



Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West (The British Library Studies in Medieval Culture)

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The history of sexuality is one of the newest and fastest-growing areas of scholarly and popular interest. This collection of original essays looks at sexuality in the long stretch between the twelfth and the early seventeenth centuries - a period that remains relatively unexplored, yet one that has deeply informed contemporary ideas about sex.

The volume grew out of a conference at the University of Toronto on human sexuality in the medieval and early modern world. Featuring works by world-renowned scholars, it presents a broad cross-section of current research and a diversity of theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary boundaries, including legal history, art history, textual analysis, codicological analysis, and feminist theory. Some essays focus on the universal values of the Church, and highlight the intellectual and religious homogeneity that characterized Europe for much of the period. Others are more localized and look at a specific social and historical context. As a whole the collection points to the ongoing tension between society's desire to control sexuality and people's need to express it.

Informed by contemporary trends in scholarship, including feminism, gay studies, post-colonialism, and deconstruction, these essays introduce scholars to some of the riches that are only now being unearthed in this young discipline.

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