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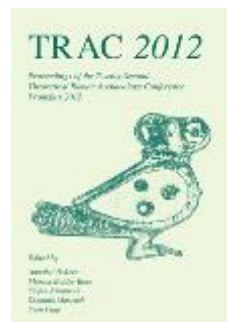
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## Paper Information:

Title: Transgendered Archaeology:  
The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite  
Author(s): Renato Pinto and Luciano C. G. Pinto  
Pages: 169–181



DOI: [http://doi.org/10.16995/TRAC2012\\_169\\_181](http://doi.org/10.16995/TRAC2012_169_181)

Publication Date: 27 March 2013

## Volume Information:

Bokern, A., Bolder-Boos, M., Krmnicek, S., Maschek, D., and Page, S. (eds) 2013. *TRAC 2012: Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Frankfurt 2012*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

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# Transgendered Archaeology: The Galli and the Catterick Transvestite

*Renato Pinto and Luciano C. G. Pinto*

## *Introduction*

This paper is a rather circumscribed analysis of how an archaeological discovery that echoed across British news sites can serve as a starting point for strengthening the dialogue between archaeologists and representatives of sexual social minorities. It also considers current (re)significations of the *galli* – the ancient eunuch priests of the goddess Cybele –, especially among transgender and transsexual people who may be defined, without herein entering into the detail of any scientific taxonomy, as men or women who seek to distance themselves from their biological sex or from their gender by extirpating or modifying their sexual organs, or even by systematically adopting the garments or sociocultural behaviours of the opposite sex.

This study suggests archaeology could sift more carefully through the anxieties experienced by this minority social group, when the interpretative disclosure of archaeological finds relates to sexual practices that differ from the ‘established’ protocols of masculinity and femininity in the Ancient World. The primary method for reaching these goals will be the contrast of the social *status* of the Roman *gallus*, seen through the eyes of scholars of Ancient Rome, with that of the groups and individuals regarded as being transgressors of the current behavioural norms marked discursively by gender and sexual practices in many Western countries. We will address the repercussions in the media arising from the announcement of the findings of archaeological excavations at Catterick, Northern England, and then proceed to studying the presence of the *galli* in the Roman textual tradition and their social *status* therein. Finally, we shall discuss how minority groups and archaeologists concerned with issues of gender and sexualities evaluate and signify the weight of contesting the behavioural norms prevalent in the Western culture today, inspired by the ancients’ representation of the *gallus*’s social *status*. We hope to show, not exhaustively, how studies on the past may be relevant to modern discussions about sexual diversity and gender roles and, thereby, to propose a greater dialogue between archaeologists and minority groups in order to better explore the (dis)continuities between the past and today.

## *The cult of Cybele and Attis*

The cult of Cybele and Attis is said to have originated in the region of Phrygia, now within the borders of Turkey, and arrived in Rome in 204 BC, as the cult of *Mater Magna* (‘Great Mother’; Henig 1984: 109, *cf.* Bremmer 2005: 33–34, 48), garnering a large number of followers in the Roman world. There was even a date for it in the Roman calendar of festivals (4–10 April; *cf.* Ov. *Fast.* 4. 223–246): the *Megalesia* (from the Greek *Μεγίτερ Μεγάλῃ*, ‘Great Mother’). Cybele was, therefore a maternal goddess,

identified with the Earth, Nature and Fertility. Attis, her divine consort, or, even her son, according to other versions, became Cybele's priest. In various versions of the myth, Attis decided to swap her for the love of nymph Sangaritis. Infuriated, the goddess punished her rival and drove Attis insane to the point of castrating himself, an act which caused his death. Filled with remorse, Cybele resurrected him. Similarly, it is believed some of her most influential devotees, called *galli*, became eunuchs in her honour (Vermaseren 1977, Henig 2004, cf. Bremmer 2005: 33–48).

### *A gallus in Roman Britain?*

The only remains of the Roman period visible above the surface in Catterick today, is a stretch of the ancient town wall of *Cataractonium*. This near invisibility of the ruins of *Cataractonium* was one of the main reasons why there was not more interest in preserving the area as an archaeological site until the mid twentieth century. However, since 1958, given the threat of destruction by works for a new ring road, it was decided to intensify the excavations there. The Catterick site complex – which also includes Bainesse, an adjacent area – proved rich in material from the Roman occupation (c. A.D. 80 to the fifth century), but it also contains archaeological material relating to the Anglo-Saxon period. The Roman period occupation of the area became more civilian over time, but there is evidence of some military presence throughout its existence (Wilson 2002b: xxi–xxii).

