

# Magnus Hirschfeld Archive in the Institute for Sexual Research in Berlin (1925)

## Abstract

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The Institute for Sexual Research in Berlin was founded in 1919 by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, a physician, sexologist, sexual reformer, and the author of *Sexual Pathology: A Textbook for Physicians and Students* [*Sexualpathologie: Ein Lehrbuch für Ärzte und Studierende*]. Hirschfeld was one of the most influential contributors to turn-of-the-century theories of sexuality. He maintained that homosexuality was an innate condition, i.e., that it was a matter of nature versus nurture. He also advocated the theory of the "third sex," whereby homosexuality was understood not as a perverse deviation from "standard" male or female heterosexuality, but rather as another legitimate sexual identity. Hirschfeld, who wrote at a time when many modern categories of sexual identity were being constructed, is credited with defining two categories that continue to exist today: transvestite and transsexual. Hirschfeld's institute included medical, psychological, and ethnological divisions; it provided counseling services and was the site of the first modern sex-change operations. In May 1933, the institute was attacked and its archive and library were burned in the first wave of Nazi book burnings.

## Source

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