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THE SECOND GLANCE



All Forms of Love

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All Forms of Love

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All Forms of Love

SURVEY OF LABELLED OBJECTS

1 IN LOVE AND WAR

The first path analyses the representation of the heroic soldier and the boundaries between masculine prowess and bisexuality

2 MALE ARTISTS AND HOMOSEXUALITY

The second path deals with works made by male homosexual artists or those close to this group

3 ART OF ANTIQUITY AND ENLIGHTENED COLLECTING

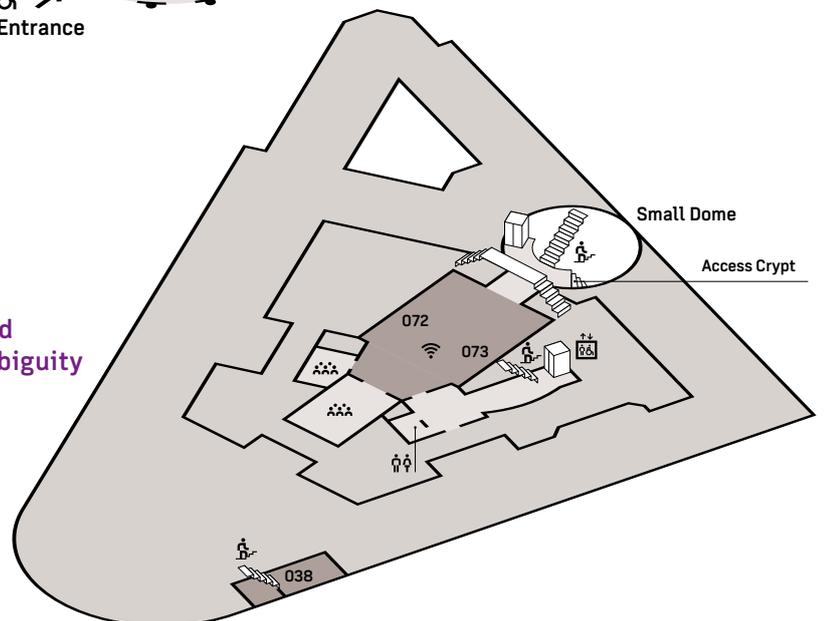
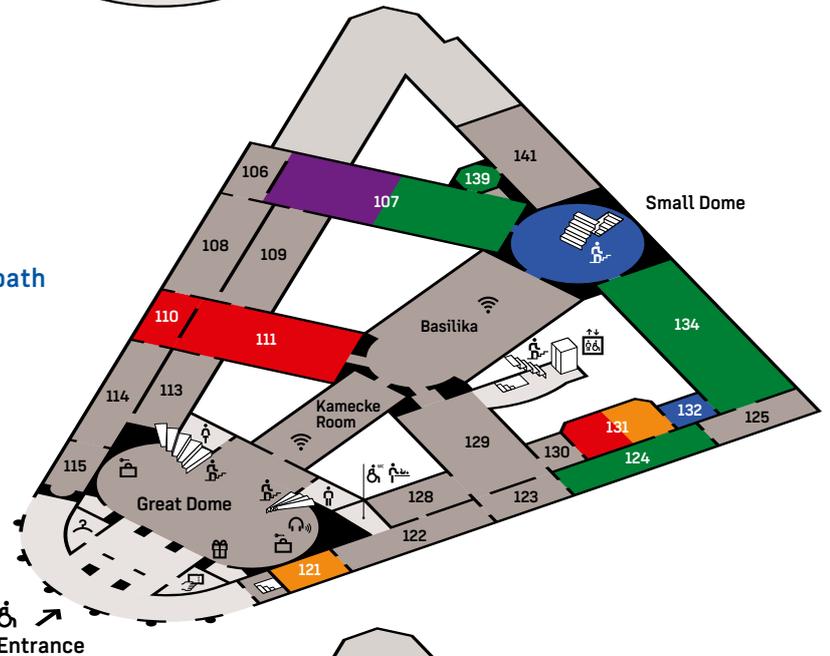
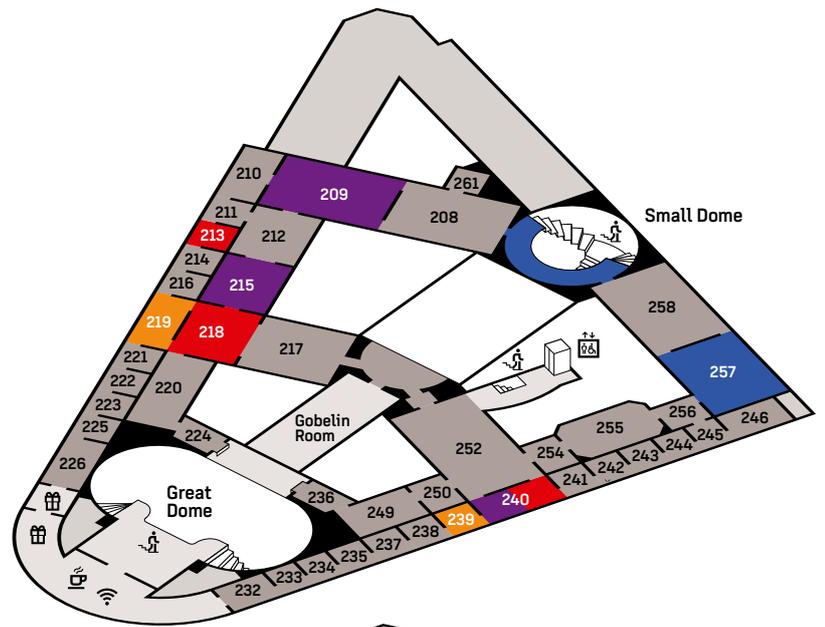
Male homosexual collectors are the focus of the third path

4 HEROINES OF VIRTUE

The fourth path concentrates on the representation of women's intimacy and female-to-female sexual affection

5 CROSSING BORDERS

The fifth path introduces both historical characters and interpretations of gender reassignment and gender ambiguity



THE SECOND GLANCE

Introduction

Exhibition 1: All Forms of Love



1
Zacharias Hegewald [1596–1639]
Adam and Eve as Lovers, ca. 1530
Marble, 29,5 x 15,3 cm

Inv. Nr. 3120, on loan from the Würth Collection.

© Archiv Würth

The project »The Second Glance« aims to present the Bode Museum's collection from new and different perspectives, which are usually not included in the conventional art history discourse. The first of these viewpoints, *All Forms of Love*, is rooted in the history of the city of Berlin and its open-minded and tolerant attitude; as reflected in King Frederick the Great's (1712–1786) famous quote from 1740: »in this

country every man must get to heaven in his own way«. Already in 1794, the Prussian state recognised the right of intersexual citizens to freely choose the gender they wanted to belong to and, consequently, to be legally judged under the chosen sex. Only a short time after, planning began for the first exhibition hall in the town, this being the germ of the present Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

But an exceptional tolerance in these earlier times should not be idealised. Although the representation of love and affection has been a recurrent topic within the history of art, the expression of sexual love has usually been considered a taboo in human history. Indeed, museums were, and often still are, places where this aspect was not particularly emphasised.



2
 Leonhard Kern [1588–1662]
Vision of Ezechiel, ca. 1640/50
 Alabaster, 72 x 84 x 13 cm
 Inv. Nr. 8482
 © Skulpturensammlung und Museum
 für Byzantinische Kunst
 der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Antje Voigt

It is often overlooked that none of the works of art in the Bode Museum was created with the intention of being exhibited here one day. Every work of art kept in this museum was originally created as a reaction of its creator to a particular context. The presentation in a museum, however, gave these objects a unique aura that encouraged misguided interpretations. After all, from the moment they were created, they were exposed to a wide variety of interpretations: by the artist himself, by the client, and by each and every one of the millions of viewers who have seen them to this day – including yourself.

The Bode Museum houses many examples where the expression of an erotic and sexual desire can only be recognised at second glance. For instance, around 1530 Zacharias Hegewald (1596–1639) sculpted in ivory the figures of *Adam and Eve* (fig. 1). They are naked, embracing and smiling at each other, so that their mutual attraction can be assumed without any doubt. More-

over, they even seem to lie together. But their sexual attributes, the genitals, are covered with a piece of cloth held by two pegs as they are not supposed to be seen at first glance, at least not by us.

On the other hand, heterosexual relations have also been integrated in the Bode Museum's collection as secondary topics within more complex scenes, only perceptible to those viewers willing to give them a second glance. In Leonhard Kern's (1588–1662) *Vision of Ezechiel*, an illustration of the resurrection of the dead, the biblical scene is even difficult to recognise as the prophet fades into the background of the composition due to the prominent position taken by the naked couples rising from the dead (fig. 2).

Both Hegewald and Kern have represented heterosexual relations. But what happened to the representation of same-sex affection? Furthermore, does every image of affection automatically mean sexual attraction? Close intimate relationships

between two women or two men can be homosocial (social relationships between persons of the same sex) and/or homosexual. The dividing line between the expression of friendship or romantic love and sexuality was and still is very vague. In some countries two male friends commonly hug and kiss as a sign of friendliness, or two female friends can walk hand in hand without this implying any sexual attraction. The impression would be much the opposite when ignoring the cultural context. In other countries the language does not even distinguish between sexual love and any other type of love. In English, the expression »I love you« can be equally directed to a sexual partner, to a friend, or to a member of the family – something unthinkable for instance in German, where the expression »Ich liebe dich« until recently automatically implied romantic love. Thinking in fixed categories does not, therefore, reflect the many forms that love and affection can take.

In the case of women, heterosexual or homosexual desires have sometimes been assumed to be non-existent. As we can see in a textile fragment, women in Antiquity were active members of the Roman *Bacchanalia*, festivals celebrated in honour of Bacchus, god of wine and freedom (fig. 3). But after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the year 476, the expression of the simplest affection among women was artistically ignored until the 9th century.

