



# EUROPEAN STUDIES CENTER

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APRIL 2016

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Photographs courtesy of Wiki Commons

Raffaello Sanzio's “The School of Athens” (1509, left) depicts Plato talking to Aristotle, while in Domenico Ghirlandai's “Angel Appearing to Zacharias,” (1490, right) Marsilio Ficino, an Italian scholar and Catholic priest, is shown standing on the far left outside a temple.

## TRANSLATING PLATONIC SEXUALITY ACROSS EUROPE

by Todd Reeser

Director of the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program  
University of Pittsburgh

What happens to Greek sexuality as it travels across European borders that are geographical and textual? Can it be stopped? And if so, how? These are some of the core questions of my recent book, *Setting Plato Straight: Translating Ancient Sexuality in the Renaissance*. The story of how Plato's notions of love spread across Western Europe is complicated, and it begins with the Christian-Humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries who viewed Plato as a problem that had to be solved.

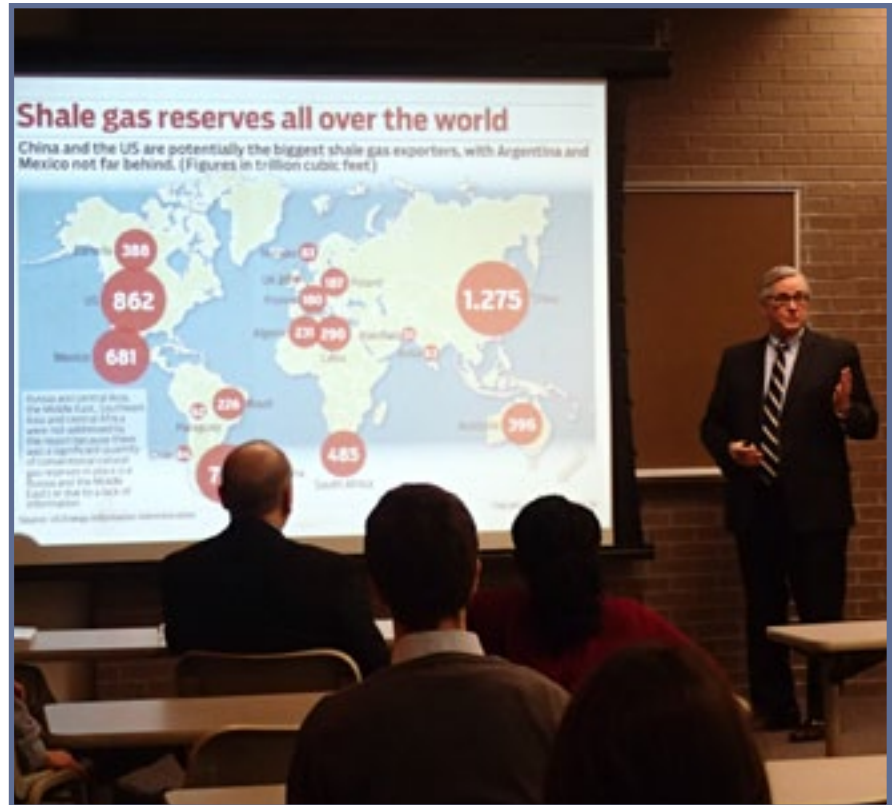
As the Platonic corpus was reborn and printed along with the Ancients, many Renaissance thinkers showed concern about the homoerotics in Plato, particularly in the erotic dialogues (the *Symposium*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Lysis*). In his well-known speech on the origin of love in the *Symposium*, Aristophanes describes a being made up of two men who are cut and separated. These male “halves” spend their lives searching for each other with the hope of reuniting as physical and spiritual lovers and, if reunited, are taken to personify ideal love. The Platonic dialogues argue that male-male love is the highest form of terrestrial love, and many of the speakers mention or elaborate on their own desire for boys or men. Perhaps most problematically for the Renaissance, Plato's Socrates makes numerous remarks about boys suggesting his own homoerotic desire, and at the end of the *Symposium*, Alcibiades recounts in detail his attempts to seduce Socrates.

