An investigation of the motif of the unspeakable as manifested in a wide range of medieval texts, from the Exeter Book to Chaucer.

Given Christianity's valuation of celibacy and its persistent association of sexuality with the Fall and of women with sin, Western medieval attitudes toward the erotic could not help but be vexed. In contrast, eroticism is
explicitly celebrated in a large number of theological, scientific, and literary texts of the medieval Arab Islamicate tradition, where sexuality was positioned at the very heart of religious piety. In Crossing Borders, Sahar Amer turns to the rich body of Arabic sexological writings to focus, in particular, on their open attitude toward erotic love between women. By juxtaposing these Arabic texts with French works, she reveals a medieval French literary discourse on same-sex desire and sexual practices that has gone all but unnoticed. The Arabic tradition on eroticism breaks through into French literary writings on gender and sexuality in often surprising ways, she argues, and she demonstrates how strategies of gender representation deployed in Arabic texts came to be models to imitate, contest, subvert, and at times censor in the West. Amer's analysis reveals Western literary representations of gender in the Middle Ages as cross-cultural, hybrid discourses as she reexamines borders—cultural, linguistic, historical, geographic—not as elements of separation and division but as fluid spaces of cultural exchange, adaptation, and collaboration. Crossing these borders, she salvages key Arabic and French writings on alternative sexual practices from oblivion to give voice to a group that has long been silenced.

How was the law used to control sex in Tudor England? What were the differences between secular and religious practice? This major study reveals that - contrary to what historians have often supposed - in pre-Reformation England both ecclesiastical and secular (especially urban) courts were already highly active in regulating sex. They not only enforced clerical celibacy and sought to combat prostitution but also restrained the pre- and extramarital sexual activities of laypeople more generally. Initially destabilising, the religious and institutional changes of 1530-60 eventually led to important new developments that tightened the regime further. There were striking innovations in the use of shaming punishments in provincial towns and experiments in the practice of public penance in the church courts, while Bridewell transformed the situation in London. Allowing the clergy to marry was a milestone of a different sort. Together these changes contributed to a marked shift in the moral climate by 1600.
Using an interdisciplinary approach and incorporating sources from across the entire European continent dating from the early Middle Ages to the sixteenth century, this book examines the phenomenon of prostitution in a variety of contexts and highlights the extent to which the institution mattered for both the higher and the lower classes.

This study brings together widely divergent discourses to fashion a comprehensive picture of sexual language and attitudes at a particular time and place in the medieval world. John Baldwin introduces five representative voices from the turn of the twelfth century in northern France: Pierre the Chanter speaks for the theological doctrine of Augustine; the Prose Salernitan Questions, for the medical theories of Galen; Andre the Chaplain, for the Ovidian literature of the schools; Jean Renart, for the contemporary romances; and Jean Bodel, for the emerging voices of the fabliaux. Baldwin juxtaposes their views on a range of essential subjects, including social position, the sexual body, desire and act, and procreation. The result is a fascinating dialogue of how they agreed or disagreed with, ignored, imitated, or responded to each other at a critical moment in the development of European ideas about sexual desire, fulfillment, morality, and gender. These spokesmen allow us into the discussion of sexuality inside the church and schools of the clergy, in high and popular culture of the leity. This heterogeneous discussion also offers a startling glimpse into the construction of gender specific to this moment, when men and women enjoyed equal status in sexual matters, if nowhere else. Taken together, these voices extend their reach, encompass their subject, and point to a center where social reality lies. By articulating reality at its varied depths, this study takes its place alongside groundbreaking works by James Brundage, John Boswell, and Leah Otis in extending our understanding of sexuality and sexual behavior in the Middle Ages. "Superb work. . . . These five kinds of discourse are not often treated together in scholarly writing, let alone compared and contrasted so well."—Edward Collins Vacek, Theological Studies "[Baldwin] has made the five voices speak to us in a language that is at one and the same time familiar and alien in its resonance and accents. This is a truly exceptional book, interdisciplinary in the real sense of the word, which is surely destined to become a landmark in medieval
The premise of this volume is that the ubiquity of lactation imagery in early modern visual culture and the discourse on breastfeeding in humanist, religious, medical, and literary writings is a distinct cultural phenomenon that deserves systematic study. Chapters by art historians, social and legal historians, historians of science, and literary scholars explore some of the ambiguities and contradictions surrounding the issue, and point to the need for further study, in particular in the realm of lactation imagery in the visual arts. This volume builds on existing scholarship on representations of the breast, the iconography of the Madonna Lactans, allegories of abundance, nature, and charity, women mystics' food-centered practices of devotion, the ubiquitous practice of wet-nursing, and medical theories of conception. It is informed by studies on queer kinship in early modern Europe, notions of sacred eroticism in pre-tridentine Catholicism, feminist investigations of breastfeeding as a sexual practice, and by anthropological and historical scholarship on milk exchange and ritual kinship in ancient Mediterranean and medieval Islamic societies. Proposing a variety of different methods and analytical frameworks within which to consider instances of lactation imagery, breastfeeding practices, and their textual references, this volume also offers tools to support further research on the topic.

