

The Philosophers of Atlantis with Jason Reza Jorjani

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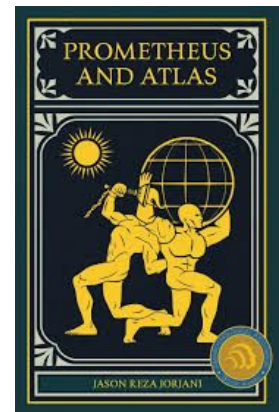
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(00:21) **JM:** Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today we'll be exploring the significance of Atlantis in the philosophical tradition. With me is philosopher Dr. Jason Jorjani, who is on the faculty at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He is also the author of *Prometheus and Atlas*, a book that won the 2016 Book Award from the Parapsychological Association. Welcome, Jason.

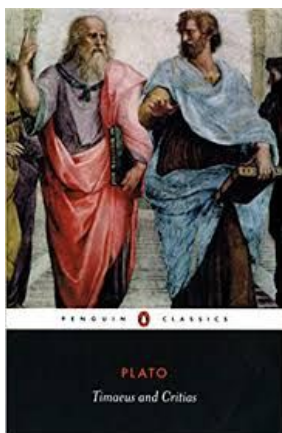
(00:51) **JRJ:** Thank you for inviting me, Jeffrey.

(00:52) **JM:** It's a pleasure once again to be with you. Many people think of Atlantis as a myth. Some people think of it as history. But it actually has a deeper significance as well. It's part of our philosophical heritage, going all the way back to Plato.

(01:11) **JRJ:** Yes, its remarkable that of all of the myths in human history this is the one that philosophers who are developing a non-mythic way of thinking keep coming back to.



(01:22) **JM:** Plato gave us some very vivid descriptions, not only of Atlantis, but its importance in his own thinking.



(01:30) **JRJ:** The history of Western philosophy has often been described as a series of footnotes to Plato [427-347 BCE]. In fact, we get the most developed and first account of Atlantis from Plato. In his *Timaeus and Critias* dialogues, Plato recounts a lost civilization that flourished, according to him, or rather reached its zenith 9,000 years before his time. He lays a great deal of emphasis on the fact that this is not a tall tale. Supposedly, he grew up in his family with an heirloom manuscript from Solon [640-558 BCE], the law giver of Athens. Solon supposedly had received the story of Atlantis from priests in Egypt. He was adapting it into a mythos that he hoped to have supplant the traditional mythology of the Greeks, the mythology set forth by Homer, in say, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

(02:30) **JM:** Yes. Plato's notion is that this was once a very high civilization that was destroyed.

(02:37) **JRJ:** Yes, Plato actually describes this civilization as having been created through a hybridization of gods and mortals. At the beginning of time, the gods divided the Earth into distinct regions, which each of them governed over, gods or goddesses. For example, Athens is named after Athena, it was the dominion of Athena. Atlantis comes from the name Atlas. It means "realm of Atlas." So, Atlas was one of the sons of Poseidon. It's interesting that in Greek mythology Poseidon is often depicted as a rival of Zeus. So, Atlas is the eldest son of Poseidon and the king of Atlantis. In this civilization, over time the blood of the gods is mixed with that of mortals, there's increasing hybridization to the point where these demigods essentially reject the Olympians as anyone worthy of reverence. They develop what you could describe as a humanistic civilization, self confident and bent on dominion over the planet.

(03:48) **JM:** Well, you tell me what led to the destruction, I think it's unclear...

(03:54) **JRJ:** Well, this was viewed as a challenge to the power of Zeus. So, the *Timaeus and Critias* account of Atlantis ends with Zeus calling a convocation of the gods and determining that Atlantis be wiped off the face of the Earth in a great deluge, which of course is a parallel to the Noah's flood story in the Bible.

(04:15) **JM:** So, it's an instance in which Plato is very consciously drawing upon ancient Greek mythology.

(04:22) **JRJ:** Yes, and what's also very unique about it is this image of a global civilization. Atlantis was aspiring to unify all of humanity into a world order that no longer revered the gods. A world order where humanity was self sufficient, as it were, and autonomous.

