**The Sacred Island and the origin of gods
If Euhemerus had told the truth ?**

 « Open the sacred books, you who are initiated to mysteries, and you will know that Heavens owe to Earth nearly all the gods»

Cicero in his «Tusculanes»[[1]](#footnote-1)

**INTRODUCTION : Euhemerus and his lost book**

Euhemerus of Messina was a Greek author contemporary of King Cassander of Macedonia. He could be born circa 316 B.C. His book « The Sacred Inscription» is considered as the first attempt to demystify gods in ancient times. We know this work only from second or third citation. It was translated in Latin by the poet Ennius, then lost, but transmitted by a summary given in the « Divine Institutions » of the Christian apologist Lactantius (I, II) ; then by another summary reported by Diodorus Siculus, book V :41-46, and book VI :1 (lost but cited by Eusebius of Cesarea in his “Preparation for the Gospels” II :52-55). Allusions to Euhemerus also appear in several other Greek and Latin authors[[2]](#footnote-2).

Euhemerus told he was commissioned by his friend King Cassander to undertake long journeys in southern countries. After walking through several countries, such as Phoenicia, Palestine and Egypt, he finally arrived in Eastern Arabia, known as fortunate because of its fertility, and to an unknown island named Panchaea. In this latter, stood a golden column on which were engraved the actions, but also the death, of all major characters bearing the name of Greek gods[[3]](#footnote-3).

The Island of Panchaea could never be localized so far, and Euhemerus was considered all the time as a liar (Plutarch, Moralia, 25). However, the local color that he was able to give to the description of his island suggests that the oriental countries were not unknown by him. For our part, thanks to the discoveries of modern archaeology we intend to demonstrate the reality of this mysterious island, as well as the existence of historical characters at the origin of the Egyptian and Greek gods.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**I. Fabulous and distant islands**

1. **The Island of Panchaea according to Euhemerus**

According to Diodorus (V, 41-46) Euhemerus began talking about Arabia and a sacred island which yielded incense. Then he largely described it :

(42) 3. (It is) a very extended island laying at thirty stades (5,4 km) from the sacred island out in the Ocean to the East and many stades in length; for men say that from its promontory which extends toward the East one can descry India, misty because of its great distance. 4. As for Panchaea itself, the island possesses many things which deserve to be recorded by history. It is inhabited by men who were autochthonous, called Panchaeans. And the foreigners there are Oceanites, Indians, Scythians and Cretans. 5. There is also a notable city on the island, called Panara, which enjoys unusual felicity; its citizens are called "the suppliants of Zeus Triphylius," and are the only inhabitants of the land of Panchaea who live under laws of their own making and have no king over them. Each year they elect three chief magistrates; these men have no authority over capital crimes, but render judgment in all any other matters; and the weightiest affairs they refer of their own accord to the priests. 6. Some sixty stades (11 km) distant from the city of Panara is the temple of Zeus Triphylius, which lies out on a plain and is especially admired for its antiquity, the costliness of its construction, and its favorable situation.

(43) 1. Thus, the plain lying around the temple is thickly covered with trees of every kind, not only those which bear fruits , but those also which possess the power of pleasing the eye; for the plain abounds with cypresses of enormous size and plane-trees and sweet-bay and myrtle, since the region is full of springs of water. 2. Indeed, close to the sacred precinct there bursts forth from the earth a spring of sweet water of such size that it gives rise to a river on which boats may sail. And since the water is led off from the river to many parts of the plain and irrigates them, throughout the entire area of the plain there grow continuous forests of lofty trees, wherein a multitude of men pass their time in the summer season and a multitude of birds make their nests, birds of every kind and of various hues, which greatly delight the ear by their song; therein also is every kind of garden and many meadows with varied plants and flowers, so that there is a divine majesty in the prospect which makes the place appear worthy of the gods of the country. 3. And there were palm trees there with mighty trunks, conspicuous for the fruits they bore, and many varieties of nut-bearing trees, which provide the natives of the place with the most abundant subsistence. And in addition to what we have mentioned, grape-vines were found there in great number and of every variety, which were trained to climb high and were variously intertwined so that they presented a pleasing sight and provided a beautiful landscape.

(44) 1 .The temple was a striking structure of white marble, two plethra (60 m) in length and the width proportionate to the length; it was supported by large thick columns and decorated at intervals with reliefs of ingenious design; and there were also remarkable statues of the gods, exceptional in skill of execution and admired by men for their colossal size. 2. Around about the temple the priests who served the gods had their dwellings, and the management of everything pertaining to the sacred precinct was in their hands. In front of the temple there is an avenue of four stades (60 m) in length and a plethrum (30 m) in width. 3. On each side of the avenue are great bronze statues which rest upon square bases, and at the end of the avenue the river we mentioned above has its sources, which pour forth in a turbulent stream. The water of the stream is exceedingly clear and sweet and the use of it is most conducive to the health of the body; and the river bears the name "Water of the Sun." 4. The entire spring is surrounded by an expensive stone quay, which extends along each side of it four stades (720 m) and no man except the priests may set foot upon the place up to the edge of the quay. 5. The plain lying below the temple was made sacred to the gods, for a distance of two hundred stades (37 km), and the revenues which are derived from it are used to support the sacrifices. Beyond the above-mentioned plain there is a lofty mountain which was made sacred to the gods and is called the "Throne of Uranus" and also "Triphylian Olympus." 6. For the myth relates that in ancient times, when Uranus was King of the inhabited earth, he took pleasure in tarrying in that place and in surveying from its lofty top both the heavens and the stars therein, and that at a later time it came to be called Triphylian Olympus because the men who dwelt about it were composed of three peoples; these, namely, were known as Panchaeans, Oceanites, and Doians, who were expelled at a later time by Ammon. 7. For Ammon, men say, not only drove this nation into exile but also totally destroyed their cities, razing to the ground both Doia and Asterusia. And once a year, we are told, the priests hold a sacrifice in this mountain with great solemnity.

(45) 1. Beyond this mountain and throughout the rest of the land of Panchaea, the account continues, there is found a multitude of beasts of every description; for the land possesses many elephants and lions and leopards and gazelles and an unusual number of other wild animals which differ in their marvelous aspect and ferocity. 2. This island also contains three notable cities, Hyracia, Dalis, and Oceanis. The whole country, moreover, is fruitful and produces in particular a multitude of vines of every variety. 3. The men are warlike and use chariots in battle after the ancient manner. The entire body politic of the Panchaeans is divided into three castes: The first caste among them is that of the priests, to whom are assigned the artisans, the second one consists of the farmers, and the third one is that of the soldiers, to whom are added the herdsmen. 4. The priests served as the leaders in all things, rendering the decisions in legal disputes and possessing the final authority in all other affairs which concerned the community; and the farmers, who are engaged in the tilling of the soil, bring the fruits into the common store, and the man among them who is thought to have practiced the best farming receives a special reward when the fruits are portioned out, the priests deciding who had been first, who second, and so in order to the tenth, this being done in order to spur on the rest. 5. In the same manner the herdsmen also turn both the sacrificial animals and all others into the treasury of the state with all precision, some by number and some by weight. For, speaking generally, there is not a thing except a home and a garden which a man may possess for his own, but all the products and the revenues are taken over by the priests, who portion out with justice to each man his share, and to the priests alone is given two-fold. 6. The clothing of the Panchaeans is soft, because the wool of the sheep of the land is distinguished above all other for its softness; and they wear ornaments of gold, not only the women but the men as well, with collars of twisted gold about their necks, bracelets on their wrists, and rings hanging from their ears after the manner of the Persians. The same kind of shoes are worn by both sexes and they are worked in more varied colors than is usual.

(46) 1. The soldiers receive a pay which is apportioned to them and in return protect the land by means of forts and posts fixed at intervals; for there is one section of the country which is infested with robber bands, composed of bold and lawless men who lie in wait for the farmer and war upon them. 2. And as for the priests, they far excel the rest in luxury and in every other refinement and elegance of their manner of life; so, for instance, their robes are of linen and exceptionally sheer and soft, and at times they wear garments woven of the softest wool; furthermore, their headdress is interwoven with gold, their footgear consists of sandals which are of varied colors and ingeniously worked, and they wear the same gold ornaments as do the women, with the exception of the earrings. The first duties of the priests concerned with the services paid to the gods and with the hymns and praises which are accorded them, and in them they recite in song the achievements of the gods one after another and the benefactions they have bestowed upon mankind. 3. According to the myth which the priests give, the gods had their origin in Crete[[5]](#footnote-5), and were led by Zeus to Panchaea at the time when he sojourned among men and was king of the inhabited earth. In proof of this they cite their language, pointing out that most of the things they have about them still retain Cretan names; and they add that the kinship which they have with the Cretans and the kindly regard they feel toward them are traditions they received from their ancestors, since this report is ever handed down from one generation to another. And it has been their practice, in corroboration of these claims, to point to inscriptions which, they said, were made by Zeus during the time he still sojourned among men and founded the temple.

