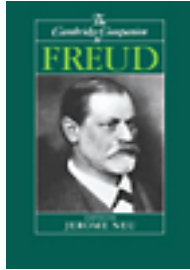


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1 Freud: The psychoarcheology of civilizations

In his last decade of life Sigmund Freud turned once more to a question that had troubled him ever since he published his conception of the psyche in *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900: What were the implications of individual psychodynamics for civilization as a whole? His mature reflections on that subject he set forth in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930a). Its somber conclusions have, of course, become part of our self-understanding: that the progress of our technical mastery over nature and the perfection of our ethical self-control are achieved at the cost of instinctual repression in the “civilized” man – a cost so high as not only to make neurotics of individuals, but of whole civilizations. An excess of civilization can produce its own undoing at the hands of instinct avenging itself against the culture that has curbed it too well.

One might expect that, in making a point so historical in its essence, Freud would have reached out to propose a scheme of civilization’s march toward the organization of nature and the collective development of the superego. Such was not Freud’s way. He approached his problem not historically but analogically, proceeding from an analysis of the individual psyche, its structure and experience, to the functioning and future of society. Yet to introduce his reader to the difference between the psyche and history, he had recourse to an ingenious historical metaphor. “We will choose as an example,” he says, “the story of the Eternal City” to represent the nature of mental life. Freud asks the reader to consider Rome as a physical entity, from its earliest beginnings as a fenced settlement on the Palatine through all its many transformations until the present day. Imagine that all the buildings known to the archeologist and the historian stand simultaneously in the same

urban space with their modern survivors or successors: "On the Piazza of the Pantheon," Freud explains, "we should find not only the Pantheon of today as bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but on the same site also Agrippa's original edifice; indeed, the same piece of ground would support Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the old temple over which it was built." Freud wishes us to struggle with this multifaceted vision of the simultaneity of the noncontemporaneous, the Eternal City that is the totality of its undiminished pasts. (With eyes trained by Picasso and the Cubists, it is easier for us to visualize than for him.) But this, he acknowledges, is not possible either in space or time. ". . . Destructive influences . . . are never lacking in the history of a city," he grants, "even if it has had a less chequered past than Rome, and even if, like London, it has hardly ever suffered from the visitations of an enemy." Only in the *mind* can what is past survive, after it has been, at the level of consciousness, displaced or replaced; and there, it is "rather the rule than the exception" for it to do so (1930a, XXI, 69–72).

Here Freud lets the metaphor of the city as total history drop, turning our attention to the individual mind, the psyche. In the mind of each of us, it is civilization itself – not the pillaging enemy – that destroys the traces of past experience, burying the personal life of instinct under the weight of its censorious denials and demands. But the psychoanalyst can, like the archeologist, recover what is buried and, by restoring a personal history to consciousness, enable us to come to terms with its traumas and even to build it anew.

Is Freud suggesting that, if we could reconstitute the Eternal City in our minds as he has asked us to picture it, with all its pasts laid bare, we would redeem it? He would make no such claim; he only points to the need to recognize that those "immortal adversaries" that inhabit the depths in each of us, Eros and Thanatos, are active and/or repressed in the collective life too, and that the earthly city must deal with them. The model of the individual psyche helps Freud to diagnose the collective life, but not to formulate a social therapy.

Freud's use of Rome in *Civilization and Its Discontents* is highly abstract and literary, as an image of an unattainable, condensed *summa* of Western historical life. Forty years earlier, when he was *nel mezzo del camin'* and at work on *The Interpretation of Dreams*,

Freud had to conjure with Rome in a quite different way, as a central problem of his self-analysis, what he called his "Rome neurosis." Within his dreams of Rome at that time, he excavated in his psychoarcheological dig an earlier Rome that belonged to the days of his childhood. The *via regia* to his discovery of the unconscious life led through the Eternal City. Once he had conquered Rome, Freud returned to it again and again. It was the city most strongly related in Freud's mind with psychoanalysis and the one that resonated most fully with all his contradictory values and desires, compacted like the simultaneous totality of historical Romes that he had suggested to the readers of *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

