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AFRICA, NORTH

This term generally denotes Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, a region which the Arabs term the Maghrib, or "West." Formerly the Maghrib also embraced Muslim Spain—including the kingdom of Granada—which are discussed separately.

General Features. Pederasty was virtually pandemic in North Africa during the periods of Arab and Turkish rule. Islam as a whole was tolerant of pederasty, and in North Africa particularly so. (The Islamic high-water points in this respect may tentatively be marked out as Baghdad of *The Thousand and One Nights*, Cairo of the Mamluks, Moorish Granada, and Algiers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.) The era of Arabic rule in North Africa did, however, witness occasional puritan movements and rulers, such as the Almohads and a Shiite puritanism centered in Fez (Morocco). This puritanism continues with the current King Hassan II of Morocco, who is, however, hampered by an openly homosexual brother.

Islam was a slave society, and one of the chief commercial activities of North Africa was the vast trade in slaves from sub-Saharan Africa. Slavery dated back to Roman times, but during this era it reached very large proportions—sometimes assuming almost the character of a mercantile trans-Saharan kingdom.

The Ottoman Turks, who followed the Arabs, were even more notorious as adepts of pederasty. If one is to trust the reports of scandalized European visitors, the "vice" was everywhere, and no social class was "uninfected." The simple tolerance of same-sex eroticism was a source of endless Christian horror.

The Christian horror was not universal. Some Europeans captured by the Turks saw no reason to return to the fold of Christendom; other Europeans simply emigrated (or fled the law). These "renegades" became an important subclass in North Africa. It was frequently remarked that some of the "renegades" became the worst enemies of Christianity; frequently better educated than the local citizenry, they often held the reins of power. When Moorish Spain fell in 1492, a large number of new recruits joined the "renegades." Four hundred Franciscan friars left the Spain of Isabel the Catholic and embraced Islam rather than "mend their ways," as she had commanded them to do.

During the Turkish period, the bazaars or suqs of North Africa had special sections devoted to the sale of Christian slaves, both male and female, who had been captured by pirates on the Mediterranean to face the proverbial "fate worse than death"—consignment to the seraglios of the ruling classes of the notorious Barbary Coast (the most beautiful captives were frequently reserved for the harems of Constantinople). This trade in white Christians, kidnapped and raped on the Mediterranean, gradually supplanted the previous trade in Negro slaves.

Universal throughout pre-colonial North Africa was the singing and dancing boy, widely preferred over the female in cafe entertainments and suburban pleasure gardens. A prime cultural rationale was to protect the chastity of the females, who would instantly assume the status of a prostitute in presenting such a performance. The result was several centuries of erotic performances by boys, who were the preferred entertainers even when female prostitutes were available, and who did not limit their acts to arousing the lust of the patrons. A North African merchant could stop at the cafe for a cup of tea and a hookah, provided by a young lad, listen to the singing, and then proceed to have sex with the boy right on the premises, before returning to his shop.

The French conquest of the area drove much of this activity underground. Although the French penal code, since the time of Napoleon, had no legal sanction for same-sex activity, and the colonists were thus largely restricted to shocked horror and verbal scorn when confronted with the behavior of the "natives," the French did put a stop to slave-trading, piracy, and much prostitution, which effectively eliminated the old romance and terror of the Barbary Coast.

Its apparent benefits notwithstanding, colonialism seems to have had an immensely destructive effect throughout much of the world, as people everywhere suddenly desired to be modern, Western, and European—certainly not to be "backwards." The European superstitions about homosexuality were swallowed entire, and adopted as if they had always been in force. The present writer has spoken with a Tunisian supervisor of schools who firmly believes in the death penalty for all homosexuals. Thus, in their rush to modernism, Third World leaders often adopt the sexual standards of medieval Christendom, even as Europe and America are moving toward legalization and tolerance of same-sex activity. Such, at least in part, is also the plight of modern North Africa.

Libya. Libya is almost entirely desert: the Sahara takes up at least 90% of the country's surface area. The coastal towns support some agricultural production, but the major export comes from the desert—oil.

