

ATLANTIS AND THE ADVANCED PREHISTORIC WORLD

BY Nigel Blair

Why is there so much interest today in what has often been regarded as a mere legend? Does it resonate with some deep impulse? Is there any factual basis behind the often fantastic fictional, stories, and the more sober documentaries?

For orthodox writers on prehistory the answer is all too often to dismiss the idea without a conscientious examination of the facts. For well over a century now, however, more discerning writers, willing to see the hidden links between pieces of evidence which have escaped others, have asserted the reality of some great prehistoric civilization which suffered an immense catastrophe which may be the origin of the flood legends which occur not just in the Bible, but in religions all over the world.

Recently, a number of scholarly writers have pointed to the mounting evidence, much of it newly-discovered, that there was such a civilization and that it was probably located precisely where legend, and Plato, in his "Criteas" and "Timaeus", put it in what is now the Atlantic Ocean.

CHARLES BERLITZ: A GREAT SUBMERGED MEGALITHIC CIVILIZATION

Amongst the best of these writers is Charles Berlitz, the well known researcher, writer and linguist, whose remarkable "Atlantis the Lost Continent Revealed" was published in 1984 by Macmillan and subsequently in paperback by Fontana; this was something of a breakthrough, as these were major publishers which concentrated on subjects well backed with research. His earlier "Mystery of Atlantis" had been published in the late 1970s by Souvenir in hardback and Panther in paperback. Writing as he did with the help of the experienced diver J Manson Valentine and, in one chapter, the great pre-historian Egerton Sykes, Berlitz produced impressive evidence. This included sonar profiles of at least one, and possibly two, underwater pyramids; the underwater "Bimini Road" in the Bahamas; submerged megaliths off Venezuela, Morocco and elsewhere; "cores" taken from the Azores (mid-Atlantic) Plateau area suggesting it was on the surface in recent geologic times; and gigantic holes in the Atlantic sea-bed where possibly great asteroids had struck. Also there were vast overgrown pyramids of undreamed-of antiquity, unrecognised and unexplored in the forests of Brazil; and extraordinary similarities between widely dispersed ancient legends and tribal rituals depicting overwhelming floods and the survival of a few who re-founded civilization.

As a linguist who uses thirty languages, moreover, Berlitz is well qualified to show startling similarities between pre-Classical languages which could have had no contact with each other, except as offshoots of some ancient language or, at least, related set of languages lost in the mists of time. All in all, Berlitz said, this added up to a great, forgotten ancient megalithic culture centered on the Atlantic area. This had widespread overseas trade, an advanced alphabetical language, sophisticated implements and, probably, a large empire. This could not be later than about 8-10,000 BC, as most of the finds had been covered by the ocean since that time. Although the idea of a large surface Azores Plateau home area (possibly destroyed by an asteroid) fits in with Plato's account, it is not essential to the Atlantis hypothesis, as is often supposed. As Berlitz points out, it is accepted knowledge that the ocean sea level rose by several hundred feet at some time between six and twelve thousand BC, as the ice from the last Ice Age, previously locked largely on land, melted into the sea. Since in those days (as now) main cities were usually located in coastal or in low lying river areas these would be first to be flooded. Before this, even without an enormous

Azores Plateau island there was easily enough space for a major Atlantic power, including far more, and larger, Atlantic islands and the continental shelves of all the continents, now submerged. This power, with or without the Plateau, had a strategic position, excellent climate and harbours, fertile land and the warm Gulf Stream current.

OTTO MUCK: THE GREAT ASTEROID OF 8498 BC

The late Otto Muck, the distinguished German geologist, pre-historian and inventor had already, (unknown to the English speaking world), written an epoch-making work on Atlantis in the 1950s. When this was published in Germany in 1975, and in English in 1978 by Collins as "The Secret of Atlantis", despite good reviews there seemed to be little response, as if the thesis was, literally, too earth shattering for more than a few to contemplate. With the passage of time, however, helped by a Fontana paperback edition, the incredible message sank in. There is strong evidence that an asteroid, possibly six miles wide, struck Earth at about the time of this rise in ocean level, perhaps 8-10,000 BC; were they connected? This had been widely believed by Atlantologists, including Donnelly and the late Egerton Sykes, but Muck assembled the evidence impressively. He traced back the previous flight path of the Adonis Group of asteroids which, for example, came within 186,000 miles of Earth in 1936. In 8,498 BC, there was a lineup of the planets which could have attracted in to the Earth a hypothetical extra member of the group, "asteroid A". It could have flown in over what is now the U.S.A., white hot and with pieces flaking off, one of which could have caused the Arizona Meteorite Crater, and others the line of crop-mark craterlet remnants running diagonally across South Carolina to the Atlantic. Here "asteroid A", he suggests, broke into two, causing the two deep holes in the sea-bed Puerto Rico Trench which now exist, The Maya, he argues, may have seen it, describing as they did a white "snake in the sky" which rained down fragments on them, followed by great tidal waves which flooded them. He even claims, with less evidence, that they could have dated their famous calendar from this event.

THE SINGLE DREADFUL DAY...." -- THE SINKING OF ATLANTIS

Muck's further thesis is even more amazing. The asteroid, ignoring the two mile Atlantic depth of water (only a third of its own diameter, perhaps) went straight through the thin hard crust on the seabed and into the semi-liquid magma underneath, causing such eastward pressures that practically every volcano, surface or subterranean, for thousands of miles across the Atlantic, erupted. He then enlists an ally for his theory more often drafted in by opponents of Atlantis as a foe. Otto Wegener proposed in 1912 the theory of continental drift, whereby there was originally one giant continent, and the ones we know gradually broke away and drifted apart over hundreds of millions of years. Egerton Sykes told me he knew Wegener at that time and was one of the few, then, to support the theory. Over the decades, it was elaborated into one of tectonic plates floating insecurely on a sea of magma, and periodically adjusting themselves, causing major volcanoes and earthquakes at the juncture lines (Incidentally, the academic scientific world regarded this idea as a heresy, and remained obdurate until "rushing to the aid of the conqueror" in 1960 when the evidence became overwhelming.) One of these juncture lines runs from North to South Atlantic and, according to Muck, runs all round the Azores Plateau which is a "platelet" of its own. The pressures from the "asteroid A" strike caused the magma to erupt all around this platelet, with a drastic reduction of pressure underneath, in turn causing it to settle, eventually by over two miles, to its present position. It took Atlantis with it, leaving only the present Azores. The great Atlantean fabled mountain, over three miles high, became the present Pico Alto, which boasts not much over a mile.

THE AGE OF DARKNESS AND THE RISING OCEAN

The consequences of this hypothetical event bring together all sorts of loose ends and mysteries of prehistory into a sort of grand theory. The massive volume of water vapour ejected into the air came down as continuous torrential rain everywhere, so that whole swathes of civilized life were destroyed or enervated, especially in the lowlands. This we have not only in the Noah story, but in flood legends across the world. Vast quantities of volcanic rock shot through with holes by volcanic gases came down in a layer and floated on the sea, followed by mud and magma, confirming Plato's statement that, following the sinking of Atlantis "in a single dreadful day and single dreadful night", the ocean beyond the Straits of Gibraltar was covered by a sea of mud, and unnavigable by ships. (Those who cannot believe this are not familiar with the aftermath of the Krakatoa eruption, west of Java in 1883, when such a sea of mud appeared, resting on volcanic pumice stone, rock made light and buoyant by volcanic gases.) Dust and earth were expelled at all points; the resulting cloud in the air cut off much of the Sun's rays for probably several thousand years, especially over northern Europe, causing a prolonged dark age. According to Otto Muck, evidence of flora and fauna shows a sparse period at this time, and Greek myths of "Hades" and the northern "land of shades" in the distant past were for them a legendary legacy of this period. The well known "loess" layer of topsoil which branches out somewhat like a funnel from the Bay of Biscay coast, through Europe to Siberia, could be the settling of some of this gargantuan dust cloud.

As if this wasn't enough, Otto Muck outlines further consequences. The warm Gulf Stream, released by the sinking of Atlantis, reached northern Europe, melting much of the land locked Arctic ice, which raised the general ocean level by 300 to 650 feet (estimates differ, but the fact is not disputed, confirmed as it is by fossils, strata in rocks, etc.) Because of the dust cloud cutting off the Sun's rays, which partly counteracted the warming, this only happened gradually over the centuries, but by, say, 6,000 BC, the British Isles had been created from the northwest peninsula of Europe, a sort of "consolation prize", perhaps, for the loss of Atlantis! The Mediterranean, also, may have become a proper sea (rather than a series of large lakes) owing to the rising ocean breaking fully through the Straits of Gibraltar. The continental shelves of Europe and America were submerged, greatly reducing the land area and causing what must have been a gradual abandonment of ancient centers of civilization.

THE SURVIVORS: "HOMO SAPIENS SAPIENS"?

Meanwhile, Atlantean Man is identified with Cro-Magnon, or Aurignacian Man: Homo Sapiens Sapiens, the first really modern human, upright, with large brain and developed larynx for speech. This culture still survived as the colonisers of the remnants of the Atlantean empire. Like other colonisers in history who have lost their homeland, they preserved what they could of the language, technology and culture, but they were attacked by predators, hungry and cold in the new dark-age after the floods and dust cloud. They were unable to maintain their original culture and, like Britain after the Romans left, declined into a long period of chaos, isolation and racial amnesia: possibly the distant ancestors of cultures like the Basques, Sumerians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Carians, Mayans, proto-North American Indians Mayas, pre-Olmecs and pre-Incas.

THE "MODERN CLASSICAL" ATLANTOLOGISTS: IGNATIUS DONNELLY AND LEWIS SPENCE

Other Atlantean authors of note are Andrew Tomas, whose "Atlantis - from Legend to Discovery" appeared in 1972 (Hale; Sphere paperback 1973) and established valuable links with Eastern legends, especially that of Shambhala; and, most recently, Murry Hope, whose

"Atlantis-Myth or Reality?" in Arkana paperback (1991), is an excellent overview of modern evidence.

These books build on the remarkably comprehensive earlier works by U.S. Senator Ignatius Donnelly, whose "Atlantis the Antediluvian World" of 1882 was the "breakthrough" book, worldwide bestseller and modern classic in countless editions. It was excellently updated by the erudite British pre-historian Egerton Sykes in 1950 (Sidgwick & Jackson; revised 1970). Donnelly's subsequent "Ragnarok: the Age of Fire and Gravel" (1883) was the first systematic treatment of the "cosmic cataclysm" theory. The almost legendary Scottish mythologist and historian Lewis Spence also wrote possibly the best attempts to integrate Atlantis with wider prehistory, classical history and ancient mythology: his books, now out of print, are considered great prizes to find at secondhand bookshops. "The Problem of Atlantis" (1924), "The History of Atlantis" (1925) and "The Problem of Lemuria" (1933) were followed by "Will Europe Follow Atlantis?" in 1942 and "The Occult Sciences in Atlantis" immediately after the war. All are fascinating and scholarly. Spence in particular laid down much of the basis for later theories, especially on Cro-Magnon Man, the Classical view of Atlantis and how it fits into orthodox views of the Stone Age.

THIS WAS ATLANTIS: PLATO, SOLON AND THE EGYPTIAN PRIESTS

All of course (as in philosophy and much else) have built on Plato's famous dialogues, which, he was at great pains to point out, were written in this case as historical fact, not mythology: they were based on extensive notes taken down in the sixth century B.C. by Solon, the great founding figure of Athenian democracy, from Egyptian priests, who in turn were translating from hieroglyphs even then considered ancient, possibly the Thothic Records, inscribed on a stone column at Sais.

