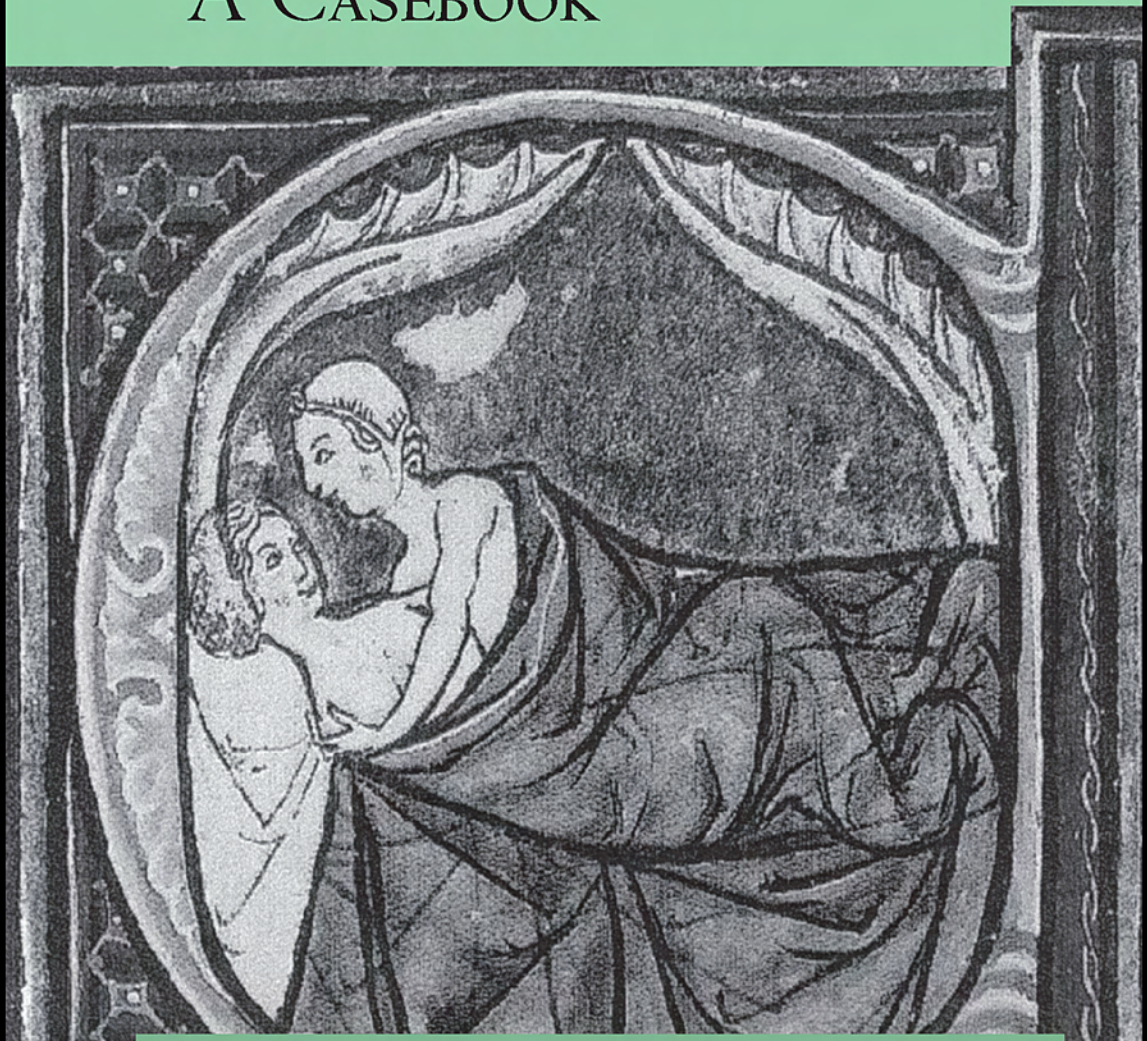
Medieval Sexuality

A Casebook



Edited by April Harper and Caroline Proctor

Medieval Sexuality

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Contents

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Introduction

April Harper and Caroline Proctor

It seems fitting to open this volume by paying tribute to the achievements of Professor Vern L. Bullough, a pioneer in the study of medieval sexuality, who sadly died on June 21, 2006. In fact, it was Bullough's words that prompted us to hold the conference (Sex: Medieval Perspectives, University of St Andrews, 2004) from which this collection of essays stems. In his article "Sex in History: A Redux," published in Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler's edited volume *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), Bullough recalled his experiences as a historian of sexuality. Following the warning not to publish on the topic until he had achieved success in "a respectable field," he still faced the embarrassment and disapproval of his colleagues, who introduced him as "a specialist in whores, pimps and queers, who occasionally deigned to do real research." It was his determination in lobbying for sessions on the history of sexuality at the American Historical Association (AHA) conference, attracting an audience of over a thousand people, that motivated other scholars who were likewise devoted to the study of sexuality to push through a session at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo. A call to action went up to promote the history of sexuality and it was a call many took up. Over the last few decades, the success of this call has been proven as the topic of sexuality has moved from the margins of academic study to the mainstream of current medieval scholarship. Perhaps some of the best testaments to this success are found in the edited collection of articles by Bullough and the respected historian and legal scholar James Brundage, the *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* (New York: Garland, 1996), a volume which immediately illustrated the breadth of sources and arenas open to the historian of medieval sexuality.

With the death of Vern Bullough in 2006, the field has lost a great historian of sexuality, a motivating force and mentor. It is, however, encouraging to note, when browsing through this year's conference program for Kalamazoo, that over 100 papers were given on topics of sexuality by "specialists in whores, pimps

and queers." Increasing numbers of conferences are being held, and books and articles produced, devoted solely to the subject of sexuality. We were incredibly fortunate to be given an excellent venue for our conference at St Andrews and enjoyed the great encouragement and support of the Department of Medieval History there, but Bullough's lone session at the AHA was never far from our minds, for though our conference was occasionally standing-room only as well, we were aware of the struggles we and our colleagues can still face in our field. One delegate informed us that the poster, which had been sent to her particular institution for posting, had, instead, been sent to her directly. Her reputation as a member of the dirty circle of historians of sexuality was obviously known and it was assumed that only she would be interested in such a gathering. Experiences like this made us keenly aware of our position as a third generation of historians of sexuality, both in the continuing challenges we face, but much more so in the freedom we now enjoy. It is the hard work of those like Bullough and Brundage in the first generation and the determination of the dozens of scholars who took up the call as a second generation to push open the doors of conferences, publishing houses and university curriculum committees that has made it possible for a third generation of scholars, including ourselves, to hold such conferences, to teach courses on the theme of medieval sexuality and to identify ourselves as historians of sexuality.

In our title, we use the term "sexuality" deliberately. The conference that inspired our collection was entitled "Sex: Medieval Perspectives" to draw attention to the fact that our focus was not exclusively masculinity, femininity, gender or the study of different sexualities; we wanted to talk about sex. It is a word that is so often deliberately avoided and one that we wanted to emphasize. We realized, however, that "sex" was just as erroneous as any other term we were being pressured to use, for we were interested not only in the act but in how it was perceived, its role in law, literature, societies, cultures and religions, how it shaped the image of men, women, and their roles in society, how it determined the definitions of masculinity, femininity, gender, "normality" and "deviancy." We wanted to explore, as Ruth Mazo Karras has described it in *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others*, "the universe of meanings that people place on sex acts" (New York: Routledge, 2005, 5). Sexuality *is* culture; it is representative of a culture's religion, attitudes, taboos and experience. It is the cultural definitions, ideals and changes in attitudes across time, geographical distance, genre and culture with which this volume is most concerned, and thus we have chosen to title our work *Medieval Sexuality* to reflect the breadth of our contributors' work.

There is a trend for authors to preface their work with an explanation of why the study of sexuality is valid and important. It is a credit to Bullough, Brundage, Murray, Salisbury, Mazo Karras and so many others whose names have become synonymous with the field, and who so eloquently and successfully argued on behalf of the history of sexuality, that we may now make the conscious decision not to begin our work with such a declaration, and can, instead, focus on what

Bullough referred to as the "serendipity" of our field. It is chance findings that often inspire or shape our work, and so serendipity is perhaps one of the most fitting descriptions of what it is to study sexuality. What we study as historians of medieval sexuality is gleaned from a huge variety of sources. It is often a question of reading between the lines, reading between the sheets. We rely on our own work, trawling through texts and manuscripts for occasional references; we welcome the serendipitous findings of colleagues and students that are so often generously shared and the chance meetings with others working in separate fields but united by our fascination with questions of sexuality. As we looked out across that conference room in St Andrews, we saw an international group of historians, experts in a multiplicity of fields of medieval studies, as well as a large number of young academics and postgraduate students, and we could only conclude that it is indeed serendipitous that we, who might have had little in common in our "real" scholarly pursuits, should share this aspect of our study. This shared concern reflects the very nature of the history of sexuality, as Foucault acknowledged when he asserted sexual discourse to be part of a universal experience. Indeed it is the universal, ubiquitous, pervasive nature of sexuality that enables it to touch all our work at some level. The goal of this collection is to reflect that universal serendipity and to draw attention to new findings gleaned from the sources. It seemed timely, a decade on from the publication of Bullough and Brundage's *Handbook*, to produce a collection which explores the breadth, scope and impact of current research into medieval sexualities. It is for this reason that we are so delighted to be able to include work both from specialist historians of sexuality and from those newer to the field, written from a variety of perspectives. Included in this volume is a collection of work from scholars of all fields of medieval study, including literature, gender, medicine, political theory, hagiography, historiography, art history, Islamic and Eastern history, whose work contributes to the growth, development and celebration of the history of sexuality. This collection represents just a fraction of the current new research being done on medieval sexualities, and indicates the potential richness of sources yet to be explored. We hope these articles will interest, intrigue, provoke and encourage further research.

The collection opens with an essay by Ross Balzaretti, a widely published expert in the history of gender and sexuality. His introduction articulates the approaches to sexuality that inform this whole volume. He seeks to open up the sources of Lombard Italy, illustrating clearly how historical and legal texts can be woven together to present us with a clearer picture of early medieval sexualities and society. Dominic Janes, whose research is increasingly focused on modern views of early sexuality, contributes a piece on the reception and historiography of early medieval penitential literature. Both these authors share a concern with gaps and silences in the histories of early medieval sexuality.

The following section focuses on the pervasive nature of sexuality in the struggles of the holy. Joyce Salisbury, who in 1991 edited the first ever collection

of articles on sex in the Middle Ages, takes us back to the desert fathers and mothers, and to their beautifully articulated and resonant personal struggles with sexuality. Sam Riches, art and gender historian, applies notions of gender and sexuality to narratives and images of the hagiographic encounters between saints and monsters. Both these articles negotiate the complexities, and the complex manipulations, of sexual identity.

April Harper is also concerned with using gender and sexuality as ways of interpreting medieval sources, particularly Old French literature. She examines a diverse range of sources to elucidate the relationship between food and adulterous women, consumers and the consumed. Lynn Martin, long interested in early modern intersections between alcohol and gender, again uses literary sources. His analysis, focused on material from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century, highlights the function of sex and alcohol in male portrayals of unruly women. Finally in this section, Caroline Proctor looks at the way sex, and sexual morality, featured in the careful manipulations of diet and lifestyle recommended in late medieval medical texts. Sexuality and consumption, and their moderation, appear intimately linked in all three of these articles.

In the following section, David Santiuste, whose work deals with late medieval English political and historical identities, is also concerned with issues of sexual morality but takes this to a higher political level, scrutinizing the motivations behind Richard III's *Proclamation for the Reform of Morals*. Sexual behavior, it seems, could play a central role in the political rhetoric of medieval power struggles. Philip Crispin looks at the political hierarchy reversed. His work on late medieval French theater is channeled here into a consideration of the role sexuality played in the festive drama of the clerks of the Parlement de Paris. He suggests that even in this world upside-down, notions of sexuality, and particularly female sexuality, remained conservative.

The final section explores the erotic and the exotic frontiers of sexuality in the Middle Ages. Hugh Kennedy, perhaps one of the foremost experts in the history of the medieval Islamic world, turns his attention to a work of Al-Jāḥiẓ and his sexual commentary. The debates in this work are examined as a product of the changing court, but are also compared to an earlier Greek text to illuminate early understandings of sexual orientation and to compare Greek and Arabic cultural attitudes to homosexuality. Kim Phillips brings the collection to an end, looking at medieval travel writers and their views of the sexualities they encountered on their travels. Her article shows how pre-colonial descriptions of the peoples of the East did not depend on allegations of sodomy, surprising evidence that allows her to engage with ideas of sexuality, sodomy, colonialism and the other. Her work urges us to see what is not, as well as what is, medieval sexuality.

Part One

Early Medieval Histories

1

Sexuality in Late Lombard Italy, *c*.700–*c*.800 AD

Ross Balzaretti

In most histories of Western sexuality there exists what might be termed an "early medieval missing link." The normal trajectory of such histories passes from ancient Greece and Rome via the "great" theologians of Late Antiquity, nearly always the atypical Augustine of Hippo, to the repressions of the later Middle Ages and the subsequent emergence of "identities" in modern times. Michel Foucault in his overly influential *History of Sexuality* omitted the early medieval period entirely because he argued that sexuality—in its sense as self-conscious sexual identity—was a creation of the late nineteenth century.[1] Most authors who approach the history of sexuality from the modern period have followed Foucault's path, a typical example being Stephen Garton's excellent overview, *Histories of Sexuality: Antiquity to Sexual Revolution* (London: Equinox, 2004). The "missing link" is still in evidence in works ostensibly designed to fill the gap, such as Ruth Mazo Karras's impressive survey, *Sexuality in the Medieval World: Doing Unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005), which concentrates heavily on the period after 1000 AD. In general histories, omissions of this sort seem to imply that nothing of any great significance happened in the early medieval centuries, at least when these are viewed as part of the longer-term history of sexuality. But viewed on their own terms by specialists in the history of early medieval sexuality—such as Pierre Payer, Allen Frantzen and many others—the opposite conclusions have been reached.[2] For these scholars, the Early Middle Ages were, in fact, a crucial time for the transmission of Late Antique Christian sexual morality to later generations, and also for the institutionalization of this morality so that it became deeply embedded within Western European culture. One of the reasons why this important period has been left out of general accounts may be that the surviving evidence is difficult to handle, or at least is perceived as such by non-specialists. But equally important, in my view, are the ways in which specialists in early medieval sexuality have tended, for very good reasons, of

course, to keep their ideas within the specialist field of the history of sexuality rather than try to explain how the results of their researches form an essential part of any understanding of how early medieval societies actually worked. Much can be learnt in this regard from recent work in the field of gender history, especially from the researches of Janet Nelson, Julia Smith and others who have quite properly argued that gender relations are such a fundamental aspect of human social relations that they cannot be left out of any history worth the name.[3] The same is surely true of sexuality, which is too often divorced from debates about gender as well as debates about politics and culture.

It is for these reasons that, in this article, I deal with the "early medieval gap" in the history of Western sexuality by means of a study of one of the better-documented early medieval societies: Lombard Italy in the eighth century.[4] I hope to show both why and how sexuality mattered to this *particular* society and I hope that the detail may help non-specialists understand this rather strange material. I am not using any "new" evidence in this article as my focus is on re-reading well-known texts: Paul the Deacon's "History of the Lombards," the master narrative history of the period;[5] the substantial body of laws issued by King Liutprand between 713 and 735;[6] and, briefly and more speculatively, the penitential literature.[7] Also, I want to suggest that possible links between these very different types of text may be worth exploring in future research. Certainly, trying to study sexuality from this evidence has its problems. In Paul's fascinating work, the importance of sex in motivating his actors is often implied but rarely spelt out. When Paul does write more explicitly he may have been trying to shock his readers or even perhaps to amuse them. However, once the limitations of Paul's work have been understood, there is certainly plenty of material to work with.[8] Legal evidence is just as problematic a source for the history of sexuality as narrative history, although it has been used much more often—and rather less critically—for this purpose. It too may exaggerate, in order to warn or shock, and we have little way of knowing at this period if laws were followed by those they were intended for, as we do not have the right sort of documentation, for example, the personal diaries or autobiographies that might shed light on this in more modern contexts. As for penitentials, they constitute a minefield for non-specialists, as it is not certain which texts were produced when and even if they circulated in Lombard Italy at all! Furthermore, even after the technical spadework has been done, their interpretation has been highly controversial because their purpose is disputed by diametrically opposed "schools."[9] Were they "practical" texts, designed to provide real penance for sinners? Or were they, like laws, normative in character, designed to deal with situations that their authors could imagine having to deal with in theory but that they had not actually encountered in reality? Or did some combine both these aspects? Clearly, any conclusions reached from evidence of this sort are speculative. However, as will become clear, there are degrees of speculation, and it is, in my view, possible to reach conclusions about Lombard *attitudes* towards sexual behavior that are based on worthwhile evidence

and plausible interpretation. This is important because studies of *specific* early medieval societies at given moments in their histories can help to clarify how human cultures *transmit* ideas about sexuality from one generation to the next, from adults to children, from teachers to pupils and so on. Also, we can think a little about how such ideas circulated within this society as a counterweight to the emphasis often placed in the history of sexuality on "major" figures—such as Augustine or Freud: history is not just about the creation of ideas but about their acceptance or lack of acceptance by others too.[10]

The last preliminary point before looking at the evidence is, of course, the thorny matter of definitions of "sexuality." One of the reasons why many historians of sexuality devote little attention to pre-modern periods is that they believe that these were times "before sexuality" (to quote the famous phrase of the classicist David Halperin).[11] There is little doubt that, in many senses, this view is correct. A self-conscious sexual "identity," thought to be an essential and fundamental part of every human being, is a modern idea that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century from a curious mélange of sexology and psychoanalysis.[12] From this viewpoint, "homosexuality" cannot be attributed to medieval societies (nor, in the strict sense, can heterosexuality be so attributed, although this has often been done without thinking by many historians). However, sexuality can be used in a different way to describe, as Karras puts it, "the whole realm of human erotic experience" and "the meanings of sex for people who did not identify themselves with particular sexualities as we now understand them."[13] It is this wide-ranging sense that I adopt here when I use the word "sexuality". Early medieval people, as we shall see, did write about sex, and it is illuminating to pay close attention to the words and phrases they used when they did so for it is only by doing this that we can grasp what made them both similar to and different from us and also, perhaps, re-think current understandings of the history of sexuality as a field.[14]

Definitions of sexuality are made more complex by the ways in which early medieval people dealt with gender. For example, as far as I am aware no statement made by a Lombard woman about sexuality has survived. Our view of Lombard female sexuality has, therefore, to be mediated through male opinion, which is hardly ever sympathetic to women in this period.[15] But when women's views on sex can be uncovered directly—perhaps in reading the works of the Carolingian Dhuoda or the Ottonian Hrotswitha—they are often found to be subtly subversive of established, male, norms.[16] Most studies of gender within Lombard society, including those by Cristina La Rocca, Brigitte Pohl-Resl, Trish Skinner, Walter Pohl and myself, have revealed a society in which women were far from equal with men.[17] This does not mean, necessarily, that women could not take control over aspects of their lives, and, indeed, taking control of their sexual lives may have been one such area in which they could do so, as some scholars have suggested with regard to contraception, for example.[18] Julia Smith, among others, has argued that women could have a surprising amount of space to be creative and influential, especially within the sphere of family life. However, because

Smith's evidence is largely Carolingian, and derived from texts produced by and for an elite, this was not necessarily the case for other societies. It seems to me that Lombard society, at least on the evidence we have about it, was a rather less pleasant place for women. That does not, however, mean that Lombard attitudes to sex were one-dimensional: the evidence of the "History of the Lombards" shows that their attitudes could be quite complex, at the very least in the case of the work's author Paul the Deacon.

Paul the Deacon's Attitude to Sex

The purpose and meaning of Paul's "History of the Lombards" (*HL*) is disputed by historians, especially for the earlier books dealing with centuries long before Paul's own time.[19] But Paul's view of the eighth century, as recorded in Book 6, can be confirmed from other contemporary evidence and hence there is less dispute about its reliability. Nonetheless, historians have generally taken a rather traditional view of his work, mining it more for information about politics than for insights into the cultural practices and beliefs of Lombards also embedded within his narratives. Predictably, Paul does not explicitly deal with sex but much of value on this subject is definitely implicit within his text. Further, by the time he wrote the *HL*, Paul had developed a wide-ranging knowledge of life outside the land of his birth, derived both from his own experience of living outside Italy, from meeting foreigners and also from fairly wide reading. Some of this knowledge must have helped form his views of his contemporaries and their sexual behavior. An interesting example of this can be found in *HL* 5.30, where he recorded the mission of Theodore and Hadrian sent by Pope Vitalian to Britain. Paul wrote that these were both "very learned men" and that "Archbishop Theodore has described, with discerning reflection, the sentences for sinners, namely, for how many years one ought to do penance for each sin."[20] This reference is significant for my argument because the penitential material attributed to Theodore (now thought to have been composed between 690 and 740 and one of the most widely diffused) contains many chapters dealing with sex and has been much used by historians of early eighth-century Anglo-Saxon sexual practices and attitudes.[21] It has become a key text in the history of early medieval sexuality. Had Paul actually read it? Two of Paul's major sources, the Roman *Liber Pontificalis* and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* did not mention it. Paul, who knew his Bede quite well, had taken the preceding sentence about Vitalian sending Theodore to Britain verbatim from Bede's so-called "Greater Chronicle" part of the latter's treatise on the computation of time, written in 725. But Bede did not mention the penitential there either. If Paul did not find out about Theodore's penitential from any of these sources, where did he know it from? It seems most likely that he had indeed read a manuscript of the text, perhaps, but not definitely, during his prolonged stay in Francia.[22] It is less likely, although not impossible, that he read it in Italy. The history of the diffusion of early penitentials in Lombard

Italy has yet to be written, but David Ganz, in a review of volume 156 of the *Corpus Christianorum*, Latin series—an edition of some of the shorter penitential compilations—stated clearly that: "Both Irish and English penitentials rapidly made headway in the Merovingian kingdoms and in Lombard Italy, where their directives were modified."[23] This presumably included the text/s attributed to Theodore, as these were among the most popular elsewhere. There would certainly have been many opportunities for direct transmission as we know of many Anglo-Saxon and Frankish visitors to the Lombard kingdom, who nearly always stopped at Pavia on their way to and from Rome.[24] Incidentally, we know of fewer Lombards who made the trip north of the Alps, but even this was not unprecedented, as the flight of the Lombard to King Perctarit to Kent in the 670s shows (*Life of Wilfrid*, Chapter 28).[25]

One of those Anglo-Saxons who visited Italy was Boniface, the author of a famous letter collection, some of which deals at length with sexual morality.[26] Boniface in these letters deals frequently with what he saw as the failings of his contemporaries, including their sexual shortcomings. Kings were not exempt from his criticisms, most famously in his letter to Aethelbald of Mercia, dated 746/747.[27] Boniface first went to Rome in 719, early in the reign of the Lombard King Liutprand (who formed the main subject of Book 6 of Paul's *HL*). He went again in 737 and stayed this time for nearly a year. Tom Noble, in his book on the early history of the papal state, argued that: "Through his work in the north Boniface exerted a profound influence in Italy itself."[28] This was largely due to a result of his involvement in the complex process whereby in the middle of the eighth century the Franco-papal alliance to defeat the Lombard kingdom was slowly, and hesitantly, formed. But it is worth adding here that at no point in his surviving letters did Boniface condemn any Lombard king. This is particularly interesting as, according to Willibald in his *Life of St Boniface*, Boniface actually met Liutprand on two occasions: on his way back from Rome having met with Pope Gregory III he "reached the frontiers of Italy, where he met Liutprand, king of the Lombards, to whom he gave gifts and tokens of peace. He was honorably received by the king and rested awhile after the weary labors of the journey" (*Life of St Boniface*, Chapter 5); and after his third visit to Rome (in 737–738) he "came to the walls of the city of Picena [corruption of Pavia?], and, as his limbs were weary with old age, he rested awhile with Liutprand, king of the Lombards" (*Life of St Boniface*, Chapter 7).[29] The two men were near contemporaries and it is fascinating to speculate on what they might have talked about. Might this have included moral questions? The imposition of strict Christian sexual morality upon the elite was a crucial aspect of Boniface's political agenda east of the Rhine, as Paul the Deacon would surely have known. Of course, Paul did not mention Boniface in his *HL* and we do not know if he ever read the letters. Nevertheless, when we are reading Paul's judgments on Lombard royal behavior the context provided by the Bonifatian correspondence is worth keeping in mind: here was one possible moral model for Paul to adhere to.

Approaching Paul's *HL* in the context of a European society that had already produced the work of Theodore and Boniface may help us understand more clearly what Paul's work does and does not say about Lombard attitudes to sex. Such comparisons, to the best of my knowledge, have never been systematically made. Indeed, work on early medieval sexuality has tended to be work on texts written north of the Alps: the penitentials (from the nineteenth century and including Payer, Frantzen and Meens); some excellent articles on Gregory of Tours (Partner, Halsall and Shanzer); and the Frankish laws and capitularies (Wood and De Jong on incest).[30] For some reason there is much less written about southern evidence, apart from papal documents and, to be fair, a reasonable amount on legal texts, such as Brundage's well-known books.[31]

Research by Danuta Shanzer into sexual "themes" within some of the stories that Gregory of Tours told in his "Ten Books of Histories" makes a particularly interesting comparison with Paul as he seems to have known the *Histories* quite well, in some ways using them as a model. A similar approach works well for Paul's *HL* as can be seen in Table 1.1.[32]

There is not space here to go into detail about every case cited in the table, but in general it shows that the range of "sexual topics" covered by Paul is quite wide and that he usually has a clear attitude towards what he is writing about. There is space to investigate only three of these examples in more detail: the stories dealing with Alahis and Thomas (5.38); Cunincpert and Theodota (5.37); and Ferdulf (6.24). Comparing Paul's treatment of these three stories about clerical chastity, adultery and homosexuality—themes also dealt with by Theodore and in many other penitential texts—suggests that Paul's understanding of the importance of sex in contemporary political life was more sophisticated (and worldly) than might have been expected of an author imbued with ascetic Benedictine monastic ideology.[33]

Paul's Attitude to Clerical Unchastity

Paul's own sexual morality appears to have been based upon the importance of clerical chastity to the stability of society. In the last surviving chapter of the *HL*—Chapter 58 of Book 6—Paul recounted how his hero King Liutprand's reign was a particularly pious one. The king had built churches and founded monasteries, had set up a palace chapel, and had appointed the saintly Peter as bishop of Pavia, the royal capital. Peter, "among the other virtues of an excellent life which he possessed, was also distinguished as adorned with the flower of virgin chastity."[34] Bodily chastity for the medieval clergy was, as Karras has recently reiterated, "taken for granted, not really in question."[35] Not only were unchaste clerics a sign of a sickly society, but so were accusations of unchastity, because, it seems, the very accusation could reflect badly on the person making it if it was untrue. This is clear from the brief tale of Alahis and Thomas, which Paul recorded in *HL* 5.38.

Table 1.1 Sexual matters in the *History of the Lombards*

	Paul's attitude	*HL*	*Principals*
Abduction	Neutral	1.16/1.17	Agelmund/Lamissio
	Neutral	1.27	Alboin/Rosamund
	Neutral	5.8	Grimoald
	Neutral	5.14	Grimoald
Adultery	Neutral	4.46	Grimoald
	Neutral	4.47	Gundeperga
	Disapproves	4.48	Rodoald
	Disapproves	5.6	Clerics at Monza
	Neutral	5.37	Cunincpert
Woman promotes husband's adultery (but fails)	Approves	6.26	Ratperga/Pemmo
Serial monogamy	Neutral	1.21	Waccho
	Neutral	6.50	Romoald
Fornication	Neutral	2.28	Peredeo + maid
	Disapproves	2.28	Peredeo + queen
Gang rape	Approves	4.37	Avars/Romilda
Homosexuality? [or friendship between men]	Neutral	5.36	Alahis/Cunincpert
	Disapproves	6.24	Ferdulf
Sexually forward, challenging women	Neutral?	2.5	Sophia
	Disapproves	4.37	Romilda
Woman murders for sexual motive	Disapproves	2.28	Rosamund
	Disapproves	2.29	Rosamund
Abstinence	Approves	1.19	Severinus
	Approves	3.1	Hospitius
	Approves	6.16	Arnulf of Metz
Chastity	Approves	4.37	Romilda's daughters
	Approves	6.58	Liutprand
Virginity	Approves	6.58	Peter, Bishop of Pavia
Imputation of clerical unchastity	Disapproves	5.38	Alahis/Thomas
Miscellaneous:			
Women masquerading as men	Mocking	1.8	Winnili women
Men masquerading as women	Neutral	2.5	Narses the eunuch
Prostitution/monstrous birth	Approves	1.15	Lamissio
Romance	Approves	3.30	Authari/Theodelinda
	Approves	3.35	Agilulf/Theodelinda
Facial mutilation	Approves	6.22	Theodorada/Aurona
Sexual disease	Disapproves	2.4	Romans

This chapter is part of Paul's extended treatment of the rebellion of Alahis against King Cunincpert (king of the Lombards between 688 and 700 and dealt with in Books 5 and 6, written around eighty years after the king's death).[36] According to Paul, Alahis was not only a traitor but also a hater of priests and clergy. Paul relates that Bishop Damian of Pavia sent his deacon Thomas to Alahis to convey his blessing. The rebel Alahis received Thomas with great rudeness. In Paul's dramatization of the scene when Alahis asked Thomas if he had clean undergarments on, the deacon replied that they were freshly laundered. However, Alahis had not meant his question literally but metaphorically: "I do not speak of the breeches but of the things that are inside the breeches." (*Ego non dico de femoralibus, sed de his quae intra femoralia habentur*).[37] Thomas then replied that only God could judge him on this point, not man. Obviously, this story is about good versus evil and it is no surprise that Paul takes the side of Thomas. But the accusation that Alahis hurled at Thomas is still interesting: his greatest weapon against the clergy, it would seem, was an accusation of sexual impropriety. Paul still had this in his mind two chapters on (5.40) where he makes Alahis threaten to fill a well "with the testicles of clergy" in revenge for the trick Cunincpert has played on him.[38] And earlier in Book 5, Paul had laid into those in charge of the contemporary church of St John at Monza because, in his view, they were "vile persons . . . unworthy and adulterous."[39] It is clear that accusations of clerical sexual immorality had real force for Paul and his contemporaries: the sexual morals of clerics were, in some sense, common property within Lombard society, of concern to all.[40]

Paul's Attitude to Royal Adultery

Paul certainly seems to have believed that adultery was commonplace within the Lombard aristocracy, even though successive kings and their aristocratic advisors had issued clear laws against it.[41] And yet when Paul had the opportunity to condemn royal adulterers in the course of his narrative, he did not automatically do so. A particularly instructive example is Paul's treatment of Cunincpert. Paul gives a favorable impression of this king: he was effective in war, fought off a major rebellion against his rule (by Alahis), and was the pious founder of several churches: "he was moreover a handsome man and conspicuous in every good quality and a bold warrior" (*HL* 6.17).[42] Other sources present a picture consistent with this. The so-called *Carmen de Synodo Ticinensi*, probably written by a monk at Bobbio *c*.698 and which Paul seems not to have known, praises the religious orthodoxy of Cunincpert, his father Perctarit and grandfather Aripert, and presents him as the man who resolved the long-running Three Chapters schism in Italy (and Alahis as evil).[43] As these qualities were often attributed generically to early medieval kings by historians of the period it is no surprise that Paul attributes them to Cunincpert. However, Paul does record one anecdote that appears to be more personal: his adulterous seduction of Theodota, a Roman

slave girl, which ironically came about because the king's Anglo-Saxon wife Hermelinda had brought Theodota's beauty to her husband's attention (*HL* 5.37). The queen:

> had seen in the bath Theodota, a girl sprung from a very noble stock of Romans, of graceful body and adorned with flaxen hair almost to the feet, and she praised the girl's beauty to King Cunincpert, her husband.

The king had sex with her, "yet he sent her afterwards into a monastery in Pavia which was called by her name."[44] The meaning of Paul's verdict is suggestive. As Theodota was no longer a virgin, she was hardly appropriate material for a nunnery in his eyes.

As is often the case in this period, it is hard for us to know if this sexual liaison actually happened or not for it is not mentioned in any other source. Unusually and importantly, Theodota is known from other evidence: her highly decorated funerary stone with its inscription has survived in fragments and is dated *c*.750.[45] It is possible that Paul had seen this stone while he was at the Lombard court as a young man and subsequently concocted the story of her adultery, taking his inspiration from it.[46] It is equally possible that the event happened. Whatever the case, at this period many finely worked inscriptions could be seen in the churches of the Lombard capital—buildings that Paul must have frequented. Another stone of similar date, which has survived in more complete form, helps to conjure up the sophisticated, and in some ways sexualized, atmosphere of the Lombard court at this period. This is the epitaph of Cunincpert's daughter Cunincperga, abbess of St Agata in Pavia, in which she is described as:

> of a beauty distinguished among the likes of other beautiful women, with her serene face, her youthful eyes, her brow innocent of gloom, her lips flowing with honey. She was truly the offspring of her father, the excellent king Cunincpert.[47]

This unique evidence, coupled with Paul's story, certainly helps us to understand Lombard concepts of female beauty and what it was in women that some men—perhaps including Paul himself—found attractive. The story further hints at how some women could use their erotic charms to gain access to the most powerful men in the kingdom.

One would think that Paul, given his monastic upbringing, would have condemned adulterous behavior of this sort out of hand. But instead he takes a neutral view of the king's deception of his wife and adultery with an apparently much younger woman. In choosing to focus on the king's adultery rather than his marriage—Paul tells us nothing about Hermelinda (but it seems probable that the marriage may have resulted from her father-in-law Perctarit's flight to Kent)—he could easily have launched an attack on the king, in the manner of Boniface's extreme onslaught upon King Aethelbald of Mercia:

> But if, as many say (which God forbid), you have not taken a lawful wife nor professed chastity for God's sake but have been driven by lust into the sins of fornication and adultery and have lost your good name before God and men, then we are deeply grieved. And what is much worse, those who told us add that you have committed these sins, to your greater shame, in various monasteries with holy nuns and virgins vowed to God.[48]

While it may be true, as Goffart argued, that "Cunincpert no sooner becomes sole king than he is shown engaging in amatory adventure" and that the reason for this may be to develop, to quote Goffart again, Paul's "almost explicit" comparison of Theodelinda's descendants (including Cunincpert) to the Merovingian do-nothing kings, it is still interesting that here Paul does not condemn the king outright.[49] Did Paul think that adultery was in general acceptable for kings? Or did he excuse Cunincpert because he produced a legitimate male heir, Liutpert? Or perhaps, instead, he included this story of a king's lax sexual morals as a cryptic and pointed reference to the state of his contemporary Charlemagne's sex life (if we believe Rosamond McKitterick's argument that Paul's audience was mainly Frankish).[50] It is notable that Paul, in the chapter immediately before he describes Cunincpert's death, records that Charlemagne's ancestor Bishop Arnulf of Metz "lived in the greatest abstinence" (6.16)—maybe a cryptic comment on his unchaste descendant, but also on Cunincpert?

Paul's Attitude to "Homosexuality"

Another instructive story is told by Paul with some relish in *HL* 6.24.[51] According to Paul, a Ligurian called Ferdulf became Duke of Friuli (about the year 700). Apparently, Ferdulf provoked the Slavs to attack Friuli because he wanted to demonstrate his own courage against the Slavs in battle. A local official, the *schuldhais* Argait, had failed to fight them off and an angry Ferdulf who met Argait on his way home accused him of being a coward: "When could you do anything bravely, you whose name Argait comes from the word coward?" (*Quando tu aliquid fortiter poteras, qui Argait ab arga nomen deductum habes?*). Argait was furious and challenged Ferdulf to prove which of them was the braver. When the Slavs returned, both men were killed, which, in Paul's view, demonstrated "the evil of dissension" (*per contentionis malum*). This story seems a straightforward moral tale about the need for unity in the face of an enemy (and, interestingly, the only brave man noted by Paul was a Lombard who later fathered the next line of Friulian dukes). But for us there is another interesting aspect of the tale: Paul's use of the word *arga*, which is the insult most scholars translate as "coward."[52] This word is recorded in the same form in all the surviving manuscripts with no variation.[53] It appears to be Paul's version of the Old Norse adjective *argr*, which scholars of that language and society generally agree was an extreme insult that implied more than simply "coward" but rather sexual

inadequacy, effeminacy or even (in the minds of some) homosexuality.[54] As Ruth Karras has stressed in her recent book on medieval sexuality, the word implies sexual passivity and it was the passivity, not the sex as such, that constituted the force of the insult.[55] The connection between *argr* and Paul's *arga* seems clear although alternative etymologies might be proposed. Whether Ferdulf and Argait ever existed and ever behaved as Paul reported or not is beside the point here, as it was in the story of Cunincpert and Theodota. What is more interesting is that Paul was able to use this word as though his readers would understand what was meant and that he may have understood it to mean that Argait was something akin to homosexual, although I would certainly not go as far as some have in saying that *arga* did mean "homosexual" given the many problems with this identity in the medieval period.[56] Certainly, the implication is that for a man to be sexually passive to another man was shameful and it seems certain that this story does shed some light on notions of male sexual honor among the eighth-century Lombard aristocracy, if only because Paul himself was part of that elite and must have been familiar with its customs and beliefs.

However, in this case, Paul's interesting use of *arga* seems to reflect a similar understanding of the term in wider Lombard society because Paul's use of it is not the only occurrence in a Lombard text. King Rothari had issued a law about exactly the same matter in his edict of 643, Chapter 381:

> [*De verbo arga*]
>
> *Si quis alium "arga" per furorem clamaverit et negare non potuerit et dixerit, quod per furorem dixisset, tunc iuratus dicat, quod arga non cognovisset; postea conponat pro ipso iniurioso verbo solidos duodecim. Et si perseveraverit, convincat per pugnam, si potuerit, aut certe conponat, ut supra*.[57]
>
> [Concerning the charge of cowardice]
>
> If anyone in anger calls another man a coward and cannot deny it, and if he claims that he said it in anger, he may offer oath that he had not known him to be a coward. Afterwards he shall pay twelve *solidi* as composition for this insulting word. But if he perseveres in the charge, he must prove it by combat, if he can, or he shall pay composition as above.[58]

This chapter is recorded in the earliest surviving complete manuscript of Rothari's edict, Vercelli, *Biblioteca Capitolare* 188, mid- or late eighth-century uncial, of north Italian production.[59] Given its date, it is not at all impossible that Paul had read this manuscript, or at the least another similar one. To me it seems highly likely that Paul, instead of recording what the two men said, in fact modeled his story on this law: he certainly knew Rothari's edict as he mentions it several times in the *HL*.[60] This unusual point of connection between narrative history and law code is worth pursuing.

The Laws of Liutprand

The final book of Paul's *HL* concentrates on the reign of Liutprand (712–744) and does so in positive terms. Paul felt strongly that Liutprand was a good king because he was effective militarily, issued laws and was extremely pious.[61] But, in what Goffart has termed his "obituary" for the king, there is one word one might not expect as a kingly quality at this period, especially for a man who had no legitimate male heir: *castus*, "chaste."[62] Paul's application of this attribute to Liutprand is surely significant given Paul's own monastic background.[63] It seems to imply that the king was especially interested in chastity and the denial of sexuality, which usually went with it in contemporary monastic thinking.[64] Comparison with Liutprand's own laws bears this out as Liutprand certainly encouraged sexual chastity among the Lombard people.

Liutprand's laws are the other major source for Lombard history in the eighth century and there is hardly a shortage of work on them.[65] Still, it is necessary to consider them at some length here because their rulings about sex have been less commonly discussed. The king dealt explicitly with sexual "crimes" in just under a third of the 153 chapters.[66] One of these is the law he issued in March 723 forbidding a man to marry the widow of his cousin, on either his mother's or father's side.[67] The king did this because:

> as God is our witness, the Pope at Rome, who is the head of the church of God and of priests throughout all the world, has exhorted us through a letter that we not permit such unions to be contracted in any way.[68]

Although this letter to Liutprand has not survived, others sent out by Pope Gregory II do, as part of the Boniface correspondence.[69] Pope Gregory issued his instruction as part of a drive to establish strict rules about incestuous relationships because these were sinful in themselves and it appears that Liutprand and his advisors acted quickly to bring Lombard law in line with papal pronouncement.[70] At the same time they issued laws against other illegal unions, including those between "spiritual kin," perceived here as "evil" (Liutprand 34). The law about the children of illegal marriages even refers to "the canons" to help establish its authority (Liutprand 32). The king did this despite the highly negative view of Liutprand that the pope's contemporary biography (*Liber Pontificalis*, 91) adopts.[71] In fact, as Tom Noble has argued, Liutprand and Gregory were on good terms in the period 719–723, which might explain why the king took notice of the pope.[72] However, it is less clear *how* Liutprand came to adopt these measures. Other kings—Visigothic, Frankish, Anglo-Saxon—were much influenced by their senior bishops at this time.[73] Although we cannot show that Liutprand was being advised at this point by north Italian bishops, it is certainly possible that Archbishop Theodore of Milan (quite possibly a blood relative of the king's) and/or Bishop Peter I of Pavia (certainly related to Liutprand) could have been involved.

Bishop Peter appears in the final chapter of the *HL* in a very positive light, as we have seen. And although there was no Italian Boniface, Noble has argued convincingly that the activities of Boniface in Saxony did have an impact on northern Italians, pushing Liutprand into alliance with the Franks at the expense of his alliance with the Bavarians.[74]

In the remainder of this article there is space only to consider four other chapters that deal with sexuality. These chapters (numbers 129, 130, 121 and 140) were issued in the period 731–734 and deal with diverse aspects of sexual morality. By the year 731 Liutprand had been king for almost twenty years. His reign had been a period of relative stability after the turbulent times of the late seventh and early eighth century. This in itself may explain why it was possible to consider issuing laws of this nature at this time. The relatively detailed narrative that Paul provides about Liutprand's reign allows us to contextualize his laws much more than can be done for Rothari's edict. We seem to be able to get some way into the mind of the king and, perhaps, to glimpse something of Liutprand's own sexual morality, although comparison with recent work by Janet Nelson on Charlemagne's "personality," which is very much better documented, makes the limitations of the Lombard material very clear.[75]

I begin with the most peculiar of the four laws, issued in 731 (number 129 in modern editions):

> There has appeared in these times a most vain, superstitious and greedy conviction and perversion which seems to us, in conjunction with the rest of our judges, to be an illegal union, namely that already mature adult women have joined themselves in union [had sex] with small boys who are under the legal age and they say that they should become their legitimate husbands, although at this time the boy is not strong enough to have intercourse [*miscere* refers to the physical act] with women. Therefore we now decree that in the future no woman shall presume to do this thing unless the boy's father or grandfather has made provision for this with the woman's relatives. But if a boy remains under age after his father or grandfather's death and a woman presumes to marry him before the boy has completed thirteen years, saying that he ought to be her legal husband, that union shall not be valid and they shall be separated from one another. Indeed the woman shall return empty-handed with her shame and she may not marry any other man until the boy reaches the above age. If on reaching this age the boy himself wishes to have her as wife, he may do so. If he does not want her, he may marry any other woman whom he wishes and is able to acquire. And if the boy does not want her and she marries another man, the man who marries her may not give a full marriage portion for her as he would for another girl but he may give only half, as if for a widow [Rothari 182, 183]. The man who persuades a boy [to enter such a union], whether he is a relative or a stranger, shall pay 100 solidi as composition, half to the king and half to the boy.[76]

This chapter provides a fascinating glimpse of deeply rooted attitudes to sexuality in eighth-century society. The language of "perversion" in the first sentence reveals how important this matter was for the lawmakers: the arrangements brought to their attention undermined their most deeply held beliefs. Like Paul's use of *arga*, this language stands out as not formulaic. The problem covered by this law was similar to something that had already been dealt with by Rothari: an improper marriage. But this improper marriage seemed to turn the world on its head. For these men, the fact that women might take charge of such a relationship was simply not possible. For modern readers, it is the hypocrisy that is most striking: there appears to be one rule for men and another for women. This is even clearer if we compare Chapter 129 with Chapters 12 and 112. In Chapter 12 a man who betrothed a girl under the age of twelve was fined heavily *unless* he happened to be her father or brother because these men were trusted not to do this "contrary to reason," by virtue of their genetic relationship alone.[77] But Chapter 112 appears to expose disagreements within Lombard society about the age of sexual maturity for girls—usually the completion of their twelfth year—because "there have been many controversies over this matter."[78] Taking these three chapters together, the inequalities of Lombard laws about sexual behavior are easily exposed, and these almost certainly reflected really unequal relationships. It may be that it is this that lies behind the most problematic aspect of Chapter 129: why were the women actually doing this? As we have already seen, there were by this point numerous restrictions upon whom a person might marry. Perhaps they did it to try to acquire rights over property that might otherwise have been beyond their grasp. An older woman married to a very young husband might be presumed to have had greater control over him than was normally the case. One thing, at least, that these women could not be accused of was marrying for sexual desire because, according to the lawmakers, boys of thirteen were simply too young to have erections.

The next law, Chapter 130, was issued two years after 129, in 733. In it Liutprand deals with the relationship between husband and wife, in the context of adultery (*adulterium*). *Adulterium* is a term that appears repeatedly in these laws, as it does in contemporary laws and penitentials from northern Europe.[79] It meant, in essence, sexual behavior that conflicted with the monogamous marital model, established in Rothari's edict, which obviously drew on Biblical sanctions against coveting the neighbor's wife. Liutprand's law is rather strange and confused, especially insofar as the woman is concerned. The law dealt with the case of a man who had apparently *encouraged* his wife to commit adultery and began, curiously, with a little invented dramatic scene in which the husband urged on his wife, saying "*[Quia] vade, cumgumbe [concumbere] cum talem hominen*" ("Go, lie with such a man"), and urged on the adulterous man, saying "*Veni et fac cum mulierem meam carnis comixtionem"* ("Come and mix your flesh with my wife"), a formula that in classical Latin was mostly found in medical texts. The wife's punishment was death, both because she had committed the act but

also because she had hidden the fact that her husband egged her on.[80] In the future, wives should tell the authorities as soon as their husbands made such a suggestion. This case, just like Chapter 129, caused consternation among the legislators: the word *malum* ("evil") is used ten times! But again the blame seems to reside more with the wife than with her husband: the whole matter was a *scandalum*, because of the wife's sin (*peccatis*, which Fischer Drew translates as "evil nature"), which is probably an allusion to Eve's disobedience in Eden. This is all the more peculiar as the legislators believed that the adultery had occurred because the husband concerned wished to kill his wife and get his hands on her property. Control of property was probably once again at the root of this case but also, surely, it was about how sexual relationships were created and by whom. Women were weaker beings, easily misled by evil husbands but blamed when they went along with their plans. Men and women were far from equal sexually. This inequality and objectification of women had ancient roots but it was the continued restatement of it in laws such as these that surely helped to keep change at bay.

So far I have tended to take these laws at face value. Lombard law dealt with sexuality largely as an aspect of property law and so it is unsurprising that sexual relationships, which could result in children and subsequent property claims, were regarded as most in need of regulation. If we believe only what the law tells us, we cannot have any view about subjects that do not appear in laws, such as same-sex relationships, masturbation, contraception, prostitution or bestiality. These are all subjects that do appear in the Insular and Frankish penitential literature, so are we to assume that northern societies took these issues seriously and Lombard society did not? Perhaps this was the case, as southern European societies have tended to be more tolerant of male homosexual acts than northern ones, for example. But we do not always have to read the laws simply at face value. We can read "between the lines," as Allen Frantzen did in his book about Anglo-Saxon sexuality. For example, the interpretation of the case advanced in Liutprand 130 seems rather far-fetched. Would a husband really try to bring about an adulterous liaison for his wife so she would be killed and he could get her property? This is obviously possible—men do murder their wives to get their hands on their money—but it could also be that the parties involved had different motivations. The fact that the law opens with a tiny dramatic scene—which is not normal in such laws—and that the husband seemingly takes the initiative raises my suspicions that something else is going on here. As the context of this case is lost to us there may well be something behind it that the lawmakers did not tell us.

If we look more closely at the language in which the chapters dealing with sex express themselves we may be able to uncover things the lawmakers did not want us to know. Sexual pleasure and erotic desire, for example, were not aspects of life that the Lombard laws had much time for and yet some chapters do mention them. Chapter 100 issued in 728 famously ruled that a widow had to wait a year for her grief to subside before, prompted by the "desires of the flesh" (*seculi*

cupiditatem), she was allowed to remarry. Widows, of course, were potentially a disruptive element in society, especially if they were beyond childbearing age but still sexually available. Chapter 121 (issued in 731), which deals with lewd talk and touching, is another interesting case:

> He who converses shamefully with someone else's wife—that is, if he places his hands on her bosom or on some other shameful place and it is proved that the woman consented, he who commits such an evil deed shall pay his *wergeld* as composition to the woman's husband.[81]

In this case no one could be killed, but the guilty man had to pay his own *wergeld* to the aggrieved husband (or, if an accusation was not proven, they could fight it out). If the wife consented, the husband had the right to discipline her as he wished, short of killing her. This indicates, then, that touching was not as serious a "crime" as penetration. Nonetheless this law dealt with "wrong sex" that may have been classed as adultery. But the voicing of notions of sexual shame in this law is its most interesting aspect, for it reveals that some people were practicing "shameful" things and apparently did not think this was wrong. Indeed, maybe they did not even regard touching breasts or genitals as "sex" at all? Further, it suggests that Liutprand and his advisors were trying to police sexual thoughts and desires as well as genital sex in a way very reminiscent of monastic concerns.

My last legal example is Liutprand 140 (issued in 734), which dealt with intercourse (*coniucatus*) between free and unfree persons. If a freeman, "inspired by hatred of the human race" (*insticantem inimicum humani generis*), had sex with one of his married female dependents, whether unfree or "half free," the woman and her husband were to be freed "for it is not pleasing to God that any man should have intercourse with the wife of another" (*quia non est placitum deo, ut quilevit homo cum uxore aliena debeat fornicari*). To be certain of their newly freed status, the freed slaves were to be invited to the palace, where Liutprand himself (or whoever was prince at the time) was to give them their charter of freedom. This seems to have been a socially enlightened law that attempted to stop lords exploiting their dependents sexually, something that, one imagines, was fairly commonplace in this society.

The law also raises a very important issue about the value of these laws as evidence for eighth-century social history: do they provide any evidence of the sexuality of "ordinary" people? The question was quite rightly asked by Michael Sheehan in 1991 but he did not venture any answer. Should we presume that by the eighth century the wider population had come to accept the Christian ideology of marriage, celibacy and virginity? It seems to me that the answer is "no." Reading Liutprand's laws carefully reveals a very deep-seated insecurity on the part of the powerful in the face of sex. Could kings ensure that the population at large would be continent? This was an old problem, of course, by this time. Bishops such as Avitus of Vienne, Caesarius of Arles and Gregory the Great had

long been aware of it. The issue underlies Gregory the Great's "responses" to Augustine of Canterbury (as reproduced by Bede in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.27 finished in the 730s), but also his *Dialogues* and other pastoral works, as well as the penitential literature. Could the powerful ever be certain that the people, the *rustici*, would behave properly? And how did bad behavior reflect upon the powerful themselves? Did it expose their own weakness? Would they go to Hell for failing to stop the sins of those supposedly under their care? This is something that Carolingian rulers appear to have taken very seriously, as in the famous condemnation of sodomitical monks in Charlemagne's Aachen capitulary of 802, but it is not something that anyone has really suggested with regard to Lombard kings. But as far as I can see it is very much present in their legislation and hardly unexpected if one reads the prologue to the laws of 724, which is full of Christian salvation imagery.[82]

One way to approach the issue is to consider Liutprand's own sexual morality. Might it be the case that his laws contain so much material about sexual crime because Liutprand *himself* was really concerned about it? We can note first of all that Paul the Deacon goes out of his way, in his so-called "obituary" of Liutprand in *HL* 6 to comment upon the king's chastity and that King Ratchis in his second prologue to his own laws (of 746) noted that Liutprand was "*omni pudicitia et sobrietate ornatus*" ("adorned with all modesty and sobriety" in Fischer Drew's version, but *pudicitia* could equally well refer to sexual continence/virginity, as it often did in classical and late antique Latin). Ratchis referred also to his "divine works and daily vigils." The inscriptions put up in his Corteolona palace demonstrated especial piety and a sense of personal responsibility for the salvation of Lombards.[83] The king's retrieval of the body of St Augustine from Sardinia when the Arabs were threatening, reported by Bede in the last sentence of his so-called "Greater Chronicle" (*De temporum ratione*) is an example of Liutprand's piety as is his interest in St Anastasius (the Persian martyr).[84] Indeed, the very fact that Bede is interested in Liutprand strongly suggests that the king had a high moral reputation among his contemporaries. Liutprand's apparently "monastic" habits and clear interests in the religious life therefore might well encompass a wariness about sex.

Conclusion

In this article I have prioritized the two most substantial eighth-century Lombard texts—Paul's *HL* and Liutprand's laws—above other relevant material such as the small surviving corpus of contemporary monastic material that shows that long-established ascetic fears of the "pleasures of the flesh" were still being voiced at this time. For example, Walfred, according to his biographer, was originally married with five legitimate sons and plagued by thoughts of sex until, in a dream, he was castrated, which cured him.[85] If the monastic life was one possible route to salvation that Lombard aristocrats could take, how far monastic

asceticism was spread through the rest of Lombard society is highly debatable. Paul's picture of King Liutprand may suggest that there was interest in sexual purity and continence at the apex of the kingdom, but it is likely that his view was colored by his own monastic background. Nonetheless, Paul had a more complex reaction to sex than most monastic authors. His view was that of established Christian sexual morality, but he had a perfectly realistic view of contemporary aristocratic male sexual behavior when it did not follow Christian customs. Reading Paul's narrative with gender and sexuality in mind suggests that, as the eighth century progressed, pressure upon the male elite of Lombard society to conform to the standards of behavior set out by kings in law increased, as it did in contemporary Francia and England. Boniface's correspondence with successive popes shows that successive eighth-century popes were very concerned about the sexual behavior of the laity. Mayke de Jong and others have shown how Popes Gregory II and Gregory III intervened in what appear to have been *debates* about what constituted incestuous relationships at this time. It would be quite wrong to see the Lombard kings as resistant to papal demands to root out and destroy incest in their kingdom. Although the Roman *Liber Pontificalis* usually, but not always, portrayed the interests of Rome and the Lombards as diametrically opposed, in fact they were not, as Liutprand's laws prove. None of this material allows us to comment on the attitudes of the mass of the population to sex. At the moment, given the evidence available, this unfortunately remains impossible.[86]

Notes

1. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, Introduction, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Allen Lane, 1978). Foucault's views have been much criticized: Paul A. Miller and Charles Platter, eds, *Rethinking Sexuality: Foucault and Classical Antiquity* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), especially Amy Richlin, "Foucault's History of Sexuality: A Useful Theory for Women?" and Joel Black "Taking the Sex out of Sexuality: Foucault's Failed History"; Ross Balzaretti, "Michel Foucault, Homosexuality and the Middle Ages," *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 37 (1994), 1–12.
2. Pierre J. Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials: the Development of a Sexual Code, 550–1150* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); Allen J. Frantzen, *Before the Closet: Same-sex Love from "Beowulf" to "Angels in America"* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
3. Janet L. Nelson, "Family, Gender and Sexuality in the Middle Ages," in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (London: Routledge, 1997); Janet L. Nelson, "The Wary Widow," in *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, eds Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Janet L. Nelson, "Women at the Court of Charlemagne," in *Medieval Queenship*, ed. John C. Parsons (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994); Janet L. Nelson, "Making a Difference in Eighth-Century Politics: The Daughters of Desiderius," in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History*, ed. Alexander C. Murray (Toronto: University of

Toronto Press, 1998), 171–90; Julia M. H. Smith, "Gender and Ideology in the Early Middle Ages," S*tudies in Church History* (1998), 51–73; Julia M. H. Smith, "Did Women Have a Transformation of the Roman World?" *Gender & History* 12.3 (2000), 552–71; Leslie Brubaker and Julia M. H. Smith, eds, *Gender in the Early Medieval World, East and West, 300–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), especially the Introduction by Julia Smith; Julia M. H. Smith, *Europe after Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Chapter 4 on "Men and Women."

4. Chris J. Wickham, "Aristocratic Power in Eighth-Century Lombard Italy," in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History: Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. Alexander C. Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 148–70, gives a good idea of the level of documentation available, as does Walter Pohl and Peter Erhart, eds, *Die Langobarden. Herrschaft und Identität* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005).
5. Pauli Diaconi, *Historia langobardorum*, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica [MGH]. Scriptores Rerum Langobardorum [SRL]*, ed. Ludwig Bethmann and Georg Waitz (Hannover, 1878), 45–187; William D. Foulke (trans. into English) *History of the Langobards* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1907). Essential commentaries are: Donald A. Bullough, "Ethnic History and the Carolingians: An Alternative Reading of Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum*," in *The Inheritance of Historiography*, ed. Christopher Holdsworth (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1986), 85–105; Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 329–431; Rosamond McKitterick, "Paul the Deacon and the Franks," *Early Medieval Europe* 8 (1999), 319–39 and her *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); *Paolo Diacono. Uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio*, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine: Forum, 2000); Walter Pohl, "Paulus Diaconus und die 'Historia Langobardorum': Text und Tradition," in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter (Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1994), 375–406. The *Historia Langobardorum* is cited here as *HL* followed by book and chapter number (e.g. *HL* 5.30).
6. Friedrich Bluhme, ed., *Leges Langobardorum, MGH Leges* 4 (Hanover, 1868; reprinted 1984) and available at www.oeaw.ac.at/gema/lango_leges.htm; Franz Beyerle, ed., *Leges Langobardorum 643–866*, 2nd edition (Witzenhausen: Deutschrechtlicher Instituts-Verlag, 1962); Claudio Azzara and Stefano Gasparri, trans. and eds, *Le leggi dei Longobardi. Storia, memoria e diritto di un popolo germanico* (Milan: Editrice la Storia, 1992). The only English translation, up to and including Aistulf, is Katherine F. Drew, trans., *The Lombard Laws* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973).
7. Cyrille Vogel, *Les "Libri Poenitentiales,"* Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978), revised by Allen J. Frantzen (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985); Raymund Kottje, ed., *Paenitentialia Minora Franciae et Italiae Saeculi VIII–IX (*Turnhout: Brepols, 1984); John McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938); Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*; Thomas Charles-Edwards, "The Penitentials of Theodore and the Iudicia Theodorici," in Michael Lapidge, ed., *Archbishop Theodore. Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 141–74; Michael Sheehan, "Sexuality, Marriage, Celibacy, and the

Family in Central and Northern Italy: Christian Legal and Moral Guides in the Early Middle Ages," in *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present*, eds David I. Kertzer and Richard P. Saller (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 168–83.

8. For the limitations see Goffart, *Narrators*, 329–431 and for some remarks about Paul and gender see Ross Balzaretti, "'These are Things that Men Do, Not Women': The Social Regulation of Female Violence in Langobard Italy," in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Guy Halsall (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), 175–92 —here at pp. 183–5—and Ross Balzaretti, "Masculine Authority and State Identity in Liutprandic Italy," in Pohl and Erhart, *Die Langobarden*, 359–82.
9. Robert Meens, "Introduction. Penitential Questions: Sin, Satisfaction and Reconciliation in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," *Early Medieval Europe* 14 (2006), 1–6 is a good recent survey of the problems.
10. Julian Carter, "Introduction: Theory, Methods, Praxis: The History of Sexuality and the Question of Evidence," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14 (2005), 1–9.
11. David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin, eds, *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989) and David Halperin's essay "Is there a History of Sexuality?" *History and Theory* 28 (1989), 257–74.
12. Gert Hekma, "A History of Sexology: Social and Historical Aspects of Sexuality," in *From Sappho to De Sade*, ed. Jan Bremmer (London: Routledge, 1989), 173–93.
13. Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality In Medieval Europe. Doing Unto Others* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 5–6.
14. For example, Allen J. Frantzen, "Where the Boys are: Children and Sex in the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey J. Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997); Allen J. Frantzen, "Between the Lines: Queer Theory, the History of Homosexuality and Anglo-Saxon Penitentials," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 26 (1996).
15. Smith, "Gender and Ideology" and Balzaretti, "These are Things."
16. Martin A. Claussen, "Fathers of Power and Mothers of Authority: Dhuoda and the *Liber Manualis*," *French Historical Studies* 19 (1996), 785–809; Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Janet L. Nelson, "Gender and Genre in Women Historians of the Early Middle Ages," in her *The Frankish World* (London: Hambledon, 1996).
17. Ross Balzaretti, "These are Things"; Ross Balzaretti, "Theodelinda, 'Most Glorious Queen.' Gender and Power in Lombard Italy," *The Medieval History Journal* (2000); Balzaretti, "Masculine Authority"; Walter Pohl, "Gender and Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages," in Brubaker and Smith, *Gender*, 23–43; Brigitte Pohl-Resl, "'*Quod me legibus contanget auere*': Reschtsfähigkeit und Landbesitz langobardischer Frauen," *Mitteilungen des Instituts Österreichischen Geschichtsforschung*, 101 (1993), 201–27; Patricia Skinner, *Women in Italian Medieval Society 500–1200* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), Chapter 2.
18. John M. Riddle, "Oral Contraceptives and Early Term Abortifacients During Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages," *Past and Present* 132 (1991), 3–32; Helen King, "Sowing the Field: Greek and Roman Sexology," in *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality*, ed. Roy Porter and Mikulàs Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29–46.

