

# A Hypothesis on the Pillars of Hercules and their True Location

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## Abstract

In this article, aimed at identifying the real location of the mythical Pillars of Hercules, it is first verified that in the works of Plutarch and Plato there are correct references to a continent beyond the Atlantic Ocean. Plutarch mentions a “great continent” surrounding the Atlantic Ocean and the islands that lie on that route, and then focuses on an ancient settlement of Europeans, called “continental Greeks”, in the Canadian region of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, of which he indicates the latitude with astonishing precision. But already a few centuries earlier Plato, in addition to declaring himself certain of the existence of a continent beyond the Atlantic, had mentioned the islands along the route to reach it, also specifying that the haven from which the ancient navigators set sail was characterized by a “narrow entrance” and the Pillars of Hercules. Cross-referencing these data with the results of a recent study on European megalithism, which argues for the transfer of the megalithic concept over sea routes emanating from northwest France and for advanced maritime technology and seafaring in the megalithic Age, it follows that this haven is identifiable with the Gulf of Morbihan, considered by scholars a focal point of the European Neolithic during the mid-5th millennium BC. This is exactly where, near its “narrow entrance”, the remains are still found of an extraordinary alignment of nineteen gigantic menhirs: here are the Pillars of Hercules! On the other hand, the memory of ancient European settlements on the American side of the North Atlantic (perhaps also linked to the extraction of copper from the ancient mines of Isle Royale, the largest island in Lake Superior) seems to emerge from various clues, such as the persistence of myths and legends comparable to those of the Old World, as well as the Caucasian traits of some Native Americans, which seem to corroborate the idea of ancient contacts between the two opposite sides of the Atlantic.

**Keywords:** Heracles; Pillars of Hercules; Morbihan; Menhir Er Grah; Carnac; Wendat; Mandan; Isle Royale; Saguenay.

## Introduction

In one of his dialogues, “De Facie quae in Orbe Lunae Apparet”, the Greek writer Plutarch (ca. 45-125 AD) surprisingly states that in the Atlantic Ocean “an island, Ogygia, lies far away in the sea, five days’ sail from Britain, in the direction of sunset. Further on there are three other islands as distant from it as they are from each other”, and after “there is the great continent that surrounds the great sea” [1]. Shortly after, Plutarch also says that in those places the sun disappears during the summer for less than an hour per night, leaving “a light, twilight darkness” [2]. It is striking that these assertions correspond to the geographical reality of the Atlantic, where the American continent surrounds the ocean from the

extreme north almost to the extreme south, and those four islands actually lie along the route to North America that the Vikings followed during the Medieval Warm Period [3]. Ogygia is identifiable with Nólsoy [4], an island in the Faroe archipelago, and the other three correspond to Iceland, Greenland and Newfoundland. They are at a high latitude, which tallies with the shortness of the summer nights.

But even more surprising is what Plutarch states immediately afterwards: “On the coast of the continent Greeks dwell around a gulf which is not smaller than the Maeotis and the mouth of which lies on the same parallel as the mouth of the Caspian Sea. These people consider and call themselves Continentals” [5]. This

indication allows us to immediately identify the gulf where those “continental Greeks” lived: indeed, the mouth of the Caspian Sea is the Volga Delta, which is at the latitude of 47°, the same as the Cabot Strait, where the Gulf of St. Lawrence opens onto the Atlantic Ocean. Here too Plutarch shows surprising geographical knowledge, which confirms the reliability of his statements [6].

