

# The Atlantis Research Charter: A defined position in the colourful world of Atlantis research

Thorwald C. Franke, Ulrich Hofmann, Ulf Richter (†),  
Christian M. Schoppe, Siegfried G. Schoppe  
*Independent Researchers, Germany*

## ABSTRACT

The Atlantis Research Charter defines Atlantis research as a science. It defends Atlantis research against typical misunderstandings and criticism: Against the pseudo-science of non-scientists, against the dogmatism of established scientists and against the abuse of Plato's Atlantis for political and other reasons. Everybody is invited to reconsider his view on Plato's Atlantis and Atlantis research on the basis of this charter and to individually express his own views.

## 1. WHY THIS CHARTER?

Plato's Atlantis is generally regarded to be an irrational and irrelevant issue, that only eccentric and mystic people are dealing with. Professional scientists mostly hurry to dismiss Atlantis dogmatically as an invention of Plato and to stigmatize Atlantis researchers *a priori* as charlatans and weirdos, because they believe this to be the only way to distinguish themselves from the existing pseudo-scientific contributors to Plato's Atlantis.

This atmosphere heavily complicates a reasonable reflection on questions regarding the Atlantis issue and is not acceptable with respect to science. The Atlantis Research Charter wants to be a contribution to remedy this conflict.

## 2. HOW DOES THE CHARTER HELP?

The Atlantis Research Charter gives a definition of Atlantis research as a science and expresses what it stands for resp. what it opposes. Thus the Charter provides an area for the free development of reason secured by clear frontiers which cannot be crushed any more by pseudo-science and dogmatism.

The Charter provides Atlantis researchers with a public point of reference supporting them to present themselves straightforwardly and to quickly clear up misunderstandings and prejudices. In public the Atlantis Research Charter can create awareness of the current problems in dealing with Plato's Atlantis, promote the ability to distinguish between reasonable and irrational arguments, and thus the Charter can lead to an increased level of confidence and interest in Atlantis research.

A clear demarcation of pseudo-scientific handling of Atlantis can in turn encourage even more professional scientists to reconsider the possibility of the existence of Plato's Atlantis. The Charter supports Atlantis researchers in their communication by providing common definitions and by developing a community with common values and objectives. Opponents of the Charter's values and objectives are put on the defensive.

### 3. HOW DOES THE CHARTER WORK?

Deliberately the charter's initiators did not establish a charter's society or membership and did not collect supporters' signatures. The intention of the charter is not to include or exclude someone from Atlantis research and not to appoint a judging authority over Atlantis researchers but to create awareness and to make people think and decide on their own.

The history of Atlantis research reveals that it is not a good idea to put pressure on Atlantis researchers. A warning example is the *Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes*, which failed in the nineteen-twenties although it had the best intentions.

This means that the Atlantis Research Charter will have its effect only by the actions taken by its readers. So think about the charter's principles and express your own views! Discuss the Charter with others interested in the Atlantis issue! Examine your own Atlantis hypothesis on the basis of the Charter! Can you share the principles of the charter? Then commit yourself to the Atlantis Research Charter by your own statements and publications and by linking to the Charter's website!

If you cannot share the principles of this Atlantis Research Charter you are invited to find like-minded dissenters and to establish alternative charters. This will result in more transparency in the competition of different approaches of Atlantis research. Not by excluding anybody, but by sorting and structuring the community of Atlantis researchers.

### 4. THE MAKING OF THE CHARTER

At the end of the Atlantis 2005 conference in Milos/Greece 24 criteria have been defined how to identify Atlantis. The German Atlantis researcher Thorwald C. Franke could not find answers on some very basic problems of Atlantis research in these 24 criteria. So he wrote a first draft version of the Atlantis Research Charter and invited some other German Atlantis researchers, known to him, to contribute to the Charter's text by reviewing the draft. Ulf Richter submitted most of the review comments and discussed the Charter's statements with high passion. Finally Ulf Richter cared for a proper translation into English. The Atlantis Research Charter then has been published on Franke's website [www.atlantis-scout.de](http://www.atlantis-scout.de) in March 2006. The Atlantis Research Charter was originally initiated by Thorwald C. Franke, Ulrich Hofmann, Ulf Richter, Christian M. Schoppe and Siegfried G. Schoppe. They support the process of stimulation and improvement of Atlantis research which started at the International Conference Atlantis 2005 on Milos/Greece.

