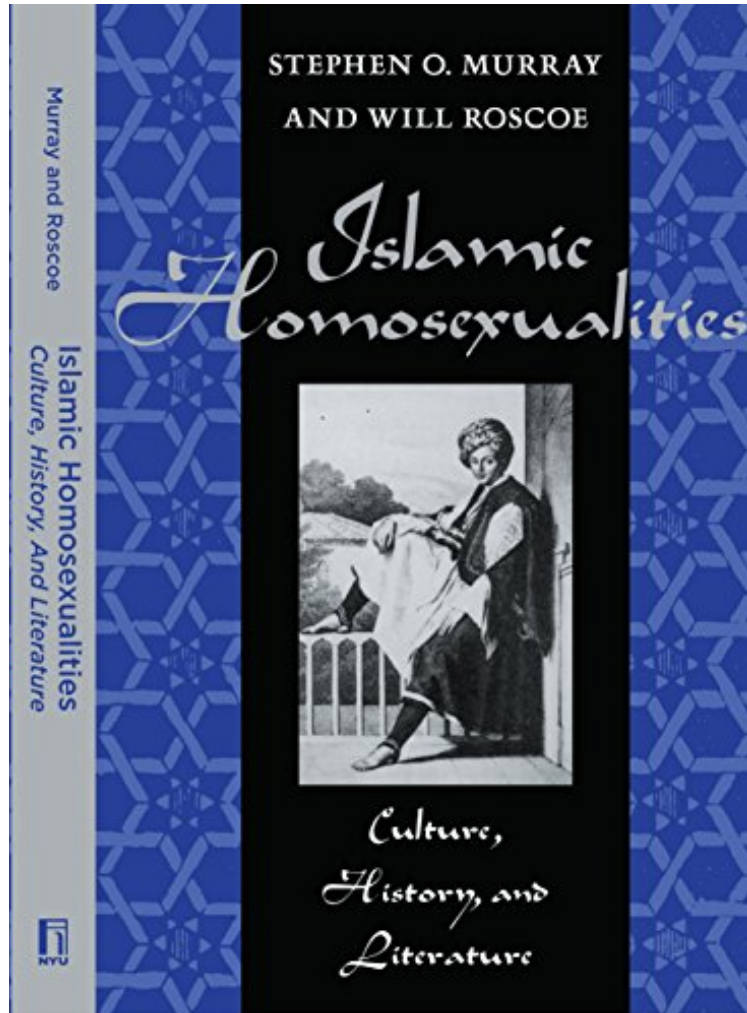


Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very compelling reading. Gay people are all over the ...By Rodney M. Brown Very compelling reading. Gay people are all over the world, and have always been. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very Informative Read By Susan Wolf Had to read for a theology class. Very informative. 1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An example of how NOT to do research on "Islamic" culture By Customer As someone training to be a scholar of the cultural history of the Ottoman Empire, I am absolutely appalled by the shoddy scholarship that has gone into the making of this book. For all its talk of correcting Eurocentrism in scholarly treatments of the "Islam" and the "Middle East", it relies on outdated Orientalist secondary sources to

support the prevalence of "homosexuality" in the Islamic world, a claim that rests upon the anachronistic usage of the term and concept of homosexuality as we understand it today. Moreover, the fact that most of the authors (and even the editors) do not know the languages of the societies they purport to discuss undermines the project from the very outset. It is sad that this is deemed acceptable to most audiences (and most reviewers here on) when it comes to the Islamic world, whilst, anybody not knowing English today would not be deemed fit by these very same audiences to research American history. The analysis often also lacks geographical or temporal specificity hereby bolstering the claim that Islamic societies and their cultural attitudes (to sexuality or to something else) have remained static over the centuries.

The dramatic impact of Islamic fundamentalism in recent years has skewed our image of Islamic history and culture. Stereotypes depict Islamic societies as economically backward, hyper-patriarchal, and fanatically religious. But in fact, the Islamic world encompasses a great diversity of cultures and a great deal of variation within those cultures in terms of gender roles and sexuality. The first collection on this topic from a historical and anthropological perspective, *Homosexuality in the Muslim World* reveals that patterns of male and female homosexuality have existed and often flourished within the Islamic world. Indeed, same-sex relations have, until quite recently, been much more tolerated under Islam than in the Christian West. Based on the latest theoretical perspectives in gender studies, feminism, and gay studies, *Homosexuality in the Muslim World* includes cultural and historical analyses of the entire Islamic world, not just the so-called Middle East. Essays show both age-stratified patterns of homosexuality, as revealed in the erotic and romantic poetry of medieval poets, and gender-based patterns, in which both men and women might, to varying degrees, choose to live as members of the opposite sex. The contributors draw on historical documents, literary texts, ethnographic observation and direct observation by both Muslim and non-Muslim authors to show the considerable diversity of Islamic societies and the existence of tolerated gender and sexual variances.

"A fascinating and eye-opening book about a topic much hinted at but little considered systematically. The authors not only have the benefit of knowing homosexuality in many other societies but are well grounded in matters Islamic." - *Middle East Quarterly* "*Islamic Homosexualities* clearly succeeds...a valuable addition to any library or interested reader's bookshelf." - *Journal of Homosexuality*

About the Author Will Roscoe is the award-winning author of *The Zuni Man/Woman* and *Queer Spirits: A Gay Men's Myth Book* and the editor of *Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology* and *Radically Gay: Gay Liberation in the Words of its Founder* by Harry Hay. Stephen O. Murray is a comparative sociologist who lives in San Francisco. He is the author of *American Gay*, *Latin American Male Homosexualities*, *Oceanic Homosexualities*, and a half dozen other books.