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“LA ESCONDIDA SENDA”:

HOMOSEXUALITY IN SPANISH HISTORY AND CULTURE

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The richness of Spain's sexual history and culture is all but unknown. Catholicism was the official religion throughout the country from about 1500 until 1931, and again from 1939 until 1975.¹ It was the

¹Judaism was prohibited in 1492. Contrary to widespread misconception, Islam was not prohibited until sometime between 1499 and 1501; records do not report the exact date. The libertarian Second Republic began in 1931; since it ended in a civil war from 1936-39, the exact date of restoration of

only religion permitted on any terms during most of this period. In keeping with Catholic teachings, the only permitted modes of sexual behavior have been chastity and marital procreative sex. Thus, there has been little interest within Spain in researching Spanish sexuality. Variant sexual behavior has been unacceptable, sinful, “un-Spanish.” If homosexuality did come to light, it was of no interest to study, a stain on the nation’s honor.

This repressive official attitude of course had a contrary effect. In Spain, where Catholicism was linked with heterosexuality to a degree it has been in no other country, anti-Catholicism, rebellion, and opposition to authority became similarly linked to homosexuality. After all, if the Catholic Church was against homosexuality, then those skeptical of the Church for other reasons—a significant proportion of the population—had reason to reflect on homosexuality. Church opposition was a powerful endorsement.

Male homosexuality—female homosexuality is largely exempt, and thus little is known about it—thus acquired a mystique, a fascination, an attractiveness that it has had in no other Western country. It is debatable whether homosexual acts were ever more common in post-medieval Spain than in other European countries; in some periods they definitely were not. But in no Western country, ancient or modern, has homosexuality been more central to its national myth. The origins of modern Spain are inseparably linked with the central theme of homosexuality.

As a result, in Golden Age and modern Spain we have a rich landscape of covert homosexuals and bisexuals. Few of them dared be open, some not even to their close friends. Many were married. With some we know that their fantasies were never turned into any sort of reality. Others led double lives. But, like *romans à clef*, telltale signs—allusions, topics chosen for creative literature or research, choices

official Catholicism varied by region.

of residence, destinations for foreign travel, and other clues—that reveal that the topic was on a man’s mind.

The homosexuality under discussion was most often between adult man and youth. Those who knew Greek had easy access to the untranslated texts in which this topic so openly appears. This pattern had the authority of some revered authors of antiquity. The Arabic and Hebrew languages, little known in Spain between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, were also tools that provided access to untranslated materials in which boy-love was sometimes presented openly and positively.

Prehistory. One key question is, “Why Spain?” Part of the answer is its geography, the key to so much of Spanish history and culture. Spain has been a bridge between Africa and Europe, between the southern coast of the Mediterranean and the northern. As such, it has on the one hand been the scene for much cultural contact. On the other, its relative isolation—mountains on the north, water on the south—has permitted autonomy in a variety of areas. Yet the Mediterranean has also facilitated cultural and demographic interchanges with other, more central regions.

The other part of the answer is perhaps lost in prehistory. We know that the Iberian peninsula was a sexual center well before the Romans arrived. The city of Gades (today’s Cádiz) exported female erotic dancers around the Mediterranean, the only city known to have done so (Hitchcock). However, we have no references to homosexuality or homosexual behavior from that period.

Roman Spain. Hadrian, Rome’s “gayest” emperor and one of the greatest, was from Spain, as was Juvenal, one of the most homosexual Latin authors, and the often scabrous Martial. Also, we know that western Arabic had a word for a male prostitute. Since the word is not known elsewhere, this strongly implies that male prostitutes were common enough to receive a name antedating the arrival of the Arabic language in the eighth century, and probably the Romans as well.

Visigoths. The Visigothic (Germanic) kingdom established in Spain after the collapse of Roman authority brought Catholicism to Spain. Christianity was made the official religion. For reasons unknown to us, the Visigoths in Spain were also hostile to homosexuality.

Yet the inhabitants were unhappy with Visigothic rule. It is well documented, though not accepted in traditional Catholic history, that the Islamic conquerors who arrived in 711 found almost no resistance. City gates were opened; the inhabitants were glad to be rid of the Catholic and somewhat puritanical Visigoths. Thus the entire peninsula changed rulers and official religion with very little bloodshed, many times less than that required to reestablish Christianity. To “conquer” Spain for Islam took less than five years; to “reconquer” it for Christianity, 800.

Al-Andalus. Muslim Spain, or al-Andalus as it was called in Arabic, is a glorious yet little-known period of European history. It is a vanished civilization without modern descent or champions. There was much emigration to Morocco and Tunisia, and in those and other Arabic countries, the memory of the glory of Muslim Spain is very much alive. However, remembering al-Andalus—the term for all of Spain, not just the modern Andalucía—is not part of the countries’ national ideology. Christian Europe always viewed al-Andalus as foreign, alien and potentially dangerous. That it was destroyed was cause for celebration.

Thus we have a missing chapter in the history of not just Spain, but Europe. During its heyday, the tenth and eleventh centuries, al-Andalus was the leading civilization anywhere around the Mediterranean. The capital, Córdoba, was by far the largest city in Europe. Al-Andalus was the leader in learning, in libraries, in science, in the arts (poetry and architecture), in medicine, in fact by any standard of civilization one cares to name. Its goal was to give beauty to every object, and joy to every hour. In contrast with Christianity, it was both religiously and sexually tolerant. Except for the twelfth century, during which Moroccan invaders imposed puritanism, it was also sex-positive. Sexual activity,

indeed sensual indulgence in general, was healthful, enjoyable, and an unqualified good. According to the *Koran*, it was a foretaste of paradise.

