

lace Hamilton's 1979 book *David at Olivet* not only glamorizes David's homosexual affairs but makes them central to the book, depicting the young harpist as soothing the king with more than music. Thus, when David becomes involved with Jonathan, the king is jealous not of his military prowess and popularity, but of his son. James Levin, in *The Gay Novel* (1983), criticizes Hamilton for not understanding the sexual rituals of ancient Palestinian ethnic groups, but retrofitting David with a twentieth-century sexual perspective instead.

Throughout its history the David and Jonathan legend shows a constantly changing interplay between ancient texts and modern interpretations, an interplay that will doubtless persist in the future.

Ward Houser

### DAY, F. HOLLAND (1864–1933)

American photographer. With, and perhaps even before Alfred Stieglitz, F. Holland Day was America's first advocate of photography as an art form, as opposed to a mere technique for recording reality. Day was a key figure in developing the pictorialist aesthetic which is today associated with the Photo-Secession movement. Between 1895 and 1910 Day's prints were well known and influential both in America and Europe, making him the first American photographer with an international reputation.

The only child of a wealthy Boston manufacturer, Day had money to indulge his tastes: assembling a notable collection of Keats material; publishing fine books as a partner of Copeland and Day; providing educational expenses and personal instruction for boys from the Boston slums, such as the poet Kahlil Gibran, who was Day's most famous discovery and pupil; and, of course, his photography. Following his meteoric rise and almost equally steep descent as the leader of the new American photography, Day

retired in 1917 to his bedroom on the third floor of the family mansion, spending the fifteen years before his death as a self-proclaimed invalid.

Day's homosexuality was never openly acknowledged, but may be inferred from the circumstances of his life, the circle of known homosexuals with whom he associated, and his work. A number of his finest photographs are male nudes or Greek themes involving young boys, adolescents or men. Unlike his contemporary Baron von Gloeden, Day's fall from photographic grace was largely not because of the sexual undertones of his work. Bostonians were sufficiently cultured to accept male nudes as "art," though they were scandalized when Day had himself lashed to a cross on a local hillside and photographed as the dying Christ for a "sacred series." More important causes were a 1904 fire which destroyed his studio and much of his work, his own dilettantism and willful withdrawal from the photographic scene, and his quarrel with Stieglitz, who simply wrote Day out of photographic history.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. E. F. Clattenberg, *The Photographic Work of F. Holland Day*, Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College Museum, 1975; J. and K. Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran: His Life and Work*, Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1974, chapters 3–8; Estelle Jussim, *Slave to Beauty*, Boston: Godine, 1981.

Donald Mader

### DECADENCE

A historic phase of decline or deterioration of a society or nation is sometimes called decadence. The term is also used more narrowly to denote certain facets of literature and art in France and England during the last decades of the nineteenth century, when some of the creative figures of the fin-de-siècle were homosexual.

Belief in historical decline is probably rooted in the psychological fact that, as they grow older, human beings