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Sommario/riassunto	This groundbreaking book challenges many stereotypical views about the historical practice of prostitution. Based on twenty years' research, and organized by region, it charts the history of sex for sale in those chief centres of the late antique and medieval East, whether in Arabia, Egypt, Syria or Anatolia. Ranging extensively from 300 CE to 1500 (or from the reign of Theodosius to the early Ottoman period), Gary Leiser meticulously examines the available sources and argues for a reappraisal of the so-called oldest profession. He suggests that it was never prohibited; that there was remarkable continuity between Christian and Muslim rule; and that prostitution was institutionalized as a 'service industry' at various times. Indicating that sex work in the East had its own distinctive character and meanings (for example, that it was taxed from the time of Caligula onwards and that prostitutes were expected to retain tax receipts), the book brings continually fresh insights to a controversial subject.