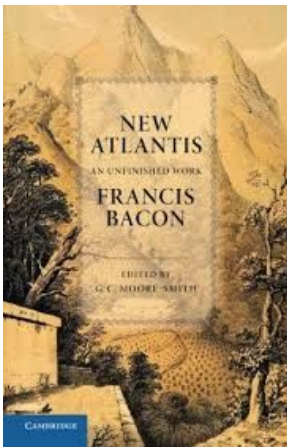
(04:44) **JM:** Well, Plato in his *Republic* developed his own model for what he thought the ideal society would be, ruled by philosopher kings. I have to assume, maybe you can tell me, did he contrast this with the society of Atlantis?

(05:00) **JRJ:** Well, in fact, the dialogue *Timaeus*, which begins the story of Atlantis picks up right where *Republic* leaves off, or the story unfolded between Timaeus and Critias. It supposedly takes place the day after Socrates and his associates have been sitting around discussing the utopian political system of *Republic*. So, it's a direct continuation and it begins with, I believe, one of Socrates's friends saying, "So, the other day you painted a picture of the ideal regime for us. Now let's try to find something from actual history that is along those lines."

(05:38) **JM:** How does that evolve, or unfold?

(05:41) **JRJ:** Well, the interesting thing is Plato actually depicts the society of ante-deluvian, or pre-flood Athens as something closest to the utopia of *Republic*. The Atlanteans are supposedly invading the Mediterranean basin and they wage a war against these Athenians. So, you would think that maybe he's intending to portray them as arrogant, you know, people who are overtaken by hubris. But in fact, Zeus decides to drown the ante-deluvian Athenians along with them. So, what kind of a just god is this? And what's the moral of the story, really?

(06:27) **JM:** Well, there are different versions that have been enunciated by different philosophers. I think, in modern times, many people are even influenced by Manly Palmer Hall [1901-1990] in his notion that these people had incredible psychic powers that led to their own destruction, that they couldn't manage their technology. It's sort of, almost, a moral lesson.



(06:50) **JRJ:** Yes. Atlantis has been used to discuss both material advancements in technology, from the material perspective, science fictional society, and also to explore the idea of a society where psychic powers are prevalent. In particular, you see this respectively in the Atlantis stories of Sir Francis Bacon [1561-1626] and then Rudolf Steiner, later. In Bacon's case, *The New Atlantis*, which he wrote in the early 1600's, is the first account of a science fictional society with tremendous advances in technology, that it's hard to fathom how Bacon was even able to conceive of in his time.

(07:31) **JM:** Well, Bacon was a contemporary of Shakespeare and some people even think he was the author of the Shakespearean plays. Another thing about Bacon is that he's also regarded as one of the first people, philosophers, to formulate the scientific method.

(07:50) **JRJ:** Right. So, one of the most interesting things about Bacon's Atlantis story, is that although he uses the name Atlantis, this is not the same island continent that Plato was describing. Plato describes an island roughly the size of the continental United States. He says something the size of Libya and Asia combined, which for Greek geographers would have meant a landmass about the size of the continental United States. This is described as being out beyond the Pillars of Hercules, or the Straits of Gibraltar, somewhere in the "world ocean." But, Francis Bacon's Atlantis is an island in the Pacific Ocean. Some travelers have been stranded there by happenstance. They discovered that this society, which was run by scientists and inventors has isolated itself from the rest of the world. It sends ambassadors to various countries and cultures to bring back all of the latest innovations in science and technology, where they're synthesised. The governing body of this new Atlantis decides which of these can be safely incorporated into society and which other ones should be withheld until a time when people have ethically developed to a point where they are capable of making the best use out of them.

(09:08) **JM:** Well, it seems as where Plato is presenting Atlantis as an actual historical event, Francis Bacon is really presenting it as an utopian scenario.

(09:23) **JRJ:** It does seem so. However, Francis Bacon was involved in some of the secret societies of his time, the so called Invisible College that was trying to extricate Europe from the mentality of the Middle Ages, and often in occulted ways, to pursue scientific research. In *The New Atlantis*, you very clearly see the idea of an Illuminati, or hidden scientific elite that has effectively developed a breakaway civilization. A very advanced civilization that's on the earth but concealed from other people. A civilization that's waiting, essentially, for the rest of humanity to catch up with it ethically. So, they send these ambassadors to various cultures but under false flags and false names, as if they're diplomats from another nation. They also bring back to the New Atlantis, men of knowledge from India, Persia, Europe, so you have also a cosmopolitan civilization. They worship or rather they set up statues of inventors and scientists, rather than gods. This also tells you something about the mentality of the governing elite.

