

LESBIANTIQUITY

ISSUE 25

c. 160–190 AD / July 2024 AD



LUCIAN
LOUKIANOS

HETAIRAS
IN BED WITH
BUZZ-CUT (WO)MEN

LESBIANTIQUITY © Georgina Barker (Portknockie: Sapphizdat, 2024)

Lucian translation, introduction, and notes © Cat Lambert & Georgina Barker 2024

Greek text from: M. D. Macleod, ed., *Lucian*, vol. VII (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1961)

Back cover art: 'Root & Branch Tree' © Emily Setzer 2024

THE TRANSLATORS

Professor Cat Lambert: Dialogue 5

I am an Assistant Professor of Classics at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. My research and teaching explore Latin and Greek literature through the lenses of book history, gender and sexuality studies, and queer theory. Recent publications of mine include essays on the ancient entomological bookworm and the poet C. P. Cavafy's queer reworkings of classical antiquity.



Dr Georgina Barker: Dialogue 12

I am the inventor of the Root & Branch translation method, which I developed to highlight the queerness of selected classical texts, drawing on my experience as a translator from Russian. I am the author of *SPQR in the USSR: Elena Shvarts's Classical Antiquity*, and the compiler and director of the verbatim play *Princess Dashkova, the Woman Who Shook the World*. I live in Scotland with my wife and my parrot.



ΛΟΥΚΙΑΝΟΣ Ὁ ΣΑΜΟΣΑΤΕΥΣ

Lucian (or Loukianos, c. 125–180 CE) of Samosata in Syria is one of the most innovative, enigmatic, and entertaining writers of Greek literature in the Roman imperial period. Regarding Lucian as a historical subject we can be sure of nothing: we reconstruct his biography from the masks of his satiric narrators and characters at our own risk.

While hugely popular during the Renaissance, Lucian fell out of scholarly favor around the turn of the twentieth century, largely owing to general scorn towards ‘post-classical’ Greek literature as overly derivative and unoriginal. And yet, Lucian’s writing itself persistently challenges aesthetic notions of original and copy and a narrow privileging of the classical, particularly through his ludic reworkings of Plato.

Lucian’s fifth *Dialogue of the Courtesans* is a riff on Plato’s *Symposium*, a conversation between two men that recounts philosophical discourses on love (erōs) delivered at an elite, all-male drinking party. Lucian, however, centers perspectives and topics excluded from or marginal to Platonic philosophical discourse: while Plato’s *Symposium* elevates male homoeroticism (specifically pederastic relations) over other forms of desire (both heterosexual and female homoeroticism), in Lucian’s *Dialogue*, two female courtesans discuss an intoxicating night of discourse/intercourse at a drinking party with the following participants: the courtesan Leaina; Demonassa, a woman from Corinth; and Megilla/os, a wealthy person from Lesbos. In the framing conversation, Megilla/os is gendered as a woman, Megilla. But during the drinking party itself, Megilla/os reveals to Leaina that they call themselves Megillos, that Demonassa is their wife, and that they were born female but are ‘entirely a man’.

Neither the courtesans nor contemporary scholars are quite sure what to make of Megilla/os's gendered embodiment. In her recent book on female homosexuality in classical antiquity, Sandra Boehringer declares that this text is unique because it is the only one of Lucian's 15 *Dialogues of the Courtesans* to represent the fulfillment of sexual pleasure, and it is 'a dialogue without men'.¹ What would Megilla/os say to this (or their wife, Demonassa)? Perhaps we might honor Megilla/os's shifting gendered embodiment through the hermeneutic of trans, as Jen Manion recently has done in *Female Husbands: A Trans History*. In Manion's words, '[t]o say someone "transed" or was "transing" gender signifies a process or practice without claiming to understand what it meant to that person or asserting any kind of fixed identity on them'.² Megilla/os certainly transcends any attempt to fit them into traditional, cultural paradigms of gender and sexuality, resulting in a subversion of typical perspectives that runs true to the hybrid aesthetics of Lucianic form.

There is a sequel, of sorts, to Leaina, Megilla/os, and Demonassa's threesome – the twelfth *Dialogue of the Courtesans*. Its threesome is more of an implied love triangle between the three speakers, Ioessa, her male lover/client Lusias, and her female friend Puthias. Lusias has caught Ioessa in bed with Puthias, who Lusias thinks was a man, due to her shaved head. This key connection with *Dialogue 5* (along with some other hints) leads Lucian's readers to suspect lesbian sex even when the two women laugh off Lusias's accusation – as Boehringer expertly diagnoses: 'The explanation [Ioessa] gives Lysias makes sense, but the audience knows only what Ioessa wants her lover to hear. After what Leaina has revealed to Clonarium, Lucian's audience is alerted: there was indeed no man in Ioessa's bed, but that does not mean she has not cheated on Lysias.'³

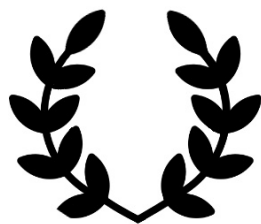
¹ Boehringer (2021) p. 339.

² Manion (2020) p. 11.

