; Ginouvès 1962: 112–17, 163–78, 220–23; lists in Webster 1972, chap. 17, class N). It is easier to posit a pornographic intent for these bathers than for the male nudes; yet they evolve during the fifth century from soft-core images aimed at a primarily male audience to more generalized expressions of feminine sensuality that become appropriate for bridal themes and wedding gifts. They first appear in quantity on the interior of red-figure cups of the late sixth and early fifth centuries (Figure 1.7). These intimate scenes of single naked bathers, often shown with a small portable wash basin, are recognizable as a sort of peephole



FIGURE 1.7. Interior of a red-figure cup in Indianapolis (47.37) by the Chaire Painter, showing a woman bathing. Ca. 510 B.C. (ARV², 144.5). Courtesy of the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

pornography aimed at an audience of males and disreputable females by their regular appearance in wine cups, the occasional inclusion of an *olisbos* (dildo) (see Keuls 1985: figs. 73, 80), and even a floating set of disembodied male genitals that appear in one scene in Berlin (Brandt 1926: II, p. 28; ARV², 1593.39). The figure would be revealed as the drinker drank.

The second quarter of the fifth century witnesses a shift in both the content and the audience of these feminine bathers. The subject moves from the interior of cups and onto larger vessels including kraters, hydriai (water jars), and, most significantly, alabastra and pyxides used by women. These vessels accommodate compositions with several figures, and the basin changes from the small portable one to a large permanent basin on a stand (Figure 1.8): the occasion becomes social, and

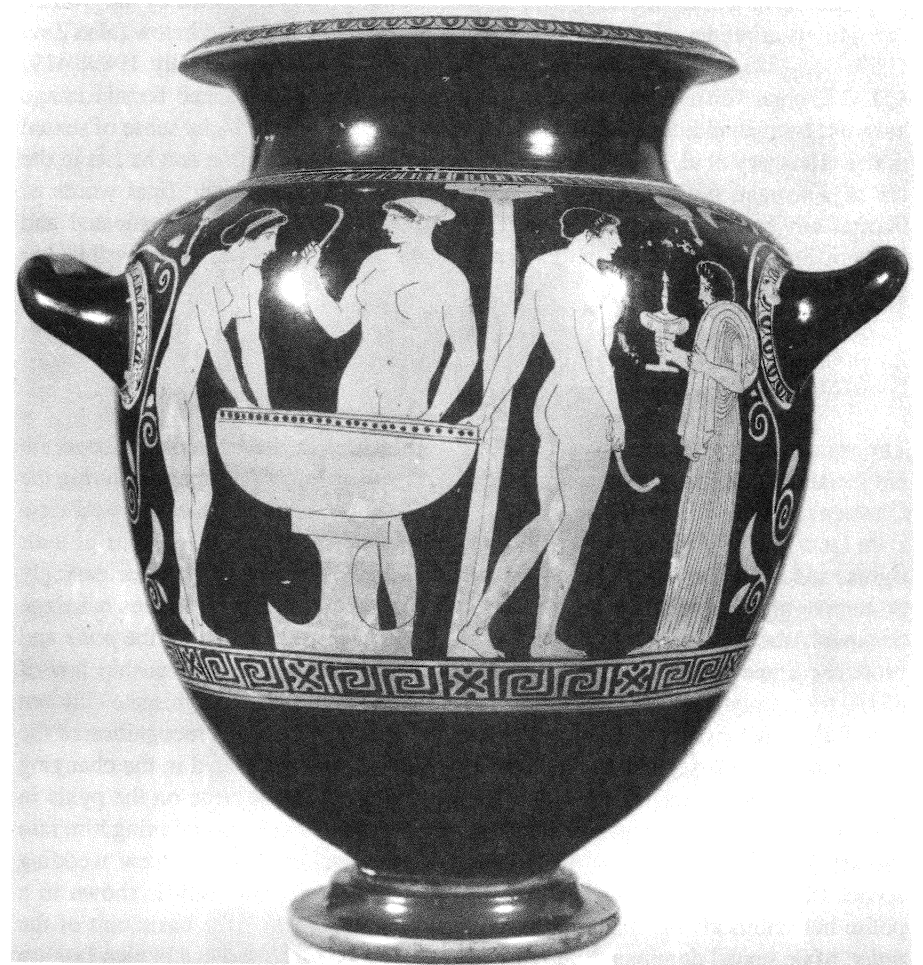


FIGURE 1.8. Red-figure stamnos in Boston (95.21) by a member of the Group of Polygnotos, showing women bathing at a wash basin. Ca. 440 B.C. (ARV², 1052.19). Catharine Page Perkins Fund. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

