

but in considerable portions in French, Italian, and Portuguese. Meant for the writer's eyes alone, the diary records not only his intellectual growth and literary studies, but also his homosexual passions. During his lifetime he allowed no one else to read it, except perhaps in a single unfortunate instance that enabled one of his best friends to detect Platen's true sexual nature—with an ensuing painful scene in a public circle of their acquaintances. After his death his literary executors were shy of publishing this revealing document, which was kept with restricted access in the Royal Library in Munich until in 1896–1900 the entire text was published in two large volumes of over 2000 pages. The entries chronicle the intense erotic friendships of his student days and later passions that tormented and thrilled him, as some of his *innamorati* were wholly unresponsive to his overtures.

Toward the close of his life Platen became embroiled in mortal enmity with Heinrich Heine, who shared many of his political views and yet was his antipode as a poet. Heine maliciously seized upon the poet's homoerotic side to attack him in *The Baths of Lucca*. Platen did in 1834 publish a poem with the code word "Vernünft'ge" [= gay] that to the initiated was a declaration of homosexual self-consciousness and solidarity ("Sollen namenlos uns länger," written January 31, 1823). He is a classic example of the homosexual in whom talent is joined with an intensity of feeling that can betray him in his private and his public life, but also with a strength of character that enables him to surmount these vicissitudes.

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PLATO (CIRCA 429–347 B.C.)

Greek philosopher and prose writer. He was the son of Ariston and Perictione, both Athenians of distinguished lineage. His writings show the enormous influence that the philosopher Socrates had upon him by his life, his teaching, and his death. The spectacle of contemporary politics, both during the ascendancy of his own supporters and under the democracy, gradually turned him away from the career of a statesman and forced him to the paradox that there was no hope for cities until philosophers became rulers or rulers philosophers. After the trial and execution of Socrates in 399 he chose with other Socratics to leave Athens and reside for a time in Megara. In the next twelve years he traveled to many places, including Egypt. In 387 he visited Italy and Sicily, where he initiated lifelong friendships with Dion of Syracuse and the Pythagorean Archytas of Tarentum. On his return he began teaching formally and continuously at a place near the grove of Academus about a mile outside the wall of Athens. This was his chief occupation during the last forty years of his life; he departed only to make two further visits to Syracuse, where he involved himself fruitlessly in its internal politics under Dionysius II.

Plato's writings consist of some twenty-five dialogues and the *Apology* of Socrates. As a prose stylist in Attic Greek he is one of the great figures of classical literature. His style possesses infinite variety, his language is tinged with poetry and rich in metaphors, especially from music, to which he can return even when their implications seem exhausted. His sentences can range from the briefest to long, straggling periods, sometimes even more powerful than those of the orator Demosthenes, but quite different from them. His later style betrays traces of mannerism, including subtle interlacings of word order and affectations of assonance. No other author attains such sustained power and beauty in Greek prose.

The subject of homosexuality in Plato is primarily a question of *paiderasteia*, the erotic attachment of an adult male for an adolescent boy that was the normative form of homosexual expression in the society in which he lived. Wherever he depicts or alludes to the power of sexual desire, the context is homosexual. The principal works in which he treats the matter are the *Symposium* and the *Republic*, which belong to his middle period, and the *Laws*, which was probably written at the end of his life. Only secondarily does Plato, in the *Gorgias* of his early period, deal with the *kinaidos*, the passive-effeminate male who accepts the role, seeks to be sexually possessed by other men, and so behaves like a woman. Though the participants in the dialogue admit that the *kinaidos* derives pleasure from his shameful practices, his disgrace reaches the level of taboo and so contaminates those who even allude to his existence. The example of the *kinaidos* proves conclusively that pleasure does not equal goodness. The stigma which even Hellenic society attached to passive homosexuality was for Plato a source of ambivalence that colored the negative evaluation even of *paiderasteia* in his last writings.

In the *Symposium*, moreover, Plato is forced to deal with a non-Greek conception of the origin of homosexuality in the speech of Aristophanes, who relates a mythical account of the origin of the erotic attraction between members of the same sex. All human beings today are the halves of primordial ancestors who had two heads, four arms, four legs, and two sets of genitalia. At that time there were three genders: male-male, male-female, and female-female. To punish these creatures for their insolence, Zeus divided them in half, so that the sexual drive is the attempt of the original dual beings to reunite. The male-male halves are homosexual men, the male-female halves are heterosexuals, and the female-female halves are lesbians, to use the modern terminology—which was not Plato's, it should be emphasized.

