

Pornographic Desire: The Moral-Psychology of Ancient Sex Work¹

Development of Incontinent Client	
<p>[1] [Demosthenes,] <i>Neaer.</i> 122 τὰς μὲν γὰρ ἑταίρας ἡδονῆς ἕνεκ' ἔχομεν, τὰς δὲ παλλακὰς τῆς καθ' ἡμέραν θεραπείας τοῦ σώματος, τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας τοῦ παιδοποιεῖσθαι γνησίως καὶ τῶν ἔνδον φύλακα πιστὴν ἔχειν.</p>	<p>Courtesans we keep for the sake of pleasure, slave-girls for the daily maintenance of our bodies, but wives for the purpose of bearing legitimate children and to be a faithful guardian of our households.</p>
<p>[2] <i>Isaeus, Pyr.</i> 3.17 ἤδη γὰρ τινες νέοι ἄνθρωποι ἐπιθυμήσαντες τοιούτων γυναικῶν, καὶ ἀκρατῶς ἔχοντες αὐτῶν, ἐπέισθησαν ὑπ' ἀνοίας εἰς αὐτοὺς τοιοῦτόν τι ἐξαμαρτεῖν.</p>	<p>For even before our time some young men, having set their hearts on such women [ἑταῖραι (courtesans)], and lacking self-control, have been persuaded by folly to do some such wrong against themselves.</p>
<p>[3] <i>Cicero, Verr.</i> 2.1.137 ut mittam cetera, quo tandem pudore tales viros, quo dolore, meretricis domum venisse arbitramini?</p>	<p>How can I pass over others? Pray tell: with what shame, what sorrow, such men went into the house of a prostitute?</p>
<p>[4] <i>Horace, Sat.</i> 1.2.31-35 “macte virtute esto” ... “nam simul ac venas inflavit taetra libido, huc iuvenes aequum est descendere, non alienas permolere uxores.”</p>	<p>“Let yours be revered virtue, for at that point when egregious desire flooded your veins, it is right that young men come down here and do not screw others’ wives.”</p>
<p>[5] [Sallust,] <i>Rep.</i> 1.8.2 porro ei, quibus ... nullam noctem sine scorto quiescere mos est, ubi animum quem dominari decebat, servitio oppressere, nequequam eo postea hebeti atque claudo pro exercito uti volunt. Nam imprudentia pleraque et se praecipitat.</p>	<p>Furthermore, as for those ... whose custom it is to rest not one night without a whore, when the mind—which ought to be in control—is pressed into servitude, in vain do they desire to wield it once it has been made dull and defective. For imprudence ruins most things, even itself.</p>
<p>[6] <i>Seneca, Constant.</i> 6.7 Perdiderunt isti divites patrimonia, libidinosi amores suos et magno pudoris impendio dilecta scorta.</p> <p><i>Seneca, Vit. beat.</i> 7.7.3 voluptas humile, servile, imbecillum, caducum, cuius statio ac domicilium fornices et popinae sunt.</p>	<p>These rich men have lost their patrimony, lecherous men [have lost] their lovers, also the whores whom they loved at great cost to [socio-ethical] dignity (pudor).</p> <p>Pleasure is base, servile, feeble, transitory, whose home and hearth are the brothel and the tavern.</p>
<p>[7] <i>Musonius, Fr.</i> 12.12-16, 46-48 ὅσαι δὲ μοιχείας ἐκτὸς συνουσίαι πρὸς θηλείας εἰσὶν ἐστερημέναι τοῦ γίνεσθαι κατὰ νόμον, καὶ αὐταὶ πᾶσαι αἰσχραὶ, αἷ γε πράττονται δι' ἀκολασίαν. ὡς μετὰ γε σωφροσύνης οὐτ' ἂν ἑταῖρα πλησιάζειν ὑπομείνειέ τις, οὐτ' ἂν ἐλευθέρᾳ γάμου χωρὶς οὔτε μὰ Δία θεραπαίνῃ τῇ αὐτοῦ.</p> <p>ὅτι δ' ἀκρασίας ἔργον καὶ οὐδενὸς ἄλλου ἐστὶ τὸ δεσπότην δοῦλῃ πλησιάζειν, τί δεῖ καὶ λέγειν; γνώριμον γάρ.</p>	<p>All relationships with females, however many—irrespective of adultery—are deprived of action according to the law, and all these are shameful which are done on account of lechery. Since with temperance one can neither endure intercourse with a courtesan, nor with a freedwoman apart from marriage nor—by Zeus—one’s own maidservant...</p> <p>Then why is it necessary to say that for a master to have intercourse with his slave is nothing other than an action without self-control? Indeed, it is known.</p>

¹ All translations are my own.

