

ROBERT GAGNON'S *THE BIBLE AND HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE* TEN YEARS AFTER : A NON-THEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT.

SECOND, REVISED EDITION

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Gagnon's personal and academic stance must be weighed down against the evidence (2). His book as a fundamentalist galore, in his own words (2-4).

Part one (pp. 4-11). Gagnon on the possible biological causes of homosexuality :

His gazette has the virtue of eschewing superficiality, as is so often the case in same-sex books (4-5), but suffers from tunnel vision, which twists the medical evidence (5-6). Its exclusion of animal homosexuality is damaging (6-7), and it failed to cover, or even mention, so many points and recent developments in hardcore science that its credibility comes close to zero (7-8). Gagnon's insistence on postnatal and psychological factors (viz. nurture) is partisan as well as badly grounded (8-10) ; it showcases his polemical, homophobic biases, thereby invalidating his pretence to objective commentary (10-11).

Part two (pp. 11-27). Gagnon as a Greek scholar :

An atrocious lexicographer, who rewrites the history of suggestive lexemes as floats his boat (12-14), he misconstrues the actual nature of Graeco-Roman sexuality in order to enforce his view of the Pauline unnaturalness of homosexual acts (15-17) ; small wonder his command of the texts which root the standard sexual anthropology of Greece and Rome comes off so badly (18-20). His book fares no better with respect to the background of the New Testament, as evinced by his totally biased assimilation of Christian views on long hair with its values during the Hellenistic and Early Imperial periods (21-24), and to New Testament intertextuality, of which he has an extravagantly sanguine notion (24-27).

Part three (pp. 27-36). Gagnon and the non-Jewish Near East :

Having no cuneiform, thus no independent judgement, he should have chosen his sources on Levantine and Sumero-Akkadian homosexuality with far more care (27-28). Not only is his view of same-sex dealings in Mesopotamia skewed (28) ; his account of the gender-bending cultic figures exhibits gaps and serious lapses (28-30), while he sticks to an outdated refusal to acknowledge as possibly carnal the bond between Enkidu and Gilgamesh (30-31). Astoundingly little familiarity with Canaanite (31) and Akkadian (31-34) makes him highly gullible, too. Therefore, of all the second-hand surveys of Middle Eastern homosexuality available, his ranks as the more ideology-driven and least satisfactory (34-36).

Part four (pp. 36-44). Gagnon as an exegete of Scripture :

Far too absolute in his stance not to be a fundamentalist (36), he deploys a curtailed and parochial bibliography (37-38). His exegesis revolves around an aggressive dragging in of the God-given, gender complementarity of the male and the female, a grid which works so little on its own merits that his case is vastly overstated and requires much special pleading of the dirty kind (38-41). Substandard in his philology and interpretive powers (41-43), Gagnon has the gall to push the clock back to the early 1980s and force-feed the reader his certainty that there were male cultic prostitutes in Israel (43-44).

Conclusion (pp. 44-54) :

A slippery work to criticize, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* has a somewhat restricted claim to being called a scholarly enquiry (44-45). Its true nature is that of a homophobic libel by a clever yet unoriginal and not greatly learned theologian (45-50), who should be asked to cast aside his chair and open a megachurch of his own (51-54).

Appendices (pp. 55-65) :

Key to the Greek and Latin quotes (55-61) ; on Gagnon's handling of his extra-biblical and Classical materials (60-63 note 138). Key to the abbreviations used hereafter (64-65).

A specialist of the New Testament who devotes his career to what amounts to a crusade against the acceptance of homosexuality as a behavior in Church and society, Professor Gagnon has long stirred a fuss, on the internet, the airs of conservative radios and television networks, or behind the pulpit of Presbyterian churches, promoting his 2001 study *The Bible and Homosexual Practice. Texts and Hermeneutics* as the final word on that topic. He is relentless in rebuking each and every progressive view from the United States, though he no longer favors academic venues (journals, monographs, panels...), unlike his fellow scholars who have no sympathy for his conclusions and have declared as much in their footnotes. His research was never subjected to an in-depth consideration ; eleven years after, time seems ripe for the files to be reopened¹, his presentation of the evidence checked and revised, its weak points assessed and, if feasible in a short compass, the flaws in his results removed. Moreover, several objections of value that never crossed his mind should be raised. Let the following not be deemed a hatchet job if it brings to the light an impressive array of factual defects in the very areas Gagnon claims to know better than everyone : his bombastic tone called for impeccable mastery².

As an academic contribution, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* is not quite balanced. The author blends dogmatic theological exegesis, evangelical science equating homosexuality with a very unfortunate condition to be cured, and pure and simple blackening of LBGT persons through barrister's tricks³ in order to reach a set of recommendations for the Church which do not commend themselves by their

¹ In accordance with Gagnon's concern for the freshness of his secondary Bible references (he deploys 7 titles dating from 2000 ; 15 from 1999 ; 20 from 1998 ; 27 from 1997 ; 21 from 1996 ; 28 from 1995), but see *infra*, p. 64 note 139, for significant strictures. The same concern does not apply to his references in other fields (*infra*, pp. 5, 27-28, 61-63 note 137).

² For clarity's sake, I incorporated bits of my response (07.31.2012) to Gagnon's rejoinder (07.26.2012) and clarified points that his strategy of building straw men prayed upon.

³ He happens to love Selbstzitat : « as with alcoholism or pedophilia, there is good indication that macro-cultural (society) and microcultural (family, peer) influences, as well as incremental choices, can influence the intensity and even incidence of homosexual development (on this analogy, see further Gagnon, *Homosexual Practice*, 460-69 ; Gagnon and Via, 43-44, with online notes ; on the high rates of harm, see Gagnon, *Homosexual Practice*, 452-60, 471-85 ; Gagnon and Via online note 167 » : Gagnon, 'Sexuality', in K. J. Vanhoozer (ed.), *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London & Grand Rapids, 2005), pp. 739-748 at 748. So much self-quoting cannot pass muster as standard scholarly protocol.

moderation⁴. The book tries hard to maintain a veneer of technical scholarship : the structure is clear, the style crisp, a bibliographic shorthand and a detailed apparatus of footnotes have been provided, while the most foreseeable objections which could be raised against Gagnon's contentions from the viewpoint of Queer apologetics are addressed in advance. This scriptural commentary on homosexuality intends (p. 37)

« to demonstrate two main points. First, there is clear, strong, and credible evidence that the Bible unequivocally defines same-sex intercourse as sin. Second, there exists no valid hermeneutical arguments, derived from either general principles of biblical interpretation or contemporary scientific knowledge and experience, for overriding the Bible's authority in this matter. In sum, the Bible presents the anatomical, sexual, and procreative complementarity of male and female as clear and convincing proof of God's will for sexual unions. Even those who do not accept the revelatory authority of Scripture should be able to perceive the divine will through the visible testimony of the structure of creation. Thus same-sex intercourse constitutes an inexcusable rebellion against the intentional design of the created order. It degrades the participants when they disregard nature's obvious clues, and results in destructive consequences for them as well as for society as a whole. The consequences include matters of health (catastrophic rates of disease and shortened life expectancy) and morals (unstable and destabilizing patterns of sexual behavior where short-term and non-monogamous relationships constitute the rule rather than the exception. »

So lofty a statement of purpose, couched in headstrong ethical language and determined by a literalistic reading of Scripture⁵, demands extensive evidence marshaled

⁴ Even though he operates within an evangelical tradition which has long been noted for its outspokenness to oppose the assimilation of (the practice of) homosexuality with a civil right — as a sample, I shall cite G. L. Bahnsen, *Homosexuality. A Biblical View* (Grand Rapids, 1978), pp. 10, 99-124, with characteristic advocacy of faith-based politics (for example, 124 : « all civil law will be legislated morality, in some sense infringing on someone's freedom. The civil law does not aim to regenerate men but simply to restrain their outward behavior. Such laws are necessary to a social order, establishing the limits of liberty and the public standards to which all members of the community must conform. God has infallibly decreed that the prohibition on homosexual relations is one standard and limit on human activity that is to be recognized in the social order and enforced by the state, thereby guarding the creation ordinance of heterosexual marriage ») —, his tough, holier-than-thou, posturing makes more sense in the context of the cultural wars of the eighties and nineties and, in our own age, would rather seem to belong to an ultraconservative fringe than to the mainstream. See K. D. Wald and G. B. Glover, 'Theological Perspectives on Gay Unions : The Uneasy Marriage of Religions and Politics', in C. A. Rimmerman and C. Wilcox (edd.), *The Politics of Same-Sex Marriage* (Chicago & London, 2007), pp. 105-129 at 109-114, 118-120, or W. Cadge and C. Wildeman, 'Facilitators and Advocates : How Mainline Protestant Clergy Respond to Homosexuality', *Sociological Perspectives* 51, 2008, pp. 587-603 at 594-600.

⁵ The conjunction of these two traits is a shaky basis to build on and has been extensively denounced in the Far Right's advocacy of stigma : K. McQueeney, "'We are God's Children, Y'All' : Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Lesbian- and Gay-Affirming Congregations',

in such a way that it command assent by people who do not belong to the audience the work has been designed to cater to. If key data are found faulty or the arguments invalid, then *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* will likely only rank as a witness to the cultural anger⁶ targeting 'liberals', feminists and LGBT people as the sources of the supposed degeneracy of the United States in matters moral and sexual, and to the moral panic of right-wingers over changing sexual behavior⁷.

First, what about the scientific aspects? The section entitled 'Homosexuality has a genetic component that the writers of the Bible did not realize' (pp. 395-430), which surveys the research on the biological causes of same-sex affect, scores prima facie a positive mark by virtues of its sheer length and attention to detail. Evangelicals usually appeal to science for rhetorical rather than substantive purposes, whether they are mainstream or affirmative of homosexuality⁸. Gagnon did not fall in

Social Problems 56, 2009, pp. 151-173 at 151-153. That Gagnon's very phrasing echoes the sexually stigmatizing rhetoric of the major anti-gay organizations as advertized online (J. M. Irvine, 'Anti-Gay Politics Online : A Study of Sexuality and Stigma on National Websites', *Sexuality Research and Social Policy. Journal of the NSRC* 2, 2005, pp. 3-21, particularly 6-10) is unsurprising, given his activism, but speaks ill of his commitment to impartiality.

⁶ T. Frank's helpful concept : *What's the Matter with Kansas ? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York, 2004), *passim*, most notably pp. 1-6, 160-176.

⁷ D. di Mauro and C. Joffe, 'The Religious Right and the Reshaping of Sexual Policy : An Examination of Reproductive Rights and Sexuality Education', *Sexuality Research and Social Policy. Journal of the NSRC* 4, 2007, pp. 67-92 at 71-84, offers a competent, appropriately low-key narrative of the moral panics caused by sexual and reproductive issues since the seventies. F. Fejes' oft-quoted *Gay Rights and Moral Panic. The Origin of America's Debate on Homosexuality*, New York, 2008, is wholly unhelpful here for it focuses on the struggles of 1977-1978 and fails to bring new light on the notion and to properly link this homosexual panic to the contemporaneous one on child abuse and pornography (G. Youmans, in *GLQ. A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 17, 2010, pp. 205-207). Read rather G. H. Herdt, 'Gay Marriage : The Panic and the Right', in idem (ed.), *Moral Panics, Sex Panics. Fear and the Fight Over Sexual Rights* (New York, 2009), pp. 157-204 (on the backsides of the reelection of G. W. Bush) ; R. Becker, *Gay TV and Straight America* (New Brunswick, N.J. & London, 2005), pp. 13-36 (on the anxieties of straight men faced with the questioning of once prominent sexual / ethical mores) ; and, for the mechanics at play in this puritanism, D. Wagner, *The New Temperance. The American Obsession with Sin and Vice* (Boulder, 1997), pp. 135-165, with the illuminative section on gay rights (157-161).

⁸ S. L. Jones and M. A. Yarhouse, 'The Use, Misuse, and Abuse of Science in the Ecclesiastical Homosexuality Debate', in D. L. Balch (ed.), *Homosexuality, Science, and the 'Plain Sense' of Scripture* (Grand Rapids & Cambridge, 2000), pp. 73-120, with their conclusions at 116-120 (« citations of the scientific findings appear frequently, casually, and with great imprecision in ecclesiastical debates about the morality of homosexual behavior. We would argue, based upon our review, that the "findings of science" are not as clear as is commonly assumed, and that the logical implications of the findings of science are far less clear than is casually assumed in ecclesiastical study documents », p. 116). C. E. Gudorf's paper, 'The Bible and Science on Sexuality', pp. 121-141, somewhat awkwardly juxtaposes an account of the mainstream research (122-131) which, though sound, could not help but be very superfi-

this trap, and at first glance, his gazette looks neither desultory nor subsidiary. Eleven years after its publication, though, the moving horizon of scientific research allows one to tell where it has aged and what was botched⁹. On the one hand, I would not care to contest the, utterly negative, conclusions raised about the impact of the various genetic components which have been presumed to play some part in the sexual orientation or identity of man, had the quality of Gagnon's data reached reasonable levels and had his judgement been sound enough. This is not the case. Mistakes in basic logic do abound, due to an 'either/or' approach. Thus the seemingly impressive discussion of monozygotic twins (pp. 403-406) not only suffered the injure of time owing to the large amount of research conducted since the latest study incorporated by Gagnon, viz. the early 1990s, which means that he builds on science already two decades old¹⁰. For all intents and purposes, it is nullified by Gagnon's edict on 461 that « if genetics alone accounted for homosexual orientation, then one would never

cial, with a discussion of what she terms the 'biblical theological themes in Christian ethics on homosexuality' (131-139). This leads her to the conciliatory but so very vague conclusion that « sin is generally not difficult to recognize, at least by hindsight. Murder and adultery happen all around us, but few need to ask why they are sinful; their usual consequences explain their moral status. But the more likely we are to know homosexual persons, and the more we know about homosexuality, the more likely we are to question the universal sinfulness of every homosexual act », thereby illustrating the validity of Jones and Yarhose's claim.

⁹ Today one should begin, barring the specific studies (a selection of which will appear in the following footnotes), with S. LeVay, *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why. The Science of Sexual Orientation*, New York & Oxford, 2011, the most satisfactory and complete (XVII + 412 pp.) account to date, determinedly biological in its stance but seldom doctrinaire ; there will be far less need to consult Roughgarden's book (*infra*, note 12), generally deemed suspect by evangelicals and mainstream scientists since the author was a transsexual. By contrast, the level of Gagnon's science was sampled, and found horrible and polemical, in the review of his book by C. S. Keener (*Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 57, 2003, pp. 166-173).

¹⁰ For a sample, consult L. S. Hall and C. T. Love, 'Finger-Length Ratio in Female Monozygotic Twins Discordant for Sexual Orientation', *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 32, 2003, pp. 23-28 (« supports previous findings that lesbian sexual orientation is associated with lower interdigital ratio, and by extrapolation, higher androgen levels during prenatal development », 27) ; N. L. Segal, 'Two Monozygotic Twin Pairs Discordant for Female-to-Male Transsexualism', *ibid.* 35, 2006, pp. 347-358 (discussion at 354-356) ; K. L. Gobrogge, S. M. Breedlove and K. L. Lump, 'Genetic and Environmental Influences on 2D:4D Finger Length Ratios : A Study of Monozygotic and Dizygotic Male and Female Twins', *ibid.* 37, 2008, pp. 112-118, who find evidence for the heritability of digit ratios and establish, on 116-117, an interesting differentiation between the sensitivity to prenatal androgen exposure on the right hand and that which obtains for the left hand before concluding that, « of the reports of a significantly smaller 2D:4D in lesbians compared to heterosexual women, the smallest sample size is that derived from MZ twins discordant for sexual orientation (Hall & Love 2000) », p. 117) ; and K. Hiraishi, S. Sasaki, C. Shikishima and J. Ando, 'The Second to Fourth Digit Ratio (2D:4D) in a Japanese Twin Sample : Heritability, Prenatal Hormone Transfer, and Association with Sexual Orientation', *ibid.* 41, 2012, pp. 711-724, mainly useful for its focus (they insist, pp. 720-721, on the non-shared environment factors on 2D:4D). More literature in Hiraishi *et al.* and in LeVay's notes 15-38 on pp. 319-320. Cf. LeVay, pp. 138-142.

find an instance where identical twins had different sexual orientations »¹¹. Sharing one genome cannot be pressed into meaning that both fetuses will grow the same way, if their glands do not produce exactly the same levels of hormones and if these hormones fail to activate their specific receptors in the same way¹². What is more, Gagnon's selection of scientific papers does not match those of actual experts¹³; the discrepancy is large enough to cause concern as to his grasp of the technicalities. One looks in vain in his book for information on the large body of research concerned with animal sexuality. That the analogization between birds and some mammals which are known to deploy same-sex patterns and the human beings of the homosexual persuasion¹⁴ is fraught with danger, does not mean that this issue shall remain

¹¹ Contrast LeVay, p. 142 : « in my view, finger-length ratios do offer a useful window into people's hormonal history, but the subtlety of the basic sex difference means that detecting differences *within* one sex — between gay and straight men, for example — requires large and carefully designed studies that take ethnicity and other variables into account. »

¹² The conditioning of the fetus through hormones eludes Gagnon entirely — on this complex phenomenon, cf. C. E. McCurdy and J. E. Friedman, 'Early Foetal Programming of Hepatic Gluconeogenesis : Glucocorticoids Strike Back', *Diabetologia* 49, 2006, pp. 1138-1141 (particularly 1138-1139); the follow up by S. P. Burns and R. D. Cohen in the same issue of this review, pp. 2809-2810; W. J. Kovacs and N. J. Olsen, 'Sexual Dimorphism of RA Manifestations : Genes, Hormones and Behavior', *Nature Reviews. Rheumatology* 7, 2001, pp. 307-310. In her comprehensive if a trifle bit overenthusiastic *Evolution's Rainbow. Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 2004, the late J. Roughgarden proposes a sensible, but too lightly referenced, account of the cardinal role played by hormones in the maturation of the human being from the womb down to adult age (pp. 215-221, with the endnotes on 436); see also LeVay, index, s.v. 'Hormones'.

¹³ Compare, e.g., the standard anthology edited by G. Einstein, *Sex and the Brain* (Cambridge, Mass. & London, 2007), pp. 689-790. Other omissions of Gagnon's include the impressive study by E. M. Miller 'Homosexuality, Birth Order, and Evolution : Toward an Equilibrium Reproductive Economics of Homosexuality', *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 29, 2000, pp. 1-34, which postulates that some genes downplaying the process of masculinization in the male fetus may well lead, eventually, to homosexual men (see 5-11). This claim has only been disproved in 2009, by P. Santtila, A.-L. Högbacka, P. Jern, A. Johansson, M. Varjonen, K. Witting, B. von der Pahlen and N. K. Sandnabba, 'Testing Miller's Theory of Alleles Preventing Androgenization as an Evolutionary Explanation for the Genetic Predisposition for Male Homosexuality', *Evolution and Human Behavior* 30, pp. 58-65, especially 62-64.

¹⁴ As pioneered in the large B. Bagemihl, *Biological Exuberance. Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity*, New York, 1999, quite a mixed bag incorporating huge masses of sound data and ill-judged attacks on evolutionary biology or the paramount necessity of reproduction, but nonetheless a milestone in the refutation of the heterosexist bias according to which homosexuality is a trademark of man. The work provoked such a big ruckus within conservative circles in the US that the chances of Gagnon not knowing about it approximate zero. We are fortunate to have on our desks A. Poiani's much sharper *Animal Homosexuality. A Biosocial Perspective, With a Chapter by A. Dickson*, Cambridge, 2010, including one of the most comprehensive bibliographies ever canvassed in the field of sexual studies (pp. 443-533, on twin columns). Here are his main conclusions : « homosexual patterns of behaviour occur more frequently among the Old World anthropoids (Cercopithecoidea, Hominoidea) than in

unheeded. Its omission by Gagnon is unfortunate, since research in animal biology indeed seems to show that sex/gender differences¹⁵ are already encoded in the cells, an interim conclusion which, if it comes to be validated, will firmly root in facts the vastly popular LGBT slogan ‘born that way’¹⁶. The conclusion which springs to the mind is that *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* tweaks the evidence so far as it has taken steps to know it, that is, with a large degree of obsolescence and a selectivity that ill compares to the medical and moral standards of the field, in such a manner that it bolsters its case. Indeed, Gagnon’s scientific gazette eschew fairness in that it signally fails to tackle a few primary issues without which the picture has no hope of coming close to representativity, therefore should not back overconfidence over the lack of biological foundation for same-sex attraction and self-identification : sexual differentiation¹⁷ gets unduly short shrift for an operative concept of great weight,

New World monkeys (Ceboidea) and have rarely been reported in the prosimian primates. Although same-sex sexual body contacts are varied in primates, not all of these contacts have a strictly sexual origin or function. Thus caution is required when interpreting such behaviours. Homosexual behaviour in primates is at least partly concerned with the ritualised expression of sexual patterns, which serve a variety of social functions. Pleasure-seeking is one potential function of same-sex sexual behaviour, especially among the Old World anthropoids. Humans retain a significant potential for bisexual behaviour, a trait shared with the rest of the Old World anthropoids » (pp. 399-400).

¹⁵ On which I. Vanwesenbeeck, ‘Doing Gender in Sex and Sex Research’, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 38, 2009, pp. 883-898 at 883-889, is very illuminating, perhaps more so than LeVay, pp. 98-106, on gay versus straight gender characteristics. Cf. also T. Sandfort, ‘Sexual Orientation and Gender : Stereotypes and Beyond’, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 34, 2005, pp. 595-611 at 598-607 (cf. 607-609, beyond masculinity and femininity).

¹⁶ See, of late, D. Zhao, D. McBride, S. Nandi, H. A. McQueen, M. J. McGrew, P. M. Hocking, P. D. Lewis, H. M. Sang and M. Clinton, ‘Somatic Sex Identity is Cell Autonomous in the Chicken’, *Nature* 464, 2010, pp. 237-243, cf. on 240-241 : « these studies demonstrate that avian somatic cells possess a cell autonomous sex identity. Our results support and extend previous findings that showed that differences between male and female zebra finch brains were a result of endogenous genetic differences in the brain cells themselves. Our analysis of lateral gynandromorph birds, showing that they are male : female chimaeras, and our experimental generation of embryos with mixed-sex chimaeric gonads, together indicate that male and female somatic cells possess a sex identity. These observations indicate that there is a molecular mechanism functioning in every cell that confers a sex-specific identity that influences how individual cells respond to developmental and hormonal signals. We propose that cell-autonomous sex identity is dependent on sexually dimorphic gene expression resulting from the “dosage compensation” system that operates to equalize the phenotypic effects of characteristics determined by genes on the Z chromosome. Recent evidence has shown that this system in birds is not chromosome-wide and results in a large number of gene expression differences between male and female cells. » LeVay, pp. 129-219, details an impeccable overview of the genetic / biological putative roots of same-sex attraction.

¹⁷ Apart from its very latest studies — I have read S. J. Semaan and A. S. Kaufman, ‘Sexual Differentiation and Development of Forebrain Reproductive Circuits’ (in rodents and mammals), *Current Opinion in Neurobiology* 20, 2010, pp. 424-431, of which 427-429 are the most relevant here, and A. S. Kauffman, ‘Sexual Differentiation and the *Kiss1* System : Hor-

behavioral endocrinology is omitted¹⁸, and the sociological study of children's play at school¹⁹, though a basic tenet for anyone, like Gagnon, who obsesses about post-natal factors, did not seem relevant. On the other hand, disproportionate attention is paid to the methodologically suspect research from N.A.R.T.H. participants, while a few more recent studies run counter to some of our section's most staunch denials²⁰. Gagnon could hardly anticipate it but this serves as an indispensable corrective to his nihilism. One thus acquires a particularly strong feeling of partisan scholarship. Proof that such must be the case comes from Gagnon's uncompromising insistence on issues of nurture instead of the interplay of biological and sociological factors. The sheer absence of balance between physiology (pp. 396-408) and psychology (408-430, for it also pervades the section on the capability of homosexuality to be changed or cured) in his account underscores the bias of the book. Now, the poor

monal and Developmental Considerations', *Peptides* 30, 2009, pp. 83-93 at 86-90, cf. 90 : « recent evidence in mice and rats now suggest that *Kiss1* neurons in the AVPV are sexually differentiated under the direction of sex steroids early in perinatal development, and that this sexually differentiated population of *Kiss1* cells provides the cellular mechanism for inducing the GnRH/LH surge that occurs in females ; likewise, the absence of sufficient *Kiss1* expression in the AVPV of adult male may explain their inability to display such a charge » ; (of course, my drastic selection is arbitrary) — apart from such piecemeal researches, there is a book-length treatment, by sociologists H. Martin and S. E. Finn, *Masculinity and Femininity in the MMPI-2 and MMPI-A*, Minneapolis & London, 2010. It clearly explains most of the basics on pp. 6-30 and then proceeds to unravel the history of modern research (32-59) ; but the authors' contributions need quite a discriminating attitude, as per the review of S. V. Rouse, 'Assessing Masculinity and Femininity, Without the Jingle or Jangle', *Sex Roles* 66, 2012, pp. 149-151 (they notably incline to reduce the importance of the social construction of genders, witness their pp. 209-212). See also Vanwesenbeeck, pp. 892-895.

¹⁸ Even though it is a branch mature enough, as evinced by the sensible account of N. Neave (a psychologist), *Hormones and Behaviour. A Psychological Approach*, Cambridge, 2007, pp. 125-129 of which focus on the hormonal approach to homosexuality (he incidentally corroborates the interim conclusion that 'female homosexuality is no a simple 'mirror image' of male homosexuality' [p. 129]), cf. 133-134 for a survey of the neurohormonal theories).

¹⁹ S. A. Berenbaum, C. L. Martin, L. D. Hanish, P. T. Briggs and R. A. Fabes, 'Sex Differences in Children's Play', in J. B. Becker and others (edd.), *Sex Differences in the Brain. From Genes to Behavior* (Oxford & New York, 2008), pp. 275-290, will serve as a decent introduction to this topic. One of their conclusions runs as follows : « all three primary causal explanations for the development of sex-differentiated play have received some empirical support. Although early sex hormones, parent and peer socialization, and gender schemas have often been pitted against each other, these influences almost certainly act together, and the key question concerns how that happens » (p. 286).

²⁰ K. Alanko, Santtila, N. Harlaar, Witting, Varjonen, Jern, Johansson, von der Pahlen and Sandnabba, 'Common Genetic Effects of Gender Atypical Behavior and Sexual Orientation in Adulthood : A Study of Finnish Twins', *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 39, 2010, pp. 81-92, argue that « in sum, we found genetic effects on GAB and sexual orientation for both men and women. The genetic correlation between GAB and same-sex sexual orientation was substantial for male and moderate for female participants. The findings indicate a shared genetic influence for the traits » (p. 91). In other words, *dies diem docet*.

quality of the psychological views marshaled is obvious : too many concepts have been allowed to stay offstage, not excluding the infamous Gender Identity Disorder of Childhood (GIDC) ²¹ ; the considerations on the gender development of children, which take pride of space, are hardly more than a collection of conservative commonplaces evincing little familiarity with the field and no great lucidity ²² ; last but

²¹ Classic expositions in K. J. Zucker and S. J. Bradley, *Gender Identity Disorder and Psychosexual Problems in Children and Adolescents*, New York, 1995, especially pp. 11-77, and P. T. Cohen-Kettenis and F. Pfäffin, *Transgenderism and Intersexuality in Childhood and Adolescence* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 2003), pp. 1-84, 105-129 ; for a fair examination of this psychiatric diagnosis along with its early research and the debates it has stirred in the last decade or so, read K. Bryant, 'Making Gender Identity Disorder of Childhood : Historical Lessons for Contemporary Debates', *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 3, 2006, pp. 23-39. As Bryant remarks on 35, « (...) revising or eliminating the diagnosis becomes secondary as to the more immediate (and I would argue more important) task of developing new models of mental health support for gender-variant children ». Cf. LeVay, pp. 83-88.

