— Chapter Four —

‘A Sort of Chivalrous Conscience’:
Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean* and Paederastic Pedagogy

I will not sing my little puny songs.

[...]

Therefore in passiveness I will lie still,
And let the multitudinous music of the Greek
Pass into me, till I am musical.

(Digby Mackworth Dolben, ‘After Reading Aeschylus’)

Puzzled by the degree of intimacy between ‘a shy, reticent scholar-artist’ and ‘a self-silenced, ascetic priest-poet’, David Anthony Downes speculates: ‘It has been frequently said that Gerard Hopkins and Walter Pater were friends. The statement is a true one, though exactly what it means, perhaps, will never be known’. Al apprehensive that such speculations might lead to elaboration on their erotic sensibilities, Linda Dowling cautions that, ‘given the fragmentary biographical materials we possess about both Hopkins and Pater, any assertion about the “homoerotic” nature of their experience or imagination may seem at best recklessly premature and at worst damnably presumptuous’. However, since in Victorian England ‘homosexual behaviour became subject to increased legal penalties, notably by the Labouchère Amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which extended the law to cover all male homosexual acts, whether committed in public or private’, expecting ‘verifiable data’ concerning their unconventional desires is the ultimate scholarly presumption.

By leaving behind no journal or diary, no authorised (auto)biography, and only a few trite letters, Pater fostered that absence of directly biographical

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3 Linda Dowling, ‘Ruskin’s Pied Beauty and the Construction of a “Homosexual” Code’, *Victorian Newsletter*, 75 (1989), pp.1-8 (p.1). The publication date of Dowling’s article suggests that she may not yet have had access to the corrective insights provided by the Hopkins *Facsimile* volumes, which may explain her subsequent change in tone.
evidence that made him ‘arguably the most private Victorian’,\(^1\) or as Denis Donoghue humorously explains:

Reciting Pater’s life, we have to look for him in the cloud of his occasional writings. He is rarely visible anywhere else. There are weeks or even months in which he seems to have taken literally his favorite motif of evanescence and drifted away. We assume that he is still alive, but the evidence for his breathing is meager.\(^2\)

Although, to some extent, manuscripts relevant to such an assessment of Hopkins were purged after his death — now providing what is often only fragmentary evidence — Hopkins, unlike Pater, did leave behind plentiful and divergent biographical materials in journals, letters, sermons, confession notes, and poems, among other things. Nevertheless, Pater’s writings such as The Renaissance and Marius the Epicurean do opaquely disclose his life and sensations, even if ‘the evidence for his breathing is meager’.

At the time that Hopkins, an Oxford undergraduate, began coaching with Pater in preparation for his finals in Literae Humaniores (or Greats), Pater was an obscure Fellow in Classics at Brasenose College, Oxford, a Fellow busily preparing a series of lectures on the history of philosophy and ‘erecting a shell around himself, deliberately isolating himself from old friends’.\(^3\) As an intuitive undergraduate, Hopkins must have ascertained, to some degree, what lurked behind his academic coach’s elaborate privacy, a privacy reminiscent of that which surrounds Pater’s Marius the Epicurean, whose demeanour drives mere acquaintances to inquire: ‘Why this reserve? — they asked, concerning the orderly, self-possessed youth, whose speech and carriage seemed so carefully measured’ (I, p.127). Donoghue explains this measured reserve as, ‘[Pater] represents, however mildly, the perfection of standing aside’\(^4\) — a ‘standing

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\(^3\) Alison G. Sulloway, Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p.44. Sulloway labels him ‘the recluse of Brasenose’.

\(^4\) Donoghue, p.8. Donoghue further explains that ‘Pater’s position is consistent with his antinomianism: the artist is neither for nor against the law, he stands aside from it’ (p.132). In ‘“Culture and Corruption”: Paterian Self-Development versus Gothic Degeneration in Oscar Wilde’s The Picture of Dorian Gray’, Papers on Language and Literature, 39.4 (2003), pp.339-64, Nils Clausson observes that ‘the self-development novel does not generically require that its protagonist lead a double life: Pater’s heroes
aside’ that is aptly illustrated by his later responses to public and pulpit attacks on his *Renaissance*:

Instead of defending himself, Pater internalized his subversive values and retained them in the form of difference. Provided he did not express them in a public or tendentious form, he was reasonably safe, even though he continued to be associated with irregularity of sentiment and desire. So he retained, as private property, feelings that could not be avowed.¹

Since he shared Pater’s ‘irregularity of sentiment and desire’, Hopkins must have perceived and partially appreciated the reasons and the reasoning behind his Greats coach’s reserve, for he too would come to cultivate much the same, remaining ever, in diverse ways, Pater’s most constant of students.

Downes’s claim that ‘exactly what it means [that Hopkins and Pater were friends], perhaps, will never be known’ is bastioned by various biographical lacunae, with scholars even disagreeing as to the circumstances under which they initially met. In *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life*, Robert Bernard Martin suggests that ‘Hopkins had been very much aware of Pater for at least two years, having heard from Samuel Brooke about the essay that he had read to the Old Mortality Society in 1864, advocating beauty as the standard by which to judge morality’.² Equally credible is Downes’s suggestion³ that Benjamin Jowett, Regius Professor of Greek, introduced Hopkins to Pater, to whom he would later send Hopkins for Greats coaching. Jowett had himself coached Pater between 1860 and 1862, and had ‘thought [so] highly of Pater as an undergraduate’⁴ that he had been willing to provide Pater private tuition in Greek.⁵ However, this admiration for Pater — at least for Pater’s later role as a don — would dissipate in the coming decades.

Later, as Master of Balliol College and ‘an agent of revolutionary change’ by infusing Oxford with Platonism and Platonic tutorials (all that ‘Jowetry’, in Oxford slang),⁶ Jowett became increasingly aware that, for Pater,

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1 Donoghue, p.69.
4 Ibid.
5 Jowett was ‘so struck with [Pater’s] power that he very generously offered to coach him for nothing’ — as related in Edmund Gosse, *Critical Kit-Kats* (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1896), p.248. In *Walter Pater* (London: Macmillan, 1906), Arthur C. Benson relates instead that Jowett ‘offered to look over the Greek compositions and essays of any members of his class who cared to submit them to him, and Pater took advantage, like many other men, of the offer’ (p.9).
pedagogic moments such as preparing undergraduates for Greats often abounded with paederastic motive, perhaps even motion. To Jowett’s disdain, ‘Pater persisted in trying to reclaim for the Platonic canon a politics of desire which the more sexually orthodox Jowett — as translator-agent — was trying to silence and erase’, a disingenuousness Pater attempted to rectify with ‘readings [that] recoded the Platonic texts and their cultural complements (sculpture, drama, myth) as the sites of, and inspiration for, a valorized homoerotic culture’.1 As a result of this persistence on Pater’s part, Jowett came to label him a ‘demoralizing moralizer’,2 though this label was, according to J. A. Symonds, equally applicable to Jowett, as Linda Dowling notes:

1 Lesley Higgins, ‘Jowett and Pater: Trafficking in Platonic Wares’, Victorian Studies, 37.1 (1993), pp.43-72 (p.45). Jowett’s linguistic discretions are explained by Higgins: ‘Jowett was too much of a scholar to omit from the Phaedrus, the Symposium, or any other text, passages which describe male-male relations. […] Jowett depended on the superficial gender “neutrality” of English — and innocuous, sentimentalized words such as “lover” and “beloved” — to mute the frank Greek discourse, to empty out all significance of male-male erotic motives, consequences, and activities’ (p.48).

Like Pater, Jowett may have seen no advantage in unifying his public roles and his private self, opting instead for a division between the two, especially in regard to the erotic views of the ancients he studied and of his own. On one hand, Jowett chose to diminish the eroticism of Plato; on the other, he had private friendships with those who attempted to accentuate Grecian erotics, most notably Pater and Symonds. In ‘The Romance of Boys Bathing: Poetic Precedents and Respondents to the Paintings of Henry Scott Tuke’, in Victorian Sexual Dissidence, ed. by Richard Dellamora (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp.253-77, Julia F. Saville notes that, ‘when Symonds died in April 1893, Jowett wrote his epitaph, concluding it with the words “Farewell, my dearest friend. No one in his heart sustained his friends more than you did, nor was more benevolent to the simple and unlearned”’ (pp.261-62). Jowett seems to have been far more accepting of his friends’ (in)discretions than most critics give him credit for, and the breach with Pater (if there really was such a breach) probably arose from a fear of Pater’s lack of discretion (or at least lack of self-cover), rather than from any sense of revulsion towards, or moral objection to a relationship between Pater and Hardinge. It certainly did not arise from a lack of personal feeling or intellectual appreciation for Pater. Pater occasionally jettisoned his own friends under similar circumstances: his breach with Wilde, in like fashion, is considered in ‘Chapter Five’.

2 As quoted in Dowling, Hellenism, p.103. For Pater as a sort of ‘Socrates’ to his circle, consider the following comments by Alexander Michaelson [Marc-André Raffalovich], in his ‘Walter Pater: In Memoriam’, Blackfriars, 9 (1928), pp.469-70:

There would have been something irresistible about Pater at the height of his power had he cared to exert his personal influence. Those unacquainted with his writings, or prejudiced by Mallock’s New Republic, could describe him as ‘a black, white, ingratiatory vampire’. Of course we who knew and loved him saw and understood the feelings of that delightful youth [Hardinge] (now a distinguished novelist) when first face to face with that Minotaur. […] Few men, I suppose, have been kinder and more affectionate to young men as they were; it is so much easier to be kind and affectionate to the men we imagine.
As Symonds establishes long-term and fully sexual relationships with working-class men outside of England in the 1880s, he begins to regard the nongenital or nonphysical eroticism of the Platonic doctrine of eros with a deepening mistrust. [.....] With this realization, Symonds comes to a bitter new assessment of his old teacher Jowett, as though Jowett’s Socratic ‘corruption’ had somehow consisted in tempting suggestive young men down the delusive path to spiritual procreancy rather than fleshly excess.¹

The paederastic potential of such a pedagogy — the spiritual path of ‘Jowetry’ extended to a literal ‘tempting [of] suggestive young men’ — is revealed through the elusive Pater-Harding scandal, though Dowling emphasises that ‘only the most fugitive rumors of this long-suppressed and still shadowy episode have survived until now to suggest that Pater may have enacted as well as

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.128; see pp.128-30 for the development of Symonds’s argument. For the primary source, see Symonds’s comments on the claim that ‘Greek love’ is ‘mainly a figure of speech’ — Letter to Benjamin Jowett, 1 February 1889, in Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters, eds, *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, 3 vols (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1967-69), III, pp.345-47. My only reservation about Dowling’s comments is her use of the broad term ‘working-class men outside of England’, which seems to suggest that Symonds’s attractions were entirely to ‘men’. Though they usually were (in practice), they were not always so, especially when Symonds was dealing with textual fantasy or purchasing visual fantasies from the photographic studio of Wilhelm von Gloeden. Notice also that Symonds’s beloved Augusto Zanon, a Venetian porter, had the youthful features sought by the paederastic Uranians (see above). In *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English ‘Uranian’ Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), Timothy d’Arch Smith primarily agrees with Dowling’s claim (see p.12).
inculcated the Socratic eros’.¹ Even though the scandalous evidence is supplied second-hand, Dowling, Richard Dellamora, and others have tended to assert that Jowett, motivated in 1874 by various erotic disclosures involving Pater, moved to counter permanently his protégé’s attempts at further university advancement, though it seems unlikely that he did so out of spite or a desire to punish: it was Jowett’s nature to be paternalistic. In this case, perhaps insightfully, he seems to have decided that a low profile would best suit his prodigal, unrepentant intellectual-son, especially while on campus. As for the specifics of this evolving ‘situation’, current critical assumption encapsulates into the following: ‘Though [Pater] was aware that he would be strongly opposed, he knew that he merited the position [of Junior Proctor]. Nonetheless, opposition took an unexpected turn when Benjamin Jowett […] black-mailed Pater by threatening to disclose some incriminating letters’,² letters that revealed that Pater had ‘become sexually involved with a Balliol undergraduate’,³ a youth named William Money Hardinge (1854-1916), ‘a nineteen-year-old student who had a tendency, before faced with consequences, to advertise his homosexuality’.⁴ Hardinge’s homoeroticism was

³ Martin, p.300. Pater’s friend J. A. Symonds, whose acquaintance he had made in 1860, found himself in much the same situation:

> In November 1862 one of Symonds’s resentful friends, G. H. Shorting, circulated to six Fellows of Magdalen [College, Oxford,] certain love-poems and passages of love-letters from Symonds. The implication was that Symonds intended corrupting the choristers of Magdalen. An inquiry was held in the college. On December 28 Symonds was acquitted, but the episode put him under such strain that his health deteriorated. He resigned his fellowship at Magdalen and moved to London. (Donoghue, pp.39-40)

⁴ Billie Andrew Inman, ‘Estrangement and Connection: Walter Pater, Benjamin Jowett, and William M. Hardinge’, in *Pater in the 1990s*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Ian Small (Greensboro: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp.1-20 (p.13). See also Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.100-03, 106-09, and 114, note; Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Knopf, 1988), pp.60-61. Although most critics have accepted Inman’s interpretation of the evidence that she presents, Shuter suggests another possible interpretation, one in which Pater was merely the verbal plaything of Hardinge, an undergraduate who was attempting to be provocative by claiming that he was having a homoerotic relationship with someone, with the scandalous Pater an obvious victim to fill this suggestive, fantasy role:

> I question only that the conclusions have in fact been demonstrated by the evidence and arguments thus far advanced. That we have the evidence to
so ‘advertised’ that he was nicknamed ‘the Balliol Bugger’, a nickname that Donoghue explains: ‘A gifted poet, winner of the Newdigate [Poetry] Prize in 1876, [Hardinge] was mainly known for his sexual activities’.¹ A fellow student would later describe him as ‘[William Hurrell] Mallock’s friend, the strange, hectic, talented Hardinge — musical, poetical, intensely flippant and flippanply “intense”’; and Marc-André Raffalovich, as ‘as entertaining and as tiresome, as gay and as indiscreet, as dangerous and as instructive a friend as I have ever known’.²

Some of the details of this evolving ‘situation’, a situation that nearly became a significant scandal, are provided by a twenty-six-page letter, dated 1 March 1874, from Alfred Milner (1854-1925; later 1st Viscount Milner) to Philip Lyttelton Gell (1852-1926), both of whom were close, undergraduate friends of Hardinge:

The very fact, that Hardinge had not yet irretrievably committed himself with Pater was all the more reason why the evil should be prevented. It seems more strongly absurd to say, that one should not interfere till the mischief was done. And it is vain to pretend that there was not evidence of the strongest character against Hardinge. When a man confesses to lying in another man’s arms kissing him & having been found doing it, as there is the strongest evidence to prove, or when letters pass between them in wh. they address one another as ‘darling’ & sign themselves 'yours lovingly', & such a letter I have seen, when verses are written from one man to another too vile to blot this paper, what hope can you have, that a criminal act, if not committed already, may not be committed any day?³

evaluate at all we owe of course to the thorough and indefatigable research of Billie Inman, whose paper may well contain all we are ever likely to learn about this episode in Pater’s life. It is a measure of my debt to Inman’s work that even when I question her reading of the evidence I do so on the basis of data she has gathered. (‘Outing’, p.482)

¹ Donoghue, pp.58; 59. ‘I still differ as to Hardinge’s supposed innocuousness (to coin a word). His reputation as the “Balliol B . . . r” is injuring the College as a whole, though I think with you, that it did not harm individuals’ (Milner’s letter to Gell, 3 March 1874, as quoted in Inman, ‘Estrangement’, pp.8-9). ‘It has been Hardinge’s fate to be remembered in the twenty-first century, not as a novelist, but as a Balliol student who, because he had written some sonnets celebrating same-sex love and had exchanged love letters with Walter Pater, was rusticated in February 1874 for a term of nine months’ — Billie Inman, ‘William Money Hardinge’, in The Literary Encyclopedia <http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=5855> [last accessed 23 March 2006].


³ As quoted in Inman, ‘Estrangement’, pp.7-8 (the emphasis is Milner’s). Poignantly, this series of letters about the Pater-Hardinge ‘affair’ exchanged by Milner and Gell dates to the same week as the arrest — on 3 March 1874 — of Pater’s close friend Simeon Solomon for a ‘sodomitical’ offence in a public urinal in Paris. Solomon’s arrest
Worries about those kisses, fondlings, verses, and epistolary addresses reached Richard Lewis Nettleship (1846-92), a Fellow of Balliol; and, subsequently, Jowett himself, then Master of the College. Dowling summarises one version of how those letters reached Jowett, as recorded by Arthur C. Benson, one of Pater’s earliest biographers:

One possible reconstruction: [Hardinge’s friend] Mallock took the incriminating letters to Jowett in order to confront and embarrass him with inescapable proof of the literally demoralizing effects of liberal teaching at Oxford, for which Jowett, who had in the past recommended Pater to Balliol pupils as a private coach in philosophy, might be held responsible.¹

By whatever hand or tongue the contents of those eroticised letters reached him, Jowett immediately endeavoured to contain the scandal, as well as to prevent its repetition: ‘Report of the nature of the letters would have been enough for Jowett; he would have felt justified, even without seeing them, in sending Hardinge down [from Oxford] for a few months till the dust settled, and in having a sharp interview with Pater’.² Fortunately for both Pater and Hardinge, only the ‘tamer’ letters were physically or conversationally presented as evidence, since the more ‘culpable’ letters had been destroyed and remained unmentioned, as Milner relates to Gell:

It’s a mercy, that neither Jowett nor Nettleship know the worst, that [Arnold] Toynbee made Hardinge destroy his most culpable letters, I mean such as could be adduced against him in a court of law, & that for the future we all mean to keep absolute silence to the outside world & speak as little as possible among ourselves upon a subject, wh. has become […] painful to most of us.³

Despite the disclosures and the averted scandal, Donoghue stresses that ‘there is no evidence that Jowett used the letters — or even talk of them — to warn Pater against putting himself forward for any university appointments. On the other hand, a word from Jowett would have been enough to set Oxford against Pater, whose reputation was already dubious’.⁴ Although lacunae abound, the absence of concrete details is telling in itself, suggesting that Jowett had himself fostered that absence, exercising a masterful tact that served to extricate Pater from at least this dangerous predicament. As Billie Inman asserts: ‘It was not in official

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.109-10, note. To Benson, Gosse confided that ‘it was W. H. Mallock who took the terrible letters to Jowett, which gave Jowett such power’ — as quoted in Seiler, *A Life*, p.258.
² Donoghue, p.61.
³ Milner’s letter to Gell, March 1874, as quoted in Inman, *‘Estrangement’*, p.8.
⁴ Donoghue, pp.61-62.
Oxford’s nature to “ruin a man’s life” over manifestations of “unnatural” tendencies, but to remove temptation, keep publicly silent, and speak as little as possible about it among themselves.¹ This is what Jowett seems to have done. Beyond maintaining an ‘official Oxford’ stance, Jowett had personal reasons for being gracious, if not sympathetic, towards Pater and his predicament.


2 This passage is from William Shakespeare, King Henry V, ed. with intro. by Andrew Gurr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) (II, iii, line 14), though the line is emended in the Cambridge edition to ‘A babbled of green fields’ (Gurr following the lead of Louis Theobald, ed.). For an elucidation of various pederastic elements in the relationship between John Falstaff and Prince Hal, see Heather Findlay, ‘Renaissance Pederasty and Pedagogy: The “Case” of Shakespeare’s Falstaff’, Yale Journal of Criticism, 3.1 (1989), pp.229-38. That Falstaff, a pederastic ‘inspirer’, had a final dream of ‘A table of green fields’ — or else ‘A fable of green fields’, ‘A talked of green fields’ (‘A’ meaning ‘he’), or ‘A babbled of green fields’ — makes me question Gerald Monsman’s following comment in ‘The Platonic Eros of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde:

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Portrait of Professor Jowett
Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-79)
Albumen silver photograph, 1864
Wilson Centre for Photography, London, UK

Despite the propriety of his public and his collegiate personae, Benjamin Jowett was, it must be remembered, the pre-eminent translator and popularizer of Plato of his day, and understood (interestedly or not) those pederastic desires that had impregnated ancient Greek life and philosophical dialogues, desires flowing variously through his own translations of the Symposium and the Phaedrus, as well as through the lives of his Oxford contemporaries, especially his protégés Pater and Symonds. For this reason, paternalistic Jowett may merely have hinted to Pater that he had better seek Falstaff’s ‘table of green fields’²
somewhere at a distance from Oxford undergraduates, particularly those who, like Hardinge, were from Jowett’s own Balliol College. Recognising the refined tastes of this prodigal, a prodigal whom he had himself refined, Jowett would have anticipated, as well as appreciated that Pater’s attractions had an intellectual or artistic component unlikely to be satisfied at Brasenose College, as Higgins explains: ‘Quite frankly, [Pater’s] college was an intellectual backwater. Balliol had Jowett, Lincoln had Mark Pattison, Christ Church had Henry Liddell — and Brasenose had its own beer’.\(^1\) Put vividly, ‘its lone literary distinction was that every Shrove Tuesday a new set of “Ale verses” was recited at the college’s pancake supper party’.\(^2\) Nevertheless, even if Jowett’s hint, request, or warning had simply been for Pater to go afield or to frolic away from Oxford, Pater seems not to have obliged: ‘In his private life Pater was not entirely circumspect. Even after the episode with Hardinge, he continued to cultivate good-looking young men, especially undergraduates of an athletic disposition’.\(^3\) However, Pater also had London interests, interests that could provide as much drama, if not as much intellectual stimulation, as Raffalovich relates: ‘I am pleased to remember that [Pater] several times met Harry Eversfield, so successful as the boy in Pinero’s play’.\(^4\)

Although the Pater-Harding scandal occurred in the decade following Hopkins’s Greats coaching in 1866, Dellamora suggests that even that coaching


\(^{2}\) Ibid., p.238, note 13.

\(^{3}\) Donoghue, p.69. ‘[Pater’s] desire for young men was strong, otherwise he would not have taken such risks in consorting with them, but between himself and people of his own generation he generally kept his distance or added to it’ (Ibid., p.54).

\(^{4}\) As quoted in ibid., p.69.
was a ‘pedagogic moment [that] permitted them to share a sense of masculine desire informing one’s perception of organic existence’,\(^1\) a pedagogic moment in which ‘Hopkins probably learned as much from his tutor’s asides and from the atmosphere of aestheticism as he did from formal instruction’.\(^2\) Again lacunae abound, such that only a single, fragmentary sentence remains to sketch this atmosphere of aestheticism so pregnant with homoerotic and paederastic potential, Hopkins’s journal entry for 17 June 1868: ‘To lunch with Pater, then to Mr. Solomon’s studio and the Academy’ (*Journals*, p.167).

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A striking change of tone becomes evident when this journal entry is placed alongside one from two years prior: ‘Coaching with W. H. Pater this term. Walked with him on Monday evening last, April 30. Fine evening bitterly cold. “Bleak-faced Neology in cap and gown”: no cap and gown but very bleak. Same evening Hexameron met here’ (2 May 1866, *Journals*, p.133). The Hexameron, meeting in Hopkins’s rooms on the same evening as his walk with Pater, was an essay society of which Hopkins was a founding member, a High Anglican society partially created to combat a growing agnosticism on campus, an agnosticism symbolised by ‘one Paper which obtained great notoriety at the beginning of this Term [because it] was directed against the immortality of the soul. It was written by a junior Fellow of a College’ (Henry Parry Liddon’s letter to the Bishop of Salisbury, 17 March 1864, as quoted in *Journals*, p.353, note).

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\(^2\) Martin, pp.132-33.
That ‘junior Fellow of a College’ was none other than Pater; and the paper, his ‘Fichte’s Ideal Student’, delivered on 20 February 1864 to the Old Mortality Society, a society that Donoghue describes as ‘a web of hypothetically erotic relations which may or may not come to anything but in the meantime desultorily occupy the same space’ — and Dowling, as ‘the unique moment of Oxford masculine comradeship, a window or halcyon interval of particularly intense male homosociality’.

Tellingly, despite his earlier aversion to Pater’s ‘bleak-faced Neology’ and his own membership in the Hexameron Society founded to combat that Neology (or Rationalism at variance with the received interpretation of Scripture), Hopkins seems to have attended at least one such meeting — on Thursday, 31 May 1866 — probably invited by Pater to hear him deliver a paper, about which Hopkins records: ‘Pater talking two hours against Xtianity’ (Journals, p.138).

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2 In correspondence with me on 20 August 2004, Gerald C. Monsman, Professor of English at the University of Arizona and author of the authoritative book on the subject, Oxford University’s Old Mortality Society, responded to my suggestion that Hopkins may have heard Pater read a paper to a group other than the Old Mortality — since the Old Mortals, who ‘did not last after 1866, although reunions continued to be held for another decade’ (Old Mortality, p.110), always met on Saturdays. Monsman’s response was, ‘Wow! a fascinating possibility that makes more sense than a tutorial or a conversation’.
In the two years separating those two journal entries, much has changed: Hopkins is now found in London accompanying Pater to lunch, then to the studio of Pater’s notorious friend Simeon Solomon at 12 Fitzroy Street, Fitzroy Square, a studio in which he would have seen a number of paintings and drawings tinged with the paederastic, the homoerotic, and the lesbian.1 Probably still in the company of Pater and Solomon, Hopkins then went to the Royal Academy Exhibition, where he lingered before an oil painting by Frederic Leighton (1830-96; later Lord Leighton), Jonathan’s Token to David, a painting that Hopkins noted in his journal (Journals, p.167), a painting that would have appealed strongly to his sensibilities, as well as to those of Pater and Solomon. Hopkins did not live long enough to see Leighton’s further development of this theme, Hit! (1893),2 of which Joseph A. Kestner writes:

The pedagogic relationship of the older male to the youth, with potentially strong erotic elements, reappeared in Leighton’s Hit! of 1893, a canvas of a youth teaching a boy to hold a bow and shoot at a target. […] The erotic nature of Leighton’s canvas is confirmed by preparatory drawings for Hit!: in two drawings, the young man is nuzzling the youth; in one drawing the nude boy stands beside the seated youth; in the other he stands between his legs, with the outline of the bow all but disappeared, making the sketch highly erotic in the tradition of the erastês and the erômenos. Attempts to claim that this is father and son, as in the notice from the Athenæum, deflect the homoeroticism of the drawings and are refuted by the age of the instructor. The aspect of ephebic training also appears in Leighton’s Jonathan’s Token to David, exhibited in

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1 I am grateful to Roberto C. Ferrari of Florida Atlantic University for securing for me the following detail: ‘Simeon Solomon moved to 12 Fitzroy Street in January 1868. I do not have a definite date but know from a letter he wrote to Frederick Leyland that he already lived at this address by the beginning of February 1868’ (E-mail from 26 July 2004).

