Summary: Maria Kruhlak, Analysis: Marta Pszczolińska, "Entry on: Atlantis, an Island of Fire [Atlantyda, wyspa ognia] by Maciej Kuczyński", peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1225. Entry version as of November 06, 2026.

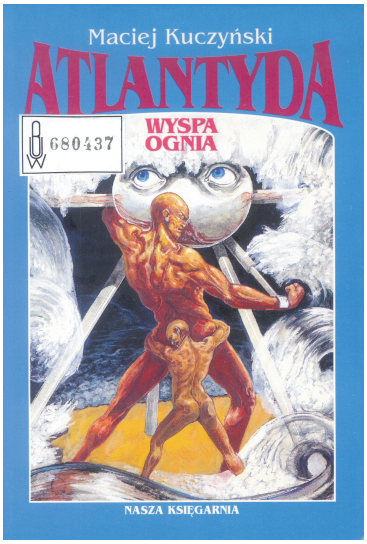
Maciej Kuczyński

Atlantis, an Island of Fire [Atlantyda, wyspa ognia]

Poland (1967)

TAGS: Atlantis





Cover design by Artur Gołębiowski (Warsaw: Nasza Księgarnia, 1988). Courtesy of the publisher.

General information	
Title of the work	Atlantis, an Island of Fire [Atlantyda, wyspa ognia]
Country of the First Edition	Poland
Country/countries of popularity	Poland, Czechoslovakia
Original Language	Polish
First Edition Date	1967
First Edition Details	Maciej Kuczyński, *Atlantyda, wyspa ognia*. Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 1967, 175 pp.
ISBN	Not applicable for editio princeps
Genre	Novels, Science fiction
Target Audience	Crossover (Children, teenagers, young adults)
Author of the Entry	Summary: Maria Kruhlak, University of Warsaw, maria.kruhlak@al.uw.edu.pl Analysis: Marta Pszczolińska, University of Warsaw, m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl
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Creators



Photograph courtesy of the Author.

Maciej Kuczyński , 1929 - 2019
(Author)

A mountaineer, polar explorer, speleologist, architect, Polish writer and author of 30 books about travelling. He is also an author of documentary films and television programs. He worked at the Polish Academy of Sciences as a technical manager of scientific expeditions. Kuczyński provided commentaries to geographic and travel films, including the expeditions of Marek Kamiński, a famous Polish Polar explorer, to the North and the South Poles. In 1990 Kuczyński suggested how to decipher the records of biological knowledge of the Mesoamerican Indians contained in pre-Columbian pictorial codes in Mexico. In 1994, he published *Atlantyda, jej tajemnice i odkrycia* [Atlantis: Secrets and Discoveries] with his interpretation of symbols on the Phaistos Disc, proposing a hypothesis that the Disc is connected to Atlantis.

Sources:

"Maciej Kuczyński", racjonalista.pl (accessed: June 16, 2021).

"Maciej Kuczyński. 40 lat życia na wyprawach", odkrywcy.com (accessed: June 16, 2021).

"Maciej Kuczyński", theexplorersclubpolska.pl (accessed: June 16, 2021).

Bio prepared by Kruhlak, University of Warsaw, maria.kruhlak@al.uw.edu.pl

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Additional information

Translation

Czech, *Atlantida ostrov ohně*, trans. Anna Bauerová, Praha: Mlada Fronta, 1978.

Summary

Based on: Katarzyna Marciniak, Elżbieta Olechowska, Joanna Kłos, Michał Kucharski (eds.), *Polish Literature for Children & Young Adults Inspired by Classical Antiquity: A Catalogue* (accessed: June 16, 2021), Faculty of "Artes Liberales", Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2013, 444 pp., section by Maria Kruhlak, pp. 160–162.

Awaru, son of a tribal chief, secretly goes as Shanti (he assumes this name for the duration of his trip) to Atlantis, an island located nearby. His task is to penetrate the interior of the unknown island and try to find out how to conquer it. It turns out, however, that he is not alone in his attempt. While spying the terrain, he meets his old enemy from another kingdom who also is seeking an opportunity to take over the island. Atlantis seems to be a technologically advanced world. Awaru is surprised that people are friendly towards him, and it makes the decision to transfer data to assist in the attack difficult. Pretending to be Loki (common name for local researchers) he is travelling around the island. After he learns about the wise and peaceful people and their life he decides to leave Atlantis alone. Many adventures later, he reaches the town of Tees, where becomes aware that all the time he was being watched, but no harm was done to him, because as an individual he was not considered a safety threat. At the end of the story, volcano Suhmi erupts and Atlantis sinks into the ocean, but people from Awaru's tribe rescue him. *Atlantis, an Island of Fire* is a supplementary reading for 6th graders.

Analysis

Atlantis, as described by Plato in *Timaeus* and *Critias*, has fascinated and inspired writers across centuries. Kuczyński used this motif and some information known from Plato's tradition (the location of the island, the advancement of its people, the confederation of rulers (here, a council) of great and marvelous power, violent earthquakes and floods which engulfed the inhabitants and caused the island to disappear into the sea), but presented to young readers his own creative, completely different vision of this mysterious land,

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combining elements of sci-fi and adventure set in the distant past. Since the author was not a classicist but rather a keen traveler and explorer, he used his imagination to show the reader a civilization as seen by a young traveler spy from an entirely different Old Land. At the beginning, Awaru/Shanti knows almost nothing about the island of Atlantis, so the reader accompanies him during the process of discovery. The young spy creates reports that the reader can consider the most important information for future conquest.

The people of Atlantis are described as technologically advanced: they use electric energy, build using concrete, cultivate specific genetically modified plants, know magnifying glass, develop geology, collect monitoring data of seismic activity, build a safety system using technological devices and trained animals or can transport things and people quickly due to the invention of the wheel. Awaru is amazed by the strange and magnificent culture and facilities that the Atlanteans use in their everyday life. They believe in science and technology, and that is why they live in peace, as they depend on a defense system that makes them safe from any potential foes. Their mystery is revealed shortly before the catastrophic eruption: they are also aware of the danger to their land. It is gradually sinking, and they are preparing to leave the island in about 5 years.

However, the book's main idea is not only to present the marvelous world of Atlantis but rather to present a man asking questions and seeking the answers, his challenges, achievements, and internal change due to the contact with other people. Awaru uses his intelligence, ingenuity, and strength to avoid being captured while collecting information about the Atlantean world. The young man develops his mental abilities not only to survive. Posing philosophical questions, having learned a lot, and experiencing selfless kindness and help, he starts feeling compassion and sympathy and eventually cannot act against the locals and cause their extinction. The moment of realization comes, however, too late. Neither the people from Old Land nor the Atlanteans can achieve their final goal: Awaru’s people cannot conquer Atlantis, which sinks under the waves, and the islanders die along with their culture before they manage to leave their homeland. The only survivors are the boy, an Atlantean girl and a tame animal, *Sheri*. The reader is not told what happens to them in the end.

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Atlantis
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Adversity Animals Conflict Death Gaining understanding Invention Journeys Nature Science Survival
Further Reading	"Maciej Kuczyński. 40 lat życia na wyprawach", odkrywcy.com (accessed: June 16, 2021).
Addenda	Illustrator: 1967: Mieczysław Majewski (1915–1988).

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