

**5. Disrupting the Norm:
Sodomy, Culture, and the Male Body in Peter Damian's *Liber Gomorrhianus*
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Written for Pope Leo IX around 1049, Peter Damian's *Liber Gomorrhianus* decries homosexual sodomy. Damian, an avid ecclesiastical reformer based in central Italy, employs conventional moral, biblical, theological, and rhetorical arguments against the unmentionable vice, and through them hoped to persuade the pope to depose ecclesiasts who practiced this illicit sexual activity, whether in the form of masturbation (singular or mutual) or intercourse (interfemoral or anal the latter being its most severe species).¹ The book's preface states accordingly:

Quoddam autem nefandum et ignominiosum valde vitium in nostris partibus inolevit, cui nisi districtae animadversionis manus quantocius obviet, certum est, quod divini furoris gladius in multorum perniciem immaniter grassaturus impendet. Heu! pudet dicere, pudet tam turpe flagitium sacris auribus intimare; sed si medicus horret virus plagarum, quis curabit adhibere cauterium? Si is, qui curaturus est, nauseat, quis ad incolumitatis statum pectora aegrota reducat? Vitium igitur contra naturam velut cancer ita serpit, ut sacrorum hominum ordinem attingat.

(A certain abominable and terribly shameful vice has grown up in our region. Unless the hand of severe punishment resists as soon as possible, there is certainly a danger that the sword of divine anger will be used savagely against it to the ruin of many. Alas! it is shameful to speak of, shameful to suggest such foul disgrace to sacred ears! But if the doctor shrinks in horror from infected wounds, who will take the trouble to apply the cauter? If the one who is to heal becomes nauseated, who will lead sick hearts back to health? Vice against nature creeps in like a cancer and even touches the order of consecrated men.)²

Employing a finely mixed rhetoric of shame and pathology, Damian's diatribe uses standard Christian arguments *contra* sodomy unnatural, destructive, spreading and as such shares in a fairly long theological and moral tradition condemning such practices. As one reads through the book, it becomes clear that Damian considers writing his project as an act of intervention, a *remedium* necessary to the well-being of both the Church and the State. After all, by recalling the biblical story, the *Liber* both implies that the Church is becoming like Gomorrah itself and reminds readers of the fate of those ancient vice-ridden cities. The implications of Damian's arguments are clear: the Church, which should function to save the world, is in fact contributing towards its destruction, for the attempt of a sodomite to secure or maintain an ecclesiastical appointment is nothing less than an attempt to sodomize God Himself!³

The few scholars who have considered this Neo-Latin text in detail have remarked upon its usefulness in understanding early Western attitudes towards same-sex sexual practices and have done an admirable job in uncovering the conventions, theological and otherwise, underwriting Damian's book.⁴ But these examinations and I am not arguing that they are necessarily incorrect in their approach have all made the same assumption: that the *Liber* treats only the *effects* of medieval homophobia and does not in some fashion encode its causes, *causes* that subtend both the tradition in which Damian wrote and the book itself. In other words, by emphasizing this passionate reformer's "heart-felt outpouring" as simply a manifestation of a homophobic tradition,⁵ these scholars have ignored the way that Damian's work can be used as a means of understanding perhaps even deconstructing homophobia itself. We can, then, use Damian's book to read medieval homophobia against the grain.

When one approaches the *Liber Gomorrhianus* in this fashion one quickly realizes that, like homophobia itself, Damian's text is not really so much about homosexual practice. Rather, it is about a threatened and fragile heteronormativity (a term indicating not only sexual but other cultural practices and taboos intimately connected to a normative heterosexual structure) and the fear that homosexual behavior will in some way disrupt or destroy both this norm and the gendered stability of the male body. Sodomy is not a threat because it is wrong; rather it is wrong because it is a threat. This threat of disruption constantly surfaces in Damian's diatribe, creating a vast network of images, ideas, and illustrations indicating the shattering effect that same-sex sexual activity could have on a heteronormative medieval cultural order and its practices (including interpretive ones). Several questions thus arrive:

exactly what is it about the heteronormative that could make it so threatened by sexual deviance? Why is the male body a focal point for this concern? Is there some instability in the system that the discourse of homophobia attempts to elide? And if this is indeed the case, can we use this homophobic discourse to uncover that instability itself?