In ‘Canons and Causes’, The Hudson Review, 56.1 (2003), pp.168-74, John Loughery notes that ‘Oscar Wilde owned Solomon’s Love among the Schoolboys [1866]’ (pp.171-72), a drawing Hopkins might have seen at Solomon’s studio. In The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy (London: Routledge, 1993), Robert Aldrich notes that ‘Alfred Douglas, Oscar Wilde’s lover, owned a collection of [Solomon’s] drawings, including one called “Love among the Schoolboys”’ (p.142). Given Douglas’s constant pennilessness, the drawing was certainly a gift from Wilde, who was its owner. The provenance of this drawing is partially explained by Emmanuel Cooper: ‘Solomon’s drawing Love Talking to Boys (private collection), of schoolboys affectionately hugging each other while being lectured by a winged schoolboy angel, hung on the walls of Oscar Wilde’s rooms at Oxford. When Lord Alfred Douglas sold Wilde’s Solomon drawings after his trial, Wilde reproached him for his heartlessness’ — The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West (London: Routledge, 1994), p.67. This drawing is reproduced in my ‘Conclusion’.

2 I am grateful to Reena Suleman, Curator of Collections and Research at Leighton House, London, for securing that a preparatory version of Leighton’s painting Hit! is in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (E-mail from 5 July 2004).
1868, showing Jonathan accompanied by a young lad as he prepares to shoot the arrow warning his beloved friend David that Saul intends to have him slain.¹

Lunching with Pater, visiting Solomon’s studio, lingering before Leighton’s Jonathan’s Token to David — such was a typical day for a Uranian disciple of Decadence. Since Hopkins kept such a schedule — even if only as an occasional ‘day on the town with the boys’ — it is difficult to accept Martin’s claim that ‘there is no reason to think that Hopkins was in any way involved in the world in which the others moved’;² a world that would be shaken, in due course, by Solomon’s repeated arrests and convictions for ‘sodomitical’ adventures in public urinals. If, at the Royal Academy on that June day in 1868, Hopkins had accompanied Solomon to the urinal, there is no record.³ Seriously, the reluctance among scholars such as Martin and Dowling to associate Hopkins directly with the blatant homoeroticism and paederasty of Pater’s coterie seems untenable, especially if Hopkins kept the company of the likes of Simeon Solomon and Pater himself.⁴


For British Victorian paintings of the male nude, a nexus of ideas formed around the tradition of the ephebia and of the erastêsrêmenos relation, the latter marked by an older man and a youth in the canvas, the former by elements such as sequestration, liminality and nudity. […] The element of ephebic education, with possible strong homoerotic elements, appears in several representations of the male nude by Frederic Leighton. (P.250)


² Martin, p.178.

³ For a fabulously decadent account of Prince Edward being locked into a bathroom with Solomon’s and Pater’s friend Oscar Browning, see Theo Aronson, Prince Eddy and the Homosexual Underworld (London: Barnes & Noble, 1995), pp.70-73.

⁴ ’[Solomon] became part of an informal network of gay men which included Walter Pater, Oscar Browning, George Powell, and Lord Houghton, some of whom were friends and confidants, others patrons and collectors of his work’ (Colin Cruise, ‘Simeon Solomon’, DNB). Donoghue suggests that ‘Solomon’s prose poem A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep (1871) owes a great deal to Pater and to theories of symbolism in Pater’s vicinity’ (p.38). There is a copy of Solomon’s A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep (London: F. S. Ellis, 1871) at the University of Rochester that bears the following inscription to Edward Burne-Jones: ‘With Simeon’s affectionate regards to Ned. June 25th 1871’. It should be noted that Solomon was, at one time, a close friend of Burne-Jones, who was a close friend of R. W. Dixon, later a close friend of Hopkins.
Jonathan’s Token to David
Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-96)
Oil on canvas, ca. 1868
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Hit!
Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-96)
Oil on canvas, 1893
Roy Miles Gallery, London, UK
Pater’s coterie also included various Oscars, one being Oscar Browning, an intimate friend of Solomon, as well as a Master of Eton dismissed ‘for insubordination, according to the official explanation, for pederastic excess, according to the unofficial one’ — a pederast who, through ‘the influence of powerful friends, […] was able to secure a new post at King’s College, Cambridge’. Or, in the phrasing of the Dictionary of National Biography: ‘He cultivated intelligent boys (such as Cecil Spring-Rice), to whom he lent books and whom he teased with Socratic provocations. He went abroad every school vacation […] usually to Italy and often accompanied by an Eton boy: he took, for example, Gerald Balfour to Sicily in 1869.’ Had Hopkins’s journal been as detailed as Mark Pattison’s in 1878, it might have read something like this:

To Pater’s to tea, where Oscar Browning […] was more like Socrates than ever. He conversed in one corner with 4 feminine looking youths ‘paw dandling’ there in one fivesome, while the Miss Paters & I sat looking on in another corner — Presently Walter Pater, who, I had been told, was ‘upstairs’ appeared, attended by 2 more youths of similar appearance.

Whatever conclusions are drawn from Hopkins’s consorting with Pater and his coterie, the assertion that ‘Hopkins still kept doubtful company’ seems rather established, even if one only goes as far as Donoghue: ‘Hopkins and Pater were divided on religious belief, but their interest in art, aesthetics, and homoerotic sentiment kept a mild friendship going.’

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1 Dowling, ‘Ruskin’s’, pp.7-8. In ‘Simeon Solomon and the Biblical Construction of Marginal Identity in Victorian England’, Journal of Homosexuality, 33.3-4 (1997), pp.97-119, Gayle M. Seymour describes Browning with the following parenthetical: ‘Eton don Oscar Browning [was the person] with whom Solomon traveled to Italy in 1869 and 1870 and through whom the artist was able to establish numerous friendships with adolescent boys at Eton’ (p.113). However, Seymour is blurring the point by claiming that Solomon had made ‘numerous friendships with adolescent boys’, since ‘friendships’ is rather a (trans)muted way of saying ‘paederastic relationships’ or ‘paederastic dalliances’. This more accurate phrasing would partially defeat her claim in the sentence that followed: ‘Clearly, Solomon was defining himself as homosexual and presenting himself as such, at least when he was safely in the company of other homosexuals’ (p.113). This is not ‘clear’: what is ‘clear’ is that Solomon was defining himself as a pederast and presenting himself as such, at least when he was safely in the company of other pederasts — especially given the evidence of his attraction to Browning’s adolescent Eton boys, an attraction often hinted at in letters. ‘The artist engaged in a voluminous correspondence with the Eton tutor Oscar Browning, a particularly close friend’ — Roberto C. Ferrari, ‘Pre-Raphaelite Patronage: Simeon Solomon’s Letters to James Leathart and Frederick Leyland’, in Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites, compiled and ed. by Colin Cruise (London: Merrell, 2005), pp.47-55 (p.47).

2 Richard Davenport-Hines, ‘Oscar Browning’, DNB.

3 From Pattison’s diary entry for 5 May 1878; as quoted in Letters of Pater, p.xxxiv.

4 Donoghue, p.33.

5 Ibid., p.34.
Hopkins could not but have recognised that Pater’s coterie was as Decadent as possible, including, at various times, the Uranian poets Marc-André Raffalovich, Lionel Johnson, John Henry Gray, and Stanislaus Eric, Count Stenbock (1858-95); the artist Simeon Solomon; the writers J. A. Symonds, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Edmund Gosse, and Oscar Wilde1; the wealthy connoisseur and Uranian apologist Edward Perry Warren, who later acquired the silver Roman scyphus considered in ‘Chapter One’; Richard Monckton Milnes (1st Baron Houghton; 1809-85), who owned what was then perhaps the largest collection of erotica in Britain, a collection only rivalled by that of Henry Spencer Ashbee (1834-1900), whose collection became the core of the Private Case Collection at the British Library; and Charles Kegan Paul (1828-1902), whose publishing house issued much of the Uranians’ verse. However, even a reluctance to associate Hopkins with that degree of Decadence does not obscure what his friendship with Pater, whether mild or intimate, implies.

1 That Hopkins did not consider Symonds overly ‘scandalous’ is revealed by a nonchalant comment in a letter to his mother: ‘I went to call on Mr. Green, fellow of Balliol, professor of Moral Philosophy. His wife, a very kind creature, is sister to John Addington Symonds the critic’ (12 February 1879, Letters III, p.152). References to Gosse appear from time to time in Hopkins’s letters to Bridges, who was one of Gosse’s acquaintances; in fact, Gosse was interested in publishing some of Hopkins’s poetry, which reveals that Bridges had shown that poetry to him (or else that Coventry Patmore had done so). After Hopkins’s death, Bridges warned the Hopkins family against allowing Gosse to edit Hopkins’s poetry or compose anything biographical.
Years later, although certainly aware of the various scandals surrounding Pater through friends such as Gosse and through texts such as *The New Republic* by William Hurrell Mallock (1849-1923),¹ Hopkins’s ‘dearest’ and most protective friend Robert Bridges nevertheless ‘reactivated personal ties between Hopkins and Pater’,² such that, after his return to Oxford in 1878, Hopkins regularly visited Pater, which was partly facilitated by proximity, since Pater’s house at 2 Bradmore Road was only minutes away from St Aloysius’s Church where Hopkins was then Curate. However, as chronicle of this suggestive friendship, only a few, pedestrian passages remain, such as Hopkins’s casual comment to his mother on 12 February 1879: ‘I went yesterday to dine with the Paters’ (Letters III, p.151). Similarly, Pater’s only extant letter to Hopkins is a terse response from 20 May 1879 —

My dear Hopkins,

It will give me great pleasure to accept your kind invitation to dinner on Thursday at 5.30.

Very sincerely yours,

W. H. Pater        (Facsimiles II, p.176)

— though its salutation, Higgins stresses, ‘was one which Pater reserved for close friends only’.³ That these now ‘close friends’ met extensively between 1878 and 1879 is substantiated by a letter from Hopkins to his friend A. W. M. Baillie: ‘By the by when I was at Oxford Pater was one of the men I saw most of’ (22 May 1880, Letters III, p.246). This casual claim to Baillie becomes particularly intriguing and insightful when one considers the number of scandals, contained or publicised, that were then besieging Pater and his immediate coterie: Pater’s utterly decried Renaissance editions of 1873 and 1877; Pater’s discovered intimacy with Hardinge in 1874; Solomon’s arrest and conviction on sodomy charges in 1873 and again in 1874 (for the latter, receiving a sentence of three months in prison); W. H. Mallock’s *New Republic: Culture, Faith, and Philosophy in an English Country House* in 1877 (though parts had already appeared in the journal *Belgravia* in 1876), a book that portrays Pater as the paederastic ‘Mr. Rose’, who is ever flitting about young ‘Leslie’, a thinly disguised Hardinge⁴; Oscar Browning’s removal from Eton in 1875 under

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¹ The paederastic nuances surrounding Pater seem to have been evident to his Oxford contemporaries. In 1880, C. E. Hutchinson wrote and distributed at Oxford a pamphlet titled *Boy-Worship*, a pamphlet that established Pater as the original for ‘Mr. Rose’, the paederastic aesthete of Mallock’s *New Republic* (see Dowling, *Hellenism*, pp.111-14).


³ Ibid., p.175.

⁴ See Billie Andrew Inman, *Walter Pater’s Reading: A Bibliography of His Library Borrowings and Literary References, 1857-1873* (New York: Garland, 1981), pp.30-35; 232-37. For Raffalovich’s gloss that Hardinge was the person being caricatured as
suspicion of paeoderasty (which, unlike William Johnson’s earlier dismissal from Eton and Solomon’s arrests, had been mentioned, though vaguely, in the press and in the House of Commons). Although no extant evidence supports that Hopkins knew the specifics of any of these scandals, he would certainly have recognised the dangerous Decadent residue clinging to Pater because of them, for there was much that Hopkins did know.

Concerning the first scandal: Hopkins undoubtedly knew the public and pulpit reactions to the first and second editions of The Renaissance:

Widely denounced as a sinister invitation to hedonism, The Renaissance elicited a rhetoric of outrage that conjoined all the norms of English life in their common vulnerability to Pater’s subversive creed. Thus W. J. Courthope spoke for many in 1876 when he denounced Pater’s volume as a betrayal not only of English society, but of English masculinity: ‘In common, we believe, with most Englishmen, we repudiate the effeminate desires which Mr. Pater, the mouthpiece of our artistic “culture”, would encourage in society’. The suspicions insinuated by the label ‘effeminate’ of course became increasingly damaging during the century as this quality became more narrowly and explicitly associated with homosexual behavior.

Concerning the second: R. L. Nettleship and Benjamin Jowett, both of whom had been involved in the handling and containment of the Pater-Harding ‘affair’, had strong academic and personal ties to Hopkins, whom both had known from his undergraduate days and for whom both would later supply the academic references that would secure his appointment to a Classics professorship in Dublin in 1884. Anticipating his possible renewal of friendship with Pater, they might well have advised or hinted that Hopkins would do well to avoid such company and its possible taint, especially as a Roman Catholic curate in an overly Anglican Oxford, an Oxford that would look upon a Jesuit with suspicion anyway. Concerning the third: Hopkins might well have known from Pater or someone else about Solomon’s conviction. Since Hopkins had met Solomon at least twice in 1868 — on the second occasion clearly in the company of Pater, one of Solomon’s closest friends — Hopkins might very well have inquired, however naively, about this ‘wandering Jew’, especially since various objects of his handiwork decorated Pater’s Bradmore Road residence, objects that Hopkins would have recognised as by Solomon. Concerning the fourth: Hopkins definitely knew of Mallock’s New Republic, with its portrayal of Pater as ‘Mr. Rose’, for he wrote jokingly to his mother on 12 February 1879: ‘Sir Gore

‘Leslie’, as well as for Pater’s disappointing encounter with Harding later in life, see Donoghue, p.61. In A Usable Past: Essays on Modern and Contemporary Poetry (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), Paul Mariani writes: ‘Hopkins mentions Mallock twice in two letters written in February 1879, and he seems to have read Mallock’s The New Republic’ (p.119).

[Ouseley] (ghastly as this is, what else can you say? — his name in a book of Mallock’s would become Sir Bloodclot Reekswell)’ (Letters III, p.153). Concerning the fifth: Hopkins may not have known of Browning’s dismissal from Eton under suspicion of paederasty, but Mark Pattison’s diary entry concerning that hand-holding tea at the Paters’ in 1878, with the ‘paw dandling’ Browning in attendance, suggests that Hopkins might well have been introduced to Browning after being stationed in Oxford later that year. Whatever one decides about Hopkins’s inclusion amidst this scandalous Paterian world, Donoghue’s phrasing seems as true for the Jesuit Hopkins of the late 1870s as for the pre-Jesuit Hopkins of the late 1860s: ‘Hopkins still kept doubtful company’.

**La clef for**

**W. H. Mallock’s New Republic**

Although, ‘after November, 1879, Hopkins made two further visits to Oxford: a brief appearance at St. Aloysius’s on 11 September 1883, and a somewhat longer stay in May 1886’ — Higgins does not believe that Hopkins had an opportunity to visit Pater on either occasion, since Pater had ‘resigned his Brasenose tutorship in 1883 in order to concentrate on writing *Marius the Epicurean*’. Regardless of whether or not they again met, Pater’s influence over Hopkins certainly continued, even if only textually, for ‘Walter Pater’s presence in Gerard Manley Hopkins’s life and work was much more than an undergraduate

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phenomenon’. Concerning Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean* and *Imaginary Portraits*, published in 1885 and 1887, respectively, Downes suggests that ‘given Hopkins’ enormous interest in letters, it is unthinkable that he did not know them, [though] there is no extant evidence that he did’. Even if one embraces the requirement for ‘the verifiable’ and brushes aside Hopkins’s awareness of Pater’s mature scholarship and fiction, Hopkins must have been, even as an undergraduate, inordinately versed in Pater’s elaborate *Weltanschauung*, his ‘bleak-faced Neology’. In fact, Pater’s collection of tenets is so consistent that he was able to underscore in the third edition of his *Renaissance* (1888) and afterwards: ‘I have dealt more fully in *Marius the Epicurean* with the thoughts suggested by [this book’s “Conclusion”]’ (*Renaissance* 1893, p.186, Pater’s footnote).

The last passage of that ‘Conclusion’ encapsulates a *Weltanschauung* that could not but have influenced Hopkins as a young Oxonian and later as a poet and professor:

> We are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve — […] we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among ‘the children of this world’, in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion — that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake.

(*Renaissance* 1893, p.190)

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1 Higgins, ‘Essaying’, p.77.
2 Downes, *Portraits*, p.46.
3 About this footnote added to *The Renaissance*, William Shuter writes: ‘Pater has not changed his mind; he has only explained it more fully’ — ‘Pater, Wilde, Douglas and the Impact of “Greats”, *English Literature in Transition* (1880-1920), 46.3 (2003), pp.250-78 (p.266). This desire to ‘explain it more fully’ is also evident in the writings of others in or around Pater’s circle:

Pater published *Marius the Epicurean*, his Bildungsroman, in 1885, when he was in his 46th year; Wilde wrote *De Profundis* in 1897, when he was in his 43rd year; Douglas wrote his *Autobiography* in 1927, when he was 57. While all three writers reflect on the earlier views they have abandoned or modified, they differ in the stress they place on the continuity between their earlier and later selves. Insofar, however, as this continuity is stressed, it is represented in language we recognize as belonging to the discourse of Greats. (Ibid., pp.265-66)
Hopkins’s absorption of this Weltanschauung, as well as its phrasing, is evident almost immediately: ‘Within two months of meeting his new instructor, “as Pater says” had become a popular qualifying statement’ for Hopkins.1 This absorption is already evident in the six aesthetically-tinged, philosophical essays written under Pater’s tutelage, essays that constitute Notebook D.III of the Hopkins Manuscript Collection at Campion Hall, Oxford — ‘Essays / for W. H. Pater Esq. / Gerard M. Hopkins’. From that moment forward, Hopkins would continue to engage, adjust, and adopt various Paterian notions, the foremost of those being the necessity for moments lived ‘simply for those moments’ sake’. That particular Paterian notion, however qualified or made to accord with Christian teaching, would constitute a lasting influence (or ‘underthought’) over Hopkins, whose responses to it bespeak far more than intellectual sparring between a don and an undergraduate, between the ‘High Priest of the Decadents’ and a priest of the Jesuits:

The ‘underthoughts’ which link Hopkins’s canon to Pater’s are verbal witnesses to a very rare phenomenon: a friendship, an understanding and rapport based upon personal and intellectual ties lessened by time but never severed. As Marius the Epicurean explains, ‘the saint, and the Cyrenaic lover of beauty, it may be thought, would at least understand each other better than either would understand the mere man of the world. Carry their respective positions a point further, shift the terms a little, and they might actually touch’.2

Had Hopkins and Pater, both of whom died in middle age, lived longer, their respective positions might indeed have touched, for this Catholic priest was becoming ever more ‘decadent’; and this Decadent, ever more ‘catholic’.3 Nonetheless, to brush aside their respective positions for a moment is to see how linked in ‘temperament’ these two friends and literary artists actually were: they were linked by their understanding and use of what Hopkins aptly coins ‘underthought’.

‘Underthought’ is indeed what links Hopkins’s canon to Pater’s; and, in the case of these two Uranians, one of the by-products of an acquisition and thorough mastery of ‘underthought’ was an ability to tease from the canonical

1 Higgins, ‘Essaying’, p.80.
2 Ibid., p.94.
3 Hopkins’s growing ‘decadence’ and his acquiescence to it was illustrated in the last chapter through a close reading of his ‘Epithalamion’ (1888). As far as Pater’s growing ‘catholicism’ is concerned, one should consider an unpublished, manuscript essay found among his papers after his death, ‘The Writings of Cardinal Newman’ — Houghton Library (Harvard University) MSS, Eng. 1150. About this unpublished essay and Pater’s general approach to Newman, Donoghue writes: ‘He thought of Marius moving toward a […] slowly attained acquiescence in Christianity. […] His model for this achievement was Newman. […] As he proceeds [in his essay about Newman], he enters more sympathetically into Newman’s progress toward religious belief. […] In the later years Newman was particularly evident, an exemplary figure of possibility’ (pp.96-97).
texts and artworks of Western culture the paederastic elements that had usually, out of necessity, been rendered opaque. In a discussion with his friend A. W. M. Baille about Greek lyrical passages (about which Hopkins had begun writing a book), Hopkins explains his coinages ‘overthought’ and ‘underthought’:

In any lyric passage of the tragic poets [...] there are — usually [...] — two strains of thought running together and like counterpointed; the overthought that which everybody, editors, see [...] and which might for instance be abridged or paraphrased in square marginal blocks as in some books carefully written; the other, the underthought, conveyed chiefly in the choice of metaphors etc used and often only half realised by the poet himself, not necessarily having any connection with the subject in hand but usually having a connection and suggested by some circumstance of the scene or of the story. [...] The underthought is commonly an echo or shadow of the overthought, something like canons and repetitions in music, treated in a different manner, but that sometimes it may be independent of it [...] an undercurrent of thought governing the choice of images used. (14 January 1883, Letters III, pp.252-53)

In a letter to his close friend R. W. Dixon, Hopkins illustrates the way that ‘underthought’ eludes the grasp of most readers — since ‘the overthought [is] that which everybody, editors, see’ — and he does so by considering what may be the most paederastic passage in all of Shakespeare:

You remember the scene or episode of the little Indian boy in the Midsummer Night: it is, I think, an allegory, to which, in writing once on the play, I believed I had the clue, but whether I am right or wrong the meaning must have in any case been, and Shakspeare must have known it wd. be, dark or invisible to most beholders or readers [...] (15-16 August 1883, Letters II, p.115)

1 The paederastic dynamic surrounding Oberon’s desire for Titania’s Indian pageboy, a changeling, has been commented on repeatedly. The following are representative examples: In ‘Fertile Visions: Jacobean Revels and the Erotics of Occasion’, Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900, 39.2 (1999), pp.327-56, Douglas Lanier writes: ‘Titania tells us [that] Oberon the fairy king’s desire for a young Indian boy has disrupted the seasonal cycle, with disastrous results for the kingdom’s bounty [...] Titania’s language of parentage — “progeny”, “parents” — underscores the fruitless fruit of Oberon’s misdirected attachment to the boy, which falls ambiguously between pederasty, paternalism, and an inappropriate attachment to male courtiers’ (pp.333-34). In ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream: “Jack Shall Have Jill; / Nought Shall Go Ill”’, in A Midsummer Night’s Dream: Critical Essays, ed. by Dorothea Kehler (London: Routledge, 1998), pp.127-44, Shirley Nelson Garner writes: ‘Titania’s attachment to the boy is clearly erotic. [...] Puck describes Oberon as “jealous”, and his emphasis on the “lovely boy”, the “sweet” changeling, and the “loved boy” suggests that Oberon, like Titania, is attracted to the child’ (pp.129-30). See also Bruce Boehrer, ‘Economies of Desire in A Midsummer Night’s Dream’, Shakespeare Studies, 32 (2004), pp.99-117. My personal favourite is the gloss provided for Oberon’s line ‘I only want the little Indian boy’ in William Shakespeare’s ’A Midsummer Night’s Dream’ — A Playscript for Younger Students, ed. by Geof Walker (Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press, [n.d.]): ‘The reason
In typical Uranian fashion, Hopkins reveals to Dixo n that some form of ‘underthought’ is at play in Shakespeare’s ‘allegory’, though neither Shakespeare nor Hopkins deigns to reveal what that ‘underthought’ is. As an exercise in Uranian ‘suggestiveness’, Hopkins displays, by employing ‘underthought’ in the passage above, what ‘underthought’ is. Such a ‘suggestiveness’ has ever been a feature of paederastic writing, particularly after the ascendancy of Christianity, a ‘suggestiveness’ and an ‘undercurrent of thought governing the choice of images used’ that probably left the conventional Dixon clueless as to its meaning, though the above would have been fully appreciated by Pater, one of the foremost Victorian practitioners of this technique, a technique that renders meaning ‘dark or invisible to most beholders or readers’, but not to the intended audience — though, in many ways, Hopkins handles this technique more deftly and purposefully than does his friend and former academic coach, even if ‘often only half realised by the poet himself’.

However, beyond a shared appreciation for the Uranian potential of ‘underthought’ — a reading and writing technique that Hopkins first witnessed, in any striking way, while under Pater’s tutelage — there were more holistic concepts that Hopkins would, despite adjustment, absorb from the Paterian Weltanschauung, concepts that speak less to how one reads and writes, and more to how one fashions one’s self and approaches one’s life. At the core of this Weltanschauung is a heightened form of carpe diem that Pater describes as ‘moments lived simply for those moments’ sake’.

