

Postscript: Atlantis' connection with Freemasonry

I have been very definite in my choice of leaving this chapter as a postscript. My reason is a simple one. Without having worked through the previous discussions that has preceded this chapter, I am afraid that it would be all too easy to merely scan the chapter heading and dismiss its content as nonsense with very little effort at all. However, in its own way, I intend that this chapter will actually bring neatly together the threads of the argument that I have argued and developed in the previous chapters, into a fitting conclusion.

First things first – Freemasonry's link with Atlantis is via a *philosophical thread* not an historical one. Before we move any further, let me emphasise that I personally do not believe that the island continent of Atlantis ever existed, outside of Plato's mind.

Yes! For those who may not be aware, Plato was the *first person* to write a detailed description of this legendary island continent. Scholars throughout the centuries have argued (convincingly at times and less convincingly at others) for and against the existence of the fabled island continent of Atlantis. He actually wrote two dialogues that deal with Atlantis.

The first of these is known as *Timaeus*. If you look closely at Raphael's *The School of Athens*, you will see that Plato is carrying in his hands a copy of *Timaeus*. The second work is really only a fragmentary dialogue of less than 20 pages which is known as *Critias*.

We will now address two matters that are often untouched in any discussion of Atlantis. The first point is that whenever Plato discusses his utopian civilization of Atlantis, his purpose is to subtly work at developing his concept of the philosopher-king. In the context of those two dialogues alone, the story of Atlantis is meaningless without linking it to his own creation of the philosopher-king. He introduced us to the philosopher-king in *Republic*, and the *Seventh and Eighth Letters*, finally re-thinking his original application of the concept in *The Laws*.

As I see it, in both *Timaeus* and *Critias*, Plato was using his creative skills as a dramatist, taking full advantage of the colourful *Histories* that Herodotus had written not so many years earlier and then presented a story that spoke with motivating enthusiasm to an Athenian audience which was still reeling from a crushing defeat at the hands of Sparta. This was the cultural environment within which Plato wove his story of Atlantis.

Another point that is worthwhile emphasising at this point in time is that Plato invented *three* utopian civilisations of which Atlantis is only one. In *Republic*, (where he first discussed the concept of philosopher-rulers), these philosopher-rulers were a fundamental component of a *thought-experiment* that he invited us to share with him – a thought-experiment working in a city that he named *Kallipolis* – a Greek word meaning *beautiful* or *noble city*).

As an aside, (to Australian and New Zealand readers in particular) the name *Kallipolis* should hold special

A modern interpretation of an old story...

Orpheus seemed to read his mind.

"For example, I have a strong foreboding about this place. Sometime, perhaps hundreds of years from now, men from far away will disembark here - from ships made of metal - to be cut down like stalks of grass by a scythe. But I can't say when precisely. I don't even know the name of the straits we're sailing now".

Jason shrugged. "I can tell you that... We're in the Dardanelles. There lies a place they call Gallipoli. But Orpheus, really - ships of steel - are you serious?"

Nigel Spivey, "Jason and the Argonauts" from Songs on Bronze: The Greek Myths Made Real (2005)

significance. Kallipolis was the name given to a town situated at the Dardanelles that was the scene of a beach-head assault by the army corps of both nations on the morning of April 25, 1915. Because the name was difficult to pronounce it was reduced to Gallipoli.

In his largest (and unfinished work) – *The Laws*, Plato described yet another utopian city which he called *Magnesia*. These Platonic cities represented stages in the development of his own thinking throughout his life. Whenever we refer to a city as “utopian”, we are usually referring to it as an “ideal” city (and most commonly from a sociological or political perspective). The word *utopia* itself is a Greek word meaning, “nowhere”. Incidentally, Samuel Butler in his 1871 work *Erewhon*, made a play on the word utopia and its English meaning in its title. (*Erewhon* is the word “nowhere”, spelt *backwards*)!

Having made these preparatory remarks, let's begin to work our way through the *philosophical* thread connecting modern Freemasonry with an island continent that existed (according to Plato), some 9,000 years *before his time* and was called Atlantis.