19. For example, see the critique of Goffart's view by Hans-Hubert Anton, "Origo Gentis—Volksgeschichte. Zur Ausieriandersetzung mit Walter Goffarts Werk 'The Narrators of Barbarian History,'" in *Historiographie*, eds Scharer and Scheibelreiter, 263–307 and the very effective restatement of views in the preface to the paperback edition of Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 500–800)* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), ix–xxxiv.
20. Foulke, *History*, 235: *Theodorus archiepiscopus peccantium iudicia, quantis scilicet annis pro unoquoque peccato quis poenitere debeat, mirabili et discreta consideratione descripsit* (Bethmann and Waitz, *Historia*, 154).
21. Frantzen, *Before the Closet*; Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, 60–2; James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 164–5. There is a convenient English translation in McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks*, 179–215. For the considerable textual problems and further references see Thomas Charles-Edwards, "The Penitentials of Theodore and the *Iudicia Theodorici*," in Lapidge, *Archbishop Theodore*, 141–74.
22. The length of his stay in Francia is disputed: see the texts referred to in note 5 above. Paolo Diacono, *Storia dei Longobardi,* ed. and trans., Lidia Capo (Milano: Fondazione Valla, 1992), 551, also argues that Paul had read the text.
23. David Ganz, Review in *Speculum* 71 (1996), 969–71.
24. Famously Benedict Biscop, Wilfrid, Wilibald and Boniface. Janet L. Nelson, "Viaggiatori, pellegrini e vie commerciali," and J. Mitchell, "L'Italia e l'Inghilterra anglosassone," both in *Il futuro dei Longobardi. L'Italia e la costruzione dell'Europea di Carlo Magno*, *Catalogo* eds. Carlo Bertelli and Gian Pietro Brogiolo (Milan: Skira, 2000), 163–72, 402–13.
25. Eddius Stephanus, *Life of Wilfrid*, trans. J. F. Webb and David H. Farmer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 133–4. For Wilfrid's own travels to Italy see Allan Thacker, "Wilfrid," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), accessed at www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29409.
26. Michael Tangl, ed., *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, *MGH Epistolae selectae In usum scholarum*, 1 (Berlin, 1916); Ephraim Emerton, trans., *The Letters of St Boniface* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), with a new introduction by Thomas F. X. Noble (originally published 1940). The chapter on "Sex and Marriage" in Christine Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: British Museum, 1984), 56–73, is still very useful. For recent work on Boniface see: James Palmer, "The 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull: Between Bonifatian Mission and Carolingian Church Control," *Early Medieval Europe* 13 (2005), 249–76.
27. Emerton, *Boniface,* Letter LVII [Tangl 73], 102–8.
28. Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St Peter: The Birth of the Papal State 680–825* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 27.
29. Willibald, *Life of St Boniface*, trans. C. H. Talbot, in *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and Thomas Head (London: Sheed & Ward, 1995), 107–40, here at pp. 120–1, 130.
30. Robert Meens, "The Frequency and Nature of Early Medieval Penance," in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Biller and Alastair Minns (York: York Medieval Press, 1998), 35–61; Guy Halsall, "Material Culture, Sex, Gender and Transgression in Sixth-Century Gaul: Some Reflections in the Light of Recent Archaeological Debate," in *Indecent Exposure*, ed. Lynne Bevan (Edinburgh: Cruithne

Press, 2001), 130–46; Nancy F. Partner, "No Sex, No Gender," *Speculum* 68 (1993), 419–44; Danuta Shanzer, "History, Romance, Love, and Sex in Gregory of Tours' *Decem Libri Historiarum*," in *Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and Ian N. Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 395–418; Mayke de Jong, "To the Limits of Kinship: Anti-incest Legislation in the Early Medieval West (500–900)," in Bremmer, *From Sappho to De Sade*, 36–59; Ian N. Wood, "Incest, law and the Bible in sixth-century Gaul," *Early Medieval Europe* 7.3 (1998), 293–303.

31. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church* (Buffalo NY: Prometheus Books, 1982); James A. Brundage, "Sexuality," in *Medieval Italy. An Encyclopedia,* ed. Christopher Kleinhenz (New York: Routledge, 2003), 2, 1024–7; Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*.
32. Shanzer, "History, Romance."
33. Marios Costambeys, "The Monastic Environment of Paul the Deacon," in Chiesa, *Paolo Diacono*, 127–38.
34. Foulke, *History*, 306.
35. Karras, *Sexuality*, 43.
36. Bethmann and Waitz, *Historia*, 157–8; Foulke, *History*, 241–2; Capo, *Storia*, 557–9.
37. Bethmann and Waitz, *Historia*, 158.
38. Bethmann and Waitz, *Historia*, 160: *unum puteum de testiculis impleam clericorum*. Foulke, *History*, 248, "the members of churchmen."
39. *HL* 5.6; Foulke, *History*, 219.
40. Nick Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 245, n. 38, calls this "an odd story" and "a somewhat strange and distasteful exchange." But it is surely not so odd that an anti-hero such as the godless Alahis should behave in this way? Everett also argues that a surviving inscription dealing with a chaste Thomas refers to the same person, which, if it is this man, is certainly thought-provoking.
41. Skinner, *Women*, Chapter 4.
42. *fuit autem vir elegans et omni bonitate conspicuous audaxque bellator.*
43. *Rex Cuningpertus sublimatus tempore moderno rector fortis et piissimus, devotus fidem christianam colere, ecclesiarum ditator et opifex*, verse 4, *Carmen de Synodo Ticinensi*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores Rerum Langobardorum,* eds Ludwig Bethmann and Georg Waitz (Hannover, 1878), 189–91, here at 190; Everett, *Literacy*, 245–7; Paul Lehmann, "Stefanus magister?" *Deutsches Archiv* XIV (1958), 469–71.
44. Foulke, *History*, 240–1. Capo, *Storia*.
45. Everett, *Literacy*, 254–56.
46. *HL* 2.28, Foulke, *History*, 81.
47. Translated by Everett, *Literacy*, 257.
48. Emerton, *Boniface*, 103–4, modified translation.
49. Goffart, *Narrators*, 418.
50. Rosamond McKitterick, "Paul the Deacon and the Franks," *Early Medieval Europe* 8 (1999), 319–39 and her *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Chapter 3. For Charlemagne see: Nelson, "Women at the court of Charlemagne."
51. Bethmann and Waitz, *Historia*, 172–3; Capo, *Storia*, 326–9, 576–7.
52. Foulke, *History*, 267; Everett, *Literacy*, 111.
53. Argait's name is spelled variously but not *arga*.

54. Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man. Concepts of Sexual Defamation in Early Northern Society*, trans. Joan Turville-Petre (Odense: Odense University Press, 1983), 18–21. For the equation of powerlessness with both femaleness and effeminacy in Scandinavian society see Carol Clover, "Regardless of Sex: Men, Women and Power in Early Northern Europe," *Speculum* 68 (1993), 363–87. I am very grateful to my colleague Judith Jesch for discussion of the meaning of *arga*/*argr*.
55. Karras, *Sexuality*, 129–32.
56. For example, Giovanni Dall'Orto who includes *HL* VI 24 as one of his "texts of gay history" (although with some qualification): www.digilander.libero.it/giovannidallorto/testi/latine/diacono/diacono.html.
57. *Edictum Rothari*, *c*.381. Azzara and Gasparri, *Le leggi*, 102–3 (who think *arga* means "inept" or "coward" at 199, n. 158). Bluhme, *Leges*, 88.
58. Drew, *Lombard Laws*, 128.
59. The phrase here is *per fororem aga*. The ninth-century Ivrea manuscript (probably written at Pavia, *c*.830) and all later manuscripts have *arga* or *argam*.
60. *HL* I.21.
61. Largely in Book VI of his *HL*; discussed by Balzaretti, "Masculine Authority"; Goffart, *Narrators*, 417–24. Liutprand founded at least one monastery on his estate at Corteolona near Pavia and may indeed have adopted some monastic rituals in his daily life: *HL* 6.58; Foulke, *Historia*, 304.
62. Goffart, *Narrators*, 423.
63. Costambeys, "Monastic Environment."
64. For example, the late eighth- or early ninth-century Vita Walfredi, Chapter 5. Karl Schmid, ed., *Vita Walfredi und Kloster Monteverdi: toskanisches Monchtum zwischen langobardischrlangobardischen und frankishenfrankischen Herrschaft* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991); Clare Pilsworth, "Sanctity, Crime and Punishment in the 'Vita Walfredi,'" *Hagiographica* 7 (2000), 201–68.
65. Bluhme, *Leges*; Walter Pohl, "Leges Langobardorum," *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 18 (2001), *altertumskunde*, vol. 18, ed. Heinrich Beck, Dieter Geuenich and Heiko Steuer (Berlin and New York, 2001), 208–13 is the best recent summary. I am deliberately not dealing here with the vexed question of Roman law in northern Italy in this period. The notion that Lombard law was merely a re-issuing of long-established Roman provisions is sometimes assumed but in fact very difficult to document, in the absence of much work on the very few eighth-century manuscripts of any type of Roman law in this area. Ian Wood has shown that many more manuscripts of the Theodosian Code and the Breviary of Alaric survived north of the Alps than south of them: one or two surviving manuscripts only *may* be Italian in origin (Ian N. Wood, "Roman Law in the Barbarian Kingdoms," in *Rome and the North,* ed. Alvar Ellegård and Gunilla Åkerström-Hougen (Jonsered: Paul Åstrom, 1996), 5–14 at 13). The manuscript evidence, therefore, does not suggest that Roman law in its Roman forms was alive and well in north-western Italy in the eighth century. While it may be true that some of the content of Liutprand's laws may be similar to earlier Roman legislation, it is also true that "the legislation of Rothari's successors leaves no doubt that the Italian society they addressed greatly differed from the one he had conjured up" (Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 44). This means that it is unwise to refer back to the Roman law of marriage and sex as if eighth-century Lombard legislators fully understood the

circumstances in which that Roman law had originally been made: eighth-century Lombard society was extremely different from even that of very late Roman Italy. It is my argument here that King Liutprand was issuing laws regulating sexual behavior because he was himself concerned with these issues and his laws were intended to regulate his own society not to evoke some idealized, distant Roman world: Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, 1: 29–92 remains essential on this. Although Antti Arjava, *Women and Law in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) is helpful for understanding what late Roman legal attitudes to sex were, this material does not, for the reasons set out above, transfer easily to a society several centuries in the future.

66. At a maximum count (including some laws that are implicitly about sex), 39 chapters: 1, 2, 4 (from 713); 7, 12, 14 (717); 24 (721); 30–34 (723); 60 (724); 65–66 (725); 76 (726); 89 (727); 98, 100, 101, 103 (728); 104–106, 112, 114 (729); 117, 119–122, 126, 127, 129 (731); 130, 135 (733); 139–140 (734), 153 (735).
67. Liutprand 33; Drew, *Lombard Laws*, 160–1.
68. Drew, *Lombard Laws*, 160–1.
69. Emerton, "Boniface," 20–23
70. de Jong, "To the Limits of Kinship."
71. Raymond Davis, ed., *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis),* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 1992), 1–2. Bede knew a version of this text before it had been completed: Bede, *The Ecclesiatical History of the English People*, ed. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), xxv–xxvii.
72. Noble, *Republic of St Peter*, 28.
73. Paul Fouracre, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 1 *c*.500–*c*.700 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 353–70 (Spain), 381–3 (Francia) and 474–88 (England).
74. Noble, *Republic of St Peter*, 31.
75. Janet L. Nelson, "Charlemagne the man," in *Charlemagne: Empire and Society* ed. Joanna Story (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 22–37 and her "Writing Early Medieval Biography," *History Workshop Journal* 50 (2000), 129–36.
76. *Intervenientem vanissimam et superstitiosa vel cupida soasionem et perversionem apparuit modo in his temporibus, quia inlecita nobis vel cunctis nostris iudicibus coniunctio esse paruit, quoniam adulte et iam mature aetate femine copolabant sibe puerolus parvolus et intra etatem legitimam et dicebant, quod vir eius legetimus esse deverit, cun adhuc se cum ipsa miscere menime valerit. Nunc itaque statuere previdimus, ut nulla amodo femina hoc facere presumat, nisi si pater aut avus pueri cum legetimus parentis puelle hoc facere previderit. Nam si puer post mortem patris aut avi sui intra etatem remanserit, et ei se qualiscumque femina, antequam ipse puer terciodecimo anno conpleat, copolare presumpserit, dicendo quod legitimus maritus eius esse debeat, inrita sit ipsa coniunctio, et separentur ab invicem. Femina vero ipsa revertatur vacua cum oboprobrium suum et non habeat potestatem alio viro se copolare, dum ipse puerolus ad aetatem suprascripta pervenerit. Siquidem ipsa inpleta etatem puer ipse sibi eam oxorem habere voluerit, habeat licentiam, et si eam noluerit, tollat sibi oxorem aliam, qualem voluerit aut potuerit, Illa vero, si ad alium maritum ambolaverit, et ipse puerolus eam habere noluerit, non ei possit vir suus, qui eam tollit, pleniter metfio dare, sicut ad aliam puellam, sed tantumodo mediaetatem, sicut ad viduam mulierem. Qui verum puerum ipsum soaserit, sibe parentis eius sint, sibe*

extraneus homo, conponat solidus centum, medietatem regi et medietatem ad ipsum puerolum. Bluhme, Leges, 161–2; Azzara and Gasparri, *Le leggi*, 192–5; Drew, *Lombard Laws*, 200–1. My translation, based on Fischer Drew.

77. Drew, *Lombard Laws*, 148–9.
78. Drew, *Lombard Laws*, 192.
79. Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, 20–3.
80. This refers back to Rothari 212, which stated that a man who discovered his wife with another man or a slave might kill both of them. The law is curiously inverted by Paul the Deacon in a story (*HL* 6.26) where an ugly queen is praised for encouraging her husband to sleep with a beautiful woman!
81. *Si quis admodum inventus fuerit cum oxorem alienam torpiter conversari, id est si manos in seno aut ad pectum eius miserit vel ad alium locum unde turpe esse potest, cum consensum ipsius mulieris, et provatum fuerit, conponat, qui hoc malum penetravit, wirigild suum ad maritum ipsius mulieris*.
82. Drew, *Lombard Laws*, 160 and Azzara and Gasparri, *Le leggi*, 152–3.
83. Everett, *Literacy*, 248–54. Ratchis was deposed in 749 and retired to the monastery of Montecassino.
84. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 340.
85. See note 64 above.
86. I am grateful for all the comments made about my paper at the St Andrews conference and at a subsequent seminar at Birmingham University, especially those of Julia Smith and Chris Wickham. I am especially grateful to my editors for their patience.

2

Sex and Text
The Afterlife of Medieval Penance in Britain and Ireland

Dominic Janes

The Christian communities of early medieval Britain and Ireland have been credited with originating a specialized genre of Catholic religious texts known as penitentials. These were, in essence, intended as adjuncts to the process of confession. They consisted of lists of sins and associated corrective measures. However, from the early modern period onwards, these documents became an embarrassment to later historians and theologians due to their frank sexual language, a problem for Protestants, who frequently connected them with the supposed immorality of the medieval Catholic Church, and Catholics who were, as a result, thrown onto the defensive. In the nineteenth century this debate over the penitentials was exacerbated by national tensions between the Irish and the English. In this article I will be exploring the afterlives of the early medieval insular penitentials as featuring an intertwining of scholarly, sectarian and moral concerns in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain and Ireland. This provides insights into the way in which modern prejudices can influence the readings of medieval documents as well as the way in which medieval documents have fed modern prejudices. I will begin to suggest how it was that documents representing a harsh moral code could themselves become regarded as dangerously obscene:

> It is a sad truth, but we have lost the faculty of giving lovely names to things. Names are everything. I never quarrel with actions. My one quarrel is with words. That is the reason I hate vulgar realism in literature. The man who could call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one. It is the only thing he is fit for.[1]
>
> (Lord Henry in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* 1891)

> These strange texts are usually numbered among the genuinely original Irish contributions to medieval civilization, though the honor is a dubious one. "The penitential literature is in truth a deplorable feature of the medieval Church. Evil deeds, the imagination of which may perhaps have dimly floated through our minds in our darkest moments, are here tabulated and reduced to a system. It is hard to see how any one could busy himself with such literature and not be the worse for it," was the verdict of Charles Plummer, a great scholar and one who knew the early Irish churches better than most.[2]
>
> (Dáibhí Ó Cróinín quoting Charles Plummer (1851–1927), editor of Bede in 1896, in *Early Medieval Ireland*)

According to Ó Cróinín, the early medieval insular penitentials, calling a spade a spade, catalogued "every conceivable transgression." There was "apparently no crime that could not be thought of" and these texts provide an "endless litany of reprobate behaviour."[3]

The quotation from Wilde is widely famous, but among the more rarefied spheres of penitential scholarship the words of Plummer retain a distinct notoriety. They appear, for example, on page one of Allen Frantzen's important study of the Anglo-Saxon penitentials.[4] Frantzen, however, unlike Ó Cróinín, is intent on vehement disagreement with earlier scholarship: Plummer's comment, like the penitentials themselves, has been the subject of considerable scholarly controversy.

The early medieval penitentials are texts that generations of scholars have found problematic. Written to advise priests, and consisting of lists of moral transgressions with suggested penalties, they appear to have originated in Ireland in the sixth century. They provide an important corpus of texts for the study of early medieval Christian morality and, quite understandably, have been of great interest to a considerable number of historians. The word insular refers to the island nature of Britain and Ireland and the texts there originating, but I also wish to imply in my sub-heading a certain local "insularity" that suggests that later historians were impeded in the development of sophisticated analysis by parochial moral and legal concerns.

At first sight the penitentials would appear to be in tune with any later interpreter of a strong Christian moral disposition. They are essentially lists of moral transgressions with appropriate remedies. The intention was not to punish but to purify sinners, although the methods of purification frequently resembled punishment. Exile, fasting, sleeping on stones, hours of repeating psalms; all were prescribed for offences of varying seriousness. This practice is known in the modern literature as private penance, to distinguish it from public penance, which appears to have been the earlier practice. Public penance in the early Church was made in front of the community rather than in secret to a confessor and was intended to be made once in a lifetime.[5] Private penance, at least as evidenced by the penitentials, appears to have emerged in monasteries in Ireland in the sixth century and to have spread from there to Britain and the Continent.

The rise of the penitentials was not directed by any central authority. It appears that these texts were based upon a codification of customary practice, bearing in mind the general guidance given in the Bible as to what counted as sin in passages such as Acts 15: 39, Mark 7: 21–2, Galatians 5: 19–21 and Revelation 21: 8. The idea of the deadly sins was particularly propagated in the west through John Cassian (*c*.360–433 AD) and his *Conferences*, wherein he listed gluttony, fornication, avarice, anger, dejection, languor, vainglory and pride.[6] The detailed nature of the penitentials prompted medievalist Nora Chadwick to claim that these texts were "webs spun in the casuistry of the monkish brain. They form an abstract compendium of suppositious crimes and unnatural sins, thought up in the cloister by the tortuous intellect of the clerical scribe."[7] The variety and depth of description of the individual sins varied, though of these categories, fornication was the most prominent in terms of percentage of words in the early medieval texts. The rise of concern with sexual purity from St Paul through Late Antiquity has been charted in many works, as for instance in Peter Brown's, *The Body and Society*.[8] The tenor of the penitentials is overwhelmingly negative towards any deviation from vaginal intercourse in the male-superior position, and against any sex outside wedlock. However, the fact that such admirable churchmen would engage in the writing of such sexually detailed documents, regardless of their tone or treatment of the subject, seemed to be sufficiently abhorrent to later commentators to warrant the harsh editing or total exclusion of the works from the collected works of several theologians. For example, when preparing a collection of the works by the venerable Bede, Plummer did not edit the penitentials. He justified his exclusion by asserting that the penitential ascribed to Bede was not by him and thus should not be included in his edition. Plummer states that: "the arguments are against Bede's authorship, and we should be thankful to believe that Bede had nothing to do with such a matter."[9] If these early texts showed enthusiasm for sexuality, especially "deviant" sexuality, the negative view of scholars would be easier to understand. But this is not the case. The texts are impeccably dour.

Of serious concern for Plummer and his successors was the direct language of the texts, which we can best appreciate by looking at the twentieth-century attempts to engage with what Plummer left in silence. This was still giving major problems to translators and editors into the second half of the twentieth century, as for instance in the major edition of the Irish penitentials published by Bieler in 1963, which can be compared with the translations of McNeill and Gamer of 1938. It is a feature of the translations of the texts, as Frantzen has shown, to bowdlerize, ignore or fail to translate "difficult" sections.[10] For example, compare the original text of the Old Irish Penitential below, found in RIA (Royal Irish Academy) 3 B23, a fifteenth-century manuscript now in Dublin, to the translations by Bieler and McNeill and Gamer. In many cases throughout the penitential, Binchy in Bieler translates the text into English, except for sexual matters that are translated into Latin (sections 2, 11–35).[11] McNeill and Gamer announce they

only publish "selections" from this text and omit this section entirely without mentioning what is omitted, or why.[12] Other sections are deliberately edited in the translation to make them more palatable or to suit views of the translators.

For example, the early seventh-century penitential of Cummean (10, 14–16):

> *Uiri inter femora fornicantes, primo annum, iterantes duobus annis. In terga uero fornicantes, si pueri sunt, duobus annis, si uiri, tribus annis uel iiiior; si autem in consuetudinem uerunt, .vii. annis et modus penitentiae addatur iudice sacerdote. Desideria labiis complentes, .iiii. annis; si in consuetudinem fuerant adsueti, .vii. annos*.[13]

Bieler's translation:

> Men guilty of femoral intercourse, for the first offence, a year; if they repeat it, two years. Those practising homosexuality, if they are boys, two years; if men, three or four years; but if it has become a habit, seven years, and the manner of penance, moreover, shall be decided according to the judgement of a priest. Those who satisfy their desires with their lips, four years. If it has become a habit, seven years.[14]

McNeill and Gamer's translation:

> Men guilty of homosexual practices, for the first offence, a year; if they repeat it, two years. If they are boys, two years, if men, three or four years; but if it has become a habit, seven years, and a method of penance shall be added according to the judgement of this priest. [Substantially repeats 2, 8, page 103 above.][15]

Intercourse between the legs and in the rear appears either as "femoral intercourse" and "homosexuality," or is simply elided into "homosexual practices," which is an especially interesting editorial addendum as the "homosexual" was a creation of later nineteenth-century thought. The detail of the original text is sanitized in the editorial comment where the rest of the text, which is not included, is said only to "substantially repeat" the previous passages, regardless of the fact that it does introduce new themes of fellatio and the distinction between the various forms of male/male sex practices, including femoral and anal sex.

Another example is found in the translation of *Paenitentiale Cummeani* (2, 7–10):

> *Moechator matris suae annis .iii. cum perigratione perenni peniteat. Moechantes in labiis, iiii. Annis peniteant; si in consuetudine fuerint adsueti, vii annis peniteant. Sic qui faciunt scelus uirile ut Sodomite, vii. Annis peniteant. Si uero in femoribus ii. Annis*.

McNeill and Gamer, 2, 7–8:

> He who defiles his mother shall do penance for three years; with perpetual pilgrimage. Those who befoul their lips shall do penance for four years; if they are accustomed to the habit they shall do penance for seven years. So shall those who commit sodomy do penance for seven years. For femoral masturbation, two years.

Here the same Latin verb is translated as "defiling" of a mother, but "befouling" of lips. Defiling implies purity marred, whereas befouling is more about getting something filthy dirty.[16] McNeill and Gamer avoid the translation of certain passages by falsely implying that they are somehow unnecessary, when the translators were really discomforted by the sexual intensity of the texts. Moreover, the translators made specific decisions about the supposed seriousness of the offences that are not there in the original.

The unease of these scholars in engaging with a sexual vocabulary is echoed in the legal approach to the topic of "non-standard" sexual behavior as well, especially in the treatment of "homosexual" acts. Les Moran has examined the legal discourses surrounding homosexual offences in the nineteenth century and has found that a key feature of the cases was a persistent refusal to find a language that was separate from street slang and also specified individual sexual acts.[17] By removing the terminology from the language, it may have been deemed possible to remove the act from the society, or at least from its communal identity.

The basis of this appears in the early seventeenth century when Lord Justice Sir Edward Coke (1552–1634) "commented that if buggery is to appear in the law then it must be described by the words 'not to be named amongst Christians' (*inter christianos non nominandum*)."[18] The persistence of ritual silence is traced by Moran deep into the twentieth century. For instance when the Wolfenden Committee in the 1950s recommended homosexual law reform they would only allow acts taking place "in private," which Moran identifies as a "new silence."[19] The danger of the confessional was perhaps that it was located in a troubling liminal zone, neither fully public nor fully private. Those who brought what was deemed private into the public sphere were thereby destabilizing the status quo and liable to state control. However, those administering the judicial system were put in the difficult position of thereby having to investigate private concerns in the public space of the courtroom: in order to do so they employed circumlocutory public terminology in place of private slang. This was done in order to try to maximize their distance from the acts and their perpetrators and so as to minimize the ambivalent liminality of these proceedings.

The problematic nature of the confessional was not solved by the transition from a Catholic to an Anglican state; rather than being eradicated, it was moved to an increasingly secular stage. Sex, as a religious discourse, which was to be the focus of Foucault's unfinished volume of the *History of Sexuality*, titled the

Confessions of the Flesh,[20] was usurped by the development of rival technologies of discussion and control of the body and self; judicial, medical and psychological. These discourses displaced the Christian methods, with the result that, "under the authority of a language that had been carefully expurgated so that it was no longer directly named, sex was taken charge of, tracked down as it were, by a discourse that aimed to allow it no obscurity, no respite."[21] In other words, modern discourses focusing on the control of sexuality operated in different ways from those of the Early Middle Ages, such that the earlier discourse of control had itself become seen as dangerous. Words that, in the Roman Catholic tradition, could be uttered in the morally controlling context of priestly authority were now seen as obscene in themselves. As the evangelical doctor and commentator on prostitution Michael Ryan wrote in 1839, blasphemous books invite levity for sacred things and obscene books pollute and arouse and lead on to corrupt acts.[22] This Protestant approach was to form the basis of the drafting and subsequent interpretation by the courts of the Obscene Publications Act (1857). Those who printed or edited material that, in the light of the case of *Regina* v. *Hicklin* (1868) might "deprave and corrupt" vulnerable minds, were, for the law, nothing other than pornographers. Editing a sexually explicit penitential was, therefore, a matter for special consideration. Moreover, the careful regulation of sexual expression by the modern English courts made medieval legal codes that used obscene words appear to be all the more primitive, objectionable and dangerous. As Cecily Cardew says in Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: "When I see a spade I call it a spade." Her rival, Gwendolen, replies, "I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different."[23] The early medieval writers speak more like Cecily, the nineteenth-century ones more like Gwendolen, except that they, like Lord Henry, might prefer to refer to a spade by a superior word, as being a *rutrum* perhaps. Those who feared the discussion of sexual matters in religious and scholarly contexts thought that it was best to leave such things in the secure obscurity of the original manuscripts.

In addition to early modern and Victorian tensions over the language of the penitentials, which was regarded as medieval and obscene, the penitential codes that included openly sexual references were still employed in the contemporary Roman Catholic Church. Unable to safely conceal these works in the past —especially those written by revered Church figures and Englishmen such as Bede—Anglican scholars and commentators were faced with a present moral danger even as they endeavored to sanitize them. The tension became more than a chronological conflict between the medieval and the modern; the reception and interpretation of the medieval texts also revealed layers of religious and national tensions in post-medieval Britain.

The confessional, which posed a threat to the spheres of public and private and gave voice and a vocabulary to dangerously "deviant" sexual practices, was also at the center of this tension between the Anglicans and Catholics in England.

There was a long tradition of Protestant wariness towards the confessional as being quintessentially papist, despite it never having been definitely outlawed in the Church of England. Those who spoke out against this view were clearly swimming against the tide of general opinion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, the Anglican, Nathaniel Marshall (1680–1729), writing in 1714, the year before he became Chaplain to the King, wanted to show the relevance and usefulness of ancient penitential traditions, suggesting that confession be reintroduced in England, with certain precautions—it should not be a necessity, superstition should be avoided and there should be "all scrupulosity in the enumeration of sins."[24] Marshall thought that the early Church standard was too severe to be revived, and advocated that of the seventh and eighth centuries.[25] He was keen to defend himself against charges of popery from moralists and from the "mockery" of "libertines": "I trust the world is not yet so far gone in mirth, as to be laughed out of so important a thing as religion," he wrote.[26] He was, above all, careful in his quotations from the Anglo-Saxon penitential of Egbert to quote somber prayers rather than anything smacking of the licentious.[27] Though Marshall was not alone in his wish to temper the medieval confessional for use within the Anglican Church, on the whole, a confessional role among the ordinary clergy was adamantly opposed by most in the nineteenth-century Church of England. Confession, it was generally held, was made spiritually in private to God alone and absolution could not be granted by the minister.[28] At the deathbed, the minister might offer consolation based on "the apparent evidences of a sincere repentance . . . beyond which none can go but the Searcher of hearts."[29] We are told that before the Reformation the "abominable system" of private confession led to:

> Corruption, vice, immorality, degradation, and pollution . . . It produces arrogance in the priest and presumption in those who confess; pollutes the soul and the body; it enervates or destroys the healthy power of the conscience; it degrades; it destroys self-respect; it impairs the sense of personal responsibility.[30]

A central issue—both for those in favour of the modern use of private penance and for those against—was sex. This seems paradoxical since the very purpose of the penitentials was to "redefine customary understandings of sexuality and sexual practices" in line with an austere moral code.[31] However, as we have seen, modern concerns lay with disciplining the discourse and not simply the practice of sex. For the likes of Plummer, the heroes of the Christian past were best thought of without any connection to sexuality at all, even with its effective repression. Plummer edited one of the most important collections of Bede's historical works and the first in Britain for over a century. Bede, in Plummer's commentary, appears as a devoted Christian and scholar, towards whom Plummer feels such an enthusiasm "that I am well content that some trace of my own personal feelings and circumstances should remain in what I have written about

him."[32] "There is nothing," we are told, "strained or overwrought about Bede's piety. His good sense is conspicuous."[33] And "we have not, it seems to me, amid all our discoveries, invented as yet anything better than the Christian life which Bede lived."[34] He was the "very model of the saintly scholar-priest."[35] It is very possible that Plummer saw Bede as a model for the conduct of his own life. In the preface to his edition he comments that, "Interviews with the abbot or prior provoked, no doubt, the same sort of speculation and comment as interviews with the president or dean of a college do now."[36] We may take note that Plummer was a fellow and chaplain of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and that Corpus is exceptional in being a college headed by a president (most have a master).

To place Plummer's views further in their academic and theological context, we observe that he takes time to single out the work of his colleague William Bright, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford and canon of Christ Church, next door to Corpus.[37] Bright illustrates a further problem with the penitentials, which was that they originated from Ireland where, according to the professor, we see "on a large scale the workings of the emotional temperament . . . which makes it both unstable in purpose and impatient of discipline and law."[38] The emotionality of this "non-Teutonic Christianity" led to excesses of punishment leading to self-torture "such as Hindoo devotees would find meritorious."[39] Penitential provisions were often discussed in terms of severity or, occasionally, laxness. In other words, these historians were entering into an opinionated dialogue on the gravity of the offences committed, rather than seeking to explain the divergence from their own expectations in other than racial terms.[40]

Bright's diversion in his criticism of the penitentials from the standard critique of language to that of the emotion is interesting and reveals much of the tension in the British Isles not only in the Protestant/Catholic conflict but also between the English and the Irish as nations and cultures in conflict. The none-too-subtle comparison between the Irish Catholics and the pagan "Hindoo" peoples would seem to question the very Christianity of the Irish. In fact, Bright does not seem to be engaging in a comparison between Teutonic Christianity and Celtic Christianity in a European context, for he would have had to acknowledge the highly "emotional" movements within Teutonic Christianity, such as the Flagellants of late medieval Germany; rather, he is pointedly comparing the English to the Irish. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historians, not excluding Gibbon, were keen to link "medieval" in the most pejorative meaning of the word with "Celtic" and explicitly, the Irish.

In addition to the "emotional" (and therefore implied, non-British) character of penitentials and their deviant subject matter, another criticism of "Celtic" Christianity was its largely monastic character. The main accusation against medieval monasticism was that it swung between ascetic excess and libidinous indulgence.[41] It "sprung out of mistaken views of the human mind and of the Christian religion, and was wholly opposed to the latter in spirit and practice," we are told by one tract from 1846.[42] Even so it did help to preserve culture and

benevolence in a "dark age" and that was why God allowed it to exist at all.[43] *The Dark Ages*—published in 1844 by the archbishop of Canterbury's librarian Samuel Maitland—represented the first substantially positive Anglican study of medieval monasticism, but even he was keen to distance himself from any thought that he was in favor of a monastic revival.[44] For at stake, among other things, was the dangerous progress of the Anglo-Catholic movement within the Church of England that sought to restore elements of religion, including monasticism, confession and penance, that had been abolished or marginalized at the Reformation. The storm over ritualism (the revival or reinvention of abandoned ceremonial) lasted through the second half of the nineteenth century and led to the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act (1874), under which there were a number of prosecutions, the most prominent of which was of the bishop of Lincoln, Edward King, in 1890.[45] He was acquitted on several counts but was instructed to desist from making the sign of the cross during the Eucharist.[46] This puts into context earlier Anglican readings of such penitential prescriptions as the Irishman Columbanus's requirement that a monk failing to make the sign of the cross over his spoon at dinner should be given six lashes.[47] Nevertheless, the prosecution of the bishop of Lincoln was in many ways half-hearted and the Anglo-Catholics were tacitly allowed their place. The compromise position on confession, expressed in Prescott's 1896 tract, was that absolution can only be granted by God, but might, exceptionally, as "a tonic, not daily food," be given via a priest.[48]

Modern equivalents of the medieval penitentials were regularly read and cited by opponents of "auricular" confession—in other words, that given privately to a priest and accompanied by penance where appropriate. The vital text in use for Roman Catholic confession was the *Garden of the Soul* by the English bishop Richard Challoner (1691–1781). It was the most important Catholic Prayer Book in England of the period. Its importance can be seen from the fact that it had far more editions than the official Roman *Raccolta*, which appeared in Latin in 1807, but not in English until 1857.[49] The method of confession was for the penitent to kneel down at the side of the priest, to make the sign of the cross and ask his blessing, then to list any sins. The priest then gave absolution and penance.[50] The sort of questions that gave Protestants thrills and nightmares were those such as:

> [Have you been] guilty of self-pollution? Or of immodest touches of yourself? How often?; have you looked at immodest objects with pleasure?; kept indecent pictures?; have you abused the marriage bed by any actions contrary to the order of nature? Or by any pollutions? Or been guilty of any irregularity, in order to hinder your having children?

and (ironically?):

> have you taught anyone evil which he knew not before?[51]

In a correspondence between a Catholic and a Protestant, the argument made by the antiquarian Riland Bedford, Rector of Sutton Coldfield, was that *The Garden of the Soul* ranged across the whole realm of sexual experience, asking, in sum, whether you have "ever been guilty of fornication, of adultery of incest, or any other sin against nature, either with a person of the same sex, or with any other creature." This, said Riland Bedford, would be placed into the hands of a "Protestant female of eighteen . . . I now leave it to the reader whether or not I was wrong in styling them 'disgustingly beastly interrogatories.'"[52] Since past Popes have "indulged in every kind of sensual abomination," how should he suppose that modern priests will be better?[53] This material was intended by Roman Catholic priests for someone to meditate upon so that they might know what to bring up at confession, but opponents thought of it as simply polluting innocent minds with evil thoughts and suggestions. This material was thus read as immoral and pornographic.

Placed in the context of the Anglican Church's struggle with its Catholic roots, the ever-present Catholicism within the British Isles, especially in its "Celtic fringe," and the national conflict between the Irish and English states, the unease editors such as Plummer, Bieler, McNeill and Gamer showed in their editions and translations of the penitentials becomes understandable, if not evidential of the unease of British society itself in this period, and sex became the vehicle for which much of this tension was expressed. Modernity generated juridical procedures for dealing with sexual acts and expressions that were judged to be obscene. These technologies cast their shadow over the scholarly discussion of sexual themes in medieval texts. The continued employment of sexual confession in the Roman Catholic Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided the means by which contemporary debates over the control of sexuality became intertwined with discussion of medieval precedents. Moreover, the critical words from Ó Cróinín's 1995 Longman textbook *Early Medieval Ireland* with which I began this article signal that the morally problematic nature of the early medieval penitentials has not entirely dissipated.[54] For, as Smith comments, until very recently, many readers were "apparently less disposed to judge sinners compassionately than the compilers of the handbooks had been."[55] Part of the problem lies in the issue of psychological identification—one has to understand the sick, in order to help them. As the Pseudo-Romanum penitential of *c*.830 says, "no one can treat the wounds of the sick unless he familiarizes himself with their foulness."[56] In the early Celtic model, everyone was a transgressor, whereas this was definitely not the assumption underlying later juridical models of the treatment, judgment or control of wrongdoers. Even the mid-twentieth-century, as we have seen, had yet to develop an adequate scholarly approach to medieval materials that did not fit the most widely accepted legal and moral standards of modern sexual morality. This is why the early medieval penitentials that promoted stringent controls on sexuality were regarded as potential catalysts of dangerous sexuality.

Notes

1. Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Ward Lock and Co., 1891), 289.
2. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland: 400–1200* (London: Longman, 1995), 198, quoting Charles Plummer, ed., *Venerabilis Baedae, Historiam Ecclesiasticam Gentis Anglorum*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1896), 1, clvii–clviii.
3. Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 199.
4. Allen J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 1.
5. However, see Sarah Hamilton, *The Practice of Penance, 900–1050*, Royal Historical Society Studies in History, New Series (London: Royal Historical Society, 2001), 8–9. Her work represents a powerful critique of the model of a move from public to private penance at the end of Antiquity, but her focus is on the central and later Middle Ages.
6. Cassian, *Collationes*, 5, 2: Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum XVII, 81; XIII, 121. See the discussion of John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principal Libri Poenitentiales and Selections from Related Documents*, Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies 29 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), 18–20.
7. Nora Chadwick, *The Age of the Saints* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 149.
8. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
9. Plummer, *Venerabilis Bedae*, clvii. Bede's penitential is represented by a range of texts, and the authorship question is highly complex. See Allen J. Frantzen, "The Penitentials Attributed to Bede," *Speculum* 58 (1983): 573–97.
10. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance*, 2, n. 5, provides a rich stock of examples.
11. Ludwig Bieler, ed., *The Irish Penitentials*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae 5 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963), 263–65.
12. McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks*, 160–1.
13. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 128.
14. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 129.
15. McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks*, 113.
16. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 114; McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks*, 103.
17. Les Moran, *The Homosexual(ity) of Law* (London: Routledge, 1996).
18. Coke quoted in Moran, *Homosexual(ity),* 33.
19. Moran, *Homosexual(ity),* 34.
20. Jeremy R. Carrette, *Foucault and Religion: Spiritual Corporality and Political Spirituality* (London: Routledge, 2000), 26.
21. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Allen Lane, 1979), 20.
22. Michael Ryan, *Prostitution in London, with a Comparative View of that of Paris and New York* (London: H. Ballière, 1839), 93.
23. Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (London: Leonard Smithers and Co., 1899), 101–2.
24. Nathaniel Marshall, *The Penitential Discipline of the Primitive Church for the First Four Hundred Years after Christ, Together with its Declension from the Fifth Century Downwards to its Present State, Impartially Represented*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1844), 217, quoting, with approval, the position of Zanchy: "*multas*

secum talis confessio adfert utilitates, viz, si abiit 1) necessitates opinio, 2) scrupulosa singulorum peccatorum enumeratio, 3) omnis supersitio."

25. Marshall, *Penitential Discipline*, 251.
26. Marshall, *Penitential Discipline*, 254.
27. Marshall, *Penitential Discipline*, Appendix 7.
28. For example, H. Beaumont, *Auricular Confession not the Doctrine of the Scriptures nor of the Church of England* (London: William Skeffington, 1857).
29. Bingham quoted in Beaumont, *Auricular Confession*, 29.
30. Beaumont, *Auricular Confession*, 33.
31. Julie Ann Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives: Penitentials and Nunnery Rules in the Early Medieval West* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 224.
32. Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae*, iii.
33. Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae*, lxix.
34. Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae*, lxxix.
35. Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae,* lxxviii–lxxix.
36. Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae*, xxix.
37. Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae*, iv.
38. William Bright, *The Roman See in the Early Church and Other Studies in Church History* (London: Longmans Green, 1896), 358. It is amusing to compare this with later pro-Irish nationalist stances such as that of Mitchell in *The Irish Theological Quarterly* in 1951. He argues that the penitentials are "amongst the most interesting and valuable" of early medieval texts. They originated in Ireland and "practically all the later continental penitentials bear unmistakeable traces of Celtic influence . . . the success of the new system of Penance is a matter of history"; George Mitchell, "St Columbanus on penance," *The Irish Theological Quarterly*, 18 (1951): 43–54, at 44 and 51.
39. Bright, *Roman See,* 396. The tendency to find the punishments peculiar and to link this to Celtic mores is found in a number of later writers such as Oakley, who, in 1923, can be found speaking of "quaint Irish penances" with "peculiar traits." Thomas P. Oakley, *English Penitential Discipline and Anglo-Saxon Law in their Joint Influence* (New York: no publisher cited, 1923), 66. A recent examination of the same topic is Carol Hough, "Penitential literature and secular law in Anglo-Saxon England," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 11 (2000): 133–41, who argues against Oakley that the two were separate systems before the ninth century.
40. Oakley, *English Penitential Discipline*, 71.
41. *Glimpses of the Dark Ages, or, Sketches of the Social Condition of Europe from the Fifth to the Twelfth Century,* Religious Tract Society Monthly Volume 2 (London: Religious Tract Society, 1846), 96.
42. *Glimpses*, 119.
43. *Glimpses*, 120.
44. Samuel Maitland, *The Dark Ages* (London: Rivingtons, 1844), preface, discussed by Giles Constable, "The Study of Monastic History Today," in *Essays on the Reconstruction of Medieval History*, eds Vaclav Mudroch and G. S. Couse (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), 53–68.
45. Edward White Benson and Edward King, *Read and Others v. the Lord Bishop of Lincoln, Judgement: Nov. 21, 1890 in the Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury* (London: Macmillan, 1894).

46. Judgment of the court of the archbishop of Canterbury, ss. 8 and 9, quoted in Montague Fowler, *Church History in Queen Victoria's Reign* (London: Christian Knowledge Society, 1896), 52.
47. Discussed in *Glimpses*, 95.
48. G. F. Prescott, *Confession*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Pamphlet 1763 (London: SPCK, 1896), 9.
49. Richard Challoner, *The Garden of the Soul: A Manual of Spiritual Exercises and Instructions for Christians, Who, Living in the World Aspire to Devotion* (Wolverhampton: J. Smart, 1801), 80–1; Mary Heimann, *Catholic Devotion in Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 72–3. *The Garden of the Soul* originally appeared in 1740, and the nineteenth-century editions preserved its core while making various rearrangements and additions.
50. Challoner, *Garden*, 215–6.
51. Challoner, *Garden*, 202–3.
52. W. M. Riland Bedford, ed., *The Indelicacy of Auricular Confession, as Practised by the Roman Catholic Church Treated in a Correspondence Between the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer, and the Rev. W. M. Riland Bedford* (Birmingham: William Hodgetts, 1836), 32.
53. Riland Bedford, *Indelicacy*, 49.
54. Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 198.
55. Smith, *Ordering Women's Lives*, 15.
56. John T. McNeill, "Medicine for Sin as Prescribed in the Penitentials," *Church History*, 1 (1932), 14–26, at 23.

Part Two

Saintly Sexualities

3

When Sex Stopped Being a Social Disease

Sex and the Desert Fathers and Mothers

Joyce E. Salisbury

Studies of sexuality look at both practices and attitudes, and, of course, each influences the other. As we look at what people did, we can learn more about what they thought about sex, and sexologists find that beliefs about sexuality are the most important topic of study. After all, as everyone knows, the brain is the most important sexual organ. Thus, in this article, I will focus on attitudes toward sexuality as they were developed during the transition from the pagan to the Christian Roman Empire.

The early Christian centuries were formative for our beliefs about sexuality because that was a time when many ideas were in flux: Should Christians go to gladiator shows? Should Christians eat pork? What was Christian sexuality? Thus, Christians were establishing an identity that both preserved much that was Roman and created much that was new. Perhaps ironically, among the most influential theorists of sexuality during this time of a paradigm shift between Roman and Christian were men and women who renounced sex to seek God in the solitude of the desert. In their struggles for chastity, they created a new vision of sexuality. This article will explore the reflections of the desert ascetics and show how sexuality came to be viewed not as a social disease, but as deeply imprinted into an individual's flesh—what we might call a genetic disorder.

In the Roman Empire, people believed sex to be a social matter, and sexual prescriptions were shaped by public, not private, criteria. Roman physicians and philosophers surrounded sexual intercourse with many warnings and prohibitions, substantially different from modern taboos. Pagan Roman men were to serve their cities in public roles, whether in war or peace, and physicians warned that excessive or even incautious sexual activity would so weaken men's bodies that they could no longer serve. For example, men were warned not to have intercourse on

a full stomach or in the morning on a completely empty stomach. Some exercise before intercourse was recommended and a dry massage should follow.[1] Men should guard their vital spirit (*pneuma*), which was vaguely located, at least in part, in semen, for this male spirit allowed them to be effective in the public arena.

Philosophers, too, warned against unrestrained sexual expression. As healthy male bodies were to serve the state, clear-thinking human minds were also needed, and philosophers warned that excessive sexual pleasure could reduce one's capacity to function rationally. Classical thinkers from Aristotle on warned against the intellectually debilitating effects of lust.[2] The influential Stoics were particularly cautious, warning that sexual pleasure was dangerous because "human reason vanished during the sex act."[3]

Just as Romans believed women's social roles were different from men's, they also had different views and warnings about female sexuality. Male physicians did not worry as much about intercourse weakening women, for women received the vital *pneuma* instead of expelling it. Women's sexuality was to satisfy the public need for healthy offspring, and women were urged to engage in sexual intercourse early. Indeed, some girls became pregnant before their first menstrual periods.[4] In spite of the clear danger to women from early pregnancy and childbirth, physicians never recommended that women restrict their sexual activity. Instead, many suggested that women's very nature was sexual—cool, wet and passionate rather than rational. This view of women's sexuality was to persist throughout the Middle Ages even while other aspects of Roman views of sex would change.

Equating sexuality with womanhood yielded another perceived danger to a man of too much sexual activity: he might become effeminate. Medical authorities warned that too much ejaculation could cool and moisturize a man's hot/dry nature, making him more feminine.[5] Psychologically men could also be "feminized" by stirrings of lust. For example, a man might become emotionally attached, reducing his independence. Lust could drive him physically to reverse the moral order that kept upper-class males in charge of society. Cunnilingus, for example, seemed to invert a social hierarchy in which men were served instead of serving, and was thus condemned.[6] These cultural prohibitions reveal the close tie between sexuality and the public role of the individual in the ancient world. As Peter Brown summarized:

> Fear of effeminacy and of emotional dependence, fears based on a need to maintain a public image as an effective upper-class male, rather than any qualms about sexuality itself, determined the moral codes according to which most notables conducted their sexual life.[7]

Sexual expression in the Roman world mattered only when such expression threatened an individual's public role, which in turn threatened the wellbeing of society. This preoccupation with the public repercussions of sexual expression

led to complacency about practices that would later be prohibited in Christian Europe. Masturbation, homosexuality and bestiality were acceptable to Rome as long as the social order in which upper-class men were active, and slaves and women were passive, was maintained. Even the Stoics, who were so suspicious of the results of sexual activity on the individual, believed that the sex act itself was "morally indifferent."[8] For Roman men and women, sexuality was so intimately linked to social responsibility that the very definitions of sex and gender were formed in the context of society. This would change when some Roman Christians escaped society for the solitude of the desert.

During the third-century persecutions, some Christians fled the dangers of society. Anthony, who lived *c.*250–356 CE, was one of the first, and his *Life* was written in Greek by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, shortly after Anthony's death. Translated into Latin by Evagrius, it was widely read and became enormously influential. In the early fourth century, Emperor Diocletian tried to ensure that all Romans were fulfilling their public duty by worshipping the state cults, and the resulting persecutions in the cities large and small led to many martyrs and many lapsed Christians. Some Christians chose a third option and decided to turn their backs on the society that caused this devastating persecution. Many fled into the relative solitude of the deserts on the fringes of civilization in Egypt and Syria. This movement was immensely popular. Some estimates indicate that by 325 CE, there were over 5,000 semi-hermits living along the banks of the Nile alone.[9]

We can learn of their way of life and the wisdom they discovered in their withdrawal from society from several sources: there are accounts of some of their lives, such as the famous "Life of St Antony" or "Paul the Hermit." There are also influential collections of sayings of the desert ascetics, which were treasured throughout the Middle Ages and are known as the *Apothegmata* or *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. Perhaps the most influential summary of desert wisdom lay in the writings of Cassian, a late fourth-century monk. Cassian lived among the desert ascetics and thought their way of life was the perfect vehicle for Christian spirituality. When Cassian moved to Marseilles, France, to found monasteries, he wrote two important treatises, *The Institutes* and *The Conferences,* in which he recorded the experiences of the desert monks to try to establish that way of life in the West. His reflections on sexuality were so explicit that the nineteenth-century collection of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers bowdlerized his work by deleting a number of chapters, which only proves the value of this text for attitudes toward sexuality. (It also reveals much about the attitudes of the nineteenth-century translator, but that is another story.)

All the texts, from the *Lives* to the *Sayings* to Cassian's summary, indicate that their understandings of sexuality underwent a transformation. When these men and women first left their towns and villages, they expected the ties and temptations of society to fall away; they were unpleasantly surprised to find the contrary. Alone, they discovered they were still tormented by things that had

seemed very social: anger, greed, hunger, boredom. For example, one man sadly discovered he took his rage against his fellows with him into the solitude of a cave:

> A certain brother found himself frequently moved to wrath, so he said within himself: "I shall go and live in some place and this passion of anger will be stilled." So he went forth and lived by himself in a cave . . . [When he was pouring a jug of water, it repeatedly tipped over and spilled.] And in a rage he caught up the jug and broke it. Then when he had come to himself, he thought how he had been tricked by the spirit of anger and said, "Behold, here am I alone, and nevertheless . . . rage has conquered me."[10]

This is the same lesson they learned about sex: the classical Romans were wrong; sex is a force that lay in the human heart, not in society. As the desert fathers and mothers considered the temptations that beset them, they moved in ever-narrowing circles from outside to within, and they learned that sex is not a social disease. This article will follow their path as they redefined sexuality in a way that shaped medieval (and modern) views.

First, the would-be ascetics recognized that even the desert brought with it social temptations. An aspiring holy man might encounter a woman, which could lead him to have lustful thoughts. As the North African apologist Tertullian wrote, the sight of a woman would "foster the desire of concupiscence, [and] enkindle the fire of hope" as well as provide fuel for a fantasy that might stir sexual desire. Jerome, too, warned that when a male ascetic saw women, "their faces may dwell in your thoughts."[11] Thus, even solitude brought memories of the social connections that defined sexuality.

Holy women, too, saw men, but the texts do not indicate that this was a problem for them. Tertullian expressed the prevailing opinion that sight stimulated a man's lust more than a woman's; he claimed that men enjoyed looking at women, and women enjoyed being the object of their gaze.[12] This analysis seems to have been shared by women in the desert, for they were not troubled by men's looks. The gender difference is shown in one saying from the *Apothegmata*: on a journey a monk met some nuns and when he saw them he turned off the road. The abbess said to him: "If you had been a true monk, you would not have looked to see that we are women."[13] It was the men, not the women, who were so troubled by a glance that they looked aside. When it came to the temptations of lust, the desert wisdom indicated that it troubled men much more than women, so for the remainder of this article, like Cassian, I will focus on men's experience.[14]

Even if women did not appear among the desert hermits, men were still tempted as they had been in society. Young boys who were brought into the care of desert monks sometimes became objects of sexual attention.[15] As one of the *Sayings* succinctly recorded, "Do not be friendly with a superior, nor have any exchange with a woman nor be kind to a boy."[16] Linking too much friendliness

with males along with women strongly suggests that the fear was the temptation of a homosexual encounter. Animals, too, seemed to pose a threat of temptation. John Climacus, a sixth-century monk whose writings included parables and sayings from the desert fathers, warned monks that they could be led into sexual sins by proximity with the monastery's donkeys.[17] These temptations were in various ways attachments to the societies from which they had fled, and thus they did not affect the old Roman idea that sexuality is social. Falling into fornication with women, boys, donkeys or sheep expressed simply a failure to resist the temptations that solitude would still seem to solve. However, this was not so.

The hermits believed that the devil sent demons to tempt and torture them in their solitude. The "Life of St Antony," the account of the earliest desert hermit, has the fullest description of the demons that invaded their solitude and tortured the ascetics. Antony was first tempted by recollections of the wealth and comfort of his previous life, but when he easily resisted, the devil tempted him with lust. As the text says:

> [the devil] placing his trust in "weapons that hang at his waist" and glorying in these (for they are his first snare against the young), he advances against the young man, disturbing him by night, and so besetting him by day that even onlookers could see the struggle that was going on between the two.[18]

Throughout his life, Antony wrestled with demons who assaulted him physically and mentally, and perhaps among the most interesting parts of his "Life" are his sermons describing demons and how to resist them.

Antony was not the only ascetic plagued by desert demons. One of the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* recounts an overheard conversation between the devil and one of his demons. When the devil asked where he had been, he answered, "I was in the desert: and for forty years I have been attacking one monk. At last in the night I prevailed, and made him lust." The devil rewarded the demon for his victorious persistence.[19] Stories like this reminded ascetics that demonic temptations were ubiquitous and long lasting.

Not surprisingly, demons often took the form of women as they tempted men to lust. Sometimes the demonic women were vile: "The devil came to him like a black woman, evil-smelling and ugly. He could not bear her smell and thrust her from him." This temptation was easily resisted and proof of the monk's previous victory over lust, for the ugly woman/demon said, "God has not let me seduce you, but has shown you my ugliness."[20] Most hermits recounted demons of more beautiful shape: four demons in the guise of beautiful women appeared before one monk who had to resist them for forty days.[21] The church father Jerome claimed that while he was in the desert "where I had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts, I often found myself amid bevies of girls."[22]

The temptations of demons still maintained a connection between sexuality and society, for the demons brought company to the solitude of the desert, and

it was the company that led to temptation. This continued association between sex and society was further developed in the texts that claimed that demons led real women into the arms of monks. The *Apothegmata* claims that a prostitute was led by Satan to gamble on her ability to seduce a famous hermit. She failed. In another case, an archbishop explained to a woman why the holy Arsenius could not pray for her. The churchman said, "Do you not realize that you are a woman, and the enemy uses women to attack holy men?"[23] These and similar warnings reminded ascetics that the danger of sexuality lay in society; Satan used women to bring the monks into tempting social interactions. Thus, whether women were real, and delivered by Satan, or demons, also delivered by Satan, the temptations could cause monks to fall back into society from solitude.

The real change in attitudes toward sexuality came from a recognition that lust lay not in temptation from without, but from deep within the human heart (and to stay true to ancient physiology, from deep within the kidneys where some believed semen was produced). Some of the *Sayings* reveal the torment when ascetics realized that lust came to them even in solitude: One brother says to an older hermit: "What am I to do, for these foul thoughts are killing me?" Another laments, "What can I do? My mind is always thinking about fornication; and does not let me rest even for an hour, and my heart is suffering."[24]

For the monks, the visible evidence of their innate sexual longings were nocturnal emissions that periodically disturbed even their brief slumbers. They talked about these emissions, wondered whether they were natural, like urination or nasal discharge, or whether they were indeed evidence of uncontrolled lust. John Cassian explored these questions in more detail than other ancient writers, and his description reflects the desert understandings of these disturbing signs of solitary sexuality. I will follow Cassian's analysis of this expression of male sexuality.

Male ascetics faced problems with lust that women did not—their bodies demonstrated visible signs of sexual arousal regardless of the state of their minds. Cassian recognized what he called "natural stirring" of the flesh in infants and small children, or in erections caused by full bladders. Cassian further shared the medical view of the ancients in assuming that nocturnal seminal emissions were a natural discharge of excess "humours" that had been created in the spinal "marrow."[25] However, the experience is obviously fraught with much more emotion than this rather clinical description conveys.

Cassian and the monks knew that nocturnal emissions were frequently, if not always, an expression of lust. As Cassian explained, there were three kinds of fornication: 1) sexual intercourse; 2) masturbation and nocturnal emissions; and 3) "fornication in the heart and mind."[26] In this list, nocturnal emissions were linked to a clear, willful expression of lust: masturbation. It is no wonder that Basil of Caesarea claimed, "I do not know woman, but I am not a virgin."[27] What Basil observed was that for women, the physical state of virginity was

clear—the hymen remained intact. For men, the problem was murkier—if he had experienced a nocturnal emission, had he not experienced a sexual event?

Cassian's solution was as ambiguous as his explanation of nocturnal emissions as both natural and sinful. He claimed that a monk is pure if the nocturnal emissions are not accompanied by lustful images: "no unlawful image occurs to us as we lie at rest and relaxed in slumber." He goes further, claiming that a monk is pure if when a sexual image does surface, "it does not arouse any movements of desire."[28] This claim embodies a curious paradox: a monk could have an innocent nocturnal emission as long as it was not accompanied by lustful thoughts, and he could have lustful thoughts as long as it was unaccompanied by an erection.

Cassian had to live with such contradictions as long as he insisted that nocturnal emissions were both natural and sinful. His conclusion was to limit the night "pollution" to what he claimed was its "natural" frequency, once every two months. He said:

> Just as it is beyond nature to remove this completely and cut it off permanently, so it is a matter of the highest virtue to limit it to the unavoidable and very rare requirements of nature, which customarily strike the monk once every two months.[29]

Cassian admitted that some monks would find this goal too difficult to achieve, and others transcended this experience by having fewer incidents.[30]

Some hermits claimed complete victory over these emissions: Serenus claimed "he was very privileged to receive the gift of chastity to such a high degree that he was no longer disturbed, even during sleep, by the natural arousal of the flesh." Evagrius died at the age of fifty-four, claiming he had escaped the torments of lust for the previous three years.[31] The mention of such remarkable achievements confirmed Cassian's observation that the presence, frequency and nature of nocturnal emissions became the benchmark for a monk's spiritual progress.

In summarizing his analysis of spiritual progress, Cassian identified six stages of victory over lust, and his list shows the increasing internal nature of the struggle. First, the would-be ascetic had to cease all deliberate sexual activity, presumably including resisting the urge to masturbate. In the second stage, the monk rejects lustful thoughts, and in the third, he is not moved by the sight of a woman. In the fourth, he no longer has erections while awake, and in the fifth, references to sexual acts in the Scriptures affect him "no more than if he was thinking about the process of making bricks." In the sixth and final degree of chastity, his sleep is unaffected by sexual dreams and the resultant orgasmic emissions.[32] Even while listing the avoidance of nocturnal emissions as the highest state of purity, Cassian retreats from the treating of these as wrong. Instead, he claims that although night fantasies are not sins, they are "nevertheless an indication that lust is still

hiding in the marrow."[33] Sexuality had moved from the social realm to the interior of the body.

Cassian shares with the desert fathers and mothers the conviction that in their quest for spirituality they had to purify their bodies as well. Cassian quoted Paul, writing, "abstain from fornication, that each of you know how to possess his vessel in honor and sanctification not in the passion of lust."[34] However, Paul's view was that of the ancient Romans—sex was a social matter, and avoiding sexual intercourse allowed one to sanctify one's body. However, Cassian and the monks had a higher standard; in solitude they had discovered that lustful feelings were inside—as we might say, hardwired—and consequently for them the struggle against fornication moved from the streets of the towns to the dark alleyways of the heart and the marrow of their bones. Therefore, the strategies for conquering lust became more complicated than previously thought. For example, Cassian described how Roman gladiators avoided nocturnal erections and emissions by simply sleeping with a lead shield over their genitals. The weight of the lead prevented any genital movement.[35] Such mechanical means did not address the longing within any more than simply moving to the desert would avoid sexuality. No, would-be ascetics would have to fight the battle of lust within themselves.

