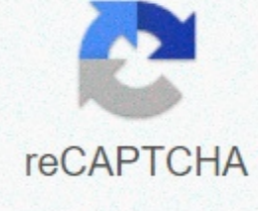




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Was achilles gay for patroclus

This is one of the big questions of Greek mythology that continues to be debated thousands of years later: are Achilles and Patroclus lovers? Or just a platonic friend? At Quora, I recently found a popular answer to the question What important part of Greek myth do filmmakers always seem to be wrong? According to this answer, which in this paper has been selected more than 6,000 times, one of the things they are wrong is the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus. This writer is convinced that Hollywood (and in particular the 2004 Film Troy) refused to show the true romantic nature of their relationship to appeal to a wider audience. Yes, Achilles is gay, he says definitively. I wouldn't normally write an article in response to one person's opinion online, but I have found this sentiment many times over the years. There is a widespread attitude that Achilles and Patroclus are clearly in sexual relationships and that anyone who questions that or disagrees should have some hidden agenda that will cause them to deny their true nature. In an article about the film Troy in the Guardian, reviewers wrote, It seems that the Greek hero (Achilles) has undergone a radical straightening process - and I am not talking about his hair anymore. No gods and no gay men. You have to wonder why they bothered to make a movie about ancient Greece in the first place.. So, here, I'm going to take us back to the original source and offer something rebuttal to this popular interpretation. But I will also examine the best evidence that Achilles and Patroclus were in a romantic or sexual relationship. When it comes to Achilles and Patroclus, the obvious place to start is the epic poem Homer the Iliad. These are the oldest surviving accounts, the most definitive in their lives, as well as the source material that most interpretations and representations are then based on. This is the gold standard when it comes to Achilles and Patroclus mythology. So what did the Iliad say? Simply put, he said they were very close friends. It does not state or, as far as I know, even imply that Achilles and Patroclus are lovers. But don't take my word for it. Here are some of the moments and quotes that proponents of the lover's argument often quote: It is indisputable that Achilles and Patroclus are very close to each other. Achilles even hoped that all the other armies, both Greek and Trojan, would perish so that he and Patroclus could conquer Troy himself (Book 16). After Patroclus is killed by Hector, Achilles reacts with intense sadness and anger, so far to say that he has lost his hasrah to live until he is able to avenge Patroclus' life. are some of his words: My dear friend died – Patroclus – a loved one beyond all my other colleagues, loved as my own life – I have lost Book 18. Patroclus returns as a ghost and has one last conversation with Achilles: Last request - grant it, please. Never bury my bones other than yours, Achilles, let them lie together... So now let one jar, a golden two-handed urn your glorious mother gives you, hold our bones - together. Book 23. Later, Achilles held an elaborate and emotional funeral ritual for Patroclus and even placed his own hair locks in Patroclus' hands (Book 23). There are many other similar moments, but I think you get the picture. It is clear that Achilles and Patroclus have a very deep and intimate bond. But none of them in the Iliad were explicitly romantic or sexual. Gregory Nagy, who may be the world's leading authority on the Iliad and the meaning behind the text, wrote that, For Achilles... in its own rising scale of affection as dramatized by the entire composition of the Iliad, the highest place must belong to Patroklos. Again, no one should be sexual. Robin Lane Fox, one of ancient Greece's most influential and knowledgeable historians, sums it up by saying, Of course there is no evidence in the Iliad text that Achilles and Patroclus were lovers (The Tribal Imagination: Civilization and the Savage Mind, p. 223). Ok, so why do so many people seem to disagree with Homer, or subscribe to interpretations that go beyond what he writes? As many Greeks of the 5th and 4th centuries BC, centuries later after the Iliad was written, did portray Achilles and Patroclus as lovers. They presented it as part of a pederastic relationship, which was a habit at the time in which an older man (usually in his twenties) formed a sexual relationship with a younger man (usually in his teens). However, Classical Greek writers could not even agree on who was the older couple (erastes) and who was the younger couple (eromenos). Plato presented one version in his Symposium, while Aeschylus presented the other in his lost play The Myrmidons (while the other at the time, like Xenophon, seemed unsure the two were lovers at all). This confusion made it quite clear to me that the Classical Greeks were simply trying to project their culture onto the different and much older cultures depicted in the Iliad (written around the 8th century BC and based on legends dating back to the 12th century BC). This projection has been a common thread that runs through depictions of Achilles and Patroclus since ancient times. They are often shown as lovers in a more sexually liberal culture (mainly as it relates to same-sex love) and as close friends in a more sexually conservative culture. So what's the verdict? Are Achilles and Patroclus Lovers? Before answering, it is important to state that Achilles and Patroclus are mythological figures. Even if the myth somehow Based on real individuals, the Achilles and Patroclus we know are fiction, not historical. So, there really is no correct answer in the same way we know that, say, the United States was founded in 1776. It's a little more abstract and open to interpretation. If by

