

Negotiating God's Sexuality in Early Modern South Asia:
The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* Book X and its Commentarial Tradition

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In his lawsuit filed in 2010 against Wendy Doniger's *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, Dina Nath Batra argued that, amongst other reasons, the book is offensive because its cover depicts God Kṛṣṇa with many naked women. Kṛṣṇa's relationships with women have been a sensitive topic within Hinduism. For example, since the 19th century, it is well-known that Christian missionaries in South Asia criticized the Kṛṣṇa tradition for being immoral.

But few realize that Kṛṣṇa's extra-marital relationships, described in texts such as the tenth book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, were controversial in the precolonial period as well. Kṛṣṇa Caitanya (1486-1534), the inaugurator of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, promoted this extra-marital relationship as embodying the highest expression of love. In the sixteenth century, his disciple, Rūpa Gosvāmī, further expounded this teaching in his works. However, Rūpa's nephew, Jīva Gosvāmī (16th century), wrote his commentary on Rūpa's works promoting the view that Kṛṣṇa was ultimately married to his many teenage consorts. This difference of opinion amongst the Gosvāmīs became a source of further controversy.

In my presentation, I first outline several Kṛṣṇa narratives described in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. I then discuss Jīva's commentary on Rūpa's *Ujjvalanīlamanī* (*The Sapphire of Amorous Aesthetic Sentiment*), as well as a refutation of Jīva's view in the *Svākiyātvānirāsavicāra* (*A Reflection on the Refutation of the View that the Gopīs were Married to Kṛṣṇa*) written by Viśvanātha Cakravartī, a representative of the Bengal Vaiṣṇava tradition in the 17th century. Based on these descriptions, I argue that the practice of producing commentaries provided an intellectual outlet for Theologians in early modern South Asia to express their perspective on controversial topics while remaining within their tradition.

The Print Revolution and Lesbian Philology in Rome Circa 1474

Marc Schachter

This paper explores how commentary traditions and textual transmission can reflect—and influence—the history of sexuality, or at least the discourse around sex. It focuses on a radical shift in the representation of sex between women that appears in Martial and Juvenal commentaries around 1474 when the first print commentaries on these authors were published. Earlier commentaries on them make no mention of Sappho's same-sex predilections or of the tribade, a figure who would greatly influence many subsequent early modern discussions of sex between women. Through an examination of manuscript and early print commentaries on Martial and Juvenal as well as editions of Martial, this paper tracks the emergence of references to Sappho's tribadism and more generally to the tribade. It will outline a confluence of factors that may have led to this shift and ask what implications the shift might have for historians of sexuality who haven't always taken textual history into account.

Perpetua and Proba: Genre and gender

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In this paper I consider the hermeneutical tradition of two Latin women authors, the early Christian martyr Perpetua (3rd c. CE) and the Christian poet Proba (4th c. CE). The *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* contains not only a third-person narration of the martyrdom of Perpetua and a small group of other Christians, but also the memoir purportedly written by Perpetua herself during her imprisonment while waiting for the judgment which will eventually lead to her death. Proba's *Cento vergilianus de laudibus Christi* exemplifies the typically late antique genre of the *cento*, in this case reappropriating Virgilian verse to communicate a Christian message, simultaneously maintaining the classical poet's language and radically subverting its meanings. I will discuss how these peculiar texts, although very different from each other in terms of genre, share an intriguing aspect: each in its own way, they are commentaries *lato sensu*. I also argue that precisely this textual feature has been received in subsequent commentaries *on* these texts as a mark of their authors' gender.

Stiles abstract
Sex in the Margins conference

This paper examines commentary and interpretation in the Islamic legal tradition by looking at judicial reasoning in present-day marital disputes involving divorce and implied adultery. Specifically, I consider how practicing Islamic judges in East Africa are engaging both in and with commentary in adjudicating marital dispute cases. In the Islamic tradition, judges' rulings may be based on scriptural sources like the Qur'an and hadith, authoritative commentary on these sources, and in light of local norms and custom. The rulings themselves may also be considered commentary. This paper explores how judges in family courts in Zanzibar, Tanzania, draw and comment on these sources in reasoning about a type of Islamic divorce known in Swahili as *khuluu* (< Ar. *khul'*). The data for the paper is drawn primarily from my extensive ethnographic research in Islamic family courts in Zanzibar. All court proceedings and court documents are in Swahili. In their written rulings and in their discussions with litigants, judges communicate the legal aspects of sexuality by commenting on and interpreting local norms, the Qur'an and hadith, and Swahili or Arabic legal texts (for example, the works of the Shafi'i scholar Imam Nawawi). The paper argues that judicial reasoning in these courts utilizes interpretation and commentary essentially for pragmatic aims, as most judges aim to reconcile disputing couples.

