

## The Lure and Lore of Atlantis: An Analysis and History of Plato's Timeless Myth

The Atlantis story, though created more than 2,300 years ago by Plato, remained as popular in its contemporary time as it is known today. There was an ancient debate about Atlantis that even carries on to this day, though interpretations of such a story changed through time as it interacted with and influenced different people. Scholars who studied alongside Plato, just as many do today, feuded with one another based on the story's purpose, historical reality, and significance. Those such as Crantor and Proclus supported the proposed physical nature of Atlantis as an island and empire. Others, however, like Aristotle and Theophrastus refuted this. There were also thinkers of the time who had shown no direct opinion toward the historicity of Atlantis as a physical place, but instead, they drew a clear sense of inspiration from Plato's creation and used it to create a mystical island of their own, like Euhemerus's "Panchaia" and Theopompous's "Meropis". Moreover, Atlantis was not just a story kept away in Plato's workshop, instead, it was known and popular in the ancient world, existing alongside other Greek stories like those that surrounded the Amazons and the Hesperides, as well as narratives from the Bible such as the Garden of Eden and the Great Flood.

Beginning in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE with the creation of the Atlantis story and continuing for the next millennium, scholars constantly mingled Atlantis with these stories in search of some connection. Atlantis coexisted within ancient literature in both the West and the East and never ceased to bring about questions of what Plato's intention for the story truly was. That may never be truly known, but I argue that the Atlantis story did indeed have an inescapable ancient significance on the minds of philosophers, geographers, astronomers, and theologians from the first 1,000 years of its existence, more than is given credit today.