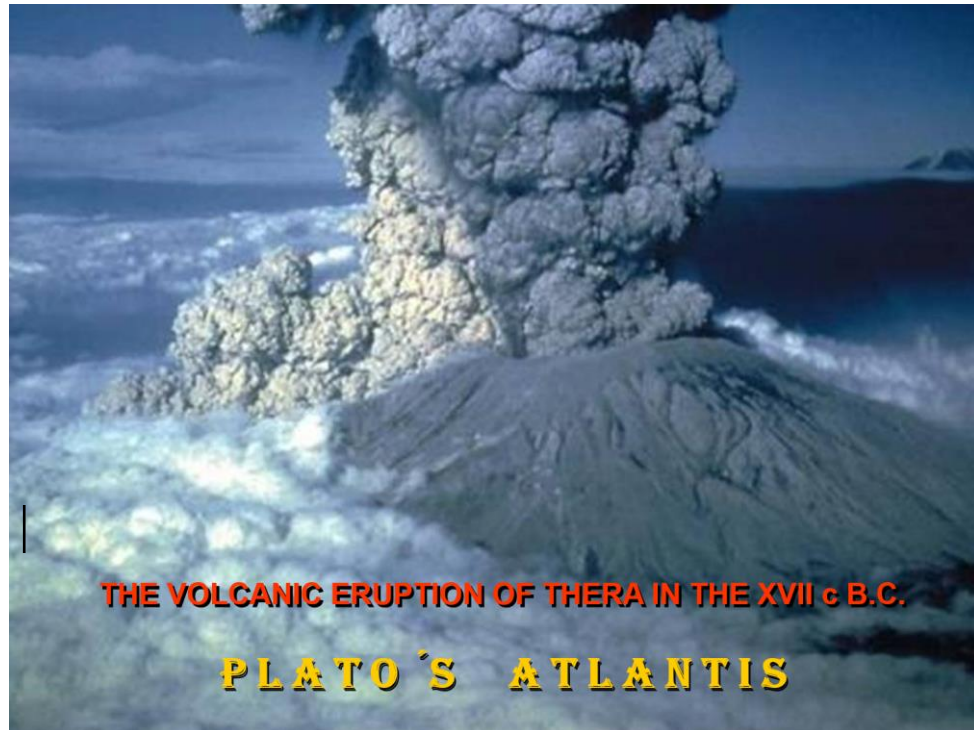


ATLANTIS

THE END OF AN ENIGMA

LINKS OF THE PLATONIC STORY WITH THE MINOAN CIVILIZATION AND THE VOLCANIC ERUPTION OF THERA ON THE ISLAND OF SANTORINI



THE VOLCANIC ERUPTION OF THERA IN THE XVII c B.C.

PLATO'S ATLANTIS

How the Platonic account of Atlantis originated?

**Are there links to the Minoan civilization on Crete,
and the volcanic eruption of Thera in the 17th century BC?**

Compilation of studies of geology, history,
archaeology, platonic literature and Greek mythology

written by

Alfonso Jesús Treviño

ABSTRACT

The greatest enigma of prehistory is the one originated from Plato's Dialogues: Atlantis. No other mystery of the past has aroused greater interest and research effort to confirm the existence of Atlantis, the place where this legendary civilization developed, its cultural manifestations and its legacy, and how its final destruction occurred when it suddenly sank into the sea. Can the Thera Volcanic Eruption in the 17th century BC, for which there is undeniable geological evidence, explain the disappearance of this advanced and mysterious civilization?

In this release are reviewed: the history and activity of the Thera volcano on the island of Santorini in the Aegean Sea; the *Dialogues* of Plato *Timaeus* and *Critias* that gave rise to the story of Atlantis; Cretan (Minoan) civilization, in particular the palace of Knossos and its wall frescoes; the possible identification of Atlantis with the Cretan civilization; and its disappearance as a consequence of the volcanic eruption of Thera in the 17th century BC.



Keywords

Atlantis Plato Solon Timaeus Critias Thera Santorini Crete
Akrotiri Greek Mythology the Labyrinth Theseus Minotaur

PLATO'S ATLANTIS

THE VOLCANIC ERUPTION OF THERA IN THE 17TH CENTURY BC

FOREWORD

This story refers to a totally unusual natural cataclysm. Something that rarely happens, even during a long life and, therefore, rarely occupies our minds as an apotheotic disaster of nature, subject as we are to the profound transformations that man has made of its habitat and ecological environment: the earth's surface. The worst disasters that have devastated the abode of man have been mostly the product of civilization. Certainly, cities and nations arise, great constructions (incredible buildings, bridges and tunnels), prosperity, comfort and security, but also internal conflicts and between nations arise, and petty interests of some that lead to misery and hunger for others, and to real catastrophes such as environmental contamination, climatic changes, devastation, war, the use of nuclear weapons, international terrorism and the destruction of man and his works.

Frequently we hear about some natural phenomena of great magnitude with catastrophic effects on entire towns and cities, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, floods and more rarely volcanic eruptions, such as Saint Helena in the state of Washington in 1980. These natural phenomena have been the cause of devastation and death (in Mexico we remember the hurricane "*Gilberto*" in 1986, which caused severe damage and deaths in Monterrey, México and the earthquake of September 19, 1985 that destroyed part of Mexico City and the one of September 19 [same day!] of 2017, the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland in 2010, whose ashes spread throughout Europe, paralyzing aviation; and recently, on February 6, 2023, the earthquake that destroyed several cities in Turkey and Syria. But the towns involved eventually recover, and the scars of the disaster are faded and forgotten in time. In the history of humanity, only exceptionally have natural catastrophes with continental repercussions occurred, or disasters that have changed the course of civilization.

Geologists and volcanologists agree that the eruption of Vesuvius that buried the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the first century AD. C., and even the tremendous explosion of Krakatoa in 1883, are relatively minor events when compared to a volcanic eruption that occurred in the Aegean Sea in remote antiquity, and which until the middle of last century, was completely ignored; however, the consequences of this eruption and its final cataclysm generated great disturbances that were not understood by the man of that time, but that through stories, legends and myths have endured as a vague memory until today. This account refers to the final event of what is considered the greatest natural catastrophe in the history of civilization.

THE CATASTROPHE

THE AEGEAN VOLCANO

The year was 1625 B.C.¹ On a deserted island in the Aegean,² between the rugged coasts of Greece and present-day Turkey, the morning of that summer day seemed to pass as if nothing was going to happen. A warm north-westerly wind was blowing and the sun was shining in the sky. The mass of the smoking volcano 1,500 meters high above sea level, which was the highest peak on the island, begins to shake with violent tremors after 20,000 years of peaceful sleep. Suddenly, the top of the volcano is blown to pieces. Huge amounts of smoke, dust, pumice and rock escape from its interior and spread hundreds of kilometers away. Fire and torrents of lava follow; Intermittent expulsion of smoke, dust and rocks continues. Smoke and dust obscure the sun. Neighboring islands are covered by pumice and the ash blown by the wind reaches more than 1,200 kilometers away, as far as Egypt. Tremors shake the entire island and deep cracks open from the side of the mountain, until a large fissure allows the sudden entry of tons of seawater into the heart of the volcano; the water immediately boils and huge amounts of gas and pressurized water vapor are released, causing the top of the volcano to explode violently. The profusion of lava that flows from the colossal hole empties the interior of the mountain, leaving its walls like a shell that collapses and the entire center of the island plunges into the sea forming a huge caldera. The water penetrates the great caldera and gigantic waves 50 meters high are produced in the center and advance in all directions at 300 kilometers per hour. The waves sweep and devastate the coasts of Greece, cover part of Crete and the neighboring islands; they bury the port city of Ugarit on the Syrian coast under water, and in less than three hours they flood the Nile delta in Egypt.

THE KRAKATOA MODEL

To get an idea of the magnitude of the Aegean catastrophe, let us compare it with the eruption of Krakatoa that occurred on the islet of Rakat between Java and Sumatra (in the Indonesian archipelago) in 1883, to which there were many eyewitnesses. The ash clouds reached a height of 11 kilometers and the explosions were heard 200 kilometers away. The main eruption occurred on the morning of August 27. The detonations were heard in Australia 3,000 kilometers away and the ashes formed a column of black smoke 80 kilometers high that obscured the sun for a long time.