²² One does look in vain, in Gagnon, for references to the Child Behavior Checklist, a very widely-used standardized measure for evaluating maladaptive behavioral and emotional problems (the basics e.g. in P. J. Frick, C. T. Barry and R. W. Kamphaus, *Clinical Assessment of Child and Adolescent Personality and Behavior. Third Edition* [New York, 2010 ; first ed. in 1996], pp. 156, 158-162 ; useful figures with a survey of previous literature in Zucker, Bradley and M. Sanikhani, 'Sex Differences in Referral Rates of Children with Gender Identity Disorder : Some Hypotheses', *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 25, 1997, pp. 217-227 at 219-221), or to such a basic concept as the 'core gender identity' coined by R. J. Stoller as long ago as 1968 (in *Sex and Gender. The Development of Masculinity and Femininity*, New York, pp. 29-30, 33-34 and *passim*) to denote the fundamental sense of being male, female or of undetermined sex that the child develops between 18 and 30 months and that seldom changes afterwards. Neither does Gagnon pursue the links between gender atypicality in children (identity as well as behavior) and adult homosexuality, even when some data are at hand that seem to corroborate his assertions — the study by D. P. VonderLaan, L. M. Gothreau, N. H. Bartlett and P. L. Vasey, 'Recalled Separation Anxiety and Gender Atypicality in Childhood : A Study of Canadian Heterosexual and Homosexual Men and Women', *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 40, 2011, pp. 1233-1240 at 1239-140, claims that « there appears to be some support for the hypothesis that elevated childhood separation anxiety is generally associated with elevated female-typical childhood behavior and identity. That is, the hypothesis seems to apply with respect to homosexual men. As a group, they exhibited elevated childhood femininity as well as elevated childhood separation anxiety, and increases in the former were associated with increases in the latter. » Read also Alanko, Santtila, Harlaar, Witting, Varjonen, Jern, Johansson, von der Pahlen and Sandnabba, 'The Association Between Childhood Gender Atypical Behavior and Adult Psychiatric Symptoms is Moderated by Parenting Style', *Sex Roles* 58, 2008, pp. 837-847, who find out, at 843-844, that over-control or coldness by parents play a crucial role. All of this, combined with the extraordinary omission of the GIDC (on which see further B. Möller, H. Schreier, A. Li and G. Romer, 'Gender Identity Disorder in Children and Adolescents', *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care* 39, 2009, pp. 117-143, cf. 117-130 for an overview on research and treatment) makes one question the competence with which Gagnon worked his way through the maze of psychological data at hand and ask whether, as a researcher, he grew any eye for what is crucial.

not least, a totally uncritical report of the ‘ex-gay’ movement (pp. 420-430 ‘Can homosexuals change?’) masquerades as a demonstration of the non-innate character of homosexuality²³. This endorsement of a tiny minority of psychiatrists, psychologists and counselors should not shock a reader who has been introduced to Joseph Nicolosi on 408, 411. The rehearsal of that one canard which dies hard among evangelicals and conservatives, that there exists a direct relation between homosexuality and pedophilia²⁴, finally brainwashes the reader into seeing LGBT Americans as persons inclined to a most abject crime; for Gagnon goes to the length of speaking, on 480, of ‘homosexual pedophiles’ in a general manner that is totally unwarranted in a scientific inquiry. Such rhetorical devices serve to conceal the fact that the only thing scientists seem to agree on is the absence of consensus in their midst regarding a biological influence on the development of homosexuality²⁵. Gagnon’s focus on

²³ A path riddled with scandals (most of its prominent advocates having come under fire for issues of personal honesty and a fair number of famous former homosexuals being known as influence-peddlers), it pertains more to politics than to science: C. Burack, *Sin, Sex, and Democracy. Antigay Rhetoric and the Christian Right* (Albany, 2008), pp. 67-97; though dated, the collective ‘Peer Commentaries on Spitzer (2003)’, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 32, 2003, pp. 419-468, preserves a fair sample of reactions to the claims of reparation therapy to some success, many of these commentaries wary of the biases of its advocates (pp. 421, 423, 426-427, etc). Read further J. M. Serovich, S. M. Craft, P. Toviesi, R. Gangamma, T. McDowell and E. L. Grafsk, ‘A Systematic Review of the Research Base on Sexual Reorientation Therapies’, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 34, 2008, pp. 227-238, which concludes that these therapies lack rigor and pale in the face of their theoretical shortcomings. Briefly put, the main objection to ex-gay ministers is that though they advertize their ability to change the sexual orientation of gay men, they only, if at all, manage to induce shifts in these men’s sexual attraction — not quite the same result. As for the huge deal of ideological special pleading assumed by this grid, it is sampled in L. Gerber, ‘Nature, Creation, and Queerish Ex-Gay Experiments’, *Nova Religio. The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 11, 2008, pp. 8-30 at 21-26 (cf. 14-21 for the attacks on nature as the source of gender essentialism).

²⁴ Cf. as to the contrary M. C. Seto, ‘Pedophilia and Sexual Offences Against Children’, *Annual Review of Sex Research* 15, 2004, pp. 321-361 at 345-346. Gagnon will not listen, who equates ‘true identity’ with anatomic gender conformity (*contra*, H. F. L. Meyer-Bahlbur, ‘From Mental Disorder to Iatrogenic Hypogonadism: Dilemmas in Conceptualizing Gender Identity Variants as Psychiatric Conditions’, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 39, 2010, pp. 461-476, particularly 461-462) in his ideologically-driven ‘Scriptural Perspectives on Homosexuality and Sexual Identity’, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 24, 2005, p. 293.

²⁵ Interestingly enough, many of those who refuse this linkage simplify the issues, speaking, for example, of structural peculiarities within gay people — which, of course, have not been discovered yet (so A. Ågmo, *Functional and Dysfunctional Sexual Behavior. A Synthesis of Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology* [Amsterdam & London, 2007], pp. 336-343 at 342-343: « I do not think it is unfair to propose that to date there is no convincing evidence for a genetic or structural difference between homosexual and heterosexual men »). Against such hardcore scepticism may be adduced S. Bocklandt, S. Horvath, E. Vilain and D. H. Hamer, ‘Extreme Skewing of X Chromosome Inactivation in Mothers of Homosexual Men’, *Human Genetics* 118, 2006, pp. 691-694. Another crucial fact to which neither Ågmo nor the wholly derivative Gagnon pay the least bit of attention is that « whatever the exact natu-

cognitive and developmental issues in his scientific section at the expense of hard-core genetics, biochemistry, endocrinology and so forth, far from being a howler, is thus a clue to his strategy of obfuscation, which puts the last nail in the coffin of his scientific report. Let me conclude with two quotes : « sexual orientation is an aspect of gender that emerges from the prenatal sexual differentiation of the brain. Whether a person ends up gay or straight depends in large part on how this process of biological differentiation goes forward, with the lead actors being genes, sex hormones, and the brain systems that are influenced by them. The biological perspective on sexual orientation stands in marked contrast to traditional beliefs, which have remained largely silent on the origin of heterosexuality while ascribing homosexuality to family dynamics, learning, early sexual experiences, or free choice. (...) There is no actual evidence to support any of those ideas, although we cannot completely rule out that they play some role. (...) Biological factors give us a sexual orientation in the sense of a disposition or capacity to experience sexual attraction to one sex or the other, or to both. Other factors influence what we do with those feelings » (Le Vay, pp. 271-272). « Same-sex orientation and behavior were an aspect of the natural history of animals long before humans made their appearance. Natural history has something to teach us, and I hope that Robert Gagnon will someday find the time to understand and accept more of it » (Keener, p. 172).

Gagnon canvasses much evidence drawn from the Ancient Near East and the Graeco-Roman world with an air of utter confidence and a parade of scholarly authorities in the notes, as a tool for his disentangling the position of Scripture on homosexuality. The strict accuracy of these comparanda should have been Gagnon's absolute priority, for whoever embarks on such a hard task as his must prove to be a judicious master of both method and materials²⁶. Unfortunately, such is not the case at all. Though respectable for a New Testament exegete with no philological pretence, the Greek scholarship that grounds his book is superficial and inadequate. As soon as he ventures beyond the language or culture of the New Testament, Gagnon indulges in wanton misrepresentation of data. I shall adduce his lecture on 234 :

re of the genetic factor, it is interesting that such a factor has stayed present in the population throughout human history, given that homosexuals do not tend to procreate as much as the rest of the population » (Savic *et al.*, p. 53). This resists all manipulations. Those by Gagnon I refrained from sampling (cf. Keener, pp. 167-168, on his treatment of LeVay).

²⁶ See S. G. F. Brandon, *The Judgement of the Dead. An Historical and Comparative Study of the Idea of a Post-Mortem Judgement in the Major Religions* (London, 1967), p. IX : « the task of the historian of religions is basically the same of that of the historian of any other form of human activity. He is concerned to understand ideas, actions and institutions of a specific kind of past generations of men and women. Although his subject matter is often very various and complex, he seeks to elucidate it by employing the same methods and techniques of research as are used by his colleagues in other fields of historical enquiry. However, while his approach and presentation of his findings must be as strictly academic as those of the political and economic historian, the historian of religions is ever aware that he is dealing with issues that have more than academic interest. »

« *desires*. Gk *epithymiais*. LSJ : “desire, yearning ; (also) longing, passion ; (generally) appetite ; (especially) sexual desire, lust” ; BAGD : “desire, longing, craving”. In Greek thought generally the word can have a neutral or positive sense, though from the time of Plato on and particularly with the Stoics the word typically acquires the negative sense of a desire for what is not one’s own, forbidden, and outside one’s moral purpose. Thus, Plato, *Phaedo*, 83 B : “the soul that truly belongs to philosophy thus abstains from both pleasures (*hēdonōn*) and desires (*epithymiōn*)” (...) »

Actually *ἐπιθυμία* neither means a forbidden impulse in Plato (for whom, though an appetite, it can be base or noble ²⁷) nor gained a whole complex of negative, moral overtones from that philosopher onward. Aristotelian psychology too had little need nor use of an entirely negative desire, not unimportant a point since Paul has been shown to draw, at a remote, on the Stagirite for his ethics ²⁸. The prevalence of the

²⁷ E. des Places, *Lexique de la langue philosophique et religieuse de Platon* (= *Platon. Oeuvres complètes*, XIV ; Paris, 1964), pp. 197-198, has a selective classification of its shades of meaning (‘desire (generally speaking) ; passion (including lust) ; craving (for virtue, science, etc)’) ; exhaustive figures in L. Brandwood, *A Word Index to Plato* (Leeds, 1976), pp. 375-376. It must be remarked that the word is vague enough that it may be twisted into meaning even the satisfaction of the desire or its very object, cf. Lysias’ speech (a possibly genuine piece of pederastic sophistry) in the *Phaedrus*, 232 a 7-b 3 *ἔτι δὲ τοὺς μὲν ἐρώντας, πολλοὺς ἀνάγκη πιθέσθαι καὶ ἰδεῖν ἀκολουθοῦντας τοῖς ἐρωμένοις καὶ ἔργον τοῦτο ποιουμένους, ὥστε, ὅταν ὀφθῶσι διαλεγόμενοι ἀλλήλοις, τότε αὐτοὺς οἴονται ἢ γεγενημένης ἢ μελλούσης ἔσσεσθαι τῆς ἐπιθυμίας συνεῖναι* (‘(...) so, when one sees them chatting, one believes that there already is, or there soon is to be, an *ἐπιθυμία* <for (or: between) them>’), with G. J. de Vries, *A Commentary on the Phaedrus of Plato* (Amsterdam, 1969), p. 63. Instead of quoting the *Phaedo* snippet in splendid isolation, thus faking the whole Platonic usage, Gagnon would have been far better off with any of the passages illustrating the tripartite division of the soul / mind into ‘appetite’, τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, ‘spiritedness’, τὸ θυμοειδές, and ‘reason’, τὸ λογιστικόν, the most detailed of which is *Republic*, IV, 436 a 8-441 c 3, particularly 439 d 4-8 οὐ δὲ ἀλόγως, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, ἀξιόσομεν αὐτὰ διττὰ τε καὶ ἕτερα ἀλλήλων εἶναι, τὸ μὲν αἰ λογίζεται λογιστικόν προσαγορεύοντες τῆς ψυχῆς, τὸ δὲ αἰ ἐραῖ τε καὶ πεινῆ καὶ διψῆ καὶ περὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἐπιθυμίας ἐπτόχται ἀλόγιστόν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικόν, πληρώσεων τινων καὶ ἡδονῶν ἐταῖρον. But none of these texts would have bolstered Gagnon’s very untrue claim. A glance at the Platonic lexica or at F. D. Miller Jr, ‘Plato on the Parts of the Soul’, in J. M. van Ophuijsen (ed.), *Plato and Platonism* (Washington, 1999), pp. 84-101 at 92 or 97-98, was remedy enough.

²⁸ B. Blumenfeld, *The Political Paul. Justice, Democracy and Kingship in a Hellenistic Framework* (London & New York, 2003), pp. 45-94 at 84-86, especially 85 (« in Aristotle, *epithymia* describes the middle range of the soul. A composite faculty, *epithymia* may heed reason or disregard it. The seat of appetites and of desire in general, to *epithymia* also belong *aretai*, qualities, in this case of the moral kind. These refer to a thought-desire system (*nous-orexis*), a system of variables controlled by choice (*proairesis*). Hellenistic popular philosophy, to which Paul is indebted, focused on this intermediary rational-irrational part, the domain of ethics. In Romans, *epithymia* (1.24) and *orexis* (1.27) describe precisely this intermediary aspect of the soul, connected, as in Aristotelianism, with morals »). On Aristotle’s stance as to the emotions, M. C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire. Theory and Practice in Hel-*

morally pejorative take on ἐπιθυμία after Zeno's decree that the sage was to be free from all kinds of passions ²⁹, which he equated with illnesses, is obvious and tallies with an early Stoic innovation ; but the somewhat different views held by Epicurus around the same time, who only condones those desires which are both natural and necessary to the happy life ³⁰, make one weary of any definitive statement, including Gagnon's asseveration that the Stoics represent a landmark in the semantic history of ἐπιθυμία — if I do not read too much into his informal, loosely phrased sentence, for his recourse to adverbs ('particularly', 'typically') cannot help blurring the edges

lenistic Ethics (Princeton, 1994), pp. 78-100 ; on Paul's stance, S. Lyonnet and L. Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice. A Biblical and Patristic Study* (Rome, 1970), pp. 52-53, cf. A. Holmes, *The Mind of Saint Paul. A Psychological Study* (New York, 1929), pp. 36-54.

²⁹ M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa. Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung*, I (Göttingen, 1992⁷ [1948]), pp. 141-153 at 148-150 (« daß die Begierde in einer Reihe mit den 'Gefühlen' auftritt, entspricht dem hellenischen Empfinden, für das die Vorstellung eines künftigen Gutes notwendig das Streben nach ihm auslöst », p. 148) ; M. van Straaten, *Panétius. Sa vie, ses écrits et sa doctrine avec une édition des fragments* (Amsterdam, 1946), pp. 182-190 at 183-184 (e.g. « lorsque les Stoïciens estiment l'ἐπιθυμία, la convoitise, condamnable, parce qu'elle est une tendance trop forte et effrénée vers les προηγμένα, ils ne peuvent avoir eu que l'intention de condamner cette licence effrénée, ce πλεονασμός », p. 183) ; etc. P. P. Fuentes Gonzales, *Les diatribes de Télès* (Paris, 1998), pp. 411-412, collects many texts illustrating the topos of the irrepressible desires, cf. also on 494-497 (the Stoic notion of ἀπάθεια = εὐπάθεια) ; D. Babut, *Plutarque et le stoïcisme* (Paris, 1969), pp. 319-230, shows well the weaknesses of the Stoic stance as to the emotions, on which see Nussbaum, pp. 316-401. I fail to grasp the rationale behind Gagnon's suppression of the context in which the Stoics refused all passions, *perturbationes animi* ~ πάθη, viz. a medical model comparing the working philosopher to a physician ; they inherited it from Aristotle (Nussbaum, pp. 48-53) and used it extensively.

³⁰ *Letter to Menoecus*, 127-128 ἀναλογιστέον δὲ ὡς τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἰ μὲν εἰσι φυσικαί, αἰ δὲ κεναί, καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν αἰ μὲν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἰ δὲ φυσικαὶ μονόν· τῶν δ' ἀναγκαίων αἰ μὲν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἰ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν, αἰ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν. Τούτων γὰρ ἀπλανῆς θεωρία πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν καὶ φυγὴν ἐπανάγειν οἶδεν ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ὑγίειαν καὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξίαν, ἐπεὶ τοῦτο τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν ἐστὶ τέλος. Τούτου γὰρ χάριν πάντα πραττόμεν, ὅπως μῆτε ἀλγῶμεν μῆτε ταρβῶμεν, with the other passages assembled in H. Usener, *Glossarium Epicureum, edendum curaverunt M. Gigante et W. Schmid* (Rome, 1977), pp. 279-280 ; see A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers, I Translation of the Principal Sources with Philosophical Commentary* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 121-125 at 123-124. Rather than sup full with other items of scholarly literature, let me quote the Epicurean inscription at Oinoanda, whose snippets relevant to ἐπιθυμία are absent in Long & Sedley : fr. 32, VI 10-VII 3 - - - ἡμεῖν δὲ] ἀπ[οδει]ῶν τινας τε τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν φυσικαὶ καὶ τινας | μῆ· καὶ τὸ σύνολον πάν|θ' ὅσα περ ἂν εἰς τὸν πρό[τερον ἀριθμὸν εἰσφέρη]] [ται ραϊδίως συνπληροῦ]ται (M. F. Smith, *Diogenes of Oinoanda. The Epicurean Inscription. Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Notes* [Napoli, 1992], pp. 200-201), and especially fr. 34, VI 14-VII 12 τὰ οὖν ὀχλοῦντα τίνα | [ἐστ]ίν· φόβοι μὲν [εἰσιν] | — [ὁ] μὲν ἐκ θεῶν, ὁ [δ' ἀπὸ] | [θ]ανάτου, ὁ δ' ἀπ' [ἀλγη]||[δ]όνων —, πρὸς δὲ [τοῦ] | τοῖς ἐπιθυμίαι το[ύς] | φυσικῶν ὅρους [ἐκ-τρέ] | χουσαι. Αἰ γὰρ ρί[ζαι] | κακῶν πάντων [εἰσιν] | ἀύ[ται, κὰν ταύ] | [τας μῆ] | ὑποτέρωμεν, [ὄχλος] | κακῶν ἡμεῖν [προσ] | φῦσεται (idem, p. 210).

of the matter. Anyway, Gagnon not only distorts the evolution of the meanings of our lexeme by misrepresenting Plato and casting the light on both him and the Stoics for the negative value he recognizes in Romans 1 :24, something that misleads him into implying that Paul merely follows or adapts here a classical Greek theme³¹. He fails to acknowledge the negative moral value of ἐπιθυμία as being in current use in Hellenistic Greek, witness the *Silloi* of Timo Phlius (H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons, *Supplementum Hellenisticum* [Berlin & New York, 1983], n°845 p. 394 πάντων μὲν πρώτιστα κακῶν ἐπιθυμῆ ἐστί), which makes his summary yet more one-dimensional, and veers right into falsification when he covers up the crucial fact that Hellenistic Judaism knows both this meaning (so the first century B.C./AD Wisdom of Solomon 4 :12 καὶ ῥεμβασμὸς ἐπιθυμίας μεταλλεύει νοῦν ἄκακον, a passage that recalls Timo's verse, and Siracid 23 :5 καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν ἀπόστρεψον ἀπ' ἐμοῦ) and the more classical ones³². All of this amounts to a blatant misconstruction of Greek intellectual history by Gagnon. An important aspect of scholarly protocol stands at issue here : who but an amateur could feel lexicographically vindicated as to the semantic history of any word only because the relevant entries in two standard dictionaries, one of them outdated and flawed³³, have been skimmed and a couple unrepresentative quotations from authors who hardly count as semantic landmarks, showcased as evidence³⁴ ? Gagnon's wish to refine on previous lore³⁵ was doomed to failure.

³¹ Paul's farewell to passions in 24 might not so much echo Stoicism (so T. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* [Edinburgh, 2000], p. 72) than it recalls/evokes Diogenes' qualification of them (and of every disturbing emotion) as 'the roots of all evils', ῥίζαι κακῶν πάντων (fr. 34, VII 7-8) ≈ 1 Tim 6 :10. On the apostle's awareness of the Garden, the only available research, N. W. De Witt, *Saint Paul and Epicurus*, Minneapolis, 1954, here pp. 18-19, disappoints.

³² Lyonnet, *Les étapes de l'histoire du salut selon l'épître aux Romains* (Paris, 1969), pp. 128-130 ; F. Watson, *Agape, Eros, Gender. Towards a Pauline Sexual Ethics* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 154-156, more pointedly 156 note 13 in which he discusses 4 Maccabees 2 :5. Cf. also R. Weber, 'Die Geschichte des Gesetzes und des Ich in Römer 7,7-8,4', *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 29, 1987, pp. 147-179 at 154-155.

³³ LSJ⁹ : J. Chadwick, 'Semantic History and Greek Lexicography', in F. Létoublon (ed.), *La langue et les textes en grec ancien. Actes du colloque Pierre Chantraine (...)* (Amsterdam, 1992), pp. 281-288. Remarkably, neither Chantraine's *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, Paris, 1968-1980, 4 volumes, which puts the lexicography of LSJ up to date, nor G. H. W. Lampe's indispensable *Patristic Greek Dictionary*, Oxford, 1961 (pp. 524-525 for ἐπιθυμία), appear anywhere in *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*.

³⁴ As proof that one must not work from lexis only, cf. ἀρμόζεσθαι. The most complete inquest (LSJ) only gives 'betroth' in the active and middle and 'take to wife' in the middle, yet Parthenius of Nicaea, *Sufferings of Love*, 7.1, deploys it as 'win over' predicated of a boy (... παιδὸς διαφόρου τὴν ὄψιν... τῶν πάνυ δοκίμων Ἀντιλέων ἠράσθη. ὃς πολλὰ μηχανώμενος οὐδ' ἀμῆνι δυνατὸς ἦν αὐτὸν ἀρμόσασθαι, « there was a lovely lad (...) from a very good stock, with Antileon as his suitor ; much as he tried, the latter was wholly unable to win his heart »). We shall always be leery of possible *unica*, especially in matters as fluid as those sexual.

³⁵ E.g., J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, 1998), p. 120. I find it strange that this 836-page treatise, the best of its kind, only appears once (p. 241 note 4).

No mere majoring in minors, here : if the philological materials deployed in *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* are vulnerable to the charges of bias and lack of sufficiently scholarly standards of competence, the main theses of the book can only rest on quicksand. Another illustration, this time chosen among its most crucial tenets, will demonstrate that indeed there is an all-pervasive complex of errors and disinformation. Within his rebuttal of D. B. Martin's exegesis of the *παρὰ φύσιν* of Rom 1 :26³⁶, Gagnon in effect writes (p. 386) that the Martin

« contention that in antiquity ‘homosexual desire is not itself ‘contrary to nature’’ is false. To make such a claim Martin has to draw too great a divide between homoerotic desire and homoerotic action. »

The theoretical context of such a remark is the historical and anthropological model for the history of homosexuality that claims that same-sex dealings and affect were articulated similarly from the Antiquity down to our times (the ‘essentialist’ view). The mainstream conception, however, envisions sexuality in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome according to the ‘social constructionist’ model : fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Greeks established a distinction between sexual acts instead of genders, which is tantamount to a vertical, social construction of sexuality³⁷. As sex partners were expected to conform to their gender roles according to their societal standing, active / insertive / ‘dominant’ versus passive / penetrated / (more or less) submissive, one's social status determined the partner one could legitimately bed as well as it conditioned the specific role one had to adopt during the intercourse. This amounts to a neutralization of desire and / or inclination as the driving force behind the sex act, whether pederastic or heterosexual³⁸. As a consequence, the unification

³⁶ ‘Heterosexism and the Interpretation of Romans 1: 18-32’, *Biblical Interpretation* 3, 1995, pp. 332-355 at 343-349 = *Sex and the Single Savior. Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville, Ky, 2006), pp. 51-64 (text), 206-212 (notes) at 55-60, 207-211.

³⁷ K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*² (Oxford, 1989), pp. 100-109, particularly 103-105 ; D. M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York, 1990), pp. 15-40 at 19-25 ; M. B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 6-10 ; *contra*, Richlin (*infra*, note 53). How social constructionism came into being is a fascinating story — J. M. Davidson, ‘Dover, Foucault, and Greek Homosexuality : Penetration and the Truth of Sex’, *Past & Present* 170, 2001, pp. 3-51 at 7-28.

³⁸ « (...) Sex was a manifestation of personal status, a declaration of social identity ; sexual behavior did not so much express inward dispositions or inclinations (although, of course, it did also do that) as it served to position social actors in the places assigned to them, by virtue of their political standing, in the hierarchical structure of the Athenian polity. (...) Each act of sex in classical Athens was no doubt an expression of real, personal desire on the part of the sexual actors involved, but their very desires had already been shaped by the shared cultural definition of sex as an activity that generally occurred only between a citizen and a non-citizen, between a person invested with full civil status and a statutory minor » (Halperin, p. 32). Similar protocols control the Roman construction of sex although it is not that much indebted to Greece on this count, witness C. A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality. Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity*² (Oxford & New York, 2010), pp. 17-20, 177-239. « First

of homosexual desire and acts as virtually one and the same thing in the eyes of the Stoics or Judeo-Christians who express contempt for same-sex twosomes, holds next to no substantive value. By triumphantly trumpeting against Martin a small array of Jewish and Christian texts that pass condemnation on passions / lust / appetites *παρὰ φύσιν*, all that Gagnon achieves is to imbue the Graeco-Roman world with modern notions of sexual persons and orientations. He also drags in a phallocentric concern for male domination which, though true enough for a tribal, patriarchal society like that of Israel from the earliest times down to the Hellenistic era, holds water neither for Mesopotamia nor for Greece and Rome, where the acknowledged domination in (same-)sex dealings is that of the free-born male only, not of any male as such ³⁹. Gagnon refrains from waxing poetical on his blanket male hegemony, though cf.

« (...) in the Greek and Roman world female homosexuality was often considered more appalling than male homosexuality — precisely because of the challenge it posed to male supremacy » (*The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, p. 145 note 230).

Spectacular proof that this is little more than phallocratic bigotry of his own exists :

« it is also a questionable assumption that our own culture should take absolutely no account of fundamental physiological and psychological differences between male and female, as if “being a man” and “being a woman” amount to the same thing. Both cultural exaggeration and cultural minimization of divinely created sexual differences between men and women are problematic » (*ibid.*, p. 96 note 135).

and foremost, a self-respecting Roman man must always give the appearance of playing the insertive role in penetrative acts, and not the receptive role : to use popular terminology often unfortunately replicated in the language of scholarship, he must be the “active,” not the “passive,” partner. This can justly be called the prime directive of masculine sexual behavior for Romans, and it has an obvious relationship to hierarchical social structures. For according to this scheme, penetration is subjugation (in the sense that the act is held simultaneously to be a figure for, and to effect, subjugation), and masculinity is domination » (p. 18).

³⁹ MAL A 20, where you should never penetrate, *nakû*, your social peer, *tappā'u*, unless you want to receive the similar treatment and be castrated ; read S. A. Jackson, *A Comparison of Ancient Near Eastern Law Collections Prior to the First Millenium B.C.* (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), p. 176, « there is no indication that undergoing sodomy was an offence (...) Another hint that malicious slander is the offence is to be found in the penalty given for the false accusation [viz. of someone’s *tappā'u* being anally promiscuous with everyone] in MAL A 19. Apart from receiving 50 blows and paying 3600 shekels of lead, the man has his hair cut off. This seems to humiliate the offender as he has humiliated the man he has slandered », and J. S. Cooper, ‘Buddies in Babylonia : Gilgamesh, Enkidu and Mesopotamian Homosexuality’, in T. Abusch (ed.), *Riches Hidden in Secret Places. Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen* (Winona Lake, Ind, 2002), pp. 73-85 at 84-85, particularly 84 : « although Greek institutions were very different from Assyrian ones, the general attitude toward homosexual acts was similar, namely, that it is shameful to be penetrated by another male, and it is a grave offense to penetrate a fellow citizen, thus shaming him. (...) Male citizens, as well as their wives and daughters, were not to be the object of sexual penetration. »

Furthermore, Gagnon would have us believe literally and uncritically that same-sex intercourse is by definition *παρὰ φύσιν* in the eyes of a few Graeco-Roman moralists and all Jews and Christians as a sort of universal, true and authoritative for all times to come — a point which one cannot grant him⁴⁰. « Simply put, conservatives believe that humans naturally come in two opposite sexes, and they read that “truth” into Genesis 1 and Romans 1 as proof that homosexuality is unnatural and heterosexual complementarity, God’s creative purpose for the sexes. The heterosexual complementarity of the sexes’ functions as conservatives’ ace in the hole over progressives’ equally ontological argument that God created “homosexual persons” in the “image of God” »⁴¹. In other words, Gagnon chooses the battleground on which he is certain to win, by interpreting at face value that fraction of the textual evidence which provides him with support instead of looking at it, and at other texts, through the mirror of the standard literary anthropology of sexuality⁴².

