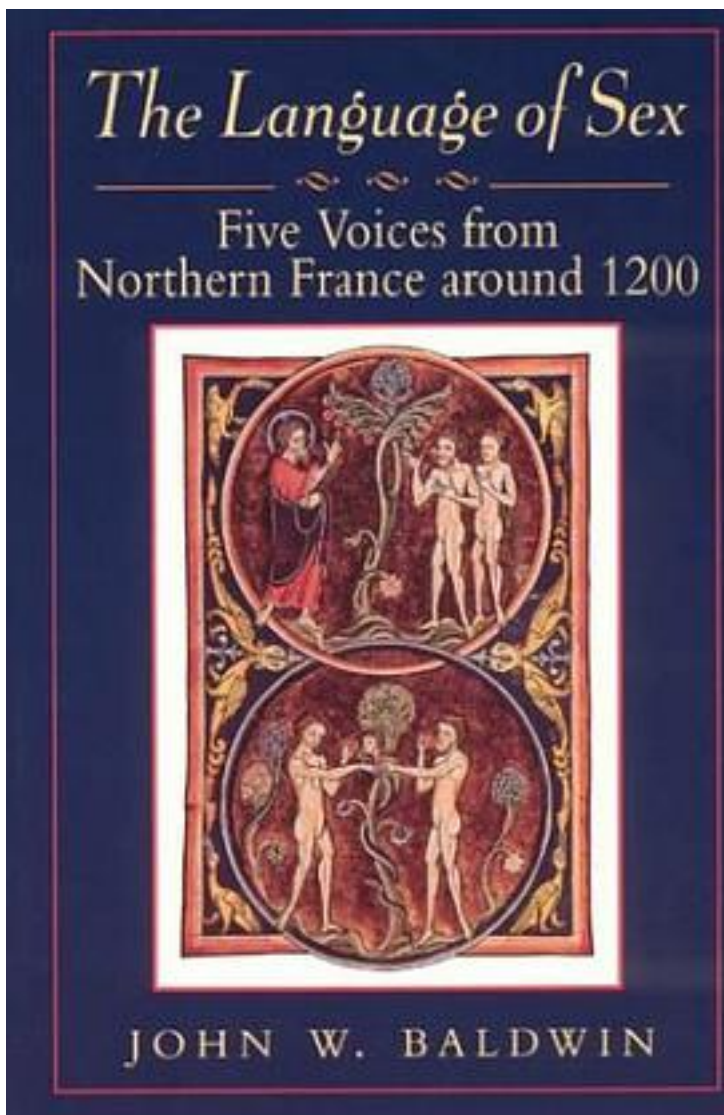


The Language of Sex



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This study brings together widely divergent discourses to fashion a comprehensive picture of sexual language and attitudes at a particular time and place in the medieval world. John Baldwin introduces five representative voices from the turn of the 12th century in northern France: Pierre the Chanter speaks for the theological doctrine of Augustine; the Prose Salernitan Questions, for the medical theories of Galen; Andre the Chaplain, for the Ovidian literature of the schools; Jean Renart, for the contemporary romances; and Jean Bodel, for the emerging voices of the fabliaux. Baldwin juxtaposes their views on a range of essential subjects, including social position, the sexual body, desire and act, and procreation. The result is a dialogue of how they agreed or disagreed with, ignored, imitated, or responded to each other at a critical moment in the development of European ideas about sexual desire, fulfillment, morality and gender. These spokesmen allow us into the discussion of sexuality inside the church and schools of the clergy, in high and popular culture of the laity. This heterogeneous discussion also offers a glimpse into the construction of gender specific to this moment, when men and women enjoyed equal status in sexual matters, if nowhere else. Taken together, these voices extend their reach, encompass their subject, and point to a centre where social reality lies. By articulating reality at its varied depths, this study takes its place alongside groundbreaking works by James Brundage, John Boswell, and Leah Otis in extending the understanding of sexuality and sexual behaviour in the Middle Ages.

作者介绍:

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