

Images are at the heart of the study of ancient sexuality. Indeed, the goal of combining philology and archaeology, text and image, has perhaps been more vigorously pursued here than in other parts of the discipline. Yet, despite a considerable body of theory on the "reading" of images, there is still a strong tendency to use the images as "illustrations" of Greek sexual customs. Images of sexual activities are taken as both representations (the direct depiction of practices) and representative (as if offering an accurate cross-sample). It has been often argued that things not seen on a pot did not occur (much) and the reverse: that since we think we know things that did occur (from literary texts), they must be represented somehow, somewhere, in the pictorial record. But pots were not created to illustrate texts and the world they do depict is different in many interesting respects. This paper briefly examines six such disparities between two types of evidence, each with its own conventions and stylizations.

1. "Courting scenes" make much of love gifts (hares, etc), yet they are barely mentioned in texts.

2. The literary sources have some praise for boys' thighs, but there is no direct mention or description of interfemoral intercourse (*διαμηρίζω* has been misunderstood). Instead it is illustrated only in Vase-World (and rather less than is supposed).

3. On the other hand, when the written record (literary and popular) is explicit, it assumes that the only form of intercourse between males is anal. However, there are only seven good example of males in the act on Attic pottery, none without difficulties of interpretation (other claimed instances are dubious). Instead, "there seems to have been a strong taboo against depiction in the visual arts of anal intercourse between males" (Kilmer 1993: 15).

4. "It was shocking if an erastes was younger than his eromenos" (Dover 1978: 99). Vaseworld, however, shows two examples of beardless (or lightly-bearded?) men penetrating bearded men. Are these presented as deliberate violations of the norms?

5. The texts make numerous boasts of men using other men's mouths, but there are no surviving depictions of men fellating other men. Nor, despite numerous attacks on men as *cunnilingi*, are there any images. Who is being more polite, the literary sources by (generally) veiling actions in polite euphemisms or the artistic sources for (generally) avoiding "beastliness"?

6. The literary sources are clear that sex in the presence of others is barbarian at best. Yet the vases depict various sexual acts as occurring in the same space. Are we then merely looking at what actually happened despite the decorum of the texts, a pictorial convention, symptomatic exaggeration, fantasy?

We need to practice more of the *ars nesciendi*. We have to end with questions. Are certain sexual scenes meant to be normal or outrageous, amusing, satiric, cautionary, or apotropaic? Who are the consumers? What are the social function of the vases? Do different painters paint different worlds? Can we continue to read the iconography as confidently as we have?