The neighboring islands were covered by a 40 - to 100-meter-thick layer of pumice. Ashes fell on towns and the decks of ships thousands of miles away. The cloud of smoke and dust encircled the earth for several months. In Java and Sumatra, 200 coastal towns

¹ The date is not exact of course. Most geologists point out that the final eruption of this volcano (called Thera) could have occurred between 1700 and 1600 B.C. Radiocarbon dating calibrated by dendrochronology favors a date of 1625 BC. Stuart Manning (2022) suggests an intermediate date between 1606 – 1560 B.C. based on statistical method.

² The island was abandoned shortly before, since no human remains corresponding to that time have been found.

were partially or totally destroyed and more than 36,000 people died due to the gigantic wave that occurred when the Krakatoa sank into the sea.

In both the Aegean and Krakatoa eruptions, the volcano's walls collapsed due to the massive expulsion of magma, and the island, or at least its center, sank into the sea producing gigantic waves. It is estimated that the eruption of the Aegean volcano was at least four times more violent than that of Krakatoa, with a release of energy equivalent to the simultaneous explosion of several hundred hydrogen bombs.

THE DARK AGE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Years pass after the Aegean Sea catastrophe. Its consequences on the human groups of the islands and mainland Greece result in migrations, loss of naval power, invasions and wars.

The Bronze Age Greeks invade Crete and the Aegean islands around 1450 BC, dominating the eastern Mediterranean for 200 years. Simultaneously in Central Asia, entire peoples are migrating to more fertile places with better livelihoods, pushing the less savage tribes west and south. The Dorian nomads from the north drive the civilized Greeks³ with their iron weapons to the south and towards the Aegean islands.

Years go by and new Dorian migrations (between 1200 and 1100 BC)⁴ cause massive mobilizations of peoples towards the sea and the islands, and from these towards distant lands on the other side of the sea. The eastern Mediterranean seethes with ships loaded with homeless people, with rascals and pirates that ravage the landing grounds (the Sea People); Egypt, from where they are expelled by Ramses III; the entire coast of Anatolia, Syria and Phoenicia burns in flames. Burn Troy, Tire, Beritos and Sidon. The Hittite empire itself is annihilated. A dark age is looming over all the civilized peoples of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East.

900 years have passed since the volcanic eruption and the past has been forgotten; Vague memories of the catastrophe, migrations and subsequent wars have persisted and are passed down from generation to generation. These memories tell of remarkable heroes of the past performing extraordinary feats, defeating giants and monsters, and exploring the unknown Black Sea in search of a Golden Fleece. The most glorious story is the epic of

³ Ionian peoples (who called themselves Danoi) Aeolians and Achaeans, currently designated as Mycenaean by the prominent citadel of Mycenae, in the Peloponnese of Greece.

⁴ These pottery-based dates are debatable; in fact, in what corresponds to the 2nd millennium B.C. there is a incipient and insidious chronological revolution in the history of the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean including Greece, Cyclades, Crete, Egypt and Palestine caused by new C¹⁴ dating (calibrated and confirmed by dendrochronology) of the volcanic eruption of Thera at the end of the 17th century BC, particularly in 1625 B.C. when previously it was estimated (based on ceramics) that this event had occurred between 1450 and 1520 B.C. This means an error of 100 to 150 years in the historical chronology of these peoples, their migrations and their wars.

a people who throw themselves into the sea in a large-scale military expedition, besiege and destroy, after 10 years of war, a city called Ilion or Troy, and all this for the honor of a man and the rescue of a beautiful woman. In short, the Classical Age of Greece is in full swing. But these people have barely begun to write again and have completely forgotten their true origin.

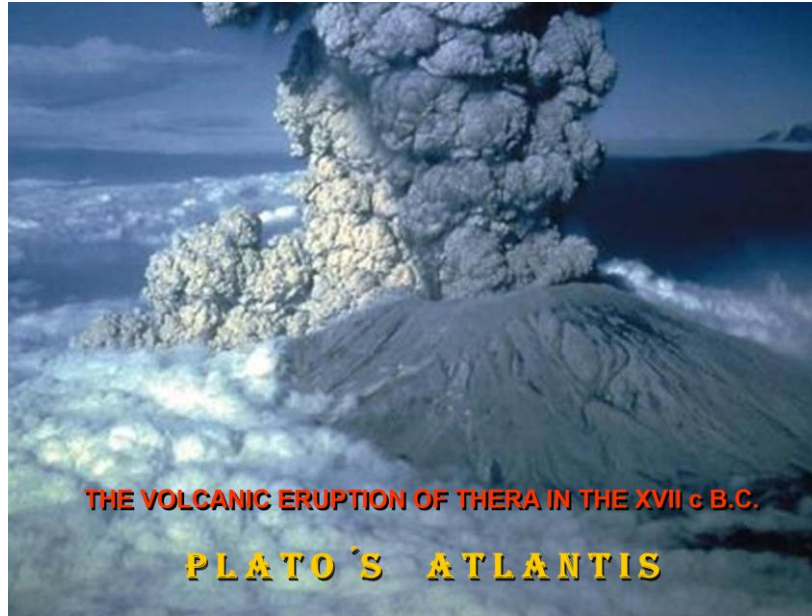


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Santorini island before and after the eruption of the Thera volcano in the 17th century BC.

ATLANTIS

SOLON AND PLATO

Around the year 590 B.C., a distinguished Athenian legislator was visiting Egypt. This was Solon, a statesman who had just codified a new body of law for the Athenians and was now traveling, prudently absent from Athens while his reluctant fellow citizens digested the harsh laws, he had foisted on them.

While in Egypt, Solon spoke with learned priests - historians of the city of Sais, the capital of Lower Egypt, whose deep knowledge of the past made a strong impression on him. Greek history was a jumble of legends of unknown origin, while the history of the Egyptians was clearly recorded on papyrus and stone, going back more than two millennia. One of the stories that he brought with him was unforgettable. He described a vast, powerful, highly civilized island empire that "in a single day and night," during a horrible catastrophe, had sunk into the sea and disappeared forever. What interested Solon the most was that according to the Egyptians, the Greeks were descendants or heirs of the inhabitants of that insular empire. The story was passed on to Critias the Elder, and later to the descendants of Solon, one of them a cousin of the philosopher Plato. Finally, Plato wrote it in his "*Dialogues*" (around 350 BC), and thus, it is believed, the legend of Atlantis originated in Western thought. In his dialogue "*Timaeus*" Plato recounts what the Egyptian priests said to Solon: «*The most beautiful and noble race of men that ever existed lived in your homeland; of whom both you and your city are just the seed or trace that they left. But then earthquakes and violent floods occurred, and in a single day and a night of rain all your warriors were buried, and the island of Atlantis disappeared under the sea*». In his dialogue "*Critias*", which followed that of "*Timaeus*", Plato continues to describe the insular empire, its extent⁵ and location⁶, its power, its kings (who met every five years to perform a ritual that involved the sacrifice of bulls), its hot springs, etc.

Over the years, thousands of people —historians, archaeologists, writers, travelers, "experts in the unknown", and even those who claim to possess special powers of the mind— have tried to find where Atlantis was, and despite numerous discoveries, many of them great errors and deceptions, of interesting hypotheses, and above all, of incredible fantasies, the general public, including those interested in the subject, remain skeptical regarding the conclusions.

Given this great controversy, it is important to ask yourself the following questions: Where does the original information about Atlantis came from? Did the Egyptians, contemporaries of Atlantis, knew the actual extent and location of this island empire? ... Or

⁵ "...was larger than Libya (Africa) and Asia" (Anatolia) combined, although in the opinion of some experts this is an error of translation, and this data does not refer to measurement, but rather to location "in the middle of Egypt, Libya and Anatolia".

⁶ "Beyond the Pillars of Hercules" (Strait of Gibraltar). Here, too, experts point to other well-known sites known in antiquity with the same name, such as the Strait of Corinth between the Peloponnese and Attica in Greece.

was it all an invention of Solon? Or of Plato, the latter with more philosophical than historical motivations? The truth is that, if this story is taken seriously, we have before us the greatest enigma of humanity.

