

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

PART V. The Colonies Of Atlantis.

Chapter III.

The Colonies Of The Mississippi Valley

If we will suppose a civilized, maritime people to have planted colonies, in the remote past, along the headlands and shores of the Gulf of Mexico, spreading thence, in time, to the tablelands of Mexico and to the plains and mountains of New Mexico and Colorado, what would be more natural than that these adventurous navigators, passing around the shores of the Gulf, should, sooner or later, discover the mouth of the Mississippi River; and what more certain than that they would enter it, explore it, and plant colonies along its shores, wherever they found a fertile soil and a salubrious climate. Their outlying provinces would penetrate even into regions where the severity of the climate would prevent great density of population or development of civilization.

The results we have presupposed are precisely those which we find to have existed at one time in the Mississippi Valley.

The Mound Builders of the United States were pre-eminently a river people. Their densest settlements and greatest works were near the Mississippi and its tributaries. Says Foster ("Prehistoric Races," p. 110), "The navigable streams were the great highways of the Mound Builders."

Mr. Fontaine claims ("How the World was Peopled") that this ancient people constructed "levees" to control and utilize the bayous of the Mississippi for the purpose of agriculture and commerce. The Yazoo River is called *Yazoo-okhinnah*--the River of Ancient Ruins. "There is no evidence that they had reached the Atlantic coast; no authentic remains of the Mound Builders are found in the New England States, nor even in the State of New York." ("North Americans of Antiquity," p. 28.) This would indicate that the civilization of this people advanced up the Mississippi River and spread out over its tributaries, but did not cross the Alleghany {sic} Mountains. They reached, however, far up the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers, and thence into Oregon. The headwaters of the Missouri became one of their great centres of population; but their chief sites were upon the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. In Wisconsin we

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find the northern central limit of their work; they seem to have occupied the southern counties of the State, and the western shores of Lake Michigan. Their circular mounds are found in Minnesota and Iowa, and some very large ones in Dakota. Illinois and Indiana were densely populated by them: it is believed that the vital centre of their colonies was near the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

The chief characteristic of the Mound Builders was that from which they derived their name—the creation of great structures of earth or stone, not unlike the pyramids of Mexico and Egypt. Between Alton and East St. Louis is the great mound of Cahokia, which may be selected as a type of their works: it rises ninety-seven feet high, while its square sides are 700 and 500 feet respectively. There was a terrace on the south side 160 by 300 feet, reached by a graded way; the summit of the pyramid is flattened, affording a platform 200 by 450 feet. It will thus be seen that the area covered by the mound of Cahokia is about as large as that of the greatest pyramid of Egypt, Cheops, although its height is much less.

The number of monuments left by the Mound Builders is extraordinarily great. In Ohio alone there are more than ten thousand tumuli, and from one thousand to fifteen hundred enclosures. Their mounds were not cones but four-sided pyramids—their sides, like those of the Egyptian pyramids, corresponding with the cardinal points. (Foster's "Prehistoric Races," p. 112.)

The Mound Builders had attained a considerable degree of civilization; they were able to form, in the construction of their works, perfect circles and perfect squares of great accuracy, carried over the varying surface of the country. One large enclosure comprises exactly forty acres. At Hopetown, Ohio, are two walled figures—one a square, the other a circle—each containing precisely twenty acres. They must have possessed regular scales of measurement, and the means of determining angles and of computing the area to be enclosed by the square and the circle, so that the space enclosed by each might exactly correspond.

"The most skilful engineer of this day would find it difficult," says Mr. Squier, "without the aid of instruments, to lay down an accurate square of the great dimensions above represented, measuring, as they do, more than four-fifths of a mile in circumference. . . . But we not only find accurate squares and perfect circles, but also, as we have seen, octagons of great dimensions."

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They also possessed an accurate system of weights; bracelets of copper on the arms of a skeleton have been found to be of uniform size, measuring each two and nine-tenth inches, and each weighing *precisely four ounces*.