### 5. THE ATLANTIS RESEARCH CHARTER

March 2006

#### An Open Issue

We consider the question of Plato's Atlantis to be an open issue. Until now Atlantis could neither be found and put in the course of known history nor has it been conclusively proved that Plato's Atlantis is an invention or misunderstanding.

We demand openness for research in both directions. We reject premature conclusions in either direction, as well as the resulting denial to enter into dialogue resp. the resulting hostility towards contrary positions.

## For a Scientific Approach

We base our research on scientific methods. This includes – among others – rationality, objectivity, verifiable documentation, clarity, up-to-dateness and expert research as well as working in different disciplines and the ability to address knowledge gaps and open issues as such.

We stand for an evolving process of knowledge acquisition in the scientific community as well as for individual researchers. This includes tolerance towards contributions from different scientific levels, as long as their authors assess their own level correctly and show the ability to develop. A living science never consists of its distinguished experts alone. Nobody should be prevented from entering into exploration of the Atlantis issue playfully and driven by natural curiosity.

We do not reject established science, but share its values and rules and are, as professional scientists and private researchers, *de facto* part of it.

## Against Pseudo-Science

We reject the approach which takes Plato's Atlantis dialogues literally word for word. Like all ancient texts they require interpretation in their context of creation and tradition. We especially consider Plato's datings and the imagination of Atlantis as the eighth continent in the Atlantic Ocean as scientifically long-since disproved and therefore we interpret them as errors derived from tradition or as inventions.

We reject the belief that a possible existence of Plato's Atlantis could not be understood within the framework of established historiography and would require complete rewriting of history. We reject any *deus ex machina*, be it extraterrestrial influence, flight discs, nuclear weapons, energy crystals, earth's crust shift or hollow earth and world ice theories.

We reject oversimplified conclusions and superficial interpretations. The historical content of myths may not be overestimated; we dismiss an unrestrained Euhemerism. We regret the prevailing ignorance and disorientation regarding ancient times and texts.

We reject frankly-expressed disagreement with rationality as well as a lack of verifiable documentation and clarity in structure and content of contributions to the Atlantis research. We regret the recurrent repetition of long-since disproved errors.

## Against Dogmatism

We reject not being allowed – against sound reason – to interpret Plato's Atlantis dialogues, but strive for a scientific way to deal with them as is accepted and practiced with every other ancient text. We dismiss the false doctrine that every interpretation of Plato's Atlantis dialogue is *a priori* an illegitimate falsification of the original.

We reject the dismissal of the Atlantis issue as irrelevant. Content and context of Plato's dialogues touch important aspects of our past. We regret a far too extensive specialization of the sciences thus losing sight of the greater context.

We reject the mystification and mythification of Plato's Atlantis which has developed over thousands of years regarding the original. Atlantis is no myth but either historic reality or invention or misunderstanding.

We reject the adaptation of a certain view of Atlantis in order to please certain colleagues in the scientific community or for the sake of loyalty towards a uniform *esprit de corps*. We also regret that fear of financial and social disadvantages can be a motivation for a certain view of Atlantis.

We reject the directing of arguments against Atlantis researchers rather than against their Atlantis hypotheses. We reject the abuse of authority, publicity and reputation to push through hypotheses. It is not acceptable to deny not only the truth of others' hypotheses but also to deny their right to exist in a free world.

## Against Abuse

We reject the combination of Atlantis research with sensationalism and greed for money.

We reject the abuse of Plato's Atlantis for political and ideological purposes, be it nationalism, socialism or racism. We regret a treatment of Plato's Atlantis which is based on excessive enthusiasm and biased love for local history.

We reject any claim on Plato's Atlantis by religions or mysticism. Atlantis does not fit into the category of metaphysical enthusiasm like New Age and parapsychology.

## 6. ROGER DÉVIGNE'S EDITORIAL 1929

What is the Situation of the Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes?

Did its work, after three years, promote the Atlantis problem?

The Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes enters its fourth year of activity. The last six months it went through a period of silence, of apparent sleep. It owes an explanation to its members and the listeners of its public conferences.

When a group of bibliophiles, refined persons and archaeologists met to found in June 1926 the *Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes*, our objective was to bring and keep the fabulous – and exciting – Atlantis problem into the area of historical review, as well as to unite, to share and to increase our documents, our books about Atlantis and our studies, finally to excite in the academic universe a curiosity and a spirit of competition, of which would profit the oldest history of the western civilizations.

