The Sundaland Hypothesis

Most scholars view Plato's Atlantis narrative as a philosophical device or allegorical tale rather than a historical account. While acknowledging the validity of these interpretations, this book explores a different possibility: that the Atlantis narrative, though serving as a cautionary tale, drew inspiration from historical sources, including traditions recorded on Nile River Valley temple walls. By examining both Greek and Egyptian source material through the lens of modern geology and geography, we can explore Sundaland's dramatic geological changes as *one* of the possible real-world inspirations for Plato's myth.

Part I: Background

One should take a hard look at the possibility that Plato really did use some Egyptian source material with an historical content.

John V. Luce, Associate Professor of Classics, Dublin University

A.01 Plato's Mathematical Precision

Plato's fascination with mathematics was foundational to his philosophy. He believed the universe was constructed upon a rational, geometric order, a conviction that surfaces in his political theory. In his Laws, Plato specifies that the ideal number of citizens for a city-state is 5,040. This was no arbitrary choice. The number 5,040 is a "highly composite number," divisible

by 60 different integers, including every number from 1 to 10. This property, Plato argued, makes it exceptionally "useful to all cities" for matters of administration, social division, and distribution.[1]

This mathematical precision suggests a mind attentive to detail and structure. If Plato was so deliberate in choosing a number for his ideal state, it is plausible he was equally deliberate with the historical details he inherited for his Atlantis narrative. This narrative, he tells us, did not originate with him, but came through a long family lineage from a revered ancestor.

A.02 Solon's Transmission

According to Plato's dialogues, *Timaeus* and *Critias*, his famous Athenian statesman Solon (c. 630-560 BCE) traveled to Egypt and conversed with priests at Sais, then the capital.[2] There, he was told the story of an ancient civilization, recorded in their temple's "sacred registers," that had been destroyed 9,000 years prior.

This account is not without historical grounding. Solon's travels to Egypt are documented by other ancient sources, including the historian Laërtius. Laërtius quotes a letter from Thales, "… for Solon the Athenian and I … sailed to Crete to investigate the history of that country, and to Egypt for the purpose of conferring with the priests and astronomers who are to be found there."[3]

Furthermore, Plato had a direct family connection to the story: Solon's brother,

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[1] Plato, *Laws*, Book V, 737e, trans. Benjamin Jowett. The mathematical properties of 5040 are also discussed by ancient mathematicians such as Theon of Smyrna.

[2] Plato, *Timaeus* 21e-23e.

[3] Diogenes Laërtius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Book I, "Thales."

Dropides, was Plato's ancestor, six generations removed. This lineage provides a plausible channel through which an Egyptian historical tradition could have been preserved and transmitted to Plato.

However, the tale Plato inherited was incomplete. In the Critias, the narrative breaks off abruptly. Plato himself provides a clue as to why, quoting his ancestor Critias, who heard the story from his 90-year-old grandfather: "…if Solon had only, like other poets, made poetry the business of his life, and had completed the tale which he brought with him from Egypt…in my opinion he would have been as famous as Homer or Hesiod, or any poet."[4]

The story, it seems, was fragmented at its source, not by Plato, but by Solon himself, who was forced by political turmoil at home to abandon the project. The tale thus comes to us as an echo of an echo, its origins rooted in Egyptian temple records that spoke of a powerful maritime people who challenged the ancient world.

A.03 The Sea Peoples

The tale passed from Solon to Plato was not just of a place, but of a people: a formidable maritime power that, according to the Egyptian priests, battled with the ancient Egyptians. This claim finds powerful corroboration in Egyptian hieroglyphs, which provide many records of invasions by groups collectively known as the "Sea Peoples." These historical accounts include:

Ramesses II (1279-1213 BC): Inscriptions detailing battles against sea raiders.

Merneptah (1213-1203 BC): *The Great Karnak Inscription* and the *Athribis Stele* which describe major conflicts with the Sea Peoples.

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[4] Plato, *Critias* 108d.

Ramesses III (1186-1155 BC): Detailed accounts in the *Medinet Habu* inscriptions of a decisive victory over the Sea Peoples around 1175 BC.

An inscription by Ramesses II recorded their naval power: "...they came boldly sailing in their warships from the midst of the sea, none being able to withstand them."[5] This confirms that a confederation of powerful seafarers did indeed threaten Egypt, lending historical weight to at least part of the priests' story.

However, this is where the conventional narrative encounters a profound problem. Mainstream scholarship identifies the Sea Peoples as a confederation of raiders who attacked regions in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age collapse (c. 1200-900 BCE). Their origins are debated but are almost universally assumed to be within the Mediterranean basin—the Aegean, Anatolia, or Sardinia, among other possibilities.[6] This timeline (c. 1200 BCE) aligns perfectly with the Egyptian records.

It does not, however, align with Plato's account. The priests told Solon that the destruction of Atlantis and its conflict with the Mediterranean world occurred 9,000 years before their time (c. 9600 BCE). This creates a chronological chasm of over 8,000 years. Furthermore, Plato's account notes a key detail absent from the Egyptian records: the role of ancient Athenians in defeating the invaders.

We are thus left with a puzzle. The Egyptian inscriptions confirm the existence of the

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[5] Inscription of Ramesses II, quoted in Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 270.

[6] For a summary of the migration theory and its alternatives, see Robert Drews, *The End of the Bronze Age: Changes in Warfare and the Catastrophe ca. 1200 B.C.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). Drews argues against the migration theory, positing instead that internal military and social changes led to the collapse.

"Sea Peoples" but place them in the 12th century BCE. Plato's narrative speaks of a similar conflict but places it in the 10th millennium BCE. The conventional Mediterranean-centric view cannot reconcile this discrepancy. This chronological conflict forces us to ask a crucial question: Were the priests describing the recent historical Sea Peoples of 1200 BCE, to which Plato (or Solon) attached a much older date? Or were they recounting a far more ancient, perhaps orally transmitted, tradition of a different seafaring people, for which the historical Sea Peoples served as a more recent and familiar analogue?

A.04 A History of the Search for Atlantis

Many people have been exposed to the Atlantis story through speculative documentaries that propose alien visitations, atomic power, or channeled past-life memories. Such extraordinary and unsubstantiated claims are designed to attract viewers, not to build a case from evidence. "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence." To clear the ground for a serious investigation, it is necessary to survey the long intellectual history of the search for Atlantis—a history that separates scholarly inquiry from occult speculation and reveals the failure of previous theories to provide a satisfactory answer.

The story begins in antiquity. Following Plato's account around 360 BCE, classical authors such as Crantor, Strabo, and Pliny the Elder debated its existence, with belief in the lost continent divided.[7] After the classical era, the story lay dormant for centuries until the Age of Discovery. In 1553, Francesco Lopez de Gomara suggested Atlantis was in America, the first of

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[7] L. Sprague de Camp, *Lost Continents: The Atlantis Theme in History, Science, and Literature* (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), provides a comprehensive overview of the classical sources.

many attempts to use Plato's myth to explain the origins of New World civilizations. This line of thinking culminated in the 19th century with two influential but deeply flawed figures. Augustus Le Plongeon, after studying Mayan culture, proposed a bizarre reverse-chronology where Egyptian civilization was an offshoot of a Mayan-Atlantean mother culture.[8] Shortly after, in 1882, Ignatius Donnelly's *Atlantis: the Antediluvian World* became a publishing phenomenon, arguing that Atlantis was the source of *all* world cultures. Though popular, Donnelly's work was methodologically slanted, presenting only confirming evidence in the manner of a lawyer rather than a scholar.

This speculative tradition branched into the occult with the work of Helena Blavatsky and her successors, who wove Atlantis into a bizarre cosmology involving dinosaurs and lost root races. In the 20th century, the psychic Edgar Cayce continued this trend, making numerous unverifiable predictions from a trance state. These theories, based on private revelation rather than public evidence, stand apart from any historical or scientific inquiry.

The first serious scientific attempt to ground the myth in a real-world event came in 1939, when the Greek archaeologist Spyridon Marinatos suggested the volcanic eruption of Thera (Santorini, c. 1600 BCE) caused the collapse of the Minoan civilization and inspired the Atlantis legend.[9] This hypothesis gained traction and was later championed by others, including the seismologist A. G. Galanopoulos. For the first time, there was a testable, geological candidate.

However, rigorous scholarly and scientific scrutiny revealed fatal flaws in the Thera

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[8] Augustus Le Plongeon, *Queen Moo and the Egyptian Sphinx* (New York, published by the author, 1896). For a companion critical book: Lawrence G. Desmond and Phyllis M. Messenger, *A Dream of Maya* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988).

[9] Spyridon Marinatos, "The Volcanic Destruction of Minoan Crete," *Antiquity* 13 (1939).

hypothesis. Geologist Dorothy Vitaliano, in Legends of the Earth, and classicist John V. Luce both demonstrated numerous mismatches: Thera is ten times smaller than Plato's description, it is not "beyond the Pillars of Hercules," and the timeline is off by millennia.[10] The theory, while an important step, ultimately failed to fit the textual evidence.

By the late 20th century, the search had reached an impasse. Oceanographic mapping had definitively proven that no sunken continent could have existed in the Atlantic Ocean.[11] The most plausible scientific theory, Thera, had been effectively refuted. This failure prompted a new generation of researchers to look elsewhere. In the 1990s, a few scholars, including myself and later Steven Oppenheimer, began to propose that geological events in Southeast Asia—the vast, submerged subcontinent of Sundaland—could provide a better match for the details of Plato's story.[12]

In sum, after thousands of books and centuries of debate, no consensus has emerged. The original location is geologically impossible, and the leading scientific alternative is inconsistent with the primary source. This intellectual dead end is precisely why a new framework is necessary—one that re-examines the evidence from a global, geological perspective.

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[10] Dorothy Vitaliano, *Legends of the Earth: Their Geological Origins* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 145-168. John V. Luce, "The End of Atlantis: New Light on an Old Legend," in *Atlantis: Fact or Fiction?*, ed. Edwin Ramage (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).

