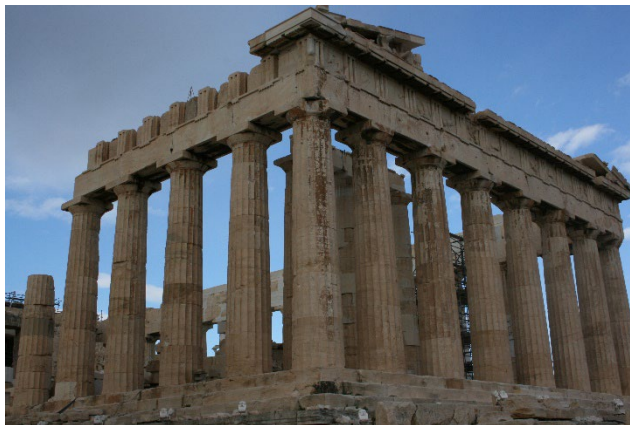


## MY GREEK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRAVELS

Inspired by my old History of Architecture, and Western Art History college courses, I embarked on a solo Greek archaeological travel, in November 2017, to fulfill an entry on my bucket list. When I arrived in Athens, the city wore a distinct look of its rich ancient Greek history. From its art and architecture to its culture and mythology, Greece, like various Mediterranean and surrounding countries, maintain modest existence amidst modern Western civilization. On *Day One*, I mapped my 8-day travels to the cities of Athens, Olympia, and Delphi. I documented my travels as I voyaged through these historic cities.

### Greek Masterpieces in Athens

Ancient Greece has influenced various artistic styles for centuries. Many of the Greek masterpieces and artifacts were inspired by prominent Greek architectural styles such as Ionic, Doric, and Corinthian, known as the Classical Orders “consist of variations of an assembly of parts made up of a column” (Harris and Zucker), commonly referred to as decorative systems or columns, continue to be used in modern architecture. During my *Second Day* in Athens, I visited the Acropolis of Athens, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site—an architectural masterpiece built during the Golden Age of Athens, from around 500 BC to 300 BC, consisting of several ancient buildings, some featuring different Classical Orders, the most famous being the Parthenon. I marveled at the archaeological ruins that are quite well preserved. Later, I visited the Acropolis Museum, built at the base of the famous monument, housing many of the precious original statues from the Acropolis of Athens.



*The southern side of the Parthenon*  
447-432 BC, marble, Acropolis, Athens, photo: Denrique Preudhomme



*Remains of the Theatre of Dionysus*  
The first theatre ever built, 4th century BC, Acropolis, Athens, photo: Denrique Preudhomme

Next, I walked through the lively Plaka area, the oldest neighborhood in Athens—filled with quaint restaurants, shops, and sidewalk cafes, a haven for souvenir shopping. I continued to Syntagma Square, located in front of the Old Royal Palace, housing the Greek Parliament. At Syntagma Square, I observed the Changing of the Guard, a Greek official ceremony associated with the Greek War of Independence, that combines the Prussian goose-step ritual, performed by the Evzone guards (or presidential guards) (Caplan 2), outfitted in traditional Greek style. The sunset cast long shadows behind the Evzone guards as they departed their ceremonial shift-change, while the temperature plummeted to upper 40 degrees Fahrenheit. At that time, I took the subway train back to my hotel.



*Colorfully-costumed Evzone Guards*

*The Changing of the Guard, Syntagma Square, Athens, photo: Denriqye Preudhomme*

### **Scenic Coastal Road to Olympia**

*Day Three* I journeyed by bus, approximately 4 hours to Olympia (birthplace of the first Olympic Games) via the scenic coastal road to the mighty Corinth Canal. The canal “a major infrastructure project constructed in 1893, is 6.3 km long, 8 m deep and with up to 60 m high slopes that often experience landslides” (Papanikolaou, Triantaphyllou and Pallikarakis 65), dividing the Peloponnese from mainland Greece. I stopped off at Mycenae, a prehistoric city in the Peloponnese region of Ancient Greece from 3000 BCE to 1200 BCE (Becker), the heartland of Greek mythology. I visited the Acropolis of Mycenae, and the Tomb of Atreus on the Panagitsa Hill, built during the Bronze Age around 1250 BC. Myceneans were frequently involved in wars, which forced them to build monumental fortress structures to protect their societies; hence, their artifacts “demonstrate the power and constant threat of invasion that this culture faced” (Ancient Greece). Mycenaean artifacts demonstrated power in its depiction of large lion forms, monumental bee-hive tombs, the extravagance of funerary masks, and thick walls that compose of massive blocks of stone and a lion gate as entry into the city (Mycenaean Art).

Continuing to Olympia, I travelled through the Central Peloponnese Peninsula, whose major cities in classical times were Corinth and Sparta, among the many cities in Ancient Greece that were governed by different clans and city-states on the Greek mainland and islands, all bearing distinctively different cultural styles. At the end of day three, a starlit sky brought me into Olympia where I overnighted in anticipation of my day four activities.



