



Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome

Rebecca Langlands

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Traditionally, scholars have approached Roman sexuality using categories of sexual ethics drawn from contemporary, Western society. In this 2006 book Dr Langlands seeks to move away from these towards a deeper understanding of the issues that mattered to the Romans themselves, and the ways in which they negotiated them, by focusing on the untranslatable concept of pudicitia (broadly meaning 'sexual virtue'). She offers a series of nuanced close readings of texts from a wide spectrum of Latin literature, including history, oratory, love poetry and Valerius Maximus' work *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*. Pudicitia emerges as a controversial and unsettled topic, at the heart of Roman debates about the difference between men and women, the relation between mind and body, and the ethics of power and status differentiation within Roman culture. The book develops strategies for approaching the study of an ancient culture through sensitive critical readings of its literary productions.

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