[11] This consensus is summarized in nearly all modern oceanography and geology textbooks. An original work comes from: Heezen, Bruce C., and Marie Tharp. "The Floors of the Oceans: I. The North Atlantic." *Geological Society of America Special Paper* 65, 1959.

[12] Steven Oppenheimer, *Eden in the East: The Drowned Continent of Southeast Asia* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998).

Part II: The Oceanic World

A.05 The Greek Viewpoint

To understand Plato's geography, we must first understand the Greek conception of the world. Ancient geographers like Eratosthenes, Strabo, and Herodotus did not see a planet of separate, named oceans. Instead, they envisioned a single, interconnected body of water—Oceanus—that encircled the known landmasses of Europe, Africa, and Asia. This "one-ocean" model is crucial to the Sundaland Hypothesis, as it reframes what an ancient Greek would have understood by the term "Atlantic."

Eratosthenes (276–194 BCE), the celebrated librarian of Alexandria who accurately calculated the Earth's circumference, provided a clear description of this worldview. Though his original work is lost, the historian Strabo (63–23 BCE) quotes him directly in his *Geography*. When describing the boundaries of India, Eratosthenes states: "The boundaries of India: on the north … Caucasus; on the west, the river Indus; *the southern and eastern sides, which are much larger than the others, project towards the Atlantic Sea.*"[13]

This view aligns perfectly with the earlier descriptions of Herodotus (c. 484–425 BCE), who consistently referred to Oceanus as a vast river flowing around the entire world. In *The Histories*, he notes, "The ocean flows all round the earth," and clarifies that the sea beyond the Mediterranean is part of this single system: "Beyond the Pillars of Hercules lies the ocean, they say... it flows round the whole earth."[14] For Herodotus, the name for this outer ocean was simple:

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[13] Strabo, *Geography*, Book XV, Chapter 1, Section 11.

[14] Herodotus, *The Histories*, Book II, Chapter 21; Book IV, Chapter 8.

“Beyond the Pillars, is what they call the Atlantic.”[15]

These historical accounts demonstrate that to the Greeks and Egyptians, the "Atlantic" was not a separate ocean but the name for the vast, single sea that began at the Strait of Gibraltar and encompassed the globe. This understanding is the key to unlocking Plato’s narrative. It supports the notion that a civilization located in what is now Southeast Asia could have been legitimately described by an Egyptian priest as existing within the great "Atlantic" world.

Astonishingly, this ancient Greek view is supported by some Middle Age maps.

A.06 Prehistoric Navigation

The Fra Mauro map (1450) is considered one of the most important maps in the history of cartography. It includes Europe, Africa, the Indian Ocean, and Asia, containing hundreds of detailed illustrations and more than 3000 descriptive texts. Placed alongside a modern NASA photograph of the Earth, as seen below, the map's similarities are remarkable.

What is also remarkable is the *ice-free ocean* in the northern regions of Asia and Russia (then called Tartaria). If true, that would have allowed navigation. However, according to climatologists, the last time this area was potentially ice-free was during a major interglacial period 120,000 years ago.

So either Fra Mauro, the cartographer, who listened to hundreds of people from around the world as they came through Venice, was speculating, or humans were navigating oceans much earlier than currently recognized. The idea that human seafaring is far older and more sophisticated than we once believed—is now being confirmed by a wave of convergent evidence

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[15] Herodotus, *The Histories*, Book I, Chapter 202.

from multiple scientific fields. This evidence is forcing a radical revision of prehistoric timelines, dismantling the old paradigm of purely land-based early humans. This revision can be understood by examining four key lines of inquiry, moving from the recent past into deep time:

1. *The Polynesian Expansion (3,500 BP):* Beginning approximately 3,500 to 3,000 years ago, the ancestors of the Polynesians—practitioners of the *Lapita* culture—executed one of the most ambitious maritime expansions in human history, migrating from the Bismarck Archipelago into the vast "Remote Oceania" of the central Pacific. This rapid eastward movement, which reached the archipelagos of Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa by roughly 1000 BCE, was facilitated by a highly sophisticated "wayfinding" system that relied on a mental star compass, the interpretation of

deep-ocean swell patterns, and the observation of migratory bird flights.[16] These seafarers utilized advanced double-hulled outrigger canoes capable of sustained open-ocean transit, allowing them to navigate precisely against prevailing trade winds and colonize islands separated by hundreds of miles of water.[17] The archaeological presence of distinctive dentate-stamped pottery across these sites confirms that this was not a series of accidental drifts, but a deliberate and organized expansion supported by an intricate body of environmental knowledge passed down through oral tradition.[18]

2. *The Peopling of the Americas (23,000 BP):* The long-held "Clovis model," which posited a single land-bridge migration from Siberia around 11,500 years ago as the glaciers melted, has been overturned. In 2021, ancient footprints found in White Sands National Park, New Mexico, were dated to between 20,000 and 23,000 years ago—a timeline confirmed in 2023: “The results show that the chronologic framework originally established for the White Sands footprints is robust and reaffirm that humans were present in North America during the Last Glacial Maximum.”[19] The most plausible explanation is that those early people reached the Americas in

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[16] Patrick Vinton Kirch, *On the Road of the Winds: An Archaeological History of the Pacific Islands before European Contact*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), 52–55.

[17] David Lewis, *We, the Navigators: The Ancient Art of Landfinding in the Pacific*, 2nd ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 82–90.

[18] Geoffrey Irwin, *The Prehistoric Exploration and Colonisation of the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 31–34.

[19] Jeffrey S. Pigati et al., "Independent age estimates confirm the antiquity of *Homo sapiens* footprints at White Sands National Park," *Science* 382, no. 6666 (October 2023): 73–75, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adh5007.

watercraft, following the Pacific coast and subsisting on the rich marine life available along the shoreline. Researchers frequently refer to this "southern coastal route" as the “kelp highway,” owing to the productive kelp forest ecosystems that supported early maritime migration.[20]

3. *The Seafarers of Flores (Homo erectus, 800,000–1,000,000 BP)*: Archaeologists have discovered stone tools on Flores Island, located between Java and Australia, dating back at least 800,000 years.[21] More recent excavations at the Wolo Sege site suggest the presence of hominins on Flores as early as 1 million years ago.[22] Because Flores remained isolated by deep-water channels even during periods of low sea levels—specifically the Wallace Line—the absence of a land bridge suggests that *Homo erectus* used primitive watercraft to cross the open sea. This finding indicates that maritime capability is not a recent innovation of *Homo sapiens*, but a deep-seated technological lineage.

4. *Experimental Archaeology:* Robert G. Bednarik, an Australian prehistorian, cognitive archaeologist, and experimental archaeologist, champions the theory of *Homo erectus* as a seafarer.[23] Bednarik asserts that the first ocean journeys took place between 900,000 and 800,000 years ago, based on evidence of early human arrival on the island of Flores.[24] To lend support to

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[20] Jon M. Erlandson et al., “The Kelp Highway Hypothesis: Marine Ecology, the Coastal Migration Theory, and the Peopling of the Americas,” *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 2, no. 2 (2007): 161–74, https://doi.org/10.1080/15564890701628612.

[21] M. J. Morwood et al., "Fission-track ages of stone tools and fossils on the east Indonesian island of Flores," *Nature* 392, no. 6672 (March 12, 1998): 173–76.

[22] Adam Brumm et al., "Hominins on Flores, Indonesia, by 1 million years ago," *Nature* 464, no. 7289 (April 2010): 748–52, https://doi.org/10.1038/nature08844.

[23] Robert G. Bednarik, "The Maritime Dispersal of *Homo erectus*," *Archaeometry* 45, no. 4 (2003): 635–63.

[24] Robert G. Bednarik, "The Initial Peopling of Wallacea and Sahul," *Anthropos* 92, no. 4/6 (1997): 355–67.

this theory, he has undertaken several hazardous voyages in reconstructed primitive rafts, including a 1998 crossing from Bali to Lombok with a crew of twelve men to demonstrate the viability of Paleolithic maritime technology.[25] We can construct an hypothesis. At first early seafarers learned how to build rafts and to navigate from island to island or from island to mainland. Watching their home ports vanish beneath the horizon, and distant islands slowly rise from the horizon, they experienced the Earth's curvature firsthand, long before it was theorized by scholars anchored to the land. They likely navigated close to the coastline, much like a novice swimmer hugs the edge of a pool. They drew primitive maps: mainland here, an island there, straight for a long distance and then a gradual left turn. As their confidence and navigational skills grew, they would begin to make increasingly accurate maps and lengthy "shore-hugging leaps." Periodically, they would land to forage, hunt, or trade with local populations. After a long enough journey, and much luck, they might end up back where they started, demonstrating a coastline encircling of Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Buckminster Fuller argued that ancient seafarers, using the globe's network of ocean currents and prevailing winds, completed a circumnavigation of the world that didn't need an ice-free polar area. Fuller's proposed route leaves the Mediterranean, follows the coastline south around Africa, across the Indian Ocean, north with the Japan Current, transiting China, Japan, and the Aleutian Islands to Alaska, south along the "kelp highway" of the American west coast, around the Horn using the "Roaring 40s" winds to be propelled by current northward along South America, and finally, the Atlantic Gulf Stream would convey them north along coast of

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[25] Robert G. Bednarik, "The Nale Tasih 2 Expedition: A Seafaring Voyage from Bali to Lombok," *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association* 21 (2001): 112–19.

South and North America, past Cape Hatteras, Nova Scotia, south of Greenland, Iceland, and Spitzbergen, eventually returning to the familiar lands of Scandinavia, the British Isles and finally back to the familiar Mediterranean.[26] This description is remarkably consistent with modern maps of global ocean currents.[27] Fuller's work suggests that for those who understood the sea, the ocean was not a barrier but a planetary circulatory system.

As one geologist has said: “The sea does not stand still. Find the right current, and it will take you where you want to go … To people who understand the sea, the ocean is a waving road that connects one land to the next. And humans have been making use of this transportation route for much longer than we computer-bound landlubbers might imagine.”[28]

A.07 Coastal Evolution

For the Sundaland Hypothesis to be plausible, a story must travel—not over land, but across a vast expanse of water. The journey of the our narrative from a submerged subcontinent in the East to the temple walls of Egypt is, fundamentally, a sea story. But the story of seafaring does not begin with the invention of the boat; it begins with the biological and behavioral orientation of our ancestors toward the water.

