Sex

Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity Alastair J. L. Blanshard
 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

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Alastair J. L. Blanshard

WILEY-BLACKWELL
A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication

This edition first published 2010

Blackwell Publishing was acquired by John Wiley & Sons in February 2007. Blackwell's publishing program has been merged with Wiley's global Scientific, Technical, and Medical business to form Wiley-Blackwell.

Registered Office
John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, United Kingdom

Editorial Offices
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Blanshard, Alastair.
Sex : vice and love from antiquity to modernity / Alastair J.L. Blanshard.
p. cm. – (Classical receptions)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-4051-2291-7 (hbk. : alk. paper) 1. Sex–History. 2. Sex customs–History.
I. Title.
HQ12.B57 2010
306.709–dc22

2009049287

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Set in 10/13pt Galliard by Toppan Best-set Premedia Limited
Printed in Malaysia

I 2010

For Suzanne,
My first real teacher.

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Preface

> **Factoid** n. Something that becomes accepted as a fact, although it is not (or may not be) true; spec. an assumption or speculation reported and repeated so often that it is popularly considered true; a simulated or imagined fact.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists the earliest reference of the word 'factoid' as occurring in a 1973 essay by Norman Mailer on Marilyn Monroe. It is no accident that 'factoid' should be coined to analyze one of the most eroticized and fantasized figures of the twentieth century. For when it comes to the topic of sex, the combination of illicit thrills, prurient fascination, and a desire for the personal and the private means that critical faculties get all too often thrown out the window and we find ourselves unable to resist a juicy story, no matter how improbable.

This book is a story about fantasy and the reality that lurks behind these fantasies. It is a history of facts and factoids. Its subject matter is the erotic desires that have been projected onto the cultures of classical antiquity. This work examines the impact that sexual fantasies about the classical world have had on western culture. Authors, artists, politicians, philosophers, and moralists have all turned to the classical world in a search to understand erotic desire. The classical world has regularly been invoked both as the home of sexual freedom and a haven for unnatural perversity. This monograph aims to examine the ways in which cultures have used classical erotica to locate and articulate their own erotic discourse. It attempts to unearth the various investments that cultures and individuals have made in antique sexual pleasure. It examines the ways in which the classical world has provided a mask for the dissimulation of acts of power as regulations of pleasure.

A history of classically inspired erotic imaginings provides a fruitful location for the discussion of the important role that imagined versions of antiquity have played in shaping notions about sexuality, guilt, desire, and love. This book seeks to juxtapose these fantasies with the reality of classical life. Not only does a narrative about sex in antiquity bring into relief the fantastic aspects of later constructions,

but it also allows us an opportunity to observe the way in which the classical world exists in dynamic tension with the modern. Ideas about one impact on the other. In undertaking this task, this work hopes to make a contribution to two distinct conversations.

The first is a conversation about the role of sex and sexuality in western culture. One of the important theoretical breakthroughs made in the twentieth century was the realization that sex was more than just a mechanical act. There might be a biological imperative behind it, but this was not the only, or indeed the most important, factor conditioning sexual behavior. Sex is a story about culture as well as nature. This has ushered in a whole new understanding of the role and significance of sex.

Sex has been written into history. We can now examine the ways in which sexual behavior has been buffeted by social forces. Sex and the discourse surrounding it respond to political, economic, and ideological conditions. Very little about sex is now taken as immutable. The status of sex varies according to time and place. It comes into view as a category worthy of comment as a result of the actions of agents. Sex gains importance because it is a place where so many ideas about gender, the body, ethnicity, the nature of pleasure, and the purpose of life come together and coalesce. For these reasons, sex and the discussion of sex have proved useful mechanisms for gaining an insight into different cultures, especially those cultures where sexual activity has been excessively regulated or occupies a central position in the construction of identity ('you can tell who I am, by who I sleep with').

In addition to the history of sex, this work hopes to make a contribution to the burgeoning field of classical reception studies. Reception studies is located broadly within the tradition of the 'history of ideas' and traces the impact of the cultures of Greece and Rome on later cultures. There has always been an interest in tracing the influence of the antique past onto the modern. Within German scholarship, the study of the 'afterlife' (*Nachleben*) or 'reception history' (*Rezeptionsgeschichte*) are well-established areas of scholarship. What distinguishes classical reception studies from previous incarnations such as 'the study of the classical tradition' is a change in sensibility. Reception studies is less interested in quantifying high culture's debt to ancient Greece or Rome. Rather than establishing pedigrees for great names, it is more interested in developing genealogies of ideas in which concepts mutate, evolve, or, sometimes, completely fail to have any epigone at all. It is democratic in the sense that it takes an interest in all fields of human endeavor, and feels happy to run the coarse against the refined to see what happens. It is a field of study that regards comic books and computer games as suitable objects of study as much as opera or old master paintings. Reception studies cuts across disciplinary boundaries, and draws upon the critical tools developed in disciplines such as film studies, art history, philosophy, gender studies, cultural history, performance studies, and the history of medicine.

The structure of this book is divided into two parts, 'Roman Vice' and 'Greek Love'. On the surface, this division perpetuates a clichéd distinction about the

immorality of Rome and the restrained virtue of Greece. It also feeds into another division, the split between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Since the very inception of the term, 'Greek love' has stood for the attraction between men whereas the key signifier of the sexuality of Rome has come to be the orgy, a queer encounter admittedly, but in which one of the many types of mingling that occurs is a mingling of genders. 'Gay' orgies always need to be identified as such. Like sex itself, the orgy has a tendency to be coded straight.

Binary divisions make a good place for starting a discussion about culture because they are so often used as a way of ordering the world. They get tangled up in each other. It is too easy to explain one binary distinction in terms of another. What's the difference between men and women? Well, it's like the difference between night and day, hot and cold, wet and dry, reason and madness, Greece and Rome. The arrangements are arbitrary, but they gain weight through repetition.

Yet, it is not the intention of this work to repeat clichés or perpetuate stereotypes about ways of viewing. While it is certainly worth exploring the reasons why Rome came to regularly stand for lasciviousness and viciousness in a way that Greece rarely did, it is also equally important to note those occasions when these divisions broke down or were not observed. For example, Roman 'vice' has a lot to tell us about the history of homosexuality, just as the story of Greek 'love' is crucial to an understanding of the development of the discourse around debauchery. For all the apparent clichés, it soon becomes clear that the idea that you could maintain a strict division between a Greek and Roman discourse in relation to sex turns out to be a fantasy in its own right.

It is for this reason, amongst others, that the book begins with a discussion of 'Roman' material before 'Greek'. In the world of sex nothing ever plays straight and lines of influence become blurred and intermingle. One of the features of sexuality as a field of discourse is the way in which it encourages a riotous ludic disposition in its interlocutors. In discussions of sex, adherence to laws of strict chronology, attention to considerations of genre, and a critical sense of disbelief about the implausible or the impractical are oft put aside. People are eclectic in their usage of allusions. Greece may have primacy in time and, arguably, in prestige, but those positions are often reversed when it comes to discussions of sex. Roman material often provides the starting point and the matrix for understanding sexual activity with an invocation of Greek material only added as subsidiary or decorative supplement.

One other reason, apart from a desire to highlight clichés, for invoking the terms 'vice' and 'love' is that I want to use them in a particular technical sense and that is to signify two different modes of reception. One of the aspects that makes the reception of antiquity so fascinating as a phenomenon is the way in which it is possible to tell the story of the transmission of an idea in two different ways. One method is as a sustained encounter over time in which each subsequent engagement reacts to, and builds upon, all previous encounters. It's a form of romance, a form of love. The other way is where an aspect of antiquity enters,

apparently unmediated, straight into the cultural bloodstream. I say 'apparently unmediated' because a complete lack of mediation is an impossibility. Every encounter with antiquity always arrives pre-framed. Yet, there is a mode of engagement that 'feels' unmediated. A moment when you experience the sense that you are working without a tradition; that the ancient world is speaking to you directly. It's the moment of the arrival of Plato in Renaissance Florence or the unearthing of an erotic picture in Pompeii or the unveiling of the Apollo Belvedere or the first time that the empress Poppaea looms over you thanks to the seemingly miraculous technology of Cinemascope. For the sake of a better term, let's call this reaction to antiquity a type of vice (and let's put the inherent moralizing inbuilt into the term aside, although perhaps not the sense of thrill). I have tried to encapsulate these two different modes of reception in the way in which I have told this story. I begin with 'vice' and the sharp juxtaposition of ideas and objects. In this section, I've been more interested in the story as a series of reactions to classical material than part of a long narrative. For this reason, it is arranged thematically rather than chronologically. The second half of the book attempts to examine reception through a longer timeframe and tells the story of the development of notions of same-sex attraction over time from ancient Greece to the twentieth century. Although the leap of ideas about Greek love from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century should remind us that the story of this love affair is anything but purely linear.

It is this desire to capture various forms and modes of reception that has encouraged me to include a number of 'snapshots' of classical reception as textboxes throughout the course of the book. These textboxes concentrate on important objects or themes that have been the subject of continued and varied interest over a long period of time. They are designed to give a sense of the range and flexibility in the reception story as well as a concentrated sense of the potency of the antique in the articulation of desire. The topics discussed in these textboxes include the appropriation of myth, the role of collecting and display in the construction of notions of the erotic, and the power of biography in the formation of fantasy.

One of the aims of the book is to establish those aspects of antiquity that have been the locus of erotic attention and to explain the reason for the explosion of discussion that surrounds them. It is not the intention to provide an exhaustive catalog of every sexual fantasy in which the ancient world has participated. This has meant that a number of not insignificant stories have been left out. So, for example, in focusing on 'queer' sex, I have chosen to concentrate more heavily on the issues of homosexuality and 'group sex' rather than, for example, S&M or transvestism. One obvious area of omission has arisen from the decision to concentrate largely on Anglo-American and European traditions. This is not through lack of interest in or failing to recognize the significance of events outside of the sphere of the West. Non-western encounters with classical sexuality are a rich and fascinating topic, combining as they do issues of colonial and post-colonial politics with the frisson caused by the interaction between western and indigenous

traditions about sexual intercourse. To give just one example. In 1999, Calcutta's first support group for lesbian, transsexual, and transgender women was created. They chose to name their group 'Sappho'. Unpacking such onomastics, we find an interesting tale about the resonances of a western classical heroine with a group that looks both towards western notions of sexual freedom and, at the same time, desires to respect and validate Indian traditions of female love. Examining the aims and concerns of this group, we discover that this is not a simple story about the wholesale adoption of a monolithic notion of western sexuality. While the group happily runs under the slogan 'Let there be courage, let there be Sappho' and decorates its website with quotes from Sappho's 'Hymn to Aphrodite', it also regularly indulges in debates in its newsletters about the applicability of western notions of homosexuality to Indian same-sex desire. Here the poet both speaks to and establishes distance from the passions of her contemporary Indian audience. Looking at the women of Calcutta's reading of Sappho, we see a complex critique about the nature of sexual identity. There is a long history of such intersections and it could easily be expanded to include examples from the cultures of Japan, China, Africa, and the Arabic world. One suspects that we are only going to see further growth as the field of sexuality, like so many other areas, becomes increasingly globalized.

Suffice it to say, there are more stories to tell than the pages of this book can contain. Instead of covering every piece of the varied sexual mosaic, this book hopes to offer a map that charts out a large part of the terrain and points out some of the important landmarks. It is designed to illustrate some of the key texts and issues that have fed into the formation of sexual fantasy in the West. It also examines strategies that have been deployed in the appropriation and repackaging of the classical world by post-antique authors. In doing so, it hopes to offer a blueprint for understanding the forms of engagement that it has not explicitly covered. This book concentrates on the dynamics of appropriation rather than cataloging every instance of its occurrence.

The construction of the body is one of the important themes in the book. Fantasies about sex are inevitably based on preconceptions about the body – its accessibility, its desirability, and its capacities. Changing attitudes to nudity, differing notions of physical attractiveness, the methods by which the body could be revealed or obscured, the way in which desire could be read from the body, and the various investments that communities put into differing body types are explored in this work. The discussion of Roman vice begins with the problematic status of nudity in western culture. It traces the origins of these tensions back to the ancient world. Rather than being just a modern prudish hang-up, concerns about the status and interpretation of the naked body have existed ever since the Greeks. Nineteenth-century attitudes reflect a long-lived ambivalence.

Another important theme is the construction of the opposition between pagan and Christian sexuality. Like all such distinctions, the distinction between pagan and Christian is, at times fluid, and, at other times, rigidly enforced. Indeed, it is

arguable that the chaste Christian is more of a fantasy than the degenerate Roman emperor. One of the important stories that I wish to trace is the way in which sex and sexuality have been used to facilitate religious discourse. We see this distinction resurfacing time and again in genres as diverse as polemics against naked statues, sermons against orgies, philosophic defenses of the study of Plato, or 1950s' Hollywood epics. It is particularly invoked whenever value systems seem under threat or the identity of a community needs to be reasserted.

This book is interested in the political use of sex. Fantasies about classical sex have been as much about creating a form of political resistance as they have been about enforcing morals. Nineteenth-century suffragettes embraced the sexuality of wild figures such as maenads or Medea as a template for transgressive desire. Just as nineteenth-century homosexual activists piggy-backed on the cultural prestige accorded classical Greece. The political deployment of sex goes back as far as the gossip told about Roman imperial families or the anecdotes the Greeks told about the sex lives of barbarians. This book sets out a range of political strategies that have been deployed in the field of sex and sexuality.

The book is designed for a multiplicity of readers. I have tried to make the work as general and accessible as possible. It is intended as much for the modern historian who wants to learn about the erotic landscape of antiquity as the classicist who wants to trace what happens to this material after the end of the classical world. In trying to satisfy such different readers, I have inevitably been forced to explain what might seem obvious or beneath explanation to a specialist in their field. I hope they will forgive me, and find the new and unfamiliar material a suitable recompense.

Numerous debts, impossible to repay, have been accumulated during the writing of this book. I am grateful to Robert Aldrich, Peter Brennan, Paul Cartledge, Murray Dahm, Victoria Jennings, Julia Kindt, Frances Muecke, Ted Robinson, Paul Roche, Kim Shahabudin, Amy Stanley, Kathryn Welch, and Bill Zewadski. All of them helped, either wittingly or unwittingly, at various important stages during the writing of this book. A number of institutions also assisted in the book's production. My own university, the University of Sydney, gave me resources and time to see it through to completion. I have particularly benefited from the surroundings and resources of the *Centre for Classical and Near Eastern Studies of Australia* (*CCANESA*). Parts of this book were written during fellowships at the University of Cincinnati and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. I am grateful to Professor Getzel Cohen and Professor David Ibbetson for being such splendid hosts on these occasions.

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Part I
Roman Vice

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 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

1

Introduction

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, a number of still-shocked Manhattan inhabitants attempted to escape the horrors that haunted them through recourse to fantasy. For one night, a 'sprawling loft in the Garment District' became ancient Rome as Palagia, the self-proclaimed 'queen of tasteful debauchery' held Caligula's Ball, an invitation-only orgy (Corrin and Moore 2002). The guests, all professional and under 40, dressed in sheer chiffon togas and indulged in threesomes, foursomes, wife-swapping, and light bondage. There was even a floorshow in which Palagia, surrounded by male assistants dressed as Roman legionaries, demonstrated the use of various sex toys and rode a tall, black, leather bench called 'Caligula's Horse', after Incitatus, the horse made a senator by Caligula. Later Palagia was replaced by two performers called 'Caligula' and 'Drusilla' (the name of Caligula's sister with whom he supposedly had an incestuous affair) who proceeded to give a demonstration of various positions of lovemaking.

Caligula's Ball has been diagnosed as part of the phenomenon known as 'terror sex' – hard, casual, non-procreative sex as an alternative response to the threat of devastation. As one sex therapist put it, 'party all night because you don't know when the party is going to end'. Another located its origins in a primeval urge for survival and companionship, 'in times of upheaval and terror, people look for confirmation of life, and there's no more obvious antidote to death than sex. It's a way of saying: "I'm functioning, I'm alive and I'm not alone".' Moments of crisis show us at our most instinctual. When people needed to imagine pleasure at its most decadent and debauched, their reflex was to reach out to Rome.

Rome has been described as a 'pornotopia' (Nisbet 2009: 150), 'an ideal setting for the activities described in pornographic literature' (*OED*), and even the most cursory survey of catalogs of pornographic film titles will reveal no end of classically themed erotica. Thus, films such as *Private Gladiator Parts 1–3* (2001–2) compete with *Roma* (2007, 'Ambition, Power, Lust, a thrilling trilogy') and *Serenity's Roman Orgy* (2001, 'Let the games begin') for the straight market; and for

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the gay market, there are titles such as *Caligula and his Boys* or *Mansize – Marc Anthony* (2003). The latter film won a pornographic film award for 'Best Supporting Actor' (FICEB 2003) and was nominated in the categories of 'Best Art Direction' and 'Best Sex Comedy' (2004 GAYVN Awards). The blurb on the back of the DVD gives a good indication of the film's contents. It promises a world of imperial decadence and lust. Egypt is falling apart and the only way that Queen Cleopatra can restore peace to the kingdom is through marriage to the Roman general Marc Anthony. Unfortunately for poor Cleopatra, Marc Anthony turns out to be gay and there then ensues a homosexual romp through the Egyptian court. The queen is left frustrated, but the eunuchs seem to have enjoyed themselves.

Mansize – Marc Anthony follows in a long tradition of locating cinematic gay sex in Roman dress. For example, in the 1950s and 60s, physique movie mogul Richard Fontaine produced short black and white films such as *Ben Hurry* (c.1960) and *The Captives* (c.1959). These films are typical of the soft-porn gay films produced between the 1940s and 60s by film companies such as Apollo and Zenith. In *Ben Hurry* (the name is a play on 'Ben Hur') muscled men in Roman-style costumes and posing pouches strike poses and feel each other up. The conceit of the film is that these men are extras on the filming of Ben Hur. At the end, before anything too explicit can happen, the men are called back onto set; the shout of 'Ben Hurry' giving the title of the film. In contrast, *The Captives* is set in Rome itself and features a Roman official who inflicts homoerotic tortures on two men accused of spying. Eventually their refusal to talk and their obvious devotion to each other cause the official to free them. Stills from the film show athletic models with buff bodies, sporting the skimpiest of Roman-style kilts.

Yet we don't need X-rated films to confirm Rome's status as a 'pornotopia'. Any visit to Pompeii will show you that when tourists think Rome, they think sex. Pompeii has many attractions, but the one that is on every visitor's list is the brothel. If you haven't been to the brothel, then you haven't visited Pompeii. Its reopening to the public in 2006 was trumpeted around the world. Fascination with the brothel has existed ever since it was first excavated in 1862. Mark Twain describes his visit there, mentioning that 'it was the only building in Pompeii in which no woman is allowed to enter' and that the pictures 'no pen could have the hardihood to describe' (Twain 1869: 247). In their study of tourists' attitudes to Pompeii's brothel, Fisher and Langlands (2009) discuss the way in which the guides' and tourists' own preconceptions about Rome combine to create a notion of Pompeii as a place free from sexual repression and bodily hang-ups. Often this construction has an element of wish fulfillment as Pompeii 'is used as a stick to beat contemporary moral conservatism' (180). Confirming the notion of the centrality of the brothel to the life of this town is the re-conceptualization of the various phalloi dotted around the city as 'signs pointing the way to the brothel'. This fantasy about the function of these phallic markers, perpetuated by numerous modern tour guides, extends, at least, as far back as the start of the nineteenth

century. Everywhere the tourist wanders in Pompeii, they seem to be directed back to a brothel.

In this section, I want to examine how Rome's status as a 'pornotopia' was achieved. It is easy to see this eroticization of Rome as the perpetuation of a Christian technique that sought to denigrate pagan practice by associating it with sin, especially bodily sexual sin. Once attitudes to the body and sex became a marker that distinguished Christian from non-Christian, it was inevitable that stories of corrupt sex would be ascribed to opponents. In focusing so much on sex, Christians were following in a substantial tradition. Attitudes to sex had long been one of the ways by which religious groups had differentiated themselves from their neighbors. This discourse on the lasciviousness of ancient Rome in contrast to a chaste Christianity can be traced back at least as far as the second century AD.

This discourse has a tendency to reassert itself at times of crisis. Whenever kingdoms or empires feel threatened, moralizing discourse tends to increase. It is the flip-side of 'terror sex', an apotropaic invocation of lost virtue. A clear example is the anxiety felt in Britain about the potential fall of her empire. Here the parallels with Rome felt uncomfortably close and the stories about Roman depravity played to an audience worried about contemporary morals. Sexy Rome simultaneously horrified and tantalized audiences.

Yet, fantasies do not appear out of thin air. Rather, they are grafted onto preexistent sturdy stock. They need a secure foundation for support and nourishment. Often the stuff of fantasy is not intrinsically or intentionally erotic. It is striking how often markers of seemingly sober, chaste authority are transformed into objects of sexual fetish. Sex shops, for example, do a roaring trade in eroticized versions of uniforms of firemen, nurses, and male and female police officers. Here the aura of respectable authority gives their sexualized counterparts a charge of illicit, subversive thrill. Power rarely operates straightforwardly and the eroticization of power and its accoutrements is one of western culture's more distinctive features.

It is not just aesthetics that are co-opted for fantastic purposes. Fantasy constructs complex scenarios out of snatches of dialogue, poetic motifs, comic exaggeration, historical events, programmatic ideological dictates, and heartfelt shouts of protest. It extends, confounds, inverts, stylizes, and stereotypes this material. Yet always at its heart exists a grain of the non-fantastic, a trace of a place that is prior to the fantasy.

In the following discussion, I want to highlight the aspects of Roman antiquity that helped secure it as the locus of the West's sexual fantasies. Roman attitudes towards bodily display, its frank discussion of sex especially within genres of vituperative exchange, its occasional, but nevertheless marked collocations of sex and religious practice, and finally its gossip culture and the stories it told about emperors, all helped fuel erotic discourse. By looking at each of these elements in turn, I want to catalog the features that made Roman antiquity such an efficient vehicle for the expression of desire.

Each section begins with a pivotal moment or important case study that helps to articulate the themes that I want to pursue in the discussion. In keeping with the focus on unmediated reception, these case studies are often juxtaposed with the classical material that proves their inspiration. Throughout the discussion of these elements, the aim remains the elucidation of the narrative function of the material within the context of a history of ideas. I want to strip the classical material down to its essence to see what features have proved most productive in the formulation of sexual fantasy. Often these aspects are best revealed by analyzing a classical motif through a series of genres or receptions, each moment helping to reveal the reason for the efficacy of the motif in furthering sexual discourse.

2

Naked Bodies

An Introduction (less than successful) to the Naked Body

In 1832 to commemorate the centenary of Washington's birth, Congress commissioned the American sculptor Horatio Greenough (1805–1852) to execute a statue of George Washington to be displayed in the Capitol Rotunda. In many ways, it was an unremarkable commission. Greenough had established himself, along with Hiram Powers (1805–1873) and Thomas Crawford (c.1813–1857), as one of the leaders of an important new generation of American sculptors. It was a generation that sought to combine a European, specifically Italian, tradition in sculpture with a sensibility drawn from the New World. Previous commissions for public figures such as his busts of Josiah Quincy Jr., the mayor of Boston (1827) and John Quincy Adams (1828) had been well received. Whilst working on the sculpture of Washington, Greenough also produced allegorical sculptures such as *Child and Angel* (1833) and *Love Prisoner to Wisdom* (1834), which in their use of children as symbols of innocence and purity showed that Greenough had a deft hand in conveying the sentimental morality so popular with large sections of the American audience.

Few were expecting the furor that would erupt on the unveiling of the statue of Washington in 1841 (see Figure 2.1). The statue depicts Washington bare-breasted seated on an antique throne decorated with garlands and carved relief panels. His form of dress is antique, although he wears his customary eighteenth-century wig. The face was modeled on Jean-Antoine Houdon's famous terracotta bust (1785) of the revolutionary leader. However, the body with its firm, defined, idealized musculature clearly looks to classical sculpture. In his left hand, Washington holds out a sheathed sword, a sign of peace and the end of conflict. His right arm is raised, and a finger points to the sky. His left foot is forward while the right rests on a footstool.

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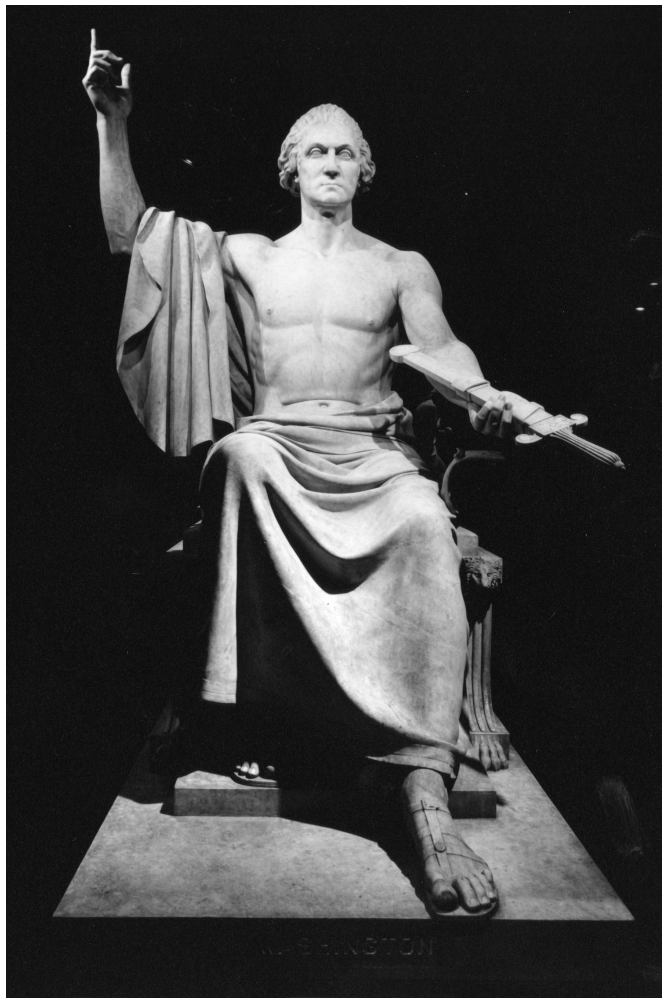

Figure 2.1 Horatio Greenough, *George Washington* (1840). An immodest president. Greenough's statue has found few admirers. Smithsonian American Art Museum, transfer from the U.S. Capitol.

Reaction to the statue was almost universally negative. Some found the image too authoritarian. Like many others at the time, Greenough had taken a great interest in the reconstruction of Phidias' Olympian Zeus published in Quatremère de Quincy's *Le Jupiter Olympien* (1815). Greenough's statue in pose and iconography clearly imitates the reconstruction. In portraying Washington as the ruler of the gods, Greenough flirted with iconography that did not play due deference to the democratic ideology of the new republic. The combination of throne and footstool (*suppedaneum*) was reserved mainly for divine or imperial personages in classical art. Greenough's statue hinted at a system of values that failed to accord

with the egalitarian nature of American politics. Congressman Smith from Alabama thought that such art might be weakening to the American constitution. Why, he wondered, were experiments in republican government always so short-lived and unsuccessful in Europe? The answer lay in art. How could a republic survive when it was surrounded by 'antiquities and monuments, breathing, smacking and smelling of nobility and royalty' (Greenough 1852: 17)? Yet as Daniel Chester French demonstrated 73 years later with his much-loved statue of Lincoln (1914–20, dedicated 1922) it was entirely possible for the Lincoln Memorial to square such iconography with the popular democratic mindset. If anything, his statue of Lincoln imitates Phidias' statue even more closely than Greenough's example.

Others thought the statue's classicism too European and not fitting for an American subject. The status of classicism in American public art had been debated ever since the founding fathers. Thomas Jefferson was a strong admirer of classical aesthetics while George Washington was less certain about 'a servile adherence to the garb of antiquity'. Davy Crockett (1786–1836) seemed to speak for many when he remarked on another neo-classical statue of Washington (1826) by Sir Francis Chantrey, 'I do not like the statue of Washington in the State House. They have a Roman gown on him and he was an American; that ain't right. They did a better thing at Richmond in Virginia where they have him in the old blue and buff. He belonged to his country – heart, soul, and body and I don't want any other country to have part of him – not even his clothes' (Crawford 1979: 42). Yet, as Crockett's criticism indicates, neo-classical statues of George Washington were hardly new or surprising. The very first commission for an equestrian statue of Washington requested that he appear 'in Roman dress, holding a truncheon in his right hand'. In addition to the statue by Chantrey, one could add the neo-classical statue of Washington (1817–21) by Antonio Canova. This statue, which was commissioned by the legislature of North Carolina, depicted Washington as a Roman general in sandals and cuirass who has put down his sword and picked up his pen to begin his legislative program. It was erected in the senate house in Raleigh, Durham in 1821, but unfortunately was destroyed by fire ten years later. Only a plaster model survives, but it clearly shows Washington as the most Roman-looking of figures (as indeed had been specified in the commission) as he sits inscribing laws for the new republic. The notion of the Roman Republic as the precursor to the Republic of the United States was so strong that Greenough's statue can be entirely forgiven its classicism. Some may have preferred a more uniquely and unequivocally American version of Washington, but we cannot ascribe the major cause of the statue's unpopularity to its classicism.

It was Washington's nudity that caused the problem from the moment of the statue's unveiling. Women complained about the statue and talked about the awkwardness of viewing it in the company of men. A number felt that the statue demeaned Washington and made him look ridiculous. One wit joked that, with its outstretched hand, the statue was reaching out for its clothes. It was relatively quickly decided that the statue was not suitable to be displayed in its intended

position in the Capitol Rotunda and a new home should be found for it. It was relocated to the east lawn of the Capitol in 1843, and in 1908 was transferred to the collection of the Smithsonian. The statue was regarded as pagan and indecent, a mistake which was best forgotten.

One final element is worth remarking upon. It is tempting for modern readers to see the negative reactions to Greenough's statue as just the mutterings of an unenlightened conservative rump, part of a nineteenth-century repressive attitude to the body and sex from which we have liberated ourselves. Yet as we have seen above, not all of the negative reactions arose from illiberal motives. The concerns expressed about democracy and the role of the cult of the individual were legitimately felt and not a cover for prudery. Concerns about autocracy swirled alongside feelings of moral outrage. Lest modern liberal readers have too much sympathy for Horatio Greenough suffering at the hands of his prudish audience, it is worth remembering his attitudes on matters of slavery and race. He may seem enlightened in his attitude to the body, but it was only white bodies with which he sympathized. Greenough was a fervent anti-abolitionist. In his 1852 work, *The Travels, Observations and Experience of a Yankee Stonecutte*r (published under the pseudonym Horace Bender), Greenough writes:

> I am not partial to Negroes. I dislike their neighbourhood even in a menial capacity. I prefer doing many tiresome, and some very disagreeable things for myself rather than be very near a black man. I am booked up in philosophy sufficiently to admit that a black man fills his place in the chain of being, as I do my own. I am only content that his place is not very near me (174).

Later in the same work, he likens being in the presence of an African American to being surrounded by a miasma and compares their physiognomy to an orang-utan. 'I avoid a black man as I avoid a dirty, low, white man. I turn my back on him as all animals spurn their own ordure,' Greenough proclaims proudly (74). Greenough provides a stark reminder how easily classicism underpins reactionary politics as well progressive ones, and how the idealization of one body type has direct implications for others.

The controversy surrounding Greenough's statue of Washington marks a moment when two discourses about the ancient world collided. According to one view, the classical tradition promised to provide chaste, morally improving bodies. These bodies might be naked, but there was nothing sexualized about them. They were exercises in form and anatomy, nothing more. The only desire they were supposed to provoke in their viewers was a longing to emulate the virtuous deeds of their subject matter, not a wish for bodily congress with them. They were supposed to elevate rather than debase their viewers. This nudity was 'heroic'. In the famous formulation of Quatremère de Quincy, whose influence on Greenough we have already noted, this was nudity as 'costume'. In 1841, these promises were put to the test and found wanting. In contrast to this view of a healthy classicism,

a new opinion prevailed. This saw the classical past not as something that was an unquestionable good, but something that needed to be policed. Art could corrupt as well as perfect. Washington's uncovered body posed a threat to the body politic. It caused the minds of its viewers to have unhealthy thoughts. Even Washington's semi-nakedness (only his chest is exposed) was enough to stimulate lust. The pagan nature of the image was particularly troubling. It promised a world with a very different moral code, one in which the promise of sex was never that far away.

Greenough should have been aware that such a reading of his statue was possible. He had earlier run into problems with his sculpture of *Chanting Cherubs* (1828), which featured naked children. The fact that this commission for James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) was based on a Raphael altarpiece had not stopped the cherubs being displayed with aprons tied around their waists as they toured the United States. It is a testament to his belief in the power of the classical tradition that he failed to heed these warnings. Certainly, he may have thought that compared to exercises in classicism such as Canova's colossal fully nude statue of *Napoleon as Mars the Pacifier* (1803–6), his Washington was comparatively restrained. Others were more attuned to public sentiment and the failure of classicism to render statues immune from criticism. Before the unveiling, Charles Sumner (1811–1874), the future US senator and leading abolitionist, had written to Greenough to advise him to prepare the American public for the statue:

> The people will not hesitate to judge your work; and some will, perhaps, complain that Washington is naked; that he has not a cocked hat and a military coat of the Continental cut; that he is not standing, etc. The loungers in the Rotunda, not educated in the works of art … will want the necessary knowledge to enable them to appreciate your 'Washington.' Should you not prepare them, so far as you can? And you can do a great deal. Publish in 'Knickerbocker's Magazine' or such other journal as you may select, some of the papers you read me during my visit to Florence, – particularly that on the 'Nude', for there I think you will encounter a deal of squeamish criticism … (Pierce, *Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner* 2.173–4 quoted in Dimmick 1987: 67–8).

For Sumner, the claims of classical precedent were not enough. This was an argument that needed to be fought by an extensive propaganda campaign. Without such a campaign, the project may well derail. Suspicions about classical nudity needed to be allayed.

The correctness of Sumner's reading of the public taste is confirmed when we contrast the derision which greeted Greenough's *Washington* with the tremendous success of Hiram Powers' *The Greek Slave* (c.1843, see Figure 2.2). The statue was begun a couple of years after the controversy surrounding Greenough's statue had erupted. In many ways, it was an even more ambitious exercise in classical nudity. The statue presents a fully naked woman in the tradition of the Aphrodite of Cnidus (see Box 2.1). The woman looks away to the left, her hands are manacled and she supports herself by resting her right hand on a pillar swathed in a

Figure 2.2 Hiram Powers, *The Greek Slave* (1851, after an original of 1844). 'Clothed all over with sentiment'. The rapturous response to Powers' *Greek Slave* contrasts with reactions to Greenough's *Washington*. Yale University Art Gallery. Olive Louise Dann Fund.

fringed cloth. Only the woman's left hand, shielding her genitals gives the woman any modesty. Yet, despite this more explicit display of flesh, there was no similar display of outrage that attended the exhibition of this statue. A careful, deliberate strategy had been employed to neutralize the opposition.

The first step had been to translate this statue from a classical to a contemporary context. The statue appears on first glance to be a standard classicizing nude. She looks like she could have stepped out of the slave markets of ancient Rome or

Athens. It is only on closer inspection that one notices an incongruous detail, a small crucifix hanging from the left hand of the statue. This is no pagan, this is a Christian girl. Moreover, she turns out to be not an ancient, but a modern. This Greek slave is a victim of the Greek War of Independence. This is not a scene from the Constantinople of Constantine, but rather it takes place in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. With this sleight of hand, Powers removed his statue from being considered within a debate about the appropriateness (or otherwise) of classical imagery. Now it is not classical aesthetics that preserves the woman's modesty, but her Christian faith. This was the line that was promoted in the literature that attended the statue. Visitors to the exhibition were given a pamphlet so that they were apprised of the story that lay behind it. Quotations from the prominent Unitarian minister Orville Dewey described how the girl was shielded by her Christianity and that, far from being naked, she was in his words 'clothed all over with sentiment, sheltered, protected by it from every profane eye'. Powers had also staggered the unveiling of the statue so that she was shown to increasingly larger audiences, first in Florence and then in the Crystal Palace in London, so that by the time she arrived in America, there was a groundswell of favorable opinion. Moreover, in associating the statue with contemporary events, Hiram Powers had chosen a story with which the American public could sympathize. The struggle for Greek independence had been actively supported by a large number in the United States who drew parallels with their own recent struggle against imperial oppression. Anti-slavery campaigners also reacted well to the statue's story about the horrors of slavery.

The success of this strategy can be seen in the positive reviews that were given on the statue's exhibition in Florence, London, and during its tour of the United States. The *Boston Daily Advertiser* called it 'the most beautiful statue in the world' (June 27, 1848). In addition, a large number of replicas and copies were made of it. Six full-length, full-size copies exist, along with three full-length, half-size ones and at least 77 busts. Yet ultimately what all the elaborate efforts undertaken by Hiram Powers demonstrate is just how hard it is to keep the erotic away from the classical nude. Even with this very directed framing of the statue within a de-eroticized Christian aura, sex was never far from the picture. For all the concern about Greenough's *Washington* inspiring lascivious thoughts, it was the Hiram Powers' *Greek Slave* that prompted the critic of *New York Express* to write with one feels a little too much projection:

> To us she looks like one who had by rough and ruthless hands been torn from her home and dragged to the private slave market … She knows she is of a trampled race, that the iron grasp of the master race is upon her … that his heart is hot with lust … (Green 1982: 36).

These stories about naked classicizing statues bring into relief a number of important themes. They demonstrate the broad range of reactions that classical

bodies elicit, from scorn to emulation. They also demonstrate the impossibility of ever fully controlling the reactions. The best one can hope for is to be able to steer them in the desired direction. The strong correlation between sex and nudity has important implications for the construction of Greece and Rome. For along with the fluted marble column, naked statues are one of the most ubiquitous signifiers of classical antiquity. The way in which sex became grafted onto the naked body is a complicated story. It is worth stressing the arbitrary nature of the association between nudity and sex. After all, one doesn't need to be naked to have sex. Sex is possible with both parties fully clothed. Indeed, in a number of cultures and time periods, nudity was not a prerequisite for sex and men and women had sex whilst wearing elaborate garments. Moreover, not every naked body is sexualized. It requires a certain attitude, a frame of mind, to see the naked body purely in sexual terms. Sexualizing bodies is a way of closing down other ways of viewing the body. Naked bodies can stand for many things. They can be signifiers of health, innocence, poverty, vulnerability, suffering, ethnicity or religious belief. Sex often enters the agenda on the oblique. It's a form of counter reading. In the following sections, I want to examine the tradition of the naked body in antiquity, and in particular how and in what circumstances sex became associated with it. We will see that rather than this being a simple story about a modern projection of smut onto an innocent antique body, the dynamics of the sexualization of art is a complex topic. The classical nude was not so innocent after all. Instead, we will see that just as Greenough's *Washington* exists in a tension between two alternative readings about the presence or absence of the erotic, so this tension was also played out in the ancient world. Bodies demand explanation, and we should not ignore the explanatory power of desire.

The Naked Body in Greece

The association between Greece and nudity has become so strong that it is difficult to imagine a time or place when nudity was not acceptable amongst the Greeks. Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768), the antiquarian scholar and art historian, imagined Greek youths dancing naked in the theatres and all around the sight of athletes devoting themselves to such vigorous naked exercises that they put modern art school models in the shade. As I shall discuss in the second half of this book, Winckelmann's vision was particularly influenced by his attractions to notions of Greek love. Yet, it was not just fans of Greek love that embraced this image of naked Greece. For example, it received endorsement at a meeting of the Archaeological Institute in London in 1877 from Heinrich Schliemann (1822–1890), the excavator of Troy, who regarded the nudism of the Greeks as part of the secret of the success of their art. Widespread nudity allowed the Greeks to observe the human form and work from life, Schliemann argued. Only the British prime minister (then in opposition) and keen Homeric scholar, William

Gladstone (1809–1898), who was also speaking at the meeting, was prepared to think otherwise. After Schliemann had made his comment, Gladstone began by remarking that the Greeks as a nation were 'decorously clad' and only rough Sparta was the exception.

It is not surprising that a Homerist should object to this liberal characterization of the Greeks. For the picture that emerges from the Homeric epics is certainly ambiguous. The fact that the Greek word for genitals is *aidoia* which means 'shameful things' should, at least, remind us that alternative views on nudity are possible. When Odysseus is found on the beach by the princess Nausicaa, he attempts to cover his genitals with a branch torn from a bush (*Odyssey* 6.126–9). This hero, who in classical vase painting is regularly depicted as nude in the presence of both men and women, is forced through modesty to cover up before this foreign princess. There is nothing heroic about his nudity here. His status grants him no special dispensations about his appearance. Understandably for Odysseus, the 'man of many stratagems' and consummate trickster and inventor of stories, being completely exposed is something that he dislikes. In the *Iliad*, Odysseus can think of no worse punishment for the troublemaker Thersites than to threaten to strip him of his clothes and drive him naked through the Greek camp until he reaches the ships beached on the shoreline (2.260–4). The only time Odysseus seems comfortable in full bodily exposure occurs towards the end of the *Odyssey* when he confronts the suitors that have been plaguing his household, harassing his wife, and plotting against his son. Before launching himself into attack, he strips off his beggar's disguise and prepares to confront the suitors naked (22.1–4). Crucial to this scene is the idea of the sudden revelation of the hero to the suitors who thought him dead. In such a context, Odysseus' nudity serves to bring home to the suitors the real corporeality of the returned hero.

Odysseus fights the suitors initially unclothed, but his son Telemachus does not join him in such a display. Telemachus' response on commencing battle is to gird himself with bronze armor. Although classical Greek vase painting is happy to show Homeric heroes fighting naked, the Homeric epics put tremendous stress on the armor of the heroes. Long passages are devoted to detailed descriptions of heroes covering themselves before they go out to battle. It is the body so covered as to be unrecognizable that signifies the warrior. In one telling scene, the hero Hector takes leave from his wife Andromache and his baby son, Astyanax. Hector is dressed for battle and his young child, unable to recognize his father in his armor, and frightened by the horsehair helmet, bursts into tears (*Iliad* 6.466–75). Throughout the conflict for Troy, the stripping of armor from the corpses of their enemies is one of the mechanisms by which heroes demonstrate their supreme mastery and domination over their opponents. Certainly the fact that Homeric heroes wrestled in loincloths was read by later classical authors as demonstrating implicit criticism of nudity (cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 7.72.3–4).

Yet even within the epics, it is possible to catch glimpses of a different vision of the heroic body; one that saw its exposure not as a mark of shame, but as a moment of revelation. In Book 22 of the *Iliad*, Priam compares the vision of his old naked body lying dead on the battlefield with that of a young man cut down in the bloom of youth (22.65–78). Priam's body as it is torn apart by weapons and mangled by dogs is only an object of pity and revulsion. For the young man, in contrast, whatever part of his body is revealed by the conflict is 'beautiful' (*kala*). Priam's observations in their collocation of martial valor, youth, bodily exposure, and beauty starts the naked body on a trajectory which will climax in the claim of the de-eroticized naked bodies of neo-classical art.

Even within the classical period, the precise moment at which Greeks came to accept the naked form as acceptable for public bodily display was a subject of debate and speculation. Greeks were aware that their attitude towards the naked body set them apart from other Mediterranean cultures. Indeed, they were quite keen on stressing this fact. It became a marker of Greek identity, a way of distinguishing Greek from barbarian. For this reason, if nothing else, they were prone to speculation about when this custom came about. According to Pausanias, writing in the second century AD, but clearly conversant with earlier traditions, it was the Megarian Orsippus who first chose to compete naked in the games (1.44.1). Pausanias glosses this story by remarking that he thought Orsippus deliberately let his girdle slip when he saw the advantage that this would give him over his competitors. Other writers such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing during the reign of the emperor Augustus, awarded the prize of first naked athlete to Acanthus from Sparta (*Roman Antiquities* 7.72.3). Dionysius is even prepared to offer a date for the introduction of this innovation, the 15th Olympiad (720 BC). From the competing claims about individuals and dates, one gets a sense that it was a debate in which a variety of different parties had a stake. The historian Thucydides (c.460–c.403 BC) was prepared to have a stab at the problem. At the start of his *History of the Peloponnesian War* he remarks that it was the Spartans who were the first to strip naked and oil themselves for athletic competition (1.6.4–5). It is only relatively recently, he continues, that Greeks have started to perform naked in the Olympic Games.

Thucydides is not an historian prone to digression. On the few occasions when he does so, it is always a marked occurrence. Here talk of nudity comes in the context of a discussion about how customs have changed and, in contrast to previous ages, how man has become more peaceful and civilized. Nudity only enters the scene once people are prepared to no longer go around continually armed. The first step to undressing is laying aside your sword. There is something democratic about nudity. The wealthy Spartans apparently adopted it because it brought them into equality with the masses (1.6.4). In contrast, barbarians are left at an earlier stage of development. They wander around fully armed, and exercise clothed just as more primitive Greeks did. Thucydides' narrative associates nudity with virtues such as civilization and equality and helps to cement it as one of the

premier Hellenic signifiers. The historian Herodotus (c.484–c.420 BC) was prepared to observe that 'among the Lydians, as just about all other barbarians, even for a man to be seen naked brings great shame' (1.10.3). Thucydides goes further in not only stressing the distinction in practice between barbarian and Greek, but also locating that distinction within a teleology that has contemporary classical civilizations as its destination. Embracing nudity was both a stepping-stone and an important condition to achieving this end.

Yet for all his ingenuity, Thucydides' idea that nudity was a comparatively recent arrival onto the fifth-century BC Greek stage needs revision. Tenth-century BC statuettes, the so-called 'Zeus and Hera' figurines, depict naked bodies. More important for the history of the nude body are the statues of naked youths that appear from the seventh century BC onwards in the Greek world. These sometimes life size, sometimes colossal, statues known as *kouroi* appear in a number of contexts: as votive dedications in sanctuaries, and also serving as funerary markers.

In one sense, the nudity of these statues is their most distinguishing feature. They are clearly modeled on Egyptian prototypes, but the most obvious point of departure from their models is their lack of dress. Egyptian statuary of this type is always dressed in, at least, a loincloth. In contrast, *kouroi* generally wear nothing except a thin belt or perhaps shoes. Normally, the only adornment to their bodies is a fillet to tie back their hair. In the *kouroi* we can see in formation a particular Greek male aesthetic. The bodies are smooth and lack body hair. The genitals are small, tidy, and the penis is never erect. Pubic hair rarely appears in the carving and when it is does, it is normally resolved into a symmetrical geometric shape. In the earliest versions, the musculature of the statues is highly stylized, but over time a more naturalistic rendering of the muscles comes into fashion. This is less a reflection of technical skill, but rather the ascendency of a view that came to equate beauty with nature.

For the one thing, perhaps the only thing, that we can say about the *kouroi* is that they were designed to be beautiful. Beyond this, what they represent is debatable. While a few are clearly supposed to represent the god Apollo, the majority of them are anonymous. Attempts to associate them exclusively with athletic victors have failed. The *kouros* seems to represent an idealized 'everyman'. As Osborne remarks 'this figure would seem to offer a template in which any man can fit himself, whether to feel sympathy for the dead in whose place, he might have been or to place himself as a model of humanity before the gods' (1997: 510). Yet fitting oneself into the template of the *kouros* did not occur without some effort on the part of the viewer. The *kouros* presents man at his simplest and most perfect, and demands of the viewer that they equate that simplicity with perfection. To become a *kouros* was to erase your identity and replace it with a regime ruled by proportion. This is nudity as the sublime.

The reaction to the notion of naked beauty that the *kouros* embodies can be seen in the classical sculpture that follows. Here the figures are no longer anonymous. Indeed, part of the skill of the artist lies in ensuring that even when a man is naked, you always know who he is. A number of techniques were deployed to ensure this

marked nakedness. Sometimes a prop was all that was needed. Drape a naked figure in a lionskin and you know that it is Heracles. This reliance on distinctive attributes can cause problems for those who come later and find imperfectly preserved statues. Debates regularly surface about whether naked figures should be identified as Zeus or Poseidon because the crucial attribute (trident or thunderbolt) is missing. Alternatively, scenes were constructed so that knowledge of myth ensured that one was never in any doubt about the identity of the characters. For example, in the pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia (c.470–457 BC), Zeus is flanked by two naked figures. There is nothing to identify them on their person, yet the presence of two chariots flanking them ensures that their identities are unmistakable. These figures must be Pelops and Oinomaos whose chariot race was so famous in the myth-history of this site. Where staging or attribute is unable to secure identification, artists were not above simply tagging the figures. This can be seen most clearly in vase painting, but was also found in sculpture. In the north frieze of the Siphnian treasury at Delphi (c.525 BC), naked bodies lie sprawled on the floor. The scene depicts a battle between gods and giants, and the corpses belong to the losing giant side. The fallen giants, however, have not died in anonymity. Even in antiquity knowledge about the naming practice of giants was fairly recherché knowledge. To help the viewer, the artist has applied tags to each of the figures in paint. Ephialtas and Porphyrion will not be allowed to die unforgotten.

Nudity became personal. We see naked depictions of the deceased on grave stele from the sixth century onwards. Graves served two functions. Firstly as markers of the location of the dead, but secondarily they were designed to be a memorial, a place of memory. *Kouroi* were fine for fulfilling the first purpose, but ill-suited for the second. By personalizing the naked body with names, attributes, props, and companions, these nude figures began to fulfill a narrative function. They tell us a story about the deceased, his life, his aspirations, and his interests. Likewise the statues of naked athletes set up as dedications in sanctuaries served to tell us more about the dedicant than just their wealth or social status. Again the association with an individual, an act, and an event is set up by these naked athletic bodies. The gods now get to enjoy not the company of a beautiful everyman, but rather can delight in the body of an individual.

Only in works such as the Parthenon frieze do the naked bodies seem to be anonymous. However, even here their anonymity is not as severe as that of the *kouroi*. These archaic statues constantly eluded context. It was impossible to locate them geographically. They seemed equally at home in Boeotia, Attica, or the islands of Naxos and Samos. Their bodies could be either mortal or divine. Contrast this lack of specificity with the situation of the naked horse-riders of the Parthenon frieze. Full frontals, twisted torsos, straight profiles, the cavalcade on the frieze allows us to view the naked body from every angle, but behind. We may not be so intimate with these figures that we know their names, but we know who they are. The frieze anchors them within a particularly civic context, the festival of the Panathenaia, and so identifies them as members of the Athenian cavalry.

Indeed, now-lost local knowledge may have even been able to identify the figures with even greater precision, if, as has been suggested, the figures in the frieze represent the heroised dead of the battle of Marathon. Even if this suggestion is false, we are still in no doubt that what the frieze presents to us is an idealized Athenian citizen body (in every sense of the word).

The problem for the 'heroic nude' is that if nudity was only reserved for the gods, the beautiful, the athletic, or those gifted in martial prowess, then it would be easier to maintain the 'heroic' coloring of such nudity. It would be a category hermetically sealed off from other systems of representation, almost a 'God's-eye-view' depiction of an individual. The practice of athletic nudity would constantly reaffirm its associations with youth, agility, strength, virtue, and Greek-ness. Unfortunately, for any firm notion of 'heroic nudity', naked bodies started appearing in other less salubrious circumstances. In vases designed for the playful environment of the symposium, the all-male drinking party, we find a number of naked bodies. Many of them are heroic, depicting scenes from myth and epic. Others show athletes training their bodies to display their worth in competition. However, a number show naked bodies undertaking less than virtuous activity. Drunken youth are shown carousing with flute-girls and on the inside of the cups are depicted vomiting up the excesses of the night before. There are scenes of copulation, occasionally even violent rape where prostitutes are beaten with slippers and choked until they unwilling perform fellatio on their clients. Naked satyrs perform acts of grotesquery (masturbation, bestiality, rape, etc.). Their large erect phalluses mocking the dainty genitals of normal naked male depictions and reminding their viewers precisely what those genitals are designed to do.

A vase dated to the start of the fifth century BC plays with the collapse of this distinction. At first sight, this vase seems to depict a scene of slaughter. Bodies appear dismembered. Hands, feet, and heads hang on hooks in the air or are placed on shelves. In one corner of the scene, it looks like a man is taking a hammer to a headless body frozen in anguish, its arms outstretched. The head lies on the ground looking onto the scene of violence being enacted on its body. It is only on closer inspection that one realizes that this isn't a scene of massacre, but a scene set in a foundry. Those aren't real bodies being hammered, but the bodies of statues. The scene in the corner isn't one of dismemberment, but assemblage. The body parts are waiting to be joined to works of art. On one side of the vase, two men work on a colossal statue of, possibly, Achilles. To the Greeks, there were few activities more demeaning than factory work. Working for another was the very antithesis of freedom, it was akin to slavery. Working in crafts such as smithing was considered particularly lowly. In painting a scene of lower-class bodies constructing representations of elite bodies, the artist plays with ideas about distinctions between the two. He is assisted by the medium here. Red-figure vase painting is unable to distinguish between bodies of bronze and flesh. What is striking is that the bodies of the workmen are identical to the statues they are forming. At the center of one side of the pot stands an incongruously (to modern

eyes at least, and one suspects to ancient eyes as well) naked workman. The artist equips him with a hammer to lean upon so that we know that he is not a statue. Yet, it is at this point that all distinctions end. The workman enjoys a musculature as fine as any athlete. Particular attention has been paid to show the development of his abdominal muscles. He is beardless and hairless. Were he standing a little straighter, he could have come straight out of a picture of aristocratic athletics. The problem of reading the naked body is only compounded by the other figures in the scene. Depictions of satyrs may have led a viewer to think that the key to interpretation lay in the genitals. Provided they were dainty and unerect then everything was OK. To show the foolishness of such a belief, the artist stages one of the workmen to be squatting down so that we see his genitals full frontally. Unlike the grotesque phalloi of the satyrs, his genitals, like those of all the other workmen are dainty. In one neat image, the artist punctures the pretensions of heroic nudity and makes such distinctions even more difficult to sustain.

So far we have only considered the naked male body. The naked female body had even less chance of being heroized. In contrast to men, Greeks tended to regard the naked female body as problematic in public display. To see a woman naked was to debase her. When the hunter Actaeon came across the goddess Artemis bathing naked in a pool, the only way that Artemis can regain her honor is by arranging his death. She turns him into a stag and the poor unfortunate mortal is torn apart by his prized hunting dogs. The paradigm of Actaeon warns of the potential dangers of female nudity. It seems to have had an effect on the vase painters who almost never portray Actaeon catching sight of the naked Artemis. Such subject matter seems to have been too hot to handle, especially as it threatened to repeat Actaeon's crime and implicate the viewer who now like Actaeon was also catching sight of the naked goddess. Instead, it is Actaeon's traumatic death that populates the Greek vases. In numerous scenes, we see him being mauled. Indeed, in a pointed statement, often the nudity is reversed and it is Artemis fully clothed who watches a naked Actaeon being savaged by his hounds as they latch onto his thighs, chest, abdomen, and throat.

The only women who we see regularly naked in Greek vase painting are courtesans or prostitutes. In the earliest black-figure examples, their painted white flesh contrasts starkly with the black of the men. These naked women appear in a variety of positions. They snuggle next to men on couches. They dance and sing. They join in the men's drunken processions and play the same drinking games. We are shown scenes of copulation, often these lie at the bottom of cups as a treat for the drinker when he drains the vessel and discovers the image inside. We are even shown these women naked at their leisure, relaxing or getting themselves ready for the evening's entertainment. In one case even urinating into a chamber pot.

In contrast, the proper respectable citizen wife is always shown covered up. Indeed, there is strong evidence that women spent a large part of their time highly veiled, especially when they were out in public. Figurines and vase paintings show severely muffled figures where only the eyes are able to be seen, peeping out from

amongst the folds of fabric. Only the most extreme circumstance can cause the respectable woman to appear less than fully clothed. So, for example, the women of Troy as they face death, rape, and the destruction of the city are often depicted as bearing their breasts as signs of sorrow and anguish.

