

latter form part of the profession of the *kādēsh* and the *kelebh*, who donned women's clothing and prostituted themselves to male worshippers at the temples of Ishtar/Astarte, of which the oldest, as Herodotus specifically mentions, was the one at Ascalon. The rendering of the word *kādēsh* in the Septuagint by *porneuon* and *teliskomenos*, which are glossed in the lexica by terms indicating that these servitors of Ishtar performed both erotic and priestly functions for the devotees of the goddess, suggests that the hierodules of the Canaanite-Phoenician religion were the counterpart of the shamans in the archaic cultures of sub-Arctic Eurasia. This conclusion reinforces what is known from other sources: the *kādēshīm* engaged in homosexual activity as part of their religious calling, which provoked the rivalry and hatred of the priests and Levites in ancient Israel. Hence the Greek observers of Palestinian and Eurasian sacrosexual customs were struck by the similarity between them.

Soviet commentators on the passages in Herodotus and the Hippocratic corpus have preferred to stress the purported survival of matriarchal customs: the male who practiced divination had to adopt the gender of a woman in order to exercise a function that had previously belonged only to women. However, it is more consistent with the whole body of ethnographic data on divination and magic to see in the Scythian institution (and its Canaanite analogue) another instance of the peculiar gift for extrasensory perception that is often linked with inversion of gender role and sexual orientation. The religious culture of the Scythians institutionalized this phenomenon in the guise of a shamanism which survived among the remote Ossetians until comparatively recent times, when the mounting influence of Islam and Christianity led to its disappearance.

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SEAFARING

As a closed environment usually involving only one gender, maritime life offers objective conditions favoring **situational** homoerotic behavior. Nonetheless, at the present stage of research, documentation remains incomplete. Historical evidence, which comes mainly from western civilization, is generally of two types: on the one hand, the official policies of the maritime authorities, and their enforcement; on the other, **folklore** and oral tradition, most commonly sailor songs or sea shanties.

In addition to shipboard sexuality, there is a long and reasonably well attested history of sexual interaction between seafaring men in port and homosexuals attracted by a certain "sexual mystique" attributed to sailors at large. As a result, seamen and their images have assumed a role in the **gay subculture** out of all proportion to their miniscule presence as permanent members of that subculture.

Naval Policy and Discipline.

Although Greco-Roman culture was suffused with same-sex relations, little has been recorded of this activity in a maritime context, probably because it was taken for granted. In a fourth-century text from Athens, **Aeschines** notes that one Timarchus, who had ostensibly gone to the port of Piraeus to learn the barbering trade, had actually prostituted himself to sailors there.

The introduction of Judeo-Christian norms created the presuppositions for a new and problematic attitude, for the taboo on homosexual relations was supposed to apply everywhere. Nonetheless, evidence of enforcement is patchy, probably because shipboard activities were out of sight of land-based guardians of official ideology and pirates paid them no heed anyway. In early modern Europe, three nations—the Venetian Republic, the United Provinces (Holland), and England—felt themselves at risk, because their very prosperity depended on seaborne commerce. Sermons and pamphlets warned against the vengeance an angry god would inflict on a nation that tolerated sodomy. Nonetheless, the only evidence of sustained persecution comes from English naval history. During the eighteenth-century wars, heavy punishment with the lash as well as hanging were inflicted for buggery, reaching a peak during the conflict with Napoleon. From 1806 to 1816, 28.6 percent of all executions in the Royal Navy were for buggery. The punishments abated, but the practice evidently did not. Sir Winston Churchill, for a time First Lord of Admiralty, was to remark that the three traditions of the Royal Navy were “rum, sodomy, and the lash.” Although homosexual conduct has been decriminalized in the United Kingdom for consenting adults (1967 and after), this liberalization does not apply to the navy or merchant marine, where it remains subject to discipline.

In the United States, a kind of witchhunt was conducted among naval personnel in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1919–21, but this local action had no immediate sequel. Court records of testimony, however, demonstrate the sailors’ casual attitudes. Some Navy men and women were discharged in the late stages of World War II as part of a campaign to rid the armed services of “sex perverts.” Introduction of women aboard ship has caused some shifts in emphasis. In the USS *Norton Sound* case in Long Beach, California

(1980), women in the ranks were subjected to investigation for both heterosexual and lesbian activity. Naval discharges for “homosexual involvement” are still occasionally handed out today, though court-martial for sodomy are extremely rare. Since the mid-1970s administrative discharges have usually been characterized as “Honorable,” especially if the “involvement” in question was off-ship and off-base. Admitted homosexuals are not eligible for enlistment or commissioning in the United States Navy. Naval policy toward homosexuality has been under attack from the gay and civil liberties movements since the 1960s, when less-than-honorable discharges were common.

Attitudes of the Sailor. The custom of speeding work through singing—the sea shanty—probably goes back to the days of oars when keeping an exact beat was critical. Surviving sailor songs, however, go back to the nineteenth and sometimes eighteenth centuries, handed down from generation to generation in uncensored form and eventually written down by folklorists and collectors. These songs provide a quite different viewpoint on shipboard sexuality from that of the official establishment.

The attitude reflected in these songs is one of casual acceptance of sex among the sailors at sea, though homosexual adventures in port are not described. Thus, the Royal Navy sang “Backside rules the Navy,/ backside rules the sea./ If you wanna get some bum [arse],/ better get it from your chum/ ‘cause you’ll get no bum from me.” An American Navy enlisted man’s song, “Turalai,” celebrated the navy “for bugging whatever it can” and went on to state flatly that from this activity “comparative safety on shipboard/ is enjoyed by the hedgehog alone.” Merchant mariners commonly characterized the cabin boys as sexual recipients.

