

Paidikion: A Paiderastic Manuscript

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ABSTRACT: Erotica devoted primarily to paiderastic practices are rare and principally found not as printed matter but as privately circulated mss. A remarkable specimen of this kind is described and its author's identity deduced from internal evidence.

Far and wide though we may search in the annals of erotic literature of all countries, it is seldom possible to find works entirely or principally of paiderastic nature. To be sure, mention is often made of such practices, but ordinarily such mention is followed by the author's editorial disapproval of the acts just recounted.

The locus classicus is, of course, the scene in John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (commonly known as "*Fanny Hill*"), expurgated from most editions of this work save for the recent Olympia Press reprint and one eighteenth century edition cited by Ashbee, *Catena Librorum Tacendorum*, 60-61. I have compared the Ashbee text and the Olympia Press version and they are substantially identical; I quote for convenience. Fanny Hill is describing things she saw through a keyhole at Hampton Court:

. . . They now proceeded to such lengths as soon satisfied me what they were.

For presently the eldest unbuttoned the other's breeches, and removing the linen barrier, brought out to view a white shaft, middle sized, and scarce fledged, when after handling and playing with it a little, with other dalliance, all received by the boy without other opposition than certain wayward coynesses, ten times more alluring than repulsive, he got him to turn around, with his face from him, to a chair that stood hard by, when knowing, I suppose, his office, the Ganymede now obsequiously leaned his head against the back of it, and projecting his body, made a fair mark, still covered with his shirt, as he thus stood in a side view to me, but fronting his companion, who, presently unmasking his battery, produced an engine that certainly deserved to be put to a better use, and very fit to confirm me in my disbelief of the possibility of things being pushed to odious extremities which I had built on

the disproportion of parts; but this disbelief I was now to be cured of, as by my consent all young men should likewise be, that their innocence may not be betrayed into such snares, for want of knowing the extent of their danger, for nothing is more certain than that ignorance of a vice is by no means a guard against it.

Slipping, then, aside the young lad's shirt, and tucking it up under his cloaths behind, he shewed to the open air those globular fleshy eminences that compose the Mount Pleasants of Rome,¹ and which now, with all the narrow vale that intersects them, stood displayed and exposed to his attack, nor could I without a shudder behold the dispositions he made for it. First, then, moistening well with spittle his instrument, obviously to make it glib; he pointed, he introduced it, as I could plainly discern, not only from its direction, and my losing sight of it, but by the writhing, twisting, and soft murmured complaints of the young sufferer; but at length, the first straights of entrance being pretty well got through, everything seemed to move and go pretty currently on, as a carpet road, without much rub or resistance; and now, passing one hand round his minion's hips, he got hold of his red-topped ivory toy, that stood perfectly stiff, and shewed, that if he was like his mother behind, he was like his father before; this he diverted himself with, whilst with the other he wantoned with his hair, and leaning forward over his back, drew his face, from the boy shook the loose curls that fell over it, in the posture he stood him in, and brought him towards his, so as to receive a long breathed kiss; after which, renewing his driving, and thus continuing to harass his rear, the height of the fit came on with its usual symptoms, and dismissed the action.

The criminal scene they acted I had the patience to see to the end . . .

Even homoerotic works of erotica are far from common. *Teleny*, falsely ascribed to Oscar Wilde, is possibly the most familiar of these, through its recent Olympia Press reprinting. Nowadays we may be regaled with such fare as *L'Erotin*, *En Pension*, Paris: "Isidore Liseux," 1954, an entertaining work about a young boy disguised as a girl at a convent school, who seduces a master not unwilling to perform the sexual act in spite of his discovery of the youth's sex, or the recent dull and crapulous *Orgie à Rio*, but again, neither work is devoted entirely to paiderasty, although the authors' admonishments appear nowadays to have been dropped. The most often seen examples of homosexual erotica circulate in manuscript form, carbon-copied, or mimeographed. The majority of these have to do with orgies among young men in their twenties or, as in *Seven in a Barn*, teenagers. Paiderasty is all but unknown in this genre.

