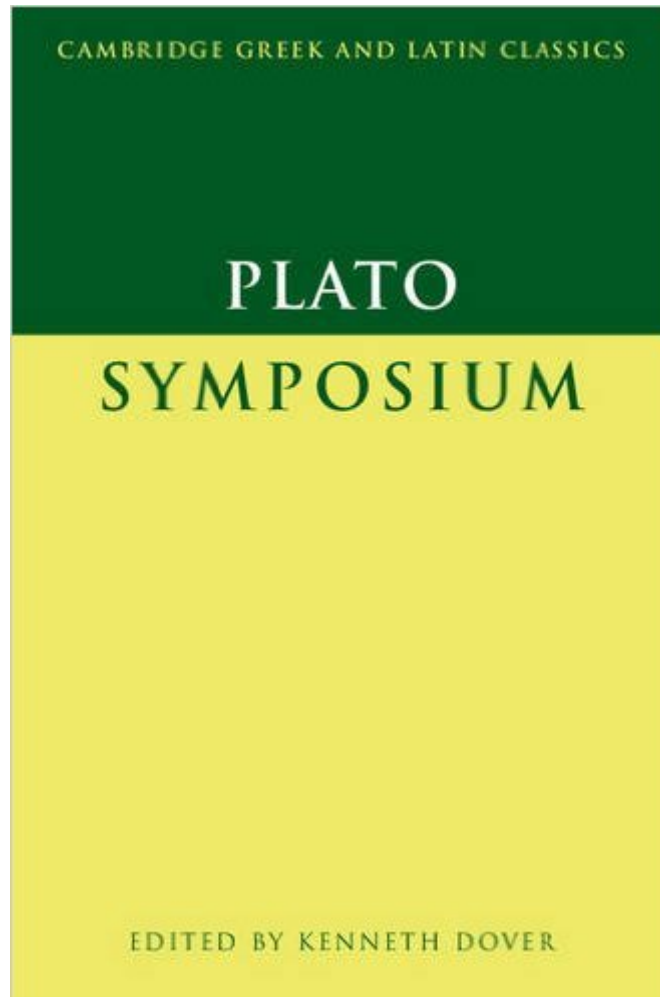


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Plato: Symposium (Cambridge Greek And Latin Classics) (Greek Edition)



Synopsis

Plato's Symposium is the most literary of all his works and one which all students of classics are likely to want to read whether or not they are studying Plato's philosophy. But the reader does need help in appreciating both the artistry and the arguments, and in comprehending the social and cultural background against which the 'praise of love' is delivered. Sir Kenneth Dover provides here a sympathetic and modern edition of the kind that is long overdue. It consists of an introduction, the Greek text accompanied by a very abbreviated critical apparatus, and a commentary on the text which is intended to elucidate the Greek, to make the philosophical argument intelligible, and to relate the content of what is said to the concepts and assumptions of contemporary morality and society. An edition for students of Greek in universities and the upper forms of schools.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Plato's "Symposium" will always be read because there will always be people who question the nature of Love. Agathon's dinner party is the scene of a conversation between a small group of men, who go around the table offering their views on Love. What does Love mean to us to-day? Reading over the responses of the dinner-guests and their host, we find the same range of answers in Ancient Greece that we are likely to find now. Phaedrus and Pausanias are utilitarians and materialists. Phaedrus looks at love between people and a proto-Burkean love for government and state. Pausanias complicates the argument, saying that there are two different kinds of love, one

which is common and one which is heavenly - yet still oriented towards the real and the tangible. Eryximachus is a proto-Swedenborg, trying to reconcile or harmonize the two kinds of love. The jewels of Plato's "Symposium" are Aristophanes and Socrates. Aristophanes gives us the profoundly moving depiction of Love as a fundamental human need, a desire for completion. For a writer of comedy, whose aim as an art form is forgiveness and acceptance, Aristophanes's explanation is no surprise, though its depth is amazing. While women are generally discounted throughout the "Symposium," not only does Socrates, as we might expect, completely astound his audience (both inside the book and out) with his progressively logical and ascendant view of Love, but he also does it through the voice of a woman, Diotima. When we realize that Socrates is a character in this fiction, and that his words originate in a woman, the egalitarianism and wisdom of Plato the author truly shines forth, like the absolute beauty he claims as the ultimate goal of Love. Was Plato a feminist? I don't know.

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