

ROMAN SOCIAL-SEXUAL INTERACTIONS

A Critical Examination of the Limitations of Roman Sexuality



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Abstract

This thesis explores the dichotomy between sexuality and socialization in ancient Rome; namely how sexuality is expressed and communicated in Roman society as a whole. While modern perceptions seem to paint ancient sexuality as something significantly fluid, I postulate that the cultural openness to matters of a sexual nature actually hindered sexual expression by categorizing and compartmentalizing human sexuality to certain categories of conduct. In the first chapter I use, as the main scholarly frame of reference of my study, the magisterial work of J.N. Adams on Roman sexual linguistics, but I expand upon his work by connecting sexual phraseology to Roman socialization using the latest advancements in academic linguistic theory. In this chapter I argue that Roman social-sexual evolution runs parallel to and is preserved by the linguistic evolution of Latin sexual constructions. Furthermore, I expand beyond the work of Adams and argue that sexual catharsis is the primary force driving both the social views on sexuality and the sexual traditions of classical Rome. In the second chapter I examine an eclectic range of primary sources (literary, epigraphic, art-historical, archaeological, etc.) through which I explore Roman sexual traditions such as marriage, prostitution, and homosexuality from a distinctly Roman perspective while comparing and contrasting those perspectives with both modern perceptions of ancient sexuality and current theories of modern sexual conduct. I argue that each, rather than facilitating sexual autonomy, serves to limit Roman sexuality by forcing Romans to comply with strict social expectations. After examining Roman sexuality in these ways, I conclude that Roman society developed a culturally consistent approach to systematically institutionalize sexuality in such a manner as to result in wide-spread sexual repression among all demographic subsets of Roman society.

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Introduction

I believe that, like many cultures around the world, sex was a matter of vital importance to the Romans. Not only was it necessary for producing the next generation, but it also played a central role in their culture as a whole. Sex and sexuality were omnipresent forces in just about every facet of Roman life – in rituals and art, in politics and literature, in love and war. Yet, it is also a topic which by its very nature tends to cause embarrassment and scandal in most modern settings. It seems that the topic of sex and sexuality was certainly no different in Rome.

Modern perceptions of Rome overwhelmingly paint Roman sexuality in a rather scandalous light. The modern imagination tends to regard Rome as a mecca of vice from the foregone days of old, but in reality, as I will aim to demonstrate in this thesis, the Romans were not any more sexually peculiar than a number of modern societies. Certainly, they expressed sexuality in a way that might be considered pornographic to our society, but I will demonstrate that they also had a number of reservations about it – just as we do today. Differences in the expression of sexuality does not necessarily equate to the Romans being more promiscuous and us less so. It is important to recognize the preconceptions that come with our modern perspective in order to objectively examine the past. Therefore, I will take due care in presenting the information in a manner consistent with Roman perspectives, examine the differences between that and our modern cultural perceptions, and finally extrapolate how the information in its natural context can help modern scholars better characterize Roman society as a whole.

Indeed, I firmly believe that Romans were actually more restricted in their sexuality than many cultures are today. Certainly, they had at their disposal any number of means of indulging in the vices which happened to be culturally acceptable (e.g. sexual slavery or institutionalized prostitution), but even slight deviation from these social norms could bring about severe consequences. Unlike in present

day American society, in which a sexual deviant might face the distaste and discomfort of society without much further censure for stepping outside culturally prescribed bounds, Romans who sexually transgressed beyond what their own society deemed acceptable had extraordinarily strong motivating forces militating against them. As an honor and reputation based society, a single mishap could be disastrous to a Roman's social standing. For instance, any sexual grievance could incur the wrath of the *pater familias* – a man with literally the power over life and death of those in his family – or the Roman state could impose legal consequences for expressing ones sexuality beyond ones role.

When we look outside of the sexual outlets available to them, it becomes exceedingly clear that the Romans were sexually repressed, more so than modern perceptions have thus far allowed us to believe. I postulate that this cultural disconnection occurs primarily because Romans were oppressed areas of sexuality which modern audiences take for granted. Alternatively, modern audiences fixate on areas of Roman sexuality which expressed more freedom than what we are used to, perhaps ones which the Romans themselves took for granted. It is simply a matter of perspective. Much of it has to do with how the Romans socialized sex. Rather than being individual and exceedingly personal, sex was more of a public matter and treated almost like a trade commodity rather than an intensely private and personal affair.

The evolution of a cultural institution tends to be reflected in the language that is used to describe it. Latin is no different. In the first chapter of this thesis, I critically analyze the language that the Romans employed for communicating ideas of a sexual nature. I focus on expanding upon the work of J.N. Adams, the most recognized authority in the field of Latin sexual linguistics, by synthesizing his foundations with the cutting edge evolutionary linguistics theory of Indirect Means in order to precisely characterize how the changes in grammaticalization, lexeme variation, and development of Latin sexual linguistics map on to the development of sexuality in Roman culture. Likewise, the Latin language tends to be divided into four basic categories, also put forth by Adams, which account for why Romans used

sexually charged language. I put forth a fifth category – sexual catharsis – which accounts for many problems such as categorical overlap between the existing four. Identifying such structures at such a fundamental level, even if they are modern characterizations, not only points to methodical social circumstances but also broader societal cares.

In the second chapter of this thesis, I examine the social institutions that directly impacted Roman notions and practices of sexuality, such as marriage, prostitution, and homosexuality. Roman society demanded a certain conduct when one availed oneself to these sexual outlets. It is through this conduct and the repercussions for breaking it that one is able to postulate a richer view of the overarching social conceptions about sex and sexuality. By establishing Marriage as my baseline sexual institution in Roman society, I extrapolate by comparison the relative acceptability of other sexualized socialization in Rome such as adultery, sexual slavery, prostitution, and homosexuality then compare them with primary sources as well as modern perceptions and sexual conditions. The result is a view of the sexuality of ancient Rome without interference from modern preconceptions.

The social tenor in Rome expected that each person play their prescribed role based on their social standing and gender. While there might have been many avenues to express this sexuality, it was unacceptable to deviate and indulge one's sexual interests in ways that may have been reserved for others. Naturally, as with many other things in Rome, the sexual repression that Romans faced was anything but equal among different demographics. Considering the categorization of Roman sexual acts, the compartmentalization of sexuality, and the distribution of imposed social standards, I aim to show that the social structure of Rome severely limited sexuality contrary to modern perceptions.

Chapter One: Language of Sex in Rome

Sex was everywhere in Rome. Likewise, the language to describe it was just as pervasive. From the lewd street graffiti in alley-ways and scrawled on tavern walls to the stately decorum of Ciceronian oration sex was a topic of constant conversation. It stands to reason that the Latin language would develop ways of better articulating communication when it comes to sex and, indeed, one will find that Latin has a very rich sexual vocabulary. By examining how and why Romans used this language one is able to better understand their outlook on sex, both privately and publicly.

This chapter primarily focuses on describing the sexual language that Romans used as well as synthesizing them with certain linguistic and psychological theories in order to build a framework from which one might classify and quantify the social implications of sexuality in Rome. The Latin content of this chapter is heavily drawn from the work of J.N. Adams, the author of *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* and related works, as a definitive expert in the field to define sexual vocabulary as well as explain some of its uses. However, I expound on his work by applying the linguistic theory of indirect means, which also serves to quantify the tenor and origin of specific language uses and examine them in order to disambiguate modern standards and expectations from the distinctly classical conceptions of Roman social-sexual interactions.

Means of Communicating Sexually Charged Language

The Romans had a vast and complex sexual vocabulary with many seemingly interchangeable synonyms. However, conventional theories in linguistics hold that different forms will always express a different meaning, even if the difference in meaning is almost irrelevantly small. Therefore, one can construct a more precise meaning by examining the words which an author used versus those which he

did not. Such nuances yield critical information in understanding other cultures, especially when it comes to particularly sensitive subjects such as sex.

Indirect vs. Direct Means

In the academic discipline of linguistics there is a theory which states that some languages employ specialized linguistic constructions to convey ideas about certain sensitive subjects such as sexuality. This is called indirect means “whenever the goals of speech involve certain functional domains” (Frajzyngier 2006). The functional domain of indirect means generally codes a certain functional domain with the purpose either to express a softer or more palatable meaning or, more unusually, a coarser and more offensive meaning. Indirect means is not motivated by purely linguistic factors:

The principle of indirect means, whose scope is the language structure is motivated by social factors. The domain in which the principle of indirect means is operational include personal interaction between the speaker and the listener, and discourse about procreation and sex, death, deities, and other social issues, which may be different in different societies. These are not functional domains of grammar but rather domains in the social life of a given society.

(Frajzyngier, via Bower 2015)

For instance, in English, one does not generally say that someone “had sex,” rather than phrases such as “slept together” or “made love” would be used. All three phrases express fundamentally the same idea, however they are all perceived differently with a nuanced distinction even between the latter two. In this case, choosing to use indirect phrasing conveys a sense of politeness or tactfulness. Whereas, if someone were instead to use “plowed” in the same context that would code for a very different functional domain.

It is also important to consider markedness, another linguistic tool that can be used to denote the semantical differences expressed with different usages of the same lexical item¹. The common, or unmarked, sense implies one meaning while the marked sense conveys a specialized relevance to some cultural or social context. The constructions “slept together” and “plowed” are both indirect means but without examining how they are marked, one would not be able to distinguish the meaning in context between the two. The phrase “slept together” is generally a more neutral term in sexual context, and therefore it can be considered an unmarked term. On the other hand, “plowed” when used in a sexual context is a very aggressive term and therefore would be semantically marked, but when used in an agricultural sense, is completely unmarked.

It is the tendency of indirect means to lose their meaning and markedness when they are removed from their context. By contrast, lexical items that retain their meaning when so removed are considered direct means. Consider the previous English examples: “had sex” refers to a very specific act even when removed from context while “slept together” or “plowed” are easily construed as, and often used in non-sexual contexts. The phrase “had sex” would be an example of unmarked direct means². Conversely, “slept together” and “plowed” would be examples of indirect means respectively unmarked and marked. It is the function of indirect and markedness means to produce a further altered meaning which is not immediately apparent from the composite meanings and grammatical construction of a phrase or sentence (Frajzyngier, via Bower 2015).

¹ This definition of markedness is one of many. This one is used because it creates a method by which one might classify the uses of a certain construction as neutral (unmarked) or having some other sense associated with it (marked).

² An example of a marked direct means in English would be “fucked.” The word has lost its other basic meanings and is primarily applied only in a sexual sense therefore classifying it as a direct term. However, it has a much harsher connotation than “had sex” which could be considered a neutral term.

Latin has a number of sexual lexemes which can be considered direct means; for instance, *mentula* [penis], *colei* [testicles], *cunus* [female pudenda³], and *culus* [anus]. *Colei*, *cunus* and *mentula* are cited in the *Priapeia* as the ideal example of an obscenity:

*Obscenis, peream, Priape, si non
uti me pudet improbisque verbis
sed cum tu posito deus pudore
ostendas mihi **coleos** patentes
cum **cunno** mihi **mentula** est vocanda*

I'd rather die than use obscene and improper words
But when you, Priapus, appear as a god
with your **testicles** hanging out
It is appropriate for me to speak of **pussy** and **cocks**⁴
(Priapeia 28)



Figure 1: Priapus (Depicted in a fresco at Pompeii) was a god very closely related to sex and sexuality. The language associated with him is very direct.

To the mind of a native Latin speaker, the meaning of these words would automatically be apparent regardless of context. Each of these words was most often marked as offensive⁵, but they establish a useful linguistic baseline against which one might judge the effect of related direct and indirect means, whether they are more or less offensive. By determining how and why certain means are used, namely what function they might code for in a phrase or sentence, it is possible to reconstruct the relationship between the Roman conceptions of their language and their social realities.

Furthermore, indirect means have a tendency to preserve social context in their etymologies. The Latin sexual lexicon contains a very detailed and rich assortment of terms for a prostitute. By examining how and why the Romans used certain constructions over the other as well as information

³ Cunus refers to a much broader sense of anatomy than common English equivalencies such as vulva, vagina, etc. For further discussion, see the Female Anatomy section.

⁴ The context of this poem requires certain liberties in capturing the marked obscenity of the Latin in English.

⁵ The basic obscenity words discussed above can have neutral unmarked meanings but are so often used in offensive or obscene contexts that it is reasonable to assume that they are offensively marked by nature.

obtained by examining markedness and means imparts a wider understanding of their social conditions. Consider the just a few of the lexemes attributed to prostitution: *meretrix*, *scortum*, *proседа*, *prostibulum*, and *lupa*. *Meretrix* [prostitute] would have been considered an indirect term [woman who earns] in archaic Latin. There is a similar tendency in many other words describing sexual anatomy or acts to begin as indirect means and become direct over time (Adams). Likewise, it evolved over time to become the direct and unmarked term for a courtesan or prostitute. In a similar manner, *scortum* [prostitute] originally meant leather or hide, perhaps as an innuendo *pars pro toto* to mean loose women, but eventually evolved to become the direct and marked term for prostitute, both male and female, in a pejorative sense (Adams). These are the baseline terms for a prostitute which Latin speakers in the Republic and Empire would have recognized immediately.

Proседа and *prostibulum* are both unmarked indirect means which give insight into the roman world of prostitution. Locked away in the etymology of these words there is also a wealth of cultural information. *Proседа* is a compound from two Latin words: *pro* [before] and *седа* a feminine noun from *sedeo* [to sit]. Literally, *proседа* means a woman who sits before or in front of an unspecific place but is certainly an indirect means for prostitute. *Prostibulum* is a related compound meaning someone, gender unspecific, who stands in front of a *stabulum* [inn]. Examining these terms gives insight into the lives of Roman prostitutes, namely that they would sit or stand outside a brothel, an inn, or another public venue such as sporting events in order to attract customers. This conjecture is confirmed by authors such as Ovid as well as archeological evidence from cities like Pompeii. Indirect means often times yield vital information to characterize customs and traditions.

Likewise, indirect means can be indicative of the perceived social status of person or act. *Lupa* [she-wolf], the last term for prostitute examined in this section, gives an insight into what the Romans thought of prostitutes. It is an indirect term which specifically refers to cheaper or lower-class prostitutes (Adams). To the romans a she-wolf would have carried interesting social connotations. First,

it is a term associated with the legend of Romulus and Remus – the mythological founders of Rome who were suckled by a she-wolf at the base of the palatine – conveying a caring and motherly characteristic. But, she-wolves were also known for their ferocity and predatory nature. Likewise, *lupae* were prostitutes which men, especially of the lower classes, could go to for easy and cheap sex but they could also be predatory when seeking their clients.

The examination of indirect means is an invaluable tool in understanding how a culture thinks about certain topics, specifically those which they deem to be sensitive subject areas. Romans left many of these clues in how they used their language, not only in describing every-day life but also how they viewed certain parts of it. When examining sexuality and sexually charged themes throughout this work, due attention will be paid to these linguistic concepts in order to fully understand Roman social-sexual dynamics.

Anatomy & Acts

Some anatomy and acts have been dealt with already in very minor detail thus far in this chapter. Before moving on to sexual literature, we ought first to examine some of the basic terms that the Romans used for anatomy and various modes of sexual stimulation in order to ascertain the additional nuances brought about by markedness and means. Furthermore, as discussed in the section above, exploring the etymology and potential social connotations of a word, e.g. *lupa*, or phrase better characterizes sex in the Roman world.

Male Anatomy

Latin terms for male genitals fall into two basic categories: those involving the penis and those involving the testes. *Mentula* was the direct term for penis. Like many of the terms that became direct over time, it is likely that *mentula* started as an indirect term, however the exact etymology is unknown (Adams 10). The word itself is most certainly a diminutive, signaled by the *-ul-* infix but the root word is unclear. Cicero relates *mentula* to a mint plant, however Adams postulates that a connection to such an

obscure plant is unlikely to be the source. Other source words that have been proposed are *mens* [mind], *eminere* [to project outward], and *mons* [mountain], likely stemming from Proto-Indo-European **men-* (Tucker 1976).

