

## Atlantis

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# Atlantis

Zainab Alsadah

Atlantis is a mysterious island that has been mentioned by the famous Greek Philosopher Plato. Around 360 BC, Plato wrote his two famous dialogue books, Timaeus and Critias, which provide detailed descriptions about Atlantis. The existence of this island remains a big question for many researchers as well as many ordinary people. The ongoing interest about Atlantis, has resulted in the filming of a famous Walt Disney animated movie in 2001 under the name of "Atlantis: The Lost Empire."

I believe that Atlantis is a fictional island that was invented by Plato for two major reasons: contradictions in the story itself and second, and the inability to locate Atlantis despite the huge technology advancement.

Plato was a famous Greek philosopher, mathematician, and founder of the Academy in Athens. He was originally a student of the famous Greek philosopher Socrates. He is well known for his ethical philosophy. Plato claimed that the ancient Egyptians told the story of Atlantis to his grandfather when he went to visit Egypt. In Plato's story, Atlantis was a great civilization that was destroyed over one day and one night. It was wonderful civilization like a heaven, built 11,000 years ago. It was larger than Africa and Asia put together, and had a wonderful tough army ready to fight consisting of about 1.2 million armed men with tons and tons of weapons. Atlanteans were hardworking and religious. They were wealthy people and brilliant engineers. They built palaces, temples, harbours, docks and a very complicated water system. Farmers grew food on a small field and behind the field, where the mountains met the sky was where the Atlanteans had their homes. Plato had described the huge buildings, fountains with hot and cold running water, walls covered with precious metals and statues made of gold. The island was only accessible by tunnels large enough for ships to sail through. Atlanteans then became greedy and dishonest.

He then stated that "afterwards there occurred violent earthquakes and floods...and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared in the depths of the sea". I believe that Plato was exaggerating in his description of Atlantis. He described a superpower and ideal civilization to convey his own philosophical and ethical messages.

The first reason is the contradiction. On one hand, Plato mentioned the earthquake as the destroying factor, but on the other hand, there was a role of the water god; Poseidon is mentioned as deciding to sink the island in the ocean to fulfill his desire to live in it. Adding to

this, Plato was the only person who mentioned Atlantis in his books, no records of the Atlantis story is found in Egypt, or indeed anywhere outside of Plato.

The second reason is the inability to locate such a continent. Plato mentioned great details about Atlantis making researchers postulate possible physical locations. Although there are some conflicting reports as to where Atlantis could be or has been, most researchers have concluded that Atlantis was located in the Atlantic Ocean. It was so huge, it stretched from what is now the Gulf of Mexico through the Mediterranean Sea. All these possible locations have been examined and didn't yield any result. Despite the huge technology advancement, and the use of satellite, and Doppler ultrasound to screen the deep oceans, no archaeological evidence of an 11,000 year old advanced civilization has ever been found. Geologists also seem to think that the bottom of the Atlantic cannot harbor any sunken continent.

There are four major possible locations for Atlantis: first is Mount Toba, which is located near Sumatra, Indonesia. It is the place for a famous volcanic eruption that occurred 70,000 years ago. It led to deposition of 15 centimeters of thick ash all over Asia, which was confirmed by the geological evidence. The Mount Toba eruption is too far from Greece and there is no evidence supporting any possible consequence on Greece or Egypt. The second possible location is Santorini. It is an island located about 120 miles from Greece. A major volcanic eruption took place 3,600 years ago and destroyed most of the island. However, it didn't make the island disappear and the geological research in the island didn't reveal evidence consistent with Atlantis's description. The third location is Helike, which is near Greece. It suffered from a catastrophic earthquake and accompanying tsunami, which destroyed and submerged the island. Extensive research didn't reveal evidence consistent with Atlantis description. The fourth location is Bimini Road. It is an underwater rock formation near Bimini Island in the Bahamas. It was discovered in 1968. It is too small to hold a civilization and there is no geological evidence to support that humans lived on its surface.

Atlantis has remained a mystery for centuries and will continue to remain so. It remains a potent story of an advanced and ideal civilization that destroyed itself by greed. I believe that Atlantis is a fictional island for the above-mentioned reasons. It was invented by Plato to teach others and to fit his ethical and political philosophy.

**Zainab Alsadah** is a transfer student from Chicago, majoring in English. She likes to read novels and comic books. All her sympathy and love goes to her kids. She likes shopping and going to art museums. Zainab is amazed by exploring new attractions in California. After graduation, she dreams of becoming a collage teacher.