TIMAEUS

Timaeus is a dialogue written by Plato around the year 350 B.C. It precedes that of *Critias* or of Atlantis and is considered the most influential in later philosophy and science. Its content delves into the origin of the universe, the structure of matter and human nature. The translated fragment below serves as an introduction to Critias's dialogue about Atlantis

«We admire many great deeds of your city recorded here, but one among all stands out for importance and excellence. Indeed, our writings refer to how your city once stopped the insolent march of a great empire, which advanced from abroad, from the Atlantic Ocean, over all of Europe and Asia. At that time, it was possible to cross that ocean since there was an island in front of the mouth that you, as you say, call the Pillars of Heracles. This island was bigger than Libya and Asia together and from it the people of that time could pass to the other islands and from the islands to all the main land that was in front of them and surrounded the real ocean, since what was left inside the mouth we mentioned looked like a bay with a narrow entrance. In reality, it was sea, and the region completely surrounding it might with absolute correctness be called the mainland»

*«On that island, Atlantis, a great and marvelous confederation of kings had arisen, ruling over it and many other islands, as well as parts of the mainland. The peoples of Libya, up to Egypt, and Europe up to Tirrenia also ruled on this continent. All this united power once tried to enslave in one attack your entire region, ours and the interior of the mouth. Then, Solon, the power of your city became famous among all men for its excellence and strength, for it surpassed all in courage and in the arts of warfare, led the Greeks at one point in the fight, then was forced to fight alone, when the others were separated, and ran the most extreme dangers and subdued those who attacked us. You thus achieved a great victory and prevented those who had not yet been enslaved from being enslaved and the rest, all of us who lived further away from the Heracleid confines, you generously freed us. Subsequently, **after a violent earthquake and an extraordinary deluge, in one terrible day and night, your warrior class sank all at once under the earth, and the island of Atlantis disappeared in the same way, sinking into the sea.** For this reason, even now the ocean is impassable and inscrutable there, because it is prevented by the clay that produced the island settled in that place and that is found at a very shallow depth».*

It is important to mention that in the last part of the fragment of the translated Timaeus (marked in bold) there is an allusion to the fact that: “*after a violent earthquake and an extraordinary flood (perhaps a tsunami) in a terrible day and night, your warrior class (the Athenians!) sank all at once under the earth, and the island of Atlantis disappeared in the*

same way, sinking into the sea." This account makes it clear that after a battle between Athens and Atlantis, a catastrophic event (earthquake and probably a tsunami) sank the Athenian warriors and the island of Atlantis into the sea, suggesting that this event occurred in the Aegean Sea, and not in the Atlantic, and the cause was the eruption of the Thera volcano that sank the center of the island (Atlantis, which disappears and the caldera is formed), causing a tsunami that wreaked havoc and victims in Greece (Peloponnese and Attica).

CRITIAS

Critias is one of Plato's last Dialogues, unfinished, it seems to be the continuation of the *Timaeus*, and it deals with Atlantis, the mysterious and hypothetical maritime empire and its war against prehistoric and pre-Hellenic Athens and the country of Egypt.

At first, he points out that this war occurred 9,000 years before Solon (which is impossible, since the city of Athens and Egypt as a nation did not exist in such remote times). If this figure is reduced to 1,000 years — as R. McQuillen proposes in his article "*Perfecting Plato*" — then it would be located around the year 1600 BC, when Athens was a primeval city founded by the Pelasgians⁷ and inhabited by the Ionians⁸, and Egypt was going through its II Intermediate Period with the Hyksos kings dominating Lower Egypt, in the delta of the Nile River.

After an introduction, Critias describes the political order of Athens, its geography and the city, before describing the Empire of Atlantis. His presentation is very extensive, and includes: the description of Atlantis (a large island with alternating rings of land and circular sea channels, around an insular center where the central city and palace were), the list of kings, the riches (orichalcum⁹ buildings, elephants, abundance of swamps, rivers, valleys, trees and fruits), the acropolis, the palace, the guard, the military organization, its government and laws; and finally, his degeneration and the punishment of Zeus.

This description is all an imaginary fantasy created by Plato, or Critias or Solon, because according to the account that the Egyptian priests gave Solon, there was no such description of Atlantis. If this empire existed 1,000 years before Solon, who would keep all this information to provide in the Platonic dialogue?

The following is the translation of the last fragment of the Critias,

⁷ Pelasgians - the oldest pre-Hellenic inhabitants of Greek Attica and Peloponnese.

⁸ Ionians: Indo-European people who settled in Greece around 2000 B.C. One of the Greek tribes which arrived before the Aeolians, Achaeans and Dorians.

⁹ Orichalcum: Metal mentioned in Plato's writings on Atlantis. According to specialists it is a copper, zinc and lead alloy (gilt brass), of much less value than gold, but was considered very valuable by the Greeks.

«The god of gods Zeus, who reigns by means of laws, since he can see such things, realized that a good lineage was disposed in an unworthy way and decided to apply a punishment to them so that they would become more orderly and achieve prudence. He gathered all the gods in his most important mansion, the one that, installed in the center of the universe, has a view of everything that participates in the generation and, after gathering them, he said... »

There is no consensus of opinion regarding the reason why the writing was not completed, but most consider that Plato was already too old or lost interest in this subject.

LUCE AND GALANOPOULOS

Two modern scholars, the Irish Hellenist John V. Luce and the Greek scientist Angelus G. Galanopoulos studied this problem of Atlantis and in their writings they have come to essentially the same conclusion. They suggest that the correct way to pose the problem is to take Plato seriously, but not literally. Plato was describing something real, but the details of his description of Atlantis, location, population, and government, were somewhat fanciful, designed to serve a philosophical rather than a historical purpose. According to these researchers we must look for the underlying facts under the Platonic account with the eyes of the Egyptians and not with the eyes of Plato. It is highly probable that a catastrophe occurred in ancient times relatively close to them, destroying the island of a people who had close trading relations with the Egyptians. The problem is that Plato's data refers to a huge island, practically a continent, located in the sea "beyond the Pillars of Hercules", which is why Plato placed it in the Atlantic Ocean, which received this name after Atlantis. The Egyptians of the 2nd millennium B.C. were people of land and river (the Nile); the Mediterranean Sea was known to them as the "*Great Green*", and they certainly did not venture across it. Any knowledge and relationships they had with other peoples across the Mediterranean would not be because the Egyptians were acting as visitors, but rather as being visited. Indeed, during their long history they had looked north from the Nile delta, across the Great Green, searching for the ships of a rich and mysterious island empire that lurked just beyond the horizon at an unknown distance. They only got to know this place indirectly through the stories of its inhabitants.

CRETE AND THE EGYPTIANS

If the previous theory were true, the inhabitants of Atlantis would be none other than those called "*keftiu*" by the Egyptians, that is, the people of Crete. They brought wood, olive oil, pottery, and bronze crafts¹⁰ to exchange for papyrus, copper, gold, and glazed pottery. But one day, after a series of signs of a terrible catastrophe at sea (heavy rain,

¹⁰ On some stelae, the Keftiu appear carrying elephant tusks, probably from Libya. This may have led to the false assumption that elephants abounded in the country of the Keftiu (Crete, taken as Atlantis).

gigantic waves, flooding of the delta cities), they stopped coming. The Egyptians may have heard a terrible explosion, coughed and spat at the cloud of dust that may have fallen on them, and even had floods. These phenomena, together with the disappearance of the men from Crete, might have suggested to the Egyptians that Crete itself had disappeared. In any case, a version of such an island disaster survived in the Egyptian chronicles, and would in due course be related to Solon on his voyage to Egypt almost a thousand years later. Since no Greek in Solon's time had the slightest idea of a Cretan civilization earlier than his own, he or Plato must have taken the account more than was appropriate. Solon or Plato gave the disappeared island the name of "**Atlantis**",¹¹ the name with which it has come down to us.

Crete, of course, has not disappeared; but it disappeared at least partially, an island located just over 100 kilometers north of Crete: its ancient name is Thera (meaning "fear"), the southernmost of the Cyclades, and it is currently called Santorini. It was a circular island originally known as *Stronguili* (La Redonda) that had formed around the top of a large submarine volcano, **Thera**¹². After a long period of calm, it had been inhabited and its soil cultivated. A thriving civilization occupied the island in the year 1,650 B.C. The island was then called Caliste (the most beautiful). The volcano became active between 1,636 and 1,600 BC. The population probably abandoned the island when the telluric movements began; later came the final eruption that destroyed and sank the island partially under the sea.

WHERE WAS ATLANTIS?

