

Citation metadata

Author: KATE LOWE
Date: Nov. 1998
From: The English Historical Review(Vol. 113, Issue 454)
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Document Type: Book review
Length: 533 words

Main content

Article Preview :

The cultural norms of Renaissance Italy demanded that hierarchy was ever present and that equality was abhorred. According to Michael Roche, *Forbidden Friendships. Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (New York/Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1996; pp. x+371. 35 [pounds sterling]), this behavioural prescription extended to male homosexual sex. Roche's study of sodomy in Renaissance Florence, a model of measured prose and good historical practice, illustrates that sex was not something that took place between equals even when both participants were male. Most of the younger, 'passive' partners were between fourteen and eighteen; the vast majority of the older, 'active' partners were between twenty and forty. Sex was an indicator of power relations, and in the absence of submissive and hierarchically inferior females, boys who (as the saying went) 'let themselves be sodomised' were...

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LOWE, KATE. "Forbidden Friendships. Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence." *The English Historical Review*, vol. 113, no. 454, 1998, p. 1287. Accessed 27 Nov. 2020.

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Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. x + 371 pp. \$35. ISBN: 01-95069-75-7. Eugene F. Rice (a1). FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIPS STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY Judith Brown and Guido Ruggiero, General Editors IMMODEST ACTS The Lift of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Id Judith Brown THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S ASYLUMS SINCE 1500 From Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women Shcrrill Cohen AUTHORITY AND SEXUALITY IN EARLY MODERN BURGUNDY (1550-1730) James R. Farr SEXUALITY IN THE. Oilman Srebnick further volumes are in preparation FRIENDSHIP: HOMOSEXUALITY AND MALE CULTURE IN RENAISSANCE FLORENCE Michael During the Renaissance, Florence developed a reputation for being pervaded with homosexuality - "sodomy" in the language of the time. Smarting from this reputation, reeling from population loss suffered during the Black Death, and pressured by homophobic clerics, in 1432 the city government set up a judicial panel called "The Office of the Night" exclusively to solicit and investigate charges of sodomy. These facts produced a large population of young, unrooted, sexually vigorous males in a city where

many women were sheltered by their families or otherwise inaccessible. This led many men to engage in sex with other males. Unsurprisingly, most of those accused of sodomy, or who voluntarily confessed, were younger than 35 or unmarried older men. "Forbidden Friendships adds an important chapter to the history of homosexuality and through it places Florentine politics in the Renaissance in a new perspective."--*Speculum*. "A sort of Kinsey Report for Renaissance Florence...A must-read for gay scholars, [the book] is the first attempt to clearly quantify sexual norms for Renaissance Florence or, indeed, any other place at such an early date...Rocke certainly establishes bisexual and homosexual relationships long before John Addington Symonds's usage of the terms."--*Journal of Homosexuality*. About the Author. Michael Rocke's tome on male culture and sexuality in Renaissance Florence is a tremendous work that provides exceptional insight into male sexuality. Samuel K. Cohn,, "Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence. Michael Rocke ," *Speculum* 74, no. 2 (Apr., 1999): 481-483. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2887117>. MOST READ. Of all published articles, the following were the most read within the past 12 months. The Enduring Attraction of the Pirenne Thesis. Effros.