

reversal has varied motives. To some extent it results from the influence of fundamentalist religion, whether Christian or Islamic. In other instances, prohibition of same-sex behavior reflects a misguided notion that modernization requires a ban on "decadence" and "perversion." Another problem is that the World Health Organization continues to list homosexuality as an illness. Beginning in 1984, the International Lesbian and Gay Association undertook to monitor the situation on a worldwide basis, and to encourage renewed momentum toward decriminalization.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.** International Lesbian and Gay Association, *Second ILGA Pink Book 1985: A Global View of Lesbian and Gay Liberation and Oppression*, Utrecht: Interfacultaire Werkgroep Homostudies, 1988.

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### DELLA CASA, GIOVANNI (1503–1556)

Italian prelate and author. Della Casa served as archbishop of Benevento in 1544, papal nuncio to the Venetian republic (1544–49), and papal secretary of state under Paul IV (1555–56). He wrote a manual of polite conduct, *Il Galateo, ovvero dei costumi* (1558), which enjoyed great success after its posthumous publication.

Before undertaking a clerical career in 1537, Della Casa wrote various compositions in the Bernesque vein, which are typically full of double entendres. Among his juvenilia it is conventional to mention a text in Latin prose entitled *In laudem pederastiae seu sodomiae* or *De laudibus sodomiae* (in praise of buggery). In reality this work never existed, as was demonstrated by Gilles Ménage (1613–1692) in his *Anti-Baillet* (The Hague, 1682). In this study Ménage traced the attestations for the supposed work, showing that they all go back, directly or indirectly, to propagandistic pieces spread by Protestants in order to discredit Della Casa and Roman Catholicism with which he was prominently connected.

Much of the responsibility lies at the door of Pier Paolo Vergerio, a heterodox prelate whom Della Casa harassed by bringing him to trial, after loudly adhering to Protestantism, Vergerio composed a harsh indictment of his persecutor. In reality the young Della Casa had written only a small satire, the *Capitolo del forno*, in which he pretended to praise, in a Bernesque vein, bread and the oven, while extolling the sexual act through double entendres. Although this composition was mainly heterosexual, a few lines do speak of homosexuality. From this slender foundation arose the legend of the pretended *In laudem . . . sodomiae*. In his own lifetime Della Casa defended himself of the charge in the short Latin work *Ad Germanos* in which he declared of himself: "We did not praise men, but clearly women." Nonetheless, some have held that the charge cost the learned prelate a cardinal's hat.

Other references to homosexual behavior that appear here and there in the *Galateo* serve, however, to confirm that, like many intellectuals formed before the Counter-Reformation, Della Casa held a detached and tolerant attitude toward same-sex love. This attitude drew Protestant attacks aimed at an educated class that was considered excessively lax and tolerant toward homosexual conduct.

Giovanni Dall'Orto

### DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Demography is the study of populations. Sex ratios, marriage ages, life expectancies, and prevalence of polygamy may tell us much about the relative frequency of homosexuality, or perhaps more strictly speaking, of **bisexuality**.

*Theoretical Basis.* Such deductions follow from a theoretical framework which sees the prevalence of homosexual behavior as somewhat plastic, responsive to **situational** factors, rather than fixed at birth or in infancy, and particularly sensitive to the relative lack or abundance of opportunity for heterosexual behavior,

rather than being a phenomenon associated for the most part with exclusive "homosexuals." Demographically-oriented theorists take reports of increased homosexual behavior in such contemporary populations as those situated in **prisons, seafaring, and public schools**, where access to the opposite sex is difficult, and reason that when heterosexual opportunities are relatively scarce, more and more of the general population will turn to homosexuality.

Applied historically, this method must take into account different social conceptions of homosexuality. Arguably, societies that tolerate homosexuality openly expect few social obstacles to such "surrogate" behavior, which Ancient Greece, overpopulated in the seventh century B.C., encouraged.

