

Myth of Meleagros



Kalidona was an ancient town of Etolia. Ineas was the King of this town. His wife Althea was Thestios' daughter, King of the neighbourly Plevrona. They had a son who was called Meleagros.

One summer the King, while sacrificing to gods, forgot goddess Artemis who protected the country. The goddess got angry and aiming to avenging upon the King she send a huge, wild boar with terrible tusks to destroy the royal fields, eradicate the animals and terrify the people. Prince Meleagros asked for help from the other countries. So, thirty five heroes gathered in Plevrona. Among them there was his mother's brother, King Thestios' son from the neighbourly Plevrona, where Kourites lived. A woman named Atalanti, whose father had abandoned her on the mountain when she was born due to the fact that her father wanted a son, went there as well. She fed on a bear's milk and in this way she became fearless. She born a great resemblance and had

much in common with Artemis, the goddess of hunting. So, since Artemis was the one who had send the boar, Atalanti represented the very same Artemis in the assembly.

A lot of these heroes had been killed by the boar by the time Atalanti hit it successfully on its back and hurt it. Meleagros managed to kill it. Being deeply in



love with Atalanti he gave her the fleece and the head of the boar, and in turn she donated them to the temple of Athena. The rest of the heroes were indignant with the fact that a woman had been given the award. The most important reaction was that of Meleagros' uncle, whom Meleagros had fought with. As a result of this conflict, the people of Calidona

who were called Etoli and the people of Plevrona who were called Kourites got fanaticized and started fighting. Etoli with Meleagros as their main protector won and Kourites found it impossible to hold their state. During the fight, Meleagros killed his uncle. However, there is no evidence whether this fact was deliberate or not. When

Althea got informed that her son had killed her brother, she fell on her knees and with her eyes full of tears she started hitting the ground with her palms and asking from the underworld gods Hades and Persephone to kill her son Meleagros.

Meleagros soon heard about his mother's terrible curse. He got upset, stop fighting and finally he was isolated at home. This fact encouraged Kourites and they set out an attack. Kalidona was in danger and Meleagros was its only salvation.

Everyone tried to persuade him to enter the battle but in vain. Only during the last time, when Kourites had set foot on the towers of Kalidona and burnt down the town and Meleagros' home, his wife Kleopatra managed to make him change his mind. Meleagros got armed, entered the fight and drove Kourites out of town. Etoli were saved but not Meleagros because his mother's curse was heard to the deepest parts of Hades by the merciless and inexorable Erinnyia. Meleagros' mother, Althea and his wife Kleopatra after their son and husband's death respectively, committed suicide hanging themselves while his sisters were mourning and bewailing inconsolably. Feeling compassion for his sisters, goddess Artemis turned them into the homonymous legendary birds, Known as Meleagrides fowls and led them to her island, Leros.

