

I will argue that a shift from more positive to more negative representations of pederasty occurred sometime around the middle of the fifth-century, concomitant with the growing democratization of Athenian culture and the shift of discursive dominance away from the traditional elites among whom pederasty was more widely practiced, indeed *of* whom it was a characteristic class-marker. I would like to illustrate this phenomenon by examining the myth of Chrysippus, the bastard son of Pelops who was loved and forcibly seized by Laius, while showing him how to drive a chariot. The boy later committed suicide out of shame over his violation, and Pelops cursed Laius with childlessness, as one unworthy to come into contact with children. Clearly this story constructs pederasty in an altogether negative light, as a relationship begun in friendship with the pretense of pedagogical development turns into lust, violent rape, and destruction of the child. It will be my argument that Euripides was the first poet to link Laius with the death of Chrysippus, and that this plot is consistent with a negative characterization of homosexuality generally in the works of Euripides, in contrast to its more benign status in the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Finally, I wish to embed Euripides' creation of this patently anti-pederastic myth in the broader social context of Athenian discourse concerning pederasty at the end of the fifth-century.

After a brief review of the *Chrysippus'* fragments, testimonia, and likely place within the trilogy of 409, I will situate Euripides' plot among the multiple versions of the Chrysippus myth that existed in antiquity. That there were so many argues against its canonical codification in early epic tradition. I will also argue against Lloyd-Jones' thesis that the first play of the *Seven Against Thebes* trilogy concerned Laius' rape of Chrysippus. Hellanicus (4F157 *FGrH*), Thucydides (1.9.2), and Plato (*Crat.* 395B) were all familiar with a version of the story in which Atreus killed Chrysippus out of fear that he might be a rival for the succession to Pelops. This was probably the earliest form the story took, since none of these prose authors would likely have had reason to invent such a myth. It is also consistent with the ephobic representations of Chrysippus we can note in fifth-century art. On the other hand, Praxilla of Sicyon (fr. 5 PMG), a lyric poet of the mid-fifth century, said that Zeus abducted Chrysippus. Hyginus (*Fab.* 271) later relates a version in which Theseus did so. Similar to Pindar's revision of the Pelops myth, Praxilla produced a less bloodthirsty and more benign account of why he disappeared. Like the demythologizers who humanized Ganymede's lover into Minos or Tantalus, Euripides then conceived the idea of substituting Laius for Zeus, since a human lover would create more interesting dramatic possibilities for the exploration of erotic pathology, and Laius was already known to have had associations with the House of Pelops during his exile. Moreover, earlier tragedy probably characterized him as a figure of sexual incontinence in virtue of his refusal to heed the oracle forbidding him to impregnate his wife. The chariot was the appropriate vehicle for his crime against Chrysippus, given that his eventual destiny would have the chariot-mounted Laius killed by his own son in revenge for an arrogant encounter on the road.