The priests clearly considered that the Athenians needed an object lesson in the true antiquity of great cultures. They started by pointing out that the movement of the heavenly bodies periodically undergoes changes causing earthly catastrophes and the destruction of millions of lives. Humanity lapses at these points into barbarity and forgets, amongst other things, the art of writing. The Athenians remembered, they said, only one world flood, whilst in fact there have been several. One of these destroyed Atlantis, which was a great island in the Atlantic (Atlas's) Ocean beyond the Pillars of Hercules (Straits of Gibraltar). Otto Muck matches Plato's exact dimensions with the Azores Plateau island, about twice the size of the British Isles; far too large for Santorini, Thera or any other Aegean island, and quite unlike them. Around this island there were others and beyond them, at the limit of the ocean, a great continent. It is staggering: that this reference to what is clearly the American continent has escaped general notice. The Atlantean islands were a sort of confederacy with one main king (originally, Atlas: hence the name) and ten kings in all. They had an empire which included much of the Mediterranean shores, and invaded Europe, which was saved by valiant Greek coalition under the (original) ancient Athens.

This was clearly the superpower confrontation of its day, remembering that Greece was then a far larger area than it is today, before a major part of it became submerged by the rising sea level. It was recalled as a sort of Armageddon and Armageddons have always been linked with catastrophes and the end of the age (not of the world: this was a mistranslation of Revelation). This was no exception according to Plato in the "Timaeus". The Atlanteans were defeated, but short after, a violent earthquake tore the Earth asunder, and heavy and lasting rain ensued. The Greek troops, though victorious, perished, and Atlantis sank beneath the ocean in a single day and night. Why did this happen? At first, says Plato the "Critias", the Atlanteans were divine and obedient, sober, gentle and wise, not caring for wealth or luxury; but then this divine quality began to fade, and pride of place to lesser mortal qualities. 9,000 years before Plato, Zeus, king the Gods, wanting to chasten, improve and punish them,

called all the Gods together and spoke... here the "Critias" stops short, unfinished, but it is clear from "Timaeus" that the decision was to destroy Atlantis, rather as, in the "Noah" story, God punishes humanity for its sins with the Great Flood, and, in the Hopi and countless other legends, catastrophe justly visits mankind.

What had Atlantis been like? The "Critias" (alias "The Atlantic") gives almost a guided tour. Poseidon's son Atlas was the first main king, but his twin brother got the part towards the Pillars of Hercules, "as far as Gades" - possibly modern Cadiz. This reference, usually ignored by "Aegean Atlantologists", makes it quite clear that Plato could only have been describing an Atlantic culture, as Cadiz is on the Atlantic side of the Straits of Gibraltar, and in any case the "part towards" the Straits, if taken as inside the Mediterranean, would be far too distant from the Aegean to make any sense of that theory. Elsewhere, as given above, Plato describes Atlantis as an enormous island which was submerged, "beyond" the Straits, followed by others and then the "great continent at the limit of the ocean" (America). For this and other reasons, all the non-Atlantic theories rapidly collapse. Some, like the attempts to identify Atlantis with the Iberian Peninsula, North— West Africa, or even Heligoland Bight in the North Sea or the Caribbean Islands, are ingenious, and could well be turning up invaluable evidence of Atlantean outreaches or colonies: but they are the peripheries, not the centre.

THE BREAKTHROUGH: EGERTON SYKES AND THE RUSSIAN SEAMOUNT PHOTOGRAPHS

In 1980, I had a striking and unexpected personal confirmation of this. In the late 70s I had read a front page item in the "Daily Telegraph" on the discovery of Atlantis, stating that, in 1974, a Russian vessel had photographed mysterious remains of an apparent stone structure on a seamount (seabed mountain) which reached within a few hundred feet of the surface in the Atlantic. In May 1980, with a small group, I founded the Wessex Research Group Network. This was soon, very rapidly, to become a Wessex wide holistic lecture network, and it was our second meeting, in July 1980, that really got us going. Through a friend, we managed something of a "coup", and got as a speaker the most distinguished living Atlantologist in the western world, Egerton Sykes, also well - known as a pre-historian generally, and re writer of the famous "Dictionary of Non-Classical Mythology", He gave us a remarkable overview of Atlantis, confirming from a lifetime's scholarship and travel (he was then 86), the asteroid, the mid-Atlantic large island, Atlantean vestiges in Wessex, and much else. His next item electrified me.

A contact in Eastern Europe had smuggled out to him several extraordinary photographs taken, it later emerged, by the Soviet research ship "Academician Petrovsky" in the Atlantic, probably near the Ampere and Josephine Seamounts or possibly near the Azores, and showing a probably artificial structure on a site last on the surface c. 8,000 years ago at the latest. Here, at last, was the direct evidence, not just of the sunken colonies of Atlantis (this was already widespread), but possibly one of the main islands. Sykes later gave Berlitz the photos, and much information, for his book, and his unique Atlantean Library to the Edgar Cayce foundation, the A. R. E. at Virginia Beach, U.S.A. He pointed out, incidentally, that there was a vast Russian (untranslated) literature on Atlantis, dwarfing anything in the West, and that they had amassed extensive evidence leaving little doubt of its reality; the next most significant, and most ancient, untranslated literature was in Arabic. He prophesied that evidence of Atlantis would be found in the honeycomb of tunnels underneath the Giza plateau which supports the Pyramids in Egypt. Egerton Sykes has now, sadly, passed on. The finest testament to his remarkable life would be such a find. Possibly the two large underground chambers reportedly discovered in summer 1994- near the Sphinx (as, in essence, predicted by Edgar Cayce), but not yet opened up, will reveal something dramatic.

A PROSPEROUS CONFEDERATION: PLATO'S ATLANTIS

Plato goes on, in the "Critias", to describe Atlantis in some detail. It had more wealth than any country before or after. Because of its great empire, goods were brought from far afield. It was well supplied with minerals (including a strange red metal called orichalcum), trees, plants and elephants. It had extensive temples, palaces, harbours and docks; its famous canals included an enormous one 300 feet wide and 100 feet deep. It had cold and hot springs and red, white and black rocks (both abundant in the Azores), excellent soil, and two crops a year. There were public baths and gardens, places of exercise, horse-race courses, tin and bronze, and many temples for many gods. Part of the country on the main island was hilly, perhaps mountainous, but to the south and centre was a great level plain, partly levelled by excavation, with many canals and wealthy villages. This surrounded the great capital city built to a plan of concentric circles, which some have thought Carthage, with its famous circular harbour, was an attempt to emulate through a distant memory. The harbours were full of ships and traders from all parts. The royal city state of Atlantis (the main one of the ten kingdoms) alone could raise 60,000 soldiers, 10,000 manned chariots and 1,200 warships - a staggering total for ancient times.

In the middle of the main island, Plato says, was a column of orichalcum by a great Temple to Poseidon, the god of the sea. On this column was inscribed their constitution, defining the relative positions of the ten kingdoms: every fifth or sixth year people from all the kingdoms gathered there, hunted bulls, sacrificed one in the temple, discussed public issues and disputes, and swore oaths to judge according to the laws on the column. A special law forbade the kingdoms to fight each other, and all were to intervene if any city attempted to overthrow the central royal House of Atlas, Was this the world's first confederation? Was it a distant precursor of the European Union, or NATO, or of the successor to the Soviet Union, the Confederation of Independent States? Or was it a closer union, more like the U.S.A., Australia or Canada? Whatever it was, it was apparently a highly enlightened arrangement as long as the Atlanteans remained a spiritual people. Atlantis is archetypal, not only in its destruction, but in its fabled golden age. It is no accident that great writers, like Plato or Francis Bacon in his "New Atlantis", have used it as a model for the ideal society.

"ISLANDS IN THE EXTERNAL SEA..." - THE CLASSICAL WRITERS' ATLANTIS

What, then, is the wider evidence for such a colossal prehistoric empire? Firstly there are ancient classical writings, beyond Plato's. The story was widely believed to be factual in learned circles in the classical world, including in Alexandria, the great centre of scholarship with its famous library, in the first few centuries A.D. Proclus (410—485 A.D.), a major philosopher in his own right, in his commentary on Plato, says the Greek, Krantor, visited Sais three hundred years after Solon. He confirmed the existence of the hieroglyphic column with the identical Atlantis story to that contained in Solon's notes and Plato's account. (Some commentators says Plato later personally confirmed it.) He adds, citing Marcellus, that certain historians (whose writings are lost to us, but may have existed in the great Alexandrian library which was so tragically burned later) said there were seven islands in the "external sea" (beyond the Straits of Gibraltar). On the largest of these, sacred to Poseidon, the inhabitants preserved the memory of the *once* great and wonderful Atlantic island which had for centuries dominated all the other Atlantic islands. Plutarch (Roman historian, 46-120 A.D.) wrote of an Atlantic continent called Saturnia; Timnagenes (Greek historian, 1st century B.C.) said the Gauls (of what is now France) told how their land was once invaded by people from an island that sank, Marcellinus (Roman historian, A.D. 330—395) told of a type of earthquake which swallowed up whole portions of the Earth: he cited "a large island. .. in the Atlantic Sea, on the coast of Europe", stating that the Alexandrian educated class regarded the destruction of Atlantis as a fact. Herodotus, a Greek often regarded as a

founding father of scholarly history, referred to the “Atlantes”, who took their name from Mount Atlas in north-west Africa, probably a colony of Atlantis.

Diodorus Siculus (distinguished Greek historian, 1st c. B. C.) writes of the “Atlantioi”, named after King Atlas (the first king of Atlantis, after whom the mount was named). We get fascinating extra detail from Diodorus they dwelt in a large island “a number of days voyage to the west”, “out in the deep off Libya” which meant the whole of North Africa. His description confirms Plato: a fruitful fertile, mild land, with varied trees, gardens, streams and costly villas banqueting houses, hunting: like a “home of the gods and not of men”. Atlas was the first to publish the “doctrine of the sphere”, which is why, he says, the idea arose of the entire heavens being supported by Atlas: this suggests he knew the Earth was a globe, when almost all other ancient societies thought it was flat. He also, Diodorus says, “perfected the science of astrology”: since this included astronomy in ancient times, this meant an advanced culture. Atlas’s daughters, through the “most famous gods and heroes”, became “the first ancestors of most of the human race”.

Could this be an allegory of the origin of “Homo Sapiens Sapiens”, “Cro-Magnon”, “Aurignacian” Man? We know the latter appeared mysteriously in Western Europe in waves, especially on the west coastal regions, from at least 35,000 B.C.: where from has long been a mystery. They obliterated, or at least superseded and perhaps interbred with, the previous, more apelike (but still intelligent) “Neanderthal Man”. Lewis Spence, in his “Problem of Atlantis”, argues cogently that there were three successive waves escaping from the progressive break-up of Atlantis: this, he says, explains why most of the archaeological finds are on or near the Atlantic coast; also why, adds Otto Muck in his “Secret of Atlantis”, many north, and some south, Native American cultures have also been of Cro-Magnon type, making Atlantis “the empire of the red-skinned man”. They, and later variants of “modern man”, went on arriving down to the end of the last Ice Age. The migrations ended at about this point (8-10,000 BC) when their homeland, Atlantis, sank; the ensuing rise in sea-level flooded the large coastal shelves everywhere and the large atmospheric dust cloud from the hypothetical asteroid caused a long dark age over northern Europe. The megalithic cultures started after 6,000 BC. Evidence is abundant, from the relative lack of advanced artifacts and cave art from c. 8-10,000 to c.6,000 BC, of a serious interruption to European civilization at this point. The ancient Greek references to a mysterious, gloomy “land of Hades” where the Hyperboreans, “beyond the north wind”, lived, could be a dim memory of a dark land cut off from much of the Sun’s rays in the aftermath of the cataclysm.

“THE PEAKS OF SUNKEN LANDS”: THE ATLANTIC ISLANDS

Many other noted classical authors write of Atlantis and clearly accept it as a fact. These include Philo Judaeus (20 BC-AD 40), Claudius Aelianus (third century BC), Tertullian AD 160-240) and possibly Homer and Theopompus. But there is more direct evidence, Charles Berlitz, to whom I am much indebted for inspiration and information, points out in his “Mystery of Atlantis” that there is much from the very remnants of Atlantis itself - the Atlantic islands. When the Canary Islands were discovered in the fourteenth century, the people said they thought all humanity had died in a great flood, save their own home, the tips of mountains which had remained above water. They had a monarchy of ten kings, like Atlantis; built red, white and black houses, mummified their dead, built circular forts and canals, and had a written alphabetical language: all things associated with Atlantis. The Canaries would have been remnants of one or more of the south eastern outlying islands of the Atlantean Empire.