From Patrick Finglass (Professor of Greek, University of Nottingham):

TEGIT REM INHONESTAM: Sophocles' Tecmessa and Virgil's Dido

ἀλλ' ἴσχε κάμοῦ μνηστίν· ἀνδρί τοι χρεὼν | μνήμην προσεῖναι, τερπνὸν εἴ τί που πάθοι.

Tecmessa remarkably frank (though modestly expressed) appeal to Ajax to listen to her (and thus not to commit suicide) because of the sexual pleasure that she has given him (Soph. *Aj.* 520-1) was memorably imitated by Virgil in Dido's appeal to Aeneas not to leave Carthage: *per conubia nostra, per inceptos hymenaeos, | si bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi quicquam | dulce meum* (*Aen.* 4.316-18). Yet commentators on these fascinating passages have often exhibited the same discomfiture as Gilbert Wakefield, who excluded *Aeneid* 4 from a lecture course because he thought that these particular lines 'would lead to a discomposure of decorum in a miscellaneous assembly' (letter to Charles James Fox, 1801). This paper analyses the responses that these passages have received in commentators ancient and modern, beginning with the Sophoclean scholia and with Servius, whose opening, disapproving words on the Virgilian passage provide the paper's title. What strategies do commentators adopt when discussing these appeals (if they discuss them at all), which are so emotionally moving and rhetorically powerful, and yet which imply that sexual pleasure can be a legitimate topic for female discourse, contrary to prevailing norms in many of the societies to which commentators and their readerships have belonged? And how does the unwillingness of some commentators to confront the sexual content of these passages affect their analyses of these characters?

The Widower, the Maid and the Novelist: Pieter Burman's Edition of Petronius' Satyrica (1709) and its Reception

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Pieter Burman (1668-1741) was professor of history and eloquence at the University of Utrecht in the Dutch Republic from 1696 until 1715, after which he succeeded Jacob Perizonius (1651-1715) in Leiden. One of the main projects of Burman during his time in Utrecht was an edition with commentary of Petronius, which was published in 1709. His work on this Roman novelist not only allowed him to publish a number of unedited annotations and remarks from other scholars like Nicolaas Heinsius (1620-1681), he also had an intrinsic interest in Petronius as an author with remarkable stylistic qualities. His comments therefore mainly focus on points of rhetoric. At the same time, morally sensitive issues, such as sex are discussed in a straightforward, unbiased manner, an approach that made one of his biographers in the 1930s write: "He examines all kinds of scabrous passages, perhaps not out of predilection, but nonetheless in unnecessary detail."

Unsurprisingly, his work on Petronius got Burman into serious trouble with conservative calvinistic theologians. When the edition came out, its editor was suddenly accused of having raped a girl who claimed to have served him as a maid. Burman was acquitted, but the affair nonetheless led to the publication of a comedy in Dutch (*De Weuwenaer*, "The Widower"), in which Burman was mocked for his alleged sexual immorality. Burman's story is thus an interesting case of how a learned commentary in Latin could lead to a broader discussion about sexual behaviour in the public sphere. In this paper I will discuss Burman's edition of and commentary on Petronius' *Satyrica*, as well as its reception within and outside the Dutch Republic.

I will argue that this edition of Petronius is a powerful testimony of the ideals of the so-called Dutch School of Criticism. This current among philologists tried to professionalise the practice of classical scholarship both by focusing on textual criticism and by looking at classical texts as historical artifacts that should be studied without any moral, Christian straightjacket. This ideal had a strong influence on scholars from other countries, such as Richard Bentley (1662-1742) who had a frequent correspondence with Burman.