One fruitful way to answer these questions is to examine the *Liber* through the theoretical matrix brilliantly sketched out by Jonathan Dollimore. According to Dollimore, homophobia is a type of displacement a shifting of the problems within the dominant order (the Same) onto an Other and a subsequent censure of this Other as the efficient cause of the Same's internal instabilities.⁶ From the dominant's perspective, it is easy to see the usefulness and necessity of such displacement, for accepted at face value such a move occludes or masks internal problematics and consolidates them by shifting focus onto an apparently external threat, a threat which ironically can not only be dominantly produced through the normative's instabilities but ultimately also used for the dominant's self-maintenance a doubly Foucauldian move. But when not accepted at face value, when this displacement is traced back to the dominant and transgressively reinscribed back into it, the construction of the Other can be used to deconstruct the Same, that very system which produced it. In other words, through reading against the grain, the Other, can indeed become a dis-closing and disrupting threat not just a subordinate function of the dominant. As Dollimore states, "displacement figures significantly in the construction of the unnatural and perverse. It also points to the dangerous instability within the dominant culture, one for which the subordinate is made to pay over and over again, but which also marks the limits of the dominant's powers, and the possibility of its overthrow."⁷

In the *Liber Gomorrhianus*, this tracing back into the dominant of the threatening instabilities displaced onto the deviant can best be accomplished by first examining Damian's discussion of sodomy as an irrational disruption of sexual difference, a disruption which eventually centers on the male body. Much as for John Chrysostom several centuries earlier, sodomy in all its four forms is for Damian a lack of reason, a disruptive madness or perversion.⁸ In Damian's work, however, the distinction between reason and madness is posited as an absolute distinction between natural and unnatural sin. Hence throughout his text there runs a subtext arguing for the irrational madness of homosexual desire as perversity, not simply as an excess or desire (as other medieval authorities argued).⁹ Employing frequently used animal arguments, Damian asserts in Chapter Seventeen:

Perpende, miser, quanta cor tuum obscuritas premat; animadvertite, quam densa te caligo caecitatis involvat. In virilem sexum furor te libidinis impulit? In tuam te speciem, hoc est, virum in virum, luxuriae rabies incitavit? . . . Nunquid aries in arietem ardore coitus insanivit? Equus nempe cum equo ad unum praesepe blande et concorditer pascitur, qui visa equa in sensibilitatem luxuriae protinus efferatur. (col. 178C)

(Consider, O miserable one, how much darkness weighs on your soul; notice what thick, dark blindness engulfs you. Does the fury of lust impel you to the male sex? Has the madness of lust incited you to your own kind, that is, male on male? . . . Does a ram leap on a ram, maddened with the heat for sexual union? In fact, a stallion feeds calmly and peacefully with a stallion in one stall and when he sees a mare the sense of lust is immediately unleashed.) (p. 68)

The rhetoric of darkness, misunderstanding, and madness a rhetoric which attempts to convey a separation from rational thought or a perversion of it supports Damian's insistence that the male body's ability to provide pleasure to another man is unnatural.

Damian further supports his diatribe by citing canon 16 of the Council of Ancyra, which condemns both bestiality and homosexual contact as irrational sexual conduct. By appropriating such a venerable authority where homosexual contact is equated not only with the loss of reason but with bestiality (in later centuries Jews would be added to make this into an unholy sexual trinity) sexual deviation becomes implicated in a triply irrational valence.¹⁰ Hence sodomy is represented as against natural reason, biblical injunction he employs the expected citations from Deuteronomy and Romans- -and ecclesiastical authority. This canon, appearing at the center of his book resonates powerfully with Damian's other images in a viciously homophobic register.

But irrationality and metaphorical darkness are not simply deviations from a norm; they are deviations threatening to destroy, to disrupt (or, in poststructuralist terminology, to supplement) that very norm and all societal values constituting the male body and/in the cultural order. As Damian states, "Nimum quem haec atrocissima bestia cruentis semel faucibus devorat, a cunctis bonis operibus quibusdam suis vinculis obligat, per omnia nequissimae

pravitatis abrupta praecipitanter effrena" (col. 176D: "Indeed, whomever this most atrocious beast once seizes upon with bloodthirsty jaws, it restrains with its bonds from every form of good work and immediately unleashes him down the steep descent of the most evil depravity"; p. 65). Anyone can be seized by unnatural desire and thus analogously by the multi-valenced darkness of irrationality. The powerful image, that of a savage, uncontrollable animal indiscriminately attacking humans, seems hyperbolic at first, but the threat of sodomy would seem larger than it does to a society in which the fiction of a stable heterosexuality or heterosexual subject position had been constructed: [11](#)