The official report of the *Cataractonium* excavations was published in 2002 by Peter Wilson (2002a and 2002b), in two volumes. Chapter 14 of Wilson's report is the contribution of Hilary E. M. Cool, and it gives an overview of the few finds from excavations in recent decades. Most of the artefacts cited by Cool are fourth century AD, a period already near the end of the occupation of the site (Cool 2002: 26). For this study, our interest lies on how the results of the excavation of the remains of a skeleton found in the necropolis of Bainesse (site 46) were interpreted and divulged. The skeleton was that of a 20–25 year-old man (Mays 2002: 384), with burial dated as fourth century A.D. The bones (skeleton 952, grave number 951) generated intense debate in the media when the report was published, for reasons we discuss below.

According to Cool, classical literature and material culture, as well as studies on burials, indicate the use of bracelets and bead necklaces is almost a prerogative of women (Cool 2002: 28–29). However, the individual buried in grave 951, in Bainesse (site 46), wore a necklace, bracelets and braided anklet, made of jet. Thus, Cool concludes, about this and another skeleton with similar grave goods, that 'if they wore these ornaments in life, as well as in death, then their fellow citizens would undoubtedly have considered the (...) man in grave 951 to be a transvestite' (Cool 2002: 29–30). Cool argues that the burial goods that accompanied them – besides the discovery of the tomb of a baby containing five phallic amulets – clash strongly with the burial practices of Roman Britain, and suggests that 'special religious beliefs were being expressed' (Cool 2002: 40). As a parameter for her conclusion, Cool uses studies in which the sex of adult skeletons was established by laboratory tests, and not just by the funerary goods,

when the vast majority of skeletons wearing bead bracelets and necklaces, similar to the Bainesse skeleton, were females (Cool 2002: 41). Cool acknowledges that there are few skeletons which undergo specific DNA tests (2002 Cool: 41).

The implication of this is that many skeletons taken to be women by archaeologists may have been catalogued only from the characteristics of the funeral items accompanying them. Although the procedure may have its *raison d'être*, it may be misleading, as seems to be the case of the skeleton buried in Bainesse, first identified in the 1980s as a female (*cf.* Derbyshire 2002). It was only after further analysis of the bones and the 'rectification' of its sex that the skeleton of the young man came to be an extremely rare example of one buried in Britain with such funerary items for the period it was associated with, namely fourth century A.D. (2002 Cool: 41). This fact provides evidence of there being pre-conceptions of Ancient dressing behaviours, and cataloguing these by gender may, sometimes, be conditioned to modern cultural conventions, something that archaeologists could reconsider.

For Cool, the Bainesse skeleton could very well be that of a *gallus*. The use of jet, a material, in the Ancient World, associated with magical amulets, indicates the artefacts have some mystical-religious powers, and the important presence of local jet jewellery could mean some increase in interest in Eastern religions in Roman Britain in the fourth century A.D., such as those of Bacchus and Christ, Cybele being one of the possibilities (Cool 2002: 42). But there are other archaeological elements that surround the burial of the individual found in Bainesse: there were two pebbles in his oral cavity (Cool 2002: 41). Martin Wainwright, in an article about the Catterick *gallus*, published on the website of *The Guardian* claims that they were a symbol of the loss of virility and had been placed in the *gallus*'s mouth in case he regretted in the after-life his devotion to Cybele (Wainwright 2002).

### *Preliminary analysis of the repercussions from the Report of the Catterick Excavations*

A team of archaeologists led by Dr. Pete Wilson decided to announce the discovery of a possible *gallus* to the British media, and, thereafter, a series of press releases, commentaries and blogs about the discovery had major repercussions in the electronic media.