Conference: Sex in the Margins, Davis, California, October, 10-12 2014

Abstract: Sexuality and Intertextuality in the Stoic and Platonic traditions
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Apart from Aristotelism, Platonism and Stoicism are the most influential schools of ancient philosophy in the canonical Western tradition, Platonism being renowned for lofty idealism and Stoicism for stark moral incitation. Yet, these two ancient philosophical schools take, even by these tokens, an unbiased look at the topics of sex and gender, and their frankness is sometimes bewildering even for modern readers. Apart from Plato's remarks on the community of women, which have been discussed in previous scholarship, these two schools' views on sex are just beginning to receive the attention they deserve.

With Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Republic* and Simplicius' commentary on Epictetus' *Handbook*, Neoplatonism offers probably the richest harvest of remarks on sex and gender within ancient philosophical commentaries. Yet, Neoplatonist commentaries are only the culmination of intertextuality in ancient philosophy in the field of sex and gender. For already Plato's provocative idea of a community of women found a rich echo in later philosophers and Epictetus' discourse on sex and gender refers not only to Cynic and Stoic texts but also to Platonic ones. Widening the chronological scope beyond ancient Platonism and Stoicism, I shall investigate whether and how these lines of commenting continue in three Christian adaptations of Epictetus' *Handbook*. In every instance of this rich tradition I shall ask (i) how these texts treat sex and react to their predecessors' way of treating it ([implicitly] reticent, [explicitly] censorious, downplaying, (re)contextualizing, moralizing, allegorizing, etc.); and (ii) whether this treatment is influenced by the texts' philosophical school, religious adherence, or the *zeitgeist*. Finally I shall examine whether and how discursive and intertextual practices go along with the commented or recommended sexual practices, e.g. whether sexual restriction is dealt with summarily and sexual dissipation lavishly – or whether it is just the opposite.

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- 1) Textual promiscuity: Aristotle, Zeno, Cicero, Epictetus and Proclus on Plato's community of women
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Luciano Pinto (Unifesp, Brazil), “In the Margins of Sodom and Gomorrah: Jerome and Augustine about Genesis 19”

In chapter 19 of the book of *Genesis* we find the narratives of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and of an incest act between Loth and his daughters. The destruction of these cities is justified on the grounds of the “injustices” committed there by their inhabitants. On the other hand, that same narrative tells us of how Loth offered his two virgin daughters as a kind of “bargaining chip,” in order to avoid the raping of his male guests by a frenzied mob (Gn. 19:8). Shortly after this passage, we find a scene of incest between Loth and his daughters (Gn. 19:31-38). Our purpose is to present and discuss some commentaries of the aforementioned biblical passages provided by two early Christian key figures, Jerome of Stridon (c. 370-420 CE) and Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE). After the presentation of their commentaries, we will analyze how their (philological) approach to telling such passages impacted on the history of the reception of Gn. 19. Finally, we will reflect upon some significant silences their commentaries maintain with regard to some gender/sexual aspects of the passages, since the act of commenting is always a matter of selecting what is viewed as obscure and ambiguous as opposed to what is regarded as clear and unequivocal.

**The Classical Nude as Canonical Text
in Plaster Academies during the Eighteenth And Nineteenth Centuries**

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Abstract submitted for
“Sex in the Margins” Conference, Oct. 10-12, 2014
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The topic here provides an analogy in the visual arts to the philological issues raised by this conference. This paper considers the development and use of plaster casts of the (predominantly nude) statuary of Greco-Roman antiquity in the academic training of artists. From the later 18th century to the later 19th, art academies in the western world began the training of artists by having them draw from plaster casts representing masterpieces of classical sculpture. The exercise preceded study of the living nude, after which art students began creating compositions of their own. During a century when the output of professional artists underwent drastic changes, the initiation experience of the “plaster academy” remained remarkably constant.

Learning art by drawing from plaster casts can be seen as a process of emulation not unlike that which perpetuated ancient texts. The process was complicated by a number of issues, not least of which was authenticity: The casts set up for emulation were copies of “originals” which had undergone considerable creative restoration and art students drawing from these casts were inevitably creating commentaries more than transcriptions.

Plaster academies of the 18th and 19th centuries were meant to present to students a revered ancient standard of bodily perfection and physical expressiveness. Yet, how was this process of emulation justified when material (white plaster) and form (nudity) diverged from the media and subjects that art students ultimately produced? The perseverance of these academies suggests their role was symbolic as much as utilitarian. The interventions of “commentary” entrenched in plaster academies produced an altered version of the classical nude that was less obeisance to the past than service to needs of the present.