Traditional Spanish historiography defines the Muslims as conquering invaders. According to this position, once these foreigners were expelled, Spain could return to its true Catholic culture and rulers. However, the civilization of al-Andalus was less foreign than the Visigothic period that Christian historiography celebrates. The number of true Arabs who came to Spain was small. They were accompanied by a much larger number of North African Berbers. But the bulk of the population was, as with the Visigoth civilization, the native inhabitants. Most of these learned Arabic and converted to Islam. They then participated in the dominant culture, which had brought them more freedom and a better standard of living. The existence of blond, blue-eyed “Arabs” in Spain is well documented.

Homosexuality was prohibited by the Koran, but in Spain (as in most of the Muslim world) there was not even the pretense of enforcing this prohibition. Powerful rulers such as ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, al-Ḥakam II, Hishām II, and al-Mu’tamid openly chose boys as sexual partners, and kept catamites. When al-Ḥakam II reached the age of forty-six without producing an heir, the problem was remedied only when a pretty girl dressed as a boy, so as to seduce him.

As always, the practices of the rulers were adopted by those who aspired to power and influence. Less is known about them, but a priceless piece of data reveals that homosexual prostitutes charged higher fees than did female ones, indicating an economically more powerful clientele.

Referring to Córdoba, the capital of al-Andalus before its fragmentation into small city-states, Abdelwahab Bouhdiba says, in his *Sexuality in Islam*:

The cities had in their suburbs or in the surrounding countryside highly frequented pleasure gardens, with open-air cabarets and cafés set up on the farms attached to Byzantine, Roman, or Persian castles, or even Christian monasteries. In the best

viticultural traditions, the monks provided plenty of wine and pretty girls for the “joyous companions of sincerity,” the *fiṭyāna sidqin* of which Abu Nawas speaks. These taverns were places where many kinds of pleasure were served up without shame and without exclusion. Singers, dancers, gamblers, but also pleasure-seeking young fellows, homosexuals of both sexes, taught the art of pleasure, without let or hindrance, to a youth whom Islam had freed from any sense of shame or guilt. (131)

The most extensive information on man-boy, and sometimes man-man love in al-Andalus is poetry; a ruler’s sexual tastes were seldom important enough to make their way into history (an important exception is found in Buluggin, 86, 191-92; and 25 of the introduction). The reader should be aware that the gender of the beloved is changed from male to female in many older studies and translations. Nevertheless, in the Arabic texts and the more faithful translations, the evidence is unmistakable.

The first such poems to come to general attention were those assembled by Emilio García Gómez in his *Poemas arabigoandaluces* (*Andalusian Arabic Poems*). This collection, published at a moment of liberalization in the late nineteen-twenties, contains verses dedicated to the cupbearer, the carpenter, etc.: homosexual passion that crossed class lines. It has been republished several times in Spanish, and translated three times into English (García Gómez). Another collection, *The Banners of the Champions*, is also available in both English and Spanish (Ibn Sa‘īd). The verses of Ibn Quzmān, not yet translated into English, describe an openly bisexual lifestyle (Ibn Quzmān). Only one poem is available in translation from a recently-discovered collection by the Granadan king Yūsuf III.

Love, which was not separated from sex as it has been in modern Western culture, was a popular topic for essays as well as poetry. Works on love treat homosexual love as legitimate or even desirable. Their tolerance and nonchalance on the subject contrast dramatically with

Christian Spain's attitude. The best known is that of Ibn Ḥazm of Córdoba, with the typically picturesque Arabic title is *The Dove's Neck Ring* (*Tawq al-ḥamāma*). It contains many anecdotes about homosexual lovers.² A similar work from Tunisia of the seventeenth century, whose culture derived directly from that of Andalucía (López Baralt), treats homosexual and heterosexual pleasures on an equal footing. The homosexual portion of the work is available in English translation (al-Tīfāshī). Márquez Villanueva describes unpublished and untranslated erotological manuscripts in the Escorial library. Titles suggestive of a pederastic content include *Modesty Abandoned, and the First Fuzz on the Cheek, An Apology for the Love of the First Fuzz of the Cheek, and The Scholar's Garden and the Delight of the Wise Man*.³

Finally, the imperfectly-known Sufi mysticism that emerged when al-Andalus was in political decline is linked with boy-love. The beautiful boy was the object of worship, the symbol of God. The extent to which this was accompanied by sexual activity between adult master and boy disciple is not known. Sexuality and religion, however, were now even more firmly identified.

Sephardic Homosexuality. An important element in medieval Spain were the Sephardic (Spanish) Jews. The Jews in Spain antedated both Christians and Muslims, and considered themselves the true "owners" of the peninsula. Their shadow kingdom had its own laws, courts, and internal authorities.

²My thanks to Nicholas Heer, who has confirmed this from the Arabic text (personal communication, 1 June 1995).

³Márquez, *Orígenes* 38, n. 70. He lists other unpublished Hispano-Arabic erotological works there. For other unpublished Islamic erotological works, see Bouhdiba 142-46. The treatise *Mufākharat al-jawārī wal-ghilmān* [Boasting Match over Maids and Youths], which he cites as untranslated at that time, has been published in English in al-Jahiz.

Jewish culture flourished under the relative tolerance of Hispano-Arabic rulers, and reached heights not known between Biblical times and the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sepharad (Jewish Spain) was the undisputed leader of world Judaism in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Spanish Jews began philological study of the Bible, compiled the first Hebrew dictionary, codified Hebrew grammar, used Hebrew for the first time for secular poetry, produced philosophers and scientists, and achieved great influence. As advisors to rulers, they had a large influence on policies. They also had a major role in setting up and running the administrative and economic infrastructure that permitted these kingdoms to flourish.

Throughout modern Spanish history homosexuality has been associated with Jews. Both Judaism and homosexuality were contagious afflictions; Jews were blamed for introducing homosexuality into Spain; rulers' attitudes toward homosexuality and Jews, whether tolerant or intolerant, tended to coincide. Satirical poetry of the thirteenth through fifteenth and seventeenth centuries frequently equates Jewishness with sexual perversion. Even today the epithet "Jew" has been used as a synonym for homosexual, and homosexuals have been frequently called a "sect."