As Christian-Humanists translated Plato in Italy, France, and Germany,

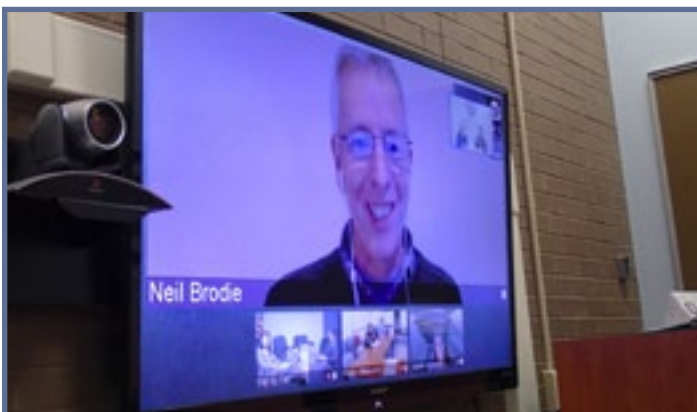
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## THE POLITICS OF SHALE GAS & ANTI-FRACKING MOVEMENTS

On March 3, the European Studies Center held a lecture titled, “The Politics of Shale Gas & Anti-Fracking Movements in France & the UK.” Presented by John Keeler, Dean and Professor in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, the lecture attracted 35 attendees, one of whom was GSPIA student Max Harleman. “I have found Dean Keeler’s synthesis of the key factors that drive divergent production trends between the US, and what can be seen in UK and France, to be extremely insightful,” he said. “Namely, I find it interesting that his research, while recognizing the importance of privately owned mineral rights, more broadly emphasizes factors such as the relative power of the energy lobby and green lobby, and the presence of formal institutions that facilitate shale gas development.” Divya Nawale was another GSPIA student in attendance. “The comparison with the US fracking sites and the differences between US and European regulations made for great ‘food for thought’ along with a delicious lunch that was served.”



## CONVERSATIONS ON EUROPE



On Feb. 16, the European Studies Center’s award-winning virtual roundtable series, *Conversations on Europe*, continued to engage the most pressing issues facing Europe with, “Whose Legacy? Museums and National Heritage Debate.” The *Conversation* was moderated by ESC Associate Director Dr. Allyson Delnore (above, right), and panelists included Dr. Erin Peters (above, far right), Joint Lecturer in Curatorial Studies at the University of Pittsburgh; Dr. Neil Brodie (above, left), Senior Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow’s Scottish Center for Crime and Justice Research; Dr. Susan R. Frankenberg, Program Coordinator at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s Museum Studies of Anthropology; and Dr. Sophie Vigneron, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Kent’s Law School. *Conversations* can be followed on Twitter as they are happening on @EuceEsc and are posted on the Centers website at: <http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/esc/content/join-us-our-next-conversations-europe-videoconference>.

## BRIDGING EUROPE OVER THE COLD WAR DIVIDE: FOREIGN TOURISTS TO ROMANIA AND SPAIN

by Adelina Stefan, PhD Candidate  
History Department, University of Pittsburgh

The sixties were the landmark of pop culture and consumerism in the United States and Western Europe. Yet, most scholars have ignored the spread of these cultural aspects in regions like socialist Eastern Europe or Franco's Catholic Spain. My dissertation explores the advent of international mass tourism in the 1960s and the spread of consumerist practices and pop culture into peripheral regions such as Romania and Spain, while also arguing they became part of a trans-cultural European network. This nuances an established view of postwar Europe as divided between the socialist East and capitalist West and proposes a different European landscape: Europe connected through informal cultural and economic practices in spite of political divisions.

Last summer, with generous support from the ESC's Klinzing Grant for dissertation research, I travelled to Romania and Spain to study the impact of international tourism in the 1960s and 1970s on the Romanian Black Sea coast and the Spanish *Costa del Sol*. Although a historical study, my dissertation also draws on oral history. This is why I spent most of my time on the two coasts conducting interviews with former tourist workers and locals to grasp the ways in which the arrival of foreign tourists changed their mores and lifestyle.