They built great military works surrounded by walls and ditches, with artificial lakes in the centre to supply water. One work, Fort Ancient, on the Little Miami River, Ohio, has a circuit of between four and five miles; the embankment was twenty feet high; the fort could have held a garrison of sixty thousand men with their families and provisions.

Not only do we find pyramidal structures of earth in the Mississippi Valley very much like the pyramids of Egypt, Mexico, and Peru, but a very singular structure is repeated in Ohio and Peru: I refer to the double walls or prolonged pyramids, if I may coin an expression, shown in the cut page 375.

GRAND WAY NEAR PIKETON, OHIO.

The Mound Builders possessed chains of fortifications reaching from the southern line of New York diagonally across the country, through Central and Northern Ohio to the Wabash. It would appear probable, therefore, that while they

WALLS AT GRAN-CHIMU, PERU.

advanced from the south it was from the north-east the savage races came who drove them south or exterminated them.

At Marietta, Ohio, we find a combination of the cross and pyramid., (See p. 334, *ante*.) At Newark, Ohio, are extensive

CROSS AND PYRAMID MOUND, OHIO.

and intricate works: they occupy an area two miles square, embraced within embankments twelve miles long. One of the mounds is a threefold symbol, like a bird's foot; the central mound is 155 feet long, and the other two each 110 feet it length. Is this curious design a reminiscence of Atlantis and the three-pronged trident of Poseidon? (See 4th fig., p, 242, *ante*.)

The Mound Builders made sun-dried brick mixed with rushes, as the Egyptians made sun-dried bricks mixed with straw; they worked in copper,

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silver, lead, and there are evidences, as we shall see, that they wrought even in iron.

Copper implements are very numerous in the mounds. Copper axes, spear-heads, hollow buttons, bosses for ornaments, bracelets, rings, etc., are found in very many of them strikingly similar to those of the Bronze Age in Europe. In one in Butler County, Ohio, was found a copper fillet around the head of a skeleton, with strange devices marked upon it.

Silver ornaments have also been found, but not in such great numbers. They seem to have attached a high value to silver, and it is often found in thin sheets, no thicker than paper, wrapped over copper or stone ornaments so neatly as almost to escape detection. The great esteem in which they held a metal so intrinsically valueless as silver, is another evidence that they must have drawn their superstitions from the same source as the European nations.

Copper is also often found in this manner plated over stone pipes, presenting an unbroken metallic lustre, the overlapping edges so well polished as to be scarcely discoverable. Beads and stars made of shells have sometimes been found doubly plated, first with copper then with silver.

The Mound Builders also understood the art of casting metals, or they held intercourse with some race who did; a copper axe it "cast" has been found in the State of New York. (See Lubbock's "Prehistoric Times," p. 254, note.) Professor Foster ("Prehistoric Races," p. 259) also proves that the ancient people of the Mississippi Valley possessed this art, and he gives us representations of various articles plainly showing the marks of the mould upon them.

A rude article in the shape of an axe, composed of pure lead, weighing about half a pound, was found in sinking a well within the trench of the ancient works at Circleville. There can be no doubt it was the production of the Mound Builders, as galena has often been found on the altars in the mounds.

It has been generally thought, by Mr. Squier and others, that there were no evidences that the Mound Builders were acquainted with the use of iron, or that their plating was more than a simple overlaying of one metal on another, or on some foreign substance.

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Some years since, however, a mound was opened at Marietta, Ohio, which seems to have refuted these opinions. Dr. S. P. Hildreth, in a letter to the American Antiquarian Society, thus speaks of it:

"Lying immediately over or on the forehead of the body were found three large circular bosses, or ornaments for a sword-belt or buckler; they are composed of copper overlaid with a thick plate of silver. The fronts are slightly convex, with a depression like a cup in the centre, and they measure two inches and a quarter across the face of each. On the back side, opposite the depressed portion, is a copper rivet or nail, around which are two separate plates by which they were fastened to the leather. Two small pieces of leather were found lying between the plates of one of the bosses; they resemble the skin of a mummy, and seem to have been preserved by the salts of copper. Near the side of the body was found a plate of silver, which appears to have been the upper part of a sword scabbard; it is six inches in length, two in breadth, and weighs one ounce. It seems to have been fastened to the scabbard by three or four rivets, the holes of which remain in the silver.