Moments lived ‘simply for those moments’ sake’ — as early as his ‘Diaphaneitè’ essay, presented before the Old Mortals in July 1864 (and believed to be an extension of the no-longer-extant ‘Fichte’s Ideal Student’), that dictum infused Pater’s writings with a caution against squandering opportunities, Pater insisting that ‘to most of us only one chance is given in the life of the spirit and the intellect, and circumstances prevent our dexterously seizing that one chance’ (‘Diaphaneitè’, Miscellaneous, p.220).¹ Much later, in Marius the Epicurean, Pater’s protagonist illustrates this ‘dexterous seizing’ by sacrificing himself for a beloved ‘friend’:

At last, the great act, the critical moment itself comes, easily, almost unconsciously. [...] In one quarter of an hour, under a sudden, uncontrollable impulse, hardly weighing what he did, almost as a matter of course and as lightly

<--- Footnotes --->

¹ Samuel Roebuck Brooke (1844-98) — a Corpus Christi undergraduate; an acquaintance of Hopkins; a former, disgruntled member of the Old Mortality Society; and a founding member of the Hexameron Society, which sought to counterbalance the Old Mortals — wrote in his diary that Pater’s lecture was ‘one of the most thoroughly infidel productions’ he had ever heard, and denounced him to other Oxonians, especially H. P. Liddon. The portions of Brooke’s diary that deal with this episode are published in Seiler, A Life, pp.11-13.
as one hires a bed for one’s night’s rest on a journey, Marius had taken upon
himself all the heavy risk of the position in which Cornelius had then been —
the long and wearisome delays of judgment, which were possible; the danger
and wretchedness of a long journey in this manner; possibly the danger of death.
He had delivered his brother, after the manner he had sometimes vaguely
anticipated as a kind of distinction in his destiny; though indeed always with
wistful calculation as to what it might cost him: and in the first moment after the
thing was actually done, he felt only satisfaction at his courage, at the discovery
of his possession of ‘nerve’. (II, p.213)

Over time, this early Paterian notion of moments lived ‘simply for those
moments’ sake’ was recast by Pater into the ‘martyrdom for friendship’s sake’
displayed above, a martyrdom that became the principal ennobling act of his
mature Weltanschauung, an act first depicted in his second edition of The
Renaissance (1877) through the tale Li Amitiez de Ami et Amile, a thirteenth-
century French romance, the addition of which allows Pater to connect ‘medieval,
Christian culture with the tradition of homosexual friendship in Greek culture’. 1
According to Pater, Amis and Amile had ‘a friendship pure and generous, pushed
to a sort of passionate exaltation, and more than faithful unto death. Such
comradeship, though instances of it are to be found everywhere, is still especially

As with his ‘Conclusion’, Pater most fully depicts this ‘classical motive’ —
expressed in Amis and Amile as an exultant and passionate friendship ‘more
than faithful unto death’ — in Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas
(1885), a novel that not only portrays the sensations and ideas of a protagonist
from Classical Rome, but also the sensations and ideas of Pater’s immediate
contemporaries, whom he frequently addresses in authorial asides: ‘Let the
reader pardon me if here and there I seem to be passing from Marius to his
modern representatives — from Rome, to Paris or London’ (Marius, II, p.14). 2
For Pater, the benefit derived from this constant shift in time and location is that
these moments lived ‘simply for those moments’ sake’, whether ancient or
modern, constitute a ‘cultural continuum’, particularly when endowed with
‘classical motive’. The ‘cultural continuum’ that Pater constructs is in direct
contradiction to Michel Foucault’s claims (as well as those of most Social
Constructionists) that such a continuum is inherently anachronistic, whether in
word or concept. However, for Pater culture is always, by necessity, a
continuum:

1 Dellamora, ‘French’, p.143.
2 Donoghue writes: ‘Marius the Epicurean is more a spiritual romance than a novel’
(p.188).
[John] Nichol envisioned history Romantically, in a fashion similar to Edmund Burke, as a vital organic and evolutionary continuum [...] There was no place in this vision for ruptures or discontinuities. As with Blake and Pater, the ages were all thought to be equal now.¹

Further, by choosing Imperial Rome as his setting, Pater is also contradicting a widely held Victorian notion — here phrased by J. A. Symonds — that this ‘classical motive’, expressed through paederasty, did not have the same meaning or meaningfulness for the ancient Romans that it had had for the earlier Greeks:

Greece merged in Rome; but, though the Romans aped the arts and manners of the Greeks, they never truly caught the Hellenic spirit. Even Virgil only trod the court of the Gentiles of Greek culture. It was not, therefore, possible that any social custom so peculiar as paiderastia should flourish on Latin soil. Instead of Cleomenes and Epameinondas, we find at Rome Nero the bride of Sporus and Commodus the public prostitute. Alcibiades is replaced by the Mark Antony of Cicero’s Philippi. Corydon, with artificial notes, takes up the song of Ageanax. The melodies of Meleager are drowned in the harsh discords of Martial. Instead of love, lust was the deity of the boy-lover on the shores of Tiber.²

It is to those ‘shores of Tiber’ that Pater turns in order to trace a continuum from Greece to Rome, from Rome to Paris and London, drawing his reader’s attention, sole-thoughted, to one boy there, a boy who will serve as his means of depicting ‘Greece merged in Rome’, as well as ‘the Hellenic spirit’ — Marius the Epicurean.

Pater’s novel is tinged with paederasty from the start. As a wealthy orphan, Marius soon finds himself at a Platonic academy in Pisa, under the private coaching of Flavian, a student three years his senior. In Flavian, Marius immediately perceives ‘something […] a shade disdainful, as [Flavian] stood isolated from the others for a moment’, something that sets Flavian apart from his companions and establishes him as ‘prince of the school’, allowing him ‘an easy dominion over the old Greek master by the fascination of his parts, and over his fellow-scholars by the figure he bore’ (Marius, I, pp.49-50).³ Predictably, ‘over Marius too his dominion was entire’, enhanced because Flavian has been ‘appointed to help the younger boy in his studies’ (I, p.50). From the moment of their introduction, Flavian begins to dominate Marius through prurient glances, visual insinuations that take a keen hold upon Marius and assure him of their

impending ‘friendship’: ‘There was pleasantness also for [himself, as] the newcomer in the roving blue eyes which seemed somehow to take a fuller hold upon things around than is usual with boys. Marius knew that those proud glances made kindly note of him for a moment, and felt something like friendship at first sight’ (I, p.49). This ‘friendship at first sight’ soon broadens beyond a tutorial relationship, until Marius ‘became virtually [Flavian’s] servant in many things’, experiencing a fascination that ‘had been a sentimental one, dependent on the concession to himself of an intimacy, a certain tolerance of his company, [that Flavian] granted to none beside’ (I, pp.50-51). Through this ‘intimacy […] granted to none beside’, Marius is taught ‘many things’ — the deliberate vagueness of such a description lending a prurient suggestiveness to this passage, a prurient suggestiveness that is intensified by this pedagogical ‘friendship’ being labelled ‘that feverish attachment to Flavian, which had made [Marius] at times like an uneasy slave’ (I, p.234).

However ‘uneasy’, Marius nonetheless yields himself to ‘that feverish attachment to Flavian’ — in much the same way that Flavian ‘had certainly yielded himself, though still with untouched health, in a world where manhood comes early, to the seductions of that luxurious town’ (I, p.53). By ‘yielding himself’ and his developing ‘manhood’ to ‘the seductions of that luxurious town’, a younger Flavian had acquired erotic experiences that served to transform him into a sort of ‘prince’ with ‘dominion over’ others, mere ‘servants’, ‘uneasy slaves’ overwhelmed by his ‘proud glances’ — or, as with Marius, ‘granted’ friendship and perhaps erotic instruction. Not surprisingly, Marius soon becomes fluent concerning Flavian’s lascivious sexual encounters, causing him to wonder

sometimes, in [Flavian’s] frer revelation of himself by conversation, at the extent of his early corruption. How often, afterwards, did evil things present themselves in malign association with the memory of that beautiful head, and with a kind of borrowed sanction and charm in its natural grace! To Marius, at a later time, [Flavian] counted for as it were an epitome of the whole pagan world, the depth of its corruption, and its perfection of form. (I, p.53)

Lost early, Flavian’s sexual innocence was replaced by ‘corruption’, a corruption that intrigues his contemporaries, as does his ‘perfection of form’: ‘His voice, his glance, were like the breaking in of the solid world upon one, amid the flimsy fictions of a dream. A shadow, handling all things as shadows, had felt a sudden real and poignant heat in them’ (I, p.53). Given the ‘poignant heat’ of the above, it is crucial to remember exactly who is feeling that ‘heat’: ‘the old Greek master [fevered] by the fascination of [Flavian’s] parts’ and ‘his fellow-scholars [fevered] by the figure [Flavian] bore’. In essence, the ‘old Greek master’ is heated by Flavian’s ‘parts’; Flavian’s fellow students, by his ‘figure’: the first seems a fascination with the erotic possibilities that those ‘parts’ could afford; the second, a more holistic admiration that covers a multitude of latent desires. Lest readers of Marius the Epicurean downplay Flavian’s ‘corrupting’ influence, Pater further insinuates that
meantime, under his guidance, Marius was learning quickly and abundantly, because with a good will. There was that in the actual effectiveness of [Flavian’s] figure which stimulated the younger lad to make the most of opportunity; and he had experience already that education largely increased one’s capacity for enjoyment. (I, p.53)

Having reached a potent ‘manhood’, Flavian employs ‘the actual effectiveness of his figure’ to ‘stimulate the younger lad’, a lad who accepts this ‘education’ with ‘good will’, having learned ‘to make the most of opportunity’, especially an opportunity that ‘largely increased one’s capacity for enjoyment’. Textually, Pater has constructed this ‘intimacy […] granted to none beside’ as a moment of paederastic pedagogy and practice — Flavian ‘stimulat[ing] the younger lad’ both sexually and intellectually, becoming the ‘inspirer’ to Marius the ‘hearer’.

In typical Paterian fashion, Flavian chooses to augment his erotic tutelage of Marius with a book, a book whose very title seems an insinuation, for Pater has opted for its more colloquial form — The Golden Ass — rather than Metamorphoses. Abounding in incidents comic, intrusions supernatural, and affairs erotic, this collection of Grecian tales, reworked into Latin by Lucius Apuleius of Madaura (123-170 CE), becomes, for these boys, ‘the golden book’, a book ‘which awakened the poetic or romantic capacity as perhaps some other book might have done, but was peculiar in giving it a direction emphatically sensuous’ (I, p.54). In fact, Flavian’s copy of this book is itself a paederastic insinuation in ‘a direction emphatically sensuous’, for it is undoubtedly a gift presented by ‘the rich man, interested in the promise of the fair child born on his estate, [who] had sent him to school’ (I, p.52). This rich man’s erotic ‘interest in the promise of the fair child’ can be surmised by the choice and choiceness of his gift, a contemporary romance packed with eroticism, a romance whose costly packaging literally drips with passionate exclamation, decoration, and perfume:

The ‘golden’ book of that day [was] a gift to Flavian, as was shown by the purple writing on the handsome yellow wrapper, following the title — Flaviane! — it said,

| Flaviane! | Flaviane! | Flaviane! |
| lege      | Vivas!   | Vivas!   |
| Feliciter!| Floreas! | Gaudeas! |

It was perfumed with oil of sandal-wood, and decorated with carved and gilt ivory bosses at the ends of the roller. (I, pp.55-56)

Although inscribing ‘books’ with salutations such as lege feliciter (suggesting ‘read in good health’) had a long Latin history,1 what is intriguing in this

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1 About the Roman tradition of inscribing formal salutations onto or within ‘books’, see Charles W. Hedrick, History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), pp.205-06. I am employing the term ‘book’, though, in most cases, this literally means ‘scroll’. 
particular case is that the sequence of salutations seems drawn, almost verbatim, from a volume presented as a gift to Valentine, perhaps the saint:

The Valentine in question is to be identified with the dedicatee of the Calendar of 354, which is basically a traditional pagan calendar with some Christian elements added. It served as a New Year’s present (that is, for January 1, 354), and was inscribed to him with legends executed and signed by the Christian calligrapher Furius Dionysius Filocalus: VALENTINE FLOREAS IN DEO, VALENTINE VIVAS FLOREAS, VALENTINE VIVAS GAUDEAS, and VALENTINE LEGE FELICITER.¹

If Pater did draw these inscriptions from this gift to Valentine, then the gift to Flavian acquires even greater pæderastic connotations, as a love-gift from that rich man, a gift mirroring the sort of gift traditionally associated with St Valentine’s feast-day, February 14. If this decorated volume is, in some sense, a ‘Valentine’ gift, then Pater could hardly have failed to recognise its association with the celebration from which St Valentine’s Day, in part, had derived — the Roman celebration of the Lupercalia, the ‘Feast of Wolves’, held on February 15th.² The Lupercalia was perhaps the most eroticised celebration in the ancient Roman calendar, a festival widely known in the nineteenth century through Edward Gibbon’s History of the Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-88), which describes the event in chapter 36. For two millennia, the Lupercalia has been promoted and banned, decried and explained in various ways, though all sources affirm the sheer eroticism it was expected to elicit:

[The Lupercalia] is a mid-February ritual, at which youths run naked (except for sashes of goatskins) through the Palatine area in the center of the city. During their revels the boys would strike women with their goatskins to induce fertility.³

³ The Lupercalian explanation for the origins of the love-cult of St. Valentine has been resurrected by [Alfred] Kellogg and [Robert] Cox, but in a most unconvincing way. They attempt to show a continuity between the time that the Lupercalia were forbidden by Pope Gelasius I and the outbreak of Valentine poetry at the end of the fourteenth century (Kelly, p.60). About the tradition of St Valentine's Day as 'a promiscuous festival' in Renaissance Britain, see Francois Laroque, Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.105-07.
There were sacrifices on that day, of he-goats and she-goats, which the Lupercal priests skinned, in order to clothe themselves in these bloody hides, which were reputed to increase the warmth of desire and to confer abounding ardor upon the lascivious worshipers of the god Pan. Sacred Prostitution was thus the soul of the Lupercalia.\

Apparently, the Lupercalia had the ultimate aim of promoting both human and animal fertility in the agro-urban community. [...] Ovid explains the Lupercalia on the strength of an oracle [...] reputed to have said to Romans who were worried about their population numbers: ‘Let the sacred he-goat penetrate the matrons of Italy!’ In AD 494, Pope Gelasius I christianised the Lupercalia to celebrate the purification of the Virgin.\

Given the above, this scroll sent to Flavian as a lover’s gift may indeed embody a touch of dangerous, paederastic ‘underthought’, though Flavian seems unlikely to have shared the worry of Apuleius’s ‘transformed boy’ who is *all ass*: ‘I reckoned I would protect my behind from the attacks of the wolves’. From whatever source these inscriptions derive or ‘underthought’ they might suggest, Flavian nonetheless recognises that this elaborate gift is wrapt with clear intentions towards himself, from a ‘wolf’ who seems to have feasted already upon his lamb-like innocence, for Flavian ‘had certainly yielded himself, [...] in a world where manhood comes early, to [...] seductions’. This scroll, a phallus-shaped gift dripping with passionate exclamation, decoration, and perfume — not

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3. Lucius Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* (New York: Penguin, 1999), p.137. Considered in its paederastic sense, even paederastic ‘wolves’ — men exhibiting the aggressive virility expressed in and exorcised by the Lupercalia — were preferable, for both Apuleius and Lucian, to the effeminate priests of Cybele (the *galli*), who were also roaming the countryside, as David F. Greenberg explains in *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990):

   When the veneration of Cybele was first introduced to Rome during the Second Punic War, the Romans disdained her emasculated priests, and forbade citizens from undergoing initiation. But the cult spread as the orientalization of the Empire progressed. Bands of *galli* roamed the countryside dressed as women [...] In the *Metamorphoses*, also known as *The Golden Ass*, Apuleius portrays the *galli* as passive homosexuals who seek out virile young peasant lads to satisfy their cravings; Lucian paints a similar picture in *Lucius, or the Ass*. However, none of the Hellenistic sources mention ritual homosexuality. (P.98)

This more ‘ritual homosexuality’, which neither Apuleius nor Lucian criticises, is the form of institutionalised paederasty common to the Greco-Roman world, that paederasty to which the Uranians were attracted and that Flavian’s owner/patron seems to be practising and fostering, in a rather costly fashion.
to mention the seductive content of the text it contains — seems just the sort of choice, seductive gift that ‘a wealthy individual who had his own slaves, including quite likely his own special “reserve stock” of pueri delicati’,\(^1\) would bestow upon his favourite from among his collection of delicate slave-boys expected to perform erotic and other intimate services, such as the services depicted on the Warren Cup (as discussed in ‘Chapter One’). In more modern phrasing, Flavian is clearly a ‘kept boy’.

Adding further ‘underthought’ to the above is a detail from Pater’s life. The bestowal or loan of an erotic volume as a form of dangerous insinuation or initiation has a biographical referent for Pater, a biographical referent hinted at in the text. Only a few pages after describing this gift to Flavian, Pater contemplates the appeal Apuleius’s *Golden Ass* would have for the young:

> But the marvellous delight, in which is one of the really serious elements in most boys, passed at times, those young readers still feeling its fascination, into what French writers call the *macabre* [….] And the scene of the night-watching of a dead body lest the witches should come to tear off the flesh with their teeth, is worthy of Théophile Gautier. (*Marius* I, pp.60-61)

This allusion to Gautier becomes biographically suggestive when brought into proximity with the events surrounding a sunny afternoon Pater spent on a boating-party in 1875 with the paederastic Oscar Browning and his young Etonians. As a result of this excursion, Pater found himself embroiled in a complaint that he had encouraged William Graham, one of Browning’s pupils, to read Gautier’s *Mademoiselle de Maupin*:

> My dear Browning,
> 
> I was not at all amused but much pained at the letters you enclose [from those scandalised by this rumour]. You heard all I said to Graham. I think it is not possible that I mentioned the book in question. I should greatly disapprove its being lent to any boy or young man, or even allowed in his way, and it would be quite impossible for me to recommend it to anybody. I read it years ago but do not possess it. Please give an unqualified denial to the statement that I approved anything of the kind. [….] I remember that, the subject arising in the natural course of conversation, I mentioned an innocent sort of ghost story by Gautier as a very good specimen of its kind. I am sorry now that I did so, as I can only suppose that the report in question arose in this way.\(^2\)

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2 Undated (though clearly from 1875), *Letters of Pater*, p.16. ‘James FitzJames Stephen complained that a boy at Browning’s [boarding-house at Eton] had been lent a novel by Gautier with Walter Pater’s approval’ (Richard Davenport-Hines, ‘Oscar Browning’, *DNB*).
Pan and a Goat
Roman
Marble, ca. 1st century CE
(from the large peristyle of the Villa dei Papiri, Herculaneum)
Gabinetto Segreto, Museo Archeologico Nazionale Napoli, Naples, Italy

Pan Teaching Daphnis to Play
Roman (copy of a lost Greek original attributed to Heliodorus, ca. 100 BCE)
Marble, ca. 2nd century CE (from Pompeii)
Museo Archeologico Nazionale Napoli, Naples, Italy
Since Pater could hardly have forgotten that occasion a decade earlier, the comment in Marius about Gautier’s ghost stories recalls, rather pruriently, that moment when Pater stood accused of attempting to corrupt a young Etonian in ‘a direction emphatically sensuous’ with a book no less erotic than Apuleius’s.

The Golden Ass does indeed brim with eroticism, including the Greco-Roman interest in bestiality, as Mark D. Jordan relates, drawing attention to one passage in which a homoerotic orgy is blent with the bestial:

In Apuleius’s Golden Ass, one of the best-known ancient Latin novels, the priests of Cybele purchase a donkey, who happens to be our unlucky hero Lucius in animal form. There is some suggestion that they mean to enjoy his sex immediately, but their interest turns to a ‘built’ farmer whom they invite to their private banquet in a small town. Their well-plotted orgy is prevented by the braying of Lucius, who summons the locals.¹

Consider that scene as it appears in Apuleius’s novel, the metamorphosed Lucius having just been purchased by Philebus (whose name means ‘lover of youth’) to pleasure himself and his fellow priests of the Syrian goddess:

‘Look, girls, what a handsome wee slave I’ve brought for you!’ The ‘girls’ were in fact a bunch of catamites. Their joy was immediate and ecstatic […] doubtless under the impression that some slave-boy had been procured to serve them. But when they saw that an ass was there […] they turned up their noses, and taunted their master.²

They visited the baths and returned from there spick and span, bringing with them as a dinner-guest a peasant of powerful physique, especially chosen for the capacity of his loins and lower parts. Those most filthy reprobates […] were fired with unspeakable longing to perform the most despicable outrages of unnatural lust. They surrounded the young fellow on every side, stripped off his clothes, laid him on his back, and kept smothering him with their abominable kisses.

[After Lucius’s outraged braying at this sight,] several young men from a neighbouring village […] burst suddenly in […] and caught the priests red-handed, engaged in those obscenely foul practices.³

³ Ibid., p.158. The metamorphosed protagonist of Pseudo-Lucian’s The Ass is also bought by Philebus to pleasure ‘a crowd of perverts, Philebus’s coworkers’, who are also less pleased by the prospect than Philebus had anticipated, wishing ‘that what he had purchased was a real man’, like the youth they would subsequently abduct: ‘One time we dropped in on a village in the region, and they hunted down a hefty young man, one of the villagers, hauling him off to the place were they happened to be staying. Then they
It is noteworthy that, although Apuleius’s tale chides these priests of Cybele for the hypocrisy of their professed vows of chastity and for assuming the passive role in adult homoerotic activities, it does not chide the ‘young fellow’ who is ‘abducted’ to penetrate them. In typical Greco-Roman fashion, Apuleius holds a distinction between ‘the homoerotic’ (especially in relation to adult passivity) and ‘the paederastic’, with the latter treated as just as normal or common as heterosexual activity — that is, unless one’s sexual partner is an ass, though the bestiality motif is treated with humour rather than disgust, recalling the more elevated forms of it practised by the likes of Zeus with Leda, Europa, and Ganymede. The normalcy and commonality afforded ‘the paederastic’ is displayed in the following, a passage in which a rural boy who despises the transformed Lucius accuses him, in front of their master, of fictive crimes:

‘To crown all his other villainies, [this ass] now causes further trouble by exposing me to fresh dangers. Whenever he spies a traveler — it could be an elegant lady, a grown-up girl, or an innocent young boy — he hastily shrugs off his load, sometimes throwing off his saddle as well, and makes a wild dash towards them; ass though he is, he aspires to be a lover of humans. He knocks them to the ground, eyes them fondly, and seeks to indulge his bestial urges with love-making at which Venus frowns. He even makes pretence of kissing [...] just now, for example, he caught sight of a splendid young woman. [...] He made a mad dive at her. Jolly gallant that he is, he had her down on the filthy ground, for all the world as if he were going to mount her there and then before everyone’s eyes. If her weeping and wailing hadn’t roused some travelers to rush to her defence, to snatch her from between his hooves and free her, the poor woman would have been trampled on and torn apart.’

Given that it abounds with such a spectrum of eroticism, The Golden Ass seems just the sort of choice, seductive gift a paederastic ‘inspirer’ would send as an insinuation in ‘a direction emphatically sensuous’. Further, not only had passively underwent from the villager all the usual things so much enjoyed by such evil perverts — Pseudo-Lucian, The Ass, in Collected Ancient Greek Novels, trans. and ed. by B. P. Reardon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp.589-618 (pp.608-09).

1 Apuleius, Golden Ass, p.133. In Pseudo-Lucian’s earlier version of the tale, the mule driver, ‘an unholy little urchin’, makes the same accusation:

‘This ass, master, I don’t know why we feed him, as he’s terribly lazy and slow. What’s more, he’s now taken up another bad habit. Whenever he sees a beautiful young woman or girl or boy, he kicks up his hooves and makes off after them at a run, like a real man in love, making advances to his beloved […] and he bites them under the appearance of a kiss and struggles to get near them […] Just now, while carrying wood, he saw a woman going off into a field. He shook off and scattered all the wood on the ground, and he knocked the woman down on the road and wanted to make her his, until different people ran up from different directions and defended the woman from being ripped apart by this fine lover here’ — Pseudo-Lucian, The Ass, pp.605-07.
Apuleius’s salacious, bestial romp found its way into the hands of Flavian (and subsequently Marius), but the gift-giver — ‘the rich man, interested in the promise of the fair child born on his estate’ — had encased it with delicate intricacy and emblazoned it thrice with Flavian’s exclamatory name. This was an elaborate gift wrapt with clear intentions towards Flavian, a youth who ‘had certainly yielded himself, […] in a world where manhood comes early, to […] seductions’. A rather-Uranian use of textual insinuation as sensual initiation is at play here, anticipating Dorian’s comment to Lord Henry about the gift of the ‘golden book’: ‘You poisoned me with a book once’ (Dorian 1890, p.97).

![Drinking cup (kylix) depicting scenes from a symposium](https://example.com

Greek (attributed to the Foundry Painter)

Red-Figure terracotta, Late Archaic or Early Classical Period (ca. 480 BCE)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

In a narratorial aside, Pater broadens the scope of this particular textual stimulation — this awakening in ‘a direction emphatically sensuous’ — by raising to a universal level this interaction between Marius, Flavian, and Apuleius’s book: ‘If our modern education, in its better efforts, really conveys to any of us that kind of idealising power, it does so […] oftenest by truant reading; and thus it happened also, long ago, with Marius and his friend’ (I, p.54). In other words, there are many ‘golden books’; and, according to two very different figures, Pater had supplied several of his own. Wilde asserted, ‘I never travel anywhere without [The Renaissance] […] it is the very flower of decadence’; Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902), the founder of Rhodesia and of the Rhodes Scholarship, that ‘he traversed the South African veldt in the company of both Marcus Aurelius and Marius the Epicurean’. As with the folded-over volume of John Keats’s poetry found in the pocket of the drowned Percy Bysshe Shelley, one measures a volume’s ‘weight in gold’ by its being carried about.

