

Myths & Tales:

The story of Atlantis begins quite literally with two of Plato's dialogues, *Timaeus* and *Critias*, the only known written records which refer specifically to Atlantis. Was it fiction, real, or...?

The story: Over 11,000 years ago there existed an island nation located in the middle of the Atlantic ocean populated by a noble and powerful race. The people of this land possessed great wealth thanks to the natural resources found throughout their island. The island was a center for trade and commerce. The rulers of this land held sway over the people and land of their own island and well into Europe and Africa. This was the island of Atlantis.

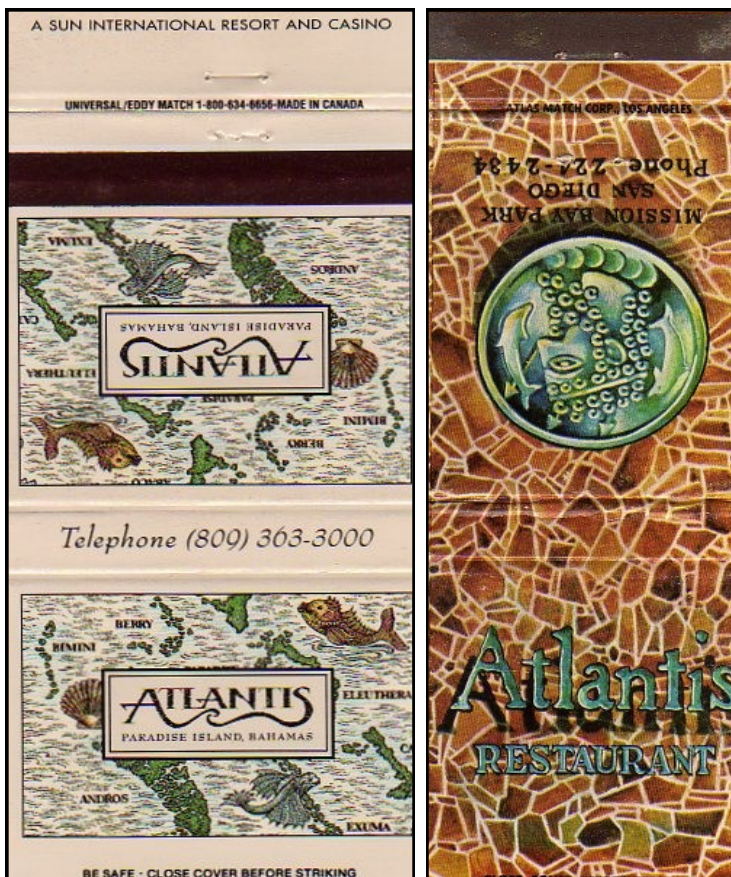
Atlantis was the domain of Poseidon, god of the sea. When Poseidon fell in love with a mortal woman, Cleito, he created a dwelling at the top of a hill near the middle of the island and surrounded the dwelling with rings of water and land to protect her. Cleito gave birth to five sets of twin boys who became the first rulers of Atlantis. The island was divided among the brothers with the eldest, Atlas, first King of Atlantis, being given control over the central hill and surrounding areas. At the top of the central hill, a temple was built to honor Poseidon which housed a giant gold statue of Poseidon riding a chariot pulled by winged horses. It was here that the rulers of Atlantis would come to discuss laws, pass judgments, and pay tribute to Poseidon.

To facilitate travel and trade, a water canal was cut through of the rings of land and water running south for 5.5 miles (~9 km) to the sea. The city of Atlantis sat just outside the outer ring of water and spread across the plain covering a circle of 11 miles (1.7 km). This was a densely populated area where the majority of the population lived. Beyond the city lay a fertile plain 330 miles (530 km) long and

110 miles (190 km) wide surrounded by another canal used to collect water from the rivers and streams of the mountains. The climate was such that two harvests were possible each year. One in the winter fed by the rains and one in the summer fed by irrigation from the canal.

Surrounding the plain to the north were mountains which soared to the skies. Villages, lakes, rivers, and meadows dotted the mountains. Besides the harvests, the island provided all kinds of herbs, fruits, and nuts. An abundance of animals, including elephants, roamed the island.

For generations the Atlanteans lived simple, virtuous lives. But slowly they began to change. Greed and power began to corrupt them. When Zeus saw the immorality of the Atlanteans he gathered the other gods to determine a suitable punishment. Soon, in one violent surge it was gone. The island of Atlantis, its people, and its memory were



Atlantis!

swallowed by the sea. [<http://www.activemind.com/Mysterious/Topics/Atlantis/story.html>]

The solution: Soon after the discovery of the Minoan civilization at Knossos on Crete by Sir Arthur Evans in 1900, theories linking the disappearance of this advanced empire with the destruction of Atlantis were proposed. More recent archaeological, seismological, and vulcanological evidence has expanded the connection of Crete, the island of Santorini, and the Minoan civilization with Plato's description of Atlantis. Evidence said to advance this idea includes:

-The Minoan palace and buildings discovered at Knossos on Crete and at Akrotiri on the island of Santorini have revealed that the Minoans possessed advanced engineering knowledge enabling the construction of three- and four-story buildings with intricate water piping systems, advanced air-flow management, and earthquake-resistant wood and masonry walls. This level of technology was far ahead of that found on mainland Greece at the time.

-Santorini (also called Thera) is the site of a massive volcanic caldera with an island at its center. Vulcanologists have determined that the island was engulfed by a volcanic eruption, the Thera eruption, around 1600 BC. The Minoan eruption, was among the most powerful eruptions occurring in the history of civilization. Archaeological evidence suggests that a resulting tsunami may have devastated the coastal Minoan settlements on Crete.

-Plato described quarries on Atlantis where "one kind of stone was white, another black, and a third red", writing that these stones were quarried from the island and used in the construction. Rocks like this are found on Santorini.

-Atlantis was described as being laid out in circular manner, surrounded by three circular concentric pits of seawater and two earth-rings. Scientists have concluded that there was a ring configuration to that of present day Santorini. One fresco shows a large city on the island, which some archaeologists think represents the center of the caldera. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Location_hypotheses_of_Atlantis]

-Plato said it was a city of the colors, black, red, and white. These colors made up most of the buildings and décor of Atlantis, and we see the same pattern in the Minoan ruins. Minoan architecture often used dyes or stones that were red, black, or white, and even their writings, paintings, etc. have these three colors repeated throughout their works. Seems like a small detail, but we're talking about two cultures that are using art schemes that are unlike any in the ancient world, where everything is white, grey, and light. [http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/248960/the_lost_city_of_atlantis_was_it_really.html?cat=37]