What Was Sex Like for a Medieval Woman? An inside look at sexual practices in medieval times. Were medieval women slaves to their husband's desires, jealously secured in a chastity belt in his absence? Was sex a duty or could it be a pleasure? Did a woman have a say about her own female sexuality, body, and who did or didn't get up close and personal with it? No. And yes. It's complicated. Romance, courtship, and behind closed doors. The intimate lives of medieval women were as complex as for modern woman. They loved and lost, hoped and schemed, were lifted up and cast down. They were hopeful and lovelorn. Some had it forced upon them, others
made aphrodisiacs and dressed for success. Some were chaste and some were lusty. Having sex was complicated. Not having sex was even more so. Inside The Very Secret Sex Lives of Medieval Women, a fascinating book about life during medieval times, you will discover tantalizing true stories about medieval women and a myriad of historical facts. Learn about: • The true experiences of women from all classes, including women who made history • The dos and don’ts in the bedroom • Sexy foods and how to have them • All you need to know for your wedding night, and well as insider medical advice • How to get pregnant (and how not to), and more Fans of The Time Traveller’s Guide to Medieval England, Medieval Women and Terry Jones’es Medieval Lives will meet real women and hear their voices in The Very Secret Sex Lives of Medieval Women.

The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe provides a comprehensive overview of the gender rules encountered in Europe in the period between approximately 500 and 1500 C.E. The essays collected in this volume speak to interpretative challenges common to all fields of women’s and gender history - that is, how best to uncover the experiences of ordinary people from archives formed mainly by and about elite males, and how to combine social histories of lived experiences with cultural histories of gendered discourses and identities. The collection focuses on Western Europe in the Middle Ages but offers some consideration of medieval Islam and Byzantium. The Handbook is structured into seven sections: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim thought; law in theory and practice; domestic life and material culture; labour, land, and economy; bodies and sexualities; gender and holiness; and the interplay of continuity and change throughout the medieval period. It contains material from some of the foremost scholars in this field, and it not only serves as the major reference text in medieval and gender studies, but also provides an agenda for future new research.

The early Christian and medieval practice of spiritual marriage, in which husband and wife mutually and voluntarily relinquish sexual activity for reasons of piety, plays an important role in the development of the
institution of marriage and in the understanding of female religiosity. Drawing on hagiography, chronicles, theology, canon law, and pastoral sources, Dyan Elliott traces the history of spiritual marriage in the West from apostolic times to the beginning of the sixteenth century.