I

Before there was psychoanalysis, before Freud confronted Rome and exhumed it, he was drawn to two modern civilizations – the English and the French. He saw each through the stereoptic lenses of his time and social class. Like many another Austrian liberal, Freud was a passionate Anglophile from his youth. His family experience confirmed his social prejudice. When the Freud family fortunes sustained reverses in the late 1850s, Sigmund's older half brothers emigrated to build successful careers in Manchester, while father Jacob removed the rest of his family from Freiberg in Moravia to a life of economic hardship in Vienna. After graduation from Gymnasium in 1875, Freud made his first visit to his relatives in England, a visit that left an indelible impression on him. In 1882, newly engaged but deeply frustrated about his career, England surfaced in his consciousness as a kind of land of hope. In a letter to his fiancée, Martha Bernays, Freud gave passionate voice to a longing to escape from Vienna and the shadow of "that abominable tower of St. Stephen" – symbol of Catholic reaction. "I am aching for independence," he wrote, "so as to follow my own wishes. The thought of England surges up before me, with its sober industriousness, its generous devotion to the public weal, the stubbornness and sensitive feeling for justice of its inhabitants, the running fire of general interest that can strike sparks in the newspapers; all the ineffaceable impressions of my journey seven years ago, one that had a decisive influence on my whole life, have been awakened in their full vividness."¹

The "decisive influence" of his early visit to England, if we are to

believe a letter Freud wrote to his closest friend immediately on his return in 1875, embraced both professional and intellectual values. England, as the land of "practical works," inclined him away from pure science toward medical practice. "If I wanted to influence many people rather than a small number of readers and co-scientists, then England would be the right country." At the same time, the young freshman bore witness to the impact of English scientific thought: "The acquaintance which I have made with English scientific books will always keep me, in my studies, on the side of the English for whom I have an extremely favorable prejudice: Tyndall, Huxley, Lyle, Darwin, Thomson, Lockyer and others."²

In 1882, in his mood of discouragement, Freud fanned the smoldering embers of Anglophilism that remained from his visit with reading of a wider kind. "I am taking up again," he reported to his Martha, "the history of the island, the works of the men who were my real teachers – all of them English or Scotch; and I am recalling again what is for me the most interesting historical period, the reign of the Puritans and Oliver Cromwell." One might have expected that the future liberator of sexuality would have defined his interest in the Puritans negatively. Not at all, for his eye was seeking civic virtue.

"Must we stay here, Martha?" Freud wrote of Vienna. "If we possibly can, let us seek a home where human worth is more respected. A grave in the Centralfriedhof is the most distressing idea I can imagine."³ Although he seems often to have entertained the idea of emigrating to England in the 1880s, Freud could not shake off his attachment to hated Vienna as the scene of his professional self-realization. It was only Hitler that caused him finally to leave for London, in the end to be buried there rather than in the Centralfriedhof.

In his devotion to England as an ideal society, Freud only shared an attitude widespread in the Austrian liberal bourgeoisie before World War I. Indeed, when the Great War broke, Freud, who would soon give "all my libido . . . to Austria-Hungary," hesitated in his allegiance. As he wrote to Carl Abraham, "I should be with it (Austria-Hungary) with all my heart, if only I could think England would not be on the wrong side."⁴

Within the larger whole, however, there were different kinds of Anglophilism. Most of Freud's contemporaries among the intellec-

tuals admired England for producing a human type who fused bourgeois practicality with aristocratic grace, business, and high style. The writer Arthur Schnitzler portrayed in a novel an Austrian Jew who, making a new life in England, embodied the typical Englishman as Austrians of the *fin-de-siècle* saw him: cool and gray-eyed, courteous, and self-possessed. The poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his friends in the higher bureaucracy wanted to establish a public school on the English model in Austria to breed such personalities. Theodor Herzl's Jewish state too would cultivate such aristocratic realists *à l'anglais*. Adolf Loos, architect and critic of Austria's visual culture, when he founded a journal called *Das Andere* (*The Other*) "to introduce Western culture into Austria," exalted the gentlemanly values of sobriety and practicality reflected in English clothing, interior decor, and use-objects.