My first stop was in Malaga, a town that is more than a major beach destination on the *Costa del Sol*. Its rich history dates back to Roman times, and today Roman, Moorish, and Christian remnants mingle into a cultural conglomerate that shapes the city's character. Malaga is still a lively melting pot, with North African and Arab migrants working in the tourist industry. This industry emerged in the 1960s and changed the region's social and cultural landscape. My first interviewee, a former economy professor at the University of Malaga, pointed out that, "In the early 1960s the way of life in Spain was very closed because of the political regime, and when the tourists came, especially the Scandinavians, it was a shock. We are talking about values, and this was visible in the way of life, cultural habits, way of dress, sexuality, and many

things...." He also pointed out that these changes were more obvious on the coast, while life remained the same a couple of miles from Malaga. One interviewee recalled the shock of seeing a Swedish woman in a two-piece swimming suit for the first time, while another interviewee appreciated that women benefitted from this cultural opening, especially in regards to fashion, but also by picking up a banal habit like smoking. These changes in mores and mentalities put women in the spotlight, and one look at the daily *Sur*, the main newspaper in Malaga region, confirms this assumption. A 1962 caricature depicted two women fashionably dressed who brag about "going out" with foreigners. "I have days when I go out with a sore throat," said one of them. "Me too, I go out with a foreign guy," replied the second woman.

On the other side of the Iron Curtain, the Romanian Black Sea coast was not much different. Despite a political regime that tried to prevent the interactions between Romanians and foreign tourists, the latter brought about significant changes in material culture and mentalities. Because of its exposure to a higher number of foreign tourists, the Black Sea coast became an attractive place for young seeking jobs in the 1960s and 70s. Doina is a former maître de hotel whom I interviewed last summer in Neptun, a holiday resort located about 20 miles from Constanta, the main city in the area. She confessed that, "I thought I was in another world, in another country," after having found a job in one of the newly-built hotels. "It was like living 'outside' (the country) because of the foreigners who were everywhere."

The Black Sea coast became a meeting place for eastern and western Europeans who exchanged goods, ideas, and cultural practices. Doru M. moved to Neptun together with his family when his father found employment as a construction worker. While in high school, he began working in tourism as a bellboy for one of the newly-built hotels. Living and working in Neptun presented numerous opportunities for him, including that of attending the "disco for foreigners," which usually was not accessible to Romanians because it charged an entrance fee in dollars. Doru recalls that, "It was three or four dollars, but of course we didn't have any foreign money, so we had to rely on friends to get in. My neighbor worked there and let us in for free [...] we were young and we were craving for music and having fun, and those places played, believe it or not, the latest musical hits in the

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## COMING UP

### EUROPE DAY FESTIVAL

On **Saturday, May 7**, the ESC will be hosting its first-ever Europe Day Festival. The festival, which will run from **12:00 PM – 7:30 PM** in and around Posvar Hall (**230 S. Bouquet Street**), will be a celebration of European culture, cuisine, and heritage. Local artisans and vendors will create a dynamic marketplace, and performances of regional song and dance will be presented on the main stage. More information can be found at [www.ucis.pitt.edu/eurofest](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/eurofest). To volunteer contact Kate Bowersox: [kal68@pitt.edu](mailto:kal68@pitt.edu).

### FRENCH IMMERSION WORKSHOP

This Institute offers area secondary school French teachers an opportunity to maintain or improve their language skills, to develop deeper understanding of French culture and its global influence, and to share relevant teaching strategies. The French Immersion Institute hosts three Saturday workshops through the year and an intensive, weeklong workshop beginning in the summer of 2016. Visit the ESC website for more information, or contact Kathy Ayers at [kma69@pitt.edu](mailto:kma69@pitt.edu). **8:30am, April 23, 4130 Posvar Hall.**

### 16TH ANNUAL POLICY CONFERENCE

On May 3-4, the ESC will hold its 16th Annual Policy Conference, "Designing Effective Climate Policies." The aim of the conference is to study the effectiveness of various strategies and discuss whether they are politically viable in the long run, as well as whether they can be scaled up. The Keynote address will be given by Gernot Wagner, Senior Economist at the Environmental Defense Fund, co-author of *Climate Shock*, which was short-listed by the Financial Times as "book of the year." **8:30 am Tuesday to 2:00 pm Wednesday, Twentieth Century Club, Pittsburgh.**

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they found themselves faced with a problem. On one hand, the rebirth of the Ancients implied a "fidelity" to the words and the sense of Greek texts. However, many Humanists were anxious about translating faithfully, and thus possibly propagating the institution of pederasty or other homoerotic elements in the Platonic corpus. What was a Renaissance Humanist to do if he wanted to be faithful to the Ancients but also to his own cultural context that disavowed same-sex sexuality?