Marginality, gender, and intertextual commentary: the Griselda story from Boccaccio to Petrarch and Christine de Pizan

One of the most renowned narratives of the European literary tradition, the story of Griselda, emblematically located at the end of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (X, 10) reveals a powerful archetypal nature which continues to fascinate readers of all kinds and to stimulate scholarly discussion. This paper analyzes two episodes in the early reception of this narrative: the Latin translation of the story written by Petrarch in 1373 (*Seniles* XVII, 3), and the French version elaborated by Christine de Pizan in 1405 (*The Book of the City of Ladies* II, 50).

Although not properly identifiable with the genre of commentary, the two new versions of Boccaccio's Griselda story when analyzed comparatively will reveal them not only as a well studied example of medieval intertextuality, but one in which specifically the authorial formulation about gender and sexuality has been reallocated and marginalized at the same time. Very much as in the making of a commentary, Boccaccio's original portrayal of the patient and devoted Griselda as a figure of stoic moral steadfastness and spiritual exemplarity is constantly associated with the symbolic ritual of her nakedness, and with a sexual passivity which at the same time seems to nurture the strange relationship with her husband and strikingly be in contrast with the cynical commentary of the storyteller Dioneo. In Petrarch's version Griselda loses her psychological marginality and narratological centrality in favor of a general process of moralization that establishes the transition of this character from a symbol of spiritual, redeeming tranquility and female submission to an eschatological symbol of the Christian virtues of loyalty and obedience, a figure of the human soul in his exemplary relationship with God, and eventually an intermediary between humanity and God himself. Following Petrarch's moralizing interpretation, in Christine de Pizan's version Griselda becomes an example of female constancy rather than one of human patience within the context of less gender-imbalanced notions of sexuality and marriage; this element seems to underline the author's proto-feminist intention of creating an inspirational figure of female redemption both at the individual and at the social level.

Finally I will show how, along this process of intertextual commentary, much of the essentially problematic nature of Boccaccio's Griselda has been lost, thus contributing to marginalizing the original narrative potential of this character, and at the same time to centralize

that psychological development which has been precisely the cause of its international literary success.

Chest Hair and the Margins

Scholars are prone to discuss chest hair in ancient Greek literature in terms that resonate with their own contemporary notions of what body hair signifies. Charles Anthon (1846), for example, confidently asserts that Achilles' hairy chest (*Il.* 1.189) "is here, as with us, the sign of manhood, and of the full development of physical powers." This view of chest hair, both its conclusions and its approach, is indicative of how modern commentators have addressed this topic (e.g., Leaf 1886, Ameis-Hentze 1894, Zuretti 1921, Magnien 1932, Pulleyn 2000). Ancient scholiasts and Byzantine scholars offer similar interpretations, though they root their views in scientific principles that understand internal heat as the cause of hair growth. For them, the hair which stems from this heat is multi-referential and indicates both high-spiritedness and intelligence (e.g., Arist. *Part. an.* 658b2-5, Gal. *Ars med.* 1.335.6-9, 338.13-18, *De temp.* 1.624.5). The conclusions drawn from these appeals to science and/or comparative ethnography, however, stand at odds with how chest hair functions in ancient literature. Ancient authors consistently employ chest hair as a means of physically highlighting one's marginal status in society. The hirsute individual, then, whether he be Achilles, a Centaur, a Cyclops, a pederast, or a beast, is necessarily "Other" (e.g., Hom. *Il.* 1.189, Pind. *Pyth.* 1.17-20, Soph. *Trach.* 555-8, Ar. *Nub.* 349, Callim. *Hymn* 3.75-77, Strabo 15.157, Nonnus *Dion.* 46.195-6) and most closely resembles the "wild men" of Near Eastern mythologies (Mobley 1997).

Sex in the Margins

No One Looks at Elissa

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Virgil marks Dido's first appearance in the *Aeneid* with a simile between the queen and the goddess Diana (*A.* 1, 498-504). The final verse of this simile is dedicated to Diana's mother, Latona, who silently rejoices at her daughter (*A.* 1, 502). Over the centuries, Virgilian commentators have often focused on this line: Valerius Probus, with his negative judgement (1st century AD); Servius, with his highly influential reading path (4th-5th century AD); J. C. Scaliger (16th century) and J. L. de La Cerda (17th century), great modern commentators; up to Viktor Pöschl's 20th century interpretation. Its adoption by Philip Hardie, one of Virgil's leading scholars of our time, will close my survey. As I will try to show, the dynamics of tradition give place to a curious phenomenon: from one commentator to another, the verse on Latona's maternal feeling acquires an erotic nuance, seemingly absent from the original text.