As noted in the previous section the long-held "Clovis model" of inland migration has

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[26] Fuller, *Critical Path*, 9.

[27] "What are the Roaring Forties?" National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), accessed April 14, 2026, https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/roaring-forties.html. A full NASA visualization of ocean currents is available at "Perpetual Ocean," NASA Scientific Visualization Studio, https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/3827.

[28] Robert Schoch, *Voyages of the Pyramid Builders: The True Origins of the Pyramids from Lost Egypt to Ancient America* (Putnam, 2003.) 168-169.

been replaced by the "coastal migration hypothesis." A similar "maritime highway" likely existed along the ancient coastlines of the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.[29] This coastal orientation was not merely a choice of path; it was a powerful selective force that may have shaped our very anatomy.

The evidence suggests that our evolution was deeply influenced by this waterside existence. The rapid growth of the human brain was likely fueled by brain-specific nutrients—such as DHA and iodine—found in high concentrations in seafood.[30] Furthermore, Peter Rhys-Evans, an expert in ear, nose, and throat anatomy, suggests that our unique vocal architecture may have its origins here. He notes that the development of a descended tongue-bone, closed tooth-rows, and a globular tongue—lacking the transverse horny ridges found in other primates—may be explained by the mechanics of suction feeding on soft, slippery seafood and the voluntary breath control required for shallow diving.[31] These anatomical changes, while originally serving a "waterside" lifestyle, provided the perfect platform for the precise articulation of consonants and the birth of complex speech.[32]

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[29] Paul Mellars, "Going East: New Genetic and Archaeological Perspectives on the Modern Human Colonization of Eurasia," *Science* 313, no. 5788 (2006): 796–800. For the specific role of the coastal environment as a selective force on human brain and vocal anatomy, see Stephen Cunnane, *Survival of the Fattest: The Key to Human Brain Evolution* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2005); and Peter Rhys-Evans, *The Waterside Ape: An Alternative Account of Human Evolution* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2019).

[30] Stephen Cunnane and Kathlyn Stewart, eds., *Human Brain Evolution: The Influence of Freshwater and Marine Food Resources* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

[31] Peter Rhys-Evans, *The Waterside Ape: An Alternative Account of Human Evolution* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2019).

[32] Marc Verhaegen and Stephen Munro, "Possible Preadaptations to Speech: A Preliminary Comparative Approach," *Human Evolution* 19, no. 1 (2004): 53–70.

This evolutionary "pressure cooker" would have been intensified by the geological forces central to this book. During the glaciations of the last million years, vast coastal plains like Sundaland were exposed, drawing early populations into these rich amphibious territories. A Krakatoa-like explosion or a massive tsunami would have provided a brutal but effective selection event: those best adapted to the water—those who could swim, dive, and navigate the chaos—would have been the most likely to survive and carry the narrative of their lost world forward.[33]

In Part III, we will explore the evidence suggesting that the inspiration for Atlantis came not from a lost continent in the modern Atlantic, but from the ancient, geologically violent world of Sundaland. The catastrophes that defined that region—the 1006 AD eruption of Merapi, the 1883 explosion of Krakatoa, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami—are not just historical footnotes. They are echoes of the same creative and destructive forces that may have forged our bodies for a life in the waves, preparing us, long ago, for the great sea journeys to come.

Part III: Sundaland

A.08 Ships and Canals

Before the great ice sheets melted and the seas rose, a vast sub-oceanic plain connected Southeast Asia to Australia. This lost world, now submerged, is known as Sundaland. It extends from Borneo in the East, to Thailand in the North, and Indonesia in the South and West. Could the memory of such a place be the origin of some of Egypt's stories?

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[33] Chris Stringer, "The Coast in Early *Homo sapiens* Evolution and Dispersal," *Quaternary International* 559 (2020): 10–17. Discusses the impact of coastal cataclysms on human dispersal.

My own journey into this question was sparked by the visionary architect and thinker R. Buckminster Fuller. While traveling in Southeast Asia, Fuller marveled at the intricate boat-building technology along the Chao Phraya River, home to Bangkok. He noted that local shipbuilders often soaked their teak logs in water for up to a century before using them. This incredible patience structurally stabilized the wood, allowing their masterful craftsmanship to create planks that fit together so seamlessly they required no caulking. Fuller became "unequivocally convinced that Bangkok represents the cradle of the world's most sophisticated ship technology and design engineering."[34]

Sundaland, on Griffith Observatory

In his dialogues, Plato describes Atlantis as having an extensive and sophisticated canal system. This observation creates a tantalizing parallel. During his own aerial travels over Cambodia and Thailand, Fuller observed canal networks penetrating hundreds of miles inland,

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[34] R. Buckminster Fuller, *Critical Path* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 21.

drawing a possible link between the two.[35] My own travels in Indonesia in 1997 confirmed the geography on a smaller scale; I was struck by the shallowness of the waters in the Sunda Strait and off the coast of Jakarta, reminders of a time when the sea was lower and the land was larger.

A.09 Lost Cities

To understand how a civilization might fade into legend, we can look to two other famous "lost cities" that were dismissed as myth before archeology proved them real.

The "Lost City of Ubar" is mentioned in both the Koran and *A Thousand and One Nights*. For centuries, scholars doubted the existence of Ubar, a center for the frankincense trade mentioned in the Quran and *A Thousand and One Nights*. It was nicknamed the "Atlantis of the Sands," a ghost story from the desert.[36] The legend became reality when two amateur archeologists teamed up with NASA scientists. Using radar data from the Space Shuttle, they pinpointed ancient camel caravan routes hidden beneath the dunes, which converged on the remains of the long-lost city. A place of myth was located with the tools of science.[37]

An even more famous example is the city of Troy. As the legend goes, the Greeks sailed a thousand ships to Troy to rescue the beautiful Helen. After a long siege, they breached the city's

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[35] Steve Van Beek, *The Chao Phya: River in Transition* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995), 39. For a visual of the canal systems, see PrModernHistorian, "The Ancient Canal Network of Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos," See also, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGyaOEqmNeg.

[36] Nicholas Clapp, *The Road to Ubar: Finding the Atlantis of the Sands* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 12–15.

[37] Charles Elachi and Jakob van Zyl, "Spaceborne Imaging Radar," in *Spaceborne Radar Remote Sensing: Applications and Techniques* (Piscataway, NJ: IEEE Press; New York: Springer, 2006), 75–110, accessed April 16, 2026, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/0-387-44455-6_3.

impenetrable walls not with force, but with cunning—the Trojan Horse—leading to the massacre of all the men and the enslaving of many of the women and children. For millennia, Troy was considered pure fiction, a grand stage for Homer's epic poetry.

That changed thanks to the obsession of two men. Frank Calvert, an English diplomat in the Mediterranean, was a lover of Homer's stories and was convinced they were at least partly historical. He eventually bought land in Turkey where he believed Troy was located and began digging. But it wasn't until he met Heinrich Schliemann, a phenomenally wealthy German businessman, that the site was truly "excavated." Schliemann, who had made a fortune selling war materials to the Russian government during the Crimean War (1853–1856), poured his resources into finding the city from Homer's writings. Around 1868, convinced by Calvert, he began a now-infamous excavation. In his zeal, Schliemann was a bit overeager, using blasting powder that likely destroyed some of the very walls he was seeking. Despite his crude methods, he unearthed thousands of priceless artifacts. In 1996, Calvert's heirs sued the Schliemann estate for a share of the treasure found on his family's land. Today, most archaeologists agree that this site is indeed the historical location of ancient Troy.[38]

The rediscovery of Ubar and Troy reminds us that the line between history and myth is often porous. Legends once dismissed as fantasy can preserve the memory of real places and events, inviting us to ask whether the story of Atlantis, as also suggested by Egypt's "The Destruction of Mankind" story (*Book of the Heavenly Cow*), was an echo of forgotten events.

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[38] Susan Heuck Allen, *Finding the Walls of Troy: Frank Calvert and Heinrich Schliemann at Hisarlik* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Also, David A. Traill, *Schliemann of Troy: Treasure and Deceit* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995). For the legal dispute, see "Calvert's Heirs Claim Schliemann's Gold," *Archaeology* 49, no. 3 (1996).

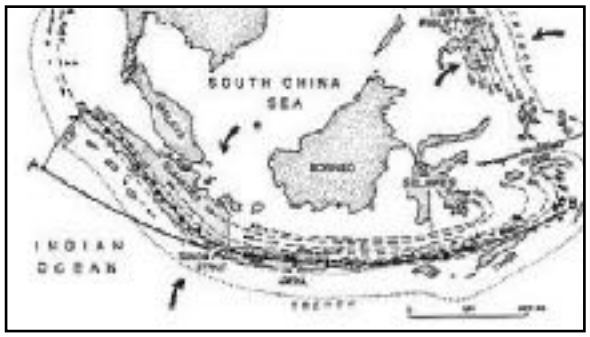
A.10 The Geology

Ubar's discovery inspired me to explore the potential of the Sundaland region as the origin of the Atlantis myth. Therefore, in 1995, drawing on the abundance of canals in Southeast Asia, the historical rise in ocean waters, and the powerful maritime history indicated by Fuller's observations, I looked at an ocean floor map. (See photo.) Despite my prior knowledge, I was struck by the vast area of Sundaland that was submerged when the glaciers melted. Bordering it was Java at the bottom and emptying into it at the top was the Chao Phraya River. I imagined that during the lower sea levels of the last Ice Age the Chao Phraya would have crossed Sundaland, and eventually emptied into the South China Sea. I thought that that might be a good port location for an ancient city.

I decided to do more research, and I discovered that there are more than one hundred active or recently active volcanoes in Indonesia. In fact, Java is one of the most volcanically and geologically active locations in the world. With an area approximately the size of New York State but with 17 active volcanoes, Java is a geological hotbed due to the collision of the Australian and Eurasian tectonic plates.