the locale apparently shifts from the private chamber to the public bath. The switch from cups to hydriai and toilet shapes suggests that many of these vessels may have been designed for use in the baths and private bathing they portray; even the kraters may have doubled as wash basins (Ginouvés 1962: 55–57). Though some bathhouses seem to have had a reputation not very different from that of a modern massage parlor (Ehrenberg 1951: 180, citing Aristophanes *Knights* 1401 and *Frogs* 1279f.), and a pornographic purpose may still continue strong, it is clear that some of these later scenes were intended to be seen by a respectable feminine audience.

Certainly it cannot be maintained that all these naked women must be regarded as hetairai simply because of their nudity (contra Williams 1983: 99; Bonfante 1989: 559), for by around 430–420 a naked bride is shown bathing on an unattributed pyxis in New York (Figure 1.9) in a scene that shows the progressive preparations of a bride for her wedding, an occasion clearly indicated by the women tying fillets around a nuptial loutrophoros, a ritual shape discussed below (also Zevi 1937: 355–58, fig. 6; Bothmer 1961: no. 243, plates 91–92; Reilly 1989: 419, 421–22, plate 78b). The sensuous, erotic associations of the naked female image have not been abandoned, for Eros, the personification of love in the sense of sexual desire (Hermay et al. 1986), appears twice as a helper, and at the end he sits in the lap of a woman most plausibly identified as Aphrodite delivering final words of marital advice to the veiled bride. Female sensuality has been domesticated and brought in as a kind of Peitho to persuade the Athenian bride, and possibly her groom as well, of her proper sexuality.

Weddings

The romantic transformations of courting and bathing scenes described above are not isolated phenomena but are repeated also in Athenian nuptial imagery during the Classical period. The family (*oikos*) was the basic social unit of the Classical city-state (*polis*). The Athenians, like those in other Greek states, were jealous of their rights, and as the privileges of Athenian citizenship increased, became increasingly protective of membership in the citizen body. Although in Archaic Athens marriage between Athenian men and non-Athenian women was recognized by the *polis* and produced some of the city's leading politicians, after Pericles' citizenship law of 451/0 B.C., only marriage to an Athenian woman could produce legitimate children with full citizen rights (Patterson 1981; Pomeroy 1988). This new recognition of the importance of marriage to an Athenian bride seems to be reflected in the changing iconography of marriage during the fifth century. The naked bride on the pyxis in New York (Figure 1.9) is part of a general tendency to tame Eros and bring him into the service of the *oikos* and thereby of the Athenian state. In the new wedding scenes that appear in the second half of the fifth century, sexuality is shown in a polite but unmistakable manner as the bond that ties together the basic unit of the *polis*. Male sexual dominance and female submission, presented in a benign fashion attractive to male and female alike, serve as an emblem of the respective roles in society of the two sexes and provide a proper model for emulation, rather like the 1960s film comedies starring Doris Day and Rock Hudson.

