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“Ancient Cities and their reflection to today’s world”

Monday, 24th October 2010

A Geomythological Excursion and Experience

Environmental Education Center of Styliida

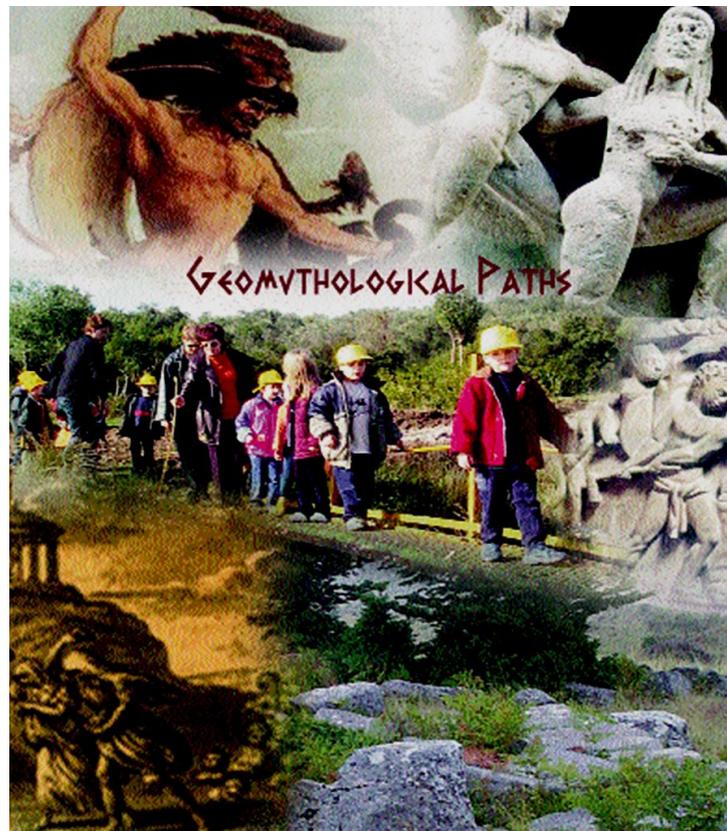
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Geomythological Guide-layout

LAMIA –THERMOPILAE-HERACLEA| Mn Othris-Mn Oeta and Asopos Canyon

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Geomythological Field Trip to Thermopilae and Heraclea

Guide-layout

- I. HERACLES - NESSOS AND LIHAS
- II. THE BIG STOWN OF MELAMPYGOS
- III. THE BATTLE OF THERMOPILAE
- IV. THE SPINGS OF HERACLES
- V. THE TEMPLE OF DEMETER (AMFIKTIONIA OF ANTHILI)
- VI. THE TRAHENIANS ROCKS AND THE TRAHINA
- VII. THE CANYON OF ASOPOS (THE ANOPAEA PATH)



HERACLES, NESSOS AND LIHAS

Lihades' volcano created Lihades islands - *Lihadonessia*, as we know them today-, are entirely formed by volcanic rocks. Mythology relates these islands to Hercules dramatic end and apotheosis, and to his friend Lihos (the islands were named after him). While Hercules was in Cape Kenaeon in north-west Evvoia, he decided to perform thanking sacrifices to his father, god Zeus.

Deianeira, Hercules wife, lived in Trachina on the foot of mount Oeta. When she found out Hercules had fell in love with Iole, she gave to Lihos a shirt soaked in a love potion to give it to Hercules. The potion was full with



poison from Lernaean Hydra, provided to her by centaur **Nessos**, during the adventure of river Euenos crossing. The moment Hercules wore the shirt to perform his sacrifice; it glued to his body and started devouring his flesh causing him terrible pain. Driven by his anger he grabbed Lihos and after spinning him in the air, through him in the north Evvoikos Gulf. Lihos' body parts, formed Lihades islands. (Monolia is his body, Strongili his head and the mountain above the cape is called Lihos.)