The news reached the BBC website on May 21, 2002 (BBC 2002). The headline, somewhat bombastically, read: 'Dig reveals Roman transvestite.' After reproducing most of the information contained in the printed report, BBC Channel 4 gave interview space to David Miles, an English Heritage archaeologist, in which he explained the presence of the *gallus* in the north of Britain should not come as a shock, since *Cataractonium* would have received various groups of people from throughout the Roman Empire, becoming extremely cosmopolitan. The article carried some images, also: a reproduction of what the settlement of *Cataractonium* would have looked like, a photo of the archaeologist Pete Wilson holding a ceramic mask in one hand and a skull in the other, both found

during the excavation; and one figure wearing a lilac turban, an orange cloak, bracelets and an elaborate black beaded necklace, taken from the cover of volume two of the Catterick report (Fig. 1). Under the latter image, there was the explanation: ‘A *gallus* wore women’s clothes and jewellery’. The caption gave no other detail about the sources of the images or the discovery that was not already in the article.

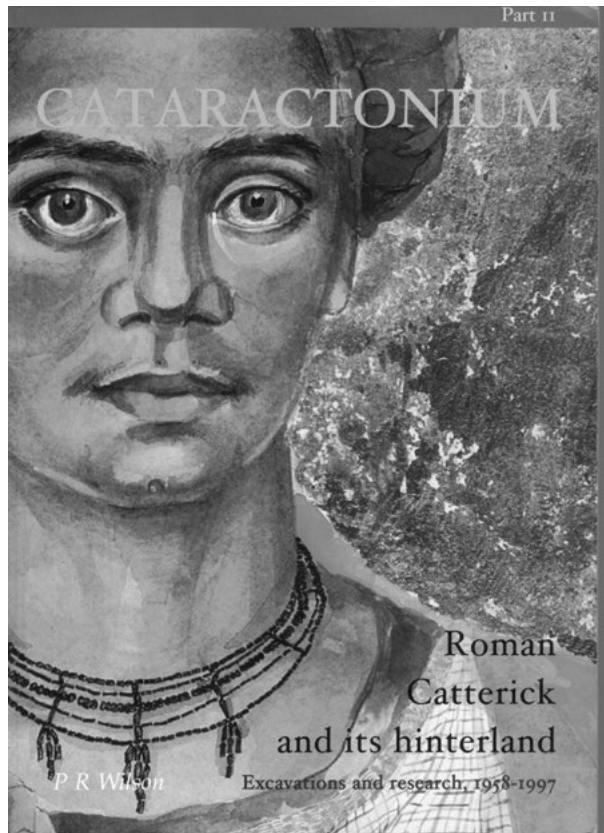


Figure 1: Cover of the report on the Catterick excavations with the illustration of the *gallus* of Bainesse. Painting by J. Dobie (CfA Graphics Studio); copyright of English Heritage; reproduced by permission of the Council for British Archaeology <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/publications> (In: Wilson, 2002b: cover)

On days subsequent to this, other sites rebroadcast this news. On the site *brigantesnation.com*, David Derbyshire, its Science correspondent announced the discovery of the tomb of a cross-dressing eunuch priest who wore jewels in fourth century Yorkshire (Derbyshire 2002). The site of the English archaeologist Win Scutt (Scutt 2002) said: ‘The exotic life and times of Roman Catterick: book reveals first picture of fourth century A.D. eunuch found in town excavations.’ The article took for granted this

was an acolyte of the goddess Cybele and emphasized the disclosure of the first image of the eunuch. On the website of the British newspaper *The Independent*, a text by the correspondent for Archaeology, David Keys, asked ‘Pagan transvestite priest? died after castration ritual?’ (Keys 2002). The report narrates that ‘Romano-British clergymen from exotic religious cults ministered to their congregants while dressed as transvestites, weighed down with stone and bronze jewellery.’ On emphasizing priests usually died during the ritual of castration, Keys claimed the transvestite eunuch of Catterick would probably have died after his self-mutilation and, in an indication of a possible motive for the castration, he drew attention to the customary practice of celibacy among priests in the Roman world (Keys 2002).

The headlines of the news sites on the Catterick report gave prominence to the discovery of the alleged *gallus* and defined him as effeminate, a cross-dresser or a transvestite, thus to a large extent reproducing the opinions and conclusions in the archaeological report. However, doubts as to the conclusions present on the report were not always explained on news sites. Moreover, on the hypothesis of the skeleton being that of a priest of Cybele and Attis, the reader is almost never instructed on how the ancient Romans represented the *galli*, nor was there further discussion about the implications of alleged castrations in Rome. We offer next a brief study of the social status of the *galli* based on their acceptability in a world where masculinity had gained a very important role for the attributions of a Roman citizen. The issue to be scrutinized is the extent to which the *gallus* suffered some form of social repression in Ancient Rome.