The Azores were probably the remnants of the main island: Otto Muck, the distinguished German geologist, scientist and inventor, draws in his scholarly “Secret of Atlantis” a detailed parallel between the Azores Plateau Island and Plato’s island. Amongst other things which

Plato mentions, the Azores have black, white and red rocks; hot springs; temperate climate; fertile fruit crops; and the great mountain, now Pico Alto. The Azores as a whole, great mountains emerging straight from the sea, have the look of the peaks of sunken lands. On the sea bed below, up to two miles down, the jagged and sharp mountainous terrain suggests recent submergence, as over millions of years it would have been smoothed out by erosion. I am also told by a friend of mine who went to the Azores frequently that the snaking paths of river beds can still be traced offshore on the shallow sea bed of the Plateau, showing that the area was once on the surface. Berlitz reports that flyers on the very occasional glassy calm day, can see what seem to be rectangular shapes, as if sunken buildings of unknown origin. The Russian seamount photographs came therefore as a confirmation of an already likely theory, first scientifically researched by the Royal Naval survey ship "Challenger" in the last century. Its crew, like the then Prime Minister William Gladstone, were convinced they had found either Atlantis, or something eerily corresponding to it.

"THE STONES OF ATLANTIS" -- SUBMERGED RUINS AT BIMINI

As if this is not enough, we have the extraordinary finds at Bimini in the Bahamas, probably one of the colonial, outlying islands of Atlantis. The "Bimini Wall" was first discovered by the naturalist, explorer and diver S. Manson Valentine, and written up in Berlitz's books. It was further explored by Dr. David Zink in his remarkable "Stones of Atlantis", published by W.H.Allen in 1978. It is a clearly artificial paved stone "road" in a "3" shape, about thirty feet down in seabed last thought to have been on the surface before the rise in sea level at the end of the last Ice Age, c. 8-10,000 B.C. Dr. Valentine, as reported in chapter eight of Berlitz's "Atlantis - the Lost Continent Revealed", thinks it was a ceremonial road leading to a special site, as with the Mayan one, the Sacbe, a raised causeway in Yucatan which goes on for over a quarter of a mile undersea. It was only one of well over- thirty areas containing what he calls "ghost patterns", vague patterns in the seabed too deeply buried to be traced. In detail, including large rectangles connected by straight lines, comparable in some ways to the Lines of Nazca in Peru. He has researched them since 1958. He thinks they were built by a widespread prehistoric race that could transport cyclopean megaliths in a mysterious way, such as (later-) Stonehenge, Baalbek in Lebanon (c. 200 tons), or Tiahuanaco, over two miles up in Bolivia.

Finely cut stone blocks and a "stylized head" have been brought to the surface by Dr. Zink at Bimini, who has also pointed out an amazing vertical plinth arising out of the seabed which could not be a natural object. All this fulfils the prediction of the famous American psychic Edgar Cayce, who said, speaking in the 1930s, that evidence of Atlantis would be found at Bimini in 1968 or 1969 which is when it was, in fact, first definitely discovered. Further south, off Florida under some three hundred feet of ocean, a massive pyramid, it is claimed, has been found by the depth finder of a fishing boat. Berlitz estimates a total of between fifty and sixty unexplained underwater stone walls, roads and circles in the Caribbean and Bahamas areas: in fact, over the continental shelves of the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Pacific coast of South America, extraordinary evidence is being found of the remains of an incredibly ancient megalithic civilization with, at least, extensive seaborne communications and trade.

"MAPS OF THE ANCIENT SEA KINGS" - ECHOES OF ANCIENT SCIENCE?

A distinguished historian of science, at about the same time as these finds were being made, was coming quite independently to a similar conclusion. Professor Charles H. Hapgood was Professor of the History of Science at New Hampshire University. He had already written "Earth's Shifting Crust", a work much praised by no less a figure than Albert Einstein. In 1966 the Chilton Company of Philadelphia published his remarkable and much quoted

"Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings: Evidence of Advanced Civilization in the Ice Age", the result of seven years' work with a team of his university students using a computer - quite an innovation for the time. A revised, British edition emerged from Turnstone Press in 1979. His findings were startling. He decoded Renaissance and Mediaeval maps, finding the most accurate were, amazingly, the oldest ones, which had come from much older source maps of forgotten origin. These ancient sources, it appeared, remembered remains of ice sheets from the Ice Age in Northern Europe; knew the shape of the Antarctic coast before it was covered with ice several thousand years B.C.; could measure longitude accurately, an ability only acquired again with Harrison's chronometer in the 18th Century; and used spherical trigonometry long before the Ancient Greeks. The map show great changes in coastlines, suggesting planetary cataclysms of Earth - shaking proportions in the last ten to fifteen thousand years.

The most famous, the Piri Reis map, was found in Constantinople dated 1513. Its undoubted serious inaccuracies, like joining South America to Antarctica, do not invalidate the evidence, since it was based on a wide range of other maps, some more accurate than others, and was clearly also affected by popular geographical misconceptions of the time. What it also shows, Hapgood found, is calculations mountain ranges, coastlines, estuaries and islands (like Marajo in the Amazon estuary) which had not been discovered at the time, nor for long afterwards. Remarkably, it shows the Azores archipelago several times its present size, even after allowing for possible errors in copying: were the ancient map(s) on which it is based made in an era when either the ocean level had not risen fully (after a great catastrophe which melted much of the ice), or the Azores Plateau had not fully subsided (following the sinking of the Azores Plateau tectonic platelet)? Even more remarkable, it shows several large Atlantic islands which do not any longer exist: one, in particular, between Brazil and West Africa where the gaunt St. Peter and St. Paul Rocks now stand, Hapgood considers well confirmed by other old maps and by the shape of the Mid -Atlantic Ridge beneath it, which Piri Reis could not have known about. If this did exist, it was probably a southern arm of the Atlantean Empire.

"SONS OF THE SUN": ANCIENT SOUTH AMERICA

Its proximity to Brazil links up with other fascinating research. Many distinguished scholars and explorers have found extensive evidence of ancient inscriptions, buildings and sites in South America, far older than the pre-Inca and other civilizations generally accepted. These include Colonel A. Braghine, whose comprehensive "Shadow of Atlantis" was first published by Rider in 1938, and reprinted by Thorsons Aquarian as a paperback in 1980. He explored many overgrown forest areas and concluded that there were possibly some 2,000 Phoenician or other ancient inscriptions in Brazil, largely giving directions up creeks and inlets to the nearest gold mine! Braghine, with impressive if circumstantial evidence, considered in detail two groups he thought were descended from prehistoric Atlantean colonists or refugees: The Phoenicians, an ancient Middle Eastern race of master mariners of unknown origin, and the even more shadowy Carians, the first three letters of whose name showed, he thought, affinities with other later groups like the Carthaginians of North Africa. He traces similarities with racial groups in South and Central America, the result, he thought, of escaping or colonising Atlanteans migrating both East and West from their central Atlantic homeland, a theme taken up also by Otto Muck, Charles Berlitz and Lewis Spence.

Other scholars of ancient South America include Professor Marcel Hornet, whose "Sons of the Sun" and "On the Trail of the Sun Gods" were published in 1963 and 1965 by Neville Spearman. He outlined his discovery, not only of inscriptions, but of an enormous, incredibly ancient sacred "painted rock" or "Pedro Pintada", shot through with inscribed tunnels underneath and buried in the forests of Venezuela. He felt the ancient Amazonian civilization

was a direct offshoot of the Atlanteans, the "Sons of the Sun" as he thought they were known, part of their worldwide prehistoric culture. And most famous of all, of course, we have Colonel Percy Fawcett, who disappeared mysteriously in the Matto Grosso jungle in 1925, believing he was hot on the track of an ancient unknown civilisation, His son, Brian Fawcett, has edited his writings in the classic "Exploration Fawcett", published by Hutchinson in 1953, and has followed this up in 1958 with "Ruins in the Sky", describing his own further explorations and evidence.

Percy's great nephew, a dedicated seeker, Tim Paterson, who has given us two talks, has explored frequently the area where his great uncle disappeared. He feels Percy was invited into a tunnel and cave complex, many miles long, and did not die till 1959, having discovered the remnants of an incredibly ancient, and enlightened, civilization which has now passed into another dimension of matter, being only visible occasionally to local tribes as mysterious beings in white, who cannot be physically traced. These local stories have an affinity to the unearthly legends of Mount Shasta, California, and Shambhala, frequently placed in invisible realms in or above the Gobi Desert in Mongolia. Legends are of course not evidence, but usually embody deeper truths: in this case, of an elusive yet pure ancient wisdom we have even now not penetrated?

There is one startling new piece of scientific evidence. Berlitz, in his "Atlantis - the Lost Continent Revealed" publishes (facing page 128), satellite and helicopter photographs showing eight gigantic symmetrical pyramid shaped structures, with four smaller ones, covered with dense forest on the edge of the Amazon jungle. Exploration is difficult because of the thick forest and the local tribes who, no doubt quite properly, protect them as sacred places. Nearby there are other circular and semicircular formations, thought to be massive constructions far older than any known cultures and only recently discovered by modern aerospace technology.

"THE DISTORTED REMAINS OF A SUNKEN CONTINENT"? -- OCEANOGRAPHY

Professor Hapgood, in "Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings", page 59, quotes the distinguished Belgian Dr. René Malaise. He concluded that at least parts of the Mid-Atlantic ridge, which includes the Azores Plateau, was still above sea-level at the end of the last ice age, around 10,000 B. C. He examined diatoms of fresh-water species, taken from the ridge, that lived in a freshwater lake when the ridge was above sea level, which must have been he said, in the last 10,000 to 15,000 years, as they were all recent species. Berlitz, as a professional diver, is an expert in this field. He describes in detail the topography of the Mid-Atlantic ridge which is at one of its widest points where Atlantis is supposed to have been the distorted remains of a sunken continent? He also describes remarkable finds of tachylyte - a vitreous basaltic lava on the seabed north of the Azores (mid Atlantic islands). The scientific examination of this by Dr. Pierre Termier of the Paris Oceanographic Institute, showed, he announced in 1911, that the Atlantic seabed in that area was probably on the surface not more than 15,000 years ago.

Although Termier's conclusion has been challenged since, the thesis that much of the Atlantic seabed was at some time on the surface is also supported by extensive other evidence, notably "cores" brought up from the mid-Atlantic Ridge in 1957 and the work of the U. S. Geodetic Survey on the American continental shelf. The most remarkable evidence, however, already outlined, are the actual remains of what are clearly ancient shaped stones on the seabed off the Bahamas, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Peru, Morocco, and the Russian seamount photographs, all pre-dating the rise in ocean level of 10,000 to 12,000 years ago; which itself coincides strikingly with Plato's date of about 9,500 B.C. for the sinking of Atlantis.

Since the rise of level of probably 300-650 feet is a generally accepted fact even by the most orthodox science, we have enough scope to postulate a major Atlantean culture of near Platonic dimensions even without envisaging the larger (Azores Plateau, Caribbean and mid-Atlantic) disappeared islands: the Atlantis theory does not depend on geologic or cosmic catastrophism! A very powerful, empire-building Atlantis could perfectly well have been distributed among the far larger Atlantic islands and far more extensive coastal continental shelf areas (on both sides) which existed before much of them were swallowed up by the gigantic, if gradual rise in sea level. The evidence, however, is increasingly in favour of catastrophism, an idea that is just now beginning to reclaim scientific favour as evidence proliferates that asteroids, comets or both caused large, recently discovered impact areas (e. g. an enormous one in Texas) and may, for example, have led to the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago and/or the mammoths of northern Siberia 10,000-15, 000 years ago.

