Introduction

The present study is an attempt to reconstruct the way in which male homosexual behavior and feelings were conceived and evaluated in the Arab-Islamic Middle East between 1500 and 1800, the centuries immediately preceding the beginnings of modernization and westernization in the nineteenth century. My central contention is that Arab-Islamic culture on the eve of modernity lacked the concept of “homosexuality,” and that writings from the period do not evince the same attitude toward all aspects of what we might be inclined to call homosexuality today. An appreciation of this point is crucial to understanding attitudes toward homosexuality in the premodern Arab-Islamic world.

Tolerance of Homosexuality?

The Arabic literature of the early Ottoman period (1516–1798) is replete with casual and sometimes sympathetic references to homosexual love. Biographical dictionaries, poetic anthologies, and belletristic works on profane love relate, usually without any hint of disapproval, the pederastic love affairs of prominent poets, religious scholars, and political notables. Much if not most of the extant love poetry of the period is pederastic in tone, portraying an adult male poet’s passionate love for a teenage boy. A popular topic amongst poets and belletrists was whether beardless or downy-cheeked youths were more appropriate objects of passionate love. The general picture suggested by such passages is reinforced by European travel accounts of the period. Many travelers were of course silent on the issue, but several noted, usually with astonishment or disgust, that local men openly flaunted their amorous feelings for boys.¹ For example, the Englishman Joseph Pitts, a sailor who was a captured and sold into slavery at Algiers in 1678, to escape fifteen years later, noted:

This horrible sin of Sodomy is so far from being punish’d amongst them, that it is part of their ordinary Discourse to boast of their detestable Actions of that
kind. ’Tis common for Men there [Algiers] to fall in Love with Boys, as ’tis here in England to be in Love with Women.2

The French traveler C. S. Sonnini, who visited Egypt between 1777 and 1780, made a similar observation:

The passion contrary to nature . . . the inconceivable appetite which dishonored the Greeks and Persians of antiquity, constitute the delight, or, to use a juster term, the infamy of the Egyptians. It is not for the women that their amorous ditties are composed: it is not on them that tender caresses are lavished; far different objects inflame them.3

To be sure, such testimony from often bigoted travelers should be treated with caution.4 However, their claims receive support from the fact that Muslim travelers who “rediscovered Europe” in the first half of the nineteenth century found it noteworthy that the men there did not court or eulogize male youths. For example, the Moroccan scholar Muḥammad al-Ṣaffār, who visited Paris in 1845–46, wrote:

Flirtation, romance, and courtship for them take place only with women, for they are not inclined to boys or young men. Rather, that is extremely disgraceful to them.5

The Egyptian scholar Rifā’ah al-Ṭaḥtāwī, who was in Paris between 1826 and 1831, noted:

Amongst the laudable traits of their character, similar really to those of the Bedouin [ʿarab], is their not being inclined toward loving male youths and eulogizing them in poetry, for this is something unmentionable for them and contrary to their nature and morals. One of the positive aspects of their language and poetry is that it does not permit the saying of love poetry of someone of the same sex. Thus, in the French language a man cannot say: I loved a youth (ghulām), for that would be an unacceptable and awkward wording. Therefore if one of them translates one of our books he avoids this by saying in the translation: I loved a young female (ghulāmah) or a person (ḏāṭān).6

The surprise expressed by Saffār and Ṭaḥtāwī suggests that they came from societies in which “flirtation, romance, and courtship” with boys was quite familiar, as was composing “amorous ditties” for male youths.

It is perhaps tempting to view such passages as evidence of a widespread tolerance of homosexuality or—to be more precise—pederasty in the pre-nineteenth-century Islamic world. Such an interpretation has been advanced
by modern historians. In his pioneering comparative study Sexual Variance in Society and History (1976), Vern L. Bullough propounded the view that Islam, in contrast to Christianity, is a “sex-positive” religion, and that homosexuality was widely tolerated in medieval Muslim societies. John Boswell, in his Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality (1980), similarly contrasted an increasingly homophobic cultural climate in medieval Europe with what he saw as widespread tolerance for homosexuality in Muslim Spain. Specialists in Arab-Islamic history have made similar, if more nuanced, claims. For instance, Marshall Hodgson, in his influential The Venture of Islam, wrote that in medieval Islamic civilization,

\[ \text{despite strong Shar'i [i.e., Islamic legal] disapproval, the sexual relations of a mature man with a subordinate youth were so readily accepted in upper-class circles that there was often little or no effort to conceal their existence . . . The fashion entered poetry, especially the Persian.} \]