⁴⁰ Given the existence of B. J. Brooten, *Love Between Women. Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago & London, 1996), pp. 195-302, cf., e.g., 214 : « the central question of my investigation is : what are natural and unnatural intercourse ? In what follows I will argue that Paul condemns sexual relations between women as “unnatural” because he shares the widely held cultural view that women are passive by nature and therefore should remain passive in sexual relations. Like the hellenistic- and Roman-period authors surveyed above, he views sexual relations as asymmetrical, so that a sexual encounter necessarily includes an active and a passive partner. Egalitarian, mutual relationships were not part of the dominant cultural discourse of the time. According to this literature, a woman cannot naturally assume the active role, thus rendering natural sexual relations between women impossible. » How does Gagnon deal with a demonstration as wide-ranging and erudite as hers ? *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* only ever addresses the issue on 256 note 16 : first he raises unsubstantial points either analogizing Rom 1 :26-27 with ‘Jewish writings of the period’ as to the role played by animal heterosexuality (which Brooten makes much of) or conjecturing gratuitously that ‘the focus is on visible clues in creation and nature, not on a written text’, something which he immediately qualifies by conceding that « (access to the latter is what distinguishes Jew from gentile in Romans 2, though Paul undermines that very distinction by pointing to the internal, unwritten “law” possessed even by Gentiles) », and he ends up with the complain that ‘strangely, and without justification’, Brooten shunned the interpretation of Pauline and Judeo-Christian φύσις as anatomical complementarity. Do sixteen such lines qualify as a scholarly refutation ? I call this skirting the issues and grasping at straws.

⁴¹ D. M. Swancutt, ‘Sexing the Pauline Body of Christ : Scriptural ‘Sex’ in the Context of American Christian Culture War’, in V. Burrus and C. Keller (edd.), *Toward a Theology of Eros. Transfiguring Passion at the Limits of Discipline* (New York, 2006), pp. 65-98 (text), 390-399 (notes), at 70, cf. 71 « in short, the dominant ideology of the body in the pre-modern West was a one-sex / body, multi-gender model that reflected ancient gender norms for the distribution of power. Only with the rise of Western medicine and genetics has sex been conceived as dual and ontologically stable — male and female. »

⁴² C. Bryan, *A Preface to Romans* (New York, 2000), pp. 84-85, and M. Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World. A Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis, 1998), pp. 79-88, furnish ample evidence that, in the Graeco-Roman world as Paul knew it, the question at issue whenever homosexual matters were adumbrated had mostly to do with the stance taken du-

His understanding of *παρὰ φύσιν* in Rom 1 :26 is not only idiosyncratic ; it muddles the data. What counted for the Greeks was the act, viz. anal intercourse per se, vis-à-vis the status of those who engage into it, rather than either the rationale which might stand behind it or the sheer desire it evinces⁴³. Moreover, the appeal to *φύσις* in sexual matters to cast moral blame on male-male love or intercourse, from

ring the intercourse, viz. an approval of penetration and a contempt for passivity. See also J. M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford & New York, 2004), pp. 184-186, cf. 184 « the nuances and coherent patterns of gendered identity have become particularly clear through studies of Graeco-Roman sexuality. These have shown how the opposition within which sexual relations should be understood is not simply that of the biological gender of sexual partners, and so of heterosexuality versus homosexuality, but rather of active versus passive roles, frequently articulated as penetrator versus penetrated. Hence, for a woman to take the active role of ‘penetrator’ is as much a ‘perversion’ of proper order as for a man to take the passive role » ; and C. M. Conway, *Behold the Man. Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (New York, 2008), pp. 22-25. On 25, the latter rightly reminds us that « (...) by the first century and beyond, self-control appears to trump the active / passive binary when it came to defining ideal masculinity. This is seen, for example, in accusations of effeminacy even if one’s sexual desires were for one’s wife ». By focusing on the argument of nature as an anatomical ‘fit’ of male and female as deployed by Paul and the Jewish tradition (Philo, Josephus) and dragging in the natural theology of Rom 1 :19-20, Gagnon attempts to overcome this basic superstructure, but it does not follow that the vertical active vs. passive divide ceases to inform the Graeco-Roman views of (homo)sexuality. It is quite likely even that 1 Cor 6 :18 ὁ δὲ πορνεύων εἰς τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα ἀμαρτάνει, like Aeschines, *Against Timarchus*, 39 ὅσα μὲν παῖς ὢν εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἡμάρτηκεν which it closely resembles, means that a free man sinning against his body conflicts with his status and deprives him of it (R. Kirchhoff, *Die Sünde gegen den eigenen Leib* [Göttingen, 1994], pp. 179-181 ; contra, T. L. Carter, *Paul and the Power of Sin. Redefining ‘Beyond the Pale’* [Cambridge, 2001], p. 72 note 78, with inept arguments : the 400 years separating the two texts, Timarchus’ age).

⁴³ Proof that sexuality was not conceived as natural or unnatural, but conform or not conform to the societal / ethnic norm (rule, custom), {οὐ} *κατὰ νόμον*, comes from Herodotus, I, 61.1-2, apropos of anal sex between the demagogic leader Pisistratus and his wife : οὐ βουλόμενός οἱ γενέσθαι ἐκ τῆς νεογάμου γυναικὸς τέκνα ἐμίσητό οἱ οὐ κατὰ νόμον. Τὰ μὲν νυν πρῶτα ἔκρυπτε ταῦτα ἡ γυνή, μετὰ δέ, (...) ἡ δὲ τῷ ἀνδρὶ τὸν δὲ δεινὸν τι ἔσχε ἀτιμάζεσθαι πρὸς Πεισιστράτου (D. Asheri, in idem, A. B. Lloyd and A. Corcella, *A Commentary on Herodotus. Books I-IV. Edited by O. Murray and A. Moreno, with a Contribution by M. Brosius* [Oxford, 2007], pp. 123-124 ; also D. Ogden, *Greek Bastardy in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods* [ibid., 1996], p. 46 with note 51). It has been obvious for Greek scholars since J. J. Winkler’s demonstration, that *φύσις* in straight or same-sex dealings comes very close to *νόμος*, viz. to culture or accepted customs / conventions, cf. *παρανόμημα*, ‘transgression, vile act’, at Polybius XXIII, 10.2, XXXVI, 17.13, XXXVIII, 6.2 (*The Constraints of Desire. The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* [New York & London, 1990], pp. 17-44 at 17-23, 36-43) ; and the original stance of Musonius Rufus against all sexual practices between males is but a idiosyncratic twist on the old (G. J. Pendrick, *Antiphon the Sophist. The Fragments* [Cambridge, 2002], pp. 319-321 and 352-356, after G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* [ibid., 1981], pp. 111-130, or J. de Romilly, *Les grands sophistes dans l’Athènes de Périclès* [Paris, 1988], pp. 197-205) antithesis *νόμος* versus *φύσις* : cf. Williams², pp. 58-59, 272-274.

Plato on, is a double-edged sword⁴⁴. Take that passionate pederast, the epigrammatist Straton of Sardis (first half of the second century AD). Feigning to bow down to φύσις in *Palatine Anthology*, XII 245, he ironically toys with the contrast between βινεῖν (the beasts) and πυγίζειν (the humans), whereas in XII 238 he broaches animal homosexuality in a way that leaves little doubt as to where his sympathy stands :

Ἀλλήλοις παρέχουσιν ἀμοιβαδίην ἀπόλαυσιν
οἱ κύνειοι πῶλοιο μειρακιευόμενοι·

Πᾶν ἄλογον ζῶιον βινεῖ μόνον· οἱ λογικοὶ δὲ ἀμφαλλάξ δὲ οἱ αὐτοὶ ἀπόστροφα νωτοβατοῦνται
τῶν ἄλλων ζῶιον τοῦτ' ἔχομεν τὸ πλέον τὸ δρᾶν καὶ τὸ παθεῖν ἀντιπεραίνονται.
πυγίζειν εὐρόντες. Ὅσοι δὲ γυναίξει κρατοῦνται, Οὐ πλεονεκτεῖται δ' οὐδ' ἄτερος· ἄλλοτε μὲν γὰρ
τῶν ἀλόγων ζῶιον οὐδὲν ἔχουσι πλέον. ἴσταται ὁ προδιδούς ἄλλοτ' ὅπισθε πάλιν.
Τοῦτ' ἐστὶν πάντως τὸ παροίμιον· εἰς γὰρ ἀμοιβήν,
ὡς λέγεται, κνήθειν οἶδεν ὄνος τὸν ὄνον.

Now Gagnon functions on the basis of the Judeo-Christian and Stoic notions as to the νόμος / φύσις dichotomy in sexual dealings, viz. evidence of Hellenic pedigree backed by precious few Roman testimonies (p. 386 note 57). A radical modification of the long-held Greek notions which a reader of Paul should be careful not to obscure, this contention that homosexuality is παρὰ φύσιν⁴⁵ stumbles on the evidence of at least two Greek passages whose wording specifies unambiguously that the sphere of the νόμοι (not the φύσις) included such heterosexual milestones as the procreation of children and conjugal harmony. These are anonymous comic fragments : ἔξω σε γαμετήν 'παίδων ἐπ' ἀρότωι κατὰ νόμους Ἑλληνικούς'⁴⁶ ~ ἔστ' ἀνδρὶ καὶ γυναικὶ κείμενος νόμος,

⁴⁴ Read B. S. Thornton, *Eros. The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality* (Boulder, 1997), pp. 100-105, who aptly writes on 101 that « both of these explanations of homosexuality — as either an 'unnatural' perversion of sex or an excessive expression of its essential nature — can be found in ancient Greek literary remains. Choosing one of the two to the exclusion of the other, which is often the practice among modern scholars, oversimplifies the complexity of attitudes attested in the evidence », on the Greek side, and Williams, pp. 269-277, on the Roman. Cf. P. W. Ludwig, *Eros and Polis. Desire and Community in Greek Political Theory* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 105-109, about the priority of φύσις to νόμος in same-sex ἔρωσ according to Plato ; B. Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 194-215, for τὰ κατὰ φύσιν ; and Bryan, *Preface...*, pp. 84-89, on κατὰ / παρὰ φύσιν for Paul.

⁴⁵ What about heterosexual incest, whose naturalness was debated in fifth-century Athens (R. Goossens, *Euripide et Athènes* [Brussels, 1962], pp. 143-144, endnotes on 183) ? What of the linkage between sexuality, the psychic life, and dreams, as in the oniric theory of Herophilus, and the agreement of early Christians with him on natural sex dreams (H. von Staden, *Herophilus, the Art of Medicine in Ancient Alexandria* (...) [Cambridge, 1989], pp. 306-310) ?

⁴⁶ Chariton of Aphrodisias, III, 2.2 = adespoteon comic fragment 127* Kassel-Austin (*Poetae Comici Graeci*, VIII [Berlin & New York, 1995], p. 44). The line demonstrates that, for the Greeks of Chariton's date (25-50 AD according to the latest editor — G. P. Goold, *Chariton. Callirhoe* ['Loeb Classical Library', Cambridge, Mass., 1995], pp. 1-2 — but a vaguer dating is more standard, e.g. S. D. Smith, *Greek Identity and the Athenian Past in Chariton. The*

| τῶι μὲν διὰ τέλους ἦν ἔχει στέργειν αἰεί, | τῆι δ' ὅσ' ἂν ἀρέσκηι τάνδρι, ταυτ' αὐτὴν πο-
εῖν⁴⁷. If the values of such paramount labels as νόμος and φύσις were shifting around
the time of Paul, the evidence canvassed by Gagnon becomes moot. All the more so
since it is doubtful that Stoic-leaning morals were central to the popular morality of
the late Hellenistic period and early days of Roman world-wide rule ; Greek comedy
and romance are much more representative of the mindset of the half-literate Greek-
lings Paul seems to belong to, and demonstrably wrote for⁴⁸. Indeed his cornerstones
are Jewish thought and Stoic morals, but can he have ignored popular morality ? Last
but not least, what of Paul's possible dishonesty in Romans⁴⁹ ? Beware of devoutly
assuming, as Gagnon does, that the apostle is painfully sincere and always speaks his
mind with transparency. Now, the first Patristic occurrence of the phrase ὁ τῆς φύσεως
νόμος, 'the law of nature', viz. Justin, *Second Apology*, 2.4 (in A. Wartelle, *Saint Justin*,
Apologies. Introduction, texte critique, traduction, commentaire et index [Paris, 1987],
p. 198), is both heterosexual and concerned with conjugal morality, thus agrees with
my contentions — so I feel confident that Martin's understanding of the unnaturalness
affixed to same-sex acts and affects in Rom 1 :26⁵⁰ is the correct one.

Romance of Empire [Groningen, 2007], p. 2 and note 4 : 'mid- to late-1st century CE'), the pro-
creation of children belongs to the domain of the νόμοι.

⁴⁷ Fr. 1000 Kassel-Austin, 14-16 (*PCG* VIII, p. 290) = D. L. Page, *Literary Papyri Poetry*
(‘Loeb Classical Library’, Cambridge, Mass, 1942), pp. 186-187. « For the husband and the
wife there is an ordinance laid down (καίμενος νόμος) : | for him, to feel affection forever
(στέργειν αἰεί) towards her, until the end ; | for her, to do whatever pleases her husband ».

⁴⁸ The point needs no justification for New Comedy given the popularity of its authors in the
Roman empire witnessed by the numerous papyrological finds and their often low scriptural
levels ; as for Greek romance and its attaches to the lower class, see B. P. Reardon, *Courants*
littéraires grecs des I^{er} et III^e siècles après J.-C. (Paris, 1971), pp. 322-325. I shall have to
broach with more details the topics of Paul's audience and cultural level (*infra*, note 106).

⁴⁹ L. Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul. A Dynamic Perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law*
(Tübingen, 2000), pp. 36-50, where it is shown that Paul relies to a great extent on a rheto-
rical mise-en-scene in his epistles (in the same line, F. J. Long, *Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's*
Apology. The Compositional Unity of 2 Corinthians [Cambridge, 2004], pp. 117-241 ; comp-
are J. G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* [New York & Oxford], 2000, pp. 73-74). Thurén states
that Paul « could dramatize the situation in order to incite his hearers. He attempted to widen
the gap between the addressees' slightly inappropriate thoughts and his own convictions. Such
a technique is seldom used in rhetoric ; it is a risky, but effective means of persuasion. But is
it ethical to pretend to be angry in order to play on the emotions of the audience ? » (p. 44),
while Long struggles to tone down the possible dishonesty of the charges behind 2 Cor (pp.
124-125). On Pauline paradox, T. B. Savage, *Power Through Weakness. Paul's Understan-
ding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 54-99.

⁵⁰ He could have added that, in the imperial age, the antithesis between *nature* and *conven-
tion* raged around the superiority of the male or the female in the bedroom. The level of arti-
fice that entered into any woman's beauty was repeatedly flung in the face of the unmodified
charms of the boy, he who comes into the intercourse as nature fashioned him. The texts read
as follows : Strato, *Palatine Anthology*, XII 7, 1-2 παρὰ παρθένωι (...) | (...) οὐ φυσικῆ χρωτὸς
ἐϋπνοῖῃ, and XII 192 οὐ τέρπουσι κόμαι με περισσότεροί τε κίκιννοι, | τέχνης, οὐ φύσεως ἔργα

The background of the New Testament fares no better. The kind of writer who renames Second-Temple Judaism (chapter 2 ‘Same-Sex Intercourse as “Contrary to Nature” in Early Judaism [!]’, pp. 159-183)⁵¹, Gagnon enforces his theology on the Graeco-Roman data at hand⁵². Thus, on p. 169 (italics mine) :

« the second main reason why same-sex intercourse was rejected as “contrary to nature” extends from reproductive capability to the anatomical fittedness (...). Since the obvious receptacle given by nature for the male penis was the female vagina, penetration of a male amounted to treating the male as if he were a female and thereby “emasculating” him — a blatant case of anatomical gender transgression. In effect, the willingly penetrated male takes up complaint with nature for failing to supply him with a vagina. In Hellenistic and Roman imperial culture, “the passive partner” in a homoerotic relationship, either of his own initiative or by way of encouragement or coercion from “the active partner,” took the process of feminization a step further by braiding and adorning his hair or growing it long, putting on makeup and perfume, adopting female mannerisms, wearing women’s clothes, plucking facial and body hair, or (in extreme cases) undergoing castration. *Overlaying this critique of a rebellion against one’s God/nature-given gender* was the standard hierarchical conception of male-female status in antiquity : females were inferior and subordinate to men. »

Growing one’s locks to sign one’s feminization within the same-sex couple not only ignores that ‘length of hair, like colour of skin, is culturally determined (...)’ (Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*², pp. 78-79) ; it pays no heed to the construction of ethical gen-

διδασκόμενοι | ἀλλὰ παλαιστρίτου παιδὸς ῥύπος ὁ ψαφαρίτης | καὶ χροὴ μελέων σαρκὶ λιπαινομένη. | Ἴδὺς ἀκαλλώπιστος ἐμὸς πόθος· ἡ δὲ γοῆτις | μορφὴ θηλυτέρης ἔργον ἔχει Παφίης ; Rufinus, *ibid.*, V 19, 3-4 ἀντὶ δὲ μοι παίδων ἀδόλου χροὸς ἤρесе γύψου | χρίματα καὶ φύκους ἄνθος ἐπεισόδιον ; and the *locus classicus*, Achilles Tatius, II, 38. 2-3 γυναίξῃ μὲν γὰρ πάντα ἐπίπλαστα, καὶ τὰ ῥήματα καὶ τὰ σχήματα· κἀν εἶναι δόξῃ καλῆ, τῶν ἀλειμμάτων ἢ πολυπράγμων μηχανῆ. Καὶ ἔστιν αὐτῆς τὸ κάλλος ἢ μύρων, ἢ τριχῶν βαφῆς ἢ καὶ φιλημάτων· ἀν δὲ τῶν πολλῶν τούτων γυμνώσεως δόλων, ἔοικε κολοῖᾳ γεγυμνωμένῳ τῶν τοῦ μύθου πτερῶν. Τὸ δὲ κάλλος τὸ παιδικὸν οὐκ ἀρδεύεται μύρων ὄσφραις οὐδὲ δολεραῖς καὶ ἀλλοτρῖαις ὀσμαῖς, πάσης δὲ γυναικῶν μυραλοιφίας ἥδιον ὄδωδεν ὁ τῶν παίδων ἰδρώς. Compare the early Christian ideas on sexual ethics (e.g. R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* [London, 1986], pp. 340-351) and consult, on this syncretism, R. Hunter, *A Study of Daphnis and Chloe* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 70-71, and S. Goldhill, *Foucault’s Virginité. Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality* (*ibid.*, 1995), pp. 66-111, cf. 49-67 on the *nature vs unnatural* sexual divide.

⁵¹ He cannot even tell when Paul endorses Philo : J. W. Thompson, ‘Creation, Shame and Nature in 1 Cor 11 :2-16 : The Background of Paul’s Argument’, in J. T. Fitzgerald, T. H. Olbricht and L. M. White (edd.), *Early Christianity and Classical Culture. Comparative Essays in Honor of A. J. Malherbe* (Boston, 2003), pp. 237-257 at 251-256.

⁵² He lumps the anti-pederastic verses of the Pseudo-Phocylides with other Jewish texts and pseudepigrapha (p. 161), but vv. 192-194 need only stem from Cynic-Stoic polemics (P. W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* [Leiden, 1978], pp. 238-241 ; P. Derron, *Pseudo-Phocylide. Sentences* [Paris, 1986], p. 30 notes 5-6 ; Wilson, *infra*, p. 62 top).

ders, a paradigm minimized by Dover or Nissinen (whom Gagnon cites, note 16)⁵³. For Greeks and Romans, long hair was typically a youthful trait which male teens renounced at their entry into adulthood⁵⁴; young adults from the élite were fond of this hairstyle. As a social cipher, it does not mean the same whether the male who wears it is your average Joe, however attractive, or a lad in the right age segment to belong to the world of pederastic relationships⁵⁵ — especially before the second century AD, by which time long hair becomes popular in grown men without any regard for age, social status and condition in the oriental parts of the Roman empire⁵⁶. It follows that, in the texts which relate to pederasty or homosexuality and on the iconographic evidence for these practices, the long hair given to the junior partner never expresses their desire to change their anatomic gender and assimilate themselves to women, unless this is told⁵⁷. Actually, this long-haired man or boy is very

⁵³ M. W. Gleason, 'The Semiotics of Gender : Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.E.', in Halperin, Winkler and F. I. Zeitlin (edd.), *Before Sexuality* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 389-416, particularly 390-392; C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 63-97, cf. 67 « impossibility of separating off discourses about sex from other discourses, in particular those relating to gender but also those relating to oppositions between sophistication and vigour (...) ». Cf. A. Richlin, 'Not before Homosexuality. The Materiality of the *Cinaedus* and the Roman Law against Love Between Men', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3, 1993, pp. 523-573 (the best essentialism) at 526-528.

⁵⁴ D. D. Leitao, 'Adolescent Hair-Growing and Hair-Cutting Rituals in Ancient Greece. A Sociological Approach', in D. B. Dodd and C. A. Faraone (edd.), *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives. New Critical Perspectives* (London & New York, 2003), pp. 109-129, especially 112-117; Christian Laes, *Children in the Roman Empire. Outsiders Within* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 232, 276-277. For the Romans, hairstyle operated as a social giveaway: the kid of free descent wore his hair long and artfully arranged, whereas it was long but unadorned for the slave boy and adult slave (H. Gabelmann, 'Römische Kinder in *Toga Praetexta*', *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 100, 1985, pp. 497-541). The young citizen, with his toga, braids and *bullae*, could not be mistaken for a slave and was thus spared the pederastic zest of citizens eager to prey on slave boys (P. Grimal, *L'amour à Rome* [Paris, 1988], pp. 121-124; E. Eyben, *Restless Youth in Ancient Rome*² [London, 1993], pp. 243-245; B. Rawson, *Children and Childhood in Roman Italy* [Oxford, 2003], pp. 261-263). For Greek pederasty binds two citizens while at Rome it binds free man and slave.

⁵⁵ K. Hopwood, 'All That May Become A Man': The Bandit in Ancient Novel', in L. Foxhall and J. B. Salmon (edd.), *When Men Were Men. Masculinity, Power, and Identity in Classical Antiquity* (London, 1998), pp. 195-204 at 201-202. On sexy long hair, R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace Odes Book 1* (Oxford, 1970), p. 341 at 8 *unctis*, *A Commentary on Horace Odes Book 2* (ibid., 1978), p. 92 at 23 *solutis crinibus. Capillatus* refers to the slave-boy by a metonymy and the reverse is most unusual (N. M. Kay, *Marital Book XI. A Commentary* [London, 1985], pp. 89-92 at XI 11, 3 *tonso pura ministro*).

⁵⁶ L. L. Belleville, 'Κεφαλή and the Thorny Issue of Headcovering in 1 Corinthians 11 :2-16', in T. J. Burke and J. K. Elliott (edd.), *Paul and the Corinthians. Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 215-231 at 217.

⁵⁷ Witness *Priapea*, 45, 1-3 *cum quandam rigidus deus uideret | feruenti caput ustulare ferro, | ut Maurae similis foret puellae*; in 6-7, the boy is mocked as a *cinaedus* by the god: *num tandem prior es puella, quaeso, | quam sunt, mentula quos habet, capilli?* (on this sex-

likely to be either a *puer delicatus* or a slave owned / courted by his companion, viz. a nobody, socially speaking, who does not qualify for the protection afforded by the Roman *lex Scantinia*⁵⁸. The monstrosity of the thesis put forward by Gagnon⁵⁹ stands out : far from setting right the confusion of those late-antique Christians who discovered (or feigned to) same-sex overtones in long hair and / or seemingly effeminate looks in young males⁶⁰, he perpetuates it. In deference to the complexity of the religious picture that obtained for Paul's contemporaries, one shall finally point out what is usually left unsaid through ignorance by students of Biblical sexuality, namely that the apostle's strident hostility to hairstyles which he envisioned as unmanly stands a chance to stem from a specific cultic detail. We know, courtesy to the testimonies of Horace (*Epodes*, 17, 56-58), Juvenal (2, 91-92), and especially the pseudo-Virgilian epode 13 of the *Catalepton*, that the mysteries of the old Thracian goddess Cotyto / Cotys, which were scurrilously disparaged at Athens by the comic poet Eupolis in his 415 or 416 BC play *Βάπτται* — an ambiguous title, with little to help us decide between the traditional *Those who have been immersed* (at sea, as a form of baptism) and *The dyers* (of their hair ? clothes ?) —⁶¹, were still alive and

crazed figure, E. M. O'Connor, *Symbolum Salacitatis. A Study of the God Priapus as a Literary Character* [Francfort, 1989], pp. 1-53, or J. Uden, 'Impersonating Priapus', *American Journal of Philology* 128, 2007, pp. 1-26 at 4-13). Otherwise, long hair appears, as in Rufinus, epigram X Page (= *Palatine Anthology*, V 28), 3-4 *νῦν μοι προσπαίζεις, ὅτε τὰς τρίχας ἡφάνικάς σου, | τὰς ἐπὶ τοῖς σοβαροῖς αὐχέσι πλαζομένης*, qua shorthand for the beauty of any lad / παιδικά whose favors can either be cajoled or paid for.

⁵⁸ S. Lilja, *Homosexuality in Republican and Augustan Rome* (Helsinki, 1983), pp. 302-320 ; J. Pollini, 'The Warren Cup : Homoerotic Love and Symposial Rhetoric in Silver', *The Art Bulletin* 81, 1999, pp. 21-52 at 29-36, particularly 31 sqq. ; id., 'Slave-Boys for Sexual and Religious Service : Images of Pleasure and Devotion', in A. J. Boyle and W. J. Dominik (edd.), *Flavian Rome. Culture, Image, Text* (Leyde, 2003), pp. 149-166 ; C. Vout, *Power and Eroticism in Imperial Rome* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 17-22 ; Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*², pp. 31-40 ; Laes, pp. 223-243. On the *deliciae*, 'pet slaves', one shall read H.-J. Van Dam, *P. Papinius Statius Silvae Book II. A Commentary* (Leiden, 1984), pp. 72-73 ; A. J. Pomeroy, 'Heavy Petting in Catullus', *Arethusa* 36, 2003, pp. 49-60 at 55-59 ; N. W. Bernstein, 'Mourning the *Puer delicatus* : Status Inconsistency and the Ethical Value of Fostering in Statius, *Silvae* 2.1', *American Journal of Philology* 126, 2005, pp. 257-280 at 267-268.

⁵⁹ He was not even bothered to specify that the humiliation, for a male, of being penetrated, on which, historically, the rabbis first based their distaste for homosexuality, is a Roman borrowing : M. L. Satlow, 'Rhetoric and Assumptions : Romans and Rabbis on Sex', in M. Godman (ed.), *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 135-144 at 137-140.

⁶⁰ Exemplified in W. Loader, *The Pseudepigrapha on Sexuality. Attitudes Towards Sexuality in Apocalypses, Testaments, Legends, Wisdom, and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids, 2011), pp. 473-474, 506-507. The Pauline precept calling long hair a man's disgrace (Thompson, pp. 252-254) and its refusal (M. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch. Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* [Chicago, 2001], pp. 224-225, 274-275), is relevant. Gagnon only mentions the former p. 235 because, on 169, he needs to hide his apologetics.

⁶¹ Fr. 76-98 Kassel-Austin (*Poetae Comici Graeci*, V [Berlin & New York, 1986], pp. 331-342) = I. C. Storey, *Fragments of Old Comedy*, II *Diopieithes to Pherecrates* ('Loeb Classi-

kicking in that golden age of Roman poetry. There is no proof that Cotyto was not present at Rome then, and affirmations as to the contrary adduce nothing but mere conviction⁶². What particularly interests me is that the goddess, from Eupolis down to our latest sources⁶³, was said to be worshipped by effeminated men, or rather, by men who had recourse to transvestitism, including long curls — something as flimsy, and seemingly as gender-neutral as a man's concern for his hair, indeed appears in our sources in association with Cotyto / Cotys⁶⁴. It is, therefore, a logical, though unevidenced, step to speculate that the Pauline obsession with man's hair may have something to do with the external characteristics of Cotyto's (or some such deity's) worshippers. Paul's flippancy on the lightweight topic of hairstyle would be mired in his awareness of its function in some mysteric religions, on top of a typically Jewish disavowal of gender-bending characteristics in men.

Other faults of Gagnon's concerning the background of the New Testament include the sweeping recourse to unsupported assertions, lexicography-wise. Thus, on 236, Rom 1 :26 αἱ τε ἡλειαὶ αὐτῶν elicits the following comment :

« the use of *thēleiai* rather than *gynaikes* (“women”), and later in v. 27 of *arsenes* (“males”) rather than *andres* or *anthrōpoi* (“men”), suggests an allusion to Gen 1 :27 (*arsēn kai thēlu epoiēsen autous* : “male and female he made them”). Most English translations, however, translate here as “women” and “men” respectively, thus obscuring the link to Gen 1:27 for readers. »

Since Rom 1 :26 reads ἡλειαὶ *simplex* and 1 :27 ἄρσενες... θηλείας, it seems axiomatic to assert that both verses can or must only echo the Greek of Gen 1 :27c, which

cal Library', Cambridge, Mass, 2011), pp. 78-95. The same Storey wrote an in-depth study of the play in his *Eupolis, Poet of Old Comedy* (Oxford & New York, 2003), pp. 94-111, and its rituals are examined at great length in F. Delneri, *I culti misterici stranieri nei frammenti della commedia Attica antica* (Bologna, 2006), pp. 249-353. H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion, I Ter Unus. Isis, Dionysus, Hermes. Three Studies in Henotheism* (Leiden, New York, Copenhagen & Cologne, 1990), p. 113, is a fine summary.

