



Ancient Obscenities: Their Nature and Use in the Ancient Greek and Roman Worlds

Dorota Dutsch, Ann Suter

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Ancient Obscenities inquires into the Greco-Roman handling of explicit representations of the body in its excretory and sexual functions, taking as its point of departure the modern preoccupation with the obscene. The essays in this volume offer new interpretations of materials that have been perceived by generations of modern readers as “obscene”: the explicit sexual references of Greek iambic poetry and Juvenal’s satires, Aristophanic *aischrologia*, Priapic poetics, and the scatology of Pompeian graffiti. Other essays venture in an even more provocative fashion into texts that are not immediately associated with the obscene: the Orphic *Hymn to Demeter*, Herodotus, the supposedly prim scripts of Plautus and the Attic orators. The volume focuses on texts but also includes a chapter devoted to visual representation, and many essays combine evidence from texts and material culture. Of all these texts, artifacts, and practices we ask the same questions: What kinds of cultural and emotional work do sexual and scatological references perform? Can we find a blueprint for the ancient usage of this material?

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