

THERMOPYLAE

Thermopylae is a mountain pass in Greece. The region takes its name from nearby sources of hot water and from the narrow and rough passages from which one could approach the area, the so called eastern, middle and western "gates".

This name seems to derive from the mythical hero Hercules, who fell into the waters of the springs to get rid of the pains that had been created by the poisoned tunic of Nessus that was stuck to his body. Since then, fumes come out of the source.

The passage leads from Locris to Thessaly, between Mount Oiti and the bay of Maliakos.

In the ancient times, the site was sacred. There existed a dual source dedicated to Persephone -the "scyllo" source- at the foot of the ravine, near the Middle Gate, the narrowest part of Thermopylae.

Thermopylae is primarily known because of the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC between Greek and Persian armies.

At the time of Leonidas, in 480 BC, the pass was a narrow path (about 12 meters wide) down the hill, which the Greek soldiers attempted to exploit strategically to prevent the redundant Persian army. Today the passage of Thermopylae reaches 1.5 to 3 km wide, because of the deposits of Sperchios river.

The hot springs are still there, in our days, at the foot of the hill.

