

A Lost Civilization in NW Europe?

The academic who connected Atlantis with Ireland and the Megalithic Culture is now looking for a still older lost culture in the North Sea. He suspects some aspects of the Atlantis tale may in fact be historic memories from as far back as the Ice Age. An expedition may be urgent due to the risk of destruction by oil exploration and bottom trawling.

Miami 2005-08-15 — Many suggestions have been advanced for the location of Plato's fabled lost island and empire called "Atlantis." With one exception the hypotheses have been based on conjecture, and not tested scientifically.

The exception is the study by Dr. Ulf Erlingsson, presented in his book "Atlantis from a Geographer's Perspective: Mapping the Fairy Land" in 2004. Recently he addressed the scientific community at the international conference "The Atlantis Hypothesis: Searching for a Lost Land" on Milos, Greece, 11-13 July 2005.

Dr. Erlingsson is not the first one to advance the hypothesis that the Empire of Atlantis is linked to the Megalithic Culture. They were the builders of large-stone tombs in Europe and Africa, from about 5,600 to 2,800 BC. However, he is the first one to test this scientifically, and come up with a statistically significant match. At the Atlantis conference, this was the only location hypothesis that was supported by a scientific study.

The hypothesis was initially regarded as controversial at the conference, compared to the more traditional hypothesis of a location near the Straits of Gibraltar. But after reviewing the arguments, several scholars started seriously considering a location in NW Europe. If so, Atlantis might be based on historical annals from a lost European civilization stretching over nearly ten thousand years, and not refer to one single time and place.

In his analysis, Erlingsson deduced that only Ireland could have been the island of Atlantis, if the empire was the Megalithic Culture. When comparing Ireland to Atlantis, he ended up with several significant geographic matches. Quoting archaeology textbooks, he argued that also the archaeology supports the hypothesis, since Ireland is rather unique both in terms of the architecture, and in the density and age of megalithic tombs.

The sinking of Atlantis was tentatively associated with Dogger Bank in the North Sea in Erlingsson's book. This former island was destroyed by the Storegga tsunami around 6,100 BC. At the Atlantis conference Erlingsson added that a plain south of Dogger Bank was flooded at precisely the time indicated by Plato, and that the site has been identified by archaeologists as one of the best sites for human dwellings by the end of the Ice Age.

Dr. Erlingsson, who during his time at Uppsala University was in charge of the underwater exploration vessel Akusta, is planning to investigate the bottoms of the North Sea. "There is one particular site of interest," he says, but is not willing to reveal which. His worst nightmare is that oil exploration or bottom trawling may already have ruined the ruins.

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