1 As quoted in Ellmann, p.301.
2 Dowling, Hellenism, p.72.
While these truants are exploring the tales of Apuleius and each other, Marius begins to consider Flavian the embodiment of his own ‘Cyrenaic philosophy, presented thus for the first time, in an image or person, with much beauty and attractiveness’ (Marius 1885, I, p.230), the embodiment of a philosophy that fuels ‘his own Cyrenaic eagerness, just then, to taste and see and touch’ (I, p.201). To see and touch (and, blushingly, taste) what? — if not Flavian’s ‘beauty and attractiveness’. This is a lingering question made all the more salacious by the playful syntax of the former quotation in its entirety:

[Marius’s] Cyrenaic philosophy, presented thus for the first time, in an image or person, with much beauty and attractiveness, and touched also, in this way, with a pathetic sense of personal sorrow — a concrete image, the abstract equivalent of which he discovered afterwards, when that agitating personal influence had settled down for him, clearly enough, into a theory of practice.

(Marius 1885, I, pp.230-31, emphasis added)

This mélange of ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ — the ‘touched also, in this way’ — develops into a paederastic, pedagogical intimacy, an intimacy partly facilitated by Apuleius’s erotic text, a text that ‘awakened’ its reader in ‘a direction emphatically sensuous’, such that the young Cyrenaic Marius is overwhelmed by an ‘eagerness […] to taste and see and touch’ both Flavian’s body and the ‘aesthetic life’ he has come to embody, a feverish eagerness that Marius had caught from the lips of Flavian, in much the same way that the older boy had caught the refrain of his subsequent poem and the plague of his subsequent death: '[Flavian] had caught his “refrain”, from the lips of the young men, singing because they could not help it, in the streets of Pisa’ (I, p.104).

Alas, overcome by a fever seemingly caught ‘from the lips of the young men […] in the streets of Pisa’, Flavian ‘lay at the open window of his lodging, with a fiery pang in the brain, fancying no covering thin or light enough to be applied to his body’ (I, p.112), an advantageous situation indeed, for Pater is at liberty, given Flavian’s feverish state, to situate this nude, dying youth at a voyeuristic vantage point. While lying naked at the open window, attended only by Marius (everyone else fearing contamination from the plague), Flavian would,

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1 In a few cases, I have preferred and given preference to the phrasing of the 1st edition: in these instances, the citation reads ‘Marius 1885’.

2 The Cyrenaic school of philosophy, which flourished in the city of Cyrene from about 400 to 300 BCE, was notable for its tenets of hierarchical Hedonism derived from Socrates and Protagoras. Late Cyrenaicism and Epicureanism are only distinguishable from each other in details, not fundamental principles, though, for Marius and for Pater, the distinct details that Epicurus held and advocated — that a proper knowledge of death makes one enjoy life the more, that wise men avoid taking part in public affairs, that one should not marry and beget children — were important. Donoghue glosses Pater’s Cyrenaicism as ‘the assertion that the best way to live is to crowd as many pulsations as possible into one’s inevitably brief life, and that the best way to do this is by cultivating art for art’s sake’ (p.57).
‘at intervals, return to labour at his verses, with a great eagerness to complete and transcribe the work’, a work that is ‘in fact a kind of nuptial hymn’ (I, p.113), an epithalamion lightened by passages like the following: ‘Amor has put his weapons by and will keep holiday. He was bidden go without apparel, that none might be wounded by his bow and arrows. But take care! In truth he is none the less armed than usual, though he be all unclad’ (I, p.113).

This is a curious passage indeed, for Flavian’s Cupid — unclad like himself, stripped of all weaponry except for his phallus, a phallus fully capable of spoiling and despoiling — is merely a refashioning of Apuleius’s amorous Cupid. Although Apuleius suggests that, while sleeping naked like Flavian, Cupid resembles little ‘that winged, bold boy, of evil ways, who wanders armed by night through men’s houses, spoiling their marriages’, Cupid’s ‘inborn wantonness’ (I, p.63) nonetheless ever accompanies his potent beauty, even in repose, a beauty that Pater textually caresses by describing the shoulders of this ‘winged god’, then the way his damp plumage moves across those shoulders, then how ‘smooth he was’:

Love himself, reclined there, in his own proper loveliness! […] [with] the locks of that golden head, pleasant with the unction of the gods, shed down in graceful entanglement behind and before, about the ruddy cheeks and white throat. The pinions of the winged god, yet fresh with the dew, are spotless upon his shoulders, the delicate plumage wavering over them as they lie at rest. Smooth he was. (I, pp.74-75)

In all of his resplendent tactility, this ‘petulant, boyish Cupid of Apuleius’ serves ‘to combine many lines of meditation, already familiar to Marius, into the ideal of a perfect imaginative love, centred upon a type of beauty entirely flawless and clean — an ideal which never wholly faded from his thoughts’ (I, p.92). That Marius should choose to unify symbolically Flavian — his ‘epitome of the whole pagan world’ and ‘his own Cyrenaic philosophy […] in an image or person’ (I, pp.53; 234) — and the Cupid of Apuleius is not surprising, especially since Flavian’s appearance ‘was like a carved figure in motion […] but with that indescribable gleam upon it which the words of Homer actually suggested, as perceptible on the visible forms of the gods’ (I, p.50).

1 For an anecdote about Solomon (who may have served as the model for Pater’s Flavian) appearing as Cupid at a costume party, see James M. Saslow, Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts (New York: Viking, 1999), pp.179-81. I wish to thank Dr Saslow, Professor of Renaissance Art and Theater at The City University of New York, for corresponding with me by E-mail about this point.
**Cupid Interceding with Zeus for Psyche**  
Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino) (1483-1520)  
Fresco, 1518-19  
Villa Farnesina alla Lungara, Rome, Italy

**Bow-Carving Cupid**  
Parmigianino (Francesco Mazzola) (1503-40)  
Oil on wood, ca. 1533-34  
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria
However, although resembling a god, Flavian is not one, and consequently reposes, in all of his naked, dying splendour, ‘with a sharply contracted hand in the hand of Marius, to his almost surprised joy, winning him now to an absolutely self-forgetful devotion’ (I, p.118), a devotion consummated through a rather-nuptial embrace, as Flavian, barely conscious, is held by Marius amid the scattered fragments of his own epithalamion, the *Pervigilium Veneris*¹: ‘In the darkness Marius lay down beside him, faintly shivering now in the sudden cold, to lend him his own warmth, undeterred by the fear of contagion which had kept other people from passing near the house’ (I, p.119).

Even after Flavian’s death, Marius clings, in memory, to Flavian’s body, the body of a ‘friend’ whom he now clearly recognises as his ‘belovèd’:

> It was to the sentiment of the body, and the affections it defined — the flesh, of whose force and colour that wandering Platonic soul was but so frail a residue or abstract — he must cling. The various pathetic traits of the beloved, suffering, perished body of Flavian, so deeply pondered, had made him a materialist, but with something of the temper of a devotee. (I, p.125)

This description seems a Paterian embellishment on Henry Wallis’s painting *The Death of Chatterton* (for which Pater’s acquaintance George Meredith [1828-1909] had served as the model), though Pater provides his own Roman Thomas Chatterton with a *Divo Amico* to soothe his passing, to hold his chilling hand, recalling one of the last poems composed by John Keats, Chatterton’s staunchest devotee and defender:

> This living hand, now warm and capable
> Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold
> And in the icy silence of the tomb,
> So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights
> That thou would wish thine own heart dry of blood
> So in my veins red life might stream again,
> And thou be conscience-calm’d — see here it is
> I hold it towards you — ²

¹ Probably written in the second or third century CE, the anonymous *Pervigilium Veneris* (*Vigil of Venus*) celebrates the annual rejuvenation of Nature through the goddess. Of Pater’s attribution of this poem to Flavian, a poem that Pater has here translated, Donoghue suggests that it is ‘a freedom Pater takes because no other poet is known to have written it’ (p.193). ‘The question regarding the author of the Pervigilium Veneris is still a *lis sub judice*. Aldus, Erasmus, and Meursius, attributed it to Catullus; but subsequent editors have, with much more probability, contended that its age is considerably later’— [Anonymous], ‘The Vigil of Venus: Translated from the Latin’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 53.332 (June 1843), pp.715-17 (p.716). About ‘the blatant sexuality of the *Pervigilium Veneris*’, see Thomas M. Woodman, *Politeness and Poetry in the Age of Pope* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1989), p.61.

Solemn years pass before Marius develops another ‘friendship’, this time with a young Praetorian guard named Cornelius, ‘a very honourable-looking youth, in the rich habit of a military knight’, whose voice is so entrancing that Marius, rather romantically, ‘seemed to hear that voice again in his dreams, uttering his name’ (I, p.167). As they depart together for Rome, these two travellers, who have only just met, begin a conversation that left [them] with sufficient interest in each other to insure an easy companionship for the remainder of their journey. In time to come, Marius was to depend very much on the preferences, the personal judgments, of the comrade who now laid his hand so brotherly on his shoulder. (I, p.168, emphasis added)

These ‘preferences’ (a word that, even for the Victorians, often possessed homoerotic and paederastic connotations) determined the intention behind this new hand laid ‘brotherly’ upon Marius’s shoulder, the hand of an Imperial guard who ‘seemed to carry about with him, in that privileged world of comely usage to which he belonged, the atmosphere of some still more jealously exclusive circle’ (I, p.169). Unlike Flavian, who had surrounded himself with flamboyance, who had garnered the admiring gazes of his fellows, and who had expired as an exhibitionist at a casement, in the nude, Cornelius surrounds himself with an atmosphere both discreet and graceful, an atmosphere about which he manoeuvres with the ease of an initiate — undoubtedly a physical initiate — for ‘the discretion of Cornelius, his energetic clearness and purity, were a charm, rather physical than moral […] with its exigency, its warnings, its restraints’ (I,

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*Wilde, ed. by Peter Raby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.69-79, John Stokes writes: ‘[Wilde] never makes explicit references to his sexuality, but he does return to topics that have a long homoerotic history: Keats and Chatterton, [etc.]’* (p.77).
Cornelius’s ‘discretion’ displays itself as a physical ‘charm’, a charm that protectively (over)shadows his intimacy with Marius, like ‘the atmosphere of some still more jealously exclusive circle’, a circle perhaps analogous to the modern Western concept of ‘homosexual code’ (to borrow phrasing employed by Linda Dowling), a ‘code’ that often gains discretion through ambiguity, an ambiguity about which Pater was himself well versed.¹

Not surprisingly, one of the novel’s most flagrantly ambiguous passages follows a criticism of the Imperator Caesar Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE), who was self-fashioned as a Platonic philosopher-king, for despising the ‘charm’ of the human body (the emphasis is added):

And here again, in opposition to an inhumanity like this, presenting itself to [Marius] as nothing less than a kind of sin against nature, the person of Cornelius sanctioned or justified the delight Marius had always had in the body; at first, as but one of the consequences of his material or sensualistic philosophy. To Cornelius, the body of man was unmistakably, as a later seer terms it, the one temple in the world (‘we touch Heaven when we lay our hand upon a human body’), and the proper object of a sort of worship, or sacred service, in which the very finest gold might have its seemliness and due symbolic use.

(1885, II, pp.59-60)

A standard reading of the above would suggest that ‘this’ and ‘itself’ both refer to ‘the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius’ (a philosophy expressed in his Meditations), with the first sentence translatable into the following:

In opposition to an inhumanity like that presented by the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, a philosophy that Marius believed to be nothing less than a kind of ‘sin against nature’ because it despised the body, the person of Cornelius sanctioned or justified the delight Marius had always had in the body.

Since the antecedent of ‘itself’ is syntactically ambiguous, another reading is possible, an erotic reading in which the antecedent is not the ‘philosophy of Marcus Aurelius’ or ‘this’, but instead ‘the person of Cornelius’:

In opposition to an inhumanity like that presented by the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, a philosophy that despises the body, the person of Cornelius, ‘presenting’ itself to Marius as nothing less than a kind of ‘sin against nature’, sanctioned or justified the delight Marius had always had in the body.

¹ Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), not one of Pater’s intimates, registered the following impression after meeting Pater in 1886: ‘[Pater’s] manner is that of one carrying weighty ideas without spilling them’ — as quoted in Paul D. L. Turner, The Life of Thomas Hardy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p.101. Donoghue asserts that this discretionary ‘manner’ may have involved a conscious split into a private self and a constructed, public self: ‘In the middle world one may choose to live by nearly any values, so long as one doesn’t overtly challenge the dominant forces in law and government. Or one can divide one’s life into two parts, public and private, and live differently in each’ (p.317).
This second alternative — which describes the physical interaction between Marius and Cornelius as a ‘sin against nature’, a traditional euphemism for homoeroticism and paederasty oft employed in the Old Bailey Proceedings — allows Pater to establish an opposition between the Stoic asceticism of Marcus Aurelius and the Epicurean eroticism of Marius with Cornelius. This subversive reading is facilitated and substantiated by Cornelius’s rather prurient insistence that ‘the body of man was […] the one temple in the world’ and that ‘we touch Heaven when we lay our hands upon a human body’.

Cornelius, ‘the comrade who now laid his hand so brotherly on [Marius’s] shoulder’, inaugurated an intimacy that is not fully appreciated by Marius until their stay together at White-nights, Marius’s childhood home: ‘It was just then that Marius felt, as he had never done before, the value to himself, the overpowering charm, of his friendship. “More than brother!” — he felt — “like a son also!” contrasting the fatigue of soul which made himself in effect an
older man, with the irrepressible youth of his companion’ (II, p.209). Amidst the tranquillity of their stay at White-nights and their leisurely journey back to Rome, Marius begins to appreciate the paederastic overtones inherent in his relationship with the ‘irrepressibly young’ Cornelius — for, in this relationship, Marius is cast in the role of ‘inspirer’ rather than ‘hearer’. These overtones are accentuated as they wander

hither and thither, leisurely, among the country-places thereabout, [...] [coming] one evening to a little town [...] which had even then its church and legend — the legend and holy relics of the martyr Hyacinthus, a young Roman soldier, whose blood had stained the soil of this place in the reign of the emperor Trajan. (II, p.210)

Pater’s choice of the name ‘Hyacinthus’ for this martyr — especially since he was a Roman soldier as young and as Christian as Cornelius — serves as a Classical allusion to the paederastic beloved of Apollo, a boy killed by the machinations of Zephyr, a lesser deity angered that the boy’s ardour rested with another. Similarly, a jealous and self-deified Trajan martyred the young Roman Hyacinthus because of his love for Christ, a devotion that Trajan could also not accept gracefully. Seemingly a composite of several martyrdoms of St Hyacinths during the reign of Trajan (one of those, of a Chamberlain to the Emperor), this martyrdom, as a fictional detail supplied by Pater, suggests that an analogy is

1 This reference to ‘more than brother’ derives from the intimacy between David and his ‘friend’ Jonathan, as expressed in 2 Samuel 1.26: ‘My brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women’ (KJV). To illustrate that, in the nineteenth century, this phrase would have been interpreted within the context of that ‘friendship’, consider the opening line of Richard Parkinson’s poem ‘Jonathan’s Farewell to David’: ‘Farewell! Farewell! the word has pass’d, oh! more than brother dear!’ — Poems, Sacred and Miscellaneous (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1832), p.36. In The Sexual Perspective, Cooper writes: ‘The strong relationship between David and Jonathan continues to provide a means of suggesting the sensitivities of the homosexual presence’ (p.xvii). In ‘The Ladder of Love’, in Plato’s Symposium, trans. by Seth Benardete, with commentaries by Allan Bloom and Seth Benardete (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp.55-178, Allan Bloom writes: The relationship between David and Jonathan is the only example in the Hebrew Bible of what one would call an admirable friendship. It is a source of outrage to Jonathan’s father, Saul, that his son prefers his friend to his father, which he indeed does. For Saul, the primacy of the family relations is so great that the threat to them posed by this friendship can only appear a perversion and a crime. In ancient Hebrew, there is no distinct word for one’s friend; it is the same as that for one’s neighbor or fellow. (Pp.62-63)

2 For the various St Hyacinths of the 2nd century CE, see The Benedictine Monks of St Augustine’s Abbey, Ramsgate, Book of the Saints: A Dictionary of Servants of God Canonised by the Catholic Church: Extracted from the Roman & Other Martyrologies (London: A. & C. Black, 1921), p.139.
being drawn between Marius’s relationship to Cornelius and Apollo’s paederastic relationship to Hyacinth. Unlike Marius’s earlier relationship with Flavian — an interaction with Cyrenaic philosophy and its ‘eagerness […] to taste and see and touch’ (I, p.201) — Marius’s relationship with Cornelius is an encapsulation of the perfect and eternal love of ‘comrades’ expressed by the likes of Apollo and Hyacinth, the core love of Pater’s Weltanschauung, a love that he elucidates in *Plato and Platonism*:

Brothers, comrades, who could not live without each other, they were the most fitting patrons of a place in which friendship, comradeship, like theirs, came to so much. Lovers of youth they remained, those enstared types of it, arrested thus at that moment of miraculous good fortune as a consecration of the clean, youthful friendship, ‘passing even the love of woman’ […] A part of their duty and discipline, it was also their great solace and encouragement. The beloved and the lover [were] side by side through their long days of eager labour, and above all on the battlefield. (P.231)

Beyond such mortal ‘friendship’ and ‘comradeship’ — ‘the beloved and the lover side by side’, which between Marius and Flavian elaborated into a kind of touch, between Marius and Cornelius into a kind of art — Marius also interacts, in much the same way, with aesthetic and philosophical masterpieces, an interaction that elaborates into a kind of ‘abstract friendship’, a kind of ‘mystic companionship’: ‘With this mystic companion he had gone a step onward out of the merely objective pagan existence. Here was already a master in that craft of self-direction, which was about to play so large a part in the forming of human mind, under the sanction of the Christian church’ (*Marius*, II, pp.50-51).¹ Although ‘yearning […] for audible or visible companionship’ (1885, II, p.95), Marius finds, besides his relationship with Cornelius, a novel companionship both inaudible and invisible, arising not from intimacy with highly impassioned ‘friends’ like Flavian or beloved ‘comrades’ like Cornelius, but from aesthetic and philosophical masterpieces, masterpieces that allow for an intimate familiarity with eminent minds, whether living or dead:

On this day truly no mysterious light, no irresistibly leading hand from afar reached him; only the peculiarly tranquil influence of its first hour increased steadily upon him. […] Companionship, indeed, familiarity with others, gifted in this way or that, or at least pleasant to him, had been […] the chief delight of the journey. And was it only the resultant general sense of such familiarity, diffused through his memory, that in a while suggested the question whether

¹ What must be kept in mind is that Marius’s preferred proximity to early Christianity arises *only* because he finds no other alternative from which to choose: ‘To understand the influence upon him of what follows the reader must remember that it was an experience which came amid a deep sense of vacuity in life. The fairest products of the earth seemed to be dropping to pieces, as if in men’s very hands, around him. How real was their sorrow, and his!’ (II, pp.128-29).
there had not been — besides Flavian, besides Cornelius even, and amid the solitude which in spite of ardent friendship he had perhaps loved best of all things — some other companion, an unfailing companion, ever at his side throughout; doubling his pleasure in the roses by the way, patient of his peevishness or depression, sympathetic above all with his grateful recognition [...] of the fact that he was there at all? (II, pp.65-67)

As this ‘familiarity’ intensifies, Marius no longer questions the tentative existence of this ‘abstract friend’, this familiar spirit, for ‘that divine companion figured no longer as but an occasional wayfarer beside him; but rather as the unfailing “assistant”, without whose inspiration and concurrence he could not breathe or see, instrumenting his bodily senses, rounding, supporting his imperfect thoughts’ (II, p.70). Further, ‘the resultant sense of companionship, of a person beside him, evoked the faculty of conscience’ (II, p.71), a conscience that Marius recognises as also present in the early acolytes of Christianity: ‘Surely, in this strange new society he had touched upon for the first time to-day — in this strange family, like “a garden enclosed” — was the fulfilment of all the preferences, the judgments, of that half-understood friend, which of late years had been his protection so often amid the perplexities of life’ (II, p.107).

The vagueness of Pater’s phrasing — ‘that half-understood friend’ — allows this description to fit equally his ‘friend’ Cornelius and his ‘abstract friend’. Marius’s ‘sense also of a living person at his side’ (II, p.218) — a sense that his ‘abstract friend’ provides — serves to tranquillise and to inspire him, to augment his sensations and to solidify his thoughts, such that even his feverish flailings on his deathbed are transformed into a sensual massage, as he is prepared by a group of Christians for his nuptial consummation with Death, figured as Christ (an image that would have held great appeal for Digby Dolben):

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1 This interest in certain aspects of early Christianity has a biographical referent for Pater: ‘Knowing that the peace of heart he once knew was ultimately a religious state, Pater began in 1878 attending the very Catholic liturgical services at St. Alban’s, Holborn, and St. Austin’s in the New Kent Road. These highly ritualistic services, reviving the spirit of early Christianity, began to bring some rest to his disquietude and also rendered special satisfactions to his aesthetic nature’ (Downes, Portraits, pp.59-60). Hilliard explains the added incentive behind Pater’s visits, at least to one of those churches: ‘Among those who regularly visited St. Austin’s and enjoyed its colourful ritual (without believing yet in Christianity) was Walter Pater, aesthete and historian of the Renaissance. His intimate friend was Richard Charles Jackson (Brother à Becket), a lay brother and so-called professor of Church History at the priory. At Pater’s request Jackson wrote a poem for his birthday:

Your darling soul I say is enflamed with love for me;
Your very eyes do move I cry with sympathy:
Your darling feet and hands are blessings ruled by love,
As forth was sent from out the Ark a turtle dove! (P.193)
The people around his bed were praying fervently — Abi! Abi! Anima Christiana! [Depart! Depart! Christian soul!] In the moments of his extreme helplessness their mystic bread had been placed, had descended like a snowflake from the sky, between his lips. Gentle fingers had applied to hands and feet, to all those old passage-ways of the senses, through which the world had come and gone for him, now so dim and obstructed, a medicinal oil. It was the same people who, in the gray, austere evening of that day, took up his remains, and buried them secretly, with their accustomed prayers; but with joy also, holding his death, according to their generous view in this matter, to have been of the nature of a martyrdom; and martyrdom, as the church had always said, a kind of sacrament with plenary grace. (II, p.224)

Contrary to his previous fears that ‘from the drops of his blood there would spring no miraculous, poetic flowers’ (II, p.214), Marius’s ‘martyrdom’ springs forth as beautifully as did the flower commemorating Apollo’s beloved Hyacinth, for his ‘martyrdom’ results from actualising the Paterian ideal of ‘dexterously seizing’ the profound moment, from a willingness to sacrifice himself by taking the place of his beloved Cornelius, who was then under arrest, suspected of being a criminal, a Christian: ‘He had delivered his brother, after the manner he had sometimes vaguely anticipated as a kind of distinction in his destiny’ (II, p.213). By chronicling this imaginary ‘martyrdom for friendship’s sake’, and by casting it as the principal ennobling act of a life well lived, Pater has indeed voiced ‘an eloquent utterance’, an utterance validating homoerotic and paederastic passions as a heightened form of ‘friendship’ and ‘comradeship’, whether experienced in art or in life, an utterance validating a ‘cultural continuum’, particularly when that continuum is endowed with ‘classical motive’: ‘Had there been one to listen just then, there would have come, from the very depth of his desolation, an eloquent utterance at last, on the irony of men’s fates, on the singular accidents of life and death’ (II, pp.214-15).

Against the ‘eloquent utterance’ that ends Pater’s novel, Higgins’s claim that ‘like many Victorians […] the one aspect of his “being” that [Pater] would and could not explore was his sexual identity, specifically his homoerotic sensibility’, seems untenable. When Pater suggests that ‘of other people we cannot truly know even the feelings’, each having ‘a personality really unique’ (Marius I, p.138), he means only, contrary to Higgins’s claim, that absolute empathy is elusive. Nevertheless, aesthetic creation does allow a powerful intellect to ‘project in an external form that which is most inward in passion or sentiment’ (‘Winckelmann’, Renaissance 1893, p.168). It does allow others to perceive the world from his perspective: ‘Then, if we suppose [someone to be] an artist, he says to the reader, — I want you to see precisely what I see’ (‘Style’, Appreciations, p.28). In the creation of literature, this capacity for inspiring others with one’s ‘own strength and noble taste in things’ (Platonism, p.232) allows for the expression of the ‘most inward in passion or sentiment’, which is

1 Higgins, ‘Piecemeal’, p.177.
especially attractive for a homoerotic or paederastic writer whose ‘being’ is particularly ‘inward’, as was the case with both Pater and Hopkins.

Recognising that methods of concealment, as well as revelation, are inherent to literary expression, such individuals acquire scrupulosity in regard to words and their phrasing, something Marius praises in Flavian:

For words, after all, words manipulated with all his delicate force, were to be the apparatus of a war for himself. To be forcibly impressed, in the first place; and in the next, to find the means of making visible to others that which was vividly apparent, delightful, of lively interest to himself, to the exclusion of all that was but middling, tame, or only half-true even to him — this scrupulousness of literary art actually awoke in Flavian, for the first time, a sort of chivalrous conscience. (I, p.96, emphasis added)

Far more than an idyllic notion, this ‘chivalrous conscience’ becomes, for Flavian,

a principle, the forcible apprehension of which made him jealous and fastidious in the selection of his intellectual food; often listless while others read or gazed diligently; never pretending to be moved out of mere complaisance to other people’s emotions: it served to foster in him a very scrupulous literary sincerity with himself. (I, p.103)

Because of his ‘scrupulous literary sincerity’, Flavian only finds palatable those qualities essential for greatness in literary masterpieces, qualities that Pater enumerates: ‘It is on the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it’ (‘Style’, Appreciations, p.36). This greatness allows a master of letters to display ‘the unique word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, essay, or song, absolutely proper to the single mental presentation or vision within’ (p.27) — in other words, an ‘absolutely sincere apprehension of what is most real to him’ (p.34). By continual, scrupulous interaction with such literary masterpieces, a reader such as Flavian, with a copy of Apuleius in hand, encounters the interior lives of others: ‘Not less surely does it reach a genuine pathos; for the habit of noting and distinguishing one’s own most intimate passages of sentiment makes one sympathetic, begetting, as it must, the power of entering, by all sorts of finer ways, into the intimate recesses of other minds’ (‘Postscript’, Appreciations, p.266).

