

New Atlantis Rising Book on the Cusp of a Revolution

A Best-Selling Alternative Science Author Reviews "Forbidden History"

• BY COLIN WILSON

Forbidden History: Extraterrestrial Intervention, Prehistoric Technologies, and the Suppressed Origin of Civilization, edited by J. Douglas Kenyon (Bear and Co., 2005)

This is a book that provoked waves of nostalgia in me, for a dozen years ago, when the tremors of the 'forbidden history' revolution were just beginning to upset the world of academic archaeology, I happened to be close to its seismic center. For all practical purposes, this consisted of two men: the subversive Egyptologist John Anthony West and the Boston geologist Robert Schoch.

One day in the autumn of 1993, I received out of the blue a letter from John West, containing a magazine article describing how he had persuaded the police sketch artist Frank Domingo to go with him to Cairo with a view to studying the face of the Sphinx, and giving his opinion on whether it could be the pharaoh Chefren, the builder of the second pyramid. Domingo, said the article, had compared the face of the Sphinx with the bust of Chefren in the Cairo Museum, and concluded that the answer was no. The chin of the Sphinx is bigger than Chefren's, and the angle from the ear to the mouth is quite different. And this, said the article, seemed to demonstrate Schoch's conclusion that the weathering of the Sphinx was caused by rain, not by wind-blown sand, and that the monument is probably around five thousand years older than it is generally supposed to be.

All this delighted me, for I had been impressed by West's 1979 book *Serpent in the Sky*, which summarized the views of that extraordinary philosopher and Egyptologist

Schwaller de Lubicz, and concluded by citing his conviction that Ancient Egypt was colonized around 9,000 B.C. by survivors from the destruction of Atlantis, and that this explained the amazingly high level of its culture in pharaonic times.

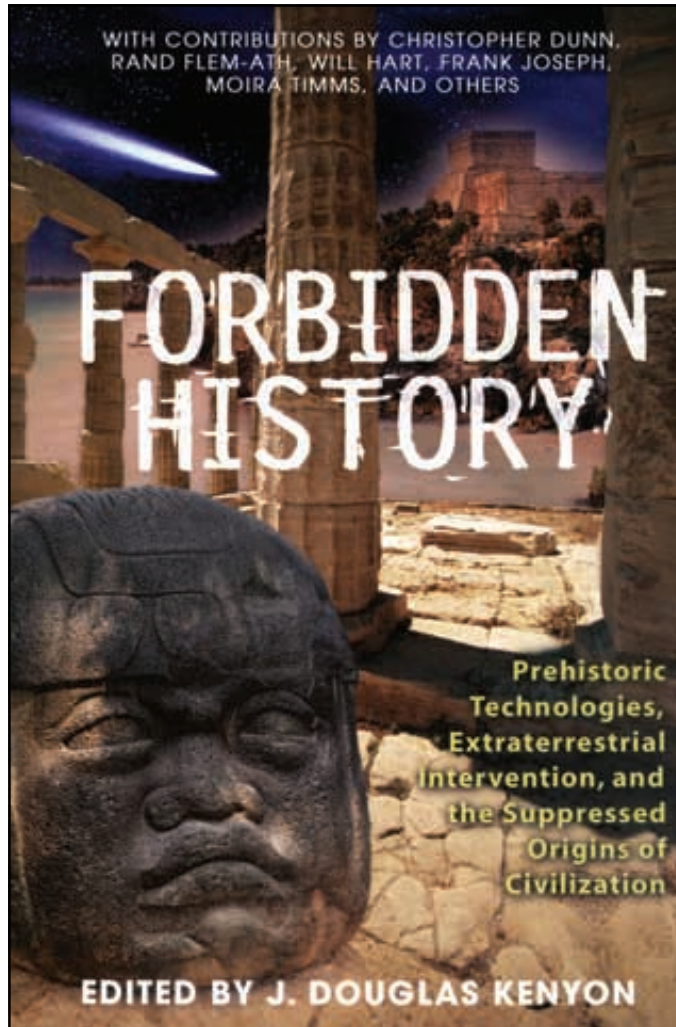
I did not know West and had never contacted him. But his letter was a marvelous piece of synchronicity, for I was planning to write a book arguing that Egypt was the heir to Atlantis, and was even then working on a film script for the producer Dino de Laurentis, based on the same idea.

on to the best-seller list for a few weeks, inducing euphoria in my publisher and bank manager.

