

L. BRISSON: *Einführung in die Philosophie des Mythos. Vol. 1: Antike, Mittelalter und Renaissance* (Translated by A. Russer) (Die Philosophie). Pp. x + 242. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996. Paper, DM 45/Sw. frs. 45/öS 351. ISBN: 3-534-10112-X.

B. leads his reader through 2000 years of Greek myth in the reception of philosophers and philosophically minded scholars. His analytical table of contents and indexes (loci; names; concepts) permit one to use this book for reference. B.'s *aperçus* of periods and persons are most convenient, and his quotations of some late antique and Byzantine writers bring many of us as close to them as we shall ever come. He does not provide a bibliography, but his notes, of discreet quantity and length, indicate the state of opinion, with a preference for French authorities.

The twentieth-century American Joseph Campbell was not the first, it turns out, to propound a univocal world mythology as a means to self-fulfillment. Numenius of Apamea (second century C.E.), a forerunner of Plotinus, taught that a single, unalterable truth had been revealed in Homer, Pythagoras, and Plato, and also to the Egyptians, Persians, and Jews. This truth, however, was hidden, and like the mysteries, accessible only to a select few. It only remained for his successors to work in the Chaldaean Oracles and the Orphica. Allegorizing already in the fifth century B.C.E. a way to interpret myth persisted in the School of Athens, which was so successful that Justinian shut its pagan doors in 529. Then the scene shifted to Byzantium, and, with the immigration of Byzantine scholars, to Italy. The rest is Western history. B. has a long chapter on the Renaissance. What of the Christian Middle Ages in the West? They receive only a skimpy chapter, probably because they cannot show much but Euhemerism (most conspicuously in the *Origines* of Isidore of Seville) to put under the heading of philosophy.

This heading indeed leaves the reader with large questions. Was there ever really any philosophy of myth, or was there only critique, on the one hand, and allegorizing accommodation on the other? Even when those whom we would consent to call philosophers are referring to myth, are they talking about myth or about something else? Robert Lamberton, under the title *Homer the Theologian*, covers much of the same material as B. (Chapters 5–6). Myth as narrative, myth as a form of thought, myth as difference in sameness as it deploys itself in various works in various times—these are not problems that anyone in B.'s large cast of characters felt compelled to face. For them, myth was theology, and also cosmogony, cosmography, and psychology, in short, whatever their philosophic systems could use.

Perhaps it is unfair to raise these questions. B. was contributing to a series of introductions (*Die Philosophie: Einführungen in Gegenstand, Methoden und Ergebnisse ihrer Disziplinen*), and he has written a handy one. He has spared himself no, us much, labour. (The work is also published in French as *Introduction à la philosophie du mythe* [Paris, 1996]; ISSN: 0249-7913.)

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LOWELL EDMUNDS

I. M. RUUD: *Minoan Religion: a Bibliography*. (Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology and Literature, Pocket-book 141.) Pp. vi + 124. Jonsered: Paul Åstrom, 1996. Paper. ISBN: 91-7081-162-8.

Given the current level of interest in Minoan religion, it is appropriate that R. should have revised *Minoan Religion: A Bibliography*, which was originally published in 1980. This is not a supplement but a complete revision and covers monographs, journal articles, chapters of monographs, essays and articles from collections, and doctoral dissertations published between 1900 and 1995. Whereas the previous version of the bibliography was simply arranged alphabetically by author, this edition is subdivided into fourteen sections, namely bibliographies, general works and introductory sources, cult places, cult practices, cult symbols and equipment, deities, epigraphic evidence, iconography/seals and sealings, priesthood and sacral kingship, relation to Greek and Mycenaean religion, relation to other religions, relation to Thera, sacral animals and demons, and tombs and burial customs.

Since there are 950 entries, 520 more than in the 1980 edition, this thematic arrangement is sensible. Of course some of the entries could, and possibly should, have been listed in other sections, and more use might have been made of cross-references. It helps that there is a subject as