Many of the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* indicate that the first strategy for overcoming desire within oneself is to replace and thus displace the feelings. Since bodies cannot usually experience two competing feelings or thoughts, ascetics focused on opposing lust with its opposite. Consider the advice of one hermit: a brother said to a hermit, "What am I to do, for these foul thoughts are killing me?" The hermit said to him, "When a mother wants to wean her baby, she smears something bitter on her breasts: and when the infant comes as usual to suckle, he tastes the bitterness and is repelled. So you ought to put bitterness into your thought." The brother said to him, "What bitterness is this?" The hermit said to him, "The thought of death and torment, which is prepared in the next world for sinners."[36] Modern psychologists would recognize the adverse conditioning here: when a bad thought is associated with a positive experience it negates it.

The same principle was applied in even more extreme cases. For example, a woman knocked on the cell door of a monk claiming she had lost her way. He allowed her to sleep in his shelter, but was troubled by lust stimulated by the woman's proximity. Throughout the night, he held his fingers in a flame to focus on the pain of his burning fingers rather than on the fire in his loins.[37] Even more extreme was the case of a monk who was troubled by the memory of a beautiful woman. By chance, a visitor came from Egypt and told the brother that the woman was dead. The monk went at night to the place where she was buried. He dug up the corpse and wiped his cloak in the putrefied flesh. When he returned to his cell, every time he felt the temptation of lust, he smelled the cloak. As the text records, "he punished himself with the smell until his passions died down."[38] All these cases and more show the ways monks used adverse conditioning to drive longing from their bodies and their memories.

A second and likely equally effective method to transform their bodies into non-sexual vessels was fasting. Many of the *Apothegmata* extolled the transformative virtue of fasting: the Abbott Hypericius said, "Fasting is the monk's control over sin. The man who stops fasting is like a stallion who lusts the moment he sees a mare." He also said, "When a monk's body is dried up with fasting, this lifts his soul from the depths. Fasting dries up the channels down which worldly pleasures flow."[39]

Dioscorus, abbot of some hundred monks, explained the relationship between food and sexuality, for he explained the prevailing medical wisdom that said semen was made of excess food and liquid. Consequently, he said, "We should try to keep the fluid depleted by the prolongation of fasting. Otherwise, it arouses our sensual appetites."[40] John Cassian linked this medical advice with his concern to prevent nocturnal emissions. He said that an excess of liquid became concentrated in the marrow, and nature had to eliminate it. These humors were most easily eliminated at night, for as he wrote:

> The quality of urine which gathers constantly while we are asleep, overfilling the bladder, arouses the relaxed members of eunuchs and children as well as grown men . . . One must eradicate this excess even to the point of drinking less water, so that as less fluid passes through the increasingly idle and parched members every day, this physical movement which you consider inevitable becomes rarer and also weaker.[41]

Aline Rousselle has calculated the caloric intake of these desert ascetics to determine the probable relationship between malnutrition and sexual activity, and demonstrates that fasting would work. The average monk's diet was about 1,000 calories a day, and in modern studies sexual activity, including nocturnal emissions, cease with a diet of anything less than about 1,400 calories.[42]

However, Cassian observed what modern studies have also shown: sexual fantasies and desire increase during the beginnings of malnutrition. It is probable that for this reason, Cassian recommended against extreme fasts. He said, "We must constantly maintain a moderate and regular fast,"[43] and it is likely he was correct in his analysis. If a monk alternated between excess calories and an extreme fast, he would be plagued by increased desire during transition phases. Cassian was surprisingly inaccurate in his prediction that the "normal" frequency of nocturnal emissions in monks consuming about 1,000 calories a day was one episode every two months. Indeed, within six months of such severe fasts, it is likely they would no longer be troubled in their sleep. It is possible that in a population long used to periodic hunger, the sexual drive lasted longer than in our well-fed subjects. In this case, Cassian and the other monks had to look to means other than adverse conditioning and fasting to cure their sexual longings. And they did.

Once they realized that sexuality lay within themselves, one recommended solution was to bring the longings into the open and share them with other hermits. As Cassian warned, "we shall not . . . permit to take root within us what we shudder to allow in the open, and we shall not be contaminated by a hidden acquiescence in matters that shame us when they are publicly known."[44] That is, sexual fantasies thrive in private and fade with public disclosure. The *Apothegmata* tell repeatedly of hermits who overcame the temptations of the night by telling of the fantasies to others. As one claimed, "Nothing troubles the demon of lust more than laying bare his urgings. Nothing pleases him more than the concealment of the temptation."[45] Frankly, it seems a little counter-intuitive to think that discussing sexual fantasies repeatedly among celibate men would cause them to fade, and according to the sources this cure took time. Fantasies had to be repeated eleven times and more before the cure worked.[46] Perhaps the boredom of repetition served the purpose. Perhaps also the humility of self-revelation formed a balance to the pride one could acquire in solitude, and in these revelations, Christians came to know more about this demon of interior sexuality, and each learned that his sufferings were not unique.

These solutions to the problem of lust and temptations testify to the difficulty of attaining chastity. A hermit spending most of his time alone and fasting to near starvation still had fantasies to share. The almost insurmountable task of overcoming one's sexual nature led the desert fathers to the final conclusion about how to attain their goal: you cannot do it alone; it requires God's grace. As one hermit said, "No one can endure the enemy's clever attacks, nor quench, nor control the leaping fire natural to the body, unless God's grace preserves us in our weakness."[47] Notice that at this point, desire is seen as "natural" to the body, or innate.

The recognition that these ascetic heroes needed God's grace to achieve their goal brought these reflections on sexuality into the great early fifth century theological controversies: Augustine argued with Pelagius about whether humans have free will not to sin. Cassian once again served as the bridge from the desert to the West as he engaged this topic. He was in a peculiar situation of admiring the accomplishments of the ascetics—and he did give them credit for their strength—and recognizing that the continuing mark of nocturnal emissions meant that overcoming lust completely was out of their control. Cassian believed that God created humans with a "spark of good will" that allowed for human effort. The "spark of good will" required God's grace to complete the effort.[48]

Cassian's sophisticated observations grew from his experience in the desert where he saw men struggle valiantly against their own sexuality, yet winning only with God's help. This combination earned Cassian condemnation as a "semi-Pelagian" for giving too much credit to the human will.[49]

The future lay with Augustine who saw sexuality as original sin imprinted indelibly in the flesh by the semen discharged in intercourse.[50] In a sense, the desert fathers lost their battle against sex in the desert. Once sex was no longer

a social disease but an interior flaw built into their flesh, victory became a miracle. The perfect hope for the monks was related by Father Elias, who had a vivid dream of castration: "Three angels took hold of him, one by the hands and one by the feet, and the third took a razor and castrated him." For the next forty years he felt no more desire. Father Serenus, too, "prayed to God to make him a eunuch, and he dreamed he saw an angel open his body and remove a tumor. A voice told him that God had granted him perfect chastity."[51] Mystical castration came to few in the desert; most spent their lives struggling against the lust that they discovered deeply imbedded in the solitude of their hearts. We are the heirs of these desert seekers in our attitudes towards our bodies, our genders and the passions that burn within us.

Notes

1. Aline Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and Body in Antiquity,* trans. Felicia Pheasant (New York: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1988), 18.
2. James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 16–21.
3. Brundage, *Law, Sex,* 21.
4. Rousselle, *Porneia*, 33–7.
5. Paul Veyne, "Homosexuality in Ancient Rome," in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Time*, eds Philippe Aries and Andre Bejon (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 29.
6. Peter Brown, "Late Antiquity," in *A History of Private Life from Pagan Rome to Byzantium,* ed. Paul Veyne (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 243.
7. Veyne, *Private Life*, 243.
8. Brundage *Law, Sex,* 21.
9. See Derwas Chitty, *The Desert a City* (Crestwood NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1966), which details the large numbers of ascetics fleeing to the fringes of society.
10. Helen Waddell, *The Desert Fathers* (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 89.
11. Joyce E. Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (London: Verso, 1991), 17.
12. Salisbury, *Church Fathers*, 17.
13. Benedicta Ward, *The Desert Fathers: Sayings of the Early Christian Monks* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 30.
14. See Salisbury, *Church Fathers* for a discussion of the women's views of sexuality.
15. Rousselle, *Porneia*, 148.
16. Columba Stewart, *The World of the Desert Fathers* (Fairacres Oxford: SLG Press, 1986), 38.
17. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 283.
18. "Life of St Antony," in *Medieval Saints: A Reader,* ed. Mary-Ann Stouck (Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press, 1999), 59.
19. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 48.
20. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 40.
21. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 46.

22. Salisbury, *Church Fathers*, 19.
23. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 46, 10.
24. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 43, 44.
25. Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 69.
26. Stewart, *Cassian*, 67.
27. John Cassian, *The Institutes*, trans. Boniface Ramsay (New York: The Newman Press, 2000), 161.
28. Cassian, *Institutes*, 157.
29. Cassian, *Institutes*, 161.
30. Cassian, *Institutes*, 161.
31. Rousselle, *Porneia*, 157; Stewart, *Cassian,* 76.
32. Rousselle, *Porneia*, 157.
33. Rousselle, *Porneia*, 157.
34. Cassian, *Institutes*, 159.
35. Cassian, *Institutes*, 156.
36. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 43.
37. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 46–7.
38. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 39–40.
39. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 27.
40. Rousselle, *Porneia*, 171.
41. Rousselle, *Porneia*, 172–3.
42. Rousselle, *Porneia*, 176–7.
43. Cassian, *Institutes*, 162.
44. Cassian, *Institutes*, 157.
45. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 37.
46. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 37.
47. Ward, *Desert Fathers*, 35.
48. Stewart, *Cassian*, 79.
49. Stewart, *Cassian*, 77–8.
50. Augustine, it should be noted, thought that Adam and Eve were created as sexual beings and that God intended them from the start to reproduce sexually, although sexuality accompanied by lust was a consequence of the Fall.
51. Rousselle, *Porneia*, 151.

4

Virtue and Violence
Saints, Monsters and Sexuality in Medieval Culture

Samantha J. E. Riches

The version of the life of St Benedict (*c*.480–*c*.550) presented in the thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* contains a variety of anecdotal accounts of the activities of the saint and his followers. Two of these form an interesting commentary on medieval views of the temporal world and its temptations presented within the context of a collection of saints' lives that was often used as a source for both sermons and images throughout Europe in the late medieval period. The first incident concerns St Benedict himself, living as a hermit in a desert place:

> Soon the devil brought to the holy man's mind the image of a woman whom he had once seen, and he was so aroused by the memory of her that he was almost overcome with desire, and began to think of quitting his solitary way of life. But suddenly, touched by the grace of God, he came to himself, shed his garment, and rolled in the thorns and brambles which abounded thereabouts; and he emerged so scratched and torn over his whole body that the pain in his flesh cured the wound of his spirit. Thus he conquered sin by putting out the fire of lust, and from that time on he no longer felt the temptations of the flesh.[1]

Subsequently, there is an account of an interaction between St Benedict and one of his followers:

> [A] monk, who was unhappy in the monastery and wanted to leave, importuned the man of God so much that finally, having had enough of this, he gave the needed permission. Hardly had the monk got outside the gate when he met with a dragon, which opened its maw and wanted to devour him. The monk cried out to some of the brothers who were nearby: "Hurry, hurry, this dragon wants to

> eat me!" They ran up but saw no dragon, and led the trembling terrified brother back to the monastery, where he was quick to promise that he would never leave again.[2]

The three topics in the title of this article may at first glance appear to be only loosely related: certainly some saints encounter monsters, but to what extent are—or were—saints understood to have sexuality? What role have monsters played in an understanding of sexuality, both animal and human? Most particularly, do the encounters between saints and monsters give space to some kind of mutual sexual dynamic? These are all large questions that demand far fuller answers than is possible within the confines of this article;[3] however, as these brief anecdotes from the life of St Benedict indicate, not only can we clearly identify the sexuality of saints—and its sometimes violent control—as a topic of interest to medieval people but we also have evidence of a monster being used as a personification of the temptations of the world. Admittedly, there is no direct evidence here that the sins that the apostate monk may have fallen into were necessarily sexual, but it seems very likely that thwarted sexual desire would have formed at least part of his motivation to seek to leave the monastery in the understanding of the medieval reader.[4] As we shall see, dragons and other monsters seem frequently to have exhibited an association with untrammeled sexuality within medieval written and visual culture, and it is certainly possible to interpret this episode with this motif in mind.

I have written elsewhere on some of the range of meanings associated with saints' encounters with monsters,[5] and also, in common with several other commentators, on the sexualized discourse that attaches itself to some saints' cults.[6] However, this current collection presents me with a welcome opportunity to focus directly on the overlap between these topics, and hence to engage with some thorny issues around medieval understandings of the roles and meanings of both saints and monsters in connection with sexual urges and sexualized activities, particularly where written and/or visual accounts of the encounters between saints and monsters seem to invite a reading that highlights a sexualized dynamic. In this article I am focusing on some presentations and understandings of three saints in particular, St George, St Michael and St Margaret, with brief references to comparative figures. The choice of these three central characters is informed by a number of significant features of their presentation in late medieval Western Christian thought, and overall the article aims at giving the reader a sense of the potential for approaching visual and written accounts of other saints with a similarly nuanced set of questions in mind. First, all three encounter—and defeat—monsters, yet, as we shall see, different understandings and meanings have been mapped onto these saints and their concomitant legends so that they present a range of understandings of the meanings of both monsters and saintly encounters with them. Second, two of the three—St George and St Margaret—have martyrdom legends, while the third, St Michael, operates entirely outside

this paradigm. In this way we can begin to gauge the extent to which an apparently sexualized discourse within an encounter between a saint and a monster is informed by other aspects of a saint's cult that may also appear to be constructed to project, or enable, a particular kind of sexualized agenda. Third, two of the three—St George and St Michael—are ostensibly identified as "male" while the third, St Margaret, is demonstrably "female": this too presents us with a range of gender identities upon which a sexualized encounter with a monster can be imposed.

To begin with this issue of the gender of these saints, it is now commonly agreed by gender historians that concepts such as "male" and "female" are overly blunt labels to apply to any individual, for they obscure a multitude of nuanced gender roles. It is generally accepted that both masculine and feminine gender identities are qualified by a range of complicating factors such as age, occupation, activities, dress and social status, as well as the more obvious issues surrounding individuals who consciously move between gender identities through affecting the apparel or demeanor conventionally associated with a member of a different gender category. With a historically dubious saint the problems are magnified, for we must acknowledge that we are dealing with a figure who is almost entirely the projection of some kind of group consciousness, a consciousness that can vary quite radically over time and space, and even between different individual adherents inhabiting the same time and space. St George is a good example of a figure who seems to exhibit "gender slippage": as we shall see below, he is sometimes presented as an authoritative, aggressive exponent of a particular type of high-status male identity, while on other occasions he is apparently labeled as a physically vulnerable and powerless figure who is "emasculine," if not strictly "feminine."[7] St Margaret, by contrast, can be fairly securely identified as a feminized figure, although her presentation in her legend as a high-status woman who vows her virginity to God ensures that she is qualitatively different from the "average" female adherent of her medieval cult, and is arguably closer to higher-status males than to lower-status women. Her most obvious gender ambiguity lies in the fact that, despite retaining virgin status throughout her life, she was identified as the patron saint of childbirth—a life-cycle experience common to virtually all women living outside the cloistered world of a nunnery, and indeed to quite a few of those living within it, particularly those who took the veil as widows. Meanwhile, St Michael presents a whole other set of gender problems. As an angel he is to be understood, strictly speaking, as an insubstantial creature of light, with no genitals or other identifying marks of biological sex. However, he is consistently gendered male through his name,[8] through the use of male pronouns in descriptions of his deeds,[9] and, most significantly, through the activities and dress associated with him: he is frequently depicted wearing armor and engaged in battle, and as such is constructed with the overtones of a particular kind of high-status masculinity.[10]

Bearing these problematic gender identities in mind, we can move on to consider the additional layers of meaning provided by a sexualized reading of aspects of a saint's legend. The clearest examples of the general connections between saints and sexuality are often thought to occur in the written and visual records of medieval understandings of martyred saints. Recounting the story of the "passion" of a saint presents an opportunity for the narrator (whether in oral, written or visual form) to present a commentary on the sanctified body's capacity to transcend above both physical suffering and sexual urges. The motif of forcibly bared flesh is a common feature of martyrdom narratives. It is often contrasted with heavily clothed torturers, allowing for the construction of a dichotomy between the vulnerable body and the invulnerable soul. Penetration of the saint's flesh is also a common feature of martyrdom narratives, and this topos seems to operate on several levels; it not only emphasizes the vulnerable body/invulnerable soul motif—arguably this informs the anecdote about St Benedict's mortification of the flesh recorded in *The Golden Legend*—but also invokes the concept of innocent flesh that was untainted by ungovernable sexual impulse in the period before the Temptation and Fall of humanity. Furthermore, the penetrative tortures presented in these narratives often seem to operate as a way of labeling the torturers as unclean and sexual creatures in contrast to the clean and chaste martyr, and the trope of penetration is often accompanied by a direct evocation of chastity. This is particularly clear in the narratives of female virgin martyrs, for there is often an episode where an offer of marriage is made to the saint, which she refuses because she has already vowed her virginity to God.[11] The legend of St Margaret is a good example of this format,[12] and her rejection of the suitor is presented as a crucial element in the story of her ascent to claiming a heavenly crown for it precipitates her trial and torture under the direction of her rejected swain, a heathen ruler. St Margaret's decision to live in chastity allows her to emulate both Christ and the Virgin Mary in their rejection of an active sexual life; chastity in itself is a form of sexual identity, albeit a largely negative one, and it is an identity that has been promoted to Christians as the pinnacle of virtuous living over many centuries.[13] Masculine equivalence is harder to find, but there are a few male saints who are explicitly described as virgins,[14] and others where this sexual status is strongly implied—St George rejects a thank-offering of the rescued princess's hand in marriage in the legend of the dragon fight, for example.[15] Furthermore, many male martyrs experience penetrating torments as part of their passion sequence: as we shall see, St George is one example, for he suffers a range of invasive tortures such as being raked, scourged, sawn in half and having nails driven into his body.[16] Meanwhile, the case of the arrow-filled St Sebastian, who has famously been understood as a homoerotic figure over several centuries, is surely evidence of the sexualizing potential of a penetrative assault.[17]

While the physical sufferings presented in these martyrdom narratives often seem to position the saints as emasculine figures, we should also be aware that

some very masculinized activities are also associated with these individuals—both "male" and "female." For example, the conversion of nonbelievers, whether as individuals or as large crowds, is often a factor in these legends, sometimes through preaching and teaching and on other occasions through the forbearance demonstrated by the suffering saint. Conversion, preaching and teaching—particularly in a setting other than the domestic realm—all seem to be coded as "masculine" actions within late medieval consciousness, and it is notable that these activities are associated with a number of ostensibly "female" saints, such as St Margaret, St Katherine and St Ursula, as well as obviously "male" martyr saints, such as St George, St Lawrence and St John the Evangelist.[18] Some "female" saints go even further in their adoption of "masculine" patterns of behavior: for example, St Ursula leads a large group of followers of both sexes, including 11,000 female virgins, although traveling and leading large groups are both conventionally associated with "male" saints in later medieval thought. According to the version of her legend presented in *The Golden Legend* she even founds an order of knighthood—surely a concept of high-status, privileged masculinity—for her female followers: this is an incident that surely indicates gender slippage.[19]

Thus we have a fairly clear paradigm where the martyr saint, whether physically "male" or "female," is the object of an apparently gendering sexualized threat enacted by male torturers and their male paymasters—it is very rare for torturers to be presented as female, and then only as part of a mixed-sex group, and unknown for the heathen ruler (or equivalent) to be presented as a female figure. This in itself raises intriguing questions about gender roles that label the torturers and rulers as representatives of a particular type of aggressive, sexual masculinity, a masculinity that is arguably congruent with the life experiences of many "successful" laymen at a time when maleness was often defined in relation to the ability to procreate children and to fight to defend oneself and one's family, but a world away from the (theoretically) celibate, non-combative lifestyle that was enjoined upon clerics.[20] This aggressive masculinity acts as a foil to the transcendent martyred saint, who seems to be defined in ways that cannot be reduced to simplistic terms such as "male" or "female," and instead calls upon a range of culturally defined gender markers such as physical vulnerability and authoritative behavior, including preaching and conversion, which effectively position the individual saint outside—or above—the conventional nexus of human gender roles.

Yet within the saint's encounter with a monster the ground rules are far less defined. First, we should be clear that by no means all of these encounters end in physical conflict—the battles between saints such as St George, St Michael and St Margaret with their respective dragons are justly well known, but there are many other examples of narratives of saints and monsters where the monster is merely banished to a place where it cannot harm people, or even is left entirely in peace to go about its business as it chooses.[21] This flexibility is entirely at odds with the consistency with which martyrdom narratives are presented: the details

of the tortures may vary, but the story reliably climaxes with the death of the saint, usually through beheading, and the soul's acceptance into heaven. It seems that there is no equivalent in martyrdom legends of the saint and the monster agreeing to differ: the heathen ruler never backs down and allows the saint to continue to live a Christian life, presumably because the experience of persecution was such a formative influence on the Early Church. Second, where a conflict between saint and monster does take place the power relationship is very different to that between the martyr and the torturer. In martyrdom narratives—both written and visual—the vulnerability of the martyr's flesh is a crucial part of the story, for it provides the opportunity for spiritual transcendence, and in consequence the heathen ruler—or equivalent—and his assistant tormentors are firmly cast in the roles of assailants. However, in the legends of saints who encounter monsters the saint is clearly identified as the principal assailant, or is at least party to an assault on the monster taking place at the hands of others.[22] As yet I have not uncovered any medieval accounts where the saint suffers physically in the jaws of the monster, however horribly it is described or depicted. The monster may well have attacked and eaten people before the saint arrives, but the nature of the combative encounter between them is such that the saint's holy power ensures that he or she is never in any real danger. As a concomitant to this, the penetrative weaponry of swords and lances wielded by St George or St Michael can be read as an equivalent of the arrows, hooks, rakes and flaming torches wielded by torturers in martyrdom accounts. In effect the monster becomes the object and the saint becomes the subject of a physical, potentially sexualized, aggressive encounter. The account of St Michael in *The Golden Legend* states that "the devil deceives the mind by false reasoning, entices the will by seduction, and overpowers virtue by violence,"[23] yet in the aggressive encounters between saints and monsters it is virtue that triumphs through violence. This apparent volte-face is particularly evident in the legends of St George, a dragon slayer who uniquely wields sword and lance yet also finds himself on the business end of a range of such weapons, combining as he does the persona of a monster defeater and a fully fledged male martyr.

St George has been an enormously popular saint throughout most of Christendom since his cult first began to establish itself widely on the back of extensive martyrdom narratives of the eighth century. In the post-Reformation period his identification as a dragon slayer has been crucial in his success, with its clear potential for interpretation as a form of good overcoming evil, Christ overcoming the devil, *urbs* overcoming wilderness, and various other—often political—oppositions. However, the story of his encounter with a dragon was a relatively late embellishment of his legend, largely arising from its inclusion in the *Golden Legend* version of his life,[24] and it seems that in the late medieval period he was recognized equally as a martyr and a dragon slayer, and celebrated in both these capacities.

As we have seen, the construction of the archetypal martyrdom legend can be understood to offer considerable potential for a sexualized reading, and St George is no exception to this rule. He is depicted in both words and images as the object of a considerable range of penetrative (and some non-penetrative) tortures that are presented with little consistency between different versions, to the extent that there are some geographically specific tortures associated with him, such as being nailed and chained to a table in Catalan imagery.[25] He is frequently associated with being sawn in half, scourged, beaten and—like almost all martyrs—beheaded, and overall it seems safe to assume that St George was understood to function as a transcendent figure in the vein of female virgin martyrs. However, an equally potent evocation of sexuality is found in some late medieval images of his encounter with the dragon, one that, in contrast to the emasculinization of torture, seems to position him squarely within the ambit of aggressive, high-status masculinity. St George's dragon has variously been interpreted as an allegory of heresy, chaos and more generalized evil, but, most interestingly for our purposes, it also seems to act on occasion as a figure of lust. The encounter has obvious overtones of good overcoming evil, for St George, as a saint, is clearly identified with the forces of heaven, while the dragon, with its snaky associations,[26] is strongly linked to the demonic tempter in the Garden of Eden. Figure 4.1 shows an early sixteenth-century image of St George and the dragon that formed part of a scheme of stained glass within the house of the Leicester patrician John Wygston.[27] St George, armed as a knight and brandishing both lance and sword, tramples the dragon underfoot while spearing it through the jaws of the larger of its two mouths. The end of the dragon's tail bears a secondary head, which makes a valiant—though ultimately fruitless—effort to attack the saint by biting his thigh while the tail itself curls around his lower leg. At the base of the tail an almond-shaped orifice is indicated, and this motif is the key to understanding the image as a depiction of a sexualized encounter, for it allows the dragon to be read as an archetype of a negatively charged feminized sexuality where an exposed vulva is symbolic of a base female sexual identity.

The trope of the "gendering orifice" occurs in at least fifty images of St George and the dragon from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, along with other, far rarer, evocations of a female gender role and/or sexual identity for the monster such as the depiction of breasts or dugs and the presence of dragonlets. There is a high degree of consistency in the iconography of these images, with the dragon routinely placed on her back in a position of extreme vulnerability that reveals the pudendum. This type of positional cue is frequently enhanced by the presence of a pseudo-phallic pointer, such as a broken lance, that is aligned to lead the viewer's eye to the orifice itself. Furthermore, the fact that St George is invariably shown in the process of attacking the dragon in the mouth or throat—as a variant he may be about to cut off the creature's head while a prominent mouth or throat wound is already visible—is surely significant. The concept of the *vagina*

Figure 4.1 Stained glass panel of St George and the Dragon, English, *c.*1505, Newarke Houses Museum, Leicester

Source: Dr Phillip Lindley

dentata—the toothed vagina—was familiar to medieval culture, with its associations with the fear of female sexuality and the female sexual body, but the common perception of a link between the female mouth and the female genitals went far further than this.[28] In effect, St George's attack on the dragon's mouth is a substitute for an assault on her vagina, an assault that would seem to demand a sexualized interpretation in the mind of the viewer.

While it could be asserted that the visual motif of St George's encounter with the feminized dragon arose in order to permit a duality of high-status male versus base female, we should also be aware that the saint is strongly associated with chastity in his medieval cult. We have already noted his refusal to marry the rescued princess and also his apparent construction as a transcendent virgin martyr, but beyond these factors lies an oral and visual tradition that identifies him as "Our Lady's Knight," the champion of the Virgin Mary: there is very good evidence of this topos in English poems, carols and a range of visual imagery.[29] The Virgin herself is, of course, an archetype of chastity, and in consequence she would seem to demand a chaste champion. The identification of St George in relation to the Virgin, and indeed as an explicitly chaste figure, also occurs outwith the context of the English medieval cult,[30] and in consequence we can map this understanding on to a range of images of St George and the feminized dragon so that we find not only a dynamic of male versus female, high status versus low status, but also chastity versus untrammeled sexuality. Given medieval understandings of the susceptibility of mortal men to fall foul of women's unbridled passions, it is perhaps unsurprising that this saint is shown sublimating his inherent sexual desire through attacking the dragon's mouth with his phallic weaponry. Like St Benedict he defeats the temptations of the flesh, but he achieves this through assaulting the source of this lure—feminized sexuality—rather than attacking his own masculine body with penetrative thorns and brambles; that task is left to the hyper-masculine torturers who will attack his by-then stripped and emasculine flesh at a later point in the narrative.[31]

Unlike St George, St Michael is not associated with martyrdom. However, he is credited with engaging a dragon in an overtly physical manner, although in his legend the monstrous opponent is clearly identified as a form of the devil rather than as an actual animal or as an allegory of lust, heresy, chaos or generalized evil. St Michael is identified in several places in the Bible as the captain of the heavenly host, but he is frequently depicted in single combat with Satan, who tends to be represented either in the form of a human-like, or composite, demon, or as "the Great Dragon" that is referred to in the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation.[32] Often these images show the saint trampling on his enemy, in reference to Psalm 91, 13: "The dragon shalt thou trample under foot," and he frequently is shown binding the creature with chains or transfixing him with a lance: in this latter form the iconography of St Michael is particularly close to that of St George, a similarity that is evident in even a cursory comparison of Figures 4.1 and 4.2.

Figure 4.2 shows "Saint Michael triumphant over the Devil," painted by the Spanish artist Bartolomé Bermejo in 1468,[33] probably to stand as the central panel of an altarpiece that was formerly in the church of San Miguel in Tous, near Valencia. The kneeling figure on the left is the donor, Antonio Juan, Lord of Tous. He is shown in an attitude of prayerful contemplation, and holds a psalter open at two penitential Psalms (Psalms 51 and 130). On the right side the victorious archangel triumphs over his defeated enemy, presented here as a composite, grotesque monster. This visual treatment of the devil, and demons more generally, is typical of northern European art of the late medieval period: Hieronymous Bosch's early sixteenth-century fantastical monstrous creatures are well known,[34] but they were clearly influenced by the creations of earlier artists such as Dirk Bouts. His *Last Judgement* altarpiece of 1470 features a range of composite demons exhibiting body parts apparently derived from bats, birds, lizards, snakes, bulls, cats and fish.[35] During the later fifteenth century, and beyond, there was a strong affinity between Spanish art and Northern European art, undoubtedly encouraged by the trade in paintings from north to south, and there is clear evidence in Bermejo's painting of the influence of Flemish art in particular; indeed, he may well have been directly trained by a Flemish artist. Thus we are presented with a naturalistic but rather austere portrait of the donor; the whole work demonstrates a mastery of the Netherlandish technique of oil painting, particularly its facility for modeling and creating surface detail. The treatment of reflections, for example in St Michael's crystal shield and in his polished breastplate, is especially fine, and again stands as testament to the strong influence of the art of the North.

The donor seems untroubled as he kneels immediately before the unholy, monstrous body of the devil, presumably because he is confident of the defeat of evil. St Michael towers over both the man and the devil, his armor gleaming while his swirling, red-lined golden mantle complements his glorious rainbow-hued wings. His elegance and majesty speak of a higher realm than the prosaic world inhabited by the donor (and indeed the viewer), and a strong contrast is drawn between the archangel—a creature of light and air—and the completely earthbound devil, the lowest creature here in several senses. The creature is pinned bodily to the ground by the trampling feet of the saint on his torso and wings, and this body speaks of base creatures and grotesque deformity. It is multiform: the tail is that of a serpent, the wings are bat- or dragon-like, the limbs are scaly and reptilian or bird-like. The torso is metallic, perhaps to form a commentary on the beauty and worth of the saint's armor: the devil's base armor is a pale imitation, which singularly fails to protect the unworthy fighter. Meanwhile, the monster's arms combine reptilian scales with metallic panels, again demonstrating the unnaturalness of the monster.

One very striking aspect of this image of the devil is the artist's use of the motif of additional mouths. Most obviously, a large secondary mouth is placed in the monster's abdomen, but the elbows of the creature also sport toothed

Figure 4.2 Bartolomé Bermejo, "Saint Michael triumphant over the Devil with the Donor Antonio Juan," 1468, oil on wood, 179.7 × 81.9 cm

Source: National Gallery, London

mouths. There seem to be at least four aspects underlying the presence of these supernumerary mouths. First, they emphasize the monstrosity of the creature and in consequence its otherness. A useful comparative is offered by the blemmye, a human-like creature that has no head but instead sports a face—and hence a mouth—in the chest; the blemmye is a standard feature of both early world maps and late medieval travelers' tales.[36] Misplaced and oversized body parts are a feature of a number of exotic monsters such as the blemmye, which are located in medieval consciousness on the margins of the known world, and their quality of otherness can be interpreted as permitting a commentary on the nature of humanity itself: it is only by recognizing the other that we can define ourselves.

Second, we should also be aware that hell is frequently represented by medieval artists in the form of a huge, monstrous mouth, gaping open to receive the souls of the unredeemed. This subject is widely found in sculpture, manuscript illuminations and panel paintings, but perhaps most significantly it appears in wall paintings of the Doom, of the Last Judgement, which were a standard feature of the decorative scheme in late medieval churches.[37] There is, therefore, clear evidence that, within popular consciousness, mouths, especially the mouths of monsters, could have demonic overtones: there is a clear linkage between the devil, a mouth and hell.

Third, the "elbow mouths" give the appearance that the creature is consuming itself. The "self-eater" is a standard motif in early medieval art, with the tail-swallowing snake known as Uroboros frequently appearing in Celtic interlacing in early medieval work such as the eighth-century Book of Kells,[38] for example. In this earlier format the self-consumer is often interpreted positively as symbolic of eternity; however, in this much later image the implication would seem to be the eternal damnation that awaits all whose ultimate destination is hell. Meanwhile, the concept of self-consuming can again be understood as other: it is demonstrably unnatural behavior in the context of "civilized" human life.

Finally, the supernumerary mouths arguably evoke the *vagina dentata*, the toothed vagina already referenced in relation to St George and the feminized dragon. The particular monster shown in Figure 4.2 would seem to be less clearly gendered than the dragon in Figure 4.1, for no identifiable vulva is visible. However, we should be aware that the secondary mouth in the torso may well be standing for a vulva, playing on the well-established concept of the dangers of a wandering womb.[39] The doubled mouth/doubled vulva implied in this image is, of course, a negative attribute: more female genitals indicates more danger. This evocation of female sexuality and its terrors is also played upon in the monster's twin sets of eyes: each mouth is surmounted by a pair of hard red jewels, which imitate nipples. The mimesis is particularly clear in the eyes above the lower mouth, for their position in the creature's chest is surely testament to their duality. The twinning of these nipple-eyes with the "actual" eyes in the monster's face serves to underline the link between the mouth and the vulva: in effect, the creature's face and torso both sport the fundamentals of the female sexual body.

Returning to focus on the lower mouth, a further clue to the evil and dangerously sexualized nature of the monster is evident, for a snake can be discerned partly within and partly outwith the monster's body. Does the snake live inside the monster, in an evocation of the belief in vaginal serpents that attack unwary men through biting the penetrative penis?[40] Or is the creature paying only a temporary visit, recognizing and appreciating the evil quality of the monstrous body? It is possible that both meanings are intended. The presence of the snake certainly highlights the perceived link between the devil and the serpent who acts as the tempter in the Garden of Eden, and we can also make a comparison to the snake-like tail on St George's dragon in Figure 4.1, where the coiling action, and indeed the bite of the secondary head, underlines the link between dragons and snakes. All these aspects combine to create a being of unnatural, evil and dangerous sexuality. This sexualized aspect is not necessarily "male" or "female," although the dangerous female gender role perceptible in some images of St George and the dragon, including Figure 4.1, would tend to indicate that it is female sexuality that is being invoked here too: the presence of breast-like protuberances around the lower eyes/nipples of the monster, the apparent play on the concept of the *vagina dentata* and the fear of the consuming or assaulting female orifice all tend to contribute to this impression.

St Michael holds a magnificent crystal shield in his left hand, orienting it towards the monster, who holds up an arm in apparent terror. The artist may here be seeking to evoke the Classical myth of Perseus, who overcame the snake-haired Medusa by assaulting her with her own reflection in his shield. The snakes presented in the image, both at the abdomen of the monster and in its elbow-mouths, all fit with this reading; again, it seems that a dangerous female aspect is invoked. However, we should not overlook the breast-like quality of the shield with its rounded, pendulous shape and its ruby red nipple-jewel: the saint is arguably being endowed with a nutritive, positive aspect of female sexuality, in sharp contrast to the base invocation of the dangerous vulva within the presentation of the devil. Admittedly, the monstrous creature is endowed with nipples and breast-like protuberances, but, as we have already observed, these aspects are freighted with negative connotations as a result of the otherness that obtains to them through their dual nature as nipple-eyes and also the depiction of metal-like flesh. By contrast, the saint's breast is pure, its clarity arguably standing as testament to its noble quality. The theoretically genderless archangel is thus charged with aspects of both masculine and feminine gender roles, through the depiction of armor and weaponry and also the breast-shield. The former markers certainly indicate the privileged masculinity associated with knighthood, but it is also likely that this invocation of a nutritive, positive femininity is also endowed with a high status. In particular, there is a possibility that this heavenly breast-shield would be interpreted as a reference to the breast of the Virgin, the co-redeemer whose milk was understood as a counterpart to the blood of Christ himself in late medieval religious thought. In this way the breast-shield born by

St Michael is, like the saint himself, a creature of the heavenly realm, deeply significant within the teleology of the redemption of humanity, and a sharp contrast to the role of the monstrous devil. The donor's clear ability to ignore the great enemy and to keep his mind fixed on higher things is ample testimony to his sure belief in the power of heaven to triumph.

Meanwhile, St Margaret makes a fascinating comparative to both St Michael and St George: she is a bona fide female virgin martyr whose written legend recounts that she encountered and overcame the devil in the form of a dragon through much less aggressive means than those employed by these "male" saints. The *Golden Legend* version of her life states that the episode occurred while she was imprisoned during the sequence of tortures that formed part of her trial: she had previously refused to marry the prefect Olybrius, who had then tried to persuade her to renounce her Christianity by means of force.[41] Following a beating with rods and laceration with iron rakes, when "the blood poured from her body as from a pure spring,"[42] surely evidence of both penetrative torture and also the assertion of her virginal state, Margaret was imprisoned overnight. She prayed to God to let her see her enemy, whereupon "a hideous dragon" appeared. Jacobus, the author of this collection of saints' lives, then presents us with two different versions of what happened next. He initially tells us that she made the sign of the cross (presumably with her hand), whereupon the creature vanished. A second version, which he tells us "is apocryphal and not to be taken seriously," is that the monster opened its maw and swallowed her whole. As it was trying to digest her she made the sign of the cross, and by the power of this sign the dragon burst open so that she emerged unscathed. In medieval art St Margaret is commonly depicted appearing from within the monster, especially through its back while the edge of her robe is still visible, trailing from the creature's mouth, as a reminder that she had been swallowed by it. This vivid narrative was clearly far more popular with both artists and patrons than the relatively tame version preferred by Jacobus where the monster disappeared; indeed, St Margaret's identification as the patron saint of childbirth is directly linked to the tradition that she was swallowed and emerged unscathed, just as a baby should emerge safely from the womb.

However, turning to Figure 4.3, an English alabaster figure of the fifteenth century, we find that the iconography of St Margaret by no means always mirrors these written narratives. Here we see the saint trampling a dragon, much in the manner of both St George and St Michael in Figures 4.1 and 4.2; furthermore, she is stabbing the creature with some kind of weapon.[43] It is unclear whether it is to be read as a cross-topped lance or, perhaps, as a processional cross that is serving as a spear: either way, the object combines clear Christian symbolism with the deadly effect of a penetrative weapon. This iconography is clearly not derived from the *Golden Legend* version of her story; in fact, it seems likely that it is inspired by imagery of other saints with monsters, most obviously St George and St Michael. Does then St Margaret take on some of the sexualized aspects

Figure 4.3 Alabaster of St Margaret, English, fifteenth century, private collection
Source: Warburg Institute Library, London

of these other saints? It may be tempting to read the swallowing of the virgin by the monster in this way, especially because of the possibility that the creature's mouth is acting as an invocation of a vulva, but I would argue that in this specific image, and perhaps in imagery of St Margaret generally, there is little reason to make this reading: it is more likely that the dragon's mouth is acting as a reference to the hell mouth. Another, potentially more fruitful, possibility lies in the saint's use of penetrative weaponry: there seems to be an inherent paradox in a virginal woman violently penetrating the body of the dragon just as she herself has been tortured. The allusion may be to her own impenetrable and transcendent soul and also to her power in overcoming her (male) oppressor, and hence to a gender position that is above and beyond the standard male/female dichotomy.

One other complicating factor about St Margaret is the identification of her dragon as a form of the devil. While we have seen this already in relation to St Michael, we should be aware here that the creature takes on a kind of hallucinatory quality, for in Jacobus's preferred version it vanishes entirely at the sign of the cross. On one level this raises questions about medieval understandings of dragons (are any of them actually real?), and it is also an indicator of the nature of the devil: he is a tricksy creature who can slip beyond sight and reach, then shape-shift into another format. In St Margaret's legend he next takes on the form of a man, but, clearly unimpressed, the saint grabs him by the hair, pushes him to the ground and tramples him, crying: "Lie still at last, proud demon, under the foot of a woman!" His response to her is equally indicative of an awareness of their shifting gender roles; "If I'd been beaten by a young man I wouldn't mind, but by a tender girl . . . !" To ram the point home, Jacobus states that Margaret was reassured by her encounter with the devil. "[S]he had defeated the chief, she would certainly outdo his hireling." The hireling in question is the prefect Olybrius, the figure who exhibits the most privileged of male gender roles within the narrative. In this way the episode exhibits the power of saints in general and St Margaret in particular: she is a figure of strength and authority who can overcome the greatest of foes, and consequently occupies a supreme human gender role, well above the common level of ordinary men and women.

In conclusion it can be argued that it is the issue of oppositionality that is the key to the interpretation of these stories and images, and also the source of their popularity. Saints are malleable, mutable beings whose usefulness lies in their ability to exemplify a whole range of concepts. Thus St George is able to be understood simultaneously as a vulnerable emasculine virgin martyr and an authoritative hypermasculine military figure: his own transcendence above the flesh and its sexuality is encoded in both his forbearance during torture and his defeat of the dragon (who is only the heathen emperor in a monstrous guise anyway). St Michael and St Margaret would seem to be more fixed in their gender roles as "male" and "female," yet they too can be shown to demonstrate that the status of saint seems to give the individual (or rather, the artist or author depicting them) the license to call upon both feminine and masculine signifiers, particularly

those associated with high social status. Meanwhile the monsters in all their forms operate as foils to the saints, sometimes highlighting their virtue through a display of baseness and otherness and at other times simply providing a suitable locus for virtuous violence. In some encounters between a saint and a monster there is clear potential for us to make a reading where sexuality, particularly female sexuality, is encoded as negative, but this forms just one aspect of a discourse where the saint is constructed as a figure who is able to transcend the limitations of their humanized body.

Notes

1. "St Benedict," in Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. William G. Ryan (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), vol. 1, 186–93, at 187.
2. Voragine, *Golden Legend*, vol. 1, 192.
3. All these topics are treated in my ongoing research for a monograph on the various meanings of both written and visual treatments of saints' encounters with monsters.
4. For the purposes of this chapter the term "reader" encompasses the listener, whether to communal readings of the life of the saint, sermons or other oral forms, and also viewers of imagery relating to these types of stories (which could include dramatic presentations as well as static paintings, sculpture and so forth) in addition to actual physical readers of textual accounts.
5. Samantha J. E. Riches, "Encountering the Monstrous: Saints and Dragons in Medieval Thought," in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, eds Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 196–218.
6. Samantha J. E. Riches, "St George as a Virgin Martyr," in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, eds Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), 65–85.
7. The fifteenth-century visual cycles of St George at Stamford and Windsor provide examples of the presentation of St George as both emasculine and hyper-masculine within the same sequence. On these cycles see: Samantha J. E. Riches, "The Lost St George Cycle of St George's Church, Stamford: An Examination of Iconography and Context," in *St George's Chapel, Windsor, in the Late Middle Ages*, eds Colin Richmond and Eileen Scarff (Leeds: Maney for the Dean and Canons of Windsor, 2001), 135–50; Samantha J. E. Riches, "The Imagery of the Virgin Mary and St George in the Stalls of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle," in *Windsor: Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture of the Thames Valley*, eds Laurence Keen and Eileen Scarff (Leeds: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions XXV, 2002), 146–54.
8. The name "Michael" seems to be exclusively masculine. Its meaning is usually glossed as "who is like God," which in itself seems to imply maleness given the conventional understanding of "God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit": the gender identity of the latter is ambiguous, but the terminology of the former two is undeniably male. There is very little evidence of a widespread recognition of a feminine aspect of God during the later medieval period, and this underlines the identification of St Michael as a male figure.

9. It could be argued that the male pronoun is used in this context merely as a default—because the English language does not have a neuter gender—rather than to connote a masculine identity, but taken in conjunction with the masculine overtones of his name and the nature of his legend the conclusion that he was perceived as male by his devotees seems irresistible.
10. There are a few examples of female soldiers, most notably St Joan of Arc, but we should be aware that she was perceived by her contemporaries, according to the transcripts of her trial, as a problematically masculinized figure, especially in relation to her chosen mode of dress. See: Susan Schibanoff, "True Lies: Transvestism and Idolatry in the Trial of Joan of Arc," in *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc*, eds Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood (New York: Garland, 1996), 31–60.
11. There are a few important exceptions to this general rule where the virgin saint does agree to marriage: St Ursula and St Cecilia both transcend the conventions of female virgin martyrs in this regard. However, there seem to be no examples of a saint who goes back on a vow of virginity by actually consummating the marriage.
12. "St Margaret," in Voragine, *Golden Legend* vol. 1, 368–70.
13. The role of chastity and virginity within Christian thought is a complex one, not least because of the inherent paradox that if all Christians live an entirely chaste life the religion will almost inevitably become extinct. Issues around chastity and virginity are explored in Sarah Salih, *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001).
14. St John the Evangelist is the prime example of a male saint who is explicitly described as a virgin: "St John the Evangelist," in Voragine, *Golden Legend* vol. 1, 50–5, at 50.
15. St George is consistently offered a reward for killing the dragon, which he always refuses. In some cases this reward includes the rescued princess's hand in marriage: this element is found in Alexander Barclay's version of 1515, while William Caxton's translation of *The Golden Legend* (1483) informs us that she was arrayed as a bride when she was sent out to meet the dragon. Both versions are reproduced in Alexander Barclay, *The Life of St George*, ed. William Nelson, Early English Text Society, 230 (London: Oxford University Press, 1955 and 1960).
16. For a full discussion of St George as a martyr see Samantha Riches, *St George: Hero, Martyr and Myth* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000 and 2005).
17. All saints are modeled on the life and sufferings of Christ, and we should not overlook the fact that he too was the object of penetrative assaults, most obviously in the use of the lance, nails and crown of thorns. The potential for Christ to be understood as a sexualized figure has been explored by a number of commentators, most recently Robert Mills in "Ecce Homo," in *Gender and Holiness*, eds Riches and Salih, 152–73.
18. As noted above (note 14), St John the Evangelist's incontrovertible status as a male virgin martyr makes him highly unusual among the pantheon of saints. The fact that he is a rare example of a saint who did not die as the result of attempts to kill him through violence, which included poisoning and boiling, but who is understood to have died a natural death at an advanced age, adds to his inherent interest as a potential site of gender slippage.
19. On St Ursula see Samantha J. E. Riches, "'All Took the Oath of This New Knighthood': Gendering St Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins," in the proceedings of the conference "The Cult of Saints in Eastern and Central Europe (1400–1800)," Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, September 2003 (publication forthcoming).

20. See Patricia H. Cullum, "Clergy, Masculinity and Transgression in Late Medieval England," in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. D. M. Hadley (Harlow: Longman, 1999), 178–96.
21. St Senán and St Carantoc are two examples of saints who do not physically engage with the monsters they encounter but send them away to a location beyond the realm of human civilization. See Riches, "Encountering the Monstrous."
22. An example of this format is found in the legend of St Martha. She transfixed the Tarasque, a river-dwelling monster that preyed upon ships in the River Rhone, by making the sign of the cross, then stood aside while local people beat the monster to death with sticks and stones. See "St Martha," in Voragine, *Golden Legend,* vol. 2, 23–6, at 24.
23. "St Michael, Archangel," in Voragine, *Golden Legend*, vol. 2, 201–11, at 207.
24. The ultimate allusion is probably to a metaphorical description of the heathen emperor who puts St George on trial: some revisions of a fifth-century Greek source, which purports to be based on an eyewitness account, describes him as a dragon as a way of indicating his evilness (Riches, *St George*, 27). In consequence the identification of St George as a dragon slayer seems to have been born out of his identification as a martyr, an interesting conclusion in the light of the extent to which the persona of the dragon-slaying champion seems to have sidelined the martyred saint in the post-medieval age, at least in Western Christian culture.
25. See Claus M. Kauffmann, "The Altar-Piece of St George from Valencia," *Victoria and Albert Museum Yearbook*, 2 (1970), 65–100, 85.
26. There is a strong visual association between dragons and serpents through the depiction of the dragon's snake-like tail, but over and above this factor is the common perception of dragons as a form of snake: the bestiary definition of the dragon is that it is the largest of all serpents: *Bestiary* (an edition of Oxford, MS Bodley 764) trans. Richard Barber (London: Folio Society, 1992), 183.
27. The rationale underlying Wygston's selection of imagery, which includes both secular and religious subjects, is unclear. However, given that the Guild of St George was a powerful political force within late medieval Leicester, and the general association between the triumph of St George over the dragon and the assertion of civic values over the chaos of wilderness, it is at least possible that the imagery was selected as a testament to the power of the *urbs*. In this reading the sexualized aspect of the iconography is incidental rather than fundamental—I have argued elsewhere that by the sixteenth century, in English visual material at least, it is possible that the "feminized dragon" is part of the stock-in-trade of artists creating imagery of the saint, in that it is a variant that the patron can select along with the number of wings, legs and heads that the dragon will sport. However, this does not undermine the possibility that a sexualized dynamic could be read into this iconography, and hence a commentary on the sexual status of the saint vis-à-vis the dragon could be formulated in the mind of the observant discussant. For a full discussion of the trope of the sexualized dragon see Riches, *St George*.
28. Catherine Blackledge, *The Story of V* (London: Phoenix, 2004), 24.
29. Riches, *St George*, 68–71.
30. For example, the Virgin is shown arming St George as a knight in the Valencia altarpiece, a German work created for a Guild of St George in Valencia *c.*1420. It is unclear whether the impulse to present him in relation to the Virgin came from the

artist or the patrons. Meanwhile, St George is still considered to be an emblem of chastity within contemporary Coptic and Orthodox Christian belief.

31. The chronology of the dragon-slaying legend in relation to the martyrdom legend is not fixed, but they frequently occur in this order, apparently on the basis that it is the saint's conversion of the rescued princess and others that leads to his arrest.
32. Revelation 12: 9.
33. Bermejo is a nickname meaning red: the artist's actual name was Bartolomé de Cardenas. Probably originating from Cordoba, he was a leading painter of the fifteenth century in Spain, working particularly in Barcelona, Valencia and Zaragoza. Recorded from about 1468, when he was already working, he died in 1495.
34. For example, the Hell wings of the triptychs known as the *Haywain* (*c.*1500) and the *Garden of Earthly Delights* (*c.*1515), both Madrid, Prado, depict many composite monstrous demons, with fish-like, bird-like and stag-like aspects present among a wide range of ghastly creatures.
35. Paris, Louvre. One of the demons even sports a pair of nipple-eyes very similar in conception to those seen on the devil in Figure 4.2, and this may well indicate that Bermejo's treatment formed part of an established tradition of form for devilish creatures.
36. For example, the apocryphal travel work credited to Sir John Mandeville mentions the blemmye; *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, trans. C. W. R. D. Moseley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983).
37. Examples of English churches with at least partially extant medieval doom paintings on the chancel arch include Bacton (Suffolk), Beckley (Oxfordshire) and Great Harrowden (Bedfordshire).
38. Dublin, Trinity College.
39. I have argued elsewhere that the medically inaccurate longitudinal wound depicted in late medieval images of the birth of the Antichrist by Caesarian section acts as a form of vulva—artificial, violently opened and base—to form a diametric opposition with the ever-hidden, ever-sealed vulva of the Virgin Mary. The date of Figure 4.2 is congruent with these images, and this tends to suggest that a similar understanding of the movable, visible and unnatural vulva is being brought into play. See Samantha Riches and Bettina Bildhauer, "Cultural Representations of the Body," in *A History of the Human Body in the Medieval Age*, ed. Monica Green (Oxford: Berg, forthcoming).
40. Blackledge, *The Story of V*, 194.
41. Voragine, *Golden Legend*, vol. 1, 368–9.
42. Voragine, *Golden Legend*, vol. 1, 369.
43. St Margaret holds her book in her other hand: this may look rather unlikely at first glance, given the attack on the monster, which is happening simultaneously, but the book is a standard piece of iconography for saints who were learned—an understanding that was associated with this saint. Its presence indicates the extent to which visual symbolism could operate outside the conventions of written narratives.

Part Three

Consuming Passions

5

"The Food of Love"
Illicit Feasting, Food Imagery and Adultery in Old French Literature[1]

April Harper

Barbara Ehrenreich has proposed that in the modern era, food "may be the only sensual experience left."[2] Her omission of sex itself as a sensual experience is perhaps intentional in her commentary, yet what is most interesting about her assertion is that while we may debate the lost sensuality of sex in our culture, there appears to be no debate or refutation of her claim to food's inherent sensuality. The link between food and sensuality, or indeed between food and sexuality, appears to be firmly ingrained in our minds; it is found in the increasing trend to cast young, beautiful women and men in television cookery programs; it is in the food pages found in *Playboy* magazine or even in films, such as the infamous kitchen scene in *9 1/2 Weeks* (1986). My first realization of the link between the two came at age six. I was in my Italian grandmother's kitchen, watching her make my grandfather's favorite dish: a very tiny little pumpkin-filled tortellini. It was an immense undertaking, cutting, gutting, roasting, peeling and mashing the pumpkin and making her own pasta. It had taken almost all day and then, amidst all the work, she turned around to me, seated on my three-legged stool, and said, "There are two desires a man follows, and his stomach always wins—especially when he is very young or old." She picked up a beautiful sheet of perfectly rolled out pasta and said, "Your hair will go grey, but your pasta only gets better." I thought about what she said for a minute and then asked what was the other desire men follow. She said she would tell me when I was married and chased me out of the kitchen with her usual excuse that virgins ruin dinner. So from the age of six, I was keenly aware that there was a link between a woman's sexuality, the sexual fidelity of marriage partners and a woman's ability to cook for the man she loves. Much later in life, my own academic work on images of adultery in Old French literature reminded me of this conversation as I found

episode after episode of women feeding their lovers, serving up both meals and their bodies to the men they loved who were seldom their husbands. In his work on the *Ascetic Eucharists*, Andrew McGowan claims:

> From Durkheim through Levi-Strauss to Mary Douglas, there has been a continued discussion of the way in which food and meals can be understood largely by analogy with language, as a code or metaphor whose structure somehow patterns the structures of the universe of the participants.[3]

Indeed, food as a sexual metaphor has long been part of the Western tradition: Eve's forbidden fruit, Aphrodite's golden apples and the prostitute in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* who civilizes the wild-man, Enkidu, with sexual experience and the eating of bread, to mention but a few.[4] While some may argue that the use of food as a sexual symbol in the Old French literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is, perhaps, a continuation of this metaphor or an aspect of inherited culture, it does appear that another discussion is being held through these images in the texts, for it is specifically the adulteress who is depicted in the act of feeding her lover. The discussion seems to be concerned not only with the connection between a woman's sexuality and food, her body and her role as provider of sustenance both culinary and sexual, but mainly with what happens when that connection becomes deviant—what is the connection between improper feasting and illicit sex?

To understand the discussion of women, food and adultery in the medieval texts, it is necessary to explore the origins of the ideals of proper and improper sexual and feasting behavior upon which the medieval commentary was based. The discussion started not in the High Middle Ages, but rather in Antiquity. The authors of these twelfth- and thirteenth-century sources were drawing on earlier literary/social conventions and entering into a millennium-long debate on the proper place of food and sexuality in Christian culture as a response to the perceived impropriety of both Greek and Roman society. A large amount of excellent scholarship has recently been devoted to the theme of feasting in the Greek and Roman world and its connection to sexuality. As both Veronica Grimm and Emily Gowers note, sex and eating are commonly teamed in ancient literature, art and in practice, most often through the *convivia* or dinner party.[5] Quite often these drinking parties would include, in the later stages, the introduction of prostitutes.[6] In fact, women who worked in restaurants, taverns or any food shop were considered to be prostitutes in the eyes of the law. It was not these establishments' links with alcohol that made them suspect or linked with immorality so much as their link with food. Illegal and indeed illicit activities including adultery, fornication and even treason were associated with places of eating.[7] Within the home, dinner parties could likewise devolve into scenes of drunkenness, extravagant, occasionally obscene feasting and sexual activity with prostitutes or sometimes young boys. This is a favorite theme among satirists such as Horace, who

discussed their views on such gatherings, contrasting them to the higher ideal symposia where the food is simple and the sexual element removed.[8] Horace crafted scenes set in the not-so-distant-past of farmers' faithful wives preparing simple meals for their husbands in contrast to the women of his day, who were shown to engage in crude sex acts and indulge in a decidedly non-Roman diet of luxury associated with the Greeks.[9] Other Roman satirists such as Juvenal, Persius and Petronius invented fantastic scenes of illicit feasting and sex within their works to magnify their criticisms.[10] Petronius came quite dangerously close to the truth in parodying several of the Emperor Nero's banquets and specifically their decadence, both culinary and sexual. This is seen most obviously in the *Satyricon*'s description of the dinner party held by Trimalchio, the ex-slave turned wealthy socialite, who invites a sundry crowd for a dinner party at which he serves outrageously expensive dishes and engages in obscene efforts to impress his guests, such as serving a pig that is prepared to appear uncooked. When its belly is sliced open, the organs, which have been cleverly switched with sausages and other foods, fall to the floor. During the meal, the guests, who are vying for the sexual attention of a slave boy, watch as Trimalchio's wife begins to prostitute herself drunkenly.[11]

Likewise, the Emperor Caligula was renowned for combining these two indulgences: food and sex. Determined that one would accompany the other, he went so far as to serve the Senate a dinner consisting only of carrot dishes: carrot was thought to be a powerful aphrodisiac, whether for its potent properties, or phallic shape and original dark purple color.[12] The word "carrot" was used as a euphemism for the penis as were a multitude of other foods, including broccoli, sprouts, and of course, sausage.[13] The female genitalia were often evoked in thinly veiled imagery such as pigeon's rumps, snowy porridge and figs.[14] The art of cooking was often likened to the act of seduction, as shown in both Anaxippus and Plautus's works.[15] Indeed, the playwright Terence shows not only the link between food (and in this case also alcohol) and sex, but portrays them as wholly dependent on each other when he has his character Chremes in *Eunuchus* declare: "Sine Cerere et Libero frigit Venus" (Without Ceres [food] and Libero [wine], Venus [sex] grows cold).[16]

This connection between food and sex, the stimulating of both appetites simultaneously or sequentially was pounced upon by several of the Church Fathers, including Tertullian, Clement and perhaps most notably, Jerome. Jerome drew upon humoral theory as put forth in medical writings, especially those of Galen.[17] Ancient physicians had long made a connection between the properties of food and sexual cravings, especially pointing out certain foods that would raise the heat of a body and thus spark other heat-dependent desires. Often these foods were recommended to increase a man's libido or to help cure impotency.[18] Many of Jerome's writings, promoting extreme asceticism, focus on this relationship between the two appetites of the flesh, but instead of linking them primarily to male libido or sexual dysfunction, they are focused very clearly on women.

Sexual continence was central to Jerome's concept of Christian asceticism: it was a difficult condition to maintain and this Jerome blamed to a large extent on women. In his opinion, women were, by nature, sensuous, lewd and corrupt. Even Christian women, even consecrated virgins, were too worldly in his view, most of them "gluttons, drunkards and pretenders."[19] An ascetic life was the only solution to save a woman from her lewd nature and eventual sin. Jerome stated his ideal woman was one who:

> Mourned and fasted, who was squalid with dirt, almost blinded by weeping, the psalms were her music, the gospels her conversation, continence her luxury, her life a fast. No other could give me pleasure but one whom I never saw eating food.[20]

In several of his letters addressed to women, Jerome prescribed fasting for the purpose of "cooling their hot little bodies."[21] He openly stated that God does not take pleasure "in the rumbling of our intestines or the emptiness of our stomachs, but that this is the only way of preserving chastity."[22] While he confessed that he had never given up delicious food entirely, he preached a strong line of near starvation for young women and female children and was held as responsible for encouraging the death of at least one young woman for whom he advised the complete abstinence of all food. "Nothing," he declared in a letter to the young widow Furia, "so inflames the body and titillates the organs of generation as undigested food and convulsive belching."[23] In a letter to the monk Rusticus he declares "indigestion to be the parent of lust."[24]

The impact of Jerome upon the writers and theologians of the Middle Ages was great not only for his Vulgate translation of the Bible into Latin and his *Vitae* of the desert fathers but also for his opinions on the prurient pairing of sex and food. This connection between eating and lust continued to be a strong theme in medieval theology and was clearly present in the thirteenth century as illustrated in a poetic sermonette of the Franciscan Jacopone da Todi in which he paraphrases Jerome, stating "Control your gluttony because excess is poison and the companion of lust."[25] In Robert Grosseteste's *Templum Dei*, the seven cardinal sins are divided into categories: those against God, those against the community and those against the self. The sins are further divided into their causes: the demons, the world and the sins of the flesh. Interestingly, gluttony and lust are explicitly linked twice: as sins of the flesh and as sins against the self.[26]

It is clear that, from Antiquity onwards, medical, theological and literary writings made a strong connection between food and sex, and more specifically between culinary indulgence and lust-driven, illicit sex. Given this trope in these other genres, how were women, sex and food presented in the Old French literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries? Caroline Walker Bynum has shown that medieval women played significant roles as the controllers of food, determining who gets it, and how much and when.[27] This is perhaps most often shown in

courtly literature and epic through the depiction of various queens' roles as cupbearers, using food and drink to honor valiant warriors and unite the participants of the feast.[28] The depiction of Guinevere at a feast in the opening of *Mort Artu* or *Death of Arthur* is an especially interesting case. At a feast occurring on the king's return to Camelot, the narrator focuses the action upon the queen's table, at which several excellent knights are sitting, including Gawain. Unbeknown to the queen's favorites, the knight Avarlan, who had harbored a mortal hatred for Gawain, is also at the feast. Knowing the queen would show special attention to Gawain as her husband's nephew and reward him with a token of the feast, Avarlan poisons a piece of fruit and places it upon her table. The queen deviates from normal feasting behavior, however, and gives the token to a young knight called Gaheris of Carahew, who, we are told, accepts it for his love of the queen. He immediately dies upon tasting the fruit.[29] This is interesting not only for what it reveals of women's role in feeding men, in rewarding the best knight with a choice bit of food, but because someone has interfered with that role by poisoning the fruit. Any deviation from the proper feasting role is dangerous. The power of the queen's culinary reward is here perverted and magnified, for her control of food has literally become her control of these men's lives.