Thanks largely to the pioneering work of Jefim Schirmann and especially Norman Roth, we know that this link—homosexuality and Spanish Judaism—has a historical origin. Homosexuality was honored among Andalusian Jews to a degree scarcely conceivable today. In Hebrew, a language closed to outsiders, poetry of male love—both for boys and men—is found. The authors are the great scholar-rabbis who were the leaders of the community. Ibn Gabirol, Samuel ha-Naguid, Moses Ibn Ezra, Judah ha-Levi, all major figures, wrote boy-love poetry. Some of the homosexual poetry has yet to be translated.

Israel's love for God was sometimes expressed, as in the poetry of St. John of the Cross, as the love for a divine male by a male (or Jewish nation) taking the female role. Furthermore, homosexuality was even more closely linked with the Jewish religion than with Islam. The love of

Israel's great poet-king, David, for Jonathan did not escape them. The sacred (temple) homosexual prostitution that flourished during his reign and that of his son Solomon also is unmistakable to those who study the Jewish Bible closely.

The peak of Sephardic Judaism as a political as well as cultural reality is found in eleventh-century Granada. The Zirid state that existed for half a century was a Jewish kingdom in everything but name. The Muslim ruler was a powerless figurehead. A Jew, the rabbi, scholar, and poet Samuel ha-Naguid, commanded the army, something not seen again until the modern state of Israel.

In this kingdom, homosexuality and pederasty were so prevalent in aristocratic circles that they can be called normal. It was truly a "fairly kingdom," whose mystique survives, though much disguised and diluted, until the present. I know of no other parallel of the link between ideology, religion, power, and homosexuality.

Because of Christian conquest of Muslim territory and of lesser tolerance during later phases of Spanish Islam, the Jews gradually moved to Christian Spain. While they had power and influence in Christian Spain until the expulsion of 1492, references to Jewish homosexuality disappear. It is at this time, however, that the Hebrew language, of course the key to untranslated texts, acquires its sense of mystical power. Both Hebrew alphabetic numerology (*gematria*) and Kabbala appear in Christian Spain during this period.

Medieval Christian Spain. Christian Spain of the North and Muslim Spain of the South were separated by a moving, ill-defined, but real frontier. As what we know as the Middle Ages progressed, the border became progressively more defined by sexuality as well as religion. The South was perceived by the North as degenerate, unmanly, given to soft living, and weak. In response the North sought military strength through bodily purity and the Spartan life of the soldier. The South, for example, featured public baths and daily ritual cleansing. The North rejected such a sensual, indulgent, and to them emasculating lifestyle.

In addition, Muslim use of captured Christians for sexual purposes outraged the Christians. The extent of the practice was probably exaggerated by Christians when it facilitated their political goals, but there is no doubt that it occurred. The story of the boy-martyr St. Pelagius or Pelayo, executed because he resisted the amorous intentions of °Abd ar-Raḥmān III, served to dramatize the need for Christian action (Jordan). The legendary beginner of the “Reconquest” in 718 bore the same name.

Those Christians who wished a freer lifestyle could and did migrate to the South and become Muslim. These were overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, male. Those moving from the Muslim South to Christian territory were female, and less numerous. As in the Muslim world today, life in the South was arranged for the convenience and pleasure of men. While skillful courtesans and mothers of the powerful could achieve much influence and comfort, most women were subject to divorce at the man’s whim. In the North, however paternalistic, women were protected from the economic destitution of divorce, and virgins were protected from abuse (and sometimes from their own mating urges). In a related development, it was at this time that the Virgin Mary—who received little attention in the Bible—made her prominent appearance in European culture.

Because of the mass destruction of Granadine documents by Cardinal Cisneros in 1499-1500 (Eisenberg, “Cardenal”), the final period of Hispanomuslim history is imperfectly known. This is the Naṣrid kingdom of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Granada, an autonomous enclave filled with refugees from other conquered parts of Spain. Through clever diplomacy and strong natural defenses, it maintained a precarious but productive existence. It took an expensive and prolonged campaign, coupled with internal dissension, for Queen Isabella of Castile to conquer it in 1492. All that we know suggests that Granada accented those characteristics that distinguished it from Christian society. It contained an aura of magic, of something wonderful, which Christian Europe officially rejected, while still fascinated.

It is during this period that one of the earliest works of Castellon creative literature, the *Libro de buen amor* (Book of Good Love) of one Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita. The book teaches the benefits of love of women, and techniques for their seduction. Such seemingly strange writing by a priest, otherwise hard to explain, can only be understood by realizing that he is trying to turn readers from love of young men (Eisenberg, "Buen amor").

Christian Spain was ruled through most of the fifteenth century by two homosexual kings: Juan II (1407-54) and his son Enrique IV (1454-74). Both lived in relative harmony with Granada. Juan II was a culture-loving rather than a warlike ruler, and is credited with introducing lyric poetry into Castilian. Juan, whose parents died when he was an infant, was brought up from a very young age by a tutor, Álvaro de Luna. Luna and Juan, who shared a bedroom for years, were an inseparable team, Álvaro actually carrying out the daily business of the kingdom (Hutcheson). Álvaro's execution was finally forced by the queen. His tragic story was a way for later authors, such as Tirso de Molina, to deal covertly with homosexual themes.

Enrique IV was a sick man and an ineffectual ruler. He was dethroned in effigy as a *puto* (passive sodomite), and public gossip said that the daughter of his Queen was not his. (On this point lies the legitimacy of the rule of Queen Isabella and all later Castilian monarchs.) Weak both physically and politically, under him Castile descended into chaos. After Enrique IV there is no Castilian ruler who is associated, even by innuendo, with homosexuality, nor have any been named Enrique (Weissberger).

