

'Lost continent' of Atlantis stirs debate

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Italian scholars in Rome are debating the controversial theory that Sardinia is the lost island of Atlantis, and whether the theory merits further research.

The theory, offered by Italian journalist Sergio Frau, has drawn both international acclaim and criticism, the Italian news agency ANSA said Friday. About 250 academics have dismissed the claim, saying it sensationalizes Sardinia's history.

The thesis received a boost in 2005 during a United Nations-sponsored symposium on the issue, suggesting it merited serious consideration, ANSA said.

The gathering of academics, archaeologists, geologists and historians coincides with the opening of an exhibition on Frau's ideas, outlined in his book "The Pillars of Hercules."

The location of Atlantis -- or whether the fabled sunken continent ever existed -- has never been confirmed, ANSA said.

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