

of luxurious indulgence. This notion has a current folk version which maintains that older men and women turn to same-sex relations when they can no longer experience the pleasures of "normal" love or have supposedly become impotent with the opposite sex. Such a view was sustained in the otherwise remarkably tolerant remarks of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. The common belief, which has little foundation, that prostitutes are often lesbian in their own preferences is ascribed to the fact that they have had too many men. Oddly enough, this notion of homosexual orientation as the outcome of surfeit and repletion is the mirror opposite of the psychoanalytic claim that homosexuality is a type of arrested development. For critics, the appetite governing same-sex love is always too little or too much, but never "just right."

There seems to be little empirical support for this folk view. Some people do change their sexual orientation, but usually for other reasons than satiation with their previous mode of erotic fulfillment. They may be responding more fully to feelings that they have always had, but have been suppressing; or they may wish to explore a side of their nature that has been neglected through lack of opportunity. But such a shift is rarely undertaken out of a mere sense of "jadedness." It is possible that for some individuals sado-masochistic practices have the function of restoring interest in sexual pleasures that have become too anodyne.

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## SAUNAS

See Bathhouses.

## SCANDINAVIA, MEDIEVAL

In this article Scandinavia has the extended sense that includes not only the three European countries of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, but also Iceland. The extant sources for the history of homosexuality in the Scandinavia of the Middle

Agas, which is to say the period just before the introduction of Latin Christianity (about the year 1000) and the three centuries following, record no positive attitudes toward the phenomenon. There are no accounts of comradesly love, of fidelity and heroism on the battlefield, of institutionalized pederasty such as have been transmitted by the literature of other peoples at a similar stage of cultural development. The textual material that has come down to us—undoubtedly reflecting a process of selection and editing—stigmatizes the passive-effeminate homosexual as slothful, cowardly, and unmanly—as the object of other males' sexual aggression and humiliation.

### *Folk Attitudes and Customs.*

There is no word in Old Norse or in other Germanic languages for what came to be called sodomy in Medieval Latin, so that the criminal offense owes its inception to Christian teaching. Yet there was a term *argr* which was broader in its meaning: the Roman writer Tacitus in the twelfth chapter of the *Germania* had to paraphrase it in Latin as *ignavos et imbelles et corpore infames*, "slothful and unwarlike and sexually infamous," specifying that such individuals were punished by drowning in a swamp. And in later vernacular sources the word *argr* (with the variant *ragr*) is mentioned alongside *stroðinn/sorðinn* and *sannsorðinn* as one of three *fullrettisord*, "words whose utterance amounts to a capital offense." The man who is the object of such insults has the right to bring whoever uttered them to court or even to assault and kill him so as to avenge his honor. The three latter terms are past participles applied to one who has been used sexually by another male. In the same category of heinousness were insults likening a man to a female animal (*berendi*). The *argr* carried the further stigma of practicing sorcery (*seiðr*), which was in principle a female art, as the *Ynglinga saga* says, "such *ergi* [*argr* conduct] accompanies this sorcery that it was deemed shameful for men to busy themselves with it;

therefore this art was taught to the priestesses." The disgraceful component of both the sexual and the ritual aspect of *ergi* was the taking of a female role by a male; it constituted the behavioral expression of a character type that was held in contempt by a warrior society. Such was the moral judgment of the people of the age of the sagas and even of later times. Conversely, when applied to a woman the feminine of *argr* meant *manngjörn*, that is to say, "man-crazy," aggressive in pursuing men, a quality as much despised in a woman as passivity and unmanliness in a man. It should also be mentioned that these customs applied only to free men, just as the laws against rape protected only free women: slaves were the property and responsibility of the master, and while sexual intercourse between two free men in which one had to take the passive role was considered shameful, no such feeling seems to have prevailed toward a slave's playing that part. In this respect the attitude of the pagan Scandinavians did not differ significantly from that of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