Every geologist in the world knows of the Krakatoa volcano which is located between Sumatra and Java, directly in the middle of what is appropriately called the Sunda Strait. Several books and one Hollywood movie have portrayed its 1883 explosive eruption, which triggered a devastating tsunami, claiming the lives of over 36,000 people. Sound waves from its explosion reverberated across the globe for the next 12 hours, often called "the greatest volume of sound recorded in human history."

Krakatoa is at the “elbow” of Sumatra and Java, adjacent to Sundaland. This elbow is



Krakatoa at the elbow of

slowly bending, which increases the geological activity. (See image.)

In 2004, the Sumatra–Andaman earthquake “killed an estimated 227,898 people in 14 countries, making this one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history.[39] This undersea megathrust earthquake, with its epicenter off the west coast of Sumatra was a geological behemoth that unleashed energy equivalent to 23,000 Hiroshima-type atomic bombs. When the Earth's crust ruptured along the fault line, it didn't just cause localized tremors; it sent shockwaves rippling across the ocean floor, triggering a series of devastating tsunamis that radiated outward like concentric rings in a pond. These massive walls of water, some reaching heights of 100 feet, crashed into coastal areas with merciless force, sweeping away everything in their path.

Unlike the gradual buildup and release of pressure seen in volcanic eruptions, this tectonic titan struck with little warning. With a magnitude of 9.1, the 2004 Sumatra-Andaman

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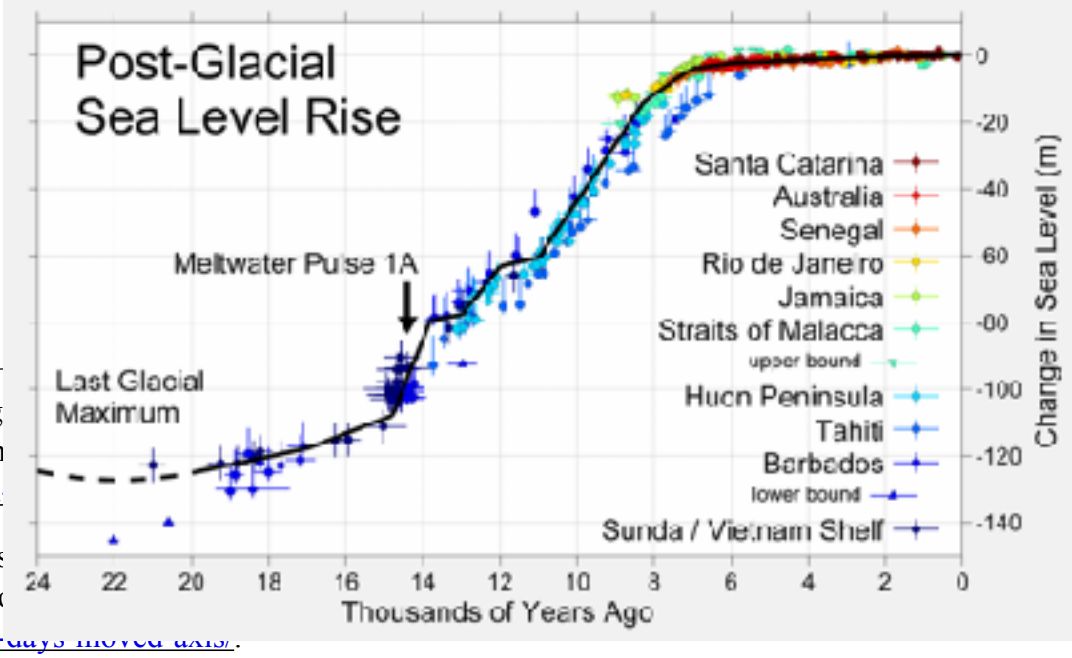
[39] United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, “What to Plan For When Rebuilding After a Tsunami,” UNU-EHS News, December 22, 2014, https://ehs.unu.edu/news/news/what-to-plan-for-when-rebuilding-after-a-tsunami.html.

earthquake was the third-largest ever recorded.[40] The tectonic shift was so violent that the entire planet "rang like a bell," vibrating as much as one centimeter. This global tremor was powerful enough to physically alter the Earth's rotation, shifting the planet's figure axis by approximately seven centimeters and shortening the length of the day by 6.8 microseconds.[41] Just as shield volcanoes in Hawaii slowly reshape the landscape with their oozing lava, this earthquake dramatically altered the geography of the affected regions in an instant, permanently shifting islands and lifting the sea floor by several meters.[42]

In ancient times, as Sundaland slowly filled with water, people might have migrated to various locations around the world. Steven Oppenheimer agrees with this interpretation, and, in the present day, we have seen severe flooding in New York City after a hurricane. There was a dramatic rise and sea levels from about 15,000 years Before Present (BP) until 8000 years BP. (See graph.)



Sea level rise since the Last Glacial Maximum.

[40] U.S. Geolog
Andaman Earth
science/tsunami

[41] Richard Gros
Propulsion Labo
shortened-earth-days-moved-axis/.

[42] U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), "The Magnitude 9.1 Sumatra-Andaman Earthquake of 26 December 2004," *Scientific Investigations Map 2932*, 2005.

The gradual shrinking of Sundaland might explain apparent contradictions in Plato's description, which have puzzled Atlantean scholars. At one point, he says Atlantis is larger than Libya and Asia combined, referring to countries in southwestern Asia.[43] At another point he calls it an "island."

Plato also says that from the islands beyond Atlantis, "… you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean." Traditionally, the "true ocean" has been thought to be the Atlantic, and the "opposite continent" the Americas. Compare the Pacific and Atlantic on a globe. The huge difference in size is easily seen. The Pacific encompasses almost half the globe. To a navigator accustomed to that vast expanse, which encompasses nearly half the globe, the Atlantic would seem like a mere channel. Plato's "true ocean" may be what we now call the Pacific. Plato also gives this account:

> The whole country was said by him [the Greek, Solon, who went to Egypt where he heard the story of Atlantis] to be very lofty and precipitous on the side of the sea, but the country immediately about and surrounding the city was a level plain, itself surrounded by mountains which descended towards the sea; it was smooth and even, and of an oblong shape, extending in one direction three thousand stadia, but across the centre inland it was two thousand stadia. This part of the island looked towards the south, and was sheltered from the north. The surrounding mountains were celebrated for their number and size and beauty …

This could be a description of parts of Sundaland before the melting of the ice-age

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[43] Plato, *Timaeus* 24e. "For this island was larger than Libya and Asia put together, and was the way to other islands..."

glaciers about 12,000 to 7,000 years ago.

The eruption-explosion of Krakatoa in 1883 was, as I have said, immense. The tidal wave generated was 100 feet high. One book about the volcanic explosion says:

Several of the survivors attempted to describe the great wave. The magnitude of the experience was too great for them. The sight of the gray wall of water appearing from nowhere was an experience which no one could have adequately described. The air was filled with swirling dust and falling pumice. It was blacker than the blackest night. Huge tracts of land were submerged. Towns and houses were in ruin. Corpses lay everywhere.[44]

Debris from the coast was found seven to ten miles inland. (See photo.) Entire towns and villages disappeared without a trace. Particulate matter from the explosion affected sunsets around the world for the next three years. Of the 36,000 people who died, most were killed by the tidal wave, which could be called a "flood."

One geologist suggests that Krakatoa may have had as many as 10 or 12 gigantic eruptions over this time. Also, he documents evidence, mostly from ancient texts, of many major eruptions in the last 2000 years.[45] Also, the Egyptian priest tells Solon, Plato's ancestor: "There have been, and will be again, many destructions of mankind arising out of many causes; the greatest

Buoy (on a monument) carried inland 2 km during 1883 tsunam

[44] Rupert Furneaux, *Krakatoa* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 117.

[45] dG.A. de Neve, "Earlier Eruptive Activities of Krakatau in Historic Time and During the Quaternary," in *Proceedings of the Symposium on 100 Years Development of Krakatau and its Surroundings,* vol. 1 (Jakarta: Indonesian Institute of Sciences [LIPI], 1983), 35–46.

have been brought about by the agencies of fire and water …"[46]

Another author cites the *Javanese Book of Kings*, which states that there was a major eruption in 416 AD that caused the separation of Java and Sumatra.[47] He notes that this account could have been based on an *earlier* event. So the Indonesians seem to be aware of some violent catastrophe in the ancient past connected with Krakatoa which may have been worse than the 1883 one. Also, in 1927, the Child of Krakatoa, which had been gradually growing underwater, emerged above the waves. As I described earlier in this book, in 1997, leading a small expedition, it had become quite large, taking us about 30 minutes to climb about two-thirds of the way of the slope. The Child of Krakatoa was a volcanic resurrection of the kind which had happened many times and in many places throughout the world. With all this in mind, let's read Plato's descriptions of the destruction of Atlantis:

But afterwards 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. For which reason the sea in those parts is impassable and impenetrable, because there is a shoal of mud in the way; and this was caused by the subsidence of the island … [It] became an impassable barrier of mud to voyagers sailing from hence to any part of the ocean.

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[46] Plato, *Timaeus* 22c.

[47] J John Wesley Judd, "The Final Catastrophe," in *The Eruption of Krakatoa and Subsequent Phenomena,* ed. G. J. Symons (London: Trübner, 1888), 23–56, as cited in Ian Thornton, *Krakatau: The Destruction and Reassembly of an Island Ecosystem* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 44–45.

Some geologists say that Krakatoa may have been as high as 6,000 feet in 1882.[48] After the massive eruption-explosion, parts of Sundaland (which is now mostly underwater) could have been swept by a tidal wave. However, although Plato mentions earthquakes in his narrative, he does not mention volcanoes, so I think a geological event that may have inspired the Egyptian story was more similar to the underground earthquake and devastating tsunami in 2004. Regardless of the exact geological cause, at some time period, part of the plain, somewhere, became an impassable muddy barrier.

