

See also *Castrati*; *Dance*; *Music*, *Popular*; *Theatre and Drama*; *Transvestism* (*Cross-Dressing*); *Variety, Revue, and Cabaret Entertainment*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Roger Baker, *Drag: A History of Female Impersonation*, London: Triton, 1968; Gisela Bleibtreu-Ehrenberg, *Der Weibmann*, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1984; A. Holtmont, *Die Hosenrolle*, Munich: Meyer & Jessen, 1925; Kris Kirk and Ed Heath, *Men in Procks*, London: Gay Men's Press, 1984; Laurence Senelick, "The Evolution of the Male Impersonator on the 19th Century Popular Stage," *Essays in Theatre*, 1:1 (1982), 31-44.

Laurence Senelick

TRAVEL AND EXPLORATION

In this context, the literature of travel and exploration refers to books written by Europeans or Americans about what came to be known as the "Third World"—Asia, Africa, the islands of the Pacific, and to a certain extent the Americas (as relating to Amerindians). It would not include work in the field of *anthropology*. This literature of travel and exploration (and conquest) begins around the time of Columbus and goes onward until the early twentieth century, when tourism began to make the whole world a replica of the West and nothing was left to be explored.

Travel Literature. During the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, it was possible to write about "sodomie" with some frankness. Accordingly, there are numerous candid references to homosexuality in the various writings of travelers which were collected in massive multivolume anthologies by Richard Haklyt, Samuel Purchas, and John Pinkerton. Purchas (the source of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan") even has a unique reference to the homosexuality of the Emperor Jahangir of India. Many other travel books during this period not collected by any later editor also contain data of this kind.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, a slow tidal wave of puritanism and prudery rolled over the West, and by 1835 it had ceased to be safe to make open references to homosexuality in books intended for general use. Here and there in France and Germany, scholars during the nineteenth century were able to write articles or even books about homosexuality, or to mention it in passing, but in the English-speaking world there was an almost absolute taboo against mentioning such an "unspeakable" subject at all. Travelers therefore either simply did not mention what they saw in foreign lands with regard to homosexual behavior, or else they mentioned it in veiled phrases ("vice against nature," "abominable vice," "unnatural propensities," and similar expressions). This sort of nonsense went on until the veil was rudely lifted by Arminius Vambery and Sir Richard Burton in the late nineteenth century, Vambery being a Hungarian traveler who had visited the court of the pederastic Amir of Bukhara in Central Asia, and Burton being the notorious explorer of Asia and Africa who wrote a whole essay on *pederasty*, which provoked howls of "moral" outrage. But the Oscar Wilde trials in 1895 put the lid back on until after World War I, and even to a certain extent until after World War II.

Another problem was that the Asians and Africans themselves—and this is a problem faced also by anthropologists—realized that the Western travelers were hostile to homosexuality, and therefore kept it out of their sight as much as possible. The Japanese after the beginnings of modernization in the late nineteenth century are a case in point. One need only look back to the clandestine nature of homosexual society in the United States up until the 1960s to realize how easy it is to hide a flourishing homosexual subculture from the general public, much more so from passing tourists.

The present writer can attest that homosexuality, so widespread in Morocco,

remains totally out of the view of tourists who are not looking for it. Nonetheless, there have been some travelers who were allowed to see homosexual behavior going on right in front of them. In the 1950s, Wilfred Thesiger and Gavin Maxwell visited the tribes in the marshlands of southern Iraq (since, alas, ravaged by war), where the young boys were all stark naked, and there were dancing-boys who act as prostitutes. The Arabs made no secret of this to Thesiger and Maxwell, but whether they would have made a secret of it to other visitors is hard to say. The fact that Maxwell was a pederast may have made a difference.

Homosexual Questers. There is a second aspect of travel, namely the travels of homosexual men (rarely lesbians) in search of some place on earth where the taboos of the Christian West have no validity. As Kipling put it, "Ship me somewhere east of Suez, where the best is like the worst, Where there ain't no Ten Commandments, and a man can have a thirst." The idea that somewhere "east of Suez" there was a paradise where "a man can have a thirst" for the forbidden is a powerful myth that took over the imagination of many homosexual men. How many explorers were actually, deep in the recesses of their minds, looking for this paradise? The wanderlust of many an explorer and traveler doubtlessly had been inspired by cravings that they hardly dare admit even to themselves. The fact that travel and exploration generally involve being in the company of other men, to the total exclusion of women, and requiring the company of friendly local boys as guides and servants, is bound to have a much stronger appeal to homosexual than to heterosexual men. Even in paradises famous for their women of easy virtue, such as Polynesia, it was homosexual men like Herman Melville and Charles Warren Stoddard who led the way, and in Bali, an island famous for its bare-breasted women, there was a colony of European homosexuals in the 1930s (driven out by the Dutch).