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<p>[8] Dio Chrysostom, Or. 7.134 [πορνοβοσκούς επιβάλλοντας] ἀλλὰ ἀνθρώποις αἰσχυμένοις καὶ ἄκουσιν οἰστρῶντας καὶ ἀκολάστους ἀνθρώπους ...</p>	<p>Rather [whore-mongers impose] frenzied and intemperate men on human beings subject to shame and constraint</p>
<p>[9] Plutarch, Alex. fort. 336D [χρυσὴν εἰκόνα Φρύνης τῆς ἐταίρας ἐν Δελφοῖς] τοῦτο τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀκρασίας τρόπαιον ἔστηκε...</p> <p>Plutarch, Conj. Praec. 140B ἂν οὖν ἰδιώτης ἀνὴρ, ἀκρατῆς δὲ περὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς καὶ ἀνάγωγος, ἐξαμάρτη τι πρὸς ἐταίραν ἢ θεραπαινίδα, δεῖ τὴν γαμετὴν μὴ ἀγανακτεῖν μηδὲ χαλεπαίνειν, λογιζομένην ὅτι παροινίας καὶ ἀκολασίας καὶ ὕβρεως αἰδούμενος αὐτὴν ἐτέρᾳ μεταδίδωσιν.</p>	<p>[the golden statue of Phrynē the courtesan at Delphi] stood as a monument of the Greek's lack of self-control...</p> <p>If therefore a man in his private life, lacking self-control and dissolute with respect to the pleasures, commits some wrong with a courtesan or slave-girl, his spouse ought not be indignant nor should she be cold, recognizing that he out of respect for her shares his debauchery and intemperance and abuse with another woman.</p>
<p>[10] Philo, Spec. 3.51 πάλιν πόρνην ἢ κατὰ Μωυσῆν οὐ παραδέχεται πολιτεία κοσμιότητος καὶ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀρετῶν ἄλλοτριαν, ἢ ἀναπιμπλάσα τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνδρῶν ὁμοῦ καὶ γυναικῶν ἀκολασίας τὸ μὲν τῆς διανοίας ἀθάνατον κάλλος αἰσχύνει...</p> <p>Philo, Her. 105–109 ψυχὴν μὲν ἐπίβουλον, ἀλόγοις πάθεσι πεφυρμένην καὶ πλήθει κακιῶν κατελιμμένην, τοτὲ μὲν ὑπὸ λαιμαργίας καὶ λαγνείας ὡσπερ ἐν χαμαιτυπείῳ περὶ βριζομένην τοτὲ δὲ ὑπὸ πλήθους ἀδικημάτων...</p>	<p>Again, the constitution of Moses does not allow the whore, removed as she is from propriety, modesty, temperance, and other virtues, who, blighting the souls of men and women alike with intemperance, subjects the immortal beauty of their minds to shame.</p> <p>A scheming soul, muddled by irrational passions and overwhelmed by a multitude of vices, at once bitterly assailed by gluttony and salacity as if in a brothel and at another time confined by a multitude of injustices...</p>
Paul and Porneia	
<p>[11] Paul, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6 ³ Τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶν θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἀγιασμός ὑμῶν, ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας, ⁴ εἰδέναι ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκευός κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἀγιασμῶ καὶ τιμῇ, ⁵ μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα τὸν θεόν, ⁶ τὸ μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν ἐν τῷ πράγματι τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ...</p>	<p>³ This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you desist from lechery, that is, ⁴ each of you knows how to use [sexually] his own vessel (i.e., wife) in a state of sanctity and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of desire as also foreigners who don't know God, ⁶ that is, that no one impose on or take advantage of his brother in this matter...</p>
<p>[12] Paul, 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 ¹ περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε, καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἄπτεσθαι· ² διὰ δὲ τὰς πορνείας ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναικῆ ἐχέτω καὶ ἕκαστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἐχέτω. ³ τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ τῷ ἀνδρὶ. ⁴ ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἄλλ' ὁ ἀνὴρ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἄλλ' ἡ γυνή. ⁵ μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε ἀλλήλους, εἰ μὴτι ἂν ἐκ συμφώνου πρὸς καιρόν, ἵνα σχολάσῃτε τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἦτε, ἵνα μὴ πειράξῃ ὑμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς διὰ τὴν ἀκρασίαν ὑμῶν.</p>	<p>¹ Now concerning what you wrote: "it is good for a man not to touch a woman." ² And on account of lecherous acts each man should have his own wife and each woman should have her own husband. ³ The husband ought to grant his wife her [sexual] due, and likewise the wife should grant this to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but her husband does; and so also likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but his wife does. ^{3 5} Do not deprive one another, except perhaps mutually for the appropriate time, in order that you may have leisure for prayer and once again come back to the same position, lest Satan tempt you on account of your lack of self-control.</p>

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[13] Paul, Galatians 5:19-24

¹⁹ φανερά δέ ἐστιν τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός, ἅτινά ἐστιν **πορνεία**, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια, ²⁰ εἰδωλολατρία, φαρμακεία, ἔχθραι, ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθειαι, διχοστασίαι, αἰρέσεις, ²¹ φθόνοι, μέθαι, κῶμοι καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις, ἃ προλέγω ὑμῖν, καθὼς προεῖπον ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν. ²² ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἀγάπη χαρὰ εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία χρηστότης ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις ²³ πραύτης **ἐγκράτεια**· κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος. ²⁴ οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ] τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις.

¹⁹ The activities of the flesh are manifest, namely: **lechery**, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰ idolatry, magic, enmities, strife, jealousy, bouts of anger, rivalries, divisions, factions, ²¹ envies, binges, revelries, and similar things, which I am telling you ahead of time, just as I previously told you, that those who do such things will not inherit the reign of God. ²² But the produce of the spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, usefulness, goodness, loyalty, ²³ gentleness, and **self-control**. Against such fruit there is no law. ²⁴ But those who belong to Christ [Jesus] have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

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