Isles in the Midst of the Great Green Sea

Produced by Jeffrey Frederick Gold

Narration:

The Aegean—the birthplace of myths and the home to many island civilizations—was the setting for Homer's Odyssey and the battleground of Agamemnon. Known as the "Isles in the Midst of the Great Green Sea" by the ancient Egyptians, the eastern Mediterranean was a bustling center of sea-trade routes that fueled the ancient marketplace. Archaeologist and Anthropologist, Richard Daly.

Richard Lyon Daly:

But this was the charted world, the known world at the time, of the sea-lanes, and it was because the Hyksos knew about these ... the Canaanites knew about them ... Later they became Phoenicians. And the Phoenicians in ancient history were the great mariners who went to Carthage and ... even through the Straits of Gibraltar to the west ... and ... competed with the Romans and the Etruscans and the Greeks and in later ... in later Iron Age—-in this earlier period they had the coastlines all mapped out. And [they] ... these were secrets—naval secrets, because you could do your trading with all of these places. You could fill your ships up with goods from Egypt, and ... trade them off, fill them up with new goods in Greece, for example, with honey, wax, fur, slaves ... salt or ... or other products after you dump off all of the Egyptian products from your ship and make a big profit ... gold ... and so on ... jewelry and ... then take these products back again and resell them again: you can make a double profit on making a trip around the Mediterranean with your shipping. So that was ... the main isles of the Great Green Sea that the Egyptians were referring to ... where this big Thera eruption disrupted all these trading routes and caused the military takeover by Egypt of the Hyksos empire that was in alliance with the Cretan thalassocracy, or sea empire, on Crete, at Knossos, in the Palace ...

Narration:

Long the focus of anthropologists and archaeologists, the Aegean sea contains the island of Thera, now known
as Santorini, which, in 1628 B.C., was nearly devastated by the eruption of the resident volcano.

Richard Lyon Daly:

Thera, seventy miles north of Crete, blew up that summer, the whole island blew up, but it left a crescent shaped rim with a little town called Akrotiri, and the people were in desperate straits because they had to leave everything real quickly—they packed everything up and left. But for a hundred years or two hundred years before 1628 B.C., they ... they had a going economy with olive oil trade, they had great big ... jars that they filled with olive oil and then they put smaller jars on their ships and they'd take it to Egypt and trade it for birds and different kinds of monkeys and ostrich egg shells and panther skins and borrow a few soldiers here and there, you know for their marines to keep the pirates away, to make a profit on olive oils. But they also had grapes and deep-sea fishing and naturally—the regular wheat grain, Emmer wheat, they grew in the fields to make their bread. And the volcano blew the whole scenario away.

Narration:

The eruption did not affect only the island of Thera, but also had remarkable effects on the balance of power in the eastern Mediterranean region. Archaeological research has tied the time-lines in the Shah-Nameh, the king-lists of ancient Persia, with the Hittite rulers, based at Avaris, who were the principal occupiers of the region at the time of the volcanic eruption.

Richard Lyon Daly:

Once the Thera eruption occurred it weakened all the shipping and they were cut off from their supplies and the Egyptians were getting more powerful and they just overran the Gaza Strip, they overran the Nile Delta at Avaris, their headquarters, and the new kingdom Egypt started. So that's the most significant results of my own personal research: to line up those king-lists with those characters and find out who they were and identify 'em as the ancestors of the people in the Bible and as the people who were kicked out of Egypt.

Narration:

The Thera Bo eruption of 1628 B.C. impacted the world in a way that surpassed the eruptions of Mounts Aetna and Vesuvius. Thera Bo forced the seafarers of the eastern Mediterranean region to tack a new course and re-establish the sea-trade routes that had given this region its rich heritage. The Great Green Sea has been a major force in shaping the annals of human history as much as the inhabitants whose lives depended on it.
Written, Directed, and Produced by
Jeffrey Frederick Gold

Aegean

Composed, Arranged, Performed, and Produced by
Jeffrey Frederick Gold

Narration
George Fivas

Sound
John Woodhouse

Special Thanks to:
Richard Lyon Daly, Ph.D.
George Fivas
John Woodhouse
Dale Angell
Keith Martindale
Brian Patrick

Additional Footage from:
Mycenae and Crete
Aegean: Legacy of Atlantis
Jurassic Park
http://www.knossos.gr/thera

Copyright 1995

Produced at the University of Utah