An illuminating exploration of the surprisingly familiar sex lives of ordinary medieval people. The medieval humoral system of medicine suggested that it was possible to die from having too much or too little sex, while the Roman Catholic Church taught that virginity was the ideal state. Holy men and women committed themselves to lifelong abstinence in the name of religion. Everyone was forced to conform to restrictive rules about who they could have sex with, in what way, how often, and even when, and could be harshly punished for getting it wrong. Other experiences are more familiar. Like us, medieval people faced challenges in finding a suitable partner or trying to get pregnant (or trying not to). They also struggled with many of the same social issues, such as whether prostitution should be legalized. Above all, they shared our fondness for dirty jokes and erotic images. By exploring their sex lives, the book brings ordinary medieval people to life, revealing details of their most personal thoughts and experiences. Ultimately, it provides us with an important and intimate connection to the past.

Awarded honorable mention for the 2007 Wallace K. Ferguson Prize sponsored by the Canadian Historical Association. How were marital and sexual relationships woven into the fabric of late medieval society, and what form did these relationships take? Using extensive documentary evidence from both the ecclesiastical court system and the records of city and royal government, as well as advice manuals, chronicles, moral tales, and liturgical texts, Shannon McSheffrey focuses her study on England's largest city in the second half of the fifteenth century. Marriage was a religious union—one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church and imbued with deep spiritual significance—but the marital unit of husband and wife was also the fundamental domestic, social, political, and economic unit of medieval society. As such, marriage created political alliances at all levels, from the arena of international politics to local neighborhoods. Sexual relationships outside marriage were even more...
complicated. McSheffrey notes that medieval Londoners saw them as variously attributable to female seduction or to male lustfulness, as irrelevant or deeply damaging to society and to the body politic, as economically productive or wasteful of resources. Yet, like marriage, sexual relationships were also subject to control and influence from parents, relatives, neighbors, civic officials, parish priests, and ecclesiastical judges. Although by medieval canon law a marriage was irrevocable from the moment a man and a woman exchanged vows of consent before two witnesses, in practice marriage was usually a socially complicated process involving many people. McSheffrey looks more broadly at sex, governance, and civic morality to show how medieval patriarchy extended a far wider reach than a father's governance over his biological offspring. By focusing on a particular time and place, she not only elucidates the culture of England's metropolitan center but also contributes generally to our understanding of the social mechanisms through which premodern European people negotiated their lives.

The Middle Ages are often viewed as a repository of tradition, yet what we think of as traditional marriage was far from the only available alternative to the single state in medieval Europe. Many people lived together in long-term, quasimarital heterosexual relationships, unable to marry if one was in holy orders or if the partners were of different religions. Social norms militated against the marriage of master to slave or between individuals of very different classes, or when the couple was so poor that they could not establish an independent household. Such unions, where the protections that medieval law furnished to wives (and their children) were absent, were fraught with danger for women in particular, but they also provided a degree of flexibility and demonstrate the adaptability of social customs in the face of slowly changing religious doctrine. Unmarriages draws on a wide range of sources from across Europe and the entire medieval millennium in order to investigate structures and relations that medieval authors and record keepers did not address directly, either in order to minimize them or because they were so common as not to be worth mentioning. Ruth Mazo Karras pays particular attention to the ways women and men experienced forms of opposite-sex union differently and to the implications for power relations between the genders. She treats legal and theological discussions that applied to all of Europe and
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presents a vivid series of case studies of how unions operated in specific circumstances to illustrate concretely what we can conclude, how far we can speculate, and what we can never know.

The emotional and sensual, religious and erotic excitement of the whip, a crucial instrument of stimulation in devotional and sexual practices, as seen in religious, literary, and medical texts and images.

Sexually explicit sculptures may be found on a number of medieval churches in France and Spain. This fascinating study examines the origins and purposes of these sculptures, viewing them not as magical fertility symbols, nor even as idols of ancient pre-Christian religions, but as serious works that dealt with the sexual customs and salvation of medieval folk, and thus gave support to the Church's moral teachings.

