

ATLANTIS AND EGYPT

Atlantis: Myth or Reality

The anthropological and archaeological story of human history and evolution is generally well accepted in the scientific community, although some scientists admit that there are gaps and anomalies in the conventional version of how and where the human species originated and eventually spread throughout the world:

We know relatively little about the intervening cultures between Cro-Magnon and the beginnings of the well-documented Middle and Far-Eastern civilizations that appeared roughly 10,000 years ago. This incredible quantum leap in our anthropology covering several thousands of years is a mysteriously missing chapter in human history. Since Cro-Magnon was anatomically nearly identical to the modern human, we might expect these shadowy millennia to be tremendously transitional epochs, with momentous strides forward in technical and mental advancement ushering in greater understanding of the world. Unfortunately, all that is available to us are legends of these veritable "missing links" in the evolving network of civilization. One exception is the series of recent discoveries dating the existence of North American hunting tribes at 19,000 B.C. These groups might comprise the pieces of a larger puzzle centering on the mythical lost continent of Atlantis, which some geologists concur sank to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean approximately 10,000 years ago. Many respected historians and anthropologists theorize that this huge island-continent supported a highly advanced culture that propagated to the later major civilizations on both sides of the Atlantic. The striking similarities between much of the science, art, and religion of Native American and Middle Eastern culture is explained by such a theory, buttressed as it is by impressive archeological analysis. (1)

There has been an ongoing fascination with the idea that a vast, prehistoric continent may have existed in the Atlantic and been destroyed by some kind of cataclysmic event. German scientist Otto Muck, who has studied the Atlantis phenomena in depth, comments: "Thousands of books may have been written in an attempt to solve the mystery that surrounds Atlantis but the problem remains unsolved and eternally fresh. There is hardly another nonreligious theme in the world literature that has attracted so much strong interest for so long and left such a lasting literary effect."

The oldest known written mention of Atlantis is found in two of Plato's dialogues, *Timaeus* and *Critias*, dating from the fifth century B.C. Plato introduces Atlantis in a conversation between Solon and an Egyptian priest, and describes it as a large island situated west of Gibraltar in the Atlantic, which had sunk 9,000 years before. In Plato's account, Atlantis represents the ideal state. According to the *Critias*, the inhabitants of Atlantis were prosperous, powerful, spiritually refined, and possibly technologically advanced:

For many generations, so long as the divine element in their nature survived, they observed the laws and loved the divine to which they were akin. They retained a certain greatness of mind, and treated the vagaries of fortune and one another with wisdom and forbearance, as they reckoned that qualities of character were far more important than their present prosperity. So they bore the burden of their wealth and possessions lightly, and did not let their high standard of living intoxicate them or make them lose their self-control, but saw soberly and clearly that all these things flourish only on a soil of common goodwill and individual character, and if pursued too eagerly and overvalued destroy themselves and morality with them. So long as these principles and their divine nature remained unimpaired the prosperity which we have described continued to grow. But when the divine element in them became weaker by frequent admixture with mortal stock, and their human traits became predominant, they ceased to be able to carry their prosperity with moderation. To the perceptive eye the depth of their degeneration was clear enough, but to those whose judgment of true happiness is defective they seemed in their pursuit of unbridled ambition and power, to be at the height of their fame and fortune. (2)

There is some archeological evidence suggesting that Plato's story of Atlantis may have been historically accurate:

The wave of inexplicably sophisticated settlers that appeared in the Near East in the last half of the eighth millennium BCE, may actually have been refugees from Plato's ruined cultures in the west. Plato gives a date of 10,000 BCE for the deluge; the most compelling evidence for this date is simply the number and nature of the newly founded settlements that appeared in the east around 7,500 to 7,300 BCE. From Syria to Palestine to east Anatolia and the Zagros mountains, extraordinarily advanced communities emerged, seemingly out of nowhere. An inventory of their collective remains shows that virtually all of the elements upon which the civilizations of later ages would be based – complex hybrid grains, advanced architectural techniques, functional pottery, even the beginnings of metal work – were introduced almost simultaneously by this wave of new settlers. (3)

However, among many orthodox archaeologists and scholars the veracity of Plato's account of Atlantis is uncertain at best. "The most common argument against the validity of the existence of Atlantis as presented in the *Timaeus* and *Critias* is that Plato meant them to be understood merely as fictional recapitulations of his ideal state."

It is still an open question whether Plato's account of Atlantis is based on truth or fiction. There is no proof that the country which gave its name to the Atlantic was an island that sank beneath the sea, or a continent that subsequently changed its name. At one end of the scale is belief inspired by intuition, at the other, an uncompromising skepticism leading to total rejection. What are the established facts? The conviction that Atlantis really existed is founded on an authentic, documented,

and verified text containing nothing that is contrary to the laws of logic or is incapable of scientific proof. Opposed to this is the suspicion that Plato invented Atlantis as a framework for his theories, hoping to make his authoritarian political ideas more acceptable and impressive by expounding them through this fascinating story. The argument runs that too much of it is frankly incredible, and can only with difficulty be made to tie in with certain scientific conceptions. Is Atlantis fiction or is it truth? Thousands of years of controversy have failed to resolve this problem. In the end it all comes down to one question: Is Plato's essay on the subject genuine or not?
(4)

In modern times interest in Atlantis was rekindled in the 1800s with a spate of books, monographs and newspaper articles. The most notable author was H.P. Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, who spoke of Atlantis in her books *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. She claimed that originally Atlantis was an immense continent which stretched from South America to West Africa in the south and from Newfoundland to Spain in the north. However, a series of cataclysms reduced the original continent to two large main islands (which Blavatsky called 'Ruta' in the south, in the area of the tropics, and 'Daitya' in the north, near the Azores). There were also a series of much smaller islands and island chains.

