

*Like the Phoenix of lore, Arts
and Sciences die only to revive*



Abstract and train of thoughts

That which our far-distant forefathers had heard in the secrecy of the temples was not lost. It has reached posterity, and is now improving upon the details.

Whether the West had any right to impose upon Universal History the untrustworthy chronology of a small and unknown Jewish tribe and reject, at the same time, every data as every other tradition furnished by the classical writers of non-Jewish and non-Christian nations is questionable. 3

Had it not been for the efforts of a few Alexandrian and other mystics, Platonists and heathen philosophers, Europe would have never laid her hands even on those few Greek and Roman classics she now possesses. 3

And, having no Past of record themselves, the European critics, historians, and archæologists have not scrupled to deny one to others — whenever the concession excited a sacrifice of biblical prestige. 4

If these incompetent builders of Universal History can persuade their public to accept as authoritative their chronological and ethnological reveries, why should the Eastern student, who has access to quite different and more trustworthy materials, be expected to join in the blind belief of those who defend Western historical infallibility? 6

When the fury of critical bigotry has quite subsided, and Western men are prepared to write History in the interest of truth alone, will the proofs be found of the cyclic law of civilization. 6

Europe has neither the Titanic and Cyclopean masonry of the Ancients, nor even its parchments to preserve the records of its “existing arts and languages.” 7



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From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (SOME INQUIRIES SUGGESTED BY MR. SINNETT'S "ESOTERIC BUDDHISM" – REPLY TO AN ENGLISH F.T.S.),¹ Question III: "Are the Great Nations to be swept away in an hour?" Vol. V pp. 163-81.

No such absurdity was ever postulated. The cataclysm that annihilated the choicest sub-races of the 4th race, or the Atlanteans, was slowly preparing its work for ages; as anyone can read in *Esoteric Buddhism*.² "Poseidonis," so-called, belongs to historical times, though its fate begins to be realized and suspected only now. What was said is still asserted: every root-race is separated by a catastrophe, a cataclysm — the basis and historical foundation of the fables woven later on into the religious fabric of [164] every people, whether civilized or savage — under the names of "deluges," "showers of fire," and such like.

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That no "appreciable trace is left of such high civilization" is due to several reasons. One of these may be traced chiefly to the inability, and partially to the unwillingness (or shall we say congenital spiritual blindness of this our age?) of the modern archæologist to distinguish between excavations and ruins 50,000 and 4,000 years old, and to assign to many a grand archaic ruin its proper age and place in prehistoric times. For the latter the archæologist is not responsible for what criterion, what sign has he to lead him to infer the true date of an excavated building bearing no inscription; and what warrant has the public that the antiquary and specialist has not made an error of some 20,000 years? A fair proof of this we have in the *scientific* and *historic* labelling of the Cyclopean architecture. Traditional Archæology bearing directly upon the monumental is rejected. Oral literature, popular legends, ballads and rites, are all stifled in one word — *superstition*, and popular antiquities have become "fables" and "folk-lore." The ruder style of Cyclopean masonry, the walls of Tyrus, mentioned by Homer, are placed at the farthest end — the dawn of pre-Roman history; the walls of Epirus and Mycenæ — at the nearest. The latter are *commonly* believed the work of the Pelasgoi³ and *probably* of about 1,000 years before the Western era. As to the former, they were hedged in and driven forward by the Noachian deluge till very lately — Archbishop Usher's learned scheme, computing that earth and

¹ [Frederick W.H. Myers, co-founder of the Society for Psychic Research]

² p. 54

³ [Or Pelasgians, a term used by Classical Greeks to denote pre-Hellenic peoples in Greece, Crete and beyond.]

man “were created 4004 B.C.,” having been not only popular but actually *forced* upon the educated classes until Mr. Darwin’s triumphs. Had it not been for the efforts of a few Alexandrian and other mystics, Platonists and heathen philosophers, Europe would have never laid her hands even on those few Greek and Roman classics she now possesses. And, as among the few that escaped the dire fate, not all by any means were trustworthy — hence, perhaps, the secret of their preservation. Western scholars got early into the habit of rejecting all [165] heathen testimony, whenever truth clashed with the *dicta* of their churches. Then, again, the modern Archæologists, Orientalists and Historians are *all* Europeans; and they are *all* Christians, whether nominally or otherwise. However it may be, most of them seem to dislike to allow any relic of archaism to antedate the supposed antiquity of the Jewish records. This is a ditch into which most have slipped.