⁶² D. Mankin, *Horace. Epodes* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 288 « except for this passage and *Cat.* 13.19-20, there seems to be no evidence for a cult at Rome (Wissowa (1912) 376) (...) » ; L. C. Watson, *A Commentary on Horace's Epodes* (Oxford & New York, 2003), p. 573 « (...) Eupolis apparently represented Cotyto as the goddess of *cinaedi*, and later writers generally follow this account. For Horace, however, the *Cotytia* are simply secret, licentious rites, here anomalously depicted as admitting women, instead of being reserved for men. *Pace* J. Hu-beaux, *Mus. Belge*, 27 (1933), 63 and 81, it seems unlikely that the goddess was ever worshipped in Rome, which may account for the unusual account given by Horace. » In my view, imitation of Archilochus or Eupolis by Horace, Juvenal and the pseudo-Virgil are not enough to explain this surge of interest for Cotyto in Augustan and early imperial poetry.

⁶³ F. Lasserre, *Les épodes d'Archiloque* (Paris, 1950), pp. 65-69 ; Storey, *Eupolis*, pp. 96-99.

⁶⁴ E. Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (London, 1980), pp. 136-137, who cites Greek and Latin evidence ; Storey, *Eupolis*, p. 96. On religious effeminacy around the figure of Dionysos (to which Cotyto was not unfrequently related through Sabazios, the Phrygian Dionysos : Versnel, pp. 114-115), see *ibid.*, p. 159 with note 246.

has the pair in the singular qua the polar expression ἄρσῃν καὶ θῆλυς — a far cry, one must remark, from the wording of Rom 1 :27. Such intertextuality is possible but beyond any proof in 26 ; in 27, where both ἄρσῃν and θῆλυς stand, a link with Gen 1 :27c looks more likely, but remains conjectural. In effect, it approximates a sleight of hand to take these Pauline verses as an unity because of the shared presence of θῆλυς — their only common feature, at the textual level — and their thematic closeness reflected in the syntactical form of the sentence (the γάρ of 26⁶⁵) if this only grounds a refusal to look at the distribution of lone ἄρσῃν in the NT. Two classical words of excellent pedigree⁶⁶, they are frequent in the Hellenistic and early imperial periods⁶⁷ and need be no echo of the Septuagint whenever they appear *separatim* in the New Testament, witness Rom 1 :27, Rev 12 :5, or Rev 12 :13 for lone ἄρσῃν (no lone θῆλυς survives in the NT). Philo's practice, which puts ἄρσῃν simplex independently of Gen 1 :27, combined with the evidence of the numerous compound forms in ἀρρεν- canvassed by Lampe, pp. 229-230 (so, e.g., ἀρρενιστέον, ἀρρενογονία, ἀρρενοειδῶς), proves that the mere deployment of this lexeme cannot be pressed into any kind of intertextual use in a Judeo-Christian writer. The same applies to Flavius Josephus (another landmark)⁶⁸, while numerous passages in non-Christian, imperial

⁶⁵ With ὁμοίως τε καὶ at the start of v. 27 as the emphatic mark of the equivalence established between the sin of female libido gone wrong and what obtains for male lust. — However, this does not necessarily signify a thematic continuation, since a) it remains wholly unclear why women were singled out first for mention in 26, given the views of Hellenistic Judaism on the superiority of man (Gagnon dogs this issue ; the seemingly obvious answer would be that male perversion receives more emphasis this way : so, e.g., C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, I [London & New York, 1975], p. 125), and b) the considerably more flippant v. 27 entails unusual NT vocabulary and hapax, apparently implying that male sin was particularly significant for Paul. Community of inspiration is thus the most one will diagnose in 26b-27 without overarching oneself. On all of this, the sanest remarks I know of are in Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, 1988), pp. 91-93, and in Brooten, *Love Between Women*, p. 240 and note 73 (where she tones down the link with Gen 1 :27c).

⁶⁶ Ἄρσῃν, with its dialectal variants, is the byword for maleness (Chantraine, I, p. 116 ; G. P. Shipp, *Modern Greek Evidence for the Ancient Greek Vocabulary* [Sydney, 1979], pp. 99-100) and reflects directly a Proto-Indo-European etymon **{h₁}r̥sen-*, 'männlich, männliches Tier' (D. S. Wodtko, B. Irslinger and C. Schneider, *Nomina im Indogermanischen* [Heidelberg, 2008], pp. 584-586). The hardly less venerable θῆλυς (Chantraine, II, p. 435 *sub* II°), a banal derivative of the PIE verb meaning 'to suckle (the maternal milk)', **d^he₁{i}-* (H. Rix (ed.), *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben. Die Wurzeln und ihre Primärstammbildungen*² [Wiesbaden, 2001], pp. 138-139), took on a value 'effeminate' as early as Herodotus in the forms θηλυδρίας and θηλυδρώδης, cf. the name of quality θηλύτης, which, from 'femininity' (3 ex., contrary of ἀρρενότης [1 ex.] : H. Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus* [Berlin, 1870], pp. 330, 107), went on to signify 'effeminacy, delicateness' by early imperial times (Plutarch).

⁶⁷ For the late Hellenistic attestations, cf. E. Maysner, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit*, I *Laut- und Wortlehre* (Berlin & Leipzig, 1923), p. 220.

⁶⁸ *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, 12. 1 ἦσαν γὰρ τῶι μὲν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐκ Γλαφύρας ἄρσενες δύο, Ἀριστοβούλῳ δὲ ἐκ Βερενίκης τῆς Σαλώμης θυγατρὸς ἄρσενές τε τρεῖς καὶ θήλειαι δύο ; it also

Greek can be found wherein the polar pair ἄρσῃν ~ θήλυς appears for the sake of the sense and nothing else⁶⁹. The Josephus snippet demonstrates that, at an epoch not much removed from Paul's, a learned, Jewish writer could easily ignore the sheer suggestiveness (!) of Gen 1 :27c when speaking of '(the) male and (the) female' — why, pray tell, should it be any different for Paul, even in Romans where God (the word and concept) pervades everything ? Let me repeat that only through a wholly arbitrary *petitio principii*s may one admit that Paul's choice of words in 1 Rom 26 and 27 points to the Greek of Gen 1 :27 rather than either Augustean or LXX idiom⁷⁰. It is no strain to expect from Paul enough familiarity with the *koine* to be able to use the elevated ἄρσῃν and θήλυς in the place of more standard but colorless words to heighten the rhetorical strength of his condemnation of deviant sexual behavior in the genders as distinct from individual men and women.

Last but not least, Gagnon suppresses the embarrassing facts that not many commentaries non-theological in their premises or expected audience explicitly link Rom 1 :26-27 with Gen 1 :27c and that those who do, restrict such intertextuality to Rom 1 :27, with its mention of the polar pair, thereby disrupting the so-called unity he claims exist between Rom 1 :26 and 27⁷¹. At issue here, not the number of exe-

shows that a Jew could take ἄρσῃν and θήλυς to mean υἱός and θυγάτηρ, cf. *Meno*, 71 e 8 = T. Buchheim, *Gorgias von Leontinoi. Reden, Fragmente und Testimonien* (Hambourg, 1989), p. 88 fr. 19 και ἄλλη ἐστὶν παιδὸς ἀρετὴ και θηλείας και ἄρρενος και πρεσβυτέρου ἀνδρός.

⁶⁹ So, e.g., in Diodorus of Sicily, VIII, 23. 2 και ἀνεΐλε Ἀψία ἤι ποταμῶν ἱερώτατος εἰς ἄλλα πίπτει, ἐνθ' εἴσω βάλλοντι τὸν ἄρσενά θήλυς ὀπυΐει ; Lucian of Samosata, *On the Syrian Goddess*, 54 θύουσιν δὲ βόας ἄρσενάς τε και θήλεας και αἴγας και ὄϊας ; Oppian, *Cynegetics*, III, 147-148 ἤματα γὰρ και νύκτας ἐελδόμεναι φιλότῃτος, | αὐταὶ θηλύτεραι μάλ' ἐπ' ἄρσειν ὀρμαίνουσι, 289 ἄρσενά και θήλειαν ἀμείβεσθαι λυκάβαντι, 357-358 ὡς τότε φύλον | θήλυ πρόπαν τελέθει και ἀδέμνιον ἄρσενός ἐστι ; or in Galenus (many examples).

⁷⁰ A glance at any good dictionary of the LXX confirms this : T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven, Paris & Walpole, 2009), pp. 93, 329. Even the uncritical J. E. Ellis, *Paul and Ancient Views of Sexual Desire. Paul's Sexual Ethics in 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 7 and Romans 1* (London, 2007), p. 165, concedes that « while it may not be unmistakable, the lexical similarities Gagnon cites [between 1 Rom 1 :18-32 and the Creation and Fall stories of Gen 1-3] make the connection seem at least likely. »

⁷¹ As a sample of this paradigmatic contrast, compare P. Stuhlmacher, *Die Brief an die Römer*² (Göttingen, 1998), pp. 36-37 « das neue „deswegen hat Gott sie preisgegeben“ präzisiert, was schon in V. 24 gesagt worden war : Mit allen Zeichen der Abscheu schildert der Apostel, wie die Heiden sich (in sündhafter Umkehr von Gen 1,27 f.) in lesbischer Liebe und Sodomie selber schänden », with D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids & Cambridge, 1996), p. 114 note 114 « Paul's use of the antonyms θήλυς / ἄρσῃν (v. 27) rather than, e.g., γυνή / ἀνήρ, stresses the element of sexual distinctiveness and throws into relief the perversity of homosexuality by implicitly juxtaposing its confusion of the sexes with the divine 'male and female he created them'. For the pair θήλυς / ἄρσῃν is constantly associated with the creation narrative (cf. Gen. 1 :27 ; Matt. 19 :4 ; Mark 10 :6, although the only other occurrence of the pair in Paul [Gal. 3 :28] does not clearly allude to creation) » (footnote to Rom 1 :26 αἱ θήλεια αὐτῶν ; tellingly, Gal 3 :28 appears nowhere in Gagnon's book).

getes who accept or shun the link with the creation of man, but the opposition between a reluctance to make exegetic leaps of faith and theological *caviardage* of the kind *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* is prone to. Indeed, the latest interpreter of Romans flatly rules out Gagnon's interpretation⁷². If this is not a case of sweeping recourse to unsupported assertions hardwired in a mechanical conception of Scriptural intextuality⁷³, what shall it be ?

The section of the book that investigates the Ancient Near Eastern remains of homosexual acts and affects (pp. 44-55) exhibits a similar lack of mastery and yet more disdain for philological rigor. This topic is frighteningly technical ; one should have expected Gagnon to work *experto credite*, by relying on those publications of noted assyriologists and egyptologists who have withstood the test of time, and then to check some key facts in the primary texts through those very translations used by those experts. He has done the contrary, as disclosed on p. 44 :

« recent summaries and analyses by David Greenberg, Martti Nissinen, Donald Wold and Saul Olyan provide a helpful starting point for describing ancient Near Eastern perspectives on homosexuality. »

This is qualified by the bibliographical note 1 on the same page. Apart from Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* ; Nissinen ; and a few second-hand surveys of biblical homosexuality, the only contributions by assyriologists are the classical, albeit dated, 'Homosexualität' by J. Bottéro and H. Petschow in the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie* (IV [Berlin, 1975], pp. 459-468), in

Yet more open-minded is the, usually stoutly heterosexist and conservative, N. T. Wright, in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 10 (Nashville, 2002), pp. 433-434.

⁷² A. J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans. A Commentary* (Grand Rapids & Cambridge, 2011), p. 97 : « (...) or (3) even more, it refers to the divinely created order, echoing the creation story of Genesis 1. (...) The third is unlikely, for there is no clear reference to the creation story here, which is surprising if such is intended. Instead, the language used is in keeping with the familiar tradition in both Jewish and non-Jewish Hellenism, as well as Paul himself (Rom 2:27, 11:21, 24), concerning what is "natural." Such traditions affirm that there is a natural order, and that that order can be discerned by observation and reason. The result is that, for Paul, the kind of sexual relations to which he is referring do not conform to what is "natural" » . In note 48 at (3), Hultgren references *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*.

⁷³ The standard grid for Paul's intertextual engagement with the Hebrew Bible is to be sought in R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul?* (Yale, 1993), pp. 29-33, though I think it much more satisfactory if it is demonstrated that the structure of both the Pauline text entailing a verbatim correspondence with something in the HB and the Hebrew snippet said to be picked up by the Apostle, do cohere at the ideological level. I would recommend using the model put forward by P. Hadot, viz. « (...) la méthode des 'structures conceptuelles', qui consiste à reconnaître de part et d'autre, chez l'emprunteur et sa source, la présence de combinaisons d'éléments typiques, liés ensemble de manière à former une configuration unique et se retrouvant à la fois et uniquement dans l'emprunteur et dans sa source » (*Plotin, Porphyre. Études néoplatoniciennes* [Paris, 1999], p. 15).

which he found no help, probably because it is written in French, and H. A. Hoffner Jr, 'Incest, Sodomy and Bestiality in the Ancient Near East', in idem (ed.), *Oriens et Occidens. Essays Presented to Cyrus H. Gordon on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1973), pp. 81-90, which too he never uses elsewhere ; actually, it provides little detail save on *hurkel-*⁷⁴, so may have been spared us. Now, Gagnon missed at least four seminal studies with titles quite explicit-looking⁷⁵. They would have taught him that homosexuality was not shameful in early Mesopotamia ; to quote from Bottéro, *Mésopotamie...*, p. 232, « absolument rien ne nous autorise à penser que ces relations homosexuelles aient été le moins du monde réprouvées, ou même simplement tenues, comme telles, pour plus infamantes, ou à déconseiller, que les relations hétérosexuelles — pourvu seulement que les unes comme les autres ne comportassent point de violence ». He would also have gained from these contributions a more substantial notion of the cultic figures which the evidence at hand allows us to recognize as either homosexual or transgendered ; for his account of them, pp. 47-50, shows devastating weaknesses. The Sumerian *gala* ~ Akkadian *kalû(m)*, a lamentation priest who cuts a most elusive figure⁷⁶, appears nowhere in

⁷⁴ J. Tischler, *Hethitisches Etymologisches Glossar*, I (Innsbruck, 1983), p. 302 ; J. Puhvel, *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*, III *Words Beginning with H* (Berlin & New York, 1991), pp. 402-403 ; I. Peled, 'Expelling the Demon of Effeminacy. Anniwiyani's Ritual and the Question of Homosexuality in Hittite Thought', *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 10, 2010, pp. 69-81 at 76-79. The heterosexist bias is thankfully lesser now than in 1973.

⁷⁵ Bottéro, 'L'amour libre à Babylone et ses servitudes', in L. Poliakov (ed.), *Le Couple interdit* (Paris, 1980), pp. 27-42 = *Mésopotamie. L'écriture, la raison et les dieux* (ibid., 1987), pp. 224-240 at 231-232, 235-236, 238 ; B. Groneberg, 'Die sumerisch-akkadisch Inanna / Ištar : Hermaphroditos ?', *Welt des Orients* 17, 1986, pp. 25-46 at 33-39 ; W. G. Lambert, 'Prostitution', in V. Haas (ed.), *Aussenseiter und Randgruppen. Beiträge zu einer Sozialgeschichte des Alten Orient* (Constance, 1992), pp. 127-157 at 145-153 ; S. M. Maul, 'Kurgarrû und *assinnu* und ihr Stand in der babylonischen Gesellschaft', *ibid.*, pp. 159-171.

⁷⁶ « A ridiculous figure of uncertain sexuality according to some literary texts, a respected cleric with wife and children in many documents » states Cooper, 'Genre, Gender, and the Sumerian Lamentation', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 58, 2006, pp. 39-47 at 45. Cf. further M. Bachvarova, 'Sumerian Gala Priests and Eastern Mediterranean Returning Gods : Tragic Lamentation in Cross-Cultural Perspective', in A. Suter (ed.), *Lament. Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 18-52 at 20-22 and 39-41 notes 3-23, after P. Michalowski, 'Love or Death ? Observations on the Role of the gala in Ur III Ceremonial Life', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 58, 2006, pp. 49-61, who shows that there were « galas for a day, for days on end, or even for an hour ; they were not initiated into the permanent status of a gala » (p. 55), and before U. Gabbay, 'The Akkadian Word for Third Gender : The *kalû* (gala) Once Again', *Proceedings of the 51st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (Chicago, 2008), pp. 49-56, id., 'Lamentful Proverbs or Proverbial Laments : Intertextual Connections Between Sumerian Proverbs and Emesal Laments', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 63, 2011, pp. 51-64 at 55-56. The classic J. Renger, 'Untersuchungen zum Priestertum der altbabylonischen Zeit. 2. Teil', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 59, 1969, pp. 104-230 at 187-195, is still useful ('Was der *kalûm* ein Eunuch ?', pp. 192-193 ; he answers : 'keiner dieser Belege zwingt dazu, sie als Eunuchen oder Kultprostituierte zu klassifizieren').

the book though he has been long deemed an eunuch⁷⁷. Whatever the rationale behind this suppression, it deprives the reader of a crucial figure. Gagnon has much to say concerning two other priests which are difficult to differentiate from the *gala*, the *saĝ-ur-sa(ĝ)* and the ^(h)*kur-ĝar-ra*, so this omission is glaring. The *saĝ-ur-sa(ĝ)*, ~ *assinnu(m)* / *issinu(m)*, took central stage during the New Year festival at Isin in homage to Inanna and seems to have been something in-between a transvestite male prostitute and an eunuch or a hermaphrodite⁷⁸. As for the ^(h)*kur-ĝar-ra*, borrowed as *kurgarrû(m)*⁷⁹, this cleric must have been a true-to-life eunuch or castrate since we possess an explicit passage where (their?) blood is mentioned in connection with the same goddess⁸⁰. So, what about these priests, of which the *assinnu* and the *kurgarrû*, having renounced the societal marks (clothing) of their gender, perhaps even their genitals, provide a kind of culturally acceptable archetype of the passive partner in same-sex relationships? Gagnon, who argues that homosexuality mainly happened

⁷⁷ By virtue of his using the literary dialect reserved for heroines and goddesses, the Emesal, and since the proverb 2. 90 as explained by E. I. Gordon (*Sumerian Proverbs. Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* [Philadelphia, 1959], pp. 247-248, most notably his note 9 on 248) mentions masturbation and may be related to another proverb, 2.100, which exhibits the *kalû(m)* speaking about his anus as belonging to his goddess, Inanna, in such a way that renders possible some sexual allusion. B. Alster, though, has contradicted this exegesis of 2. 90 in his own *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer* (Bethesda, 1997), II, p. 65, and it must be conceded that the whole evidence rests on fragile grounds (Lambert, p. 159 note 29: « the problems of language are too great for this material to be used, except that words put in the mouth of the *gala* are in Emesal dialect and so confirm his feminine aspect »).

⁷⁸ W. H. P. Römer, *Sumerische 'Königshymnen' der Isin-Zeit* (Leiden, 1965), pp. 157-158; G. Farber-Flügge, *Der Mythos 'Inanna und Enki' unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Liste der me* (Rome, 1973), p. 106 *ad* 23; D. Reisman, 'Iddin-Dagan's Sacred Marriage Hymn', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 25, 1973, pp. 185-202, cf. 187; G. Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (London & New York, 1994), pp. 157-158, 159-160; J. M. Durand, 'La Religión en Siria durante la Época de los Reinos Amorreos según la Documentación de Mari', in P. Mander and id., *Mitología y Religión del Oriente Antiguo*, II. 1 (Barcelona, 1995), pp. 125-533 at 332-334; S. T. Kamionkowski, *Gender Reversal and Cosmic Chaos. A Study of the Book of Ezekiel* (Sheffield, 2003), pp. 79-80; P. Lapinkivi, *The Sumerian Sacred Marriage in the Light of Comparative Evidence* (Helsinki, 2004), pp. 158-166 at 159; S. Teppo, 'Sacred Marriage and the Devotees of Ištar', in Nissinen and R. Uro (edd.), *Sacred Marriages. The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (Winona Lake, 2008), pp. 75-92 at 84-91. The old analogy with the *berdache* of American folklore, viz. a man with some kind of feminine sensibility, has little to commend it.

⁷⁹ Römer, p. 166 *ad* 7; L. Cagni, *L'Épopée di Erra* (Rome, 1969), p. 233 *ad* 55; CAD K (1971), pp. 557-559; R. A. Henshaw, *Female and Male: The Cultic Personnel. The Bible and the Rest of the Ancient Near East* (Allison Park, PA, 1994), pp. 284-306 *passim*.

⁸⁰ Lines 76-77 of the Sumerian 'royal' hymn Inanna-Dilibad, as edited and translated by Römer: *giri úš dul₄-dul₄-e šeš.NI [] | kù^d-inanna-ra igi-ni-še i-dib-bé*, 'der das Schwert mit Blut bedeckt, der [], | tritt vor die heilige Inanna'. This text is curiously absent in Lambert's discussion of prostitution; the doubts voiced by Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality*, p. 96 and notes 37-39, fail to convince once compared with the lines quoted above, cf. Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World*, p. 33.

in cultic contexts in the Levant (pp. 100-110) since the *assinnu*, the *kurgarrû* and the *kulu'u* 'provide good evidence for homosexual cult prostitution' (pp. 102 sqq.)⁸¹ and parallel the Hebrew *qēdēšim*, fails to tell the reader that Nissinen considers the cultic role of our Mesopotamian clerics to have been asexual rather than homosexual (*Homoeroticism in the Biblical World*, pp. 30-31). Such a far-reaching disagreement with one of his most expert authorities weakens the case Gagnon attempts to build. Small wonder he kept silent, given the ignorance *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* remains in as to the whole dimension of transvestitism in the Ancient Near East and the gender issues at stake⁸²; its iconography too is seminal⁸³, but Gagnon was not in the least conversant with this kind of evidence. His paltry, third-hand at best, acquaintance with the Ancient Near East betrays him into accepting the fastly-diminishing *opinio communis* that anything coming close to same-sex love between Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the Standard Babylonian epic would do too much violence to the primary texts, the testimony of which passes for inconclusive (pp. 50-51)⁸⁴. However, the latest scholarship firmly upholds such an attachment of the two

⁸¹ Though plausible, the idea that they may have been/played the part of cultic prostitutes is little more than guesswork; see Bottéro & Petschow, p. 463, and Greenberg, pp. 96-97. Gagnon could have availed himself of the survey of these priests by W. Roscoe, 'Precursors of Islamic Male Homosexualities, in S. O. Murray and idem (edd.), *Islamic Homosexualities. Culture, History, and Literature* (New York, 1997), pp. 55-86 at 65-68.

⁸² Suffice it to mention here H. T. Vedeler, 'Reconstructing Meaning in Deuteronomy 22 :5 : Gender, Society, and Transvestitism in Israel and the Ancient Near East', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, 2008, pp. 459-476 at 461-469. A similar ignorance mars what, to date, is Gagnon's most technical contribution ('The Old Testament and Homosexuality : A Critical Review of the Case Made by Philly's Bird', *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 117, 2005, pp. 367-394 at 373-375, on homosexual cultic prostitution).

⁸³ Inanna / Ištar's gender-bending priests wore womanly clothes and performed their deeds with a view to entertain their grim goddess, witness the Assyrian iconography : J. Scurlock, 'Animals in Ancient Mesopotamian Religion', in B. J. Collins (ed.), *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (Leiden, Boston & Köln, 2002), pp. 361-387 at 369-370. Cf. more generally Roscoe, 'Priests of the Goddess : Gender Transgression in Ancient Religion', *History of Religions* 35, 1996, pp. 195-230 at 213-217.

⁸⁴ This is a classical topic of conservative exegesis, mirrored even by people who know some cuneiform (e.g. M. Zehnder, 'Observations on the Relationship Between David and Jonathan and the Debate on Homosexuality', *Westminster Theological Journal* 69, 2007, pp. 127-174 at 171 : « some passages in the Gilgamesh epic, alluded to by Schroer and Staubli and others, though not being unequivocal and for the most part reconstructed, can be interpreted as containing — perhaps only very implicit — homoerotic or homosexual connotations, without negative evaluation ») and historians with no concern for homosexuality (so M.-A. Ataç, 'Angelology' in the Epic of Gilgamesh', *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 4, 2004, pp. 3-25 at 12-16; according to him, « speculations on the nature of the relationship between the two heroes of the epic, Gilgamesh and Enkidu, have often suffered from literalisms such as a friendship that takes the place of a normal heterosexual relationship, and even homosexual inclinations proper » [p. 4]). Literalism it must indeed be, for Ataç wishes to show « that all the events presented within the framework of the Epic are actually models or representa-

Mesopotamian heroes⁸⁵, and the case is far from being closed, owing to the amount of philological facts and interpretive data these scholars offer, witness the somewhat embarrassed reluctance shown by the last religious scholar who wrote on Gilgamesh and Enkidu⁸⁶. I shall finally adduce Gagnon's credulity as to the Biblical testimony on the peoples of Canaan as showcased on 54. Once he has stated that « Ugaritic literature and art discovered to date gives no hard evidence of homosexual practice, though it does of bestiality and incest », a remark unsupported in the desultory footnote 35, he immediately embarks on references to the abominations of the Leviticus and Deuteronomistic History and the crime of Ham, 'the father of Canaan', to claim that « the Yahwist too would have regarded this practice as typical of the Canaanite population. The attestation of three independent (!) sources, along with the persistence of male temple prostitutes in Israel during the era of the divided monarchy, speaks against an entirely imaginative reconstruction of the past by any one biblical author ». Take such uncritical behavior verging on fundamentalism, with not the least bit of primary evidence from West Semitic texts to bolster these claims⁸⁷, and you will find yourself bound to conclude that the Pittsburgh professor has neither the technical tools to report the Ancient Near Eastern evidence about same-sex love and dealings in a trustworthy capacity, nor the intellectual calibre needed to assess this evidence with apt scholarly transparency.

His total lack of understanding for the cuneiform materials and his equally antiscientific adherence to unreliable sources are yet more damagingly in evidence in the note which begins on 186. There Gagnon quotes Matthew 5 :22 and attempts

tions of cosmic sagas that take place in a mythical time frame, an anthropological proto-history that does not involve man in the ordinary sense of the word, as we know him today, but one that focuses on the primordial versions of the *anthropos* » (p. 5), an eccentric thesis which only an extraordinary amount of proof could make palatable. Primarily responsible for this persistence of old views appears to be the enduring popularity of J. H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*, Philadelphia, 1982 (reprinted in 2002) as the main entryway of non-assyriologists into the corpus, for Tigay had rejected any homosexuality in the dealings of Gilgamesh and Enkidu on 184 note 22 (similarly, Lambert, pp. 156-157 note 31).

⁸⁵ S. Ackerman, *When Heroes Love. The Ambiguity of Eros in the Stories of Gilgamesh and David* (New York, 2005), pp. 33-150 (text), 246-282 (notes) ; my own *Homosexuality and Liminality in the Gilgamesh and Samuel* (Amsterdam, 2007), pp. 6-26 ; D. E. Fleming and S. J. Milstein, *The Buried Foundation of the Gilgamesh Epic. The Akkadian Huwawa Narrative* (Leiden & Boston, 2010), pp. 38, 104-105, 105-106.

⁸⁶ D. Launderville, *Celibacy in the Ancient World. Its Ideal and Practice in Pre-Hellenistic Israel, Mesopotamia, and Greece* (Collegeville, 2010), pp. 191-197 at 193-195 : he (briefly) summarizes the *status quaestionis*, then, with no further ado, leaves the question open for his reader to decide — a textbook case of scholarly disreliction of duty.

