

## ENCYCLOPEDIAS

See Dictionaries and Encyclopedias.

## ENGLAND

The history of homosexual behavior in England between the eleventh and the twentieth centuries can be divided into two periods, the traditional and the modern, with the break occurring around 1700. The evidence for the earlier period is slender until the seventeenth century, but the evidence after 1700 eventually becomes overwhelming. The two periods are distinguishable by differences in the dominant mode of homosexual behavior. The behavior of men is always more easily documented than that of women, but roughly the same patterns can be found in both genders, even if the changes after 1700 were differently timed for men than for women.

*Basic Features of the First Paradigm.* Between 1100 and 1700 sexual relations between males were usually between an active man and a passive boy. The man was usually attracted to women as well, and it is an error to suppose that such men were *really* interested only in boys. The boys were valued for their feminine characteristics: slight bodies and smooth skin. They were often encouraged to dress in a way that was seen as effeminate.

Effeminacy could also be a characteristic of two kinds of adult males. There were, first, men who liked to take the passive role and were thought to be peculiarly corrupt for surrendering male dominance. They were consequently sometimes seen as **hermaphrodites** and confused with actual physical hermaphrodites. Some of the latter did go back and forth between genders, but they were held guilty of sodomy for doing so. There was, however, a second category of men accused of effeminacy: namely those who liked the sexual company of women so much that they were thought to have come under their power. Sodomy had a similar

range of meaning: anal sex with women and with males, and genital sex with animals. And references to Sodom could be made simply to describe a general situation of rampant sexual irregularity.

This sexual behavior has to be seen as part of a general cultural system that emerged in the twelfth century and lasted until the seventeenth; there were only minor adjustments in the system after 1500 as a result of the **Renaissance** and the **Protestant Reformation**. This new western European culture produced its own pattern of family structures, sexual behavior, and gender roles. Aristocratic families adopted a patrilineal ideology. Marriage for men was late. Monogamy was enforced and divorce forbidden. Many in the general population never married, and priestly celibacy was promoted. Sexual relations outside of marriage were forbidden. But a regulated prostitution was tolerated for fear, as Thomas Aquinas said, that the world would otherwise be overrun with sodomy. Sodomy and all sexual acts which were not procreative were peculiarly sinful. But sexual acts between males nonetheless occurred. They can be documented in the royal court, in monasteries and colleges, and in the large cities like London, which were a part of this new world. But it is not until the seventeenth century that one can show the male peasant who had a wife and seduced the local boys.

*The Medieval Development.* At the end of the eleventh century the king, William Rufus, was accused of sexual irregularity, but only one writer claimed that his vices included relations with youths. Two years into the reign of his successor (1102), a church council did condemn sodomy. Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, sought, however, to limit the effects of the condemnation, because many would not have known that sodomy was a grave crime. Henry's son, Prince William, was drowned in a shipwreck in 1120. This was blamed on the effeminacy and sodomy of his companions, but it is not clear what the relationship was be-

tween these two characteristics. Henry's great-grandson, Richard I (the Lion-Hearted), was of course a most brave and chivalrous knight, who was also observed to be passionately fond of the king of France, and who was frequently rebuked for his fondness for males. Archbishop Anselm promoted friendships between monks. Aelred of Rievaulx, another saintly abbot, also did so. It is clearer that his friendships were based on physical attraction, but he presumed that such relations would not be carnal, except perhaps among adolescents. The libertine Latin poems of the time which circulated in England and elsewhere always stated that the authors desired both boys and females and spoke of boy prostitutes in the towns. Richard of Devizes described these boys in late twelfth-century London—smooth-skinned, pretty and passive—and placed them among the rest of the city's low life: dancing girls, actors, beggars and magicians.

By the end of the thirteenth century the new culture of the twelfth had become a fully organized system of a kind in which most sexual activity was viewed as dangerous. The law codes now reflected this. In Edward I's reign a law was promulgated punishing with death sexual relations with Jews and with beasts, as well as between sodomites. Edward's successor, Edward II, was hounded by his enemies, in part because of his lovers. He was killed by having a red-hot poker thrust up his anus. But it is unclear whether many men were actually tried for sodomy, as they were in the contemporary Italian cities. At the end of the fifteenth century there was sodomy in London: one man publicly boasted that he had committed sodomy with another; and a married man was called "a woman" because he grabbed priests between their legs. But both of these involved sex between two adults. It may have been that relations of men with boys were not much noticed.