The War between Athens and Atlantis: Its relationship with the War between Athens and Sparta

It will help us to understand the *context* in which Plato elaborated the story of Atlantis if we stop for a moment to consider that in some respects, the era in which Plato lived, shared many resemblances with our own in these early years of the 21st century.

The early decades of the fifth century BCE had seen tumultuous turns of events in political, sociological, religious and intellectual arenas. Athens (a relatively small city-state) had led a coalition of neighbouring city-states to repel the forces of the Persian Empire – the largest that the world had ever known to that point in time. Athens succeeded in defeating the Persians in not one, but *two* attempts to invade what we now recognise as the Greek mainland. The first invasion had been spearheaded by Darius I in 490 BCE while the second Persian invasion took place ten years later under Xerxes in 480-479 BCE. The First Persian Invasion ended with the Persian's defeat at the Battle of Marathon. This battle is memorable for a story that most people have heard – the story of how a young man named Pheidippides (*before the days of telephony*) ran the distance from Marathon to Athens to confirm Persia's defeat – dying only moments after announcing the news. The modern Olympic event called the marathon pays tribute to these circumstances.

The turning point for Persia's defeat in its second invasion attempt was at the naval battle off the coast of Salamis. Herodotus records that Xerxes' forces in the Second Persian Invasion amounted to a critical mass of 5, 283,220 – an invasion force such as the world had never seen before. In the face of these numbers, it was *never* expected that Athens had any hope of defeating the Persians. Managing a loose alliance of Greek city states was not easy. Many actually defected to the Persian side believing that the Athenian-led coalition would end only in disaster. These defections altered not only military but trade allegiances necessary for Athens to score a decisive victory. The fact that Athens *did* achieve victory in the face of all these odds only increased its self-pride and swelled its confidence in the ability to expand its own colonial interests. The next move that Athens took was to send troops to restore freedom to other Ionian cities located in modern-day Turkey that had once been subject to Persian tyranny. Athens as well as these Ionian cities all shared the same ethnic and cultural origins – something that we have previously discussed.

From 460-429 BCE the statesman Pericles (ca 495-429 BCE), led Athens while it embarked on a series of ambitious capital works programmes (including the building of the Parthenon on the Acropolis). Pericles was an astute leader. These building works revitalized Athens' economy, improved its employment rate and strengthened the confidence of the Athenian community in its powerbase as well as its expansion plans. In many respects, this period vibrates with the same confident, economic and political buoyancy enjoyed by the USA following the Second World War

(1939-45). The other “super-power” that had assisted Athens in its campaigns against Persia had been Sparta. Following Persia's defeat, Sparta watched with growing alarm as she saw evidence of Athens' aggressive and intrusive imperialist campaigns. A “cold war” between the two developed that draws parallels to the era following the end of the Second World War until the Soviet Republic dissolved in 1991. Tensions between Athens and Sparta continued to escalate until both powers reached an agreement in 446 BCE by the signing of a treaty that was known as the *Thirty Years' Peace*. However, the peace treaty lasted no longer than 15 years - ending abruptly in 431 BCE with full scale hostilities breaking out between Athens and Sparta.

By the end of the second year of the war in 430 BCE, a devastating outbreak of plague broke out throughout Athens. The main reason for this has been attributed to a swelling of Athens population due to Spartan incursions in the surrounding rural regions. Thucydides, an Athenian general who took part in fighting the Spartans, recorded its events in a work known as *The History of the Peloponnesian Wars*. In addition to the plague, the city also broke into extremes of lawlessness and reversals of fortune. Pericles, struck with the plague, gathered what little strength of his remained, to make a stirring speech to the Athenians, urging them to show courage in the face of these calamities.