We could have wished for some mention, at least, of the matter in the quite excellently written *Josefine Mutzenbacher oder die Geschichte einer Wienerischer Dirne* (1906), ascribed to Felix Salten, author of

Bambi, and translated (Paris: n.p., 1931) as *Josefine Mutzenbacher: the Memoirs of a Viennese Prostitute*. Few of the characters are over sixteen years old, and the incidents are well-told and amusing, but paiderastic material is, alas, absent.

The present author has recently been allowed to examine a ms. which, were it published or publishable, would more than fill this lacuna in the annals of erotica. The ms. is now in a private collection in London, the owner having purchased it for a considerable sum of money from a bookseller who, it is rumored, paid half-a-crown for it in the Charing Cross Road. Such stories are common in book-collecting circles, and I would be inclined to disbelieve the tale were it not for the fact that the binding is so unprepossessing that the ms. might easily have been thrown unopened onto a sixpenny stall. A detailed description follows.

The manuscript is written in a blank ruled notebook, small quarto, bound—after the style of a bible!—in semi-stiff dark green roan boards. It is lettered only on the front cover, PAIDIKION.

Pagination by the author in ms., [ii], 1-570.

Title page: [in red:] PAIDIKION / VOL I [in black:] AN ANTHOLOGY OR THE BOOK OF / [in red:] HYAKINTHOS / AND / NARKISSOS / [in black:] [small vignette of male sex organs] / WITH THIRTEEN FULL PAGE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LIFE /

Evidently some mutilation occurred, as only eight plates are present. They are:

1. Frontispiece: A youth in toga and thonged sandals, rubber-stamped on verso 'Vicenzo Galdi, Via Campania lett: B, Roma.'
2. Facing p. 80: A nude youth outside a cave, verso blank but for the pencilled number 1211.
3. Facing p. 178: A nude youth reclining on a sofa, verso blank.
4. Laid-down on p. [183]: A nude boy sitting in an armchair, one leg seductively raised.
5. Laid-down on p. [219]: A nude boy and youth both sitting on a trapeze. The number 90 is faintly visible in one corner.
6. Facing p. 250: A nude boy standing. Erased, but partly visible on the torso is the number 815 and the date 5-9-1910.
7. Laid-down on p. [521]: An amazing photograph of a nude boy lying face-up on a bed, his waist-length hair flowing back over the pillow.² The number 297 is on the print.
8. Facing p. 548: A nude boy leaning against a stone urn in a garden.

On the verso is a rubber-stamped caption 'W. V. Gloeden, 20 1 09. Taormina. Sicilia, Piazza S.Domenico 6' and a crayoned number 747.⁸

There are two further illustrations aside from tiny erotic vignettes in pen-and-ink: a small original water-color of a young boy in an Eton collar is laid-down on p. 250; and a small photograph of the head of a boy with a bandanna round his brow is laid-down on p. 401.

The manuscript is clearly written in a small neat hand in black ink, with pagination and running titles in red ink at the head of each page. Contents follow:

p. 1: Dedication. A fourteen-line poem in rhyming couplets.

p. 2: "The Beloved Name." A list of translations of the word "Boy" in 24 languages. Spaces are left for the word in 13 other languages to be inserted.

p. 3: "The Thirty Three Joys of Paiderasty and their Symbols." This is a list of 33 different forms of sexual practices with boys, each of which is given a symbol. These symbols are used on pp. 560-566 (see below).

pp. 4-33: "Nox Amoris: a Fragment." A prose story, probably factual, of the first sexual experience of a young man with a soldier in the Horse Guards.

pp. 34-35: "Carmina Priapeia of Petronius Arbiter." An English translation.

pp. 36-77: "Amorous Education: a School Story." A delightful and amusing tale of a schoolmaster who must teach his nine pupils, aged between 14 and 17, the arts of paiderastic love, and naturally succeeds with every one.

p. 78: "Two Pathan Love Songs to his Boy."

