



Philosophos: Plato's Missing Dialogue

Mary Louise Gill

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Plato famously promised to complement the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* with another work on a third sort of expert, the philosopher--but we do not have this final dialogue. Mary Louise Gill argues that Plato promised the *Philosopher*, but did not write it, in order to stimulate his audience and encourage his readers to work out, for themselves, the portrait it would have contained. The *Sophist* and *Statesman* are themselves members of a larger series starting with the *Theaetetus*, Plato's investigation of knowledge, and the whole series relies on the *Parmenides*, the second part of which presents a philosophical exercise, introduced as the first step in a larger philosophical program. Gill contends that the dialogues leading up to the missing *Philosopher*, though they reach some substantive conclusions, are philosophical exercises of various sorts designed to train students in dialectic, the philosopher's method; and that a second version of the *Parmenides* exercise, closely patterned on it, spans parts of the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* and brings the philosopher into view. This is the exercise about being, the subject-matter studied by Plato's philosopher. Plato hides the pieces of the puzzle and its solution in plain sight, forcing his students (and modern readers) to dig out the pieces and reconstruct the project. Gill reveals how, in finding the philosopher through the exercise, the student becomes a philosopher by mastering his methods. She shows that the target of Plato's exercise is internally related to its pedagogical purpose.

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