As anyone who has read Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales knows, Middle English literature is rife with sexually explicit language and situations. Less canonical works can be even more brazen in describing illicit acts of sexual activity and sexual violence. Such scenes and language were not, however, included exclusively for titillation. In Obscene Pedagogies, Carissa M. Harris argues instead for obscenity’s usefulness in sexual education. She investigates the relationship between obscenity, gender, and pedagogy in Middle English and Middle Scots literary texts from 1300 to 1580 to show how sexually explicit and defiantly vulgar speech taught readers and listeners about sexual behavior and consent. Through innovative close readings of literary texts including erotic lyrics, single-woman’s songs, debate poems between men and women, Scottish insult poetry battles, and The Canterbury Tales, Harris demonstrates how through its transgressive charge and galvanizing shock value, obscenity taught audiences about gender, sex, pleasure, and power in ways both positive and harmful. She focuses in particular on understudied female-voiced lyrics and gendered debate poems, many of which have their origin in oral culture, and includes teaching-ready editions of fourteen largely unknown anonymous lyrics in women’s voices. Harris’s own voice, proudly witty and sharply polemical, inspires the reader to address these medieval
texts with an eye on contemporary issues of gender, violence, and misogyny.

Like specialists in other fields in humanities and social sciences, medievalists have begun to investigate and write about sex and related topics such as courtship, concubinage, divorce, marriage, prostitution, and child rearing. The scholarship in this significant volume asserts that sexual conduct formed a crucial role in the lives, thoughts, hopes and fears both of individuals and of the institutions that they created in the middle ages. The absorbing subject of sexuality in the Middle Ages is examined in 19 original articles written specifically for this "Handbook" by the major authorities in their scholarly specialties. The study of medieval sexuality poses problems for the researcher: indices in standard sources rarely refer to sexual topics, and standard secondary sources often ignore the material or say little about it. Yet a vast amount of research is available, and the information is accessible to the student who knows where to look and what to look for. This volume is a valuable guide to the material and an indicator of what subjects are likely to yield fresh scholarly rewards.

"Intersectionality, a term coined in 1989, is rapidly increasing in importance within the academy, as well as in broader civic conversations. It describes the study of overlapping or intersecting social identities such as race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and sexual orientation alongside related systems of oppression, domination, and discrimination. Together, these frameworks are used to understand how systematic injustice or social inequality occurs. In this book, Roland Betancourt examines the presence of marginalized identities and intersectionality in the medieval era. He reveals the fascinating, little-examined conversations in medieval thought and visual culture around matters of sexual and reproductive consent, bullying, non-monogamous marriages, homosocial and homoerotic relationships, trans and non-binary gender identifications, representations of disability, and the oppression of minorities. In contrast to contemporary expectations of the medieval world, this book looks at these problems from the Byzantine Empire and its neighbors in the eastern mediterranean through sources ranging from late antiquity and early Christianity up to the early modern period. In each of five chapters, Betancourt provides
short, carefully scaled narratives used to illuminate nuanced and surprising takes on now-familiar subjects by medieval thinkers and artists. For example, Betancourt examines depictions of sexual consent in images of the Virgin; the origins of sexual shaming and bullying in the story of Empress Theodora; early beginnings of trans history as told in the lives of saints who lived portions of their lives within different genders; and the ways in which medieval authors understood and depicted disabilities. Deeply researched, this is a groundbreaking new look at medieval culture for a new generation of scholars"--

Originally published in 1990. Well-annotated bibliographical entries cover works on history, religion, medicine, philosophy, law and literature in western Europe from about the third century A.D. through the end of the medieval period. The primary sources are organised thematically, and separately from secondary sources. Languages covered include English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Italian, and Latin. The focus is on sexuality and sexual attitudes, not on the related topics of marriage and family. Detailed indexes are also included.