### *The significations of the gallus and the ideology of masculinity in the Roman textual tradition*

While not every *gallus* had to castrate himself (*cf.* Takacs 2011) during rituals dedicated to Cybele, it was nevertheless a common practice among them. The term also becomes a synonym for eunuch. In Latin, moreover, other words served as paraphrases for *gallus*, e.g. *abscisi* (‘severed’), *exsecti* (‘castrated’), *spadones* (‘eunuchs’), and *semimares* (‘semi-males’) *semiui* (‘semi-men’). Another symptomatic procedure of the unstable place in discourse that the *galli* occupied was to use feminine words to designate them. Some of these are in passages, e.g., by Homer (*Il.* 2.235; 7.96), Cicero (*De Or.* 2.277), Virgil (*A.* 9.617) and Catullus (LXIII).

In these, it is clear the motive for their use, as Cicero says, is to mock or slander, except, perhaps, in the text of Catullus. What might have been in play in these forms of ridicule? What were the presuppositions that would produce such jests? What criteria might give them cultural meaning?

There is a need to present, on the one hand, the formulations most frequently used to describe the *galli* and, on the other, to match them with the assumptions of what a man ought to be, in the expressions of Ancient Greece and Rome. It is worth remembering it is impossible to represent the entire universe of discourse of any period. However,

it is legitimate to seek to trace the general tendencies, expressed in the available (archaeological and textual) evidence.

Although the cult of Cybele was not only ministered by *galli* as castrated men and there were also women (cf. Takacs 2011) –, the association between the goddess, these priests and ecstatic practices was so strong that some ancient etymologies explain one term by using one of the others. The meaning of *gallus* attracted to itself a series of images associated with the exoticism, the furore, Nature, the feminine, the *hybris*, into which these conceptions, within the values of classical societies, had already been interwoven (cf. Harrison 2005: 13; Nauta 2005: 113). This keyword from classical Greek thought, intemperance (*hybris*), in whatever sphere of life, could be a criterion to differentiate one male attitude from any other. At the same time, the force of that other form of being was recognised. The very existence of these cults corroborates the idea they ‘needed’ to occupy a place in the cartography of those societies, since they represented, *inter alia*, the constant ‘threat’ to the masculine state in the Roman context. ‘So there was an ambivalence at the heart of the cult, which was on the one hand the traditional state cult, and on the other hand it exhibited disturbingly “un-Roman” practices.’ (Nauta 2005: 109–110). These ‘non-Roman’ practices were the prerogative only of foreigners, so much so that Roman citizens, and even slaves were forbidden to take part in them or to castrate themselves (cf. Nauta 2005: 111; Bremmer 2005: 58). Self-control is an important factor as an attribute of the Roman male, and this can be explained by the anthropological fact that, in many ancient cultures, masculinity had to be earned through constant effort and attention. According to Craig Williams, ‘boys must be made men, while girls just become women’ (Williams 2010: 155). Masculinity in the Ancient world is a precarious and artificial state, which boys have to win by fighting against a series of threats (Williams 2010: 368–369, no. 59). Effeminacy was considered a disease (*morbus*) (Williams 2010: 154) that everyone could contract if they were not careful. Slaves and foreigners, especially those from the east (Williams 2010: 148, 151, 197), did not have the means to rid themselves of effeminacy, which was said to be inherent in them.

There was a tendency to associate the *galli* with the figure of the *cinaedus*, which, at first, literally meant ‘wanton’ but, above all, was the name given to the adult man who might display any feminine trait. The association between both falls back on the idea that becoming effeminate would be gradual. Both were effeminate; some because they had in fact been castrated, others because they behaved as if they had been. However, if the presence of the *gallus* was not only permissible, but also, sometimes, esteemed because of his religious services, the *cinaedi* were, in general, execrated. The biggest fear seemed to be associated with those who were willing to take the final step toward the ‘abyss’ of effeminacy: self-castration. They were then regarded with horror and disdain for making themselves *cinaedi* voluntarily. Invectives and curses contained in the polysemic concept of *cinaedus* were hurled at them: the *galli* were Orientals, dancers, unhinged, weak and inclined to being the ones penetrated (*pathicus*), since they were either unable or unwilling to penetrate anyone (Williams 2010: 196–198).

