

# BEYOND THE WESTERN SEAS: THE QUEST FOR ATLANTIS CONTINUES

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The concept of Atlantis is one of the most powerful and pervasive ideas in the western psyche. If Atlantis had not existed, we would need to create the Lost Continent, so important is this mythos to us. Indeed, in the science fiction universe of *Star Trek*, this is exactly what the government of Earth and the United Federation of Planets began doing in the mid-twenty-fourth century CE, geo-engineering a new continent in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>1</sup>

More recently, on U.S. television's longest running science fiction program, *Stargate SG-1*, humanity discovers that Atlantis was an ancient city capable of interstellar flight, created by our distant ancestors who then subsequently ascended to the psychic realm.<sup>2</sup> In the spin-off program *Stargate Atlantis*, which began in 2004, an international team from Earth re-colonizes the lost city, now in a distant galaxy, and inherits both the successes and mistakes of "the Ancients," our Atlantean forebearers.<sup>3</sup>

Both of these very popular programs, as well as the myriad of novels and films portraying Atlantis or Atlantean themes, demonstrate the immense place the Lost Continent has in the hearts and minds of the western world, and arguably in much of our planet. It should not be surprising that the Search for Atlantis is alive and well at the dawn of the twenty-first century, with no end yet in sight.

## **The Modern Quest for Atlantis Takes on New Dimensions**

As the plate-tectonic theory of continental formation and movement became more and more accepted during the late twentieth century, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the concept of the literal sinking of an entire continental body. However, our increased knowledge of the

variability of sea levels during historical and pre-historical periods has more than compensated for this difficulty, and has produced a myriad of Atlantean theories.

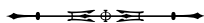
In an endeavor such as the search for Atlantis, controversy is inevitable. Research and methods generally fall into two camps. Academic mainstream archaeology and its allied sciences tend to be naturally conservative in their methodology and claims, and these researchers consider very few sites as serious candidates. Indeed, the main-stream view is that Plato's story was a myth, and so it is a minority of orthodox scholars who continue to search for Atlantis today.

On the other hand, alternate archaeologists and historians are often more daring in their theories, challenging standard paradigms and explanations. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the wider availability of technology and the spread of information on the Internet have enabled these researchers to more successfully challenge their mainstream colleagues, with data and publicity to back up their claims. The line of demarcation between mainline and alternate archaeology still remains, but there are increasing signs of crossover theories and research. Perhaps these two approaches have always interacted, as the discovery of Troy, the Minoan Civilization, and the Nag Hammadi Library can attest. Dreams and visionary quests can fuel discoveries, and these may occur when we least expect them. Rosicrucians have long taught that thought manifests reality, and we may be seeing evidence of this in today's continuing quest to find Atlantis.

Modern theories about the location of Atlantis fall into several categories, based on geography. First, there are several sites in the Mediterranean that are considered prime



possibilities for Atlantis, some of which are of interest to those mainstream archaeologists who consider the possibility of a factual background to Plato's account. Second, areas in the Atlantic off the coast of North Africa and Europe have garnered considerable attention during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Third, many sites around the world have been identified, in one way or another, with Plato's Atlantean realm. Finally, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a new approach altogether has begun to emerge, in a worldwide context. We can look at some of the most popular examples of each of these in turn to consider the possibilities for the ongoing quest for Atlantis.<sup>4</sup>



## THE MEDITERRANEAN

The search for the location of Atlantis is not a favored theme within mainstream archaeology, since many academic scholars consider Plato's story of Atlantis to be allegorical or didactic, rather than historical. Nevertheless, in these circles, the possibility is held out that the myth of Atlantis and the Flood stories may have some basis in a major cataclysm that took place in the Eastern Mediterranean in the distant past.