Since it promised the power of ‘entering […] into the intimate recesses of other minds’, Pater’s subjective approach to art became particularly attractive, by the 1880s — the decade that saw the emergence of the Uranian movement proper, according to Timothy d’Arch Smith — to ‘a new generation of literary men [who] began accepting homosexual sentiment as “part of the whole range of feeling which waited to be explored”, some claim[ing] that homosexuality was
often linked to the “artistic temperament”.

This ‘small band of elite “Oxonian” souls’ embraced Pater’s Decadent vision, a vision proclaiming that ‘all art has a sensuous element, colour, form, sound’ (‘Winckelmann’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.167), a sensuous element that Pater made a habit of teasing from masterpieces of canonical culture, casting over the Victorian appreciation of literature and art a homoerotic and paederastic tint that is most noticeable in his treatment of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), about whom he writes: ‘Though [Leonardo] handles sacred subjects continually, he is the most profane of painters’ (*Renaissance* 1893, pp.93-94).

Because this ‘sensuous element’ must be teased out of masterpieces by the likes of Leonardo, it requires certain uncommon skills in reading; hence, as Dellamora observes, ‘Walter Pater promoted within the emergent academic field of literary criticism an oppositional mode of reading motivated by an affirmation of sexual and emotional ties between men’. The result was that a new generation of literary men, under Pater’s influence, began to employ their ‘artistic temperaments’ to craft profane, cloistral atmospheres conducive for the display of their own ‘erotic sentiments’, atmospheres hidden by Hopkinsian ‘underthought’. Yet these ‘elite Oxonian’ displays were only one aspect of the Uranian renaissance surfacing in Victorian society, which explains why Pater extends this sensuous vision far beyond his Oxonian contemporaries, suggesting that ‘not only scholars, but all disinterested lovers of books, will always look to [literature], as to all other fine art, for a refuge, a sort of cloistral refuge, from a certain vulgarity in the actual world’ (‘Style’, *Appreciations*, p.14). As far as its paederastic implications, Pater is ever conscious that his and his contemporaries’ works are part of a ‘cultural continuum’, a ‘classical motive’ that flows — despite the obstacles of ‘a certain vulgarity in the actual world’ (as for Gosse, a reference to the Victorian populace) and the claims of modern scholars (such as Foucault) — from the shores of the Tiber to the shores of the Thames, from the Greco-Romans to those of today, as Rictor Norton asserts:

> Homosexuality is a broad stream which continues to run despite being dammed up and channelled off by social control. The evidence of history points to repression rather than construction as the shaping force of queer identity and

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The opportunities for expressing queer desire have been increasingly restricted in modern times, but the desire remains the same.\(^1\)

Although Pater equally asserted that homoerotic and paederastic desires had flowed from the Greco-Roman period to his own, he recognised that, more often than not, they had done so underground. Such an existence, analogous to Cecilia’s hidden church, was required in order to thwart hostile ‘social control’. Hence, Pater believed that only within a ‘clostral refuge’ could such desires be given their fullest expression, the only lingering problem being the construction and maintenance of such a ‘refuge’, a problem Pater addresses biographically through Leonardo and fictively through Marius.\(^2\)

Because Pater’s Marius ‘remained, and must always be, of the poetic temper’ (*Marius*, I, p.153), he needed such a ‘clostral refuge’ from the vulgarity


\(^2\) While considering the proverbial ‘homosexual closet’ in *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), William N. Eskridge quotes John Horne Burns (1916-53), the author of *Lucifer with a Book* (1949), a novel in which a coterie of young homosexuals plays a crucial role:

The closet then became a metaphor for ‘the absolute necessity for secrecy from the majority (which, immediately, included your family and the police, but also all other heterosexuals) regarding the truth of your sexuality’. At the same time the closet was a secret haven, it was one that an increasing number of homosexuals wanted to escape. Burns in the 1950s described his publication of *Lucifer* as his way to ‘come out of the cloister’. (P.58)

In *The Social and Political Thought of Bertrand Russell: The Development of an Aristocratic Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Philip Ironside considers the impact that such a ‘cloister’ had on Bertrand Arthur William Russell (3rd Earl Russell; 1872-1970), the British philosopher, mathematician, and Nobel Laureate in Literature:

In [Bertrand] Russell’s case, a conventional post-Wildean view of homosexuality was reinforced by a reluctance or inability to establish any degree of intimacy with members of his own sex. […] The concealment of his feelings became habitual, […] and after 1901 it again became something of a refuge: ‘For my part’, he wrote in 1902, ‘I am constructing a mental cloister, in which my inner soul is to dwell in peace, while an outer simulacrum goes forth to meet the world. In this inner sanctuary I sit and think spectral thoughts’. […] Russell’s experiment with the ‘double’ does illustrate that the *fin de siècle* taste for masks was as prevalent as was the imitation of Pater’s prose. (P.48)

This ‘closet’ became all the more necessary after Wilde’s trials, as Lisa A. Golmizt notes: ‘The conviction of Wilde in 1895 forced Aestheticism’s promoters, of all sexual persuasions, back into the closet. […] In 1895, public leniency for the Aesthetic project disappeared. The public art forum that Wilde had created in the 1880s was gone’— ‘The Artist’s Studio’, in *Reading Wilde: Querying Spaces*, ed. by Marvin H. Taylor and Carolyn Dever (New York: NYU Press, 1995), pp.43-52 (pp.43-44).
of the outside world, a world unappreciative of ‘revelation, vision, the discovering of a vision, the seeing of a perfect humanity, in a perfect world’ (II, p.218). Although ‘his own temper, his early theoretic scheme of things, would have pushed him on to movement and adventure’, Marius’s life actually pushed him inwards, a ‘movement of observation only, or even of pure meditation’ (II, pp.208-09), a movement described in Pater’s Renaissance as ‘observation […dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind’ (‘Conclusion’, 1893, p.187), a meditative chamber suitable for intimate interaction with the highest forms of culture, forms that Pater describes as ‘the brightest enthusiastms the world has to show’ (‘Winckelmann’, Renaissance 1893, p.183), enthusiastms that allow the intellect ‘to feel itself alive’ (p.183).

Since he had lived his childhood in a ‘coy, retired place’ where nothing happened ‘without its full accompaniment of thought or reverie’ (I, p.13), for Marius ‘the whole of life seemed full of sacred presences’ (p.17). His familiarity with these ‘presences’ became as much a ‘manner of life’ (p.148) as it would for the young Leonardo, about whom Pater observes: ‘He learned [at Florence] the art of going deep, of tracking the sources of expression to their subtlest retreats, the power of an intimate presence in the things he handled’ (Renaissance 1893, p.81). Dwelling within the ‘subtlest retreats’ — as Leonardo would later, in the Renaissance — Marius’s ‘manner of life’ allowed him to ‘become aware of the possibility of a large dissidence between an inward and somewhat exclusive world of vivid personal apprehension, and the unimproved, unheightened reality of the life of those about him’ (I, p.133), a world that considered his Cyrenaic idealism as nothing more than an elevated, pompous form of Hedonism. The Roman world was unable to recognise that the ‘criterion of values’ for Marius’s Cyrenaic philosophy was ‘not pleasure, but fulness of life, and “insight”’ (I, pp.152; 151), in much the same way that the Victorian world was unable to recognise the same for Pater’s Cyrenaic philosophy — even members of his own coterie, such as Wilde. ‘I wish they wouldn’t call me “a hedonist”’, Pater commented to Gosse in 1876, after reading a newspaper article that made reference to him. ‘It produces such a bad effect on the minds of people who don’t know Greek’.1 This ‘bad effect’ was what the wider Victorian world stood aghast at, aghast that such a ‘hedonistic’ Cyrenaic philosophy ever inspired its followers with an ‘eagerness, just then, to taste and see and touch’ (1885, I, p.199), an ‘eagerness’ so unlike the ‘immobility’ that Marius characterises as ‘a sort of ideal in the Roman religion’ (II, p.178) and culture, a characterisation that, by his continual authorial asides, Pater manages to extend to his own ‘immobile’ and ‘blasé’ contemporaries, whose opposition to his ‘hedonism’ was usually couched in religious terms, particularly in regard to the ‘sins of Sodom’ to which his ‘hedonism’ was rightly thought to give license.

What nullifies much of the baseness attributed by society to such a ‘hedonism’ is that the Cyrenaic ‘eagerness’ that Pater advocates can, in fact,

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motivate someone like Marius to dive into ‘that full stream of refined sensation’ (II, p.26), to live forever in that

school of Cyrene, in that comparatively fresh Greek world, [where] we see this philosophy where it is least blasé, as we say, in its most pleasant, its blithest and yet perhaps its wisest form, youthfully bright in the youth of European thought. But it grows young again for a while in almost every youthful soul. It is spoken of sometimes as the appropriate utterance of jaded men; but in them it can hardly be sincere, or, by the nature of the case, an enthusiasm. […] The Cyrenaic doctrine, then, realised as a motive of strenuousness or enthusiasm, is not so properly the utterance of the ‘jaded Epicurean’, as of the strong young man in all the freshness of thought and feeling, fascinated by the notion of raising his life to the level of a daring theory, while, in the first genial heat of existence, the beauty of the physical world strikes potently upon his wide-open, unwearied senses. He discovers a great new poem every spring, with a hundred delightful things he too has felt, but which have never been expressed, or at least never so truly, before. (II, pp.15-17)

This Cyrenaic ‘eagerness’ to dive into ‘that full stream of refined sensation’, an ‘eagerness’ expressed most authentically by the utterances of a ‘strong young man in all the freshness of thought and feeling’, is what attracted Pater both erotically and intellectually, is what inspired him to seek paederastic ‘hearers’ from among Balliol undergraduates like Hardinge or from among London actors like Eversfield. Pater’s desire for contact with such ‘wide-open, unwearied senses’ is what made him willing to risk scandal and possible arrest — perhaps even Marius’s ‘martyrdom’ for love’s sake — though he hoped that a protective discretion like Cornelius’s would provide him with a ‘cloistral refuge’ from the vulgar, their gossip, and their draconian laws, hence protect him from the fate of Johnson, Solomon, Browning, and Wilde. Pater’s actualisation of such a discretion is what fostered that absence of directly biographical evidence that made him ‘arguably the most private Victorian’, a factor that lends to Marius much of his autobiographical resonance.

As ‘the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world’ (‘Conclusion’, Renaissance 1893, pp.187-88), the refined Cyrenaic doctrine that surrounded Marius with a ‘cloistral refuge’ came linked to an attendant loneliness, a loneliness that began to dissipate under the realisation that his maturing aesthetic sensibility could be employed to express his most inward impressions, a sensibility that Pater describes in his Renaissance:

The basis of all artistic genius lies in the power of conceiving humanity in a new and striking way, of putting a happy world of its own creation in place of the meaner world of our common days, generating around itself an atmosphere with a novel power of refraction, selecting, transforming, recombining the images it transmits, according to the choice of the imaginative intellect.

(‘Winckelmann’, Renaissance 1893, p.170)
Acquiring this sensibility, a sensibility that perceives humanity in ‘a new and striking way’, a sensibility that allows one ‘to burn always with this hard, gem-like flame [and] to maintain this ecstasy’, suggests Pater, ‘is success in life’ (‘Conclusion’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.189). This success bestows a ‘colourless, unclassified purity of life, with its blending and interpenetration of intellectual, spiritual, and physical elements, still folded together, pregnant with the possibilities of a whole world closed within it’ (‘Winckelmann’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.174), an imaginative world impregnated by a Paterian sensibility, as is illustrated by Flavian as he shares his copy of Apuleius with Marius:

> The two lads were lounging together over a book, half-buried in a heap of dry corn, in an old granary — the quiet corner to which they had climbed out of the way of their noisier companions on one of their blandest holiday afternoons. They looked round: the western sun smote through the broad chinks of the shutters. How like a picture! and it was precisely the scene described in what they were reading, with just that added poetic touch in the book which made it delightful and select, and, in the actual place, the ray of sunlight transforming the rough grain among the cool brown shadows into heaps of gold. (I, p.55)

Such may have been the glories of an adolescence lived in Imperial Rome, with its transforming freedoms — but what of the glories of an adolescence lived in Victorian London? Anticipating this question, Pater responds with a challenge, asserting that ‘life in modern London even, in the heavy glow of summer, is stuff sufficient for the fresh imagination of a youth to build its “palace of art” of’ (*Marius* II, p.17), a palace where humanity and its mores are ‘freshly’ perceived and expressed, whether in modern London or in ancient Rome. Embracing Pater’s mature dictum that ‘what we need in the world, over against that [bland existence that others lead], is a certain permanent and general power of compassion — humanity’s standing force of self-pity’ (*Marius* II, p.182), Marius sought for a ‘humanity, a universal order, the great polity, its aristocracy of elect spirits, the mastery of their example over their successors’, a ‘fresh’ humanity whose mores are ‘more than an intellectual abstraction’ (II, pp.11-12). Only in the early Christian concept of a ‘supreme city, [an] invisible society, whose conscience was become explicit in its inner circle of inspired souls’ (II, p.10), did Marius find this ‘humanity’. In this ‘fresh’ faith’s ‘humanity, or even its humanism, in its generous hopes for man, its common sense and alacrity of cheerful service, its sympathy with all creatures, its appreciation of beauty and daylight’ (II, p.115), Marius found materials from which to build his own ‘palace of art’, inspired by ‘a cleansing and kindling flame at work in [early Christianity and its rites], which seemed to make everything else Marius had ever known look comparatively vulgar and mean’ (II, p.131). For Pater, as well as for his Marius, this early church was a potent symbol, for it was within just such a ‘supreme city’, an ‘invisible society’, an ‘inner circle of inspired souls’ that Pater envisioned the paederastic Hellenism that he advocated finding a space to flourish, at least for its ‘palace of art’.
This subsequent refinement (not change of perspective) was due, in great measure, to the maturing of ideas that Marius had embraced under Flavian’s influence, ideas that were further developed and adjusted through contact with Cornelius and the humanity of Cornelius’s church, ideas that were augmented through intimacy with his own ‘divine companion’: this is an apt expression of the subsequent refinement in Pater’s own perspectives and perceptions, as is made clear by that footnote that he later added to the then-infamous ‘Conclusion’ of his Renaissance. In fact, this subsequent refinement can be illustrated by pairing a précis of The Renaissance with a précis of Marius the Epicurean, with the following attempting to don Pater’s baroque style:

Expanding his time and vitality, first by refining his sympathy with the old masters — especially Renaissance artists who derived their sweetness from the Classical world and their curious strength from the Medieval, a combination of the profane and the sacred — then by exploring the finer gradations of the modern arts of music, poetry, and painting — an aesthete exposes his sensual organs to the strange pagan beauties of art and mood and personality that are never flaccid, even in Christian culture, beauties that penetrate and stimulate and attune his otherwise brief and trivial life, filling it with as many brilliant sins and exquisite amusements as possible, impregnating him with culture and solace and grace, leaving behind only a relish, a longing for those experiences to happen again. (Renaissance, my précis)

In Christianity’s humanistic ideal of a youth who, although parting with everything for his cause, still announces his success, as if foreseeing his own worship amid the vulgar pagan world — Marius had found an imaginative stimulus, a possible conscience, a chivalry analogous to his own ample vision of that perpetual companion who was diffused through his memory of strange souls, transforming his vague hopes into effective desires, doubling his pleasures, bringing him gratitude for all aspects of his life, anticipating one great act, one critical moment, which, though it comes easily, changes him and his life forever. (Marius, my précis)

Notice how the first involves a form of self-refinement through contact with the choicest of aesthetic and philosophical works, stimulating and attuning one’s brief life in order to create a form of exquisite ‘self-culture’; the second, a renunciation of everything, even one’s brief life, if that is what is required to achieve an ideal, an ideal bastioned by a ‘sort of chivalrous conscience’. This refinement of perspective — the distinct difference between the Pater of The Renaissance and the Pater of Marius the Epicurean — is something that even many in Pater’s coterie seem to have been unable to grasp, despite its centrality to Pater’s concept of a ‘supreme city’, an ‘invisible society’, an ‘inner circle’, despite the fact that they were the individuals Pater expected to constitute that ‘city’, ‘society’, ‘circle’. While The Renaissance sought to justify a necessary first step — the development of ‘self-culture’ — Marius the Epicurean sought to broaden that ‘culture’ beyond the ‘self’, beyond ‘the individual in his isolation’.
Pater fully recognised that this second step often requires an act of renunciation for the ‘greater good’.

Although ‘Chapter Five’ will deal more fully with how this relates to Wilde, let it merely be noted that this Paterian concept of renunciation, of a youth parting with everything for his cause, was beyond Wilde’s comprehension, hence worthy of his humoured or peeved disdain. In *The Critic as Artist*, Wilde expresses through Gilbert that ‘self-denial is simply a method by which man arrests his progress, and self-sacrifice a survival of the mutilation of the savage, part of that old worship of pain which is so terrible a factor in the history of the world’.

While the Pater of *The Renaissance* might well have seconded this claim, the Pater of *Marius the Epicurean* had come instead to appreciate both ‘self-denial’ and ‘self-sacrifice’, had come instead to realise that the ultimate refinement of ‘self-culture’ resides in knowing how to assist one’s ‘comrades’ as well as the wider culture, in knowing how to facilitate the ‘cultural continuum’ (a phrase employed here in its fullest pederastic and homoerotic sense)—even if that assistance requires one to remain silent and/or to stand aside, a form of Paterian ‘martyrdom’ ever accompanied by Marius’s fear that ‘from the drops of his blood there would spring no miraculous, poetic flowers’ (II, p.214). This acquiescence is a Paterian willingness to accept banishment, if need be, alongside those scurrilous free spirits whom Dante relegates to the Vestibule of Hell as ‘unworthy alike of heaven and hell […] [and placed in] that middle world in which men take no side in great conflicts, and decide no great causes, and make great refusals’ (‘Sandro Botticelli’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.43).

Given the advantages of having acquired an aesthetic education complete with ‘all the finer sorts of literature’ (*Marius*, I, p.147), complete with an appreciation of the vulgarity and meanness of conventional humanity, Pater, like his persona Marius, felt compelled to enlighten others, to assist the wider culture, to maintain the ‘authentic’ cultural continuum stretching back to the Greeks—even though Pater recognised that this ‘assistance’ might only ever be appreciated by an extremely limited Decadent and Uranian audience, his ‘inner circle’. This is Pater’s conciliatory, not dissident impulse, for he was fully aware that his own Cyrenaic doctrine ‘with its worship of beauty — of the body — of physical beauty’ would only ‘perform its legitimate moral function, as a “counsel of perfection”, for the few’ (*Marius* 1885, II, p.32).

In Leonardo da Vinci, Pater found an exemplar of this ‘counsel of perfection’, an exemplar who ‘seemed to his contemporaries to be the possessor of some unsanctified and secret wisdom’ (*Renaissance* 1893, p.78), a wisdom that transformed his studio into a form of Platonic academy ‘for the few’, specifically for

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Andrea Salaino, beloved of Leonardo for his curled and waving hair [...] and afterwards his favourite pupil and servant. Of all the interests in living men and women which may have filled his life at Milan, this attachment alone is recorded. And in return Salaino identified himself so entirely with Leonardo, that the picture of St. Anne, in the Louvre, has been attributed to him. It illustrates Leonardo’s usual choice of pupils [...] men with just enough genius to be capable of initiation into his secret, for the sake of which they were ready to efface their own individuality. [...] Out of the secret places of a unique temperament [Leonardo] brought strange blossoms and fruits hitherto unknown. (1893, pp.91-92)

Necessity dictated that the eroticised ‘wisdom’ into which young Giacomo Salai (Pater’s Andrea Salaino)2 was to be ‘initiated’ remain a ‘secret’, as Leonardo knew from personal experience. In early April 1476, an anonymous message was delivered to the Ufficiali di Notte e dei Monasteri at the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, accusing Leonardo of sodomia with a seventeen-year-old model and prostitute, Jacopo Saltarelli. As a result, Leonardo spent two months in prison awaiting the court’s decision: ‘Though the charges were later dismissed for lack of evidence, and even though death was not the usual sentence for those convicted, the possibility of a capital sentence gave the more cautious good reason to be discreet’.3 After this ominous experience, Leonardo indeed became more discreet, with his desires eventually directed, more safely, towards his young apprentices, apprentices who were primarily chosen, as Pater asserts, for their beauty, as with Salai, chosen for ‘his curled and waving hair’. Nevertheless, two manuscript pages of what is now the Codex Atlanticus (f. 132v, 133v) indiscreetly evince — in either a playful or a taunting way — that the relationship between Leonardo and his favoured Salai was far from chaste or covert:

1 Pater’s use of the word ‘men’ seems a deliberate attempt to disguise the fact that Leonardo’s principal ‘pupil’, Giacomo Salai, was only a boy. The painting referred to is Leonardo’s The Virgin and Child with St Anne (oil on wood; 1510; Musée du Louvre, Paris, France).
2 In Walter Pater, The Renaissance, ed. by Kenneth Clark (New York: Collins, 1967), Clark observes that ‘there was no such painter as Andrea Salaino. The name seems to be due to a confusion between Andrea Solario and Giacomo Salai. The latter was the boy with curly hair who joined Leonardo in 1490 and stayed with him throughout his life’ (p.116, note). About the problematic name of Giacomo Salai, Wayne V. Andersen writes: ‘Freud was under the impression that Salai and Giacomo were separate boys, but Salai’s documented name was Giacomo de’ Caprotti detto Salaj. I have found him also referred to as Andrea Salaino’ — Freud, Leonardo Da Vinci, and the Vulture’s Tail: A Refreshing Look at Leonardo’s Sexuality (New York: Other Press, 2001), pp.133-34. The engraving by Charles Henry Jeens that appears on the title page of Pater’s Renaissance is based on a chalk drawing attributed, at the time, to Leonardo, and believed to be a portrait of Salai (which it might actually be).
After 1490 [when Leonardo took him in at the age of ten], he was no longer called Giacomo, but Salai. In 1490, Leonardo would have been thirty-seven or thirty-eight. Thought to be the clearest piece of evidence that Leonardo used Salai sexually is a cartoonish sketch in one of Leonardo’s notebooks. It depicts a line of walking phalluses aimed at a circle, a hole that is assumed to be an anus […] Above the circle is inscribed “Salai”. […] On the same sheet are Leonardo’s invention of a bicycle and a sketch of the male head in profile.¹

¹ ‘Salai’ means ‘little devil’; see Anderson, p.134. By comparing these cartoonish sketches with Leonardo’s Coition Sheet, it becomes immediately apparent that these ‘prancing penises’, as well as the ‘bicycle’ sketch, are not from Leonardo’s hand, and were probably sketched by one or more of his apprentices (the ‘bicycle’ perhaps from a model that Leonardo had already fabricated).
However, since nothing about these phallic images in the *Codex Atlanticus* bespeaks the hand of Leonardo, they were likely drawn in a playful way by Salai himself (with someone noting this by supplying the boy’s name) or by one or more of Leonardo’s other apprentices, as a taunting commentary on the sodomitical acts that were either explicit or implicit in Salai’s position as the artist’s favourite, both in the studio and in the bedroom. A pair of penises prancing towards a hole labelled ‘Salaj’ is a secret best veiled from the eyes of the many (which certainly accounts for those two halves of a severed manuscript sheet being pasted to mountings by Pompeo Leoni at the end of the sixteenth century, concealing those prancing penises until restoration work on the *Codex Atlanticus* in the 1960s). This salacious (or ‘Salai-cious’) drawing provides a clue to unravelling the paederastic pedagogy ‘encoded’ within Leonardo’s aesthetic works, a paederastic ‘Da Vinci Code’ that was of particular interest to Pater and his Uranians, those masters of ‘underthought’. This was a ‘code’ that could only be unravelled by an initiate for whom ‘the veil that […] lay over the works of the old masters of art’ had been lifted.

As if schooled, like Salai, by a Leonardo, Marius had acquired ‘a peculiar manner of intellectual confidence, as of one who had indeed been initiated into a great secret […] Though with an air so disengaged, he seemed to be living so intently in the visible world! […] The veil that was to be lifted for him lay over the works of the old masters of art’ (*Marius*, I, pp.157). This ‘intellectual confidence’, a confidence that emboldened and enabled Marius to unexpurgate the subtleties of ancient art, had been gained through refining all the instruments of inward and outward intuition, of developing all their capacities, of testing and exercising one’s self in them, till one’s whole nature became one complex medium of reception, towards the vision — the ‘beatific vision’, if we really cared to make it such — of our actual experience in the world. Not the conveyance of an abstract body of truths or principles, would be the aim of the right education of one’s self, or of another, but the conveyance of an art — an art in some degree peculiar to each individual character.

(I, p.143)

At a Classical academy, an academy resembling, at least in paederastic import, the studio of Leonardo — ‘the school, one of many imitations of Plato’s Academy in the old Athenian garden, lay in a quiet suburb of Pisa, and had its grove of cypresses, its porticoes, a house for the master, its chapel and images’ (I, p.46) — Marius had gained an idiosyncratic education in the Platonism that Pater considered ‘a highly conscious reassertion of one of the two constituent elements in the Hellenic genius, of the spirit of the highlands namely in which the early Dorian forefathers of the Lacedemonians had secreted their peculiar disposition, in contrast with the mobile, the marine and fluid temper of the littoral Ionian people’ (*Platonism*, pp.200-01, emphasis added). Pater’s verb ‘secreted’ is a portmanteau of erotic suggestion, especially if ‘disposition’ is interpreted erotically: the Dorian ‘disposition’ was secret—ed, conveyed in secret from an
‘inspirer’ to his ‘hearer’; the Dorian ‘disposition’ was _secrete—d_, conveyed as a fluid (ejaculate) from an ‘inspirer’ into his ‘hearer’. However, as Symonds explains in _A Problem in Greek Ethics_, for the Dorians this erotic relationship conveyed more than pleasure, more than a ‘disposition’ fostered by ejaculations ‘secreted in secret’. It literally conveyed the essence of the paederastic continuum — establishing, through a private pedagogy, a physical, mental, and emotional intimacy that was so durable that it became a revered ‘institution’ in Doric society:

The lover taught, the hearer learned; and so from man to man was handed down the tradition of heroism, the peculiar tone and temper of the state to which, in particular among the Greeks, the Dorians clung with obstinate pertinacity. Xenophon distinctly states that love was maintained among the Spartans with a view to education; and when we consider the customs of the state, by which boys were separated early from their homes and the influences of the family were almost wholly wanting, it is not difficult to understand the importance of the paederastic institution. The Lacedæmonian lover might represent his friend in the Assembly. He was answerable for his good conduct, and stood before him as a pattern of manliness, courage, and prudence. Of the nature of his teaching we may form some notion from the precepts addressed by the Megarian Theognis to the youth Kurnus. In battle the lovers fought side by side.