Freud's Anglophilism showed none of these aristocratic-aesthetic features. He drew his image of England from an older, more militant midcentury liberalism, hostile to aristocracy and to the Catholicism associated with it in Austria. Parliamentarism was what they prized in English politics; philosophic radicalism was their lodestar in culture. Freud studied philosophy under Franz Brentano, a leading protagonist of English positivism in Austria. Under the editorial guidance of Theodor Gomperz, a classicist who, following George Grote, embraced the Sophists and radical democrats as the finest flowers of Athens, Freud worked on the German edition of the complete works of John Stuart Mill. (He translated "On the Subjection of Women," "Socialism," "The Labor Movement," and "Plato.") Though he does not speak of a debt to Bentham, Freud's early theory of instincts, with its duality of pleasure principle and reality principle, resonates with echoes of Bentham's hedonistic system. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, those whom Freud claimed as his "real teachers – all of them English or Scotch," were the protagonists of libidinal repression and the advocates of postponed gratification – whether as Puritan foes of aristocratic squandering and the Church of Rome or as secularized utilitarian moralists. They were builders, stern and rational, of the liberal ego which, for Freud, made England the classic land of ethical rectitude, manly self-control, and the rule of law.

Freud named all his children after his teachers or their wives – except one. Oliver, his second son, he named for Cromwell. Thus

the great sex theorist paid tribute to the public virtues of private repression and the special achievement of English political culture.

II

It has become a commonplace of Freud scholarship to identify Paris with the impact of Jean-Martin Charcot, the great theorist and clinician of hysteria, on Freud's intellectual development. Justly so. Freud went on a fellowship to the Salpêtrière Hospital for Women in 1885 as a neurologist exploring the organic basis of nervous disorders. Charcot turned him in a new direction, toward the study of hysteria, especially hysterical paralysis, as a disease that behaved "as if there were no anatomy of the brain."⁵ He also opened Freud's mind, even if only in informal discourse, to "*la chose génitale*," the sexual component in the etiology of hysteria. When Freud returned to Vienna to open his own practice, it was as a neurologist still, but one with a special interest in "nervous cases" that others found tiresome: patients who did *not* suffer from organic lesions of the nervous system.⁶ Thus returning from Paris with a pronounced predilection for what we would now call neurotics, Freud set out for the first time, boldly if only half aware, on the *via regia* to the unconscious.

Freud's letters to his fiancée during his half-year in Paris make it clear that the city itself, or more accurately, his encounter with it, both prepared and reinforced the impact of Charcot.

England was good order, morality, and liberal rationality, appealing to Freud as a possible refuge from the social inequities and professional frustrations of Austria. Paris was the very opposite: a city of danger, of the questionable, of the irrational. Freud accepted, but richly elaborated, Paris as the wanton, the female temptress; he approached it in a spirit of adventure at once thrilling and terrifying.

Until he went to Paris in 1885, there is, as far as I could find, no reference to the city in his writings, either as fact or as symbol. More than a decade later, however, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he tells the reader cryptically that "Paris . . . had for many long years been the goal of my longings; and the blissful feelings with which I first set foot on its pavement seemed to me a guarantee that others of my wishes would be fulfilled as well" (1900a, IV, 195). What wishes? Freud does not say. In the beautiful letters he wrote to his fiancée and her sister during his Paris *Lehrjahr*, however, the intense

and impressionable young Freud seems to have opened himself to the whole world of forbidden *fleurs du mal* that Freud the Anglophile and liberal Jew had until then rejected or avoided: the Roman Catholic Church, the bewitching power of the female, and the power of the masses. As London was the city of the ego, where the whole culture supported one's independence and control, Paris was the city of the id, where instincts erotic and thanatal reigned.

Two months after his arrival in Paris, Freud could still write of it, "I am under the full impact of Paris, and, waxing very poetical, could compare it to a vast overdressed Sphinx who gobbles up every foreigner unable to solve her riddles."⁷ Freud chose his image well, for the Sphinx united beauty and the beast, challenging natural law with her composite being and rationality with her fateful riddle that only brilliant, perverse Oedipus could solve.