Tina Chronopoulos, Binghamton University SUNY

Homoerotic poems in the medieval classroom: two *Odes* by Horace

In this paper I examine two Horatian *Odes* (3.20 and 4.10) and their treatment in a number of medieval classroom commentaries from England and France. Usually, when it comes to morally ambiguous material, commentators tend to circumvent the issue or explain it away by focusing attention on something else. By contrasting the treatment of *Odes* 3.20 and 4.10 in at least two different commentaries, one written in 12th-century France (British Library, London, Harley 2732) and one in 12th-century England (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.57), I show that the commentators deployed various tactics in extracting a moral message for their students. In a move that might seem surprising to us, for example, the commentator of Harley 2732 tackles the subject head-on and, unusually, laces the introductory gloss with numerous negative characterizations of homoerotic love. By comparison, other commentators tread more lightly. The name of Ganymede, for example, is used in such a way as to alert the audience to the homoerotic content without actually making an explicit reference. What led the commentators to make negative or ambiguous remarks? What would their students have made of these poems and their teachers' interpretations? How did Horace's 'heteroerotic' poems fare in comparison? I suggest that some of these signs of anxiety around erotic situations between men are partly the result of teenage boys being educated in a homosocial environment and partly the result of a culture that relished teaching by negative examples.

Erotic Latin Poetry, Nineteenth-Century Commentary and the Authority of Sexology

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Proposal for:

Sex in the Margins: A Conference on Commentaries, Sexuality and Gender

In 1886, the Austrian psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing published *Psychopathia Sexualis: A Medico-Forensic Study*. It is no exaggeration to say that the appearance of this encyclopaedic examination of sexual pathology marked a profoundly important moment in the history of modern sexology, with its graphic descriptions of sexual perversion and its popularisation of numerous terms such as 'homosexuality', 'sadism' and 'masochism'. Krafft-Ebing mapped out the landscape of sexual identity which the West still inhabits today. What intrigued many of his earliest readers the most, however, was his use of the Latin language, which he explained in his Preface as a 'technical terminology' to describe the obscene activities of the sexual perverts who populated his book.

My paper examines the origins of Krafft-Ebing's Latinity, to show how Latin became the language of scientific authority for nineteenth-century sexology. As I will demonstrate, the words and phrases used by Krafft-Ebing can be traced back to a Latin commentary written and published in 1825 by a German philologist called Friedrich Karl Forberg. This commentary was an appendix to Forberg's edition of *The Hermaphrodite*, a Renaissance collection of obscene epigrams written by Antonio Beccadelli (1394-1471). My paper traces out how Beccadelli's creative re-writing of the erotic obscenities of Catullus and Martial came to be of interest to a nineteenth-century German philologist, whose commentary in turn became required reading matter for nineteenth-century doctors. My paper uncovers the intriguing story of how the Latin of Roman and Renaissance epigram became the authoritative language of sexual science by the end of the nineteenth century.

Short Curriculum Vitae

I am Associate Professor in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Warwick in the UK. I teach Greek and Latin language and literature. My research focuses on the reception of classical antiquity in modern intellectual and cultural history. In particular, I am interested in the roles ancient texts have played in modern histories of gender, sexuality, imperialism and colonialism. I have published one monograph, *Classical Culture and Modern Masculinity* (Oxford University Press, 2011) and have another appearing later this year, *Sex: Antiquity and its Legacy* (Oxford University Press, 2014). I have also co-edited a collection of essays on modern black-Atlantic writing and the ancient world, called *African Athena: New Agendas* (Oxford University Press, 2011). I am currently preparing with Pierre-Philippe Fraiture (Professor of French at Warwick) *The VY Mudimbe Reader* (University of Virginia Press), an edited collection of essays by the well-known Duke-University-based, Congolese post-colonial theorist, novelist and classicist. I have recently completed an Alexander-von-Humboldt-Foundation Fellowship at the Humboldt Universität in Berlin, where I have been working on a monograph on Winckelmann and eighteenth-century antiquarian illustration.