Are lovers of Achilles and Patroclus?, someone asked about the meaning behind the oldest and most comprehensive source we have, the answer for me may not be. Homer didn't explicitly say them, nor did he imply them clearly. Some believe there are clues in the text that he hopes readers and listeners will take, but that is a pretty big stretch for me. Feels like wishful thinking. However, if one looks at the totality of the mythological traditions of Achilles and Patroclus, there are clearly many precedents for portraying them as lovers. Many of history's greatest thinkers, writers and artists consider Achilles and Patroclus romantically involved. From this point of view, why is Shakespeare's interpretation (where they are lovers) less valid than Homer's? Of course there is an argument that myths evolve over time and Homer's version is just one link (albeit important) in that ongoing chain. So it depends on how you approach finding the truth in mythology. It should also be noted that some people with much better credentials than I do not seem to agree with some of my conclusions. Madeline Miller, who holds a Master's degree in Classic Film from Brown University, spent more than a decade adapting the Iliad into the award-winning novel The Song of Achilles (which I review here). In it, Achilles and Patroclus did have a sexual relationship. Here's one quick quote from their younger days, before the Trojan War began: I was shaking, afraid to put it to fly. I don't know what to do, what he wants. I kissed his neck, his chest span, and tasted salt. He seemed to swell under my touch, to mature. Smells like almonds and earth. He pressed me, smashed my lips for wine (100). This is one of my favorite books and I know that Miller is doing all he can to be true to ancient source material. In an interview she was asked how she came to the conclusion that the two were lovers: I stole it from Plato! The idea that Patroclus and Achilles were lovers is old enough. Many Greco-Roman writers read their relationships as romantic—it was a common and accepted interpretation of the ancient world. We even have fragments of the lost Aeschylus tragedy, in which Achilles talks about his frequent kisses and Patroclus. There is a lot of support for they are in the Iliad text itself, although Homer never makes it explicit. For me, the most comable evidence, aside from the depths of Achilles' grief, is how he grieves: Achilles refused to burn Patroclus's body, insisting on keep the corpse in his tent, where he constantly cries and embraces it—despite the terrible reaction of those around him. That sense of physical destruction speaks deeply to me about the true and total intimacy between the two men. The fragment Miller refers to is from Myrmidons by Aeschylus, which I mentioned earlier written several centuries after the Iliad was completed. And for the way Achilles grieves, it certainly underscores their intimacy, but it doesn't necessarily imply sexual intimacy. At least not for me. Miller also admits that he took inspiration from other sources than the Iliad to develop his story. To defend the other side for a moment, we don't know for sure what homer we want to believe about Achilles and Patroclus. I'm not sure she wants us to think they're lovers, but there are some parts that definitely open up possibilities. There's also a lot we don't know about Ancient Greece (Homer's time), so we're missing some valuable context. Maybe the Greeks in classical times knew something about a period of time before we didn't. After all, they're much closer to Homer in terms of timeline than we are. So, although I don't think Homer intended us to see Achilles and Patroclus as lovers, that view is not directly at odds with Homer's version either. So certainty isn't really on the table here. The most to say is that the romantic or sexual aspects to their relationship do not reflect the literal reading of the text. Anything beyond that is an exercise in speculation, projection, or interpretation (or all three). three).

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