“THE GODS OF AZTLAN”? -- WORLD LEGENDS

From Plato to ancient Indian Sanscrit writings, from North American Indian flood legends to the Canary Islands natives, a remarkably consistent picture emerges of “gods” and humans who in many cases escaped from a great continent variously known as “Atlas”, “Aztlan”, “Atlantis”, “Ad” (and many other variants) which was in the East (for the American Indians) or the West (for Europeans and Egyptians), and which was catastrophically flooded. The “flood survivor” racial memory was so strong that, in the last century, some North American Indian tribes were still found to be regularly playing out an extraordinary ritual. The sole survivor reaches the village and has to go round from dwelling to dwelling asking for hospitality.

The most famous “god figure” is the Toltec, and later Aztec, ancient “white god” Quetzalcoatl “Kuculcan” to the Mayas. His confusion with the Spanish invader, Cortes, had disastrous consequences for the Aztecs in 1519. In the legend, after bringing civilization to Mexico, he went back to Tlapallan, “The Land of the Rising Sun”, his original home in the eastern sea, ie. presumably the Atlantic. His father was Gucumatz, god of the ocean and earthquake, as was Atlas’s father, Poseidon. The similarities do not stop there: in fact, they almost defy belief. Both Quetzalcoatl and Atlas came from Atlantic homes; both were founders of civilizations; each was one of twins; both were bearded; and both in legend, held up the heavens. Do we have, here, a common Atlantis legend from two supposedly completely separate civilizations? What of the Peruvian legends of their great founding hero, Manco Capac, who, with his sister/wife, suddenly appeared “from the Sun” on an island in Lake Titicaca and taught civilization? Or the Maya founding “Master of the dawn” Tzamna, or Zamna? The dawn, i.e. the rising sun, comes from the east, the direction of Atlantis from America; and as Professor Marcel Hornet points out, the Atlanteans were called “Sons of the Sun”.

The “Codex Troanus”, a book of hieroglyphs left by the Maya, is now in the British Museum. Brasseur de Bourbourg, in an admittedly controversial version, translated this to say that, 8,060 years before its compilation, two great Islands were continually rocked by earthquakes and eventually sank with 64 million people. Augustus Le Plongeon equally controversially translated the inscription on the pyramid of Xochicalco, Mexico, to give a similar message. Fascinating further detail is in “The Shadow of Atlantis” by Braghine, especially chapter one. Then there are the inexplicable similarities between buildings, pyramids, cultures, burial rituals, customs and traditions on both sides of the Atlantic did these originate, as many of the legends imply, with a common centre of civilization, perhaps the hub of an empire which extended throughout much of the Americas, Europe and the Middle East? Were Mesolithic Man (8, 000 to 4, 000 B. C.) and Neolithic Man (after 4,000 B.C) the degenerate, or not-so--degenerate survivors of areas that had once been colonised or influenced by Atlanteans, and to which, perhaps, some of the survivors of the Atlantean catastrophe fled?

“THE LANGUAGE OF THE GODS”? -- ANCIENT COMPARATIVE LANGUAGE

The present day Basques of southern France and northern Spain, think themselves descendants of Atlantis, Charles Berlitz, whose grandfather founded the Berlitz language schools, is a languages expert. In “The Mystery of Atlantis” he devotes a fascinating chapter (ten) to “Atlantis, Language and the Alphabet”. He regards the Basque language (the general Iberian language before the Celtic and subsequent Roman conquests) as a possible relic of the Atlantean language. It is very ancient, and isolated, with strange affinities. It has similarities with other agglutinative languages like Quecha, the ancient Inca language, and also resembles the polysynthetic American Indian and Eskimo, but does not appear to have influenced, or been influenced by, any other language. Rather it is a sort of living fossil, certain of its words, like “ceiling” which literally means “the top of the cavern” or “knife” which means “the stone that cuts”, seem to go back to Cro-Magnon cave days, and remember that Lewis Spence thought the Cro-Magnons were escaping Atlanteans.

Spiritual words in American Indian languages, Berlitz continues, have extraordinary resemblances to ancient languages very far removed, that could only have had contact if there were some sort of prehistoric seaborne communications, “Thalassa” was “the sea” in ancient Greek: “thallac” meant “not solid” to the Mayes, and Tlaloc was the water god of the Aztecs. “Atl” means “water” in Nahuatl, the Aztec language, and also in the North African Berber language. “Manitu” is “great spirit” in American Indian, equivalent to the Hindu “Manu”. The Nahuatl for “God” is “teo” or “theulh”, and the Greeks have “theos” from which we get “theology”. In Basque “argi” is “light”, while in Sanskrit “arg” is “brilliant”.

Even more strikingly, “father” is “aita” In Basque, “taita” in Quecha, “ata” in Turkic languages, “atey” in Dakota, “tata” or “tahtli” in Nahuatl, “intati” in Seminole, “Tachchu” or “tat’chu” in Zuni, “tata” in Maltese, “tatay” in Tegalog, “tad” in Welsh, “tate” in Roumanian, “thatha” or “tata” in Sinhalese, and “tate” in both Fijian and Samoan, both distant Pacific island languages. Most of these languages are linguistic islands, not sharing in the mainstream of Indo-European language development, as if they, too, are fossils of a distant past language which once united or linked them all. Was this, also, the “language of the gods” which the ancient Egyptians considered the origin of their hieroglyphs? And why is the Easter Island script so similar to the Indus valley script of more than 5,000 years ago in ancient Pakistan? Or the carvings of balsa wood sailing craft found on recently excavated pyramids at Tecume, in Peru, so similar to the Easter Island craft: “almost identical”, to use Thor Heyerdahl’s words faxed to the Kon-Tiki Museum, Norway, on 5th March 1992. Why, also, is the newly discovered script of Mystery Hill, New Hampshire, U.S.A., so similar to ancient Cretan script?

“THE SHINING ONES” - THE GARDEN OF EDEN AND THE RE-FOUNDERS OF CIVILIZATION

Christian O’Brien, a remarkable scholar, retired in 1970 as head of the Iranian oil industry and became a fulltime researcher into prehistory. Turnstone Press, published his two impressive books, “The Megalithic Odyssey: A Search for the Master Builders of the Bodmin Moor Astronomical Complex of Stone Circles and Giant Cairns” in 1983, and “The Genius of the Few: The Story of Those Who Founded the Garden in Eden” in 1985. This was a major publishing event, and I remember the sheer excitement as the immensity of the implications of the thesis sank in.

Many gigantic stone structures, the thesis runs, were built within a space of only two centuries in the Third Millennium B. C. , in a sudden spurt of precision building that suddenly came from previously primitive cultures: among them the Pyramids of Egypt, the great works at Avebury and Silbury Hill, the first part of Stonehenge, the early ziggurats of Mesopotamia

and the advanced cities of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa in the Indus Valley. The first book argues for the advent in history of a race of master builders, a group originating before Sumeria, regarded in orthodox circles as the oldest advanced Middle Eastern culture which suddenly and mysteriously learned the arts of civilization. These master builders traversed much of the World guiding, instructing and inspiring local populations, not only with building techniques but with advanced astronomical and philosophical wisdom, as is shown by the Bodmin Moor complex which O'Brien and his wife, Joy, discovered in 1978. The linguistic evidence for this is impressively assembled, with amazing similarities of place names on their overseas journeys, including Britain, compared in detail with their Sumerian originals.

The second book, written with Joy O'Brien, is even more fascinating. It goes back to 8,000 B.C. almost, be it noted, Atlantean times. According to Sumerian scripts which they translated in a logical, scientific way without the usual religious bias, a group of wise sages appeared, known as the "Annanage" to the Sumerians and the "Elohim" ("Shining Ones") to the early Middle East people. They settled in a fertile basin in the Southern Lebanese mountains and set up an agricultural, crop and animal genetic research centre. This was not only for their own survival but to breed a superior genetic strain of humanity and teach there the elements of civilization. Passages in the Biblical Garden of Eden story of, for example, the creation of man and woman, the apple, the serpent, the temptation and the Fall, are compared with the very similar Sumerian passages based, it seems, on the same events. These sages seem to have been exploring what was for them an unknown world. According to the O'Briens, they were inevitably made into gods by the people, in their absence, thousands of years after these "creation" events; so that, for example, the words that could be translated in a matter of fact way as "The Shining Ones looked on the highlands and the lowlands with pleasure" were given the far more cosmic rendering of "God made the Heaven and the Earth" - "Elohim", literally plural "the Shining Ones" (i.e. O'Brien's sages), becoming the singular "God". They went on, say the O'Briens, to found (by their genetic work) the Hebrew race, whose purity was supposed to be maintained by fierce injunctions to maintain cleanliness, eat pure foods, and not intermix with other races. The Hebrews carried the tribal memory of their homeland as the Garden of Eden, and of their benefactors as "angels" (literally Greek "angelos" "messengers").

If this thesis is correct, and there was a confusion, (I would say at times only), between "The Shining Ones" and the concept of "God", I do not think this in any way prejudices the existence of a very real, universal true God, nor of its revealing itself genuinely in the Biblical (or other) scriptures; the most inspired passages very definitely show an awareness of this all embracing consciousness, of which, surely, the sages or "Shining Ones" themselves were aware, as were most of the other great teachers of history. My concern is where these apparently very physical and scientific sages came from. One clear possibility is that they came from other planets; another, that they densified from higher planes of matter. But there is a clear, more Earthly possibility: that they came from the remnants of a once great advanced civilization right here on this planet, and had saved sufficient of their scientific knowledge (especially of genetics) to perform the great commission, perhaps left them by their dying forefathers, of re-starting advanced life on a planet now recovering from a worldwide cataclysm.

Here one point is crucial. The O'Briens put the appearance of the first generation of these beings as at 8,000 BC. This leaves a convenient 500-1,500 years for Earth to recover from the catastrophe and the advanced remnant to reconvene, in some remote safe area, and reassemble its knowledge. What better, then, than to found a genetically advanced race which can lend the recovery, and then tour much of the world teaching how to re-found the arts of civilization with the "appropriate technology" of the time (megaliths, astronomy, agriculture, etc.)? Much of that tour led back to areas (Western Europe, Britain) that would have been colonies of the sunken mother-land of which they would have had a vague but

affectionate racial memory. When we consider the similarity with the persistent worldwide legends of ancient founding godlike figures like Quetzalcoatl or Atlas himself, who came from oceanic or Eastern lands, or from remote highlands or even “the Sun” or “the Heavens”, the relevance to the Atlanteans, the “Sons of the Sun”, becomes compelling.

“THE LOST SHIP OF NOAH”? - THE ARARAT SHIP REMAINS

Also in the Middle East, the Biblical flood legend has been the subject of massive speculation and literature. The story of Noah’s epic survival of a massive flood, with his family and two of each animal, in a gigantic “ark”, has long fascinated us, but had been assumed to be mythical. In early 1994 this assumption was shattered, On 30th January Jill Parsons wrote an article in “The Mail on Sunday” entitled “Is this Noah’s Ark? Why scientists believe they are proving, a Biblical legend”, “The mountain top site that may be one of the most sensational archaeological finds ever”; and on 13th February, Channel 4 opened their “Encounters” series with one of those programmes that really do make history, entitled “The Quest for the Ark”. An archaeological team including the American Vendyl Jones, who has devoted his life to the Ark quest, had examined a massive ship shaped imprint near the peak of the El Judi mountain, 7,000 feet up in Turkey.

