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The homosexual, the queen and models of gay history

For many years, gay historiography has been pervaded by the problem of constructionism versus essentialism. Nowadays, most historians assume that forms of homosexual preferences and behaviours are historically, culturally, and individually shaped. Social constructionism is the dominant theory in gay history.¹ But one problem remains: if sexual conduct and preference have historical forms, when did these particular forms come into being, and how widely were they distributed? For Michel Foucault and Jeffrey Weeks, homosexuals and homosexuality date from the end of the nineteenth century when they, and so many other sexual neologisms, were introduced. Then, the homosexual was constructed as a person with a specific, often inborn identity, whose gender role was inverted, the