### The Thera-Santorini Theory

The most popular of these theories centers on a massive volcanic eruption on Thera in the Santorini group of islands during the Bronze Age, circa 1630–circa 1500 BCE. Lying about 125 miles southeast of the Greek

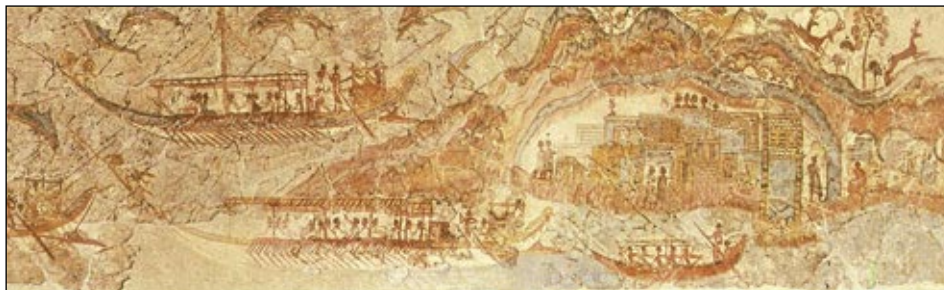
mainland, Santorini is a modern vacation spot, named for St. Irene by the Romans or Venetians in the thirteenth century CE. Its earliest inhabitants were from the Minoan culture in 3000 BCE, followed by a later Dorian settlement in the eleventh century BCE.<sup>5</sup>

When the eruption took place circa 1630–circa 1500 BCE<sup>6</sup>, the entire center of the island was obliterated, and a tsunami resulted which struck the northern side of Crete with devastating force. Together with the ash fall, this event took a severe toll on the Minoan civilization on Crete. Although this did not destroy the Minoans, it may have weakened their culture, and thereby provided the opportunity for the Mycenaeans from the Greek mainland to conquer Crete around 1420 BCE.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout the middle and late twentieth century, noted Greek archaeologist Spyridon Nikolaou Marinatos argued that the Thera eruption, its weakening of Minoan culture, and the later defeat of the Minoans at the hands of the Mycenaeans formed the basis of Plato's Atlantis Myth.<sup>8</sup>

The eruption at Thera has also been suggested as the basis of the disasters described in the *Admonitions of Ipuwer* from the Middle Kingdom of Egypt. The *Admonitions* in turn may have influenced the description of the ten plagues of Egypt in the Biblical Exodus account.<sup>9</sup>

The Minoan culture of Crete does have many similarities to the traditional description of Atlantis, and—although this assumption is currently debated—has usually been seen as a primarily peaceful, rather than



Fresco discovered at Santorini showing vibrant port life, leading some to speculate that this is evidence for the Santorini theory of Atlantis

bellicose, civilization.<sup>10</sup> The possibility of Minoan human sacrifice has recently been raised;<sup>11</sup> however, this claim is disputed.<sup>12</sup> If the evidence proves to substantiate human sacrifice, this would be an uncanny link to the similar reason put forward for the fall of Atlantis in the classic esoteric work, *A Dweller on Two Planets*.<sup>13</sup> The Thera theory remains the favorite of those mainstream archaeologists today who take an interest in the search for Atlantis.

### **Other Mediterranean Theories**

Although the Thera–Santorini–Minoan thesis is the most popular of the Mediterranean theories about Atlantis, it is not the only one. Cyprus, Cádiz (Spain), Sparte, a sunken island in the Strait of Gibraltar,<sup>14</sup> and the island of Sardinia,<sup>15</sup> have all been mentioned, and they are not alone. Locations in Turkey, including Troy,<sup>16</sup> and the Middle East are sometimes put forward as well,<sup>17</sup> each with its own proponents and detractors. Jericho and surrounding territory has also recently been proposed as the origins of the legend.<sup>18</sup>

Malta has also been a very popular possibility for the Atlantean culture. The connection of Malta and Atlantis is not a new theory. This was first espoused by the renowned Maltese architect Girolamo Għonnet de Vassé in 1854. More recently, several alternate archaeology researchers on Malta have added to the evidence, arguing for the presence of humans on the island as early as the Paleolithic Era (15,000–18,000 years ago), rather than the usually accepted 6000 BCE for the first human occupation, and that this culture of builders was destroyed by a flood in 2200 BCE. Considerable disputes have arisen between mainstream Maltese archaeology and these theories, and no clear end to the controversies is currently in sight.<sup>19</sup> Regardless of the outcome of these disputes, Malta's ancient culture and geographic situation make it a reasonable option for Atlantis.



### **OFF THE COAST OF EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA**

Outside the Mediterranean, but still near Europe and North Africa, there are multiple locations suggested today for Atlantis. Among the most popular are the following.