I also became acquainted with Rand Flem-Ath, was excited by his theory that Atlantis was in Antarctica, and wrote an introduction to his first book *When the Sky Fell*. It was Rand who introduced me to *Atlantis Rising* when, in 1998, he sent me a copy of the magazine with his article 'Blueprint from Atlantis', arguing that the regular, grid-like pattern of the placement of hun-

It was not long after this that I met John West in New York, and learned from him that a fellow Englishman named Graham Hancock was writing a book arguing that civilization is thousands of years older than we assume. And John also told me about the Canadian librarian, Rand Flem-Ath, who was writing a book that theorized that the site of Atlantis had been at the South Pole. The result was that when I got back to England, I wrote to Graham Hancock and Rand Flem-Ath, and was soon in friendly correspondence with both. Graham allowed me to read his book *Fingerprints of the Gods* in its original typescript, and when he and his family drove to our house one Sunday, he and his wife Santha were severely broke, having spent the advance on travel and research. and were praying that his book would keep their bank manager at bay.

It did more, of course—made him a millionaire, and made every literate person familiar with his conviction that civilization probably dates back at least twelve thousand years, to the end of the last Ice Age. My own book *Before the Sphinx* (whose title my publisher insisted on changing to *From Atlantis to the Sphinx*, to get 'Atlantis' in) came out in May 1996, and managed to clamber



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dreds of the earth's sacred sites indicates that they were laid out by a proto-Atlantean civilization. He also suggested that he and I should collaborate on a book about the theory, and I agreed instantly, resulting in a two year collaboration that resulted in *The Atlantis Blueprint*.

Forbidden History, edited by J. Douglas Kenyon, tells the whole story, and far more, for Doug Kenyon happened to be one of those editors of genius whose finger was on the pulse of the intellectual revolution of the period, and who commissioned articles that covered the whole story from the explosive debut of Immanuel Velikovsky to Graham Hancock's exploration of the underwater architecture of Yonaguni. The result is a fascinating chronicle of history in the process of happening. It feels at times like being in the Place de la Bastille on the day the French Revolution broke out.

Before launching into its major contentions, *Forbidden History* fires a few opening salvos with Will Hart's review of *The Facts of Life: Shattering the Myth of Darwinism*, by Richard Milton. Milton is a science journalist, whose book *Alternative Science* sits by my bedside. It considers some of the notions the modern science has condemned, like cold fusion, telepathy and bioenergy,



Atlantis Rising Editor Doug Kenyon at Old Sarum Ruins in Southwest England

and mounts a vigorous defense. His other book *The Facts of Life* is not anti-Darwin, but it is anti the kind of rigid modern Darwinism that reduces nature to a mindless machine. Milton does an excellent destructive job on Richard Dawkins, and offers an interesting analysis of the half-forgotten 'vitalist' Hans Dreisch, whose ideas turn out to be much sounder than the Neo-Darwinists allow. Like Goethe, Milton sees nature as a living force, capable of self-repair and evolution. And as someone who acquired his first notion of evolution from Bernard Shaw (a name I hardly dare breathe outside the pages of *Atlantis Rising*), I am delighted to see Milton taken as seriously as he deserves.

The argument against the dead hand of scientific reductionism continues in David Lewis's piece on 'Evolution versus Crea-