*The Reformation and After.* In the sixteenth and the seventeenth centu-

ries England went through the upheavals associated with the Reformation, but these do not seem to have made much difference for sodomy, except that a statute in Henry VIII's reign took jurisdiction over sodomy with "mankind or beast" away from the ecclesiastical courts. The common law courts interpreted the statute as condemning anal intercourse and bestiality, but not sexual relations between women.

In the seventeenth century, when the evidence grows more detailed, one can observe patterns of behavior rather similar to those of the twelfth century. The royal court had a bad reputation under James I and William III who had their male favorites, as well as wives, and in William's case, a mistress too. London had more sodomy cases than anywhere else in the country. There were boy prostitutes who, like the female ones, clustered around the theatres. A male libertine culture flourished in which men pursued women and youths. Shakespeare wrote his sonnets in part for a youth and in part for a woman. Marlowe said St. John was Jesus' boy. Lord Castlehaven watched his male servants have sex with his wife, and then had sex with them. Lord Rochester had wife, mistress, and page, all as sexual companions. And Captain Rigby and the other London beau took to boys as safer when too many of the whores were infected. But it could all be dangerous: Castlehaven was executed and Rigby stood in the pillory.

In the colleges and the schools, there were fellows and masters who seduced their students. In the countryside, there were ordinary poor men who had a taste for sodomy. They were usually married. They might also be as interested in bugging the horse, or the cow, as the boy. If caught they might suffer death or public mockery. But the mockery was never on the ground that they were effeminate. They were wicked but manly. Only in the few cases of adult males who took the passive role with another man, was sodomy seen as leading to the upset of behavior proper to the two genders.

*The Shift to a New Paradigm.*

This system of some six hundred years standing began to unravel in the 1690s and in the first decade of the eighteenth century, as the culture of modern Western society began to crystalize all over north-western Europe, in the Netherlands, in France, and in England. Like the previous culture of the twelfth century, it produced a distinctive familial, sexual, and gender system. Marriage became romantic, companionate and universal, and divorce grew more commonplace. Women and children were in theory held equal to adult males, but in practice the two genders were presumed to exist in separate spheres. Most individuals were thought to desire only the opposite gender. Adult males who desired males were socialized to be sexually passive and effeminate, and were given a status equivalent to those women who became prostitutes. This new role for men was established by 1750, but a comparable change did not occur for women until just before 1900.

The adult effeminate sodomite or molly, as he was popularly called, can be documented from the London sodomy trials of the first thirty years of the eighteenth century. Such men met each other in the parks, latrines, and streets, much as prostitutes met their customers. They consummated their acts either there or in a public house or tavern. In these molly-houses most men adopted feminine characteristics in speech and gesture, and took women's names. Sometimes there were balls when they dressed as women. A few men seem to have spent most of their time in female dress, and to have been referred to entirely as she and her. There were raids by the constables, and those found guilty were either pilloried, fined and imprisoned, or executed if anal penetration could be proven.

It now became much more dangerous for an adult man to make a pass at an adolescent boy than it had been under the previous system. Boys could now tolerate only with difficulty any suggestion

that they passed through a period of sexual passivity. Some boys ran for the constable if they were simply touched; others would allow themselves to be treated and perhaps fellated but would resist a continued relationship that might compromise them with their peers. A few boys were identified as future sodomites by their effeminacy and their affectionate ways toward males. These boys were sometimes sexually abused by men who would themselves have denied that they were sodomites; and sometimes they were seduced by a fellow sodomite. But physical affection between most men, such as kissing in greeting, was given up as potentially compromising. Male clothes were increasingly differentiated from women's in sobriety of color and cut. Some trades like making women's clothes were avoided because sodomites practiced them. A thriving trade in the blackmail of seemingly effeminate men grew up. They paid under the threat that the blackmailer would swear sodomy against them. In some cases they were actually sodomites.

The old bisexual libertine did not entirely disappear. But it was now said that they simply used marriage to screen themselves from notoriety. In some cases this was probably true. But seafaring men who were isolated on ships at sea still seduced the cabin-boys in the old way. And when prisons at the end of the century became segregated by gender, something similar occurred. Consequently separate wings for boys, adult men, and sodomites were established in the London house of correction.

In the countryside, however, and perhaps also in parts of working-class life, the old and the new systems coexisted into the early twentieth century. The upper classes accepted the new system. Aristocrats who were discovered to have transgressed against it were separated from their wives and sometimes had to go live abroad, especially in Italy where the old system still prevailed. Lord Byron's life in the early nineteenth century when contrasted

with Lord Rochester's in the late seventeenth century perfectly shows the difference between the two systems of homosexual behavior: Rochester with wife, mistress, and boy, and his social position intact; Byron ostracized, separated from his wife, and guiltily indulging his taste for males only in Italy and Greece.