Plato's Atlantis was for 2,300 years the starting point of the most fantastic positions that can be imagined. More frequently, hypothetically, it has been located in the Atlantic Ocean, closer to the coasts of Africa and Spain than to America; In various hypotheses, the Canary Islands and the Azores have been identified as part of Atlantis. Recently (in the 60s of the 20th century) it was located in the Bimini Islands (of Bermuda), due to an underwater discovery of "constructions and walls" near the coast of the island, which later investigations by geologists, among who, should be highlighted Floyd McCoy, from the University of Hawaii, concluded that they were natural formations of underwater rock strata. There has been no shortage of those who place it in the Bay of Cádiz, the North Sea, in Turkey, on the island of Malta, in Israel, on the Andean plateaus of South America (!), and even worse in Antarctica and in the Indian Ocean. Its inhabitants have been related to the Egyptians, Greeks, Phoenicians, Toltecs and even with extraterrestrial beings. Popular science programs on television have recently featured some characters who, from their point of view (not always shared by the publisher) have "discovered" Atlantis in places unsuspected, as in the Andean plateaus, providing "evidence" of the existence of an

¹¹ The name of Atlantis is derived from the mythological giant Atlas, who holds the world under his shoulders.

¹² The THERA was formed by deposits of lava and other materials accumulated from the Upper Pliocene, by the eruptions of at least seven other submarine volcanoes.

ancient civilization (possibly related to Tiahuanaco or other regional cultures); or in Antarctica, when this drifting continent was closest to the Equator, hundreds of thousands of years ago. Numerous works, with a total lack of seriousness have been published regarding Atlantis in the Caribbean, in the Bermuda Triangle and especially in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean; in many of them, the author gives free rein to his fantasy without presenting the slightest proof.

And in reality they could not and will not find any proof. Geological studies of topography and cartography of the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean prove without a doubt that there was no continental plate or a large island between America and Africa that has sunk into the sea. On the other hand, the "*Pillars of Hercules*," formed by two rocky promontories that limit the Strait of Gibraltar between the Iberian Peninsula and Africa, has not been the only maritime passage with that name; in antiquity, on the eastern coast of Greece, two promontories were also known as "*Pillars of Hercules*," beyond which stretches the Aegean Sea with the Cyclades islands (see footnote ⁵). Even more, the strait between the island of Faros and the port of Canopus in the Delta was known to the Greeks as the "*Pillars of Heracles Canopian*" or "*Pillars of Proteus*," according to R. McQuillen in *Perfecting Plato*.

It is interesting to note that in most of the hypotheses that have been proposed, as well as in most of the investigations carried out in search of Atlantis, the accepted knowledge about the history of the Egyptians and the Greeks has not been considered, as well as some essential aspects of the original story referring to Solon¹³:

- The Egyptians knew many details about the Atlanteans, as if they had been contemporaries and close neighbors. (The Egyptian civilization did not exist 9,000 years before Solon, so the date is incorrect, and location of Atlantis would not be very distant from Egypt.)
- The Egyptians traded regularly with the Keftiu (Cretans), seafarers who came from a highly civilized island empire.
- The Egyptians told Solon: "*a noble race lived in your homeland...*" The homeland of the Greeks in Solon's time were Greece and the islands of the Aegean Sea. There were also Greek colonies (not the homeland exactly) in Asia Minor and Magna Graecia.
- The Egyptians told Solon that the Greeks were descendants or heirs of that noble race inhabiting the insular empire, "*you are the seed that they left...*" (This rules out the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Toltecs, the Incas, etc.).

¹³ If they were considered, some of the hypotheses would be discarded immediately, and the investigations in certain places, where "possible remains of Atlantis" have been found, they would lack foundation and financial support

- In Plato's dialogue "*Critias or from Atlantis*" it is pointed out that Athens and Egypt were at war with the kings of Atlantis, which rules out the date of 9,000 B.C. (Athens did not exist then; even 1,000 years before Solon, (1,600 B.C.) Athens was barely a village. A distant location, e.g., in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, in the Caribbean, or in South America, is also ruled out, since it is about three nations at war, and therefore with common interests, in Egypt, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean, Greece and the Cyclades, and not in the Atlantic Ocean or some other distant place.
- The kings of Atlantis met every five years for a ritual where bulls were "hunted" and sacrificed. (These animals existed in ancient times in Egypt, Anatolia, the Near East, and Crete; on the other hand, they certainly did not exist in the Americas, on the Caribbean islands, or in Antarctica.

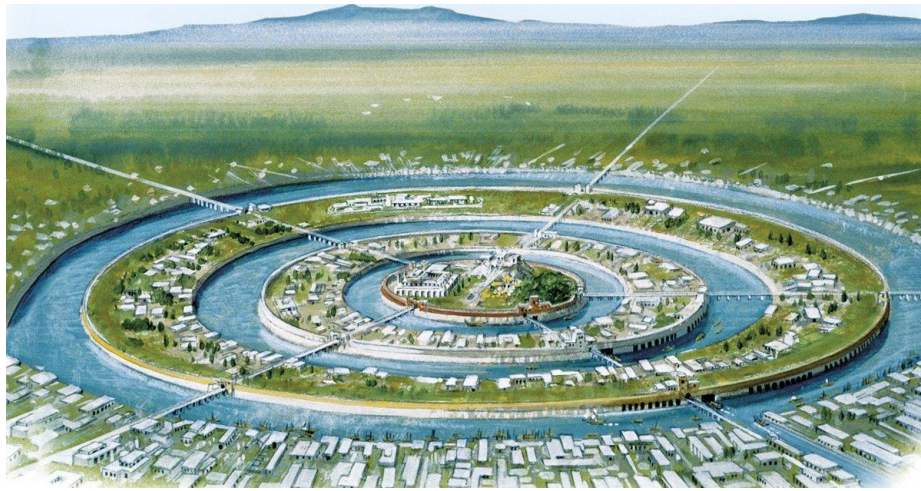


Fig. 3

Fictitious conception of Plato's Atlantis according to Critias' Dialogue



Fig. 4

Fictitious conception of Plato's Atlantis according to Critias' Dialogue

MINOAN CIVILIZATION

3,600 YEARS LATER

After that terrible volcanic eruption in the Aegean, Crete and the Cyclades were settled by the Greeks and have been continuously inhabited up to the present time. Its remote past has been forgotten, but the Thera volcano still shows signs of activity. There have been recent eruptions and earthquakes, the last in June 1965.

But what kind of people inhabited Crete and the Cyclades before the Thera catastrophe? What relationship did this people have with the cultures developed in Ancient Preclassic Greece? Were the Greeks really descendants of the Cretans? Is there any archaeological evidence on Crete and Thera that connects this culture with Egyptian accounts and the first cities of Greece? To answer these questions, I will take information from three distinguished archaeologists: Sir Arthur Evans, English; Heinrich Schliemann, German and Spyridon Marinatos, Greek. Each of them separately, contributed to discover an unsuspected civilization, the Minoan, the Mycenaean and the Cycladic respectively. The ruins of three important cities of these civilizations: Knossos, Mycenae and Akrotiri, have allowed well-founded answers to the above questions, and in the opinion of some leading scientists, archaeologists, historians and geologists, there is a probability that these recent discoveries will finally solve the mystery of Atlantis.

ARTHUR EVANS IN KNOSSOS

The ancient history of Crete was totally unknown until Arthur Evans began unearthing it in 1900 from a site called Cnossos (Knossos), near the central north coast of Crete, where he spent his entire fortune and worked continuously until his death in 1936.

Evans found in Knossos the ruins of a magnificent palace that occupied an area of more than 25,000 square meters, certainly one of the most imposing buildings of all time. The complex layout of its rooms and storerooms reminded Evans of the Greek myth of the labyrinth, where the hero Theseus slew the minotaur¹⁴. In this legend, the city of Athens sent periodically as tribute to Crete seven young men and seven maidens to feed a half-bull, half-man monster that King Minos kept locked up in the labyrinth built by Daedalus. If the legend has a background of reality, it undoubtedly evokes a vague memory of the Athenians regarding a remote past in which they were subject to Crete, where the tyrant King Minos reigned from a huge and impressive palace with a complex and asymmetrical arrangement of its many rooms and halls. The palace exhibited in its access avenues, entrances and everywhere, a strange symbol consisting of a double stone axe. The Greek

¹⁴ Ariadne, one of the daughters of Minos, gave Theseus a ball of linen so that he could unroll his thread tied to the entrance of the labyrinth, and in this way he could return without getting lost, picking up the rope from the skein.

word "labrys" means double axe, therefore, it can be spoken of the Palace of Labrys, or simply The Labrys. Over time, the term labrys was identified with a complex structure with no apparent exit, from which the word "labyrinth" arises with its current meaning. In this place, rituals or festivals were held that included offerings and sacrifice of bulls¹⁵, as well as a series of acrobatic acts on the backs of bulls (reminiscent of a kind of primitive bullfight).