Andalusia in southern Spain, and its lost city of Tartessos have been candidates for Atlantis since first proposed in 1673. Tartessos was an important trade city until it suddenly vanished from history in the sixth century BCE. Advocates of this theory suggest that the Tartessians were the Sea Peoples who attacked many Mediterranean cultures during the Bronze Age, giving rise to the story of Atlantis.<sup>20</sup>

The islands of Britain and Ireland, and the North Sea and Celtic Shelf between France and Britain, have also been cited as the location of the Atlantean civilization in several scenarios in combination or separately. These theories take into account several factors. The well-known megalithic culture of the area during the Neolithic Era is a primary attraction for researchers. Sea level studies also indicate that portions of the North Sea and the Celtic Bank have been above sea level in the past. Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy is a dramatic example of the effects of rising and lowering sea levels.

Further, in the Arthurian legends, the mystical forest of Brocéliande (today known as Paimpont Forest in Brittany) was said to connect France and Britain, and is near the famous standing stones of Carnac. One wonders if this could be a memory in the collective unconsciousness of a time when there was an actual land connection. All of these make these locations plausible Atlantean sites.<sup>21</sup>

The Canary Islands, an archipelago of Spanish islands located off the coast of Morocco and Western Sahara, contain several mysteries. Although the islands were known in classical antiquity and were visited by the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, there is considerable debate today over the origins of



the indigenous populations of the various islands and their genetic connection to other populations.

In the 1990s, famed explorer Thor Heyerdahl studied the complex which includes the six Pyramids of Güímar, ancient constructions very similar to step pyramids on the island of Tenerife. No conclusive theory of their purpose, age, or construction have yet been established.<sup>22</sup> However, in Pliny's *Natural History* (6:37), he makes mention of the fact that reports from Juba II of Mauretania indicated "traces of buildings" on the island in antiquity.<sup>23</sup> These two circumstances have persuaded some to consider the Canary islands as potentially Atlantean.

The islands of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge have long been regarded as very likely remnants of an Atlantean empire. In particular, the Azores, a Portuguese archipelago in the mid-Atlantic Ocean, have been a favorite contender for Atlantis, including among Rosicrucians. Ignatius Donnelly, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, was among the first exoteric writers to mention the Azores in this connection in his seminal work, *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World* in 1882.<sup>24</sup>

More recently, this hypothesis has been supported and further researched by Nikolai Zhironov, a Russian chemist and Atlantis scholar. Zhironov marshals data from oceanography, climate studies, seismic studies, gravimetrics, ancient botanical studies, geomorphology, plate tectonics, ocean bottom current patterns, submarine erosion, and geological data to support his positions with impressive documentation.<sup>25</sup> Further findings by other alternate researchers may indicate river beds on the shelf areas surrounding the Azores now submerged, making the possibility of these once being land areas plausible.<sup>26</sup> A simple search of the Internet will demonstrate the continuing support and popularity for the idea that the Azores Islands are the mountain peaks of ancient Atlantis.

## FURTHER AFIELD: PROPOSALS FOR ATLANTIS OUTSIDE THE EUROPEAN AREA

Outside of the area of Europe and Africa, several other parts of the world have been proposed as candidates for the origin of the Atlantis stories. Probably best known is the area of the Caribbean. Much of the popularity of these theories is due to the readings of the American mystic and clairvoyant Edgar Cayce, who predicted in 1938 that signs of Atlantis would be found near Bimini (see the Cayce readings in this edition of the *Digest*).<sup>27</sup> The discoveries of the "Bimini Road," have fueled this theory.

Off North Bimini Island, part of the Bahamas to the east of Florida and the north of Cuba, some mysterious undersea formations were discovered in 1968, leading some to identify them as a road of human construction. The debate over their nature and meaning has continued to the present day.<sup>28</sup> Bimini remains one of the favorite candidates among those who hold for a New World location for Atlantis. Other candidates in the Caribbean include the Isla de la Juventud near Cuba,<sup>29</sup> and a purported sunken island off Central America;<sup>30</sup> however, both of these claims are controversial and contested by most researchers.

## North and South America Offer Possible Atlantean Sites

Some Atlantis advocates have suggested that the Americas themselves, or some parts of North or South America, were the actual location of the Atlantean civilization. This is certainly not a new idea. In 1627, Rosicrucian Emperor Sir Francis Bacon penned a utopian novel, *The New Atlantis*, setting his island Bensalem ("Offspring of Peace") off the western shores of the Americas. In the context of Bacon's work, it is clear that the original Atlantis was in the Americas, though North or South is not specified.