³ Boehringer (2015) p. 267 n. 52.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blondell, Ruby, & Sandra Boehringer. 2014. 'Revenge of the *Hetairistria*'. *Arethusa* 47.2: 231–264.
- Boehringer, Sandra. 2015. 'The Illusion of Sexual Identity in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 5', in *Ancient Sex: New Essays*, Ruby Blondell & Kirk Ormand, eds. Ohio. 253–284.
- Boehringer, Sandra. 2021. *Female Homosexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome*, translated by Anna Preger. Routledge.
- CGL: *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*. James Diggle et al., eds. 2021. Cambridge.
- Gilhuly, Kate. 2006. 'The Phallic Lesbian: Philosophy, Comedy, and Social Inversion in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*', in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, C. A. Faraone & L. K. McClure, eds. Madison. 274–291.
- Gilhuly, Kate. 2015. 'Lesbians Are Not From Lesbos', in *Ancient Sex: New Essays*, Ruby Blondell & Kirk Ormand, eds. Ohio. 143–176.
- Haley, Shelley P. 2002. 'Lucian's "Leaina and Clonarion": Voyeurism or a Challenge to Assumptions?' in *Among Women: From the Homosocial to the Homoerotic in the Ancient World*, N. S. Rabinowitz & L. Auanger, eds. Austin. 286–303.
- Hayes, Evan, & Stephen Nimis, eds. 2015. *Lucian's Dialogues of the Courtesans: An Intermediate Greek Reader*. Oxford.
- Halperin, David. 2002. *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*. Chicago.
- Macleod, M. D., ed. 1961. *Lucian*, vol. VII. Cambridge, MA; London.
- Manion, Jen. 2020. *Female Husbands: A Trans History*. Cambridge.





ROOT & BRANCH READING GUIDE

Our translations branch out to explore
a variety of options for the text:
any variants in the original <Greek
Latin> texts
and the various possible meanings in English.

Our translations are rooted in the words
of the original text, replicating when possible
word order, root meanings of words, and
grammatical gender $\left(\begin{matrix} [n] \\ [f] \\ [m] \end{matrix} \right)$ of words about people.

You, the reader, will choose which branches you prefer to follow.

DIALOGUE OF THE COURTESANS 5

KLONARION AND LEAINA

KLONARION

◁Strange
Queer ▷ things about you we've been hearing, o Leaina, that the Lesbian Megilla, the rich one [f], is in love with you like a man, and that you ◁spend time together
have sex ▷, doing who knows what with each other. What's this? You're blushing? Come on, tell me if this stuff is true.

LEAINA

It's true, o Klonarion: but I'm ashamed, for it's something unusual.



ΚΛΩΝΑΡΙΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΛΕΑΙΝΑ

ΚΛΩΝΑΡΙΟΝ

Καινὰ περὶ σοῦ ἀκούομεν, ὦ Λέαινα, τὴν Λεσβίαν Μέγιλλαν τὴν πλουσίαν ἐρᾶν σου ὥσπερ ἄνδρα καὶ συνεῖναι ὑμᾶς οὐκ οἶδ' ὃ τι ποιοῦσας μετ' ἀλλήλων. τί τοῦτο; ἡρυθρίασας; ἀλλ' εἶπε εἰ ἀληθὴ ταῦτά ἐστιν.

ΛΕΑΙΝΑ

Ἀληθῆ, ὦ Κλωνάριον· αἰσχύνομαι δέ, ἀλλόκοτον γάρ τί ἐστι.

NOTES

- *Leaina*: the name literally means 'lioness,' and is a common name for courtesans. Lucian may have chosen her name because a Leaina appears in the story told by Pausanias in Plato's *Symposium* (182b–c) about Harmodios and Aristogeiton: after Leaina was tortured and killed by the tyrant Hippias, the Athenians honored her by erecting a bronze statue of a lioness with its tongue cut out, symbolizing her refusal to reveal information about the tyrannicides' plot (Leaina's silence under questioning is important in this dialogue). Or Lucian may have chosen her name for its sexual connotations: the word is used by Aristophanes to mean a 'crouching' sex position (CGL p. 869).

- *Klonarion*: her name means 'Twig' (the diminutive form of κλών, 'branch') (Hayes & Nimis 2015 p. 125).

KLONARION *Strange/Queer things*: the adjective *kaina* is a buzzword in the literary aesthetics and fictive discourse of Lucian's time: it ranges in meaning from 'new', 'fresh' to 'strange', 'without precedent', 'novel'.

K Lesbian: Lesbos was the birthplace of the lyric poet Sappho, and more generally a place associated with erotic creativity and female luxury and excess (Halperin 2002 pp. 51–2).

K Megilla: her name means 'Squinting Great One' (Hayes & Nimis 2015 p. 128). It has Platonic significance as the feminine form of the Spartan interlocutor in Plato's *Laws*, Megillos (see Gilhuly 2006 pp. 279–81); it also has lesbian significance, as Megillos is presumed (by Plato's speaker) to represent homosexuality (both male and female).

K spend time together / have sex: this is a play on the ambiguity of the verb *suneinai*, which means both 'to keep company with' and, euphemistically, 'to have intercourse with'.

KLONARION

By the child-rearing < one [f]
[goddess] >, what is with this < situation
activity > ?
What does the woman want? What do you even do when
< you're together
you have sex > ? See? You don't feel affection for me,
otherwise you wouldn't be keeping such things from me.

