ATLANTIS
PILLARS OF HERACLES
(STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR)
GARDEN OF THE HESPERIDES
CONSTANTINE
Christopher Columbus: famous explorer

by Mary Dodson Wade

Illustrated by Rod Whigham and Charles Barnett III
Situs Insula Atlantis, a Mari obiis absorpte ex mente Egyptianorum et Platonis descriptio.
Plato Devised Atlantis Myth, Scholar's New Study Indicates

THE LOST continent of Atlantis! How many times has human imagination been stirred by thoughts of a hidden land in the Atlantic, suddenly engulfed by the sea in a terrible day of earthquake and flood? Was there ever such a place, or was Atlantis a myth?

So much has been written arguing for and against Plato’s interpretation of the story, that Prof. W. A. Heidel, Greek scholar of Wesleyan University in Connecticut, has published a book, "The Myths of the Egyptians," in which he attempts to give weight to the story of Atlantis.

Studying Plato’s dialogues, where the Atlantis story is told, Heidel concludes that the story of Atlantis, as told by Plato, was fiction devised by Plato. Greek pride caused him to put in some details, and there was an air of playful irony in the telling.

The philosopher Plato was teaching that the perfect republic would function in the crisis of war. To make the argument real, he asked his audience to support the citizens of the ideal republic to be their venerable ancestors in a very ancient country, then he outlined the story of primitive Atlantians 9,000 years before, engaged in trade with people from the great island of Atlantis, and as an epilogue he told of sudden disaster, which plunged Atlantis into the depths of the sea.

What has misled scholars into thinking that Plato might be talking about a real country, says Prof. Heidel, was Plato’s statement that he got his facts about Atlantis from the Egyptian priests. Egypt, to the ancient world, was the land of the oldest wisdom, the priests were the great authorities. But, Prof. Heidel says, there is no evidence that Plato attributed Atlantis to the Egyptians merely to give weight to his words and a touch of realism.

Like accomplished creators of fiction in all ages, says the professor, “he multiplies the circumstances which give verisimilitude to his story.”

Moreover, Plato seems to have enjoyed taking a dig at the Egyptian wisdom and antiquity. For he proudly makes his own Athens a thousand years older than an Egyptian town in the narrative. And he tells of the struggles between the Greeks and the conquering armies from Atlantis, he says that Greece defeated the invaders and liberated all the inhabitants of Europe and Africa.

Since Plato is the only writer of antiquity who refers to Atlantis, the solution of the Atlantis problem is most likely to be found in his direction, Prof. Heidel believes. As in the children’s game of hide-and-seek, the seeker would seem to be "warming up" when investigating Greek history and geography, in order to see what ideas were borrowed and used to make a "lost continent." And, considering that Plato had no modern knowledge of the world’s geologic history, and could scarcely have held theories of land bridges in the Mesozoic era, the Atlantians who approach the problem geologically are "cold"—so far as their chances of explaining Plato’s Atlantis are concerned.

Animal Psychology

Plato Devised Atlantis Myth, Scholar’s New Study Indicates

ANIMAL PSYCHOLOGY

Animals Know Phonograph Voices of Own Species

"HIS MASTER’S Voice" is not just a bit of clever advertising; animals do recognize the voices of their own and other species when played on a phonograph record. So reports Prof. Bastian Schmid of Munich in the German scientific publication Die/Ernianan.

Prof. Schmid tried a phonograph record of a mewing cat on a fox terrier that hated cats. As soon as he heard the voice of his pet antipathy he tore around the room hunting for it, and when he found the phonograph horn he tried to dive into it. The same record was then played on a cat, which listened for a moment and then responded with the same melancholy meowing.

Another record, of a hen cackling just after she had laid an egg, was tried on a farmyard rooster. He responded immediately with the same egotistic cackling that a henyard sultan sets up when one of his wives has boasted her laying record by one unit.

Prof. Schmid also tried a record of a watchdog’s barking on the dog himself. After a moment of astonishment the dog began to bark in reply, but in a different tone. A young ape, hearing a record of his own voice, also treated it as the voice of a stranger. Prof. Schmid is inclined to believe that animals will recognize their own voices as belonging to their own species, but not as belonging to themselves.
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