

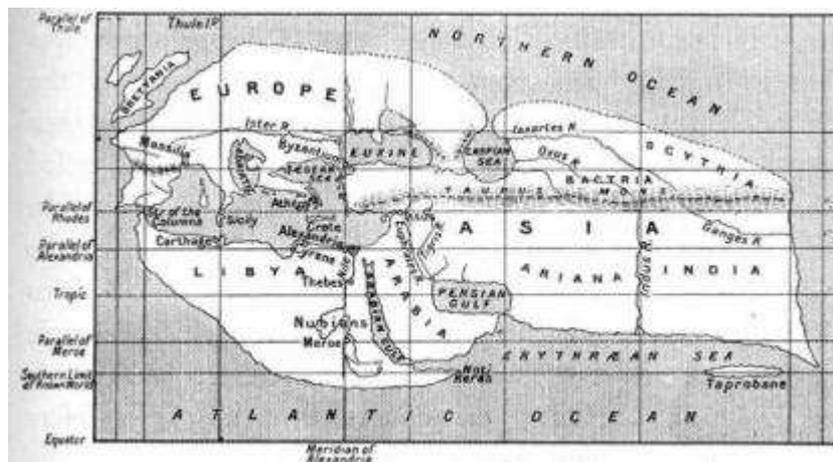
Silent Witnesses of Destruction

by Fatih Hodzic

Scientists have been exploring several possible locations for Atlantis, which is, according to Plato, »the island beyond the pillars of Hercules«: Malta, Cuba, the Bahamas, Santorini etc. At he moment, they are studying the theory regarding the original location of the Pillars of Hercules which allows for the possibility that Atlantis was located in today's **South Adriatic Basin**.

Atlantis was an ancient kingdom, a state with a perfect social system, the cradle of civilization, an island »beyond the pillars of Hercules«. This is what Plato, a classical Greek philosopher, wrote about Atlantis in his dialogues »*Timaeus*« and »*Critias*« in about 350 BC. Critias, who was a Greek politician and writer, relates in his papers on the state, law and justice that in 571 BC Athenian statesman Solon visited Egypt and met with priests in the town of Sais where he was told a story about »an island named Atlantis, the heart of a great and wonderful kingdom«. Plato wrote that »there occurred violent earthquakes and floods; and in a single day and night of misfortune all your warlike men in a body sank in the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared in the depths of the sea«. There are numerous ancient accounts of the catastrophe of such extent. Even though they are dominated by mythical themes, the narrations contain convincing descriptions of the sinking which can be analyzed and confirmed scientifically.

Up until 250 BC Greek writers placed the Pillars of Hercules near Sicily. After subsequent discoveries of new territories the mythological sites moved away and were placed on the fringes of the then known world. Ancient Greek mathematician and geographer Eratosthenes »transferred« the Pillars of Hercules to Gibraltar while nowadays the scientists are exploring the possible locations of the sunken island on Malta, Santorini and 'beyond' in the Atlantic Ocean: on Cuba, the Bahamas, Iberia etc.



Eratosthenes's world (reconstruction)

The Return of the Pillars of Hercules

The aforementioned theory about the pillars' locations offers enough indications that the Pillars of Hercules can be »moved« again, or rather returned to their place in Solon's era: to **the Strait of Otranto**, which connects the Ionian and Adriatic Seas and is located 360 kilometers from Sicily. One of the continents in the sea, the Palagruža Sill, divides the Adriatic Sea into the shallow northern part and the southern part with the South Adriatic Basin in the great syncline. In front of the Strait of Otranto – the Pillars of Hercules – where

the Adriatic Sea is at its widest and deepest, lies **the South Adriatic Basin**: the location of the sunken island of Atlantis which corresponds to Plato's descriptions in every detail!



Southadriatic basin - Location of flooden Island Atlantis

The South Adriatic Basin, which covers 13,000 square kilometers, lies in the sea not far from Albania, Montenegro and southern Croatia, opposite Apulia, the region in southern Italy from where *»... was the way to other islands, and from these you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean.«*

Before the Flood this area was part of the kingdom of Atlantis which also comprised other islands and the continent around the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. The southern and central parts of the island were flat like the coastlines of nearby Apulia and Albania. The northern part of the island was mountainous and abundant in forests, rivers and lakes. Not far from the island, which was said *»to be very lofty and precipitous on the side of the sea«*, lies the Gargano Promontory on the Apennine Peninsula. On the other side of the Adriatic Sea there is the mountainous region of the Dinarides, from the Alps in the north to the Prokletije range and Šar Mountains.

