

Unearthing Atlantis: An Archaeological Odyssey

Charles Pellegrino , Arthur C. Clarke (Foreword by)

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In a synthesis of historical and literary, archaeological and paleontological detective work, Charles Pellegrino transfixes us with his exploration of the origins of Atlantis.

Unearthing Atlantis: An Archaeological Odyssey Details

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Molly says

One of the more interesting books I've ever read (although there's a section in the middle about pottery that drags a bit). About a volcanic eruption that destroyed a small Greek island that, according to Pellegrino, seems to have been the inspiration for the Atlantis legend. The accounts of the eruption and others are fascinating, as are the stories of what happened as a result of this particular, Biblical-class disaster.

Valerie says

I don't know what to think of Pellegrino. Some of his ideas are very interesting, and he is a vivid and entertaining thinker and writer. However, I have no yardstick to judge his science by. He never appears (to my knowledge) in any respected journals. So, although, he gives me a lot to think about, and he presents some plausible ideas, I'm not sure I would classify him as science. I'd love comments on his validity. Anyway, I enjoyed this book, as I say it gave me a lot to think about, and that is the point of reading.

Marla says

A little old at this point, but still a fascinating read.

(I've read another book by this author, but I don't remember that other one having a condescending tone that came across in certain parts of this book)

Jennifer Post says

All I can say is WOW!! I love reading Charles Pellegrino. I think I've read this about 7 times so far. All about the volcanic island Thera, what they've found, how it corresponds to Plato's description of Atlantis and the marvelous story that archaeology and geology tells.

Thomas McBryde says

The Lost Continent of Atlantis is the stuff of legend, not only that, it has become a mythological place, like Mount Olympus or Avalon. Plato wrote about it in his works, scholars, archaeologist, oceanographers, treasure hunters, and common people have all searched for it for so long. There is compelling evidence that it was there at one point and this novel by Charles Pellegrino does an excellent job at convincing the reader that this place was not myth but real.

The book reads much like an Indiana Jones adventure. The author takes us around the globe to Egypt,

Greece, Crete, Minoa, the Mediterranean Sea, and other places in search of clues of this lost civilization. Piecing together artifacts, customs, and even the migratory patterns of certain animals he concludes that something large once existed near Greece that would fit the description of Atlantis.

In one section of the book the author takes an entirely unique approach and delves into the history and creation of Atlantis, at one point taking the reader to just after the Big Bang...I've never seen writing like that before and it was astounding!

Atlantis is synonymous with mystery and wonder. Plato wrote that after a deluge, a day and a night and Atlantis was gone. Pellegrino takes the reader on that journey and brings the truth of this legend to life. For anyone with a penchant for archaeology or history this book is a great find.

Helen Jones says

I happen to love every Charles Pellegrino book I've read so far, and this was no exception. I read somewhere that he knew putting the word 'Atlantis' in the title would open him up to criticism, but if you actually read the book, it's a very well-argued theory that Atlantis was based upon what is modern day Santorini, backed up with plenty of research and first-hand experience at the site. Pellegrino also excels in drawing stories out of the dust of history, bringing a lost world to life.

A book I've read several times already, and will read again.

?oincidental Dandy says

A paleontologist by profession, Mr. Pellegrino has what few historians, much less writers, possess: the keen sense of bringing long-gone eras back to vibrant life again (a gift he shares with the great David Attenborough as well as John Romer); the ability to make history alive & interesting.

Ostensibly about the Thera explosion & the Minoan-Atlantean connection, it's so much more than that - it adroitly blends various scientific disciplines & fields to create an excellent & articulate book by a talented & engaging writer. Riveting (& highly recommended).

L. says

I LOVED this book. While it is most certainly not a quick read, it is fascinating and well worth the time. This is really more an archaeological exploration of a society than it is a lot of speculation on the idea of Atlantis. It delves, not only through ancient civilizations, but goes into religious ideals and even dips into prehistoric, climatological and big band theories. It makes for a thought provoking read, I would, however, take Pellegrino's theories with a grain of salt due to his lower standing in the academic community. All in all, I highly recommend it.

RevBrother says

Unearthing Atlantis –

This book talks about the theory that the lost city of Atlantis that people have been searching for since Plato described it in one of his stories is actually a reference to the Minoan civilization that dominated the Mediterranean before the Greeks. In his story, Plato describes a place that had a great deal of power and very advanced technology. Since Plato, and especially in more modern times, people have come with several ideas about where and what Atlantis might have been. A good deal about what we “know” about Atlantis has come from people who allegedly “channeled” Atlanteans using psychic powers: this is where all the legends of magic powers, space craft and alien beings come from. I’ve never put much stock in channeling, but I’ve also never tried it, so maybe I’m not the right person to be judging it; the story that this book presents, however, seems much more credible.

