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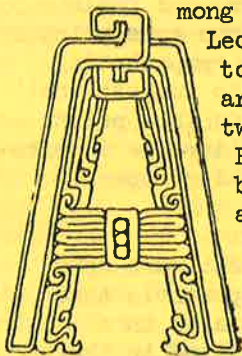


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Some Speculations of Leo Frobenius

Dear Friends:



Among the most colorful of modern explorers and ethnologists we should mention Leo Frobenius (1873-1938). During his lifetime, this eccentric genius came to be regarded as one of the world's greatest authorities on pre-historic art. According to the note in the Encyclopaedia Britannica Frobenius led twelve expeditions into Africa, and explored centers of pre-historic art in Europe, the Near East and the Libyan, and Sahara Deserts. He wrote sixty books and numerous pamphlets and articles and, perhaps most interesting of all, announced in 1910 that he had conclusive proof of the existence of Atlantis. The projects which dominated his life were interrupted by World War I, and the disastrous consequences of the disintegration of the German Colonial Empire in Africa. A number of Frobenius' books and articles have been reprinted, and are still considered outstanding. Possibly the best of his works from a scholarly point of view is "The Voice of Africa--Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African Exploration Expedition in the Years 1910-1912" in two volumes; London, 1913. The last chapter of this book is titled "Atlantis," and summarizes what the author considers the most reasonable hypothesis to explain the original culture of the African culture group, especially the esthetic achievements of the great Benin and Yoruba. The areas of Africa most intensively examined by Frobenius between 1904, and 1912, are the French Sudan, Nigeria, the Cameroons, Congo Free State, and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

Frobenius considered artistic stylization as the most valid instrument for dating the various levels of a civilization. To him, art was a release of consciousness revealing the plateau of intuitive insight attained by a culture group in the process of its unfoldment. He found that the comparatively primitive level of modern African society is a relatively late phenomenon revealing a decline taking place gradually over a period of centuries, or even millenia. In this Frobenius reached the same conclusion of nearly all ethnologists who have carefully examined the relics of ancient times. History, as we know it now, is in nearly every instance the account of a decline and fall. Egypt rose, flourished and faded away. Greece led the world in many cultural endeavors but perished under Roman domination. The North, Central and South American cultures are known to us only through the ruins of a former greatness. East Indian science reached its highest development approximately 5,000 B.C. China was already crumbling in the times of Confucius and Lao Tse. No civilization has been able to survive its own self-created complexities.

In commenting on the Greek legend of Atlantis, Frobenius writes: "This passage of Solon's narrative is all the more pregnant with meaning because, as already mentioned, the Greeks had neither inherited the Idea of the Universe in its essence and regularity, nor even understood it. And yet here the casting of dice and drawing of lots; the holy establishment of a uniform celestial region; of a God and a godly possession; together with a perfectly clear idea of posterity in divinely founded clans, are all preserved, in exactly the form in

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which the Tyrrhenes and, before them, probably all the Occidental nations of culture possessed them, and as the Yorubans in particular hold and observe them to-day. Solon's story in Greek, then, says that Atlantis is the Island in the Tropics where all the tropical plants flourish and elephants gambol, where brass is smelted and the houses are strange; an island which, in the beginning, by the cast of a die, fell as his share of the earth to Poseidon, who colonized it with the seed of his loins. The account attributes a growth of power westwards to this indigenous posterity of the Straits of Gibraltar, which extends into Egypt and as far as the Tyrrhenians; shows them in an arduous contest with the Orient powers, amongst whom Athens is, in his own view, particularly important; and he, therefore, singles out the Tyrrhenians and Egyptians, both lying respectively exactly within and exactly beyond the sphere of the powers of the West, precisely those nations who fought the fight for final supremacy to a finish in the thirteenth century before the Saviour was born."

Frobenius points out that it is customary to assume that the great migrations of culture have moved in a westerly direction. He gives exceptions to this trend however, and feels that in the case of Africa there was a very early migration moving eastward from some point beyond the Pillars of Hercules (Straits of Gibraltar). Frobenius seems to be sympathetic with the hypothesis advanced by Dr. Augustus Le Plongeon, who went so far as to suggest that Egypt may have been colonized by navigators from the Central American area. On this point, it is interesting to note that Lord Bacon in his The New Atlantis gained considerable inspiration from the reports brought back to Spain by Cortez. This Spanish Conquistador reported that the City of Mexico was the most magnificent metropolis in the world.

If we wish to assume that the old cartographers were correct in placing the continent of Atlantis in the general area where the Azores Islands are today, it is quite possible that migrations from Atlantis could have moved not only eastward and westward, but also in a southwesterly direction. It is now held likely that the cataclysms which resulted in the final destruction of Poseidonis occurred over a considerable period of time and there was ample opportunity for the Atlanteans to colonize adjacent areas before the submergence of their homeland. I have discussed this at some length, in our book on Symbolical Philosophy pointing out that most classical civilizations believed that they had been founded by mysterious men who came out of the sea. Plato, in his description of Atlantis, which had reached him from Egypt through Solon implies clearly that the Atlanteans were navigators, and that their fleets visited many distant parts of the world.