LEAINA

I feel affection for you, as much as for any < other [f]
other woman >. But
this woman is (marvelously
terribly
skilfully) manly.

KLONARION

I don't get what you're saying, unless she happens to be some
hetairistria: for such [f], they say, are on Lesbos, man-faced women:



ΚΛΩΝΑΡΙΟΝ

Πρὸς τῆς κουροτρόφου τί τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἢ τί βούλεται ἡ γυνή; τί δὲ
καὶ πράττετε, ὅταν συνῆτε; ὁρᾷς; οὐ φιλεῖς με· οὐ γὰρ ἂν
ἀπεκρύπτου τὰ τοιαῦτα.

ΛΕΑΙΝΑ

Φιλῶ μέν σε, εἰ καί τινα ἄλλην. ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δεινῶς ἀνδρική ἐστίν.

ΚΛΩΝΑΡΙΟΝ

Οὐ μανθάνω ὅ τι καὶ λέγεις, εἰ μή τις ἐταιρίστρια τυγχάνει οὔσα·
τοιαύτας γὰρ ἐν Λέσβῳ λέγουσι γυναῖκας ἀρρενωπούς,

K *the child-rearing one* [f] / [goddess]: Aphrodite.

K *the woman*: throughout my translation, I preserve whatever gendered language the various speakers use around Megilla/os in order to reflect how Megilla/os's gender is variably constructed and recognized according to different perspectives and social situations/constraints.

LEAINA *terribly/marvelously/skilfully manly*: Leaina introduces Megilla/os's masculinity in ambiguous terms: the adjective *deinos* casts a large semantic net, from 'fearful', 'mighty', and 'terrible' (whence 'dinosaur') to 'clever', 'skilful', 'marvelous'.

K *hetairistria*: this is the only known appearance of this word since Plato's *Symposium*. There, the comic playwright Aristophanes uses it to describe 'women who desire other women with special intensity' (Blondell & Boehringer 2014 p. 253). For more about the word, see LESBIANTIQUITY 5; Barker translates *hetairistria* as 'companionizeress' / 'womanizeress'.

under men they don't wish to $\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{experience it} \\ \text{take it} \\ \text{be passive} \end{array} \right)$, but with women they [f] $\left\langle \begin{array}{c} \text{get close} \\ \text{have sex} \end{array} \right\rangle$ just like men do.

LEAINA

That sort of thing.

KLONARION

Well, o Leaina, $\left\langle \begin{array}{c} \text{recount this} \\ \text{give me the play-by-play} \end{array} \right\rangle$ too: how she made an attempt first, how even you were won over, and the stuff after that.

LEAINA

A certain drinking party she was throwing together, and also Demonassa the Corinthian [f]. She too is rich and has the same skills as Megilla, and she took me along to kithara for them [f]:



ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν μὲν οὐκ ἐθελοῦσας αὐτὸ πάσχειν, γυναιξὶ δὲ αὐτὰς πλησιαζούσας ὥσπερ ἄνδρας.

ΛΕΑΙΝΑ

Τοιοῦτόν τι.

ΚΛΩΝΑΡΙΟΝ

Οὐκοῦν, ὦ Λέαινα, τοῦτο αὐτὸ καὶ διήγησαι, ὅπως μὲν ἐπεῖρα τὸ πρῶτον, ὅπως δὲ καὶ σὺ συνεπέισθης καὶ τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα.

ΛΕΑΙΝΑ

Πότον τινὰ συγκροτοῦσα αὐτὴ τε καὶ Δημῶνασσα ἡ Κορινθία. πλουτοῦσα δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ καὶ ὁμότεχνος οὔσα τῇ Μεγίλλῃ, παρειλήφει κάμὲ κιθαρίζειν αὐταῖς.

L *Demonassa*: her name means 'People's Princess' (Hayes & Nimis 2015 p. 128). Another Plato allusion – *Demonassa* is the feminine of *Demonax*, a contemporary philosopher from Cyprus whom Lucian compared to Socrates, Plato's teacher (*Demonax* 5; Gilhuly 2015 p. 172).

L *the Corinthian*: like Lesbos, Corinth also carried stereotypes about female sexuality – it was 'the center of the sex trade, and Corinthian women were regarded as sexually adventurous' (Haley 2002 p. 296).

L *the same skills*: Lucian saying *Demonassa* is *homotekhnos* with *Megilla/os* prevents an easy stereotyping of her as the 'passive' or 'feminine' half of the couple (Blondell & Boehringer 2014 p. 255).

L *to kithara for them*: another allusion to Plato's *Symposium* – where Plato's elite male symposiasts had shooed away the low-status female aulos-player in order to engage in erotically charged philosophical discourse, *Leaina* participates in this symposium as both kithara-player and dialogic/sexual participant.

after I had kitharaed and it was late and time to sleep and

< ^{I was}
they were > drunk, "Hey, come on, o Leaina," said Megilla, "going
to bed now is < ^{good}
fine >, here, sleep with us in between us both."

KLONARION

Did you sleep? After this what happened?

