

We're All A Little Bit Gay: Female Homoeroticism In Greek Art

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Argument

Female homoeroticism can be seen in ancient Greek artwork. Through a queer and feminist theoretical framework, archaeological evidence can be reinterpreted to challenge the heteronormative and androcentric understanding of the past



Historiography

Nancy Rabinowitz, Robert Sutton, Dyfri Williams, K.J Dover, and Sarah Pomeroy are all Classic scholars who have discussed sexuality or the lives of women in the ancient world, and whose research I have drawn on. They all, however, lack significant research on homoerotic relationships between women.

I also consulted Chelsea Blackmore, David Halperin, and Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood to inform my use of queer and feminist theoretical approaches.



Theory

In this study I employed feminist and queer theory to complete my analysis of each image

Feminist theory examines the intersectional identities of individuals, including gender, sexuality, race, and class.

Queer theory challenges the accepted notions and combats binary understandings of the past.



Analysis and Digital Exhibit

In conjunction with my written portion, I created a digital exhibition on ArtSteps that analyzed different pieces of art and how female homoeroticism can be discerned within them. Here, I provide an example of my analysis and how they are influenced by my theories.

On the kylix we can see two nude women bathing together. Using queer theory we can question the relationship that the women have with one another. Aspects such as the gaze, space and touch are all indicative of erotic behaviors and can be applied to this scene. Using feminist theory we can also question their role and why they were washing clothes together. We know that women worked and performed tasks together, and I suggest that these tasks provided the space for women to create intimate relationships. The nudity, rather than be seen as a sign of a hetaira (prostitute), should be reconsidered as indicative of homoeroticism. With these observations in mind, I suggest that an intimate relationship exists between these two women.



Inside of kylix with two nude women handling their clothes, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 23.160.54.t