I think it possible that the inspiration for the Atlantis fiction was based upon a story, which was based upon a story, etc., or was a mixture of different stories. *Homo erectus certainly* witnessed the 10 or 12 gigantic eruption-explosions of the last million years. Was *Homo erectus* able to pass on a description of these events to his children? Robert Bednarick, whom I mentioned earlier, says the evidence suggests that rock art, decorative beads, engraved stones and hunting spears all originated several hundred thousand years before *Homo sapiens*. He concludes that such accomplishments would require that individuals speak to each other and assign abstract meanings to various objects and symbols.[49] Then the memory of Sundaland's 10 or 12 massive eruptions may have been preserved not just in marrow, but in the earliest iterations of human myth.

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[48] R.D.M. Verbeek, *Krakatau* (1881), in Tom Simkin and Richard S. Fiske, *Krakatau, 1883—The Volcanic Eruption and Its Effects* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983).

[49] Bruce Bower, "The Seeds of Speech," *Science News* 164, no. 16 (October 18, 2003): 248–250.

A.11 The Irrigated Fertile Plain

Plato makes five separate references to the fertile plain of Atlantis:

> [Poseidon] making every variety of food to spring up abundantly from the soil.
>
> Looking toward the sea, but in the center of the whole island, there was a plain which is said to have been the fairest of all plains and very fertile.
>
> [The island brought forth fruits] wondrous and in infinite abundance.
>
> …. the excellence of the soil.
>
> Twice in the year they gathered the fruits of the earth, in winter having the benefit of the rains of heaven, and in summer the water which the land supplied by introducing streams from the canals.

Sundaland was not completely submerged when the ice-glaciers melted. The remains of it exist as the northeastern part of the island of Java. So let us compare the above passages to the following passage about this area:

> Java's level of fertility and agricultural productivity is without parallel in any other equatorial land … because of Java's miraculously rich volcanic soil, with loam so dark it looks like melted chocolate, farmers often harvest two or even three crops a year … wet rice cultivation is extensive, irrigated by water systems up to 3,000 years old.[50]

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[50] Bill Dalton, *Indonesia Handbook*, 7th ed. (Chico, CA: Moon Publications, 1995), 412.

Or this from *Java* (Hutton), "rice yields under traditional conditions … that are by far the highest in the world."[51]

In *Islands of Fire, Islands of Spice*, we read, "While volcanic ejecta in many parts of the world is acidic, in Java it is chemically basic, rich in soluble plant nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, nitrogen and phosphorus. For millennia this rich ash deposit has blanketed the island and turned it into a rioting garden."[52]

Pick up any reference book and look up Java (or, for example, "Indonesia," or the "Malaysian Archipelago"). They all say that the soil fertility is near miraculous or the best in the world. (Also, Java experiences most of its rain during the "winter" months as Plato says of Atlantis.)

So here we have more parallels between Java and Plato's fictional Atlantis: 1) soil fertility, 2) harvesting multiple crops a year, 3) a 3,000-year-old irrigation system. If one wanted to find a place somewhere in the world where the soil fertility matched the irrigated soil fertility of our alleged "Atlantis," one would pick Java.

A.12 The Flora and Fauna

Regarding the flora and fauna, Sundaland fits neatly with Plato's Atlantis. Here are two of Plato's descriptions of the biological conditions of Atlantis [my emphasis]:

> There was an abundance of wood for carpenter's work, and sufficient

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[51] Peter Hutton, *Java* (Hong Kong: Apa Productions, 1980), 34–36.

[52] Richard Bangs and Christian Kallen, *Islands of Fire, Islands of Spice* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), 33.

> maintenance for tame and wild animals. Moreover, there were a great number of *elephants* in the island; for as there was provision for all other sorts of animals, both for those which live in lakes and marshes and rivers, and also for those which live in mountains and on plains, so there was for the animal which is the largest and most voracious of all. Also whatever fragrant things there now are in the earth, whether roots, or herbage, or woods, or essences which distill from fruit and flower, grew and thrived in that land; also the fruit which admits of cultivation, both the dry sort, which is given us for nourishment and any other which we use for food-we call them all by the common name pulse, and *the fruits having a hard rind, affording drinks and meats and ointments*, and good store of chestnuts and the like, which furnish pleasure and amusement, and are fruits which spoil with keeping, and the pleasant kinds of dessert, with which we console ourselves after dinner, when we are tired of eating-all these that sacred island which then beheld the light of the sun, brought forth fair and wondrous and in infinite abundance.
>
> [The mountains] also have in them many wealthy villages of country folk, and rivers, and lakes, and meadows supplying food enough for every animal, wild or tame, and much wood of various sorts, abundant for each and every kind of work.

Fruits “having a hard rind, affording drinks and meats and ointments” was probably the coconut, with its firm rind, its delicious inside drink, its white meat, and the white coconut oil its

white meat, which could have been made into coconut oil by simply pressing (with wood or stone) or boiling. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "… the native home of the coconut palm is unknown, but it probably originated somewhere in Indo-Malaya." In other words, Sundaland. It is not naturally found in the Mediterranean area. Also, notice that Atlantis contained "elephants … the animal which is the largest and most voracious of all." This eliminates several other possible inspirations for "Atlantis," as I will discuss later.

Pick up any reference book on Java or Indonesia or the Malay Archipelago (of which Indonesia is a part) and you will find descriptions matching Plato's. For example:

> The flora of the Malay archipelago is probably the most varied in the world. More than 30,000 species of trees, shrubs and grasses belonging to more than 2,500 families have been recorded … island groups have been joined together, then separated, then rejoined, increasing the almost unimaginable diversity of plant and animal life … While the fauna of the archipelago is very rich, there are a few large animals. Elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, wild cattle, tapir and orangutan are all part of the Asian fauna.[53]

Also, the *Indonesian Handbook* says that Java has "35 species of fruit, 20 found nowhere else." (I saw many exotic fruits in Indonesia and rode on one of the many elephants there.)

When archeologists first found bone remains of "Java Man" (later to be called *Homo erectus*) in the 1800s, this was thought to be the earliest ancestor of man (before the discovery of A*ustralopithecus,* etc.), and they therefore thought that Java might have been the Garden of Eden

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[53] *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Malay Archipelago," accessed April 19, 2026, https://www.britannica.com/place/Malay-Archipelago.

mentioned in the *Book of Genesis*.

A.13 The Mining

In several places throughout the text, Plato mentions a strange metal. No one has ever been able to decipher what this metal was. Here are the three relevant passages:

> 1. In the first place, they dug out of the earth whatever was to be found there, solid as well as fusile, and that which is now only a name and was then something more than a name, orichalcum, was dug out of the earth in many parts of the island, being more precious in those days than anything except gold.
>
> 2. The entire circuit of the wall, which went round the outermost zone, was covered with a coating of brass, and the circuit of the next wall they coated with tin, and the third, which encompassed the citadel, flashed with the red light of orichalcum.
>
> 3. In the interior of the temple the roof was of ivory, curiously wrought everywhere with gold and silver and orichalcum; and all the other parts, the walls and pillars and floor, were coated with orichalcum.

These descriptions are very similar to the temples I saw throughout Thailand. The literal

translation of orichalcum is “copper-mountain”.[54] All metals have an igneous or magma origin and so we would expect the Indonesian area to have many metals. I discovered that there is, and has been, plenty of mining of precious metals in the large Malaysian arc. Just in the last few decades, a large copper mine was built in Irian Jaya, which is at the far eastern end of Indonesia on what is now called New Guinea. This copper mine is the second largest in the world and produces the largest amount of gold of any mine in the world. It was called “the largest and richest copper deposit ever found above ground … a mountain of ore.”[55] The ore, which comes out, is a mixture of copper and gold. The mine sits at 12,000 feet. When discovered it was a large unusual outcropping of copper that had been made visible by the glacial removal of the overlying sedimentary rock. The Dutch called this phenomenon “erzberg” or “ore mountain.”

What could be “more precious in those days than anything except gold” if not gold that has been mixed with another metal? Since orichalcum is reddish, like copper, I would guess that this copper-gold mixture is the ancient and mysterious orichalcum. I found four references that tend to confirm this:

> Gold with copper mixed in is called “pink gold.”[56]
>
> The first metals known to man were those occurring frequently in their native

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[54] *Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 2001), s.v. "orichalcum."

[55] Forbes Wilson, *The Conquest of Copper Mountain* (New York: Atheneum, 1981), 18–22.

[56] Untracht, Oppi. *Jewelry Concepts and Technology*. New York: Doubleday, 1982, 222–223.

state, and that these were probably gold and copper.[57]

On the island of Crete, a particular gold metalwork was found from ancient times: "The gold was in two colours, a deeper red being obtained by the admixture of copper …" This tells us that some ancient people did, in fact, combine gold and copper.[58]

One author reports that a rare, red alloy of copper and gold is found around Lake Poopo in Bolivia.[59]

Here we have more interesting parallels: the red flashing metal of Plato's "Atlantis," so-called "pink gold," the ancient red gold found on Crete, the red alloy of copper and gold in Bolivia and the very large, naturally protruding copper mine containing gold and copper ore on a mountain top in eastern Indonesia, on the island of Borneo.

A.14 The Mythology

Plato describes some hot springs: "He himself [Poseidon], being a god, found no difficulty in making special arrangements for the centre island, bringing up two springs of water from beneath the earth, one of warm water and the other of cold … "

Plato never mentions a volcanic destruction, but the hot springs that he mentions suggests

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[57] *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Metallurgy," accessed April 19, 2026, https://www.britannica.com/technology/metallurgy.

[58] "Metalwork." In *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 15th ed. Vol. 23. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010, 831.

[59] James M. Allen, "The Lost Kingdom of the Andes," *Geographical Magazine* 71, no. 12 (December 1999): 44–47.

that his Atlantis had geological activity. In southern Sumatra, I met an old man who had visited the child of Krakatoa more than 200 times. He told me that his great-grandfather had been killed by the 1883 explosion-eruption. As we walked down to the shore and the boat, which would carry us over to the volcanic island, he pointed out some hot springs. Later, a few kilometers up the hill, I bathed in some hot springs at a small resort that had been built by the Dutch when they colonized this area.

