

## THE SINGLE LIFE IN THE ROMAN AND LATER ROMAN WORLD

Using a variety of historical sources and methodological approaches, this book presents the first large-scale study of single men and women in the Roman world, from the Roman Republic to Late Antiquity, and covering virtually all periods of the ancient Mediterranean. It asks how singleness was defined and for what reasons people might find themselves unmarried. While marriage was generally favoured by philosophers and legislators, with the arguments against it largely confined to genres like satire and comedy, the advent of Christianity brought about a more complex range of thinking regarding its desirability. Demographic, archaeological and socioeconomic perspectives are considered, and in particular the relationship of singleness to Roman household and family structures. The volume concludes by introducing a number of comparative perspectives, drawn from the early Islamic world and from other parts of Europe down to and including the nineteenth century, in order to highlight possibilities for the Roman world.

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The idea of having a conference on *The Single Life in the Roman and Later Roman World* first came to mind because hardly anything had been said before on this quite fashionable modern concept.

It took networking, communication between friends and colleagues, and fundraising to give shape to the initial idea. Surely it was worth making the effort, since the conference held at the Academia Belgica in Rome (28–30 May 2015) has stuck in the minds of its participants as a most interesting event, full of engaging exchange and scholarly discussions.

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During the conference, Ilse Mueller presented her paper. She had been invited because her 2010 article on *Single Women in Funerary Inscriptions* was seminal for the topic of the conference. Ilse passed away on 29 October 2016. With great sadness, we acknowledge the death of a respected scholar, whose area of research was on marginalized groups in the ancient world.

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