Due to the extraordinary location and the Mediterranean climate, the influence of the cold north was negligible, or as Plato wrote: *»This part of the island looked towards the south, and was sheltered from the north.«*

The Adriatic Basin lies in the Alpine-Mediterranean belt, where the active edges of two continental plates – the African and the Eurasian – meet. Some of the records about events in the history (the sinking of Santorini, the eruptions of Mounts Vesuvius, Etna, Stromboli etc.) talk about the catastrophic consequences of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

The Fall of an Asteroid

One of the possible events which triggered the chain reaction in an unstable environment and caused a catastrophe of unspoken proportions was the fall of an asteroid. This possibility is indicated by huge caves in the Ionian Sea not far from the Gulf of Taranto and is also supported by a story about the fall of an asteroid which was told to Solon by a priest from Sais:

»There is a story, which even you have preserved, that once upon a time Paethon, the son of Helios, having yoked the steeds in his father's chariot, because he was not able to drive them in the path of his father, burnt up all that was upon the earth, and was himself destroyed by a thunderbolt ...« And he explained: *»Now this has the form of a myth, but really signifies a declination of the bodies moving in the heavens around the earth, and a great conflagration of things upon the earth, which recurs after long intervals.«*

After the asteroid falling into the Ionian Sea and the heat wave which followed, the most energy was released in the form of tsunamis, extremely high waves. The sinking and devastation were accompanied by destructive earthquakes. Parts of the Adriatic micro plate broke off and sank. The areas of land and sea changed throughout centuries after the cataclysm. Thick clouds of dust and ashes in the highest layers of the atmosphere created all necessary conditions for extreme climatic changes and cooling. Judging from the geological periods and time stated by the priests from Sais, the cataclysm occurred around **8500 BC**.

This period belongs to the cold Paleolithic and the beginning of the Holocene epoch with the Mesolithic Age when the climate finally stabilized.

The Kingdom of Atlantis

The epoch of Atlantis started when it was awarded to one of the »gods«, Poseidon. The island boasted natural resources and beauty, later also urban towns and an imposingly built metropolis, the royal city. Part of the metropolis with the temple of Poseidon and the royal palace of Atlant, the oldest Poseidon's son, was surrounded by three concentric sea channels. Inhabitants of Atlantis raised walls around the channels and *»placed towers and gates on the bridges where the sea passed in«*.

The kingdom of Atlantis encompassed the Balkan Peninsula (Greek regions and the Dinarides) and the Apennine Peninsula up to Tyrrhenia (named Tuscany today) and reached down to Malta and Crete in the south. This territory of the kingdom *»was greater in extent than Libya and Asia«*. The period of expansion in the Mediterranean was marked by the conflicts and wars between the forces of Atlantis and ancient Athenians, who were much like the Atlanteans the descendants of *»the fairest and noblest race of men which ever lived«*.

Plato indirectly speaks about the law-abiding kings of Atlantis and their divine nature which gradually disappeared by procreating with mortals. Due to genetic identity and co-dependency of mortals and immortals, the number of human elements in the »god's« seeds increased. The final situation on Atlantis was represented by *»the domination of the human ethos«* and the beginning of wars for the throne, such as the battle with ancient Athenians. Critias speaks about the military force of kings *»which unprovoked made an expedition against the whole of Europe and Asia, and to which your city put an end. This power came forth out of the Atlantic Ocean, for in those days the Atlantic was navigable«*. During the wars *»there occurred violent earthquakes and floods; and in a single day and night of misfortune all your warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared in the depths of the sea«*. Solon also heard that *»there was a time, before the great deluge of all, when the city which now is Athens was first in war and in every way the best governed of all cities, is said to have performed the noblest deeds and to have had the fairest constitution of any of which tradition tells, under the face of heaven ...«* In Solon's era the phrase *»the city which now is Athens«* referred to parts of Greece, Dalmatia, southern Italy and Albania.

Atlantis and the Adriatic Basin

There are interesting similarities between Critias' statements about Atlantis and the characteristics of the Adriatic Basin:

- Critias spoke about a plateau which *»was for the most part rectangular and oblong, and where falling out of the straight line followed the circular ditch«*. The South

Adriatic Basin actually has a form of a rectangle whose opposite sides go from north to south and from west to east.