LEAINA

They kissed me at first like men, not only pressing [f] < ^{the}
my > lips,
but < ^{slightly}
secretly > opening < ^{the}
my > mouth, and they enfolded [me] and
squeezed < ^{the}
my > breasts: Demonassa even bit while kissing [f]: I
did not have anything to compare this < ^{situation}
activity > to. In time,
Megilla, now a little heated, removed her wig from her head,



ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐκισθάρισα καὶ ἄνωρ ἦν καὶ ἔδει καθεύδειν, καὶ ἐμέθουν, "Ἄγε
δὴ, ἔφη, ὦ Λέαινα, ἡ Μέγιλλα, κοιμᾶσθαι γὰρ ἤδη καλόν, ἐνταῦθα
κάθευδε μεθ' ἡμῶν μέση ἀμφοτέρων.

ΚΛΩΝΑΡΙΟΝ

Ἐκάθευδες; τὸ μετὰ ταῦτα τί ἐγένετο;

ΛΕΑΙΝΑ

Ἐφίλουν με τὸ πρῶτον ὥσπερ οἱ ἄνδρες, οὐκ αὐτὸ μόνον
προσαρμόζουσαι τὰ χεῖλη, ἀλλ' ὑπανοίγουσαι τὸ στόμα, καὶ
περιέβαλλον καὶ τοὺς μαστοὺς ἔθλιβον· ἡ Δημῶνασσα δὲ καὶ
ἔδακνε μεταξὺ καταφιλοῦσα· ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ εἶχον εἰκάσαι ὅ τι τὸ
πρᾶγμα εἴη. χρόνῳ δὲ ἡ Μέγιλλα ὑπόθερμος ἤδη οὔσα τὴν μὲν
πηνήκην ἀφείλετο τῆς κεφαλῆς,

L *drunk*: the root of *emethuon*, *methu*, is 'an intoxicating drink', usually wine, but also nectar, beer, or mead – with which it shares a common Proto-Indo-European root.

L *the/my lips ... mouth ... breast*: no pronouns are given to specify whose body parts these are; they are probably Leaina's, but could equally be Megilla/os's, Demonassa's, and/or all three's.

it fitted [her] very well and [seemed like it was] naturally growing [on her], and she looked just like the extremely manly-looking of the athletes, <shaved-off buzz-cut> [f] to the skin: and I was shocked, seeing this. Then she says, "O Leaina, have you ever seen such a (fine beautiful) young man?" "But I don't see," I said, "a young man here, o Megilla." "Don't <feminize make a woman out of> me," (he she they) said, "Megillos is what I <call myself am called>, and I have been married for a long time to this here Demonassa, and she is my <wife woman>." I laughed, o Klonarion, at this, and I said, "So you, o Megillos, as some man have you escaped my notice, just like Achilles, they say, hidden among the maidens, and that manly thing, do you have it and do you do to Demonassa the very things that men [do]?"



ἐπέκειτο δὲ πάνυ ὁμοία καὶ προσφυής, καὶ ἐν χρῶ ὥφθη αὐτὴ καθάπερ οἱ σφόδρα ἀνδρώδεις τῶν ἀθλητῶν ἀποκεκαρμένη· καὶ ἐγὼ ἐταράχθην ἰδοῦσα. ἡ δέ, ὦ Λέαινα, φησίν, ἐώρακας ἤδη οὕτω καλὸν νεανίσκον; Ἄλλ' οὐχ ὁρῶ, ἔφην, ἐνταῦθα νεανίσκον, ὦ Μέγιλλα. Μὴ καταθήλυνέ με, ἔφη, Μέγιλλος γὰρ ἐγὼ λέγομαι καὶ γεγάμηκα πρόπαλαι ταύτην τὴν Δημώνασσαν, καὶ ἔστιν ἐμὴ γυνή. ἐγέλασα, ὦ Κλωνάριον, ἐπὶ τούτῳ καὶ ἔφην, Οὐκοῦν σύ, ὦ Μέγιλλε, ἀνὴρ τις ὢν ἐλελήθεις ἡμᾶς, καθάπερ τὸν Ἀχιλλέα φασὶ κρυπτόμενον ἐν ταῖς παρθένοις, καὶ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον ἐκεῖνο ἔχεις καὶ ποιεῖς τὴν Δημώνασσαν ἅπερ οἱ ἄνδρες;

Ⓙ *it fitted [her] very well*: literally, ‘it was laid on very samely/similarly’. Significantly, Leaina uses the same adjective, *homoia*, ‘same’, here in describing Megilla/os’s female costume as Megilla/os does later in talking about their femaleness at birth.

Ⓙ *young man*: a *neaniskos* would typically be the attractive, younger male partner, or *erōmenos*, in a homoerotic, pederastic relationship. Megilla/os here muddies the traditional role expected of the *neaniskos* by actively pursuing Leaina, and further confounds sociocultural binaries by self-describing as a married man later on.

Ⓙ *she/he/they said*: this verb here, *efē*, has no gendered markers, unlike *hē fēsin*, ‘she said’, in the previous line – a significant choice in the context of Megilla/os’s request that Leaina not ‘feminize’ them.

MEGILLA/OS married: Lucian uses the verb *gameō* whose primary meaning is ‘marry’ but can also simply mean ‘have sex with’. It is in the active voice, which is primarily used for men marrying women (as opposed to the middle voice, which is primarily used for women marrying men; see CGL p. 298).