One other fifteenth-century ruler who needs mention is Alfonso V "The Magnanimous," King of Aragón. He moved his court out of the Iberian peninsula altogether, to Naples, newly associated with Aragón. In his court, in a more tolerant environment than found anywhere in Christian Spain, he employed or sponsored several homosexuals or bisexuals: Antonio Beccadelli, Ausias March, Pere Torroella. Aragón disappeared as an autonomous entity with the death of Queen Isabella's

husband, Ferdinand of Aragón, in 1516. Yet Naples remained a major Spanish administrative center, through which rotated many of Spain's highest nobles.

Pious Queen Isabella, half-sister of Enrique IV, inherited the throne of Castile after his death, rather than Enrique's son. She was often seen as "masculine," and therefore virtuous, contrast with her allegedly effeminate and impotent half-brother. by writers Shortly after becoming Queen she set out as project the conquest of Granada. It made both political and economic sense. Castile was embarrassed to have at its border the only Islamic state in Western Europe. Granada had already been much weakened both by tribute paid to the Christian rulers, and by internal dissension. An enemy neighbor was much feared by the Castilian population, even though Granada was in no real position to threaten the Christian kingdom. Also, Granada was an ideological threat, a refuge for those dissatisfied with Christian teachings and morality. The capture of Christians for sexual or other purposes assured widespread support in Castile for the expensive military investment.

Yet inseparable from these was the desire to impose Catholicism, and its moral and sexual code, throughout the peninsula. After Granada was conquered, its baths closed, and Islam as a political entity abolished, homosexuality was subject to the death penalty throughout Spain. Always viewed as a conscious choice, it was believed a contagious and incurable addiction. The only remedy for such a dangerous practice, to prevent its spread, was removal through hanging or burning. The first known case in Castile, now owner of the conquered territories, is the hanging of two sodomites in 1495.

The downfall of Granada in 1492 meant the disappearance of any openly hedonistic or tolerant culture on the Iberian peninsula. Isabella immediately closed Granada's baths, not because she opposed cleanliness, but to suppress the sexual activity that they were thought to facilitate. Judaism was prohibited later that same year, and Islam by 1500.

Spaniards who wished an atmosphere of relative tolerance could and did emigrate to Italy or Turkey, where there were colonies of expatriate Spaniards. The North African pirating centers, especially Algiers, were favored destinations for those fleeing from Christian authorities. According to hostile Christian witnesses, our only evidence, the refugee Christians, called “renegades” because they had denied Christ and adopted Islam, ran the city to suit their sensual lifestyle. Finally, a hypothesis deserving study is that desire for sexual freedom motivated some of the large number of emigrants to the New World. The widely-circulated reports of the “deviant” sexual behavior of American Indians may well have suggested this move.

Early Modern Spain. Spain of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a turbulent place. There were many dissenters from Catholicism; Protestantism had to be snuffed out within the peninsula, a traumatic process. By this time Catholicism was clearly identified with heterosexuality or celibacy. Suspicion of deviant sexual behavior automatically accompanied any hint of deviant religious practices. A contrary effect is that those who disagreed with Catholic orthodoxy—and many did so—also had occasion to reflect on the correctness of the Church’s position on sexuality. There were several private attempts to redefine primitive Christianity, distinguished from Catholicism, as more sexually tolerant, and the sexual orientation of Jesus was the subject of speculation.

Homosexuality was of course just as widespread in the sixteenth century as any other time. We see a distinction between love and sexuality, both homosexual and heterosexual, become clearly established in social thought. Close friendship, non-sexual partnership, or love between men was not defined as problematic or cause for concern. We have no close equivalent in modern Western culture. Indeed, the view that friendship between men was nobler and more rewarding than male-female friendship was widely, though not universally held. (The female point of view on intense friendship between women is not known

directly, but can be inferred to be similar.) Within monastic institutions, whose hidden lifestyle has not received critical study, these relationships were free to flourish. However, much documentation exists for homosexuality among the clergy (Herrera, Chapter 13; Perry, "Nefarious").

The preferred mode of expression for those torn between their desires and the Catholic society's strictures, and who could not emigrate, was poetry. In difficult poetry, little of which was published at the time, themes could be treated which were taboo in more widely circulated genres. Continually throughout modern Spanish history, poetry has had a prestige and role in society that has no parallel elsewhere in the West. Similarly, the modern novel, while it originated in Spain, does not have the same tradition that it does in England or elsewhere. It has often been noted that biography is particularly underdeveloped in Spain. There is a reluctance to discuss in print the private lives of famous people, because it would entail discussion of their lovers or paid sexual partners, male or female.

The clearest example of a Golden Age author who used poetry to treat homosexuality is Góngora, a great admirer of Cervantes. In his major work, the *Solitudes* (*Solitudes*), the protagonist is an alienated young man, described as more beautiful than Ganymede. Shipwrecked in a strange country, he sees only from afar a rustic wedding ceremony. Góngora was Andalusian, and took vocabulary and meters from the Italians, seen by the Spaniards as effeminate. It is perhaps no coincidence that Góngora's *Solitudes* became the center of the largest literary controversy of Golden Age Spain, and remains the most famous poem in the language. It gave rise to a furious literary curiosity, in which those attacking Góngora were Castilian, and his defenders Andalusian.

Those poets influenced by Góngora are usually homophiles. These include the Granadine Pedro Soto de Rojas, and the Mexican Sor Juana. Góngora became in the early twentieth century a coded symbol of homosexuality and of lost Andalusian sexual freedom, used as such by the Generation of 1927.

The poetry of San Juan de la Cruz (Saint John of the Cross) expresses mystical experience in terms of homosexual lovemaking. The narrator's voice is the beloved of, and has a sexual encounter with, God, a male lover. Even the most canonical poet of all, Garcilaso, without interruption in his popularity from first publication to the present, has many suggestive elements. For a poet whose primary topic is love, suspiciously little is known about his personal life. The intensity of passion expressed in some poems, such as Sonnet 37, is also suggestive.

The Golden Age's most famous author, Miguel de Cervantes, was similarly an alienated outsider. His love life is mysterious, and he was accused of "dirty" activities in Algiers. His sexuality was attacked in poetry, and his most bitter critic was the great womanizer, Lope de Vega. Cervantes did not favor male-male sexuality, but he was fascinated by intense, lifelong friendship between men.

