



That Sinking Feeling: Atlantis Lost and Found

"What lands may have been thickly populated for untold ages, and subsequently have disappeared and left no sign above the waters, it is of course impossible for us to say; but unless we are to make the wholly unjustifiable assumption that no dry land rose elsewhere when our present dry land sank, there must be half-a-dozen Atlantises beneath the waves of the various oceans of the world."

- - T. H. Huxley, *Methods and Results of Ethnology* (1865)

Boy, you lose one measly continent and people just won't let you forget about it. Ever since 355 B.C. (or 1450 or 8498 or 9564 or 10,540 or 800,000 B.C.), people have been dredging up Atlantis from somewhere in the vasty deep and making it jump through romantic or philosophical or political hoops. No wonder it's turned kind of mean. And since it's the creepy, fascist, decadent, racist Atlantis deserving of its destruction by the gods that makes for better roleplaying material, that's the kind of Atlantis we'll go fishing for today through the many and multifarious Atlantises caught in the loosely-rigged nets of mysticism and dog-scholarship. Dive right in, the water's fine.

"This power came forth out of the Atlantic Sea, for in those days, the sea was navigable; and there was an island situated in front of the straits which you call the Pillars of Herakles; the island was larger than Libya and Asia together, and was the way to other islands. . . Now in this island of Atlantis there was a great and wonderful empire which had rule over the whole island and several others. . . "

- - Plato, *Timaios*, 24D

It shouldn't surprise anyone that Atlantis gets so mean, given that it was the brainchild of Plato, godfather of fascism. The *Timaios* and *Kritias*, the dialogues in which Plato told the story of Atlantis, serve a larger role as illustrations of the failure of democracy and the need for pure, ordered societies. (In fact, Atlantis' hubristic attempt to conquer the world is stopped only by a superior fascist state, Plato's idealized Republic of Athens.) Plato also wound up, somehow, as one of the fathers of Western mysticism thanks to his dismissal of the connection between the real and the perceived - - this comes back into the Atlantis legend sooner than the fascism does, in fact. It's pretty clear to anyone who's read Plato that he made the whole story up; the combination of the framing sequence of "Egyptian records" about a land "beyond the Pillars of Herakles" was the equivalent of "a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away" to Classical Greek readers.

Some very ingenious people have tried to claim that Plato got Atlantis from real Egyptian records of Minoan Crete (which didn't sink) or Thera (which blew up and

never had an empire), neither of which are beyond the Pillars of Herakles - - nor did the Egyptians have any records of either catastrophe, as far as we know. For coverage of these clever folks (as well as a myriad of others proposing Atlantises from Greenland to Nigeria to South Africa to Ceylon), it's well worth reading Richard Ellis' *Imagining Atlantis* and L. Sprague de Camp's *Lost Continents*. It's possible that Plato took the island from Homer's Ogygia or Schaeira, and the germ of the "sunken city" trope from the Greek city of Helike, which sank into the Gulf of Corinth twenty years before he wrote the *Timaios*, and the annihilating war from the catastrophe of the Peloponnesian War (during which a wave smashed up an Athenian fortress on the island of Atalant?). But it's most likely that he made it up, just like he made up the floating sky-islands in the *Phaidon*, where giants lived.

"At bottom every German has one foot in Atlantis, where he seeks a better Fatherland and a better patrimony. This double nature of the Germans, this faculty they have of splitting their personality which enables them to live in the real world and at the same time to project themselves into an imaginary world, is especially noticeable in Hitler and provides the key to his magical socialism."

- - Hermann Rauschning, *Conversations With Hitler*

But when you combine giants, protofascism, and Atlantis, you start cranking out Theosophy, and that's just what H.P. Blavatsky and her ilk did. Descended from the oviparous Third Race, the Lemurians, the Theosophical Atlanteans were just like people, only giants. (Heretically, Rudolf Steiner's Atlanteans could only learn by eidetic memory rather than true understanding.) They went through seven "subraces" from the black and "childlike" Rmoahals through the warlike Turanians, calving off the Aryans (true humanity) right about the fourth subrace. This gumbo led to a lot of people finding the home of the Aryan race and Atlantis in the same place, from Mongolia (identified by the astronomer Jean Sylvain Bailly in 1779) to Spitsbergen (also identified by Bailly, hedging his bets). Karl Georg Zschaetzch, in his 1922 *Atlantis: Original Homeland of the Aryans*, made it explicit with his theory that Atlantis was sunk by a comet after its natives had mingled their blood with inferior slaves. (He also claimed to be descended from Zeus, spelled "Zschaetzsch" in the original Atlantean.) The engineer Otto Muck (inventor of the U-Boat snorkel and part of von Braun's V-2 team at Peenem?de) proposed a similar asteroid impact off Puerto Rico in 8498 B.C. vaporizing a floating continent in *The Secret of Atlantis*. Muck drew much of his supporting evidence from an oceanographic expedition under Dr. Albert Merz, which gathered data in 1925-1927 during the voyage of the (ahem) *Meteor* in the South Atlantic. Speaking of coincidental naming and Germans in the South Atlantic, the cruiser *Atlantis* (full of Professor Muck's Atlantean secret technology, no doubt) raided Allied commerce throughout the Antarctic seas in 1939-1941 (resupplying the [Antarctic Space Nazi](#) airfields in Neuschwabenland - - [another Atlantis](#), by the by) until she was sunk on November 22, 1941.

