



ANTEROS

A FORGOTTEN MYTH

CRAIG E. STEPHENSON

Anteros

Anteros: A Forgotten Myth explores how the myth of Anteros disappears and reappears throughout the centuries, from classical Athens to the present day, and looks at how the myth challenges the work of Freud, Lacan, and Jung, among others. It examines the successive cultural experiences that formed and inform the myth and also how the myth sheds light on individual human experience and the psychoanalytic process.

Topics of discussion include:

- Anteros in the Italian Renaissance, the French Enlightenment, and English Modernism
- Psychologizing Anteros: Freud, Lacan, Girard, and Jung
- Three anterotic moments in a consulting room.

This book presents an important argument at the boundaries of the disciplines of analytical psychology, psychoanalysis, art history, and mythology. It will therefore be essential reading for all analytical psychologists and psychoanalysts as well as art historians and those with an interest in the meeting of psychoanalytic thought and mythology.

Craig E. Stephenson is a graduate of the C.G. Jung Institute Zurich, the Institute for Psychodrama, Zumikon, and the Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies, University of Essex. His most recent book is *Possession: Jung's Comparative Anatomy of the Psyche* (Routledge, 2009).

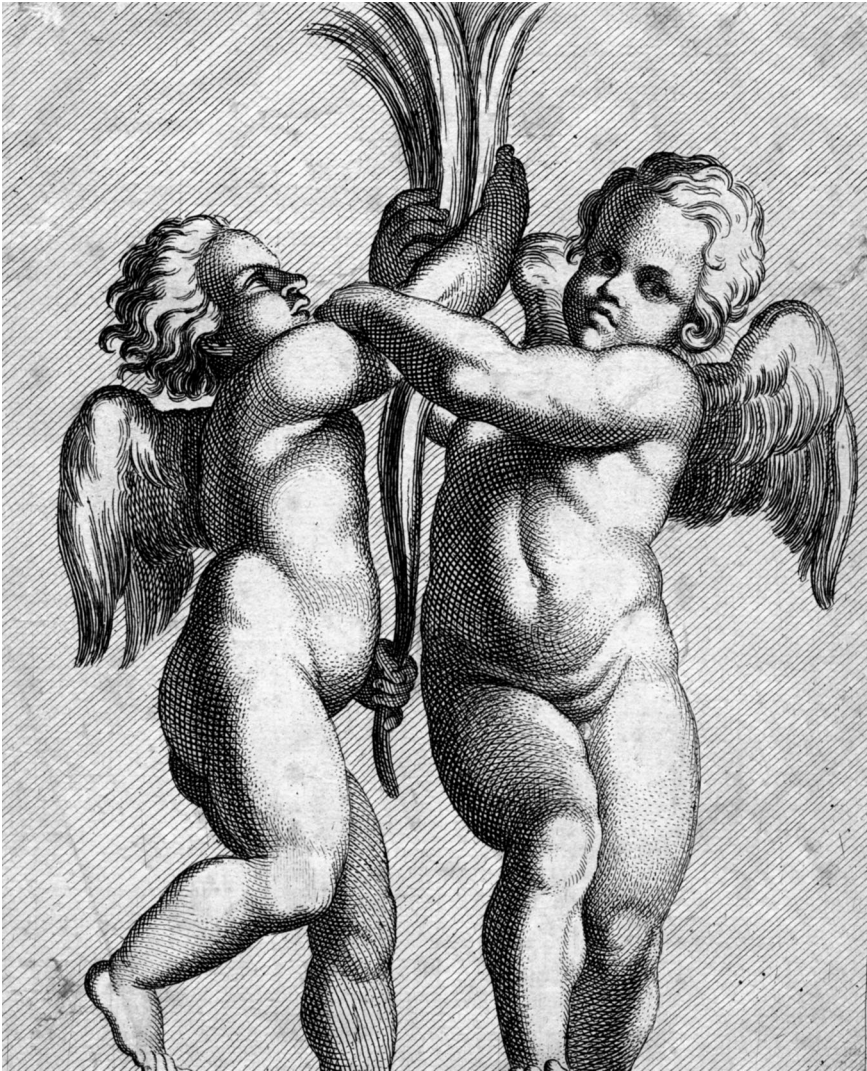


Figure i Eros and Anteros. Engraving after a fresco by Annibale Carracci, Palazzo Farnese, Rome, Italy.

Source: From the author's collection.

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This book is for Alberto



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Figure ii *Eros and Anteros Wrestling*. Vase. Copyright © Martin von Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg.

Photo: K. Oehrlein.

Introduction

On a forgotten myth

This is the child, Love; this, your abyss:
See, there is nothing that he can befriend,
He who in all things is his own opposite.
(Francisco de Quevedo, 'Soneto
amoroso definiendo el amor', p. 385)

The myth of Anteros, the younger brother of Eros, seems to have crystallized in Athens in around 450 BC, at a moment when certain well-defined problems troubled the Athenians. The earliest remaining artistic expressions of the cult of Anteros date to this time, but the major extant renditions of his stories come from texts created after the Roman conquest of Greece. Today, the story of Anteros is all but forgotten. This book brings together many of these Greek and Roman fragments, and then follows their trail over centuries and into our time, recording when and how the myth of Anteros has come back to life.

Myths intrigue us because their narratives run deeper than the mere telling of a good story. They feel weighted with meaning that is both elemental and shared. That myths live and die, come and go, is perhaps not surprising, since they can lose their firmness and significance in a particular retelling or context. But what precisely is happening when a myth appears, disappears, and then reappears, over and over again, as if opposing the times, as if asserting its import? Does a myth possess not only meaning but also vigour or forcefulness?

In one important early story, the infant Eros cannot grow. Aphrodite, his distressed mother, goes to her sister Themis for advice, and this wise Titan recommends that she should have a second son, this one fathered by Ares, the god of war. Anteros will oppose yet strengthen Eros, acting as a loving sibling rival who will shift the stuck dynamic of his older brother in a positive direction. And, according to the story, Themis's remedy works: as long as Anteros remains at hand, he and Eros grow. But if Anteros absents himself, then they both regress.

What meanings can be ascribed today to such a story? Classicists question most contemporary approaches to Greek myth. They want to restrict writing about the ancient Greek mind to what can be read in the ancient texts themselves – which is