Ⓙ *like Achilles ... hidden among the maidens*: according to this myth, Achilles was sent by his mother Thetis to live as a maiden at the court of Lykomedes in Skyros, so that he might postpone the deadly fate that awaited him in the Trojan War. There Achilles had a relationship with Lykomedes’ daughter Deidamia, resulting in at least one child. For one version of the tale, see Statius, *Achilleid* 1.198–960.

Ⓙ *that manly thing*: i.e. a penis.

Ⓙ *do to Demonassa*: the verb, *poieis*, which generally means ‘do’, ‘make’, here is unequivocally sexual (Boehringer 2021 p. 335 n. 10).

"That," $\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \text{he} \\ \text{she} \\ \text{they} \end{smallmatrix} \right)$ said, "o Leaina, I don't have: but I have absolutely
 no need of it: in my own kind of way, more $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{pleasurably} \\ \text{sweetly} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ by a
 lot, you'll see me $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{being intimate} \\ \text{having sex} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ [m]." "But surely you aren't
 Hermaphroditos," I said, "like many people are, they say,
 $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{equipped with} \\ \text{having} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ both [parts]?" For I still didn't understand, o
 Klonarion, the $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{situation} \\ \text{activity} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$. "No," $\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \text{he says} \\ \text{she says} \\ \text{they say} \end{smallmatrix} \right)$, "I am entirely a man."
 "I've heard," I said, "the Boeotian aulos-girl Ismenadora recounting
 the fireside [tales] among those people, how someone at Thebes
 became a man from a woman, and this guy was also a prophet,
 $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{excellent} \\ \text{famous} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$, I think, Teiresias by name. You haven't $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{experienced} \\ \text{undergone} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$
 the same thing too, have you?" "No, o Leaina," $\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \text{he} \\ \text{she} \\ \text{they} \end{smallmatrix} \right)$ said,
 "I was born the same as [f] the rest [f] of you,



Ἐκεῖνο μὲν, ἔφη, ὦ Λέαινα, οὐκ ἔχω· δέομαι δὲ οὐδὲ πάνυ αὐτοῦ·
 ἴδιον δέ τινα τρόπον ἡδίω παρὰ πολὺ ὁμιλοῦντα ὄψει με. Ἀλλὰ μὴ
 Ἑρμαφρόδιτος εἶ, ἔφην, οἷοι πολλοὶ εἶναι λέγονται ἀμφότερα
 ἔχοντες; ἔτι γὰρ ἡγνόουν, ὦ Κλωνάριον, τὸ πρᾶγμα. Οὐ, φησίν, ἀλλὰ
 τὸ πᾶν ἀνὴρ εἰμι. Ἦκουσα, ἔφην ἐγώ, τῆς Βοιωτίας αὐλητρίδος
 Ἰσμηνοδώρας διηγουμένης τὰ ἐφέστια παρ' αὐτοῖς, ὥς γένοιτό τις
 ἐν Θήβαις ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ, ὃ δ' αὐτὸς καὶ μάντις ἄριστος, οἶμαι,
 Τειρεσίας τοῦνομα. μὴ οὖν καὶ σὺ τοιοῦτόν τι πέπονθας; Οὐκουν,
 ὦ Λέαινα, ἔφη, ἀλλὰ ἐγεννήθην μὲν ὁμοία ταῖς ἄλλαις ὑμῖν,

M *being intimate / having sex*: of the several different verbs that Lucian uses in this dialogue for 'having sex', here Megilla/os uses *homileō*, which has the root *homos*, 'same', and implies consorting with one's own kind on an equal footing. Megilla/os's use of this verb when s/he is asserting that s/he is a man but that s/he has sex differently from men suggests their greater sexual accomplishment stems from their privileged understanding of female sexual pleasure. (Lucian repeatedly uses this word in *Erotes* 28, in a passage about homosexuality: see LESBIANTIQUITY 26).

L *Hermaphroditos*: as told in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.285–388, the nymph Salmacis tried to rape Hermaphroditus, the son of Hermes and Aphrodite; when he resisted, she prayed he may never escape her, so the gods merged their two bodies, making him intersex or a 'hermaphrodite'. This allusion evokes the androgyne/man-woman of Plato's *Symposium* (Blondell & Boehringer 2014 p. 253).

L *aulos-girl*: another allusion to Plato's *Symposium* (an aulos-girl was dismissed by Plato's all-male symposiasts).

L *Teiresias*: as told in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.316–38, the Theban Teiresias came upon two copulating snakes and struck them with his stick, and was transformed into a woman. After seven years, s/he came upon the same snakes, struck them once again, and was turned back into a man. Juno and Jupiter therefore asked him to arbitrate their dispute over who gets most pleasure from sex – men or women. Teiresias sided with Jupiter – that women get more pleasure – and, for his pains, was blinded by Juno and given the gift of prophecy by Jupiter. This debate, and Teiresias's conclusion, is of evident relevance to Lucian's dialogue.