At a time when there is much less certainty regarding sexual norms than ever before, the Bode Museum offers the visitor five paths, conceived as autonomous themes, through which one may unearth new meanings related to all forms of love within the collection. The first path analyses the representation of the heroic soldier and the boundaries between masculine prowess and bisexuality. The second deals with works made by homosexual artists or those close to this group. Homosexual patrons are the focus of the third path, while the fourth concentrates on the representation of women's intimacy and female-to-female sexual affection. Finally, the fifth path questions the boundaries of gender assignment. Many of the following artworks were not specifically made under a LGBTIQ* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersexual, and queer) perspective but they simply acquired this connotation from the viewer's perspective. Other works were revolutionary at their time, just because of showing same-sex affection, even when devoid of sexual implications.

With the aim of making the following texts accessible, footnotes have been omitted. However, it must be acknowledged the significant relevance on the present work of studies by Robert Mills, Samantha J. E. Riches, Sarah Sali, James M. Saslow,



3

Egypt

Fragment of a Curtain with Dionysian Figures (Detail), ca. 5th c.

Linen and wool, 152 x 60 cm

Inv. Nr. 5/69 © Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Antje Voigt

James Small, and Andreas Sternweiler, among others. Their publications are recommended for a deeper understanding of the subject. A basic general bibliography and vocabulary have been added as an appendix.

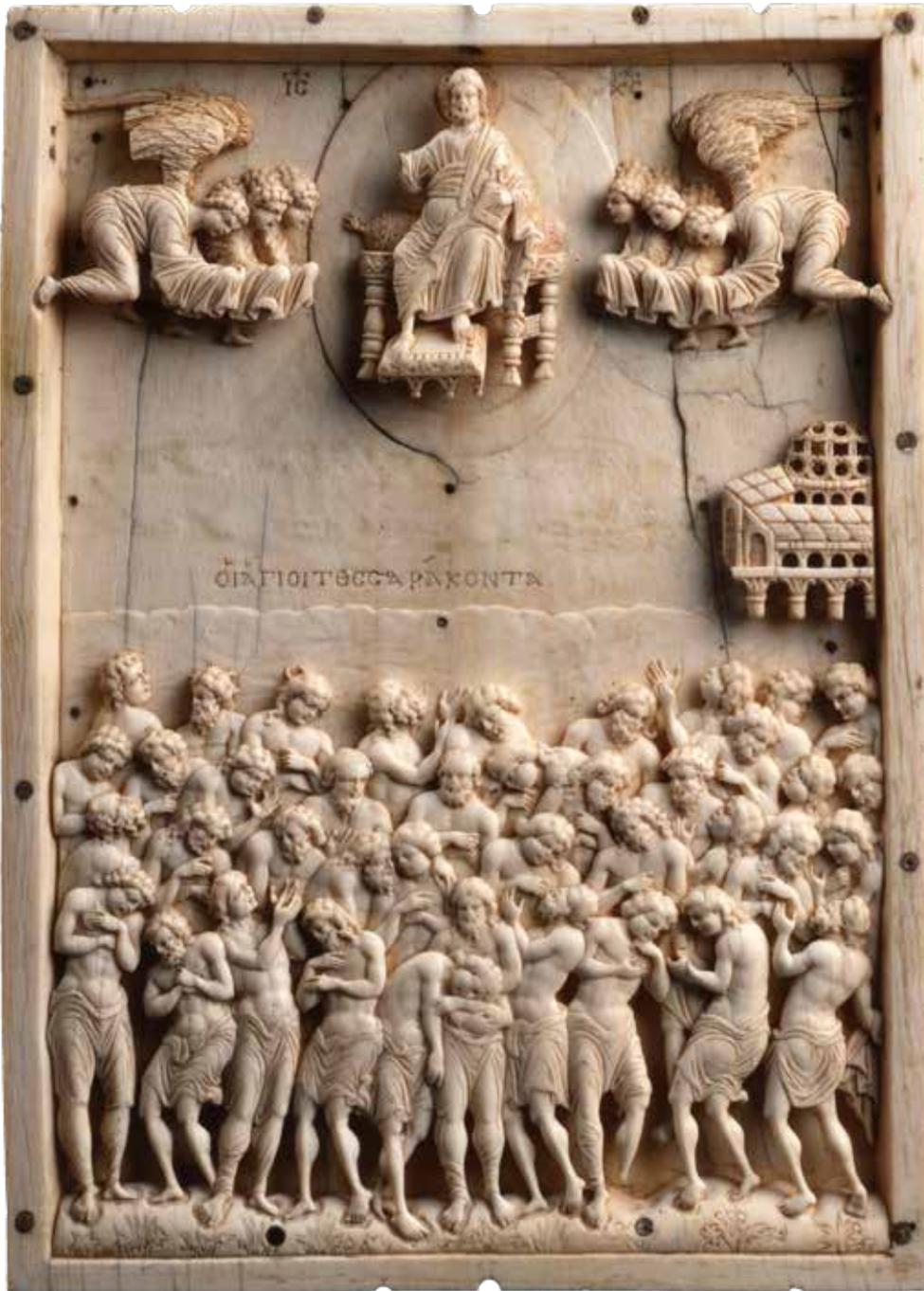
Generally the term homosexual, as opposed to heterosexual, has been used. Although this word was coined in the 19th century in the medical

context of human sexuality, it still is the most commonly used designation in most European languages.

All Forms of Love

IN LOVE AND WAR

Path 1 – The first path analyses the representation of the heroic soldier and the boundaries between masculine prowess and bisexuality



1
Constantinople
**Central Panel of Triptych with the
Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, 10th c.**
Ivory, 17,6 x 12,8 cm
Inv. Nr. 574
© Skulpturensammlung und Museum
für Byzantinische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen
zu Berlin / Jürgen Liepe

The ideal soldier has often been associated with the image of the heterosexual male. However, this is a contemporary cliché that has little to do with the representation of the greatest traditional heroes of Antiquity.

In Antiquity, bisexuality walked hand in hand with heroism. These

sexual practices were encouraged in the army as a way to establish tight bonds of affection among soldiers, promote combative spirit, and keep the morale high. The most important military heroes of Greek and Roman sacred narrative (known as mythology) displayed, therefore, bisexual orientations.

Although not openly sexual, medieval society also glorified intense emotional bonds, especially between men, which represented powerful secular and sacred ideals. Between the 9th and the 14th centuries, feudal society was structured upon a system of loyalties and personal support, ennobled by the spirit of chivalry –



2
Region of Lake Constance
**Saint John the Apostle Leaning
on Christ's Breast, ca. 1310**
Oak, old polychromy, 89 x 47 x 31,5 cm

Inv. Nr. 7950
© Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst
der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Antje Voigt

military honour – which bound knights in devoted comradeship. This ideal was extended to the Church, whose monasteries were organised as fraternal communities, following Saint Paul's parallelism between »good Christians« and »good soldiers of Christ Jesus«.

Between the 9th and 10th centuries, Europe recovered some of the economic prosperity lost since the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the year 476 and entered a period of social stability that led to expanding populations and growing cities. For the first time since the Roman period, bigger towns offered the

critical mass and freedom required to develop homosexual networks, which was accompanied by a flourishing erotic literature. The secular urban authorities often cultivated a climate of liberty, and much homoerotic poetry – mostly in Latin – was written at the time. Unlike in poetry, which could be produced within a private subculture, such developments were hardly possible in the visual arts, as painting and sculpture depended on workshops and high expenses. Church and nobility were almost the only existing patrons, but the first had no interest in exposing homosexuality and the latter feared punishment if



3
Master of the Biberach Holy Kinship
Saint Sebastian, ca. 1515
Limewood and original polychromy, 70 x 28 x 17 cm

Inv. Nr. 10/84
© Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst
der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Antje Voigt

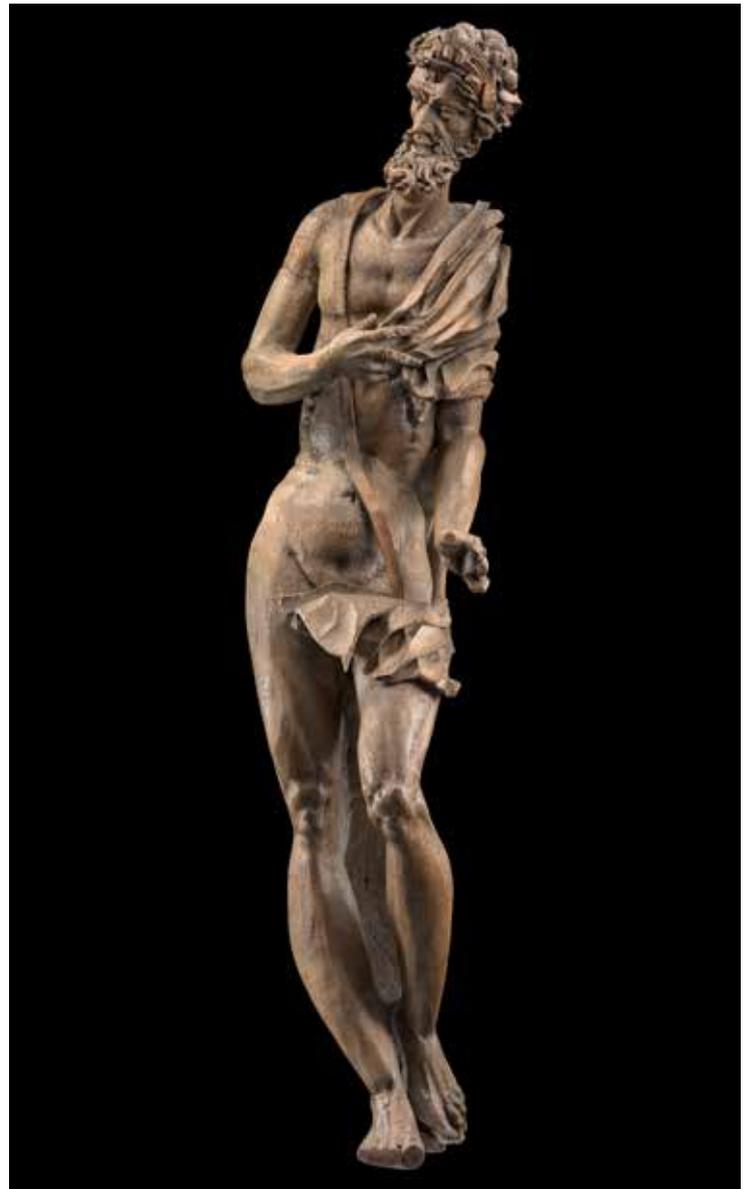
doing so. That is why the only illustrations of same-sex intimacy in this period are religious subjects where eroticism is only present, if at all, by implication.

