

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*

who lust in their bisexual aggressiveness. His adult males are bisexual as a matter of course. Thus Plautus reveals the prevalence and character of homosexuality in the Roman Republic at the close of the Punic Wars, when, although the civilizing role of Hellenism was just beginning, homoerotic relationships already flourished in uncouth, indigenous forms.

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PLETHYSMOGRAPHY

According to Masters and Johnson, sexual arousal consists (among other things) of the engorgement of the blood vessels in the pelvic region. Scientists can directly measure this physiological engorgement using a technique called plethysmography. A *vaginal photoplethysmograph* records an electronic signal that measures the reflectivity of the vaginal wall, which is correlated with the amount of engorgement of the blood vessels in the region. A *penile strain gauge plethysmograph* records a signal that reflects the circumference of the penis it encircles. A *volumetric penile plethysmograph* reports the total volume of air around a penis it encloses. A *groin temperature thermocouple* reports the temperature at the surface of the skin on the inside upper thighs, a temperature that reflects the rise in warm blood pooling in the groin during sexual arousal in either sex.

The scientific validity of penile plethysmography is no longer much in dispute—it is, after all, practically valid *prima facie*—though it is not settled which of the two kinds of device is more accurate. Vaginal photoplethysmography has almost

attained the same status. Groin temperature reading is a new technique which has not yet been completely tested.

Origins and Basic Procedures.

Plethysmography was first applied to the study of sexual orientation issues by Kurt Freund, a Czech researcher, who was conducting studies of aversion therapy to change the sexual orientation of gay men who came to him for such help. Freund found that these patients' self-reports of "cures" due to the aversion therapy did not last long, and that plethysmography failed to confirm these cures. Accordingly, he stopped performing such aversion therapy and, in Canada, he has popularized the technique in basic research on sexual topics. Other researchers (notably Nathaniel McConaghy of Australia) have also discovered, through plethysmography, that it is very difficult to change sexual orientation in men.

In research on sexual orientation, plethysmography is useful because it assesses which stimuli cause sexual arousal independent of a person's conscious knowledge or reporting thereof. Age preferences can also be roughed out in cooperative subjects.

In a typical experiment, subjects wear a plethysmograph while they watch a screen and/or listen to an audiotape involving a variety of stimuli: some sexually neutral stimuli (as controls), and some depictions or descriptions of situations or objects thought to be sexually arousing. A mixed bag of plethysmographic results will give the flavor of the kinds of experiments conducted. (1) Male cross-dressers who have been erotically aroused by women are also somewhat aroused by stories of themselves wearing women's clothes, while cross-dressers never aroused by women (i.e., homosexual "drag queens") are not. (2) Ordinary heterosexual men who are *most* aroused by pictures of naked adult women sometimes show small but measurable arousal to pictures of naked prepubescent girls, but ordinary homosexual men who are *most* aroused by pictures