to particular pleasures, is here underpinned by yearning of a different order altogether: for a world unstructured by the subtleties of Plato's metaphysics, a Presocratic cosmos built on 'chance motions and unstructured energies of phusis' (p. 46; cf. p. 58). Allied with the 'primordialist' outlook to which this gives rise comes an ugly, Nietzschean ethics as well: the 'spontaneous passion for mastery' (p. 47), for tyrannical self-assertion in an inherently selfish universe. Plato, of course, is tough on tyranny, and tough on the causes of tyranny—but there is a limit to what he can do. In the *Symposium*, he attempts to refine *eros* into something more 'sober' (p. 174) and ultimately, he thinks, more satisfying. But by the time he wrote the *Republic*, he had come to believe that things are not even this simple: for *eros* in the *Republic* has a natural ally in *thumos*, which shares its primordialist leanings (indeed, takes from it its direction towards 'specific substantive objects', p. 116). In this case, Plato's only solution to the problem of tyranny is to break the bond between these two, to realign *thumos* with reason and employ it against its old ally. But while this may work in the short term, it can never be a perfect remedy: *thumos* remains a hearty type, easily bored in the company of the intellect; and its fidgeting ultimately causes the breakdown of the order so carefully contrived. Indeed, the inevitability of this breakdown leads N. to argue that the *Republic* as a whole (and at least *qua* work of political philosophy) is purely 'heuristic, pointing to likely obstacles in the way of achieving . . . pure synonymity between reason and convention' (p. 160).

Strauss's history of philosophy was explicitly a means to an end, and judgement of it must take this mitigating circumstance into account. N., however, relies more directly on the historico-philosophical validity of his reconstruction; and he fails, in my view, to justify the exuberant pessimism he brings to Plato's texts. If N. emphasizes, in theory at least, the 'doubleness' of *thumos*, in practice he gives little space to Plato's overwhelmingly positive assessment of its rôle; and he may be right to think that there is a sinister portrait of Eros somewhere in Plato's attic, but is wrong to ignore altogether the real erotic charge which brings life and cheer to Plato's own positive philosophy—not just in the *Symposium* either. To suggest that mathematics might be 'arid' (cf. p. 168), and quite generally to work with a distinction between the dusty, 'sober', and cerebral concerns of the intellect on the one hand, and the passionate urges of *thumos* and *eros* on the other, is simply to ignore Plato's view of what it is like to do philosophy. But I do not, in the end, move these as reasons not to read the book. For one thing, the aspects of Platonic psychology exaggerated by N. (not least the rôle of *thumos*) are aspects generally underplayed or ignored in more conventional literature, and deserve their turn. For another, *Ruling Passion* is a fast-paced, action-packed read: as stimulating and provoking as it is unlikely to meet with universal agreement.

University of Durham GEORGE BOYS-STONES

PLATO'S ATLANTIS AND THE EXPLODING PLANET

A. F. Alford: *The Atlantis Secret. A Complete Decoding of Plato's Lost Continent*. With a Foreword by C. Gill. Pp. vii + 541. Walsall: Eridu Books, 2001. Paper, £18. ISBN: 0-9527994-1-3.

The reader of this book first encounters Poseidon, his eyes blazing with red rage,

© The Classical Association, 2003

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.1.56 Published online by Cambridge University Press

standing before an angry sea lashed by the lightning reflected in his eyes. The sub-title and the foreword by Christopher Gill are reassuring to a reader startled by the cover and facing still another book revealing the historical and geological truth of Plato's *Atlantikos Logos* (told in the *Timaeus* prologue and *Critias*). Attempts to locate the lost 'continent' have just about covered the entire globe, even as they have neglected the Atlantic. The classicist reader of *The Atlantis Secret* can rest assured. Alford takes the side of the 'scholars' in their Titanomachy with the 'Atlantis-hunters' and states, as many scholars have, the difficulties confronting the many attempts to discover the lost island or 'continent' of Atlantis either in the depths of the Atlantic or elsewhere. His skepticism is timely. About a decade ago, Atlantis was discovered in the Arctic (*The Sun*, 16 April 1991); and only a year later Atlantis was moved to Troy (in Eberhard Zannger's *The Flood from Heaven: Deciphering the Atlantis Legend* [New York, 1992]).

But the alliance with scholarly skepticism in this war is soon abandoned. A declaration of this desertion is apparent in A.'s shift to the appellation 'academics' to describe his sometime allies (p. 264). Like Zannger, A. adopts the rôle and rhetoric of a hierophant (most evident in the aretalogy in praise of his hypothesis on p. 352). The words 'decoded', 'cipher', 'allegory', 'myth', 'revealed', 'the truth', and (distasteful to me) 'the final solution' describe his approach which is to show at great length that Near Eastern mythology and the Greek myths and cults influenced by it are symbolic representations of a cosmic event that occurred in the dark backwood and abyss of time: the explosion of a planet that plunged its inhabitants into the deep recesses of the earth from which they emerged into the light of day, not as matter but as invisible souls, or what he calls the invisible *daimones* of the Olympian gods. This is the EPH (Exploded Planet Hypothesis), often stamped as established truth by the abbreviation QED (and prepared for in Alford's *When the Gods Came Down: The Catastrophic Roots of Religion Revealed* [London, 2000]).

