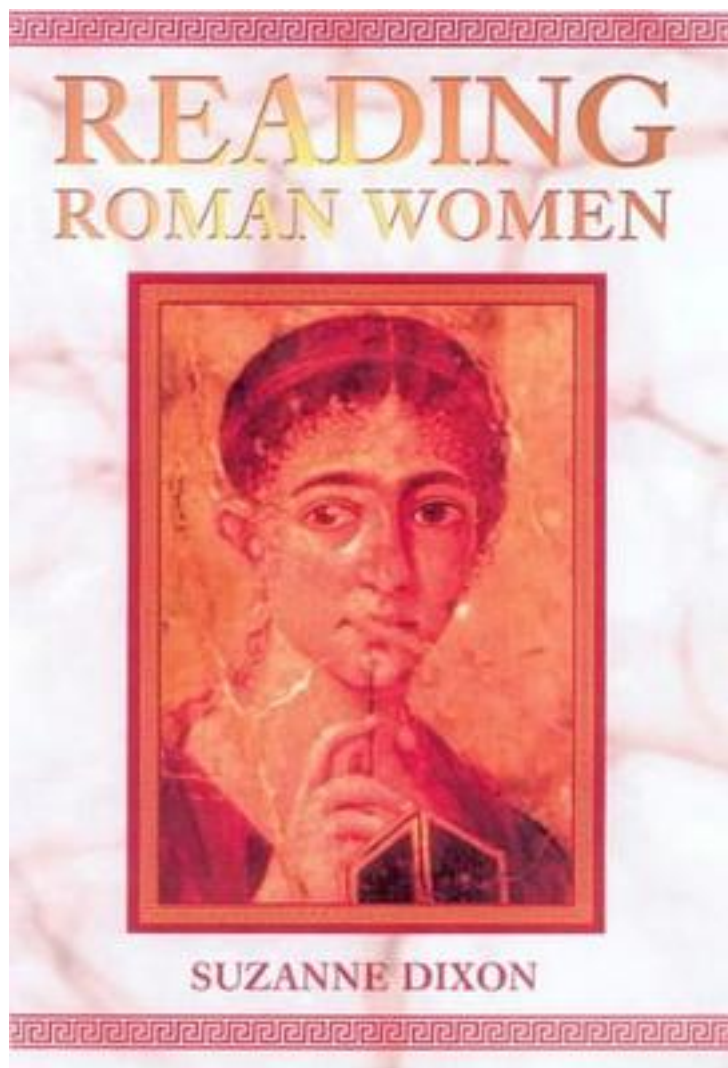


Reading Roman Women



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Roman women were either luxurious sluts or domestic paragons - at least according to the elite men who wrote Roman history and poetry. These authors, preoccupied with masculine pursuits, introduced women into their works to make a moral point. Even Roman tombstones and the law showcase feminine virtues and reflect biases about "female nature". We also have our own prejudices about ancient Rome and Roman women. Derived from film, television and sensational novels, these prejudices affect the way we "read" the ancient material. So how do we retrieve the lives of "real women"? In this treatment Suzanne Dixon presents a range of examples to support her argument that our ideas of what we "know" about women's work, sexuality, commerce and political activity in the Roman world have been shaped by the format, or genre, of each ancient source. She suggests ways in which we can read the evidence (including what is left out) more critically. She considers legendary heroines like Verginia and Lucretia and what they tell us about Roman attitudes to rape and women's chastity. She has a sympathetic take on notorious bad girls like Clodia and Messalina and tries to retrieve less spectacular women from the meagre non-literary sources. She introduces us to a huge cast of Roman women, not only the larger-than-life decadents of the Roman orgy, but the small traders of Ostia, the spinners, prostitutes and barmaids celebrated in Pompeian graffiti and the prosperous businesswomen and landowners of Rome and the Bay of Naples.

作者介绍:

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