If one thinks about it, this is not at all a surprising idea. When the Americas were discovered once again by Columbus, it would



seem to have been a fulfillment of the desire to find the “Lost Continent” to the west of Europe, considerably larger than western North Africa and Asia Minor (Plato’s “Lybia and Asia”) combined.

Over the past 200 years mainline archaeologists have learned much about the advanced and sophisticated civilizations in the Americas. In 2006, Charles C. Mann’s study, *1491*, provided a thorough and astonishing look at what we know today about the complex human societies of the Americas on the eve of Columbus’s voyage, including a population probably greater than that of Europe, with larger and more advanced cities.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, the origins of American civilization are continually being pushed back. The findings of the circa 5,000-year-old Peruvian pyramid-builder-civilization at Caral on the Pacific Coast north of Lima, has considerably revised the estimates for the antiquity of American cultures now coeval with the Egyptian pyramid builders.<sup>32</sup> It is within the realm of possibility that ancestral memories of contact between Europe, Africa and the Americas could have fueled Atlantean Legends.

The connection of Meso-America and Atlantis became popular among some nineteenth century archaeologists. In 1879, Edward Herbert Thompson proposed the Maya-Atlantis connection in *Popular Science Monthly*, but later revised his opinion.<sup>33</sup> The amateur archaeologist and photographer, Augustus Le Plongeon, is most famous in alternate archaeology circles for his theories (no longer accepted in academic archaeology) of the association of Mayan culture with Atlantis and the lost Pacific continent of Mu or Lemuria. He held that Central America was the cradle of civilization, later transmitting this culture westward to Atlantis and Egypt.<sup>34</sup>

Although his theories in this area have been discredited in academe, he and his wife Alice Dixon Le Plongeon are still honored as early pioneers of archaeological photography.<sup>35</sup> Le Plongeon’s Atlantean theories have proven

enduringly popular among alternate researchers, and have had some influence on James Churchward’s famous *Mu* series.<sup>36</sup>

### **North American Authors Utilize the Atlantis Theme**

The alternate archaeological writings of Ignatius Donnelly and Lewis Spence continued the idea of Atlantis in America into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>37</sup> Several writers of visionary novels delved into this theme as well.

Best known of these is Frederick S. Oliver’s *A Dweller on Two Planets*.<sup>38</sup> As an eighteen year old youth in Yreka, CA, north of Mount Shasta, Oliver began receiving this channeled book from “Phylos the Thibetan.” He continued to receive the book until 1886, and it was published posthumously by his mother in 1905.<sup>39</sup> The novel tells of the lives of several Atlanteans through various incarnations.

Another example is *Yermah the Dorado* by early feminist science fiction author Fiona Eunice Wait in 1897. Wait chronicals the adventures of her dashing hero, Yermah, an Atlantean, on the ancient coast of California, in what is now San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park, Richmond, and Haight-Ashbury districts.<sup>40</sup>

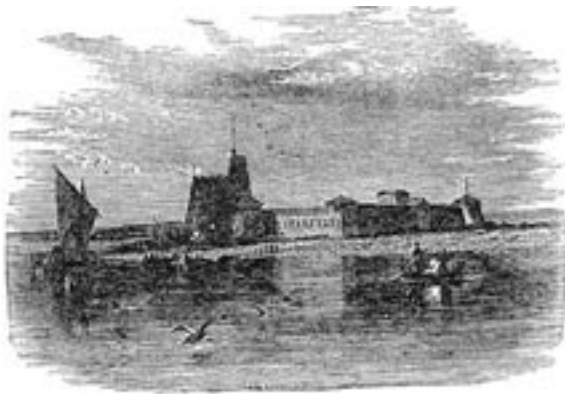
During 1926, the AMORC publication *The Mystic Triangle* serialized a futuristic novel connecting the destinies of America and Atlantis *Zada*, or *Looking Forward* by J. H. Thamer. The June 1926 installment has the twenty-first century protagonists exploring the ruins of Atlantis surrounding the Azores.<sup>41</sup> Dr. Lewis’s seminal work *Lemuria* extended the connection of America to the Lost Continent of the Pacific.<sup>42</sup>

### **Atlantis in Bolivia**

More recently, researcher Jim Adams has proposed the Altiplano in Bolivia, in the region of Lake Poopo, as the site of ancient Atlantis. His ingenious solution to the many problems of identifying the ancient site are laid out on his websites and



publications.<sup>43</sup> He carefully matches Plato's descriptions of the geography of Atlantis to the Altiplano; and explorers have found evidence of a sunken island under the waters of Lake Poopo, with evidence of human habitation. All of this makes the Bolivian theory a very attractive alternative approach, worthy of further study.