After Minos won a war against Athens, it is possible that Athenian princes were held hostage in Knossos (The Labyrinth); finally, the Greeks freed themselves from the Cretans, and in this liberation struggle the hero Theseus stood out by killing a Cretan prince or gladiator, Asterion, "*the bull of Minos*" (Minotaur), kidnapping the daughters of Minos (Ariadne and Phaedra) and burn and sink his fleet of ships^{16, 17}.

Evans' finds at Knossos included numerous living rooms, chambers with private bathrooms and water closets, wall frescoes, stairways, a throne room, storerooms with jars over a meter high for grains and oil; all these rooms arranged around of a large central patio; elegant ceramic pieces, drinking water supply systems, drainage pipes and excreta drainage, sewers and, in short, all the comforts of a refined, cultured, elegant society with "*modern*" tastes. The characters depicted in their works of art, such as frescoes and statuettes, reveal a people of tall, slender individuals, with graceful forms, a happy and peaceful character, and given to practicing acrobatics that suggest unusual recklessness, since they carried out handstand somersaults on the back of brave bulls at full speed and in an attitude of charge. These parties can be considered as the oldest antecedents of bullfighting. The interesting thing is that women also participated in this sport (or perhaps ritual festival), so it can be deduced that their rights were on a par with those of men. Cretan fashion is quite characteristic: the men wore only a loincloth with a front satchel, while the women wore long ruffled skirts with tight-fitting bolero-like blouses open at the front, exposing large, turgid breasts. There is a fresco called "*the ladies in blue*", where three young women are part of an audience that watches a procession or a party; the elegantly attired ladies, with their kinky and carefully combed hair, fastened by numerous beads, their jewels and bracelets, their hands gesturing frivolously and femininely, their heads turning from side to side as they continually chatter, form a truly enchanting picture.

What most caught Evans' attention was that this cheerful, sophisticated people, with an extraordinary sense of beauty and art, lover of animals and nature, never felt the need to measure time or write their history. It is the only educated people for whom history did not make sense. They did not leave a single date or a single name of their rulers written down.

¹⁵ This ritual that involves the sacrifice of bulls seems similar to the one in the story of Atlantis, where 5 kings met periodically, to hunt down and sacrifice large wild bulls.

¹⁶ An attempt to historically recreate the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, as the end of war between Crete and Athens.

¹⁷ It is possible that the war of Minos against Athens inspired Plato for the story of a war between Atlantis (Crete) and Athens, the latter an ally of Egypt.

Evans himself had difficulty deciding what to call this Cretan town, since he did not know what they called themselves. Evans used the term "*Minoan civilization*" based on the Greek myth of King Minos and the Minotaur, but it may actually be that Minos's name itself signifies a title, such as "king" or "monarch," rather than a name of person. In any case, it has been accepted to call all the architectural, social and cultural manifestations of this town, the *Minoan civilization*.

WRITING

Evans found at Knossos tablets and inscriptions in two types of script which he called Linear A and Linear B. The B form had been found on numerous tablets at Pylos and Mycenae, two very ancient Greek cities inhabited by the Achaeans. Linear B script was initially thought to originate from Crete, and its existence at Pylos and Mycenae was further evidence of Cretan domination over mainland Greece. It was not until 1952 that a young Englishman, Michael Ventris, deciphered this script and published his interpretations to the great surprise of historians and archaeologists, as Ventris considered this script to be a form of very ancient Greek or proto-Greek. Since Heinrich Schliemann had discovered a similar script in Mycenae in 1874, the possibility arises that the Mycenaean Greeks had influenced the Minoans. But this went further. The tablets had been found in the palace of Knossos and constituted a kind of file of food and economic resources, outstanding debts and a detailed inventory of all the furniture in the palace, all written in Greek. This suggests that the Mycenaeans occupied the palace at Knossos as rulers. On the other hand, the Linear A script has only been found on Crete, and therefore must be considered authentic and original to the island; Unfortunately, this script could not be deciphered, although there is progress in this regard (I quote the studies referred to by Miguel Valério from the Autonomous University of Barcelona).

Ventris died shortly after his sensational discovery, and it was not until some years later that he would be credited with deciphering the oldest script in Greece.

THE HISTORY OF CRETE

Various archaeological excavations have shown that Crete was inhabited from the year 7000 BC. At the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, around 3000 BC, the human groups of Crete were well organized socially and began the construction of large palaces. From 2000 to 1500 BC. The Middle Bronze Age and the palace society described above developed in Crete, and not only in Knossos, but also in other cities of the island, such as Phaistos, Hagia Triade, Malia, Cato Sacra and Tylisos. There is evidence of a catastrophe that destroyed the palaces around 1700 BC, probably an earthquake, which are very frequent in that area. After the disaster the palaces were rebuilt and enlarged; its decorations and frescoes restored. Around this time the Minoan civilization exerted a notable influence on

the Greek cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, older than the Athens of the Classical period, which would then be no more than a village. There is also evidence of Minoan colonies on the Cyclades islands, and some suppose that the Aegean was the private lake of the Cretans. In fact, the Minoan influence left traces in Egypt¹⁸ and in the Greek colonies of Asia Minor. Crete was the first thalassocracy of humanity, that is, the first empire based on navigation and domination of the eastern Mediterranean. None of the Minoan cities was fortified or walled, which gives strength to the hypothesis that Crete is a naval power, surrounded by a sea in its complete domain. It is certain that the Minoans made a strong impression on the Egyptians as a maritime people from an island in the "Great Green", although in reality they only had contact with the sailors and merchants of the various cities of Crete and the Cyclades. Certainly, the Egyptians never had a clear vision of this insular empire¹⁹ because they were a people of land and river, seeming to them that all their keftiu visitors came from the same place, under a single powerful ruler.

Minoan influence in the Aegean and Mycenae continued until 1520 BC²⁰, when a second major catastrophe (earthquakes and tidal waves) struck all the cities of Crete. Buildings would collapse and most of the sites where palaces or royal country villas once stood were destroyed. Only Knossos was partially rebuilt, and for the first time after 1450 BC, weapons and pottery of obvious Mycenaean style appear. These finds, in addition to the Linear B script already mentioned, are strong evidence that the Mycenaeans occupied Knossos as rulers. Around 1200 B.C. the palace of Knossos falls again; an intense fire consumes everything and this time it will not be rebuilt. The palatial ruins will wait more than 3,000 years... to be discovered by Arthur Evans.

HEINRICH SCHLIEMANN IN TROY AND MYCENAE

Contemporary with and closely related to the Minoan civilization was the Mycenaean civilization. The latter, also called Helladic by the name of "*Hellas*" with which their peninsular land was known to the Greeks, it was designated by Evans as "*Mycenaean*" after the ancient acropolis of Mycenae, which was the most powerful city-state in mainland Greece between 1700 and 1100 B.C. The Greek heroes of the Homeric poems of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* came from Mycenaean cities: Agamemnon from Mycenae itself, Menelaus from Sparta, Nestor from Pylos, and Ulysses (Odysseus) from Ithaca. This lost civilization, only epically mentioned in Homer's poems, was believed to be a product of Greek imagination and mythology, until Heinrich Schliemann, with a copy of *The Iliad* in hand, discovered Troy on a hill near the present-day village of Hissarlik in Turkey; and Mycenae, Tiryns, and Orchomenos in the Greek Peloponnesian. (1870-1887) Then the

¹⁸ Recently, what may have been a Minoan colony was discovered near the Nile delta in Lower Egypt. It deals with the remains of a villa and a wall fresco with a scene of acrobats on the back of an enormous bull.

¹⁹ With the exception of the period of the Hyksos, an Asian people who dominated and ruled Lower Egypt, —around 1700 BC— and were allies of the Cretans with whom they had trade relations.

²⁰ Date estimated by archaeologists based on pottery vs 1625 B.C. according to recent radiocarbon dating.

remains of a thriving civilization of ferocious warriors and consummate builders of walled cities emerge, but with a clear Minoan influence in their culture, as can be seen in ceramics, art and women's fashion; Indeed, the fresco found in the Mycenaean city of Tiryns shows a woman dressed in Minoan fashion, possibly an offering priestess, with her long skirt and blouse open at the front, revealing her prominent breasts, a peculiar detail of Minoan artistic representation of the woman.