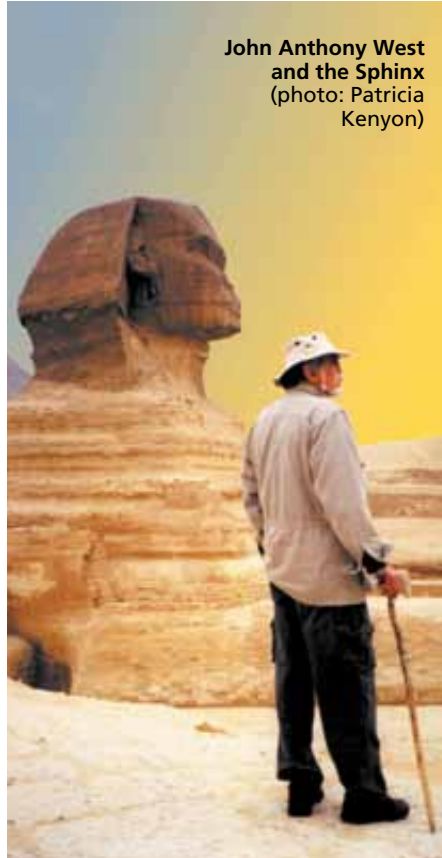
tionism', which discusses the 2-videotape set of *The Mysterious Origins of Man*, the NBC documentary (with commentary by Charlton Heston) which covers some of the staggering evidence for the ancient past unearthed by Michael Cremo and Richard Thompson in their book *Forbidden Archaeology*. I have to admit that my first reaction to the book, when I read it in 1996, was suspicion, since the authors were members of the Bhaktivedanta Institute in Florida, which taught a form of Hinduism. But I was soon convinced of their scientific credentials, as they went on to cite dozens of geological anomalies that were suppressed by the scientific establishment in the 19th century—for example, the skeleton of a kind of prehistoric horse called the Hippocampanion, dating back five million years, whose bones looked as if they were broken by the hand of man. And in 1874, archaeologist Frank Calvert found the bone of a dinotherium engraved with the picture of a 'horned quadruped'.

All this is certainly breathtaking, and I am still not sure how I feel about the evidence of how, after the great California gold rush of 1849, miners found themselves unearthing baffling artifacts—such as a stone pestle wedged tightly in a 9-million-year-old level of rock, or an iron nail embedded in a chunk of gold-bearing quartz that was known to be 38 million years old. This is the kind of thing that makes me want to say 'I pass'. I do not disbelieve this evidence. I ➤

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simply clutch my head in despair. Yet, as Doug Kenyon points out in the following chapter, which includes an interview with Michael Cremona, *Forbidden Archaeology* is a work of 'irrefutable scientific facts'. No wonder orthodox archaeologists cringe when they are asked to give their opinion. I share their angst.

In the following section, we move into the mainstream of the forbidden history revolution. Velikovsky gets a well-deserved reconsideration in no less than four chapters, and Schwaller de Lubicz, John West and Robert Schoch hove into view. So does that eccentric and brilliant mind Paul LaViolette, who believes that some of the catastrophes our solar system has encountered are due to cosmic shock waves caused by an explosion in the galaxy's center—an explosion that he believes will be repeated every 26,000 years. A less disturbing, but equally compelling view held by two British scientists, D. S. Allan and J. B. Delair, in a vast and impressively researched book called *Cataclysm! Compelling Evidence of a Cosmic Catastrophe in 9500 B.C.*, presents the case for some huge cosmic body, which they call Phaeton, hurtling through the solar system and causing the catastrophe that took place at the time Plato claims Atlantis was submerged. Like Rand and Rose Flem-Ath and Graham Hancock, they speak about the catastrophe myths that point to a day 'when



**John Anthony West
and the Sphinx**
(photo: Patricia
Kenyon)

the earth nearly died' (which is the title of Allan and Delair's book in the UK).

There follows a lengthy (ten chapter) section on Atlantology, which opens with an interview with the father of modern Atlantology, John Michell, who has made discoveries about the science that went into the building of Stonehenge and other megaliths, which leave him in no doubt that ancient man had a far more sophisticated technology than we assume, and argues that their intimate mathematical knowledge of the sun and planets reveals the existence of a tradition that seems to extend back far earlier than our present estimates of the age of civilization. Michell has always seemed to me to be a figure of immense significance.

The chapters that follow include two by Rand Flem-Ath, one outlining his theory that Atlantis was in Antarctica, and the other on the notion that the grid-pattern of ancient monuments proves that they were laid out by an ancient worldwide civilization, such as that posited by the great Charles Hapgood in *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings*. And since I worked so closely with Rand, it behooves me to explain my own present estimates of these theories.