DIVHow medieval texts represent and reproduce normative heterosexual identities./div

Martyred saints, Moors, Jews, viragoes, hermaphrodites, sodomites, kings, queens, and cross-dressers comprise the fascinating mosaic of historical and imaginative figures unearthed in Queer Iberia. The essays in this volume describe and analyze the sexual diversity that proliferated during the period between the tenth and the sixteenth centuries when political hegemony in the region passed from Muslim to Christian hands. To show how sexual otherness is most evident at points of cultural conflict, the contributors use a variety of methodologies and perspectives and consider source materials that originated in Castilian, Latin, Arabic, Catalan, and Galician-Portuguese. Covering topics from the martyrdom of Pelagius to the exploits of the transgendered Catalina de Erauso, this volume is the first to provide a comprehensive historical examination of the relations among race, gender, sexuality, nation-building, colonialism, and imperial expansion in medieval and early modern Iberia.
Some essays consider archival evidence of sexual otherness or evaluate the use of "deviance" as a marker for cultural and racial difference, while others explore both male and female homoeroticism as literary-aesthetic discourse or attempt to open up canonical texts to alternative readings. Positing a queerness intrinsic to Iberia’s historical process and cultural identity, Queer Iberia will challenge the field of Iberian studies while appealing to scholars of medieval, cultural, Hispanic, gender, and gay and lesbian studies. Contributors. Josiah Blackmore, Linde M. Brocato, Catherine Brown, Israel Burshatin, Daniel Eisenberg, E. Michael Gerli, Roberto J. González-Casanovas, Gregory S. Hutcheson, Mark D. Jordan, Sara Lipton, Benjamin Liu, Mary Elizabeth Perry, Michael Solomon, Louise O. Vasvári, Barbara Weissberger

In the fourth century, clerics began to distinguish themselves from members of the laity by virtue of their augmented claims to holiness. Because clerical celibacy was key to this distinction, religious authorities of all stripes—patristic authors, popes, theologians, canonists, monastic founders, and commentators—became progressively sensitive to sexual scandals that involved the clergy and developed sophisticated tactics for concealing or dispelling embarrassing lapses. According to Dyan Elliott, the fear of scandal dictated certain lines of action and inaction, the consequences of which are painfully apparent today. In The Corrupter of Boys, she demonstrates how, in conjunction with the requirement of clerical celibacy, scandal-averse policies at every conceivable level of the ecclesiastical hierarchy have enabled the widespread sexual abuse of boys and male adolescents within the Church. Elliott examines more than a millennium's worth of doctrine and practice to uncover the origins of a culture of secrecy and concealment of sin. She charts the continuities and changes, from late antiquity into the high Middle Ages, in the use of boys as sexual objects before focusing on four specific milieus in which boys and adolescents would have been especially at risk in the high and later Middle Ages: the monastery, the choir, the schools, and the episcopal court. The Corrupter of Boys is a work of stunning breadth and disconcerting resonance, as Elliott concludes that the same clerical prerogatives and privileges that were formulated in late antiquity and the medieval era—and the same strategies to cover up the abuses they
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enable—remain very much in place.

This collection of essays addresses a number of questions regarding the role of consent in marriage and in sexual relations outside of marriage in ancient and medieval societies. Ranging from ancient Greece and Rome to the Byzantine Empire and Western Medieval Europe, the contributors examine rape, seduction, and the role of consent in establishing the punishment of one or both parties; the issue of marital debt and spousal rape; and the central question of what is perceived as coercion and what may be the validity or value of coerced consent. Other concepts, such as honor and shame, are also investigated. Because of the wide range—in time and place—of societies studied, the reader is able to see many different approaches to the question of consent and coercion as well as a certain evolution, in which Christianity plays an important role.

