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# Grst 315: Gender and Sexuality in Pre-Mediterranean Society

– In Pursuit of Abstract Nonsence –

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# Preface

This is a collection of notes associated with Grst 315 (Gender and Sexuality in Pre-Mediterranean Society) taken at the University of Calgary.

University of Calgary,

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# Contents

# Notation

List of common notations used in these notes.

| | |
|---|---|
| $\mathbb{N}$ | Natural numbers |
| $\mathbb{Z}$ | Integers |
| $\mathbb{Q}$ | Rational numbers |
| $\mathbb{R}$ | Real numbers |
| $\mathbb{C}$ | Complex numbers |

# Chapter 1

# Sappho's Private World

**Abstract** The author of this article seeks to portray the unique and powerful qualities of Sappho's poetry and compare and contrast it with the male lyric poets of the time. To do this the author analyzes a number of poems and poem fragments from male lyric poets and Sappho. In particular, the focus throughout is on the theme of love in the lyric poems, and how this theme is portrayed by Sappho versus male lyric poets. The author contrasts Sappho's depiction and relation with figures such as Aphrodite and Eros to that of the male lyric poets. Sappho is often on "good terms" with the depiction of Aphrodite or Eros, while being helpless in the face of the "love object," opposite to the perspective of the male lyric poets. An important conclusion the author draws is the relation Sappho's poetry has to **space**, and its contrast with male poets. Sappho's poems often presuppose a "private space", containing the two women. This relies on the **homesexual relationship** - the fact that two women can mirror each other. The dynamic of mutual erotic attraction becomes an invisible bond, or impenetrable enclosure. It is a metaphor for **emotional openness**. In some poems this space is physically realized, but in all poems it is the poem itself.

## 1.1 Questions and Remarks

> Remark:
> Throughout the article the author mentions the role of biology plays in the nature of the lesbian relationship and placement of women. How much of this is based in evidence based fact versus social bias? Is this a location bias? Is it due to definitions and societal standards of the time? (the article was written in 1981).

## 1.2 First Reading

Remark:
Sappho was a lyric poet who wrote love poetry in Greek between about 700 and 500 BC.

The other refers to the unique quality of Sappho's poetry her **romanticism**.

**Definition 1.2.1** By **romanticism** the author seeks to evoke literary associations, essentially a yearning for escape from the isolation of the self and affirmation of the yearning in the face of knowledge that escape is impossible. It is a self-conscious easthetic attitude that paradoxically distances the individual from that into which they would lose themself.

Remark:
Hymns, poems of praise and blame, re-tellings of myth with culturally normative motives, and love poems are all traditional types found in Sappho's work.

The theme of love in Sappho's work showed a distinct structure of narrative from that of any other lyric poetry. Sappho faced the problem of presenting the female persona as an erotic subject. Sappho's solution to direct the erotic impulse toward other women was in fact a traditional one.

Sappho is fundamentally different from the male lyric poets because she explores what a woman might desire and might offer erotically and how these interact.

Note:
The love poems of male lyric poets see a pattern. The man is helpless, prostrate, stricken by the power of Eros (concept of sensual or passionate love in greek philosophy) or Aphrodite, but toward the particular boy or girl who attracts him the man is confident and prepared to seduce.
Note Eros or Aphrodite is the universal, eternal sexual longing which can never be mastered, while the individual provoking it is only a temporary focus of the longing, the prey or prize which loses its allure once the man has captured it.

A short poem of Ibycus, a poet about sixty years after Sappho, illustrates this:

Eros again looking at me meltingly with his eyes under dark eylids, flips me with manifold charms into the inescapable nets of Aphrodite. In truth I termble at his coming as a yoke-bearing, prize-winning horse, nearing old age, unwillingly goes with his quick chariot into the fray.

**Analysis:**

1. "Eros has driven the narrator into the nets of Aphrodite"; he is like a trapped and helpless wild animal.

2. Towards the object of the narrators love; he is an old prize-winning horse who returns again to the contest. Now he is active, competitive, and the boy will be his prize. The "prize-winning" in the epithet hints that the narrator has won the individual boy before, yet this has previous victory has not secured him respite from the power of Aphrodite.

3. The boy's eyes are treated as the momentary location of Eros, but when the narrator has won this boy for himself, Eros will laughingly skip off elsewhere.

Anacreaon too though that the contest was with Eros, stating

> The dice of Eros are madnesses and uproars.

Several fragments of Archilochus proclaim that the narrator is being overwhelmed by desire, for instance:

> Miserable I lie wrapped in longing, soulless, pierced through the bones by harsh griefs from the gods.

In a longer fragment, the **Cologne Epode**, Archilochus describes the seduction of a virgin girl. The narrator acts, despite his admitted haste, with a graceful, gentle masterfulness that bespeaks control, experience, self-assurance. THe implied impotence of the first fragment is not imagined as impeding action where opportunity presents itself.

We see the same pattern fro mAnacreon. In one fragment the narrator complains that Eros like a bronze-smith again hit him with a hammer and dipped him in a wintry river. But elsewhere he has the speaker boast to a skittish girl:

> Thracian filly, why do you glance at me askance and flee pitilessly? Do you think I have no art? Know, then, neatly could I throw on the bridle and holding the reins steer you around the course. At the moment you pasture in meadows and play lightly prancing, for you do not have an adroit experienced rider.

Note:

It is essential to the male lyric poet that the object of his passion be vulnerable to seduction, but unseduced.

Anacreon gives expression to the allure of innocence in a brief poem:

> Oh child, virgin glancing, I seek you, but you do not hear, not knowing that you are the charioteer of my soul.

Remark:

We see a pattern of longing for the ver uncapturable essence of Eros and excitement at discovering its momentary embodiment in a vulnerable, innocent figure, is the poetic rhythm of the male lyric poets.

This pattern Sappho could not use. Had Sappho portrayed herself as an active seeker after the virginity of a succession of girls, even, she might have presented a figure too close to that of a lusty woman for cultural acceptance or aesthetic appreciation among her contemporaries.

> Note:
> The poetic reason for the inappropriateness of the male pattern to Sappho is that the implicit metaphors of recurrent prostration, domination, and release are based on male sexual psychology, the man's sense of his action in sexual encounter.

Sappho had to find patters that allow her to express romantic longing, fulfillment, and struggle with the mystery of sexuality, with truth to her emotional and bodily sense of them. The only definitely complete poem we have of Sappho goes as thus:

> Richly-throned immortal Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, weaver of wiles, I pray to you: break not my spirit, Lady, with heartache or anguish;
>
> But hither come, if ever in the past you heard my cry from afar, and marked it, and came, leaving your father's house,
>
> Your golden chariot yoked: sparrows beautiful and swift conveyed you, with rapid wings a-flutter, above the dark earth from heaven through the mid-air;
>
> And soon they were come, and you, Fortunate, with a smile on your immortal face, asked what ails me now, and why I am calling now,
>
> And what in my heart's madness I most desire to have: Whom now must I persuade to join your friendship's ranks? Who wrong you, Sappho?
>
> For if she flees, she shall soon pursue; and if she recieves not gifts, yet shall she give; and if she love not, she shall son love even against her will.
>
> Come to me now also, and deliver me from cruel anxieties; fulfil all that my heart desires to fulfil, and be yourself my comrade-in-arms.

This is the only poem of Sappho's in which the narrator expresses an adversary relationship with the love-object. The narrator is on good terms with Aphrodite but helpless in the face of the love-object, the opposite of the male pattern.

> Note:
> Sappho does not portray herself as a woman skilled in seduction, nor does she claim the potential to master the other or to "win." On ther other hand, Aphrodite is not the capricious, impersonal force that she and Eros are for the male poets. Far from trembling at her approach, Sappho calls her for help. Aphrodite here is a cosmic affirmation of Sappho's own eroticism, the source of terrible pain but also of loveliness and joy, of contact with the divine, of heightened self-awareness, as the vivid sensuousness of the poem bears witness.

Though Aphrodite may be her ally Sappho does not ask her to make the other girl submit, and Aphrodite offers only to have the other girl suffer too. Connection with Aphrodite grants Sappho a way of making manifest her own eroticism, which will perhaps, via the epiphany itself, draw the other girl closer to her. Only in this fashion can the other girl be won; the other girl's response to Sappho must be spontaneous. Thus unlike the innocent beloved of the male poets, the other girl's envisioned role here is to turn to

Sappho out of her own longing. She must come independently to want Sappho before either woman can find intimacy satisfying.

> Remark:
> The two women must be equals, each understanding the other from insight into herself.

In a fragment Sappho says:

I loved you, atthis, long ago. . . . You seemed to me to be a small and graceless child.

The name Atthis recurs in other of Sappho's poems as a companion, so one can imagine the narrator telling atthis about her previous attraction only after the two have become intimate, when Atthis is in a position to appreciate it.

Another fragment of a poem of Sappho reads:

Honestly, I wish I were dead. Weeping she left me With many tears, and said "Oh what unhappiness is ours; Sappho, I vow, against my will I leave you."
And this answer I made to her: 'Go, and fare well, and remember me; you know how we cared for you.
If not, yet I would remind you ... of our past happiness. Many wreaths of violets and roses and ... you put around you at my side,
And many woven garlands, fashioned of flowers, ... round your soft neck,
And... with perfume of flowers, fit for a queen, you anointed ...
And on soft beds ... you would satisfy your longing ... And no ... holy, no ... was there, from which we were away.

**Analysis:**

1. Sappho recalls a whole range of shared experience, including but not limited to the erotic.

2. In Archilochus' Cologne Epode the girl presses for a verbal statement, perhaps an offer of marraige, rather than sexual contact, and the seducer must cut off the conversation in order to further the seduction. Sexual intimacy and verbal understanding inhibit one another. In Sappho's poem the conversation is a continuation and confirmation of erotic intimacy, an attempt to perpetuate it.

3. In Archilochus the conversation is manipulative, she negotiating, he trying to disarm her. In Sappho the persona also takes over the dialogue, but uses it to banish impending separation between herself and the other woman. Sappho's method of recreating the intimacy verbally to the girl whom she comforts is to reflect the girl's past happiness back to her. Thus Sappho dramatizes her absorption with the other woman, the lapse of her separate self-consciousness as she is cought up in the other's sensuousness. The tension is Sappho's poem is between the friends and the outside forces that are requiring them to separate.

Sappho's poem resupposes a protected place containing the two women in perfect understanding.

Remark:

Sappho's poetic problem was to find a pattern consistent with female experience of love within which to express her romantic sensibility. The pattern of love in Sappho's poetry, of mutuality rather than domination and subjection, of intimacy based on comprehending the other out of the self, is the ideal characteristic of lesbian love.

Simone de Beauvoir confirms a felt identity of two lovers which erases the distinction between "self" and "other," at least ideally, so that Sappho's concentration on the other womean can be seen as a poetic equivalent of erotic fulfillment.

Note:

Sappho's method to create a romantic posture was to pick three aspects of love to dramatize.

1. the appeal to Aphrodite, who displaces the desired girl in Sappho's attention in the first quotation. Through this Sappho claims that erotic desire, if cherished above release or calm, opens a path to divinity and absolute beauty, that through intensity of longing comes transcendence.
   For the erotic impulse as Sappho projected it is less a matter of loving another individual than of finding in love a form of intensification and grandeur which must be ever renewed.
2. the loss of the beloved by parting. Poems of longing for one absent imply that bliss would come with the numinous presence of that individual. Sappho uses the moment of parting as the frame for the picture of intimacy, for intimacy seems most previous, union most complete in the face of imminent loneliness. Sappho here romanticizes what is in fact the dominant experience of women in love-making and in child-birth—intimacy followed by withdrawal.
3. Sappho shapes her pattern to romanticism is in the creation of a private world. In this she depends specifically on the fact that two women can mirror one another. For to come together each woman must spontaneously wish to be close to the other; the act of love requires communication between the two, since it has no other outward manifestation. The dynamic of mutual erotic attraction, the interplay between two women, becomes an invisible bond, or in Sappho' formulation a single enclosure, impenetrable by others, in which the two are so open to another that they feel united. It is the poetic equivalent of Simone de Beauvoir's phrase, "duality becomes mutuality."
   The beautiful robes and ornaments and flowers with which Sappho decorates her poems are the furnishings of this poetically-created private space. The private space exists, in fact, only in the poem.

The existence of a private space created by the poem, counter-balances the focus on loss in Sappho's poetry. The continuation of the private space is asserted in the face of the loss of the loved woman.

Remark:

The private space is the most important metaphor for love in the poetry of Sappho. Itself based on a contradiction, that the inward can become outward, that solitude can be replaced by perfect intimacy, the claim of a private world can mediate the contradictions of Sappho's romanticism.

> Powerful erotic drive can coexist with a biological role as non-aggressor, Sappho's self-involvement can coexist with intimacy with another, and lament for the loss of another can coexist with the certainty that the unity of the two still exists.

In conclusion, **Sappho's romanticism devoles on the creation of a poetic metaphor that both affirms and transcends the inward, self-contained nature of woman's love**.

## Problems

**1.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 2

# Performing Sappho

**Abstract** Ferrari aims to provide insight into how and where Sappho's poems were performed, using a combination of literary sources, visual sources, and arceological sources. Ferrari also compares and contrasts his cocnlusions with the conclusions published in the scholarship. In particular, Ferrari agues and concludes that the stage directions found with regard to Sappho's work indicate references to night festivals, temples, shrines, groves, altars, sacrifices, musical instruments, choral groups, cloakcs, crowns, and so on, all of which seem to be organically linked to the festivals—weddings, rites in honour of Aphrodite, the Adonia (festival celebrated annually by women in ancient Greece to mourn the death of Adonis, the consort of Aphrodite), cultic ceremonies for Hera at Messon and for the Nereids in the bay of Pyrrha, and so on. This animates the communal life of Mytilene (capital of Lesbos) and the island of Lesbos as a whole. As method Ferrari primarily analyses poems and poem fragments of Sappho with an emphasis on possible translations of the greek text and what they imply in context.

## 2.1 Questions and Remarks

> Question?
> What does it mean to "perform Sappho"?

> Question?
> What is the Book of Epithalamia?

**Answer.** It is a wook of wedding songs

> Question?
> Who is Charaxus, and why do they matter?

**Answer.** They are Sappho's brother.

> Question?
> What is Pathography?

## 2.2 First Reading

### 2.2.1 Viewpoints

**Epithalamia** (wedding songs) and **Contrasto** (dialogue poem) are poems of Sappho which were performed for Adonis' death, both of which can be assigned to choral performance before a large audience.

According to Fränkel, Sappho and her followers worshipped the gods with songs and dances not only during festive occasions but also according to sudden, personal impulses; for Page, Sappho performed her poems 'informally to her companions'; for Merkelbach, nearly all of Sappho's poems were intended for a group of girls taht she directed; for West, Sappho's poems were "music and song, for public as well as private performance'; and for Aloni there were three groups of poems: **ritual songs**, **poems destined to heterogenous people**, **poems addressed to a narrow female audience**. The existence of such a circle, in any form, has also been denied by other scholars.

That teenage girls, not peers, were Sappho's privileged interlocutors and customary emotional reference can be inferred from clues in certain poem fragments.

### 2.2.2 Night Parties

Evidence can be found in portraits and illustrations from the time, though Sappho appears rarely.

### 2.2.3 The Book of Epithalamia

### 2.2.4 Interiors and Externals

The dichotomy that characterises the poem was accompanied by a contrast between spaces internal and external to Sappho's house—an opposition between private activity related to elegance, beauty, and the pleasure of sleeping together, and activities tied to festive occasions and musical performances.

### 2.2.5 Cretan Aphrodite

The sacred shrine, the insistence on vegatation, the presence of a group of devotees celebrating a rite that includes a state of trance, the sharing of a drink connected with immortality—all these elements suggest a mystery rite in honour of Aphrodite.

Crete is the place from which Aphrodite should arrive.

### 2.2.6 Worries for Charaxus

Charaxus is Sappho's brother.

### 2.2.7 Old Age

The enumeration of the symptoms of old age culminates in the impossibility of dancing on the part of the speaker. THis implies Sappho must have been inviting the young girls of her group to dance, not to listen or play. Old age prevents the poet from leading the dances of the chorus as she once used to do:

> Come to the splendid sanctuary of ox-eyed Hera, girls of Lesbos, whirling the delicate steps of your feet. Form there a beautiful chorus in honor of the goddess; Sappho will lead you with the golden lyre in her hands. Blessed you in the joy of your dance: surely you will believe you are listening to the sweet song of Calliope herself.

### 2.2.8 Sing for Us!

### 2.2.9 Erotic Pathography

### 2.2.10 Mourning Becomes Not Sappho

### 2.2.11 Towards a Conclusion

The stage directions emergin from Sappho's remains do not refer either to home performances within a small circle of girls or to those sympotic meetings reflected in the poems of Alcaeus and elsewhere in Greek lyric poetry. Instead, references to night festivals, temples, shrines, groves, altars, sacrifices, musical instruments, choral groups, cloacks, crowns, and so on seem organically linked to the festivals—weddings, rites in honour of Aphrodite, the Adonia, cultic ceremonies for Hera at Messon adn for the

Nereids in the bay of Pyrrha, and so on—which animated the communal life of Mytilene and of the island of Lesbos. On the one hand poems, usually choral, marking the key moments of public events; on the other, monodic (eventually with dancing accompaniment) or choral poems related to emotions, situations, and relationships that interested Sappho and her adepts in the context of cultic occasions.

## Problems

**2.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 3

# Before Queerness?

**Abstract**

## 3.1 Questions and Remarks

> Question?
> What period is being discussed?

The Tomb of the Diver is discussed and analyzed by the author to gain a better understanding of how homoeroticism was viewed in ancient Greece, the interaction between ancient Greece and the Etruscans and Orphic cult with respect to the similar eschatology.

> Question?
> What is the Tomb of the Diver?

A tomb of the early fifth-century BCE in the ancient Greek colony of Poseidonia (modern-day Paestum, Italy) which contained 5 acclaimed painting decorating the walls and ceiling.

> Question?
> What is the Tomb of the Leopards?

## 3.2 First Reading

The **Tomb of the Diver** was a tomb of the early fifth-century BCE in the ancient Greek colony of Poseidonia (modern-day Paestum, Italy) which was discovered in 1968 and was acclaimed for the paintings decorating

the walls and ceiling (in total five). One of the five paintings portrays an expression of **male homoerotic desire**.

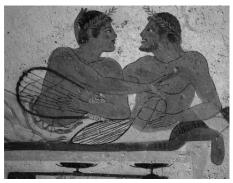

**Fig. 3.1** The Lovers; detail of a fresco from the Tomb of the Diver (c. 480-470 BCE)

This has appeared in many scholarly works of homosexuality in the ancient world. However, based on our understanding of the ancient Greek past, this depiction is neither a representation of homosexuality nor of gayness unless we are to speak in an anachronistic (belonging to a period other than that portrayed), essentialist (objects have an underlying reality or true nature that one cannot observe directly) view.

> Question?
> Should we then use the broader, more flexible category of queer, which denotes a site of marginalization from and resistance to dominant culture, to try to link the male-male eroticism of the past to the homosexuality of the present?

If the paintings were modern they would fit into the context of “queer." Indeed, the ultimate setting for the **erōmenos** and **erastēs** in the painting is a homoerotic, homosocial afterlife.

> Remark:
> In the context of their time, the paintings invite us to a space that was a privileged location of the Greek patriarchy—the symposium.

Indeed, the Tomb of the Diver paintings are like the pederastic (depicting intimacy between a male and young boy, usually in his teens) symposium scenes found on Attic pottery (pottery from the **Attica**, a historical region encompassing Athens) and described in philosophical and other Greek treatises.

> Note:
> The author argues that Ancient Greek societies were **homonormative** in that they privileged males and prioritized relationships between men through the institution of pederasty.

The paintings show local Italic influences, especially of death sexuality, and banqueting that seem to have been borrowed from the Etruscans (civilization which controlled a majority of the Italian peninsula). However, in Etruscan depictions the male-female couple is privileged, but in the Tomb of the Diver it is the male-male couple that stands out. This suggests the Greeks of Poseidonia borrowed heavily from Etruscan conceptions of the afterlife, but adapted these ideas to suit their own solial milieu.

Remark:

The eroticism and eschatology of the iconography of the Tomb of the Diver suggests the deceased was an initiate of the **Orphic cult**.

The Orphic cult followed a collection of beliefs and practices related to the mythical poet **Orpheus**. Previous scholarship ignored or subordinated the eroticism of the paintings to other concerns. The main exception to this is the analysis of **Cerchiai (1987)**, who instead subordinates the eschatological themes to the erotic. The author attempts to provide a more balanced approach.

Note:

The author argues that the Orphic rites were, in much more of a Greek than an Etruscan fashion, both homosocial and homoerotic. In Orphic though, the symposium served both as a means to worship Dionysus and other gods in this life, and as an image of the eternal hereafter in the next life.

### 3.2.1 The Paintings

The paintings in the Tomb have been dated to approximately **480-470 BCE** based on pottery in the tomb. The two long sided slabs depict partygoers lounging on couches at what has been identified as a symposium.

**Fig. 3.2** North wall of Tomb of the Diver

**Fig. 3.3** South wall of Tomb of the Diver

Most of the male guests appear in couples, and the celebrated pair in Figure 3.1 have been labeled **gli amanti "the lovers"** by Mario Napoli, the archeologist who discovered the tomb. On the opposite wall one of the symposiasts is playing music while his couchmate holds his hand to his forehead, a gesture

which has been interpreted to indicate a state of ecstasy. The symposiast on the left in Figure 3.3 is holding an egg, which has been identified as a symbol of the Greek Orphic religious movement (it symbolizes the belief in eventual reunification with a divine source—Phanes, also called Eros, the creator of all things, was an androgynous being who was originally thought to have hatched from a shell). On the middle couch (**klinē**) of Figure 3.2 the symposiast has raised his **kylix** (wine drinking cup) at an angle indicating that he is playing **kottabos** (similar to modern-day darts). The dregs offered in kottabos in a symposium were done so in the name of an **erōmenos**.

**Fig. 3.4** East wall of Tomb of the Diver. Depicts a youth walking from a garlanded krater which appears to contain wine. The youth is most likely the designated wine pourer for the guests.

**Fig. 3.5** West wall of Tomb of the Diver. A procession of symposiasts led by a female flautist followed by a naked youth with a blue scarf draped over his arms and a clothed bearded man.

**Fig. 3.6** Slab cover of Tomb of the Diver. A naked young man is pictured diving into a body of water.

The Poseidonian paintings in the Tomb of the Diver, despite similarities in the symposium scenes, otherwise fall outside the norms of **Attic art**. The association of the symposium with the afterlife and of eschatology with eroticism are reflective of Etruscan influence, as **Pontrandolfo (1996)** has argued:

> While full of Greek conceptual models, the paintings in the Diver's Tomb are in fact an exception, even as far as their contents are concerned, because they do not mirror the typical mental attitude of Greeks who would normally never decorate the interior of tombs with paintings, nor place the world of death together with that of the symposium, for the two worlds contradict each other. The homosociality of the symposium participants, nevertheless, is very Greek.