⁸⁷ I shall compare the enigmatic *gzrm n'cm*, 'gracious lads', of CAT 1.23, 17-18, which, pending new findings, no amount of learned commentary will ever make clear (see M. S. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths of the Feast of the Goodly Gods of KTU/CAT 1.23. Royal Constructions of Intersection, Integration, and Domination* [Atlanta, 2006], pp. 60-61). The rationale behind Gagnon's silence is partly tactical, the famous 'great sin' of Ugarit (and Egypt) with regard to marriage being adultery, not the homosexuality of the husband.

to explain to his satisfaction the clause $\delta\varsigma \delta' \acute{\alpha}\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}\pi\eta\iota \tau\acute{\omega}\iota \acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\acute{\omega}\iota \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\text{-}\acute{\rho}\alpha\kappa\acute{\alpha}$, ἔνοχος ἔσται τῆι συνεδρίῳ, ‘he who calls his brother *raka*, will be liable to the Sanhedrin’, as follows (*The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, pp. 186-187) :

« a few have argued that *raka* is from the Hebrew *rak* (here with a vocative ending -a), meaning ‘tender, soft, weak, sensitive.’ According to Greenberg, ‘the phrase refers to passive effeminate male homosexuals. The case for this reading is strengthened when it is recalled that in Akkadian the syllable *raq* is used as a prefix to denote a woman’s name or occupation. It appears in compounded form in the words for a woman, a particular kind of nun, and the female genitals. The Akkadian symbol derives from the Sumerogram for a woman. It has also been suggested that the Greek word *moros* . . . refers to a male homosexual aggressor. This reading makes the threatened punishment far more plausible’ (*Construction*, 211 ; citing (...)). »

Unqualified quotation means approval of the conclusion raised and faith in its data ; thus Gagnon turned a blind eye to the gross assyriological errors of his source. For there exists no such thing, in Akkadian, as ‘the syllable *raq* (...) used as a prefix to denote a woman’s name or occupation’. What serves as the female determinative is the Sumerogram MUNUS, most commonly read MÍ(N) or S/ŠAL ; in Standard and Late Akkadian, it has a phonetic value RAQ, RAG, RAK which does never denote womanly things or occupations, let alone a nun⁸⁸. For it only appears in the Neo-Assyrian geographical name *Raqmat*, also read *Amat*, *S/Šallat*⁸⁹ ; in the verb *raqāqu(m)* — Old Babylonian on —, logographic SAL.LA, SAL.SAL, ‘to (be)come thin, sparse’, plus its cognates *raqqu(m)*, *raqqaqu* (Von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, II, p. 957 ; *CADR* [1999], pp. 167-168, 171-172 ; *Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*², p. 299 ; W. Schramm, *Akkadische Logogramme* [Göttingen, 2010], p. 126) ; and in the substantive (*a*)*raqraqqu* / (*a*)*laqlaqqu*, log. SAL.SAL^{mušen}, ‘stork’⁹⁰ — Standard Babylonian on (*AHw.* I, p. 538 ; *CAD L* [1973], p. 102 ; *CDA*², p. 178 ; Schramm, p. 122)⁹¹. The

⁸⁸ R. Labat and F. Malbran-Labat, *Manuel d’épigraphie akkadienne*⁶ (Paris, 1988), n°554 p. 229, R. Borger, *Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon* (Münster, 2004), n°883 pp. 450-451. W. von Soden and W. Röllig, *Das akkadische Syllabar*⁴ (Rome, 1991), only lists SAL, as n°298 p. 58. Greenberg’s notes 144-145, citing Borger’s *Akkadische Zeichenliste* (1971), which supports none of his lexicographical claims (the nun is the infamous *nadītu(m)*, *munus + me = LUKUR*) but, at very superficial reading, that about the female pudenda, and a piece of advice whose value no one is in a position to assess, show that he muddled data he did not master.

⁸⁹ J. N. Postgate, ‘Assyria : the Home Provinces’, in M. Liverani (ed.), *Neo-Assyrian Geography* (Rome, 1995), pp. 1-17 at 10 and notes 33-34 ; S. Yamada, *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire. A Historical Study of the Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (859-824 B.C.) Relating to His Campaigns in the West* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 60-61.

⁹⁰ On which, specifically, N. Veldhuis, *Religion, Literature, and Scholarship. The Sumerian Composition ‘Nanše and the Birds’* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 265-266 sub li-li-bi-si^{gmšen}.

⁹¹ *AHw.* and *CDA*² mention a /*raq/raqqu* qua ‘vulva’, which must be what Greenberg had in his mind, but the evidence, exclusively of a lexicographical nature, is quite paltry (see *AHw.*, sense 2, H. Holma, *Die Namen der Körperteile im Assyrisch-babylonischen* [Leipzig, 1911], p. 109 : the only ubiquitous spellings are those with the determinative for body parts UZU, but

cuneiform roots of *ῥακά* thus being moot, either one takes it as vocative of *ῥαχᾶς*, a barely attested term of contempt (one example, meaning uncertain), or, better, as the calque of Aramaic *רִיקָא / רִיקָה*, *rêkâ / rêkâ'*, ‘good for nothing, empty-head ; fool, imbecile’⁹², highly grievous an insult in a shame-honor culture⁹³. The latter solution is commended by the parallelism with *μωρός*⁹⁴ (which might very well be the gloss or the translation of the enigmatic *ῥακά*⁹⁵) in the last clause of our verse *ὃς δ’ ἂν εἴπη· μωρέ, ἔνοχος ἔσται εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός*, ‘he who says : ‘<you> fool’, will be liable to the Gehenna fire’⁹⁶. Gagnon hardly pays lip-service to this point, despite the triadic shape of 5 :22, a favorite device of Matthew’s that increases the enigmatic character of the utterances of Jesus on anger ; neither does he admit that our verse bristles with exegetic problems⁹⁷. Anyway, whatever the value of *ῥακά*, it encapsu-

they do not contain MUNUS / SAL = RAG/Q/K, which makes all the difference in the world) and has been eliminated, no doubt on purpose, in Borger 2004.

⁹² It is not considered in a standard study since it might be Greek : M. Wilcox, ‘Semitisms in the New Testament’, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, II Principat*, Band 25, 2. Teilband (Berlin & New York, 1984), pp. 978-1029 at 995-1014 (lexical lists).

⁹³ J. H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville, KY, 1998), pp. 192-193, on the grounds set by B. J. Malina in *The New Testament World. Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (ibid., 1981), pp. 30-36, especially 34. Cf. now Z. Crook, ‘Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited’, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, 2009, pp. 591-611 ; « Malina’s abstract model is built on the anthropological tradition that claims that the public sphere belonged to men while women were limited to the private sphere. The problem, as others have indicated, is that social “laws” and social practice do not always correlate. There appears to have been an ideal world and a lived world, and in the lived world women *did* participate in public life, *did* compete for honor, *could* have greater honor than their husbands, *did* act as benefactors, and *were* given crowns, statues, and seats of honor. The presence of women in areas *traditionally* demarcated as male, especially in the centuries on either side of the common era in Asia Minor, is too amply documented to be deemed countercultural or exceptional. Challenges across social boundaries *did* happen » (p. 609, original emphases).

⁹⁴ Alternating with *ἄφρων* in New Testament Greek (ἄ. 10x, μ. 12x) ; the two words and their cognates scarcely appear afterwards (Lampe, pp. 279 and 859 respectively).

⁹⁵ So S. T. Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke* (Hoboken, N.J. & New York, 1987), p. 92, cf. 95 note 23.

⁹⁶ D. C. Duling, ‘The Matthean Brotherhood and Marginal Scribal Learning’, in P. F. Esler (ed.), *Modelling Early Christianity. Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (London & New York, 1995), pp. 159-182 at 169 « verse 22 formally like verse 21b, appears to contain expansions based on the Matthean tendency to form triads, and contains parallel insults in Aramaic (*raka*) and Greek (*more*) ».

⁹⁷ D. C. Allison, *Studies in Matthew. Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids, 2005), pp. 65-66. Not the least of the problems in v. 22 is whether we are to find a gradation in the insulting ejaculations Jesus condemns successively, viz. if a progression in foolishness from *ῥακά* to *μωρός* which may explain the increase in punishment from going to the Sanhedrin to burning in the Gehenna (*sed contra*, Lachs), was intended by Matthew ; a classic, theological explanation is that by W. Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew. Chapters 1-10* (‘Revised and Updated’, Louisville, 2001 ; original editions, 1956, 1975²), pp. 161-163.

lates no condemnation of homoeroticism⁹⁸, unless one is so incompetent not to see anything amiss in the bad research of Greenberg and biased to the point of preying on the flimsiest evidence favoring what one regards as truth.

The level of naivety, stubbornness, and sheer ineptitude in this section of his book, whether on matters philological⁹⁹ or interpretive¹⁰⁰, puts the other evangelical

⁹⁸ Witness the standard commentaries, none of which mentions the possibility of a same-sex slighting by Jesus : so R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew. An Introduction and Commentary* (Nottingham, 1985 ; Grand Rapids, 2002), p. 120 ; W. D. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7* (London & New York, 1988), p. 513 ; L. Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, 1992), pp. 114-115 ; C. S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids & Cambridge, 1999), p. 184 and note 71.

⁹⁹ Errors in the secondary references and factual blunders appear in such numbers that the footnotes, and often the text, cannot be trusted. On 53 note 30, J. Gwyn (not : Gwynn) Griffiths' *Conflict of Horus and Seth*, pp. 45-46, is adduced as evidence that the « temple inscriptions at Edfu from the Ptolemaic period (third-second centuries B.C.E.) convey a similar theme : Horus eats lettuce (whose juice is identified with semen) so that he can ejaculate into Seth's anus » (pp. 52-53), but the two texts Griffiths quotes there do not say this at all. The lettuce, Seth's food of choice (see the *Contendings of Horus and Seth*, 11.8-12.1), is associated with fertility / fecundity (though this is quite controversial nowadays : M. Broze, *Mythe et roman en Égypte ancienne. Les aventures d'Horus et Seth dans le papyrus Chester Beatty I* [Leuven, 1996], pp. 94, 251-252) ; splashed with Horus' semen in the *Contendings*, *loc. cit.*, or by their own virtue (the Edfu inscriptions), lettuce makes *Seth* pregnant once he has eaten it, cf. Edfu II 44, 12-13, as Englished by Griffiths 'take to thyself the beautiful green plants which are with me that thou mayest cast the sacred fluid which is in it (the lettuce), so that the poltroon may swallow for himself thy seed and conceive (...)' — no idea of anal sex at all ! For this latter theme, cf. Griffiths, pp. 42-45, and H. te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion?* (Leiden, 1977), pp. 35-39. This is iron-clad proof that Gagnon did not actually consult Griffiths ; he just reproduced Greenberg's howler (« temple inscriptions at Edfu (...) imagine the god Min, identified with Horus, eating lettuce (whose milk-sap is identified with semen) so that he can anally penetrate and impregnate his male enemy (presumably Seth), humiliating him by turning him into a female » : *The Construction of Homosexuality*, p. 132 § 2 and note 31, with the reference to Griffiths). Other blunders of Gagnon's range from the trivial (note 30 on p. 53 has the pagination of te Velde on Seth's homosexuality spectacularly wrong ; it is actually 32-46) to the perverse (the snippet of the *Erra* epic quoted on 49 with a reference to Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, does not come from that anthology ; the translation resembles her, with one grave blunder : at *Erra*, IV 56, *ana šupluhu nisi*^{mes} does not mean 'to strike horror into people', for *palāhu(m)* [AHw., II, pp. 812-813 ; CDA², p. 261 ; CAD P (2005), pp. 37-49], far from having its standard value 'fear', means here 'revere' [Dalley : 'to make the people of Ishtar revere her'], 'intimorire, infondere timore religioso' [Cagni, *Erra*, pp. 233, 294], a fairly common sense for this verb [CAD P, 4°, pp. 41-45]). See *infra*, p. 65 note 140.

¹⁰⁰ On p. 50, the various transgender servants of Inanna / Ištar attract a misleading comment : « the goddess, it was believed, had transformed each into a "man-woman" or even a "dog-woman" (with "dog" denoting a disgusting transformation of masculinity and possibly also intercourse in doglike position) ». Though Gagnon endorsed Greenberg, p. 138 (« according to Mesopotamian mythology, they had been turned from men to women by the goddess Ishtar, and thus they were given the designation "man-woman" and even a "dog-woman" —

expositions of Near Eastern homosexuality (by D. J. Wold, *Out of Order. Homosexuality in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* [Grand Rapids, 1998], pp. 43-61, and R. M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh. Sexuality in the Old Testament* [Peabody, 2007], pp. 134-142) on a class apart despite their cumbersome ideology and technical shortcomings (most glaring in Wold's chapter). Even if one shuns a comparison between Gagnon and the best short survey at hand ¹⁰¹, his section has no claim to be called a fair review of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian traces of male-male sex and affect ¹⁰². Was it really so difficult, for a biblical scholar untrained in the relevant languages but used to juggling with Semitic texts, to reap the benefits of the best scholarship

the designation “dog” probably “denoting a disgusting transformation of masculinity and possibly also intercourse in doglike position” »), the truth of the matter is that *assinnu*, syllabically spelled *as-sin-nu*, *is-sin-nu*, etc, has the logographic writing ⁽¹⁰⁾ur.SAL (CAD A Part 2 [1958], p. 341), verbatim ‘dog-woman’, viz. ‘bitch, female dog’, therefore the ‘feminine one, catamite’; a mere Akkadographic scriptural convention (as was not made manifest enough in Nissinen, pp. 28 and 147 note 45), it must not be called a ‘designation’, *pace* Davidson; nor speculation about a specific position in sex, which may or may not resemble dogs copulating, should have been indulged in in the manner of Gagnon so as to increase its relevance to the gender-bending clerics. Gagnon and Greenberg missed a crucial point: unlike what holds sway for the Hebrew Bible, where the dog epitomizes what is vile / unclean, this animal was not repulsive in the eye of the Mesopotamians except for the people of Ugarit (« in Ancient Near Eastern Literature, the dog symbolizes a submissive, obedient animal, whose characteristic behavior is to grovel and humiliate itself in front of its master » T. L. Forti, *Animal Imagery in the Book of Proverbs* [Leiden & Boston, 2008], p. 93 and note 19, cf. A. Altman, ‘Tracing the Earliest Recorded Concepts of International Law. (3) The Ancient Near East in the Old Babylonian Period (2003-1595 BCE)’, *Journal of the History of International Law* 10, 2008, pp. 1-33 at 3-4 = *Tracing the Earliest Recorded Concepts of International Law. The Ancient Near East (2500-330 BCE)* [Leiden, 2012], p. 54). Finally, Gagnon has no references, e.g. M. Malul, ‘David’s Curse of Joab (2 Sam 3:29) and the Social Significance of *mhzyq bplk*’, *Aula Orientalis* 10, 1992, pp. 49-67 at 53-56 for Ištar’s power to render sexually abnormal.

¹⁰¹ P. A. Bird, ‘The Bible in Christian Ethical Deliberation concerning Homosexuality: Old Testament Contributions’, in Balch, *Homosexuality, Science, and the ‘Plain Sense’ of Scripture*, pp. 142-176 at 158-160, 173-176. The superiority of her presentation was so obvious that these pages are the only ones which did not come under fire in his rebuttal (note 82).

¹⁰² It most resembles B. Musche, *Die Liebe in der altorientalischen Dichtung*, Leiden, 1999, an attempt to trace the evolution of the relationships between male and female from the Sumerians down to the Sassanid epoch which rests on a surer control of the data and the relevant bibliography than Gagnon’s, but still does not deploy enough philological scholarship. Its technical shortcomings are glaring — it is a treasure-trove of half-truths and hyperspeculative deductions —, and its chronological view of the development of milder notions of heterosexual love through the rise of ‘romantic’ elements received the cold shoulder from those qualified to evaluate it (e.g. J. G. Westenholz, *Nin. Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity* 2, 2001, pp. 125-133), yet, as a scholarly achievement, it shames neither the author nor her chosen discipline. Let it be declared, with the strongest emphasis possible, that there is a crucial divide between a book to be avoided at all costs qua cesspool of lies, errors and texts cut too short so that they could be taken out of context (Gagnon) and a flawed but basically honest work from which the discriminating reader can try to profit (Musche).

in the field and then proceed without compromising the indispensable awareness that even the most reasonable conclusions rooted in solid facts and arrived at by a sturdy-looking network of conjectures might be found, in the end, to be fallacious or to not square really well with the evidence¹⁰³ ? The unpretending *L'homosexualité dans le Proche-Orient ancien et la Bible* by T. Römer and L. Bonjour (Geneva, 2005), pp. 13-35, 80-102, shows that it is no superhuman task. In the place of it, we are dealing with a scholar who holds his farthing candle to the sun, but remains silent whenever a difficulty unmapped in his sources crosses his path.

Let us now comment on Gagnon's handling of Scripture. His assumptions belong to fundamentalism inasmuch as he takes whatever text canonically and tries to lessen all cases of inconsistency he chances upon. Such a viewpoint might be respectable in a theological piece¹⁰⁴, but apart from making for awkward compromises when one trumpets the absolute superiority of one's discourse over all other views, it is not well suited to Paul, an author whose ability to pursue, and achieve, anything resembling internal cogency remains hotly debated¹⁰⁵. With this preliminary caveat

¹⁰³ Since the Ancient Near East embodies the context against which the Early Jewish notions of gender and sexuality developed, the lack of comprehensiveness and narrow level of engagement with the assyriological and egyptological literature the evangelical treatments of sex / love in the Bible exhibit is baffling. Liberal scholars (Nissinen, Ackerman) do much better, but fail too to treat the Near Eastern evidence at the length required. This is not merely a matter of qualifications, though Bible scholars untrained in cuneiform now rule the field. Topics understudied by assyriologists are naturally most risky for them; thus the chapter on Mesopotamian female prophecy in W. C. Gafney, *Daughters of Miriam. Women Prophets in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis, 2008), pp. 49-73, bristles with infelicities. The *qabbātu(m) / qamātu(m)* of Mari (pp. 50, 52-53) should read *qammatu(m)*, cf. *CDA*², p. 283; on 50, it is perverse to suppress the standard form of the prophet *ragintu*, a Neo-Assyrian spelling resulting from a shortening of the long vowel and the doubling of the consonant that follows it, viz. *rāgimtu(m)*; the Akkadian byword for the fringe of the prophets, *sissiktu(m)*, is written either syllabically or as the logographic TUG.SIG (Borger, *Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon*, n°809 p. 426) and only appears as an Akkadogram in Hittite with the Sumerogram for 'dress, garb' as its determinative, viz. ^{TUG}SISIKTUM, *pace* Gafney, 71-72; etc. It is not high-level scholarship: J. Stökl, 'Ištar's Women, YHWH's Men? A Curious Gender-Bias in Neo-Assyrian and Biblical Prophecy', *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 121, 2009, pp. 87-100 at 94-98.

¹⁰⁴ Only in such literature would one find a blatantly unmitigated idea of sin given to Rom 3:9 with no further ado (p. 240). Read rather J. Flebbe, *Solus Deus. Untersuchungen zur Rede von Gott im Brief des Paulus an die Römer* (Berlin, 2008), pp. 54-57, on this verse (« dieses bestätigt ganz wie V.4 einerseits Bund und Vorzugstellung, relativiert sie aber andererseits als fallweise und nicht absolut und schlechthinig »), cf. generally J. Jervell, *Imago Dei. Gen 1,26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen, 1960), pp. 325-329; R. H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology, with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 204-216; Dunn, *Theology of Paul...*, pp. 111-114.

¹⁰⁵ For H. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*² (Tübingen, 1987), pp. 266-267, « it is a fundamental mistake of much Pauline exegesis in this century to have portrayed Paul as the 'prince of thinkers' and the Christian 'theologian par excellence'. Paul was indeed an original and ima-

in mind, the striking difference between Gagnon's chapter on the Hebrew Bible and those which tackle the New Testament — the latter are on a much fuller scale than the former, to the extent that the reader is treated with a translation and commentary of the all-important Romans 1 :24-27 — does not match the degree of elaboration within. In both parts a feeble engagement with the critical literature stands out : bibliographical lists are provided at the start of each section, only to be nigh forgotten in the following pages, where one or two studies, at best, are discussed or built upon. As a consequence, nearly all of the secondary pleading, including the kind of finer points that normally fill the footnotes of dissertations, falls under the radar ¹⁰⁶. Apart

ginative thinker, and his letters are full of seminal insights and thought-provoking suggestions. He is, however, first and foremost a missionary, a man of practical religion who develops a line of thought to make a practical point, to influence the conduct of his readers ; in the next moment he is quite capable of putting forward a statement which logically contradicts the previous one when trying to make a different point, or, rather, struggling with a different problem ». Cf. B. L. Martin, *Christ and the Law in Paul* (Leiden, 1989), pp. 26-55 at 39 sqq., E. van Spanje, *Inconsistency in Paul ? A Critique of the Work of Heikki Räisänen*, Tübingen, 1999 (« it can be stated that Räisänen's approach to Paul's view of the law is one-sided. To put it differently, Räisänen's great weakness is that he does not make sufficient use of hermeneutical rules appropriate to the interpretation of Paul's letters. It is not Paul who is to blame for the inconsistencies detected by Räisänen, but Räisänen's way of reading the texts », 249).

¹⁰⁶ Let one example suffice here, since it is of paramount value : unless I am mistaken, in no place within the entire book is the reader informed that one of Gagnon's most favorite sources of textual parallels in his exegesis of the Scriptures, viz. Philo, far from being representative of Hellenistic Judaism in matters of sexual ethics, embodies on the contrary an extreme case, being Pythagorean-like both in his austerity and procreationism (K. L. Gaca, *The Making of Fornication. Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity* [Berkeley, 2003], pp. 193-217, particularly 205-214 ; homosexuality is treated on 210-211). A syncretism between the outlooks of Philo and Paul, such as the one written by J. W. Martens in *One God, One Law. Philo of Alexandria on the Mosaic and Greco-Roman Law* (Boston, 2003), pp. 160-163, with respect to their mixture of Jewish theologemes and things Hellenic, was out of the question for Gagnon. Philo's considerable Greek culture (for which see, e.g., his view of Gen 1 :27 in *De opificio mundi*, 23 and 69, with J. Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie. Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*² [Paris, 1976], pp. 327-328 note 93), and high elevation of mind, are somewhat problematic when one uses him to disentangle the issues at stake in the far more uncouth and lower-reaching Paul. One should not forget who the audience of his canonic epistles must have been (A. J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*² [Philadelphia, 1983], pp. 29-59) : mainly commoners, slaves, freedmen, people predominantly concerned as such by sexual exploitation or forced submission to their owners (J. A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* [Oxford & New York, 2002 ; reprinted Minneapolis & Edinburgh, 2006], pp. 9-101, especially 39-70 ; S. Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons. A New Rhetoric Analysis of Paul's Slave Metaphor in his Letter to the Galatians* [New York, 2005], pp. 38-62). Glancy nails down the very crux of the matter at 40, where she writes that « Pauline Christianity was an urban phenomenon. The relationships of slavery with which Paul was acquainted would have been principally the relationships of urban slavery. Slaves in Corinth or Philippi would not have been miners or agricultural laborers but, for example, craftspeople, prostitutes, managerial agents, and domestic slaves, including those whose do-

from the annotated translations and commentaries, which appear in unnecessary profusion within the preliminary lists but seldom play any part in the footnotes nor inform the core of the main text, what secondary items served as brick-and-mortar for Gagnon never ventures outside of the ideological divide informing same-sex matters in the United States : evangelical research versus Queer theology. A massive loss of erudition ensues, with virtually no European scholarship no matter whether Catholic, Protestant or atheist. The decision to stick to books and journal articles written in English increases this parochialism ¹⁰⁷. The effects of these ill-conceived restrictions could have been reduced by a more adequate argumentative style and a rigorous interpretive stance. Those deployed by Gagnon are neither, for his entire opus seeks to defend the a priori notion that the agenda of the Biblical redactors, whatever their date and ideological slant, was to promote the God-ordained, sexual-affective complementarity of the male and the female of the human species. This grid identifying the sheer reproductive capability as the proof of some divine will for sexual congress does not work without a heavy doctoring of the few texts which, prima facie, would tally with such a theologeme ¹⁰⁸. Indeed, the most natural and

mestic duties included sexual obligations. How would a new identity as a Christian affect an urban slave, and how did the presence of slaves and slaveholders in the population affect the growth and practices of the churches ? »

¹⁰⁷ Not only are French sources non-existent, a common occurrence in American Bible studies, and German scholarship cited extremely sparingly (those few he dignified with an abbreviation), the latter nowhere really engaged with ; English books published in Great Britain and Holland appear very infrequently. A fair sample of Gagnon's manner will be sought on 230-231 note 1, detailing the bibliography to his annotated version of Rom 1 :24-27 : he references one French commentary and several German ones, none of which is ever cited.

¹⁰⁸ See, with respect to the Leviticus ban of same-sex acts / affects, my *Aristarchus Antibarbarus. Pseudologies mésopotamiennes, bibliques, classiques* (Amsterdam, 2012), pp. 88-93. The central piece of Gagnon's apology is the Creation story in Genesis 1 :26-28, where male and female are fashioned in the image of Yahweh and fit one another in a genital sense (v. 27) which foreshadows the blessing of reproduction that immediately follows (v. 28) ; however, nowhere it is adumbrated that the sexes complement one another to reflect the unity they are declared to stem from (unless one does detour to 1 Cor 11 :11 *πλὴν οὐτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρός οὐτε ἄνῆρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς ἐν κυρίῳ !*). Anything along the lines of a moral prescription of heterosexual coupling is wholly alien to the Jewish interpretations (J. Neusner, *Judaism's Story of Creation. Scripture, Halakhah, Aggadah* [Leiden, Boston & Köln, 2000], pp. 219-227, most particularly 225 ; J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, 'The Creation of Man and Woman in Early Jewish Literature', in G. P. Luttikhuisen (ed.), *Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions* [Leiden & Boston, 2000], pp. 34-62, where it is demonstrated that, though marital, the sexual union of Adam and Eve has no mandatory status ; F. García Martínez, 'Creation in the Dead Sea Scrolls', in G. H. van Kooten (ed.), *The Creation of Heaven. Re-interpretations of Genesis 1 in the Context of Judaism, Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, and Modern Physics* [ibid., 2005], pp. 49-70 at 62-63), with the lone exception of Philo. *De opificio mundi*, 151-152 — a chapter on whom Platonic influences loom large (D. T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* [Leiden, 1986], pp. 345-346) — claims that ἔρωσ δ' ἐπιγενόμενος καθάπερ ἐνὸς ζώου διττὰ τμήματα διεστηκότα συναγαγὼν εἰς ταῦτόν

straightforward way of explaining Gen 1 :26-28¹⁰⁹ is not by digging in clues which waited until Paul to be put together and made into a formal prescription. Nor can it pass for right interpretive protocol to dispose within one lone footnote, however long and involved (42 on 58-60), of the large-scale case built up by Bird, with massive scholarship, in favor of a restricted understanding of the sexual differentiation of Gen 1 :27¹¹⁰. Nor, finally, should one grant on a priori grounds that Lev 18 :22 and

ἀρμόττεται, πόθον ἐνιδρυσάμενος ἑκατέρωι τῆς πρὸς θάτερον κοινωνίας εἰς τὴν τοῦ ὁμοίου γένεσιν (§ 152) ; read Runia, *Philo of Alexandria. On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, Boston & Köln, 2001), pp. 354-358, who remarks, apropos of § 151 ἐπεὶ δ' ἐπλάσθη καὶ γυνή, θεασάμενος ἀδελφὸν εἶδος καὶ συγγενῆ μορφὴν ἡσμένισε τῇ θείῃ καὶ προσίων ἡσπάζετο, that « (...) the emphasis is above all on bodily or physical appearance. This is illustrative of the fact that for Philo the differences between male and female relate primarily to the body, but in two different ways : (1) the patent physical and biological differences between the two sexes ; (2) the fact (as he sees it) that the female nature (i.e. primarily her soul) is more affected by bodily and physical matters than the male. The second difference is the foundation for the allegory of man as mind and woman as sense-perception » (p. 357). Is this Gagnon's take on the complementarity between the sexes, which he never makes crystal-clear apart from the genital subsidiarity entailing reproduction (the most that can be said with respect to 1 :27 is in G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* [Waco, 1987], pp. 28-33) ? This is sexism at its most unappealing, per se and compared to modern rabbinic thought (A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis. The Beginning of Desire* [Philadelphia, 1995], pp. 14-16). I should not dwell on the fact that Gagnon surreptitiously would have us swallow the rampant Platonism and misogyny which inform Philo's views on the distinction of sexes (cf. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, pp. 283-286), but the sheer absence of the *Op. mundi* in his work, not just in connection with gender complementarity, is testimony enough. Last but not least, it is highly uncertain, to put it mildly, whether the Creation narrative was ever meant by the redactors of Gen as prescriptive rather than merely aetiological, as recognized by a huge majority of interpreters (who are content with viewing Gen 2-3 as an *αἴτιον* ; e.g. the classic commentary of H. Gunkel, *Genesis* [translation M. E. Biddle, Macon, Ga, 1997 ; German original, 1917⁴], p. 13, went so far as to speak of Gen 1 :24-25 as « the prototypical example of an aetiological myth (...) The question here is, "How is it that man strives for union with woman ?" The myth answers, "Man desires to become one flesh with woman because he was originally one flesh with her"'. In love that which was originally one is reunited ») ; those few who refused to admit that they were faced with myths of origins, like V. P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, 1990), pp. 56-59, have had to split hairs. The moral reading adumbrated by Gagnon for the creation of male and female as divine 'fits' therefore crumbles on all sides.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. S. Verkhovskoy, 'Creation of Man and the Establishment of the Family in the Light of the Book of Genesis', *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 8, 1964, pp. 5-30 at 13-20, for the standard view. The second Creation narrative (2 :4b-25) Gagnon surveys on 59-61, with no attention to stratification (P. E. S. Thompson, 'The Yahwist Creation Story', *Vetus Testamentum* 21, 1971, pp. 197-208) and little to details (A. L. Jacobsen, 'Genesis 1-3 as Source for the Anthropology of Origen', *Vigiliae Christianae* 62, 2008, pp. 213-232 at 214-223).