The few exceptions prove the rule. There are three notable groups that violate the strong demarcation between the chaste, respectable, clothed woman and her whorish naked counterpart. The first are depictions of maenads, the female followers of Dionysus who are often shown bare-breasted, even suckling animals. Here their semi-nudity stands as a sign of the abandonment of the conventional and the ecstatic nature of their devotion. The second are Amazons whose breasts, despite the myth about their supposed practice of mastectomy, are often shown perfect and exposed. Here again nudity and wildness go together. The final group of exceptions are depictions of the goddess Aphrodite, although again it is hardly an exception that takes female nudity out of the sphere of the erotic. If anything, it confirms the correlation.

The association between nudity and the erotic only became stronger in the Hellenistic period where the trend for naturalization exacerbated the problem. The nude statue of Aphrodite of Cnidus was a minor scandal (see Box 2.1). But it came alongside a trend in which art continually sought to depict figures in a way that showed them at their most real and desirable. Unlike the artificial bodies of the *kouroi* or the stiff, withdrawn bodies of early classical nudes, these were bodies that just wanted to be loved.

Naked Romans

Rome inherited this complex situation and complicated it even further by adding into the mix their own particular indigenous attitudes about the unclothed body. The Romans were initially much more conservative about displays of the unclothed body. Even a scantily clad body in the Roman mindset was effectively 'naked'. The Latin word *nudus* makes no distinction between 'lightly clad' or 'completely naked'. The effect of this failure to distinguish between these two states makes it difficult for us to tell from descriptions whether a figure was really naked in Latin. Oddly such lack of precision has not been entirely unwelcome within some academic circles who much prefer their ancients in loincloths than stark naked. Indeed, some were even prepared to import this lack of distinction into Greek so that a group of nineteenth-century philologists were happy to embrace this fuzziness for the Greek word *gymnos*. Therefore when Greeks described themselves as *gymnos* they were not naked, but were in fact clothed in a loincloth or some other light garment. This fantasy persisted for a while until eventually the accumulation of evidence, particularly the visual evidence, made it impossible to sustain.

It is telling that one of the laws imagined at the foundation of Rome was Romulus' prohibition against men ever appearing naked when women were present.

Box 2.1 Aphrodite of Cnidus

Few statues have been subject to such erotic speculation as the Aphrodite of Cnidus. Almost from the moment of its execution, this statue became a lightning rod for lust; a touchstone for understanding the limits of appropriate and inappropriate desire. Ancient literature played up its sexiness. Particular charge was given to the statue by the story recorded by Pliny (AD 23–79) of its arrival at Cnidus. According to this account, the statue was one of two made by the fourth-century BC sculptor Praxiteles that were first offered for sale to the island of Cos. One statue showed the goddess clothed and the other naked. So shocked were the inhabitants of Cos by the sight of the naked goddess that they chose the clothed one. The naked statue was then taken by the inhabitants of Cnidus on the coast of Turkey where its fame soon eclipsed its rival on Cos.

This reference to the statue's shocking nudity has led many to believe that the Aphrodite of Cnidus represents the first depiction of the goddess fully naked in free-standing sculpture. This may or may not be true. Certainly, its nudity was famous in antiquity. One ancient epigram has the goddess wondering when it was that Praxiteles had caught her naked, so accurate is the supposed depiction. As if this weren't tantalizing enough, our sources name Praxiteles' model. Our Aphrodite is supposedly modeled on none other than one of Greece's most notorious courtesans, the famously beautiful Phryne. With this pedigree we can understand the notoriety of this statue.

In addition to the statue's nakedness Pliny's account also preserves another detail about the statue. This is the story of the young man who was so overcome with desire for the statue that he tried to have sex with it, leaving a stain on the statue's legs as evidence of his attempt. Stories about men having sex with statues (both male and female) occur with surprising frequency in antiquity. Oscar Wilde, attuned to such stories, has the eponymous hero of his poem *Charmides* break into a temple, undress the statue of Athena ('Till from the waist the peplos falling down, Left visible the secret mystery, Which to no lover will Athena show, The grand cool flanks, the crescent thighs, the bossy hills of snow'), 'paddle' the throat of the statue with kisses and press 'his hot and beating heart upon her chill and icy breast'.

The rape of the statue also features in an erotic dialogue attributed to the author, Lucian. In the course of a debate about the superiority of either women or boys as love objects, one of the interlocutors offers the stain of the Aphrodite of Cnidus as proof of the superiority of women. If a female statue can arouse such excitement, how can we not regard women as superior? 'Yes, but look where the stain occurs,' points out his debating partner. Our lover has taken Aphrodite from the rear, like a boy.

Given its role in the imaginary erotic life of antiquity, it is natural that the Aphrodite entered the modern world with a lot of baggage. The statue itself is lost. Constantine is supposed to have taken it to Constantinople as part

Figure 2.3 Campo Iemini Venus (second century AD). Scandal and modesty combined. Naked statues of Aphrodite titillate through the illicit pleasure of spying on the divine. British Museum. Image: © Trustees of the British Museum.

of his collection of artifacts to adorn his new capital, and it is presumed to have been destroyed in the great fire that swept the city in AD 476. Various copies of statues of Aphrodite have been identified as versions of the Aphrodite of Cnidus. Almost any naked Venus seems to do. The current favorite prototype is the so-called 'Venus Colonna' in the Vatican.

The statue's reception by the post-antique world has been equally as ecstatic and eroticized. Numerous imagined images of the statue were produced

(*continued overleaf*)

Box 2.1 *Continued*

from the Renaissance onwards. From the mid-sixteenth century, the Capitoline 'copy' was displayed in the statue court of the Belvedere alongside the Belvedere torso as respective paradigms of the male and female forms. Copies, ancient and modern, were erected throughout libraries, museums, palaces, stately homes, and art schools. She appears in numerous paintings, almost always with an admiring male in attendance. The flirty way the statue covers her genitals with the palm of her hand has always proven a great tease. She was a great favorite with the rakes and libertines that moved in the circles of the 'Hellfire clubs' of early eighteenth-century Britain. One of most infamous of these clubs was Sir Francis Dashwood's 'Order of St Francis at Medmenham Abbey'. The club was famous for its drunkenness, sexual excesses, and blasphemous rites. One text produced for the enjoyment of the club members features a priest praying on his knees to an image not of the Virgin Mary as one might expect but to a copy of the Aphrodite of Cnidus. At the priest's feet lies open a copy not of the scriptures, but the works of Ovid. The statue of the goddess points to a motto on the wall: 'O tempora, O mores' ('Oh the times, Oh the customs'). However, it was not just those looking for a degenerate thrill who were attracted to the statue. Writers such as James Joyce were not immune to its charms. In his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, he has one of his characters boast about how he was so overcome by desire for the statue that he wrote his name in pencil on her backside.

This enactment was designed to help facilitate the incorporation of the Sabine women into the new Roman city. These women had been abducted from their homes because if the city was going to succeed it needed to move from a rag-tag fort of armed men to a proper community of families. The acquisition of wives who felt comfortable and happy in the town had been among the first priorities of Romulus and his men. Covering their bodies was one of the ways in which the Romans could make these women feel honored and respected. This time, in contrast to the schema imagined by Thucydides, the transformation towards civilization is marked by putting your clothes on, rather than taking them off.

In the Roman mind, nudity was associated with poverty, servile status, and criminality. One of the signifiers of preparing the slave for market was stripping them of their clothes so that their bodies were exposed, ready for inspection by future owners. When Roman commanders wished to show their superiority over a defeated foe, they forced them to go 'under the yoke'. This traditional ceremony required the army to pass under a low bar, forcing them to bend and bow their heads, reducing them to the form and status of cattle. As if this wasn't subjection enough, they performed this act stripped of almost all their clothes wearing only

a single garment. Similarly, criminals were traditionally stripped before punishment was inflicted on them. When capital punishment was inflicted, the prisoner was tied up to a stake, stripped of his clothes, beaten with rods, and finally beheaded. Depictions of criminals thrown to the beasts in amphitheatres show them wearing only a loincloth. The legacy of this tradition, whose origins lie in earliest Roman practice, is most commonly seen in the depictions of the crucifixion of Jesus. Although renditions of this scene are not produced until centuries after the act, they manage to accurately depict this detail. He is always shown either naked or with a loincloth. In other words, *nudus*.

Nude statues arrived in Rome under the guise of Greek fashion. As Rome had gained mastery over the Mediterranean, it encountered a whole series of practices and beliefs that challenged traditional Roman mores. The correct response to such challenges was one of the great intellectual debates of the first two centuries of Roman expansion. On the one hand, such customs were seen as threatening to the nature of Roman-ness. Adoption of foreign ways by the young was seen as corrupting. Greek ways were particularly suspect. Greece had become synonymous in the Roman mind with effeminacy. The fact that Rome had managed to conquer Greece so easily was seen as much as a sign of Greek weakness as of Roman valor. If Rome adopted Greek ways then there was the potential that it too might be laying itself open to conquest by a foreign foe. Within this debate, customs such as nudity and pederasty were particularly important as signs of Greek degeneracy. On the other hand, showing a familiarity with Greek practices was a way for Roman elites to demonstrate their wealth and sophistication. Rome was a competitive society and being able to distinguish yourself from the mass was the aim of every elite young man. Greek education and an appreciation for the Greek arts was a particularly effective way of showing off your economic power and social connections. To demonstrate familiarity with Greek culture bespoke ideas such as travel, foreign land-holdings, an ability to afford expensive Greek slaves and tutors, and the leisure time to devote yourself to learning a foreign tongue. We should also not rule out the intrinsic worth of Greek culture. Romans were excited by the ideas presented by Greek philosophy, they admired the skill and workmanship of Greek artists, especially in their ability to capture and mimic nature.

The first statues of nude Romans seem to have originated in the Greek East as Romans assimilated themselves to the honorific practices of their newly subjugated peoples. Hellenistic rulers had long been honored with naked portrait statues, and there is substantial evidence that the earliest nude statues of Romans were erected by Greek communities as a method of ingratiating themselves with the newly emergent power of Rome. Old statues, presumably a number of them depicting nudes, were also rededicated to prominent Romans through re-inscription of dedications. Romans living in the provinces also adopted native customs and erected nude or semi-nude statues of themselves.

It is only in the last dying days of the Republic that public nudity in art by Romans on Italian soil takes off. This is a period that sees an explosion in

experiments in symbolism as rival factions compete with each other. It was a battle of aesthetics as much as ships and men. Thus, both Octavian and his rival Sextus Pompey might depict themselves as naked figures on coins, appropriating imagery that went back as far as the earliest Hellenistic rulers. Once established the trend continues all the way through the first few centuries of the imperial period. It becomes a regular feature of imperial portrayal, and filters down through the Roman social classes as senators, wealthy merchants, and ambitious freedmen adopt the technique. Nude statues of emperors occupied important places in the city. The colossal bronze statue planned by Nero, more than 120 feet high, scandalized Rome not because it supposedly intended to depict the emperor naked, but because of its outrageous expense. As we shall see, the rise of Christianity served to effectively finish off this mode of representation. But that didn't stop the first Christian emperor, Constantine, from erecting a nude statue of himself.

It is tempting to argue that nudity achieved more of an aura of 'heroic costume' under the Romans than the Greeks. Such generalizations are, of course, difficult to sustain. So much depends on context, attitude of the viewer, and the nature of the subject matter. Still there are a couple of marked differences in practice which suggest that Roman nudity was able to erase, at times, more completely notions of baseness than its Greek counterpart.

In some ways, the prejudice against nudity assisted in this erasure. The Roman dislike of nudity meant that it required more force of will, more determined buttressing, to support notions of acceptable nudity. It required nudity to assume a category that put it beyond reproach. It required nudity to assume the aura of art. One can see this in practice in the following anecdote told by Cassius Dio (c. AD 164–post 249) about Livia, wife of Augustus:

> There are recorded many excellent sayings made by her [Livia]. Once, when some naked men met her and were about to be put to death as a consequence of their exposure, she saved their lives by remarking that to chaste women such men were just like statues (58.2.4).

This is a rich little story. Here two forms of nudity operate in parallel, the disgraceful and insulting nudity of the real and the acceptable nudity found in art. It shows the power of art to operate at a different level to real life. Art may aim at realism, but it is not bound by the ethical, social, and physical rules that govern the real. Moreover, it shows the way in which this transcendence of art is an act of will. The word Cassius Dio uses for chastity here is *sophrosyne*, a state of self-control achieved by the willful control of appetite. To see nudity as heroic is an act of will, a practice of the self. Finally, by locating this story as a 'saying' (*apothegma*), this anecdote shows the way in which the status and interpretation of nudity was grounded in discourse. Nudity was something that you talked through.

Some other differences between Greek and Roman art also support the idea of a tendency to a more marked heroism in Roman nudity. We mentioned earlier

that the Parthenon frieze may include a depiction of the heroized war dead of the battle of Marathon. An alternative explanation is that it depicts a contemporary Panathenaic procession and the naked bodies are idealized versions of Athenian youth. Such interpretation is not without foundation. We find nude figures in other Greek reliefs depicting contemporary events such as sacrifices or battles. Greek art seems happy to depict naked figures in the midst of real-life events. If this later interpretation is correct it would mark an important distinction between the Roman and Greek deployment of nudity. Roman art does not tend to allow nudity to break the historical frame. In Roman reliefs depicting historical events or public ceremonies nudity is not allowed to intrude upon the scene. Only images of the gods are permitted as an exception to this rule. It is as if the very presence of nudity would tarnish the claims of veracity that these historical reliefs are attempting to make. It is too charged to permit into such vignettes. Nudity with its other worldly associations, is instead reserved for the stylized, the allegorical, and the acontextual.

The power of the heroic aura to transform the status of the naked body is confirmed by Roman nude statues of women. In our discussion of Greek nudity, we saw that female nudes were rare. Apart from the exception of statues of Aphrodite, they were associated with disreputable women. Nudity objectified women making them either objects of desire or, in the case of Amazons and maenads, revulsion and fear. Roman culture shared with the Greek notions of disquiet about female nudity. Just as in Greek culture, female nudity was associated with prostitution and slavery. In Roman brothels women would walk around semi-naked to attract customs and show off their attributes. Yet despite these associations, we possess a number of naked statues of respectable Roman women. Sixteen nude or semi-nude statues of women survive from antiquity. Admittedly this is a comparatively small sample and one limited almost exclusively to Rome. One gets the sense that with the female nude portrait we are pressing against the limits of the transformative power of the heroic nude. It is worth noting that these statues almost always either adopted poses or included attributes that associate the portrait with depictions of Aphrodite/Venus. The cupids that attend these Roman matrons are added insurance to help nail the cloak of heroic nudity onto these statues.

The establishment of nudity as heroic/divine signifier may also explain why Romans were prepared to allow goddesses other than Aphrodite/Venus to be shown naked. We earlier discussed the story of Actaeon as a mythological exemplar for establishing the paradigm that viewing naked goddesses was deeply inappropriate and we saw that this convention was carried over into the depictions of this story which tended to eschew the bathing scene of Artemis in favor of the savaging of Actaeon. The story of Actaeon presents a limit case for the appropriateness of nudity. Only Roman art seems prepared to take the step which nobody previously had been prepared to take and depict a bathing naked Artemis/Diana. Although it must be admitted that even here the depictions are rather coy and we only see the goddess naked from behind or crouching in a bathing position, one which

had already been made famous by statues of Aphrodite in the same position. Yet it is striking that the desire to tell the whole story of Actaeon allows this taboo to be broken. The will to narrative triumphs over the power of convention. In neutralizing the power of a naked Artemis and turning her into a decorative motif, we see the force of heroic nudity.

The Love of Art and the Art of Love

Of course, the Romans and Greeks knew that the 'will to heroism' implicit in the display of the Roman nude could easily break down. Again myth provides a useful entry point for our understanding. Just as the myth of Actaeon carved out the limits for the viewing of the female nude, so the story of Pygmalion ensured that viewers were warned that the passions inspired by the observation of statuary could be a complex and dangerous business. The most influential telling of the story of Pygmalion is found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (10.243–97). Pygmalion was a Cypriot sculptor who, disgusted by the wantonness of women, swore off all female contact. However, in the course of carving an ivory statue of a woman, later given the name Galataea, Pygmalion fell passionately in love with the statue, becoming so obsessed by the image that he prayed to the goddess Venus to make the statue his bride. The goddess obliges and Pygmalion discovers that the statue has been brought to life. The couple marry and give birth to a son, Paphos, who goes on to found one of the most important cities on Cyprus.

Pygmalion's story, as it is told to us by Ovid, is a story about the dangers of art. The story has a happy ending, but the passions that it diagnoses are dark. There is nothing healthy about Pygmalion's love. His rejection of women is extreme and the passion he feels for the statue is the gods' way of punishing such rejection. Pygmalion is driven delusional by his love of the statue. He dresses it, converses with it, and gives it gifts. He kisses it and imagines that it kisses in return. His love of the statue is feverish and destructive. Only the intercession of Venus is able to rescue this situation which otherwise is set for tragedy. It is the extreme naturalism of his art that contributes to Pygmalion's madness. 'The art that hides its art' (*ars adeo latet arte sua*) is how Ovid describes this naturalism in a phrase that has come to be a motto for numerous artists, many unaware of the less than ringing endorsement that this story gives it.

This story of *agalmatophilia* (Gk. 'love of statues') was not a one-off occurrence. Towards the end of the second century AD, the Greek rhetorician and grammarian, Athenaeus, wrote a work called the *Deipnosophistae* ('The Dining Sophists'). This work takes its form from an imagined dinner party in which a number of topics are discussed. Learned conversation takes place as each of the guests quote authorities to illustrate or support the propositions that they are making. The topics are wide ranging. In effect, the work is an encyclopedic compilation of everything that a sophisticated member of the elite could possibly want

to include in their own conversations. It's a handbook for elite discourse. One of the topics of conversation is stories of men who love statues.

The conversation begins with recounting tales of animals who have been so confused by the naturalism of ancient statues or depictions of animals that they attempted to have sex with them. Thus, a bull once tried to mount the bronze cow of Peirene, and dogs, pigeons, and geese have likewise been fooled into attempting congress with representations of their species (*Deipn.* 13.605f). In recounting these incidents, the stories bring an erotic dimension to a debate about the potentially dangerous effects of naturalism in art, namely the way that art is able to fool the senses. The debate traces its origins back to a legendary competition between the artists Zeuxis and Parrhasius, a story which is preserved for us by the Roman writer, Pliny (AD 23/4–79). According to this account, Zeuxis opened the competition with a display of such virtuoso talent that he was able to paint grapes so life-like that they were able to deceive a flock of passing birds which flew up to the grapes to peck at them. This success filled Zeuxis with such confidence that he demanded that Parrhasius pull back the curtain and display his work of art, only then did he discover that the curtain was Parrhasius' painting. At which point, Zeuxis had to concede defeat; for while his painting had been able to deceive animals, Parrhasius had managed to deceive a man. The account in Athenaeus follows a similar trajectory for whilst it begins with animals, it then turns itself to discussion of men who have fallen in love with statues. So we hear of Cleisophus of Selymbria who attempted to have intercourse with a statue on Samos until the frigidity of the marble caused him to stop and he slaked his desire on a piece of meat that happened to be conveniently nearby. Indeed, the story seems to have been an infamous one in antiquity with Athenaeus citing accounts by Alexis and Philemon. Yet, it is not just Samos where such activity occurs. The text also cites an account of a pilgrim at Delphi having intercourse with a statue group of two boys. We could also add the account of the attempted intercourse with the Aphrodite of Cnidus (see Box 2.1).

Certainly the erotic potential of statues was worrying to Christian writers. We noted above that Roman nude portraiture declines with the arrival of Christianity. The second-century Christian writer, Clement of Alexandria (c. AD 150–216) gives us an insight into some of the concerns that Christianity might have had about naturalistic art. A large section of Clement's denunciation of pagan religion, the *Exhortation to the Greeks*, is devoted to a discussion of classical art. Clement also recounts stories about men who fell in love with statues. For him, these stories illustrate the dangers of idolatry. To support his case, he alters the story of Pygmalion to make the sculptor fall in love with a statue of Aphrodite. Man's fascination with art causes him to worship statues as gods. There is something of sorcery about this love. Such love Clement regards as a form of demonic madness and he berates his readers as being less intelligent than monkeys for their infatuation with statues. Clement also tells stories of animals who have been duped into attempting to make love to images, but monkeys are apparently immune to the charms of art and are not fooled by wax or clay figures. To show the depths of depravity to

which such art can lead, Clement recounts the story of how Daedalus was able to construct a simulacrum of a heifer so lifelike that a bull was induced to mount it. Inside the bull, the Cretan queen Pasiphae lay and so satisfied her bestial desires. The product of this unnatural union was the Minotaur. For Clement, nothing could be more typical of contemporary artistic practice that it be involved in the construction of a giant sex toy to facilitate the birth of monsters.

Clement's reaction to art was certainly extreme, and as always with the *Exhortation to the Greeks*, it is difficult to work out what is particularly provocatively idiosyncratic to him and what received, if not wide approval, then at least acceptance within contemporary Christian circles. Certainly his diagnosis of the problem of loving statues chimes, as we have seen, with wider concerns. Loving statues becomes more understandable when we consider that not only were they designed to imitate in the most exact fashion the objects of desire, but that such works of art existed alongside images which depict the naked body in erotic circumstances. These *agalmatophiliacs*, these lovers of statues, are certainly suffering from 'category confusion', but one whose origins are explicable. Indeed, one suspects that stories such as these exist to police the boundaries, because those boundaries are just so blurry.

It was not just Romans who took these accounts seriously. There is an interesting afterlife to the stories of statue love. These stories were so striking that the earliest writers on sexology believed that they pointed to a genuine psychological condition. The pathology went under a number of names. In addition to *agalmatophilia*, the condition has been termed Pygmalionism, *Venus statuaria*, and *statuophilia*. Most of the key writers on sexology such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Magnus Hirschfeld, and Havelock Ellis treated it as a real disease. The belief in statue love as a psychiatric illness continued for decades before it was abandoned when no actual cases presented themselves. As the most generous interpretation concluded 'it would appear that *agalmatophilia* is no longer prevalent, but it could be that it might merely have changed its form because the burgeoning plastics industry has rendered obsolete the pathological focus on stone statues *per se*' (Scobie and Taylor 1975: 49). Others were less kind, regarding the condition of *agalmatophilia* as a complete fiction, the product of poor science and the tendency to give overdue weight to classical sources and pornographic fantasy.

Yet, it is not just in stories of statue love that we find the conflation of art and the erotic. The excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum allow us unrivalled access to Roman domestic life, architecture, and decoration. The extent to which we should regard these communities as 'typical' is debatable, but they certainly open our eyes to the range and strategies of domestic arrangements permissible within the Roman world. The amount of material that depicts sexual couplings that emerged from the excavation of these towns certainly surprised the early excavators. The material amounted to such a volume that special plans were eventually required for its storage and display. This led to the creation of the so-called 'Secret Cabinet of Pompeii' (see Box 2.2). The range of media which supports erotic

Box 2.2 The 'Secret Cabinet' of Pompeii

Few collections of artifacts have been the subject of such fevered speculation and myth making as the so-called 'Secret Cabinet' at Pompeii. This collection of erotic objects from the excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum has supposedly scandalized monarchs, shamed antiquarians, and has even been held responsible for inventing the modern genre of pornography.

The 'Secret Cabinet' came into existence in 1819 when plans were made for the entire collection of antiquities excavated from Pompeii and Herculaneum to move to Naples. According to the account of Michele Arditi, the curator of the collection at the time, the decision to remove obscene objects came from Francis I, Duke of Calabria and the future king of Naples, after he had toured the collection with his daughter. Arditi selected 102 objects and removed them to a room that was to be accessed only 'by persons of mature age and of proven morality'. This cabinet was originally known as the 'Gabinetto degli oggetti osceni' ('Cabinet of Obscene Objects'). In 1823, the name was changed to 'Gabinetto degli oggetti riservati' ('Cabinet of Restricted – or more popularly, Secret – Objects'). The most extreme attempt at censorship occurred in 1849, when the doors were closed and the room actually walled up. For 11 years the collection was not accessible to the public until Giuseppe Garibaldi took over the museum for the State and appointed Alexandre Dumas (*père*) as the curator. Dumas reopened the cabinet and had it properly cataloged. Access was still restricted until 2000, and at times, such as during the Fascist dictatorship, it could be very difficult to gain a permit to see the collection. A decree from 1934 records that 'this upper room, for reasons of morality, may be visited only by artists bearing valid documents testifying to their profession and, as the occasion arises, by personnel on official visits who shall make application'.

Objects moved into the cabinet included free-standing statuary such as the famous statue of Pan copulating with a goat, wall paintings that depicted nude goddesses or scenes of copulation, votive phalluses, depictions of hermaphrodites, vases with obscene images, and numerous statuettes of Priapus. Prior to their removal to the cabinet, many of these objects had been on open display in the king's private collection that was set up in the royal palace of Portici. The obscene content of some of the material unearthed in Naples was well known in the eighteenth century. The Marquis de Sade in his novel *Juliette* has his characters pay a visit to Portici where they find the ambiance and a number of objects particularly stimulating.

Like so many acts of repression, the restriction of access to these objects only served to fuel interest in them. Indeed, some of these objects such as the famous statue of Pan copulating with a goat arguably became even more famous after their move to the cabinet than before. Numerous engravings

(*continued overleaf*)

Box 2.2 *Continued*

circulated which purported to show objects from the collection. Two important catalogs of the material were produced. Both heavily illustrated, these catalogs ensured that the contents were well known throughout Europe. The earliest of the two catalogs is Caesar Famin's *Musée royal de Naples; peintures, bronzes et statues érotiques du cabinet secret, avec leur explication* (1832). This is by far the more explicit of the two, and is often classified as a work of erotica. The later catalog by Louis Barré, which was produced in 1840, although exhibiting a tendency to obscure genitalia, leaves little to the imagination.

Both of these works are more than simple catalogs. They demonstrate the way in which ancient objects often served to provide jumping-off points for extensive discourses on a variety of issues. Each entry in these catalogs rarely stops at just providing a description of the object. Instead, each object provides an excuse to discuss, amongst other topics, ancient morality, religion, attitudes to the body, Christian misunderstandings about pagan practice, domestic architecture, and classical aesthetics. These discussions are peppered with ancient quotations. In the opinion of these authors, it is at the point of enjoying ancient erotica that we become closest to the ancients. It is this experience that the Secret Cabinet offers, an opportunity unable to be equaled by institutions such as the Louvre or the British Museum. Although the latter institution was sufficiently inspired by the practice in Naples to establish its own *Museum Secretum* to house its erotic objects away from the main collection, a practice that it continued until just before the First World War.

imagery encompasses almost the entire range of Roman production. We find erotic images on pottery lamps, engraved gems, carved marble, cameo glass, silver vessels, scratched graffiti, and, most famously, painted plaster walls. These last depictions are perhaps the most important because they allow us to reconstruct the viewing context for this imagery. A study of the deployment of these images in Pompeian housing is very revealing.

Erotic images were not treated as a 'dirty secret' to be removed from public display. In the Roman house, there were very few places that were totally private. Even spaces such as sleeping areas were much more permeable to the traffic of slaves, family members, and even close associates than modern bedrooms. Erotic images were quite often placed in public parts of the house. They were designed to be admired as symbols of taste and sophistication. Erotic images sit proudly alongside images drawn from prestige subjects such as myth. So, for example, when the wealthy owner of the House of the Centenary decided to redecorate two of the rooms off his triclinium ('dining room'), he chose a mixture of mythological and erotic scenes. On the first room were paintings of Cassandra, the Trojan

prophetess, the hero Endymion and his lover the goddess Selene, and Venus as a fisherwoman. In the following room were images of Hercules sleeping and on the walls to the right and left of this painting were images of copulating couples. On the left wall is a scene of a man reclining on his bed, a woman squats down on his member. On the right wall is another couple, she lies on top of a reclining man facing him, her right arm is between his legs and seems to be fitting his penis to her vagina.

Even if we accord images such as these less of an erotic thrill than they produce in their modern viewers who have all been too keen to label them pornographic, they nevertheless complicate Roman notions of viewing. The delights they offer are different from the delights of paintings of Hercules and Cassandra. They can happily sit alongside them, but in doing so, the erotic pleasures that they evoke threaten to bleed into these other images. Just as they gain kudos from their surroundings, so they implicate their neighbors in their own particular regime of gratification. Pleasure isn't a stop-start business, and different forms of desire easily assimilate into each other. As the empress Livia explained, with the right form of self-control we can construct a taxonomy of desires, sublimating some and transforming others, but we mustn't forget the effort that this took or assume that everyone was up to the task.

3

Obscene Texts

Illustrating the Unspeakable

In the previous chapter, we examined how debates about ancient art played out in debates about contemporary morality, and we examined how the legacy of attitudes to the classical body could find form in modern anxiety over the classical nude. In this chapter, I want to examine how classical literature acts as a stimulus for sexual fantasy. Using the case study of Aubrey Beardsley's engagement with Juvenal's *Sixth Satire*, I want to highlight how fertile the literature of the ancient world could prove for the erotic imagination. Juvenal's *Sixth Satire* also provides a useful springboard for a broader discussion that seeks to locate these sexualized descriptions within their social and historical context and so bring into relief some of the broader claims made about Roman sexual culture. As we shall see, what has often been taken as a statement of literal truth owes more to generic conventions than any form of reality. This final section illustrates some of the main features of erotica in Roman literature as well as explaining some of their nuances and origins.

When art meets text, Roman sexual culture can become very problematic. In 1894, the illustrator Aubrey Beardsley (1872–1898) was at the height of his success. After a penurious childhood and adolescence in which his family had shuffled from rented accommodation to rented accommodation, and having spent his first few years after school as a poorly paid clerk in London, the young man was finally experiencing some good fortune. His association with leading painters such as Whistler and Edward Burne-Jones was starting to pay dividends. The important critic Aymer Vallance had taken a shine to him. In 1892, he had been commissioned by the publisher J.M. Dent to produce illustrations for Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. This commission not only helped his bank balance, but it also made him the center of attention for the circle of Pre-Raphelite painters to whom this text was so influential. Previously, Beardsley had only been on the periphery of this circle through his friendship with Burne-Jones. Vallance also helped raise

Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity Alastair J. L. Blanshard
 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

Beardsley's profile by securing the placement of an article on the artist in the first issue of *The Studio,* a magazine devoted to contemporary art and design.

This edition of *The Studio* also contained a drawing by Beardsley, originally commissioned by the *Pall Mall Budget*, illustrating Oscar Wilde's play *Salome*. The piece had been rejected by the *Pall Mall Budget*, who were disturbed by its graphic, macabre, and potentially blasphemous depiction of Salome's embrace of the head of John the Baptist. *The Studio* was less squeamish and ran the picture. Wilde liked the piece immensely and arranged for Beardsley to produce illustrations for an edition of the play.

At the start of 1894, Beardsley's illustrated version of *Salome* was published to considerable scandal. All agreed that the illustrations were extremely proficient. Beardsley was a pioneer in his use of metal process blocks that allowed for more graphic detail in printing. However, critics found themselves torn between admiration at the technical skill of Beardsley's drawing and horror at the decadence, violence, and sensuality of the images. These reactions only seemed to confirm Beardsley's position as one of the significant figures in the new fin de siècle art movement.

Beardsley's next enterprise had been planned a few months before the publication of *Salome*. It was a new magazine devoted to art and literature, *The Yellow Book*. Importantly, the magazine sought to redress the balance between artist and author. No longer would the artist be a subservient illustrator, but now both parties would be published on an even footing. Beardsley was the artist director of the enterprise. The magazine appeared in April 1894 and, like *Salome*, it was a scandalous success. The initial print run of 5000 copies sold out in five days. Beardsley's star seemed secured in the firmament. More issues of *The Yellow Book* were planned and put into production.

Unfortunately, fate had other plans. In April, the following year, Oscar Wilde was arrested at the Cadogan Hotel in Knightsbridge for the crime of gross indecency. As he was escorted away by police, Wilde grabbed a copy of Pierre Louÿs' *Aphrodite*, which like many French books of the period, was bound in yellow. The press mistook it for a copy of *The Yellow Book* and implicated the publication in the scandal. Beardsley's own public involvement with Wilde, which had begun with the publication of *Salome*, also served to cement the association.

The reaction of the public was swift. Crowds gathered and threw stones through the windows of the publisher's office. Prominent authors contacted the publisher of *The Yellow Book*, John Lane, and threatened to withdraw their association with the press unless Beardsley was fired. In May, Beardsley was dismissed from the editorship and lost his main source of income.

One of the results of this sequence of events was that London society was deprived of a collection of drawings for one of the most scandalous poems of Latin literature. At the end of the fourth edition of *The Yellow Book*, Beardsley had published a double-page supplement that showed two monkeys in livery bearing an elderly person in a sedan chair, behind them was an Italianate streetscape. The

drawing was designed to herald an important new sequence of illustrations, a sequence devoted to Juvenal's *Sixth Satire* on women.

Beardsley had long been interested in the classical world and its erotic potential. His interest in the illustrative potential of the Roman world began at Brighton Grammar school. Amongst his earliest drawings are a collection of illustrations of Book 2 of Vergil's *Aeneid*. This book, a popular school text for Latin students, tells of the destruction of the city of Troy. Intriguingly, Beardsley was less interested in the scenes of bloodshed and destruction that dominate this book. Instead, his eye was caught by more minor details. The story of the death of the seer Laocoon and the abduction of the statue of Minerva by Odysseus seem to have been particular favorites judging by the number of drawings of the incident. The latter story is interesting for our understanding of Beardsley's notion of classical desire given that in one version he plays up the way in which the statue, represented by a woman in flowing drapery, leaps into the arms of Odysseus. No chaste goddess here.

However, it was not until a number of years later when he began to work on some illustrations of Lucian's *True History* that he first really saw the erotic potential of antiquity. The opportunity to illustrate this second-century AD fantasy story occurred whilst Beardsley was illustrating *Le Morte d'Arthur*. In a letter to a school friend, Beardsley writes:

> Better than *Morte d'Arthur* is the book that Lawrence and Bullen have given me, the 'Vera Historia' ['True History'] of Lucian. I am illustrating this entirely in my new manner, or rather a development of it. The drawings are most certainly the most extraordinary things that have ever appeared in a book both in technique and conception. They are also the most indecent (Letter to G.F. Scotson-Clark, February 15, 1893 quoted in Reade 1967: 252).

We possess four drawings inspired by Lucian's narrative. In them we can see a number of themes that continue to be important in Beardsley's work. Here we find his revulsion at the notion of conception and his corresponding fascination with the form of the fetus, his flirtation with homoeroticism, and his interest in hard, masculine women. At one point, the main character in Lucian's narrative makes a trip to the moon. Here he finds a world entirely populated by men. The word 'woman' is unknown to them. In mimicry of the birth of Dionysus, who was born out of the thigh of Zeus, in this world reproduction occurs in the calf of the leg. Here conception occurs presumably through the standard ancient homosexual practice of frottage between the thighs. Once the fetus has reached term, the thigh is cut open and the fetus is pulled out. Although dead, the fetus is brought back to life by opening its mouth and letting the wind blow into its lungs. Beardsley's drawing of this story captures its macabre absurdity. The fetus dominates the picture. As always in Beardsley, it is shown side on with a single malevolent eye staring out at the viewer. The cut on the thigh is clean, black, and

vaginal. A fetus also appears in the second drawing from Lucian. This drawing is not based on any specific passage, but it takes its inspiration from the monsters found in Lucian's work. It is a nightmarish vision in which a youth stands before scaled androgynous half-naked women with florid tendrils emerging from their breasts, a dragon lurks in the corner, and a bird-headed cherub flutters by the youth's thigh. In one hand, the woman holds out a fetus in a bizarre reversal of the iconography of the Madonna and child. The final two images are the most sensual of the images that Beardsley drew. They take inspiration from a scene where the voyagers arrive at an island transformed by a previous visit of the god Dionysus. Here wild, lush grapes spring from the earth, and rivers of wine flow through the landscape and contain fish which if you eat them will make you drunk. It was also populated with a race of grapevine women whose lower half was vine, but were 'perfect from the waist up'. Out of their fingertips grew branches and their hair was a mass of grapes and leaves. The travelers carouse with these women and are made drunk by their kisses. However, tragedy breaks out when some of the men attempt intercourse and find that their genitals become stuck in the bodies of the women as their penises begin to grow roots. Beardsley's depiction of this episode plays up the initial sensuousness of the carousing. In one scene, in a languid, drunken encounter bodies intertwine and kisses are exchanged. In another again the men and women are romantically involved, only this time the look of pleasure on the men's faces has turned to alarm. To the knowing viewer the cause of alarm is all too obvious.

The illustrations of the *True Histories* represent Beardsley's first sustained encounter with the erotic potential of antiquity. From this point onwards, classical motifs function as a signifier of the libidinal and abandoned. They crop up in places where they might not be expected. Pan and satyrs make regular appearances in the margins of works such as the collection of eighteenth-century apothegms published under the title *Bon Mots* by J.M. Dent, the publisher of *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Even though *Salome* is a biblical story, these figures still manage to feature. Indeed, the title page of the work is remarkably classical in style. It features a cupid praying at an enormous herm. These statues were dedicated to the god Hermes and in their classical Greek form were essentially a square pillar topped with a head and a set of genitals including an erect phallus placed on the front. Later Roman versions favored a more modeled top so that they took the form of a three-quarter-length bust and sometimes omitted the genitals. The features were generically male, but later often took the form of portraits. Beardsley's herm for *Salome* takes a particularly pagan form. It takes its inspiration from the Roman herm, but he adds horns to the head to make it simultaneously more Pan-like and demonic.

Beardsley was a regular visitor to the British Museum, where he was taken with the high standard of drawing on Greek vases. Together with classical Japanese illustration, this material proved a major inspiration for his style. In addition to the herm for *Salome* and the marginal drawings in *Bon Mots*, we can point to

classical drawings of numerous dancing fauns, Apollo and Daphne, and Atalanta in Calydon with her hound. Given the importance of classical material, it comes as no surprise that in a self-portrait Beardsley shows himself tethered to a classical herm. It is an image about Beardsley's debt, both erotic and aesthetic, to classical antiquity.

One other sequence is worth noting. These are the illustrations of Aristophanes' comedy *Lysistrata* produced by Beardsley when he was working with the publisher Leonard Smithers. Smithers had found employment for Beardsley following his dismissal from *The Yellow Book*. These illustrations are by far the most graphic of Beardsley's drawings. The plot of this play centered on a sex strike by the women of Athens as a method by which their menfolk could be brought around to the idea of suing for peace in their long-running war with Sparta. Beardsley plays with the sexual theme by seasoning his images with giant erect phalluses. In one drawing, Lysistrata anoints a giant phallus with a sprig of myrtle. Off to the side is another herm with a rampantly erect phallus. All the men sport painfully erect phalluses in the various drawings. This both references the comic phallus worn by actors in Greek comedies, and also the men's sexual frustration. The men's phalluses are large, obscene, and very life-like.

It is normal to account for the increased graphicness of the imagery through reference to the influence of Smithers. Leonard Smithers (1861–1907) was a former solicitor who had become a publisher and antiquarian book dealer. He was especially interested in ancient and exotic erotica. Together with Harry Sidney Nicols, he founded the Erotika Biblion Society. He was a close associate of the explorer, diplomat, and author Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821–1890). It was their shared interest in erotica that brought the two together. Burton's most famous work was an unexpurgated version of *The Thousand Night and One Night* (1885–6), a translation which became famous for its retention of the erotic content of the stories and its discussion of homosexual activity. Smithers was one of the subscribers to this work and was also a keen admirer of Burton's translations of the *Karma Sutra* (1883) and the *Ananga Ranga, or, The Hindu Art of Love* (1873, 1885). His bookshop was one of the main venues in London to obtain upmarket erotica.

Traditional accounts tend to treat Smithers rather badly and regard him as a corrupting influence on figures such as Beardsley. Alan Crawford, in his entry on Beardsley in the *ODNB*, describes Smithers as 'an angel of darkness: a pasty-faced, thirty-four-year-old ex-solicitor who sold old books, prints, pornography from a shop in Arundel Street, off the Strand'. Many see him as preying on the lives of those ruined by the Wilde scandal, and his offer to act as Wilde's publisher as gross opportunism. Yet, as we have seen, Beardsley was no innocent by the time of his encounter with Smithers. Whatever appetites Smithers fed, they were appetites that had been around for a while.

Smithers' production of an edition of *Lysistrata* represents a slight departure. Until *Lysistrata*, Smithers had concentrated on Latin erotic literature. He pro-

duced a translation of the verse dedicated to the Roman god, Priapus, the so-called *Priapeia* (1888), as well as a translation of the Roman love poet Catullus. This latter work was a collaboration with Burton, and was published in 1894 after Burton's death. A large amount of its risqué content was removed at the request of Burton's widow. Smithers also encouraged Beardsley to acquaint himself with this Latin poet. In one of the editions of *The Savoy*, the literary magazine Smithers started as a rival to *The Yellow Book*, Beardsley published not only an illustration, but also a translation of Catullus' poem where a man weeps over the tomb of his brother (Catullus 101).

Smithers was also responsible for the eventual publication of some of Beardsley's drawings of Juvenal's *Sixth Satire* that had been destined for *The Yellow Book*. In addition to the drawing published in *The Yellow Book,* six drawings are known. One, intended as an introductory piece, depicts a grotesquely large semi-naked woman bound and impaled on a column. Beneath her, Juvenal, naked from the waist down with his genitals exposed, carries a whip with which to flog her. The image is designed to capture both the sensuality and the brutality of Juvenal's depiction of women. The drawing gives Juvenal a sadomasochistic coloring, not found in the original satire. The remaining drawings illustrate scenes from the satire. One, *The Impatient Adulterer*, was sold to his friend and frequent customer of his work H.C.J. (Jerome) Pollitt. Illustrating lines 237–8 from the satire, it depicts a man peeking through curtains as he fiddles with his semi-erect penis. In clutching the curtains, his hand makes the horned-gesture of the cuckold, thus signifying his intent. The remaining four were bought by Smithers who published a selection of them in *An Issue of Five Drawings Illustrative of Juvenal and Lucan* (1906). Two represent the empress Messalina. Two depict the Roman actor Bathyllus performing a lewd dance. In one he imitates Leda as she is seduced by Zeus in the form of a swan. In the other we see the dancer naked from behind. He gestures provocatively towards his anus.

The appeal of Bathyllus can be explained by his status within late-nineteenth century homosexual circles. Already by 1876, Bathyllus was being used as a homoerotic signifier. In that year William Hurrell Mallock published *The New Republic*. This *roman à clef* received such tremendous acclaim when it was serialized as a series of sketches in the *Belgravia* magazine that it was subsequently published in novel form in both England and the United States. The novel parodies a number of contemporary figures and their attitudes to the Church, progress, and women's education. Among the cast of characters assembled in the novel is Mr. Rose, a figure based on Walter Pater, one of the leaders of Oxford's aesthetic movement and an important figure in Wilde's intellectual development. In the course of the novel, Mr. Rose describes himself as belonging to a party who have 'gone back to Athens, and to Italy' and for whom 'the boyhood of Bathyllus is of more moment than the manhood of Napoleon'. This reference to Bathyllus clearly mimics the use of classical allusions as homosexual code within the period. Two figures from antiquity are known by this name. The first is a youth famed for his

beauty who captured the heart of the tyrant of Samos and who was immortalized by a statue erected by the tyrant before the altar of Hera at Samos. He was beloved of the Samian court poet, Anacreon whose love for him is recorded in a few surviving verses of Anacreon and four lines by the poet Horace (*Epodes* 14.9–12). The other is a pantomime actor from the reign of Augustus. This Bathyllus was loved by Augustus' offsider, Maecenas (Tacitus, *Annals* 1.53) and was famous for his comic performances. The most famous reference to him occurs in Juvenal's *Satires* (6.63–6) where Bathyllus dances dressed as Leda as she is seduced by Jupiter disguised as a swan. The dance was so erotic that women literally wet themselves with excitement.

If the reference to Bathyllus can be explained by the appeal of its homoerotic fame, what can be said for the images of Messalina? The images are not overtly erotic. In one scene, Messalina hurries through a Roman street at night in a cloak. In another she emerges from her bathroom, fully dressed with a determined look on her face. Yet, in these figures, Beardsley seems to have found a profound metaphor for contemporary sexual politics. Beardsley's drawings come from a period in which gender roles were under intense interrogation and significant social change, especially with regard to the expectations and capacities of women, was occurring. The power of female sexuality and its resistance to control were sources of anxiety. There were modern Messalinas stalking the streets in the form of the 'new woman'. These liberated, independent women threatened the *status quo* and established male power. Issues of female suffrage and women's access to education were alive. As one critic has described her, 'the New Woman was an anarchic figure who threatened to turn the world upside down and to be on top in a wild carnival of social and sexual misrule' (Showalter 1990: 38). As we shall see, one could find parallels in the ancient characterization of the wayward empress. In attempting to figure these profound social changes and explore their implications, it is understandable that Beardsley found himself drawn to the literature and stories of the classical world, especially the Roman Empire. One of the distinctive features of Roman literature was its explicit discussion of the sexual activity of men and women, particularly prominent figures. Roman literature provided just the model that Beardsley needed. Here was a world in which standards about sex, promiscuity, gender roles, and morality seemed as much at sea as they were in contemporary London. In its supposed candor, it provided a mirror in which it was possible to see reflections of fin de siècle society.

Talking Dirty

The text which captivated Beardsley so strongly, Juvenal's *Sixth Satire*, represents one of the most complete catalogs of female misbehavior in Roman literature. Critics debate about whether the satire is anti-women or just anti-marriage. Such debate is understandable. Both are topics with long pedigrees in classical literature,

and both genres share an interest in the sex life of women. In its opening line, Juvenal's satire declares that its theme will be chastity (*pudicitia*). At the core of this Roman term lay the notion of sexual purity. It meant both the preservation of virginity for unmarried women and sexual fidelity for married ones. It was one of the most important virtues, defined through numerous anecdotes and recapitulations of historical memory. One of the most famous stories from Roman myth history was the story of the rape of Lucretia by Tarquin, the last king of Rome, and the subsequent outrage at the act which led to the overthrow of his rule. A version of this story is presented by the Augustan historian Livy. This version became the dominant account in western culture and its influence can be seen in numerous paintings, and dramatic retellings. Whenever the grotesqueness of tyranny needs to be exposed through the violation of women or a model of female virtue needs to be affirmed, then Livy's Lucretia seems to be invoked.

In Livy's account, Lucretia is portrayed as a model of wifely virtue who was forced at sword point to have sex with Tarquin. Indeed, she eventually succumbs to Tarquin not through fear of her own death, but because Tarquin threatens to kill her and then arrange it so that it looks like she was engaged in adultery with a slave. After Tarquin leaves, Lucretia calls together her husband, father, and their close friends and confesses what Tarquin has done to her. After giving her account, she takes up a dagger and kills herself. 'How can a woman be well if she has lost her chastity (*pudicitia*),' she remarks in suicidal despair. Picking up the blood-stained knife, her family and friends pledge revenge, and rouse the city into open revolt. Tarquin and his family are driven from Rome never to return. The Roman Republic owes its origins to a woman's *pudicitia*.

Such female virtue provides the jumping-off point for Juvenal's satire. Juvenal begins his satire by contrasting the current world to an early Golden Age in which life was simple and women were chaste (ll.1–20). It was a world without any of the sophisticated trappings of modern life. Families slept in caves with their animals on beds of straw and leaves. Women did not prettify themselves, but instead devoted themselves to the rearing of young. However, with the end of the Golden Age, we see the departure of chastity from the world. Just as *pudicitia* could claim to be the primary Roman virtue, so adultery is the first Roman vice (23–4). According to Juvenal, nowadays women are so unchaste that a sensible man would contemplate exile or suicide rather than face the prospect of marriage (30–2).

The bulk of the satire consists of a list of the ways in which women betray their husbands. Particular attention is paid to the often low status of the lovers. The satire begins with a discussion of women's love of actors and gladiators. We have already seen discussion of Bathyllus, the beloved of Victorian gay men, and, according to Juvenal, Roman matrons. But Bathyllus is not alone. The love of women extends to other actors as well. Juvenal produces a great list of comedians, tragedians, flutists, and lyre-players who women lust after (67–81). Gladiators, despite their often brutal features and wounded, scarred bodies, also attract women. Juvenal tells the scandalous story of an Eppia, the wife of a senator, who abandons

her children to run off to Egypt with her gladiator lover. For such men, women are prepared to brave any danger (94–102). Their normal feminine weakness fades away in the face of such desire. It is impossible to keep these women locked up. They have corrupted the household staff and the slave girls are only too ready to assist their mistresses (345–51).

Eppia is not the only high-class Roman to be a slave to her lusts. In an extended sequence, Juvenal describes how the empress Messalina used to leave the palace disguised in a cloak and head out to a brothel where she entertained customer after customer (114–32, a scene illustrated by Beardsley). No other prostitute can match Messalina for stamina. Never satisfied she takes men until daybreak when she slinks back home.

Often women's interests are nothing but a cover for the conduct of affairs. Juvenal is scathing of women's interest in magic and mystery religions. Their rites seem nothing but an excuse for an opportunity to seduce the attendant priests and practitioners. Female-only festivals are suspect. Juvenal is only too happy to remind his audience of the Bona Dea scandal of 62 BC when it was alleged that the Republican politician Clodius had violated this female-only festival disguised as a musician (345). These women are so depraved and sacrilegious that they sneak out at night to urinate on the altar dedicated to the goddess of Chastity in the Forum Boarium. Under the cover of darkness, they perform their abominable acts, leaving their husbands to walk through the urine unsuspectingly in the morning.

Juvenal's satire creates a vision of Rome in which depraved wives betray their husbands at every turn. Marriage vows mean nothing to this gaggle of scheming women. The only inconvenience they suffer is the occasional abortion or a troublesome nosy husband. Should he prove too troublesome, he better watch out. Juvenal tells tales of many poor husbands poisoned by their wives when they become too inconvenient. It goes without saying that Juvenal's depiction of Rome is totally fictional. Even the supposed historical events such as the flight of Eppia, the nocturnal activities of Messalina, or the Bona Dea scandal owe more to the wagging tongue of the scandalmonger than they do to historical reality. Yet it is the vision of this text that has proved so influential in our fantasies of Roman life and morals.

Juvenal's satire does not stand alone. Satire was the genre that Rome claimed as its own. 'Satire, at least, is totally ours' boasts Quintilian (*Institutes* 10.1.93). Although even in antiquity, there were critics, some of them even the writers of satire, who were prepared to challenge this claim and argue for Greek origins for the genre. Nevertheless, even if we can find antecedents for a number of satire's motifs and critical moves, it does seem to be one genre where we can find the Roman mind at work perhaps more easily than other genres. 'Bad bodies misbehaving' (Gunderson 2005: 225) is a good summary of much of the content of satiric writing. Satire positions the poet as an outraged voyeur to society's evils. This can include the actions of jumped-up ex-slaves, foreigners, and poets too full

of their own importance. All are shown up as cheap, tawdry, corrupt, and revolting. Their breath smells, their assholes are wracked by hemorrhoids. There is something pathological about the satirist's addiction to vice. There is no matter too disgusting that he can't recount in lurid detail. The Roman satirist often purports to be revolted by what he sees, yet deep down it is hard not to suspect that the poetic persona is putting on a pose. In satire, the poet wears multiple masks. He knows that his audience delights in hearing about the gory details of Rome's vices just as he enjoys recounting them. All the thrills of satire are vicarious. Sex is never far from view in satire.

One can see this in operation in a writer such as Horace, who arguably exercised the most influence on the western tradition of satire, and was certainly the most openly self-reflexive practitioner on the nature of the genre and its rules, content, and traditions. For example, in Horace's *Satires* 1.2, possibly the poet's first satire, the poem opens with a discussion of wealth and its associated practices in contemporary Rome. Horace parades before his readers images of spendthrifts, misers, extortionate usurers, and their unwary prey (1–24). Yet not before long the subject matter turns to sex. Indeed, a fifth of the way into the poem, the poet expresses his fear that this discussion of money is confusing his readers. He's afraid that they are worried where the poem is going (24–5). At that point, he reveals the real meat of his poem, a discussion of the types of women one encounters and the advantages and disadvantages of having sex with them. Ultimately, the satirist decides that, contrary to much popular opinion and practice, married women are not worth the effort. Instead, he mounts a case for the desirability of prostitutes. For this opinion, he claims the endorsement of the legendary moralist, the Elder Cato (31–5). Choosing a good woman is like choosing a horse (86–9). With a prostitute, one knows what one is getting. All her wares are on display. The married woman on the other hand is coy. She muffles her faults. You can't see her skinny ass or big feet. Why, the poet wonders, should you fixate on upper-class women? He envisages a conversation between a man and his penis (68–72). 'I'm hard, but not unreasonable, I only ask for cunt. I don't care about its social class,' complains the organ. It is a hard claim to refute. 'When starved do you need grilled turbot or roasted peacock? Why torture your prick?', Horace writes, reducing love to its most biologic functions.

The satiric tradition's focus on sex is symptomatic of a distinct trend in Roman literature which saw sexual activity as an area for explicit discussion and exploration. In some ways this discourse is a direct result of the veneration of the concept of *pudicitia*. By making it so central to discussions of Roman virtue, especially female virtue, sexual activity was inevitably drawn into the public domain. Erotic activity permeates almost every genre of Roman literature. Walls were covered in sexually explicit graffiti. Letters contained gossip and jokes about the activities of prominent individuals. In the theatres it was possible to see farces, much of which involved obscene content. Orators in political and legal speeches loved to dwell on the scandalous affairs of their opponents. Poets played with society's concerns

composing epigrams that castigated in explicit terms acts and desires that they found reprehensible or, as we have discussed above, composed satires railing against contemporary depravity.

A number of themes run through these various genres and help contribute to the notion of the sexually permissive Rome. Adultery was one. Juvenal's satire is the most elaborately worked disquisition on this theme. However, the whole genre of Roman love poetry was predicated on this topic. Even when there wasn't a husband in the picture, there was normally a male guardian, a father or brother, who needed to be got around. A lot of Roman sexuality was based on the idea of the lover stealing illicit love and thereby demonstrating his masculine prowess. Indeed, much of Roman love making is a game between men in which women are both the game pieces and the prize.

The most famous Roman treatise on the game of love was Ovid's poem *Ars Amatoria* ('The Art of Love'). The work is composed of three books. The first book treats the topic of the places and means by which young men can locate and seduce girls. The second book tells the reader how to maintain their lovers once they have been acquired. The third book is addressed to young women and tells them how they can capture the hearts of young men. It includes a long description of the various sexual positions that a woman can adopt to show off herself to best advantage and please her lover. For example, he advises that if you have a beautiful face to lie on your back, while to reverse the position if your back is your best feature (3.773–4). Rear-entry sex is also advisable if your belly is marked by wrinkles (3.785–6). Small girls are advised to ride their lovers like a horse, whilst leggy girls should wrap their legs around their lover's shoulders so that he can admire them closely (3.775–7). This work had a scandalous reputation. There is strong evidence that it played a large role in Augustus' decision to exile the poet to the city of Tomis on the Black Sea. The *Ars Amatoria* is distinguished by a particular cynicism about matters of love. For Ovid love is a game, a hunt for suitable quarry. The lover must be like the hunter and set traps for the unwary (1.45–50). Women are simple-minded prey, easily startled, but also fooled by the most obviously insincere praise of their face, hair, fingers, or feet.

Ovid explains the various places that one can mingle with women and the opportunities that they provide for seduction. So, for example, he goes into a long discussion of the racetrack as a suitable venue for seduction. The crush of the crowd allows a lot of opportunity for 'accidental' touching. It also provides an opportunity for displays of gallantry as you organize cushions and other paraphernalia to make your beloved comfortable. Finally, it provides an opportunity as the horses rush by and the girl is covered in dust to obtain a surreptitious grope as you brush her down. Yet, it is not just the racetrack where such opportunities lie. Ovid also lists the advantages of the theatre and the gladiatorial contests. Effectively Ovid's poem makes every form of public entertainment in Rome an erogenous zone. Wherever 'they come to see or that they themselves might be seen, that place contains the seeds of destruction for chastity' (*Ars Amatoria* 100).