Still in that chapter of “De Facie”, Plutarch also mentions the “Sea of Cronus” (the name the ancient Greeks gave to the North Atlantic) and the “peoples of Cronus”. Since according to Greek mythology, the god Cronus had been the lord of the happy Golden Age before being dethroned by Zeus, it can reasonably be assumed that the “peoples of Cronus” are the last memory of the megalithic civilization, which flourished during the Holocene Climatic Optimum (HCO), also called “Atlantic Climatic Optimum” [7] which ensured an exceptionally mild climate [8] in many parts of the world. When it ended, the far north was enveloped in a grip of frost and ice, which gradually made the northern route between the two opposite sides of the Atlantic more and more difficult. Indeed, the megalithic civilization—which was born in Europe in 5th millennium BC, as we will see shortly, during the climatic optimum—is much older than the Egyptian one. This corresponds to a news reported by Diodorus Siculus, according to which Osiris, the Egyptian god whom he defines as the “eldest son of Cronus”, traveled throughout the world, until he reached “those who incline towards the Pole” [9]. This seems to echo very ancient memories, perhaps dating back to a very remote period of predynastic Egypt, when the Holocene Climatic Optimum made even regions located at very high latitudes habitable.

Plutarch also tells us that there were several waves of colonization: “With the peoples of Cronus there mingled at a later time those who arrived in the train of Heracles and were left behind by him, and these latter so to speak rekindled again to a strong, high flame the Hellenic spark there which was already being quenched and overcome by the tongue, the laws, and the manners of the barbarians” [10]. From the mists of a remote prehistory, corresponding to the mythical Golden Age of the god Cronus, an extraordinarily lively and realistic story emerges.

At this point it is natural to ask how Plutarch managed to obtain this information. He himself mentions a foreigner who spent a lot of time in Carthage; however, certain news may have reached Rome from the Celtic world, following the military expeditions that the Romans made in Britain at that time, after Caesar’s conquest of Gaul in the previous century. One could in fact suppose that here Plutarch is also referring to the oral tradition of the Druids (the cultured priestly class of the Celts) when at the beginning of his story, in focusing on Ogygia and its North Atlantic location, he writes: “The barbarians tell...”. On the other hand, Tacitus, almost the same age as Plutarch, quotes Odysseus—whose close relationship with the island Ogygia is well known [11]—in a Nordic key: “Some believe that even Odysseus in his long and legendary wanderings reached this ocean and landed to the lands of Germany” [12]. This mention of a “Nordic Odysseus” by Tacitus (whose father-in-law,

Julius Agricola, was the governor of Roman Britain for seven years starting from 77 AD) fits well alongside Plutarch’s speech on the North Atlantic location of Ogygia, corroborating the idea that both refer to a very ancient tradition, rediscovered following the recent expansion of the Romans towards northern Europe.

The fact that Tacitus also mentions a Nordic Hercules [13], when he states that the Germanic peoples held him in high regard, also fits perfectly into this picture. On the other hand, a few centuries earlier the Greek poet Pindar had also mentioned Heracles’ contacts with the Hyperboreans [14]. Indeed, the figure of Heracles is not at all limited to the Greek world, to the point of being identified by the Greeks themselves with the Phoenician god Melqart [15]. This confirms his “international” dimension, certainly due to his antiquity (as also indicated by Roman mythology, in which Hercules appears as the protagonist of legends that refer to an era preceding the founding of Rome).

### The Pillars of Hercules

Let us now return to the continent located beyond the Atlantic, where Plutarch surprisingly reports the presence of Heracles. Several centuries before Plutarch, Plato had also made a precise reference to it and to the islands along its route: “For the ocean there was at that time navigable; for in front of the mouth which you Greeks call, as you say, ‘the pillars of Heracles’, there lay an island which was larger than Libya and Asia together; and it was possible for the travelers of that time to cross from it to the other islands, and from the islands to the whole of the continent over against them which encompasses that veritable ocean. For all that we have here, lying within the mouth of which we speak, is evidently a haven having a narrow entrance; but that yonder is a real ocean, and the land surrounding it may most rightly be called, in the fullest and truest sense, a continent” [16].