¹¹⁰ His arguments either circular or invalid he advances in typically self-confident fashion. Far from conceding what is obvious, viz. that 'the interpretive details of Gen 1 :26-27 are unclear at best' (W. R. Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness. Humanity, Divinity, and Mon-*

20 :13, far from being isolate nuggets of homophobia in the Hebrew Bible, actually preserve the very heteronormative spirit supposed to pervade the whole corpus ¹¹¹.

otheism [Leiden & Boston, 2003], p. 4 ; the whole analysis, 2-9, repays careful reading for its good sense and deep engagement with the secondary literature), Gagnon flings in the face of the reader his own idea of commonplace. 'It is obvious that, *contra* Bird, the clauses in v. 27 are not sequential but parallel ; the sequence is between (not within) verses' (p. 59) runs counter to the standard grammatical theory on apposition in Hebrew, v. 27 consisting of four clauses of which the last three are apposed to what precedes (27 b-c to 27 a-b — 'epic' —, and 27 c-d to 27 b-c — specifying-explanative) : F. I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague, 1974), pp. 36-60, specifically 55 (not the best linguistic definition and use of apposition, cf. T. Collins, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 20, 1975, 252-254 at 253, yet philologically the least invasive ones, and most exegetes leave aside a rigorous grammatical analysis of 26-27 as futile). I will not rebuke Gagnon's other strictures with Bird, for what concerns me by and large here is his contention that the definite purpose of divinely-ordained heterosexuality does not revolve around reproduction. This he maintains against her by twisting her terms. She had written, in a paper Gagnon somehow missed, that 'P declares that sex, as differentiation and union, is intended for procreation' ('Sexual Differentiation and Divine Image in the Genesis Creation Texts', in K. E. Børresen (ed.), *Image of God and Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition* [Oslo, 1991], pp. 11-34 at 23 ; also *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities. Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* [Minneapolis, 1997], pp. 151, 170), but her adversary chooses to confront her 1981 paper in the *Harvard Theological Review* alone — « that the creation of 'male and female' would have held for P no implications regarding "the status or relationship of the sexes to one another, or marriage" is hard to accept, given the following verse with its command to procreate. To suppose that P viewed marriage as solely 'biological', as if for P marriage was just a mechanical and impersonal relationship void of mutual affection, is to posit for P a view of sexuality out of step with the rest of the Hebrew Bible » (*The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 59). Now, in the light especially of Garr, pp. 130-132, the role of the first human pair, homological of Yahweh's androcentric will, does not bypass the transmission of the divine image / likeness, as a theophany ; in other words, neither mutual affection and feelings between the pair need appear in 1 :26-27 nor marriage should be found in this purely biological-theological narrative (M.-A. Tolbert, 'Marriage and Friendship in the Christian New Testament. Ancient Resources for Contemporary Same-Sex Unions', in M. D. Jordan *et alii* (edd.), *Authorizing Marriage ? Canon, Tradition, and Critique in the Blessing of Same-Sex Unions* [Princeton & Oxford, 2006], pp. 41-54 at 44-45). Embarrassingly for Gagnon, the Fathers were loath to find in Gen 1 :27 a valid ground for heterosexual union (H. S. Benjamins, 'Keeping Marriage Out of Paradise : The Creation of Man and Woman in Patristic Literature', in Luttikhuisen, pp. 93-106 at 97-103) ; and Gen rather insists on endogamy vs. exogamy (M. G. Brett, *Genesis. Procreation and the Politics of Identity* [London & New York, 2000], pp. 84-85, 86-108 *passim*).

¹¹¹ For Gagnon is a maximalist when it comes to derogative, homosexual interpretations of the Hebrew Bible : the crime of Sodom, Lot's offence against Noah, the episode of the Levite at Gibeah bear, according to him, the unimpeachable marks of a hardcore line proscribing every kind of same-sex affects and dealings. A closer look at his arguments demonstrates the extent of the double standard which conservatives labor under (they demand airtight argumentation entailing explicit evidence from those who hold that David and Jonathan may have been lovers, whereas they themselves are happy to provide neither apropos of Gen 19 :1-29, 9 :18-27, or Judges 19 :22-29) : details in my *Aristarchus Antibarbarus*, pp. 206-219.

Complementarity indeed functions so little that, far from proceeding step by step with this interpretive key and discerning what can be borne out and what cannot, Gagnon actually backtracks ; he does not declare where his interest stands but relies on dirty tricks such as arbitrary analogy, *reductio ad absurdum* or circular logic, throughout the whole book ¹¹². I am not clear about how differently he would confront the evidence of texts whose meaning can only, if at all, be unraveled by a cautious approach firmly encroached in Biblical philology and lexicography ¹¹³ — not his forte by any means ¹¹⁴ —, for those of his arguments I have taken steps to dissect

¹¹² The way he overrules Olyan and D. Boyarin on the coverage of the prohibitions of Lev 18 :22 ~ 20 :13 (p. 143) being a revealing case-in-point of his tactics : « (...) it would still be erroneous to conclude (...) that other forms of homoerotic contact would be permitted. Such a conclusion is akin to arguing that, because any corpus of law in the Old Testament explicitly proscribes only penetrative intercourse in the case of incest, adultery, fornication, rape, and bestiality, we can assume that fondling one's stepmother, or a neighbor's wife, or a virgin, or an animal would be acceptable behavior in ancient Israel (cf. the Hebrew idiom "uncover her nakedness" for sexual intercourse) ». On top of this rhetorical polarity 'either/or' — what is not punished, even in matters so grave as to warrant death, is not necessarily 'permitted' ; what about a 'gray area' entailing tacit freedom so long as it does not stir a fuss as pushing at the boundaries established by P ? —, the blatant exaggeration his *reductio ad absurdum* entails conspires with the appeal to the locution *gālâ 'erwat*, 'uncover nudity', which expresses sexual immorality, most usually incest (so H.-J. Zobel apud *TDOT* II, s.v. *gālâ*, p. 479 ; D. Steinmetz, 'Vineyard, Farm and Garden : The Drunkenness of Noah in the Context of Primeval History', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113, 1994, pp. 193-207 at 198-199 ; Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, p. 11), to amalgamate into a toxic blend the revulsion anyone sane of mind feels towards unnatural couplings (with beasts or one's own children / parents) and the very partisan, very speculative disgust Gagnon tells us the early Hebrews had for the whole gamut of non-insertive, same-sex affection. Other than two verses of Lev, the distaste (to tone things down...) for same-gender affects or acts is unattested before the Hellenistic era, in the case of Hellenized Jews, or the Rabbinic period — see Satlow, 'They Abused Him like a Woman' : Homoeroticism, Gender Blurring, and the Rabbis in Late Antiquity', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, 1994, pp. 1-25 at 4-15, or *Tasting the Dish. Rabbinic Rhetorics of Sexuality* (Atlanta, 1995), pp. 198-222. Gagnon thus stands in a full exegetic circle.

¹¹³ He even refuses the possibility of evolution in his Biblical writers, though it provides an useful key for disentangling Paul's ideas, e.g. on the afterlife (M.-E. Boismard, *Faut-il encore parler de 'résurrection' ? Les données scripturaires* [Paris, 1993], especially pp. 41-67, 103-117). Scripture is a work of men, thus liable to contradictions and changes of mind.

¹¹⁴ Reading him, one soon tires of never ever being told that such a text is ambiguous or that the value of such a Hebraic or Greek word is shrouded in obscurity — even when most of his predecessors and successors did not manage to advance much beyond that. One is thus very surprised to see that his Hebraic philology amounts to the barest minimum : not only does the entire book contain only two references (!) to the *TDOT* and four to the *HALOT* ; the multi-volumes *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* do not appear anywhere but in his 'Abbreviations'. It comes as no surprise that key lexemes fare badly. *Hesed* is explained on 149 note 240 with a reference to K. D. Sakenfeld's 1985 book, which does not suffice by a long margin and is inferior to her 1978 dissertation — cf. P. Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant. A Comprehensive Review of Covenant Formulae from the Old Testament and the*

and put in context seldom reach standard levels in the field ¹¹⁵. As if all of the above did not suffice to downgrade Gagnon as an exegete, several of the most seminal

Ancient Near East (Rome, 1982), pp. 47-51 ; G. R. Clark, *The Word Hased in the Hebrew Bible*, Sheffield, 1993, especially pp. 267-268 (« חָסַד is not merely an attitude or an emotion ; it is an emotion that leads to an activity beneficial to the recipient. The relative status of the participants is never a feature of the non act, which may be described as a beneficent action performed, in the context of a deep and enduring commitment between two persons or parties, by one who is able to render assistance to the needy party who in the circumstances is unable to help him- or herself » [p. 267]) ; J. Joosten, 'חָסַד 'bienveillance' et ΕΛΕΟΣ 'pitié'. Réflexions sur une équivalence lexicale dans la Septante', in E. Bons (ed.), '*Car c'est l'amour qui me plaît, non le sacrifice...*'. *Recherches sur Osée 6 :6 et son interprétation juive et chrétienne* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 25-42, especially 26-28 ; W. Börschlein, *Häsäd — der Erweis von Solidarität — als eine ethische Grundhaltung im Alten Testament. Ein Beispiel für ein Modell in christlicher Ethik heute ?*, Francfurt-am-Mein, etc, 2000. Another key word, *tô'ēbâ*, still puzzles specialists when it appears in Lev 18 :22 and 20 :13 (Satlow's remark 'the meaning of the term (...) in this context is obscure' ['They Abused Him like a Woman', p. 5] being representative of this disquiet) ; you will not find one note of uncertainty in Gagnon, at pp. 117-118 or anywhere else, nor will it be explained out to you why these verses belong generically, instead of editorially, to the other sexual prohibitions of chapter 18, cf. S. M. Olyan, 'And With a Male You Shall Not Lie the Lying Down of a Woman' : On the Meaning and Significance of Leviticus 18 :22 and 20 :13', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, 1994, pp. 179-206 at 182-183. As Olyan states at 183 note 8, « some commentators assume such a necessary association ; they tend to be apologists for a conservative morality, and their arguments build on the final H casting of the laws of Lev. 18 and 20, in which all of the enumerated sexual violations are called *tô'ēbôt* and associated with the allegedly defiling behavior of the Canaanites and Egyptians. Conservative commentators tend to amplify and highlight the associations established by the final redactors of Lev. 18 and 20 without reference to issues of redactional intention or legal prehistory ». In a revealing move, Gagnon fails to give evidence as to the correctness of the belonging of v. 22 to the sexual code of Lev 18 ; he also declines to furnish references for the relation between the (crimes lists in) chapters 18 and 20, e.g. W. Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus* (Leiden, Boston & Köln, 1999), pp. 159-160, 165 — two more proofs of his indifference to scientific impartiality. The philological insensitivity we have sampled in his grasp of classical Greek, which it was tempting to attribute to the same lack of familiarity with the tools of the craft that made him stick to LSJ, therefore needs to be qualified : since Gagnon is equally prone to oversimplifications in his lexicography of Hebrew and (non-)biblical Greek, the fault can only lie in a defect of his mind, unless he is an ignoramus in both languages. *Tertium non datur*. Cf. *infra*, p. 64 note 138.

¹¹⁵ Whoever doubts me on this count should compare his treatment of 1 Corinthians 6 :12-20 (pp. 292-297) firstly to the ones by the standard commentators, viz. G. D. Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [Grand Rapids, 1987], pp. 249-266), R. F. Collins (*First Corinthians* [Collegeville, Min, 1999], pp. 239-251), A. C. Thiselton (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians. A Commentary on the Greek Text* [Cambridge & Grand Rapids, 2000], pp. 458-479), and, lastly, J. A. Fitzmyer (*First Corinthians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [New Haven & London, 2008], pp. 261-272), then to the magisterial analysis of 6 :16b = LXX Gen 2 :24c in its context, that is 6 :12-16 and 17-20, penned by J. P. Heil (*The Rhetorical Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians* [Atlanta, 2005], pp. 103-123 at 111-116, 117-

discussions of Scripture in *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* run counter to the *status quaestionis* on the strength of his conviction alone. Among those controversial interpretations one is well entitled to nag him about, I shall merely mention the treatment of *qādeš* (pp. 100-110). Thirty years have now elapsed since M. I. Gruber demonstrated that the four passages in which corroboration has been discovered of the belief that female sacred prostitutes did exist in ancient Israel (Gen 38 :21, 22 ; Deut 23 :18 ; Hos 4 :14) fail to support this allegation, while there is no firm proof that the *qādeš* mentioned in Deut 23 :18, 1 Kgs 14 :24, 15 :12 and 22 :47, 2 Kgs 23 :7, and possibly too in Job 36 :14 was a male cultic prostitute and that the Ugaritic *qdš* — its etymological but not necessarily semantic equivalent — ever engaged in intercourse or counted anything sexual among its attributes or activities ¹¹⁶. Nonetheless, Gagnon, pp. 101-105, interprets these verses as no evidence of forgery yet mentions in his footnotes those commentaries alone who support his view no matter if some internal evidence negates it ¹¹⁷. He goes to the length of stating that « even if

122), and, finally, to K. O. Sandnes' avowedly theological study of the *Body and Belly in the Pauline Epistles* (Cambridge & New York, 2002), pp. 191-198. « Who the Christians are », he concludes, « or what will become of them in the future, has consequences for what to do with the belly and genitals. To Paul therefore living properly with the stomach and genitals is a definitional activity. Such is Paul's strategy vis-à-vis the question of passions and desires. This theological substructure of Paul's text represents a confirmation of what we found in Phil. 3 :18-21 and Rom. 16 :17-20. Devoting oneself to the desires of the belly, whether in terms of food or sex, implies a practical denial of Christian faith. Hence belly-worship is identical with enmity to Christ's cross ; it is a neglect of the indicative-perspective in Paul's soteriology ; i.e. the basic identity of believers. Just as the Corinthian slogans in 1 Cor. 6 :13 pave the way for belly-worship, so too Paul's argument in this text paves the way for how Christians should think of their body in general. This is the theological framework within which Paul's dicta on serving the belly rightly belong » (pp. 197-198).

¹¹⁶ הקדש בספרי מלכים ובמקורות אחרים, *Tarbiz* 52, 1983, pp. 167-176 ; 'Hebrew *qadeshah* and Her Canaanite and Akkadian Cognates', *Ugarit Forschungen* 18, 1986, pp. 133-148. The standard treatment (Bird's 'The End of the Male Cult Prostitute : A Literary-Historical and Sociological Analysis of Hebrew *qādeš* - *qēdēšim*', in J. A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume, Cambridge, 1995* [Leiden, 1997], pp. 37-80) Gagnon merely nods at (106-107 note 169), even though the latest research is hardly less skeptical (B. A. Foreman, *Animal Metaphors and the People of Israel in the Book of Jeremiah* [Göttingen, 2011], pp. 123-128).

¹¹⁷ The fittest refutation of what he says about 2 Kgs 23 :7 on p. 102 note 158 is to refer the reader to M. A. Sweeney's very honest remarks on the obscurity of the point of *bāttim* which qualifies the weavings of the *qēdēšim* there : *I and II Kings. A Commentary* (Louisville, Ky, 2007), pp. 447-448. How revealing that even when an element of the passage he is drawing on is shrouded in obscurity, Gagnon does not pause to elucidate it or ask himself whether the text really supports the point he intends to make, but proceeds with his reasoning ! His note also evinces the man's naive desire to appear learned : he cites a famous line from a Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscription on Asherah whose contents inadequately weigh in on the issue which motivates the quotation (« Asherah was the wife of El ; hence the link with Yahweh, who shares many of the traits of El (cf. the inscription (...) ») and does it in a loose, imprecise manner (*brkt. 'tkm. lyhwh. šmrn. wl'srth* appears on the pithos A ; it should be rendered 'I bless (or : I

the *qēdēšim* were a literary fiction, the texts would still be relevant to the discussion of same-sex intercourse in the Bible. For they demonstrate the attitude toward same-sex intercourse adopted by both the authors/transmitter of Deuteronomic law and the Deuteronomistic Historian » (p. 108).

Time has come to conclude ¹¹⁸. A slippery target to criticize, as Gagnon never grants anything that does not square with his conservative methodology, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* puts those who disagree with it in an uncomfortable position. If they multiply rebuttals over minutiae, they are bound to produce, in the average reader, the feeling that the book basically stands but for these blunders ; and if they fault the author for indulging in ideological special pleading at odds with the critical method in Bible studies — which he disguises as a great awareness of what the hermeneutics of ancient texts implies —, all Gagnon has to do to dismiss this charge is protest that it stems from a liberal or atheistic viewpoint ¹¹⁹ whose validity remains unproven. The present article tried to apply the dictum *dies diem docet* by assessing the value his work does or does not retain eleven years after ¹²⁰. We found out that while it shows a sound grasp of the Bible as a religious document, all other fields are misrepresented or misinterpreted, depending on their degree of conformity to Gagnon's view of the topic and his aptitude to control their parameters. Medical reporter he is not ; nor historian of the Greek ideas ; nor lexicographer of Masoretic Hebrew or NT and Classical Greek ; nor even reliable chronicler of the Ancient Near Eastern evidence. On the one hand, a partisan notion of intertextuality prevents the

have blessed) you by Yahweh of Samaria and by his asherah'). See T. Binger, *Asherah. Goddesses in Ugarit, Israel and the Old Testament* (Sheffield, 1997), pp. 168-169.

¹¹⁸ Gagnon likes nothing more than to level the charge of ignorance of primary and secondary sources at his opponents in his e-pamphlets, and then to assert that they are not Biblical scholars ; as he is far the worst offender on this account, to that extent that one may doubt he ever was an outstanding student (his Pauline dissertation remains unpublished, a very unusual case in the light of the academic mores of his field), I shall not mince my words.

¹¹⁹ « Individuals who are arguably the most important targets for anti-stigma interventions are also the least likely to benefit from them » G. A. Boysen and D. L. Vogel, 'Biased Assimilation and Attitude Polarization in Response to Learning About Biological Explanations of Homosexuality', *Sex Roles* 57, 2007, pp. 755-762 at 761 ; this interesting paper throws light on the hidden motives behind Gagnon's attitude towards homosexuality and LGBT people.

¹²⁰ A rival to Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, has just appeared : Loader, *The New Testament on Sexuality*, Grand Rapids, 2012, X + 565 pp., cf. 293-338 for homosexuality. A better compilation of the available data than Gagnon's (Loader seldom suppresses inconvenient views ; he is unafraid to list authorities *pro et contra* and to extract extensive quotations from them ; he has read and digested German sources), it unfortunately remains more under his spell than what would seem to appear from Loader's frequent disagreements with him (*The New Testament on Sexuality*, pp. 301 note 34 ; 305-306 n. 49 ; 307 ; 309 ; 311-312 n. 71 ; 318-319 and n. 109 ; 331 n. 169 ; 338 and n. 204), as befits a scholar whose reliability, sound judgement and moderation not quite successfully cloak the lack of originality and vigor of thought (Loader, like Gagnon, is willing to benefit from Brooten on minutiae, usually in the wake of *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* or the Gagnonian e-pamphlets, but he eschews her big picture).

texts from the Hebrew Bible he interprets from deploying their meaning according to the standard stratigraphical and narratological models of composition : verses are seldom read as their original writers adumbrated them, through the lens of contemporary data, but taken according to their final casting in the books as handed down to us. In other words, Gagnon puts the dogmatic slant of the latest redactors, which determined the present-day collocation of verses, clusters of verses and chapters in, say, Leviticus or Genesis, over the authorial intent of those who created their earliest strata ¹²¹. It is an interpreter's right to parse the Hebrew Bible through the post-exilic prism, with its theological hardline ; but it should be disclosed that this is a far from harmless minority view, while the reader must be presented with iron-clad facts for such a commitment. Yet, far from meeting these needs, Gagnon goes all out stating that alternative grids are unsustainable — could less transparent scholarship be devised ? On the other hand, too many of his arguments depend on faulty methodology and unfair tactics. Thus Pauline intertextuality was enriched by confining to silence the specifics of the community of mindframe between Paul and Philo, and by boldly discovering what may be but are not capable of being proved to be scriptural echoes and parallels. Thus too the frantic repackaging of the last decades over Paul's ability to build a coherent theology (G. Tatum, *New Chapters in the Life of Paul. The Relative Chronology of His Career* [Washington, 2006], pp. 1-4, compare J.-F. Collange, *Énigmes de la deuxième épître de Paul aux Corinthiens. Étude exégétique de 2 Cor. 2,14-7,4* [Cambridge, 1972], pp. 3, 171-173 ; W. Dabourne, *Purpose and Cause in Pauline Exegesis. Romans 1.16-4.25 and a New Approach to the Letters* [ib., 2002], pp. 42-43 ; Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul. Revised Edition* [Tübingen, 2005], pp. 142-144, 281-283) left no trace in Gagnon's book. Finally, the desire to shine in the eyes of ignorants lowers its scientific level : footnoting and bibliography are too erratic ; technical jargon should not have been eschewed ; and rhetoric loom heavily through the excess of straw men, false dilemmas, and abusive analogies, the skirting of difficulties, the oversimplification of issues.

So *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* belongs to homophobic polemics of bogus value ¹²² ; regardless of its programmatic claims to fresh insights and tech-

¹²¹ This informs his treatment of Lev 18 :22 and 20 :13 : he shuns Olyan 1994 — Milgrom's critically-minded commentary on c. 17-22 came out too late for him to use (2000), though he tried later to tear holes into the fabric of its same-sex exegesis —, while claiming (112 note 179), that « it is misleading (...) to treat Lev 18 :22 and 20 :13 (or worse, opposition to homosexual practice itself) as if they were late creations of the post-exilic period ».

¹²² The noted Bible scholar J. E. Miller in 'A Response to Robert Gagnon on 'The Old Testament and Homosexuality'', *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 119, 2007, pp. 86-89, builds a good case for disregarding Gagnon as a serious, creditable interpreter. Since Miller did not mince words and faces his foe's assertions with scholarship, here is a bouquet of some of his points : « should the reader insist that the *qedeshim* are indeed religious prostitutes, the text in Deut comes no closer to an attack on homosexuality. The text is already explicit about the *qedeshah*, and it denigrates the practice of heterosexual religious prostitution. Choosing to read opprobrium into the homosexuality of the supposed male prostitution but ignoring the heterosexuality of the explicit female prostitution reveals more about the in-

nical refinement ¹²³, it reads as a work of defamation plain and simple threatening LGBT persons, their supporters, those who advocate civil rights for them, and the

terpreter than the text » (pp. 86-87) ; « (...) even if we understand actual incestuous rape in the case of Noah and Ham, there is no clear negative content concerning homosexuality after we have recognized the issues of rape and incest. There are many rape and incest narratives and legal texts, but a paucity of texts which mention sex between males. If the author wished the reader to understand incestuous rape in the case of Ham and Noah, incest seems the primary focus, based on parallel narratives in Genesis » (p. 87) ; « Gagnon does not specify the rabbinic texts which support his reading of the Sodom story. BerR 49.5.3, some Targums on Gen. 18,20f. and some talmudic texts (e.g. San 109b) read the sin of Sodom in light of Ez 16,49f. and construct the story of Peletith. (...) In this story she is executed by the people of Sodom for the crime of helping the needy, and it is for this sin of Sodom, not a sexual one, that the city is destroyed. (...) The rabbinic tradition on Sodom found no homosexual opprobrium implied in the term *to'ebah* » (p. 88) ; « Gagnon's ethical hermeneutic seems simultaneously too blunt and intricate to accomplish his ends, ends which seem to precede his study of the text » (p. 89). That none of the first-rate Bible scholars Gagnon assailed (so Bird, Martin, or Milgrom) saw fit to rebuke him in print shows clearly enough their opinion of his character and the worth of his scholarship ; subsidiarily, the few competent experts of both Bible and gender studies who commented on this or that part of his book are far from laudatory (witness Ackerman, *When Heroes Love*, pp. 16-17).

¹²³ « The book by Soards provides helpful information and insights (...). However, the treatment of the biblical texts is deliberately brief and written in a popular style, leaving room for a more rigorous and detailed assessment of the Bible and its hermeneutical relevance. To some extent this need is met in the books by Springett and especially Schmidt. Yet I believe there is still a need for carrying the discussion of biblical texts further, including such areas as the implicit motive clause for the Levitical prohibitions ; the meaning of *para physin* (...) in early Jewish literature and its relation to Paul's understanding of the phrase ; and a more thoroughgoing response to recent criticisms of the Bible's view of homosexuality as misogynistic and outdated. A major aim of this book is to lift up in a more rigorous and scholarly way than has been done till now the argument of the complementarity of male and female in material creation as a key argument in early Judeo-Christian opposition to same-sex intercourse » (pp. 39-40). Notice the deceiving choice of words : the Bible's 'hermeneutical relevance' to same-sex debates is a politer synonym for fundamentalist homophobia and / or heteronormativity, whereas the 'implicit' motivation behind Lev 18 :22 and 20 :13 boils down to a preconceived idea and 'thoroughgoing response' equates to faith-based advocacy of literalist biblical standards. Concerning the scholarly rigor Gagnon claims, I am stricken, in its stead, by the vigor, pretension, and determination with which he pushed forward his ideas. The formula is well known : « dazzle the reader with erudition and hammer the opposition with arguments. When (...) critics raise questions about the veracity of the research and the validity of the conclusions, accuse them of lacking expertise and exhibiting an excess of partisanship » (P. C. Hoffer, *Past Imperfect. Facts, Fictions, and Fraud in the Writing of American History* [New York, 2004], p. 143, with M. Bellesiles' 2000 book *Arming America* in his mind). This is not the hallmark of scholarship one sees under the covers of academic publishers ; actually *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* has been made by Abingdon, the premier conservative, evangelical press in America. I am quite certain that his manuscript would never have passed through the referees of any American University publisher, not to speak of worldwide famous presses like Oxford, Brill, or Walter de Gruyter.

Bible scholars for whom bigotry is substitute neither to analysis nor to the exploration of all exegetic options available. Inquinated by the desire to find simplicity in a religious tradition that at all stages is confused and tangled, Gagnon indeed sees only one side to any question ; he parades in support of it a mass of material designed to impress and canvassed in a manner which he knows will benumb most of his unwary readers into acquiescence. With the way Gagnon ridicules such-and-such, it even resembles intellectual terrorism : ‘think like me, if you are not mentally challenged and unwilling to see the truth’. This has been pushed to the point that he seems positively terrified of conceding the least bit of ideological space to ‘homosexualist’ (his own coinage ¹²⁴) exegetes due to fears common to evangelical folk which I cannot treat here ¹²⁵ but which pervade all of his public stance as a professor, influential lecturer and media darling. It is highly unscientific to stick to one’s guns in such a systematic way — especially when the demonstrations which back one’s convictions rest on no sturdy grasp of medicine and the psychological sciences, on a below-average understanding of all non-biblical technicalities stemming from what I take to be some mix of sloth, ineptitude and misplaced feelings of self-sufficiency, and a refusal to be comprehensive in matters bibliographical and philological, despite the promise of exhaustiveness the considerable compass of the work seemed to

¹²⁴ He has been anticipated by M. A. Czaplicka in her 1914 anthropological study of Siberian Aborigenes, as quoted by J. P. Brown, ‘The Mediterranean Seer and Shamanism’, *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 93, 1981, pp. 374-400 at 376 (reprinted in *Israel and Hellas*, II [Berlin & New York, 2000], pp. 154-198 at 157 — a truly encyclopaedic scholar would probably have known of this reference), and, of course, by out-and-proud novelist Gore Vidal more than a generation later (cf. D. Weise, *Gore Vidal, Sexually Speaking. Collected Sex Writings* [San Francisco, 1999], pp. 51-52, etc, with the analysis by J. Behrendt, *Homosexuality in the Work of Gore Vidal* [Münster & London, 2002], pp. 45-60, especially 59, cf. 117). How revealing of his grasp of cultural lore that Gagnon does not appear to understand that he harks back to a distant past by using that word — unless he knowingly twists it into a renewed, debased sense. If so, the desire this materializes is utterly un-academic and verges on psychiatric causes which I have neither the taste nor the tools to investigate.

