

in Brunetto's case meant having used the French language as a medium for one of his works.

Opposed to this attempt to "cleanse" the *Inferno* of homosexuals was Giuseppe Aprile. His 1977 book, *Dante, Inferni dentro e fuori*, offers a "psychoanalytic reading" of Dante's poem that takes up the old thesis of Dante's personal homosexuality: it was their common predilection that made the poet treat the sodomites so gently.

The authoritative *Enciclopedia Dantesca* has sought to bring the conflict to an end, taking adequate account of Dante's indulgent judgment as the correct key for solving the supposed "enigma" of the band of sodomites. As regards the reason for Brunetto Latini's presence among the sodomites, Avalle D'Arco's recent confirmation of the attribution to him of a long love poem directed to a man, "Se' o son distretto innamoramento," shows that it was probably on the basis of facts that were publicly known in Dante's time that he was consigned to Hell.

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Giovanni Dall'Orto

DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS

See Bilitis.

DAVID AND JONATHAN

The biblical story of David (ca. 1012-972 B.C.) and his loving friend Jonathan has long been a source of inspiration for Western homoerotic art and literature, and has been construed as the one episode in the Judeo-Christian scriptures which

affirms at least passionate attachment between two males, if not an outright homosexual relationship. The nature of this friendship, however, can only be glimpsed through a veil of legend.

David himself ranks as a central figure in the Judeo-Christian tradition, revered by Christians as an ancestor of Jesus Christ. Jesus is described as of the "House of David," in accordance with an Old Testament prophecy regarding the Messiah, and his title "Christ" means "the Anointed One," reflecting back on David who was anointed King of Israel. Thus Jesus is given royal ancestry in addition to his divinity. Jews admire him as Israel's greatest king and national hero, ruler of an impressive Near Eastern empire at the turn of the first millennium B.C., and (putative) author of the Psalms.

Sources. The earliest sources about David are often judged to stem ultimately from the reign of his successor Solomon and in any case probably predate the Babylonian Exile of the sixth century B.C. The key early material on David's life, a compilation of sometimes conflicting narratives, appears in the Old Testament books of Samuel; a later version treating only his reign is found in the books of Chronicles. Later Jewish and Christian traditions magnified his role as a cultural, political, and spiritual hero.

The youngest son of a wealthy Bethlehem landowner, David is first seen as a shepherd, a cunning musician, and valiant, if underage, warrior, who rose to the position of armor-bearer and soothing harpist for Israel's first king, Saul, who "loved him greatly" (I Samuel 16:21) at first sight. In combat with the giant Goliath, the boy vanquished the champion of the Israelites' arch-enemies, the Philistines, with a stone from a slingshot. This deed caused Saul, who in this text seems unacquainted with David, to bring the boy into the royal household, where he came to enjoy a close relationship with Saul's son, Jonathan. They forged a compact of some sort, and Jonathan doffed his clothes

and gave them to David. Although Saul resented David's popularity, he rewarded further martial deeds (bringing him the foreskins of 200 Philistines) by giving him his daughter Michal in marriage. David's star continued to rise, until Saul resolved to kill him. Both Michal and Jonathan took David's side against their father, helping him escape. After various adventures in hiding, David learned that both Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle with the Philistines, and he became king of Israel, having numerous wives and concubines, and sons by them. His otherwise glorious reign is marred by his passionate heterosexual adultery with Bathsheba, which led him to connive at the death of her husband Uriah, and a revolt by David's fratricidal son Absalom.

David's Beauty. The biblical description of David as "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to" (I Samuel 16:12; repeated at 17:42) has made David an icon of sensuous male attractiveness not unlike Greek Apollo and Ganymede, or Roman Antinous, but within the Judeo-Christian sacred tradition, and hence a more legitimate subject for European Christian artists and writers during periods when religious-based cultural inhibitions surrounded the theme of male beauty. "Goodly to look to," it has been suggested, signifies that he had beautiful eyes, a quality much prized in ancient Mesopotamia.