Translations of Plato's works circulated widely in the period. Early-modern Platonism got its start in Italy through the work of the Florentine Leonardo Bruni, who composed the first Renaissance translation of the *Phaedrus* and of any part of the *Symposium*. But Platonism became popular because of the translations and commentaries of Marsilio Ficino, whose attempts to Christianize Plato for his readers in his *Opera Omnia Platonis* (1484) were so influential that nearly all subsequent early modern interpretations of Plato are inflected with his work. Two other important Latin translations were undertaken in Renaissance Europe: Janus Cornarius's *Symposium* (1548) and the influential Stephanus edition of the complete works of Plato (1578), translated by Jean de Serres. In addition to these Latin translations, the *Symposium* was translated twice into French, in a version by Mathurin Heret (1556) and in a more widely disseminated edition by Louis Le Roy (1559). Other translations of the erotic dialogues were done in Italian and French. As far as we know, no Renaissance translations of the erotic texts were made into English, Spanish, or German, presumably because the French and Latin translations were so widely read throughout Europe. Platonic and Neoplatonic ideas

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### ESC NEWSLETTER:

Director: Professor Ronald H. Linden  
Associate Director: Allyson Delnore  
Newsletter Editor: Gavin Jenkins

For newsletter announcements, comments, or submissions, please email [eucnews@pitt.edu](mailto:eucnews@pitt.edu).

*ESC would like to thank the European Union for support for the Center.*

## ESC SPOTLIGHT: ILKNUR LIDER



This month, ESC Newsletter Editor Gavin Jenkins interviewed Ilknur Lider, a Turkish Instructor at the Less Commonly Taught Languages Center (LCTL). This semester, she's teaching a new course on Turkish culture and society. Students working toward a European Union Studies certificate can use this course, as well as Turkish language, for credit toward the certificate. Lider also is an oral proficiency tester for Turkish certified by the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Lider grew up in Tokat, a small town in the Black Sea region of Turkey. She received a degree in International Affairs from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, and then moved to Pittsburgh in 1990. Lider earned a Master's degree from Pitt's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and in addition to teaching beginner, intermediate and advanced level Turkish classes during the regular academic year, she also teaches beginner level intensive Turkish at the Summer Language Institute (SLI).

**Q:** Which do you like teaching more: Turkish language or Turkish culture?

**A:** I like teaching both language and culture, but for different reasons. In Turkish language classes, I help students acquire skills to construct meaning in Turkish. The main goal is communicative competence in written and spoken forms, and cultural education is an essential element for students to discern the link between language forms and the meanings those forms may convey in different communicative situations. Students learn about various

symbols, rituals, customs, traditions and heroes. In the Turkish Culture and Society class, we go beyond those visible manifestations of culture and examine historical trends, societal debates on social values and identity to better understand the diverse and layered existence of people and their experiences in Turkey. Topics include ideological currents like secularism, Islamism, Kemalism and nationalism, social construction of gender roles, identity politics and minorities, civil society movements like the Gezi protests (of 2013), literary traditions, musical genres, traditional art forms, holidays and celebrations, Turkey's relations with the European Union, the Middle East, the US and migration movements through Turkey. Students explore different points of views and perspectives on these topics and deconstruct several aspects of Turkish culture and society through historical analysis and critical thinking. The main goals are for students to appreciate complexity of culture as a conceptual tool and to understand diversity and multiplicity of experiences in regard to various issues that are relevant to everyday lives of people in Turkey.

**Q:** How has the interest for studying Turkish grown?

**A:** The study of Turkish has traditionally been linked to Turkey's strategic importance as a country located at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East, as well as the Central Asian, Caspian, and Caucasus regions. Since the start of the new millennium, this conventional importance assigned to Turkey's strategic value has become more visible. Turkey has come under the spotlight as a regional actor in various issues that have come to dominate the policy agenda for the US government and the European Union in these regions of vital strategic importance. Following the events of September 11, 2001, the US policymakers realized a lack of personnel with language skills and cultural expertise in areas that are considered critical for US national security. Various government agencies have launched policy initiatives with the goal of broadening the base of Americans studying and mastering critical languages like Turkish. Moreover, with the globalization of businesses, transactional knowledge of languages has become a critical skill for jobs in the private sector, as well.

Today, there are several scholarship programs available for students to study Turkish. To name a couple, the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship

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program is a Department of Education initiative to provide graduate and undergraduate students taking Turkish classes with funding for tuition and a monthly stipend for a period of one year. Here at the University of Pittsburgh, the FLAS for Turkish is administered by REES and Global Studies through a competitive application process. The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) is an initiative of the US Department of State which provides full-funding for eight weeks of intensive language study and cultural immersion in Turkey in summer time. Among the most satisfying experiences for me as an educator has been taking on an advocating role for my students and mentoring them through the application process for various national scholarship programs open to students of critical languages. In the last eight years, several of my students have been recipients of these scholarships for Turkish.