As with other Attic symposium scenes, the only female in the frescoes is a young flute girl. In contrast, Etruscan paintings show women, probably wives, at symposia.

**Fig. 3.7** Tomb of the Leopards

> Remark:
> No other comparable funerary paintings from the fifth century have been discovered in the vicinity of Poseidonia.

Other painted tombs from the fourth century BCE have been found, but they date to the period after the Lucanian invasion/conquest of Poseidonia (when the name of the city was changed to Paestum), thus after the period of Greek rule of the **polis** of Poseidonia. Nonetheless, fourth-century male burials are usually accompanied by **kraters** and other wine vessels which suggest that, for men, the afterlife might include a symposium.

### 3.2.2 Eschatology of the tomb's iconography

Note that **eschatology** is the part of theology concerned with death, judgement, and the final destiny of the soul and humankind.

**Napoli** interpreted the dive scene as **Pythagorean**, representing the purifying passage of the soul through water. But this fails to account for the relationship of the diver to the symposium scene.

**Bianchi-Bandinelli (1970)** has asserted that the symposium scenes represent the heroic afterlife in the Isles of the Blessed beyond the western limits of the Mediterranean described by **Hesiod**, that the structure from which the diver leaps representes the **Pillar of Heracles**, and that the body of water he plunges into is the Atlantic Ocean, which represented the limits of the known world to the Greeks. However several centuries separate the time of Hesiod and the tomb, and the body of water into which the diver plunges looks much more like a small lake or spring than an ocean.

Note the diver, the association of the symposium with the afterlife, and the procession of the deceased are all themes that surface in Etruscan funerary art. The Greek colony of Poseidonia lay just to the south of Naples, and the polis shared a border along the River Sele, with ancient Campania. Campania was already "deeply Etruscanized" by the end of the seventh century BCE, when Poseidonia was founded. The inhabitants of Poseidonia mingled and possibly intermarried with Etruscans and other native inhabitants of the region, so the influx of Etruscan eschatology into the region is not surprising. Inscriptions on an **olpē** manufactured at Poseidonia and found at Fratte di Salerno contains short erotic verses involving persons with Greek, Etruscan, and other Italic names.

Although the association of the symposium with the afterlife is at first an Italic/Etruscan feature, the paintings do represent the attitude of at least some Greeks—those Greeks called "Orphics" who followed the teachings of **Musaeus**. Indeed, Plato described the Orphic conception of the afterlife as a banquet

where the reward is eternal drunkenness (attributed to Musaeus, who was either a son or friend to Orpheus).

> Note:
> Orpheus was a prophet of Dionysus, and hence the “Orphic" cult was associated with and perhaps even synonymous with the Dionysiac/Bacchic mysteries in ancient Southern Italy.

Orphic beliefs demonstrate a number of commonalities with Etruscan eschatology, including:

(1) a procession of the dead to a blessed afterlife;

(2) a need to either pass through or drink water to reach that afterlife;

(3) the representation of that afterlife as a banquet or symposium.

By the fourth century BCE Plato refers to the “Orphic" idea of the afterlie as a symposium being a reward for the just, whereas the unjust went to the house of Hades as punishment for their wrongdoings. This suggests that the Etruscan idea of the afterlife was borrowed by Greeks who adapted it for their own needs in the Orphic cult.

> Remark:
> This is a radical departure from archaic Greek religion where humans went to the gloomy “land of the shadows" described by Homer, save for a select few of the heroic race you transcended mortality to dwell in the paradise of the Elysian fields at the end of the earth described by Hesiod. On the other hand in Orphic belief the afterlife was a reunion with the gods, in the form of a symposium.

Some other Orphic initiates in nearby Greek colonies were buried with a tablet, considered by archeologists to be a type of passport which would give the Orphic initiate access to the afterlife. A fifth-century tablet found in Hipponium in Souther Italy contained a small text:

> This (dictate) is sacred to Memory (for the **mystes** [initiate]) on the point of death. You will go to the well-built house of Hades, where, on the right, there lies a spring, and next to that a white cypress tree stands. There the souls of the dead seek refreshment. Do not even approach this spring. Beyond it you will find the cold water that runs from the lake of Memory, with its keeper to the fore, and they will ask you, with clear penetration, what you seek in the shades of murky Hades. Reply: “I am the son of the Earth and of starry Heaven; I burn with thirst and I am fainting; quick, give me to drink the cold water that comes from the lake of Memory. They are merciful, as the king of the underworld wills, and will give you to drink from the lake of Memory; and when you have drunk you will travel the sacred path where the other **mystai** and **bakkhoi** proceed in glory."

In this context the procession depicted on the west wall of the tomb may be none other than a sacred procession of **bakkhoi** as mentioned in the tablet above.

However, some skepticism over the “Orphic" associations in this text have been expressed because the deceased buried with it was a woman. What we can loosely term “Orphic/Dionysiac" cults were marked by sex-segregated rites.

The elements of water and earth are also invoked in what **Clement of Alexandria** alleges is the writing of Orpheus himself:

> Water is death for souls, But from water comes earth, from earth again water, and thence soul, rushing to all the ether.

Both Orpheus and Dionysus journey to the underworld and return from it in Greek myth, and it stands to reason that both of these mythical characters, the god and his prophet, were believed to have the power to intercede on behalf of the dead with the rulers of the underworld.

### 3.2.3 The symposium and Orphic rites: Higher forms of knowledge, homosociality, and homoeroticism

Orphic/Dionysiac mystery rites ultimately sought to provide the initatie with a better afterlife through the purification provided by traveling Orphic priests, or **orpheotelestai**. From a tablet in the Black Sea colony of Olbia dating to the fifth century BCE, one finds the text “life death life truth," which seems to argue for reincanation at least once before reaching the Orphic afterlife of “truth." “Liberation from the wheel of life" in Orphism could be achieved, it was thought, through religious rites.

Beginning in the 480s BCE, and hence relevant to the Tomb of the Diver paintings, Attic vases show Orpheus surrounded by males only. **Phanocles** explains that Orpheus introduced “male love" (**erōtas arrenas**) to the Thracians. Eventually the Thracian women killed Orpheus out of jealousy for taking their husbands away from them. In terms of the pederasty and homosociality, the “Orphic rite" has much in common with the Greek concept of the symposium.

According to **Cerchiai** the reveler would obtain access to higher forms of knowledge through the symposium. In the symposium, “the phrase ‘wine and truth’ was proverbial for those who talked frankly while inebriated."

> Note:
>
> Sympotic discussions strove both to enlighten one’s contemporaries with regard to politics but even more to educate the **erōmenoi** present, just as the Orphic rite strove to educate the initiate as to how to find an eternity of sympotic pleasure.

The sexuality displayed is consistent with a neschatological Orphic reading. **Cerchiai** suggests that the procession on the west wall of the tomb is an erotic hunt, in which the older bearded man is chasing the younger, nude man.

### 3.2.4 Ancient Paintings, Modern Queerness

The sympotic scenes denote what is, for all intents and purposes, a specifically ancient context. The symposium scene was more than a drinking party; it was a ritual, wherein a libation was poured to the god Dionysus, paeans were sung, and divination was sought through the game of kottabos. The Tomb of the Diver symposium seems to represent both the best of this life and hereafter, given Plato's description of the Orphic afterlife as sympotic.

> Remark:
> In the social development of a Greek citizen, the youth was meant to begin his sexual and social development as an **erōmenos**, then, when his beard came in, to become the **erastēs**, and finally, around the age of 30, to give up youthful same-sex **erōs** and marry.

This was normative. Understanding "queerness" as being identified with marginalization and transgression, the author argues that there is nothing "queer" going on, but instead the paintings should be called "homonormative," in the ancient Greek context, defining the centrality of social and/or erotic relationships among men to the institutions such as the symposium, that reify and promote exclusive male privilege in the power structures of society.

According to **Cohen (1991)**:

> when an Athenian man courts a boy he does so according to the normative expectations ofthe boy, his family, and the community of which he is a part (all social interaction is normatively structured by such expectations, though these expectations may conflict or reflect moral ambivalences about the conduct). Yet the norms reflected in such expectations do not simply determine his behavior. He possesses the knowledgeability that almost all individuals have about the norms, values, beliefs, and practical expectations of the society in which they live. This knowledgeability enables individuals to influence evaluations of their behavior by interpreting and manipulating their words and deeds and the normative categories by which they are judged.

While little is known of the customs and social history of ancient Poseidonia, its mother city of **Sybaris**, itself an **Achaean colony** that was known for its wealth and luxurious way of life in antiquity had a few more details. The inhabitants of Sybaris were the most indulgent of the Western Greeks. The Sybarites were known to like and have befriended the Etruscans to the north and the Ionians to the east.

> Question?
> Could this indicate Etruscan influence on Poseidonian sexuality?

Note the Poseidonians lived between the Sybarites and the Etruscans, and had absorbed some of the Etruscan ideology of the afterlife into their own eschatology. Inscriptions on an **olpē** made in Poseidonia nad found in a tomb at nearby Fratte di Salerno suggests that same-sex activity was enjoyed between Greeks and Etruscans:

> Apollodorus loves Kscylla

Wolchas buggers Apollodorus
Onatas loves Nikso
Hybrichus has love Parmynio.

Five males (Apollodorus, Wolchas, Onatas, Hubrichus, and Parmynio) and two females (Ksylla and Nikso) are named. Athenaeus points out that the Etruscan men enjoyed sex with both boys (**paides**) and young men (**meirakia**), a term that refers approximately to twenty-yera-old males.

#### 3.2.5 Conclusion

The paintings analyzed suggest that the idea of a drunken, sexy hereafter derived from an Etruscan context was imported into Greek thought and altered to fit Greek norms of homosociality and pederasty in the “Orphic" religious movement. The Tomb of the Diver paintings display a relationship between male-male eroticism and the afterlife that is Orphic.

The Tomb of the Diver paintings show a pederastic ideal, even if it is not as stringent as the Athenian model. The close proximity of Poseidonia to Etruscan and othe Italic communities may offer a rationale for this phenomenon.

## 3.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

> Remark:
> The author begins by describing the five paintings before preceeding to a survey of the secondary scholarship on the paintings, and then presenting their own interpretations. Finally, they return to the question of the use of images to mark homosexuality or gay identity, and argue that the scene in the painting is neither gay nor queer, but rather offers a “homonormative" paradigm.

> Note:
> As the author notes, to be useful for analysis of ancient Greek evidence queer theory must be adapted and refined as concepts like “heteronormative" do not really apply.

## Problems

**3.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 4

# Revisiting Roman Sexuality

**Abstract**

## 4.1 Questions and Remarks

> Question?
> What is the penetration model?

The penetration model is a model of ancient Roman society which places partaking in sexual acts into two categories: either penetrating or penetrated.

> Question?
> What is the **irrumatus**?

> Question?
> What is the **pedicatus/fututus**?

> Question?
> What is the **fellator**?

> Question?
> What is the **cinaedus/pathicus**?

## 4.2 First Reading

> Remark:
> To the Romans, penetrating was associated with freeborn status, masculinity, and social dominance, whereas being penetrated was associated with servility, femininity, and social inferiority. This is sometimes called the **“penetration paradigm"**.

Recent scholarship has proposed nuances for this model, pointing out that some types of sexual behaviours cannot be understood, or understood alone, through the framework of penetration. The author argues that in addition to the primary conceptual axis of penetration, the Romans further envisioned a secondary axis of agency (activity versus passivity) in the sexual act.

### 4.2.1 Agency and the penetration model

The author argues that penetration is conflated with agency with the use of “active" and “passive" in the literature, which in general is an oversimplification at best. We now propose the use of “active" and “passive" based on the model of Latin grammar. As **Charisius**, a fourth-century CE grammarian explains:

> Active is that which will indicate doing something, like “I say," indicating a motion either of the body, like “I mount," or of the mind, like “I foresee" ... Passive is the opposite of active, [and is] that which indicates enduring something, like “I am burned."

Thus “activity" should refer to more than just penetration; it should encompass, for example, performing a sex act, moving one’s body during sex, or moving one’s soul.

The author focuses on the literary and **epigraphic** (written matter recorded on hard or durable material) use of the nouns **cinaedus** and **pathicus** (“sexually penetrated male"), as well as the following verbs and their associated participles:

1. **irrumare** and **irrumari** (“to face-fuck" and “to be face-fucked")
2. **fellare** (“to suck cock"),
3. **pedicare** and **pedicari** (“to ass-fuck" and “to be ass-fucked")
4. **futui** (“to be fucked")
5. **cevere** (“to waggle the buttocks")

Note:

The author pays carefull attention to grammar (e.g., active versus passive voice, subjects versus objects), as well as descriptions of agency, movement, and desire. Through these close readings, we argue that some penetrated males (the **irrumatus** and the **pedicatus/fututus**) were conceptualized as passive, while others (the **fellator** and the **cinaedus/pathicus**) were characterized as active.

### 4.2.2 Passive Penetrated Males

#### 4.2.2.1 The irrumatus

Because irrumatio, “face-fucking," was a violent act—namely, oral rape—its victim was conceptualized as an unwilling or inactive participant, in contrast to those who were said to perform fellatio (fellare). In both literature and graffiti, irrumatio often appears in implicit or explicit threats.

Example:

One graffito from Pompeii reads, “L(ucius) Habonius sauciat / irrumat Caesum / Felic(e)m", “Lucius Habonius wounds, face–fucks Caesus Felix."

Example:

A set of graffiti from Rome: “ir(r)uno te Sexte," “I face-fuk you, Sextus."

**Irrumatio** is used as a threat in the epigrams of the poet Martial as well as poems of Catullus. Other examples come from the **Priapic Corpus**. These poems are written from the perspective of the woodland deity Priapus, guardian of gardens, who threatens thieves with rape by his oversized phallus. In none of these cases does the threatened individual want to engage in oral sex; rather, the implication is that he is an unwilling, passive party in his penetration.

#### 4.2.2.2 The pedicatus/fututus

Anally penetrated males who did not seek their penetration could be described with passive forms of the verb **pedicare**, “to ass-fuck", or as objects of pedicare. The terms appeared often in graffito paired with names.

Example:

The following is graffito from Northern Italy which focuses on the actions and agency of the penetrator: “Antioc(h)us pedicatus / ego qui feci non / nego," “Antiochus [has been] ass-fucked. I, the one who did it, don’t deny it."

As with irrumare, pedicare was often used in threats. In addition to being used against thieves, pedicatio (“ass-fucking") also features in threats against nosy and envious individuals.

Forms of pedicare were also used in humorous threats against readers. At its simplest we find “ego qui lego pedicor," “I who read am ass-fucked" in a graffito from Gaul.

In sum, irrumati, pedicati, and fututi routinely show a lack of sexual agency, movement, and desire for being penetrated.

#### 4.2.3 Active penetrated males

##### 4.2.3.1 The fellator

The subjects of the active verb fellare, “to suck cock," are conceptualized as agents in their oral penetration. Literature often portrays fellatio as willingly performed.

Remark:
**Martial** plays on the common trope that oral sex pollutes the mouth.

The active desire for the act of fellatio is very present in epigrams and graffito. The agency of performers of fellatio is further suggested by the word fellator, “cock sucker," an agent noun composed of the root fell- and the agentive suffix -tor.

Fellatores were characterized by their habitual behaviour. For example, a certain Vacerra is said by Martial to be an informer, a slanderer, a swindler, a dealer, a gladiator-trainer, and a cock sucker. Just as a slanderer or a cobbler performs his defining actions repeatedly, so too does the fellator habitually perform fellatio.

Note the distinction between the agency of the fellator and the passivity of the irrumatus.

##### 4.2.3.2 The cinaedus/pathicus

The Latin word cinaedus comes from Greek and is of uncertain origin. The ancient lexicographers proposed various etymologies, including derivation from “empty of shame," and “to move one’s shameful parts." Although in early Latin cinaedus was used primarily to designate dancers, with an emphasis on their bodily movements, in time it came to have a broader semantic range: most often it referred to a male

who desired to be penetrated anally or was effeminate, but it could also designate a male who was lustful in general. Thus, a cinaedus might also perform oral sex on males and females and even penetrate females and (albeit rarely) males.

We focus on the active role of the cinaedus in his own penetration. Cinaedi and males of a similar ilk are depicted as wanting to be penetrated. We even see a man who pays to be penetrated in a graffito from Pompeii.

As with the man who “bends over of his own accord," sometimes the agency of cinaedi is made manifest through their enthusiastic bodily movements, whether in attracting men or in the act of sex.

In other instances, verbs such as ceveo, “to waggle the buttocks," are used to describe the sexual movement of cinaedi and those with similar characteristics.

The term **pathicus** shows up considerably less frequently than cinaedus in Latin literature and graffiti. The word is related to the verb **pati**, “to endure"; in the case of males, it indicates enduring anal penetration. Despite this, the near-interchangeability of the terms pathicus and cinaedus hints that at least some pathici were thought to be agents.

### 4.2.4 Further repercussions

This distinction has further repercussions for our conceptual map of Roman sexuality, providing nuances to models set forth by other scholars. Parker’s teratogenic grid (1997) provides a visualization of the penetration paradigm, although in grouping together all penetrated individuals under the label of “passive," this model obscures the potential agency of some of these individuals.

**Table 4.1** Teratogenic grid

| | Vagina | Anus | Mouth |
|---|---|---|---|
| Active | | | |
| Activity | futuere | pedicare | irrumare |
| Person | fututor | pedicator/pedico | irrumator |
| Passive | | | |
| Activity | futui | pedicari | irrumari/fellari |
| Person | | | |
| Male | cunnilinctor | cinaedus/pathicus | fellator |
| Female | femina/puella | pathica | fellatrix |

Williams’s chart of sexual verbs on the other hand allows for precisely this agency, as well as eschewing the terms “active" and “passive" as glosses for one’s role in penetration.

**Table 4.2** Chart of sexual verbs

| | Insertive | Receptive |
|---|---|---|
| Vaginal | futuere | crisare |
| Anal | pedicare | cevere |
| Oral | irrumare | fellare |

Neither model, however, encompasses both active and passive penetrated individuals, or fully represents the complex relationship between penetration and agency. While all penetrated men were non-normative objects of scorn, the Romans at the same time drew distinctions between active and passive. For example, accusations or insuations that someone was not only penetrated but also an agent in his own penetration were particularly defamatory. At times, this difference could have legal consequences too. Being willingly penetrated could result in civic restrictions, whereas being an unwilling party did not.

**Table 4.3** Penetration-agency model for male sexuality

| | Orifice | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Vagina | Anus | Mouth |
| Penetrating | | | |
| Verb | futuere | pedicare | irrumare |
| Person | fututor | pedicator/pedico | irrumator |
| Penetrated | | | |
| Verb | futui | pedicari | irrumari/fellari |
| Person | | | |
| Male (passive) | - | pedicatus/fututs | irrumatus |
| Male (active) | - | cinaedus/pathicus(?) | fellator |
| Female | femina/puella | pathica | fellatrix |

## 4.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

## 4.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**4.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 5

# The Cultural Construct of the Female Body in Classical Greek Science

**Abstract**

## 5.1 Questions and Remarks

## 5.2 First Reading

In most culturees an individual is ascribed to one sex or another at birth on the evidence of external genitalia and this categorization is taken to predict their physical and mental development and capabilities, which in turn support the differentation between the sexes in the home, workplace, religion, and the law.

> Remark:
> Cultures support the division of sexes by claiming that there are mental and emotional trats, outside the physical genetalia, which naturally differentiate the sexes.

Challenges to cultural constructs of male and female are neutralized by claiming that they are exceptions to a **natural law**.

> Note:
> The belief in a natural law of the disjunction of the sexes can be found initially in the expression of mythology or religion.

The deeply implanted cultural belief that men and women are radically different can condition the interpretation of empirical evidence so that science, in its turn, supports the belief that perceived differences between men and women are a result of biology rather than **social conditioning**.

Remark:

In ancient Greece the polarization of sexual roles was far more marked than in our own society. This disjunction was expressed in Greek myth by separate origins of the sexes.

1. Hesiod portrays man as already existing when woman, a later manufactured product of the gods, was given to him.

After the beginnings of **natural philosophy** in **ionia** in the **sixth century BCE** mythology was no longer universally accepted as giving a true explanation of the world.

Note:

The Greeks did not dissect the human body, and so had only the vaguest understanding of the internal reproductive organs; nor could they have any knowledge of genetics or endocrinology. The strict biological polarization of the sexes was thus even more dependent on external sexual characteristics than our own society.

The **cultural paradigm of masculinity and femininity** had to be supported by demonstrating that typical male or female observable characteristics were evidence of a more perfectly male or female invisible nature (**physis**).

Remark:

Once the cultural archetype was shown to be grounded in nature, a man or woman who deviated from this norm could be viewed as aberrant—lacking in something essentially masculine or feminine—rather than as a challenge to what it was to be male or female, and the traditional polarization of the sexual roles could claim a scientific foundation.

Note that

1. Men were thought to be best suited to dealing with matters outside the home, the **polis**, and
2. women with the concerns of the household, the **oikos**

Although the female role in managing the oikos was recognized as important, a woman was still considered inferior and subordinate to her husband. On the other hand, although a man could not bear or nurse a child, he was not thought incapable of performing female tasks in the same way; rather the management of the household was considered beneath him.

Remark:

**Hesoid** account of the first women as a gift (albeit **malicious**) of the gods to men.

Many scientific theories attempted to justify the subordination of female to the male. Note that little explicit reference is made to female anatomy or physiology in the majority of Greek literature, besides the two sources mentioned previously.

**Definition 5.2.1** The **Hippocratic Corpus** was a collection of theoretical and therapeutical treatises written between the last quarter of the fifth and the middle of the fourth century BCE. These were written by several different authors.

**Definition 5.2.2** The **biology of Aristotole**, primarily **History of Animals, Parts of Animals, Generation of Animals**, was written around the third quarter of the fourth century BCE.

Both of these texts functioned in the same culture.

Remark:

The Hippocratic theory is the product of different physicians in different generations concerned, primarily, with pathology. On the other hand Aristotle was a single philosopher of nature, interested more in normative physiology and in developing a thoroughgoing theory of the female which could explain the similarities as well as the differences between the male and the female.

Both constructs were similar in that they were shaped by their **cultural assumption** that the female body was inherently inferior to that of the male. Both Hippocratics and Aristotle also argued that the fundamental differentation between the sexes did not become apparent until puberty.

Note:

According to Aristotle, at puberty a man's body changes more drastically than a woman's, until then the two sexes are very similar.

### 5.2.1 Diseases of Women 1.1

This work atributes menstruation to the very nature of a woman's flesh, which at puberty becomes "loose and spongy," causing her body to soak up excess blood from her stomach.