In 421 BCE, a second peace treaty (known as the *Peace of Nicias*) was signed between Sparta and Athens. Once again, this peace was short lived. Further conflicts between city-states of the Greek mainland that had allied themselves to either the Athenian or Spartan side, brought the matter to a conclusive end with the defeat of Athens to Sparta in 404 BCE. Athens – which only a brief half-century earlier, was a super-power of almost mythic proportion was now broken, humiliated (and in the arena of international politics and relations), a power of insignificant influence.

The Persian Wars: Their Influence on the writing of the story of Atlantis

Having briefly covered the chief events of the 5th century BCE that impacted on Plato's writing of the story of Atlantis, we will take a small diversion and similarly investigate the influence of the writings of a Greek historian named Herodotus.

The point that I will emphasise is this: in creating his myth of Atlantis, Plato consciously took an episode related by Herodotus in his *Histories* and embroidered it to serve as a backdrop for his principle of philosopher kings.

For the sake of clarity, I will bullet-point five items that summarise the story of the Greek victory over the Persians that Herodotus related in his *Histories*:

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1. The world's largest and most aggressive super-power (Persia) attempts to invade the *entire* Greek mainland.
 2. Athens – a small city-state leads a military coalition with other city states of Greece in a fight to the death against the Persian force.
 3. A number of Greek city-states that are part of the military coalition, defect to help the Persians. In doing so, they betray Athens.
 4. Against every imaginable odd – the Greek military coalition (under Athens' leadership) repels and defeats the Persians.
 5. Athens restores freedom to Greek cities along the Turkish coast that were once subject to Persia's control.
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The Influence of Plato's Republic on Freemasonry and Masonic Ritual.

These were the events that occurred in the very early years of the 5th century BCE. These were the events that helped to form the Athenian view that as descendants of the original Ionians, they were (in effect) masters of the world. These were the events that helped the Athenians to believe that they were far superior to the Spartans – descendants of the original Dorian settlers and their allies – the luxury-seeking Corinthians. These were the events that made the Athenian defeat to the Spartans and Corinthians at the conclusion of the Peloponnesian Wars so humiliating.

With this in mind, we can temper our “take” on Atlantis by including one subtle but powerful difference. We need to keep in mind the original audience for which the story of Atlantis was originally intended. It was an *Athenian* audience.

Their ears and sensitivities were quick to pick up the bullet-points that we've highlighted. We also need to remember that they were a proud people who had defeated Persia and then found themselves subjects of Sparta. Demotivated and humiliated, when they heard the story of Atlantis, they remembered what they had achieved only two to three generations previously against Persia. When they heard the story of Atlantis, it was something that appealed to their hearts and minds and senses. When they heard the story of Atlantis, it spoke of a *hope* for the future. When they heard the story of Atlantis, they were inspired by its narrative. When they read the story of Atlantis, they were too close to the events of their own time to understand the tale as anything *other than fable* couched in the history of the Persians Wars - the same histories that Herodotus had delivered in the theatres and marketplaces of Athens.

Having set the intellectual stage, Plato now embellished the telling with an *emotional* dimension for their acceptance of his concept of the philosopher-king.

Herodotus' Influence:

In the opening pages of Gore Vidal's novel *Creation*, Herodotus is delivering a history of the Persian Wars to an audience at the Odeon in Athens. What Vidal captures here, is the essence of what probably did take place in the marketplaces and theatres of Athens in the fifth century BCE.

We can speculate that a young Plato *may have been among an audience* listening with intense interest to the drama of events as Herodotus narrated them. We have no historical record that Plato was ever present at a “live” presentation by Herodotus, but there appears little argument that Plato had been inspired by the heroic theme that Herodotus developed and had access to his work. In most particular, Plato appears to have paid specific attention to the description that Herodotus gave of the *visually eccentric* capital city of the Medes – a city known as *Ecbatana* and described by Herodotus in Book 1.98 of his *Histories*.