Some illustrations will show the process of triangulation by means of which pieces of Golden Age sexuality emerge. Cervantes dedicated Part I of *Don Quijote* to the seventh Duke of Béjar. In itself, this is unremarkable. But when one looks at other books dedicated to this patron, we see immediately one of Cervantes' friend Cristóbal de Mesa. Mesa was the first translator into Spanish of Virgil's *Eclogues*. This work is one of the few clearly marked at the time as homosexual, because of the Corydon episode in the Second Eclogue. Mesa was proud of his five years spent in close company with the Italian poet Tasso, one of the most prominent homosexuals of the period.

We thus have two homophile writers with the same patron. When we look at other authors who dedicated books to the Duke of Béjar, we find Góngora. Also we find the only poetry anthology of the period, the *Flores de poetas ilustres* (*The Flowers of Illustrious Poets*) compiled by Pedro de Espinosa. When one adds that Espinosa wrote on Granada—a "marked" city as no other in Spain—we can safely add Espinosa to the list of homophiles.

Both Cervantes and Mesa were friends of another, forgotten poet, Pedro de Padilla, and also in the same circle was the poet Gabriel López Maldonado.

A center of homophile activity in the seventeenth century seems to have been Toledo, a nearby refuge from the stultifying orthodoxy in Hapsburg Madrid. It was first the home of the homosexual painter El Greco (The Greek), the significance of whose nickname has not been grasped. Garcilaso was from Toledo. Toledo was the residence of the Archbishop Bernardo Sandoval de Rojas, the head of the Catholic church in Spain and a fan of literature. It was to him that Cervantes dedicated Part II of *Don Quijote*. His pagemaster, a most suggestive occupation, was Márquez Torres, also a close friend of Cervantes. The religious poet José de Valdivielso, who wrote on Christ's father, was the Archbishop's chaplain, and also a friend of Cervantes.

The Archbishop held a literary salon in the house and gardens belonging to the Count of Buenavista. It was these gardens that the dramatist Tirso de Molina chose as setting for his one novel, *Los cigarrales de Toledo (The Summer-Gardens of Toledo)*. The sexuality of Tirso, originator of the Don Juan legend, cries out for examination. He has long been noted for writing plays with female protagonists, a choice so far lacking explanation. He has many plays dealing with historical or Biblical figures associated with variant sexuality or sexual issues: Álvaro de Luna, discussed above, Ruth, or Tamar. While women dressed as men were common in drama of the time, Tirso wrote *Aquiles* ("Achilles"), one of the rare plays in which a woman is dressed as a man.

As can be seen, a pattern of links and friendships emerges. We can apply this to the case of the renowned court orator Paravicino, who was a close friend of Góngora. He was the subject of a famous portrait by El Greco. Paravicino wrote the *aprobación*—the ecclesiastical permission to publish, in obtaining which friendships often played a part—for Mesa's translation of Virgil's *Eclogues*, which also contained a prefatory sonnet to Archbishop Sandoval.

In the world of sixteenth-century pastoral and chivalric romance an atmosphere of freedom was established, and sex-variant characters,

especially women in male roles, appear. Anonymous chronicles of famous homosexuals were published in the sixteenth century; these include the King Juan II, Álvaro de Luna, and the “Gran Capitán” Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba.

None of the above were publicly identified as homosexuals, and to what extent sexual activity took place is not known. In groups set off from mainstream society, such as soldiers, gypsies, or actors, a relative amount of freedom was easier to obtain. Seville was Spain’s main port, and men were constantly passing through, on their way to or from the Indies. The relative anonymity undermined the power of repressive authorities as nowhere else in Spain. The figure of seventy-one burned to death for sodomy between 1567 and 1616 is considerably less than for other regions in which documentation exists (Perry, *Crime* and “Nefarious”). Homosexual prostitution flourished, far more so, according to Rafael Carrasco, than it did in any other century prior to the twentieth. There were organized networks recruiting young men to satisfy their customers. The customers were, of course, those with money, sometimes the high aristocracy.

The main center for assignations was the gambling house, although the networks also supplied inns, hospitals, and prisons. Cervantes and Góngora both frequented gambling houses; Cervantes’ publisher, Francisco de Robles, operated one in Madrid. Male slaves (blacks, Turks, or Moors) were also used for sexual pleasure and as procurers. The real extent of sexual activity between males is unknown, but it seems to have been quite extensive, to have involved many married men, and to have been widely known and to some degree tolerated (not reported to authorities). The cases we know of are those that came to the attention of the Inquisition, which at an early date decided to pursue sexual as well as religious diversity. Again, nonsexual male friendship caused little concern, and female prostitutes were openly available at little cost.

There is no case of a publicly-identified homosexual living in Spain between the sixteenth and early twentieth-century Spain. Public identification brought on the death penalty. There are records of such

executions. The closest thing to a “known homosexual” at the time was the Count of Villamediana, a seventeenth-century courtier who was assassinated. While rumors of homosexuality have been associated with his assassination, and the incident was never concealed, it appears more likely that the accusations of homosexuality were a cover for other reasons. Similarly, when the king’s counselor Antonio Pérez had to flee Spain to save his life, accusations of homosexuality were added after the fact.

In early modern Spain, then, public knowledge of homosexual activity brought the death penalty. References to certain Greek or Roman figures, as well as to Andalucía, can be coded references to homosexuality. Knowledge of Latin and especially Greek indicates access to unexpurgated texts unavailable in Castilian, such as Plato’s *Symposium*. An unexplored question is whether knowledge of Hebrew by religious scholars, like Fray Luis de León or Benito Arias Montano, also permitted knowledge of Sephardic homosexual poetry.

Aside from Inquisition records, which are a treasure-trove of information on sexual behavior of all sorts, no information on homosexual allusions or thought has come to light until the mid-nineteenth century. It seems very likely some is there, probably associated with religious dissent, but it remains to be found.