SPYRIDON MARINATOS EN CRETA Y EN SANTORINI

Evans died in 1936 without having solved the mystery of Knossos. What caused the fall and burning of the palaces around 1,500 BC? Did the Mycenaeans really occupy the palaces of Crete after 1450 BC? What caused the last destruction of Knossos in 1,200 BC? The distinguished Greek archaeologist Spyridon Marinatos asked these questions in 1932 when he was excavating an archaeological site on the north coast of Crete, near the capital city of Heraklion, where the ruined palace was filled and covered in rosy pumice²¹. After meditating for about 7 years, Marinatos published a book with the theory that a volcanic eruption and earthquakes had been the causes of the destruction of the Cretan palaces. His book was widely criticized. The pumice certainly suggested a volcanic provenance, but where was the volcano that destroyed Knossos? There are no volcanoes on Crete.

Professor Marinatos disappeared from the scene until 1967, when he decided to test his theory by carrying out an excavation on the island of Santorini, a place where volcanic activity has occurred since ancient times. The island has a semi-lunar shape (Fig. 7) with its largest part called Tera, with cliffs of up to 300 meters above the sea outwards and the same inwards of a central lagoon of 80 km², called CALDERA., where there are two islets of volcanic formation and remains of the circular island²². The entire island is covered by a layer of volcanic ash more than 50 meters thick in some sites, yet it is inhabited and has 12 small towns on top of the cliffs. Its population in 1971 was only 6,487 inhabitants (many families have abandoned the island, leaving their houses empty); Its main products are wine and pistachio, although the population depends mainly on tourism.

At an island site called Akrotiri, Marinatos found the richest archaeological area in all of Greece. He discovered an entire city buried by meters of volcanic ash; a city where time stood still: streets, squares, workshops and houses from the 17th century BC, a large quantity of Minoan-style pottery (including sanitary privies) and numerous frescoes of extraordinary beauty in the unearthed houses and buildings. The nature, animals and characters represented in the frescoes are of clear Minoan influence. The house prototype had 2 to 4 floors and were connected by streets, ramps and stairs. Thera's frescoes are

²¹ The ruins correspond to the port city of Amnisos, which in the time of the Minoans served as a port of Knossos and was connected to the latter by a road.

²² THERAsia the largest, 4.5 km in its largest diameter and Aspronisi the smallest, just a rocky promontory. Two islets have arisen in the center of the Caldera: Ancient Cameni in 197 BC and New Cameni in 1573 AD.

unrivaled, having been well preserved for 3,600 years thanks to packing of pink pumice stone and volcanic ash. The characters represented in these frescoes could very well have walked through the palace of Knossos without anyone noticing their strange presence.

The evidence of an earthquake and a terrible volcanic eruption that engulfed everything is quite clear. Buildings and stairways were literally split apart by the violence of the earthquake. It is possible that the inhabitants of Thera had foreseen the approaching end when the volcano began its activity, and had abandoned the island, since no human remains have been found. Excavations at Thera were suspended in 1974 due to the death of Professor Marinatos after an accidental fall at the same archaeological site; in his posthumous opinion, it would take 100 years of excavations to unearth all of Thera's archaeological secrets. Professor Christos Doumas has been directing the Akrotiri excavations since 1975.

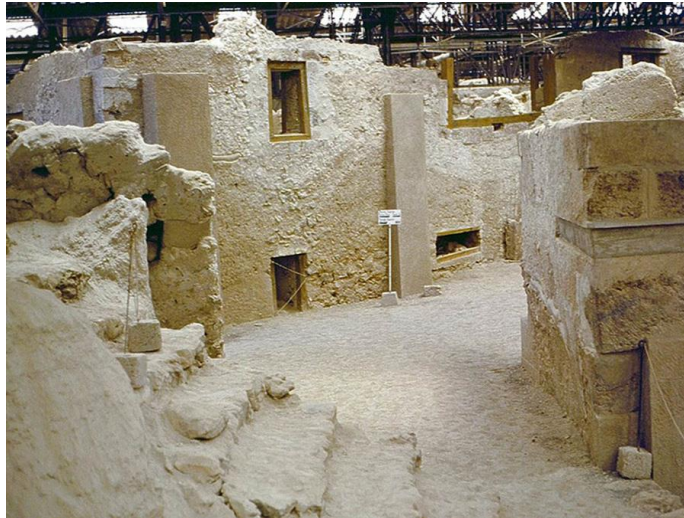


Fig. 5

Archaeological site of Akrotiri on the island of Santorini

THE AEGEAN KRAKATOA

GEOLOGISTS AND VOLCANOLOGISTS

In 1969 an international meeting of geologists and volcanologists dedicated to the study of the volcano that existed on the island of Santorini, took place in Thera. The conclusions of this study and other more recent ones that include topography of the island and a precise radiocarbon dating of the so-called Minoan eruption of the Thera volcano, led scientists to a reconstruction of the events that occurred before, during and after this great eruption, from the year 1625 BC. We now know that the previous eruptions of this volcano over thousands of years (the last major eruption 20,000 years before) caused the formation of a huge caldera surrounded by an incomplete ring and in its center an island-volcano with its flat cone, allowing the possible settlement of a city. However, there is another possibility: a lake is formed in the central volcanic cone that does not allow settlements. When the volcano erupted with ominous vents and violent earthquakes, the island was abandoned. Weeks, perhaps months or a few years of moderate activity elapsed until the volcano erupted spewing 60 km³ of pumice 35 km high, followed by the expulsion of ash. Pumice spewed out by the volcano has been found on all the Cyclades islands and on Crete. Glassy volcanic ash called tephra, which can be specifically identified by the refractive index of the material, has been found at the bottom of the sea, kilometers around Thera to the coast of Turkey and Egypt. The distribution of volcanic ash further to the southeast suggests that the northwesterly wind, which blows in that region during the summer, deflected it in that direction. Then a colossal eruption of lava, gases, ash and smoke erupted, obscuring the sun for several days. Deep fissures form and magma ejection continues until the volcanic cone collapses and the central island disappears leaving in its place a huge crater-caldera encircled by an island ring fragmented into several islets edged steeply towards the volcano crater. The sea enters the caldera, boils the water and produces a colossal tsunami that hits the island of Crete, the Cyclades, the coasts of the Peloponnese, the Nile delta and the eastern Mediterranean coast, burying the city of Ugarit (on the coast of present-day Beirut).

What remains of the island of Thera, currently Santorini, will not be colonized until many years later by the Phoenicians and perhaps centuries later by a Spartan navigator named Theras, from whom the name of the island comes and later it has been successively occupied by Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Byzantines, Venetians and Turks. The current cities of Santorini are located on the rocky lip that limits the Caldera of the most spectacular volcano in the history of humanity.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND HISTORIANS

Today's archaeologists believe that what destroyed the palatial society of Crete was not the violence of the earthquake or the pumice rain, or the tidal wave that produced the sinking of the island of Thera, but the war provoked by famine and misery; the economic and food resources collapse following the loss of their ships, (found at the bottom of the sea off Heraklion)²³ the death of livestock and the ruin of agriculture by the layer of volcanic ash that covered the pastures and the arable field.

The Mycenaean occupation of Crete is attributable to the overthrow of the ruling Minoan class, as the empire was weakened by internal warfare. The Mycenaeans ruled Knossos for more than two centuries, and around 1200 BC, the invasion of the last Greek lineage, the Dorians, ended up destroying everything. The ruling Mycenaeans flee to Asia Minor. The eastern Mediterranean becomes a lake infested with pirate ships and homeless people; they try to reach the coast of Syria and Egypt; a group of them settles on the southern Canaanite coast, where the Israelites try to expand; this group of “*peoples of the sea*” will go down in history as the “*philistines*”²⁴. The Phoenician cities of the Syrian coast are set on fire. Troy is destroyed in 1250 B.C. The Hittite empire is annihilated. In Greece, Mycenae, Tiryns, and Pylos go up in flames. A dark age looms over the eastern Mediterranean. Thera, Knossos, Phaistos, Mycenae and Tiryns will fall into oblivion. In Greece it will take a few centuries for the Ionians in Athens and the Dorians in Sparta to reinvent writing based on the alphabet devised by the Phoenicians. *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* will appear; the labyrinth and the minotaur; and after 600 years, Solon the Athenian legislator, will make a trip to Egypt where he will hear stories of an unknown and ancient culture that occupied his homeland, and from which the Greeks are his descendants; and upon his return to Athens, the legend of a great island that sank into the sea in the remote past will begin: PLATO'S ATLANTIS!