As witnessed in the genres of literature in Antiquity, the perversion of food contains not only an element of danger, but is primarily sexual. So, in the literature of the Middle Ages, the connections are not only between women and food, but between women, food and sex with the focus upon the illicit portrayal of all three. Just as this motif of illicit feasting and sexual activity was prevalent in all genres of ancient literature, including the play and the uniquely Roman genre of satire, so it is prevalent in all genres of medieval literature: the romance, the *lais* and the fabliaux. While not without an element of humor, the genres of the romance and the *lais* are usually vague or romanticized in their descriptions of sex, even when it is obviously illicit. A famous example of such courtly decorum in the face of illicit behavior is found in Chrétien de Troyes' account of Lancelot and Guinevere's tryst in which he denies the reader anything more than a voyeuristic glimpse of the pair:

> Now Lancelot had his every wish: the queen willingly sought his company and comfort, as he held her in his arms and she held him in hers. Her love-play seemed so gentle and good to him, both for her kisses and caresses, that in truth the two of them felt a joy and wonder, the equal of which had never yet been heard or known. But I shall ever keep it secret, since it should not be written of: The most delightful and choicest pleasure is that which is hinted, but never told.[30]

The fabliaux, on the other hand, suffer no such prudery. As a genre, the fabliaux, a large collection of witty fable-like poems often expressed in earthy language, were devoted to burlesquing the themes of courtliness and the propriety of institutions such as marriage and the Church. The depiction of love, sex and the

relations between the sexes in the fabliaux are often seen as providing a stark contrast to the images and messages found in the more courtly genres. It is, therefore, particularly interesting that they both provide a similar view of the link between illicit female sexuality and feasting.

One example of such an illicit pairing of sex and food is found in the fabliau *Baillet,* in which an honest cobbler discovers his wife is having an affair with the local priest. The narrator describes the details of the lovemaking and feasting that take place in the husband's absence in such a fluid manner that it is difficult to separate the activities, as if the boundaries between the two are indistinguishable: "between the two, the lovers had their pleasure, and devoured the finest morsels and the strongest wine they didn't spare."[31] The lovers' secret might have been kept from the husband but for the impatience of the cobbler's daughter who was often bribed for her silence with morsels from the lovers' feasts. Impatient for her share of the hidden food, which can only be brought out once her slow-moving father has left the house, she openly pines in her father's presence for the vast array of condiments and foods, tarts and pies. Indeed, "the table is spread," she says, but until her father leaves the house, she has nothing but bread to eat. The woman's control of food is obvious—she barely feeds her husband or child, but gorges with her lover on choice victuals. Some husbands endure more than hunger, such as the husband of *La bourgoise d'Orliens* who, in an attempt to find his wife entertaining her lover with both his roast and her body, is mistaken for the lover himself and beaten by the servants he has set as guard, while she enjoys her meal and her real lover downstairs.[32] Here is an obvious tie not only with the control of food, but also the control of sex.

Not only are food and sex often paired activities, they are occasionally viewed as being comparable and interchangeable. In *Baillet*, it is her lover whom the wife feeds before he partakes of her physically. Another fabliau, *Le prestre qui abevete*, depicts a similar scene of consumption. When the priest in this story arrives at his lover's house, he yells out that he can see her and her husband having sex through the open window. The husband replies that they are only eating, but the priest swears he sees them having sex. The husband changes places with the priest and to his shock, sees the priest begin to have sex with his wife. When he cries out, the priest assures him he is only eating. The husband is befuddled by this magic window that seems able to transpose the acts of eating and sex to the watcher.[33] Here the link between the two activities and the consumable nature of both sex and food is further exemplified.

Similarly, the fabliau *Le clerc qui fu repus derriere l'escrin* is the story of a wife who is eating with her lover and is interrupted by yet another of her lovers who also takes part in the meal and sex only to eventually be replaced by the husband who, after discovering both lovers in their hiding places, sits down to finish the meal—opting for a full stomach rather than a row with his unfaithful wife.[34] More often, as seen in *Baillet,* the fate of the husband is to go hungry. This fabliau is rare in that it depicts a married couple eating. The instances of

wives feeding husbands are uncommon and, as in the case of this tale, and that of *Le prestre qui abevete*, are often accompanied by the wife's infidelity.

In addition to these cases illustrating a connection between illicit sex and feasting there is also a wide use of puns, euphemisms and allusions to food in the discussion of illicit sex. As noted in the Latin texts, there are several references in the Old French texts to food as euphemisms for genitalia: most notable is the description of one man's penis, which is described through food imagery, "the length of which is like a goose's neck, the color like a red onion, the opening being the size of a bean."[35] The sex act in many of the fabliaux in particular is referred to as "having the final course, to nurse or to be skewered or turned on a spit, to seed, to grind grain, to harvest, to crush grapes, to crack nuts, to have a roast or some bacon."[36] Pork products seem to be most commonly related to sex, genitalia and women. For instance, the husband of one adulterous wife switches the body of his wife's would-be lover for a pig.[37] In *Le meunier d'Arleux*, a pig is exchanged for conjugal rights.[38] Pillow talk could likewise contain food metaphors—in one case, a knight forgets himself and slips into a bit of crude and offensive pillow talk with the married woman he is making love to, asking "Madam, would you care to crack nuts." The wife is so offended by this that she ends her affair with the young knight there and then.[39]

While the connection between illicit sexual behavior and feasting is common in these texts, one food in particular becomes associated with adulterous passion: meat. Meat was considered one of the foods that ancient physicians and indeed church fathers recognized as being responsible for raising the body's heat and therefore libido.[40] The eating of meat, like the freedom to engage in sex, was one of the sacrifices a monk made when dedicating his life to Christ. For laymen, meat and sex were also forbidden during Lent and Easter. These two heat-producing and sinful activities were seen as counterproductive to the contemplative nature of the seasons, and marriages were not conducted at these times, as they could not be consummated.[41] The lust-inciting properties of meat are frequently tied to its consumption, as Jerome and Galen warned in Antiquity, and as was also illustrated in medieval literature. In the Prose Tristan legend, we find the lovers, Tristan and Iseult, hiding in the forest from her husband, King Mark's wrath. Sheltered in the woodland cottage Tristan secures for them, the lovers are able, as the narrator informs us to his amazement, to survive without bread, and live only on a diet of meat and sex.[42] This passage emphasizes the break the lovers have made with society by embracing a life in the hinterland of the forest, in which the rules of their society are not applicable.[43] This break is not only evident in their illicit and rough living conditions, but in their rejection of bread: a key symbol of civilization. Their survival upon meat alone not only reinforces the primitive nature of their diet but emphasizes the overwhelming image of their carnal lifestyle: both dietary and sexual. This lifestyle is physically eating away at them, however, as they grow pale and wan and are consumed by their passion.[44]

The references to meat are sometimes less obvious, as seen in a burlesque of the Tristan romance, a fabliau entitled *Guillaume au Faucon*. After being thwarted in his advances on many occasions, the young knight Guillaume refuses to eat until his lord's wife yields to his desires. The wife does not expose Guillaume's real hope, but when questioned by her husband, replies that Guillaume desires her "falcon." Not aware of his wife's clever use of sexual euphemism, her husband orders her to give the young man what he desires. Thus, Guillaume's culinary fasting is at last satisfied by a sexual feast with his lord's wife. After making love to her, all physical effects of his dietary fasting disappear, illustrating once more the interchangeable nature of food and sex.[45] It is also interesting to note the implications of the use of the term "falcon" as a euphemism for the woman's genitalia. It seems at first to be a strange comparison, as falcons were traditionally seen as a bird with masculine associations. However, its use here may in fact be a reference to its use in hunting: the pursuit of meat. Further, the violence of the kill could be a subtle reference to orgasm, as sexual climax was occasionally referred to as a "death," but is also reflective of the threat of violence present in the fabliau, should the husband discover this tryst, and emphasizes the sexually active and occasionally dominant or predatory role of the adulterous wife.[46]

Another, more subtle reference to the illicit nature of meat is found in *Baillet*. Not only is meat present in the feast the wife attempts to serve her lover, but the chest in which the meat is kept becomes an object central to the ending of the affair and the punishment of the priestly lover. The wife, who has a made a feast for her lover to dine on, is caught out when her husband, tipped off by his daughter's pining, returns early. She hastily hides her lover in the meat safe—the motif of the lust-inducing properties of meat is subtle, though intentionally emphasized. Her husband realizes what his wife has done, and rather than expose the priest within his own house, devises a plan to shame the priest publicly. He loudly proclaims that he has decided to sell the meat safe. Baillet takes the safe to market and begins to auction it. The terrified priest inside begins to pray and Baillet drives the price up at market for this wondrous meat safe that speaks Latin. The priest's brother realizes what is happening and buys the safe to save his brother shame. Thus, Baillet makes a tidy profit, ends the affair, and gives away the wife's means of providing for her lover, which is the object associated with the offending, lust-inciting meat. There is no new safe bought at the end of the tale. It is, perhaps, a diet of vegetables for her, as Jerome would have advocated. Again, there is a strong link between the control of food and the control of sex. Baillet alone appears to take control of both in his selling of the meat chest. For most husbands, control of either is out of their grasp.

By giving their bodies as well as the choicest foods, especially costly meat dishes, to their lovers, women break not only their marital vows but also the social conventions of hospitality. An example of this double violation is found in the fabliau *Le povre clerc*. One day, a poor, wandering clerk is denied a meal by the

lecherous wife who, in her husband's absence, has prepared a sumptuous meal and is awaiting her lover's arrival. Though the clerk asks for only a small tidbit from the feast he sees she has spread for her lover, he is denied by the gluttonous adulteress. While walking, he encounters the woman's husband who generously invites him to share in their modest evening meal. To her husband's amazement and to his own amusement, the clerk cunningly forces the wife to serve the bounteous feast he had spied she and her priestly lover enjoying earlier. Ultimately, after the clerk finishes his meal he divulges the hiding place of the lover and exposes the reason for the husband's usual hunger and the impetus for that night's feast.[47]

In the treatment of the stingy wife in *Le povre clerc*, it is perhaps appropriate that a perversion of the rules of hospitality is repaid by the revelation of sexual misconduct. Revenge is also often meted out through the theft of goods or sexual favors, as found in *Le boucher d'Abbeville*—a tale of a traveling butcher who, when refused a meal at a priest's house, returns with one of the priest's own sheep he has stolen and butchered. After eating the meat with the priest and his mistress, he seduces the woman, thus satisfying his need for revenge in an illicit feast of the stolen sheep and in illicit sex with the mistress. By seeking his retribution against the priest in this way, the butcher makes sure the priest is unable to prosecute the case in any way without revealing his own illicit relationship with the woman or his own un-Christian lack of hospitality.[48]

The butcher's incorporation of both culinary and sexual topoi in his personal justice is also found in other fabliaux. This connection is sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious and often facilitates the poetic form of justice dispensed for the crimes revealed in the stories. For example, in seeking justice for the theft of food, the two clerks in *Le meunier et les deux clercs* seduce both the wife and daughter of a miller. In a later reworking of this tale, the daughter is convinced by the offer of a ring, which is actually the ring of the cooking pot hanging on the stove.[49] In another fabliau, a raped maid searches in the meat house for her rapist, a local priest. She is tempted to cut down what she presumes in the darkness of the windowless room to be a sausage hanging from the rafters of the smoke house—a "sausage" to which, the audience realizes, the priest hiding in the rafters is quite attached.[50]

So what are we to make of these examples of the paired images of inappropriate feasting and illicit sex? If, as the medieval premise held, literature should both teach and entertain, what was the audience to learn from these tales?[51] First, that there is a connection, both are acts of consumption. The term "feast" itself has interesting implications, for while lovers feast on food and sex, so husbands starve. While they are literally given table scraps to survive upon, there is the implicit connotation that perhaps they are also being served sexual scraps as well, that lovers are being given the first fruits of the table and the women's bodies while the husbands must sustain themselves with leftovers.

But the lesson was also admonitory; it carried a warning. We are told that women's sexuality is dangerous; as one fabliau states regarding women's sex, "men lose their money and honour by it and that it has destroyed many good men."[52] It is also physically dangerous to men. Albertus Magnus described an interesting case of a man who "desired" a woman some seventy times before Matins; when discovered, his body was mummified, completely dry, his eyes missing and his brain shrunken to the size of a pomegranate.[53] In line with medical theory, sex was deadly to men as it depleted them of semen, thought to be the distillation of internal organs or even brain fluid itself. Every time a man had sex, he was robbing himself of days of his life: a sexual life was a slow suicide.[54] Myths of *vagina dentata* perpetuated such fears, indeed the fabliau *Li jugemenz des cons* makes reference to this. Sisters agree to answer a riddle in order to win a young man they are fighting over. When asked whether she or her genitalia is older, one girl answers with a witty pun on the vagina/mouth parallel by saying that indeed, she is older as she has teeth and her vagina has none, however, she is outdone by her little sister who says that she is older than her genitalia because she is weaned and it still desires to nurse.[55] This fabliau is one of only a very few tales portraying women involved in sexual ingestion. And though the contest ends well, with everyone amused and the younger daughter being given in marriage, it is important to note that she does not physically ingest the young man, but after the contest, engages in proper sexual form in which it is her body that is "sampled." The edginess of the joke is not only in the crudity of its theme or in its physical humor of having women speak the crude lines but also in the flirtation with danger, for in the few scenes in which women consume their lovers, the effects are disastrous. Medieval theologians such as Bartholomew of Exeter pointed to such perversions of the natural sexual positions and roles as the reason behind a great many disasters, including the Flood.[56] Within the literature of the period, natural calamity is avoided, but the end result for the couple involved is often just as deadly.

Looking more deeply at the images of women engaged in illicit sex and improper feasting, it is not the woman who consumes, but rather who is consumed, feeding her lover by the creation of her hands and with her body. Walker Bynum's work points out the curious phenomenon that as well as controlling food, women are food.[57] Their bodies provide the nourishment upon which the young feed through nursing, but if we explore this not only in the religious sense that she examines but in a wider sexual study, we see how a woman's body is a sexual consumable as well. In the case of Guinevere, for example, she rewards the best knight at this particular feast with food but the very best knight in the court, Lancelot, is rewarded with the feast of her body.[58] Sex has many uses within the legend of the lovers: it even proves to be a medicinal tonic as Guinevere sustains Lancelot in his madness with her body when he will not partake of food. As well as nutrition, her body provides a cure for his insanity, for, after engaging in sex

for a week and a day with the queen, Lancelot transforms from his invalid state to one of vibrant masculinity.[59] Women's bodies protect their lovers, nourish them, cure them and satisfy them. However, by engaging in illicit sex with their lovers, adulteresses have inverted the sexual order and have become sexual consumers, sampling the delights of other tables. As the fabliau *Li jugemenz des cons* illustrates, by engaging in the illicit sex act, the women are vaginally and orally ingesting the forbidden flesh of their lovers. The literature that focuses on the punishment of the adulteress often centers on a poetic form of justice in which the woman who has fed her lover with both food and body and has in turn consumed his body for her own sexual appetites is often forced to consume her lover in the most literal sense with calamitous results.

One example is the case of the nun of Watton, as chronicled by Ailred of Rievaulx. When the father of the nun's unborn child is identified, he is castrated and his testicles are put in her mouth. Her judgment is to endure a most unsavory feast for an unsavory crime against her heavenly spouse.[60] Another example, and perhaps the darkest of all the scenes of feasting found within the literature of this period shows the link between illicit sex, women and feasting in its most improper form. In the anonymous *lais Ignaurés,* the lover pays for his sin of seducing twelve wives by being imprisoned for four days before being dismembered by the jealous husbands of the women. His heart and penis are served in a dish to the wives at a cannibalistic feast prepared by the husbands.[61] After gorging themselves on the meat, the women are informed of the ingredients of the dish. Each declares the meat to be the finest they have ever eaten and declares it to be her last meal. This depraved feasting results in a fast that leads to the death of each woman. The eating of this meat, the flesh that had literally encouraged and accomplished their illicit sexual behavior, ends in a penitential fast, not for the sins committed but for the loss of their lover. When women consume their lovers, it is an aberration, a perversion of the theme of ingestion, it is cannibalism. Though this motif is rare, it shows the extreme consequences for perhaps the most improper feasting; similar to the deviation of Guinevere's feasting behavior, this change in the proper roles of lover as consumer and the wife as consumable has taken a most unsavory turn, resulting in death.

In their emphasis on the scientific and theological understanding of the link between food and sex and more specifically between gluttony and lust, the medieval writers reinforced the morally and socially subversive image of women cultivated in Antiquity. This image was not only depicted in the works of men, but was embraced by women as well. While fasting was a common motif in the *vitae* of both male and female saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, food took special importance and a very central role in the fervor of female mystics and women seeking higher spiritual attainment in life. Caroline Walker Bynum and Rudolph Bell have brought attention to the phenomena of the extreme forms of female fasting and the "anorexic" saint.[62] Female saints and mystics such as

Catherine of Siena, Veronica Giuliani, Margaret of Cortona, Mary of Oignies and Christina the Astonishing were all renowned for their extreme fasting, sometimes to the point of starvation in order to refuse not just their human sinful state, but their decidedly female frailty. However, women's strong connection to food and sexuality is never far removed from even these saintly figures. Women's refusal of sex and food is often depicted as most unnatural. For example, in the *Book of Margery Kempe*, Margery's abstinence from sex and eating in her husband's presence so disquiets the man that he agrees to allow her to go on pilgrimage if she would only eat with him. Likewise, it is her rejection of food that prompts the concern of her confessor and at times the annoyance of other male figures within the Church.[63] Fasting itself is not at the root of the skepticism and concern of her husband, confessor or priests, but rather it is Margery's obsession with it, her strong emotional responses and her almost obscene craving for the Lord that seems to be most distasteful and problematic to the men. The illicit nature of women's sexuality and appetite for food are undeniable and transgress even the boundaries of the holy. Like Margery, other female mystics were criticized for this transgression. For example, Ida of Louvain was reported to crave the Eucharist stronger every day, to the point of gluttony. Her hagiographer described her craving of the host in positive terms, but notes the rather disturbing fact that Ida "discerned it with the sense of taste and even chewed it with her teeth."[64] Both she and Christina the Astonishing were eventually deemed insane for their profane cravings of the host and were chained up by their families to keep them from satisfying this spiritual lust for the ingestion of the Eucharist—the flesh of Christ. No matter how holy a station woman aspired to, she was unable to deny the sins that defined her flesh and spirit: lust and gluttony. Sacred and redemptive food is reserved for men; it is transformed by a miracle between God and the male priest in the miracle of the mass, and through the transfiguration it becomes the flesh of God as man, which is then administered by men. Even in their ingestion of the host itself, women seem to defy their proper place as consumable rather than consumer; flesh, even holy flesh, appears to have been able to incite the corrupt female mind and body.

Whether it be the savory feasts depicted in literature or the holy, unseemly spiritual cravings of her spirit, a woman could not deny the illicit nature of the food she was, she prepared and she gave. As illustrated in the wide variety of genres of literature from Antiquity through the Middle Ages, the connection between food and sex carried an inherent element of power and therefore fear of the misadministration of that power in the hands of the morally, spiritually and physically inferior agent: woman. The perversion of her role in any way led to an illicit joining of food and sex and resulted in calamity: a violation of duties to marriage, family and the community. In the end, it was the protreptic image of Eve and her apple—that connection of sex and food—that both defined and doomed women of Antiquity and the Middle Ages as they fulfilled their roles as the givers and sustainers of life and the architects and generators of sin.

Notes

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2. Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (London: Pluto, 1983), 13.
3. Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 3.
4. See Genesis 3: 1–7; *Iliad*, Book 5 and Ginette Paris, *Pagan Meditations* (Dallas TX: Spring Publications, 1986), 21; Benjamin R. Foster, Douglas Frayne and Gary Beckman, eds, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).
5. Emily Gowers, *The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 258 and 277, and Veronica E. Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting, The Evolution of Sin: Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1991), 107–9.
6. See Horace, *Satires*, trans. and ed. H. Rushton Fairclough (London and New York: Loeb Classical Library, 1925) 2, especially 2.8; Petronius, *Satyricon,* trans. and ed. Michael Heseltine (London and New York: Loeb Classical Library, 1913), Chapters 30–78; Juvenal, *Satires* in *Juvenal and Persius,* trans. and ed. Susanna Morton Braund (London and New York: Loeb Classical Library, 2004), *Sat.* 5.
7. I am greatly indebted to Jason König for unselfishly sharing his sources, time and enthusiasm on the subject of food in Roman society and especially for our discussions of the role of the tavern. See Jerry Toner, *Leisure and Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 76–8.
8. Horace, *Satires*, 2.2.
9. See especially Horace, "Epistle 2," in *Satires, Epistles and Ars poetica*, trans. and ed. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926) and Horace, "Ode 3.6," in Horace *Odes and Epodes,* ed. and trans. Niall Rudd, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), in contrast to Horace, *Satires*, 1.2 and 2.7.
10. See Persius, *Satires* in *Juvenal and Persius, Sat.*1, 2, 6; Juvenal, *Satires*, *Sat* 2.6.
11. Petronius, *Satyricon*, 30–74.
12. The aphrodisiac qualities of carrots had long been rumored in the ancient world from cultures as diverse as China, Afghanistan, Greece and Rome. Livy and Dioscorides especially advocate the use of the carrot as an aphrodisiac. While carrots are known to have diuretic and abortifacient powers, there may be evidence that they do, as Hippocrates and other Greek scholars claimed, "make men more ardent and women more yielding," as carotine and vitamin A have been tenuously linked to increase of sexual desire. Wild carrot seeds regulate menstruation and have some contraceptive effect. The carrot's original color was purple, as illustrated in the floor mosaics of Roman homes and those on tomb walls in ancient Egypt. Orange carrots were only available after the sixteenth-century Dutch manipulated the carotene rich roots of the vegetable to change the plant's color to that of the House of Orange. See William Scott, Alan Reid and Nick Jones, *Growing Schools—The Innovation Fund Projects (2002–2003): an external evaluation* (Bath: Council for Environmental Education and

University of Bath, 2003), 74. For a discussion on Roman feasts in religious festivals, those sponsored by the *collegia* and the emperors, see John F. Donahue, "Toward a Typology of Roman Public Feasting," *American Journal of Philology,* 124 (2003), 423–41.

13. James N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London: Duckworth, 1982), 14–44; Gowers, *Loaded Table,* 252–3; Martial, *Epigrams*, trans. and ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 9.2.3.
14. Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary,* 90–5; Gowers, *Loaded Table*, 252–3.
15. See especially Plautus, *Asinaria, Pseudolus* and *Cistellaria* in *Plautus,* trans. and ed. Paul Nixon (London and New York: Loeb Classical Library, 1992) vols. 2–3.
16. Terence, *Eunuchus* ed. John Barsby (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 4, 5: 732. Thanks go to Marcia Colish for sharing this excellent reference.
17. Jerome repeatedly drew upon the expertise of Galen. See Jerome, *Select Letters,* trans. and ed. F. A. Wright (London and New York: Loeb Classical Library, 1991) letter 54: 245 for a description of the effects of food in warming the body and stimulating lust. The continuing belief in the heat-generating property of these foods and the link between feasting and sex is echoed later in the writings of physicians and philosophers who were heavily influenced by both Galen and Jerome. See especially Jacob Levinger, "Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* on Forbidden Food in the Light of his Own Medical Opinion," in *Perspectives on Maimonides: Philosophical and Historical Studies*, ed. Joel L. Kraemer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 195–208.
18. See Catherine Rider, *Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
19. Jerome, *Select Letters*, letters 22: 8–16, 64: 21, 123: 4, 125: 6.
20. *Nulla fuit Romae alia matronarum, quae meam posset domare mentem, nisi lugensatque ieiunans, squalens sordibus, fletibus paene caecata, quam continuis noctibus domini misericordiam deprecantem sol saepe deprehendit, cuius canticum psalmi sunt, sermo evangelium, deliciae continentia, vita ieiunium. Nulla me alia potuit delectare, nisi illa, quam manducantem numquam vidi*. Jerome, *Select Letters*, letter 45: 183.
21. Grimm, *From Feasting*, 164.
22. *Non quo Deus, universitatis creator et dominus, intestinorum nostrorum rugitu et inanitate ventris pulmonumque delectetur ardore, sed quo aliter pudicitia tuta esse non posit*. Jerome, letter 22: 75.
23. *Et ud, quod sentio, loquar, nihil sic inflammat corpora et titillat membra genitalia nisi indigestus cibus ructusque convulses.* Jerome, *Select Letters*, letter 54: 249.
24. *Cruditatem, quae parens libidinum est*. Jerome, *Select Letters,* letter 125: 407.
25. Jacopone da Todi, *The Lauds,* trans. and ed. Serge and Elizabeth Hughes (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).
26. Robert Grosseteste, *Templum Dei*, eds Joseph Goering and F. A. C. Mantello (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), Chapters 5.6, 36. Richard Newhauser notes, in his *The Treatises on Vices and Virtues in Latin and the Vernacular* (Turnhout: Brepolis, 1997), 193–7, that by the fourteenth century gluttony was being re-classified as a "sin of the mouth" along with drunkenness. This re-classification had its origins in the early thirteenth century, but was not added as a pendant to the septenary until the writings of the French Dominican William Peraldus in the mid-thirteenth century. Gluttony's association with drunkenness and its reclassification as

a "sin of the mouth" rather than its tie to sex hence "the flesh" became especially popular in the Late Middle Ages, though, as Newhauser admits, was "limited almost exclusively to the German-speaking areas of Central Europe, perhaps because it was in part a response to the question of culpability in an authority-dominated culture." (p. 193).

27. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1987), 260–76.
28. Guinevere's queenly role at her husband's table places her not only in a context familiar to courtly culture of the High Middle Ages, but also in a familiar and ancient role of queens as "peaceweavers" bestowing alcohol or food to honor warriors. See Michael Enwright, "The Lady with the Mead Cup," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 22 (1988), 170–203.
29. Norris Lacy, trans. and ed., *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*, 5 vols (New York: Garland, 1193–6) 4: 110 and H. O. Sommer, ed. *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances, Edited from Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 8 vols. (Washington DC: Carnegie Institution, 1908–16; reprint New York: AMS Press, 1969) 6: 247–52.
30. Chrétien de Troyes, *Chevalier de la charrete,* trans. and ed. William Kibler (New York: 1981), 4654–84.
31. *Baillet*, in *Fabliaux*, trans. and eds R. C. Johnson and D. D. R. Owen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957).
32. *La bourgoise d'Orliens,* in *The French Fabliaux: BN MS 837*, trans. and eds Raymond Eichmann and John Du Val, 2 vols (New York: Garland, 1985) 2: 26–34.
33. *Le prestre qui abevete*, in Raymond Eichmann and John Du Val, *Cuckolds, Clerics and Countrymen, Medieval French Fabliaux* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1982), 43–6.
34. *Le clerc qui fu repus derriere l'escrin*, in William Noomen and Nico Van den Boogaard, *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux (NRCF),* 10 vols (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1983), 10: 119.
35. *Du fevre de Creel*, in Eichmann and Du Val, *French Fabliaux*, 2: 134–40.
36. Charles Muscatine, *The Old French Fabliaux* (New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 111.
37. T. B. W. Reid, ed., *Le Sacristan* in *Twelve Fabliaux* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), 34–53.
38. *Le meunier d'Arleux*, in Noomen and Van den Boogaard, *NRCF*, 7: 64.
39. *La dame qui se venja du chevalier*, in Noomen and Van den Boogaard, *NRCF*, 7: 82.
40. See Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 121, and Hunayn ibn Ishaq al-`Ibadi's pseudo-Galenic work on the topic in *Galen on Medical Experience: First Edition of the Arabic Version*, trans. and ed. Richard Walzer (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1944).
41. For a discussion of the forbidden nature of sex during holy days, see James Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 154–76. On meat restrictions in Benedictine houses see: St Benedict, *Rule*, 39, in Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Latina* vol. 66, col. 215ff; Barbara Harvey, *Living and Dying in England, 1100–1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 142; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven CT: Yale

University Press, 2005). Many thanks are due to Sally Dixon-Smith for generously sharing her work on the eating habits of rich and poor and for the specific references here to the dietary prohibitions in the religious calendar and of monastic houses in general.

42. Beroul, *Tristan,* in *Early French Tristan Poems*, ed. Norris Lacy, 2 vols. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1998), 1: 1768 and Renee Curtis, ed., *Le roman de Tristan en prose*, 3 vols (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1963–1985), 2: 550.
43. D. J. Shirt "*Le Chevalier de la charette*: A World Upside Down?" *Modern Language Review* (1981), 801–22.
44. Beroul, *Tristan*, 2: 550.
45. Eichmann and Duval, *Cuckolds, Clerics and Countrymen*, 87–104.
46. See Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1984) and John G. Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: the Art of Medieval Hunting* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1988).
47. *Le povre clerc*, in Noomen and Van den Boogaard, *NRCF*, 7: 98.
48. *Le bouchier d'Abbeville*, in Eichmann and Du Val, *French Fabliaux*, 2: 2–24.
49. *Le meunier et les deux clercs*, in *Sources and analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales,* eds and trans. William Bryan, Germaine Dempster and Carleton Brown (New York: Humanities Press, 1958), 100–15.
50. *Aloul*, in Eichmann and Duval *The French Fabliaux,* 1: 162–201.
51. Twelfth-century critic Denis Piramus chastizes Marie de France for failing to achieve this goal and instead supplying courtly ladies with entertainment that taught against the Church's message of the proper role of women and the place of love and sex only within the institution of marriage. See Denis Piramus (ed. H. Kjellman), "La Vie Seint Edmund le Rei," *Göteburgs Kungliga Vetenskaps Och Vitterhetssamhalle Handlingar*, series A, band 4, no. 3 (1935), 4, lines 25–79.
52. *Du con qui fu fait a la besche*, in Eichmann and Du Val, *French Fabliaux* 2: 44–6.
53. Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. M. Adamson (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1988), 55.
54. Hippocrates, *Hippocratic Writings*, ed. G. E. R. Lloyd, trans. I. M. Lonie and G. Baader (London: Penguin, 1983), 317.
55. *Li jugemenz des cons*, in Eichmann and Du Val, *French Fabliaux*, 1: 48–54.
56. See Bartholomew of Exeter, *On Magic*, in John McNeill and Helena Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principle "Libri Poenitentiales"* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 349, and Pierre Payer, *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 219.
57. Bynum, *Holy Feast*, 276.
58. Lacy, *Early French Tristan Poems*, 3: 24; Sommer, *Vulgate Version*, 4: 182.
59. Lacy, *Early French Tristan Poems*, 2: 232; Sommer, *Vulgate Version*, 3: 417.
60. See Giles Constable, "Aelred of Rievaulx and the Nun of Watton: An Episode in the Early History of the Gilbertine Order," in *Medieval Women,* ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1978), 205–26, and Sarah Salih, *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 152–65.
61. *Ignaurés*, in *Les Lais Anonymes des Xiie et Xiiie Siécle*, ed. Prudence Tobin (Geneva: Droz, 1976), lines 12–14. The eaten heart motif is taken up and expanded into the early fourteenth century romance *Roman du Castelain de Couci*. This motif is also

found in several troubadour lyrics of Guillem of Cabestany. See Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, *Troubadours: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 274–8. See also Madeleine Jeay, "Consuming Passions: Variations on the Eaten Heart Theme," in *Violence Against Women in Medieval Texts*, ed. Anna Roberts (Gainsville FL: University Press of Florida, 1998), 75–96.

62. Walker Bynum's conclusions regarding the extreme forms of female fasting are intriguing and cast much light on hardships faced by women in expressing their piety as well as the necessity for female mystics and saints not only to meet but to exceed the achievements of holy men. These ideas are in sharp contrast to the conclusions drawn by Rudolph Bell in his controversial work *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago, 1987).
63. Lynn Staley, ed. and trans., *The Book of Margery Kempe* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 19, 45.
64. Bynum, *Holy Feast,* 117. For an opposing view on fasting by women, see Rudolph Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago, 1987).

6

The Role of Drinking in the Male Construction of Unruly Women

A. Lynn Martin

Over the past twenty-five years feminist historians have demonstrated the patriarchal nature of traditional European society. The precise nature of this patriarchy, including its methods and rhetoric, changed with the passage of time, but its primary purpose and its primary effect have always been the subordination of females.[1] The subordination began at birth, when males often received better treatment than females, continued through marriage, when women passed from the control of their fathers to the control of their husbands, and did not even end at death, when burial customs privileged men. In addition to documenting the nature, purpose and effects of patriarchal society feminist historians have also demonstrated that women were not passive bystanders in their subordination. In other words, women challenged patriarchy.[2]

One way that women could challenge the patriarchal order was through the phenomenon of the disorderly or unruly woman. In late medieval and early modern Europe women were considered prone to sedition and riot, to uncontrolled and uncontrollable behavior. Disorderly wives challenged their husbands' authority and thereby the natural order of things in a patriarchal society. In the popular literature of the period, the unruly woman was primarily a male construction that reflected misogynistic attitudes and male fears of female insubordination. The unruly woman has been the subject of study by Natalie Zemon Davis in her article with the suggestive title, "Women on Top,"[3] and by Joy Wiltenburg in her book, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany*.[4] According to Davis, the image of the unruly or disorderly woman took form in festive rites of inversion—the world turned upside down—as the woman on top. Anthropologists argue that such rituals of status reversal function to reinforce the prevailing social order. Davis disagrees; the image of the disorderly woman could also undermine male authority by demonstrating behavioral options that promoted insubordination and confronted patriarchal

privilege. Neither Davis nor Wiltenburg mention the role of alcohol in their analyses of disorderly women. However, an analysis of misogynistic popular literature from the Late Middle Ages reveals that alcohol and drinking, taverns and alehouses played fundamental roles in the male construction of the unruly, disorderly woman. A familiar theme in this literature was the group of women who gathered, often secretly, in a tavern or in an alehouse to gossip, to challenge their husbands' authority, and, above all, to drink wine or ale. The consumption of alcoholic beverages was the cause of the unruliness of these women. This is evident from an examination of five works of popular literature, one French, one Italian and three English, that range chronologically from the fourteenth to the early sixteenth centuries.

The earliest and the funniest is the fourteenth-century poem *Des iii dames de Paris* (The Three Women of Paris) by Wautriquet Brassenel de Couvin.[5] The setting for the poem was a feast day, perhaps Epiphany, at Paris in 1320. Margue, the wife of Adam de Gonnesse, and her niece, Marion, were on their way to purchase some tripe at a tavern, when they encountered Madame Tifaigne, a hairdresser:

> Said she: "I know a wine so rare,
> it's like no other grown before.
> Who drinks it, it will soon restore;
> a brilliant, effervescent wine,
> bold, fresh, smooth on the tongue and fine
> and pleasant going down and mellow."

She continued by assuring Margue and Marion that the tavern keeper would let them drink on credit. The three immediately headed for the tavern to try it. After drinking large amounts of this wine, Margue was not all that impressed; it made her mouth feel queer, so she ordered some grenache. The grenache went down well, too well, for they soon had to order more, so the waiter brought each a bucket. There they sat drinking from dawn until the dead of night. In the meantime, they wanted something special to eat with the wine—a goose with a bowl of garlic on the side and fresh hot rolls. When Margue ordered the grenache, she added:

> Bring waffles and patisseries,
> shelled almond meats, a round of cheese,
> pears, spice, nuts.

As they drank and ate, they discussed the quality of the wine, and Margue advised her niece on the proper way to drink it:

> if I were you I wouldn't swill
> all mine at such a rapid clip,

but drink it slowly, sip by sip,
and leave it on the tongue a spell;
you ought to take a breath as well,
just one, for every swig you savor,
thus prolonging all its flavor.

Even before the grenache arrived Margue's behavior bordered on the unruly and the disorderly; she sang a drinking song with the words:

My dears, let's have ourselves a spree;
the mug who puts it on the line
will never get to taste the wine.

Then in the dead of night she and her two companions decided to dance in the street since no one would see them, but they wanted to keep their clothes clean, so they took them off. And so they danced completely nude, sang a love song, and gossiped about their gigolos. Someone stole their clothes, of course. They fell into an open sewer and met the dawn by lying together dead drunk, "like turds upon the avenue." The townspeople were horrified to discover them, obvious murder victims, and buried them. When the three women of Paris revived in the cemetery late that night, well and truly hung over, they made their way back to the tavern for some more wine, collapsed again in the same place, and were found again by the terrified townspeople, who suspected the work of the Devil, but this time Madame Tifaigne woke up and shouted for the waiter, "Let's have another round!" "Me too!" cried Margue. "And tripe—I want some if it's not too ripe."

The second example is a late medieval popular song from Bologna.[6] It began with a woman calling to her friend:

Come now, drink wine, good woman, and don't dilute it,
Since if the wine is strong it warms the head.

However, when they went to a tavern to drink, they drank weak wine, five barrels of it, as if it were nothing, and another quart just to enjoy the taste. After such a large amount of drink, one of them pissed so much that she exposed the roots of a tree. "For God's sake, plug that hole," said the other, "You could drown in your own lake." Like the three women of Paris, food accompanied their drinking—eight capons, one of them stuffed, and 200 eggs. For their diversions they went to the public baths and bathed in the nude. When a boat arrived with wine, they rejoiced, but when a boat arrived with linen for them to process, they cursed the pilot and wished him dead. Instead of working they continued drinking, went together to a festival where they consumed seven plates of gnocchi and lasagne, and wished they never had to work again.

Next are two versions of an anonymous English carol, one from the late fifteenth century and the other from the early sixteenth century, which I prefer to

discuss as one work. The two told the story of gossips or friends, named in the first version Elinor, Joan, Margery, Margaret, Alice and Cecily, who regularly gathered for food and drink at a tavern.[7] They were determined to enjoy their outing without their husbands' knowledge, so they arranged to meet without anyone seeing them, sneaking into the tavern two by two. As one of them exclaimed:

> A stripe or two God might send me
> If my husband might here see me.

The six women rejected weak drinks and searched for the tavern with the best and strongest wine, such as muscatel. They praised such wine for its good effects on their health and proclaimed that the only reason they came was for the good drink. Like the women of Paris and Bologna, they ate at the tavern, but they supplied their own special food:

> And each of them will somewhat bring,
> Goose, pig or capon's wing,
> Pasties of pigeons or some other thing.

Their conversation alternated between making merry and complaining about their husbands. One complained that her husband beat her "like the Devil of hell, and the more I cry, the less mercy." Alice, who feared no man, proclaimed, "God give him short life!" and Margaret boasted:

> I know no man that is alive
> That gives me two strokes but he gets five!
> I am not afeard, though I have no beard!

Despite the bravado of Alice and Margaret, when the women went home they all told their husbands that they had just returned from church. Their husbands might have suspected something, because instead of getting back to work the women, under the influence of the wine and the food, went to sleep.

The last example is *The Tunnyng [Brewing] of Elynour Rummyng* by John Skelton (1460?–1529), which supposedly described a real alewife who kept an alehouse near Henry VIII's castle Nonsuch.[8] Elynour was the archetypal keeper from hell—Skelton even called her the Devil's sibling—whose ale contained chicken droppings but who nonetheless had a huge crowd of disorderly female customers eager to buy it. Skelton described the unruly horde of women who flocked to Elynour's alehouse whenever she brewed ale:

> Thither come Kate,
> Cecily, and Sarah

With their legs bare,
And also their feet
Hardly full unsweet;
With their heals dagged,
Their girdles all to-jagged,
Their smocks all to-ragged . . . .
With all their might running
To Elynour Rummyng . . . .
Some wenches come unlaced,
Some housewives come unbraced,
With their naked paps,
That flips and flaps, ...
Such a lewd sort
To Elynour resort.

Some of her customers proclaimed that they did not care what men said about them running to drink her ale, but:

Some, loathe to be espied,
Start in at the back side,
Over the hedge and pale,
And all for the good ale.

The customers were so desperate for a drink that they were willing to pawn anything for it, and many lines of Skelton's poem formed a list of what the women offered, including a wedding ring, hose, girdle, ladle, cradle, saddle, hatchet, wedge, spinning wheel, spindle, thimble and needle, even their husband's hat, cap and hood, and some brought food to exchange for their drink. The drinking women were so volatile that Elynour had to keep the peace by threatening to break their heads. Joan was testy, "angry as a wasp"; another was a "foul slut" who had a quick tongue. Alice was a drunk who "pissed where she stood" and gossiped endlessly; "she was full of tales" from everywhere. Another customer had a sinister reputation:

With the feathers of a quail
She could to Bordeaux sail;
And with good ale barm
She could make a charm
To help with a stitch:
She seemed to be a witch.

The material from these five examples might seem like harmless good fun, but they reveal male fears of unruly, disorderly women. In the first place, all of

these women did their drinking in taverns or alehouses. In medieval Europe, alehouse and tavern space was male space, so much so that in the thirteenth century Siena forbade women to enter taverns.[9] Taverns and alehouses elsewhere did serve women, and women of varying conditions had occasion to drink there. Some priests took Margery Kempe to a tavern in Rome and made her have a drink, even though they knew her tendency to weep and whoop uncontrollably during religious services, so much so that people considered her drunk.[10] Women did not drink much wine at Montaillou in the early fourteenth century, but they did drink at taverns.[11] Peasant women in medieval England were frequent visitors to the village alehouse during the day while their husbands were working in the fields, a practice that resulted in tales about a husband accusing his wife of spending her day gossiping in drinking establishments while he labored for their keep.[12] However, the mere presence of women in taverns and alehouses was a sign of insubordination. A solitary woman drinking in an alehouse or a tavern was not a threat to patriarchal power, because she would have been subject to male domination, but a group of women would have been capable of maintaining their independence, especially if they withdrew to a separate room. Anthropological studies of modern drinking behavior have demonstrated the masculine exclusiveness of drinking establishments, where men flee from their insecure relationships with women and take refuge with their fellow escapees to engage in macho drinking. The English pub, the French tavern, and the Greek taverna have been centers of male sociability and male drinking rituals that have excluded females.[13] The situation was the same in medieval Europe.

In addition to being male space, the medieval drinking establishment was an anti-church. The best expression of this opinion occurred in a fourteenth-century English devotional treatise: "You have heard of both lechery and gluttony. These sins arise most commonly at the tavern, which is a well of sin. It is the school of the Devil, where his disciples study, and the chapel of Satan, where men and women serve him. God does His miracles in His church; the Devil does his, which are the opposite, in the tavern."[14] Italian and French moralists had similar opinions. According to Italian authors, taverns were cellars of the Devil, fountains of sin and haunts of all corrupt and depraved youths.[15] In France, moralists considered taverns to be cesspools of the Devil, the Devil's churches and schools for mobs of delinquents.[16]

If the alehouse or tavern could represent an anti-church, the alehouse or tavern keeper could represent an anti-priest in league with the Devil. As already noted, Skelton called Elynour the Devil's sibling. Some of the actual court cases of "anti-priests" involved female keepers, such as Jeanne de Baugie of Paris, who confessed in 1400 to abducting a young girl, keeping a disorderly house, procuring prostitutes, and stealing a piece of fur from a merchant who had stopped for some wine.[17] Other cases of disorderly female keepers focused on their sexual behavior; in 1379 Juliana Fox of Thornbury, Gloucestershire, faced prosecution for receiving "priests and others into her house at illegal times, viz. around the middle of the

night,"[18] and in 1471 the alehouse of Joanna Skeppere of Brandon supposedly attracted "lecherous and suspicious" men.[19] Sexual misbehavior had no role in some cases of disorderly female keepers. Alice Causton of London was convicted in 1364 for selling short measures in a manner that could have featured in Skelton's depiction of Elynour Rummyng. She filled the bottom of a quart measure with pitch and then covered it with sprigs of rosemary, a crime for which she was sentenced "to play bo-peep through a pillory."[20] Such behavior by female keepers was reflected in works of fiction; the last scene of the mystery play from Chester entitled *The Harrowing of Hell* focused on an unscrupulous alewife:

> Sometime I was a taverner,
> A gentle gossip and a tapster,
> Of wine and ale a trusty brewer,
> Which woe hath me wrought.
> Of cans I kept no true measure:
> My cups I sold at my pleasure,
> Deceiving many a creature,
> Though my ale were naught.

As punishment for her bad ale and short measures the alewife went to hell, where a demon greeted her: "Welcome, dear lady, I shall thee wed!"[21] In short, the church and the alehouse/tavern represented polar extremes. In contrast to God's work in the church the alehouse/tavern was the venue for drunkenness, which was the gateway to all the other sins including swearing, blasphemy, fornication and murder. A respectable woman should never darken the threshold of such establishments.

The three women of Paris drank wine by the bucket, the women from Bologna consumed five barrels and a quart, and the English women had drink after drink. Another popular song from late medieval Bologna described a woman who kept seven buckets of the best wine at her side "to be able to guzzle well."[22] In marked contrast to such gargantuan drinking is the view expressed in a late sixteenth-century poem *Le monologue du bon vigneron*; the patriarchal "good vine-grower" drank only his own wine and left water for his wife to drink.[23] Despite such comments on the consumption of alcohol by women, because of the important role of alcoholic beverages in most people's diets during the Middle Ages, even women could drink substantial amounts of ale or wine as a matter of course. Between 1410 and 1412 the women in the entourage of the aristocratic Marguerite de Latour, prioress of Toul, consumed 0.75 liters of wine a day.[24] The household accounts for a Pisan notary reveal that his family, including the notary, his mother, wife and young male servant, consumed 1820 liters of wine in 1428, or 455 liters each. In the same year members of the household, including slaves and servants, of a wealthy Pisan merchant each consumed 683 liters.[25] One source that illustrates the consumption of alcohol by women is the maintenance agreement between one

peasant family and another in return for the surrender of land. In return for the land the agreements stipulated that the recipient provide a stated amount of food. In 1291 Margaret atte Green of Girton, Cambridgeshire, received enough barley for 2.6 pints of strong ale a day,[26] which is the same amount promised to Emma del Rood of Cranfield, Bedfordshire, in 1438.[27] Wills also indicate that women drank; in 1441 at Barjols in Provence Jean Quinson left his widow an annual supply of 360 liters of wine.[28] When a fourteenth-century citizen of Paris wrote a set of instructions for his young wife, he compared the sin of gluttony to, significantly, a woman who had trouble rising in the morning in time for church as a result of a hangover:

> When she has with some difficulty risen, know you what be her hours? Her matins are: "Ha! what shall we drink? Is there nought left over from last night?" Then she says her lauds, thus: "Ha! we drank good wine yestreen." Afterwards she says her orisons, thus: "My head aches; I shall not be at ease until I have had a drink."[29]

In short, women of all classes drank alcoholic beverages regardless of patriarchal constraints.

On the other hand, to preserve her honor a woman should never become drunk. According to the ancient Roman author Valerius Maximus, Roman women were forbidden to drink wine so they would not commit adultery.[30] Drunk women were considered promiscuous since alcohol supposedly made them sexually permeable.[31] Medieval moralists often linked the immoderate consumption of alcoholic beverages to adultery and fornication. For example, the early sixteenth-century *Ship of Fools* by the Benedictine Alexander Barclay warned that drunks gave themselves to "bawdy ribaldry."[32] Some authors directed their warnings to women, as did Robert de Bois in *Le chastoiement des dames (Advice to Ladies)*, composed in the thirteenth century:

> And she who gluts more than her fill
> Of food and wine, soon finds a taste
> For bold excess below the waist!
> No worthy man will pay his court
> To lady of such lowly sort.[33]

Chaucer noted the connection between sexuality and alcohol in "The Wife of Bath's Prologue." This woman with attitude complained that lechers knew from experience that a drinking woman had no defense against their advances.[34] So women drank alcoholic beverages, but they were expected to avoid drunkenness and thereby maintain their chastity.

As already noted, women had occasion to visit alehouses and taverns in medieval Europe, but the male clientele of these establishments usually regarded

such women, especially if they were alone, as morally dissolute if not prostitutes. The connection between drinking establishments and prostitution was almost as strong as their connection to the sale of drink. Prostitutes searched for clients at alehouses and taverns, while men in search of prostitutes knew their best chance of finding them would be in alehouses and taverns. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries authorities in Venice vacillated between policies that prohibited prostitutes from using taverns and, when these proved difficult to enforce, less repressive policies designed to exclude them from taverns in areas such as the Piazza di San Marco.[35] Authorities in London issued decrees in the fourteenth, fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries against prostitutes using alehouses and taverns, to little apparent effect.[36] The unsavory reputation of taverns and alehouses as anti-churches combined with the view that drinking women were sexually permeable to create an assumption that a woman consuming alcohol at a drinking establishment was sexually available. A group of women enjoying each other's company not only disturbed these assumptions but also represented unruly behavior. Men feared female sexuality, which they considered permeable when women were sober; the fears increased when women were drinking and increased yet more when they were drinking at taverns and alehouses. Nonetheless, the sexual exploits of the unruly women in popular literature were restrained to say the least—no adulterous liaisons, no orgies. The three ladies of Paris talked about their gigolos and danced naked in the street in the middle of the night, the women from Bologna bathed nude, and Elinor, Joan, Margery, Margaret, Alice and Cecily as well as Elynour Rummyng's customers were asexual. All of this is hardly indicative of moral depravity, but it was still threatening as a result of prevailing attitudes regarding the connection between alcohol and sex and regarding the alehouse/tavern as an anti-church:

> A late fifteenth-century poem proclaimed that wives,
> To the tavern they will not go,
> Nor to the alehouse never the more,
> For, God knows, their hearts would be woe
> To spend their husbands' money so.[37]

This was misogynist satire. The spending of their husbands' money was another male concern that was a common theme in the male construction of drinking unruly women. In the five examples all the women spent considerable amounts of money either as a result of the quality of the drink—muscatel and grenache—or the quantity of their drink—buckets, barrels, drink after drink. In addition to the expense of the drink was the expense of the fine food that they consumed in enormous quantities—goose, a bowl of garlic, fresh hot rolls, waffles, patisseries, almonds, cheese, pears, spice, capons, eggs, gnocchi, lasagne, pig, and pigeon pasties. If unruly wives did not have any money to pay their shot, they found other ways of buying the food and drink. The three ladies of Paris drank and ate

on credit, and Elynour Rummying's customers bartered their personal belongings. What was worse, they bartered items that were important for the domestic economy of the household, such as the hatchet, wedge, spinning wheel, spindle, thimble and needle. Not only were unruly wives spending money on drink and food and bartering away items that helped supply their families with the necessities of life but they were also wasting their time in drinking establishments when they could have been contributing to the household economy. The Bolognesi never wanted to return to work. This aspect of the male construction of drinking unruly women refutes those historians who argue that in the early modern period a shift occurred in attitudes toward drunkenness as it became an economic sin according to the ideology of nascent capitalism.[38] The message in the early fifteenth-century English poem entitled *How the Goodwife Taught her Daughter* also stressed the economic consequences of immoderate drinking; when offered good ale:

> Moderately take you thereof that no blame befalls you,
> For if you are often drunk, it reduces you to shame.
> For those that be often drunk,
> Prosperity is taken away from them.[39]

Another theme in the male construction of drinking unruly women was their insubordination and threat to patriarchal power. The three women of Paris gossiped about their gigolos, Elinor, Joan, Margery, Margaret, Alice and Cecily about their husbands, and of Elynour Rummyng's customers Jane was testy and "angry as a wasp," another was a "foul slut" with a quick tongue, and Alice never stopped gossiping. One of the few weapons that women could use in their struggle with patriarchal domination was their tongues, and many drinking women were ferocious scolds or malicious gossips. Marguine la Faucharde from the small village of Lesches near Meaux was such a scold when drunk that on one occasion in 1354 she left her sleeping husband and shouted abuse and attempted to start a quarrel in the street even though no one was there to hear her.[40] Gossips could be more threatening than scolds. Men considered unruly women as threats to masculine control because unruly women were gossiping women. Hence, another reason why a solitary woman in a tavern or an alehouse was not threatening was because she had no gossips with whom to gossip. In addition to their gossip, unruly women posed a challenge to their husbands' authority by secretly gathering for drinks in an alehouse/tavern with their friends when they were supposed to be home working. Some of Elynour Rummyng's customers brazenly and openly entered her alehouse, but others snuck in the back door, and the deception of Elinor, Joan, Margery, Margaret, Alice and Cecily continued when they returned home and told their husbands they had been to church. The challenges to patriarchal authority continued in the drinking establishments, although some of them were surreptitious rather than direct, all talk and no show, as best indicated by the bravado of Alice and Margaret's comments. The customers of Elynour

Rummyng pawned their husbands' hoods, caps and hats. The symbolism of selling the garments that covered a husband's head indicated a challenge to their authority, but the challenge again was surreptitious and not direct.

Studies of male drinking behavior in modern societies note that one of the reasons men drink is because of the feeling of power that alcohol gives them. In his article entitled "Drinking as a Manifestation of Power Concerns," Richard A. Boyatzis states, "men drink alcoholic beverages to attain, or regain, a feeling of strength." Drinking empowers men; it makes them feel strong and important, and it makes them feel that they can dominate or influence others. What about women? According to Boyatzis, alcohol does not work that way for women. Drinking makes women feel more feminine, less assertive and aggressive, and less concerned with power.[41] In short, drinking does not empower women. I doubt if this is true today, and I doubt that it was true in medieval Europe. Alcohol made women assertive and aggressive, and it made them challenge patriarchal power. Women drank to escape subordination. At least that was how men perceived drinking women, and that was the male construction of unruly and disorderly women in the popular literature of the period. The best illustration of this is the early sixteenth-century farce entitled "A Merry Play Between Johan the Husband, Tyb His Wife, and Sir Johan the Priest," attributed to John Heywood. The first part of the farce is a *chanson de mal marié*, that is, a husband's lament. Johan the husband languished at home while Tyb drank at a tavern and ignored her housework. He debated with himself whether to beat her or not, and when he finally told himself, yes, he would beat her, Tyb returned from the tavern, overheard him, and confronted him, "Why whom wilt thou beat, I say, thou knave?" Whereupon the husband meekly claimed that he was talking about beating some dried fish to make it tender.[42] Tyb's challenge was not surreptitious and indirect. In popular literature dominating women were often drinking women. The late fifteenth-century French farce *Le cuvier* (*The Washtub*) told the story of Jaquinot the husband who decided to assert his authority over his wife after a year of marriage; he began by telling her, significantly, "You are only a drunk."[43]

Oddly enough, the male construction of drinking, unruly women contributed to the empowerment of women. Modern cross-cultural studies of drinking behavior and drunken comportment indicate that this behavior and this comportment are socially mediated; they are learned. The consumption of alcohol causes physiological changes that are scientifically verifiable, but much of what passes for drinking behavior and drunken comportment varies from one society to the next. What is typical for a drunk in one society is not typical in another. In some societies drunks are violent and aggressive, in others they are peaceful and passive, in some alcohol arouses sexual passions, in others it dampens them.[44] In other words, people learn what the effects of drinking will have on their behavior and their comportment. The misogynistic fears evident in the male construction of female drinking created a cultural script. This cultural script taught women that drinking could help them challenge patriarchal power and help them escape subordination.

To return to Natalie Zemon Davis, the male construction of the disorderly woman could undermine male authority by demonstrating behavioral options that promoted insubordination and confronted patriarchal privilege. In other words, drinking empowered women. The male construction of unruly women in popular literature could teach women this lesson.

Notes

1. See Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
2. The output of feminist historians has become so huge that, according to Merry Weisner-Hanks, it is no longer possible to keep abreast of it. See her "Reflections on a Quarter Century of Research on Women and the Reformation," in *History Has Many Voices*, ed. Lee Palmer Wandel (Kirksville MO: Truman State University Press, 2003), 93–111.
3. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women on Top," in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 124–51.
4. Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville VA: University Press of Virginia, 1992).
5. Wautriquet Brassenel de Couvin, *Des iii dames de Paris*, in *Gallic Salt: Eighteen Fabliaux Translated from the Old French*, trans. Robert Harrison (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1974), 398–417.
6. Guido Davico Bonino, ed., *Il tesoro della poesia italiana* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1982), 1: 99–100.
7. Richard Leighton Greene, ed., *The Early English Carols* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), 280–4; a slightly modernized version of the later carol is in G. G. Coulton, ed. and trans., *Life in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 3: 141–4. Here and elsewhere I have modernized the spelling.
8. John Skelton, "A Sixteenth-Century English Alewife and Her Customers—Skelton's *Tunnyng of Elynour Rummyng*," ed. E. M. Jellinek, *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 6 (1945): 102–10. For a literary analysis of Skelton's poem see Deborah Baker Wyrick, "'Withinne that Develes Temple:' An Examination of Skelton's *The Tunnyng of Elynour Rummyng,*" *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 10 (1980): 239–54.
9. William Heywood, *The "Ensamples" of Fra Filippo: A Study of Medieval Siena* (Siena: Enrico Torrini, 1901), 194.
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11. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294–1324* (London: Scolar Press, 1978), 264.
12. Barbara A. Hanawalt, "At the Margin of Women's Space in Medieval Europe," in *Matrons and Marginal Women in Medieval Society*, eds Robert R. Edwards and Vickie Ziegler (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995), 9–10.
13. Dimitra Gefou-Madianou, "Introduction: Alcohol Commensality, Identity Transformations and Transcendence," in *Alcohol, Gender and Culture*, ed. Dimitra Gefou-Madianou (London: Routledge, 1992), 7–11. For other studies see: Pierre Mayol, "Les

seuils de l'alcoolisme," in *Actes de la Rencontre Internationale: Cultures, Manières de Boire et Alcoolisme*, eds Guy Caro and Jean-François Lemoine (Rennes: Bretagne, Alcool et Santé, 1984), 36; Robert E. Popham, "The Social History of the Tavern," in *Research Advances in Alcohol and Drug Problems*, eds Yedy Israel, Frederick B. Glaser, Harold Kalant, Robert E. Popham, Wolfgang Schmidt and Reginald G. Smart (New York: Plenum Press, 1978), 4: 226–7; Lucienne Roubin, "Male Space and Female Space within the Provençal Community," in *Rural Society in France*, ed. Robert Forster and Orest Ranum (Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 153.

14. *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, an English translation of Friar Laurent's *Somme le roy*, summarized in Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansinmi: Michigan State College Press, 1952), 183.
15. Rosa Maria Dentici Buccellato, "Produzione, commercio e consumo del vino nella Sicilia medievale," in *Il vino nell'economia e nella società italiana Medioevale e Moderna* (Florence: Accademia economico-agraria dei Georgofili, 1988), 166; Francesco Guicciardini, *Storie Fiorentine*, in *The Portable Renaissance Reader*, eds James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin (New York: Viking, 1953), 649.
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17. Bronislaw Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 236 and n. 141.
18. Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior in England, 1370–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 76.
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29. Power, *Goodman of Paris*, 84.
30. Valerius Maximus, *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*, ed. John Briscoe (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1998), 2, 1, 5.
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34. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, trans. Nevill Coghill (Baltimore MD: Penguin, 1958), 287.
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42. John Heywood, *Johan the Husband [1533],* in *Medieval Mystery Plays, Morality Plays, and Interludes*, eds Vincent F. Hopper and Gerald B. Lahey (New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1962), 233–7. See Barbara D. Palmer, "'To Speke of Wo that Is in Mariage': The Marital Arts in Medieval Literature," in *Human Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Douglas Radcliff-Umstead (Pittsburgh PA: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1978), 12.
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44. Craig MacAndrew and Robert B. Edgerton, *Drunken Comportment: A Social Explanation* (London: Nelson, 1970); see also the comments by Thomas Brennan, "Towards the Cultural History of Alcohol in France," *Journal of Social History,* 23 (1989): 83.