It must be remembered that women were not the only object in these games of love. Roman poets also celebrated the pursuit of beautiful boys. Often boys were seen as preferable lovers to women. Juvenal in the *Sixth Satire* argues that, at least, with the love of boys one never need fear adultery. The largest number of poems to boys is found in the work of the Roman writer Martial. In his poems, he professes love to numerous boys. In one poem, Martial expresses his vision of his ideal boy. He is born in Egypt, but possesses fair skin, tumbling locks unfettered by braids, low-set brows, an aquiline nose, rose-red lips, a chaste demeanor, and an unswerving devotion to the poet. Sadly such boys prove impossible to obtain. Many poems are devoted to the inconstancy of boys or the resistance they put up to the lover's advances. Sometimes boys are just there to satisfy passing pleasure. Catullus boasts of raping a slave boy that he found masturbating (56).

As with any game, there were winners and losers. The poets were equally explicit about the dangers that adulterers ran. Horace describes a list of adulterers and the fates that befell them: one falling from a roof, another beaten with rods, another only extracting himself from a vengeful husband with the payment of a large amount of money, another being handed over to the stable-hands who mistreat him by urinating on him, one even being castrated (*Satires* 1.2.37–46). Similarly, Catullus threatens the adulterer Aurelius with anal violation with a radish or a mullet (15.19) or oral rape (21.13).

The poets knew that they were being controversial when they penned these lines. They were deliberately flouting contemporary morality. They were offering a new type of man. One of the themes which runs through Ovid's other great erotic work, the *Amores*, is the way in which the game of love is a replacement for the game of war. Indeed, being in love is presented as a comparable activity. 'Every lover is a solider' he begins one verse, a similarity that he then pursues throughout the rest of the poem. Love like war is a young man's game. Both soldier and lover are admired for their spirit, the former by their military commanders, the latter by their female lovers. Like the soldier, the lover is forced to endure long periods on night watch, gazing at his beloved's door. Both are prepared to go on long journeys and endure immense hardships in pursuit of their objective. They both have foes to overcome, and are prepared to use surprise attack. The lover waiting until the husband is asleep before he mounts his assault. In this playful attempt to supplant the citizen soldier as the paradigm of masculinity, Ovid challenges a number of core values. Ever since the earliest days of the Roman Republic, martial valor had been the cornerstone of Roman male identity. No greater proof of a Roman citizen's virtue could be offered in court than that he strip off and show the scars that he had earned in battle.

Ovid offered the lover as a replacement for the soldier. This is transgressive, although at least both soldier and lover pretend to share the same moral vocabulary, even if the lover's take on traditional virtues is rather skewed. The other gambit employed by poets of embracing notions of slavery is even more perverse. Time and again throughout Roman love poetry, the lover depicts himself as

enslaved to his mistress. Tibullus, for example, fantasizes about being a slave watching over his beloved, even if this means enduring the indignity of whips and chains. In another poem he pictures himself as her slave attendant making way for her through the crowded Roman streets. The distinction between slave and free was one of the cardinal distinctions of the ancient world. The distinction had political, legal, economic, and social implications. It was not a light metaphor.

We miss the point if we fail to recognize the controversial nature of these gambits. Some have seen them as deliberately shocking and provocative. Others have taken the unreal, topsy-turvy world that they portray as the product of a desire to escape the often violent and troubled world of the poets. The one way they should never be read, and yet for moralists it has all too often been their preferred reading, is that they should not be seen as a symptom of decadence.

The other way in which sex and sex acts appeared in Roman literature was as part of an invective discourse against other rival men or women who have rejected the lover's advances. Love and hate go together. In one of his shortest poems, the love poet Catullus brings the two together.

> I hate and I love. Why am I like this, you perhaps ask.
> I don't know, but I feel it and am tormented (85).

When Romans hated, they hated with a ready-made and ample vocabulary. Roman sexual invective is crude and graphic. Thus, after his relationship with his beloved 'Lesbia' has soured, Catullus turns on her and spurns her in the following way:

> May she live and flourish with her lovers,
> Embracing three hundred simultaneously,
> Loving none of them truly, but time and again
> Breaking the groins of all of them (11.16–20)

Elsewhere Catullus pictures Lesbia practicing her trade as a whore in the back alleys of Rome, servicing any Roman who wants her (58). It is a remarkable reversal given that in poems set earlier in the relationship, Catullus had been professing his undying love and delighting in even the curses of Lesbia because they, at least, indicated that she remembered him. This is the woman to whom Catullus' poetic persona was so devoted that he threatened his rivals with rape for making advances towards her. Yet Catullus does not just save his scorn for Lesbia. Numerous others are castigated in his verse. Over 40 verses have an invective quality, most of which is sexual in nature. Some promise obscene punishment. For example, he promises to anally and orally rape Aurelius and Furius for thinking poorly of his verse. In other poems, the poet chooses to spread scandal or insult. Thus, Gellius is accused of seducing his uncle's wife and committing incest with his mother and sister. Caesar and his deputy Mamurra are accused of conducting a homosexual

relationship in which each takes it in turns to be the passive partner. Aemilius is exposed as someone who loves oral and anal sex, whilst Egnatius drinks others' urine. Veranius and Fabullus are castigated for allowing their master to sodomize them.

Such invective arises out of the macho competitive culture of much of Roman public life, in which the graphic abuse of enemies was considered standard practice. Like Roman love poetry, its connection with any reality is tenuous. Yet, the desire to see these poems as reflections of reality has been hard to resist, even by modern scholars. Suzanne Dixon (2001: 133–56), for example, has pointed out the strange determination to resurrect a historical 'Lesbia' from Catullus' poems. In the second century AD, the writer Apuleius claimed to unlock the key to Catullus' *nom d'amour* and revealed that 'Lesbia' was 'Claudia', a female member of one of the ancient leading Roman families, the Claudii. Three likely candidates present themselves, all are sisters of the prominent politician Publius Clodius (a plebeian spelling of Claudius) Pulcher, the figure alluded to by Juvenal in his discussion of the Bona Dea scandal. Any of them could be the 'Lesbia' of Catullus' poems, but scholarship has generally preferred to see 'Lesbia' as Clodia Metelli (i.e. the wife of Quintus Caecilius Metellus) who is mentioned in a number of sources, most notably the Roman politician Cicero who was an opponent of her brother and who vilifies her for her promiscuity and accuses her of poisoning her husband. Both Catullus' erotic verse and Cicero's political smear campaign are fantasies, yet this has not stopped generations producing a Lesbia/Clodia fantasy amalgam and presenting her as 'historical fact'. Thus, Cornish, in his introduction to the Loeb edition of Catullus (1913, repr. 1956), talks of Lesbia as 'the most beautiful, powerful and abandoned woman in Rome'. Such talk is to miss the point of Roman erotic writing and to chase a mirage that even the most naive Roman could see through. It requires a desire to blind oneself to considerations of genre or even logical consistency (the portrait of Lesbia is not consistent even within Catullus' verse, let alone with Cicero's Clodia narrative). It is hard to keep a good story down.

4

Erotic Rites

The Myth of the Orgy

In an engraving printed at the very start of the twentieth century, we see a heap of classical bodies writhing in an elaborate orgy (see Figure 4.1). The engraving features as plate 14 in a collection of 19 pornographic etchings published by the so-called 'Sybarite Society' in Paris in 1906 under the title *Metamorphoses of Venus*. All of the pornographic images are set in antiquity. This scene is set in a Roman hall. On the walls are classically inspired paintings of figures, tendrils of plants, and geometric designs. In the foreground a naked woman lies asleep. Her body is hairless like a statue. By her right hand lies a rhyton, a sculptured drinking horn in the shape of a cow's head. These cups, originally used by the Persians, were adopted by the Greeks and later the Romans. Next to the rhyton lies a strap-on dildo, no doubt the cause of the woman's exhausted slumber. To the right of her feet lie a naked couple. The woman also has her eyes closed, this time in ecstasy as a man performs cunnilingus on her. The woman's right hand traces figures on her taught stomach. The man's feet disappear out of view. Next to them is another couple. The woman is propped up on the base of a column. With her right hand she pulls apart her labia, a young man licks at her genitals whilst masturbating himself. On the other side of the room are three other couplings. On the far left a young girl has mounted the phallus of a marble herm. She looks deeply into the eyes of the grinning statue's face. To the right of her and a little way behind them is another couple. They are surrounded by the remnants of a feast. A drinking horn, wine cup, and plate of fruit lie scattered on the floor. The woman lies twisted on her side. The man has stuck his penis between the thighs of the woman and commenced intercourse. He looks down on the woman with hooded eyelids. Finally, in the far right-hand corner, at the entrance to an alcove, a man and woman are engaged in anal sex. The man has his back to the viewer and stands at a slight angle, so that we can appreciate his muscular buttocks clenched through the effort of achieving penetration as well as seeing the shaft of his penis enter the woman from behind.

Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity Alastair J. L. Blanshard
 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

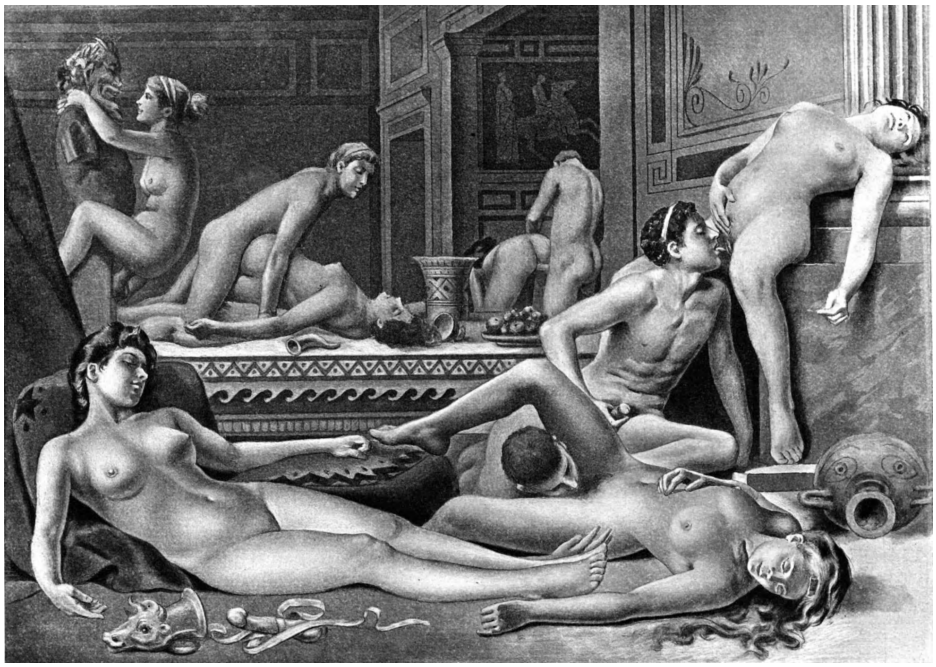

Figure 4.1 *Metamorphoses of Venus* (1906), Plate 14. Private Collection. An orgy of the imagination. Pornographic etchings crystallize our notions of ancient sexual practice.

Bent over, the woman's face is obscured and her head disappears behind a decorated urn. Indeed, none of the figures in the scene make eye contact with the viewer. All have either their eyes closed or they look away into the distance. Only an overturned cup with painted eyes looks out of the image straight at the viewer. The foot of the vessel forms a mouth open with horror or amazement. It is a visual joke about the nature of the extraordinary scene that surrounds the pot.

The image is emblematic of the fantasy of the Roman orgy. The Roman orgy is perhaps one of the most well-known 'factoids' about the ancient world. Its promise of indiscriminate sex usually set in the context of elaborate feasting and decadent luxury has proved irresistible to countless moralists looking to be appalled and libertines looking for inspiration. The orgy breaks all the rules. It transgresses notions of monogamy, the distinction between private and public space, and the idea that sex should be aiming towards reproduction rather than pleasure. It promises multiple thrills. Voyeurism mixes with the opportunity to have every appetite satisfied. There is always more at an orgy. More bodies, more orifices, more positions. Yet as we shall see, the orgy is an enormous superstructure built on few and flimsy foundations. The Romans never routinely engaged in sexual orgies and would have been appalled that we thought that they did. The very few instances where we can find references to anything remotely approaching an orgy

seem to indicate, if we can even believe them, that these were one-off affairs. If the Romans did try the orgy, they certainly didn't seem to like what they found. Roman sexual activity was largely based around the idea of satisfying one dominant male. This sits uneasily with the notions of reciprocity and bodily sharing implicit in the orgy. Catullus may conjure up the image of the orgy when he derides Lesbia for embracing 300 men at the same time, but none of his male readers would have openly approved of such behavior or regretted not getting an invitation. The orgy exists largely in people's minds.

Take the orgy discussed above. The moment one starts to consider the scene, the image comes apart at the seams and we realize that this engraving is a pastiche of various elements, concocted and thrown together in an erotic mish-mash. Take, for example, the cup decorated with eyes. Drinking cups with eyes are a well-known design from classical Greece and examples can be found in all the major European and American collections. Often these eye-cups, in keeping with their sympotic context, have erotic content in their decoration. In one famous example, the 'Bomford cup' in the Ashmolean Museum, these eyes are perched on the body of a cup in which the stand has been modeled into the shape of a penis and testicles. Cups from the Roman period, however, with this marking are unknown. It is a blatant anachronism. Other elements betray the same indifference to the reality of the ancient world. The rhyton is also more appropriate to a Greek context. The herm on which the girl is impaling herself is an ornament more suited to the garden than the interior space of a house.

Such criticisms might seem a little unfair and it could be argued that they miss the register of the image. After all, isn't this just a little harmless fantasy? Who turns up to an orgy and complains about the wallpaper? This might be true, were it not for the fact that the author of *The Metamorphoses of Venus* went to considerable efforts to bolster the claim of the veracity of his images.

We possess a healthy number of pornographic images that take classical topics as their theme. For example, catalogs of pornographic prints list subjects such as the copulation of Leda and the Swan, the naked Ariadne weeping over the loss of Theseus, Dionysus copulating with a girl in the midst of a Bacchic revel, or the rites of Priapus. Other etchings choose instead a generic classicizing frame for their subject matters. So we possess countless prints of naked nymphs 'with defined pudenda' or amorous couples in bucolic scenes with a statue of Silenus or Priapus (and sometimes both) in the frame to signify the erotic context. This tradition goes back at least to the sixteenth century and the famous series of drawings, *I Modi* by Giulio Romano, that depicted, over a series of 20 images, a variety of sexual positions.

What distinguishes *The Metamorphoses of Venus* is that these pornographic images purport to have origins in the actual Roman practice. This orgy is not an orgy of the imagination, but of historical reality. So, for example, on the page before this engraving, on a thin, practically transparent piece of cellulose paper, is printed a quotation from Juvenal's *Sixth Satire*:

> There nothing must be feigned, all must be done in very truth and deed … Then is seen mere lust that will brook not a moment's more delay, woman in her bare brutality, while from every corner of the subterranean hall rises the reiterated cry: …

This quotation both sets the scene and teases the reader. It holds out the promise that what follows is a scene of abandonment. It name-checks lust and brutality, but cuts out before the sentence is completed. What is this cry that the women make? Where is it that 'nothing must be feigned'. Only someone who knows Juvenal can make sense of it. The quotation is taken from the *Sixth Satire*, lines 327–9. The scene is the Bona Dea festival, and the women are driven to the heights of lust. The cry they call out is 'Let in the men'. Our engraving then is not just any orgy, but the orgy that Juvenal imagined happened at the Bona Dea festival. The image fills in the gap left by the final ellipse.

The quotation from Juvenal concretizes the image and makes it real. It is no generic orgy, but a real one grounded in the authority of Roman literature. A number of other pornographic engravings in *The Metamorphoses of Venus* have similar quotations that serve the same function. So, for example, Ovid's advice from the *Ars Amatoria* about lying face up if you are pretty prefaces the image of a man penetrating a woman sprawled on a bed. Her buttocks are hung over the end of the bed, and he penetrates her standing up. He grabs her right leg for support and leans in as he drives into her. We know we are in the Roman world because the man wears a fillet and sandals and in the background are classically inspired ewer and basin. On the wall are painted two cornucopia and a caduceus as well as numerous laurel wreaths. This game of matching image with quotation is played out time and time again in this work. An epigram of Sospiter describing how his lover grips him round the middle with her legs as he has sex with her prefaces an engraving of precisely this image. The same thing occurs with a quote from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* about a woman riding on top of a man.

Sometimes a quote can't be found to support the image and another erotic text is plundered for the citation. Thus, the absence of any suitable classical text on the sexual pleasures to be gained from flagellation forces the author to seek a suitable quote from the seventeenth-century pornographic text, *The Dialogues of Luisa Sigea* (also 'Aloisia Sigea'). This neo-Latin work (Latin title *Satyra Sotadica de Arcanis Amoris et Veneris*) was written in the 1660s by Nicolas Chorier. It was an extremely influential text published in numerous Latin editions and a number of modern language editions. Its influence was such that one scholar has remarked that 'modern sexuality could be understood as a footnote to Chorier' (Turner 2003: 167). The dialogue takes the form of erotic instruction between two women, Tullia and Octavia. It is peppered with classical allusions about sex in antiquity as well as discussion of modern sexual issues and scandals. The dialogue's classical coloring is reflected in the engraving. The image that accompanies the quotation from the *Dialogues of Luisa Sigea* shows the birching of a young man who is being masturbated by a naked woman lying on

a classical bed. Bunches of grapes are also positioned on the sideboard as an appropriate classical prop.

Further adding to the appearance of historical reality is depiction of historical figures in the collection of etchings. After a quotation from the *Augustan History* about Hadrian's love for Antinous, we see the emperor sodomizing the youth on a couch with the Nile and the Pyramids in the background. Hadrian wears a beard clearly modeled on Roman portrait busts of the emperor. A naked female attendant wearing an anachronistic, but reasonably accurate, Pharaonic headdress fans the couple. Another image depicts Socrates ravishing the sleeping form of the young Alcibiades. The love between the philosopher and his student had been the subject of much speculation in antiquity and again there is an appropriate quote that alludes to it. The infamous stories about Tiberius' activities on the island of Capri ensure that he merits inclusion among the etchings. He is shown surrounded by his 'minnows', the children he trained to suckle at his groin. *The Metamorphoses of Venus* cites the Roman biographer Suetonius for the story. However, in Suetonius' account the 'minnows' are clearly male. While in this depiction they are young girls with budding breasts. One performs fellatio on the emperor while the emperor digitally rapes another, nonchalantly hooking into her. Another young girl waits off to the side. She is a replacement for the girl currently performing fellatio. While she waits another girl licks her anus. Even historical events are reflected in the etchings. In one scene we see a young woman kneeling on an animal-skin rug and fellating a seated young man. In the right-hand corner is a balcony overlooking the bay of Naples and, in the distance, we can see smoke pouring out of the top of Mt. Vesuvius. The time is AD 79 and both the volcano and the youth are about to blow.

By legitimating these images through references to classical literature or historical anecdotes, these images reassure the reader that not only are their desires capable of being depicted, they are capable of being achieved. What has happened once can happen again. One can be a new Tiberius, Socrates, or Hadrian. Ovid, Martial, Suetonius, Horace and all the other writers cited give these acts a pedigree. These images were certainly not the first attempt to ground contemporary desires into the classical past. This project had been underway for well over a century by the time this collection of images was published.

The collection takes its inspiration from one of the key works in this project to assemble and catalog the sexual activities of the ancients, Friedrich Karl Forberg's *De figuris Veneris*. The work is specifically alluded to in the frontispiece of the collection of etchings which features a small portrait of Forberg surrounded by a depiction of the goddess Venus naked and embracing a cupid. To the right of cupid is a satyr with an erect penis and to the left is a mermaid whose fish tail has been divided in two so that her hairless vulva can be seen. Forberg's work was not the first to catalog sexual references. He follows in the footsteps of texts such as *The Dialogues of Luisa Sigea*, which receives numerous citations in Forberg's text. Yet his text gives the project new impetus. Originally published in Latin in 1824,

the work was subsequently translated into a number of European languages. Two English editions are known. The first was produced in limited numbers in 1884, and there is a subsequent edition in 1887 published by Leonard Smithers. The preface to a late-nineteenth-century English translation of the work makes the fame of Forberg's text clear: 'we know of no other compilation which casts so intense a search-light upon those Crimes, Follies and Perversions of the "Sixth Sense" which transformed the olden glory of Greece and Rome into a by-word and a reproach among nations' (*Manual of Classical Erotology*, 1884: vi). The work is a compilation of ancient sources arranged into eight chapters. Forberg outlines his system of classification at the start of the work:

> The work of Venus may be accomplished with or without the help of the *mentula* (virile member). If with the *mentula*, the friction of this organ, in which friction the whole pleasure consists, can be effected either in the *vulva* (female organ), in the *anus* (arse-hole), in the mouth, by the hand or in any cavity of the body. If without the *mentula*, the vulva may be worked either with the tongue, with the clitoris, or with any object resembling the virile organ (*Manual of Classical Erotology*: 23).

Here is an example of phallocentrism at its most extreme. The phallus – its presence or absence, the manner in which it is stimulated, its imitation by the tongue, clitoris, or other object – becomes the key for understanding all sexual activity. By viewing sex through the prism of the phallus, Forberg is able to classify and make sense of all of his material. Thus, the first chapter (*De fututione*, 'Of Copulation') is devoted to those passages in which the phallus is placed in the vulva. The second chapter (*De paedicando*, 'On Pedication') deals with placement of the phallus within the anus. Chapter 3 deals with the placement in the mouth (*De Irrumando*, 'Of Irrumation'). Chapter 4 deals with masturbation ('To excite the member by friction with the hand until sperm comes spurting out of it … This may be done by one's own hand or by borrowing someone else's'). Chapter 5 on cunnilingus begins the discussion where the 'work of Venus' is done by objects in imitation of the phallus, in this case the tongue. The following chapter discusses the use of the clitoris. Only the final two chapters break from the programmatic schema outlined at the start of the work and discuss sex with animals or sex in groups. Although even here the phallus remains the organizing principle of the chapter. So discussion of sex with animals begins with the use of animal phalluses to penetrate women before turning to the penetration of animals by the phallus. Similarly, in his discussion of group sex (*De Spintriis*, 'On Spintrian Postures'), the chapter is organized by the placement of the phallus of the various members in the sex act.

Reading Forberg is to watch the discipline of sexology in formation. Throughout the work, Forberg's tone is sober and clinical. His texts might be racy, but the authorial persona never seems to get excited. The only desire he seems to want to satisfy is the desire of the collector who wishes to assemble all examples of any

one type of object and ensure that they are arranged according to the most exacting taxonomy. In this we can see the strong link between the Humanist tradition of scholarly learning and sexology. This is also reflected in the origins of Forberg's work which originally began its life as a commentary on the *Hermaphroditus* of 'Panormitta' (Antonio Beccadelli, 1394–1471). This work was a Renaissance collection of 81 epigrams, often obscene, in imitation of Martial and the *Carmina Priapea*. The obscene content of the *Hermaphroditus* had ensured that it enjoyed a checkered reputation, yet it had never been entirely without admirers for its style and wit. Indeed, initially *De figuris Veneris* had been published as an appendix to Forberg's edition and commentary on the *Hermaphroditus* thereby gaining reflected respectability. Only later once the discourse of sexology had been more firmly established was it published on its own.

This scholarly tone is reflected in the subsequent translations. Thus, the foreword to the 1884 English translation written by the translator Julian Smithson (a pseudonym, possibly for the publisher Charles Carrington) warns that it is only intended for 'students of the Classics, Lawyers, Psychologists and Medical Men' (1884: v). A full biography of Forberg is also given in the foreword which stresses his academic credentials and rectitude. Thus, the reader learns – despite what he or she might have suspected – that Forberg was a distinguished philosopher with a strong interest in 'religious exegesis'. Born in 1770 in the Duchy of Saxe-Altenburg, he held an assistant professorship in philosophy at the university of Jena (1793), and was installed as Co-Rector at Saalfeld in 1796. The origins of the text and their relationship to *Hermaphroditus* is explained. Although the author is not kind about Panormitta's work describing it as 'filth' and not possessing 'any great literary merit'. In this the translator works to distinguish Panormitta's work from Forberg's: 'Forberg, good, simple man, was mistaken owing to his too great modesty; the true feast, at once substantial, nourish and savoury, is his own work' (pp. xiii–xiv). Here we see the commentary surpassing the original text.

Of course, lurking in the background of all this sober talk of the 'didactic' nature of the work, the praise for its 'methodical classification', and the appeals to its respectable readership, was the specter that readers might mistake this work for pornography. Which is precisely what they did. Illustrators were only too happy to assist by adding lurid, pornographic scenes to Forberg's prose, transforming this clinical work into a work designed to excite the senses and encourage the reader's masturbatory fantasies. The most famous collection of illustrations was that done for the French translation by Paul Avril. These scenes became so well regarded that they soon were copied and circulated independently of Forberg's text. It is Avril's illustrations that formed the basis for the Sybarite Society's 1906 edition of pornographic etchings that were discussed above. It is uncertain whether the Sybarite Society had Avril's permission for this edition. Avril worked for a number of the leading French bibliographic clubs and his output included both pornographic and non-pornographic illustrations. Sadly, we know little about the 'Sybarite Club' beyond its name which alludes to the archaic Greek town of Sybaris

in Magna Grecia. It was famed for its decadence in antiquity and its destruction at the end of the sixth century BC became the locus for a moralizing discourse in classical literature about the debilitating effects of luxurious living.

Despite these etchings' attempt to benefit through association with Forberg's work, in many ways they act contrarily to the spirit of the work, subverting and perverting Forberg's project. Where Forberg wished to impose order, these images inspire chaos. They refuse to follow his taxonomy. Scenes of group sex come before scenes of cunnilingus or bestiality. The depiction of masturbation is livened up by having the Roman masturbating in front of a wall painting of an orgy. Body upon body is piled up indiscriminately. Where Forberg's text is serious, these images are playful and witty. We have already observed the jokey use of eyes painted on the cup in the orgy scene. A similar visual joke is played in the etching of the masturbation scene where eyes are painted onto a lyre so that it too now looks out at the viewer and seems to be obscenely grinning. Avril also included some literary jokes in his work. Thus, beside the image of Socrates raping the recumbent Alcibiades lies an open scroll on which the words *Gnothi sauton* ('Know yourself') are inscribed. This famous maxim from Delphi plays an important role in Platonic texts involving Socrates. It features in discussion in the *Charmides*. More importantly, it plays center stage in the *Alcibiades* as part of a long discussion about how a person might 'know himself' by looking deeply into the eyes of his lover (132c–133c). As such, the saying makes an appropriate motif for this scene. Yet, it also is directed at the viewer. What do you discover about yourself watching this act of homosexual love? If you find yourself aroused, what follows from this?

In many ways, these etchings are testament to the power and the appeal of the orgy. The orgy cannot be written out of the classical past. The discussion of group sex is almost the thinnest section of Forberg's work, only the discussion of bestiality receives less treatment. The discussion of copulation is eight times as long as the discussion of group sex, the discussion of anal sex is nine times as long. The discussion of group sex acts comes almost as an after-thought in Forberg. It fits uncomfortably into his phallocentric system of classification. There are too many penises to keep track of. Yet, the etchings reverse this trend. Solitary couples are in the minority. Even when we see only couples having intercourse, there is normally some voyeuristic cupid or leering statue of a satyr in attendance. We want the orgy, and are prepared to ride rough-shod over our texts, be they ancient or modern, to get it.

Locating the Erotic in Roman Religion

When Forberg comes to discuss group sex in his work, he finds that vocabulary fails him. There seemed to be no pre-existing technical term for 'group sex'. Various other sexual activities enjoyed technical names. Sometimes the terms were very specific. Oral sex, for example, could be split into fellatio (also called

irrumation after the Latin *irrumare*) or cunnilingus depending on the object being pleasured. Indeed, it was this very object-orientated nature of technical sexual vocabulary that seems to have been part of the problem. In reducing sex to just the manipulation of sexual organs, the act was robbed of any notion that there might be people involved rather than objects. Thus, 'group sex' in which the defining feature is the presence of more than one individual was left out of the race to classify sexual activity. 'Group sex' is indifferent to the use of body parts. Indeed, it encourages their indiscriminate placement.

Forberg's solution was to turn to a passage in the Roman biographer Suetonius (c. AD 70–130). In Chapter 43 on the emperor Tiberius, Suetonius describes his life on the island of Capri. Tiberius had retired here to escape Rome and, according to the biographer, this allowed him to indulge his sexual fantasies:

> In his retreat at Capri he had a sitting-room, the scene of his secret debaucheries, in which chosen groups of young girls and worn-out voluptuaries, the inventors of monstrous conjunctions, called by him *spintries*, forming a triple chain, surrendered themselves to mutual defilements in his presence, so as to re-animate by this spectacle his languishing desires (Suetonius, *Tiberius* 43.1, trans. adapted from *Manual of Classical Erotology*, 1884: 179).

It was from this episode that Forberg developed the term 'Spintrian postures' (*genus spintriaium*) to mean sex involving 'three or even more'. The term has effectively no afterlife. What has come to designate group sex is another term derived from antiquity, 'orgy'.

Yet this notion of the orgy designating only group sexual activity is a comparatively recent phenomenon. For most of the history of the orgy, the focus was equally, if not more so, on the orgy as a religious event rather than a sexual one. Orgies were conceived as pagan religious rituals in which sacrifice and magic were just as likely to occur as sex. Here authors were taking their cue from early Christian writers such as Clement of Alexandria who denounced mystery cults with a scattergun of allegations about lewdness, violence, and depravity. When Samuel Wesley (1662–1735) denounces in his sermons 'the lewd orgies of Bacchus', he is as much revolted by the thought of idolatry as the thought of indiscriminate sex. One of the earliest definitions of the term occurs in Thomas Blount's *Glossographia* (1661) in which he defines the orgy as 'rude Ceremonies instituted by the Poet Orpheus, to be kept every third year to the honor of Bacchus'. Blount's definition picks up the classical origins of the term. The word 'orgy' derives from the Greek *orgia* meaning 'rites' or 'sacrifices'. In Greek, the term has no negative connotations. It is used commonly with reference to the rituals associated with Dionysus and initiation into mystery cults such as those of Demeter at Eleusis, the so-called Eleusinian mysteries. However, it can be used simply to mean just a normal ritual. For example, Sophocles uses the term in *The Women of Trachis*, his fifth-century BC tragedy about the death of Heracles, to refer to the sacrifices that

Heracles performs as he puts on the fatal robe poisoned by his lover Deianeira. Similarly in another tragedy, *Antigone*, the blind seer Tiresias uses it to refer to the sacrifice that he performed in order to gain prophetic vision.

The notion that religious practices, in particular *orgia*, had sex at their center would have surprised the ancients. A number of Greek religious laws prescribe a ritual washing if any of the participants have recently had sex. Without this purification they would have been regarded as unclean and forbidden from taking part in the rituals. 'Sexual activity … joins birth and death to form a trio of inescapable human processes for which the Gods require insulation' (Parker 1983: 74). Similarly Rome was arguably more interested in maintaining the purity of its religious practitioners than promoting their promiscuity. This focus on religious chastity can be seen at its most extreme in the cult of the Vestal Virgins, the priestesses devoted to tending the 'undying fire' of Vesta and thereby ensuring the continued safety of Rome. Abstinence from sex was central to the performance of their religious rituals. The entire iconography of the Vestals, their dress, deportment, and hairstyle, was designed to remind viewers of their commitment to chastity. Rome considered Vestals engaging in sex as one of the worst crimes. It was a crime that literally imperiled Rome and the punishment was severe. The offending Vestal was buried alive in an underground chamber. Only in rituals such as the *ludi scaenici* of the Floralia do we seem to have a foregrounding of sensuality. In this ritual, prostitutes would take the stage and indulge in ribald jokes and obscene humor. Although it is worth noting that even here the sensuality of the ritual serves the function of reinforcing ideas of chastity. The Floralia seems to have worked as a structural opposite to the more restrained and chaste *sacrum anniversarium Cereris*, in honor of the goddess Ceres. It's the inverse that tells us about the right way to do things, the carnivalesque mirror, the exception that proves the rule.

The desire to distinguish between sex and religion was even dramatized. In 405 BC, Athens staged a posthumous production of Euripides' *Bacchae*. Euripides had written the play a few years earlier whilst in the court of the Macedonian king Archelaus, but had never produced it in Athens. At its first performance in the city, the play (along with two other previously unproduced plays of Euripides) was awarded first prize in the dramatic competition. The story of Euripides' *Bacchae* concerns the arrival of the god Dionysus to Greece. After the death of his mother, the Theban princess Semele, Dionysus was raised in the East. The play opens with Dionysus' return to his hometown of Thebes. Here he meets the young king, Pentheus. Pentheus refuses to believe that Dionysus is a god. Instead, he accuses him of being a charlatan, a magician, and he further alleges that the rites Dionysus introduces are just an excuse for women to cavort with men. 'Their pretext is that they are maenads performing the rites, but they hold Aphrodite in higher regard than the rites of Bacchus', he fumes (224–5). The aim of the play is to show that Pentheus is wrong on every count. He is so wrong that he deserves the ultimate punishment. Dionysus leads Pentheus to a gruesome death, arranging for his mother to dismember her son under the delusion that he is a bear. He

even uses Pentheus' own false preconceptions about the nature of Bacchic rites to set up this fatal encounter. Dionysus encourages Pentheus in his voyeuristic desire to spy on the cavorting maenads. Disguising him in the humiliating costume of a woman, he leads him up to the hill where the maenads are worshipping, only to abandon him there to these wild women who in their religious ecstasy tear him limb from limb.

The fate of Pentheus should stand as a warning for any who would confuse the *orgia* of Dionysus with the modern orgy. It was a popular story in antiquity. The owners of the House of the Vettii in Pompeii chose the death of Pentheus as the subject matter for one of the rooms of their home. The model for the scene was presumably a famous painting now lost. Euripides' version of the story was so famous that the Romans even imagined that it might play in kingdoms outside the empire. One of the stories told about the death of the Roman general Crassus, who was defeated and killed by the Parthians, was that when his head was sent to the king of Parthia, it happened to arrive just at the time that the court was enjoying a production of the *Bacchae*. The actor who was playing Agave, the mother of Pentheus, seized the head and began to use it as a prop to the great delight of the audience. The whole court entered into the joke, so that when Agave was about to confess that she had killed Pentheus, the real killer of Crassus stood up and took hold of the head and uttered the confession.

Of course, sometimes the temptation to rewrite the *orgia* is impossible to resist. The story of Pentheus also reminds us that one of the features of ancient discourse was a tendency towards idle speculation about the activities of women when they were engaged in religious rituals, especially those where men were not present. We have already seen Juvenal's version of what happens at the Bona Dea. In this he had a Greek precursor in the form of Aristophanes' play, the *Thesmophoriazousae* ('The Women at the Thesmophoria'). The Thesmophoria was a Greek woman's festival held in honor of the goddess Demeter each year in autumn. Men were not allowed at the festival, which in Athens was held over three days in the countryside, a short distance from the city walls. Aristophanes' play speculates about what this festival involves. In his obscene version, it provides an opportunity for women to discuss strategies for adultery and indulge their drunken appetites. There is no sex at the festival, but sensuality oozes through the bawdy talk of the women. Both Juvenal's and Aristophanes' version of female religious practice owe more to the ancient male prejudice about the inability of women to contain their appetites than any real practice. Men found female religious rituals potentially threatening, and this caused their imaginations to run wild. One deluded Attic litigant even imagined that his wife spent her time at the Thesmophoria chatting to the mother of her lover and plotting with her about how to effect adultery. The mistake that subsequent commentators made was not to take these comments as the scandalous comic exaggerations or the paranoid fantasies that they so clearly are. It is from such bitter seeds of male misogyny that the myth of the orgy germinated.

Perhaps more understandably taken as the literal truth, and certainly more influential, are passages in historical texts where religious rituals, especially Bacchic rites, are collocated with illicit sex. The most famous of these concerns the attempt by the Roman Senate in 186 BC to ban the worship of Bacchus from Rome. The story is told by Livy in his history of Rome in a florid and dramatic account. The story opens with the rise of Bacchic rituals brought to Italy by an anonymous Greek, 'a man not skilled in any of those arts which the Greeks, supreme in learning have brought to us … but a dabbler in sacrifices and fortune-telling' (39.8.3). The debauched rites that he introduced quickly took hold. These rituals were distinguished by drunkenness, promiscuous sex between the young and the old as well as crimes such as forgery, murder, and assault. These last two crimes being assisted by the clash of cymbals and drums that attended the rituals and so drowned out the screams of the victim. One of the degenerates attracted to these rites was Titus Sempronius Rutilus, a man who had squandered the patrimony of his ward and saw in the rites an opportunity either to debauch his stepson or, if he should prove incorruptible, to do away with him. However, his plan was foiled by a kindly neighbor and courtesan called Hispala who tips off the boy about his stepfather's evil plan. The son, with the help of Hispala, then informs the Consuls about the danger these rites pose to the city of Rome and the numerous people involved in them. The Senate agrees to intervene and the rites are smashed just before they can do any lasting harm.

A couple of features should be stressed about this account. Firstly, it is worth noting the ambiguous status of these rites. Livy in his account acts to rob them of legitimacy. They are not true religious rites, but a perverted sham. Twice in his account Livy describes the rites. The first time, he describes how they were introduced by a scheming vagabond. In the second account (39.13.9–14), the vagabond is not mentioned, but the blame for the corruption of the rites is attributed to a wayward priestess, Paculla Annia, who took what had been reasonably sober rites limited only to women and introduced men to the ritual and changed the time of the meetings from day to night. From this moment onwards, debauchery ensued and men mingled with women forming lustful unions. Indeed, the men were often even keener on acts of lust with each other than with the women (39.13.10). Implicit in Livy's account is a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate Bacchic rites. It is the latter that should be feared and controlled.

The other element that should be stressed about Livy's account is that it is almost certainly heavily embroidered. Scholars have noted similarities between the account and the language of the *Bacchae* and the plots of Hellenistic drama. In fact, it seems much more likely that the Senate's reaction to the rites of Bacchus were driven not by concerns of morality, but rather the ban constitutes an attempt to control a cult whose highly structured organization and financial operations the Senate found threatening.

In the story of the mythology of the orgy, Livy's account must occupy a central place. Here we find all the classical elements associated with the modern

orgy. His two descriptions of the orgies with their elaboration of the frenzied sexual activity and the breaking down of social conventions between young and old, men and women, create a vivid, memorable scene. Livy's description is extraordinary in its visual and aural details. His picture of *matronae* with disheveled hair running in wild frenzy and plunging inextinguishable torches into the Tiber while men thrashed in ecstatic trances and uttered prophetic visions is designed to feed straight into the imagination. Blount in his *Glossographia* (1661) lists, as one of the aims of his dictionary, the desire to assist the reader in reading Roman history. He must have had Livy in mind when he proffered his definition of the orgy. Livy's rites come to stand for all pagan religion. Thus, the anonymous author of the comprehensively titled pamphlet, *God's judgments against whoring. Being an essay towards a general history of it, from the creation of the world to the reign of Augustulus (which according to common computation is 5190 years) and from thence down to the present year 1697: being a collection of the most remarkable instances of uncleanness that are to be found in sacred or prophane history during that time, with observations thereon* (1697), includes a very detailed description of the events in Livy as well as including the Consul's speech in full. Livy's Bacchanalia is *the* Bacchanalia. The imagery later gets picked up in a description of the rites of witchcraft and the Black Mass which was seen as a continuation of earlier pagan festivals that supposedly remained popular with rural peasants. The Black Sabbath is the 'Saturnalia of the serf' as one eighteenth-century commentator put it.

It was not just literary texts that fueled speculation about the erotic nature of pagan religion. Objects were also open to misinterpretation as well. For many students of Roman religion, one of the most distinctive, challenging, and for some, even shocking, aspects was the preponderance of images of phalluses that seem to populate the ancient world. We have already discussed the ubiquitous herms found on every Athenian street-corner sporting an erection. The Roman equivalent was the god Priapus whose depiction also featured a large, often obscenely so, phallus. He's even been called 'a talking, deified phallus' (Richlin 1983: 67). This god, the son of Dionysus and Aphrodite (or alternatively a nymph), is first mentioned in a fourth-century BC Greek comedy by Xenarchus. Initially his cult seems to have been centered on the region of Lampsacus before spreading to Italy where it became extremely popular. Images of Priapus are found in all media from small terracotta figurines to full-size statues and wall paintings.

He seems to have been particularly associated with fertility and the protection of gardens, herds, and beehives. It was common to erect an image of him in a garden or house, and we possess a number from Pompeii. Perhaps the most famous picture of him is found in the entrance to the house of the Vettii, the same house that features the death of Pentheus painting. He stands resting with his elbow on a plinth. In one hand he holds a balance scale on which he weighs his huge phallus against a bag of money. The implication of the message is obvious, his phallus is equal to any amount of coin. It is a source of wealth in its own right. To under-

score this message of fertility, at the feet of the god sits a basket overflowing with a bounty of fruit.

Despite the associations of wealth and fertility that attend Priapus' phallus, it would be a mistake to see it as an object of desire. To ancients brought up on an aesthetic of small, compact genitals, this figure no doubt looked ugly and threatening. This aspect is brought out in a popular genre of epigrams that either address the god or enact the persona of the god. The largest collection of these (80 in total) are known as the *Carmina Priapea*, and most likely date to some period in the first century AD. In these poems the god repeatedly threatens those who violate his garden with vicious sexual punishments such as oral and anal rape. There is no pleasure in the garden of Priapus only humiliation and punishment. The poems even address those who might seek out such a sexual encounter with the god such as men who enjoy being penetrated or sex-starved women. They are castigated for their perverted desires and the god refuses to satisfy them: 'A certain man whose disposition is softer than goose marrow comes to steal because he loves the penalty that I exact. Let him continue to steal, I won't see him' (*Carmen Priapea* 64).

The phallus as symbol of fertility and protector from evil was ubiquitous in the Roman world. We find the phallus appearing as finger-rings, amulets, and wind chimes. Buildings and roadways included phalluses in decorative mosaics or terracotta plaques. Even the Vestal Virgins supposedly kept a sacred phallus as one of the objects under their care, an object entirely in keeping with the cult's focus on fertility and a useful example of the way in which it was clearly possible to separate out the fertile from the erotic in the contemplation of the phallus.

In post-antique discussions of the phallus, some were prepared to collapse this distinction, and some were prepared to maintain it. In 1786, the traveler, scholar, and aesthete Richard Payne Knight (1751–1824) published *An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus, lately existing as Isernia, in the Kingdom of Naples.* Knight was the heir to a large fortune derived from his grandfather's involvement in the iron industry. This fortune allowed Knight to travel extensively and acquire a large collection of art. His time on the Continent exposed him to European ideas about the nature of beauty and the role of the classical in formation of taste and culture. Among his many expeditions, he made an extended trip in 1777 to Italy in the company of the artists, Jakob Philipp Hackert and Charles Gore. This trip included all the major classical sites of Magna Grecia. In 1781, Knight was elected to the Society of Dilettanti, which was responsible for the publication of his book on the worship of Priapus. The book was Knight's first substantial publication.

The book is composed of a number of sections. The first is a letter from Sir William Hamilton (1731–1803) describing what Hamilton takes to be a continuation of the worship of Priapus in the cult of St. Cosmo in the city of Isernia. Hamilton was a fellow member of the Society of Dilettanti and had been stationed as the envoy-extraordinary to the Spanish court at Naples since 1764. He was a

keen collector of south-Italian vases and his collection forms the basis for the collection in the British Museum. Hamilton's letter reflects his antiquarian interests. In the cult of St. Cosmo, he sees a connection between the wax votive phalluses presented for blessing by the women of the congregation and what he imagines to be the phallus cult of Priapus in ancient Rome, the remains of which he thought he had seen in the numerous phalloi unearthed at the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Hamilton's letter is, in many ways, the least interesting section of the work. For all the novelty of his argument, this first letter just reflects contemporary Protestant prejudice about the pagan-ness of Roman Catholicism. Hamilton was certainly familiar with this material. He cites, for example, at the start of his work Dr. Middleton's *Letter from Rome*, a letter much republished precisely in this vein of thought. And his tone takes on a sneering quality as he recounts the supposed aphrodisiac qualities of the oil of St. Cosmo ('The oil is in high repute for its invigorating quality, when the loins and parts adjacent are anointed with it') or the way that priests would bless and anoint the genitals of congregation members.

It is the second section of work, the much more substantial essay by Knight (entitled *A Discourse on the worship of Priapus, and its connection with the mystic theology of the ancients*) that presents more novel theses. In this section, Knight takes issue with those who would see only depravity in the pagan rites of Priapus. He attacks those Christians who find the phallus obscene and 'contrary to the gravity and sanctity of religion … more fit to be placed in a brothel than a temple' (26–7). Instead, he argues that the phallus is the key to all religions as the symbol of the supreme 'generative or creative attribute', an attribute which is worshiped in various forms, many of them phallic, by all the world religions. As such there was nothing perverted about the phallus: 'Whatever the Greeks and Egyptians meant by the symbol in question, it was certainly nothing ludicrous or licentious; of which we need no other proof, than its having been carried in solemn procession at the celebration of those mysteries in which the first principles of their religion, the knowledge of the God of Nature, the First, the Supreme, the Intellectual, were preserved free from the vulgar superstitions, and communicated, under the strictest oaths of secrecy, to the initiated; who were obliged to purify themselves, prior to the initiation, by abstaining from venery, and all impure food' (28–9). Among the mysteries to which Knight is referring in this passage is the *orgia* of the Eleusinian Mysteries. His belief that the mysteries involved the showing of a phallus owes its origin to Christian polemic against the mysteries. Here Knight uses a calumny to reclaim the orgy as a religious rather than erotic rite, turning Christian discourse against itself.

Despite the fact that the aim of the work was to de-eroticize antiquity rather than rejoice in and recapitulate its supposed vices, Knight's work was almost uniformly denounced by popular critics. Knight had been deliberately provocative in making his case. Its subject matter in praise of the phallus was too radical. Many

found the work's implicit attack on contemporary Christianity egregious. Particular exception was taken to Knight's suggestion that the T-shaped crucifix used by the Christian church owed its origins to a stylized phallus. Despite being published only privately and circulating in limited copies, critics lined up to attack it. Even years after publication, it was still attacked. Thomas Matthias in 1808 described it as 'one of the most unbecoming and indecent treatises which ever disgraced the pen of a man who would be considered a scholar and philosopher'. Even after Knight's death, Edward Hawkins, Keeper of Antiquities at the British Museum, an institution that benefited from Knight's generosity, would write of this text, 'of this work it is impossible to speak in terms of reprobation sufficiently strong; it is a work too gross almost to mention'. Knight's work was consigned to the ranks of high-end pornography or esoteric literature where subsequent specialist publishers in the field continued to keep copies in print. A few scholars took note of Knight's ideas. For example, the scholar Hargrave Jennings seems to have been keen on its radical ideas. In 1877, he published a pamphlet, *The Obelisk: Notice of the origins, purpose and history of obelisks*, in which he argued that the form of the obelisk was derived from the phallus and reflected a universal prehistoric phallus cult. Like Knight, Jennings was derided for his suggestion. Few wanted to entertain his suggestions about the ultimate origins of the recently erected Cleopatra's Needle on the banks of the Thames.

Knight's failure to reinscribe a serious religious dimension into supposed pagan eroticism represents the triumph of the orgiastic system of thought. In this religious turf war, Christianity which predicated itself on a lascivious Rome wins. As we have discussed above, early critics of pagan religion played up its sexual immorality. Clement of Alexandria warned of the desires that its idols might induce. Gradually this eroticism began to displace and overwhelm the religious. Thus, the Marquis de Sade, himself a lover of the sacrilegious, uses the term orgy to denote group sex without any pagan overtones. There is a certain irony here because one of the best descriptions of an orgy from antiquity concerns not pagan religion, but Christianity. The fullest version of the account is told by the third-century AD writer, Marcus Minucius Felix. In his dialogue *Octavius*, Minucius Felix has a Christian Octavius and a pagan Caecilius Natalis debate the merits of their respective religions. In the course of his argument, after first mentioning the Christian love of child killing, Caecilius describes the rites of the Christians:

> Their form of feasting is notorious; it is in everyone's mouth … On the day appointed they gather at banquet with all their children, sisters, mothers, people of either sex and every age. There, after full feasting, when the blood is heated and drink has inflamed the passions of incestuous lust, a dog which has been tied to a lamp is tempted by a morsel thrown beyond range of his tether to bound forward with a rush. This tale-telling light is upset and extinguished, and, in the shameless dark, lustful embraces are indiscriminately exchanged; and all alike, if not in act, yet by complicity, are involved in incest, as anything that occurs by the act of individuals results from common intention (*Octavius* 9.6–7, trans. Rendall).

Although the focus of the writer is clearly on the notion of incest, there is plenty here to fuel the orgiastic imagination. Moreover, the story is not a one-off. It is repeated in almost exactly the same terms by the Christian writer Tertullian (c. AD 160–c.240). In his *Apology*, Tertullian defends Christianity against a number of accusations including the one given by Minucius Felix. Although we are uncertain about the relationship between Tertullian and Minucius Felix, and there is a strong possibility that the latter is copying from the former, this story must represent a reasonably widespread tradition. Tertullian clearly represents the accusation as the type of thing commonly said about Christians, and Minucius presents his story as common gossip. The attribution of the orgy to pagan Rome might represent then the ultimate form of revenge; a clear sign of a discourse in which Christianity has achieved mastery, able to turn against its opponents the common *topoi* of religious invective previously disposed against itself.

5

Imperial Biography

The Private Lives of the Caesars

In order to have a sex life, one needs to have a life. In many ways, sexuality is really a form of biography, a way of putting acts into a personal narrative. Part of the pleasure of stories of vice is the potential that they will allow us to look into a person's soul. In this chapter, I want to examine how anecdotes about historical figures, especially members of the imperial court, contributed to constructions of erotic fantasy. To illustrate this I want to begin with a work of pornographic fiction.

Around the same time as the furor in London broke out over the publication of Richard Payne Knight's *An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus*, Rome and Paris were also having their own publication scandal. The occasion was the revised edition of Baron d'Hancarville's (1719–1805) *Monuments de la vie privée des douze Césars* ('Monuments of the private life of the twelve Caesars'). This was a work that proved as popular as it was scandalous. Indeed, its popularity was such that within the space of a few decades a number of different pirated editions were in circulation.

The Baron d'Hancarville was one of the more colorful and notorious characters who flittered around European courts and salons in the final decades of the eighteenth century. A thief, pornographer, and art historian, he was born Pierre-François Hugues in Nancy. However, the loss of the family fortune saw him leave France for Italy via adventures in Germany, Spain, and Portugal. Along the way he added a title to his name and began to style himself Baron d'Hancarville. He moved in elevated social and diplomatic circles. He was an associate of Prince Ludwig of Mecklenburg and the Duke of Wurttemberg. His relationship with the latter ending with allegations of d'Hancarville stealing the Duke's silver. He was an associate of William Hamilton and had acted as an intermediary in Hamilton's purchase of Prince Porcinari's substantial collection of ancient vases in 1766. D'Hancarville also helped to catalog and illustrate Hamilton's collection of south-Italian vases. This monumental work proved to be more than just a catalog of the

Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity Alastair J. L. Blanshard
 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

collection, it included discussion of other famous pieces not in Hamilton's possession as well as an extended essay on the nature and origins of Greek art. Its illustrations almost single-handedly revolutionized neo-classical taste. 'The volumes that resulted from this agreement are among the most beautiful of the eighteenth century – indeed amongst the most beautiful of all time' (Haskell 1987: 33). In fact, d'Hancarville ended up swindling Hamilton over this project by running away with the plates. Hamilton only managed to recover them by arranging a deal with d'Hancarville's creditors whilst d'Hancarville was in debtor's prison in Florence. Throughout his life, d'Hancarville was always attended by scandal and the threat of poverty. Only at the very end of his life whilst living in Venice does he seem to have enjoyed any security.

His excursion into the production of pornography seems to have been occasioned by money difficulties around 1770. In *Monuments de la vie privée des douze Césars*, d'Hancarville pretends to offer a catalog of etchings supposedly taken from antique engraved gemstones, medallions, and cameos that reflect well-known anecdotes about the lives of the various Roman emperors. In fact, the illustrations are pornographic fictions. The origins of these images do not lie in any real object, but the sexual anecdotes found in our biographical and historical sources. The biographer Suetonius is the main supplier of material, but the images also make allusions to stories found in the historians Tacitus (c. AD 56–c.118) and Cassius Dio (c. AD 164–post 249). The images begin with Julius Caesar and end with the emperor Domitian. Originally, there seem to have been 25 images, and this was later expanded to 50.

D'Hancarville was also the author of another similar pornographic work, *Monuments du culte secret des Dames Romaines* ('Monuments of the secret rites of Roman women') which purported to show gems and cameos depicting pagan erotic practices. As a vehicle for tracing the transmission of fantasies about orgiastic practice, the work is not without interest. All the standard features of the stereotypical pagan orgy are represented. Yet, the work was never as popular as *Monuments de la vie privée des douze Césars*. It is the biographical angle that makes the latter work so popular. Anecdotes told about emperors tease us by offering to tell us more about Rome than any monument or staid political history ever could.

The subject matter of d'Hancarville's images is varied. There are depictions of homosexual sex. The sequence begins with a depiction of Julius Caesar being sodomized by Nicomedes, the king of Bithynia, and includes scenes of homosexual sex featuring the emperors Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Otho, and Vitellius. There is bestiality. In one corner of a medallion showing the marriage of Nero to the eunuch Sporus, there is a youth having sex with a sheep. Group sex is popular. Tiberius performs cunnilingus on a woman while another fellates him. Caligula is shown sandwiched between two men, while his companions have sex with women on a table. Nero is shown penetrating a woman while another man penetrates him. Adultery is rife. In one scene, the emperor Augustus is shown seated and straddled by Terentia, the wife of Augustus' close aide, Maecenas. Maecenas in deference

to the *princeps*' wishes pretends to be asleep. Women are shown to be as depraved as men. Cleopatra masturbates Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. We see the wife of Caesar at the Bona Dea indulging in an adulterous affair with Clodius. The empress Livia is shown offering her husband Augustus two young girls to ravish. Caligula indulges in incest with his sister Drusilla. Nero rides naked in a carriage with his mother Agrippina, and in another cameo Agrippina is seen making sexual advances to her son. Domitian enjoys a threesome with his wife Domitia and his niece Julia. There is a whole sequence of images devoted to Messalina. She is shown naked in adulterous union with her lover Silius. She is depicted beautifying herself in preparation for her nightly expedition to serve as a prostitute in a brothel. Her addiction to the phallus is shown by her anointing the erect organ of the god Priapus with crowns of myrtle. As always, pagan religious ritual is given a sexual coloring. There is the ubiquitous Bona Dea scene. Tiberius is shown deflowering a young man midway through a sacrifice. Augustus and Mark Antony dress up as gods, Apollo and Hercules respectively, and cavort with retinues of young women. This collection of images gives us every cliché of Roman sexual practice.

Attached to every image, there is a discussion of the ancient source material that the image is supposed to illustrate. D'Hancarville has plundered our sources for every sexual reference that he can find. When the sources aren't overt in their erotic content, he exaggerates wildly. So, while our sources discuss Augustus' affection for the wife of Maecenas, there is no depiction as graphic as that shown on the supposed cameo. An even more extreme example of this is provided by his illustration of a cameo that depicts Augustus penetrating from behind a very heavily pregnant Livia. The image is based on a passage in Cassius Dio (48.44) that discusses the fact that Livia was pregnant when Augustus married her. There is some discussion about whether the marriage should have been allowed to take place, but talk of sex is fairly repressed. D'Hancarville turns this passage into an opportunity to discuss not only sex during pregnancy, but also the various positions in which this might be achieved and whether the act gave increased pleasure. Livia turns out to be very fertile ground indeed.

