

include some gay activists and theoreticians, there is not a single favorable reference to homosexuality in his writings. He loathed homosexuals, never knowingly accepted a homosexual for treatment, and avoided overt homosexuals in his social and professional life. When a Norwegian physician recommended an individual for training with Reich, no sooner had the latter learned of the candidate's homosexuality than he rejected him with the words, "*Ich will mit solchen Schweinereien nichts zu tun haben*" (I want nothing to do with such filthiness). In a letter to A. S. Neill in 1948, Reich stated that while his discipline of sex economy dealt with the problems of natural genitality, the sexology promoted by the World League for Sexual Reform (Hirschfeld's bailiwick) concentrated on lingams, condoms, and homosexual perversions. He had earlier maintained that homosexuality was a disease of fascism that would "wither away" under socialism. Despite all this, the radical wave of the 1960s and later saw counterculture homosexuals turn to Reich as an authority for repudiating conventional morality and equating socialism with the untrammled gratification of their own sexual impulses.

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RENAISSANCE, ITALIAN

In Italy the term Renaissance designates a period somewhat different from that in the rest of Europe: the Italian Renaissance embraces the epoch that stretches from the late fourteenth century through the later decades of the sixteenth century, when the Catholic Counterreformation took hold. On the other side of the Alps, the Renaissance did not commence

until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when it was introduced from Italy; yet it lasted somewhat longer there, at least in Protestant countries.

The word Renaissance (literally: rebirth) alludes to the impression, widespread in the period itself, that the ongoing cultural and artistic flowering was a kind of revival—on a Christian base, to be sure—of the glory of the ancient Romans, a revival attained on the very soil from which Rome itself had arisen.

A notable feature of the Italian Renaissance was an intense drive to recover the authentic character of classical antiquity. This impulse led to the rediscovery of original texts, chiefly Latin ones—though the study of Greek and Hebrew was also promoted. As a result of this trend, ancient manuscripts thought to have been lost were copied and disseminated, and a new branch of learning, philology, was founded.

The roots of the Renaissance lie in the great upsurge of commerce and industry that occurred in Italy after the year 1000. These advances required cultural changes: merchants needed to know how to read and write and to keep accounts. A surplus of wealth accumulated that sufficed to maintain a number of scholars and investigators in "full-time employment." Since the traditional training that religious schools provided was inadequate, lay schools appeared, from which a number of prestigious Italian universities developed. Becoming famous throughout Europe, the universities were one of the channels that diffused the Italian Renaissance, permanently injecting its values into Western civilization.

Social Background. With respect to homosexuality the Renaissance attitude was not uniform. The beginning of the Renaissance—the late fourteenth century—coincided with increased persecution of homosexuals. Toward the middle of the fifteenth century, however, a more tolerant atmosphere began to prevail, and capital punishment became uncommon.

The upper classes—in part under the umbrella of libertine currents of thought—witnessed the spread of a mood of “live and let live,” which did not approve of homosexual behavior, but felt no obligation to condemn it either.

Evidence of the mindset that lies behind this trend is found for instance in the letters Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) and his friend Francesco Vettori (1474–1539) exchanged between 1513 and 1515 commenting about the homosexual behavior of this or that friend as the most natural and obvious thing in the world. Similarly, Baldassare Castiglione (1474–1529) treated homosexuality quite nonchalantly in his famous classic of manners, *Il Cortegiano* (1529).

In short it is not an accident that beginning in the fifteenth century information proliferates on the rise of a sodomite subculture in the major Italian cities. Even in the previous century documents lament the existence of sodomite coteries. That these complaints were not baseless is shown by the documents of mass trials preserved in municipal archives, and in the literary allusions to the existence of specific zones in the cities where the sodomites went to look for sexual partners. The sermons St. Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444) preached against sodomites in 1424–25 seem an almost inexhaustible source of relevant anecdotes.

Italian Renaissance Literature and Homosexuality. If society tolerated the subculture, the world of letters did not lag behind. Because of the boundless affection that humanist men of letters cherished for the Ancients, few had the courage to condemn, or even to refuse to condone, the tastes which the great Latin and Greek poets accepted without question. In emulation of the antique there appeared a rich literature of homosexual themes both in Latin and in Italian—so rich that it has no equal in quantity and quality until the twentieth century.