(10:38) **JM:** Well, it seems to be in some sense a reflection of Bacon's own personal world.

(10:45) **JRJ:** Yes, it's amazing how he was able to extrapolate from the meager technical advancements of his time to things like submarines, telephone lines, sky scrapers, laser, sonic chambers. He describes the wise men, or scientific researchers of Atlantis, as masters of illusion, who draw on all of these technical capabilities in order to be able to produce simulacra of reality. He's also got descriptions of robots in there and what appears to be genetic engineering of plants and animals.

(11:22) **JM:** It's almost as if Bacon was looking into the future...

(11:26) **JRJ:** It is almost...

(11:27) **JM:** ...one might say remote viewing the future.

(11:30) **JRJ:** Right. Which brings us to Steiner [1861-1925], who explicitly claimed that his insights into Atlantis were based on the use of psi ability.

(11:39) **JM:** Well, Rudolf Steiner is more known as a mystical teacher, a hierophant even, and a clairvoyant. Although he certainly was educated as a philosopher, I don't think he's regarded much in terms of academic philosophy at all.

(11:58) **JRJ:** Well, his early work was in academic philosophy. I believe his dissertation was on the subject of free will.

(12:03) **JM:** And, Frederick Nietzsche, yeah.

(12:06) **JRJ:** So, Steiner's own proclivities are perhaps reflected in the way that he handles the story of Atlantis. He claims that the Atlantean civilization was founded by beings who descended to the earthly plane, but who were not entirely corporeal at the outset.

(12:24) **JM:** Consistent with Theosophical teachings...

(12:26) **JRJ:** Yes. They became teachers to a group of early human beings who wound up developing a society that inextricably intertwined what we would consider material advancements in technology with psychical abilities. So that, on the one hand you have some of the same technologies that Francis Bacon describes. But on the other hand, Steiner emphasises that the mind interfaced with some of these devices. So that if we were in possession of some of the Atlantean pieces of technology, we probably wouldn't be able to make them work. Or at any rate, someone who wasn't an adept in psychokinesis wouldn't be able to make them work.

(13:05) **JM:** It reminds me a bit of the movie Forbidden Planet, the old 1950's science fiction movie.



(13:11) **JRJ:** Actually, that's, you know, a very good comparison because the way the story ends for Rudolf Steiner is that these Atlanteans turn their minds against one another. They begin to invade one another's minds with terrifying visions and turn their psychic abilities essentially into a weapon. This becomes the cause of the demise of the civilization. Although, he also agrees with Plato that there was a great flood and earthquakes as the cause of Atlantis' destruction. He suggests that these alterations in the natural environment were brought about, again, by a misuse of a psychic ability or psychokinetic ability.

(13:56) **JM:** Which is not so different from Plato's description of Zeus seeking revenge.

(14:02) **JRJ:** Right. Also, Plato's description of the way in which the demigods of Atlantis were beginning to use putatively divine powers for secular purposes, that they ought not to have.

(14:18) **JM:** I suppose, in a sense, it's an echo of the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel.

(14:26) **JRJ:** That's right. I think it is very much so.

(14:29) **JM:** In a way, humans rising up to challenge the gods in one way or another.

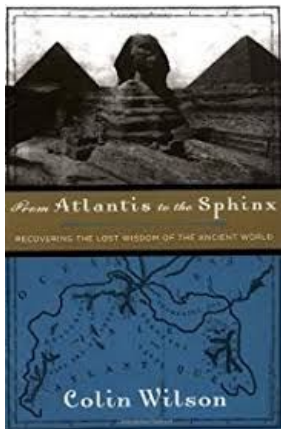
(14:35) **JRJ:** Yeah, the most interesting element in Steiner's account is he suggests that at some point a cognitive change took place where we went from a mentality that was based largely on memory,

where learning was a question of a vast store of experiences and the Atlanteans thought in terms of images. We transitioned from that into an analytic mode of thinking. This destabilized the Atlantean society because only a few people made this transition at first. And then with their new found analytical capabilities they were in a position to manipulate the rest of society. He actually traced the guru worshipping cultures of India and the pharaoh worshipping cultures of Egypt to this transformation in Atlantean society.

(15:25) **JM:** I see. In other words, the Atlanteans had god-like kings. Is that the notion?