Heracles and Lixas Lihades islands left the Body and right the head of Lixas



THE BIG STOWN OF MELAMPYGOS HERACLES



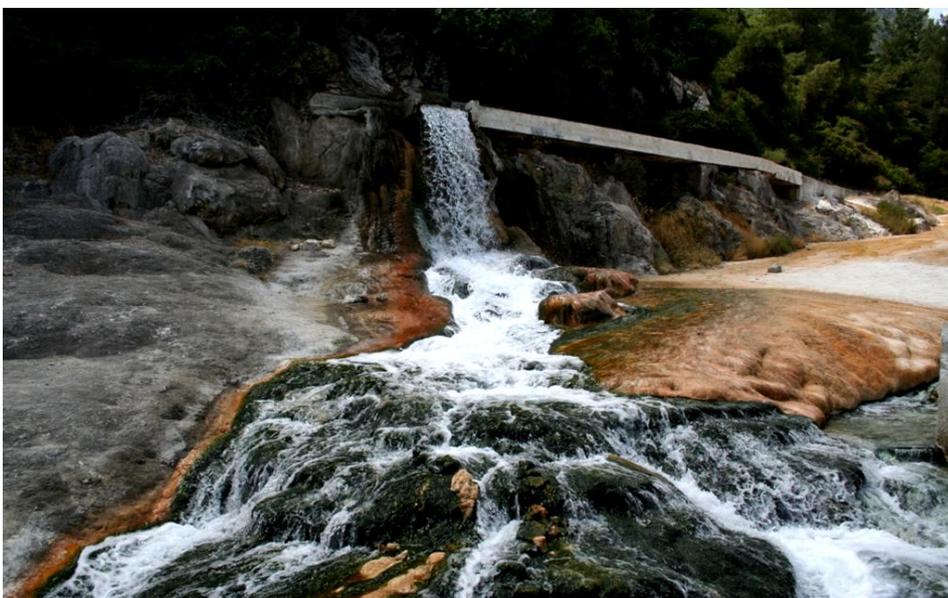
The Kerkopes (or Cercopes or Kercopes) were warned by their mother to beware of the "melampygos" or black-bottomed one, but they did not know whom she meant. When Hercules (Herakles) caught the Kerkopes trying to steal his arrows while he slept, he slung them over his shoulder by their heels



where they had a good look at his sun-darkened posterior. The Kerkopes started laughing because they remembered their mother had warned them against the black-bottomed one. After explaining their laughter to Hercules, he joined in and, being the good sport that he usually was, released them.. The eventual fate of the Kekropes was to be turned either to stone or to monkeys.

