

dialogue (*JHS* 119 [1999], 1–16). Nevertheless, it is delightful to see a new publication of this relatively neglected Platonic dialogue.

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H.-G. NESSELRATH: *Platon und die Erfindung von Atlantis*. (Lectio Teubneriana 11.) Pp. 62. Munich and Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 2002. Cased, €18. ISBN: 3-598-77560-1.

The monograph, no. 11 in the Lectio Teubneriana series, originated as a public lecture on the celebrated Atlantis narratives in Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias*. Professor Nesselrath, who has already treated Theopompus' adaptation of the myth, here examines the delusions of Atlantis-searchers and the likely sources and purpose of Plato's fiction. That it is fiction he has no doubt, and he has little difficulty in showing that the quest is quite simply impossible: all searchers compromise the data by adjusting details, whether of location, or size, or date, and in so doing lose the right to call what they find 'Plato's Atlantis' (p. 16). (This section draws substantially on P. Jordan, *The Atlantis Syndrome* [Stroud, 2001].) He also tackles the 'chain of transmission', arguing that the silence of contemporaries, especially Isocrates (p. 21), shows that the myth was either unknown or not taken seriously. His treatment of Plato's sources is equally convincing: they run from Carthaginian sea-tales in Herodotus to cities recently lost in Greece to flood and tidal-wave, and the obvious paradigms of Persia vs. Greece and Carthage vs. Syracuse. The argument becomes somewhat shakier when we come to context. Ignoring obvious connexions with Syracuse, the author focuses on a tradition in Proclus that Plato was accused of plagiarizing the institutions of his *Republic* from Egypt, and devised the 'Ur-Athen' myth in response. (How would an unconvincing fiction satisfy critics?) Also not quite cogent is the suggestion that the fate of the aggressive sea-power Atlantis served as a warning to contemporary Athens—hardly a threat to anyone after the collapse of the second confederacy. In the final section he deals very sensibly with the mystery of Plato's failure to finish. By the time he reached *Critias* 121c the narrative had got out of hand, shifting attention to the hubris of Atlantis and changing the role of 'Ur-Athen' from the historical expression of the ideal to the instrument of divine justice. It could no longer serve Plato's purpose, so he abandoned it and embarked on the *Laws*. Perhaps a few loose ends: Plato's attitude to myth and its relation to truth had clearly changed (*Tim.* 22c–d; cf. *Politicus* 269b, *Laws* 3.677a–d); the author should have noted (pp. 22–3) that it is Socrates himself (*Tim.* 26e) who endorses the truth of *Critias*' *logos*; curiously, no attempt is made to examine the role of the *Timaeus* in the plan, or the discrepancies over the ideal state between *Timaeus/Critias* and the *Republic*. These, however, are minor flaws in a valuable and entertaining discussion.

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J. J. CLEARY, G. M. GURTLER (edd.): *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy. Volume XVII, 2001*. Pp. xx + 291. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002. Paper, US\$46. ISBN: 90-04-12687-2 (90-04-12688-0 hbk).

One of the pleasures of reading this stimulating volume is that it gives one a sense of the range of topics in ancient philosophy that scholars are currently pursuing. After a discussion of the new Empedocles papyrus, we move into Plato's mereology, current debates in Aristotle's ethics and logic, Hellenistic psychotherapy, and Neoplatonic commentaries on henology, all of which are illuminated wherever possible by modern philosophical perspectives. Harte's reflections on mereology are a fine example of this virtue, providing a fresh analysis of the famous argument at *Theaetetus* 203–6 about knowable complexes comprised of unknowable elements, in the light of David Lewis's theories. Similarly bracing analysis is to be found in Crivelli's discussion of whether Aristotelian logic can accommodate empty terms, focusing on *Topics* 4.6, *Categories* 4, and *De Interpretatione* 8. C. argues that Aristotle can accommodate them, and in a way that is perfectly consistent with his general correspondence theory of truth. This conclusion leads C. into a comparison with Russellian logic. Still on Aristotle, Jennifer Whiting turns to the ethics

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