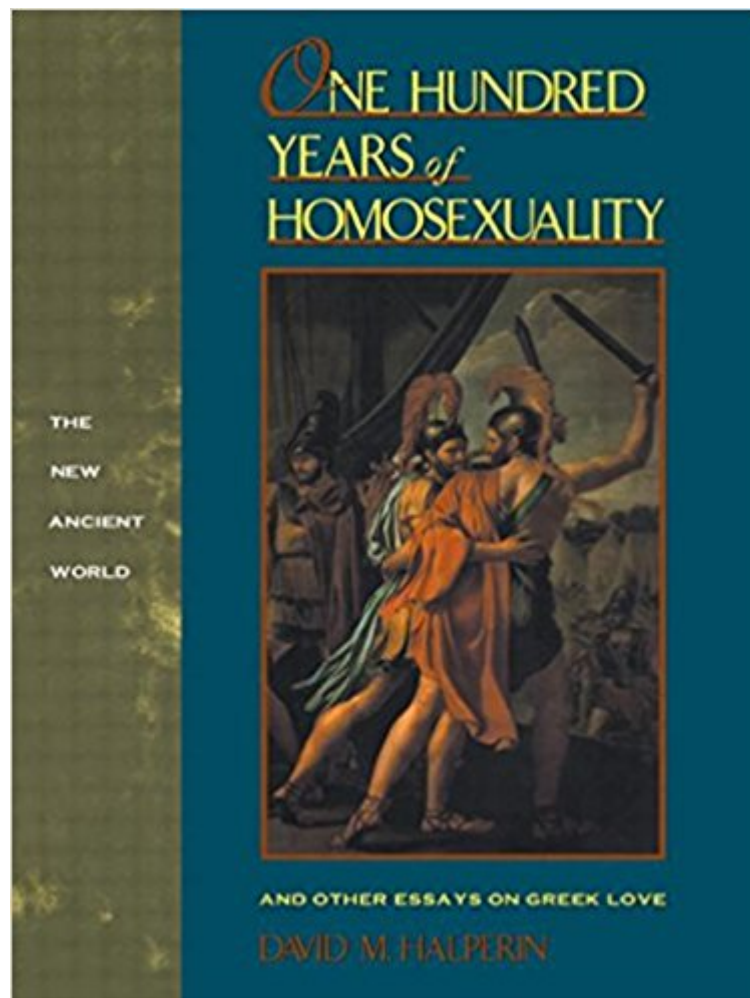




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One Hundred Years Of Homosexuality: And Other Essays On Greek Love (New Ancient World)



Synopsis

Halperin's subject is the erotics of male culture in ancient Greece. Arguing that the modern concept of "homosexuality" is an inadequate tool for the interpretation of these features of sexual life in antiquity, Halperin offers an alternative account that accords greater prominence to the indigenous terms in which sexual experiences were constituted in the ancient Mediterranean world. Wittily and provocatively written, Halperin's meticulously drawn windows onto ancient sexuality give us a new meaning to the concept of "Greek love."

Book Information

Series: New Ancient World

Paperback: 244 pages

Publisher: Routledge (November 17, 1989)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0415900972

ISBN-13: 978-0415900973

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.6 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.7 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #442,368 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #51 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Literature & Fiction > Literary Criticism #170 in Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Gay & Lesbian Studies #208 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > History

Customer Reviews

"the single most important contribution to the interpretation of gay history in nearly a decade."-"Outweek "the most significant study of Greek homosexuality since the pioneering work of K.J. Dover...This rich and stimulating book has something to offer to the general reader of Homer and Plato as well as to the specialized theorist of human sexuality. Halperin's research is very much on the cutting edge of classical studies and is sure to be an influence in the field for years to come.."-Classical World "all very fine essays, characterized by meticulous scholarship and a great deal of fresh insight."-"Journal of the History of Sexuality "Carries out, with careful scholarly arguments and a judicious, wide-ranging use of evidence, the project Foucault mapped out in the second volume of his "History of Sexuality . . . Clear and incisive, these essays are probably the best available introduction for the general reader to the issues raised by Foucault's work."-Martha Nussbaum, "TLS "[Halperin] is a brilliant polemicist . . . it is hard to imagine a more eloquent and

well-informed presentation of his point of view. And the passion and dash of his prose serve to remind us that what is in question is not only theory but the beliefs and behaviors of real human beings."-Mark Golden, "Classical Views

David M. Halperin is Professor of Literature at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

David Halpern "is Professor of Literature in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology" . . . and it shows. This book is a complex treatment of a complex subject. I don't like to divulge the endings of novels - let the reader find out for himself . . . but this is no novel, and this has no final conclusion. It deals with societal characteristics (East and West) from about 500 BC to present, maintains that "homosexuality" is pretty much a POOR psychological category used only in the LAST 150 years, and, as such, has many failings . . . as a valid classification of human behavior. The author investigates both the NATURE (are there genetic homosexuals?) and NURTURE (are there socially produced homosexuals?) sides of the question: "WHAT PRODUCES SAME SEX BEHAVIOR?" By the time you finish the book you will be an expert on Ancient Greek History (Athens). . . at LEAST. In summation I believe the author "feels", as do I, that sex is a strong undifferentiated, biological drive channeled to target by MANY environmental elements. This book should be required reading for all undergraduates.

This book is a canonical gay studies text. Halperin is a respected academic in both the classics and gay studies. The term "homosexuality" was invented a little over a century ago. Thus, anything before that time has to be analyzed in perspective. Halperin looks at the classic writings of ancient Greek "homosexuals" and puts them into deep analysis. Halperin avoids a lot of the "essentialist" mistakes that John Boswell fell into with his Social Tolerance book. Dover's book has more cool photos in it, but Halperin's book is very worthwhile. It's a must-have for classics and gay readers.

This was given to me by a friend. I have found it to be indispensable in my readings as a great place to start looking for information on Greek Homosexuality. The bibliography is top-notch. Highly recommended for any historian or philosopher of the Greek era, and any gay person interested in the history of homosexuality.

Halperin's book highlights the absurdity of social constructionism. If homosexuals first appeared in the English speaking world when the word was first attested in 1892, then they must by that logic

have appeared in the German speaking world in 1869, when Kertbeny coined the German equivalent. We homos also must have not yet appeared among speakers of such languages that do not yet have the term - even if some of those speakers know English. This exaggerated form of social constructionism ignores the habitual, exclusive sodomite known to medieval and early modern Europeans, as well as to the Greeks and Romans whose authors often satirized such queens in terms all too familiar today. Halperin should give up on history and theory and go to work studying cowboys, now that he has relocated from the Hub to Australia and then to the mid-west - not far from the Wild West. His expertise seems to extend from Gilgamesh and Enkidu to the Lone Ranger and Tonto! John Addington Symonds, who was as familiar or more familiar than anyone else with German scholarship about inversion, must have known about the German neologism in 1869 long before 1892. In Halperin's twisted, tainted logic did he therefore become a homo avant le mot anglais? The same must also apply to gay if indeed "gay" in that sense was another neologism, as many claim.

Halperin's work is essentially ideological, as I suspect he would admit. He believes first and then argues. His reading of the primary sources reflects his biases, and his arguments based on Greek vocabulary are weak and based on a lot of semantic trickery. If you are interested in sexuality in the ancient world, you have to read Halperin, but only those that start from his own ideological assumptions will be convinced he has said anything important.

Save yourself the effort. Camille Paglia has already done the work for you. Before you read Halperin's book, read Camille Paglia's showstopping breakdown of it. It's a laugh-out-loud riot and basically calls this travesty out for what it is.

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