Certainly, based on the likely misidentification of etymological roots, *mentula* was definitely a term of direct means well before time of Cicero. Adams comments on the directness of the term as expanded upon by Cicero, “Certainly *mentula* was not felt by Cicero to be metaphorical, though that is not decisive against the metaphorical origin of the word his use of *suo nomine*⁶ at *Fam* 9.22.2 shows that for him it had no other more basic meaning” (Adams 10). *Mentula* is often used as very marked term, indeed Catullus uses it as a pejorative nickname at *carmen* 115, but it could also have neutral connotations. Consider Martial:

Stare iubes nostrum semper tibi, Lesbia, penem:

*Crede mihi, non est **mentula**, quod digitus.*

You order my penis to always stand at attention for you, Lesbia,

Believe me, a **penis** is not like a finger.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 6.23)

This usage is benign in nature, it simply refers to *mentula* in an anatomical sense. In this way, the Latin *mentula* takes on a similar linguistic tenor as the English penis. Each can be used anatomically, but it can also be used offensively.

Verpa [penis, dick], on the other hand, is another direct term for penis but that consistently expresses a notably more offensive characteristic. The Oxford Latin Dictionary translates *verpa* as penis as protruded from the foreskin while the adjective *verpus* as circumcised⁷ (Oxford Latin Dictionary, 2247). A *verpa* does not generally refer to a penis that has been circumcised but rather one which the

⁶ Literally by its own name. Cicero had received a letter which appears to have used *mentula* “What you call in your letter by its own name, he, with more reserve, calls *penicillus* [paint brush]”

⁷ *Verpus* is an adjective often ascribed to Jews.

glans may be protruding from the foreskin on account of an erection. Circumcision was thought to be barbaric in much of the Hellenistic world and therefore was only practiced among some smaller Egyptian cults, Arabic tribes, and Jews. In matters of state it was considered to be absolute proof of Judaism. Suetonius (*Life of Domitian* 12.2) recounts an experience in the imperial court in which a man was stripped naked and examined to see if he was circumcised in order to determine if he was Jewish or not. Because circumcision was so rare among those who were culturally Romans, and because *verpa* is a term in such widespread use, it does not follow that a *verpa* need be circumcised to be called such. Thus, accounting for the discrepancy between the definitions, the adjective is simply convenient for describing circumcision where very little cultural precedent existed before.

The use of *verpa* indicates something more predatory in nature. The word may have acquired this connotation from its occasional associations with Jews who were thought to be well endowed and particularly lecherous or, perhaps, it draws its connotation simply from the fact that an erection implies an impending danger of penetration. It is often times used when a sexual act that is associated with *verpa* is of a certain nature, for instance “It was an aggressive homosexual act which seems to have been most appropriately performed by *verpa* rather than a mere *fututio*⁸” (Adams 13). In graffiti *verpa* is often seen with very obscene verbs such as *pedico* [sodomize] and *irrumo* [violent oral-sex]⁹.

There are many more attested instances of indirect means being used to stand in for either *mentula* or *verpa*. It seems to be a universal phenomenon among all languages that they all use certain kinds of metaphors to refer to the penis, among them weapons and sharp or pointed instruments which represent the broadest category in Latin. Indeed, the similarities between *verpa* and the Germanic *werpen* [weapon] point to the possibility that it is a borrowed word from this semantic group. In ancient cultures warfare and weapons were an extremely important part of life, indeed, the penis would have

⁸ Lit. sexual act, generally coitus. For further information see the vaginal sex section.

⁹ For further information on *pedico* and *irrumo* see the oral sex section.

been considered a weapon in its own right¹⁰. Even with this being the case, “no single weapon seems to have become a banal term for penis in Latin, but the frequency of ad hoc metaphors both in Greek and Latin shows that the sexual symbolism of weapons was instantly recognizable in ancient society” (Adams 19). Suetonius recounts one of Vespasian’s jokes about a particularly well-endowed man:

μακρὰ βιβάς, **κραδάων** δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος.

Striding along and **waving a lance** that casts a long shadow

(Suetonius, Life of Vespasian 23.1)

Others terms from this semantic group are considerably less abusive; many romance languages would eventually draw their modern terms for penis from this group. *Virga* [rod or stick] is represented in French by *verge* while *penis* [tail] is represented in English.

Furthermore, there are a myriad of other semantic groups from which the more than 100 Latin terms which can refer to the penis are drawn. They include terms such as diminutives of agricultural implements (plows and sickles), various plants, animals, and “private property.” The aforementioned semantic groups may be slightly less universal, but they particularly idealize many traits which were important to the Romans. Although many Romans were statesmen, craftsmen, and soldiers, they would all fancy themselves as patriotic farmers harkening back to their agrarian roots during the monarchy and the early republic. It is therefore not unusual that lexemes belonging to these semantic groups would have permeated their society to such an extent to have become indirect means for sensitive topics such as sex and anatomy.

The testicles and scrotum are other areas of male anatomy which had many names associated with them, though to not such a great extent as the penis. *Colei* was the basic obscene word for the testicles relatively equal to *mentula* based on *Priapeia* 29 above in that it could be used as both a

¹⁰ Sexual spoils and sexual punishments were common place in ancient warfare used to terrorize conquered populations. See sexual aggression.

neutral term or pejoratively, albeit less offensively (Adams 66). The etymology of *colei* is similarly obscure; Tucker's Etymological Dictionary of Latin relates it to *cohū* [yoke]. Again, some romance



Figure 2: This is a common yoke. Such implements would have been widely used during Roman times. Certainly, a yoke such as this is visually similar to testicles and thus lends additional evidence to the proposed etymology.

languages use this as a source for their modern word for testicles: the Italian *coglione* and French *couillon*. The etymology of the English term can be etymologically traced through the Latin *testiculus*, a diminutive of *testis* [witness], though by the middle republic and

beyond the etymological weight was no longer felt, thus making it a direct term, and *testiculus* and sometimes *testis* were both used as anatomical terms (Adams 68). The last major euphemism for testicles involved their personification as *gemini* [twins], which is not an uncommon euphemism in modern English for both testicles and breasts.

The Roman attitude toward the penis seems to have been much more open and accepting than toward female anatomy; perhaps this accounts for the disparity in number of terms used for each. There are more than 120 Latin terms that can mean penis or any accompanying male anatomy and that number excludes broad general terms such as adjectives paired with *membrum* [member], *locus* [place], and *pars* [part] (Adams 77). The social attitude of Romans toward the male genitalia can be seen in Martial:

*Audieris in quo, Flacce, balneo plausum,
Maronis illic esse **mentulam** scito.*

In the bath applause will be heard by you
I know that it is for Maro's **penis**.

(Martial, Epigrams, 9.33)

In the above quote, Martial recounts applause for a particularly well-endowed man. It is not uncommon for Latin authors to concern themselves with the size of a man's *mentula*, "which variously reflects pride, admiration, or envy" (Adams 78). It primarily falls to women and men who engage in homosexual acts to concern themselves with the size of a *mentula* for their prurient interests.

Female Anatomy

The direct term that the Romans used for the female anatomy was *cunnus*. The etymology of the term, as with some other direct means, is not very well accounted for. It has cognates across many of the Indo-European languages such as the Persian *kun* [anus] and *kos* [vulva] as well as the Greek *κύσθος* [female pudenda] (de Vann). The meaning of *cunnus* as described above is hard to equate to any common English word. *Cunnus* refers to the entire external structure of the female genitals, i.e. the vulva and anatomical structures associated it, the pubis mons, and the vagina.

The markedness of the word, like the other words that have been thus far discussed tended to vary from use to use. It was offensive in most situations, albeit not anywhere near as offensive as its four-letter English descendent, but could also be used in a variety of neutral situations. The example from *Priapeia* 29 above establishes *cunnus* as the female equivalent of *mentula*. Likewise Cicero only refers to *cunnus* cacemphatonically:

cum autem nobis non dicitur, sed nobiscum; quia si ita diceretur, obscaenius concurrerent litterae.

We don't say *cum nobis* ["with us"], but rather *nobiscum*; if we said it the other way, the letters would run together in a rather obscene way.

(Cicero, Epistulae ad Familiares 9.22)

In fast speech *cum nobis* would have run together to form *cunno bis*¹¹, a rather awkward addition to any phraseology. In this, it shows that Cicero actively tried to avoid using *cunnus*, even

¹¹ Ablative singular form of *cunnus*. *Cunno bis*: literally, twice with the pudenda.

accidentally due to its profanity. However, when *cunnus* was used as a term referring to males, it was significantly more obscene and had no neutral uses in that context.

Like *mentula*, the majority of the indirect Latin lexemes which express feminine anatomy come primarily from a select group of metaphors and euphemisms including animals, plants, caves, ditches, etc. However, again, there are two semantic groups which are particularly notable: Fields or other agricultural terms and household terms. Again, it is likely that these semantic groups are shared in common with a majority of other languages, “The frequency (in Latin and other languages) of the metaphor of the field, garden, meadow, etc. applied to the female pudenda reflects in part the external appearance of the organ, and in part the association felt between fertility of the field and that of females” (Adams 82-3). Naturally, this is a complementary semantic group to the euphemisms for male anatomy earlier, also involving agricultural terminology. Metaphorically, they serve as the feminine field for the masculine plow.

Both Vergil and Lucretius used *sulcus* [furrow] to represent the female pudenda with verbs of plowing. Examining the authors who used this euphemism is telling of not only the tone of the word itself but also how it was socially perceived. On account of the authors using it, both of whom had a reputation for being extraordinarily formal and producing high literature, the term itself would have had to be extraordinarily benign or tactfully poetic. This is a direct contrast to similar metaphors in English which are seen as particularly base. This would have further played into the Roman citizen as an idealized and patriotic farmer. Thus, the markedness of the term is significantly different than modern English equivalences which have no existing cultural context that is still relevant to daily life.

The other semantic group of note equates household objects with the female pudenda. Again, there are similar constructions in English, but unlike the last which equated feminine anatomy with a field to be plowed, metaphors using household objects are significantly more agreeable to modern sensibilities. Consider the English “a bun in the oven,” it carries a much more agreeable tone. In Latin,

words such as *foculus* [hearth] were equivalent to the female pudenda while words such as *olla* [oven] was equivalent to womb. Both are used in widely Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* as well as other authors such as in this *carmen* of Catullus' poetic corpus:

*Mentula moechatur. moechatur mentula certe.
hoc est quod dicunt, ipsa olera olla legit.*

A penis has sex. Of course a penis has sex!
This is what they say, the **oven** gathers its own spice!
(Catullus 94)

The final household metaphor is the *ara* [altar]; a generic term for any alter that is a raised platform, which could be equivalent to the vulva or pubis mons. The equivocation between altars and female anatomy occurs at *Priap.* 74 which, in a context melding human sexuality with religion, would have certainly equated sex with a religious right to be performed at an "altar".

In addition to *cunnus* and other metaphors which described female sexual anatomy as a whole, the Romans had terms for very specific parts. The clitoris and its functionality, for instance, was very well understood (Adams 98). Its direct term, *landica*, appears to have been extremely offensive and, again, it is only referred to cacemphantonically by Cicero as "*illam dicam*" which would have formed *landicam*, the accusative form (*fam.* 9.22). As Latin began to split into the romance languages, *Landica* fell out of use and was eventually replaced by a Greek appropriation *nymfe* and others like *nasum* [nose] (Adams 98). The only descendant of *landica* that exists is the Romanian *lindic*.

On the other hand, *uterus* [womb] survived in a number of romance languages. The original Latin meaning was bladder, but over time it evolved to encompass the womb. It may have descended from Proto-Indo-European roots simply meaning belly, such as the Sanskrit *udaram* [belly]. By the early republic *uterus* was used purely to mean womb alongside other more indirect terms such as *venter*

[belly, unborn child] and *alvus* [belly, hollow cavity]¹². *Uterus* seems to have developed a very specialized usage to denote the womb while the other two became less specialized and began to mean many different things not associated with anatomy.

In the early Empire – that is during the reign of the first emperor Augustus and following Julio-Claudians – a new word began to refer to the womb, *vulva* – a marked term with a slightly more derogatory sense. This term should not be confused with the English term, referring to the external female genitals. While the two originally referred to the same anatomical structure, *vulva* evolved via metonymy to the recognizable definition of vulva today. Adams states, “*vulva* was not used only of the womb in the early empire. It tended to shift its reference slightly to other parts of the female genitalia. In the vocabulary of popular speech non-rigid distinction is necessarily made between the womb, the internal genitalia, and the external pudenda” (Adams 103). Before the Roman Empire, *vulva* referred to an animal’s reproductive organs according to Pliny (Adams 101). It is likely that it came into popular usage referring to human genitals through vulgar usage thus accounting for its derogatory nature in Classical Latin.

The distinction between *uterus* and *vulva*, as one might suspect, is both stylistic and in the markedness of the term. *Uterus* is found in the works of authors such as Horace and Tacitus who have a distinctly high style. *Vulva*, on the other hand, only appears in satire and epigram which were primarily composed using every-day terms and language. After the empire, the feeling toward both terms seems to have shifted back and forth, perhaps accounting for why they both exist in English and one hasn’t completely replaced the other; for instance, during early Christian times, those who were translating the Bible into Latin from Greek took *vulva* as the proper term for the womb rather than *uterus*.

¹² Only relative definitions for *venter* and *alvus* are given because they have a number of different and irrelevant meanings to this context.

Finally, it is worth noting that *vagina* [sheath, scabbard] itself is a Latin term, though it was not used as an anatomical term in the Classical period. It was used primarily in its literal sense, as a place that one would sheath a sword. However, accounting for the weapon semantic group often used as indirect means for *mentula*, it is easily understandable how *vagina* became an indirect means of referring to the organ. The medical terminology followed well after the fall of the Roman Empire. While, indeed, it follows many of the same patterns demonstrated with the field and plowing euphemisms, namely metaphorical indirect means becoming direct over time in parity with some semantic functionality of an indirect term for the penis, this particular form is not representative of Republican nor Imperial culture.

The Anus

When considering human sexuality, we must not forget that the anus is a viable option in both heterosexual and homosexual intercourse. The Romans certainly did not shy away from anal sex. Indeed, during the wedding night it was common for couples to engage in anal sex rather than coitus (Johnson 81). However, considering the number of surviving descendants, more than twenty, the term must have been exceedingly popular in Vulgar Latin (Adams 110). However the anus itself was associated with a great deal of shaming and likewise its direct term, *culus*, was more derogatory than the other direct means discussed thus far. The etymology of *culus* is particularly obscure, though the word possibly is related to *obscurus* [dark, obscure] from the Proto-Indo-European **kuhl* [to cover] (de Vann).

Culus and its cognates had a common tendency to form a wide number of derivatives. For instance, *culibonia* is a nickname attested at CIL IV.8473 which shares similar characteristics to popular female names such as *Scribonia* or *Antonia* but with a distinctly derogatory sense (Adams 111). *Culibonia* may have been used by prostitutes to advertise to their customers that they offered anal sex. Julius Caesar, for his sexual transgressions, may have been given a similar name of *Sesquiculus*. There is no

doubt that these and similar constructions were intended to be humorous¹³, “the *culus* was clearly a topic of jokes both in ordinary speech and in certain varieties of literature (comedy, farce, and epigram)” (Adams 116-7).

