

<b>Section A</b>		
<b>Institution:</b> Durham University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 29 Classics and Ancient History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Romosexuality: sexuality and censorship		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> Between June 2010 and 31 August 2018		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Jennifer Ingleheart	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Lecturer 2004-12; Senior Lecturer 2012-16; Reader 2016-17; Professor (2017-)	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2004 to present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> Between February 2015 and November 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>Section B</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>The research of Ingleheart on Roman sexuality and its reception has brought public attention to a previously neglected aspect of the history of sexuality, and informed new approaches to erotica, marginalised books and authors, and censorship. Ingleheart's research led the Bodleian Library to display its Phi collection of 'improper' books for the first time, influencing curatorial practice and increasing knowledge of a little-known collection. Her Bodleian display, related events, and work with other cultural organisations alerted a wide audience to Rome's importance in the history of sexuality; by inviting reflection upon marginalised works and the policing of sexuality, the project increased knowledge of the history of sexuality, particularly for LGBTQ people.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Professor Ingleheart's published research since 2015 has established that ancient Rome plays an important yet largely neglected role in modern discourses about sexuality: Rome and the Latin language were every bit as central as ancient Greece to classicising C19th and C20th conceptions of homosexuality, but played a very different role. Early public discussions of homosexuality focused on Greek antiquity, presenting Greece as a positive, legitimising model, which provided an apology for noble, desexualised modern-day relations. Conversely, Ingleheart has analysed how Roman sexuality was demonised as over-sexed, licentious, and decadent [R1, R4]. This binary stereotype of Greek 'virtue' and Roman 'vice', as Ingleheart demonstrates, has played a defining political role in the history of sexuality, supporting early activism for 'homosexual' rights by portraying relations between males modelled on 'Greek love' as respectable and mainstream.</p> <p>A further key insight of Ingleheart is that the cultural typecasting of Roman homosexuality as having degenerated from 'Greek love' led to Rome's consequent appeal in more private contexts to authors with a pornographic agenda [R1, R2, R3, R4, R5]. Ingleheart's research probes the long and intimate historical connection between Rome, the Latin language, and the history of erotica; Ingleheart demonstrates that Rome provides both an excuse and a very detailed, precise language for talking about sex [R1 and R3]. A major insight from Ingleheart's research is that modern identifications and imaginative engagements with Roman sexuality illustrate that Rome allows for a range of options that go far beyond the narrow concept of 'Greek love' as legitimising homosexual relations. Rome offers a multiplicity of desires, frank depictions of sexual practices, and a wider variety of sexual actors than found in most accounts of elite, pederastic Greek</p>		

'homosexuality' [R1, R3]. As Ingleheart shows, Rome consequently provides fertile ground for queer people who wish to resist moralising and/ or restrictive narratives relating to sexuality, particularly in pornographic works; Ingleheart's research on pornographic responses to Rome, and other clandestinely circulated Roman receptions, has brought attention to queer works and authors previously marginalised owing to their treatment of taboo sexual themes [R1, R3, R4]. Modern writings that treat Roman sexuality, and the contemporary reception of these texts, therefore offer an important and challenging stimulus through which people can explore questions relating to censorship of sexual materials and attempts to categorise and control sexuality throughout history.

### 3. References to the research

- R1—. Ingleheart, J. (ed.). 2015. *Ancient Rome and the Construction of Modern Homosexual Identities* (Oxford University Press). ISSN/ISBN: [978-0-19-968972-9](#)
- R2—. 2015. 'Responding to Ovid's Pygmalion episode and receptions of same-sex love in Classical antiquity: art, homosexuality, and the Curatorship of Classical culture in E. M. Forster's 'The Classical Annex'', *Classical Receptions Journal* 7(2): 141-158. DOI: [10.1093/crj/clt017](#)
- R3—. 2018. *Masculine Plural: Queer Classics, Sex, and Education* (Oxford University Press). ISSN/ISBN: [9780198819677](#)
- R4—. 2018. 'High culture in low company? The reception of ancient 'homosexuality' in the pornographic *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain: The Recollections of a Mary-Ann*', in E. Richardson (ed.), *Classics in Extremis* (Bloomsbury), 88-100. ISSN/ISBN: 978-1-3500-1725-2.
- R5—. 2020. 'Translation, identity, and the history of sexuality: explorations in Burton and Smithers' Catullus', in Thomas, R. F./ Henderson, J. J. (edd.), *The Loeb Classical Library and its Progeny* (Harvard University Press), 395-423.

