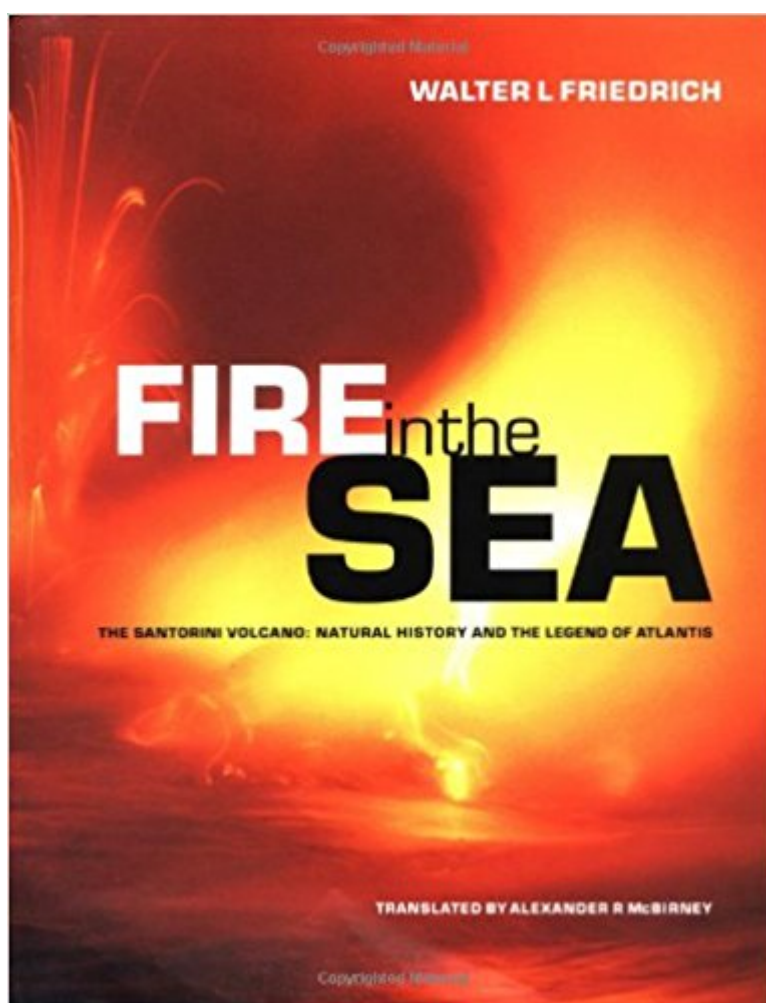


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# Fire In The Sea: The Santorini Volcano: Natural History And The Legend Of Atlantis



## Synopsis

The legend of the lost city of Atlantis has captivated the human imagination for centuries. Did this city actually exist, and, if so, what happened to it? Was it destroyed in the greatest cataclysmic event of the Bronze Age? While the truth behind the legend of Atlantis may never be known, *Fire in the Sea* tells the story of one of the largest and most devastating natural disasters of classical history that may also hold vital clues to the possible existence and fate of the lost city. In vivid prose, author Walter L. Friedrich describes the eruption of the Greek island of Santorini, or Thera, sometime in the 17th or 16th century BC. This eruption, perhaps one of the largest explosions ever witnessed by humankind, sent a giant cloud of volcanic ash into the air that eventually covered settlements on the island. Friedrich relates how this event forever altered the course of civilization in the region, and inspired a mystery that has fired humanity's imagination ever since. More than 160 elegant, full-color photographs and vivid prose capture the beauty, the geology, archaeology, history, peoples and environmental setting of Santorini. *Fire in the Sea* will readily appeal to the general reader interested in natural catastrophes as well as the beauty of the region. It will also enchant anyone who has ever dreamt about uncovering the mystery of the legend of Atlantis. Walter Friedrich is currently an associate professor at the Department of Earth Sciences, University of Aarhus, Denmark. He has visited Santorini at least 35 times since 1975 and has published numerous scientific articles in such international journals as *Nature*, *Lethaia*, *Spektrum der Wissenschaft*, and other publications.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Site of one of the most intensely studied volcanoes, Santorini in the Aegean Sea supported the thriving Minoan civilization until a titanic eruption about 3,600 years ago. Now Santorini attracts a seasonal influx of tourists to appreciate the spectacular volcano, a semicircular caldera rising hundreds of meters above the sea, which the wealth of photographs in Friedrich's survey, though intended to help explain Santorini's stratigraphy, shows off handsomely. The basic explanation of the volcano is simple: it resulted from an upwelling of magma from the subduction of the African plate beneath the Eurasian plate. Its surface expression is a layer cake of deposits, which is to be expected from a place that blows up every few millennia. The heart of the text describes how the rocks of Santorini were dated and a sequence of eruptions established. In the course of geological fieldwork, the relics of a buried civilization have come to light. Friedrich capably summarizes that archaeological discovery, complete with the notion that the Minoan civilization inspired Plato's reference to Atlantis Gilbert Taylor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

