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The Atlantis Research Centre

Atlantis the Key to the Past

By **EGERTON SYKES.**

One of the major historical mysteries which science has still to clear up is the problem of Atlantis. First brought to the notice of the modern world by Plato in B.C. 460, the problem of this vast continent, occupying most of the Atlantic Ocean between the West Indies and the Canaries, has filled the mind of historians, geographers, anthropologists, and ethnologists, for 2,000 years without doing more than providing a satisfactory framework of conclusions—based on ascertained data—on which further studies can be based.

The three questions to be considered in relation to Atlantis are:

- When did it exist?
- Where was it situated?
- Why did it vanish?

It may well be asked why a query as to the date when the mere existence of Atlantis is itself uncertain. This, however, is not the case. The majority of geologists and biologists are quite willing to accept the theory of a land bridge across the Atlantic Ocean, i.e., by one or more large islands—but are still inclined to think that the last vestiges disappeared before man had peopled the earth.

This is a point of view which the majority of experts are not prepared to accept. The vast conglomeration of similar man-made customs to be found on both sides of the Atlantic basin is direct proof to the contrary. Any tacit assumptions that mummification was invented simultaneously in Chili, Peru, the Canaries and Egypt; that the idea of building pyramids occurred independently to the Mayas and the Egyptians; that the couvade—a system whereby the father goes to bed after the birth of the child—was initiated both in the Mediterranean Basin and in Central America; that the practice of deforming the heads of children to make them egg shaped which is found all over America, and round the shores of the Mediterranean Sea (in parenthesis, the reason for this practice was that the

original Atlanteans appear to have had heads of this shape, i.e., with no bridge to the nose but a direct line from the nostril to the apex of the head, some of the early Egyptian rulers were of this type); that the megalithic and cyclopean structures of similar design dotted all over Mexico, Central America, Peru, Bolivia (i.e., the upper reaches of the Amazon), England, France, Spain, and Portugal, the North African coast, etc., were not the products of a unified system; would appear to be unjustified and in contradiction to the evidence.

It may therefore be safely assumed that Atlantis existed at about the period assigned by Plato, that is up to B.C. 9600, and that while its culture was mainly that of the Stone Age, nevertheless the inhabitants had a knowledge of non-ferrous metals (the orichalcum mentioned by Plato would appear to have been a copper alloy). There is no indication that they knew how to read or write.

That it existed any later is improbable. The Egyptian records go back to about B.C. 6000 as do the Mesopotamian, and the pre-diluvial period was a considerable time before them. H. S. Bellamy has calculated that the Egyptian Solar Calendar and the Assyrian Lunar Calendar coincided in B.C. 11,542, while the Maya and the Hindu Lunar Calendar systems coincided in 11,653 B.C., a difference of 110 years. The Platonic date of B.C. 9570 and the Theosophist one of B.C. 9564 may both relate to the final stages of the great disaster.

As to where Atlantis was situated, the name itself and the fact that Plato placed it to the West of the Pillars of Hercules, should be sufficient to offset the views of the French and German schools (Butavand, Hermann, Gattefosse, etc.) who place it on the North or North West coast of Africa or the West coast of the Iberian Peninsular. That these sites may have been those of trading colonies, also overwhelmed by the great disaster is most probable.

That the Dolphin Ridge, which forms the backbone of the Atlantic, was also that of Atlantis is a reasonable assumption. Followers of Wegener's theory as to the drifting of the continents forget that the river Congo has an under water channel of 700 miles in length in the Atlantic, presumably made where the sea was shallower than now, but in any case a work that must have taken tens of thousands of years to do and which must have been a great period of time—say 10,000 years—under water. Reasonable estimates as to the time taken for America and Europe-Africa to drift apart to where they are now range between 500,000 and 1,000,000 years, in any case the movement in the last 12,000 years since the submersion of Atlantis would not be more than a few miles.

The causes which produced the Atlantis disaster, have for most researchers remained a mystery, because a flood of such a magnitude would mean drawing off the surplus water from the seas of the earth, and it is difficult to see how that can have been accomplished.

There is only one force in nature that could have shifted the waters of the Polar Seas over Atlantis and that is the force of gravity, which could have been brought into play either terrestrially or cosmically.

In the first case the axis of the earth may have reached a point of instability and suddenly altered its position by a couple of thousand miles, which would have been enough to precipitate a rush of waters enough to have drowned Atlantis and everybody on it, while the gravitational attraction of the earth itself would have kept them there.

The second, and to my mind the more probable alternative, is the gravitational attraction of a celestial body such as the moon. The Austrian engineer, Hans Hoerbiger, considered that the moon was a small planet between the earth and Mars, with an irregular orbit, which was picked up by the earth owing to its having approached too close.

Granted such an occurrence, the gravitational power of the moon, acting mainly on the equatorial zones, would have drawn considerable amounts of water from the North and South Polar regions, to deepen the Atlantic by two to three miles, a depth which although but an infinitesimal part of the earth's diameter of 8,000 miles, would be sufficient to drown Atlantis.

It is for this reason, and this alone, that concrete physical proof of the existence of Atlantis has not been found, and will not be until we have evolved some reasonable method of exploring the Atlantic depths. Until then we shall have to be satisfied with the proofs of the existence of an Atlantean culture in the Mediterranean area, in North Africa and South West Europe, in the West Indies, Mexico and the Central Americas and, finally, in the Amazon basin—where Colonel Fawcett lost his life—as far as the American plateau. Fortunately, these are numerous.