#### Evidence of quality

R1-R3 were published by Oxford University Press; R5 by Harvard University Press. Research for R1 was funded by British Academy conference grant; research for R3 by the Harry Ransom Center; research for R5 by the Loeb Classical Library Foundation. All five outputs were peer reviewed.

### 4. Details of the impact

The beneficiaries of Ingleheart's research include libraries and museums, the LGBTQ community, and a wider public audience. Overall, the project opened up neglected stories of importance to the history of sexuality, enriching the cultural offerings of libraries and museums, alerting LGBTQ people to previously obscure aspects of their past, and encouraging the public to reflect on the mechanisms and structures that regulate sexuality, past and present. The impact achieved falls under three main headings, elaborated below.

#### 1. Influence on curatorial practice in libraries and museums

Ingleheart's studies of censored books led to a collaboration with the Bodleian Library, which holds a large collection of texts once deemed 'obscene'. The 'Phi' (Greek letter Φ) shelfmark was created by the Library in 1882 to classify 'improper' books and keep them away from undergraduates, who had to apply for special permission for access. Ingleheart curated an exhibition that put on display within the Library a representative range of items from the Phi collection for the first time, including texts she analysed in [R1], [R3], and [R4]. *Story of Phi* was open to the public for three months between the 15th November 2018 and the 13th January 2019, and attracted a total of 3,540 visitors [E5], making it the second most popular exhibition to have been displayed in that space within the Bodleian.

The Bodleian's chief librarian said: "The idea for the exhibit, and the approach to scholarly engagement with the Bodleian came from Prof Ingleheart. Our collaboration with her proved to be an extremely positive and fruitful one [...] providing us with the opportunity to revisit, and to reflect on past curatorial practices, and to develop new approaches to display and public engagement. ... The research work to develop the exhibit ... and our

curatorial approaches to displaying it and promoting it were truly innovative, with public attitudes to the material, and the approach to display confirming that the decision to move ahead was the right one. ... the exhibit boosted our reputation as being both bold in our approach to public exhibitions as well as sensitive and thoughtful in the way that this boldness was brought to the fore. ... In addition to the academic and intellectual benefit afforded to us by the collaboration, the extended public exposure globally [...] enhanced the Bodleian's reputation internationally." [E6].

The Bodleian estimates that the *Story of Phi* exhibition had a media reach of approximately 92,400,000 people globally [E1]: it featured in 62 news articles in 7 countries, from UK publications such as *The Times* and *The Guardian*; coverage on BBC Radio 3's 'Free Thinking' programme, BBC Radio Oxford and Radio 4's 'The World Tonight' (for the period ending December 2019, when these programmes aired, Radio 3 had 1.4% of the national audience, Radio 4 had 13.4% of the national audience, and Radio Oxford had a 7.9% share of the local area audience); to international news outlets such as CNN in the USA, which syndicated to outlets in Russia, Greece and Nigeria [E1]. Media engagement clearly echoed the themes of Ingleheart's research: the *TLS* noted that the exhibition told the story of "the construction and policing of queer identities", while coverage in popular online magazine *Atlas Obscura* highlighted the exhibition's presentation of Latin as the language of pornography and "Rome as the more lustful foil to a more pure Greece." Ingleheart's research therefore significantly increased the public attention afforded to Roman-influenced books and the way in which they had previously been hidden away, opening up a rich new vein of material to cultural discourse [E1].

