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ATALANTA AND INSTITUTION OF FOSTERAGE
IN CONTEXT OF MYTHOLOGICAL TRADITIONS

In the article the name of the heroine Atalanta is analyzed on the basis of chosen fragments of texts of the Greek and Roman mythographers, summarized in Appendix. (Pseudo-) Apollodorus and Aelianus agree in information that it was a she-bear who became a foster-mother of Atalanta, when she was left in mountains by her father Iasos (or Iasion), because he wished a son. Other authors inform us about a father called Schoineus, but nobody ascribe him the leaving of his daughter. This paradox may be explained, if Iasos or Iasion was a foster-father. With regard to the she-bear, Atalanta’s foster-mother, the institution of fosterage played an important role in Atalanta’s curriculum. In this perspective it is legitimate to etymologize her name on the basis of the Indo-European root *H₂el– > *al– “to nourish; grow”, in the case of the name Atalanta intensified by the prefix *a(i)–, which was applied to the same root not only in Greek (ἀτάλλω “I skip in childish glee, gambol; bring up a child, rear, foster”), but also in the Germanic languages (*aþala– “noble descendant”), Tocharian A (ātäl “man”), and probably also in Hieroglyphic Luvian (atala– “brother”).

Keywords: Greek, mythology, theonym, etymology, word formation, fosterage

1. Existing etymologies.
1.1. The name of the heroine Ἀταλάντη is usually interpreted as “the [woman] equal [to men]”, cf. ἀτάλαντος “having the same weight, equal” FRISK (1973: I, 175–76).
1.2. The semantic interpretation of her name as “intollerant” is still less probable CARNOY (1957: 28) “celle qui ne supporte pas”.
1.3. More promising seems a solution of HOFFMANN (1906: 157, n. 60) proposing a compound of ἀταλός “tender, delicate (of maidens etc.) & ἄντη “face”, reconstructed on the basis of adverbs ἁντα “face to face, over against”, ἁ ντην “against, over against”. He identified the same component in the second members of such the compound names as Εὐ–άντα, Ἄρι– ἁντος, ΘΕ–άντος.
2. Hypothesis.
According to the one (Arcadian?) version of the myth she was a daughter of Minyos’ daughter Klymene and Schoineus (Hesiodos: *Catalogue of Women*; Diodoros Siculus: *Bibliotheca Historica*; Ovidius: *Metamorphoses*: *Atalanta*; Pausanias: *Graeciae Descriptio*; Hyginus: *Fabulae*: *Atalanta*). According to another version her father was Iasios (Theognis: *Elegies*; Kallimachos: *Hymn to Artemis*) or Iasos (Apollodoros: *Library*) or Iasion (Hyginus: *Fabulae*: *Auge*) or Iasion (Aelianus: *Varia Historia*). The stories on Atalanta are summarized and analyzed by Escher-Bürkli (1896: c. 1891), keeping two different heroins. Two traditions differentiating two fathers are compatible, if one of fathers was in reality a foster-father. This role could be, perhaps in agreement with local rules, ascribed to the man called Iasios (also Iasos or Iasion) which was determined as her foster-father. However, Iasios wished to have a boy and therefore he left the girl in the Parthenion Mountains. A she-bear, who found and suckled her, became her new foster-mother. Later Atalanta found her new home among herdsmen where she presented herself as a top-hunter and runner. It is not important, if the motif of the fosterage occurs once (she-bear) or twice (foster-father & she-bear). Both internal Greek etymology and external Indo-European cognates confirm that her name may indicate her role of a fostered child.

3. Internal etymology.
In Greek there is a relatively rich set of forms supporting the ‘foster’–etymology (details see Moussy 1972):
Greek ἀτάλλω “I skip in childish glee, gambol; bring up a child, rear, foster”, redupl. ἀτιτάλλω “I rear, tend” (about other than own child, cf. *Il.* XXIV, 60; *Od.* XVIII, 323; Hesiodos *Th.* 480), ἀτιτάλτας “foster-father” (Gortyn); also ἀταλός “tender, delicate (of youthful persons, as of maidens)”; specifically Euripides, *El.* 699: ἀταλὰς ὑπὸ ματέρος on suckling her lamb.

4. External cognates.
4.1. Germanic *apala– > Old High German adal ntr. “origo, indoles, nobilitas, generositas”, German Adel, Old Saxon ntr. adal(i) “Geschlecht, Gesamtheit der Edeln”, Old English æpelø f., in pl. ntr., “nobility, preeminence, origin, family, race, nature, talents, genius”, Old Icelandic adal ntr. “nature, disposition, inborn native quality; offspring”; adj. *apalja– > Old High German edili “of noble descent”, Old Saxon edili id., Old English æpelæ “noble, eminent, not only in blood or by descent, but in mind, excellent, famous, singular”; besides the ṣddhi–formation *śpala– > Old
High German *uodal, uodil* “patria, praedium avitum”, Old Saxon *ōðil* id., Old English *ōpel, ēōel, wēōel* “inheritance, one’s own residence or property, country, land, dwelling, home”, Old Icelandic *ōðal* “inborn quality, nature; property, patrimony, one’s native land”, also Gothic *haimōpli* “inheritance”, Old Frisian *ēdila* “great–grandfather”, Szemerényi (1952: 42–43), Pokorny (1959: 71), Delamarre (1984: 37).

4.2. Hieroglyphic Luwian *atala–* “brother”. In Hieroglyphic Luwian the logogram FRATER, plus the syllable complement –la–, were usually used for the kinship term “brother”. The same word probably occurs in (INFANS. NI)ā̃ta–la–za (dat. pl. atalanza) in the text Karkamiš A15b, §§15–17:

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“and I brought up his younger brothers, I, ANTA SASA–ed, to the brothers(?), and to them, to my lord Astiruwas’s children, I extended protection.”

The formulation about the protection of children and *atala–* indicates that in the text the relation of fosterage could be described.


5. Arguments for the new etymology.
A common denominator of the compared words seems to be “fosterage”, the institution characteristic of the early Indo-European aristocratic society. The most usual model looked as follows: some children left their aristocratic families to become members of other, unrelated families, e.g. in the medieval Ireland, in Munster the clans Darghthine and Dairenne exchanged their children, Hüburt (1932: 243). In medieval Scandinavia the term *fōstr* “nourishment, education” was used for this kind of care, cf. also Old English *fōstor* id., Old Saxon, Middle High German *fōster* “fodder”. The traces of the same institution may be identified in the texts of Homer (Il. XXIV; Od. XVIII, 323) and Hesiod (Th.480). Two alternative etymologies should be discussed. Benveniste (1973, 368–70) mentions the use


6.1. In the Indo-European languages the suffix *–nt– forms the active participles, with the exception of the Anatolian languages, where the –nt– participles are passive when formed from transitive verbs (Fortson 2005, 97). This phenomenon need not be limited to Anatolian, cf. Gothic alands “ἐντρεφόμενος, nourished” < *alontó– (Lehmann 1986: 25), formally the active participle, but with the meaning formed from the middle voice (Kümmel: LIV 262). The name of the mythic heroine can be archaic enough to assume an archaism of this type. It remains to explain, why the form *atalantā and not *atalontā is attested. Perhaps this change was caused by levelling between the full and zero–grades of the type φέροντα vs. *φέρατο, cf. ἑκοντί adv. “willingly” vs. Cyrenaic ἐκασσά, Cretan γεκαθά ἐкоχά “willing” f. < proto–Greek *wekjtā (Schwyzer 1939: 525, Frisk 1973 I, 479). It cannot be excluded that this proper name was influenced by the theonym Ἄτλας–αντος or the adj. ἀτάλαντος “having the same weight, equal” in perspective of Volksetymologie.

6.2. The possibility of contamination in perspective of Volksetymologie proposed in §6.1. is only speculative. Perhaps more satisfactory seems the
solution formulated already by HOFFMANN (1906: 157; see §1.3.), namely a compound with the second component *ἀντή “face”, metaphorically maybe also “person” (cf. Russian лицо 1. “face”; 2. “person”). In this case the compound Ἀταλάντη would mean “fostered person”.

