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Carnal Knowledge: Regulating Sex In England, 1470-1600 (Cambridge Studies In Early Modern British History)



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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'Masterly and definitive. Ingram's study, meticulously researched and powerfully argued, transforms our understanding of the evolution of sexual regulation before, during and after the Reformation.' Bernard Capp, Emeritus Professor of History, University of Warwick 'Carnal Knowledge is a hugely important work of careful and stimulating scholarship that must be required reading for all late medieval and early modern scholars interested in sex, social and gender relations, and how they changed historically.' Garthine Walker, Cardiff University 'In this deeply researched and highly

illuminating book Martin Ingram makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the regulation of sexuality by both ecclesiastical and secular authorities in sixteenth-century England.' Adam Fox, University of Edinburgh'This eagerly anticipated book has many virtues ... But by far the most important is the commitment to the long perspective ... The result is a compelling and persuasive account of sex and its control that should be of interest to anyone interested in the social and cultural history of the period.' Phil Withington, University of Sheffield'Carnal Knowledge is the culmination of ... two decades of endeavour, and is a publication of massive significance. It is a rich and multi-faceted book.' James Sharpe, The Times Literary Supplement --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

How was the law used to control sex in Tudor England? What were the differences between secular and religious practice? This major study, based on a wide range of church and secular court archives, explores sexual regulation in London and provincial England before, during and immediately after the Reformation.

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