"Two or three pieces of copper tube were also found, *filled with iron rust*. These pieces, from their appearance, composed the lower end of the scabbard, near the point of the sword. No signs of the sword itself were discovered, except the rust above mentioned.

"The mound had every appearance of being as old as any in the neighborhood, and was at the first settlement of Marietta covered with large trees. It seems to have been made for this single personage, as this skeleton alone was discovered. The bones were very much decayed, and many of them crumbled to dust upon exposure to the air."

Mr. Squier says, "These articles have been critically examined, and it is beyond doubt that the copper bosses were absolutely *plated*, not simply *overlaid*, with silver. Between the copper and the silver exists a connection such as, it seems to me, could only be produced by heat; and if it is admitted that these are genuine relics of the Mound Builders, it must, at the same time, be admitted that they possessed the difficult art of plating one metal upon another. There is but one alternative, viz., that they had occasional or constant intercourse with a people advanced in the arts, from whom these articles were obtained. Again, if Dr. Hildreth is not mistaken, *oxydized iron* or steel was also discovered in connection with the above remains, from which also follows the extraordinary conclusion that *the Mound Builders were acquainted with*

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the use of iron, the conclusion being, of course, subject to the improbable alternative already mentioned."

In connection with this subject, we would refer to the interesting evidences that the copper mines of the shore of Lake Superior had been at some very remote period worked by the Mound Builders. There were found deep excavations, with rude ladders, huge masses of rock broken off, also numerous stone tools, and all the evidences of extensive and long-continued labor. It is even said that the great Ontonagon mass of pure copper which is now in Washington was excavated by these ancient miners, and that when first found its surface showed numerous marks of their tools.

There seems to be no doubt, then, that the Mound Builders were familiar with the use of copper, silver, and lead, and in all probability of iron. They possessed various mechanical contrivances. They were very probably acquainted with the lathe. Beads of shell have been found looking very much like ivory, and showing the *circular striæ*, identical with those produced by turning in a lathe.

In a mound on the Scioto River was found around the neck of a skeleton triple rows of beads, made of marine shells and the tusks of some animal. "Several of these," says Squier, "still retain their polish, and bear marks which seem to indicate that they were turned in some machine, instead of being carved or rubbed into shape by hand."

"Not among the least interesting and remarkable relics," continues the same author, "obtained from the mounds are the stone tubes. They are all carved from fine-grained materials, capable of receiving a polish, and being made ornamental as well as useful. The finest specimen yet discovered, and which can scarcely be surpassed in the delicacy of its workmanship, was found in a mound in the immediate vicinity of Chillicothe. It is composed of a compact variety of slate. This stone cuts with great clearness, and receives a fine though not glaring polish. The tube under notice is thirteen inches long by one and one-tenth in diameter; one end swells slightly, and the other terminates in a broad, flattened, triangular mouth-piece of fine proportions, which is carved with *mathematical precision*. It is drilled throughout; the bore is seven-tenths of an inch in diameter at the cylindrical end of the tube, and retains that calibre until it reaches the point where the cylinder subsides into the mouth-piece, when it contracts gradually to one-tenth of an inch. The inner surface of the tube is perfectly smooth till within a short distance of the point of

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contraction. *For the remaining distance the circular striæ, formed by the drill in boring, are distinctly marked.* The carving upon it is very fine."

That they possessed saws is proved by the fact that on some fossil teeth found in one of the mounds the *striæ* of the teeth of the saw could be distinctly perceived.