Many of the semantic groups that tended to be used as indirect means to allude to the anus overlap with those of *cunnus*. *Culus* was commonly referred to as a fossa [ditch] as well as drawing from a number of other agricultural terms to compliment a man’s plow. The difference between a ditch and a furrow is certainly apparent in the fertility and sanitary ideas behind the two terms. Moreover, *culus* could have been directly referred to as *cunnus*, this would have been particularly offensive when applied to males as it implies effeminacy or that they would be playing the passive partner in a homosexual relationship¹⁴.

The anus quite often was referred to indirectly by *anus* [ring]. The tone of this word was significantly more palatable to a more formal Latin audience and, indeed, it was what eventually made its way down through medical writings and the like to many modern romance languages virtually unchanged. There were other names used for the anus in medical writings, such as *sedes* [buttocks] or *inferior guttur* [lower throat] but anus retained its polite euphemistic tone through the entirety of the republic and empire, much longer than some other indirect means which eventually became direct, perhaps on account of the wide usage of its other meanings.

Penetrative Sex

For the purposes of this thesis, penetrative sex falls into two categories: vaginal and anal. Both have similarities which were lightly touched upon earlier. Oral sex, in order to exemplify the social nuances inherent in different acts, will be examined in the next section.

¹³ See Sexual Humor

¹⁴ See Chapter 2 for more information of the power roles in male homosexuality and how they relate to the social context of sex.

The term that is most often used for sex was *futuo* [fuck]. The etymology seems to have come from proto-Latin **futo* [strike, beat] as a reference to the repetitive striking motion of the act itself and is related to *refuto* [oppose] and *confuto* [restrain]. It is not uncommon for verbs of striking or beating to be used in place of sexual verbs; consider Petronius:

*Non taces, nocturne **percussor**, qui
ne tum quidem, cum fortiter
faceres, cum pura muliere **pugnasti***

Shut up, you night-time **stabber**! Even when you were at your best you never managed to **lay** a decent woman!

(Petronius, *Satyricon* 9.9)

Percussor [one who stabs or strikes], as used in the passage quoted above, or the verbal form *percutio* [strike or pierce through] are common substitutions for verbs which overtly refer to sex. Similarly, *pugnasti* [fight] fills a similar role. Furthermore, they significantly expanded euphemistic currency for sexual acts because *mentula* is often indirectly referred to as a weapon or sharp object for beating or, in this case, stabbing. However, *futuo* does not seem to have any other more basic meanings along these lines in classical Latin. Thus, one would never see it in the context where it would be used to literally strike.

In a construction along similar lines as occurred with *culus*, *futuo* occurs in a number of derivatives such as *defutuo* [fucked out, sexually exhaust i.e. unable to have more sex]. This derivative is generally applied to a person or body part:

*Ameana puella **defututa***



Figure 3: This position, similar to what modern audiences would call the missionary position, is what the Romans would have equated with *futuo*.

*tota milia me decem poposcit,
Ista turpiculo puella naso,
decoctoris amica Formiani.*

Ameana, a girl having been **fucked out**
Begs me for all of ten thousand,
That girl with the ugly little nose¹⁵,
The girlfriend of bankrupt Formian.
(Catullus 41)

Here *defutuo* is applied to a girl, but it could have just as easily been applied to a *cunnus* or a *mentula*. Such constructions would have been common in Vulgar Latin and had the distinct flavor of either lower class citizens or prostitutes (Adams 120).

However, it ought to be noted that *futuo* is not generally used in an aggressive or insulting way, “it is often used neutrally or even affectionately when the circumstances or addressee are such that euphemism was not called for (as in exchanges between whores and their clients)” (Adams 119-20). Consider the following graffiti advertisement for a prostitute:

*siqui **future** volet, Atticen quaerat*

If anyone wants **to fuck**, they should ask Attica
(CIL 4.1751)

This use is not particularly emotive, it is simply a technical term used in brothels by both clients and prostitutes. Likewise, “in male boasts, *futuo* is chosen merely as the proper designation of an act or acts indicative of the subject’s virility. The writer scarcely sees himself as humiliating his partner, whose identity is of no consequence” (Adams 120). Essentially, if a Latin speaker wanted to specifically target someone for humiliation or verbal aggression, *futuo* is not the verb he would use.

¹⁵ In this sexual context, it is quite likely nose could mean clitoris and as such Catullus might be referring to Ameana as being quite promiscuous as excessive sex was thought to alter the appearance of the genitals and therefore used up.

Pedico [sodomize], on the other hand, would serve the purpose for sexual aggression quite well. The etymology of *pedico* coming from the Greek παιδικός [child] is not particularly surprising; it seems to have been the tendency of classical Latin to take words with a strong relation to homosexuality from Greek¹⁶ (Adams 123). *Pedico* was most certainly conceived of as a direct term, one of a very offensive tenor at that. It is one which might be found in association with master-slave relationships, homosexuality, and sexual threats¹⁷.

All of the terms discussed thus far deal only with the active partner and most commonly, with a few extraordinarily rare exceptions, they specifically deal with a male active partner. Much of the sexual language of the Romans specified both gender and role. There are two words which apply to the passive partners: *criso*, defined as the grinding movements of the female passive partner, and *ceveo*, defined as the grinding movements of the male passive partner. These words form the most common contrasts to the active roles, more frequently *criso* with *futuo* and *ceveo* with *pedico* based on the implications of the verbs. However, they seem to be significantly less obscene than their counterparts, as they were included in the works of authors such as Juvenal who avoided other obscenities. It is likely that referring indirectly to the act through motions rather than directly through the role of the passive partner was more palatable (Adams 137). Coding for such a functional domain is certainly a purpose one might expect from this use of indirect means.

Even less offensive to the Roman mind was the metaphor of plowing or sowing the fields, “there is no evidence from [their] use or distribution that [they were] vulgar or offensive in tone¹⁸” (Adams 154). Plautus was more than willing to use *aro* [plow], *arvus* [arable land], and *ager* [field] as well as their cognates and derivatives as innuendos in his comedies:

¹⁶ Other examples include *cinaedus* [sodomite], *catamitus* [catamite], and *pathicus* [passive partner]

¹⁷ For examples and further information, see the Sexual Aggression section.

¹⁸ Adams specifically refers to plowing in this quote, but later the same assumption is applied to sowing as well.

*Non **arvos** hic, sed pascuost ager: si **arationes**
habituris, qui **arari** solent, ad pueros ire meliust.*

There's no **field** for plowing here, just a pasture: if **plowing**
is what you're after, better go to those who usually get **plowed** – the boys!

(Plautus, *Truculentus*, 149-50)

Even though this appears in a comedy and is of questionable content to a modern reader, the Romans would not have been offended by it. In this case, what the roman audience would have found funny about this situation was the double meaning in the words. Not only does the use of plowing as indirect means allow for such double talk but had the wording been more offensive, the humor would have been diminished¹⁹.

Finally, one of the more unusual terms which draws important connections between roman life and the modern day is the use of verbs associated with riding as sexual verbs. The verb for this is *sedeo* [sit] but when applied sexually can mean ride for both female and male penetrated partners. These partners may be referred to as the *eques* [horseman, rider]. Indeed, these verbs seem to imply the penetrator on his back with his partner sitting on top of him, an act which would have only been performed as a special concession (Adams 165). When compared to modern popularity, namely that such positions are quite popular, it shows a striking difference in the importance of sexual roles in the Roman mind (Crooks 244).

Oral Sex

Oral sex is generally considered to be a shameful act for those who are performing it. Parallels can be drawn between oral sex and male homosexuality in that it is acceptable for only the active partner, in this case on who the oral sex is being performed, while it is overwhelmingly shameful for

¹⁹ For more information on humor and sex, please refer to the Sexual Humor section.

passive, or in this case the one giving oral sex. It is for that reason, much like homosexuality, that there are a number of threats associated with oral sex, specifically *irrumo* [forcible oral sex]²⁰.

Irrumo is one of the most obscene words that I have discussed thus far. It started as indirect means, originally a derivative of *in + rumis* [treat] literally meaning to “put in the treat.” This etymology is exemplary of a number of other sexual terms, especially of those which refer to oral stimulation of some kind, to be derived from terms related to eating. In classical Latin it was definitely a case of direct means, but in earlier times when it was indirect, it would have certainly also been marked as abusive particularly because of the sarcastic use of treat. Even though *irrumo* had an extremely offensive tenor, it was a popular joke to threaten to silence someone or, here in Martial, it serves as a humorous warning:

*Subdola famosae moneo fuge retia moechae,
Levior o conchis, Galle, Cytheriacis.
Confidis natibus? non est pedico maritus:
Quae faciat duo sunt: **irrumat** aut futuit.*

I warn you, flee the cunning net of the famous adultress,
oh Gaullus, smoother than the shells of venus.
Do you rely on your ass? Her husband is not an ass-fucker,
There are two things that he does: **fucks faces** or women.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 2.4)

Language such as this is only found in genres such as epigram or in the poetry of Catullus, but it is often alluded to through indirect means in a much wider variety of works. The threat of *irrumo* is representative of a common sexual fear among the Romans.

Fello [suck], unlike *irrumo*, was not particularly offensive. The word certainly was direct in classical Latin, but interestingly had a significant number of neutral uses. Surviving reflexes in romance

²⁰ See Catullus 16 in Sexual Aggression

language, “suggest that the verb had a lingering tendency to be used in an innocent sense. But in extant Latin it largely specialized in the sexual meaning” (Adams 130). Further, based on graffiti and other surviving sources, *fello* was the technical term that was used among prostitutes, they would offer fellatio rather than *irrumatio*. There was still a perceived social shame associated with *fello*, not all prostitutes offered fellatio, and those that did charged more than for other acts like *futuo*. Thus, one can conclude that *fello* was still significantly shameful, enough so to double the costs of services or more.

Perhaps the distinction between *fello* and *irrumo* was the willingness of the one performing oral sex. There is a small group of texts that, when discussing oral sex, exemplify the different Roman conceptions of both *fello* and *irrumo*. In this passage Martial speaks of getting revenge on a man through *irrumo* but the last line of the epigram reveals why this might be problematic:

Nec vindicari, Rufe, possumus: fellat.

Nor are we able, Rufus, to be avenged: **he sucks**.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 3.82)

The use of *fellat* in this line implies the man they wish to get revenge on enjoys performing fellatio and therefore subjecting him to *irrumo* as punishment would not have the intended punitive goals. *irrumo* doesn't hold the same weight to a fellator as it would to others, however being marked as a fellator in itself was shameful.

Lingo [lick] is an indirect term that is used for oral sex which conveys yet another alternative marked sense. It is by far the least obscene of the three verbs related to oral sex covered here, simply because it was used primarily in neutral contexts, though it might have acquired a slightly distasteful



Figure 4: Fresco at Pompeii. This depicts an act of *cunnilingus* probably with a prostitute. It was rather uncommon for a prostitute either male or female to offer such services, but it was an act that a prostitute could charge significantly more for than *futuo*.

connotation on account of the occasional sexual usage (Adams 134). *Irrumo* and *fello* automatically imply that *mentula* is the direct object of the verb. *Lingo*, on the other hand, is more often paired with *cunnus* which is the source of the modern term for the oral stimulation of female genitals, *cunnilingus*.

These three verbs are exemplary of how direct and indirect means can be used to examine the social and cultural context of

sensitive subjects like sex and how they evolve over time. *Irrumo* etymologically began as an indirect term, but it was extremely marked, so much so that it lost its other potentially benign meanings²¹ and became a direct term. *Fello* also started as an indirect term, but did not possess the extreme markedness of *irrumo*. As *fello* slowly evolved to become more direct, it retained a number of neutral meaning and became a middle-of-the-road term for oral sex. Finally, *lingo* retained its indirect nature. Used both in sexual and non-sexual situations, *lingo* is easily the softest term. Linguistic evolution often follows cultural changes. Here are three terms which describe an act which became culturally perceived as dirty and shameful, thus the Latin language evolved to encompass these perceptions. The words which best fit the cultural trends in their initial indirect forms therefore evolved and specialized to become direct means, where others retained their indirectness and despecialized.

Miscellany

The information about anatomy and acts above is by no means exhaustive, however they provide context for some of the most common uses and constructions for expressing sexual ideas and

²¹ i.e. literally giving someone a treat.

provide a sense of how sexual linguistics both shape and are shaped by Roman culture. However, there remains a small handful of brief topics which have not been discussed thus far - namely orgasm, ejaculation. Respectively, these both make sex pleasurable and productive.

Like English, there were a number of euphemisms which concisely refer to the male orgasm, however not many referring to the female orgasm. Latin has a number of constructions which can be construed as reaching a goal, constructed as a verb or participle + *finem*²² [finish, goal], which is most equated with the common English vulgarism 'cumming' (Adams 144). However, *finis* was used in a number of euphemisms both sexual and benign and therefore retained its non-specialized meaning. It fell to the verbs or their participles to specialize to develop a function to specifically refer to an orgasm. There were many, which did not specialize, like *facio* [make, do], but *patro* [accomplish, ejaculate] did specialize and became a direct term. It was originally used euphemistically as the etymology reveals – it is related to *pater* [father] and so a more etymologically correct definition would be 'to father' (de Vann). The use of these terms eventually would wane in favor of the more palatable Greek origins of orgasm from *ὀργάω* [Ripen, swell, aroused].

Ejaculation itself, which unlike today was not medically distinct from orgasm, was often referred to as urination. It is important to note that the Romans distinguished between urine and semen and that it was not some primitive confusion of the functions of bodily fluids as attested in book IV of *De Rerum Natura* by Lucretius, who discusses the condition of semen [seed] in detail and how its thickness or lack thereof can lead to male sterility²³. Rather, it is likely that *meio* [urinate] remained in common use simply as a vulgarism, as attested by its frequency in satire and epigram (Adams 142). Ejaculate, like its romance language cognates, comes from the Latin indirect means of *ex-* [out] and *iaculor* [throw].

²² Accusative singular form of *finis*

²³ Lines 1233 - 1247

Purposes of Sexually Charged Language

The sections above have established the meanings, both pragmatic and semantic, of the basic building blocks of sexual communication. Every use of sexually charged expressions in most languages can be relegated to one of five categories. J. N. Adams lists four primary reasons why sex finds its way into language: Apotropaic, Sexual Aggression, Humor, and Titillation. There is a fifth, sexual catharsis, which Adams doesn't mention, perhaps because in some instances it overlaps with the four functional categories he established. Even if this is the case, it and the other four, have a vital part to play in any consideration of why one might use sexual language.

Apotropaic Traditions and Sex

Cultures around the world, not just Rome, exhibit traditions which involve invoking obscenity, often those of a sexual nature, in order to ward off malignant spirits or what is commonly referred to as the evil eye. Such traditions are categorized by anthropologists as apotropaic traditions, from the Greek roots *απο-* [away] and *τρέπω* [turn]. Quite literally, it was believed that evoking a verse, gesture, or image which had some religious or obscene qualities would force evil spirits to turn away. Apotropaic traditions were quite common in the Mediterranean, including Rome.

Just as it is now, as apotropaic traditions evolved with society, the memory of their original purpose tended to fade. Today, people tend to forget that the gargoyles which adorn cathedrals originally served to protect rather than simply serve as macabre decoration, so too did the Romans forget some of their original functionality of apotropaic traditions over time. Eventually the Romans all together forgot, or at the very least became desensitized to, the apotropaic roots of some of their traditions. Again, similar occurrences happen in English. People tend not to notice that English expletives like “fuck!” or “shit!” or “God damn it!” are intrinsically apotropaic. Forgotten or remembered, such traditions are invaluable for a discourse on Roman sexuality.

