Jean-Fabrice Nardelli, a classicist at the Universities of Aix-Marseille, France, presents new research which makes his text now one of three scholarly books in English that are essential reading (along with Horner’s pioneering Jonathan Loved David, 1978, and Susan Ackerman’s sophisticated When Heroes Love, 2005) for interpreting the Jonathan and David relationship in 1-2 Samuel, freed from the heterosexist prejudice often found in biblical commentary. With first-hand knowledge of Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Hebrew and Greek, Nardelli is eminently qualified for the task of showing how literature in these ancient Near Eastern cultures commonly referred to same-sex love and eroticism in subtle, coded and euphemistic ways, characteristics also found in the Samuel narrative. He investigates male bonding among ancient Near Eastern males of around the same age and presents evidence which disproves the notion that Jonathan and David could not have had a homosexual relationship.

«The thought provoking book of Professor Nardelli offers a detailed analysis of the parallels between the Gilgamesh Epic and the biblical story about the relationship between David and Jonathan. He critically reviews Susan Ackerman’s use of the concept of liminality in order to explain the homoerotic aspects of both accounts. He demonstrates that the biblical account of David and Jonathan does not suggest that David is always the active and Jonathan the passive partner. Nardelli finds convincing evidence in the narrative of the David-Jonathan story that clearly suggests that they are in a homosexual relationship. Every scholar working in this field should read this well-informed book, which also discusses other Near Eastern (including Egyptian) texts that deal with homosexuality.» – Thomas Römer, professor, College of France, Paris; and assistant dean, School of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Lausanne, Switzerland; co-author (with Loyse Bonjour), L’homosexualité dans le Proche-Orient ancien et la Bible, 2005, with Spanish and Italian translations, 2007


«Professor Nardelli has made a very significant contribution to the discussion of male-male sexuality in the Ancient Near East. His book is distinguished by detailed and judicious application of philology, where too much study of this subject matter has been controlled rather by efforts at systematization, taken either from ancient legal materials, Christian theology, or contemporary theory. Only the deep weighing of specific texts, such as he has engaged in here, can begin to show us the complexities of ancient Mediterranean culture. At the same time, his broad command of languages allows him to cross cultural boundaries in ways beyond the reach of most scholars of antiquity, thus further enriching the discussion.» – L. William Countryman, professor emeritus of Biblical studies, Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, CA; and author, Dirt, Greed and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and their Implications for Today, 2nd ed. 2007

«Jean-Fabrice Nardelli’s book-length review of Susan Ackerman’s When Heroes Love offers a thorough criticism of Ackerman’s anthropological reading of the Gilgamesh Epic and of the biblical texts concerning David and Jonathan. Nardelli views David and Jonathan as involved in a marriage-like covenant, that is, a permanent same-sex partnership, but without the usual distinction made between active and passive roles. Detailed and learned, his book is an intriguing addition to the ongoing debate on ancient male-to-male relationships and their modern interpretation.» – Martti Nissinen, professor of Old Testament, University of Helsinki, Finland; and author, Homoeroticism in the Biblical World, 1998

«The author shows extraordinary scholarship. He succeeds in putting both the Gilgamesh/Enkidu text and the David/Jonathan text into its ancient context, and clarifies the homoerotic content of these texts. We owe a major debt of gratitude to Nardelli for his original work.» – John McNeill, author, The Church and the Homosexual, 4th ed., 1993

«Of all the Biblical passages that relate to homosexuality, the Jonathan and David story may turn out to be the most significant one, after all. The truth, however, lies in elusive details. Nardelli encourages us to dig deeper, by showing how it was common in ancient Near Eastern writing, in numerous cultures, to use just such evasive, camouflageed, even double-layered language to speak about taboo subjects, such as homosexual love.» – Mel White, president and co-founder (with Gary Nixon) of Soulforce; and author, Stranger at the Gate: To Be Gay and Christian in America, 1994

ADOLF M. HAKKERT, Publisher
http://www.tte.nl/hakkert/item.sql?key=700&field=id
If you contact Mr. Kos in the Spain office, the book can be received in about 8 days, sent airmail for 7 euros.