Executions of sodomites continued, though in reduced number, into the eighteenth century. The death penalty for homosexual acts was removed in 1822 with the first Spanish penal code, which referred only to “unchaste abuses” (*abusos deshonestos*). In 1868 the crime of causing public scandal was added, but no homosexual cases have been discussed in print.

Modern Spain. New contact with mainstream Europe, especially Germany, exposed Spain in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to ideas from which it had long been sheltered. There ensued a great campaign of intellectual and cultural renewal, tearing down the intellectual barricade that Felipe II had erected. This movement was anti-

Catholic, libertarian, and often Arabophile; some of the leading figures spent time in Granada. The founder was the revered, celibate homosexual educator Francisco Giner de los Ríos, called “the Spanish Socrates.” His Institución Libre de Enseñanza (Independent Teaching Institute) had a great influence until its demise with the Spanish Civil War. The Hellenism of Giner and his disciples remains unstudied.

A focus of homosexual life was the liberal Residencia de Estudiantes, an offshoot of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza and much more than what its name would imply. Its small campus, with buildings in Hispano-Arabic style, opened in 1915, and it was in the 20's and 30's a center of the artistic vanguard in Madrid. Among its residents were the gay authors Federico García Lorca and Emilio Prados, and the bisexual painter Salvador Dalí.

In the early twentieth century there was little open or published discussion of homosexual topics, but there were many coded allusions. Many well-known figures were interested in homosexuality, at least during part of their lives. It should be remembered that homosexuality was never as primary a concern as it would be to a figure like Oscar Wilde (whose legal woes were well known in Spain, and influential). Sexual freedom was part of a much larger program, including removal of Catholicism as the state religion, a reappraisal of Spain's Muslim past and of the centrality of Andalucía, a democratic government, freedom of the press, women's right to vote, and divorce.

Among those who shared some version of this program is the seminal thinker Fernando de los Ríos. Giner's nephew and disciple, he was mentor of Lorca, an educator, and finally a politician and diplomat. The Greek professor, essayist, and fiction writer Miguel de Unamuno was exposed to Greek texts, always a telling fact, and is the author of a novel with the suggestive title *Amor y pedagogía* (*Love and Pedagogy*). His view of woman as mother and nothing more is typical of male homosexuals of that period. Others worthy of attention are the novelist Pío Baroja, and the poets Manuel Machado and Rubén Darío (the former the foremost Spanish dandy and translator of Verlaine, the latter the

author of the first published discussion in Spanish of Lautréamont). The Biblioteca Renacimiento, whose literary director was the playwright Gregorio Martínez Sierra, published translations of Freud and the works of Spanish homosexual authors, among others.

Writers more openly homosexual were faced with the choice of avoiding gay topics altogether, or presenting them negatively. These include the conservative dramatist Jacinto Benavente (Nobel prize, 1922), who could not publish his *De muy buena familia* (*From a Very Good Family*), the dramatist and fiction writer Ramón del Valle-Inclán, the chronicler of Madrid life Pedro de Répide, and the novelist Antonio de Hoyos y Vinent. It was foreigners who were able to publish in Spain the first original literature on homosexual themes: the Chilean Augusto d'Halmar (*Pasión y muerte del cura Deusto*, *The Passion and Death of Father Deusto*), the Cuban Alfonso Hernández Catá (*El ángel de Sodoma*, *The Angel of Sodom*), and especially the Uruguayan Alberto Nin Frías. Nin was the earliest and the most positive writer on homosexuality in Spain. His *La novela del Renacimiento. La fuente envenenada* (*The Novel of the Renaissance. The Poisoned Fountain*) appeared in 1911, followed by *Marcos, amor de la belleza* (*Marcos, the Lover of Beauty*) in 1913, and *Alexis o el significado del temperamento urano* (*Alexis or the Meaning of the Uranian Temperament*) in 1932. During the Second Republic, he published the first positive study of homosexuality in Spanish, *Homosexualismo creador* (*Creative Homosexuality*) (1933), which linked homosexuality with creativity.

As in earlier periods, poetry was the medium of expression most favored by those who need to write on the taboo subject of homosexuality. It was a period of little poetry magazines, such as *Grecia* (*Greece*) of Adriano del Valle, *Mediodía* (*The South*) of Joaquín Romero Murube, *Renacimiento* (*Renaissance*) of Martínez Sierra, and *Papel de Aleluyas*, remain incompletely studied. Their editors, an interlocking group including Adriano del Valle, Joaquín Romero Murube, Fernando Villalón, were primarily poets, and primarily from the south of Spain.

One type of covert treatment of homosexuality was study of Andalusian culture or figures associated with homosexuality, such as the Count of Villamediana and Góngora. An important event was the tercentenary of the latter author in 1927; the commemoration gave the name to the famous poetical “generation of 1927.” This was a celebration of poetry, of Andalucía (Góngora was from Córdoba), an exuberant revolt against Spain’s cultural establishment, and also an affirmation of Spain’s homosexual tradition. Among those participating were the poets Lorca, Prados, Luis Cernuda, Vicente Aleixandre (Nobel prize, 1977), and the bisexual poet and printer Manuel Altolaguirre; Altolaguirre and Prados published in Málaga the magazine *Litoral* (*The Shore*, 1926-29). Especially important was the mentoring role of the great bisexual love poet Pedro Salinas, called the “inventor” of that poetical generation. Salinas, who introduced his student Cernuda to Gide’s writings, was translator of and much influenced by Proust. Salinas’s poetry is noted for being, at times, unique free of Spanish gender markers, and can be read as referring to either gender. His personal life and thinking on sexuality, other than the heterosexual, remains untouched by scholarship.