The influence of this work was tremendous. Forberg cites it constantly and takes its various images to be depictions of legitimate artifacts. Paul Avril in turning Forberg's text into pornographic images is, in some ways, returning the text back to its origins. Forberg cites d'Hancarville's work so often that he ends up calling it 'the repeatedly quoted French work'. Forberg clearly imagines that he and d'Hancarville are united in a scholarly brotherhood of sexology. Another who took d'Hancarville seriously was Richard Payne Knight. Along with the art collector Charles Townley, he helped subsidize d'Hancarville during a sojourn in London. His *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* engages often with d'Hancarville's ideas about the ancient world and the symbolic nature of sex in antiquity.

A large part of the reason for d'Hancarville's success is the quality of the images. D'Hancarville demonstrates the way in which these anecdotes about imperial lives translate so easily into visual representation. The anecdotes have a vivid quality.

In d'Hancarville's work we see an important trend developing; namely the use of visual media as a central vehicle for the discussion, repackaging, and transmission of conceptions about Rome and its morals. It is not hard to chart a line from d'Hancarville's pornographic etchings to nineteenth-century history painting to the Rome of twentieth-century cinema. These works assimilate themselves into a tradition through continual recourse to the slanders of Roman history and their desire to give it visual expression. It is the desire to respond to the power of these gossipy anecdotes that unites work as disparate as d'Hancarville's pornographic scenes with works such as Henryk Siemiradzki's *Roman Orgy in the Time of the Caesars* (1871) or Alma-Tadema's *Roses of Heliogabalus* (1888).

What nineteenth-century history painting started, twentieth-century cinema brought to fruition. Cinema's ability to marshal significant economic resources as well as the depth and breadth of its impact on audiences make it an ideal subject for tracing the traditions and concerns relating to Roman sexual morality. Cinema represents simultaneously both the end of a tradition and the beginning of a new one. The close relationship between nineteenth-century history painting and cinema is well established. Not only did cinema derive much of its aesthetics from looking back at the history-painting tradition, but there was even an overlap in personnel so that painters who had begun as history painters ended their careers as set designers or Hollywood back-drop artists. At the same time, the cinema quickly developed its own visual and narrative conventions. It was equally concerned with making its own distinctive Roman myths.

Cinema has repeatedly drawn voyeuristic pleasure from reprising the vices of Rome's elite for its audience. Scholars have pointed out the implicit contradiction of this mode of representation. For while the cinematic narratives offer storylines that expose and condemn the corruption of Rome, the cinematography delights in the decadence:

> the movies, themselves, as costly studio productions, plainly take the other side … they are all for tyranny and Rome, more imperialist than the emperor. The great scenes in these films, the reasons for our being in the cinema at all – the orgies, the triumphs, the gladiatorial games – all belong to the oppressors. The pleasures, the costumes, the pomp … are all theirs. It is the Romans who provide the circuses, who give us a Rome to be gaudily burned. It is Nero and the Pharaohs who throw the parties with all the dancing girls (Wood 1975: 173).

Wyke (1994, 1997a: 110–12) has pointed out the disjuncture between MGM marketing Nero-themed underwear as a tie-in to the release of *Quo Vadis* (1951), which encouraged the wearer to 'make like Nero' and the opening sequence of the film in which Nero is described as 'the Antichrist'. The commercial imperative sits at odds with the moralizing one. They can be squared, but only by admitting that the depictions of Rome play to our dark side as much as to our virtuous one.

In examining this dynamic of cinematic flirtation with Roman figures of iniquity, it is useful to focus on one example. Although the reigns of a number of

emperors have been the subject of eroticization – Caligula is a good example (see Box 5.1) – one man stands out in this tradition. Nero has become a byword for the spectacular evil that was Rome. In adopting Nero, cinema was working with a figure who had already established credentials in his ability to collocate ideas of entertainment with the voyeuristic thrills that came with observation of immorality. Everything about Nero is spectacular. His golden palace. His magnificent games. When one thinks of entertainment, it is hard to go past Nero. Certainly the entrepreneurial Barnum & Bailey thought so. Nineteenth-century circus acts and shows often invoked the ancient world. Thus, a trip to the circus could involve such acts as *The Flying Mercury*, *Alexander the Great* and *Thalestris the Amazon*, the Ringling Brothers' *Cleopatra*, and the *Last Days of Pompeii*. However, the most elaborate of these classically themed shows was *Nero, or the Destruction of Rome*. Staged in Olympia in London in 1888, this show boasted a cast of 2000 performers, 100 massive golden chariots, wild beasts, and combined 'gladiatorial contests of the famed Coliseum and Circus Maximus with the Olympic Games of ancient Greece'. As if that wasn't enough, the poster for the spectacle promised 'grand, bewitching dances' and 'gorgeous scenes of imperial orgies'.

Nero's association with decadence made him the prototype for aesthetes such as Wilde. Even in his early commonplace books we can notice a fascination with the emperor. He writes of 'Nero's terrible joy in all things evil and beautiful'. Wilde traveled especially to Paris so that he could have his locks curled in imitation of a bust of the emperor preserved in the Louvre. It is understandable then that when cinema wanted to represent the decadent Rome, it turned to the Rome of Nero. The Empire would exist for centuries after his reign, but cinema, following a path already charted in nineteenth-century novels, was determined to locate the start of the rot here.

Arguably the most self-consciously decadent of the mainstream cinematic Neros is Cecil B. DeMille's Nero from *The Sign of the Cross* (1932) played by Charles Laughton. The storyline of the film follows the conventions of films set in antiquity in pitting virtuous Christian characters against depraved pagans. It is a storyline that forms the basis of most Roman history films, and draws inspiration from a nineteenth-century novel tradition. It is played out in the numerous cinematic versions (e.g. 1901, 1913, 1924, 1951) of Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel *Quo Vadis?* (1894–6). Even when the dates preclude the presence of Christianity, filmmakers can't resist the temptation to include proto-Christian elements. Thus, Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* (1960), even though theoretically set in the years 73–71 BC, finished with a scene in which Spartacus' crucifixion is staged in a direct allusion to the death of Christ and his beloved Varinia is framed as a precursor to the Virgin Mary. In the case of *The Sign of the Cross*, the Christian element is represented by the girl Mercia (Elissa Landi) who is rescued by and ultimately converts the Prefect of Rome, Marcus Superbus (Fredric March). Even in the opening scene, the irreconcilability of ancient Rome and Christianity is signaled. Nero is shown lounging on his throne, playing a lyre while Rome burns in the distance.

Box 5.1 Caligula

Whenever vice needs a poster boy, Caligula stands ready to fill the bill. The superabundance of the biographical tradition around him ensures that he can be a representative of almost any form of depravity. For the most part, moralizing discourse has tended to oscillate around the twin vices of profligacy and cruelty. For many he became the paradigm of the cruel tyrant. His saying that he wished the people of Rome had only throat so that he could slit it when it irritated him (Suetonius, *Gaius Caligula* 30.2) was much repeated. Caligula became a prototype tyrant to whom any disliked monarch could be compared. We find this particularly during the Reformation where bloody religious purges of Catholics and Protestants forced writers to look for a figure who combined absolute power with a reign marked by rivers of blood.

Yet alongside this concern about Caligula's extravagance and love of violence also ran a concern about his sexual morality. His supposed incest with his sister was infamous. John Gower, the influential medieval poet, in his *Confessio Amantis, or the confession of the lover mad* (c.1386) choses the lust of Caligula as the starting point for the section in his poem on 'them that in love's cause do on against nature'. We see this trend most fully in a work such as Thomas Crowne's play *Caligula: A tragedy* (1698). The description of the court as a place 'where amorous dalliance, and wanton play is all the toil in which he wastes the day' and Rome as a city where 'bosoms oft flame with incestuous fires and many sons are brethren to their sires [and] our emperor has with high-sprung bastards stor'd a thousand beds, and all his sisters whor'd' sets the scene for a melodrama of lust and violence. Here the emperor debauches all around him until he is finally slain by an aggrieved husband.

Crowne's play is important because it establishes just how early and easily the life of Caligula lent itself to drama. The ingredients that Crowne fillets from Suetonius' life of the emperor (allegations of incest, the appointment of his horse as senator, the violence and adultery) form a rarely varied script. From Crowne to Camus, whose play *Caligula* (1938) was staged in 1945 to a world that appreciated all too well the picture it painted of decay, absurdist violence, and the dangers of authoritarian power, dramatists have continually been lured by the theatrical power of this emperor.

The attraction of such theatrical decadence helps explain the production of the now-discredited film, *Caligula* (1979). Few films have generated as much controversy. Produced at a cost of over $17 million, it is one of the most expensive erotic films ever made. Its impressive cast included Peter O'Toole (Tiberius), John Gielgud (Nerva), Malcolm McDowell (Caligula, Figure 5.1), and Helen Mirren (Caesonia). The film was produced and financed by Bob Guccione, the editor and owner of *Penthouse* magazine, and it is Guccione's vision of Rome that dominates the film. Neither the script-

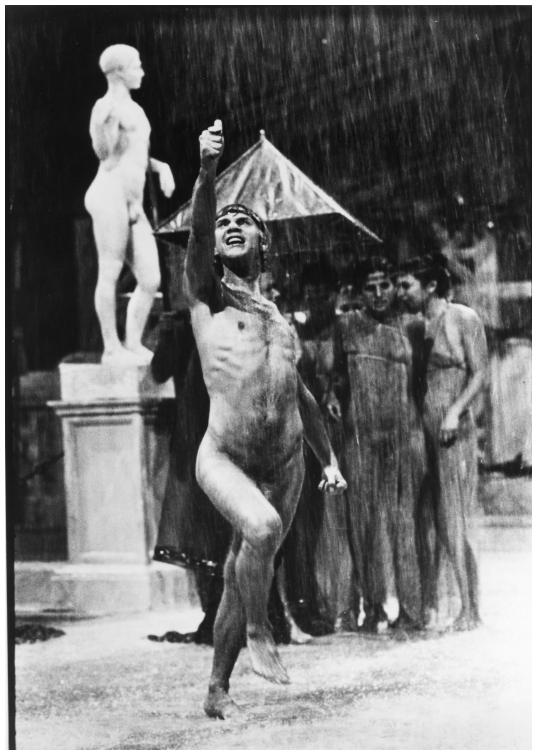

Figure 5.1 'A paradigm of licentiousness'. Malcolm McDowell as Caligula (1979, dir. Tinto Brass/Bob Guccione). Film still. Collection of William K. Zewadski.

writer (Gore Vidal) nor the director (Tinto Brass) was ultimately allowed to interfere with this vision. Both quit the project in disgust and demanded that their names be removed from the screen credits.

The posters promoting the movie asked 'What would *you* have done if you had been given absolute power of life and death over everybody else in the whole world'. To judge from the answer provided by the film, you would have indulged in a riot of orgiastic sex and violence.

The movie opens with scene of a half-naked couple frolicking in the countryside. Panpipes play in the background as sheep are driven to market. However, it does not take long for this bucolic idyll to give way to a much darker vision of the ancient world. Rome turns out to be a city of rapists, prostitutes, and transvestites in which effeminate senators and oversexed matrons vie for power in a scenery populated by giant gold phalluses, burning braziers, and swathes of richly decorated fabric. Over the course of the film

(*continued overleaf*)

Box 5.1 *Continued*

every taboo is broken. Acts of adultery and incest are frequent occurrences. The centerpiece of the film was an extended sequence set on an imperial brothel barge in which wives of senators are prostituted for 'the bargain price of five gold pieces for 20 minutes' and every sort of pleasure was available. Homosexual, heterosexual, pedophilic, and sadomasochistic desires are all fulfilled on Caligula's pleasure ship.

Continuing this erotic theme a special edition of *Penthouse* was produced to tie in with the release of the film. Its cover featured a half-naked Roman dancing girl entertaining Incitatus, the horse made a senator by Caligula. Inside scenes from the film provided much of the content and there was a feature article on the making of the film. The content even spilled into subsequent *Penthouse* issues so the following month's issue featured a photo essay on the lesbian lovemaking scene between Messalina and Agrippina, played by Penthouse pets Lori Wagner and Anneka di Lorenzo.

The critical reception of the film was far from favorable, and the size of the box-office receipts remains questionable. Nevertheless, despite this antagonistic attitude towards the press, the film's impact was felt far beyond those who saw it. *Caligula* was one of the most talked-about films of its season. Commentators frequently refer to it as symbolic of the times. The success of *Caligula* was contrasted to a corresponding decline in the box-office receipts for Disney films. Publicity for the film was kept alive by a run of legal problems in showing it. Its initial showing in Italy prompted outrage and a court case ensued over whether it was too obscene to show in public. A similar court case broke out in Massachusetts. The case was eventually dismissed, but only after evidence was received from four university professors (Andrew Hacker, Stanley Cavell, Irving Singer, and Glen Bowersock) on the political and philosophic merits of the film.

Ultimately, it may be the case that *Caligula* suffered because it played too strongly on the association between eroticism and Rome. There is a problem in equating ancient Rome with nothing but sex. As one critic observed, 'The people copulating and carrying on in other ways in *Caligula* look exactly like the people doing those very same things in low-budget porn films set in suburban motels. At its most spectacular, *Caligula* evokes visions not of ancient Rome but of some wildly overdecorated swingers' club where the floors are probably dirty'.

He laments to his offsider Tigellinus (Ian Keith) that his attempts to eliminate the Christians have been so unsuccessful. For while they have been 'hunted and killed like rats', their religion continues to spread. How, he laments, can he tolerate a doctrine that aims to put the meek in place of the mighty and will accept the worship of no other god, not even an emperor? Together he and Tigellinus plot to shift the blame for the fire from Nero to these Christians and so set off a sequence of brutal recriminations and vigilante slayings.

The entire narrative arc of the film is designed to show that, for the devout, death is preferable to Nero's Rome. At the very end of the film, the Christians go singing into the arena, facing martyrdom at the jaws of the lions. The film goes to considerable effort to show us just how much they, especially that dashing member of the Roman elite Marcus, are giving up. DeMille's Rome, despite the pressures of the Depression and the financial woes that the cash-strapped studio Paramount then faced, was lush and over the top in every detail. One of the final scenes of the film is set in the arena and features a cast that even Barnum & Bailey would have envied. One print advertisement for *The Sign of the Cross* reads 'Spectacle! 50 Nubian Lions. Fierce jungle tigers. Elephants. Dwarfs battling Amazons. Savage African crocodiles' (*New York Times*, November 22, 1932, p. 25). In fact this list sells the final scene short, it neglects to mention the gorillas, bulls, gladiators, wrestlers, or boxers. This final scene is a virtuoso display of cinema's ability to produce spectacle. Nero's palaces are similarly equipped. Great swags of tasseled fabric, tables groaning with every sort of meat and fruit, dozens of elaborately costumed attendants. Underpinning all this luxury was a sensuality that challenged the contemporary supposedly strict moral code that governed film production. Buffed, oiled, practically naked slave boys attend the emperor. The slave girls wear a little more, but not much more. Even the final arena scene is laced with eroticism as we see seemingly naked Christian girls tied to herms and ravished by gorillas whilst the fight between the dwarfs and Amazons is choreographed to play up the sexual tension between the opponents.

This pagan sensuality is embodied in the figure of the empress Poppaea (Claudette Colbert). Imperial Roman women have long been the stuff of fantasy. They came to epitomize the seductive potential of Roman power. The structure of the film is set up as a tussle between Poppaea and Mercia for the heart (and soul) of Marcus. When Marcus eventually chooses Mercia, Poppaea arranges for the death of Mercia and so unwittingly sends Marcus to his death as well. Poppaea is everything that Mercia is not. She is dark, Mercia is blonde. Poppaea is highly coiffured and wears make-up and revealing dresses of diaphanous fabric. In contrast, Mercia is always modestly covered in clothes of rustic simplicity. While Mercia is upright and chaste, Poppaea is abandoned and libidinous. Her status as the locus of erotic interest is signaled the first time we see her. This is a scene much promoted in the film's publicity, her famous bath in asses' milk. One print advertisement even sums up the film as 'The milk-bath of Poppea … the

feast-orgy of Marcus Superbus … combined with a love story as poignant as *Tristan and Isolde*'. The scene begins outside the palace where we see numerous beasts being milked. Buckets of milk are carried up by a chain of men and poured into a giant siphon. The camera then traces the path of the milk to its emergence from a spout in the imperial bathroom. Here we see the naked empress swimming in a pool of milk surrounded by female attendants. Only we don't quite see her naked. The milk froths up into bubbles which allow the empress to keep her modesty – just. The scene is an elaborate tease in which it looks like Poppaea is going to reveal her naked breasts only at the very last moment for the camera to turn away or a wave of bubbles to rise up and keep her covered. The scene even features an actual strip tease when Poppaea invites her friend Dacia (Vivian Tobin) to undress and join her in the bath. Again modesty is maintained. We see Dacia's clothes slip past her ankles, but no other body part is shown. While Dacia and Poppaea swim in the milk, two kittens lap at it from the side of the pool. We are invited to identify the empress and her friend with the kittens who stand as sexually suggestive symbols of the morals of the women. Mercia may have won the heart of Marcus, but it was Claudette Colbert who won the hearts of the male audience. Critics were united in praising her ability and marveling at Marcus' ability to resist her charms. 'A bad girl, Poppaea – but you sure do like her!' exclaimed the movie critic of the *Chicago Tribune* (January 16, 1933, p. 13) who previously had wondered how so much of the film had managed to get past the censors.

When Claudette Colbert embarked on her role as the empress Poppaea, she did so with a character that inherited a minimal amount of baggage. Poppaea has a comparatively small role in the fantasy life of western culture. Her most famous previous instantiation was the title character in Claudio Monteverdi's last opera *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* ('The Coronation of Poppaea', 1643). The opera is notable for its ultimately immoral character. Virtue is not rewarded and vice is not punished in this work. Inspired by Tacitus' judgment in the *Annals* that Poppaea never let love stand in the way of ambition (*Annals* 13.45), the storyline of the opera concerns Poppaea's seduction of the emperor Nero, her heartless betrayal of her lover Otho, and her scheming to get rid of Nero's current wife, Octavia. The gods themselves are seen to intervene on Poppaea's behalf and, along the way, the empress arranges for the death of the Stoic philosopher and tutor to Nero, Seneca, whom she sees as a threat to her plans. The opera climaxes with an elaborate coronation scene in which Cupid, Venus, and the Graces descend to earth to crown Poppaea as the goddess of beauty on earth. Critics have always found the morality of the opera troubling and explanations for its content have included: making libertines out of the librettist, or the audience; seeing the hand of the influential and morally corrupt *Accademia degli Incogniti* in its production; attributing the content to Venetian prejudice against Rome; or regarding the opera as implicitly critical of the Habsburgs (the heirs to the Roman Empire); or an attempt to rehabilitate the figure of Seneca. What-

ever the reason for the dark nature of the work – and it is unlikely that any argument will prove conclusive – Monteverdi's opera stands alone as an influential use of the motif of Poppaea. Other operas would use her story, but none has ever commanded the same critical acclaim or given her story as much attention. Poppaea seems destined to be a bit player. Only to be invoked when you want a female offsider for Nero.

In this Poppaea contrasts with the figure of Messalina (full name Valeria Messalina), the wife of the emperor Claudius (10 BC–AD 54). Messalina is a figure who has continually surfaced in our narrative of the eroticization of Rome. As we have seen, she dominates d'Hancarville's work. No other female figure approaches her in the number of depictions in his etchings. In Chapter 3, we saw how Beardsley was similarly drawn to her, showing her repeatedly in his drawings. Forberg uses her life story to reconstruct the behavior of a 'typical' prostitute. Alexandre Dumas (*père*) named her as one of the great courtesans in history. Her name has become a byword in Italian for a 'licentiously depraved woman'. Her active life in pornography and sexual imaginings about Rome reflects her active appearances in our ancient sources. In Juvenal's *Sixth Satire*, she appears as the climax of a sequence on female infidelity. Here the poet imagines her stealing out from the palace under the cover of darkness to work in a brothel. The story of the empress as a prostitute was a well-known one. It appears in Tacitus and Cassius Dio. Her lust was such that she madly courted Gaius Silius and even went so far as to marry him in an elaborate ceremony (cf. *Annals* 11.27). Thereafter, she retired to a wild Bacchic revel (11.31). When Claudius found out about her betrayal, he condemned both his wife and her new bridegroom to death. Yet it was not just lust that drove her. Tacitus, in particular, shows her as manipulative and brutal in hunting down her enemies. Unfortunately, for her, these machinations came to naught. Her name was officially condemned and her one son, Britannicus, was supposedly raped and murdered by the emperor Nero.

The figure of Messalina has the power to derail even seemingly sober discussions of biology. In his *Natural History*, Pliny begins by discussing the fact that man differs from animals in not having a mating season. He then starts discussing man's unquenchable appetite for sex which leads him straight to Messalina, and the story of how she outdid all the prostitutes of Rome by having sex with 25 men in the space of a day. Messalina so fires up the historian that the section ends with a practically irrational denunciation of contemporary morals:

> In the human race, men have invented every possible form of perverted sexual pleasure, crimes against nature, while women have invented abortion. How much more guilty are we in this respect than animals? (*Natural History* 10.172).

In his *Tenth Satire*, Juvenal warns about taking too much delight in vain pleasures. Do not hope for beautiful sons. For they will attract a Messalina like poor

Gaius Silius and so be led to their doom (10.329–45). No other fate is possible. Messalina assumes a status equivalent to a law of nature. In observing the deployment of the figure of Messalina we can see that she gains her greatest potency whenever traditional gender constructions are under attack. As a calculating, politically astute, desiring subject, she flies in the face of traditional views of feminine weakness and domesticity. Again cinema provides a useful place in which to observe this feature in action.

Wyke (2002: 370–80) demonstrates the way in which Susan Hayward's portrayal of Messalina in *Demetrius and the Gladiators* (1954) intersected with contemporary anxieties about feminism and the liberated woman. Described in reviews as 'a suburban feminist having a fling', Hayward's Messalina is an empowered forthright woman. She laments the fact she is not a man. Were it not for her sex, she would have 'taken the empire for my own'. She seizes the initiative. Her marriage to Claudius is a political ruse in order to gain power should anything happen to the current emperor, Caligula. She uses sex as a weapon. Her most common target is the gladiator, Demetrius, and not even his Christian faith is enough to enable him to resist her charms. The sensuality of the empress was such that a film reviewer wondered what a mother might say to her 10-year-old child should she take him to the film. She might be able to explain that the blood in the arena is 'only catsup', but what could she possibly say about the on-screen behavior of the stars? In this, Messalina seems to mirror Hayward's off-screen persona. Hayward may have claimed in the *Look* that Messalina represented a radical departure for her ('I've been too goody-goody lately!'), but it was not long before her behavior had earned her the nickname 'wayward Hayward'. The film's final scene in which Messalina renounces her previous life and proclaims that 'It's no secret from any of you that I have mocked my marriage vows, that I've openly disgraced my husband myself. That too has ended. I am Caesar's wife and I will act the part' provides a suitably cinematic hopeful ending that such wayward femininity might be straightened out. Messalina/Hayward/the 1950s feminist can all be brought round in the end. All it takes is the right man and an exposure to Christianity.

The only figure who rivals, and arguably surpasses Messalina, in eroticization is the figure of Cleopatra. This queen, the last of the Ptolemaic dynasty, was the lover of first Julius Caesar by whom she had a son and later Mark Antony, the great rival to Augustus. Her involvement with figures so central to the politics of the Late Republic ensured that she features in our sources, and she has been adopted as a figure for female desire from the Renaissance through the Enlightenment to nineteenth- and twentieth-century incarnations.

Cleopatra's ability to stand for all female desire has seen her portrayed cinematically as everything from the archetypal dangerous and unpredictable 'New Woman' in Cecil B. DeMille's *Cleopatra* (1934, Claudette Colbert again) to the ultimate consumerist (Elizabeth Taylor, *Cleopatra*, 1963). Depictions of Cleopatra normally focus on her Egyptian nature. She is a representative of oriental desire rather

than Greco-Roman. Her Hellenistic character is downplayed and submerged beneath a different erotic discourse, one about the mysteries of the East. As one writer on the image of Cleopatra remarks, it is enough to make you ask, 'Did the Greeks ever reach Egypt?'

One of the advantages of Rome as a location for narrative is that, as the world's first cosmopolis, it is a place that permits you to incorporate oriental elements, without too much effort, into your narrative. We see this explicitly in films such as Rodolfi's *Last Days of Pompeii* (*Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei*, 1913), which delights in a plot centering around the machinations of the evil priest of Isis, Arbaces, and his lust for the innocent Ione. Arbaces is an orientalist pastiche. He is a sexual predator in Egyptian dress. His depiction mirrors the depiction of cinematic Cleopatra. Both are notionally situated in a Roman environment, but the story that they really tell is one about the seductive corrupting power of the East.

One work that seeks to locate Cleopatra in a Roman setting and within the sweep of Roman politics is the nineteenth-century erotic novel, *The Loves of Cleopatra, or Mark Antony and his concubines. An historical tale of the Nile*. The work was published under the pseudonym 'Appolonius' of Gotham. As the misspelling of the name Apollonius might indicate, this work is not high art. We have no idea how popular it was, although a few copies survive and it seems to have made its way into some important libraries. The interest of the work lies in the way in which it demonstrates how the story of Cleopatra and Roman can nourish and support elaborate fantasy.

Despite the title, *The Loves of Cleopatra*, the heroine of this story is Charmion, a slave girl from Gaul who is bought by Julius Caesar. In this, she narrowly escapes a worse fate as the under-bidder was the voluptuary Dione who lives in a subterranean cavern with his consort the sorceress Astarte and bathes in the blood of virgins to maintain his sexual powers. Dione and Astarte stand as representatives of Roman sexual depravity. The following snatch of dialogue from Astarte to Dione gives a good sense of the flavor of the work as well as the way in which it co-opts material such as the story of Elagabalus drowning his guests in rose petals or Juvenal's claims about female devotion to gladiators:

> Sweet lord, you make my heart beat high with rapture, and my pulse to throb with joy. Dost thou not think our games are too monotonous. I lack excitement; drowning Grecian youths in baths of wine, and smothering nymphs in mounds of rose leaves were my last caprices, but they seem so tame and simple … Can you not invent something to amaze me … With you, sweet lord, I'll own that I have tasted every phase of love, from the quick ecstatic gush to the voluptuous spasm, and when you lacked vigour, though not will, my sweet preceptor in the art of love, you like a dear kind paternal friend, threw into my arms the rosiest youths of every clime to satiate my amorous frenzy; but papa Dione, 'tis of no avail, my Grecian youths are too effeminate, my lustiest Swiss is pale and tame from my embrace, and so, dear lord, bid Forceps usher to our presence the envy of many a maid and matron fair in Rome – Belletrix, the brave gladiator (1860: 20–1).

Dione, of course, accedes to the request and a description of the inevitable orgy ('the saturnalia') follows. However, despite Dione's agreeability in such matters, Astarte eventually bores of her lover and together with brother Phaon, a eunuch in the court of Cleopatra, they murder Dione by feeding him to a 70-foot python. Meanwhile, Charmion has been slipped an aphrodisiac by Caesar and has been deflowered. After his sexual conquest of her, Caesar leaves Charmion as a handmaiden to Cleopatra. The rest of the novel which features numerous sex scenes between Cleopatra, Mark Antony, and Charmion tells the story of the rise of the dispute between Octavian and Mark Antony and the eventual defeat and suicide of Cleopatra. The novel ends with Charmion marrying a knight in Octavian's army and pretending to be a virgin ('that must have made the ghosts of Caesar and Mark Antony laugh in their sleeve', 1860: 100). For all its failings as a work of literature, *The Loves of Cleopatra* demonstrates the way in which Roman historical writing provided a framework for expressing fantasy. The sequence of events in the fall of the Roman Republic provides the only stability in this work and prevents it from collapsing into a nonsensical heap of grinding bodies.

Of course, sometimes this is what artists desire. In discussing cinematic engagements with Rome, it is worthwhile to finish with one of the most distinctive products of this interaction, Fellini's *Satyricon* (1969). The film is part adaptation of, and part meditation on the *Satyricon* attributed to Nero's courtier and intimate, Petronius. Tacitus' obituary of Petronius (*Annals* 16.18) condemns him as a man whom 'indolence had raised to fame as energy raises others' and describes how he became Nero's arbiter of taste so that the emperor 'thought nothing elegant or charming unless Petronius has expressed approval of it'. His most famous work, the *Satyricon*, a contemporary satire of Roman manners, was condemned as 'one of the most licentious and repulsive works in Roman literature' (Lecky 1897: i.n215). In Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*, the dissolute character of the title expresses the desire that 'he might really become to the London of his own day what to imperial Neronian Rome the author of the *Satyricon* had once been'.

Wilde's character expresses a desire to return to a Rome now familiar to us from centuries of moralizing discourse. We know all too well the Rome that he wants to inhabit. In contrast, the most serious cinematic engagement with Petronius' text, Fellini's *Satyricon* attempts to do the opposite and uses Petronius' text to make Rome unfamiliar to us. Unlike the Rome of Hollywood, there is nothing of grandeur here. The film spends a large amount of its time in dark, grubby, unadorned spaces. The architectural lines are irregular, the music discordant. Cheap props compete with elaborate stage pieces. This representation of Rome was a deliberate strategy on the part of Fellini to deconstruct Rome and strip it of all its cultural baggage. It was an attempt to forge a new image of Rome as alien, one that constantly threatened to slip beyond our ability to comprehend it. It is a film that values the fragmentary, damaged, and incomplete over the perfect and the whole.

Yet while stripping Rome of so many of its classic signifiers, it is striking that Fellini still retains the idea that it is through sexual practice that one can get in touch with the antique past. Indeed, in a film composed of a largely disjointed narrative, it is sex that holds the film together. The first half of the film comprises a series of scenes in which the character of Encolpio attempts to find his boy-lover Gitone, and the second involves a long complicated search for a cure for his sexual impotence. Along the way each of the disjointed episodes in the story often has a sexual dimension. In one of the most famous scenes in the film, Encolpio and Gitone walk through a brothel in Rome populated by freaks, drunks, and whores. Through glimpses through various doorways, we can see that every form of desire is able to be satisfied in Rome. Children, transvestites, grotesquely fat women, and dwarves are all there; ready to please their customers. Every type of sexual activity seems to be taking place. There is bondage, flagellation, group sex, and coprophilia. Other scenes include a visit to an art gallery in which the art and conversation largely consists of sexual activities known from myth; the story of a wife that allows the mutilation of her husband's corpse to help her lover get out of a jam; the capture of Encolpio and Gitone as prisoners destined for the sexual pleasures of the emperor and the subsequent homosexual marriage of Encolpio to the pirate slaver; the abduction of an albino hermaphrodite who was worshipped as a god; a threesome between Encolpio, his friend, Ascilto, and a slave girl left behind after the suicide of her master and mistress; and the ritual deflowering of 'Ariadne' by 'Theseus' (played by Encolpio). The centrality of sex to this film is reflected in the film's trailers which consist largely of montages of various sex scenes.

Even when artists attempt to break the rules in their depiction of Rome, none seems happy to jettison the sex. The *Satyricon* stands for many things. As an exercise in bold, provocative filmmaking, it has few rivals. Yet, in its sexual focus – for all that it attempts to often challenge us with scenes of unconventional eroticism – it perpetuates an equation that Rome will always be about perverted and over-abundant desire.

Explaining Roman Gossip Culture

The erotic picture portrayed above draws its vitality from a rich and vibrant moralizing discourse centered around prominent individuals. It is a tradition that needs explanation. The imperial family did not invent gossip. They inherited a world in which gossip was part of everyday life. In Book 4 of his epic poem, the *Aeneid*, Vergil describes how gossip circulated about the affair between Queen Dido of Carthage and Aeneas whose fleet had been blown off course onto the shores of North Africa as he made his way from Troy to found the city of Rome. Vergil personifies gossip as a huge fearsome monster which flew through the skies, under every feather of her enormous wings grew never-closing eyes and ears to hear

gossip, and a tongue to spread it; she loved news that was false and perverted as much as that which was true (4.173–88). Vergil could not imagine a world in which rumors about the affairs of the royal family were not a feature. Rumor existed before the founding of Rome and she continued to fly through the night skies of the city throughout Rome's entire history.

Gossip was certainly a feature of the elite disputes that characterized the feuds of the late Roman Republic. The various factions of Pompey, Caesar, Augustus, Cicero, and Mark Antony were happy to spread rumors about each other. Accusations of immorality had a political dimension because they pointed to an inability to govern. One of the principal Roman virtues was self-control. Only the man who could control his desires and appetites was fit to exercise control in the state. It is the theme of self-control that unifies so much moralizing discourse. Greed, adultery, drunkenness, profligacy were not bad in their own right, but rather they were worrisome because they pointed to a lack of discipline. Thus, Augustan propaganda went out of its way to accuse Mark Antony of debauched living. His drunkenness, irrationality, wasteful extravagance, and sexual devotion to an oriental queen were all painted as symptoms of a deeper malaise, a criminal inability to gain mastery over one's appetites.

For this reason women also featured in this discourse. Not only were women important political players in their own right, but their reputations directly reflected onto their husbands. In a macho culture like Rome, it reflected badly on the husband that he was not able to control the activities of his wife or daughter. Julius Caesar famously divorced his wife after the Bona Dea scandal on the grounds that 'the wife of Caesar should be above reproach'. Her behavior directly impacted on him. When Augustus has to face up to the stories of his daughter Julia's profligacy, he's facing up to his own impotence. The emperor who attempted through legislation to outlaw adultery from the city of Rome can't even control what happens under his own roof.

The same idea is bound up in accusations of passive homosexuality. Roman sexuality favored those who penetrated, rather than those who were penetrated. One needed to be constantly on guard that there was nothing ever womanly about one's behavior. Thus, Julius Caesar was mocked for being the beloved of Nicomedes, the king of Bithynia and Caligula was regarded as even worse in being accused of being subject to an actor, an extremely low status profession. Indeed, love between men was a potential minefield. Even when they assumed the active, penetrative role, it was possible for emperors to get it wrong. One of the common accusations against emperors was that they debauched free Roman boys. This was a crime that Roman culture took most seriously as it reflected a complete indifference to the status and bodily integrity of the victim. Again this crime was seen to spring from an inability to control one's desire and respect the status of one's victim.

Moralizing discourse was a method by which it was possible to assert Roman cultural identity. As the Empire expanded, new ideas were encountered and

wealth made new modes of living possible. The constitution of Roman-ness became increasingly debated. The reassertion of codes of moral behavior arose partly through an anxiety over what constituted acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Allegations of excessive philhellenism are bound up in many of the stories of imperial debauchery. Nero's devotion to Greek culture is seen as the root of many of his perversions. Authors constantly stress the Hellenic flavor of so many of his vices. His passion for games, acting, and music are all Greek in origins. His 'marriage' to the eunuch Sporus occurs in Greece and is celebrated 'by all the Greek world' (Cassius Dio 63.13.1). Nero's encounter with Greece has infected him. By diluting his Roman-ness, it also effected corruption. Moralizing discourse puts Romans on guard about the dangers of Empire and the world around them.

Castigating emperors for their vices was also empowering. It was a method by which it might be possible for those who could never hope to match the military, legal, or economic resources of the imperial family to exercise power. Stories about imperial corruption and depravity were fundamentally didactic. One of the features of imperial biography is the tendency to divide emperors into 'good emperors' and 'bad emperors'. The aim of every emperor was to be remembered as the latter rather than the former. Through the analysis of vice, it might be possible to escape its traps. This seems particularly the case in the stories about the depravities of empresses. The choice of marriage partner was one of the most important that an emperor might make. Characters such as Messalina are painted with such vivid colors so that they might know how to avoid this mistake in future.

It was empowering in another sense because knowledge of gossip bespoke intimacy to the center of power. Romans were not interested in the vices of the poor or insignificant. Gossip was circumscribed to the activities of the elite. By pretending to know sexual gossip worth hearing, one pretended to be intimate with the most powerful in the state. Sexual relations told a lot about power relations. One type of story that occurs with regular frequency is the accusation of sexual co-mingling between successive emperors. Here sex stands as a symbolic metaphor for political power. Thus, it was alleged that Augustus had been beloved by Julius Caesar, and that Caligula had shared in the vices of Capri with Tiberius, a distinction that he shared with the emperor Vitellius. The future emperor Otho gained his position at the court of Nero supposedly by sleeping with him. As Vout notes, 'in a system in which imperial succession was never fully resolved, stories of intercourse between emperors seem to have been an important way of conceptualising the passage of power from one to the other' (2007: 3). You knew who was 'in' by looking at who the emperor was 'in'.

The spreading of stories about the immorality of emperors was also a method by which a new regime could distinguish itself from its predecessors. This was particularly the case when the previous regime had been overthrown by violence. The emperors Nero and Domitian both died as the result of coups and represent

the last of their dynasties, the Julio-Claudian and the Flavian, respectively. Both were the subjects of numerous anecdotes about their immorality. Domitian presents an excellent test case for the way in which a subsequent regime legitimates its rule through black propaganda.

Domitian was assassinated as part of palace coup on September 18, AD 96, and immediately replaced by one of his associates, the elderly Marcus Cocceius Nerva (c. AD 35–98). The reign of Nerva only lasted for a couple of years, and not long after his accession Nerva found his reign plagued by increased civic turmoil, financial problems, and fermenting military rebellion. Partly as a solution to these problems and to help settle anxiety about the succession, the childless Nerva adopted in October 97 and appointed as co-ruler, the then-governor of Upper Germany Marcus Ulpius Traianus (53–117), or, as he is he more commonly known, Trajan.

With the death of Nerva in 98, Trajan went about stabilizing the Empire. He conducted a thorough review of the armed forces and ensured that there would be no problems with rebellion. He neutralized those factions in Rome that had been promoting dissent during the reign of Nerva, and organized for the deification of his adopted father. He expanded the bounds of the Empire through large-scale campaigns against the kingdoms of Dacia and Parthia. He annexed Arabia and Armenia and had success, although it proved to be short-lived, in establishing Roman rule over Mesopotamia, Assyria, and the Parthian Empire. Unfortunately, for the reputation of Domitian, the dynasty that he founded proved to be extremely long-lived. He and his successor Hadrian were regarded as ushering in a new golden age, one to rival that of Augustus. Even in the third century AD, an emperor would still be happy to describe himself as the 'great-great-great-grandson of the deified Nerva'. While in the fourth century AD, the Senate ritually exhorted emperors upon their accession to be 'more fortunate than Augustus, and even better than Trajan'.

After his assassination, Domitian suffered *damnatio memoriae* ('the condemnation of memory') in which all traces of the victim were symbolically removed. This might involve the destruction of statues, the dispersal of property, desecration of portrait images, and the removal of names from inscriptions. The irony, of course, is that what this process achieves is that the condemned is never forgotten. There is always a hole in public space (an empty statue base, a chiseled blank in an inscription, a disfigured face) to remind you of them. It is a 'pantomime of forgetfulness' (Stewart 2003: 279). The promulgation of scurrilous rumor works together with *damnatio* by keeping alive the reason for erasure. It helps to ensure that we never forget why we are forgetting. The one unexpected exception to this public display of erasure was Domitian's own wife who survives the emperor and perpetuates his memory after the assassination. Thus, making a lie of much of the gossip about her dissatisfaction with their relationship.

Writers proved extremely versatile in adjusting to the changed political circumstances. Thus, Martial, who under Domitian praised the emperor's building

works as being equal to the heavens, under the next emperor dismisses them as the 'oppressive luxuries of an insolent king' (12.15.4–5). Another example is the Roman writer Pliny (c. AD 61–c.112). Pliny had served as a military tribune during the reign of Domitian and had ridden his way up through the ranks. Domitian favored him by appointing him quaestor (one of the magistracies which made a person eligible for admission to the Senate) at some point in the late eighties (most likely 87) and he subsequently held the posts of tribune of the plebs and praetor. Having prospered under Domitian, especially in the supposed final brutal years of his regime, Pliny potentially found himself in an awkward position under the new regime. His response was to compose one of the most fulsome apologias for the new order, the *Panegyricus.* The pretext for the speech was the award of a suffect consulship to Pliny by Trajan. Such praise speeches were common, but Pliny's is distinguished by its length, quality, and the excessive nature of its praise for Trajan. The work was much admired in antiquity and was seen as a foundational example by writers of later imperial panegyrics. Pliny draws explicit comparisons between the current regime and the previous one. 'The first duty of grateful subjects towards a perfect emperor is to attack those who are least like him', Pliny declares (*Panegyricus* 53.1). In the course of these comparisons, Pliny manages to allude to much of the scandalous rumor that surrounded Domitian's regime. For example, twice he refers to the rumor that Domitian committed incest with his niece, Julia (52.3, 63.7). The story of this affair is told by Suetonius in his life of Domitian in a chapter where he lists the objects of the emperor's lusts. Domitian was apparently so oversexed that he treated intercourse as a form of regular exercise. He also swam naked with prostitutes and enjoyed removing their pubic hair by hand (Suetonius, *Domitian* 22). Pliny is never this explicit in his work, but then he didn't need to be. His few coded comments said it all. His panegyric to Trajan didn't create gossip, rather it acted as a catalyst for its circulation as his audience, both individually and in concert, 'remembered' (even if they didn't know before his speech) just how bad the emperor had been.

The case of Domitian also points to a final factor in the tendency for emperors to suffer posthumous defamation, namely tensions in their relationship with the Senate. Domitian's reign was characterized by strained relations with this body. The Roman Empire was established on an elaborate fiction that Augustus had restored the Republic and that the emperor ruled only as the 'first amongst equals'. Emperors enjoyed special powers such as the effective right to appoint all senior army officers and the administrators of the key provinces such as Egypt and those provinces with a substantial military presence. However, they enjoyed these powers theoretically only by virtue of a gift from the 'Senate and People of Rome'. Domitian seems to have been less keen to indulge this fiction than other emperors.

Domitian continually played up the primacy of the imperial family in Roman affairs at the expense of the Senate. He accorded his wife extravagant honors. Her

portrait appeared on the obverse of coins. He organized for the deification of his son. He renamed the month of October *Domitianus* after himself. He awarded himself a retinue of 24 lictors, when convention dictated that 12 was the more normal number. He organized to be elected to the consulship 10 times. Although he then refused to accept the office five times, an act which only created ill-feeling amongst those who might have liked to have been elected to the office in the first place. His disregard for the feelings of the Senate can be seen by his habit of wearing triumphal dress in the Senate and his assumption of the post of Censor for life. By assuming this magistracy which traditionally decided on who was and wasn't eligible for the Senate, Domitian symbolically signaled his supremacy. Domitian also had a tendency to consolidate powers and honors within an inner circle of trusted associates. Honors and posts which had previously been in the gift of the Senate and had been held by those not necessarily closely associated with the imperial family were appropriated by the emperor to give to those who he was grooming for higher office.

Most grievous to the Senate was the number of senators that Domitian had put to death. This was despite numerous senatorial decrees that an emperor should not execute anyone of this rank. Unlike his brother, the emperor Titus, Domitian refused to swear an oath not to execute senators. At least 11 ex-consuls were executed during his rule, and our sources continually return to this feature as one of the worst aspects of his reign. Suetonius devotes a chapter to it in his biography of Domitian and offers it as proof of the emperor's savagery. Most of the victims were charged with plotting revolution or disloyalty to the emperor. What was particularly troubling to the senators was Domitian's reliance on semi-professional informers, *delatores.* Such figures were known from previous regimes, but Domitian's use of them in the latter part of his reign seems to have been exceptional. Certainly, the types of accusations for which a number of ex-consuls were killed (e.g. jokes at the emperor's expense, the casting of horoscopes, the impolitic celebrating of a previous emperor's birthdays) are the types of accusations most associated with *delatores.* In addition to the execution of senators, a number of them were exiled. Their crimes seem to have been that they were too outspoken or were rivals of those within Domitian's inner circle. Even if we dismiss much of these accusations as the post-assassination rewriting of history by a group who needed to justify why they did nothing during the emperor's reign, we can still say that, at the very least, Domitian's relationship with the Senate was rocky. The Domitianic project was one based around a close circle of friends and loyal associates. It had little part for a diffuse, complex, and potentially unmanageable body like the Senate.

Domitian's relationship with the Senate matters because the practice of history writing had long been a senatorial occupation. Its most important practitioners came from the senatorial class and the affairs of the Senate along with the deeds of generals were standard historical subject matter. In the case of Domitian, he was particularly unlucky to have Tacitus (c. AD 56–post 118), arguably the most

'senatorial' of Roman historians, write up his reign. Sadly, Tacitus' discussion in his *Histories* of Domitian's reign does not survive. However, we can obtain a sense of its tenor from a few remarks in the part of the *Histories* that does survive and Tacitus' earlier work, the *Agricola*. This work is written in praise of Tacitus' father-in-law Gnaeus Iulius Agricola (AD 40–93) who had enjoyed the position of governor of Britain under Domitian. In the final chapters of the work, Tacitus gives an obituary of Agricola that stressed the nobility of this Roman in contrast to the ruler he served. Tacitus rejoices in the fact that his father-in-law died before he could witness the worst excess of Domitian's brutality against the Senate. 'It was not his fate to see the Senate-house besieged, the Senate surrounded by armed men, and in the same reign of terror so many consuls butchered' (*Agricola* 45.1). At the very end of the work (46.4), Tacitus recalls to his readers the many famous men who have been forgotten through the passing of time. Thanks to Tacitus' work, this will not be the fate of Agricola whose fame will outlast death. It's a useful, if self-serving, reminder that one's reputation is ultimately in the hands of the historian.

So far our discussion has assumed that stories about the sexual exploits of emperors come from a wellspring of malice. People tell anecdotes about emperors because they want to bring them back down to ground, to show that they have feet of clay, to make them no better (indeed a lot worse) than normal folk. However, it is possible to argue that something of the reverse is simultaneously happening here. What if these stories are not designed to make the emperor look like a knave, but a god?

Greek and Roman myth is populated with stories about the cruelty and the depravity of the gods. Zeus/Jupiter was as famous for his adulterous unions as the beneficence of his divine rule. The love of the gods was excessive and indifferent to the suffering it caused. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, an epic 15-book poem on the theme of mythical beings who changed forms, is littered with figures whose lives are irrevocably ruined by divine lust. Take, for example, the poor nymph Callisto who Jupiter desired (*Metamorphoses* 2.405–510). Unfortunately for the god, Callisto was a virgin and a chaste and devoted member of the goddess Diana's hunting band. To overcome her resistance, Jupiter took the form of Diana and, luring her into an embrace, promptly raped her. When her 'crime' was later discovered, Diana expelled her from her group and Juno in revenge for her 'adultery' turned her into a bear. Miserable Callisto was left to wander the fields. Lonely, an outcast both from men and beasts, Callisto could only raise her paws in strangled cries of lament to the sky and the god who caused her pain. Even if the luckless victim managed to avoid rape, they were still left damaged by their encounter with divine passion. So, Daphne (*Metamorphoses* 1.452–568), another virgin huntress who unfortunately caught the eye of Apollo, was pursued to the point of exhaustion at which point she prayed for release and was transformed into the laurel tree as a way to avoid rape. Dumb, her skin roughened into bark, the runner now anchored forever by her roots.

To Ovid's audience, there must have been obvious similarities between the accounts of the divine and imperial lover. Both were excessive in the frequency of conquests, their indifference to the feelings of those involved, and the often tragic aftermath of their encounters. So many imperial affairs ended fatally. Antinous, the beloved of Hadrian, was supposedly killed as a sacrifice in place of the emperor. Domitian's Julia died when he supposedly forced her to have an abortion to hide the product of their illicit union. Nero in his anger kicked his wife Poppaea Sabina to death, killing her and her unborn child. Like Jupiter, emperors had a constantly roving eye, always looking for new talent and an opportunity to pounce. Nothing could stop their will. They literally could move mountains to get their way.

From the period of Augustus onwards the gap between mortal emperor and divine god had been growing narrower and narrower. The emperors were worshipped as gods by large sections of the Empire. Their palaces resembled temples. They were included in the prayers of the citizens. They erected statues of themselves in temples and, after death, grew to expect official deification. Some even seized it in their lifetime. Imperial power and divine power began to coalesce as the emperor became the centre of the world exercising a power that was predicated on the divine.

Emperors seem happy to have encouraged this process of assimilation. Again the reign of Domitian provides a good example of the way in which the discourse of divine love could bleed into that of imperial desire. One of the stories told about the loves of Domitian was his passion for the young castrated slave boy Earinus. We possess a number of poems by Martial and Statius that discuss this imperial beloved. One poem in particular is striking. It is a poem of a little over 100 lines by Statius whose topic is the dedication of a lock of Earinus' hair to the shrine of Asclepius in Pergamum (*Silvae* 3.4). Through the course of this poem, Earinus' act takes on a heroic quality as various gods are enlisted to ensure that the lock has a safe journey and Earinus is compared to other dedicants of hair such as Achilles (84–5). When the poet comes to discuss the relationship between Earinus and Domitian, he reaches for one very specific template. It is the template of the relationship between Jupiter and Ganymede. Like Ganymede before him, Earinus is figured as the beautiful divine cupbearer to the almighty ruler. This gambit was not just used by Statius. We find the same identification in Martial. Here in poems designed to praise and delight an imperial audience, we see the conflation of the two types of desire.

This use of the model of the divine lover as a signifier of the extraordinary overabundance of power vested in the emperor should be seen as complementary to the moralizing discourse discussed above. Moralists were always trying to bring the imperial person back within the purview of judgment – the emperor was a figure who could and should be criticized – and the emperor was always trying to escape it. Both could use this discourse to their advantage, each playing to an audience that wanted to be titillated and enjoy the vicarious thrills that stories of vice bring out.

Stories about the loves of emperors could assume the status, and serve to replace, the stories of myth. The emperor was a figure whose distance and remove meant that he could be viewed as an almost elemental figure, a person who one shouldn't expect to be bound by the conventions of morality. His life became as suitable a subject for fiction as any other figure for myth. It could be reworked in prose, verse, art, and song. The imperial body took on a different quality. When he was dying, the emperor Vespasian is supposed to have joked that 'I think I am becoming a god' (Suetonius, *Vespasian* 23.4). It is a joke with a serious message. Strange things happen when men become gods. Divinity distorts discourse, and the consequences can be perverse. In many ways the stories about the depravities of Messalina and her wild nights in the brothels of the city are as much a sign of divine status as the prayers that were offered up to her husband Claudius by the priests of Rome.

Part II
Greek Love

Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity Alastair J. L. Blanshard
 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

6

Introduction

Democracy could have come into being without Athens, philosophy would have continued without Socrates, the laws of physics have no real need of Archimedes, but modern western homosexuality without the Greeks is impossible. This is a bold claim. To many it would seem astonishing. Yet it is worth observing that such feelings of astonishment are only a comparatively recent phenomenon. The thought that such a statement might be considered outlandish only starts to gain widespread currency in the late nineteenth century. For most of its history, western culture has been content to regard Greece as central to any discussion of homosexual identity (and the acts that are associated with that identity). The Romans were the first to collocate Greek identity with a particular constellation of homosexual acts. It was an association that survived the fall of the Roman Empire and passed into European consciousness. The story of 'Greek love' provides one of the longest and fullest stories within the history of classical reception. In terms of continuity and impact, it has few rivals.

As a number of theorists have pointed out, 'coming out' as a homosexual is a rather peculiar experience. Individuals do not come out into a vacuum. Homosexuals may feel that in coming out they are revealing their 'true' self, but the expression of that self is mediated by a pre-existing code of behaviors. One expresses one's homosexuality through an already present language. Homosexuality is scripted. From antiquity onwards, people have professed, discussed, and dissected their love for each other. They have seen reflections of their love in the love of others from distant times. Of course, they may be deluding themselves; falsely writing themselves into a story in which they have no part. People separated by time or place may in truth have nothing in common. Cold, rational analysis may show that two types of affection are totally unlike. But when is love ever cold and rational? Once we start to love (however one construes that notion), we want to clothe our feelings in history and myth. We want love to have a past because that in some way guarantees it a future.

In this part of the book, I want to examine how the script for modern homosexuality was put together and the place of Greece in this narrative. Greece

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provided a set of metaphors in which homosexual desire could be captured and crystallized. Greek myth, art, philosophy, drama, and poetry have all played a part in the formation of modern homosexual identities. Discussing homosexuality in Greek terms is a practice that unites both critics and advocates of homosexual love. It is a story that is not limited to one group. It is the accepted common ground where both sides can meet. So ingrained is this association that looking to Greece for illumination on homosexual matters is instinctive.

What is 'Greek Love'? Scenes from a Courtroom I

In early 1895, Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), author, critic, and dandy, commenced an action for criminal libel against John Sholto Douglas, ninth marquess of Queensberry. Wilde alleged that he had been defamed by Douglas who had left a card at Wilde's club calling him either a 'ponce and sodomite' or of 'posing as a sodomite' (the writing was indistinct, although the latter interpretation was the one taken at the libel trial). In his defense, Douglas pleaded justification on the grounds that the claims were true. When the case came to trial on April 3–5, Wilde found himself facing Edward Carson Q.C. whose hostile cross-examination of Wilde's relations with a number of lower-class youths caused him to attempt to withdraw his case. The marquess of Queensberry was acquitted and the evidence collected by his defense was passed onto the public prosecutor. The following day, Wilde was charged with offenses under section 11 of the *Criminal Law Amendment Act* (1885), the so-called 'Labouchere Amendment', which made homosexual activity illegal as an act of 'gross indecency' and punishable by up to two years imprisonment, with or without hard labor. Wilde's first trial (April 26 to May 1) ended with the jury unable to reach a verdict owing to a prosecution case marred by a number of witnesses either denying impropriety or being dismissed for perjury. In his retrial (May 22–5), Wilde was eventually found guilty and sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labor. Each stage of these legal proceedings generated a large amount of press coverage and heated discussion in British literary circles.

A number of important claims have been made about Wilde and these trials. According to some, they represent a turning point in the modern formation of the homosexual. In this account, the effect of the trials was such that the figure of Wilde came to so dominate the popular conception of the homosexual that no other viable alternative could survive. Wilde canonized the foppish aesthete as the definitive mode of homosexual existence. He bequeathed to subsequent homosexuals a legacy of poignant, potent, poetic, camp.

We need not go quite as far as this in our thinking about the Wilde trials. One might, for example, regard the trials as a symptom arising out of the formation of a particular homosexual identity rather than its catalyst. A number of features of the Wildean persona (e.g. effeminacy, reliance on wit rather than brawn, an appre-

ciation of surface rather than substance, an equation of beauty with morality) were associated with homosexual activity long before Wilde. Moreover, it is hard to imagine the Wilde trials occupying the center stage claimed for them unless the groundwork had been well prepared in advance. Whatever story we tell about the Wilde trials, it must be one which has a long prelude. The status of the trials rests on the way in which it marks a moment when a number of factors came together. Over the course of a few months, law, public morality, and the status and nature of the homosexual were all thrashed out. It was a trial in which social class as much as literary criticism played a part. In navigating all these issues, we find Hellenic culture repeatedly invoked by both defense and prosecution. Greek love was being put on trial.

Wilde's career as a poet, playwright, lecturer, and aesthete has a tendency to obscure his identity as a classical scholar. Yet, it is significant that when Wilde's counsel, Sir Edward Clarke, introduced Wilde to the court he began by stressing Wilde's academic qualifications in classical learning. Wilde's achievements in winning a classical scholarship and a gold medal in Greek at Trinity College Dublin followed by his double first in Mods and Greats at Oxford take precedence over his activities as a dramatist and author.

Wilde had every reason to be proud of his proficiency. He was taught at Portora Royal School by its distinguished classicist headmaster William Steele and his competency was cemented by his time at Trinity College Dublin under the guidance, most notably, of the famous Irish classicist, John Pentland Mahaffy (1839–1919). Wilde has been called 'the best educated in classics of all the major figures of the Anglo-Irish literary tradition' (Stanford 1976: 236). During his time at Trinity College Dublin, he was twice 'first of the first' beating a future Cambridge professor of classical archaeology (William Ridgeway) and a Dublin professor of Latin (Louis Purser). His time at Oxford (1874–8) only cemented his skills and he achieved his double first – reportedly the best in his year – with apparent minimal effort. While at Oxford, Wilde maintained his contact with Mahaffy and the two toured Italy and Greece in 1877. It was a fortuitous trip as the theme for the Newdigate prize the following year was 'Ravenna', a place that Wilde had visited the previous year. So extensive was their touring that Wilde was late returning to Oxford and was consequently rusticated for a term. 'I was sent down from Oxford for being the first undergraduate to visit Olympia', he later remarked. Wilde's tour of Italy set him up well for the Newdigate prize. Unfortunately, Wilde was unable to match this success with his entry for the Chancellor's prize, an essay on 'Historical Criticism among the Ancients'. This essay, which praised the Greeks for their rationality (in contrast to the Egyptians, Hindus, and Chinese) and discussed in turn the critical ability of Herodotus, Thucydides, Aristotle, and Polybius, failed to impress the judges who decided to make no award that year.

