

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

presume that she wrote about things which concerned her; from this one would conclude that Challans was a lesbian—or at least bisexual—but there is, as yet, no direct biographical evidence.

She began her career with an apprenticeship in the world of popular fiction, or romance novels. She later asserted that if everything she had written before *The Charioteer* were to perish, she would only feel relief. Her first novel, *Promise of Love* (1939), dealt with lesbianism as a subtheme, and her other romance novels continued to probe the nature of male and female in a very nonstandard way for the genre. Also nonstandard was the continued development of her writing style and a constant background of ancient Greek themes.

With *The Charioteer* in 1953, Challans began to break new ground for the popular novel. (The book's publication was delayed until 1959 in America, a fact which Challans attributed to McCarthyism.) The ancient Greek subthemes assume a much more prominent role, and the foreground tale is an overt account of male homosexual love. The novel describes physical love largely through ellipses (Challans was never to vary this habit of restraint), but otherwise pulls very few punches.

With her next book, *The Last of the Wine* (1956), Challans left popular romances behind her and took up a career in historical fiction. This is a problematic genre, since it has been so often abused. Yet, very early on, she was receiving the highest possible accolades for her faithful recreations of ancient Hellas. She typically included a bibliography and an "Author's Note" in each novel, explaining what was historical fact and what was not.

The Last of the Wine is one of the few classic novels of male homosexual love, and has been cherished by many gay men since it first appeared (it has never gone out of print). Other novels followed in steady progression: *The King Must Die*, *The Bull from the Sea*, *The Mask of Apollo*,

Fire from Heaven, *The Persian Boy*, and *The Praise Singer*. She also published a non-fiction work describing her research into *Alexander the Great: The Search for Alexander*. Almost all her historical novels seem assured of a healthy life for many years to come. The theme which is dating the novels most quickly is the Freudian mythology which Challans unfortunately decided to weave into her tales.

Challans' significance is similar to that of Marguerite Yourcenar, another lesbian who wrote magnificent books about male homosexuality. It is a somewhat puzzling phenomenon, in that one would expect them to write novels about women in love, and the beauty of women. But somehow these two women (and they are not alone) had extremely strong perceptions of male beauty and of love between men. In Challans' case, that has left *The Charioteer*, *The Last of the Wine*, and *The Persian Boy* as a literary heritage.

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RESORTS

Resorts frequented by homosexual men—and to a lesser extent by lesbians—tend to be at the shore. A few inland exceptions, such as Palm Springs and Russian River in California occur, but winter resorts, such as skiing sites, have rarely developed a visible homosexual presence. The reason for this specialization lies probably in the association of sun and sensuality, and gay resorts function more clearly as places of sexual assignation than those favored, say, by family groups. An interesting contrast is that between nude beaches, which attract a gay clientele, and nudist camps, which rarely do.

Some well-heeled gay visitors travel to resorts in the company of their regular lovers, while others hope to find