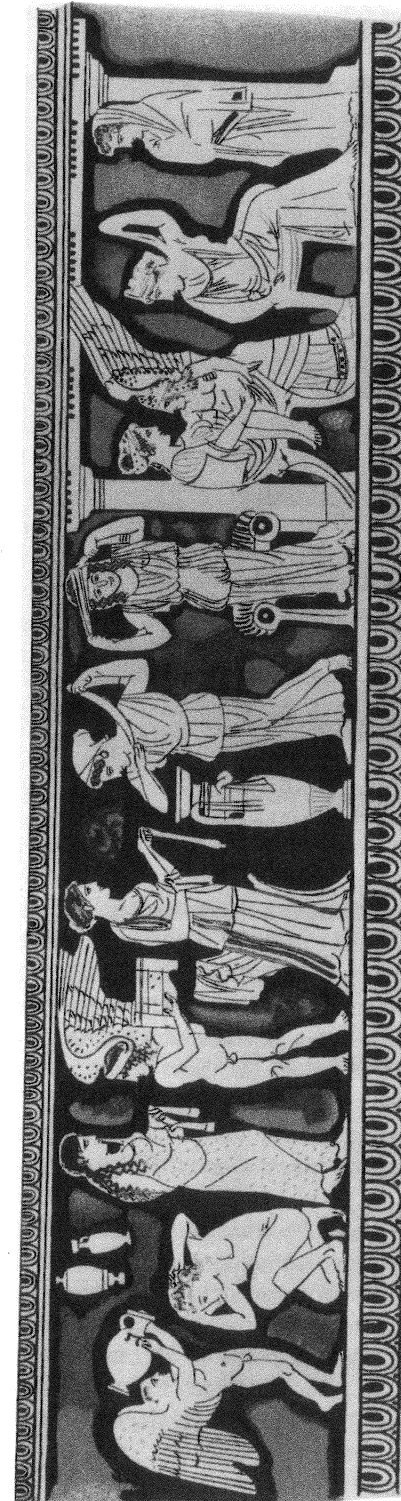


FIGURE 1.9. Scene on a red-figure pyxis in New York (1972.118.148), showing the progress of a bride's preparations for the wedding: she bathes, dresses, and receives final advice from Aphrodite with the help of Eros. Ca. 425 B.C. Bequest of Walter C. Baker, 1972. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Unlike other genre subjects, which show considerable variety in form and outlook, wedding scenes are strikingly uniform in composition and tone, reflecting the formal and public role of these vases in Athenian wedding ceremonies (Sutton 1981: 145–275; 1989). Gods and other elements of the mythical world are freely included in scenes that are only rarely (usually through inscription) connected to any particular mythical personality; while the two extremes of the mythical and contemporary worlds can be identified, most representations lie in an undifferentiated middle ground. This deliberate blurring of the boundaries between myth and genre makes elements of both felt simultaneously, presumably to enhance the actual weddings at which the painted scenes were viewed.

Archaic weddings are remarkably conservative. The black-figure technique is regularly retained well into the fifth century to depict a formal vehicular procession often attended by divinities (list in Webster 1972: 105 n. 1). The couple almost always rides in a chariot, an unrealistic heroic transformation of the rustic cart that was actually used (Krauskopf 1977; see Keuls 1985: fig. 92; Bothmer 1985: 182–84). The bride usually pulls the mantle from her head to reveal her face in an impersonal and formal expression of the sexual side of marriage, but there is no hint of physical or emotional contact between the couple riding rigidly side by side. These processions regularly occur on hydriai and amphorae (jugs) found throughout the Mediterranean (Webster 1972: 105).

A wave of innovation occurs at the outset of the Classical period (ca. 480) with the simultaneous adoption of the red-figure technique and of a new compositional type, the pedestrian procession, which may have seemed more democratic and certainly allowed a greater expressive range (Sutton 1981: 177–96). This new type is found most frequently on the loutrophoros, a ritual water jar represented in Figure 1.9; it is an impractical elongated version of both amphora and hydria that was used in Athens to carry the bridal bath from a special spring, and examples were often dedicated to the nymph of that spring (*nymphê* means both “bride” and “nymph”).⁵ Most of the red-figure weddings on all shapes were found in Attica and Greece; if they were indeed used at Athenian weddings, their romantic scenes could have worked to alleviate the anxiety that was surely felt by Athenian grooms and especially brides facing arranged marriage. In these scenes, male sexual possession and leadership are expressed by the groom’s grasp of the bride’s wrist or hand as he leads her into the house or bedroom; as he does so, he almost invariably turns back toward her to express his interest. She may meet his glance or look down as she acquiesces. A bridesmaid (*nymphetria*) usually sends her off by adjusting her veil. The groom is usually beardless and the bride mature, both sexually desirable. One of the finest of these scenes is on a loutrophoros in Toronto by Polygnotos (*ARV*², 1031.51; Lacey 1968: fig. 24; Boardman 1989: fig. 134), who politely emphasizes the sexual bond of marriage through the prominence of the bride’s belt that the groom will shortly loosen, the rare inclusion of the traditional fruit she will eat in the bedchamber, and finally the glance in which the couple’s eyes meet.