Herodotus was born about the year 485 BCE by the seaport of Halicarnassus – a town now known as Bodrum in the south west of modern Turkey. The time of his birth coincided with the first Persian incursions into Greek territory and may have been the key to his interest in writing his history of the Persian Wars. The general consensus of opinion is that the *Histories* of Herodotus were written in the 430's BCE and completed about 425 BCE – placing its composition in the early stages of the Peloponnesian War. Little is known of the date of Herodotus' death, but it is commonly believed that he died by 420 BCE – *well before* Athens defeat to Sparta. His life then was placed squarely in the time of the great intellectual, religious and political revolutions that swept through Athens signifying her prominence among Greek city-states following the victory over the Persians.

Reading his *Histories*, we can understand how well-travelled he was. He claims to have journeyed to Egypt and describes at some length, the culture and practices of the Egyptians in Book II. He claims also to have travelled to Scythia (*roughly*, modern day Ukraine) – again exploring the culture of this people in Book IV. Tradition has it that he eventually settled (and probably died) in the Greek colony of Thurii in what is now the Province of Calabria, Italy.

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While he was neither a philosopher nor theologian, Herodotus had imbued his work with a theme that the world's balance is brought back into order by a process of retribution for injustices performed - something that Robin Waterfield notes in the Introduction to his translation of *The Histories* and similarly observed by Charles Freeman in his recent study, *The Greek Achievement*:

Herodotus did not discount the actions of the gods entirely in human affairs (he believed that they punish those like Xerxes, who are guilty of excessive pride, in order, it seems, to bring the cosmos to an ordered balance)...

Throughout the *Histories*, Herodotus interprets historical events from the interplay of human and divine intervention...a perspective that was discounted by his contemporary Thucydides in writing the *History of the Peloponnesian War*:

This history may not be the most delightful to hear, since there is no mythology in it. But those who want to look into the truth of what was done in the past – which, given the human condition, will recur in the future, either in the same fashion or nearly so – those readers will find this History valuable enough...

In any event, Herodotus made his statement of purpose in writing the *Histories* clear in the second sentence of his work – it was “to prevent the traces of human events from being erased by time”. The heroic theme of his work was the inspiring success story of a small Greek city-state against the largest invasion force known to the world at that point in time.

This theme was forefront in Plato's mind when he wrote *Timaeus* and *Critias*. Here he told a parallel history of another successful Athenian victory – it was against the greatest, the most cultured and largest nation that the world had ever known. It was the story of a war against the expansionist policies of the island continent of *Atlantis*.

With our understanding of the events of the Persian Wars, we can now turn to the details that Plato gave of this city by combining the descriptions found in both *Timaeus* and *Critias*.

What did Atlantis look like?

As we indicated earlier, it was an island continent larger in size than Africa and Asia combined and that it was situated in the Atlantic Ocean just outside the Straits of Gibraltar. It was an island rich in minerals (particularly a precious metal known as *oreichalkos* – “which is now only a name to us...(but) ...in that age it was valued only less than gold”. The island itself was a self-sustaining Eden - aromatic plants, pastures, a variety of cereals, and timber was plentiful as were other habitats to sustain a wide diversity of animal life (including elephants).

The peculiarity most evident about the island was its *visual eccentricity*. It was composed of three *circular* rings of land, divided by three *circular* canals of water with bridges that linked each island ring with the next. An interior and exterior wall surrounded each ring of land. This means that in total there were *five* walls and each was made of stone quarried specifically for its distinctive colour. From the most extreme, outer wall and moving inward, their colours were white, then in sequential order - black, then red. The fourth wall was coated in a veneer of bronze while the fifth and innermost wall (surrounding the Acropolis, the Hot and Cold Water Springs and Palace) was fused with tin. The Acropolis itself was covered with *oreichalkos* which “glittered like darting fire”.

To say the least, this is a very fanciful description of a city. In fact, should we have found this description in the writings of Jules Verne or Robert Heinlein, it would hardly seem out of place at all. It *appears* on face value to be a description of a city that is the proud product of the human imagination.