Plato too, therefore, just as Plutarch does, mentions Heracles in relation to the Atlantic, the overseas continent and the islands found along the route, “for the ocean there was at that time navigable”. However, what is most striking in this passage are the three consecutive adverbs [17] with which Plato, who lived in the 4th century BC, announces with great emphasis the real existence of a continent beyond the Ocean, which was unknown at that time. In this regard, Enrico Turolla, one of the most eminent Greek scholars of the 20th century, in commenting on this passage maintains that “Plato is the bearer of a voice that comes from further away. He received, he arranged; he didn’t invent; indeed, he has faithfully preserved it, as the reference to the continent beyond the sea undoubtedly demonstrates” [18].

Furthermore, this passage by Plato clashes with the traditional placement of the Pillars of Hercules on the Strait of Gibraltar. In fact, the latter is not only not a haven, but is 14 km wide and, therefore, has nothing to do with his indications. As for the large island along the route to the overseas continent, we have shown in another work that its characteristics (on which Plato focuses in his dialogues “Timaeus” and “Critias”) correspond to those of Greenland [19],

obviously in an era in which the climate, warmer than the current one, made the Arctic Ocean navigable (but the Vikings, who colonized the southern part of Greenland during the Medieval Warm Period, also found it habitable and in fact called it with this name). In short, the passages we have just read seem to clearly outline the plausibility of ancient transatlantic voyages making use of intermediate islands located at a high latitude—presumably in the megalithic age, when the climate was more favourable than the current one—whose starting point, as Plato is keen to point out, was a haven characterized by a “narrow entrance” and the Pillars of Hercules.

To locate that haven on the European coast of the Atlantic, it is worth examining some passages from a recent article on European megalithism: “For thousands of years, prehistoric societies built monumental grave architecture and erected standing stones in the coastal regions of Europe (4500–2500 calibrated years BC) (...) The result presented here, based on analyses of 2,410 radiocarbon dates and highly precise chronologies for megalithic sites and related contexts, suggests maritime mobility and intercultural exchange. We argue for the transfer of the megalithic concept over sea routes emanating from northwest France, and for advanced maritime technology and seafaring in the megalithic Age (...) The radiocarbon results suggest that megalithic graves emerged within a time interval of 200 y to 300 y in the second half of the fifth millennium cal BC in northwest France, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic coast of the Iberian Peninsula. Northwest France is, so far, the only megalithic region in Europe which exhibits a premegalithic monumental sequence and transitional structures to the megaliths, suggesting northern France as the region of origin for the megalithic phenomenon (...) The megalithic movements must have been powerful to spread with such rapidity at the different phases, and the maritime skills, knowledge, and technology of these societies must have been much more developed than hitherto presumed. This prompts a reassessment of the megalithic horizons and invites the opening of a new scientific debate regarding the maritime mobility and organization of Neolithic societies, the nature of these interactions through time, and the rise of seafaring” [20].

Here we would like to underline the statement “We argue for the transfer of the megalithic concept over sea routes emanating from northwest France, and for advanced maritime technology and seafaring in the megalithic Age”. Navigation, therefore, was the key to the diffusion of megalithism, favoured by the Holocene Climatic Optimum, which ensured an exceptionally mild climate in many parts of the world. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the abstract of this article concludes with a sentence that underlines how important this factor was for the spread of megaliths: “A maritime diffusion model is the most likely explanation of their expansion”. As for northwest France, the reference is to the Carnac stones, one of the largest megalithic complexes in the world, comprising around three thousand monoliths, scattered across the Breton countryside: it was here, in fact, that, as we have just seen, the European megalithism originated: “Northwest France is, so far, the

only megalithic region in Europe which exhibits a premegalithic monumental sequence and transitional structures to the megaliths, suggesting northern France as the region of origin for the megalithic phenomenon” [20].

At this point we have all the information necessary to locate the haven with the “narrow entrance” that Plato talks about. Indeed, in that area of Brittany overlooking the Atlantic Ocean there is a geographical entity exactly corresponding to his indications: it is the Gulf of Morbihan, an inland sea—whose Breton name, *Mor Bihan*, means Small Sea—extended over about 20 kilometres, which through a narrow inlet between Locmariaquer and Port-Navalo, less than 1 km wide, opens onto the Bay of Quiberon, i.e. the western part of the *Mor Braz*, the Great Sea where one enters in the Atlantic.