Our Figure 1.10 shows the type in its most developed form: the simple language of touch and glance was evidently not sufficient, and in the 430s (on current information) painters introduce the figure of Eros to make explicit what had previously been shown by more subtle means. Although in earlier genre scenes Eros had been associated with pederasty and prostitution, shortly after about 450 he

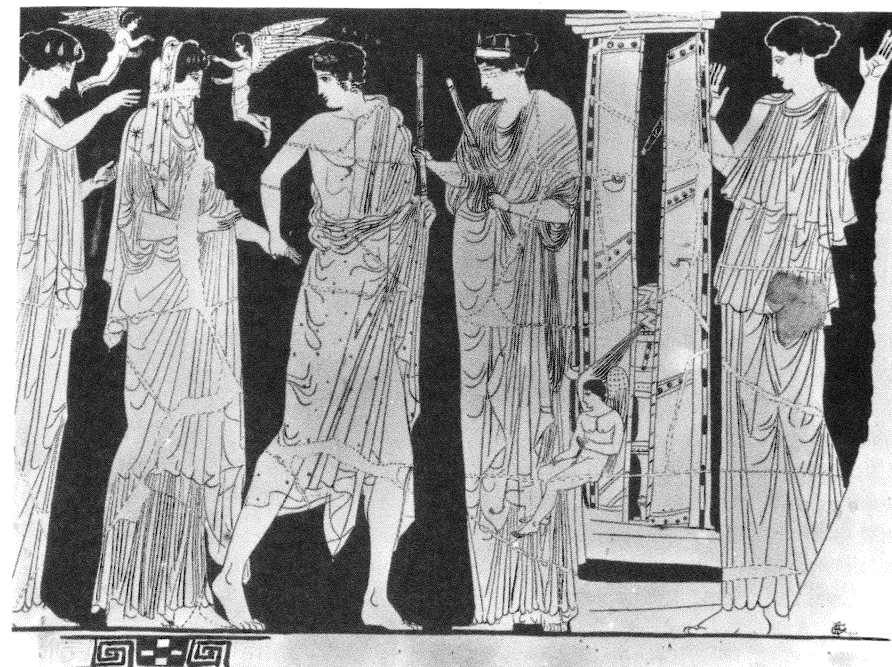


FIGURE 1.10. Scene on a red-figure loutrophoros in Boston (03.802), showing the procession to the nuptial bed. Ca. 425 B.C. (Drawing in Beazley Archive, Oxford). Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Beazley Archive, Oxford.

invades the domestic sphere of respectable women and then moves into the wedding itself (see below; Hermary et al. 1986: 902–17, 933–36, pls. 643–46; Shapiro, Chapter 3). The Eros of classical wedding scenes is associated especially with the bride, and to some painters he even seems to be a force she emanates rather than a simple attendant. This Eros operates in both an active and passive sense, expressing both the emotion felt by the bride and the feeling she engenders in the groom. One of the best expressions of this new nuptial imagery occurs on the illustrated loutrophoros (Figure 1.10; Sutton 1989; Keuls 1985: fig. 102). Here a usual wedding procession is embellished by two Erotes conventionally adorning the bride with wreath and necklace; a third Eros bounding down from the nuptial bed through the half-open door of the bridal chamber is a striking vision of love in marriage that astounds a bystander. The Classical Athenian bride, seeing herself surrounded by Erotes in such scenes, was perhaps inspired by this refined erotic vision with a passion to accept her sexual and social role in society.