It is interesting to note that the sailor songs frequently accompanied tales of heterosexual adventures in port with woeful endings involving venereal disease

and vengeful husbands, but the songs describing sex at sea among themselves are good-humored and without such warnings.

Sailor slang characterized the passive sexual partner on ship as "sea pussy," implying he was a legitimate substitute in the female-deprived circumstances of an ocean voyage. Thus does the proverbial seaman's expression "any port in a storm" find direct physiological outlet.

Sailors in general have long been noted for a relatively casual attitude toward the standards of sexual "morality" held by landlubbers; this relative tolerance also applies to same-gender sexual activity. Most seamen are of the working class and widely share the attitude common among working-class men that only the passive partner's activity is "homosexual" or "unnatural," while the active, insertive partner's role is not stigmatized.

In the American navy (until pay was substantially raised with the end of the draft in the early 1970s), and in less-well-paid navies to this day, male prostitution in port was quite common among enlisted sailors, sometimes for nominal sums as an excuse for a desired sexual contact. The active, "male" role had to be preserved, however. Not infrequently, the poverty-stricken sailor would first earn some money offering himself for fellatio with a homosexual male, then take the money so earned and spend it on a female prostitute.

While it is clear that sailors in general are more tolerant of homosexuality than a cross-section of the land-dwelling population from which they come, the maritime subculture is not immune from the homophobia of that population. Significant numbers of sailors can also be found to endorse the strictly homophobic norms established by naval (if not merchant marine) authorities. While some captains ignore the official policy, and others enforce it only when inescapably brought to their attention, still others

have been known to conduct vigorous witchhunting. As with many other matters of shipboard life, the atmosphere with regard to homosexuality can vary enormously from one ship to another.

It should not surprise that significant numbers of young men who prefer the companionship of other males and feel little or no need for females have for centuries gone to sea. Those inclined toward passive roles have often found themselves welcomed by sexually frustrated crewmates, while those inclined toward active roles have found it relatively easy to camouflage themselves as "straight" while practicing the sex they like best.

The Mystique of the Sailor. For the landlubbing civilian, sailors have often had a romantic aura, and for homosexual males this has been supplemented by an uncommonly strong erotic mystique. This mystique is promoted by many sailors, who traditionally pride themselves on their erotic prowess, their experience of sexual variations from all over the world, their revealing skin-tight uniforms, and their abundant sexual energy stored up over weeks or months at sea. Some seamen speculate that the constant vibrations of the powerful engines on ship make them especially horny. Perceived by homosexuals as hypersexual, relatively casual about homosexual contact, and easily plied with inhibition-loosening alcohol, it is no wonder that even apparently heterosexual sailors were sought out and highly prized as sexual partners. The sailors, of course, were usually aware of this and often played up to it, resulting in a curious symbiosis of maritime and homosexual subcultures. In gay slang, sailors are called "seafood," probably reflecting their well-known (if scientifically undocumented) fondness for oral sex, and the men who are particularly drawn to them are called "seafood queens." In major ports, where the interaction of the two subcultures is strong, there are well-known places, times, and means of making contact. In Norfolk, Virginia (headquarters of the U.S.

Atlantic Fleet), for example, there are so many available sailors that many of the "seafood queens" become specialists, adopting one particular ship and its crew or one occupational speciality (such as radarman or boatswain's mate) to the exclusion of others.

Not well known is the fact that a great deal of the motivation for those generally heterosexual sailors who become repeatedly involved with gay men as trade is not sexual or financial at all. The young common sailor, generally at the bottom of the shipboard hierarchy and often dismissed with contempt by civilians at large, finds himself treated like royalty, his male ego enhanced, his gripes given sympathetic attention. Instead of taking orders all the time, he finds himself in a position to give them. Instead of the usual sterile environment of cramped shipboard quarters, he gets to relax in a home environment where he can kick back, watch television, and have his every need attended to.

Literary and Artistic Images. The sexual fascination with sailors was often expressed, though sometimes cryptically, in literary works. Major monuments are the sea novels of Herman Melville; in *White-Jacket* (1850) the title character declares, "sailors, as a class, entertain the most liberal notions concerning morality . . . or rather, they take their own views of such matters." In 1895 Adolfo Caminha published a novel, *Bom-Crioulo*, offering a frank view of an interracial affair between two Brazilian sailors. Among twentieth-century novels, Jean Genet's *Querelle of Brest* (1947) is outstanding for its transposition of the sailor image into the author's own powerful moral universe. In its turn the book was made into a film by the German gay director Rainer Werner Fassbinder. The multitalented Jean Cocteau offered a dual homage to sailors in poetry and drawings. Christopher Bram's novel *Hold Tight* (1988) portrays the spy-catching career of a sailor in a male brothel in New York City during World War II. The American painters Paul Cadmus and

Charles Demuth showed sailors on shore leave as the object of the attention of gay men. Depictions of sailors, often emphasizing the characteristic contours of the bell-bottom trousers and the jaunty set of the cap, have been a staple of pornographic drawings, photographs, and films.

Much research remains to be done, especially as regards homosexual behavior among Muslim, Chinese, Japanese, and other non-Western sailors. There can be no doubt, however, that seafaring, with its characteristic appeal to escape from the constraints of land-based civilization, has been a major focus of male homosexual imagination.

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SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem refers to the evaluative dimension of the self-concept: the attitude that an individual adopts and customarily maintains with regard to the self as good or bad. It reflects the extent to which an individual believes the self to be capable, significant, and worthy. Self-esteem thus implies an overall attitude of self-acceptance, self-respect, and self-worth independent of context. Rosenberg notes that "A person with high self-esteem is fundamentally satisfied with the type of person he is" while a person with low self-esteem "lacks respect for himself, considers himself unworthy, inadequate, or oth-