The Gulf of Morbihan with its narrow entrance corresponds very well to Plato’s description of the port from which ships headed towards the American continent set sail in prehistoric times. Furthermore, it is “a focal point of the European Neolithic during the mid-5th millennium BC” [21]. This was also the arrival point of the first swimming crossing of the Atlantic, completed in 1998 by Benoît Lecomte starting from Massachusetts, confirming that this choice is completely natural to cross the North Atlantic. In short, these data already give us excellent reasons to suppose that the haven “which has a narrow entrance” mentioned by Plato is identifiable with this Breton gulf. If we now found something identifiable with the Pillars of Hercules in this area, such a hypothesis would become almost certainty.

The area around the Gulf of Morbihan features an extraordinary range of megalithic monuments of all types: dolmens, large mounds with underground chambers, stone circles and menhirs, even large ones. Moreover, near the “narrow entrance” of the Gulf, in Locmariaquer, “The Broken Menhir of Er Grah” lies on the ground, so called because it is broken into four pieces [22]. It is the largest known single block of stone to have been transported and erected by Neolithic peoples (20 meters high by 3 meters wide and approximately 300 tons in weight). Furthermore, what makes the Broken Menhir extremely interesting for us is not only its exceptional size that makes it unique among the European menhirs, but also the results of archaeological excavations which show that it was not isolated, but instead it was the first and largest of an alignment of nineteen menhirs, lined up one behind the other, of which archaeologists have identified the aligned pits on the ground that once housed their bases.

In short, near the “narrow entrance” of the Morbihan, in the middle of the largest and oldest European megalithic complex, in that remote era there stood an extraordinary row of menhirs, straight and aligned, starting from the base of the Menhir of Er Grah. Here are the Pillars of Hercules (“*Hērakleous stēlai*” in Greek) mentioned by Plato! They stately stood near the narrow entrance of the “*Mor Bihan*”, the “Small Sea”, as if they were saying goodbye to the departing sailors, who from their ships saw them file past,

one after the other, before entering the Quiberon Bay and then the immense ocean, heading towards the continent mentioned by Plato and Plutarch.

The grandeur of this gigantic alignment makes us believe that it was very likely erected in memory of an exceptional character: it would be suggestive to hypothesize that it was Heracles himself, who, as we have seen just now, according to Plutarch was the protagonist of an expedition on the overseas continent. We also note that the Breton name of the Broken Menhir, *Men ar Hroëc'h* (Stone of Hroëc'h) seems glottologically comparable to the name of Heracles (which perhaps could mean that the original name of the first of the Pillars was "Stone of Heracles" and not "Stone of the Fairy", as it is currently translated). At this point, we could even dare to hypothesize that the eighteen menhirs behind the Broken Menhir were the memory of Heracles' companions on that expedition, to whom, as we have seen before, Plutarch makes explicit reference when he says that they "rekindled again to a strong, high flame the Hellenic spark there" [10]. Incidentally, a possible confirmation of the relationship between men and stones can be found in a field of menhirs a few kilometers from Morbihan, where there are 1029 stones divided into ten alignments, which is called "Kermario" (House of the Dead). This relationship is found in Greek mythology, according to which after the flood the two only survivors, Deucalion and Pyrrha, reconstituted the human race by throwing stones behind them which transformed into men and women. And what about the menhirs found in Sardinia, called "pedras fittas" (stones stuck in the ground), some of which show phallic symbols, while others show breasts? They were probably erected in memory of people, men and women, and were the predecessors of the memorial stones of subsequent eras, up to the present day.