Domestic Scenes of Women

The revaluation of respectable feminine sexuality described above is also seen in the ordinary portrayal of women on vases during the fifth century (Zevi 1937; Götte 1957; see now Reilly 1989). These scenes appear primarily on vessels that were

intended for feminine domestic use, especially on toilet vessels and hydriai (whose nuptial use has been mentioned), but relatively rarely on cups and symposium ware (Webster 1972: 226). This evidence suggests that during the course of the fifth century, vase painters discovered and cultivated a feminine market. The find spots of these pieces are largely in Attica and Greece (Webster 1972: 227), indicating production for a largely Greek and Athenian audience. Comparisons between these scenes and modern romances are especially appropriate, for both represent reciprocal awareness and creation of a distinctly feminine sensibility. A reliable idea of an ancient Greek woman's outlook survives in the work of the Archaic poet Sappho, an almost isolated feminine voice speaking from antiquity (Hallett 1979; Stigers 1981; Winkler 1981; Snyder 1989: 1–37). Characteristic of her poetry is a delicate yet intense romantic sensibility focused on clothing, flowers, birds, Aphrodite, and feminine companionship, which finds close reflection in the vase paintings showing feminine life. Admittedly the aristocratic world of Sappho's Lesbos is different in many ways from democratic Athens, but we know that her work was popular there; Sappho is identified by name on four vases (Sutton 1981: 50 n. 165) and is therefore the most popular poet on vases save perhaps Anacreon; thus, her work was known even to vase painters and available to them as a source.

Over the course of a century, as is well documented by Erika Götte's dissertation (1957), Attic vase painters transform the unambitious scenes of women's domestic life that first appear regularly at the end of the sixth century into the sensuous, idyllic masterpieces of the Meidian style that were produced during the Peloponnesian War (for illustration, Haugsted 1977; Williams 1983; Bérard 1989; Keuls 1985; Reilly 1989). The feminine subject matter seems first to have been inspired by its suitability for small perfume jars and colored the content of the scenes, for women are shown at home occupied primarily with self-adornment and at leisure. A late example (ca. 430–420) in Chapel Hill (Shapiro 1981a: no. 50), remarkable only for the number of figures included, accurately conveys the scope and tenor of these scenes. This feminine world is inhabited by graceful creatures occupied almost exclusively with mirrors, hair bands, cosmetic chests, perfume, and sometimes games or pets; they cultivate beauty and charm in a sociable world of reassuring domesticity. Wool baskets and occasionally spinning and weaving are the only reference to labor, and one searches hard for reminders of unglamorous jobs—like cooking, cleaning, fetching water, or gardening—that were best left to slaves. That children (usually shown as infants) are rare is a sure sign that these vases celebrate feminine grace rather than any attribute considered useful in Athens. While these pleasant fantasies are interesting expressions of a prevailing feminine ideal appropriate for cosmetic containers, the theme achieves a higher level of expression and becomes a major artistic force in the service of two personal rites of passage: funerals and weddings.

As a mortuary subject (Götte 1957: 16–32), the theme of women at home acquires a noble monumentality on vessels designed especially for the tomb, in particular white lekythoi. These beautiful scenes are important here only for their expression of a restrained inner emotion, a feeling carried over as the subject of women passes into nuptial use (Götte 1957: 33–71). The subject becomes the adornment of the bride (see Figure 1.9; Reilly 1989), which is commonly portrayed



FIGURE 1.11. Scene on a red-figure lebes gamikos in New York (07.286.35) by the Washing Painter, showing a bride playing the harp amid companions as Eros appears. Ca. 425 B.C. (ARV², 1126.1). Rogers Fund, 1907. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