7

Between Medicine and Morals
Sex in the Regimens of Maino de Maineri

Caroline Proctor

One of the most fruitful sources for the history of sexuality in the Middle Ages has been the works of learned medical authors.[1] Among others, studies of such well-known figures as Constantinus Africanus (d. before 1098/99), the elusive Trotula and Giles of Rome (*c*.1243–1316) have revealed both consistency and variety in the medieval understanding of sexuality.[2] However, confining the study of sex in medicine to works dedicated purely to gynecology has made it a little difficult to gauge the true emphasis given to this subject within medicine as a whole.[3] For example, in citing only thirty medieval medical manuscripts devoted to reproduction, M. A. Hewson has neglected the numerous medical works that chose to encompass sex within some larger purpose.[4] Helen Rodnite Lemay's work on the renowned surgeon William of Saliceto (*c*.1210–1280), which discussed his treatments for genital disorders, has allowed us to see how a physician could view sexual dysfunction as one aspect of curative medicine.[5] But how did medieval medical writers envisage sex functioning as part of their patients' everyday lives? The genre of *regimen sanitatis*, manuals of everyday preventive lifestyle advice especially popular from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, would seem to be a natural place to look for evidence of how medieval physicians expected their readers to incorporate sex into a healthy routine. On the contrary, Pedro Gil Sotres, in his pioneering work on the regimens, has noted that:

> These sources provide a limited image of sexuality, considered solely as a means for the evacuation of a product of the third digestion, the sperm produced by the testicles. There is no mention of pleasure or the emotions involved in sexuality, nothing about fertility or about the moral rules that govern sexual practices.[6]

This characterization rings true when we see how sex is described in almost all regimen literature. The precedent, set for example by Aldebrandino of Siena, writing in 1256, was for sex to be dealt with in a short chapter, euphemistically entitled in his case, "*D'abiter avoec femme*."[7] Later writers, such as Arnau de Vilanova (*c*.1240–1311), chose most often to include sex as a short digression within larger sections on sleep and wakefulness or inanition and repletion, simply called, "*De choitu*."[8]

One regimen writer who did address the topic of *coitus* in significantly greater detail and did attempt to confront the deeper issues raised by Gil Sotres was Maino de Maineri (d. *c*.1368), a medical master at the University of Paris, who treated King Robert I of Scotland and, for the last twenty years of his life, was court physician to the Visconti rulers of Milan.[9] Maino was the author of medical, astrological and philosophical treatises, but it was in his two regimens of health that his interest in sex was made most apparent.

The first of these, the *Regimen sanitatis* of 1331, was dedicated to Andrea Ghini Malpighi, Bishop of Arras.[10] As the lengthy contents are examined, it is clear that there is only a small degree of subject repetition. More intriguingly, virtually all of this repetition centers on two subjects: sex and wine. Sex was also a central concern of the *Compendium regimen sanitatis*, a concise, personalized version of Maino's first regimen written for Antonio Fieschi of Genoa, later the Bishop of Luni, between 1331 and 1336.[11] As much as one tenth of this text is devoted to a consideration of chaste living.

This raises two interesting questions. First, what was the specific nature of Maino's sex advice? Second, why did Maino unusually devote so much space to sex? Considering the role of sex in his regimens in these two, linked ways will draw attention to the rare depth Maino gave to this subject. For *coitus* represented the collision of medicine and morals, Maino's two prime obsessions. This conundrum, the inextricable interplay of these two spheres of knowledge, raised significant authorial challenges. By following Maino's own approach, beginning with a consideration of sex as a function of the healthy body—with the aims, first, of "natural" reproduction and, second, of the "non-natural" elimination of superfluities from the body—and then turning to his recognition of sex as a more complex issue of personal morality, I hope that his wide-ranging approach towards sexuality will be demonstrated.

Maino viewed reproduction as the primary function of sex. Indeed, this was one of the reasons behind his recommendation that adolescents abstain from sexual activity: "nor is the semen useful for generation."[12] The whole purpose of the generative members was, both nominally and actually, generation:

> And this is because the generative members are by nature made for the act of reproduction, which consists of the production and fermentation of seed, its appropriate emission during the sexual act, and the final generation of offspring.[13]

The majority of Maino's advice on sexual reproduction is centered on Part 2, Chapter 7 of the *Regimen sanitatis*, a chapter of advice specific to women, and within the first section of that chapter: "*De impregnatione*." The very existence of this chapter is remarkable in itself, given the almost exclusively male-oriented advice generally contained in regimens.[14]

Maino laid down some essential conditions for successful procreation, and the first of these excluded those who were completely sterile:

> There are some women who are simply sterile and cursed who this chapter does not serve. And others who are not sterile but not easy to impregnate and all the same they are within the "latitude of health."[15]

Within what Maino perceived then as the range of fertility that medical advice could potentially enhance, he believed that there were three key areas that could be targeted for improvement. The first lay in the physical makeup of the woman: "bad figure or composition in the womb."[16] The second centered on how the couple had sex: "bad movement in the joining of the man to the woman."[17] Third, a woman wishing to conceive had to avoid: "the use of things which impede conception."[18] What did Maino recommend to his readers before, during and after sex to ensure pregnancy?

Maino suggested various prescriptive and proscriptive measures that could be taken before having sex. These sometimes focused on the creation of the right ambience: "If for instance Serapine or St John's Wort should be placed in the chamber, all evil spirits will have been driven out."[19] An alternative was the use of a magnet: "likewise by carrying a magnetic stone into the same place, it can create harmony between the man and the woman."[20] Both of these suggestions had been repeated often since their inclusion in the *Materia medica* of Dioscorides (first century AD, but available in Latin translation in Western Europe from around 550–570).[21] The woman's condition was of prime importance, and certain situations must be avoided for sexual reproduction: "After something is administered which cleanses menstrual blood . . . and when the woman is not hungry or full or drunk. And when she is not excessively hot or cold. And when her first digestion is complete."[22] This is reminiscent of the advice which Constantinus Africanus attributed to Galen on the timing of sex: "There is, however, a proper hour for intercourse, when the body is in complete outward harmony i.e. neither replete nor fasting, neither cold nor hot, dry nor wet, but well-tempered."[23]

Otherwise herbs could be used in a more "medicinal" way, to prepare the woman's body for impregnation. Once again, St John's Wort was praised as being particularly effective. Maino suggested that it be ingested with theriac or alternatively used externally in a plaster.[24] St John's Wort was and is considered an emmenogogue, and in this sense might help achieve one of the conditions Maino had advised, for intercourse, the purging of any menstrual blood. Maino's list was lengthy and included the use of other ingredients (including wormwood, peony

roots, red wine, oil of lilies, white honey, elephant urine and jewels) and techniques (such as syrups, pessaries, phlebotomy, exercise, stuphas [steam baths] and clysters). By and large, his ingredients and techniques seem to be held in common with other gynecological writings, which make it frustratingly difficult to find the precise origin of his recommendations, hinting at the encyclopedic approach he took to his compilation of the long regimen.

In two specific examples taken from the *Regimen sanitatis*, Maino showed more distinctively the practical nature of his advice, which included instruction on how to implement these recommendations. The first suggested anointing the woman with oil of lilies or white honey, both of which would have acted as lubricants, with lily widely held to increase moisture.[25] The second recommended phlebotomy of the feet or cupping the legs as a treatment for a badly positioned womb, literally pulling the womb down to its correct position.[26]

By providing a wealth of such clearly described alternatives, mined from numerous sources, Maino offered his readers many options, which could be taken according to preference or availability. Similarly, in the *Liber medicinalibus octo tractatuum* he wrote in 1360, seven of the eight tracts focused in great detail on the properties of foods and drinks; their utility in sexual practice is one of the most common properties considered.[27] So, for example, mint could be used to increase the libido, while at the same time it had the potential to act as a contraceptive or perhaps abortifacient.[28] The emphasis on the reproductive qualities of these ingredients was no accident; fertility must have been one of the prime considerations of any physician, and it was imperative that they should be aware of how each ingredient they might use could impact on the sex lives of their patients. Sex appears to have been one of the more lucrative possible specialisms for a physician, as the fifteenth-century commentator Jacques Despars pointed out.[29]

Maino moved on in his account of reproductive sex in the *Regimen sanitatis* to advice pertaining to the sexual act itself. Maino's description is quite detailed. In general, he advised the use of both: "pleasant touch and sweet words."[30] But more specifically, "rubbing the area between the anus and above it, the vulva," is to be recommended, he added, "for this is an area of delight for her."[31] It is particularly interesting that Maino admitted the importance of pleasure ("pleasant," "sweet," "delight") in sex, an emphasis that had grown since the twelfth century.[32] His advocation of pleasure is in direct contrast to the rather sour, if perceptive, judgment of Bernard de Gordon (*c*.1238–1308): "Few have intercourse for the sake of offspring, more for the sake of health, and many more for the sake of pleasure."[33] The subject of female pleasure was one that provoked considerable medical debate, and not all writers had agreed with Maino. As just one example, William of Saliceto had maintained that female pleasure was not crucial: "such desire or pleasure is not required in intercourse."[34]

Once the foreplay was over, Maino advised entering the woman when she: "is holding on tight, her eyes are beginning to redden, her breath is elevated and her words are stammered."[35] This advice had been lifted directly from one of

Maino's major sources, the *Canon* of Avicenna (d. 1037), translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona in the twelfth century. Avicenna wrote:

> They should unite with the woman, rubbing the area between the anus and the vulva. For this is the seat of pleasure. They should watch out for the moment when the woman clings more tightly, when her eyes start to go red, her breathing becomes more rapid and she starts to stammer.[36]

Ideally, the man should not reach orgasm before the woman: "it is not good if the man satisfies his desire before the woman, rather at the same time or the woman a little earlier."[37] Maino clearly followed the Galenic model of reproduction, where both male and female produced an active seed, fundamental to generation, and this perhaps explains his emphasis on female pleasure in sex, essential to her production of that seed.[38] At the point of, and immediately after, ejaculation, there were various ways in which the likelihood of conception could be improved: "And during the emission of the semen the man should hold on to the woman strongly, according to the position where the woman's legs should be a little raised."[39] Then the man should slowly withdraw, still holding on to the woman who should lie with hips raised, holding her feet and holding her breath.[40] These descriptions clearly imply that sex should be in the missionary position, although Maino never states this overtly.

Maino went on to list certain methods of ensuring conception after sex. He enumerated various substances that the would-be mother should avoid: stag's heart bone, jet, emerald and sapphire among them.[41] This list is interesting, for while it is overtly phrased as proscriptive advice, it implicitly provides a great deal of detail on potential contraceptives and abortifacients.[42] Furthermore, Maino does not appear to support any Augustinian notion that sex must only be for reproductive purposes. Monica Green has pointed out that in fact such blanket moralizing was rare among medical authors, with Bernard de Gordon being a notable exception.[43] Maino's approach also seems to focus on a woman's choice to become fertile and pregnant, as is suggested by his use of phrases such as: "a woman wishing to be impregnated and to be fertile," and, "a woman who wants to conceive."[44]

On the positive side, there were many things that could aid conception. These included fumigations of sweet smells held to the nostrils, drawing the imagined fetus up and into the womb.[45] Maino also included a medicinal recipe for, "a pessary of '*theodoricon anacardium*' [a sort of cashew confection interestingly more commonly used as a purgative] blended with a little scamony," which "without doubt will help conception if immediately afterwards the woman has sex with a potent man."[46]

The wealth of advice offered by Maino seems both practical and easy to understand. Its utility is evidenced in particular by the existence of manuscript Lat. 7066 of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, where an extract from the *Regimen sanitatis* has been copied under the title *De iuvamentibus mulieres ad*

impregnandum. This manuscript takes the form of a small, easily portable compilation of medical advice for fertility problems. It was probably copied and owned by a fifteenth-century Parisian medical student called Pierre Pilatre, and was considered useful enough to have been heavily annotated.[47] Furthermore, in a later section of the *Regimen sanitatis*, Maino referred to another more detailed work he had composed on the subject: "in the treatise that I have composed concerning a regimen for sterility."[48] Unfortunately, this work is not extant, but Maino obviously considered conception an important topic. It is possible that Maino had a reputation as something of an expert in gynecology. Certainly, he appears to have observed women's obstetric practice carefully, and made many references to the techniques of French women.[49] We also know that in 1347 he accompanied Isabella Fieschi, the sister of Antonio, the dedicatee of the short regimen, and wife of his patron Luchino Visconti, the ruler of Milan, on a pilgrimage to Venice very soon after she had given birth.[50] Maino was himself married, and perhaps this would have made him seem a trustworthy consultant on matters of this sensitivity.[51] Even with such minimal insight into the actuality of his medical practice, it is clear at the very least that readers of Maino's *Regimen sanitatis* could learn a great deal about how to improve their chances of conception through sex.

Sex had a secondary "non-natural" function, which could be seen as incidental to reproduction, but also provided an entirely separate justification for the act. So Maino included chapters on sex not only in the part of the regimen dedicated to the "naturals," but also in Part Three of the *Regimen sanitatis* (3: 5, *De coitu*), the section devoted to the "non-naturals." This is also the only manner in which sex is considered directly in the *Liber medicinalibus*, in the final tract, which dealt with "Exercise and the other non-naturals."[52] Like all the non-naturals, sex could be used as a means of moderating the health of the body. To give just one example, Maino suggested that it could be part of a thinning regimen: "by sleeping only a little in a hard bed, having sex often and lounging in the sun or in hot houses, a fat body will become thin."[53] More generally, Maino saw the act of *coitus* as one way of ridding the body of harmful superfluities, those superfluities that, left unchecked, could swing the body away from health and towards imbalance and consequent sickness.[54] Without sex, the build-up of seed could cause corruption to spread throughout the body: "And occasionally corruption arises from the retention of sperm, corrupting not only the sperm ducts but the whole body . . . in the manner of a poison."[55] In fact, he went as far as to suggest that without sex, the poison in the body could build up so much as to cause, "very serious illness and ultimately death."[56] He emphasized the fact that sex was the easiest way to rid the body of superfluities that: "Sex is a suitable way to expel: nor is there another convenient way."[57] To continue from Maino's earlier words, sex was primarily for reproductive purposes but the ejaculation of sperm also had the desirable side effect of strengthening the reproductive organs themselves through

"its appropriate emission through the sexual act, and the final generation of offspring: this can be used in such a way as to fortify the generative members."[58] This function is confirmed in the opening sentence of the chapter: "Sex's second true use is in the expulsion of the superfluities of the third digestion, where it pertains to the regimen of health."[59] More than this, sex also had the potential to improve the emotional well-being of an individual. According to Maino, it, "cures melancholy," "removes anxiety," "calms passionate love," "comforts desire," and gives a man feelings of "lightness and great joy."[60]

Again, this ran in direct contradiction to Bernard de Gordon's already-cited conviction that sex should only be used towards reproductive ends. However, the use of sex in the maintenance of health was a very old idea, as Constantinus had described: "The ancients said in their books: the things which preserve health are exercise, bathing, food, drink, sleep, and intercourse . . . if the man has intercourse the superfluities are dissolved and the body is rested, cooled and relieved."[61] It was in large part due to the influence of Arab dietetics that this role of sex was increasingly emphasized in Western medicine from the eleventh and twelfth centuries onwards. The direct influence of Avicenna on Maino, and a broader background of translations by such authors as Constantine the African, has already been noted. But the understanding of sex's importance to health can be viewed perhaps most clearly in the writings of Maimonides (1135–1204). Maimonides' regimen for the sultan Saladin had been translated at Montpellier by Armengaud Blaise, the nephew of Arnau de Vilanova, in 1302, and was mentioned by Maino as one of his sources.[62] It was a vital representative of this stronger emphasis on the need for sex.

Just as he did when considering reproduction, Maino gave his readers a practical list of dos and don'ts to ensure that sex would achieve the effective evacuation of harmful superfluities from the body. This type of advice was centered mainly on his section on the generative members (*Regimen sanitatis*, 2: 6). On the negative side, Maino suggested the avoidance of bathing, frequent phlebotomy, and drying or cooling ingredients such as agnus castus, basil, camphor, coriander, cabbage seeds and vinegar.[63] More positively, to enhance the efficacy of sex, he recommended particular foods such as meat from fat, masculine goat-kid or lamb, as well as hens and chicks, fat doves and especially larks.[64] These recommendations, as in the section on reproduction, are taken from a variety of sources, though his advice on basil, coriander, meats and mushrooms seems to be more original.[65] As is characteristic of the regimen in general, there follow a few recipes that could be incorporated into the reader's diet to improve sexual function. One such called for, "Soft-boiled egg thoroughly mashed with cinnamon, pepper, galangal and crushed salt," which, along with other recipes, "truly strengthens the [generative] members, especially for the sperm."[66] Eggs were, of course, associated with fertility, while cinnamon, pepper and galangal were all considered hot spices and were thus able to provoke sexual desire. The timing of sex was

crucial, just as Maino outlined in his preconditions for reproductive sex, but here the unsuitable times for sex were expanded to include: just after exercise, after phlebotomy or other evacuations, and after strong emotions had been experienced.[67]

During sex, there were also inadvisable activities: "In sex there are inconvenient positions and those against law and morals, from which the body can receive the most harm: for example if the woman climbs on top of the man, this is a bad position."[68] This was perhaps the first hint Maino gave to suggest that his medical recommendations of sex were not unconditional. This was akin to Avicenna, who held that "bad positions" were among the dangers of *coitus*, but at the same time Maino was relatively unusual among medical writers in actually describing the position he found to be "bad."[69] In a very interesting passage, Maino reveals his thoughts on sex with the young and male:

> It is also known that sex with the young and male is filthy, abominable and prohibited by law, and in one way is more harmful, in the other less so. Certainly, it is more harmful because nature requires in such sex more movement in order to elicit sperm, and it is less harmful because less sperm is expelled than with women and with less pleasure.[70]

His open references to the legal and social mores of the time and his deference to those mores are perhaps unsurprising, but they offer up some interesting areas of compromise.[71] For example, while Maino clearly encouraged the use of pleasurable foreplay in his section on reproduction, and while he recognized the positive feelings and emotions that sex could bring, too much pleasure was not to be advised. Likewise, it was the lesser degree of pleasure that Maino assumed accompanied non-heterosexual intercourse that made it less harmful. In his words: "great delight in sex is one of the causes of the fall into weakness: and therefore he who delights more in sex is more weakened."[72] Maino made the crucial distinction between *moderatus* and *immoderatus* sex.[73] Moderation was the key: "Therefore, the use of moderate sex is one of the things which can strengthen the generative members."[74] By contrast, a lack of restraint could "weaken and further totally destroy" the generative members.[75] This is reminiscent of the way that control of natural appetites was recommended in Maino's chapters on food. But the lines between what constituted moderate and immoderate sex were left frustratingly vague. This saw the inevitable recurrence of the same contradictions at the heart of how sex was treated in the ancient dietetic works surveyed by Michel Foucault:

> Hence a paradox resides in this preoccupation with a regimen by which one sought both an equitable distribution of an activity that could not in itself be regarded as a vice, and a restrictive economy in which "less" seemed almost always preferable to "more."[76]

If sex should be moderate in character, then it is interesting that Maino was to adopt a more extreme position in the two chapters he devoted to sexual continence (*Regimen sanitatis*, 3: 23; *Compendium*, 22). He viewed sex as a "natural" process, one that of course ensured the continuation of the species, and also as a "non-natural" that could be used in various ways to maintain the body in health, but even more radically, for a medical author, as something that man could not only control but in fact entirely exclude from the routine of life. He put this most succinctly: "So sex is not necessary for the preservation of the health of the individual, although it is necessary for the preservation of the species."[77] Maino's dilemma is palpable. His difficulties in finding a rigid and logical definition of sex, and thus a home for it in his regimen, reveal a deeper problem of attitude. For though sex was a medical issue, it also had moral overtones, and Maino seems to have been unable to ignore this aspect of sex. It was this that forced him to consider sex in these seemingly exclusive ways, as necessary and voluntary, medicine and morals, body and soul. When Caroline Bynum writes regarding attitudes to the body that "the Middle Ages was characterized by a cacophony of discourses," she is right; this cacophony can be heard at play even in the writings of one man.[78]

Certainly, the wrong type of sex could end in dire physical consequences; for example: a pregnant woman having sex risked abortion; retention of sperm (*amplexus reservatus*) during sex could damage the testicles; and having sex with two women would immediately generate leprosy.[79] Conversely, abstinence from sex could have positive health benefits; for example, in order to avoid plague, people should: "Abstain from work, sex and worry."[80] This advice was reiterated in the context of an actual plague outbreak in the 1360 *Libellus de preservatione ab epydimia*, where Maino suggested that *coitus* and particularly immoderate *coitus* were to be avoided. Maino stressed the need for young people in particular to hold these desires in check.[81]

But Maino saw chastity as the superior choice where spiritual considerations were paramount. He consistently emphasized that one should not be too interested in sex, early on criticizing people of a choleric complexion saying: "This complexion is afflicted by an inordinate desire for sex."[82] By contrast, people of admirable character hated sex: "Hence men of elevated spiritual contemplation totally abhor this act."[83] This comment, though, is given in the context of things that will impede healthy sex; in other words, too much religion could interfere with bodily health. At this juncture it seems relevant to reemphasize the dedication of both early regimens to religious men, men for whom the issue of sexual continence should, at least, have been important. In writing these, Maino was clearly responding to the needs and concerns of his readers: "Since it is true that there are venerable men who want to live chastely and at the same time want to live healthily."[84] This was especially true in the case of the later *Compendium*. This work concluded with the chapter on sexual continence, which opens as follows:

> Because there are some clerics and educated men who have chosen to live continently, among whose number I include you my Lord and dearest friend. For this reason I intend to give in this chapter various rules and considerations by which man can more easily remain chaste.[85]

Maino's personal circumstances may also account for his interests in sex and chastity. Celibacy was one of the conditions attached to becoming a master at the University of Paris, yet Maino was one of only four masters known to have been allowed to marry, and we know that he had a large family.[86] His experience of marriage may also account for his generally open-minded consideration of sex, certainly when compared with the less favorable attitudes already noted in the writings of the apparently celibate Bernard de Gordon, who had written that even "looking at a woman causes the worst corruption of morals."[87] Could the dilemmas raised in his writings on *coitus* reflect the complex realities of Maino's own life, as well as the lives of his intended audience?

In his fourth and last section on sex in the long regimen (*Regimen sanitatis*, 3: 23) and in its reiteration and expansion in the final chapter of the *Compendium*, this proscriptive attitude to sex was proposed most fully. Maino saw plenty of evidence around him that sex was not a necessity: "So it is possible for men to live healthily without sex, as is evident in many virgins, in the past and in the present."[88] Nonetheless, he acknowledged that it was much easier to remain a virgin than to renounce sex once you had had it.[89] If not a virgin, it was better to slowly withdraw from sexual activity. In order to help this process, Maino made the somewhat controversial suggestion that men should visit old and ugly prostitutes, all the time contemplating the brutish nature of sex, until little by little their desires would wane. In the *Compendium*, as noted by Gil Sotres, the emphasis was placed much more on contemplation of the act and meditation on how it could disrupt a good life.[90]

Just as he had included recommendations for good sex earlier in the regimen, Maino now offered a list of things that could help keep man chaste against sexual temptation. He included the study of literature, morals and philosophy, and the distractions of hunting, watching sport, taking political office or warfare, as well as more medical suggestions for anaphrodisiacs, phlebotomy, stuphas, bathing and vigorous exercise.[91] More specifically, he gave the still familiar prescription of cold baths: "Further to know that from time to time to submerge the generative members in very cold water: in this way the desire for sex is removed."[92] And of course, a relative health could be maintained even without sex, that most perfect form of excretion: "Of course, the superfluities of the members of the third digestion can be expelled through exercise, bathing or massage."[93] The orientation of the *Compendium regimen sanitatis* towards a celibate lifestyle can therefore be seen to explain not only the omission of any reference to sex as a means of ridding the body of superfluities but also the inclusion of a specific

chapter devoted to methods of excretion (a section unusually omitted from the *Regimen sanitatis*). The constraints of a religious lifestyle—whether fasting or chastity—made negative impacts on the health of the body. Ultimately, though, individuals could, and perhaps should, view the health of their soul as more important, and the physician and patient could only rectify these impacts in a limited fashion. This compromise led to the major reorientation of the medical advice given to Antonio Fieschi in the *Compendium regimen sanitatis*. The soul had become preeminent, the body maintained only to allow the soul to function perfectly, with this rewritten regimen opening and closing with themes that related to the soul's balance: Chapter 1 on the "accidents of the soul" and Chapter 22 on a life of sexual continence.

It is worth remembering that Maino thought the *Regimen sanitatis* the ultimate expression of his views on sex. In his *Liber medicinalibus* of 1360, he opened and closed his brief chapter on sex with references to the more detailed exposition of this early work: "which I have discussed expansively in my book of the regimen of health," and again, "which are all most perfectly described and elucidated in my famous book of the regimen of health."[94] Maino declared in his prologue that it was his intention to provide almost a textbook of preventive medicine for poor students, and this perhaps accounts for its all-inclusive nature.[95]

Maino, quite correctly, recognized himself as the first dietician in the West to actually write about the moral ramifications of medical advice on sex: "Amongst the wise men who have spoken about the regimen of health, none have mentioned anything profound concerning sex."[96] As his own words indicate, he was aware of the novelty of his approach to sex, and its twofold medicinal and moral implications for man. Was this symptomatic of Maino's intellectual interests in both medicine and moral philosophy?[97] Or was it necessitated by his double audience, medical and ecclesiastical? Or is it simply tribute to the depth and honesty with which Maino approached his reworking of the regimen genre, not happy to regurgitate old oversimplifications but determined to explore and expand the realities of the everyday concerns of his readers? Ultimately, Maino's desire to write in depth about sex resulted in a major achievement: regimens that made a real attempt to consider the patient's whole life, both physical and spiritual. More than any other regimen author, Maino dwelled on the use and abuse of sex, sex as morals and sex as medicine, exactly the "two types of discourse" described by Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset.[98] He could have opted out of the dilemmas this deeper consideration raised; he could have fundamentally recommended or prohibited sex to his readers; but he chose to remain open to both options, for: "Of course there are many who live healthily without sex and others with sex."[99] Sexualities, like all the aspects of lifestyle discussed in the regimens of health, were as various as they were entirely individual. Furthermore, even within the life of each individual, sexuality remained a state permanently in flux.[100]

Notes

1. Fundamental works include: Helen R. Lemay, "Human Sexuality in Twelfth- through Fifteenth-Century Scientific Writings," in *Sexual Practices & the Medieval Church*, eds Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (Buffalo NY: Prometheus Books, 1982), 187–205; Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. M. Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988); Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and her, "Western medicine and natural philosophy," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, eds James A. Brundage and Vern L. Bullough (New York: Garland, 1996), 51–80; more focused on gynecology is the wide-ranging work of Monica Green collected in her *Women's Healthcare in the Medieval West: Texts and Contexts* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000).
2. Paul Delaney, "Constantinus Africanus' *De coitu*: A Translation," *Chaucer Review,* 4 (1969): 55–65, and Monica H. Green, "Constantinus Africanus and the Conflict Between Religion and Science," in *The Human Embryo: Aristotle and the Arabic and European tradition*, ed. Gordon R. Dunstan (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1990), 47–69; Monica H. Green, ed. and trans., *The 'Trotula': A Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); M. Anthony Hewson, *Giles of Rome and the Medieval Theory of Conception: A Study of the 'De formatione corporis humani in utero'* (London: Athelone Press, 1975).
3. As noted previously by Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality*, 2.
4. Hewson, *Giles of Rome*, 46.
5. Helen R. Lemay, "William of Saliceto on Human Sexuality," *Viator*, 12 (1981), 165–81.
6. Pedro Gil Sotres, "The Regimens of Health," in *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. Mirko D. Grmek, trans. Antony Shugaar (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 312–13. For more on the regimens see especially: Melitta Weiss Adamson, *Medieval Dietetics: Food and Drink in Regimen sanitatis Literature from 800 to 1400* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995); Pedro Gil Sotres, "Introduccìon," in *Arnaldi de Villanova Opera Medica Omnia, vol. X. 1: "Regimen sanitatis ad regem Aragonum,"* eds Luis García-Ballester and Michael R. McVaugh (Barcelona: University of Barcelona, 1996), 471–885; and M. Nicoud, "*Aux origines d'une médecine préventive: Les traités de diététique en Italie et en France (XIIIe–XVe siècles)*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Paris, 1998).
7. Louis Landouzy and Roger Pepin, eds, *Le 'Régime du Corps' de Maître Aldebrandin de Sienne: texte français du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1911), 28–30.
8. Garcìa-Ballester and McVaugh, *Arnaldi*, 435; Gil Sotres, "Introduccìon", 761–2.
9. For more on Maino, see Caroline Proctor, "Perfecting Prevention: The Medical Writings of Maino de Maineri (*d. c.*1368)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of St Andrews, 2006).
10. The *Regimen sanitatis* is extant in four fifteenth-century manuscripts: Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Pal. Lat. 1098, ff.100r–176r; Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Pal. Lat. 1331, ff.228r–302v; Seitenstetten, Stiftsbibliothek, ms. 193, ff.191a–260a; Bethesda, National Library of Medicine, ms. 513. Throughout I will be referring to an early printed edition (Paris: Felix Baligault, 1495) available

for download online at http://gallica.bnf.fr, notice no. FRBNF37230620, henceforth cited as *Regimen*.

11. The *Compendium regimen sanitatis* (henceforth *Compendium*) is only extant in one fifteenth-century manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 873, ff.1r-34r. A transcription of this work is included as an appendix in Proctor, "Perfecting Prevention."
12. *Regimen*, 2: 3, f.IXa: "*nec semen est utile generationi*."
13. *Regimen*, 2: 6, f.XXVa: "*Et quia generationis membra ordinata sunt a natura et ad actum generationis qui consistit in spermatis generatione et fermentatione et eiusdem per actus coitus convenienti emissione et in prolis finali generatione*."
14. It is clear, though, that the other sections on sex are primarily directed at men, though of course this did not exclude women from using the advice. The difficulties of specifying a clearly male or female audience for such literature are noted in Beryl Rowland, "*Ad restringuendum coytum*: How to Cool Lust," in *From Arabye to Engelond: Medieval Studies in Honor of Mahmoud Manzalaoui*, eds Auguste E. C. Canitz and Gernot R. Wieland (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1999), 61–73; and Monica H. Green, "The Possibilities of Literacy and the Limits of Reading: Women and the Gendering of Medical Literacy," in her *Women's Healthcare*, 7: 26–32.
15. *Regimen*, 2: 7, ff.XXVIb-XXVIIa: "*Sunt enim quedam mulieres: simpliciter steriles et maleficiate quibus hoc capitulum non deservit. Et alie que non sunt steriles sed non de facili impregnantur et tamen sunt sub latitudine sanitatis*."
16. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIa: "*malicium figure aut compositionis matricis*."
17. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIa: "*malum motum commixtionis viri cum muliere*."
18. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIa: *"usum quarundam rerum conceptionem impedientium."* This, of course, relates to wider use of contraceptives and abortifacients in the Middle Ages, issues that have been discussed by: Peter A. Biller, "Birth Control, the Medieval West," *Past and Present*, 94 (1982): 3–26; John T. Noonan, *Contraception: A History of its Treatment by the Catholic Authorities* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1986), especially at 209–11, 239; John M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992) and his *Eve's Herbs: History of Contraception and Abortion in the West* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
19. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIa: "*Si enim serapinum in camera posueris sive hypericon omnia demonia fugabantur*."
20. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIa: "*Item lapis magnetis portatus ad idem valet et concordiam facit inter virum et mulierem*."
21. See, for example, the inclusion of these suggestions in the *Thesaurus pauperum* of Petrus Hispanus (d. 1277), Maria Helena da Rocha Pereira, ed., *Obras Médicas de Pedro Hispano* (Coimbra: University of Coimbra, 1973), 234–9. I would like to thank Dr Iona M. McCleery for sharing these references and her translations with me.
22. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIa: "*postquam facta est administratio illorum que menstrua mundificant: et est perfecte mulier mundata ab eis. Et quando mulier non est famelica nec crapulata nec ebria. Et quando non est calefacta nec infrigidata in excessu. Et prima digestio est completa*."
23. Delaney, *"De coitu,"* 59.
24. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIa: "*Tyriaca exhibita cum decoctione hypericon maleficium tollit. Et hypericon emplastrum renibus maleficium tollit*."

25. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIb: *"Et iunctio matricis ex oleo de lilio est eis conveniens: et similiter ex melle albo."* See da Rocha Pereira, *Obras*, 242–3 where Dioscorides is cited as recommending that lily root cooked with oil, "softens the womb and opens it."
26. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIa: "*puta quando est matrix nimis alta: nam per fleubothomiam sophenarum et per ventosas crurium descendit et conceptio fit facilior*."
27. The complete *Liber medicinalibus* is contained in: Cambridge, Peterhouse, ms. 182, ff.1a–108a; Krakow, Biblioteki Jagiellonskiej, ms. 821, ff.1r-107r; Metz, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 282, ff.7r-104v; and Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Pal. Lat. 1213, ff.1r-94v. There are also many partial copies, listed in Proctor, "Perfecting Prevention," Appendix 1.
28. Maino de Maineri, *Liber medicinalibus octo tractatuum*, Cambridge, Peterhouse, ms. 182, f.71a: "*Menta esui . . . coytum incitat . . . Dicunt aliqui quod nascale ex ea prohibet impregacionem nam impregnacione ex necessitate sit seminum coagulacio et menta prohibet coagulacionem*."
29. Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality*, 133.
30. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIa: "*tactu suavi et verbis amicalibus*."
31. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIa: *"ei fricando de ea quod est inter anum eius de super et vulvam. Ille enim est locus delectationis eius."* In the most complete manuscript of the regimen, Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 1331, f.247v, the term *perytoneo* is used. Intriguingly, the whole account of the sexual act is omitted from another manuscript, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 1098; see ff.114v-115v. It was often copyists and not authors who highlighted what might be considered troubling in these medical works; see Joan Cadden, " 'Nothing Natural Is Shameful': Vestiges of a Debate about Sex and Science in a Group of Late-Medieval Manuscripts," *Speculum,* 76 (2001): 66–89.
32. See Cadden, *Meanings*, 38, 134–65.
33. Ibid., 137.
34. Quoted in Lemay, "William of Saliceto," 166, n. 3: "*Tale desiderium vel delectatio non requiritur in coitu.*"
35. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIa: "*fortis adherentia et eius oculi incipiunt mutari in rubedinem: et eius anhelitus elevari: et verba eius balbutire*."
36. Quoted in Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality*, 131.
37. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIa: "*non est bonum ut vir expleat suum desiderium ante mulierem immo simul parum vel mulier ante*."
38. See Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1980), 30. In common with many medieval medical writers this ran contrary to the dominant Aristotelian model proposed by Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).
39. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIa: "*Et in seminum emissione vir adhereat mulieri fortissime secundum figuram quod mulieris crura sint elevata parumper*."
40. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIa: "*Nec vir statim descendat sed adhereat donec videat anhelitum mulieris quietatum et quod nodi oris matricis quiescunt muliere iacente parum elevatis coxis et everso dorso. Et tunc descendat et mulier remaneat horula una supina constrictis pedibus et retento anhelitu*."
41. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIb: "*Amplius dico quod mulier desiderans impregnari et esse fecunda cavere debet a sterilizantibus et conceptionem impedientibus. Mulier enim*

volens concipere non comedat os de corde cervi nec secum portet matricem caprinam nec lapidem vocatum gagates, impediunt enim conceptionem. Item caveat a comestione granorum edere nigre. Amplius non portet secum os de corde cervi, nec smaragdum, nec zaphirum. Hec enim impediunt actum coeundi. Amplius non portet secum radicem pimpinelle nec bibat coagulum leporis post partum nec teneat scolopendriam suspensam supra lectum. Item apis comesta reddit mulierem sterilem sed partum facilitat. Amplius non portet secum auriculam mule vel corium nec comedat limaturum ferri, nec succum mente, nec matricem mule, reddunt enim mulierem sterilem."

42. As noted by Noonan, *Contraception*, 209–11.
43. See Green, "Constantinus Africanus," 54, 58–9. Bernard de Gordon opened his chapter on sex stating that: "coitus is only permitted for the sake of offspring," as cited in Joan Cadden, "Medieval Scientific and Medical Views of Sexuality: Questions of Propriety," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 14 (1986): 157–71 at 165.
44. See above, note 41.
45. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIb: "*Amplius scias quod suffumigatio cum aromatibus calidis stipticis est de his que preparant matricem ad concipiendum. Et non debent talia aromatica calida boni odoris ante conceptionem odorari de super per nares quia impedirent impregnationem cum essent causa motus matricis ad superiora, sed post impregnationem competit odor eorum de super per nares et non per inferius, quia ex hoc impeditur aborsus. Nam matrix et fetus moventur ad partem superiorem aromaticis applicatis naribus*." In particular, Maino recommended fumigations of lolium, frankincense, calamint, and lemon-balm; see ibid.: "*Nos autem hic volumus addere quedam que multum valent ad concipiendum. Lolium enim et thus suffumigata disponunt mulierem ad concipiendum, et similiter nepita . . . Amplius ad idem valet melissa suffumigata*."
46. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXVIIIb: "*Item theodoricon anacardinum per pessarium immissum cum modico scamonnee sine dubio concipere facit si post immediate mulier coierit cum viro potenti*."
47. This manuscript has previously been cited in Cadden, *Meanings*, 229 and Green, *Women's Healthcare*, Appendix, 20.
48. *Regimen*, 5: 9, f.CXIIa: "*in tractatu quem composui de regimine sterilitatis. In hiis etiam locis dictum est de figura et quantitate pessariorum et de modo immitendi pessaria*."
49. As just one example, *Regimen*, 2: 3, f.VIb: "*Mulieres gallicane habent regulam specialem in regimine infantium quam volumus premittere*."
50. For more on the contemporary accounts of this sexually scandalous trip see Proctor, "Perfecting Prevention," 153–5.
51. For Maino's marriage dispensation see Élie Chatelain and Heinrich Denifle, eds, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (Paris: 1889–1897), 2: 341.
52. Maino, *Liber*, f.99b: "*Tractatus octavus et ultimus de exercitio et aliis rebus non naturalibus*"; and ff.106b-107a: "*Summa quarta de usu coytus*."
53. *Regimen*, 2: 5, f.XVIa: "*parum dormire etin lecto duro et multum coire et morari sub sole et in mansionibus calidis corpus pingue macrescere faciunt*."
54. Monica Green has stressed the Arabic (and Greek) origin of this view of sexual practice, though she disputes that this constituted a conflict in the medieval West between religion and science. See Green, "Constantinus Africanus."

55. *Regimen*, 2: 6, f.XXVb: "*Et interdum ex spermatis detenti corruptione non solum seminaria vasa sed etiam totum corpus corrumpitur . . . ad modum veneni*."
56. *Regimen*, 3: 5, f.XLIb: "*causabit pessimas egritudines et tandem mortem*."
57. *Regimen*, 3: 5, f.XLIb: "*coitu convenientius expellitur: nec est alia via convenientior*."
58. *Regimen*, 2: 6, f.XXVa: "*eiusdem per actus coitus convenienti emissione et in prolis finali generatione: illa que ad hec iuvant membra generationis confortat*[sic]."
59. *Regimen*, 3: 5, f.XLIb: "*Coitus secundum veritatem iuvamentum habet in expulsione superfluitatum tertie digestive quare competit in sanitatis regimine*." Maino also mentioned in passing the fact that sex could also be used as a cure for various diseases, see ibid., f.XLIIa: "*Et non solum confert in sanitatis regimine: sed etiam in cura multarum egritudinum . . . Sed quia non intendimus in hoc opere de egritudinum cura*."
60. *Regimen*, 3: 5, f.XLIIa: "*sollicitudinem removet . . . melancolia sanatur, . . . sedatur furiosus amor*."; *Regimen*, 3: 5, f.XLIIb: "*appetitus confortetur et sentiat se leviorem et magis gaudentem*." This list is very reminiscent of the list of attributes Maino used to praise wine.
61. Delaney, "*De coitu*," 59–60.
62. See: Green, "Constantinus Africanus" on the importance of Arab/Jewish attitudes to sex; Gil Sotres, "Regimens," 299–300, on the regimen of Maimonides; and W. Z. Harvey, "Sex and Health in Maimonides," in *Moses Maimonides: Physician, Scientist, Philosopher*, eds Fred Rosner and Samuel S. Kottek (Northvale NJ: Jason Aronson, 1993), 33–9.
63. *Regimen*, 2: 6, f.XXVb: "*Amplius scias quod balnei multiplicatio est ex his que debilitant membra generationis in actu coeundi, et etiam frequentatio fleubothomie . . . ab his ergo cavere debet qui sanitatem membrorum generationis desiderat. Abstineat etiam a quibusdam quorum usus nocet actui coitus . . . Unde agnus castus vaporatus et bibitus nocet. Et etiam herba basiliconis. Camphora abscindit coitum infrigitando et exsiccando et similiter semen caulium . . . Et similiter usus coriandri . . . Acetum etiam et omne acetosum abscindit coitum infrigitando*."
64. *Regimen*, 2: 6, f.XXVIa: "*Meliores enim cibi sunt carnes edi pinguis masculi et carnes ovine et cicer et cepe . . . Ad idem valent galline et pulli columbini impinguati et proprie allaude*."
65. Constantinus mentioned cabbage-seeds, vinegar and chickpeas; see Delaney, "*De coitu*," 63. On the use of camphor, see Rowland, "*Ad restringuendum coytum*," 65–6.
66. *Regimen*, 2: 6, f.XXVIa: "*ova sorbilia proprie pulverizata cum cynamomo et pipere et galanga et sale scinci . . . enim confortat membra, spermatis valde*."
67. *Regimen*, 3: 5, f.XLIIb: "*Amplius coitus evitari debet post omnes evacuationes fortes, sicut post vomitum et fluxum ventris et fleubothomiam et post fortes motus corporeos. Et similiter post fortem iram vel tristiciam vel post forte gaudium et similiter cum instat tempus emissionis stercoris et urine*."
68. *Regimen*, 3: 5, f.XLIIb: "*in coitu sunt figure inconvenientes et contra legem et mores ex quibus corpora possunt incidere in maximum nocumentum, sicut si ascendat mulier supra virum mala est figura*." Here Maino repeats Avicenna's assertion that this could cause lesions to the penis.
69. See: Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality*, 134: and James A. Brundage, "Let Me Count the Ways: Canonists and Theologians Contemplate Coital Positions," *Journal of Medieval History*, 10 (1984): 81–93.

70. *Regimen*, 3: 5, f.XLIIb: "*Amplius scias quod coitus cum infantibus et masculis est fedus et abominabilis in lege prohibitus et ex una parte est nocibilior et ex alia minus nocivus. Nocibilior quidem quia natura indiget in tali coitu motu plurimo ut sperma educatur, et minus nocivus est qua minus expellitur de spermate quam cum muliere et cum minori delectatione*." See Jeffre Richards, *Sex, dissidence and damnation: minority groups in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1991), especially 138, where Richards posits a culture of acceptance of sex between men, particularly at the University of Paris in the fourteenth century. For invaluable, though not equally accepted, introductions to attitudes to "homosexuality" in the Middle Ages see: James Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Vern L. Bullough, "The Sin Against Nature and Homosexuality," in Bullough and Brundage, *Sexual Practices*, 55–71; James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Mark Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
71. In her article, "Medieval Scientific," Joan Cadden pointed out that legal and moral considerations were often mentioned in medieval scientific literature, but usually only in passing. Maino's deeper discussion is exceptional in this respect.
72. *Regimen*, 3: 5, f.XLIIb: "*Et enim delectatio magna in coitu una est de causis inducentibus debilitatem: et ideo qui plus in coitu delectantur plus debilitantur*."
73. *Regimen*, 2: 6, f.XXVb sees the first use of these comparative words.
74. *Regimen*, 2: 6, f.XXVb: "*Usus ergo moderatus coitus est unum ex his que confortant membra generationis*."
75. *Regimen*, 2: 6, f.XXVb: "*debilitat et etiam totalis dimissio*."
76. Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2 (London: Allen Lane, 1985), 120.
77. *Regimen*, 3: 23, f.LXXXIIa: "*Non est igitur coitus necessarius ad sanitatis conservationem individui: licet ad conservationem speciei necessarius sit*." Note the atypically emphatic positioning of the "*Non*."
78. Carolyn Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry*, 22 (1995): 1–33 at 7.
79. *Regimen*, 2: 7, f.XXXIa: "*Oportet igitur quod mulier pregnans evitet motum superfluum, saltum, percussionem, casum et coitum proprie*"; *Regimen*, 3: 5, f.XLIIb: "*Amplius in actu coeundi nullo modo retineatur sperma nam hoc perducit ad destructionem unius vel duorum testiculorum*"; *Regimen*, 4: 1, f.XCb: "*Coire cum duabus mulieribus immediate generat lepram*."
80. *Regimen*, 4: 2, f.XCIIIa: "*a labore et coitu et sollicitudine abstinendum est*."
81. R. Simonini, ed., *Maino de Maineri ed il suo "Libellus de preservatione ab epydimia"* (Modena: Casa Editrice Cav. Uff. Umberto Orlandini, 1923), 24–6.
82. *Regimen*, 2: 4, f.XIIIIa: "*Hec complexio leditur a coitu inordinato*."
83. *Regimen*, 2: 6, f.XXVb: "*Unde quidam homines elevati spiritu contemplationis hunc actum totaliter abhorrent*."
84. *Regimen*, 3: 23, f.LXXXIb: "*Quoniam quidem sunt venerabiles viri qui vivere volunt continenter et tamen volunt vivere sani*."
85. *Compendium*, f.32r: "*Quia quidam sunt inde venerabiles clerici et litterati qui eligunt vivere continenter de quorum numero suppono Domine et amice carissime vos esse.*

Ideo in hoc capitulo intendo ponere aliquas regulas seu considerationes per quas homo potest facilius continere."

86. For further details on his family see Proctor, "Perfecting Prevention," 1–27. It is worth pointing out that, in contrast to theological writings, medical works do not usually mention marriage in relation to sex; see Maclean, *Renaissance*, 45.
87. Quoted in Luke E. Demaitre, *Doctor Bernard de Gordon: Professor and Practitioner* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980), 26–7.
88. *Regimen*, 3: 23, f.LXXXIIa: "*Possibile igitur est hominem vivere sanum sine coitu, sicut patet in multis virginibus preteritis et presentibus*."
89. *Compendium*, ff.32r-32v: "*Sciendum igitur quod non consuescere actum venereum vel deassuescere est de his que maxime iuvant ad continentiam. Nam sicut lac non generatur in mamillis mulierum non lactantium ita quod efficiuntur steriles sic etiam in his qui deassuescunt actum illum non ferventatur materia seminaria in vasis generationis et sic possunt levius continere*."
90. See Gil Sotres, 'Introduccìon', 771. *Regimen*, 3: 23, f.LXXXIIa: "*Consuetudo igitur paulatim est mutanda et hoc fieri potest si quis volens mutare consuetudinem coeat tardius quam consuevit et cum turpioribus mulieribus et cum vetulis et cum meretricibus et universaliter cum mulieribus quarum actus et aspectus sunt horribiles et specialiter in actu coeundi imaginari debet actus turpitudinis et quod eodem actu ratio absorbetur et succumbit et homo brutis adequatur, et quod ex hoc actu nullus actus virtutis nec bonus habitus in nobis augmentatur, quoniam in hoc actu ratio nichil iudicat, nec de bono, nec de malo, immo eius iudiciam totaliter annullatur et specialiter quod ex hoc actu homo distrahitur a multis operibus virtuosis, quia mulier furatur cor spisse sapientis. Omnibus his itaque consideratis et sepe homo levius et facilius continebit*"; *Compendium*, f.32v: "*Si quis tardius coeat solito et cum turpioribus mulieribus quarum actus et aspectus sit horribilis et specialiter in actu coeundi amplius in magni actus turpitudinem in eodem actu cum intentionalibus animalibus communicationem et quod in actu isto ratio absorbetur et succumbit et quod homo animalibus adequatur et quod ex hoc actu nullus virtutis habitus in nobis generatur quem in hoc actu ratio nichil iudicat de bono nec de malo imo eius iudicare anullatur. Et specialiter quod ex hoc actu homo distrahitur a multis virtuosis operibus sapientis. His itaque consideratis homo facilius continebit*."
91. *Regimen*, 3: 23, f.LXXXIIa: "*Amplius scias quod venationes et ludorum species et tristicie provocationes et dignitates assumpte sunt ex his que iuvant hominem continere et super omnia servire philosophie et studiis litterarum et specialiter moralibus insudare et bellorum actibus insistere hec omnia iuvant quam plurimum continere. Amplius fleubothomia et stupha sicca exercitium forte et balneum multum iuvat ad continendum homines*"; *Compendium*, ff.32v–33r. In suggesting both physical and mental approaches to controlling sexual appetite, Maino echoed the types of advice offered by religious authors; see John H. Arnold, "The Labour of Continence: Masculinity and Clerical Virginity," in *Medieval Virginities*, eds Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans and Sarah Salih (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 102–18.
92. *Regimen*, 3: 23, f.LXXXIIb: "*Amplius scias quod interdum submergere membra generationis in aqua frigidissima: est de his auferunt desiderium coitus*"; *Compendium*, f.33v.
93. *Regimen*, 3: 5, ff.XLIb–XLIIa: "*Per exercitium enim et balneum et fricationem expelluntur superfluitates membrorum tertie digestive*."

94. Maino, *Liber*, f.106b: "*De quo memini me dixisse diffuse in libro nostro de regimine sanitatis*"; ibid., f.107a: "*omnino in nostro libro fam[?] de regimine sanitatis perfectissime sunt enarrata vel pertracta*."
95. *Regimen*, f.Ib: "*Necnon ad omnem utilitatem iuvenum et specialiter rudium pauperum copiam librorum habere nequeuntium nichilominus in hac scientia studere volentium*."
96. *Regimen*, 3: 23, ff.LXXXIb–LXXXIIa: *"Unde aliqui sapientum qui fuerunt locuti de sanitatis regimine de coitu nullam penitus fecerunt mentionem."* This is again reminiscent of Maimonides' complaint that, "No physician of antiquity included in his general health regimen the regulation of coitus . . . To my mind, regulation of coitus should be included," as quoted in Harvey, "Sex," 33.
97. Maino also wrote on philosophical topics in his *De intentionibus secundis* and perhaps the *Dialogus creaturarum moralizatus*; see Proctor, "Perfecting Prevention," 9–10, 25–6.
98. Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality*, 194, and see also Jacqueline Murray, "Sexuality and Spirituality: The Intersection of Medieval Theology and Medicine," *Fides et Historia*, 23 (1991): 20–36. Indeed, some authors have observed an increasing meshing of the approaches of medicine and theology regarding sexuality throughout the late medieval period, and Maino's approach may well be the consequence of this. See Bynum, "Why All the Fuss," 30 and Cadden, "Nothing Natural," 72.
99. *Regimen*, 3: 23, f.LXXXIIa: "*Multi enim sunt qui vivunt sani sine coitu sicut alii cum coitu*."
100. *Regimen*, 1: 2, f.IIIb: "*Sunt enim corpora nostra in continua alteratione, et sic continue aliter se habent quam prius*."

Part Four

Real and Imaginary Kingdoms

8

"Puttyng Downe and Rebuking of Vices"

Richard III and the *Proclamation for the Reform of Morals*[1]

David Santiuste

Like the reign and character of Richard III himself,[2] his *Proclamation for the Reform of Morals* has inspired conflicting interpretations. Issued from Leicester on October 23, 1483, the *Proclamation* is a manifesto against the leaders of the so-called "Buckingham's Rebellion" that was distributed throughout southern England.[3] Setting out Richard's commitment to the "putting down and rebuking of vices," the *Proclamation* denounces the rebels on the basis of their alleged sexual behavior. But the *Proclamation* may also be situated within a larger context. As king, Richard appears to have been preoccupied with "vice" in many of his public statements, often making retrospective criticisms of the sexual behavior of his late brother, Edward IV, and his courtiers, as we shall see. Richard's propaganda has been considered previously in the light of his contentious claim to the throne; all of Edward's children were ultimately barred from the succession on the grounds that Edward's marriage to his queen, Elizabeth, was invalid.[4] Richard's concern with personal morality has sometimes been dismissed, therefore, as a rather crude attempt to manipulate public opinion, readily understandable on the part of a usurper whose title was in dispute.[5] However, some have discerned elements of personal principle, evidence of Richard's adherence to a stern code of sexual ethics, perhaps even to the extent of religious fanaticism.[6] Richard's own intentions are obviously important, and will be considered in some depth, but I have also tried to think about the audience of the *Proclamation*, and how it might have been received. Royal proclamations were intended to persuade, not only to command, and may therefore be seen as a good place to look for the intersections between high politics and the social and cultural trends affecting

wider society. The *Proclamation* raises broader questions not only about Richard's personal attitudes but also about contemporary perceptions of the relationship between sexual and political morality. Richard's public statements about his enemies' sexual behavior were in fact consistent with normative principles that were deployed in a variety of rhetorical contexts; they might also have demonstrated sensitivity to genuine contemporary concerns.

Proclamations were used as an instrument of government throughout the late medieval period, although they increased in sophistication. The crucial innovations occurred during the reign of Edward IV.[7] Previously, instructions to give proclamation had been written entirely in Latin, and it was left up to individual sheriffs how best to convey the king's message. Edward's proclamations specified the words that were to be used and included an English text that often employed emotive language. There are good grounds for arguing that Yorkist propaganda was a success. Right at the start of Edward's reign, for instance, the Lancastrians' chances of gaining control of London might have been hindered by the preparation of Latin manifestos that were probably never proclaimed. The effectiveness of Yorkist propaganda, by contrast, is attested to by its preservation in a diverse range of sources. Although historians differ as to the political sophistication of the "commons" at this time, it is clear that by the time of Richard's accession to the throne appeals to "the people" were an increasingly important component of political discourse.[8]

In its essential format the *Proclamation for the Reform of Morals* follows the proclamations of Edward IV's reign. The instructions to Richard's officers, written in Latin, are formulaic. The officers are commanded that the *Proclamation* should be made immediately in all the places they deem appropriate. It is twice stressed that the *Proclamation* should be made following exactly the words that are written. The *Proclamation* itself, written in English, runs to approximately 600 words. But it is Richard's preoccupation with vice that immediately stands out, and this was unusual. Richard points out that he had granted full pardons to:

> all manner [of] persons . . . having full confidence and trust that all oppressors and extortioners of his subjects, horrible adulterers and bawds, provoking the high indignation and displeasure of God, should have been reconciled to the way of truth and virtue.

This, presumably, is a reference to his early policy of retaining members of Edward's household in key positions.[9] There then follows a list of those who were regarded as having abused Richard's trust by joining the rebellion. At the head of the list, even ahead of the "king's great traitor," Buckingham, is Thomas Marquis of Dorset, Queen Elizabeth's son by her first marriage. During the reign of Edward IV the queen's family, usually known collectively by Elizabeth's maiden name of Woodville, had become pillars of the regime, but on his way to the throne Richard had virtually destroyed the family as a viable political force;

several members of the family and their associates had been executed. Dorset was the most prominent of the Woodvilles to escape Richard, and he features heavily in Richard's propaganda. He is denounced not only as a traitor, but as one "which not fearing God, nor the peril of his soul, has many and sundry maids, widows and wives damnably and without shame devoured, deflowered and defouled, holding the unshameful and mischievous woman called Shore's wife in adultery." This was the celebrated Elizabeth "Jane" Shore, to whose story we shall need to return. Dorset and the other rebels are said to have aimed to bring about not only the death of the king and the breach of the peace but also the "letting of virtue and damnable maintenance of vices and sin as they have done in times past to the great displeasure of God and evil example to all Christian people." Richard invites "every true subject and lover of virtue and peace" to join him in the "punishing of the great and damnable vices of the said traitors, adulterers and bawds," so that "virtue may be lifted up . . . and vice utterly rebuked and damned to the security and comfort of all the true and good Commons of this realm."[10]

Richard continued to denounce his enemies as "horrible adulterers and bawds" (among other things) up until the eve of Bosworth, nearly two years later.[11] However, the *Proclamation* can be more specifically associated with Richard's criticisms of the sexual behavior of Edward IV's court, which were consistent and sustained. According to the Italian observer Dominic Mancini, Richard's first public attack on Edward IV's courtiers can be dated to soon after the late king's death. When Richard and the duke of Buckingham intercepted Edward's eldest son, then acknowledged as king Edward V, at Stony Stratford:

> [they] exhibited a mournful countenance, expressing profound grief at the death of the king's father whose demise they imputed to his ministers as being such that they had little regard for his honour, since they were accounted the companions and servants of his vices, and had ruined his health.[12]

In *Titulus Regius*, the parliamentary act that confirmed Richard's right to the throne, Edward's regime is denounced as having been sexually predatory: "No man was sure of his life, land or livelihood, nor of his wife, daughter or servant, every good woman and maiden standing in dread to be ravished and defouled."[13]

There is independent corroboration for some of Richard's criticisms. In this case the court seems to have taken its lead from the king himself, and Mancini appears to have been scandalized by Edward IV's behavior: "He was licentious in the extreme . . . he pursued with no distinction the married and unmarried the noble and the lowly: however he took none by force."[14] Edward then, unlike the courtiers in Richard's *Proclamation*, was not accused of rape, but Mancini does suggest that Edward colluded with his courtiers in the sexual subjugation of women. When Edward had tired of his mistresses, we are told, he passed them on to his courtiers, "much against their will" [*invitas*]. We learn that the most

conspicuous of Edward's companions in "vice" were members of the queen's family, her two sons by her first marriage to Sir John Grey, as well as her brother, Sir Edward Woodville. Sexual jealousy between the marquis of Dorset and Lord Hastings is said to have led to dangerous factionalism: "He [Hastings] maintained a deadly feud with the queen's son [Dorset] . . . and that because of the mistresses whom they had abducted, or tried to entice from one another."[15]

Mancini seems to have derived his material from an eclectic range of sources, although A. J. Pollard is probably correct to suggest that the "shape" of his story is derived from John Argentine, Edward V's personal physician.[16] Mancini's account is generally hostile towards Richard, and his attack on the morals of Edward IV's court may therefore be surprising. It has been suggested that Mancini may have been influenced by Richard's own propaganda in this respect, which is plausible, but it seems equally likely that Mancini may be reflecting the frustrations of Edward V's entourage, including those who had been entrusted with the young king's education.[17] Their work had been undone, they might have argued, not only by Richard's "machinations," but also by the weakness at the center, caused by factionalism, which made Richard impossible to resist.[18] The Crowland Chronicler, who was also no friend of Richard, echoed Mancini's sentiments. Edward IV "was thought to have indulged too intemperately his own passions."[19]

More tangible evidence for Edward IV's sexual appetites is provided by the existence of his illegitimate children. The latest count suggests that Edward may have fathered as many as five children outside of his marriage to Elizabeth.[20] The evidence, however, is derived from genealogies and record sources, and therefore tells us little about Edward's relationships with the mothers of these children. The production of children is, of course, a rather imprecise measure of an individual's attitudes towards sexuality. It should also be stressed that most of the medieval kings of England fathered illegitimate children, and that Edward's record in this matter is much less conspicuous than some of his predecessors'.[21]

Ironically, even before doubts arose about its validity, it was in fact Edward IV's *marriage* that confirmed his image as a man driven by his sexual urges. Elizabeth Grey (née Woodville), several years' Edward's senior, the widow of a minor baron who had been killed fighting against Edward, was obviously a controversial choice of bride. Scandalized contemporaries, such as the chronicler "Gregory," concluded that Edward must have been overcome with "love" (or lust).[22] Nevertheless, Elizabeth proved in many ways to be a rather conventional queen, although the marriage continued to be controversial because of the political role of her relatives, who were married into families of the highest nobility and showered with titles and offices. Modern historians have concurred with contemporary verdicts that the Woodvilles were grasping, unattractive figures, advanced far beyond what was necessary or appropriate.[23] We have already seen that the Woodvilles were the particular focus of Richard's ire. A detailed discussion of the political implications of Edward's marriage, including Richard's relationship with the Woodvilles prior to Edward's death, is, however, beyond the scope of

this essay.[24] But the central question remains: why did Richard choose to emphasize the sexual immorality of the Woodvilles (and others) when more obvious lines of attack were surely available?

It seems unlikely that the behavior of Edward IV and his courtiers would have shocked many of their contemporaries. Although it would be tedious to provide a long list of powerful people who were involved in sexual relationships outside of marriage, most medieval courts seem to have accorded both men and women a certain degree of sexual freedom.[25] At the court of Edward III, for example, it seems to have been accepted that male courtiers would consort with prostitutes, although that is not to say that relationships with women of the court were discouraged. Men and women mixed freely, and a highly eroticized court ritual, notably the tournament, gave ample scope for flirtation.[26] Kim Phillips suggests that many "affairs" at court may in fact have been "parasexual," at least on the part of young women, although relationships in which men and women were indeed having sex outside marriage were not uncommon.[27] One might consider, for instance, the case of Elizabeth Lancaster, the daughter of John of Gaunt. Elizabeth was betrothed to the earl of Pembroke, but when she arrived at court she fell in love with the king's constable, Sir John Holland. She became pregnant, and married Holland instead. True, this story ended in respectable marriage, but the affair does not seem at all to have offended contemporary sensibilities.

