The book begins with an introduction titled ‘Gay and Lesbian History’. There is no discussion of what the editor means by homosexuality but some discussion of words for it; but discussion of words leads nowhere since, as a behavior, all evidence points to homosexuality preceding language. In the opening paragraph the editor states that ‘the earliest complete’ text of Gilgamesh ‘dates from 1,700 BC’. This is not correct. There is no complete text of Gilgamesh. The most that can be said is that the most complete version is in late Akkadian (sometimes called Babylonian) and dates from before the fall of the palace of Ashurbanipal which is normally dated 612 BC; see A. R. George’s two volume 1999 edition. The major work of sculpture which predates the surviving record of the Gilgamesh text, the so-called Tomb of the Two Friends (about 2400BC), a landmark gay work or art, at Saqqara in Egypt, is nowhere mentioned in the book.

Then follows an overview of Australia, covering both its Aboriginal and introduced cultures. Dr Aldrich does not state there were once some 500 Aboriginal tribes and introduced cultures number 300. The section is titled ‘Homosexuality in the Antipodes’ which is strange since the author, who emigrated from the United States, lives in the country. Does he really regard his country of domicile as ‘the opposite end of the world’ and what does this say? And why is a continent relegated to part of the introduction? The archaic phrase ‘the Antipodes’ normally refers also to New Zealand (which does not get discussed: the 2005 published proceedings of the major 2003 gay history conference, Outlines, is thus not mentioned). In surveying Australian homosexuality with a cutoff point of 2006 Dr Aldrich leaves out my Encyclopedia of Male Homosexual Poetry and its Reception History which has 6,300 entries (cdrom in the database Filemaker Pro, 2002; this work has been republished in 2009 in pdf file in a single alphabetical sequence in 2009); it came to over 1 million words and covers the legal, historical and social background to the poetry (and thus to homosexuality). He also omits to mention my Encyclopedia of Male Homosexual Art (cdrom, 2005) with 8,300 entries covering 240 cultures. Gary Simes’s 1998 annotated Bibliography of homosexuality: a research guide to the University of Sydney Library, commissioned and partly published by the now defunct Australian Centre for Lesbian and Gay research, which Dr Aldrich cofounded, of 370 pages and 6,129 entries, is also not mentioned. These works do cover the world systematically. The Simes bibliography, modelled on Wayne Dykes’ 1987 annotated bibliography, the first annotated world bibliography (nowhere mentioned in Gay History and Culture either), is the most wideranging annotated bibliography to date. This is crucial since all scholarship begins and ends in bibliography: a list of works to read. Also left out is Sydney scholar, Keith Howes’s landmark work Broadcasting It (1994) a 960 page encyclopedia of homosexuality on Anglo radio and television. But Gay History and Cultures overall only mentions one TV work Queer as Folk and nothing from radio, one of the most important means of communicating homosexuality ever. The editor fails to mention Martin Smith, the brilliant founder of Australian gay history, who posed questions still unanswered 30 years later (notably, the extent of convictions for homosexual offences amongst the 160,000 convicts). Not
mentioned amazingly is Patrick White, Australia's most famous homosexual and only native born winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature (in 1973).