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We know that truth is stranger than fiction. We have demonstrated how Plato used Herodotus to provide a skeletal framework for the Athenian victory against Atlantis. We also saw how Plato adapted Herodotus' concern that the deeds of men and women who lived in the period of the Persian wars would be erased by the effects of time unless they were recorded. For Plato, this became the argument he used to explain why no Athenian was familiar with the story of Athens' defeat of Atlantis. But substantial as they are, these are not the only influences that Plato owes to Herodotus. The main literary influence Plato owes to Herodotus is that of using his description of the Median capital of Ecbatana as the model for Atlantis.

In *Histories* I.98, Herodotus describes the majestic city of Ecbatana as one similarly striking for its *visual eccentricity*. For the sake of convenience, I have bullet-pointed its main features:

- An impregnable stronghold of concentric *circles* of defensive walls
- There were seven walls that encircled the city.
- The innermost walls housed the palace and treasuries.
- The first five walls were painted in specific colours being – white, then black, red, blue and orange.
- The innermost two walls were covered in silver and the last in gold.

As intriguing as these correspondences may be, there is one last piece in the jigsaw puzzle that assists the argument. It is found in a work known as *Epigrams*. By tradition, the work is attributed to Plato. Whether each and every one of these short epigrams was composed by Plato himself is doubtful, however in the context of what we've just discussed, we cannot dismiss Epigram XIII as being wholly spurious. If we assume for the time being that it is directly from Plato's pen, then this epigram functions as the connective tissue within the framework of the preceding argument. The epigram reads:

We once left the sounding waves of the Aegean to lie here amidst the plains of Ecbatana. Fare thee well, renowned Eretria, our former country. Fare thee well, Athens, Euboea's neighbour. Fare thee well, dear Sea.

While there are sufficient parallels between Herodotus' descriptions of Ecbatana with Plato's account of Atlantis, the central issue from the perspective of the argument proposed in this book, is the connection drawing modern Masonic ritual and practice to ancient Greek philosophy – in particular – the philosophy of Plato. Whether Atlantis ever existed in reality or only as an idea, is something that I expect will remain a quest for scientists and historians alike, for centuries to come.

The Setting for the Myth of Atlantis:

As the dialogue of *Timaeus* opens, Socrates meets with Timaeus, Critias and Hermocrates. Timaeus is a wealthy man from Locris in southern Italy – an area renowned as the home ground of the Pythagorean School of philosophy. The character known as Critias is actually Plato's uncle while the fourth person in this dialogue is Hermocrates – a wealthy and educated survivor of the Peloponnesian War. While apparently written some years after *Republic*, *Timaeus* begins with Socrates wanting to summarise the main points belonging to the theme of the ideal society, first discussed in *Republic*. More than anything, he wants to flesh it out, breathe some life into this vision of his utopian model. He wants to better understand how his philosopher-kings would govern such a city - in times of war (as well as peace). The point he develops here is that the character of the philosopher-king needs to be multi-dimensional - able to scale the intellectual and

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emotional range between deep emotional sensitivity to focused, objective, mental toughness. These are minimum requirements for a leader in times of peace as well as war.

...the guardians' souls should have a nature that is both spirited and philosophical to the highest degree, to enable them to be appropriately gentle or harsh as the case may be.

Critias interjects here and offers to relate a story that might achieve Socrates' aim. He claims that it is a story that he heard from *his own* great grandfather – a person known as Solon the lawgiver, when Critias was himself only a small child. It is the story of an epic Athenian victory over the greatest military power ever known to man that took place thousands of years earlier.

Neither Socrates, Timaeus nor Hermocrates have ever heard of this story before and are surprised to be hearing that a story as grand and epic as Critias purports it to be, has no historical record supporting it. At this point, Plato (with subtle cleverness) weaves in a point that Herodotus made in the opening lines of his *Histories* – namely that the epic triumph is unknown to Athenians because these traces of human events had already been erased by time, many, *many* years ago:

The story is that our city (Athens) had performed greats and marvellous deeds in ancient times, which, owing to the passage of time and the destruction of human life, have vanished.