"Friedrich capably summarizes that archaeological discovery, complete with the notion that the Minoan civilization inspired Plato's reference to Atlantis." Booklist "...a welcome addition to studies of the Cycladic island of Santorini. Walter L. Friedrich's many years of geological research are synthesized in a well-illustrated monograph...Refreshingly, Friedrich has no academic axes to grind; his aim throughout is to provide information basic to understanding a pivotal natural event in the prehistoric Aegean." Historian "...Santorini exploded in 1600 BC producing one of the largest explosions ever witnessed by humans. The story of why it blew--and the consequences--is superbly detailed and illustrated in Friedrich's book." Focus Magazine "Where the book really excels is that all facets seem to have been treated with comparable, if not equal, authority...The book has excellent photographs and clear diagrams in a large format but it is no mere coffee-table publication. The science is clear and thorough but not condescending and the author conveys thorough knowledge and enthusiasm for the region. It would be an excellent read for anyone contemplating a visit to any volcanic island and would be essential preparation for a visit to Santorini. It is the sort of book one would return to...it is an excellent value." Bulletin of the British Ecological Society "Lavishly illustrated...a painstaking account...a genuine education in the enormous power of the Earth to shake up the landscape." National Geographic's Adventure Magazine "This in-depth survey of the Santorini volcano's natural history and its connections to the Atlantis legend will hold special appeal for students of volcanism and geology...packed with color photos of the volcano, relics, excavations, and maps; and it includes in-depth discussions of volcanism in general. An outstanding, involving account for the dedicated student of geology." Midwest Book Review "...a unique case study of a

natural disaster in a plate tectonic framework and historical context...Lucid writing, ample high-quality color photographs and illustrations, and creative combination of scientific language with historical details make fascinating reading. Highly recommended." Choice"An outstanding, involving account for the dedicated student of geology." The Bookwatch"...an excellent account of the archaeological and geological history of Santorini...Its lavish color photographs, drawings and computer graphics will have broad appeal. It is indicative of the book's quality that the new archaeological museum at Santorini displays passages from it." American Scientist"Friedrich brings the story up to date, and summarizes the geologic and archeological studies that support this conclusion in a style that should appeal to general readers and specialists...is a detailed look at the geologic framework." Society of Exploration Geophysicists

One of the grander books concerning volcanoes impacting human history ! The immense work to gather data and understand the eruption sequence of Santorini is what separates serious scientists and geologist from the rest of humanity . The extinction of Minoan civilization would not have been possible without the efforts of the various scientists I was delighted to get my hands on this pieces of literature . T.

The geologic history of Santorini is fascinating. This book is written as a science text but includes many illustrations and pictures which helps with the scientific formatting. It is a great book if you are interested in long period volcanoes and how they evolve over time. Interesting reports regarding archaeological excavations and their findings and interpretations concerning the Minoan civilization.

Enjoyed "Fire in the Sea" as I will be traveling there, good information, very informative. A good buy and gave the finished book to our library.