Port of Sindree on the Indus before it was submerged by the Earthquake of 1819. From Donnelly's *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World* (1882). From the Rosicrucian Library Collection

### Asian Possibilities for the Lost Continent

Even further afield, Arysio Santosa, a Brazilian nuclear physicist who also writes on mystical subjects, proposed in 2005 that the huge plain of Sundaland on the continental shelf of Southeast Asia (which was exposed during the last Ice Age) is Atlantis. This would comprise the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia, including Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Bali, and the smaller islands in the archipelago. He suggests that refugees from the sinking of Sundaland eventually came into contact with Egyptians, who then recorded a garbled version of the history of the lost lands.<sup>44</sup>

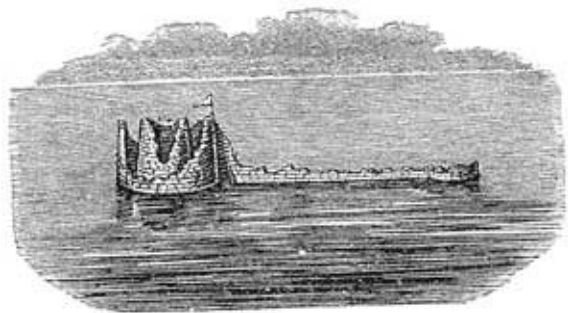
### The Antarctic Theory Becomes Increasingly Popular

One of the most persistent suggestions for an Atlantean location is the southernmost continent of Antarctica. The literature of this theory is varied and fascinating. In fiction, the American horror writer H. P. Lovecraft popularized the Atlantis–Antarctic link in his 1931 novel, *At the Mountains of Madness*,<sup>45</sup>

at least partly inspired by Edgar Allen Poe's "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket" (1838), which breaks off unfinished with a mysterious maelstrom near Antarctica.

This subject matter exercised such a fascination on the public that Jules Verne had earlier penned a sequel as well in 1897, *The Sphinx of the Ice Fields*, which continues Poe's narrative.<sup>46</sup> Verne had already envisioned the ruins of an undersea Atlantis in *Twenty-Thousand Leagues Under the Seas* (1870).

During the late twentieth century, scientific researchers in Antarctica made multiple announcements of their discoveries through ice core samples of ancient tropical flora and fauna during a period ranging from 250 million years ago to as recent as 3 million years ago. Evidence of running rivers in Antarctica has been found as late as 4000 BCE.<sup>47</sup> In 2004, satellite imagery revealed the existence of Lake Vostok beneath the ice in Antarctica, approximately the size of Lake Ontario in North America, and still fluid.<sup>48</sup> These discoveries have only fueled the hopes that at last, in our most remote continent, Atlantis could be found.



View of the Port of Sindree after the Earthquake (1838). From Ignatius Donnelly's *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World* (1882). From the Rosicrucian Library Collection

### Unusual Maps Add Evidence for Atlantis

Several writers, including Charles Berlitz, the scion of the language education empire of the same name, who is also a popular author on unsolved mysteries around the world, suggested the identification of Atlantis with

Antarctica.<sup>49</sup> One of the most interesting clues in this area is the mysterious Piri Reis Map. Discovered in 1929 in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, it has been authenticated as a navigational map by the well-known Turkish Admiral Piri Reis, drawn in 1513 from a number of other maps he had available to him, according to his own testimony.<sup>50</sup>



The *Piri-Reis* map from the Topkapi Palace in Turkey (1513), purportedly showing Antarctica.

The Piri Reis Map shows parts of the western coastline of Africa and the eastern coast of South America. More controversially, it also appears to show the outlines of Antarctica, several centuries before the accepted discovery of Antarctica in 1820. Since ancient times, cartographers posited a southern landmass to balance the northern continents of Europe and Asia; however, modern theorists and researchers Charles Hapgood and Gavin Menzies have argued that the map represents accurate seafaring knowledge of either pre-Classical Western (Hapgood) or Chinese (Menzies) mariners,<sup>51</sup> from whose maps Piri Reis gleaned the information about Antarctica. Both theories are widely dismissed by academic scholars but are very popular among alternate historians,<sup>52</sup> and so the mystery persists.

