

The Oera Linda Book: From A Manuscript Of The Thirteenth Century (1876) - Illustrated and Annotated Atlantis Mythology, Island Character and Reference Texts and Sources

Wiliam R. Sandbach



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In the 19th century, ascendant nationalism in Europe used local folklore and ancient legends to bolster a sense of identity. One curious example of this is the Oera Linda Book, a controversial manuscript, dated 1256, from the Frisian region of the Netherlands. The Oera Linda book is today conventionally agreed to be a forgery, written during the mid-19th century. This is based on the paper which the manuscript is written on, as well as internal and linguistic evidence.

Purporting to be an episodic chronicle of wars and migrations of the Frisian people, the Oera Linda Book describes events dated (very precisely) from 2194 BCE to 803 CE. The reference date is the submergence of 'Atland,' a lost land in the North Sea, which, according to the book, occurred in 2193 BCE. The book is peppered with descriptions of catastrophic earth changes, including volcanic eruptions, strange weather, and rapid sea level changes. This is intriguing because, even if a forgery, the Oera Linda Book predates the origin of the modern Atlantis craze, which began with Ignatius Donnelly's Atlantis, the Antediluvian World, published in 1882.

The Oera Linda Book also claims that Europe was ruled by a (mostly) peaceful, just matriarchy for most of its history, and that the Frisians invented writing. There is a dark side, too: parts of the Oera Linda Book have touches of bigotry and intolerance which will be galling to most modern readers. This mix of themes have led to a continued fascination with this text, regardless of its authenticity.

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