Ingleheart's collaboration with the Bodleian Library directly influenced the curatorial policy and practice of two other libraries. Encouraged by Ingleheart's work on *Story of Phi*, University Library, Cambridge displayed — also for the first time — its own collection of restricted 'Arc.' books in 2017. Ingleheart worked with the Cambridge University Libraries' Rare Books Specialist who curated the 'Arc.' display, and her research directly influenced the inclusion of materials relating to A. E. Housman and Philip Bainbrigge, the subjects of Ingleheart's 2018 monograph [R3, E8]. Ingleheart's work for [R3] on Housman's collection of erotica, which was donated to the University Library (UL) after Housman's death, led the UL to include one of the works once owned by Housman in its major 2018 *Tall Tales* exhibition, which attracted approximately 39,000 visitors and national and international press attention, including from BBC Breakfast and Sky News [E8]. Reflecting on Ingleheart's contribution, the Cambridge University curator said that her work "... allowed us to tell the tale of a book one would not necessarily expect to find in a library like ours [...] The exhibition was particularly popular with members of the public in and around Cambridge, a group (as distinct from our typical academic user base) with which we are keen to engage more. Jennifer's work has therefore played a crucial part in bringing otherwise unknown local angles to our public engagement programme" [E8]. Ingleheart's research was also of interest to Trinity College, Oxford, whose Danson Collection includes significant holdings of similar pornographic texts. The cataloguer of the collection notes that Ingleheart's display and Study Day "helped us understand how the Danson erotica ... could be a legitimate area of study and research". Trinity College also reports an increasing number of enquiries about, and visits to view, the Danson erotica since Ingleheart's exhibition [E7].

Ingleheart's research has also informed exhibitions that encompass similar themes of censorship/sexuality hosted by other cultural organisations, reflecting the increasing interest in opening up previously censored or 'hidden' collections to public knowledge and widening access to materials that help tell the often complex story of LGBTQ history and identity. For example, The British Museum's 2017 'Desire, love, identity: exploring LGBTQ identities' [E8]. Ingleheart acted as an advisor to curators on

interpretation relating to classical content, particularly where censorship has played an important role in modern interpretations.

One participant at the Phi Study Day who works in the museum sector was inspired by Ingleheart's approach towards censorship and hidden histories in the Phi display and Study Day, commenting "The study day ... enriched my own understanding of how to access hidden histories. ... Our topic of research is how the histories of people of colour are often difficult to find in archival research: information we now consider critical may be invisible in categorisation and there is no obvious way of keyword searching to understand the volume of archival material available that is pertinent to the topic, or of pulling out links that may be fruitful between one individual and another. By contrast, the *Story of Phi* Study Day dealt with an archive that brought together material that was often unconnected, and categorised it as 'dangerous' or 'unsuitable for the public'" [E3].

### 2. Increasing understanding of censorship/ policing of sexuality

The *Story of Phi* Study Day attracted 22 participants: 59% were aged between 18 and 29 years old, and 55% self-defined as other than 'heterosexual' [E2]. These demographics are important: the majority come from a younger and queerer demographic than may be expected as a proportion of the UK population (only 5.4% of the population defined as other than heterosexual in the 2018 census). This suggests that Ingleheart's research insights are of particular interest to LGBTQ audiences.

The Study Day increased knowledge of which books get restricted by 38% (19% before the Study Day; 57% after); awakened greater interest in restricted books by 26% (35% before, 61% after said they would read such works); and improved knowledge of Rome's place in the history of sexuality by 14% (4% before, 18% after) [E3]. One participant commented that the Study Day was "thought-provoking and sent me away thinking hard about the different ways in which 'underrepresented' histories can find themselves obscured and occluded" [E9]; another noted "I was touched to imagine how lonely, judged and isolated students questioning their gender and sexuality must have felt in an environment which put up barriers to them seeking answers to questions in a place which should have been there to inform and help them. Since then I have read up on this," further observing that the day "strengthen[ed] my opinion that access to more information can only be a good thing and we should all feel able to discuss openly subjects on anything, including sexuality and gender without feeling shame or judgement" [E9].

Participants used learning from the day to reflect on their own sexuality and its place within libraries and society, through a creative exercise in which they designed a book cover/ title and decided whether it should be classified within Phi [E4]. One participant reflected on the stereotype that older people don't have sex. He felt that his *Getting Old, But Still Very Hot and Sexy*, by 'Randy Oldmann', shouldn't be in Phi, but "would have been because of ageism ... the word "sexy" and even the word 'hot'". Another explained that they created a book entitled *50 Shades of The Grey Area: a teenager's guide to LGBTQ+ fiction* because "There are YA [young adult] titles about racism, bereavement, divorce, dysfunctional families with which young people can identify – but if public libraries are only buying mainstream and schools are putting up firewalls where can YA find themselves ...?" Another major theme from Ingleheart's research — that Rome allows for queer transgression [R1, R3] — that resonated with the audience emerged in a participant's comment on her *Confessions of a Tribade* as inspired partly by Ingleheart's presentation on Victorian receptions of Rome, partly by her own experiences, and partly "to counter critics' belief that such a woman couldn't have existed", noting that the book belongs in Phi because "I enjoy the continued existence of transgressive categories" [E4].