Praised for its common sense by Benjamin Jowett and the other Oxford dons, Pater’s _Plato and Platonism_ asserted discreetly that ‘the institutions of Sparta [which Symonds describes above] bore directly upon those of Victorian England’ — or, more aptly, ‘bore directly into’ the educational institutions of

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1 In _Pederasty and Pedagogy in Archaic Greece_ (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996), William Armstrong Percy III notes that, in 1907, the classicist Eric Bethe ‘claimed that Dorian warriors solemnly and ritually injected youths anally with semen to make them grow strong and brave, much as certain primitive societies still did in his day. Bethe’s contemporaries almost unanimously rejected the analogy’ (p.17). ‘Bethe maintained that the pederastic initiation of Dorian youths into manhood had a sacred character. Since rituals of manhood were holy among the Dorians, their pederastic practices did not constitute true homosexuality but a type of phallus-worship: “The love act itself, as a holy act, in a holy place, was consummated according to officially recognized usages”’ (p.32). It is difficult to speculate whether Pater would have agreed or not with Bethe’s historical claim, a claim considered insupportable by Bethe’s immediate contemporaries and by scholars today. However, the sacramental quality of Bethe’s claim — that Greek paederastic acts constituted an absolute commingling of the sacred and the profane — might well have appealed to Pater on a philosophical and emotive, if not historical level.

2 Symonds, _Greek Ethics_ [1901], p.13.


4 Dowling, ‘Ruskin’s’, p.3. The sentence in full reads: ‘It is clear, for example, that Pater himself believed that the institutions of Sparta bore directly upon those of Victorian
Victorian England, especially after educators such as William Johnson (later Cory) and Oscar Browning had begun ‘secreting their peculiar disposition’ into the orifices, carnal or cerebral, of many a submissive Etonian. The key phrase here is ‘asserted discreetly’. Since these lectures were originally delivered to undergraduates in an introductory philosophy course — or, as Pater expresses in his prefatory note, ‘The Lectures of which this volume is composed were written for delivery to some young students of philosophy’ — and since these lectures were delivered in his official capacity as a university lecturer and published while he still retained that position, Pater could hardly have ‘asserted indiscreetly’ about Plato’s ‘paederastic pedagogy’. These ten lectures were designed to provide an overview of the Platonic canon; the Socratic Method; Socrates’ responses to Pre-Socratic philosophies about motion, inertia, and number; the differences between Xenophon’s Socrates and Plato’s; the Socratic conflict with sophistry; Plato’s theory of Ideas and his strategies of dialectic; the political and social dimensions of Plato’s ideal state; and Plato’s relationship to creativity. Only two of these lectures even vaguely consider paederasty: lecture six, ‘The Genius of Plato’, and eight, ‘Lacedæmon’. However, the little that can be gleaned from Plato and Platonism, such as the portmanteau ‘secreted’, is paederastically expressive and choice.

Surprisingly, few of Pater’s contemporaries, including Jowett, seem to have recognised or particularly considered the book’s subtle veneration of Dorian (or, early Spartan) paederastic practices:

These bodies [of the young male Spartans], moreover, are shaped by a discipline in which normative Victorian masculinity is perpetually violated: this emphatically conservative and masculine society articulates its social authority through the anathematized practice of pederasty. Yet Pater’s sympathy to this transgressive discipline was not idiosyncratic: in contemporary reviews, […] Pater’s account of Sparta was ‘universally admired’. ¹

Whether encapsulated in Spartan discipline or Platonic dialogues, the ‘paederastic institution’ engendered a receptive temperament or ‘disposition’ in the young Greeks of antiquity, a temperament marked by the ‘strict indifference’ that Pater believed essential for encountering, whether in literature or in life, the brilliance of an individual like Plato:

England: the parallels he draws between the education of Spartan youth and the public schools and universities of England are too insistent for us to think otherwise’. ¹ Adams, p.461. Dorian paederasty was first dealt with in detail by Karl Otfrid Müller in his Die Dorier: Geschichten hellnischer Stämme und Städte, which was translated into English by Henry Tufnell and George Cornewall Lewis as The History and Antiquities of the Dorian Race, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1830). This book considers Greek paederasty to have been an essential aspect of Greek culture. Dowling writes: ‘Whatever we decide, it is clear that Müller’s Dorians was a favorite book with Pater’ (‘Ruskin’s’, p.3). For ‘Dorianism’ as a broader concept for Pater and his contemporaries, see Dellamora, Apocalyptic, chapter 2.
The business of the young scholar therefore, in reading Plato, is not to take his side in a controversy, to adopt or refute Plato’s opinions, to modify, or make apology for, what may seem erratic or impossible in him; still less, to furnish himself with arguments on behalf of some theory or conviction of his own. His duty is rather to follow intelligently, but with strict indifference, the mental process there, as he might witness a game of skill; better still, as in reading *Hamlet* or *The Divine Comedy*, so in reading *The Republic*, to watch, for its dramatic interest, the spectacle of a powerful, of a sovereign intellect, translating itself, amid a complex group of conditions which can never in the nature of things occur again, at once pliant and resistant to them, into a great literary monument. (*Platonism*, pp.10-11)

Pruriently, Pater suggests that the brilliance of Plato, a brilliance enacted in his dialogues, arose from the same ‘sensuous faculty’ that made him a superior lover, for he too ‘had secreted [his] peculiar disposition’, into the boy Aster: ‘Just there, then, is the secret of Plato’s intimate concern with, his power over, the sensible world, the apprehensions of the sensuous faculty: he is a lover, a great lover, somewhat after the manner of Dante’ (p.135). For Pater, as for Plato, the educational was ever blent with the physical and the emotional, an aspect of his life and works that has proven problematic, both biographically and critically.

Although sharing many of Pater’s acquaintances and desires, as well as writing his only approved biography — that is, ‘approved’ as far as Pater’s fastidious and protective sisters Hester and Clara were concerned — Arthur C. Benson nonetheless recognised the moral problems arising from such a unification of Plato’s pedagogy and Dante’s idealised love, compelling him to question: ‘Isn’t it really rather dangerous to let boys read Plato, if one is desirous that they should accept conventional moralities?’ Symonds also pondered this question, as Dowling relates:

No wonder Symonds in concluding *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891), the last of the homosexualist apologias he was to have printed during his lifetime, should suggest that those who insist on punishing homosexuals at law would do better instead to ‘turn their attention to the higher education’ being carried on in

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1 In ‘Pater as Don’, *Prose Studies*, 11.1 (1988), pp.41-60, William Shuter writes: ‘In the study of Plato [according to Pater] no examinable skill is so essential as a receptive disposition, for Plato’s philosophy “does not provide a proposition, nor a system of propositions, but forms a temper”’ (p.53).

2 Dowling writes: ‘Pater […] seems to have been persuaded that an education conducted along the old lines of Greek paiderastia […] would genuinely fulfill the liberal ideal of education’ (*Hellenism*, p.102).

3 See Donoghue, p.104.

English public schools and universities. For it was just there that the ‘best minds of our youth are … exposed to the influences of a paederastic literature at the same time that they acquire the knowledge and experience of unnatural practices’.¹

One must bear in mind that, in Benson’s case, this question about the dangers arising from boys reading Plato concerns ‘conventional moralities’ only, for Benson seems unlikely to have been personally scandalised by the paederastic pedagogy that Pater sanctioned or advocated: ‘While not truly Uranian, Benson nevertheless hovered dangerously near Uranian sympathies’.² In fact, Benson would later provide a biographical introduction and notes for the 1905 edition of Ionica, a ‘classic paean to romantic paiderastia’³ by William Johnson (later Cory), one of the founding and most influential of the Uranians (or, as Timothy d’Arch Smith labels him, one of the most influential ‘Uranian precursors’). ‘A vigorous intellect, classicist, and master at Eton’, Johnson had ‘a romantic belief in Platonic paiderastia’,⁴ the very paederasty that Symonds considers above and that was originally expounded to him in a letter from Johnson, a letter that was considered in ‘Chapter One’. As with Pater’s friend Oscar Browning a few years later, a scandal drew Johnson (formerly one of Browning’s teachers) away from his beloved Eton: ‘Johnson was to leave Eton abruptly in 1872 after what appears to have been a parent’s complaint about his overly intimate relationship with a pupil’.⁵

As the provider of a biographical introduction and notes for Johnson’s Ionica and as the writer of Pater’s biography, Benson was one of those best qualified to answer his own rhetorical question, ‘Isn’t it really rather dangerous to let boys read Plato, if one is desirous that they should accept conventional moralities?’

While visiting Oxford in search of biographical materials about the elusive Pater, Benson gained a definitive answer to his own question, finding that Pater had always been a wanton ‘corrupter of youths’, had always been that wanton returning from ‘upstairs’ with two ‘feminine’ youths in tow whom Pattison had observed in 1878. In On the Edge of Paradise: A. C. Benson: The Diarist, David Newsome relates:

¹ Dowling, Hellenism, p.129.
² D’Arch Smith, p.7.
⁴ Dowling, Hellenism, p.87.
⁵ Ibid., p.87, note. For Kincaid’s discussion of both Johnson and Browning, see Child-Loving, pp.232-34. D’Arch Smith notes that Oscar Browning had been one of Johnson’s pupils at Eton (p.6). See also Ari Adut, ‘A Theory of Scandal: Victorians, Homosexuality, and the Fall of Oscar Wilde’, American Journal of Sociology, 111.1 (2005), pp.213-48 (p.225).
If the writing of Walter Pater took under three months, at least the research behind it had proved ticklish and delicate, as [Edmund] Gosse had warned [Arthur Benson] it would. There were ‘dark areas’ in Pater’s life. Benjamin Jowett had gained possession of certain compromising letters which he had threatened Pater he would publish should he ever think of standing for university office. Arthur’s reaction was instinctively to defend Pater’s male friendships as never being anything but ‘frigidly Platonic’. After he had visited Oxford and talked with Herbert Warren at Magdalen about the Aesthetic Movement generally, he was less happy. ‘It will want great care’, he wrote. This was ‘rather a dark place, I’m afraid. But if we give boys Greek books to read and hold up the Greek spirit and the Greek life as a model, it is very difficult to slice out one portion, which was a perfectly normal part of Greek life, and to say that it is abominable etc. etc. A strongly sensuous nature — such as Pater and Symonds — with a strong instinct for beauty, and brought up at an English public school, will almost certainly go wrong, in thought if not in act’.¹

Warren’s assessment of Pater seemed tenable to Benson, at least as biographer, especially since Pater had always fashioned himself as a receptive student of Plato,² a paederastic lover whose philosophical strength came from a ‘strongly sensuous nature’ that, as with Marius, rested in the education of the eyes — for the artist, as well as the philosopher, implores his students: ‘I want you to see precisely what I see’ (Appreciations, p.28). In fact, Marius cultivated

the capacity of the eye, inasmuch as in the eye would lie for him the determining influence of life: he was of the number of those who, in the words of a poet who came long after, must be ‘made perfect by the love of visible beauty’. The discourse was conceived from the point of view of a theory Marius found afterwards in Plato’s Phaedrus, which supposes men’s spirits susceptible to certain influences, diffused, after the manner of streams or currents, by fair things or persons visibly present — green fields, for instance, or children’s faces — into the air around them, acting, in the case of some peculiar natures, like potent material essences, and conforming the seer to themselves as with some cunning physical necessity. (Marius, I, p.32)

A necessity both ‘cunning’ and ‘physical’ — Pater’s phrasing echoes his ‘secret—ed’ and ‘secrete—d’, and posits that those with a ‘receptive’ or ‘susceptible’ temperament (those with ‘peculiar natures’, like Marius and Plato) are brought tantalisingly and tauntingly close to ‘potent material essences’, hence are more easily impregnated, in a paederastic sense, by a ‘peculiar disposition’.

This ‘receptivity’, a receptivity that Pater believed to be characteristically present in children, became an ideal for Marius, such that he himself hoped to maintain ‘the unclouded and receptive soul quitting the world finally, with the same fresh wonder with which it had entered the world still unimpaired’ (II,

¹ Newsome, p.192.
² The progression from the ‘receptive’ to the ‘active’ role in Decadence is considered in ‘Chapter Five’.
p.220), for this receptivity is not limited by chronological age. Even in mid-life, ‘Winckelmann looked at life with a fresh, childlike eye’ — or, as Pater phrases this himself in regard to Winckelmann’s admiration for all things Greek: ‘Greek sensuousness […] is shameless and childlike’ (Renaissance 1893, p.177). Robert Currie suggests that Pater adopted or adapted this linkage of ‘Greek sensuousness’ with childhood from Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), causing Pater to believe that, ‘in the nineteenth century, only the child, or the naive genius, might enjoy the immediacy of Greek life’, an ‘immediacy’ that could only be maintained in adulthood through continual interaction with the young, an interaction about which Marius elaborates in his diary: ‘I notice sometimes what I conceive to be the precise character of the fondness of the roughest working-people for their young children. […] What is of finer soul, or of finer stuff in things, and demands delicate touching — to [the roughest worker] the delicacy of the little child represents that: it initiates him into that’ (II, pp.180-81, emphasis added). If even the most illiterate, vulgar, and rough worker is somewhat initiated into this ‘finer soul’ through physical and emotional contact with his own children, how much more so for someone with refined sensibilities like Marius, someone who has already been fully initiated into the pleasures and philosophies of the ‘immediacy of Greek life’?

Since this ‘Greek sensuousness’ was, for the Uranians, linked with the ‘delicacy of the […] child’, Pater portrays Marius as someone compelled to perform the ‘legitimate moral function’ of his Cyrenaic philosophy, the ‘counsel of perfection’, for the few (1885, II, p.32) — though, in this case, for a few boys of receptive temperament, boys with the potential to become his inspired ‘hearers’. As if by a stage direction ‘Enter boy’, such a boy duly appears, a boy whose countenance seems to ‘demand delicate touching’, a boy whose ‘capacity of the eye’ seems to display his receptivity, a boy whose subsequent ‘blush’ seems to suggest that he already recognises the eroticism that his person provokes:

Marius became fluent concerning the promise of one young student, the son, as it presently appeared, of parents of whom Lucian [of Samosata] himself knew something: and soon afterwards the lad was seen coming along briskly — a lad with gait and figure well enough expressive of the sane mind in the healthy body, though a little slim and worn of feature, and with a pair of eyes expressly designed, it might seem, for fine glancings at the stars. At the sight of Marius he paused suddenly, and with a modest blush on recognising his companion [Lucian], who straightway took with the youth, so prettily enthusiastic, the freedom of an old friend. (II, p.144, emphasis added)

3 In a passage soon to be quoted, Winckelmann claims that ‘[The ancients] went so far as to cite their [paederastic] inclination as testimony of their morality’.
This lad’s ‘modest blush’ gains its import and importance only when ‘so prettily enthusiastic’ is interpreted in the Uranian sense Pater supplies it in his essay on Winckelmann, where enthusiast encodes ‘paederast’ and enthusiasm ‘paederastic desire’ (though these terms apply equally to the paederastic ‘hearer’). Seen in this way, that ‘modest blush’ suggests a secret shared, an intimacy unmentionable, a reaction spontaneous; it also suggests the implication of ‘[Lucian] took with the youth […] the freedom of an old friend’. In particular, Marius is struck by the effect the boy’s ‘enthusiasm’ has upon Lucian, for it alters his normal demeanour, with Marius ‘fancying that the lad’s plainly written enthusiasm had induced in the elder speaker somewhat more fervour than was usual with him’ (II, p.144).

As a result of this ‘plainly written enthusiasm’, an ‘enthusiasm’ that provokes ‘more fervour than usual’, Lucian and this lad, whose name is Hermotimus, immediately fall into conversation, a conversation that is, in fact, an abbreviated translation of Lucian’s dialogue Hermotimus, or The Rival Philosophies (ca. 165 CE). What is noteworthy here is not the dialogue itself: to compare Pater’s translation with that of the Fowlers’ four-volume Clarendon edition of The Works of Lucian of Samosata (1905) is to see how few liberties
Pater has actually taken in his condensed translation.\(^1\) However, what is noteworthy is the way that Pater frames the dialogue. Although attendant throughout and sitting on the same marble bench as Lucian and Hermotimus, Marius is cast as a mere voyeur. Although Hermotimus is, in Lucian’s original, a bearded adult who has already been studying Stoicism for twenty years, Pater converts him into a boy. Although ‘the nature of love and friendship’ is not its theme, Pater maintains the original’s Socratic intimacy by allowing only two participants, recalling the intimacy of a dialogue like *Lysis*, where Socrates facilitates a discussion that, despite its rhetorical incompleteness and lack of direction, nonetheless blossoms into a ‘friendship’ between the aged philosopher and the young lovers Menexenus and Lysis:

> I said, however, a few words to the boys at parting: O Menexenus and Lysis, how ridiculous that you two boys, and I, an old boy, who would fain be one of you, should imagine ourselves to be friends — this is what the by-standers will go away and say — and as yet we have not been able to discover what is a friend!\(^2\)

These Paterian choices — the passive observation by Marius, the alteration of Hermotimus into a boy, the retention of only two participants — exponentially heighten the paederastic suggestiveness, with Marius literally initiated by Lucian into the ways one ‘becomes fluent concerning the promise of one young student’. Hence, the import of this dialogue hinges less upon what it might have meant for Lucian and young Hermotimus, and more upon its lingering meaning for Marius, the Epicurean voyeur whose perceptions are never actually divulged. In the lacuna that exists between what Marius observes and what he does not say, much suggestion resides.

What provides the occasion for Pater’s suggestiveness is that, at the time he was writing *Marius the Epicurean*, Lucian’s oeuvre exhibited contradictory stances towards paederasty, a disparity that arose because the seventy or more works then attributed to him included works now attributed to Pseudo-Lucian (denoting one or more of his later imitators). Although the majority of his works satirize paederasts as satyrs ever wallowing in profligacy and banality — as in *A Professor of Public Speaking, Alexander the False Prophet, The Passing of Lucian of Samosata*, trans. by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1905]), II, pp.41-90.\(^3\) Plato (Benjamin Jowett, trans.), *Lysis, or Friendship*, in *The Dialogues of Plato Translated into English with Analyses and Introductions by B. Jowett, M.A., in Five Volumes*, 3\(^{\text{rd}}\) edn rev. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892), pp.39-76 (p.75). This is also available in a recent edition: Plato, *On Homosexuality: Lysis, Phaedrus, and Symposium*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1991). ‘The *Hermotimus* is, of all of Lucian’s works, the closest to a Platonic dialogue’ — Eleanor Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address: From Herodotus to Lucian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.131.

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Peregrinus, and The Ignorant Book Collector — several of those that are now attributed to Pseudo-Lucian treat paederasty quite differently. In one case — the dialogue Erôtes (now dated ca. 300 CE) — paederasty is actually proven superior to heterosexuality, with Callicratides of Athens, the winner of the debate, contrasting the needed mechanism of procreation (heterosexuality) with the management of chaos (paederasty). For Callicratides, paederasty displays chaos conquered, an abstract expression of civilisation’s gradual triumph over necessity, with paederasty changing, as the boy matures, into a permanent bond of friendship.¹ In essence, the Lucian Marius observes is the Lucian Pater constructs; and, proficient in Lucian’s dichotomous oeuvre, Pater understandably preferences and accentuates the Lucian believed to have written the Erôtes, and ignores or diminishes the more recognisable Lucian, the Lucian whose Dialogues of the Gods chides a foolish Zeus for fawning over Ganymede, a rustic lad of limited intellect and narrow potential.²

Besides the paederastic potential it affords for an intimate dialogue between the writer of the Erôtes and a school-boy, by choosing Lucian as Marius’s guest, Pater is also recalling Marius’s earlier experiences with Flavian, since the comic novel Lucius, or The Ass — ‘which Latin readers found expanded in the Metamorphoses of Apuleius’³ — was then attributed to Lucian. In essence, Lucius, or The Ass was one of the influences on Apuleius’s Metamorphoses, or The Golden Ass, ‘the golden book’ that, for Marius and Flavian, had ‘awakened the poetic or romantic capacity […] giving it a direction emphatically sensuous’ (I, p.54). Pater subtly alludes to this work by his choice of phrasing: ‘All philosophers, so to speak, are but fighting about the “ass’s shadow”’ (II, p.168).⁴ The ‘golden ass’s shadow’ had indeed been cast over Marius’s life, a shadow that he now has an opportunity to cast anew, in a way becoming to himself, by

¹ Often appearing as a triad, the Erôtes were the wingèd gods of love — Erôs (love), Pothos (longing for something absent), and Himeros (desire because of proximity to an object): ‘Pothos seizes you to fill you with languorous desire for a girl or boy you cannot possess. […] Himeros, which is related to pothos, seems to refer to a more pressing desire that comes even closer to fulfillment’ — Claude Calame, The Poetics of Eros in Ancient Greece (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p.31.
⁴ The Fowlers’ translation reads: ‘His teachers’ sparrings with our shadows (for we are not there)” (p.59).
making a gift of a book in a ‘handsome yellow wrapper […] perfumed with oil of sandal-wood, and decorated with carved and gilt ivory bosses at the ends of the roller’, a book upon which his exquisite handwriting — handwriting that had contributed to his being appointed an intimate secretary to the Emperor — could ‘enthusiastically’ inscribe a suitable ‘Valentine’ greeting:

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<th>Hermotimus!</th>
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<td>lege</td>
<td>Vivas!</td>
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<td>Feliciter!</td>
<td>Floreas!</td>
<td>Gaudeas!</td>
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**Skyphoi (drinking cups) with Erôtes**
Roman
Silver, Late 1st century BCE – early 1st century CE
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, USA

**Relief with Erôtes**
Roman (after a Hellenistic original)
Marble, ca. 1st century CE
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria
There are other aspects of Pater’s translation of Lucian’s *Hermotimus* that serve to link it with the *Erôtes*, then attributed to Lucian. While Pater’s translation deviates little from the Fowlers’ later version in its handling of how the dialogue moves from a contemplation of the ‘the fairest of all men’ (II, p.160) to a contemplation of ‘a certain woman of a fairness beyond nature’ (II, p.169) — echoing the debate at the centre of the *Erôtes* — unlike the Fowlers’ translation, Pater’s continues beyond the dialogue itself, the very last sentences of the chapter in which this translation appears revealing that, given an *Erôtes* choice between ‘the fairest of all men’ and ‘a certain woman of a fairness beyond nature’, Marius, like a paederastic Paris, would choose the former as the outright victor. After making an excursion so he can walk the boy home, Marius recalls a memorable passage from the dialogue he has just overheard, a passage that seems to focus on Hermotimus: ‘And we too desire, not a fair one, but the fairest of all. Unless we find him, we shall think we have failed’ (II, p.171). Marius seems to have found him. Hermotimus — that boy who had just claimed, ‘I am trying with all my might to get forward. What I need is a hand, stretched out to help me’ (II, p.148), recalling Keats’s lines ‘This living hand, now warm and capable / Of earnest grasping […] see here it is / I hold it towards you’ — seems the literal embodiment of the paederastic ideal, ‘the fairest of all’. While playing voyeur to Lucian’s conversation with Hermotimus, while observing the ways that a paederastic ‘inspirer’ becomes ‘fluent concerning the promise of one young student’, while contemplating this youth ‘so pretty enthusiastic’, this youth with a ‘sane mind in the healthy body’, this youth ‘with a pair of eyes expressly designed, it might seem, for fine glancings at the stars’ — Marius seems to have become more than enamoured. Everything about precocious Hermotimus seems consistent with ‘the fairest of all’ whom an ‘inspirer’ like Marius would seek as his ‘hearer’. Put simply, ‘the lad’s plainly written enthusiasm had induced in [Marius] somewhat more fervour than was usual with him’, and Marius seems to be hoping that, in the end, he will not be forced to admit to Hermotimus, as Lucian had, ‘How slippery you are; how you escape from one’s fingers’ (II, p.164).

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1. ‘The handsomest of mankind’ (Fowlers’ trans., p.67).
2. ‘A certain lady of perfect beauty’ (Ibid., p.83).
3. This is a rather curious detail. The passage (II, p.170), with my comments interspersed, reads: ‘The disputants parted [Marius is not one of the disputants in the dialogue, which suggests that only Lucian and Hermotimus are parting from one another]. The horses were come for Lucian [This suggests that Lucian will henceforward be “out of the picture”]. The boy went on his way, and Marius onward [This suggests that they are going in the same direction, though Marius continues in that direction after seeing Hermotimus home], to visit a friend [Marius’s spontaneous decision “to visit a friend” seems an excuse to buffer the innuendo associated with walking this boy to his door] whose abode lay further [“Further” than what, if not the abode of Hermotimus?]’. Indeed, Marius now knows where to send the gift I posit hypothetically above.
4. ‘[I am] still on the lower slopes, just making an effort to get on; but it is slippery and rough, and needs a helping hand’ (Fowlers’ trans., p.42).
Lucian’s Socratic tutelage had its Sophistic counterpart in the tutelage of Marcus Cornelius Fronto (100-170 CE), ‘the favourite “director” of noble youth’, a contemporary of Marius who bestowed on his own ‘hearers’, like Marcus Aurelius, a complex code of conduct, ‘an intimate practical knowledge of manners, physiognomies, smiles, disguises, flatteries, and courtly tricks of every kind — a whole accomplished rhetoric of daily life’ (I, p.222).\(^1\) The disparity between the tutelage of Lucian (and potentially of Marius) and the tutelage of Fronto is the same disparity that exists between the ‘elevated’ and the ‘carnal’ Uranians, the gulf that separates Pater and Hopkins from Wilde.