For instance, for most Christian authors, this association between the *galli* and the

*cinaedi* was sufficient to generate criticism and contempt for the practices of this religion, which they regarded as being endowed with vices from paganism. In this context, the eunuch priests of Cybele do not seem to have counted on being regarded indulgently because they sought to castrate themselves and dress in women's clothing. Indeed, they were ridiculed by Christian authors, for whom the public, bloody emasculation rituals of the *galli* were proof of the depravity of the pagan religion. Also in play was the permanence of the paradigm of the male gender, which was threatened by the ambiguity of the *gallus*'s emasculated body (Kuefler 2001: 249–250). Lactantius defined the ritual as an act of the insane, and what most caused him consternation was the male body being violated by castration, which turned its victim into an indefinable being (Lactant. *Div Inst.* 1.21). Similarly, in the *City of God*, Augustine execrated the amputation of virility in the cult of the Mother of the Gods, as this did not allow such sufferers to be either men or women (August. *De civ.* 7.24).

According to classical sources, the *galli* led an errant and mendicant life. For Nauta (2005: 108), moreover, the '[...] association of *galli* with mendicancy was deeply entrenched in the ancient world.' When all is said and done, the *galli*, in their wanderings in the countryside and in the city, used to ask for money in exchange for ecstatic performances and prophecies, and also '[...] the *galli* attached to the temple of the Magna Mater in Rome went out to beg, as a special privilege granted them during the Megalesia [...]' (Nauta 2005:109).

For these very reasons – because they were errant mendicants – it is legitimate also to consider that their only *locus* becomes being on the move, nomadic, as if they were in permanent exile. Because the *galli*, by refusing (or being forced to refuse) the social role of male activity, would equally reject the cultural mainstream. It seems, from the classic texts, that the *gallus* bears a stigma after castrating himself. There are no signs of the *galli* being exalted because of their courage or *pietas*, except for the Emperor Julian, who considered the *galli*'s act of castration a 'sacred harvest' (Jul, *Or V*, 168D *apud* Henig 1984: 110). But could it be that the *galli*, in Rome or elsewhere in the Empire, sought the self-castration as a way out of the hostility targeted on the effeminate?

The question is pertinent for discussion here and an answer was formulated by Rabun Taylor (1997) about the existence of a homosexual 'subculture' in Rome between 100 BC and AD 100. In a society that condemned the practice of passive sex, the cults could supply a less repressive environment and, self-castration would have been a means of finding for the men 'with a homosexual orientation' a context of greater acceptance and more conducive to their sexual desires (Taylor 1997: 337 *apud* Williams 1999: 224).

But for Craig Williams (1999), although some 'homosexually oriented men' might reach such extremes in other cultural contexts, there is no reason to suppose that this had occurred in Rome. The Roman man who might have wanted to be penetrated by another man would not need to 'run from the lonelier and more dangerous context of society at large into the arms (and knives) of the castrated priests of the Divine Mother' (Williams 1999: 224). Moreover, according to Williams, the rejection of the passive man was not so great in Roman society to the point of making them marginal beings, as would happen to someone who is homosexual nowadays.



However, the *galli* cannot be compared to every Roman man who ‘might have wanted to have been penetrated’ for we have already seen how they *seem* to have been the target of much more specific attacks. Indeed, in what can be taken as an indication of the existence of social groups bounded and marked out as being effeminate, Juvenal’s satire 2, with a hostile attitude towards the *cinaedi* and the *galli*, alludes to ‘phalanxes’ of *cinaedi* in Rome (Juv. 2.45-7). Even though we cannot say undoubtedly that Roman sexual ideology systematically repressed the *galli*, neither should we ignore some signs that point to certain forms of reproach towards the effeminate behaviour attributed to the *cinaedi*, the priests of Cybele included. The *galli* could have been understood as a segmented social group even among the *cinaedi*, given the apparent irreversibility of their transgression of the Roman protocols of masculinity. Likely, not because of their possible sexual practices, but rather because of their insistent transgression of gender, for being men who would never be able to fulfil their male role in Roman society.