Naturally, one should not conclude that every declaration of homosex-

ual love stemming from the Renaissance corresponds to experiential reality, rooted in the emotional preference of the author. Often writers of the fifteenth century contented themselves with imitating Vergil, Martial, Catullus, and other major figures of the past. A similar trend appeared in Elizabethan England.

Nonetheless, it is a mistake to interpret, as is often done, every homosexual utterance as simply the product of literary convention. In the Italian Renaissance no risk attended the expression of homosexual sentiments and wishes. Hence many, profiting from literary and amatory conventions, took advantage of this freedom to set down their own homosexual feelings, though in the guise of “imitations” of the revered models of antiquity.

For these individuals the coming of the Counterreformation was a real tragedy that effectively ended the Renaissance. Shortly after the middle of the sixteenth century this rigorist trend brought a chill climate of moralism and censure that proved intensely hostile to the expression of homoerotic themes.

Classical Imitation. Italian Renaissance homosexual discourse was much given to donning the garments of classical antiquity. Latin Renaissance poetry often shows its proximity to its sources by its choice of terms and themes. On the one hand, one finds recyclings of specific authors, of Martial, as in the case of the *Hermaphroditus* (1425) of Antonio Beccadelli (1394–1471), and of less jocular authors, as in the *Hecathalegium* (1489) of Pacifico Massimo of Ascoli (ca. 1400–1500)—not to mention the invectives that Italian Humanists launched against one another. One finds classical trappings in the accusations of sodomy that Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481) launched against Cosimo de’ Medici in 1448; or in those of Giovanni Pontano (1426–1503) against a certain “Antonino,” or yet again by Andrea Dazzi (1473–1538) against Poliziano. As regards invectives against behavior Juvenal remained the

obvious point of reference, as had occurred earlier in the **Middle Ages**. Imitation also involved other authors (e.g., Vergil), as seen in Niccolò Lelio Cosmico (before 1420–1500), who was accused by contemporaries of being a sodomite; Angelo Ambrogini, known as Poliziano (1454–1494), who wrote also in classical Greek; Pomponio Leto (1421–1498), who was also arrested on suspicion of sodomy; and Pietro Bembo (1470–1547).

Jocose Poetry. Jocose or burlesque poetry enjoyed particular favor. In Florence it became so popular that as early as 1325 a law explicitly forbade the composition and singing of sodomitical songs, which were usually in verse.

Satirical poetry in Italian continued the traditions of medieval jocose and burlesque poetry; thus one finds the invectives (in which accusations of sodomy abound) of Matteo Franco (1447–1494) against Luigi Pulci, and of Nicolò Franco (1515–1570) against Pietro Aretino (1541).

To this general class belong the pasquinades, or public satires, in which the accusations of sodomy are unceasing. Valerio Marucci has provided an excellent sampling of this material, but much of it remains unpublished.

In burlesque poetry, as early as 1406–7 one finds two significant documents, the so-called "Tenzone fra Dante e Forese" (long attributed to Dante himself) and the work entitled *L'Aquettino*. From 1407–9 comes a long poem entitled *La Buca di Monteferrato* of Stefano Finiguerra (d. after 1422), in which a large number of Florentines were accused of sodomy and chastised for it in allusive language that abounds in double entendres.

This kind of cryptic language was carried to perfection in the so-called **Burchiellesque poetry**, and utilized also in **Bernesque poetry**, which enjoyed immense fame in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A later development of burlesque poetry was to give rise to **Fidentian verse**, which was also homoerotic in theme.

Prose. Relying upon the precedent of Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375), one of the "fathers" of the Italian language, who included stories with homosexual motifs in his *Decameron*, Italian writers did not flinch from offering an abundance of new tales and anecdotes featuring homosexual characters. Citing only the most important, one may note short stories and jokes on homosexual themes by the following: Gentile Sermini (fifteenth century), Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), Sabbadino degli Arienti (1450–1510), Nicolo dell'Angeli dal Bucine (ca. 1448–1532), Matteo Bandello (1485–1561), Agnolo Firenzuola (1493–1543), Girolamo Morlini (sixteenth century; wrote in Latin), Francesco Molza (1489–1544), and Sebastiano Erizzo (1528–1585).

