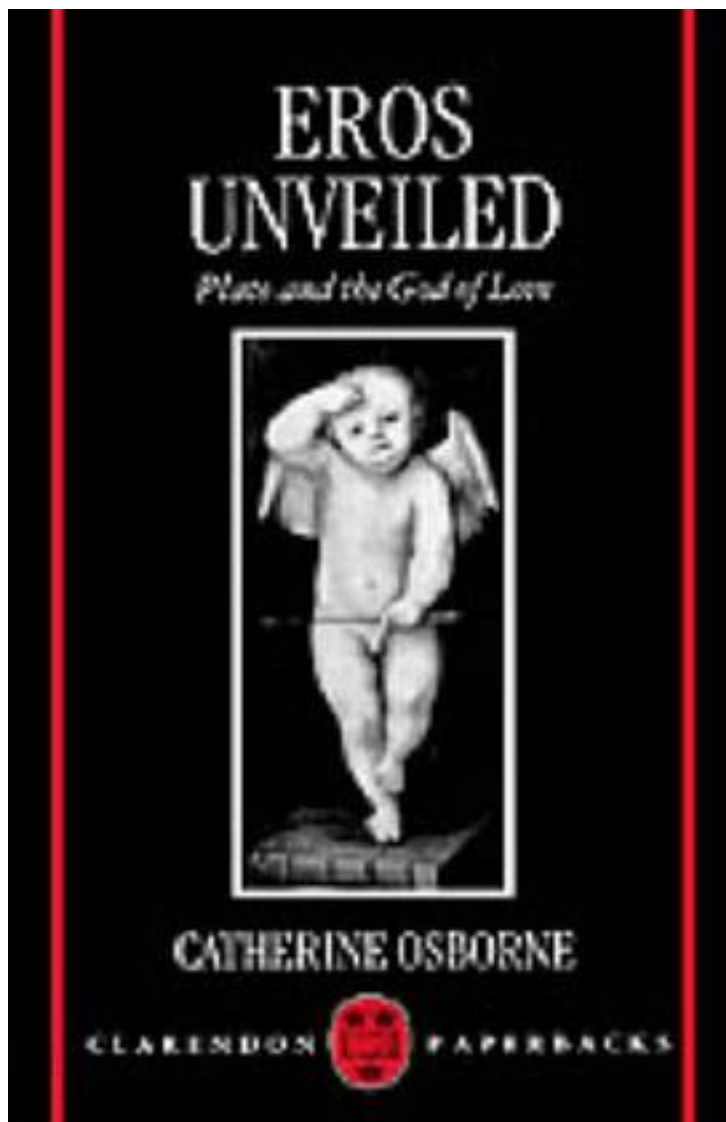


Eros Unveiled



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Few books on love can claim to make significant contributions to our understanding both of ancient views on eros and its place in the Christian tradition. On the basis of a new and sympathetic reading of Plato, Catherine Osborne shows that the long-standing distrust of eros, rather than agape, as a model for the believer's relation to God in Christian thought derives from a misunderstanding of ancient thought on love. Focusing on a number of classic texts, including Plato's Symposium and Lysis, Aristotle's Ethics and Metaphysics, and famous passages in Gregory of Nyssa, Origen, Dionysius the Areopagite, Plotinus, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas, she shows that love is not motivated by a need that seeks fulfilment. On the contrary, Dr Osborne argues, to seek a motive for love, whether in Plato's account or our own, is to pursue a philosophical confusion. To mention love is to mention the motive that explains our response of affection or devotion or desire; the response cannot be the motive for our love, but is an attitude that belongs in a vision of the beloved transfigured by love. It is for this reason that we have to restore the image of Cupid, whose mischievous darts picture the impossibility of seeking some further grounds or explanation for love.

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