

BLOCH, IWAN (1872-1922)

German physician, historian, and sex researcher. One of an extraordinary group of investigators active in Wilhelmine Berlin, Bloch perhaps surpassed all the others in learning. Omnivorously curious, he is said to have possessed a personal library of 80,000 volumes. In addition to the medical approach in which he had been trained, Bloch directed his full attention to historical, literary, sociological, and ethnographic evidence, so as to create a multidisciplinary concept of Sexualwissenschaft (sexual science). In his own time he viewed the problem of venereal disease as emblematic, holding that this once overcome, humanity could look forward to a bright future.

Rejecting the degeneration theory, Bloch first held that homosexuality could be acquired in a multiplicity of ways, but then—on the basis of first-hand observation—accepted Hirschfeld's doctrine that "true homosexuality," of congenital

origin, was not morbid, but rather healthy in that it was spontaneous and occurred in individuals who were able to function as well as other members of society. He distinguished homosexuality per se from pedophilia, pederasty, hermaphroditism, misogyny, and "pseudo-homosexuality" (the latter largely corresponding to bisexuality).

Some of the English translations of Bloch's works, especially those dealing with anthropological and historical subjects, are so heavily abridged as to be no true measure of his erudition.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. *Works: Das Geschlechtsleben in England*, by Eugen Dühren [pseud.], 3 vols., Berlin: Barsdorf, 1901-03; *Beiträge zur Ätiologie der Psychopathia sexualis*, 2 vols., Dresden: H. R. Dohrn, 1902-03; *Die Prostitution*, 2 vols., Berlin: L. Marcus, 1912-25; *The Sexual Life of Our Time*, trans. M. Eden Paul, London: Heinemann, 1908; *Der Ursprung der Syphilis*, 2 vols., Jena: G. Fischer, 1901-11.