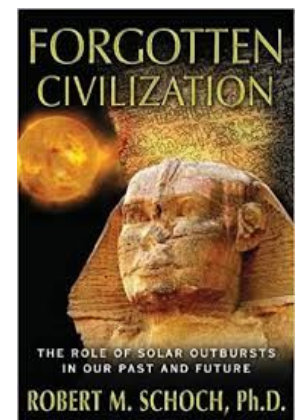
(15:30) **JRJ:** A few of the people who developed a new form of thinking began to manipulate a society that was still largely linked together psychically by a collective consciousness. He thinks this influenced Egypt and India because after the destruction of Atlantis, the Atlanteans went around and colonized various parts of the world, or perhaps relocated themselves to colonies they had already established in various regions.

(15:55) **JM:** Well, there are some people who wonder about the fact that we have pyramids in Mesoamerica and pyramids in Egypt and other similarities, that there was once a global culture going back to prehistoric times.



(16:12) **JRJ:** Well, this brings us to the most recent of the philosophers who has made use of the idea of Atlantis in his work, and that's Colin Wilson. Colin Wilson synthesised all of the empirical research on Atlantis, or some such lost civilization of global scope. Some of the more interesting pieces of evidence that he drew together include the anomalies at the Giza site, where we have the Sphinx, the Sphinx temples and the pyramids. In particular, he looked at the work of Robert Schoch, a geologist at Boston University who determined that the weathering on the Sphinx is consistent with long periods of heavy rainfall, as water erosion as well as wind erosion. This would push the

Sphinx back in time to at least 7,000 BC. This also means that the Sphinx and the Valley Temples, which are built from out of the rock... that was hewn out of the...

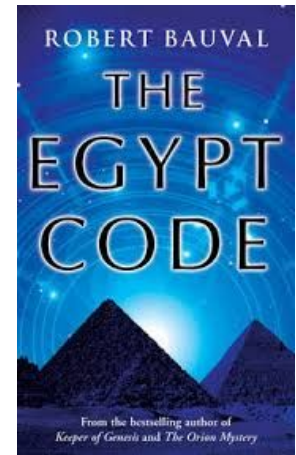


(17:12) **JM:** Carved right into the limestone mountains...

(17:16) **JRJ:** Yes, well, so the Sphinx is carved out of a trench and the rock that was loosed by the process was used to build those temples. So, they must be contemporaneous with the Sphinx.

(17:26) **JM:** I see.

(17:27) **JRJ:** And their architectural style is very un-Egyptian, they're not covered with hieroglyphs unlike most Egyptian temples. It's a very austere megalithic style, extremely high precision. The other thing that has been noticed about the Giza ground plan, particularly by the Belgian engineer Robert Bauval, is that if you look at the three stars of Orion's Belt, they're in the same pattern as the three pyramids at Giza, with the third one slightly misaligned from the first two. The Sphinx has a counterpart among the constellations, namely Leo. The Milky Way was viewed by the Egyptians as sort of a pathway to the heavens, a means by which souls ascend and descend. Well, at a very specific time, dawn on the Spring Equinox in 10,500 BC, the Sphinx is looking at the sun rising into the constellation of Leo, the Milky Way is mirrored on the ground by the Nile River and the three stars of Orion's Belt are in the same orientation with the Milky Way as the the three pyramids are to the Nile.



(18:42) **JM:** All of which suggests that the date of construction might go back that far.

(18:46) **JRJ:** At the very least the ground plan of the pyramids and the construction of the Sphinx and the temples there.

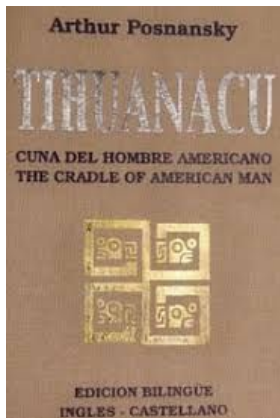
(18:53) **JM:** Because my understanding is that archaeologists don't date the pyramids as being that old.

(19:00) **JRJ:** Right. Well, the pyramids are built on limestone carved platforms. And all you'd need to get right are the platforms. Someone else could come and build the pyramids on top of them later and you still have the same alignment. So, this date of 10,500 BC fits perfectly with Plato's dating of Atlantis, of 9,000 years before his own time. This isn't the only place we find these kinds of engineering anomalies. In Lebanon, at Baalbek in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, there's a platform for the largest temple ever built by the Romans when they ruled that part of the world. They built the Temple of Jupiter on a pre-existing platform which consists of about 400 ton stones that are surmounted by three much larger stones each weighing over 1,000 tons, they are referred to as the trilithons. We know that these came from a quarry at a great distance because whoever the engineers were, they left one of these trilithon size blocks in the quarry, I think deliberately, to indicate that they had transported the stone over such a long distance.