An introduction to the principles of Greek homosexuality certainly featured as part of his classical education. The most likely candidate to introduce Wilde to the concept was Mahaffy whose *Social Life in Greece from Homer to Menander*, pub-

lished in 1874, featured one of the first publicly available, frank discussions of the subject. Wilde's commonplace book from his time at Oxford shows him taking notes on the topic. 'From the love of the beautiful object we rise to the ideal *eros* ('passionate desire'), from Charmides (the attractive youth beloved by Socrates, see Box 7.1) to the idea *tou agathou* ('of the good')', Wilde writes, setting out the Platonic justification of same-sex attraction (Smith and Helfand 1989: 147).

There is some evidence that Wilde would have liked to have stayed at Oxford and pursued a career as an Oxford don. However, he was unsuccessful in acquiring a fellowship and so moved to London. Yet even in the capital, Wilde did not lose his interest in academic scholarship. He was one of the founding members of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies (which remains one of the most important learned societies for the study of the Greek world). He sat on the first Council of the Society after its formation in 1879. The influence of his old tutor Mahaffy seems to have been responsible for getting him involved in the organization. Other members of the Council included a couple of other passionate admirers of 'Greek Love', John Addington Symonds and Oscar Browning.

Hellenism and references to the classical world suffuse the trials of Wilde. Both sides repeatedly used Wilde's deployment of classical motifs to prosecute their cases. For Wilde, reference to Hellenism explained the wholesomeness of his conduct; for his opponents it was a signifier of his depravity. So in the first libel trial, while Wilde and his attorney kept attempting to use Wilde's proficiency in classical languages as a sign of his good character, Queensberry's defense team saw something more sinister in his classical allusions. They entered, as evidence, letters to Lord Alfred Douglas, the marquess of Queensberry's son, in which Wilde portrays the young man as the reincarnation of Hyacinthus, the youth beloved of Apollo and another where he is described as 'so Greek, so gracious'.

Two of Wilde's published works were also used against him. The first was a piece entitled 'Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young' which had appeared in the *Chameleon*, an Oxford literary magazine ('A Bazaar of Dangerous and Smiling Chances') whose first and only edition had been published in 1894. It was all too easy for the playful paradoxes of this piece to be taken as a sign of Wilde's decadence and blasphemy. Reading through the text we see that once again Hyacinthus makes an appearance, this time as part of a paradox about the mortality of the divine and the immortality of the mortal ('It is only the gods who taste of death. Apollo has passed away, but Hyacinth, whom men say he slew, lives on. Nero and Narcissus are always with us'). Wilde is not above criticizing classical practice in this article. However, his remarks that Greek dress lacked artistry because it prevented one from fully appreciating the naked form were unlikely to assist his cause. Wilde's defense of this piece was to rely upon the authority of the ancients. When challenged by Edward Carson, Queensberry's counsel, over the line 'Pleasure is the only thing one should live for, nothing ages like happiness', Wilde responded 'I think that self-realisation – the realisation of one's self – is the primal aim of life. I think that to realise one's self through pleasure is finer than

to realise one's self through pain. That is the pagan ideal of man … I was, on that subject, entirely on the side of the ancients – the Greeks, I will say – the philosophers' (Holland 2003: 75). The reply was well received by the audience in the court.

The second supposedly damaging work was *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Even the choice of the name for the novel's title character ('Dorian') betrays the implicit classicism of this work. The extracts selected to be read out in court by Carson confirm not only the work's decadent character, but also its classical flavor. In his closing remarks, Carson cited one long passage where the character Lord Henry expresses the desire that man give in to every pleasure and so 'forget all the maladies of mediaevalism and return to the Hellenic ideal' (Holland 2003: 259). For Carson the trajectory of such a desire was clear enough. To profess an attachment to the Hellenic ideals of pleasure could only mean one thing. It was this sort of talk that caused one to be labeled, and rightly so, a 'sodomite'.

Wilde's supposedly debauched classicism makes an appearance in the criminal trials as well. One of the young men who offered testimony against Wilde told the court how Wilde would dine at Kettner's restaurant and discuss 'poetry and art … and the old Roman days' before taking him home to sodomize him. However, perhaps the most famous bit of Wildean Hellenism occurred when the prosecutor Charles Gill asked him to explain the phrase 'the love that dare not speak its name' found in a poem 'Two Loves' written by Lord Alfred Douglas and published in the same edition of the *Chameleon* as Wilde's 'Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young'. Wilde's explanation of the phrase elicited such cheers from the crowd that the judge threatened to clear the court, and it was reportedly widely in the press. It has become a classic of homosexual apologia:

> 'The Love that dare not speak its name' in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michelangelo and Shakespeare. It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michelangelo, and those two letters of mine, such as they are. It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the 'Love that dare not speak its name', and on account of it I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it. It is intellectual, and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder man has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope and glamour of life before him. That it should be so the world does not understand. The world mocks at it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it.

Here in the crucible of the Wilde trial, we see one of the most complete definitions of 'Greek love'. It is important to note that this explanation of Greek love occurs as part of a defense against a charge of sodomy. The discourse of sodomy always existed in tension with the discourse of Greek love. The distinction between

the two always threatened to collapse. It was the duty of the Greek lover to keep them apart. It was only the hostile critic who erased the difference. This tension is one that we will see time and time again in discussion of Greek love and will constitute one of the important themes of this history.

In order to carve out a place for itself, Greek love took a particular form. For Wilde, Greek love is a largely chaste, but nonetheless erotic attachment between a beautiful younger man and an older more mature male. This is a type of love that has the ability to transcend time. Empires might rise and fall, religions come and go, but love remains eternal and unchanged. Recently this love has become misunderstood and abused, but Wilde has no doubt that he feels the same way as the ancients do. The origins of this love are not exclusively classical. David and Jonathan share in it as much as Plato. However, as we shall see, its features of moral improvement and age distinction draw their inspiration from Greek texts. This love leaves culture in its wake. It proves inspirational to both literature (Shakespeare) and visual arts (Michelangelo). Wilde waxes eloquently about a past golden age free from the contemporary repression where youth and older lover could unite together beauty and intellect. It is rich stuff, this 'love that dare not speak its name'. Quite a lot is able to pass under the sign of Greek love.

Of course, Wilde's definition of Greek love was not the only one in existence. For many, not every element in the picture was equally crucial. Some regarded the chastity as optional, for others its educational and self-improving aspects were less important. Yet even when these elements were lacking, there was still an important sense in which people could recognize a shared vocabulary. Whatever differences in individual practice, Greek lovers were united by a distinct language, mythology, history, philosophy, and code of practices. Each of the elements routinely looked to the ancient world for validation, inspiration, and point of origin. The story of Greek love is a story about the transmission of knowledge. Sex, in this sense, turns out to be as much about a way of thinking as a way of acting.

7

Greece

The Loves of Hellas

The notion that homosexuality was in some senses intrinsically Hellenic would have come as a surprise to the Greeks. The Greeks were not averse to seeing their customs as unique (and implicitly superior as a result). For example, the so-called 'Father of History', the fifth-century Greek historian, Herodotus, devotes a considerable amount of his writings to listing distinctions between Greeks and Barbarians. Amongst the things that he saw as peculiarly Greek were their religious customs, their language, their food, and their attitude to nudity. Homosexual activity seems not to be very high on the list, although he does say that the Greeks did teach the custom of pederasty to the Persians (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.135).

This is not to say the Greeks didn't wonder about or discuss homosexual love. Indeed, they ascribed various origins to it. Some claimed that it was learned from the Cretans, others that it was invented by Laius, the father of Oedipus, who was the first man to fall in love with a member of the same sex. However, the notion that homosexual activity was a marker of Hellenic identity is largely absent from their discourse. The vast majority of Greek discussions are concerned with the rules, obligations, functions, and feelings inspired by homosexual activity. This vibrant, artful discourse begins in the Archaic period (c.700–500 BC) and continues well into the Hellenistic (c.323–30 BC). In producing such fulsome discussions, Greek writers may not have realized it but they were writing homosexuality into the Greek legacy.

Greek homosexual relations could take a variety of forms. Sometimes they resemble what to us look like initiation rites in which a young man on the cusp of puberty is taken away from his community and lives with another older man until such time as he is able to re-enter the community as full-grown adult. In Sparta, homosexual relations were incorporated into the strictly hierarchical, militaristic training regime that all Spartiates endured on their way to manhood. Other relationships were less structured. Male prostitutes were readily available to

Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity Alastair J. L. Blanshard
 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

service willing clients and slaves also provided an outlet for slaking one's lust. Yet amongst all these various combinations and structures, one particular model of homosexual relationship dominates Greek discussions. This is a model in which a beautiful young boy is courted by an older, more mature male. The relationship was asymmetric in age. The courted boy was normally no younger than 12 and no older than 17. The age range for the man was considerably wider. Taking an interest in younger boys was a practice normally associated with attainment of full physical development and the end of puberty. It was a practice that could occupy one's entire adult life. There was a presumption amongst the Greeks that sexual desire started to flag after the age of 40, but the poet and playwright Sophocles reputedly still attempted to seduce boys at the age of 65. The relationship was normally initiated through the giving of gifts and compliments by the older man towards the younger man. After a suitable show of resistance, if the youth was interested in the older man's advances, he returned the compliment and attached himself to the older man at which point the relationship was physically consummated. Our visual sources seem unusually coy on the matter. The paintings on Greek vases provide the majority of visual imagery from ancient Greece, but these only show very few depictions of homosexual sex acts (in contrast to heterosexual lovemaking). These depictions also tend to be considerably less explicit. However, our literary sources confirm that anal and intercrural sex were the dominant modes of sexual congress. Oral sex seems to have been universally disreputable in the ancient world.

Amongst scholars there is considerable debate about whether the asymmetry in age between the two parties translated into an asymmetry of power in the relationship. Many scholars hold that Greek homosexual relations were modeled on a social hierarchy in which adult citizen males were dominant and that everybody else (women, slaves, foreigners, and youths) were relegated to a secondary social status. Sex acts thus enacted the social hierarchy. On top were a group of superior 'penetrators'; the objects of their lust were an undifferentiated group of 'penetrated'. In this schema, the gender of one's partner was, at best, a secondary consideration when compared to their status. The attraction of this 'penetration model' (as it is labeled by its critics) is that it helps to explain a number of distinctive features about Greek homosexual relations. The strong distinction in age comes about through reflecting a distinction in franchise. A young boy was a 'precitizen' and hence politically and legally occupied the same status as a woman or a slave. The coyness of the artistic depiction and the elaborate courting rituals likewise reflect the liminal state of the youth. He may be one of the 'penetrated' now, but unlike almost every other member of this group, he will make the transition to the role of 'penetrator'. Hence the especial care taken in his treatment. Finally, this model helps to account for the strangely vituperative rhetoric surrounding adult males who seem to violate the norms and adopt effeminate manners and possibly passive roles in sexual relationships. These are 'penetrators' that are breaking the rules of conduct.

Certainly, homosexual relations could be political. In one famous vase, the Eurymedon oinochoe, we see a naked Greek who declares himself to be the embodiment of an Athenian naval victory advancing on a bent-over Persian, the imminent act of sodomy ramming home ideas of Athenian superiority. Here sex really is politics. It is difficult, however, to extrapolate from this image all forms of homosexual relations in the Greek world. The penetration model can account for some elements in the cloud of ideas that circulated around the topic of same-sex love. However, it can't account for all of them. In particular, there is a strong vein of thought in which homosexual desire rather than empowering the older man actually weakens him. Much Greek verse, particularly from the Hellenistic period, describes how pathetic the life of the older man has become ever since he fell in love with the younger boy. For example, in the first century BC, the poet Meleager writes:

> I am caught, I who once frequently laughed
> At the young men's lovelorn serenades.
> Even me has winged Eros set upon your forecourt,
> Myiscus, inscribing upon me 'Spoils won from Self-Control'. (*PA* 12.23, trans. B. Acosta-Hughes)

Here the poet portrays himself powerless in the face of the beauty of the young man Myiscus. In a vivid metaphor, he describes himself as piece of booty won in a battle of love. It is an image that completely reverses the iconography of the Eurymedon vase discussed previously. Now it is the older lover who is the vanquished, the prize of war. Although Meleager was writing long after the demise of classical Athenian democracy with its strict political divisions and attention to status, such motifs can be found in the classical period. As we shall see, even Socrates proved not to be immune, struck (almost) dumb by the beauty of Charmides (see Box 7.1). This species of love, what the Greeks called 'Eros', was a dangerous and destabilizing emotion, certainly, not one on which to ground a political hierarchy.

Whatever view is taken on the politics of Greek homosexual relations – and one suspects that the issue was heavily contested even in antiquity with numerous different opinions in vigorous competition – the fact remains that Greek homosexual relations were highly coded and distinctive. They had a rich vocabulary of images and motifs and a recognizable outline that stood out from other versions of homosexual relations.

The Platonic Vision

Out of all the various versions of homosexual relations that emerged from the Greek world, one has been more influential than most, and that is the version promulgated by Plato. This version of homosexual relations has been so influential that it tends to occlude almost all others. Moreover, its dominance means that it

Box 7.1 Charmides

It takes a lot to stop Socrates in his tracks. Socrates himself describes how he was smitten by the boy at the start of the Platonic dialogue that bears Charmides' name:

> Now you know, my friend, that I cannot measure anything … for almost all young persons appear to be beautiful in my eyes. But at that moment, when I saw him coming in, I confess that I was quite astonished at his beauty and stature; all the world seemed to be enamoured of him; amazement and confusion reigned when he entered; and a troop of lovers followed him. That grown-up men like ourselves should have been affected in this way was not surprising, but I observed that there was the same feeling among the boys; all of them, down to the very least child, turned and looked at him, as if he had been a statue …
>
> He came towards us, and sat down between Critias and me. Great amusement was occasioned by every one pushing with all his might at his neighbour in order to make a place for him next to themselves, until at the two ends of the row one had to get up and the other was rolled over sideways. … And at that moment all the people in the palaestra crowded about us, and, O rare! I caught a sight of the inwards of his garment, and was on fire. Then I could no longer contain myself. I thought how well Cydias understood the nature of love, when, in speaking of a fair youth, he warns someone 'not to bring the fawn in the sight of the lion to be devoured by him,' for I felt that I had been overcome by a sort of wild-beast appetite. (Plato, *Charmides* 154b–155d, trans. Jowett).

Little is known about the figure of Charmides. His pedigree was distinguished, and he was an uncle of Plato. According to the historian, Xenophon, he was advised by Socrates to enter into a political career. If this is true, then it was unfortunate advice. Charmides was a leading member of the brutal oligarchic regime that ruled Athens in the aftermath of the Athenian loss to Sparta at the end of the Peloponnesian War. He died fighting the restoration of democracy in 403 BC. Plato's description in the *Charmides* ensures that none of this brutality is preserved in the tradition surrounding him. He remains forever the beautiful youth admired by all.

is difficult to fully appreciate the radically different alternative that it offered to contemporary Greek sexual relations. Plato's version of Greek love has come to stand for all Greek love. It is the one that has done most to nourish the idea of Greek love.

Plato outlines his thoughts on love in a number of texts (e.g., the *Lysis* and the *Alcibiades*). However, two texts stand out in importance, the *Phaedrus* and the

The sheer force of passion that swept Socrates at the sight of Charmides has proved embarrassing for many. It seems hard to reconcile the Socrates of the *Charmides* with the restrained pedagogue of *Symposium* or the *Phaedrus*. All commentators on this text have to wrestle with its erotically charged opening. Marsilio Ficino, the Renaissance neoplatonist, started a trend by altering the text to reduce its scandalous content. 'Although everything in this dialogue is a marvelous allegory, most of all the love-passages … I have nevertheless changed a few things. For things which once sounded harmonious to the pure ears of the Attic Greeks will perhaps sound much less harmonious to cruder ears'. Even today, Socrates' passion is dismissed by modern philosophers as just another example of 'Socratic irony'. *Charmides* threatens to expose the carnal nature of Greek love. *Charmides* is a lightning-rod for critics of Greek love. 'The emotions of Socrates at the sight of the beauty of young Charmides are described for him by Plato … The expressions put in his mouth are, no doubt, typically Hellenic. But they are not natural: and it is well known that the Greek love of nature and beauty went frequently against nature', thundered Richard St. John Tyrwhitt as he started his campaign against the rise of Hellenism in Victorian England.

Part of the reason why the Charmides story proves so problematic is that the episode always seems so contemporary. For many, it has proved all too easy to project one's self into the figure of Socrates, enjoying the voyeuristic thrill of the flash of flesh as Charmides' cloak falls open. The scene's juxtaposition of innocence and bestial desire proved irresistible. Wilde's famous quip in *De Profundis* that enjoying the company of attractive criminals was like 'feasting with panthers' alludes to the *Charmides* as the prototype of all such encounters. For Wilde (and many others) Charmides has come to stand for the ideal Hellenic youth:

> He was a Grecian lad who coming home
> With pulpy figs and wine from Sicily
> Stood at his galley's prow, and let the foam
> Blow through his crisp brown curls unconsciously (Wilde, *Charmides* ll. 2–4, 1878–79, eds. Fong and Beckson).

Symposium. The homosexual apologist John Addington Symonds speaks for many when he describes their revelatory power. 'Here in the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium* I discovered the true *liber amoris* ("book of love") at last, the revelation that I had been waiting for' (*Memoirs,* ed. Grosskurth: 99). Both texts have become canonical works in the homosexual imagination. Since the Renaissance, they have been endlessly revisited by those who want to know how to love, who to love,

and why they should love. Plato's texts do not provide easy or simple answers to these questions. It is easy to get lost in the world that they offer. For many, reading Plato proved a heady experience. Few have been able to fully capture the vision of Greek love that Plato offers. Most have been drawn to a telling image, metaphor, or phrase. Each person's *Phaedrus* or *Symposium* is subtly different. For this reason, it is worth analyzing these texts in detail.

Both texts include long discussions on the nature of love. Yet each tackles the topic in a different way. In the *Phaedrus*, we are presented with an intimate conversation between Socrates and the youth Phaedrus. The talk ranges widely and the discussion of love forms part of a much broader discussion about the value of rhetoric, the nature of the soul, and the status of myth. In the *Symposium*, exclusive intimacy is replaced with the boisterousness of the male drinking party. Once again Phaedrus is there, but this time he is joined by poets, sophists, and statesmen. Love is really the only subject on the table, but each member of the party takes it in turn to offer a different analysis of it. What unites these texts is the richness of their offerings. Both provide not only ideas, but also images, metaphors, and anecdotes about love. In doing so, they play as much to the imagination as to the intellect. It is this dual appeal that is the secret of their seductive power and their longstanding influence.

The *Phaedrus* opens with Socrates approaching Phaedrus as he is proceeding for a walk by the walls of Athens. Phaedrus has left the city to walk by the river Ilissus and to commit to memory a speech that he has obtained from the orator Lysias. This speech presents arguments for convincing beautiful boys to sexually gratify men who have no emotional attraction to them. Socrates is keen to hear the speech and persuades Phaedrus to sit with him in the shade of the plane trees and read it to him (230d3–e4).

Lysias' speech turns out to be a cool, logical affair. Boys should gratify men who don't love them because it is more profitable for them than submitting to those who do love them. Those in love should be avoided. Not only is their jealousy detrimental to their beloved's social life (232c4–d1), but their passion will eventually fade. Recriminations will then start. They will begin counting and regretting the amount they spent on their beloved (231a6–b1). Indifferent lovers are more discrete than the besotted (231e3–232a6). They are also more discerning, able to dispassionately assess all the attributes of a boy. They offer the possibility of lasting friendship rather than mad, passionate, but momentary love (232e3–233a4, 234a5–7). Phaedrus finds all of these arguments utterly persuasive. Socrates is less convinced, and voices his disquiet. Phaedrus then challenges Socrates to produce a better speech on the topic than the one he has just heard.

Socrates responds with a speech in which he firsts defines 'being in love' as the state when reason is overcome by desire for bodily beauty (238b5–c4). Such people are dangerous to their beloveds because they will seek to undermine their love objects so that they will be unable to resist the lovers' advances (238e2–239a4). Jealousy will mean that the beloved is steered away from beneficial rela-

tionships (239a7–b4). Perhaps most shockingly in Socrates' opinion, the boy will be shielded from philosophy (239b4–6). Under the charge of the lover, the boy will become effeminate (239c3–d7). Finally, when desire stops, as it inevitably must, the lover will recant of all his promises made whilst he was in love, fleeing shamefully, pursued by a bitter and broken boy (240e8–241c5). 'Just as wolves love lambs, so do lovers have affection for boys,' concludes Socrates (241d1).

Just when the matter seems settled, the dialogue takes a surprising twist. As he concludes this speech, Socrates is overcome by a divine premonition. Socrates was famous in antiquity for being guided by a divine spirit (his *daimonion*) and this supernatural voice warns him of the blasphemous nature of the preceding speeches (242b8–d2). Love is a god and doesn't like being mocked. The previous speeches were shameful and decadent acts, giving honor to neither speaker. As a penance for his transgression, Socrates must offer a speech that recants his previous position and offers only praise of love and the relationship it inspires.

Socrates promises a tour-de-force, and he doesn't disappoint. He aims to rival Homer and the poet Stesichorus whose recantation of his slander of Helen was such that the gods cured the blindness with which he had been punished. Socrates starts from a seemingly dangerous position by restating his belief that love is a type of madness, but this time he argues that not all madness is bad. Some madness is divinely inspired (244a6–245b2) and love is one such type of madness. It is designed to allow man to achieve the greatest good. To prove this claim Socrates offers an extraordinary, elaborate, and unforgettable description of the soul. As we shall see, it is a description whose potency was felt down the ages. Rarely is it captured or repeated in its entirety. Instead, we tend to find fragments, allusions to, and quotations of Plato's description.

Socrates begins with the anatomy of the soul. The soul is immortal and is structured like a chariot pulled by two winged horses (246a–c). For the souls of gods, these horses are both fine and noble steeds. However, for others (those whose souls are destined to spend time in the earthly realm) only one of their horses is noble, the other base. This latter horse is a troublesome beast, refusing to heed the reins of its charioteer. These souls both godly and earth-bound are initially joined together in the heavens and are arranged in 11 different companies each led by a different Olympian divinity (247a). Everything is fine until the moment arrives for feasting and banqueting. At this point, this great celestial throng proceeds to the summit of the arch of heaven. The way is steep. Too steep for those burdened by the laziness of their unruly horse. The gods ascend the pathway easily and are able to stand on the outer part of the heavens gazing at the region above heaven, a region indescribable by poets, a realm of truth only able to be perceived by intellect (247c). It is this region that provides nourishment for the souls of the gods. For other souls, their recalcitrant horses mean that they are unable to ascend to the region above the heavens (248a–d). At best they can fly high enough to stick their heads above the heavens to catch a glimpse of the world above. Others are not able to even do this. Caught in

the scrummage to ascend the arch of heaven, their chariots crash into the chariots of other souls. They do not see the world above the heavens, and so miss out on the nourishment it provides. Some even have their wings broken. Those who do not see the realm above the heavens are destined to descend to earth; either because their wings are damaged or they have not received sufficient sustenance to keep them aloft.

Once they have descended from heaven, these souls are destined to remain on earth for 10,000 years, being constantly reborn. The souls only have a dim recollection of their previous life. There are only two possible ways to return to heaven before the elapse of 10,000 years. If a soul chooses to live a philosophic life free from trickery three times in a row then it may return to heaven after 3000 years (249a). The other method is to fall hopelessly in love with a beautiful boy.

Love helps one's soul take wings. When one falls in love one's soul remembers the transcendent beauty of the world above the heavens (251a–b). Beauty in the world awakens recollection of this higher beauty (251c). Just as this higher beauty nourished one's wings, so too does this earthly beauty. The pangs of love are the pangs of the soul as the stumps of its wings are revitalized by the beauty streaming out of the beloved. What once was dead begins to throb again with new life. Like teeth breaking through the gums, so too do wings start to regenerate. The soul is drawn to the beloved. The base horse leads the way. Only a sense of almost religious dread can force the charioteer to bring the horse back into line. The bad horse keeps bolting, the charioteer keeps pulling down on the reins until the bit of the horse is bloodied with the effort and it can no longer put up resistance. It is at this point with baseness fully under control that the lover can safely approach the beloved. United by love, with baseness brought under control, the couple are ready to begin their long ascent back to heaven.

Now the dialogue leaves the topic of love and ventures into a discussion of the aim and value of rhetoric. While this section of the dialogue has an important afterlife in fueling philosophy's hostility to rhetoric, it is never discussed, except in passing, by students of 'Greek love'.

The companion piece to the *Phaedrus* in the discourse of Greek love is the *Symposium*. From the Renaissance through to the early nineteenth century, the *Phaedrus* was thought to be the earlier work, and commentators often read the *Symposium* as putting a gloss on the ideas contained in the *Phaedrus*. The *Symposium* takes us from the idyllic landscape beyond the walls of Athens and brings us back to the centerpiece of urban Athenian male life, the symposium. Symposia were all-male drinking parties. The only women in attendance were there to pour wine or entertain the guests. They were often rowdy affairs where there was always the potential that events might get seriously out of control. Music, dance, drinking, singing, and conversation were the main forms of entertainment, and they often had a competitive edge to them. Guests might compete in flicking the dregs from their wine cups or attempting to outsmart each other with witty repartee or poetic quotations.

Compared to these boisterous affairs, the party described in the *Symposium* seems quite restrained. The flute girl is dismissed. There is some singing at the start, but this soon gives way to conversation – serious, passionate, competitive conversation. This is the way to talk about love. The aim of the discussion in the *Symposium* is to make up for a deficit. Every other god is praised, but Love (Gk. *Eros*) is neglected. The participants vow to set this matter aright. Each will offer in turn a speech in praise of Love.

Phaedrus begins the task. Eros deserves praise because he is the oldest of the gods. Before any of the Olympian deities, there was Love (178a–c). All civilization is a product of love. It is love that causes men to behave correctly. Seeking the approval of one's beloved or fearing shame are the best motivating forces (178d). In an ideal world, cities and armies would only be composed of lovers and their beloveds (178e–179a). Love is the only emotion that can cause a person to die for the sake of another. Phaedrus canvases examples of this (Alcestis, Orpheus), but dwells particularly on the case of Achilles whose affection for Patroclus was such that he killed Hector to avenge Patroclus' death even though he knew this meant that he too was destined to die as a result. In Phaedrus' account it is Achilles who was the younger and most beautiful of the heroes who were pursued by Patroclus (180a). Not so driven by passion, his actions are all the more remarkable (180b). Other speeches were made by guests in turn. The *Symposium* passes over them, until Pausanias begins to speak.

Pausanias attempts to qualify the praise of Phaedrus. He says that Phaedrus is confused because he praises love indiscriminately, not realizing that there are two types of love. At this point, Pausanias embarks on a novel bit of theology (180d–181a). Using conflicting accounts over the birth of Aphrodite, Pausanias argues that there are two forms of Aphrodite: one called Uranian because she emerged from the foam from the genitals of castrated Uranus swirling in the sea (cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 188–202); and one called Pandemos ('common to all') who is the daughter of Zeus and Dione as mentioned in the *Iliad* (5.370–430). A corresponding form of love attends each of these goddesses.

Pandemic love is indiscriminate. It is the love of lesser men. It is the love of women as well as boys, the love of the body rather than the soul. It only seeks sexual gratification (181b). In contrast, Uranian love does not seek after women. It is a love of the intellect as much as the body, as can be seen by the fact that those in the thrall of Uranian love only start to love boys when their beard starts to appear, the age at which boys begin to show sense (181d). Uranian love is more constant. The Pandemic lover is likely to flit from boy to boy (181d). Indeed, it is Pandemic lovers that give pederasty such a bad name (182a). It is a mistake to regard pederasty as inherently shameful. Rather it can be an ennobling relationship. It is for this reason that tyrants attempt to prevent it (182c). The aims of laws should be to separate out base from noble love, and it is for this reason that Athens encourages beloveds to flee their lovers. For it is through the trials of conquest that true love will be determined (184a). Uranian love

promotes virtue, for it is only by displaying his virtue that the lover will succeed in his aims.

Pausanias passes the baton onto Eryximachus. This physician takes up the division offered by Pausanias and shows how favoring that which promotes the good and regulating that which promotes the bad is a principle of general application. In the body, one should avoid the overindulgence of delicacies to avoid illness and instead should favour healthy food (187e). In music, harmony is achieved through the regulation of music's elements. Likewise the seasons show the importance of such regulation in that excesses of climatic conditions such as frost and hailstorms are to be avoided.

The next speaker, the comic poet, Aristophanes, turns to the past to explain the benefits that love brings to the world (189c–193d). In his opinion, love helps repair one of the greatest crimes done to man. At one point mankind was composed of three races, a male race, a female race, and a mixed male/female race. The bodies of each race were composed of two sets of arms, legs, and genitals set back to back. Each race had two faces, each looking a different way. When these creatures wished to move, they tumbled like acrobats. The strength of these races were incredible, enough to threaten the gods. Zeus, therefore, decided that they should be split in two. This not only diminished their power, but it also ensured that each half was left missing its other half, and would seek it out so that it might feel whole again. Those who are descended from the mixed male/female race are those who are attracted to the opposite sex. Those who are from the female race are those women who seek out the company of other women who love women, while those from the male race are those men who seek the company of other men who love men. Love is crucial because it helps avoid confusion. When love is reciprocated it means that one has found one's other half rather than a half from one of the other races. It is for this reason we should not attempt to regulate love. Love helps make us whole. Moreover, if we follow love we may also be reconciled to the gods who split us in the first place.

It is now Agathon's turn to contribute to the topic. He argues that previous speakers have been too concerned with praising the benefits of love and not praising the qualities of the god Love himself (195a–197e). He begins with the god's physical qualities. Love is the most beautiful of the gods and also the youngest. Phaedrus is wrong to claim that Love is the oldest of the gods. If he were older, one would have noticed his effects. He must be a comparatively recent arrival as it is only now that we enjoy a golden age, free from the violence that typified divine affairs in previous ages. Love is also the wisest of the gods. He inspires the poets. He is the bravest of the gods having managed to ensnare even the war-like god Ares. Because he inspires the pursuit of the beautiful, Love is the ultimate source of all the gifts that the gods enjoy. Without Love, Apollo would never have acquired his skill in archery.

It is now Socrates' turn to offer a speech, but in typical Socratic fashion, he offers not a speech but rather a question and answer session that climaxes with

him repeating an explanation of love that he learnt from a wise woman from Mantinea called Diotima (201d–212c). He begins by trying to determine what is it that we love. The answer turns out to be 'the good' and 'the beautiful'. There are a number of byproducts of this. One is that the god Love turns out not to be a beautiful youth as Agathon's account would have it, because it is the nature of love to love what we don't have. Therefore, Love is not beautiful himself, but the seeker of beauty. He is poor, squalid, shoeless, and homeless, constantly laying traps to ensnare the beautiful and the good. He's a philosopher. The next question that Socrates attempts to answer is why we love the objects that we do. Again, he relies upon the answer provided by Diotima. Diotima gets Socrates to accept the substitution of the 'good' for the 'beautiful'. Once that occurs, we can see that it is only natural to want to possess 'good things', whether they are money, knowledge, or another person.

Yet this raises another question. Why does love act in this way? Why does it attract us to the 'good'? The answer, according to Diotima, is that love aims to let us 'give birth in the beautiful' and it is love which allows us to give birth to the 'pregnancies' in our bodies and our soul. The beautiful and the good act as stimuli to these pregnancies. It is through giving birth that we can obtain a type of immortality. The types of these 'pregnancies' vary according to each individual. Some people are more pregnant in their bodies. These people seek immortality through their children and so are more attracted to women. Others are more pregnant with regard to their soul. These seek immortality with their words and ideas. As such they are attracted to beautiful men because their beauty acts as stimulation for the production of these ideas. Through the education of another the pregnant man gives birth.

Love does a lot in this account. But Diotima isn't finished. Love of the beautiful leads not only to birth of ideas, but also enlightenment. For by starting to love a boy, one is placed on the bottom rung of a ladder. For soon it will be realized that it is not just one body that is beautiful and worthy of love, but rather a quality that is found in many bodies. Indeed, as one's awareness expands, one is brought to the realization that there is the same beauty in people's activities and intellectual endeavors until finally one is forced to confront the pure, abstract, supreme nature of beauty. This is the ultimate service of love; it brings us to an understanding of the true nature of things.

Diotima's speech ultimately shows that love is about education, and the way in which it makes the soul better. Plato's *Symposium* then gives us a chance to see this in action. For the drunken figure of the gorgeous youth Alcibiades suddenly bursts onto the scene. Alcibiades explodes through the door flanked by flute girls. He has come to Agathon's house from a revel and is at first dismayed to see the sobriety of the company. Encouraged to join the throng, Alcibiades offers a speech not in praise of love but of Socrates himself. In doing so, he shows the readers how love can work on the soul. Alcibiades begins by describing the ugliness of Socrates. Yet, he says that he has been captivated, driven mad by his words. This

passion for ideas over mere physical delight shows the educative power of love. Love turns Alcibiades from a man who received advances to one who makes them. In semi-comic tones he recounts how he tried to seduce Socrates, hoping that he could exchange sexual favors for knowledge. In every attempt, Alcibiades is unsuccessful. He engineers situations so that he is alone with Socrates. He oils himself up and invites Socrates to wrestle naked with him. Again no result. Dinners are arranged, but Socrates never makes a move. Finally, he convinces Socrates to spend the night, but when the lights are out and the slaves away, Alcibiades nudges the sleeping Socrates and begs for sex. Once again Socrates refuses. Not to be deterred Alcibiades slips under Socrates' cloak and lies on the bed beside him, hoping that by physical proximity something might stir in Socrates. Sadly, his hopes are dashed. Alcibiades greets the morning as unmolested as if he had shared a bed with his father or elder brother. Socrates has driven the young man to distraction. And the problem is only compounded when Alcibiades had the opportunity to observe Socrates on military campaign. His resolution and self-control again prove a marvel. The tragedy of Alcibiades is that having taken the first steps on the road to enlightenment, he is unable to complete the journey. His desire for Socrates competes with other desires and he has confused his love for words with a love for sex. The potential is there, but it is potential unfulfilled because as Alcibiades' speech ends, so effectively does the *Symposium*. The party peters out, and the text ends with Socrates putting the other guests to bed before getting up to go and wash at the Lyceum and 'spend the rest of his day just as he always did'.

Winged chariots, two-headed and four-armed creatures, Love as the oldest god, Love as the founder of civilization, Love as the substance that makes us fly – it is a rich diet that these Greek texts offer us. But is it a healthy one? As we shall see, reactions to these Platonic texts have been mixed. Some have embraced them wholeheartedly, elevating them to the level of inspired scripture. Others have been more skeptical, seeing beneath these bewitching words a cloak for more debased and carnal purposes. Yet whatever conclusion one reaches, one is forced to take a position with regard to Plato. He is hard to ignore. It is to these texts that people continually return.

8

Rome and the West

Greece under Rome and Rome under Greece

The first moment in the reception of the notion of Greek love belongs to Rome. That the Greek regime of homosexuality constituted a particular species was recognized by the Romans. Knowledge of Greek practices and ideas had flooded into Rome as Roman influence had expanded throughout the Mediterranean in the first and second centuries BC. The Greek formula for homosexual activity joins a long list of imports to the Roman world. It is the stowaway, hidden amongst a cargo that included rhetoric, philosophy, and mathematics. Writers such as Cicero and Cornelius Nepos recognized the peculiar nature of Greek love. Nepos, in presenting his biographical account of famous Greek lives in the first century BC, remarks that the Athenian general, Alcibiades 'had many lovers, as is the custom among the Greeks' (*Alcibiades* 2.2), while Cicero describes the tyrant of Syracuse, Dionysius, as one who had 'youths attached to him by ties of love which is the fashion amongst the Greeks' (*Tusculan Disputations* 5.58).

Of course, it would be a mistake to regard homosexuality as something imported into Rome. By the time of the arrival of Greek ideas, there was already a thriving indigenous discourse of same-sex attraction and activity. Roman plays joked about the activities of lovers, and poets discussed acts in extreme and graphic detail. Like Greek homosexual practice, this Roman practice was based on an asymmetric relationship between an older man and a younger, smooth-skinned youth. Indeed, the two models for relationships proved very compatible and became quickly assimilated, as Greek homosexual motifs were adopted by the Romans to express their desires. Occasionally, these acts of appropriation struck contemporaries as extravagant and decadent. The moralist Cato railed against the decadence of his contemporaries who paid more for a pretty boy than they did for a farm. This licentiousness he traced back to an importation of 'Greek permissiveness'. The aesthetics of Greek homosexual love were grafted onto Roman stock and so fused into an amalgam that became known as 'Greek love'. Roman culture helped make

Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity Alastair J. L. Blanshard
 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

Greek love famous. In particular, it helped to establish that here was a type of love that could transcend one's own ethnicity. Anybody could be a Greek lover. One of the most famous pairs of 'Greek lovers' was the Roman emperor Hadrian and the youthful Antinous (see Box 8.1).

Most of the material that has come down to us from Greece only does so because it was appreciated and valued by the Romans. Had it not been for the privileged position that Hellenism occupied it is doubtful that the rich discourse surrounding homosexual relations would have survived. Some of the most important texts relating to ancient homosexuality were either written or collated in the Roman period. Reading and writing Attic Greek, the dialect of Greek used in fifth-century BC Athens, became the mark of highest attainment amongst the Roman elite. And what better way to show off one's learning than ornamenting one's work with a particular Greek flourish. These flourishes could take a variety of forms. Some Roman writers chose to show off rare grammatical constructions, others used refined vocabulary, while some peppered their work with historical allusions from the classical Greek past. Amongst this variety of gambits for displaying one's antiquarian knowledge was the deployment of homosexual allusions. These allusions signified 'Hellenism' as much as any reference to an Arcadian herb or use of the Aeolic dialect.

There was a market amongst the Roman intelligentsia for Greek-infused homoerotica. The collection of epigrams assembled by Strato of Sardis is a typical example. Strato was writing in the early second century AD and is usually dated to the reign of Hadrian (AD 117–138). Strato's work mixes epigrams from older periods with verses written by himself. His poems consciously mimic the literary style and motifs of their predecessors. They perpetuate homoerotic sentiments from the classical past. In a series of verses, Strato reflects classical taste by describing how his interest in youths starts at the age of 12 and climaxes at the age of 16 (*Palatine Anthology* 12.4). Any older and they are 'for Zeus to seek'. Older still and it is not as a lover one seeks them, but as one who wants 'an answering back'. Classical aesthetics are reaffirmed in Strato's strong aversion to body hair on his lovers, and the elaborate courting rituals and exchanges of gifts that lovers still demand. Throughout his epigrams, Strato plays up to the interests of his readers by adding recherché vocabulary or idiom such as his epigram on words for the three stages of stiffness that a penis goes through as it becomes erect in the hands of a lover (*Palatine Anthology* 12.3). Contemporary interests are also reflected in the historical and literary allusions found in the homoerotic verse. So, for example, in one epigram (*Palatine Anthology* 12.247), Strato writes about the love between the Cretan king Idomeneus and his squire Meriones. The characters are known from the *Iliad*, although Strato's projection of desire onto the part of Idomeneus seems to be a novel invention.

In the visual arts, we see a similar adoption of Greek motifs. One of the most spectacular examples of homosexual imagery from the Roman period is found on the Warren Cup. The cup is named after one of its most famous owners, the art

Box 8.1 Antinous, the Beloved of Hadrian

'It was very courageous to ask even artistic questions about him,' wrote R.S. Poole, keeper of coins and medals at the British Museum, in 1878 when asked about Antinous by the homosexual activist, John Addington Symonds. Asking questions about Antinous is not just courageous. At different times, and for different people, asking questions about Antinous has been thrilling, perplexing, reassuring, challenging, an act of devotion, and an act of defiance. 'The inscrutable Bithynian. If we knew what he knew, we should understand the ancient world', remarked Alfred Lord Tennyson as he gazed into the eyes of a bust of Antinous in the British Museum.

Antinous invites endless speculation because we know so little about this figure. Although there are a number of mentions of him in ancient literature, these references tend to be brief, and often less than convincing. All sources agree that he was a beautiful youth from Bithynia and was exceptionally beloved by the emperor Hadrian who mourned his early death. The cause of his death remains a subject of speculation. Some say that he drowned in the Nile, others that he was sacrificed as part of a magic ritual to ensure the continued longevity of the emperor. Whatever the cause, Hadrian's commemoration of Antinous' death was exceptional. Hadrian founded a city in his honor, had the youth deified, celebrated games in his memory, and had his image dispersed throughout the empire on coins and in statues. Antinous was a boy with no past who became the poster-boy for an imperial regime.

Antinous thus has an advantage that he shares with a number of other symbols. He can stand as a cipher. He is a figure onto which we can project our desires. And numerous figures have lined up to do so. Indeed, the weight of so much projected passion exerts its own gravitational force. There is an 'Antinous effect' as if a person's deepest desires were sucked out of anybody who came into contact with him. We know what to do with Antinous, we animate him with our love.

One of the earliest and most famous lovers of Antinous was the antiquarian and father of art history, Johann Winckelmann. A 1768 portrait of Winckelmann by Anton Maron shows a turbaned Winckelmann writing notes about an engraving of the bas-relief of Antinous from the Villa Albani (Figure 8.1). There had been a minor craze for statues of Antinous when the villa of Hadrian had been excavated in the seventeenth century, but it was Winckelmann who cemented Antinous' place in the canon of art history. His devotion to the figure and his passionate prose in praise of the beauty of statues of Antinous ensured that, for the next 200 years, when almost any statue of a beautiful youth with downcast eyes was unearthed, its discoverers flirted with identifying the figure as Antinous.

(*continued overleaf*)

Box 8.1 *Continued*

Figure 8.1 An object of desire. Winckelmann holds a portrait of Antinous in his hands as inspiration. Stiftung Weimarer Klassik und Kunstsammlungen, Weimar, Germany. Photo credit: © Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 2009.

The fatal attraction that Antinous exerted was particularly felt in the nineteenth century. Antinous proved attractive because he offered things that no other figure from classical antiquity could. Ganymede or Hyacinth only offered myth and metaphor. Antinous gave historical reality. Here was a figure who had really felt, loved, and died. Yet, unlike other historical Greek lovers such as Socrates, he offered something darker, a real sensuality,

not a morally improving chaste longing. The great Victorian Platonic commentator Benjamin Jowett in his introduction to Plato's *Phaedrus* tried to argue otherwise, but nobody seems to have believed his claims of Hadrian's chastity.

It is understandable then that Antinous would become a favorite in decadent fin de siècle homosexual circles. Certainly that is how he is presented in the most famous homosexual pornographic novel produced in the nineteenth century, *Teleny*. The figure is constantly alluded to in conversation within the libertine circles who inhabit the novel. Teleny himself relates to Antinous, at one point contemplating throwing himself into the Thames in imitation of Antinous' death in the Nile. The sensuality of Antinous is reflected in his appearance in a number of pornographic etchings from this period as well.

Yet the cult of Antinous was not limited to risqué novels. It was spread by poetry, essays, and art. Lovers could buy casts of Antinous for £3 10s. John Addington Symonds wrote a long poem on the death of Antinous ('The Lotus Garland of Antinous') and the figure recurs frequently throughout his verse. Another prominent homosexual campaigner, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, devoted a long discussion to Antinous in one of his pamphlets. Oscar Wilde alludes to him constantly in his work. He appears in his poems 'The Sphinx' and 'The Young King'. In a 'Portrait of W.H.', Wilde writes that while 'the ivory body of the Bithynian slave rots in the green ooze of the Nile … Antinous lives on in sculpture'. At Wilde's trial, the prosecution reads from a passage in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in which Wilde has one of his characters say 'What the invention of oil-painting was to the Venetians, the face of Antinous was to late Greek sculpture, and the face of Dorian Gray will some day be to me. It is not merely that I paint from him, draw from him, model from him. Of course I have done all that. He has stood as Paris in dainty armour, and as Adonis with huntsman's cloak and polished boar-spear. Crowned with heavy lotus-blossoms, he has sat on the prow of Adrian's barge, looking into the green, turbid Nile. He has leaned over the still pool of some Greek woodland, and seen in the water's silent silver the wonder of his own beauty. Unconsciously he defines for me the lines of a fresh school, a school that is to have in itself all the passion of the romantic spirit, all the perfection of the spirit that is Greek'. The jury needed little direction to understand what such a passion for Antinous meant.

As with so much associated with Greek love, the Wilde trial marks the end of an era, but although the passion for Antinous diminished after the end of the nineteenth century, it did not disappear entirely. Marguerite Yourcenar's *Memoirs of Hadrian*, an international bestseller when it was published in 1952, introduced Antinous to a new generation of lovers. An internet search soon finds plenty of homoerotic fan fiction in which Antinous features.

dealer Edward Perry Warren (1860–1928), who wrote poetry and pamphlets on the topic of ancient homosexuality under the pseudonym of Arthur Lyon Raile. This silver vessel dates to the reign of Augustus (27 BC–AD 14). It depicts two homosexual scenes. On one side of the cup, a younger man lowers himself onto the penis of his older lover using straps hanging from the ceiling to support his weight. His lover is older, bearded, and crowned with a laurel wreath. In the corner of the room, the door is ajar and a young slave boy looks onto the scene. On the other side of the cup, we have another scene of homosexual sex. Again there is a strongly demarcated difference in age between the participants. The active lover is beardless, but he is clearly older than the boy he is penetrating. Here difference is signified by a distinction in hairstyles and size rather than the more normal schema of beard and non-beard. Although Roman in date, both scenes on this cup allude to Hellenistic prototypes for the depictions of the figures and their gestures. The owners of the Warren Cup may have been elite Romans, but their fantasy life was Greek.

Greek writers were equally keen to retell stories about pairs of ancient Greek lovers. So authors such as the biographer Plutarch (c. AD 50–120) preserved anecdotes about the Theban 'Sacred Band', an elite military unit composed of pairs of lovers who were bound by ties of affection to each other and were so fearsome in battle that they remained undefeated until the Battle of Chaeronea where they were slaughtered by Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. Another writer whose work revisited the classical Greek past for a Roman audience was Athenaeus, writing at the end of the second century AD. His monumental work, *The Learned Banquet* (Gk. *Deipnosophistai*) is a vast collection of quotations, stories, myths, and anecdotes about food, life, geography, language, and love. The majority of the material is taken from archaic and classical texts (many now lost). As one would expect, homosexual material is not absent from this compilation. In Book 13, one of Athenaeus' characters, Myrtilus, gives a long speech in which he recounts numerous anecdotes about famous boy lovers from classical antiquity. The speech includes references to many renowned pairs of lovers such as Achilles and Patroclus, Theseus and Minos, Harmodius and Aristogeiton as well other lesser known figures such as Chariton and Melanippus, lovers who plotted to overthrow the brutal tyranny of Phalaris in Sicily. Classical authors are mined for pederastic content, and the speech effectively constructs a queer canon of pederastic allusions. However, it would be a mistake to regard Athenaeus' actions as unusual. Almost every author who turned his attention to the Greek past found it hard not to include some homosexual material in their writing. Pausanias, as he describes Athens, repeats stories about the metic Timagoras who threw himself to his death off a rock as a sign of his love for the Athenian youth Meles (1.30.1), while Aelian (AD 165/70–230/5) talks about the nobility of Spartan youths towards their lovers (*Varied History* 3.12).

The other influential contribution to the idea of Greek love that writers in the Roman period made was the construction of treatises in Greek that often had

homoerotic subject matter. Picking up on the erotic dimension to much Greek philosophy, especially Plato, authors constructed elaborate, almost parodic, philosophic dialogues in which contemporary issues or moral dilemmas could be explored. Two of which stand out in particular. The first is Plutarch's *Erotic Dialogue*, or *Dialogue on Love*. The narrator is Plutarch's son, Autoboulos, who begins by telling a story told to him by his father about the events that occurred when Plutarch went to Mt. Helicon to make a sacrifice to Eros, the god of love (749b). Whilst he was there, Plutarch found himself caught up in a dispute over whether a local celebrity, the gorgeous youth, Bacchon, should marry a much older, wealthy, widow, Ismenodora. The dispute split local opinion and a debate erupts about whether it is right for the youth to marry immediately, or whether he should instead put off marriage and spend his time in the company of the older men who love him. Those who argued for the marriage were represented by Bacchon's cousin, Anthemion. Those opposed to it were represented by Pisias, the most respectable of Bacchon's lovers (749e–f). In the dialogue, two types of love come into conflict, the love that attends marriage and coupling with women and a higher, more spiritual love afforded by the passion that men feel for each other; in other words 'Greek love'. Neither side concedes defeat in this debate and both are prepared to marshal as much evidence from ancient authors as they can in support of their positions. Poets, playwrights, and philosophers are cited by both sides. In many ways, the positions set out by Anthemion and Pisias and their various supporters mark out the standard positions for and against Greek love for the next two millennia. For the defenders of pederasty, this type of love is spiritual, intellectual, and emancipating. Its aim is to cultivate friendship and virtue (750d–e). The love of women is merely a form of appetite (750d), something best left to slaves (751b). Women are suspect as lovers. They lack self-control and discipline, especially wealthy women like Ismenodora (752e–753b). Opponents on the other hand regard pederasty as unnatural and effeminate (751d–e). They were particularly scathing about the philosophic justifications for pederasty. As far as they are concerned, these arguments are just a ruse for philosophers so that they can have their way with pretty youths (752a). For them, marriage was an institution worth celebrating. Not only did it lead to the production of children, but also, if the right partners were chosen, it could be a particularly profitable union (754b–d). Before the debate can properly conclude, news arrives that Ismenodora has taken matters into her own hands and kidnapped the youth. This act puts an end to the debate, although it does provide Plutarch with an excuse to give his own discourse on the true nature of love. The work concludes with a discussion of love that is framed in particularly Platonic terms. Indeed, throughout the dialogue, there are numerous references to the *Phaedrus*, and Plutarch clearly sees this work as working in concert with this text.

The second treatise on boy love to come down to us from antiquity was the Pseudo-Lucianic, *Erotes* or *Loves*. This work was transmitted as part of the corpus of the second-century AD satirist and author, Lucian. Certainly its playful quality

seemed appropriate to him. However, for stylistic and other reasons, the work is now believed to be the work of another anonymous author. Dating the work is difficult, and dates have ranged from the late second century AD to the beginning of the fourth century AD. A date at some point in the third century AD seems the most likely. Like the *Dialogue on Love*, this work features a debate between two characters over the virtues of love of women or boys. Arguing for the superiority of the love of women is Charicles, a Corinthian who has populated his household with gorgeous female slaves and concubines. His opponent is the Athenian Callicratidas, a passionate devotee of beautiful boys and hater of women (9). Charicles starts the debate with a speech in favor of the love of women (19–29). He begins his argument by reference to the principle of procreation. Love of women is to be preferred because it is by this means that the race is perpetuated. This was the first type of love and belongs to the Golden Age. It is only in recent decadent times that man began to sleep with youths and 'sow his seed on barren rocks' (20). Pederasty is an unnatural type of love. Animals do not practice it ('lions have no passion for lions', 22), and it is only practiced by deceitful philosophers (23). The love of women is superior because the beauty of women lasts longer and both gain pleasure from the encounter. When men make love to boys there is only physical pain and tears (27). Finally, in a bit of artful sophistry, Charicles concludes if we are to regard pederasty as the preferred form of love for men then we must also say the same for lesbianism, a state of affairs that Charicles regards as obscene.

Callicratidas' response (30–49) attempts to refute these arguments. He begins by rejecting the criteria for judging love advanced by Charicles. Just because such love is necessary or found in nature does not make it the best type of love. Rather than being the love of the Golden Age, the love of women is the love of the primitive (33). Just because male animals only love females doesn't prove anything. Animals love women because they lack intellect. Lions may not practice pederasty, but they don't practice philosophy either (36). As for the beauty of women, it is nothing, but a practice of deceit. Without their perfumes, elaborate hairstyles, clothes and jewels, women would be hideous (39–42). Again, the weight of antiquity is brought to bear on the topic. Solon the Athenian lawgiver, Socrates the philosopher, and Callimachus the poet are all offered as exemplary boy lovers. Unlike the *Dialogue on Love*, the author of this work is prepared to declare a winner in this debate. The crown of victory passes to Callicratidas, although it is a victory that is only to be shared by the worthy. All men must marry, but only the true philosopher should be allowed to take part in the delights of boy love (51).

The *Erotes* was most likely written just before the rise of Constantine, if not during his reign. If so, it occurs at precisely the point that Christianity was about to become the official religion of Rome. Yet, it is striking how little Christian attitudes impact on these discussions of Greek love. The lack of influence is understandable. These texts are so infatuated with the classical Greek past that few contemporary events influence them. They barely acknowledge the existence and

supremacy of the Roman Empire, let alone the rise of an obscure cult from Judea. So ingrained was Greek love in elite educational practice that even in the sixth century AD, we find poets writing verses on the topic of boy love. Rufinus presumably speaks for a number at the court of Constantinople when he laments his transition from the love of boys to women, 'No longer am I boy-crazy as before, but now am called Mad for Women, and my discus [a sign of the gymnasium] is a rattle [an instrument associated with the female followers of Isis]. Instead of boys' guileless skin, chalk's colours [i.e. cosmetics] have come to please me' (*PA* 5.19, trans. B. Acosta-Hughes).

Although it is possible to overstate the impact of Christianity – and tales of repression always play better than stories of complexity and ambiguity – nevertheless it is clear that one of the effects of the official adoption of Christianity was the problematization of sexual acts between members of the same sex. This problematization needs to be seen as part of a general trend in the rearticulation and regulation of sexuality. Some of the earliest Christian writers had been critical of boy love. In seeking to mark themselves out from members of other religious sects, Christianity was not adverse in condemning the morals of non-Christians. One of the first writers of such polemics was Clement of Alexandria, writing in the second century AD, the period which produced such voluminous and rich writings on the topic of Greek love.

Clement of Alexandria's work, principally his *Exhortation to the Greeks*, was designed to provide arguments for Christian apologists to show the superiority of Christianity over traditional religious practices. The *Exhortation* is addressed to a contemporary audience, and attempts to convince them to convert to Christianity. At times Clement cajoles his audience, but most of the time he berates them for their foolishness in following non-Christian religious practices. Although little is known about the life of Clement, it seems that he was a convert to Christianity and that prior to his conversion he had received a traditional education in the canonical texts of Greek literature and philosophy. He is certainly very familiar with these works, and cites (and miscites) them regularly to bolster his arguments. One of Clement's grounds for arguing Christian superiority was the moral degeneracy of the Greek gods, as illustrated in Greek myth. The unbridled appetite of the gods and their failure to respect social conventions such as the institution of marriage are used by Clement to hold them up to mockery. In a discourse on their intemperance, the sexual conduct of the gods is ruthlessly analyzed. The gods are not good models for husbands. Who would want to marry Poseidon, Zeus or Apollo with their reputations for adultery and rape? According to Clement, they behave no better than randy he-goats. Clement climaxes his discussion of the gods' sexual profligacy with the observation that 'Your gods did not even abstain from boys. One loved Hylas, another Hyacinthus, another Pelops, another Chrysippus, and another Ganymede. These are the gods your wives are worshiping, desiring their husbands to be like them, to seek similar things. These are the ones your children reverence, in order to become men following a pattern of such

fornication' (*Exhortation* 2). Later in the text, he argues that gods were invented as an excuse to legitimize pederastic desire.