4. The land possesses rich mines of gold, silver, copper, tin, and iron, but none of these metals is allowed to be taken from the island; nor may the priests for any reason whatsoever set foot outside of the hallowed land, and if one of them does so, whoever meets him is authorized to slay him. 5. There are many great dedications of gold and of silver which have been made to the gods, since time has amassed the multitude of such offerings. 6. The doorways of the temple are objects of wonder in their construction, being worked in silver and gold and ivory and citrus-wood. And there is the couch of the god, which is six cubits long and four wide and is entirely of gold and skillfully constructed in every detail of its workmanship. 7. Similar to it both in size and in costliness in general is the table of the god which stands near the couch. And on the center of the couch stands a large gold stele which shows letters which the Egyptians named sacred, and the inscription recounts the deeds both of Uranus and of Zeus; and to them Hermes added also the deeds of Artemis and Apollo. 12. As regards to the islands, then, which lie in the ocean opposite Arabia, we shall rest content with what has been said.

**2. The Island of Atlantis according to Plato**

The Athenian philosophe Plato, as for him, described an island which in one day sunk into the sea (Timaeus 23e - 25d):

« (24e) In front of the mouth which you Greeks call, as you say, 'the Pillars of Heracles’[[6]](#footnote-6), there lay an island which was larger than Libya and Asia together; and it was possible for the travelers of that time to cross from it to the other islands, and from the islands to the whole of the opposite continent …”

And he gave us more details on this island (Critias 113c – 120b):

“(113c) Poseidon took for his allotment the island of Atlantis and settled therein the children whom he had begotten of a mortal woman in a region of the island of the following description. Bordering on the sea and extending through the center of the whole island there was a plain, which is said to have been the fairest of all plains and highly fertile; and, moreover, near the plain, over against its center, at a distance of about 50 stades (9 km), there stood a mountain that was low on all sides. Thereon dwelt one of the natives from the land, Evenor by name, (113d) with his wife Leucippe; and they had for offspring an only-begotten daughter, Cleito. And when this damsel was now come to marriageable age, her mother died and also her father; and Poseidon, being smitten with desire for her, wedded her; and to make the hill whereon she dwelt impregnable he made around it circular belts of sea and land enclosing one another alternately, some greater, some smaller, two being of land and three of sea, which he carved from the midst of the island; and these belts were at even distances on all sides, so as to be impassable for man; (113e) for at that time neither ships nor sailing were as yet in existence. And Poseidon himself set in order with ease, as a god would, the central island, bringing up from beneath the earth two springs of waters, the one flowing warm from its source, the other cold, and producing out of the earth all kinds of food in plenty… (114e) and the island itself furnished most of the requirements of daily life, metals, to begin with, both the hard kind and the fusible kind, which are extracted by mining, and also that kind which is now known only by name but was more than a name then, there being mines of it in many places of the island, I mean “orichalcum,” which was the most precious of the metals then known, except gold. It brought forth also in abundance all the timbers that a forest provides for the labors of carpenters; and of animals it produced a sufficiency, both of tame and wild. Moreover, it contained a very large stock of elephants; for there was an ample food-supply not only for all the other animals which haunt the marshes and lakes and rivers, (115a) or the mountains or the plains, but likewise also for this animal, which by its nature is the largest and most voracious. And in addition to all this, it produced and brought to perfection all those sweet-scented stuffs which the earth produces now, whether made of roots or herbs or trees, or of liquid gums derived from flowers or fruits. The cultivated fruits also, and the dried ones, which serve us for nutriment, and all the other kinds that we use for our meals, the various species of which are comprehended under the name “vegetables”, (115b) and all the produce of trees which affords liquid and solid food and unguents, and this scaly fruit, so hard to store, which is grown for the sake of amusement and pleasure, and all the after-dinner fruits that we serve up as welcome remedies for the sufferer from repletion, all these that hallowed island, as it lay then beneath the sun, produced in marvelous beauty and endless abundance”…

(118a) “In the first place, then, according to the account, the whole region rose abrupt out of the sea to a great height, but the part about the city was all a smooth plain, enclosing it round about, and being itself encircled by mountains which stretched as far as to the sea; and this plain had a level surface and was as a whole rectangular in shape, being 3000 stades (540 km) long on either side and 2000 stades (360 km) wide at its center, reckoning upwards from the sea. And this region, (118b) all along the island, faced towards the South and was sheltered from the Northern blasts. And the mountains which surrounded it were at that time celebrated as surpassing all that now exist in number, magnitude and beauty; for they had upon them many rich villages of country folk, and streams and lakes and meadows which furnished ample nutriment to all the animals both tame and wild, and timber of various sizes and descriptions, abundantly sufficient for the needs of all and every craft. (118c) Now as a result of natural forces, together with the labors of many kings which extended over many ages, the condition of the plain was this. It was originally a quadrangle, rectilinear for the most part, and elongated; and what it lacked of this shape they made right by means of a trench dug round about it. Now, as regards the depth of this trench and its breadth and length, it seems incredible that it should be so large as the account states, considering that it was made by hand, and in addition to all the other operations, but none the less we must report what we heard: it was dug out to the depth of a plethrum (30 m) and to a uniform breadth of a stade (180 m), and since it was dug round the whole plain (118d) its consequent length was 10,000 stades (1800 km). It received the streams which came down from the mountains and after circling round the plain, and coming towards the city on this side and on that, it discharged them thereabouts into the sea. And on the inland side of the city channels were cut in straight lines, of about 100 feet (30 m) in width, across the plain, and these discharged themselves into the trench on the seaward side, the distance between each being 100 stades (18 km). It was in this way that they conveyed to the city (118e) the timber from the mountains and transported also on boats the seasons' products, by cutting transverse passages from one channel to the next and also to the city. And they cropped the land twice a year, making use of the rains from heaven in the winter, and the waters that issue from the earth in summer, by conducting the streams from the trenches.”

 This island engulfed in front of the Columns of Heracles was unable to be located off the coast of the Strait of Gibraltar, where indeed never stood neither temple nor columns. So our modern Hellenists have concluded that the Atlantis story was a parable invented by Plato to remind the decadent Athenians their virtuous and glorious past.

**3. The Island of Meropis according to Theopompus**

Meropis is an island mentioned by the ancient Greek writer Theopompus of Chios in his work "Philippica", which is only fragmentarily maintained via Aelian in his “Varia historia” (III, 18). His description of the Island of Meropis inhabited by Meropes was considered as a parody of Plato's Atlantis[[7]](#footnote-7), but it could also be recognized in the Panchaea of Euhemerus.

According to Aelian, Theopompus wrote : « Europe, Asia and Africa were islands surrounded by the Ocean : There was but one continent only, which was beyond this world, and as to magnitude it was infinite. In it were bred, besides other very great creatures, men twice as big as those here, and they lived double our age. Many great cities are there, and peculiar manners of life; and they have laws wholly different from those amongst us. That there are two cities far greater than the others, that do not look like : one named Machimus, the Warlike, the other Eusebes, the Pious : The Pious people live in peace, abounding in wealth, and reap the fruits of the Earth without ploughs or oxen, having no need of tillage or sowing... The Inhabitants of the city Machimus are very warlike, continually armed and fighting: They subdue their neighbours, and this one city predominates over many. The Inhabitants are not fewer than two hundred myriads (two millions)… They have vast plenty of gold and silver, insomuch that gold is of less value with them then iron with us. He said that they once designed to come to these our Islands, and sailed upon the Ocean, being in number a thousand myriads (ten millions) of men, till they arrive to the Hyperboreans ; but understanding that they were the happiest men amongst us, they considered this people as persons that led an inglorious life, and therefore thought he was not worth to be conquered. He added what is yet more wonderful, that there are men living amongst them called Meropes, who inhabit many great cities ; and that at the farthest end of their country there is a place named Anostus, (from whence there is no return) which resembles a gulf[[8]](#footnote-8) ; it is neither very light nor very dark, the air being dusky intermingled with a kind of red ; that there are two rivers in this place, one of Pleasure, the other of Grief ; and that along each river grow trees of the bigness of a plane-tree.“

**4. The Island of the Sun visited by Iambulus**

The description of the Panchaea of Euhemerus also appears to resemble that of the Island of the Sun visited by the Greek Iambulus, as recounted also by Diodorus in his book II :

(55) “1. But with regard to the island which has been discovered in the ocean to the South and the marvelous tales told concerning it, we shall now endeavor to give a brief account, after we have first set forth accurately the causes which led to its discovery. 2. There was a certain Iambulus who from his boyhood up had been devoted to the pursuit of education, and after the death of his father, who had been a merchant, he also gave himself to that trade; and while journeying inland to the spice-bearing region of Arabia, he and his companions on the trip were taken captive by some robbers. Now at first he and one of his fellow-captives were appointed to be herdsmen, but later he and his companion were made captive by certain Ethiopians and led off to the coast of Ethiopia[[9]](#footnote-9). 3. They were kidnapped in order that, being of an alien people, they might serve to the purification of the land...and at the time when the purification by means of the two men was to take place, a boat had been built for them sufficient in size and strong enough to withstand the storms at sea, and could easily be manned by two men; and then loading it with food enough to maintain two men for six months and putting them on board they commanded them to set out to sea as the oracle had ordered. 4. Furthermore, they commanded them to steer towards the South; for, they were told, they would come to a happy island and to men of honorable character, and among them they would lead a blessed existence. And in like manner, they stated, their own people, in case the men whom they sent forth should arrive safely at the island, would enjoy peace and a happy life in every respect throughout six hundred years… 6. And these men, after having sailed over a vast sea and been tossed about four months by storms, were carried to the island about which they had been informed beforehand. It was round in shape and had a circumference of about five thousand stades (900 km).