THE SPINGS OF HERACLES - Thermopylae

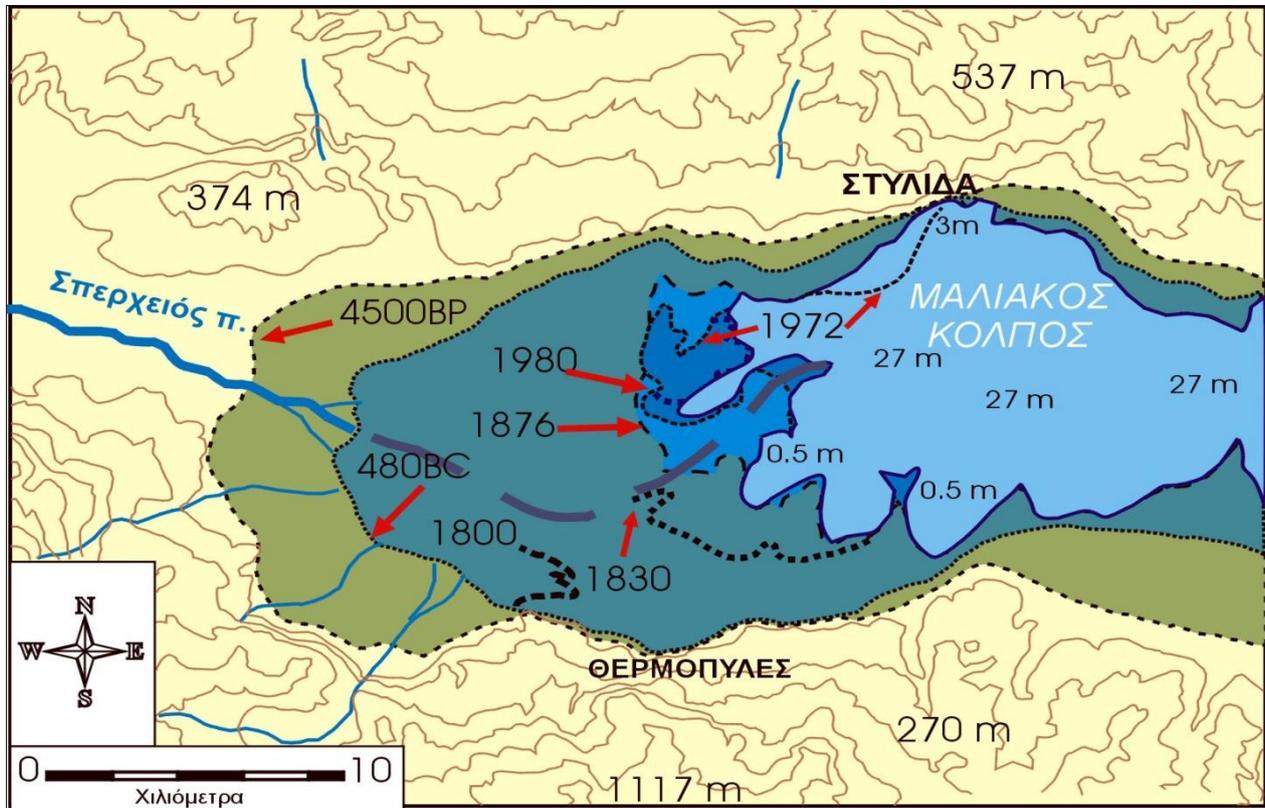
Hercules blood was boiling as a result of the poison and to comfort his pain dived in the spring nearby. Since then water in that place is hot