Not only is this a mere 17-20 miles from Mount Ararat (and on the same mountain range), where the Bible says the Ark was grounded after the flood subsided, but the Koran, the Muslim Holy Book, is more specific: it actually names the El Judi mountain and says the Ark landed near the peak. In Genesis, in the Bible, God Instructed Noah to build an Ark 300 cubits (450 feet) long and 50 cubits (75 feet) wide, exactly the dimensions of the imprint. Even more astonishing, as given in Jill Parsons’ s article, these measurements are repeated in an ancient Greek account of Noah’s life, according to Jones and a shipwreck specialist member of his archaeological team, David Fasold. This Greek text also gave them an ancient map reference which, together with other ancient texts, clearly indicated the Ararat range as the site for the Ark. Further, the imprint was once made of wood held together by plaster, and although the wood has rotted away, samples of the plaster remain.

The Channel 4 programme adds important details. An ancient Babylonian text is mentioned, giving directions to the Ark, Ancient stones in the area were found, with holes in the top very similar to, but much larger than, stones found on ancient sunken ships in the Mediterranean, used to stabilize the vessels by being towed behind them, On these stones are remarkable carvings: crosses, said locally to denote the presence nearby of the Ark; an ancient script; and stylised plants like olive leaves, said to portray the olive sprig which the dove brought back to Noah to show that, at last, land had appeared after his apparently unending ordeal on the waves. A nearby town is given a name which translates as “crow on the land”, which could refer to the crow in the Noah story. Although not permitted to excavate as yet for fear of damaging the site, a team was filmed using special radar which could penetrate 25 feet down into the soil. It traced what could be the eerie fossilised shape of the timbers of a large ship, of exactly the Ark’s size: the timbers had rotted away, but the shape of them was still visible. The Turkish government takes this all very seriously: it has declared the site an area of outstanding natural and historical interest.

The Biblical side is given very well in “The Ark on Ararat”, by Tim LaHaye and John Morris, published by Thomas Nelson and Creation Life in the USA, 1976, and by Lakeland in Britain in 1979. They point out that the original Hebrew word which I translated “flood” implies more than this: an earth changing cataclysm. In fact, it is the root from which we get such a concept. They also describe how Ararat remains were first sighted as early as 1856, from which time there have been increasing reports of them by about 200 individuals, all of whose stories have many common details, with no possibility of collusion, and despite the glacial changes that periodically alter the ice that usually has hidden the Ark imprint from view. Most

strikingly, three men have found hand hewn timbers in that area (150 miles from the nearest tree).

In "The Lost Ship of Noah: In Search of the Ark at Ararat", a very valuable book published by W. H. Allen in 1987, Charles Berlitz gives further details of the Ararat imprint. Wood fragments were found there when parts of it were dynamited in 1960. An unusual, gigantic stone slab has been found nearby with stratified lines that may be an actual fossilised part of the Ark this, according to Fasold, was an enormous reed structure, built round a timber framework, over which a form of resin was poured to waterproof it, of a type which we know the ancient Akkadians had. Berlitz also tells the story of Fernand Navarra, the French industrialist and author of "J'ai Trouvé l'Arche de Noé", perhaps the equivalent for the Ark of Heinrich Schliemann who discovered Troy.

It was 1955, the year of the greatest thaw point in decades: the almost perpetual ice glaciers which covered the Ararat range would be easier to penetrate than usual. After several attempts and a heroic four days and nights on the blizzard swept western slope of Ararat, Navarra succeeded in finding evenly cut and obviously hand tooled wooden beams under a half melted glacier. He selected one, but found it attached to others, on what he considered the hull of the Ark, the core complete pattern of which he could see through the ice. He cut off a five foot section. On analysis, the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture said the wood was oak. The term 'gopherwood' for the Ark's wood in Genesis is thought by scientists to mean white oak, There is no white oak within 600 miles of Ararat, so it must have come by, or as part of, a vessel. They also dated it at 5,000 BC, a date later confirmed (4-5,000) through carbon-14 and other tests by the universities of Bordeaux and Madrid. Although two American universities gave much later dates, we can be fairly confident of the early dates in view of the now known tendency of carbon-14 techniques seriously to underestimate the age of objects, as described in Professor Colin Renfrew's "Before Civilization: The Radiocarbon Revolution and Prehistoric Europe", published by Jonathan Cape in 1973. In fact, in view of this, 4-5,000 is possibly an underestimate, especially since the deep freeze and covered condition of the wood may have inhibited the carbon-14 decay.

Excitingly, this leaves open a possible date of Atlantean or near - Atlantean antiquity. Anything of 5,000 BC or before may be relevant, since the period of global instability may have continued for as much as thousands of years after the initial asteroid impact and sinking of Atlantis. We can imagine starkly the upheaval of the tectonic plates, the giant dust cloud in the upper atmosphere only gradually dissipating, severe disruption to weather patterns, rising sea level and possible further impacts by other, lesser asteroids, comets or large meteors. There may have been, in other words, several lesser deluges following the Atlantean one (as some legends, e.g. the Hopis' of Arizona, suggest). Perhaps there were several arks, vessels carrying survivors, or ships plying an ancient seaborne trade which survived, or was rebuilt after, the catastrophe.

It seems likely that Navarra's glaciated "hull" is one of these, as it is not the same as the Mt. El Judi imprint covered in the Channel 4 programme, which is 17-20 miles from Ararat. The widespread distribution of such wooden beams is a further indication of this. Navarra later seems to have found them in different positions on Ararat. Apparently, moreover, similar beams to Navarra's have frequently been found by local Kurdish or Turkish mountaineers, but are not usually reported because the presence of a great ship, or ships, on Mount Ararat is a matter of common knowledge in the area. In 1948, a "ship like" shape was reportedly forced up by an earthquake in the field of a local farmer, Resit Sarihan, in a village to the south of Ararat called Mahser: since this meant "doomsday" and the "ship" was thought to be a bad omen, the village name was later changed to Uzengili!

“LOST SURVIVORS OF THE DELUGE”: WORLDWIDE FLOOD LEGENDS

Another invaluable work, “Lost Survivors of the Deluge” by Gerhard von Hassler, was translated by Martin Ebon and published in English by Signet Books in 1978. Amongst other things, he points out that the Sumerians, in the “Epic of Gilgamesh”, describe a huge ship similar in proportions to Noah’s Ark, a great flood similar to Noah’s, and explores the possibility that Gilgamesh sailed from Africa to the mouth of the Amazon in search of his ancestors. He describes how legends worldwide, of Greece and India, of the Incas, Mayas, Aztecs, and North American Indians, all speak of a Great Deluge which destroyed all but a few remnants of humanity - but that these remnants included the “gods” and heroes who re-taught the arts of civilization. These re-founded arts are vividly shown in two of the most ancient cities yet uncovered, dating approximately from the time of the end of Atlantis: Catal Huyuk in Anatolia, little over 1,000 kilometres from Mount Ararat, and Jericho, c. 1, 200 kilometers away. So the Ararat region, clearly, as we have seen, the home of the best known of the remnants, could have been the seed for perhaps the most prominent, but far from the only, revival. Remember, also, that the O’Briens say their “sages” first appeared not far away, in the Lebanon highlands, and at about the same time, 8,000 BC.

Here we have, then, extraordinary evidence for the world’s best known flood and cataclysm story. God’s reasons for the flood, given in Genesis chapter six, were strikingly similar to Zeus’s reasons for submerging Atlantis in Plato’s account: “The imaginations of men were evil continually”, including violations of God’s marriage statutes; people were “lovers of violence”, disobedient to, and unbelieving in, God; they refused to believe Noah, until too late, that judgement was about to come, just as Zeus appears to have caught the Atlanteans unrepentant and unprepared.

Was Noah’s Flood, then, the same event that sank Atlantis in probably 8-10,000 BC? Remember that, to Noah and his people, “the World” would have meant the Middle Eastern world as they knew it, so we do not have to read the account to mean Noah’s family were the sole survivors on the whole planet. If it were the same event, it does not mean Noah was an Atlantean; he was suffering the effects of the catastrophic continuous deluge, lasting over a month that would probably have followed the impact of Otto Muck’s six mile diameter asteroid in the Atlantic. Vast amounts of water would have been instantly vaporised and boiled, reached the upper atmosphere, and been carried by the tornado strength winds all round the planet. On cooling it would have come down in violent torrential sheets, wiping out most civilization as it did so.

Flood legends of incredible antiquity throughout the world, including ancient China and America, show that everywhere it was regarded as a cosmic cataclysm, a judgement, a destruction followed by a renewal. These legends, and other fascinating evidence, are given comprehensively by Charles Berlitz in “Mysteries from Forgotten Worlds” (1972) and “Doomsday 1999 AD” (1981) published by Souvenir Press, as well as his Atlantis books and “The Lost Ship of Noah”. These works did much to assemble the evidence and pave the way for the recent revelations. In “Doomsday 1999 AD” Berlitz relates it to apocalyptic beliefs more generally, and gives valuable analyses of the way some people and groups are currently trying to “hitch” catastrophe legends in support of their expectation of a similar world nemesis at the forthcoming end of this millennium.

There were survivors all over the planet, but as the Egyptian priests told Solon in Plato’s account, most were so devastated that they lost the structure of their civilization, including the art of writing. I say “most”, because a few were probably better placed, either because of their technology, or because like Noah they were forewarned in some way, or because of geography. Possibly, even, some of them were not primarily based on this planet, or in this time space frequency, at all or were rescued by those who were not. Were these better

placed people for whatever reason the ancestors of the O'Briens' "sages", or Manco Capac, or Quetzalcoatl, or other wise figures whose appearance to the forlorn remnants of humanity re-founded world civilizations and gave them the name of "gods"?

THE RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX

Are the remains of the Ark, Catal Huyuk and Jericho, the Atlantic underwater finds and Hapgood's ancient maps the only physical, as opposed to literary or legendary, evidence of Atlantean period advanced civilization? Until 27th November 1994, most people would have said yes. On the evening of that day, however, everything changed. The BBC 2 "Timewatch" programme for that evening was a bombshell. Entitled "The Age of the Sphinx", it featured an adventurous, spiritually minded and unorthodox American Egyptologist, John Anthony West, who until then had been best known for an excellent study of Ancient Egypt, "Serpent in the Sky", published by Turnstone in 1979. He started by proving, to his own satisfaction and that of a police identification expert, that the face on the Sphinx was not that of the son of Chephren, the Pharaoh who built the Great Pyramid, and through whom the Sphinx has received its orthodox dating in the 3rd Century BC. He went on to ask Robert Schoch, Professor of Geology at Boston University, specialising in rain erosion, to examine the Sphinx.

Schoch quite independently put its date at 5-7,000 BC, since the erosion, previously overlooked, could not have happened with the very slight rainfall in Egypt after that time. Schoch points out (as given in an "Independent" article in 1992) that stone remains of this period have been found elsewhere, in Turkey and Palestine; and further states that it may be before this period, since erosion rates often happen "non linearly"; in other words, the deeper the weathering, the slower it may progress, since it is protected by the outer layer of the stone. This is revolution enough, and we are already in the near Atlantean period, when re-founded or surviving remnants of Atlantean civilization may have been widespread and powerful: quite enough so to have brought about the worldwide seaborne trade that Hapgood's ancient maps, the Ararat timbers, and cities like Catal Huyuk and Jericho, suggest. In other words, we have a civilization quite advanced enough to have built the Sphinx and, if it did so, clearly it was the precursor of the Ancient Egypt we know so well.

West himself is not content with this: he dates it at the earliest at 8-10,000 BC, when the precession of the equinoxes would have been such that the paws would have been pointing to the midsummer sunrise. This was a point of great importance to the Egyptians, as well as to the builders of great monuments elsewhere, such as Stonehenge (John Ivimy, in "The Sphinx and the Megaliths", published by Turnstone in 1974, thinks that the importance was indeed so great that the ancient Egyptians themselves brought the practice to the western megaliths, including (midwinter sunrise) to Newgrange near Dublin in Ireland, which is at least 4,500 BC). But for West, even 8-10,000 BC is latest possible date for the Sphinx. He claims (as reported in the "Independent" article, 1992) that its extreme water weathering patterns suggest it already existed during the climatic conditions that followed the break-up of the Ice Age between about 15,000 and 10,000 BC. If this is true, we have a sensation, overturning all orthodox preconceptions: a real Atlantean-period Sphinx -- an advanced prehistoric Egypt. This was probably not a colony of Atlantis (as Ignatius Donnelly and others had suggested), but co-existed with it, standing proudly independent, as did prehistoric Greece. This would be striking confirmation of the literal truth of Plato's account based, remember, on what the Egyptian priests of Sais told Solon, reading from their own hieroglyphs ancient even then, written on a stone column.