Ardet caro misera furore libidinis, tremit mens frigida rancore suspicionis, et in pectore miseri hominis jam quasi tartareum chaos exaestuat Infelici quippe animae postquam hic venenatissimus coluber dentes semel infixerit, illico sensu adimitur, memoria tollitur, mentis acies obscuratur; fit immemor Dei, obliviscitur etiam sui. Haec namque pestis fidei fundamentum evacuat, spei robur enervat, charitatis vinculum dissipat, justitiam tollit, fortitudinem subruit, temperantiam eximit, prudentiae acumen obtundit. Et quid amplius dicam? Quandoquidem omnem virtutum cuneum de curia humani cordis expellit, omnemque vitiorum barbariem, velut evulsis portarum repagulis, intromittit. (col. 176C)

(The miserable flesh burns with the heat of lust; the cold mind trembles with the rancour of suspicion; and in the heart of the miserable man chaos boils like Tartarus. . . . In fact, after this most poisonous serpent once sinks its fangs into the unhappy soul, sense is snatched away, memory is borne off, the sharpness of the mind is obscured. It becomes unmindful of God and even forgetful of itself. This plague undermines the foundation of faith, weakens the strength of hope, destroys the bond of charity; it takes away justice, subverts fortitude, banishes temperance, blunts the keenness of prudence. And what more should I say since it expels the whole host of the virtues from the chamber of the human heart and introduces every barbarous vice as if the bolts of the doors were pulled out.) (p. 64)

Not only does the irrationality of male-male intimacy notice that female-female contact seems outside the realm of the medieval male imaginary separate one from one's true self and from God, it also destroys that entire process of interpellation through which a cultural order functions cohesively.

Damian's causal logic of destruction here and throughout the text is striking as it posits an incremental destruction that moves from the male body ("miserable flesh") to the social and spiritual orders and back to the body itself. Through the (mis)use of the male sexual organs, first body and mind are destroyed; social and spiritual values are lost; ostracization from the body of Christ and the earthly community occurs; and eventually the soul is cast into hell. In the midst of this individual degradation, human society faces obliteration, a point Damian underlines, though as secondary, from the book's preface to its end.

But as much as Damian emphasizes sodomy as an evil in itself, the message that emerges is that sodomy is an evil because the heteronormative order is too weak, too unstable, to withstand deviance. In this light, the *Liber's* revealing and repeated slippages subordinating the intrinsic evil of sodomy to the weaknesses of the social order begins to underscore the way that medieval discourse of homophobia does not so much concern the perverse Other *per se* as it does a fear about the stability of the Same. This displacement of the feared and sublimated instability of the dominant Other onto the deviant-as-intrinsic-evil, instead of fortifying the dominant, transgressively reinscribes both the deviant, the disruptive, and the unstable back into the Same. It is at this point that the function of homophobic discourse whether medieval or modern begins to deconstruct itself by revealing the chinks in its ideological and rhetorical armor.

I can best illustrate these chinks by examining the underpinnings of Damian's major premise: that private acts between two medieval males and more specifically between comparatively small organs such as the penis and the anus can have a disastrous effect on the medieval cultural and spiritual order at large. These underpinnings, of course, have to do not only with gender and its metaphorical social and spiritual uses but also with the multi-valenced effect of medieval culture's construction of its social imaginary through binary logic: also an issue of the Same/Other categorization. Fundamentally, medieval Western culture, like many others, phallogcentrically divides itself through the binaries of male and female, the male position privileged as dominant. And like the Aristotelian categories that it adopts, this sexual/gendered difference is carefully imbricated with other types of binaries: light/darkness, good/evil, active/passive, strong/weak, and others of that ilk. Within this binary categorization, the dominant male principle is the basis through which the subordinate terms are defined and understood as antithetical. This antithetical logic easily leads to a Same/Other categorization wherein masculine elements, as the norm, are part of the cultural Same or

dominant, and feminine elements are relegated to the position of Other, an Other to be sought, subordinated, and maintained as such for the logic to function properly. It is for this reason not only that male dominant/female submissive categories are institutionalized through law, politics, theology, civic duty, social customs and dress, but also that this paradigm is used figuratively for all sorts of relationships.¹² And since the masculine is the post-natal defining norm, even the somatic representation of the body politic employs the male body as its norm: the passive receptive female body has little proper socio-political use in this figurative sense.¹³ Any disruption in this system, especially at its most basic somatic and gendered level, has severe consequences for the vast social network of images and ideas functioning through it.