7. Appendix: Fragments of Greek and Latin texts with the Atalanta’s story

Hesiodos: Γυναικῶν Κατάλογος Catalogue of Women (c. 700 BCE)
Fragment 14: Atalanta (Petrie Papyri, ed. Mahaffy, Pl. III. 3):

ἀγακειτοῖο ἄνακτος ... ποδόκης δὲ Ἀταλάντη Σχοινῆος θυγάτηρ, Ἑρμῆς ἀμαρύγματ’ ἔχουσα, ώραίῃ περ ἐδώσ’ ἀπαιναίνετο φύλον ὁμοίον ἄνδρῶν βουλομένη φεύγειν γάμον ἀλφήστανον. ... ἦ μὲν ὅ ρα ποδοκῆς δὲ Ἀταλάντη ἵετ’ ἀναινομένη δόρα χρυσέης Αφροδίτης ...

“... of the glorious lord ... fair Atalanta, swift of foot, the daughter of Schoineus, who had the beaming eyes of the Graces, though she was ripe for wedlock rejected the company of her equals and sought to avoid marriage with men who eat bread. ... for her, even fair, swift–footed Atalanta, ran scorning the gifts of golden Aphrodite...”

Theognis of Megara: Ελεγείων Elegies (6th century BCE)


“Wrong me not, lad (still would I fain be to thy liking), but understand this with good shrewdness; [thy wiles] shall not circumvent me nor deceive me; thou hast won, and thine is the advantage hereafter, but yet will I wound thee as thou fliest me, even as they tell that the daughter of Iasius once fled [the young Hippomenes],

refusing wedlock for all she was ripe to wed; ay, girded herself up and accomplished the unaccomplishable, forsaking her father’s house, the fair-haired Atalanta, and was away to the high tops of the hills, flying from delightful wedlock, gift of golden Aphrodite; yet for all her refusing, she came to know the end.”

Euripides: Φοίνισσαι Phoenissae (c. 410 BCE)

Αντιγόνη
145τίς δ’ οὗτος ἁμφι μνήμα τὸ Ζήθου περὶ καταβόστρυχος, ὅμμασι γοργός εἰσιδεῖν νεανίας, λοχαγός, ὡς ὅχλος νιν ὑστέρῳ ποδὶ πάνοπλος ἁμφέπει;

Παιδαγωγός
150δ’ ἐστι Παρθενοπαιός, Ἀταλάντης γόνος.

Αντιγόνη
ἀλλὰ νιν ἂ κατ’ ὄρη μετὰ ματέρος Ἄρτεμις ἱεμένα τόξοις δαμάσας ὀλέσειεν, ὃς ἐπ’ ἐμὰν πόλιν ἔβα πέρσων.

Παιδαγωγός
155εἴῃ τάδ’, ὥ παῖ. σὺν δίκῃ δ’ ἥκουσι γῆν: ὃ καὶ δέδοικα μὴ σκοπῶσ᾽ ὀρθῶς θεοὶ.

Ἀντιγόνη
ποῦ δ’ ὃς ἐμοὶ μιᾶς ἐγένετ’ ἐκ ματρὸς πολυπόνῳ μοίρᾳ; ὡ φιλτάτ’, εἰπέ, ποῦ ἕστι Πολυνείκης, γέρον.

Παιδαγωγός
160ἐκεῖνος ἑπτὰ παρθένων τάφου πέλας Νιόβης Ἀδράστῳ πλησίον παραστατεῖ. ὃρας;

Antigone
145 “Who is that youth passing by the tomb of Zetheus, with long flowing hair, fierce to see? Is he a captain? For an armed crowd follows at his heels.”

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Old servant

150 “That is Parthenopaeus, Atalanta’s son.”

Antigone

“May Artemis, who rushes over the hills with his mother, lay him low with an arrow, for coming against my city to sack it!”

Old servant

“May it be so, my child; but they have come here with justice, and my fear is that the gods will take the rightful view.”

Antigone

“Where is the one who was born of the same mother as I was, by a painful destiny? Oh! tell me, old friend, where Polyneices is.”

Old servant

“He is standing by Adrastus, near the tomb of Niobe’s seven unwed daughters. Do you see him?”

Kallimachos: εἰς Ἀρτεμιν *Hymn to Artemis* (3rd century BCE)

καὶ Ἄντικλειαν ἵσον φαέσσι φυλῆσαι
αἰ πρὸται θοὰ τόξα καὶ ἁμφ᾽ ὠμοὶσι φαρέτρας
ιοδόκους ἐφόρησαν: ἀσύλλωτοι δὲ φιν ὁμοὶ
dεξίτεροι καὶ γυμνὸς ἀεὶ παρεφαίνετο μαζῶς.215
ήνησις δ᾽ ἔτι πάγχυ ποδορρώφην Αταλάντην,
κούρην Ἰασίοιο συοκτόνον Ἀρκασίδαο,
καὶ ἐ κυνηλασίην τε καὶ εὐστοχίην ἐδίδαξες.
οὐ µὲν ἐπίκλητοι Καλυδωνίου ἀγρευτῆρες
μέμφονται κάρπῳ: τὰ γὰρ σημὴν κάρης
Ἀρκαδίην εἰσῆλθέν, ἤχοι δ᾽ ἔτι θηρὸς ὁδόντας:
οὐδὲ μὲν Ὑλαῖόν τε καὶ ἄφρονα Ῥῴκον ἑολπα
οὐδὲ περ ἐχθαίροντας ὑπ' Ἀιδί μοιμήσασθαὶ
tοξότιν: οὐ γὰρ σφιν λαγόνες συνεπιψεύσονται,
tάων Μαινάλη νὰέν φόνῳ ἀκρώρεια.225

“And the nymph would hide herself now under the shaggy oaks and anon in the low
meadows. And for nine months he roamed over crag and cliff and made not an end
of pursuing, until, all but caught, she leapt into the sea from the top of a cliff and fell
into the nets of fishermen which saved her. Whence in after days the Cydonians call
the nymph the Lady of the Nets (Dictyna) and the hill whence the nymph leaped
they call the hill of Nets (Dictaeon), and there they set up altars and do sacrifice.
And the garland on that day is pine or mastich, but the hands touch not the myrtle.
For when she was in flight, a myrtle branch became entangled in the maiden’s robes;
wherefore she was greatly angered against the myrtle. Upis, O Queen, fair–faced
Bringer of Light, thee too the Cretans name after that nymph. Yea and Cyrene thou
madest thy comrade, to whom on a time thyself didst give two hunting dogs, with
whom the maiden daughter of Hypseus beside the Iolcian tomb won the prize. And
the fair–haired wife of Cephalus, son of Deioneus, O Lady, thou madest thy fellow
in the chase; and fair Anticleia, they say, thou dist love even as thine own eyes. These
were the first who wore the gallant bow and arrow–holding quivers on their shoulders;
their right shoulders bore the quiver strap, and always the right breast showed bare.
Further thou dist greatly commend swift–footed Atalanta, the slayer of boars, dau-
ghter of Arcadian Iasius, and taught her hunting with dogs and good archery. They
that were called to hunt the boar of Calydon find no fault with her; for the tokens of
victory came into Arcadia which still holds the tusks of the beast. Nor do I deem that
Hylaenus and foolish Rhoecus, for all their hate, in Hades slight her archery. For the
loins, with whose blood the height of Maenalus flowed, will not abet the falsehood.”5

5 Callimachus: Hymns and Epigrams. Lycophron. Aratus, translated by Mair, A. W. &
In the fifth year after Heracles had changed his residence to Pheneus, being grieved over the death of Oeonus, the son of Licymnius, and of Iphiclus his brother, he removed of his free will from Arcadia and all Peloponnesus. There withdrew with him a great many people of Arcadia and he went to Calydon in Aetolia and made his home there. And since he had neither legitimate children nor a lawful wife, he married Deïaneira, the daughter of Oeneus, Meleager being now dead. In this con-
nection it would not, in our opinion, be inappropriate for us to digress briefly and to speak of the reversal of fortune which befel Meleager.