Blavatsky relates that "Ruta was progressively destroyed by the geomagnetic shift that commenced around 850,000 years ago, while Daitya seems to have survived until about 270,000 years ago, when it was also destroyed by some series of unspecified cataclysms that left only the desiccated island chain of the Azores as a testament to its previous existence."

Rudolph Steiner, an influential Austrian theosophist, claimed that the inhabitants of Atlantis became increasingly corrupt and materialistic, leading to their use of black magic and destructive forces which eventually led to the cataclysms which destroyed their island and most of the inhabitants.

Theosophists also believed that there was a 'lost continent' called "Lemuria" located in the southern Pacific that stretched from East Africa to Australia. Like Atlantis it was destroyed by a series of devastating cataclysms.

According to Blavatsky, the human race began as a completely etherealized being who became progressively more dense and solid with each stage of evolution. The Lemurians were the 'third root race,' the Atlanteans the 'fourth root race' and modern humans the 'fifth root race.'

In the twentieth century the story of Atlantis continued to intrigue the general public, as well as journalists, a number of scholars and even psychics. One of the most unusual figures was Edgar Cayce, a renowned American psychic sometimes known as the "sleeping prophet." He was able to enter trance states in which he provided information about individuals' past lives, including those supposedly lived in Atlantis:

According to Cayce, Atlantis occupied a place in the Atlantic Ocean from the Saragossa Sea to the Azores, and had a flourishing civilisation dating back to 200,000 BC. The Atlanteans' civilisation was highly developed and they possessed some kind of 'crystal stone' for trapping the rays of the sun; they also possessed steam power, gas and electricity. Unfortunately, their prosperity finally made them greedy and corrupt, so they were ripe for the destruction that finally came upon them. This occurred in periods, one about 15,600 BC, and the last about 10,000 BC. By then, Atlanteans had dispersed to Europe and South America. Their archives, Cayce said, will be found in three parts of the world, including Giza. He also forecast that documents proving the existence of Atlantis would be found in a chamber below the Sphinx. (5)

In the early part of the twentieth century G.I. Gurdjieff, who brought a seminal Fourth Way spiritual teaching to the West, described the destruction of Atlantis as a pivotal event in human history. References to Atlantis abound in his writings and he told his students that the famous rock paintings in the caves of Lascaux, France "were the work of a brotherhood that existed after the loss of Atlantis."

John G. Bennett, a student of Gurdjieff, reported that although some have interpreted his references to Atlantis as symbolizing 'conscience' submerged in the unconscious part of the mind, "there is little doubt that Gurdjieff also intended the story of Atlantis to be taken literally." In *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* Gurdjieff described the demise of Atlantis due to a calamity that he called the "second transatlantic perturbation."

During the second serious catastrophe to that planet, the continent Atlantis, which had been the largest continent, and the chief place of the being-existence of the three-brained beings of that planet during the period of my first descent, was engulfed together with other large and small terra firmas within the planet with all the three-brained beings existing upon it, and also with almost all that they had attained and acquired during many of their preceding centuries. In their place there then emerged from within the planet, other terra firmas which formed other continents and islands, most of which still exist. (6)

According to Gurdjieff, seers of Atlantis had prophesized the upcoming destruction of their lands and many inhabitants migrated to Africa and settled at the source of the Nile. Following the catastrophe that destroyed Atlantis, the remaining survivors escaped to central Africa before migrating north and east, eventually reaching the lower Nile valley "to continue in isolation the attainment of the tasks set by their society of initiates." The survivors of Atlantis who settled in Egypt were able to preserve the essence of the wisdom teachings of their earlier homeland: "There still continued to be present in the presence of beings of several subsequent generations after the loss of Atlantis, the 'instinctive conviction' concerning the sense of what is called there 'completed personal Being'."

Many of the world's cultural traditions speak of Atlantis in their myths and legends. They include Egyptian and Phoenician mythology, the legends of Mongolian nomads, Greek myths and traditional tales of the indigenous peoples of North and South America:

The Hopi Indians have a legend about the final destruction of Atlantis that has been passed down from generation to generation through all the intervening years. According to this legend the world (of Atlantis) was one of a greatly increasing population in which there existed great cities and advanced crafts. The people made a "shield of hide" which could fly through the air with people in it; this was used in warfare. Eventually the people became so corrupt that their world was destroyed by a great flood. "Waves higher than mountains rolled in on the land and the continents broke asunder and sank beneath the seas." Some of the people survived by traveling in boats from island to island until they reached a great continent. This was the beginning of the Hopi people. Other evidence suggests that the Hopi, as well as the Iroquois, the Mound Builders and many other North American tribes, were all descendants of the Atlanteans. Most tribes have similar legends to account for the great flood on the earth and the beginnings of their own race. All refer to a land beautiful beyond description with wondrous machines where the people became so evil that they had to be destroyed. (7)