¹²⁵ Most of these fears would appear to stem from the preoccupation of evangelical activists and the Christian Right with the increasingly liberal climate, qua unfavorable to religion, that they think afflicts America as a consequence of the visibility and victories of the LGBT action in the last fifteen or so years. In this I am endorsing the model proposed by T. J. Linne-man (‘Homophobia and Hostility : Christian Conservative Reactions to the Political and Cultural Progress of Lesbians and Gay Men’, *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 1, 2004, pp. 56-76), which rests on a — to my eyes — convincing array of data qualitative and statistical. From the journalist C. Wicker, *The Fall of the Evangelical Nation. The Surprising Crisis Inside the Church*, New York, 2008, one learns that the numbers of the faithful seem to stagnate around 7% of the whole population (pp. 15-32, 83-95) while there would appear to be a virtual lockdown in the capability of the Protestant churches to produce conversions (pp. 49-65). As for demography, available figures demonstrate that the weight of the non-Catholic denominations significantly decreased between the 1970-80s and 2008 (so M. Ryan and L. Switzer, *God in the Corridors of Power. Christian Conservatives, the Media, and Politics in America* [Santa Barbara, Denver & Oxford, 2009], pp. 5-7).

underscore. Gagnon is nothing but an entrenched essentialist student of homosexuality and a believer in the framework theological-scientific of the male and female sexes who will never admit that biological sex is dependent on culture and ideology, therefore historically determined, and that his critical box of tools amounts to the following analogy : provided that the lexemes ‘red’, ‘blue’, and ‘white’ appear in a short passage which, conjecturally, could be made to yield the ideas of ‘country’ or ‘nation’, he trumpets that it must be the United States and nothing else, although France has indeed the same colours in her flag. If, at the very least, he had managed to produce an intellectual achievement of the caliber of Boswell’s *Christianity* or Nissinen’s *Homoeroticism*, namely some sort of conservative landmark impeccably researched and bearing testimony to encyclopaedic learning ¹²⁶, something perhaps would have been gained in the long haul. Even an evangelical equivalent of the twin studies of homosexuality by Boswell, deeply flawed as I take them to be so far as their findings and theoretical tenets go, would have been nothing short of a boon. Unfortunately, this is not the truth at all — we are required to buy a falsifying ¹²⁷, superficial ¹²⁸, and atrociously self-indulgent ¹²⁹ libel that needed a massive list of

¹²⁶ As the book pretends it displays : it opens with a needlessly lengthy compendium of the abbreviations used (full of gaps, not least Hallo-Younger’s *The Context of Scripture*, volume I [1997], and error-ridden : e.g. Charlesworth’s *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* appeared in 1983-1985, not 1983 [p. 18], the *HALOT* in 1994-2000, not 1994-1999 [p. 17], the *LÄ* from 1975 on, not in 1972 [ibid.]), while, on his way, Gagnon implies that he has read, and digested, much more than what his text actually evinces or pays lip-service to. See G. Temple, *Gay Unions. In the Light of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason* (New York, 2004), p. 53, with respect to Dover and Foucault ; the same thing obtains for non-evangelical Bible scholarship which cannot be said to have been sampled by Gagnon in anything like a representative manner. It follows that, despite its size, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* has no right to be hailed a self-contained compendium of all there is to know on the topic (*pace* Ellis, *Paul and Ancient Views of Sexual Desire*, p. 6 : ‘a nearly exhaustive discussion of the biblical texts relating to homosexual activity’). It merely holds the distinction of being the fullest conservative effort at pushing the clock back to the period before Kinsey and D. S. Bailey.

¹²⁷ If not falsification, how should one call the mentions of P on pp. 43-44, 57-59, 62-63 and of J (the Yahwist writings) on 43-44, 55, 57, 60, 63, sigla which are never pursued for their own, redactional sake but flung in the face of the reader to mislead him into thinking that the book is critically-minded ? Gagnon’s mere nod at the critical-stratigraphical model attempts to remove the suspicion that he will be handling the Hebrew Bible as an old-fashioned, fundamentalist evangelical rather than as a present-day, university-level scholar.

¹²⁸ The validity of any exegetic solution does not revolve solely around its internal cogency and imperviousness to objections, despite Gagnon’s refutational strategy ; since his personal theses are unusually vulnerable to charges of tunnel vision and biased or faulty marshalling of the evidence, he should really have looked at epistemology of science for a less one-sided approach, for example C. Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage* (Paris, 1962), p. 328 : « l’explication scientifique ne consiste pas dans le passage de la complexité à la simplicité, mais dans la substitution d’une complexité mieux intelligible à une autre qui l’était moins ».

¹²⁹ I share Martin’s diagnostic (*Sex and the Single Savior*, p. 26) « it is amazing to me that Gagnon can conduct himself through all this elaborate interpretation with all the decisions

endorsements by biblical luminaries, as complacently detailed on the front and back covers, to stand on its own as a professionally researched contribution to the field. 'Libel' does not strike me as too strong a word qualifying *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, since the monograph deliberately mistakes petty prejudice for intellectual courage when it suggests that its preparation cost the author much and might well endanger him by virtue of his swimming against the prevalent ideological current. As if there were something comparable between Gagnon's comfortable tenure or cozy church activities and the daily sufferings of gay boys bashed, bullied, sent by their parents to boot camp or left by the curb ! The lengthy list of youngsters dying because of what they were, from Matthew Shepard to Tyler Clementi, exposes this special pleading of Gagnon's for the heartless, revolting hypocrisy it is. Far from being but a side aspect of his work, it stands at the core of his attempt to consolidate the traditional reading of Scripture on homosexuality. This is demonstrated by the pieces of strident fundamentalist propaganda his bad book indulges in (most notably pp. 29-30, on the tolerance and intolerance of homosexual behavior, and 471-484, 'The negative effects of societal endorsement of homosexuality')¹³⁰ plus the pointed

and speculations it necessitates, and then convince himself that any reasonable, responsible, unbiased reader would see in the text precisely what he sees. After such a parade of assumptions, to believe that the text itself is dispensing its meaning is astounding », and do wholly concur with Jordan, *Blessing Same-Sex Unions. The Perils of Queer Romance and the Confusions of Christian Marriage* (Chicago & Londres, 2005), when he considers, p. 10, that « Gagnon's (willful ?) refusal to engage theoretical critique of sex/gender categories goes hand in hand with a refusal to admit exegetical questions that would complicate his lock-step argument ». It wholly astounds me that Gagnon could boast to have counteracted Nissinen's relevant section ('The Old Testament and Homosexuality', p. 367 note 2 : « the other major work is : M. Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World. A Historical Perspective*, 1998, 19-56. Hereafter : *Homoeroticism*. Cf. my critique of Nissinen throughout my book, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice. Texts and Hermeneutics*, 2001 (see index) »).

¹³⁰ Let me provide a taste of these claims of his which I identify as such. « We have already noted that same-sex molestation of children increases the chance that the child will later identify his orientation as homosexual. The problem of molestation pertains not only to adult male homosexual molesters but also to adolescent male homosexual boys who are increasingly being encouraged by sex-ed programs and gay-activist groups to engage in same-sex sexual experimentation with their peers » (p. 480). The rate of same-sex molestation of gay men and lesbians in their childhood or early teens is indeed abnormally high compared to straight people, but the samples tested are called not quite representative of LBGT persons, at least as a clinical group, by investigators themselves, whereas, *pace* Gagnon, it remains to be proved that molestation is a causal factor in the development of an homosexual identity (M. E. Tomeo, D. L. Templer, S. Anderson and D. Kotler, 'Comparative Data of Childhood and Adolescence Molestation in Heterosexual and Homosexual Persons', *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 30, 2001, pp. 535-541 at 539-541 ; the picture does not change when the samples come from another country and the patterns researched include vulnerability to suicide, see M. Eskin, H. Kaynack-Demir and S. Demir, 'Same-Sex Sexual Orientation, Childhood Sexual Abuse, and Suicidal Behavior in University Students in Turkey', *ibid.* 34, 2005, pp. 185-195, though they isolate, on 190-191, a significant difference between female and male par-

barbs at the LGBT group Gagnon seems tireless in trading at every turn and opportunity — thereby creating a climate that surreptitiously influences the reader. Out of place in any scholarly inquest worth the name as so many clues to *ira et studio*, all those items evince the cultural anger of the polemicist catering to church-goers disgruntled by the proliferation of Queer and liberal views on homosexuality¹³¹. The

ticipants). Last but not least, Gagnon strangely fails to cite the only rigorous statistical study then available (L. S. Doll, D. Joy, B. N. Bartholomew, J. S. Harrison, G. Bolan, J. M. Douglas *et alii*, ‘Self-Reported Childhood and Adolescent Sexual Abuse Among Adult Homosexual and Bisexual Men’, *Child Abuse and Neglect* 16, 1992, pp. 855-864), preferring to deploy earlier or contemporary studies by psychologists belonging to the Far Right, such as Paul Cameron, who even in his heyday was seldom heard by mainstream sex researchers and is now useless (cf. A. Zanghellini, ‘Scientific Positivism and the Controversy Over Research Into Lesbian and Gay Parenting’, *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 4, 2007, pp. 100-114 at 101, with literature — ‘discredited’, ‘disreputable’, ‘problematic approach’), and papers published in periodicals guilty of complacency towards evangelical integritism, like the *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* (pp. 412 and 480, in a seemingly impressive array of figures and footnotes, complete with arcane abbreviations) : this is extremely damaging to Gagnon’s claims to a competent grasp of the evidence and weakens the lofty generalisations we have quoted. On top of that, he has no right whatsoever to link the putative role played by early same-sex abuse in the emergence of an homosexual identity with the (unproven and canned) motif of the encouragement given by both sexual education in school and LGBT activism towards teens — two wholly different matters which it was most unwise to lump together ; and why omit the Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) ? The very visibility and capability of action of these groups on school grounds so manifestly runs afoul of the conservative mindset in many countries that they meet with new legal blinkers, like antiobscenity rules and no-sex policy (C. Mayo, ‘Obscene Associations : Gay-Straight Alliances, the Equal Access Act, and Abstinence-Only Policy’, *Sexual Research & Social Policy* 5, 2008, pp. 45-55, particularly 45-47 and 49-54 ; as he summarizes on 47, « restrictions on GSAs do more than just prohibit gay youth from meeting — they also prohibit youth from critically analyzing sexuality, making alliances across sexual diversity, and reconsidering their own sexualities in supportive contexts. In short, by making speaking about sex equivalent to sexual activity, conservative policies are simultaneously acting to limit sex and sexual discourse. Abstinence-only policies not only define sexuality and import religion into the curriculum but also define a certain way of being a member of a community or group. In contrast, GSAs represent new forms of alliance identity that do not require antagonism — indeed they often (not always, of course) thrive on internal diversities and differences. Because their intention is to remain critical about identity and community, GSAs at least provide a queer understanding of membership, one that challenges embattled Christianity’s version of community (...) »). There is thus no rigour in the kind of reasoning Gagnon delights in. Whoever upholds the utterly devious linkage of sexual-education programs and the action of LGBT groups by and large with same-sex molestation merely showcases their renouncement to scientific discourse for fundamentalist propaganda.

¹³¹ It was partly due to them that, in 2007, I included Gagnon among those ‘academics turned ayatollahs because of their dislike of homosexuality’ (*Homosexuality and Liminality in the Gilgameš and Samuel*, p. VII). This label has been reproduced by others, for example J. E. Harding, ‘David and Jonathan Between Athens and Jerusalem’, *Relegere. Studies in Religion and Reception* 1, 2011, pp. 37-92 at 41 note 12 — a sure sign, it would seem, that I nailed it

prominent status of Gagnon within the Far Right originates in the very ingenuity with which such nuggets of conservative lore blend with seemingly impressive research in Bible-related fields under the pen of an impeccably credentialed scholar ; this no student of ancient religion who strives in earnest to ascertain what was in the mind of the Biblical redactors and how they were responding to their cultural milieu(s) — of course, among a host of other goals... — can allow to stand unanswered as the ideal of science is ruinously perverted. So there exists no middle ground between bowing down to Gagnon as if he were an antigay equivalent of Jacob Neusner (which it has been one of my goals in the present commentary to demonstrate he is not, by a very wide margin...), and stepping up as the grim scholarly onlooker who deems himself capable of proving that, eleven years after, at a times when America looks torn between the twin extremes of acceptance of each and every alternative lifestyle¹³², and outright demonization of everything that is not straight — postures most provocatively advocated, respectively, by Lady Gaga and Westboro Baptist Church's Fred Phelps —, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* is moot, if not irrelevant. As Queer scholars or 'liberal' exegetes, we have a duty towards students and the LBGT community who needs guidance rooted in empirically sound views of Scripture, that is, Biblical interpretation that makes use of the whole gamut of scientific tools at our disposal, not to wallow in a pity party around such an irredeemable pile of junk as Gagnon's ill-informed, badly conceived and tiresomely polemical book, just because its gauntness discourages rebuttals. As scholars tout court, imbued by our teachers at the university level with ethical standards that our frequentation of both pupils

down correctly when I wrote this sentence. It goes without saying that my use of 'ayatollah' was not intended as an offence to Islam ; it merely plays on the negative overtones the word, in itself and by contrast with the more neutral 'mollah', has gained in contemporary parlance, where it comes close to signifying something like 'archetype of religious intolerance'. As for the charge that might be raised against me that I behave as the mouthpiece of a liberal fringe of interpreters in my analysis of Gagnon's book, let the reader balance my published output on Greek and Ancient Near Eastern homosexuality against his and then make up their mind, a task for which some help can be derived from <http://epistle.us/hbarticles/jondave11.html> ; <http://epistle.us/hbarticles/debate1.html> and <http://epistle.us/hbarticles/debate2.html> — I am confident that the *bona fide* reader of both my work and the afore-mentioned papers will find out that the onus of proof does not fall on me).

¹³² By this I do not imply or mean that being gay equates to engaging in a lifestyle, viz. the behavioral choice to partake in certain conduct, alternative to heterosexuality — a favorite tenet of conservative-minded people —, nor that embracing one's homosexuality amounts to much the same thing as 'living the homosexual lifestyle'. What I mean is that, currently there is a trend, for gay youth, to follow such role models as Lady Gaga or American Idol's Adam Lambert and be flamboyant in a way that seems to corroborate the stereotypes entertained by the Far Right about gay people as a group. I do not want to preach ; nouveau fag who appeals to straights and that no one can suspect is gay shall not be the norm of the LBGT community, yet 'flaming queens' made bold by the above-mentioned idols do provide the Religious Right with an all too easy tool for discriminating against everything LBGT. This is why I speak of the 'acceptation of each and every alternative lifestyle' as an 'extreme' ; so far as extremes extend, it would certainly be preferable to a Phelps-approved ban, though.

and colleagues must have nourished, if not increased, since our formative years, we shall not, I think, accept Gagnon within our ranks unless he amends his learning and recants the worst of his homophobia. But is he even trying to be a scholar anymore ? The sheer fact that he devotes so much of his time to mounting rambling e-attacks asking for no response from his foes (for you cannot make him see reason through persuasion) rather than writing books and articles in peer-reviewed journals, even evangelical ones, and serving *qualitate qua* in doctoral committees and professorial associations (the last activity a crucial element of American, academic life) is telling. Coupled with his fondness for giving speeches in churches of his own or in friendly denominations and with his eagerness to have his theological presentations videotaped and then put on YouTube and conservative venues, this appears to evidence a revealing shift in purpose for someone enamored with his credentials. His stance as a moral authority within the Far Right now seems of more concern to him than his status as a academic. In that case, in quite the same manner as Nietzsche eventually renounced Greek philology for philosophy after his *Geburt der Tragödie* and the chilly reception it elicited from the best classical scholars then in activity¹³³, let us make such a fuss with rebuttals, rejoinders, and protests¹³⁴, in a much more sustain-

¹³³ Not that Gagnon comes close to resembling Nietzsche in power of intellect, see R. D. Weekly, *The Rebuttal. A Biblical Response Exposing the Deceptive Logic of Anti-Gay Theology* (sine loco, Judah First Publishing, 2011), pp. 264 (in *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*) « Gagnon portrays a kindhearted tenderness with his choice of language, but it's really anything but » and 261 « if I sneeze in this instant, I have no doubt that Gagnon will find a way to make it relevant to his interpretation of Scripture. “Gay people sneeze ; therefore, God is pronouncing judgement on the fact that they are gay, for sneezing is not a manifestation of the health that God would have us walk in as believers.” The man is a master of seeing signs where others simply see plain facts ». If all of his writings share anything with the treatise on tragedy by the Hellenist-turned-thinker, it would be in their not being in the least *φιλοπράγμων* — to borrow Neoplatonic parlance. My point is that even the staunchest, most entrenched abuser of any science can be ‘persuaded’ to stop damaging it (remember that, for all its dazzling splendor as a piece of German prose, the *Geburt...* is abysmally argued and ill-informed from a strictly philological viewpoint ; it comes as no surprise that the subsequent war of libels pitting U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Nietzsche’s most determined foe who became the greatest classical scholar of the period 1870-1930, against the Nietzsche-compatible E. Rohde, hardly, if at all, Wilamowitz’s inferior in learning, strikes a much more technical note than the work which elicited it).

¹³⁴ The ones by Obie Olmen (<http://www.theliberalspirit.com/awretchedman/blog/?p=2569>), Scott Miller (<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/tonyjones/2012/04/05/reading-gagnon-overstate-d-exegesis-scot/>) and especially Ted Grimsrud (<http://peacetheology.net/2009/02/10/robert-gagnon-the-bible-and-homosexual-practice/>) are all recent, moderately phrased yet substantial, commentaries which strike hard at the soft joints on Gagnon’s armour. A more extensive attempt, by Michael Wood (*Jesus on Homosexuality. A Rebuttal to Dr Gagnon*, 2012, 50 pp. available at <http://www.jesushomosexuality.com/Jesus%20on%20Homosexuality.pdf>) has some decent, or at the very least sensible, ideas but its superficial interpretive and scholarly values are unlikely to impress readers with a modicum of familiarity with some scholarly resources on Scripture. The numerous, often perceptive rebuttals of antigay theology concocted

ned move than back in the 2000s when his book appeared and elicited a stream of reviews and opinion pieces which dried up very soon, that Gagnon eventually desert Bible studies at the post-graduate level for the greener pastures of stardom. To this writer at least, he already looks well on the way of becoming a televangelist, so this should not be a big step forward. And if my reader asks who the heck I am for daring to flaunt such contempt for a theologian embraced by many senior authorities, I will only answer that I am a part of all that I read in disciplines extending considerably farther than Gagnon's expertise, and that my not inconsiderable familiarity with sexuality in Greece, Rome, and the Near East ¹³⁵ has me leaning towards the positions

by Weekly for The Gay Christian Fellowship website and collected in *The Rebuttal* ruthlessly unmask Gagnon's love of interpretive circles and partiality toward special pleading of a crude nature ; it is amusing to watch the gay pastor debunk and trounce the Ivy League graduate (e.g. his personal comment on 173 : « given Gagnon's credentials and my resulting expectation that he would offer the most legitimate anti-gay case I'd come across to date, I read *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* with the hope of being presented with more reasonable arguments than proved to exist. If this type of nonsense is the best a well-credentialed traditionalist biblical scholar can come up with, gay people have nothing to worry about, theologically speaking. Our adversaries have stopped grasping at straws and are now groping aimlessly at the formless wind, hoping that a magical dragon named Falcore will happen by and lift them from the quagmire of their theological desperation »).

¹³⁵ It takes a huge aplomb, for someone whose grasp of these branches is, as we sampled *supra*, second-hand at best, to claim to have succeeded in returning against their conclusions the materials detailed by such experts as Brooten and Nissinen, yet Gagnon does that whenever they tread on what he considers his home turf. He handles the lesbian professor with a modicum of respect, while by no means shying away from vigorous disagreement (*The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, pp. 122-125, in which he attempts to overturn her view that Rom 1 :26-32 echoes Lev 18 :22 and 20 :13 on impurity, defilement and shame in such a manner that the Pauline condemnation of same-sex acts is shown to be antiquated and canonically irrelevant to us moderns) ; Nissinen, on the other hand, he continuously snaps at, due to the authority justly entrusted to the handbook of the Finnish orientalist by Bible scholars (see on 78 note 101, 139-140, 145 note 230, 154-155, 259, 289, 292...). Gagnon goes to the length of patronizing one or the other scholar, for example « Nissinen unfortunately does not bother to explore the question of whether Jesus was opposed to homosexuality » (p. 188 note 2 ; Gagnon has not doubt that Jesus and Paul were of the same persuasion, but see E. Stauffer, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, II Principat*, Band 25, 1. Teilband [Berlin & New York, 1982], p. 72 : « die Propheten des AT werden nicht müde, die sexualmoralische Korruption ihres Volkes in wortreichen Scheltreden zu geißeln. Die Qumranleute, die Psalmen Salomos und viele Rabbinen setzen diese ehrenvolle Tätigkeit fort. Jesus unterbricht jene Predigttradition. Er hat seine eigene Meinung über die Moralisten (Mt 23,4 ; L 11,46 ; J 8,7) und die Unmoralischen (L 7,47). Doch die Unterbrechung ist kurz und wirkungslos. Der Rabbinenschüler Paulus greift wieder auf die wohlbekanntes Klagelieder und Lasterkataloge zurück und votiert gegen den Geist von Mt 13,29 und J 8,7 für das mosaische Ausrottungsprinzip. Matthäus kämpft für eine superpharisäische Sexualmoral. Und Lukas, der ἀγύβναιος und ἄτεκνος, entwickelt eine Eheskepsis qumranisehen Stils. Die Rejudaisierung ist in vollem Gange, und die kirchliche Zensur der Jesusüberlieferung ist allenthalben am Werk ») ; worse, he has the gall to lump Brooten and Nissinen together in the same condemnation for refusing to

spearheaded by Bird, Brooten, Jordan, Milgrom, Nissinen, Olyan, or Römer. So far as authority goes, these scholars are hardly less distinguished than those who find in Gagnon confirmation of their beliefs along with a congenial mind.¹³⁶

swallow the sexual complementarity *κατὰ φύσιν* (256 note 16, cf. 378 : « what is clear from these texts is that Brooten and Nissinen have ignored or downplayed the importance of the anatomical (and procreative) complementarity of male and female for Paul's negative assessment of same-sex intercourse ») or falling back on what he regards as absurd alternatives to the commonplaces he champions (369 : « the Greeks and Romans approved of certain forms of homosexual behavior, particularly in cases where the passive or penetrated partners were social inferiors. In a system where social hierarchy is the primary concern, such concessions [!] are quite understandable. The fact that biblical authors made no such concessions suggests that their concern was broader. Brooten, Nissinen, and others have to argue, in effect, that Paul and Jesus were simply more misogynistic than their Greek and Roman contemporaries. Surely, such an argument has little merit » ; aye, it has, for Jews and Pagans possessed relatively discrepant mental and cultural outlooks — and 'concession' is definitely not the right word to use, speaking of the allowances, viz. the exceptions from societal blame, made for same-sex acts and behaviors in the Graeco-Roman world). The average quality of Gagnon's arguments compared with those in *Love Between Women* and *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World* cuts generally as poor a figure as his primary and secondary erudition, on top of their being irrevocably mired in conservative theology.

¹³⁶ I would like to acknowledge a debt to William O'Donnell and the lamented Bruce Gerig. The former has been instrumental in pushing me to take a stance and insist on the medical evidence ; his enthusiasm and energy have been a comfort in the midst of all this drudgery. As a scientist, his insistence on the necessity of rooting each important step or argument into samples from the critical literature large enough to be representative, served as the reminder that no matter whether you are studying Scripture through books or the nature of man with a CAT-scan, you must exercise more than flair and a nimble mind : fairness is not a vain term (in utter contrast with *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, p. 38 : « (...) the most that can be claimed is that homosexuality arises from a complex interplay of genes, intra-uterine and post-uterine biological development, environment, and choice », wherein the place of individual choice is meant to suggest that LBGT people can decide to be homosexual or transgender !). Gerig suffered through countless versions of this paper *in fieri* during the ultimate months of his life, lavishing on me the proofs of his enviable familiarity with the subject and calling my attention on those points of mine that required further elaboration. He is responsible for more ameliorations than I care to count. Of course, they should not be held responsible for any of my views, nor should the somewhat breezy style Gagnon's inexhaustible store of ignorances, mistakes and instances of straw man argument decided me to write in, be put at their door. On one point, despite their help, I must admit of mixed feelings : not being American, but living and teaching in a so different a country, culturally and sociologically speaking, as France, my exposition to the United States has been through my contacts with American colleagues, pupils and laymen, my reading, which I hope will be deemed adequate enough, and my web browsing, so I might well have blundered here and there on non-academic issues. I can only beg the reader's mercy for all blemishes cultural, educative, medical, and so forth, which had escaped me ; my hope is that they do not put me at too much of a disadvantage against Gagnon, whatever his blinkers on so many topics may be.

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APPENDIX 1 : TRANSLATION OF GRAECO-ROMAN SNIPPETS AND QUOTES, WITH THE TRANSLITERATION OF SINGLE WORDS

- P. 8 note 20, 44 :

dies diem docet : ‘time teaches to time’, that is : ‘progress comes with time’

- P. 12 note 27 : ἐπιθυμία] *epithymia*

Plato, *Phaedrus*, 232 a 7-b 1 : « lovers are bound to be found out and be seen trailing after their beloved ones and making this their chief concern, and so (...) »

τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν] *to epithymētikon*

τὸ θυμοειδές] *to thymoeidēs*

τὸ λογιστικόν] *to logistikon*

Plato, *Republic*, IV, 439 d 4-8 : « then, said I, it would not be unreasonable for us to claim that there are two elements, different from one another, and to call the one in the soul with which it calculates, the rational element ; and the one with which it feels passion, hungers, thirsts, and is stirred by other appetites, the irrational and appetitive element, friend to certain ways of being filled and certain pleasures »

- P. 13 note 29 :

ἐπιθυμία] *epithymia*

προηγμένα] *proēgmena*, ‘preferred things, things approved’

πλεονασμός] *pleonasmos*, ‘excess, excessiveness’ (for the early Stoics, a *pathos* was an impulse, *hormē*, that went too far — *pleonasmos* — and became bad / evil)

ἀπάθεια = εὐπάθεια] *apatheia = eupatheia*, ‘absence of *pathē*’ = ‘innocent / good emotion’, viz. the rational one (the Stoic *eupatheia* is the uplifting of the soul for the fully rational man capable of prevailing over his own emotional impulses)

πάθη] *pathē*, ‘emotions, passions’ (here : what disturbs the mind)

- P. 13 note 30 :

Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, 127-128 : « we must consider that, among appetites, some are natural, others vain, and within the natural ones some are necessary, the others merely natural ; of the necessary (appetites), some are <needed> for <our> happiness, others for the tranquility of the body, and other for our very existence. A right understanding of these data puts us in a position to refer all choice and avoidance to the well-being of the body and the freedom of the soul from disturbance, since such is the aim of the blessed life. In effect, we always act to that end, viz. neither to feel pain nor be afraid »

ἐπιθυμία] *epithymia*

Diogenes of Oinoanda, fr. 32, VI 10-VII 3 : « we must show] both which of the desires are natural and which are not ; and in general all things that [are included] in the [former category are easily attained » (transl. Smith, p. 382)

Idem, fr. 34, VI 14-VII 12 : « well, what are the disturbing emotions ? [They are] fears — of the gods, of death, and of [pains] — and, besides [these], desires that [outrun] the limits fixed by nature. These are the roots of all evils and, [unless] we cut them off, [a multitude] of evils will grow [upon] us » (ibid., p. 385)

- P. 14 :

ἐπιθυμία] *epithymia*

Timo Phlious, *Supplementum Hellenisticum*, 845 : « of all evils, the foremost is appetite »

Wisdom of Solomon, 4 : 12 : « and vagrant desire perverts the guileless mind »

Siracid, 23 : 5 : « and divert from me desire »

- P. 14 note 31 :

ρίζαι κακῶν πάντων] *rizai kakōn pantōn*

- P. 14 note 33 :

ἐπιθυμία] *epithymia*

- P. 14 note 34 :

ἀρμόζεσθαι] *harmozesthai*

- P. 15, 16, 17 :

παρὰ φύσιν] *para physin*, ‘against nature, unnatural’

- P. 17 note 40, end :

φύσις] *physis*, ‘nature’

- P. 18 :

παρὰ φύσιν] *para physin*

φύσις] *physis*

- P. 18 note 42 :

1 Cor 6 : 18 : « whereas when one sells oneself, one sins / offends against their own body »

Aeschines, *Against Timarchus*, 39 : « all the offences he committed when a youth against his own body »

- P. 18 note 43 :

{οὐ} κατὰ νόμον] {ou} *kata nomon*, ‘{non-}conform to custom’

Herodotus, I, 61.1-2 : « he had no wish for children from his new wife and did not deal with her the normal way. At first, the woman kept on being silent, then (...), and she (viz. her mother) (spoke) to her husband ; the man was furious at the offence of Pisistratus against him »

φύσις] *physis*

νόμος] *nomos*, ‘law, custom, social order’

παρὰ νόμῳ] *paranomēma*

νόμος versus φύσις] *nomos* versus *physis*, ‘culture’ versus ‘nature / nurture’

- P. 19 :

φύσις] *physis*

βινεῖν] *binein*, ‘have intercourse’ (vulgar ; ‘fuck’)

πυγίζειν] *pygizein*, ‘sodomize, bugger’

Straton, *Anth. Pal.*, XII 245 : « Dumb brutes only fuck ; we clever human

Beings, in this superior at least,

Invented buggery. The slaves of women

Have no more sophistication than a beast »

(D. Hine, *Puerilities. Erotic Epigrams of the Greek Anthology* [Princeton, 2001], p. 113) Straton, *ibid.*, XII 238 : « In their erotic play with one another

Puppies give and take a lot of pleasure :
Reciprocally mounted by each other,
They screw as they are screwed, measure for measure.
The underdog — for no one is left out —
Immediately to the rear will pass.
So in the proverb : turn and turn about,
It's said, it takes an ass to scratch an ass » (Hine, p. 111)

νόμος ~ φύσις] *nomos* ~ *physis*

παρὰ φύσιν] *para physin*, 'against nature, unnatural'

νόμοι] *nomoi*, 'laws, customs, social habits'

Adespoton comic fragment 127* Kassel-Austin : « I would take you as my wife “for the production of children, in accordance with Greek laws” », cf. Plutarch, *Eroticus*, 767 D « in my eyes, the resemblance, but for one letter, between *stergesthai* / *stergein* [to be loved / to love], and *stegein* [to keep at one's house] seems to show from the first how a shared life, with the passing of time, instills reciprocal affection within the constraints of the conjugal bond. » See further the epoch-making G. Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women : Notes on the Political Economy of Sex', in R. R. Reiter (ed.), *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York, 1975), pp. 157-210, reprinted in L. J. Nicholson (ed.), *The Second Wave. A Reader in Feminist Theory* (New York & London, 1997), pp. 27-62.