The facts are these: Once when Oeneus had an excellent crop of grain, he offered sacrifices to the other gods, but neglected Artemis alone; and angered at him for this the goddess sent forth against him the famous Calydonian boar, a creature of enormous size. This animal harried the neighbouring land and damaged the farms; whereupon Meleager, the son of Oeneus, being then in the bloom of youth and excelling in strength and in courage, took along with himself many of the bravest men and set out to hunt the beast. Meleager was the first to plunge his javelin into it and by general agreement was accorded the reward of valour, which consisted of the skin of the animal. But Atalantê, the daughter of Schoeneus, participated in the hunt, and since Meleager was enamoured of her, he relinquished in her favour the skin and the praise for the greatest bravery. The sons of Thestius, however, who had also joined in the hunt, were angered at what he had done, since he had honoured a stranger woman above them and set kinship aside. Consequently, setting at naught the award which Meleager had made, they lay in wait for Atalantê, and falling upon her as she returned to Arcadia took from her the skin. Meleager, however, was deeply incensed both because of the love which he bore Atalantê and because of the dishonour shown her, and espoused the cause of Atalantê. And first of all he urged the robbers to return to the woman the meed of valour which he had given her; and when they paid no heed to him he slew them, although they were brothers of Althaea. Consequently Althaea, overcome with anguish at the slaying of the men of her own blood, uttered a curse in which she demanded the death of Meleager; and the immortals, so the account runs, gave heed to her and made an end of his life.”

[4.65.4]

“And having decided to restore Polyneices first, he sent Tydeus as an envoy to Eteocles in Thebes to negotiate the return. But while Tydeus was on his way thither, we are told, he was set upon from ambush by fifty men sent by Eteocles, but he slew every man of them and got through safe to Argos, to the astonishment of all, whereupon Adrastus, when he learned what had taken place, made preparations for the consequent campaign against Eteocles, having persuaded Cepheus and Hippomedon and Parthenopaeus, the son of Atalantê, the daughter of Schoeneus, to be his allies in the war.”
[65.6–9]

At the time in question Amphiaraüs, we are told, was at variance with Adrastus, striving for the kingship, and the two came to an agreement among themselves whereby they committed the decision of the matter at issue between them to Eriphylê, the wife of Amphiaraüs and sister of Adrastus. When Eriphylê awarded the victory to Adrastus and, with regard to the campaign against Thebes, gave it as her opinion that it should be undertaken, Amphiaraüs, believing that his wife had betrayed him, did agree to take part in the campaign, but left orders with his son Alcmaeon that after his death he should slay Eriphylê. Alcmaeon, therefore, at a later time slew his mother according to his father's injunction, and because he was conscious of the pollution he had incurred he was driven to madness. But Adrastus and Polyneices and Tydeus, adding to their number four leaders, Amphiaraüs, Capaneus, Hippomedon, and Parthenopaeus, the son of Atalantê the daughter of Schoeneus, set out against Thebes, accompanied by a notable army. After this Eteocles and Polyneices slew each other, Capaneus died while impetuously ascending the wall by a scaling-ladder, and as for Amphiaraüs, the earth opened and he together with his chariot fell into the opening and disappeared from sight. When the rest of the leaders, with the exception of Adrastus, had likewise perished and many soldiers had fallen, the Thebans refused to allow the removal of the dead and so Adrastus left them unburied and returned to Argos. So the bodies of those who had fallen at the foot of the Cadmeia remained unburied and no one had the courage
to inter them, but the Athenians, who excelled all others in uprightness, honoured with funeral rites all, who had fallen at the foot of the Cadmeia.”

**Ovidius: Metamorphoses** (8 CE)

**VIII, 260–364: Aper Calydonius, Meleager**

260 *Iamque fatigatum tellus Aetnaea tenebat*

*Daedalon, et sumptis pro supplice Cocalus armis mitis habeatur;*

*iam lamentabile Athenae pendere desierant Thesea laude tributum.*

*Templa coronantur, bellatricemque Minervam*

265 *cum Iove disque vocant aliis, quos sanguine voto muneribusque datis et acerris turis honorant. Sparserat Argolicas nomen vaga fama per urbes Theseos, et populi, quos divers Achaia cepit, huius opem magnis imploravere periclis.*

270 *Huius opem Calydon, quamvis Meleagron haberet, sollicita supplex petiit prece. Causa petendi sus erat, infestae famulus vindexque Dianae.*

*Oenea namque ferunt pleni successibus anni primitias frugum Cereri, sua vina Lyaeo,*

275 *Palladios flavae latices libasse Minervae.*

*Coepus ab agricolis superos pervenit ad omnes ambitiosus honor; solas sine ture relictas praeteritae cessasse ferunt Latoidos aras.*

*Tangit et ira deos. “At non impune feremus, quaeque inhonoratae, non et dicemur inultae” inquit, et Oeneos ultorem spreta per agros misit aprum, quanto maiores herbida tauros non habet Epiros, sed habent Sicula arva minores.*

*Sanguine et igne micant oculi, riget horrida cervix,*

285 *et saepta similes rigidis hastilibus horrend stantque velut vallum, velut alta hastilia saetae fervida cum rauco latos stridore per armos spuma fluet, dentes aequantur dentibus Indis, fulmen ab ore venit, frondes adflatibus ardent.*

290 *Is modo crescentes segetes proculcat in herba,*

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nunc matura metit fleturi vota coloni
et Cererem in spicis intercipit. Area frustra
et frustra exspectant promissas horrea messes.
Sternuntur gravi di longo cum palmite fetus
bacaque cum ramis semper frondentis olivae.
Saevit et in pecudes: non has pastorve canisve,
non armenta truces possunt defendere tauri.
Diffugiunt populi nec se nisi moenibus urbis
esse putant tutos, donec Meleagros et una
lecta manus iuvenum coiere cupidine laudis:
Tyndaridae gemini, spectatus caestibus alter,
alter equo, primaeque ratis molitor Iason,
et cum Pirithoo, felix concordia, Theseus;
et duo Thesiadae prolesque Aphaireia, Lynceus
et velox Idas, et iam non femina Caeneus
Leucippusque ferox iaculoque insignis Acastus
Hippothesisque Dryasque et cretus Amyntore Phoenix,
Actoridaeque pares et missus ab Elide Phyleus.
Nec Telamon aberat magnique creator Achillis
cumque Pheretiade et Hyanteo Iolao
impiger Eurytion, et cursu invictus Echion,
Narycissisque Lelex Panopeusque Hyleusque feroxque
Hippasus et primis etiamnum Nestor in annis,
et quos Hippocoon antiquis misit Amyclas,
Penelopaeque socer cum Parrhasio Ancaeo,
Amphicidesque sagax et adhuc a coniuge tutus
Oeclides, nemorisque decus Tegeaeae Lycaeai.
Rasilis huic summam mordebat fibula vestem,
crinis erat simplex, nodum conlectus in unum.
Ex umero pendens resonabat eburnea laevo
telorum custos, arcum quoque laeva tenebat.
Talis erat cultu; facies, quam dicere vere
virgineam in puero, puerilem in virgine possis.
Hanc pariter vidit, pariter Calydonius heros
optavit renuente deo flammisque latentes
hausit et “o felix, siquem dignabitur” inquit
“ista virum.” Nec plura sinit tempusque pudorque
dicere: maius opus magni certaminis urget.
Silva frequens trabibus, quam nulla ceciderat aetas,
incipit a plano devesaque prospect arva.
Quo postquam venere viri, pars retia tendunt,
vincula pars adimunt canibus, pars pressa sequuntur
signa pedum cupiuntque suum reperire periclum.
Concava vallis erat, quo se demittere rivi
adsuerant pluvialis aquae: tenet ima lacunae
lenta salix ulvaeque leves iuncique palustres
viminaque et longa parvae sub harundine canae.
Hinc aper excitus medios violentus in hostes
fertur, ut excussis elisi nubibus ignes.

Sternitur incursu nemus et propulsa fragorem
silva dat. Exclamant iuvenes praetentaque forti
tela tenent dextra lato vibrantia ferro.
Ille ruit spargitque canes, ut quisque furenti
obstat, et obliquo latrantes dissipat ictu.

Cuspis Echionio primum contorta lacerto
vana fuit truncoque dedit leve vulnus acerno.
Proxima, si nimiis mittentis viribus usa
non foret, in tergo visa est haesura petito:
longius it. Auctor teli Pagasaeus Iason.

“Phoebe,” ait Ampycides “si te coluique coloque,
da mihi quod petitur certo contingere telo!”
Qua potuit, precibus deus adnuit: ictus ab illo est,
sed sine vulnere, aper; ferrum Diana volanti
abstulerat iaculo: lignum sine acumine venit.