### Some Clues about Ancient European Settlements on the American Continent

Let us now return to the Gulf of Morbihan, where the city of Vannes is located, whose name derives from the ancient Veneti, who were defeated by Julius Caesar's fleet in 56 BC in front of Locmariaquer [23]. The Veneti were excellent sailors, "superior to all others in the art and practice of navigation" [24], and had formidable ships, capable of withstanding ocean storms, which Caesar describes in detail [25]. The enormous size of these ships even impressed Pliny the Elder (who knew a lot about ships, being the commander of a fleet), according to whom Emperor Claudius celebrated his triumph over the Britons "on a ship the size of a palace" [26]. It is also curious that on the other side of the Atlantic, in Canadian territory, there are the Wendat people (also called by the name of Hurons), whose territory is called Wendake, coming from the province of Ontario, connected to the Atlantic from the St. Lawrence River. Their name recalls that of the Veneti, and in some old photos several of them seem to have a physiognomy that could be defined as European. At this point one might ask whether the Wendat were descendants of prehistoric Veneti who, similarly to the continental Greeks mentioned by Plutarch, may have crossed

the Atlantic starting from Brittany towards the Canadian coasts. This could be verified with a comparison between their DNA and that of the current inhabitants of Vannes.

Furthermore, in North Dakota, west of the Great Lakes, there is the territory of the Mandan, whose physical characteristics—light skin and hair, blue or gray eyes—have aroused the interest of explorers and scholars since the 18th century, to the point that a legend made them descend from Madoc, a 12th century king of Wales, and their language was compared to Welsh [27]. It is also remarkable that during their most important ceremony, called "Okipa", they commemorated the salvation of their tribe, which occurred by divine hand, from a primordial flood [28]. Furthermore, the Mandan had characteristic round boats (consisting of bison skins stretched over a frame of willow branches and a flat bottom), which were identical to the "coracles" of the British Isles, widespread in Scotland, in Wales, in the west of England as well as in Ireland, where they are called "curragh" and are believed to date back as far as the Neolithic [29].

Also surprising is the figure of a sort of "Native American Prometheus" among the *Catlo'ltq* of British Columbia, on the Pacific coast of Canada, with characteristics such that two scholars wrote: "Here is a Greek myth that suddenly emerges in full light among the American Indian tribes, miraculously preserved" [30]. Furthermore, some Native American tribes saw *Ursa Major*—whose Latin name means "greater (or larger) bear"—as a bear, although the shape of this constellation does not resemble any animal. This strange convergence, also reread in light of the other clues seen previously, is somewhat suspicious and would seem to attest to ancient contacts between the cultures of the Old and New World.

At this point, after having verified the knowledge that Plato and Plutarch had of the overseas continent, one wonders what could have pushed the ancient European navigators to venture beyond the Atlantic. The answer may be linked to the ancient copper mines of *Isle Royale*, the large island in Lake Superior, where, long before the arrival of Europeans, Native Americans extracted copper by hammering the rock to obtain pieces of pure copper. Archaeologists have dated some ancient mining sites to around 5,700 years ago. Thousands of years ago, therefore, large quantities of copper were mined on *Isle Royale* and the adjacent *Keweenaw Peninsula*, and it seems that legends about it still circulate among the inhabitants of these places [31]. This has given rise to a debate among archaeologists, because it is not clear where such a quantity of copper ended up in the Americas. In this regard, metallographic examinations on pieces from the European Bronze Age, in order to verify the origin of the metal, could help to resolve the question.

We also observe that the name given by the natives to *Isle Royale*, "Minong" (or "Menong"), in many European languages recalls concepts such as "mine, miner", which derive from old French, probably of Celtic origin [32]; this could also be found in the Greek "mnā", which indicates a unit of weight or a coin and can in turn be combined with the Hebrew "maneh" [33]. Here



one wonders whether the convergence between the Amerindian name Minong, given to an island characterized by intense mining activity, and the name given in Europe to mining activities since ancient times, is only due to a pure chance, or if instead this set of converging clues can be framed in a common memory of mining activities and trade between the two opposite sides of the Atlantic, with the mediation of a Celtic (or Greek) word. On the other hand, the main outlet of the American Great Lakes is the St. Lawrence River, which connects them to the Atlantic Ocean, flowing right into the gulf where, according to Plutarch and his very precise indications, the “continental Greeks” lived.

