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### CICERO, MARCUS TULLIUS (106–43 B. C.)

Roman politician, orator, and writer, who left behind a corpus of Latin prose (speeches, treatises, letters) that make him one of the great authors of classical antiquity. Unsuccessful in politics, he was overestimated as a philosopher by the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and underestimated in modern times, but was and is ranked as one of the greatest masters of Latin style. His career as an orator began in 81 B.C., and from the very beginning his speeches revealed his rhetorical gifts. His denunciation of Verres, the proconsul who had plundered the province of Sicily, opened the way to his election as aedile, praetor, and then consul, but subsequently the intrigues of his enemies led to his banishment from Rome (58/57), followed by his triumphal return. In the civil war he took the side of Pompey and so failed again, but was pardoned by the victorious Caesar, after whose death he launched a rhetorical attack on Mark Antony. The formation of the triumvirate meant that Cicero was to be proscribed by his opponent and murdered by his henchmen.

The theme of homosexuality figures in Cicero's political writings as part of his invective. In the last turbulent century of the Roman republic in which he lived, a

contrast between the austere virtue of earlier times and the luxury and vice of the present had become commonplace. Also, as we know from the slightly later genre of satirical poetry, a taste for salacious gossip had taken root in the metropolis. In his orations Cicero remorselessly flays the homosexual acts of his enemies, contrasting homosexual love with the passion inspired by women which is "far more of natural inspiration." The glorification of male dignity and virility goes hand in hand with the condemnation of effeminacy as unnatural and demeaning. Something of the Roman antipathy to Greek *paiderasteia* transpires from Cicero's condemnation of the nudity which the Greeks flaunted in their public baths and *gymnasia*, and from his assertion that the Greeks were inconsistent in their notion of friendship. He pointedly noted: "Why is it that no one falls in love with an ugly youth or a handsome old man?" Effeminacy and passive homosexuality are unnatural and blameworthy in a free man, though Cicero remained enough under the influence of Greek mores to express no negative judgment on the practice of keeping handsome young slaves as minions of their master. The right of a free man to have sexual relations with his male slaves Cicero never challenges, though he distinguishes clearly between the slave in the entourage of his master and the "hustler" whose viciousness is imputed to his keeper. The Judaic condemnation of homosexuality per se had not yet reached Rome, but the distinction that had existed in Hellenic law and custom between acts worthy and unworthy of a citizen was adopted and even heightened by the combination of appeal to Roman civic virtue and his own rhetorical flair.

Cicero's denunciation of homosexual conduct in his enemies—not of exclusive "homosexuality," which is never in question—remained in the context of effeminacy, debauchery, and other sexual offenses designated by the general term *stuprum*. He depicted the other side as

living in a demimonde of vicious and corrupt associates who revel shamelessly in drunken orgies. The impudent Mark Antony had a clientele of drunkards and debauchees like himself, his house was *impudica*, "unchaste," and he himself was *impurus*, which is to be understood as the equivalent of Greek *akáthartos*, "impure," the term applied to the passive-effeminate homosexual who is defiled by the lust of others. The antithesis was the virile man who guards his honor in his relations with other men, who has not submitted to their sexual advances. Accordingly, the followers of Cataline were denounced as young men who are *impuri impudicique*, ready *amare et amari*, "to love and to be loved," hence having both active and passive homosexual relations in a promiscuous manner. At the same time Cicero defended the honor of his clients by saying that the accusations against them are no more than malicious gossip.

The character of the freeman stood in contrast to the baseness of the slave who freely lent himself to the unchaste desires of his master. According to Cicero, Verres surrounded himself with slaves whose degradation infected his whole entourage, while treating free men as if they were slaves. The same inversion of the social hierarchy attached to Clodius as the heir of Cataline. The term *patientia* used with reference to Verres implies the passivity in sexual relations that is degrading and unworthy of a free man, just as in the case of Mark Antony, charged with having "prostituted himself to all," much like the Timarchus whom Aeschines had denounced centuries earlier in Athens for a like failing. The other aspect of passive homosexuality was the lapse into effeminacy, so that Cicero's enemies were accused of delight in luxury, the adoption of women's gestures, and the wearing of feminine clothes and makeup.

Cicero's rhetoric thus had two sides: the attempt to discredit opponents by inflammatory imputations of homosexual conduct and of sexual immorality

in general—a type of smear to be followed in political life down to modern times; and his rigorous demarcation between the active and the passive partner in sexual relations, the active role being the only one worthy of a man and a citizen, the passive role being equated with effeminacy and servility. This view has its roots in the primary distinction made by classical civilization between the active and the passive which, however, Cicero heightened for his own tendentious ends.

*See also McCarthyism.*

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## CINEMA

*See Film.*

## CIRCLES AND AFFINITY GROUPS

Sociologists treat the group as a plurality of individuals defined by some principle of recruitment and by a set of membership rights and obligations. Sometimes these groups may be visible, as in the case of medieval guilds and modern collegiate fraternities and sororities; in other instances, as the freemasons and the illuminati, they are more or less secret. Homosexuals and lesbians do not belong in toto to any such well-defined grouping, though outside observers, such as the French literary critic Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, have sometimes perceived them as forming such a fraternity. The clandestine marks of recognition whereby gay men and lesbians have communicated their nature to one another recall the more structured gestures of freemasons. Such comparisons aside, it is more useful to posit small groupings within the larger