The traces of ancient civilizations exist, and they are many. Yet, it is humbly suggested, that so long as there will be reverend gentlemen mixed up unchecked in Archæological and Asiatic societies; and Christian bishops to write the supposed histories and religions of non-Christian nations, and to preside over the meetings of Orientalists — so long will Archaism and its remains be made subservient in every branch to ancient Judaism and modern Christianity.

So far, Archæology knows nothing of the sites of other and far older civilizations except the few it has stumbled upon, and to which, it has assigned their respective ages, mostly under the guidance of biblical chronology. Whether the West had any *right* to impose upon *Universal* History the untrustworthy chronology of a small and unknown Jewish tribe and reject, at the same time, every data as every other tradition furnished by the classical writers of *non-Jewish* and *non-Christian* nations is questionable. At any rate, had it accepted as willingly data coming from other sources, it might have assured itself by this time, that not only in Italy and other parts of Europe, but even on sites not very far from those it is accustomed to regard as the hot-bed of ancient ruins — Babylonia and Assyria — there are other sites where it could profitably excavate. The immense “Salt Valley” of Dasht-Beyad by Khorasan¹ covers the most ancient civilizations of the world; while the Shamo desert has had time to change from sea to land, and from fertile land to a dead desert, since the day when the *first* civilization of the 5th Race left its now invisible, and perhaps for ever hidden “traces” under its beds of sand. [166]

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Times have changed, are changing. Proof of the old civilizations and the archaic wisdom are accumulating. Though soldier-bigots and priestly schemers have burnt books and converted old libraries to base uses; though the dry rot and the insect have destroyed inestimably precious records; though within the historic period the Spanish brigands made bonfires of the works of the refined archaic American races,

¹ [Endnote 10 by Boris de Zirkoff: Province of N.E. Iran. Present name for the “Great Salt Desert” is Dasht-e-Kavir.]

which, if spared, would have solved many a riddle of history; and Omar lit the fires of the Alexandrian baths for months with the literary treasures of the Serapeum; and the Sibylline and other mystical books of Rome and Greece were destroyed in war; and the South Indian invaders of Ceylon “heaped into piles as high as the tops of the cocoanut trees” the *ollas* of the Buddhists and set them ablaze to light their victory — so to the knowledge of all, obliterating early Buddhistic annals and treatises of great importance; though this hateful and senseless Vandalism has disgraced the career of most fighting nations — still, despite everything, there are extant abundant proofs of the history of mankind, and bits and scraps come to light from time to time by what science has often called “most curious coincidences.” Europe has no very trustworthy history of her own vicissitudes and mutations, her successive races and their doings. What with their savage wars, the barbaric habits of the historic Goths, Huns, Franks, and other warrior nations, and the interested literary Vandalism of the shaveling¹ priests, who for centuries sat upon its intellectual life like a nightmare, an antiquity could not exist for Europe. And, having no Past of record themselves, the European critics, historians, and archæologists have not scrupled to deny one to others — whenever the concession excited a sacrifice of biblical prestige.

No “traces of old civilizations” we are told! And what about the Pelasgoi — the direct forefathers of the Hellenes, according to Herodotus? What about the Etruscans — the race mysterious and wonderful if any, for the historian and whose origin is the most unsolvable of problems? That which is known of them only shows that could something more be known, a whole series of prehistoric civilizations [167] might be discovered. A people described as are the Pelasgoi — a highly intellectual, receptive, active people, chiefly occupied with agriculture, warlike when necessary though preferring peace; a people who built canals as no one else, subterranean water-works, dams, walls, and Cyclopean buildings of most astounding strength; who are even *suspected* of having been the inventors of the so-called Cadmean or Phœnician writing characters from which all European alphabets are derived — who were they? Could they be shown by any possible means as the descendants of the biblical *Peleg*² their high civilization would have been thereby demonstrated, though their antiquity would still have to be dwarfed to 2247 “B.C.”