The bulla is one example of an apotropaic tradition, albeit visual rather than spoken, which used sexual imagery to ward off evil influences. The bulla was a small locket, either phallic shaped or containing a phallus, which Roman boys would wear until they assumed the toga virilis and were declared men. It was given to boys nine days



Figure 5: 1-3rd century CE Bronze apotropaic amulet from Spain. This amulet depicts a phallus to the right, a *ficus manus* (closed fist – obscene symbol) to the left and a complete set of male genitals at the bottom.

after their birth in conjunction with their *Lustratio*, a purification ritual culminating in their naming. The ritual itself was meant to expel evil spirits lingering from his birth and ward off any malignant influences in his youth, the bulla is a physical representation of this. Plutarch suggests that at one point the bulla was designed to mark a free Roman from those of lesser social status and therefore designate those without bullae as legal for other men to engage in sexual acts with (Plutarch, *Questions* 101). The bulla also maintained a use after the boy reached majority; it was placed as an offering to his household gods but during significant life events a man might reassume his boyhood bulla to invoke the same apotropaic protections.

In particular, triumphs were events where a conquering triumphator might dawn his bulla. The triumph itself was a ritual, although it eventually became a celebration with ritualistic aspects, invoking many apotropaic aspects both visual and verbal. In addition to the triumphator's bulla which protected him from evil, a phallus was attached to the bottom of the triumphator's chariot as a *medicus invidiae* – a prophylactic against the envious desires of other men (Adams 4). Additionally, ribaldic songs were chanted by the triumphator's troops during the precession. Famously, during Caesar's Gallic triumph in

45 BCE his troops made light of the scandal which marred his youth, namely that he may have been the passive partner in a relationship with the Bithian king Nicomedes. The ribaldic song was preserved by Suetonius, they chanted:

*Gallias Caesar **subegit**, Nicomedes Caesarem:
Ecce Caesar nunc triumphat qui **subegit** Gallias
Nicomedes non triumphat qui **subegit** Caesarem*
(Suetonius, *Life of Julius Caesar*, 49.4)

The sexual innuendo in this passage is very overt but tends to be glossed over by modern translators. The Latin word *subegit*, from the same semantic group as *aro*, can mean many things: bring or get under, plow, sharpen, or subjugate. This is an example of indirect means used in apotropaic traditions, in this case it contextually serves as a double entendre. In order to express this, some liberties were taken to preserve the sexual innuendo:

Caesar screwed the Gauls, Nicomedes screwed Caesar:
Look! Caesar is now a Triumphator, he who reined in the Gauls!
Yet Nicomedes does not get his victory, he who reined in Caesar!
(Suetonius, *Life of Julius Caesar*, 49.4)

The song implies much more than Graves' English translation puts it, "Nicomedes wears no laurels, though the greatest of the three." It implies that Nicomedes, through his sexual conquest of Caesar, was the greatest conqueror of all. Ribald songs such as this one which made light of the situation at the expense of the triumphator were present many of the attestations of triumphs. Adams and others postulate that though the original function of the songs had been lost to time and that they originally served apotropaic purposes just as the phallic symbols did (Adams 7). By Caesar's time, just as with other things like Roman wedding songs, the ribaldry of the triumph had evolved from apotropaic origins to become a tradition which served more as humor and entertainment.

In the Greek and Roman world wedding songs were designed to impart bride and groom with good fortune. They came in two varieties: the *hymenaios*, were songs sung to the god of marriage

ceremonies during the bride's procession to groom's house, and the *epithalamium*, literally meaning over the wedding bed, were songs sung at the threshold of the marital chambers. Both invoke sexual themes for an apotropaic effect. *Hymenaios* invoked the god Hymen, the belief being that if he was not present at a marriage it would be disastrous. One tradition recounts the story of Hymen's own mortal wedding where he was slain on his wedding night. The *epithalamium* were songs which expressed the ideal image of a married couple: loving but also constrained to strict socially imposed roles (Johnson 61). Both were originally erotic in nature but became significantly more obscene and graphic during Roman times. Over time, the excessive expression of sexually charged themes changed the role of these songs from the apotropaic to a humorous facet of the wedding tradition in the spirit of celebration.

When considering when sexually charged language is used in apotropaic traditions it is important to remember that the role of such traditions was to turn away evil. Therefore, one would expect that more direct means or negatively marked indirect means would be used in purely apotropaic traditions. It is very much a case of form following function. Visual depictions, gestures, or art with an apotropaic function, such as the phalluses present in a triumph, can generally be considered more direct. That said, as an apotropaic tradition evolves it will take on more indirect means. In the Ribaldic song sung at Caesar's triumph above, *subegit* could be translated in an overtly sexual manner, but it actually falls in to indirect means; *subegit* can only be assigned a sexual characteristic based only in this or similar context as is an expected characteristic of indirect means. In this, traditions which evolved from apotropaic traditions will be composed of both direct and indirect means.

Apotropaic traditions served an important role in Roman culture and it is important to recognize the degree that they permeated Roman society. Even if, over time, they began to lose their ritualistic properties and took on new functions, apotropaic rituals were present from the personal and familial level – bullae, weddings, and others – all the way up to matters of state. Oftentimes matters of state and

matters of religion were indistinguishable. Even if these new functions evolved to become no longer apotropaic, they still preserved a purpose for people to use sexually charged language.

Lewd Humor

In direct contrast to apotropaic traditions, lewd humor is relatively easy for a modern audience to recognize. Dirty jokes and sexual humor are some of the more common modern uses of sexually charged language. Likewise, Romans also enjoyed sexual humor. It was present in comedies, in a vast array of writings, and in every-day conversation.

As was discussed earlier, there are a number of traditions that began as apotropaic and were transformed over time to take on a humorous aspect. The ribaldic songs of the Roman triumph during Caesar's time certainly did not fulfil any ritualistic function but were instead sung purely for enjoyment and the humor derived from the soldiers embarrassing their commander. Likewise wedding songs were enjoyed not for their protective properties, as they had been in the past, but instead were an institutionalized part of weddings purely for their festive nature.

Saturnalia was a week long holiday held in mid-December where the strictness of Roman social norms was completely overturned. Many poets and scholars wrote about Saturnalia. Martial, a prolific writer of humorous works often of a sexual nature, believes that Saturnalia is a time for such lewd comedy:

Lay aside for a while your austere gravity, and while December, sporting with attractive games, resounds on every side with the boxes of hazard, and plays at tropa with-fraudulent dice, accord some indulgence to my muse, and read not with severe but with cheerful countenance my little books, abounding with jocular pleasantries.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 4.14)

Because of the nature of the Saturnalia celebration, such humor certainly would not have been misplaced. It was a celebration marked by freedom, Horace refers to it as *Libertas Decembri* (sat 2.7) or December Liberty. A particularly important aspect of this holiday was the freedom of speech, both

between master and slave and among citizens. During Saturnalia people were not only allowed to say what they wanted but were encouraged to do so. Certainly sexual humor was part of this.

Saturnalia, triumphs and weddings were not every day occurrences in the Roman world. Romans consumed sexual humor in a much more leisurely manner on a regular basis. In Martial's epigrams, he comments that his writings are meant to invoke laughter. He writes:

But I wish the present little book to laugh from one end to the other, and to be more free in its language than any of my books; to be redolent of wine, and not ashamed of being greased with the rich unguents of Cosmus; a book to make sport for boys, and to make love to girls; and to speak, without disguise, of that by respecting which men are generated.

(Martial, Epigrams 11.15)

The writings of Martial would have been aimed at a primarily upper class audience, to whom his epigrams would have been read as entertainment, but it stands to reason that all strata of Roman society would have both created and enjoyed similar humor even if it had not been preserved. The light-heartedness and sexual license that is seen in the writings of Martial serves to characterize not only what Romans found enjoyable but, as his writings are primarily satirical, what kind of scandalous activities Romans were fond of engaging in.

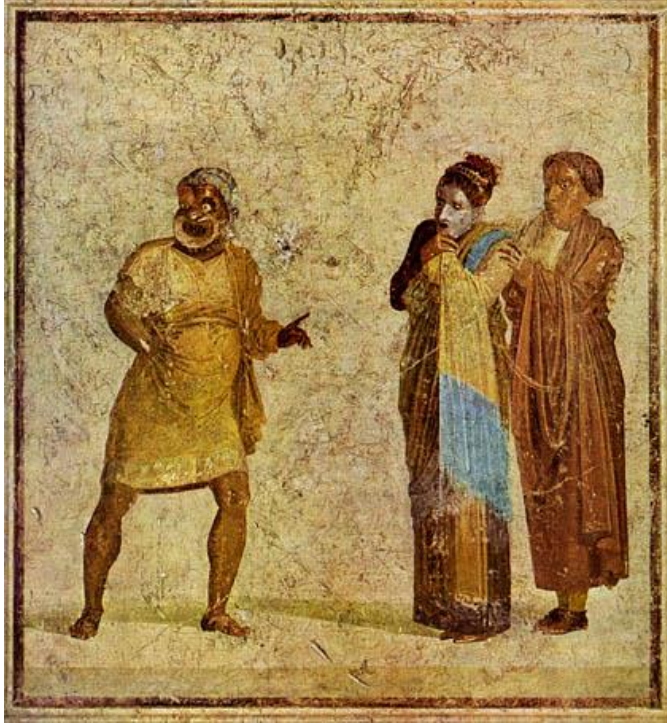


Figure 6: Comedies generally used stock characters that conveyed sexual traits such as the over-sexed slave (left), the pimp, or the prostitute.

Sexual humor tends only rarely to take on direct means and only when such an acrid term was necessary for humor, such as *irrumo*. Indirect means form the base of nearly all sexual humor on account of the unique properties that indirect language imparts, namely the possibility to be misunderstood. A great number of comedies rely on characters misunderstanding context. For instance, in the *Menaechmi Brothers*, a play by Plautus, a twin makes trouble for his brother in both sexual and non-sexual

scenarios. Much of the play is knotted up in misunderstandings between the characters, often times brought on with innuendo and double talk. Thus, as the play progresses, humor is derived from these indirect constructions taken out of context or delivered to the wrong twin by the wife, courtesan, or slave. Many of the stock characters in Roman Comedy are heavily associated with sex: wives, prostitutes, pimps, and amorous slaves thus adding more nuances to the sexual undertones.

Sexual Aggression

At times, humor has the tendency to offend. Indeed, it is offensiveness, rather than misunderstanding, from which the humor sometimes is derived. However, occasionally the line between humor and offensiveness becomes unclear. It is at this point that humor becomes aggressive. Sexual aggression comes in many forms and that which might have been intended to be humorous is only one of them. Sexual themes generally seem to be sensitive subjects both now and in Roman times. It was

not uncommon for people to insult or threaten each other with sexual threats in Rome, which on account of their nature, were all the more threatening.

Historically speaking, in Greek and Roman culture there is a precedent of sexually motivated punishment. For most of Roman history, the raping of the inhabitants of a conquered city, although horrifying to modern ethical standards, was considered just another spoil of war. The same mindset carried over to everyday Roman life. It was not uncommon for a master to abuse his slaves sexually or at the very least to threaten abuse. Such threats even occurred between the Roman elite. One of the most famous sexual threats comes in a poem written by Catullus:

Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo
Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi,
qui me ex cersiculis meis putastis,
quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum.

I will **fuck your ass** and I will **fuck your face**,
degenerate Aurelius and perverted Furius,
who think, on account of my poems,
because they are tender, I have no shame.

(Catullus 16)

The poem continues on, but this first sentence illustrates the overt sexual threat. This is, perhaps, one of the most graphic extant pieces of surviving Latin literature.

It was not uncommon that threats as seen above would revolve around either being orally or anally penetrated as both acts were considered extraordinarily shameful for the passive partner. The *Priapeia* contains a number of poems that threaten sexual violence against those who commit crimes against Priapus. One such passage characterizes the severity of receiving such sexual acts:

You, who are not thinking straight and have evil
thoughts about stealing from this garden,
you'll be arse-fucked by this arse-fucking prick.
But if so weighty and grievous a punishment

has no effect, I will touch you in higher places.

(*Priapeia* 28, TR: Johnson)

This poem proposes being the penetrated partner in anal sex to be a “weighty and grievous punishment,” but euphemistically proposes an even greater punishment, which is to be orally raped, i.e. *irrumare*. As can be seen in the previous examples, sexual aggression does not shy away from using very direct and offensive means while only using indirect means when they can be marked to be even more offensive to the listener. *Pedico* and *irrumo* are prime examples used in the two passages above of vocabulary so particularly offensive that it is generally only found in sexually aggressive discourse.

Direct threats are not the only sexual violence in which Romans engaged. In a much broader sense of the term, violence, which can also be harm to one’s own character, was used *ad nauseam* in Roman politics. In *Pro Caelio*, a speech Cicero delivered in defense of one of his former students, a woman named Clodia, who

was the architect of many of the accusations in the case, was defamed as a prostitute for her sexually promiscuous lifestyle. Such accusations would have been devastating to a woman of Clodia’s status.

Prostitutes were considered *infames*, or people who had a less-than-palatable reputation. *Infames* were not conceded certain legal protections and were not allowed to testify in court. Marking Clodia as a



Figure 7: *Tarquin and Lucretia*, Tiziano Vecellio - 1571. This Renaissance painting depicts the rape of Lucretia, the act of sexual violence which catalyzed the overthrow of the Roman monarchy.

potential *infamis* was a strategic use of sexual violence meted out by Cicero for the benefit his student who, thanks in part to this act, was acquitted of all charges.

Titillation

Titillation is perhaps the most straight-forward of the purposes why someone might use sexually charged language: it arouses their prurient interest. In modern society we tend to delegate titillation to a small subgroup of what we might see as obscene, that is either pornography or erotica. Authors such as Catullus and Martial composed their work as much to stimulate sexual desire as to entertain.

Consider justification Catullus gave in his poetry:

*qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem
si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici
et quod **pruriat incitare** possunt*

[my verses] which indeed have taste and charm
if they are delicate and a little soft
and because they are able to **incite a longing**
[... you think me less of a man?]

(Catullus 16)

Recall, from the earlier part of this *carmen*, where Catullus is threatening sexual violence against his peers on account of their criticisms of his poetry, namely that his verses are delicate and without shame. This part of the poem justifies the reasons, namely that it his poetry produces a longing. *Puriat* [itch, longing], is the polite word that Romans would have used for sexual arousal and is likely related with *pruna* [burning coals] from Proto-Indo-European **prews-* [burn] (de Vann). This imagery is similar to what one might expect today along the lines of burning with lust or desire. This word survives in the English prurient, describing a sexual desire or interest. In his epigrams Martial also explains the titillative pleasure one might receive from reading his epigrams:

... sed hi libelli
tamquam coniugibus suis mariti

non possunt sine mentula placere

... but these small books,
just as the spouse you married,
are not able to please without a penis.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 1.35.3-5)

This passage is more graphic than the Catullus passage above, but shows that sexual language plays upon the pleasures of sex and fulfils a similar role in society as erotic literature does today.

For the romans, it was a fine line distinguishing between the prurient and the other uses of sexual language. Certainly, it was not quite as cut and dry as sexuality can be construed today, where nudity and obscenity, even artistically, can easily be condemned as pornographic. For the romans, nudity in art and statuary was symbolic of heroes, phallic statues and trinkets were protective, and sexual tension and misunderstandings were humorous. While these may serve the secondary goal to arouse, pure titillation came in a much more specific category of communication, pornographic artwork, primarily depicting an actual scene of intercourse would have been common in the homes of the wealthy and the brothels. Lower class citizens would have gotten their titillation from spoken word or graffiti.

Sexual Catharsis

Sexual catharsis was not mentioned by Adams as one of the reasons why the Romans would have used sexually charged language, perhaps because it has a great deal of overlap between the other modes of sexual expression, but it is important when considering the Roman mindset. In the field of psychology, catharsis is a form of release; it is defined as the process of venting pent up negative emotions. The roots of the Theory of Cathartic Release were laid down by Freud and very closely associated with sexuality.