If a man should have any excess moisture in his body after exercise, it is absorbed by his glands, which are especially constructed for this purpose. The author of **Glands 1** described their nature as spongy, porous, and plump, language very similar to that which is used in **Diseases of Women** to describe the female body in general. The author likens the glands to wool and emphasizes how much they differ from the rest of the body, but for woman the body is one big gland, and hence similar to that of a male body which functioned only after a man had evacuated or used up most of his excess fluid through vigorous activity.

Remark:

> The implication is that a truly feminine woman would be incapable of developing the sort of flesh that would enable her to perform the same tasks as a man.

The difference in the size of male and femal breasts was used as another indication of the extent to which a woman's body is "looser than a man's".

In **Epidemics 2.6.19**, it is stated that a large vein runs to each breast and that these are the seat of the greatest part of consciousness. That women would always be more susceptible to having more blood in their breasts than men, would give a "scientific" basis to the belief that women were always closer to the irrational than men.

### 5.2.2 Value Judgement

Underlying the Hippocratic characterization of male and female flesh is a value judgement: firm and compact is good, while loose and spongy is bad. The man was thought to work much harder than a woman and thereby use up all his nourishment in building a stronger body. On the other hand a woman soaks up moisture through inactivity.

**Regimen 1.34** says that women are colder and moister than men in part because they use a more frivolous regimen. In **Diseases 4.45**, it is stated that less work does not simply result in a different type of body, but a sicker body; characterizing the result of idleness as **kakon** shows that the change was looked upon as a deterioration.

> Question?
> Could a woman change her body type and cease to menstruate if she led a strenuous life?

The Hippocratic Corpus suggests nowhere that a woman could overcome her inherently inferior physis to the extent that she could cease to menstruate altogether. Despite the frequency of menstrual cycles which must have lasted longer than the canonical month, the Hippocratics assumed that an absence of menses for longer than a month meant that the blood was trapped in a woman's body, not that there was no excess blood to be evacuated.

> Note:
> By the second century CE, when perhaps partly as a result of dissection, Soranus expressed the opinion that excessively active women did cease to menstruate.

Because the Hippocratics believed that the difference between men and women was to be explained primarily by biology rather than by their socially allotted ways of life, they did not believe the female could ever assimdate to the male in this way or, thus, could ever expect to live more like a man. The converse, however, seemed quite possible. in **Airs, Waters, Places 20-22** the description of Scythian men

shows that if a man pursues a sedentary lifestyle, his body becomes loose, flabby, and mosit and therefore more like a woman's.

The science of Hippocratics and Aristotle used menstruation to construct a female body inherently weak and capable of exerting influence on her emtions and intellect, thereby buttressing her subordinate and restricted position in society.

> Remark:
> For the Hippocratics the weakness of a woman's body (her porous flesh) caused menstruation; for Aristotle, menstruation caused her physical weakness.

**Menstruation and Health:**

1. In the Hippocratic theory the release of excess matter in menstrual blood once a month prevented a woman's body from becoming diseased.

2. Aristotle attributes the production of menstrual blood as what forced women away from the ideal of male health.

### 5.2.3 Theories of the Womb

**On the Nature of the Child 15** says that the drawing of the blood from the woman's body into her womb happens all at once each month when she is not pregnant; this is perhaps to account for symptoms women report before menstruation each month. The passage for blood to flow was believed to be blocked in young girls, for whom the best way to remove the impediment is to be married as soon as possible. The Hippocratics believed that an imperforate membrane could stretch across the vagina, but they viewed this as an unusual pathological symptom, not as a natural hymen common to all women.

> Remark:
> In Plato's **Timaeus** the womb is portrayed as an animal travelling around the body of a woman seeking satisfaction in sexual intercourse and pregnancy. The Hippocratics explain the "movements of the womb through a woman's body" as it not being anchored in place by pregnancy or if not being kept moist by intercourse, it becomes dry and is attracted to the moister organs of the heart, the liver, the brain, and sometimes to the bladder and the rectum.

> Remark:
> The womb could prolapse completely and issue from the vulva as a result of intercourse too soon after childbirth or a difficult birth.

A prolapsed uterus is recognized as a medical conditino today, and it has been suggested that it was this which gave rise to the belief that the womb could wander; however, it is simply a falling downard of

the organ through the vagina. **Hanson** remarks that as men's bodies held no uterus, the human body had no special place for it to reside. That "rational medicine" did not reject such a strange idea out of hand suggests that it fulfilled an important role in characterizing the female sex.

> Remark:
> The wandering womb was believed to account for the suffocating sensation some women experienced in the chest and for various other pains dispersed throughout the body.

In their explanations of womb movements the Hippocratics were rationalizing the theories, not of women themselves, but of a culture which needed to promote, and yet at the same time wished to maintain control over, women's power of procreation.

> Remark:
> The wandering womb deprived a woman of independent control of her own sexuality.

The Hippocratics retain the model of the womb as a separate animal within the woman which, without the intervention of a man, is in danger of subjugating the woman's own life force. Odors were used to repel the womb from one end ofthe body and attract it the the other. **Manuli** points out that employing perfumes in attracting the womb parallels the use of incense in invoking a god, an entity with a very definite mind of its own which is not easy for even a man to control.

**King** asserts that the idea of the womb as an independent animal would not suggest itself in the Hippocratic texts if we were not reading back from **Timaeus**. But even so we have to ask why the Hippocratics expended so much effort explicating a traditional belief which seems to us to have such little basis in reality. However, although the Hippocratics may have attempted to deny that the womb had any desires, the use of foul and sweet-smelling substances to draw it back contradicts the idea that their system was totally mechanical.

Aristotle asserted that the womb was held in place just like the wombs of other animals and like the seminal passages in the male. Nevertheless, even he thought that when the womb was empty it could be pushed upwards and cause a stifling sensation.

> Remark:
> In **History of Animals 582b22-26** Aristotle explains a prolapsed womb as a result of lack of sexual intercourse. A prolapsed uterus is one of the rare female conditions for which Hippocratics recommend abstinence from intercourse.

Although Aristotle may have been more rigorously "scientific" in observing anatomical and physiological phenomena, he to some extent was more bound by his cultural assumptions than the Hippocratic doctors.

According to **King**, the nostrils and vagina of a woman were thought to be connected by one long hollow tube giving the womb free passage from the top to the bottom of the body. Hence a favored method

for deciding whether a woman could conceive was to sit her over something strong-smelling and see if it could be smelled through her mouth.

Aristotle also used the smell of pessaries through the mouth to showing if the passages in the body have closed over. However, he believed that the seminal secretion originates in the area of the diaphragm, and just as this passes down to genitalia, any movement set up in that area passes back to the chest, such that it is from here that the scent becomes perceptible on the breath.

> Note:
> The Hippocratics frequently refer to the human womb in the plural, and Aristotle explicitly says that it is **double**.The occasional birth of twins probably confirmed this belief. It may also be from the observation of other mammalian uteri, such as that of a pig.

### 5.2.4 Conception of the Vagina

Because they were compiling a pathology rather than a physiology, the Hippocratics did not describe in detail every part of the female anatomy of which they were aware. They explicitly differentiate this from the urethra, and often advise inserting pessaries into the vagina without any directions for steps to avoid obstructing the flow of uring, which again suggests that they viewed the vagina solely as the passage to the womb and completely separate from the urethra.

Aristotle failed to make the distinction between the vagina and the urethra. This is a consequence of one of his founding principles: that the female is less representative of the human form than the male. Further, on the principle that men are naturally superior to women, Aristotle claims that men have more teeth, which he associates with a longer life-span.

### 5.2.5 Issus of Gender

The physical difference that men are on the whole harier than women is credited to a man's greater volume and agitation of semen by the author of **On the Nature of the Child 20**. Hair, he claims, needs moisture (primarily semen) to grow, and that the semen is stored in the human head and that is where the epidermis is most porous. Thus it is believed women have some semen, but not as much as males, and the genital area is the only palce secondary body hair grows.

Aristotle thought hair grew when moisture was able to seep through the skin and then evaporated, leaving an earthy precipitate behind. People had most hair on their headas because the brain was the moistest part of the body and the sutures in the skull would allow the fluid to seep through. Again men go bald at the front of their heads because this is where semen is stored. The growth of hair is associated by Aristotle to hot fluid in the body. Aristotle has difficulty in attaining consistency in his theory of hair

growth because adult men produce more but also lose more, and he wants both to be indications of male superiority.

### 5.2.6 Conclusion

The sexual differnita of menstruation, breasts, and womb are all accounted for in Hippocratic theory by the nature of female flesh. They are utlized in procreation, but they are the result of a difference between men and women which does not have sexual generation as its prime purpose. As a man produces more seed it becomes more agitated and he produces more hair. Thus in Hippocratic theory there are two fundamental causes for the observable difference in male and female physiology

> Note:
> the difference between male and female flesh dictates a woman's incapacity to perform in a man's world, rather than differenes in reproductive fluids.

Aristotle's theory ties all differences to a man's naturally greater heat, which allows him to concoct nourishment ot a greater degree for the purposes of sexual reproduction.

> Remark:
> Aristotle considered women to be less "other" and more like men than Hippocratics, but he could only maintain this general thoery while adhering to the principle of male superiority in every feature at the loss of some consistency and the neglect of some observable anatomical realities.

> Remark:
> Because they thought woman was a completely different creature and not simply a substandard man, the Hippocratics did not have to look for a correspondence between all male and female body parts. THey felt woman was inferior, of course, but her "otherness" allowed her body to be defined more by its own parameters. However, because they thought a woman was so different these parameters sometimes spread a little too widely.

## 5.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

This article was written in 2003, and hence still well-before gender studies was commonly studied in the scholarship.

Note:

The author analyzes the two main sources in Greek literature which reference the female anatomy, which are discussed in the gynecology of the **Hippocratic Corpus**, and the biology of **Aristotle**. The differentiation in the female body that appears at puberty, including mentruation and breasts, is assigned by oth Hippocratics and Aristotle as a manifestation of a “female nature" that makes it difficult for women to perform in male spheres.

The contents of the Corpus range from Hippocrates’ time in circa 460-375 BCE to many centuries later. Note that Aristotle is shortly after the time of Hippocrates, being born in 384 BCE and dying in 322 BCE.

Remark:

The author seeks to demonstrate how Greek scientific theories of female anatomy and physiology were conditioned by cultural assumptions of female nature: specifically, how Greek scientists used menstruation, breasts, womb, and lack of body hair to define female physical nature as fundamentally different from and inferior to the physical nature of the male, and how, on occasion, their assumptions led them to misinterpret or overlook data which could have challenged their theories.

The author conclude that the culture’s unwavering belief in female inferiority constrained the theories of Greek scientists.

## 5.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**5.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 6

# Fertility control in ancient Rome

**Abstract**

## 6.1 Questions and Remarks

Question?
How was Fertility percieved and understood in ancient Rome?

Question?
What methods did ancient Romans use to control women through fertility?

Question?
Were the methods deployed sufficiently effective to qualify as ‘control’, and was it ‘fertility’ that was being acted on through adoption and exposure?

## 6.2 First Reading

Note:
One key shift in the history of human procreation is from societies in which the dominant fertility project was the production of helathy children to those in which the limitation of that production dominates.

The reproduction of some groups is always enabled and encouraged more than others.

Agency in the fertility domain, particularly female agency, should not be restricted to action around contraception and abortion, but understood more holistically, as recent scholarship on medicine and childbearing in medieval Europe has emphasized.

> Remark:
> Behaviour was not bound simply to the number of children already born, but also to their sex and survivorship, among other considerations.

The author notes the following quote with regard to the term 'fertility control':

> While helpful in linking the prevention and promotion of procreation, the term may be too modern for centuries before the twentieth. People have always aimed to achieve certain objectives for family continuity and population size, individual health and happiness, but their conceptual and practical tools have changed.

'Control' is a modern reproductive term. There is an issue about whether 'control' sets the efficacy bar too high for the pre-modern world: whether, or to what extent, success in respect to or at least real purchase on the challenges and aims involved is required to use this language. There is also the sense in which 'control' has now become an aim in itself rather than a means to an end, and so perhaps lacks the categorical stability necessary to do the requisite heuristic work.

### 6.2.1 Fertility *Control*

Circa 100 CE in Rome, the noted physician **Soranus of Ephesus** composed his **Gynecology**, the only such dedicated treatise to survive from the early Roman Empire. Soranus traveled from his birthplace to the imperial capital via the medical schools of **Alexandria**, and continued to write in his native Greek. Greek was still the dominant language of learned medicine.

> Remark:
> Soranus offered instructions about how to have healthy children to Roman elite, through opposition to and criticism of past medical authorities. He positioned himself against the traditional Hippocratic view that female health depended on generation, arguing instead that women's physical well-being was undermined by her 'child-production' (**teknopoia**).

Soranus' pro-procreative program started with female anatomy and moved onto a systematic study of all the processes involved in generation, from menstruation to birth and the care of the newborn. Soranus insisted that girls pass the first occurrence of menstruation and become physically mature before marrying. This was somewhat at odds with elite practice in the Roman empire. Soranus argued that questions about the fertility of any prospective pride should accompany the customary inquiries.

Note:

All evidence indicates that the Roman elite stuck to their traditional interests in birth, money, and looks, instead of heavily considering the fertility of their bride. The women's childbearing prowess was something to be proved. THe only women who posses the virtue of "**fecunditas**", in the Annals of the Roman historian Tacitus, for instance, have already born children.

Soranus' answer to conception followed the Hippocratic view that women are most likely to concieve as their periods are dwindling and stopping. For the rest, body and soul must be in the right condition, feeling good and appropriately inclined.

Remark:

In modern medicine, the 'fertile window' refers to the six days during which heterosexual intercourse can result in pregnancy, those being the five days before and the day of ovulation itself. So this does not align with Soranus' best time. However, both the menstrual and ovulatory cycles are somewhat variable.

Guidance of care for the pregnant woman had three stages:

1. guarding the deposited seed
2. alleviating the ensuing symptoms, such as those associated with **kissa** (characterized by cravings, nausea, and general digestive disarray)
3. Aim at perfecting the embryo and preparing for the demans of birth.

Every aspect of a woman's life was to be regulated.

Note:

The first book of the **Gynecology** ends with a chapter on contraception and abortion. Soranus believed that childbearing uses up resources, saps vigor, and causes premature aging. Thus Soranus opened up conceptual space in which talk of family limitation could occur, within the pro-procreative program.

The items and actions which prevent conception were called **sullepsis** or 'non-birthers' **atokia**, and those which 'destroy what has been conceived' were called **phthoria**.

Remark:

'Destruction of what is carried' was controversial at the time. The opposition called Hippocrates as a witness, who said 'I will give no woman an abortive', and asserted that the medical art must guard and preserve what has been generated by nature.

The proponents of judgement were mainly motivated by preventing dangers in birth, and they said the same about contraceptives. Soranus concurred with this.

Soranus' contraceptive presecriptions can be roughly divided into three:

1. The first was that the 'best time' for procreative sex should be avoided.
2. The second involved applications to the mouth of the womb prior to intercourse, preventing the entry or retention of the seed.
3. The last were oral contraceptives.

For the thirty days after conception do the opposite of what Soranus advised to guard the deposited seed.

> Note:
> Several of the ingredients listed by Soranus have been identified as having fertility suppressing effects in a range of ethnobotanical and laboratory studies.

The work of John Riddle, who was the first to survey this evidennce in relation to ancient medical writings, has been subject to sustained criticism ever since: its orientation, presuppositions, methodology, and conclusions have all been called into question. For instance, discovering what modern species might be designated by ancient plant names is far from straightforward.

Soranus explicitly located his discussion of contraceptives and abortives within marriage. In pharmacological contexts or works on medical materials, actual engagement with the business of prevention or destruction occurred in association with prostitution.

> Remark:
> The philosophical poet Lucretius, writing his Latin epic **On the Nature of THings** in the last decades of the Roman Republic, had asserted that women themselves can 'prevent or resist' conception, by pulling away and becoming limp as a man climaxes. This technique however belongs to '**scorta**' ('whores'), who wish to minimize their chances of becoming pregnant and maximize their client's pleasure.

The second book of the **Gynecology** covers the business of normal birth and the ensuing care of both mother and baby. There are two important points in the detailed descriptions and instructions:

1. First is the section on how the midwife (**maia**) was to recognize whether the infant she had just delivered was fit for rearing or not. The main positive indicators were that the mother had enjoyed good health during pregnancy, birth had occurred at the proper time, the newborn had cried vigorously when placed on the ground, and was well-formed in all its parts. At the end of the day it was the father's decision to rear or expose (i.e. to put the new-born out to die or for someone else to raise).

2. The other issue of interest is the nutrition of the newborn. Soranus favored wet-nursing, aligning himself with the dominant elite practice of the early Empire, and against arguments by some philosophers and traditional moralists that women should nurse their own infants.

The later half of the **Gynecology** deals with the diseases of women, in which dangers and damaging impact of pregnancy and parturition loom large. Difficult birth is referred to as **dustokia**. The sections on several of these uterine ailments are not preserved in their original Greek, but, apart from their headings, survive only in the later 'Latinizations' of the **Gynecology** of the fifth-centery CE North African physician Caelius Aureliunus and his less firmly located successor **Muscio**. Similarly, the contents of the final chapter in book three of Soranus' composition, listed as 'On non-generation (**agonia**) and non-conception (**asullepsia**)' are transmitted only in Latin.

All of the failures associated with being 'sterile', in latin '**Sterilitas**', occur in the female body according to Soranus, the cause may lie with either party. All of the reasons can be treated, mostly dietetically if addressing the overall somatic condition, and through pharmacological applications or surgery if the problem is more localized and specific.

There were non-medical courses of action available to those struggling to have children in the Roman Empire. Generative failure could be caused by some sort of incongruity or incompatibility between the couple having intercourse. The suggested remedy was changing partners for better results. The formulations were mostly vague, but Lucretius clearly recommended divorce and remarriage in contexts where no progeny had been forthcoming.

> Note:
> By the time Lucretius wrote his didactic epic in the first centure BCE, divors and remarriage were legally (if not practically) straightforward for both parties at Rome, especially if there no no surviving offspring. This was a variation on a key theme in Roman matrimony—the main reason for divorce in the late Republic and early empire was to remarry, for political, economic, or generative purposes.

Soranus had an apparent omission of the reltational aspects of infertility. A range of texts from the imperial period demonstrate that dream interpreters, astrologers and fortune-tellers were often consulted about the production of children, pregnancy, birth, and the prospects of the new-born. The point here is simply to return to the pro-procreative shape of Roman society, with which this section opened.

Note that although not all the resources for the generative project were accessible to those below the elite, many were, at lesat in some form. Maximum effectiveness still resides in infant exposure and adult adoption, however, so it is to these phenomena we now turn.

### 6.2.2 *Fertility* Control

As **Soranus** assumed, in the Roman world birth was followed by a decision about whether to rear the newborn. A positive judgement meant being welcomed into the family and community, while a negative

one entailed the separation of the child from their natal famly through exposure, their being put out (**ekthesis**) either to die or be picked up and raised by someone else. The main reason for third party rescue was to bring up the infant as a slave. **Exposure** was about separation or rejection, not about the fate of the child. It was a means of regulating family size and family composition.

> Remark:
> Soranus described a physical assessment of suitability to rear, one that was entirely gender neutral, but other ancient sources and modern scholarship raise the possibility of selectivity by sex in these post-parturition judgements, a selectivity that favored boys over girlds.

Issues of sex and disability surely played a role in Roman decision making about raising children, but in complex and relative rather than absolute ways.

Control can be exercised over quantity and quality, and the efficacy of **expositio** is obvious in respect to both. Until the development of reliable fetal sex discernment tests in the twentieth century, exposure and infanticide were the only means of sex selection in relation to offspring.

> Question?
> Did the Roman sources themselves include **expositio** with other forms of family limitation or considered it as a distinct practice? Where did it fit in the overall demographic system of the Roman world?

Soranus' approach was essentially inclusive, covering contraception, abortion, and exposure, as well as infertility treatments, in a single treatise. Soranus' role was limited by the role of the **maia** as reporter's of the newborn's physical condition to those in the family who would make the actual decision: most critically, the father, in whose power (**patria potestas**) any child raised would most likely be.

Roman law made all legitimate offspring, female and male, automatic heirs (**sui heredes**) who had to be left a fair share of the estate unless explicitly disinherited.

> Note:
> A couple decades before Soranus was writing, the Stoic moralist **Musonius Rufus** argued strongly in support of the thesis that all children born should be raised, which was more or less the positon of the **Stoa**.

Musonius mainly had an issue with the wealthy who chose not to rear later-born offspring so that those earlier born may inherit greater wealth. This was essentially a civic argument. Having lots of children was an obligation citizens owed to the state and the gods, though the benefits accrued to both the community and the family concerned, far outweighing the pragmatic excuses for limiting offspring that he dealth with. Musonius also praised a variety of measures against abortion and contraception, public rewards for parents of multiple progeny and penalties for the childless.

Remark:

The end of marriage, through death or divorce, could have resulted in the exposure of any progeny born in the aftermath. Both pragmatic and emotional reasons seem to have been in play, including matters of inheritance.

For example, there is the question of 'fatherless' children, those born to a woman not in a ROman marriage (**iustum matrimonium**), so who were not born in **patria potestas** with all that entailed. These were not babies born to a 'single' woman, one who society deemed should not be having children or was having them by the wrong man, for example in adultery. So, though those latter women would likely have exposed their offspring, the numbers involved were probably small.

The raising of foundlings, a kind of 'fostering', became a regular and to some extent regulated occurrence in the Roman world. It seems that certain local places became informally known as spots where newborns would be put out and could be taken up, by anyone who wanted to. Another possibility beyond slavery is that **expositi** might be smuggled into reasonably wealthy, even positively elite households lacking offspring and presented as the product of their marriages by wives unable or unwilling to bear children for themselves.

Note:

Legislation and juristic discussions condemned the practice—there was no time-limit on fraud accusations concerning the introduction of such children, for instance—but they also recognized that husbands might collude in such undertakings as well as their primary victims.

Under classical Roman law, exposure did not affect the birth status of the infant. It remained free if born to a freewoman, and remained in **patria potestas** if that woman was in a Roman marriage. It allowed these redemptions as long as the person who had raised the foundling was compensated for what they had spent on maintenance by the natal family. While some imperial rulers permitted this kind of purchase of freedom to be enforced in parts of Greece, the emperor **Trajan** preferred the principle. He stresses the inviolability of free birth; if the status were proven, they should not have to 'buy back their freedom'.

Some **expositi** did return to their original homes. In fact, that may have been the plan all along. This chimes with the idea that among the married poor exposure mostly a response to a specific crisis, rather than to poverty as such. If desperate circumstances compelled them to put out a newborn it may well have been in the hope of future recovery, when things had improved, thus locating **expositio** among the adaptive strategies developed to spread the burden of childbearing and improve procreative outcomes as well as among the methods of family limitation.