Pressures for liberalization were building. Besides Freud, Oscar Wilde’s works were available in Spanish, as was Frank Harris’s life of Wilde and Iwan Bloch’s *The Sexual Life of Our Time*. Gide’s *Corydon* and an expurgated version of Lautréamont’s *Maldoror* appeared in the 1920’s, both translated by Julio Gómez de la Serna; his brother Ramón Gómez de la Serna wrote a long prologue to the latter. Young Spaniards studied in Germany, returning with knowledge of its sexual freedom. Contact with the writings of the great German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld is certain. The Anarchist movement, which flourished in Spain as nowhere else, fought for removal of restrictions on sexual as well as other conduct. Emilio García-Gómez’s *Poemas arabigoandaluces* (*Andalusian Arabic Poems*), which included pederastic poetry, caused a stir when published, first in the *Revista de Occidente* (*Occidental Magazine*) in 1928, then expanded into a book in

1930. Also contributing to a much changed climate were the lectures and publications on gender identity by Spain's most famous physician, the endocrinologist Gregorio Marañón. Marañón was opposed to androgyny and a champion of clear and distinct sexual roles. He believed that homosexuality was a congenital defect, and claimed that "Latin races" were superior because they allegedly had less of it than did Germany and England. Yet he brought the topic into public discussion for the first time, and strongly and publicly advocated tolerance. "Treatment" was to be just as voluntary as for any other medical condition. (Impressed by the newly discovered sex hormones, Marañón expected a hormonal therapy for homosexuality to be developed.) Besides *Los estados intersexuales en la especie humana* (*Intersexual States in Humans*) and other writings on sexual medicine, Marañón wrote an introduction for Hernández Catá's *Ángel de Sodoma* (*The Angel of Sodom*), a prologue for the translation of Bloch, an "antisocratic dialogue" accompanying the second Spanish edition of Gide's *Corydon*, and a historical diagnosis of Enrique IV.

These trends and pressures came to fruition in 1931 with the proclamation of the liberal Second Republic. The fervently anti-Catholic Manuel Azaña, intimate friend of the playwright and producer Cipriano Rivas Cherif, was President; Minister of Education and later Ambassador to the United States was Fernando de los Ríos; and the author of Spain's new constitution, Luis Jiménez de Asúa, had published in defense of sexual and reproductive freedoms (*Libertad de amar y derecho a morir* (*The Freedom to Love and the Right to Die*); an epilogue to Hernández Catá's *Ángel de Sodoma*, *The Angel of Sodom*). Anarchism, which flourished in Spain as nowhere else, was also linked with an escape from all types of repression of the individual.

The first few years of the Republic were very happy times. The Chilean diplomat Carlos Morla Lynch kept a cultural salon, frequented by García Lorca and other writers of his generation. His diary, if published in full, will be an important source for information on homosexual activities in this happy period; so far we have only a heavily

censored journal. A Hispano-Arabic institute was created, and with it the journal *Al-Andalus*; surprisingly, both survived the Civil War. Even more surprising, they produced as offshoots, just when ally Germany was eliminating its Jews, a Hispano-Jewish institute and its journal *Sefarad*. All of this adds to an already probable case for the bisexuality of the general Francisco Franco. Franco, who for many years was based in and comfortable in Morocco, would rule Spain as dictator from 1939 to 1975.

Homosexuality moved toward open appearance in Spanish literature. While the “Oda a Walt Whitman” (“Ode to Walt Whitman”) of Lorca was privately published in Mexico (1933), Cernuda published “Donde habite el olvido” (Where Oblivion Dwells) in 1934, “El joven marino” (“The Young Sailor”) and “Los placeres prohibidos” (“The Forbidden Pleasures”; part of *La realidad y el deseo, Reality and Desire*) in 1936. Lorca’s *Sonetos del amor oscuro (Sonnets of Dark Love)* and *El público (The Public)* were being read to friends shortly before his assassination. Following their mentors the Nazis, a motive of the Catholics who began the Civil War in 1936 was to cleanse Spain of homosexuals, although the topic awaits study. There were, unsurprisingly, homosexuals within the neo-Catholic right. As symbols of sex variance in harmony with Catholicism they chose the Carmelite mystics San Juan de la Cruz and Santa Teresa (see Ellis’s chapter on Roig for a rare example of printed discussion of sexual variance and San Juan). Franco had the latter’s mummified arm in his bedroom, and the pair had a remarkable popularity throughout his period. (Indignation from the right greeted recent examination of the Jewish ancestry of both saints.) A right-wing political leader and martyr, the assassinated José Antonio Primo de Rivera, is reputed to have been a homosexual and a friend of Lorca. The army tolerated homosexuals within it, although homosexuality in the military—especially the unit based in Morocco and led by General Franco—also awaits scholarly study.

Franco’s Spain. After the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939, Spain’s leading gay and bisexual writers were dead (Lorca) or in exile (De los Ríos, Azaña, Prados, Cernuda, Salazar, Salinas, Altolaguirre). General

Franco's regime was cheerless, repressive, and hypocritical. Censorship of sexually-oriented materials and authors the regime found inappropriate was pervasive. In the final years the government recriminalized homosexual behavior, which had a direct impact on the birth of Spain's gay movement in 1971.

Spanish gay culture again retreated into poetry. The best-known gay figure of the Franco period—Vicente Aleixandre—was the author of the most obscure poetry. (Aleixandre never admitted his homosexuality publicly, and preferred to believe that it was a secret.) Carlos Bousoño was Aleixandre's protégé, lover, and author of a fundamental study of him. Lorca's lover, the poet Luis Rosales, went to his death without feeling ready to talk openly. Other gay male poets of this period are Francisco Brines, Leopoldo Panero, Juan Gil-Albert, and the more erotic Jaime Gil de Biedma, dead of AIDS in 1990. The *Cántico* group of poets, centered in Córdoba, included Vicente Núñez, Pablo García Baena, and Juan Bernier. Gil-Albert and Gil were subject to self-censorship. Gil-Albert's *Heraclés*, the only serious essay on homosexuality written in Spain during the Franco period, could only be published posthumously, in 1981 (Peña).