Existing in a society forces humans to repress their most primal instincts in order to coexist with others. Feelings like anger, pleasure, desire, and fear are inherently repressed in a society; having an outlet by which to express them leads to a vastly improved mental state of being. Each of the reasons

to use sexually charged language above provides not only a venue to vent pent-up sexual frustration but also provides a means to achieve some other cathartic goal. Apotropaic traditions not only account for some modicum of sexual catharsis but are also cathartic against fears that might be prevalent in the society, such as the evil eye. Performing apotropaic rituals gives a mental sense of safety and relieves the stress that fear may have caused.

Sexual catharsis was not uncommon in the ancient world. It is perhaps best exemplified in Greek old comedy, which was known for its particularly obscene nature:

The primary effect of obscenity on the audience was to allow an unrestricted exposure of what was usually hidden... such exposure in real life would have been considered unacceptable aggression, but placed on the stage they became permissible channels for the audience's sexual aggressiveness, a kind of catharsis of sexual feelings and a kind of wish fulfilment.

(Henderson, 1991)

Certainly, this line of logic applies not only to Roman comedy, such as the *Menaechmi Brothers* by Plautus which makes light of the sexual tension between wives and courtesans to their men, but also to titillation. By exposing a slice of Roman life to public scrutiny, it served the purpose to entertain but also to be cathartic through socially acceptable venues. Aggression, on the other hand, was catharsis through less than acceptable venues.

By understanding the cathartic value that even a work of fiction might have, one can ascertain the corresponding social circumstances which would have ran parallel to the work. Perhaps it is overt like Catullus 16 or perhaps it is hidden beneath rite and ritual like the bulla, but catharsis is a necessary consideration for any society and helps definitively answer why a tradition evolved to be the way it is as well as illuminate a wealth of cultural information: what did the Romans fear, what were they aroused by, what were their desires. The theory of Catharsis plays a vital bridge between what one might see on a page to what the social tenor was like.

Applied Linguistics and Roman Graffiti



Figure 8: Graffiti at the Lupanar. Although it is often hard to make out, the graffiti preserved at Pompeii is an invaluable window into the life of a lower class Roman.

As demonstrated above, linguistic methodologies such as indirect means, markedness, etymology, and other provide a wealth of social information to the particularly discerning reader. This supplementary information would have been immediately accessible and understandable

to a native speaker. However, there are no remaining native Latin speakers and therefore in order to ascertain a more precise meaning via translation as well as an increased understanding of Roman culture, such techniques are invaluable. That said, even with all of the tools at a Latinist's disposal, we can only ever hope to recover a small fraction of a full understanding of the Roman culture as it was to Romans. Much of the written corpus has been lost and certainly all of the spoken communication has as well. Unfortunately, because of what has survived it makes it very difficult to get a view of the social lives of the demographic subsets that are not part of our extant linguistic transmission, primarily the poor, unless it is through the eyes of another observer.

There is, however, one place which the spoken words of every-day life are preserved: Graffiti. Graffiti generally doesn't have the best grammar with a number of syntax and spelling errors but it is representative of the most direct means available to the speakers at the time. It is the essence of the vulgate; it was what the Roman people were speaking to each other rather than the formal publications which have made up most of the previous examples. It is important to note that Graffiti certainly isn't a

catch-all solution to uncovering the social sex lives of every day citizens because sexual graffiti primarily falls into only three of the five categories above: aggression, titillation, and catharsis. Humor of a sexual nature in graffiti is present, but it is rarer or of a nature which makes it functionally indistinguishable from aggression. Apotropaic graffiti is the least represented of all. Perhaps this distribution shows the priorities of those whom are writing the graffiti. It seems reasonable to suspect that their daily lives primarily revolved around aggression which might be humorous, titillation, and the need for catharsis rather than a need for the apotropaic.

Aggressive graffiti, like aggressive sexual language in general, tends to use verbs such as *irrumo* and *pedico* and also tends to be short. A construction such as *irruma* or *Pedica*²⁴ + accusative direct object tended to be common in graffiti which would cognate with the English “fuck” + object. Like English, Latin could alter the constructions. One such example is a threat to a specific person:

*Batacare, te **pidicaro***²⁵.

Batacarus, I will **fuck you**.

(CIL 4.2254)

Names that are found in graffiti are particularly hard to match with any historical figure unless they are quite famous, such as Caesar. Therefore, most constructions such as these are unhelpful for characterizing the social climate of Rome but do reveal certain phonetic changes which may have occurred when spelling a word phonetically with intonated vowel quantity changes rather than properly.

Other aggressive graffiti shows the fine line between aggression and humor:

*amat qui scribit, pedicatur qui legit,
qui auscultat prurit, pathicus est qui praeterit.
ursi me comedant et ego verpa qui lego.*

The writer loves, the reader gets ass fucked,

²⁴ imperative

²⁵ Misspelling of *pedico*.

the hearer itches, the passerby plays the woman.

May bears eat me and I who read eat a penis.

(CIL 4.2360)

The tone is obviously very derogatory and aggressive, but certainly intended to be humorous. Much of the sexual humor in Latin graffiti comes in humorous sexual threats or sexual insults.

Titillative graffiti is a rather broad category. Most of this type of graffiti comes in the form of prostitution ads such as the one for Attica above. In a Roman city brothels and other places one might hire a prostitute were quite numerous. Pompeii was a rather small port town and yet had more than 100 such establishments. Some of the graffiti at one of the best surviving Pompeiian, the *Lupanar* [den of the she-wolf], serves as both an advertisement and titillation:

hic ego puellas multas futui

here I fucked many girls

(CIL 4.2175)

felix bene futuis

You lucky guy, you got a good fuck

(CIL 4.2176)

Each of these serves their purpose for titillation, but also achieve their secondary goal of attracting men. Unlike the very basic aggressive graffiti, these do characterize the men that would frequent these brothels, namely that they particularly cared about quantity and quality which a crib – a small closet like room serving one or two prostitutes – simply could not provide.

Finally, cathartic graffiti comes in many forms just as all cathartic language tends to overlap with the other purposes of using sexually charged language. It is rather objective to tell what is cathartic or not. Consider the purpose of the following:

Malim me amici fellent quam inimici irrument.

I would rather have my friends suck me than my enemies face fuck me.

(CIL 4.10030)

This piece of graffiti seems to encompass at least three of the purposes for using sexually charged language, it is humorous and it is a little aggressive in subject matter but it is wholly cathartic. This inscription merely expresses a fear that the writer had, which does infinitely more to characterize society as a whole than the other purposes of graffiti. It expresses the fear of being a passive partner in oral sex at lower strata of society just as the upper class.

Graffiti shows that indeed, as expected, the most direct means discussed above as determined by their etymologies remain direct means in the lower classes while other euphemistic terms are strictly applied to higher strata of society. The verbs used above come from only a small sample of graffiti but are representative what terms the common people would have used – some of the most direct words like *irrumo*, *pedico*, *futuo*, and *verpa* among them. How they socialize about sex may certainly set the various levels of Roman society apart from the rest, but they all tended to think along the same terms. Even though a senator may favor the distinct literary flavor of euphemism and metaphor, a poor freed man still has the same desires and fears.

Chapter Two: Socialization of Sex in Rome

Sex is inherently a social activity in that every sex act requires more than one participant. However, different cultures have different standards and expectations of how social sex is. Certainly, every culture has its limitations for how sexually social someone can be, and Rome was no exception. It was established in the previous chapter that Romans, although they might be considered more open, had categories which sexuality or sexual themes fell into as well as how their behavior was dictated by their culture.

This chapter focuses primarily on the situations in which Romans most often found themselves having sex and thus describes their cultural context and explains the role these situations serve in Roman society. The list is not exhaustive but it is illustrative of many of the most fundamental facets of Roman life – marriage, children, and slaves – as well as common sexual deviations – prostitution and homosexuality. Each played an important part in the laws, literature, life, and livelihood of every Roman citizen. Likewise, in order to characterize Roman social-sexuality, it is important to examine what effects at the micro-social scale each has on the broader conceptualizations of Roman sexuality. Any deviation from the normal and expected behavior with regards to sex would have tended to be at the very least shameful and potentially could have led to repercussions and even punishment under the law. Looking at the categories of sexual outlets both within societal norms and at the results breaking of the socially mandated proscriptions of each characterizes the Roman conceptualization of sex and sexuality and how that might translate into a social setting.

The Roman Orgy

Perhaps the most prevalent mischaracterization of Roman sexuality is that the Romans were sex-crazed and indulged themselves in all manner of debauchery – most notably, orgies. By its very

nature, an orgy could certainly be classified as the most social of the sexual relations a Roman might have. But, contrary to the modern imagination, they did not widely engage in orgies – at least not the kind with which a modern American might be familiar. The word for orgy, Latin *orgia*, comes from the same roots as orgasm – ὀργάω [ripen, swell, arouse].



Figure 9: This is an ancient Roman depiction of an orgy. It is apparent in the picture that an orgy was more about the wine and drugs rather than the sex.

Rather than purely sex parties, they were religious nocturnal rituals in the honor of Bacchus, a pastoral god of wine, madness, and fertility. Orgies were drunken and frenzied rituals that, although involving sex, often turned violent. Livy recounts some of the earliest events related to these rites:

To their religious performances were added the pleasures of wine and feasting, to allure a greater number of converts. When wine, lascivious discourse, night, and the intercourse of the sexes had extinguished every sentiment of modesty, then debaucheries of every kind began to be practiced... from this store-house of villainy proceeded false witnesses, counterfeit seals, false evidences, and pretended discoveries. From the same place, too, proceeded poison and secret murders, so that in some cases, not even the bodies could be found for burial. Many of their audacious deeds were brought about by treachery, but most of them by force.

(Livy, *History of Rome* 39.8)

During the year 186 BCE, the kind of worship of Bacchus as described above was criminalized, the existing cults were disbanded, often by force and violence, and a reformed version was brought under the control of the Roman *pontifices* [priests]. While orgies were not as widespread as one might be led

to believe from some modern stereotyped portrayals of Roman life, thereafter the scope and functionality of orgies, or gatherings with orgy-like aspects, was primarily restricted to festivals and rituals with apotropaic properties.

Certainly, as it is transmitted by historical authors such as Suetonius in his biographical anthology *Lives of the Caesars*, the emperors and perhaps, by extension, members of the imperial court were exceptions to this generalization and engaged in orgies outside of these apotropaic purposes. But Suetonius tends to look on the Julio-Claudians, some of the most infamous sexual deviants, unfavorably and may have transmitted exaggerations or misinformation. Thus, it is entirely possible that an average Roman during the relatively socially conservative Flavian dynasty would have seen such debaucheries and sexual deviances as distasteful. Suetonius may have only included these scandalous occurrences in order to paint the current rulers in a more favorable light. It is therefore unrealistic to assume that Rome was sex-crazed and filled with orgies as many people do when in reality most Roman citizens were quite reserved in regards to sex.



Figure 10: a modern depiction of the Lupercalia. Based on the descriptions of the rituals, the Lupercalia was much more orgiastic to modern audiences than the orgies of Bacchus.

Although the Roman orgy was far from common, there were a number of rights or festivals, primarily fertility festivals, which involved many orgiastic events. The Lupercalia was one of the most celebrated rites in the Roman year, held in the middle of February, in order to purify Rome and promote fertility. It was originally a festival

in honor of pastoral deities which pre-date the monarchy. The ritual, in its preserved form, throughout

the Republic and Empire involved naked men running through the streets of Rome ritualistically lashing women with the flayed hides of animal sacrifices. This act was thought to have the power to make barren women conceive and pregnant women have a childbirth without complication. Certainly, this is apotropaic in nature, and although not an orgy in the proper sense, certainly had characteristics of an orgy. This is an example of the most wide-spread social-sexual interactions in Roman culture. However, the Lupercalia may have even gone further and included a custom which young men would draw lots for young women and they would become sexual companions for up to a year (Galician, 318). These pairings would certainly have increased fertility, though it is unclear how prevalent such pairings were because of the strict monogamy generally forced upon women. Other instances of such orgiastic festivals and rituals include the Floralia, Liberalia, as well as rites of Cybele and Priapus.

Roman culture very clearly had a number of very widespread events which afforded citizens a certain degree of freedom in being social with their sexuality. However, outside of these events, sex tended to be a very private affair – dinner parties would not degenerate into orgies as modern media like to believe (Laurence, 92). The majority of sexual interactions among people would have been very limited in nature; that is to say with one or, perhaps, two people at a time. This limitation of sexual conduct is very characteristic of how Roman society handled sex. Rather than being a free flowing continuum of sexuality, Roman sexuality was actually confined to certain acceptable categories and any slight deviation from them would have been shameful.

Marriage & Family

While examining the sexual linguistics in the previous chapter, it was useful to establish a baseline in order to characterize and quantify the traits of related terms. It is similarly useful to establish a baseline when examining the venues for sex in the Roman world. Orgies would have served this purpose had their importance and prevalence not been a figment of the collective modern imagination.

However, not only is the family central to sex in the Roman world, but sex is inherently central to the family because without sex as a procreative mechanism, families obviously are unable to be formed and then propagated through the generations. Therefore, exploring the family and familial dynamics allows, by comparison, a means to explore other modes of sexual socialization.

The Social Structure of the Family

The structure of the *familia* [family] in Rome, like that in many other cultures at that time in the Mediterranean world, generally consisted of multigenerational conglomeration of nuclear family all descended along paternal lines as well as adopted members. However, the Roman concept of *familia* also included the family's slaves. These familial networks ranged in size from a single individual²⁶ to hundreds in a very wealthy family (Gardner 1).

All of this was lorded over by the *pater familias* [father of the family]. He was the eldest male relative in the family unit and all those born from him or his sons fell under his dominion in the legal and moral spheres. He was the sole owner of the property belonging to the family and was the sole arbitrator in legal and domestic matters. The *-as* case ending is the preserved archaic Latin genitive plural ending, hinting at the antiquity of the term and the cultural precedent of the power the *pater familias* had. "Within the *familia* he was virtually autonomous; he had *patria potestas* [power of the father], legal power, over the persons of his children and descendants – and, in early Rome mainly, usually of his wife as well" (Gardner 2). Dionysius of Halicarnassus traces this power back to Romulus:

Romulus granted to the Roman father absolute power over his son, and this power was valid until the father's death, whether he decided to imprison him, or whip him, or put him in chain and make him work on a farm, or even kill him. Romulus even allowed the Roman father to sell his son into slavery

(Dionysius, *Roman Antiquities* 2.26-27).

²⁶ For instance, a man with no living relatives, especially a father (and paternal generations beyond that), no wife or children, and slaves, he still would have been considered to be part of a familia. Situations to make such a distinction would have been exceedingly rare.

The decision to accept the legitimacy of an heir, marry his descendants and to whom, as well as even life or death punishments fell to the *pater familias*.

In Book One of his *Ab Urbe Condita*, Livy recounts the legendary battle between Rome and Alba Longa which gives insight into the historical *patria potestas*. During the reign of Tullus Hostilius, the third king of Rome, a conflict arose between Rome and the nearby town of Alba Longa. Instead of waging a costly war which would cripple both and make them vulnerable to attack from the Etruscan town of Veii to the north, they made a treaty that three brothers from each side would fight as champions and the victorious side would win the war – the Horatii brothers from Rome and the Curiatii brothers from Alba Longa. Two of the Horatii are killed first but the third brother was able to kill the three Curiatii and win the war for Rome. When the sister of the Horatii brothers, who had been betrothed to one of the Curiatii, saw her lone brother returning to the city, she burst in to tears mourning for her lost lover. Enraged by her disregard for her *familia*, the surviving Horatii brother cut her down where she stood. He was condemned to death by a civil court but was exonerated by the testimony of his father, in part claiming that, “his daughter had been justly slain, had it not been so, he would have exerted his authority as a father in punishing his son” (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 1.24-26).