*Corinth Canal, dividing the Peloponnese from mainland Greece, Corinth, photo: Denrique Preudhomme*



***The Lion Gate at Mycenae***

*The only surviving monumental piece of Mycenaean sculpture, the Lion Gate was the main entrance of the Bronze Age fortified city of Mycenae. Erected during the 13th century BCE, it is named after the relief sculpture of the two lionesses above the entrance, photo: Denrique Preudhomme*



***Archaeological ruins at Mycenae***

*A prehistoric city in the Peloponnese region of Ancient Greece from 3000 BCE to 1200 BCE, photo: Denrique Preudhomme*

### **The Archaeological Site of Olympia**

On *Day Four*, my visit to the Archaeological Site of Olympia—declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site—included the Sanctuary of Olympian Zeus, where the colossal gold-and-ivory made cult statue of Zeus was once positioned, and the Ancient Stadium where the Olympic Games were first held in 776 BC. The stadium could accommodate approximately forty-five thousand people, and, although

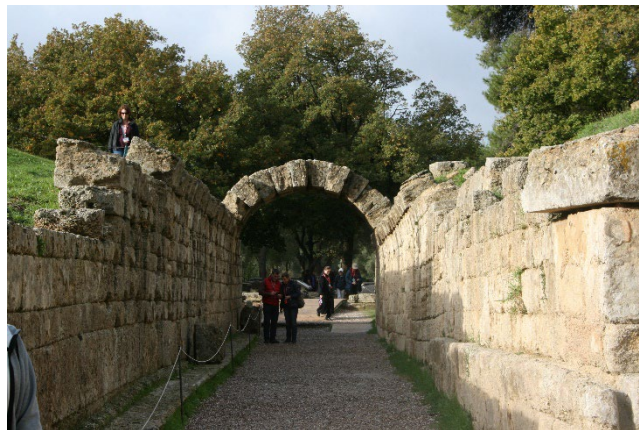


young girls could enter, women were not permitted into the stadium during events (Cartwright). “In the 5th century BCE, permanent stone slabs (*balbis*) were placed across the tracks with parallel grooves for athletes (who competed naked and barefoot) to place their toes in, ensuring all started level and from a standing position” (Cartwright).



*The Temple of Olympian Zeus, 470-457 BC*

*The status of Zeus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world was once placed in the temple, photo: Denrique Preudhomme*



*Remains from the entrance of the ancient Greek stadium, photo: Denrique Preudhomme*



*Stone slabs (balbis) with grooves for athletes at the ancient Greek stadium*

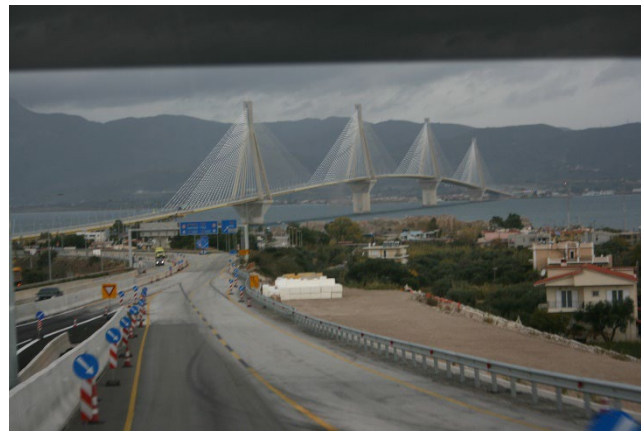
*Standing on stone slabs (balbis) with grooves, ancient Greek stadium, photo and in photo: Denrique Preudhomme*

Later, I visited the Archaeological Museum of Olympia, the location of the Parian marble sculpture of the east pediment of the Temple of Zeus, portraying the preparation for the famous chariot race between Pelops and Oinomaos, as well as other astonishing Greek works of art such as the Nike of Paionios, and terracotta statues dating back to the 5th century BC.

As the sun began to set, I voyaged north through the plains of Eliad and Achaia, crossing the Corinth Strait via a cable bridge from Rion to Antirion, on my way to Delphi. I stopped off and walked through the picturesque town of Nafpaktos, a town with an intense medieval style, and a relaxing atmosphere. Then, I continued to Delphi, home of the ruins of the Tholos Temple.



*Marble sculpture of the east pediment of the Temple of Zeus  
Archaeological Museum of Olympia, photo: Denrique Preudhomme*



*Cabled bridge from Rion to Antirion, photo: Denrique Preudhomme*

### **Archaeological Temples, Museum, and Theatre in Delphi**

*Day Five*, I toured the excavated site of Delphi and the Archaeological Museum, perched on the slopes of Mount Parnassos. I walked the Sacred Way to the magnificent 4th century Temple of Apollo, the Greek mythical God of music and son of Zeus and Leto. Next, I visited the reconstructed Treasury of Athens, built to commemorate the Athenians' victory at the Battle of Marathon. Then, I visited the Stoa of the Athenians, constructed c. 478 BC to 470 BC during the early Classical period, and dedicated by the Athenians after the Persian Wars. I climbed the high elevations for a panoramic view of the Theatre at Delphi, originally built in the 4th century BC but remodeled on several occasions. Later, I visited the Tholos at the sanctuary of Athena Pronoia, a circular building that was built between 380 BC and 360 BC at the center of the sanctuary of Athena Pronoia.





*Ruins of the ancient Temple of Apollo at Delphi  
Overlooking the valley of Phocis, In photo: Denrique Preudhomme*



*The Theatre at Delphi, photo: Denrique Preudhomme*



*The Tholos at the base of Mount Parnassus, photo: Denrique Preudhomme*

## **Return to Athens, My Greek Travels End**

*Day Six*, I walked through parts of downtown, Delphi. Then, I travelled about 2 hours and 30 minutes south, returning to Athens late afternoon. Later that evening, I dined in the lively Plaka area, purchased souvenirs, then trekked back to my hotel. At the end of the evening, I prepared for *Day Seven*, a cruise to Hydra (one of the Saronic Islands of Greece, located in the Aegean Sea), Poros (one of the smallest Greek islands), and Aegina (the island of the Temple of Afea).

At the end of *Day Eight*, I was filled with additional knowledge of Greek history and mythology, memories, and an impressive collection of magnificent pictures. If you fancy Greek history and plan on traveling to Greece, I recommend visiting all the places listed in my Greek archaeological travels. Safe travels. Cheers!

by **Denrique Preudhomme, M.A.**  
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