It is the feared loss of these social categories and of the dominant Same's fundamental privilege which appear to subtend Damian's homophobic premise and through which the Other as both feminine (or feminizing) *and* perverse become conflated. The need to maintain this easily transgressed binary codification surfaces repeatedly in the *Book of Gomorrah*. Homosexual contact not only puts at least one of the participants into a passive ("female") subject position especially passive anal intercourse but also through this re-placement confuses definitional and constitutive categorization: gender is as gender does, and *mis*-performance is so grave that it should result in death.¹⁴ And within this logic, if a male takes a female subject position, then he is neither male nor female but a disruptive force threatening the system and beyond definition: as Chrysostom would say, not man, not woman.¹⁵ No wonder Damian discusses sodomy in terms of gender or category confusion: in Chapter Sixteen male sodomites, burning in lust for one another, are imagined as having a queen. This feminine desire at the heart of sodomy also figures in Damian's later description of sodomites as choosing "*virilis vitae fortia facta relinquere, et femineae conversationis illecebrosam mollitiem exhibere*" (col. 179C: "to relinquish the strong deeds of a virile life and to exhibit the seductive weakness of feminine conversation"; p. 70).

Chapter Seventeen treats this disruption of gendered stability at greatest length and attempts to enlist experiential and theoretical arguments to maintain binaristic stability. Damian's most remarkable passage appears after his use of animal behavior to refute homosexual contact:

Dic, vir evirate; responde, homo effeminate, quid in viro quaeris, quod in temetipso invenire non possis? quam diversitatem sexuum? quae varia lineamenta membrorum? quam mollitiem? quam carnalis illecebrae teneritudinem? quam lubrici vultus jucunditatem? Terreat te, quaeso, vigor masculini aspectus, abhorreat mens tua viriles artus? Naturalis quippe appetitus officium est, ut hoc unusquisque extrinsecus quaerat quod intra suae facultatis claustra reperire non valet. Si ergo te contrectatio masculinae carnis oblectat, verte manus in te: et scito, quia quidquid apud te non invenis, in alieno corpore in vacuum quaeris. (col. 178D)

(Unmanned man, speak! Respond, effeminate man! What do you seek in a male which you cannot find in yourself? What sexual difference? What different physical lineaments? What softness? What tender, carnal attraction? What pleasant smooth face? Let the vigour of the male appearance terrify you, I beseech you; your mind should abhor virile strength. In fact, it is the rule of natural appetite that each seek beyond himself what he cannot find within the cloister of his own faculty. Therefore, if contact with male flesh delights you, turn your hand to yourself. Know that whatever you do not find in yourself, you seek vainly in another [male] body.) (p. 68)

These phrases, "vir evirate" (unmanned man) and "homo effeminate" (effeminate man), while derisively marking sodomy's conflation of gender categories, also function as way to reassert the value in Same/Other categorization, to redirect desire of the Same onto desire of the Other, for their illogic is demonstrated by an appeal to natural carnal impulses. What is most striking, however, is Damian's insistence that such binary opposition is absolute that the masculine and the feminine are completely separate. The injunction for the sodomite to feel his own body and to discover that the Other, the feminine (and the female) is not there nor can it be found in the body of another male, the Same attempts once and for all to put a theoretical argument to an experiential/somatic test.

That is, as long as these sodomites feel in the right places those places culturally territorialized as marking sexual difference between male and female. Damian's rhetoric, however, cleverly elides two major issues, both problematic in

maintaining medieval heteronormative logic and its Same/Other dichotomy: that morphology and gender are not necessarily identical (this is not a modern insight) and that even on a morphological basis, the anus potential sexual receptacle for both sexes, even if a disapproved one conflates these categories considerably, even the morphological ones from which Damian argues.¹⁶ As Lee Edelman has recently noted in his discussion of Freud's famous Wolfman case, man is the same as woman from the front, who is the same as man from behind.¹⁷ It is this circularity which also disrupted the absoluteness of the *medieval* Same/Other distinction between male and female, as medieval Latin poetry makes clear. At the beginning of the tradition, three epigrams by Ennodius (473-521 C.E.) mark the way that sodomy disrupts a stable sex/gender system:

Vir facie, mulier gestu, sed crure quod ambo,

jurgia naturae nullo discrimine solvens,

es lepus, et tanti conculcas colla leonis.

Respice portentum permixtu jure creatum,

communis generis, satius sed dicitur onmis.

Ludit in ancipiti caonstans fallacia sexu:

femina cum patitue, peragit cum turpia, mas est.