Plato goes on to say that Poseidon,

> …. also begat and brought up five pairs of twin male children; and dividing the island of Atlantis into ten portions, he gave to the first-born of the eldest pair his mother's dwelling and the surrounding allotment, which was the largest and best, and made him king over the rest; the others he made princes, and gave them rule over many men, and a large territory. And he named them all; the eldest, who was the first king, he named Atlas, and after him the whole island and the ocean were called Atlantic.

It is a common misconception that Atlas held the *world* on his shoulders. He held the *heavens*. Pomponius Mela in his description of the world describes Atlas: "… its summit is higher than the eye can reach: it loses itself in the clouds; also it is fabled not only to touch with its top the sky and the stars but also to support them." It appeared to me at this point in my investigation that Java and Sumatra, with their many tall peaks towering over 10,000 feet, would be good candidates for the real Atlas Mountains. In other words, I imagined that seeing a mountaintop disappear into the clouds could remind one of holding up the heavens. Twin peaks

(of which Java has several, see NASA photo) disappearing into the clouds could certainly remind one of two shoulders holding up the heavens. Plato says that beyond the continent of Atlantis were many other islands. This certainly fits when all the islands of the South Pacific are considered.

Mountains in Indonesia are often cloud covered. The moist, equatorial air of Indonesia produces this condition. Mahameru (10,082 ft), in eastern Java is known as the "abode of the Gods." The largest mountain of Bali, the island just east of Java, is also known as the "abode of the Gods." Certainly, mountain peaks that sometimes disappear into the clouds would seem to be a likely place for the Gods to gather. I wondered if these disappearing mountains, besides being

Mount Sundoro and Mount Sumbing are twin peaks

the beginnings of the legend of Atlas, were also the beginnings of the legend of Mount Olympus. Perhaps as the legend traveled westward, the mountain was relocated repeatedly so the local populace would have their Gods nearby. If this seems unlikely to you, recall that the largest volcano on Mars, which is also the largest volcano in the solar system, has been named Mount Olympus.

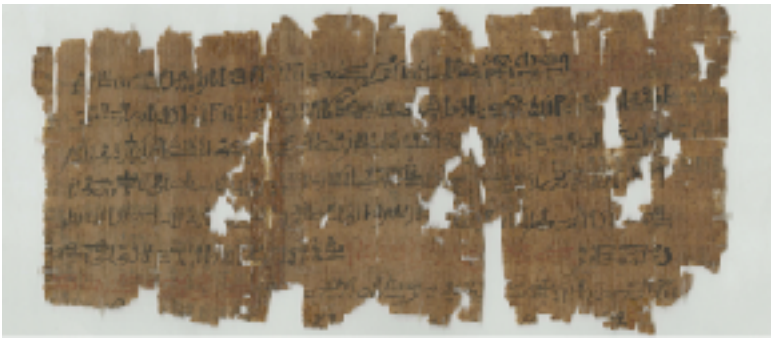
So again, we see a parallel between the local geography of Sundaland and Plato's

Atlantis. More will be said later about mythology and its correlation with Sundaland.

A.15 The Destruction of Mankind

The Pyramid Texts were inscribed on the walls and sarcophagi of the Saqqara pyramids during the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties of the Old Kingdom. Dated to approximately 2400–2300 BC,[60] these ancient records preserve a narrative often called "The Destruction of Mankind," or the "Book of the Heavenly Cow." This myth contains elements strikingly similar to the account shared with Solon in Egypt, which later served as the basis for Plato's narrative of Atlantis.

In various locations, there is an interesting story about the "Destruction of Mankind," also called the "Book of the Heavenly Cow." I present parts of it here, as they are similar to the tale told to Solon when he went to Egypt (from which Plato later wrote his story of Atlantis):



The Destruction of Mankind myth on a fragment of papyrus from the Turin

> Zeus, the god of gods, who rules with law, and is able to see into such things, perceiving that an honorable race was in a most wretched state, and wanting to inflict

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[60] James P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 3rd ed. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015), 1–5.

> punishment on them, that they might be chastened and improved, collected all the gods into his most holy habitation, which being placed in the centre of the world, sees all things that partake of generation. And when he had gathered them together he spake as follows:

Here Plato's story abruptly ends. However, in previous passages we already have found out about the destruction of Atlantis and I also mentioned that Solon may not have been able to finish his narrative, unlike Homer or Hesiod, because of other pressing issues.

Note that Zeus gathers them in the center of the world, where the magma would be thought to be. Compare this with this Nile River Valley hieroglyphic story sometimes known as The Destruction of Mankind. In this story, Ra has grown old, "… his bones were like electrum [a pale yellow mixture of gold and silver], his flesh was like gold, and his hair was like lapis lazuli [a deep blue semi-precious rock]:[61]

> Ra … when realized that mankind was plotting against him, said to his suite: Go summon me hither my Eye, together with Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, and all the fathers and mothers who were with me in the Primeval Waters … You shall bring them to the Great Palace so that they may give their advice … Behold mankind, who came from my Eye, have been scheming against me. Tell me what to do about it for I seek [a solution]. I would not kill them until I had heard what you have to say … [62]

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[61] Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, 181–183.

[62] Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt,* 181-183.

Ra then slays many of them with the help of his Eye, represented by Hathor*,* the cow goddess. The description of Ra loosely matches a dormant volcano, with the Eye being the caldera of the volcano. When Ra sees too many people are being slayed, he floods the fields with a type of red "beer." Modern beer is not the beer of ancient Nile folk. Their beer was thicker and less alcoholic, making it more like "meal"—like a thick, porridge-like, nutrient-dense, semi-solid substance that functioned more like "liquid bread" or a food.[63] This red "beer" fools Hathor into thinking it is human blood. Hathor drinks it, gets drunk, and returns to Ra. Later in the story, Ra "ascends to heaven," which fits with the ancient idea of a volcano generating the heavens as we see in the Pyramid Texts, "the Great Wild Cow… has lifted me up to the sky … not having left me on earth, among the gods who have power."[64] Then, "When Ra had made a heaven for himself … he remembered that at one time when reigning on earth he had been bitten by a serpent, and had nearly lost his life through the bite."[65]

So, there are similar geological suggestions in the two stories: the destruction, the flood, and the primordial waters. I also would argue that a volcano could be interpreted as a mammary gland of the cow, Hathor, and of course the *thick red* "beer" as lava. In addition, both stories describe a God wanting to destroy humanity because they have fallen short of good behavior. Besides Plato's story, this Nile River Valley flood myth was probably also the basis for the later

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[63] Delwen Samuel, "Brewing and Baking," in *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, eds. Paul T. Nicholson and Ian Shaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 537–576.

[64] Erik Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 148–150.

[65] E. A. Wallis Budge, *Legends of the Gods: The Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts and Translations* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1912), 14–25.

Babylonian and Judeo-Christian flood stories.

This legend suggests that Plato did not merely invent his story of Atlantis. Plato says the Egyptian priests told Solon that the story of Atlantis was recorded in the Egyptian temples in their “sacred registers.” Some scholars, having found no apparent mention of the word Atlantis in the hieroglyphs and no continent between America and Europe, have said that Atlantis never existed. However, if the “Atlantic” Ocean was the entire ocean round the world, or even just included the Indian Ocean, then these facts support the theory that Plato’s fiction was inspired by actual events.

A.16 The Austronesian Expansion

Jared Diamond argues that there is no archaeological evidence of civilizations beyond hunter-gatherers in southern Sumatra or northwestern Java prior to 2,000 years ago. He posits that civilization spread to these regions from Taiwan around 2,000 BC—a movement known as the "Out-of-Taiwan" hypothesis or the Austronesian Expansion. In *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Diamond describes this migration from mainland China through Taiwan to Australia and Polynesia as one of the most significant population movements of the last 6,000 years. According to this timeline, these peoples reached the Philippines by 3,000 BC, Java and Sumatra by 2,000 BC, the Solomon Archipelago by 1,600 BC, and Hawaii by 500 AD. Diamond notes that linguistic evidence independently supports Taiwan as the source of this expansion, bolstered by the spread of a "cultural package" including pigs, chickens, dogs, specific stone tools, and

pottery.[66]

Conversely, Wilhelm Solheim suggests that a "Nusantao" maritime trading network existed in Southeast Asia as early as 5,000 BC, potentially dating back to 30,000 BC, emphasizing that sea-peoples spread culture in multiple directions.[67] Supporting this view, landmark genetic findings from 2009 suggest that Asia was populated through a single migration out of Africa, where an early population first entered Southeast Asia/Sundaland before moving northwards to East Asia. This is further supported by the fact that populations in China exhibit smaller genetic variation than those in Southeast Asia.[68]

A 2018 study by McColl et al. provides further support for this more complex model of regional peopling.[69] Genetic evidence indicates a remarkable two-pronged maritime expansion originating from the ancient Sundaland region. One group of seafaring people moved west to settle Madagascar, while another appears to have moved east, successfully transporting the Pacific-type coconut across the vastness of the Pacific Ocean to the western coast of South America.[70]

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[66] Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997).

[67] Wilhelm G. Solheim II, *Archaeology and Culture in Southeast Asia: Unraveling the Nusantao Maritime Trading and Communication Network* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2006).

[68] HUGO Pan-Asian SNP Consortium, "Mapping Human Genetic Diversity in Asia," *Science* 326, no. 5959 (December 2009): 1541–45, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1177074.

[69] Hugh McColl et al., "The Prehistoric Peopling of Southeast Asia," *Science* 361, no. 6397 (July 2018): 88–92, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aat3628.

[70] Bee Gunn, Luc Baudouin, and Kenneth M. Olsen, "Independent Origins of Cultivated Coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L.) in the Old World Tropics," *PLoS ONE* 6, no. 6 (2011): e21143, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0021143.