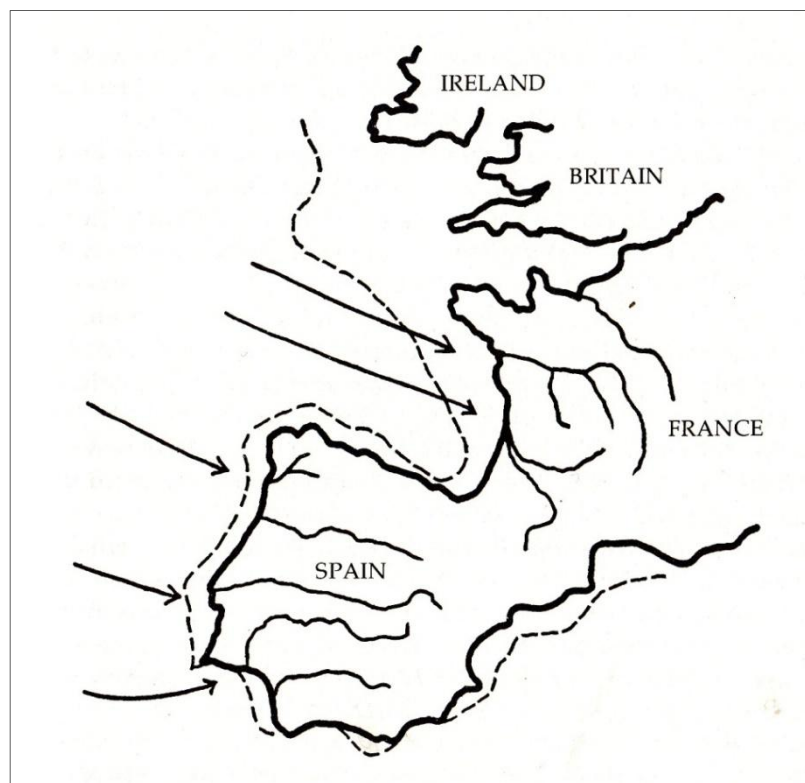
Perhaps the most compelling argument for the existence of Atlantis is from archaeological and anthropological evidence itself. There are striking similarities to many aspects of ancient cultures on both the east and west sides of the Atlantic:

- Similar creation myths
- Recurring legends of a 'Great Flood'
- Comparable sophisticated astronomical alignments at ancient observation sites
- Knowledge of the 25,900-year precession of the equinoxes
- Equivalent units of measurement: feet, fathoms, cubits, stadia
- Step pyramids appear in both Central America and the Middle East
- In Iberia and Yucatan the same ball games are played
- Similar practices of embalming the dead
- Linguistic and phonetic correspondences, e.g. the languages of the Basque people and certain Central American cultures have many similarities
- Similarity of physical appearance, including skin colour, facial features, hair texture and colour, musculature and height

There is strong anthropological and archaeological evidence that a new and more highly developed human being, the Cro-Magnon, lived on the western part of the European continent between at least 30,000 and 10,000 B.C. The traditional belief is that they spread from east to west across Europe, gradually supplanting the Neanderthals over thousands of years. However, researchers such as Dr. Otto Muck argue that the migration of the Cro-Magnons was from west to east, and that their original home was Atlantis:

Cro-Magnon man must have come from the west, sailed across the Atlantic and landed at the river mouths of Western Europe, and penetrated inland along the rivers. These hypothetical routes of migration are marked by the burial sites of Cro-Magnons, which differ radically from those of the Neanderthals. The artifacts have greater artistic value, the weapons are more effective. It is likely that the Cro-Magnons, with their superior weapons, pushed the Neanderthals back toward the alpine retreats . . . Excavations confirm the theory that the Cro-Magnon race came not from the east but from the west. The areas that are rich in Cro-Magnon finds are the very regions that are stated by Plato to have been subject to the rule of Atlantis. (8)

Figure 1. The probable routes of Cro-Magnon migration to Europe



There are indications that western Europe may have been populated by successive waves of Cro-Magnons originating from Atlantis, possibly in the form of "small, organized hunting expeditions." The colonization of western Europe probably began before the actual submersion of Atlantis, during the period of transition between Ice Ages.

Researchers have also noted a striking physical resemblance between Cro-Magnons and North American indigenous tribes such as skeleton type and skin colour. As well, the marvelous cave paintings attributed to the Cro-Magnons depict them as red-skinned people: "The cave paintings to the east of the Atlantic show similar essential characteristics as those of the North American Indian races to the west – a link across the ocean that cannot be ignored."

'The Great Flood' and Other Cataclysms

According to Gurdjieff, the earth has experienced a series of calamities throughout its history. The first catastrophe occurred when the earth was in its infancy. A comet which he called 'Kondoor' collided violently with the earth, resulting in two sizable fragments breaking off and flying into space. Both bodies eventually lost momentum and began to make regular elliptical orbits around earth. The larger fragment became known as the moon while the existence of the smaller body, which Gurdjieff named 'Anulios,' is completely unsuspected: "Contemporary three-brained beings do not know of this former fragment of their planet, chiefly because its comparatively small size and the remoteness of the place of its movement make it quite invisible to their sight."