### *Archaeology and minority groups*

In 2006, in an article about transsexuality, hosted on the website of the University of Michigan, Lynn Conway presented and commented on excerpts from a BBC report about the eunuch of Catterick and the image of the supposed *gallus*. The substance of her comments did not in the least praise the archaeologists:

It is so sad when archaeologists naively obscure and inherently ridicule this girl’s gender identity by calling her a ‘cross-dressing eunuch’. Such comments reveal their lack of understanding of human nature in the large, and their lack of appreciation for how sophisticated some ancient civilizations were when accommodating gender variations. Those who are knowledgeable about transgenderism and transsexualism will recognize that this person is not a ‘eunuch’ (a male-gendered boy or man who has been castrated – in ancient times usually as a slave), nor is she a ‘transvestite’ (an intact male-gendered man who is cross-dressing for male erotic satisfactions). Instead this person was very likely an intensely transsexual girl who desperately sought and willingly underwent a voluntary emasculation surgery at a young age, probably her early teens, and then lived as a female ‘priestess’ afterwards. The evidence that she underwent her primitive sex change early in life is staring right out at us in the photo above: The girl has no male brow-ridge on her forehead above and between her eyes (take a close look at the photo above). Given her rounded female facial structure and slight build, she may have been a very beautiful woman. Her elaborate burial upon her death in her early twenties suggests that she was very much beloved, and perhaps left behind a grieving lover or patron. (Conway 2006)

Some four years after the Catterick findings had been published, Lynn Conway, a researcher on sexuality, was apparently not aware the image published on the BBC website, which she used to make an anatomical analysis, was not from Antiquity – an important piece of information not made available in the article. The image, a painting

by J. Dobie, a member of the CfA Graphics Studio, was used as the cover of volume two of the report (Fig. 1).

Other *sites* for transgenders and transsexuals echoed the news of the finds in Catterick, copying Lynn Conway's tone (*cf.* Wallbank 2004; Zagria 2008). Taking a much more open approach to the issue of transsexuality, Elinor Lieber (2008), on referring to the *galli*, argues that 'under the influence of alcohol or drugs to dull the pain, [they] had voluntarily castrated themselves because they wanted to be women in shape as well as in spirit' (2008: 367). The method used by Conway to 'evaluate' the transgender aspects of the individual portrayed by means of his/her physiognomic characteristics is, at the very least, controversial and we do not endorse it. However, perhaps we should not dismiss the criticism made of how some archaeologists hastily discard the possibility of their having come across an individual who had sought something like a transsexual identity, which includes satisfying his/her sexual desires, regardless of his/her creed or religious fervour.

Although the sacredness of gender roles and sexual acts is a common element found in textual and material sources, today's archaeologists have the means to interpret the signs of everyday behaviours that challenge Roman masculinity and femininity protocols without, necessarily, having to segregate them into a mystified, apparently asexual category of exotic religious rituals. The voluntary act of emasculation in the cult of Cybele can be understood as the sacrifice of one's own fertility for the sake of that of the Goddess but that does not mean discarding adherence to the cult as a fruit of the desire to live a female social life in tandem with religious belief (Kuefler 2001: 248, 250). There are studies that conceive of a strong sexual connotation between fertility rituals in the cult of Cybele and the life of her priests, who might have given themselves up to a kind of sacred prostitution (Kuefler 2001: 250; see also Beard and Henderson (1998) on the theme of 'sacred prostitution'). It does not seem off beam to conjecture that some individuals with transsexual tendencies might seek more efficient social inclusion, and a certain acceptance of their sexual condition among the acolytes of Cybele.

