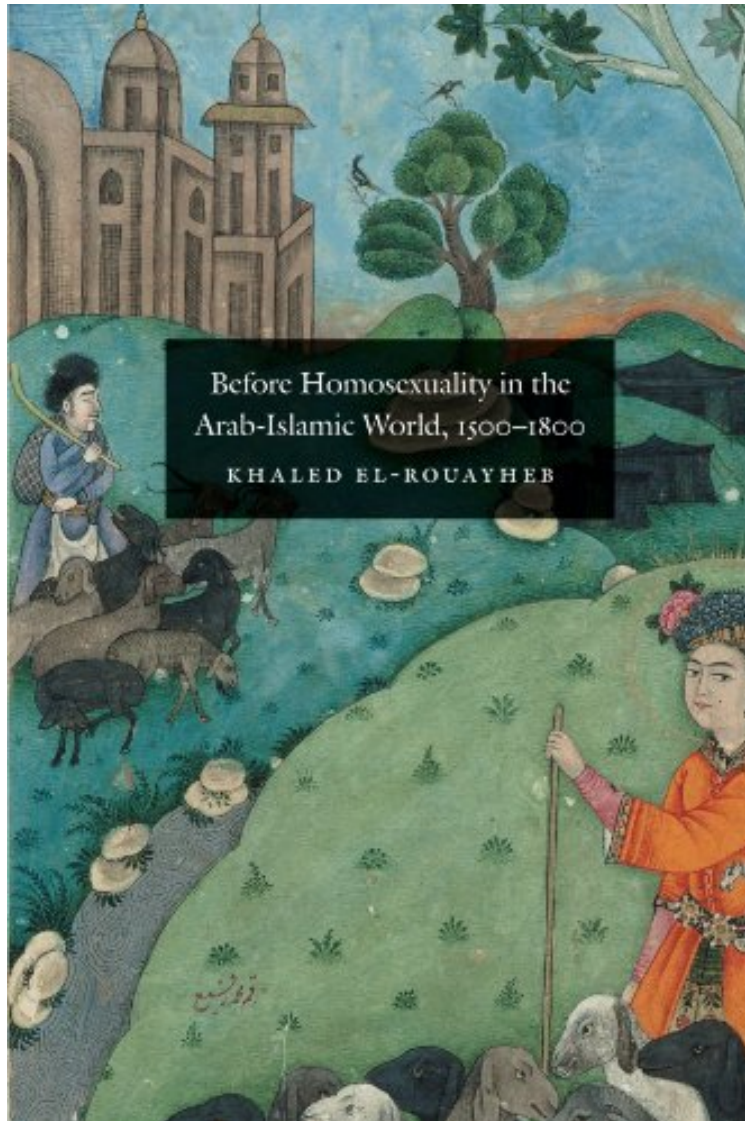


[PDF] Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800

## Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800

*Khaled El-Rouayheb*

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#202854 in Books Khaled El Rouayheb 2009-04-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.00 x 6.001, .70 #File Name: 0226729893224 pages Before Homosexuality in the Arab Islamic World 1500 1800 | File size: 30.Mb

**Khaled El-Rouayheb : Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800:

30 of 32 people found the following review helpful. Arab Instances of Male Homosexuality By Jeffery Mingo El-Rouayheb looks at writings over 300 years in the Arab world to refute ideas that all forms of male homosexuality were punished or that all forms were widespread. He tries to answer how so many Arab men could openly praise the beauty

of young men even if the Qu'ran may condemn such practices. Just as masculine Native American men could boogie with two-spirited men and this relationship was not seen as "same-sex," bearded Arab men could get down with younger males and not have their love be seen as that between two similars. The author tries to answer whether Michel Foucault's contentions could apply to the Arab world. In short, he maintains that "homosexuality" is too large an umbrella to translate the many dynamics that took place between older and younger males in that region at that time. This book is much-needed and highly informative. If I could wave a wand and give a copy to every gay person and every Muslim or Arab, I would. This was a thoughtful eye-opener. As a non-Muslim and a non-Arab, I must admit that it is hard to be critical or refute this text. Since I don't know any better, I take the author at his word. I imagine that most "Western" readers will have this same feeling. This book is not a "Who's Who of Gay Arabia." Besides Abu Nuwas, few famous names come up. The author doesn't address whether again-celebrated poet Rumi had homoerotic relationships or not, for example. With the exception of the painting on the cover, there is no section of photographs or reprints. I suppose this lack makes the book seem more serious to rigorous scholars. However, Boswell included visuals in his "Homosexuality, Christianity, and Social Tolerance." The internet provides many Arabic homoerotic paintings. Thus, I wish this author had done the same thing. This book sometimes frustrates me with its disinterested, arm's length tone. Yes, this may make the author sound more objective and credible as a scholar, but there may be political ramifications to this text. Dr. Simon LeVay, the scientist who first argued for the existence of a "gay gene" has also made statements like, "Yes, I know if scientists find the gene, they may try to wash it out of human DNA." Similarly, this author never really says whether he supports the rights of consenting adult males, whether in the Arab or non-Arab regions, to fall in love or boogie with each other. Given the arrest of 52 gay men in Cairo and the execution of two gay teens in Iran recently, this book does nothing to ensure that tragedies like that won't happen again. This "constructionist" perspective, naively, washes its hands of modern, concrete issues around sexuality. As important as Eve Sedgwick's "The Epistemology of the Closet" was to gay studies courses when I was in college, only the introductory chapter was ever assigned. The body chapters were just examples of a theme already set out. Time-strapped students assigned this book could easily get away with just reading the first and last chapters of the text. 1 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating, and easy to read. By DEl-Rouayheb has done a great job of diving into a scantily researched and often ignored topic. Information is presented in a topical manner that makes it easy to understand and digest.

Attitudes toward homosexuality in the pre-modern Arab-Islamic world are commonly depicted as schizophrenic—visible and tolerated on one hand, prohibited by Islam on the other. Khaled El-Rouayheb argues that this apparent paradox is based on the anachronistic assumption that homosexuality is a timeless, self-evident fact to which a particular culture reacts with some degree of tolerance or intolerance. Drawing on poetry, biographical literature, medicine, dream interpretation, and Islamic texts, he shows that the culture of the period lacked the concept of homosexuality.

This is the best contribution to the history of homosexuality I have read in some time. For centuries, Arabic-Islamic cultures have been notorious for their occasional celebration and practice of male homosexuality. Western travelers have talked about it and, in some cases, Western novels and scholarship have portrayed or alluded to it. Yet, there has never been a reliable or systematic treatment of the topic that is, until now. Working from an impressive range of primary sources that include poetic, theological, Koranic, historical, legal, and literary texts, Khaled El-Rouayheb, with this book, fills an important gap in our knowledge about the nature of attitudes toward male eroticism in the early modern Arab-Islamic world. (David M. Halperin David M. Halperin 2005-06-17) Khaled El-Rouayheb's book is a very useful corrective to those views that have misinterpreted and misrepresented premodern Islamic attitudes toward homoeroticism, or that have ignored them altogether. In addition, it is a welcome contribution to the study of a period in the history of Arabic literature that is still very much under researched. Not for the prudish, it is a provocative, serious, and eminently readable study. (Geert Jan van Gelder Geert Jan van Gelder 2005-06-17) "[The book] rectifies many . . . prejudices and misinterpretations in a masterly fashion. . . . [The author's] careful distinction between the different categories of feelings, expressions, behaviour, terms and actors of same-sex love shows . . . that many of the evaluations of modern scholarship on Islamic societies and Arabic literature, and on the comparative history of homosexuality need to be revised."