Mindful of the bitter lifelong disgust and mistrust in which Freud held Catholicism, recalling his yearning to escape from the shadow of "that abominable tower of St. Stephen" to England in 1882, we are stunned to watch his reaction to Notre Dame. "My first impression was a sensation I have never had before: 'This is a church.' . . . I have never seen anything so movingly serious and somber, quite unadorned and very narrow." What Freud reported of the companion with whom he paid his first visit to Notre Dame must have been true of himself: "There he stood, deeply lost in wonder."⁸

Freud associated himself not only with the beauty of the cathedral, but with its beastly side as well. He later recalled that the platform of Notre Dame was his "favorite resort" in Paris. "Every free afternoon, I used to clamber about there on the towers of the church between the monsters and the devils." When Freud in a dream of omnipotence identified himself with Hercules, he discovered behind the dream Rabelais' Gargantua, avenging himself on the Parisians by turning a stream of urine on them from the top of Notre Dame (1900a, V, 469).

As for the people of Paris, they simply frightened Freud. They struck him as "uncanny." To be sure, political turbulence marked the months of Freud's stay, a period of governmental instability (the so-called *valse des ministères*) following the fall of Jules Ferry, stormy elections, and the rise of Boulangisme. Freud rarely identified the objectives of political demonstrators; what he saw was mob behavior as such, something to become all too familiar again in

Vienna a decade later: "The people seem to me of a different species from ourselves; I feel they are possessed of a thousand demons. . . . I hear them yelling 'A la lanterne' and 'à bas' this man and that. I don't think they know the meaning of shame or fear. . . . They are people given to psychical epidemics, historical mass convulsions, and they haven't changed since Victor Hugo wrote *Notre-Dame*."⁹

To the awe of the church and the fear of the feverish crowd one must add one more perspective to triangulate Freud's Paris: the theater, and especially its women. Freud went to theater first in hopes of improving his French, found he understood little, but returned ever again for other reasons. Freud devoted one of the longest of his long letters to a scene-by-scene account of Sarah Bernhardt's performance in Victorien Sardou's melodrama, *Théodora*.¹⁰ He was utterly bewitched by her portrayal of the Byzantine heroine, a prostitute become Empress: ". . . Her caressing and pleading, the postures she assumes, the way she wraps herself around a man, the way she acts with every limb, every joint – it's incredible. A remarkable creature, and I can imagine she is no different in life from what she is on the stage."

"For the sake of historical truth," Freud continues, "let us add that I again had to pay for this pleasure with an attack of migraine." The tensions of the Paris experience, his new receptivity, sensual as well as intellectual, to the realm of instinct were doubtless related to Freud's long separation from his Martha. He cheerfully admitted to her his frequent recourse to cocaine to keep his tensions down or his spirits up. While he surely concealed no actions from her, he revealed one fantasy – that he might marry the attractive daughter of Dr. Charcot and thus in one stroke solve his problems of power – professional, social, and sexual – that evidently evoked a nettled response from Martha, who could not take it as lightly as Freud tried to present it.¹¹ One suspects that the decorous Freud could not and did not reveal the full extent of his newfound feelings. They are perhaps better expressed in a joke he delighted to record at a later time, when he had discovered that jokes contain the expression of repressed wishes: A married couple is discussing the future. The man says to his wife: "If one of us should die, I shall move to Paris" (1900a, V, 485).

In one of Freud's remarkable Paris letters, the very imagery he used seems to bring all the dimensions of his Paris experience into

relation to the impact of Jean-Martin Charcot: "I think I am changing a great deal. . . . Charcot, who is one of the greatest of physicians, and a man whose common sense borders on genius, is simply wrecking all my aims and opinions. I sometimes come out of his lectures as from out of Notre Dame," our militant anti-Catholic continues, "with an entirely new idea of perfection. . . . It is three whole days since I have done any work, and I have no feelings of guilt," the erstwhile Puritan adds. "My brain is sated as after an evening in the theater. Whether the seed will ever bear fruit, I don't know; but I do know that no other human being has ever affected me in the same way. . . . Or am I under the influence of this magically attractive and repulsive city?"¹²

Surely it was both. Paris, and Freud's rather stereotyped perception of it, provided the ideal setting to receive from Charcot a doctrine that opened the way to that questionable province of the psyche where neither body nor conscious mind seemed in control.

Before Freud left Paris for home he cemented his relations with Charcot by volunteering as translator of a volume of his *Leçons sur les maladies du système nerveux*, including his lectures on hysteria. Thus Freud's tribute to English thought in his translation of John Stuart Mill's essay on the subjection of women found an appropriate French equivalent. Freud carried the symmetry into his family too: He named his firstborn son Jean Martin for Charcot, as he would soon, in tribute to Puritan England, name his second son Oliver, after Cromwell. Thus Freud's personal exemplars of English ego and Parisian id each had their namesakes among his children.