It would be difficult to conclude that Edward IV's court represented a "counter culture" as far as sexual ethics are concerned, or that it was particularly "decadent" when compared to other royal courts. So why was Richard, apparently, so angry? One explanation could lie in the frustration of his martial ambitions during the later years of Edward IV's reign.[28] The decadence of courtiers was often associated with effeminacy, because they were thought to be lacking the appropriate martial spirit, and this was a popular and recurring theme throughout the Middle Ages.[29] A direct link was drawn between "effeminacy" and sexual indulgence. Whereas today promiscuous men tend to be seen as virile and "manly," medieval authorities argued that excessive interest in sex could lead to "women's conditions."[30] We have already seen that Richard believed, according to Mancini, that Edward's excesses, which were encouraged by his courtiers, had "ruined his health." However, where Richard more strongly echoed earlier critics was in his concern that immorality in high places was causing God's displeasure. It was a commonplace of medieval thought that "divine providence" could be seen at work in the world.[31] Thus a clear link could be drawn between public immorality and natural or political disaster, because it could be seen as having incurred God's wrath.

Was Richard's anger, therefore, informed by his religious beliefs? Richard's donations to churches, and even his extravagant religious building programs, could be regarded as conventional. However, there are some indications of a more profound religious experience. Richard's library included saints' lives, an English bible, and his famous book of hours, the latter being originally compiled for a

cleric.[32] A book of hours was an aid for the devout layman who was attempting to lead the so-called "mixed," or "meddled" life. It was essentially a prayer book containing devotions for the various "hours" of the day. There was usually scope for the owner to specify devotions to chosen saints and to add his own prayers at the end, as Richard did. As the book's modern editors argue, it is "beautiful, but in such a simple and unostentatious way that it cannot have been chosen for its outward appearance."[33] In short, unlike many other contemporary examples, Richard's book of hours was, first and foremost, a practical book that was designed to be used. It is quite possible that Richard was able to relate religious texts to the conduct of his own life and that of others.[34]

It would seem, though, from a Christian moralist's point of view, that Richard's own sexual behavior was by no means above reproach. First, Richard openly acknowledged two illegitimate children.[35] Richard's attitudes towards these children seem to have differed little from those of previous kings. The marriage of his daughter Katherine to the earl of Huntingdon was presumably designed to cement Richard's relationship with this important magnate. His son John, appointed Captain of Calais in 1484 while still under age, is described in the patent as "our dear son, our bastard John of Gloucester, whose quickness of mind, agility of body, and inclination to all good customs, give us great hope of his good service for the future."[36] Second, although Richard's claim to the throne was based on the dubious status of his brother's marriage, the validity of his own marriage has been questioned.[37] Richard married Anne Neville, the daughter of Warwick "the Kingmaker," probably in the summer of 1472. Through Anne, Richard eventually acquired control of a share of the estates formerly held by Warwick, which would form the basis of his northern powerbase.[38] However, Richard and Anne had faced impediments to their marriage; they were related within the prohibited degrees according to canon law. Without a dispensation to marry granted by the Pope, the marriage would have been regarded as incestuous. It used to be thought that Richard and Anne married entirely in defiance of canon law, although the details of a dispensation have recently been found by Peter Clarke.[39] This is an exciting discovery, although Michael Hicks has argued, correctly, that this dispensation could not make Richard's marriage valid, because it only covered the third and fourth degrees of affinity.[40] It did not cover the relationship in the second degree of consanguinity; Richard and Anne were first cousins. Nor did it cover the most glaring impediment. Richard and Anne were related in the first degree of affinity in the collateral line; Anne was Richard's sister-in-law. (Anne's sister Isabel had married Richard's brother George, duke of Clarence in 1469.) Hicks concludes that Richard and Anne did not seek a further dispensation, but this seems uncertain. It seems curious, surely, that there was not more discussion about Richard's marriage. In particular, why did Clarence, who desperately tried to prevent the match in order to defend his own interests, not openly challenge its validity?[41] Hicks suggests that an application for a further

dispensation would have been unsuccessful, not least because a marriage such as Richard's could have been seen as contravening natural law, as opposed to the law of the church.[42]. Theologians such as Duns Scotus had challenged this notion, however, and there was a clear precedent for Richard's marriage. Pope Martin V had been prepared to dispense for a man to marry his sister-in-law on the advice of experts present at the Council of Constance.[43] It seems possible that further evidence might be forthcoming, and that this debate will continue.

Although Richard was surely not a saint, irrespective of the technical status of his marriage, there is no suggestion that he indulged in the excessive and coercive sexual behavior of which he accused his enemies. Nevertheless, Thomas More found Richard's concern with personal morality to be not only hypocritical but also presumptuous.[44] Deploying his sarcastic wit at its most savage, More tells us that Richard: "As a good and continent prince, clean and faultless of himself, sent out of heaven into this vicious world for the amendment of men's manners . . . caused the Bishop of London to put her to open penance." "Her" was Elizabeth Shore, better known as Jane, the "mischievous and unshameful woman" referred to in the *Proclamation*. Jane was said to be the mistress of Edward IV, and probably Hastings and Dorset as well.[45] More does not dispute that Jane was sexually promiscuous, although in his account she is a good person at heart, and he paints an attractive portrait. Her beauty is more than skin deep, and she is witty and intelligent. Furthermore, she uses her influence with Edward to help others, rather than to enrich herself. More tells us that, of all Edward's women, it was she that the king loved.

While Jane is carrying out her penance, the tolerant and compassionate attitudes of her fellow citizens are in marked contrast to Richard's hypocritical and self-delusional zeal. More tells us frankly that there were some who were "more amorous of her body than curious of her soul," but even those others who disapproved of her morals "pitied they more her penance than rejoiced therein." More's account seems credible, but it should be noted that this passage is strikingly reminiscent of his message in *The Last Things*, his poem about the seven deadly sins. More took as his starting point the biblical passage Revelation 3: 16: "Because you are neither hot nor cold." The carnal sins of lechery, sloth and gluttony all contain the seeds of their own repentance, because the sinners are painfully aware of their fault, and thus are likely to try and change. The proud man, however, convinced of his own righteousness, is less likely to turn to God. In this case, as Alison Hanham suggests, Jane Shore can be seen as the personification of lechery.[46] Richard, of course, represents pride. More was concerned with moral truth, not historical fact.[47]

Richard's attitude towards Jane Shore was more ambivalent than More's account would have us believe. After her penance Jane was imprisoned, where she developed a relationship with Richard's solicitor-general, Thomas Lynom, and the couple soon wished to marry. Richard wrote a letter to his chancellor,

John Russel, exhorting him to dissuade Lynom.[48] It is to Richard's "great marvel" that Lynom is "marvellously blinded and abused" with Jane. But the mask quickly slips. If Lynom is "utter set" on the match (as he was), Richard would be "content."[49] This is an attractive flash of humanity on Richard's part, but it does provide something of a contrast to his fierce public persona as it is presented in the *Proclamation*. However, if political actors are behaving rationally, they must ensure that their public statements conform to "accepted principles," irrespective of their actual motives or beliefs.[50] Hughes, following More, argues that Richard failed as a communicator, and that his public statements would have alienated his subjects.[51] The rest of this essay, in contrast, presents evidence to suggest that Richard's message could have been widely understood, and approved.

Richard's emphasis on "vice" should not blind us to the fact that there is much in the *Proclamation* that is conventional, such as Richard's commitment to the defense of the "common weal." Anne Sutton has sought to demonstrate, through the lens of Giles of Rome's *De Regimine Principum*, that Richard tried hard to convey that he understood contemporary expectations of the ideal ruler.[52] (Although, for Sutton, in deed as well as in word.) The analysis of Richard's public statements cannot be divorced from this context. His preoccupation with sexual matters may have had a more immediate resonance, however. Several recent studies have drawn attention to an increasing concern with moral regulation throughout society towards the end of the fifteenth century.[53] The trend was not towards "top-down" legislation from the central government, but rather towards initiatives on the part of local communities, both large and small, although most particularly in urban areas. It is significant that the professed concerns of local leaders seem to have matched Richard's own. This suggests that Richard, in the *Proclamation*, was speaking a popular language.

The language used by urban authorities regarding sexual morality calls to mind the language used in Richard's own statements. The use of religious imagery was common in London, as well as in other large towns. Once again we see the link between lechery and decay, and the parallel is more generally drawn between moral disorder and political disorder. During the first few months of Richard's reign, for example, the authorities in London launched an attack on prostitution within the city.[54] It was "to eschew the stinking and horrible sin of lechery,"[55] which is said to have been increasing. This was "to the displeasure of almighty God and disturbance and breaking of the king our sovereign lord's peace." This has been interpreted as Richard's own initiative, but it seems unlikely.[56] This campaign can be situated within a broader context. Throughout the fifteenth century there were waves of attempts to improve public morality in London, and elsewhere. In 1474, for example, the mayor and aldermen of London defended their arrest and imprisonment of John Denys for lechery on the grounds that:

> Just as crows and eagles, by the instinct of their nature, converge on places where dead bodies lie, so also do bawds attract to their bawdyhouses, by their nepharious

> vice of lust, other evildoers, whence comes murder, robbery, felonies, litigiousness, dissensions and other evil deeds against the king's peace and the healthy [*sanum*] and politic rule of the kingdom.[57]

Women were always more likely than men to be presented to courts for sexual offences, but Shannon McSheffrey and Stephanie Tarbin have independently questioned the existence of a clear double standard. The urban elite seem to have shared Richard's view that men of authority should govern themselves well in their "private" lives. In Coventry's civic ordinances of 1492, for example, it was decreed that any "man of worship within this city" who was guilty of the "sins" of adultery, fornication or usury was "utterly to be estranged from all good company."[58] The emphasis that men of power needed to control their sexual urges, through the employment of "manly" reason, may be traced back to Aristotle and can be found in various types of didactic literature from throughout the Middle Ages.[59] The implications are clear. "Good rule," at whatever level of responsibility, could only be carried out by individuals who were themselves well "governed" morally.[60] Richard's *Proclamation* therefore had a positive message in that it implied that the king and his subjects shared a common ideology, derived from a common set of principles.

A perception of shared values may have pre-dated Richard's accession to the throne. Mancini, based in London, tells us that the Woodvilles were hated by the "populace" [*populi*] "on account of their morals" [*propter eorum mores*], whereas Richard was respected for his "probity" [*integritatis*].[61] Historians may have underestimated the importance of London's support for Richard in 1483, although Richard seems to have enjoyed the support of the powerful urban elite as opposed to that of the "mob." Richard's substantial material links with prominent merchants, including the mayor, Edmund Shaa, have long been recognized by historians, but it may also be significant that Richard's public statements fitted well with the London oligarchs' attitudes towards "governance."[62] According to the *Great Chronicle of London*, when Buckingham proclaimed Richard's title to throne at the Guildhall, the seat of urban power, those present acclaimed Richard "more for fear than for love."[63] However, the city fathers seem to have taken great pride in the city's role at Richard's coronation, striking a martial pose.[64] This is an intriguing aspect of Richard's reign that could be worthy of further consideration.

Finally, did Richard's subjects share his concern that women were in danger of being "devoured, deflowered and defouled" by male aristocrats? Attitudes towards rape in the Middle Ages were complex and ambivalent, just as they are today, and the image of the medieval nobleman as a sexual predator presents the historian with considerable difficulties of interpretation.[65] Nevertheless, the occasional prosecution of minor gentlemen for sexual offences in towns throughout the later fifteenth century might suggest that townsmen were increasingly troubled by the sexual activities of the aristocracy.[66] There is an interesting case from

London in 1483 that seems to hint at such tension. A woman and her husband launched a defamation suit when neighbors spread the following story about her:

> Mawde Nesche is a strong whore and a strong strumpet, for Master William Paston . . . had a do with her in her house and sent his meny [retinue] to keep the door and he kept her in a house in Saint George's Field as a strong whore and harlot as such is.[67]

Although this (possibly) slanderous tale was clearly designed to damage Maude's own reputation, may not we also detect resentment at the noblemen and gentlemen who used London as a sexual hunting ground? There is no indication, it should be said, that Maude was thought to be a rape victim, but it was surely the presence of Paston's armed retinue that ensured that nobody would intervene. This is important, because, for men, "governance" entailed not only self-control but also the ability to control and protect their households. Richard's commitment to defending the interests of his lesser subjects, notably through the law, is well documented.[68] Although some of Richard's defenders may have exaggerated the novelty of his legislation, Richard did convey a clear message that the crown would meet its obligations to *all* its subjects.[69] Just as Richard would punish corrupt legal officials, it might be suggested, so he would act against noblemen, such as the marquis of Dorset, who abused their power in order to gain sexual gratification.

In the months following the death of Edward IV, Richard was able to construct his own image of a just and Godly prince, which was revealed *in cameo* within his *Proclamation for the Reform of Morals*. This image was maintained throughout his short reign, and it was consistent with Richard's professed concern for his subjects' welfare (including those of lower status) and perhaps also with his religious beliefs. It seems extremely unlikely that Richard's public statements were ones that could have only have been made by an isolated and deluded religious fanatic. Richard's "obsession" with sexual morality could be seen, rather, as a statement of political principles. It is conceivable that Richard's reputation for "good governance," in both the private and public senses, was at least partly responsible for his success in the late spring of 1483, as Mancini suggested. Richard's enemies, by contrast, were revealed to be "ill-governed" men, whose sexual behavior transgressed notions of acceptable masculine responsibility that were held increasingly throughout society. The success Richard achieved was short-lived, however, because he quickly lost control of the debate. Having set himself such high standards, Richard found that his own rhetoric could easily be used against him. The self-proclaimed "reformer of morals" was eventually forced to swear a public oath to try and protect himself against slurs that he had murdered his wife in order to marry his brother's daughter. Richard had also to face the allegation that he had murdered his nephews, and, ultimately, the fact that Richard said, and even sometimes *did*, the right things meant little to those who could not accept that he was the right man. If Richard had triumphed at Bosworth he might

today be remembered as one of England's most formidable kings. But his death in battle meant that his enemies, and perhaps later his defenders, were free to twist his message to their own ends.

Appendix: *Proclamacio Pro Morum Reformacione*

Forasmuch as the King our Soverain Lorde, remembryng his solempne Profession which he made at the tyme of his Coronation to Mercy and Justice, and folowyng the same in dede; first beganne at Mercy in yevyng unto all maner Personnes his Full and Generall Pardon, trusting therby to have caused all his Subgettes to have be surely Determyned unto hym according to the Duerty of their Ligeance; and eftson his Grace, in his owne Person, as is well knowen, has dressed himselfe to divers Parties of this his Reame for the indifferent Admynystracion of Justice to every Person, having full Confidence and Trust that all Oppressours and Extortioners of his Subjectes, orible Adultres and Bawdes, provokyng the high Indignation and Displeasure of God, shuld have be reconciled and reduced to the wey of Trouth and Vertue, with the abiding in good Disposition.

This yet notwithstanding, Thomas Dorset, late Marques Dorset, which not feryng God, nor the Perille of his Soule, hath many and sundry Maydes, Wydowes, and Wifes dampnably and without Shame Devoured, Defloured, and Defouled, holding the unshampfull and myschevous Woman called Shores Wife in Adultry, Sir William Noreys, Sir William Knevet, Sir Thomas Bourghchier of Barnes, Sir George Broun, Knyghtes, John Cheyne, John Noreis, Walter Hungerford, John Rush, and John Harecourt of Staunton, with other unto theym Traytourly Associat, without the Kinges Auctorite have Assembled and Gadered his People by the Comforte or hys grete Rebell and Traytour the late Duc of Bukynham, and Busshopes of Ely and Salesbury, entending not oonly the Destruccion of the Riall Person of oure seid Sovereign Lord and other his true Subjectes, the brech of his Peace, Tranquilite, and Common Wele of this Reame. But also in letting of Vertue, and the dampnable Maintenaunce of Vices and Syn as they have done in tymes passed to the grete Displeasure of God and evyll Example of all Cristen People.

Wherfor the Kinges Highness of his tender and lovyng Disposicion that he hath and bereth unto the Commyn Wele of this his Reame, and puttyng downe and rebuking of Vices, Graunteth that no Yoman nor Commoner thus abused and blynded by thes Tratours, Adultrers, and Bawedes, or eny of theym, shall not ne hurte in their Bodies ne Goodes if they withdrawe theym self fro their False Company, and medell no ferther with theym.

And over this oure seid Sovereigne Lorde Graunteth that whoo so ever put hym in devoier, and taketh the seid Duc and bringeth hym unto his Highness, shall have a M l. in Money, or C. l. in Land, and for every of the seid Busshopps and Marques a M. Marke in Money, or C. Marke in Land, and for every of the seid Knyghtes D. Marke in Money, or xl l. in Lond in Reward, and that nowe

every true Subjecte and Lover of Vertue and Peace put his Hand in Resisting the Malicious entent of the seid Traytours, and Punysshing of the grete and dampnable Vices of the seid Traytours, Adultrers, and Bawedes, so that by their true and faithful Assistens Vertue may be lyfte up and praysed in the Reame to the Honour and Pleasure of God, and Vice utterly rebuked and dampned to the suertie and comfort of all the true and good Commons of this Reame.

And over this the Kyng's Grace woll that it be known that all thoo that in any wise Eyde, Comforte, or Assist the seid Duc, Busshopes, Marques, or any other of the Kinges Rebelles and Traytours aforesaid after this Proclamation other with Goodes, Vitelles, or otherwise, be reputed and taken for his Traytours.

Notes

1. Earlier versions of this article were presented at the conference "Sex: Medieval Perspectives" at St Andrews University in July 2004 and at the Richard III Foundation's "Symposium" at Warwick in October 2004. I would like to thank the audiences at both events for their attention and perceptive comments.
2. Richard's short reign (1483–1485) is almost certainly the most controversial in English history. Although Richard's defenders have proved beyond question that his depiction in Shakespeare's play, a cynical hunchbacked loner with psychopathic tendencies, is a grotesque caricature, they have singularly failed to establish a new orthodoxy. The best introduction to the reign is Charles D. Ross, *Richard III*, revised edition (London: Yale University Press, 1999). For a concise survey of Richard's historical reputation, from a Ricardian point of view, see Jeremy Potter, *Good King Richard? An Account of Richard III and His Reign* (London: Constable, 1994, c1983).
3. The *Proclamation* is printed in *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae etc.,* ed. Thomas Rymer (London: A & J Churchill, 1704–35), 20 vols, 12: 204–5. English spelling has been modernized throughout. For the original see the appendix. "Buckingham's Rebellion" was the first serious challenge to Richard's rule, but it was badly coordinated and was quickly repressed. (The involvement of Henry duke of Buckingham, Richard's erstwhile ally, remains perplexing.) The best modern account of the rebellion is Rosemary Horrox, *Richard III: a Study in Service* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 138–77.
4. According to the revelation of Bishop Stillington of Bath and Wells, Edward IV had pre-contracted a marriage with Lady Eleanor Butler. The implications of the pre-contract are discussed in Richard H. Helmholz, "The Sons of Edward IV: a Canonical Assessment of the Claim That They Were Illegitimate," in *Richard III: Loyalty, Lordship and Law*, ed. Paul W. Hammond (London: Alan Sutton, 1986), 91–103. Following Edward IV's sudden death, his eldest son was briefly acknowledged as Edward V, but he was quickly set aside in favor of Richard. Edward V is, of course, better known as one of the celebrated "Princes in the Tower"; he and his younger brother Richard appear to have disappeared early in their uncle's reign. It suffices to say here that their fate remains uncertain. For a comprehensive survey of the evidence see Audrey Williamson, *The Mystery of the Princes: an Investigation into a Supposed Murder* (Dursley: Alan Sutton, 1978).

5. See, for example, Ross, *Richard III*, 136–7. See also Charles D. Ross, "Rumour, Propaganda and Popular Opinion During the Wars of the Roses," in *Patronage the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England*, ed. Ralph A. Griffiths (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1981), 15–32, 27. Michael Hicks's most recent work has restated doubts about the validity of Richard's own marriage, which implies hypocrisy on Richard's part, as well as cynicism. See Michael A. Hicks, *Anne Neville: Queen to Richard III* (Stroud: Tempus, 2006) and below.
6. For Jonathan Hughes, the *Proclamation* suggests that Richard was a deluded zealot who "identified with Old Testament kings witnessing the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah." Jonathan Hughes, *The Religious Life of Richard III: Piety and Prayer in the North of England* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), 100. Hughes's arguments are to a certain extent anticipated by Paul Kendall, although the latter generally takes a much more positive attitude towards Richard's character. At Edward IV's court, apparently, "the man of the moors [Richard] was an Israelite in Babylon." Paul M. Kendall, *Richard III* (New York: Norton & Company, 1955), 173.
7. See Alison Allan, "Royal Propaganda and the Proclamations of Edward IV," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* (1986), 146–54, especially 153–4.
8. Ross draws attention to the "apparent credulity, sometimes gullibility" of the common people. See Ross, "Rumour, Propaganda and Public Opinion," 17. Ian Harvey offers a more nuanced view. The "commons" tended to be more interested in the activities of individual personalities than in abstract theories, but social and economic change, accompanied by rising literacy, ensured that increasing numbers of people were able to engage with political ideas in a more meaningful way. See Ian M. W. Harvey, "Was There Popular Politics in Fifteenth-Century England?" in *The McFarlane Legacy: Studies in Late Medieval Politics and Society*, eds Richard H. Britnell and A. J. Pollard (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995), 155–75.
9. For this, see Horrox, *Richard III*, 138–148. Several prominent members of Edward's household joined the rebellion.
10. Although it should be added that Richard was also offering something more tangible, and large monetary rewards were promised to those responsible for the capture of the leading rebels.
11. Henry Tudor's invading forces were referred to, with a touch of variety, as "open murderers, adulterers and extortioners." Rosemary Horrox and Paul W. Hammond, eds, *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1979–83), 4 vols, 2: 230.
12. ". . . *de obitu patris in corde dolorem in vultu tristitiam ostendunt, cuius mortem eius administris imputant: quia qui parum eius honori consuluissent, cum libidinum socii et structures haberentur, eiusdem etiam salutem precipitassent*." Dominic Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard III*, trans. and ed. C. A. J. Armstrong (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 76. Medieval physicians believed that excessive indulgence in sexual intercourse could lead to dangerous weakness and even death. See James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 287, citing authorities such as Maimonides and Arnau of Villanova.
13. John Strachey, ed., *Rotuli Parliamentorum* (London: Record Commission, 1783), 6 vols, 6: 240.

14. "*Libidinis ut fuit intemperantissimus . . . Nuptas et innumptas: matronas atque humiles nullo discrimine egit, nullam tamen vi rapuit*." Mancini, *Usurpation*, 66.
15. "*Dissidebat is odio capitali cum eo regine filio . . . idque propter amores alteri ab altero ablatos, aut sollicitatos*." Mancini, *Usurpation*, 68.
16. See A. J. Pollard, "Dominic Mancini's Account of the Events of 1483," *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 38 (1994), 152–64, quote at 162. Hicks argues that much of Mancini's material remains "raw and undigested," and this is also a view that demands respect. Michael Hicks, *Richard III* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003), 125–36, quote at 136. Mancini's account does seem to present a cacophony of voices. However, Argentine's is the one that seems most insistent to be heard.
17. Pollard, "Dominic Mancini's Account," 158–9; Hicks, *Richard III*, 132, 135. Mancini tells us that Richard's actions in 1483 were partly motivated by his hatred for the Woodvilles, first, because he disapproved of Edward's marriage to Elizabeth (for which, see below) but, second, because he believed that the Woodvilles had brought about the death of his brother Clarence (executed for treason in 1478) out of fear for their position. Mancini, *Usurpation*, 61–5.
18. Queen Elizabeth's eldest brother, Anthony Earl Rivers, who was charged with overseeing Edward V's education while he was Prince of Wales, was specifically disassociated from the rest of his family. He is described as a "kind, serious and just man" [*vir gratus, gravis, et iustus*]. Mancini, *Usurpation*, 66. Edward V himself is presented as an attractive youth of great promise, brave and wise beyond his years. Mancini, *Usurpation*, 76, 92.
19. N. Pronay and J. Cox, eds, *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations 1459-86* (London: Richard III & Yorkist History Trust, 1986), 151.
20. Paul W. Hammond, "The Illegitimate Children of Edward IV," in *Tant D'Emprises—So Many Undertakings: Essays in Honour of Anne F. Sutton*, ed. Livia Visser-Fuchs, *The Ricardian*, 13 (2003), 229–34.
21. See Chris Given-Wilson and Alice Curteis, *The Royal Bastards of Medieval England* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1995, c1984), 178–9, for a comprehensive list. Henry I, for instance, fathered twenty illegitimate children.
22. "Gregory's Chronicle," in *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century,* ed. James Gairdner (London: Camden Society, 1876), 226–7. Mancini reported the story, which he may have heard on the Continent, that Edward only decided to marry Elizabeth after she had refused to submit to his advances, even at knifepoint. Mancini, *Usurpation*, 60 and n. 10.
23. Edward IV was much less generous to the Woodvilles after regaining his throne in 1471, but the most prominent members of the family were allowed to consolidate their influence. The most authoritative modern study of the Woodvilles is Michael A. Hicks, "The Changing Role of the Wydevilles in Yorkist Politics to 1483," in his *Richard III and his Rivals: Magnates and their Motives in the Wars of the Roses* (London: Hambledon, 1991), 209–28, although see also David Baldwin, *Elizabeth Woodville: Mother of the Princes in the Tower* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 2002) for a more positive appraisal of the Woodvilles' role.
24. There is no tangible evidence of particular hostility on Richard's part prior to 1483, although Mancini claims that Richard was good at hiding his true feelings. Mancini, *Usurpation*, 63.

25. For the rest of this paragraph I am indebted to Kim M. Phillips, *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England, 1270–1540* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 154–5, 162–4.
26. For the revival of the tournament in the reign of Edward IV, after a period of comparative neglect under the Lancastrians, see Richard Barber, "Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* and Court Culture Under Edward IV," in *Arthurian Literature XII*, eds James P. Carley and Felicity Riddy (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), 133–55.
27. Referring to sexuality that is "deployed but contained, carefully channeled rather than fully discharged . . . ." Phillips, *Medieval Maidens* (quoting Peter Bailey), 163. Intriguingly, the most famous mistresses of later medieval England—for example, Alice Perrers, Katherine Swynford and, of course, Jane Shore—tend to have been mature women who were, or had been, married themselves.
28. Although Richard led a successful expedition into Scotland, his ambition to campaign in France, which would have represented a greater chivalric enterprise, was thwarted. For this see Michael K. Jones, "1477—The Expedition That Never Was: Chivalric Expectation in Late Yorkist England," *The Ricardian*, 12 (2001), 275–92.
29. Thomas Walsingham, for instance, famously described Richard II's courtiers as "knights of Venus rather than Mars, showing more prowess in the bedroom than on the field of battle . . ." [*"milites . . . Veneris quam Bellone, plus ualentes in thalamo quam in campo . . ."*]. John Taylor and Wendy R. Childs, eds, *The St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, trans. Leslie Watkiss (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 814.
30. Richard Firth Green, employing literary evidence, suggests that this notion was widely held throughout society in the later Middle Ages. See Richard F. Green, "Further Evidence for Chaucer's Representation of the Pardoner as a Womanizer," *Medium Aevum*, 71 (2002), 307–9.
31. This tendency was particularly marked in the work of medieval chroniclers. See, for examples, Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: the Writing of History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon, 2004), 21–56.
32. For a detailed study of this text see Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, eds, *The Hours of Richard III* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1990).
33. Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Hours of Richard III*, 82.
34. Sutton and Visser-Fuchs are reluctant to engage in conjecture about the strength of Richard's piety. For a more speculative approach see Hughes, *Religious Life of Richard III*, although the argument is taken too far. Hughes believes that Richard's contemplations led to a profound alienation from society, and a deluded sense of his own God-given righteousness similar to that of a modern cult leader. However, too much of the evidence Hughes considers is open to alternative readings that are silently ignored, not least because he takes it as a premise that Richard "was guilty of, or implicated in, most, if not all of the crimes of which he has been accused . . ." (1). It is difficult to accept, for instance, that an affinity with King David, one of the most flawed, yet most attractively human of biblical characters, would necessarily lead to an "isolated and grandiose self-image" (140).
35. A third illegitimate child has been attributed to Richard, although his parentage is uncertain. This is Richard of Eastwell (Kent), apparently a stonemason who was buried as "Richard Plantagenet" in 1550. The entry in Eastwell parish register appears

to be genuine, although Richard of Eastwell does not appear to have been linked specifically with Richard III until the mid-eighteenth century. For the careers of all three children see P. W. Hammond, "The Illegitimate Children of Richard III," in *Richard III: Crown and People,* ed. James Petre (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1985), 18–24. Hammond assumes that the births (or at least the conception) of both acknowledged children pre-dated Richard's marriage, although this is uncertain. (See Hicks, *Anne Neville*, 155–9.)

36. Horrox and Hammond, *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433*, 1: 81–2.
37. For the background to Richard's marriage see Hicks, *Anne Neville*, 101–49.
38. This followed Warwick's treason and death in April 1471. (Anne's first husband, Prince Edward of Lancaster, was also killed in the fighting of 1471.) Warwick was not attainted, but his rightful heirs, his wife and his nephew, George duke of Bedford, were passed over.
39. The registers of the Penitentiary, in the Vatican archives, were not accessible to historians until 1983. This ensured that earlier searches for a dispensation proved to be fruitless. For the dispensation see Peter Clarke, "English Royal Marriages and the Papal Penitentiary in the Fifteenth Century," *English Historical Review*, 120, 488 (2005), 1023 n. 42.
40. Hicks, *Anne Neville*, 133–4.
41. Hicks suggests that Clarence was "gambling" on Richard not being able to obtain a further dispensation. The partition of Warwick's estates and titles between Richard and Clarence, grudgingly accepted by the latter, was settled by an act of parliament in July 1474. However, a clause was added that if Richard and Anne were divorced, Clarence's children would become Anne's heirs. Hicks, *Anne Neville*, 140–1, 145.
42. Hicks, *Anne Neville*, 145.
43. See J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1968) 172–3, 177. Scarisbrick's discussion of Henry VIII's divorce (163–97) also provides an excellent introduction to the medieval law of marriage.
44. Thomas More, *The History of King Richard III*, in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More,* ed. Richard S. Sylvester (London: Yale University Press, 1963), vol. 2. For More's description of Jane see pp. 55–7. For her penance see pp. 54–5.
45. According to the *Great Chronicle of London*, Jane Shore was forced to do penance "for the life that she led with the said lord Hastings and other great estates," although the *Proclamation* is the only source that links her specifically with Dorset. See Arthur H. Thomas and Isobel D. Thornley, eds, *The Great Chronicle of London* (London: G. W. Jones, 1938), 233.
46. More claims to have met Jane personally, although by which time she was "old, lean, withered and dried up." (More, *History of King Richard* III, 55.) However, More's readers would doubtless have been aware of the implied correlation between lechery and physical disintegration (for which, see below). Hanham also suggests that Jane's depiction might have called to mind the popular image of Mary Magdalen. See Alison Hanham, *Richard III and His Early Historians* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 179–80. Hanham is reluctant to press this argument too hard though, stressing that More's subtle and witty writing often defies clear analysis.
47. It should also be noted that there is no sense of sympathy towards Jane in the account in the *Great Chronicle*, suggesting that More has sanitized Jane's experience. Although

it is possible that Jane won over the crowd, and perhaps this is to be hoped, the rituals of penance—for example, the "rough music" and the penitent's state of undress—were designed to inflict maximum humiliation on the penitent. For further discussion of this see Barbara A. Hanawalt, "Rituals of Inclusion and Exclusion: Hierarchy and Marginalization in Medieval London," in her "*Of Good and Ill Repute": Gender and Social Control in Medieval London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 24–8.

48. Horrox and Hammond, *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433*, vol. III, 259.
49. For Jane's subsequent career, including her marriage to Lynom, whose career does not seem to have been adversely affected, see Nicolas Barker and Robert Birley, "Jane Shore," *Etoniana*, 125 (June 1972), 383–414.
50. The phrase "accepted principles" is, of course, Quentin Skinner's. For a lucid discussion of Skinner's ideas, and how they can be employed in the study of the later Middle Ages, see John L. Watts, "Ideas, Principles and Politics" in *The Wars of the Roses*, ed. Anthony J. Pollard (London: Macmillan, 1995), 110–33.
51. Hughes, *Religious Life of Richard III*, especially 10–11.
52. Anne F. Sutton, "'A Curious Searcher for Our Weal Public': Richard III, Piety, Chivalry and the Concept of the 'Good Prince,'" in *Richard III: Loyalty, Lordship and Law*, ed. Paul W. Hammond (London: Alan Sutton, 1986), 58–90. Richard himself owned a copy of *De Regimine Principum*, which was the classic example of the pervasive "Mirrors for Princes" genre.
53. Marjorie K. McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour in England, 1370–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Shannon McSheffrey, "Jurors, Respectable Masculinity and Christian Morality: A Comment on Marjorie McIntosh's *Controlling Misbehaviour*," *Journal of British Studies*, 37 (July, 1998), 269–78; Shannon McSheffrey, "Men and Masculinity in Late Medieval London Civic Culture: Governance, Patriarchy and Reputation," in *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West*, ed. Jacqueline Murray (New York: Garland, 1999), 243–78; Stephanie Tarbin, "Moral Regulation and Civic Identity in London 1400–1530," in *Our Medieval Heritage: Essays in Honour of John Tillotson for his 60th Birthday*, eds Linda Rasmussen, Valerie Spear and Dianne Tillotson (Cardiff: Merton Priory Press, 2002), 126–36.
54. Richard R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter Books Preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London, Letter Book L* (London: City of London Corporation, 1912), 206.
55. Lechery was often associated with rotting or stinking flesh in popular religious poetry based on the seven deadly sins. The correlation between lechery and physical disintegration was a common literary motif. See, for example, the *Templum Domini*, for which see Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing MI: Michigan State College Press, 1952), 233–7.
56. Hughes, *Religious Life of Richard III*, 101.
57. Corporation of London Records Office, Letterbook L, f.160v. I am grateful to Shannon McSheffrey for providing me with a transcription and translation of this passage.
58. For this, see McSheffrey, "Jurors, Respectable Masculinity and Christian Morality," 276.

59. This was a commonplace, for example, of the "Mirrors for Princes" literature. Giles of Rome argues that self-control is essential, and, more specifically, that "it is better for those who wish to be healthy in reason and understanding not to exert themselves too much in sexual love." See Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books: Ideals and Reality in the Life and Library of a Medieval Prince* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1997), 107–9, quote at 109.
60. For the increasing use of the term "governance" at this time, emphasizing the need for an individual to internalize society's standards, see Barbara A. Hanawalt, "'Good Governance' in the Medieval and Early Modern Context," *Journal of British Studies*, 37 (July 1998) 246–57, especially 247–8.
61. Mancini, *Usurpation*, 68, 72.
62. The most detailed account is Rosemary Horrox, "Richard III and London," *The Ricardian*, 85 (1984), 322–9. If Richard appreciated the moral concerns of London's oligarchs, then this could partly explain his plan, in January 1484, to incorporate the borough of Southwark, then London's "red light district," within the liberty of the city. Richard pledged £10,000 towards the building of defenses around the borough. For this see Anne F. Sutton, "Richard III, the City of London and Southwark," in *Richard III: Crown and People*, ed. James Petre (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1985) 289–95, 289.
63. Thomas and Thornley, *Great Chronicle*, 232.
64. Furthermore, at the time of Buckingham's Rebellion, the city fathers were preparing to hold the city for Richard in anticipation of an attack from the marquis of Dorset. See Anne F. Sutton, "The City of London and the Coronation of Richard III," *The Ricardian*, 63 (1978) 2–8, 4, 6. As an aside, is it possible that the mood of the city deterred the Woodvilles from resisting Richard militarily after the arrest of Edward V's entourage at Stony Stratford?
65. Alain Boureau has revealed that the ultimate symbol of aristocratic oppression, the "Lord's first night," has in fact never existed anywhere as a legal right. Rather the "Droit de Cuissage" is a myth that has been exploited for rhetorical purposes from the medieval period onwards. See his, *The Lord's First Night: the Myth of the Droit de Cuissage*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998). This is not to say, of course, that men, especially powerful men, never exploited their position in a sexual way. For an extremely thoughtful survey of medieval attitudes towards rape in literature, which eschews the insensitive deployment of theories that are believed to have trans-historical implications, see Corinne J. Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001). See also Diane Wolfhal, *Images of Rape: the Heroic Tradition and its Alternatives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), a study of images of rape in art, which robustly challenges the commonly held notion that the experience of rape victims was taken lightly in the Middle Ages.
66. See McSheffrey, "Men and Masculinity in Late Medieval London Civic Culture," 263–4. This is not to imply, however, that sexual ethics were entirely homogenous throughout social groups. Certainly, young men in towns seem to have believed that they needed to be assertive, which is not to say coercive, in their sexual lives. See McSheffrey, "Men and Masculinity in Late Medieval London Civic Culture," 264–5.
67. London, Guildhall Library, MS 9064/3, f. 179v, quoted and discussed in McSheffrey, "Men and Masculinity in Late Medieval London Civic Culture," 264.

68. For Richard's legal reforms see Sutton, "Curious Searcher for our Weal Public," 74. Three of the five legal statutes enacted in parliament were specifically designed to counter corruption in the legal system, and were of particular benefit to Richard's least significant subjects. These were concerned with bail, the quality of juries, and the punishment of corrupt officials.
69. See Ross, *Richard III*, 188.

9

Scandal, Malice and the Kingdom of the Bazoche

Philip Crispin

This article will examine sexuality as projected through the festive drama of the corporation of law clerks of the Parlement de Paris: le Royaume de la Bazoche. This powerful institutional body was also a leading producer of scurrilous theater in the Late Middle Ages.[1] As the Renaissance lexicographer Randle Cotgrave defined it in his 1611 *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues,* the Bazoche was, "The whole troupe or companie of lawyers clearks in the palace of Paris, having among them a king, and their peculiar lawes; hence also revel, misrule (for these fellows are none of the soberest)."[2]

The Bazoche was indeed both funny ha-ha and funny peculiar. It was liminal, transgressive and marginal. During festivals, the Bazochiens produced *sotties*—satirical fools' plays. In the words of Jean Bouchet (1545), the *sots* (i.e. fools):

> Fearing nothing . . . speak freely of all
> Praising virtues and detesting all vice. . . .
> [Unleashing] criticism with madcap delight
> Naming such and such and creating a scandal.[3]

The *sots* were free speakers oftentimes governed by the dictates of natural justice, parodically counterfeiting their targets. The *sots* were also famous for their *sauts*—their leaps. Frenetic activity and choplogic forced dizzying and dangerous reassessments of reality.

Yet if Bazochien laughter liberated from governing social codes in many instances, it failed to do this in the realm of sexuality. The Bazoche bore an affinity to the "Abbeys of Youth," which were responsible for the repressive policing of women's sexuality, for charivaris, and for violent sex crimes. The Abbeys were organizations of unmarried men who had reached the age of puberty. They acted like courts and boasted a surprising range of jurisdiction and festive responsibility

over their communities, particularly over nubile girls and marriageable people in general. Within their rule was tremendous scope for derision.[4] Cotgrave further defines the Bazoche as a "certaine baudie Court, wherein wifes that beat their husbands are censured" (evidently a shocking inversion of the norm) and the first historian of the Bazoche, Miraulmont, comments on the "pleasant and secret gallantries of private households" being "most freely" and "indifferently" reported during their festive games.[5] Along with the *cris de la rue* (street cries), *sotties* could report the shameful "romps" of individuals, even royalty, in a manner reminiscent of today's scandal-mongering tabloids.

A deep-rooted misogyny within patriarchy sanctioned the violent mistreatment of women and enforced gender hierarchies.[6] Despite paying lip service to the equality of human souls before God, a deep distrust of the female sex had come to dominate Christian thinking. This viewpoint was based upon the patristic tradition of Biblical interpretation that identified Eve as "mother of all our woe." The portrayal of the female role in the Fall was a constant leitmotif underpinning the Church's regulation of women's existence. Women were identified as morally and intellectually inferior as witnessed by the Apostle's marital prescriptions that demanded wifely submission.[7] Humbert of Romans wrote that women should not preach. Eve "taught but once and turned the whole world upside down."[8]

The Fall was also linked to another overwhelming clerical preoccupation: the perverse nature of the female body and the fundamental uncleanness, if not downright sinfulness, of sexual relations, in which women were often portrayed as temptresses leading men into lust and perdition. This anti-sexuality, epitomized in the revering of the Blessed Virgin Mary, gave rise to great fear, tension and repression.

A woman's fertility was a jealously guarded commodity in terms of procreation and heredity, and female sexuality was, in general, ruthlessly policed. Husbands were entitled to resort to violence. The lives of women were regulated by a primitive code of conduct based on shame, modesty and honor.

Men, however, had recourse to prostitutes: "fallen" and "loose" women who were generally the victims of violent male repression. Brothels were condoned, even owned by the authorities, the Church included. In the transition from religious ideal to popular practice, there emerged a double standard of sexual morality, lax for men but strict for women. Certain *sotties* refer to making use of the services of prostitution. Most include derogatory remarks about female sexuality. They include sexual slurs concerning venereal disease, celebrate male desire, and brag about male sexual prowess; fools, after all, were often famed for their rampant, inhibition-free libido. Like cockerels, *sots* were "lustful, vain and given to strutting display." The medieval jester's *coqueluchon* (coxcomb) was originally a "cock" in the sense of phallus and testicles.[9]

In the *sotties*, women are clearly associated in the minds of the *sots* with folly itself. Leaving aside those allegorical names in the feminine gender, which

appear on stage as females, there are only thirteen female characters in the *sotties* that portray individualized women. Four of these are pilgrims and four prostitutes, "a remarkable numerical representation of the Ave-Eva conception of women."[10] Prostitution is the only female activity observed to any extent in the *sotties*. There are five common complaints about women: loquacity; objectionable sexuality (appetite too great, too small, too promiscuous); shrewishness; moodiness; and prodigality with the spouse's resources. Women are unfaithful—indicative, as much as anything, of their predilection for deception and their preoccupation with appearance. All the above female faults are given as examples of their folly, their deviant and disordered natures. The horned Lady Folie in the *sottie Gorriers,* who is remarkably evocative of the artist Lucas van Leyden's Devil Queen in his depiction of "The Temptation of St Anthony," describes herself as Mother of Discord in her final speech: a resounding summary of patriarchy's demonizing projection of women's unruly sinful essence.[11] The title *Gorriers* is a play on words that skewers both flashy young men and sufferers from venereal disease, *la gorre*—often the self-same people.

Malice

I would now like to turn my attention to a *sottie* from the reign of Louis XI (1461–1483), the acquisitive, hard, centralizing, consultative constitution-flouting "universal spider." This *Sotie des sotz fourrez de malice* attacks royal misrule.[12] When Louis became king, large areas of the kingdom lay ruined by a century of conflict, most notably with the English. There was a severe economic depression. Yet far from lightening the burden of taxation, Louis increased it. Frequent, unannounced tax rises, not to mention arbitrary seizures, corrupt expropriations from royal officers and the lootings and oppressions of the royal soldiery, marked his reign.[13] The high-handed but crafty monarch, who was dubbed the "subtlest man alive," needed the money to fund his swelling administration and his hefty military operations as he set about increasing the size of the realm and reducing autonomous fiefs and apanages.

After a few years of his rule, several of the highest nobles in the land had led a fierce resistance to Louis' highly authoritarian reign in what became known as the War of the Public Weal. They claimed that they had come together to oppose Louis on behalf of the *bien public* in order to remedy injustices and sweep away taxes, which were driving the realm to perdition. The king survived this frightening time and afterwards succeeded in keeping the disgruntled aristocracy sweet by dangling hefty royal pensions in front of them as a reward for their loyalty. He proved adept at buying support across the upper echelons of society, selling lucrative offices and bankrolling local agents of power. Political commentators of the time remarked that the French crown was supposed to uphold a "state of justice," not "a state of finance."

Significantly, Louis sought to "bridle," subdue and outmaneuver the Parlement, the "Senate of the Kingdom" and highest court in the land, not to mention the home of the Bazoche, by establishing his own *Grand Conseil de justice*. The Parlement became increasingly restive about what it perceived to be an abuse of royal power. A torrent of decrees flooded from the King's Council, making the royal will a reality right down into the lowest echelons of the administration of the state. Here was a definite affirmation of royal power in binding the country together: a presage of Renaissance absolutism. But Louis' unscrupulous methods, and his abdication of his responsibilities as the supposed legal guardian of France, are identified in this *sottie* as lying behind injustice and considerable popular suffering. The people's woes are highlighted, moreover, through a performance of sexual politics.

The *Sotie des sotz fourrez de malice* focuses on a prostitute who is the victim of male violence, and it provides a striking example of how sex is used for rhetorical and satirical purposes. Further, as the Bazoche was a male troupe, the female prostitute would have been played by a male actor. This fact will lead on to a discussion about transvestism, gender, homoeroticism and homosexuality.

Here is a *précis* of the *sottie.* A huntsman, known as the "Captain," a very daring counterfeit of hunt-loving Louis XI, banters with the audience, extolling the virtues of the chase, and of "ma lice" [my hound bitch] above all, whose fur lines everyone's coats.[14] This strange banter coheres in the pun, "Chascun se fourre de malice:" ostensibly, everyone lines themselves with (the fur of) my bitch; but, equally, everyone's wrapped up in malice—a malice that stems from the very top of society.

The Captain's *sot* henchmen provide an extended satirical report on those clad in "malice" and note *en passant*, that women prefer polecat, thereby evoking the musky odors of sexual promiscuity.[15] Just as illustrated in modern euphemisms for cunnilingus such as "muff diving" or "drinking from the furry cup," fur was a signifier of the female genitalia; interestingly, the Magdalen, whom Church tradition baselessly identified as a penitent prostitute, was occasionally portrayed in furs as noted in the works of Hans Memling (1433–1494), and Quentin Matsys (1460–1530) and is noticeably dressed in fur-lined garments in *The Magdalen Reading* by Rogier van der Weyden (*c*.1438).

Suddenly, Chose Publique (*Respublica* or Public Thing) struggles through the crowd to lay dramatic charges against an oppressive regime. She stands both for the public administration and for the common people. Her pitiful condition is the opposite of furry comfort. The mode of governance is debated and the role in that process of the Parlement—the shrine of the Law, home of the Bazochiens and the location for this performance—is stoutly defended against absolutist incursions by Louis.[16] The Captain's verdict is that his disciples should "revisit" the public sphere in order to make reparation.

Two registers and statuses co-exist simultaneously. The *sots* are the henchmen of the Captain and so represent corrupt government. Yet the festive *sots* and

Captain also represent those in revolt against this. They stand as tribunes for the trampled people.

La Chose Publique, "broken by a tyrannical regime," bears stark witness to her terrible condition and to the crimes inflicted upon her: "Which is why I would like very much / For all without exception to see my case." Once upon a time healthy and prosperous, pleasing everyone with her sovereign gestures, Chose Publique has been raped:

> In the very chamber[17]
> Of the said bad government, . . .
> for a long time, winter and summer,
> They had their way with me.
> So much so that they mutilated me utterly
> During which time they plundered me
> And destroyed me.[18]

She is subsequently forced into prostitution. Metaphorically, public resources are seized and drained, by violence if necessary. She is booted out into the public domain where the authorities continue to live off her "pratique" (her prostitute's "trade"): simony, bribery, unfair taxation. Chose Publique has been limping. Her leg had been broken by her malefactors after they had gorged themselves upon her—symbolic evidence of the fractured integrity of the body politic as well as its shattered physical condition. The Captain denounces pimps who live off "poor women" as,

> Ruffians, wicked young rabbits,
> Parasites, turnspits . . .
> Who only live from above and below
> The arses of daytime whores.[19]

Chose Publique has borne the bitter fruits of her violation, giving birth to "Mal importable' (unbearable ill/pain). Yet she is "hors d'entendement," unheard and unheeded. A *sot* insists that she be "interpreted" or administered judicially in the Temple (code for the "precious and consoling" Parlement), *the* "lieu publique" (public domain).[20]

The bifocal Captain, alias a prurient and perverse Louis XI, is *also* the Bazochiens' mouthpiece: "I am captain of those / Who'll restore the quite unique Chose Publique." In the *sottie*'s "verdict," he orders his "officers" to "revisit" *Respublica* in order to rectify matters. The "revisitation" is an erotic assault-cum-"medical." The *sots* warm to their task with a series of ribald brags and vicarious, verbal chafing. They have "the necessary" to give heart to Chose Publique. The Captain advises:

From behind, from the front,
And every which way, right or wrong,
Revisit her well.[21]

They need some lubricant, going by the name of "diaculum"—"a certaine mollifying plaister . . . made of juices," according to Cotgrave (a sort of medieval KY Jelly). At this rowdy and lubricious peak, the Captain intervenes: "Temps est que recullon" [Time is we must give way]. The "cul" (arse) sound present in both "diaculum" and "recullon," together with the pun on "giving way" (going backwards, reversing), reinforces the impression of imminent anal sex: "Je suis prest, montons a cheval / Et chevauschons sans selle" (I'm ready, let's mount / And ride the filly without saddles).[22] Given that Chose Publique was played by a cross-dressing actor, the audience is brought to a homoerotic and an uproarious climax.

Was homoerotic passion aroused in the audience? I benefit here from the, at times, contradictory insights from scholars of the Early Modern Period, profiting from the similar undertaking of Pamela Sheingorn, in her essay "The Bodily Embrace or Embracing the Body: Gesture and Gender in Late Medieval Culture."[23] Lisa Jardine "sees the Renaissance public theater as in large measure designed for the gratification of male spectators and argues that in many cases it was homoerotic passion that the boy actors aroused in their male audience."[24] A *sot* says of the cross-dressing Chose Publique, "S'blood, what a succulent beak she has, / She has a very comely face." Cross-dressing was "figured as sexual perversion," claims Jean E. Howard. "A man, and especially a boy, who theatricalizes the self as female, invites playing the woman's part in sexual congress." [25]

According to the late Michael Camille, the "unmentionable vice" of sodomy was first formally condemned in the third Lateran Council of 1179. Homosexuals were "created" as a group by the codifications of canon law in the thirteenth century. Homosexuality's new illegality was accompanied by harsh legislation: a single proved act of sodomy was punishable by death. Any human action that "misused" a preordained part of the body such as the anus was dubbed "unnatural." Alternative forms of sexuality, which departed from the ordained end of procreation, were held to be "deviant." But yoking together the antinomies of homosexual desire and normative morality, Florence Tamagne describes a gulf between official Christian outrage and the reality of laxer everyday relations.[26]

Yet, this homoerotic frisson apart, Chose Publique represents a woman. Women were sex objects, the objects of male desire, who were hypocritically denounced as voracious temptresses. They were dubbed the Devil's Gateway, responsible for bringing "folly" upon Earth. There is a constant punning upon Chose Publique—literally public thing—and prostitution. Compare "filles publiques," a term for prostitutes, and "thing" as reductive signifier of the female genitalia.

Chose Publique, we recall, is to be found in the Temple (i.e. the Parlement). At the same time, the Parisian stews were located in the Temple quarter in Paris during this period.[27] A *sot* quips:

> She's . . . wearing
> A hood in the distinctive manner
> Of those of the women of the brothel.

Earlier, Chose Publique was described as being "habillee follement"—synonymous for dressing like a prostitute.[28] Female sexuality was scapegoated as *responsible* for misrule and disorder, and prostitutes were forced to dress up, wearing a badge of shame.

Amidst the violent tenor of medieval existence, a considerable amount of sexual violence was sanctioned as part of "human nature." The channeling and containing of this took precedence over prohibition. Sexual violence constituted a "permanent dimension of urban life." Gang rapes were frequently carried out by bands of young men often in an organized grouping such as an Abbey of Youth or guild—or the Bazoche—whose conservative and repressive policing tactics we have discussed. The victims of these attacks were vulnerable women, such as servants or widows; but, to the extent that such rapes were "social vengeance," young wives of much older men, or the priest's "whore" were frequent targets. Municipal brothels indicate both tolerance of, and an attempt to contain, the violence. Prostitutes were often rape victims who had, consequently, become "defamed women."[29] Thus, they were doubly victims, as is the case with Chose Publique:

> I pray to God in Paradise
> That they [i.e. "the rapists"] be cursed by him
> For they have totally ruined me . . .
> when I was placed into their hands
> And subjugated to their will. [30]

An integral element in "civic space," these "filles communes" were much in evidence during festivals. Sexual activity, commercial or otherwise, was a major element during festive periods.[31] But their marginal existence left them constantly vulnerable to physical violence, and they were vilified as, literally, "loose" women as they were not tied to habitual domestic, male control. By the end of the fifteenth century, the authorities associated prostitution, like begging or vagabondage, with the world of crime. The enclosing of *les putains* in brothels became more stringently enforced.[32]

While male-to-female cross-dressing was quite unusual and subject to punishment, it was "permitted during festivals during which the usual standards of behaviour were laid aside."[33] Michael Camille asserts that "women are clearly

the victims of a deep misogyny in medieval marginal art, which seals them into oppressive simulations of their social position," while Sheingorn admits that, in transvestism, one could argue women were "literally stripped by men of bodily self-possession"; men acting women's roles amounted to the ultimate appropriation of the female subject by the male.[34] But what we have in *Malice* is more nuanced, a swirling complicitous critique, germane to the liminal shiftingness of the carnivalesque.

If gender is performance, as performance theorists and feminist philosophers broadly contend, then in learning to perform as feminine, actors might have learned *something* about living as females in their society; to a limited degree, transvestite acting makes a certain feminized bodily experience accessible to males. Such knowledge could be ignored, of course, but it might also be deliberately sought. It could be used to create parody or a more sensitive representation.[35] The Bazochiens bay for horseplay—an unbridled glut of the flesh, and invasions of the lower bodily stratum—while listening simultaneously to a pathetic account of male violence.

The pathos and compassion accorded to the portrayal of Chose Publique, alongside the more testosterone-fuelled delirium, reveals masculine pangs of conscience concerning men's cruelty towards women—which we learn about largely from the "woman's point of view." Finally, the *sottie* constitutes an emotive critique of Louis XI's oppressive misgovernment. Remaining in the domain of reductive emblems, Chose Publique's appearance recalls both the supplicating Magdalen and a pathetic echo of the personified fair maiden "la douce France": sweet France herself.

Escornez

La sottie des sots escornez, which dates from the reign of Louis' successor, Charles VIII (1483–1498), also features sexual strife, as well as allusions to homosexual practice and medieval hostility to such sexual activity.[36]

Louis XI had died while his son and heir, Charles VIII, was a minor. The late king had entrusted the regency to his daughter Anne and to her husband, Pierre de Beaujeu. However, Louis d'Orléans, who was the future Louis XII and cousin of the king, claimed the regency for himself. In accordance with the Salic Law, Louis, as nearest male relative, had been declared "second person of this kingdom." The Estates General were convened, but Louis failed in his bid for power. A power struggle between the Beaujeu faction and the Orléanists ensued until, in 1485, Louis launched the vain undertaking of the *Guerre folle*, so called because it was a fiasco, ending up with his imprisonment. Royal power now ruled the roost over a much-weakened aristocracy.

La sottie des sots escornez is a subversive parody of the *Guerre folle*. Rebellious *sots*, sporting antlers on their heads and conspiring to rise up on All Fools' Day (apt for a *Guerre folle*), declare their hatred of the "gouvernement de

femmes" who wear "atours de chapperon" (veiled and pointed hats). Anne de Beaujeu's regency was known as the government of women. Her sister, Jeanne de France, and the Queen Mother, Charlotte de Savoie, were also fingered for surrounding and influencing the young Charles VIII.

The word *escornez* provides a nutshell summary of the plot. Two of the possible senses of the word signify (1) in revolt and (2) punished and humiliated or scorned by the loss of one's horns. Such a loss evokes the sense of emasculation felt by the thwarted Orléanist camp.

An outraged Prince of *Sots*—aka Charles VIII—demands proof of submission from his recalcitrant *sots*, and the issue of fidelity is brought to a head in the required ritual of homage, which constitutes a major fault-line in the play. The political objective of the homage at the time was to verify loyalty.[37] Two aspects in particular were seen as humiliating: the vassal's kneeling before his overlord and the kiss on the mouth, which had become charged with a sexual ambiguity. These particular practices were now only performed before the monarch, "emperor in his kingdom." By compelling the homage of the great feudal lords, the king signified that their fiefs were an integral part of France. The homoerotic frisson of the homage's mouth-to-mouth osculation seems to be obliquely targeted in a ditty about sodomizing goats intoned by the rebels, the implication being that the prince's council is composed of "unnaturally" passive minions:

> The goats were proceeding all in a row,
> The horn of the last
> Was placed up the arse of the first . . .
> In brief, it's horn up the arse all round,
> I couldn't make it out in any other way.[38]

This chant employs a bawdy interpretation of "corne," slyly playing on the Prince's fears that the *sots* wish "to get into his cornet" (his jaunty headgear), in order to degrade his pomp and undermine his promised show of force. This bestial evocation of the "abomination" of sodomy,[39] derides the Prince's trumpeted virility with an image of an unending circle of anal sex performed by voracious goats, the Devil's own familiars. Such a horned orgy recalls the *sots*' outspoken hatred of the government of women in their pointed (phallic) hats. In the *sots*' eyes, the king has been emasculated by this dominant group of women who have penetrated the king's inner circle.

In late medieval culture, a kiss was a "visual sign" of concord and harmony. In England, for example, an actual public ritual, the "loveday embrace" was used to confirm the achievement of private peace settlements through a ritualistic exchange of the kiss of peace. Europe was full of male–male embraces, both in dramatic representation and, as in the loveday, in "real life." Such embraces served to reinforce homosocial bonds, what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls "male homosocial desire . . . the affective or social force, the glue . . . that shapes an

important relationship." She believes that the *structure* of men's relations with other men may even have centered on the male–male embrace. While Sheingorn downplays the homoerotic in the social semiotics of the medieval embrace, the earlier "cul" taunt suggests it was ever-present. Consider Rupert of Deutz's dream of Christ on the cross in which he craved closer union with the Lord. "I held him, I embraced him, I kissed him for a long time. I sensed how seriously he accepted this gesture of love when, while kissing, he himself opened his mouth that I might kiss more deeply."[40]

Roys

The sense of inadequacy that *le gouvernement de femmes* sowed in thwarted powerful male magnates such as Orléans is made clear in another raucous *sottie.* In *La Sottie pour porter les presens a la feste des roys*,[41] however, the focus shifts from "homophobic" insults directed at a young king supposedly dominated by women (although Charles VIII is himself derided as a hapless and craven hysteric: "a *sot* sottishly governed . . . sprung forth from the womb of folly"). Instead, the *sottie* focuses upon attacking the royal women themselves.[42]

The women are mocked as threatening aliens—mock Amazons from the realm of *Femenye*[43]—who have no place in the male domain. Furthermore, they are associated with witchcraft—at a time when the first searing embers of the witch craze had started to consume Europe. Witches, of course, served as the dark phantoms of taboo sexual desires and delight in the male imagination. Arch-purveyors of carnivalesque transgression, they danced "in the mire for very pure joy" (to borrow a line from a song by Friar Tuck in an early modern English play about his sluttish paramour). The *sottes* representing the royal women are here dumped in a pile of excrement—a vicious ritual of humiliation that chimes with a patriarchal demonization of the "filth" of women's sexuality.

This play, another delirious, in-house Bazochien entertainment in the Parlement, was staged as a culmination of the Feast of Fools. As its title suggests, it would have been played on Twelfth Night, the eve of the Epiphany. The religious feast celebrates wise *men* or "kings," as opposed to wise women or queens. One of the *sottes* in the play says hubristically, "I know, I understand, I see everything."

The feast of the Epiphany was a feast day notably used by the state to "[justify] the royal religion."[44] The adoring Magi, or traditional Three Kings —Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar—representing the three known continents—Europe, Asia and Africa—were customarily depicted in contemporary royal costume, incorporating such elements as the *fleur de lys* and ermine cloaks. In grand royal entries, in which allegorical "mysteries" celebrated the virtues of the monarchy, the parade of the Magi took place with the greatest pomp while the cries of "Noël!" that greeted the king's coming explicitly recalled Christ's epiphany.[45] Just as the Epiphany celebrated Christ's revelation to the gentiles, the royal state enacted comparable "epiphanies" in order to reveal the king's sacred

majesty to the people. The wisdom of the Magi enhanced the claim to *sapientia* of France's "most Christian king"—God's consecrated deputy on earth.[46]

At the same time, of course, Twelfth Night marked a resounding finale to the Feast of Fools: a period of extended folly.[47] The Epiphany's highly wrought performances and projections of royalty provided rich pickings for the mimicry of festive subversion. Divine Wisdom had as its flipside profane folly, with its potential to undermine official solemnity. The Epiphany was shadowed by a whole gamut of popular festivity: plays,[48] parades and quests, acrobatics and fertility rites, agrarian magic, guisings, charivaris, rituals of face daubing and blacking (recalling Balthazar, the Moor King), ritual invasions, gift-bearing and Saturnalian monarchies, including the King of the bean game. Most of these festive practices are enacted in *La Sottie des Roys,* which parodies the Epiphany narrative itself.