Until recent times, the absence of a folk model of exclusive homosexuality made it much easier for males to switch back and forth from penetrating the opposite sex (or desiring to) to penetrating the same sex (especially if the receptor was not perceived as equally masculine, such as was the case with boys, slaves, captives, the poor, or those of inferior social rank) without facing either an **identity crisis** or massive social opprobrium. At the most, such an opportunistic switcher had made himself guilty of a vice considered minor except by **Abrahamic religions**; his marriage or financial prospects remained unimpaired.

On the other hand, without available passive partners, or the willingness by actives to switch roles on demand, such a possibility would be of only theoretical interest. Reciprocity was by all accounts historically rare until recent times, but an overabundance of boys, passive partners in relation to adult males, has normally existed. Late ages of marriage, widespread slavery, resident non-citizens, prolonged warfare, and an overabundance of paupers favored the development of **pederasty**. Sufficient evidence for lesbianism in harems and other situations without males

such as nunneries sustains demographic theorizing without further elaboration.

*Prehistory.* Before the breakthrough to agriculture—which terminated the Paleolithic Age—cave-dwellers averaged well under 20 years of life, primarily because of high infant mortality. Those who survived infancy, if often sick and frail by 40, had a good chance to reach 50. Active females who suffered from early pregnancies thus did not survive their peak sexual drive, which is currently estimated to occur at 27, by more than a decade or so. High death rates from pregnancy and childbirth may have reduced the number of women even more than deaths from hunting and warfare reduced the numbers of adult males. Women capable of reproduction were taken by men upon whom they depended for game, their major protein supply. Thus lesbianism would have been relatively infrequent. On the other hand normal males did not live into such old age that they became impotent, as so many do now.

The hypothesis that females dominated society by putting the young males outside the horde, as do baboons and gorillas, greatly stimulating homosexual contacts among the outcast adolescent males as it does among such primates, may have been realized occasionally in certain human groups. If so, lesbianism may have flourished among such "Amazons," but the surviving evidence, largely the widespread existence of "mother goddesses" on neolithic sites, is too scanty for proof.

*Early Civilizations.* Beginning in **Mesopotamia and Egypt**, about 3500–3100 B.C., the earliest writings depict a male-dominated society with a pantheon ruled by males. In most societies adolescents married shortly after puberty, and polygamy predominated as it has done throughout most of history—there have been hardly any polyandrous and relatively few monogamous societies. One survey reports that monogamy prevails in 24 percent of societies, polyandry in 1 percent, and po-

lygamy in 75 percent. Even in Egypt, where considerable evidence exists for monogamy, the wealthy certainly kept concubines and sexually used slaves and prisoners of war of both sexes. Mesopotamia and all the civilizations outside Europe practiced polygamy, replete with harems such as King Solomon's. Such institutions assured that many slave, poor, or young men could not have women for themselves, with a consequent probability of widespread homosexuality among the lower classes who could rarely have afforded prostitutes.

As life expectancy increased in these archaic civilizations that developed irrigation and storage facilities along with the plough, infanticide, especially of females, seems to have increased. Only Egyptians, who married relatively late, and Jews seem to have prohibited it, but even they greatly preferred male offspring. As a result of much more frequent female infanticide, males greatly outnumbered females in most societies. A 4:3 ratio was perhaps not uncommon, although among especially warlike nomadic societies like those of the Arabian Peninsula, men were in such short supply that Mohammed may have been recognizing actual conditions when he transmitted Allah's command that a man might have four wives and as many concubines as he can afford.

