

# Encyclopædia Britannica, Ninth Edition, Volume III — Atlantis



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ATLANTIS, ATALANTIS, or ATLANTICA, an island mentioned by Plato and other classical writers, concerning the real existence of which many disputes have been raised. In the *Timceus*, Critias relates how his grandfather Critias had been told by Solon some remarkable events in early Athenian history which he had learned from the Egyptian priests at Sais, whose records went much further back than the native accounts. "The most famous of all the Athenian exploits," Solon had been told, "was the overthrow of the island Atlantis. This was a continent lying over against the pillars of Hercules, in extent greater than Libya and Asia put together, and was the passage to other islands and to another continent, of which the Mediterranean Sea was only the harbour; and within the pillars the empire of Atlantis reached to Egypt and Tyrrhenia. This mighty power was arrayed against Egypt and Hellas and all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. Then did your city bravely, and won renown over the whole earth. For at the peril of her own existence, and when the other Hellenes had deserted her, she repelled the invader, and of her own accord gave liberty to all the nations within the pillars. A little while afterwards there was a great earthquake, and your warrior race all sank into the earth; and the great island of Atlantis also disappeared in the sea. This is the explanation of the shallows which are found in that part of the Atlantic ocean." (Jowett's Introduction to the *Timceus*.) Such is the main substance of the principal account of the island furnished by the ancients, an account which, if not entirely fictitious,

belongs to the most nebulous region of history. The story may embody some popular legend, and the legend may have rested on certain historical circumstances; but what these were it is (as the numerous theories advanced on the subject may be held as proving) impossible now to determine.



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