M *the same as*: Megilla/os (through Leaina's ventriloquization) uses a grammatically feminine adjective here, *homoia*, in self-description, probably because here s/he is talking about their birth, which was before (in their view) the start of their gender-deviance.

but my understanding and heart's-desire and everything else is a man's." "And is it really enough for you," I said, "this desire?" "Offer it up Give yourself over", at least, o Leaina, if you don't believe," (he she they) said, "and you will understand that I am not deficient [f] compared to men: for I have something instead of the manly thing. Just offer it up give yourself over, and you'll see." I offered it up gave myself over to her, o Klonarion, since she was begging supplicating [f] a lot and gave [f] me a necklace, an expensive one, and a linen dress, a delicate one. Then I embraced (him her them) just like a man, and she went to work and was kissing [me] and panting and seemed to me to be exceedingly (enjoying himself enjoying herself taking pleasure).



ἡ γνώμη δὲ καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία καὶ τὰλλα πάντα ἀνδρός ἐστί μοι. Καὶ ἱκανὴ γοῦν σοι, ἔφην, ἐπιθυμία; Πάρεχε γοῦν, ὦ Λέαινα, εἰ ἀπιστεῖς, ἔφη, καὶ γνώσῃ οὐδὲν ἐνδέουσάν με τῶν ἀνδρῶν· ἔχω γάρ τι ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀνδρείου. ἀλλὰ πάρεχε, ὅψει γάρ. παρέσχον, ὦ Κλωνάριον, ἰκετευούσης πολλὰ καὶ ὄρμον τινά μοι δούσης τῶν πολυτελῶν καὶ ὀθόνας τῶν λεπτῶν. εἴτ' ἐγὼ μὲν ὥσπερ ἄνδρα περιελάμβανον, ἡ δὲ ἐποίει τε καὶ ἐφίλει καὶ ἡσθμαινε καὶ ἐδόκει μοι ἐς ὑπερβολὴν ἡδεσθαι.

M heart's-desire: Megilla/os uses the same word, *epithumia*, 'heart's-desire', which Plato uses to convey the half-humans' intense yearning for oneness with their other halves (four times, in various forms: *epithumountes*, 'setting their hearts on'; *epithumeite*, 'you set your hearts on'; *epithumiai*, 'heart's-desire' – Symposium 191a, 192d, 192e; see LESBIANTIQUITY 5).

M something instead of the manly thing: scholars have tended to assume that what Megilla/os refers to here is a dildo or *olisbos*, but there is no explicit mention of one here. Megilla/os's obvious pleasure is also at odds with the conventional representation of the *olisbos* giving pleasure to the penetrated partner, not the penetrator (Blondell & Boehringer 2014 pp. 255–6).

L since she gave me a necklace ... and a linen dress: the *hetaira*, like the *erōmenos*, was supposed to play hard to get, and her consent should properly be obtained by gifts (Blondell & Boehringer 2014 p. 256).

L I embraced her/him/them like a man: i.e. Megilla/os is like a man (the word for 'man', *andra*, is in the accusative).

KLONARION

What did $\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \text{he} \\ \text{she} \\ \text{they} \end{smallmatrix} \right)$ do, o Leaina, and in what way? This especially tell!

LEAINA

Don't pry into the exact details, for they're shameful: so much so, by the heavenly $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{one} \text{ [f]} \\ \text{[goddess]} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$, I couldn't tell.



ΚΛΩΝΑΡΙΟΝ

Τί ἐποίει, ὦ Λέαινα, ἢ τίνα τρόπον; τοῦτο γὰρ μάλιστα εἶπέ.

ΛΕΑΙΝΑ

Μὴ ἀνάκρινε ἀκριβῶς, αἰσχρὰ γάρ· ὥστε μὰ τὴν οὐρανίαν οὐκ ἂν εἴποιμι.

L *the heavenly one* [f] / [goddess]: Aphrodite.

L *they're shameful ... I couldn't tell*: Lucian/Leaina breaks off the narrative at the crucial, climactic, moment. Blondell and Boehringer (2014 p. 251) see multiple Platonic allusions in this – to Alkibiades, who was nearly too ashamed to tell of his attempted seduction of Sokrates (*Symposium* 217e–18b); to Diotima, who compared lovemaking to the not-to-be-spoken-of Mysteries (*Symposium* 210a–12a); and to Sokrates, who habitually withheld wisdom to provoke a greater desire for philosophy, bringing the 'audience to the very brink of revelation – but no further'.

DIALOGUE OF THE COURTESANS 12 (EXCERPTS)

IOESSA AND PUTHIAS AND LUSIAS

Ioessa is upset because her lover Lusias is shunning her.

IOESSA

I <had held> Phaon only, and neither <looking at setting eyes on> anyone <other else>, nor <allowing [anyone] to come admitting [anyone]> that's not you:

Ioessa accuses Lusias of cheating on her, and threatens to kill herself. Lusias gets angry and leaves without answering. Ioessa appeals to her fellow hetaira/courtesan/companion Puthias for sympathy. Puthias advises Ioessa to shut Lusias out to increase his love for her. Ioessa is horrified by the idea. Lusias returns to justify himself to Puthias (still refusing to speak to Ioessa).

LUSIAS

Do you really wish, o Puthias, [me] to bear with Ioessa, her, the one now <shedding tears> crying,



ΙΟΕΣΣΑ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΘΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΥΣΙΑΣ

ΙΟΕΣΣΑ

[...] ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν Φάωνα μόνον εἶχον οὔτε τινὰ προσβλέπουσα ἕτερον οὔτε προσιεμένη ὅτι μὴ σέ· [...]