(56) 1. But when they were now drawing near to the island, the report proceeds, some of the natives met them and drew their boat to land; and the inhabitants of the island, coming together, were astonished at the arrival of the strangers, but they treated them honorably and shared with them the necessities of life which their country afforded. 2. The dwellers upon this island differ greatly both in the characteristics of their bodies and in their manners from the men in our part of the inhabited world; for they are all nearly alike in the shape of their bodies are over four cubits (2,70 m) in height… 3. There is absolutely no hair on any part of their bodies except on the head, eyebrows and eyelids, and on the chin, but the other parts of the body are so smooth that not even the single can be seen on them. 4. They are also remarkably beautiful and well-proportioned in the outline of the body… 7. Their climate is most temperate, we are told, considering that they live at the equator, and they suffer neither from heat nor from cold. Moreover, the fruits in their island ripen throughout the entire year, even as the poet wrote[[10]](#footnote-10): “Here pear on pear grows old, and apple close on apple, yea, and clustered grapes on grapes, and fig on fig.” And with them the day is always the same length as the night, and at midday no shadow is cast of any object because the sun is in the zenith.

(57) 1. These islanders, they go on to say, live in groups which are based on kinship and on political organizations, no more than four hundred kinsmen being gathered together in this way; and the members spend their time in the meadows, the land supplying them with many things for sustenance; for by reason of the fertility of the island and the mildness of the climate, food-stuffs are produced of themselves in greater quantity than is sufficient for their needs… 3. There are also in the island, they say, abundant springs of water, the warm springs serving well for bathing and the relief of fatigue, the cold ones excelling in sweetness and possessing the power to contribute to good health. Moreover, the inhabitants give attention to every branch of learning and especially to astrology. 4. And they use letters which, according to the value of the sounds they represent, are twenty-eight in number, but the characters are only seven, each one of which can be formed in four different ways. Nor do they write their lines horizontally, as we do, but from the top to the bottom perpendicularly. And the inhabitants, they tell us, are extremely long-lived, living even to the age of one hundred and fifty years, and experiencing for the most part no illness…

(58) 7. The sea about the island has strong currents and is subject to great flood and ebb and it is sweet in taste as the fountain water. And as for the stars of our heavens, the Bears and many more, we are informed, are not visible at all. The number of these islands was seven, and they are very much the same in size and at about equal distances from one another, and all follow the same customs and laws.

(59) 1. Although all the inhabitants enjoy an abundant provision of everything from what grows of itself in these islands, yet they do not indulge in the enjoyment of this abundance without restraint, but they practice simplicity and take for their food only what suffices for their needs. Meat and whatever else is roasted or boiled in water and are prepared by them, but all the other dishes ingeniously concocted by professional cooks, such as sauces and the various kinds of seasonings, they have no notion whatsoever. 2 And they worship as gods that which encompasses all things and the sun, and, in general, all the heavenly bodies. Fishes of every kind in great numbers are caught by them by sundry devices and not a few birds. 3. There is also found among them an abundance of fruit trees growing wild, and olive trees and vines grow there, from which they make both olive oil and wine in abundance. Snakes also, we are told, which are of immense size and yet do no harm to the inhabitants, have a meat which is edible and exceedingly sweet. 4. And their clothing they make themselves from a certain reed which contains in the center a downy substance that is bright to the eye and soft, which they gather and mingle with crushed sea-shells and thus make remarkable garments of a purple hue… 5. All the details of their diet, we are told, follow a prescribed arrangement, since they do not all take their food at the same time nor is it always the same; but it has been ordained that on certain fixed days they shall eat at one time fish, at another time fowl, sometimes the flesh of land animals, and sometimes olives and the most simple side-dishes. 6. They also take turns in ministering to the needs of one another, some of them fishing, others working at the crafts, others occupying themselves in other useful tasks, and still others, with the exception of those who have come to old age, performing the services of the group in a definite cycle. 7. And at the festivals and feasts which are held among them, there are both pronounced and sung in honor of the gods hymns and spoken laudations, and especially in honor of the sun, after whom they name both the island and themselves…

(60) 1. After remaining among this people for seven years, the account continues, Iambulus and his companion were ejected against their will, as being malefactors and as having been educated to evil habits. Consequently, after they had again fitted out their little boat they were compelled to take their leave, and when they had stored up provisions in it they continued their voyage for more than four months. Then they were shipwrecked upon a sandy and marshy region of India. 2. His companion lost his life in the surf, but Iambulus, having found his way to a certain village, was then brought by the natives into the presence of the King at Palibothra, a city which was distant a journey of many days from the sea. 3. And since the king was friendly to the Greeks and devoted to learning he considered Iambulus worthy of cordial welcome; and at length, upon receiving a permission of safe-conduct, he passed over first of all into Persia and later arrived safe in Greece. Now Iambulus felt that these matters deserved to be written down, and he added to his account not a few facts about India, facts of which all other men were ignorant at that time».

**5. The Island of Nysa, Dionysus’ homeland**

In his book III Diodorus reporting the author Dionysius gave a description of the island where Dionysus was reared:

 (67) 5. Thymoetes, the son of Thymoetes, the son of Laomedon, who lived at the same time as Orpheus, wandered over many regions of the inhabited world, and penetrated to the western part of Libya[[11]](#footnote-11) as far as the ocean. He also visited Nysa, where the ancient natives of the city relate that Dionysus was reared there, and, after he had learned from the Nysaeans of the deeds of this god one and all, he composed the "Phrygian poem," as it is called, wherein he made use of the archaic manner both of speech and of letters…

(68) 1. Dionysius, then, continues his account as follows : Ammon, King of that part of Libya, married a daughter of Uranus who was called Rhea and was a sister of Cronus and the other Titans. And once when Ammon was going about his kingdom, near the Ceraunian Mountains, as they are called, he came upon a maiden of unusual beauty whose name was Amaltheia. 2. And becoming enamored of her he lay with the maiden and begat a son (Dionysus) of marvelous beauty as well as bodily vigor... 4. Now Ammon, fearing the jealousy of Rhea, concealed the affair and brought the boy secretly to a certain city called Nysa, which was at a great distance from those parts. 5. This city lies on a certain island which is surrounded by the river Triton and is precipitous on all sides save at one place where there is a narrow pass which bears the name "Nysaean Gates." The land of the island is rich, is traversed at intervals by pleasant meadows and watered by abundant streams from springs, and possesses every kind of fruit-bearing trees and the wild vine in abundance, which for the most part grows up trees. 6. The whole region, moreover, has a fresh and pure air and is furthermore exceedingly healthful; and for this reason its inhabitants are the longest lived of any in those parts. The entrance into the island is like a glen at its beginning, being thickly shaded by lofty trees growing close together, so that the sun never shines at all through the close-set branches but only the radiance of its light may be seen.

(69) 1. Everywhere along the lanes, the account continues, springs of water gush forth of exceeding sweetness, making the place most pleasant to those who desire to tarry there. Further in there is a cave, circular in shape and of marvelous size and beauty. For above and all about it rises a crag of immense height, formed of rocks of different colors; for the rocks lie in bands and send forth a bright gleam, some like that purple which comes from the sea, some bluish and others like every other kind of brilliant hue, the result being that there is not a color to be seen among men which is not visible in that place. 2. Before the entrance grow marvelous trees, some fruit-bearing, others evergreen, and all of them fashioned by nature for no other end than to delight the eye; and in them nest every kind of birds of pleasing color and most charming songs… 3. When passed the entrance the cave is seen to widen out and to be lighted all about by the rays of the sun, and all kinds of flowering plants grow there, especially the cassia and every other kind which has the power to preserve its fragrance throughout the year; and in it are also several couches of nymphs, formed of every manner of flowers, made not by hand but by the light touch of Nature herself, in manner meet for a god. 4. Moreover, throughout the whole place round about not a flower or leaf is to be seen which has fallen. Consequently those who gaze upon this spot find not only its aspect delightful but also its fragrance most pleasant”… (70) 1. Now, to this cave, the account runs, Ammon came and brought the child and gave him into the care of Nysa, one of the daughters of Aristaeus; and he appointed Aristaeus to be the guardian of the child, he being a man who excelled in understanding, and in self-control, and in all learning.

**6. The Island of Meroe in Sudan**

The five islands just described have many points in common, for the simple reason that they correspond to the same place: the ancient Island of Meroe in the present North Sudan.

Indeed the Island of Meroe which was widely described by Greek and Latin authors did not stand in the middle of the sea. It was the name given in ancient times to a territory surrounded by three rivers[[12]](#footnote-12): the White Nile at West, its tributary the Atbara River at Northeast and the Blue Nile at South. It is now the District of Keraba in the State of Butana (230 km north of Khartoum).