- The Atlanteans used stone for building: *»one kind was white, another black, and a third red«*. White and black stone is still quarried on Island Brač (Croatia) and red stone in the Bay of Kotor (Montenegro).
- *»There was an abundance of wood for carpenter's work, and sufficient maintenance for tame and wild animals. Moreover, there were a great number of elephants in the island.«* The remnants of elephant skeletons have been found in central and southern Italy as well as on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea close to Island Pag and Dramlje near the town of Crikvenica (Croatia). The skeletons date back to the Pleistocene, more than 9000 years before Hannibal's march with elephants to Rome.
- The Atlanteans dug and melted ores as well as mined and used **orichalcum** or brass – a copper-zinc alloy. The territory along the Adriatic Basin is rich in ores and minerals, including copper and zinc. There are many forests as well as rivers and cold- and thermal water springs.
- To the north of the sunken island, there are unique inland seas on Mljet (Croatia), the island of underground dwellings, caves and mud-lakes. Up until 9000 BC the inland seas contained fresh water.
- Jabuka and Brusnik are two of the 1185 islands in the Adriatic Sea which were formed when lava flow reached the sea. Along with Island Palagruža, which is of partial volcanic origin, they form the *»Adriatic volcanic triangle«*.

Scattered Artefacts

The Mediterranean and the Central European regions which were devastated by the sinking and destruction are undoubtedly sources of great archaeological treasures. Some of the treasures are attributed to the Neolithic period and the Mediterranean impresso-ceramic culture. The ruins of ancient castles (Amantia, Meteon, Daorson, Asseria etc.) are ascribed to the Iron Age and the Hellenistic culture. The remnants from the buildings of the Atlantean kingdom, which were scattered across a huge area during the cataclysm, are proof of existence of this incomprehensible and unimaginable culture. The examples of 'scattered' artefacts are stone balls in Bosnia, a bronze sky disk in Nebra, a statue of Venus in Willendorf which is over 20,000 years old etc.

This group also includes the unique monumental stone blocks or the so-called *stećaks*, which are spread throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, southern Croatia, western Montenegro and southwestern Serbia. The most typical and impressive examples of scattered artefacts are *stećak* tombstones – commonly known but still unexplained monolithic stones in Bosnia and its surrounding areas.

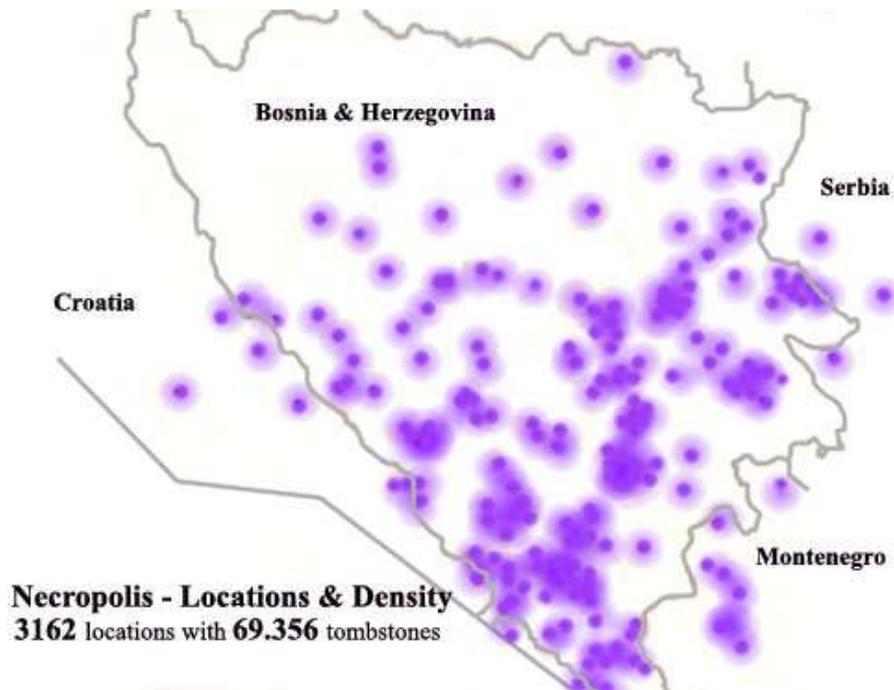


Necropolis with *stećaks*

Stećaks!