on hydriai and lebetes gamikoi (nuptial basins; Moore and Philippides 1986: 27–29), vessels associated with the bridal bath. The seated bride is brought various toiletries and clothing accessories by female companions (Keuls 1985: figs. 101, 104). The first step in elaboration during the second quarter of the fifth century is the inclusion of a winged female who flies in with items identical to those brought by the normal, wingless women (Götte 1957: 38–41). She could be Iris or Nike (Victory), both divine messengers, or perhaps some other figure more specifically nuptial. After mid-century, emphasis moves from the act of adornment itself to representation of the bride's emotional state, which is expressed through the introduction of another winged figure, Eros (Hermay et al. 1986: 906–7, 935–36), and a new interest in music and the Muses. These new themes, love and music, are united on a lebes gamikos in New York by the Washing Painter, dating from about 425 B.C. (Figure 1.11; Boardman 1989: fig. 207); here the seated bride playing the harp in the midst of her friends recalls the nuptial songs of Sappho. Eros suggests the romantic theme of the music, while the lush, clinging, transparent drapery creates an atmosphere of sensuous femininity.

This is the look of the extravagant Meidian style, characterized by rich drapery, mannered poses, and a romantic tone, which dominates the last quarter of the fifth century and represents the fullest development of the feminine theme in vase painting. Eros himself is displaced, or rather eclipsed, by his mother, Aphrodite, who sets the tone for all. The walls of the house dissolve to reveal an idyllic landscape where women sit in the open air with domestic adjuncts surrounded by birds, gilt-winged Erotes, sensuous lovers, benevolent feminine personifications (including Peitho), and Olympian divinities of both sexes (Götte 1957: 60–71; Burn 1987). A mostly nude long-haired Adonis lounges in the lap of Aphrodite, languidly allowing a lyre to slip from his limp left hand (Burn 1987: M1, pls. 22–25; Boardman 1989: fig. 285); a more vigorous but equally pretty Phaon serenades Demonassa in a gilded bower as Aphrodite flies overhead in a chariot drawn by Erotes, a Sapphic theme (Burn 1987: M2, pls. 27–29; Arias 1961: pls. 216–17; Boardman 1989: fig. 286). Though the origin of these compositions lies in the realm of genre representation, the subjects are now primarily those of myth and allegory.

On the painter's name piece in London (Figure 1.12; Burn 1987: plates 1–9; Boardman 1989: fig. 287), the abduction of the Leucippidae (“daughters of Leucippus”) by Castor and Pollux is comparable in form and spirit to Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing to “Night and Day,” with its similarly well-disposed flow of graceful drapery and mannered charm. The scene is set in a precinct of Aphrodite where the two girls have been gathering flowers in a rocky landscape; an archaic image of the goddess is set above in the center, while Aphrodite herself lounges against the altar to receive a flower from Chryseis (“Goldie”). Castor and Pollux, two handsome Spartan youths dressed in flowing robes of faintly Eastern look (Miller 1989: 327–29), have arrived in chariots and snatch up the girls as Zeus, the boys' father, looks on from the lower left. Agaue and Peitho flee off to the wings, demurely pulling their cloaks in theatrical alarm. Lucilla Burn (1987: 17) notes the way the traditional violence of the subject is replaced by romantic fiction: “[T]he Meidian Painter replaces the desolate Leukippos with Zeus, complacent father of the assailants, and Aphrodite, patroness of amorous intrigue. . . . [T]he Leukippidai



FIGURE 1.12. Detail of red-figure hydria in London (E 224) by the Meidian Painter, showing the rape of the Leucippidae by Castor and Pollux. Ca. 420 B.C. (ARV², 1313.5). Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.

themselves are rather calm and make no real effort to escape, their primary effort being to look pretty and pluck at their drapery with becoming elegance. This is no longer a rape, but a romantic elopement.” The painter's novel reinterpretation of the old Greek theme of marriage as rape (Sourvinou-Inwood 1973, 1978, 1987) merely follows to its conclusion the romantic idealization we have seen in the genre wedding scenes. The trauma of a woman's compulsory removal to a new home through arranged marriage is artistically transformed into an agreeable abduction by handsome young heroes set in an idyllic fairyland. The Meidian style has been taken as a form of escapism from the horrors of the Peloponnesian War (Pollitt 1972: 123–25), similar in spirit to the romantic films of the Depression era, and as a romantic reaction to a general existential malaise of urban society, comparable to Tennyson's poetry (Burn 1987: 94–96). Acknowledgment of the scenes' feminine audience and Sapphic connections suggests a more immediate and specific inspiration: the concerns and aspirations of Athenian and other Greek women. These vase paintings, directed, like today's popular romances and romantic films, at a mass feminine audience (compare the sympathetic send-up in Woody Allen's *Purple Rose of Cairo*), may also have been a means by which ancient women were able to grapple with and transcend the cares of their existence.

