

**A GEOMYTHOLOGICAL APPROACH OF ACHELOOS RIVER AND
ECHINADES ISLANDS (WESTERN GREECE)**

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Abstract

Although many consider the Greek Mythology as a figment of imagination of the imaginative Greeks, we believe that the Greek Mythology is the encrypted, most ancient history of the inhabitants of the Aegean and Circum-Aegean region, as well as that of the neighboring areas. In reality, it's their struggle for survival in a Geoenvironment that started to change drastically in 18,000 BP. These changes lasted for about 12,000 years and led to dramatic consequences, not only to their living needs, but also to their social and psychological needs.

The myth relating Echinades islands to Acheloos river is one of many that absolutely coincide with the physical and geological evolution of the broader area of the western Greek mainland since 18,000 BP.

The majority of rivers were considered as Gods by the ancient Greeks, children of the Titans Oceanus and Tethys. Acheloos was one of the most famous rivers in antiquity and was honored as a God. But, because some Nymphes who lived at its banks offered sacrifices to other Gods and did not honor him, he "*dragged the place of the Nymphes to the sea*" (Ovid. Metamorph. VIII 576) and formed the Echinades Islands. Later on, some of them were turned once again into land, because of Acheloos river deposits (Her., B. 10). Nowadays the small islands of Echinades are located in front of the Acheloos Delta, at the south-western point of the continental Greece, near the Ionian coasts. From a geographical point of view, they are distinguished in northern and southern Echinades.

For the physical-geological interpretation of the myth, the following have been taken into account:

- i. The actual (present-day) configuration of the Acheloos Delta which started to form after the Holocene Climatic Optimum (~6,000-4,000 BP)
- ii. The Upper Acheloos river valley (aprox. upstream of Kastraki village) which was gradually shaped during the last 6 Ma years, whereas part wise even earlier.
- iii. The glacial-eustatic movements during the last 18,000 years (last Glaciations' peak).

The geomythological analysis of the relationship between Acheloos river and Echinades islands has shown the following:

- i. Absolute coincidence of the myth with the physical-geological evolution of the Delta area during the last 18,000 years.

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- ii. The Greek Mythology is very old and descriptions which are referring to physical and geological conditions, are much older than the Neolithic period.
- iii. The Greek Mythology is not a figment of imagination of the imaginative Greeks.