p. 79: "Measurements of the Young Male Body."

pp. 80-139: "The Island: a Study in Solitude." A tale of a man shipwrecked on a desert island with a 17-year-old youth. He spies the youth masturbating and tries to force him to submit. The youth refuses, is bound and erotically whipped whereon he yields himself to the man. In the night the youth escapes and commits suicide. An act of necrophilia follows and the man severs the youth's sexual organ from the dead body: "And this one relic of the Island is with me now as I write."

p. 140: "Ten Little Bugger Boys." A 20-line doggerel verse in rhyming couplets.

pp. 141-158: "Nel Bagno: a Neapolitan Tale." The hero visits a turkish bath in Naples where he is seduced by the 16-year-old attendant.

The ensuing scenes are of masturbation, fellatio, coprolagnia and urolagnia.

pp. 159-167: "Laddie: an Episode." A tale of paiderasty among tramps, clearly influenced by 'Josiah Flynt's' "Homosexuality among Tramps" which forms Appendix A in Havelock Ellis's *Sexual Inversion*.⁴

pp. 168-249: "Floreat Etona: or, Where Waterloo Was Won." An incredibly detailed story, with numerous erotic scenes, between the hero, who calls himself Julius, and Douglas, aged 16, and Philip, aged 14, two Eton schoolboys. Philip, in the course of the narrative, tells a tale of his visit to another Etonian where he is involved in an orgy with foreign boys and animals.

pp. 250-387: "The Furnace: an Autobiography in which is set forth the Secret Diversions of a Paiderast." A poem, in rhyming couplets, of 2706 lines. There can be nothing similar to this achievement in any erotic work. Considering that the author was an amateur poet, it is a fine effort, by far the best-written section in the book, and completely autobiographical. While the author's name is not given, certain clues lead us to his identity, as will be seen later.

pp. 388-487: "Simla: the Tale of a Secret Society." A long story concerning the hero's encounter with Eric, a 13-year-old schoolboy. He introduces two other boys, Foster, 17, and Fred, 16. Every possible sexual act is performed.

pp. 488-559: "Kid: the Strange Story of a Bugger-Boy." Kid, a homeless 13-year-old orphan, is seduced by a man. The following night, after an orgy of solitary masturbation in a public park, he is accosted by a friend of his original seducer and taken to a "peg-house" or brothel staffed by boys. There he is immediately taken up by 13-year-old Tommy, a public school boy who works at the brothel in the holidays, and is taught all manner of ways of delighting his customers. At the end is written "Continued in Volume II," but I do not believe another volume was written.

pp. 560-566: "Paidology." This is a list of boys with whom the author of the ms. has had affairs. The list is divided into eight columns: (1) The number of the boy on the list, totaling 129. (2) Age. (3) Place. (4) Date. This ranges from 1897 to 1917. (5) Name. Usually only first names are given, but there are a few exceptions. (6) Race. (7) References. This is a list of symbols referring back to page 3 of the ms. and one can at once tell the physical practices performed by the author and each indi-

vidual boy-friend. (8) An unidentifiable column of numbers which range from 1 to 93. Occasionally there are superscript digits, e.g. 7² or 1¹. I take this to mean, possibly, the number of separate times meetings took place and the superscript digits to refer to the number of orgasms achieved at one session.

At the bottom of each page an average is taken of the ages of the boys; this never rises above 15.8. The figures in the mysterious final column are also added at the foot of each page. The youngest boys are aged seven, one being a Muslim boy named Rahimbu whom the author merely handled, the other an Arab named Mohammed Ali with whom he practised mutual masturbation, fellation and anal intercourse.