Ira feri mota est, nec fulmine lenius arsit:
emicat ex oculis, spirat quoque pectore flamma.
Utque volat moles adducto concita nervo,
cum petit aut muros aut plenas milite turres,
in iuvenes certo sic impete vulnificus sus

fertur et Hippalmon Pelagonaque, dextra tuentes
cornua, prosternit; soci rapiere iacentes.
At non letiferos effugit Enaesimus ictus,
Hippocoonte satus: trepidantem et terga parantem
vertere succiso liquorunt poplite nervi.

“Wearied with travel Daedalus arrived at Sicily, where Cocalus was king; and when
the wandering Daedalus implored the monarch’s kind protection from his foe, he
gathered a great army for his guest, and gained renown from an applauding world.
Now after Theseus had destroyed in Crete the dreadful monster, Athens then had
cessated to pay her mournful tribute; and with wreaths her people decked the temples
of the Gods; and they invoked Minerva, Jupiter, and many other Gods whom they
adored, with sacrifice and precious offerings, and jars of Frankincense. Quick-fly-
ing Fame had spread reports of Theseus through the land; and all the peoples of
Achaia, from that day, when danger threatened would entreat his aid. So it befell,
the land of Calydon, through Meleager and her native hero, implored the valiant
Theseus to destroy a raging boar, the ravage of her realm. Diana in her wrath had
sent the boar to wreak her vengeance; and they say the cause was this: – The nation
had a fruitful year, for which the good king Oeneus had decreed that all should of-
fer the first fruits of corn to Ceres – and to Bacchus wine of grapes – and oil of oli-
vies to the golden haired Minerva. Thus, the Gods were all adored, beginning with
the lowest to the highest, except alone Diana, and of all the Gods her altars only
were neglected. No frankincense unto her was given! Neglect enrages even Deities.
“Am I to suffer this indignity?” she cried, “Though I am thus dishonored, I will not
be unreavenged!” And so the boar was sent to ravage the fair land of Calydon. And
this avenging boar was quite as large as bulls now feeding on the green Epirus,
and larger than the bulls of Sicily. A dreadful boar. – His burning, bloodshot eyes
seemed coals of living fire, and his rough neck was knotted with stiff muscles, and
thick-set with bristles like sharp spikes. A seething froth dripped on his shoulders,
and his tusks were like the spoils of Ind. Discordant roars reverberated from his
hideous jaws; and lightning-belched forth from his horrid throat scorched the green
fields. He trampled the green corn and doomed the farmer to lament his crops, in
vain the threshing-floor has been prepared, in vain the barns await the promised
yield. Long branches of the vine and heavy grapes are scattered in confusion, and
the fruits and branches of the olive tree, whose leaves should never wither, are cast
on the ground. His spleen was vented on the simple flocks, which neither dogs
nor shepherd could protect; and the brave bulls could not defend their herds. The
people fled in all directions from the fields, for safety to the cities. Terror reigned.
There seemed no remedy to save the land, till Meleager chose a band of youths,
united for the glory of great deeds. What heroes shall immortal song proclaim?
Castor and Pollux, twins of Tyndarus; one famous for his skill in horsemanship, the
other for his boxing. Jason, too, was there, the glorious builder of the world’s first
ship, and Theseus with his friend Perithous, and Toxeus and Plexippus, fated sons
of Thestius, and the son of Aphaereus, Lynkeus with his fleet-foot brother Idas and
Caeneus, first a woman then a man the brave Leucippus and the argonaut Acastus,
swift of dart; and warlike Dryas, Hippothous and Phoenix, not then blind, the son
of King Amyntor, and the twain who sprung from Actor, Phyleus thither brought
from Elis; Telamon was one of them and even Peleus, father of the great Achilles;
and the son of Pheres joined, and Iolas, the swift Eurytion, Echion fleet of foot,
Narycian Lelex – and Panopeus, and Hyleus and Hippasus, and Nestor (youthful
then), and the four sons Hippocoon from eld Amyclae sent, the father-in-law of
queen Penelope, Ancaeus of Arcadia, and the wise soothsayer Mopsus, and the
prophet, son of Oeclus, victim of a traitor-wife. – And Atalanta, virgin of the gro-
ves, of Mount Lycaeus, glory of her sex; a polished buckle fastened her attire; her
lustrous hair was fashioned in a knot; her weapons rattled in an ivory case, swung
from her white left shoulder, and she held a bow in her left hand. Her face appeared
as maidenly for boy, or boyish for girl.
When Meleager saw her, he at once longed for her beauty, though some god forba-
de. The fires of love flamed in him; and he said, “Happy the husband who shall win
this girl!” Neither the time nor his own modesty permitted him to say another word.
But now the dreadful contest with the boar engaged this hero’s energy and thought. A wood, umbrageous, not impaired with age, slopes from a plain and shadows the wide fields, and there this band of valiant heroes went – eager to slay the dreaded enemy, some spread the nets and some let loose the dogs, some traced the wide spoor of the monster’s hoofs. There is a deep gorge where the rivulets that gather from the rain, discharge themselves; and there the bending willow, the smooth sedge, the marsh-rush, ozier and tall tangled reed in wild profusion cover up the marsh. Aroused from this retreat the startled boar, as quick as lightning from the clashing clouds crashed all the trees that cumbered his mad way. The young men raised a shout, leveled their spears, and brandished their keen weapons; but the boar rushed onward through the yelping dogs, and scattered them with deadly sidelong stroke. Echion was the first to hurl his spear, but slanting in its course it only glanced a nearby maple tree, and next the spear of long-remembered Jason cut the air; so swiftly hurled it seemed it might transfix the boar’s back, but with over-force it sped beyond the monster. Poising first his dart, the son of Ampyx, as he cast it, he implored Apollo, “Grant my prayer if I have truly worshiped you, harken to me as always I adore you! Let my spear unerring strike its aim.” Apollo heard, and guided the swift spear, but as it sped Diana struck the iron head from the shaft, and the blunt wood fell harmless from his hide. Then was the monster’s savage anger roused; as the bright lightning’s flash his red eyes flamed; his breath was hot as fire. As when a stone is aimed at walls or strong towers, which protect encompassed armies, – launched by the taut rope it strikes with dreaded impact; so the boar with fatal onset rushed among this band of noble lads, and stretched upon the ground Eupalamon and Pelagon whose guard was on the right; and their companions bore their bodies from the field. Another youth, the brave son of Hippocoon received a deadly wound – while turning to escape, the sinew of his thigh was cut and failed to bear his tottering steps.”

X, 560–651: Atalanta

mors pretium tardis. Ea lex certaminis esto."
Illa quidem inmitis: sed (tanta potentia formae est)
venit ad hanc legem temeraria turba procorum.
575Sederat Hippomenes cursus spectator iniqui
et "petitur cuquam per tanta pericula coniunx?"
dixerat ac nimios iuvenum damnarat amores.
Ut faciem et posito corpus velamine vidit,
quaee meum, vel quale tuum, si femina fias, 580
obstipuit tollensque manus "ignoscite," dixit
"quos modo culpavi. Nondum mihi praemia nota,
quae peteritis, erant." Laudando concipit ignes
et, ne quis iuvenum currat velocius, optat
invidiaque timet. "Sed cur certaminis huius
585intemptata mihi fortuna relinquitur?" inquit
"audentes deus ipse iuvat." Dum talia secum
exigit Hippomenes, passu volat alite virgo.
Quae quamquam Scythica non setius ire sagitta
Aonio visa est iuveni, tamen ille decorum
590miratur magis; et cursus facit ipse decorum.
Aura refert ablata citis talaria plantis,
tergaque iactantur crines per eburnea, quaeque
poplitibus suberant picto genualia limbo;
inque puellari corpus candore ruborem
595traxerat, haud aliter, quam cum super atria velum
candida purpureum simulatas incitum umbras.
Dum notat haec hospes, decursa novissima meta est
et tegitur festa victrix Atalanta corona.
Dant gemitum victi penduntque ex foedere poenas.
600Non tamen eventu iuvenis deterritus horum
constitit in medio, vultuque in virgine fixo
"quid facilem titulum superando quae et inertes?
mecum confer!" ait. "Seu me fortuna potentem
fecerit, a tanto non indignabere vinci:
605namque mihi genitor Megareus Onchestius, illi
est Neptunus avus, pronepos ego regis aquarum,
ec virtus citra genus est; seu vincar, habebis
Hippomene victo magnum et memorabile nomen."
Talia dicentem molli Schoeneia vultu
610adspicit et dubitat, superari an vincere malit.
Atque ita "quis deus hunc formosis" inquit "iniquus
perdere vult caraeque iubet discrimine vitae
contugium petere hoc? Non sum, me iudice, tanti.
Nec forma tangor (poteram tamen hac quoque tangi),
sed quod adhuc puer est: non me movet ipse, sed aetas.

