

another of Frederick's relatives, Emperor Henry IV (1050–1106), who has frequently been considered bisexual.

The Guelph allies of the Papacy captured one of Frederick's sons, Enzo, and held him captive in a cage in Bologna for years, breaking the emperor's heart. Later popes ordered the extermination of "that breed of vipers." Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis of France, dutifully beheaded the last of the line, Frederick's grandson Conradin and his noble Austrian companion in the marketplace of Naples in 1268. Here to this date German tourists weep for the fate of these royal youths, who were still adolescents and probably lovers.

Propagandists accused Frederick of keeping a harem and also of homosexual sodomy—both Moslem practices. He supposedly blasphemed "Mankind has had three great deceivers: Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed," a legend that underlay the belief in the apocryphal *Liber de tribus impostoribus*. At his court in Sicily Frederick encouraged the beginning of Italian literature in the form of troubadours, poets who copied the Provençal lyrics and inspired the Tuscans and Dante. He himself composed outstanding love poems as well as what became the standard text on falconry. Many medieval poets were homoerotic and some modern scholars believe that courtly love with its unattainable ladies spurred homosexual instincts and even acts among knights and squires.

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FREDERICK II (THE GREAT) OF PRUSSIA (1712–1786)

Prussian general and enlightened ruler of the eighteenth century. The son of the brutal, anti-intellectual, homophobic,

and fanatical Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia, Frederick was in his adolescence small and pretty, loved French literature and art, wore French clothes and curled his hair. His relationship with his father was hideous; almost every day of his life until he was eighteen Frederick was beaten and verbally abused. At that time he decided to run away from home with his dearest friend, Lieutenant Hans Hermann von Katte, who was eight years older than Frederick, well-educated, a lover of the arts, and a freethinker. Just what their sexual relationship was remains unknown, as Frederick took care to destroy the evidence. The father discovered their plot and had them both arrested; then, overruling the decision of the court-martial that had sentenced Katte to life imprisonment, he ordered him beheaded and forced Frederick to watch the execution. At the moment the sword fell on Katte's neck Frederick fainted, and after regaining consciousness he hallucinated for a day and a half.

Upon ascending to the throne of Prussia in 1740, he immediately displayed the qualities of leadership and military skill that characterized his reign, during which Prussia expanded territorially and gained the basis for its later role as cornerstone of the German empire. Frederick's officials, confidants and friends never doubted that he was homosexually oriented. Ecclesiastical Councilor Busching declared that "Frederick forewent a good deal of 'sensual pleasure' because of his aversion to women, but he made amends for it by his intercourse with men, recalling from the history of philosophy that Socrates had a great fondness for Alcibiades." Hard put to account for Frederick's unorthodox social life, historians ascribed it to misogyny, but this assumption has no other ground than his separation from his wife and the general absence of women from his court. He did have female friends and correspondents with whom he had an intellectual affinity, but his courtiers in residence were all male, and Prussian

society in general had a high degree of sex segregation.

Frederick's separation from his wife is quite understandable. His father had forced him to marry her as a sign of his obedience, to produce an heir to the throne, and possibly to prove his heterosexuality. The bride, Elizabeth Christine of Brunswick, had been chosen by the Holy Roman emperor in the hope that she would influence Frederick to follow Austrian policies, but Frederick had no intention of being dominated by a woman. The wife, moreover, was a dull German hausfrau, submissive, unsophisticated, and nowhere near as intellectual as he, so that the absence of a sexual interest precluded any human relationship between them. The minute his father died, Frederick separated from his wife but never divorced her, and as compensation he gave her the palace of Schönhausen, apartments in the palace in Berlin and an income suitable for the queen of Prussia.

Frederick's brother Henry of Prussia, who was fourteen years younger and also homosexual, but far more open and undisguised in his erotic preferences, chose the officers in his regiment for their handsomeness rather than for their military competence. Frederick did, however, force his younger brother to marry "to save appearances."

There are allusions to homosexuality in a mock-epic which Frederick composed in French, *Le Palladion*, and in a victory poem commemorating the defeat of the French at Rossbach on November 5, 1757. Some of his poetic references to Greek love were negative on the surface, but this may have been mere literary camouflage. The male friends whom he loved deeply nearly all died of disease or in battle and left him lonely in his old age. He carefully kept his male intimates separate from the affairs of state, never allowing them to exert an undesirable influence on his regime. His relationship with the French writer and philosopher Voltaire was fraught with ambivalence—including

the homoerotic overtones, and the exasperated Frenchman went so far as to publish an anonymous book entitled *The Private Life of the King of Prussia* which amounted to an exposé of Frederick's homosexuality, yet in the end each acknowledged the other's greatness.

Frederick was a crowned homosexual who loved other men passionately—and sometimes suffered terribly as a result. He exercised his royal prerogative to pardon those convicted of sodomy, and never let his personal feelings override his duties as a ruler. If his life experiences made him bitter, they never robbed him of the capacity for male love.

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FREEDOM, SEXUAL

See Liberation, Gay; Sexual Liberty and the Law.

FREEMASONRY

The fraternal order of Free and Accepted Masons is a male secret society having adherents throughout the world. The order is claimed to have arisen from the English and Scottish fraternities of stonemasons and cathedral builders in the late Middle Ages. The formation of a grand lodge in London in 1717 marked the beginning of the spread of freemasonry on the continent as far east as Poland and Russia. From its obscure origins freemasonry gradually evolved into a political and benevolent society that vigorously promoted the ideology of the Enlightenment, and thus came into sharp and lasting antagonism with the defenders of the Old Regime. The slogan "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" immortalized by the French Revolution is said to have begun in the lodges of the Martinist affiliate. The Catholic church became and remained an impla-