An interest in romance is likewise reflected in the later fifth century's fondness for vase paintings showing the abduction of Helen by the Trojan prince Paris, the adulterous cause of the Trojan War (Ghali-Kahil 1955: 53–70). This theme is treated romantically and becomes so assimilated with the scenes of ordinary women that it is sometimes difficult to tell them apart. Both celebrate the goddess of love as an irresistible force whose destructive side is ignored in art or sublimated to the concerns of society at large. An acorn lekythos in a private collection in Switzerland by the Painter of the Frankfort Acorn (ARV², 1317.3; Delivorrias 1984: no. 1192, plate 120), dating to about 420–410 B.C., is a good example of the fusion of these two traditions to create a positive image of domestic love. Before an open door, a fleshy and beardless young man bends down behind a woman seated in a chair to embrace her as she turns back toward him in equal response; the two are swept away by the mutual passion aroused by the tiny female figure who flies over them in a miniature chariot drawn by two Erotes, and who Beazley suggests is the personification of Peitho.⁶ Two female figures standing on either side are probably (as Beazley also suggests) Aphrodite and Hera, the two goddesses of marriage, for the great scholar is surely right to recognize the couple as bride and groom (yet note the skepticism of Delivorrias 1984 and Burn 1987: 81[F3]). Their model is Paris and Helen, but they seem to be characters of genre, not myth. This seductive image shows an idealized bride and groom swept away, yielding to the persuasion of divine lust, not to betray house and home, thereby bringing about the ultimate civic cataclysm that Troy represented to the Greeks, but rather to perform their expected role in society as husband and wife.

Conclusion

Such scenes in a popular medium like vase painting help one understand how Athenians, including prosperous and empowered male citizens as well as women and other disenfranchised members of society living in conditions that seem extremely restrictive to contemporary eyes, might have generated in themselves the allegiance to the values of their culture that allowed them to carry out the various roles society had decreed for them. In the Archaic period, we find in the sexual scenes on cups and other symposium ware an emphasis on male self-expression, frequently in defiance of social norms, that encouraged aggressive individualism. These scenes provided both images to emulate and social catharsis for their male viewers and creators, though we might suggest that it was not just these representations but the actual beating of prostitutes that provided catharsis through the displacement of aggression from fellow citizens to a socially acceptable outlet. (This is, we note, a one-sided catharsis.) Such scenes provided their servile female viewers with an image that reaffirmed their helpless standing; those presenting the positive results of demonstrative affection and compliance would encourage such behavior in response to male advances. Courting scenes idealized male pederastic sexual bonding at a time when that aristocratic ideal seems to have been especially important politically (Shapiro 1981b). Both types of scene express a relation between sex and power in rather blunt terms, and the evolution of new social structures

attendant on the evolution of the radical Democracy, combined with other reasons, ensured that both types lost their appeal by the mid-fifth century. Antisocial individual self-expression was no longer popular on vases, probably reflecting both a need for a more refined public self-image for the Athenian *dēmos* and changing markets for painted pottery—or a tendency to reserve it for special occasions, as plain black-glaze wares became more elegant and suitable for daily use.