Herodotus was the first to mention it in his description of the Nile Valley (II, 29) “4. The country above Elephantine now begins to be inhabited by Ethiopians: half the people of the island are Ethiopians, and half Egyptians. Near the island is a great lake[[13]](#footnote-13), on whose shores live nomadic Ethiopians. After crossing this, you come to the stream of the Nile, which empties into this lake. 5. Then you disembark and journey along the river bank for forty days; for there are sharp projecting rocks in the Nile and many reefs, through which no boat can pass. 6. Having traversed this part in forty days as I have said, you take boat again and so travel for twelve days until you come to a great city called Meroe, which is said to be the capital of all Ethiopia. 7. The people of the place worship no other gods but Zeus[[14]](#footnote-14) and Dionysus, these they greatly honor, and they have a place of divination sacred to Zeus; they send out armies whenever and wherever this god through his oracle commands them».

 Strabo in his « Geographia » (XVII, 2) concerning Ethiopians, reported: « They reverence as gods their kings, who generally stay shut up at home. Their greatest royal seat is Meroe, a city bearing the same name as the island. The island is said to be like an oblong shield in shape. Its size was perhaps exaggerated: about three thousand stadia (540 km) in length and one thousand (180 km) in breadth. The island has both numerous mountains and large forests; it is inhabited partly by nomads, partly by hunters, and partly by farmers. It has mines of copper, iron, gold, and different kinds of precious stones. It is bounded on the Libyan side by large sand-dunes and on the Arabian side by continuous precipices, and above, on the South, by the confluence of the three rivers, the Astaboras, and the Astapus and the Astasobas, and on the North by the next course of the Nile, which extends to Egypt along the aforesaid windings of the river. In the cities the dwellings are made of split pieces of palm-wood woven together, or of brick. And they have quarried salt, as do the Arabians. And, among the plants, the palm, the persea, the ebony, and the ceratia are found in abundance. And they have not only elephants to hunt, but also lions and leopards. They also have serpents which are elephant-fighters, and also many other wild animals; for the animals flee for refuge from the hotter and more arid regions to those that are watery and marshy».

 And Diodorus (I, 33) reported: «1. The Nile also embraces islands within its waters, of which there are many in Ethiopia and one of considerable extent called Meroe, on which there also lies a famous city bearing the same name as the island, which was founded by Cambyses and named by him after his mother Meroe. 2. This island, they say, has the shape of a long shield and in size far surpasses the other islands in these parts; for they state that it is three thousand stades long (540 km) and a thousand (180 km) wide. It also contains not a few cities, the most famous of which is Meroe. 3. Extending the entire length of the island where it is washed by the river there are, on the side towards Libya, the dunes containing an infinite amount of sand, and, on the side towards Arabia, rugged cliffs. There are also to be found in it mines of gold, silver, iron, and copper, and it contains in addition much ebony and every kind of precious stone».

Pliny the Elder (VI, 35: 7-8) wrote: « They also state that the grass in the vicinity of Meroe becomes of a greener and fresher color, and that there is some slight appearance of forests, as also traces of the rhinoceros and elephant. They reported also that the city of Meroe stands at a distance of seventy miles (1000 km) from the first entrance of the island of Meroe, and that close to it is another island, Tadu by name, which forms a harbor facing those who enter the right hand channel of the river. The buildings in the city, they said, were but few in number, and they stated that a female, whose name was Candace, ruled over the district, that name having passed from queen to queen for many years. They related also that there was a temple of Jupiter Hammon there, held in great veneration, besides smaller shrines erected in honor of him throughout all the country. In addition to these particulars, they were informed that in the days of the Ethiopian dominion, the Island of Meroe enjoyed great renown, and that, according to tradition, it was in the habit of maintaining two hundred thousand armed men, and four thousand artisans. The kings of Ethiopia are said even at the present day to be forty-five in number. The whole of this country had successively the names of Etheria, Atlantia, and last of all, Ethiopia, from Ethiops, the son of Vulcan”.

Flavius Josephus, in his book "Antiquities of the Jews" (II, 10:2) about a military campaign of Moses against the Ethiopians, described Meroe with a very particular structure that led us to identify it with the Atlantis island of Plato[[15]](#footnote-15) : “Now when the Egyptian army had once tasted of this prosperous success, by the means of Moses, they did not slacken their diligence, insomuch that the Ethiopians were in danger of being reduced to slavery, and all sorts of destruction; and at length they retired to Saba, which was a royal city of Ethiopia, which Cambyses afterwards named Meroe[[16]](#footnote-16), after the name of his own sister. The place was to be besieged with very great difficulty, since it was both encompassed by the Nile quite round, and the other rivers, Astapus and Astaboras, made it a very difficult thing for such as attempted to pass over them; for the city was situate in a retired place, and was inhabited after the manner of an island, being encompassed with a strong wall, and having the rivers to guard them from their enemies, and having great ramparts between the wall and the rivers, insomuch, that when the waters come with the greatest violence, it can never be drowned; which ramparts make it next to impossible for even such as are gotten over the rivers to take the city”.

Finally, Heliodorus of Emesa, an author of the 3rd century A.D., in his novel “Theagenes and Chariclea. Ethiopian story" (book X) also gave us his description of the place: «Meroe the chief city of Ethiopia is a three-cornered island about where do run navigable rivers, the Nile, and the Astabora and the Asasoba. At the topmost point is the Nile, which there divides itself into two parts; the other two rivers run on both sides one by the other, and then meeting fall into the Nile, and yield their waters and their name. The island is very large and almost imitates the mainland, for it is three hundred three score and fifteen miles (750 km) long and six score and five (250 km) broad, and it engenders beasts of wonderful greatness of all kinds and especially elephants. Trees grow there without the work of men, and they produce fruits as good as anywhere else. Palm trees are much higher than elsewhere and bear big dates. Corn and wheat reach such tallness that they will hide a man on horseback and even sometimes though he sits upon a camel. And they multiply so strongly that one grain can produce up to three hundred others.”

 The inhabitants called gymnosophists their priests of God Pan. And they sacrificed to the Sun, the Moon and Bacchus (Dionysus), gods protecting Ethiopia.

**CONCLUSION**

It is true that all these stories have in some ways the characteristics of myths. And yet we can recognize there every time the same place: the Island of Meroe at North of the present Sudan, as Eratosthenes located it (cited by Strabo XVI, XVII, 4: 8 and 2: 2). However, it is likely that Eratosthenes, as Plato himself for his Atlantis, drew much of his information from the "Periegesis" of Hecataeus of Miletus, author of the 3rd century B.C.[[17]](#footnote-17), whose work is now lost. It is the reason for which we can rightly so identify the Island of Meroe[[18]](#footnote-18) (aka Atlantis) with the Sacred Island of Euhemerus, where the lives of the historical figures at the origin of the major Greek gods were engraved on a column of gold.

1. **Some very mortal gods**

Plutarch said expressly that Euhemerus reported the story of all the gods; and Lactantius, as Augustinus expressed the same way. The fragments which remain from his book "The Sacred Inscription" show us that it dealt with Ouranus, Cronus, Zeus, Hera, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Aphrodite, Hermes, Ammon, Demeter, Dionysus, and it did not forget some deities of a lower order, such as Cadmus and Harmonia. All these divine characters were treated as men: Euhemerus spoke of their birth, reported their deeds and actions, indicated the countries they inhabited and even to their tombs. Each had once been Kings and Queens; others, their ministers, their generals and their admirals.

**1. Lactantius**

This author of the 4th century B.C. reported in the Book I of his "Divine Institutions”: « (14) These are the words of Ennius: Afterwards Saturn[[19]](#footnote-19) married Ops. Titan, who was older than Saturn, demands the kingdom for himself. Upon this their mother Vesta, and their sisters Ceres and Ops, advise Saturn not to give up the kingdom to his brother. Then Titan, who was inferior in person to Saturn, on that account, and because he saw that his mother and sisters were using their endeavors that Saturn might reign, yielded the kingdom to him. He therefore made an agreement with Saturn, that if any male children should be born to him, he would not bring them up. He did so for this purpose that the kingdom might return to his own sons. Then, when a son was first born to Saturn, they slew him. Afterwards twins were born, Jupiter and Juno. Upon this they present Juno to the sight of Saturn, and secretly hide Jupiter, and give him to Vesta to be brought up, concealing him from Saturn. Ops also brings forth Neptune without the knowledge of Saturn, and secretly hides him. In the same manner Ops brings forth twins by a third birth, Pluto and Glauca. Pluto in Latin is Dispater; others call him Orcus. Upon this they show to Saturn the daughter Glauca, and conceal and hide the son Pluto. Then Glauca dies while yet young. This is the lineage of Jupiter and his brothers, as these things are written, and the relationship is handed down to us after this manner from the sacred narrative. Also shortly afterwards he introduces these things: Then Titan, when he learned that sons were born to Saturn, and secretly brought up, secretly takes with him his sons, who are called Titans, and seizes his brother Saturn and Ops, and encloses them within a wall, and places over them a guard. The truth of this history is taught by the Eritrean Sibyl, who speaks almost the same things, with a few discrepancies, which do not affect the subject-matter itself. Therefore Jupiter is freed from the charge of the greatest wickedness, according to which he is reported to have bound his father with fetters; for this was the deed of his uncle Titan, because he, contrary to his promise and oath, had brought up male children. The rest of the history is thus put together. It is said that Jupiter, when grown up, having heard that his father and mother had been surrounded with a guard and imprisoned, came with a great multitude of Cretans, and conquered Titan and his sons in an engagement, and rescued his parents from imprisonment, restored the kingdom to his father, and thus returned into Crete. Then, after these things, they say that an oracle was given to Saturn, bidding him to take heed lest his son should expel him from the kingdom; that he, for the sake of weakening the oracle and avoiding the danger, laid an ambush for Jupiter to kill him; that Jupiter, having learned the plot, claimed the kingdom for himself afresh, and banished Saturn…