The *Transición* and Spain Today. After the death of Franco in 1975, with the wrenching reorientation called *La Transición* (The Transition), Spain has reacted to the years of oppression with a compensating liberalization. Homosexual acts were quickly decriminalized, in 1976. In a legal sense, homosexuality, and sexuality in general, are more public and accepted than in the U.S. Male and female prostitutes and brothels advertise freely in general newspapers. Magazines and TV shows take much greater liberties than in the U.S. (as is true elsewhere in continental Europe). There is no right-wing, antisexual movement, as in the U.S. Although the Catholic church remains unchanged in its positions, its prestige and influence are much diminished.

Open incidents of harassment, either official or private, are uncommon. Respect for the discrete personal life of others has a long

tradition in Spain: a type of “don’t ask, don’t tell” approach. AIDS has played a much smaller role in Spain, where it is primarily a disease of needle users.

At the same time, and perhaps because of this tendency toward discretion, a gay movement, or a sense of gay literature or scholarship, is hard to detect. There is no national gay magazine, and organizations are small and without national recognition. Perhaps this reflects the lack of development under Franco, where Spain’s first publication, *Aghois*, edited by Armand de Fluviá, had to be printed and mailed from Paris. Significantly, the area where gay movement is least developed is in Andalucía, where civic tolerance for such items as gay bars is much lower than in other areas. However, in private, homosexual liaisons are reported to be more available in Andalucía.

There is, in contrast with the U.S., little desire to publicly live as homosexuals, little perceived need to confront authority, or one’s family. Pressures toward marriage are stronger. There is no expression in Spanish that translates the English “coming out” or “outing” someone. Before the Civil War, Spain was influenced by Germany, the center of the gay culture and movement of the time. Today the United States is the center of the world’s gay culture and movement, and Spain traditionally sees the United States as an uncultured rival rather than a model to imitate. Yet changes are coming, slowly, as gay Spaniards reach a level of prosperity so that they can travel abroad.

The leading gay male author and intellectual in Spain today is Luis Antonio de Villena. Translator of Kavafis, Villena is author of poetry, fiction, and literary and cultural scholarship (Perriam). Antonio Gala, who deals less directly with gay topics, is a more public figure, frequently appearing on television. By far the most influential outside of Spain is the older Juan Goytisolo, who is flamboyantly homosexual. Goytisolo, who lives in Paris, has been the author most focused on rejecting the Catholic, anti-sexual, and Arabophobe view of Spain (*Reivindicación del Conde Don Julián, Count Julian*). Also more

influential outside Spain than within it is the gay filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar.

As of 1998, there are several openly gay male authors who have yet to achieve wide renown. These include Antonio Roig, Biel Mesquida, Leopoldo Alas, Vicente García Cervera, Carlos Sanrune, Jaume Cela, Eduardo Mendicutti, Miguel Martín, Lluís Fernández, Víctor Monserrat, Alberto Cardín, Mariano García Torres, and Agustín Gómez-Arcos.

Lesbian Writing in Spain. Little is known about love between women in Spain. Since it did not involve any acts the Catholic church found objectionable, it attracted little attention. Prior to the twentieth century, we have most information about the Muslim period. In Muslim Andalucía, selected women had access to education, and could write freely. There are two published anthologies of women poets (Garulo; Subh). We see in them that love for other women is both present and treated all but routinely, no more remarkable than the love of men for boys.

As there was little writing by women in Christian Spain, there was little Lesbian writing. Saint Teresa was widely regarded, and regarded herself, as a masculine woman, but her affections were for Christ, not women. There are occasional references to homosexual activity between women in Golden Age Spain; one of the most explicit is in an anonymous, but possibly Cervantine, report on female prisoners in Seville. The woman dressed as man was a frequent character on the Spanish stage, and there are also reports of women passing as men in real life. The relationship of these disguises to sexual orientation is unclear (Barbaza; Burshatin; Escamilla; Perry, "From," "Manly," and "*Monja*").

Spain's first female writer on women's issues, María Martínez Sierra, was the wife of Gregorio Martínez Sierra mentioned above. Because of the poor reception received when publishing under her own name, she resolved early on to publish only under Gregorio's name. Her voluminous writings contain cogent and insightful discussions of women's and other social problems. Margarita Xirgu, a prominent actress who played leads in several of Lorca's plays, was at the center of

a tolerant theatrical group. The *Songs of Bilitis*, at that time still believed to have been written by a woman, were available in translation. However, Lesbian writings and society in pre-Civil War Spain still await investigation.

This lack of research on Lesbian topics reflects not just the lack of documents, but the lack of Lesbian leaders. There has never been, until the 1990's, a writer who was "out" as a Lesbian. The poet Gloria Fuertes wished to keep her sexual identity private. A number of modern writers, Lesbian or bisexual, touch on the topic to a greater or lesser extent in their writing - Ana María Moix (sister of the sexually complex author Terenci Moix; see Smith), the erotic poet Ana Rosetti, Esther Tusquets, Carmen Riera, Elena Fortún, and Isabel Franc. The first "out" Lesbian writer in Spain is Andrea Luca.

Gay Hispanists. Just as Spain's Catholic tradition has attracted Catholics to Hispanism, the hidden homosexual tradition—what García Lorca's brother Francisco called "the hidden path"—has attracted homosexuals and bisexuals. Study of gay figures of the past has been a tolerated form of affirmation of gay identity. Gay Hispanists (excluding those alive when this article was written, in early 1998) include Walter Starkie, J. B. Trend, Kurt Schindler, Alfonso Reyes, Adolfo Bonilla y San Martín, Adolfo Salazar, Antonio Marichalar, Narciso Alonso Cortés, José María de Cossío, Joaquín de Entrambasaguas, Juan Manuel Rozas, the music historian and musician Manuel de Falla, the Hebraist Rafael Cansinos Assens, and the Arabist (and priest) Miguel Asín Palacios, mentor of Emilio García Gómez, and very recently, Jack Walsh, dead of AIDS.

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