

tum of pagan belief and practice undercut the new religion imported from the Mediterranean world. A situation prevailed that in Russian historiography is termed *dvoeverie*, "dual belief"—the Christian doctrines and practices coexisted with the older heathen ones for several centuries, until the teachings reiterated generation after generation became the folk ethos of Western Christendom.

The penitentials, and the canonical collections into which they were incorporated, enjoyed wide circulation for some four centuries or more, and in the course of time shifted moral judgment in the direction of Christian asceticism. The evangelization of Western Europe involved the inculcation of the moral teachings of Christianity as well as the preaching of its myths and dogmas, and sexual morality from the outset was a significant part of its theology, if not the very cornerstone of its ethical system. The creative elaboration of the material found in decisions of the church councils and in papal letters was accomplished by the middle of the eighth century; after that time the penitentials simply copy previous manuals. This tradition in its Irish, Frankish, and Anglo-Saxon variants is comparatively unanimous both in range of content and manner of treatment. Even original contributions such as those of Burchard of Worms are simply added to an existing penitential tradition, the end result of which was the moral outlawry of homosexual behavior and the marginalization of those engaging in it as criminals and outcasts with no rights that a Christian society needed to respect.

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## PENNA, SANDRO (1906–1977)

Italian lyric poet and prose writer. Born in Perugia, where he took a degree in accounting, Penna moved at the age of twenty-three to Rome, where he lived until his death. Shy and diffident, he led a highly private existence for most of his life, refusing invitations to elegant gatherings to be with his *fanciulli* ("lads"), and making a living in various ways, including the gray market during the war and art dealing afterwards. Yet he did show some affinity for the company of such homosexual writers as Pier Paolo Pasolini, Elio Pecora, and Dario Bellezza.

Penna was "discovered" by another great twentieth-century Italian poet, Umberto Saba (1883–1957). Thanks to Saba's help he was able to publish even during the fascist period (the first book is from 1939), despite the homoerotic and pedophilic content of his work.

Alongside his exiguous poetic production—the compositions up to 1970 are collected in *Tutte le poesie* (Milan: Garzanti, 1970)—he also wrote fiction, some of which appears in *Un po' di febbre* (Milan: Garzanti, 1973). Love for boys is omnipresent in the delicate lyrics of Penna. To critics who, while acknowledging his high artistic quality, found his insistence on homosexual themes "inappropriate," Penna replied with scorn: "The sexual problem/ engages my whole life./ Is it good, is it bad?/ That's what I keep asking myself." Provocatively, he styled himself a "love poet." He was so proud of his *eros paidikos* that in one interview he made his own the saying attributed to Camille Saint-Saëns, "I am not a homosexual, but a pederast."

In his poems—which are usually brief, four lines or a few more—Penna used only a few strokes to sketch a situation, a thought, or a portrait. The source of inspiration was his "lads," adolescents or young boys; his desires (which had a physical dimension) were stated with extraordi-

nary delicacy and a circumspection amounting almost to prudery. Even the poems that he did not want to release because he thought them "pornographic," have been found, after their publication, to be quite chaste.

Sandro Penna ranks among the most significant Italian poets of homosexual love, and is particularly significant in the twentieth-century context. In recent years his work and personality have undergone an unceasing process of critical reevaluation, though this had begun before his death. Penna's influence on young Italian homosexual poets is clearly evident today, so that it is not excessive to speak of his formative influence on contemporary Italian gay poetry.

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### PÉREZ, ANTONIO (1540-1611)

Spanish author and political figure. Antonio was publicly the son of King Felipe II's secretary, the priest Gonzalo Pérez, although he may really have been the son of a court noble; he was probably of Semitic ancestry, as were many thinkers and administrators in sixteenth-century Spain. Antonio was well-educated, especially at the universities of Venice and Padua, and was further tutored by Gonzalo for a career in government. He succeeded Gonzalo in the powerful position of royal secretary, and was especially charged with Italian affairs. His hobby was perfumery, and he is also remembered for advances in dental hygiene.

The victim of conservative courtiers, Pérez was arrested on charges of murder and heresy; charges of sodomy were later added. He escaped from prison and fled to Aragon, terrifying the king because of Pérez's possession of documents containing official secrets, probably assassi-

nations. After popular demonstrations prevented the king from immediately recapturing Pérez, he fled to France. His wife and children, whom he was never to see again, were kept as hostages in Madrid to ensure that he did not reveal secrets. In exile in France and England, surviving assassination attempts, Pérez wrote and published on Spain, beginning the long tradition of study of Spain's problems. His works have had considerable influence on Spanish reformist and anti-clerical thinking.

The testimony of the witnesses against Pérez, which has been published only in heavily censored form, speaks of a homosexual underworld among the Spanish nobility. Pérez's cousin Juan de Tovar, also implicated in the scandal and one of the witnesses, is presumably the same Juan de Tovar who composed the first known work in Spanish in which homosexual love is presented positively. This is a lengthy *Eclogue* first published, minus a page torn from the manuscript, in 1985. In it, a boy dies rather than reveal the identity of the man he loves.

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### PERU

*See Andean Societies.*