Even in monogamous societies such as those of the Indo-Europeans who settled in Europe, upper-class males married at very different ages. After about 600 B.C., copying a custom begun on Crete, Greek warriors waited until the age of 30 when they married girls from 15 to 18, getting an aristocratic boy of 12 when they were 22 to train and love until they married. Aristocratic Roman boys, on the other hand, married in their teens girls of 12 or 13 as arranged by their *patres* (male heads of families). Middle-class males who predominate on tombstones married later, in their mid-twenties to women as old as twenty. Practically no women, who may have composed little more than one-third

of society because of excess female infanticide, failed to find husbands, and virtually all upper-class males married, at least before the times of the Roman emperors. In Greece and Rome when a baby was born, the husband would decide whether to raise the infant or expose it—as contraception was ineffective and abortion dangerous, infanticide remained the usual method of birth control. Christianity, which took over the Empire and banned other religions with the sole exception of Judaism during the fourth century, outlawed infanticide and had the emperors decree death for sodomites.

*The Medieval Period.* During the Dark Ages (roughly A.D. 500–1000), after the Germans overran the depopulated Western provinces of the Roman Empire, little central control in the church or state survived. Among the barbarian laws, only those of the Visigoths condemned sodomy. The Celtic penitentials punished it harshly, but never with death. Many Merovingians and Carolingians had several wives and most had concubines, and evidence of excessive female infanticide continues. Knights and squires bound together by the closest ties in all-male (except for the lord's women and the servingwenches) castles often loved each other. Some poor in such an underpopulated society as Europe in the early Middle Ages could earn a sufficient living at an early age to marry or rather cohabit with a woman. Life expectancies decreased from classical times but upper class males at least married in their teens.

From the end of the invasions about 1000 to the arrival of the Black Death in 1347, the population grew from thirty to seventy million as life expectancies improved again to 40 or 50. As it became more difficult to get a farm or a position in a guild, commoners began to marry later in life. Merchants and professionals postponed marriage to accumulate capital or education. The marriage age for males went up from 20 to 30, but as they preferred women of 18 or even 16, a gap

developed in the population pyramid. Lots of rowdy, lusty young bachelors must often have lapsed into homosexual acts. Moreover, when the smaller age-group of 30-year-old men married 18-year olds, many unwed women became spinsters or nuns, often cloistered against their will, vastly increasing the allure of lesbianism. Catholic authorities and even **canon law** condoned female prostitution so that unmarried males would avoid the worse evil of sodomy.

The Black Death, wars, and famines decreased the population by one-third, from seventy to fifty million. Wages rose and food prices fell. Men could establish a living for themselves earlier and their marriage age, except for merchants and professionals, dropped. As the number of young bachelors and of spinsters decreased, homosexual activity probably declined. Demographics may have been more important than clerical persecution or municipal houses of **prostitution** and **municipal laws** or **royal laws**, which became quite severe, often ordering castration before hanging or burning, in reducing sodomy and lesbianism during the late Middle Ages—just when documentation of it (such as there is) becomes more plentiful. On the other hand, urbanization not only provided anonymity and other opportunities to escape family control but produced a secular gay subculture outside monasteries.

*Early Modern Europe.* The economic boom of the Renaissance and following period could not keep up with population expansion so that real wages fell. Bullion from the New World spurred inflation. Those unmarried increased, reaching almost 20 percent of the population in Spain. **Pirates**, **sailors**, **merchants**, and **soldiers** in the longer, more distant wars and voyages lived in male societies with only occasional contact with females, often through prostitution and rape, with a resultant increase in homosexuality. In the demographic boom that began in 1740 wages fell and males delayed marriage in

the lower as well as in the upwardly mobile middle classes.

In England between 1550 and 1800 the age of marriage rose to 26 for males and 23 for females. The percentage of unmarried males rose to 22 but fell by 1800 to about 17; that of females rose to the low 20s. Other European countries displayed similar patterns. Between 30 and 50 percent of peasants in preindustrial Europe never married. Sons could often not afford to marry until their father retired or died, leaving one of them land.