with unpleasant odor, and that's why it's called *Thermopylae* (*thermo*: thermal).



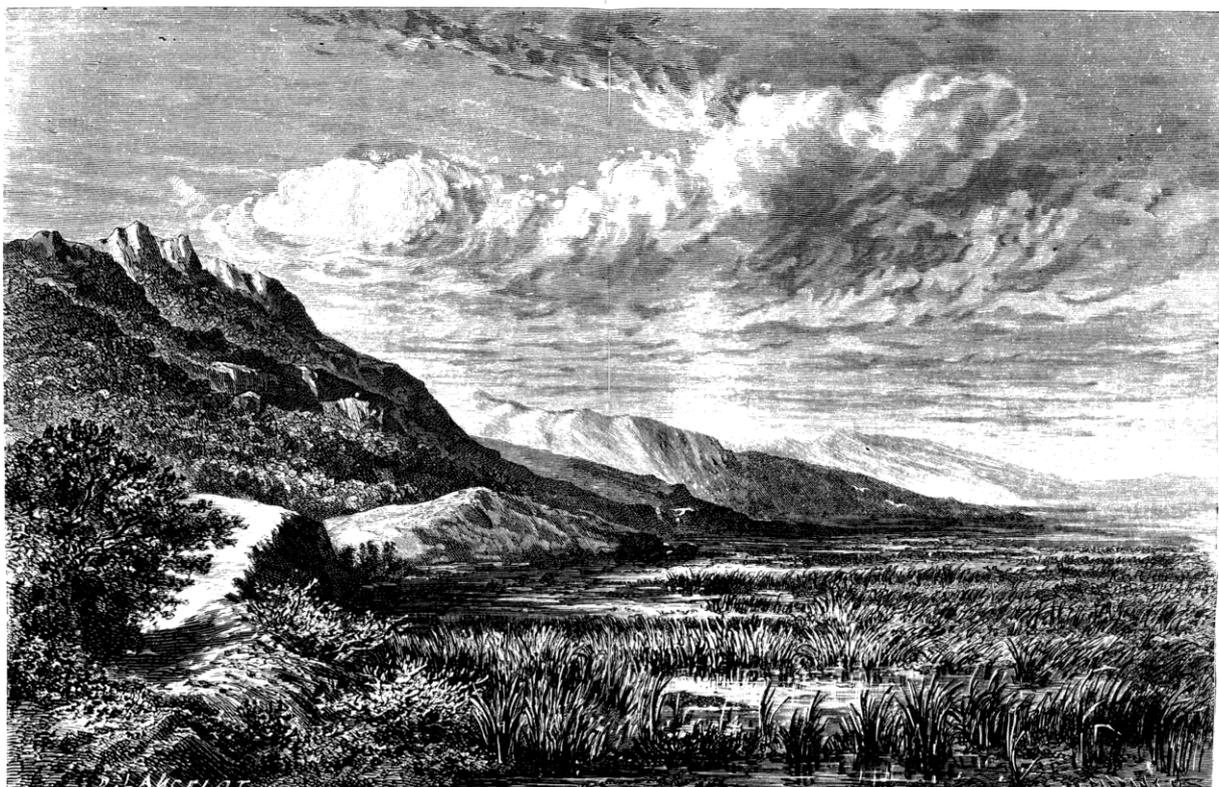
The Olympian gods Athena and Iphistos (Volcano) was the gods who make this spring (for Heracles)