**Q:** Why does it benefit a student who is studying Europe to learn about Turkey?

**A:** Since the emergence of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th Century, historical ties between Europe and Turkey have been layered with continuous political, military, economic, commercial, and cultural contacts. Resulting mutual influences have long been a subject of scholarly research in art, literature, music, and various social science fields. For students studying Eastern Europe, especially the Balkans, the legacy of the Ottoman rule is crucial in understanding historical development of these societies and their relations with contemporary Turkey and the European Union. For students studying the EU enlargement processes, Turkey's long-standing application for full membership represents a unique case on many fronts. Turkey first signed a cooperation agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC), the forerunner of the EU back in 1963. Since then, Turkey's place in Europe has been a highly contentious issue generating intense public debates about cultural identity, geography and history on both sides. The EU is Turkey's largest trading partner and there are some five million Turks working and living in various European countries like Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Recently, Turkey has emerged as a regional actor in the study of EU foreign policy in issues like energy security, population movements through migration, human trafficking, and transnational terrorist networks.

**Q:** How do you approach the war in Syria in class?

**A:** We approach the war from several angles. First, Turkey shares its longest border with Syria. Historically, Syria's support for the Kurdish separatist movements like the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in south eastern Turkey has been a main source of tension between the two countries. The war has presented many challenges for Turkey in this regard. In my Turkish culture and society course, we look at the Turkish government's policy and engagement with various state and non-state actors like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Syrian Kurds who have been waging war within Syria and examine domestic implications of Turkey's involvement in the Syrian war for the government policy vis-à-vis the Kurdish minority in Turkey. We also look at the recent rise in terrorist attacks claiming the lives of Turkish citizens with alarming frequency in urban centers like Istanbul and Ankara.

Second, we look at the humanitarian aspect of the Syrian refugee crisis. Turkey is now host to an estimated 2.7 million Syrian refugees. This is an unprecedented number even for a country like Turkey, which has a long history of receiving migrants. It is highly likely that the majority of the refugees will remain in Turkey for the foreseeable future. This raises a number of policy issues as to how to facilitate the long term integration of Syrian refugees into the Turkish society in areas like education, housing, health, legal status and employment. In the culture class, we look at these issues from a historical and cultural angle. Second, we watch a movie inspired by the 1923 population exchange between Greece and Turkey, and it involves the forced migration of more than a million Greeks from Turkey and over half a million Turks from Greece. Then students do a writing assignment reflecting the complexities of interactions between immigrants and receiving communities, and they identify major issues for class discussion about the Syrian refugees in Turkey. Third, we look at the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on Turkey's relations with the European Union. The recent migration deal between the EU and Turkey promises to speed up Turkey's accession talks to EU and doubling of EU financial aid to Turkey in return for a mutually agreed framework to control and regulate the flow of Syrian refugees to Europe. We will look at various reactions to the deal both in Turkey and EU countries and discuss consequences of the deal for the Syrian refugees in Turkey. €

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reached well beyond actual translations, and because they permeated Renaissance thought, the question of same-sex sexuality could not be ignored.

Translation factors in heavily to the question of what to do with Platonic erotics. Unlike the modern notion of translation in which a word-by-word equivalency is generally sought, Renaissance *translatio* was often based on the idea of “carrying across” (from the Latin *trans* + *latus*), or adapting a text to the new cultural or geographical context for which it was intended. Still, the translator had to first understand the language and the content of the author if he was to “carry it across” to a new context. The textual interaction between ancient and Renaissance culture required that the translator understand Platonic sexuality as well as translate it in some way.

No Humanist solved the problem of Plato or set Plato straight once and for all. Rather, the problem was rehearsed by thinkers in a variety of texts in numerous cultural contexts. While censorship of erotic terminology or concepts was not uncommon, it is only one part of the story of the reception of Platonic love. To simply make Plato heterosexual was impossible. Generally, Humanists invented ways to reread Plato that allowed for some kind of compromise between fidelity and their anxiety. These compromises were usually related to questions of reading. If a Humanist could find an appropriate justification for rereading Plato, perhaps the content of Plato could be rethought too.