(Your face is masculine, your gestures feminine, but your thighs are both. You resolve an opposition in nature by negating the difference. You are a rabbit and trample the neck of a great lion.

Look at this monster created by promiscuous rule of common gender or, rather, of all genders.

There is a constant deception at play in his double sex: He's a woman when passive, but when active in shameful deeds, he's a man.)¹⁸

Since similar concerns abound throughout Latin and vernacular writings of the Middle Ages and are still part of our cultural imaginary it is easy to see how Damian's attempt to differentiate strongly and absolutely male and female is a move to elide that which, both at the level of performative ability and gender, is in fact malleable and not as sharply distinct as the logic of difference might like. That Damian in fact needs to elide this issue offensively through homophobic discourse dis-closes and in fact concerns the very weakness of the system he is representing as absolute and impenetrable. Though Damian discusses male-male anal intercourse throughout the *Book of Gomorrah*, it is little wonder, then, that when making comparisons between male and female he frequently ignores the anus and male sexual passivity, since both are a problematic and deconstructive cultural issue. Once again, through his rhetoric and argumentation, it is the heteronormative and his offensive need to elide its weaknesses that becomes the true focus of homophobic discourse.

In light of this categorical disruption of binary logic, Damian's posited relationship between irrationality and sodomy and the latter's potential to destroy the entire dominant socio-cultural and theological order should be more clear, as should the way that seemingly insignificant private acts of the male body could be seen to have a larger significance. If medieval ideas of reason and rationality are indeed based on the binary divisions of these Aristotelian categories, then disrupting the most "obvious" and basic aspects of this division would throw into question the other aspects of categorization, both on a smaller level and on the larger cultural levels with their physical and metaphorical uses of the male/female dichotomy. That is, if proof and reinforcement of such a heteronormative cultural logic were based on

ideas of heterosexual activity and on gendered subject positions as essential or singular, then homosexual acts and desire two men becoming man and woman would quite quickly emphasize that the professed essentialism of such normative activity was *merely* performative and disrupt it, thus confusing and disempowering the "true" or normative with the "false." Homosexual activity between two men gendered male and female would thus become a kind of simulacrum challenging both the ideal and the copy of heterosexuality Ennodius' fear; and each time such an act was performed, it would challenge all the other practices and modes of thought based on the binary logic of stable sexual and gender distinction.¹⁹

This feared challenge to the stability of heteronormativity brought to crisis ruptures through to the surface of Damian's text during his most virulently homophobic passages. This vice which "nulli prosus est vitio conferendum, quod omnium immanitatem superat vitiorum" (is never to be compared with any other vice because it surpasses the enormity of all vices), which "mittit in errorem" (casts into error), and which "subtrahit deceptae menti funditus veritatem" (completely removes the truth from the mind that has been deceived; col.175D; p. 63) is made responsible not just for the destruction of body and soul but for all aspects of ethical, moral, and rational deviation from the norm, for it turns the world upside-down and makes folk incapable of distinguishing truth from falsity. What Damian cannot say explicitly but which his discourse unknowingly reveals as he attempts to displace wholly the threat onto sodomy itself is that the heteronormative, despite its normative status, is not intrinsically strong enough to withstand such deviation. Speaking again of sodomy, he states:

Hoc est enim, quod sobrietatem violat, pudicitiam necat, castitatem jugulat, virginitatem, quae irrecuperabilis est, spurcissimae contagionis mucrone trucidat. Omnia foedat, omnia maculat, omnia polluit; et quantum ad se, nihil purum, nihil a sordibus alienum, nihil mundum esse permittit (col. 176A)

(For it is this which violates sobriety, kills modesty, strangles chastity, and butchers irreparable virginity with the dagger of unclean contagion. It defiles everything, stains everything, pollutes everything. And as for itself, it permits nothing pure, nothing clean, nothing other than filth.) (p.63)

Not only does sodomitical practice defile *everything* again note the generality of Damian's word choice but it easily casts out the normative, permitting only things unclean. The threat of sodomy then is not simply a perversion or deviation of the norm but a full-scale displacement of the Same's instability onto the Other. Hence not only is sodomy itself irrational and able to conflate truth and error, but it is also a perversion so powerful that through it the normative social order and the reason subtending it can be overthrown and, ultimately, destroyed. Damian's statement is just as, if not more, revealing of the normative as it is of the deviant. From this perspective, the *Liber Gomorrhianus* divulges, probably unconsciously, the very state of the normative which its rhetorical, spiritual, and sexual politics attempt to occlude.