In Roman adoption a man who lacked a direct heir could acquire one, more or less fully formed, from another lineage to inherit his family name and cult as well as property. Adoptive households should roughly replicate natural ones. The model adopter was over sixty or otherwise known to be unable to procreate, had tried to have and maintain his own children, without lasting success. He should adopt an adult male at least eighteen years his junior, of similar social status if not actually part of the same kin group. The adoptee should also come from a family which could bear his transfer elsewhere, indeed his move would ideally benefit both parties.

Remark:

Adopted children were legally in the same relationship to their **paterfamilias** as children who had been born to him in a legitimate marriage, but they had been raised by someone else. That raising, the emotional and material resources invested in it, its formative effects, the physical and moral resemblance between parents and offspring it forged, left its mark and was neither wiped out nor replaced by the formal transfer to a new family.

Less formal practices of fostering, of raising the offspring of others, might produce closer emotional ties, but without the same legal results: foster-children could not be heirs in the same way that adopted sons were. The consent of the adoptee was only relevant if the father was dead. This also meant that any offspring born to a master by his slave women, since they followed the status of the mother, could not be adopted and while it would have been theoretically possible to adopt children produced outside marriage, if the mother were a citizen, there is no evidence that this happened.

Note:

The position of the adoptee, at least in elite circles, would have been socially untenable, and his inheritance would undoubtedly have been challenged in the courts with some chance of success.

### 6.2.3 Conclusions

The author has aimed to enable a fuller assessment of questions of control over those matters of the procreative project in the Roman world, as part of a longer history of fertility control. To summarize, everybody was in the business of family continuity, of having children to pass their name, status, cult, and whatever property they might have owned on to, of forging links to posterity. The slaves, wanting to have free children, to establish and then enact the possibility of family continuity after a period of generalized, definitional lack of control, including over their fertility.

It is important to distinguish between the elite and the rest. For the vast majority while there would have been definite advantages to birth spacing, achieved through abstinence and breatsfeeding, absolute limits were not an issue. Parents seem generally to have wanted both sons and daughters, a son first and foremost to ensure the continuity fo the paternal line but also daughters, who made a range of important contributions to the family enterprise. Sex-selective exposure might have been deployed in such circumstances of single sex offsprings, but decisions to raise children were largely in response to crisis, albeit in a precarious world, where food shortages and famine were not infrequent, and with some wishful hopes of retrieving those given up when fortunes improved.

Birth spacing for the elite was neither suffcient nor so easily organized, given the reliance on wet-nurses; a pattern of rapid generation of some sons and daughters and then stopping, with the possibility of re-starting after either child mortality or a new marriage was more suited to family needs. Though Soranus attempted to facilitate this through making contraception and abortion available to respectable married women and not just prostitutes, to protect those women from the most damaging effects of repeated childbearing, his recommendations would have been of limited efficacy, in respect to either pregnancy

or well-being. Control would have come from abstinence or exposure, ultimately relying on the latter, without any benefits to female health.

> Remark:
> This was, as Musonius indicated, the dominant means of family limitation but one that operated within a wider suite of actions with the same aims, all of which he opposed while promoting moves encouraging childbearing.

## 6.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

The author provides a survey of methods used to promote but also prevent pregnancy in ancient Rome. The author also discusses the pracices of adult adoption and infant exposure in more detail in order to interrogate the notion of 'fertility control'.

The author argues that the Roman case has plenty to offer wider debates about the history of reproduction as it includes the desires to have and not to have children, to limit and increase offspring, to shape families in different ways.

The author argues that the fact that in all cases families and individuals and communities had procreative aims toward which they consciously worked suggests a long-term narrative in which the reproductive project itself, whether more expansive or restrictive, provides the unifying thread to be tracked and analyzed.

> Note:
> The author pays careful attention to definitional issues.

## 6.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**6.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 7

# How to Kill an Amazon

**Abstract**

## 7.1 Questions and Remarks

> Question?
> Who is Euphronius?

> Question?
> Where were the Amazon's located?

> Question?
> How is Hercules' related to the Amazons?

## 7.2 First Reading

Greek **Heracles** is not only the great civilizer, but also the most bestial of heroes. His exploits are fueled by a violent animal energy that gives him a special kinship with antisocial monsters and simultaneously enables him to conquer them.

> Note:
> Heracles is prone to murderous rages, voracious gluttony for food and drink, and rampant sexual promiscuity towards women and men.

Note:

Heracles has two wives, **Deianeira** and **Megara**, as well as **Iole**, a princess he destroys a city to adbuct. **Euripides** shows him briefly as a loving husband and father, but in the tradition as a whole the principal function of **Megara** and her children is to highlight the horror of their deaths at Heracles' hands, while **Deianeira**'s most memorable appearance is as the agent of his own horrific demise as a result of his destructive passion for **Iole**.

There is also **Omphale**, to whom he is temporarily enslaved in female costume—a gender reversal that serves to enhance his hypermasculinity.

Remark:

In 1994 Heracles was reborn in the person of Kevin Sorbo, star of the television show **Hercules: The Legendary Journeys** (HLJ). The telemovies present Hercules as a monogamous, strictly heterosexual family man, utterly devoted to his wife and children.

In the course of Greek tradition, Heracles' inner need to perform his exploits came to replace the external compulsion of the gods. But in the telemovies he needs a woman's permission. To be sure, the hypermasculine Greek Heracles had been cleaned up long before the 1990s, in a tradition that had its beginnings in archaic Greece, became entrenched in Roman Stoicism, and swept on through the Middle Ages and Renaissance to the present day. Heracles became a figure of **perfect moral virtue**.

Heracles' popularity in modern American mass culture began in 1959 with **Pietro Francisci**'s movie Hercules. Greek Heracles' promiscuity is erased, with the only love interest appearing being **Iole**, while there is no mention of **Megara**, **Deianeira**, or **Omphale**.

In HLJ Hercules is portrayed as trying to use reason before resorting to muscle power. He repeatedly concerns himself with righting social wrongs, often through persuasion. Hercules was explicitly envisaged as a role model who would send the "right message," especially to children. Thus the ferocious Greek Heracles reinvented as a model of **conventional, respectable, middle-class American values**, a bourgeois fantasy hero of late twentieth-century popular culture.

Nearly all the female figures whom the Greek Heracles had relationships do appear, but they are **radically** rewritten. In **Underworld** Deianeira becomes the great love of his life, while Iole is a seductress who is unable to seduce Heracles. Omphale appears in **Lost Kingdom** as a queen to whom Hercules voluntarily enslaves himself for just one day, in order to further his own schemes. (**no cross-dressing appears**)

In the weekly series that picked up where the Action Pack movies left off, the same kind of revisionism was seen. At the beginning of the first season Deianeira and the children are killed by Hera, through no fault of Hercules' own, in order to enable him to follow a life of adventure without becoming a neglectful "absent" husband and father. This allows him to elide the tension between heroic and domestic roles, which is dramatized by Euripides. Eliminating it HLJ allows Sorbo's Hercules to evade contemporary anxieties regarding "fractured families."

In HJL he remains devoted to the dead Deianeira. Though not entirely celibate, he is exceedingly slow to seize the countless opportunities for sexual adventure thrust upon him by eager women. By nature he is portrayed as monogamous. In Season 3 he meets and marries his second wife, Serena, but before doing so visits Deianeira in the Underworld to obtain her blessing.

> Remark:
> Most of Hercules' suitors, all of whom are female, are portrayed as sexual predators in pursuit of his virtue. The fifty virgin daughters of THespius with whom the greek Heracles had sex in a single night at their father's behest, became a flock of fifty numphomaniacs from whom Hercules flees in terror.

The most innocent mythological women like Iole, Arachne, and the Thestiads have become aggressors, often eroticized in ways that locate both their power and the threat they pose in their sexual desire. What of the "real" female aggressors? The **Hydra**, the second of the traditional Twelve Labors, provides Hercules with his first adventure in **Hercules and the Amazon Women** (HAW). The "**treacherous power of the feminine**": the Hydra lures in her victims by posing as a helpless and "adorable" sad little girl, before metamorphising into the "ultimate phallic woman".

> Remark:
> Innocent females, including Heracles' own victims, are reimagined as threats to his monogamous domesticity, while the truly monstrous female lowers his guard by turning into the kind of innocent girl-child who would naturally touch the heart of a dovoted family man.

The agenda not only for the movie but the series as a whole is set: Hercules' struggle against evil as an engagement with the monstrous female. Even his male enemies are usually pawns of the goddess Hera.

> Note:
> Sorbo's Hercules is a direct descendant of the fifth-century BCE sophist **Prodicus**'s influential Heracles. When faced with a fork in the road, this Heracles chooses virtue and eschews pleasure. HLJ's Hercules shows similar self-restraint, and in HAW he warns **Iolaus** against recklessness in battle.

This reinvention takes a form that reflects our culture's efforts to evade the disturbing implications of extraordinary human performance. For example, witness the ubiquitous but bizarre notion that sports "heroes" should serve as exemplars of moral perfection, when everything about their acculturation would seem to predispose them, like Heracles, towards antisocial violence, and abundant evidence corroborates that expectation.

> Remark:
> HLJ asks us to believe that the most physically powerful hero of them all is more likely to be a victim of sexual assault than a perpetrator.

The ninth of Heracles' traditional Twelve Labors is to steal the war-belt of the Amazon queen **Hippolyta**, a feat that not so subtly betokens both military and sexual conquest. In the process he slaughters numerous Amazons. This encounter, radically revised, is the central subject of **Hercules and the Amazon Women**.

Note:

In defiance of the strictly gender ideology of ancient Athens, they are, at their core, "a female people who fight."

The earliest references call them "equivalent to men," yet in the agonistic, zero-sum terms of Greek culture, such equivalence is tantamount to hostility.

Remark:

In a vase by **Euphronius** We see Heracles and male warriors fighting Amazons. Although the Amazons are losing, they are positioned equal in size to Heracles and the men.

Amazons are **radically alien** in virtue of their rejection of conventional gender norms. The fighting equipment of Amazons is portrayed as "barbarian" equipment of various kinds. After the Persian Wars the Amazons start to be identified with the Persians as the barbarian other. At all periods it is vital that they be shown as defeated or dying at the hands of heroic Greek males.

Note:

As a threat to the "civilized" social order, the Amazons conquest came to be seen as part of Heracles' civilizing mission.

The Amazons "masculinity" and separatism are in turn made possible by a lack of any sexual need for the male beyond an occasional roll in the reproductive hay. In HLJ the aggressive Amazons undergo a transformation in which they are reimagined in much the same fashion as Heracles himself. The opening of the move situates Hercules as an antimarriage misogynist. By the ned his meeting with Hippolyta and her Amazons has transformed him into a fervent devotee of heterosexual romance.

In contrast to Greek representations, none of these modern Amazons is armed like a conventional male warrior. They are monkeylike, jungle-dwelling tomboys who swing down from trees to attack. "Primitive" animal masks betoken both savagery and "feminine" deviousness.

Hercules neither kills any Amazons on the way to the Amazon queen, nor the queen herself even when she has challenged him to finish her off. Hercules allows himself to be captured by the Amazons. After making him wash her feet, Hippolyta informs him that women want to be respected and explains that the roots of his misogyny lie in his childhood acculturation. Hercules picks up on this and asks "what if I tried to change?", and he does. He is instantly transformed into a "sensitive" late-twentieth-century middle class male.

Remark:

Hippolyta's psychotherapeutic strategy and its success reflect the enormous influence of the self-help movement of the late-twentieth century.

Hercules, the therapeutic "client," will learn more than she meant to teach, turning the tables to become a better psychotherapist than his teacher. Newly wise in the ways of women, he informs Hippolyta that her subjects "feel an emptiness they cannot explain." Like their forebears in Greek art, the Amazons are svelte, beautiful, and eroticized for the presumptively male gaze. In the end the militantly "feminist" leader Hippolyta is seduced away from her feminist separatism by the newly sensitive Hercules. This is configured as courage on Hippolyta's part for resisting Hera, who was enslaving the Amazons' wills and teaching them to hate all men.

Remark:

Hecules plays the role of those late-twentieth-century counselors who took it upon themselves to "cure" women of the "disease" of independence from men and the "infection" of feminism.

Like late-twntieth-century American career women, the Amazons are assured that they will be really happy only if they give up their independent lives and devote themselves to maternity and "nurturance." The means by which Hercules achieves this transformation include not only an antifeminist discourse of personal fulfillment, but also, a related feminist rhetoric of self-determinationn.

Remark:

The Amazons' embrace of conventional heterosocial domesticity is represented as a newfound "freedom".

The movie tells women that "they must choose between a womanly existence and an independent one...if they [give] up the unnatural struggle for self-determination, they [can] regain their natural femininity."

Remark:

The rhetoric of the natural became more loaded than ever in the 1990s, as biological determinism, especially regarding sex roles, swept triumphantly through the popular media in a trend that shows no sign of abating (link to **Dean-Jones and Flemming**).

Far from being feminist in its essence, the kind of "respect" that Herculs advocates is the restoration of an antiquated romantic ideal, whereby such gestures as flowers and love songs are the price men pay for female domestic labor. The men will persist in their romantic gestures, but these serve to underline the traditional hierarchical division of labor, not to challenge it. The monster of **female separatism** is contained by our hero.

Note:

As different as he is from the early Greek Heracles, Kevin Sorbo's Hercules too is an agent of "civilization," as defined by the patriarchal ideology of his own time.

The Greek Amazons are domesticated in HLJ much as Heracles is, by the use of therapeutic discourses characteristic of the late-twentieth century to incorporate them into a bourgeois, pseudo-enlightened model of the household, an incorporation that only echoes Heracles' own domestication but enacts it under his therapeutic regime. The result is a taming of the Amazons more insidious than the unapologetic Greek representations of slaughter.

Remark:
Despite their physical prowess and self-sufficiency, waht proves effective in the end is the passive female power exercised in Aristophanes' **Lysistrata**.

In the telemovie the rejection of domesticity is fueled by a desire for a better domesticity.

Note:
The Greek Amazons exist in order to define the "civilized" normative male (and female) through the reversal of culturally coded gender expectations; the televisual Amazons perform the same function by embracing those norms.

Female power is shown to serve, in the end, only the interests of Bourgeois domesticity with which female interests are held to be identical. And the therapeutic discourse that has been embraced predominantly by women, as a means of improving both themselves and their men, is used to reinscribe the gender roles that many women, in their quest for "self-fulfillment," have attempted to escape.

This outcome may be designed to appeal to one type of heterosexual male viewer, allowing him to fantasize that despite his own evident limitations, women of the caliber of the Amazons are available to him as mates, if he just adds a dash of "sensitivity." Kevin Sorbo's Hercules is a kinder gentler action hero, intended to appeal to women as well as men. This can be seen in the products used to advertise the initial showing of **Underworld** (November 1994). In other words, the antifeminist ideology of HAW, along with its pseudo-feminist veil, was directed not just at men but at women, who were presumably expected to embrace this assertion of their "essential" needs as women.

Both the Greek myth of the Amazons and the treatment of the Amazons in HAW serve to obfuscate and naturalize the tensions and contradictions inherent in the institution of marriage, but the ways in which they do so are tailored to their cultural contexts.

Remark:
Classical Greek culture so dreaded the prospect of female power and the threat it presents to such structures that it kept its women in an explicitly subordinate position based on their supposed inferiority to and need for men.

In the ideology of contemporary popular culture the patriarchal family's ability to reproduce itself is likewise threatened by female autonomy and power. In contrast to classical Greece, howerver, modern American popular culture purports to respect the powerful female and to give a voice to "feminine" needs even within the bourgeois family. The "mythic" strategy for neutralizing the Amazons adopted by HAW therefore diverges somewhat from its Greek sources.

For the Greeks the Amazons' "masculine" independence is itself the problem, and must be erased in the interests of "civilization." A culture that purports to respect female independence must maintain that while women do indeed have the capacity for autonomy, this is not what they really wantm since it militates against their "natural" domesticity.

> Remark:
> For the women, it is death if they are Greek Amazons; but if they are modern Americans, it is a denial of their self-fulfillment. It is for this reason that is is unnecessary for our hero actually to kill any of these Amazons. As far as HAW is concerned, the Greek Amazons are already dead.

The "preferred" ideology of HAW is clearly patriarchal, flavored with just enough lip service to women's "needs" to veil its coercive definition of those needs.

Hercules is often sexually objectified throughout the series, often explicitly through women's eyes. In HAW he is bound, caged, and humiliated for the satisfaction of the female (Amazon) gaze.

In the final moments of the movie Zeus reverses time (so that various corpses will be restored to life), andn the whole story is undone and started over again. This time Hercules gives the messenger fro mGargarencia the Horn with which Hippolyta controls her Amazons. In doing so it picks up on a theme from the beginning of the movie, where a good deal is made of the fact that Hercules carries no weapons.

The Greek Heracles' signature weapons, the bow and the club, symbolize opposed modes of heroism, since the club requires brutal violence at close quarters, while the more sophisticated bow, which allows one to kill from a distance, betokens caution and ingenuity, if not actual cowardice. The television Hercules' masculine completeness is demosntrated by his lack of weapons, his ability to rely on the self-sufficiency of the male body.

When Hercules resotres Hippolyta's "horn" to the Gargarencia men at the movie's close, what viewer can doubt that these women will reappropriate it from these men in no time flat?

## 7.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

> Remark:
> The author argues that depictions in telemovies such as HLJ killed the Amazons of classical Greek myth, domesticating them. On the other hand, **Xena: Warrior Princess** telemovies brought the Amazons back to life.

## 7.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**7.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 8

# The Venus Pudica: uncovering art history's 'hidden agendas' and pernicious pedigrees

**Abstract**

## 8.1 Questions and Remarks

> Question?
> What is the **Venus Pudica**?

> Question?
> Who is **Praxiteles**?

> Question?
> What is the **Knidian** Aphrodite?

> Question?
> What is the **Pudica**?

## 8.2 First Reading

To write history, and perhaps particularly the history of cultural objects, is to engage in creating coherences.

> Remark:

> Within traditional art history, no more satisfying explanatory connection can be made for a work of art than to link it to classical antiquity.

Ever since the Italian Renaissance, the infinitely elevated regard for classical works of art has been matched only by the elevated intellectual gratification produced by the historians coherent narratives, which revel in unending reaffirmations of 'classicism' as the adherent stuff of western cultures 'high' history.

> Remark:
> Female nudes fashioned as covering their pubises were and continue to be a most favoured subject/pose/gesture in the art of the western world.

The pose was first mainstreamed into western culture by fourth-century Greek sculptor **Praxiteles**. The endemic presence of this pose has become so normalized, so 'natural', that it is made invisible or transparent.

### 8.2.1 The Knidian Aphrodite by Praxiteles

Praxiteles' monumental sculture, usually called the **Knidian Aphrodite**, was produced in the volatile period around 350 BCE. It is the very first monumental cult statue of a goddess to be represented completely nude. Moreover, it is the first monumental female nude sculpture to be positioned with her hand over her pubis, which at some undetermined moment in ancient times was given the name '**pudica**', or so-called **modest pose**.

> Note:
> Its popularity was expressed not only in accolades of ancient writers but also in the countless Hellenistic and Roman copies, adaptations and derivations 'inspired' by Praxiteles' concept.

Praxiteles' introduction of the monumental female nude occurred at least three centuries after the introduction of its counterpart, the monumental male nude statue.

> Remark:
> A survey of Greek monumental sculpture of men and women in teh sixth and fifth centuries readily reveals the strong differentation along gender lines already inherent in their definition.

In the archaic period the **kouroi** (athletic male youths) are fabrications of an idealized humanity defined as male, youthful, and heroically nude. The correspondence female **korai** are consistently draped. The male anatomy continued in fifth-century classicism to be the form in which primary creative energy

was invested. Its treatment is ever more precisely scientifically informed, culminating in **Polykleitas Doryphoros**.

> The male figure is portrayed as coherent and rational from within; the female figure is portrayed as attractive from without; the male body is dynamically explored as an internally logical, organic unity; the female body is treated as an external surface for decoration.

The asymmetrical treatment of the nude male and clothed female in archaic and classical Greek art can be matched with the by now well-known social and legal inequities between men and women in ancient Athens.

> Note:
>
> In the formation of the **polis** or city-state, women were legally positioned somewhere between slaves and citizens, and under the law they fell closer to slaves than to citizens.

The artistic practice coincided with the differentiated social practices of the polis, where young men exercised in the nude, while women in public places were always discreetly covered. The practice of preserving an idealized concept of youthful nudity exclusively for the masculine subject had a strong historical relationship with the Greek definition of beauty, which was defined specifically as a male attribute and ultimately with Greek homoerotic desire.

> Note:
>
> Homoerotic impulses were considered natural in ancient Greece, and that socially legitimate desire contributed to the forming of the male nude as an ideal.

The male sexual organs are presented like any other body part, having no special claim to our attention. This is not the case in the monumental female nude introduced into Greek sculpture.

> Praxiteles' Aphrodite is in the condition of both complete nudity and self-conscious nakedness.

The Knidia is the starting point of a history that privileges the female over the male nude. Further, it is a history that sexually defines the represented woman by her pubis and, on that account, keeps her in a perpetual state of vulnerability.

> ...the artistic codes of female nudity as fetishized

The issue of whether Aphrodite in the Knidia points to herself as to her powers of fertility, or whether she is covering herself before the eyes of an intruder can never be resolved. We are, in either case, directed to her pubis, which we are not permitted to see. Woman, thus fashioned, is reduced to her sexuality.

Praxiteles was renowned for naturalizing the gods, making them more human and life-like than ever. The conditions of desirability presented in Praxiteles' creation shed light on its enduring popularity as a benchmark for the construction of woman as perpetual rape victim in western European art.

Remark:

The Knidia is portrayed holding drapery in her left hand above a vase. Iconically, this type of image recalls Aphrodite's connection with water as she was born from the sea. On the level of narrative, it communicates that she, as a grown woman, was in the process of bathing.

The gesture of the right hand over the pubis constructs a sexual narrative of protective fear that is conveyed by her body language as a whole.

The word **pudica** is etymologically related to **pudenda** a word that simultaneously means both shame and genitalia.This goes back to the double meaning of the Greek root word **aidos**. In a description by the **Pseudo-Lucian**, he says it is the Knidia's **aidos** that she covers with her right hand

Note:

The etymological connection situates those 'things about which one must have **pudor**, modesty, shame, and respect' with sexual demeanour.

For the Greeks, **aidos** is a virtue to be taught as part of a young boy's education between the ages of fourteen and twenty to balance out his natural tendency to **hubris** or arrogance. Moreover, **aidos** is related to the all important Greek notion of **s phrosyne**, meaning soundness of mind, sobriety and self-control, the trait which allows one to master ones desires by exerting rational control. Feminine **s phrosyne** 'always includes, and is frequently no more than, chastity'. Even when it does come to be used as chastity for both men and women, 'masculine chastity derives from self-control, feminine chastity from obedience.' This is an idea championed by **Aristotle**.