Quid quod inest virtus et mens interrīta leti?
Quid quod ab aequoreā numeratur origine quartus?
Quid quod amat tantique putat conubia nostra,
ut pereat, si me fors illi dura negarīt?

Dum licet, hospes, abi thalamosque relinque cruentos:
coniugium crudele meum est. Tibi nubere nulla
nolet, et optari potes a sapiente puella. –
Cur tamen est mihi cura tui tot iam ante peremptis?
Viderit! Interret, quoniam tot caede procorum

admonitus non est agiturque in taedia vitae. –
Occidet hic igitur, voluit quia vivere mecum,
indignamque necem pretium patietur amoris?
Non erit invidiae victoria nostra ferendae.
Sed non culpa mea est. Utinam desistere velles,
aut, quoniam es demens, utinam velocior esses!

A! quam virgineus puerili vultus in ore est!
A! miser Hippomene, nollem tibi visa fuissem!

Vivere dignus eras. Quod si felicior essem,
nec mihi coniugium fata importuna negarent,

‘unus eras, cum quo sociare cubilia vellem.’
Dixerat; utque rudis primoque Cupidine tacta,
quid facit ignorans, amat et non sentit amorem.

Iam solitos poscunt cursus populusque paterque,
cum me sollicita proles Neptunia voce

invocat Hippomenes “Cytherea”
que “compencer, ausis adsit” ait “nostris et quos dedit
adiuver ignes.” Detulit aura preces ad me non
invida blandas; motaque sum, fateor. Nec opis
mora longa dabatur. Est ager, indigenea
Tamasenum nomine dicunt,
telluris Cyppiae pars optima, quam mihi prisci
sacravere senes templisque accedere dotem
hanc iussere meis. Medio nitet arbor in arvo,
fulva comas, fulvo ramis crepitantium auro.

Hinc tria forte mea veniens decerpta ferebam
aurea poma manu: nullique videnda nisi ipsi
Hippomenen adii docuique, quis usus in illis.

“Perhaps you may have heard of a swift maid, who ran much faster than swift-footed men contestsing in the race. What they have told is not an idle tale. – She did excel them all – and you could not have said whether her swift speed or her beauty was more worthy of your praise. When this maid once consulted with an
oracle, of her fate after marriage, the god answered her: “You, **Atalanta**, never will have need of husband, who will only be your harm. For your best good you should avoid the tie; but surely you will not avoid your harm; and while yet living you will lose yourself.” She was so frightened by the oracle, she lived unwedded in far shaded woods; and with harsh terms repulsed insistent throngs of suitors. “I will not be won,” she said, “Till I am conquered first in speed. Contest the race with me. A wife and couch shall both be given to reward the swift, but death must compensate the one who lags behind. This must be the condition of a race.” Indeed she was that pitiless, but such the power of beauty, a rash multitude agreed to her harsh terms. Hippomenes had come, a stranger, to the cruel race, with condemnation in his heart against the racing young men for their headstrong love; and said, “Why seek a wife at such a risk?” But when he saw her face, and perfect form disrobed for perfect running, such a form as mine, Adonis, or as yours – if you were woman – he was so astonished he raised up his hands and said, “Oh pardon me brave men whom I was blaming, I could not then realize the value of the prize you strove for.” And as he is praising her, his own heart leaping with love’s fire, he hopes no young man may outstrip her in the race; and, full of envy, fears for the result. “But why,” he cries, “is my chance in the race untried? Divinity helps those who dare.” But while the hero weighed it in his mind the virgin flew as if her feet had wings. Although she seemed to him in flight as swift as any Scythian arrow, he admired her beauty more; and her swift speed appeared in her most beautiful. The breeze bore back the streamers on her flying ankles, while her hair was tossed back over her white shoulders; the bright trimmed ribbons at her knees were fluttering, and over her white girlish body came a pink flush, just as when a purple awning across a marble hall gives it a wealth of borrowed hues. And while Hippomenes in wonder gazed at her, the goal was reached; and **Atalanta** crowned victorious with festal wreath. – But all the vanquished youths paid the death–penalty with sighs and groans, according to the stipulated bond. Not frightened by the fate of those young men, he stood up boldly in the midst of all; and fixing his strong eyes upon the maiden, said: “Where is the glory in an easy victory over such weaklings? Try your fate with me! If fortune fail to favor you, how could it shame you to be conquered by a man? Megareus of Onchestus is my father, his grandsire, Neptune, god of all the seas. I am descendant of the King of Waves: and add to this, my name for manly worth has not disgraced the fame of my descent. If you should prove victorious against this combination, you will have achieved a great enduring name—the only one who ever bested great Hippomenes.” While he was speaking, **Atalanta**’s gaze grew softer, in her vacillating hopes to conquer and be conquered; till at last, her heart, unbalanced, argued in this way: “It must be some god envious of youth, wishing to spoil this one prompts him to seek wedlock with me and risk his own dear life. I am not worth the price, if I may judge. His beauty does not touch me — but I could be moved by it — I must consider he is but a boy. It is not he himself who moves me, but his youth. Sufficient cause for thought are his great courage and his soul fearless of death. What
of his high descent;— great grandson of the King of all the seas? What of his love for me that has such great importance, he would perish if his fate denied my marriage to him? O strange boy, go from me while you can; abandon hope of this alliance stained with blood— A match with me is fatal. Other maids will not refuse to wed you, and a wiser girl will gladly seek your love. — But what concern is it of mine, when I but think of those who have already perished! Let him look to it himself; and let him die. Since he is not warned by his knowledge of the fate of many other suitors, he declares quite plainly, he is weary of his life. — “Shall he then die, because it must be his one hope to live with me? And suffer death though undeserved, for me because he loves? My victory will not ward off the hate, the odium of the deed! But it is not a fault of mine. — Oh fond, fond man, I would that you had never seen me! But you are so madly set upon it, I could wish you may prove much the swifter! Oh how dear how lovable is his young girlish face! — ah, doomed Hippomenes, I only wish mischance had never let you see me! You are truly worthy of a life on earth. If I had been more fortunate, and not denied a happy marriage day; I would not share my bed with any man but you.” All this the virgin Atalanta said; and knowing nothing of the power of love, she is so ignorant of what she does, she loves and does not know she is in love. Meanwhile her father and the people, all loudly demanded the accustomed race. A suppliant, the young Hippomenes invoked me with his anxious voice, “I pray to you, O Venus, Queen of Love, be near and help my daring-smile upon the love you have inspired!” The breeze, not envious, wafted this prayer to me; and I confess, it was so tender it did move my heart— I had but little time to give him aid. There is a field there which the natives call the Field Tamasus— the most prized of all the fertile lands of Cyprus. This rich field, in ancient days, was set apart for me, by chosen elders who decreed it should enrich my temples yearly. In this field there grows a tree, with gleaming golden leaves, and all its branches crackle with bright gold. Since I was coming from there, by some chance, I had three golden apples in my hand, which I had plucked. With them I planned to aid Hippomenes. While quite invisible to all but him, I taught him how to use those golden apples for his benefit.”