Unfortunately (and logically, altogether) we encountered the opposition of fantasts, for whom the Atlantis problem is only a pretence for daydreams.

Things went so far, that during the last conference, which I personally held at the Sorbonne about the antiquities of Corsica, two "atlantomaniacs" believed to have to spread tear gas in a full lecture hall, so quite seriously discommoding the listeners! ..

We contented ourselves to make an analysis of the relict of the flacon left behind by the two "demonstrators".

We will not insist. We will not polemize. Those are inelegances which have nothing to do with our studies.

[Page 94]

But we owe to our listeners, to our friends, to our members this explanation about the undeniable discouragement (I would even say chagrin) which came over us, to see how our purely studious and scientific effort encountered such deplorable puerilities.

We wanted finally to take away by our silence all pretences from certain eccentrics to raise again a quarrel of bad nature with us, which would have only the result to discredit in the eyes of refined persons and academics the prehistoric problem which we tried to study.

Surely, the S.E.A. and those who take part in its work do not claim in any way to have a monopoly for studies of the Atlantis hypothesis. But the Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes thinks to have been the first academic society which publicly proclaimed an interest in this research, in the course of a constituting session, held at the Sorbonne in June 1926 under the presidency of Dr. René Verneau.

The necessity not to let believe that the Atlantis problem finally is accessible only to prophets and illuminates of two worlds seemed to us to be ready to be proclaimed after three years of public conferences and documentary publications.

The researchers who analyze the Atlantis problem "under control of diverse sciences which can

conduct and increase this research" [Art. 1 of the S.E.A.'s statutes] cannot be made responsible for certain eccentricities as the academic promoters of wireless telegraphy are not solidary to those who pretend to talk with the planets by using Hertz waves.

But while it is easy in an environment *on the verge of all rational research* to find the necessary material support which is necessary for every scholarly group, the S.E.A., which is exposed to the opposition and the malignity of a certain number of fantasts, encounters – by the excesses of the same said fantasts – the justified distrust of the academic world.

We thus find ourselves caught, – "clamped" if you allow the word – between the cautious distrust of the true academics and the delirium of those, who – with an "Atlantean" (alas, yes) badge in the button hole – organize Atlantean picnics in a strange language confusion, where the kabbalah, boy scouts, free masonry, the Shroud of Turin, the celts, the Sacred Heart of Paray-le-Monial, White Horse Eagle, the roman knights, Buddha, Quetzalcoatl and Poseidon are composed to a you do not know what intellectual carnival, which justifies the reluctance of honest and deliberate minds.

Is it this in what Atlantis research has to result?

Meanwhile learned and rich works are published and accumulate in Germany, England, Italy and America.

The Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes, which from the beginning did not ignore the risk and the danger which threaten its work, is preparing for the necessary putting its cause in perspective in the academic world.

May all who think that we are on the right, on the only reasonable way, help us, come to us, support us!

## DEDICATION

To the memory of Roger Dévigne, Atlantis researcher and president of the *Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes*, and to the memory of Ulf Richter, co-author of the Atlantis Research Charter, who passed away in 2006.

## REFERENCES

Conseil de la SEA (1927): Les Statuts de la Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes, in:

Les Études Atlantéennes – Bulletin de la Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes SEA, No. 5-6, May-June 1927; pp. 62-64

Dévigne (1929): Roger Dévigne, Où en est la Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes? (editorial), in:

Les Études Atlantéennes – Bulletin de la Société d'Etudes Atlantéennes SEA, No. 8-9, February-March 1929; p. 93 f.

English translation: Thorwald C. Franke.

Franke (2006): Homepage of the Atlantis Research Charter. <http://www.atlantis-scout.de/charter.htm>

Kontaratos (2007): Antonis N. Kontaratos, Criteria for the Search of Atlantis, in:

Stavros P. Papamarinopoulos (editor), The Atlantis Hypothesis – Searching for a Lost Land, Book of Proceedings of the International Conference Atlantis 2005, Heliotopos Publications, Santorini/Greece 2007, pp. 573-576.

© 2008 COPYRIGHT by Thorwald C. Franke et al.

Copyright granted to the Atlantis Conference 2008 for scientific purposes.