Bernard Lewis made the same point in his recent Music from a Distant Drum:

Homosexuality is condemned and forbidden by the holy law of Islam, but there are times and places in Islamic history when the ban on homosexual love seems no stronger than the ban on adultery in, say, Renaissance Italy or seventeenth-century France. Some [classical Arabic, Persian, and Turkish] poems are openly homosexual; some poets, in their collected poems, even have separate sections for love poems addressed to males and females.

Both Hodgson and Lewis suggest that what was cultivated openly in society is precisely that which Islamic law prohibited. As I hope to make clear in the course of this study, this assumption is questionable. What Islamic law prohibits is sexual intercourse between men, especially anal intercourse. It is hardly credible to suggest that such illicit intercourse was carried out in public. What unfolded in public was presumably such things as courting and expressions of passionate love. It may seem natural for modern historians to gloss over the distinction between committing sodomy and expressing passionate love for a youth, and to describe both activities as manifestations of “homosexuality.” But this only goes to show that the term is anachronistic and unhelpful in this particular context. Islamic religious scholars of the period were committed to the precept that sodomy (liwāt) was one of the most abominable sins a man could commit. However, many of them clearly did not believe that falling in love with a boy or expressing this love in verse was therefore also illicit. Indeed, many prominent religious scholars indulged openly in such activity. The example that follows is a case in point.

The Egyptian scholar ʿAbdallah al-Shabrāwī (d. 1758) was for over thirty
year Rector (Shaykh) of the Azhar college in Cairo, perhaps the most prestigious Islamic college in the Arabic-speaking world. He was also an accomplished poet, and his collected poetry (Dīwān) was, according to a scholar writing two generations later, “well known among people.” The Dīwān consists overwhelmingly of love poetry, much of which clearly depicts a young male beloved. An example is the following poem, in which the gender of the beloved is indicated both by the allusion to beard-down in the third verse, and more clearly by the last verse, which reveals the beloved’s name to be Ibrāhīm:

My lord, by Him who has granted you comeliness, splendor and beauty. And who in your bewitching eyes has permitted lovers some licit magic. And who has bestowed on your cheeks that thing which lovers have disputed at such length.

Grant nearness to a lover for whom infatuation is a strict duty and forgetfulness is impossible.

O gazelle! No! You are even more exalted, whose neck puts the gazelle to shame.

O namesake of al-Khalīl [the epithet of the Prophet Ibrāhīm], you are cold and yet set my heart ablaze.

Another poem commemorates the growth of beard-down (‘idhār) on the cheeks of an Ibrāhīm in the year 1110 of the Muslim era (i.e., 1698–99 CE). The poem ends with the following words, containing the date of composition in letter-code: “The hill flowers delight on the cheeks of Ibrāhīm.” Yet another poem is introduced by the poet himself with the following words: “I also said a love poem of a youth (qultu mutaghazzilan fī shāb) who studied with me the sciences of language, addressing him dallyingly.”

It is difficult to believe that Shabrawī was openly committing a cardinal sin in composing such poetry. Of course, a religious scholar may sometimes fail to live up to the principles he preaches. Yet in such cases one would expect some discretion, not a public flaunting of the transgression. It is much more likely that Shabrawī simply did not believe that what he was doing fell into the same category as the sodomy that was so strictly prohibited by Islamic law. Indeed, the love poetry of the Dīwān repeatedly insists on the chaste nature of the poet’s affection: “he [i.e., the poet] has no wish for that which is prohibited”; “I have chastity by natural disposition, not affectation”; “my conscience desists from sin.”

Shabrawī seems not to have had an attitude toward “homosexuality” at all, but apparently drew a central distinction between, on the one hand, falling ardently in love with a boy and expressing this
love in verse and, on the other hand, committing sodomy with a boy. Until quite recently, it was common in Europe to tolerate or even value ardent love between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman but to condemn pre-marital sex. This combination of attitudes is only contradictory if one wrong-headedly insists on interpreting the coexisting judgments as expressions of both tolerance and intolerance of “heterosexuality.”