All of these pieces of evidence combined have inspired the most persistent and

thorough advocates of an Antarctic Atlantis in the latter twentieth and early twenty-first centuries: Rand and Rose Flem-Ath and Colin Wilson.<sup>53</sup> One of their major pieces of evidence is based on Charles Hapgood's theory of the Earth Crust Displacement,<sup>54</sup> which holds that the earth's crust and the poles can and do shift. Under this approach, Antarctica was once 2000 miles north of its present position. Mainline geologists do not generally support this theory, even though Hapgood's first book is graced by a forward by Albert Einstein, who thought enough of the theory to discuss it seriously.

With the work of the Flem-Aths and Colin Wilson, we have a synthesis and evolution of the theories of James Churchward, Charles Hapgood, and a century of alternate historians and archaeologists. As the publisher of *The Atlantis Blueprint* put it, this is a "spellbinding blend of history and science, scholarship and speculation."<sup>55</sup> In fact, this theory has opened the door for the newest approach to the Atlantis Mythos.

Popularized by journalist and alternate researcher, Graham Hancock, and several allies, including Robert Bauval, John Anthony West, and geologist Robert Schoch, a new, comprehensive approach emerged at the dawn of the twenty-first century. This highly synthetic scenario builds on the work of von Dechend and Santillana's *Hamlet's Mill*,<sup>56</sup> which argues that myth can and often does encode scientific and historical truths.

### **A Planetary Cataclysm Destroys a World-Wide Civilization**

Incorporating themes from much of alternate archaeology since Ignatius Donnelly and Le Plongeon, together with modern archaeological discoveries, Hancock and others suggest that the Flood stories which exist in so many world cultures actually point to a cataclysmic event which took place approximately 12,500 years ago.

This destruction obliterated a worldwide maritime civilization which is the basis of our myths of the golden age: Atlantis, Lemuria,



and many others. According to these researchers, the cultures which arose around the world beginning anywhere from 10,000–5,000 years ago, are the survivors and inheritors of the great antediluvian planetary civilization; and the memory of that society, and of its destruction, is encoded into myth, religion, and architecture in each of these cultures. Underwater archaeology is a cornerstone of the worldwide theory, and new discoveries of evidence for the ancient civilization are predicted using undersea and satellite technology.<sup>57</sup>

### Controversy and Support for this Comprehensive Atlantis Theory

These theories have been widely attacked by mainstream scholars, and there have been several highly publicized controversies during the last few years. Graham Hancock's website is very useful for keeping up with the entire burgeoning field, and its Forum Section includes many genuinely useful essays by numerous authors.<sup>58</sup> To his credit, Hancock includes legitimate critiques of his own books and productions. Through the haze of the academic battles, it appears that the first steps toward a rapprochement between academic science and alternative approaches may be gradually emerging.

The advantage of such a comprehensive theory is that one need not feel the need to pick one site over another. "Atlantis" may be considered to be a mythically encoded word for the whole of this antediluvian civilization. However, it might also have been the capital or major center of such a society; and as more evidence turns up, Plato's location may be found, just as Homer's Troy was. The theory does not depend on sinking continents or earth crust displacement, but the known and accepted rise and fall of sea level due to ice ages,

and catastrophes such as meteor strikes, vulcanism, and the like. Only time will tell, but it may be that here, myth and science will finally establish an equilibrium and harmony, finally finding Atlantis and our lost history.

Rosicrucians and mystics of all traditions, as well as psychologists and literary scholars, know that the questing journey may very well be as important as the object sought. It may be that the desire to find Atlantis has been deeply implanted in us for a reason.

### Tolkein's Use of the Atlantis Archetype

"Beyond the Western Seas," the title of this essay, is an epithet for one of Professor J. R. R. Tolkein's great divine or angelic spirits, the Vala Varda, also known as Elbereth, who is "Queen Beyond the Western Seas."<sup>59</sup> Tolkein too had his own version of the Atlantis story, which he tells in "Akallabêth," one of the sections of his posthumously published *Silmarillion*.<sup>60</sup>

Núminor, or Westernesse, was the great western isle prepared especially for humans by the great creative beings, the Valar. Núminor prospered for many years until humanity on this blessed island was seduced by Sauron, who, thousands of years later, was the Dark Lord in *The Lord of the Rings*. He convinced the Núminoreans to mount a naval assault on the Undying Lands to their West where Varda was queen; and in so doing, their whole island

was sunk, and the exiles were sent back to the shores of Middle Earth. After this, the world was changed, made round, and no longer had direct access to the lands of the Valar. Only the Elves had access to the straight-road that could take them from this world to the next.