In this story, not only did the father of the Horatii have the authority to kill his daughter, he justified the actions of his son through his *patria potestas*. Likewise, if his son had truly done wrong by him, the *pater familias* had the right to punish his son or even kill him. Livy wrote during the reign of Augustus, more than 700 years after this event was said to have taken place, which is an important factor to take into consideration. The traditions at the founding of Rome certainly had evolved by the time he was writing at the beginning of the Empire. Histories tend to anachronistically synthesize contemporary social conditions with historical or legendary stories in order to make them more relevant or palatable. It seems justifiable, considering how Livy portrayed the rights of the *pater familias* in the story, not that these powers still existed, they might have in some capacities, but rather that even as

power in Rome was being centralized into one figure, the *pater familias* retained absolute authority over his descendants.

The position of women in a family is not very well attested for a variety of reasons, presumably because women tended to live significantly shorter lives, a high mortality rate due apparently most often to death during childbirth. Therefore, many of the authors who produced extant sources may not have known their mothers or had been raised by stepmothers or occasionally grandmothers (Shelton 20). However, although there are very few specific examples, the duties and legal rights of a *mater familias* [mother of the family] are attested in literature and law. The ideal *mater familias* was virtuous, strong, self-sacrificing, and devoted to the education and political advancement of her family (Shelton 20). Tacitus recounts these characteristics:

The mother of Agricola was... a woman of exceptional moral integrity. He spent most of his boyhood and adolescence close by her side being gently trained in every aspect of honorable achievement... I remember that he himself had said that he had, in his early youth, been more absorbed with philosophy than was proper for a Roman and a senator until his mother's good sense brought under control his ardent and passionate nature.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 4.2-4)

Even with this characterization of mothers, many ancient authors note that mothers were known for being much more caring and compassionate than fathers. When it came to domestic affairs and the marriage of children, the *mater familias* would certainly have expressed an opinion even if the decision ultimately came down to her male counterpart.

Unlike in modern society, attachment to one's family did not end at an arbitrary age. Rather, the descendants of the *pater familias* were subject to his *patria potestas* until the *pater familias* died or they were legally emancipated. Until then, the children of the family, of any age, were expected to show *pietas* [duty]. The concept of *pietas* is vitally important to the Roman family and the expectations of the children, it is loosely translated as duty and the English piety is descended from it but neither of those

definitions fully encompass the weight of the word. It is better defined as an unflinching willingness to be dutiful and devoted to one's family, friends, citizens, country, and gods (Shelton 2). In the Roman mind *pietas* was the characteristic of the ultimate patriotic heroes such as Aeneas – *insignem pietate virum* [a man marked by piety] (Virgil, Aeneid 1.10). *Pietas* to one's family, and specifically one's *pater familias* was not only the main force that held families together but also made them excel in the Roman world.

Roman Marriage

Unlike in modern America today, the vast majority of marriages in the Roman world were not for the sake of love, but rather primarily for the sake of children. Upper-class and noble families could also use marriage to cement alliances, play for power, and improve their social position. It does not seem that the lower classes would need to commit to such unions for political or economic reasons, but it could have certainly been motivated along the lines of vocational utility, e.g. a baker's son marrying a baker's daughter in order that she might help with the family business. There aren't many remaining sources from lower class marriages and so, while unions such as this did exist, it is impossible to make the claim that most were like this. Likewise the bride and groom had little say on whom they were to marry (Shelton 38). Arrangements were made by the *pater familias* or a guardian, if a woman had no other male relatives alive. This letter of Pliny the Younger preserves the early stages of one such arrangement: "You have asked me to look for a husband for your niece ... you could not entrust to me a more important or more agreeable task; and I could not undertake a more honorable task than that of choosing a young man worthy of fathering the grandchildren of Arulenus Rusticus" (Pliny, *Epistulae* 1.14). The letter goes on to explain the *pietas* and the virtues of the match that Pliny has in mind, which are very much in line with what was expected of a nobleman, but at no point does the letter mention the choice of either party in the matter.

Roman marriages were contracted significantly earlier in life than they are in most modern societies. It was not uncommon for both partners to be in their teens, the male having assumed the *toga virilis* around the age of sixteen or seventeen and the female having begun menses around the age of thirteen or fourteen. Sometimes the conditions might have been even more extreme, the man could be significantly older and on his second marriage or more, or the girl could be significantly younger than usual and pre-pubescent (Shelton 37). Considering these ages, it shows that it was of vital importance for Romans to produce offspring as early as possible as well as continue to produce them as long as they could.

Marriage was certainly a dangerous affair for the woman and, because of her age, could have also been a great source of anxiety. Therefore it is no wonder that the apotropaic marriage songs focus on the bride, soothing her anxiety and urging her to have children. Catullus preserves a traditional

Hymenaios:

As the clinging grapevine
embraces the nearby tree
so will you fold your new husband
in your embrace, but the day is waning,
come forward new bride...

what joys await your new lord,
what pleasures
during the dark night,
or even at midday. But the day is waning,
come forward, new bride...

(Catullus 61)

The *carmen* above shows the need for some kind of catharsis for the bride to conquer her fears of marriage. It took a great deal of effort to move from her innocent childhood and assume the mantle of the matron of a household, all at such a young age.



Figure 11: Fresco from Casa della Farnesia depicting a husband encouraging and reassuring his new bride as a servant looks on. Scenes like these would have been common during a wedding night when one or both parties was lacking experience.

Often times she was left emotionally alone, more isolated from her family than she had been, an outsider in a stranger's house and expected to carry the responsibility that had been thrust upon her with the dignity and grace befitting a Roman wife. Certainly, that would have been a source of extreme anxiety, and songs such as this show the need for a kind of apotropaic catharsis.

Consummation of a marriage was considered vastly different than modern connotations of the act. Rather than coitus to consummate the marriage, the marriage was considered finalized when the bride entered the house of her husband. That leaves the act of sex on the wedding night to take on a different tenor. The vast majority of brides, save perhaps for those who are marrying again after their husbands died, would have been virgins at marriage. Thus, another source of anxiety for the bride on the marriage night would have been defloration. Therefore, it was a custom to engage in anal sex on the first night to put the fears of the bride at ease: “‘We know,’ he said, ‘about the abstinence²⁷ on the part

²⁷ *Abstinentiam* [abstinence] is a strange choice of word here, perhaps here with connotations only to coitus, rather than abstaining from all sexual intercourse.

of the newly married men who, although granting remission of the first night to fearful virgins, still take their pleasure in nearby locations''' (Seneca the Elder, *Controversies* 1.2.22 TR: Johnson). It seems unlikely that this tradition would have been entirely out of respect for the fears of the bride, but may also become a symbolic rite of passage for the male who would have primarily had experience with homosexual anal sex moving on from his boyhood *delicati* [male sexual slaves] to his wife (Johnson 82).

Children

As mentioned above, the production of children was generally considered to be the primary purpose of marriage. When a couple was married, they were expected to produce children as quickly as possible and as often as possible. Birth rates were high but so too were infant mortality rates, and therefore the size of the *familia* was relatively small. Sometimes one or two children from a dozen or more would survive to adulthood (Shelton 24). The production of children was of such a concern that wives were even known to suggest divorce if they could not produce offspring for their husbands.

Fertility or lack thereof was a paramount concern when it came to the production of children. Often times a barren couple might seek the help of either a *medicus* [doctor] or religious advice as attested by the many surviving relics which had been offered as sacrifices for fertility. The doctors of the time could only do so much, but that wasn't for lack of knowledge. Some of the advice that doctors would give couples is certainly on par with some of the advice that a doctor might give today:

Just as every season is not suitable for sowing seed on the ground for the purpose of bringing forth fruit, so too among humans not every time is suitable for the conception of seed ejaculated during intercourse. Therefore, in order that the desired outcome may be attained through the proper timing of intercourse, it is useful to discuss here the problem of proper timing. The best time for intercourse resulting in conception is when menstruation is ending and abating.

(Soranus, *Gynecology* 1.36)

This shows both the accuracy of the ancient medical doctors but also their misconceptions. It is true that timing is important in conception, however the time outlined in the passage above is not what would be considered the best time to conceive by modern medical science, rather about 7-9 days later the window of optimal fertility begins to open (Crooks 304-5). Even so, some couples remained infertile with even the help of their doctors and they turned to the divine, but even then they might have been met with disappointment:

Yet most people think it is the gods, miserably spattering altars with great quantities of blood and setting them on fire with offerings, praying that they might render their wives heavy with vast amounts of seed. It is a waste of time for them to exhaust the power of the gods and the sacred lots; for they are sterile – some because their seed is too thick, then again in turn if their seed is inordinately watery and thin; thin because it cannot cling and stick to the parts, and so runs down at once and retreats withdrawn in miscarriage. Seed that is too thick, because it is too solid when ejaculated, either cannot fly forward with so far-flung an impact, or cannot penetrate the parts so well.

(Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 4.1236-1247 TR: Godwin)

This passage is peculiar because it is one of the few that mentions male sterility. It was most often the case that sterility in marriage was blamed on the woman. Being removed of the ability to conceive children was perceived as one of the greatest misfortunes a Roman could endure.

Even though there were many pressures to produce children, both cultural and pragmatic, there was also a wide prevalence of birth-control in classical Rome. A large family quickly went from a blessing to a curse as it became economically unstable if it grew too large. Therefore the family may choose to use birth control. As with medical advice about fertility, the effectiveness of these contraceptives were rather varied. Soranus recommended that old olive oil, or honey, or sap – alone or mixed with white lead – be applied to the cervix (Soranus, *Gynecology* 1.61). This was likely to be rather effective where other methods weren't. However, there was one very effective birth control in the ancient world: silphium. The silphium plant was mentioned in the works of Pliny the elder and alluded to in the works

of other authors. It was an extremely effective form of birth control as a chemical abortifacient by inducing menstruation. However, it only grew in a small strip of land in Syria and was harvested to extinction, therefore modern science is unable to judge the effectiveness of the plant. Based on ancient depictions, experts in plant taxonomy have been able to relate it to fennel, which contains chemicals with abortifacient properties and therefore its attested effectiveness may have been accurate (Tatman).

There were two other, less favorable, options for an unwanted pregnancy: abortion and exposure. Abortion was very dangerous in the ancient world, though significantly less so than giving birth. The recommendations made by Soranus' *Gynecology* involved heavy labor and riding animals in order to produce a miscarriage first, while physically removing the fetus was recommended against and only as a last resort because of the likelihood of injuring the woman (Soranus, *Gynecology* 1.64-65). Exposure was a final option, should the previous methods either not work or not utilized. A child could be exposed at the order of the *pater familias* under his *patria potestas* but it was generally an agreeable option in the Roman mindset if the child had some sort of birth defect or was sickly or the family simply could not handle another child (Shelton 28).

During the reign of Emperor Augustus the patrician nobility faced something of a crisis, namely that they were not having enough children. Rearing a child was particularly expensive, especially considering the mortality rate before they reach adulthood. It was a risk without much of a chance of return. Therefore Augustus implemented laws in order to promote children among all strata of the Roman population, but specifically the nobility:

Augustus placed heavier penalties on unmarried men and on women without husbands. On the other hand, he offered rewards for marriage and for having children. And since there were, among the upper class, far more males than females, he allowed all upper class men who wished, except senators, to marry freedwomen and he ordered their children to be considered legitimate.

(Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 54.16.1-2 TR: Shelton)

Unfortunately this legislation did not have its intended effect. Marriages and laws did not increase because the political and economic climate of Rome at the time simply made it much more advantageous to be single and childless for as long as possible rather than supporting a wife and children.

Infidelity

In marriages men were held to vastly different standards than women. It was a long standing cultural belief that men did not have to stay faithful in a marriage, whereas women did. However, there were limits; for instance, men were only allowed to have sex with someone who was a lower class than themselves – male or female. During the late Republic and early Empire upper-class men began to look to seducing the wives of their peers as a kind of sport and entertainment. Thus, even the women began to have sex outside their marriage. Famously, Julia, the daughter of Emperor Augustus, was completely unfaithful in her marriages. Part of Augustus' family related legislation made his daughter's and his own actions illegal.

Many adulterous scandals marred the twilight of the Republic and the dawn of the Empire and some of the most influential leaders. Julius Caesar's second wife Pompeia was caught up in an adultery scandal when a senator named Publius Clodius Pulcher, dressed as a woman, snuck into Caesar's house where the women only rights of the *Bona Dea* were being held with the express purpose of seducing her. This lead Caesar to divorce Pompeia saying that "Caesar's wife must be above suspicion" (Plutarch, *Julius Caesar*). Such occurrences, though this one was particularly scandalous, were a source of tension in the upper classes of Rome. So, on account of the already low marriage numbers and even lower birth-rates, the laws of Augustus – the Julian Law – were also instated to regulate this pressure on upper-class marriage with some of the most brutal laws.

The non-forcible seduction of wives, widows, and virgins became illegal under The Julian Law in addition to punishing rape. The punishment for women was the confiscation of half their dowry, a third

of their property, and exile. The punishment for men was the confiscation of half their property and exile (*Acta Divi Augusti*). Judging by the punishments, these laws were very clearly aimed almost entirely at the upper classes which were often punished by exile and property confiscation (Shelton 10-11). However, these laws also reveal the extreme nature of the crime in their other punishments. Should the *pater familias* discover his daughter's seducer in the act, these laws extend the power of his *patria potestas* over the seducer and encourage him to kill the adulterer with impunity as he may kill his daughter, husbands were given similar albeit more limited rights against *infames* caught seducing his wife in his home (*Acta Divi Augusti*). It was one of the most inviolable rights of a Roman citizen to face trial and appeal before capital punishment is carried out. Previously, only in cases where the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum* [ultimate decree of the senate]²⁸, which happened only four times during the republic, could a Roman citizen be killed with impunity. The extension of such impunity to the private realm, in a manner similar to the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*, was an absolute last resort revealing the dire urgency to address the problem of adultery.

However, Augustus found it difficult to follow his own laws. Consider some of the behavior of Augustus as recorded by Suetonius, who tended to paint an unfavorable characterization of the Julio-Claudian dynasty:

Not even his friends deny that Augustus committed adulteries, although they excuse them, it is true, as committed not because of lust, but because of shrewd planning: he could more easily discover his opponents' schemes through their women. Mark Antony protested not only that he had married Livia so hastily but also that he had, at a dinner party, taken the wife of an ex-consul from her husband's dining room, right before his eye, and led her into a bedroom; he brought her back to the dinner party with her ears glowing and hair disheveled.

²⁸ "Let the consuls see to it that the state suffer no harm" is a decree given by the senate that allowed the consuls (highest executive officials) to use lethal force in dealing with enemies of the state. Even then, after their imperium lapsed, as they were not able to be tried while they still had imperium, they would be tried for any killings made while under the ultimate decree of the senate and only then acquitted.

(Suetonius, *Augustus* 69)

It is likely that such adulteries took place, though perhaps not as overtly as is portrayed in Suetonius. Although, Augustus put on an appearance of a moral high-ground in public, which resonated with the populace of Rome, his private behavior was exactly what his laws aimed to avoid. Suetonius even claims that his wife was involved in his illicit affairs, she would find virgins and present them for Augustus to deflower (Suetonius, *Augustus* 71). It seems Adultery became an inescapable vice for the upper echelons of Roman society.

Poets like Ovid and Catullus embraced adultery as an art form. Ovid even gives advice to other men on where to find women:

Don't neglect the horse races if you're looking for a place to meet your girlfriend. A circus crowded with people offers many advantages. You don't have to use a secret sign language here or be content with a slight nod to acknowledge one another's presence. Sit right next to your girlfriend – no one will stop you – and squeeze up beside her as closely as possible. It's really easy to do.