*The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* In early nineteenth-century England, more men were hanged for sodomy than in any other period, apparently. The new system was being enforced with a brutal relish. But after 1830 the hangings ceased, and in 1861 the death penalty was repealed. Throughout the century a thriving underground of male prostitution can be documented in London. There were as well mutual acts between persons of the same social class who had met in parks, latrines and pubs; many of these were effeminate to some degree, and a few of them were transvestite. Middle-class boys in public schools often had considerable homosexual experience, and there were networks of friends among adult men, the most famous of which was revealed when Oscar Wilde was accused by the father of his younger, effeminate lover. London's Anglo-Catholic churches also became noted as meeting places for homosexual men, confirming every stout-hearted Englishman's worst suspicions of the connections between popery and sodomy.

At the end of the nineteenth century two important changes occurred. A lesbian role for women began to emerge which paralleled the male role of the early eighteenth century. And there appeared a new way of talking about same-gender sexuality which did not use the language of the streets but the language of psychological deviance. Both trends can be placed in a line of development which led to the repeal of the laws against consensual homosexual acts in 1967, as well as to the development of a gay rights movement in the two decades after 1969.

Women, like men, had before 1700 been presumed to be as capable of desiring

women, as of desiring men, though it was sinful to do so. They damaged their gender standing only if they dressed as males, married women, and used an artificial penis, as a few did. This was still the case in the 1750s. By the early nineteenth century, affectionate friendships between women were allowed and protected by the presumption of female asexuality. But in the late nineteenth century there appeared female couples, one of whom was masculine in dress and manner, and neither of whom desired men. It is still unclear, however, why this should not have occurred until that point.

At the same time, men like J. A. Symonds who were sodomites, and others like Havelock Ellis who were sympathetic, set out to explain what came to be called homosexuality. They treated it as a psychological condition that could be explained either biologically or by the dynamics of individual experience. They did not see it as a social role. By the 1950s, liberal opinion had learned to speak easily enough of the phenomenon that the Wolfenden Committee could be appointed and the law changed in 1967. But two generations of increasing self-consciousness on the part of gay men and lesbian women led them in the following decade to openly declare their sexual orientation and to demand a fuller social acceptability. In the 1980s the reaction to the appearance of the AIDS virus among gay men showed the continued existence of homophobia in the general population, and was partly used to justify repressive measures by the government and in the churches.

*See also Anglo-Saxons; London; Social Construction.*

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Randolph Trumbach

## ENLIGHTENMENT

The Enlightenment thinkers—the *philosophes*—who flourished in the eighteenth century sought to give practical effect to the era's fundamental advances in knowledge. The trend represented both a prolongation and a departure from the Age of Reason of the previous century. Continuing to rely on the application of rationality as the solution to problems, the Enlightenment shifted attention away from pure thought and natural science to ethics and human happiness. Firm believers in progress and the value of

education, the philosophes were strongly secularist, viewing established religion as a major source of continuing human ills. The movement's two heroes were Confucius and Socrates, the humanistic philosophers of East and West. Because of its commitment to human betterment, the Enlightenment has been called the "Party of Humanity."

*Basic Problems.* For many today the word "Enlightenment" retains a halo owing to the underlying metaphor of illumination and also to its social optimism and humanism. Moreover, films and other modern popular presentations have spread the idea that the eighteenth century was an era of joyous and unrestrained sexual hedonism. Before endorsing this view, it should be remembered that this was the period in which the great **masturbation** scare began—the claim that physical weaknesses of all kinds, leading to insanity and death, were the inevitable result of this harmless practice. The hysteria began with an anonymous English publication, *Onania; or, the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution, and all its Frightful Consequences in both Sexes, Considered* (1707-08), continued in the Swiss Dr. Tissot's *L'Onanisme; ou dissertation physique sur les maladies produites par la masturbation* (1760), and was even enshrined in the great French *Encyclopédie*, the pantheon of the Enlightenment, under the article "Sodomie."

Rather than taking it at its own evaluation and that of its latter-day admirers, one should examine the Enlightenment critically and historically, and distinguish the contingent and personal views of individual thinkers from overarching principles. Diderot and Voltaire harbored some conventional anti-Jewish prejudices, yet the overall thrust of their rhetoric promoted the emancipation of European Jewry. Also, Voltaire praised enlightened despots, but furthered the recognition of individual rights and of political democracy.

*Individual Thinkers.* In a brief, but suggestive passage Baron Montesquieu