THE REALLY ANCIENT WORLD: THE EGYPTIAN PRIESTS' ACCOUNT

The first part of their account is often overlooked. One of the best translations and commentaries is in Otto Muck's "Secret of Atlantis", first chapter. It tells us vital information about the really ancient world before the catastrophes, and the catastrophes themselves. The priests said the Greeks (of 571 BC, when Solon visited them) were all like children, for they had no really ancient knowledge. Many disasters have hit humanity, in various ways ("and it will continue in the future"), of which the greatest are by fire and water and the lesser ones by "a thousand other causes". The Greek legend of Phaethon and Helios, in which Phaethon caused a terrible conflagration on Earth by failing to control the sun chariot and falling to Earth struck by Zeus's thunderbolt, was, they said, not mere fable but an account of "the deviation from their courses of the stars in the heavens that revolve round the Earth" and "the destruction by much fire of everything on Earth". When it is thus by fire the uplanders are the main victims, but Egypt is saved from this "as it is in all other things" by the Nile, which bursts its banks. When the disaster is by deluge, the town and coastal people, like the Greeks, suffer, but again Egypt is saved, or less affected, since there are no hills or mountains from which the water can sweep down and carry them away to the sea as elsewhere.

In other words, the Egyptian priests tell us that they have an unusually safe land, which is "why the tradition preserved among us is considered the most ancient", and all the "beautiful, great, or significant events that take place among you, or us, or anywhere else" is recorded "wholly and fully in our temples", as word is received, and "preserved for posterity". But "with you [Greeks] and the others" [who, we wonder!] everything has only recently started again through written documents and the mechanisms of the state. After a regular period "the heavens open up on mankind again" and sweep away all but the ignorant, and "you will be as it were made young again", knowing nothing of the ancient past.

The Greeks in particular, the priests said, remember only one deluge, although there have been many previous ones', therefore forgetting their own ancient, most glorious race, because they have gone for many generations without written records. These were the Greeks who, after all others had defected, beat the Atlanteans and restored the freedom of all those in the Mediterranean area, after which came the "violent earthquakes and floods" which destroyed the Greeks, as well as Atlantis "in a single dreadful day and a single dreadful night". They said Atlantis had ruled Libya (North Africa) "as far as the borders of Egypt", Europe "as far as Tyrrhenia" and "parts" of the "continent" (America) on the "other side" of and "enclosing" the "sea which may properly be called an ocean" beyond the "Pillars of Hercules" (Straits of Gibraltar). Compared with this, they said, everything that is situated on this side of the Straits (of Gibraltar) "appears like a bay with a narrow entrance".

We can now see the priests' account, as reported in Plato, as not merely the story of Atlantis. It is an outline of the Mediterranean and Atlantic ancient world more generally, and the frequent cataclysms that affected it, increasingly being confirmed by new research. We do not need to speculate too much. The Greeks have conveniently translated for us the account written in stone, by the civilization which had taken it upon itself to be the chroniclers of civilization. The picture that emerges is one of a vigorous, varied and prosperous world, with extensive seaborne trade, large armies and navies, advanced agriculture, metal working, writing, sophisticated astronomy including knowledge of the spherical Earth, largely accurate world maps, and advanced forms of government. There were evidently many smaller states and at least three major regional powers Atlantis, Greece and Egypt, to which we should probably add an unnamed Mesopotamian power and possibly a Balkan or South European one, with parts of America and the Mediterranean world as Atlantean conquests at least in the latter stages. It is clear from the account that Egypt was not an Atlantean colony at that time, but bordered the eastern edge of the Atlantean empire.

Most, with some exceptions including Egypt, were subject to periodic destruction by planetary bodies, earthquakes and floods.

ANCIENT INDIA AND CHINA

Further east, India and China, their legends suggest, were also advanced, before suffering catastrophes, after which they were reconstructed, India has extraordinary legends of unknown antiquity in the “Mahabharata” and “Ramayana”, including great civilizations, heroes and heroines both godlike and more fallible, descriptions of flying machines and how to make them, and terrifying accounts of cataclysms and warfare with exotic weapons, some of the effects of which suggest nuclear war. Rene Noorbergen, in “Secrets of the Lost Races”, published by New English Library in 1978, gives extensive evidence for China and the Pacific region. He gives accounts of Chinese experimental flying craft (pages 107—8), ancient patches of fused quartz suggesting nuclear detonations (page 125) and, evidence from an ancient geographical treatise. Called the “Shan Hai King”, “The Classic of Mountains and Seas”, and dated 2, 250 BC, it includes detailed surveys of Western North America, with recognizable items like the Rocky Mountains and even the Grand Canyon. Most significant, however, are legends of lost races of distant epochs who were in some way punished or removed, often by floods. The ancient Chinese realized that before them were “giants”, “men twice as tall as us”, who once lived in the “realm of delight”, but lost this by not living “by laws of virtue” (page 34-); also there was a race of primitive degenerates who “troubled the Earth” and had to be exterminated (page 152). A familiar theme already: but on pages 14 and 15 Noorbergen quotes legends that all Chinese are direct descendants of an ancient ancestor called Nu-wah, who overcame a great flood: this has given the Chinese language several words that can only be traced to Nu-wah and the flood. Nu-wah reconstructed the world after its destruction by the flood. This is just one of over thirty flood legends Noorbergen says have been discovered in the Orient.

“THE SUNKEN CONTINENT OF THE PACIFIC”: THE LOST LEMURIA?

The Pacific itself is rich in them. Hawaiians, for example, also have a similar legend, this time of Nu-u, who was the one righteous man allowed, with his family, to escape, by building a great canoe with a house on it after the Hawaiian god had destroyed the Earth. As with the Noah legend, a rainbow was the sign of the waters subsiding, and Nu-u and his three sons repopulated the Earth. The similarity with the Biblical and Sumerian legends is beyond coincidence. The Pacific is also, of course, home to the greatest lost continent legend outside Atlantis: that of Lemuria, or Mu, the fabled ancient lost land which broke up and sank probably millennia before Atlantis. Lacking a reliable account like Plato’s, we have to depend on myth and circumstantial evidence: this has been described by Colonel James Churchward in his series of “Mu” books published by Neville Spearman. The best single analysis of it is probably in Lewis Spence’s excellent and now rare book “The Problem of Lemuria: The Sunken Continent of the Pacific”, published by Rider in 1933. He presents evidence attesting the existence of now vanished inhabited islands and larger land masses, and the actual survival of a native white Pacific race which may be the descendants of the Lemurians. He believed there were several sub-continental land masses. One, near Easter Island, was the most advanced, and was known to Polynesian tradition as “Motu Matira Hiva”: it had affinities with Ancient Peru, The second one has New Zealand as its remnant; the third stretches from New Caledonia to Sumatra. There were, he said several lesser ones. He found great similarities with Atlantis.

“KON-TIKI” AND “RA”: THOR HEYERDAHL AND THE ANCIENT NAVIGATORS OF THE OCEANS

The Peruvian link with Easter Island was remarkably confirmed when excavations at the ancient pyramids at Tecume uncovered, as Thor Heyerdahl reported on 5th March 1992, “sensational news, two large reed balsa rafts in high relief on a temple wall...”, both of which had small deck cabins dwarfed by bird men, almost identical to those found on Easter Island”. Heyerdahl, of course, believes Peruvians had sailed the Pacific to this and other islands, and proved it by doing it himself in the famous “Kon-Tiki”, whose name was taken from the ancient hero who had arrived from the east in the islanders’ legends. Beyond reasonable doubt, he established ancient links between legends of “bird men”, kneeling statues and “Long-Ears” on Easter Island, and similar legends in Peru and Bolivia, including Tiahuanaco. These were not just oral tales, but were confirmed by carvings and statues of astonishing similarity separated by thousands of miles of ocean. Other ancient sailors, it is now known, came from South East Asia, and there were contacts with Australia and probably China.

I am sure Heyerdahl, a very great explorer and scholar, is right. With or without a literal Lemurian lost continent, one thing is certain: after Heyerdahl, fewer and fewer researchers will take the once orthodox view that the continents of the world lay isolated in ancient times, shorn of contact or commerce with one another, evolving their extraordinarily similar cultures, religions and architecture by purely coincidental parallel development. Meanwhile, Heyerdahl’s exploits have themselves entered our modern mythology. Archetypal in nature, they show that modern Westerners, given a strong resolve and purpose, can plumb the mysteries of the Earth, whatever the opposition and the difficulties. His book titles shine through our hectic modern world like beacons: “The Kon-Tiki Expedition”, 1950; “Aku-Aku: The Secret of Easter Island”, 1958; “The Ra Expeditions”, 1971; and “Fatu-Hiva: Back to Nature”, 1974; all published by Allen and Unwin, who also produced Heyerdahl’s biography, “Senor Kon-Tiki” by Arnold Jacoby, in 1968. A first rate BBC1 series, “Kon-Tiki Man: Thor Heyerdahl, the story of a great Adventurer”, was shown between April and June 1990. Old legends were rediscovered: a new legend was born.

The “Ra” expeditions of 1969-70 included a wide selection of nationalities on the small Atlantic reed-boat, under the flag of the United Nations, and including an American and a Russian at the height of the Cold War. Those expeditions proved that an ancient pre Egyptian seafaring race, possibly the Phoenicians, could have crossed the Atlantic from the Mediterranean to America. They also proved that the search for truth and adventure could potentially unite this divided planet. “Rn” in Ancient Egyptian meant “the Sun”. “Ra 1” sank because the modern builders had not secured the stern according to the ancient design. “Ra 2” was built with the help of Aymara Indians from South America, who had preserved all the ancient skills: this one survived, and reached the West Indies. This gives the modern world a message, symbolic but clear: respect and explore our ancient heritage, and we will yet win through. The flexibility of the reeds, through which the water could wash, proved “Ra 2’s” saving in high seas, Here again we learn a lesson: go with the flow, go the way of the “Tao”, and the mightiest forces will prove harmless, as with the ancient eastern martial arts.

LEMURIANS IN WESTERN AMERICA?

Other researchers, too, believe that Lemurians were amongst the first occupants of the west coast of America; if they were escaping from the gradual break-up and sinking of their Pacific land they may be responsible for the many flood legends of the west coast American Indians in both the north, e. g. the Hopi and Aschochimi, and the south, e. g. the Yurukare, and the Chibchas of Colombia. The Chibchas’ founding hero, Bochica, amazingly, was said to carry the world on his shoulders, and when he got tired he changed his position, thus

originating earthquakes: a fascinating variation on the Greek Atlas legend? The Lemurians may have been the distant precursors of the "mound builders" in the north, which have left such impressive earthworks, including the famous "Indiana serpent" a universal symbol of wisdom very prevalent in the Pacific. They may also have been the ancestors, and legendary inspirers, of the creators of the extraordinary ancient markings and monuments in the south. These include the Lines of Nazca in Peru, which although A.D. in date may reflect far more ancient practices of astronomical alignment based largely, research suggests, on the Orion Constellation.

