

The Shiite faction has, from the beginning, been innately mystical, revolutionary, and capable of extreme sadism, masochism, and puritanism. It has hosted the whirling dervishes and the poetry of wine and boys; but it has also been the school of the Old Man of the Mountains, the fanatic who drugged his murderers with hashish and duped them into the belief that he held the keys to paradise on earth. (The term "assassin" derives from the hashish used by this group of thugs, who would risk anything for a return to the paradise they had glimpsed.)

In more recent times, this historical confusion about the subject has produced a sort of schizophrenia in the Iranian mind. Travelers from the nineteenth century report a man executing his son in the town square for the "crime," yet clearly many Iranians were and are devotees of pederasty, the Farsi term *batchebazi* (lit. "boyplay") being the equivalent of the ancient Greek *paidika*. In modern times under the Shah, Teheran had open gay bars and male hustlers were available. (These tended to come from the south of Teheran, particularly the impoverished suburb of Rayy, often under the guidance of tough *lutiyy* [brawling, folk-hero types] as their pimps and protectors.)

The overthrow of the Shah and the installation of the Khomeini regime saw another abrupt reversal. Basing their legitimacy on "Islamic fundamentalism," the mullahs (religious teachers) soon began executing homosexuals en masse in town squares—acting like Zoroastrians while citing Islam. They were also executing the few remaining Iranian Zoroastrians, which should come as no surprise to anyone who has been following this singularly erratic government.

The Iranian Baha'i sect, which claims to integrate all the great religions, also suffered at the hands of the mullahs. The Baha'i had never made any formal statement about homosexuality, finding this question difficult to solve, but unofficially held that homosexuality was a

"curable disease," which shows they had gathered elements of psychiatry into their ecumenical mixture.

An ironic sidelight on the new regime is the fact that, for centuries, the Iranian people had regarded the mullahs themselves as generic homosexuals, and respectable Persian fathers would routinely warn their sons to guard their chastity during religious instruction.

Geoff Puterbaugh

## IRELAND

In the first millennium B.C. the ancient Celts of the European continent were noted for their initiatory and military homosexuality. Yet as the mists of prehistory lift in Ireland in the fifth century of our era, no trace of these institutions is recorded. This absence (or silence) undoubtedly reflects the thoroughness of the process of Christianization, initiated by the quasilegendary St. Patrick. Yet the Irish Church pioneered in a new system of penitentials, a procedure that allowed sinners to "work off" their infraction with specified periods of restriction. The penalties for homosexual conduct found in these documents reveal a more lenient attitude toward homosexual conduct, while at the same time initiating the bureaucratic approach that was to eventuate, centuries later, in the confessional system of the Roman Catholic Church. Irish missionaries active in remote areas of the British Isles and the European continent were sometimes linked by bonds of intense affection, a homosocial (if not homosexual) pattern that was to recur among the later medieval clergy ("particular friendships").

Beginning in the ninth century devastation by foreign invaders, first the Vikings and then the English, complicated the history of Ireland. In the present state of our knowledge we can only point to a few homosexual episodes before recent decades. In 1640 John Atherton, bishop of Waterford and Lismore, was convicted of sodomy and hanged. There is some indica-

tion that his execution occurred because he had offended both the powerful Earl of Cork and the still significant Roman Catholic party of the country. Two centuries later another high ecclesiastic became notorious throughout Europe. Jocelyn Percy, Bishop of Clogher, was in 1811 involved in a homosexual case in Dublin, for which he was not prosecuted. In 1822, however, he was apprehended in London, and only managed to escape serious punishment by fleeing to Scotland, where for some years he made his living as a servant.

Unlike the tragedy of Oscar Wilde, which was enacted entirely outside the emerald isle, that of Roger Casement is closely connected with Irish politics. Casement, an Irish patriot, was arrested in Ireland in 1916, after disembarking from a German submarine. On his person the British found a diary which recorded his homosexual activities in some detail. During his subsequent imprisonment and trial the London government "leaked" portions of the diary to erode sympathy for Casement, who was then executed for treason. For decades defenders of Casement disputed the authenticity of the diary, but it is now generally conceded to be genuine.

The preeminence of the Roman Catholic church in the new Irish Free State (1922- ) meant repressive attitudes with regard to family and sex. The new republic retained the English laws of 1861 and 1885 against homosexual conduct. Pubs (bars) in Dublin were discreetly "mixed," and many Irish gays and lesbians undoubtedly joined the waves of immigration to Britain and America. During World War II and after, the country benefited from economic and social development that culminated in its joining the European Common Market. Efforts to unify the island by ending British sovereignty in the northern six counties proved unsuccessful. Sexual restrictions were slow to fall, though Ireland felt the impact of the American and European gay liberation movement after 1969. Homosexuality was decriminalized in

Northern Ireland as a result of a favorable decision handed down by the European Court of Human Rights (Strasbourg) in the Jeff Dudgeon case in 1982. Yet the Catholic preamble to the Republic's constitution was quoted by the Dublin Chief Justice in his 1983 opinion dismissing the suit of David Norris to have the laws against gay men struck down. Continuing control of educational, medical, and social services gives the Roman Catholic church power to mold consciousness throughout the Republic of Ireland—but not in the larger world of the European Community to which Ireland belongs. Norris, the country's only openly gay legislator, appealed the case, and on October 26, 1988, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the Republic's sodomy laws violate Article 8 of the European Charter of Human Rights.

The National Gay Federation established a noteworthy premises in Hirschfeld Centre in Dublin, and telephone "hotlines" were set up and successfully maintained. Unfortunately a fire destroyed the Centre in 1987, but organizational work continues. For a time the Irish capital was also the headquarters of the International Gay Association. Despite some problems with violence, today gay life flourishes in the cities of Dublin and Cork, and, in Northern Ireland, in Belfast.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Dublin Lesbian and Gay Men's Collectives, *Out for Ourselves: The Lives of Irish Lesbians and Gay Men*, Dublin: Women's Community Press, 1986.

Wayne R. Dynes

## IRRUMATION

See Oral Sex.

## ISHERWOOD, CHRISTOPHER (1904-1986)

Anglo-American novelist. Born in upper-middle-class circumstances, Isherwood became acquainted with W. H. Auden, his life-long friend and occasional collaborator, during their English public