(Pseudo-)Apollodorus: Βιβλιοθήκη Library III, 9.2 (1st–2nd century CE)

Λυκούργου δὲ καὶ Κλεοφύλης ἢ Εὐρυνόμης Ἀγκαῖος καὶ Ἑσοχος καὶ Αμφιδάμας καὶ Ἰασός. Αμφιδάμαντος δὲ Μελανίω ν καὶ θυγάτηρ Ἀντιμάχη, ἤν Εὐφράδης ἔγημεν. Ἰάσου δὲ καὶ Κλυμένης τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντη ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμῶν ἐξέθηκεν αὐτήν, ἀρρένων δὲ Μελανίων καὶ θυγάτηρ Ἀντιμάχη, ἤν Εὐφράδης ἔγημεν. Ἰάσου δὲ καὶ Κλυμένης τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντη ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμῶν ἐξέθηκεν αὐτήν, ἀρρένως δὲ Μελανίως ἀρρένων ἀνέτρεφον. τελεία δὲ Ἀταλάντη γενομένη παρθένον ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμῶν ἐξέθηκεν αὐτήν, ἀρρένως δὲ Μελανίως ἀρρένων ἀνέτρεφον. τελεία δὲ Ἀταλάντη γενομένη παρθένος ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρένων παίδων ἐπιθυμήσα τῆς Μινύου Ἀταλάντην ἐγένετο. ταύτης ὁ πατήρ ἀρρέ

“Lycurgus had sons, Ancaeus, Epochus, Amphidamas, and Iasus, by Cleophyle or Eurynome. And Amphidamas had a son Melanion and a daughter Antimache, whom Eurystheus married. And Iasus had a daughter Atalanta by Clymene, daughter of Minyas. This Atalanta was exposed by her father, because he desired male children; and a she-bear came often and gave her suck, till hunters found her and brought her up among themselves. Grown to womanhood, Atalanta kept herself a virgin, and hunting in the wilderness she remained always under arms. The centaurs Rhoecus and Hylaeus tried to force her, but were shot down and killed by her. She went moreover with the chiefs to hunt the Calydonian boar, and at the games held in honor of Pelias she wrestled with Peleus and won. Afterwards she discovered her parents, but when her father would have persuaded her to wed, she went away to a place that might serve as a racecourse, and, having planted a stake three cubits high in the middle of it, she caused her wooers to race before her from there, and ran herself in arms; and if the wooer was caught up, his due was death on the spot, and if he was not caught up, his due was marriage. When many had already perished, Melanion came to run for love of her, bringing golden apples from Aphrodite, and being pursued he threw them down, and she, picking up the dropped fruit, was beaten in the race. So Melanion married her. And once on a time it is said that out hunting they entered into the precinct of Zeus, and there taking their fill of love were changed into lions. But Hesiod and some others have said that Atalanta was not a daughter of Iasus, but of Schoeneus; and Euripides says that she was a daughter of Maenalus, and that her husband was not Melanion but Hippomenes. And by Melanion, or Ares, Atalanta had a son Parthenopaeus, who went to the war against Thebes.”

Pausanias: Ελλάδος περιήγησις Description of Greece VIII, 35.10 (2nd century CE)

“Beyond this is a plain called the Plain of Polus, and after it Schoenus, so named from a Boeotian, Schoeneus. If this Schoeneus emigrated to Arcadia, the race–courses of Atalanta, which are near Schoenus, probably got their name from his daughter. Adjoining is … in my opinion called, and they say that the land here is Arcadia to all.”

Hyginus: Fabulae (1st century CE)


Auge

“Auge, daughter of Aleus, ravished by Hercules, when her time was near, gave birth to a child on Mount Parthenius, and there exposed him. At the same time Atalanta, daughter of Iasius, exposed a son by Meleager. A doe, however, sucked the child of Hercules. Shepherds found these boys and took them away and reared them, giving the name Telephus to the son of Hercules because a doe had suckled him, and to Atalanta’s child the name Parthenopaeus, because she had exposed him on Mount Parthenius [pretending to be virgin]. Auge, however, fearing her father, fled to Moesia to King Teuthras, who took her as a daughter since he was without children.”

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Qui ad aprum Calydonium ierunt
Castor et Pollux, Iovis filii; Eurytus Mercurii, parth. Echion Mercurii, Thebis; Aesculapius Apollinis; Jason Aesonis, Thebis; Alcon Martis, Thracia; Euphemus, Neptuni; Iolaus Iphicli; Lynceus et Idas Aphaeiri; Peleus Aeaci; Telamon Aeaci; Admetus Pheretis; Laertes Arcesii, Ithaca; Deucalion Minois; Theseus Aegei; Plexippus, Idens, Lynceus, Thestii filii, fratres Althaeae; Hippothous Cercyonis; Caeneus Elati; Mopsus Ampyci; Meleager Oenei; Hippasus Euryti; Ancaeus Lycurgi; Phoenix Amyntoris; Dryas Iapeti; Enaesimus, Alcon, Leucippus, Hippocoon Amyci, Atalante Schoenei.

Those who hunted the Calydonian boar


Meleager
“Althaea, daughter of Thestius, bore Meleager to Oeneus. There in the palace a glowing brand is said to have appeared. The Fates came there, and foretold the fate of Meleager, that he would live as long as the brand was unharmed. Althaea, putting it in a chest, carefully preserved it. In the meantime the wrath of Diana sent a boar of huge size to lay waste the district of Calydon, because Oeneus had not
made yearly offerings to her. Meleager, with the help of chosen youths of Greece, killed it, and gave the hide to the virgin Atalanta because of her valor. Ideus, Plexippus, Lynceus … brothers of Althaea, wished to take it from her. When she asked the help of Meleager, he intervened, and putting love before family relationship, killed his uncles. When Althaea, the mother, heard that her son had dared to commit such a crime, remembering the warning of the Parcae, she brought out the brand from the chest and threw it on the fire. Thus, in desiring to avenge the death of her brothers, she killed her son. But his sisters, all except Gorge and Deianeira, because of their weeping, were by the will of the gods changed into birds. These are called Meleagrides, ‘guinea hens.’ And Alcyone, wife of Meleager, died from grief in mourning for him.”

[185] Atalanta

“Schoeneus is said to have had a most beautiful daughter, Atalanta, who by her swiftness used to surpass men in the race. She asked her father that she might remain a virgin. And so, since she was sought by many in marriage, her father set up a contest, that her suitors should contend with her first in a foot–race; then a limit being set, that the man, unarmed, should flee, and she should pursue him with a weapon; the one she overtook within the limits of the course, she should kill, and fix his head up in the stadium. When she had overtaken and killed many, she was finally defeated by Hippomenes, son of Megareus and Merope. For he had received from Venus three apples of exceptional beauty, and had been instructed how to use them. By throwing them down in the contest. He had slowed up the speed of the girl, for as she picked them up and admired the gold, she lost time, and gave victory to the youth. Schoeneus willingly gave him his daughter because of his ingenuity, but as he was taking her home, forgetting that he had won by the favour of Venus, he did not give thanks to her. While he was sacrifice to Jove Victor on Mount Parnassus, inflamed with passion through the anger of Venus, he lay with Atalanta
Men who killed their relatives

“Theseus, son of Aegeus, killed Pallas, son of his brother Neleus. Amphitryon killed Electryon, son of Perseus. Meleager son of Oeneus killed his uncles Plexippus and Agenor on account of Atalanta, daughter of Schoeneus. Telephus, son of Hercules, killed Hippothous and Nerea, son of his grandmother. Aegisthus killed Atreus, son of Thyestes. Megapentes, son of Proetus, killed Perseus, son of Jove and Danae on account of the death of his father. Abas, on account of his father, Lynceus, killed Megapentes. Phegeus, son of Alpheus, killed the daughter of his daughter Alphesiboea. Amphion, son of Tereus, killed the sons of his grandfather. Atreus, son of Pelops, served the infant sons of Thyestes, Tantalus and Plisthenes, to their father at a banquet. Hyllus, son of Hercules, killed Sthenelus, brother of his great-grandfather Electryon. Medus, son of Aegeus, killed brother of Aeetes and son of Sol. Daedalus, son of Eupalamus, killed Perdix, son of his sister, Perses, out of envy of his artistic skill.”