In short, this prehistoric copper trade from Isle Royale to Europe, albeit hypothetical, could perhaps explain the ancient European presence in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, as well as the legend of the mythical Kingdom of Saguenay [34], of which the first French explorers of Canada were informed by the Iroquois chief Donnacona. He spoke of a mythical kingdom, rich and sumptuous, of blond men, displaying gold and furs, in a place they called Saguenay. Shortly after, the French explorer Jacques Cartier announced the discovery (which took place in 1536) of the Saguenay River, a left tributary of the St. Lawrence, which according to Donnacona’s sons was the access route to the kingdom of Saguenay, which, however, was never found. As for the noun Saguenay, it is almost identical to that of the Sequana River, the ancient name of the Seine (called “S  kouanos” by Strabo, “S  koanas” by Ptolemy).

This name is also found in other important hydronyms of the Celtic world, such as that of the Sa  ne, which derives from “Sauconna”, and that of the Sikanos, a river on which, according to Thucydides, “the Sicani lived in Iberia” [35] before moving to Sicily. Furthermore, the Sequana gave rise to the name of the Sequani, a Gallic tribe mentioned by Caesar and Strabo, and was also a healing deity to whom a large Celtic sanctuary was dedicated, later also used by the Romans, the “Fontes Sequanae” (the sources of the Seine) [36]. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that in that distant land that provided wealth and well-being—and which enjoyed an excellent climate in the Neolithic—those ancient peoples made a point of remembering the name of their river and their protective deity. Furthermore, the memory of that lost world is also evoked by Seneca in the tragedy “Medea”: “In a certain number of years there will come a time in which the Ocean will open the barriers of the world, and in which we will discover an immense land; Tethys will reveal a new world and Thule will no longer be the last of the lands” [37].

On the other hand, at that time maritime communications between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific were also easier, since the climate, warmer than today, made the Arctic Ocean navigable during the summer. This explains the planetary diffusion not only of myths, tales and legends common to the whole world, but also of the megalithic civilization, whose last memory is found in the myth of Atlantis, told by Plato together with the memory of the Pillars of Hercules, in which the great philosopher focuses on a prehistoric global civilization based on navigation. We have already mentioned

it in a previous article in which we verified the plausibility of the hypothesis —based on many clues— that the Elysian Fields of classical mythology were located in the plain overlooking Hilo Bay, on the island of Hawaii [38].

## Conclusion

At the beginning of this article, we saw that both Plutarch and Plato talk about the continent located beyond the Atlantic, even if their points of view are different and in a certain sense complementary. Indeed, Plutarch begins to talk about this topic by mentioning Ogygia and other three islands located at high latitude, which correspond to the intermediate islands cited by Plato when he shows the route to the overseas continent. Then Plutarch describes the Canadian Gulf of St. Lawrence, of which he correctly says that it is at the same latitude as the mouth of the Volga into the Caspian, focusing on the continental Greeks, who lived there and were linked to the figures of Cronus and above all of Heracles. In turn Plato, whose absolute certainty of the existence of a continent beyond the ocean is striking, focuses on the haven of departure of the transatlantic route, characterized by its narrow entrance and the Pillars of Hercules. At this point, making use of a recent study on European megalithism, whose Author argues “for the transfer of the megalithic concept over sea routes emanating from northwest France, and for advanced maritime technology and seafaring in the megalithic Age” [20], it is natural to identify this haven with the Gulf of Morbihan, “a focal point of the European Neolithic during the mid-5th millennium BC” [21] near the megalithic site of Carnac. This identification in turn is confirmed by the imposing alignment of nineteen menhirs, all in a row starting from the Broken Menhir of Er Grah, the largest European menhir, near the narrow entrance of the Gulf. They are the Pillars of Hercules indicated by Plato. All of this also confirms the reliability of what was handed down by Plutarch, with his story about the continental Greeks (regarding which there is no lack of confirmations coming from the Native Americans themselves), which in all probability represents the last testimony, miraculously surviving the millennia, of prehistoric settlements of Europeans on the American continent during the prehistoric climatic optimum, when megalithic civilization reached its peak. However, these themes require further studies and insights, which in the future could shed new light on the prehistory of humanity.