In the *sottie,* two *sots* decide to pay homage to the "King of Kings," alias king of the *sots* and of the Bazoche but also Charles VIII. Three little *sottes* who sing like chicks materialize from the fabulous realm of *Femenye* and, parodying the actions of the Magi, wish to offer a present to the king. But the *sots* prevent these "three big mares from Brie" from doing so and humiliate them. They seize their "pommier de malingre" (crab apple), which comes from the Land of Prester John, and present their leader with this miraculous gift.[49] The *sots*' snatching of the present symbolizes the grasping of access to the King. Just as the Magi symbolically ushered in salvation to the gentiles, so the two *sots*' own parodic adoration, stemming from the seizure of the apple tree, symbolizes an attempt both to eclipse the *sottes* (the "gouvernement de femmes"), and to redeem themselves in political terms.

It is salutary to examine in more detail how the *sottes*/royal women are portrayed and treated. A mysterious cackling from beneath an upturned basket betrays their presence. The terrified *sots* believe they are being assaulted by the Devil and perform a mock exorcism against the "beast with two backs" (a menacing sexual phenomenon) in their midst. One of them eventually summons up the courage to lift up the basket to reveal the three diminutive *sottes*: the hen-like cacklers are now hatched chicks. The upturned basket, itself, is reminiscent of an egg, a ubiquitous carnivalesque symbol, often linked to fools.[50] As *ovum*, of course, it is also a brooding emblem of female fecundity.

But the *sottes* are barred access to the inner sanctum of the king. They are apprehended, paraded in a wheelbarrow and then upended into a pile of dung. The shaming of the *sottie* in this fashion, being buried in what Pope Innocent III referred to as the "vile ignobility of human existence," is reminiscent of the words of Lamentations 4: 5: "They who were brought up dressed in purple have embraced dung."[51] The punishment of the *sottie* constituted a symbolical and vicarious revenge against the Beaujeu regime.

The upturned basket beneath which the *sottes* were sheltering and their subsequent transportation in the barrow also recall the popular Hellequin myth.

The mysterious dark lord Hellequin, whose name may have derived from the Old French *hèle-chien* (hunting dog) or from a diminutive of *helle,* the Germanic word for the underworld, traceable in the English word "Hell," leads a spectral "rabble" of the dead, akin to the Wild Hunt folktales of the Germanic peoples. These dead souls suffer torments as they advance, punished due to their mortal sins. Accounts of the legend include references to grotesque dwarfs (redolent of the *sottes*) and also allude to the souls of illegitimate infants carried to Hell on Hellequin's back, an image recreated in the midget-*sottes*' barrow-ride to the dung heap, a "hocte" [backpack] indeed having been rejected.[52]

The *sottes* are commanded to kneel—symbolic of abasement and devotion—and pay homage, at a distance, to the king in a manner reminiscent of the adoring Magi. The *sottes*' flattery gives way to rage when their gift is seized. They are muzzled by threats of forced labor and summarily dismissed. Their "magnificent" present turns out to be neither gold, nor frankincense nor myrrh but a bathetic withered apple, fruit of the "pommier de malinger," whose presentation to the king constitutes the *sottie*'s climax.

Evoking the peregrinations of the exotic Magi, Second *Sot* lies that he has borne the gift from the Land of Prester John.[53] Merely to touch this magical apple renders the holder a hundred times more beautiful than Absolom; the pulp confers the wisdom of Solomon; while the pips bestow the strength of Samson: a trinity of resolutely male gifts—propaganda borne upon Biblical tradition.

"The fruit of the tree" recalls the Tree of Knowledge, arch-symbol of subversion. The plucking and eating of the "apple" in Eden was a moment of "epiphany" for Adam and Eve (the onset of knowledge of good and evil—the evil inextricably intertwined with the onset of sexual desire) just as the homage of the Magi represented the revelation of God to the gentiles. Both moments were liminal in that there was a decisive shift between what had gone before and what was to follow: expulsion from the Garden and mortality in the first instance, and "a light to enlighten the nations" with the birth of a second Adam to restore humanity in the second. This sickly sounding tree also recalls the *arbor sicca*, the withered tree depicted upon medieval maps such as the *Mappa Mundi,* situated next to the Earthly Paradise at the edge of Creation in both time and space.

The *sottie*'s prevailing homosociality derives its sense of corporate force from a set of invoked contraries. Exogenous and parodic references (the Magi, Prester John, the Indies etc.), and the incursion of the *sottes* from the uncanny realm of *Femenye*, ruffle a comforting, patriarchal, domestic sphere. The *sottie* enacts a brutal misogynist paranoia that derives a febrile, triumphalist force from the invocation of a taboo female "other," which is perceived as an invasive threat upon male prerogatives.[54]

People at this time were highly sensitive to disorder and displacement because they were so concerned with the hierarchies, not least sexual, that defined and preserved their position in the universe. Women were associated with the dangers of excess, speaking too much and too loosely, as the gabbling *sottes* do here, and

with the artifices of representation: fashionable clothes and cosmetics. According to a misogynistic medical discourse, women's bodies overflowed their boundaries, epitomizing the grotesque body, and these "overflows" were infectious. Female fecundity was invested with threatening power, not least due to the high mortality rates during childbirth.[55]

The *sottes* are not just women but *little* women: dwarfs or midgets. One way in which people exorcized their fears was to shunt them onto those believed to inhabit the edges of the known world (where the *arbor sicca* grew), who were "lesser" in some sense: monstrous races such as troglodytes or pygmies, deriving from Pliny. Like their counterparts in medieval art, the deformed *grylli*—who represented ignoble instinct—dwarfs were considered base. Laughing at ugliness and deformity was institutionalized in court dwarfs and buffoons, but in the cities it became even more scurrilous.[56] Ironically, one of the "womanish clan" around Charles VIII, his sister the "deformed and saintly" Jeanne de France, had been forced into an unhappy marriage with Orléans by Louis XI, and the *sottie*, as part of its vicious attack on the female body, derides her as "deformed," toothless and deaf. Using diminutive actors to portray the *sottes*, of course, enabled a cogent symbolical "belittling" of the royal women.

The hag-like, cackling *sottes* have also been connected with the "black arts." This period saw the originating sparks of what was to become the witch craze. The sparks were fanned by a book, the *Malleus maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witches*) published in 1486, roughly contemporaneous with this play. Wise women and cunning men, folk healers endowed with mysterious powers by their peers, had lived and worked in the community for centuries, feared and yet approached for aid, marginalized yet still familiar figures. Little by little, they became scapegoats for the troubles of the times. The spark inflaming opinion against them came from the city, where, since the late fifteenth century, lay and clerical intellectuals had set about exposing the malevolent efforts of satanic powers to subvert the order of heaven and earth. The devil's agents were above all women, they contended.

While the demonized *sottes* are depicted as intruders in the *sottie*, in real life the authorities—both secular and religious—were encroaching upon many of the elements with which the *sottes* are associated. The rise of the royal state and elite institutions, not least the Parlement, was accompanied by an interventionist, codifying repression of certain traditional ways of life. Lawyers and their clerks were in the vanguard of this *kulturkampf,* editing custom law, imposing "culture" over "nature," seeking to dispel "superstition" (the Sorbonne, for example, pronouncing against occultism in 1494), shoring up their territory and generally closing ranks against the "enemy."[57]

In 1459–1460, certain inhabitants of Arras were victims of one of the first organized witch-hunts in northern France. The hunt was conducted by the Inquisition and involved torture. Typical of the charges were allegations that the witches had met with the Devil and had indulged in promiscuous sex. In a manner

reminiscent of the *sottes*' shameful upending into the dung heap, five of the accused were paraded in public in the shameful robes of convicted heretics before being burned alive. Carnivalesque humiliation parodied and mimicked the admonitory, shaming rituals of the state.[58]

In positing themselves as the guardians of the king—"Saluez bien tost *nostre* roy" (salute *our* king right away)[59]—the *Sots* are re-appropriating their own space, and seeking to regain their own interests, as leaders, within the Royal Council, "Sans avoir *conseil* de ces soctes" (Without having *counsel* from these *sottes*).[60]

The *sots* exhort their king to observe the ordained protocols of degree in matters of state. Louis d'Orléans is, according to the phallocentric Salic Law, the "second person of this kingdom":

> So we ask you to graciously accept
> Each person according to his degree,
> We couldn't have done anything else
> To better please the kingdom.[61]

If the *sottes*' "*pommier de malinger"* represents the withered "Tree of France," the message is that it will flourish again once husbanded by those who have seized what is lawfully theirs.[62] And if, according to the logic of patristic tradition, the "temptress" Eve gave Adam the apple and hence is the "Mother of all our woe," then here the seizure of the *pommier* by men symbolizes a restitution of the good. The crab apple tree also stands in for both the French kingdom's phallic rod of justice and scepter of power. If it is a little "limp" right now, then if it is grasped firmly and tended by a suitably virile man, it will soon perk up.

There is a capital stress upon corporate solidarity within this homosocial environment. The earless *sotte*-interlopers literally do not fit in. Legitimacy was signified through appearance and other *sotties* employ the familiar motif of an incomplete fool's noddle to signal that all is not well.[63] Here, for all their claims of omniscience, the female intruders betray "nul entendement"—simultaneously no understanding and no hearing due to the absence of a bona fide fool's pointed ears. To the misogynistic discourse condemning female vice within the play is added a distinction that stigmatizes the three *sottes* as vicious (as opposed to virtuous) fools: they are "*un peu trop nices* (a little too foolish)." The fate of the emissaries from *Femenye* not wearing the requisite *sot*'s uniform is hinted at in "The Parable of the Wedding Garment" where an incorrectly garbed gatecrasher is cast into "the place of wailing and gnashing of teeth."[64]

Conclusion

Within these troubling, harsh, satirical plays—that negotiate, among other things, justice, status, identity, power—female sexual identity, and consequently female sexual practice, are often evoked and enacted as a counter-measure, an

all too frequent "negative" from which the *sotties* draw their own "positive" affirmations.

Female sexuality is a constant obsession to be mocked, censored and berated, but also feared and misunderstood. The pathos in *Malice* also indicates a certain element of male awareness and regret for the repressive, violent and unjust treatment of women. Furthermore, the "nothingness" of female sexuality and sexual identity (in Freudian, anatomical and moral terms), a free-flowing and carnivalesque "chaos," generates a tumescence of somethings that can suggest all manner of giddying possibilities, such as cross-dressing, feminized performance and homoeroticism, to trouble and interrogate male "hetero-sexist" orthodoxies and behavioral codes.

Notes

1. For the Bazoche and its theatre, see: Heather Arden, *Fools' Plays: A Study of Satire in the "Sottie"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Jean-Claude Aubailly, *Le Monologue, le dialogue et la sottie* (Paris: Éditions Honoré Champion, 1976); Philip Crispin, "Scandalizing the Monarchy: the Kingdom of the Bazoche and the Kingdom of France, 1460–1560," Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 2003; Olga Anna Dull, *Folie et rhétorique dans la sottie* (Geneva: Droz, 1994); Jody Enders, *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Adolphe Fabre, *Les Clercs du Palais: Recherches historiques sur les Bazoches des Parlements et les Sociétés dramatiques des Bazochiens et des Enfants-sans-Souci* (Lyon: N. Scheuring, 1875); Lucien Genty, *La Basoche notariale: Origines et histoire du XIVe siècle à nos jours de la cléricature notariale* (Paris: Delamotte Fils, 1888); Howard Graham Harvey, *The Theatre of the Basoche* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1941).
2. Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues. 1611*, ed. W. S. Woods (Columbia SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1950).
3. Jean Bouchet, *Epistres morales et familières du Traverseur*, *1545*, Intro. Jennifer Beard, reprint (New York: S.R. Publishers, 1969), Epistre XIII, fol. f2v.
4. Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule" in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 98–110. David Underdown, too, provides a detailed appraisal of the various socio-political functions of the charivari and its English variants, not least their use in enforcing patriarchal norms in his *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).
5. Pierre de Miraulmont, *Memoires de Pierre de Miraulmont conseiller en la chambre du Tresor sur l'origine et institution des cours souveraines et autres jurisdictions subalternes encloses dans l'ancien Palais Royal* (Paris, 1584), 651.
6. In this section I have drawn upon: Naim Attallah, *Women* (London: Quartet, 1987), 45–63; Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion, 1992), 127; Alain Demurger, *Temps de crises, temps d'espoirs: XIVe–XVe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), 194–201.
7. Ephesians 5: 22–33.

8. Humbert of Romans, *Treatise on Preaching*, trans. Dominican Students Province of St Joseph, ed. Walter Conlon O.P. (Westminster MD: Newman Press, 1951) 2: 9.
9. Timothy Hyman and Roger Malbert, *Carnivalesque* (London: Hayward Gallery, 2000), 25.
10. I have drawn on Arden, *Fools' Plays*, 79–84, in this paragraph.
11. Emile Picot, ed., *Farce nouvelle nommee la Folie des gorriers, a IIII personnages in Recueil général des sotties* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1902–1912), lines 563–608.
12. Eugénie Droz, ed., *Le Recueil Trepperel*, 2 vols, 1: *Les Sotties* (Paris: Droz, 1935), 73–94, henceforth cited as *Malice*.
13. For this short conspectus of Louis' reign I have drawn upon: Demurger, *Temps de crises*; Janine Garrisson, *A History of Sixteenth-Century France, 1483–1598: Renaissance, Reformation, and Rebellion* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995); Paul Murray Kendall, *Louis XI: "The Universal Spider"* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971); and David Potter, *A History of France, 1460–1560: The Emergence of a Nation State* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).
14. *Malice,* line 30. See Kendall, *Louis XI*, 28, 118–24, for a discussion about Louis' fanaticism for the chase and his convention-flouting "savage ways."
15. *Malice*, lines 105–84. Cf. *Othello* (IV.1.146), "'Tis such another fitchew!"
16. The *sottie* describes a venal administration with Louis XI dominating the Royal Council and trampling the integrity of the Parlement—"procureurs ne vueil ne advocatz," says the Captain—which he regarded as not sufficiently docile, and sought to bridle by menacing injunctions, or to outmaneuver through royal commissioners and the creation of a new tier of the law under royal tutelage, the *Grand Conseil de justice.*
17. "Chamber" puns on both bedroom and chamber of state. According to Kendall, *Louis XI,* 125, Louis XI often kept his Royal Council at a distance and directed its labors by curt memoranda. He would often summon two or three of his men to join him for work in a small chamber after morning mass and this shadowy outfit, which had no official existence, was thus entitled his chamber council.
18. *Malice*, lines 251–7.
19. *Malice*, lines 274–8.
20. See Demurger, *Temps de crises,* 192, and Kendall, *Louis XI,* 348, for accounts of how Louis was ultimately unable to entirely avoid the Parlement's legislative scope.
21. *Malice*, lines 369–71.
22. *Malice*, lines 383–8.
23. *Malice*, lines 281–5. Pamela Sheingorn, "The Bodily Embrace or Embracing the Body: Gesture and Gender in Late Medieval Culture," in Alan E. Knight, ed., *The Stage as Mirror: Civic Theatre in Late Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 51–89. Sheingorn acknowledges her indebtedness to Jean E. Howard, "Cross-dressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39 (1988), 418–40.
24. Cited by Sheingorn, "Bodily Embrace," 79–80.
25. Cited by Sheingorn, "Bodily Embrace," 79.
26. Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 90–2. Florence Tamagne: "L'Histoire de l'homosexualité", radio broadcast, France Inter, 28 June 2002. For Biblical admonishments, see, for example, 1 Corinthians 6: 9–10; Romans 1: 23–7.

27. Demurger, *Temps de crises*, 194.
28. *Malice,* line 204.
29. See: Demurger, *Temps de Crises*, 194–201; Bronislaw Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Jacques Rossiaud, *Medieval Prostitution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).
30. *Malice*, lines 230–2.
31. When the *sots* enter in *Malice,* their flyting consists of sexual slurs concerning venereal disease. Perroquet dwells distractedly upon an amorous liaison (33–77). All of the *sotties* studied here include derogatory remarks about female sexuality, some include brags about male sexual prowess (fools, after all, were often famed for their rampant, inhibition-free libido) and some make references to making use of the services of prostitution, for example, *Rapporteurs* (55–7).
32. Demurger, *Temps de Crises*, 198–9.
33. Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, *Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 66. Cited by Sheingorn, "Bodily Embrace," 84.
34. Sheingorn, "The Bodily Embrace," 81.
35. Phyllis Rackin and Catherine Belsey, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories. Feminist Readings of Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 1997), suggest that, "at least in some instances cross-dressing on the stage opens up the possibility of revealing the plurality and fluidity and cultural-constructedness of gender, thus toppling the essentialist binarism that was used to hold women in an inferior place." Cited by Sheingorn, "Bodily Embrace," 51–89.
36. Droz, *Les Sotties*, 315–38.
37. See Demurger, *Temps de Crises*, 126, 156.
38. *Escornez*, in Droz, *Les Sotties*, 321–38, lines 96–105.
39. See, for example, Kendall, *Louis XI*, 16.
40. The above citations come from Eve K. Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 2, and Mary Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The* Viaticum *and Its Commentaries* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 24. Certainly, in medieval Christian culture, the kiss did not always have an erotic, a fortiori a homoerotic, meaning. See L. Edward Phillips, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1996) and, most recently, Michael P. Penn, *Kissing Christians: Ritual and Community in the Late Ancient Church* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005) and, more generally, Karen Harvey, ed., *The Kiss in History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005). Nevertheless, both Penn and Harvey acknowledge how the purity and chastity symbolized by certain ritualized kissing could not banish thoughts of impurity and promiscuity residing in the "*osculum infame*."
41. *Roys,* in Droz, *Les Sotties*, 297–313.
42. I am convinced by Aubailly's proposition that numerous allusions depict the efforts of Louis d'Orléans and his allies to seize power from the "womanish clan" during the *Guerre folle*—Anne de Beaujeu, her sister Jeanne de France and the Queen Mother, Charlotte de Savoie—who surrounded and influenced the young Charles VIII. Anne, of course, was de facto regent alongside her husband. Aubailly, *Monologue*, 322.
43. As in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*.

44. Bernard Guenée, *L'Occident aux XIVe et XVe siècles, Les Etats, idéologie et propagande* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), 88. See Matthew 2. 1–12. On the politicization of the cult of the Magi, see Richard C. Trexler, *The Journey of the Magi: Meanings in History of a Christian Story* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
45. C. J. Brown, "Pierre Gringore: acteur, auteur, éditeur," in *Grands Rhétoriqueurs*, ed. Michel Zink (Paris: Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 1997), 150–1; David Potter, *History of France*, 46.
46. Furthermore, Charles ascended the throne at a time of intense religious fervor, provoked by the expectation of the "millennium" declared imminent by prophets and astrologers. These claimed for the young king a principal role in this. Like a new Charlemagne, he would vanquish the wicked, liberate Jerusalem and reign over the world, opening the thousand years of peace that had to precede Judgement Day. See Demurger, *Temps de Crises*, 300.
47. See Jacques Heers, *Fêtes des fous et carnavals* (Paris: Fayard, 1983).
48. For examples of festive kings' plays see: Jean-Claude Aubailly, *Le Théâtre Médieval, Profane et Comique: la naissance d'un art* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1975); Droz, *Les Sotties*, 297 note 1.
49. *Roys*, line 236.
50. See Hyman and Malbert, *Carnivalesque*, 20–2.
51. Lamentations 4.5. For excrement, see: Camille, *Image on the Edge*, 111–14; Hyman and Malbert, *Carnivalesque*, 32; and Stephen Greenblatt's acute essay "Filthy Rites," in his *Learning to Curse* (New York: Routledge, 1990). Dung played a role in malodorous censings in the Feast of Fools' profane masses and was frequently cast about during charivaris.
52. See Camille, *Image on the Edge*, 54, and Andrew Joynes, ed., *Medieval Ghost Stories: An Anthology of Miracles, Marvels and Prodigies* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 5 and 47–53. For a review of the extensive bibliography relating to Hellequin's Hunt in medieval literature and folklore, see H. Flasdieck, "Herlekin," *Anglia*, 51 (1937), 225–338. Hellequin features in the summer festive play *Le jeu de la Feuillée.*
53. Lines 271–7. He is parodying the genre of travelers' tales such as *Mandeville's Travels,* written in French in the mid-fourteenth century, which describes the Holy Land, the Land of Prester John and the Indies. See Kenneth Sisam, ed., *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), 94–106.
54. See the illuminating chapter "Women on Top," in Davis, *Society and Culture*, 124–151.
55. Camille, *Image on the Edge*, 53–5.
56. Camille, *Image on the Edge*, 14, 138; Hyman and Malbert, *Carnivalesque*, 32–9. Due to the practical demands of this performance, it seems that either children or dwarfs would have played the *sottes*. The strong likelihood of dwarfs playing the roles raises the intriguing question of whether the Parlement, or indeed the Bazoche, had its own dwarf "mascots"-cum-entertainers. A diminutive *sot* appears in *Gardonnez*, and the General d'Enfance appears in *Bon Temps* and *Prince des Sots*.
57. Garrisson, *History of Sixteenth-Century France*, 29–30; Potter, *History of France*, 238.
58. David Pickering, *Dictionary of Witchcraft* (London: Cassell, 1996), 6.
59. My italics.
60. *Conseil* means both council and counsel.
61. *Roys*, lines 303–7.

62. According to Christian legend, the *arbor sicca,* identifiable as the True Cross, will sprout green leaves again when the final battle is to be fought.
63. See, for example, *Béguins,* in Emile Picot, ed., *Recueil général des sotties.* 3 vols. (Paris, 1902–1912), 2: 265–97.
64. Matthew 22. 1–14.

Part Five

To the East

10

Al-Jāḥiẓ and the Construction of Homosexuality at the Abbasid Court[1]

Hugh Kennedy

Al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 246 or 247/868 or 869) was a writer and literary critic who flourished at the Abbasid court in Samarra[2] and in literary circles in Baghdad in the mid-ninth century. Although he came from a very modest background himself, his wit and erudition brought him into close contact with the richest and most educated people of his day. He wrote at a time when Abbasid literary culture was dominated by debates about the relative merits of classical pre-Islamic poetry and contemporary verse and the importance of Greek science and philosophy. His own talents were not those of a philosopher or historian but more of a critic and social commentator.[3]

The essay entitled *Mufākharat al-jawāri wa'l-ghilmān* (Boasting Match between Slave Girls and Page Boys) is a typical example of the master's *Rasā'il* (Essays): erudite, replete with quotations and delighting in paradoxes.[4] The narrative device of a boasting match was a well-established genre in the Arabic literature of the time. This had originated in actual boasting matches between Arab tribes in the pre-Islamic period in which representatives of each tribe would produce stories and poems to demonstrate their superiority over the other. In the Iraqi cultural circles in which al-Jāḥiẓ operated, tribes and tribal rivalries were a distant memory and the boasting matches were more likely to involve more domestic subjects—old age versus youth, bread versus olives and so on—and to be ironical and witty in presentation. In addition to the match between the girls and boys discussed here, al-Jāḥiẓ also wrote one on the superiority of the belly over the back. The object was to be clever, funny and perhaps paradoxical and challenging. The matter under discussion is treated as a learned debate; quotes and authorities are produced from each side and the author is careful to maintain a guarded neutrality.

This learned approach is in deliberate contrast to the subject under discussion, namely the relative merits of slave girls and boys as sexual partners. Let us be clear what we are talking about here. We are not discussing mutual and consensual sexual relations between equals, nor are we talking about homosexual relations in a wider sense. What is being compared is the pleasure of penetrative sex from the point of view of the penetrator. The feelings and pleasures of the penetrated are not at issue. Much of the conduct described would land the perpetrator in prison in most modern legal systems and would certainly incur opprobrium and social ostracism of the most complete and violent sort.[5]

It is probably true that the audience of this dialogue would have been much less concerned about issues of non-consensual and under-age sexual behaviors than most people today. The admirer of boys is described as a *lūṭi.* This noun, derived ultimately from the name of Lot, the Old Testament figure who fled the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah before their destruction, is portrayed as a not uncommon and recognizable type. However, it is clear that many of al-Jāḥiẓ's contemporaries would have disapproved very strongly of *liwāṭ*, that is, of anal intercourse. We know that because this is the period when the legal schools were formulating their abhorrence of the practice and elaborating the most condign punishments for its perpetrators.[6] Malikis, Hanbalis and Shafi'is generally imposed the death penalty for sodomy as did most Shi'is; only the Ẓāhiris and Hanafis argued against the consensus, some early Hanafis going so far as to argue that it would be allowed in paradise. In practice it was difficult to find sufficient evidence to convict anyone who conducted their sexual life privately and discreetly, but the point remains that the jurists were adamant, and, we might assume, much contemporary public opinion followed them.

What, then, are we to make of al-Jāḥiẓ's witty and erudite essay on a subject that could be, literally, a matter of life and death for many of his contemporaries? In this paper I want to look at this apparent paradox from two angles: the first is the construction of a distinctively court culture in Baghdad and Samarra in the third/ninth century[7] and the second to raise the possibility that al-Jāḥiẓ was working within a Hellenistic literary genre and adapting it for the purposes of Arabic belles-lettres: a sociological and a literary approach.

Court cultures emerge in response to two needs. The first is to bind the members of the court, the ruler, his intimates and the members of his household together in a network of shared interests and norms. The second is to define the relationship of the ruler and his court with those over whom he rules. This second purpose can be attempted in two quite different ways. The first way is by asserting common values between rulers and ruled: "we rule over you because we share the same values and pleasures and that binds us together." The second way is by using the argument that says, "We rule over you because our values and pleasures are different from yours, more refined, more sophisticated and more learned. That is why you should look up to us. We do not want you to share our culture, but simply to admire it and accept it as the natural prerogative of the elite."

In the most simplified sense, the Umayyad (39–128/661–750) and early Abbasid (128–187/750–809) poetry-based court culture was an example of the first approach, the Abbasid caliphate in the ninth century an example of the second.

When al-Ma'mūn arrived in Baghdad in the summer of 204/819 and set about reconstructing the Abbasid court, which had been torn apart in the aftermath of the civil war that followed the death of his father Hārūn al-Rashīd, he needed to find new courtiers and a new court culture to bind them together. Very few of these new courtiers had any connection with the courts of the early Abbasids or even with the court of Hārūn. Many of them came from northeast Iran and some of them may never have visited Baghdad before. Few of them were of Arab origin and they made no attempt to claim kinship with the Arab tribes of old. On the contrary, they were more likely to boast of their descent from the Persian aristocracy of pre-Islamic times. The culture of Bedouin poetry had little resonance for them. Many of them, too, came from families who were newly converted to Islam and they could claim no *sābiqa* (precedence in Islam: early converts to the new religion enjoyed a very high social status in early Islamic society) in the Muslim world. In many ways the new elite may have felt very insecure, and they lacked any legitimizing narrative to sustain their new-found dominance.

Whether consciously or not, the new caliph and his courtiers set about developing a new court culture. There can be no doubt that al-Ma'mūn himself was very influential in deciding the form it took. His own interests in Greek learning and science seem to have been quite genuine, and he gathered around him men who could translate his cultural aspirations into reality.[8] After his death, the caliphs who succeeded were not so personally committed to the new culture, but it was sustained by viziers, chief judges and such rich aristocrats as Muḥmmad ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Ṭāhir, who held court in Baghdad when the caliphs moved to Samarra. The new court culture was not anti-Islamic, but it did focus on many issues that the more religious and traditional-minded Muslims must have found distasteful. In a variety of ways it seems to have set out to flout the beliefs and sentiments of the pious bourgeoisie of Baghdad.[9] The adoption of the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'an[10] was just such a clever idea and it alienated many in Baghdad as surely as did the arrival of the Turkish military in the city. The new culture, like the new politics, was openly disdainful of traditional norms.

Al-Jāḥiẓ was the standard bearer for this new culture, or at least the areas of that culture that were concerned with literary and social values. His patrons were the great men of the new order: the vizier Ibn al-Zayyāt was the patron of his *Ḥayawān* (Book of Animals) and the chief judge Aḥmad ibn Abī Duwād of his *Bayān wa tabyīn* (a work on literature and rhetoric). Al-Jāḥiẓ then drifted into the circle of al-Mutawwakil's favorite, the gay aesthete and book lover al-Fatḥ ibn Khāqān, and though we have no evidence for the date of its creation, it may have been at this time that he composed the *Mufākharat.* Examined in this context, the work may seem more appropriate. The rejection of moral and cultural norms increasingly espoused by the religious and bourgeois inhabitants of Baghdad

and the rest of the caliphate was a deliberate and essential feature of this court culture.

The *Mufākharat al-jawāri wa'l-ghilmān* takes the form of a dialogue between two protagonists who are simply called *Sahib al-Jawārī and Ṣāḥib al-Ghilmān*. *Jawārī* (sing. *jāriya*) is a term that means slave girls, frequently distinguished as singers. These were a major feature of the court life of the early Abbasid period. They were often highly educated and were important bearers of the musical and poetic culture in the court. They were always of modest social backgrounds, chosen for beauty and talent rather than social status. The most successful of them were extremely valuable but they remained slaves who could be bought and sold at the will of their master. As *jawārī* means more than just girls, so *ghilmān* (sing. *ghulām)* is more than boys. In early classical Arabic, the term does indeed simply mean boys or young males. By the time al-Jāḥiẓ was writing, however, the term had acquired a more restricted and specialist use. The *ghulām* was a youth, often but not always, of Turkic Central Asian origin. Many of them were trained and employed as soldiers. For the connoisseur, the *ghulām* was at his most perfect immediately after puberty but before he had acquired the thick beard considered an essential part of the masculinity of a mature Muslim male. Like the *jāriya*, he too was un-free. The term *ṣāḥib* carries a number of different meanings. It can be taken simply as friend or supporter, or in the case of this dialogue about sexual preference, the advocate. It also means owner, making it clear that the boys and girls alike were the possession of their *ṣāḥibs* and could be used as they wished.

The arguments on each side are based on two main foundations: ancient authority, on the one hand, and what might be called, for want of a more elegant word, utility, on the other. In the culture of ninth-century Baghdad, there are two sorts of ancient authority that can be drawn on: pre-Islamic poetry and the teachings of Islam. Before he begins, however, Al-Jāḥiẓ addresses the problem of decent and indecent language and the related question of whether sex should be openly discussed. This is, of course, a difficult issue for all historians of pre-modern sexualities expressed in foreign tongues, for it is easy to mistake the register of language being used. Are we talking *membrum virile* and *pudenda mulieris* ("the decent obscurity of a dead language"), penis and vagina or cock and cunt? It is not easy to tell what effect the use of certain words would have had on the audience but from al-Jāḥiẓ's justification of his writing he seems to have aimed at a certain shocking bluntness.

"Some people who affect asceticism and self-denial are uneasy and embarrassed when cunt (*ḥirr*), cock (*ayyir)* and fucking (*nīk)* are mentioned. Most men you find like that are without knowledge, honour, nobility or dignity."[11] He then goes on to cite examples of pious early Muslims using expressions that might be considered obscene by some. ʿAbd Allah ibn al-ʿAbbās, ancestor of the Abbasid ruling dynasty and a very important figure in the transmission of religious traditions, is quoted as reciting a short poem in the mosque at Mecca when he was in the purified garment of a pilgrim:

The women walk by us softly
If the omens are right, we will fuck (*nanik)* them.[12]

When someone reproached him with being too sexually explicit, he defended himself by saying that it was the women who were sexually explicit, not him. He then went on to recount traditions of other famous and pious figures using language that some might find offensive: Abū Bakr, the first caliph (10–12/632–634), is said to have told a pagan opponent of the Prophet to "bite the clitoris of al-Lāt" (one of the idols the pagans associated with God) or another early Islamic hero, Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, abusing someone as a "son of a clitoris cutting woman."[13] Better still, one Ibn Ḥāzim is quoted as boasting how he would climb the steps of paradise holding his wife on his erect penis. Another pious early Muslim, Ibn Abī Zinād, is asked by his nephew if he grunts (*nakhara)* during intercourse, and he replies that in private you can do anything, and if his nephew saw him having sex, he would conclude that he did not believe in God.

As with much of al-Jāḥiẓ, it is difficult to know how seriously to take this, but it seems as if he is making a claim to be able to use uninhibitedly sexual language in a literary production. There was a developing trend through the Middle Ages for serious Arabic literature to become more modest and to avoid expressions that might be considered vulgar and obscene, although such material does survive in popular compilations such as the Arabian Nights. Al-Jāḥiẓ may be protesting against this trend in this short justification. Whether the intention is as serious as that, we cannot be sure, but we can be certain that Al-Jāḥiẓ used language in his dialogue that many pious critics would have found repulsive, and that he was proud of it.

The arguments the protagonists deploy are partly based on the wisdom of the ancients. For al-Jāḥiẓ's contestants there are two sources of old authority. One is the literature of the pre-Islamic Arabs, especially the poetry of the *jāhiliya* (the period of "ignorance" before the coming of Islam), revered then, as now, as the epitome of Arabic literary style. The *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* quotes claims that boys are superior because the poets compare beautiful girls to boys, and he produces a series of quotes about the beauty of a "girl wine-bearer like a youth beginning puberty" or a girl who has "her hair cut short, in a shirt with buttons, in the clothes of one with a cock and a boyish expression."[14]

The *ṣāḥib al-Jawārī* argues that there is no example in the lives of ancient Arab poets of one of them dying for love of a boy, whereas there are numerous examples of men slain by love of girls, and classic examples are trotted out, among them Jamīl b. Maʿmar, killed by love of Buthayna, and Majnūn driven insane, as his name implies (Majnūn means mad), by love of Layla. The *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān*'s reply[15] is interesting and goes to the heart of much of the ninth-century debate about pre-Islamic poetry and the norms of behavior found in it. He argues that the old poets were so enamored of these girls only because they had not seen the beautiful boys available to the sophisticated punters of ninth-century Baghdad and Samarra:

> You argued against us with the example of rude and coarse Bedouins who fed on misfortune and misery and grew up in it. They knew nothing of the luxury of life or worldly pleasures. They lived in desolate deserts, shying away from people like wild animals, eating hedgehogs and giant lizards and splitting open colocynth. When one of them reached the height of eloquence, he wept over the blackened remains of a camp fire and described a woman by comparing her to a wild cow or a gazelle.

He goes on to quote poetry in praise of beautiful boys:

> I am in love with a gazelle
> The front of his neck is like a pure white doe,
> With a stalk on sandy ground
> On the two willow boughs.
> He has the glance of a wild creature
> And the words of a man.[16]

The most famous of the early Abbasid poets was Abū Nuwās and he provides material for both sides of the argument. On the one hand is his outspoken contempt for the norms of Bedouin society. He pours scorn on the cult of desolate landscapes and desert hardships, saying how much he prefers "the placement of a sweet herb behind the ear / and the movement of a cup to mouth by a hand" and goes on to rhapsodize about the hand and arm of the young Christian boy who serves him his wine:

> I drink wine from his palm and from
> His mouth pouring over hailstones.
> That is better than weeping over a campsite.[17]

But Abū Nuwās is equally enchanted by "a slender pearl." She "gives you enchantment to drink from her eye and from her hand, wine. Then you have no escape from two intoxications. I feel dizzy twice, fellow drinkers only once." An extended poetic duel then ensues, each side quoting verses about the merits of girls and boys.

One of the recurrent themes in the poetry quoted by the *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* is the cruelty of boy lovers:

> He makes killing souls his sport
> He almost destroys souls with his pleasure.
> Here am I, your obedient servant, calling out. I say to him
> While my heart is anxious and distraught with love.
> This heart of mine comes to you
> Obediently, not unwillingly
> Desperate for contact with you.

Or again:

I have a beloved who as he grows
In harshness to me becomes more captivating.[18]

This almost masochistic tone becomes common in both Arabic and Persian poem devoted to the love of *ghilmān* where the beauty and cruelty of the beloved are celebrated in the same verses.

Some of the other poetry quoted by *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* is simply abusive:

I would not change beardless youths for a girl with short hair
Nor would I sell a gazelle for a rabbit
I do not put my hand in the lair willingly:
I fear the snake and the scorpion

Or, more crudely:

I have no need for cunt
I think fucking is revolting
No one screws the cunt
Except those who are poor and needy.
So if you screw, screw
A beardless youth, pale as a piece of ivory

Or again:

As far as my cock goes
A female is not worth two lumps of dung.
Fucking girls
Is like discharging one debt after another.
The cock has no life
Without the scent of two balls.[19]

The retort from the *ṣāḥib al-jawārī* uses simple abuse and denounces the poets quoted by his opponent as debauchees and sodomites, because they describe boys at length and glorify pederasty.

The discussion of the merits of girls and boys here becomes part of a wider discussion of cultural values. There was a continuing debate in the circles among which Al-Jāḥiẓ moved between those critics who maintained that pre-Islamic poetry was the highest form of art and those who argued that the new, subtle and elusive poetry of such contemporary figures as Abū Tammām represented a more advanced and developed literary style. The argument is made that the simple heterosexuality of the pre-Islamic poets is essentially a sign of a primitive society, fine in its own time but essentially out of date in the sophisticated milieux of Al-Jāḥiẓ's time.

The other source of ancient wisdom was, of course, the teachings of Islam and especially the traditions of the Prophet. Qur'anic descriptions of paradise are a useful source mined by both sides. The *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* quoted the verses "They have youths who go around them like guarded pearls" (52: 24) and "Immortal boys go about them with cups and ewers" (56: 17–18). The youths of paradise have been a source of inspiration for homosexuality among Muslims since the beginning of Islam for, as *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* says, "He (God) described them in more than one place in His book and created desire for them in His saints."[20] The *ṣāḥib al-jawārī*, of course, retorted that God mentioned the girls of paradise much more often than the boys.

Traditions of the Prophet (*ḥadīth)* can be adduced to prove almost anything. The *ṣāḥib al-jawārī* can quote examples such as "Women and perfume were made dear to me (Muḥammad), and prayer pleases me,"[21] while the *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* can respond with the tradition that men enter paradise as beardless youths and another in which the Prophet declares that "I have left behind me no trials more harmful for men than women."[22]

An important topic in the debate is the question of religious prohibition. For *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* the ammunition in the debate is the prohibition of *zinā* or adultery. Adultery is one of the vices most clearly and repeatedly condemned in the Qur'an, and according to Mujāhid, even the other inhabitants of Hell are appalled by the stench of the adulterers.[23] The *ṣāḥib al-jawārī* retorts that God has made the prohibition of adultery very difficult to enforce. Where most other crimes, including such heinous sins as polytheism, require only two witnesses to establish proof, adultery requires four, each one of whom must have seen the act being consummated, to use the famous metaphor, like the eyeliner (*kuhl)* applicator going in and out of the bottle.[24]

In retaliation the *ṣāḥib al-jawārī* is able to produce a number of traditions and anecdotes in which the practice of sodomy is clearly forbidden and the punishments laid out. One story recounts how the caliph ʿAlī (34–39/656–661) had a pederast thrown from the top of a minaret while Abū Bakr (10–12/632–634) had a wall pushed over on another. There were also stories of pederasts being burned on the orders of the Umayyad caliph Hishām (102–121/724–743). The great collectors of traditions (that is, traditions about what the Prophet said or did on certain occasions) also pass down sayings that purport to show the Prophet's disgust with the practice. For Mujāhid the pederast will remain defiled "even if he bathes in every drop of water from the sky and the earth." Al-Zuhrī says that pederasts should be stoned because it was the Prophet's custom, and others say that the Prophet cursed both male homosexuals and lesbians (*mudhakkirāt*).[25] The *ṣāḥib al-jawārī* is also able to add a number of traditions in which the Prophet commends marriage and the procreation of children.

The second class of arguments includes those that are based on utility. For the *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* one of these is that if a man buys a girl, the law decrees that he has to wait a full menstrual cycle before having vaginal intercourse with her

to avoid uncertainty about the parentage of any children. No such waiting is needed in the case of a boy, who can be enjoyed immediately. The *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* also produces a further argument based on anatomy. The penis is round, he argues, so it was clearly designed to penetrate the round anus; if it were for the vagina, it would be shaped like an axe.[26] It is difficult to know how seriously to take this argument—whether it is a joke or a more serious attempt to develop a moral point based on anatomical observation, a sort of scientific approach, rather than revealed religion.

Some of the *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān's* argument degenerates into the common stock of misogynist comment to be found in many cultures: "Women make a man's hair turn white, his odour foul, his complexion black and his urine plentiful" and:

> they exhaust the rich man and demand from the poor man what he cannot give. How many a respectable merchant has been reduced to bankruptcy by his wife until he has wandered about like a madman, confined to his house or deprived of his shop and livelihood by her.[27]

The *ṣāḥib al-jawārī* in turn has arguments from utility. A girl can be enjoyed both vaginally and anally, allowing two avenues of pleasure.[28] A girl can also be enjoyed for much longer. A female can give sexual pleasure for at least forty years while a boy ceases to be of interest when he becomes more mature.[29]

Al-Jāḥiẓ delivers no clear verdict on the merits of either case and the essay peters out in a series of interesting but not especially relevant anecdotes about sexual behavior. The piece has allowed him to show off his wit, his knowledge of poetry and tradition, but it has also allowed him to be dangerous and provocative, to introduce an alternative morality that many would condemn.

It is interesting to compare al-Jāḥiẓ's work with a Greek text dealing with the same sort of issues.[30] The dialogue "Affairs of the Heart,"[31] attributed to Lucian, seems, in fact, to be a composition of the third century AD. The style suggests that the attribution to Lucian is incorrect and that this is the work of an imitator. Although it differs in many aspects from al-Jāḥiẓ's essay, the subject matter and some of the ideas discussed have many features in common.

The structure of the Pseudo-Lucian is more formal than the al-Jāḥiẓ. The two protagonists have names: Charicles the admirer of girls; Callicraditas the lover of boys. There is also a clear context: the two are encouraged to debate their sexual preferences before an older man, Lycinus, when their ship puts in at the port of Cnidus on the west coast of Asia Minor. Lycinus plays no part in the actual discussion but serves as umpire and judge.

The account of the debate begins with an invitation to visit the temple of Aphrodite, goddess of love; Charicles accepts with enthusiasm, Callicraditas with some dread, this being a shrine to the most feminine of deities. There follows an interesting discussion of the temple and the statuary in the courtyard. The naked statue of Aphrodite is examined with keenly erotic interest, Charicles being

enchanted by it, Callicraditas regarding it without enthusiasm until they go round behind and view the goddess from the rear, when the boy-like quality of her buttocks and thighs provoke his enthusiasm. They then notice a stain on the marble of the image and ask the priestess who is showing them round what it is. She tells the story of a young man of Cnidus who fell hopelessly in love with the statue. He would spend all day gazing at it and all night dreaming of her. One night he contrived to have himself locked in the temple over night. During the night, he made love to the statue "as if to a boy, not wanting to be confronted by the female parts." The stain on the marble was the result of his passion. The story went that the next day, the young man, mortified by shame and frustration, hurled himself down the cliff.[32] The role of classical statuary as the inspiration for erotic fantasy and masturbation is articulated with surprising clarity.

In the Pseudo-Lucian debate, after this instructive interlude, the party withdraw to a shady place so that the discussion can begin in earnest.

Some of the arguments adduced by both sides are similar. Like the *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān*, Callicraditas puts forward the argument that homosexuality is the sign of a more advanced culture. Heterosexual intercourse, he argues, is a necessity for the propagation of the human race but just as cuisine advances from the crude to the gourmet and clothing from skins to fine fabrics, so sexual tastes develop from the basic to the more refined, from the necessary love of women to the more aesthetic love of boys. Nor, he goes on, is the argument that heterosexuality is superior, because it is more ancient, valid. And Callicraditas concludes by asserting that "We must consider the pursuits that are old to be necessary, but assess as superior the later additions invented by human life when it had leisure for thought."[33] This precisely parallels the argument that the *ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* develops in al-Jāḥiẓ's essay about the primitive nature of the Bedouin society that produced the pre-Islamic heterosexual poetry compared with his own more refined day.

Another argument that appears in both al-Jāḥiẓ and the Pseudo-Lucian is about the longevity of women as objects of desire:

> from maidenhood to middle age, before the time when the last wrinkles of old age spread across her face, a woman is a pleasant armful for a man to embrace and, even if the beauty of her prime is past:
>
> "With wiser tongue
> Experience can speak than doth the young."

By contrast, boys are well past their prime when they reach the age of twenty, for the "limbs being large and manly are hard, the chins which once were soft, are covered in bristles and the well-developed thighs are, as it were, sullied with hairs."[34]

The argument that women can be enjoyed both vaginally and anally is also produced by Charicles. "A woman can be used like a boy so that one can have

enjoyment by opening up two paths to pleasure, but a male has no way of bestowing the pleasure a woman gives."[35]

Against these reasons for preferring woman are set the old charges of the vanity and extravagance of women. Again, the Pseudo-Lucian develops these more fully than al-Jāḥiẓ, allowing Callicraditas a long diatribe against the extravagance of women, the use of cosmetics:

> Some pass unfavourable judgments on their own gifts from nature and, by means of pigments which can redden the hair to match the sun at noon, they dye their hair with a yellow bloom as they do coloured wool. Those who are satisfied with their dark locks spend their husbands' wealth on radiating from their hair, all the perfumes of Arabia . . .

And there is much more in the same vein. Then there are "the flower coloured shoes that sink into their flesh and pinch their feet."[36]

In contrast, boys rise early and devote their days to manly sports and the study of philosophy. They are attended not by perfumes and exotic clothes but by "many-leaved writing tablets or books that preserve the merit of ancient deeds, along with the tuneful lyre if he should be going to the music master."[37]

If the texts share certain key points, there are also many differences. The most obvious of these is the general cultural milieu. Al-Jāḥiẓ's speakers appeal to the authority of pre-Islamic poets and the traditions of the Prophet and early Islam. In the *Affairs* the appeals are to classical Greek philosophy and the tales of the gods.

Another important point is made in *Affairs* but not in al-Jāḥiẓ. This is the question of mutual pleasure between the partners in the sexual act:

> Men's intercourse with women involves giving like enjoyment in return and I think it is honourable for men not to wish for a selfish pleasure . . . but to share what they obtain and repay like with like. No one could be so mad as to say this in the case of boys. No, the active lover . . . departs after having obtained an exquisite pleasure, but the one outraged suffers tears and pain at first, though the pain relents somewhat with time and you will, men say, cause him no further discomfort, but of pleasure he has none at all.[38]

The relationship between the two texts is not a close one. There is no evidence that the *Affairs* was ever translated into Arabic, and in a way it would be surprising if it had: with few exceptions the translation of Greek texts into Arabic, happening at the same time and in the same intellectual circles as al-Jāḥiẓ inhabited, concerned itself with practical science, logic, mathematics, botany, geography, to the almost complete exclusion of imaginative literature. However, we cannot entirely rule out the possibility that a dialogue similar to this was translated into Arabic and that al-Jāḥiẓ read it or heard of it. We should not completely dismiss the possibility that al-Jāḥiẓ here was picking up on a Hellenistic genre and adapting it to an

Arabic/Islamic cultural milieu. If this is indeed the case, then it would be another example of the intellectual contacts between Greek and Arabic that are such a characteristic feature of the court culture al-Jāḥiẓ inhabited.

Both texts also have interesting points to make about attitudes to sexual orientation. In contrast to Foucault's argument that the idea of homosexuality is a comparatively modern construct, these authors assume that some men are naturally heterosexual and others naturally homosexual. The *lūṭī* of the Arabic dialogue is a recognizable type and it seems assumed that a man is either a *lūṭī* or not. Likewise Callicraditas's homosexual orientation is accepted as an essential part of his nature though no blame is attached to him and there is no expectation that he can or should change.[39] Also interesting, in light of many modern attitudes to gay men, is the assumption that the love of boys, far from being a sign of effeminacy, is a more masculine preference than loving women: the lover of boys is interested in martial arts and serious intellectual endeavor; the lover of women has to be concerned with clothes and hairstyles. This is not a cultural prejudice shared by the Arab author.

The discussion of these texts may also shed some light on the debate surrounding pre-modern homosexuality generated by the writings of Foucault, Dover and others.[40] Are we talking here about homosexuality in any sense in which the term is used in modern discourse? It is important to remember when trying to answer these questions that both the texts are literary productions rather than scientific explorations of human sexuality. Their main concerns are with presenting a lively and entertaining discussion of a risqué subject and they must be read not as objective accounts of sexual relations but as intellectual and rhetorical exercises. To an extent, the images they present may be constructs created to make the dispute genre work effectively, though it would hardly be effective unless it did, to some extent, reflect contemporary attitudes.

Despite this caveat, however, it is possible to make some substantive points. The first is that the issue of penetration, which so dominates the writings of Dover and, by extension, of Foucault is not an issue here. It is taken for granted that the protagonists are penetrators and that the penetrated are of lower social status. The interests and pleasure of the penetrated play no part in the Arab text and little enough in the Greek.

On the other hand the gender of their sexual partners is described as having a profound effect on the identity and self-image of the protagonist. In both dialogues sexual preference is seen as essentially involuntary, a major defiing feature of their identities and lifestyles. It is assumed to be lasting and permanent, not a casual whim based on passing attraction or availability. To that extent the protagonists are recognizably "homosexual" and "heterosexual" in a way which closely resembles modern conceptions of these categories. James Davidson suggests that Foucault's "momentous objective" was the "undermining of the transhistorical category 'homosexual'."[41] These two texts suggest that, in both the Hellenistic Society of the first centuries AD and the Islamic Society of the ninth, both homosexual and heterosexual adult males could have clear, distinct sexual identities.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Caroline Proctor and April Harper for organizing the conference in St Andrews at which this paper was first given. I would also like to thank Dr Caroline Goodson and Prof. John Arnold for their valuable advice and help in the preparation of this paper.
2. The official capital of the Abbasid caliphate was at Samarra from the 830s to 892, but Baghdad remained in many ways the cultural and commercial capital.
3. For background on Al-Jāḥiẓ, see Charles Pellat, "Al-Jāḥiẓ," in *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany, T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham and R. B. Serjeant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 78–89.
4. I have used the edition in *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. Abd al-Salām Muhammad Harun, 2 vols (Beirut, 1991), 1: 91–137. There is an adequate, if sometimes stilted, English translation in *Nine Essays of Al-Jāḥiẓ*, trans. William M. Hutchins, American University Studies: series VII Theology and Religion Vol. 53 (New York, 1989). Part of the translation first appeared as "Short Stories, translation of part of an essay by Al-Jāḥiẓ," *Playboy*, 22, 7 (1975).
5. See James T. Monroe, "The Striptease That Was Blamed on Abu Bakr's Naughty Son: Was Father Being Shamed, or Was the Poet Having Fun? (Ibn Quzman's Zajal no. 133)," in *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature,* eds J. W. Wright Jr and Everett Rowson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 116–18.
6. For this see Arno Schmitt, "Liwat im Fiqh: Mannliche Homosexualität," *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies,* 4 (2001–2002), 49–110.
7. On Abbasid court culture, see Hugh Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs (*US title: *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World*) (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004).
8. See Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London, 1998), 75–104.
9. What would they have made, for example, of the works of the Persian aristocrat Ibn al-Shāh Mīkāl? According to the *Fihrist*, he composed books on "The Boasting of the Comb over the Mirror," "The War of Bread and Olives," "The Wonders of the Sea," "Adultery and its Enjoyment," "Stories about Slave-boys," "Stories about Women," and a work simply called "Masturbation." Ibn al-Nadīm in his *Kitab al-Fihrist*, ed. R. Tajaddod (Tehran: Marvi Printing, 1393/1973), 170; English translation in: Bayard Dodge, ed. and trans., *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, 2 vols (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970), 335).
10. The issue under discussion was whether the Qur'an had existed since all eternity and was only revealed to Muhammad for the first time or whether God actually created it at the time of Muhammad's mission. Conservative intellectuals in Baghdad, usually opposed to the regime for other reasons, argued for the first point of view; the new Samarra elite believed in the createdness of the Qur'an and demanded that anyone enjoying public office should subscribe to it. Opponents were persecuted and on occasion martyred.
11. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 92; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 139.
12. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 92; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 139.
13. On female circumcision in early Islamic society, see Jonathan Berkey, "Circumcision Circumscribed: Female Excision and Cultural Accommodation in the Medieval Near East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 28 (1996), 19–38.
14. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 96; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 141.
15. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 105–10; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 146–8.
16 Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 106–7; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 146–7.

17 Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 106–7; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 146–7.
18. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 109; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 148.
19. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 111–2; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 149–50.
20. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 96; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 142.
21. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 99–100; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 143.
22. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 100; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 144.
23. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 100; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 143. Mujāhid b. Jabb al-Makkī (d.c. 100/718) was one of the earliest commentators on the Qur'an.
24. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 97; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 142.
25. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 101; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 144. Muhammad b. Muslim al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742) was a major figure in the development of early muslim tradition.
26. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 126; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 158. The word used for axe is not the common *fa's* but *ṭabarzīn,* a Persian word meaning a battle-axe.
27. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 102; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 144.
28. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 97; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 142.
29. Harun, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 97; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 154–5.
30. Growing up in Basra, al-Jāḥiẓ was exposed to a wide variety of influences, including the philologists who would lecture at the mosque on Fridays, and as the home of Mu ʿtazilism, Basra also exposed al-Jāḥiẓ to a rationalist philosophy. He was also exposed to a wide variety of Greek works that were just being translated at this time under the rule of al-Ma'mūn. Many genres of Greek and Arabic literature were not unique but shared by both cultures, such as the dream literature and these stylized debates over comparable objects or ideas. See Franz Rosenthal, "Male and Female: Described and Compared," and Steven Oberhelman, "Hierarchies of Gender, Ideology, and Power in Medieval Greek and Arabic Dream Literature," both in *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature,* ed. Wright and Rowson, 24–54; 55–93.
31. Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart*, ed. and trans. M. D. Macleod (Cambridge MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1967), 8: 432, 147–235. For a discussion of this text see M. Foucault, The History of Sexuality III: The Care of the Self (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 211–27.
32. *Affairs*, 173–9.
33. *Affairs*, 432.
34. *Affairs*. 190–1.
35. *Affairs*, 192–5. Foucault, Care of Self, 226, argues that the dialogue ends with "a victory conforming to a traditional schema that reserves for philosophers a pederasty in which physical pleasure is evaded." It is clear though that the love of boys as discussed is concerned with actual sexual penetration, see Affairs, 230–3.
36 *Affairs*, 216–19.
37. Ibid.
38. *Affairs*, 192–3.
39. Harun, Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ, 126; Hutchins, *Nine Essays*, 158. For both charicles and callicraditas their sexual orientations are an essential aspect of their personalities, illustrated by their characters and households, in Affairs, 162–5.
40. Kenneth J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (London: Duckworth, 1978) and James Davidson, "Dover, Foucault and Greek Homosexuality: Penetration and the Truth of Sex", Past & Present, 170 (2001), 3–51.
41. Davidson, "Dover, Foucault and Greek Homosexuality," 43.

11

"They Do Not Know the Use of Men"

The Absence of Sodomy in Medieval Accounts of the Far East

Kim M. Phillips

Bret Hinsch begins his pioneering study of homosexuality in Chinese history with this assertion:

> When western travelers first described Chinese society to their fellow Europeans they lavished ecstatic praise on many aspects of Chinese culture, including efficient government administration, awe-inspiring public works, and the opulent and sophisticated life-styles of the upper classes. Early European commentators even added Chinese moral values to their idealistic panegyric. But one aspect of Chinese society received strident condemnation and scorn from these first adventurers: homosexuality. For them, the popularity of the "abominable vice of sodomy" was an unforgivable flaw in an otherwise admirable society.[1]

Most of Hinsch's early European commentators are early modern. He cites: the merchant Galeote Pereira who was imprisoned in China in 1548–1549; Matteo Ricci, a Jesuit missionary in China from 1582 to his death in 1610, who was disgusted by "public streets full of boys got up like prostitutes"; and Gaspar de Cruz, a Dominican missionary in China during 1555–1556, who expressed revulsion at a land he perceived as a new Sodom, poised for devastation by earthquakes and floods as God's retribution for, "the filthy abomination . . . the accursed sin of unnatural vice" to which Chinese men were so partial.[2] The Elizabethan travel anthologist Samuel Purchas extended the accusation to the Mongols, casually remarking that, "[t]hey are addicted to Sodomie or Buggerie."[3] The special reputation of Chinese cities for sexual vice was of long duration. In his 1885 translation of *The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night*, Sir Richard

F. Burton offered a learned pun: "The Chinese, as far as we know them in the great cities, are omnivorous and omnifutuentes"—that is, they will eat anything, and fuck anything. "[T]hey are the chosen people of debauchery and their systematic bestiality with ducks, goats, and other animals is equalled only by their pederasty."[4] When Danish traveler Henning Haslund penned his *Mongolian Journey* in 1946 he celebrated all the good that western "civilization" had brought to the once debauched and diseased orient:

> Singapore . . . which at the beginning of last century had been a fever stricken marsh and a resort of cruel pirates, which was now transformed into a great trading-place . . . Hongkong . . . in our grandfathers' time a barren, desolate rock—was now changed into a paradise where trade flourished on a wide scale . . . . And Shanghai—that *Sodom*, where sickness, sin and misery were so firmly ensconced—had yet received so much help from civilization in the form of money and pills that, even if never reformed, it could boast a clean and smiling façade.[5]

Yet if we examine the Western European accounts of China provided in letters and travelogs of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, we find no such general condemnation of unnatural vices. Indeed, travelers to the distant eastern realms of Mongolia and the three Indies, encompassing what we would now call India, Burma, South-East Asia and China, make mention of various sexual practices but do not seem compelled to remark on sodomitical ones. This lacuna does not seem remarkable until we compare it to the virulent denunciations of the sixteenth century and afterwards. Moreover, pre-modern homoerotic traditions are widely attested to in most of the regions through which the medieval travelers passed, including India, Afghanistan, South-East Asia and China.[6] It is difficult to make the same case for Mongolian sexuality, as it has not attracted much attention from historians. One thirteenth-century Mongolian law pronounced the death penalty for homosexual acts, as for adultery, but the outlawing of a practice is not indicative of its non-existence—rather the opposite.[7] Male same-sex love in Chinese history has been quite well served by recent scholarship. Romantic and sexual relations between men were widely represented in Chinese law, literature and visual art from the beginning of the Zhou dynasty in 1122 BCE to the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911.[8] Hinsch's slightly rose-tinted picture of Chinese sexual tolerance before the twentieth century has been criticized by Matthew Sommers, who shows that laws of the Ming (1368–1644) and more particularly Qing (1644–1911) dynasties stigmatized the passive, receptive role in homoerotic relationships and punished homosexual rape severely because of the polluting and feminizing effect it had on its victims.[9] Nonetheless, to be the active partner in consensual homoerotic sex seems to have held few if any negative associations, and there is wide-ranging evidence for male same-sex couplings. As a character in *The Golden Locus* from the Ming period quips, "all [men] go in for this sort

of thing. Even the beggars in their hovels."[10] Double entendres involving men playing in each other's "rear courtyards" abound. Little was sacred in this bawdy tradition, and jokes about Buddhist priests and their novices are common:

> One night the venerable Master spoke to the young priest, saying, "Tonight we ought to do it the vegetarian way." "What do you mean by the vegetarian way?" "I won't use my tongue [to lubricate the penis]." They did it that way but the young priest felt extremely pained so he cried out, "Master, I can't stand it any more, let's go back to a meat diet!"[11]

From the mid-thirteenth century onward many Europeans traveled to Mongolia, China, Burma, India and South-East Asia, some as ambassadors, others missionaries or merchants.[12] It is impossible to calculate how many individuals made the arduous journey. The number of merchants, in particular, was probably larger than we tend to imagine. Because relatively few left any record of their journey, some who did have been regarded with skepticism. Frances Wood, in an influential book, argued that Marco Polo never went to China, but Polo's remarkable feat was not in making the journey but in composing its record, with the help of romance author Rusticello of Pisa, who added his own literary embellishments.[13] We could wish that some of the Florentine merchants of the late fourteenth century upon whom Francesco Balducci Pegolotti relied for information about the road to China had produced works similar to the Polo Texts.[14] Nicolò de'Conti, another Venetian who made the journey to China, told Poggio Bracciolini that he had set out from Venice in 1419 in the company of 600 other merchants. While the number could well be exaggerated and many in the trading company may have gone no further than the Iranian or Indian coasts, Conti's remark gives an insight into the size of some European trading ventures in the Middle and Far East in the later medieval period.[15] Hieronimo de Santo Stephano, a Genoese merchant, also left a brief account of his voyage with a fellow merchant to India and the East Indies in the late 1490s and was shipwrecked off the Maldives on his way to China.[16]

The number of ambassadors and missionaries who traveled to distant eastern regions was smaller, but they were more likely to provide written accounts. The Mongolian conquests of large tracts of Russia and Eastern Europe in the early decades of the thirteenth century made Latin Europeans wake up to the existence of these fierce, nomadic eastern peoples, and while the first reports of Mongols and their deeds emphasized Mongolian violence and atrocities, western powers quickly switched to viewing the Mongols as potential allies in their ongoing crusades against Islam. In 1245 Pope Innocent IV sent a small embassy to Guyuk Khan's camp near Karakorum, led by the elderly Franciscan John of Plano Carpini, seeking an alliance in the ongoing crusades against Islam. Carpini, his companion Benedict the Pole, and subsequently William of Rubruck produced accounts of the Mongolians. Records from later western embassies to eastern powers include

John Marignolli's reminiscences from his period as papal legate in China, 1338–1353, and Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo's description of his journey as Castilian envoy to Tamerlane in 1403–1404.[17] In addition to these essentially ambassadorial accounts we must consider the various missionary records. There are three letters associated with John of Monte Corvino's missions to India and China, 1291–1306, and some short pieces by his successors in China: Andrew of Perugia (mission of 1308–1326), John de Cora (mission of 1328–1334), and Pascal de Vittoria (1338). Riccoldo de Montecroce's mission to Persia of *c*.1288–1301 is relevant, as are Jordanus of Severac's letters and his narrative *Mirabilia descripta* from his Indian mission of 1321–1328, and Odoric of Pordenone's itinerary of his bold mission by the southern route through India and South-East Asia to China in the 1320s.[18] Then come the fictional accounts of eastern journeys, largely plagiarized from earlier travelogs and legends of eastern marvels—those of "Sir John Mandeville" (*c*.1356) and Johannes Witte de Hese (*c*.1424).[19] In short, even if we leave aside the contents of geographic works, *mappae mundi*, romances including the important "Alexander" romances, the 160 or more surviving Latin copies of the "Letter of Prester John" (and many others in medieval vernaculars), "Wonders of the East" literature, and a diverse range of other sources, we have a wealth of information about Western European impressions of Far Eastern peoples from the mid-thirteenth to late fifteenth centuries. These travel narratives offer valuable insight into European constructions of Asian otherness in an era before colonialism or imperialism: that is, before Orientalism.