Stećaks are formally regarded as tombstones which mark the medieval culture, yet they are very unusual and mysterious and not sufficiently explained and explored.

There are 69,356 stećaks recorded on 3,162 locations. Most of them, 59,593 or 86 per cent, are in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because their number is so high, they are associated with the Bosnian Church and the medieval state of Bosnia. But even though stećaks were mainly used for the graves of members of the Bosnian Church, it is strange that not even one »djed« – the highest priest in the hierarchy of this church – was found buried under one of the stećaks.



Locations and density of necropoleis with stećaks

Among all recorded stećaks, relief motifs were found on fewer than 6,000 and the inscriptions on fewer than 400. Of all inscriptions and found written records, not even one mentions stone-cutting in quarries or their transportation – there is only one phrase about the transfer of one stećak, which says that »one hundred oxen were harnessed and one hundred rams were eaten«. In the vicinity of Kakanj in Bosnia, there is a site with 14 stećaks in the form of sarcophagi, prisms and a few slabs. Some of those stećaks are in the ground and as many others these function as cenotaphs – symbolic tombstones without graves. Nobody is buried beneath them and there is no trace of burial. Under half a meter of soil, there are veins and layers of coal.



Necropolises on Visocica by Konjic...

No Reliable Explanation

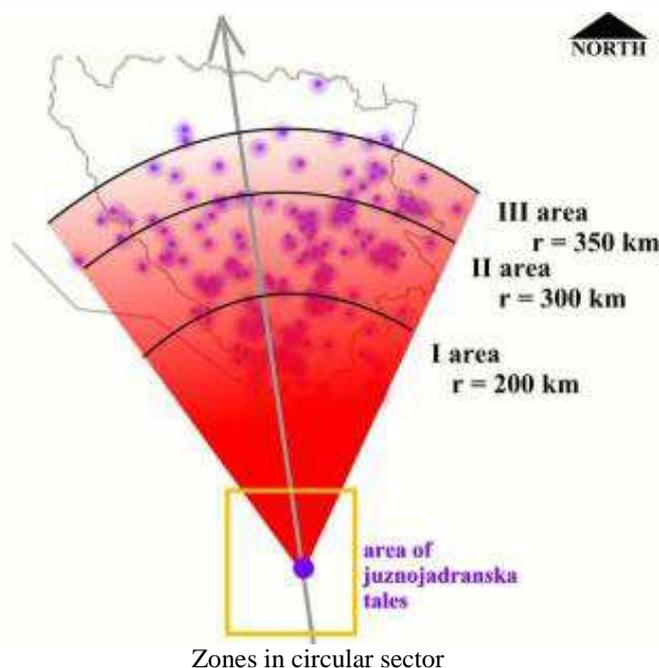
These contradictions have not been reliably explained yet, but our common sense tells us that stećaks are a lot older. Even their name is a giveaway – stećak means »standing«, »big« and also »resistant«.

Significantly, necropolises with stećaks are found in a limited area in the form of a "circular sector" with the radius of 350 kilometers and the surface of 50,000 square kilometers. This area consists of the Dubrovnik-Neretva county, southern Herzegovina where the concentration of stećaks is the highest, and northern Bosnia and Croatia along the Sava and Una rivers where the sites are few and far between.

In the first zone with the radius of 200 kilometers, where the necropolises are the most numerous and widespread, heavy sarcophagi and high, prism-shaped stećaks are predominant. This zone includes regions of southern Dalmatia, southern Herzegovina and western Montenegro.

In the second zone with the radius up to 300 kilometers, where there are still many necropolises which are unevenly distributed, stećaks in the shape of sarcophagi, prisms, slabs and columns are predominant. This zone consists of Dalmatian Zagora, western Herzegovina, central and eastern Bosnia, northern Montenegro and southwestern Serbia.

The third zone with the radius of up to 350 kilometers, where the necropolises are scarce, smaller sarcophagi, slabs and columns prevail. This zone consists of the Šibenik-Knin county in Croatia, northern Bosnia and western Serbia.



If stećaks and cenotaphs are taken out of the historical context as legacy of medieval culture, there are still 69,356 stone blocks left! Considering their space and time dimension properties they are a phenomena that shows the consequences of a Flood and directly on the location of the sunken island.