A particular type of writing, a mock essay on an erotic theme, appeared in the *Commento alla "ficheide" di Padre Siceo* of Anibal Caro (1507–1566) and with the audacious *La Cazzaria* (1531) of Antonio Vignali de' Buonagiunti (d. 1559).

In prose writing a special place belongs to the numerous treatises on love, starting with that of the neo-Platonist Marsilio Ficino, in which the discussion of the permissibility of love between men is almost an obligatory commonplace. Among authors of treatises discussing this question are Tullia d'Aragona (1508–1556), Girolamo Benivieni (1453?–1542), Giuseppe Betussi (1512?–1573?), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), Flaminio Nobili (1530–1590), and Francesco Sansovino (1521–1583).

Theatre. Homosexual characters and situations appear in the *Janus Sacerdos*, a Latin comedy of 1427, as well as dramas by Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533), Pietro Aretino, and Poliziano.

Love Lyrics. Lyrical love poetry addressed to persons of the same sex was cultivated during the Renaissance by poets who often assembled a genuine *canzoniere* or personal anthology for the beloved.

From the imposing collection of Tuscan lyrics of the fifteenth century edited by Antonio Lanza, one must note at least Giovanni Gherardi (ca. 1367–1446), Andrea Bellacci (fifteenth century), Filippo Scarlatti (1442–after 1487), and Antonio di Guido (d. 1486). Also noteworthy is the love poetry of **Michelangelo**, Francesco Beccuti (1509–1553), Benedetto **Varchi**, and Torquato Tasso (1544–1595).

Sermons. The social historian will find much material in sermons, providing anecdotes and detailed descriptions of elements of the homosexual life. Among the most important are, besides those already cited by Bernardino of Siena, the sermons of Antonino of Florence (Antonio Pierozzi; 1389–1459), Roberto of Lecce (Roberto Caracciolo; 1425–1495), and the famous Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498).

Visual Arts. In the late Middle Ages, artists were organized in workshops whose personnel were made up, for the most part, of members of a single extended family. In fifteenth-century Florence, however, rising prosperity and new technical advances made it possible for gifted artists to set up studios of their own. In these independent establishments they hired unrelated young men (*garzoni*) who served as apprentices, models, and servants. Women did not function as models and, in an era in which ideal beauty was a supreme value, comely youths posed for renderings of both the male and female form. At the same time, artists became familiar with the ancient heritage of pederasty that the humanists had been uncovering. The homosexual character of classical themes, such as **Ganymede** and **Orpheus**, became known and cherished. In this climate it is not surprising that some artists succumbed to the charms of their *garzoni* and to those of other attractive youths. Such major figures as **Donatello**, **Leonardo**, and **Botticelli** are known to have had homosexual affairs. At the end of the fifteenth century a period of religious and political disturbances began, which made the situation of the artists, then reaching

the zenith of prestige in what subsequently came to be known as the High Renaissance, more uncertain, though their same-sex amours by no means ceased. Here the names of Michelangelo, Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (called “**Il Sodoma**”), Benvenuto **Cellini** (twice accused), Jacopo Pontormo, and **Caravaggio** must be recorded. Eventually, however, the Counterreformation put an end to this period of efflorescence of homoeroticism in the arts.

See also **Art, Visual; Florence; Papacy; Venice.**

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Giovanni Dall’Orto

RENAULT, MARY
(PSEUDONYM OF MARY
CHALLANS; 1905–1983)

Born in England in 1905, Mary Challans was educated at St. Hugh’s College, Oxford, in preparation for a teaching career. When she decided to become a writer instead, she concluded that she needed to see more of life and trained as a nurse from 1933 through 1937. After World War II broke out, she worked as a nurse and wrote in her off hours.

After the war, Challans settled in South Africa, where she spent the rest of her life, traveling periodically to mainland Greece, Crete, and other points. She was an intensely private woman, as shown by her use of a pseudonym, and never sought the “writer-celebrity” limelight, despite the fact that she was world-famous and highly esteemed. Since she never married, and since homosexuality and the nature of male and female are constant leitmotifs of her fiction, it would be only sensible to