

tion camps were obliged to wear markings that indicated the category into which they fell. The triangle was a piece of colored fabric, about 5 centimeters across, sewn on their clothing. The color scheme was: yellow for Jews, red for political offenders (Communists), green for professional criminals, black for asocial individuals (criminal psychopaths), violet for Jehovah's Witnesses, blue for illegal émigrés, brown for Gypsies, and pink (in German *rosa*) for male homosexuals. This scheme was not applied uniformly, and other symbols could perform the same function: a yellow band on the upper arm with the letter A for "Arschficker" [Arse-fucker], or a large numeral 175 (the number of the paragraph of the Reich Penal Code which the wearer had violated). However, the pink triangle was the most frequent badge imposed on prisoners who had been convicted of homosexual offenses.

The colored triangles could also be used to isolate prisoners and prevent them from playing a role as organizers of resistance within the camps, for example as when a Communist was labeled with the black triangle and relegated to the company of asocials in whose midst he could accomplish no political task. Also, many of those convicted under Paragraph 175 were not homosexual: some were opponents of the regime such as Catholic priests or leaders of youth groups who were prosecuted on the basis of perjured testimony, while others were street hustlers from Berlin or Hamburg who had been caught up in a police dragnet. The yellow star of David with the word "Jude" (or its equivalent in the language of the occupied country) was inspired by the medieval Jew badge that had been imposed on Jewish communities in Christian Europe by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). Under the Nazis it had to be worn by Jews in civil life and exposed them to all the discriminatory statutes and regulations, while the triangles were strictly confined to the concentration camps.

In the early 1970s the pink triangle was discovered by gay activists in the United States and adopted as a symbol of resistance and solidarity. Since then it has become, together with the Greek letter lambda, one of the worldwide emblems of the gay liberation movement, as well as a reminder of the homosexuals who perished in the Nazi extermination camps during the Second World War.

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## PIRATES

Because pirates or buccaneers belonged to all-male organizations which tended to be isolated from women for long periods of time, situational homosexuality (as in prisons) has probably flourished in their midst over the centuries. For various reasons, however, there is little documentation, let alone detailed accounts, of this conduct. It is known that homosexuality was widespread among the Barbary corsairs of the North African coast, but this may be better categorized as Mediterranean or Islamic homosexuality than as pirate homosexuality.

*The Buccaneers of the West Indies.* Professor B. R. Burg has attempted to deal with homosexuality among the pirates of the Caribbean during the seventeenth century. He was handicapped by the lack of documents, and sought to reason backwards in many cases from what is known today about the sexual behavior of men in all-male groups to the patterns of sexuality among the pirates.

In his research, Burg discovered only one book, of dubious authenticity, offering material on pirate homosexuality. This was the autobiography of a French

pirate named Louis Le Golif, who said that he had engaged in passive sodomy when he was young. Beyond this, Burg found some legal records, and close friendships between adult pirates, as well as considerable affection between captains and their cabin-boys. Because of these methodological problems, Burg's reconstruction of a widespread, thoroughly homosexual society among the West Indies pirates has elicited scepticism.

Nevertheless, Burg's work does shed light on the subject. He establishes that the pirates did not show much interest in acquiring women, and often went to lengths to keep their distance from them even when the pirates could easily have procured them for sexual purposes. Burg infers that the pirates preferred the all-male society and its homosexuality. This conclusion departs from a strictly situational model, such as is applied to prisons, boarding schools, and seafaring, where the participants express a preference for heterosexuality which is, however, unobtainable. On the other hand, Burg paints a picture of impoverished youths growing up in all-male environments in which they were socialized to homosexuality from puberty onward and found it "normal" to continue such patterns in their careers as pirates.

Burg also found no evidence for effeminacy or for quasi-female roles among the pirates, in marked contrast to prison patterns in which the insertees are assigned such roles; all the pirates, from the most aggressive sodomizers to the cabin boys, were considered thoroughly male.

According to Burg's analysis, the common members of the pirate crews practiced **androphilia**, that is the adults engaged in sex with each other; he also found a marked preference for anal sex and little or no reference to oral sex. **Pedophilia**, however, could be found as a practice of captains and certain other crewmembers with specialized skills who were socially not integrated with the rest of the pirate crew.

The institution of *matelot* was also found to be widespread among the Caribbean pirates, with one pirate taking on a boy or man as a personal servant, either from a captured ship or from a port, and forming very close emotional bonds to him. The matelots even had inheritance rights in the event of the death (not uncommon among the pirates) of their masters.

