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Homosexual Warriors

Michael Hone

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This is a fully illustrated book on warriors, but it is not their interest in war as such that motivates me. Rather, my passion is the discovery of everything revealing about the men and boys behind the sword and dagger that is the heart of this book, a heart of passion: human, intellectual and sexual. The undisputed stars are the Greeks, the world's foremost warriors, the hallowed essence of what it means to be homosexual, as represented by the captured soldier whose only wish was to be speared in the chest and not the back, so that his lover, when he found his body, would not blush with shame--symbolically represented by the book's cover. No group of men has ever surpassed the 300 of Thebes, the Sacred Band, where it was declared unlawful to state that love between men was not beautiful. After Greece came the Dark Ages, homosexually speaking, during which Caesar was ribbed by his men for his love of Nicodemes, Florentines were fined for same-sex adventures, still others burned under Henry VIII, tolerated under the Stuarts, hanged in the times of Byron, imprisoned in those of Oscar Wilde, and even today a footballer would be mad (or insanely courageous) to admit his preference for his locker-room buddies. The lives covered in this volume--some nearly book length--include Cellini who, during the Siege of Rome, killed the attackers' general and 30 of his men with one cannon shot, Caravaggio, a warrior who killed in duels and in back alleys, as well as Orestes and Pylades, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Xenophon, Agesilaus and Lysander, Epaminondas and Pelopidas, Alexander and Hephaestion, Aeneas and Pallas, Caesar, Augustus, Hadrian and Antinous, the Templars, Richard the Lionhearted, the Borgia, Julius II, Ivan the Terrible, Henry III, Louis XIII, James I/VI, Caribbean pirates, the Kelly Gang, Roger Casement, Lawrence of Arabia, Willem Arondeus, the explorers Burton, Stanley and Speke, and many others.

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