Ailianos Klaudios: Ποικίλη Ιστορία – Varia historia (170–222 CE)

[13,1] Λόγος οὗτος Αρκαδικός ύπερ τῆς Ἰασίνους Αταλάντης. ταύτην ὁ πατήρ γενομένην ἐξεθηκεν: ἔλεγε γὰρ ὦ θυγατέρων ἄλλα ἀρρένων δεῖεθαι. ὁ δὲ ἐκεῖναι λαβὼν οὐκ ἀπέκτεινεν, ἐλθὼν δὲ ἔπι τὸ Παρθένιον ὅρος ἔθηκε πηγῆς πλησίον· καὶ ἴνα ἐνταῦθα ὑπαντρος πέτρα, καὶ ἐπέκειτο συνηρεφθεὶς δρομῶν. καὶ τοῦ μὲν βρέφους κατεφύστο θάνατος, ὧν μὴν υπὸ τῆς τύχης προδοθῆ ὅλης γὰρ ὑστερον ὑπὸ κυνηγετῶν ἀφημημένη τὰ ἐαυτῆς βρέφη ἄρκτος ἤκε, σφριγνύτων αὐτῆ τῶν μαζῶν καὶ βαρυνυμένων ὑπὸ τοῦ γάλακτος. εἶτα κατὰ τινα

θείαν προφητὴν ἰσχείσα τῷ βρέφει εἴθηλασεν αὐτό, καὶ ἀμα τὸ θηρίον ἔκουσίσθη τῆς ὀδύνης καὶ ὀρέξει τροφῆν τῷ βρέφει. καὶ ὦν καὶ αὐθὰς ἐπαντλοῦσα τοῦ γαλάκτος καὶ ἐποχεῖσθαι ἔπει τῶν ἑαυτῆς μὴτρ υὐκ ἔμεινε. τῆς ἤμεν ὁι προσηκούσης τροφῆς ἐγένετο. ταύτην οἱ κυνηγῆται παρεφύλαττον οἱ εἰς ἀρχῆς ἐπιθυμεύσαντες τῷ θηρίῳ ἐς τὰ ἐγχονα αὐτῆς, καὶ αὐτὰ ἐκαστὰ τῶν ὀρφεμῶν κατασκεψάμενοι, ἀπελθοῦσιν κατὰ συνήθειαν κατὰ τε ἄραν καὶ νομὴ τῆς ἀρκτοῦ. τὴν Ἀταλάντην ὑφεύλοντο, καλομεμνην τοῦτο ἀνάδω τοι αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἐδεν αὐτή τό ὄνομα. καὶ ἐπέφευτο ὑπ’ αὐτοῖς ὀρείω τῇ τροφῆ. κατὰ μικρὸν δὲ αὐτῇ τά των σώματος μετὰ τῆς ἡλικίας ἄνετρεξε· καὶ ἦρα παρθενίας καὶ τὰς τῶν ἄνδρῶν ὀμίλια ἔφευγε καὶ ἐρημιάν ἐπόθε, καταλαβοῦσα τῶν ὀρῶν τῶν Ἀρκάδων τὸ ὑψηλότατον, ἐνθὰ ἦν καὶ αὐλῶν κατάρρητος καὶ μεγάλα δρῦς, ἐτὶ δὲ καὶ πεύκαι καὶ βαθεία ἢ ἐκ τούτον σκιά. τί γὰρ ἠμάς λυπεῖ καὶ ἄντρον Ἀταλάντης ἀκούσας, ὡς τῇ τῆς Καλυμνοῦ τὸ ἐν Ὀμήρω; καὶ ἦν ἐν κοίλῃ τῇ φάραγγι σπήλαιον ἐν καὶ βαθὺ πάνω, κατὰ πρόσωπον δὲ βαθεῖ κρημνῶν ὕψωστο. κιττοὶ δὲ αὐτὸ περιπέτειον, καὶ ἐνεπέλεκοντο οἱ κιττοὶ μαλακοὶ δένδροι καὶ δ’ αὐτῶν ἀνείρον. κρόκοι τε ἦσαν περὶ τὸν τόπον ἐν μαλακῇ φυώμενοι καὶ βαθεῖα τῇ πόᾳ. συνανετέλλε δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ ύπακινθος καὶ ἀλλή πολλή χρόα ἄνθεων ὑ μόνον ἐς ἑόρτην ὦφελειν συνελείν δυναμένων, αλλὰ καὶ ὅσαι εἰς αὐτῶν τὸν ἄερα τὸν κύκλῳ καταλέμβανεν· καὶ παρὴν τῇ τέ ἀλλή πανηγυριζειν καὶ κατὰ τὴν εὐωδίαν ἑστάσθαι. δάνυνε τε ἦσαν πολλαί, φυτῶν διὰ τέλους αἰκμαζόντων ἠμὶδει προσδεινῦν κόμια· ἀμπελιὶ δὲ πάνω σφοδρὰ ἐνθυνουντὶς πρὸ τοῦ ἄντρου τιθέλλαι πὸ τὸ φιλεργὸν τῆς Ἀταλάντης ἐπεδείκνυτο. ὑδάτα τὲ διατελὲ καὶ αἴε ὀρέντα καὶ καθαρά ἰδείν καὶ ψυχρὰ, ὡς ἐν ἀναμένει τεκμηράσθαι καὶ καταγώνα πιόντι, χύδην καὶ ἀφθόνος ἐπερρήσε τὰ δὲ αὐτὰ ταυτὰ καὶ ἦς ἁρδεύαν τοῖς δένδροις τοῖς προαρμημένοις ἦν ἐπιπεδεῖα, συνεχῶς ἐπιρρέοντα καὶ ἐς τὸ ἐμβιόν αὐτοῖς συμμαχοῦμεν. ἦν οὖν τὸ χωρίον χαρίτων ἀνάμεστον, καὶ σεμνότατον τε ᾃμα καὶ σώφρονα παρθενῶν ἐδεικνυν. ἦν δὲ ἄρα τῇ Ἀταλάντῃ στρομφὴ μὲν αἱ δοραί τῶν τεθηραμένων, τροφῆ δὲ τὰ τούτων κρεά, ποτὸν δὲ τὸ ύδωρ. στολὴν δὲ ἰδήθησθο ἀπράγμαν καὶ τοιαύτην, οἷαν μὴ ἀπάθειαν τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος· ἐλέγε γὰρ ἐμλεύσαν αὐτὴν καὶ ἐν τούτῳ καὶ ἐν τῷ παρθένῳ εἶναι διὰ τέλους ἐθέλειν. ἐπερύκει δὲ ὁκίστη τοὺς πόδας, καὶ οὐκ ἄν αὐτὴν διέφυγεν οὔτε θηρίον οὔτε ἐπιθυμεύων αὐτὴν ἄνθρωπος· φιλεῖν δ’ ἐθέλουσαν, ἀλλ’ ἐνταῦθα μὲν οὐκ ἄν τῷ αὐτῆς κατέλαβεν. ἦρων δὲ αὐτῆς οὐχ ὁσοὶ μόνον αὐτὴν εἶδον, ἀλλ’ ἦδη καὶ ἐκ φίμης ἤρατο. φέρε δὲ καὶ τὸ είδος αὐτῆς, εἰ τὸ μὴ λυπεῖ, διαγράψωμεν· λυπεὶ δὲ ὀδύνετο, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐκ τούτον προσγενοῦθ’ ἀν λόγων τὲ ἐμπειρία καὶ τέχνη. μέγεθος μὲν γὰρ ἐπὶ παῖς οὖσα ὑπὲρ τὰς τελείας ἦν γυναίκας· καλὴ δὲ ἦν, ὡς ὀν ἄλλη τῶν ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ παρθένων τῶν τότε. ἄρρενωπὸν δὲ καὶ γογγὸν ἐβλέπον, τοῦτο μὲν καὶ ἐκ τῆς θηρείας τροφῆς, ἦδη δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐς τοὺς ὀρεσι γυμνασίων. κορικὸν τε καὶ ζαδίνον οὐδὲν εἶχεν· οὐ γὰρ ἐκ θαλάμου προῆλθε, οὐδὲ ἦν τῶν ὑπὸ μητράσι καὶ τίθαις προφεμῶν. τὸ δὲ ὑπερογκὸν τοῦ σώματος οὐδὲ τοῦτο εἶχε καὶ μάλα γε εἰκότως, ἀτε ἐν τοῖς κυνηγεοῖς καὶ περὶ αὐτὰ τὰ γυμνάσια τὸ πάν σώμα ἔκπονοῦσα. ἔλθη δὲ ἦν αὐτῆς ἢ κόμη οὐ το πολυπραγμοσύνη γυναικείας καὶ βαφαίς ἀμα καὶ φαρμάκοις, ἀλλ’ ἦν
Les chasseurs qui lui avaient enlevé ses petits, l'épiaient assidûment: enfin, après l'enfant, elle ressentit, comme par l'inspiration des dieux, un mouvement de joie: elle épiaisse forêt. Cette enfant destinée à la mort ne fut point abandonnée de la fortune.

de la sienne, au lieu de la faire mourir, la porta sur le mont Parthénius, et la laissa