This myth echoes a Babylonian account of the origin of the sexes reported by Berosus, and to some extent underlying the story of the separation of Eve from Adam in Genesis, in which of the three only the heterosexual pair remains.

In the *Symposium* Pausanias holds that pederasty is justified, but that admiration for the physical beauty of the boy should be paralleled by concern for his moral qualities and their development. The dialogue further develops the notion that there are two forms of love: the vulgar one, Aphrodite Pandemos, can be that of a male subject for either women or boys, while the heavenly one, Aphrodite Uranios, is directed solely toward males and rises above the desire for physical gratification. The lover cherishes the vigor, the intelligence, and the potential for maturation of the *eromenos*, the beloved youth to whom he remains devoted throughout life. Thus *paiderasteia* is accepted as a fact of social life, but the philosopher seeks to orient the man-boy relationship toward non-sexual goals.

In the *Republic* Plato's attitude toward pederasty is more negative; he finds males who have sexual relations with other males, even in age-asymmetrical pairs, guilty of "vulgarity and lack of taste." The ideal of chastity in the life of male society is coupled with the notion that love of the soul should replace that of the body. Then in the *Laws*, probably written at the end of his life and in a mood of bitterness, Plato condemned pederasty as *para physin*, "contrary to nature," and called for complete suppression of the homoerotic drive by defaming it so continuously that it would, like incestuous desire, vanish from consciousness. The feeble argument that supports this doctrine is that "one cannot know in advance how boys will turn out," so that the efforts of the pederast to educate his beloved boy are futile. In the Hellenic society of Plato's own time, and even later, this teaching found no resonance, but when fused with the condemnation of male homosexual relations in the

book of Leviticus—of which the Greeks of the Golden Age knew nothing—it became the nucleus of the intolerance of homosexuality that has characterized Western civilization since the Roman state adopted Christianity as its official religion.

Plato's influence has been manifold, and cannot be reduced to a simple formula. The enemies of homosexual expression have used Plato's arguments selectively and have even tried to depict the more negative ones as typical of the whole of ancient Greek society—which they never were. On the other hand, homosexual apologists have over the centuries looked to the *Symposium* as justifying and ennobling sexual liaisons between males and even exalting them above heterosexual ones in their utility to society, and at times have conveniently disregarded the crucial point that these are age-asymmetrical relationships with an educational purpose—of which modern androphile homosexuality has none. Just because of his importance in the history of philosophy and his mastery of Greek prose, Plato has for more than twenty-three centuries been read, studied, and translated. His ambivalent legacy has shaped and even today informs the attitudes of Western man toward love of beauty and its sexual expression.

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**PLAUTUS,
TITUS MACCIUS
(D. CA. 184 B.C.)**

The greatest Latin comic playwright and earliest Latin of whom substantial writings survive. Of the 130 plays attributed to him, the 21 that have come down from a second-century collection

are certainly his. Modeled on plays by Menander, greatest of the Greek New Comedians, who wrote at the very end of the Golden Age of Athens, Plautus' comedies are not merely translated from the Greek, but also incorporate new material not only from other Middle and Late comedies but from Roman life as well. Nowhere is this combination clearer than in his treatment of homosexuality, which the Middle and Late Greek comedies, in marked contrast to Aristophanes' and others' Old Comedies, tended to avoid in favor of marriage and slapstick heterosexual street scenes.

Plautus featured pederasts and pathics and portrayed relationships, primarily between masters and slaves, a dominance–submission pattern that was the normal practice in Rome, far removed from the mentor–disciple paradigm of Greek pederasty, which was theoretically (and often in practice) between upper-class males for pedagogic aims. Likewise in *Pseudolus* (The Confidence Man), Plautus transformed the refined hetaira of a Greek original into the coarse inmate of a low Roman brothel. Slaves in general figured far more in his plays than in the Greek models, presumably because after the wars of expansion, they represented a much greater part of the Roman than of the classical Athenian population. Plautus portrayed the stereotypical characters from Greek comedies with a distinctively Roman twist.

His successor Terence (ca. 190–159 B.C.) stuck closer to the Greek originals, especially to Apollodorus of Carystus, a disciple of Menander, and to Menander himself, and consequently made few allusions to homosexuality (only three have been detected). Perhaps this dearth explains why Terence, more than Plautus, was assigned to Roman schoolboys and enjoyed greater vogue in the Middle Ages.

In Greek comedy it is always the effeminate male who is satirized, whereas Plautus portrays macho characters such as braggards and soldiers in *Miles Gloriosus*