The representation of Christian soldiers provided the right scenario that could be, if not openly representative of homosexuality, at least expressive of physical proximity and true affection among men. To the Byzantine collection of the Bode Museum belongs one of the most famous representations of the *Forty Martyrs of Sebaste* (fig. 1). According to legend, those soldiers were condemned to die from exposure

to cold on a frozen lake near the city of Sebaste, because of their profession of the Christian faith. Usually depicted just before death, the situation offered an unusual opportunity to represent a group of men hugging each other, searching for warmth and consolation.

This atmosphere of relative freedom changed dramatically in the 13th century. Strong political rivalries and the decadence of feudalism led secular and religious authorities to extend control over all aspects of their subjects' lives, including sexual regulations. Homoerotic poetry virtually disappeared but, ironically, more images depicting affections or taboo behaviours were created than before. Many of them, despite intending to offer uplifting religious or knightly examples, offered an ambiguous physical reading, and spiritual and carnal love were not always neatly separated. A motif from around 1310 of Saint John the Apostle leaning his head against Christ's breast exemplifies the kind of male intimacy portrayed at the time (fig. 2). This representation, derived from the account of the Last Supper in the Gospel of John (which was thought in the Middle Ages to have been written by John the Apostle), shows Christ and John in a posture that recalls the central couple of soldiers in the *Forty Martyrs of Sebaste*. Jesus is portrayed as a bearded man who tenderly holds the »beloved disciple«. Groups like the one kept in the Bode Museum were often placed in female convents, dedicated to commemorate the fraternal devotion of Saint John for Jesus. Such images would help the nuns to identify their mystical marriage to Jesus with the androgynously depicted saint.

Among the several chivalrous examples often revered by the Church, that of Saint Sebastian is particularly interesting because of the evolution of his iconography throughout the history of art. According to one of the most important medieval sources on the lives of the saints, the *Golden Legend* (13th century), he was a Roman soldier living in the 3rd century who served as a personal bodyguard to the emperor and commanded the first cohort of the Praetorian Guards. Sebastian converted to Christianity and was consequently dismissed from the army. From that moment, he understood his duty towards his fellow Christians as similar to that of a soldier towards his war companions. He accompanied several martyrs during their torture, supported them in their battle against temptation, and encouraged them in the pursuit of their final aim: to reach the kingdom of God through martyrdom. Sebastian finally suffered martyrdom himself, being first shot with arrows and then beaten to death.



4

Ludwig Münstermann [1570/80–1637/38]

Apollo, 1615/1616

Oak, 98 x 22 x 24 cm

Inv. Nr. 2/63

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Nothing in Sebastian's legend suggests possible homosexuality. During the Middle Ages he was often represented as a soldier wearing armour, either holding arrows or being pierced by them. It was at the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries when he started to be portrayed as a handsome and partially undressed adolescent. Such development resulted from the combination of the Christian tradition with the new interest on the antique myths and culture, which started in the Western world at that time. It was the beginning of a new era: the Renaissance (in English »rebirth«), which attempted to reconcile new scientific knowledge with the values of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and also with the teachings of the Catholic faith. This tension between paganism and Christianity was prolonged and reinterpreted until the 18th century. Consequently, the personalities of antique heroes and Christian saints were endlessly rethought and even iconographically interwoven in not a few cases.

An important characteristic of the Renaissance was a strong relation to the earthly world. As we can see in a carving by the Master of the Biberach Holy Kinship (ca. 1515), Sebastian's physical appearance and nudity became so important that it nearly eclipsed his moral and protective virtues (fig. 3). Sebastian acted as protector against plagues in the Middle Ages, the illness being then represented as a volley of arrows. However, the connection of the martyr pierced by arrows with the plague is not an intuitive one. In Greco-Roman mythology, the archer god Apollo (bisexual and the epitome of male beauty) was the deliverer from pestilence, and the figure of Sebastian Christianised this association. Since the 19th century, Saint Sebastian has become a homoerotic



5
Giambologna [1529–1608]
Mars Gradivus, ca. 1580
Bronze, height 39,5 cm

Inv. Nr. 4/65
© Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Jörg P. Anders

ideal as well as a prototype of the tormented one in a homophobic society.

With the recovered interest in Antiquity, the fine arts found an iconography independent of religion where nudity and homoeroticism could be more freely expressed. Differing from the Christian soldiers mentioned above, pagan heroes and their expressions of affection and physical proximity – including bisexuality – could be more openly depicted and exposed. Like Apollo, the Roman god Mars and the half-god Hercules (in Greek Heracles) were among the highest models of bellicosity in classical mythology. They also engaged in countless heterosexual and homosexual relations, all of them exposed as illustrations of their virility.

Apollo, who represented the ideal of male beauty in both Greek and Roman mythology, was considered to be the god of the sun, poetry, plague, and healing, among others. He was usually portrayed as a handsome young man only partly covered by a cloak, as in Ludwig Münstermann's (1570/80–1637/38) carving (fig. 4). The list of his male lovers is at least as long as the female ones.

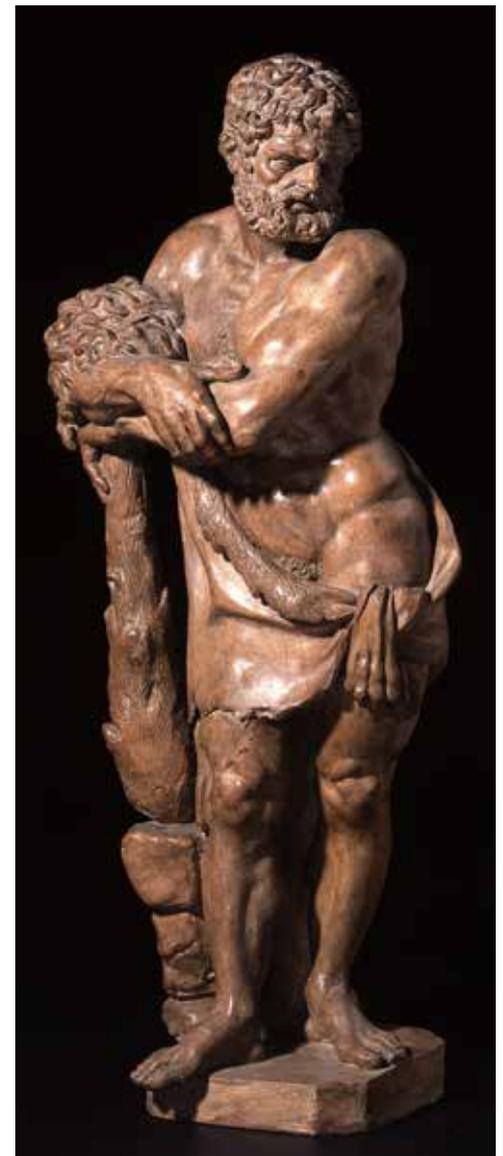
Mars (in Greek Ares), god of war, was considered the epitome of masculinity in Antiquity. He was often represented nude (as a symbol of fearlessness), muscular, standing in a courageous position, and holding or wearing attributes related to war – such as a spear, helmet and shield. This tradition was continued in the Renaissance, as we can see in Giambologna's (1529–1608) Mars (fig. 5). Since the 18th century, his spear and shield have been used as the international symbol representing the male gender (σ), while the mirror of his wife Venus (in Greek Aphrodite; goddess of

beauty) represents the female (φ). Being married to the most beautiful of all goddesses did not stop Mars from having several affairs with mortal men.

Hercules, son of Jupiter (in Greek Zeus; king of all gods), was the greatest of all classical heroes and a paragon of masculinity. Taller and stronger than any other mortal, he played a central role in the war between the Trojans and Athenians narrated by Homer in the *Iliad*, the most important epic poem of ancient Greek literature (8th century BC). Hercules had several same-sex affairs with fellow warriors and younger men he was training as soldiers. He was traditionally depicted as an extremely muscular person, nude or partially covered with a lion skin, and holding a club. This iconography was fixed by the so-called *Hercules Farnese* – a 3rd-century Roman sculpture excavated in Rome in 1546 and a copy of the original by the famous Greek sculptor Lysippus. Hercules's pose and exaggerated musculature were admired by the artists of the time, heavily influencing the art of the 16th and 17th centuries, including work by Pierre Puget (1620–1694) (fig. 6). With the passing of time, the ideal representation of the male body invented by Lysippus remained as one of the standardised iconographies for the homoerotic.

In conclusion, the theme depicted in no way determines the artistic quality of a work of art. Neither does the sexual interpretation – objective or subjective – that we make of it. The masterful execution of a work cast in bronze, a wood carving or the modelling of clay certainly depends on the mastery of the artist. But, as seen in these examples, gender perspective is nevertheless necessary for understanding works of art, beyond

their mere technical perfection, as a reflection of a society, and a tool for accessing a historical context. After all, bisexuality did not stand in any way against the recognition of a soldier as a hero. And generic ambiguity was fundamental both for the iconographic evolution of Saint Sebastian and for the religious composition of Christ and Saint John to have the desired effect.



