



## DAMIAN, PETER, SAINT (CA. 1007–1072)

Italian prelate and ecclesiastical writer. Originally of Ravenna, by dint of rigorous austerity and solitary prayer he reluctantly became superior of the hermitage of Fonte Avellana (1043) and corresponded with emperor Henry III. As a trusted counselor of three popes, he became cardinal bishop of Ostia in 1057, and then papal legate to France, to Florence, and finally to Germany, where in 1072 he persuaded Henry IV not to divorce his wife Bertha. (Henry IV was perhaps bisexual and has been analyzed as unstable because of a troubled childhood during which an archbishop kidnapped him from his mother.)

Along with the fanatic Humbert—soon to be made a cardinal—whose mission to Constantinople in 1054 resulted in permanent schism between the Orthodox and Catholic churches, Peter Damian was an ally of Hildebrand, the leader of the papal reform movement. Hildebrand, as pope Gregory VII (1073–1085), challenged lay control of the Church, particularly the domination by the German emperors, which initiated a two-hundred-year-long struggle that weakened both. Gregory VII claimed supremacy in Western Christendom, denying the old Gelasian doctrine that emperors were of equal power and dignity with popes. In his *Dictatus Papae* (1076), the uncompromising Gregory insisted that popes could make and unmake kings and emperors, judge everyone but be judged by no one, and that anyone who defied them could not gain entrance to Heaven.

Although he is often described as less fanatic than Humbert and Gregory,

Damian, an informal member of the papal circle, was actually more fierce than they about several matters. He was vigorous in denouncing Nicolaism, the sin of clerical marriage, for he believed that wives and children would distract priests from serving the church with all their heart and also might incline them to skim church funds for their families and to pass on their offices to their sons. It was largely owing to his influence that the higher secular clergy—priests and bishops—had to give up their wives and concubines. Until then most of them, like those in lower orders, deacons, exorcists, acolytes, and so forth, often had female “housekeepers” or even wives, as priests in the Orthodox church still today may marry. Once the papal reformers demanded and began to enforce chastity for secular clergy, as popes did from the mid-eleventh century (just when they also began to insist that kings not divorce or abandon their wives), homosexuality became as great a problem for the secular clergy in the outside world as it had been for monks from their earliest days. This happened when monks fled the company of women to the Egyptian desert and were later cloistered in monasteries, that is, walled into areas from which women and often other outsiders were excluded. The eleventh-century reform movements, under the banner of a return to the selfless *vita apostolica* of the first Christians, attempted to restore the full rigor of monastic life after it had fallen into desuetude as a result of unsettled political conditions. The monks henceforth lived only with one another, under strict rules designed to discourage sexual contact and under the watchful eye of the abbot who was

empowered to flog them when other coercive measures failed.

Secular clerics were far harder to control than monks. They mingled freely with the laity, heard their confessions, and often visited them or received them alone. Their opportunity for homosexual as well as for heterosexual contact was far greater than that of monks, and bishops' supervision was more distant and generally much laxer than that of abbots. Many seculars attained their posts as the younger sons or brothers of nobles or, in the case of poor priests, through less exalted family connections. Not a few bought their offices—the sin of simony, named for Simon Magus, who tried to buy his way into heaven, a sin Peter Damian denounced bitterly. But homosexual sodomy became a greater problem once celibacy was demanded of the secular clergy. Although some always cohabited with women (which the Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century were to allow again if they married), secular clerics after the eleventh century increasingly had to live apart from women, and as they did, sodomy among them probably increased, though Protestant propaganda exaggerated its frequency among the Catholic clergy.

The whole issue of clerical celibacy raises psychological, biological, and philosophical issues which the apologists for Roman Catholicism have never fully faced. Can an instinct exist in human beings only to be denied and suppressed? If procreation is the sole legitimate end of sexual activity, why should any part of the population be forbidden to procreate, all the more as the church condemned castration on the ground that the reproductive powers of a human being should never be abolished? It has been maintained that administrative convenience underlay the whole policy: a celibate clergy would have no wives and children to maintain, could be moved from one locale to another with a minimum of burdens, and so forth. It is probably also true that a sexually inhibited and frustrated clergy would be more prone

to implement the antisexual policies of the church out of envy and resentment for those who sought—in defiance of the Church's teaching—to obtain illicit sexual gratification. On the other hand, the eccentric Russian social critic Vasilii Vasil'evich **Rozanov** maintained that homosexuals instigated the church to adopt ascetic policies as a way of separating men from women, and also to provide themselves with a cozy haven in which they would not be encumbered with the obligations of heterosexual marriage and family life. However, in an age when the clergy had a virtual monopoly on higher learning, such policies, with the intelligentsia as a class doomed not to reproduce itself, might in the long run result in the genetic impoverishment of the population.