 (22) Jupiter himself, when he had gained possession of power, arrived at such insolence that he built temples in honor of himself in many places. For when he went about to different lands, on his arrival in each region, he united to himself the kings or princes of the people in hospitality and friendship; and when he was departing from each, he ordered that a shrine should be dedicated to himself in the name of his host, as though the remembrance of their friendship and league could thus be preserved. Thus temples were founded in honor of Jupiter Atabyrius and Jupiter Labrandius; for Atabyrius and Labrandius were his entertainers and assistants in war. Temples were also built to Jupiter Laprius, to Jupiter Molion, to Jupiter Casius, and others, after the same manner. This was a very crafty device on his part, that he might both acquire divine honor for himself, and a perpetual name for his entertainers in conjunction with religious observances. Accordingly they were glad, and cheerfully submitted to his command, and observed annual rites and festivals for the sake of handing down their own name… In this manner Jupiter spread abroad through the world the observance of his own worship, and gave an example for the imitation of others. »

**2. Plutarch**

This Greek writer of the 1st century A.D. told us in his "Moralia" (Treaty of Isis and Osiris) about the struggles of the Egyptian goddess Isis against her brother-in-law Typhon, murderer of her husband Osiris. Eventually his son, the young God Horus heir to the throne, overcame the usurper: (19) « Now the battle, as they relate, lasted many days and Horus prevailed. Isis, however, to whom Typhon was delivered in chains, did not cause him to be put to death, but released him and let him go[[20]](#footnote-20). Horus could not endure this with equanimity, he laid hands upon his mother and wrested the royal diadem from her head; but Hermes put upon her a helmet like the head of a cow[[21]](#footnote-21). Typhon formally accused Horus of being an illegitimate child[[22]](#footnote-22), but with the help of Hermes to plead his cause it was decided by the gods that he was legitimate. Typhon was then overcome in two other battles».

And Plutarch added : (20) «These accounts do not, in least, resemble the sort of loose fictions and frivolous fabrications which poets and writers of prose evolve from themselves, after the manner of spiders, interweaving and extending their unestablished first thoughts, but that these contain narrations of certain puzzling events and experiences, you will of yourself understand… (22) Many things like these are narrated and pointed out, and if there be some who think that in these are commemorated the dire and momentous acts and experiences of kings and despots who, by reason of their pre-eminent virtue or might, laid claim to the glory of being styled gods, and later had to submit to the vagaries of fortune, then these persons employ the easiest means of escape from the narrative, and not ineptly do they transfer the disrepute from the gods to men; and in this they have the support of the common traditions. The Egyptians, in fact, have a tradition that Hermes had thin arms and big elbows, that Typhon was red in complexion, Horus white, and Osiris dark, as if they had been in their nature but mortal men. Moreover, they give to Osiris the title of general, and the title of pilot to Canopus, from whom they say that the star derives its name…»

1. **Diodorus Siculus**

Eusebius of Cesarea reported this fragment of the now lost sixth book of Diodorus. Citing Euhemerus, he said in his “Preparations for the Gospel” (I: 2) “ As regards the gods, then, men of ancient times have handed down to later generations two different conceptions: Certain of the gods, they say, are eternal and imperishable, such as the sun and moon and the other stars of the heavens, and the winds as well and whatever else possesses a nature similar to theirs; for of each of these the genesis and duration are from everlasting to everlasting. But the other gods, we are told, were terrestrial beings who attained to immortal honor and fame because of their benefactions to mankind, such as Heracles, Dionysus, Aristaeus, and the others who were like them. 3. Regarding these terrestrial gods many and varying accounts have been handed down by the writers of history and mythology. 4. Of the historians, Euhemerus, who composed the Sacred History, has written a special treatise about them… He travelled southward as far as the ocean; for setting sail from Arabia the Blest he voyaged through the ocean for a considerable number of days and was carried to the shore of some islands in the sea, one of which bore the name of Panchaea. On this island he saw the Panchaeans who dwell there, who excel in piety and honor the gods with the most magnificent sacrifices and with remarkable votive offerings of silver and of gold. 5. The island is sacred to the gods, and there are a number of other objects on it which are admired both for their antiquity and for the great skill of their workmanship, regarding which severally we have written in the preceding books. 6. There is also on the island, situated upon an exceedingly high hill, a sanctuary of Zeus Triphylius, which was established by him during the time when he was king of the entire inhabited world and was still in the company of men. 7. And in this temple there is a stele of gold on which is inscribed in summary, in the writing employed by the Panchaeans, the deeds of Uranus and Cronus and Zeus. 8. Euhemerus goes on to say that Uranus was the first to be King, that he was an honorable man and beneficent, who was versed in the movement of the stars, and that he was also the first to honor the gods of the heavens with sacrifices, whence he was called Uranus or "Heaven." 9. There were born to him by his wife Hestia two sons, Titan and Cronus, and two daughters, Rhea and Demeter. Cronus became king after Uranus, and marrying Rhea he begat Zeus and Hera and Poseidon. And Zeus, on succeeding to the kingship, married Hera and Demeter and Themis, and by them he had children, the Curetes by the first named, Persephone by the second, and Athena by the third. 10. And going to Babylon he was entertained by Belus, and after that he went to the island of Panchaea, which lies in the ocean, and here he set up an altar to Uranus, the founder of his family. From there he passed through Syria and came to Casius, who was ruler of Syria at that time, and who gave his name to Mt. Casius. And coming to Cilicia he conquered in battle Cilix, the governor of the region, and he visited very many other nations, all of which paid honor to him and publicly proclaimed him a god."

 (II: 1) “Regarding the gods, the most learned Diodorus also says in his writings that those gods, whom men were wont to address as immortal, considering them to be so because of their beneficences, had indeed been born human beings; but that certain of them had acquired the appellations they have after the lands they conquered”.

**CONCLUSION**

According to the reports of these authors, it appears that the so-called gods and goddesses had in fact many problems with the members of their families, sometimes numerous. And also they were contempory of really terrestrial personalities.

1. **Egypt the birthplace of gods**

We can recognize in Greeks and Romans gods the same defects as in humans, and it was already the same for Egyptian gods. Currently, most Egyptologists are very skeptical about the reports of ancient authors, although they would be the best placed persons to meet there historical characters, as we shall see. It is the reason why we intend to demonstrate that the main characters in the mythology were major actors in Egypt, before to be honored later as divinities.

1. **Isis et Osiris**

This famous couple of Egyptian gods, Isis and her brother-husband Osiris, both parents of God Horus, may be the earliest example of deified mortals. God Seth must be added in the role of the inveterate disturber and challenger of the royal power. The names of these gods appear in Egypt as early as the Old Kingdom, but from the New Kingdom under the reign of the Ramses, the myth seems to be repossessed to illustrate under encoded form a period particularly dark but essential in Egypt history. The tale of ramesside time reported that God Seth accused his nephew Horus, heir to the throne of Thebes, to be a bastard because he was born after the assassination of his father Osiris. After many adventures and long deliberations of the assembly of gods, Horus ascended to the throne with the unwavering support of his mother Isis. Seth was thus defeated, but Isis did not put him to death, thus arousing the wrath of her son Horus who cut off her head." (In other words, he seized legitimately the royal power after the regency of his mother).

Indeed, we can remark that all of these events happened in Egypt history at the time of the recovery of the North of the land by the Theban power against the Hyksos invaders. This troubled period that covers the end of the Second Intermediate Period and the beginning of the New Kingdom, circa 1550 B.C. is still very badly known, from the view of Egyptologists. But there again, ancient authors can come to the help of archaeologists, as we shall see.

So, according various late texts[[23]](#footnote-23), in that time Queen Ah-hotep[[24]](#footnote-24) and her brother-husband Pharaoh Seqenenre of the 17th Dynasty, who ruled Upper Egypt, were of Asiatic[[25]](#footnote-25) origin as close relatives of the Hyksos rulers occupying the North of the land. They had already lost several sons in infancy, when the King was killed in an ambush instigated by his parent from the North who wanted to seize the throne of Thebes. Just about the death of the King, the Queen gave birth prematurely to a son of weak constitution, she became regent. To protect Upper Egypt against the ambitions of conquest of the enemy from the North, the Queen appealed then to Prince Kamose, experienced in the art of war.