'Dr Aldrich's main area of expertise is French history and he is or was an economic historian latterly having written and edited books on homosexuality. In Gay Life and Culture, I was surprised there was no mention in the editor's introduction of the Annales School, the major school in French history since the second world war. These historians insisted that history should not be a simple historical narrative of events and dates but all sorts of approaches were valid, for instance economic and social history on which they made major contributions (Ferdinand Braudel is an example). In 1974 the journal Annales published a pioneer work in French on homosexuality in Switzerland by E. William Monter (revised and republished in English in the Journal of Homosexuality in 1981/82). Already we are into very heady issues: how should gay history be written? Should it be a narrative, should it be dealt with from biological, archaeological, anthropological, social, psychological, economic, religious, legal, medical and other points of view or all of these? How does science come in? What about literature, notably poetry, the oldest recorded form of literature and the most widely dispersed? What about music and art (including film, television and video)? A world history demands a statement of where the editor and his book stands on these issues, particularly an editor who comes from French economic history. Dr Aldrich has also written on French colonial history. Postcolonialism, which now permeates all scholarly thought and where Dr Aldrich has authored books, is now a dominant ideology in scholarship but is not mentioned in his introduction. In Gay Life and Culture: A World History of the 14 chapters (chapters 1 to 10 and 14) are mainly on west European homosexuality and the cultures of some of the former colonies of western Europe (which include the United States of America, Australia, Brazil and many other countries). Slavic lands covering a third of Europe by space and population (over 220 million people) barely get in: Russia and Poland have one page each; major works of LS Klein in Russian and Jiri Fanel's 500 page survey of gay history and culture in Czech are not mentioned. These 14 chapters total 378 pages with footnotes in a virtually unreadable tiny typeface (readers of scholarly works need to constantly consult footnotes and they should be easy to read; in this day and age with advanced computer technology they should be at the bottom of the page). Ten chapters are written by west Europeans and all contributors come from western cultures (2 contributors have Wikipedia entries). For perspective, an edited world history should surely have people from all continents writing. Four chapters are by women, a gender imbalance. The title indicates that there is a monolithic gay culture but this is far from the truth. I suggest there are many gay cultures; for instance, that of non literate cultures versus literate, villages versus cities or across the various human ages: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, middle age and old age. Cultures by sexual type (eg vanilla sex versus SM, pedophilia, pederasty, androphilia) are another approach. All this is before we get to countries (eg Ghana, Korea) and ethnic groups (eg the Scottish, Welsh, Irish and English in Great Britain). Only 2 of 14 chapters of Gay History and Culture are primarily devoted to lesbianism, which is only directly covered from 1500 on and mainly in western Europe; chapter 2 on Greece and Rome gives a bit more coverage and there are 2 further chapters with more elaborated comment and scattered references in other chapters; probably because a woman chose them, there is a significant portion of lesbian illustrations. There are over 200 countries of the world: see "List of countries" in Wikipedia. But African countries (as distinct from tribal cultures) south of the Sahara, Canada, south America (notably and amazingly Brazil and Argenta) and much of Asia and Oceania (for instance, Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous nation and Thailand which has a vibrant gay scene), are left out or else given a brief reference or two in Gay Life and Culture.

Photographs occupy at least one third of the pages of Gay Life and Culture so the work is quite modest in length, at most 240 pages of text. A world history could easily be twice this length. Apart from chapters 1-10 and 14 on Europe and colonies, three chapters, 11 to 13, discuss the rest of the world. Chapter 11 deals with tribal cultures in a cross cultural context (what the author Lee Wallace calls "the pre-Columbian Americas, sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania", p. 251; unfortunately the Americas turns out to be mostly North America; the reader is given no indication that Brazil once had 800 tribal cultures or that 230 African tribes have same sex marriage (see the San Francisco Chronicle "Churches weigh in on same-sex marriage", 18 February 2008) though, on page 226, 30 African tribes which have female-female marriage are mentioned. Chapter 12 is on the Middle East and North Africa (the so-called dal al-Islam or world of Islam but Indonesia, the largest Islamic nation and the most moderate, is, as already noted, not included). Chapter 13 is Asia conceived of as China, Japan and India (though Asia stretches from Turkey to Indonesia). There are therefore several principles of organization operating in this book. In the introduction it is non literate (or tribal) cultures versus literate for Australia, then organization by continent for the next 9 chapters (8 on Europe and one on the Americas), then non literate cultures versus literate (Chapter 11), then one major religion, Islam (Chapter 12, north Africa and the Middle East), then back to the
This work hovers between coffee table book and serious scholarship, between the general reader and the serious scholar. Without the 237 illustrations chosen by Wendy Gay which do cover the world (except Arctic and Antarctica) it could simply be another book of gay and lesbian history essays. It is sad to hear of Wendy Gay’s death in an accident outside the British Library.