Regardless, these people somehow established themselves on the island of Madagascar, near Africa, by 800 AD and possibly as early as 300 AD. How they arrived there is not known. Diamond states that the evidence supports the fact that they might have crossed the "Indian" Ocean directly, rather than following the coast (shore-hugging) along India and Africa. This direct trip would have been just a bit farther than Columbus sailed from Europe to the West Indies. Diamond calls this migration, "… the single most astonishing fact of human geography for the entire world."[71]

A.17 Provisional Possibilities

Wherever they may have begun, Taiwan or Southeast Asia, they crossed a large body of water, a body of water that may have been at one time part of the ancient Atlantic Ocean.

To establish a permanent presence somewhere, usually it is first necessary to do exploratory expeditions. For example, the first expeditions to the American continent did not establish a permanent presence. Also, as Oppenheimer suggests, they may have been driven out by rising waters at the end of the Ice Age.

If they continue around Africa to the Mediterranean, these Sea People may have met the Egyptians in a battle that occurred sometime around 1200 BCE and documented on the walls of Egyptian monuments. Scholars have assumed that the Sea People arrived in Egypt and Palestine somewhere from within the Mediterranean, possibly the island of Crete. However, this has never been firmly established.

Oppenheimer comes to these three conclusions:

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[71] Diamond, p. 381.

1) The genetic markers that have spread radially out of Southeast Asia, carried by people speaking Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic Tongues, had both been in this island region back in the ice age, if not much longer. This contradicts the conventional view of the *recent* Out-of-Taiwan dispersal through the Philippines, and supports a Sundaland origin.

2) Where genetic trees have been constructed for East Asian genetic markers, including those in aboriginal populations still found in Southeast Asia and speaking either Austro-Asiatic or Austronesian tongues, these markers are placed at the earliest branches.

3) These markers were carried east to the Pacific, west to India, and the Middle East, north to Taiwan, China, Burma and Tibet and south to Australia since the last ice age. All these findings are predicted by the prehistoric models outlined earlier [a Sundaland origin for civilization].[72]

So the important points are:

1. The original Atlantic Ocean, to the Greeks, probably encompassed what we call today the Indian Ocean, and the Atlantic was probably the Greek “Ocean of the World,” or “Oceanus."
2. Taiwan, Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines are very active geologically.
3. Ancient people established themselves throughout Indonesia, the Pacific Islands of Polynesia and across the Indian Ocean, on the island of Madagascar (near Africa) by 300 AD. This is known as Out-of-Taiwan or the Austronesian Expansion. However, these people may have originally come from Sundaland, perhaps during the rising ocean waters at the end of the ice age.

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[72] Oppenheimer, p. 217-218.

4. Plato wrote about the Sea People coming into the Mediterranean in 9500 BC and fighting with the Egyptians. He said these people were from “Atlantis,” in the “Atlantic Ocean.”
5. In 1200 BC, Egyptian monuments describe battles with the “Sea People.” Scholars do not know where these people came from, but assume it was from within the Mediterranean.

Regarding the Sea People, assuming the Egyptian monuments do not completely lie, there are several possibilities:

1. 9500 BC: Ancient humans, from Thailand, Taiwan or from Sundaland (maybe due to rising ocean waters), spread throughout Southeast Asia, and then eventually sailed into the Mediterranean Sea and fought with ancient Egyptians. (Some of Plato’s story is correct.)
2. 1200 BC: Same as above but much later. (Plato wrongly ascribed an ancient date of 9000 BC, rather than circa 1200 BC.)
3. 1200 BC: The Thailand, Taiwan or Sundaland people never reached the Mediterranean. The Sea People came from inside the Mediterranean. Plato ascribed a wrong date to the event (9000 BC) and a wrong geographical source (outside the Mediterranean) to the people.

A.18 The Azores Plateau

This plateau has gotten some interest on social media as a possible location for Atlantis. So in this section I will give evidence against that possibility.

The Azores Plateau, located in the present-day Atlantic Ocean, is a geologic triple junction where three tectonic plates meet: the North American plate, the Eurasian plate and the African plate. It's a very geologically active area, made from tectonic extension due to plate rifting and from volcanoes and seamounts, a volcano that doesn't reach the surface, due to hotspots in the thin crust.

Unlike the flat-shaped "shield" volcanoes like in Hawaii, most of the volcanoes are cone-shaped. This is because the Azores islands are primarily composed of stratovolcanoes, which form steep, conical shapes due to the type of volcanic activity and the composition of the magma. If they do reach the surface they may become flat topped due to erosion, but this flat top is only a relatively small slice of the much larger underwater cone.[73]

One Portuguese archaeologist, Nuno Ribeiro, has been researching the Azores. He claims to have found a large number of ancient ruins including 140 primitive pyramid-like structures, an epigraph from Roman times, Carthaginian sanctuaries, cave art, and other megalithic structures.[74] However, these are described as "pre-Christian," from about 400 BCE, not from 9,000 years BCE. Also, evidence from the analysis of a core on Pico Island detected possible feces of cows and sheep dated family recently, between AD. 700 and 800.[75] these states do not compare to dates from Java Island in Indonesia, where remains of *Homo erectus* have been found

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[73] NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research, "Guyots," *Ocean Explorer,* accessed April 19, 2026, https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/explorations/ex1606/background/guyots-bio/welcome.html; and "What Is a Seamount?" *NOAA Ocean Service Facts*, accessed April 19, 2026, https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/facts/seamounts.html.

[74] Nuno O. Ribeiro and Anabela Joaquinito, "Evidence of Human Presence in the Azores Before 1427," *Arkeos* 32 (2012).

[75] Jason Urbanus, "Azores Populated Earlier than Thought," *Archaeology*, October 6, 2021, https://www.archaeology.org/news/10038-211006-azores-islands-habitation.

dating back 1.3 million years.

Also, during the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM), which lasted approximately from 26,500 to 19,000 years ago, spanning roughly 7,500 years, and in which coastal areas around the globe expanded significantly, the Azores Plateau was still quite small compared to Sundaland, which has been described as a subcontinent filled with grasslands and wooded areas. There was probably travel between the Occident, a word derived from "the fall" (of the sun) (i.e., Europe and Africa), and the Orient, a word derived from "the rise" (of the sun) (i.e., Asia and Indonesia). The "Old World" was where hominids had been living for millions of years, and one could sail from one part of it to another by way of the Middle East and India. In contrast, the "New World" of the Americas has only begun to be populated about 22,000 years ago, according to recent evidence. My point is that there was probably much more travel between Sundaland and the Mediterranean than between the Mediterranean and the Azores.

Furthermore, evidence from the adjacent undersea plateau suggests that the Azores have been underwater for millions of years and that they have not sunken to any significant degree but have actually risen, with some beach sediments now lying well above current sea level. Also, in the Azores, there were no elephants and no coconuts. Additionally, the Azores were not as fertile as South East Asia, did not have as great a range of flora and fauna, and had no canals.

Also, any geological catastrophe in the Azores would not have killed as many people in the "Orient" of Indonesia, Southeast Asia, India, and East Africa (as were killed in 1006, 1883, and 2004), and it would not be worthy of being called a "catastrophe" and being recorded on Egyptian walls.

In addition, Plato writes, "For which reason the sea in those parts is impassable and

impenetrable, because there is a shoal of mud in the way; and this was caused by the subsidence of the island … [It] became an impassable barrier of mud to voyagers sailing from hence to any part of the ocean." This implies that there was some significant traffic in the area, which was much more likely in Southeast Asia than in this part of the Atlantic. For example, after the 1883 eruption of Krakatoa, ash, pumice rafts, and other volcanic materials disrupted shipping lanes in the Sunda Strait for months.

Of note, both the Sunda Strait and the Malacca Strait, which are today vital and heavily trafficked sea lanes, connecting Korea, Japan, China, Southeast Asia, and the Philippines to India, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, were fundamentally reshaped during the last glacial maximum, LGM, and subsequent sea level rise, transitioning from land corridors into crucial maritime gateways beginning about 12,000 years ago. So they could have been navigable for a time, and then there could have been a large geological event, common to this area, making them muddy and impassible for a time.

Independent scholar Randall Carlson's general perspectives offer thought-provoking interpretations of geological and historical phenomena and might be correct in regard to the Impact Theory regarding the Younger Dryas Cooling. However, with regard to the Azores and a sunken civilization, his theory extends beyond current scientific evidence and he misinterprets data.

In his interview with Joe Rogan in 2024,[76] Carlson seems shocked that they found seafloor core samples in 1948 which contained fossils of shallow-water fish, usually at about 100

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[76] Joe Rogan, "Joe Rogan Experience #1772 - Randall Carlson," *The Joe Rogan Experience*, YouTube video, 3:09:12, posted February 5, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJZV0k6LwvQ.

feet, at depths 1 to 1.5 miles. However, in the earthquake prone area of a spreading ridge “slide deposits” are normal, and over thousands of years it would not be unusual to find fossils from surface level fish on the ocean floor. This is not evidence of subsidence of a large land mass.

Then Carlson shows and discusses, respectively, two excerpts from a scientific abstract.[77]

1) The first excerpt: *The Atlantis, Cruiser, and Great Meteor seamounts rise from a broad ridge or plateau which extends from the Mid-Atlantic Ridge at 37°N. 32°W southeast to Great Meteor Seamount at 30°N. 28°W. The Atlantis Seamount, briefly explored in 1947 and 1948, was found by echo sounding and submarine photography to have a fairly flat bedrock summit area at about 180 fathoms covered in some cases by cobbles and in other cases by current rippled sand...About a ton of flat pteropod limestone cobbles was dredged from the summit area…*

What the paper actually describes: 1) normal seamount formations along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (one playfully named “Atlantis seamount”), 2) a flat summit area at about 180 fathoms (roughly 330 meters) depth, 3) typical seafloor features like cobbles (a medium sized rock) and rippled sand, limestone cobbles containing pteropods (small marine organisms).

What Carlson omits: 1) these are typical volcanic seamount formations, 2) the flat tops are common features of seamounts (known as guyots), 3) the limestone deposits are normal marine formations, the depth is consistent with the seamount's volcanic origin. Nothing in this paper suggests: Recent subsidence, any connection to human civilization, the dramatic vertical movements Carlson proposes.