6
Pierre Puget [1620–1694]
Hercules, ca. 1660

Clay, 67,5 x 26 x 18,5 cm

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All Forms of Love

MALE ARTISTS AND HOMOSEXUALITY

Path 2 – The second path deals with works made by male homosexual artists or those close to this group



1
Donatello [ca. 1386–1466]
**David with the Head of Goliath,
mid-15th c.**

Bronze, 54 x 10,5 x 10,5 cm

Inv. Nr. 2262

© Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Antje Voigt

In the 14th century a new cultural model focusing on the revival of classical Antiquity – humanism – arose in Italy and rapidly spread throughout Europe. A new reading of ancient literature together with a fresh interest in classical art, philosophy, and science considered humankind the measure of all things. The world was now conceived in terms of human values and, as a result, medieval Theocentricism (God as the central aspect to human existence) began to decline.

2
Andrea del Verrocchio [1435/36–1488]
Sleeping Youth, ca. 1475/80

Terracotta, 36 x 67 x 25 cm

Inv. Nr. 112

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The subsequent debate over questions like virtue, desire, sensuality, and sexual liberties, which reduced Christian condemnation of worldly pleasures, had a tremendous cultural influence at the time. By returning to the classical past for inspiration, writers and artists also took an interest in homosexuality, given its prominence in art, chronicles, and the pagan narratives of the gods (known as myths). Even though not every humanist was homosexual, many of them showed an interest in dealing with homoeroticism.

Homosexual artists certainly existed before humanism. But it wasn't until the 14th century, for the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire, that Western society was flexible enough to accept openly homoerotic artistic productions and, despite social and religious opposition, to at least tolerate homosexuality, including that of artists.

Humanism, as a current of thought, reached its culmination around 1500, the time of the Renaissance, a term



3
Leonardo da Vinci [1452–1519]
[or circle]

Flora, 16th c.

Wax, 67 x 44 x 37 cm

Inv. Nr. 5951

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für Byzantinische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen
zu Berlin / Jörg P. Anders

which literally refers to the »rebirth« of the Greek and Roman cultures. Its artistic origin was in the city of Florence, one of the most dynamic European centres of the time. Florence also seems to have had a well-known homosexual subculture during the 14th and 15th centuries, widespread among all classes of people. In Germany, for instance, the word »Florenzer« was used as synonym for the homosexual male.

Artists like Donatello (ca. 1386–1466), Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) and Michelangelo (1475–1564) were influ-

enced by the theories of the philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), translator of the text *Symposium* written by the Greek philosopher Plato (428/427–348/347 BC) and initiator of the current known as Neo-Platonism. According to Ficino's complex interpretation of Plato's work, love is the product of the desire for beauty, whose pursuit would ultimately lead to the Divinity (God). Desire would therefore carry a religious connotation. Moreover, for Ficino a man would naturally be more attracted towards men than to women, as in this way he would be

reminded of his own inner beauty. With this thesis, Ficino helped to legitimize homosexuality and contributed enormously to the search for androgyny in the development of Renaissance art: the physical union of fortitude and grace.

Donatello is considered one of the fathers of the Renaissance. In his sculpted work, he coupled classical sensuality with Christian morality and humanism, illustrating for the first time the Neo-Platonic approach to the notion of love in his depictions of the biblical figure of David.



4

After Michelangelo

Samson Defeating Two Philistines, 1601-1615

Bronze, 36,3 x 17,4 x 14,7 cm

Inv. Nr. 2389

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In the version housed in the Bode Museum, David is covered with only a cloak and a very short tunic, which leaves his right leg almost completely nude up to the hip. The focus on his beautiful male body is underlined by the position of a slightly twisted waist and the lifting of the left leg (fig. 1).

According to the Old Testament, David was a young shepherd who killed Goliath, the chieftain of the Philistines confronting the Israelites. Immediately after this episode took place, David developed an

intimate friendship with Jonathan, son of King Saul, which is recounted in the Bible as follows: »the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul«. Jealous of David's success in the battle and of his influence over his own son, King Saul ordered the murder of David. The young man was forced to flee and left Jonathan after they had »kissed one another and wept

with one another, David weeping the most«. Later on, when David was informed of Saul's and Jonathan's deaths, he would lament on the latter, as his »love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women«.

Considering David's historical and religious relevance, being one of the leading figures in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, those biblical passages were often highlighted and his relationship with Jonathan – homosexual or not – was frequently used to portray same-sex desire in

art. Donatello, who according to several sources may have been a homosexual himself, was certainly not the first artist to represent the king, but he was indeed the first one depicting him as an attractive and androgynous adolescent.

Leonardo da Vinci – artist, engineer, scientist, and inventor – is considered the paradigm of the »Renaissance man«, a person whose expertise spans a large number of different areas. He started his career in Florence with the openly homosexual painter and sculptor Andrea del Verrocchio (1435/36–1488), owner of a workshop characterised by artistic experimentation. Verrocchio's *Sleeping Youth*, for instance, is an impressive analysis of the male body (fig. 2).

In 1476, Leonardo was twice accused of homosexual activity because of his closeness to a young male model. Although these charges were dismissed, a reputation as a homosexual accompanied him until the end of his life. Da Vinci's works of art and his approximately two thousand pages of notes have been widely analysed with regards to his supposed homosexuality, among others by the Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud (1856–1939).

In his artistic production, Leonardo focused on the search of the androgyne, a merging of masculine features and rounded feminine forms. This was the case of the sculpture of the Roman goddess *Flora*, probably the work of one of his close followers (fig. 3). Flora, symbol of the blooming of flowers and the spring season, is recognisable as a woman because of her breasts, but her toned arms and shoulders educe a masculine body. Her features and even her curls follow those in Leonardo's painting *Saint John the Baptist* (today in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, Inv.



5

Hans Daucher [ca. 1485–1538]

Allegory of the Virtues of Dürer, 1522

Solnhofen Limestone, 23,8 x 16,8 x 3,2 cm

Inv. Nr. 804

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6
 Albrecht Dürer [1471–1528]
Willibald Pirckheimer, ca. 1503
 Drawing, silver pencil on grounded paper,
 21,1 x 15 cm
 Inv. Nr. KdZ 24623
 © bpk / Kupferstichkabinett, SMB / Dietmar Katz

Nr. 775), whose model could have been a male apprentice in Leonardo's workshop known as »Salai« (little devil).

In the High Renaissance period (1490s–1530s), popes like Clement VII (1478–1534) and Julius II (1443–1513) invested an enormous amount of money in converting Rome into the new cultural capital of the Western world. Consequently, Florence lost part of its previous artistic prominence, even though

artists like Michelangelo contributed a great deal to the grandeur of both cities. Michelangelo was a sculptor, painter, architect, and poet, pivotal to the development of Western art and still considered as one of the greatest artists of all time.

Because Michelangelo was a devout Christian, his homosexuality was in conflict with his fear of its punishment. This dilemma between religion and forbidden sexual desires seems to have contributed to his introspec-

tive and tormented character. His search for beauty in the male body drove him, in contrast to Donatello or Leonardo, to produce works of extreme virility. Muscularity and tension can be found in most of his compositions, even when portraying women.

In a sculpture kept in the Bode Museum, an anonymous artist set in bronze an original drawing by Michelangelo (fig. 4). This drawing was meant to serve as a model for a



7

Greece

Pan in Foliage, 11th c.

Marble, 62,5 x 49 x 6 cm

Inv. Nr. 6436

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monumental sculpture of the biblical Israelite hero Samson fighting against the Philistines, where Michelangelo portrayed three men intertwined in a kind of spiral embrace. The intensity of their movements, their exposed nudity, and the tension of the bodies are certainly closer to a sexual scene than to combat.

Although not necessarily homosexuals themselves, other artists in the Renaissance showed an interest in expressing homoeroticism. A particularly prominent case is that of Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528).

Dürer was the central painter, printmaker, and draftsman of the German Renaissance. His work also inspired other German artists like Hans Daucher (ca. 1485–1538), who even depicted Dürer in his relief *Allegory of the Virtues of Dürer* (fig. 5). Here, Dürer is represented

exhibiting his characteristic well-cared-for long hair and dressed with one of the elegant costumes he liked to wear. He is defeating an opponent personifying Envy in the presence of eight witnesses, Hercules and King David among others.

Dürer was married and never acknowledged any homosexual tendencies. However, his correspondence with a friend, the humanist scholar Willibald Pirckheimer (1470–1530), contains caustic comments on the subject. For instance, while Dürer made fun of his friend's fondness for Italian soldiers and German girls, Pirckheimer presumably annotated »with a man's prick up your anus« in Greek on a sketch by Dürer, kept today in the Kupferstichkabinett of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (fig. 6). Some of Dürer's drawings and prints portrayed the homosexual humanist subculture to which he

must have been acquainted during his two trips to Italy (in 1494–1495 and 1505–1507).

Homosexuality also features in the oeuvre of Vincenzo Pacetti (1746–1820). Pacetti is particularly important for the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin because around 10,000 drawings from his collection are now housed in the Kupferstichkabinett. Today, however, we are interested in his work as a restorer of antique sculptures.

In 1620 one such sculpture, probably made in the 3rd century BC, was found in Rome: the work now known as *The Barberini Faun*. Despite extensive damage – for instance, the right leg and the left arm were missing – it was soon regarded as one of the masterpieces of antique sculpture. For a long time the Faun was owned by the famous Roman Barberini



8

Vincenzo Pacetti [1746–1820]

The Barberini Faun, 1799

Clay, 86,8 x 63,4 x 50,5 cm

Inv. Nr. M 290, Property of the Kaiser Friedrich Museumsverein

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family, hence its title, and is now kept in the Glyptothek in Munich (Inv. Nr. 218). Fauns and their Greek precursors, the satyrs, were a recurrent motif in Antiquity and have their origin in the Greek mythological figure known as Pan. In Roman mythology, they were traditionally seen as drunken, eccentric companions of Bacchus, the god of wine.