[13,1] « D’Atalante. Je vais raconter ce que les Arcadiens disent d’Atalante, fille de Jason. Dès qu’Atalante fut née, son père ordonna qu’on l’exposât: « J’ai besoin, disait-il, non de filles, mais de garçons. » Celui que Jason avait chargé de le délivrer de la sienne, au lieu de la faire mourir, la porta sur le mont Parthénius, et la laissa au bord d’une fontaine, voisine d’un rocher creux, au-dessus duquel s’élevait une épaissie forêt. Cette enfant destinée à la mort ne fut point abandonnée de la fortune. Une ourse, à qui des chasseurs avaient enlevé ses petits, arriva peu de temps après dans ce lieu, traînant avec peine ses pesantes mamelles, gonflées de lait. A la vue de l’enfant, elle ressentit, comme par l’inspiration des dieux, un mouvement de joie: elle lui présenta sa mamelle; et lui fournissant ainsi la nourriture qui lui manquait, elle se procurait elle-même un soulagement à ses douleurs. L’ourse continua de venir l’allaiter: mère sans famille, elle adopta un nourrisson qui ne lui appartenait pas. Les chasseurs qui lui avaient enlevé ses petits, l’épiaient assidûment: enfin, après avoir foulé les différents cantons de la forêt, pendant qu’elle était allée, suivant sa coutume, à la chasse ou au gagnage, ils emportèrent la petite fille, et lui donnèrent le nom d’Atalante: elle fut nourrie parmi eux d’aliments sauvages. Son corps s’étant formé peu à peu avec les années, elle résolut de conserver sa virginité. Dès lors, elle
évita tout commerce avec les hommes, et chercha une solitude où elle pût s’établir. Elle choisit, sur les plus hautes montagnes d’Arcadie, un lieu arrosé d’eaux courantes, où régnait un air frais, toujours entretenu par l’ombre des plus grands chênes, et par le voisinage d’une épaisse forêt. Mais pourquoi n’entreprendrais-je pas de décrire l’antre d’Atalante, comme Homère a décrit celui de Calypso? Dans une vallée profonde, il y avait une vaste cavern, dont un large précipice défendait l’entrée. On y voyait le lierre embrasser les jeunes arbres, et s’élever en serpentant jusqu’au haut de leurs tiges: l’herbe tendre et touffue était émaillée de safran, d’hyacinthe, et d’autres fleurs de diverses couleurs, qui non seulement charmaient les yeux, mais parfumaient des plus douces odeurs l’air des environs: ce lieu délicieux pour tous les sens, l’était surtout pour l’odorat. Le laurier, dont la feuille toujours verte flotte agréablement la vue, y croissait de toutes parts. Au devant de la grotte était une vigne, dont les cépages, chargés de raisins bien nourris, attestait l’industrie laborieuse d’Atalante. Les eaux limpides, aussi fraîches que la glace, soit au toucher soit au goût, y coulaient en abondance; dans leur cours, que jamais rien ne suspendait, elles arrosaient les arbres dont je viens de parler et leur donnaient une nouvelle vie. À voir ce beau lieu, qui inspirait autant de respect qu’il paraissait plein de charmes, on pouvait juger que c’était la demeure d’une chaste et modeste vierge. Les peaux des animaux qu’elle avait tués à la chasse, lui servaient de lit; elle se nourrissait de leur chair; elle ne buvait que de l’eau. Ses habits, extrêmement simples, étaient tels que ceux de Diane: « En ce point, disait-elle, j’imiter la déesse, comme en voulant rester toujours vierge. » Atalante était d’une telle légèreté à la course, qu’aucun animal ne pouvait l’échapper; qu’aucun homme, si elle eût voulu se dérober à sa poursuite, n’eût pu l’atteindre. Elle fut aimée de tous ceux qui la virent, de ceux même qui n’avaient qu’entendu parler d’elle. Essayons présentement, si on veut bien m’écouter, de peindre sa figure. Ce portrait ne saurait déplaire, puisqu’il peut me fournir des traits propres à orner mon récit. Atalante, dès sa première jeunesse, était d’une taille plus haute que ne le sont d’ordinaire les femmes faites: nulle jeune Péloponnésienne de son temps ne pouvait lui être comparée en beauté. Elle avait dans la physionomie quelque chose de mâle et de rude; ce qui lui venait, ainsi que le courage dont elle était douée, soit d’avoir été allaitée par une bête sauvage, soit d’avoir vécu sur les montagnes dans un exercice continu. Elle n’avait rien de son sexe: comment en aurait-elle eu la mollesse? Elle n’avait point été élevée par une mère ou par une nourrice, et n’avait point passé sa vie dans un appartement. Elle n’était point grasse, et ne pouvait pas l’être, s’étant toujours occupée à fortifier son corps par la chasse et autres exercices semblables. Elle était blonde: ses cheveux semblaient cette couleur à la nature, non à l’art, ni aux drogues dont les femmes savent faire usage pour se la procurer. Son teint, coloré par les rayons du soleil, paraissait d’un rouge foncé. Mais est-il une fleur aussi fraîche, aussi belle, que le visage d’une jeune vierge, sur lequel brille la pudeur? Elle réunissait deux qualités également propres à étonner, une beauté incomparable, et un air qui inspirait la terreur. Un lâche, un efféminé, loin de prendre de l’amour pour elle en la voyant, n’aurait osé l’envisager. L’éclat que répandait toute sa figure, joint aux traces de son visage, éblouissait ceux
qui la regardaient. On ne la rencontrait point sans éprouver un mouvement d’effroi:
et cela venait, entre autres choses, de ce que ces rencontres étaient rares; car on ne parvenait pas facilement à la voir. Quelquefois, poursuivant une bête féroce, ou repoussant l’attaque de quelqu’un d’environ, elle apparaissait subitement comme une étoile, au moment où l’on s’y attendait le moins; et dans sa course elle brillait comme un éclair. Mais aussitôt elle allait précipitamment se cacher, ou dans un bois planté de chênes, ou dans un taillis épais, ou dans quelque autre endroit fourré de la montagne. Dans le voisinage d’Atalante habitaient deux centaures, Hylaeus et Rhoeclus, insupportables à toute la contrée par le genre de leur débauche: ils osèrent l’aimer. Les joueuses de flûte, et les autres moyens que la jeunesse des villes emploie pour s’amuser, n’entraient pour rien dans leurs divertissements: leur plaisir était de courir au milieu de la nuit, tenant à la main des torches ardentes, dont la flamme, au premier aspect, était capable d’effrayer tout un pays; à plus forte raison, une jeune fille. Ces amants odieux, couronnés de jeunes rameaux de pin qu’ils plaient autour de leur tête, couraient à travers les montagnes, du côté où habitait Atalante, faisant avec leurs armes un bruit continu, et mettant le feu aux arbres. C’est dans cet appareil, aussi insolent que bruyant, qu’ils portaient à l’objet de leur amour les présents qui précèdent les noces. Atalante n’ignorait pas leurs mauvais desseins: du fond de sa grotte, elle aperçut la clarté des flambeaux, et reconnut les centaures. Sans s’émouvoir, sans être épouvantée de ce qu’elle voyait, elle bande son arc: le trait part, et atteint d’une blessure mortelle celui qui s’avançait le premier. Quand le second le vit étendu par terre, il courut sur Atalante, non plus en amant passionné, mais en véritable ennemi, animé du désir de venger son compagnon, et de satisfaire sa propre fureur: un second trait, lancé par Atalante, le prévint, et le punit de son audace. Je ne m’étendrai pas davantage sur la fille de Jason. »

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Résumé

V článku je analyzováno jméno heroíny Atalanty na základě vybraných úryvků z textů řeckých a římských mytografů, které jsou uvedeny v příloze. (Pseudo–)Apollodóros a Aelianus se shodují v tom, že se ji ujala medvědice, když byla odložena svým otcem jménem Iasos, respektive Iasion, neboť ten si přál chlapce. Jiní autoři uvádějí jako otce muže jménem Schoineus, nezmiňují však, že by dceru odložil. Vysvětlení tohoto rozporu může spočívat v předpokladu, že Iasos či Iasion byl náhradním otcem – pěstounem. Pěstounkou byla Atalantě i medvědice, a tak je přirozené hledat klíč k jejímu jménu právě v instituci pěstounství. K ni se vztahuje indoevropský kořen *H₂el- > *al- “živit; růst”, v případě jména Atalanty zesílený prefixem *at(i)-, který se uplatnil u téhož kořene nejen v řečtině (ἀτάλλω “živím, pěstuji, vychovávám”), ale i v germánských jazyčích (*aþala– “urozený potomek”), tocharštině A (ātāl “muž”) a zřejmě i hieroglyfické luvíštině (atala– “bratr”).