The second major catastrophe was a consequence of the cosmic disharmony created by the first catastrophe:

When during the first disaster two considerable fragments had been separated from this planet, then for certain reasons, the what is called "center-of-gravity" of the whole of its presence had no time to shift immediately into a corresponding new phase, with the result that right until the second catastrophe, this planet had existed with its "center-of-gravity" in a wrong position, owing to which its motion during that time was not "proportionately-harmonious" and there often occurred both within and upon it various commotions and considerable displacements. But it was recently, when the center-of-gravity of the planet finally shifted to its true center, that the said second catastrophe occurred. (9)

The "second Transapalnian perturbation" was accompanied by massive earth tremors which destroyed the continent of Atlantis and also created new land masses in other parts of the planet. In *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, Gurdjieff describes these major reconfigurations of the earth's land masses: "In consequence of the said perturbation, this small continent, which exists until now under the name of 'Africa,' became much larger, because other terra firmas which emerged from the water spaces of the planet were added to it." And, "On account of various disturbances during the second terrestrial catastrophe, several parts of the continent of Iranan [Asia] entered within the planet, and other terra firmas emerged in their place and attached themselves to this continent which in consequence became considerably changed and became in size almost what the continent Atlantis had been for the planet Earth before the catastrophe."

Gurdjieff also mentions a number of other smaller catastrophes that befell the planet. These include powerful earthquakes, which he attributed to the effect of the excessive heights of newly formed mountain ranges on the earth's atmosphere: "Although planetary tremors or earth-quakes frequently occur to the planet from other interplanetary disharmonies also, that have arisen in consequence of the two great Transapalnian perturbations, nevertheless most of the planetary tremors there, and especially during recent centuries, have occurred solely on ac-

count of those excessive elevations . . . If the abnormal growth of the Tibetan mountains continues thus in the future, a great catastrophe on a general cosmic scale is sooner or later inevitable.”

Gurdjieff describes a third major catastrophe in which many fertile regions of the earth were covered by sand, creating the Gobi desert, and, at a later date, the Sahara desert. This period has been called the ‘Great transmigration of races,’ as the inhabitants of many lands were forced to move elsewhere:

The third misfortune was entirely of a local character and occurred because there had proceeded in its atmosphere unprecedented what are called ‘accelerated-displacements-of-the-parts-of-the-atmosphere,’ or great winds . . . These unprecedented great winds then began by the force of their currents to wear down the elevated ‘terra firma parts’ and to fill up corresponding ‘depressions.’ Such depressions were also the two central countries of the continent Ashhark [Asia] upon which the process of existence was chiefly concentrated. At the same time sands also filled up certain parts of the country Pearland [India], as well as that country in the middle of the continent Grabontzi [Africa], where there was formed, after the loss of Atlantis, what they called the leading ‘Center-of-Culture’ for all the three-brained beings there, a country which at that time was the most flourishing part of the surface of this planet, and which is now the desert called ‘Sahara.’ During the abnormal winds of that time, besides the countries mentioned, several other small terra firma spaces on the surface of that hapless planet were also covered by sands.
(10)

Accounts of a cataclysmic universal flood in ancient times appear throughout the planet as part of the myths and legends of more than five hundred widely scattered cultures. “There is burgeoning evidence that something extraordinarily severe had struck the planet and had wiped out most of the world’s mammals, uplifted mountain ranges, caused widespread volcanic explosions, carved valleys and fjords, and left massive deposits of stone and gravel strewn across the globe’s landmasses.”

These stories of catastrophes and a ‘Great Flood’ are related in the Old Testament (Noah), Sumerian epics, Egyptian mythology, Greek myths and traditional tales of Australian aborigines. They are found in cultures as diverse as Japan, China, Thailand, Laos and India in the East; Egypt and the Congo in Africa; Greece, Germany and Scandinavia in Europe; and the indigenous tribes of North, Central and South America. Many ethnologists believe that these myths may be accurate records and eyewitness accounts of real events.

Many of the myths and legends bear a great similarity to the ‘Great Flood’ described in the Old Testament. For instance, the Sumerian epic of *Gilgamesh* describes an intense deluge that inundated Mesopotamia: “The floodgates of heaven were truly opened. Springs, small streams, great rivers – all swelled under the tremendous downbursts. They mingled with the tidal waves to produce overwhelming floods. On vast tracts of the Earth’s surface, all life was destroyed.”

There came a time when the rulers of darkness sent down a terrible rain. At day-break clouds as black as the night appeared in the sky. All the evil spirits raged and all light was transformed into darkness. The southerly gale roared, the waters reached the mountains and the waters buried all the people. For six days and six nights the rains roared like torrents. On the seventh day the tide relented. It was like the calm after a battle. The sea became calm, and the storm of disaster abated. I looked out at the weather, and the air was very still. All the people had turned into mud. The ground of the Earth was a bleak desert. (11)

Many North and South American indigenous peoples have legends of violent earthquakes followed by floods which caused widespread disaster. The Haida of British Columbia have a flood myth which is virtually identical to the ancient Sumerian myth: "From all corners of the earth the same story is told. The sun deviates from its regular path. The sky falls. The earth is wrenched and torn by earthquakes. And finally a great wave of water engulfs the globe." Many other indigenous tribes have oral legends of massive floods which ravaged their lands:

Among the Inuit of Alaska, there existed the tradition of a terrible flood, accompanied by an earthquake, which swept so rapidly over the face of the earth that only a few people managed to escape in their canoes or take refuge on the tops of the biggest mountains, petrified with terror. The Luiseno of lower California had a legend that a flood covered the mountains and destroyed most of mankind. Only a few were saved because they fled to the highest peaks which were spared when all the rest of the world was inundated. The survivors remained there until the flood ended. Further north similar flood myths were recorded amongst the Huron. And a legend of the Algonquin related how Michabo, the Great Hare, re-established the world after the flood with the help of a raven, an otter and a muskrat. The Iroquois have a myth that 'the sea and waters had at one time infringed upon the land, so that all human life was destroyed.' The Chickasaws asserted that the world had been destroyed by water 'but that one family was saved and two animals of every kind.' The Sioux also spoke of a time when there was no dry land and when all men disappeared from existence. (12)

In many of the myths and legends there is mention of dramatic changes in the sky before the floods commenced, as well as the occurrence of earthquakes and volcanic activity: "The event caused severe volcanic eruptions, massive earthquakes, catastrophic flooding, and the upheaval of the world's mountain ranges. Earth's axis may have tilted or its crust may have been violently displaced. Continents rose and sank. Mass extinctions of plants and animals followed, as did a period of eerie global darkness."

Many deluge and catastrophe myths contain references not only to the onset of a great darkness but to other changes in the appearance of the heavens. In Tierra del Fuego, for instance, it was said that the sun and the moon 'fell from the sky' and in China that 'the sun, moon and stars changed their motions.' The Incas believed that 'in ancient times the Andes were split apart and when the sky made war on the

earth.' The Tarahumara of northern Mexico have preserved world destruction legends based on a change in the sun's path. An African myth from the lower Congo states that 'long ago the sun met the moon and threw mud at it, which made it less bright. When this meeting happened there was a great flood.' And ancient Graeco-Roman myths tell that the flood of Deucalion was immediately preceded by awesome celestial events. (13)

Graham Hancock, writing in *Fingerprints of the Gods*, dates the worldwide flood story to the period between 15,000 and 8,000 B.C., which roughly coincides with Plato's account of the destruction of Atlantis:

We have seen that many of the great myths of cataclysm seem to contain accurate eye-witness accounts of real conditions experienced by humanity during the last Ice Age. In theory, therefore, these stories could have been constructed at almost the same time as the emergence of our subspecies *Homo sapiens sapiens*, perhaps as long as 50,000 years ago. The geological evidence, however, suggests a more recent provenance, and we have identified the epoch 15,000 – 8,000 BC as the most likely. Only then, in the whole of human experience, were there rapid climatic changes on the convulsive scale the myths so eloquently described. (14)

There is also a great deal of archeological evidence from different sources suggesting that a series of cataclysmic events and a worldwide flood of epic proportions actually happened:

- The existence of very high levels of volcanic ash in the atmosphere following major volcanic eruptions in the Quaternary epoch has been detected. The presence of the ash greatly reduced the amount of sunlight reaching the earth's surface, resulting in a significant drop in temperature. Abnormally dark skies lasting for years are recorded in early European myths and ancient Japanese and Indian legends.
- The remains of diverse life forms (plants, trees, animals) native to warm climates have been discovered deposited in Arctic regions.
- The fossil remains of countless numbers of incompatible prehistoric animals (bison, lions, sabre-toothed tigers, rhinoceroses, wolves and other mammals) have been found throughout the world in deep subterranean recesses sometimes termed "bone caves."
- "Huge numbers of warm-blooded, temperate adapted mammal species were instantly frozen and their bodies preserved in the permafrost, all across a vast zone of death stretching from the Yukon, through Alaska and deep into northern Siberia. The bulk of this destruction appears to have taken place during the eleventh millennium BC."
- The remains of hundreds of humans from diverse ethnic groups, who died from natural causes in caves (apparently seeking refuge from a catastrophe), have been discovered in North America, Brazil, India and the Balkans.

- The profound effect of the Ice Ages on all living creatures corresponds with the forced migration of human populations from one region to another. "The emergence of *Homo sapiens sapiens* coincided with a lengthy period of geological and climatic turbulence, a period marked, above all else, by ferocious freezing and flooding. The many millennia during which the ice was remorselessly expanding must have been terrifying for our ancestors. But those final 7,000 years of deglaciation, particularly the episodes of very rapid and extensive melting, must have been worse." It is unlikely that this was the sole result of gradual climatic factors and "the rapidity of the deglaciation suggests that some extraordinary factor was affecting the climate."

The various lines of evidence, from the similarity of the catastrophe myths and legends of cultures throughout the world to the findings of modern archeological investigations, suggest that the occurrence of past cataclysmic events is a historical reality, and not fiction or allegory.

Ancient Egypt

Greek historians associated ancient Egypt with the legendary Atlantis. And Plato was said to have learned about the destruction of Atlantis from Egyptian sources. However, contemporary archaeology generally scoffs at any link between Egypt and "mythical Atlantis," and limits the emergence of Egyptian culture and civilization to the last 5,000 to 7,000 years. But critics have questioned this view: "There are so many large and unsatisfactory gaps in the historical record, and mainstream Egyptology seems to be so keen to concentrate on the mere cataloguing of minutiae at the expense of all sorts of wider possibilities."

In the 1940s and 1950s René Schwaller de Lubicz, a French scholar and occultist, challenged the literalist interpretation of Egyptologists. He lived in Egypt for twelve years and studied in depth its monuments and temples, especially the temple of Thebes (or Luxor). He developed a symbolist approach to ancient Egypt and published his findings in his massive geometrical opus *The Temple of Man*, translated into English as *Sacred Science*.