Fig. 6 Miniature fresco of “*The Flotilla*” or “*The Ships*” from the west house of Akrotiri in Thera. Some believe that the city on the left represents Atlantis, sunken in the caldera. But the lion chasing three gazelles, the papyri and the rivers evoke a city in Africa, Egypt or Libya. In my opinion it could be Avaris in the Nile Delta.

²³ Jacques Cousteau, the famous French underwater researcher, found the Minoan ships in a row in 1983, sunk off the ancient port of Amnisos, on the central north coast of Crete.

²⁴ This group of Sea Peoples is known in the Bible and in history for their fights against the Israelites. They occupied several coastal cities, including Gaza and Ashkelon. Their territory was called Philistia, from which the modern name of Palestine is derived,

EPILOGUE I

INTERPRETATIONS AND SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Professor Angelus Galanopoulos of the Athens Seismological Institute believes that Solon made some mistakes when interpreting the stories, inscriptions and numbers of the Egyptians. He confused the number 100 with the 1,000 of the Egyptian symbols, and in this way multiplied all the figures by 10. If a zero is eliminated from 9,000, the catastrophe of Atlantis would have occurred 900 years and not 9,000 years before Solon, that is, in the 15th century BC, precisely in the year 1490 BC. which approximates the Thera eruption dated 1520 B.C., but is certainly missing by more than 100 years from the currently accepted dating of 1625 BC. Richard McQuillen points out that 9,000 "is the duration of Ptah's mythological reign mentioned by Maneto, but that the original and correct number of Ge'lo is 1,000 years, so the figure quoted would be 1,000 years before Solon (638 - 558. BC), that is to say around 1600 B.C. In the same way, by eliminating a zero from the figure that represents the extension of Atlantis supposed by Plato, an island would remain with dimensions similar to the islands of the eastern Mediterranean²⁵.

My opinion in this regard does not require a captious interpretation; Solon or Plato were simply referring to a very distant date by ignoring the existence of the ancient Cretan civilization long since vanished after the Dorian invasion and the dark ages of the Eastern Mediterranean. I also believe that Plato and Solon knew the location of the Pillars of Hercules (the current Strait of Gibraltar) and deliberately located Atlantis in front of the strait in the Atlantic Ocean due to ignorance of the original civilization of the island of Crete that dominated the Eastern Mediterranean more 1,000 years before Classical Greece. Furthermore, he could not locate Atlantis in the Mediterranean because Solon's account referred to "a power that came from the Atlantic towards Libya, Egypt and Athens". Other descriptions of Plato in his *Dialogues*, such as that of the "royal city of Atlantis", agree with the ruins of Phaistos in Crete. Similarly, his description of rituals and bull sacrifices can be found in frescoes found at Knossos, the site where the twelve kings of Atlantis probably met. The hot springs, steaming fissures, and concentricly circling channels described in Atlantis correspond to similar finds found on the island of Santorini²⁶, and remarkably consistent with the computer reconstruction of Atlantis from what was left. from the volcanic island of Thera.

The Greek government has not allowed underwater exploration of the Santorini coast and the submerged portion of the Thera volcano. However, in 2002 some (very short)

²⁵ Another interpretation assumes that the Egyptian priests were referring to a maritime empire (the Eastern Mediterranean) larger than Libya and Asia Minor combined, not an island.

²⁶ Some authors allude to a possible very vague "generational memory" of the island of Santorini before and after the eruption of Thera, and in Plato's time the only way to explain this memory was the mythical construction of a great city with canals or rings concentric from sea and land

underwater videos filmed by expert divers were revealed. The findings (according to uncertified versions) are truly spectacular: remains of columns and walls of a palace, submerged ships at the bottom of the sea and a large number of Minoan ceramics. It is expected that the Greek government will soon authorize the continued underwater exploration of this rich submerged archaeological zone, to conclude with one of humanity's greatest mysteries.

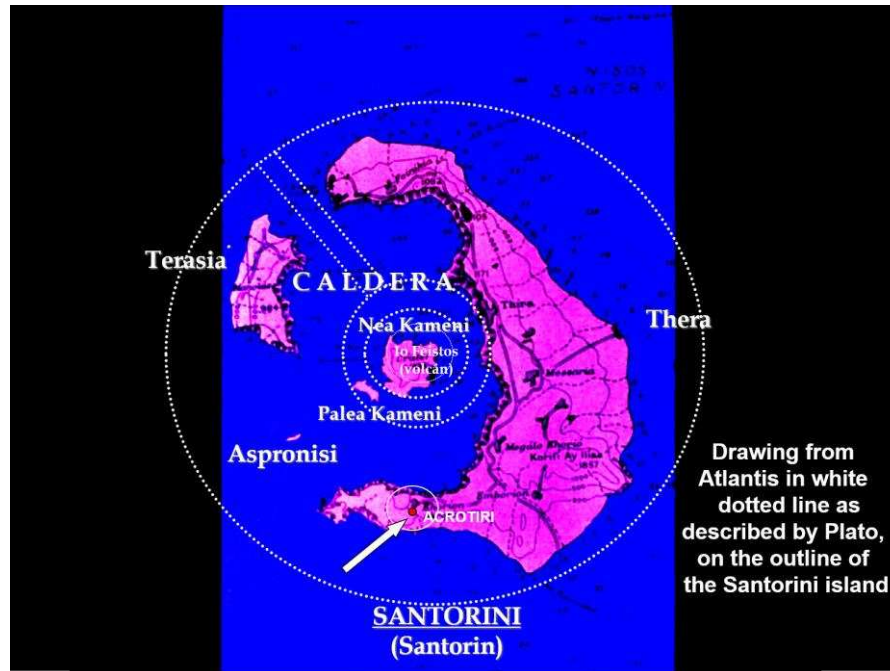


Fig. 7

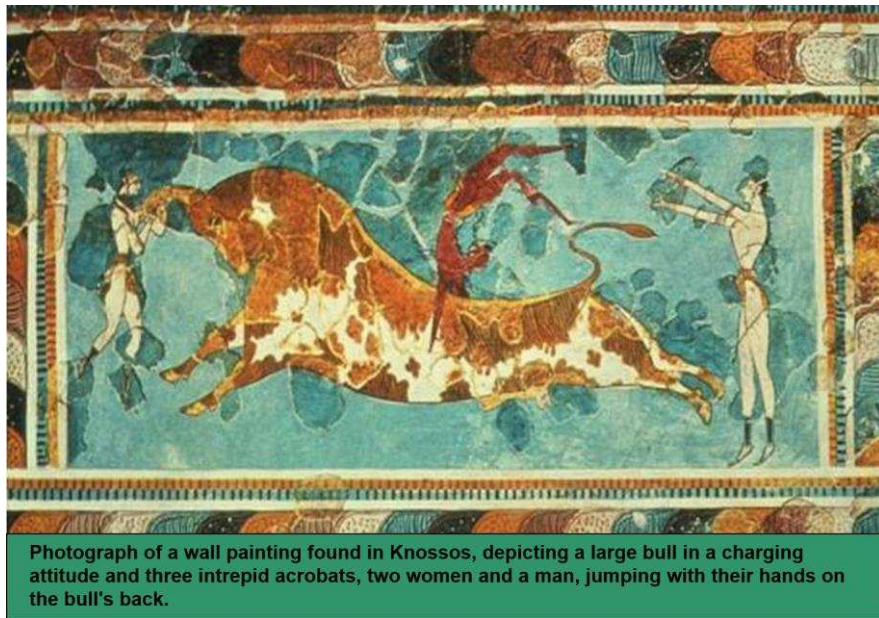


Fig. 8

EPILOGUE II

REVIEW OF MYTHOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Arthur Evans designated as *Minoan Civilization* the architectural, cultural and commercial manifestations of the inhabitants of Crete and the Cyclades between 1800 and 1500 BC. Evans created and used the Minoan term derived from Minos, to designate this people, since he did not know how they called themselves. He identified in a certain way, the palace of Knossos with the Labyrinth and with the myth of the minotaur, whom Theseus killed. The possibility of a historical fact behind this myth is accepted: a conflict between the rulers of Knossos and Athens, or an earlier war between the two cities, in which princes were held hostage in Crete. One of them, Theseus, achieves a feat, kills the sacred bull (or a prince or a gladiator) and escapes from Knossos, returning to his homeland of Athens as a great hero. If this version is close to the historical one, when did this event occur?

To answer the previous question, it is necessary to review the possible date of two mythological epics, apparently not related to Minos, the Minotaur and Theseus, such as the Trojan War and The Argonauts. In my opinion, the event in question occurred between the two epics, so it is necessary to first estimate their date.