A further concept that bears upon this complex of beliefs is *nið*, a form of ridicule or insult that exposes the object to the contempt of the whole community. The laws distinguished between *tungunið* (tongue *nið*) and *trenið* (carving *nið*). The former was the spoken insult; the latter a carving or statue that represented the injured party in a humiliating position, that of the passive party in anal intercourse. The erection of such a statue was a reproach that called for vengeance—hence the proverb "Only a slave retaliates at once, an *argr* never" (*Grettis saga*, chapter 15). By implication the free man defends his honor, but not impetuously, rather in accordance with an Arab proverb that says "He who waits but forty years for revenge is a man of little patience." The feminine behavior of a free man, whether in a sexual or in a magical function, is an act of baseness; and if he is not guilty, he must behave in a manner that will restore his

honor. In another saga the carved *nið* takes the form of a pole with a man's head carved at one end and a runic inscription on the shaft which is then thrust into the body of a dead mare—the symbol of the feminine, implying that the abused party has taken the female role in an obscene act. In all these instances the sexual need not be the exclusive object of the reproach, as in Finnish and Estonian the loan word from *argr* is a complete inventory of the traits ascribed to the passive-effeminate homosexual, while in Modern German the word *arg* means simply "bad." A semantic parallel is Medieval Latin *felo/fello*, "evildoer, criminal," stemming from Classical Latin *fellare*, "to perform fellation."

*Legal Aspects.* The only written law against homosexual behavior from medieval Scandinavia is Chapter 32 of the Norwegian *Gulathinglog*, a part of the new legislation introduced by King Magnus Erlingsson and Archbishop Eysteinn in 1164: "And if two men enjoy the pleasures of the flesh and are accused and convicted thereof, they shall both suffer perpetual outlawry. But if they deny the charge while common report affirms it, let them deny it with the hot iron. And if they are convicted of the charge, the king shall have one-half of their goods and the bishop one-half." This law was the outcome of collusion between the archbishop and Erlingr skakki, the father and guardian of the King. The provision against male homosexual acts was a convenient tool to rid the Church and the state of their enemies and dispossess them of their property, and was probably modeled on a similar provision in the Code of Justinian which prescribed banishment with confiscation of half of their property for those guilty of an "abominable crime with persons of the male sex."

In conclusion, the material of the sagas and law codes from medieval Scandinavia shows that pre-Christian custom and belief severely stigmatized the free man who took the passive role in a homosexual relationship—a role that was

equated with cowardliness and want of manhood.

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### SCHOPENHAUER, ARTHUR (1788-1860)

German philosopher. Through a large inheritance from his father the celebrated misanthrope enjoyed financial independence so that he could devote his life completely to philosophy. Even today Schopenhauer's ethic of compassion possesses great philosophical significance. In the third edition of his magnum opus *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer analyzed the phenomenon of "pederasty" in an addendum to Paragraph 44 on the metaphysics of sexual love. At that time (1859), the technical term **homosexuality** had not yet entered scientific discourse. Nonetheless one must proceed from the assumption that in this addendum Schopenhauer was seeking to find the cause of homosexuality from the philosophical standpoint. In a historical survey he showed that homosexuality has occurred at all times and among all the peoples of the globe. From this finding Schopenhauer concluded that homosexuality could not be unnatural, as his great model Immanuel Kant had held. Schopenhauer's teleologically oriented conception of nature therefore had to assume in male homosexual behavior—the only form he discussed—a "stratagem of nature" (in the words of Oskar Eichler).

Referring to Aristotle he hypothesized that young men (supposedly boys just past puberty) and likewise men who are too old (the magic boundary is here the age of 54) are not capable of begetting healthy and strong offspring, because their semen is too inferior. As nature is interested in perfecting every species, in men older than 54 "a pederastic tendency gradually and imperceptibly makes its appearance." When he formulated this argument Schopenhauer himself was 71 years old, so that he could have harbored a homosexual tendency for some years. His ethical evaluation of homosexuality is consistent: What is in the interest of nature cannot be bad. Schopenhauer considered only the seduction of minors as problematic, "since the unlawfulness consists in the seduction of the younger and inexperienced partner, who is thereby physically and morally corrupted." Therefore homosexuality as such is not reprehensible, solely the alleged seduction of minors.

Schopenhauer was himself the father of at least two illegitimate children and had many unhappy affairs with women. He passionately admired Lord Byron and like him came to the conclusion that women could be considered beautiful only by "the male intellect clouded by the sexual instinct." In intellectual and aesthetic respects Schopenhauer had homosexual preferences. In a letter to his admirer Julius Frauenstadt he stressed that "even their [women's] faces are nothing alongside those of handsome boys." Bryan Magee hypothesizes that the philosopher systematically suppressed his gay tendencies, a view shared by Oskar Eichler and others. Thirty years after the publication of the third edition of *The World as Will and Idea* Oswald Oskar Hartmann adopted Schopenhauer's teleological explanation of homosexuality, suggesting that the first champions of homosexual rights voluntarily followed Schopenhauer's arguments.

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