When we consider that some of their porphyry carvings will turn the edge of the best-tempered knife, we are forced to conclude that they possessed that singular process, known to the Mexicans and Peruvians of tempering copper to the hardness of steel.

We find in the mounds adzes similar in shape to our own, with the edges bevelled from the inside.

Drills and gravers of copper have also been found, with chisel-shaped edges or sharp points.

"It is not impossible," says Squier, "but, on the contrary, very probable, from a close inspection of the mound pottery, that the ancient people possessed the simple approximation toward the potter's wheel; and the polish which some of the finer vessels possess is due to other causes than vitrification."

Their sculptures show a considerable degree of progress. They consist of figures of birds, animals, reptiles, and the faces of men, carved from various kinds of stones, upon the bowls of pipes, upon toys, upon rings, and in distinct and separate figures. We give the opinions of those who have examined them.

Mr. Squier observes: "Various though not abundant specimens of their skill have been recovered, which in elegance of model, delicacy, and finish, as also in fineness of material, come fully up to the best Peruvian specimens, to which they bear, in many respects, a close resemblance. The bowls of most of the stone pipes are carved in miniature figures of animals, birds, reptiles, etc. All of them are executed with strict fidelity to nature, and with exquisite skill. Not only are the features of the objects faithfully represented, but their peculiarities and habits are in some degree exhibited. . . . The two heads here presented, intended to represent the eagle, are far superior in point of finish, spirit, and truthfulness, to any miniature carvings, ancient or modern, which

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have fallen under the notice of the authors. The peculiar defiant expression of the king of birds is admirably preserved in the carving, which in this respect, more than any other, displays the skill of the artist."

FROM THE MOUNDS OF THE OHIO VALLEY

Traces of cloth with "doubled and twisted fibre" have been found in the mounds; also matting; also shuttle-like tablets, used in weaving. There have also been found numerous musical pipes, with mouth-pieces and stops; lovers' pipes, curiously and delicately carved, reminding us of Bryant's lines--

"Till twilight came, and lovers walked and wooed
In a forgotten language; and old tunes,
From instruments of unremembered forms,
Gave the soft winds a voice."

There is evidence which goes to prove that the Mound Builders had relations with the people of a semi-tropical region in the direction of Atlantis. Among their sculptures, in Ohio, we find accurate representations of the lamantine, manatee, or sea-cow--found to-day on the shores of Florida, Brazil, and Central America--and of the toucan, a tropical and almost exclusively South American bird. Sea-shells from the Gulf, pearls from the Atlantic, and obsidian from Mexico, have also been found side by side in their mounds.

The antiquity of their works is now generally conceded. "From the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon," says Mr. Gliddon, "we have bones of at least two thousand five hundred years old; from the pyramids and the catacombs of Egypt both mummied and unmummied crania have been taken, of still higher antiquity, in perfect preservation; nevertheless, the skeletons deposited in our Indian mounds, from the Lakes to the Gulf, are crumbling into dust through age alone."

All the evidence points to the conclusion that civilized or semi-civilized man has dwelt on the western continent from a vast antiquity. Maize, tobacco, quinoa, and the mandico plants have been cultivated so long that their wild originals have quite disappeared.

"The only species of palm cultivated by the South American Indians, that known as the *Gulielma speciosa*, has lost through that culture its original nut-like seed, and is dependent on the hands of its cultivators for its life. Alluding to the above-named plants Dr. Brinton ("Myths of the New World," p. 37)

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remarks, 'Several are sure to perish unless fostered by human care. What numberless ages does this suggest? How many centuries elapsed ere man thought of cultivating Indian corn? How many more ere it had spread over nearly a hundred degrees of latitude and lost all resemblance to its original form?' In the animal kingdom certain animals were domesticated by the aborigines from so remote a period that scarcely any of their species, as in the case of the lama of Peru, were to be found in a state of unrestrained freedom at the advent of the Spaniards." (Short's "North Americans of Antiquity," p. 11.)

