

among us but in application to the aboriginal Americans. But with the people of Europe it was not so unimportant. Situated between the two countries, India and America, the same name for the inhabitants of both must, at first, have produced considerable inconvenience, if not confusion; because, in speaking of an Indian, no one would know whether an American or a Zealander was meant, unless by the context of the discourse. Therefore, in a historical point of view, the error is, at least, as much to be deplored as that the name of the continent itself should have been derived from Americus instead of Columbus.

It has been the practice of almost every writer, who has written about the primitive inhabitants of a country, to give some wild theories of others, concerning their origin, and to close the account with his own; which generally has been more visionary, if possible, than those of his predecessors. Long, laborious, and, we may add, useless, disquisitions have been daily laid before the world, from the discovery of America by Columbus to the present time, to endeavor to explain by what means the inhabitants got from the old to the new world. To act, therefore, in unison with many of our predecessors, we will begin as far back as they have done, and so shall commence with Theopompus and others, from intimations in whose writings it is alleged the ancients had knowledge of America, and therefore peopled it.

Theopompus, a learned historian and orator, who flourished in the time of Alexander the Great, in a book entitled *Thaumasias*, gives a sort of dialogue between Midas the Phrygian and Silenus. The book itself is lost, but Strabo refers to it, and Ælianus has given us the substance of the dialogue that follows. After much conversation, Silenus said to Midas, that Europe, Asia and Africa were but islands surrounded on all sides by the sea; but that there was a continent situated beyond these, which was of immense dimensions, even without limits; and that it was so luxuriant, as to produce animals of prodigious magnitude, and men grew to double the height of themselves, and that they lived to a far greater age; that they had many great cities, and their usages and laws were different from ours; that in one city there were more than a million of inhabitants; that gold and silver were there in vast quantities. This is but an abstract from Ælianus's extract, but contains all of it that can be said to refer to a country west of Europe and Africa. Elian or Ælianus lived about A. D. 200.

Hanno flourished when the Carthagenians were in their greatest prosperity, but the exact time is unknown. Some place his time 40, and others 140, years before the founding of Rome, which would be about 800 years before our era. He was an officer of great enterprise, having sailed around and explored the coast of Africa, set out from the Pillars of Hercules, now called the Straits of Gibraltar, and sailed westward 30 days. Hence it is inferred by many, that he must have visited America, or some of its islands. He wrote a book, which he entitled *Periplus*, giving an account of his voyages, which was translated and published about 1533, in Greek.

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