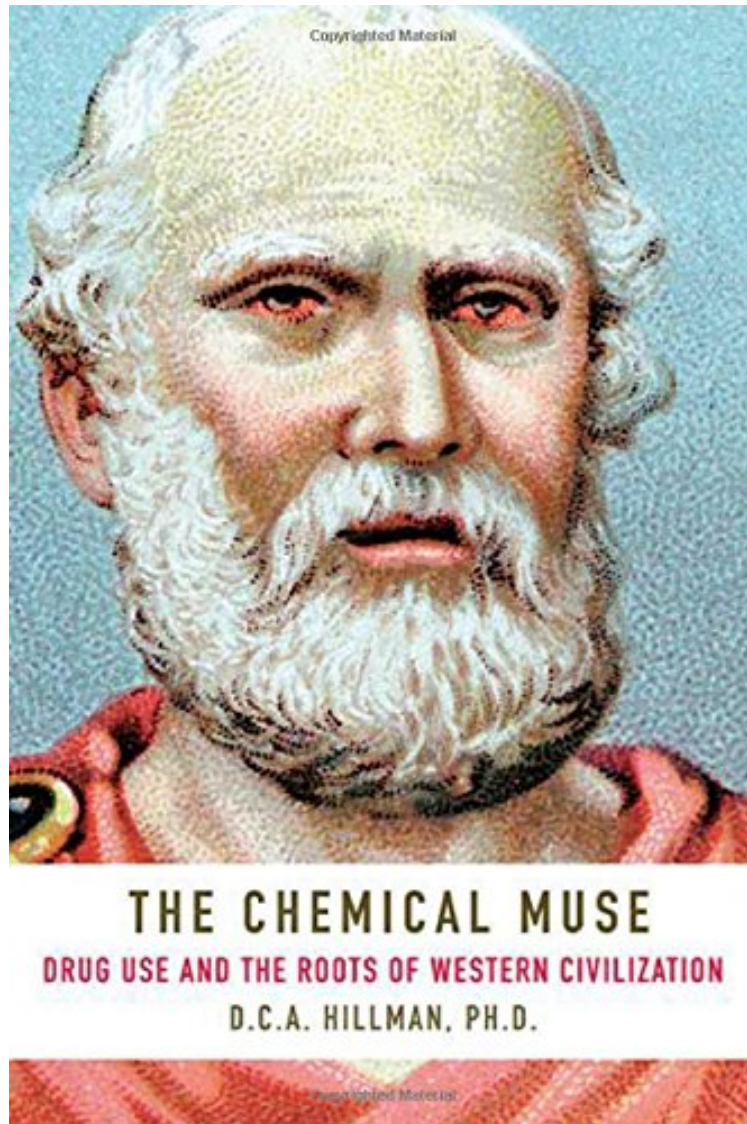


(Free download) The Chemical Muse: Drug Use and the Roots of Western Civilization

The Chemical Muse: Drug Use and the Roots of Western Civilization

D. C.A. Hillman

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D. C.A. Hillman : The Chemical Muse: Drug Use and the Roots of Western Civilization before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Chemical Muse: Drug Use and the Roots of Western Civilization:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Amazing and spot on...By GregulusLife before the stranglehold of the Abrahamic monotheistic religions exhibited true freedoms of both mind and body...today's society still has a firm

foothold in the social dark ages...free your mind! The best governments/societies would embrace such perspectives as: if it doesn't hurt anyone, leave it be and if it makes them happy, so be it! 18 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing

By Professor KI was looking for some scholarly works on the current and past use of psychoactives for a course I am creating. I personally found this work to be lame. The author relates his perceived persecution by his thesis committee in having to remove aspects of his thesis, then proceeds to present ancient Greece and Rome as a society with open and accepted drug use (poisoning to medical to recreational). The author may well be correct that these cultures were well versed in the use of botanicals, but the information is presented in such a personally opinionated way that it is distracting. The information contained may serve as a starting point to find further information; however, I do not feel I can use it as a reference for anything that I present to my students.

26 of 30 people found the following review helpful. Surprising truths they hid from us

By blueskies I just received a copy of this book this week, and literally couldn't put it down since I found the topic fascinating. The author describes his ordeal with a doctoral dissertation committee, who were insisting that he remove offending chapters from his dissertation. Those chapters became this book. It seems to be a huge secret that there was recreational drug use by the ancients. The cradle of democracy was full of druggies! I had some classical studies and none of this was EVER mentioned. But, the use of herbals and botanicals for medicinal purposes was known. The use of psychotropic substances for recreation and inspiration was decidedly not taught. For a very fascinating look at a still taboo subject, I suggest reading this book. It is an easy read, despite the scholarly origin for the author. I would have liked more scholarly references but probably wouldn't have understood them since I have no background in ancient Greek. I was particularly interested in the way the author tied the frequent wars to use of botanicals for medicine and relief. Life was difficult back then and it probably did help to numb the fear and pain of a very hostile world to have potent drugs sold in the marketplace along with the kitchen produce. Very readable and informative and a little naughty. I had no idea that the founders of Western democracy were bisexual druggies until I read this book!

The last wild frontier of classical studies. ---The Times (UK)

The Chemical Muse uncovers decades of misdirection and obfuscation to reveal the history of widespread drug use in Ancient Rome and Greece. In the city-states that gave birth to Western civilization, drugs were an everyday element of a free society. Often they were not just available, but vitally necessary for use in medicine, religious ceremonies, and war campaigns. Their proponents and users existed in all classes, from the common soldier to the emperor himself. Citing examples in myths, medicine, and literature, D. C. A. Hillman shows how drugs have influenced and inspired the artists, philosophers, and even politicians whose ideas have formed the basis for civilization as we know it. Many of these ancient texts may seem well-known, but Hillman shows how timid, prudish translations have left scholars and readers in the dark about the reality of drug use in the Classical world. Hillman's argument is not simply pro-drug. Instead, he appeals for an intellectual honesty that acknowledges the use of drugs in ancient societies despite today's conflicting social mores. In the modern world, where academia and university life are often politically charged, The Chemical Muse offers a unique and long overdue perspective on the contentious topic of drug use and the freedom of thought.

The role of psychoactive drugs has been airbrushed out of the conventional picture of Western civilization. The academics who have created this drug-free Greco-Roman world have found their nemesis in Dr. Hillman's The Chemical Muse. With clarity and directness the author gives us back a lost chapter of our Classical heritage and by doing so restores our understanding of this past. ---Richard Rudgley, author of Lost Civilizations of the Stone Age

In addition to demonstrating the importance of medicinal botanicals and chemicals in alleviating the sufferings of humanity in the ancient Greco-Roman world, Dr. Hillman unveils the role that many of them played as recreational drugs, not for the lunatic fringes of society, but as sources of knowledge and religious sacraments by the leading artists, thinkers, and politicians, central to the very formation of what we admire and enshrine as the Classical tradition. The Chemical Muse inspired democracy itself and the greatest minds of antiquity. ---Carl A. P. Ruck, author of Sacred Mushrooms: The Secrets of Eleusis

"David Hillman has given us a penetrating insight into our permanent romance with altered consciousness. This important work is a myth-buster." ---Mike Gray, author of Drug Crazy and The China Syndrome