"Common women" in medieval England were prostitutes, whose distinguishing feature was not that they took money for sex but that they belonged to all men in common. Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England tells the stories of these women's lives: their entrance into the trade because of poor job and marriage prospects or because of seduction or rape; their experiences as streetwalkers, brothel workers or the medieval equivalent of call girls; their customers, from poor apprentices to priests to wealthy foreign merchants; and their relations with those among whom they lived. Common Women crosses the boundary from social to cultural history by asking not only about the experiences of prostitutes but also about the meaning of prostitution in medieval culture. The teachings of the church attributed both lust and greed, in generous measure, to women as a group. Stories of repentant whores were popular among medieval preachers and writers because prostitutes were the epitome of feminine sin. Through a sensitive use of a wide variety of imaginative and didactic texts, Ruth Karras shows that while prostitutes as individuals were marginalized within medieval culture, prostitution as an institution was central to the medieval understanding of what it meant to be a woman. This important work will be of interest to scholars and students of history, women's studies, and the history of sexuality.
During the Middle Ages in Europe, some sexual and gendered behaviors were labeled "sodomitical" or evoked the use of ambiguous phrases such as the "unmentionable vice" or the "sin against nature." How, though, did these categories enter the field of vision? How do you know a sodomite when you see one? In Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages, Robert Mills explores the relationship between sodomy and motifs of vision and visibility in medieval culture, on the one hand, and those categories we today call gender and sexuality, on the other. Challenging the view that ideas about sexual and gender dissidence were too confused to congeal into a coherent form in the Middle Ages, Mills demonstrates that sodomy had a rich, multimedia presence in the period—and that a flexible approach to questions of terminology sheds new light on the many forms this presence took. Among the topics that Mills covers are depictions of the practices of sodomites in illuminated Bibles; motifs of gender transformation and sex change as envisioned by medieval artists and commentators on Ovid; sexual relations in religious houses and other enclosed spaces; and the applicability of modern categories such as "transgender," "butch," and "femme," or "sexual orientation" to medieval culture. Taking in a multitude of images, texts, and methodologies, this book will be of interest to all scholars, regardless of discipline, who engage with gender and sexuality in their work.

Sexuality in modern western culture is central to identity but the tendency to define by sexuality does not apply to the premodern past. Before the 'invention' of sexuality, erotic acts and desires were comprehended as species of sin, expressions of idealised love, courtship, and marriage, or components of intimacies between men or women, not as outworkings of an innermost self. With a focus on c. 1100–c. 1800, this book explores the shifting meanings, languages, and practices of western sex. It is the first study to combine the medieval and early modern to rethink this time of sex before sexuality, where same-sex and opposite-sex desire and eroticism bore but faint traces of what moderns came to call heterosexuality, homosexuality, lesbianism, and pornography. This volume aims to contribute to contemporary historical theory through paying attention to the particularity of premodern sexual cultures. Phillips and Reay argue that students of premodern sex will be blocked in their understanding if
they use terms and concepts applicable to sexuality since the late nineteenth century, and modern commentators will never know their subject without a deeper comprehension of sex's history.

This monumental study of medieval law and sexual conduct explores the origin and development of the Christian church's sex law and the systems of belief upon which that law rested. Focusing on the Church's own legal system of canon law, James A. Brundage offers a comprehensive history of legal doctrines—covering the millennium from A.D. 500 to 1500—concerning a wide variety of sexual behavior, including marital sex, adultery, homosexuality, concubinage, prostitution, masturbation, and incest. His survey makes strikingly clear how the system of sexual control in a world we have half-forgotten has shaped the world in which we live today. The regulation of marriage and divorce as we know it today, together with the outlawing of bigamy and polygamy and the imposition of criminal sanctions on such activities as sodomy, fellatio, cunnilingus, and bestiality, are all based in large measure upon ideas and beliefs about sexual morality that became law in Christian Europe in the Middle Ages. "Brundage's book is consistently learned, enormously useful, and frequently entertaining. It is the best we have on the relationships between theological norms, legal principles, and sexual practice."—Peter Iver Kaufman, Church History