> For the man, control comes from within, for the woman, since she cannot control herself, it must be exerted from the outside.

> Man, as his image, is constructed as managed internally, woman, as her image, is constructed as managed externally.

The pose constructs the female as the opposite of the aggressive unseen male. According to Foucault and Dover, Greek sexual relations are always conceived of as

> being of the same type as the relationship between a superior and a subordinate, an individual who dominates, and one who is dominated, one who commands and one who complies, one who vanquishes and one who is vanquished.

While such sexual practices were apparently equally operative in the love of boys and women, in monumental Greek sculpture they find expression only in the female form.

### 8.2.2 The Pudica in the Christian Era/Venus as Eve

The Christian period capitalized on the connections between the pudica pose and its narrative implications. The word 'pudica' is never applied in traditional art istory to Eve. Nevertheless, the pudica pose is the one classical trope which is maintained without break throughout the medieval period. The ancient form of female nudity 'fits' the Christian disdain for the human body, especially the female body, so well. The hand-to-genitals gesture is represented as a normal way to hide nakedness, not because the Bible describes it that way.

> Remark:
> Within the medieval visual scheme, man has been subjected to the worst form of humiliation: by being defined as a pudica, he has been feminized.

In the **Expulsion from Paradise**, Adam covers his face keeping his emotional expression of grief and shame from the viewers gaze; Eve covers her breasts and pubis. Once again, while the torture of Adam's shame is an emotional internal affair, Eve's is indexed by reference to her primary and secondary sexual organs.

### 8.2.3 True Renaissance Connections

The culture of early fifteenth-century **Florence** is the initial seat of the Italian Renaissance. It is there that the human nude is no longer exclusively relegated to the shameful Adam and Eve. A Renaissance meant a revival of classical concepts and values that were deeply homocentric, misogynist, classist, and racist.

The celebration of the male nude precedes that of the female nude, as in ancient Greece. **Donatello**'s bronze sculpture of David is the case in point. This influenced **Michelangelo**'s statue of the same subject. Janson writes that we must take into account Donatello's 'reputation as a homosexual', and further, that we should recall the creation of the work coincides with the publication of **Hermaphroditus**. The homoerotic aspects of Michelangelo's David are well known and have been discussed in the scholarship.

The reintroduction fo Venus proper into the western European artistic tradition was predictably as a pudica. Botticelli's **Birth of Venus**, about fifty years after David, is acclaimed as a 'first' in the narratives of the traditional historical canon as Praxiteles' and Donatello's work.

> The Birth of Venus, in fact, contains the first monumental image since Roman times of the nude goddess in a pose derived from classical statues of Venus.

The pose's intrinsic work in constructin female sexuality could be accessed by acknowledging its shared use with the representation of Eve, as in **Masaccio**, or in its difference from Donatello's **David**, as two examples. The Botticelli's Venus and the ancient source share a vacuous 'unknowing' look. They gesture as if in a trance or through some agency outside their own volition. Again the gesture is divorced from

a narrative reading of a particular figure or moment and thus free to work as an essentialist definition of woman in general through this all-telling attribute.

### 8.2.4 The Supine Pudica

The sixteenth-century **Venetians**, **Giorgione** and **Titian**, popularized the gesture in a reclining figure in their mythological paintings of recumbent Venus. In the **Sleeping Venus** and **Venus of Urbino**, her one act is to draw her hand to her pubis, again both directing attention there while blocking its full view. Accent on the pubis is further abetted by the formal technique of tipping that part of the female body up and presenting it forward so that it is fully exhibited.

> Remark:
> The pictures' message ultimately conveys a form of licensed voyeurism and ownership.

The proliferation of the artistic nude female pudica from the early sixteenth century onwards is in a proportionally inverse relationship to that of the nude male. The pudica as a form that culturally promotes and instigagtes a certain kind of heterosexual desire can be seen as a reaction against the homosexual erotics carried by the artistic male nude.

For the counter-reformation writers Michelangelo's love of male nudity and its open display in teh **Last Judgement** in 1541 signified all that was lewd and its destruction was contemplated even before it was unveiled.

In his letter **Aretino** asserts that Michelangelo's figures are more suitable to a bath house than to the highest chapel in the world. He invokes the 'modesty' displayed 'even by the Ancients', although significantly he can cite only sculputes of female deities: Diana clothed and Venus where they were 'careful that the chaste gesture of her hand should replace her vestment'. Further, Aretino recommends that Michelangelo follow the example of the modest Florentines, who have covered the genitalia of his David with leaves.

> Note:
> The censorial practice of mutiliating and then covering with fig-leaves the genital area of ancient and classcizing male figures became a commonplace during the counter-reformation.

The pudica, unlike the fig-leaf, is presented as part of the volition of the figure herself. It is designed as both the narrative and inner character of ideal femininity.

The fig-leaf is seen as a social imposition; the pudica gesture is seen as a personal condition.

### 8.2.5 By Way of a Conclusion

The Venus pudica's initial historically significant appearance occurred at the crucial moment when the citizen/slave structure of the ancient polis gave way to the far more complex social order and division of the Hellenistic empire. The vulnerable, sexualized female nude is the culturally fabricated site and teh public display of heterosexual desire for that male bonding ritual. The representation of 'pudicated' women therewith allowed for the diversification of the western male population into power hierarchies by providing them all with a common 'natural' and 'essentially manly' site of mastery.

> Remark:
> The forced sense of male heterosexual desire allows for the practice of homosocial bonding without the stigma of homosexual innuendo.

## 8.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

> Note:
> The author argues that from origin to copy, teacher to student, generation to generation, the history of western man is made to cohere along classical values presented as rational, logical, and universalist.

The author brings into question "how logical and reassuring" is it? or more accurately, for whom is it such?

history-writing actively participates in generating ideology.

The author tracks the incredibly durable set of power relationships structured on gender difference and defined as sexual which are figured by the so-called **Venus Pudica**, the depiction of an idealized female nude who covers her **pubis** with her hand.

The author argues that we can rethink the conditions of traditional art history as the terms which testify to the advent and continuation of certain shared, culturally constructed exxpressions of power hierarchies.

> Note:
> The author aims to reinstate to vision the political significance of this subject/pose/gesture in its endless permutations in western art; to denaturalize it and underscore its configuration as idealogical artiface.

The author argues what is at stake in the Knidia is fundamental to our understanding of ourselves and our images of self as a sexual, deployed 'other' through the conditioning of culture.

## 8.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**8.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 9

# House and Veil in Ancient Greece

**Abstract**

## 9.1 Questions and Remarks

> Question?
> What is the Dream Book **Oneirokritika**?

> Question?
> What is Tegidion?

## 9.2 First Reading

### 9.2.1 Primamry Considerations: Symbols and Ideologies

**Artemidoros** of **Daldis** in his Dream Book (**Oneirokritika**) collected and collated a wealth of reports concerning people's dreams. He provides interpretations of the dreams and impacts on the dreamer's waking world. Artemidoros states that all objects which surround a person, cloacks, tunics, houses, walls, ships, etc., must signify one another (if one appears broken in a dream, another may break in the waking world).

> Remark:
> There is a rich symbolism which was attached to and shared by dress and domestic space in the ancient Greek world. This is particularly evident in regard to women's domestic space and to female

clothing; an investigation into the ways in which the Greeks observed and even named parts of the house and items of dress will quickly reveal that the association was very much at the front of the Greek mind and was, in fact, an important component of Greek gender ideology.

**Plutarch** uses the symbolic motif of a tortoise to demonstrate the notion of the shared connection between the covering created by clothes and the covering created by a house. He comments that

> **Pheidias** represented the Aphrodite of the **Elians** as stepping on a tortoise to typify for womanhood staying at home and keeping silent.

He suggests a woman should stay at home in security and silence, but when necessity forces her to leave the house, she, like the tortoise, should symbolically carry her house with her and should always act as though she were still passively secreted indoors.

Note:
A female's garments become an extension of her living-space.

By **veil** we consider an unstitched garment, like a mantle or cloack, which has the capacity to be pulled up onto the head and, if required, across the lower face.

### 9.2.2 House-Veil: Archaeology, Etymology, and Iconography

Literary and artistic information testifies to the use of shutters, wooden panels and textiles as curtains and screens in Greece.Archaelogical evidence of such objects is next to none due to largely being made of perishable materials.

The excavators of the houses in the city of Olynthos in northern Greece noted a total absence of pivot-holes in the paved rooms. It is feasible to imagine that hangings were used instead of doors. **Pollux** refers to 'curtains at the doors of bedchambers', **Theophrastos** mentions 'rings for embroidered hangings', and curtain-rings are also mentioned by **Pliny**.

Note:
The common word **epiblema** has the general meaning of 'that which is thrown over' or 'covering', but is more specifically linked with a tapestry or wall-hanging, while it simultaneously means 'outer garment', 'mantle' and by extension, 'veil'. A variant of the word, **epibles**, is used for a cross-beam in a roof, seeming to link a woman's head-covering and a roof.

The widespread veil-word **kalumma** is often associated with vocabulary referring to the house and its decoration. But **kalumma** is also applied to roof-beams and to window shutters, again amplifying the association between the veil and the house.

Remark:

The common veil-word **kredemnon** also translates as 'city walls', 'towers' or 'battlements', and in an epic context, the female veil and the defensive walls of a city-state are regarded as systematically analogous.

Another veil-word is **eruma**, which also means 'fence', 'fortress' or 'bulwar' and more generally 'protection'. **Sophokles** uses the word to describe the walls of Troy. The Iliadic phrase **kredemnon luesthai**, 'to loose a veil/covering/wall', is used as a vivid metaphor for the sacking of a city and for the breaching of a woman's chastity.

The most common word for 'roof' in ancient Greek was **tegos**, with diminutive **tegidion** meaning 'little roof', a word also defined by lexicographer **Hesychios** as 'a manner of adorning the heads of women'. Figures wearing the **tegidion** have been found in Attica, Boeotia, and Macedonia, the length of the coast of Asia Minor and in the Greek cities of the Levant, Egypt, and Libya.

Question?

What was the **tegidion**?

What the terracota figures actually show is a face-veil composed by cutting eye-holes into a single rectangular cloth, which is sometimes edged with a delicate fringe.

The word **tegidion** appears on an inscription dated to the third century BCE. A statuette from **Myrina** (circa 250 BCE) shows a woman wearing a mantle-veil that has been pulled around her lower face to mask her mouth and chin and is secured on the right side by being tucked into the headband of the **tegidion** which is worn in conjunction.

The cloth of the tegidion is folded off the face and back onto the head to form a flat surface with overhanging eaves resembling a little gabled roof.

Note:

The standard depiction of a gesture whereby a woman raises a portion of her veil usually shows it being held out at arm's length, so that it forms a large flap of cloth that frames her profiled face.

Often we see imagery of a closed door and a lifted veil with a woman peering out. THe outstretched hand that lifts the veil intensifies the effect of the open door, and her clothing, like her house, demarcates the privacy of the female body, a space ideally removed from the public gaze.

Remark:

The house and the veil keep a woman modestly and safely enclosed.

### 9.2.3 Veiling and Privacy

As the busybody penetrates through the door of the house he 'unveils' its occupants to his unwanted and shaming gaze and defiles the sanctity of privacy that the house usually offers. Contained within the protective walls of their house the mistress and her unmarried daughters normally have no need for the further protection offered by the veil; but when interrupted in their daily routine by a strange man, their lack of veils leaves them even more exposed and vulnerable to the gaze of the intruder.

> Remark:
> For men to enter into a space that is currently in use by females is a discreditable act that brings dishonour on the violated family and particularly shames the women.

The veil is a 'logical supplement' to the use of enclosed living spaces.

> Note:
> In ancient Greece the women who attract the most notoriety are those who are conspiciously uncovered to the public view: lower-class prostitutes who are at the call of all men and do not enjoy the protection of a husband or guardian come in for particular attack.

As one comic fragment attests, 'their door is open' (about prostitutes).

> Remark:
> As an extension of domestic space and a symbol of separation, the veil, in any form, enables women to move out of their homes in a kind of portable domestic space, and as a result, despite the modern Western perception of its negative aspects, the veil can be considered a liberating garment that frees a woman from the confines of any form of patriarchal **purdah** and lets her operate in the public sphere.

### 9.2.4 The Tegidion and Female Visibility

Although a social requirement for a woman to cover her face is an extension of the ideological complex that obliges women to cover their heads, it is a drastically greater step to have an item of clothing specifically designed to cover the face; face-veiling is concomitantly significant. The **tegidion** was introduced into the Greek world at the close of the fourth century BCE.

A veil that was specifically designed to cover the female face was a significant move towards the public control of female sexuality as a guarantor of male honour, yet the tegidion first appears at a time when it is generally assumed that women's lives were literally opening up as they began to take increasingly confident strides into public life.

From the late fourth century, a new group of large and elaborate elite houses began to appear, suggesting that the 'status of the **oikos** and the role of the house were undergoing a rapid change in many areas of the Greek world'. This revision of domestic space resulted in the physical separation of the house into two separate areas, one for domestic activity and one public.

> Remark:
> For the first time we can probably use the terms **andron** and **gynaikonitis** in the manner of the ancient sources.

**Nevett** suggests that 'contrary to what the epigraphic record appears to suggest, women's status did not improve during the Hellenistic to early Roman periods'. Throughout the Hellenistic period we have reports in some Greek cities of civic bodies known as the **gynaikonomoi** ('controllers of women') who may have ensured that women's public appearances were policed.

If the veil is an extension of domestic space, then the increasing separation of women from the male world reflected in the two-courtyard house finds an astonishing parallel in the use of the face-veil in the same period. At this time Greek artists start to produce full-sized nude female statuary in the form of a variety of Aphrodite figures. But it should be emphasised that nudity did not transfer from the divine realm to the world of mortal women.

> Remark:
> Although the tegidion may have been another device to control the autonomy of Hellenistic women, it could also have allowed women more freedom to participate in public society.

### 9.2.5 Conclusions

The common conception that the female veil acted as a logical extension of private domestic space can be demonstrated in a rich linguistic and visual symbolism where veils are frequently likened to shells, walls, doors, and roofs.

## 9.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

The author suggests that the connection between the veil and the house is a pertinent theme in Greek gender constructions and that the symbolic association between these two facets of female daily experience can be located in both literary and material evidence.

## 9.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**9.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 10

# The Vestal Habit

**Abstract**

## 10.1 Questions and Remarks

> Question?
> What is the **Vestal Habit**?

> Question?
> Who were the **Vestal virgins**?

> Question?
> Who is **Vesta**?

## 10.2 First Reading

**Mary Beard** interpreted the Vestal virgins through the proposition that by combining features relating to the status of unmarried daughters (**virgines**) with those of married women (**matronae**), the priestesses became in themselves vessels for the symbolic mediation between culturally opposed categories that **Claude Lévi-Strauss**, **Mary Douglas**, and others have identified as a central function of myth and ritual.

Scholars who identified the origins of the Vestals' priesthood in the religious duties of the wives of Rome's early kings have pointed to those articles of clothing that are also characteristic of matrons (their **vittae**, or headbands, and **stola**, or floor-length gown) and brides (the "six-lock" hairstyle, or **seni crines**, and belt tied in a square knot, or **nodus Herculaneus**).

Remark:

**Beard** read these sartorial markers as evidence for a symbolic affinity with the category of matrons, which produced the above-mentioned ambiguity when combined with the obvious fact that the Vestals' physical virginity precluded them from the status of mothers and wives.

**Nina Mekacher** emphasizes the hybrid nature of the Vestals' ensemble, which she claims marked the priestesses out as **sui generis**.

Remark:

**Vittae**, the cloth ribbons with which the Vestals bound their hair, were perhaps the most recognizable feature of their attire. These headbands are clearly depicted in almost all of the visual representations of the priestesses that have come down to us.

The Vestal vittae is most probably what Dionysius of Halicarnassus is referring to when he recounts the story of **Aemilia**, a priestess in the third century BCE, miraculously revived **Vesta**'s fire by removing a linen strap from her clothing and placing it on the hearth.

It is also true that **vittae** were closely associated with the status of the Roman matron.

Remark:

**Valerius Maximus** suggests that the privilege of wearing these headbands was granted to the **ordo matronarum** by the senate in recognition of the role played by **Coriolanus'** wife and mother in averting the exiled commander's wrath from Rome.

**Vittae** in themselves do not necessarily denote any particular stage of the female life course. The **vittae** of the Vestal virgins might be seen as creating a unique connection with the costume of the Roman bride. Although the nature of the **seni crines** has become a source of much scholarly confusion and debate, the author says the best explanation of the term may be to read it as referring to the division of the hair into six strands, three on either side of the head, which were then braided into pigtails.

Remark:

The dress of the Vestals corresponded to that of brides in the way that their gowns were girded as well.

Describing the woolen belt (**cingillum**) worn by brides, **Festus** explains that it was secured with the **Herculanean knot**, the same as seen in visual depicts ofthe priestesses. This lends particular weight to an interpretation of the priestesses as icons of ambivalence:

> like the girl on the day of her wedding, they are seen as on the brink between virginal and marital status, but perpetually on the brink, perpetually fixed at the moment of transition from one category to another.

There were key elements in the dress of brides that the Vestals did not share. Most notably, the Vestals did not veil themselves with the bright yellow **flammeum**, as brides did. When Vestals appeared on ritual occasions, their heads were covered with the **suffibulum**, a cowl-like, shoulder-length veil, which was white with a purple border and fastened in front with a brooch.

The Vestals also wore the long flowing **stola** associated with matrons instead of the wide-cut **tunica recta** (or **regilla**) of the bride. **Festus** informs us that the bridal garment in question did not have an exclusive association with a signle category of individuals: it was also worn by boys when they received the **toga virilis**. The **tunica recta** marked the transition into adulthood that was common to both, even as the normative expectations of Roman gender roles required that this rite of passage operated quite differently for males and females.

The most intriguing example of this principle of **boundary-crossing** is the **toga**, which not only marked the status of the adult (male) Roman citizen, with all its pride and consequence, but was also the garment assigned to female prostitutes and adulteresses.

**Cicero** aptly exploits the inherent ambivalence of the toga in his account of **Antony**'s dissolute youth:

> You took up the toga of a man, which you promptly rendered womanly. At first, you were a common whore; the price of your shame was fixed, and it was not small. But soon Curio came along and took you out of the prostitute's trade, as if he had given you a **stola** and settled you in a stable and steady marriage.

In this passage the difference between **toga virilis** and **toga muliebris** lies not in the garment itself, but in the nature of the person who wears it.

Question?
Why was the toga, when worn by a woman, the mark of a whore in Roman culture?

Let us place the **stola**, the common dress of Vestals and matrons, on one side and the toga, as worn by adult men and whores, on the other. Viewed in this way the social categories associated with these garments produce a clear axis of sexual restraint or availability. The sexuality of the Vestal virgins was obviously the most restricted.

Remark:
To violate the chastity of a Vestal was to commit **incestum**, a crime punished with death.

Similarly, adulterous sexual activity involving a matron was a form of **stuprum**, which had been dealt with harshly. By covering their bodies with the long, flowing stola when they appeared in public, both matrons and Vestals signaled the prohibitions that governed their sexuality.

Note:
Under the terms of an old law recorded by **Valerius Maximus**, the message conveyed by the stola was "hands off".

Any matron who failed in her duty to wear the stola should be punished as if she had committed stuprum according to **Caecina Severus** and **Tertullian**. Conversely, an adulteress was forbidden to wear the stola.

> Note:
> The toga left one shoulder bare and did not fully cover the legs. Therefore the toga marked an absence of external constraints on an adult wearer's sexuality.

For the Romans it was only "natural" that adult men should be in charge of their own sexuality. The assumption of the **toga virilis** signaled one's transformation from the status of **puer**, who was potentially vulnerable to penetration, into a mature and fully-formed sexual subject. Roman women were by definition denied this kind of subjectivity. According to the normative gender categories available to them, the only meaningful control that could be exercised over their sexuality consisted in placing it off limits.

> Note:
> The toga marked women's bodies as lacking the chastity that was necessary for them to secure a respectable position in society.

Gradations of fabric, cut, and color might differentiate the clothing of particular groups ( and thus mark out the cross-dresser), but there is nothing inherently transgressive about wearing a garment that is appropriate to one's station.

The maiden **Cloelia** has a famous equestrian statue along the Sacria Via which is suggested to depict her "wrapped in a toga". The honors bestowed on this heroine all but assimilated her to the status of a man, whose characteristic **virtus** she more than equaled. Cloelia was a **virgo** whose heroism saved not only herself, but also other vulnerable children (**impubes**) from the threat of defloration by their Etruscan captors.

> Remark:
> We msut recognize that Cloelia's toga was not that of an adult (man or prostitue), but rather it should be understood as the purple-bordered **toga praetexta** worn by freeborn children of both genders. It has nothing to do with the paradox of her virginal virtus.

The **toga praetexta** was also worn by curule magistrates and certain priests, providing another instance of overlapping categories. **Lynn Sebesta** suggests that the purple border of such garments signified the chastity associated with tis wearer.

This proposed connection explains why children regularly served as ritual ministrants and acolytes, as well as why the Vestal virgins wore a purple-bordered **suffibulum** when participating in sacrificial rites.

As a mark of status available to matrons, brides, and virgins alike, vittae were used to contrast the honorable status of these female roles with that of prostitutes, whom Servius explains were not allowed to wear hairbands, and other females of dubious integrity, such as slaves. **Ovid** describes thin **vittae** together with the long **instita** or lower border of the **stola** as a "sign of chastity".

Remark:

Just as the wearing of the **stola** signaled the difference between the chaste and unchaste woman's body, the binding of one's hair with vittae accomplished a similar distinction for females of all ages.

**Festus** suggests:

> Brides are adorned with the **seni crines** because it was the[ir] most ancient form of adornment. Certain [writers have argued?] that they do so because the Vestal virgins are adorned with it, whose chastity [brides emulate?] for their husbands in marriage[?].

Jist as the vittae that bound the hair were a sign of chastity, a belt (whether that of a Vestal or the woolen **cingulum** of a bride) tided with such a sturdy knot as the **nodus Herculaneus** would signify a sexuality that was especially well guarded.

### 10.2.1 Conclusion

The author has argued that overlapping boundaries were a normal feature of the Roman system of dress as a whole. The similarities between the Vestals' costume and that of other kinds of women therefore did not necessarily render their position in Roman society ambiguous.

The **stola** or **vittae** should be understood as marking some aspect of identity that women of each status held in common. For the clothing of the Vestal virgins the author had argued that this point of correspondence was their sexual purity.

**Cicero** ascribes an exemplary function to the Vestal cult: "there are six virgins to attend upon [Vesta] so that...women may perceive that it is the nature of women to submit wholly to chastity".