And who were the Etruscans? Shall the Easterns like the Westerns be made to believe that between the high civilizations of the pre-Roman (and we say — *pre-historic*) *Tursenoi* of the Greeks, with their twelve great cities *known* to history; their Cyclopean buildings, their plastic and pictorial arts, and the time when they were a nomadic tribe “first descended into Italy from their northern latitudes” — only a few centuries elapsed?

Shall it be still urged that the Phœnicians with their Tyre 2750 “B.C.” (a chronology, accepted by *Western* history) their commerce, fleet, learning, arts and civilization, were only a few centuries before the building of Tyre but “a small tribe of Semitic fishermen”?

¹ [shaved head]

² *Genesis* x, 25

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Or, that the Trojan war could not have been earlier than 1184 B.C., and thus *Magna Græcia* must be fixed somewhere between the 8th and the 9th century “B.C.,” and by no means thousands of years before, as was claimed by Plato and Aristotle, Homer and the Cyclic Poems,¹ derived from, and based upon, other records millenniums older? If the Christian historian, hampered by his chronology, and the free thinker by lack of necessary data, feel bound to stigmatize every *non-Christian* or *non-Western* chronology as “obviously fanciful,” “purely mythical” and “not worthy of a moment’s consideration,” how shall one wholly dependent upon Western guides get at the truth? And if these incompetent builders of Universal History can persuade their public to accept as [168] authoritative their chronological and ethnological reveries, why should the Eastern student, who has access to quite different — and we make bold to say, more trustworthy — materials, be expected to join in the blind belief of those who defend Western historical infallibility? He believes — on the strength of the documentary evidence, left by Yavanāchārya (Pythagoras) 607 “B.C.” in India, and that of his own national “temple records,” that instead of giving hundreds we may safely give thousands of years to the foundation of *Cumæ*² and *Magna Græcia*,³ of which it was the pioneer settlement. That the civilization of the latter had already become effete when Pythagoras, the great pupil of Āryan Masters went to Croton. And, having no biblical bias to overcome, he feels persuaded that, if it took the Celtic and Gælic tribes *Britannicæ Insulæ*,⁴ with the ready-made civilizations of Rome before their eyes, and acquaintance with that of the Phœnicians whose trade with them began a thousand years before the Christian era; and to crown all with the definite help later of the Normans and Saxons — two thousand years before they could build their mediæval cities, not even remotely comparable with those of the Romans; and it took them two thousand five hundred years to get half as civilized; then, that instead of that hypothetical period benevolently styled the childhood of the race being within easy reach of the Apostles and the early Fathers, it must be relegated to an enor-

¹ [Poems of the Epic Cycle, *i.e.*, a collection of Ancient Greek epic poems, composed in dactylic hexameter and related to the story of the Trojan War, including the *Cypria*, the *Aethiopis*, the so-called *Little Iliad*, the *Iliupersis*, the *Nostoi*, and the *Telegony*. Scholars sometimes include the two Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, among the poems of the Epic Cycle, but the term is more often used to specify the non-Homeric poems as distinct from the Homeric ones.]

² [The name given by Romans to *Kūμη*, the first ancient Greek colony on the mainland of Italy, founded by settlers from Euboea in the 8th century B.C. and soon becoming one of the strongest colonies. It later became a rich Roman city, the remains of which lie near the modern village of Cuma, a frazione of the comune Bacoli and Pozzuoli in the Metropolitan City of Naples, Campania, Italy.]

³ [*i.e.*, Great Greece (Μεγάλη Ἑλλάς) the name given by the Romans to the coastal areas of Southern Italy in the present-day regions of Campania, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily; these regions were extensively populated by Greek settlers.]