In 1059 in his almost hysterical *Liber Gomorrhianus*, addressed to Pope Leo IX, Peter Damian denounced clerical sodomites. Although the Pope refused the extreme punishments Damian recommended, and expressly and firmly proclaimed that there was no need to depose sodomitical clerics, persecution increased with the growing organization of the church. In 1045 a local synod excommunicated sodomites along with heretics. In 1104 Guibert de Nogent noted that heretics near Soissons were accused of homosexual acts. At the same time the scholastic Anselm of Laon condemned heresy and sodomy as forms of sacrilege and deserving of death. The council of Nablus in 1120 enacted into law the death penalty for heresy and sodomy which it saw as two aspects of the same offense.

Peter Damian thus ushered in the period of intensified condemnation and repression of sodomy that culminated in the total outlawry of homosexual expression in the late thirteenth century.

*See also Christianity; Clergy, Gay; Monasticism.*

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## DANCE

The impulse to execute patterned rhythmic movements that are different from simply walking or running lies deep in the human constitution. Dancelike forms are employed by some animal species for courtship and communication. As it has evolved, human dancing may be divided into social, ritual, folk, and art dance.

*Early Forms.* In ancient Greece dance events were associated with the sexually ambivalent god Dionysus. In many cases dance festivals that began as religious were transformed into opportunities for lasciviousness. In Athens at the Cotyttia festival dance performances took place by men in women's clothes in which the ceremonies, which at first had referred only symbolically to sex, gradually passed into homosexual orgies. During Roman times the castrated priests of Cybele were alleged to use religious dances as a prelude to the seduction of young men. In Islam, with its rigid segregation of the sexes, a long tradition has existed of boy dancers for the entertainment of adult men. The popularity of masked balls in eighteenth-century Europe permitted some revelers to dress as members of the opposite sex and to engage in amorous dalliance with members of their own.

*Modern Social Dancing.* In a remarkable description in *Sodome et Gomorrhe*—the encounter of Charlus and Jupien—Marcel Proust analyzed the separate segments of a male-male cruising episode in terms of dance. From the end of the nineteenth century homosexual balls have been given in which some male attendees dress up in glamorous women's attire. These events, frequently held on Hallowe'en, were tolerated as social oddi-

ties. Generally speaking, however, the law banned homosexuals and lesbians from ballroom dancing in which the couples hold one another. Changes in legal climate in most Western countries eliminated this barrier, and gay bars began holding "tea dances," sometimes to raise money for charities. The phenomenon of disco, which began in the early 1970s, was particularly associated with male-homosexual patronage. Opposed to disco is the **punk rock** trend, which has its own dance forms, most notably the "slam dance," which features turbulent mass body contact in a usually all-male context; the participants, however, are generally unaware of the implicit homosexuality involved.

*Modern Art Dance.* Familiarity with the world of classical ballet and modern dance reveals a disproportionate number of male homosexuals among the performers. Anton Dolin, who had his own company in England, and John Cranko, former director of the Stuttgart Ballet, stand out among dance figures who were straightforward about their sexuality. Despite great advances in the standing of dance in the middle decades of the twentieth century, the notion lingers among the general public that, in contradistinction to **athletics**, dance is not a truly masculine activity.

The explanation for these facts lies in part in the history of dancing. Before the French Revolution men dominated the dance, usually also assuming women's roles since respectable women were generally barred from the medium. Even kings such as Louis XIV performed in ballets. After 1800 the status of dancing declined, while at the same time women began to dominate, even dancing men's roles on occasion. The ballet girl as the plaything of the libertines became almost a stereotype in Victorian times. It is difficult to recover the biographical details of male ballet dancers during this period; many married women, but no small number of them were probably gay.

In the early twentieth century a remarkable upgrading of the status of bal-