Confined not just by the social conventions that governed their sex but by strict religious regulations as well, the Vestal virgins held out more strongly than most women against the changing trends of fashion, thereby providing an essential anchor for Roman attitudes regarding the connection between a woman's chastity and her manner of dress.

Remark:

The same senators who sought to penalize matrons for going out without their **stolae** in the reign of Tiberius also bestowed a gift of two million **sestertii** on the newly inducted Vestal virgin Cornelia in 23 CE.

## 10.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

The author seeks to revisit the problem of the priestesses' ambiguity, paying closer attention to the socially contingent nature of its production.

> Remark:
> The author confines themselves to an aspect of gender construction that other scholars regarded as essential to establishing the **matronal** piece of the Vestals' supposed **interstitiality**: their ritual costume.

The author notes that systematic analysis of the significance of particle articles of clothing is difficult. The author hopes to shed new light on the way that Romans used clothing to express concepts of gender and sexuality more generally using their analysis of the Vestal virgins.

> Note:
> The author argues that each element of the Vestals' wardrobe helped to reinforce the importance of basic principles of sexual decorum, according to which gender roles were typically constructed in Roman society.

## 10.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**10.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 11

# Beyond Ritual: Cross-dressing between Greece and the Orient

**Abstract**

## 11.1 Questions and Remarks

Question?
What did Romans consider to be effeminate behaviour in view of manly ideals?

Question?
Who was **Hermaphroditus**? How did they cross between the realms of woman and man?

Question?
How does dress place Hermaphroditus in a **liminal/transitional** status?

Question?
How do dress and the body figure into representations of Hermaphroditus?

Question?
How could Facella's work be used to enhance or counter our understanding of Hermaphroditus?

Question?
How can Facella be used to unpack Hermaphroditus?

Question?
What is **Hybristika**?

Question?
What is **Le crime des Lemniennes**?

## 11.2 First Reading

Cross-dressing episodes in the ancient Greek and Latin texts has been explained as **strategemata**, **exempla**, **virtutum**, **thaumasta**, or **aitia**.

Remark:
There is a risk in analyzing this evidence of exponentially departing from the specific situation pertaining to each fact and of closely linking phenomena which can be connected only up to a certain point.

### 11.2.1 Hybristika: ritual cross-dressing, aetiology, and the comparative approach

**Plutarch** in **De Mulierum Virtutibus** 245 C-F mentions the existence at **Argos** of a festival called **Hybristika** (“Outrageous Acts"), during which men and women exchanged dress. Plutarch associates these celebrations with the struggle between the Spartans and the Argives (c. 494 BCE), and relates that the Argive women led by Telesilla successfully defended their city against the enemy.

Note:
**Hybristika** also translates to the “Festival of Impudence."

Remark:
To correct the loss of population, the women were united with the best of the people living around (**perioeci**), whom they made citizens. The women, however, seemed to despise their husband, hence the law which orders married women to wear beards when they go to bed with their husbands.

**Herodotus** reports in his version that the oracle consulted before the battle by the Argives in conjunction with the Milesians declares the victory of the **teleia** (feminine element) over the **arsen** (masculine element); but Cleomenes does not attack Argos. The attention is focused instead on the **oliganthropia** of Argos and the consequent conquest of the city by the slaves.

Remark:

The introduction of the women warriors and the poetess Telesilla, the Argive perspective permeating the entire passage, and the differences compared with the Herodotean version (in particular, the substitution of slaves with perioikoi) suggest that it was a later re-elaboration by Socrates and other local historians aimed at improving the reputation of their city.

The account has no historical reliability, and the role reversal in the story is meant to explain the role reversal of the ritual. The story of Telesilla and the women warriors was suitable for explaining both the origin of a celebration where men and women experienced a temporary reversal of social roles, and of a bizarre custom in which Argive brides wore a false beard on their wedding night.

**Martin Nilsson** compares this tradition with others involving the wearing of clothes of the opposite sex. Nilsson recalls the cult of the bearded Aphrodite at Cyprus, whose worshippers wore clothes of the opposite sex; the tradition of a Spartan bride wearing a man's cloak and sandals; and the sacrifices to Mutunus Tutunus by Roman women dressed in male clothes.

Note:

Nilsson explains this rituals as marriage customs in which the enactment of cross-dressing was directed at confusing the powers of evil. (p.110)

**Ernest Crawley** had observed the wedding practices seen in Argos, Cos, and Sparta in various 'primitive' societies and which he described as 'inoculation': a means of overcoming sexual taboos. **James Frazer** Noted that ritual transvestism went beyond the marriage sphere. Frazer explored the custom of transvestite priests in the Pelew Islands (Western Pacific) and collected comparanda in the ancient and contemporary world, to realise that a single solution applicable to all cases was unlikely.

> the custom of men dressing as women and of women dressing as men has been practised from a variety of superstitious motives, among which the principal would seem to be the wish to please certain powerful spirits or to deceive others. (p.110)

**Robert Halliday** viewed the donning of the clothes of the opposite sex as a typical 'rite de passage', aimed at creating a sense of unity in those who performed it. We see the exchange of clothes between boys and girls at the circumcision ceremonies of the Egyptians and of the Nandi in East Africa, the masquerade of men in female attire in some Northern African carnivals, and the 'Geese dancing' of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in the UK were aligned with several traditions recorded by Graeco-Roman sources.

Remark:

Halliday observed that the donning of the clothes of the other sex takes place at **transitional moments** which can concern the individual (circumcision, marriage, mourning, initiation of seers), as well as the entire community (seasonal and renewal feasts, festivals with social reversal). (p.110)

The construction of a theoretical paradigm based on ethnological comparisons caused an oversimplification of a multifaceted phenomenon and its confinement to the ritual sphere.

### 11.2.2 Le crime des Lemniennes and functional disguise

**Georges Dumézil** investigated the proverbial myth of the **dysodia** of the Lemnian women, the “foul smell" which had caused a sexual refusal by their husbands and the consequent massacre of the male population of the island by the outraged females. Dumézil showed that we have a pseudo-historical projection of a ritual which, as **Philostratus** records, took place on the island every year: the legend of the **malodorous Lemniads**, who killed their husbands, ruled their country alone, and then were reconciled with the male sex when Jason and his companions arrived.

The children born from the union of the Lemniads with the Argonauts are referred to as the Mynians.

> Remark:
> The Mynians married Spartan women, and were cast into prison due to their arrogance and impious. Their wives helped them escape by dressing them in women’s clothing.
> Dumézil follows Fredrich, and maintains that in the Lemnian ritual we see an aetiological explanation of an ancient Spartan ritual; an exchange of clothes between the sexes would be in its place.

Neither Herodotus nor Plutarch make a correlation between this legend and a Spartan festival. In other words, the existence of Spartan ceremonies associated with the Mynian deeds is a matter of guesswork and so is the cross-dressing procession which is supposed to have taken place in these ceremonies.

The episode of the Mynians does show some socio-political dynamics which typically develop between incomers and the indigenous population: new marriages, a new ethnic mix, and new conflicts. Herodotus narrates how some Macedonian men, disguised in women’s clothes, killed their Persian hosts who had tried to take advantage of them. This strategy during war was seen quite often. These episodes cannot be reasonably classified as examples of “ritual cross-dressing."

> Remark:
> In the episode of the Mynians as well as in the others, what is described is a functional disguise, which must be distinguished from ritual cross-dressing or transvestism. (p.112-113)

### 11.2.3 Ritual cross-dressing or socially subversive dressing?

The story of **Aristodemus Malakos turant of Cumae** is often cited as an example of ritual cross-dressing. Our main source is **Dionysus of Halicarnassus**.

> Remark:

> Dionysus says that Malakos ordered the boys to wear their hair long like girls, to keep it curled and to bind up tresses with hair nets, to wear embroidered robes, and over these thin and soft mantles, and to pass their lives in the shade.

Plutarch recounts that Aristodemus “accustomed the boys to wear long hair and golden ornaments, and he compelled the girls to cut their hair short around the neck, and to wear youths’ cloaks over their short chitons". Jacques Boulogne remarks that we may be in the presence of old rites, and compares this case with the story of Hybristika and that of the Mynians.

> Note:
> Plutarch describes the tyranny at Cumae as an overturning of normal social relations. Dionysus on the other hand argues that Aristodemus’s impositions suited a precise political design, and were intended to weaken the young Cumaeans so as to make them unsuitable for the government of the city.

A passage by **Athenaeus** on the people of Tarentum shows how the gender of determination of a garment could vary (or become restricted) over time: “He [= Clearchus of Soli] says that all men wore transparent garments with a purple border, which are today a refinement of women’s life."

> Remark:
> Aristodemus is likely to have extended to the young citizens a refined education, which until that time had been restricted to the aristocracy, and this change was seen negatively by the later tradition. It is likely therefore that fashion, rather than a mysterious ritual, was behind Aristodemus’s agency. (p.114)

We can compare to a passage on the tyrant **Ortyges** and his followers preserved by **Athenaeus**.

> Remark:
> Ortyges and his companions, having possessed themselves of the supreme power in **Chios**, destroyed all who opposed their proceedings, and they subverted the laws, and themselves managed the whole of the affairs of the state. They tried all actions, sitting as judges, clothed in purple cloaks, and in tunics with purple borders, and they wore sandals with many slits, but in winter they always walked about in women’s shoes; and they let their hair grow, and took great care of it so as to have ringlets, dividing it on the top of their head with fillets of yellow and purple.

Once again we find the historiographical pattern that associates tyranny with a reversal of social conventions (p.114). The fashion of long hair recalls Aristodemus and the **Koronistai**, the long-haired young men with whom he fought against the barbarians.

> Note:

> The description of these tyrants has been deeply moulded by the later historiographical tradition, so it is the negative attitude towards them which attributes a female connotation to what was actually a fashion, or an outward way of distinguishing themselves by certain elite groups. (p.114)

### 11.2.4 Transvestites for love

**Effeminacy** is one of the main ingredients constituting the Graeco-Roman stereotypical image of a decadent 'Oriental' court society. It is in this setting that examples of women who cross-dress and assume a male role may be found.

> Example:
> **Aelianus** records in **Varia Historia** of the case of **Aspasia of Phocea**, a girl of humble origin, who first became the concubine of the younger Cyrus and then of his brother Artaxerxes. When Tiridates Artaxerxes' favourite eunuch died, Aspasia was the only one who managed to console the grieving king. Artaxerxes put the eunuch's cloak over Aspasia's black dress.

Aspasia is also mentioned by Xenophon and Plutarch. In the case of Aspasia, the cross-dressing is enacted for erotic reasons and is limited in time and space (p.115).

> Example:
> **Hypsicrateia** was the concubine of **Mithradates Eupator**, and she cut her hair short and was accustomed to ride a horse and to use weapons, so that it was easier to take part in his fatigues and dangers. Plutarch specifies that the woman wore the garment of a Persian male, and "the king called her **Hypsicrates**". In 2005, in the Taman peninsula, at Phanagoreia, a marble base, part of a funerary monument, was uncovered. The **gyne** is here recorded with the name in the masculine form.
> Amazonian traditions can provide at most reasons for the adoption of a 'Persian' male costume by the concubine; what they fail to do is to explain her adoption or acceptance of a male name.

### 11.2.5 Conclusions

The collection of cases assembled over time to support an exclusively ritualistic basis for cross-dressing includes incongruous exampls and inevitably inducs us to oversimplify a more complex reality. The predominance of this type of cross-dressing in our evidence is a reflection of the Greek approach to this practice (p.116).

Beyond the ritual or strategic spheres, cross-dressing behaviours were considered socially disturbing, as the association between tyranny and transvestism in our sources reveals. Positive comments are expressed

only for two female cross-dressers, concubines of Persian kings, who were hence considered as belonging to an eccentric ‘Oriental’ world and presented as having renounced their femininity for love.

> Remark:
> Artemidorus says “A woman’s attire is auspicious only for bachelors and those who act on the stage. . . . But dreaming that one is wearing a colourful, or a woman’s, garment at feasts and festivals does not hurt anyone."

## 11.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

The author focuses on a few items of evidence which should alert us to the temptation of associating episodes of cross-dressing of a different nature and always explaining them as an expression of religious ritual.

## 11.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**11.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 12

# Masculinity, Appearance, and Sexuality: Dandies in Roman Antiquity

**Abstract**

## 12.1 Questions and Remarks

> Question?
> Who was **Hermaphroditus**? How did they cross between the realms of woman and man?

> Question?
> How does dress place Hermaphroditus in a **liminal/transitional** status?

> Question?
> How do dress and the body figure into representations of Hermaphroditus?

> Question?
> How could Olson's work be used to enhance or counter our understanding of Hermaphroditus?

> Question?
> How can Olson be used to unpack Hermaphroditus?

> Question?
> What can Roman male clothing tell us about cross-dressing and transgender identity?

Question?
What are **Ancient Dandies**?

## 12.2 First Reading

In the early second century CE the biographer **Suetonius** wrote of Julius Caesar that

> he was somewhat overnice in the care of his person, being not only carefully trimmed and shaved, but even supposedly having superfluous hair plucked out. ... They say too that he was remarkable in his dress, that he wore the broad-striped tunic, with fringed sleeves reaching to the wrist, and always had a belt overtop [**super eum cingeretur**], though rather a loose one [**quidem fluxiore cinctura**], and this, they say, was the occasion of Sulla's **mot**, when he often warned optimates to beware the ill-girt boy [**ut male praecinctum puerum cauerent**]

Note:
**Plutarch** was a Greek biographer who lived and wrote in the late first century CE.

Plutarch talked of Caesar's soft white skin and related how he used to scratch his head with one finger and daintily arrange his hair.

Remark:
The elder Curio in one of his speeches famously referred to Caesar as "every woman's man and every man's woman"; other authors note his reported sexual liaison with Nicomedes, king of Bithynia. (p.182)

Caesar has a reputation as an **androgyne**, **catamite**, and wearer of effeminate clothing. **Anthony Corbeill** claims Caesar's choice of dress was "political self-advertisement," because "the popular politicians [**populares**] became aligned with feminine traits" since the tradionalist politicians (optimates) adopted masculine-coded walk and dress. (p.183) Thus Caesar's effeminacy was part of a political identity, and by transgressing normal male aristocratic behaviour, he "fashioned himself as a proponent of political change." (p.183) - **emphasis on political change and liminal position between genders**

Question?
Was Caesar's effeminacy part of a political identity, as Corbeill claims, and was he transgressing normal male aristocratic behaviour?

The author's contention is no, in both instances.

Remark:

The Romans operated on a system of **gender identity** rather than one of **sexual orientation**. Instead of categorizing their sexual world into identities based on the preferred gender of someone's partner, as we do, Roman sexual ideology seems to have divided the world up into "penetrators" and "those penetrated" (**Can connect to Kamen and Richardson**) (p.184)

The penetrator was an adult male of citizen status who by his active sexual role also configured himself as dominant and masculine. It mattered little whom he was penetrating, or which orifice, as long as he took the active role. The penetrated partner was characterized as womanish, servile, and emasculated—a role well suited to slaves, prostitutes, and women but problematic if filled by another adult citizen male.

Remark:

The Romans liked to see social and sexual roles collapsed. Adult men who enjoyed being penetrated or giving fellatio or cunnilingus were mercilessly lampooned and censured in the dominant discourse. What bothered Roman writers in male homoerotic relations was an assimilation to the female role. (p.184)

**Definition 12.2.1 Effeminatus** (effeminate) and **mollis** (soft) refer to a man who did not embody traditional masculine looks.

**Definition 12.2.2 Pathicus** was a "blunt term" referring pejoratively to a man who had been or who continued to be anally penetrated.

**Definition 12.2.3 Delicatus** and **deliciae** often allude to slave boys kept for visual and sexual pleasure.

**Definition 12.2.4** The **cinaedus** was a man who wore loos colorful clothing, perfume, and curled hair, who walked along with a mincing gait, and who was apt to be anally penetrated and enjoy it.

Scholars have suggested that what made a cinaedus was his general lack of self-control and the abrogation of sartorial masculinity, both forms of gender deviance, rather than any specific sexual practice or preference.

Note:

We have no first-person statements from a cinaedus in Roman antiquity; these are always words the Roman authors use to hurl at another person. The voices of the passive, as the Romans would have called them, are absent from our sources (p.186)

### 12.2.1 Roman Male Clothing

The normal appearance for an elite Roman man was **staid, even plain**. Roman citizen men fulfilled normal social and sartorial expectations if they wore the tunic (**tunica**), the simple short-sleeved or sleeveless garment worn by men of all ages and ranks, the basic male garment for both public and private wear. It was normally girded with a cord at the waist, and the tunic material bloused over the cord so that the tunic fell to knee-length. Over it the Roman citizen would wear a **toga**; but these garments were ideally made of unbleached, undyed woolen cloth.

> Note:
> Roman antiquity was more or less a sartorially static society, and there were few real clothing changes over the centuries that comprised the bulk of its history.

aristocratic maleness was to be expressed by independence from the servitude of fashion (p.187)

Roman ethicists saw aesthetics and morality as being inextricably linked, which meant that deviation from the male vestimentary code at Rome could bring social censure. (p.187) An ideal Roman masculinity did not equal deliberate untidiness—a certain amount, a degree, of refinement was in order.

### 12.2.2 The Signs of Effeminacy

The Roman statesman **Cicero** in the first century BCE depicted his effeminate political enemy **Aulus Gabinius** as having cheeks “bright with rouge"; the first-century CE novelist Petronius (also a politician at the court of the emperor Nero) described a male slave-prostitute who wore makeup and had nicely combed hair (**quo enim spectant flexae pectine comae, quo facies medicamine attrita**). **Quintilian**, a ROman advocate and famous authority on rhetoric who lived in the late first century CE, condemned the use of womanish cosmetics on men indirectly in his censure of overly embellished oratory.

> Remark:
> Cosmetics were bound up with constructions of sexuality and power in Roman antiquity: persons who used cosmetics—boy slaves used for sexual pleasure, women, male whores—were located outside traditional legal power structures.

Long hair, or long curly hair was a sign of desirability and sexual availability and is mentioned most often in reference to **delicati**. Such slaves were termed **capillati**. The effeminate statesman **Maecenas**’s hair was described by **Suetonius** as “ringlets ... dripping with perfume".

**Depilation** described a man who removed the hair from his legs, chest, buttocks, even genitals by means of plucking, pitch, or other depilatory and was said to be hairless or “smooth" (**levis, glaber, expolitus**).

**Maud Gleason** observed that a man's natural hair was thought to be the product of the same abundance of inner heat that concocted his sperm (**connection to Jones and Flemming**) (p.189)

> those who depilated themselves were rightly suspected of undermining the symbolic language in which male privilege was written.

Long hair and depilation were practices held to be womanish, but also with status dissonance, connected with the confusion of gender boundaries.

> Remark:
> Much of the ancient vitriol against male use of perfume comes from **Cicero**: effeminate men reeked of unguents or had cheeks "moist with unguent"; the Roman rebel Catiline's insurgents glistened in perfumed oils. To use a certain type of perfume called **opobalsamum** could also be a sign of effeminacy, as well as the expensive concoctions normally used by women.

Wearing more than one ring was a conventional sign of **mollitia**. Quintilian recommended that the hand of an orator should not be loaded with rings and that the orator should especially eschew any that did not fit over the middle finger joint; presumably, wearing rings in this fashion meant one was able to display more of them.

The ancients thought that it was by his clothing that a man most clearly indicated his sexual proclivities (p.190). The sartorial blurring of gender boundaries was ridiculed and censured by many. Quintilian observed that

> a tasteful and magnificent dress [**cultus**] ... lends added dignity to its wearer; but effeminate and luxurious apparel fails to adorn the body and merely reveals the foulness of the mind.

The emperor **Tiberius** (13-37 CE) legislated against the wearing of silk by men, citing the fabric's inherent effeminacy as his reason. Quintilian believed that "womanish attire" (**vestem muliebrem**) was "an indication of an effeminate and unmanly character" (**mollis et parum viri signa**).

Clothing color could also be an indication of a lack of masculinity: only somber hues were worn by "real" men.

Tunics with long sleeves were also considered effeminate. A tunic that was girded too short was also cause for censure. A short tunic could also indicate that one was a manual laborer: artisans and workers wore tunics that fell above the knees.

For a nobleman to wear a tunic loosely girt, as Caesar did, or one without a belt altogether also indicated an effeminate nature.**Margaret Graver** notes that the state of "unbeltedness" was near to being the exact opposite of ideal masculinity in antiquity. "As a point of dress, the absence of cincture indicates defiance of convention and also unreadiness for action, in the particular, the inability to wear a weapon."

> For if someone, drenched daily in perfumes, adorns himself before a mirror, shaves his eyebrows, walks about with his beard plucked and thigh hairs pulled out, who, as a young boy with his lover, wearing a long-sleeved

tunic [**chiridota tunica**], was accustomed to lie in the low spot at banquets, who is not only fond of wine, but fond of men also, then would anyone doubt that he has done the same thing that **cinaedi** usually do [**quod cinaedi facere solent**]? - Second-century BCE general and politician Publius Scipio Africanus

### 12.2.3 Youth, Urbanity, Heterosexual Activity

Effeminacy was often closely linked to passive homoerotic activity in Roman antiquity. **Catherine Edwards** notes how scholars "used references to men behaving in an effeminate manner to determine, firstly, how widespread homosexual practices were in ancient Rome." Although some descriptions of effeminacy did connect this sort of self-presentation with cinaedi or pathici, as we have seen, there is also an intriguing cluster of references that associated "effeminate" visual images with youth, urbanity, and heterosexual activity.

**Gellius** suggested in the second century CE that Publius Africanus, who was "habituated to this ancestral fashion" (**hac antiquitate indutus**) of wearing a short-sleeved tunic, reproved Sulpicius Gallus for wearing a long-sleeved one, implying perhaps that it was trendily youthful. Diodorus Siculus, a Greek from Sicily who wrote a universal history in teh first century BCE, reported that after 146 BCE, the "younger generation" (**hoi neoi**) wore garments in the Roman marketplace that were soft and delicate and resembled women's garments.

Quintilian was of the opinion that "purple and deep red garments do not suit old men; in the young, however, we can endure a rich and even perhaps a risky style." Despite teh range of authors and genres, we may generally note some tension between the generations as to what was acceptable in the way of clothing.

> Remark:
> Attention paid to personal appearance was often related to male urbanity and sophistication.

Plutarch reported that fashionable shades in men's clothing changed; thus, "when [the stern politician Cato the Younger] saw a purple which was excessively red and much in vogue, he himself would wear a dark shade," implying that the refined man kept up with changes in clothing colors.

