

THE UNEXPLAINED FILES

BOOK TEN

ATLANTIS

LEGEND, EVIDENCE
AND THE SEARCH FOR
A LOST WORLD

THE STORY, THE MYTHS AND THE
MODERN QUEST TO FIND
THE MOST FAMOUS LOST
CIVILIZATION OF ALL TIME



ALDEN M. CORVALE

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*The Story, the Myths and the Modern Quest to Find the Most Famous
Lost Civilization of All Time*

ALDEN M. CORVALE

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PUBLISHING NOTE



This is a work of general-interest nonfiction. It evaluates historical, archaeological and geological claims using publicly available scholarship and primary texts. Where evidence is disputed, the book identifies uncertainty rather than presenting speculation as established fact.

Atlantis is a literary and historical subject with many competing interpretations. The inclusion of a theory does not constitute endorsement. New discoveries may change details discussed in this edition; readers interested in technical questions should consult the primary sources and current peer-reviewed literature listed at the end of the volume.

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PREFACE



Atlantis is one of history's rare ideas that can survive almost any verdict. If archaeologists announce a drowned prehistoric settlement, somebody asks whether it was Atlantis. If geologists map a circular structure in a desert, somebody notices Plato's rings. If a volcanic island collapses into the sea, the old story appears again. The legend is elastic because it sits at the meeting point of several real human experiences: cities do fall, coastlines do move, earthquakes do destroy communities, and memories of catastrophe can outlive the people who witnessed them.

But elasticity is also the problem. A theory that can fit almost anything risks explaining nothing. Plato's Atlantis is unusually specific in some ways and frustratingly literary in others. It is placed beyond the Pillars of Heracles, ruled by a powerful island federation, rich in resources, designed around concentric zones, and destroyed after moral decline and war. Yet the story appears in philosophical dialogues written many centuries after the period in which Plato says the catastrophe occurred. No independent Egyptian text has been identified that preserves the same account.

This book approaches Atlantis as both a historical problem and a cultural phenomenon. We begin with the only ancient source that matters directly: Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias*. We then examine real societies and landscapes that have been proposed as inspirations or locations, from Bronze Age Santorini and Minoan Crete to Helike, Tartessos, the Azores, the Richat Structure, Bimini, Doggerland and other submerged worlds.

The method is simple. A mystery should become sharper as evidence improves. Each chapter therefore ends with an Evidence Check separating what is established, what is plausible, and what remains unsupported. Atlantis may ultimately be a philosophical invention, a memory transformed beyond recognition, or a composite built from many disasters. Whatever the answer, the search reveals something real: humanity has repeatedly built at the edge of the sea, and the sea has repeatedly rewritten the map.