As in the Byzantine relief fragment with *Pan in foliage* (11th century), fauns were often depicted dancing (fig. 7), but they were also often shown suffering from the consequences of their excessive lifestyle. The latter is the case of the *Barberini*

Faun, who lies probably drunk or resting after sex, with closed eyes, relaxed, his right arm under his head and the left one hanging to the side. His open legs show his complete nudity and his well-toned torso. We could certainly say that he is shamelessly enjoying the moment.

When in 1799 the sculpture came temporarily into the possession of Pacetti, he took the opportunity to alter some of the restored missing parts, which had already been reworked several times before. By clearly lifting the right leg, Pacetti further strengthened the Faun's already distinctly erotic pose. It was in this

context that a terracotta model of the Faun was created, which is now in the Bode Museum (fig. 8).

Bans on homosexual behaviour had a deep impact on the lives of all the artists mentioned above. It constrained their social relations as well as the practice of their professions. Their proximity to homosexuality, whether themselves homosexuals or not, was crucial to their artistic production and even to their proximity to the patrons. However, this essential part of their biographies is still largely ignored in most art history writings.

All Forms of Love

ART OF ANTIQUITY AND ENLIGHTENED COLLECTING

Path 3 – Male homosexual collectors are the focus of the third path



1
François Duquesnoy [1597–1643]
Antinous Belvedere, first half of the 17th c.
Bronze, 31,5 x 13,5 x 9 cm

Inv. Nr. 1/94
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der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Jörg P. Anders and Antje Voigt



2
Edmé Bouchardon [1698–1762]
Baron Philipp von Stosch, 1727
Marble, 85 x 65 x 34 cm

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Unlike in the Christian societies of the Middle Ages and the early modern period, which judged homosexuality as unnatural, in antiquity same-sex love (between men) met with greater tolerance and sometimes even approval. This was especially true for friendships between young men and older mentors, which were

of both an intellectual and sexual nature. The publicly celebrated love of the Roman emperor Hadrian (76–138 AD) for the young Antinous (ca. 110–130 AD) is legendary: after the latter drowned under tragic circumstances during a boating excursion on the Nile, Hadrian had his lover venerated as a god in several

of the temples that were dedicated to the emperor. In addition, he had Antinous' image reproduced hundreds of times, whether chiselled in stone, cast in bronze, or minted on coins. In later centuries these images of Antinous were in high demand among collectors and lovers of fine art, particularly in the 18th century,

when the excavations of the ancient monuments in Herculaneum and Pompeii aroused a great enthusiasm for antiquity among intellectuals and art lovers.

Furthermore, many of the artists of that era taught themselves using the antique statues and their proportions, which were considered ideal. Among them was the Flemish sculptor François Duquesnoy (1597–1643), whose bronze Antinous figure is in the Bode Museum (fig. 1). For this work, the artist used the famous antique marble sculpture known as »Antinous of Belvedere« (Vatican Museum; today identified as Hermes, Inv. Nr. 907) as his model. As a result, the beautiful young man became one of the most well-known personifications of Roman antiquity even to this day and additionally became in modern times a figure representing an era and social order in which homoerotic relationships, under certain circumstances, could exist openly and even gain societal acceptance.

One of the 18th century art lovers was the antiquarian and antiquities collector Philipp von Stosch (1691–1757), who had been named a baron by the Holy Roman and German emperor Charles VI (1685–1740) for his diplomatic services. He spent the second half of his life in Italy, first in Rome and later in Florence, where he made a name for himself as an art connoisseur and collector. The portrait bust of Stosch that the French sculptor Edmé Bouchardon (1698–1762) made during his ten years in Rome shows the baron, appropriately enough, with the bearing and garb of a Roman emperor and thus reflected Stosch's intellectual frame of reference (fig. 2, compare fig. 3). One might as well suspect that antiquity was also attractive for Stosch because it celebrated the ideal of

homoerotic friendship. His affinity towards his own gender was present throughout his life and was no secret to his close friends, although the baron did not act on it openly.

When Philipp von Stosch, shortly before his death, met Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768), who nowadays is considered the father of modern archaeology and art history, he commissioned him to prepare a catalogue of his famous collection of antique engraved gemstones. However, the work (»Description des pierres gravées du feu Baron de Stosch«, 1760) was only completed thanks to a commission by Stosch's nephew and sole heir, Heinrich Wilhelm Muzel-Stosch (1723–1782), who, like his late uncle, was a life-long bachelor and probably also had same-sex attractions. Most notably, his correspondence with his friend Winckelmann, in which both men discreetly exchanged views on their erotic inclinations, supports this assumption. In their rhapsodies over antique works of art and the societies that produced them, the two could speak relatively freely about the topic; this took place within a fusion of aesthetic, intellectual, and erotic attraction to the sculptures of antique heroes and youths. Shortly after Winckelmann's death in 1767, Heinrich von Stosch was already striving to publish their correspondence. This fact can also be considered evidence that the nephew, like his uncle before him, did not categorically keep his sexual preference a secret.

This relative freedom did not, however, apply to the Prussian king Frederick II (1712–1786), who acquired the famous Stosch gem collection for the Prussian court in 1764 and thus laid the foundation for the Berlin antiquities collection. Unlike his aesthetic contemporaries Stosch



3
Egypt [Alexandria]
Torso of Emperor Statue, 4th c.

Red Egyptian porphyry,
96 x ca. 45 x ca. 36 cm

Inv. Nr. 6128

© Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Jürgen Liepe

and Winckelmann or even his younger brother Heinrich (1726–1802), whose love for the army officer Christian Ludwig von Kaphengst (1740–1800) was an open secret, Frederick, as the future king and

commander of the Prussian troops in time of war, had to fulfil the societal and dynastic expectations that were thrust upon him. These demands were reflected in most of the portrayals of the Prussian king, for example in Johann Gottfried Schadow's larger-than-life marble sculpture in the small dome of the Bode Museum (fig. 4), which shows him in the pose of a stern general.

However, it is very probable that Frederick was homosexual. There were no children from his marriage with Elisabeth Christine von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel-Bevern (1715–1797), the couple always living separately. Instead, Frederick maintained particularly intimate relationships with certain men in his court, which was especially a thorn in the side of his father, Frederick William I (1688–1740), known as the »Soldier King«. The pivotal episode of the dysfunctional relationship between father and son can be considered the execution – carried out in front of Frederick – of his boyhood friend Hans Hermann von Katte (1704–1730), who was involved in the attempt of the artistically inclined crown prince to escape from his father's harsh discipline.

The fact that this text deals with exclusively male art lovers and collectors is no accident. On the one hand, today we barely have any information about female intellectuals and art lovers of the pre-Modern era. In contrast to the men, they remained in the background because of their societal status, which led to any traces of their contributions disappearing over time. On the other hand, antiquity, because of the explicitly masculine homoerotic and aesthetic idealisation of the male form in the 18th century, primarily provided a frame of reference for gay male love.



4

Franz Tübbecke [1856–1937]

Frederick the Great, 1904**[copy from an original by Johann Gottfried Schadow]**

Marble, 253 x 105 x 82 cm

Inv. Nr. 2829

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Path 4 – The fourth path concentrates on the representation of women's intimacy and female-to-female sexual affection.



1
Franconia [Bamberg?]
Chest with the Life of Jesus (Detail), ca. 1100
Walrus-bone [?], 14 x 41 x 29 cm
Inv. Nr. 616
© Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst
der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Jörg P. Anders



2
Austria
Saint Margaret (Detail of a Retable), ca. 1517
Lime and conifer wood, original polychromy,
117,2 x 120,5 x 28 cm
Inv. Nr. 2770
© Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst
der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Antje Voigt

The social role of women varied very little throughout most of history. Their engagement in everyday life was generally restricted to maternity or religious roles. Customarily, a woman was first subjected to her father and, after marriage, her husband. The ability of a woman to remain independent was strictly linked to her personal wealth. Very few, however, had enough money of their own and, moreover, economic affluence did not automatically result in higher social status.

Given the restricted social chances women had on their own, why would some of them not want to get married? Motives could be plenty and the rejection of heterosexual relations was certainly one of them.

Antique mythology – the stories of Greek and Roman gods – and Christian hagiography – the biographies of the saints – tell of many women freely renouncing active heterosexual relations. Both sources share a common pattern: Unmarried

women were socially accepted as long as they communicated the same virtuous message of women's chastity.

Concerning Christendom, the main virtue of nearly every female martyr saint (killed because of her faith) was an unequivocal defence of her virginity, at least during the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. Thus, chastity became compulsory for holy females, if not throughout their entire existence, at least from



3
Bernardino Cametti [1669–1736]
Diana the Huntress, 1720/50
Marble, height 258 cm

Inv. Nr. 9/59
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der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Antje Voigt

the very moment in which they devoted their lives to God. For their male counterparts, however, sexual activity remained irrelevant.

When considering women's sexuality, medieval culture was clearly misogynistic. Female sexual desire was simply not taken seriously unless it threatened male privileges or the primacy of the male sex. Just one reprobation of female homosexuality can be found in Christian scriptures: the Letter to the Romans written by Saint Paul (»even their women exchanged natural sexual

relations for unnatural ones«). But despite the scant attention paid in the Bible to the subject, it was denounced by theologians and clerics, and some of the most important medieval Christian writers, such as Saint Augustine (354–430) and Thomas Aquinas (1224/1225–1274), specifically condemned female homosexuality in their texts.

