

## **Introduction**

Proponents of the “Tartarian Empire” theory claim that the world’s pre-Modern architecture was the work of a single, global, technologically-advanced state called Tartaria which was destroyed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to a “mud flood” and subsequently erased from the history books (Mortice, 2021; Tartaria Uncovered: AntiquiTech, Tesla, Mud Flood & Beyond!, n.d.; Dunning, 2021). New Zealand based believers suggest that Dunedin’s 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture was the work of this Empire (Hypothesis A – H<sub>a</sub>) as opposed to that of British settlers (Hypothesis B – H<sub>b</sub>) (The Mysterious Tartarian Buildings of Dunedin (NZ) – Tartaria Empire Youtube, n.d.). I will evaluate both H<sub>a</sub> and H<sub>b</sub> with the help of the SEARCH process (Schick & Vaughn, 2014).

## **Claim**

Much of Dunedin’s pre-Modern architecture was built by a technologically advanced global civilization called the Tartarian Empire. The downfall of Tartaria was due to a mud-flood, which caused a loss of technology that prevents us from building new “Tartarian Architecture”—a broad category that lumps together Beaux Arts, neo/gothic, neo/classical and even Ancient Egyptian buildings—henceforth referred to as ‘TA’.

## **Evidence**

Proponents of H<sub>a</sub> point to the significant presence of TA in Dunedin. For example, the Railway station (built in 1903), the First Church (1867) or the World’s Fair building (1865, now demolished) all share various ornate features that are seen as markers of the Tartarian style elsewhere in NZ and the world (tartaryan, 2019).

YouTuber “King Dave” has questioned how a population of “2000” in 1861 could have sourced the necessary materials and manpower to build imposing brick architecture (Obeda, 2021, 18:22). He has also questioned how Dunedin could have had buildings in 1849, only one year after that arrival of settlers, as well as how early settlers could have built buildings “10 stories high”(Obeda, 2021, 10:26; Passenger Arrivals at Port Chalmers, New Zealand, 1848-1851, n.d.; Obeda, 2021, 14:47). Tall “spires” on 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings are suggested by King Dave to be advanced antenna (Obeda, 2021, 37:09).

The lack of people and the apparent presence of mud surrounding buildings in cityscape photos of Dunedin in the 1800s has been touted as evidence of a mud-flood disaster (Obeda, 2021, 47:32).

Finally, the whiteness of the sky in these photos is taken as evidence of photographic tampering by the government to tell an alternate history; perhaps one in which advanced air technology is erased from the history books (Obeda, 2021, 13:29).

### **Is it admissible?**

This evidence is largely not admissible.

19<sup>th</sup> century Dunedin architecture conforming to the “Tartarian” style could as easily be explained by H<sub>b</sub>. Dunedin was settled early of the NZ cities, which would explain why it has a large amount of pre-Modern architecture. Additionally, the exodus North and slowing economic growth after the Gold Rush ended helps explain why so much of Dunedin’s architecture was not demolished for newer buildings as it was in other cities (“The Drift to the North,” 1916)

Likewise, the consistency of Dunedin architecture with styles found contemporaneously overseas can be easily explained by the fact Dunedin was colonised by the British. As Richardson (1988, pp. 1–2) has written, the architectural design of colonial cities like Dunedin offered a chance for the British Empire to indicate its cultural influence.

There are also factual errors that discount some evidence. Most importantly, the Otago population in the 1860s was 27,163 according to the Census, not the 2000s that King Dave mentions (STATISTICS OF NEW ZEALAND FOR 1861, n.d.). Likewise, none of the photos King Dave provides actually show 10 story high buildings.

The antenna King Dave points out in photographs are actually spires, a key part of the Gothic architectural tradition since the Middle Ages (Spire | Architecture | Britannica, n.d.).

The claims of evidence of a mud flood also don’t stand up. As architectural historian Robin Aitken told the Spinoff, the mud seen in such photos can be explained easily by the use of horses and the resultant feces. Early photography (in the 1800s) required very long exposures, which meant moving people were not captured, explaining the empty streets (Lamb, 2017).

Finally, white skies are in fact a common photographic occurrence, relating to high set exposures in outdoor photography. This is common and is not good evidence of tampering, hence is inadmissible (axelf, 2012).

### **Alternate hypothesis**

Dunedin was built British settlers over the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Criteria of adequacy**

A section of the wider Tartarian theory is falsifiable in that we could attempt to build TA in the modern period, proving that we don’t build such buildings because of stylistic concerns, not lacking technological ability. Indeed, we have actually tested this claim and it has been falsified: The ‘theatre’ building in the Espaces d’Abraxas complex near Paris is in the neoclassical style, for example, and was

built entirely in 1978-83.  $H_b$  is falsifiable—if we found remains of advanced Tartarian technology used to build Dunedin architecture then that would be evidence against  $H_b$ . No such evidence has been found so far.

Neither hypothesis is fruitful.

Both hypotheses have a wide purported scope, as the Tartarian theory purports to explain the presence of architecture all over the world. Likewise, the British colonial theory also explains the presence of such architecture all over the world, for example in Shanghai.

$H_b$  is far more simple than  $H_a$ .  $H_a$  makes a large number of assumptions, for example that the government has covered up both Tartaria but also the fact of the coverup itself. It posits huge amounts of hidden rubble from demolished TA, as well as large amounts of missing Tartarian technology. It also assumes that an advanced world state could have been destroyed by a mud-flood when somehow a less advanced subsequent government survived. Advanced technology is profitable and thus hard to keep secret, yet  $H_a$  assumes this has been done.

Additionally, proponents of  $H_a$  still posit the arrival of British settlers in NZ, just that they found rather than built the TA. Thus,  $H_b$  is more simple as it posits *only* British settlers, whereas  $H_a$  posits both British settlers and Tartarians.

Finally,  $H_b$  is more conservative in that mainstream architectural and engineering theory holds that such buildings could have been built with the technology of the time.  $H_a$  is less conservative in that it contradicts these established histories.

## Conclusion

Elements of  $H_a$  are falsifiable; they have been falsified.  $H_b$  is falsifiable but has not yet been falsified. While both hypotheses have a wide scope,  $H_b$  is far more simple than  $H_a$ . Likewise,  $H_b$  is more conservative than  $H_a$ . Paired with the inadmissibility of much of the evidence put forward for  $H_a$ , this gives us good reason to reject  $H_a$  and to continue to believe  $H_b$ .

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