> Remark:
> Ken Gelder suggests that one useful way of understanding dandyism in history is as an "anachronism that refuses to go away, as a mode of fashionability that survives against the odds and makes a point of being out of step with its context" (note 92)

The younger Seneca wrote that when luxury spreads, men first begin by paying more attention to their personal appearance. The elder Pliny held that "unguents are among the most elegant and also most honorable pleasures in life" but railed against men wearing gold bracelets called **dardania**, apparently the fashion. The sophisticated urbanite thus paid some attention to his appearance. Williams says that "perfume and depilation in themselves were not necessarily markers of excessive effeminacy."

Note:

Many of the conventional characteristics of effeminacy were attached to men who were said to be trying to attract women.

The elegiac poet TIbullus who wrote in the alte first century BCE, stated that richly dressed men were attractive to women: “whoever dresses his hair with art and whose voluminous toga falls with a rommy fold." **Ovid**, a love poet who wrote in the late first century BCE, also suggested the connection between fashionable male appearance and adultery with the term **cultus adulter**, “well-groomed adulterer."

**Definition 12.2.5** Martial’s epigrams contain the fullest description of a **bellus homo**: “A beautiful man curls his hair and arranges it carefully, always smells of balsam or cinnamon, hums tunes from the Nile and from Cadiz, moves his plucked arms in time with changing measures, lounges all day among ladies’ chairs and is forever murmuring into some ear; reads billets sent from this quarter and that, and writes them, and shrinks from the cloak on a neighbor’s elbow."

**Arrian**, a Greek writer and lecturer in the second century CE, claimed that a smooth man depilated himself to be attractive to women.

The sophist and physiognomist Polemon, writing in the second century CE, claimed that men sometimes assume items of personal adornment and clothing in order “to please other men and women." The author offers the alternative label of **dandy**.

**Edwards** states that in the ancient sources the same men were often accused of effeminacy and adultery (men like Marc Antony, friend to Julius Caesar) or effeminacy and uxoriousness (men like Maecenas, friend to Caesar Agustus). An effeminate appearance could be a mode of self-presentation associated with youth, urban sophistication, and heterosexual activity.

Remark:

In Lucian’s dialogues from the second century CE, **Eros** bluntly tells Zeus that if he wants reciprocal enamorment, he must adopt an effeminate manner; his tough-guy looks are unattractive to women. Women’s erotic desires were apparently directed at the softer sort of male.

**Graver** has noted that “effeminate behaviour is not so much behaviour of one kind or orientation as it is behaviour which calls attention to itself. Masculinity appears in purely negative terms." (p.199) Seneca the younger complained of such men who would “even put up with censure, provided that they can advertise themselves."

Question?

Were such men necessarily **pathici**, that is, passive in their sexual relations with men or with women? Why would a Roman man sport the kinds of effeminate characeristics that might lead to social censure and the label of **pathicus**?

Such an effete self-presentation indicated pretensions to upper-class status, at least in some circles. Perfume, jewelry, and expensive, excess, or colourful fabrics indicated status and rank rather than merely effeminacy, as the items were expensive. In another epigram, an effeminate man is perhaps an **equestrian**: status symbols mentioned here include a garment (**trabea**) fastened with a brooch (**fibula**), and he points with a “smoothed...hand" (**pumicata...manu**).

Note:

There clearly existed both a correlation and a confusion between the signs of wealth and status and signs of “effeminacy" (p.200)

### 12.2.4 Effeminacy, Dandies, and Class in Premorder Societies

**Gleason** has noted that the ancients thought excessive sexual indulgence with either sex was thought to cool the body down too much; since proper masculine warmth could not be maintained, effeminacy was the result. (**link to Jones and Flemming**). **Alan Sinfield** writes that mostly effeminacy “meant being emotional and spending too much time with women. Often it involved excessive cross-sexual [that is, heterosexual] attachment."

At even the time of the late nineteenth century and the Wilde trials in England, effeminacy was still flexible, “with the potential to refute homosexuality as well as to imply it." Oscar Wilde’s “effeminate" manner and interests had excited comment and hostility, but they “had not led either his friends or strangers to regard him as obviously, even probably queer" but rather as an aristocrat and aesthete. The Wilde trials are said to have produced a major shift in perception of the signs of same-sex passion.

Remark:

While effeminacy figured upper-class uselessness and debauchery, and “dandy" was also often used to describe aristocratic foppishness, it simultaneously embodied aspirations toward refinement, sensitivity, and taste.

Effeminacy was thus coded as a signifier of class or of excessive heterosexual activity, rather than exclusively of homoerotic dissidence.

### 12.2.5 Ancient Dandies

**Definition 12.2.6** A **dandy** or what we might call today a **metrosexual** is an urban young man of fashion whose sexuality may be ambiguous, whose defining features include a love of self-display, and who seeks to create social spectacle through his appearance.

Question?

Can we locate such men in Roman antiquity?

Derogatory terms for such a man did exist in Latin: **trossulus** and **comptulus**. Varro, an antiquarian, satirist, and essayist who lived and wrote in the first century BCE, associated trossuli with personal adornment and paying outrageous sums for hroses. The younger Seneca described the trossulus as “rather refined and often surrounded by friends".

Remark:

Use of either the culter or the gladius would have bee nshameful pastimes for a noble youth, the culter, used for trimming the hair and nails, because of its associations with female adornment and attention to appearance, and the gladius because it was the weapon of the gladiator.

That the dandy or fashionable man was connected in some way with the aristocratic lifestyle in antiquity is perhaps evident from the association of the trossulus with intellectualism: poetry recitations and philosophy lectures thrilled them, and the younger Seneca described them as being complete from the book-storage box.

## 12.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

The author examines the nexus of effeminacy and masculinity in Roman antiquity by first setting out the conventional signs of effeminacy and its implied connection to sexual passivity in men, and they then go on to detail the instances in which an appearance conventionally held to be effeminate was also linked with youth, urbanity, and even heterosexual activity: indeed, many of the conventional characteristics of effeminacy were attached to men who are said to be trying to attract women.

The author also argues for the existence of a male figure on Rome’s urban scene seldom acknowledged by scholars: the **dandy**, or **urban young man of fashion**. (p.183)

Effeminate male appearance could indicate dandyism rather than pathic sexuality, although certain Roman authors equated or confused urbanity and dandyism with sexual passivity. Dandyism and effeminacy may also have indicated membership in or aspirations toward the upper class.

To the Roman moralists there was no difference between dandies and cinaedi because in Roman society, affect served as a visualization of morality; indeed, even from a modern standpoint it is hard to distinguish them. (p.204)

We can note that there were derogatory overtones even in the words for “dandy"; thus, may equites, according to the elder Pliny, were ashamed of being called trossuli. There was more than a whiff of sexual ambiguity about the dandy even in Roman antiquity.

The author concludes that when Caesar wore an effeminate-style unbelted tunic in the first century BCE, daintily arranged his hair, and depilated himself, comparative evidence suggests that it might have been not a political or even a sexual announcement but mere dandyism, which itself was in part a visual declaration of his patrician status. In Roman antiquity, class, dandyism, and effeminacy were all linked in a nexus of ideas about masculinity, status, and sexuality

## 12.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**12.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 13

# The Tale of Salmakis

**Abstract**

## 13.1 Questions and Remarks

> Question?
> Who was **Hermaphroditus**? How did they cross between the realms of woman and man?

> Question?
> How does dress place Hermaphroditus in a **liminal/transitional** status?

> Question?
> How do dress and the body figure into representations of Hermaphroditus?

## 13.2 First Reading

**Salmakis** (Salmacis) was the **Naiad**-nymph of a spring of the town of **Halikarnassos** (Halicarnassus) in **Karia** (Caria). She fell in love with the handsome youth **Hermaphroditos** and prayed the gods be united with him forever. Their forms were merged as one to create the first **hermaphrodite**.

> Remark:
> Salmakis' namesake fountain was believed to make men who bathed in its waters effeminate.

With regard to the fountain, **Strabo** says

> It seems that the effeminacy of man is laid to the charge of the air or of the water; yet it is not these, but rather riches and wanton living, that are the cause of effeminacy.

Ovid says Salmacis is the only of the Naiads unkown to swift Diana (**Artemis**). Upon seeing Hermaphroditos the Naiad please for the boys affection. The Nympha pleaded, begged, besought at least a sister's kiss, and made to throw her arms around his ivory neck. 'Enough!' he cried 'Have done! Or I shall quit this place–and you.' The Nympha at first conceded, and after she left the boy stripped off his clothes to enter the pool. Seeing this while in hiding the Nympha could no longer hold it in and plunged into the pool and grappled the boy, and caressed him as he fought to escape her hold. Atlantiades (**Hermaphroditus**) fought back, denied the Nympha her joy; the Nympha cried 'Ye Gods ordain no day shall ever dawn to part us twain!', and her prayer found gods to hear; both bodies merged in one, both blended in one form and face. Ovid describes the union as 'one body then that neither seemed and both.'

Raising his hand Hermaphroditus cried, 'Dear father [**Hermes**] and dear mother [**Aphrodite**], both of whose names I bear, grant me, you child, that whoso in these waters bathes a man emerge half woman, weakened instantly.'

Ovid says both Hermes and Aphrodite heard their bi-sexed son, and drugged the bright water with that power impure.

### 13.2.1 Art, Pride, and Ranbow Flag

By Dr. Bryan C. Keene, David Bardeen, Dr. David Brafman, Sarah Cooper, Dr. Mazie Harris, Arpad Kovacs, Casey Lee, Pietro Rigolo, and David Saunders `https://smarthistory.org/art-pride-and-the-rainbow`

**Turquoise: Magic**

In the Chemical Wedding of Hermes and Aphrodite, Michaelis Majeri depicts Hermaphrodite with two heads being roasted over a fire.In the original myth, Hermaphroditus is the offspring of the god Hermes and goddess Aphrodite, born with "male" and "female" sex organs. In alchemy the figure is adapted into a symbol for creating the illusion of gold.

> Remark:
> Hermes, the Roman Mercury, stands for the element mercury. Aphrodite comes to be the symbol for copper. The island of Cyprus, her birthplace, was heavily mined in antiquity for copper. One takes mercury, copper, and a sprinkle of genuine gold flake, and heats the mixture, the mercury bonds the gold to the surface of the copper, making it **look like** gold. **An illusion**.

Alchemical imagery often expresses transformation by metaphorically toying with the ambiguity of gender as a physical illusion. "Gender's a transitory illusion. True identity's an embedded secret, waiting to be empowered." - David Brafman

### 13.2.2 Theoi: Hermaphroditos

`https://www.theoi.com/Ouranios/ErosHermaphroditos.html`.

**Hermaphroditos** was the **god of hermaphrodites and of effeminates**. They were numbered amongst the winged love-gods known as **Erotes**. Hermaphroditos was the child of Hermes and APhrodite, the gods of male and female sexuality.

According to some, they were once a handsome youth who attracted the love of a Naiad nymphe Salmakis. She prayed to be united with Hermaphroditos, and the gods answered her prayers, merging their two forms. At the same time the spring acquired the property of making men who bathed in its waters soft and effeminate.

> Remark:
> Hermaphroditos was depicted as a winged youth with both male and female features—usually female thighs, breasts, and style of hair, and male genitalia.

The name Hermaphroditus is the compound of Hermes and Aphrodite, and is synonymous with **androgunes**, **gunandros**, **hemiandros**. Hermaphroditus was brought up by the nymphs of Mount Ida.

> "Some say that this Hermaphroditos is a god and appears at certain times among men, and that ze is born with a physical body which is a combination of that of a man and that of a woman, in that ze has a body which is beautiful and delicate like that of a woman, but has the masculine quality and viour of a man. But there are some who declare that such creatures of two sexes are monstrosities, and coming rarely into the world as they do they have the quality of presaging the future, sometimes for evil and sometimes for good." - **Diodorus Siculus** (1st century BCE)

## 13.3 SENSING HERMAPHRODITUS IN THE DIONYSIAN THEATRE GARDEN

The author notes that Ovid's narrative of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis in Metamorphoses was possibly staged for theatrical performances in Pompeian domestic garden settings. Dionysus' ancient Mediterranean presence had a connection with fertility festivals and mystery rites, which in its early stages included men, women, and children, who engaged in rites under the influence of wine and dance (p.68).

> Remark:
> Visual depictions of Hermaphroditus date from as early as the fourth century BCE, coinciding with the emergence of both the display of the female nude body in Aphrodite Knidos and the iconographic transformation of the ffeminate beardless Dionysus. (p. 71-72)

Hermaphroditus is not introduced into Dionysus' entourage until the second century BCE (p.72). Members of Dionysus' entourage who frequently accompany Hermaphroditus include satyrs/Pan, Silenus, and maenads. Hermaprhoditus is associated with Dyonisiac performance.

Hermaphroditus is predominantly seen in Pompeii-ing depictions with a **tympanum** (tambourine) played by a follower of Dionysus or on the ground near Hermaphroditus (p.72 and 74). We also see the **kithara** (lyre).

**Saffron yellow** was perceived as a feminine colour in antiquity in part because of its associations with young unmarried women, seduction, female ritual, and by extension, a change of identity (p.75). Saffron had semantic ties to the theatre, cult of Dionysus, and effeminacy. Hermaphroditus' appearance with saffron yellow hence links hir with Dionysus.

Often Hermaphroditus is portrayed either sleeping or wrestling as a satyr/pan figure 'discovers/awakens' hir. Ovid's likening of Hermaphroditus' blushing red cheeks to apples in an orchard has been linked to Sappho's fragment. Apples were used as gifts for marriage and as aphrodisiac symbols to elicit sexual desire. The apple is linked to Aphrodite, the mother of Hermaphroditus. This simile also links Hermaphroditus to Dionysus, due to his patronage being extended to various fruits, gardens, and orchards. Apples were also a reference for female breasts in Greek and Roman literature.

A third century BCE comedy by Poseidippus entitled Hermaphroditos suggests that Hermaphroditus' images were considered appropriate marvels for Pompey the Great's theatre in Rome. (p.80) Fragmentary remains of Hermaphroditus/satyr groups have also been found in Hellenistic/Roman theatres at Daphne.

## 13.4 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

## 13.5 Terms

1.

## Problems

**13.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 14

# The Horror of the Terrifying and the Hilarity of the Grotesque: Daimonic Spaces and Emotions in Ancient Greek Literature

**Abstract**

## 14.1 Questions and Remarks

> Question?
> Who/what were the **Daimones**?

> Question?
> Who/what was the **Apollonius of Tyana**?

## 14.2 First Reading

> **Definition 14.2.1 Gorgoneion**: a Gorgon mask

Vernant says the Gorgon's mask "expresses and maintains the radical otherness, the alterity of the world of the dead, which no living person may approach." This otherness comprises a network of ideas that associate the realm of the dead and night with some particular qualities of the female and monstrosity.

The Gorgon is an offspring of **Phorkys** and **Keto**; she and her siblings play the role of "watchmen, even bogeys, who bar the way to forbidden places."

> **Definition 14.2.2** The term **daimones** is used to refer to the dead, and it may also capture these creatures' close relationship even identification with, the goddess **Hekate**.

### 14.2.1 Case Study One: Daimones and Comedy

In both comedy and tragedy we have cases of asking wearing masks called **mormolykeia** ("mormo-goblins"), and these were hung around Dionysus's precinct, either as dedications or as part of the announcement of new productions. Their apperance was fashioned to create the emotion of **kataplexis**, a term that evokes not just fear but a horrified almost frozen fixation on a dreadful vision.

> Remark:
> A number of sources indicate that Mormo and her fellow creatures were the subjects of stories told by parents to frighten their children into behaving.

The scholiast to Aristides reports that Mormo was a Corinthian woman who purposefully ate her own children and then flew away. The tale of Mormo is about the radical transformation of mother to monster: her changing face not only symbolizes this switch it also evokes the very moment of horror itself, perhaps especially from the viewpoint of a child hearing the sory of another child's fate. (p.216)

The **Lamia** has similar associations.

> Note:
> The Lamia has a variety of meanings and alludes to a range of different mythic figures.

The term **lamiai** was use not only of phantoms, but also of gluttonous people, and of fish (p.216). Lamia could refer both to monsters and an ancient Libyan woman of this name. The Libyan Lamia is the one associated with the loss and killing of children. Lamia was a beautiful queen in Libya. Zeus's interest in her makes Hera angry, and she destroys all the queen's children. Lamia's grief deforms her; she seizes the children of other women and either tears them apart or eats them.

**Diodorus Siculus** describes Lamia as driven to madness by the loss of her own beauty.

In comedy Lamia's uncivilised characteristics were the focus. Aristophanes suggests that Lamia had testicles, while Krates' allusion to her possession of a **skytale** may indicate that she was imagined as having a penis.

> Remark:
> In contrast, **Empousa** does not seem to be linked to a story of mothers killing children. Rather, we find an association with Hekate and with more obscure ritual activities.

The Empousa is defined as "A daimonic ghost sent by Hekate and appearing to the ill-fated. [Something] which seems to change into many forms." (p.218) Empousa is connected to rituals of initiation into the mysteries. She is also described as having a single leg, which is either of bronze, an ass' leg, or made of donkey excrement.

Note:

In the **Frogs**, Empousa is described both as lovely and as having a face blazing with fire. (p.219)

#### 14.2.1.1 “Uncivilized Space and Time"

All of Empousa, Lamia, and Mormo inhabit spaces outside the civic sphere, spaces characterized by night, darkness, and the wild. The disturbing appearances of these creatures is linked to morally unacceptable behaviour. (p.220)

Remark:

These monstrous names were mor usually found attached to a very different social group: **hetairai**. Sources indicate that hetairai might well have adopted such names for themselves in the real world.

The transgressive quality of the monster was not, or not always, straightforwardly concerned with a horrific appearance. Empousa was considered rampant, and her lust was not simply titillating but it also crossed behavioural boundaries and transgressed social norms. It is in this crossing of boundaries that audiences could experience hilarity in horror and horror in their hilarity (p. 221-222)

### 14.2.2 Case Study Two: Daimones in Disguise: Apollonius of Tyana

The biography of Apollonius of Tyana is a confection, written 120 years after the death of Apollonius (98 CE) in order to satisfy the empress Julia Domna by presenting Apollonius as a philosophical sage like Pythagoras and Empedokles.

The empousa are characterized by the marginal space at the end of the world and, is itself, also used to mark it.

Remark:

**Corinth** has a particular link to these creatures.

#### 14.2.2.1 Changing Spaces

The darkness in Aristophanes’ work is not only spatial but also social: the creatures inhabit or are used to characterize those who are somehow marginal of uncivilized. (p. 225)

Remark:

In the **Frogs**, the presence of Empousa reinforces the alterity and horror of the underworld; in the Life of Apollonius, the appearance of an empousa on the road at night indicates how far the travellers are from civilization and how dangerous is their quest, while implying the initiatory nature of this part of their journey.

These daimones were used to provide a consistent commentary on the transgressive and dangerous sexuality of women. (p. 226)

In the classical period these creatures emphasise the “otherness" of women, especially those whose focus is sexual desire. (p.227)

Note:

The classical evidence puts particular emphasis on the role of children as the targets of these monsters.

### 14.2.3 A Shift in Perception

Gasparro argues that daimonology was a more or less homogenous and articulated set of ideas and beliefs, sometimes associated with ritual practice, relating to the category of the divine with the Greeks from the time of Homer. The daimon began to offer a way of thinking about or expressing the turbulence of the Hellenistic age. The term daimon could be used to represent a graduated conception of the divine, which both distanced divinity, but also mediated between mand and the divine. (p.228)

### 14.2.4 Boundaries: The Uncanny and the Abject...

These creatures were in part horrific because they revealed the presence of “the other" emergin from the familiar everyday world. The instantiaition of these figures through time and genre reveals a repeated cultural identifiaction of what is “other" and its rejection. (p. 230)

**Definition 14.2.3** The **abject** is “a sudden and massive emergence of uncanniness"; abjactness is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothig is familar, not even the shadow of a memory.

Remark:

The repeated depiction of these daimones and their sexual appetites can be described as a cultural abjection of female sexuality.

## 14.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

The author focuses on the features of childhood terror of the **Empousa**, the **Gello**, and the **Mormo**. Their appearance is in primarly oral rather than literary, accounts.

The author analyzes these creatures using the “space" they inhabit. The author argues that there is a significance in the spaces that these creatures were perceived to inhabit, which supports their identification as daimones. This also involves an examination of how physical space relates to social space and temporal space, including times of day or night and the human lifecycle.

> Remark:
> These creatures were themselves “spaces" of meaning, available for claims and counter-claims about the natures of the unnatural and the supernatural, and man’s relationship to them.

The author argues this implies that the physical embodiment of each daimon is significant. The author also explores the conceptions of cultural space in or from which these creatures emerged.

The author aims to examine those representations for their intention to provoke the emotions of eithe rand/or both hilarity and horror and reflects on the question of the relationship between the two. (p.213)

## 14.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**14.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 15

# Characterizing Roman Artifacts to Investigate Gendered Practices in Contexts Without Sexed Bodies

**Abstract**

## 15.1 Questions and Remarks

## 15.2 First Reading

### 15.2.1 Introduction

Gender as a sociocultural construct with “constantly negiotiated relationships" constituted in historically specific ways, is not inherent in archaeological data. In the geographically and chronologically diverse Roman world, where social status and ethnicity often played more significant roles in social hierarchies and socioeconomic practices than did biological sex, gender as a defining characteristic of identity and practice is problematic. (p.103)

> Remark:
> While the existence of changing and differing gender identities across the Roman world is for certain, any apparent consistencies of gendered practices in artifact use across that world have important ramifications for understanding how sociocultural practices spread.

### 15.2.2 Approaches to Gender in Roman Archaeology

Feminist and gender studies in Roman classical archaeology in the 1990s focused on elite women. While approaches to gender across Roman archaeology are converging, they are still reliant on the sexed bodies as represented in the sources.

### 15.2.3 Gendered Approaches to Roman Artifacts and Lived Spaces

A major concern for gender archaeology has been the assumed maleness of many Roman archaeological remains.

> Note:
> The main material sources used by feminist archaeologists to develop insights into the hidden voices across the Roman world are representational, epigraphical, and funerary.

Dress-related artifacts have been used to identify gendered practices in some lived contexts that lack sexed bodies. Van Driel-Murray used the size ranges of leather shoes found in Early Impertial military bases to argue for the presence of women and children inside soldiers' barracks.

> Remark:
> The author argues that interpretative links can be found between artifacts and gender in contexts with sexed bodies and that such artifact types can be systematically analyzed, characterized, and used critically as tools for investigating gendered identities and practices within archaeological contexts that lack such bodies. (p.107)

### 15.2.4 Gendered Characterizations of Artifact Types and Gendered Space

The presence of specific brooch types in military contexts has traditionally been used to argue that these were types worn by Roman soldiers. However, such an argument gives precedence to preconceived assumptions about who occupied these military bases over specific evidence for how different types of brooches would have been worn by different status and gender groups.

> Remark:
> Brooches were part of both male and female dress in much of pre-Roman Europe and were adopted and adapted during the Roman period.