...and again

...an accomplishment that deserves to be known far better than any of her other achievements. But owing to the march of time and the fact that the men who accomplished it have perished, the story has not survived to the present.

Preamble to Critias' Summary of Athens' Victory over Atlantis:

Critias relates how Solon once journeyed to the Egyptian city of Sais in the Nile Delta and was welcomed by the priests who involved him in a number of animated discussions on a range of subjects – one of them in particular being an attempt to calculate the length of time between creation of the first man (Phoroneus) and the Great Flood (as related in the Greek myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha).

Solon was surprised by the priest's quick, but sardonic response. The priest observed that the Greeks have a distinct lack of *historical depth*. Specifically, they exhibit a form of what we could term as historical amnesia because they have consistently lacked the discipline to record their histories. Lacking this, they have substituted *myths* to explain natural phenomena. Here, the priest explained something unknown to Solon. He told him that there was not *one* Great Flood - there had been *many*. The complete, total and utter destruction of the human race has occurred not just once, but humankind has been destroyed at regular intervals throughout history by two main causes – fire and water. Each cycle of destruction has been accompanied by a change in the course of the sun across the sky – a phenomenon which in scientific language would be explained as a change in the earth's polarity.

The priest then continues to explain that while Greeks appear to consider the Egyptian civilization as older than

Moreover, as for wisdom, I'm sure that you can see how much attention our way of life here has devoted to it, right from the beginning. In our study of the world order we have traced all our discoveries...from those divine realities to human levels and we have acquired all the other related disciplines. This is in fact nothing less than the very system of social order that the goddess (Athena) first devised for you when she founded your city...

Timaeus. 24b-c (Trans: Hamilton)

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theirs, Athens is actually the older civilization. In justification, he claims that the Egyptians have historical documents that go back 8,000 years. The priest explains that when both the Athenian and Egyptian civilizations were founded, they each enjoyed the same social system. Throughout this time, the Athenian social system has been in a state of decay, while the Egyptians have maintained it in its original state.

The curious thing about this social system is that in the Egyptian model, people maintained specialist skills and were forbidden to involve themselves, obtain training or education in areas to which their own trade or profession was unrelated.

First, you'll find the class of priests is marked off and separated from the other classes. Next, in the case of the working class, you'll find that each group – the herdsmen, the hunters and the farmers – works independently, without mixing with the others.

The next point that the priest makes, is that Egyptian law stresses the importance of all *disciplines of knowledge* – a point that Plato hammered home in the educational curriculum that he devised for philosopher-kings in Republic – something we understand as the liberal arts and sciences.

If we take a small step back, we can appreciate the skills that Plato demonstrated as a propagandist and marketer of his own theories. Here is an Egyptian priest speaking of an ideal world order (or social structure) where knowledge is used to lead us to divine realities or the throne of God himself. By using the artistic contrivance of a third party expressing the same thing that Plato was promoting, he gives his argument an extra edge of credibility as well as a make-believe historical justification.

We can see the beginnings of the actual ideological origins of a super race – for instance - Athens over Sparta - taking its form in the next words spoken by the priest:

...she (Athena) had chosen the region in which your people were born (Athens) and had discerned that the temperate climate in it throughout the seasons would bring forth men of surpassing wisdom. And, being a lover of both war and wisdom the goddess chose the region that was likely to bring forth men most like herself and founded it first... In fact your laws improved even more, so that you came to surpass all other people in every excellence, as could be expected from those whose begetting and nurture, were divine.

The Victory of Athens over Atlantis:

Combining the narratives given in *Timaeus* and *Critias*, the story of Atlantis follows...

Critias explains that the events of the war between Athens and Atlantis took place 9,000 years before their time (in other words c 9400 BCE). He describes Atlantis as an island situated in the Atlantic Ocean, opposite the Pillars of Hercules (Straits of Gibraltar). It was an island "larger than Libya and Asia put together". (Libya was the name given to the area of explored-Africa at that time). Its empire extended throughout Africa to the borders of Egypt, and extending across Europe to Italy. Atlantis then decided to expand its empire further to incorporate Greece and Egypt and what is now Spain. Athens then showed her might and courage in commanding an offensive consisting of "...an alliance of the Greeks" against the legions of Atlantis. Even when she was deserted by members of this Greek alliance, Athens resisted the Atlantean aggression single-handedly and achieved undisputed triumph thereafter liberating all countries that had been subjugated under Atlantis' tyranny.