When Freud returned to Vienna he entered practice as a doctor of nervous diseases. He chose Easter Sunday to publish this good news in the *Neue Freie Presse*. Thus the Jewish admirer of Notre Dame combined an announcement of his own resurrection and new life with a defiance of Catholic sensibilities worthy of a Puritan prophet. Such were the extreme polarities that entered into the genesis of psychoanalysis.

III

By this time, you must be wondering whether the pictures that I have drawn of Freud's London and Paris justify my subtitle, "The Psychoarcheology of Civilizations." Since they antedate Freud's in-

terests in either the depths of the psyche or in archeology, our materials thus far have dealt with conscious ideas and values, not with buried ones; with the day-world, not the night-world. What is striking is the sharpness of the contrast between Freud's images of the two cultures. He not only kept their identities separate and antithetical but sought in neither any trace of the features he saw in the other. The Puritan-rationalist spectacles he wore when he looked at England allowed him to see there nothing of the cathedrals, crowds, or women that so caught his eye in France; nor did he remark the gracious, aristocratic side of English life and manners. In France, on the other hand, the image of the female and the Sphinx so dominated his perception that the positivist, rationalist, masculine side of French bourgeois society scarcely entered his field of vision. Finally, Freud made no attempt to establish any relationship between the contrasting values that attracted him in English and French culture. This he was to accomplish only indirectly in his encounter with Rome, where male and female, ethics and aesthetics – in short, the ego-world of London and the id-world of Paris – converged in bewildering conflation.

Rome had engaged Freud's fancy on and off since childhood. Not until the 1890s, when Freud was in his forties, while at work on *The Interpretation of Dreams*, did he conceive a truly passionate interest in the Eternal City. As in the early 1880s, when he had contemplated escape to the refuge of England, he entered in the mid-1890s another, deeper professional crisis. Where the impasse of the 1880s applied only to his career opportunities, the new one involved, by virtue of the very depth of his frustration, Freud's personal identity and intellectual direction as well.

I have elsewhere tried to show how the seething crisis of Austrian society, in which liberalism lacked the power to sustain itself against the rising tide of Catholic and nationalist anti-Semitic movements, affected Freud.¹³ It drove him into social withdrawal as a Jew, into intellectual isolation as a scientist, and into introspection as a thinker. The more his outer life was mired, however, the more winged his ideas became. In his fundamental work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud transformed the poison of social frustration as Jew and as scientist into the elixir of psychological illumination. Essential to his procedure was to plumb the depths of his own personal history, thus to find a universal psychological structure, a key

to human destiny that would transcend the collective history which until then had seemed to shape man's fate. Freud devised psychoanalysis as a counterpolitical theory in a situation of political despair. Where he had once been tempted to withdraw to England, he now turned inward into himself, to face and overcome the conflicts between his wishes and his hostile environment, by means of psychoanalysis as *theory*. As he did so, he also resolved, by means of psychoanalysis as *therapy*, the conflicts between his wishes and his values.

It was in working through this intellectual and personal crisis that Freud's interest in antiquity and in Rome arose. He hit upon the analogy between his own procedure of digging into his own buried past as depth psychologist and the work of the archeologist. Soon his mild interest developed into an insatiable passion. He eagerly read the biography of Heinrich Schliemann, who fulfilled a childhood wish by his discovery of Troy. He began the collection of ancient artifacts that soon graced his office in the Berggasse. And, especially rare in those days of his social withdrawal, Freud made a new friend: Emanuel Löwy, a professor of archeology. "He keeps me up until three o'clock in the morning," Freud wrote to his dearest friend; "he tells me about Rome."¹⁴

What could be more natural than that Freud, an inveterate traveler, should pursue his newfound interest by visiting the Eternal City? But he found he could not. Five times Freud journeyed to Italy between 1895 and 1898, without ever reaching Rome. Some inhibition held him back. At the same time, the yearning to visit it grew ever more torturous. Rome became literally the city of his dreams, and Freud began to speak of his longing for Rome as "deeply neurotic."¹⁵ As such, he incorporated it into his self-analysis and into *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Freud explored fully only one dimension of his Rome neurosis in *The Interpretation*, that which bore on his relations with his father. But in it he revealed also the centrality of the Jewish problem and Austrian politics in his own life. He recalled from his school days his hero worship for Hannibal.