Maliakos Area flooded by sea water and became Maliakos Gulf 6.000 years ago. Ever since Spercheios river determines and influences the Gulfs evolution, with its

alluviums, floods and his delta. Spercheios, according to Hesiod, was a god river son of Titans, *Oceanus* and *Tethys*. The rivers delta constantly changes as the river supplies the gulf with its alluviums. The picture shows the changes in the shoreline throughout history, as well as the supposed shoreline at the time the world famous battle in Thermopylae took place.



THE BATTLE OF THERMOPILAE



Οι Θερμοπύλες.

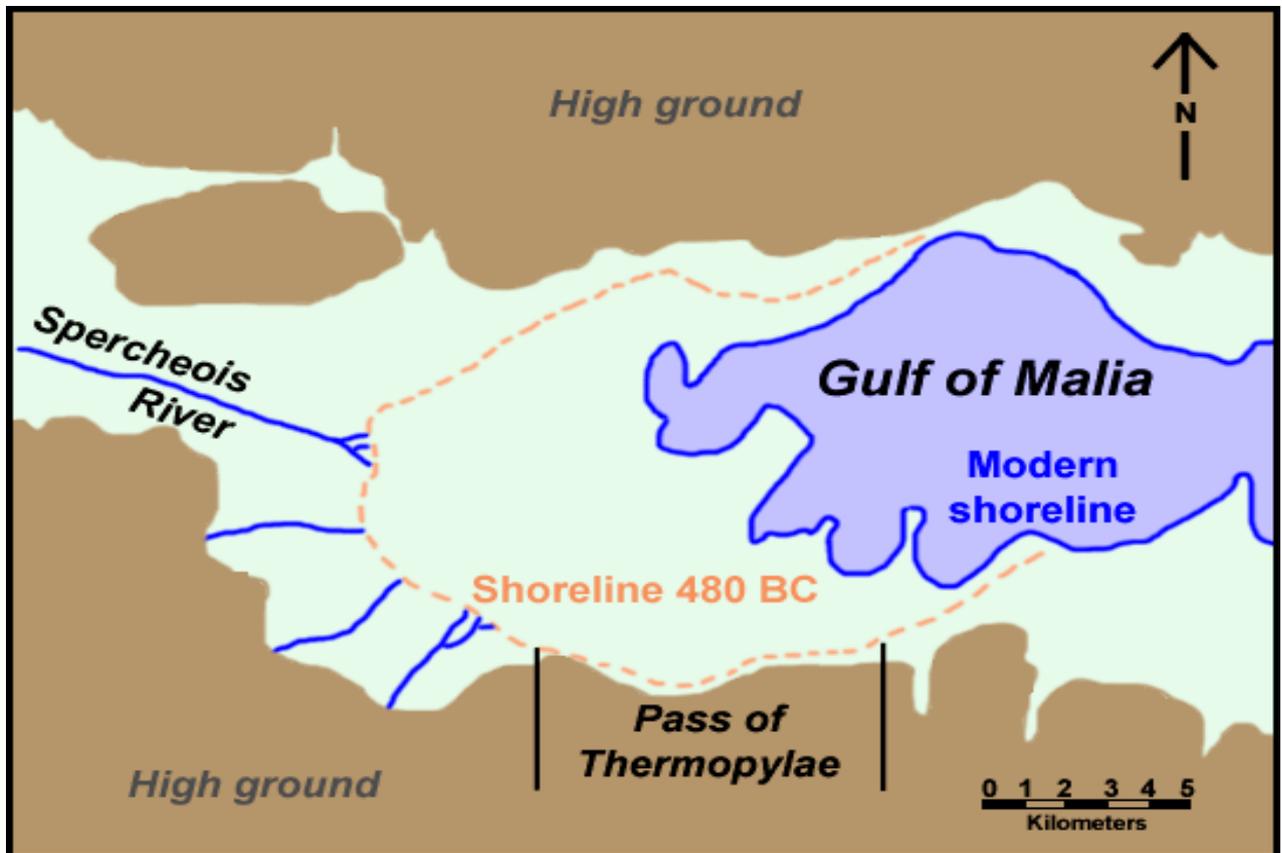


Leonidas Monument
With the Statue of Leonidas between
Statue of Mountain Taigetos and river Eurotas

Ω ΞΕΙΝ ΑΓΓΕΛΕΙΝ
ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΙΣ ΟΤΙ ΤΗΔΕ
ΚΕΙΜΕΘΑ ΤΟΙΣ ΚΕΙΝΩΝ
ΡΗΜΑΣΙ ΠΕΙΘΟΜΕΝΟΙ
The Epitaph of Simonides on the Hill of Kolonos

Here, in the narrow passing of Thermopylae, King Leonidas stopped the biggest army of ancient History. Only after few days and when the “Greek” traitor Efiates, (Trachina citizen), showed to the Persians another narrow path beginning from the canyon of Asopos , that is the Anopaea path, they passed through and therefore reach the eastern Thermopylean side.

The King Leonidas ordered the other Greek soldiers to leave out, while he decided to stay there with 300 soldiers from Sparta. Also 700 men from Thespieae (Near to Thebae) decided to stay and fight along with Leonidas.



Map of Thermopilaee area
With modern shoreline and reconstructed shoreline of 480 BC



Greek phalanx formation

There are several monuments around the battlefield of Thermopylae.

Today, you can see Leonidas Monument with the Statue of Leonidas between Mountain Taygetos and river Eurotas and the Thespian monument in Honor of 700 soldiers from Thespieae with a bronze statue depicting the god Eros (Love)

Also on the Hill of Kolonos, you can see the Epitaph of Simonides
Simonides composed a well-known epigram, which was engraved as an epitaph on a commemorative stone placed on top of the burial mound of the Spartans at Thermopylae. It is also the hill on which the last of them died. The original stone has not been preserved. Instead the epitaph was engraved on a new stone erected in 1955. The text from Herodotus is:

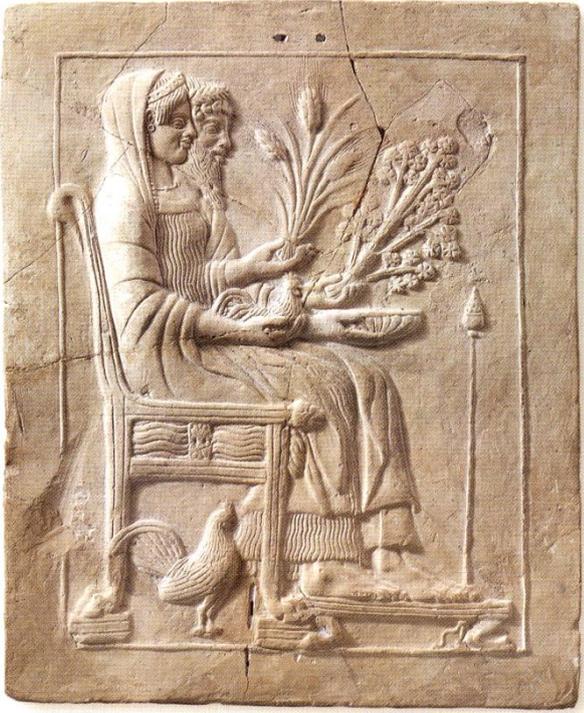
Ω ΞΕΙΝ ΑΓΓΕΛΕΙΝ ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΙΣ ΟΤΙ ΤΗΔΕ ΚΕΙΜΕΘΑ ΤΟΙΣ ΚΕΙΝΩΝ ΡΗΜΑΣΙ ΠΕΙΘΟΜΕΝΟΙ
Ō ksein', angellein Lakedaimoniois hoti tēide-keimetha tois keinōn rhēmasi peithomenoi.

O stranger, tell Lacedaemonians that here We lie to their sayings in obedience."
Stranger, report this word, we pray, to the Spartans, that lying Here in this spot we remain, faithfully keeping their laws

THE TEMPLE OF DEMETER (AMFIKTIONIA OF ANTHILI)

Amfiktionia was founded during the prehistoric years. Legend has it that Amfiktion, Ellinas's brother and Deucalion's and Pyrra's son invited the town representatives (Hieromnemes) to Ancient Anthele in Dimitra's Temple, which was located in the most western Thermopylean pathway. The Ieromnimones held a meeting and decided to arrange peacefully all differences among their towns. Since then, twice every year (in Spring and Autumn Equinox) the Ieromnimones would meet in Anthili, in Dimitra's Temple, later named Pylaia after its position, and discuss and solve problems peacefully without a war.





So great was Amfiktionia's influence that even Delphi's Oracle was under its power. However, much later one of the two annual meetings took place in Delphi.



THE TRAHENIANS ROCKS AND THE TRAHINA

The great Greek tragic poet Sophocles in his tragedy TRACHENIANS he describes Hercules's last years in Trachena, in mount Oeta Foot, the town where King Keekus and Queen Alcyone hosted Hercules and his wife Deianera.



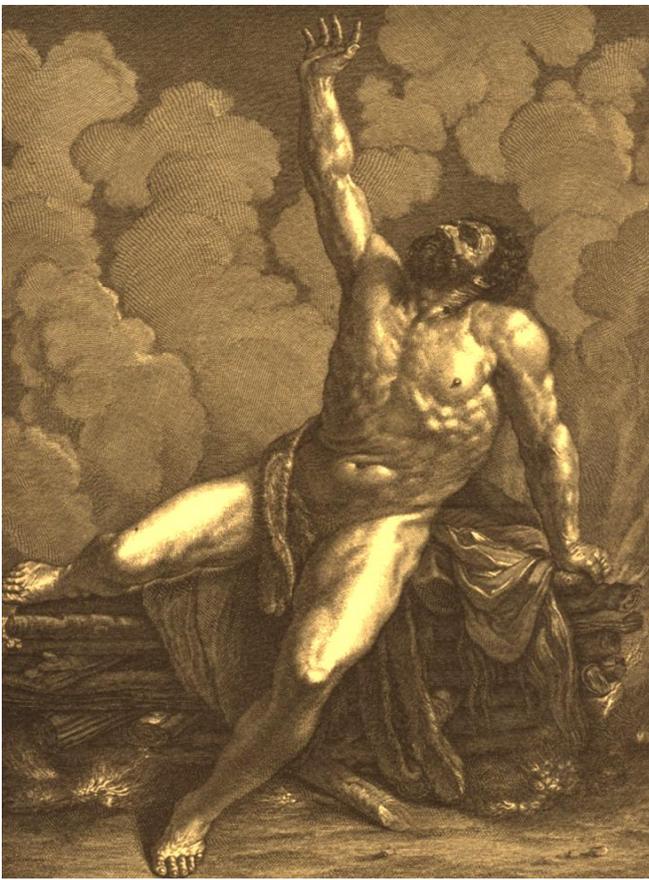
Here you can see a big geological fault between Oeta Mountain and Sperheios River Valley