The most ancient remains of man found in Europe are distinguished by a flattening of the tibia; and this peculiarity is found to be present in an exaggerated form in some of the American mounds. This also points to a high antiquity.

"None of the works, mounds, or enclosures are found on the lowest formed of the river terraces which mark the subsidence of the streams, and as there is no good reason why their builders should have avoided erecting them on that terrace while they raised them promiscuously on all the others, it follows, not unreasonably, that this terrace has been formed since the works were erected." (Baldwin's "Ancient America," p. 47.)

We have given some illustrations showing the similarity between the works of the Mound Builders and those of the Stone and Bronze Age in Europe. (See pp. 251, 260, 261, 262, 265, 266, ante.)

The Mound Builders retreated southward toward Mexico, and probably arrived there some time between A.D. 29 and A.D. 231, under the name of Nahuas. They called the region they left in the Mississippi Valley "Hue Hue Tlapalan"--*the old, old red land*--in allusion, probably, to the red-clay soil of part of the country.

In the mounds we find many works of copper but none of bronze. This may indicate one of two things: either the colonies which settled the Mississippi Valley may have left Atlantis prior to the discovery of the art of manufacturing bronze, by mixing one part of tin with nine parts of copper, or, which is more probable, the manufactures of the Mound Builders may have been made on the spot; and as they had no tin within their territory they used copper alone, except, it may be, for such tools as were needed to carve stone, and these, perhaps, were hardened with tin. It is known that the Mexicans

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possessed the art of manufacturing true bronze; and the intercourse which evidently existed between Mexico and the Mississippi Valley, as proved by the presence of implements of obsidian in the mounds of Ohio, renders it probable that the same commerce which brought them obsidian brought them also small quantities of tin, or tin-hardened copper implements necessary for their sculptures.

The proofs, then, of the connection of the Mound Builders with Atlantis are:

1. Their race identity with the nations of Central America who possessed Flood legends, and whose traditions all point to an eastern, over-sea origin; while the many evidences of their race identity with the ancient Peruvians indicate that they were part of one great movement of the human race, extending from the Andes to Lake Superior, and, as I believe, from Atlantis to India.
2. The similarity of their civilization, and their works of stone and bronze, with the civilization of the Bronze Age in Europe.
3. The presence of great truncated mounds, kindred to the pyramids of Central America, Mexico, Egypt, and India.
4. The representation of tropical animals, which point to an intercourse with the regions around the Gulf of Mexico, where the Atlanteans were colonized.
5. The fact that the settlements of the Mound Builders were confined to the valley of the Mississippi, and were apparently densest at those points where a population advancing up that, stream would first reach high, healthy, and fertile lands.
6. The hostile nations which attacked them came from the north; and when the Mound Builders could no longer hold the country, or when Atlantis stink in the sea, they retreated in the direction whence they came, and fell back upon their kindred races in Central America, as the Roman troops in Gaul and Britain drew southward upon the destruction of Rome.
7. The Natchez Indians, who are supposed to have descended from the Mound Builders, kept a perpetual fire burning before an altar, watched by old men who were a sort of priesthood, as in Europe.
8. If the tablet said to have been found in a mound near Davenport, Iowa, is genuine, which appears probable, the Mound Builders must either have possessed an alphabet, or have held intercourse with some people who did. (See "North Americans of Antiquity," p. 38.) This singular

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relic exhibits what appears to be a sacrificial mound with a fire upon it; over it are the sun, moon, and stars, and above these a mass of hieroglyphics which bear some resemblance to the letters of European alphabets, and especially to that unknown alphabet which appears upon the inscribed bronze celt found near Rome. (See p. 258 of this work.) For instance, one of the letters on the celt is this, ###; on the Davenport tablet we find this sign, ###; on the celt we have ###; on the tablet, ###; on the celt we have ###; on the tablet, ###.