*The Nineteenth Century.* In nineteenth-century agrarian Ireland overpopulation meant that many "boys" (so called until marriage), could never secure and support a wife and hence did not marry. The society became obsessed with homophobia, taking that fear with them wherever they emigrated. Sicily and Southern Italy in a similar situation, however, continued the ancient **Mediterranean** tolerance of homosexuality, a common Catholicism notwithstanding, but the Italians tended to emigrate to American and other overseas areas after the Irish and ranked beneath them in the Church in these areas. Catholicism in English-speaking overseas areas became more homophobic than Catholicism in Latin areas.

Immigration usually loosened family and church ties. Often the first generation delayed marriage so that overseas immigrants engaged in homosexual acts as in Carolina plantations or early Virginia, and even more so in penal colonies like Georgia and Australia where males greatly outnumbered females. Puritans, however, took wives and children with them to the promised land where the unchallenged church was strengthened.

Easy access to western land and the constant labor shortages even in the eastern cities, however, lowered the marriage ages in comparison with Europe, where increasing numbers in both Catholic and Protestant countries remained lifelong celibates. Upper and middle class men married in Victorian England at age

30. The American frontier, however, was populated by young males with few females in the initial phase of settlement.

Among these nineteenth-century urban celibates the homosexual emerged and was named in 1869, exclusive as opposed to the earlier sodomites who, it was assumed, would normally be married.

Reaching their sexual peak later than men, women had opportunities to become lesbian at various stages of their increasingly long lives. Most men long outlived their sexual peak (in their late teens), more and more living into the slackening of sexual potency attendant on middle and old age. No wonder one hears so much of lesbianism after the eighteenth century and so little before.

The application of demographic principles to the study of sexual patterns is still in a pioneering stage; further investigation may shed considerable light, not only on the periods discussed above, but also on contemporary developments in the Third World and elsewhere. In the absence of literary and other documentation for sexual mores in the broad mass of the population, demographic analysis may open a window into these little-known areas.

*William A. Percy*

### DEMUTH, CHARLES (1883–1935)

American painter. Born into a well-to-do family in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Demuth was a sickly child who was educated largely at home. After art school in Philadelphia, he made two trips to Europe, absorbing modernism at its source in Paris. During the second of these, in 1913, he met another gay American artist, Marsden Hartley, a friendship that was to last all his life. After returning to the United States at the beginning of World War I, Demuth began to spend more and more time in New York's Greenwich Village, where new ideas of aesthetics and sexuality effervesced in equal measure. In

the company of Carl Van Vechten he began to frequent nightclubs in Harlem, then considered off-limits by bourgeois society. He also visited bathhouses, producing frank watercolors of scenes of sexual solicitation. Always strongly interested in literature—a connection enhanced by his friendships with such figures as Eugene O'Neill and William Carlos Williams—Demuth began to illustrate works of fiction, including books by Honoré de Balzac and Frank Wedekind concerned with sexual variation. Also emerging at this time was his continuing predilection for flower subjects, into which sexual meanings were read in the then-prevailing Freudian mode. To the extent that Demuth himself shared these readings (a matter that is uncertain), they are not without validity.

In the later 1920s and 1930s, suffering from diabetes and under his mother's care in the family home in Lancaster, Demuth summoned himself to produce major works evoking the American scene, which have much in common with the precisionism of Charles Sheeler. At the same time, he produced for private viewing a series of watercolors that are even now striking in their frankness. These show street cruising, blatant sexual display, and even episodes of male group sex. These works feature military men, especially sailors, and "rough trade."

Demuth worked at a time of transition in American art, as it was abandoning the certainties of the academy and the realism of the Ashcan School, but before it fully embraced the modernist aesthetic. This historical position, and the unusual range of his subject matter, make his ultimate standing hard to determine. Certainly the 1980s rediscovery of his sexually explicit works—achieved at a time when critics are questioning the conventional distinctions between high and low art, between erotic painting and pornography—makes a reassessment mandatory. Significantly, as a major retrospective of his oeuvre was mounted in four American cities in 1987–88 some critics still ex-