In this pioneering book, Eve Levin explores sexual behavior among the peoples of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Russia from their conversion to Christianity in the ninth and tenth centuries until the end of the seventeenth century. By ranging across all these societies, Levin is able to fulfill three basic aims: to delineate the general character of sexuality among the Orthodox Slavs, to enrich that account by drawing our attention to regional variations in the sexual mores of these peoples, and to draw suggestive comparisons between the world of the medieval Orthodox Slavs and their contemporaries in the Latin West. Levin begins with a study of the ecclesiastical image of sexuality as expressed in didactic and literary texts, showing that the Orthodox Church was deeply suspicious of sexuality. Her second chapter, on canon law and marriage, examines the conditions for marriage, divorce, and
remarriage, the obligation of the conjugal relationship, and the impact of these rules on social order. Levin looks
at church regulations concerning sexual relations among relatives by blood, marriage, spiritual kinship, and
adoption in Chapter Three, and she devotes Chapter Four to prohibited sexual practices, both inside and outside of
marriage. In the fifth chapter she studies Russian and South Slavic responses to rape, and demonstrates that these
societies simultaneously censured violence against women and sanctioned the attitudes and social structures that
justified it. Chapter Six deals with the rules on sexual conduct for the clergy, whose job it was to enforce sexual
precepts. Throughout her work, Levin argues that, despite its conviction that sexual expression was diabolical, the
medieval Orthodox Church approached sexual matters in a surprisingly practical way; its official sexual ethic
corresponded to a great degree with popular views. Historians of the Slavic world, both medieval and modern,
will welcome this accessible study. It should also attract comparativists who work in such fields as church history,
the history of women and the family, and the history of sexuality.

This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important and is part of the knowledge base of
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graphical elements with text in an easy-to-read typeface. We appreciate your support of the preservation process,
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Originally published in 1991. Covering courtship, disclosure, diversity, and public implications, the essays here
discuss topics such as erotic magic, nakedness, physicians' attitudes about sex, boy-love, saints and sex, and the
politics of sodomy, as they were manifested in medieval Europe and the Middle East.

Challenging the way the Middle Ages have been treated in general histories of sexuality, Sexuality in Medieval Europe shows how views at the time were conflicted and complicated; there was no single medieval attitude towards sexuality any more than there is one modern attitude. Focusing on marital sexual activity, as well as behavior that was seen as transgressive, the chapters cover such topics as chastity, the role of the church, and non-reproductive activity. Combining an overview of research on the topic with original interpretations, Ruth Mazo Karras demonstrates that medieval culture developed sexual identities that were quite distinct from the identities we think of today, yet were still ancestral to our own. Using a wide collection of evidence from the late antique period until the fifteenth century, this fully revised third edition has been updated to include the latest scholarship throughout, including expanded coverage of Islamic and Jewish cultures and new ideas on how medieval sexual violence relates to the modern world. A new companion website supplements the text featuring an interactive timeline of key events, links to key primary sources, and references to further reading. Sexuality in Medieval Europe is essential reading for those who study medieval history and culture.

A comprehensive survey of the evolutionary science of human sexual behavior, Evolution and Human Sexual Behavior invites us to imagine human sex from the vantage point of our primate cousins, in order to underscore the role of evolution in shaping all that happens, biologically and behaviorally, when romantic passions are aroused.

Prostitution played an important part in structuring gender relations in medieval Germany. Prostitutes were often viewed as an example of the extreme female sinfulness which all women risked falling into, yet their social role was also seen as vital to the unmarried men for whom they provided a sexual outlet. Prostitution and Subjectivity in Late Medieval Germany is the first full-length study of medieval prostitution to focus primarily on how gender
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discourse shaped the lives of prostitutes themselves. Based on three legal case studies from the late medieval Empire, Prostitutes and Subjectivity in Late Medieval Germany examines constructions of subjectivity between 1400 and 1500. This period saw the rapid rise of tolerated prostitution across much of western Europe and the emergence of the public brothel as a central institution in the regulation of social order, followed by its equally rapid suppression from the early 1500s. By analysing how individuals interacted with cultural discourses surrounding the body, sexuality, and sin, the book explores how the concepts which defined prostitution in the Middle Ages shaped individual lives, and how individuals were able - or not - to exert agency, both within the circumstances of their own lives, and in response to official attempts to regulate sexual behaviour.