"In our days there can no main or other island be found to be judged to be parcel of this Atlantis, than those western islands, which bear now the name of America."

- - Sir Humphrey Gilbert and George Gascoigne, *A Course of Discoverie For A New Passage To Cathay* (1576)

That, of course, was because the Germans had tangled with the true Atlantis, which is, of course, America. On the other hand, in 1805 Sir Francis Wilford said that Atlantis was Britain - - but then he also said that Palestine was Britain. (In 1570, Jean de Serres claimed that Palestine was Atlantis.) William Blake split the difference and said that Atlantis was a spiritual country combining the best of both Albion and America. I've got to admit that if you're looking for a continent on the other side of

the Pillars of Herakles, America is a good one, although its pestiferous failure to sink derails that theory. It didn't derail Elizabethan magus John Dee, who repeatedly referred to America as Atlantis (attempting an enchanted naming?), believing that Plato's city only sank in part of the continent.

Dee favored the Northwest Passage or the Verazzano Sea (the great inland sea from the Hudson River to California); others selected the West Indies, Mexico, the Yucatan, and so forth. (In *Atlantis in Wisconsin*, Frank Joseph puts it underneath Rock Lake in the Badger State.) I've covered the interest of Dee and Raleigh in America [elsewhere](#), but it's interesting that in *The Tempest*, set on a magical island, Shakespeare specifically mentions Bermuda (an Atlantic island), dead Indians, a "brave new world" and a philosophical utopia, and completes it all by having the wizard duke Prospero (an echo of the sorcerer-kings of Atlantis, as well as of Atlantis-hunter Dee) "drown" his book "deeper than ever did plummet sound," a clear echo of lost magical knowledge under water. Where Shakespeare alludes, of course, his would-be alter ego and conspiracy fave [Sir Francis Bacon](#) comes right out and tells the tale of a scientific utopia in the *New Atlantis*, which he had published in 1627, the year after his death. Unless, of course, he faked his death and snuck off to the old Atlantis, which he said was obviously America.

"This description suggests all the characteristics of an Atlantean city, with moats, tunnels, causeways, and unending lights. Whether the race now occupying them are descendants of a helot nation, aeons ago, ruled over by the ancient white kings and fair gods of old Brazil, or the posterity of the old Hy-Brazilian Atlanteans long gone savage. . . must for the time, remain a moot point."

- - Harold T. Wilkins, *Secret Cities of Old South America* (1952)

Or, it might have been one continent off: South America has been in the Atlantis running ever since Sebastian M^oster labeled it "insula Atlantica" on his 1540 world map. Raleigh's [El Dorado](#) is an Atlantean holdover, of course, as are the various other lost cities (full of "white gods") spangled through the rain forest including Akakor of the six-fingered Nazis. These places' resolute refusal to sink into the ocean doesn't disqualify them, though. (In kind of an Atlantis-in-reverse, travelers since before Raleigh have placed phantom oceans in South America that vanish from maps to be replaced with land.) J.M. Allen's recent *Atlantis: the Andes Solution* announces that Atlantis is in the Bolivian altiplano, which is about as unsunken a continent as you can get. He announces that it lies beneath Lake Poopo, and drowned during a Noachian rainstorm, and that its refugees became the Aztecs and the Philistines - - even Bolivian Atlanteans turn out to be bad news, it seems.

"Indeed, given the various American Indian legends and images of the gods weeping for their 'sunken Red Land,' the multiple mythical references to space as a vast ocean, and numerous occult connections, it is likely that Mars was the original 'island' of Atlantis that 'sank beneath the waves,' with the name later applied to any global catastrophe which followed on our own world."

- - Bruce Rux, *Architects of the Underworld*

The Philistines, of course, worshiped Dagon, the half-man, half-fish-god so beloved of H.P. Lovecraft and so reminiscent of all those merman type Atlanteses from Aquaman to Arion to Prince Namor. (All of whom seem to have a real bone to pick with the "surface world" - - in an interesting echo of Platonic criticism of the superficial nature of modern man.) And we all know that half-fish gods are actually [Nommo aliens](#) from Sirius, right? Sirius must be Atlantis, then, unless it's Mars (which had a big flood, albeit some eons ago) or Venus (which, like El Dorado, used

to have an imaginary ocean but lost it later). What we really learn from all this, then, is that Atlantis is everywhere (most likely hidden behind a primo Theosophist "vibrational barrier" or lurking beneath those all-concealing waves). And that it's really, really mean. Keep watching the seas!

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