Tragic women in ancient and byzantine scholia

Ancient Greek tragedy stages women belonging to the mythical past, sometimes portrayed as subordinate and submissive, sometimes represented as independent women crossing the boundaries of their gender; in several passages, an implied or explicit gender contrast is involved, and a questioned or unquestioned view of how a woman should behave is in the background or in the foreground. How did ancient and byzantine commentators react to these aspects?

If the roles of women in Greek tragedy have been studied in depth in the last decades (see for example H.P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*, Princeton - Oxford 2001 and D.J. Mastronarde, *The Art of Euripides*, Cambridge - New York 2010, pp. 246-79), the views of ancient commentators' on the female presence in tragedy are still underinvestigated. And yet the well-documented role of the hypomnematic tradition in ancient and byzantine education makes the study of the views they presuppose and maintain particularly intriguing as part of a wider analysis of how certain perceptions of gender were shaped and perpetuated in antiquity.

In particular, a comprehensive consideration of the corpus of tragic scholia, a multifaceted and chronologically stratified conglomerate, can offer revealing insights on how ancient readers and scholars dealt or were expected to deal with the inevitable differences between their understanding of women's roles, place, and habits, and the tragic representation of these elements. Moreover, the scholia can indicate to what extent and in what terms ancient commentators perceived and underlined the distance between the represented woman and the real woman of fifth-century Greece.

A close analysis will also reveal different motives behind scholiastic discussion. For example, female habits belonging to either the tragedian's time or the mythical past may be taken into consideration simply as part of a wider antiquarian interest. In other cases, the representation of women may be discussed within a moral frame, presupposing or stating a clear view on how a woman should behave; or it may be commented upon from a literary point of view, as a fictional element or the product of a specific authorial attitude towards women.

My paper will offer an analysis of selected scholia to Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, in which deeds, feelings, attitudes, habits of female characters are discussed. The intersection of three motives (antiquarian, moral, and literary), three times (the mythical past, the tragedian's time, and the commentator's time), and three voices (the character's, the tragedian's, and the commentator's) will portray a complex and diversified scenario, characterized by changing and persisting elements.

Emily Blakelock
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Glossing the gap: interpreting Juvenal in the twelfth-century classroom

Juvenal's *Saturae* are among the most popular school texts of the middle ages. Juvenal's obsession with appropriate gender-based and sexual behaviour for males in the urban environment became increasingly relevant to teachers and students during the twelfth century, when post-Gregorian discourses about clerical masculinity combined with a surge in urban schools. This paper will examine several commentaries emerging from twelfth century France which provide interesting perspectives on the connections between the lives of medieval students and those of the urban men described in the satires. In these commentaries, twelfth-century teachers highlight key issues in Juvenal's text such as the sexual vulnerability of young boys, the process of effeminization, and the dissemination of illicit sexual behaviours through male social networks. I will demonstrate the ways in which teachers interpreted and translated these shared areas of concern for a contemporary audience.

The notion that both correct and incorrect gendered sexual behaviour can be learned is central to understanding the ways in which medieval teachers approached texts with sexualized themes. Canonical school texts were not merely sources of grammatical or lexical content, but fell under *ethica* and were thought to address everyday behaviour. Furthermore, because the satirical genre was thought to lack *integumentum*, or metaphorical meaning, each of Juvenal's statements had to be explained in a fairly straightforward fashion, and teachers often added contemporary parallels to aid the student's comprehension. Juvenal's critique of sodomites and effeminate men reflects an anxiety present in the medieval urban homosocial schools, where the possibility of (homo)sexual activity was always a source of tension. The continuing popularity of Juvenal's text speaks to its role as a locus for exploring male behaviour as part of students' moral education.

“Who am I to Judge?” – Commentary, Nonchalance, and Sex with Eunuchs in the *Shiji*

In the *Shiji*,¹ we find a fascinating and enigmatic passage concerning Liu Bang, the founder of the Han dynasty. The passage describes him, sick and wearied from battle, issuing orders that he is heading to his bedroom and not to be disturbed. The empire is not yet at peace, however, and his people need him—most pressing, to lead the army in battle against the rebel Qing Bu. As his generals and high officials wait anxiously for the emperor to emerge, Fan Kuai, his longtime friend and advisor, determines to barge unceremoniously into the emperor’s bedroom. When he does so, with the top officials following behind him, they find the emperor in bed, lying with his head on a single eunuch—an unambiguous reference to their sexual activity. But in what should have been a moment of complete embarrassment, Liu Bang simply laughs, gets himself out of bed, and heads to war.