Some homosexual (usually pederastic) men have practically made a career out of wandering around the globe in search of exotic boys: Walter B. Harris, Michael Davidson, and Roland Raven-Hart, to name a few. If one was not too adventurous, a simple trip to France or Italy (Venice, Capri, Sicily) would suffice, and there has long flourished a homosexual colony in Tangier, exotic but near to Europe.

In the 1970s there were several Asian nations whose great poverty caused a sharp rise in the prostitution of young boys (and girls), but a public outcry forced the otherwise amoral police to crack down, or pretend to crack down, on the numerous tourists who came in just to patronize the local boys. This sort of prostitution was flourishing in Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Thailand, and the Philippines, where the town of Pagsanjan turned pederasty into its main industry. As far back as 1903, General Hector Macdonald, a hero of the British Army, had committed suicide after having sexual relations with boys in Ceylon.

The fondness for travel among modern homosexuals has led to the publication of various "gay guides," the most complete one being the *Spartacus International Gay Guide* (Berlin: Bruno Gmünder Verlag, 1989). The idea that "the grass is greener on the other side" has helped to send thousands of homosexual men in search of sexual freedom or gratification in foreign lands. To a certain extent, this is a glorified version of the sexual encounters that the heterosexual businessman has on trips to other cities—he dare not risk exposure in his home town, but nobody knows him in the other city, he is anonymous.

Local Attitudes and Foreign Myths. The question of whether the people of Asia and Africa are more liberal about sex remains to be answered. Islam is more puritanical than Christianity, but its customary sexual segregation provokes widespread homosexuality, at least of the situational sort that flourishes in boarding schools or prisons if not the "real" sort.

And poverty creates the desperate amorality that breeds prostitution of all kinds. These are not the best bases for a sexual paradise, even if sexual freedom is more widespread under such conditions. But a lot of men don't care. Hence the sexual "Meccas"—how totally unlike the purity of Mecca!—of the East.

In a sense, the sexual bazaars of the East are an artificially created response to the "east of Suez" image that many Westerners are looking for, and the supply is created to meet the demand. Thus, the image creates its own realization. The modern situation is totally unlike the earlier one because the invention of jet airplanes increased the number of tourists to Asia. In the 1930s, a slow boat to Shanghai to taste the vices of the mysterious Orient was no easy matter, but now one can fly to Asia in one day. The availability of sex and the liberalism of sexual attitudes can often be seen in amusing and ironic comparisons made by people who think that "here" it is hard but "there" it is easy. Some Americans think that Rio de Janeiro is a sexual paradise compared to the United States—the sex more available and the attitudes more liberal—while the Brazilians are thinking that their own country is puritanical and that America is the sexual paradise! But the myth keeps provoking people to travel to other countries in search of better sexual hunting grounds. (This myth also applies to the American image of Scandinavia.) Not long ago, East Baltimore was the Pagsanjan of America, but people continue to think in terms of paradises being far away.

Perhaps in the future, when wealthy Asians are common and the AIDS crisis will have been solved, one can expect the United States to be visited by homosexual tourists from Japan in search of the large and virile Western male of the cowboy and detective films they see at home.

See also **Resorts, Gay.**

Stephen Wayne Foster

TRIBADE

The Greek term for lesbian, *tribas*—from the verb *tribein*, "to rub"—implies that the women so designated derived their sexual pleasure from friction against one another's bodies. Male imagination supplied further embellishments. Friedrich Karl Forberg, in his commentary on classical sexual mores entitled *De figuris Veneris* (1824), asserted that "the tribades . . . are women in whom that part of the genital apparatus which is called the clitoris attains such dimensions that they can use it as a penis, either for fornication or for pedication. . . . In tribades, either by a freak of nature or in consequence of frequent use, it attains immoderate dimensions. The tribade can get it into erection, enter a vulva or anus, enjoy a delicious voluptuousness, and procure if not a complete realization of cohabitation, at least something very close to it, to the woman who takes the passive role." He adds that the term was "also applied to women who in default of a real penis make use of their finger or of a leather contrivance [dildo] which they insert into their vulva and so attain a fictitious titillation." According to some ancient sources, a pet garden snake could also double for the virile member.

The word *tribas* appears comparatively late in Greek, in astrological authors and satirists of the second century of our era, yet its occurrence in the work of the Roman poet Martial at the end of the first century shows that it must have existed in vulgar speech, if not in literature, well before that time. Phaedrus (IV, 14) even equates *tribades* with *molles mares* (effeminate males = homosexuals) as individuals exhibiting disharmony between their genitalia and the direction of their sexual desires. The Latin language formed its own word *frictrix* or *fricatrix* from *fricare* "to rub" on the model of the Greek expression. Preserved by the texts of classical authors whose manuscripts survived into the Renaissance, the word *tribade* found its way into the modern languages,