One of his main conclusions was that Egyptian civilization was thousands of years older than 3,000 B.C. as traditional Egyptologists claimed. In his rigorous investigations and studies he was able to demonstrate how ancient Egyptians "integrated occult knowledge into visual, auditory, conceptual and architectural symbolic expressions. In so doing, they specifically intended to bypass cerebral intelligence." He also conclusively established that the ancient Egyptians recognized the 25,900-year period of the precession of the equinoxes and based their religio-mystical culture and civilization on sophisticated astronomical observations.

In the following decades, a number of independent investigators built on Schwaller de Lubicz's seminal work and contributed their own insights and theoretical perspectives. Among the most notable were John Anthony West (*Serpent in the Sky*), Robert Temple (*The Sirius Mystery*), Robert Bauval and Adrian Gilbert (*The Orion Mystery*) and Graham Hancock

(*Fingerprints of the Gods*). Their research supported Schwaller de Lubicz's conclusion that thousands of years before the accepted beginnings of Egyptian civilization, "Egypt was populated by survivors of Atlantis who settled in the valley of the Nile. The great temples and pyramids of Egypt are a legacy of these survivors."

Gurdjieff also traces the migration of the survivors of Atlantis to prehistoric Egypt and notes some of their subsequent spiritual influences on Egypt. In *'Beelzebub's Tales'* he recounts the story of the learned "Society of Akhaldans" which was first formed on the continent of Atlantis tens of thousands of years before its final destruction. The emblem of the Society, which was called 'Conscience,' was an allegorical being similar to (and perhaps a precursor to) the Sphinx. It consisted of the trunk of a bull, the four legs of a lion, two large wings of an eagle and the breasts of a virgin, which represented impartial Love.

Gurdjieff wrote that the meaning of the name "Akhaldan" is the "striving to become aware of the sense and aim of the Being of beings." According to research by Fourth Way author William Patterson, this is similar to the aim of ancient Egyptian religion which viewed "the living universe as a rhythmic movement contained within an unchanging whole." The influence of this Atlantean society on ancient Egypt was highly significant in many other ways:

Among the results of the Akhaldans settling in Egypt were the invention of the telescope and the building of pyramids, what Beelzebub calls "observatories." A telescope was placed deep within the pyramid. From there specialists observed other suns and planets of the universe and also determined and intentionally directed "the course of the surrounding atmosphere in order to obtain the 'climate' desired." Still another result was the knowledge of preserving the physical body through mummification . . . Through their scientific and spiritual contributions, the Society of Akhaldans has had a great influence on individuals and society. Among those influenced by Akhaldan learning were such seminal individuals as Pythagoras and Moses. (15)

Ancient Egyptian texts speak of Seven Sages who were survivors of Atlantis and planned the monuments and pyramids of Egypt. They were "divine beings who knew how the temples and sacred places were to be created."

The Sages were divine survivors of a previous cataclysm who made a new beginning. Originally, they came from an island – the Homeland of the Primeval Ones -- the majority of whose divine inhabitants were drowned. Arriving in Egypt, the survivors became "the builder Gods, who fashioned in the primeval time, the Lords of Light . . . the Ghosts, the Ancestors . . . who raised the seed for gods and men . . . the Senior Ones who came into being at the beginning, who illumined this land when they came forth unitedly." The correlation with Gurdjieff's description of the second Transapalnian perturbation which caused the island of Atlantis "to enter within the planet," and with the surviving members of Beelzebub's tribe and the Society of Akhaldans who resettled in the region of Ethiopia and Egypt and restarted civilization is, of course, exact. (16)

According to Edgar Cayce, inhabitants of Atlantis began migrating to western Europe, the Americas, Africa and Egypt during the period of the final destruction of the continent. Based on a number of life readings of individuals who supposedly incarnated in Egypt during the period of pre-history from 10,000 to 11,000 B.C., a picture emerges of early Egyptian history:

A leader Arart from the Caucasian region came into Egypt with his people prior to 10,500 B.C. and conquered it. The Great Pyramid of Giza and the Sphinx were built during the rule of his son Araat-aart. With these invaders came a priest Ra-Ta who attempted to organize religious practices. At about the same time Egypt was being flooded by refugees from sinking Atlantis. The priest, having become involved in political machinations and consequently a native rebellion, was banished for several years to what later became Abyssinia. However, he was recalled to aid in correlating the activities of the rulers in power, the native Egyptians and the incoming Atlanteans. Under the influence of the priest Ra-Ta, and with the help of the Atlanteans, there began a period of material and spiritual development in Egypt and efforts were made to spread this enlightened culture over the known world. Records – yet to be discovered – of the Atlanteans and their civilization were preserved in Egypt. (17)

The eleventh millennium B.C. marks the beginning of the so-called “golden age” when the gods were said to have ruled Egypt. It also corresponds with the precessional age of Leo, when the massive glaciers of the northern hemisphere were undergoing their final melting. This altered the climatic precipitation patterns and, with increased rains, the Nile valley became fertile. “Egypt enjoyed a period which has been described as ‘precocious agricultural development’ – possibly the earliest agricultural revolution anywhere in the world identified with certainty by historians.” There is evidence that these early agricultural experiments were based on techniques introduced by those with advanced botanical knowledge.