Like so many boys of that age, I had sympathized in the Punic Wars not with the Romans, but the Carthaginians. And when in the higher classes I began to understand for the first time what it meant to belong to an alien race, and

anti-semitic feelings among the other boys warned me that I must take a definite position, the figure of the semitic general rose still higher in my esteem. To my youthful mind, Hannibal and Rome symbolized the conflict between the tenacity of Jewry and the organization of the Catholic church.

Freud then recaptured an episode from his childhood where his father told him of having been insulted by Christians, without fighting back. Freud resented his father's "unheroic conduct." He remembered having wished that his father had enjoined him, as Hannibal's had, "to take vengeance on the Romans." Ever since that time, Freud reported, Hannibal had had a place in his fantasies. In the face of the newly threatening power of anti-Semitism in the 1890s, Freud interpreted his longing for Rome as "actually following in Hannibal's footsteps. Like him, I had been fated not to see Rome" (1900a, IV, 196–7).

Two aspects of Freud's interpretation of his Hannibal identification deserve notice: First, that he had the same attitude toward Christian Rome that the English Puritans had had, as the hated center of Catholic power; second, that he had taken on the paternal burden of defender of Jewish dignity, which, despite his anger at his father's impotence, he was himself now powerless to realize. Freud's Rome neurosis, his inability to reach the city, was from this perspective the consequence of guilt, of an undischarged obligation at once filial and political.

Yet Freud's actual dreams of Rome in the years 1896 and 1897 spoke a different language, one more akin to the seductive allure of his Paris than to the Puritan probity of his England. All of them suggest fulfillment rather than conquest. All conflate images of Catholic Rome with Jewish ideas and situations (1900a, IV, 193–8).¹⁶ In one dream Rome appears as "the promised land seen from afar," implying Freud to be in the same relation to Rome as Moses to Israel. The vision, though Freud does not say so, seems to express a forbidden wish: a longing for an assimilation to the gentile world that his strong waking conscience – and even his dream-censor – would deny him. He also identifies Rome with Carlsbad, Bohemia's equivalent of our Palm Springs, a city of pleasure, rest, and cure; in short, an earthly city of recreation (re-creation), of resurrection. Freud compares himself in the analysis of this dream to a poor, gentle Jewish character in one of the Yiddish stories he loved so well. Because the little Jew did not

have the train fare to Carlsbad, the conductor beat him up at every station; but, undaunted, he continued on his *via dolorosa* (the expression is Freud's). Thus the lofty vision of Moses-Freud seeing Israel-Rome "from afar" had its lowly analogue in the picture of the little-Jew-Christ-Freud reaching Carlsbad-Rome on a *via dolorosa*. A third dream reinforces the Christian theme but telescopes it into that of ancient, pagan Rome. From a train window Freud sees across the Tiber the Castel Sant'Angelo, at once papal castle and Roman imperial tomb. Tantalizingly, the train moves off before he can cross the Bridge of the Holy Angel to reach the castle – a house of both buried paganism and Christian salvation.

How different is the Rome of Freud the youth of the 1860s and 1870s – forbidding, hostile, bureaucratic – from this Rome of the dreaming man in the 1890s: the first an object of hate, to be destroyed, the second an object of desire, to be entered in love! Surely in the second of these Romes, we can descry the positive features of Freud's Paris: the awesome but glorious feminine Catholic spirit of Notre Dame, the allure of the city of pleasure (Carlsbad-Paris-Rome); in short, Mother and temptress at once. Indeed Freud provided the materials to connect the lure of Rome to his surrogate mother, a beloved Czech Nanny of his childhood. She had taught him about her Catholic faith and taken him to church on Easter Sunday. In contrast to his father, she had given him "a high opinion of my own capacities." As the Rome of Hannibal was masculine, connected by Freud with his social duty and his oedipal conflict, so the Rome of Nanny was feminine, that of Mother Church, of tabooed oedipal love.¹⁷