Constructionism and Essentialism

The assumption that it is unproblematic to speak of either tolerance or intolerance of homosexuality in the premodern Middle East would seem to derive from the assumption that homosexuality is a self-evident fact about the human world to which a particular culture reacts with a certain degree of tolerance or repression. From this perspective, writing the history of homosexuality is seen as analogous to writing, say, the history of women. One assumes that the concept “homosexual,” like the concept “woman,” is shared across historical periods, and that what varies and may be investigated historically is merely the changing cultural (popular, scientific, legal, etc.) attitude toward such people. In contrast to this “essentialist” view, a number of anthropologists, sociologists, and historians, inspired in the main by the late French philosopher Michel Foucault, have recently emphasized the “constructed,” or historically conditioned, nature of our modern sexual categories. They claim that the concept of homosexuality (and heterosexuality) was developed in Europe in the late nineteenth century, and that though its meaning may overlap with earlier concepts such as “sodomite” or “invert,” it is not, strictly speaking, synonymous with these. For example, Foucault stressed that the term “sodomite” applied to the perpetrator of an act; someone who was tempted to commit sodomy but refrained out of moral or religious considerations was thus not a sodomite. By contrast, the category “homosexual” would include someone who has the inclination, even if it is not translated into action. On this account, homosexuality is no more a synonym for sodomy than heterosexuality is equivalent to fornication.

Foucault’s “constructionist” claim has inspired much recent work in the history of homosexuality, but it has also provoked sometimes heated “essentialist” rejoinders. It is generally acknowledged that the term “homosexualität” was coined in the late 1860s by the Austro-Hungarian writer Karl Maria Kertbeny, and that the first English equivalent first appeared in print some twenty years later. “Essentialists” insist that though the term “homosexuality” was new, the concept was not. Rejecting Foucault’s claim of
conceptual discontinuity, they believe that the new term corresponds in meaning to earlier terms such as the medieval Latin *sodomia* or the classical Arabic *liwāt*.

The adjudication of the dispute between constructionists and essentialists should of course be based on a careful investigation of the historical evidence. To avoid prejudging the issue, close attention will have to be paid to the pre-modern—in this case Arabic—terms and phrases used in various contexts to designate acts and actors that we would be inclined to call “homosexual.” Only then will it be possible to determine whether such terms and phrases are equivalent in meaning to the English term “homosexual.” Unfortunately, modern scholars are often not so careful. For instance, one recent author translates the Arabic medical term *ubnāh* as “homosexuality,” even though he himself acknowledges that the term only applied to the male who desired to be anally penetrated. A man who regularly anally penetrated other men was not thought to have *ubnāh* but would presumably be deemed a “homosexual” today. The two terms are simply not synonymous. Recent general histories of homosexuality find a “disparity” between the proclaimed ideals and actual behavior of some Islamic scholars who, on the one hand, condemned “homosexuality” but, on the other, wrote “strongly homoerotic poetry.” What Islamic scholars condemned was not “homosexuality” but *liwāt*, that is, anal intercourse between men. Writing a love poem of a male youth would simply not fall under the juridical concept of *liwāt*.

What such examples show is that care should be taken before translating as “homosexual” any Arabic term attested in the texts. The possibility at issue is precisely whether pre-nineteenth-century Arab-Islamic culture lacked the concept of homosexuality altogether, and operated instead with a set of concepts (like *ubnāh* or *liwāt*) each of which pick out some of the acts and actors we might call “homosexual” but which were simply not seen as instances of one overarching phenomenon. In the course of this study I hope to show that this was indeed the case. I argue that distinctions not captured by the concept of “homosexuality” were all-important from the perspective of the culture of the period. One such distinction is that between the “active” and the “passive” partner in a homosexual encounter—these were typically not conceptualized or evaluated in the same way. Another distinction is that between passionate infatuation (*išhq*) and sexual lust—emphasizing this distinction was important for those who would argue for the religious permissibility of the passionate love of boys. A third distinction centers on exactly what sexual acts were involved—Islamic law prescribed severe corporal or capital punishment for anal intercourse between men, but regarded, say, kissing, fondling, or non-anal intercourse as less serious transgressions.

