

chosen a life of homosexual liaisons despite his own erotic ambivalence.

Together Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis founded the Denishawn school, an academy of dance and the related arts with classes in as many dance techniques as they could offer, music, drama, stage, and costume design. It created and propagated an entirely new concept of American dance that was to circle the globe and end America's provincial backwardness in this branch of art. Conversely, their tours of other areas of the world, particularly the Far East, gave their art a cosmopolitan quality. Shawn had the gift of transmuting something that had stimulated him intellectually and spiritually into theatrical terms whose surface sheen even untutored audiences could appreciate. After the Ted Shawn Dance Theater, the first theatre designed especially for dance, opened in 1942, the debuts and premieres acquired national and even international significance. Shawn was thus an American pioneer in the choreographic art, and a major figure in the dance culture of the twentieth century.

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SIBERIA

See Paleo-Siberian Peoples; Shamanism.

SICILY

Dividing the Mediterranean into eastern and western basins, Sicily, largest of its islands, became pivotal when the Phoenicians opened the West to maritime trade after 1000 B.C.

Antiquity. In the eighth century Greeks began colonizing eastern Sicily and southern Italy, to control the straits between the island and the toe of Italy, and to establish farms to which to export their burgeoning population. To control the western passage around the island, their

Phoenician rivals colonized Western Sicily, their greatest foundation being Palermo, opposite Carthage, their main African site. Until the Roman conquest in the third century these two great merchant peoples contended for Sicily. Both early introduced pederasty; Phoenicians with temple prostitutes (*kelabhim*), eunuchs, and effeminate boys, Greek warriors with young aristocratic athletes.

Greek settlements, beginning with Cumae (ca. 750 B.C.), occurred before the Hellenes institutionalized pederasty about 650 on Crete. Shortly afterwards Zaleucus introduced pederasty for the colony at Locri on the toe of Italy. While colonists sometimes all came from one "metropolis" (mother-city), often founders of a single colony came from various old cities. The need for constitutions was imperative and many were written. Zaleucus, the earliest known colonial lawgiver and author of a constitution, composed the laws for Locri using the even then prestigious Cretan models. He was the student of Onomacritus or Thaletas, the Cretan "musicians" (poets-statesmen) who first institutionalized pederasty and may have antedated "Lycurgus," as the reformers at Sparta who introduced the Eunomia ("good order") institutionalizing pederasty on Cretan models styled themselves. Whether Zaleucus antedated the Spartan reform institutionalizing pederasty or not, it soon spread to all the Greek poleis of Sicily and Magna Grecia and to all other western outposts of Hellenism, including Massilia (the modern Marseilles; founded ca. 600), where it did not shock the Celts who practiced their own version of it. Too little is known about the sexual practices of Sicels and Siculs, the aboriginal Sicilians, to form a judgment of their attitudes toward pederasty before the arrival of Greeks and Phoenicians.

Frequent interchange of population and travel fostered a common Hellenic civilization with only local variations, but Sicilian Greeks, partly because of the Carthaginian menace, retained tyrants

after most were overthrown in the homeland. Most Sicilian tyrants were pederasts. In the sixth century Phalaris of Agragas (Agrigentum) roasted his enemies alive in a bronze bull which seemed to bellow with their agonizing death screams. At Syracuse, Hiero (died 467/6) competed in the **Olympic Games** and patronized **Pindar**, greatest of the pederastic poets, and Dionysius patronized **Plato** along with his mentor **Socrates**, the principal theoretician of pedagogical pederasty. Hiero's older brother Gelon, who defeated the Carthaginian attempt to take over the island in 480, had made Syracuse the greatest western polis. First of the homosexual **exiles and émigrés**, Pythagoras founded at Croton ca. 530 the pederastic school of philosophy that flourished in Magna Grecia. At the end of the sixth century Parmenides of Elea in southern Italy founded the pederastic Eleatics. Both bucolic poets, **Theocritus** (fl. ca. 250), who migrated to **Alexandria**, and **Moschus** (fl. ca. 150) were born at Syracuse.

After the Roman conquest, during which in 212 a soldier sacking Syracuse slew the scientist Archimedes, Greeks from Southern Italy and Sicily introduced **Hellenism** including pederasty to the more cultivated members of the Roman aristocracy, and Latin writers such as **Vergil** and **Petronius** often placed their pederastic scenes there. In addition, latifundia [great estates] filled Sicily with gangs of slaves and other impoverished agricultural workers, normally isolated from women. With inordinately high female infanticide, lower-class males must also have often satisfied their drives homosexually or with farm animals. Under the Romans Sicily became an intellectual backwater and declined further in the fifth and sixth centuries of our era with Vandalic piracy and Byzantine reconquest.

Islamic and Medieval Sicily. Seizing Sicily from the **Byzantine Empire** between 827 and 902, Arabs turned the Mediterranean into a Muslim lake, thereby isolating and accelerating the decline of

Western Europe. They reinvigorated Sicily with new crops, often irrigated, such as sugar, cotton, and citrus fruits, and industries such as silk and cotton textiles. The Arabs reestablished its position as an entrepôt of international trade, lost when the Roman Empire crumbled. Though the subject has hardly been studied, polygamy, eunuchs, seclusion of women in harems, and female infanticide must have encouraged both male and female homosexuality in Muslim Sicily, and a high proportion of Arabic poetry is pederastic.