Early reports from Libya include the famous oasis of Siwa located near the Libyan-Egyptian border, but since the accession of Mu'ammr Gaddafi and his purportedly revolutionary regime, the country has not been generally accessible to foreigners. However, numerous and independent travelers' reports indicate that at least one highly-placed Libyan authority is addicted to blond European lads, whom he flies in for weekend trysts and decorates with gold and silver. There is

also, for the general populace, a quasi-clandestine pederastic trade, with the older males in automobiles and the younger on the sidewalks, where money is exchanged for quick satisfaction of lust. Neither Libya nor its neighbor, Egypt, has a strong tradition of hedonism.

Tunisia. A small and impoverished country of some four million, Tunisia's high birthrate keeps the country very young—about half the people are under eighteen. Although it is common to see men walking hand-in-hand (as in all Islamic countries), it would not be wise for a foreigner to adopt the practice with a male lover. Tunisians can easily tell the difference between two friends of approximately equal status (where hand-holding is expected) and a sexual relation (which is "officially" disapproved of and therefore not to be made public). The "official" disapproval means that hotels will frequently not allow Tunisian visitors in hotel rooms occupied by foreigners. In the heartland of homosexual tourism (the Hammamet-Nabeul area), when summer is at its peak, squads of police have occasionally been posted to keep the boys out of the luxury beach hotels. They are not always successful.

Homosexual behavior in Tunisia goes back for hundreds or even thousands of years. In the days of Carthage, the city was known for its perfumed male prostitutes and courtesans. After Carthage was destroyed in the Punic wars, Tunisia became a Roman colony. The country did not regain its independence until modern times. The Romans were supplanted by the Vandals, who in turn surrendered the country to the Byzantine Empire. The rise of the followers of Muhammad swept Tunisia out of Christendom forever, and the country eventually passed into the Turkish Empire, where it remained until the French protectorate. In the Islamic period, Tunisia was centered on the town of Kairouan and known as "Ifriqiya."

Algeria. Algeria is different from Tunisia, principally because of the savage

war of independence against the French, and the subsequent drift of Algeria into the socialist camp. Marxist societies abominate homosexuality, and this influence has had a chilling affect on Algeria. The passing tourist will see nothing of such activity, although residents may have a different experience. Another fact is that Algerians do not like the French (because of the war) and this dislike is frequently extended to all people who look like Frenchmen, though they may be Canadian or Polish. It is a strange country, where you can spot signs saying "Parking Reserved for the National Liberation Front" (the stalls are filled with Mercedes Benzes), and also the only place in all of North Africa where the present writer has even seen a large graffito proclaiming "Nous voulons vivre français!" ("We want to live as Frenchmen!").

The adventures of Oscar Wilde and André Gide in Tunisia and Algeria before the war are good evidence that this modern difference between the two countries was in fact caused by the trauma of the war. There is better evidence in the history of Algiers long before. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Algiers was possibly the leading homosexual city in the world. It was the leading Ottoman naval and administrative center in the western Mediterranean, and was key to Turkey's foreign trade with every country but Italy. Of the major North African cities, it was the furthest from the enemy—Europe. It was the most Turkish city in North Africa, in fact the most Turkish city outside Turkey.

Morocco. Almost nothing is known of homosexuality in Morocco prior to the end of the fifteenth century. It is possible that the Carthaginians introduced the religious prostitution of boys to the indigenous Berbers. In the impressive remains of the Roman/Moroccan city of Volubilis, a large bas-relief stone phallus testifies to a phallic cult. When Morocco does appear in written history, however, it has the same guise as the rest of North

Africa: Europeans report the omnipresence of behavior which was thought to be an act against nature, or a temptation of the Devil. The loss of Azzamur on the Moroccan coast was blamed on "the horrible vice of Sodomie," in a parallel to the original tale of the destruction of Sodom itself. The bathhouses (*hammams*) of Fez were the object of scandalous comments around 1500.

Two factors assume a bolder relief in Morocco, although they are typical of North Africa as a whole. One is a horror of masturbation. This dislike, combined with the seclusion of good women and the diseases of prostitutes, leads many a Maghrebi to regard anal copulation with a friend as the only alternative open to him, and clearly superior to masturbation. It also leads to such behavior being regarded as a mere peccadillo.