The notion of Atlantis in Antarctica, which originally struck me as highly plausible (for reasons explained at length in our collaboration *The Atlantis Blueprint*), I have finally come to reject. My reason is simple. Plato talked about some long-standing conflict between Atlantis and the Athenians,

and I think long and hard before rejecting any of Plato's central theses. But how on earth could there be a war between Atlantis and Athens if they were separated by more than five thousand miles? And what of Schwaller's view that survivors from Atlantis created Egyptian civilization? That would not make sense either.

All this suddenly took on new meaning last year when an American explorer named Robert Sarmast set out on an expedition to the south-east of the island of Cyprus, and found a mile beneath the sea some interesting sonar evidence that Plato's Atlantis was, in fact, on a plain that was submerged when the Mediterranean came into being. (He believes this happened over a long period, in several inundations.) Originally dismissive of this notion of 'Atlantis in Cyprus', Sarmast's discoveries have made me more open-minded. And, after all, if Atlantis was Cyprus, Plato's story of the war with Athens and Schwaller's belief that survivors of the Atlantis flood fled to Egypt, would suddenly make sense.

Rand's theory about the grid-alignments of sacred sites still seems to me convincing. But I have never agreed with his notion that the sites were 'laid out' by Atlantean scientists trying to forecast future movements of the earth's crust, and I said so in *Blueprint*. Of the importance of his discovery about alignment of religious sites I have never had any doubt.

The fifth section of *Forbidden History* contains no less than five chapters by the excellent Christopher Dunn, the engineer who started from the irrefutable fact that the cutting of the vast stone blocks of Ancient Egypt could simply not be explained in terms of copper chisels and wooden mallets. How, he asked, were the Egyptians able to produce basalt surfaces machined to an accuracy of a thousandth of an inch? His notion that the Egyptians could make use of sound in ultrasonic drills sounds absurd, but it is hard to think of other plausible solutions. Any amateur archaeologist who wants to test out his powers of creating plausible theories could not do better than to start with Dunn's five chapters on Egyptian technology.

Forbidden History ends as controversially as it began with a section called 'New Paradigms to Ponder', which moves into the realm of UFOs and possible influences from other planets—something I have never doubted since reading Robert Temple's tour de force *The Sirius Mystery*, which shows that the Dogon tribe of Mali knew that Sirius B was a white dwarf. And I think that no one who is intimately acquainted with the work of the late Professor John Mack on the abduction phenomenon can doubt that something very odd is going on. (It is inter-

esting to note that towards the end, Mack also became increasingly interested in the evidence for survival after death, and was in London to research it at the time he was knocked down by a car.) But there is obviously not enough space left in the book to go into the vast field of UFOs, and the possible influence of extraterrestrials on human civilization. Doug Kenyon offers an informative chapter on Zecharia Sitchin, and acknowledges the breadth of his scholarship, while adding: 'While Sitchin's 'facts' may be beyond challenge, many of his conclusions are another matter,' and cites John West as feeling that 'there are subtleties in the high wisdom of the ancients that have completely eluded him.'

A piece on Richard Hoagland and the Face on Mars is equally informative and



Christopher Dunn (Photo: Tom Miller)

equally balanced. And a chapter on Paul LaViolette by Len Kasten places that bold and difficult thinker where he should be—among the most interesting theorists in the field. But LaViolette's theory that pulsars could be some kind of beacon created by ETs left me in the same state of mind that I feel after reading his books—fascinated but troubled scepticism.

He appears again, together with David Bohm and the Holographic Universe theory, in the book's final chapter on 'The Physicist as Mystic,' in which David Lewis argues that the old materialist paradigm is now gasping its last breath. And as if setting out to upset anybody who still clings to reductionism, he quotes at some length the words of Yogananda from *The Autobiography of a Yogi*, declaring that 'My sense of identity was no longer confined to a body, but embraced the circumambient atoms.' And he points out that while, in the jargon of modern physics, this would be described as Non-Locality in the electron sea, Yogis call it 'Oneness with Supreme Consciousness, Ultimate Being, or God'.

This makes a fitting conclusion, like the last bars of a symphony, and underlines that this book, which covers such an immense range of topics, is really about one thing: a basic change in the nature of human consciousness. ■