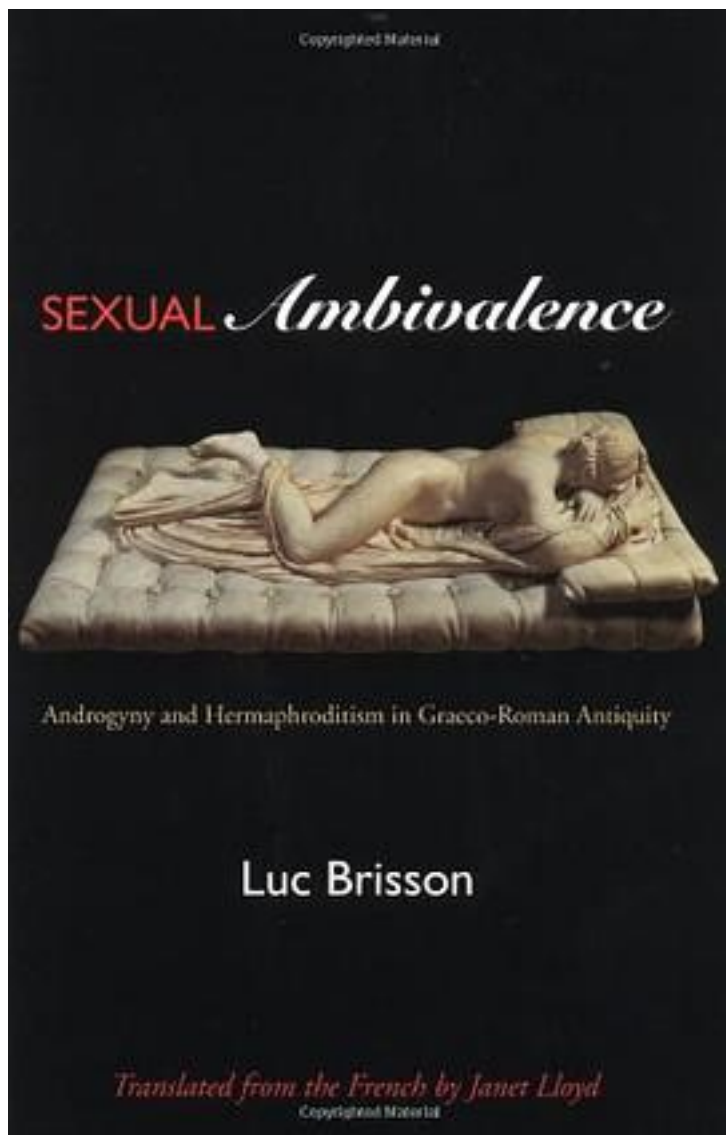


Sexual Ambivalence



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出版者:Univ of California Pr

出版时间:2002-3

装帧:Pap

isbn:9780520223912

This fascinating book collects and translates most of the extant written Graeco-Roman material on human beings, divinities, animals, and other creatures who were said to have been both female and male. Luc Brisson provides a commentary that situates this rich source material within its historical and intellectual contexts. These selections--from mythological, philosophical, historical, and anecdotal sources--describe cases of either simultaneous dual sexuality, as in androgyny and in hermaphroditism, or successive dual sexuality, as in the case of Tiresias (the blind Theban prophet), which are found through the whole span of Graeco-Roman antiquity. *Sexual Ambivalence* is an invaluable sourcebook that gathers this suggestive, yet hard to find, material in one convenient place. This book presents some very obscure but wonderfully strange material. There is the ghost story about a father who returns from the dead to devour his dual-sexed son in the public square, leaving behind only the head, which proceeds to deliver a prophecy from its position on the ground. In addition to including such familiar sources as the myths of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus as told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Aristophanes' myth of the origins of the sexes and sexuality in Plato's *Symposium*, Brisson also discusses cosmogonic mythology in Hesiodic poetry, the Orphic Rhapsodies, Gnosticism, the Hermetic Corpus, and the so-called Chaldean Oracles. He presents the manifold variants of the myth of Tiresias, as well as many other sources. Brisson quotes this material at length and discusses its significance in Graeco-Roman myth and philosophy. These ancient stories open a window onto a world without the sexual oppositions of male and female, a paradise of unity and self-containment, as well as onto the peculiar world of go-betweens like the prophet Tiresias. They deepen our awareness of the extent to which the polarity of sexuality colors our entire perception of the world, as it did in antiquity, and as it does for us now. This provocative material is profoundly relevant to our thinking today.

作者介绍:

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