Egyptian historians have remarked on the sudden changes that took place in Egyptian civilization around 3,500 B.C. when an apparently Neolithic culture of a tribal nature was supplanted by a well-organized societal structure and the development of writing, sophisticated crafts and impressive works of art and architecture. These achievements occurred in a comparatively short period of time with little or no background to these fundamental developments. “That hieroglyphs suddenly appear full blown, as do a carefully established calendar, a social order, census, and a well-developed mythology, give ample testimony to a long-civilized epoch that must have preceded the historical period.”

Independent observers such as Graham Hancock have also commented on the sudden rise of Egyptian civilization: “The archeological evidence suggests that rather than developing slowly and painfully, as is normal with human societies, the civilization of ancient Egypt emerged *all at once and fully formed*. Indeed, the period of transition from primitive to advanced society appears to have been so short that it makes no kind of historical sense.” John Anthony West concurs:

Egyptian science, medicine, mathematics and astronomy were all of an exponentially higher order of refinement and sophistication than modern scholars will acknowledge. The whole of Egyptian civilization was based upon a complete and precise understanding of universal laws . . . Moreover, every aspect of Egyptian knowledge seems to have been complete at the very beginning. The sciences, artistic and architectural techniques and the hieroglyphic system show virtually no sign of a period of 'development'; indeed, many of the achievements of the earlier dynasties were never surpassed or even equalled later on. This astonishing fact is readily admitted by orthodox Egyptologists, but the magnitude of the mystery it poses is skilfully understated, while its many implications go unmentioned. (18)

In *Fingerprints of the Gods* Graham Hancock provides a number of pertinent examples of the inexplicable sophistication of ancient Egyptian civilization:

Technological skills that should have taken hundreds or even thousands of years to evolve were brought into use almost overnight – and with no apparent antecedents whatever. For example, remains from the pre-dynastic period around 3,500 BC show no trace of writing. Soon after that date, quite suddenly and inexplicably, the hieroglyphs familiar from so many of the ruins of Ancient Egypt began to appear in a complete and perfect state. Far from being mere pictures of objects or actions, this written language was complex and structured at the outset, with signs that represented sounds only and a detailed system of numerical symbols. Even the very earliest hieroglyphs were stylized and conventionalized; and it is clear that an advanced cursive script was in common usage by the dawn of the First Dynasty. What is remarkable is that there are no traces of evolution from simple to sophisticated, and the same is true of mathematics, medicine, astronomy and architecture and of Egypt's amazingly rich and convoluted religio-mythological system (even the central content of such refined works as the *Book of the Dead* existed *right at the start* of the dynastic period). (19)

The Great Pyramid of Giza and the Sphinx are probably the most iconic and visually recognizable monuments in all of Egypt. The Great Pyramid is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. In the eyes of orthodox archaeology, the pyramids at Giza were "great pharaonic mausoleums," constructed around 2580 B.C. under the direction of the pharaoh Khufu. The Sphinx is believed to have been built around 2500 B.C. for the pharaoh Khafra, the builder of the second pyramid at Giza. But many believe that they are much older than commonly believed. Edgar Cayce stated that the Great Pyramid was built from 10,490 to 10,390 B.C. and was designed by Hermes, "who preserved the sciences of Atlantis."

Gurdjieff believed that the source of these awe-inspiring structures can be traced to the descendants of Atlantis: "The Pyramids and Sphinx were the sole, chance, poor surviving remains of those magnificent constructions which were erected by the generations of the great initiates of Atlantis, the Akhaldans." According to Gurdjieff, one of the functions of the pyramids was to serve as astronomical observatories. He claimed that the two smaller pyramids at Giza were

not only designed as observatories but also to influence the local atmospheric conditions to enhance the astronomical observations – acting as “micro-climate” modifiers.

Research conducted by Robert Bauval and Graham Hancock suggest that the Great Pyramid was designed and constructed specifically in relation to the circumpolar stars and the precession of the equinoxes. They point out that the shafts in the Great Pyramid point directly to Orion and Sirius and other important circumpolar stars.

Some researchers have proposed that the positioning of the Giza pyramids follows an overall master plan in which the alignment of many of the sacred sites of Egypt reflect an “accurate representation of the sidereal heavens.” For instance, Robert Bauval proposes that the three pyramids of Giza were aligned in a pattern which was a perfect reflection of the stars in Orion’s Belt in 10,450 B.C., when Orion was at its closest to the southern horizon in the 25,900- year cycle of the precession of the equinoxes. Interestingly, this date coincides with Edgar Cayce’s statement that the Great Pyramid was planned around 10,500 B.C.

There are also many who believe that the Great Pyramid was in reality a sacred temple and ceremonial ritual site rather than a tomb. They propose that it was used for initiation rites by Egyptian Mystery Schools: “The architectural design (both internally and externally) had been specifically coordinated to achieve the best possible results through accurate psycho-spiritual correlation of the individual’s evolutionary status with the astronomical alignments of the time.”

There is compelling geological evidence that the Sphinx is much older than the commonly attributed age of 2,500 B.C. Schwaller de Lubicz was the first to observe that the weathering of the Sphinx was due to water erosion rather than the effect of sand and wind. In *Sacred Science* he made reference to the devastating rains and floods in Egypt in the eleventh millennium B.C., adding that “a great civilization must have preceded the vast movements of water which passed over Egypt, which leads us to assume that the Sphinx already existed, sculptured in the rock of the west cliff at Giza – that Sphinx whose leonine body, except for the head, shows indisputable signs of water erosion.”