A central goal of my book is to explain why Hu-

manists approached Platonic sexuality in the ways they did. While medieval theologians discussed the problem of same-sex sodomy and ways to render Plato a Christian in a broad sense, no ancient or medieval precursors had explained how to reread Platonic sexuality *per se*. Techniques of reading thus had to be developed in the Renaissance. Consequently, the book centers on the question: what lenses did Christian-Humanists employ or develop for rereading Plato in the absence of a standardized way of reworking Plato? If Plato was taken as an author, he could be turned against himself, and be shown to have argued against his own erotic ideas. Renaissance thinkers, particularly Ficino, developed Platonically-inflected hermeneutics assumed to have come from the philosopher himself. The Platonic idea that the “outer” leads to an “inner” or “higher” meaning led writers to approach sexuality as an external sign that should be shaved off to reach a higher sense that had no relation to sexuality. In this way, reading Plato could be attributed to Plato, and there was some justification for transforming same-sex sexuality in the original Greek text.

Another recurring element of these rereading practices was based on assumptions of a proto-national character. Many believed that while same-sex male love might have been widespread in ancient Greece, the Italians should be blamed for much of its rebirth in the Renaissance. Ficino’s work removed much of the physicality of same-sex love but maintained its male character and allowed for chaste male-male love. As the French started

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West. So, we were dancing and making friends...”

Doru was not the only eastern European to enjoy the benefits of a cosmopolitan life on the Romanian Black Sea coast. East German and Polish tourists also visited this region in large numbers. Jan, a tourist from East Germany currently living in Austria, used to hitchhike every two years from his hometown in East Germany to Constanta in Romania. As native German speakers, Jan and his friends would also dupe the Romania authorities, pretending they are from West Germany and getting to spend time in the otherwise prohibited “discos for foreigners.” “Me and my friends, we were tired of being treated as ‘East Germans.’ When travelling we had a fake green passport, similar to the West German one and

in this way we would have gotten access to discos as the doorman believed we were West Germans.” During one of these trips he got to meet his future wife, an Austrian, who was also taking vacations to socialist Romania.

Although the Iron Curtain was “there” and separated the capitalist and socialist Europe, international tourism as a new global phenomenon produced similar effects in various places on the continent, despite the different political and economic systems. Moreover, it brought together people of various backgrounds and cultures and established channels of communication that transgressed the otherwise existing political divisions. The Klinzing Grant for dissertation research offered me the opportunity to reach out to these people and bring their stories into the narrative of my dissertation. €

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to import Italian texts, they tried to figure out ways to transform their male-centered-ness into “heterosexuality,” and they tried to attribute the transformation to a French cultural character that necessitated the changes. The earliest major text that imported Neoplatonism to France is Symphorien Champier’s *The Ship of Virtuous Ladies* (*La Nef des dames vertueuses*, 1503). The text renders Platonic love as simultaneously male-male and female-male, and in so doing, creates a “balance” model of gender that parallels Champier’s medical views of health as based on balance and harmony. French cultural sexuality is thus balanced but also implicitly healthy and purged of any sexuality issues. The Italians might be male-centered, he suggests, but in France genders are mixed, and consequently a new, heterosexualized Plato can prosper.

The best rationale for imagining that Platonic sexuality had not—and thus could not—enter a given geographical context pertained to Germania. Greek pederasty was often understood as a manifestation of cultural character or “humor,” and by extension, other cultures, with their own distinct humors, may not be susceptible

to, or capable of, same-sex love. Janus Cornarius’s Latin translation of the Symposium, published as part of his *De conviviis veterum Graecorum, et hoc tempore Germanorum ritibus, moribus ac sermonibus*, makes the strongest case in the Renaissance for Greek love as un-translatable in a given geographical context. Worried about pederasty and Greek customs, Cornarius argues that pederasty is simply culturally impossible and not “comprehensible” in a Germanic cultural context. Much of his argument hinges on an imagined comparison between the “barbarians” in Plato and sixteenth-century Germanic “barbarians.” Because “barbarians” in Plato reject pederasty as an institution (in contrast to Athenians), clearly—he argues—Renaissance barbarians have maintained the same cultural character and have never allowed same-sex love to cross the Rhine or the Danube and infect a sexually pure Germania. Cornarius can thus translate Plato rather faithfully because there is no danger that same-sex sexuality influence or infect Germans that read the translation.

More information about the book can be found here: <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/S/bo22228645.html>. €

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