It is clear from reading his texts that much of Clement's hostility towards the love life of the gods was inspired by scripture. This opposition between Biblical authority and Greek pederastic practice had already been established by Hellenized Jews living in Alexandria, and Clement is an heir to this tradition. For example, the Jewish author, Philo of Alexandria, writing a century earlier than Clement, had readily interpreted the injunction against sodomy in Leviticus as a general prohibition against pederasty of the type found in Greek society. This opposition was picked up by Christian writers. They saw validation for this position in texts such as Paul's *Letter to the Romans* where he argues that homosexual desire was a punishment sent by God to mark out idolaters. Although writing two centuries later than Clement, this opposition between Greek texts and practices and Christian models can be seen in Eusebius who in his *Preparation for the Gospel* comments on the admiration of homosexual love in the *Phaedrus*: 'Thus spoke Plato, but not Moses, who decreed especially the contrary, proclaiming with a loud voice the penalty for pederasty: "If a man lies with another man as one lies with a woman, both have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood shall be upon them"' (Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 13.20.7).

However, the success of the Christian opposition to Greek love was not just the product of a desire to follow the strictures of Leviticus. Christian polemic against Greek love succeeded because it was able to argue that pederastic passion was dangerous and undesirable. Greece and Rome had long regarded the forced abuse of free citizen youths as a crime of the worst sort. In Athens, it was a crime that could lead to exile or death. The penalty was just as severe in Rome. In giving his list of the loves of the gods, Clement plays up the brutal nature of much pederastic desire. The gods did not court their loves; they snatched them from the earth, abducting them from friends and family. However, this sort of behavior was not limited to the divine. We have many stories about men who did just the same thing. As Plato had made clear in his texts, Eros was something that needed to be watched. It could be dangerous. It is not accidental that Clement is happy to repeat these warnings from the *Phaedrus.*

The other accusation made against Greek love was that it promoted effeminacy. Philo of Alexandria had already made this criticism in the first century AD. 'Mark how conspicuously they braid and adorn the hair on their heads, and how they scrub and paint their faces with cosmetics and pigments and the like, and smother themselves with fragrant unguents … In fact the transformation of the male nature to the female is practised by them as an art and does not raise a blush,' he writes (*The Special Laws* 3.37–38, 7.499). This accusation of effeminacy is repeated in a number of early Christian texts that are critical of men who adorn themselves, trim their beards or wear perfume as a way to make themselves particularly attractive. Special scorn is reserved for those men who shave off their beards and remove body hair in a desperate attempt to make themselves attractive as beautiful youths.

In playing on these anxieties, that were already profound and active in Greco-Roman culture, Christian moralists were able to effect a change in attitude to homosexual acts. The precise date of this change remains hotly debated. Some see the edict of Theodosius in 390 as a turning point. The wording of the edict is slightly unclear. Its stated aim was the reduction of effeminacy, and it seems to direct that those who are passive members of a relationship should be seized and put to death by burning. However, there is some uncertainty about whether this edict only applies to male prostitutes or has broader implications. Certainly prostitutes were the main targets of the legislation. Others prefer a later date arguing that evidence for pederastic relationships continues well past this period. We have already mentioned the pederastic verses written in the sixth century AD, and while these sit alongside contemporary persecution of pederasty, they at least point to a complex picture.

Whatever date we choose, Christianity ultimately ensured that discussions of homosexual activity needed to occur in a different register. It had always been a charged issue. Same-sex love was never unproblematic, but it was now overlaid with notions of sin, uncleanliness, and illegality. This was certainly different from what had gone before. However, what Christianity was unable to completely dislodge was the matrix for expressing and understanding same-sex desire. New stories and motifs may have entered the mix: the story of Sodom is a key example. Yet there remained an unalterable, latent core, and that core was Greek.

Greek Love Burns Briefly, but Brightly

The discourse of Greek love is certainly at its thinnest during the medieval period. A number of factors contributed to this. One key factor was the rise of a competing discourse surrounding the act of sodomy. Although sodomy was not limited to homosexual acts – the crime included the sodomy of women, and even by women – the importance attached to the crime subsumed all other discussion of male-to-male sexual relations. It dominated the scene to the exclusion of all else. The problem that male-to-male sexual relations could only be discussed under the sign of sodomy was further exacerbated by the decline of Greek in the West which meant that access to the canonical texts of Greek love, especially Plato, was limited. As we have already seen, most Roman authors preferred to write their homoerotic verse in Greek, so the loss of Greek was a substantial impediment to the transmission of knowledge of Greek love. Yet classical precedent and models were not entirely forgotten. There was still a substantial body of Latin literature that dealt with the love of boys. Moreover, the mythic tales about the loves of the gods for mortal youths, especially Zeus (Jupiter) for Ganymede and Apollo for Hyacinth were still well known. In particular, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* provided an important vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge within this period.

We get a sense of this interplay between classical models and contemporary sensibilities in a number of Latin verses written by medieval churchmen on the topic of boy love. Take for example, the following verse attributed to Marbod of Rennes (c.1035–1123), who was bishop of Rennes from 1096:

> Horace composed an ode about a certain boy
> Who could easily enough have been a pretty girl
> Over his ivory neck flowed hair
> Brighter than yellow gold, the kind that I have always loved.
> His forehead was white as snow, his luminous eyes black as pitch;
> His unfledged cheeks full of pleasing sweetness
> When they gleamed bright white and red.
> His nose was straight, lips blazing, teeth lovely,
> Chin shaped after a perfectly proportioned model.
> Anyone wondering about the body which lay hidden under his clothes
> Would be gratified, for the boy's body matched his face.
> The sight of his face, radiant and full of beauty,
> Kindled the observer's heart with the torch of love.
> But this boy – so beautiful, so extraordinary,
> An enticement to anyone catching sight of him –
> Nature had moulded wild and stern:
> He would sooner die than consent to love. (trans. Stehling)

From its opening invocation of Horace (*Odes* 2.5 ll. 21–4), this is a poem of boy love that wants to see itself as part of a classical tradition. The poem is an interesting amalgam. Written in dactyls, the poem adopts a classical meter whilst incorporating an internal rhyming scheme drawn from contemporary medieval poetry. The title of the poem *A Satire on a Young Boy's Lover in an Assumed Voice* seems to reflect medieval sensibilities by providing a satirical mask for these sentiments. Certainly, no Roman poet would have required this subterfuge. Yet, apart from this title, there is little to indicate any break from classical precedent. The description of the boy is a pastiche of classical tropes. The lack of body hair ('the unfledged cheeks', *implumes genae*), the dark eyes, the red lips, the white skin, the fine proportions, the congruity between face and body, the tendency to inflame the viewer are all elements that can be paralleled in classical poetic descriptions of the beautiful boy. There is nothing here that the classically attuned reader hasn't seen a dozen times before.

Marbod's verse is not an isolated instance of the sentiments of Greek love resurfacing. We possess almost 100 poems by various authors written between the late eleventh and early thirteenth centuries which express similar sentiments. So, for example, Baudri of Bourgueil (1046–1130), a student of Marbod's, berates a beautiful youth for being too proud and not responding to those captivated by his beauty. In making his arguments, Baudri invokes a number of

youths from Greek myth to bolster his case. This boy may sing like Orpheus, and refuse to play Ganymede, but, warns Baudri, he ought to keep the example of Narcissus in mind, and not think only of his beauty, lest he reach a similarly tragic end. For Baudri, it is impossible to discuss a beautiful youth without recourse to classical models. Every act, emotion, and look is filtered through this classicizing lens.

Occasionally, classical precedent was used to argue for the acceptability of boy love. Hildebert of Lavardin (1055–1133), for example, wrote a poem in which he compares the story of Ganymede and Jupiter with the story of Iphis and Ianthe. This latter story is known from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (9.666–763). Iphis was the daughter of Ligdus and Telethusa. When she was born her father had declared that if the child turned out to be a girl, she should be killed. To avoid this fate, Iphis was declared to be a boy and was raised as such. However, problems arose when Iphis was betrothed by her unsuspecting father to another girl, Ianthe. A solution to this potentially disastrous situation was provided through the intercession of the Egyptian goddess Isis who metamorphosed the girl into a youth. What struck Hildebert about this story was the sense of necessity about Isis's intercession. Here the gods seemed to have double standards. There was never any suggestion that Ganymede should have been turned into a girl so that Jupiter's lusts could be satisfied. Yet love between women was not allowed to stand. The only conclusion one could draw was that boy love was acceptable, certainly as acceptable as heterosexual love, and that only lesbian love was a crime. 'If the crime were the same, the gods' judgment should have transformed one or the other man, or neither of the women', he concludes. This recourse to classical justification wasn't an isolated incident. A late-twelfth or early-thirteenth-century book of model letters parodies this talk when it has one correspondent attempt to seduce a boy through correspondence littered with references to Jove's love for Ganymede and Apollo's love for Hyacinth and Cyparissus. The boy responds coldly with a letter containing references to nature and the destruction of Sodom. This association between classical antiquity and sodomy was even projected back anachronistically into works which purported to be set in the classical world. So, for example, in the twelfth-century epic, *The Romance of Aeneas*, Aeneas not only has to battle Turnus to establish his kingdom in Italy, but he also has to act against the prejudices of his future mother-in-law who voices twelfth-century opinions when she warns her daughter that figures such as him have a reputation for sodomy.

Of course, one should be careful not to extrapolate too much real feeling from these homoerotic verses. A lot of this poetry uses playful license to get away with their sentiments. One is never sure with these poets where the joke ends and the serious feelings begin. Indeed, a number of these poets could be equally scathing about sodomy and its associated acts. Hildebert in another poem *On the Wickedness of this Age* (*De malitia saeculi*) castigates his community for their tolerance of sodomy:

> People sleep together in any combination, with no rules.
> Venus can hardly set her weapons in motion to increase the race.
> More common than any other lewdness is the plague of sodomy.
> Men pay what they owe their spouses to other men.
> Countless Ganymedes tend countless hearths,
> And Juno grieves to have lost the duty she used to claim. (trans. Stehling)

The allusions are classical, but the sentiments are derived from Christian morality. Hildebert seems to have some sympathy for the figure of Juno abandoned by her unfeeling husband as he pursues his lusts for Ganymede. In another poem, he warns his readers not to fall for any contemporary Ganymedes. One shouldn't believe the myth that this was a love affair consummated in celestial paradise. Rather, the twelfth-century boy lover risked condemnation to hell ('a male wife gets the underworld', *manes masculus uxor habet*). Hildebert consoles Juno with this thought: 'she didn't have to grieve that this sin's reward would be heaven'. Indeed, this use of classical allusions to voice Christian morals proves to be a reasonably common gambit.

One of the most popular poems on the subject of boy love in the medieval period was the *Debate between Ganymede and Helen* (*Altercatio Ganimedis et Helene*). The poem is known from a number of manuscripts. It opens with an idyllic pastoral scene in which the poet spies two figures of extraordinary beauty, the fair Helen and the gorgeous Ganymede. Neither has encountered the other before, and each is struck by the respective beauty of the other. This mutual admiration soon gives way to base lust and they attempt copulation. At this point, poor Helen is distraught to see Ganymede roll over and assume the passive position, awaiting penetration. Disgusted that the object of her desires should turn out to be a sodomite, she berates and curses the youth. For his part, Ganymede attempts a defense of boy love. Helen refuses to entertain such a defense and resolves that the matter should be determined by Nature herself. She proposes that they ride out to the abode of Nature and each will plead their cause. Helen will argue for heterosexual love, and Ganymede will be the advocate for the boy lovers. Ganymede accepts the challenge and, on arrival, at the abode of Nature, the pair discovers that this debate will be judged by not only Nature, but Reason, Providence, and all of the gods of Olympus. The ensuing debate between Ganymede and Helen rehearses a number of arguments already seen in Plutarch's *Dialogue on Love* and the Pseudo-Lucianic *Erotes.* Boy love is derided for being contrary to nature, sterile, effeminate, and inconstant. In turn the act of loving women is portrayed as gross and uncivilized and women as deceitful and sluttish. However, while these earlier debates were often reluctant to concede a winner, the debate between Ganymede and Helen is clearly won by Helen. Helen's clinching argument is that by squandering semen ('the tears of Venus') on the thighs of men, one is throwing away human beings ('ibi fit hominis iactura'). At this moment, the scales fall from Ganymede's eyes and he is converted, along with the

rest of the audience, to heterosexual love. 'I begin to yearn for my own Juno', says Jupiter.

The triumph of Helen here speaks for the period. Occasionally, Ganymede may win a debate as he does in an anonymous poem in a thirteenth-century manuscript. Yet, for the most part classical learning in this period is deployed against homosexual desire. Another of the factors that lead to the decline in expressions of Greek love in this period was the increase in church hostility to homosexual acts, and the formation of theological and legal doctrine against sodomy. Ironically, these texts often relied on classical authorities or used classical expressions in order to make their case.

In many places in Europe, the anti-sodomitical laws of the late antique Roman Empire were revived and incorporated into local law. The punishment of Theodosius, which required the burning of both parties, was established in French law, and was still being enforced as late as the late eighteenth century. More insidious was the development of theological arguments against sodomy that began to shift the nature of the discourse surrounding the crime. Previously, we have seen that boy love could prove problematic either because it was potentially corrupting or effeminizing to a young man. God's dislike for the practice could be read in the story of Sodom. In the twelfth century we begin to see arguments that sodomy was not only disliked by God and socially undesirable, but actually constituted an active crime against God. This idea finds its fullest explanation in the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas (1224/5–1274).

Aquinas built his argument on a theory of natural law developed in antiquity. The idea is found earliest in Aristotle. According to this theory, as we live in the best of all possible worlds, it is from nature that we can derive principles of right and wrong, good and evil, virtue and vice. As only heterosexual coupling is found in nature, so sodomy must be condemned as unnatural and evil. This idea is confirmed when one remembers that one must also give due weight to the 'natural end' of actions. Everything in nature has a purpose and to violate this purpose is wrong. As the purpose of copulation is procreation, anything other than sex for the purpose of procreation is wrong. Unnatural acts violate God's plan for creation. As such, they must be punished as acts of willful disobedience by man; they repeat the crime for which man was condemned and expelled from the Garden of Eden.

There is a certain irony that Greek love was killed by Greek philosophy, but when Aristotelian philosophy fell into the hands of Aquinas that is precisely what happened. If Greek love were to survive, it was going to take more than a few Latin verses or mythological precedent. It would require a philosophy of its own.

9

Renaissance and Enlightenment

Giving Birth in the Beautiful

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 is normally seen as a turning point in the history of Western Europe. The argument runs that the destruction of Constantinople and the Eastern Roman Empire meant that classical ideals forgotten in the West came to Italy, and later the rest of Europe, as manuscripts, refugees, and artifacts disappeared before the invading hordes of the Ottoman Empire. The influx of Byzantine teachers facilitated the study of ancient Greek and meant that once again the poets, dramatists, and most importantly, the philosophers of ancient Athens could be read and understood. Of course, like all simple stories, the reality is much more complex than this. The Eastern Roman Empire didn't fall in a day, but was slowly eroded over the course of two centuries. Likewise there was already a healthy exchange of ideas and interest in classical learning that preceded the fall. Italy adopted Greek ideas because Italy was well disposed to receiving them. There may have been a Renaissance in the fifteenth century, but we shouldn't imagine that the labor had been quick or straightforward.

One aspect that has often been ignored in the story of the classical revival that swept Europe in this period has been role that Greek love played in this radical transformation. So successful and widespread, certainly amongst elite cultures, was the new thinking of the Renaissance that it is all too often assumed that any opposition to this change was small, not particularly spirited, and easily neutralized. Yet, as we shall see, this was far from the case. Indeed, in some ways one could argue that Greek love almost cost Italy important elements in its Renaissance.

In 1458, two of the West's leading intellectuals found themselves in dispute over precisely the definition, content, and morality of 'Greek love'. Not only were academic reputations at stake, but also, more crucially, the reputation of Plato. Had the debate gone the other way, the study of Plato's texts may have been consigned to relative obscurity and Greek love would have emerged into the modern world still-born. Western philosophy would certainly have looked very

Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity Alastair J. L. Blanshard
 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

different. For most of the medieval period in the West, the majority of Plato's texts had not been read or studied. Two partial translations of the *Timaeus*, and a couple of unintelligible translations of the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*, and the *Parmenides* were the only texts available to medieval scholars. It was only with the arrival from Byzantium of a complete manuscript of Plato in 1423 that the full Platonic corpus could begin to be re-appreciated.

To judge from contemporary accounts, here were texts that stimulated the mind, offered new horizons, and inflamed hearts. The passion for Platonic philosophy was increased by the arrival in Florence in 1438 of a deputation from Byzantium which included the emperor John VIII Palaeologus and which aimed to explore the possibility of reunification between the Orthodox and Catholic churches (the Councils of Ferrara-Florence). Accompanying John VIII was the Platonic scholar George Gemistos (1355–1452), a man whose passion for Greek antiquity was such that he had taken the name Pletho ('full', the classical equivalent of his surname Gemistos which means 'full' in modern Greek). Whilst in Florence, Pletho offered lectures on the topic of Plato. Among the many Florentines who rushed to hear Pletho's lectures was reportedly Cosimo de' Medici, who was so inspired he later founded an *Academia Platonica* in Florence (or so the story goes). One contemporary observer describes people as 'enslaved to Plato', so powerful was the attraction of Pletho's lectures.

There is no doubt a lot of wishful thinking in this depiction of Platonic frenzy. Both disciples and enemies (then and later) had reason to exaggerate the influence of Pletho. Nevertheless, it is clear that the passion for Plato spread widely and many of Pletho's circle achieved positions of prominence in fifteenth-century society. None more so that his student, Basilios Bessarion (c.1403–1472), who had arrived with the Byzantine delegation in 1438. Bessarion's ability and sympathy to the Catholic church had attracted the notice of Pope Eugene IV, who made him a cardinal bishop. In the papal conclave of 1455, Bessarion was one of the candidates to succeed Pope Nicholas V. Yet in the competitive environment of court and papal politics, such a meteoric rise was bound to cause envy and resentment.

In 1458, this hostility to Bessarion manifested itself when George of Trebizond (1395–1486) published a stinging, vituperative attack on Plato in his *Comparatio philosophorum Aristotelis et Platoni* ('A Comparison of the Philosophy of Aristotle and Plato'). George of Trebizond has a claim to being one of the Renaissance's finest Hellenists, translating more patristic, philosophic, scientific, and literary texts than any other figure. His *Rhetoric* and *Logic* were the most important examples of their type during the fifteenth century. In many ways, the careers of George and Bessarion mirror each other. Bessarion was born in the city of Trebizond on the Black Sea coast, the same city from which George's family hailed. Both seem to have come to prominence as a result of the greater interest in Greek affairs promoted by the attempts to reunify the two churches. Both were able to translate their knowledge of Greek texts into positions of power and influence. George, for example, secured the post of secretary through the intercession of Pope Nicholas

V, another keen Aristotelian. Indeed, one suspects that it was their similarity as much as their intellectual differences that was the cause of their enmity. Bessarion, despite signs of initial affection for George, soon cooled on this talented humanist, continually promoting enemies of George to positions of authority.

In seeking to distinguish themselves from each other, the two settled on their differences in philosophic approach. Bessarion was a keen student of Plato, and George an equally passionate scholar of Aristotle. In his *Comparatio*, George was able to turn this intellectual distinction into one of judgment, ethics, and capacity. The aim of the *Comparatio* was not just to demonstrate the superiority of Aristotle, but also the dangers posed to the state by the followers of Plato.

To the modern reader there is much that seems wild, even mad, about George's claims for the pernicious influence of Plato. For George, Plato was the origin of all Christian heresies. Pletho had been long accused of letting his love of Plato lead him into heretical, neo-pagan views. However, George takes criticism of Pletho to a new level. So corrupting was Pletho, argued George, that even the presence of his corpse was enough to make people sicken and die. At their first meeting, Pletho had apparently confessed that he wished to replace Christianity and Islam with a new form of paganism. 'Disturbed by these words, I have always hated and greatly feared him just as one hates and fears a poisonous viper', writes George at the start of the *Comparatio*. The fall of Constantinople which had happened only a few years earlier in 1453 just confirmed his sense of impending apocalypse. For George, it was an apocalypse that was to be ushered in by readers of Plato. Plato was responsible for the rise of Islam and the destruction of Byzantium. Everything that Plato touched was ruined or corrupted.

Amongst other claims, George alleged that Plato was dangerous because he encouraged pederasty. Central to this allegation was the endorsement given to boy love in the *Phaedrus*. We have already seen how Aquinas was able to ground his opposition to sodomy in Aristotelian philosophy. Greek love then became a major point of difference between the two philosophic camps. Aristotelians were able to show the moral virtue of their philosophic hero. The focus on Greek love in the Platonic texts seemed to put the Platonists on the back foot, and threatened the claims they made for their new texts. It must be remembered that although the Renaissance saw the first major expressions of Greek love since the twelfth century, it was not a period that was particularly kind to homosexual acts. The laws against sodomy were still in force. In Venice, at precisely the same time as the first important editions of classical texts were being produced, sodomites were still liable to denunciation, torture, beheading, and immolation. In Florence, the penalties were often less strict, but even here there were procedures for anonymous denunciation, arrest, and the imposition of substantial fines. All too quickly the environment could turn hostile. During the time of the ascendency of Savonarola, there were attempts to introduce legislation that would see the punishment of sodomites with branding, spending time in the pillory, and ultimately being burnt alive.

In a long discussion at the start of book three of his *Comparatio*, George alleges that Plato was driven by a hatred of women. It was for this reason that he advocated pederasty. He disliked the notion of marriage and so advocated the prostitution of women in the *Republic*. In contrast, George says that Aristotle was a devoted husband and father, a model of healthy natural relations. This association between Platonism and homosexuality had a tendency to stick. A number of associates of Bessarion were accused of pederasty. In 1468, a group of Platonic humanists were charged with plotting against the Pope's life and planning to restore the Roman Republic (the so-called 'Conspiracy of the Roman Academy'). Among the many charges made against them was a preference for sodomy and the writing of graphic homosexual poetry.

In the face of such charges, Platonist circles undertook a rehabilitation of Plato. Pamphlets were published which showed the excellent reputation Plato enjoyed amongst the ancient and, importantly, early Christian sources. The congruence between Platonic philosophy and Christian doctrine was stressed, especially aspects such as the notion of God the creator and the immortality of the soul. These Platonists did not deny the existence of Greek love. Instead, they sought to sublimate the physical aspects of the attraction and play up its spiritual dimension. Greek love was then brought into line with contemporary Christian philosophy. The wild, dangerous uncontrollable *eros* of the Greeks became the gentle love of God the Father and his shepherding Son.

George had to wait over a decade for a published response to his *Comparatio*. Yet when it came in 1469, it addressed his claims directly. Bessarion's *In Calumniatorem Platonis* had been much revised in the intervening years, going through three drafts in Greek and one in Latin. *In Calumniatorem Platonis* represents one of the most complete defenses of the study of Plato in the Renaissance. It addressed all the charges made by George, in particular his reading of the *Phaedrus* as promoting a corrupt form of love. For Bessarion, it was the reverse. There was nothing sensual about this love. Indeed, if the love became anything other than chaste, it could be regarded as a failure. In his *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, Bessarion repeatedly invokes the *Phaedrus*, especially the passage where Socrates argues that sometimes the bad horse is not sufficiently tamed so that the relationship rather than being spiritually uplifting, takes on a sensual character. Here Bessarion argues Socrates is not endorsing pederasty; rather, he is suggesting that it is a failed form of love. He rejected any ancient text that said otherwise, declaring them mistaken about Plato's intention. He further declared the love poems attributed to Plato in antiquity, and circulating in Diogenes Laertius, were forgeries. Bessarion stressed the distinction between the two types of love found in Plato. Platonic love is the love that is 'honourable, modest, demure, loyal, holy, blessed, a safeguard of chastity and continence, generously inspiring the soul and loving and obedient to virtue' (*In Calumniatorem Platonis* iv.2). This type of love had been praised by Christians and pagans alike down through the ages. Greek love became the love of God.

This reading of Bessarion becomes the orthodox one for the Platonic circles in Renaissance Florence. It was further developed by one of Bessarion's students, Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499). Ficino is perhaps the most important Platonic commentator and teacher in the Renaissance. His translations of Plato became standard throughout Europe. Ficino continued and refined the exegetical and allegorical interpretation of Greek love found in Bessarion. This is most notably seen in his so-called 'commentaries' (really extended essays on topics raised in the texts) on Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. In these texts, he locates discussion of 'Greek love' within a broader discussion of 'divine love'. This, he argues, is the true topic of Plato's discussion. This metaphysical form of love is far removed from any earthly passion. Earthly passion, when it occurs, does so only as a poor and approximate version of it. We should not read Plato to understand how to operate our own desires, but rather the nature of desire in general. There is little in the *Phaedrus* that speaks directly to contemporary life. Instead, it is only concerned with higher things. If Plato seems to praising pederasty, it is not pederasty as we understand it, but a higher, purer, spiritual form that we may one day be able to comprehend, if we study the texts with enough ardor. Ficino constantly reduces texts to metaphors and allegories. Thus, for example, when Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium* talks about men being divided into two and constantly looking for the male part that will make them complete, Ficino turns this account into an allegory about the parts of the soul and the relationship to abstract notions of courage (the male virtue). In the hands of Ficino, Plato takes on the status of holy writ, impossible to criticize because it stands outside of morality.

Bessarion and Ficino are the figures most responsible for reorientating Greek love into a form of spiritual practice. They were never able to convince all their critics. Many refused to accept that Socrates was really as spiritual as they claimed. Nevertheless, their arguments were influential, not only inspiring numerous others to aim for the chaste, improving love found in Plato, but also for providing intellectual ammunition for those who found their desires taking on a 'Hellenic' color.

The Renaissance not only taught you how to think about Greek love, it also taught you what the ideal of Greek love looked like. The rediscovery of classical art in this period reintroduced a figure who had disappeared during the medieval period – the naked, desirable, beardless youth.

We can sense that something new has come into play with Donatello's bronze statue of David (c.1430–2, see Figure 9.1). This work marks a departure not only from contemporary trends, but also from the rest of Donatello's work. It is arguably the first freestanding nude statue made since antiquity. Two earlier statues of David by Donatello (1386–1466) are known. In both cases, the young king is fully clothed. In one he wears a short tunic, in the other he has a jerkin and long cape. In the earlier of the two, the form of David is adapted from that of an Old Testament prophet. In the later one, he stands awkwardly, his hands by his side. Neither work prepares us for the David that emerges in bronze. Here the young Jewish king has been turned into an ephebe straight from the gymnasium or pal-

Figure 9.1 The return of Greek love. Donatello's *David* ushers in the return of the classical body as the epitome of male beauty. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy. © Scala/Art Resource, NY.

aestra. He stands incongruously naked, clad only in boots and a hat, above the head of the defeated Goliath. In his hand he holds a sword, the other rests akimbo on his hip. One knee bent, his torso makes a sinuous curve. The face is expressionless. There is no look of triumph or exhaustion after a long fight. There is only a curious, enigmatic half-smile on the lips. We can only make sense of this statue through reference to the antique. It requires the tradition of the young athlete or beautiful boy to explain this statue. Donatello has reached back to this tradition for his David. The genitals provide a clue as much as anything else; their

bijoux quality deriving from classical proportions. It is Greek art that explains the equation of nudity with heroism, and the disengaged expression.

In depicting David naked, Donatello also challenges how we read the male body. Previously nudity was something to be pitied. Christ, naked on the cross, or the naked sinner in hell, speaks of the suffering of humanity. Donatello's David differs because now the nude body is to be desired, not pitied. The naked youth is aspirational. The Greek nude flirted with its viewers even in antiquity. It is the same with Donatello's David. We want to be this boy, and be in the company of him. Despite the sword and the decapitated head, he doesn't seem to be a killer. The curious ambiguity of our relationship with the figure is only heightened by the figures on the visor of Goliath. Here we see three winged cupids pulling a chariot while others bow down to a figure under a parasol. The iconography is triumphal, drawn from antique cameos and gems. Love is clearly at play here both as a motivating force and a force to be commanded. It is not a large leap from this chariot of love to the chariot of desires and the winged souls borne up by desire of Plato's *Phaedrus*. Notions of Greek love caress this statue.

Of course, Donatello's naked David is only an approximation of the antique body. As critics have noted, it doesn't obey all the rules of classical proportion. The body is a little too fleshy around the abdominal regions, and lacks generosity in the buttocks. We see in this statue a canon in formation. Donatello's statue occurs before the major discoveries of classical statues in Rome. It also has no immediate rivals or imitators. It is the first hint of something new. When the change does come, it does so at a rush.

A key moment is the rediscovery of the Apollo Belvedere at some point around 1479. This work quickly makes it into artists' pattern books. Small bronze copies were made. Rumor alone was sufficient to transmit knowledge of the statue. Dürer never saw the statue, and yet that didn't stop him drawing his own version of this Apollo in 1501 based on etchings and reports about the statue. Indeed, there was a flood of antique fragments that came onto the market towards the end of the fifteenth century and beginning of the sixteenth century, among them, the Laocoön in 1506. First popular amongst artists, these fragments then became prized by collectors. As artists were priced out of the market, they increasingly came to rely on the large collections assembled by wealthy patrons.

Often the unfinished nature of these statues didn't appeal to their owners, and there was an important restoration industry. Indeed, restoration is the wrong word to describe the work. Often it involved substantial and imaginative reworking of fragments. For artists, there was the challenge and thrill of being able to put their own work up against the mastery of the antique. Again one detects exposure to knowledge of Greek love. For example, when the sculptor Cellini (1500–1571) was presented by Duke Cosimo I with a torso from a statue of a youth, he immediately thought of Ganymede (Box 9.1). Indeed, when another sculptor sneered at the choice of subject matter and called Cellini 'a big sodomite', the sculptor responded 'Would to God that I understood so noble an art as you allude to; they

Box 9.1 Ganymede

Everybody wants a piece of Ganymede. Few figures from antiquity have been fought over so furiously as the beautiful young cupbearer of Zeus. The earliest references to Ganymede in the Homeric texts make no mention of a sexual relationship between Zeus and the young Trojan prince. The gods don't seem to want his body, they only want his beauty. It is as an ornament for their palace on Olympus that they abduct him from Troy to act as an attendant to Zeus. It is only later that sex enters the picture. According to this version, it is lust for the young boy that drives Zeus either to adopt the form of an eagle or to send an eagle (accounts differ) to abduct the beautiful boy as he tended his flocks on Mt. Ida. To compensate the family, Zeus sends the father a set of fine horses, and to preserve the youth for all eternity, Zeus turns him into the constellation Aquarius.

Once sex enters the picture, it proves very hard to displace. It does not take long for the story of Zeus and Ganymede to become the paradigm for pederastic relationships. The word 'catamite' is a corruption of the name Ganymede. The Roman poet Martial uses the name as a synonym for the passive member of a pederastic relationship. Indeed, some in the ancient world found the story all too convenient. Plato accused the Cretans of inventing the story to legitimize pederastic desire. In fact, Plato and his circle try harder than most to complicate this seemingly straightforward story of desire and its consummation. In the *Phaedrus* (255), Plato argued that there was nothing sexual in this story, the ascension of Ganymede was a metaphor for the pure souls' love of divine beauty. It was an interpretation with which Xenophon concurred in his *Symposium*.

It is this ambiguity over the myth's sexual content that explains the story's attraction and its functional utility. With Ganymede sex is always just around the corner. The image of the eagle sweeping down from the heavens to abduct the lad proves too distracting. The story of Ganymede tends to get frozen in this moment. The image is startling, arresting. Ganymede is a story of lust with pleasure deferred. The moment of rape (in the sense of abduction) is so violent – so captivating – that it displaces that other moment of rape (in the sense of sexual penetration). It gives you erotic thrills without demanding that you commit to any particular erotic outcome. Thus, Dante can use the image of Ganymede as a metaphor for the grace of God descending from Heaven and the image of Ganymede can be sculptured onto the doors of St. Peter's without causing any concern.

Yet the homoerotic potential was never obliterated. Ganymede's predilections were too well known. In medieval texts, Ganymede regularly appears whenever the narrative calls for a character to defend the act of sodomy. This potential was particularly exploited by artists in the Renaissance. A naked

(*continued overleaf*)

Box 9.1 *Continued*

Ganymede lifted high, his thighs wrenched apart by an eagle's talons, his full muscular buttocks exposed to the cool air, provided much opportunity for voyeuristic, erotic display. One of the more complex uses of the Ganymede motif as a metaphor for homosexual love occurs in a couple of drawings created by Michelangelo for his beloved friend Tommaso de Cavalieri. These pictures play with the spiritual and erotic meanings of the image of Ganymede. In the first one, we see Ganymede being lifted up by an eagle (Figure 9.2).

Figure 9.2 Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Ganymede*. Caught between spiritual and earthly desire. Ganymede has come to stand as a metaphor for the passions of Greek love. Harvard Art Museum, Fogg Art Museum, Gifts for Special Uses Fund, 1955.75.

say that Jove practiced it with Ganymede in paradise, and here upon this earth it is practiced by some of the greatest emperors and kings. I, however, am but a poor, humble creature who neither has the power nor the intelligence to perplex my wits with anything so admirable'. Certainly, the artist was not deterred from his choice of subject matter. These days the sculpture can be found in the National Museum in Florence. It shows a slim youth with a mischievous expression teasing

The eagle grips his ankles and the naked boy supports himself by throwing one arm around the neck of the eagle, the other arm grips the eagle's pinions. The other image depicts the giant Tityos, who, like Prometheus, was punished by the gods by being chained to the rock of Tartarus so that his liver could be gnawed out by a vulture. In the hands of Michelangelo, the two myths were joined as part of the same iconographic program. Ganymede and Tityos are so similar in depiction that they could be brothers. The vulture of myth has been transformed into an eagle. Michelangelo wants us to read these images together. As allegories these images concern love. But what story do they tell? On a moralist interpretation, these images are a neo-platonic allegory about two types of love, the earthly love which lifts one up and the base love which consumes you. Yet, as a lover's gift, it is tempting to read these images as a personal statement about the state of the artist's passions. Separated from his beloved, he feels the pangs of distance as keenly as Prometheus. United with his lover, the artist is transported to the heavens.

In artistic terms, the Renaissance represents Ganymede's high point. Although he is ready to make an appearance whenever fashion demands a beautiful unclothed youth. Both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with their love affairs with the figure of beautiful boys saw the production of a number of Ganymedes. He also enjoys a poetic afterlife with verses about Ganymede produced by Auden, Verlaine, Hölderlein, and Saba. Of course, Ganymede as a signifier can seem a bit too obvious. Homosexual poets of the fin de siècle tended to prefer more obscure divine loves such as Hyacinthus (the beloved of Apollo) or Hylas (the beloved of Heracles). On the other hand, pornography has never been worried about the obvious, and there have been numerous pornographic images produced of the deflowering of Ganymede by Zeus (sometimes depicted as an eagle, sometime as an adult male). Even as late as 1981, it was still possible to buy soft-porn versions of the story of Ganymede such as Felice Picano's *An Asian Minor: The true story of Ganymede* in which the youth has a series of erotic encounters not only with Zeus, but also with Hermes, Ares, and Apollo. The accompanying illustrations suggest that Ares would not have looked out of place in a San Francisco leather bar.

an eagle with a finch in one hand whilst he ruffles the back of the eagle's neck with the other.

This idea of producing male nudes that imitated and rivaled masterpieces from the classical world dominates output, and these works came to occupy a central place in western art history. The output of Michelangelo (1475–1564) is symptomatic. Michelangelo had been an associate of Ficino as a youth and had been

brought up with a firm grounding in classical knowledge and neo-platonic thought. We see his appreciation of the classical form in early works such as his marble statue of Bacchus (c.1496–8), in which the god is depicted as a youth whose hair is festooned with ivy and grapes, and who toasts the viewer with wine from an antique cup. A boy satyr peeks out behind the thighs of the god as he munches on a bunch of grapes. The sensuality of this piece is only exceeded by works such as the *Dying Captive* and the *Struggling Captive* (c.1514), exercises in showing the respective beauty of active and languid muscles. Finally, it is most clearly articulated in the heroic nudes of his celebrated *David* and works such as his *Victory* (1527–30). Even in his supposedly Christian work there often lurks a model from antiquity. Thus, it has been argued that Christ in his *Pietà* derives from images of Venus mourning the death of Adonis.

The nude so dominates the western canon of art that it is difficult to recover the sense of shock and awe these antique bodies elicited. It is worth remembering that when Michelangelo's *David* was first erected in Florence's Piazza della Signoria in 1504, the statue was stoned during the night by hostile citizens. A number of artists maintained that this classicizing nudity was only appropriate when the subject matter permitted it. Donatello's and Michelangelo's *David*s clearly refuse to observe this rule, but it possibly explains the fondness of Sebastian as a subject. His stripped body, strung out ready for (or already pierced by) a volley of arrows, provided a perfect opportunity for a virtuoso display of classicizing flesh.

The tendency upon viewing these male nudes is to read into them a story about the sexual life of the artist. Certainly, the association between accusations of sodomy and the arts was a not unfamiliar topos. Dante even seems to play with this when he has his pilgrim self and Virgil encounter so many Florentine intellectuals in the circle of hell where sodomites are punished. Each of the artists discussed so far was accused of sodomy. Amongst a collection of anecdotes collected in the late 1470s, but not published until 1548, we find Donatello depicted as devoted to surrounding himself with beautiful apprentices. His jealousy was such that he would pursue them across the countryside if they attempted to escape, or he would 'tint' them so that others would not find them attractive. Cellini, although an inveterate womanizer, was also not immune to the attractions of beautiful youths. In January 1523, he and another man were convicted of sodomy with a boy named Domenico di Ser Giuliano da Ripa. Some artists, such as the infamous Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (1477–1549) wore this charge as a badge of honor, signing himself as Il Sodoma ('the sodomite'). However, perhaps the most famous boy lover amongst the Renaissance artists was Michelangelo. We possess numerous poems, letters, and accounts from contemporaries that attest to this passion. In his poems and letters, Michelangelo expresses his admiration and desire for his attractive models such as Febo di Poggio and Cecchino de' Bracci, and later his close friend, Tommaso Cavalieri. The expression of this love is always couched in Platonic terms. This love is uplifting and purifying.

However, it would be a mistake to see the work of these artists only in biographical terms. They are not the expression of a purely personal desire, although that desire may well have fed into them. They are commissions, often public works, designed to be consumed by an appreciative audience. They work within established canons and iconography, they are responsive to the wishes of patrons and benefactors. As such, they are evidence of not only the changing attitudes to antiquity, but also the complexities of Greek notions of beauty. The desire they evoke cannot be purely sexual, nor are they to be seen in purely sexual terms. Bessarion and Ficino argued that Greek love was noble and that desire could be spiritual. These works attest to the success of this program. The works are multivalent. To some the beauty spoke of health and clarity, to others it spoke of a desire regarded by contemporaries as unnatural, and to others it seemed to say both things simultaneously.

The Renaissance established two cardinal points in triangulating Greek love – philosophy and art history. It is principally through these two disciplines that Greek love would continue to find expression in succeeding centuries. Armed with Plato, and buttressed by the steadfastness of classical statuary, the Greek lover found himself ready to take on the world.

The Pursuit of Love

> How did it come about that a vice destructive of mankind if it were general, an infamous outrage against nature, is yet so natural? It appears to be the highest degree of deliberate corruption, and is nevertheless the ordinary lot of those who have not yet had time to be corrupted. It has penetrated unspoilt hearts that have not yet known ambition nor fraud nor the thirst of wealth; it is blind youth that flings itself into this disorder upon leaving childhood, by an instinct still little understood (trans. Besterman).

Thus, Voltaire (1694–1778) begins the entry entitled 'The so-called Socratic love' (*Amour nommé socratique*) in his *Philosophical Dictionary* (*Dictionnaire philosophique*). To modern readers, the title *Philosophical Dictionary* is slightly misleading as this work is neither a dictionary (except in the sense that the entries are arranged alphabetically) nor is it exclusively devoted to philosophic issues. Instead, the work is a series of short essays about contemporary manners, customs, and controversies. Other entries in the dictionary include discussions of an outbreak of hysterical dancing, Confucian philosophy, King Solomon, the emperor Julian, and circumcision.

This work, begun in 1752 and first printed in 1764, reflects many of the attitudes that we have come to associate with the Enlightenment. It adopts a skeptical attitude towards the church and its activities. The opening of the entry on the 'Inquisition' reads: 'It is well known that the inquisition is an admirable and thoroughly Christian invention to make the pope and the monks more powerful and

a whole kingdom hypocritical'. Similarly, it refuses to follow tradition blindly or accept authority, especially classical authority, without question. 'Oh Plato, so much admired, I fear you have told us nothing but fables, and that you have never uttered anything, but sophisms! O Plato! You have done so much more evil than you think', laments Voltaire in his rejection of the idea of the 'Great Chain of Being'.

This new sensibility infuses this discussion of 'Socratic love'. Here Greek love is treated as a disease or a condition. Voltaire speculates that this unnatural affection arises out of gender confusion where the similarity in appearance of young boys and girls leads to a mistaken transfer of affection. Voltaire also notes that this form of love is found much more in men than women, and is much more common in milder climates, where there is a corresponding tolerance, than colder ones. 'What seems merely a weakness in the young Alcibiades is a disgusting abomination in a Dutch sailor and a Muscovite camp-follower', he remarks. Thus, Greek tolerance of homosexual acts is only a product of their warmer weather rather than their superior refinement. In this, Voltaire looks forward to the technical sexological treatises of the nineteenth century where the climatic origins of homosexuality are explored. This tendency to reduce the emotional inner life to physical causes is also seen in the entry preceding the one on 'Socratic love'. Here the topic of 'love' is treated exclusively as a biological urge, and the greatest problem that a lover faces is avoiding venereal disease.

It is striking how the Socratic origins of the practice fail to give it any cachet. Voltaire goes out of his way to excuse other Greeks from being associated with this form of affection. It is only our depravity that makes us believe that figures such as the great Athenian lawgiver Solon were attracted to boys in this way. One suspects that Voltaire's own strong personal commitment to Greek notions of freedom and liberty are responsible for his desire to excuse the Greeks. Certainly that Roman autocrat, the emperor Augustus (described by Voltaire as 'that debauched and cowardly murderer'), is not given the benefit of the doubt. It is only in a later edition of the text that we see any softening of Voltaire's stance when he adds the following preface to the entry: 'If the love called Socratic and Platonic was only a decent sentiment, one must applaud; if it was a debauched love one must blush for Greece'.

Of course, it is difficult to know how much Voltaire is joking or being deliberately provocative in this text. One of the aims of this work was to shock and amuse, and to judge from contemporary reactions, it managed to do both. Yet in many ways, Voltaire's ambivalence towards Greek love is typical of this period. This ambivalence represents the failure of Ficino's and Bessarion's Renaissance model of spiritual male love to take hold. The problem seems to be that for most of the period from the sixteenth century onwards very few people believed the claims that they made about the morally improving nature of this love, and especially the chastity of its practitioners. In popular conception, the discourse of sodomy trumped that of Greek love.

One of the stock figures in this period is the pederast–pedant teacher, a man who, under the cover of teaching (most notably Latin and Greek instruction), attempts to seduce or assault his students. As we have seen, such accusations existed in the Renaissance. The difference here is that they seemed to have solidified, so that the pederast humanist has become an identifiable type. One of the earliest references to humanists occurs in the context of a poem denouncing their sodomy: 'Few humanists (*umanisti*) are without that vice which did not so much persuade, as force, God to render Gomorrah and her neighbour wretched!' Other poems warn students about turning their back on their masters or personify grammar as a tool for wreaking havoc on the buttocks of boys. Pornographic novels imagine masters giving their students a very physical demonstration of various Latin adverbs (*infra*, *in retro*, *ante*, *coram*, *a tergo*, *intus et extra*) and their meanings (underneath, backwards, in front, face to face, from behind, inside out).

One of the most developed examples of these pederast teachers is the philosopher Philotime from the pornographic novel, *L'Alcibiade fanciullo a scola* ('The young Alcibiades at school'). This novel was written by Father Antonio Rocco in the first few decades of the seventeenth century, and circulated for about 20 years in manuscript form before it was published in 1651. There seem to have been two initial editions. Subsequent editions and a translation into French occurred in the nineteenth century. The work clearly affiliates itself with this earlier tradition of pederastic schoolteachers by including a number of sonnets on the subject. One concludes:

> All hail to those holy Athenian sages
> Who delivered us men from our bestial cages!
> So like Socrates, Plato, and all of their chums,
> Let us lodge our utensils in pretty boys' bums! (trans. Rawnsley)

The author of these verses is anonymous, identified only by the initials 'M.V.' which has led some to suggest that he was a member of the Vernier family.

The name Philotime means 'lover of honor'. However, there is little that is honorable about this instructor. As the title implies, the story is set in ancient Greece and concerns the education of the young Alcibiades. Philotime represents a type of anti-Socrates or, perhaps more correctly, a Socrates who doesn't hide the reason for his interest in the education of young men. Like Socrates, he engages in dialogue with his students that discusses nature and virtue. However, unlike Socrates there is no aim of moral improvement. Instead the only purpose of Philotime's argumentation is to get the attractive youth to bend over and offer his buttocks to ravishment by the schoolmaster.

The figure of Alcibiades is constructed from a pastiche of sources. The description of his beauty alludes to classical aesthetics, but also goes far beyond anything found in ancient praise poetry to the beautiful boy. Here is how he is described on arriving at the classroom of Philotime:

> The radiant Diana, in the midst of her nymphs, shone less brilliantly, drew fewer enraptured eyes, than did Alcibiades. The divine Ceres radiated less splendour, less grace, than did that lovely boy on his entry under the roof of his master. The new pupil, with his lithe, graceful carriage, his easy, fluid movements, could not fail to open all hearts to himself, to become the darling of all who had the good fortune to look upon him. His beautiful locks of hair, springing from his head like miraculous flowers, and tumbling in a thousand ringlets on to his shoulders, put the very splendour of gold to shame; his eyes, shadowed by their long lashes, half-hidden by their lids as a royal pavilion hides their king, shone blue as azure, full of gentleness and grace, and seemed to send arrows, like Cupid's love-bolts, straight to the heart of anyone they looked on; his forehead was clear and pure as a spring morning (trans. Rawnsley).

It is easy to see why Philotime might be struck by such a figure. This description seems to play with neo-platonic ideas of love and beauty. Renaissance neo-platonists such as Ficino had long warned about the dangers of 'blue-eyed boys' whose radiant eyes emitted their souls and who might enter and mingle with your soul if you stared at their eyes too much.

Unfortunately, Philotime's expressions of desire to the youth meet with a cold rebuff. There then ensues the type of philosophic justification of the love of boys that we have already seen in Plutarch, Lucian, and the *Contest between Helen and Ganymede*. As always, the argument begins with nature and the unnatural. Philotime argues that man regards sodomy as unnatural merely because of the placement of the anus. It is opposite the vagina, and therefore man has come to mistakenly regard one opening as appropriate and the other inappropriate. While it is true that the anus is used to conduct waste, it is a mistake to regard a body part as only having one function. After all, doesn't the hand perform dozens of functions, doesn't the penis produce both urine and semen? Indeed, nature's approval of sodomy can be seen by looking at the animal kingdom. In a departure from standard conceptions of the ancient world, Philotime points out the tendency for homosexual couplings amongst roosters, partridges, dogs, and lions. He even turns the story of Arion who was rescued from the sea by a dolphin to his advantage. This account just goes to show that even dolphins love boys. Philotime recounts the stories of the gods and their love of boys. When Alcibiades, rather anachronistically, brings up the story of the destruction of Sodom, Philotime bats this objection away by declaring that the story was a myth invented to explain the origins of a sulfurous lake.

As usual, the boy lover peppers his arguments with blatant misogyny. Women's bodies are seen as disgusting. Their beauty is the deceitful product of cosmetics, unlike the natural beauty of boys. Women's vaginas are portrayed as bottomless pits of foul fluids. Women's breasts are cold and unresponsive, unlike the small, warm, easily excitable genitals of boys. Even the anus of a boy is a thing of delight. Just as a melon lover does not fear the odor or taste of a melon, so does the boy lover not fear the anus. Indeed, Philotime recounts the

time a boy lover was disgusted to find that his lover had artificially scented his anus with rose water.

Given such argumentation, Alcibiades can only succumb, and here we see one significant difference between the earlier dialogues on boy love, and that is that Philotime ends up winning the argument and the reader is left to enjoy the graphic description of the taking of Alcibiades' virginity. Again the text indulges in over-the-top description. Alcibiades' buttocks are like 'a garden planted with lilies and narcissi', his anus is like 'a button-hole with its delicate and tight pleats, like that of a new-born rose, a little flower with a thousand mixed colours, where snow-white and purple vied everywhere together'.

It is rare to find a distinction drawn between sodomy and Greek love in the Enlightenment. Reference to 'Greek behavior' seems largely to be used as code for sodomy or as a way of prettifying it. So, for example, contemporary discussions of the homosexuality of Frederick the Great (1712–1786) often make references to figures from classical antiquity, but these rarely are used to indicate that his love was pure, chaste, or uplifting. In many case, it is the reverse. After his death, Frederick's physician Dr. Johann Georg Zimmermann felt the need to defend the monarch from charges of having 'Grecian taste in love'. Elsewhere in his defense, Zimmermann describes these rumors as the ones which alleged that 'he had loved, as it is pretended, Socrates loved Alcibiades'. In both cases, these designations seem to be just code for sodomy. Frederick himself seems to have often seen no distinction. Thus, in a ribald poem he wrote describing the pack rape of a young novice by a group of monks, he talks about the young man being about to join the company of Socrates and Alcibiades, and Euryalus and Nisus (devoted friends in the *Aeneid*, who were supposedly involved in a homosexual liaison). Here the names are just used as synonyms for sodomy, and make no distinctive claims about the quality of the homosexual desire or any attendant sensibility.

It seems few people ever believed Zimmermann's denials. Frederick the Great's reputation as one of the world's most famous homosexuals seems secure. Indeed, he is often paired with Alexander the Great as an example of homosexuality and military prowess not being mutually exclusive. Certainly, the vast number of contemporary documents with homosexual content didn't help Zimmermann's case. Amongst these papers is one poem from Voltaire to Frederick the Great, who was a great friend and patron, in which he compares Frederick to Julius Caesar, not only as a military commander, and social reformer, but also the sodomite lover of Nicomedes, the king of Bithynia. In addition, there is Frederick's supposed remark when refusing the imposition of the death penalty in a sodomy case that 'in his states he granted freedom of conscience and cock' (Steakley 1988: 166).

This doesn't mean that there weren't a few who were keen to experiment with Greek love. We see glimmers of it in works such as the Temple of Friendship built by Frederick near Sanssouci, his new palace in Potsdam. This small rotunda was decorated with medallions depicting famous male companions. Once again we find the pairing of Euryalus and Nisus, only this time they are joined by famous

companions from antiquity such as Orestes and Pylades, Heracles and Philoctetes, and Theseus and Peirithoüs. Here these friends are not standing as representatives of sodomy, but of something more – a heroic notion of male companionship. It is in this slippage between the signs of sodomy and the elevating virtue of deep male friendship that we find Greek love. Others were happy to follow the trajectory set out by the Temple of Friendship. Thus, we find the novelist and playwright Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) writing to his friend in Potsdam, the Prussian officer Ernst von Pfuel, that 'you have recreated the age of Greece in my heart, my whole soul embraces you … I have often observed your beautiful body with girlish feelings … All the law-giving of Lycurgus [the founder of the Spartan constitution] becomes clear to me through the feelings that you have inspired' (Letter to Ernst von Pfuel, 7/1/1805, ed. Streller iv.86).

Indeed, Kleist's flirtation with Greek love finds echoes in the activities of many in the Romantic movement. The circle around Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) and Lord Byron (1788–1824) provides one example. In many ways, their activities in Greece and Rome establish the paradigm for later Greek lovers who would head to the Mediterranean to find expression for their desires. Byron's consciously self-constructed persona of excess makes his attitude to love difficult to categorize. He pursued every type of love and, for him, Greek love was just one of many types on offer. It certainly was important to him, as his homosexual encounters in Greece and Italy attest. However, Greek love is never theorized to the same extent with him as we find with Shelley. Shelley's sexuality has always been controversial. He was the target of one of the first exercises in gay reclamation. Advocates of this position dwell on the unhappiness of his marriages and his sympathy for texts about Greek homosexuality. As a schoolboy at Eton, he had been introduced to Plato's *Symposium* by his mentor Dr. James Lind. It clearly made an impact. In 1818, Shelley produced one of the first English translations of the text. Until this point, the text had largely been read through French translations. Shelley realized the controversial nature of the text's sexual content and he always seems a little coy in discussing it. In a letter in which he announces that he has started work on the translation, he says that he undertaken this work 'only as an exercise or perhaps to give to Mary [his wife] some idea of the manner and feelings of the Athenians' (*Letters of Shelley* 2.20). Yet, this was 'an exercise' that he would keep returning to over the course of his life, right up until his death. In an introductory essay, *A Discourse on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks relative to the subject of Love*, he champions the civilization and the sentiments found in the *Symposium*. In a well-established rhetorical move, Shelley draws a distinction between Greek love and sodomy. The love of men for men is intellectual. It occurs because the condition of women at the time was so debased. Moreover, Greek love involved neither 'disgusting acts' nor produced 'pain and horror' in its recipients. No sharper distinction between sodomy and Greek love could be drawn.

Another place where one finds a similar collocation of desire, antiquity, and moral improvement is in the field of art history. The key figure here is Joachim

Winckelmann (1717–1768), arguably the father of modern art history. Winckelmann first came to prominence whilst working as librarian to Heinrich von Bünau. During this period, he published his first substantial work of art history *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture* (1755). This work brought him to the attention of not only a large number of European intellectuals, but also the papal court. In 1756, he was appointed as assistant to the director of the papal library, and, in 1763, Pope Clement XII appointed him as papal antiquary. Based in Rome, the home of the most important finds of classical antiquities and the curator of one of the largest collections, Winckelmann became the eighteenth-century's principal interpreter of classical art, and hence artistic taste more generally. His numerous writings on classical art, including his monumental *History of the Art of Antiquity* (*Geschichte der Kunst Altertums*, 1764) became the canonical texts for the study of art.

Reading Winckelmann's work, one is instantly struck by the intense desire that he felt for the artworks, especially statuary which surrounded him. Winckelmann's text is programmatic not only in the sense that it tells you how you should identify, catalog, value, distinguish, and appreciate classical art. It also tells you how you should *feel* in its presence. To modern readers, these feelings often border on, and at times cross over to, the homoerotic. His rapturous discussions of the Apollo Belvedere or the Belvedere Torso seem not far removed from Rocco's description of the beautiful Alcibiades. However, unlike Philotime, Winckelmann always remains chaste. Casanova preserves a very telling anecdote about Winckelmann. One day he surprised Winckelmann in his study. As he entered, he saw Winckelmann leap away in shock and surprise from a handsome youth and start to rearrange his clothing. In his explanation to Casanova of the scene that he had just witnessed, Winckelmann expressed that he had only taken an interest in these boys in imitation of the ancients. Moreover, there was no sexual climax to the relationships.

One is entitled, of course, to see hypocrisy and duplicity in Winckelmann's claims that he never sexually enjoyed the pleasures of boys, or was only interested in them as an ornament of taste. Nevertheless, there is a remarkable congruence between Winckelmann's description of his sex life and his written work. One is tempted to give him the benefit of the doubt and say that he practiced what he preached, even if he did occasionally fall off the rails. It is striking how Winckelmann constantly channels the desire that statues elicit towards the ethical and the improving. We may desire these bodies, but only because they act as physical lessons and aides-mémoire for heroic achievement. So the outline of the Belvedere Torso's physique calls to mind Hercules' subduing of the giants, its supple flexibility, the wrestling match between Hercules and the river god, Achelous. We understand the nature of divinity from these statues. The chest of the Apollo Belvedere allows us to see how the celestial spirit might manifest itself in physical form. It is remarkably Platonic, the way that exposure to beauty is a didactic act. The similarity is, of course, not accidental. Winckelmann was well versed in Platonic texts.