BUILT BEFORE THE FLOOD? THE MYSTERY OF TIAHUANACO

They also include the enigmatic, mountain top city of Tiahuanaco, with its extraordinary Sun-Temple Gate and Calendar, by Lake Titicaca 13,000 feet up in Bolivia. Manco Capac, the legendary god-founder of Cuzco and the great Peruvian civilization, arrived mysteriously on an island in the lake after a great flood, according to a myth accepted by the conquering Incas from the more ancient local races. Lewis Spence describes this in "the Problem of Lemuria" on pages 195-8; he also points out the similarity between Tiahuanaco's architecture and that of Easter Island, and between Manco Capac and Easter Island's founding hero, Hotu Matua. Although the famous Easter Island statues are A.D. in date, they may again reflect distant racial memories of prehistoric practices. The Tiahuanaco ruins are certainly very ancient: H.S. Bellamy, in the now rare work "Built Before the Flood: the Problem of the Tiahuanaco Ruins", published by Faber and Faber in 1943, argues like others, that the evidence of calcified remains of marine plants 11,500 feet up on the plateau shows that it was originally at sea level, and therefore predates the great catastrophe and flood.

Bellamy ascribes this to a great planetary girdle-tide. This raised the sea-level by over-two miles on either side of the Equator, caused in turn by a predecessor of our Moon orbiting into Earth; an even greater catastrophe was caused by its impact, which also destroyed Atlantis and the remains of Lemuria. Though this, based in Hans Hoerbiger's cosmological theory popular before the war, is not now fashionable, it is one explanation of the sea fossils and the extraordinary height of Tiahuanaco, in rarified air not easy for westerners to breathe. (Others, like Otto Muck, argue that the effects of the asteroid impact created the Andes by raising its whole landmass from sea level!) Bellamy's book is based largely on the work of Professor Arturo Posnansky, who lived among, or near, the ruins for several decades and made detailed surveys at a time when far more of the buildings still existed; they have been systematically vandalized, (Most writers on sites, if they visit at all, do so briefly only.) It also records (pages 41-2) the legends of the (then) local Indians, a proud and quiet people calling themselves "Urus", "Men of the Light", who hinted that they had lived in these Bolivian highlands before the Age of Darkness (Chamak-Pacha), a terrible cataclysm, and that they remember the time when the Sun re-appeared after it, The great ruined city, for which "Tiahuanaco" was the traditional local name, was built before this cataclysm, and was by a great sea rich in big fish; eventually there was a flood which destroyed the city's builders.

The Spanish conquistadores were told a slightly different Inca legend: Thousands of years after the original Creation of humanity by their god creator, Viracocha Pachacayachi, there was a catastrophe from which only a shepherd and his family escaped: he, as a thank offering, built Tiahuanaco in a single night. Its date is much disputed, and estimates vary profusely, ranging from a thousand to many thousands of years old. The ruins are now pitifully depleted, but clearly show advanced knowledge, including the Akapana, or Hill of Sacrifices, a huge truncated pyramid 167' x 496' x 650', perfectly squared with the cardinal points of the compass. There is a reservoir system with stone pipes, and of course the great Temple of the Sun, with its sophisticated calendar. It is built of 60 ton blocks and rests on 100-200 ton blocks, transported 30-90 miles from quarry sites on an island in Lake Titicaca!

This massive stone phenomenon is of course found all over the world, e.g. Stonehenge, Baalbek, Egypt and also in some of the recent underwater Atlantean discoveries. It shows a worldwide massive megalithic culture reflecting amazing powers of organization, precision, perseverance, mathematics, astronomy and, perhaps, even what would now be regarded as paranormal powers over gravity to lighten heavy objects. This great prehistoric advanced megalithic culture, which according to Plato included metal working, ocean going ships, astronomy, complex government, cities, mathematics, exquisite arts and highly productive agriculture, seems to have penetrated most of the world, including Africa, Scandinavia and even Siberia and Mongolia.

SHAMBHALA.: OASIS OF THE ANCIENT WISDOM?

The “Shambhala” legends depict an incredibly distant ancient haven, often placed in or near the Gobi Sea (now a desert), where many fossil finds indicate ancient cultures. Geoffrey Ashe has developed this theme in a scholarly and original way in “The Ancient Wisdom”, (Macmillan, 1970s) and “Dawn Behind the Dawn” (Henry Holt, 1992), and Andrew Tomas gives a fascinating and spiritual, if somewhat speculative, account in “Shambhala: Oasis of Light” (Sphere, 1977). They argue that this was the seat of an original and universal knowledge that later, through invasion and other influence inspired much of the ancient Indian, Tibetan and Chinese spiritual myths and traditions. Explorers, especially the remarkable Russian and later world citizen Nicholas Roerich, have found oral, archaeological and anthropological evidence suggesting this, dramatically depicted in Roerich’s vivid symbolic paintings. The teachings of “Dwal Khul”, “The Tibetan”, through Alice Bailey call it “the place where the will of God is known” and where planetary civilization started. It could be the actual start point as in Tibetan Buddhist legend, or it could have been a “secure refuge”, a colony of escaping, or forewarned, Atlanteans (or Lemurians). Here, in a high area very safe from floods, they could have revived and eventually sent out groups to re-found advanced cultures elsewhere.

The Theosophists, as outlined in H.P. Blavatsky’s “Secret Doctrine” (1888) and “The Story of Atlantis and the Lost Lemuria” (1896/1904) by W. Scott Elliot (both published by the Theosophical Publishing House, and still in print), say this is what happened. Enlightened Atlanteans were forewarned of disaster many thousands of years before, and leaving Atlantis, they were gradually guided to the Gobi, then a sea. They evolved the modern “seven root races” which, they say, were deliberately sent out from the Shambhala haven, one by one, as part of a great plan for humanity’s evolution directed by high spiritual masters of which the most directly involved was given the title menu. Like all legends, this need not be taken literally, but clearly embodies much truth. The idea of an archetypal “safe land” or haven from which civilization is re-established after a catastrophe, and then in some sense master-minded and (sometimes invisibly) guided, occurs frequently in world mythology, as for example with Manco Capac’s island in Lake Titicaca, and Egypt itself in Plato’s account: far too often to be dismissed as fancy.

THE BRITISH ISLES: “SHAMBHALA” OF THE WEST?

In some esoteric teachings, the area now covered by the British Isles (in Atlantean times, part of a large north western spur of Europe) was to Atlantis rather as Shambhala was to, say, India: *an* almost mythical, northern, cold, sparsely inhabited, but very pure and sacred land, where the invisible hierarchy of “guiding masters” lived. At the time of the catastrophe, it is said, they resisted the great wave of psychic negativity which surged out from Atlantis, stabilized the situation, and then re-sited themselves in the Gobi as the new “safe area” in accordance with the plan for humanity. Some say they are now back here in invisible realms, with the “heart chakra” (centre of energy, literally Sanscrit “wheel”) of the world now situated

again in northwestern Europe (including the Low Countries, and parts of France and Scandinavia).

An interesting variation on this was given to us by Lt. Col. Stephen Jenkins. He had already written "The Undiscovered Country" (Spearman, 1977) on his paranormal and spiritual experiences. He had done a lecturing exchange with the University of Ulan Bator, Mongolia. Showing an interest in their variation of the Shambhala legend, he was told an extraordinary story by lamas (learned monks) of the "Kalachakra" or "Wheel of Time" Buddhism. For the last hundred or so years they had concluded that Shambhala was not in the East at all, but the West: in the land from which "Sucandra" came, the "wise man of the West", to visit the dying Buddha in 542 BC (they say our date for his death is wrong). After much research, they had decided he had possibly come from Britain, and asked him to confirm this. On returning, with Geoffrey Ashe's help, Jenkins managed to identify the details of Sucandra, including his name (which meant "beautiful all - white moon") with those of Gwyn-ap-Nudd (which means the same), a legendary figure associated with Glastonbury Tor. This and other factors have convinced Stephen that he has confirmed the Lamas' theory of the origin of Sucandra, which their legend said was Shambhala, literally in Sanscrit meaning the place of bliss.

Again, like all legends they point to a profound truth without having to be fossilised by being taken too doctrinally or literally. Possibly the main message of the lamas was that the truth does not reside only in far or exotic places, but can be found where one comes from. In other words, firstly, every culture has its own expression of truth, however mundane (or submerged under motorways and high tech) its outer trappings may appear. Secondly, people within each culture normally understand the truth best as expressed through that culture. Thirdly, all understanding and acceptance ultimately has to come from within, and the means to all truth is ultimately within each of us: Plato, the champion of Atlantis, was also at pains to demonstrate this through his accounts of Socrates, and it is this that makes him, with Socrates, one of the greatest of all philosophers.

BRITAIN: "THE FORTUNATE ISLES?"

But, fourthly, Britain is a very special place. Too small and developed for her people, any longer, to be preoccupied with physical exploration and improvement, they are forced to go within, and there they find the rich inner treasure that results from their long spiritual heritage. We have gone from an Atlantean "mystic land" to being the recognised spiritual centre visited from afar, which Hecataeus, a Greek historian of the 4th Century BC, eulogised, with its great "circular temple to Apollo" (Stonehenge? or "spiral" Glastonbury Tor with its sacred maze) and its beautiful music. It was in regular contact with the (even then) ancient Greeks, Hecataeus said, and of its wise teachers one, Abaris, was tutor to no less a spiritual teacher than Pythagoras. Later we became the Druidic teaching centre to which, Julius Caesar says, pupils came from all over Europe to our "universities" of learning. Through Joseph of Arimathea, whom strong evidence suggests came to Cornwall and Glastonbury with, or just after the death of, Jesus, Britain then became one of the earliest and most enlightened Christian centres. Later, there was far less persecution and religious war than elsewhere, and the national genius for constructive synthesis and tolerant comprehensiveness were embodied in Elizabeth I's Church of England and the great spiritual, literary and scientific flowering of that time, led by Shakespeare and Bacon. In the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries Britain gave the world the scientific, agricultural, financial and industrial revolutions, with towering figures like Newton, Watt, Dalton and Faraday, to say nothing of literary figures like Johnson, Jane Austen and Dickens.

Since then the momentum has been, on the whole, maintained, despite Britain's relatively small size: British Nobel Prizes, in total, are second only to the USA, a country with 4½ times

her population. Michael Hart, an American, in his well known book "The 100: a Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History", published by Simon and Schuster in 1978 and 1992, says (page 524) that "From [the] table, it appears that the British have made a greater contribution to human civilization than have the people of any other region or nation" (he didn't know about Atlantis, of course!) Now, having transformed Empire freely into Commonwealth, Britain is again a synthesis in a different sense: a sort of "microcosm" and "catalyst" of the many streams of spiritual wisdom coming from all over the quarter of the globe that she once ruled, and is now an equal partner with. She is also, let us not forget, the birthplace of psychical research, and a prime centre of holistic values, natural medicine and spiritual literature. As in Druidic times, and as clearly was Atlantis, she is visited from afar by many in search of truth and wisdom.

What is this to do with Atlantis? It is this: the British Isles could be, by legend, what Atlantis may also have been called, "the Fortunate Isles", those other Atlantic islands which not only survived the sinking of Atlantis, but were created by that very sinking. Before it, the area was probably the haven for many Atlantean colonists, pilgrims and, finally, refugees. The rising sea level happened, Otto Muck argues, because the disappearance of Atlantis released the Gulf Stream to reach North Western Europe and further north, where it melted enough of the landlocked Arctic ice to raise the level by probably 300-650 feet. This created the North Sea and the Channel, the Irish Sea and therefore the British Isles, Britain Is, therefore, in a very physical sense, the inheritor of the Atlantean legacy.

Since then, like Atlantis, she became the centre of great seaborne trade and a great empire. Plato makes it clear that Atlantis was destroyed because it tried to add to its empire by conquering even more, and Greece had to fight it to restore the invaded countries' freedom. Britain has fought two World Wars, where the forces of light were concentrated in these islands, to rescue the world from militarist end Nazi enslavement; and has then peacefully given away its empire in the interests of freedom and democracy a concept pioneered by Greece in ancient times, and Britain in modern times. Atlantis was initially promising, but went disastrously wrong, and others had to pick up the torch. Greece and Egypt were clearly the first to do so; Britain, with others, has done so in recent centuries. Freedom is so important that almost any sacrifice is justified to preserve or win it. When Britain has ignored this in the past, it has been at her peril. Atlantis ignored it and paid with her very existence.