2) the second excerpt:

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[77] Bruce C. Heezen, Maurice Ewing, D. B. Ericson, and C. R. Bentley, “Flat-topped Atlantis, Cruiser, and Great Meteor Seamounts” (abstract), *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 65, no. 12 (December 1954): 1261.

One of the cobbles gave an apparent radiocarbon age of 12,000 years ± 900. The state of lithification of the limestone suggests that it may have been lithified under subaerial conditions and that the seamount may have been an island within the past 12,000 years...The Cruiser and Great Meteor seamounts studied in 1952 have larger flatter summits at 150 and 165 fathoms depth...These youthful "guyots" may have originated as volcanoes which were later capped by limestone and more recently have sunk beneath the sea.

Once again, these are two typical volcanic seamount formations, flat tops of a cone, that have once been an island and later subsided, to only 274 and 302 meters. The limestone capping is a normal feature of seamounts. The sinking described is normal subsidence for cooling volcanic structures. Note that Carlson has gone from suggesting Atlantis subsistence of 1.5 miles to suggesting Atlantis subsistence of only 274 meters. There is no evidence of civilization, no evidence of sudden catastrophic sinking, no evidence of a large landmass.

Next Carlson presents two additional scientific abstracts as evidence of the Azores having a sunken civilization.

1) The first paper is entitled, "Tectonic implications of glacio-eustatic sea level fluctuations."[78] The abstract discusses ocean basin response to glacial loading/unloading on a broad scale. It's about how entire ocean basins respond to ice age cycles. It's not about localized subsidence or the Azores specifically. It's discussing long-term, gradual processes, not sudden submergence. It is primarily about general isostatic [equilibrium] principles, their relationship to ocean floor spreading, the dating of volcanic events, and global sea level changes during glacial periods.

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[78] R. K. Matthews, "Tectonic Implications of Glacio-Eustatic Sea Level Fluctuations," (abstract) *Earth and Planetary Science Letters* 5 (1968): 459–462, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0012-821X(68)80077-4.

Nothing in this paper supports rapid subsidence of large landmasses, the specific timeline Carlson proposes for Atlantis, or the idea that the Azores was a large landmass that sank.

2) The second paper is entitled, "Late Quaternary slumps and debris flows on the Scotian Slope."[79] There are many difficulties with using this paper as evidence for a sunken civilization. a) Carlson uses an ancient earthquake to try to support his theory. The earthquake mentioned was actually on the Scotian Slope, near Nova Scotia, not at the Azores. b) The rock deposits found near the seafloor, did not subside, but were due to slide deposits, which commonly occur on conical seamounts and islands in volcanic areas in the ocean. c) The finding of shallow water fish fossils at depth, which was probably also due to slide deposits and doesn't necessarily indicate the area was once at surface level. d) Carlson says: "A seamount is like a flat-top mountain. The top of the mountain has been sheared off." Actually, these flat tops are eroded over a very long time period. e) Carlson says, "The major part of the plateau is a mile to a mile and a half underwater." Plateaus don't suddenly sink 1 or 1.5 miles. f) Carlson says, "A large section of the Azores Plateau was above sea level during the late glacial maximum." These would have been steep-sided islands, not a large fertile plain.

In summary, Carlson selectively uses geological evidence without providing full context, leading to potentially misleading conclusions. The Azores Plateau 1) is too small, 2) mostly steep-sided volcanic cones, 3) may have risen rather than sunk, 4) has no evidence of ancient humans living in 9,000 BCE, 5) has no evidence of canals, 6) has no evidence of elephants, 6) has no evidence of coconuts.

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[79] David J. W. Piper, John A. Farre, and Alexander Shor, "Late Quaternary Slumps and Debris Flows on the Scotian Slope," (abstract) *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 96, no. 12 (1985): 1508–1517, https://doi.org/10.1130/0016-7606(1985)96<1508:LQSADF>2.0.CO;2.

A.20 Difficulties with Other Theories

Another modern proposal places Atlantis in the ancient Sahara, usually identifying it with the Richat Structure, the so-called Eye of the Sahara, in Mauritania. The attraction of this theory is obvious. The Richat's concentric rings can be made to resemble Plato's concentric canals, and the Sahara during humid phases was far greener and more habitable than it is today, with rivers, lakes, and wider ecological corridors. Yet these similarities are superficial. The Richat Structure is not a recently drowned city-site, nor a late prehistoric impact basin, but an ancient geological dome shaped by magmatic activity and long erosion over immense spans of time. Its rings are natural features of rock and erosion, not evidence of human engineering.[80]

The larger problem is that the Richat is inland, whereas Plato describes Atlantis as an island power associated with the Atlantic beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Humid phases in the Sahara do help explain past habitability, but they do not transform an inland Mauritanian dome into a lost maritime kingdom. Nor does the archaeology rescue the theory. The site has yielded evidence of very ancient human presence, including stone tools, but not the remains of a complex urban civilization with harbors, monumental canals, or an imperial military state. In short, the Sahara theory is visually suggestive but scientifically weak. In short, the Sahara theory is a modern mirage: visually arresting, loosely analogous, and unsupported by the geology,

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[80] Frannie Comstock, "Richat Structure," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed April 21, 2026, https://www.britannica.com/place/Richat-Structure; M. Matton, J. Jébrak, and G. Lee, "The 'Eye of Africa' (Richat Dome, Mauritania): An Isolated Cretaceous Alkaline–Hydrothermal Complex," *Journal of African Earth Sciences* 97 (2014): 109–24, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jafrearsci.2014.04.006.

archaeology, and geography required by Plato's text.[81]

Here are some of the difficulties with other locations suggested for Atlantis, including Sundaland.

1. An island-continent in the present-day Atlantic Ocean: No evidence, despite extensive sea-floor mapping.
2. Bahama Islands: Too small, no elephants, no canal system.
3. Great Britain: No elephants, not tropical, too small, no canal system.
4. Islands of the Caribbean: No elephants, too small, no canal system.
5. Antarctica: No elephants, not tropical, no evidence for a recent crustal shift.
6. A lake in the Andes highlands: No elephants, no seacoast.
7. Crete and Thera (Santorini): Too small, no large plain, no tropical fruits, no coconuts, poor soil fertility, no elephants, no canal system, not beyond the Pillars of Hercules.
8. Sundaland: Here are three main problems with the Sundaland theory and my suggestions for possibly resolving them:

   a) Plato mentions horses in Atlantis. This area of the world is now tropical and there are no fossils of horses. However, during the last glacial maximum about 21,000 years ago, Sundaland was much more temperate and may have had grasslands which would have been good for grazing.[82] As the glaciers melted, Sundaland became covered with water,

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[81] "Atlantis," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed April 21, 2026, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Atlantis-legendary-island; C. Skonieczny et al., "African Humid Periods Triggered the Reactivation of a Large River System in Western Sahara," *Nature Communications* 6 (2015): 8751, https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms9751.

[82] Enqing Huang et al., "Expansion of Grasslands across Glacial Sundaland Caused by Enhanced Precipitation Seasonality," *Quaternary Science Reviews* 337 (August 2024): 108824, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2024.108824.

and as the temperature warmed; perhaps the horses disappeared and their fossils are buried beneath the sea.

b) Plato says there were "mountains to the north." If this is correct, it would limit the hypothetical destruction site to 1) the Malacca Strait near Kuala Lumpur, 2) the Gulf of Thailand south of Cambodia, or 3) the Java Sea south of Borneo, as suggested in the book *Atlantis: The Lost City is in Java Sea.*

c) Plato mentions part of Atlantis as facing Gades, which is the ancient name for the modern-day Spanish city of Cádiz. There is no easy answer to this except to say that the Egyptian priests, Solon, or Plato might have combined different stories together, or over the centuries the story was corrupted.

A.21 Summary

Although many suggestions have been made regarding the location of "Atlantis'" (or an event that *inspired* the story of Atlantis), such as Great Britain, Thera, Peru, Antarctica, the Azores, the Bahamas, North Africa, etc., I believe that none of them make as good a match as Southeast Asia. The Sundaland Sub-Oceanic Plain, or Sundaland, is large enough to match Plato's Atlantis and suggests that it may have been the basis for the "destruction of mankind" story carved on Egyptian stone monuments and Plato's subsequent retelling. It has an equatorial climate, some volcanic mountains to the North, and a sea to the South. When we add several other factors: the climate, the irrigated-fertile plain, the flora and fauna, the mining, the cultural artifacts, and the mythology, the evidence becomes stronger, although not entirely convincing.

A.22 Conclusion

There is no need for us to invoke UFOs, aliens, advanced technology, past lives, "high wisdom" of the ancients, "channeling," and other such matters. None of these things existed in Plato's account. They were all invented by people and then perpetuated in various media out of ignorance or greed. However, as Professor John V. Luce said in 1975, "Plato in his Atlantis narrative utilized materials not entirely devoid of historical content."[83]

Plato's story, or the Egyptian priest's story, may have been a fictional attempt to demonstrate the dangers of hubris in a society, but it may also have been inspired by legends carried by travelers or by the westward Austronesian expansion. Witness the many ancient geological disasters in Indonesia, which are still continuing, as evidenced by the Krakatoa explosion in 1883, which killed 36,000 people, and the Sumatra earthquake in 2004, which killed about 250,000 people.

It is interesting to note that the story of Troy was once considered to be entirely fictional but is now widely believed to have an historical basis in Turkey: In the late 19th century, archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann excavated a site in northwestern Turkey, near the modern-day city of Hisarlik. His work revealed layers of an ancient city that many scholars now identify as Troy.

Likewise, perhaps someday, underwater explorations, whether in the Gulf of Thailand, in the Malacca Strait (near Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, etc.), near Jakarta, or in the Java Sea south of Borneo, may reveal some ancient structures that suggest that Plato's allegory was partly based on

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[83] Edwin Ramage (ed.), *Atlantis: Fact or Fiction?* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1978), 50.

real events in Sundaland. However, as far as any *single* location that inspired Plato, via Solon, via the Egyptian priests and their ancient Nile River monuments, I suspect that will never be found.