"The advantage of such a comprehensive theory is that one need not feel the need to pick one site over another. 'Atlantis' may be considered to be a mythically encoded word for the whole of this antediluvian civilization."

On one level, the tale told in "Akallabêth" is a creative reworking of the Atlantis Mythos, integrating it into Tolkein's immense cosmic



vision. However, it may point us to something more. In Tolkien's world, to look to the Western Seas is both to mourn Núminor (Atlantis) in its greatness and its fall, and also to seek the Undying Lands, the source and destiny of all being. Thus the quest for Atlantis is not only a historical search, but a journey to find our own meaning, our source, and our goal.

### **Academic Scholars Doubt Plato's Intent**

Many traditional classical scholars share the approach of Dr. Julia Annas of the University of Arizona, who steadfastly refuses to consider the possibility that Plato's story might have any historicity:

"The continuing industry of discovering Atlantis illustrates the dangers of reading Plato; for he is clearly using what has become a standard device of fiction: stressing the historicity of an event (and the discovery of hitherto unknown authorities) as an indication that what follows is fiction. The idea is that we should use the story to examine our ideas of government and power. We have missed the point if instead of thinking about these issues, we go off exploring the sea bed. The continuing misunderstanding of Plato as historian here enables us to see why his distrust of imaginative writing is sometimes justified."<sup>61</sup>

In so doing, scholars can fall into the same error that Plato himself does from time to time when he mistrusts the imagination. It is precisely our faculty of visualization that is being called into play with the Atlantis Mythos. The quest for Atlantis impels us to seek our source and exercise our power of "sub-creation."

If Atlantis were not real, we would be forced to create it. And perhaps we have. In the intricate, demanding, and challenging novel *Foucault's Pendulum*, Umberto Eco weaves the story of a group of journalists who "create" a history linking the Knights Templar to modern manifestations. And then, this history begins to manifest in reality.<sup>62</sup>

### **The Atlantean Quest Remains a Treasure for Us and the 21st Century**

The Quest for Atlantis has kept us searching for thousands of years for our lost heritage. In the process, we have found a world of priceless archaeology and history. We have discovered things about Crete, Malta, the Canary Islands, the Azores, Bolivia, and a myriad other locations throughout the world because we wanted to find lost civilizations. Today, we are on the verge of discovering even more through underwater archaeology and satellites that can aid in scanning under the vast deserts of the planet and identify features we miss by being too close.

As we search, we find out more about the Primordial Tradition, the source of all human wisdom, and the goal toward which it beckons: union with Being itself. Just as Tolkien's Middle Earth dwellers gazed out upon the Western Sea to ponder the fate of Núminor, and in so doing, went beyond the western seas to dream of the Undying Lands and the origin and goal of all being, so too we are drawn to this goal through our search for Atlantis.

Atlantis will be found—if not today, then tomorrow—and many other wonders on the journey, as well. Our divine creativity is too great to fail. We may feel empowered in both the quest and the creation as expressed by Professor Tolkien speaking for the Divine within us:

"So great is the bounty with which we have been treated that we may now, perhaps, fairly dare to guess that in Fantasy we may actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation. All tales may come true; and yet, at the last redeemed, they may be as like and as unlike the forms that we give them as Humanity, finally redeemed, will be like and unlike the fallen that we know."<sup>63</sup>

May the desire to find Atlantis—and our own origin and destiny—never cease until we finally find our way beyond the western seas.



## Endnotes:

- 1 Ronald D. Moore, "Family," *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, Season 4, Episode 2 (October 1, 1990).
- 2 Brad Wright and Robert C. Cooper, "Lost City," *Stargate SG-1*, Season 7, Episodes 21–22 (March 12 and March 19, 2004).
- 3 <http://www.stargateatlantis.com/> and <http://www.scifi.com/atlantis/>.
- 4 These summaries are greatly indebted to the anonymous authors at "Atlantis," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantis> and "Location Hypotheses of Atlantis," Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Location\\_hypotheses\\_of\\_Atlantis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Location_hypotheses_of_Atlantis).
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