The radical Democracy of the fifth century was not opposed to love and other emotions unless they were directed at inappropriate objects that distracted individuals from benefiting the larger social group of the *polis*. It is Thucydides' Pericles, after all, that most outstanding proponent of democratic ideals, who asks the Athenians to direct their lust, that most personal of emotions, toward their city and become its lovers (*erastai*, 2.43). This rhetoric is reflected in the prominence given to Eros in contemporary vases. As the earlier erotic themes wane, the feminine atmosphere of women bathing and simply being women at home emerges as an erotic theme in heterosexual courting scenes. At the same time, women's life is idealized first on vases designed for female use and later for the display of feminine virtue at weddings and funerals. The celebration of women's beauty on cosmetic vessels contributed to the revaluation of female sexuality we have seen in Classical scenes of bathers, primpers, and weddings. In the second half of the fifth century, female eroticism not only becomes respectable but is portrayed as a means of personal happiness and social stability on vessels intended largely for feminine eyes. While wedding scenes always present highly idealized images, it is the increasing exploration of the specifically sexual elements that characterizes the Classical period. Such idealization served to provide positive role models with which the young bride could identify as she was led off to a strange house by a virtually unknown man, and the increasingly erotic tone that is found suggests that, like a reader of today's mass-market romances, the citizen woman of ancient Athens had high hopes of affection and sexual fulfillment. And perhaps males viewing the erotic visions on wedding and other feminine vessels would be encouraged to direct their erotic energies more exclusively to engendering future citizens.

Such artistic fictions contrast strongly with what is presented in Lysias's *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* (esp. 6–14), in which it is claimed that husband and wife saw little of each other, or Xenophon's *Oikonomikos*, a Socratic dialogue that includes the following famous interchange (12–13; Loeb trans.):

“Is there anyone to whom you commit more affairs of importance than you commit to your wife?”

“There is not.”

“Is there anyone with whom you talk less?”

“There are few or none, I confess.”

“And you married her when she was a mere child and had seen and heard almost nothing?”

“Certainly.”

But while these literary representations may reflect actual experiences more faithfully than our vase paintings, they too are fictionalized interpretations reflecting

ideology, and their intended audience is male. The paintings are important in suggesting how such a Xenophontic child bride, armed with only observation and the testimony of immediate family and friends, might have viewed the same situation in a way that she could accept and even embrace.

The evolution of erotic imagery on Attic pottery from Hippokleidian dance to romantic love in marriage during a century and a half of Athenian history marks a significant change in ideology. Like modern mass-market literature, these mass-market images must have both reflected and shaped the continually evolving self-images of the inhabitants of the Athenian polis. These changes in vase painting reflect both general changes in social ideology and persistent attitudes of particular segments of society that emerge and vanish as painters developed and abandoned (or lost) specialized markets for their products. Yet such changes do not necessarily reflect improvements in the circumstances of women's lives. Thurston's study of the modern romance is remarkable for its inclusion of readers' responses. What we lack, and mourn the loss of, are Athenian women's voices to speak for themselves.

NOTES

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1. Hereafter, all dates are B.C. unless specified otherwise.

2. All vases attributed to painters by Beazley are identified by reference to his lists in *Attic Black-figure Vase-painters (ABV)* and the second edition of *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters (ARV²)*; these provide full identification with citations of illustrations. I generally make no reference to the addenda of each volume, *Paralipomena*, or *Beazley Addenda²*, which should all be checked.

3. Carpenter's (1983) attempt to lower the Group's date is not compelling. See Moore 1985, which makes clear stylistic links to Sophilos, who was active around 580–70. In a subsequent article, Carpenter (1984) suggests that the Group may not have worked in Athens itself, though he still places its activity in Attica; technical studies might resolve such questions.

4. These are a kind of graffiti (in the nontechnical sense) which take the form *X kalos* ("X is handsome") and often have no obvious connection to the scene in which they appear. Those on vases presumably represent a small fraction of what was once written on perishable media. See Dover 1978: 111–24; Robinson and Fluck 1937; Shapiro 1987. Note the special examples in Figure 1.6, which are relevant to the representation.

5. Moore and Philippides 1986: 18–20. For preliminary reports on the shrine of Nymphē, see Wycherley 1978: 197–200; Travlos 1971: 361–63; *ARV²*, viii, 1747–48; pub-

lication of the myriad loutrophoros fragments found there may render details of my discussion of wedding scenes obsolete, though probably not the general picture.

6. Delivorrias 1984 suggests that this figure is Aphrodite herself, but also accepts Beazley's suggestion that Aphrodite is one of the flanking figures, which would seem to mean that Aphrodite appears twice.