Officially, we do not know the family of this character whose mummy fall into dust at opening the coffin[[26]](#footnote-26); but according to Plutarch (Moralia, Treaty of Isis and Osiris, 36) he could be adopted by a previous pharaoh in exile in Nubia, who wanted to make him his heir, able to recover by arms the Egypt throne. As for his real parents, this is undoubtedly a particularly well-kept family secret since Kamose was born of incest between Queen Ah-hotep and her own father the Hyksos King Apophis Aaouserre. This facts joined the Greek legend of Princess Io seduced by Zeus, and then changed into a cow before delivering the bull Epaphus in Egypt; as much as the name of Prince Kamose in hieroglyphs means “generated by a bull”.

Kamose, fiery and talented commander in chief, drove the Asiatic occupier Hyksos out of Egypt. Become the most powerful character of the kingdom, when his half-brother Ahmose attained his majority to rule, Kamose refused to render him the sovereignty over the territories he had released. Having rebelled against the royal power of Thebes, Kamose and his supporters were finally besieged in the fortress of Avaris by loyalist Egyptian troops and had to leave Egypt for the Asiatic territories from whence their Amorite ancestors had come.

We see that these characters and historical facts are fully reflected in the myth of Isis (Queen Ah-hotep) and Osiris (the murdered pharaoh Seqenenre), as well as their son Horus (Pharaoh Ahmose) persecuted by his uncle Seth (Kamose).

1. **Osiris-Dionysus**

Diodorus (I, 11: 3; 13: 5) reported that Greeks named Osiris, Dionysus[[27]](#footnote-27). But this time it is another Osiris who was not the husband of Isis, although he was also a major actor in Egypt history, as we shall see.

Firstly, here are the texts of Diodorus that relate to this character:

(I, 15) 6. « Osiris, they say, was also interested in agriculture and was reared in Nysa, a city of Arabia Felix near Egypt, being a son of Zeus; and the name which he bears among the Greeks is derived both from his father and from the birthplace, since he is called Dionysus.[[28]](#footnote-28)… 8. And the discovery of the vine, they say, was made by him near Nysa, and that, having further devised the proper treatment of its fruit, he was the first to drink wine and taught mankind at large the culture of the vine and the use of wine, as well as the way to harvest the grape and to store wine. The one most highly honored by him was Hermes, who was endowed with unusual ingenuity for devising things capable of improving the social life of man.[[29]](#footnote-29)

(I, 19) 5. Now when Osiris arrived at the borders of Ethiopia, he curbed the river by dykes on both banks, so that at flood-time it might not form stagnant pools over the land to its detriment, but that the flood-water might be let upon the countryside, in a gentle flow as it might be needed, through gates which he had built. 6. After that he continued his march through Arabia along the shore of the Red Sea as far as India and the limits of the inhabited world. 7. He also founded not a few cities in India, one of which he named Nysa, wishing to leave there a memorial of that city where he had been reared. He also planted ivy in the Indian Nysa, and throughout India and those countries which border upon it the plant to this day is still to be found only in this region. 8. And many other signs of his stay he left in that country, which have led the Indians of a later time to lay claim to the god and say that he was by birth a native of India. (20) 1. Osiris also took an interest in hunting elephants and everywhere left behind him inscribed steles[[30]](#footnote-30) telling of his campaign.”

And Diodorus added in his book III : (66) 4. «I am not unaware that also those inhabitants of Libya who dwell on the shore of the ocean lay claim to the birthplace of the god (Dionysus), and point out that Nysa and all the stories which the myths record are found among themselves, and many witnesses to this statement, they say, remain in the land down to our own lifetime; and I also know that many of the ancient Greek writers of myths and poets, and not a few of the later historians as well, agree with this in their accounts. 5. Consequently, in order not to omit anything which history records about Dionysus, we shall present in summary what is told by the Libyans and those Greek historians whose writings are in accord with these and with that Dionysius who composed an account out of the ancient fabulous tales…

(70) 7. Dionysus, however, being reared according to the account in Nysa and instructed in the best pursuits, became not only conspicuous for his beauty and bodily strength, but skilful also in the arts and quick to make every useful invention…

(71) 1. Now, when the valor and fame of Dionysus became spread abroad, Rhea his stepmother, angered at Ammon, strongly desiring to get Dionysus into her power; but being unable to carry out her design she forsook Ammon and, departing to her brothers, the Titans, she married Cronus her brother. 2. Cronus, then, upon the solicitation of Rhea, made war with the aid of the Titans upon Ammon, and in the pitched battle which followed Cronus gained the upper hand, whereas Ammon, who was hard pressed by lack of supplies, fled to Crete, and marrying there Crete, the daughter of one of the Curetes who were the kings at that time, gained the sovereignty over those regions, and to the island, which before that time had been called Idaea, and he gave the name Crete to his wife. 3. As for Cronus, the myth relates, after his victory he ruled harshly over these regions which had formerly been Ammon's, and set out with a great force against Nysa and Dionysus. Now Dionysus, on learning both of the reverses suffered by his father and of the uprising of the Titans against himself, gathered soldiers from Nysa, two hundred of whom were foster-brothers of his and were distinguished for their courage and their loyalty to him; and to these he added from neighboring peoples both the Libyans and the Amazons[[31]](#footnote-31), regarding the latter of whom we have already observed that it is reputed that they were distinguished for their courage and first of all campaigned beyond the borders of their country and subdued with arms a large part of the inhabited world. 4. These women, they say, were urged on to the alliance especially by Athena, because their zeal for their ideal of life was like her own, seeing that the Amazons clung tenaciously to manly courage and virginity. The force was divided into two parts, the men having Dionysus as their general and the women being under the command of Athena, and coming with their army upon the Titans they joined battle. The struggle having proved sharp and many having fallen on both sides, Cronus finally was wounded and victory lay with Dionysus, who had distinguished himself in the battle. 5. Thereupon the Titans fled to the regions which had once been possessed by Ammon, and Dionysus gathered up a multitude of captives and returned to Nysa. Here, drawing up his force in arms about the prisoners, he brought a formal accusation against the Titans and gave them every reason to suspect that he was going to execute the captives. But when he got them free from the charges and allowed them to make their choice either to join him in his campaign or to go scot free, they all chose to join him, and because their lives had been spared contrary to their expectation they venerated him like a god. 6. Dionysus, then, taking the captives singly and giving them a libation of wine, required of all of them an oath that they would join in the campaign without treachery and fight manfully until death;...

(72) : «1. Now when Dionysus was on the point of setting out against Cronus and his force was already passing out of Nysa, his guardian Aristaeus, the myth relates, offered a sacrifice and so was the first man to sacrifice to him as to a god. And companions of his on the campaign, they say, were also the most nobly born of the Nysaeans, those, namely, who bear the name Silenus. 2. For the first man of all, they say, to be king of Nysa was Silenus, but his ancestry was unknown to all men because of its antiquity. This man had a tail at the lower part of his back and his descendants also regularly carried this distinguishing mark because of their participation in his nature… Dionysus, then, set out with his army, and after passing through a great extent of waterless land, no small portion of which was desert and infested with wild beasts, he encamped beside a city of Libya named Zabirna…

4. Then Dionysus advanced against the Titans, maintaining strict discipline on his journeying, treating all the inhabitants kindly, and, in a word, making it clear that his campaign was for the purpose of punishing the impious and of conferring benefits upon the entire human race. The Libyans, admiring his strict discipline and high-mindedness, provided his followers with supplies in abundance and joined in the campaign with the greatest eagerness.

5. As the army approached the city of the Ammonians, Cronus, who had been defeated in a pitched battle before the walls, set fire to the city in the night, intending to destroy utterly the ancestral palace of Dionysus, and himself taking with him his wife Rhea and some of his friends who had aided him in the struggle, he stole unobserved out of the city. Dionysus, however, showed no such a temper as this; for though he took both Cronus and Rhea captive, not only did he waive the charges against them because of his kinship to them, but he entreated them for the future to maintain both the good-will and the position of parents towards him and to live in a common home with him, held in honor above all others. 6. Rhea, accordingly, loved him like a son[[32]](#footnote-32) for all the rest of her life, but the good-will of Cronus was a pretense. And about this time there was born to both of these a son who was called Zeus, and he was honored greatly by Dionysus and at a later time, because of his high achievements, was made king over all the country...

(74) 1. As for the first Dionysus, the son of Ammon and Amaltheia, these, then, are the deeds he accomplished as the Libyans recount the history of them; the second Dionysus, as men say, who was born to Zeus by Io, the daughter of Inachus, became king of Egypt and appointed the initiatory rites of that land; and the third and last was sprung from Zeus and Semele and became, among the Greeks, the rival of the first two. 2. Imitating the principles of both the others he led an army over all the inhabited world and left behind him not a few pillars to mark the bounds of his campaign; the land he also brought under cultivation by means of the plantings which he made, and he selected women to be his soldiers, as the ancient Dionysus had done in the case of the Amazons. He went beyond the others in developing the orgiastic practices, and as regards the rites of initiation, he improved some of them, and others he introduced for the first time. 3. But since in the long passage of time the former discoverers had become unknown to the majority of men, this last Dionysus fell heir to both the plan of life and the fame of his predecessors of the same name… 6. To support the view that there were several of the name Dionysus the effort is made to cite, along with the other proofs, the battle waged against the Titans. For since all men agree that Dionysus fought on the side of Zeus in his war against the Titans, it will not do at all, they argue, to date the generations of the Titans in the time when Semele lived or to declare that Cadmus, the son of Agenor, was older than the gods of Olympus. Such, then, is the myth which the Libyans recount concerning Dionysus».