This book isn’t about magical beings or mystical powers: it’s really just a book about archeology. It mostly focuses on a city from the Minoan civilization on an island called Thera that was covered when the Volcano on the island exploded a few thousand years ago. Because it was covered under the volcanic debris, the city was well preserved when the archeologists found in the middle of the twentieth-century. One of the most notable things about this city is that it had indoor plumbing with hot and cold running water. The author postulates that this, among other things, is an example of the advanced technology that Plato talks about when he is describing Atlantis over a thousand years later. So, there were no space ships or anything like that, but there were things that would have seemed quite advanced at the time: after the Minoan civilization was destroyed, humanity did not discover indoor plumbing again until thousands of years later.

Apparently, not much is known about the Minoan civilization except for they were advanced culturally and dominated the Mediterranean during their time. According to this book, it seems that it was a peaceful civilization, and that their art, culture and technology advanced so quickly at least partly because the island geography of the area caused a competition that was dominated by a need to progress in order to survive with the resources available rather than from a fear of conquest from neighboring peoples or corrupt rulers. The book goes into quite a bit of details on all of these points, but that’s sort of what I understood in a nutshell. The Minoans also had a language that is somewhat linguistically independent from other known languages, and although we have discovered various artifacts that include samples of this writing, we are still not capable of translating it.

The central hypothesis of this book was that after the volcano on Thera erupted in the biggest explosion that the earth had seen in a long period of geologic time, the aftermath (which included a false winter and the essential destruction of neighboring islands) was so damaging that the Minoan civilization that existed on the surrounding islands collapsed as a result. This weakened state created an opportunity for the Greeks to conquer these islands and wipe out the Minoan culture.

The legend of Atlantis then came to be over a thousand years later when Plato heard the story from a relative who had heard the story from some one, who had heard the story from some one else all the way back to the person who originally heard story several hundred years before. This person was a Greek politician that decided to take a vacation in Egypt during some heated political times. While there, he spent some time with an Egyptian librarian who told him the story of an ancient civilization that had existed a long time before. He said that the Greeks had forgotten about this civilization, but that the history found in the Egyptian libraries went back a long ways, so that’s how the Egyptians knew about. I guess that most of the Egyptian books and records were later destroyed when some bishop ordered the library of Alexandria burned to the ground

during the dark ages; Alexander the Great had consolidated all of the Egyptian records there after he conquered Egypt back in the day (or something like that; remember, like Grandpa Simpson, I pieced most of what I know about history together from what I read on the back of sugar packets.) So, unfortunately we don't have those ancient books anymore. The main effect this book had on me is I now want to learn more about the Minoans and the ancient Egyptians.

Ted Moisan says

Based on the number of times I've read a book cover-to-cover, *Unearthing Atlantis* would pretty much have to be my favorite, or my desert-island book, or whatever. Pellegrino writes well about forces that shape our world and our Earth, how slowly they can progress, how suddenly and catastrophically they change. Ultimately the book is about locating ourselves as humans between these nanoseconds of massive upheaval and our own conceptions of historical, geological, and astronomical time. In other words, volcanoes r cool.

j pimper says

Thoroughly entertaining and very informative. Here is pretty much all of the current info. about the Minoans. Wow your friends (or bore them) with your knowledge! Plus, anything by Charles Pellegrino is been great.

Mel says

Having been to the Greek Island of Santorini (classically Thera), and having had the chance to walk around the volcano that did so much damage (and actually swim at its base, which was incredible) I'm very interested in reading this to see how the author links the tangible island of Thera with the supposedly mythical Atlantis. As I understand it, the inhabitants of Thera were all able to evacuate the island before the eruption occurred, which blanketed the island in volcanic ash in a Pompei like manner, while I'd always heard the story of Atlantis told as a tragedy, with everyone perishing as it was swallowed by the sea. It'll be interesting to hear how he ties Plato's theories into his own. Looking forward to it!

Katrina says

He waxes poetic for a science book

Stuart says

I wasn't as thrilled with this book as with 'Ghosts of the Titanic'. It was still interesting, but I never really got into it. It's a scientific exploration of the theory that the lost island of Atlantis is modern day Thera (Greek Island in the Aegean Sea), which 'submerged' due to an immense eruption of the volcano on it, around c1640 b.c. It's as detailed as the current archaeological excavations of the island allow it to be (allowing for the fact

that the book was written in 1991), and it also details some other huge volcanic eruptions in modern times, including Mount St Helens and St. Pierre.

Minda says

I adored this book. It's a very different way to look at history and storytelling. I have studied Thera, Akrotiri and the Atlantis myth for several years, and thought this book quite inspired.
