

their southern voyages as far as the river Senegal. Very likely they discovered the Canary Islands, by the ancients called Fortunate Isles, visited and abandoned the East of America, giving origin to the story of that marvellous vast island situated west of the Strait of Gibraltar, called Atlantis, which as the legend goes, had subsequently been overwhelmed by the Ocean. Alexander the Great sent (B. C. 325) his admiral Nearchus with a fleet to explore the coasts of the Persian and Red Seas.

After the fall and destruction of Carthage (B. C. 146) the settlements lying beyond the pillars of Hercules were by degrees abandoned, and so the existence of such far countries fell into oblivion. Under the Roman empire and during the Middle Ages explorations mostly by land were undertaken by some bold travellers, viz. by Strabo, a short time before Christ, by Pausanias in the second century of our era, by the Chinese monk Fa-Hian in the fourth and above all by the Venitian merchant Marco Polo in the thirteenth and by the Arabian theologian Abd Allah El Lawati in the fourteenth century, who both visited Europe, Asia, the Sunda Islands or Malayan Archipelago, Africa and even Madagascar.



While the incursions of new tribes in Europe, the spread of Christian doctrines, the destruction of Greek and Latin works, the unceasing wars and robberies destroyed the former civilization and rendered property and life unsafe, some Irish monks, either to escape persecution or in search of other people to christianize, sailed northwards from their Green Island (i. e. Ireland) and discovered Iceland in the year 795, which was subsequently occupied by Norman refugees from Norway. These found in their turn Greenland at the