**THE SKEPTICAL RECORD**

This is the last nail to the coffin for skepticism regarding Doric Crete and Sparta as the home of Greek philosophy. The 11th Platsis Symposium on September 23, 2012, supported by the Classics and Modern Greek Department at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, was convened to examine "The Greek Background of the Natural Law". At the question and answer session, when it was mentioned that Sparta was the home of Greek philosophy and it was the origin of the Natural Law, the head of the department grew furiously indignant at the mention of Sparta having anything to do with philosophy. The first speaker reiterated that Athens was the origin of the Natural Law and that there is nothing connecting Sparta with the Natural Law. (From the brochure: "…which emerged ***clearly*** in fifth century Athens." ª) Afterwards, in the reception that followed in a private conversation with two attendees, this author presented the proof that Socrates himself stated that Crete and Sparta were the home of Greek philosophy. One of them turned to his partner to explain that yes, that it is in the Platonic corpus but it was an anomaly and it was to be discounted.

In a talk with an advisor to the board, he said there is no evidence that Crete and Sparta is the home of Greek philosophy and just because Socrates said that doesn't make it so.[[1]](#footnote-2)

That very same line "Crete and Sparta, the home of Greek philosophy" was the title of paper published in the fall of 2007 that set out Socrates statement as being true. And in the age of the internet, five years later, it seems no one has heard about it and there is no discussion about it anywhere on the internet. It is not so bad that after five years of something this groundbreaking that the same old meme is being presented but that Socrates is still being demeaned and his statement is still being dismissed outright.

The *carte blanche* dismissal is not just throughout academic interactions and environment; it is throughout academic literature of classical studies, philosophy and political science. The first fragment of Doric Greek philosopher (Burnett, 70)[[2]](#footnote-3) Empedocles’ work begins this way:

“Meagerly scattered among the body’s members are the means of acquiring knowledge, and many are the evils that burst in and blunt the edge of attentive thought”. (Wheelwright, 26)

There seems to be many evils attendant upon the recognition of the true history of philosophy. In earlier papers, A. E. Taylor, Elizabeth Rawson, and Gregory Vlastos, some of the greats in classical studies, have been noted in dismissing Socrates statement in the *Protagoras* (§342a-343c).[[3]](#footnote-4) In a recent book (2007) on Socrates, Prof. Luis E. Navia, who describes himself as having “devoted many years to the study of Socrates and have read countless accounts and interpretations of him” (p. 9), and who acknowledges the comments in both the *Protagoras* and in Aristophanes, (p. 27 and noting all the Socratics were Laconophiles, p. 69) makes no connections to a Spartan influence whatsoever and implies a total denial thereof; there is no value accrued to these statements; no bearing on his assessment of Socrates except that is one of the reasons the Athenians put him to death. I. F. Stone remarks that the Socratic admiration for Sparta and Crete is puzzling and that “Sparta and Crete were culturally and politically the two most backward regions of ancient Greece”. (p. 124)

This author’s two most beloved classical scholars, the renowned Edith Hamilton and Werner Jaeger, express the same sentiments. Ms. Hamilton describes Sparta as a backwater (1993, 131) and writes, “The Spartans have ***left the world nothing*** in the way of art or literature or science.” (ibid, 119 ª) Prof. Werner Jaeger parallels the comments of A. E. Taylor: “Plato ***ironically*** makes Socrates say (Prot.342b) that all Spartans (and Cretans) are philosophers…” (Vol. I, 436, #7 ª) A. H. M. Jones echoes the same old message, “Sparta produced no art and no literature and played no part in the intellectual life of Greece (p. 66) and notes Sparta’s “cultural sterility.” Even though he recognizes that the intelligentsia of Athens admired Sparta, the evidence of their witness doesn’t faze him; he finds it “odd”. One of the leading modern experts on Sparta, Paul Cartledge, compares Lycurgus as “a mixture of George Washington – **and Pol Pot**” (p. 29 ª),

1. Personal experience. It was also learned that the head of the cl assics department was going call security on this author and have him forcefully removed because of his absurd ideas.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. “Empedocles of Agrigentum (*c*. 460 B. C.), the only citizen of a Dorian state who finds a place in the early history of science and philosophy,…”

 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. In “Doric Crete and Sparta, the home of Greek philosophy” and in “Macrocosm/Microcosm in Doric Thought”, both by the same author.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)