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2. Plut De Fac. 941d.
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4. Vinci F (2017) The Nordic Origins of the Iliad and Odyssey: an up-to-date survey of the theory. *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 3(2): 163-186.

5. Plut De Fac 941b-c. The Maeotis is the present Sea of Azov (whose extension is smaller than that of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, as Plutarch states).
6. The excellent knowledge of geography in Plutarch's time (1st century AD) is also attested by his statement that the distance from the Moon to the Earth is "fifty-six times greater than the radius of the Earth" (De Facie 925d). Indeed, multiplying the average radius of the Earth (6,371 km) by 56, we obtain an Earth-Moon distance of 356,776 km, while the effective distance of the Moon from the Earth at perigee is 356,500 km.
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8. For instance, in Dicksonfjord, a fjord branch of Isfjorden at Spitsbergen, it was found that there was an average temperature of +6°C compared to the current one. Cf. Beierlein L, Salvigsen O, Schöne B, Mackensen A, Brey T (2015) The seasonal water temperature cycle in the Arctic Dicksonfjord (Svalbard) during the Holocene Climate Optimum derived from subfossil Arctic islandica shells, *The Holocene* 25 (8): 1197-1207.
9. Diod. *Bibl. Hist.* I, 27.
10. Plut De Fac. 941c.
11. According to Homer, Odysseus, after his adventures following the Trojan War, arrived at the island Ogygia (Od. 12, 448), from where he later set sail to reach, after a very long voyage eastward, the land of the Phaeacians, who subsequently accompanied him to Ithaca. This North Atlantic location of Ogygia was the starting point for the study with which we relocated the whole Homeric world in northern Europe, in an era preceding the descent of the Achaeans into the Mediterranean, thus resolving both the innumerable geographical inconsistencies and the current problems of temporal framing of the Homeric poems. Cf. Vinci F (2017) The Nordic Origins of the Iliad and Odyssey: an up-to-date survey of the theory. *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 3(2): 163-186.
12. Tac Germ 3, 2. "Germania" is the name with which Tacitus called northern Europe up to the Baltic.
13. Tac Germ 34, 2. "Hercules" is the Latin name of the mythical hero called "Heracles" in Greek.
14. Pind Ol 3, 16.
15. Hitti P (1957) *Lebanon In History from the Earliest Times to the Present*, Macmillan, New York, p. 118.
16. Plat Tim. 24e-25a, transl. by Lamb W R M (1925) in *Plato*, vol. 9, Heinemann, London.
17. Here are the three consecutive Greek adverbs, elegantly translated by Walter Lamb as "most rightly (...) in the fullest and truest sense": pantelôs (perfectly) alêthôs (really) orthôtata (most rightly). This attests to how certain Plato was of the existence of a continent beyond the ocean!
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19. Vinci F (2020) *I Misteri della Civiltà Megalitica (Mysteries of the Megalithic Civilization)*. LEG, Gorizia, pp. 170-176. The question is long and complex; among the many reasons supporting this identification, here we just restrict ourselves to observing that the peculiar morphology of Greenland corresponds to that of Atlantis, described by Plato as a very large island with a vast central plain surrounded by very high mountains. This explains why the Atlanteans built a system of huge canals there (Critias 118d): they had to drain the meltwater during the summer season to avoid disastrous floods. The resemblance between the coastal profile of Greenland and the map of Atlantis by A. Kircher (c. 1669) also gives cause for thought.
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