This proposition was later confirmed by American geologist Robert Schoch who, upon careful examination of the body of the Sphinx, concluded that “the Sphinx shows evidence of significant precipitation-induced weathering and erosion (degradation), and the core body of the Sphinx predates the pharaoh Khafra.” Schoch estimates the initial date of construction of the earliest parts of the Sphinx to between 5,000 and 7,000 B.C., while John Anthony West argues for an even earlier date prior to 10,000 B.C., speculating that it could be as old as 15,000 B.C.

The pattern of water weathering of the Sphinx is consistent with the climatic conditions existing in Egypt in the period well before the historical flowering of Egyptian civilization:

The Sahara, a relatively young desert, was green savannah until about the tenth millennium BC; this savannah brightened by lakes, boiling with game, extended

across much of upper Egypt. Farther north, the Delta area was marshy but dotted with many large and fertile islands. Overall the climate was significantly cooler, cloudier and *rainier* than it is today. Indeed, for two or three thousand years before and about a thousand years after 10,500 BC it rained and rained and rained. Then, as though marking an ecological turning-point, the floods came. When they were over, increasingly arid conditions set in. This period of desiccation lasted until approximately 7,000 BC when the 'Neolithic Upheaval' began with a thousand years of heavy rains, followed by 3,000 years of moderate rainfall which once again proved ideal for agriculture . . . This, then, in broad outline, is the environmental stage upon which the mysteries of Egyptian civilization have been played out: rain and floods between 13,000 BC and 9,500 BC; a dry period until 7,000 BC; rain again (though increasingly less frequent) until about 3,000 BC; thereafter a renewed and enduring dry period. (20)

Both Graham Hancock and Robert Bauval argue that the Sphinx was built around 10,500 B.C. to act as a marker of the beginning of a new astronomical cycle. "The astronomer-priests who built the Sphinx in 10,500 B.C. also *planned* to build the pyramids in such a way that their spatial arrangement would reflect exactly the belt of Orion, and so convey an important message to some future age."

Bauval and Hancock point out that there is a highly convincing reason to believe that the Sphinx was built in 10,500 BC. Imagine that you are standing between the paws of the Sphinx at dawn on the spring equinox of 10,500 BC. The Sphinx faces due east, and a few moments before dawn, we see the constellation of Leo rising above the horizon – Leo the lion. If we now turn at a right angle to face due south, we see in the sky the constellation of Orion, with the stars in its belt reflecting exactly the later lay-out of the pyramids. It is as if the pyramid builders are leaving us a message to tell us not only when they built the Great Pyramid but, by implication, when their ancestors built the Sphinx. The southern 'air-shaft' tells us when they built the Pyramid, and the alignment of the pyramids, reflecting Orion's belt, tells us that they are directing our attention to 10,500 BC, in the age of Leo. (21)

Recent research has revealed the importance of the Sphinx in understanding human origins and history:

The Sphinx may be the repository of the answers to where we came from and when we began. Building on Robert Bauval's *The Orion Mystery* and Graham Hancock's *Fingerprints of the Gods*, the two authors collaborated on *The Message of the Sphinx*. By means of computer simulation, the authors scroll back through astronomical heavens to show how the prehistoric skies of 2500 BC and 10,500 BC appeared. In effect, they deduce – and marshal a great many facts to prove – that a priestly elite they call "The Followers of Horus" used the heavens as a *Legominism*, a conscious means of passing and preserving knowledge down through time's inherent, law-conformable distortions. By ingenious reckoning and reasoning, Hancock and Bauval

not only theoretically solve the riddle of the Sphinx but also determine that the much heralded but never discovered "Hall of Records" – which is said to preserve the knowledge and wisdom of "a highly advanced antediluvian civilization that was destroyed by a 'Great Flood'" – lies just one hundred feet below the hind paws of the Great Sphinx. (22)

Gurdjieff described the inner, symbolic meaning of the prototype of the Great Sphinx which existed in Atlantis. The intention of the allegorical figure was to provide a 'shock' or 'stimulus' to the body, mind and feelings which would awaken the innermost consciousness of the human being:

- The trunk or *Bull* symbolizes regeneration through indefatigable labours.
- The legs of a *Lion* represent the sense and feeling of courage, self-respect and faith in one's inherent strength and ability to master any life circumstance.
- The wings of the high-soaring *Eagle* are a reminder to continuously contemplate the deepest, most profound questions of life and existence.
- The image of a head in the form of the *Breasts of a Virgin* expresses the wish "that Love should predominate always and in everything during the inner and outer function-ing evoked in one's consciousness."

Graham Hancock, after many years of dedicated research into prehistoric and ancient world cultures, speculates on the possible motives of the people who built the pyramids and Sphinx:

What remains to be guessed at are the *motives* of the pyramid builders, who were presumably the same people as the mysterious cartographers who mapped the globe at the end of the last Ice Age in the northern hemisphere. If so, we might also ask why these highly civilized and technically accomplished architects and navigators were obsessed with charting the gradual glaciation of the enigmatic southern continent of Antarctica from the fourteenth millennium BC down to about the end of the fifth millennium BC? Could they have been making a permanent cartographical record of the slow obliteration of their homeland? And could their overwhelming desire to transmit a message to the future through a variety of different media – myths, maps, buildings, calendar systems, mathematical harmonies – have been connected to the cataclysms and earth changes that caused this loss. (23)

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