David often appears in medieval and Renaissance art, though usually without Jonathan. The teen-aged bronze David figure (ca. 1435) of Donatello, now in the Bargello at Florence, radiates homoerotic sentiment. In 1501–04, Michelangelo created his heroic marble David as a symbol of the city of Florence, but doubtless also reflecting his interest in youthful male beauty.

Jonathan. A careful review of the sources suggests that in the relationship between David and Jonathan, it was Jonathan who was the desiring partner, submissive and perhaps somewhat effemi-

nate, while David appears less committed (there are many references to Jonathan's love for David, but in no text is David said to "love" Jonathan) and more macho, perhaps something of a political opportunist. Establishment scholars and churchmen have insisted that there is no sign of an erotic link between the two men, denying that there is any evidence that would afford the basis for an interpretive context for such a link. The narrative of their relationship, however, is highly charged: "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. . . . Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. . . . Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee. . . . They kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded." (I Samuel 18:1, 19:1, 20:40–41). After Jonathan's death, David laments: "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." (II Samuel 1:26). In retrospect, the great womanizer David compared Jonathan's love favorably to that bestowed by men on women.

Ward Houser

There are, in addition, two other passages that deserve close scrutiny. The first of these is I Samuel 20:30, in which the irate Saul hurls at Jonathan a series of epithets which the King James version renders: "Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?" There is no indication in Samuel of any reason for Saul to cast aspersions on Jonathan's royal mother, so the text in the Rabbinic Bibles may be corrupt. The first clause in the standard versions of the received Hebrew text reads essentially as rendered above, but following the Septuagint it could be read and interpreted as: *ben nā'arōt ha-mōrdōt*, "Thou son of the man-crazy harlot!" Saint

Jerome, who was usually sensitive to erotic nuances of his original, translates as *fili mulieris virum ultro rapiantis*, "son of a woman pursuing the man of her own desire." The second part of the quotation in Hebrew (amending *haber* for *boher*, in conformity with the Greek of the Septuagint), could then be rendered as: "do I not know that thou art the *darling* of the son of Jesse, to thine own shame and the shame of thy profligate mother?" John Chrysostom paraphrased the passage as "son of man-crazy harlots running after the effete, thou enervated and effeminate and having nothing of a man." This reading suggests that Saul was reproaching Jonathan for homosexuality, or at least that the virulently homophobic Chrysostom (A.D. 347–407) so understood it. If this interpretation is correct, what Saul is denouncing is probably not homosexuality as such, but rather the politically unacceptable subordination of the prince to his dangerous rival (in Saul's eyes) David; for Jonathan was David's "liege lord" and should have taken the masculine/dominant role with him, while the final words of the exclamation show that Saul suspected David's political ambitions on the throne.

The second passage is I Samuel 20:41, which depicts the meeting of David and Jonathan in the field, where the prince warns the soldier to flee for his life. They kissed, they wept, "until David exceeded" (*'ad higdīl*). The question here is the meaning of the Hebrew verb *higdīl*, which the King James translators rendered literally, following the second-century Greek version of Aquila. Yet the analogy of a root of similar meaning in the cognate Arabic language, a type of comparison of recognized value among Biblical scholars, offers a much better interpretation. *Higdīl* is derived from the adjective *gādōl*, "large," which has an exact parallel in Arabic *akbara*, "to have an erection; to ejaculate," alongside the adjective, *kabīrun*, "large." The variant readings of the Septuagint and of some Hebrew manuscripts

also suggest that the Hebrew originally had *'ad hagdēl*, rendered in Greek as *heōs tēs synteleias*, "until the ejaculation." Of course, with such a rendering one is left wondering how David could weep to the point of an ejaculation, behaviors not normally associated with each other. Or perhaps they first wept, then kissed, then David ejaculated, and the compiler got the sequence wrong as well. Still another possibility is that the physical contact left David with an erection, that he "grew large," at which point the narrative drew a discreet veil over the subsequent events. In any event, there is no suggestion that Jonathan was active; if there is an erotic element in this passage, then David was the active partner and Jonathan the passive.