While Freud in his psychoarcheological report analyzes only the first, pagan Rome, identifying with Hannibal and his wish "to take vengeance on the Romans," he gives us a clue that opens still another road that leads, like that of Nanny, to a Rome more consonant with the dream-wishes to enter it in love and fulfillment. The clue lies in a quotation from a German author which occurred to Freud in the course of wrestling with his Rome neurosis: "Which of . . . two [men] paced his study in greater excitement after forming his plan to go to Rome: Winckelmann or Hannibal?" Freud unequivocally answered for himself, "Hannibal," for he had been "fated not to see Rome." But Winckelmann would correspond to the other side of Freud's dream-truth, the one he failed to analyze for us. For Winckel-

mann, the great archeologist and art historian, had much in common with Freud: his poverty; an acute sense of low social origins; failure to find for many years a congenial position or professional recognition; a series of intense male friendships with homosexual overtones; hatred of political tyranny; hostility to organized religion; and a generativity crisis at the age of forty that resulted, like Freud's, in a "first work" of a new and revolutionary kind. Above all, Winckelmann, a Protestant, overcame his scruples and embraced Catholicism in order to enter Rome, to be able to pursue his passion for classical antiquity. He conquered his conscience for the sake of his science, his *amor intellectualis* for Rome.

Was not Freud more scientist than general – and a "soft" scientist at that? Was he not, on his journey to Rome, following in Winckelmann's footsteps rather than in Hannibal's? Freud's passionate cleaving to the friendship of Wilhelm Fliess as sole intellectual confidant during these years of crisis had homoerotic overtones that speak for Winckelmann too. Fliess was even more radically committed to the primacy of sexuality in psychic life than Freud. He advanced a radical theory of bisexuality that Freud seriously entertained. (Paris, where Freud espoused Charcot's theory that males too could suffer from the woman's malady, hysteria, had prepared him for that.) Freud called their series of meetings *à deux* "congresses"; he particularly longed for a congress on classical soil. When Fliess proposed in 1901 that they hold their congress at Easter, Freud replied that he was "powerfully gripped" (*mächtig gepackt*) by the idea; but since the friendship was then nearing its end, Freud declined.¹⁸ He could not but admit to Fliess the pull of Rome as goal, as scene of resurrection: "In the midst of this mental and material depression, I am haunted by the thought of spending Easter week in Rome this year. Not that there is any justification for it – I have achieved nothing yet." Or again: "I shall no more get to Rome this Easter than you will."¹⁹

Of course, Freud was not ready to go the course of Winckelmann, to join the Church of Rome. The Hannibal and the Cromwell in him – the Jewish, liberal, and Anglophile values that furnished his conscience by day and censored his dreams by night – assured his capacity to resist any such apostasy. But the temptation that Winckelmann had embraced in Rome, so like the one that Freud had encountered in Paris – the affective power of Eros with which Catholic Rome was

associated – Freud recognized as a deeper reality in his own psyche. It was his glory to exhume it painfully in himself and then to put it to work in building his dynamic psychoanalytic system.

After Freud finished his self-analysis and *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900, the gates of Rome opened to him at last. He entered the city not “to take vengeance on the Romans,” nor to yield to the temptation of Holy Mother Church, but as an intellectual pilgrim. “It was an overwhelming experience for me, the fulfillment of a long-cherished wish,” he wrote to Fliess. “It was also,” he added, “slightly disappointing.” Though he did not find all the strata of Rome’s symbolic meaning for his psychic life simultaneously present, as in the metaphor with which this essay began, Freud could distinguish three Romes clearly, by historical period. Taking them in inverse order, the third Rome, modern Rome, was “hopeful and likeable.” The second, Catholic Rome, with its “lie of salvation,” was “disturbing,” making him “incapable of putting out of my mind my own misery and all the other misery which I know to exist.” Was not his misery the result of the powerful attraction of the Catholic world of Notre Dame, and the temptation of professional salvation through conversion after the example of Winckelmann – all of which conflicted with his Old Testament conscience and his ethnic fidelity? But beneath these, there was the first Rome, the Rome of antiquity. It alone moved him to deep enthusiasm: “I could have worshipped the humble and mutilated remnants of the Temple of Minerva.”²⁰

