



Before the Closet: Same-Sex Love from "Beowulf" to "Angels in America"

Allen J. Frantzen

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Allen J. Frantzen challenges the long accepted view that the early Middle Ages tolerated and even fostered same-sex relations and that intolerance of homosexuality developed only late in the medieval period. Frantzen shows that in early medieval Europe, the Church did not tolerate same-sex acts, in fact it was an age before people recognized the existence—or the possibility—of the "closet."

With its ambitious scope and elegant style, *Before the Closet* sets same-sex relations in Anglo-Saxon sources in relation to the sexual themes of contemporary opera, dance, and theatre. Frantzen offers a comprehensive analysis of sources from the seventh to the twelfth century and traces Anglo-Saxon same-sex behavior through the age of Chaucer and into the Renaissance.

"Frantzen's marvelous book . . . opens up a world most readers will never have even known was there. It's a difficult topic, but Frantzen's comprehensive, readable and even wryly funny treatment makes this an unexpected pleasure."—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

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