Excluding the notion that stećaks and cenotaphs are a legacy of a medieval culture, there are still 69,356 stone blocks left! In regard to their location and age, they are a phenomenon

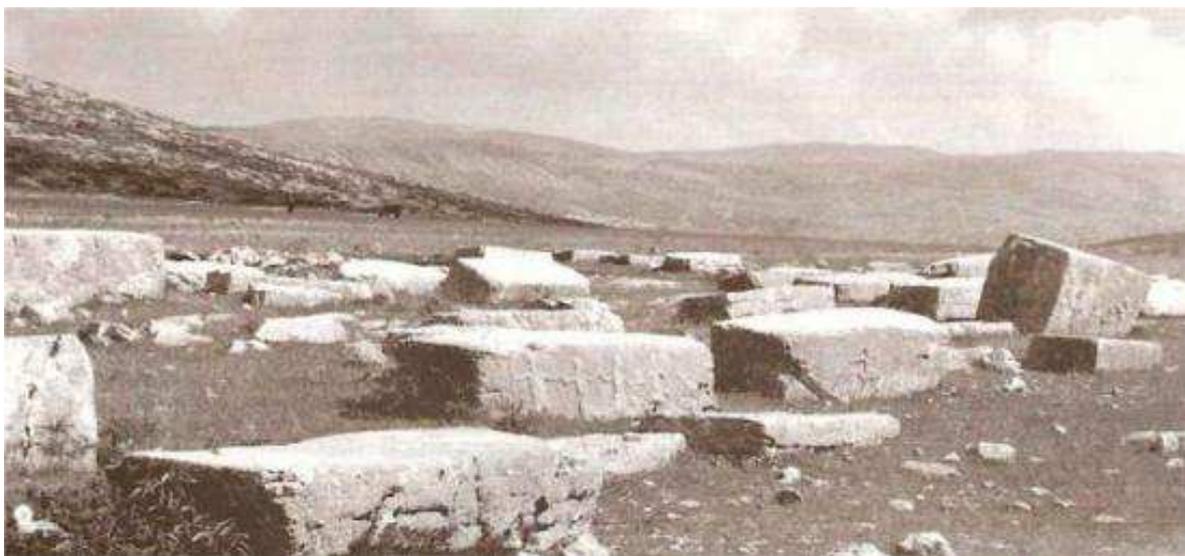
which indicates the consequences of the ancient sinking and directly points to the location of the sunken island.

Atlantis – the Historical Fact

The theory which rejects the myth of Atlantis and regards it as historical fact is based on the following premises:

- **The fall of an asteroid** triggered natural forces: earthquakes, tsunamis, the sinking. Most parts of Europe and northern Africa were flooded by the sea. The destructive wave washed over Atlantis from the south to the north.
- **The consequences of the floods** are manifested in alluvial material and layers of silt, sand and other materials on the broader region of southern Italy, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the bottom of the Adriatic Sea. The alluvia of small stones agglutinated with sand and clay and created breccia and a conglomerate, sedimentary stone which can be found in the mountainous parts of Albania, Bosnia and Croatia, along with fossilized sea organisms.
- **A tsunami** scattered the stone blocks across a circular sector area. The areas closer to the sea were more exposed to the destructive forces of the giant waves, so more stone blocks, which were also bigger in size, were scattered there. In the Dinaric region most stone blocks or necropolises with stećaks were situated on the south side and on mountain slopes facing the sea.
- **The center of the circular sector** is part of the tectonic fabric of the Adriatic micro plate in the southern part of the Adriatic Sea.
- **The stone blocks–monuments** cut in a certain period and space are legacy and indigenous treasure of the kingdom of Atlantis. Stone blocks–stećaks which were later hewn and decorated with inscriptions and reliefs are legacy of the culture from the Bosnian Church era. As monuments and as stećaks they are a valuable treasure from both prehistoric and medieval times. They are silent witnesses of an ancient cataclysm and **artefacts of two cultures**.

Before the sinking the South Adriatic Basin in the Adriatic Sea was the original location of the stone blocks–monuments. This area in the sea is where sunken Atlantis, the cradle of our civilization, has been lying for a hundred and more centuries.



Necropolises on Blidinje... (from *Leksikon stećaka*)

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