Even though references to female homosexuality in the Middle Ages are scarce, ordinary displays of, at least, affection among women began to be portrayed at the time. At the

beginning of the 9th century a new depiction of the subject of the Visitation began to circulate in Europe. According to the Gospels, before Jesus' birth Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth who, despite her advanced age, had miraculously become pregnant with John (called »the Baptist«). When both women met, John leapt from joy in his mother's womb as he became aware of the presence of Christ. The traditional scene of those women greeting each other was now open to more effusion. Moreover, they were often represented physically intertwined, cheek-to-cheek,



4

Giuseppe Mazza [1653–1741]

Diana with Nymphs and Acteon, ca. 1710

Marble, 56 x 72,5 x 8 cm

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 Museen zu Berlin / Jörg P. Anders

or even kissing each other's lips, portraying a very emotional moment. This is the case shown in the walrus-bone chest (ca. 1100) kept in the Bode Museum (fig. 1).

In general, female martyrs suffered a larger number of tortures than their male counterparts. They were also often stabbed with knives or swords, or pierced by arrows. Those weapons carry implicit allusions to the role of the male genital in heterosex-

ual copulation. In one way or another, early female martyrs transgressed the established norms of traditional feminine virtue, above all by the explicit rejection of heterosexual relations. Paradoxically, had they not breached heterosexual principles, they would have never attained martyrdom and, by extension, holiness.

Three of those female saints – Ursula, Catherine and Agatha – share similar histories. All were born into wealthy

families, Ursula and Catherine being even princesses. They were betrothed against their will, but renounced riches and marriage in order to devote their lives to God. The three suffered what was known as »female martyrdom«: Saint Ursula being pierced by arrows, Saint Catherine being tortured on a spiked breaking wheel, and Saint Agatha having her breasts mutilated.

However, the case of a fourth saint, Saint Margaret, patently shows the triumph of woman's sexual self-determination over men. According to Jacobus da Varagine and his 13th-century writings on the lives of the saints (known as the *Golden Legend*), Saint Margaret refused to marry in order to devote her life to God. Upon her refusal, she was imprisoned and tortured. It was in prison that the Devil appeared to her in the form of a dragon, a fabulous beast which was used in Christian legends to symbolize evil in general and sexual temptations in particular. Varagine then recounts two different versions of the same episode. In the first one, Saint Margaret was swallowed by the dragon, but she managed to escape from his belly by making the sign of the Holy Cross. In the second, Saint Margaret defeated the beast – which according to the legend even took on a manly appearance – grasping him by the beard, beating him with a hammer, and, finally, triumphantly planting her foot on his neck. In other words, she physically dominated him.

Within the Bode Museum's collection several images of Saint Margaret can be found, most of them showing her accompanied by a peaceful dragon lying at her feet. But the right wing of an altarpiece is decorated with an image of the martyr exposing two unusual details alluding to the fight, the resulting victory, and the final domination of the dragon by the woman (fig. 2): We can see Saint Margaret wearing a martyr's crown and handling a papal ferula (pastoral staff) that keeps the revolting dragon under control, thus reminding it who is master.

The role of women in society did not progress much with the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance in the 15th century. They remained segregated at home or secluded in convents and were only allowed minimal education. Nevertheless, the inspiration that the Renaissance (in English »rebirth«) drew from Antiquity and its myths opened new perspectives in the representation of women and female homosexuality.

In Ancient mythology, the goddess Diana (in Greek Artemis) represents the virtue of heterosexual chastity but serves also as a model for lesbian love. As in Bernardino Cametti's (1669–1736) sculpture, Diana is often depicted sporting a well-toned body and taking over those roles traditionally ascribed to men, such as hunting (fig. 3). In this case, her defiant attitude recalls the part of the classical male hero. Her rejection of men was recounted by the Roman poet Ovid (43 BC–17 AD) in his poem *The Metamorphoses* where Diana converted Actaeon into a deer after he was found secretly watch-



5

Paulus Ättinger

Diana Riding the Deer, 1600–1605

Silver, partially gilded, inlaid with gems and pearls, 34,5 x 30 x 15 cm

Inv. Nr. 3864, on loan from the Würth Collection.

© Archiv Würth



6

Giambologna [1529–1608]

Sleeping Nymph, ca. 1600

Bronze, 20,5 x 34 x 15,4 cm

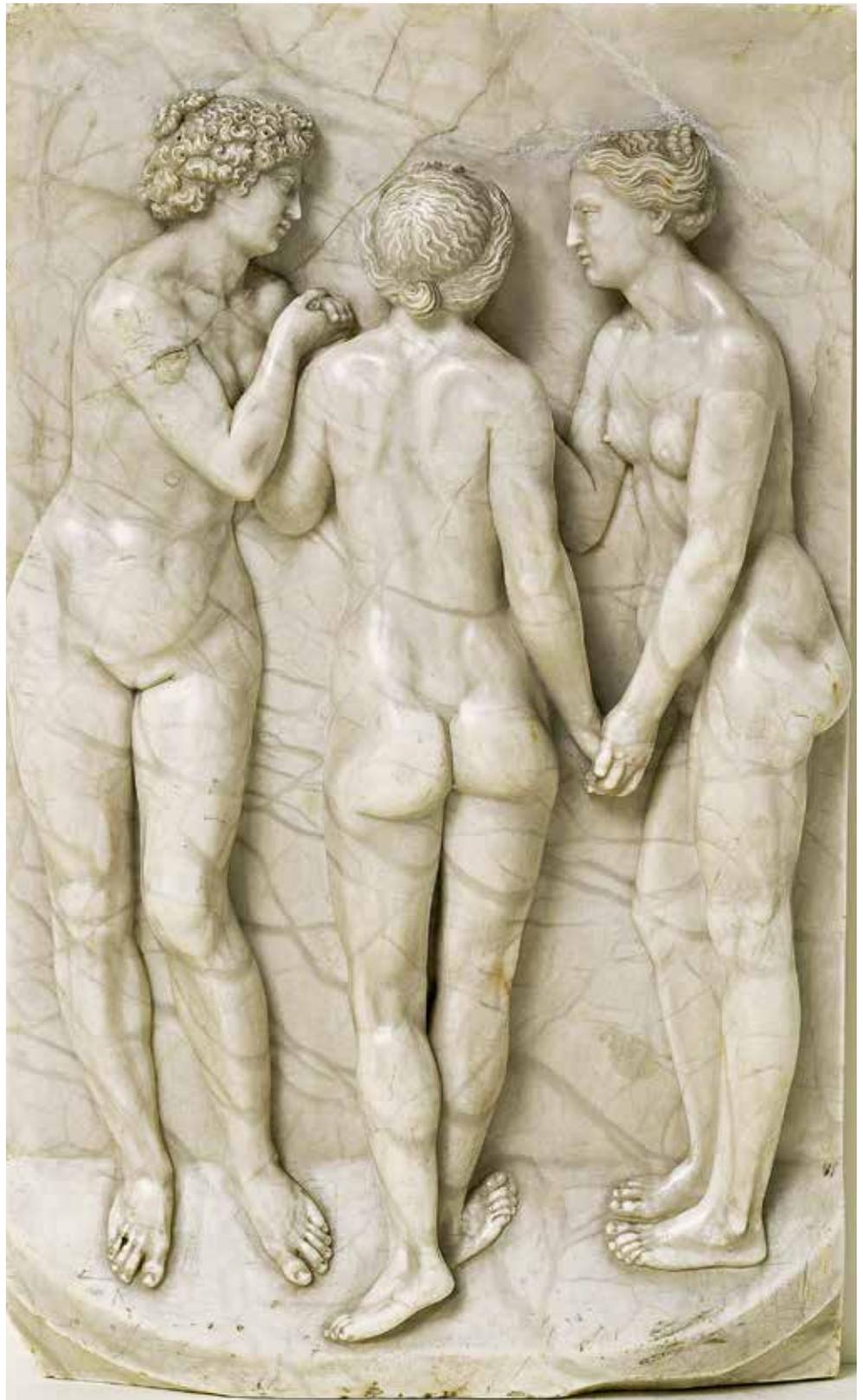
Inv. Nr. 7243

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ing her while she was bathing. This is the scene chiselled in Giuseppe Mazza's (1653–1741) relief (fig. 4). Actaeon is placed in the background, sprouting deer antlers, while Diana stands in the foreground surrounded by her nymphs – the female spirits who usually accompany the goddess as her entourage, often depicted in sexual attitudes towards each other. Other representations show Diana apparently free of sexual connotations, as for instance when riding a deer (fig. 5). The scene represented by Paulus Ättinger on a Vessel can surely allude to her love of nature, but it can also serve to subtly remind the observer of the goddess's domination when riding Actaeon.

Bath scenes were the most common situations in which nude women were represented during the Renaissance and Baroque times. *Diana and her Nymphs* was among the most common examples. The richness of the Bode Museum's collection of bronzes offers many examples of bathing and sleeping nymphs, such as that by Giambologna (1529–1608) (fig. 6). *The Three Graces* was also a beloved subject. They were minor goddesses of beauty, charm, fertility and creativity, usually portrayed naked, holding hands or even embracing each other. As in the case of Leonhard Kern's (1588–1662) relief, those gestures of affection among women were, paradoxically, traditionally marketed to men for heterosexual pleasure (fig. 7).

Scenes of female intimacy were also integrated as secondary subjects within mythological and religious topics. In Simone Mosca's (ca. 1523–1578) *The Fall of Phaeton*, these two themes are completely intertwined (fig. 8). In Greek mythology, Phaeton was the son of the solar god Helios, (in Latin Sol) who was allowed by his father to drive the sun chariot for a day. Phaeton was, however, unable to control the horses and Zeus (in



7
Leonhard Kern [1588–1662]
The Three Graces, before 1650

Alabaster, 37,8 x 23,3 cm
Inv. Nr. 1044, on loan from the Würth Collection.
© Archiv Würth

Latin Jupiter), king of all gods, had to strike the chariot down in order to prevent the earth from being burned up. Phaeton fell then into the river Eridanos – here portrayed as an old man – where he drowned. Human beings and their bodies were one of the central topics in the Renaissance and their depiction, in this case, often became the main subject of the art work. In this relief, the interaction among all figures has a strong homoerotic component, emphasized by the fact that all bodies are shown nude: Phaeton's genitals are placed at the very centre of the composition, the three nymphs on the right side show an open lesbian intimacy, and Eridanos – despite directly looking at the women – does not seem to react to them. He is, moreover, portrayed with open legs and showing his genitals in a so-called homoerotic position.