It was truly an exciting experience which found me capering about loose scoria ridges looming over the still fuming caldera several feet about the beach; I felt quite daring, especially as I am extremely afraid of heights! I learned a lot that I had missed by dropping out of my degree program prior to going on my summer field camp. There were examples of debris flows, unconformities, erosional channels, wind formations, faulting, uplift of sea bed strata with fossiliferous deposits, all an education in themselves. I also learned that hours on end in the hot sun plotting individual grains of rock for size, shape, color, angularity, and inclination is not my cup of tea. It makes a great summer vacation for the enthusiastic amateur, but I couldn't imagine it as a permanent, full time job. I

decided I had missed nothing by remaining a nurse, and looked forward to a publication of results that I could enjoy in the quiet of my own home! Just such a report has since been published (2000). I had the great good fortune to discover Walter L. Friedrich's volume *Fire in the Sea* while browsing the various links from another book on geology. Although it's not an in depth geological or archaeological survey of the research on the island, it is an excellent compendium for the page length of what is known about it with respect to these two topics. Above all it is an approachable discourse on the tectonic history of Santorini, both ancient and modern. There are wonderful photos of the various vistas around the island-many of which I recognized from my own visit there--and several maps that show the development of the site through time. Reports of volcanism and earthquake activity through the ages are included from earlier authors that give an almost biographical character to the story of Santorini or ancient Thera, and there are several illustrations of Minoan art work that help recreate the character of the island prior to the eruption for which the volcano is most noted and often cited, that during Minoan times ca. 1700 BC. At the end of the book in Appendix 1, the author has included one of Plato's Dialogs discussing the ancient tale of Atlantis with which the island has been linked by a number of researchers. I found the book to be an excellent discourse on the geology of the island but was a little disappointed in that there was so little about the archaeological site of Akrotiri, especially as geologists-including Dr. Floyd McCoy, with whom I worked and who is mentioned in the volume-have been very helpful in illuminating some of the events of the city's last moments. The excavation site is fascinating, as the structures are preserved in places up to second stories. The faulted stair case (p. 70) is included and is one of the most emotive sights in the devastated city, but a more thorough discussion of the site and what is believed to have occurred there during the eruption that ended its life is a very stirring tale, one that could have lent a greater sense of the moment to the reader. It would also illustrate how the activities of archaeology and geology are integrated to generate productive results. Although the author discusses in brief some of the concerns of the modern inhabitants of the island, I would also have enjoyed more photos of the modern towns in the area, since I suspect they are very like those that have existed on the island since antiquity. A discussion of their own history and likely future would have added a sense of continuity to the tale of Santorini.

"*Fire in the Sea: The Santorini Volcano: Natural History and the Legend of Atlantis*" by Walter L. Friedrich is a uniquely fascinating scholarly natural history of the Greek island of Santorini, yet amazingly easy to read for a volume with such a wealth of geologic and natural history, as well as a thoughtful inclusion of Plato's writings on Atlantis. The author seems intent on making the secrets of

the Santorini volcano and the catastrophic explosion which destroyed the island and made an impact on the Aegean area easily understandable to the average reader, even while discussing geologic formations and the nature of volcanoes. The many photos are quite helpful in understanding the island and its geologic makeup; it was truly hard to put the book down and I was a little sad when I finished reading, as it had been such a joy to read. I highly recommend this book to amateur rock hounds, vulcanologists, and anyone interested in Santorini.

This book has been updated and republished in 2009 as "Santorini: Volcano, Natural History, Mythology" — Santorini: Volcano, Natural History, Mythology

This is a lucid and informative book for both ancient history buffs and those interested in volcanos. The book discusses the Santorini volcano system in detail, and outlines the history of eruptions from the remote past to the present day. The greatest emphasis is on the eruption of 1640 B.C., one of the most violent volcanic explosions of all time. The text, maps and drawings are excellent, and the author presents not only what we know about the Santorini volcano, but how the scientific conclusions evolved and what the evidence is behind them. The book was published in Germany in 1994, which means that the eruption of Mt. St. Helens had not yet occurred when the book was written. Too bad -- that would have been an excellent example for the author to compare to Santorini. As a bonus, the cover, the paper quality, printing and photos are all superior to those in most hardback books available today.

This in-depth survey of the Santorini volcano's natural history and its connections to the Atlantis legend will hold special appeal for students of volcanism and geology: Fire in the Sea is packed with color photos of the volcano, relics, excavations, and maps; and it includes in-depth discussions of volcanism in general. An outstanding, involving account for the dedicated student of geology.

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