Modern Orientalism has made extensive use of stereotypes of sex and gender to buttress stereotypes of the eastern hemisphere as languid, sensual, fertile, erotic—indeed, feminine.[20] The East is desired and fetishized, which is to say that it is not only a place where a western traveler can find delightful sexual partners, but that the Orient is *itself* sexualized as feminine, passive and queer. By the assumed natural law of patriarchy, the masculine, masterful West is thus authorized to dominate and subdue the East. "The East is a career," reads Said's epigraph by Disraeli, from his novel *Tancred*. It could equally read, "The East is a mistress," or "The East is queer." When Said wrote that, "the Orient becomes a living tableaux of queerness," he was using "queer" in its broad sense of "peculiar', although his references to Flaubert on the same page do emphasize the sexually peculiar.[21] While Said may not have had specifically homoerotic queerness in mind, it seems apt to offer a narrower reading when we consider the queering of the Orient by modern Orientalists such as Burton. Medieval authors do not appear to have shared in this tendency, and, indeed, do not engage in the particular kind of stereotyping and homogenizing of eastern cultures that is central to perhaps the most interesting part of Said's definition of Orientalism: "a western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient."[22] There *were* Western European stereotypes of Far Eastern cultures in the medieval period: for example, according to Gerald of Wales it was a place of poison, serpents and monstrous races but also of precious stones, silks and

spices,[23] while the increasingly detailed versions of the "Letter of Prester John," which were in mass circulation from *c*.1165 emphasized the land's great wealth, precious stones, exotic beasts and monstrous races.[24] However these were not simply the same as modern caricatures, and the modern tendency to homogenize Oriental cultures (encapsulated in our now almost unavoidable distinction between "West" and "East") was not nearly as strong.[25] I hesitate to say that there is not a single reference to eastern homosexual practices in the texts under discussion, given that some of them survive in numerous manuscripts with complex textual traditions. This is particularly true of the Polo Texts, Odoric and "Mandeville," for whom around 140, 111 and 250 manuscripts survive respectively, in various languages and recensions.[26] It would be rash to suggest that no mention of homoeroticism will ever turn up. However, it would be fair to say that homoeroticism is not a common theme, and this is worth some discussion.

Many medieval travelers to central, south and east Asia were interested in the sexual practices and moralities of the people they encountered, or they made up tall tales about them. Carpini, Rubruck, the Polo Texts, Monte Corvino, Montecroce, Odoric, "Mandeville," Conti, and Hieronimo include sexual and marital habits in their descriptions of eastern peoples. Fornication, adultery, incest, polygamy, prostitution, chastity, promiscuity and sensual excess find a place in these works.[27] Active eastern sexualities thus encompassed the licit and illicit according to medieval moral teaching, but all fell into the category of the "natural," as acts or tendencies from which procreation might result. The Polo Texts and "Mandeville" take particular delight in spinning bawdy yarns about eastern proclivities.[28] Chinese prostitutes and the ubiquity of brothels fascinated commentators including Polo and Conti, but the rent boys who distressed or fascinated later travelers are not mentioned.[29] To employ an admittedly modern term, the eroticism of the medieval Orient is strongly heterosexual.

Nicolò de'Conti described one of the more exotic practices, recounting how the men near Ava in Burma would have the skin of their penises cut and several small bells—twelve or more—inserted between glans and prepuce, to make their members larger and give their wives greater sexual satisfaction:

> The members of some men stretch way down between their legs so that when they walk they ring out and may be heard. Nicolò was mocked by the women because of his small penis and invited to do the same, but was not willing to give others pleasure through his pain.[30]

Early modern travelers remarked on these "Burmese bells" too, but—significantly—these later writers employ the topos of eastern sodomy to explain their use. Around the turn of the seventeenth century, Italian explorer Francesco Carletti wrote:

> Those people [of Burma], using an ancient invention designed by a queen to rule out and render impossible the practicing of venery in illicit parts of the body

> even with men, ordered that each man must have stitched between the skin and the flesh of his member two or three rattles, as large as large hazelnuts, these made in round or oval shape.[31]

The bells' utility in preventing homosexual acts had been made still more explicitly by the English ambassador Ralph Fitch in recounting his experiences in 1583:

> They cut the skin and so put them in, one into one side and another into the other side . . . When they be married the husband is for euery child which his wife hath, to put in one until he come to three and then no more: for they say the women doe desire them. They were inuented because they should not abuse the male sexe. For in times past all those countries were so given to that villany, that they were very scarce of people.[32]

One might be inclined to read between the lines of Odoric's use of the "world-upside-down" topos when describing "Polumbum" (Quilon) in southern India, a place where women drink wine but men do not and where women, not men, shave their faces and beards, and, "many other remarkable and bestial practices may be found there, about which it is best not to write much."[33] However, this is not the only place in the text where Odoric draws back from full description of matters he finds distasteful, and it would be unwise to assume that sexual transgression is implied.[34] In the French translation of his book made in 1351 by Jean le Long, Odoric describes the city of "Somdoma" or "Sostoma" at the mouth of the Black Sea, the summer residence of the Persian emperor, but le Long is at pains to emphasize that this should not be confused with one of the five cities on which God rained fire and sulfur, "in retribution for the vice against nature that prevailed amongst them."[35] Even if we go back slightly in time to the 1220s and 1230s when the Mongols were wreaking destruction upon Russia and Eastern Europe and threatening Latin Christendom itself, horrified letter-writers and chroniclers of the day seemed to see no reason to accuse these eastern barbarians of sodomy. They were seen as cannibalistic, bestial, and identified with the tribes of Gog and Magog who would come at the dawn of the Sixth Age to do battle on behalf of the Antichrist, but sodomy was not among their reported vices.[36]

One brief reference to homoerotic acts in this literature appears in Poggio's account of Conti's travels. Yet this, far from queering the Orient, makes it unambiguously "straight":

> Common women are everywhere at hand and easy to find, having houses particular to them in all parts of the city. They entice men with their fragrances, ointments, blandishments, beauty and youth (for all the "Indians" are inclined towards licentiousness), *because the use of men is unknown among the Indians.*[37]

To alter the translation slightly, "the Chinese do not know the use of men." No doubt Poggio Bracciolini, as a fifteenth-century Florentine intellectual and

specialist in classical literature knew all about such "use."[38] Conti's assertion of eastern ignorance of male homosexual acts expresses a view directly opposite to modern Orientalists, notably Sir Richard Burton who devised the now notorious concept of a "Sotadic zone." This was a geographical and climactic zone identified by its inhabitants' enthusiasm for pederasty: "bounded westwards by the northern shores of the Mediterranean (N. Lat. 43°) and by the southern (N. Lat. 30°)." It included meridional France, the Iberian Peninsula, Italy, Greece and North Africa. It then narrowed, running eastwards through Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Afghanistan and northern India before broadening spectacularly to encompass all of China, Japan and Turkistan, then carried on through the Indies and Pacific Islands to the Americas. "Within the Sotadic Zone the Vice is popular and endemic, held at the worst to be a mere peccadillo, while the races to the North and South of the limits here defined practice it only sporadically amid the opprobrium of their fellows who, as a rule, are physically incapable of performing the operation and look upon it with the liveliest disgust."[39]

Of course, terms such as "sodomy" or "vices against nature" are not synonyms for "homosexuality." "Sodomy"—*sodomia*—is a particularly unstable signifier in medieval discourse, and does not always refer to sex acts between men, much less to a permanent and innate erotic preference for the same sex, and on occasion has no overtly sexual connotations. The wide semantic range of "sodomy" and "Sodomite" endured throughout the medieval period, despite Peter Damian's relatively narrow definition in his 1049 *Liber Gomorrhianus* which counted four types of sex acts as sodomitical: self-pollution (masturbation), mutual masturbation, intercourse between the thighs, and anal intercourse. He is primarily interested in the vice as an expression of desire between men, given his overriding concern with the "purity" of the priesthood, but given his inclusion of self-pollution one could not say that even this definition is synonymous with "homosexual" acts.[40] The Old Testament sin of the Sodomites was—according to Derrick Bailey—an abuse of the rules of hospitality and a display of pride and arrogant self-indulgence. A connection between the Sodomites and sexual excess or depravity became more apparent in the interpretations of patristic writers, notably Augustine and Gregory the Great, but still they did not limit themselves to a homoerotic interpretation.[41] "Sodomy" and "Sodomite" kept their connotations of a generalized sinfulness, unlawfulness, abnormality or perversity until at least the sixteenth century: in 1542 Martin Luther lamented, "who is not weary of the abominations of our world, if it ought to be called a world and not a very hell of evils with which those Sodomites torment our souls and eyes day and night?" and it appears that by "Sodomites" he means the Turks, Jews, papists and cardinals condemned to hell, not men who committed homoerotic sex acts.[42] However, varieties of what we would now call "gay sex" and also anal sex with either male or female partners were certainly important elements in the broad medieval concept of sodomy, and were increasingly assumed in legal usage.[43] We could picture sodomy as the middle section of a Venn diagram that shows the "vices against nature," that is,

non-procreative sex acts (including homosexual acts) on its left side, and blasphemy on its right. Warren Johansson and William A. Percy offer a formulation that encompasses both the homoerotic and blasphemous nuances of medieval sodomy: "The sodomite is driven by lusts so bestial, demonic and blasphemous as to make him trample upon every law of God and man in quest of pleasure."[44] The crucial point is that whether we go looking for specifically homoerotic acts in medieval descriptions of the Far East, or for sodomy or vices against nature more broadly defined, all such "unnatural" sexual practices are missing.

To accuse an individual or ethnic group of a propensity for sodomy is a powerful weapon. I say "accuse" deliberately because "sodomy" is never simply neutral or descriptive. It is always "a judgment," as Jordan states.[45] Zeikowitz calls it, "a discursive weapon."[46] James A. Brundage's older phrase, "the politics of sodomy," is still apt, and recently echoed by Helmet Puff.[47] Warren Johansson gave medieval Christian paranoia about same-sex acts a potent name: the "sodomy delusion."[48] As has been well known ever since scholars began to write about medieval male homoeroticism in the 1970s and early 1980s, sodomy was an important tool of judicial and inquisitorial authorities seeking to demonize and condemn religious dissidents and other enemies of orthodox hegemony. From the mid-eleventh century—that is, about the same time that Peter Damian was producing his diatribe against sodomitical clergy—heretics were regularly accused of same-sex acts. In the thirteenth century Cathars were often accused of sexual vice, and it is thought that the term *bougre*, bugger, originated as a nickname for Albigensians (and thus as a catch-all for "heretics") because of the sect's purported origins in Bulgaria.[49] In the late medieval and early modern German legal records examined by Helmut Puff, the vernacular term most often used for same-sex acts —*ketzerie*—translates as "heresy." *Ketzern*, the verb used to denote the act of anal intercourse, means "to commit heresy." Religious authorities' drive to vilify religious dissenters was so successful in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that "'heresy' in German came to designate sodomy in addition to religious unorthodoxy."[50]

Sodomy's power to denote not only certain sex acts but to stand for all that was contrary to nature and law in the Christian ethos meant that it be very usefully deployed in political contests at the highest level. As is well known, Philip IV prosecuted the Knights Templar during the trial of 1307–11 with charges of blasphemy, indecent sexual acts and idolatry.[51] Allegations of excessive intimacy with male favorites were key to the downfall of Edward II and Richard II, and some medieval English chroniclers alleged that William Rufus, Robert Curthose and Henry I were addicted to vices against nature and, indeed, that the whole Anglo-Norman court was awash with effeminates, sodomites and catamites.[52] Innocent IV, in his denunciation of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II at the Council of Lyons in 1245, powerfully conveyed a sense of the emperor's spiritual bankruptcy by charging him with taking Saracen lovers, both male and female.[53] The implication of Saracen debauchery fits well with certain western anti-Islam

stereotypes of the crusading period, which employed the image of the Sodomitic Saracen to help to justify savage destruction of Muslims in the Holy Land. Jacques de Vitry went so far as to claim that Mohammed himself was responsible for popularizing the vice of sodomy [*vitium Sodomiticum*] among his people, leading them to abuse not only both sexes, but even animals.[54] In 1376 in England the Commons petitioned parliament to expel "Lombard" moneychangers from the realm because not only were they usurers, but, "just as many of those who are held as Lombards are Jews and Saracens and secret spies; and that recently they have brought into the land a most horrible vice which should not be named." This evil could bring about the imminent destruction of the realm.[55] Foreigners did not need to be infidels, however, to be accused of unnatural vices, especially in an age of developing nationalist consciousness. German Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century insisted on indigenous German "innocence" of sodomy, arguing that it was a vice associated with papist lands and particularly with Italy. *Florenzen*—"to Florence"—alternated with *ketzern* to mean "to sodomize" in Reformation German texts.[56] In the same period French anti-court satirists blamed the fashionable Italians for introducing homosexual behavior to France, thus polluting the maternal, nurturing and natural mother—the French nation: "French writers produced a hygienic politics of the natural in which anything inessential—art, style, homosexuality—was not only not *natural* but not *national*."[57]

One of the most devastating outbreaks of the "sodomy delusion" took place among the Spanish colonists in the New World. It is instructive to make a comparison here between the uses of sodomy and cannibalism, for cannibalism is also a "discursive weapon": an accusation with the power to obliterate its target's humanity. Phobic fantasies of creatures that eat human flesh have played a vital role in European constructions of otherness since at least the archaic Greek age. Homer described his monstrous one-eyed giant Polyphemus of the Cyclopes as an ardent consumer of human flesh, and the theme of the human-eating monster continued through Herodotus, Pliny, Solinus, late Roman accounts of Christians, early medieval "Wonders of the East" literature, and the Alexander romances.[58] Learned works, such as Gervase of Tilbury's early thirteenth-century *Otia Imperialia* drew on the writings of Orosius, Isidore of Seville and Honorius Augustodunensis in describing the human-eating races of the distant East.[59] "Cannibalism" is not quite the right word to use in these contexts, as it was not known until Columbus, sailing in the Caribbean and believing himself to be near the coast of China, miswrote "Cariba" as "Caniba": "Caniba means simply the people of the Great Khan, who must live very near here and will have ships; they must come to capture these people, and when they do not return it is supposed that they have been eaten."[60] The "Caniba" would be swiftly equated with human-eating races of ancient and medieval travel literature. Ancient and medieval human-eaters are properly called anthropophagi, and could be either monstrous races or humans who ate other humans. By the thirteenth century, with a certain inevitability, the anthropophagi topos entered descriptions of the atrocities of the

Mongols. In a letter of 1243 Ivo of Narbonne feverishly recounts how the invading Mongols slaughtered old and ugly women to provide food for the ranks but kept beautiful ones to be ravished, then raped the virgins until they died and cut off their breasts to make dainty morsels for the feasts of the chiefs.[61] The eating of human flesh became a constant refrain in European reports of Mongolian atrocities, but most accounts of Mongolian anthropophagism asserted that the Mongols ate human flesh only out of necessity. As a nomadic people with a small and uncertain food supply, they were by necessity liberal in defining the limits of the edible. John of Plano Carpini explains:

> Their food consists of everything that can be eaten, for they eat dogs, wolves, foxes and horses and, when driven by necessity, they feed on human flesh . . . They eat the filth which comes away from mares when they bring forth foals. Nay I have even seen them eating lice . . . I have also seen them eat mice.[62]

Carpini, Rubruck and Odoric remark on ritual anthropophagism in Tibet, specifically the consumption of the dead father and turning his head into a drinking cup.[63] Odoric expresses profound disgust at the (alleged) human-eating habits of the inhabitants of Lamori, Nicobar and Andaman Island: "how can you do this, when you seem to be men endowed with reason?"[64] Some Polo Texts had already included similar denunciations of anthropophagism in parts of China, the kingdoms of northern Sumatra, Andaman Island and Sri Lanka[65] and Nicolò de'Conti said the same of the Andamanians and northern Sumatrans.[66] Versions of the perennially influential "Letter of Prester John" included human-eaters by about 1221,[67] and naturally "Mandeville" could not resist plagiarizing earlier statements about eastern anthropophagy.[68] It is not surprising then that when Columbus sailed into the Caribbean, thinking he was near China, he soon reported on fierce cannibals dwelling on nearby islands—although historians have wondered about how he could have received such information without knowledge of local languages. The "carib as cannibal" theme was forcefully developed by Dr Diego Chanca on Columbus's second voyage, and thus "cannibal" as human-eater came into European languages and would be ever after associated with the pre-conquest Americas and all manner of other "primitive" peoples undergoing colonization.[69]

Sodomy soon joined with cannibalism in a kind of hyper-othering of Native American peoples. The link "between sodomy and cannibalism . . . would reappear compulsively in proto-colonial narratives of the New World . . . [providing] a convenient screen for European fears and fantasies and for the realities of colonial violence."[70] A possible medieval source for the link can be found in Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, explaining the origin of some forms of unnatural corruption: "Just as some men enjoy the habit of eating other human beings, or of uniting with animals or other men, or other such activities, which are not in accordance with human nature."[71] Sodomy, bestiality

and cannibalism formed an unholy trinity of definitively unnatural acts. While Columbus, Dr Chanca and Amerigo Vespucci, the earliest recorders of Spanish/New World encounters, claimed to have found races of cannibals, they echoed medieval travelers in remaining silent about sodomy. This quickly changed. The first letter concerning conquistador Hernan Cortés, dated July 10, 1519, made a statement about Native Americans that was to resonate through the centuries of the American holocaust: "we have been informed, and are most certain it is true, that they are all sodomites and practice that abominable sin."[72] "From this point on," says Price, "cannibalism and various acts interpreted as sodomy travel hand in hand in New World narratives, from *The Chronicle of the Anonymous Conquistador*, *c*.1519, through that of Tomás Ortiz in 1525 and Fernándo de Oviedo in 1526."[73] Jonathan Goldberg has offered the most influential readings of Spanish and English uses of sodomy allegations in their justifications for conquest, genocide and colonization.[74] We have seen that in the early seventeenth century Samuel Purchas introduced the idea that Tartars practiced sodomy, lacking in the medieval sources upon which he mostly depends, but it is worth adding that he discusses this in the same breath as their cannibalism.[75]

We are beginning to build up a clearer picture of the uses of sodomy in the medieval and early colonial eras: the when, where and why of its appearances. It is essential to leave behind any notion that these travel narratives simply express the experiences and observations of travelers. Texts do not merely *say*, they *do*, and the motives guiding their production ensure that what they leave out is as important as what they put in. One might object that medieval authors did not include sodomy in their descriptions of Oriental peoples because they did not observe it, or even hear about it, but this seems too simplistic and indeed heterosexist. First, a wide range of evidence from local sources indicates that Far Eastern cultures of the period were highly aware of the possibilities of homoerotic sex, whether they tolerated it, made jokes about it, or legislated against it. It seems improbable that none of the travelers would have witnessed, heard about or had personal experience of same-sex acts. We must also remember that not all the travelers were simply "passing through." Marco Polo spent around twenty-four years away from home, about seventeen of these in China; John of Monte Corvino maintained his Chinese mission for over thirty years, dying in Beijing in 1328; Nicolò de'Conti traveled through the East for over twenty years. Second, in any case, because "sodomy" is an accusation rather than merely a description, accusers do not need to witness it to condemn foreign peoples for its practice. Cortés did not need to see unnatural acts with his own eyes to be certain of their ubiquity in Mexico, and the same could be said of the accusations leveled at heretics, Knights Templar and political foes. This point is reinforced by the fact that some of the most important of the medieval eastern travel narratives were either written down by an amanuensis—as occurred with Polo's original text (now lost), Odoric's book and Conti's accounts—or produced by men who only pretended to have traveled, notably "Mandeville" and de Hese. It cannot be purely a coincidence

that these are also the works with the most outlandish contents, and the greatest interest in eastern sexualities. Tropes of godless sodomy were well known to medieval authors: they could have used them to describe the Far East if they had been thought appropriate or necessary. Similarly, cannibalism does not need to be witnessed to be employed to overwhelming effect in western narratives which seek to define "us" and "them,"[76] yet cannibalism is, it seems, a less powerful accusation than sodomy in medieval and early modern contexts, and here I want to move towards a conclusion by venturing some hypotheses. Cannibalism is a multi-purpose otherer: an ancient and reliable tool for instantly encapsulating the alien and almost sub-human nature of newly encountered peoples. Sodomy, I suggest, is deployed with greater precision, and is a more dangerous weapon. It is a kind of ultra-otherer. It is deployed by European hegemonies—religious, royal, national—when they are on the offensive: that is, when they need an especially potent weapon of attack to justify crusading, suppression of heresy, extermination of political opponents or vilification of other nationalities. It can be used to back up missionary efforts to wipe out local religions, but was not deployed by medieval missionaries to the East because they were small-scale expeditions representing the ideals of individuals who had little backing from their Orders or from Rome. The Dominican and Jesuit missions of the sixteenth century and after, however, were organized on a grander scale and with grander institutional ambitions; they had greater motive for emphasizing the otherness and ungodliness of the East. Among the Spanish conquistadors sodomy became an item of war propaganda, just as it had been for the crusaders.

From the eleventh century, when churchmen began loudly to assert their position of masculine hegemony through enforcing their own hetero- and homosexual celibacy, sodomy accusations were employed to great effect in the many battles against heterodoxy, apostasy and political threat or dissidence, which the Church perceived existed all around it. As so often seems to happen in the history of sexualities, what is presented as an overt assertion about sex turns out to be an intrinsic assertion about power. Puff reminds us, "We have learned to recognize that sodomy is not only about sex . . . As a concept, it is often used to control the boundaries between the pure and impure, rights and wrongs, the indigenous and the foreign."[77] Yet, in the medieval period, sodomy was not generally needed as a marker of Far Eastern otherness. Eastern otherness, or foreignness, was pictured variously according to the motives of the authors of descriptions of the distant East. Emphasis on the exotic, alien and even monstrous was strongest in those who sought primarily to inform in a diverting manner (notably Polo, Odoric, Jordanus, Montecroce, Marignolli, Conti) or purely to entertain ("Mandeville," de Hese), while it was weakest in the works of those reporting back intelligence or news of their endeavors to their superiors (notably Carpini, Rubruck, Monte Corvino and his successors), yet one crucial element that all had in common was that they were writing in a pre-colonialist mode. The travelers wanted to engage with the peoples of the Far East, especially for trade and political alliance. They

were working out of a Europe that was relatively backward, lightly populated, rural and poor compared with the colossal might of the thirteenth-century Mongols, the splendid but baffling Indians, or the clever and sophisticated Chinese: any form of colonization in these regions never seems to have crossed anyone's mind. Even the mostly naked and primitive peoples of South-East Asia upon whom the travelers poured most of their scorn prompted no colonial impulses. This was not because Western Europeans could not conceive of colonialism—they had been engaging in conquest and settlement closer to home in Iberia, the Holy Land, North-East Europe and the islands of the Atlantic since the eleventh century, and even long before that the history of Western Europe is a story of migrations and resettlement of peoples. Rather, before the promise of gold and vast continents, previously unimagined, lured Spaniards and Portuguese to the Americas, colonization of distant realms must have seemed too ambitious and without adequate reward. In medieval eyes the Eastern Other is not a sodomite, because he is an *altern* but not entirely a *subaltern*, an *other* but not an entirely *inferior other*. Justification for his conquest is not required because that conquest is not sought. As hypotheses such ideas will require further testing and questioning, but they are offered here in light of the well-established connection between pre-modern sodomy accusations and political suppression. The colonial and missionary projects of the early modern era, like the crusading and inquisitorial projects that had come before, needed to denigrate their adversaries in order to justify their actions against them. By alleging the unnaturalness of other populations, European Christians in an age of colonial expansion were able to justify even the greatest atrocities.

Author's note: Vincent of Beauvais, working from a lost work by Simon of St Quentin (envoy to the Mongol General Baiju in 1245–1248) makes mention of sodomitic sin among the Tartars in his *Speculum Historiale* (see Jean Richard, ed., *Simon de Saint-Quentin: Histoire des Tartares* [Paris: Paul Guenther, 1965], 37). I came across this reference when the present volume was in final production. Interestingly, it seems to support the argument that sodomy is used as an accusation rather than a description, as Simon was unusually negative in his descriptions of Mongols as a result of his experience of imprisonment at their hands and repeated death threats.

Notes

1. Bret Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1990), 1. I am grateful to April Harper, Caroline Proctor and John Bevan-Smith for their insights and help with drafting this essay.
2. Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve*, 1–2; Galeote Pereira, "Certain Reports of the Province of China," and Gaspar de Cruz, "Treatise in Which the Things of China Are Related at Great Length," both in *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. and

ed. C. R. Boxer (London: Hakluyt Society Publications, 2nd series, no. 106, 1953), 16–17, 223; Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking, 1984), 220. Hinsch also cites "An Account of the Travels of Two Mohammedans Through India and China in the Ninth Century," trans. Abbé Renaudot, in *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in All Parts of the World*, ed. John Pinkerton, 17 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1808), 7: 195: "The Chinese are addicted to the abominable vice of sodomy, and the filthy practice of it they number among the indifferent things they perform in honor of their idols." However, Pinkerton is a famously unreliable authority, and in this instance inserts his own editorial comments throughout the work. It is possible that the statement represents an English colonialist mentality rather than a ninth-century Islamic one.

3. Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimage or Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in all Ages and Places Discovered, from the Creation to the Present*, 2nd edition (London: William Stansby, 1614), 16, IV.12.
4. Sir Richard F. Burton, "Terminal Essay," *The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night*, 16 vols, trans. Sir Richard F. Burton (Benares: Kamashastra Society, 1885), 10: 238.
5. Henning Haslund, *Mongolian Journey*, trans. F. R. Lyon (London: Routledge, 1949), 4–5, emphasis added.
6. For an overview and range of studies see Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson, eds, *Asian Homosexuality* (New York: Garland, 1992); for India, Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai, eds, *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000), and essays by Scott Kugle and Indrani Chatterjee in *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture and Society,* ed. Ruth Vanita (New York: Routledge, 2002). Japan had a particularly strong pederastic tradition before the Meiji Restoration in 1868 but is not of central importance here because European travelers did not reach Japan until 1543. See: Michael Cooper, ed., *They Came to Japan: An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543–1640* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1965), 15, 46; Gary Leupp, *Male Colors: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1995); Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1999).
7. The law code entitled the Great Yassa prescribed the death penalty for anyone found guilty of either adultery or male–male sex, although the anti-homosexual edict is lacking in the surviving portions of the Yuan legal code of 1291 designed for Mongolian rule in China. V. A. Riasanovsky, *Customary Law of the Mongol Tribes (Mongols, Buriats, Kalmucks*, part I–III*)* (Harbin, China: privately printed, 1929), 57; Paul Heng-chao Ch'en, *Chinese Legal Tradition Under the Mongols: The Code of 1291 as Reconstructed* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).
8. For example: Robert H. van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Sex and Society from ca. 1500 BC till 1644 AD* (Leiden: Brill, 1974); Marinus J. Meijer, "Homosexual Offenses in Ch'ing Law," *T'oung Pao*, 71 (1985), 109–33; Vivien Ng, "Homosexuality and the State in Late Imperial China," in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, eds Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey (New York: Meridian Press, 1989), 76–89; Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve*; Matthew H. Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society in*

Late Imperial China (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), especially Chapter 4.

9. Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society*, 114–65.
10. Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve*, 107.
11. Howard S. Levy, ed. and trans., *Chinese Sex Jokes in Traditional Times (*Taipei: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1974), 234. See also 226–7, 230, 233.
12. Modern place-names will be used in this essay in the interests of brevity and simplicity, though they are largely anachronistic and here refer to general geographical regions rather than political entities. The focus will be on the "Far" or distant Easts of Central, East, South and South-East Asia rather than Islamic "Near" and "Middle" Easts.
13. A. C. Moule and Paul Pelliot, ed. and trans., *Marco Polo: The Description of the World*, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 1938); Frances Wood, *Did Marco Polo Go to China?* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1995); Igor de Rachewiltz, "Marco Polo Went to China," *Zentralasiatische Studien*, 27 (1997), 34–92. The manuscript history of Marco Polo's book is fiendishly complicated, and Moule and Pelliot make the point that no two manuscripts are exactly alike (vol. 1, p. 40). More recent scholars have supported this view, and in addition are beginning to pose important questions about the genre and authorial voice(s) of the work: for example, Professor Simon Gaunt at King's College London is working through some of these issues for a new book on Marco Polo. For these reasons I prefer to refer to the "Polo Texts" rather than "Marco Polo" as an author or to his *Book* or *Travels*, as the work tends to be called in English.
14. Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La Pratica della Mercatura*, ed. Allen Evans (Cambridge MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1936), 22.
15. An account of Conti's travels makes up the fourth book of Poggio Bracciolini, *De varietate fortunae: Edizione critica con introduzione e commento*, ed. Outi Merisalo, Annales Academia Scientiarum Fennica, series B, no. 275 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1993); English translation in John Winter Jones, trans., *Travelers in Disguise: Narratives of Eastern Travel by Poggio Bracciolini and Ludovico de Varthema*, revised, with an Introduction by Lincoln Davis Hammond (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1963). Pero Tafur met Conti near Mt Sinai in the early 1440s and gave an alternative account of the journey in his own book: Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures, 1435–1439*, trans. and ed. Malcolm Letts (London: Routledge, 1926), 83–95. See Kennon Breazeale, "Editorial Introduction to Nicolò de'Conti's Account," *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research*, 2 (2004), 100–9.
16. Hieronimo de Santo Stephano, "The Journey of Hieronimo di Santo Stefano, a Genoese," in *India in the Fifteenth Century, Being a Collection of Narratives of Voyages to India*, trans. and ed. R. H. Major (London: Hakluyt Society Publications, original series, no. 20, 1857).
17. The standard editions of Carpini, Benedict, Rubruck and Marignolli are by P. Anastasius van den Wyngaert, in *Sinica Franciscana*, 6 vols. (Karachi and Florence: Ad Claras Aquas, 1929), vol. 1. Carpini, Benedict and Rubruck have been translated by Christopher Dawson and "a nun of Stanbrook Abbey" in the collection *The Mongol Mission* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), reprinted as *Mission to Asia*, and Rubruck has also been translated by Peter Jackson for the Hakluyt Society (1990). For Clavijo see Guy Le Strange, ed. and trans., *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403–1406* (London: Routledge, 1928).

18. The letters of Monte Corvino, Andrew of Perugia, John de Cora and Pascal de Vittoria, and Odoric's *Relatio* are edited in van den Wyngaert, *Sinica Franciscana*, vol. 1; all are translated in Henry Yule, revised by Henri Cordier, eds and trans, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, 2 vols, (London: Hakluyt Society Publications, 2nd series, nos. 33, 37, 38, 1913–1915); Jordanus is translated by Henry Yule in Friar Jordanus, *Miribilia descripta: The Wonders of the East* (London: Hakluyt Society, original series, no. 31, 1863), and Ricoldo de Montecroce is translated into French in *L'Extrême Orient au moyen âge d'après les manuscrits d'un Flamand de Belgique moine de Saint-Bertin à Saint-Omer et d'un prince d'Armenie moine de Prémontré à Poitiers*, trans. and ed. Louis de Backer (Paris: Leroux, 1877).
19. Malcolm Letts, ed., *Mandeville's Travels: Texts and Translations* (London: Hakluyt Society Publications, 2 vols, second series, nos. 101–2, 1953); Scott D. Westrem, *Broader Horizons: A Study of Johannes Witte de Hese's Itinerarius and Medieval Travel Narratives* (Cambridge MA: Medieval Academy of America, 2001).
20. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), 188. This is explored further in: Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Robert Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); some essays in Inge E. Boer, ed., *After Orientalism: Critical Entanglements, Productive Looks (*Amsterdam: Rodophi, 2003).
21. Said, *Orientalism*, 103.
22. Said, *Orientalism*, 3.
23. For example, in his description of Ireland the twelfth-century writer Gerald of Wales compares the healthful, wholesome West to the alluring but pestiferous East: *The History and Topography of Ireland (Topographia Hiberniae)*, trans. John J. O'Meara, 2nd edition (Mountrath: Dolmen Press, 1982), 54–5.
24. Friedrich Zarncke, ed., "Der Brief des Priesters Johannes an den byzantinischen Kaiser Emanuel," in *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Classe der königlich sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften 7* (Leipzig, 1879), reprinted in Charles F. Beckingham and Bernard Hamilton, eds, *Prester John and the Ten Lost Tribes* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996).
25. I hope to explore these themes further in a book-length study: *Before Orientalism: Eastern Peoples in Medieval European Representation*, in progress.
26. Moule and Pelliot, *Description of the World*, vol. 1, 509–16; Westrem, *Broader Horizons*, 37, note 93, and 229; M. C. Seymour, *Sir John Mandeville*, Authors of the Middle Ages 1: English Writers of the Late Middle Ages (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1993), 37–56. It should be noted, however, that these three authors were exceptionally popular. Most of the other travel narratives survive in fewer than ten manuscripts.
27. To be discussed in more detail in Kim M. Phillips, "Oriental Sexualities in Medieval European Representation," in *Old Worlds, New Worlds: European Cultural Encounters, c. 1100-c. 1800*, eds Lisa Bailey, Lindsay Diggelmann and Kim M. Phillips, forthcoming.
28. For example, Moule and Pelliot, *Description of the World*, vol. 1, 154–6, 180–1, 214, 269–71, 273–4, 304–5, 309–10, 338–9, 406; Letts, *Mandeville's Travels*, vol. 1, 16–18, 18–19, 199–200, 219–20.
29. Moule and Pelliot, *Description of the World*, vol. 1, 236, 328–9; Poggio, *De varietate fortunae*, 167.

30. Poggio, *De varietate fortunae*, 158–9. The passage in full reads, "*ad has virum, antequam uxorem capiat, profisci (aliter enim rejicitur a conjugio): executa atque elevata paulum membri virilis cute, trudi inter pellem et carnem ex his sonaliis usque ad duodecimum, et amplius, prout libuit variis circum circa locis; inde consuta cute intra paucos sanari dies; hoc ad explendum mulierum libidinem fieri; his enim tanquam internodiis, membrique tumore, feminas summa voluptate affici. Multorum dum ambulant membra tibiis repercussa resonant, ita ut audiantur. Ad hoc Nicolaus sæpius a mulieribus, quae eum a parvitate Priapi deridebant, invitatus, noluit dolorem suum aliis voluptati esse*."
31. Francesco Carletti, *My Voyage Around the World*, trans. Herbert Weinstock (London: Methuen and Co, 1965), 181–3, quote at 181–2. Carletti also cites Conti's account of the "rattles."
32. Ralph Fitch, "The Voyage of M. Ralph Fitch Marchant of London," in *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* etc, Richard Hakluyt, 3 vols. (London: George Bishop et al., 1598), 2: 262.
33. Odoric, *Relatio*, 441: "*Alia etiam consuetudo illic habetur: nam mulieres vinum bibunt, homines vero non. Mulieres sibi faciunt radi visum et barbum, homines vero non. Et sic de multis aliis mirabilibus et bestialibus que illic fiunt, que scribere non expedit multum*." See Yule, *Cathay*, 2: 139–40. In the French translation of Odoric's book made by Jean le Long in 1351 (see note 35 below), the wording is slightly different: "*Et ainsi de pluseurs autres bestialitez et merveilles que ilz font, qui ne seroyent mie bonnes à racompter devant tous bons crestiens*."
34. See also Odoric, *Relatio*, 441, 446.
35. Oderic de Frioul, *Relation*, in *L'Extrême Orient*, ed. de Backer, 92: "*Ce n'est my Somdoma une des V. citez sur lesquelles Dieux fist plouvoir feu et souffre, en vengence de péchié contre nature qui regnoit en eulx.*" The city ("Soldania") is briefly described in the Latin text, but the assurance that this is not the Sodom of the scriptures is missing: Odoric, *Relatio*, 418. According to the cautious yet convincing case presented by M. C. Seymour, Jean le Long could well have been "Sir John Mandeville": *Sir John Mandeville*, 23–4. Many travelers to the Near East, of course, commented on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the *Sodomiticum peccatum* for which they were destroyed: e.g. Letts, *Mandeville's Travels*, 2: 450.
36. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, 7 vols, Rolls Series, no. 57 (1872–1880), 3: 488–9; 4: 76–8, 109–20, 131–2, 270–77, 386–9; 6: 74–84, 113–16; Robert Michell and Nevill Forbes, trans., *The Chronicle of Novgorod, 1016–1471*, Camden Society, 3rd series, vol. 25 (London, 1914); J. J. Saunders, "Matthew Paris and the Mongols," in *Essays in Medieval History, Presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, ed. T. A. Sandquist and Michael R. Powicke (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1969), 116–32; C. W. Connell, "Western Views of the Origins of the 'Tartars': An Example of the Influence of Myth in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 3 (1973), 115–37.
37. "*Publice mulieres ubique uolentibus presto sunt per ciuitatem propriis habitaculis dispersae, quae odoribus, unguentis, blandiciis, forma atque aetate uiros (proni enim sunt ad libidinem Indi omnes) alliciunt, eoque marium usus apud Indos ignotus.*" Poggio, *De varietate fortunae*, 167 (emphasis added). Note that in this passage "Indians" refers to the people of outer India or the India beyond the Ganges, roughly corresponding to our China and South-East Asia. The sense that Chinese men go to

prostitutes because they do not know about same-sex is indicated in John Frampton's late sixteenth-century English translation: "for in that countrey they are muche inclined vnto those women, and for thys cause the Indians knowe not what thing is that abhominable sinne," *The Most Noble and Famous Travels of Marco Polo together with the Travels of Nicolò de' Conti*, with introduction, notes and appendices by N. M. Penzer, 2nd edition (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1937), 137. Presumably if the men had only known about sodomy they would have ignored the scented girls calling them into the brothels.

38. The prevalence of homoerotic behavior among young Florentine men of the period is exceptionally well documented: Michael J. Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
39. Burton, "Terminal Essay," 206–7, and see 238–40 for the particular prevalence of the vice among East Asians. "Sotadic" is classic Burton, in that it combines obscenity, obscurity and erudition. It means "after the manner of Sotades, an ancient Greek poet noted for the coarseness and scurrility of his writings," but also has connotations of reversal or inversion, as "Sotadic" can be used as a synonym for "palindromic"—capable of being read backwards and forwards: *Oxford English Dictionary*.
40. Peter Damian, Letter 31 ("The Book of Gomorrah"), in *Letters*, 3 vols., trans. Owen J. Blum (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press: 1989–92), 2: 45–66. Peter Damian was one of the first authors to use the abstract noun *sodomia* as well as the proper noun *Sodomite*: Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 29, 40–66.
41. Derrick Sherwin Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London: Longmans, 1955), 1–28; See also John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 93–7 and Jordan, *Invention of Sodomy*, 29–44.
42. Martin Luther, *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, trans. Theodore G. Tappert (London: SCM Press, 1955), 76. William E. Burgwinkle's insightful recent study is consistently alert to the term's broad associations: *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law in Medieval Literature. France and England, 1050–1230* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), and the same can be said of Helmut Puff's *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400–1600* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003). Allen J. Frantzen prefers a strictly sexual definition: "In the Middle Ages, sodomy encompassed diverse acts with a single common denominator: all thwarted conception," that is, masturbation or non-procreative hetero- or homosexual acts, "The Disclosure of Sodomy in *Cleanness*," *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 111 (1996), 451–64, at 451. Richard E. Zeikowitz focuses on the homoerotic dimension: *Homoeroticism and Chivalry: Discourses of Male Same-Sex Desire in the Fourteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).
43. For example, Helmut Puff quotes a scribe's comment in a protocol from Fribourg in 1493 that anal sex is "*la propre sodomitique, c'est assavoir par derriere*," *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland*, 29.
44. Warren Johannson and William A. Percy, "Homosexuality," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, eds Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York: Garland, 1996), 158.
45. Jordan, *Invention of Sodomy*, 1.
46. Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry*, 102–6.

47. James A. Brundage, "The Politics of Sodomy: Rex vs. Pons Hugh de Ampurias (1311)," in *Sex in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays,* ed. Joyce E. Salisbury (New York: Garland, 1991), 239–46; Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland*, 17–30.
48. Johannson and Percy, "Homosexuality," 172: "In its fullest formulation it [the sodomy delusion] is a complex of paranoid beliefs invented and inculcated by the church, and prevalent in much of Christendom to this day, to the effect that non-procreative sexuality in general, and sexual acts between males in particular, are contrary to the law of Nature, to the exercise of right reason, and to the will of God, and that sodomy is practiced by individuals whose wills have been enslaved by demonic powers."
49. Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition*, 137–41; Vern L. Bullough, "Heresy, Witchcraft, and Sexuality," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 1 (1974), 183–201; Michael E. Goodich, *The Unmentionable Vice: Homosexuality in the Later Medieval Period* (Santa Barbara CA: ABC-Clio, 1979), 7–9; Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 283–6.
50. Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland*, 13.
51. Malcolm Barber, *The Trial of the Templars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 61–3, 163–6, 178–82, 223; Anne Gilmour-Bryson, "Sodomy and the Knights Templar," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 7 (1996), 151–83; Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry*, 107–13.
52. Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry*, 113–29; Michael Hanrahan, "Speaking of Sodomy: Gower's Advice to Princes in the *Confessio Amantis*," *Exemplaria*, 14 (2002), 423–46; Goodich, *Unmentionable Vice*, 4–5; Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law*, 48–52, and see also his thoughtful reconsideration of Richard I and recent historians' attempts to "heterosexualize" him, 73–85. It is not my purpose to consider empirical questions of whether or not any of the kings or other dignitaries mentioned really *did* have homoerotic relations, as some of their recent biographers have attempted (indeed I feel such questions are unanswerable); my interest is in the accusations that were hurled, and their political implications.
53. Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity and Law*, 31.
54. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 279–83; see also Steven F. Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis)identifications: Muslims and Jews in Guibert of Nogent," *New Literary History*, 28 (1997), 185–203, especially 197, and for the more complex case of Iberia see Gregory S. Hutcheson, "The Sodomitic Moor: Queerness in the Narrative of *Reconquista*," in *Queering the Middle Ages*, eds Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 99–121.
55. Chris Given-Wilson, gen. ed., *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England (*Leicester: Scholarly Digital Editions and the National Archive, 2005), 50 Edward III, item 58.VII.
56. Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland*, 13, 127–32.
57. Rebecca E. Zorach, "The Matter of Italy: Sodomy and the Scandal of Style in Sixteenth-Century France," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 28: 3 (1998), 581–609, quote at 583. For Gerald of Wales and his allegations of sodomy among the Normans of Normandy (but not England), and the ancient Welsh (but not his contemporaries) see Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales 1146–1223* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 12, 187, and Rhonda Knight, "Procreative Sodomy: Textuality and the Construction of Ethnicities in Gerald of Wales's *Descriptio Kambriae*," *Exemplaria*, 14 (2002), 47–77.

58. Merrall Llewellyn Price, *Consuming Passions: The Uses of Cannibalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
59. Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, trans. and ed. S. E. Banks and J. M. Binns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 184, 186, 190.
60. John Cummins, ed. and trans., *The Voyage of Christopher Columbus: Columbus's Own Journal of Discovery Newly Restored and Translated* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), 137.
61. Ivo of Narbonne to Archbishop Gerald de Mulemort of Bordeaux, quoted in Paris, *Chronica Majora*, vol. 4, 273.
62. Carpini, *Ystoria Mongalorum*, in *Sinica Franciscana*, ed. van den Wyngaert, 47–8. See also the 1244 report of the Russian refugee archbishop, Peter, in Paris, *Chronica Majora*, vol. 4, 388.
63. Carpini, *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 61; Rubruck, *Itinerarium*, in *Sinica Franciscana*, ed. van den Wyngaert, 234; Odoric, *Relatio*, 485–6.
64. Odoric, *Relatio*, 446, 452–3 and 455–7.
65. Moule and Pelliot, *Description of the World*, 1: 188–9, 345–6, 364, 371, 374–5, 378, 379.
66. Poggio, *De varietate fortunae*, 156–7.
67. The part of the "Letter" which tells of the peoples of Gog and Magog, who eat human flesh, are not afraid to die, and who will even eat the bodies of their dead parents raw, was introduced with Interpolation C by 1221; Zarncke, "Der Brief des Priesters Johannes," 60–5, 79; Vsevolod Slessarev, *Prester John: The Letter and the Legend* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), 34.
68. Letts, *Mandeville's Travels*, 1: 127, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142.
69. For discussions of cannibalism and its development in the writings associated with Columbus's voyages see Price, *Consuming Passions*, 84–9.
70. Price, *Consuming Passions*, 83.
71. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2: 1, Q. 31, art. 7.
72. Hernan Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, trans. and ed. Anthony Pagden (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 37. The letter is not by Cortés but by the judiciary and council of Vera Cruz.
73. Price, Cons*uming Passions*, 98–9.
74. Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), Chapters 6 and 7.
75. Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimage*, 416: "They are addicted to sodomie or buggerie. They eate sometimes for necessitie mans flesh, sometimes to delight themselves, and sometimes to terrifie others."
76. The existence or non-existence of ritual cannibalism in human populations is at the centre of ferocious debate among anthropologists, for example: William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen, eds, *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Gananeth Obeyesekere, *Cannibal Talk: The Man-Eating Myth and Human Sacrifice in the South Seas* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2005).
77. Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland*, 7.

Further Reading

This is by no means intended to be an exhaustive list. It offers simply some initial suggestions for further reading, organized loosely around the key themes of this collection. We would refer readers seeking a more detailed bibliography to Ruth Mazo Karras's wonderful bibliographical essays in her *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 160–81. The bibliographies accompanying each of the chapters in Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, eds, *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* (New York: Garland, 1996) are also very helpful.

Sex in General

Until recently, there was no comprehensive history of sexuality in the Middle Ages. The subject had been considered in larger works such as Vern Bullough's *Sex, Society and History* (New York: Science History Publications, 1976), and the complexities, challenges and rewards of studying medieval sexuality had been discussed in several articles, including: Julian Carter, "Introduction: Theory, Methods, Praxis: The History of Sexuality and the Question of Evidence," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 14 (2005), 1–9; David M. Halperin, "Is there a History of Sexuality?," *History and Theory*, 28 (1989), 257–74; and Vern L. Bullough, "Sex in History: A Virgin Field," *Journal of Sex Research*, 8 (1972), 101–16. It was the publication of collections such as those in the following list that provided the field with the largest amount of scholarship, weaving between them a picture of the history of sexuality: Vern A. Bullough and James A. Brundage, eds, *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* (New York: Garland, 1996); Karma Lochrie, Peggy McKracken and James A. Schultz, eds, *Constructing Medieval Sexuality* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler, ed., *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996) and Joyce E. Salisbury, ed. *Sex in the Middle Ages* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1991). Jacqueline Murray's "Historicizing Sex, Sexualizing History" in *Writing Medieval History*, ed. Nancy F. Partner (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), 133–52, is an invaluable

recent survey. It was not until 2005 that a single monograph was devoted to the history of sexuality in Ruth Mazo Karras's highly acclaimed *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005). Together, these works provide an excellent basis for the study of sexuality in the medieval period.

Sex in the Early Middle Ages

The study of sexuality in the Early Middle Ages, as Ross Balzaretti asserts, has often been a form of "missing link" in the study of sex as many historians have chosen to devote their attentions to the rich sources of Antiquity or the High and Late Middle Ages. It has most often been treated as part of a larger discussion of gender as seen in the following recommended books and articles: Leslie Brubaker and Julia M. H. Smith, eds, *Gender in the Early Medieval World, East and West, 300–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Julia M. H. Smith, "Gender and Ideology in the Early Middle Ages," S*tudies in Church History* (1998), 51–73; Janet. L. Nelson, "Family, Gender and Sexuality in the Middle Ages," in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (London: Routledge, 1997); Carol Clover, "Regardless of Sex: Men, Women and Power in Early Northern Europe," *Speculum*, 68 (1993), 363–87; Michael Sheehan, "Sexuality, Marriage, Celibacy, and the Family in Central and Northern Italy: Christian Legal and Moral Guides in the Early Middle Ages," in *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present*, eds David I. Kertzer and Richard P. Saller (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 168–83.

For a discussion of homosexuality in the Early Middle Ages, see: Guy Halsall, "Material Culture, Sex, Gender and Transgression in Sixth-Century Gaul: Some Reflections in the Light of Recent Archaeological Debate," in *Indecent Exposure*, ed. Lynne Bevan (Edinburgh: Cruithne Press, 2001), 130–46; Robert Meens, "The Frequency and Nature of Early Medieval Penance," in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, eds Peter Biller and Alastair Minns (York: York Medieval Press, 1998), 35–61; Allen J. Frantzen, *Before the Closet: Same-Sex Love from "Beowulf" to "Angels in America"* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998); and Allen J. Frantzen, "Between the Lines: Queer Theory, The History of Homosexuality and Anglo-Saxon Penitentials," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 26 (1996).

For the discussion of sex in the penitentials specifically, see: Robert Meens, "Introduction. Penitential Questions: Sin, Satisfaction and Reconciliation in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," *Early Medieval Europe*, 14 (2006); *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, eds Peter Biller and Alastair J. Minnis (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1998); Jacqueline Murray, "Gendered Souls in Sexed Bodies: The Male Construction of Sexuality in Some Medieval Confessors' Manuals," in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, eds Peter Biller and Alastair J. Minnis (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1998), 77–93; John McNeill and Helena Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation*

of the Principle "Libri Poenitentiales" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Pierre Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials: The Development of a Sexual Code, 550–1150* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

Sex and the Saints

The study of the sexuality of saints and of broader intersections between sexual and religious life is a rapidly growing field that includes a large number of specialisms. The study of virginity itself is expansive. Recommended are: Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans and Sarah Salih, eds, *Medieval Virginities* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Samantha Riches, "St George as a Male Virgin Martyr," in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women, and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, eds Samantha Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002); Sarah Salih, *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001); Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000); Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Elizabeth Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Robert N. Swanson, "Angels Incarnate: Clergy and Masculinity from Gregorian Reform to Reformation," in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. Dawn M. Hadley (New York: Longman, 1999), 160–177; Jane Tibbets Schulenburg, "At What Cost Virginity? Sanctity and the Heroics of Virginity," in *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500–1100* (Chicago IL, University of Chicago Press, 1998), 127–75; Mary B. Cunningham, "'Shutting the Gates of the Soul': Spiritual Treatises on Resisting the Passions," in *Desire and Denial in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 23–32; Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, ed., *Sanctity and Motherhood: Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages* (New York: Garland, 1995).

For chaste marriage, see Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Margaret McGlynn and Richard J. Moll, "Chaste Marriage in the Middle Ages: 'It Were to Hire a Greet Merite,'" in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality,* eds Vern A. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York: Garland, 1996), 103–22; Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Jo Ann K. McNamara, "Chaste Marriage and Clerical Celibacy," in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, eds Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (Buffalo NY: Prometheus Books, 1982), 22–33.

For general medieval theology see: Pierre J. Payer, *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Joyce E. Salisbury: "The Latin Doctors of the Church on Sexuality," *Journal of Medical History*, 12, 4 (1986), 279–90; Vern L. Bullough and James

A. Brundage, *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church* (Buffalo NY: Prometheus Books, 1982).

Two more recent volumes signal the centrality of sexuality to medieval religious life. The first is that edited by Susannah M. Chewning, *Intersections of Sexuality and the Divine in Medieval Culture: The Word Made Flesh* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005). The second, with contributions considering sexuality from Stephen C. Jaeger, Ruth Mazo Karras and Kathryn Kelsey Staples, is *Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth-Century Holy Woman*, eds Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser (London: Routledge, 2005).

Sex and the Body

An invaluable starting point is Caroline Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry*, 22 (1995), 1–33.

The subject of the sexual body in Antiquity is so pervasive that it is found in a wide variety of texts on medicine, literature, culture, religion and politics. It is impossible to give a complete bibliography for the subject, but highly recommended in light of the topics addressed in this collection are the following: Helen King, *Hippocrates' Woman* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner, eds, *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Helen King, "Sowing the Field: Greek and Roman Sexology," in *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science. The History of Attitudes to Sexuality*, eds Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29–46; Aline Rouselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity*, trans. Felicia Pheasant (Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1993); David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin, eds, *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens, an Illustrated History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985).

For medical views of sex and sexuality, see: Catherine Rider, *Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Joan Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex difference in the Middle Age: Medicine, Science and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Nancy F. Partner, "No Sex, No Gender," *Speculum*, 68 (1993), 419–44; John Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Jacob Levinger, "Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* on Forbidden Food in the Light of his own Medical Opinion," in *Perspectives on Maimonides: Philosophical and Historical Studies*, ed. Joel L. Kraemer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 195–208; Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*,

trans. M. Adamson (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1988); Helen R.Lemay, "Human Sexuality in Twelfth- through Fifteenth-Century Scientific Writing," in Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, New Concepts in Human Sexuality Series (Prometheus Books, 1982); Joseph Ziegler, "Sexuality and the Sexual Organs in Latin Physiognomy 1200–1500," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 3, 2 (2005), 84–107.

For the sexualization of food in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, see: Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Sex and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); James N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York: St Martin's, 1998); Judith M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300–1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Jerry Toner, *Leisure and Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); Emily Gowers, *The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Veronica E. Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting, The Evolution of Sin*: *Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1991); and Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1987).

The role of sex and sexuality in literature is a broad topic in which an impressive amount of scholarship is being carried out on a variety of aspects. As an introduction to the themes highlighted in this volume, see for the genre of romance: Peggy McCracken, *The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998); Laurie Finke, "Sexuality in Medieval French Literature," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality,* eds Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York: Garland, 1996), 345–68; E. Jane Burns, *Bodytalk: When Women Speak in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

For the fabliaux and humor, see Pamela Allen Brown, *Better a Shrew Than a Sheep: Women, Drama and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Guy Halsall, ed., *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Charles Muscatine, *Medieval Literature, Style and Culture: Essays* (Columbia SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999); E. Jane Burns, "Knowing Women: Female Orifices in the Old French Fabliaux," *Exemplaria*, 4 (1992), 81–104; Mary Jane Sterns, *The Fabliaux: Tales of Wit and Deception* (Philadelphia PA: J. Benjamins, 1987); R. Howard Bloch, *The Scandal of the Fabliaux* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Charles Muscatine, *The Old French Fabliaux* (New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1986).

For women's bodies, see: Claire Marshall, "Politics of Self-mutilation: Forms of Female Devotion in the Late Middle Ages," in *The Body in Late Medieval and*

Early Modern Culture, eds Darryll Grantley and Nina Taunton (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2000), 11–22; Jacqueline Murray, "Gendered Souls in Sexed Bodies: The Male Construction of Sexuality in Some Medieval Confessors' Manuals," in *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, eds Peter Biller and Alastair J. Minnis (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1998), 77–93; Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin, eds, *Framing Medieval Bodies* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1994); Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury, eds, *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); Rudolph Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago, 1987).

Sex and Medieval Legal Systems

For a discussion of law and sexuality, see: Conor McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England: Law, Literature and Practice* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004); James A Brundage, *Sex, Law, and Marriage in the Middle Ages* (Brookfield VT: Variorum, 1993); Angeliki E. Laiou, *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993); Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991); Judith M. Bennett, ed., *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989); James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

For sex in a royal context, see: John W. Baldwin, "The Many Loves of Philip Augustus," in *The Medieval Marriage Scene: Prudence, Passion and Policy* (Tempe AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 85–100; Frederik Pedersen, "The Danes and the Marriage Break-up of Philip II of France," in *Adventures of the Law: Proceedings of the Sixteenth British Legal History Conference* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003), 54–70; Richard E. Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry: Discourses on Male Same-Sex Desire in the Fourteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave, 2003); Michael Hanrahan, "Speaking of Sodomy: Gower's Advice to Princes in *Confessio Amantis*," *Exemplaria*, 14 (2002), 423–6; Katherine J. Lewis, "Becoming a Virgin King: Richard II and Edward the Confessor," in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women, and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, eds Samantha Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), 86–100; Alain Boureau, *The Lord's First Night: the Myth of the Droit de Cuissage*, trans. L. G. Cochrane (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Barbara A. Hanawalt, "Rituals of Inclusion and Exclusion: Hierarchy and Marginalization in Medieval London," in her "*Of Good and Ill Repute": Gender and Social Control in Medieval London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 24–8; John Carmi-Parsons, *Medieval Queenship* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993); James A. Brundage, "The Politics of Sodomy: Rex vs Pons Hugh de

Ampurias (1311)," in *Sex in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Joyce E. Salisbury (New York: Garland, 1991), 239–46; John Gillingham, "Richard I and Berengaria of Navarre," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 53, 128 (1980), 157–73.

Homosexuality

The validation of the importance of the history of homosexuality and the rise in popularity and scholarship of queer studies has resulted in a large amount of recent scholarship. The following is a suggested reading list relevant to the themes discussed in this volume and focuses on both the standard and seminal works on the subject as well as highlighting some of the newest scholarship on the subjects. Any examination of the topic should start with John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980). For more recent scholarship on the topic, see: David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation: Minority Groups in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Ross Balzaretti, "Michel Foucault, Homosexuality and the Middle Ages," *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 37 (1994), 1–12.

On specifically male homosexuality, see: William E. Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity and Law in Medieval Literature: France and England, 1050–1230* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Mathew S. Kueffler, "Male Friendship and the Suspicion of Sodomy in Twelfth-Century France," in *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages*, eds Sharon Farmer and Carol Braun Pasternak (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 145–81; Helmut Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400–1600* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

The study of lesbianism in the Middle Ages is problematic as it was often considered, in line with Aristotlean philosophy, to not exist or to be at best harmless and at worst pointless or wasteful; see Jacqueline Murray, "Twice Marginal and Twice Invisible: Lesbians in the Middle Ages," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality,* eds Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (New York: Garland, 1996), 191–222. Judith Bennett discusses the difficulty of locating lesbians in medieval society in her work "'Lesbian-Like' and the Social History of Medieval Lesbianisms," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 9 (2000), 1–24 and in her joint work with Amy Froide, *Singlewomen in the European Past 1250–1800* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). See also

Francesca C. Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn, eds, *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

For a discussion of homosexuality in a non-Western context, see: Everett Rowson, "Gender Irregularity as Entertainment: Institutionalized Transvestitism at the Caliphal Court in Medieval Baghdad," in *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages*, eds Sharon Farmer and Carol Braun Pasternak (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 45–72; Kugle Chaterjee and Ruth Vanita, eds, *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Gregory S. Hutchenson, "The Sodomite Moor: Queerness in the Narrative of *Reconquista*," in *Queering the Middle Ages,* eds Glenn Burger and Steven Kruger (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 99–122; Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai, eds, *Same-Sex Love in India: readings from Literature and History* (Houndsmills: Macmillan, 2000); Matthew H. Sommer, *Sex, Law and Society in Late Imperial China* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); Josiah Blackmore and Gregory S. Hutcheson, eds, *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Everett K. Rowson, *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson, eds, *Asian Homosexuality* (New York: Garland, 1992); N. Roth, "Deal Gently with the Young Man: Love of Boys in Medieval Hebrew Poetry of Spain," *Speculum*, 57 (1982), 21–50.

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