ΛΥΣΙΑΣ

Φέρειν οὖν ἐθέλεις, ὦ Πυθιάς, Ἰόεσσαν ταύτην τὴν νῦν δακρύνουσαν

NOTES

- I give here only select excerpts from this dialogue (the parts with lesbian implications): one phrase from the first half (Ioessa's long opening speech), and the majority of the second half (Lusias's account and Ioessa and Puthias's responses to it). The gaps are indicated with [...] in the Greek text and italicised summaries in the translation.

- *Ioessa*: her name (often transliterated 'Joessa') is from ἴov, 'violet'.
- *Puthias*: her name (often transliterated 'Pythias') means 'Priestess' (Hayes & Nimis 2015 p. 129).
- *Lusias*: his name (often transliterated 'Lysias') means 'Loose' (Hayes & Nimis 2015 p. 127). It evokes Lucian's own name, something Lucian does very frequently.

IOESSA *I had/held Phaon only*: Ioessa is calling Lusias her Phaon – her only beloved – but the implication (fully intended by Lucian) is of Ioessa as Sappho, who is and was known for loving women.

myself having <stood over
come upon> her once sleeping with a young man,
in (defecation from
desertion of
abandonment of) me?

PUTHIAS

Lusias, the whole [thing] is, she is a (courtesan
hetaira
companion). How, really,
did you catch them sleeping together?

LUSIAS

Five days ago, having been locked in by his father (who disapproves of his relationship with loessa), Lusias escaped in the middle of the night and came to loessa's place.

the courtyard door I found <locked up
barred off> carefully: for midnight it
was. I didn't knock at all, but having quietly lifted up the <door
gate> -
already also at <another time
other times> I had done the same - bypassing
the socket, I came in noiselessly. Sleeping - were all, then



αὐτὸν ἐπιστάντα αὐτῇ ποτε μετὰ νεανίου καθευδούση ἐμοῦ ἀποστάση;

ΠΥΘΙΑΣ

Λυσία, τὸ μὲν ὅλον ἐταίρα ἐστί. πῶς δ' οὖν κατέλαβες αὐτοὺς
συγκαθεύδοντας; [...]

ΛΥΣΙΑΣ

[...] τὴν αὖλειον εὖρον ἀποκεκλεισμένην ἐπιμελῶς· μέσαι γὰρ νύκτες
ἦσαν. οὐκ ἔκοψα δ' οὖν, ἀλλ' ἐπάρας ἡρέμα τὴν θύραν, ἥδη δὲ καὶ
ἄλλοτ' ἐπεποιήκειν αὐτό, παραγαγὼν τὸν στροφέα παρεισῆλθον
ἀσοφητί. ἐκάθευδον δὲ πάντες, εἶτα

LUSIAS *ἐπιστάντα αὐτῇ*; *having stood over / come upon her*: this phrase seems to be ungrammatical. I understand *ἐπιστάντα* as coming from *ἐφίστημι*, ‘set over’, but for this to make sense the word should be in the middle or passive, *ἐπιστάμενον*, rather than the active. This reading is supported by the fact that a little later in the dialogue, Lusias uses the same verb and construction (in its grammatically correct form) to describe this moment. If *ἐπιστάντα* actually comes from *ἐπίσταμαι*, ‘know’, the word would have to likewise be *ἐπιστάμενον*, but this wouldn’t work with the dative construction that follows.

L *ἐμοῦ ἀποστάση*; *in desertion of / defection from / abandonment of me*: Lusias’s language here is more appropriate to politics or religion.

PUTHIAS *the whole [thing] is, she is a hetaira/courtesan/companion*: an excellent (if sarcastic) point from Puthias.

L *στροφέα*; *socket*: a ‘hole set in a threshold and lintel into which fitted the *στρόφιγξ*, the pivot on which the door turns’ (CGL p. 1294), i.e. Lusias lifted the door/gate off its hinges to get through without unlocking/unbarring it.

⟨^{touching}
feeling⟩ [along] the wall I ⟨^{stand over}
come upon⟩ the bed.

IOESSA

What will you say, o Damater? For I'm ⟨^{anxious}
in agonies⟩.

LUSIAS

When I didn't ⟨^{perceive}
see⟩ the breathing of [just] one, at first I
⟨^{thought}
supposed⟩ Lude was sleeping with her: that wasn't it, o Puthias,
but ⟨^{touching}
laying hands on⟩ [them] I found someone beardless, totally
soft, ⟨^{shaved}
buzz-cut⟩ to the skin, and him ⟨^{smelling}
reeking⟩ of ⟨^{unguents}
perfumes⟩.
Having ⟨^{perceived}
seen⟩ this, if also ⟨^{having}
holding⟩ a sword I'd come, I
would not have hesitated, know [it] well. Why do you [pl] ⟨^{laugh}
smile⟩,
o Puthias? laughter-worthy [things] do I seem to you [s] to recount?



ἐπαφώμενος τοῦ τοίχου ἐφίσταμαι τῇ κλίνῃ.