In contrast to the Sophistic tutelage of Fronto, the ‘elevated’ Socratic tutelage that Pater advocates does not recommend continual interaction with, manipulation of, or an affront to the existent, canonical, wider culture. Instead, it recommends interaction with a submerged culture, a culture (mis)labelled as ‘subversive’, even though, from the Uranians’ histrionic perspective, it is the only ‘authentic’ Western culture. Although forced into submerged obscurity by the wider culture — except during a few halcyon moments such as the Greco-Roman period and the Renaissance — this more ‘authentic’ Western culture is ever maintained by a community of ‘enthusiasts’ who possess paederastic and homoerotic sensibilities, a community that Pater made the very cornerstone of his own attempts to assist the wider culture by restoring the ‘Hellenic tradition’, by elevating this ‘invisible society’ into the ‘supreme city’, despite an assurance that only a few would understand or approve:

Pater’s writings are full of references to secret societies [….] a utopian vision of community seen from the margins of society. Invariably the binding secret remains obscure: it seems to designate a particular state of mind or mode of existence rather than a body of discursive lore, and hence is not to be revealed, only experienced. In this sense, a form of secret society is implicitly constituted in virtually all of Pater’s accounts of the reception and transmission of artworks or cultural traditions — as, for example, ‘the Hellenic tradition’ constructed in ‘Winckelmann’. Many critics have commented on the pronounced homoerotic character of these communities of ‘enthusiasts’, as Pater refers to Winckelmann; certainly the ‘secret’ into which Leonardo initiates young men seems as much sexual as artistic. [….] Pater’s rhetoric clearly suggests a calculated affiliation of

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\(^1\) Marcus Aurelius was eighteen at the time Fronto began to address him as ‘Beloved Boy’. See the letter (ca. 139 CE) from Fronto to Marcus Aurelius titled ‘A Discourse on Love’, which begins: ‘This is the third letter, beloved Boy, that I am sending you on the same theme’ — Charles Reginald Haines, trans., *The Correspondence of Marcus Cornelius Fronto with Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Lucius Verus, Antoninus Pius, and Various Friends* (New York: Putnam, 1919), p.21. This is not meant to imply that Marcus Aurelius was a paederast himself. In *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), Thomas K. Hubbard writes: ‘The emperors’ attitudes toward homosexuality varied greatly. Hadrian was explicitly and publicly homosexual in his orientation […] On the other hand, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius both disapproved of pederasty’ (p.443).
his aestheticism with homoerotic subcultures that still remain shadowy in recent social and literary histories of Victorian England.1

Beyond accentuating the similarities between Marius’s receptive temperament, Socratic tutelage, and Christianity’s early secrecy, one passage also provides an example of Pater’s ‘calculated affiliation’ with that shadowy, secret society implicitly constituted in his texts, a society of ‘enthusiasts’ who would have appreciated the paederastic and homoerotic subtleties concealed behind his description of a Christian sanctuary, of all things. Pater’s informed reader — a Uranian ‘enthusiast’ — would have recognised in the following a discreet, metaphorical insight into Marius’s potential instruction of that ‘young student’, that boy described as ‘so prettily enthusiastic’: ‘Faithful to the spirit of his early Epicurean philosophy and the impulse to surrender himself, in perfectly liberal inquiry about it, to anything that, as a matter of fact, attracted or impressed him strongly, Marius informed himself with much pains concerning the church in Cecilia’s house’ (II, p.109). This sentence seems tame enough — that is, until brought into proximity with that boy who is evidently the object of Marius’s erotic desires. If Marius had ‘the impulse to surrender himself […] to anything that […] attracted or impressed him strongly’, such that he ‘informed himself’ about it (as he had concerning the church in Cecilia’s house), then what about his impulse, initially suggested and illustrated by Lucian, to become ‘fluent concerning the promise of one young student’? Can Marius’s ‘impulse’ be anything other than a salacious desire to ‘surrender himself’ to that youthful companion? — a boy ‘so prettily enthusiastic’, a boy who had ‘attracted or impressed him [as] strongly’ as the Christian church hidden within Cecilia’s house, where ‘there reigned throughout, an order and purity, an orderly disposition, as if by way of making ready for some gracious spousals. The place itself was like a bride adorned for her husband’ (II, p.97).

Seen in this light, that boy ‘so prettily enthusiastic’ in whom Marius is also attracted becomes a paederastic ‘bride adorned for [his] husband’, becomes a ‘hearer’ adorned for nuptials with Marius the ‘inspirer’. Further, since these religious rites in Cecilia’s house are described as ‘a half-opened book to be read by the duly initiated mind’ (II, pp.134-35), they also recall Marius’s attendance at the deathbed of his beloved Flavian, a youth whose copy of Apuleius lay half-opened nearby, a youth whose last moments were spent crafting the *Pervigilium Veneris* as a form of epithalamion, a traditional hymn sung as a couple is ushered towards the consummation of their ‘gracious spousals’. This also recalls Cupid’s ‘gracious spousals’ in Apuleius’s tale, a marriage interwoven with the act of Jupiter being attended by the Olympian version of Marius’s beloved boy, the most potent of celestial paederastic icons, Ganymede:

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1 Adams, p.454.
Thereupon [Jupiter] bade Mercury produce Psyche in heaven; and holding out to her his ambrosial cup, ‘Take it’, he said, ‘and live for ever; nor shall Cupid ever depart from thee’. And the gods sat down together to the marriage-feast. On the first couch lay the bridgroom, and Psyche in his bosom. His rustic serving-boy bare the wine to Jupiter; and Bacchus to the rest. (I, pp.90-91, emphasis added)

Cecilia’s secret church, Marius’s increasing ‘fluency’ about that young student, Flavian’s deathbed epithalamion, Apuleius’s description of the attendant Ganymede — this blent insinuation reveals Pater’s mastery of self-referentiality, especially when the contents of his Renaissance, Plato and Platonism, and a dozen other works are brought to bear upon this text and its context. It evinces that, taken as a whole, Marius and the rest of the Paterian canon constitutes a cornucopia of paederastic nuance, desire, and practice, a veritable Symposial banquet that enacts a paederastic pedagogy equally elevated, subtle, and cultivated.

A paederastic education capable of cultivating a rustic Trojan shepherd into the servant and belovèd of Jupiter, of elevating a Ganymede from a ‘rustic serving-boy bare’ into the ‘rustic serving-boy [who] bare the wine to Jupiter’ (Pater playfully choosing his verb to allow for naked paederastic ‘underthought’) — such an education is most cogently elucidated, at least in its more contemporary sense, in Pater’s essay on the archaeologist and art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann, an essay that Dellamora suggests is so ‘deeply felt’ because of ‘the depth of affinity between these two men’, for ‘both [Pater and Winckelmann] shared an erotic temperament and wrote especially for young men’. Beyond his published volumes — Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in Malerei und Bildhauerkunst (Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture, 1755), Geschichte der Kunst des Alterhums (The History of Ancient Art, 1764), and Monumenti antichi inediti, spiegati ed illustrati (Unpublished Ancient Monuments, Explained and Illustrated, 1767) — Winckelmann’s influence over his period was augmented by his roles as Papal Antiquary and as the tutor of young European aristocrats. In essence, although not directly a Renaissance personage, Winckelmann nonetheless provided Pater with a historical counterpart to himself, a scholar of the paederastic continuum stretching unbroken from the Greco-Roman period to the modern. He also provided Pater with an occasion to explore, rather daringly, ‘the homoerotic tradition of Western culture at a point of origin in Plato’s

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1 Apuleius’s views on paederasty are partly explained by the following: ‘In his Apology, Apuleius asks: “Would you deny that Solon was a serious philosopher because he wrote that most lascivious line, ‘yearning for thighs and sweet lips’?”’ — as quoted in David Mulroy, trans. with intro. and commentary, Early Greek Lyric Poetry (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.204, note 6. Solon’s statement, in its entirety, is more poignant than the above quotation suggests: ‘Till he loves a lad in the flower of youth, / Bewitched by thighs and by sweet lips’ — as quoted in translation in Hubbard, A Sourcebook, p.454.
dialogues’, and, even further, to (re)consider a historical personage who, more openly than himself, ‘pursued romantic attachments with young men’. In the case of Winckelmann, the difference between the theoretical and the actual, between the scholarly and the sexual only involved a slight shift in medium, a shift that Pater planned both to explore and exploit.

After being appointed to tutor Friedrich Wilhelm Peter Lamprecht (1728-97), son of the chief magistrate of Hadmersleben, in Sachsen Anhalt, Germany, Winckelmann soon exceeded his tutorial role, his illicit ‘friendship’ with the

1 Dellamora, ‘Androgynous’, pp.52; 53.
2 Denis M. Sweet, ‘The Personal, the Political, and the Aesthetic: Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s German Enlightenment Life’, Journal of Homosexuality, 16.1-2 (1988), pp.147-62 (p.151). See also Whitney Davis, ‘Winckelmann Divided: Mourning the Death of Art History’, Journal of Homosexuality, 27.1-2 (1994), pp.141-60. In ‘The Discreet Charm of the Belvedere: Submerged Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century Writing on Art’, German Life and Letters, 52.2 (1999), pp.123-35, Jeff Morrison considers the ‘students’ and ‘studies’ of Winckelmann: ‘These men would then be brought to Italy after a period of preparatory study for individual tutoring. At its simplest we could have here a pragmatic, eighteenth-century adaptation of the Socratic method. But it is surely more than this. We have a striking coincidence of sexual agenda and pedagogic method, a coincidence so strong that the two become inseparable’ (p.128).
younger Lamprecht evolving into ‘the great love of Winckelmann’s life’. This situation became ‘a composition in pedagogy and passion’, such that ‘when Winckelmann left the Lamprecht family house in the spring of 1743 to take up a position as assistant headmaster in a school in Seehausen, the young Lamprecht followed, taking up residence in Winckelmann’s room and continuing with his lessons’ for the next five years, lessons flushed with a ‘desire that blends eros, pedagogy, and aesthetics’. Twenty years would pass before Winckelmann encountered the ‘one more Lamprecht in his life’, a young baron of Livonia, Friedrich Reinhold von Berg (1736-1809), with whom, some scholars assert, he shared ‘a specific instance of homoerotic practice’. Winckelmann later instructed other aristocrats — ‘young princes from Germany’ — and this instruction was ‘marked by the same elan and pedagogic purpose as his friendships with Lamprecht and Berg’: his most noteworthy student of this period being Leopold III Friedrich Franz (1740-1817), the ruling prince of Anhalt-Dessau, ‘who was twenty-five when he sought out Winckelmann in Rome’. In these descriptions, Winckelmann is noticeably defined as a homoerotic and paederastic ‘inspirer’, an ‘inspirer’ equal to a Jove, a Socrates, a Marius, or a Leonardo, though an ‘inspirer’ who would be murdered before he had an opportunity to meet the one individual seemingly destined to become his principal ‘hearer’, the young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who nonetheless remained a lifelong admirer: ‘Pater imagines what would have happened if Winckelmann and Goethe had met. It is a homosexual fantasy’.

To elaborate more fully than in the ‘Introduction’: If, as Kevin Parker suggests, ‘Winckelmann’s relation to the Greeks is rather explicitly erotic’ and ‘informed by a certain very stylized homoerotics’, then Pater’s relation to Winckelmann is much more so, for his essay about this archaeologist and art critic literally undulates with stylised homoeroticism — though ‘Greek enthusiasm’ or ‘paederasty’ describes far better Winckelmann’s style and the style of Pater’s responsive essay. Pater found in Winckelmann a practitioner of a blend of Platonism, paederasty, and aesthetic instruction designed to ‘inspire’ young aristocrats, most of whom were at least twenty years younger than Winckelmann, highlighting that Winckelmann’s desires were less egalitarian and more paederastic in nature. Notice how Pater’s description of Winckelmann’s approach to boys and young men — in this case, to their depiction in antique art — seems almost a voyeuristic approach to a naked Flavian reclining at a window or to a dew-bespotted Cupid in much the same pose:

2 Sweet, pp.152-53.
3 Ibid., pp.153-54.
4 Ibid., p.155.
5 Donoghue, p.157.
6 Kevin Parker, pp.528; 532.
Greek sculpture deals almost exclusively with youth, where the moulding of the bodily organs is still as if suspended between growth and completion, indicated but not emphasised; where the transition from curve to curve is so delicate and elusive, that Winckelmann compares it to a quiet sea, which, although we understand it to be in motion, we nevertheless regard as an image of repose; where, therefore, the exact degree of development is so hard to apprehend. 

(Renaissance 1893, p.174)

Nevertheless, Winckelmann’s ‘temperament’ did apprehend those physical subtleties, for he had developed, according to Pater, bold ‘new senses’ that endowed him with a paederastic acumen in regard to puerile beauty, a Grecian subject hitherto taboo in Western society, at least since the ascension of Christianity:

That world in which others had moved with so much embarrassment, seems to call out in Winckelmann new senses fitted to deal with it. He is in touch with it; it penetrates him, and becomes part of his temperament. He remodells his writings with constant renewal of insight; he catches the thread of a whole sequence of laws in some hollowing of the hand, or dividing of the hair; he seems to realise that fancy of the reminiscence of a forgotten knowledge hidden for a time in the mind itself. (1893, pp.154-55)

Pater suggests that ‘this key to the understanding of the Greek spirit, Winckelmann possessed in his own nature’ (1893, p.175), possessed as a serenity of temperament that influenced his ‘handling of the sensuous side of Greek art’, a serenity recognisable in his ‘absence of any sense of want, or corruption, or shame’ (p.176). Winckelmann’s method of ‘handling of the sensuous side’ — particularly ‘the sensuous backside’ — is given a rather phallic thrust, at least rhetorically, when Pater claims that ‘penetrating into the antique world by his passion, his temperament, [Winckelmann] enunciated no formal principles, always hard and one-sided’ (p.176). ‘Temperament’ here is synonymous with ‘disposition’, which serves to link his ‘penetrating into […] by his passion, his temperament’ with the Dorians’ ‘secreted their peculiar disposition’.

Through such descriptions — descriptions as paederastic and homoerotic as those of his biographical subject — Pater asserts that ‘nothing was to enter into [Winckelmann’s] life unpenetrated by its central enthusiasm’ (p.144), an enthusiasm that even in ‘the protracted longing of his youth is not a vague, romantic longing’, for Winckelmann ‘knows what he longs for, what he wills. Within its severe limits his enthusiasm burns like lava’ (p.148), an enthusiasm and an ‘affinity with Hellenism [that] was not merely intellectual’ (p.152), an enthusiasm and an affinity arising from ‘his romantic, fervent friendships with young men’:
St Michael the Archangel (detail)
Guido Reni (1575-1642)
Oil on canvas, 1635
Santa Maria della Concezione dei Cappuccini
Rome, Italy

Christ Appearing to the Virgin (detail)
Guido Reni (1575-1642)
Oil on canvas, ca. 1608
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK
This enthusiasm, dependent as it is to a great degree on bodily temperament, has a power of reinforcing the purer emotions of the intellect with an almost physical excitement. That this affinity with Hellenism was not merely intellectual, that the subtler threads of temperament were inwoven in it, is proved by his romantic, fervent friendships with young men. He has known, he says, many young men more beautiful than Guido [Reni]’s archangel. These friendships, bringing him into contact with the pride of human form, and staining the thoughts with its bloom, perfected his reconciliation to the spirit of Greek sculpture. (P.152, emphasis added)

Brought ‘into contact’ with ‘the pride of human form’, Winckelmann had indeed ‘known […] many young men more beautiful than Guido [Reni]’s archangel’, had ‘known’ them in the intimate ways that had damned the men of Sodom, for Pater is employing here, as already noted, the language of Genesis 19.5 — ‘And [the men of Sodom] called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them’ (KJV); ‘[…] Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them’ (NIV). Pater implicitly suggests that ‘we see [in these “romantic, fervent friendships”] the native tendency of Winckelmann to escape from abstract theory to intuition, to the exercise of sight and touch’ (1893, p.147). As biographer, Pater assumes that, inspired by the beauty of these young German aristocrats, Winckelmann performed with them and with others pedagogical ‘exercises of sight and touch’, an assumption supported by the memoirs of Giacomo Casanova:

Early that morning I go without knocking into a small room in which [Winckelmann] was usually alone copying out some antique inscription, and I see him hastily leave a boy, at the same time quickly setting his breeches to rights. I pretend to have seen nothing. […] The Bathyllus, who was indeed very pretty, leaves."

1 Pater would have had leisure to contemplate the painting to which Winckelmann refers, _St Michael the Archangel_ (1635) by Guido Reni (1575-1642), since a large copy hangs in the chancel of the chapel of Jesus College, Oxford. This copy was a gift from Thomas James Warren-Bulkeley (7th Viscount Bulkeley; 1752-1822), who had acquired it on his ‘grand tour’ of the Continent. Winckelmann’s comment, in the original, alludes to a letter about the painting, a letter sent by Guido Reni to Monsignor Giovanni Massani, Housemaster to Pope Urban VIII: ‘I should like to have had the brush of an angel or forms of paradise, to form the archangel and to see him in heaven, but I was unable to ascend so high, and on earth I sought them in vain. So I looked at the form that I established for myself in my idea’ — as quoted in Giovan Pietro Bellori, _The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors, and Architects_, trans. by Alice Sedgwick Wohl, with notes by Hellmut Wohl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005 [1672]), p.59.

2 Giacomo Casanova, _History of My Life_, vols 7-8, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p.193. The allusion is to a startlingly beautiful boy who was Anacreon’s alleged lover during his exile on Samos: ‘I see a godlike portrait there; / So like Bathyllus! — sure there’s none / So like Bathyllus but the
Winckelmann immediately justified his activities to Casanova as follows:

‘Know’, he said, ‘that not only am I not a pederast, but that all my life long I have declared it inconceivable that the inclination could have exercised such an attraction on the human race. If I said this after what you have just seen you would pronounce me a hypocrite. But here is the truth of the matter. In the long course of my studies I first came to admire, then to idolize the ancients, who, as you know, were almost all of them buggers without concealing the fact, while a number of them even immortalized the charming objects of their love by their poems and even by magnificent monuments. Indeed, they went so far as to cite their inclination as testimony of their morality […] I felt a kind of disdain and even of shame because in this respect I did not in the least resemble my heroes. At considerable cost to my self-esteem, I felt that I was in a way contemptible, and, unable to convict myself of stupidity merely by cold theory, I decided to seek the light of practice. […] Having so resolved, I have been applying myself to the matter for the past three or four years, choosing the prettiest Smerdiases in Rome; but all to no avail: when I set to work, non arrivo (“I get nowhere”). To my dismay I always find that a woman is preferable in every respect.’

Although awkwardly compromised, although recasting his interrupted ‘tutorial’ as an attempt to illumine himself through pederastic practice, Winckelmann nonetheless admitted candidly to Casanova that his own Classicism was an attempt to reconstruct the pederastic culture that had flourished among the ancients — ‘almost all of them buggers without concealing the fact’ — a Hellenic culture that often lingers only as pitiable fragments buried beneath the earth or in the (un)consciousness of man, as Pater explains:

This testimony to the authority of the Hellenic tradition, its fitness to satisfy some vital requirement of the intellect, which Winckelmann contributes as a solitary man of genius, is offered also by the general history of the mind. The spiritual forces of the past, which have prompted and informed the culture of a succeeding age, live, indeed, within that culture, but with an absorbed, underground life. The Hellenic element alone has not been so absorbed, or content with this underground life; from time to time it has started to the surface; culture has been drawn back to its sources to be clarified and corrected. Hellenism is not merely an absorbed element in our intellectual life; it is a conscious tradition in it. (Renaissance 1893, p.158)


This passage asserts a necessity for ‘zealous archaeology’ (Greek Studies, p.157), in the scientific and anthropological sense employed by Winckelmann, a sense that is, in many ways, diametrically opposed to the use made of the term by Foucault in L’Archéologie du Savoir (The Archaeology of Knowledge, 1969), where Foucault questions the specificity of Western thought and concentrates instead on the differences by which ‘meaning’ is formulated within particular epochs. Unlike Foucault, Pater advocates bringing ‘to the surface’ those earlier materials that have ever ‘prompted and informed’ Western culture, revealing ‘its sources’ and delineating ‘the general history of the mind’. For Pater, as for Winckelmann, all cultural roads, all ‘archaeological’ pursuits inevitably lead back to Greece, where the ‘Hellenic element’ that they both so prized was widely celebrated and cultivated.¹

Neither absorbed nor content with its underground life, this ‘Hellenic element’ — in the paederastic sense that Winckelmann understood and experienced it — had also ‘started to the surface’ in Victorian culture, as a seedling nurtured by Pater and his coterie. Nevertheless, as Wilde would come to illustrate both textually and literally, ‘those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril’, a peril that extended beyond those who tilled the Uranian soil to those who gathered what Hopkins, in that fragmentary poem composed upon Pater’s dinner acceptance, calls the ‘brightest blooms’, those blooms with the ‘sweetest nectar’. Pater and his coterie fully recognised the real peril involved in cultivating this paederastic flower and in ‘staining the thoughts with its bloom’ (Renaissance 1893, p.152). They also fully recognised that the particular blooms that sprang from their own cultivation of this ‘Hellenic element’ would only be appreciated and discreetly sanctioned by individuals with ‘peculiar natures’ (Marius I, p.32), individuals who, like Winckelmann, possessed ‘this key to the understanding of the Greek spirit’ in their own ‘natures’, individuals who, like Pater, Hopkins, and Wilde, were masters of the Classics studied in Oxford’s Literae Humaniores (or Greats), a bountiful bouquet of Greco-Roman paederastic nuances. After gathering a score of paederastic blooms from the dialogues of Plato, the apprenticeships of Leonardo, and the criticisms of Winckelmann, Pater crafted, particularly in his Renaissance, a pedagogical laurel that would wreath the scholarly and sexual temperaments of many an Oxford Uranian like Hopkins, as well as many a modern ‘Uranian’ (even if they know it not).

Despite the fact that, when Pater’s essay on Winckelmann appeared in the Westminster Review in January 1867, it did so anonymously, Hopkins is likely to have known much of its substance, even if uncertain of Pater’s authorship (given that Hopkins knew the essay at all). This essay on Winckelmann, published six months before Hopkins graduated from Oxford, was still being drafted while Hopkins was busily preparing with Pater for his finals in

Greats. This was a period during which, according to Nixon, ‘Pater would have shared much of his scholarship with Hopkins’.

Perhaps after a rhetorical question like ‘And what does the spirit need in the face of modern life?’ — a question with its attendant answer of ‘The sense of freedom’ (‘Winckelmann’, Renaissance 1893, p.184) — Pater had vaguely insinuated to Hopkins about ‘the theme of sexual freedom latent in Winckelmann’s notion of Greek nakedness’. Much later, as a professor himself, Hopkins must have ruminated over the discussions he had had with Pater, discussions that had certainly been tinged with a Winckelmannesque appreciation for a Hellenic culture in which paederasty was more than a valued aspect, for the Greeks had inaugurated a pedagogical tradition that still occasionally surfaces, in all of its emboldened nakedness, in Western culture, flaunting about en plein air in the likes of Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’, a poem that fulfils Pater’s insistence that the aesthetic goal is ‘to create, to live, perhaps, a little while beyond the allotted hours, even if it were but in a fragment of perfect expression […] something to hold by amid the perpetual flux’ (Marius, I, p.155), something stable amid the Heraclitean changes in life and culture that Hopkins considers in ‘That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection’. Beyond its intrinsic value discussed in the previous chapter, the Paterian quality of Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ — a poem that, according to Nixon, is an expression of the ‘Paterian notions of the wholeness of male sexuality’ — seriously challenges Norman White’s dismissal of the poem as an improvisational fragment and as a collection of ‘landscape descriptions [that] have no force of plot behind them’.

As a poetic masterpiece, Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ warrants what Marius refers to as ‘some ampler vision, which should take up into itself and explain this world’s delightful shows, as the scattered fragments of a poetry, till then but half-understood, might be taken up into the text of a lost epic, recovered at last’ (II, pp.219-20). This would certainly fulfil at least half of the title of Michael Lynch’s article about the poet’s homoeroticism — ‘Recovering Hopkins, Recovering Ourselves’ — and would situate the poem into its proper Paterian context, allowing it to be judged in accordance to Paterian criteria of aesthetic excellence.