What adds to the enigmatic quality of this passage is that Sima Qian does not offer his own commentary, either to explain Liu Bang’s actions or to pass judgment on them. In my paper, I plan to examine the classic commentaries to the *Shiji* (and also some modern commentaries) to observe their treatment of this passage. What layers of complexity do they add to this already complex passage? To what extent do they pass judgment, either on Liu Bang, or on Sima Qian himself? In what ways does this formative text set the tone for how (sexual) relations with eunuchs are discussed, and not discussed, in subsequent works?

¹ The *Shiji*, or *Book of Historical Records*, is China’s most important work of historical writing. Begun by Sima Tan and completed by his son Sima Qian, the work covers a 2,500 year sweep of Chinese history, from the (legendary) Yellow Lord to the reign of Han Wudi in the second century BCE. Sima Qian himself is considered the model historian, and his format in the *Shiji* became the model for subsequent historical works.

No fuss about sex? Sodomy, purity and the restrained body in Hildemar's Commentary to the Rule of Benedict

Abstract

Hildemar of Corbie's massive commentary on the Rule of Benedict, which was written in the middle of the ninth century, belongs to the most prolific sources on everyday monastic life but also on the transformation of monastic ideals in the aftermath of the Carolingian project to reform monastic life but also society at large. Sex plays a prominent but curious role in the work. Hildemar is remarkably frank about sodomy and masturbation, nudity, control of the body and sexual desires, but gives the impression that sex, albeit a concern of monastic discipline, is not a structural danger to the monastic community and to collective purity and certainly not a matter of monastic reform. It seems to be a marginal problem for monks and a much more serious problem for everyone else, particularly for priests. I try to situate this observation within two contexts: the nature of Carolingian concerns with purity (which may be much less sexual than generally assumed) and the question which role sex actually played in the Carolingian project to create an ideal Christian society.

Bio

Albrecht Diem, Associate Professor in History at Syracuse University received his PhD from the University of Utrecht in 2000 with a dissertation on the late antique and early medieval monastic discourse on chastity and sexuality, which came out as a book with the title *Das monastische Experiment. Die Rolle der Keuschheit bei der Entstehung des westlichen Klosterwesens*.

He publishes on the emergence and transformation of monastic life in the early medieval west, but also on various topics related to gender and sexuality.

Currently he works on a monograph on the history of monastic normativity and on concepts of community and techniques of discipline in early medieval monastic rules.

He is also the coordinator of a collective translation project of Hildemar of Corbie's 650 pages long commentary on the Rule of Benedict which involves more than sixty historians, theologians and philologists. The commentary is now online with a facing translation on www.hildemar.org.

The Productive Body of Debauchery: Reading Staged in *Retrieved History of Hailing*
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The anonymous *Retrieved History of Hailing*, printed between 1606 and 1627, is a Chinese vernacular novella on the despotic Jürchen ruler King Hailing (1122–1161). The story proper copies verbatim from the *Official History of the Jin Dynasty* to lay out the framework of the narrative: Hailing and his consorts' ignominious behaviors. Fleshing out the historical outline are anecdotes in the storyteller's voice interspersed with textual fragments drawn from all levels of textual traditions, from Classics to ballads and vulgar repartee. The construction of the foreign body of Hailing as that of ultimate otherness and debauchery compels precisely with the story's staging of the act of reading as the fundamental source of meaning-making—what invigorates the text's extrapolation of disparate textual traditions are perverse hermeneutic moments that challenge generic prescriptions of textual production and consumption as literary institutions. Adding more zest to the liberating act of reading are the unusual paratexts featured in the story: the marginal commentary cites exclusively from the iconic romantic play *The Western Chamber*, thereby functioning very much as a mediating figure that engages the novella in its discursive moments of reading the play, so much so that the hierarchy of the book page in its spatial layout may be fully reversed, as the text proper presents itself to be commentary on the play evoked by the marginal commentary. The foreign body of debauchery therefore finds its most productive modalities not so much in the novelty of writing, but by unearthing buried possibilities of reading the romantic play.