ΙΟΕΣΣΑ

Τί ἐρεῖς, ὦ Δάματερ; ἀγωνιῶ γάρ.

ΛΥΣΙΑΣ

Ἐπειδὴ δὲ οὐχ ἑώρων τὸ ἄσθμα ἔν, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὥμην τὴν Λυδὴν
αὐτῇ συγκαθεύδειν· τὸ δ' οὐκ ἦν, ὦ Πυθιάς, ἀλλ' ἐφαψάμενος εὐρον
ἀγένειόν τινα πάνυ ἀπαλόν, ἐν χρῶ κεκαρμένον, μύρων καὶ αὐτὸν
ἀποπνέοντα. τοῦτο ἰδὼν εἰ μὲν καὶ ξίφος ἔχων ἦλθον, οὐκ ἂν ὥκνησα,
εὖ ἴστε. τί γελάτε, ὦ Πυθιάς; γέλωτος ἄξια δοκῶ σοι διηγείσθαι;

I *Damater*: Demeter, goddess of harvest, marriage, and birth.

L *οὐχ ἑώρων ... ἰδὼν*; *I didn't perceive/see ... Having perceived/seen*: although these verbs don't necessarily mean 'perceiving by seeing', they imply it, and Lucian's use of them twice here, in a situation where Lusias literally can't see (and turns out to be perceiving incorrectly), seems intentionally ironic.

L *Lude*: her name (often transliterated 'Lyde') means 'Lydian' (Hayes & Nimis 2015 p. 129).

L *ἐν χροῶ κεκαρμένον*; *shaved/buzz-cut to the skin*: this phrase, repeated later, echoes almost exactly the description of Megilla/os in *Dialogue 5*.

L *smelling/reeking of unguents/perfumes*: in an unnecessary spoiler, Macleod (1961 p. 441) adds 'like a woman' in his translation here.

L *τί γελᾶτε ... δοκῶ σοι*; *Why do you [pl] laugh/smile ... do I seem to you [s]*: Lusias's switch from plural to singular suggests that both women were laughing/smiling, and Lusias addressed both of them before remembering he wasn't speaking to loessa.

IOESSA

This, o Lusias, (^{upset}~~distressed~~_{annoyed}) you? Puthias herself with me was sleeping.

PUTHIAS

Don't tell [it], o Ioessa, to him.

IOESSA

Why shouldn't I tell? Puthias it was, dearest, (^{summoned}~~called~~ ^{over}~~round~~)
by me, so together we'd sleep: for I was (^{upset}~~distressed~~_{annoyed}) not
(^{having}~~holding~~) you.

LUSIAS

Puthias, him (^{shaved}~~buzz-cut~~) to the skin? Then over the sixth day she's
(^{become long-haired,}~~grown her hair out~~) this much hair?



ΙΟΕΣΣΑ

Τοῦτό σε, ὦ Λυσία, λελύπηκεν; ἡ Πυθιάς αὕτη μοι συνεκάθευδε.

ΠΥΘΙΑΣ

Μὴ λέγε, ὦ Ἰόεσσα, πρὸς αὐτόν.

ΙΟΕΣΣΑ

Τί μὴ λέγω; Πυθιάς ἦν, φίλτατε, μετακληθεῖσα ὑπ' ἐμοῦ, ὥς ἅμα
καθεύδοιμεν· ἐλυπούμην γὰρ σέ μὴ ἔχουσα.

ΛΥΣΙΑΣ

Πυθιάς ὁ ἐν χρόνῳ κεκαρμένος; εἶτα δι' ἑκτης ἡμέρας ἀνεκόμησε
τοσαύτην κόμην;

⌊ *δι' ἑκτῆς ἡμέρας*; *over the sixth day*: i.e. in the past five days.

⌊ *ἀνεκόμησε τοσαύτην κόμην*; *she's become long-haired, / grown her hair out this much hair*: Lusias's doubling of words for 'hair' is comical.

IOESSA

<Because of
After> the <sickness
disease> she <shaved it
got it shaved>, o Lusias: for
her hairs were <slipping away
falling out>. And now she's put on the wig.
Show, o Puthias, show it is so, persuade him. <See
Behold>, the
(mannie
lad
stripling), the <fornicator
adulterer>, of whom you were jealous.

Lusias and Ioessa make up, and Puthias asks Lusias to tell no one about her hair.



ΙΟΕΣΣΑ

Ἀπὸ τῆς νόσου ἐξυρῆσατο, ὦ Λυσία· υπέρρεον γὰρ αὐτῇ αἱ τρίχες.
νῦν δὲ καὶ τὴν πηνήκην ἐπέθετο. δεῖξον, ὦ Πυθιάς, δεῖξον οὕτως
ὄν, πείσον αὐτόν. ἰδοὺ τὸ μεράκιον ὁ μοιχὸς ὃν ἐζηλοτύπεις. [...]

| *πηνήκην*; wig: again, the same word as with Megilla/os in *Dialogue 5*.

| *μειράκιον*; lad/mannie/stripling: diminutive of *μειραξ*, 'lass / young girl', and if said of an actual man would be contemptuous (CGL p. 907). This is, of course, sarcastic.



LEVERHULME
TRUST —————

Sapphizdat
PORTKNOCKIE