Hence, reading Damian's arguments *contra* sodomy against the grain asking what they reveal *about* the *dominant through* their construction/representation of the *transgressive* illustrates the way that medieval homophobic discourse, and I would argue its modern varieties as well, concerns not so much the transgressive itself as the instabilities of the dominant order laid bare or threatened by (some might even say partially productive of) transgression. For a medievalist whose personal, political, and intellectual responsibilities are both to the construction of the past and to the present, texts such as Damian's analyzed through modern theories of sexual dissidence provide a useful way of understanding not just the history of perversion but a history of the dominant itself.

Notes

1. Even among medievalists, the writings of Peter Damian are not well known. Two of the best short general discussions of his life and work are Owen F. Blum, "The Monitor of the Popes: St. Peter Damian," *Studi Gregoriani* 2 (1947), 459-76, and Lester K. Little, "The Personal Development of Peter Damian," in *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Joseph R. Strayer*, ed. William C. Jordan, Bruce McNab, and Teofilo F. Ruiz (Princeton, 1976), pp. 317-41.
2. Peter Damian, *Liber Gomorrhianus*, in *PL* 145: 159-90, at col. 161B. The translation is that of Pierre J. Payer, *Book of Gomorrah: An Eleventh-Century Treatise against Clerical Homosexual Practices* (Ontario, 1982), p. 27. Subsequent references to both the Latin text and the translation will be cited parenthetically in the text.
3. Damian allegorizes the story of Sodom and Gomorrah to make this point during his discussion in Chapter Five of the *Liber Gomorrhianus*. See *PL* 145: 164D-166C, esp. col. 165D.
4. See, for example, Payer, *Book of Gomorrah*, pp. 13-22; J. J. Ryan, *Saint Peter Damiani and his Canonical Sources: A Preliminary Study in the Antecedents of the Gregorian Reform* (Toronto, 1956); and J. Leclercq, *Saint Pierre Damien, ermite et homme d'Eglise* (Rome, 1960), pp. 70-73.
5. The phrase is that of Payer, *Book of Gomorrah*, p. 19.
6. Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford, 1991), p. 33. Dollimore terms this process "transgressive reinscription."
7. Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, pp. 111-12.

8. The translated excerpts from Chrysostom in John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 359-63, illustrate this point nicely.
9. For examples of this belief in various medieval authorities both before and after Damian, see Boswell, *Christianity*, pp. 156-57, 277. Even viciously homophobic authorities such as Alan of Lille and Peter Cantor, who concentrated on homosexual sodomy, frequently saw excess as the precipitating issue. While for them homosexual excess and desire were also unnatural, they understood such desire as being part of a gradation that included heterosexual desire as well. Hence, their distinction was not as absolute as Damian's. For Alan, see Jan Ziolkowski, *Alan of Lille's Grammar of Sex: The Meaning of Grammar to a Twelfth-Century Intellectual* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), p. 47; for Peter Cantor, see the excerpt in Boswell, *Christianity*, p. 375.
10. Boswell, *Christianity*, p. 178, n. 33, discusses this canon and points out its original ambiguity. For its later uses as a document *contra* homosexual activity, see D. S. Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London, 1955), pp. 86-89.
11. There seems to be no understanding of a homosexual (or a heterosexual) subjectivity in Damian's work nor in similar medieval texts. For a fuller account, see my *Sodomy, Silence, and Social Control in Medieval Narrative* (forthcoming).
12. An excellent introductory discussion of this binaristic thought may be found in Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Women: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medieval Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge, England, 1990), pp. 7-9, 47-53.
13. For this reason the somatic representation of the body politic in medieval texts such as John of Salisbury's *Policratus* is a masculine one.
14. Damian quotes Leviticus 20:13 to emphasize this point (col. 162D; p. 33).
15. See the translation in Boswell, *Christianity*, p. 361.
16. On the problematic of early "biology" as it relates to sex and gender in the premodern period, see the fascinating study by Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990). On the anxiety over vaginal/anal conflation in the Middle Ages, see my *Sodomy, Silence, and Social Control*.
17. Lee Edelman, "Decking Out: Performing Identities," in *Inside/ Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (London: 1990), pp. 99-125 at 105.
18. These epigrams and their translations are found in the Latin-English *Medieval Latin Poems of Male Love and Friendship*, trans. and ed. Thomas Stehling (New York, 1984), pp. 6-7.
19. For a fuller discussion of the theoretical issues underlying these points, see Judith Butler's remarkable study *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London, 1990).