



God of Many Names: Play, Poetry and Power in Hellenic Thought, From Homer to Aristotle

Mihai I. Spariosu

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Tracing the interrelationship among play, poetic imitation, and power to the Hellenic world, Mihai I. Spariosu provides a revisionist model of cultural change in Greek antiquity. Challenging the traditional and static distinction made between archaic and later Greek culture, Spariosu's perspective is grounded in a dialectical understanding of values whose dominance depends on cultural emphasis and which shifts through time.

Building upon the scholarship of an earlier volume, *Dionysus Reborn*, Spariosu here continues to draw on Dionysus—the “God of many names,” of both poetic play and sacred power—as a mythical embodiment of the two sides of the classical Greek mentality. Combining philosophical reflection with close textual analysis, the author examines the divided nature of the Hellenic mentality in such primary canonic texts as the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, the most well-known of the Presocratic fragments, Euripides' *Bacchae*, Aristophanes' *The Frogs*, Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, and Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Politics*.

Spariosu's model illuminates the many of the most enduring questions in contemporary humanistic study and addresses modern questions about the nature of the interrelation of poetry, ethics, and politics.

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