

After his death, claims about him became more personal and explicit. In the proceedings of his inquest, government informer Richard Baines claimed that Marlowe had said that "all they that love not Tobacco & Boies were fooles," and in 1598, Francis Meres wrote that he "was stabbed to death by a bawdy seruing man, a riual of his in his lewde loue." However characteristic of what we do know of Marlowe's life, these posthumous comments do little to establish his homosexuality.

However, Marlowe's work does demonstrate an understanding and compassion for mythological and historical homosexuality. His *Hero and Leander* deals directly with Jupiter's passionate infatuation for Ganymede, a story which is also mentioned in *Dido*, and his masterwork, *Edward II*, based on fact, can be considered the first gay play in English.

An effeminate child, Edward was given as a companion the orphaned son of a Gascon knight at age 14 by his royal father, who hoped that the handsome and virile 16-year-old Piers Gaveston would exert a positive and masculine influence on his son. However, Edward fell passionately in love, and the king banished Gaveston in 1307. Marlowe's play begins shortly after this point with Edward (who had become king upon his father's death) immediately recalling his love to court, much to the anger of his barons, who demand Gaveston's permanent banishment. Edward, more the lover than the ruler, will accept nothing of this and even shares his throne with Gaveston, who is eventually seized and beheaded. Enraged in his grief, Edward involves himself in a bloody civil war, eventually taking another lover, young Spenser, who also is killed by the barons. Edward himself is seized, forced to abdicate, and, in 1327, is murdered by having a heated poker inserted into his anus, "intended as just retribution for his sins." In this one play, Marlowe surpasses the achievements of many explicitly gay writers in his sensitive and complex portrayal of a doomed

and passionate relationship between two men caught up in a repressive and homophobic society.

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MARRIAGE

It has long been observed that many married men and women have sexual desires for members of their own sex. In the case of those who are primarily homosexual in orientation (Kinsey Incidence nos. 4 to 6), the question which follows is why they marry. Marriage may be camouflage, a response to societal or familial pressure, and the relationship unconsummated; marriages of convenience between gay men and lesbians are not unknown. Marriage may also occur because the person does not understand or is unable to accept his or her sexual makeup; some of the latter group turn to marriage with the unrealistic hope of changing themselves. The desire for children is a motive for some, as is a desire for the public commitment and legal rights only available, at present, to heterosexual couples. Some simply happen to fall in love with a member of the opposite sex and try to make the best of it, and some, while preferring sexual partners of the same sex, or the anonymity and promiscuity readily available in the gay male world, prefer a marital partner of the opposite gender. A successful union of this kind is possible if honesty and tolerance are found on both sides, or if the bisexual partner is able to keep any extramarital activities from the other partner. Some report that a person aware and accepting of the homosexual component within him- or herself makes a better partner in a heterosexual relationship.

In the case of married persons who are primarily heterosexual (Kinsey 1 or 2), the problem is somewhat different: how to deal with occasional erotic desires for a partner of the same gender. In theory this is equally a problem for those in homosexual relationships who desire occasional sexual interaction with members of the opposite sex, and interest in the opposite sex can be more threatening to a homosexual relationship than same-sex interest is to a heterosexual one. Because male-female sex is less freely available for men than male-male sex, however, the question comes up less often. Again, the problem is not sexual activity but how the desired activity is viewed and the extent to which it threatens or is permitted to threaten the primary relationship. Not all desires need to be satisfied through activity, and questions of commitment, maintaining sexual interest, and protection from sexually transmitted diseases come up in relationships regardless of sexual orientation.

Marriage among members of the same sex existed in ancient Rome but then disappeared until the present century, when it has returned as a goal for some gay people. Even for heterosexuals, marriage is becoming an emotional union and commitment rather than an arrangement to produce and protect children, and if it is that then there is no rational reason why marriages of homosexuals should not be endorsed by society. This proposal is controversial, however, even in the gay community, since marriage has long been viewed by libertarian thinkers as an outmoded and repressive institution, and a significant number of homosexuals, male and female, have "come out" from very unhappy marriages. Public and religious opinion is moving toward permitting same-sex unions for those desiring them. Currently they are available only in Denmark (in Sweden, while they may not marry, same-sex couples have more legal rights than in the U.S.). Elsewhere, ceremonies and rituals, even though they lack

legal status, can serve some of the same purposes as marriage.

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MARTIAL, MARCUS VALERIUS (CA. 40-CA. 104)

The greatest epigrammatist in Latin literature and an inexhaustible source of information on sexual life in the Rome of the first century. Born in Bilbilis in Spain, he settled in Rome at the age of 24, living as a client of the Senecas, his renowned countrymen, and then of other wealthy patrons. His poems won him the favor of the court; he was honored by Titus and Domitian and awarded a knighthood. A friend of the leading intellectuals of his day, he lived in the capital until 98, when he returned to his Spanish homeland for the remaining years of his life. His major work is his twelve books of *Epigrams*, published between 85 and 103. The books were arranged and numbered by the author on the basis of smaller collections and individual pieces that he had composed over the years, with dedications to particular friends and patrons. In form and language the poems exhibit the greatest possible variety: a wide assortment of meters and speech ranging from artificial heights of literary diction to the coarsest and most vulgar slang. Martial's treatment of the sexual life of his contemporaries was so candid and unvarnished—particularly where homosexuality was concerned—that many of the epigrams could not be published in the modern languages until quite recently.

Martial knew and freely described in verse all possible varieties of sexual conduct: from heterosexual love to the