6 INTRODUCTION
The State of the Field

Much of what has been written on homosexuality in Arab-Islamic civilization shirks the conceptual point discussed in the previous section. Proceeding on the basis of an unquestioned “essentialist” assumption, many historians have assumed that their task is to point out the extent to which “pederasty” or “homosexuality” was practiced or tolerated, and perhaps to offer explanations of this phenomenon. The tendency is very much in evidence already in Sir Richard Burton’s remarks on “Pederasty” in the “Terminal Essay” to his translation of *The Arabian Nights* in 1886. Writing before the term “homosexuality” was introduced into the English language, Burton still assumed that he was faced with one phenomenon, “pederasty,” which he claimed was widespread in the Islamic world and regarded as at worst a peccadillo. He believed that this was due to the “blending of masculine and feminine temperaments” in the region.

More recent commentators often proceed in the same fashion. The article “Liwaṭ” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, published exactly one hundred years after Burton’s essay, notes that homosexuality was prohibited by Islamic law but nevertheless widely practiced and tolerated in Islamic history after the eighth century. This is traced back to the “corruption of morals” by luxury and the “rapid process of acculturation” following in the wake of the Islamic conquest of the Middle East. Similarly, one historian has sought to explain what he believed to be widespread pederasty or homosexuality in Arab-Islamic civilization by invoking supposedly “oversatiated” heterosexual appetites among the upper classes of society. At least one other historian has advanced the exact opposite explanation: widespread homosexuality was supposedly caused by gender segregation and the resulting frustration of heterosexual appetites. One may suspect that such “explanations” reveal very little besides the moral prejudices of those who offer them, and their sense of what stands in need of explanation and what does not. More crucially, however, such studies do not seem to suspect that the culture under discussion may not have shared our concept of homosexuality, and may thus have seen as unrelated certain phenomena that we are inclined to conflate.

A broadly “constructionist” approach to the issue of homosexuality in Arab-Islamic history has recently been suggested by writers such as Arno Schmitt, Everett Rowson, and Thomas Bauer. They emphasize that the modern concept of homosexuality was absent from premodern Arab-Islamic culture, which, like classical Greek and Roman culture, tended to categorize and evaluate people according to whether they were active or passive in a sexual relation, and not according to the gender of their partners. This study offers some support for their claim, but argues that the distinction between
active and passive was merely one of several distinctions that are not captured by the modern concept of homosexuality but are nevertheless crucial to understanding the attitudes underlying the texts that have come down to us. An exclusive emphasis on the distinction between active and passive will not allow us to understand the attitude of the majority of writers of the period who, like ‘Abdallāh al-Shabrāwī, did not have a single attitude even toward “active” homosexuality, but held the distinction between, for example, passionate infatuation and lust, or between passionate kissing and anal intercourse, to be important.

The secondary literature on attitudes toward homosexuality in Arab-Islamic civilization consists overwhelmingly of brief discussions that try to encompass the entire geographic and historical span of this civilization. Even the few studies that focus on a text or a selection of thematically related texts usually try to supply a context in the form of general remarks about homosexuality in Arab-Islamic civilization. Such general discussions or remarks are based on a highly selective use of sources spanning many centuries and different geographic regions. All too often, sweeping claims are based on no more than a handful of sources, and sometimes even a single text. For instance, in a recent article which displays an admirable awareness of the need to avoid anachronism when discussing attitudes toward homosexuality in Arab-Islamic culture, J. T. Monroe nevertheless states that “Islamic jurisprudence” regards homosexual attraction to be “entirely normal and natural,” in sharp contrast to “Christianity,” which holds that such attraction is a “pathological character defect.” The claim is supported by a single statement by a twelfth-century Islamic scholar to the effect that a man who claims that he can gaze at a handsome beardless youth without feeling lust is lying. Some qualified version of Monroe’s claim may perhaps be defensible, but it is surely desirable to consider both the context of such a statement and a much larger number of texts before putting forward such a general claim.

The existing secondary literature also suffers from another kind of selectivity. It tends to focus on evidence from one or two particular genres, for instance poetry or juridical texts or medical works. There has as yet been no sustained effort to investigate the evidence from a whole range of genres and bring out their interrelations. This may be due to the fact that modern scholars tend to specialize in one particular field, such as Middle Eastern history or Arabic poetry or Islamic law or Sufism, and are understandably reluctant to venture beyond it. However, such an “interdisciplinary” approach is necessary. The textual evidence relevant to the study of attitudes toward homosexuality in Arab-Islamic history straddles such genres as biographical.
dictionaries, Islamic law, commentaries on the Qur’an, belles-lettres, Sufism, and medicine.