PSYCHIC POWERS, CRYSTALS, SLAVES: EDGAR CAYCE'S ATLANTIS

For those who find this sort of evidence acceptable the over 14,000 "psychic readings" given in a trance state by Edgar Cayce, the famous American clairvoyant, not only diagnosed their ailments with proven extraordinary accuracy, but in some cases took people back into supposed "past lives". A few of the accounts it was found possible to check historically by research into obscure documents (which Cayce could not possibly have seen) and they were found to be remarkably accurate. (In this respect they resemble the famous "Bloxham Tapes" of Arnall Bloxham, the Cardiff hypnotherapist, and many more recent cases).

No less than 700 of Cayce's readings refer to lives in Atlantis, which is placed squarely in the Atlantic. When they are pieced together (which has now been done with much painstaking scholarship), they trace the history of Atlantis from its beginnings to its Golden Age, with (according to Cayce) great stone cities which had much advanced modern technology. This included mass communication, air and underwater transport, and some inventions that even we today have not achieved, such as the neutralization of gravity and the use of solar energy through electric crystals. A great, central crystal concentrated the sun's rays and beamed them to cities, ships and aircraft as an almost unlimited, non-polluting form of power.

Misuse of these crystals, Cayce stated, caused two of the cataclysms that ultimately were to destroy Atlantis. They were first used against giant mammoths which threatened the people, later, it seems, as a weapon. Combined with Earth stresses happening anyway because the molten core was cooling, their energies destabilised the delicate tectonic plate systems causing earthquakes, volcanoes and sinkings of parts of the then enormous Atlantean continent. The first big sinking, according to Cayce, was in 48,000 BC. In Lemuria, the Pacific continent, the wise men foretold it: many emigrated to Asia, Africa or America, where they were regarded as superior by the natives, and spread the knowledge of the One God. Many Atlanteans migrated to Central America, Egypt, North Africa or Spain, establishing civilizations there, and especially pyramids. When the catastrophe came, the Earth (or its crust) shifted on its axis, causing great upheavals. Lemuria mostly sank into the Pacific, though leaving some large islands. New mountain ranges may have been created, with some cities possibly left thousands of feet up. Some Atlantean land sank, but most remained. Torrid zones became frigid, and visa-versa. Great mammoth like beasts that had overrun the Earth were largely killed off. Millions of souls returned to the spirit state, and some had to return to learn karmic lessons in later lives.

Atlantis became the undisputed leader of the world. Science and invention became its new god, scientists its effective rulers. Life on Atlantis was luxurious; it was in the torrid zone, and people grew lazy. (Do we see a danger of this in the present day west?) The giant crystal, known as the "Firestone", was used for destructive purposes, including torture and punishment. It was also, Cayce says, tuned unintentionally too high; its rays combined with other electrical forces to start many fires deep inside the planet, leading to great volcanoes and then the second sinking, of further parts of Atlantis, in c. 28,000 BC, leaving the "Sargasso Sea" of weeds in the Western Atlantic as a remnant. Some speculate that the great crystal is still submerged there. Could its magnetic effects, even from the sea-bed, be causing strange effects on compasses and electrical equipment causing in turn some of the unexplained disappearances in what is known as the "Bermuda Triangle" in this area?

After 28,000 BC, much of Atlantis was still left, and still powerful. Many of its people emigrated and founded colonies in Europe, America and elsewhere. Many Atlanteans had psychic powers, some of which were misused. There was mating of humans with animals, at a time when this was possible, producing a hybrid race of "things" which were then enslaved: a war, of either a psychic or physical nature, ensued between the slave owning "Sons of Belial" and the freedom loving "Sons of the Law of One". This was won by the slave owners (creating a "karma" which, Cayce said, had to be resolved by their coming back in much later lives during the American Civil War in the 1860s, when they lost). The civilization deteriorated; civil discontent, civil war, enslavement of workers, human sacrifice and, in general, misuse of the forces of nature, made the final destruction of the continent certain. Cayce added that one of the "last straws" was the beginning of the use of genetic engineering to take over and misuse the very blueprint for humanity: a challenge we are facing again today.

Around 10,000 BC, according to Cayce, these factors; plus further experimentation with crystals, led to the sinking of the remaining part of Atlantis, leaving only smaller Atlantic islands and the colonies. As we have seen earlier, these were reduced even more in the next few millennia by the rising ocean level.

Cayce gives a very spiritual view of the Atlanteans, like Plato portraying their misdeeds as the direct cause of their destruction, and seeing them as eternal souls who came back at various times in later history to learn further lessons. They are coming back today in a critical time, to ensure that Earth, having again reached a high level of science, uses it this time in a constructive way and puts the "Law of One" (love, dedication and truth seeking) before the

pursuit of power and purely selfish pleasures. Whatever one thinks of Cayce's details of the Atlantean story, which cannot be confirmed, this is a fine moral viewpoint.

“IMAGES OF ANOTHER WORLD”: MORE PSYCHIC THAN TECHNOLOGICAL?

In my view, however, Cayce seriously exaggerates Atlantis's overall technological sophistication. He is probably more accurate when he talks of their psychic powers: these may have enabled them, for example, to communicate to some degree by telepathy, practice spiritual healing and lighten heavy objects by paranormal means. A strange confirmation of ancient shamanistic powers was given on 19th April 1989 in a BBC1 “Chronicle” programme, “Images of Another World” Cave paintings of 20,000 years old and over, e.g. at El Castillo in northern Spain, depict “entoptic forms”, abstract geometric shapes, with animals and humans in spiritual configurations. These were shown to be illustrations of trance states and probably out of body experiences, similar to those practiced up to modern times by South African bushmen and widespread tribal societies.

But modern technology? Had they had really possessed things like submarines, lasers and aircraft on a large scale, we would surely have seen signs of it, for some types of metal do not rust. Advanced implements would have been found, for example, in the many Cro-Magnon graves excavated in coastal areas which were clearly once colonies of Atlantis. Instead, we have found an advanced Stone Age culture, known as “Aurignacian”, with wonderful cave paintings, implements and bone carvings, sophisticated dwellings, the use of animals and boats, and interesting hints of shamanistic spiritual beliefs. Even allowing for the worldwide floods and the long dark age after the asteroid strike, one would have expected to have found more evidence if the culture as a whole had been technologically advanced. Plato and the other classical accounts give them a technology which, although fully equal to that of Ancient Greece, was hardly advanced in the modern sense. Ignatius Donnelly, Lewis Spence, Otto Muck and Charles Berlitz all concur with this general view.

“IN OPEN CONTACT...”? -- ATLANTIS, “OOPARTS” AND ANCIENT SPACE BEINGS

What is not generally known, however, is that we have found isolated cases of extremely advanced technology buried in geologic strata that, make them probably far older than Atlantis as if some distant and long forgotten epoch had harboured a race that has left only the slenderest remnants. These are known to specialists as “OOPARTS” out of place artifacts. Perhaps some aspects of the sophistication they embody were preserved by the Atlanteans, but only in more primitive forms and without the widespread technological backup to make them generally effective.

What seemed to be a standard geode was found recently near Olancho, California. Fossil shells encrusting its surface are thought by a trained geologist who examined them to be at least half a million years old. When cut in half and X-rayed, an obviously artificial and precisely machined metal object was found, resembling a modern spark plug. This is only one of a whole series of precisely made artifacts found in fossilized material or in seams of coal and limestone, dating them back hundreds of thousands of years at least.

Did great world cataclysms in incredibly ancient times bury them there? Why do ancient Sanskrit documents speak of times when humanity had aircraft and fearful weapons which could destroy whole areas at a time? Why do ancient cave paintings depict machine like or aerial objects and apparently helmeted men? Could these have been Atlantean pilots and aircraft? Or those of an even more ancient civilization? Or the result of some sort of co-operation or co-existence between advanced earthmen and extraterrestrials; with a mission to conquer the planet, explore or “civilize” it? Or were the advanced Earthmen themselves the result of previous extraterrestrial colonising, “civilizing” or even genetic engineering?

One view, argued by Erich von Daniken, Desmond Leslie, Brinsley le Poer Trench, Andrew Tomas, Peter Kolosimo and others, is that they were spacemen and their craft visiting from other planets. Some writers link them with the modern UFO phenomenon. This suggests, with overwhelming evidence that the Earth is being systematically surveyed and used by many different alien groups, and has been for millennia. Though some are, to say the least, unfeeling and, *for example*, practice enforced genetic engineering and selective breeding through abduction, this may be part of some long term constructive programme to improve humanity's genetic strain, much as the O'Briens' sages appear to have had.

On the whole, though stand-offish and unwilling to intervene (perhaps through some cosmic law), the "ufonauts" appear to be spiritual and concerned for our evolution. There is a strong tradition in the esoteric ("inner") teachings on Atlantis that, in its golden age, it was in open contact with extraterrestrials, but when it became corrupt the space beings withdrew and kept only a distant surveillance, which they have done ever since. If this is so, they are now closing in a bit, as the technology "explosion" gives us global communications and the ability to pollute or even destroy the Earth. Despite their reluctance to intervene, they might do so rather than see us repeat the Atlantean disaster: there is some evidence (as at Chernobyl, Ukraine, where they may have prevented a second nuclear catastrophe in 1991) that they are already helping to save us from the worst consequences of our mistreatment of the planet. Some of them may even be descendants of rescued survivors from Atlantis, or reincarnated souls from it who can remember past lives there.

We cannot do other than speculate on this, but one thing seems reasonably certain. At some time long before our recorded history, an advanced technology either existed on Earth, or was in contact with the planet. Either hypothesis is consistent with the existence of Atlantis. Why is it that humanity is being permitted to re-discover all this today? Could it be that present day civilization has a lesson to learn from the fate of Atlantis, and that we are being warned against making the same mistakes, with the same consequences? It would be well or scholars to break out of their straitjacket of "orthodoxy", and reflect on these questions.

ATLANTIS: THE WORLD ARCHETYPE?

In its decadence, Atlantis became a supreme archetype of the "pride before the fall". An empire already the richest and most powerful in the known world comes to care only for its wealth and power, and eventually embarks on a war of conquest to gain yet more. This is a recurring theme of history up to our own times. Societies, once fresh and responsive to genius and free opinion, become encrusted with power groups, profit, vested interests, luxury, censorship and, eventually, often dictatorships. Examples abound: Ancient Egypt, Athens, Alexander's empire, Assyria, Babylon, ancient Israel, Rome, the Maya and Aztecs, Byzantium, the Turks, many Medieval states; much of Tudor and Stuart England, Cromwell, Philip II's Spain, Louis XIV's and XVI's France, Napoleon. More recently we have Tsarist and Communist Russia, Austria-Hungary, the Kaiser's Germany, some parts of the European colonial empires, Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Imperial Japan, Mao's China, Indonesia, South Africa, Eastern Europe, South America, and many smaller dictatorships in Africa, Asia and worldwide.

There is a widespread revival of spiritual consciousness and inner transformation today at an individual and group level; yet much of the modern "democratic" world, free of dictatorships, nevertheless displays a worrying tendency to the vested interest and power aspects of Atlantis. "Will Europe Follow Atlantis?" asked Lewis Spence in his book title of 1942, at the height of the Nazi occupation of Europe. Some would say this title is still relevant in more subtle ways, applied to the present day world scene. Of the three cardinal sins ascribed by Plato to Atlantis -denial of indwelling divinity, materialism and wars of conquest, the free world today looks as if it is finally outgrowing the last; has stopped just short of committing

the first, with many drawing back from it in the current spiritual revival; but looks in as great a danger as ever from materialism. We have undreamed of wealth and technology, but this is a two edged sword. We have made enormous strides in the 1980s and 90s, with many dictatorships overthrown, fewer wars, greater freedoms and far greater holistic and environmental awareness. We no longer talk of imminent nuclear holocaust. But are we going to use this safety, freedom and wealth only to pollute ourselves and the planet by satiating the "mortal admixture" which "got the upper hand" in Plato's Atlantis?

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