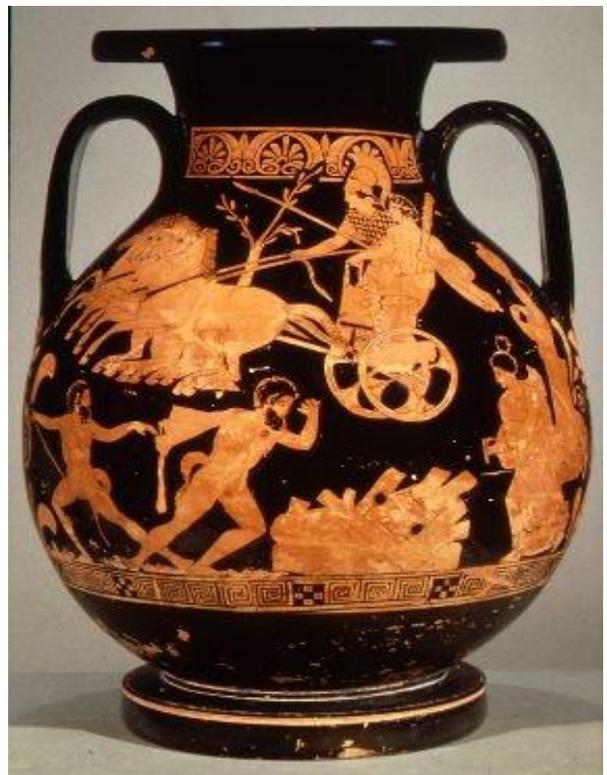
**Here you can see the rocks of Trahena
The name Trahena is translated as rocky**

THE CANYON OF ASOPOS (THE ANOPAEA PATH)





The buried of Heracles Heracles became a God -



According to the legend, Hercules dug the canyon of Asopos with his own hands, when suffering from pain he decided to climb up Oeta's crest and become god. Athena takes the new born (from the fire Heracles) to Olympus between the other Gods of Heracles.

The "Place of fire" on Mountain Oeta (Xserovouni)

view from the Temple of Heracles



Asopos Canyon

In historic years, in 480 B.C. Xerxi's army camped in the valley between Spercheios and Asopos rivers. The traitor Efiates, Trachena citizen, showed the Persians a path beginning from the canyon of Asopos, that is the Anopaea path. Leonidas knew this path and feared betrayal, so he had placed 1000 soldiers from neighboring Fokida, to guard the path. Unfortunately for the Greeks, Ydarnis, the leader of the Honorable Undying Host of Persians, managed to pass through and therefore reach the eastern Thermopylean side.





Deucalion's flood

The mount Othrys area, is closely related to Deucalion and Pyrrha, as the flood took place during their time. The continuous invasion of the sea on the mainland, forced pre historic man to settle in mountains, near rivers and lakes, where environmental factors were considered more stable.

The word “Laos” (people)

After the flood, Deucalion and Pyrrha created the new generation of humans and because they left “earth's bones” behind they were called *laos* (stones – *laos* in ancient Greek). The word *laos* is still used as a synthetic in other words in reference to stone exploitation (*λατομείον-latomeion*: mine).

Why do we call ourselves Hellenes

Hellen was the name of Deucalion's son, who according to tradition was the head of our race. After the flood, *Hellen* founded city **HELLAS (ΕΛΛΑΣ)** located in mount Othrys, as imprinted by Regas Ferraeos in his “map” (late 18th century) and in “New Anaharses” map (early 19th century).