Whether within mythological legends or Christian traditions, all women discussed here are trailblazers who broke the repressive roles of their time. Only by overcoming or erasing social and gender boundaries did these women become an integral part of art history. This message of freedom ultimately anticipates the claim the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir made to Alice Schwarzer in 1976 in connection with lesbianism: »in itself, exclusive homosexuality is just as restrictive as heterosexuality. It would be ideal to be able to love a woman just as well as a man, simply a human being. Without fear, without compulsion, without obligation.«



8

Simone Mosca, called Il Moschino [ca. 1523–1578]

The Fall of Phaeton, ca. 1560

Marble, 124 x 96 x 26 cm

Inv. Nr. 282

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Path 5 – The fifth path introduces both historical characters and interpretations of gender reassignment and gender ambiguity

Gender reassignment and gender ambiguity play an important role within the Bode Museum's collection. Both Christian and mythological works of art show how the representation of all forms of love was a recurrent concern throughout human history. The broadness of this theme was already acknowledged in Antiquity and portrayed through the double nature of the Greek goddess of Love, Aphrodite (in Latin Venus).

Greek mythology (which refers to the tales of Antique gods) bestowed Aphrodite with a double personality of two different origins: Aphrodite Pandemos, which embodied the love of sensual pleasures and was daughter of Zeus (king of all gods) and Dione, and Aphrodite Urania, personifying the love of body and soul. The latter was conceived from the foam produced when the severed genitals of the god Uranus were thrown into the sea.

Despite the distinction, both Aphrodites were regarded as equals. Nevertheless, in order to distinguish between their natures, Aphrodite Urania was represented with a celestial globe evoking her more spiritual personality. This globe can be observed at the feet of Giambologna's *Urania* who, lost in thought, tries to cover her naked body with a cloth (fig. 1).

That Aphrodite Urania was conceived without the intervention of a woman was acknowledged by the Greek philosopher Plato (428/427–348/347 BC) who discussed the diversity of love in his *Symposium*. In 1864, before the term »homosexual« was used for the first time in public, the pioneer of the rights of homosexuals, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–1895), elaborated on Plato's argumentation and developed the terms »Uranian« and its heterosexual equivalent »Dioning« in his *Research on the riddle of male love*.

Despite Aphrodite's beauty winning unlimited praise, there was, however, a long tradition of considering a woman's body to be impure and sinful. Important early Christian authors such as Augustine (354–430) and Jerome (347–420) even proposed a way women could, through spiritual steadfastness and renunciation of their femininity, attain at least some kind of allegorical male status. Even Saint Paul had already stated in his *Letter to the Galatians* that baptism would not only overcome all boundaries of ethnic, religious and social origin,



1
Giambologna [1529–1608]
Venus Urania, 1573

Gilt-bronze, 43,5 x 15 cm

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© Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst
der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin / Jörg P. Anders

but also of gender: »Here is not Jew nor Greek, here is not slave nor suitor, here is not man nor woman; for you are all one in Christ Jesus«.

Over the centuries, Christian scholars interpreted these words according to the rules of their patriarchal societies. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Christian canonisation of women was equalised to transforming and debasing their bodies, subverting their own gender and thus becoming almost nearly »non-female« or »almost men«. Moreover, even if those holy women actually died by beheading, they were usually depicted while their sexualised tortures were in progress.

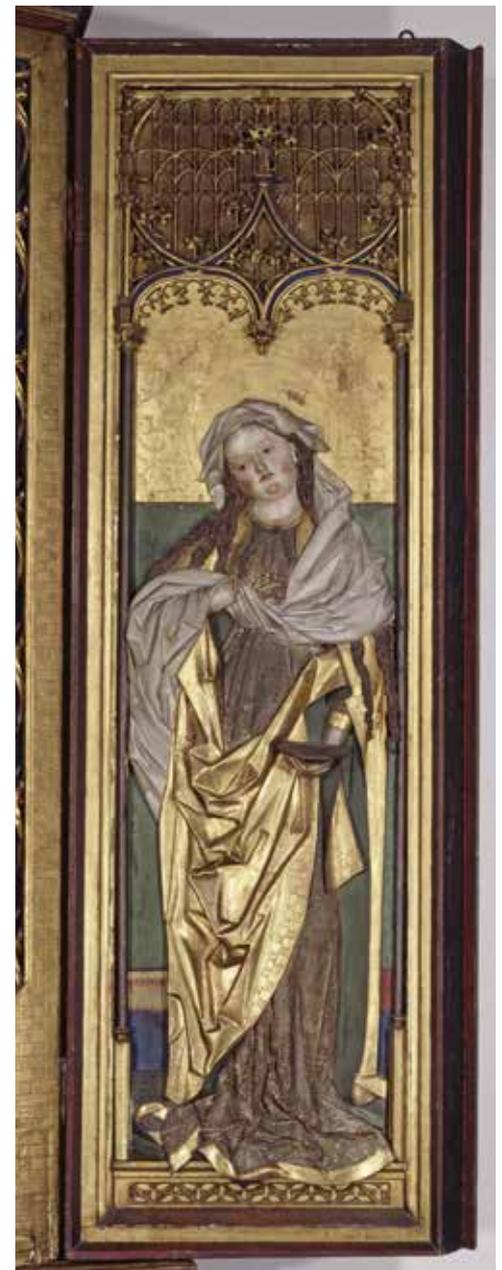
On the other hand, other Christian writings – like the 13th-century compendium on the life of the saints known as *The Golden Legend* – encouraged members of both sexes to aspire to a mystical union with Christ and cultivate all his virtues and values, such as hope, faith, love, courage and moral strength – regardless of the fact that the first three qualities were considered inherently feminine and the last two predominantly seen as masculine. This is how, despite the clear definition of the roles of men and women in the Middle Ages, there were opportunities for slippage between genders.

Nowadays, gender studies usually distinguish between biological (sex) and social (gender) gender. The Middle Ages already offered a similar framework. Saints like Ursula, Catherine, Agatha and Margaret underwent a passive forced transformation of their gender (see path 4 »Heroines of Virtue«). But other early female martyrs took an active part in that change through voluntary conversions. These were the cases of Saint Lucy and Saint Wilgefortis, both of

whom were born women but actively renounced their original gender in order to devote their life to God.

According to different legends, Saint Lucy suffered martyrdom during the 1st century in the city of Syracuse, Sicily. A converted Christian, Lucy was betrothed to a »pagan« man who denounced her faith to the Romans. She was sentenced to be raped, hitched to a team of oxen, boiled in oil, stabbed by a dagger thrust into her throat, and finally beheaded. The legend of Saint Lucy grew with the passage of time and in the 15th century another episode was added to her story: being constantly courted because of her beautiful eyes, Lucy pulled them out in order to ruin her loveliness and therefore preserve her virginity. Since then, Lucy's eyes symbolised her renouncement of the female gender. On the right wing of the 15th-century *Zams Altarpiece*, Lucy is portrayed as a beautiful, self-confident woman, firmly holding a plate with her left hand (fig. 2). Her eyes – today lost – must have been laid on the plate. She is presenting them to God, showing the way to sanctity to the viewer.

The history of Saint Wilgefortis (also known as Kümmeris, Uncumber, Liberata and Librada, depending on the country) arose in the 14th century as a result of the intersection of a legend with an iconographical misinterpretation. The former tells the transformation of a woman into a man and the latter the reversion of a man into a woman. Beginning with the legend, princess Wilgefortis desired to remain a virgin and to pursue a religious Christian life. In order to escape an unwanted marriage to a »pagan« man, she prayed to God, imploring for help, and was rewarded with a beard. As a result,



2

Tyrol

Saint Lucy (Detail of the Zams Altarpiece), ca. 1485

Conifer wood, original polychromy,
275 x 260 x 60 cm

Inv. Nr. 3112

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Byzantinische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu
Berlin / Reinhard Saczewski

her fiancé broke the engagement but nonetheless she was sentenced to crucifixion – a martyrdom traditionally reserved to men.

The second source is the *Sacro Volto* (Holy Face), now lost and once kept in the Italian city of Lucca. It was a well-known devotional image in the Middle Ages and a popular pilgrimage destination. Seldom exposed, the *Sacro Volto* was probably made in the 12th century and consisted of a wooden-carved robed figure of a bearded crucified Jesus, and decorated with precious jewellery. Following the ancient Oriental traditional representation of Christ on the cross, Jesus was portrayed as a king, with open eyes, wearing a purple tunic, and decorated with precious jewellery. He had very long hair and showed female-like features. When copies of the figure migrated to Northern Europe, the meaning of their uncommon depiction was not recognised anymore. New legends had to be developed in order to explain the image, the iconography was misinterpreted and a bearded woman was now seen in it. The origin of the name Wilgeförtis could lie in the northern German expression »hilge Vartz«, the literal translation of the Italian »Sacro Volto«. The Bode Museum's Kümmeris has been undoubtedly portrayed as a woman, bearing breasts and wearing a feminine dress (fig. 3).

In the Middle Ages, virginity was seen as not only a physical, but also a spiritual state. For women aspiring to sainthood, their body was both an instrument of sanctification and a hindrance. On the contrary, men's control over their bodies – and the renouncement of their male gender – challenged notions such as nobility and chivalry.