A.'s lessons in comparative mythology point us away from Greece to the East. Walter Burkert and M. L. West have already turned our heads to Anatolia and Mesopotamia. Now we are shown that Hittite, Hurrian, Sumerian, and Akkadian texts reveal in mythical terms an awareness of the 'cataclysmic' event of a planet exploding and raining fire, water, stones, and gods down into the recesses of the earth. Plato, by this account, adopted this history rendered symbolically by myth, and in his 'true history' (*Timaeus* 20D) of the war between the prehistoric worlds of Atlantis and Athens cast the myth into his own symbolic terms. Decode these and Athens stands for the golden race of an exploded planet hurled, like Hephaestus (or Mulciber), from heaven; Atlantis stands for both the Underworld and a celestial island that was home to another divine race cast down like Milton's Satan.

> from morn
> to noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
> a summer's day; and with the setting sun
> dropped from the zenith like a falling star
> on Lemnos th'Aégean isle. Thus they relate . . .
> (Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 1.742–6)

As Milton concludes his description of the fall of Satan in the image of Homer's Hephaestus, he pulls us up short: 'Thus they relate'. The EPH is A.'s myth.

A.'s use of comparative mythology encourages us undertake another kind of comparative study and to look not only to the East but also nearer to home, and to Herodotus' description of Hecataeus' interview with a priest at Egyptian Thebes and

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.1.56 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the palace of Deiokes at Ekbatana (*Histories* 2.143 and 1.96–9). These passages seem to inspire the meeting Plato stages betwen Solon (to whom we owe his *Atlantikos logos*) and the priest of Neith at Sais, the statues of the kings of Atlantis and their wives displayed at the approach to the Temple to Poseidon in Atlantis (*Critias* 116E recalling the 345 *piromies* of Herodotus 2.143), and the seven ring walls investing the central sanctuary of Poseidon on Atlantis, which replicate the seven walls circling the palace of Deiokes.

Duke University DISKIN CLAY

XENOPHON'S *SYMPOSIUM*

B. HUSS: *Xenophons* Symposion. *Ein Kommentar*. (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 125.) Pp. 493. Stuttgart and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1999. ISBN: 3-519-07674-8.

Symposium opens by saying one should study not only the serious acts of *kaloikagathoi* but also τὰ ἐν ταῖς παιδιαῖς. Huss rightly takes this seriously—and gives 493 pages of commentary on barely thirty-seven pages of Greek. Despite which, there is an exiguous *index rerum* (under three pages!) and no *index locorum*. Inter-relation with earlier Socratic literature preoccupies H., but the reader has no quick route to putative examples. Instead s/he must scan a table for Plato and pp. 18–25 ('Das *Symposion* als pastiche, sein Autor als reiner Literat') for the rest: the latter does not claim to register everything relevant and misses material on 66–7, 123, 142, 364, 398. Pursuing claims about Old Comedy (e.g. 197) without reading the entire text is even harder.

There is much textual criticism, with full reports on old editions, conjectures, and inaccurate assignment thereof. Even so, lists of editorial decisions are sometimes incomplete (e.g. p. 326, *ad* 5.7), and criteria of selection unclear. (And why must one consult *ICS* 22 [1997], 45–6, on 2.1, 6.9, 8.1, when the exposition could have been resumed here?) Analysis of problems is lucid, solutions not always mandatory: αὐτῶν for αὐτῷ in 1.7 is unnecessary—even harmful (the important thing is that everyone went to dinner, not that two sub-groups were differently prepared)—and even if ἰσουμένου is right in 8.1, Ast's ἀνθρώπῳ is no obvious improvement. H. says frequent papyri/MSS divergence 'erweckt generelle Skepsis gegenüber der mittelalterlichen Überlieferung'. The facts are unsupportive. *P.Mon.Gr.Inv.* 160 differed wrongly from MSS at 3.9–10. *P.Antin.* 1.26 had a right reading in 4.53 (with many MSS) and a wrong one in 4.54. In 4.64 it variously resembles MSS in a passage requiring emendation and supplies μοι (rightly) and ἔτι (unnecessarily). Its corrupt text in 5.1 may reflect something different from MSS tradition, while at 5.2 it adds an unnecessary τις. In ten cases in *P.Lond.* 152 and *P.Giss.* 1 in 8.6, 8, 16, 17, I see two improvements on MSS readings.

Symposium—written post-365 in Athens—was, like other Xenophontic Socratica, produced by a 'literary' Socratic, using a Socrates 'spät geboren und ausschliesslich aus Sokratesliteratur geschaffen' to express *kaloskagathos* values. Distinctive features are the interplay of ἔρως/καλοκαγαθία and σπουδή/παιδιά (proper grasp of which rebuts complaints about the structural inadequacies), a scenario which effaces nasty realities, and X.'s sense of humour. (The 'laughing Xenophon' appears more sharply in *AJP* 120 [1999], 381–409, which summarizes much in the commentary introduction and, through analysis of widespread blindness to a plain joke in 2.19, makes vivid the

© The Classical Association, 2003

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.1.56 Published online by Cambridge University Press