The other, more peculiarly Moroccan tradition is that of *baraka*, a sort of "religious good luck." It is believed that a saintly man can transmit some of this baraka to other men by the mechanism of anal intercourse. (Fellatio has traditionally been regarded with disgust in the region, although the twentieth century has been changing attitudes.)

The Frenchman responsible for establishing the French protectorate over Morocco in 1912, Resident General Louis-Hubert-Gonzalve Lyautey, was an aristocratic pederast, who in his youth was already working with clubs of Catholic working men, and always paid attention to the welfare of his men. It is universally reported that Lyautey showed great respect for local Moroccan institutions. A member of the French Academy and a Marshal of France, Lyautey was a soldier/pederast of great distinction. (His own love was directed toward his aristocratic French aides.)

The city of Tangier was notorious during the period 1950–1980, when numbers of American and European celebrity homosexuals made the city their second home. (They had the same motivations as

the composer Camille Saint-Saëns, who spent his declining years in Tangier.) Visitors and residents included Jane Bowles, Paul Bowles, William Burroughs, Truman Capote, Allen Ginsberg, Jean Genet, Tennessee Williams, and other notorieties. The British playwright Joe Orton's Moroccan vacation was shown with great panache in the biographical film *Prick Up Your Ears*, and was fully described in his diaries (published posthumously). In more recent years, there have been some indications of a puritan backlash developing, and the city has lost much of its celebrity glitter, although pederasty remains a constant of the Moroccan cultural scene.

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AFRICA, SUB-SAHARAN

Africa south of the Sahara presents a rich mosaic of peoples and cultures. Scholarly investigations, which are continuing, have highlighted a number of patterns of homosexual behavior.

Male Homosexuality. Recurrent attempts have been made to deny any indigenous homosexuality in sub-Saharan Africa, at least since Edward Gibbon wrote, in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1781), "I believe and hope that the negroes in their own country were exempt from this moral pestilence." Obviously, Gibbon's hope was not based on even casual travel or enquiry. Sir Richard Burton, who a century later reinforced the myth of African sexual exceptionalism by drawing the boundaries of his *Sotadic Zone* where homosexuality was widely practiced and accepted to exclude sub-Saharan Africa, was personally familiar with male homosexuality in Islamic societies within his zone, but had not researched the topic in central or southern Africa, where there were "primitive" hunter/gatherer socie-

ties and quite complex state formations before European conquest. In a number of the latter, such as the Azande of the Sudan (see Evans-Pritchard), the taking of boy-brides was well-established.

Clearly, gender-crossing homosexuality also existed from Nubia to Zululand on the East Coast of Africa (and offshore on Madagascar as well). In many societies it was related to possession cults in which women have prominent roles and male participants tend to transvestitic homosexuality. Cross-gender homosexuality not tied to possession cults has been reported in a number of East African societies. Folk fear of witches is widespread in Islamic cultures, although a link between witchcraft and pederasty is unusual in existing ethnographic reports of Islamic cultures.

Nadel (1955) did not mention any such link in contrasting two other Sudanese peoples: the Heiban in which there is no expected corollary of homosexual acts (i.e., no homosexual role), and the Otoro where a special transvestitic role exists and men dress and live as women. Nadel (1947) also mentioned transvestitic homosexuality among the Moro, Nyima and Tira, and reported marriages of Korongo *londo* and Mesakin *tubele* for the bride-price of one goat. In these tribes with "widespread homosexuality and transvestiticism," Nadel (1947) reported a fear of heterosexual intercourse as sapping virility and a common reluctance to abandon the pleasures of all-male camp life for the fetters of permanent settlement: "I have even met men of forty and fifty who spent most of their nights with the young folk in the cattle camps instead of at home in the village." In these pervasively homoerotic societies, the men who were wives were left at home with the women, i.e., were not in the all-male camps." Among the Mossi, pages chosen from among the most beautiful boys aged seven to fifteen were dressed and had the other attributes of women in relation to chiefs, for whom sexual intercourse with women was denied on Fri-