Hellen's children were *Dorus*, *Aeolus* and *Xuthus*, who gave birth to *Ion* and *Achaeus*. So *Dorians*, *Aeolians*, *Achaeans* and *Ionians* were named *Hellenes* in honor to their forefather.





Othrys - the mountain of Titans – Titanomachy

In mount Othrys, the Titans were gathered and fought against the gods of Olympus. Since Greece was characterized by active seismicity and volcanism, the circumstances under which the areas' natural environment was formed were unstable and highly influenced.



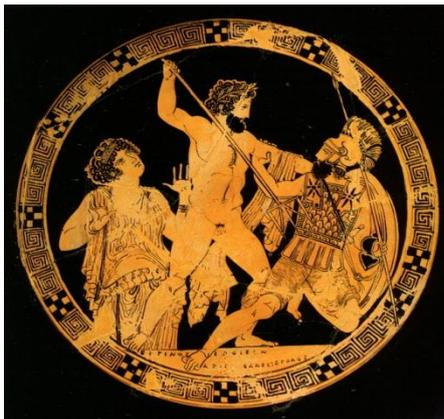
The Titans

The end of the Titans signifies, first of all, the diminution of geological activities and secondly the end of direct and determinative influence that natural environment had on prehistoric man and its settlements.



Fossils from mountain Othris (as the big tooth of Titans)

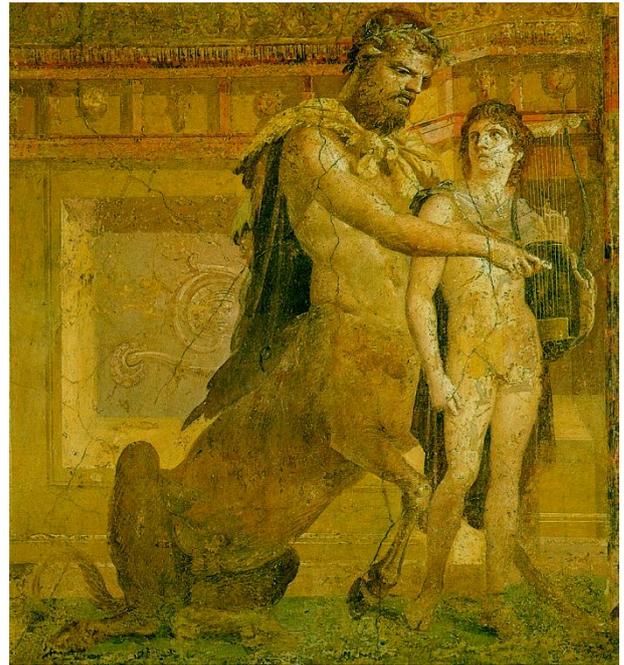
God Poseidon cut a piece of Kos Island and used it to burry Giant Polybotes, creating the volcanic island of Nissyros. (One of Nissyros craters is known as Polybotes)



Mountain Othris and Sperheios Valey, the Kingdon of the Achilles



Achilles and Patroclus



Achilles and Centaur Heiron

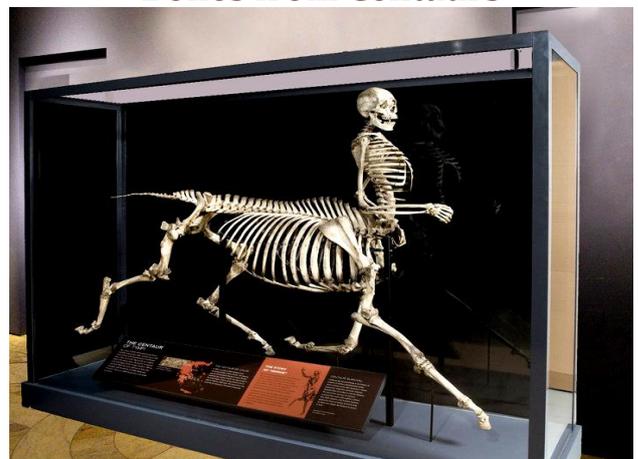


Achilles and

Centaur's reconstruction (do you believe it?)



Bones from Centaurs



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