It is difficult and somewhat risky to try to identify the essence of myths and legends with historical facts, and even more to try to extrapolate from a certain date in prehistory. However, most today accept that the Trojan War, considered a myth and poetic fantasy of Homer, lays a background of undeniable reality from the archaeological discoveries found on the Hissarlik hill in Turkey (site of Homeric Troy), since Heinrich Schliemann began excavations in 1870. It is now accepted that a fire destroyed Troy in about 1250 BC. (Some archaeologists accept a later date of 1184 or 1200 BC.)

The mythical account of the journey of Jason and the Argonauts aboard the Argos, in search of the Golden Fleece in the Colchis of Pontus Euxino, is currently considered a distorted and exaggerated legend about the first voyages of the Greeks in their exploration of the Black Sea, for purposes of colonization and trade. Among the Argonauts are well-known characters, later cited in other stories, such as the famous hero Hercules, Peleus (who would later be the father of the warrior Achilles, a combatant in the Trojan War and the main character in the *Iliad*), and the young warrior Nestor (who also participates in the Trojan War, pointing himself then as king of Pylos, and among the allied heroes, the oldest of the combatants and the wisest by his experience. If all this has a background of historical truth, the trip of the Argonauts occurred 40 or 50 years before the Trojan War, since Nestor participated in both adventures, and Achilles, son of Peleus, fought in Troy,

while his father was an Argonaut. Therefore, it is possible that the voyage of the Argonauts commanded by Jason occurred around the year 1300 BC.

If Theseus, the prince who killed the minotaur (or the sacred bull, or a gladiator with that nickname, to eliminate the mythical part) was a real character, in what era did this Athenian hero live? Theseus was the son of Aegeus, king of Athens, who took Medea as his wife, a sorceress from Colchis, daughter of King Aetes, (who had the Golden Fleece in his possession), who, madly in love with Jason, returned with him aboard the Argos after its voyage to the Pontus Euxino (Black Sea). After Jason left her, she married Aegeus, and tried to poison Theseus, mistaking him for an impostor. According to the chronology of this account, Theseus lived after the voyage of the Argonauts (circa 1300 B.C.) and before the Trojan War (initiated in 1260 BC), so an approximate date of 1270 BC would be quite possible for his adventure in Crete and defiance of King Minos, and therefore much later than the date of the Mycenaean invasion at Knossos (circa 1450 BC).

I consider that all the characters involved in this historical legend, were turned myth: Minos and his daughter Ariadne, Theseus, and Daedalus (the Athenian architect who built the Labyrinth) are Greeks from the Mycenaean period at Knossos, after 1450 BC, and therefore, it is not fair to apply the term **Minoan Civilization** indistinctly to the occupants of Knossos before and after the Mycenaean invasion of Crete in 1450 BC. Indeed, before this Mycenaean invasion of Knossos, the inhabitants of Crete and the Cyclades, accomplished sailors and merchants, more than warriors, had no relationship with Minos (since he is much later), and because of the powerful arguments (reviewed in this essay) that identify these peoples with **Atlantis**, the group should be called the **Atlantic Civilization**, and its inhabitants, identified as Keftiu by the Egyptians, would be the **Atlanteans**.

We continue without knowing, how this highly civilized people with a cultured and refined society called themselves; how their rulers were called; how they measured the passage of time, and how they dated the most important events of their political and social life, since their writing, Linear A, has not yet been deciphered.

- o O o -

FINAL NOTE

If Atlantis were just a fantasy, a myth created by Plato, it would not be possible to explain the enormous interest it has aroused through more than 2,000 years, the intense archaeological, geological, underwater, historiographical, and literary research and the efforts of countless scientists, explorers and adventurers to find it. Certainly Atlantis is not a historical civilization, but neither is it a myth or a fantasy, it is a story of historical content collected by Solon during his stay in Egypt, told by priests of Sais about events that occurred between Crete and Egypt with reference to a conflict with Athens in the remote past, after which the Cretans ("keftiu" among the Egyptians) stopped trading with Egypt (their ships sank by a tsunami related to the eruption of Thera in Santorini) and they never heard of them again. The story was transmitted orally (there were perhaps some writings and poems about it) for several generations until the time of Plato, who transformed it into a mythical legend inspired by vague knowledge about the ancient Cretan (Minoan) civilization and perhaps the characteristic circular shape with a central caldera on the long-abandoned island of Santorini, later settled by the Dorians (the warrior Theras or Firas - Phyras "terror"). The location of Atlantis "beyond the Pillars of Hercules" (Strait of Gibraltar) makes no sense in an account from the Egyptians, who never sailed beyond the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean; It is an invention of Plato or Critias, the same for the dimensions and the fabulous flora, fauna and wealth of Atlantis. The whole story actually refers to the first civilization in Europe (before 2000 BC) on the islands of Crete, Thera and others, and the terrible eruption of the Thera volcano c1625 BC. which caused its fall and conquest by the Mycenaeans from Hellas.

- o O o -

Alfonso J. Treviño
Revised March 2023
Revised May 2024
Monterrey, N.L.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Platón (365 a.C.) *Diálogos*. Volumen VI: *Filebo, Timeo, Critias*. Madrid, 2003. Gredos. ISBN 978-84-249-1475-2.

Donnelly, I (1882). *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*, Harper & Bros, New York: Retrieved 6 November 2001, from Project Gutenberg.

Marinatos, S (1939). «*The Volcanic Destruction of Minoan Crete*». *Antiquity* 13.

Galanopoulos, Angelus G.; Bacon, Edward (1969) *Atlantis the Truth Behind the Legend* Bobbs-Merrill 1969. ISBN-13: 978-0672506109.

Luce, John Victor (1969). *The end of Atlantis: New light on an old legend (New Aspects of Antiquity)*. London: Thames & Hudson. ISBN 978-0-500-39005-4.

Doumas, Christos (1974) *La erupción minoica del volcán Santorini*. In: *Antigüedad* 48, 1974, ISBN 0003-598x.

Kramer, Samuel Noah y el equipo editorial de los libros Time-Life (1978). *La cuna de la civilización*. Versión en español. TIME-LIFE International (Netherland) B.V.

Maitland, A. Edey y el equipo editorial de los libros Time-Life (1979). *Las primeras culturas de Grecia*. Lito Offset Latina, S.A. México.

Doumas, Christos (1984). *Thera, Pompeii of the ancient Aegean*. Thames and Hudson. ISBN 0-500-39016-9.

Stanley, DJ, Sheng, H (1986). *Volcanic shards from Santorini (Upper Minoan ash) in the Nile Delta, Egypt*. *Nature*. 320.

Pellegrino, Charles (1991) *Unearthing Atlantis; An archeological Odyssey*. Random House ISBN-13978-0394575506.

Luce, John. V. (1996) *El fin de la Atlántida*. Destino Ediciones. ISBN-13: 978-507320033

Friedrich, WL (1999). *Fire in the Sea, the Santorini Volcano: Natural History and the Legend of Atlantis*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-65290-1.

McCoy, Floyd W; Heiken, Grant (2000). *The Late-Bronze Age explosive eruption of Thera (Santorini), Greece – Regional and local effects, in: Volcanic Hazards and Disasters in Human Antiquity*. Geological Society of America. ISBN 0-8137-2345-0.

McCoy, Floyd W; Heiken Grant (2000). «*Tsunami Generated by the Late Bronze Age Eruption of Thera (Santorini), Greece*». *Pure and Applied Geophysics* 157.

Manning, SW et al. (2006). *Chronology for the Aegean Late Bronze Age 1700-1400 BC*. *Science* **312**.

Friedrich, Walter L; Kromer, B et al. (2006). «*Santorini Eruption Radiocarbon Dated to 1627-1600 B.C*». *Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science)* **312**.

Sivertsen, Barbara J. (2009) *The Parting of the Sea: How Volcanoes, Earthquakes, and Plagues Shaped the Story of Exodus*. Princeton University Press. ISBN 978-0-691-13770-4

Guilera Iglesias, Cristina (2022) *La Civilización Minoica*. Academia.edu.

McQuillen, Richard (2022) *Perfecting Plato: A colorful commentary on the Critias*. Academia.edu.

Treviño, Alfonso J (2023) *Chronology of Greek legends and myths*. Academia.edu.

Wikipedia (2024) *The Free Encyclopedia: in Solon, Plato, Timaeus and Critias*.