The volumes of Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, published between 1976 and 1984, prompt us to rethink modern concepts of sexual repression and forcefully present how heteronormative discourse crosses traditions and permeates today's thinking. Also the Feminist and Queer movements brought new life to studies on gender and sexualities in the Social Sciences, thus transforming issues hitherto held as being irrelevant or embarrassing for the public stage of academic studies. The works of Jeffrey Weeks (1977), the publication of Conkey and Spector (1984), considered the genesis of Feminist Archaeology, followed later by other influential works related to gender studies, such as those by Gero and Conkey (1991), Sedgwick (1990) and Judith Butler (1990), were also fundamental in consolidating such approaches. Precisely one of the greatest contributions that theories of gender and sexuality brought to Archaeology was to widen the range of interpretations about the sexuality of individuals, thus avoiding the interpretative contortions that seek to associate the so-called 'unexpected items' of funerary goods, with obscure or exotic religious rites – which include artefacts usually associated with the female gender being found in males' graves, or vice versa (Conkey

2000: 292). Emphasis can be given to the search for sexual identities, even though it might be said they were embedded in religious contexts, without prejudice to any of the specifics of these forms of social life.

### *Conclusion*

Therefore, what can Archaeology say about the life of the *galli* to other groups and individuals who challenge the boundaries of biological sex and gender in our age? Should not Archaeology offer more space to interpreting a past that could be shared by groups of transgenders and transsexuals today? Might we speak of a continued oppression of the 'transgressors' of sexual norms and gender? The Roman world did not have a conceptual apparatus to classify what today is known as 'sexual orientation', much less would the individual who might demonstrate a greater inclination towards some kind of sexual act in Antiquity earn a specific fixed identity that might characterize all their social actions (Halperin 1990: 135). The modern categorization of transsexuality as a sexual orientation has no matching fit in Antiquity, but neither can one imagine there were no individuals discontent with the sex of their body or with the norms of behaviour dictated socially by their gender. The difference between the past and present lies in how such desires and practices are interpreted and dealt with in their various sociocultural contexts. The sexual imaginary can be regarded as being in common among human beings but the social responses to it vary in time and space (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994: 40).

We believe that we could not, in this paper, give a full account of the theoretical discussion on the specifics of the past and the differences between then and our times. Amongst discussions on continuities and ruptures, perhaps the best approach, at this point, might be to try to look beyond this discussion and propose a more open dialogue between archaeologists and minority groups that is not conditioned by any of the theoretical positions adopted to interpret what the past is. However this may be, no study of the past is disinterested, and if we follow the path of the continuities between past and present, it seems legitimate to allude to discrimination against transsexuality ever since at least the age of ancient Rome, grounded on continued patriarchal and heteronormative oppression. This is not about trying to compare, unconditionally, censorship in Ancient Rome that targeted those individuals seeking to change their gender by excision or their gender by dressing differently with the discrimination suffered today by transsexuals in the western world. But we have seen how masculinity was endowed with great value by that phallogocentric society and how those who failed to cultivate it could suffer some form of social rejection. In this sense, transsexuals today also suffer similar discrimination: for they do not conform to the norms of the gender roles in the western world. If, nevertheless, we opt to avoid similarities between the past and the present, even then Archaeology should be the interlocutor between minority groups and Academia in order to make explicit and explain the extent to which differences arise. These brief remarks on analysing the multiple meanings given to the *galli* and other figures set out, first, to show how gender issues in the Ancient World do not slot into schemes that are redoubts

of and/or regaled in anachronisms; on the other hand, they are also an invitation to all interested in the subject and the ways in which dialogue between current knowledge and the study of the past, in its diversity, can supply insights into questions posed today. The intention is to show Archaeology is one of the possible ways to challenge simplistic ways of tackling the issue of gender and sexuality.

Finally, we would like to propose that archaeologists keep an open dialogue with social sectors so that they can nourish some interest in the diversity of gender and sexual practices in the Ancient World. They might thus draw attention to the ruptures or continuities between past and present in order to deconstruct the idea of there being norms and traditions set in stone.

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### *Acknowledgements*

The authors would like to thank the TRAC 2012 committee for the opportunity to present this paper at Frankfurt, Germany, and for inviting us to submit this extended version for publication. Likewise, thanks are due to: Roderick S. Kay, as the main translator of this text from Portuguese into English; FAPESP, for the financial support; Richard Hingley, Pedro Paulo Funari, Maria Isabel D'Agostino Fleming and Greg Woolf, for the many insights and salient academic interaction. Thanks also go to the LARP team at MAE-USP, to the Federal University of Pernambuco and to the State University of Campinas. The authors are responsible for any mistakes or inconsistencies.

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