Minerva? A true brainchild of her father Jupiter, she was at once the goddess of disposing wisdom and protectrix of the polis. Her statue was just then (1902) being placed before Vienna’s Parliament building, as the belated symbol of the liberal-rationalist polity. Minerva was also a phallic female, an antierotic goddess, who repelled her enemies with her spear, her snaky aegis, and her gorgon-studded shield. She unified in her ascetic bisexuality and rational cool the civic spirit that had so attracted Freud to masculine England with the female beauty and irrational power that had so moved him in Paris. In the deepest, pagan layer of the Eternal City, where he found the mutilated remnant of Minerva, Freud the psychoarcheologist could celebrate his own achievement: to reconcile in thought the polarities of male and female, conscience and instinct, ego and id, Jewish patriarchy and Catholic maternalism, London and Paris – all in the name of science. Freud’s solution to his own problem with

many-layered Rome brought with it the restoration of his own ego, endowing it with the capacity to comprehend a contradictory and nonhomogeneous reality and thus to find a way to live with it.

NOTES

- 1 Quoted in Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, 3 vols. (New York, 1953–57), vol. 1, pp. 178–9.
- 2 Ronald M. Clark, *Freud: The Man and His Cause* (New York, 1980), pp. 38–40.
- 3 Jones, *Freud*, vol. 1, p. 179.
- 4 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 171.
- 5 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 233. For an able discussion of Freud's relation to Paris and Charcot somewhat at variance with mine, see Léon Chertok, "Freud in Paris (1885/86)," *Psyche* 5 (1973): 431–48.
- 6 Marthe Robert, *The Psychoanalytic Revolution*, trans. Kenneth Morgan, paperback ed. (New York, 1968), p. 72.
- 7 Sigmund Freud to Minna Bernays, Paris, 3 Dec. 1885, *The Letters of Sigmund Freud*, ed. Ernst L. Freud, trans. Tania and James Stern, paperback ed. (New York, Toronto, London, 1964), p. 187.
- 8 Freud to Martha Bernays, Paris, 19 Nov. 1885, *Letters*, p. 183.
- 9 Freud to Minna Bernays, Paris, 3 Dec. 1885, *Letters*, pp. 187–8.
- 10 Freud to Martha Bernays, Paris, 8 Nov. 1885, *Letters*, pp. 178–82.
- 11 "Now just suppose I were not in love already and were something of an adventurer; it would be a strong temptation to court her [Mlle. Charcot], for nothing is more dangerous than a young girl bearing the features of a man whom one admires." *Ibid.*, 20 Jan. 1886, pp. 196–7; 27 Jan. 1886, pp. 197–8; 2 Feb. 1886, p. 201; 10 Feb. 1886, pp. 206–7.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 24 Nov. 1885, pp. 184–5.
- 13 Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna, Politics and Culture* (New York, 1980), ch. 4. Unless otherwise indicated, what follows is based on the materials there presented.
- 14 Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, Vienna, 5 Nov. 1897, Sigmund Freud, *The Origins of Psycho-analysis: Letters, Drafts and Notes to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1902*, ed. Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud, Ernst Kris, trans. Eric Mosbacher and James Strachey, paperback ed. (Garden City, N.Y., 1957), p. 232.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 3 Dec. 1897, p. 129.
- 16 One later Rome dream, in which the city is the setting of grief, is not included here. This dream's bearing on Freud's problem of ambivalence as a Jew has been interestingly demonstrated by Peter Loewenberg in "A

- Hidden Zionist Theme in Freud's 'My Son, the Myops . . .' Dream," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 31 (1970): 129–32.
- 17 Freud to Fliess, Vienna, 3–4 Oct. 1897; Vienna, 15 Oct. 1897, *Origins*, pp. 221–8. The most comprehensive treatment of the Nanny and Freud's Rome neurosis is Kenneth A. Grigg, " 'All Roads Lead to Rome,' The Role of the Nursemaid in Freud's Dreams," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 21 (1973): pp. 108–26.
- 18 Freud to Fliess, Vienna, 23 March 1901, *Origins*, pp. 315–6.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 30 Jan., 15 Feb. 1901, pp. 328–9.
- 20 *Ibid.* [Vienna], 19 Sept. 1901, p. 336.