In England of the Stuart period, according to Burg, attitudes toward homosexuality were relatively relaxed, and the practice flourished among those from whom pirates drew their crews: groups of vagabond youths, merchant mariners, and Royal Navy crewmen. In the absence of heterosexuality, one is left with the options of sexual abstinence (which for many is scarcely credible), masturbation (which is not too plausible either), or widespread homosexuality. While it is easy to criticize the dearth of documentary material offered by Burg, his conclusions cannot be readily dismissed.

#### *Pirates of the China Coast.*

Thanks to reports by Chinese governors to their emperors, there is a good deal more documentation for homosexual practices on the part of Chinese pirates operating in the South China Sea around the turn of the nineteenth century, when a confederation of six pirate fleets defeated the Chinese Navy and raided coastal villages between 1790 and 1810.

The chief of this confederation was first Cheng-I, who kidnapped the 15-year-old fisherman's son Chang Pao (1783-1822) and made him his lover and later his adopted son. It was common for Chinese pirates to rape anally their captives of both sexes, and captured boys often became the lovers and/or adopted sons of the pirates. At the death of Cheng-I, Chang Pao inherited the chiefdom and married his adoptive mother to consolidate his power.

Chang Pao terrorized all of south-east China, threatening to attack Macao and Canton, and even dreamed of becom-

ing emperor. However, his plans were forestalled by the governor of Canton in 1810 when the latter offered pardons and rewards to all pirates who would surrender, and this pulled out the rug from under Chang Pao, who eventually settled for a colonelcy in the Chinese army.

Dian Murray's study of the Chinese pirates describes them as moving "easily and freely" between men, women, and boys as sexual partners. Unlike their West Indies counterparts, the top pirates usually carried women on board, with one captain noted for having five or six wives living on the ship with him. Murray suggests that forcible sodomy may have been used as a rite of initiation into the pirate crew. Certainly, to judge from Chang Pao's story, it was not considered a dishonor or a bar to future leadership, in marked contrast to the contempt accorded by ancient Romans or modern prisoners to any male who has been sexually penetrated.

If the data on Chinese and Caribbean pirates are both scanty and tantalizing, there is even less information on other periods of great pirate activity, such as occurred in the late Roman republic or the sixteenth-century heyday of the Spanish Main. If any conclusion can be drawn from what is recorded, it is that the study of pirate lifestyles confirms earlier knowledge that patterns of homosexuality differ extraordinarily from one culture to another and resist easy generalization.

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**PLATEN-HALLERMÜND,  
AUGUST VON  
(1796-1835)**

German Romantic poet. Born in Ansbach of one of the oldest aristocratic families of the city, he was by rank a count.

His outward life was uneventful, consisting mainly of brief military service, an extensive stay at the university, and some dozen years of residence or travel in Italy. The poet's inner life, however, was a profound psychological drama. He was attracted to the late adolescent or male in his twenties, and although he had lifelong friendships that lay outside the sphere of his homosexual tendencies, when his attraction to another man began with a note of sexual passion, it remained so to the bitter end—and often meant intense torment for him. In religion a Protestant, in character a sensitive, refined individual of idealizing temperament, Platen was virile in mind and body, yet only the male appealed to his sense of beauty.

At the close of the Napoleonic wars Platen served in a Bavarian regiment in Munich and even accompanied it onto French soil, but returned home without a baptism of fire. He then studied foreign languages, literature, political history, and philosophy at the universities of Würzburg and Erlangen, furnishing his mind with an encyclopedic knowledge of these subjects. Before his student days were over, Platen had attracted notice, even in high literary circles, by his poems and his brilliant satirical dramas, and he understood that his calling was to be a writer. The oriental poems known as the Ghazels, the profound human feeling in the Sonnets, and the passion, rhythmic sense and melody of the Odes still command admiration. His comedies are precursors of the sort of social satire that Gilbert and Sullivan later immortalized for the British stage. After 1826 the poet was increasingly alienated from his German homeland, and his contempt for most aspects of its literary life grew biting. In part because of his homosexual interests, it was Italy that beckoned him, and he spent the last decade of his life there, a life prematurely ended by an outbreak of cholera in Syracuse in 1835.

The clearest record of his homosexuality is in the diary, kept from childhood, which he wrote not just in German,