In Getting Medieval Carolyn Dinshaw examines communities—dissident and orthodox—in late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth-century England to create a new sense of queer history. Reaching beyond both medieval and queer studies, Dinshaw demonstrates in this challenging work how intellectual inquiry into pre-modern societies can contribute invaluably to current issues in cultural studies. In the process, she makes important connections between past and present cultures that until now have not been realized. In her pursuit of historical analyses that embrace the heterogeneity and indeterminacy of sex and sexuality, Dinshaw examines canonical Middle English texts such as the Canterbury Tales and The Book of Margery Kempe. She examines polemics around the religious dissidents known as the Lollards as well as accounts of prostitutes in London to address questions of how particular sexual practices and identifications were normalized while others were proscribed. By exploring contemporary (mis)appropriations of medieval tropes in texts ranging from Quentin Tarantino’s Pulp Fiction to recent Congressional debates on U.S. cultural production, Dinshaw demonstrates how such modern media can serve to reinforce constrictive heteronormative values and deny the multifarious nature of history. Finally, she works with and against the theories of Michel Foucault, Homi K. Bhabha, Roland Barthes, and John Boswell to show how deconstructionist impulses as well as historical perspectives can further an understanding of community in both pre- and postmodern societies. This long-anticipated volume will be indispensable to medieval and queer
scholars and will be welcomed by a larger cultural studies audience.

Gender in Medieval Culture provides a detailed examination of medieval society's views on both gender and sexuality, and shows how they are inextricably linked. Sex roles were clearly defined in the medieval world although there were exceptions to the rules, and this book examines both the commonplace world view and the exceptions to it. The volume looks not only at the social and economic considerations of gender but also the religious and legal implications, arguing that both ecclesiastical and secular laws governed behaviour. The book covers key topics, including femininity and masculinity and how medieval society constructed these terms; sexuality and sex; transgressive sexualities such as homosexuality, adultery and chastity; and the gendered body of Christ, including the idea of Jesus as mother and affective spirituality. Using a clear chapter structure for easy navigation and categorisation, as well as a glossary of terms, the book will be a vital resource for students of medieval history.

"Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church" analyses the Christian assumptions about sexuality, chronicles the early institutionalisation of these assumptions, and explores the theological debate of the meaning of marriage and the role of sex in marriage. The theological conception of sex, including issues such as rape, seduction, impotence, and prostitution, is then examined as it came to be developed by canon lawyers and justified by medical and scientific writers. The book concludes with an overview of late medieval sex practices as seen in the literature of the period and in demographic studies. Professor Vern Bullough, the well-known researcher in human sexuality, and Professor James Brundage, a historian of the Medieval period, have combined their scholarly talents to develop an in-depth analysis of sexual attitudes and practices during the Middle Ages. Skilfully blending readability and scholarly thoroughness, this is a volume general readers as well as professionals recognise as a major contribution to the study of medieval sexuality.
Composed between the sixth and ninth centuries, penitentials were little books of penance that address a wide range of human fallibility. But they are far more than mere registers of sin and penance: rather, by revealing the multiple contexts in which their authors anticipated various sins, they reveal much about the ways those authors and, presumably, their audiences understood a variety of social phenomena. Offering new, more accurate translations of the penitentials than what has previously been available, this book delves into the potentialities addressed in these manuals for clues about less tangible aspects of early medieval history, including the innocence and vulnerability of young children and the relationship between speech and culpability; the links between puberty, autonomy, and moral accountability; early medieval efforts to regulate sexual relationships; and much more.

This book examines drinking and attitudes to alcohol consumption in late medieval and early modern England, France, and Italy, especially as they related to sexual and violent behavior and to gender relations. According to widespread beliefs, the consumption of alcohol led to increased sexual activity among both men and women, and it also led to disorderly conduct among women and violent conduct among men. Dr Lynn shows how alcohol was a fundamental part of the diets of most people, including women, resulting in daily drinking of large amounts of ale, beer, or wine. This study offers an intimate insight into both the altered states induced by alcohol, and, by opposition, into normal relations in family, community, and society.