Reading heroism from the male body became standard practice following Winckelmann. Perhaps his greatest influence can be seen in the male nudes that dominate French history painting in the late eighteenth century. Male nudes were of course known in painting before Winckelmann. The authority of the antique was enough to guarantee them a place in art. Yet, it was Winckelmann who provided the critical vocabulary so that the muscular chests, thighs, and arms of heroic figures such as David's *Leonidas* (1814), or the ephebic beauty of Girodet-Trioson's *Sleeping Endymion* (1791), could be appreciated and valued. His work gave these nudes an ethical spin, an added allegorical depth.

Winckelmann represents a bridge between Renaissance thought and modern nineteenth-century revivals of Platonic love. Indeed, he is so at home in nineteenth-century thought that it is difficult to see just what a radical departure he offers from typical eighteenth-century thought on antiquity, and its homosexuality. In a world where an undifferentiated and unsophisticated notion of sodomy threatened to subsume all homosexual acts, Winckelmann offered a distinctive and radical vision.

10

Nineteenth Century and Beyond

Greek Love Triumphant

It was the twin rediscovery of Plato and the Renaissance in the nineteenth century that did most to stimulate the discourse of Greek love in this period. Whilst it is true that neither had been forgotten in previous centuries, both receive renewed attention and an increase in importance in this period. The Renaissance became valued as the pre-eminent and foundational period for modern European culture – in combining so skillfully the classical past with modern reason, it offered a recipe for contemporary social organization. Similarly, Plato saw a corresponding revival in his fortunes. His texts, which had previously enjoyed only a secondary place on academic curricula next to Aristotle, now came to greater prominence. In particular, his political works such as the *Republic* took on greater importance in a world reordering itself in response to widespread political and economic change.

The flowering of Greek love in this period was an unintended consequence of these reforms. Certainly, it was not planned. Unlike the Renaissance recovery of Plato in which the main reformers do seem to have believed that male friendships developed on Platonic lines could be used to improve the soul, advocates for the adoption of Plato in the nineteenth century were keener to excise this aspect from the curriculum, or, at the very least, water it down so that its disruptive potential was effectively removed.

The case of Benjamin Jowett (1817–1893) is illustrative of the problems that these Platonic reformers faced. Jowett was one of the great social and university reformers of Victorian England. As a tutor at Balliol College in the 1840s and 1850s, he had been one of the important campaigners for change at Oxford University. In particular, Jowett had been influential in reforming the 'Greats' syllabus at the start of the 1850s. 'Greats' was the most important of the degrees offered at Oxford in this period. This curriculum was notable for a number of new features. There was more Greek than previously prescribed, and it replaced a narrow grammatical understanding of the texts with one that stressed the literary,

Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity Alastair J. L. Blanshard
 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

historical, and philosophical contexts of these texts' creation. Most importantly, it added a substantial amount of Plato onto the syllabus.

Plato was a particular favorite of Jowett. Indeed, it was often joked that Jowett's own liberal version of Christianity owed more to Plato than to the Bible. His belief in the importance of Plato to education can be seen not only in his Oxford University reforms, but also in his other great educational reform project, that of the Indian Civil Service. Again Plato was introduced onto the curriculum as part of Jowett's belief in the utility of texts such as the *Republic* for the future administrators of the British Empire. In the 1870s, he published a tremendously successful series of translations of the Platonic dialogues.

Jowett was a pillar of the establishment. His election to the mastership of Balliol in 1870, confirmed his position of authority within the university. Jowett had effectively run the college since 1864 and Balliol had every right to be regarded at that time as the premier college at Britain's leading university. Jowett famously once quipped that 'I would like to govern the world through my pupils' (Quinn and Prest 1987: 249). His education of three successive viceroys of India (Lansdowne, Elgin, and Curzon) does give some justification to this claim. He was well connected with members of the British and foreign royal families. His close friendship with Florence Nightingale is particularly notable, and he was famous enough to be the subject of mockery by contemporary satirists. In 1882, he was elected vice-chancellor of the university, a position that he held for four years.

The homosexuality of Plato presented Jowett with a problem. Certainly, his liberalism did not extend to countenancing such activity. When he encountered homosexual relationships between tutors and Balliol students, he quickly put a stop to them. His response to homosexual desire in Plato was to ignore it. Famously, he remarked in his introduction to his translation of Plato's *Phaedrus* (still the most widespread English translation of the text):

> To understand him [Plato], we must make abstraction of morality and of the Greek manner of regarding the relation of the sexes. In this, as in his other discussions about love, what Plato says of the loves of men must be transferred to the loves of women before we can attach any serious meaning to his words. Had he lived in our times he would have made the transposition himself. But seeing in his own age the impossibility of women being the intellectual helpmate or friend of man … seeing that, even as to personal beauty, her place was taken by young mankind instead of womankind, he tries to work out the problem of love without regard to the distinctions of nature (*Dialogues of Plato*, 3rd ed., p. 406).

Plato here becomes a healthy heterosexual trapped in a homosexual age.

Jowett's strategy of ignoring the homosexual content of the texts was not entirely successful. For many, it didn't go far enough. A number saw the Hellenization of education as a threatening move, one dangerous to morals. In 1887, Richard St. John Tyrwhitt attacked the reforms that Jowett had championed in

his essay 'The Greek Spirit in Modern Literature' (1887). Tyrwhitt's essay, which was published in *The Contemporary Review*, sought to raise a warning about the underlying agenda of the wholesale imitation of Hellenic culture advocated by figures such as Jowett. 'Nothing can be more charming than Hellenism as a literary habit', he writes, but there it should stop. Tyrwhitt was a keen promoter of the study of Greek grammar, but not Greek sentiment. The invocation of Plato cut no ice with Tyrwhitt. He claimed to expose what reformers smuggled under their promotion of Hellenism, namely a profound immorality: 'Hellenism means, at the present day and when you come to work it, the total denial of any moral restraint on any human impulses' (558). Such attacks were implicitly critical of Jowett. He and the other famous educational reformer with a fondness for Greek, Matthew Arnold (1822–1888), were specifically named in the essay and Jowett was quoted at length. Tyrwhitt cited Jowett's commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul where he stressed the profound difference between Christian morals and the Greeks. How, Tyrwhitt wondered, could Jowett have ever convinced himself of the moral soundness of endorsing Plato?

The success of attacks such as Tyrwhitt's can be seen in the way in which it stymied the careers of figures who were attempting to use Plato to advance the cause of male-to-male love. For example, the main figure under attack in Tyrwhitt's essay was the poet, essayist, and early homosexual rights activist John Addington Symonds (in many ways the attack on Jowett was collateral damage). John Addington Symonds (1840–1893) was arguably the most important proponent of the Greek love movement in late Victorian Britain. Others, such as aesthetes like Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde, might have given it more public prominence. However, no one thought as hard about the topic or wrote as extensively on it.

Symonds was the son of a prominent and wealthy Bristol medical family. We know so much about his internal emotional life owing to the preservation of an extraordinary memoir he wrote, and the fact that he was a contributor to some of the earliest scientific studies of human sexuality. Symonds lies behind a number of case studies in Havelock Ellis's groundbreaking *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897). Indeed, at one stage, it had been envisaged that Symonds would help co-author this work. The memoir and the case study are both confessional works, and Symonds uses the opportunity they provide to construct a distinct narrative of sexual development. What is striking is the way in which Hellenism plays such an important role in Symonds' sexual awakening. It is exposure to ancient Greece that acts as the catalyst for Symonds' true self to emerge. It is pictures of Greek statues that first excite him. He bursts into tears when his tutor gets him to translate the lines describing the god Hermes disguised as a beautiful youth. He chose to memorialize his first homosexual kiss with an assemblage of flowers and lines from the Greek poet Theocritus.

This conflation between Hellenism and homosexuality was only intensified by his experiences in Oxford. In 1858, he was admitted to Balliol and began his association with Jowett. Like many others, Symonds found that it was all too easy

to conflate the Oxford tutorial system of small-group teaching focused on reading and analyzing classical texts, with the world of eroticized didacticism they found in the dialogues of Plato. These 'Uranian circles' (the name is taken from Aphrodite Ouranos, the heavenly love of Plato's *Symposium*) produced numerous poems, letters, and essays in which they delighted in the beauty of the male form and professed deep and abiding affection for each other. They produced new translations of homoerotic texts such as Strato and Meleager. There are frequent allusions to Hyacinth, Charmides, Hercules and Hylas, and Narcissus in their work. Oddly, Achilles and Patroclus are not so frequently invoked. For Uranians the world of pagan freedom and intense male friendship were the highest goods. It may be an exaggeration when an undergraduate writes to Symonds to declare that everybody is currently composing *apologiai hyper paiderastias* ('defences of boy love'), but to the considerable number of figures who dined and caroused together exchanging witty classical allusions on homoerotic topics, it must have seemed that they had stumbled upon a gay utopia.

Symonds' reluctance to leave the environment of Oxford is understandable, and a fellowship at Magdalen ensured that he was not required to go down once he had taken his degree. Unfortunately for Symonds, in 1863 a scandal relating to his involvement with a Magdalen chorister broke out. Dealing with the aftermath proved too stressful for Symonds, and he retired to Europe to recuperate. He returned to England in 1865, but his health was never good and so he spent half his time in Europe and half in the UK. Eventually he settled in Davos, Switzerland, taking a Venetian gondolier, Angelo Fusato, as a lover. He died in 1893 of the tuberculosis that had plagued him for most of his life.

Symonds is a useful figure to concentrate upon because the choices he made during his life reflect the choices that a number of men from his class made. His decision to cast his homosexual life within a Greek mold, as we have seen, was readily followed by a number of his Oxford contemporaries. Symonds was particularly keen to reaffirm the distinction between 'Greek love' and 'gross sensuality'. It is a distinction that he explores in a number of his writings. His belief in the healthiness of Greek love led him to write one of the first political pamphlets in defense of homosexuality, *A Problem in Greek Ethics*. This pamphlet was addressed to 'medical psychologists and jurists'. It was a work of which Symonds was inordinately proud. 'One of the few adequate works of scholarship I can call my own', he says in his memoirs (232). The work is the first serious discussion of Greek homosexuality in the English language. Initially published in only 102 copies, it achieved wider distribution when it was appeared as an appendix to Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. The aim of the work was avowedly political. As Symonds observed, 'the truth is that ancient Greece offers insuperable difficulties to theorists who treat sexual inversion exclusively from the points of view of neuropathology, tainted heredity or masturbation'. The aim of *A Problem in Greek Ethics* was to ensure that nobody could be allowed to forget this. This strategy of translating the cultural prestige of Greece into political capital was not only

employed by Symonds. On the continent, we can see it paralleled in the work of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–1895).

Between 1864 and 1865, Ulrichs (under the pseudonym Numa Numantius) wrote five booklets on the topic of homosexuality. Although they advocated a biological origin of homosexuality, the so-called 'third sex' theory, his works are conspicuous in their references to Plato, especially Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium*, which seems to have been the inspiration for Ulrich's theories. Ulrich was an early political campaigner, and like Symonds, he saw his work as an important contribution in effecting homosexual law reform.

Symonds was of course not alone in his agitating for political change. His work occurs against a backdrop of political campaigning for the rights of women, the urban poor, and even animals. Symonds himself was involved in a number of these campaigns, most notably the education of women. Sometimes Greek love could map directly onto contemporary social campaigns. For example, a number of Greek lovers were involved in establishing clubs for working-class youth in inner city London. Here the pedagogic aspect of Greek love found expression in social reform. Other homosexual campaigners in the period included Edward Carpenter (1844–1929). Carpenter was less Hellenically inclined than Symonds, finding more inspiration in a combination of eastern eroticism and progressive socialism. Nevertheless, like Symonds he did find Greek material politically useful, and incorporated a large amount of it in works such as *Homogenic Love* (1894–5), *The Intermediate Sex* (1908), and *Ioläus: An anthology of male friendship* (1902).

Symonds' passion for Greek love also took him back to the Renaissance. Along with Walter Pater, Symonds was one of the key popularizers of this period within the English-speaking world. Indeed, between Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) and Symonds' *Introduction to the Study of Dante* (1872), *Sketches in Italy and Greece* (1874), *Renaissance in Italy: The age of despots* (1875), these men practically invented the discipline of Renaissance studies. Symonds was extremely useful in making primary sources available in English. His work on the sonnets of Michelangelo and the biography of Benvenuto Cellini ensured that these figures were well known to Victorian audiences. He also did nothing to hide the homosexual content of their writings.

His decision to live so much of his life in Europe, especially Italy, was one followed by a number of homosexuals. Partly, this was for practical reasons. The legal regimes in places such as Italy were much less restrictive and punitive. The lifestyle was also pleasant and inexpensive. Yet, the attraction to the Mediterranean was more than this. Here it was possible to forget your contemporary troubles and imagine yourself back in the days of Greece and Rome, when love between men and their youthful companions could be enjoyed without censure. Indeed, there arose here a mini-industry to service this fantasy. Locations such as Capri attracted a number of gay men to rented villas there. Wealthier ones such as the physician Axel Munthe and the German industrialist Friedrich Krupp built impressive houses where they hosted elaborate soirees and entertained their lovers, often

drawn from local youths. The association that Capri had as the location of the emperor Tiberius' debauched court was not lost on these figures.

This classically inspired homosexual decadence is best captured in the photographs of the German photographer, William von Gloeden (and his rivals Wilhelm Plüschow and Vincenzo Galdi). Von Gloeden (1856–1931) worked primarily in Sicily, and is especially associated with the town of Taormina. He had first come to Italy at the age of 23. Like Symonds, he suffered tuberculosis and the move had been recommended for his health. And again, like Symonds, the attractions of Italy proved invigorating in more ways than the doctors imagined. Indeed, the story of the sickly northern homosexual made well again by the warmth of the Italian summer and the arms of a young man verges on becoming a nineteenth-century cliché. Although he produced many well-regarded landscape and ethnographic pictures, von Gloeden is best remembered today for his series of photographs of young men either naked or scantily clothed in togas and artfully arranged in the Sicilian countryside. There is abundant use of classical props (urns, columns, reed pipes, garlands of laurel and roses, etc.) to give these scenes an antique feel. Indeed, Roland Barthes found this classical adornment too over the top, bordering on the kitsch. Von Gloeden offered his viewers a fantasy, but a fantasy which the immediacy of photography promised might actually be able to be made a reality. Von Gloeden often styled the hair of his model into little horns. In the wilds of Sicily, he seemed to say, satyrs still roamed free (Figure 10.1).

Symonds also had a keen interest in the visual arts. Like many other homosexuals, he was attracted to the writings of Winckelmann whom he felt shared a similar inclination to his own. Winckelmann's fame owes a lot to these homosexual writers. Walter Pater's famous essay on Winckelmann introduced him to a new audience and cemented his position amongst art historians. The beautiful boy became a regular subject in nineteenth-century art. Again, the inspiration was classical. John William Waterhouse rehearses versions of youthful male beauty in his *Hylas and the Nymphs* (1896) and *Echo and Narcissus* (1903), while Frederic Leighton's *Daedalus and Icarus* (c.1869) is a painting devoted to the beauty of the male form. The youthful vigor of Icarus is juxtaposed with the decrepit form of his father. His arm is raised so that a wing can be affixed providing an opportunity for the viewer to admire his absence of body hair and muscled torso. In paintings such as these, it is left to the viewer to find any erotic charge. Elsewhere the pederastic content of the paintings is made more explicit. In Alma-Tadema's *The Siesta* (1868), two men, one older, one younger, recline together while a flute girl plays in the background. In case anyone might mistake the nature of the relationship, Alma-Tadema added lines from Greek homoerotic verse onto the frame. In other cases, the subject matter was not classical, even though the aesthetic clearly was derived from classical precedent. Examples such as Leighton's *Jonathan's Token to David* (c.1868) or, in the United States, the numerous scenes of bathing boys painted by Eakins and Tuke, illustrate this trend. Of course, not all of this work passed without censure. For example, in 1874, the *Art Journal*

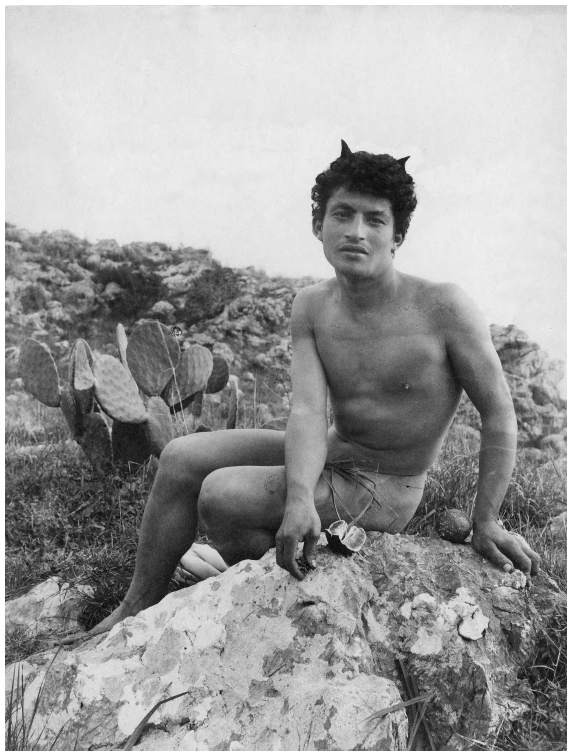

Figure 10.1 Wilhelm von Gloeden, *Faun*. The escapism of Arcadia. For many nineteenth-century homosexuals, the Mediterranean offered the possibility of recovering a world of lost pleasures. Münchner Stadtmuseum.

was less than complimentary about the degenerate effeminacy of Apollo in Briton Rivere's *Apollo with the Herds of Admetus* (1874). Clearly, there was something erotic, even political, about these canvases. The decadent nature of this art was celebrated in the pornographic novel, *Teleny*, where the homosexual artist Briancourt proposes to celebrate his love for the beautiful Teleny by commissioning a picture of Socrates and Alcibiades with Alcibiades having the features of Teleny. For Briancourt, there was no other way to make the nature of his passion clearer to an audience.

Sapphic Love

One of the distinctive features of the nineteenth century, especially the late nineteenth century, is a marked increase in 'lesbian visibility'. Yet the impact of classical material on lesbian life and self-identity is harder to quantify than for male

homosexuality. When compared to the topic of lesbian love, the impact of Greek literature, philosophy, and art on modern male homosexuality seems much easier to chart. In the following section, I want to trace some of the important concepts that have operated in the discourse surrounding female same-sex desire and its relationship with Greece. This discussion begins with an analysis of the classical material available for deployment in this discourse and proceeds to examine its utilization by critics of women who wish to use allegations of sexual activity as a method for controlling female power. It then examines the politics of reclamation and the counter-response by those who adopted the politically charged stance of self-identifying with 'lesbian' Greece. In short, this section sketches out a 'long history' for a number of particular formulations of female same-sex desire found in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It is worth observing at the start that the antique material on which to build a classicizing discourse of lesbian desire is certainly less voluminous than for male homosexual love. Unlike the masses of material that discusses male desire for other men in antiquity, there is very little which discusses female desire for women. This is one of the reasons that the archaic poet Sappho (c.620–c.560 BC) tends to dominate the field.

Yet even here, our sources are less than they should be. In truth, we know almost nothing about this figure from antiquity. The biographies of poets are famously unreliable. Take for example the tradition that she was married to a man called Kerkylas from the island of Andros. This 'fact' is nothing but a joke; the husband's name is a bad pun. As one scholar explains, his name translates literally as 'Dick Allcock from the Isle of Man' (Parker 1993: 309). Our only certainties are place and date. We know that she came from the island of Lesbos and must have been active towards the end of the seventh and the beginning of the sixth century BC. Apart from these facts, the rest of the story of Sappho is gleaned from her poetry or from wild rumors circulating later. According to these myths, Sappho was born into one of Lesbos' leading families, only to be orphaned at the age of six. She found employment as a poet, and made herself the center of a circle of girls to whom she dished out love and education in equal measure. She fended off the advances on her girls from rival older women, but was forced to mourn their loss when the pressure to marry stole them away. Passion ran high in her. Jealously over a courtesan causes her to fall out with her brother. She was capable of loving men as much as women. Despite having a daughter by Kerkylas, Sappho was apparently prepared to sacrifice her domestic situation for her love of Phaon, a boatman from Mytilene on Lesbos. When she was rebuffed by Phaon, Sappho was so distraught that she threw herself off a cliff and drowned.

Even if it is entirely fictional, the life of Sappho is, at least, full. The other classical sources that deal with female homoeroticism tend to treat this desire as a secondary form of love – a necessary, but less interesting byproduct of sexual symmetry. So, for example, Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium* clearly envisages the existence of a race of women who desire women. Yet the implications of this

are never explored elsewhere in the text. Lesbianism in Sparta receives exactly the same treatment. Here our sources mention female love of women, but this love arises only as a symptom of the intensity of pederastic relations. These relationships were so prevalent and esteemed that women began to imitate them and 'girls became the erotic objects of noble women' (Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 18.4).

Alternatively the sources are openly hostile. In a misogynistic society such as ancient Greece, female sexuality was always suspect. Women, it was thought, were given to great appetites and lacked the ability to control them. Their desire for food, drink, and sex knew no bounds. The best men could do was to segregate them from society and supervise their activities closely. Given this construction of female sexuality, it was only natural that men imagined women would turn to phallic substitutes such as dildos or engage in frottage to satisfy their desire. We have a number of Greek vase paintings that show women with dildos. In one case, a woman tries to satisfy herself with the pointy end of an upturned amphora. Men feared that women would become addicted to such dildo play, and in their poetry and comedy painted fantastic scenes of rampant women rubbing each other ('tribades', from the Greek *tribein* 'to rub') until they climax. Such images belong more to the projection of male fears than they do to reality.

This misogynistic attitude continues into the Roman period, during which the notion of the tribade consolidates into an identifiable figure. The tribade represents the worst male fear. She is the woman that likes to penetrate. Envisaged as having an exceptionally large clitoris or else using a strap-on dildo, she penetrates both men and women, although she does have a preference for penetrating women. According to the Latin fable writer, Phaedrus, the tribade was created when Prometheus got drunk and accidentally stuck male genitals onto a female body (Phaedrus 4.16). In contrast, the medical writer Caelius Aurelianus, in his translation of the Greek writer Soranus, regards tribadism as a mental condition, possibly due to defective heredity or an error in the act of contraception (*On Chronic Diseases* 4.9). As the most famous exponent of female-female love, it became common practice to diagnose Sappho as a tribade. Thus, when the poet Horace describes Sappho as 'masculine' (*Epistles* 1.19.28), a later commentator explains that Horace gives this epithet either because Sappho excelled at poetry, a normally male sphere of activity, or because she was a tribade. One suspects that Horace meant both.

These source problems are further compounded because we have so few documents, especially before the nineteenth century, written by women about their love for other women. Too often, we are forced to consider accounts written about these desires by hostile witnesses, mainly men (but occasionally women). The problems of exaggeration and fantasy in such accounts are obvious. Indeed, one of the functions of classical material seems to have been to plug gaps in these accounts. Given the authors' inability to know precisely what was going on, they have a tendency to imagine scenes derived from classical models. The inherent misogyny implicit in so much of this material only added to its attraction and suitability.

Sappho comes to speak for all female desire, especially desire of a transgressive nature. Her story allowed interpreters to make her emblematic for a variety of acts and emotions. Her love for men (e.g. Phaon) was as excessive as her love for women. Her suicide testified to the irrationality of her passion. At the same time, the skill of her poetry gave evidence of a cunning skill with persuasive words. There was much to alarm you about Sappho.

The construction of the sex life of Marie Antoinette (1755–1793) allows us to see this terror and its political deployment in action. Rumor and accusations about the behavior of the queen had begun almost immediately after her husband Louis XVI began his reign in 1774. In 1775, the queen wrote to her mother, the empress Maria Theresa, that her enemies 'have been liberal enough to accuse me of having a taste for both women and lovers'. The main vehicle by which the queen's erotic encounters were discussed was the numerous political pamphlets devoted to French court life that were published in France, England, and the Netherlands. These pamphlets were a byproduct of the printing revolution. Relatively cheap and easy to produce, it was possible to rent as well as buy them. In a world of limited literacy, they also became the main method for the diffusion of revolutionary ideas. For those unable to read or afford Rousseau, or any of the other radical philosophic texts, the pamphlets did most of the work in promulgating their thoughts.

The French court had long been a source of interest to publishers of pamphlets. Tales of amorous adventures had been around since the time of Louis XIV (1638–1715). Monarchs had often been forced to use agents to buy up these publications before they could enter France. Louis XV (1710–1774), for example, spent considerable sums buying up copies of pamphlets on the supposed sexual impotence of his grandson, the future Louis XVI (1754–1793). Yet even by eighteenth-century standards, the interest in the sex life of Marie Antoinette is remarkable. She is the subject of more pamphlets than any other contemporary figure. Her erotic adventures form the subject matter of over 126 separate pamphlets, and the most famous of these pamphlets circulated in large numbers, up to 30,000 copies.

The appeal of these pamphlets lay in the voyeuristic opportunity that they provided to their readers to gain an insight into the secret world of the court of Versailles and the Petit Trianon. In a world where it was a thrill to touch the foot or see the ankle of an aristocratic woman, the illicit pleasure of contemplating a naked queen either through the graphic descriptions of the text or the even more graphic etchings which accompanied a number of texts is understandable. These stories also had an important political content. The king embodied the state, and through personal anecdotes about the life of the royal family, it was possible to critique the regime. The weakness of the king was juxtaposed with the voraciousness and masculine determination of his wife. Marie Antoinette was at once 'frighteningly feminine and threateningly virile' (Colwill 2003: 143). It was a story that lent itself to the misogynistic stereotypes of antiquity. The denigration of the queen was given added impetus towards the end of her life when she was put on trial. The trial of a queen was unprecedented, and the success of the state's pro-

secution depended on its ability to portray her as morally and politically threatening to the Republic.

In the accounts surrounding Marie Antoinette we see the most excessive deployment of the accusation of tribadism in modern history. The rediscovery of the clitoris a century earlier, and the view that it was a 'female penis', had put the figure of the tribade, the penetrating woman, back into the spotlight. The term appears almost constantly in discussions of the queen's activities. She was supposed to have introduced the vice from Austria to France. Although sometimes the victim of the desires of others, such as the ambitious Duchesse de Polignac who supposedly used the hold that her ability to pleasure the queen gave her to advance the cause of her husband and herself, it was normally the queen who was portrayed as the center of corruption. Her lesbian desire became the prism through which one could read all court activity. If a woman was in favor, it was because she had succumbed to the queen's caresses. If she was out of favor, the reason was normally because she had refused Marie Antoinette's advances. Her lust knew no bounds. Marie Antoinette would leave a female lover for the embrace of a man, only to leave him in turn for another woman. The queen was depicted at the center of a circle of Parisian tribades. The English diarist Hester Piozzi summarizes contemporary propaganda effectively when she observes that 'The queen of France is at the Head of a Set of Monsters call'd by each other *Sapphists*, who boast her example; and deserve to be thrown with the He Demons that haunt each other likewise, into Mount Vesuvius' (*Thraliana* 2.740). Dildos make frequent appearances in these stories. In *La journée amoureuse*, the queen is depicted as being 'simultaneously masturbated and sodomized with an ivory dildo wielded by the princess de Lamballe'. Belief in the truth of this relationship between the queen and her longtime companion is reflected in the punishment meted out to the body of de Lamballe after she was killed in the September Massacres. Her genitals were mutilated and her severed head was carried to the prison where the queen was housed. Here the crowd demanded that the queen 'kiss the lips of her intimate'.

The use of the discourse of Sappho and tribadism to denigrate Marie Antoinette is emblematic of one way in which the classical world has impacted upon same-sex female desire. In this case, recycled misogyny is amplified to assuage male anxiety about politically powerful females, and restore strictly deliminated male/female roles in an age where revolution threatened to upset traditional gender divisions. We can parallel this usage of Sappho with a number of other examples. We find similar accusations made against the leading and influential actress Mademoiselle Raucourt whose life was pilloried in works such as *Anandrina, ou confessions de Mademoiselle Sapho* (1789). Again tribadism and lesbian love pass under the sign of Sappho in this text. Such activity was not limited to France. At some point around 1782, we find published in England *A Sapphic Epistle from Jack Cavendish to the Honourable and Most Beautiful Mrs D.* This text was poetic lampoon that made fun of the lesbian adventures of its protagonist, the anonymous Mrs D., in Italy. Despite its largely vitriolic tone the work was prepared to concede that

certain aspects of lesbian desire could be more pleasant for a woman than heterosexual contact and the text contrasts the more gentle form of lesbian love to the more brutal acts of deflowerment practiced by men ('tis martyrdom small wits declare/to torture such a beauteous fair/on such a monstrous spit').

Yet despite this usage, or perhaps more correctly, because of this usage, Sappho became a figure for reclamation. The list of what Sappho had stood for is endless. Yet among her many roles, one of the most important has been as the 'original lesbian' – the world's first homosexual woman. The adoption of the term 'lesbian' says it all. As we have seen, there were a number of terms that could have been appropriated. No one seems to have been terribly keen to self-identify as a 'tribade', for example. Just as Greek love existed in tension with the notion of sodomy – a tension that always threatened to collapse – so 'the lesbian' existed in tension with 'the tribade'. The term 'lesbian' locates one physically, on an island, at the feet of Sappho, a member of a community bound by love. This form of reclamation is most obvious from the nineteenth century onwards, but it has roots in a much older tradition of the use of classical iconography by women to legitimate and substantiate their position and express the nature of their desires. The iconography deployed by Queen Christina (1626–1689) in her self-presentation provides a useful example.

Born on December 8, 1626, Christina inherited the throne of Sweden at a very young age from her father King Gustaf Adolf II. Her rule coincided with the end of the Thirty Years War. Raised a Protestant, she was received into the Catholic Church in 1654 and abdicated her throne. After her abdication, she moved to Rome and lived most of her life in the Palazzo Riario. Throughout her life, Christina was a complicated figure who constantly challenged the expectations of her gender. She seems to have had a number of close intimate friendships with women, most notably Ebba Sparre. She regularly dressed as a man and in her autobiography which she addressed to God, she thanked him for 'not letting any of the defects of my own sex be inherent in my soul, which You in mercy have made altogether male, just as the rest of my being'. Given such behavior and sentiments, it is easy to understand why the rumor circulated that she was a hermaphrodite and why in 1965 her bones were exhumed to test these rumors.

Within the elaborate game of transgressive self-representation that Christina conducted, the artistic iconography of the Palazzo Riario plays an important part. Through motifs drawn from the classical world, Christina was able to tell a story about who she was and how she saw her place in the world. Two figures dominate the iconographic program, Alexander the Great and the goddess Athena. Both are regularly twinned with the queen to make her self-identification with them more certain. It is easy to understand the appeal of Athena. She is the virgin goddess. Clothed in armor, she never takes a husband. On her breast, she wears the Gorgon's head so that any man who looks at her is turned to stone. Other images also make the same point about gender reversal. One of the more spectacular pieces in the queen's collection was a large painting by Rubens of Omphale and

Hercules. Again one can understand the appeal of this image. The painting relates to an episode in the Hercules myth cycle when the hero, in order to atone for a murder he has committed, has been sold into slavery. He is bought by Queen Omphale who strips him of his lion-skin cloak and his club and dresses him in women's clothes. She in turn adopts the costume of the hero. It is a story about man brought down low and the transgressive power and desire of women. As a subject for painting, it seems to erupt whenever gender roles are under pressure. For example, it was extremely popular during the French regency and the early reign of Louis XV. It provided a general allegory for contemporary gender relations for a world where the rise in importance of salon society meant that many nobles were eschewing the battlefield (hanging up their metaphorical clubs) and finding themselves at the mercy of ambitious courtly women. It was an image well suited to display in the parlor of Queen Christina.

Christina is only one of a number of women who have found inspiration in antiquity for their fight against the role imposed on them by the gender expectations of their age. One could also discuss the appeal of the figure of the maenads, the wild uncontrollable female followers of Dionysus, for the first generation of suffragettes. Indeed, not just maenads, but also Medea, the murderous queen of Greek tragedy appealed as a role model to those first women who agitated for women's rights. At early suffragette meetings, women would often recite Medea's speech to the women of Corinth in which she compared the lot of women to men and argued that it was only women who knew true bravery. However, although there were other candidates for appropriation, it was Sappho who came to dominate the realm of female same-sex desire.

Part of the attraction of Sappho over other stories or emblems from antiquity is the strongly emotional nature of her work. Sappho not only seemed to tell you how to live your life, she also told you how to feel. This aspect of her work was known from antiquity. One of her most famous poems of lesbian attraction is preserved precisely because she seems to capture so perfectly the symptoms of love. The poem is preserved as Sappho fragment 31 ('He seems to me a god', *Phainetai moi*) and recounts the pangs of jealousy that Sappho feels when seeing a woman that she loves being courted by a man. Towards the end of the poem, she describes her feelings:

> If I just glance at you, even for a moment,
> it is impossible for me to speak
> my tongue is broken; and a
> a thin flame runs underneath my skin,
> I can see nothing,
> I hear only the drumming of my ears
> I drip with sweat
> And my body trembles
> and I go green like grass –
> I feel close to death.

The idea of Sappho running a school of erotic learning is one that has been a fixture of western culture. There is no evidence for it, although the story is regularly repeated. Yet in one aspect the story does contain a powerful truth, and that is that Sappho teaches us how to love. It is thanks to Longinus' discussion of the above poem in his *On the Sublime* that we have this work. His comments are particularly revealing. He describes the poem in this way: 'Are you not amazed at how she evokes soul, body, hearing, tongue, sight, skin as though they were external and belonged to someone else? And how at one and the same moment she both freezes and burns, is irrational and sane, is terrified and nearly dead, so that we observe in her not a single emotion but a whole concourse of emotions? Such things do, of course, commonly happen to people in love' (*On the Sublime* 10). Longinus situates Sappho here at the very beginning of the tradition of western love. She simultaneously speaks to the experience of love and constructs that experience. So real does Sappho's love seem that scholars have even ventured a medical diagnosis on the basis of it; her trembling is seen as a symptom of the condition of 'female inversion'. The Pulitzer prize-winning author Willa Cather spoke for many when she wrote, 'If all of the lost riches we could have one master restored to us … the choice of the world would be for the lost nine books of Sappho … those broken fragments have burned themselves into the consciousness of the world like fire'.

It is no accident, then, that poetry has proven to be such a powerful vehicle for lesbian expression. Even accounting for the fact that lesbian love first begins to become most clearly identifiable at the time of the dominance of poetry as an art form, it is striking how poetry dominates in anthologies of lesbian writing. C. Day Lewis jokes 'I shall never write real poetry. Women never do, unless they're invalids or Lesbians or something' (*Friendly Tree* 1.23, 1936), a quote which, oddly, makes into the *Oxford English Dictionary* under the entry for 'lesbian' as if poetry and lesbianism were somehow definitionally inseparable.

It was Sappho's fame as *the* poet of lesbian desire that led to one of the late nineteenth century's most intriguing literary hoaxes. In 1895, Pierre Louÿs published a work that purported to be a translation of ancient Greek poems written by a contemporary of Sappho called Bilitis. According to Louÿs, the tomb of the poet had only recently been discovered by Herr G. Heim near Amathus, and upon the walls of the tomb were inscribed Bilitis' poems. In addition to a fictional bibliography on the discovery, Louÿs included a biography of the poet in his poetic collection. Bilitis had apparently been born to a mixed Greek/Phoenician couple (hence her Phoenician name) in Pamphylia. After an unhappy love affair, she left Pamphylia and traveled to the island of Lesbos. Here she mixed in aristocratic circles, which included Sappho from whom she learned the art of poetry. On Lesbos, she fell in love with the young girl, Mnasidika. However, their love was blighted by Bilitis' jealousy. Distraught at the loss of her beloved, Bilitis left Lesbos and came to Cyprus where she found employment as a sacred prostitute in the temple of Aphrodite. The work entitled *Les chansons de Bilitis* ('The songs of

Bilitis') was a minor success amongst Parisian intellectual circles. Its contents were vaguely pornographic – one poem describes in detail Bilitis fondling Mnasidika's breasts – but were given a respectable air by their supposed pedigree. For lesbians, the poems were particularly attractive because they discussed not only female same-sex desire, but the pain, jealousy, loss, and resentment that went along with that desire. It seems unlikely that Louÿs actually intended to deceive anyone with his faked provenance, although as the work's circulation grew, a few were deceived. The work was reprinted in a number of translations and many editions included graphic illustrations of naked women kissing and caressing. Indeed, the publication so outraged the distinguished classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf that he published a series of works in which he attempted to rescue Sappho from the taint of such associations. He wrote a long review denouncing Louÿs' work. He deplored the image of the island of Lesbos that Louÿs had created. Wilamowitz's Sappho was no Bilitis. For Wilamowitz, Sappho was the paradigm of the loving wife and mother, and nothing could be allowed to threaten this image, even a fictional literary parody. The legacy of the Bilitis episode is preserved in the name of one of the earliest lesbian advocacy groups in the United States, 'The Daughters of Bilitis', which was founded in San Francisco in 1955 and published the important lesbian journal, *The Ladder*.

It is in the nineteenth century that we can see most clearly the lesbian appropriation of Sappho. Among her most passionate fans were the Anglo-French poet Renée Vivien (1877–1909) and her lover Natalie Barney (1876–1972). Born Pauline Mary Tarn, Vivien experienced a privileged, but nonetheless troubled childhood, shuttled between London and Paris. In 1899, Vivien established herself in Paris as part of the city's vibrant lesbian community. She had a number of affairs, but the two great loves of her life were Violet Shillito and Natalie Clifford Barney, both daughters of American industrialists. Throughout her career, Vivien constantly returned to the poetry and story of Sappho. Arguably, Vivien's most important work was the collection of translations of Sappho she published in 1903. The translation, which included the Greek text and other poems inspired by Sappho's original, also contained a personal and passionate introduction to the poet and her world. Sappho was more than a literary interest for Vivien, she wanted to recreate the world of Sappho in Paris. She held a number of Sapphic salons in which her lover, Natalie Barney, decorated the garden with busts of the poet, a number of antique-style *chaises-longues*, and a complete Greek temple. Guests often dressed in Greek style and to commemorate one such salon, they staged a play about the life of Sappho written specially for the occasion by Barney. In 1904, Vivien traveled to Lesbos with Barney to attempt to establish an artists' colony there. Although unsuccessful, Vivien continued to be drawn to the island and she visited frequently up until the time of her death.

Sappho held a similar fascination for 'Michael Field', the poetic persona of Katherine Harris Bradley (1846–1914) and Edith Emma Cooper (1862–1913). Although niece and aunt, these two women lived together in what they styled a

'female marriage'. Together they wrote a number of plays and volumes of poetry. The influence of Sappho can be seen in their first volume of verse, *Long Ago* (1889). For example, the poem 'Atthis, my darling' is written in the persona of Sappho and imagines the poet lying in bed next to her beloved, sharing everything, even the same breath. Sappho makes a number of other appearances in their work, especially the early poems before the women's conversion to Catholicism. After their conversion, the women seem to have sought other motifs than Sappho to express the nature of their love. The liberated pagan was no longer to their taste.

For many others, Sappho never lost her attraction. Writing by women which uses the vehicle of Sappho to express their deep affection for other women in this period is considerable. This lesbian appropriation of Sappho came in the context of, and piggybacked on, a much wider Sappho-mania that occurred within the nineteenth century. A number of nineteenth-century translations of Sappho did nothing to disguise the lesbian nature of her poetry, and it is clear that such work proved inspirational to a number of lesbian writers. Poets and artists of all types were fascinated with her story in this period. Baudelaire identified himself with the poet in his *Fleurs du mal*. Swinburne championed Sappho as the 'greatest poet that ever lived'. His poem 'Anactoria' is an extended homage to her. Artists became fascinated by her story, although the Sappho that they prefer to depict is the heterosexual Sappho, the suicidal lover of Phaon. Ovid had made this relationship the subject of one of the poetic epistles in his *Heroides*, and this ensured the story's widespread circulation. The eighteenth-century French painter, David, had painted Sappho brightly colored and delirious in the arms of Phaon, but for the decadent and darker world of the fin de siècle, it was her suicide from the Leucalian rocks that attracted everyone's attention. Numerous pictures of Sappho leaping from the cliffs were produced during this period.

Sappho's popularity with lesbians continued into the twentieth century. The range of responses to Sappho are so numerous and varied that is impossible to catalog them. Instead, it is better to examine how some women have responded to the Sapphic tradition to illustrate the variety and complexity of the responses. One of the most complex was the response of Hilda Doolittle (1886–1961), who wrote under her initials, 'H.D.'. Doolittle was born in Pennsylvania where she came under the influence of the modernist poet Ezra Pound. After initially enrolling at Bryn Mawr College to study Greek, she left university owing to health problems and became engaged to Pound. She followed Pound to England and later Italy and although their engagement did not last, she remained a close friend and married an associate of Pound, Richard Aldington. Throughout her life, Doolittle also entertained female lovers. When her marriage to Aldington eventually disintegrated, Doolittle took up with Annie Winifred Ellerman, who became her companion for the rest of her life.

Hellenism clearly informs a lot of H.D.'s work. She produced translations of a number of dramatic and poetic Greek texts and her poetry makes numerous allusions to the classical world. Amongst the many allusions and models, Sappho holds

a place of particular importance. H.D. wrote two essays on Sappho. In addition to substantial borrowing of Sapphic vocabulary and motifs in her poetry, over 30 poems include actual fragments of Sappho within them. It is striking, however, that H.D. never produced an explicit translation of Sappho. For H.D. there was something of religious dread about Sappho, her poems were treated as 'inspired gospels', only possible to be gazed upon indirectly. It was not just that H.D. imagined that she and Sappho shared the same desire or that Sappho provided a vocabulary by which H.D. could express her feelings, Sappho became a model for the very poet that H.D. wanted to become. This wasn't a love affair, it was a fatal attraction. Sappho's work didn't seem just to mirror H.D.'s joy, but also her sorrow and sense of loss and abandonment. Sappho's resentment at the pressure to marry provided H.D. with a model on which to craft her own ambiguous attitudes to the institution. In her engagement with Sappho, H.D. found a confidante, lover, poetic model, and therapist.

Outside of the field of literary production, the appeal of Sappho was equally strong. In the twentieth century, Sappho became a lesbian brand name, used as a queer signifier to mark out lesbian clubs, bookshops, reading groups. In the 1970s, Sidney Abbott and Barbara Love published *Sappho was a Right-On Woman: A liberated view of lesbianism*. In fact, despite the title, the book contains little discussion of the poet. She exists only as a label, a marker of lesbian identity. To say that Sappho was 'right on' is enough. To one's readers it says plenty. It stakes out a position, an identity. We see this identification at play in 1896 when one of the founders of the 'science of sexuality', Magnus Hirschfeld, published his first sexological text, *Sappho and Socrates*. Sappho has become the counterpoint, the flipside, the female mirror image of the gay Greek male lover. Just as Sappho has been appropriated so has her island. Renée Vivien started the trend of lesbian pilgrimages to Lesbos at the start of the twentieth century, and matters have only snowballed since. The island of Lesbos has become an important lesbian travel destination, especially for lesbians from Germany and England. Indeed, the Sapphic connotations have threatened to overwhelm any other identity for the island. In 2008, there was a legal attempt by a number of Greek islanders to forbid the use of the term 'lesbian' to denote anything other than a person or object pertaining to the island of Lesbos. The case was rejected by the Greek court. The lesbians had beaten the Lesbians.

A Mixed Legacy: Greek Love in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

It is probably a good thing that John Addington Symonds never lived to see the Wilde trial. For it represents the end of the flourishing of explicit claims of 'Greek love' which Symonds so firmly advocated. Not only did the condemnation of Wilde seem to be a rejection of any classicizing strategy to legitimate homosexual

attraction, but it also occurred against a background in which such arguments and lifestyles became harder to maintain. The 'scientific' study of sexuality began to displace Plato as providing an account of the origins of love. As Wilde remarked in a letter to his publisher Leonard Smithers, 'My life cannot be patched up. Neither to myself, nor others, am I any longer a joy … I am now simply a pauper of a rather low order: the fact is that I am also a pathological problem in the eyes of German scientists: and even in their works I am tabulated, and come under the law of *averages*!' (Wilde to Smithers, 11/12/1897, ed. Holland). Greece was squeezed out of a field that became dominated by sexological treatises devoted to discussions of brain size, heredity, and infantile experiences.

The other problem that adherents to notions of Greek love encountered was the practical problem of living out their fantasies. The Mediterranean had always provided a safe haven for their activities. However, the Depression and two world wars changed the nature of the place for the fleeing homosexual. It no longer became financially viable to live in exile in the Mediterranean, and the rise of movements such as fascism in Italy and Greece meant that these locations were not as welcoming as they had been previously.

Of course, the legacy of Greek love was not so easy to erase. We have already seen the way in which homosexual notions about the beautiful boy were conditioned by Greek aesthetics. In the work of von Gloeden, that aesthetics was translated into the modern world through the medium of photography. Photography continued to be an important medium for the transmission of Greek notions of the male 'body beautiful'. Photographers such as F. Holland Day produced work setting beautiful young male bodies in Mediterranean-style settings. As notions of Greek love, with its strict age hierarchy, were diluted in the twentieth century, the aesthetic changed from the beautiful boy to the beautiful youth/man. Again the model is Greek (the lack of body hair, the nudity, the posing, the musculature, the use of classical props), but this time photographers look more to the well-developed athletes of the classical canon. The rise of 'beefcake' photography came to fill a market already established by pioneers such as von Gloeden.

Publications such as the *Physique Pictorial* routinely used classical props to provide an 'artistic alibi' for their homoerotic photography. Institutions such as the Athletic Model Guild provided an almost endless number of good-looking muscular men ready to be posed against columns, holding spears, crowned with wreaths, or placed in revealing Roman costume (and sometimes all three). Customers who were particularly taken by the images were able to obtain copies by mail order. However, it was not just the demand for soft porn that kept the classical body alive in twentieth-century visual culture. The centrality of the imagery of the 'Greek body' to western notions of beauty meant that almost any artist who wished to engage with the male form needs to engage with it. Modern artists from Warhol to Mapplethorpe have each grappled with and responded to the classical body.

We see a similar phenomenon in gay film that often appropriates classical aesthetics. In gay erotic films, for example, the absence of body hair is taken to such

an extreme that actors routinely remove all pubic hair. Only in the category of 'bear' films do we see figures with their natural body hair retained. The importance of fantasies about classical mores in contemporary gay film culture is shown in works such as *Pink Narcissus* (1965–71). The film is based on a series of vignettes which aim to shown the full repertoire of homosexual fantasy. Matadors appear alongside policemen, sailors, and bikers. Yet the ancient world gets as much screen time as the modern. There are extended fantasy scenes set in a Hellenized bucolic landscape and a lush Roman imperial boudoir.

Indeed, many gay men have come to see the legacy of Greece in homosexual aesthetics as a problematic one. Contemporary gay culture is routinely derided and criticized for its focus on youth and beauty. The problems of 'body fascism' and the loss of desirability that comes with age are issues that the gay community is starting to confront. The recognition that there are political consequences that flow from Greek love is one of the significant developments in the twentieth century. Contrasting attitudes towards Greek love is one of the defining and divisive issues in the homosexual rights movement.

In its initial phases in the early to mid-twentieth century, the early gay rights movement was positively disposed to the past, particularly the Hellenic past. Here the practice echoes that of Symonds and Carpenter at the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Carpenter provides a bridge between the two periods. He didn't die until 1929, and was active in producing works on homosexual rights until his death. The political strategies adopted by these groups have been called 'assimilationist'. They militated for equality of opportunity and treatment and wished to gain acceptance to all the institutions of the state. As a result, a strategy of attempting to write oneself into history and culture, especially high culture, is understandable. Mail-order tracts were produced on the topic of famous homosexuals from history, and these devoted considerable space to discussions of the Greeks. Promotion of knowledge of Greek texts, especially in translations that didn't seek to hide their homoerotic content, was regarded as a priority. Carpenter's *Iolăus* (1902, reprints 1907, 1908, 1917) is one such example. Others include the reprinting of the speech from the *Symposium* and the description of the effeminate playwright, Agathon in the US gay journal, *ONE.* The sense of a shared and common past created through recourse to a Hellenic heritage is reflected in the remarkable homogeneity in the names of early gay groups. Despite being separated by ethnic, political, and linguistic divisions, early groups routinely invoke Greece in their names or titles of their publications. So we have 'Arcadie' in France, 'Hellas' and 'Uranus' in Germany, 'Pan' and 'Ganymedes' in Denmark, 'Adonis' in Japan, and 'Dionysus' in the United States.

Yet even in 1954, there were members of the gay community who felt the 'great gays of the past' strategy had become a worn-out cliché. 'I feel silly in a skirt', says one of the models about his classical costume in a 1960s' gay erotic film. It is a sentiment which many of his audience would seem to have shared. The criticism of staking out a political position so dependent on the cultural prestige of Greece

came from a variety of quarters. For a number on the Left, this approach was considered too elitist. Socialists such as Carpenter had been able to square his political beliefs with recourse to the classical past. However, for many, the class associations of classics were a stumbling block. For too long, working-class men and women had been excluded from the realm of upper-class classical education. Classics' status as an elite-marker made it hard to swallow. Moreover, as devotees of Marxist history, it was hard to eulogize any slave-owning society as one worth imitating. For others, assimilationist strategies based on the prestige of Greece seemed to miss the radical potential for alternate sexualities to challenge and disrupt conventional life. Finally, for some, the worthiness of the Greek world offered seemed a little too preachy. Greek love never let you forget that with pleasure came a good dose of education.

This frustration and sense of unease about the primacy of the classical world in the construction of homosexual identity was given scholarly backing with the rise of post-structuralist criticism of sexuality, particularly that of Michel Foucault (1926–1984). Foucault has been called the most important queer theorist of the modern age. His *History of Sexuality* was first published in 1976. Its impact in the field of the study of sexuality has been remarkable. Foucault stressed the comparative modernity of the strict binary division between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Homosexuality was more than a desire, it was an identity. In his famous formulation, the homosexual was 'a personage, a past, a case history, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology' (Foucault 1979: 43). Moreover this identity was the product of particular social, economic, religious, and philosophic forces. For Foucault, the homosexual had no decent past, and this attested to the radical potential of his/her future. Foucault's work has been particularly influential with gay activist circles owing to its political utility. By rejecting 'sexuality' as a fixed, essential element of a person's make-up, he rescues homosexuality from being treated as a medical or psychological problem and ends the search for elements such as the 'gay gene' (and its associations that homosexuality might be able to be 'cured' or eradicated like other genetic disorders). His view also situates homosexuality within a radical politics of resistance, and ends any hope of true assimilation. The homosexual is 'other', and so incapable of reclamation.

In such a view, the status of Greece in modern homosexual life is diminished, although paradoxically, Foucault devoted two volumes of the *History of Sexuality* to discussions of Greece and Rome. Here stress was laid on the discontinuity between the modern and ancient world. Foucault traced the building blocks of modern sexuality to the ancient world, but argued that whatever we find in the ancient world was a far from complete structure. His views have been particularly important within classical scholarship, and constitute the current orthodoxy within the study of ancient sexuality.

Recent years have seen a deliberate move away from the explicit avowal of Greek love such as we find in the defense speech of Oscar Wilde. Yet, the legacy of the

Greek world still lurks under the surface, always ready to bubble up. For example, no one has ever really 'forgotten' that Alexander the Great indulged in homosexual acts. The gang of Greek lawyers who tried to get an injunction because Alexander was depicted as 'gay' in Oliver Stone's film *Alexander* (2004) were routinely derided for their ignorance and desire to whitewash historical 'fact'. Emily Eakin commenting on the issue sums up the somewhat paradoxical attitude of twentieth-century culture on the matter: 'Never mind that the ancient Greeks didn't have rigid categories for sexual orientation. Or that Alexander also had three wives and possibly a couple of mistresses. He has already been anointed a "gay" hero at gayheroes.com' (*New York Times*, November 26, 2004). This list of contemporary references could be extended. From the homoerotic encounter between Pentheus and Dionysus in *Dionysus in 69* (1969), the avant-garde production of Euripides' *Bacchae*, to the punk transsexual musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1998) which reworked Aristophanes' speech from the *Symposium* to music, when it comes to homosexuality there is always someone, somewhere, who won't let you forget the Greeks.

11

Epilogue

Scenes from a Courtroom II

Another useful reminder that Greek love is best regarded as dormant rather than dead was provided by a scene played out in the courtrooms of Colorado in 1993. In that year, the philosophers Martha Nussbaum and John Finnis squared off, and, in a series of affidavits and witness testimonies, argued over who knew better the sex lives of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. This legal debate arose because, in 1992, the state of Colorado had passed an amendment to its state constitution that made it illegal to offer, amongst other rights, protections against discrimination to gays and lesbians. The amendment nullified protections that had already been offered to residents of the municipalities of Aspen, Boulder, and Denver. In deciding the case, the court asked Colorado to prove that the amendment was 'supported by a compelling state interest and narrowly drawn to achieve that interest in the least restrictive manner possible'. In arguing for a 'compelling state interest', Colorado alleged, amongst other arguments, that it was merely doing what its Hellenic predecessors had done – expressing concern about, and attempting to regulate, a set of morally degenerate and socially harmful relationships.

This was certainly the argument of the Oxford philosopher John Finnis, who claimed that 'all three of the greatest Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, regarded homosexual conduct as intrinsically shameful, immoral, and indeed depraved or depraving' (Affidavit of October 8, 1993: 35). Furthermore, according to Finnis, 'to know or tell Plato's views on the morality, the immorality, of all such non-marital conduct as homosexual sex acts, one need go no further than … unmistakably clear passages in the *Laws*, texts with which every other text of Plato can readily be seen to be consistent' (Finnis 1994: 1061).

Nussbaum responded to Finnis' claims using the full panoply of classical learning. Socrates' male lovers were paraded in the court documents. His lust for the young beauty Charmides, as shown in the Platonic dialogue of the same name, was invoked. The art of textual criticism was used to show that Finnis' contentions

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 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7

were based on corrupt passages of text. Finally, philological tools were used to argue that Finnis had misunderstood the Greek of the texts that he was relying upon. Nussbaum's evidence on this last point has not been without controversy.

It is worthwhile focusing on this moment for a number of reasons. It usefully reminds us of the ever-present potential of the classical world to re-enter the modern. As we saw with the account of the Wilde trial that began Part II, this was not the first time that Greek sexual protocols had intruded into a legal proceeding, and Nussbaum clearly thought that this might not be the last time that the court would need to rely on the expert testimony of a classicist in discussing the regulation of sexual affairs. In an appendix to her discussion of the case, she published a guide to legal practitioners for establishing the credentials of such witnesses. We should not forget the ability of the classical world to sneak in and catch us by surprise. It is unlikely that the drafters of the Colorado amendment had Plato's *Laws* in mind when they put the motion to a referendum. Yet, the status and meaning of the text became, for a short time, an important issue in a complex and difficult case.

In matters of sexuality, the Greek world still resonates in a way that is different from other cultures. Part of the attraction for the Colorado case was the non-Christian nature of the culture. Throughout the case, the state of Colorado was keen to distance itself from any suggestion that in passing this amendment it was seeking to impose a Christian morality on its citizens. Instead, it cast its arguments in terms of trying to protect families, children, and 'public morality'. In arguing that the Greeks were equally concerned about homosexuals, the state of Colorado hoped to establish pagan credentials for their homophobia. Yet, there are numerous other non-Christian cultures that could have been invoked. It is odd, for example, that there was no real discussion of Rome in the court documents. Greece was deployed because Greece, as far as same-sex attraction is concerned, is not just *any* culture.

Notes and Further Reading

Preface

History of sexuality: The writings within this field are extensive. Garton (2004) provides a good historical survey of the field.

Reception studies: An accessible introduction to the field is provided by Hardwick (2003). See also the collection of essays in Martindale and Thomas (2006), especially the introductory essay by Martindale.

Classics and non-western sexuality: For the Sappho lesbian support group, see Akanksha and Malobika (2007). The address for the group's website is www.sapphokolkata.org/sappho. See also Martins (2006). For a demonstration of the utility of texts such as Sappho's poetry and Plato's *Symposium* in discussion of contemporary Indian sexual ethics and scandal, see Bandyopadhyay (2007), especially pages 26–36. For a discussion of the globalization of sexual discourse and practice, see Altman (2001).