The source material that is relevant if one wishes to survey attitudes in Islamic, or even just Arab-Islamic, civilization from the seventh to the twentieth century is dauntingly large. A study that is less selective with regard to the amount and the genres of textual evidence it takes into account will also be a study that has a somewhat reduced geographic and temporal scope. In the present study I focus on the Arabic-speaking parts of the Ottoman Empire from the early sixteenth to the early nineteenth century. The nineteenth century saw the beginning of the encroachment of Western values and ideas upon the region. As I will briefly discuss in my conclusion, the encounter with European Victorian morality was to have profound effects on local attitudes toward what came to be called “sexual inversion” or “sexual perversion” (ṣhubudh jinsi). The present work should hopefully set the stage for a study of this profound change.

I should perhaps add that the imposed geographic and temporal limits do not imply any commitment on my part to the uniqueness of attitudes in that area and period. However, I also do not want to claim that each and every point I make will be valid for earlier periods of Arab-Islamic history. For instance, the love poetry of the period I study predominantly portrayed a chaste and unreciprocated love for a person whose gender is usually either indeterminate or male. This may or may not be true of earlier periods of Arabic history. Also, Islamic scholars of the period I study typically deemed composing love poetry of beardless youths religiously permissible. Again, this may or may not have been true of earlier periods. In general, it seems to me that the best approach to recovering the history of attitudes toward homosexuality in Arab-Islamic civilization is to conduct a series of more narrowly defined studies. Only then will the exact balance of continuity and change between various periods and regions become clear.

Overview of the Present Study

The present study is conceived as a work of cultural and intellectual history. The focus will not be on homosexual behavior in the past, but on how such behavior was perceived and represented. I should perhaps emphasize this point. In particular, I do not wish to suggest that the sexual behavior of individuals must conform in a straightforward way to the dominant sexual categories or concepts used in their society. For example, I shall be arguing that biographical and bawdy works from the period tend to distinguish conceptually
between the active pederast and the effeminate pathic. This need not imply that individuals always acted in ways that fit neatly with this distinction. By the same token, it might be possible to establish that in the dominant discourse of the modern West, people tend to be classified according to the gender of their preferred sexual partners, and not according to their preferred role (insertive or receptive) in sexual intercourse. Even if this is the case, it does not follow that certain individuals do not act in ways that confound the dominant categorization—for example, pursuing both women and teenage boys, but never accepting to play the “receptive” role. On the other hand, it does not seem plausible to think of the distinction between representations and behavior as a rigid dichotomy, and to maintain that the former is completely unresponsive to the latter and the latter completely uninfluenced by the former. I therefore think that much of what I have to say about dominant perceptions will also reveal something about broad behavioral patterns.

The culture I shall be studying is the one shared by urban, literate Muslim men in the Arabic-speaking parts of the Ottoman Empire between 1500 and 1800. The textual evidence that I consider was almost invariably written in urban centers such as Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo, Mosul, Baghdad, Mecca, and Medina. By textual evidence I mean primarily Arabic literary sources such as chronicles, biographical dictionaries, belletristic works in verse and prose, and Islamic mystical and legal works. This will inevitably imply a bias toward the attitudes and values of the learned male elite, by whom and for whom such works were written. One obviously cannot assume that such values and attitudes can without further ado be thought to apply to other social groups. On the other hand, there would seem to be positive reasons for not supposing that the main cultural strands I shall discuss were narrowly confined to the elite. The cultural significance given to the distinction between active and passive partners was hardly an elite phenomenon. It is still apparent today amongst all social classes in the Middle East. The courting of boys by adult men also does not seem to have been an elite phenomenon. The literary sources suggest that men of non-elite status—bakers, tailors, street-sellers, and “rabble” attending the Saints Fairs of Egypt—could behave likewise. There is also no reason to believe that acceptance of the authority of Islamic law—even if one occasionally failed to live up to all the demands of this authority—was confined to the sociopolitical elite. The attitudes I discuss may have been more significantly correlated with gender than with social class. Unfortunately the literary sources of the period give almost no information on female attitudes to love and sex.