### 3. Enabling LGBTQ audiences to gain a better understanding of LGBTQ history

Many of the authors and texts that form the focus of Ingleheart's research had previously received very little public attention, because of their sexualised subject matter. The great-niece of the subject of [R3] wrote: "Your research has meant a great deal to me, perhaps

more than you realise. After having been raised on a diet of convenient half-truths and outright lies, it has been a quest of mine to find out who my forebears really were” [E10].

Since 2015, Ingleheart has disseminated her research insights in numerous activities aimed at non-academic audiences. These include nine public talks (e.g. Polari Salon at the Southbank Centre; Schools Out/ LGBT History Month in Manchester, Newcastle, and Shrewsbury; LGBT History Project North East; Bristol OutStories; Queer Week 2020 at Wadham College, Oxford), reaching a total audience of approximately 700 people. In addition, she has disseminated her research via blogposts (including one for The Conversation, republished by LGBTQ online magazine Gayety, who said “The ancient Romans contributed so much to our understanding of what it means to be queer. It’s called ‘Romosexuality’”) [E9], and invited interviews on the Phi display with BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio Oxford. Ingleheart has alerted the LGBTQ community to the role of Rome and its reception in our history. A review of Ingleheart’s 2016 Polari talk notes “it is in fact the Roman perspective on gay relationships rather than the idealised Greek which bears more relevance to our modern lives” [E9]. The reviewer for Schools Out/ LGBT History Month’s website wrote of [R1]: “It explores the important role that ancient Rome has had in shaping modern ideas about homosexual identities, and although it’s a scholarly book, there’s much of importance here to the LGBT community and queer history” [E9]. Cheryl Morgan (the co-chair of Bristol OutStories, who herself gives regular public talks on LGBTQ history) attended several of Ingleheart’s talks, and invited Ingleheart to speak at Bristol OutStories; commenting on past oppression and modern LGBTQ liberation, she says: “we are free to study the queerness of the past. There is, however, one more thing that this work had needed. It is what the trans actress and activist, Laverne Cox, calls Possibility Models. We needed trailblazers who could go before us and show what could be done. Professor Ingleheart is such a Possibility Model. She is clear evidence to young Classicists, and to independent scholars such as myself, that you can study queerness in the ancient world and not be ridiculed and dismissed by academic authority. Through her public speaking, Professor Ingleheart has also shown a much wider audience that the Classics has clear relevance to the modern world.” [E9].

##### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- E1. *Story of Phi* media (a) report, compiled by Bodleian Library (b) press clippings
- E2. *Story of Phi* Exhibition Activities Reports ((a) compiled by Eris Williams Reed (b) by Alexandra Franklin, Special Collections, Bodleian Library)
- E3. *Story of Phi* Study Day: (a) participant demographics (b) registration forms (c) ‘before’ and (d) ‘after’ questionnaires (e) follow-up questionnaires with participants
- E4. *Story of Phi* Study Day creative exercise: (a) book covers and (b) reflection on whether they belong in Phi
- E5. Visitor figures/ counter information (recording when visitors linger in front of display for more than 20 seconds) for *Story of Phi*
- E6. Testimony from [REDACTED] the Bodleian’s Head Librarian
- E7. Testimony from [REDACTED] Librarian, Trinity College, Oxford
- E8. Testimony about the impact of my research on exhibitions: [REDACTED] Curator of 2017 ‘Arc.’ Exhibition at Cambridge University Library; [REDACTED] Curator of 2017 British Museum ‘Love, Desire and Identity’ LGBT exhibition.
- E9. LGBT evidence portfolio
- E10. Testimony from those affected by uncovered hidden histories