Pagan vs. Christian: The classic study on the impact of Christianity on attitudes to the body and sex in antiquity is Brown (1988). He presents a picture in which the strict division between 'pagan' and Christian practice has not yet solidified and is far more fluid than later traditions would have us believe. In addition, he stresses the often 'pagan' origins of many attitudes towards the female body and the veneration of chastity. In this respect, see also the work of Rousselle (1988). On the distinction between pagan and Christian in the Victorian imagination, see Turner (1999). This study illustrates the way in which the story of Christianity in Rome could be told not just to exalt Christian values, but also specific branches of Christian theology.

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Roman Vice

Introduction

Caligula's Ball: Corrin and Moore (2002).

Terror sex: The origins of the term 'terror sex' have been attributed to an article by Cole Zazdin entitled 'Sex in a time of terror' on the website www.salon.com.

Rome in pornographic cinema: Nisbet (2009).

Ben Hurry (c.1960): A copy of the film is available on *Gay Erotica from the Past, 1948–1969*. The film is discussed in Waugh (1996): 57; Wyke (1997b): 62–3 and (2001): 240.

The Captives (c.1959): see Waugh (1996): 267 and plate 3.64 (a still from the film showing Frank Hlivjka in Roman costume).

The brothel at Pompeii: The best treatment is Fisher and Langlands (2009) which includes a bibliography on the site and its excavations as well as an analysis of tourists' responses to the site.

Narratives of decline and fall: A marvelous example is provided at the start of Pomeroy (2008: viii, and provides the title for this work) in an interview with Joan Collins conducted by *Playboy* magazine. Joan Collins: 'There's a moral laxity around. Herpes and AIDS have come as the great plague to teach us all a lesson … It's like the Roman Empire. Wasn't everybody running around just covered in syphilis? And then it was destroyed by the volcano'.

Naked Bodies

An Introduction (less than successful) to the Naked Body

Horatio Greenough and his statue of Washington: Wright (1956) and (1963). For a discussion of attitudes to nudity in nineteenth-century American art and techniques of concealment, see Seymour (1986). On the history of the nude, Clark (1956) remains the classic study. See also Smith (1996). For a history and analysis of attitudes to nudity, see Barcan (2004). On the erotics of marble sculpture in the period, see also Herbert (1991).

Influence of Phidias: Craven (1963) and Richman (1977 – on French's *Seated Lincoln*).

Status of classicism in art in America: Crawford (1979). See also Dimmick (1987) and Gerdts (1971).

Equestrian statue to Washington: Dimmick (1991).

Chanting Cherubs: Gerdts (1971): 62.

Hiram Powers' Greek Slave: Robertson and Gerdts (1965); Gerdts (1971): 62–3; Green (1982). For other examples of Powers' exercises in classicism, see Fryd

(1986). For a parallel case where eroticism and classicism collide, see Lubin (1989).

The Naked Body in Greece

Greek nudity: For a discussion of the topic in art and Greek attitudes towards nudity, see Bonfante (1989); Osborne (1997); Stewart (1990): i.105–6, (1997); and Wilkinson (1978): 81–110.

Winckelmann's views on nudity: See his essay 'On the imitation of the painting and sculpture of the Greeks' (1755). His views are discussed in Osborne (1997): 505–6.

Schliemann and Gladstone: The story is recounted in Wilkinson (1978): 92–3.

Kouroi: Richter (1960) provides an authoritative study of the phenomenon. Stewart (1990): i.109–10 also provides a good introduction that places these sculptures within their art historical context.

Temple of Zeus at Olympia: The best discussion of the sculptures is Ashmole and Yalouris (1967).

Siphnian treasury: For discussion of the building and its sculptural program, see Moore (1977); Stewart (1990): i.128–9; Vian (1951); Waltrous (1982).

Parthenon frieze: Both Brommer (1979) and Neils (2001) provide good general illustrated discussions of the frieze.

Depiction of satyrs: Lissarague (1990).

Foundry cup: Attic red-figured cup, c.490 BC. Berlin, Staatliche Museum 2294. For an illustration, see Stewart (1990): ii.226.

Actaeon: For a survey of the representations of the story, see Guimond (1981).

Depictions of courtesans and prostitutes: See Keuls (1985), especially pages 153–86. This work provides an excellent introduction to the representation of sex in Attic vase painting.

Women and veiling: The most comprehensive study is Llewellyn-Jones (2003).

Maenads and Amazons: Cohen (1997) provides a good summary of the various ways in which the female breast is exposed in classical art.

Naked Romans

Roman nudity and its reflection in art: The best introduction is Hallett (2005). For previous discussions of the topic, see Hallett (2005): 309–11. See also discussion in Bonfante (1989).

Terminology for nudity: Sturtevant (1912) and Mann (1974).

Romulus' prohibition on nudity: Plutarch, *Life of Romulus* 20.3 with discussion in Hallett (2005): 62.

'Going under the yoke': See discussion in Hallett (2005): 64 with references.

The arrival of nude statues in Rome: Zanker (1988): 5–8 and Hallett (2005): 102–58.

Hellenism in the Roman Republic: For a discussion of the impact on Hellenism on the intellectual life of the late Roman Republic, see Rawson (1985). For a discussion of the place of such trends within the socio-economic dynamic of Roman expansion, see Beard and Crawford (1985).

Depiction of Octavian and Sextus Pompey: Zanker (1988), especially pages 33–64, provides an overview of the role of image in political competition in the late Republic. For Sextus Pompey and Octavian, see Hallett (2005): 97–8, 117–20.

Nude statues of Nero and Constantine: Hallett (2005): 178–9.

Parthenon relief as contemporary event: See the discussion in Boardman (1984) and Osborne (1987): 100–3.

Historical reliefs: Hallett (2005): 92–3, 224–5.

Female nude statues: The phenomenon is discussed in D'Ambra (1996), (2000); and Hallett (2005): 199–201.

Naked Artemis: See, for example, a terra sigillata bowl in the British Museum (M64) that preserves depictions of the whole sequence of events in the Actaeon myth. We also find Artemis naked on Roman sarcophagi such as one in the Louvre collection in Paris (Inv. No. 459). Both are illustrated in Guimond (1981): nos. 91 and 106.

The Love of Art and the Art of Love

Pygmalion: On this story as paradigmatic in art history, see Elsner (1991). For the Pygmalion tradition in English literature, see Miles (1999): 332–449.

Agalmatophilia: Stewart (2003): 44, 265–7.

Zeuxis and Parrhasius: The tale of their competition is told in Pliny, *Natural History* 35.65, cf. Rumpf (1951).

Clement of Alexandria: See, for example, *Exhortation to the Greeks* IV.51. For displays of nudity in Byzantium, see Zeitler (1999).

Agalmatophilia as psychiatric condition: Scobie and Taylor (1975) provide a good introductory bibliography to the writings of sexologists that treat the condition as well as situating it within contemporary psychiatric practice. For a more critical treatment of the disease, see White (1978).

Roman erotic art: For a discussion of attitudes to Roman erotic art, see Clarke (1998); and Johns (1982).

House of the Centenary: Clarke (1998): 161–9.

Box 2.1 Aphrodite of Cnidus

Ancient sources: Pliny, *Natural History* 36.20–3; *Greek Anthology* 6.160; [Lucian], *Erotes* 11–17.

Modern discussion and reception: Beard and Henderson (2001): 123–32; Bénéjam (2003). See also Bober and Rubinstein (1986): 59–61, 167; Clark (1956):

73–5; Stewart (1990): i.176–8, 279–80; and, importantly, Havelock (1995). For Dashwood and the Medmenhamites, see Partridge (1958): 134–48.

Box 2.2 The Secret Cabinet of Pompeii

History and the content of the collection: See Grant (1975); García y García and Jacobelli (2001); and Kendrick (1996).

On the *Museum Secretum* in the British Museum: See Johns (1982): 29–32.

Obscene Texts

Illustrating the Unspeakable

Beardsley: For an introduction to Beardsley's work, see Reade (1967); Harris (1967); and Snodgrass (1995). Benkovitz (1981) and Weintraub (1976) provide biographical accounts of his life and work. The best discussion of issues of sexuality and the erotic in the work of Beardsley is Zatlin (1990).

On the reaction following Wilde's arrest: See Benkovitz (1981): 120–3; Brophy (1968): 90–1; and Weintraub (1976): 125–9.

Beardsley and Juvenal: For the discussion of the drawings of the *Sixth Satire*, see Zatlin (1990): 55–59, 71, 81–3. Beardsley refers to the drawings in his correspondence, see *Letters* (ed. Maas, Duncan, and Good) 149–55, 166, 184, 185, and 263. See also his remarks on the comparison between Juvenal and Volpone in Snodgrass (1995): 221. The impact of Beardsley's frontispiece can be seen by the fact it was lampooned in *Punch* (November 24, 1894). For discussion of the lampoon, see Weintraub (1976): 123 and Zatlin (1990): 81–3.

Illustrations of the Aeneid: Harris (1967): 7–9.

Reproduction in the calf muscle: The passage occurs in Lucian, *True History* 22. For the parallel birth of Dionysus see Apollodorus, *Library* 3.4.3; Diodorus Siculus 5.52; Euripides, *Bacchae* 1–3, 242–5, 286–97.

Beardsley and pornography: For a discussion of Beardsley and his relationship with erotic art, especially Japanese art, see Colligan (2006): 129–61.

Works discussed: *True History* (Reade 1967: 252–6); *Juvenal's Sixth Satire* (Reade 1967: 371, 392, 468–70), *Lysistrata* (Reade 1967: 460–7), self-portrait (Reade 1967: 428).

Smithers: For the contrasting views on Leonard Smithers, see the opinions of William Rothenstein ('a bizarre and improbable figure – a rough Yorkshireman with a strong local accents and uncertain h's. the last man, one had thought, to be a Latin scholar and a disciple of M. Le Marquis de Sade') and Oscar Wilde ('He is the most learned erotomaniac in Europe. He is also a delightful companion and a dear fellow'). Both Rothenstein and Wilde are quoted in Upstone (2003): 510.

Sir Richard Burton: On the erotica produced by Burton, see Colligan (2006): 56–95.

Mallock's New Republic: An edition is available published by Leicester University Press in 1975. For an introduction to the text and its themes, see Ramos (2006).

Beardsley and contemporary sexual politics: For a discussion of Beardsley's work and its relations to contemporary concerns about the 'new woman' and gender roles, see Zatlin (1990), especially chapters 1 and 2. For discussion of sexual ethics in the period, see Showalter (1990), especially pages 38–58.

Talking Dirty

Juvenal's Sixth Satire: On the debate about whether the poem is anti-women or anti-marriage, see Braund (1992) and Watson (2008). On attitudes to women in satire, see Richlin (1984).

Pudicitia: For discussion of the term and analysis on the scholarship on the virtue, see Langlands (2006): 1–36.

Lucretia: See Livy *History of Rome* 1.57.6–60.3. For discussion of the story, see Joplin (1990); Joshel (1992); and Langlands (2006): 78–122. On the post-antique tradition of Lucretia, see Camino (1995) and Donaldson (1982).

Bona Dea scandal: For an account of the scandal see Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 1.12 and Plutarch, *Life of Caesar* 9–10. For discussion of the scandal and a more general account of the rites, see Brouwer (1989) and Staples (1998): 13–51.

Roman satire: For an introduction to satire, see Hooley (2007) and the collection of essays in Freudenburg (2005).

Hemorrhoids: Juvenal, *Satires* 2.12–13.

Horace: For an introduction to Horace's *Satires*, see Muecke (2007). A more comprehensive, but older study is Rudd (1966). For further reading, see the collection of articles in Freudenburg (2009). For the topic of sex and gender in Horace, see Oliensis (2007). For overviews of the reception of Horace, see the essays by Friis-Jensen, McGann, Money, and Harrison in *The Cambridge Companion to Horace* (ed. S. Harrison, 2007). Also important in understanding the later impact of Horace are Martindale (1993) and Harrison (2007).

Adultery: For an excellent introduction to the *topos* of adultery in Roman literature, see Richlin (1981).

Love elegy: Miller (2002) provides an anthology of examples plus a reader of the more important articles on the genre.

Ovid: A good introduction to the poet and his works is provided in Holzberg (2002).

Ovid's exile: In his lament for his exile, the *Tristia*, Ovid refers to a work being responsible for his exile (*Tristia* 2.207–11). Of the extant works of Ovid, the *Ars Amatoria* would seem to be the one that would have proved most chal-

lenging to Augustus and his attempt to clamp down on adultery within Rome. See discussion in Fantham (2006): 111–16.

On the use of flattery for the seduction of women: see Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.611–14, 1.621–6, 2.657–66.

Boy love: For a discussion of the genre of boy love in Roman poetry, see Richlin (1983): 34–44. On a preference for love of boys in Juvenal, see *Sixth Satire* 33–7. Martial's poems to boys: 1.46, 2.55, 3.65, 4.7, 4.42, 5.46, 5.83, 6.34, 7.29, 8.46, 9.56, 9.103, 10.42, 11.6, 11.8, 11.26, 11.70, 12.71. Martial's ideal boy: 4.42. For a discussion of these verses and Martial's attitude to sexual behavior, see Williams (1999) and Sullivan (1979).

Lover as soldier: The metaphor gets its most sustained workout in *Amores* 1.9. For discussion of this metaphor, see Gale (1997) and Davis (1999). On the way in which love poetry challenges contemporary morals, see Hallett (1984); and Wyke (1987) and (1989).

Display of scars: See the case of Manius Aquilius as recounted in Cicero, *De Oratore* 2.124, 188, 194–6; cf. Livy, *Periochae* 70, Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 2.15.7.

The enslaved lover: For a discussion of this motif, see Copley (1947); Fitzgerald (2000): 73–6; Lyne (1979); McCarthy (1998); Murgatroyd (1981); and Skinner (1997) and (2005): 221–2. For the enslaved Tibullus, see 1.6.37–8 and 1.5.61–6.

On love poetry as reflecting a desire to escape: See Fitzgerald (1995): 134.

Catullus: On obscenity in Catullus and sexual invective, a good introduction is provided by Lateiner (1977). Richlin (1983: 144–56) provides an excellent discussion of the textual dynamics of the invective material. Delighting in the curses of Lesbia: Catullus 83, cf. 92.

Gellius: Catullus 74 (cuckolding uncle) and 88 (incest). Veranius and Fabullus: Catullus 28, cf. 47.

Lesbia/Clodia: The best discussion of the modern fascination is Dixon (2001: 133–56). For discussion on the identity of the figure, see Hillard (1981); Skinner (1983) and (2005): 218–21; and Wiseman (1985): 15–60. Cornish: Cited in Dixon (2001: 136). The text is first printed in the *Loeb Classical Library* edition of 1913. The quote is retained even in the revised 1956 edition (p. vii).

Erotic Rites

The Myth of the Orgy

Metamorphoses of Venus: Both the date and location of this printing are possibly suspect owing to the tendency to print such material using false publication data. There is some suggestion that the paper comes from a later date.

Bomford cup: See Boardman (1976). The Bomford cup is also discussed in Shapiro (1981): 140 with fig. 11 on plate 27 and Osborne (1998): 133–4.

Pornographic etchings: For a list of etchings, see the collection compiled by Henry Spence Ashbee in his infamous *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1877). On the work of Ashbee and his collection of erotic material, see Gibson (2001).

Giulio Romano: For a discussion of the work and its influence on others (e.g. the poet Pietro Aretino and the sculptor Joseph Nollekens), see Johns (1982): 21.

Dialogues of Luisa Sigea: See Turner (2003): 166–220 who provides a groundbreaking discussion of the text.

Socrates and Alcibiades: For the tradition of erotic attachment between the two, see Blanshard (2007).

Tiberius on Capri: Suetonius, *Tiberius* 44.1.

Panormitta: For discussion of the text and its reception, see de Cossart (1984). O'Connor (1997) discusses the reception of the work and also its use of classical precedents to stave off criticism. For the myths and depictions of the inter-sex figure of Hermaphroditus in antiquity, see Delcourt (1961).

Paul Avril (Edouard-Henri Avril): A number of examples of the work of the illustrator are available in an e-book produced by Jones and Jones in their Erotic Art Classics series (*Paul Avril: Erotic portfolio, drawings and illustrations*, 2008). He was a well-known illustrator, especially amongst those who enjoyed erotica. The great collector and cataloger of erotic material, Henry Spencer Ashbee, commissioned Avril to design him a bookplate. Other classicizing works illustrated by Avril include *Daphnis et Chloé* (1898), *Une nuit de Cleopatre* (1894), *Oeuvres d'Horace* (1887), and *Les sonnets luxurieux de l'Aretin* (1904).

Gnothi Sauton: For its location at Delphi, see Pausanias 10.24.1. For its appearance in Platonic texts, see *Charmides* 164d–165a and *Alcibiades* 124b, 129a, 132c.

Locating the Erotic in Roman Religion

Samuel Wesley: 'What Communion hath the Temple of God with Idols, with those abominable mysteries of Iniquity which outdo the old Fescennina of the Heathens, the lewd Orgies of Bacchus, and the impious Feasts of Isis and Priapus?' (*A Sermon Concerning Reformation of Manners*, 1698, p. 21).

Thomas Blount: The work's full title is *Glossographia, or, A dictionary interpreting all such hard words of whatsoever language now used in our refined English tongue with etymologies, definitions and historical observations on the same : also the terms of divinity, law, physick, mathematicks and other arts and sciences explicated* (1661).

Orgia: For the term referring to the worship of Dionysus, see Herodotus, *Histories* 2.81 (which links the rituals with the rituals of Orpheus) and Euripides, *Bacchae* 34. For use in relation to the Eleusinian mysteries, see Aristophanes, *Frogs* 386 and *Thesmophoriazousae* 948.

Sophocles: For the use of the term *orgia* in the context of Heracles' sacrifice, see *Women of Trachis* 765. The use of the term in *Antigone* may have some magical connotations, but is best read as a straightforward reference to the rituals preceding and involving the sacrifice, see *Antigone* 1013.

Greek attitudes to religion and sexual purity: Parker (1983): 74–103 provides an excellent and comprehensive introduction to the topic.

Vestal Virgins: For a general discussion of the cult, see Beard, North, and Price (1998): 51–4; Pomeroy (1976): 210–14; Staples (1998): 131–56; and Wildfang (2006). On the sexual status of the Virgins, see Beard (1980) with the modification of her view in Beard (1995). On the punishment of Vestals: Plutarch, *Life of Numa* 10 gives a detailed account of the ritual burial of Vestals who had lost their virginity.

Floralia: Staples (1998): 57–93.

House of the Vettii: See Brilliant (1984): 71–81; Clarke (1991): 208–35 and Stewart (2008): 54–60.

Death of Crassus: Plutarch, *Life of Crassus* 33.3–4.

Thesmophoria: For a discussion of the festival, see Brumfield (1981): 70–103. For discussion of the Thesmophoria in the Attic law court, see Lysias 1.20.

Repression of Bacchic rites in 186 BC: The story is told in Livy 39.8–19. For discussion of the incident, see Beard, North, and Price (1998): 91–5; Gruen (1990): 34–78; and Pailler (1988). The reasons for the repression are taken from Beard *et al.* (1998): 92 (link with comedy) and 95, and North (1979).

The afterlife of Livy's account of the Bacchic rites: For the aims of Blount's work, especially his desire that it assist in the reading of Roman history, see *Glossographia* (1661): 2. *God's judgments against whoring* (1697), especially pages 181–6. One might also note the author's observation that the Roman bacchanalia allow us to see 'see how far Humane Nature may be deprav'd by raging Lust, when a Person or People are justly given up to it of God' (188). Link with witchcraft: For the Black Sabbath as a continuation of Priapic pagan rituals, see, for example, the 1865 essay by Thomas Wright (especially pages 206–48) on the generative powers during the Middle Ages. This was appended to an edition of Richard Payne Knight's essay on the worship of Priapus in antiquity to create a complete history of priapic worship. For the 'Saturnalia of the serf' see page 247 with Wright citing earlier sources. For earlier seventeenth-century interest in the topic, see Jan van Meurs, *De Puerperio Syntagma* in *De Funere* (1604) and *Graecia Feriata* (1619). For a general history of orgiastic imaginings, see Partridge (1958).

Priapus: For a discussion of depictions of the god, see the article by Paribeni in the *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica* vi: 466–7 (s.v. 'Priapo'). On the versions of his birth, according to Strabo (13.1.12) he was the son of Dionysus and a nymph whereas Pausanias (9.31.2) makes him the son of Dionysus and Aphrodite, a feature that Pausanias particularly associates with his cult in

Lampsacus. Strabo makes him a late addition to the pantheon owing to the fact that he is not mentioned in Hesiod.

Depiction in House of the Vettii: The fresco is illustrated in Grant (1975): 53. For an image of possibly Neapolitan youths re-enacting this phallic weighing scene, see Waugh (1996): 303, fig. 4.12.

Carmina Priapea: The best discussion of the genre is Richlin (1983), especially pages 116–27, who illustrates its link with the genre of Latin invective. See also Goldberg, C. (1992). Parker (1988) provides a useful translation. For the date of the work, see Richlin (1983): 141–3. The majority of the poems threaten anal rape (6, 11, 15, 17, 25, 28, 30, 31, 41, 51, 52, 64, 69, 76, and 77). For oral rape, see 28, 30, 35, 44, 56, 59, and 70. For rejection of women, see poems 12 and 46. On the denigration of those who love being penetrated by large phalluses, see the criticism of the Roman emperor, Elagabalus in the *Augustan History* (*Elagab.* 5.2).

Vestal Virgins as custodians of a sacred phallus: see Beard, North, and Price (1998): 53.

Richard Payne Knight: For studies on Knight, his life, philosophy, and aesthetic theories, see Messmann (1974) and Clarke and Penny (1982). Criticisms of Knight: For quotations from contemporary critics, see Johns (1982): 24–6. Influence of Knight: For works which engage with Knight's ideas see the 1865 essay of Wright mentioned above as well as Westropp and Wake's 1874 essay *Ancient Symbol Worship. Influence of the phallic idea in the religions of antiquity* (New York). On the treatment of Knight's work as pornography: see Carabelli (1996): 107–15.

Sir William Hamilton and the worship of Priapus at Isernia: The best study of Hamilton's discussion of the wax votives is Carabelli (1996).

Hargrave Jennings: For discussion of the pamphlet and its context, see Curran *et al.* (2009): 280, 283.

Minucius Felix and Tertullian: The story of the Christian orgy is discussed in Ellis (1983). For an imaginative reappropriation of the story and a discussion of its context, see Hopkins (1999): 211–13 w. 367 nn. 5 and 6. Tertullian repeats the story and alludes to it in *Apology* 7.1, 8.7, and 8.23.

Imperial Biography

The Private Lives of the Caesars

D'Hancarville: For the life of d'Hancarville, see Haskell (1987) and Jenkins and Sloan (1996): 45–51.

Monuments de la vie privée des douze Césars: The publication history of this work is notoriously difficult and is complicated by the use of false dates and imprints. Some of the ideas for the work can be traced to *Veneres et Priapi,*

ut observantur in gemmis antiquis produced in the early 1770s. An edition of the earlier smaller groups of etchings of *Monuments de la vie privée* was produced in 1785 and an expanded edition is dated to 1786. References to the text use this expanded edition. There is also a 1792 edition, which also includes d'Hancarville's *Monuments du culte secret des Dames Romaines*. The quality of the engravings tends to diminish over time. The best engravings are found in the first 1785 edition.

For the erotic content of the various plates:

Homosexual sex: See plates 1 (Caesar at the court of Nicomedes), 20 (Tiberius enflamed by lust for two boys during a sacrifice), 27 (Caligula between two young men), 40 (Otho and Nero), 44 (A young Vitellius and Tiberius). Bestiality: Plate 34 (Nero marries Sporus). Group sex: See plates 21 (Tiberius), 27 (Caligula), and 36 (Nero). Augustus and the wife of Maecenas: See plate 15. For Augustus' fondness for the wife of Maecenas, see Cassius Dio 54.19.6, 55.7.5. The scene seems to be partly based on the transposition of an anecdote about Maecenas' wife contained in Plutarch's *Dialogue on Love* 759f–760a. Cleopatra: Plates 4 (with Julius Caesar) and 11 (Mark Antony). Bona Dea: Plate 3 (Wife of Caesar with Clodius). Livia: Plate 9 (Livia presents two girls to Augustus). Caligula: Plate 13 (Caligula lying down with his sister Drusilla). Nero and Agrippina: Plates 33 and 39. Domitia: Plate 48 (Domitian has threesome with his wife). Messalina: See plates 29 (Marriage with Silius), 30 (Preparations for trip to the brothel), and 31 (Offerings to Priapus). Sacrilege: Plates 20 (Tiberius at the sacrifice), 10 (Augustus as Apollo), and 13 (Mark Antony as Hercules).

Forberg's use of D'Hancarville: See index of *De figuris Veneris* under 'd'Hancarville' and '*Monuments de la vie privée des douze Césars*' and '*Monuments du culte secret des Dames Romaines*'. For Forberg's consciousness of his repeated citation, see, for example, n. 34: 'Plate XXXIV in the repeatedly quoted French work gives a representation of the abominable wedding'.

The Roses of Heliogabalus (1888): For illustration and discussion of the work, see Becker and Prettejohn (1997): 234–8.

Nero: A good introduction to the emperor and his representation in our ancient sources is provided in Elsner and Masters (1994), especially the papers by Rubiés (1994) and Barton (1994).

Barnum & Bailey's Nero, or the Destruction of Rome: On this and the impact of other classicizing popular entertainments, see Blanshard (2005): 152–3; Wyke (1997a): 122–3 and (1997b).

Wilde as Nero: Vance (1999): 122–4.

Sign of the Cross (1932): Wyke (1997a): 131–40.

Spartacus (1960): For essays on the relationship between the classical material and its cinematic representation, see the collection of essays in Winkler (2007).

Monteverdi's L'Incoronazione di Poppea: For discussion of the opera, see Rosand (1985); Stuart (1927); and Westrup (1927). On its relationship with Tacitus

and the status and use of the historian in the period, see Heller (1999). Carter (1997): 176–8 provides a good summary of the explanations for the work's moral ambiguity. Poppaea's operatic life seems to end with Monteverdi. There is a small-scale nineteenth-century revival with operas based on *Quo Vadis?* (Chapi y Lorente, 1901 and Jean Nouguès, 1908). Nero operas seem to have been slightly more popular. For the traditional of Nero operas, see Dahm (2009).

Messalina: For a full discussion on Messalina and her impact on western culture, see Wyke (2002): 321–91.

Rape of Britannicus: Tacitus, *Annals* 17.

Demetrius and the Gladiators: For a discussion of the film, see Wyke (2002): 370–5.

Mother and ten-year old: '"Robe" sequel is beautiful', *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 28, 1954, p. B7. Hayward: *Look* (July 1953) advertised *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 1, 1953, p. A8. On the film as the rehabilitation of Hayward: Wyke (2002): 376–80.

Cleopatra: The literature on the image of Cleopatra in the western imagination is voluminous. Hughes-Hallett (1990) provides a good summary of the tradition and her various incarnations. See also Hamer (1993); Royster (2003); and Wyke (1997a): 73–109. On Cleopatra as an Egyptian queen rather than a Hellenistic monarch, see Llewellyn-Jones (2002).

Last Days of Pompeii (*Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei*, *1913)*: For discussion of the film and its Egyptian characters, see Wyke (1997a): 147–82 and Pomeroy (2008): 32–3.

The Loves of Cleopatra: There is an 1860 edition ('published for the trade').

Elagabalus and the rose petals: The story is told in the life of Elagabalus contained in the *Augustan History* (*Elagabalus* 21.5).

Fellini, Satyricon: For various studies on the film and its interaction with the classical world, see Dick (1993); Nethercut (1971); Sullivan (2001); and Wyke (1997a): 188–91.

Explaining Roman Gossip Culture

Vergil on Rumor: For discussion of the image, see Keith (1921) and Dyer (1989), which attempts to remove some of the fantastic elements in Vergil's description.

The moralizing discourse of Rome: Both Edwards (1993) and Vout (2007) provide excellent, accessible introductions.

Regulation of appetite: For this concern in Roman culture, see Grimm (2006).

Mark Antony: On the image of Mark Antony as dissolute see, for example, the tradition preserved in Plutarch, *Life of Antony* 21, 24–5 and *Comparison between Demetrius and Antony* 3. For analysis of Cicero's invective against Antony, see Edwards (1993): 191–2.

Caesar's divorce of his wife Pompeia: For sources, see Cassius Dio 37.45; Plutarch, *Life of Caesar* 10.6; and Suetonius, *Julius Caesar* 6.2. For women as objects of sexual attack, see, for example, discussion of Fulvia in Hallett (1977). Julia's adultery: For the sources that deal with these accusations, see Fantham (2006): Appendix II.

Caesar and Nicomedes: Suetonius, *Julius Caesar* 2.

Caligula and the actor: Suetonius, *Caligula* 55. On the status of the actor, see Green (1933), and on their deployment in Roman moralizing discourse, see Edwards (1994).

Penetration of free-born Romans: See Williams (1999): 96–125, especially pages 103–4.

Morals and Roman cultural identity: Edwards (1993): 19–20. Hellenism and Sporus: Vout (2007): 136–40, 151–7. On the marriage, see Champlin (2003): 145–50.

Importance of choice of marriage partner: See this anxiety expressed in Pliny, *Panegyricus* 83.4.

Moralizing discourse as signifier of elite status: Edwards (1993): 24.

Sex between emperors: Suetonius, *Augustus* 68 (Augustus and Caesar), *Caligula* 10 (Caligula on Capri), *Vitellius* 3 (Vitellius and Tiberius), *Otho* 2 (Otho and Nero).

Domitian: The best historical discussion of the emperor is Jones (1992). For a discussion of the problems with the sources and an attempt to rehabilitate his character, see Waters (1964) and Wilson (2003).

Nerva: For the emperor Nerva and his background, see Ehrhardt (1987). For the tracing back of origins to Nerva: Example taken from the title of Septimius Severus (211), *ILS* 420 discussed by Jones (1992): 160–1. 'More fortunate than Augustus and even better than Trajan': Epitome of *De Caesaribus* and Eutropius, *Breviarium ab urbe condita* 8.

Martial: For praise of Domitian's building works and monuments, see 7.56, 8.36, 8.65, 9.20. On the two-faced nature of Martial's character, see Jones (1992): 196.

Pliny: For Pliny's career, see Birley (2000): 5–17. For the *Panegyricus* and its staging as a method of self-performance and self-justification, see Bartsch (1994): 148–87, especially 167–9; Flower (2006): 263–70; Hoffer (1999): 5–8; and Shelton (1987): especially 129–32.

Domitian and Incest: Pliny, *Panegyricus* 52.3 and 63.7, *Epistle* 4.11; cf. Juvenal 2.29–33; Tacitus, *Histories* 1.2; Suetonius, *Domitian* 22.1; and Cassius Dio 67.3.

Domitian's relationship with the Senate: See Jones (1992): 160–77, 180–92. Execution of senators: For discussion of this in our sources, see Suetonius, *Domitian* 10; Cassius Dio 67.3.3, 67.4.5, 9.6, 11.2–13, 12.1–5, 13.1–4, 14.1–3.

Delatores: Rutledge (2001).

Antinous' death as a sacrifice: Cassius Dio 69.11.2–4; Aurelius Victor *De Caesaribus* ('On the Caesars') 14.7–9. Julia's abortion: Suetonius, *Domitian* 22. Poppaea Sabina: Suetonius, *Nero* 35.3; Tacitus, *Annals* 16.6; Cassius Dio 62.28.1–2.

The divine nature of the tales of lust: The best discussion of this aspect is Vout (2007): especially 5, 21. Earinus: Poems by Martial *Epigrams* 8.39, 9.16, 9.36. For discussion of *Silvae* 3.4, see Vout (2007): 182–91.

Box 5.1 Caligula

The reception of Caligula: The most important text is the biography written by Suetonius. For his infamous profligacy, see Suetonius, *Gaius Caligula* 37. A good example of the reception of this tradition is provided by the influential pamphlet *The Art of Knowing One-Self* (1695, translated from the French) where Caligula's extravagance is diagnosed as an extreme form of self-love (p. 189). For the cruelty of the emperor, see Suetonius, *Caligula* 27–35. Particularly influential in the construction of Caligula as a tyrant was his fondness of the saying, 'Let them hate me, so long as they fear me' ('Oderint, dum metuant' – Suetonius, *Gaius Caligula* 30.1).

Caligula in the Reformation: See the sermon preached by George Abbot comparing Caligula with Catherine de Medici, the instigator of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre (*An exposition upon the prophet Ionah*, 1600: 140).

Gower: For discussion of the incest motif in Gower, see Donavin (1993).

Caligula (1979): Reviews: Canby, V., 'Malcolm McDowell in Bob Guccione "Caligula"', *New York Times*, February 2, 1980; Siskel, G., '"Caligula": Biblical epic with lots of sex, but little history', *Chicago Tribune*, September 22, 1980; 'Boston-banned film bides times', *Chicago Tribune*, August 3, 1980; 'The emperor strikes back', *New York Times*, August 3, 1980; 'X-rated film "Caligula" adjudged not obscene', *New York Times*, August 3, 1980; Buckley, T., 'At the movies: King Vidor moves in front of the camera', *New York Times*, January 25, 1980; Canby, V., 'Of coercion, "Caligula" and cloisters', *New York Times*, February 10, 1980; Huckerby, M., 'Press showing of "Caligula" film cancelled', *The Times*, October 23, 1980; Krebs, A. and Cummings, J., 'In Boston, some kind words for "Caligula"', *New York Times*, August 1, 1980; Ryan, D., '"Caligula": Controversy and $7.50 ticket price', *Chicago Tribune*, May 11, 1980. For an account of the production of the film, see the interview with Bob Guccione in *Penthouse* May 1980: 113–18, 146–50. This is the special Caligula-themed edition. The interview repeats Vidal's famous description of the film as 'Latin for turkey' (p. 118).

Greek Love

Introduction

'Coming out' and 'the closet': The best discussion of the role of 'the closet' in defining modern gay identity and the dynamics of revelation and secrecy that this metaphor sets up is Sedgwick (1985), and especially (1990). See also the discussion in Halperin (1995): 29–30, 34–7.

On the discursive nature of love: Barthes (1979).

What is 'Greek Love'? Scenes from a Courtroom I

Wilde trial: For a full historical account of the Wilde trial, see Ellmann (1987): 409–49 and Foldy (1997). A transcript of the first libel trial is available in Holland (2003). On the centrality of Wilde in the construction of the modern homosexual and his tendency to erase other formulations of male same-sex sexuality, see Cohen (1993); Dollimore (1991); Sinfield (1994); and the essays in Plummer (1981).

Camp and effeminacy: For a history of the relationship between camp aesthetics and homosexuality, see the collection of essays in Meyer (1994). On the tradition of effeminacy within homosexual identity, see Halperin (2002): 110–13.

Wilde and classicism: Cartledge (1989); Stanford (1976): 235–9.

Mahaffy: On the figure of Mahaffy, see Stanford and McDowell (1971); Stanford (1976): 152–4; and Walker (2004). Wilde's Commonplace book: Smith and Helfand (1989): 147.

Douglas as Hyacinth: Wilde's letter reads 'My Own Boy, Your sonnet is quite lovely, and it is a marvel that those red rose-leaf lips of yours should have been made no less for music of song than for madness of kisses. Your slim gilt soul walks between passion and poetry. I know Hyacinthus, whom Apollo loved so madly, was you in Greek days'. Greek dress: 'Greek dress was in its essence inartistic. Nothing should reveal the body but the body.' (*Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young*).

The Picture of Dorian Gray: Cartledge (1989).

Wilde at Kettner's restaurant: Evidence of Charles Parker in Holland (2003).

Greece

The Loves of Hellas

Greek homosexuality: For the standard descriptions of homosexual relations in Greece, see Dover (1978); Cantarella (1992); Hupperts (2006); and

Davidson (2007). Hubbard (2003) provides an excellent collection of sources relating to homosexuality in Greece and Rome.

Greeks and Barbarians: On the strong distinction drawn in Greek ideology between Greek and Barbarian practice, especially in Herodotus, see Cartledge (1990) and (2001): 51–77; Hartog (1988); Hall (1989) and Isaac (2004). See also Pelling (1997).

Herodotus and Hellenicity: Herodotus, *Histories* 1.9 (nudity), 8.144.2 (rites, language, blood), and 9.82 (food). Cretans as founders of pederasty: Plato, *Laws* 636a–b. Laius, the pederast: This story is the subject of a lost tragedy by Euripides. See Hellanicus F157; Apollodorus 3.5.5; cf. Plato, *Laws* 836c.

Initiation: Bremmer (1980) and Sergent (1986): 7–54.

Sophocles: Hieronymus of Rhodes, *Historical Notes* (=Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 13.603–4).

Homosexuality in Greek art: General conventions for the depiction of sex acts are discussed in Keuls (1985). For the discussion of depictions of homosexual scenes on Attic vases see Shapiro (1981), (1992), and (2000).

Penetrators and the penetrated: For the importance and significance of social hierarchies in structuring Greek homosexual relations, see Halperin (1990) and Winkler (1990). For criticism of the penetration model, see Davidson (2001) and (2007).

Eurymedon oinochoe: The vase is discussed by a number of scholars, see Dover (1978): 105 and Smith (1999) with bibliography.

Meleager: Palatine Anthology 12.23. Translation by Benjamin Acosta-Hughes. The poem is included in Hubbard (2003): 292.

The Platonic Vision

Plato on love: On the radical nature of Platonic *eros*, see Halperin (1985), (1986) and the essay 'Why is Diotima a Woman?' in Halperin (1990).

Plato's Phaedrus: For an introduction to the *Phaedrus* and its interpretation, see Ferrari (1987) and Griswold (1986). Rowe (1986) provides a text, translation, and notes.

Plato's Symposium: For an introduction to the *Symposium*, see Hunter (2004) and Sheffield (2006). A text and translation is available in Howatson and Sheffield (2008).

Date of the Phaedrus: On the early date of the *Phaedrus*, see De Vries (1969): 7–8 and Allen (1981): 9–13. Most commentators now would accept a later date for the *Phaedrus*.

The Greek symposium: On the symposium, see Davidson (1997) and Murray (1990).

Box 7.1 Charmides

Ancient sources: Plato, *Charmides*, *Symposium* 222b, *Protagoras* 315a; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.6.1, 3.7, 7.1–9, *Hellenica* 2.4.19.

Victorian criticism: Tyrwhitt, Richard St. John (1877) 'The Greek Spirit in Modern Literature', *The Contemporary Review*: 557.

Rome and the West

Greece under Rome and Rome under Greece

Roman homosexuality: The best discussion of indigenous Roman homosexual practice and its relationship to Greek practice is Williams (1995) and (1999). Although Williams does not believe that the Romans had a strong notion of 'Greek love', he is prepared to concede that the Romans had a notion of 'Greek customs which included a homosexual component'. Other discussions include Hallett and Skinner (1997, especially the essays by Walters and Parker). Crompton (2003): 79–110 provides a useful overview of the period. For depictions of homosexual acts in Roman art, see Clarke (1998).

Cato and pederasty: Polybius, *Histories* 31.25.5, cf. Diodorus 31.24, 37.3.6.

Atticism: The best discussion on the politics and forms of Atticism is Swain (1996), especially chapter 2. For discussion of the development of Greek culture under Rome, see the collection of essays in Goldhill (2001) and Bowie (1970). A useful introduction to the issues is Whitmarsh (2005).

Strato: The date of Strato is discussed in Clarke (1984) and (1994); Maxwell-Stuart (1972); and Steinbichler (1998).

Warren cup: For discussion of the cup, see Clarke (1998): 61–72.

Edward Perry Warren: Burdett and Goddard (1941); Sox (1991). Warren's most famous work on the topic of Greek love was *The Defence of Uranian Love* (3 vols.).

Theban Sacred Band: See Plutarch, *Life of Pelopidas* 18–19.

Plutarch's Erotic Dialogue: A translation of this text by W.C. Helmbold is available in volume IX of Plutarch's *Moralia* in the Loeb Classical library series. For discussion of this text, see Crompton (2003): 120–4.

Pseudo-Lucianic Erotes: For discussion of this text, see Halperin (1994), (2002): 89–103.

Rufinus: *Palatine Anthology* 5.19, translated by Benjamin Acosta-Hughes. The poem is included in Hubbard (2003): 297.

Clement of Alexandria: For his condemnations of homosexual acts, see *Exhortation*, chapters 2 and 3: 'In later times, men invented Gods for themselves to worship. Consider Eros, who is said to be the oldest of the Gods. Formerly nobody honoured him until Charmus captured a young lad and erected an

altar in the Academy as a thanks offering for his desire. And this sickness of debauchery is what is called Eros, and unrestrained lust is made into a god'. Philo: Crompton (2003): 43–6. Eusebius: *Preparation for the Gospel* 13.20.7 quoted in Crompton (2003): 117.

Athenian regulation of homosexuality: Dover (1978): 23–31 and Winkler (1990). Philo and *The Special Laws* 3.37–8, 7.499 quoted in Crompton (2003): 44.

Edict of Theodosius: For a discussion of the provision see Crompton (2003): 134–5.

Greek Love Burns Briefly, but Brightly

On the relationship between antiquity and same-sex love in the medieval period: Boswell (1980): especially 243–66. Stehling (1984) provides an extremely useful collection of Latin verse on the topic.

Marbod: Boswell (1980): 247–9 and Crompton (2003): 178–9. Translation from Stehling (1984): no. 46.

Baudri of Bourgueil: Stehling (1984): no. 50. Hildebert of Lavardin: Stehling (1984): nos. 66 and 68. Model letters: Stehling (1984): no. 88. *Romance of Aeneas*: Crompton (2003): 204. *On the Wickedness of this Age*: Stehling (1984): no. 65.

Debate between Ganymede and Helen: For a text and translation, see Stehling (1984): no. 114. Victory of Ganymede: Stehling (1984): no. 118.

Rise in hostility towards homosexuality: see Boswell (1980): 269–302 and Crompton (2003): 186–212.

Aquinas: For the role of Aquinas in developing arguments against homosexuality, see Boswell (1980): 318–30.

Box 8.1 Antinous, the Beloved of Hadrian

Ancient sources: Pausanias 8.9.7, cf. 8.10.11; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 14.7–9; *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (The Augustan Histories), *Hadrian* 14.5–7.

Modern discussion: Vout (2005), (2006a,b), (2007); and Waters (1995). Tennyson on Antinous: Tennyson, C. (1949) *Alfred Tennyson*. New York: 395.

Renaissance and Enlightenment

Giving Birth in the Beautiful

On the revival of Greek in the West: See Pfeiffer (1976) and Hankins (2003).

Dispute between George of Trebizond and Cardinal Bessarion: The dispute is summarized in Hankins (1990): i.165–92, 236–64. cf. Monfasani (1976): 166–70, (2008): 1–15; Allen (1981): 5–6.

Plato in the medieval period: Klibansky (1939) and Hankins (1990): 4–7.

Pletho: Masai (1956) and Keller (1957).

Academia Platonica: Monfasani (1976): 202 (quoting George Scholarius). On contemporary myth making, see the reservations of Hankins (1990): i.208.

George of Trebizond: Monfasani (1976) and (2008); and Hankins (1990): i.165–92. Cordial relations between Bessarion and George: Monfasani (1976): 47–9.

Pletho as source of corruption: Monfasani (1976): 214–15. cf. *Comparatio* f. V6v.

Laws against sodomy: Crompton (2003): 247–61. On sodomy in the Renaissance, see the essays in Gerard and Heckma (1989). Cf. Goldberg, J. (1992). Aristotle as devoted husband: Hankins (1990): i.240. Accusations of sodomy against Bessarion and associates: Monfasani (1976): 160; Hankins (1990): i.173, 213. On the term 'Socratic love' as a euphemism for sodomy, see Dall'Orto (1989).

The Conspiracy of the Academy: Dunston (1973); Palermino (1980): 92–7; and Hankins (1990): i.211–12. Cf. D'Amico (1983).

Ficino: For an introduction to the philosophy and work of Ficino, see Allen (1984); Shepherd (1999); and Kristeller (1964). Translations and commentaries on Ficino's work are provided by Sears (1985) and Allen (1981).

Donatello's David and its context: See Janson (1963): 77–86 and Schneider (1973); cf. Clark (1956): 48–9; Crompton (2003): 208–12, 263–4; and Walters (1978): 116–17. On the other Davids by Donatello, see Janson (1963): 3–7, 21–3. Classical art in the Renaissance: Bober and Rubinstein (1986).

Cellini: A biography of Cellini is available in the 1949 translation by John Addington Symonds which recounts the anecdote relating to the statue of Ganymede. The story of the encounter is also told in Crompton (2003): 284 and more fully in Gayford and Wright (1998): 209–13.

Michelangelo: Clark (1956): 54–9; Walters (1978): 128–51; and Crompton (2003): 269–78. Pietà as mourning Adonis: Crompton (2003): 271–2.

Stoning of David: Bohm-Duchen (1992): 21; and Walters (1978): 99. Contextual nudity: Walters (1978): 99. On homoerotic attachment to St. Sebastian, see Kaye (1996) and Wyke (1998).

Cellini on trial for sodomy: Crompton (2003): 283–4; and Pope-Hennessy (1985): 28.

The Pursuit of Love

Voltaire: An introduction and translation to Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* is provided in the Penguin Classics series by Besterman (1972). All translations are taken from it.

Pederasty of Humanists: Barkan (1991): 67–8 (especially quotation of Ariosto); and Turner (2003): 56 (discussing Giordano Bruno's *Candelaio*).

L'Alcibiade fanciullo a scola: A translation by J.C. Rawnsley with critical notes is available in Rocco (2000). There is also a 1995 publication of the French translation with critical notes by Louis Godbout published by Les Éditions Balzac.

For the publication history, see Turner (2003): 89, who also discusses the text widely throughout his work. Pederastic sonnets: Translation by J.C. Rawnsley from Rocco (2000): 99. On the image of the sodomite, see McFarlane (1997).

Vernier family: Turner (2003): 89 n.51.

Arion: The story of Arion is told in Herodotus, *Histories* 1.23–4.

Frederick the Great: For an account of his supposed homosexuality during his reign and reactions to it, see Crompton (2003): 504–12; Henderson (1977); and Steakley (1988). For Frederick and Voltaire, see Steakley (1988): 165–6.

Shelley and Byron: Lauritsen (2005); Crompton (1985); and Aldrich (1993): 70–4. Gay reclamation of Shelley: Carpenter and Barnefield (1925). For the sequence of events surrounding Shelley's translation of the *Symposium*, see Kabitoglou (1990): 83–7.

Winckelmann: For discussions of Winckelmann's life and contribution to the study of art history, see Potts (1994); and Morrison (1996). A selection of Winckelmann's work is available in English translation in Irwin (1972). A convenient discussion of his homosexuality is provided in Aldrich (1993): 41–56. Cf. Davis (1996).

Casanova and Winckelmann: Casanova, *Storia della mia vita* (Milan, 1965) iv.262–4 quoted and discussed in Aldrich (1993): 46–7.

On the classical body type in French history painting: See Solomon-Godeau (1997).

Girodet's Sleeping Endymion (1791): Davis (1994). For a reading of classical desire into the work of David, see Padiyar (2008).

Box 9.1 Ganymede

Ancient sources: Homer, *Iliad* 20.268–72, cf. 5.294; Plato, *Laws* 636c; Xenophon, *Symposium* 8.30; Virgil, *Aeneid* 5.250–8, cf. 1.28; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.155–61; Statius, *Thebaid* 1.548–51; Martial, *Epigrams* 11.22, 26, 43, 104; Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.35–8.

On the homoerotics of Ganymede: See Saslow (1986) and Kolve (1998). Metaphor for Grace of God: Dante, *Purgatory* 9.19–24. Michelangelo: Saslow (1986): 17–62; cf. Barkan (1991): 78–98.

Poetic retellings: F. Hölderlin (1802) 'Ganymede', *Lyrical Poems*; Saba, U. 'The Rape of Ganymede', *Il Canzoniere*. Auden, W.H. (1945) *The Collected Poetry of W.H. Auden*. New York: 324–5. For an example of the abiding interest, see Calimach (2001).

Nineteenth Century and Beyond

Greek Love Triumphant

Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford: The best discussion of the topic is Dowling (1994).

Jowett: See Hinchliff and Prest (2004) who give a list of sources for Benjamin Jowett. On the role of classical knowledge in the Indian Civil Service, see Vasunia (2005).

John Addington Symonds: Grosskurth (1964); Aldrich (1993): 77–86; Blanshard (2000) and Pemble (2000). An edition of Symonds' memoirs with an introduction was published by Grosskurth (1984). On his relationship with Havelock Ellis, see Koestenbaum (1989): 43–67; Grosskurth (1980): 111–13, 173–83; and Barua (1965). A bibliography of Symonds' work was compiled by Babington (1925).

Uranians: Mader (2005) and D'Arch Smith (1970).

Ulrichs: Kennedy (1988).

Social reform and homosexuality: Blanshard (2007): 108 and Mader (2005): 403–6.

Homosexuality and the Mediterranean: The best discussion of this phenomenon remains Aldrich (1993).

Von Gloeden: For a discussion of von Gloeden, his life and work, see Aldrich (1993): especially 143–52; Leslie (1977); and Waugh (1996): 72–84.

Homoerotic photography: For a discussion of classicism in homoerotic photography, see Burns (2008). Cf. Chapman (1989); Waugh (1996): 21–58; Ellenzweig (1992); and Budd (1998).

The beautiful boy in Victorian art: Barrow (2000). A good discussion of the 'classical hero' as one of the paradigms of masculinity in Victorian art is provided in Kestner (1995): especially chapter 2. Cf. Callen (2003).

Eakins: A good introduction to Eakins' work and themes is provided in Goodrich (1982) and Johns (1983). See also Werbel (2007) for a discussion of some of the anxieties surrounding Eakins' work.

Sapphic Love

Sappho: For an introduction to Sappho and the traditions about her life and work, see Parker (1993), Lardinois (1989), and Williamson (1995). A useful collection of essays on Sappho is Greene (1996). One of the best and most accessible histories of the image of Sappho and her impact in western literature is Reynolds (2000). On the complex phenomenon of Sappho in the Victorian period, see Prins (1999a). On lesbianism in late antiquity, see Brooten (1996), but see criticisms in Castelli *et al.* (1998). The debate is discussed in Garton (2004): 54–6.

Marie-Antoinette, tribadism, and the political pamphlets: Thomas (2003); Colwill (2003); and Hunt (2003). Rudé (1959): 212 argues for the role of the pamphlet in the dissemination of political ideology. For the publication history of these pamphlets, see Hunt (2003): 124–8.

Piozzi: quoted in Castle (1993): 131. For a discussion of Piozzi, see Crompton (2003): 484–6, 495.

Lamballe and the dildo: Colwill (2003): 155. De Lamballe (or perhaps La Polignac) also wields a dildo in *Le Godmiché royal* (1789), see Castle (2003): 129–30. On the death of Lamballe, see Castle (1993): 131.

Mademoiselle Raucourt: For a discussion of the representation of Judith Raucourt and its relationship to Sappho, see Reynolds (2000): 128–9 and Wagner (1988): 40–1.

Sapphic Epistle to Mrs D.: Wagner (1988): 39–40, 164–5.

Queen Christina: On the paintings in Queen Christina's collection and their iconographic program and their use in self-fashioning, see Baudoin (1966); Biermann (2001); and Blanshard (2005): 130–2.

Maenads: Prins (1999b).

Suffragette meetings: Hall and Macintosh (2005): 511–19.

Medical diagnosis of Sappho: For an example of using Sappho's poetry to diagnose a pathological condition, see Devereux (1970).

Cather on Sappho: Cather, W. 'Three Women Poets' in *The World and the Parish* quoted in Gubar, S. 'Sapphistries' in Greene: 199–218, 201–2.

Songs of Bilitis: De Jean (1989): 219–20, 276–80.

Renée Vivien: Jay (1988) and Sanders (1991).

Michael Field: White (1992).

Hilda Doolittle: The best discussion of H.D.'s complex relationship to Sappho is Collecott (1999). Reynolds (2000): 309–19 also provides an account of her life as well as extracts from her writing and the writings of those in her circle. For H.D.'s attitude as one approaching religious dread, see Gregory (1997): 148–51.

Sappho was a Right-On Woman: On Sappho and 1960s' and 1970s' counterculture, see Reynolds (2000): 359–63.

A Mixed Legacy: Greek Love in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

Rise of sexology: Garton (2004): 161–8, 169–88 and Hekma (1989).

Wilde on sexology: Wilde quoted in Bristow (1997): 199.

F. Holland Day: Jussim (1981) and Curtis (2000).

Beefcake photography: Chapman (2002); Waugh (1996): 176–283. cf. Blanshard (2005): 157 and Cooper (1986). On homoerotic art collection in general: See Davis (2001).

Warhol: See the introductory essay in Goldhill (2005).

Mapplethorpe: Celant and Ippolitov (2005).

Pink Narcissus (1965–71): Dyer (1990): 163–5.

Body image: For a discussion of the issue, see the collection of articles in Atkins (1998), especially those in part II ('The uniform doesn't fit'). Atkins (2000) provides a summary of the issues and an introductory bibliography.

ONE: Richlin (2005). This important article also discusses twentieth-century US gay politics more generally.

Gay groups and Hellenic names: The list is taken from Richlin (2005): 427. A similar list and point is made in Aldrich (1993): 218.

Resistance to assimilationist strategies: See the letter of 'P.H.D.' in *ONE*, May 1959 cited by Richlin (2005): 428.

'I feel silly in a skirt': Waugh (1996): 225.

Essentialism vs. social constructionism: Garton (2004): 19–28 provides a useful overview of the debate.

Foucault: On the importance of Foucault to radical gay politics, see Halperin (1995).

Alexander as homosexual: Eakin, E. 'Ancient Conqueror, Modern Devotees', *New York Times*, November 26, 2004. See also Waxman, S. 'Breaking Ground with a Gay Movie Hero', *New York Times*, November 20, 2004; and 'Alexander faces law suit', *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 21, 2004. For analysis and discussion of the issue, see Nisbet (2006): 109–10, 119–24.

Epilogue

Scenes from a Courtroom II

Romer v. Evans: The dispute is conveniently summarized by Nussbaum (1996). For other discussions, see Carnes (2006); Clark (2000); Mendelsohn (1996); and Rist (1997). Nussbaum (1996) is a condensed version of a much longer piece published in *Virginia Law Review* 80 (1994): 1515–651. Finnis has published his views on the case in Finnis (1994). cf. 'John Finnis & Martha Nussbaum, is Homosexual Conduct Wrong? A Philosophic Exchange', *New Republic*, November 15 (1993): 12. The debate also spilled out into the newspapers. See, for example, the exchange of letters between Catherine Glass and R.E. Allen in the *New York Times* (February 13, 1993 and February 27, 1993). The legal background to the case is best discussed in Nussbaum (1994): 1519–24.

Nussbaum's arguments: Her argument gets its fullest treatment in Appendix 3 ('Homosexuality in Plato's *Laws*') of Nussbaum (1994): 1623–40. One of the key points in the argument was the meaning of the word *tolmema* ('daring deed' or 'shameless act') which Plato uses in the *Laws* (636c) in the context of homosexual activity. Finnis alleges that Nussbaum used an outdated version of *Liddell & Scott Greek Lexicon* for her interpretation of *tolmema* and so misrepresented the current scholarly understanding of the term – Finnis (1994): 1058. For Nussbaum's response, see Nussbaum (1994): 1629–30.

Greek sexuality in the courtroom: On the influence of Greek sexuality in the court decisions of *Bowers v. Hardwick* and *Lawrence v. Texas*, both cases relating to the criminalization of sodomy, see Carnes (1996): 281–4, 286–91.

The definition of a classicist: See Appendix 1 ('The Qualifications of Expert Witnesses in Ancient Greek Thought') in Nussbaum (1994): 1607–13. The piece represents, for the perhaps first time, what a legal definition of a classicist might look like.

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Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity Alastair J. L. Blanshard
 ISBN: 978-1-405-12291-7