The Normans, who conquered Sicily between 1061 and 1090, and their descendants and successors, the Hohenstaufen kings (1194–1266), were rightly regarded by the papacy with suspicion as having imbibed too deeply of Islam, which they tolerated. They played off one group of subjects against another: Muslim, Jew, Greek, and Lombard (in southern Italy, which they also ruled). His Guelph (pro-papal) enemies accused **Frederick II** (r. 1198–1250; so well depicted by Ernst Kantorowicz) of keeping a harem and practicing pederasty with his black slaves. Brother of the fanatic St. Louis, the greedy and bloodthirsty Charles of Anjou (r. 1266–1285), who beheaded Frederick II's 16-year-old grandson Conradin and his coeval "friend" when they tried to regain the Sicilian throne, finally stamped out Sicilian heterodoxy. The bloody rising against tyranny and overtaxation known as the Sicilian Vespers (1282), plunged the central Mediterranean into a century of wars between the islanders, who called in the Aragonese dynasty to protect them from the Angevins, Charles' descendants, who kept the mainland provinces of the former kingdom of Sicily. This conflict created the "two Sicilies," albeit they were reunited by Alfonso the Magnanimous of Aragon in 1437. Sexual imbalance on the island persisted, with 136 males for 115 females and 40 percent of adult males unmarried in some areas during the fifteenth century, indicating the persistence of female infanticide, which other evi-

dence likewise indicates for England, France, and Tuscany.

Antonio Beccadelli (1394–1471), a humanist of the early Renaissance, was born in Palermo. In 1434 he was called to Naples, where he served king Alfonso as ambassador, secretary, and historian. He is best known, however, for his learnedly scurrilous *Hermaphroditus*, which contains a number of homosexual epigrams modeled on Martial and other Latin poets.

Modern Times. By the fifteenth century Sicily had become a colonial economy owned by a few aristocrats supplying—with the backbreaking labor of landless proletarians and slaves who made up the bulk of the population—grain, sugar, cotton, and other commodities to Genoa, Barcelona, and other Mediterranean ports. Aragonese Inquisitors relentlessly suppressed dissent and non-conformity, but tried in vain during the second half of the sixteenth century to obtain a papal bull so that they could “relax” pederasts, a veritable “social plague,” as they stated, to secular courts. Sicilian sodomites were therefore tried and punished in the local secular courts rather than by the Inquisition as in Aragon. The Greek language and Arabic pederastic traditions persisted among the lower classes, where males greatly outnumbered females.

The Spanish Bourbons ceded the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (1759–1860) to their cadet Neapolitan branch, which misgoverned the island as badly as had its Habsburg predecessors, so that the Mafia and a general disrespect of all authority, including clerical, flourished. One of the chief opponents of Bourbon misrule was the bisexual patriot Luigi Settembrini (1813–1877), who was fascinated by ancient Greek pederasty.

After Garibaldi liberated Sicily and southern Italy in 1860, but turned it over to the House of Savoy, northern industrialists began a new form of exploitation of the mezzogiorno (south of Italy) and Sicily. Millions escaped poverty by emigrating to the Americas as well as to

northern Italy. Americans tended to stereotype Italians as oversexed and morally loose. Sicilians and Neapolitans brought Mediterranean homosexuality to the United States, but adjusted their sexual mores rapidly to the new transatlantic climate conditioned by Protestantism. A significant contribution of the Italian underworld to the American gay subculture was its ownership of gay bars and speakeasies during Prohibition at a time when no respectable businessman would touch such an ill-famed enterprise. A Sicilian-American, the fine gay novelist Robert Ferro, died of AIDS together with his lover in 1988.

Like Capri in the bay of Naples, favorite resort of homosexual exiles and émigrés, Taormina in Sicily became in the nineteenth century and remains today a resort for gay tourists, along with the seedier violence-prone large cities of Palermo and Naples, abounding as they are even now with dashingly attractive *scugnizzi* (street urchins), often available at a price. Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden just after 1900 published provocative pictures of nude Sicilian boys from the region of Taormina, and continued to reside there until his death in 1931. Since World War II even ordinary gay tourists have frequented these once exclusive enclaves, driving those seeking greener pastures to Mykonos, Ibiza, and increasingly, as those have also become overrun, to Muslim sites in North Africa.

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SISSY

A diminutive of “sister,” the term “sissy” originated in mid-nineteenth-century America as an epithet for a weak, cowardly, or effeminate boy or man. Popular works, such as the novel, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886) by Frances H. Burnett, and H. T. Webster’s cartoon strip, “The Timid Soul,” featuring Caspar Milquetoast, helped to solidify the stereotype. The sissy, it was held, was not born but made, through pampering or mollicoddling in childhood