(Ovid, *The Art of Love* 1.135-9)

Such openness about the subject of adultery and aiding to its proliferation eventually got the poet exiled to the furthest reaches of the Empire, but the damage was done. This and other poems of Ovid romanticized the idea of adultery and made it easier to do. Sporting venues would have been perfect spots for such illicit affairs because they already had a sexual reputation associated with them because they were a popular spot to find prostitutes which offered easy sex in the archways leading to the venue²⁹. Catullus fared better than Ovid but the Lesbia of his poems, on account of her adulterous actions, found her reputation ruined as her adulterous nature was the topic of Cicero's defense for Caelius.

²⁹ See Prostitution

The Social-Sexual Niche of Marriage

Of the other modes of sexual relations, marital sex is the only one which has a purely utilitarian purpose at its root, where the others such as master-slave relations, prostitution, and homosexuality are about domination, power, and pleasure. It is clear that sex in a marriage certainly takes on a social nature in Rome more so than today, primarily because it was not so much a function of pleasure but rather a function of obligation to the *pater familias* to produce heirs. Certainly, even if it was often deviated from, marital sex was the most important and the most prolific sexual venue in Classical Rome, as shown by the attention Augustus gave it when he realized the institution was failing its purpose.

The continuation of Roman society relied on the production of legitimate heirs to whom property, title, and privilege may be given and legitimacy was conferred only to children produced from a marriage. Perhaps this in part accounts for the disparity in the attitudes toward men and women in marriages. In the ancient world the maternity of a child was obvious, but the paternity might be suspect. Therefore, in order to ensure that heirs were legitimate, the body of the wife was off limits to other men. However, children illegitimately produced by the man, i.e. from someone other than their wife, were ineligible for inheritance – unless legitimized by adoption – and thus their paternity was significantly less important.

Linguistically, marriage is such a prolific part of Roman society that it makes its way in to every mode of sexual communication. It invokes apotropaic protections. It is the source of conflict in some comedies. It is the source of aggression under the law and through adultery. Many images and songs associated with it are titillative. And finally, the production of legitimate children to carry on the family is cathartic. Other sources of social sexuality will often be lacking one or more of these categories. Sex and sexuality in marriage was easily seen in the most favorable light in Classical Rome. Therefore, other modes of sexual interactions will have notably less social acceptance. Marriage serves as a baseline

comparison to other categories of social-sexual dynamics, not necessarily in parallel as the linguistic terms were compared, but in varying degrees removed from universal acceptability.

Master-Slave Relations

One of the easiest sexual outlets, at least for the Roman upper-class, was slaves. Slaves were property and as such a *dominus* [master] could do as he pleased with them. In the ancient world it was not uncommon for a *dominus* to have a sexual slave nor was it unheard of for a master to use slaves as a kind of sexual catharsis. Through their sexual abuse the *dominus* could resolve sexual tension of his own. The slaves themselves might have a spouse and children, albeit not legally recognized, but also had no autonomy over their bodies leaving them vulnerable to a myriad of different abuses.

Power Dynamics

Compared to later periods in Roman history, there were relatively few slaves in Rome up until the third century BCE when Rome began to expand its *imperium* [sphere of influence] beyond Italy (Shelton 163). Before that, many of the slaves were native Italians thrust into their position either by conquest, misfortune, or debt. One of the main problems that occurred in this time was *nexum* [debt slavery], where a freeborn Roman would put themselves or one of their children into temporary slavery in order to pay a debt. Although *nexi* were Roman citizens, which supposedly carried the exemption from corporal punishment and other rights, a *dominus* might have still been tempted to take sexual advantage of them. This kind of enslavement eventually was abolished because of sexual abuses committed upon who would be otherwise free born citizens. Livy recorded the catalyzing event which lead to the abolition of debt slavery:

The law was changed on account of the notable lust and remarkable cruelty of a single money lender. This man was Lucius Papirius, to whom C. Publilius had given himself in slavery because of his father's debt. When Publilius did this, the youth and beauty that might have been able to elicit compassion in others instead inflamed Papirius' thoughts

toward lust and abuse. Believing that use and enjoyment of Publilius' youth was owed to him in addition to the loan, he first endeavored to entice him with lewd proposals. Next, after Publilius refused to hear of these disgraceful suggestions, Papirius began to terrify him with threats and repeatedly reminded him of his station in life. Finally, when Papirius saw that Publilius was more mindful of his freeborn status than of his present condition, he ordered that he be stripped and given the lash. Lacerated from the whipping, the young man ran out into the street complaining of the cruelty and the lust of his creditor.

(Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 6.1.9 TR: Hubbard)

The abuse on the sexual integrity of a free man was of such paramount importance that the senate acted immediately and abolished *nexum*. However, slaves that did not have the same legal protections suffered greatly at the hands of cruel masters like Papirius.

Certain slaves were kept purely for the sexual amusement of their masters, often times boys, which are referred to as *pupulus* [little boy, puppet] or *delicatus* [sexual plaything]. These relations between masters and slaves tended to be rather utilitarian in that their goal was pleasure for the *dominus*, often times at the slightest whim:

Just now I caught in the act the girl's boy-pet
masturbating; the boy – if it pleases you Dione –
in lieu of a weapon, I slew with my hard-on.

(Catullus 56)

Even though it involved penetrative sex, either anal or oral, it is unlikely that the majority of these master-slave relations would have been seen as much more than a *dominus* using a slave as a glorified masturbatory aide. But that is not to say that people did not take note. The Roman families tended to be a rather close-knit community and therefore, even if it is the prerogative of the *dominus* to use slaves in this manner, such relations might arouse the ire of another family member. Juvenal notes, "If a husband turns his back on his wife's bed at night, his secretary suffers" (Juvenal, *Satires* 6.475-6). Likewise, it is the prerogative of the *domina* [wife of the *dominus*] to seek retribution.

The sexuality and sexual life of a slave was generally closely controlled. Male slaves tended to be restricted to having sexual relations only with the female slaves of their *dominus* and although they could not legally be married, they could still have a spouse – perhaps chosen by the *dominus*. Any children produced from these slaves increased the value of the estate (Cantarella 103). Every child of a slave automatically became the slave of the *dominus* and therefore helped sustain the practice by replacing aging slaves with new ones. However, there was an issue of children being produced by the union of a citizen and a slave – not only would they be illegitimate but a mark of shame on the family.

Castration

Castration was primarily used as a way to sexually control slaves, but the procedure was not confined to that demographic alone. Castrations were carried out for a wide variety of reasons, for slaves it was to control their sexuality, for others it was a way to preserve their boyhood beauty, and some priests used ritual castration to be initiated into certain cults such as the cult of Cybele. There were a number of different methods available in Rome to castrate men. The most abrupt and foolproof way was to surgically remove the penis and testicles resulting in a *castratus*. But, as with all such procedures at the time, it carried the very significant risk of infection or death. The testicles themselves could be removed, resulting in *spadones* leaving the penis and the susceptible vascular tissue intact, this was a slightly less risky procedure. Finally, the testicles could be crushed or tied off leaving the genitals intact but rendering the man sterile.

This procedure was often carried out on slaves in order to protect the family in some way. For instance, tutors were often castrated so that they could not take sexual advantage over the children. It wasn't unusual for ancient cultures to use eunuchs in this way; later emperors such as Diocletian and Constantine often had eunuchs who functioned as guards, advisors, and a number of non-state related servants. Many eunuchs were quite successful in a non-sexual capacity, achieving great position in the empire (Cheney, 65)

Although the eunuch certainly had a place outside of the sexual domain, their castration could also make them sexually desirable. If a castration is done young enough, masculine features will not develop and the resulting eunuch will maintain boyhood or androgynous traits such as a high pitched voice. Certainly, these traits would have been useful for a myriad of theatre work, but these traits were also considered sexually desirable by many. Nero had one such eunuch, Sporus. In one of his many gestures of blatant disregard to Roman norms, especially those of a sexual nature, Nero perverted gender roles and married Sporus:



Figure 12: Statue of a priest of Cybele. The feminine features and delicate figure were side-effects of castration.

*Puerum Sporum **exsectis testibus** etiam in muliebrem naturam transfigurare conatus cum dote et flammeo per sollemnia nuptiarum celeberrimo officio deductum ad se pro uxore habuit.*

He castrated the boy Sporus and actually tried to make a woman of him; and he married him with all the usual ceremonies, including a dowry and a bridal veil, took him to his house attended by a great throng, and treated him as his wife.

(Suetonius, *Life of Nero* 28.1)

The use of *exsectis testibus* seems to allude that Sporus was a *spado* and thus that his sexual ability was reserved for his lovers – Nero and those who came after Nero’s death. His retention of sexual functionality points to this castration for a specific sexual end.

Castration can be pragmatic preventing reproduction, to preserve some kind of niche sexual idealism, or, lastly, for a religious purification. The cult of Cybele was transplanted to Rome during the second Punic war from Anatolia. These priests, Galli, would practice a week-long festival in March which was orgiastic leading up to their self-castration with either a flint or broken piece

of pottery in a manner similar to Attis, the divine lover of Cybele (Roller 254). Although this cult was deemed to be religiously necessary as a cultural heritage from Rome's Trojan ancestors, throughout much of its history Rome was forced to import priests because castration was forbidden to all Roman citizens.

Castration marked the Galli and others who endured castration as outsiders, even when Roman citizens were allowed to become priests they were ostracized from society. The ability to produce children, even for a slave, was a kind of social litmus test. By removing that ability or potential, for whatever reason, placed those who underwent the procedure in a very precarious social-sexual limbo. On the one hand, they were fetishized in some cases or considered divine. But on the other hand, they were completely excised from patriarchal structure of Roman society without rights such as inheritance (Roller 318-19).

Prostitution

Prostitution was extremely prevalent in ancient Roman culture. Men from all social standings were allowed to consort with prostitutes, to a reasonable degree, without much social censure. Similar to sexual relations with slaves, it was simply a part of the sexual lives of Roman men. However, being a prostitute, even the most elegant courtesan, was considered overwhelmingly shameful. Like among many facets of Roman social-sexual relations, its perception was particularly unbalanced between the roles.

Roman Law and the *Infames*

Prostitutes were members of the *infames*, a social class which has been afforded some discussion already in this thesis. Etymologically, *infames* simply means those who have a bad reputation. Like castration, *infames* were ostracized from society without many of the basic protections afforded to Roman citizens such as immunity from corporal punishment nor were they able to serve as a witness in

a trial (McGinn^a 65). While the status as an *infames* does not necessarily denote infamy of a sexual nature, it generally implied a reputation for sexual proclivities outside what was perceived as normal. Most often *infames* were people who performed duties for the pleasure of the public which, in addition to prostitutes, included other vocations such as gladiators and actors – all of whom were considered sexually attractive.

Even though *infamia* was an unsavory social status, *infames* were a vital part of the social lives of all citizens, including the Roman elite, “Actors were often represented as highly desirable to both men and women. The dictator Sulla had a lengthy affair with an actor called Metrobius, according to Plutarch. Augustus’ associate Maecenas was said to have been in love with the actor Bathyllus. The wives of emperors Claudius and Domitian allegedly had affairs with actors” (Edwards via Skinner, 68). *Infames*, like those who suffered castration, could become a very powerful force despite their status. Even so, being designated as an *infamis* could destroy any power one might have accrued through more legitimate means.

Prostitution is better understood in the context of *infamia*. Although the people who practice prostitution, and the other trades which lead to *infamia*, were considered to be of a lower social standing, they were certainly a necessary part of the Roman life and economy. Prostitution was a lucrative business by its nature – simply, sex sells. Therefore, many businessmen and entrepreneurs might consider a business venture by prostituting their slaves as a source of income. However, as archeological evidence in Pompeii shows, even though men of senatorial rank were engaged in such business, their station required them to be more discrete about it there were a number of brothels associated with them and even one in the back of a villa. Association with *infamia*, although lucrative, was an obstacle in everyday life which necessitated discretion.

Prostitution Practices

Many prostitutes were slaves of wealthy businessmen forced to sell their body for the pleasure of other men and women others were free men and women which began prostituting their bodies for the money (McGinn, 56). It was not generally a desirable position in life but a very profitable one nonetheless. Some women charged a denarius or more for their sexual services which was approximately the daily wage of a Roman laborer. The money that prostitutes made eventually led to its regulation, institutionalization, and taxation (McGinn, 4).

There were many places in a Roman city where one could find a prostitute, some of these were discussed earlier, such as in front of taverns, inns, or the fornix [archways] of a sporting venue, but there were two places which served the purely functional aspect of prostitution: cribs and brothels. A crib is a small, closet-like room with a small stone bed off of a street or alley from which a prostitute conducted her business. It was perhaps the quickest and most direct way to get a prostitute in ancient Rome.



Figure 13: A Pompeiian crib. They were dark and dingy rooms expressly built for quick and cheap sex.

A brothel was a bit different, certainly it served street customers for quick sex, but it also offered more. Instead of having a selection of one, perhaps two women or men like a crib would have had, a brothel had the opportunity to offer a wider selection as well as the array of services rendered. The Lupercal in Pompeii had a number of basic crib units on the ground floor as well as larger rooms on the second story for a wider array of entertainment. While cribs tended to be rather dark and undecorated, the walls of the Lupercal are covered in many titillative frescos as well as graffiti ads. Furthermore, depictions of prostitutes in artwork and frescoes are very telling of how they were perceived and how they handled business. Most of the artwork depicting prostitutes depicts sex in an



Figure 14: Notice the characteristics of this Fresco from the Lupercal. It depicts a very high class setting with a wooden bed and luxurious sheets. It also exhibits the idealized prostitute: bound breasts, pale, makeup, and tied up hair.

idealized setting, with large beds and lavish bedding and décor. Certainly this would not have been the case for most prostitute encounters. But, because of this idealized setting one can also infer that the acts and people depicted would be likewise idealized. The most striking feature of most prostitution scenes is that they

bound their breasts – perhaps signaling that breasts were not quite as eroticized as they are in some modern cultures. Likewise, the prostitute is generally pale like many women in ancient artwork.

Consider the following observation of Seneca:

Virtue you will find in the temple, in the forum, in the senate house, standing before the city walls, dusty and sunburnt, her hands rough; pleasure you will most often find lurking around the baths and sweating rooms, and places that fear the police, in search of darkness, soft, effete, reeking of wine and perfume, pallid or else painted and made up with cosmetics like a corpse.

(Seneca, *De Vita Beata* 7.3. TR: Edwards 84)

Finally, a prostitute's hair would generally be short or tied back. These are the components of an idealized sexual encounter, likely with a prostitute and in other sexual situations.

Each prostitute would have a certain set of services that they would offer and a set price for said services (McGinn, 295-302). From the list of possible prostitutes in Pompeii, compiled from Pompeian graffiti, not every prostitute was the same: some seemed to specialize in areas such as fellatio or

cunnilingus while others tended to be very general about their appeal. Prostitution is certainly notable in that it is among the few places in Roman social-sexual interactions where the position of the respective parties matters relatively little. Wealthy businessmen as well as poor laborers would have utilized brothels, cribs, taverns, and



Figure 15: Another fresco from the Lupercal depicts a threesome with two men. One of which is probably a prostitute specializing in pedico.

other venues such as sporting games. It makes sense that the very highest ranking officials would have put on the public face of avoiding any association with prostitutes but would have used them all the same.

Homosexuality

Defining Roman same sex relations as homosexuality is an anachronistic term, which only appeared in English in the middle of the 19th century but will be used here as a catch-all term to describe same sex relations while not necessarily making judgments about the sexual orientation of those involved. Sexuality in the ancient world was much more fluid than in modern times. It wasn't uncommon for men to take both male and female sexual companions and, for the most part, it was seen as completely normal. Indeed, this is the case of many Mediterranean cultures during the classical period. However, those who engaged in same sex relations were pressured into, and at times obligated to perform certain sexual roles. Deviating from these prescribed roles, i.e. playing the passive receptive

partner, would have been considered extraordinarily shameful, which is why a tendency to or being forced to play passive partner in homosexual acts are the topic of many threats.