_Gay Life and Culture_ starts with Greece and Rome but this mainly means Athens and the city Rome not the empires of those cities which had large populations with widely diverse sexual cultures. Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller is excellent on the European Middle Ages. Florence Tamagne titles her piece, mainly on west European cities, _The Homosexual Age 1870-1940_, but isn’t every age a homosexual age? Besides, after 1933 with the rise of the Nazis, it was hardly a homosexual age in Germany while in Britain and its realms, this period, following the imprisonment of Oscar Wilde in 1895, was a bitter time (read the poems of A. E. Houseman which stood for the experiences of many; even W. H. Auden used indirect language while Lytton Strachey resorted to irony). Granted special “homosexual ages” Han or Ming China, Socratic Athens, Tokugawa or Edo Japan, and Mughal India, even Elizabethan England, are all candidates. Some pieces, such as Gert Hekma’s survey of the contemporary world, are exemplary. Hekma to his credit does tackle the vital issue of teenage and underage homosexuality (which, after Charles Hupperts, gets largely left out). Buried in a footnote is a citation to the important work of the US scholar Bruce Rind, one of the greatest living gay scholars in this area who deserves a Macarthur award. But even Michelangelo and Proust struggle to get into this work and Leonardo da Vinci does not; nor did I find the name Serge Diaghilev, one of the most influential of all gays in the art of the twentieth century, mentioned (though Ballets Russes is).

The author of the Asia chapter, Adrian Carton, writes a creditable survey yet does not cite any references to works in the languages of the countries; reading it you would not realize that China and Japan have a notable historiography on gay life (for instance Hajime Shibayama’s massive three volume work on Edo homosexuality; in Chinese works by Sam Shasha, Zhang Xizhou and Liu Dalin, not to mention the famous 1964 two volume work by a “committee of scholars” published in Hong Kong under the noses of the homophobic British). Vincenzo Patané’s survey of the Islamic world is excellent but there is no survey of Confucianism or Hinduism (both of which religions have had lenient attitudes to homosexual relations unlike Christianity). At one chapter, tribal cultures, by far the great majority of world cultures even today (close to 1,700 in Papua New Guinea alone) are vastly underdone. In this age the internet needs extensive coverage in any world history but only a few contributors refer to one or two sites in their articles.

Even the sections covering the United States, where so much gay historical research has been done (eg Marc Stein’s outstanding 3 volume 2003 encyclopedia) are disappointing. Whitman and Ginsberg, probably the two greatest gay male figures, at least get photos; the only poetry in the book is a poorly chosen three lines by Whitman. Given the space at the editor’s disposal, probably too much has been attempted with too little guidance as to how it should be presented. A times this book reads as a rough gathering of names and events and overall, in the west European chapters, I found rather too much concentration on the social and legal aspects. The achievement of John Boswell in European gay history, who convinced Foucault that homosexuals existed from ancient Greece, is not given the place it deserves.

The 237 illustrations chosen by Wendy Gay are the book’s real achievement in a world sense and show what can be found (eg in Google images and art image databanks). I counted only about 70 cultures of the world represented by the illustrations but even so they constitute the most wideranging gathering in one book of gay and lesbian images known (or at least the most widely ranging known to this reviewer). In short the basic flaw of this book is a lack of rigorous planning at the editorial level. The commissioning editor at Thames and Hudson should have seen to this. In its emphasis on Europe (and western Europe at that) this work can even be seen as being deeply racist and even imperialistic. A bibliography of important works for world gay history should have been included (Hössli, Ulrichs, Moll etc but non western authors also). Xavier Mayne’s _The Intersexes_ (about 1911 as internal references show) is still a more balanced coverage of Europe to 1908 than _Gay Life and Culture_. Since they are sources of primary research largely untapped, prominent mention should have
Finally, how should a world history of homosexuality be written? Such a work could be written country by country. Since the number of countries is around 200, the exact number being unknown and varying according to different criteria, one (or less) page each and up to three pages for counties where major gay research has been done (e.g., Germany, China) would give a book of about 300 pages of text. Such a work would cover the world systematically and, since it covered the whole landmass, would be comprehensive. There could be a preliminary chapter on animal homosexuality excluding the human animal. Other approaches by ethnic group (see for instance G. P. Murdoch’s *Outline of World Cultures*, sixth edition, 1983) are more problematic since we do not have an adequate census of the world’s human cultures.

Paul Knobel
Sydney, Australia  
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Paul Knobel is the author of *An Encyclopedia of Male Homosexual Poetry* (2002; second edition, 2009) and *An Encyclopedia of Male Homosexual Art* (2005); he is also a published poet who has been involved in the gay rights struggle from 1981. A shorter version of this review appeared in Swedish in *Lambda Nordica* volume 12 number 3 (2007). Email: pkno2250 [at] hotmail.com