If the focus on the learned male elite seems somewhat narrow, speaking of
the Arab-Islamic part of the Ottoman Empire between 1500 and 1800 could appear too broad. It might reasonably be asked whether it is legitimate to assume that there was no significant evolution and/or regional differences in attitudes within the geographic and temporal boundaries of this study. I believe not, and my approach will be essentially systematic rather than diachronic. I should emphasize that I have not started by assuming uniformity within the geographic and temporal scope of my study. The supposition that the culture of the literate classes in the period and area under consideration displayed an overall stability in time and uniformity from city to city is one that I believe is largely substantiated by the textual evidence. This does not preclude the existence of individual differences in outlook, but it is not possible to correlate such differences with period or region; they exist equally between two individuals of the same generation or city. In fact, the geographic and temporal continuity almost certainly extends beyond the limits of this study. I would expect that many of the points I make (though probably not all) are valid for Turkey and Persia between 1500 and 1800, as well as for the Arab-Islamic world in the Abbasid and Mamluk periods (750–1516).

The questions raised concerning the scope of the present study are certainly legitimate, especially given the above-mentioned tendency to make undifferentiated statements about attitudes in “Islam” or “Islamic civilization.” However, a justified suspicion of this approach can easily lead to an overemphasis on the differences between periods, regions, or social groups. Current discussions of attitudes toward homosexuality in Arab-Islamic history often present “religious scholars” and “Sufis” and “poets” and “the upper classes” as distinct groups with distinct and competing mentalities and values. However, this is a caricature of social reality. At least in the period under consideration, a substantial number of individuals were all of these things at once. A person might be an Islamic religious jurist, and as such committed to the principles of Islamic law. However, being an Islamic religious jurist would almost certainly be one of several social roles he assumed. The same individual would also think of himself as a “man,” as opposed to a woman or a child or an “effeminate” man. This social role carried with it certain demands on behavior that were independent of, and sometimes in tension with, the demands of Islamic law. Similarly, the same individual might also think of himself as a “refined” and “urbane” individual, in contrast to “rustic” and “coarse” common people, peasants, and nomads. This again involved certain expectations as to behavior, taste, and demeanor, expectations that had little or nothing to do with religion. In other words, a literate, urban male Muslim would be under the influence of distinct cultural strands. These cultural
strands were independent of each other, and embodied values and assumptions that were potentially or actually in tension with each other. A study that ignores this fact will fail to do justice to this complex reality.

Rather than trying to recover attitudes that were supposedly characteristic of particular social groups, I will focus on distinct but coexisting strands in the culture of the urban elite. In particular, I will focus on three cultural strands that were relevant to perceptions and evaluations of what we might be inclined to call homosexual behavior or sentiments. In the first chapter of the study, I will present one cultural strand according to which the “active” or “insertive” role in sexual intercourse was uniquely appropriate to a man, and the “passive” or “receptive” role was uniquely appropriate to a woman. A man who willingly assumed the latter role was violating conventional gender roles, and was often stereotyped as effeminate and thought to suffer from an abnormal or pathological condition. However, a man who sought to have “active” or “insertive” intercourse with a beardless male youth was not violating gender roles, nor was he stereotyped in the same way. In the second chapter, I will present another cultural strand, one which valued passionate love and a general aesthetic sensibility toward human beauty in the form of women or beardless youths. Such a sensibility was thought to be the hallmark of urbane and refined people, and to lie at the root of evocative love poetry. In some Islamic mystical circles, such an aestheticist regard for beautiful women or handsome youths was given a metaphysical dimension, and held to be a means of personally experiencing the overwhelming beauty of God. In the third chapter, I discuss the cultural strand that receives expression in Islamic law, and the related disciplines of commentaries on the Qur’an and on the canonical sayings (hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad. This strand perceived sexual relations between men as a transgression of Holy Law, though according to most schools of law only anal intercourse was deemed a cardinal sin. Anything that could be perceived to be the first step along the slippery slope to such transgressions, such as gazing at beardless youths or being alone with them, became deeply problematic. However, jurists were also committed to the principle that one ought not prohibit what God has made licit, or think ill of one’s fellow Muslims, and the efforts of especially zealous jurists to prohibit outright such “preliminaries” of sodomy met with resistance from other jurists. Most jurists did not deem that a man’s passionate love of a youth was in itself a sin, and permitted the composition of pederastic love poetry.