Warren Johansson

Subsequent Interpretations. Although the philological points just reviewed represent a new understanding of the text, the popular interpretation of Jonathan and David as lovers has become relatively well-established in recent times, and some would take it as a transcultural gloss on the biblical story. In previous centuries it was often used as a coded reference to homoerotic relations when the mention was socially discouraged or even punished.

Abraham Cowley's "Davideis" (1656) is an epic poem with abundant treatment of the friendship motif. In the world of music, George Frideric Handel's oratorio "Saul" (1739) contains a moving setting of David's lament upon the death of Jonathan. The erotics of the battle between David and Goliath feature in Richard Howard's poem "The Giant on Giant-Killing: Homage to the Bronze David of Donatello, 1430" in his book *Fellow Feelings* (1976).

Contemporary American literature shows two attempts at fictionalization of the David narrative. Gladys Schmitt's 1946 novel *David the King* gives only veiled and unfavorable references to homosexual attractions. However, Wal-

lace Hamilton's 1979 book *David at Olivet* not only glamorizes David's homosexual affairs but makes them central to the book, depicting the young harpist as soothing the king with more than music. Thus, when David becomes involved with Jonathan, the king is jealous not of his military prowess and popularity, but of his son. James Levin, in *The Gay Novel* (1983), criticizes Hamilton for not understanding the sexual rituals of ancient Palestinian ethnic groups, but retrofitting David with a twentieth-century sexual perspective instead.

Throughout its history the David and Jonathan legend shows a constantly changing interplay between ancient texts and modern interpretations, an interplay that will doubtless persist in the future.

Ward Houser

DAY, F. HOLLAND (1864–1933)

American photographer. With, and perhaps even before Alfred Stieglitz, F. Holland Day was America's first advocate of photography as an art form, as opposed to a mere technique for recording reality. Day was a key figure in developing the pictorialist aesthetic which is today associated with the Photo-Secession movement. Between 1895 and 1910 Day's prints were well known and influential both in America and Europe, making him the first American photographer with an international reputation.

The only child of a wealthy Boston manufacturer, Day had money to indulge his tastes: assembling a notable collection of Keats material; publishing fine books as a partner of Copeland and Day; providing educational expenses and personal instruction for boys from the Boston slums, such as the poet Kahlil Gibran, who was Day's most famous discovery and pupil; and, of course, his photography. Following his meteoric rise and almost equally steep descent as the leader of the new American photography, Day

retired in 1917 to his bedroom on the third floor of the family mansion, spending the fifteen years before his death as a self-proclaimed invalid.

Day's homosexuality was never openly acknowledged, but may be inferred from the circumstances of his life, the circle of known homosexuals with whom he associated, and his work. A number of his finest photographs are male nudes or Greek themes involving young boys, adolescents or men. Unlike his contemporary Baron von Gloeden, Day's fall from photographic grace was largely not because of the sexual undertones of his work. Bostonians were sufficiently cultured to accept male nudes as "art," though they were scandalized when Day had himself lashed to a cross on a local hillside and photographed as the dying Christ for a "sacred series." More important causes were a 1904 fire which destroyed his studio and much of his work, his own dilettantism and willful withdrawal from the photographic scene, and his quarrel with Stieglitz, who simply wrote Day out of photographic history.

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Donald Mader

DECADENCE

A historic phase of decline or deterioration of a society or nation is sometimes called decadence. The term is also used more narrowly to denote certain facets of literature and art in France and England during the last decades of the nineteenth century, when some of the creative figures of the fin-de-siècle were homosexual.

Belief in historical decline is probably rooted in the psychological fact that, as they grow older, human beings