Frobenius assumes that one of the Atlantean migration routes involved what is now Spain and Northwest Africa. Lewis Spence, a member of the staff of the British Museum, describes the extraordinary tides off the coast of Spain. At rare intervals the tide is so low that many miles of the sea bed become dry land. During these low tides, a number of curious artifacts have been discovered, and Spence advances the possibility that they are of Atlantean origin. The waves of Atlantean culture that swept over southwestern Europe left no enduring social order. All that actually survived was myth, legend, and what Frobenius calls "style." If a Central Atlantic continent existed and had attained to a high state of scientific skill as implied in the old Egyptian accounts, we may have the key to a number of ethnological and archaeological mysteries. The very word Atlantis comes from the root "Atl." This has no derivation in European language, but is the Aztec and Maya word for water. Its glyph is the Storm-God releasing the torrents of heaven. This theme is well represented in the Dresden Codex, one leaf of which, according to Le Plongeon, depicts the destruction of the Atlantean world. It is now also suspected that America was not actually named in honor of Amerigo Vespucci, and that the word Ama-rika also originated in the western hemisphere.

One thing is certain, most 'creation myths' include the story of "The God who will return." All nations bordering upon the Atlantic Ocean had some version of this belief. The Aztec-Maya-Quiche version of this account led Lord Kingsborough to believe that Quetzalcoatl could have been an early Christian missionary to Central America, possibly even one of the Apostles.

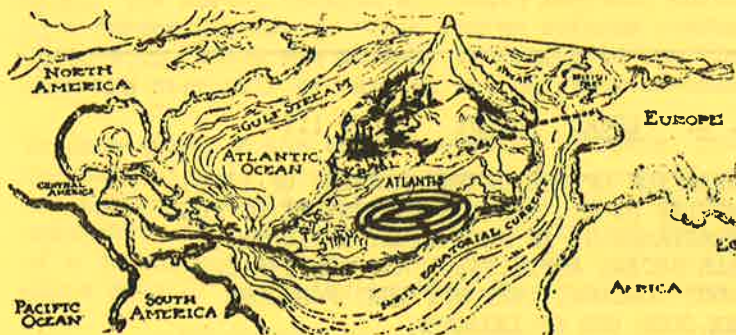
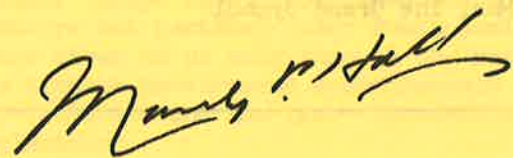
As the culture-hero of one of the world's highest civilizations, Quetzalcoatl reached the shore of Mexico upon a raft of serpents from a mysterious eastern land of seven colors. This septenary could stand for the seven islands of the Atlantis land-complex. Quetzalcoatl was an aged man of light complexion, with white hair and beard. He carried a crozier-like staff, and his long robe was decorated with crosses. He brought the arts and sciences to the primitive people of the region, established their calendar, taught medicine and art, and promoted agriculture. When departing, he promised to return and told the people to keep the laws and covenants he had given them. The Aztecs mistook Cortez for Quetzalcoatl, and brought him the crown of Mexico. This circumstance contributed largely to the Spanish conquest.

Following the systems recommended by Frobenius, there is a close parallel between stratas of style and geological stratas. If a place or tradition can be found in which the original distributions are undisturbed, it is possible to estimate physical antiquity from geology, and psychological antiquity from artistic and archeological motifs. The traces left by Atlantean colonizers, or refugees in Africa faded away, buried under the shifting forces of later events. Today, a comparatively primitive group lives on the surface of an ancient African civilization, of which only artistic fragments like aesthetic fossils remain to reward the anthropologist.

The Ethiopian kings of Egypt were not simple savages, but persons of high artistic attainments. They were also educated by a system of initiation, remnants of which still survive. For a study of this problem we recommend Albert Churchward's book Signs and Symbols of Primordial Man. Africa is linked to high antiquity by initiatory rites calculated to strengthen extra-sensory perception so that knowledge is attained through inner vision, rather than formal schooling. The African rites are similar to those of the northern Amerindian tribes of the United States, the curious tabernacle symbolism of the Hawaiian Islands, and the puberty rites of the South Pacific. In the South Pacific area there is also a strong legendry concerning the destruction of the Atlantean world. The most important conclusion reached by Frobenius is derived from his works rather than from his actual words. He suggests an ancient universal culture based primarily upon the cultivation of the faculties of the soul, and the strengthening of man's apperceptive resources. Man began to organize his cultural life around a central core of mystical experiences. Gradually, he transformed his way of life and entrusted his destiny to formal institutions for the perpetuation of tradition. This may explain why history is a record of spiritual and moral deterioration, and also why myths and legends should be examined for their possible scientific and religious content.

The recent interest in Atlantis seems to justify this Bulletin. We hope you will find it interesting and take this opportunity to thank you very sincerely for your wonderful help and friendship through the years.

Always most sincerely,



A Reconstruction of the Lost
Continent of Atlantis.

The following list of books is recommended reading. These books may be ordered directly from The Philosophical Research Society, Inc. (address on page one). Please add 35¢ for handling. Sales Tax is to be included by California residents. Note: Prices subject to change without notice.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
The Art of Chinese Landscape Painting	Anil de Silva	\$ 6.95
Art in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism	Takaaki Sawa	8.95
Astrological Aspects	C. E. O. Carter	3.50
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Acupuncture, A Layman's Guide To	Manaka/Urquhart	6.95
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Advanced Course In Yogi Philosophy & Oriental Occultism	Yogi Ramacharaka	4.50

BOOKS BY MANLY P. HALL

The Guru	\$ 5.25	Twelve World Teachers	\$ 6.50
Pathways of Philosophy	6.50	America's Assignment with Destiny	5.25
Search for Reality	10.00	The Mystical Christ	6.50
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