Exhibiting the same literary scrupulosity that, in Flavian, Pater describes as ‘a sort of chivalrous conscience’, Hopkins, in his ‘Epithalamion’, ‘manipulated [words] with all his delicate force, […] making visible to others that which was vividly apparent, delightful, of lively interest to himself’ (Marius, I, p.96) — which was a woodland where bathing boys abound and where a prurient stranger

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advances until, erotically inspired by the boys’ nakedness, he undresses and bathes alone in a vacillating stream, a stream aflow with masturbatory connotations. Like the church in Cecilia’s house, the ‘branchy bunchy bushybowered wood’ within which Hopkins has chosen to conceal his most delicate homoerotic and paederastic expression is ‘a bride adorned for her husband’ (II, p.97), an appropriate occasion indeed for a nuptial epithalamion. Contrary to White’s insistence that these ‘landscape descriptions have no force of plot behind them’, the ‘Epithalamion’, as well as its landscape, is planted with a ‘temperament’ rather than plotted with action, a ‘receptive temperament’ that Pater attempted to instil in students like Hopkins, imploring his ‘hearers’ ‘to watch, for its dramatic interest, the spectacle of a powerful, of a sovereign intellect, translating itself, amid a complex group of conditions which can never in the nature of things occur again’ (*Platonism*, p.11). Essentially, the ‘Epithalamion’ allows Hopkins to translate his own ‘sovereign intellect’, to display ‘the power of entering […] into the intimate recesses of other minds’ (‘Postscript’, *Appreciations*, p.266), in this case his own. For Hopkins as well as for Pater, these ‘secret places of a unique temperament’ (‘Leonardo’, *Renaissance* 1893, p.92) seem ‘to designate a particular state of mind or mode of existence rather than a body of discursive lore, and hence [are] not to be revealed, only experienced’,¹ experienced as an education of the senses, an education that — for Hopkins as much as for the continuum of Plato, Marius, Leonardo, Winckelmann, and Pater — ‘blends eros, pedagogy, and aesthetics’.² For Pater, this involves the acquisition of ‘appreciation’, of ‘style’, of the skill to influence others in turn:

Greatness in literary art depends on a rich and expressive style that places it architecturally within the great structure of human life, using fine, scholarly speech to express an inner vision that informs and controls, has compass and variety, is allied to great ends, has depths of revolt and largeness of hope — the writer giving each unique phrase, sentence, structural member, and the entire composition a similar unity with its subject and with itself, providing a cloistral refuge from the vulgarity of the actual world, allowing his readers to see precisely what he sees, to enter into the intimate recesses of his own mind and sentiments. (*Appreciations*, my précis)

After addressing his reader as his ‘hearer’ — the belovèd of traditional paederastic pedagogy — Hopkins invites his reader to participate aesthetically in the creation of a mutual fantasy, to observe the transformation of a voyeuristic stranger from ‘listless’ to ‘froliclavish’. This is the skill of ‘influence’ about which Pater speaks. ‘The basis of all artistic genius’, writes Pater, ‘lies in the

¹ Adams, p.454.
² Sweet, p.153. This education also had religion thrown into the mix, which would have made it far more congenial for Hopkins: ‘The interdependence of the rhetorics of aesthetics, religion and […] homosexuality in the case of Winckelmann should, then, be clear’ (Morrison, ‘Discreet’, p.132).
power of conceiving humanity in a new and striking way, of putting a happy
world of its own creation in place of the meager world of our common days’
(‘Winckelmann’, Renaissance 1893, p.170), a world created through an
‘interpenetration of intellectual, spiritual, and physical elements’ (p.174), a world
abounding with a ‘Cyrenic eagerness […] to taste and see and touch’ (Marius, I,
p.201), an eagerness to dive into what Marius calls ‘that full stream of refined
sensation’ (II, p.26). For Hopkins, this ‘full stream of refined sensation’ spills
forth from youthful bodies, bodies of ‘limber liquid youth’ that yield ‘tender as a
pushed peach’ (‘Bugler’s First Communion’, lines 22-23), bodies that
‘Winckelmann compares […] to a quiet sea, which, although we understand it to
be in motion, we nevertheless regard as an image of repose’ (Renaissance 1893,
p.174). In contrast to Winckelmann’s youthful bodies in their sculptural repose,
Hopkins’s are ‘fretted’ with a masturbatory fever that drives them to hurl
themselves into a river ‘boisterously beautiful’, a fever that also drives the
prurient imagination of a ‘listless stranger […] beckoned by [their] noise’, a
stranger who gazes, unseen, until

This garland of their gambol flashes in his breast
Into such a sudden zest
Of summertime joys
That he hies to a pool neighbouring.

This ‘pool neighbouring’ is a place of seclusion where the stranger, perhaps
ashamed to swim naked with the randy boys, can appease his own sensual urges,
place described as ‘sweetest, freshest, shadowiest; / Fairyland’. Impassioned
far by the boys’ voluptuous accents, Hopkins’s ‘listless’ stranger undresses and
bathes alone, allowing the water, described as a ‘heavenfallen freshness’, to
‘break across his limbs / Long’, an act that changes his state from ‘listless’ to
‘froliclavish’ as he embraces and is embraced by the watery hand of God.
Through this baptismal conversion, Hopkins illustrates Pater’s tripartite division
of humanity: ‘Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the
wisest, at least among “the children of this world”, in art and song’ (‘Conclusion’,
Renaissance 1893, p.190). Hopkins’s epithalamic stranger exchanges his
‘listlessness’ for ‘high passions’ (‘higher’ certainly than the passions of the
bathing boys); and, wiser still, Hopkins’s ‘hearer’ and narrator together construct
a paederastic and homoerotic epithalamion, a poetic unification of Greco-Roman
‘art and song’.

However, few artists, Pater observes, capture a ‘quickened sense of life, 
ecstasy and sorrow of love’ (p.190), all of which accompany Hopkins’s creation
of the ‘Epithalamion’. Beyond the naked bathers and their voyeur bathed in ‘high
passions’, both the narrator and the ‘hearer’, the artistic participants of Hopkins’s
‘Epithalamion’, are bathed in insight, in that ‘quickened sense of life, ecstasy and
sorrow of love’ — especially given the elegiac quality of the poem as it relates to
Digby Dolben. For Hopkins, as for Marius, ‘the whole of life seemed full of
sacred presences’ (I, p.17), presences that bestow not only passion (however
‘high’), but also serenity, ‘the absence of any sense of want, or corruption, or shame’ (‘Winckelmann’, Renaissance 1893, p.176). While on a spiritual retreat in early September 1873, Hopkins seems to have acquired just such a ‘serenity’ in regard to Dolben, who had died, disturbingly for Hopkins, outside of the Roman Catholic fold: ‘I received as I think a great mercy about Dolben’ (Journals, p.236).\footnote{This ‘mercy’ probably involved the fact that, ‘after [Dolben’s] death, there was found among his papers the beginning of a letter to his father asking to be absolved of his promise not to be baptized [into the Roman Catholic Church before graduating from university], in case of any dangerous accident or illness’ (Dolben 1915, p.cvii). Hopkins may have learned, through Bridges or Dolben’s former intimate Alfred Thomas Wyatt-Edgell (later Lord Braye; 1849-1928), of this unfinished letter and may have embraced the hope that it had, in some way, lent Dolben a form of ‘plenary grace’.}\footnote{White, ‘Epithalamion’, p.159.} On several occasions elsewhere, Hopkins uses this same phrasing to describe an assurance he believes he has been ‘granted’ of someone’s salvation — in the following case, his grandfather’s:

I receive it without questioning as a mark that my prayers have been heard and that the queen of heaven has saved a Christian soul from enemies more terrible than a fleet of infidels. Do not make light of this, for it is perhaps the seventh time that I think I have had some token from heaven in connection with the death of people in whom I am interested.

(Letter to his mother, 9 October 1877, Letters III, p.148)

With its accompanying elegiac tint, this ‘serenity’ about Dolben (however questionable the circumstances from which it arose) adds the final flourish to Hopkins’s strikingly Paterian ‘Epithalamion’, for ‘there [had] come, from the very depth of his desolation, an eloquent utterance at last, on the irony of men’s fates, on the singular accidents of life and death’ (Marius, II, pp.214-15), in this case a late poem that serves as a remembrance of Dolben’s accidental drowning as well as the love he had inspired while alive.

If, as Pater insists, the greatness of literary art depends on ‘the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it’ (‘Style’, Appreciations, p.36), then, contrary to White’s dismissal of Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ as ‘second-hand impressions pasted together’,\footnote{White, ‘Epithalamion’, p.159.} the poem is indeed a masterpiece, displaying all the qualities Pater deemed essential in art. As the last chapter elucidated, Hopkins’s Whitmanesque ‘Epithalamion’ serves as an imaginative lesson in Keatsian beauty and serenity; as a protest against conventional morality and its conception of the body; as a lyrical blending of Classical, Christian, Romantic, and Victorian themes; as an elegy on the death of Hopkins’s beloved Dolben; as an affirmation of sexual freedom and mortal beauty; as a paederastic creed as controversial as anything written in the decades following by the other English Uranians.
Missing the plot, the temperament, and the mastery of Hopkins’s ‘Epithalamion’ — as has been the case with most literary criticism — stems almost entirely from a refusal to recognise Hopkins as Pater’s Decadent pupil, a pupil fully versed in the paederastic culture that flourished among the ancients (‘almost all of them buggers without concealing the fact’) as well as among his own contemporaries, a pupil who had developed that paederastic ‘temperament’ that Pater describes as ‘a sort of chivalrous conscience’, and the later Uranians, as ‘the New Chivalry’.¹ In White’s case, the mistake stems from a belief that ‘the person who most influenced Gerard Hopkins’s writings was John Ruskin’,² a belief that allows him to claim elsewhere that ‘for one term Hopkins was coached by W. H. Pater of Brasenose, but direct influence is not obvious’.³ Hopkins often was, it must be admitted, strikingly Ruskinian in his love of Aristotelian particulars and their arrangements; however, it was at the foot of Pater — the foremost Victorian unifier of ‘eros, pedagogy, and aesthetics’ — that Hopkins would ever remain. The ‘direct influence’ of Pater on Hopkins is indeed ‘obvious’, if one cares to look.

While ‘Pater imagines what would have happened if Winckelmann and Goethe had met […] a homosexual fantasy’,⁴ it is also possible to imagine what would have happened if Pater and Hopkins had not — a paederastic and ‘homosexual’ vacuity. The result would likely have been a very different Hopkins, a Hopkins far less Decadent and Uranian, a Hopkins far less suggestive, multifaceted, and grand. The result would also have been a very different Pater, a Pater whose paederastic pedagogy would not have had its greatest flowering, a flowering not in his own works, but in a work by his ablest ‘hearer’, ‘the fit executant’ who managed to seize and size Pater’s elaborate Weltanschauung into a single, masterful poem, the ultimate tribute to Pater’s paederastic pedagogy.

¹ This is most prominently displayed in Edwin Emmanuel Bradford’s title The New Chivalry and Other Poems (London: Kegan Paul, 1918).
³ Norman White, ‘Gerard Manley Hopkins’, DNB.
⁴ Donoghue, p.157.
Epitaph:
‘Worthy of Uranian Song’

The boy, who had been to a dance the night before, remained asleep. He lay with his limbs uncovered. He lay unashamed, embraced and penetrated by the sun. The lips were parted, the down on the upper was touched with gold, the hair broken into countless glories, the body was a delicate amber. To anyone he would have seemed beautiful, and to Maurice who reached him by two paths he became the World’s desire. (E. M. Forster, *Maurice*)

‘A musical composer’s notes, we know, are not themselves till the fit executant comes, who can put all they may be into them’, wrote Walter Pater in ‘Emerald Uthwart’, a short story concerned with how, as members of a conservative society, Victorian or contemporary, ‘you thwart’ a youth who tries ‘to burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, [who tries] to maintain this [Paterian] ecstasy’ (*Renaissance* 1893, p.189). This claim about the ‘fit executant’ may have been as true for Pater’s doctrines as for any composer’s notes, perhaps gaining their fullest expression through an epithalamion by one of his students. Gerard Manley Hopkins may well have been the ‘fit executant’ of Pater’s homoerotic and paederastic doctrines, doctrines derived from an erotic nature that they had both come to appreciate in themselves while yet undergraduates at Oxford, for ‘often the presence of this nature is felt like a sweet aroma in early manhood’ (‘Diaphaneité’, *Miscellaneous*, p.221).

Whilst Pater was his Greats coach and Digby Dolben his desired beloved, Hopkins must have resembled Pater’s protagonist, the ‘gem-like’ Emerald, ‘a rather sensuous boy!’ (p.174), with qualities like those preferred and praised by Plato: ‘conservative Sparta and its youth; whose unsparing discipline had doubtless something to do with the fact that it was the handsomest and best-formed in all Greece’ (p.182). Like the young Spartans, Pater’s Emerald

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3 Pater’s choice of the name ‘Uthwart’ also derives from its possible pronunciation as ‘athwart’, a word with implications of ‘queer’: ‘The word “queer”, of course, itself means across — coming from the Indo-European root -twerkw, which also yields the German quer (transverse), Latin torquere (to twist), English athwart’ — see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, ‘Six Queer Habits’ <http://www.duke.edu/~sedgwick/WRITING/HABITS.htm> (her personal homepage) [last accessed 25 June 2004].
4 Shuter observes: In “Emerald Uthwart”, written while he was offering his lectures on Plato and Platonism, Pater gave a full-length imaginative portrait of his “ingenuous and
displays that receptive disposition that another ‘great lover of boys and young men’, according to Pater, praised as “full of affections, full of powers, full of occupation”, for “the younger part of us especially (more naturally than the older) receive the tidings that there are things to be loved and things to be done which shall never pass away” (p.171). As with these youths, Emerald had received such ‘tidings’ through a paederastic intimacy in which he was the receptive partner, both physically and intellectually: ‘Submissiveness! — It had the force of genius with Emerald Uthwart. In that very matter he had but yielded to a senior against his own inclination’ (p.188, emphasis added), a senior under whose influence ‘scholarship attains something of a religious colour’ (pp.188-89). After duly locking his Roman chamber against the intrusive Casanova, Winckelmann would indeed have appreciated Emerald’s ‘submissiveness’, as well as Pater’s ‘enthusiastic’ description of it, a Decadent wordplay that recalls Hopkins’s fragmentary statement about a ‘three-healed timber […] right rooting in the bare butt’s wincing navel’ (OET, p.155).

A ‘surface’ reading of its ‘overthought’ suggests that Emerald ‘had but yielded to a senior’ in the sense of ‘had only yielded to a senior’, yielded in some way, likely intellectual. A ‘symbolic’ reading of its ‘underthought’ suggests that Emerald ‘had butt-yielded to a senior’ — even if, initially, he had done so ‘against his own inclination’, ‘wincing’ at the prospect of complete paederastic openness and submissiveness, Hopkins’s ‘bare butt’s wincing navel’. As a result of eventually yielding, ‘his submissiveness […] made him therefore, of course, unlike those around him’, for it ‘was a secret; a thing, you might say, “which no one knoweth, saving he that receiveth it”’ (p.189), an erotic and intellectual openness transforming ‘he that receiveth it’ (the vagueness of ‘it’ allowing for transgressive vagaries) into someone like Flavian’s Marius, Leonardo’s Salai, Winckelmann’s Lamprecht, Pater’s Hardinge, or Hopkins’s ‘hearer’, someone noticeably different from ‘those around him’, someone who would have appreciated the eroticism that swells in the following description of Emerald’s own maturing ‘manhood’:

Preceptores, condiscipuli, alike, marvel at a sort of delicacy coming into the habits, the person, of that tall, bashful, broad-shouldered, very Kentish, lad; so unaffectedly nevertheless, that it is understood after all to be but the smartness properly significant of change to early manhood, like the down on his lip. Wistful anticipations of manhood are in fact aroused in him, thoughts of the future; his ambition takes effective outline. The well-worn, perhaps

docile” youth. The rigors of Uthwart’s mental and ethical training at school and at Oxford are explicitly compared to those prescribed in the Republic, and the paiderastic eros of his relationship with the slightly older James Stokes is represented in the language of the Phaedrus” (“Greats”, p.254).

1 The etymology of ‘butt’ (in the sense of physiognomy) seems to derive from Middle English, probably akin to Middle English buttok, ‘buttock’ (OED). ‘Butt’ also has the meaning of ‘a backstop for catching arrows shot at a target’ — a meaning that allows for Hopkins’s playfulness.
Although, like Whitman, Emerald could find no ‘fit expression’ for his erotic intimacy with that senior, for his ‘love that dare not speak its name’ — he did find, through the symbolism of Pater’s art, what Marius describes as ‘an eloquent utterance at last’:

He finds the Greek or the Latin model of their antique friendship or tries to find it, in the books they read together. None fits exactly. It is of military glory they are really thinking, amid those ecclesiastical surroundings, where however surplices and uniforms are often mingled together; how they will lie, in costly glory, costly to them, side by side, (as they work and walk and play now, side by side) in the cathedral aisle, with a tattered flag perhaps above them, and under a single epitaph. (P.185)

If scholars were to drape Hopkins and Pater, both of whom had advanced, advocated, and/or practised a similar paederastic pedagogy, both of whom had been motivated by ‘a chivalrous conscience’, both of whom had lent a hand to puerile pupils whom they pruriently called ‘hearers’, both of whom had found their erotic desires ‘costly to them’ — if scholars were to drape them under one flag, could that flag be any other than the symbol that Whitman calls ‘the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven’, a ‘branchy bunchy bushybowered’ flag capable of concealing paederastic intimations or intimacies from the unappreciative, embarrassed, or spiteful glances of society, an emerald flag flown by those ‘you thwart’? What then as a ‘single epitaph’? Could scholars place Pater and Hopkins under any more befitting epitaph than ‘Uranian’? ‘Uranian’ is the ‘fit expression’, the one expression that would link them, as part of a continuum, with the paederastic poets, prose writers, and painters who flourished in England from William Johnson (later Cory; 1823-92)

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1 In The History of Education in Antiquity, trans. by George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), Henri I. Marrou explains:

For the Greeks, education — paidea — meant, essentially, a profound and intimate relationship, a personal union between a young man and an elder who was at once his model and his initiator — a relationship on to which the fire of passion threw warm and turbid reflections. Throughout Greek history the relationship between master and pupil was to remain that between a lover and his beloved. (P.31)

2 The seriousness that Pater would have attributed to such a question is displayed in the opening sentence of ‘Emerald Uthwart’: ‘We smile at epitaphs […] smile, for the most part, at what for the most part is an unreal and often vulgar branch of literature; yet a wide one, with its flowers here or there’ (p.170).
to Ralph Nicholas Chubb (1892-1960), those Uranian descendents of the Victorian Decadents, whose father had been none other than Pater himself. ‘Uranian’ is indeed the befitting epitaph for two literary artists ever inspired by Grecian passion and poesy, a passion and poesy ‘fathered’, as was the ‘foam-born’ Aphrodite, from the ejaculate that had spilled from Uranus’s severed genitals, genitals that, despite being considered impotent for conventional procreativity, had nonetheless filled the world with passionate creativity, had given birth to Love. Hopkins, a professed celibate who dubbed himself ‘Time’s eunuch’ (‘[Thou Art Indeed Just]’, line 13), expresses much the same about his own poetry:

> The fine delight that fathers thought; the strong
> Spur, live and lancing like the blowpipe flame,
> Breathes once and, quenched faster than it came,
> Leaves yet the mind a mother of immortal song. (‘To R.B.’, lines 1-4)

However controversial, this claim about the fitness of this ‘single epitaph’ is not entirely novel, for it was made by the Uranians themselves, situating Pater, as they did, within their own fold and beneath the folds of the emerald flag they flew. In *The Academy* on 11 October 1902, Lionel Johnson — a Uranian poet, a Roman Catholic, and a friend of the late Pater — published ‘Walter Pater’, a memorial that draws to a close with:

> Love, I adore the contours of thy shape,
> Thine exquisite breasts and arms adorable;
> The wonders of thine heavenly throat compel
> Such fire of love as even my dreams escape:
> I love thee as the sea-foam loves the cape,
> Or as the shore the sea’s enchanting spell:
> In sweets the blossoms of thy mouth excel
> The tenderest bloom of peach or purple grape. (Emphasis added)

1 From Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 176-206. ‘As for the genitals, just as he first cut them off with his instrument of adamant and threw them from the land into the surging sea, even so they were carried on the waves for a long time. About them a white foam grew from the immortal flesh, and in it a girl formed. […] Gods and men call her Aphrodite, because she was formed in foam’ — Hesiod, ‘Theogony’ and ‘Works and Days’, trans. by M. L. West (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.8-9. It is my belief that the ‘Uranians’ conceived of their name dualistically, as deriving from the ‘heavenly’ love described in Plato as well as from Aphrodite’s birth as described by Hesiod. The octave of Theodore Wratislaw’s ‘To a Sicilian Boy’, in *Caprices* (1893), seems to allude to the Uranian dimension of the birth of Venus, and of Cupid consequently:

2 In Tom Stoppard’s play *The Invention of Love* (1997), the Classicist and poet A. E. Housman encounters, on an imagined journey down the river Styx, the intellectual currents of Victorian Oxford life, individuals such as Jowett, Pater, and Wilde. Stoppard’s title suggests an appreciation that this form of love had found, in individuals like Housman, a new invention of itself.
Patient beneath his Oxford trees and towers
He still is gently ours:
Hierarch of the spirit, pure and strong,
Worthy Uranian song.¹

Meanwhile, unlike that ‘hierarch of the spirit, pure and strong’, there were other Uranians without ‘a chivalrous conscience’. Decadent types who were attempting to rally the same troops under much the same emerald symbolism, though preferring an emerald carnation sprouting from the buttonhole of their evening dress.² Paul Fussell describes this dichotomy cogently, though with too little tactility: ‘At its most pure, the program of the Uranians favored an ideal of “Greek love” like that promulgated in Walter Pater’s essay on Winckelmann, stressing the worship of young male beauty without sex. But very frequently such highmindedness was impossible to sustain, and earnest ideal pedophilia found itself descending to ordinary pederastic sodomy’.³ Hence, unlike their Paterian counterparts, whose idealism encompassed far more than ‘ordinary pederastic sodomy’, these ‘other Uranians’ bestowed only ‘passion’, passion devoid of ‘serenity’ and ‘purity’, passion devoid of an ‘absence of any sense of want, or corruption, or shame’,⁴ passion devoid of the refined qualities that Pater and Lionel Johnson considered essential:

Yet the most radical claim of the new Uranian poetry [represented by writers like Lionel Johnson] would always be that it sang the praises of a mode of spiritual and emotional attachment that was, at some ultimate level, innocent or asexual.⁵

The great significance of [Lionel] Johnson’s work as a Uranian poet thus becomes his attempt to defend the older tradition of pederastic Hellenism in the face of the newer sexual realism in male love being asserted in the early 1890s by such writers as Symonds and [Theodore] Wratislaw and indeed by [Lord Alfred] Douglas himself.⁶

⁴ See Peter Swaab, ‘Hopkins and the Pushed Peach’, Critical Quarterly, 37.3 (1995), pp.43-60. Swaab makes much the same division: ‘If we are to see Hopkins in relation to Victorian voices of homosexuality, then he has much more in common with figures mainly conciliatory to social orthodoxies (Symonds, Carpenter, arguably Pater) than with pervasively dissident figures such as Swinburne, Solomon, and Wilde’ (p.50).
⁵ Dowling, Hellenism, p.115.
⁶ Ibid., p.137. In 1893, Wratislaw published his sonnet ‘To a Sicilian Boy’, a sonnet that is representative of this encroaching realism, particularly via its title/address.
The foremost of those busily popularising and actualising the ‘newer sexual realism’ was Oscar Wilde. Although Dowling displays reticence about including Wilde in her list of Uranians above (despite including his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas), she nonetheless relates: ‘Pater never ceased to realize that the danger to homoerotic Hellenism might in fact come not from the predictably uncomprehending barbarians alone but also from the Greeks themselves: Socrates’ teaching had been corrupted by Alcibiades, his own had been mistaken by Wilde’.¹

What demarcated these two Uranian camps — Pater’s and Wilde’s — was not their choice of the emerald flag or the emerald flower, but the way they saw the same paederastic and homoerotic positionality, the way they (mis)constructed and (mis)construed Pater’s elaborate Weltanschauung, the way they handled ‘the distinction that Pater drew between his Platonic aestheticism and the more bodily and decadent aestheticism that was being associated with Wilde’.² Since Wilde and his coterie provided the second of these camps or paths, it is to Wilde as Alcibiades that the next chapter turns.³

¹ Dowling, *Hellenism*, p.140. D’Arch Smith broadens this, suggesting that, in much of the Decadence of the 1890s, ‘the aesthetics of Pater and the Greek ideal were being slightly perverted and misinterpreted’ (p.2). I would replace the word ‘slightly’ with ‘highly’. Monsman describes this aptly as ‘Oscar Wilde’s seductive (mis)constructions of Paterian aesthetic theories’ (‘Platonic’, p.28). That Wilde never acknowledged this himself is revealed in a letter, ca. 18 February 1898, Wilde claiming that ‘To have altered my life would have been to have admitted that Uranian love is ignoble’ — Rupert Hart-Davis, ed., *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1962), p.705.

Curiously, it seems that the Greco-Roman culture so prized by Pater was itself destroyed by eroticised paederasty, if the ancient historian Procopius of Caesarea, author of *The Secret History*, is correct: ‘Procopius, who wrote in the early sixth century […] tells how the Vandals captured Rome by selecting three hundred boys of good birth “whose beards had not yet grown, but who had just come of age”, and sent them to Roman patricians to serve as house slaves, a capacity in which they would have been subject to sexual exploitation. On a predestined day they killed their masters, facilitating the capture of the city’ — David F. Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p.249.


³ I am here differentiating between two forms of erotic positioning, as well as the fulfilment and outcome of such erotic attachments. My differentiation is not contradictory to Brian Reade’s claim in *Sexual Heretics: Male Homosexuality in English Literature from 1850 to 1900* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970) that there were two forms of Victorian derivation for the thing he labels ‘homosexual sentiment’ (about this claim I am in tentative agreement):

By 1870 two contrasted streams of homosexual sentiment were especially noteworthy: one from the Oxford Movement with its undercurrent of emotional friendship as expressed by Newman and Faber; the other from the muscular Christianity of Dr Arnold at Rugby School, a somewhat inarticulate trend. Although these two streams were opposed, in fact they were joined at the point in a friendship where emphasis is placed on overtones of self-sacrifice. (P.29)
W. Graham Robertson
John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)
Oil on canvas, 1894
Tate Collection, London, UK

Since ‘self-sacrifice’ for love’s sake was the Paterian ideal, Pater and his ‘philosophy’ can be seen as the confluence, after 1873, of these two Victorian streams — though these two streams would, in due course, separate again and differently. After their confluence in Pater, these two streams separated into those Uranians with a ‘chivalrous conscience’, like Hopkins, and those without it, like Wilde. For the first group, ‘Emerald’ was a flag to be flown; for the second, a carnation to be flaunted.

1 W(alford) Graham Robertson (1866-1948) — an artist, a friend of Wilde, and a London dilettante — was actually twenty-eight at the time this portrait was painted. With his brush, Sargent has managed, perhaps intentionally, to capture Robertson’s remarkable youthfulness in a tone similar to Wilde’s Picture of Dorian Gray.