Ancient Homosexuality and Greek Influence

Certain scholars, both ancient and modern, blame the prevalence of Roman homosexuality on cultural exposure to the Greeks. Cato the Censor blamed the increase of Roman excess including homosexuality and the burgeoning freedoms of women during his lifetime on exposure to Hellenistic ideologies. It tended to be the view of certain conservative Romans such as Cato that such indulgences were perverting the Republic and the glory days of old³⁰. Greek influence certainly played a part in the development of Roman culture and ideology as the poet Horace noted:

*Graeca capta ferum victorem cepit
et artes intulit agresti Latio.*
Greece took captive her savage conqueror
and brought the arts into rustic Latium.

(Horace, *Epistulae* 2.1.156-7)

Indeed, it is true that Greek culture tended to practice institutionalized forms of homosexual relations including pederasty and many of the Latin words relating to homosexuality and homosexual acts comes from Greek, but if Greek culture was the sole source one would expect homosexuality to have been practiced most by those strata of society which were likewise most affected by Greek influence. However, a disposition toward homosexual relations occurs at all strata of Roman society – from the poor farmers to the Emperors.

The *Satyricon*, although perhaps overly exaggerating tendencies, preserves a fragment of Roman lower class life with very prevalent homosexual themes. It follows a complicated love triangle between two ex-gladiators, members of the lower-class and infames, and a youth pretending to be their servant.

³⁰ Such language was used very prevalently in Roman literature, this refers to the foundations of the Roman Republic and the idealized conception of Romans as patriotic farmers and, in Cato's mind, with very conservative values.

It follows their sexual misadventures as they live their daily lives. Although the work was intended to satirize the lives of these characters and others as well as present humor through extreme but believable circumstances, it establishes some sense of verisimilitude to Roman life. Because of the tendency for extant works to be from the upper-class, works such as these which offer characterizations of the lower levels of society, even in a satirical sense, are vital for understanding other Roman demographics. Certainly, one could argue that works such as the *Satyricon* use homosexuality to somehow shame the lower classes in the eyes of the upper class reader, which was most certainly the case. But its characterization is no less factual, albeit exaggerated, and substantiated by archeological evidence such as male prostitutes offering homosexual services. Many of the cheapest prostitutes were male and offered services to both men and women (McGinn 295-302). It is likely that male prostitutes would have widely been utilized by the lower-class, suggesting a significant prevalence of homosexual practices among poorer demographics.

Likewise, there are a number of linguistic differences between Greek and Roman conceptualizations of sexual acts. Although, Greek and Latin place an emphasis on penetrative and receptive roles, “The Roman textual tradition often displaces a uniquely macho style that is evident in its tendency to focus on specific penetrative acts, and the very words available to Romans as they described sexual acts displace a degree of phallic specificity not found in Greek sexual vocabulary” (Williams, 161). As shown above in chapter one, the Romans had a number of very specific terms used for describing sexual acts such as *irrumo* [penetrate orally], and *cevereo* [be penetrated anally]; cognate constructions are not present in Greek. It shows that Romans conceptualized of homosexual acts differently, and were encouraged to do so. “Thus, while Roman men were prompt to condemn men and women who performed fellatio, they were also disposed to represent fellatio as an aggressive act of penetration that embodied the assertion of a man’s masculinity at another’s expense” (Williams, 162).

Such an aggressive conceptualization of homosexual acts is unlikely to come from Greece where in the same settings homosexuality fulfilled the purpose of teaching and camaraderie among men.

Therefore, connecting homosexuality solely with Greek influences is unsubstantiated both because homosexuality fulfilled different functions in each culture and significantly affected demographics which would have been less altered by cultural appropriation. It is more likely that homosexuality was part of the Roman cultural heritage which lost the cultural memory of its origin as it became less tasteful among the Romans.



Figure 16: The Warren cup is a silver drinking cup created in the first century AD which shows two male same sex acts. It is often times described to show the difference between Greek institutionalized homosexual relations and Roman homosexual relations. The left hand image shows the Roman conceptualization of homosexual relationships with a virile man taking advantage of a weaker boy for his own pleasure. The right hand image shows a Greek same sex relationship. The receptive partner is much older and the scene itself is significantly less abusive and more consensual. These were very clearly two very different institutions.

Social Views on Homosexuality

Male-male relations were by far the most visible of homosexual and homoerotic relations and likewise were much discussed by ancient authors. Homosexual relationships with other men, as long as they meet certain criteria, was considered completely normal, even for men who today might be considered heterosexual. Advice to a bride on a wedding day was quite common, but Martial gave advice to a certain groom who has only ever been with men:

Experience feminine embraces, enjoy them, victor,

and let your cock learn something as yet unknown to it.
Red veils are being woven for the betrothed, now the virgin is being prepared,
the new bride already will be giving your boys a haircut.
Just the once will she give her lustful husband a bum-fuck,
while she is still fearful of the initial 'wounds' of that new weapon:
her nurse and her mother will veto this happening more frequently
and will say: "that girl is a wife to you, not a boy."
Alas! What great anxieties, what great troubles for you to endure,
if a pussy will prove to be a matter totally alien to you!

(Martial *Epigrams* 11.78 TR: Johnson 82)

While sexuality was certainly more fluid in ancient Rome, there was one certainty with it: a man is expected to get married and produce an heir. Although they would have been forced to adhere to this expectation of marriage and the production of heirs, it is possible that in ancient Rome the prevalence of true male homosexuality, i.e. men who only prefer other men as sexual partners, was similar to our modern statistical values of 4-7% (Crooks 253). Marriage and children fulfilled fundamentally different social and sexual roles than male-male homosexual relationships.

It did not matter that a man engaged in homosexual sex, but rather what role he took. It was considered shameful and un-Roman for a man to play the passive role in homosexual intercourse, that is to say be penetrated anally. The only way proper Roman, or at least those who were considered to be proper, sought gratification by inserting his penis into his partner (Langlands 13). For some men, the protection of one's sexual honor was of the utmost importance and society tended to agree. Plutarch recounts a murder trial over the death of an officer in Marius' army around 104 BCE:

This officer [Caius Lusius] was enamored of one of the young men who served under him, by name Trebonius, and had on made unsuccessful attempts to seduce him. But finally, at night, he sent a servant with a summons for Trebonius. The young man came, since he could not refuse to obey a summons, but when he had been introduced into the tent and Caius attempted violence upon him, he drew his sword and slew him. Marius was not with the army when this happened; but on his return he brought

Trebonius to trial. Here there were many accusers, but not a single advocate, wherefore Trebonius himself courageously took the stand and told all about the matter, bringing witnesses to show that he had often refused the solicitations of Lusius and that in spite of large offers he had never prostituted himself to anyone. Then Marius, filled with delight and admiration, ordered the customary crown for brave exploits to be brought, and with his own hands placed it on the head of Trebonius, declaring that at a time which called for noble examples he had displayed the most noble conduct

(Plutarch, Life of Marius 14)

Even in the military, where there were severe punishments for disobeying an order let alone killing a commanding officer, was the right to protect one's sexual integrity of such importance. Deviating from one's proscribed sexual role was simply unacceptable in Roman society and protecting it was a virtue in and of itself.

Even so, there were a number of men that sought pleasure through oral or anal penetration. While the man taking the penetrative role was in the social right, the man who took the receptive role was often referred to by pejorative names such as *cinaedus*, *pathicus*, or *catamitus*. Each of these designations carried with it a sense of *stuprum* [dishonor, violation], which is a general term used to describe any violations of a sexual nature – homosexual or heterosexual. Like the other designations discussed above, *stuprum* served to ostracize people from society. In the Republic *stuprum* was generally dealt with however the *pater familias* pleased (Williams 119). Augustus' legislation for adultery set the precedent, which was eventually expanded from adulterous crimes to others such as homosexual acts, to punish those who commit *stuprum* by fines and the status as an *infamis*.

Conclusion

I have endeavored to show in the foregoing thesis that sexuality assumed many forms among the Romans. Depending on how sexuality is expressed, it can be categorized either by sexual institutions, such as marriage, or functionality, such as apotropaic. These forms of sexual expression represent the fundamental nature of Roman sexuality as driven by socialization. And, while all of these forms of sexual expression cover a very general breath of human sexuality, the sexual options open to Roman citizens tended to vary from one demographic to the next.

The demographic with the most sexual privilege is certainly free Roman men. They had a wide array of options available by which they were able to express their sexuality in socially sanctioned ways. They could do many things other demographics could not. Roman men were able to freely consort with whom they chose – whether it be a slave, a prostitute, or people of lower social standing. It is very clear that many men utilized the options that were available to them to fulfill their prurient desires. Slaves, for instance, were common and near at hand. Therefore, slaves would be used as objects of quick and easy sexual gratification for the Roman man. Prostitutes often times fulfilled the same role for men who were not wealthy enough to own slaves – thus accounting for the widespread popularity of prostitutes in the lower classes. Finally, men of the upper class had the opportunity to have sex with whomever they pleased in the lower classes. All of these sexual outlets were available in Roman society without much censure or public condemnation.

Even though Roman men were sexually freer than other demographics, I have shown they still suffered a version of sexual repression under the Roman system of institutionalized sexuality. While the Romans were prone to practicing a distinct form of bisexuality, which focused more on sexual attraction and a desire for a certain kind of gratification rather than sexual orientation, they were often very limited in such relations. In male-male sexual encounters a man was expected to play a very specific role

which may have been contrary to his attraction and desired mode of stimulation. Likewise, it is physically impossible for a male-male homosexual encounter to be carried out without shaming either one or both of the participants as a passive partner. Therefore, the inability to gratify same sex desires with a sense of equality and reciprocation, although still stigmatized by modern society, would have been a severe limitation to male sexuality in ancient Rome. Additionally, even though many men would have taken a wife regardless of their sexual orientation, on account of how a man's sexual role in marriage was institutionalized it became a mode of control by both the government and the *pater familias* in their family oriented policies. Men in the upper class, and likely the middle and lower classes as well even though we are lacking a great deal of empirical evidence on the subject, were forced into marriages for the sole purpose of producing heirs rather than love or companionship.

There were two things expected of men during their sexual lives: the production of legitimate children and maintaining sexual integrity and honor. Both of these expectations were encouraged not only through domestic means, that is to say *pietas* to the *pater familias* and his *patria potestas*, but also through the law such as the legislation of Augustus. If they conformed to these two expectations, they were allowed to do almost anything. But these expectations likewise forced men to do things which they otherwise might not want to, such as have children, or prevented them from doing things which they may have wanted to, such as playing the receptive partner in homosexual acts.

On the other hand, I have demonstrated that free women were vastly more repressed than men, often times even more than slaves albeit in different regards. The sexual life of a woman was abrupt and rather bleak. Rome was a society where free women were generally seen as a means to propagate the family, they were expected to have children as early as possible and as often as possible until they no longer were able to do so by natural causes or died, often times in child birth or complications thereof. Unlike a man's sexual life, a woman's sexuality was not about pleasure and

gratification but rather about children. Today it would be socially unconscionable to use women in the way that the Romans often did, as vessels for bearing children.

Again, in contrast to their male counterparts, it was socially unacceptable for a woman to have sexual relations with anyone other than their husband and there were very few options for feminine sexuality other than marriage – either prostitution or becoming a vestal virgin. Simply, because of the lack of paternity testing, the Romans felt that it was necessary to heavily repress the sexuality of their wives and daughters to ensure that all heirs born to them were legitimate. As adultery and other modes of exploring feminine sexuality became more prevalent near the end of the Republic, women bore the brunt force of the law. Where men might survive an adulterous relationship with their reputation and livelihood relatively intact, women often ended up disgraced, divorced, and destitute. Certain applications of the *Lex Julia* even allowed for a woman of the highest social status to be forced into prostitution as a punitive measure.

For both of these demographics in society, both free men and women, marriage and child birth was one of the fundamental driving forces behind their sexual repression. I have delineated the absolute importance of children with respect to the sexual role of men and women as well as how that importance directly contributed to widespread sexual repression. For that reason marriage was not only the most wide spread sexual institution but also the most repressive. Other institutions such as slavery and prostitution were also sexually limiting but not necessarily to such an extensive degree nor widespread degree.

Slavery can be considered oppressive in general, but much of its oppressiveness was purely a function of its nature as a social institution – sexual oppression in the realm of slavery was certainly not the most grievous oppression slaves faced. Slaves actually had a number of sexual freedoms not enjoyed by free Romans. First and foremost, slave men and women were not bound to such strict standards of social conduct. The only widespread standard that they were expected to adhere to was that they could

not have consensual sexual relations with free Romans. Master permitting, they could have sex with each other – male and female – and could do so in manners which Roman society would find distasteful, such as playing the passive receptive partner in a male-male relationship. Sexuality and masculine honor were almost inseparably associated. A slave had no honor. Therefore, a slave could do anything that a Roman's honor, or at least fear of dishonor and other repercussions, would have prevented.

Unfortunately, slaves had to endure a number of sexual abuses at the hands of their masters. As I had mentioned before, they could be used as sexual objects for their master's gratification. They had to do whatever their *dominus* asked of them regardless of if they, personally, found the act degrading or not. Likewise, masters could limit with whom the slaves had sexual relations, often times in order to produce children from their own female slaves for an economic benefit. Finally, a slave could be castrated at the whim of his master. Castration is inherently an act which forcibly alters the sexual expression of a man in two polar opposite categories – either to prevent sexual acts or to make him sexually more desirable.

Perhaps the truest sexual freedom, albeit not necessarily one which a person might have wished upon themselves, was the *infames*. Romans attained infamia in large because they broke a number of social rules and regulations often involving sex or sex appeal. Like slaves, *infames* had no honor and could therefore engage in many of the acts which would have otherwise been discouraged among Romans in good social standing. Unlike slaves, *infames* had the added benefit of being free – even if they did not enjoy quite the same legal protections as a free Roman citizen. *Infames*, despite their name, often had the reputation of being sexually desirable even among the most conservative Roman citizens which is why they were often times associated with adulterous stories involving the upper classes.

It is telling that not only does each and every Roman social-sexual institution perpetuate sexual repression in some form, but also each of the five used of sexually charged language that I have outlined in this thesis reinforce this repression at their linguistic roots. The apotropaic associates sex and

sexuality with being so obscene that it wards off evil influences often through symbols of the masculine patriarchal power. The aggressive and humorous degrades and demeans those who would step outside the socially mandated norms, perhaps accounting for why both are often closely associated with each other. The titillative enforces the prurient interests of the populace creating a certain level of sexual novelty in an otherwise oppressive system. Finally, sexually catharsis rewards those who stay within the bounds of the system, keeping them safe from assaults on their reputation and character. Even though these categories are modern constructs, the Romans certainly did not classify their language in these ways, I postulate that they exemplify how Romans used language to maintain the sexual status quo. Further credence is given to my hypothesis by examining the linguistic and grammatical changes brought about by the pressure between Roman society and the Latin language through the lens of Indirect means.

None of the demographics that I have discussed above are able to express sexuality in quite the same way, either physically or through language. Each has different requirements. In fact, the only community between them is that each is somehow forced into their sexual roles by social expectations. That is one of the major differences which makes Rome a relatively oppressive sexual culture compared to ours. Socialization, society, and the law coerced Romans into sexual conformity within their rather limited social norms while modern society tends to be shifting toward positively cultivating sexual individuality. Rome certainly had a different tenor when it came to sexual expression. Therefore, it stands that, indeed, simply having a wide array of different avenues for sexual expression does not equate to more sexual freedom; I have shown above that although Rome certainly had much harsher limitations on sex and sexuality than many modern notions of the subject had assumed.

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