

Scientists to hunt for Atlantis

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AN American researcher on the trail of long-lost Atlantis says he will lead an expedition next year to prove the mythological civilisation lies in the watery deep between Cyprus and Syria.

Robert Sarmast believes Atlantis did exist and that his quest is not a wild goose chase inspired by the ramblings of an ancient Greek philosopher thousands of years ago.

"All the evidence points here. This is where civilisation started," he said in Cyprus today. Sarmast lives in Los Angeles.

Plato suggested that the civilisation of Atlantis was destroyed in a deluge around 11,500 years ago. The Mediterranean island of Cyprus is its pinnacle, says Sarmast.

Sarmast, an architect, says he has found evidence suggesting man-made structures on an initial expedition some 80 km off the south-east coast of Cyprus in November 2004.

The outlines of what he says is a long wall which forms a right angle were detected by sonars, scanners which use sound pulses to map the sea bed.

He plans to return to the site for a closer look by May, 2006 with remote operated vehicles which will attempt to blast away sediment on a selected site lying 1.5 km below sea level.

"There is not one scientist in the world who can explain these formations as natural ones," said Sarmast, who said he had clinched a contract with a Hollywood production house to produce a two hour documentary next year.

According to Plato, Atlantis was an island where an advanced civilisation developed some 11,500 years ago.

Some also believe it to be Garden of Eden, where mankind fell from God's Grace.

Theories abound to why it disappeared, from Atlantis being hit by a cataclysmic natural disaster - an event which is accounted in many of the world's varied ancient civilisations, to being destroyed by the wrath of Zeus because it became too powerful.

It is invariably placed in the Atlantic Ocean, the Greek island of Santorini, Spain's Azores and even farther afield in the South China Sea.

But the sceptics suggest Atlantis never existed anywhere but in Plato's long decayed brain.

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