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It is easy to see now how Plato had adapted the six bullet points that he carefully chose from Herodotus' *Histories* to craft a myth of Atlantis that serves to achieve one end (and one alone) – support his vision of the philosopher-king.

The conclusion of the tale is story-telling at its best. Plato relates through Critias that in the midst of this euphoria of victory and within a 24 hour period alone, earthquakes and floods of unprecedented intensity swallowed up not only the entire island continent of Atlantis, but all the legions of Athens as well.

This natural catastrophe He emphasised that this natural catastrophe was the third *before* the Great Flood.

Why was Athens able to defeat Atlantis?

The answer to this question is the basis of the philosophical link between the story of Atlantis and modern Freemasonry.

Critias (relating the Egyptian priest's story further), argues that the god Hephaestos and his sister Athena, were given control of Greece and imbued it with the stamp of their character – with knowledge and skill, making Greece the natural home for excellence and wisdom. The survivors of the natural catastrophe that engulfed Atlantis were “an illiterate mountain people” who lacked the intellectual gifts to appreciate and pass on the values and virtues practiced by the Athenians. Furthermore – what survivors remained were faced with the task of taming a hostile environment – an occupation not conducive to recording historical events:

It is in the train of Leisure that Mythology and Inquiry into the Past arrive in cities, once...the necessities of life have been secured but not before.

He then describes the virtues that led to an Athenian victory. Firstly, they practiced all the regulations laid down in *Republic*.¹⁸ Importantly they followed one of the most important restrictions applying to philosopher-kings – one that is the *first lesson* taught to an Initiate during the Address at the North East Corner:

They made no use of gold or silver...but in pursuing a mean between ostentation and servility...

The point that Plato made, with a deftness of artistic skill and philosophical flourish, was that in practicing the principles extolled in *Republic*, (which according to the priest of Sais were *divine* in origin), Athens was able to defeat Atlantis:

...they were the guardians of their own citizens and leaders of the rest of the Greek world...such was the character of this people... as they directed the life of their city and of Greece with justice. Their fame for the beauty of their bodies and the variety and range of their mental and spiritual qualities spread throughout all of Asia and all of Europe. And the consideration in which they were held and their renown was the greatest of all nations of that age.

Pre-eminent among all others in the nobility of her spirit and in her use of all the arts of war, she (Athens) rose first to the leadership of the Greek cause. Later, forced to stand alone, deserted by her allies, she reached a point of extreme peril. Nevertheless, she overcame the invaders... (and) prevented the enslavement of those not yet enslaved, and generously freed all the rest of us who lived within the boundaries of the Pillars of Heracles.

Timaeus 25b-c (Trans: Lee)

The Triumph of Philosopher-kings:

What matters for you and I as Freemasons, is that the myth of Athens' defeat of Atlantis occurred because they followed the principles of philosopher-kings.

In its own way it is a model for us to keep in mind when seemingly insurmountable odds strike at the core of our lives. At those times, we can choose to use a balance of intellect and emotion, thoughtfully and wisely to steer our life through life's tempestuous seas while maintaining our

Triumph of a Philosopher-king...

Can you find then any flaw, then, in an occupation like this, which in order to be competently practiced requires the following inherent properties in a person: a good memory, quickness at learning, broadness of vision, elegance and love of and affiliation to truth, morality, courage and self-discipline?

Plato: Republic 487a (Trans: Robin Waterfield)

own character credibility.

Our goal in doing this is to achieve a triumph. It is to achieve the highest level of human excellence that our own individual nature can ever attain.

...And that is the purpose of the philosophy behind Freemasonry.

Finis