By the Augustan period, a distinction had developed such that some types of brooches and ways of wearing them were indicative of status and sex.

The **Distelfibel** or thistle-shaped brooch is a massive, heavy brooch with a ribbed semicircular bow that had a large shield decorated with curved and incised pressed sheet metal. These represented less than 5% of brooches found inside military fortifications, while in oppida (i.e., local settlements) double that percentage was found. Gechter argues that this distribution implies that it was a civilian, and quite possibly a distinctively female, fastener.

While there are exceptions, there is therefore strong evidence for Distelfibeln as female attributes. This brooch type may also have been an age and status attribute.

Artifacts associated with personal hygiene, health, and beauty often served as female attributes, especially of elite women. Care of the body and bodily adornment were seen to “soften Roman citizens," and toilet activities served to “display the adorned female body."

> Note:
>
> The symbolic association of toilet activities with female beauty does not necessarily represent actual practice. Many toilet items found in excavations, such as spatulas, probes, and tweezers, could equally have been medical implements and so cannot be easily gendered.

The small ceramic and glass bottle, which is widely considered to have been used to container for cosmetics and perfumed oils, is one type of artifact that seems more specifically associated with women’s toilet activities. These are often represented in Roman art as parts of cosmetic sets, but are also found in associations with medical equipment, concurring with the lack of distinction between cosmetics and medical remedies.

> Remark:
>
> Despite attention to male grooming being considered a vice in Roman society, in ROme elite men used perfumed oils after the bath, and perfumed oils could be used for anointing military regalia and statues of deities.

There is considerable written, representational, and burial evidence that cloth working was predominantly a female task in the Roman world, specifically with regard to spinning cloth. However, there is not as much evidence for the gendering of needlework, and indeed in imperial household during the Early Empire, male **vestifici** and **sarcinatores** (cloth menders) were recorded.

In burial contexts we see hints that needles were female attributes but were not strongly gendered, at least symbolically.

### 15.2.5 Concluding Comments

This article demonstrates that the investigation of artifact assemblages is important for better understandings of gendered sociospatial practices. The author argues that the consideration of different levels of gendered characterization for particular artifact types constitutes a useful interpretative tool for investigating how gender was played out in lived spaces in the Roman world.

The evident patterns and habitual practice in this material and its contexts are important here, rather than how individual items might be sexed anecdotally.

Remark:

This article aims to present approaches, analytical tools, and some case studies that can help increase “conversations between social and material traces of the past."

## 15.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

Author attempts to characterize Roman artifacts so that remains from lived spaces can be used to greater effect for insights into the presence, roles, and identities of women within these spaces.

## 15.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**15.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 16

# Performing Blurred Gender Lines: Revisiting Omphale and Hercules in Pompeian Dionysian Theatre Gardens

**Abstract**

## 16.1 Questions and Remarks

Question?
What are **Dionysian Theatre Gardens**?

Question?
Who was **Omphale** and what was their relation to Hercules?

Question?
What was Ovid's **Fasti**?

Question?
What was the **Julio-Claudian Period**?

## 16.2 First Reading

### 16.2.1 Constructing the Dionysian Theatre Garden

**Definition 16.2.1** The Pompeian **domus** was a type of upper class house.

Remark:
Dionysus was worshipped as the embodiment of transformation through wine, revelry and performance (p. 143). These personae appear in visual representations of many Pompeian homes, as wall paintings and sculptures in or near garden space where dining took place.

Note:
Representations of Dionysus included himself, satyrs, maenads, and theatrical masks, as well as subsidiary characters/

One explanation of these representations in garden settings maintains that the garden evokes or represents a **bucolic** setting for cultic or ritual performances that were synonymous with the god Dionysus. The second explanation connects garden space to theatre space in order to convey a means of self-representation for the patron of the home.

**Definition 16.2.2** The author has found four distinctive features that constitute the **Dionysian Theatre Garden**:

(1) dining areas (**triclinia**, **oeci**, **cenationes**, **cenacula**)
(2) stages/raised platforms
(3) sculptures, frescoes, mosaics and other artifacts related to Dionysian myth
(4) plantings or representations of plantings related to Dionysus.

It has been established that dining rooms and gardens proper were used for performance within the **domus**. The presence of Dionysus (as the multifaceted god of theatre and wine) in visual representations in and around the dining areas of select Roman homes could also do more than act as a subtle reference to the theatre.

### 16.2.2 Situating Omphale and Hercules within the Pompeian Dionysian Theatre Garden

We focus on a sample of Pompeian artistic representations of Omphale and Hercules: three fresco painting and one full-length sculpture in the round, all dating roughly to the Julio-Claudian period (the first half of the first centery CE).

Remark:

The **House of M. Lucretius** displayed a fresco of the cross-dressed pair. The pair stands in the presence of Dionysian characters such as erotes, maenads and Dionysus himself.

Remark:

The **House of the Golden Cupids** displays a marble statue depicting a standing figure of Omphale, represented in a similar fashion to the representation found on the previous fresco.

Remark:

From the **House of the Prince of Montenegro**, Omphale and Hercules appear convivially in a grove setting.

Remark:

From the **House of Siricus** we see a variant of the representation found in the previous house. Set within a grove, female attendants accompany Omphale, seated on the viewer's upper left.

These four examples appear in houses that feature gardens, dining areas and Dionysian-themed artifacts. Situating the representations of Omphale and Hercules near or within these spaces is highly suggestive of the pair's performative roles as seen in the **Fasti**.

Note:

In these depictions Omphale's sartorial features inlcude: Hercules' Nemean lion headdress covering her head, or lying near her side; Hercules' club appearing in her hand or near her side; an ankle-length tunic and a mantle draped around her body. Hercules, on the other hand, can appear standing or reclining, with sartorial features including a mantle draping his otherwise unclothed body, or Omphale's tunic.

Ovid references the pair dining in a garden/grove in the **Fasti**.

Remark:

**Priapus** is the god of fruit plants and guardian of gardens, who is identified sartorially by his tunic laden with fruit. His visual reference provides an allusion to physical gardens/groves, as well as conflates references to other comic rape narratives involving this deity in Ovid's Fasti.

The statue of Omphale was originally found in the west end of the peristyle garden, near the raised stage structure that housed a **triclinium**, and therefore in close proximity to a dining space. In the last two figures mentioned, both individuals are reclining and dining in a grove. Notably, in both images Omphale and Hercules are reclining in different ares. The alter piece in the imagery replaces the conventional **mensa** (table) as the centrepiece.

In a triclinium we would often see permanent or movable couches (**lecti**) arranged around a central table (**mensa**). Going from left to right the couches were called **imus** (lowest), **medius** (middle), and **summus** (highest). The host and his family would be delegated to the **lectus imus**, high-status guests the **lectus medius**, and low-status guests the **lectus summus**.

In our imagery Omphale takes the primary role at the **lectus imus** and assumes the role of **domina**, blurring conventional gender lines for traditional dining practices. The inclusion of not only Omphale and Hercules, but also other mythic figures within a Dionysian setting would allow diners to consider the experiences of other social classes, foreigners and women, thereby promoting a sense of identity and community.

> Remark:
> Clothing was a clear marker of social status in the Roman world. According to Kelly Olson 'the sartorial blurring of gender boundaries was ridiculed and censured by many' (p.149).

The roles of Dionysian allusions and contexts should not be underestimated for their ability to subvert conventional social and gender roles. (p. 150)

### 16.2.3 Situating Omphale and Hercules in Ovid's Fasti

The **Lupercalia**'s patron diety, **Faunus**, enters the sleeping chamber and unsuccessfully attempts to assault the cross-dressed Hercules in Ovid's Fasti, mistaken for Omphale. Faunus' distaste for sartorial deception subsequently serves as the basis for the rites' unclothed attendees.

> Remark:
> The scene takes place in a Lydian vineyard grove dedicated to Bacchus and forms a basis for Ovid's acknowledgement of Dionysian themes.

Plutarch's **Antony and Demetrius** serves to provide an analogy between Omphale and Hercules and Cleopatra and Antony.

### 16.2.4 Weaving Omphale's and Hercules' Theatricality in the Julio-Claudian Period

Representations of Omphale and Hercules reinforce gender and social inclusivity not only through a ritual, but also within a theatrical setting. (p. 153)

> Remark:

**Maecenas** was a patron of the Augustance poets, and a purveyor of Greek culture as well as Roman theatre. Maecenas staged performances of Omphale and Hercules on his estate.

It is suggestive that under Augustus, Dionysus belonged to the elite sphere of Roman society. During the Augustan period, we catch glimpses of the interconnected relationships between Omphale, hercules, Dionysus, gardens, theatrical perfomances and cross-dressing.

During Nero's reign, the emperor **quo** actor came to embody the philhellenic model, which encompassed a much broader sphere of community and inclusivity. Dionysus became a diety open to all spheres of Roman society.

Remark:

Nero revived Antony's Hellenic cultural aspirations, and continued to build associations with Dionysus. Nero was able to reach out to and create community amongst those typically excluded from traditional elite practices (p.154)

The **Dionysia Megala festival** included ritual processions involving Dionysian cross-dressing, as well as performances of tragedy and comedy to ultimately include citizens, foreigners, slaves, women and children alike. This coincides with Dionysus' liminal function 'as a progenitor of **communitas**', wherevy 'the community is stripped of all social barriers and social distinctions so that members of the community can experience one another "concretely" as equal'. (p. 154)

The **Domus Aurea** provided the optimal setting to stage gender reversal roles and thereby promote community and inclusivity.

Remark:

According to Stephanie Wyler, 'the fantasy of a primitive lack of differentiation between sexes and species seems to have been at the heart of the artistic experimentations of Nero himself, both in his theatrical behaviour and in the conception of his palace.' (p. 155)

#### 16.2.5 Conclusions

## 16.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

The author focuses on the foreign Lydian Queen Omphale and the hero Hercules, who offer a glimpse into how gender reversal can potentially reinforce or break down perceived social and cultural barriers for ancient Roman diners.

The author suggests that an adaptation of Ovid's **Fasti** is pertinent to our understanding of the visual representations of the pair in or near garden settings, which I call 'Dionysian Theatre Gardens'. The pair

serve as props in the backdrops of small-scale Julio-Claudian performances. (e.g. **pantomime**, **poetic recitations**)

The author argues that the inclusion of the cross-dressed pair in a theatrical context made gender reversal an instrinsic part of both domestic and public life (p. 143)

## 16.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**16.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 17

# Sensing Hermaphroditus in the Dionysian Theatre Garden

**Abstract**

## 17.1 Questions and Remarks

## 17.2 First Reading

## 17.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

## 17.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**17.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 18

# Prostitutes, Women, and Gender in Ancient Greece

**Abstract**

## 18.1 Questions and Remarks

## 18.2 First Reading

A history of ancient sex laborers is difficult to write given the lack of evidence from the perspective of such workers themselves. Actual anecdotes about these working women, penned by male writers, cannot be trusted, since an accurate portrayal of the prostitutes themselves is not the motivation behind these accounts. (p. 703)

### 18.2.1 Preconceptions and Terminology

The focus of the literature on the case of hetaira and sacred prostitution has limited the study of the variety and variability of sexual labor in ancient Greece.

> Remark:
> The impression of **hetaira** as beautiful, educated, and witty is based on anecdotes, such as **Pausanias** and **Athenaeus**, written at least a few hundred years after any such woman likely lived and have little bearing on the reality of the hetaira in classical Greece. (p.703)

The focus of prostitution in Corinth has remained temple prostitution, neglecting the many references to prostitution at Corinth in general.

Note:

Any conclusions about a class of female sex laborers serving the goddess Aphrodite and working in her sanctuaries is highly problematic and controversial. (p.703)

The result of ignoring the importance of context and prioritizing one type of evidence over another is an idealization of the hetaira and the sacred prostitute (p.703-704)

Note:

Common terms from the classical period for such female laborers were **porne**, **hetaira**, and **pallake**.

Nicknames and slang terms such as One Obol (**Obole**), Twelve Obols (**Didrachmon**) and penny whore (**khalkiditis**) emphasize the material nature of the prostitute-client relationship, the low cost of such women, and thus emphasize their communal accessibility. (p.704)

Remark:

Modern scholarship genearlly assumes that **pornai** worked for a fee in brothels and were of slave status, while **hetairai**, freed or free, were longer-term companions of one man and often paid in kind rather than in cash.

While **pallakai** might be of slave status, they differ from **hetairai** and **pornai** in that they live in semi-permanent arrangements with their lovers.

According to **Plutarch**, **hetaira** was simply an Athenian euphemism for **porne**. It is a mistake to impose a kind of taxonomy of prostitution with porne at the bottom and hetaira at the top.

Prostitutes could ply their trade anywhere throughout the city. Some ancient clients referred to these women and girls as “polluted ones."

Note:

Free, slave, ex-slave, and citizens in addition to foreigners openly practiced prostitution.

Access to prostitutes was easy, even for slaves.

### 18.2.2 Living the Life: Three Case Studies

Women working in porneia were likely of slave status and subject to a pimp, who was frequently female, the **pornoboskousa**. The presence of loom weights in such establishements suggest that the women likely also worked at looms to maximize the profit from their labor.

Remark:

We see statuettes of foreign goddesses, such as **Astarte** and **Cybele**, suggesting the women were non-Greeks and actually live in the complex.

Hosts of symposia hired female dancers, harp players, and flute players (**auletrides**) (p. 705).

The story of **Alke** hints that some such women were able to use their trade to their own advantage and move up the socio-economic ladder (p.706). The reverse was also a possibility.

Remark:

Slave women, unlike a wife, were able to accompany men to dinners with their male companions. (p.706)

The story of the unnamed **pallake** reveals the vulnerability of sex slaves as marginal members of society. (p.706)

Note:

Women who were of foreign status and originally slaves were not legally allowed to marry Athenians or have legitimate children.

Remark:

In the story of **Nikarete** it is suggested that status, more than looks, affected the prices of sex workers.

The texts attest to the use of child prostitutes and an elite culture that lavished gifts and money in support of the sex trade. The slave status and young age of prostitutes argues against any agency and autonomy in their sexual relations, but the texts do suggest that some girls might eventually achieve freedom and better their socio-economic position through the practice of prostitution. Managing sex laborers was one way for women to earn a living and perhaps even improve their standard of living.Instability perhaps best characterizes the lives of prostitutes in classical Athens. (p.708)

### 18.2.3 Prostitutes and Gender

All three case studies are associated with the speaker's opponent, and their characterizations depend on negative female stereotypes and demonstrate how gender was used to construct the prostitute body. **Apollodoros** claims that prostitutes have a particular sexual nature that predestined them for their profession.

> Remark:
> Whereas males might engage in prostitution, women who did the same took on the identity of prostitute. (p. 708)

The distinction in terminology for male and female prostitutes at Athens reinforces the attitude that women are prostitutes by nature and that being a prostitute is more than simply a way to make a living. The ancients, at least in the case of women, did not view prostitution as a trade, but treated it as an identity. (p. 708)

> Note:
> Sexual virtue was the most important quality for female citizens in classical Athens and Greek culture more broadly.

**Demosthenes** states

> We have hetairai for pleasure, and pallakai for the daily services of our bodies, but wives, for the production of legitimate offspring and to have [a] reliable guardian of our household

Wives and daughters are characterized by the **sophron** (modest) behaviour required of them (sexual virtue, prudence, and moderation).

Such examplsee reveal how the existence of prostitution and prostitutes could work as a form of social control on female sexual behaviour more generally. The identity of prostitute was an insult, but brought one's status as wife and thus the legitimate status of her children into question. (p. 709)

### 18.2.4 Conclusion

While prostitution was accepted, those practicing prostitution might be devalued and denigrated. In Athens, it was easy to obscure the relationship between a male and female and suggest it was prostitution, since women lacked a public persona.

## 18.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

The author attempts to consider the possible environment and livelihood of female prostitutes in classical Greece by looking at the narratives of three women identified in the literature as sex laborers: **Alke**, an unnamed slave, and **Neaira**. These accounts appear in law court speeches. By focusing on this type of evidence, the author hopes to reveal what we can and cannot know about these women, while also showing how negative female stereotypes centered on the prostitute body.

## 18.4 Terms

1. **hetaira** (sexual companion commonly translated as courtesan) (p.703)
2. **sacred prostitution** (sex purchased in honor of the goddess Aphrodite at Corinth) (p.703)
3. **Porne** likely comes from the verb to sell (**pernemi**) (p.704)
4. **Pallake** are frequently identified as foreign women in long-term relationships which might even result in semi-legitimate children.
5. **Megalomisthoi** refer to independent, high-priced prostitutes.
6. **Pornoboskos** is a pimp and **pornoboskousa** is a procuress
7. **Khamaitupe**: ground beater
8. **Spodesilaura, peripolis, and dromas**: streetwalker
9. **gephuris**: bridge-girls
10. **Musachne**: polluted one
11. **Porneia**: brothels

## Problems

**18.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 19

# Modern Tourists, Ancient Sexualities: Looking at Looking in Pompeii's Brothel and the Secret Cabinet

**Abstract**

## 19.1 Questions and Remarks

Question?
What is the secret cabinet?

Question?
What are **Bourbon excavations**?

Question?
What is **sex essentialism**, **sex negativity**, **sex hierarchy**, and **lascivious treatment of sexuality**?

Question?
What was the **Lupanar**?

Question?
What was the **Gabinetto Segreto**?

Question?
What is the **Museo Archeologico**?

## 19.2 First Reading

**Definition 19.2.1 Sex negativity**: the belief that sexual material reflects or contributes to moral corruption.

**Definition 19.2.2 Sex hierarchy**: the privileging of hetero-erotic sexuality

**Definition 19.2.3 Sex essentialism**: the belief that sex and sexuality are ahistorical concepts needing no explanation.

### 19.2.1 Looking at Looking in the Brothel

**Definition 19.2.4 Lupanare**: a brothel (p. 319)

There is a structure in the area to the east of Pompeii's forum which is the only structure at Pompeii that unambiguously meets scholars' criteria for an ancient brothel. The brothel was restored and opened to the public in 2006. Tour guides often present a 'sound-bite' version of sexuality that is titillating yet not offensive (p. 320). Included in most explanations of the brothel's frescoes are two popular theories: that the erotic frescoes were the 'Greco-Roman Kama Sutra', or a sex menu for the clients.

Remark:
The brothel's frescoes illustrated Hellenistic sex manuals. Modeled on these manuals, frescoes depicting couples in various sexual positions, often called **figurae veneris** (positions of love), could be found in brothels, baths, taverns, and houses.

The menu theory isn't as well backed up, as it suggests each door and fresco were in one-to-one correspondence, which is not the case. Further, one of the frescoes by the doors doesn't even show a sexual position.

Note:
Almost all of the brothel's graffiti were written in Latin, suggesting that clients and prostitutes did speak a common language, and would not need to point or grunt at pictures.

The frescoes also only depict a narrow range of sexual activities: male-female genital sex. Regardless of its veracity, the 'sex menu' theory is often repeated by guides and tourists alike.

On the other hand, the guidebook and audioguide both caution against such theories and hypotheses about the past. However these are infrequently used resources. Most tourists learn about ancient sexuality through the stories told by their guides, and few are exposed to the broader information contained in the site's audio and visual materials.

> Remark:
> Other sexual acts, including oral and anal sex and involving same sex-pairs and groups, were part of the Pompeians' sexual repertoire. Many of these acts are depicted in the frescoes of the Suburban Baths at Pompeii.

However, the epigraphic elements of the brothel (i.e. graffiti) are rather inaccessible to tourists. Additionally, none of the site's didactic material raises the possibility of non-genital sexual activities or homoerotic activity. The sex manual's, according to Holt Parker, serve to create a normative intercourse and to reassure the male initiate that he will meet with nothing unexpected ... the fear of sexual contact with the Other is removed, not only by advance familiarity with certain physiological facts but by the construction of a carefully delimited sexual cosmos. (p.323)

### 19.2.2 Looking at Looking in the Secret Cabinet

The **Gabinetto Segreto** is currently stored on the first floor of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples. In the twenty-first century the Secret Cabinet is made completely accessible to the public. Frescoes dominate the collection, with a smattering of statuary in tehe garden and street sections, and small finds displayed in glass cabinets in a few sections of the exhibit.

The role of tour guides as mediators for this collection is much smaller than at the brothel, although it still represents a majority of interactions.

> Remark:
> The lascivious treatment of sexuality and sex essentialism fail to explain the sculpture of Pan, and perhaps the sculpture even calls uncomfortable attention to these two tactics as exactly what they are—ways of rationalizing ancient sexuality. (p. 329)

### 19.2.3 Conclusions

Sex negativity in the nineteent hand twentieth centuries resulted in restrictions on who could enter the brothel or Gabinetto Segreto. Modern-day tourists will likely encounter, and themselves contribute to, sex essentialism and the lascivious treatment of sexuality. The belief that sex and sexuality have remained unchanged throughout time and a titllating view of erotic material are strong themes both in guided tours and in tourists comments at the Lupanar and Gabinetto Segreto. The privileging of heteroerotic acts

over homoerotic or otherwise marginalized sexual behaviours, combined with the belief that sexuality is unchanging, leads to a blanched, surprisingly modern-seeming picture of ancient sexuality. (p.330)

> Question?
> What does the public construction of sexuality reflect about what we want ancient sexuality to be?

From the comments of tour guides and tourists, we can infer that the public represented here wants ancient sexuality to be fun, a little risque, but ultimately normative and familiar.

## 19.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

Author examines tourists' experiences at two sites that often form the basis for popular conceptions of ancient Pompeian sexuality: the brothel (Lupanar) at Pompeii, and the Secret Cabinet (Gabinetto Segreto) in the National Archaeological Museum of Naples.

The author argues that the tourists' perceptions of ancient sexuality at Pompeii reflect not only the lascivious treatment of sexuality, but also the privileging of hetero-erotic sexuality (sex hierarchy) and the belief that sex and sexuality are ahistorical concepts needing no explanation (sex essentialism). The recognition of historical and current roadblocks to popular understandings of sexuality can give insights into the selective appropriation of the past.

The analysis uses observations of tourists in March 2007 and April 2009, supplemented by surveys filled out by university students studying at the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies during the spring of 2007.

Details are most often drawn from English-speaking tourists. The findings reflect the attitudes of a particular sector of the increasingly global Pompeian tourist audience.

Author argues the perceptions of tourists reflect not only the lascivious treatment of sexuality, the privileging of hetero-erotic sexuality, and the belief that sex and sexuality are ahistorical concepts needing no explanation.

## 19.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**19.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 20

**Abstract**

## 20.1 Questions and Remarks

## 20.2 First Reading

## 20.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

## 20.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**20.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.

# Chapter 21

**Abstract**

## 21.1 Questions and Remarks

## 21.2 First Reading

## 21.3 Notes on Analysis and Societal Context

## 21.4 Terms

1.

## Problems

**21.1** A given problem or Excercise is described here. The problem is described here. The problem is described here.