



ERMES

I am with Ares in my admiration for Atlantis, and the way they have come to dominate the world. It is not their military strength that I praise but their development of a way of trading, using imaginary gold whose value is not fixed by its rarity, but by demand for it. They have invented methods and machines to trade in this illusory currency, which can accumulate in such quantities that their wealth is legendary. It is true that virtual fortunes can disappear like water through a sieve, and be lost overnight, or immense wealth can be claimed which is in reality only numbers in a machine whose value fluctuates at the mercy of priests and oracles in the market place.

However these machines whose first function was to calculate, have been changed to use only numbers to do everything: to write words; make pictures; send messages around the world; drive chariots, and simulate the processes of artistic creation. This wonder seems like magic, and Atlantis wealth is built on the desire of the entire world to buy these machines that do the work of hands and brains.

With their enormous wealth, they can easily persuade other poorer peoples to accept huge loans, so they can imitate Atlantis' way of life, by creating shining palaces for their kings and enormous projects to persuade their people that they are advancing too. They are clever too, for these loans are on condition that Atlantis' traders have open access to their markets where they can buy and sell at profitable rates.

As your messenger, I think we have a lot to learn from their success in trade, creating wealth and sending messages, and it would be a pity to punish them for their pride before we have learned from them, and passed it on to the entire world. I suggest we could invite Atlantis' seers and priests, to take over management of our more tedious affairs, our moral accounting and liaisons with mortal men. And if they succeed and can make us as successful as they claim to be, then we should forgive them their pride and any other little moral failings, and just advise them not to be so careless with the resources that Gaea has let them have.