

Sex & Society In Graeco-Roman (Kegan Paul Library of Sexual Life)

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Sexuality in the ancient world has received much scholarly attention in the last few years, but authors have tended to confine themselves to the literary sources from Greece and Rome. There has also been a concentration on issues of social dominance and control at the expense of analysing the emotional and experiential aspects of sexual life, for which Egypt is a unique source. This is the first comprehensive study of sex in ancient Egypt. It considers sex in its broadest sense, analysing not only the sexual practices of individual people but also the ways in which sexual activity was indivisibly woven into the fabric of social and communal life. The main sources are the innumerable private documents written in Egypt during the Graeco-Roman period, and almost miraculously preserved by the dry climate. All types of documents are used, from magic spells for winning over a lover to judicial accounts of sexual crimes, many of them translated here into English for the first time. From these fragments, a world has been reconstructed in which real people move and function as sexual beings. This is an innovative addition to our knowledge of the ancient world, and has much to say about the construction of sexuality in the ancient world, about notions of the self and the sexual self, and about the ways that people inhabited their bodies.

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