



Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World (Wisconsin Studies in Classics)

Christopher A. Faraone

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Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World explores the implications of sex-for-pay across a broad span of time, from ancient Mesopotamia to the early Christian period. In ancient times, although they were socially marginal, prostitutes connected with almost every aspect of daily life. They sat in brothels and walked the streets; they paid taxes and set up dedications in religious sanctuaries; they appeared as characters - sometimes admirable, sometimes despicable - on the comic stage and in the law courts; they lived lavishly, consorting with famous poets and politicians; and they participated in otherwise all-male banquets and drinking parties, where they aroused jealousy among their anxious lovers. The chapters in this volume examine a wide variety of genres and sources, from legal and religious tracts to the genres of lyric poetry, love elegy, and comic drama to the graffiti scrawled on the walls of ancient Pompeii. These essays reflect the variety and vitality of the debates engendered by the last three decades of research by confronting the ambiguous terms for prostitution in ancient languages, the difficulty of distinguishing the prostitute from the woman who is merely promiscuous or adulterous, the question of whether sacred or temple prostitution actually existed in the ancient Near East and Greece, and the political and social implications of literary representations of prostitutes and courtesans.

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