From the manuscript's details we can identify the unnamed author. In the "Paidology" we learn that he had his first sexual experience in 1897 at Charterhouse School with a boy called Stanley. This is confirmed by the autobiographical poem, "The Furnace": "We loved each other . . . Stanley Winch and I." In the register of boys at Charterhouse School,⁵ we find Winch recorded thus: "WINCH, Stanley Brooke, b. Nov. 1883. (Hodgsonites)." "Hodgsonites"⁶ is the name of the house in which Stanley Winch was boarding. Now it is without question that the author of the ms. occupied the same house, since he describes sexual encounters in the dormitory:

That night when "Tommy Page"⁷ had gone his rounds
And I'd made certain from the various sounds
About my cubicle that all fast slept
Across the passage on bare feet I crept,
Stifling the tumult of my beating heart
Lest someone wake and hear it and the part
That I was playing—lover or beloved
I cannot say—be quickly known. I shoved
A little nervously at Stanley's door
And like a ghost I slid within and saw
My darling's length upon the shadowy bed
His white arms locked behind his golden head
The gleaming outline of his naked frame
Just visible, no more. I spoke his name
In lowest whisper and he whispered back,
"Why, Ken, old boy . . . you are so beastly slack
"I thought you were not coming!" But he took
My trembling body to his breast.

From the third-from-last line in the above passage, and from certain

other sections in the work, we learn that the author's christian name was "Ken." Now, the only "Kenneth" in this particular house at Charterhouse school around 1897, which date appears beside Stanley's name in the "Paidology" section, is one Arthur Kenneth Searight. And this is, indeed, our author. He was born in 1883, which makes him also around 14 at the time of his sexual encounter with Stanley Winch, and he left Charterhouse in 1900 to go to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. From there, by means of the Army List, his career can be traced. He became a Second Lieutenant in the Royal West Kent regiment on October 12, 1907, and was promoted to Captain on September 1, 1914. He was temporarily Railway Transport Officer, India, during a few months in 1914; and in June 1918 he was drafted to the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force. These postings are completely consistent with the places mentioned in the "Paidology" sections.⁸

The author's identity was clinched by my discovery of a copy of his only commercially published work, *Sona*,⁹ at the London Library. This copy bears a presentation inscription in Searight's hand, dated November 1943, which exactly matches the calligraphy in *Paidikion*.

Nor is the fact that the semanticist C. K. Ogden contributed a Preface to *Sona* entirely without interest here.¹⁰ Ogden is believed to have been the owner, at one time, of the renowned 'Venice Letters' of Frederick Rolfe, "Baron Corvo." These letters, devoted to the same subject as that which interested Kenneth Searight, are described by Rolfe's biographer A. J. A. Symons as treating "in language that omitted nothing, of the criminal delights that waited for the ignoble sensualist to whom they were addressed, in the Italian city from which his correspondent wrote."¹¹ One may speculate that Ogden became possessed of *Paidikion* to add to his library of books and manuscripts on such subjects. How it got onto a remainder stall is anyone's guess.

Searight is capable of portraying all kinds of emotions and actions, much in the manner of Petronius Arbiter. There is grossness of a thoroughly Roman order, as in this example from *Floreat Etona*:

. . . It was awfully funny to see all those boys lolling about and eating and drinking stark naked! Lord Arthur made Jacques soak his whopping great cock in champagne and then sucked it dry. [Follows a recital of similar antics with the other boys, and others involving an oyster and anilinctus.] . . . in fact, seeing him do this made us all frightfully keen to try the same trick, which we all did till we rolled about on the cushions shrieking with laughter!

But he can also be mildly and engagingly erotic:

I unbuttoned the top button of his trowsers . . . I was trembling like a leaf and I thought I detected a tremor pass through the boy in sympathy. "What are you doing?" he asked, the bare arm which encircled my neck tightening its hold unconsciously. "You know very well," I replied . . . Then I undid the remaining button, opened the front of his trowsers and the next moment my fingers were curling themselves rapturously in the thick bunch of hair, sliding over the quickly stiffening length of his boyish member and squeezing gently, caressingly . . . (*Simla*)

He can also write of love:

When he had gone, I turned back into my bedroom with an altogether new sense of loneliness [sic]. This shock headed, grey eyed boy of thirteen had sprung into my life like a meteor, bringing with him a trail of fire. I looked at my books, standing in a row on my writing table. Last night I had welcomed this "after tea hour" as a precious hour for study. Why was I so restless now? Why did I not want to study? Wherever I looked, why did Eric's pale, rather un-English face appear like a vision? (*Simla*)

And he can be just amusingly coarse:

Ten little Bugger Boys, drinking deep of wine
Got so tight at Fitz' Bar they counted only nine;
Nine little Bugger Boys, finding it was late
Left a lad in Leicester Square: and then there were eight.
Eight little Bugger Boys, dreaming still of heaven,
Met a lusty sodomite: and then there were seven.
Seven little Bugger Boys, in an awkward fix,
Saw a copper standing by: and then there were six.
Six little Bugger Boys—all now left alive—
Buggered one another till they only reckoned five!
Five little Bugger Boys, bottoms very sore,
Played at tossing Freddy off until there were four. . . .
(*Ten Little Bugger Boys*)

But we must beware of considering *Paidikion* to be nothing more than an obscene omnium gatherum. As Searight himself says in *Nel Bagno*:

Yes, you may shudder, you may turn from me in loathing, in disgust. But we are all of us God and brute beast. I was learning to what depths the lusts of human nature could descend.

Paidikion, whatever else it may be called, is a clinical observation, in fictional and poetic form, of the erotic stimulus which can be experienced between man and boy. It is much more than that: it is a Petronian chronicle of what may be called erotic folkways among some of

the more overt paiderasts in late 19th and early 20th century Britain and British Colonies. It is also significant in its parallel to Lord Byron, considered simply as a case history. Here there is no fabled seduction of an innocent boy by an old roué, turning the boy into a rakehell. Rather, the boy loves another boy at school, then wanders through many countries trying to recapture the magic of that initial experience. We may deplore the substitution in his life whereby he searched ever for new experience rather than settling down in proper Greek fashion with a long-term boyfriend, rather than becoming husband and father as well as lover. But we cannot deny the clinical and anthropological value of such a manuscript as this. Should publication sometime become possible, a more detailed study will follow.

NOTES

1. "The Mount Pleasants of Rome": evidently Cleland's slap at Italian mores of the period, where boys and queens and female impersonators were always available, often for a price, and where buggery, the most taboo of all sexual techniques among Britons, was commonly accepted.
2. Possibly of German origin. There was, in the 1880's, a fashion in Germany for having pretty boys let their hair grow to amazing length, to be cut short only when they became of military age. Bronze statuettes of this period, dated and signed, record this as plainly as could any photograph.
3. Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden (1856-1931) lived in Taormina and made a living by selling photographs of the town's youthful population. I hope to contribute an article on him in a future number of this periodical.
4. Pages 359-367. Most readily available in volume one of *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, New York: Random House, var. eds.
5. *Charterhouse Register 1872-1900*, Godalming: R. B. Stebman, 1904, p. 475.
6. Named after the original housemaster, Rev. J. T. Hodgson, who died on Sept. 3, 1880.
7. Thomas E. Page became housemaster of Hodgsonites in 1881.
8. For an account of the regimental history in India and Mesopotamia at this period, see Capt. C. T. Atkinson, *The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment -1914-1919*, London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1924.
9. Kenneth Searight, *Sona: an Auxiliary Neutral Language*, London: Kegan Paul, 1935; introduction by C. K. Ogden. Searight's interest in comparative languages is clearly shown not only in this book but in the section "The Beloved Name" in *Paidikion* where he lists the word "Boy" in 24 languages.
10. This is the C. K. Ogden perhaps best known for *The Meaning of Meaning* (with I. A. Richards), Routledge, 1936.
11. A. J. Symons, *The Quest for Corvo: an Experiment in Biography*, London: Cassell, 1934, p. 12. The originals of these letters, addressed to C. Masson Fox, a timber-merchant living in Falmouth, are now in an American college library; an imperfect typescript, lately offered by Phoenix Bookshop, has been bought by the Bodleian Library.