The starting point for discussions of sex among medieval lawyers in the newly minted universities of twelfth-century Europe rested upon far older foundations - the definition of natural law (*ius naturale*) set out by the Roman jurist Ulpian in the early third century AD, which described an act of union (*coniunctio*) common to both animals and humans. This passage was incorporated into both of the key texts for medieval jurisprudence: the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* of Roman law, compiled in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian, and later in Gratian's *Decretum*, the great twelfth-century collection of canon law. My paper will examine how this passage was glossed and commented upon by academic lawyers between 1100 and 1400. They were faced with a substantial task of interpretation in trying to square a passage that seemed to suggest that animalistic intercourse was something entirely natural to men and beasts with their contemporary orthodoxies on sexual morality and sin. Commentators' various attempts to address this problem led some to accept the naturalness of sinful behaviours, while others were compelled to venture beyond their discipline, borrowing from theological debates to develop a more complex model of desire and action that could accommodate sexual impulses. The paper will build upon an earlier version presented at a colloquium in Finland this year, which I am now preparing for publication; given the Greco-Roman context of the Davis conference, I particularly want to expand upon fourteenth-century jurists' attempts to incorporate another classical influence into their accounts of sexual behaviour, that of Aristotle.

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ABSTRACT

Notes on a Female Issue: (Pre-)texts and Commentary on Menstruation in Early Modern Spain

This paper examines some curious uses of commentary by sixteenth to eighteenth century Spanish male authors as a means of shedding light on period (no pun intended) notions and attitudes regarding a most misunderstood and intriguing aspect of female physiological functioning: menstruation. An analysis of excerpts taken from diverse sources ranging from the multiple iterations of Andrés Laguna's annotated Spanish *Dioscorides* to Benito Jerónimo Feijoo's *Teatro Crítico Universal* reveals that, by means of commentary, texts having little or nothing to do with female reproductive or health concerns can serve as unexpected springboards or (pre-)texts for disseminating or debunking then still widely-held classical Greco-Roman and Medieval beliefs regarding menstruation and menstrual blood. Likewise, a close reading of these passages not only reveals shifting attitudes toward women and femaleness. More importantly, it serves to highlight the role of textual commentary (and commentary of commentary) itself in the construction of such texts as well as to underscore the tensions between the authority of ancient written sources and physical evidence gathered with experimental methods of emerging science.

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Demptis obscenis: Commentaries on Martial's Epigrams
from the Seventeenth Century to the Present

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Commentaries on Martial's epigrams from the 17th and 18th centuries generally omit sexually explicit poems. Examples include the editions *ad usum Delphini*, first created in the 17th century for the instruction of the son of Louis XIV and reprinted for general educational use as late as 1830 (London); or the commentary written by a Jesuit scholar and published in Rome in 1703 – "obscenity removed," as its title page makes clear (*M. Val. Martialis epigrammata: demptis obscenis; addidit annotationes et interpretationem Josephus Juvencius e Societate Jesu*). That qualification prompts the obvious question: Which epigrams count as *obscena* for these commentators and which do not, and what kind of logic informs the selection process? The same question is raised by the anonymously authored *Index Expurgatorius of Martial* (London 1868). "Printed for private circulation," this edition offers text, translation, and commentary on "all the epigrams previously omitted by English translators," as its title page announces. This edition's title, its anonymous authorship and "private" publication have much to say about 19th-century English responses to sex in Martial; I will take a representative look at which poems the *Index* includes and what it has to say about them. Finally I consider a selection of commentaries which, in the tradition of *Altertumswissenschaft* and its profession of objective scholarly inquiry into the past, refrain from excising or bowdlerizing: from Friedlaender's 1886 edition of the entire corpus to the sequence of commentaries on individual books of Martial's epigrams that have appeared over the past decades, from Citroni 1975 on Book 1 to Henriksén 2012 on Book 9; I include some self-reflective remarks on my own 2004 commentary on Book 2. Here I draw attention to language (which Latin, German, Italian, or English words are used and how they are used); to moralizing assessments and the conceptual frameworks they imply or assert; and to silences, no longer in the form of the omission of entire poems but as the sometimes more subtle absence of comment.