Indeed, this Osiris-Dionysus does correspond exactly to what we know about Prince Kamose who was the first Heracles, namely the glory of Hera, his mother Queen Ah-hotep, aka Io of Argos priestess of the Moon and mother of a bull in Egypt.

**3. The Egyptian Heracles**

As according to Diodorus concerning Heracles (III, 74): « 4. For there were two persons of an earlier period who have worn the same name, the most ancient Heracles who, according to the myths, was born in Egypt, subdued with arms a large part of the inhabited world, and set up the stele[[33]](#footnote-33) which is in Libya; and the second, who was one of the Idaean Dactyls of Crete and a wizard with some knowledge of military generalship, was the founder of the Olympic Games; but the third and last, who was born of Alcmene and Zeus a short time before the Trojan War, visited a large part of the inhabited world while he was serving Eurystheus and carrying out his commands. 5. And after he had successfully completed all the Labors, he also set up the stele which is in Europe, but because he bore the same name as the other two and pursued the same plan of life as did they, in the course of time and upon his death he inherited the exploits of the more ancient persons of the name, as if there had been in all the previous ages but one Heracles. ».

 And Diodorus also has reported : (I, 24) : «1. Heracles, for instance, was by birth an Egyptian, who by virtue of his manly vigor visited a large part of the inhabited world and set up his stele in Libya; 2. and their proofs of this assertion they endeavor to draw from the Greeks themselves. For inasmuch as it is generally accepted that Heracles fought on the side of the Olympian gods in their war against the Giants[[34]](#footnote-34), they say that it in no way accords with the age of the Earth for the Giants to have been born in the period when, as the Greeks, Heracles lived, which was a generation before the Trojan War, but rather at the time, as their own account gives it, when mankind first appeared on the earth; for from the latter time to the present the Egyptians reckon more than ten thousand years, but from the Trojan War less than twelve hundred.... 3. They also designate him as the son of Zeus, but about the identity of his mother they say that they know nothing. 4. The son of Alcmene, who was born more than ten thousand years later and was called Alcaeus at birth, in later life became known instead as Heracles, not because he gained glory (kleos) by the aid of Hera, as Matris says, but because, having avowed the same principles as the ancient Heracles, he inherited that one's fame and name as well. 5. The account of the Egyptians agrees also with the tradition which has been handed down among the Greeks since very early times, to the effect that Heracles cleared the earth of wild beasts, a story which is in no way suitable for man who lived in approximately the period of the Trojan War, when most parts of the inhabited world had already been reclaimed from their wild state by agriculture and cities and the multitude of men settled everywhere over the land. 6. Accordingly this reclamation of the land suits better a man who lived in early times, when men were still held in subjection by the vast numbers of wild beasts, a state of affairs which was especially true in the case of Egypt, the upper part of which is to this day desert and infested with wild beasts. 7. Indeed it is reasonable to suppose that the first concern of Heracles was for this country as his birthplace, and that, after he had cleared the land of wild beasts, he presented it to the peasants and for this benefaction was accorded divine honors. 8 And they say that Perseus also was born in Egypt, and that the origin of Isis is transferred by the Greeks to Argos in the myth which tells of that Io who was changed into a heifer.”

**4. Sesostris-Sesoosis**

And it is the same man who gave rise to the epic of the mysterious Pharaoh Sesostris-Sesoosis that Egyptologists assimilated to a mixture of the lives of three Egyptian rulers from different eras: Sesostris I and Sesostris III of the 12th Dynasty and Ramses II of the 19th Dynasty, because of their military campaigns in Sudan and the Middle East. Herodotus (II, 102-110), was the first to report the exploits of this great warrior who erected monumental statues at his effigy and steles celebrating his own glory in each conquered land. Being the first to use warships sailing on the Red Sea, he submitted Arabia and was recognized as King by Ethiopians (Nubians). He also campaigned in Asia Minor as far to the Caucasus Mountains and brought back to Egypt many captives that he used as slaves to carry out major equipment in the country.

Diodorus (I, 53-58), named him Sesoosis and brought new elements concerning his military education in his youth, his conquests in Asia as far as India and all the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. He also assigned him great talents of administrator from whom Egypt had its laws. But we learn that after failing perish in a fire ignited by his own brother, he became blind in his old age and voluntarily went to death.

And Strabo in his Geography (XVI, 4:4) confirmed the existence of a stele erected by Sesostris during his passage through the Straits of Bab el Mandeb (i.e. "the Columns of Heracles) at the outlet of the Red Sea[[35]](#footnote-35): "There can be seen, they say, a stele of the King of Egypt Sesostris with an inscription in hieroglyphics commemorating the passage of the Straits by the conqueror. It is obvious that Sesostris, after having conquered, he the first, Ethiopia and the Troglodytes, went to Arabia and departed thence to traverse triumphantly across Asia, as attest to this the entrenchments of Sesostris found in many places in this region, and so many shrines also, obviously built on the model of Egyptian temples. “

We know the exploits of proud Kamose thanks to his own account of his recovery of the North[[36]](#footnote-36) against the Hyksos occupants. So, who else than he could proclaim in every country to commemorate his victories: "This land the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Sesoosis, subdued with his own arms”? (Diodorus I, 55: 7).

 But why did ancient authors call him Sesostris ? The reason is that on one of the two Kamose’s steles found in Karnak, a cartouche of Sesostris I subsisted on the slice of the spoofed block, while in the text of the front there was only the reign name of the hero Ouadj-kheper-râ[[37]](#footnote-37), without his birth name Kamose.

**5. Minos and the Minotaur**

According to Diodorus (IV, 77: 1-4) Pasiphae[[38]](#footnote-38), the wife of Minos King of Crete, fall in love with a bull. The ingenious Daedalus to satisfy this passion of Pasiphae, built a machine with like the form of a cow. Pasiphae entered inside and by this subterfuge she had a secret intercourse with the bull, and bore the Minotaur. This monster was biform: he had, from the head to the shoulders, the figure of a bull, and for the rest it looked like a man. To serve as home to this monster, Daedalus built the labyrinth, whose winding passages misled all those who entered. And the worst of all: Seven boys and seven girls were delivered every nine years to the Minotaur, who were the tribute the Athenians must paid to Cretians.

Euripides in his drama “The Cretans” said that the Minotaur with his double body was a monstrous being, the mixture of two natures, the bull and the man. Indeed, it is the meaning of the name Kamose in hieroglyphs 'the one who was generated by a bull’.

Thucydides (I : 4) reported : “Minos is, indeed, the oldest figure known by the tradition, who had a fleet and conquered, for the most part, the mastery of the sea today Greek. He established his dominance over the Cyclades and installed in most of them colonies: he expelled the Carian occupants, then he instituted there as heads his own sons. By a natural consequence he worked with all his power to rid the sea of pirates to ensure the return of his revenues".

But according to Plutarch (Life of Theseus, 16: 3): « Minos was always abused and reviled in the Attic theatres, and it did not avail him either that Hesiod called him "the greatest of the kings," or that Homer styled him "a confidant of Zeus,". But the tragic poets prevailed, and from platform and stage showered obloquy down upon him, as a man of cruelty and violence. And yet they say that Minos was a king and lawgiver, and that Rhadamanthus was a judge under him, and a guardian of the principles of justice defined by him».

 It is a fact, that nothing can better suit to describe the complex personality of Kamose, this hero of Egypt history, a great warrior and unknown conqueror, whose exploits were misattributed to Pharaoh Sesostris I of the 12th Dynasty, while he could be recognized in the character of Dionysus, the god of Nysa. Since Kamose Ouahm menou[[39]](#footnote-39) (his reign name from which came his nickname of Menes in Egypt, Minos for the Greeks) spent most of his life in Sudan in the Island of Meroe and wandered during forty years all over the inhabited world, before returning to Egypt to ascend the throne of Thebes under the name of Thuthmose (Ist) at the age of 67.[[40]](#footnote-40)

 As a consequence, Theseus, who killed the Minotaur, is Thuthmose, aka Kamose himself who, at the age of wisdom, had defeated the bull which was in him, this double character, pedophiliac and sluttish, author of the worst crimes in his youth. Ariadne is the Queen of Egypt Ah-hotep, at a time his sister, his mistress, and his doubling incestuous mother[[41]](#footnote-41) as they had the same father, the Syrian (Hyksos) Apophis Aâouserrâ. Thus, the Cretan tale of the son of Minos, the Minotaur, was an allegory referring to an embarrassing historical reality that should remain secret.