Saint George was considered the prototype of the male Christian hero and is one of the most venerated saints since the Middle Ages. Probably a Roman soldier of the 3rd century, his legend was enhanced in the 9th century by the addition of a fantastic combat with a dragon, together with the rescue of a princess. One of the most portrayed saints within the Bode Museum's collection, he is usually dressed as a medieval knight and represented in the critical moment of killing the beast. Contrary to our common preconceptions of the heterosexual male hero (see path 1 »In love and war«), George offers a good example of ambiguity in gender roles.

The number of tortures that Saint George suffered through his martyrdom varied according to multiple medieval legends. This vast amount of torments has been compared to the prototype of the female martyrdom,



3

Osnabrück

Saint Kümmeris, ca. 1520

Oak and polychromy, 144 x 132 x 22 cm

Inv. Nr. 7727

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which was usually formed by a long list of punishments and with an emphasis on the suffering of the entire body, especially of those parts related to her gender – such as the breasts. In contrast, male martyrs usually suffered fewer tortures and often the martyrdom was reduced to only beheading.

Although the historical texts made no mention of the virginity of Saint George, several other symbols common to virgin female martyrs can actually be found in his iconography; for instance, the insistence on his nude

representation throughout his martyrdom and the burning of his nipples as one of the tortures suffered. He also defeated sexual temptation twice: first by killing the dragon (a Christian symbol of such temptation) and secondly by refusing to marry the princess. In the 16th-century Bavarian sculpture of Saint George in the Bode Museum, the dragon has been clearly humanised in an attempt to seduce the saint (fig. 4). It exhibits not only human teeth but also female genitalia, clearly displayed at the centre of the composition. Furthermore, the beast lies on its back, ready for a humanised face-to-face intercourse. However, despite this more than obvious sexual proposal, Saint George remains imperterbable.

The question of how George, Lucy Aphrodite or Kümmeris would have defined themselves in terms of gender cannot be answered. Nor is it possible to answer whether they wanted to or were able to find themselves in the conventional definition of men and women. Their stories and the works of art based on them, however, point to an ancestral human need to reflect the absence of gender boundaries: in other words, the need to represent a reality that had little to do with Western social conventions. Indeed, the right of every human being not to be defined as a woman or a man was recognized by the German Federal Constitutional Court on 10 October 2017 (file number: 1 BvR 2019/16). The World Health Organisation officially decided in May 2019 to stop classifying transgender people as mentally ill.



4

Bavaria

Saint George, ca. 1520

Limewood and original polychromy, 153 x 52 x 36 cm

Inv. Nr. 3066

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Terminology

© LGBTQ Working Group, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

The following terminology is a summary of the larger dictionary of terms provided by the Victoria & Albert Museum, London: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/lgbtq>

Androgyne / Androgyny

A person appearing and/or identifying as neither male nor female, presenting a gender which is either mixed or neutral.

Bisexual / Bisexuality

An individual who is sexually attracted to both men and women, or gives the impression of being so. The term also acts as a proper noun for this individual. A common misconception is that bisexuality means being equally attracted to both sexes – in fact, many people who state a distinct or exclusive preference for one sex over another, may still identify as bisexual. An alternative, less commonly used term, is ambisexual.

Gay

An individual who is gay is sexually attracted to members of their own sex, or gives the impression of being so. The term also acts as a noun for the individual. Unlike lesbian, which always indicates the female, the term »gay« can indicate both men and women. This can be clarified by using it as a prefix, e.g. gay man/male, or gay woman/female. Some individuals who identify as gay may feel sexually attracted to and/or have relationships with members of the opposite sex but not identify as bisexual. The term »gay« as a sexual slang term first emerged in the late 1600s (a »gay woman« was a prostitute, a »gay fellow« a lothario), in addition to its general meaning, »colourful« or »happy«. In the early 20th century the term was appropriated by the homosexual community. By 1990 it was a widely accepted synonym for »homosexual«. The actual word is slightly problematic, as it is currently used as mildly pejorative (possibly not intentionally homophobic) slang (e.g. »That's so gay!«) to mean something is rubbish. When using the word »gay« it should be clearly used to avoid any such misunderstanding. If used in a historical context, i.e. in quotation (e.g. »gay house« = brothel) the meaning must be explicitly explained.

Gender Identity

A person's sense of being masculine, feminine, or other gendered.

Heterosexual

An individual who is heterosexual is solely attracted to members of the opposite sex. The term also acts as a proper noun for this individual. Some people who have same-sex experiences may identify as heterosexual rather than bisexual. Sometimes, to avoid adverse attention (i.e. homophobia), gay, bisexual, or lesbian individuals will identify themselves as heterosexual, or allow this to be assumed.

Homoerotic

This term is usually applied to items where the portrayal of males is perceived as designed (intentionally or unintentionally) to sexually appeal to a gay and bisexual male audience. The creators can be either male or female, and not necessarily gay themselves. The term »homoerotic« implies an item has artistic or aesthetic qualities, though certain individuals (not necessarily homophobic, but from any culture or social group, and of any sexuality) might consider such items to be inartistic, lewd, pornographic, and/or otherwise offensive. The term »homoerotic« is almost never applied to the lesbian equivalent of such artwork, for which no single-word official term exists. The term female homoeroticism should be used very carefully as many portrayals of lesbian activity were, and still are, explicitly created for a heterosexual male audience. Depictions of male homosexual activity created by women for a female audience (e.g. Japanese yaoi comics or manga) also exist; again to label such work homoerotic may be problematic.

Homophobia

The fear and/or hatred of homosexuals and homosexuality. Homophobia can manifest at any level, ranging from mild discomfort around LGBTQ people, to avoidant tactics, to hate speech and acts of violence against gays & lesbians e.g. »queer-bashing« or active incitement of hatred against LGBTQ people. Some people who identify as homosexual or bisexual may have attitudes best described as homophobic towards certain sections of gay culture, or certain »types« of LGBTQ people. For example, some gay men may have lesbophobia, the fear or dislike of lesbians. Gay men and lesbians can also show biphobia or even heterophobia.

Homosexual

An individual who is homosexual is sexually attracted to members of their own sex, or gives the impression of being so. The term also acts as a noun for the individual. The term can apply to both men and women, though it is usually used for gay men. The term can be qualified as male homosexuality, or female homosexuality. Same sex individuals seldom apply the term to themselves, generally preferring the terms gay or lesbian. This is because the term is problematic due to negative clinical associations. It is often used by homophobes to depersonalise and dehumanise gays and lesbians, without using more obviously derogatory terms. Cataloguers often innocently use this term in preference to what they perceive as more colloquial terms, such as ›gay‹. An alternative adjective is same-sex, as in ›same-sex relationship‹.

Intersexed Person / Intersex

Someone whose sex a doctor has a difficult time categorizing as either male or female. A person whose combination of chromosomes, hormones, internal sex organs, gonads, and/or genitals differs from one of the two expected patterns. People with intersex conditions sometimes choose to live exclusively as one sex or the other, using clothing, social cues, genital surgery, and hormone replacement therapy to blend into the sex they identify with more closely. Some people who are intersex, such as some of those with androgen insensitivity syndrome, outwardly appear completely female or male already, without realizing they are intersex. Other kinds of intersex conditions are identified immediately at birth due to visible differences in genitalia.

Lesbian

A woman who is sexually attracted to other women, or who gives the impression of being so. As a term, »lesbian« (or Lesbian) dates back to the early 18th century. By the 1870s it was known to refer to sexual orientation rather than to Sappho and the Lesbos islanders. Until the early 20th century, lesbian and Sapphist were used interchangeably.

Trans

An abbreviation that is sometimes used to refer to a gender variant person. This use allows a person to state a gender variant identity without having to disclose hormonal or surgical status/intentions. This term is sometimes used to refer to the gender variant community as a whole and can be written also with an asterisk to make a wider umbrella term, trans*. Transgender of, relating to, or being a person who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that differs from the one which corresponds to the person's sex at birth. Transgender can also be defined as a person who lives as a member of a gender not necessarily based on anatomical sex. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity.

Transsexual

A person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

Queer

An umbrella term which embraces a spectrum of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively-heterosexual-and-monogamous majority. Queer can include lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgendered people, intersex persons, the radical sex communities, and many other sexually transgressive people. It is a reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur or term of abuse until the 1980s, but has now been semantically overturned by LGBT persons who use it as a term of defiant pride.

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Canadian Lesbian & Gay Archives, Toronto [Canada]

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GLBT History Museum, San Francisco [USA]

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Lesbian Herstory Archives, New York [USA]

<http://www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org>

Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York [USA]

<https://www.leslielohman.org>

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York [USA]

Queering the Catalogue: <https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/in-circulation/2019/lgbtq>

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid [Spanien]

Inclusive Love: <https://www.museothyssen.org/en/visit/thematic-tours/inclusive-love>

Museo del Prado, Madrid [Spanien]

The Other's Gaze. Spaces of Difference: <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/whats-on/exhibition/the-others-wink-spaces-of-difference/e3ec04f9-d76d-4cdd-a331-246f192bcaf0>

Schwules Museum*, Berlin [Deutschland]

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museum**

Edited by

María López-Fanjul y Díez del Corral

Project Conception and Curation

María López-Fanjul y Díez del Corral

Authors

María López-Fanjul y Díez del Corral: Introduction and Routes 1, 2, 4 and 5. Sarah Salomon: Route 3

Translations

Svea Janzen, Douglas Kline, Roland May and Sarah Salomon

Copy Editing

English: Julien Chapuis and Douglas Kline

German: Roland May and Jennifer Moldenhauer

Gender-neutral Language: Schwules Museum

Scientific Coordination

María López-Fanjul y Díez del Corral and Jennifer Moldenhauer, with Sarah Salomon

Exhibition Coordination

Jennifer Moldenhauer and Klaus Leukers

Design

Holger Stütting – allstars design

Press and Public Relations

Fabian Fröhlich, Markus Farr, Yvonne Geister and Clara Nack

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