⁴ [British Isles]

mously earlier time. Surely if it took the barbarians of Western Europe so many centuries to develop a language and create empires, then the nomadic tribes of the “mythical” periods ought in common fairness since they never came under the fructifying energy of that Christian influence to which we are asked to ascribe all the scientific enlightenment of this age — about ten thousand years to build their Tyres and their Veii, their Sidons and Carthages. As *other* Troys lie under the surface of the topmost one in the Troad; and other and higher civilizations were exhumed by Mariette-Bey under the stratum of sand from which the archaeological collections of Lepsius, Abbott, and the British Museum were taken; and six Hindu [169] “Delhis,” superposed and hidden away out of sight, formed the pedestal upon which the Mogul conqueror built the gorgeous capital whose ruins still attest the splendour of his Delhi; so when the fury of critical bigotry has quite subsided, and Western men are prepared to write History in the interest of truth alone, will the proofs be found of the cyclic law of civilization. Modern Florence lifts her beautiful form above the tomb of Etruscan Florentia, which in her turn rose upon the hidden vestiges of anterior towns. And so also Arezzo, Perugia, Lucca and many other European sites now occupied by modern towns and cities, are based upon the relics of archaic civilizations whose period covers ages incomputable, and whose names Echo has forgotten to even whisper through “the corridors of Time.”

When the Western historian has finally and unanswerably proven who were the Pelasgoi, at least, and who the Etruscans, and the (as) mysterious Iapygians, who seem also to have had an earlier acquaintance with writing — as proved by their inscriptions — than the Phœnicians, then only may he menace the Asiatic into acceptance of his own arbitrary data and dogmas. Then also may he tauntingly ask “how it is that no appreciable trace is left of such high civilizations as are described in the Past.”

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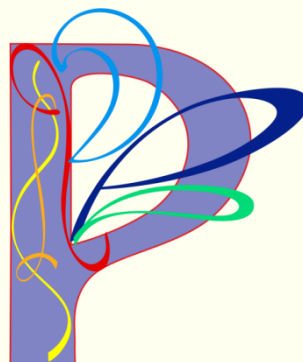
“Is it supposed that our present European civilization, with its offshoots . . . can be destroyed by any inundation or conflagration . . . ?”

More easily than was many another civilization. Europe has neither the Titanic and Cyclopean masonry of the Ancients, nor even its parchments to preserve the records of its “existing arts and languages.” Its civilization is too recent, too rapidly growing to leave any positively indestructible relics of either its architecture, arts or sciences. What is there in the whole [of] Europe that could be regarded as even approximately indestructible, without mentioning the *débâcle* of the geological upheaval that follows generally such cataclysms? Is it its ephemeral Crystal Palaces, its theatres, railways, modern fragile furniture; or its electric [170] telegraphs, phonographs, telephones and micrographs? While each of the former is at the mercy of fire and cyclone, the last enumerated marvels of modern science can be destroyed by a child breaking them to atoms. When we know of the destruction of the “Seven World’s Wonders,” of Thebes, Tyre, the Labyrinth and the Egyptian pyramids, and temples and giant palaces, which we now see, are slowly crumbling into the dust of the deserts, being reduced to atoms by the hand of Time — lighter and far more merciful than any cataclysm —

the question seems to us rather the outcome of modern pride than of stern reasoning. Is it your daily newspapers and periodicals, rags of a few days; your fragile books bearing the records of all your grand civilization, withal liable to become annihilated after a few meals are made on them by the white ants, that are regarded as invulnerable? And why should European civilization escape the common lot? It is from the lower classes, the units of the great masses who form the majorities in nations, that survivors will escape in greater numbers — and these know nothing of the arts, sciences, or languages except their own, and those very imperfectly. The arts and sciences are like the Phoenix of old: they die but to revive. And when the question found on page 58 of *Esoteric Buddhism* concerning “the curious rush of human progress within the last two thousand years,” was first propounded, Mr. Sinnett’s correspondent might have made his answer more complete by saying:

. . . this rush, this progress, and the abnormal rapidity with which one discovery follows the other, ought to be a sign to human intuition that what you look upon in the light of “discoveries” are merely *re-discoveries*,¹ which, following the law of gradual progress you make more perfect, yet in enunciating, you are not the first to explain them.

We learn more easily that which we have heard about, or learnt in childhood. If, as averred, the Western nations have separated themselves from the great Āryan stock, it becomes evident that the races that first peopled Europe were inferior to the root-race which had the Vedas and the pre-historic [171] Rishis. That which your far-distant forefathers had heard in the secrecy of the temples was not lost. It reached their posterity, which is now simply improving upon details.



¹ [*i.e.*, there is nothing new under the sun. Cf. *Ecclesiastes* 1, 4-11]