- P. 19 note 44 :

φύσις to νόμος in same-sex ἔρωσις] *physis* to *nomos* in same-sex ἐρώσις]

τὰ κατὰ φύσιν] *ta kata physin*, 'the things according to nature'

κατὰ / παρὰ φύσιν] *kata / para physin*, 'natural / unnatural'

- P. 20 :

νόμος and φύσις] *nomos* and *physis*

ὁ τῆς φύσεως νόμος] *ho tēs physeōs nomos*. Here is the passage from Justin (the protagonist of the chapter being a formerly debauched wife turned Christian whose like-minded husband remains deaf to all her attempts to win him over to temperance) : « she thought it an impiety to go on sharing the bed of a man who was seeking by all means pleasures infringing on the natural law and justice, and she decided to free herself of such submission »

- P. 20 note 47 :

κείμενος νόμος] *keimenos nomos*. I am not the first to compare this Menander fragment (J. D. Quinn and W. C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* [Grand Rapids & Cambridge, 2000], p. 85 at 1 Tim 1 :9), but its implications go far beyond the lexicographical analysis of the verb *keisthai*, 'set down, lay down', speaking of the law (all that was required of Quinn-Wacker). An historian of Biblical homosexuality who takes such a sanguine view of his subject as Gagnon should have known about it.

στέργειν ἀεὶ] *stergein aei*

- P. 20 note 50 :

Straton, *Anth. Pal.*, XII 7, 1-2 : « in the girl, (...) neither that fine, natural smell of the skin » (a classical, pederastic topic)

Straton, *ibid.*, XII 192 : « Long hair, abundant artificial curls
 I hate, for being taught, instead of natural.
 No, give me boys all sweaty from the gym,
 Glistening with oil on every limb.
 I like sex unembellished, scenting in
 Glamour a whiff of something feminine »

(Hine, *Puerilities*, p. 91, translation modified ; his rendering of line 2 « give me no pleasure : they belong on girls » rhymes well but is much too far off the Greek, which is nearly impossible to render with any degree of literalness yet needs not have its striking metaphor erased — the Loeb version, cited in Hubbard’s *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome*, p. 301, has the still remote yet more adequate ‘things taught in the school of Art, not Nature’)

- P. 21 note 50 :

Rufinus, *Anth. Pal.*, V 19, 3-4 : « I no longer appreciate the undoctored skin of boys, but the powder which <women> lay on, their unguents and their fake bloom »
 Achilles Tatius, II, 38. 2-3 : « with women, everything is staged, their utterances like their positions (in bed). Even if she appears to be pretty, it comes from the zealous trick of unguents. Her beauty is nothing but perfumes and hair-dye, even for her kisses — take most of these deceits away, she resembles the jackstraw of the fable, stripped of his wings. Now the beauty of lads is not wet with the fragrance of perfumes, nor with any perfid and alien odours ; boy sweat smells better than all the female perfumes »

- P. 22 note 54 :

bulla : a badge of Roman citizenship until the child took the symbolic cloth of grownups, this small pouch, or locket, of leather or gold according to the means of the family, was fastened around the neck of the newborn on a cord, strap or chain and contained amulet(s) meant for protection against evil. See Gabelmann, pp. 510-522 ; it is uncertain whether only boys wore it, or if it applies to girls too, as there is no iconographical evidence for the *bulla* on females and an unique scriptural reference in its favour.

- P. 22 note 55 :

unctis : ‘anointed, perfumed’
solutis crinibus : ‘with flowing hair / locks’
capillatus : ‘he who has long hair’. Cf. L. Watson and P. Watson at Martial, XII. 18, 24-25 (*Martial. Selected Epigrams* [Cambridge, 2003], pp. 149-150)
tonso pura ministro : speaking of cups of wine, ‘pure (for coming) from a short-haired server’, that is, emphatically not a *capillatus*

- P. 22 note 56 :

Κεφαλή] *kephalē*, ‘head’

- P. 22 note 57 :

Priapea, 45, 1-3 : « when the turgid god spied a lad using irons to curl his hair so as to look like a black girl »
cinaedus] read Williams, *Martial Epigrams. Book Two* (Oxford, 2004), p. 110 : « it originally referred to an effeminate Eastern dancer but was also used as an insult referring to an effeminate man who most likely, though not necessarily always, played the receptive role in anal intercourse. No attempts at translation (Ker : “———” ; Izaac : “inverti” ; Norcio :

“sodomita” ; Barié and Schindler : “schwul” ; Shackleton Bailey : “queen”) have been successful, either because they are insufficiently precise or because they rely on categories alien to Roman ideas regarding sexuality. Ceronetti’s “culatto,” specifically suggesting as it does the receptive role in anal intercourse, comes close »

Priapea, 45, 6-7 : « you won’t be more of a girl, look ! than the hairs cushioning your cock »

- P. 23 :

puer delicatus : the favored child / teen slave of a Roman citizen, sort of cross between a pet and a boy toy ; usually freed when he grew up to be a man (and often a *cinaedus*), it was all right, for his master, to shower him with presents and affection, even in public, while a lad.

Βάπται] *Baptai*, from the verb *baptein*, ‘dip’ or ‘dye, tint, color’ (both Classical meanings ; if the latter is preferred here, « the ‘Baptai’ may have been a ‘comic’ guild of dyers, who were dyeing robes for devotees of the new goddess, although Juvenal and his scholiast show that they were also worshippers of Kotyto themselves » [Storey, *Eupolis...*, pp. 96-97])

- P. 23 note 57 :

Rufinus, *Anth. Pal.*, V 28, 3-4 : « now you dally with me, when those locks that used to wander on your haughty neck can no longer be seen »

παιδικά] *paidika*, the ‘same-sex love-interest’ of a grown man, viz. his ‘favorite, minion’

- P. 25 :

αἴ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν] *hai te gar thēleiai autōn*

θήλειαι] *thēleiai*

ἄρσενες... θηλείας] *arsenes... thēleias*

ἄρσην καὶ θῆλυς] *arsēn kai thēlys*, ‘male and female’

ἄρσην and θῆλυς] *arsēn and thēlys*

θῆλυς] *thēlys*

γὰρ] *gar*, ‘for, in effect’

lone ἄρσην] lone *arsēn*

forms in ἄρρεν-] forms in *arren-*

ἄρρενιστέον, ἄρρενογονία, ἄρρενοειδῶς] *arrenisteon* (‘one must adapt to a man, make as befits a man’ Lampe), *arrenogonia* (‘the bearing of male children’), *arrenoeidōs* (‘in male form, in the semblance of man’)

- P. 25 note 65 :

ὁμοίως τε καί] *homoios te kai*, ‘in the same way also’

- P. 25 note 66 :

ἄρσην] *arsēn*

θῆλυς] *thēlys*

θηλυδρίας and θηλυδρώδης] *thēlydrias* and *thēlydrōdēs*

θηλύτης] *thēlutēs*

ἄρρενότης] *arrenotēs*

- P. 25 note 68 :

Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XVII, 12.1 : « for Alexander had two males (= sons) by Glaphyra, and Aristobulus, three males (= sons) by Berenice, Salome’s daughter, and two fe-

males (= daughters) »

- P. 26 :

ἄρσῆν ~ θήλυσ] *arsēn* ~ *thēlys*

- P. 26 note 68 :

ἄρσῆν and θήλυσ to mean υἱός and θυγάτηρ] *arsēn* and *thēlys* to mean *hyios* ('son') and *thygatēr* ('daughter'). This a perfectly classical usage, as the quotation of Plato / Gorgias was meant to illustrate, and one that bespeaks a sound grasp of the finer nuances of the idiom by Flavius ; is it too much of a stretch to assume something far less stylish from Paul ?

Plato, *Meno*, 71 e 8 = Gorgias, fr. (?) 19 Buchheim : « and so is excellence in an old man, never mind whether he is free or a slave ». Whether we are dealing with an actual quote from the Sophist or a mere echo revolves around his fondness for *aretē*, 'excellence, quality, virtue', but it is far from certain, though assumed in H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker. Griechisch und Deutsch*, II⁶ (Berlin, 1952), p. 305 as their fr. 82 B 19.

- P. 26 note 69 :

Diodorus, VIII, fr. 23, 2 (a verse oracle) : « when Apsia the most sacred of rivers falls into the sea, there at the point of embarcation the female marries the male »

Lucian, *On the Syrian Goddess*, 54 : « they sacrifice beeves male and female (viz. bulls and cows) and goats and sheep »

Oppian, *Cynegetics*, III, 147-148 (speaking of wild bears) : « for often, by day and night, the females lust after mating and they themselves give chase to the males »

Ibid., 289 (of hyenas) : « the male and the female change yearly »

Ibid., 357-358 (of tigers) : « that the whole of this tribe is female and keeps on being unmated to a(ny) male »

- P. 26 note 71 :

θήλυσ / ἄρσῆν (v. 27) rather than, e.g., γυνή / ἀνήρ] *thēlys* / *arsēn* (v. 27) rather than, e.g., *gynē* / *anēr* ('woman' / 'man')

θήλυσ / ἄρσῆν] *thēlys* / *arsēn*

αἱ θήλειαι αὐτῶν] *hai thēleiai autōn*, 'the females of theirs'

- P. 28 :

Hurkel- : « a term commonly translated as "abomination" and usually ascribed by the Hittites to the worst conduct, violating of the most fundamental taboos existing in their society » (Peled, p. 77) ; « Friedrich's rendering 'abomination, enormity' is unsatisfactory, since *hurkel* was essentially a sexually based crime » (Puhvel, p. 401)

- P. 33 :

ῥακά] *raka* (thrice)

ῥαχᾶς] *rakhas*

μωρός] *mōros*, 'fool, stupid'

- P. 33 note 94 :

ἄφρων] *aphrōn*, 'silly, foolish'

- P. 33 note 97 :

ῥακά to μωρός] *raka to mōros*

- P. 38 note 108 :

1 Cor 11 :11 : « neither (is) woman without man nor man without woman »

Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 152 : « the love that ensues brings together the two separate halves of a single living being as it used to be and joins them as one, thereby producing in both a desire for mutual union in order to create a being similar to themselves »

Philo, *ibid.*, 151 : « but when woman was moulded, he made out a sisterly form and a kindred figure, at which sight, rejoicing, he approached and greeted her »

ἀίτιον] *aition*, ‘(myth of) origin’

- P. 52 note 133 :

φιλοπράγμων] *philopragmōn*, ‘lover of facts / matters / actions’

- P. 53 note 135 :

κατὰ φύσιν] *kata physin*, ‘natural, according to nature’

- P. 54 note 135 :

der ἀγύναιος und ἄτεκνος] *der agunaios und ateknos*, ‘the celibate, childless one’ ¹³⁷

¹³⁷ In his footnotes, Gagnon is regularly eager to correct the received renderings of New Testament material, whether individual lexemes, Pauline verses or individual bits of sentences ; does the same concern for factual accuracy, or what he intends to pass off for this, extend to the Patristic and Classical texts he cites ? The issue seems to me to be so serious, in itself and for the light it sheds on Gagnon’s bad methods, that I propose to close the present Appendix with a consideration of the treatment of his extra-Biblical comparanda. The translations quoted evince little engagement with these ancient authors and their critical bibliography, being mostly taken over from vintage classics, sometimes with the precision that a more recent version was ‘consulted’ (!) : so, e.g., pp. 164-165 and 179 for the Platonic *Symposium* and *Laws* (the Loeb volumes plus Dover), 376 note 42 for Synesius of Cyrene (a 1930 translation, plus a 1985 one), 366 note 26 for Epictetus (the Loeb), 385 note 55 for Plutarch (*ibid.*). The Loeb often serves as a depository of Classical lore in Bible studies, yet not a few first-rate authors preserved therein retain little philological value, due to their antiquated Greek text and a version either archaizing or freer and less rigorous than what commands assent today (the *Symposium* appeared in 1925, the *Laws* in 1926 ; Oldfather’s Epictetus in 1925-1928 ; and Helmbold’s *Eroticus* in 1961 : among this lot, Bury’s *Laws* were worthless from the start, having been made on the 1839 [sic !] edition by Baier, Orelli, and Winckelmann as modified by the editor, even though a far superior text, equipped with numerous grammatical and exegetical notes, could be borrowed from E. B. England [1921, 2 vol.], whereas the mostly sensible Oldfather has infelicities and insidious quirks, most noticeable on issues of material culture, that put it in the shadow of R. Hard [translation] and C. Gill [annotation], *Epictetus. The Discourses, the Handbook, the Fragments*, London, 1995 ; as for Lamb, it is quaint, or evasive, to the point of annoyance in matters of same-sex love, in conformity with its date, and lacks the profound culture, chatty grace and lightness of touch in the differentiation of speakers which make S. Bernadete’s version [Chicago, 2001] so outstanding — only the choice of the Loeb for Plutarch’s amatory dialogue strikes one as wise, though it is by no means a crib, as would have been useful for Gagnon’s purposes ; the textual critic will note that it rests on a questionable assessment of the relationships between the two manuscripts in which the *Eroticus* can

be read, cf. R. Flacelière, *L'Antiquité classique* 30, 1961, pp. 593-594, whose second edition [Paris, 1980] contains the version most sensitive to the affective and amorous nuances of this delicately-phrased text). The conclusion is inescapable : these translations were chosen not out of regard for their accuracy or closeness to the wording of the original, but for the mere sake of convenience, being readily available, with the net result that only in one case did Gagnon deploy the fairest English rendering available. It will, then, come as no surprise that precious few texts are reproduced in their best translation when their author features in *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* (that of the Sibylline oracles is J. J. Collins', in Charlesworth, *OTP*, I, pp. 327-472), for, much more often than not, Gagnon is content either with copying verbatim the version used in the secondary source he dialogues with or argues against, in which case he systematically unprovenances his extracts (thus, e.g., pp. 380-382, for an oration of John Chrysostom), or he refrains from secondary references, let alone to explain matters of sense and interpretation, even when those texts he excerpts, paraphrases or embeds in his argument happen not to be quite so explicit as he would have us believe (a textbook case of it being the erotophobic verses of Pseudo-Phocylides, unsourced in his whole book ; let it serve as a corrective to Gagnon's certainties that the latest commentary on that composition, W. T. Wilson, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, Berlin, 2005, cf. pp. 196-199 for the crucial v. 190-192, mentions no more *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* than did his predecessors Derron and Van der Horst, decades before Gagnon). Repeated too often, such taking over and anonymization induce a dangerous impression of philological indifference, for one cannot plead that all unsourced translations in his book are his own, as he always tells us, whenever he deals with Scripture, if he has modified a received version or made his own. Why on earth should he have changed his policy for Classical and Patristic documents ? Though not the only scholar guilty of such relaxed mores, as even a hard-working historian of sexuality like Loader quotes the Pseudo-Phocylides in *The New Testament on Sexuality* without ever stating whether his translation is personal or taken over and evokes its stance independently of the commentaries by Van der Horst or Wilson, Gagnon's flippancy and determined advocacy of his prejudices magnify that bad method to the point of making it paradigmatic. Finally, a few minor issues in *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* seem to showcase a lack of care in technical minutiae that disappoints in a mature book. Note 10 on 165 correctly quotes Musonius after Lutz, with a shortened title (her edition bears the subtitle *The Roman Socrates*) and as if it were a book of its own (for Gagnon states '*Musonius Rufus* [New Haven : Yale University Press, 1947]'), despite it being a mere paper (*Yale Classical Studies* 10, 1947, pp. 3-147) ; worth mentioning is that Lutz had no text-critical ambition, as she simply printed and translated the fragments after Hense's 1905 edition, whereas A. Jagu's 1979 translation and commentary, although it gives no Greek text, incorporates fresh suggestions and departs quite frequently from Hense, so should have been checked. Note 152 on p. 437 silently borrows from *OTP* the version of *Sibylline Oracle* 4, 24-34, with no indication that the last hemistich of v. 32 was left out — it is the epitome of bad scholarship, when one curtails a primary document, to fail to signify the reader that it has not been reproduced continuously, yet Gagnon cites the object of the sentence he is interested in (v. 24, with a difference in wording from his source : 'humankind' Gagnon, 'mankind' Collins, the point of which cannot be made out), then he paraphrases several tangential circumstances before resuming the quote (v. 24 sqq.) and omitting 'which are most horrible things'. Here a continuous, connected quote equipped with marks of ellipsis was necessary to keep things scientific — any mix of direct reporting and summary is awkward — and to let the reader know at a glance what was left out and what was quoted. The same note 152 proffers a slightly different dating for the *Didache* ('early second century') than the

one adocated p. 335 ('the end of the first century'), viz. the kind of contradiction which it is not very advisable to impose on laymen, while it revolves around the still controversial views that both this anonymous composition and Matthew's Gospel stem from the same tradition(s), with the former depending on the latter (*pro*, at least in the case of the sixteenth chapter of the *Didache*, e.g. V. Balabanski, *Eschatology in the Making. Mark, Matthew and the Didache* [Cambridge, 1997], pp. 180-205 ; *contra*, cf. A. Milavec, *The Didache. Faith, Hope, and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50-70 C.E.* [New York, 2003], pp. 695-739, for whom both were independant, with the *Didache*, Q source and *Gospel of Thomas* predating all the Gospels and being contemporary with Paul, or M. Slee, *The Church in Antioch in the First Century C.E.* [London, 2003], pp. 53-76, and, far less sucessfully, A. J. P. Garrow, *The Gospel of Matthew's Dependence on the Didache* [London & New York, 2004], pp. 161-243, who hold that Matthew reacted to, respectively, the traditions behind the *Didache* or the work itself). To add insult to injury, in the passages referred to above, Gagnon mentions Syria as its place of origin with utter confidence, a traditional stance in favor of which serious arguments for sure exist, yet one that later scholarship has been somewhat divided about ; read the take of J. K. Zangenber, 'Reconstructing the Social and Religious Milieu of the Didache : Observations and Possible Results', in H. van de Sandt and idem (edd.), *Matthew, James, and Didache. Three Related Documents in their Jewish and Christian Settings* (Atlanta, 2008), pp. 43-69 at 69, or J. Schwiebert, *Knowledge and the Coming Kingdom. The Didache's Last Meal and its Place in Early Christianity* (London, 2008), p. 13 note 32. Indeed, Syria was a region as large as it was culturally and religiously diverse — in favor of Antioch, see Slee, pp. 77-124 — and no less cogent a case has been built for an Egyptian origin except for the prayers in 9 and 10 (so A. Vööbus, *Liturgical Traditions in the Didache* [Stockholm, 1968], pp. 169-172 ; on Christian Egypt, cf. L. W. Barnard, *Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and Their Background* [New York, 1966], pp. 41-55, comparing J. C. Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas. Outlook and Background* [Tübingen, 1994], pp. 29-42, for a similar case). I find it incoherent, to say the least, that a scholar could be so very much concerned with assigning each of the texts he quotes to their proper timeframe or doctrinal milieu, while showing no care for the philological transparency of their interpretation and the value attached to them. In the light of such inaccuracies and of the particulars of Gagnon's control over his non-Biblical sources, it would have been preferable for him to make his own translation of each and every passage quoted, not out of the desire (so one hopes !) to bias them in favor of his arguments, but in an effort to produce renderings as scrupulous and fresh as possible — in so many words, he should have consulted these texts in their best critical edition(s) plus their most recent translation(s) and / or commentaries, if anything else, to produce discussions which, in their citations and parallels, shall reflect the philological age in which we live rather than the one of the predecessors that are drawn upon. Gagnon should also have followed, instead of making his own according to his prejudices, the piecemeal exegesis of these documents stabilised by their acknowledged experts, whose mastery over them far exceeds his own and whose brains were not addled by a disgust of all things homosexual. That way, fewer blunders would have found their way in his book, and the bare bones of his extra-Biblical materials would have been ideology-free. Alas, by replacing all patristic exegesis and the interpretation of all Classical snippets by the mere quoting of a translation, as if their gist was so self-showing, Gagnon furnishes proof enough that texts are nothing for him but props in his war of words against LBG T people and liberal interpreters. By so doing, he reveals the true colors of his monograph : an hollow libel by a scholar who claims to be an expert Grecist yet relies on the Loeb translations and comparable oldies with little regard for their putative obsolescence or weak quality.

APPENDIX 2 : ABBREVIATIONS

- AHW. : W. VON SODEN, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden, 1965-1981, 3 volumes
- ANET : J. B. PRITCHARD (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd edition, Princeton, 1969 (in all essentials, a reprint of the original edition [1950] with the inclusion of new materials ; no longer recommended)¹³⁸
- BAGD : W. BAUER, W. F. ARNDT, F. W. GINGRICH & F. W. DANKER, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Early Christian Literature*², Chicago, 1979¹³⁹
- CAD : *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Chicago & Gluckstadt, 1956-2010, 21 volumes in 26 tomes
- CAT : M. DIETRICH, O. LORETZ & J. SANMARTIN, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places (KTU : Second, Enlarged Edition)*, Münster, 1995
- CDA² : J. A. BLACK, A. R. GEORGE & N. POSTGATE, *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, 'Second (corrected) printing', Wiesbaden, 2000
- HALOT : L. KOEHLER, W. BAUMGARTNER & J. J. STAMM, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament. Translated and Edited under the Supervision of M. E. J. RICHARDSON*, 1994-2000, 5 volumes

¹³⁸ Pace D. E. Fleming's very defensive foreword to his chrestomathy from *ANET*, *ANEP* and other volumes of the kind : *The Ancient Near East. An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, 2011), pp. XXIII-XXVI. I frankly disagree with the complacency of his sentimental attachment (« beyond their intrinsic values, the translations (...) bear witness to a great period in the history of ancient Near Eastern studies ») and several statements are untrue to the point of obtuseness (« translations reflect a degree of conceptual and technical mastery that we do not easily match today » ; « so far as a translation may be more than the sum of its parts, it is still worth reading the work of these masters »). What strikes me as the right approach to the materials is the one taken by Hallo, *The Context of Scripture*, I, pp. XXIII-XXV.

¹³⁹ Attention should have been paid, at the eleventh hour, to the third, definitive edition (2000, siglum *BDAG*), since its definitions are often considerably extended on top of it incorporating additional words and a treasure-trove of new primary data ; that he did not, or could not, modernize all his references to *BGAD* automatically implies that *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* was dated in matters of NT lexicography as soon as it appeared. Worse yet, Gagnon never refers, but for an off-handed, blanket mention on p. 230 note 1, to J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non Literary Sources*, London, 1914-1929, 8 fascicles collected in one volume in 1952 (siglum *MM*), whose value is attested by the sheer number of Bible studies that still cite it (see further G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity, V Linguistic Essays* [North Ryde, N.S.W., 1989], pp. 83-87), nor to C. Spicq's *Lexique théologique du Nouveau Testament*, Paris, 1991, whose 1700 pages canvass his, generally splendid, *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire* (Göttingen, 1978-1982 — Horsley, pp. 68, 69, 75, for an appreciation) and which has been translated as long ago as 1994 (*Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3 vol. ; among the reviewers, A. Hultberg alone, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40, 1997, pp. 302-304, took so bleak a view of its semantics and philology). Serious as they are, these omissions would not necessarily warrant a verdict of linguistic frailty on the part of Gagnon if he were more cautious as well as less dogmatic in his dealings with the vocabulary of Masoretic Hebrew, LXX or NT Greek, Classical Greek and *koine* ; as it is not the case, he has to be branded an hurried and somewhat uncritical user of lexical theologies.

LÄ : W. HELCK, E. OTTO & W. WESTENDORF (edd.), *Lexicon der Ägyptologie*, Wiesbaden, 1975-1992, 6 volumes + 1 of index

LSJ : *A Greek-English Lexicon. Compiled by G. LIDDELL & R. SCOTT. Revised and Augmented Throughout by Sir H. STUART-JONES with the Assistance of R. MCKENZIE and the Co-operation of Many Scholars. With a Revised Supplement*, 1966 ('New (ninth) edition completed', 1940 ; the *Supplement*, edited by P. G. W. GLARE, first appeared in the 1968 reprint)

LXX : according to the context, either the Septuagint or its Greek

MAL : Middle Assyrian Law(s), in M. T. ROTH, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*² (Atlanta, 1997), pp. 153-194¹⁴⁰

NT : according to the context, either the New Testament or its Greek

TDOT : G. J. BOTTERWECK & H. RINGGREN (edd.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, 1977- , 15 volumes so far

¹⁴⁰ Not directly utilized by Gagnon in his relevant pages (45-47), despite it being the standard bilingual edition, cf. his note 3 on p. 45. He indeed goes to the length of copying MAL A 19-20 from Roth after Nissinen (!), translation to which he adds, in square brackets, the *ANET*'s discrepant version of key lexemes. This awkward protocol not only demonstrates Gagnon's lack of a sense of progress in Assyriology (he clearly has no idea that the *ANET* rests on ANE texts established prior to WWII and that nearly all of them were republished on a sounder basis in the following decades) ; it actually misleads readers in that Gagnon perpetuates bad equivalents of Middle Assyrian words as if these were genuine alternatives to the renderings of Roth. Thus, *a'īlu* (*amīlu*, *amēlu*) is not the KJV-sounding 'seignor', which in fact conveys its basic meaning in Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian, but merely '(free) man' ; the sharply concise wordings of MAL A 19 *mā ittinikkuš* ~ *mā ittinikkuka* are better rendered 'everyone has sex with him' / 'everyone has sex with you' (Roth in her first edition ; yet more pointed, 'everyone sodomizes him ~ you' in the second edition) than 'people have lain repeatedly with him ~ you' (*ANET*), for we have here iterative participles of the verb *nāku* / *niāku* predicated of an *a'īlu* as a slander, viz. a sex crime, an act of genital violence heaped on him ; *tappā'u* in MAL A 19 is somewhat unlikely to signify 'neighbor' (so *ANET*) instead of 'equal, social peer, fellow' ('comrade', Roth in both editions, downplays things a bit), as this specific sense normally stems from the context, viz. notions of geographical vicinity (for example, CAD T [2006], p. 188, cites MAL B 8 (iv 11-12) *šumma a'īlu taḫūma rabia ša tappā'īšu ussammeḥ*, which it translates 'if a man incorporates (into his own field) a large tract of his neighbor's', contrast Roth², pp. 178-179, who sticks to 'comrade') or some such indication ; last but not least, the bodily penalty expressed by MAL 18-19 *igaddimūš*, verbatim : 'he shall be cut off', « which is possibly expulsion from the rights and privileges, whether of property or of religion, which this relationship of 'comradeship' or 'fellowship' confers on him » (G. R. Driver and J. C. Miles, *The Assyrian Laws. Edited with Translation and Commentary* [Oxford, 1935], p. 70), Roth takes to mean the suppression of the *a'īlu*'s hair or beard in accordance with the *opinio communis* (CAD G [1956], p. 8 : « the parallel in C(ode of) H(ammurabi) § 172 (...) suggests that *gadāmu* denotes a defamatory punishment rather than castration (Meek in *ANET* 181) ») so, *pace* CDA², p. 87 'to cut off (...), part of body, as punishment', there is not a shred of evidence for the 'better : they shall castrate him' taken over by Gagnon, MAL A 20 being an altogether different case — with castration explicit (*ana ša rēšēn utarruš*, 'they shall make him an eunuch [*ša rēšēn*]', as in A 15 *ana ša rēšēn utār* ; read Driver-Miles, p. 463). If basic ignorance of the Akkadian language and of the rules of the craft by Gagnon is ruled out to explain such howlers, then one is left at one's own devices to try and understand why he felt it necessary or relevant to bracket the *ANET* variant when it was patently perverse.