

scholars. Conceived as an effort to cleanse the Augean stable of the accumulated detritus of homophobic **myths and fabrications**, the procedure is understandable and laudable. Sometimes, however, the undertaking may cross over into apologetic in the bad sense, distorting or glossing over the truth in an effort to create a favorable image for the cause. One instance is the claim made by modern defenders of **pederasty** that such relationships, in keeping with their purported Greek model, are always noble and character-building. Some undoubtedly are, but others are surely less so. Conversely, some students of ancient Greece, Islam, and other societies where pederasty has been the norm, claim to find only their own preferred **androphilia** there.

Another gambit is the posthumous "naturalization" of individuals such as Pontius Pilate or George Washington as gay. Of course, in many instances it is necessary first to raise the question of the homosexuality of a past figure so that the evidence may be weighed; where it is lacking, however, stubbornness should yield to agnosticism.

These matters raise broader issues of method. A dispute has long raged between those who uphold the ideal that scholarship must strive to be objective and value neutral and their opponents (many, but not all on the political left), who believe that scholarly work is always conducted in the service of a political or ideological position. The former view, that of classical European rationalism and natural science, has been eloquently defended by the great sociologist Max Weber, who held that while the choice of a research problem is shaped by interests, the conduct of the investigation itself can and must be objective. Conversely, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre insisted that the intellectual must become committed or engaged in a cause. (They differed sharply on what that cause should be, Heidegger flirting—for a time at least—with Nazism, and Sartre involving him-

self with a variety of left-wing tendencies from Castroism to Maoism.) Another version of this demand for commitment appeared among the New Left thinkers of the 1960s who stipulated that only "emancipatory" scholarship should be supported, while Herbert Marcuse went so far as to authorize in theory forceable suppression of "harmful" (i.e., nonprogressive) enquiry (in his 1967 essay "Repressive Tolerance").

Applied to history, selective research of the kind that has been discussed is sometimes called "advocacy scholarship." Many practitioners in this mode display what may be called a "shopper's approach" to their material. That is, they sift through the mass of data available to them, extracting only the items that are attractive and leaving the rest behind. This procedure yields a highly selective view of the past, but one which the amateur is often unable to distinguish from genuine work informed by integral understanding and judgment. In extreme cases, this selective approach, fueled by the tyro's enthusiasm and unchecked by training in method, may even resemble the industry of the magpie: the "researcher" collects attractive baubles and heaps them together, little knowing that his treasures are mostly of trifling value. Regrettably, some writings publicized as restorations of our "hidden heritage" are of this sort.

Concededly, these methodological shortcomings are part of the growing pains of research in a sphere that, until recent decades, had been largely taboo. Also, because of the lack of funding and university chairs, much of the work on the history of homosexuality and lesbianism has of necessity been conducted by private scholars, who have volunteered their own time and money, often having to content themselves with the meagerest recognition for their toil. Untrained in the strict canons of evidence and argument, their errors are often innocent ones. Having suffered from the profusion of negative stereotypes that our culture offers, it is perhaps understandable that they should

attempt to redress the balance by advancing a positive, apologetic view of homosexuality. Nonetheless, the increasing depth and breadth of research should enable homosexual and lesbian scholarship to ascend to a higher plane in which these failings are obsolete. Human history is one seamless fabric, and the credibility of the growing and impressive body of research on homosexuality vitally depends on its universality.

See also **Famous Homosexuals, Lists of; Gay Studies.**

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AQUINAS, THOMAS, SAINT (1224–1274)

Italian theologian and philosopher, the most important exponent of the medieval system of thought known as Scholasticism. Born to a noble family in southern Italy and cousin of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, he studied at St. Benedict's monastery of Monte Cassino and at the University of Naples, and as a young man entered the Dominican order. Trying to dissuade him from joining that new and radical order of friars, his brothers supposedly brought a prostitute to his room to tempt him, but he drove her out with a burning brand he took from the hearth. At twenty, having graduated from Naples he traveled to Paris and later to Cologne to study under Albertus Magnus, who set him on the path of fusing Aristotle with Christian thought, an innovatory combination which became his life's work. Aquinas was a copious writer whose works in their modern edition fill scores of folio volumes, and who sought to combine encyclopedic breadth with precision and systematic presentation. He called for the capital punishment of heretics, witches, and sodomites.

In his sexual views he adhered to the restrictivist approach laid down by the **Patristic** writers, interweaving, however, some elements taken from his extensive study of **Aristotle**. A sense of his approach

emerges from his classification of "unnatural vice." After first condemning masturbation, he distinguishes three types of improper sexual contact: with the wrong species (bestiality), with the wrong gender (homosexuality and lesbianism), and with the wrong organ (oral and anal sex) (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II 154, 11). This threefold schema became normative for Christian thought.

In another passage (I-II 31, 7), Aquinas asserts that some pleasures are unnatural to man but become connatural for physical or psychological reasons or because of habit, and among these is intercourse with males or with brute animals. This text, however, was adapted from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1148b), in which the Master held that sexual intercourse with males could be pleasurable owing to the innate constitution (in the medieval Latin translation *natura*) of the individual. Aquinas reiterated this crucial point in his own commentary, the *Sententia Libri Ethicorum* (VII, 5), but suppressed it in the *Summa*. By this act of intellectual dishonesty, Aquinas made true, innate homosexuality an "insoluble problem" for Christian theologians who are obliged to maintain that erotic attraction to one's own sex is acquired and therefore abnormal and pathological.

Some modern scholars have deplored the views of Aquinas and his contemporaries as representing a turn toward a negative view of sexual nonconformity in contrast to the ostensibly more tolerant attitude that had preceded him—though they must grant that he was less hostile than **Peter Damian**. In this realm, however, Aquinas is a codifier, innovative only in his characteristically systematic approach, and not in any substantive enhancement of the negative content, which represented a fusion of the prohibitions of the Mosaic Law with an anti-homosexual tradition in the Hellenic world that went as far back as **Plato**. Even before Christianity, the synthesis of the two traditions had already been realized by **Philo Judaeus**,