(20:06) **JM:** Well, what you're suggesting is that there may actually have been a very advanced civilization that existed in prehistoric times that has influenced the evolution of philosophical thought subsequently.

(20:22) **JRJ:** Yes, and it's impacted subsequent human history. To give a very striking example, the Mayans believed that the builder gods who laid the groundwork for their civilization would some day

return to them. Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent or Viracocha or Votan as he's sometimes referred to by the people in Mesoamerica and South America, had promised his children, as he called them, that he would return some day. So, when Cortez and the Spaniards showed up they fit the physical description of the ancient builder gods and were received as such so that it was very easy for them to proceed to plunder that civilization. But, to focus on South America for a moment, I believe Polish archaeologist by the name of Arthur Posnansky studied the site at Tiahuanacu for many years and determined that the precision with which that site is built, again in very much the same style as the



Sphinx temples, or as the Osireion at Abydos, which some people believe is covered by 8,000 years of sedimentation, this structure at Tiahuanacu in Bolivia, its precision doesn't match its misalignment to, say, the solstices or the equinoxes. Stellar alignments were very important for these cultures. So, Posnansky corrected for the precision of the equinoxes. He determined that that site was built sometime between 15,000 and 12,000 BC. Which is interesting because the nearby port at Tiahuanacu is now far above the water level and what is suggested by the construction of a port at that location is that perhaps the engineers who put it there were dealing with a much higher sea level, perhaps a sea level that had precipitously risen and they needed to rapidly construct a port.

(22:30) **JM:** As a philosopher yourself, what do you think is the significance of all of these attempts by previous philosophers to make sense of this myth or legend or history?

(22:45) **JRJ:** Well, I think it has to do with Colin Wilson's ultimate conclusion in his study of Atlantis and that's that the people, supposing the civilization existed, the people who were behind it had minds very different from our own. We're dealing with a type of human being that was still operating on something like animal instinct. A kind of society that functioned through an extraordinary intuition rather than through abstract conceptual thinking.

(23:16) **JM:** Although apparently they had high technology at the same time.

(23:19) **JRJ:** They had a very different form of technology. You know, we're at a loss as to how they moved these gigantic blocks, especially with the precision that they did it. Colin Wilson suggests that psychokinesis was involved. This relates to what Steiner relates about the Atlanteans, namely that they had a kind of collective consciousness so that en masse they were mesmerized in a way that made it easier, that facilitated, these titanic tasks.

(23:48) **JM:** I see, through sort of an application of a group mind.

(23:53) **JRJ:** A mass PK effect, yes.

(23:57) **JM:** What's the lesson for us today?

(24:00) **JRJ:** Well, since we are at this juncture that I refer to as the spectral revolution, where we are going to have to learn how to reorganize society in a way that can support mainstream acknowledgement of psychic abilities. If in fact we had a civilization in the past that failed to grapple with the integration of these human capacities, perhaps we should look into it so we can learn a lesson from it so that the past doesn't repeat itself.

(24:29) **JM:** Well, I would imagine, maybe at a subconscious level, that's why there's so much resistance to parapsychology and 150 years of empirical evidence that is still on the very fringes of academia and by many people regarded as a taboo topic. It might be some sort of subconscious fear that we might repeat or that people at a dim level remember some sort of destruction that was brought on by the misuse of such abilities?

(25:02) **JRJ:** I agree. I think we are haunted by the tragic fate of Atlantis, on some deep level.

(25:08) **JM:** There's also the possibility that somewhere, somehow, maybe in a different dimension that the Atlanteans exist and are influencing us today.

(25:24) **JRJ:** Well, that takes us back to Francis Bacon's breakaway civilization. It might not literally be on the Earth, it might not be a concealed island on the Earth.

(25:33) **JM:** Well, Jason Jorjani, this has been a stimulating conversation. It's certainly raised many questions that we're not able to answer right now, but I trust that our viewers will be pondering for some time. Thank you so much for being with me.

(25:50) **JRJ:** It was pleasure being with you again, Jeffrey.

(25:53) **JM:** Likewise. And thank you for being with us.

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