**CONCLUSION**:  **Basing the myths, the reality of a distant past**

In the book of Euhemerus "The Sacred Inscription", the history of the gods was largely based on a report found in the Island of Panchaea which by its antiquity constituted the actual archives of paganism. From there, the epic of the gods was spread in various parts of the ancient world. In addition, these characters had left traces of their passage which were reflected in the monuments that the author indicated everywhere where you could find them.

Diodorus (I, 23) asserted «It is, said, that the Greeks appropriated the heroes and the most famous gods, as well as colonies that come from Egypt." And Herodotus (II, 46) recalled: "Because the main Greek gods were born in Egypt and Zeus the greatest of them was also called Dionysus because he had lived in Nyse”[[42]](#footnote-42). This place was later called the Island of Meroe[[43]](#footnote-43), derived from the Egyptian «mer wret» the big lake, after the great flood which Plato speaks in his account of Atlantis[[44]](#footnote-44).

And to conclude with Diodorus (III, 9):  “1. With regard to the gods, the Ethiopians who dwell above Meroe entertain two opinions: they believe that some of them, such as the Sun and the Moon and the universe as a whole, have a nature which is eternal and imperishable, but others of them, they think, share a mortal nature and have come to receive immortal honors because of their virtue and the benefactions which they have bestowed upon all mankind. 2. For instance, they revere Isis and Pan, and also Heracles and Zeus, considering that these deities in particular were benefactors of the race of men”.

Herodotus, Diodorus and Plutarch perhaps knew more than they wrote, because some historical facts should remain secret. They were the basis of the initiation rites like the Mysteries of Isis-Ceres and Mithras, the god to whom the initiate should sacrifice a bull to reach immortality.

 Thérèse Ghembaza

1. Cited by Lactantius « Divine Institutions » I: 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. R. de Block, Évhémère, son livre et sa doctrine, Dissertation in the Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de Liège, 1876. On line : <http://www.archive.org/details/evhmresonlivOObloc> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. According to Sextus Empiricus reporting Euhemerus in his book “Against teaching sciences”, the deification of these men was not due to the honors of immortality that other men would have granted them, but to a title that they themselves would be awarded. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Romans’ gods resulted from a syncretism of Greek gods with ancient Etruscan deities. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This Crete is not the Mediterranean Greek Island, but the land of Curetes, present Kurru inhabiting North Sudan, near the Fourth Cataract. See on line my article “Kamose-Thuthmose, the first Egyptian ruler of Kush” page 6 : <http://www.antiqua91.fr/wa_files/ATLAS_202e_20Partie.doc> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Greek Heracles was named Hercules by Romans. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See on line my article “Plato’s Atlantis or the island of Meroe » : <http://www.antiqua91.fr/wa_files/MeroeCHAPTER_20III.doc> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This looks like the chimney of a volcano as those of the basaltic columns of Mounts Siemen north-east of present Ethiopia. The Gilgamesh epic described the two twin peaks of Ras Dejen (the Watcher) between which there is a gulf, profound and unexplorable because of rocks falling from its walls. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. In Ancient times people named Ethiopia the whole land south of the frontier of Egypt, from Aswan at least as far as Somalia, including Eritrea and present Ethiopia (ex-Abyssinia that Nubians inhabitants of North Sudan, accuse of usurping their ancient name). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Homer who was considered as the greatest poet in Ancient times. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Here it is East Africa because the African coast was at West for sailors descending the Red Sea towards South. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Indeed, Greeks called νεσος (nesos) île, any territory delimited by rivers as well as by sea. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Lake Tana in Ethiopia from where the Blue Nile originates ? [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Amon the great god of Egyptians and Nubians (Kushites for Egyptians). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See my articles on line : “ Meroe the earliest metropolis of the Land of Kush » :

 <http://antiqua91.fr/wa_files/MeroeCHAPTER_20II.doc> and «Consistency of the Island of Meroe with the Atlas’ kingdom» : <http://antiqua91.fr/wa_files/MeroeCHAPTER_20III.doc> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. It is possible that a woman of the Cambyses’ family was named “mareh” which means “beautiful” in Hebrew. But the name Meroe which is very more ancient could proceed from the Egyptian “mer wret” meaning “the big lake”. See in Egypt the ancient Lake Moeris, present Lake Karun in the Fayum oasis. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Dates of life of the cited authors: Solon 640-558 B.C. ; Hecataeus of Miletus 550-480 B.C. ; Plato 428-347 B.C. ; Eratosthenes 276-194 B. C. ; Strabo 64 av. - 25 A.D. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Meroe was destroyed by a great flood of the Nile, following a major earthquake which has broken its dams and ramparts. Returned out of water, it could be rebuilt from its ruins and restructured to become the royal capital of Kush circa 650 B.C. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The Roman god Saturn was the Greek god Cronos. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Because, according to Plutarch (Moralia, Treaty of Isis and Osiris, 40) “Typhon previously had owned the land of Osiris”. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Plutarch wrote βουκρανος “a cattle head”, but we know that Goddess Isis as Hathor, as well as Io from Argos had ears and horns of cow. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Because he was born after the murder of his father. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See my article « Kamose as Thuthmose I the first Egyptian ruler of Kush p. 11

 <http://www.antiqua91.fr/wa_files/ATLAS_202e_20Partie.doc> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ah-hotep means in Egyptian “the one who honors the Moon”. The Moon god was a minor deity imported from Asia to Egypt where he was associated to the great Egyptian god Thoth. In fact, he was mainly the family god of the rulers of the 17th Dynasty, assimilated to Thoth under the 18th Dynasty. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. From Asia Minor, present Middle East. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Winlock, H.E. - The tombs of the kings of the Seventeenth Dynasty at Thebes. J. Egyptian Archaeology
10 (1924) 217-277. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. And according to Plutarch (Treaty of Isis and Osiris, 35): The epithet applied to Dionysus among the Argives was "Son of the Bull." [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Dio : From Dios, genitive of Zeus, et Nysus, why he was reared in Nysa. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The Greek Hermes was Thoth the great Egyptian god of writing, science and magic, who was associated with the Moon god represented by the crescent Iah likened to a boomerang, and become the armed arm of Thoth (see Diodorus, I, 16). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. There is an ambiguity between Greek and Latin languages : στηλη (steles) in Greek can be translated by columnae in Latin. In fact they were big steles showing a commemorative text engraved in Egyptian hieroglyphs. See also Strabo (XVI, 4: 4) for the Sesostris’ steles in the Straits of Bab el Mandeb. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Presumably, these female Amazons were male Tuareg Amazighen wearing long dark-blue dresses. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. What he really was. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Idem note 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. These Giants born by Ge or GaIa the Earth were the same characters than the Titans (Hyksos) sons of Titeïa, aka Queen Teti-sheri, the grandmother of Kamose the Egyptian Heracles (Seventeenth Dynasty circa 1550 B.C.) [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Herodotus I, 202: 4 «The sea beyond the Pillars of Heracles (the Egyptian), which they call Atlantic, and the Red Sea, are all one”. The name of Atlantic appears here for the first time in ancient texts and obviously it means the Indian Ocean. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Simpson, W. K. (Editor). The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry (3rd edition). New Haven, 2003. pp. 345-50 (translation of Kamose’s texts). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Kamose Wadjkheperrâ means "Flourishing appearance of re" and Sesostris Kheperkarâ "Appearance of the ka of râ". Kamose when ascending the throne of Thebes became Thuthmosis Aâkheperkarâ "Great is the appearance of the ka of râ". So there was probably at least two causes of confusion between Sesostris Ist and Kamose-Thuthmose (by Greek and Latin authors six centuries later). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Phasiphae means "She who shines for all," a classic epithet of the Moon goddess. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. “Ouahm menou” means “the one who multiplies the monuments”. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. See on line my article : « [Kamose-Thuthmose (I) : The first Egyptian ruler of Kush](http://www.antiqua91.fr/wa_files/ATLAS_202e_20PartieFR_20corrig_C3_A9e_20mars_202013.doc)»

<http://antiqua91.fr/wa_files/ATLAS_202e_20Partie.doc> [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The same characters are found in the Greek tale of Oedipus: a son murder of his father, who married his mother, and made himself blind; as Kamose was murder of King Seqenenre his mother’s husband, became lover of his mother Queen Ah-hotep, and become blind when aged. Blind Kamose-Thuthmose, willingly or not lost in the swamps of Thebes could die devoured by a hippo. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Diodorus III, 97 : « Ethiopians live in the sacred city of Nysa and its surroundings. They honor Dionysus in their holidays”. III,111 : “Cinnamon grows in the regions where Dionysus was reared”. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Greeks said that at the birth of Dionysus Zeus sewed him in his thigh and brought him to Nysa, a city of Ethiopia, beyond of Egypt”. A proof that this Nysa is really Meroe : μηρο (mero) in Greek means the thigh. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Th. Ghembaza : « Plato’s Atlantis as the Island of Meroe ». On-line : <http://antiqua91.fr/wa_files/ARTICLE_20Atlantis_201_20colonne_20anglais.doc>

Printed in extenso in “Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Atlantis Hypothesis (Atlantis 2008)”. Papamarinopoulos, S.T. (Ed.). Athens : Heliotopos Ltd., 2011, pp. 491-496. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)