



GREECE

Greece, (Greek: **Ελλάδα**), pronounced, officially the Hellenic Republic and known since ancient times as Hellas is a country in Southern Europe. According to the 2011 census, Greece's population is around 11 million. *Athens* is the nation's capital and largest city.

The word Greek comes from the word Graikoi which was the pre-historic name of the Hellenes. The people who we call the Greeks, actually call themselves Hellenes and live in a country called *Hellas*!

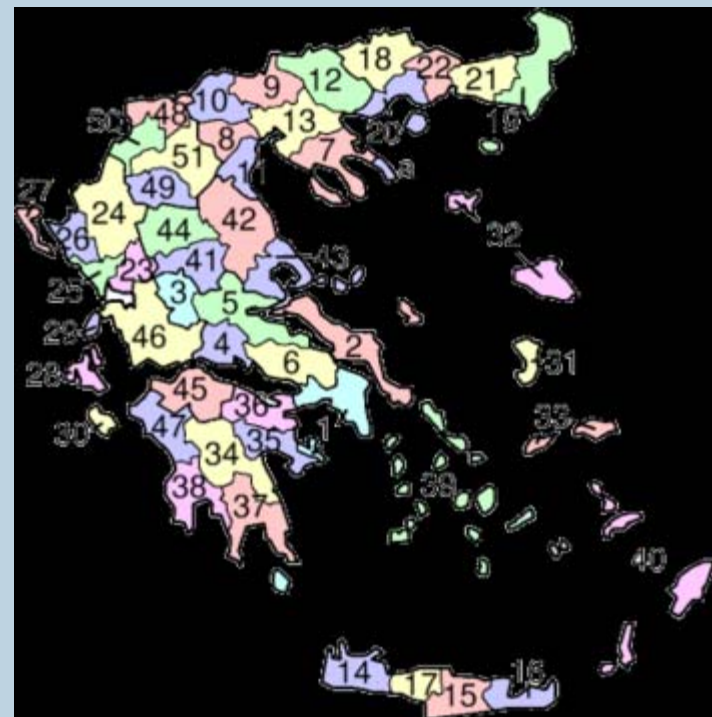


GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION



Greece is strategically located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa. It also shares land borders with Albania to the northwest, the Republic of Macedonia and Bulgaria to the north and Turkey to the northeast. The country consists of nine geographic regions: Macedonia, Central Greece, the Peloponnese, Thessaly, Epirus, the Aegean Islands, Thrace, Crete, and the Ionian Islands

- ❖ The prefectures were the second-degree organization of local government, grouped into 13 regions or 10 geographical departments, and in turn divided into provinces and comprising a number of communities and municipalities. The prefectures became self-governing entities in 1994, when the first prefectural-level elections took place. The prefects were previously appointed by the government. By 2010, their number had risen to 51, of which one, the Attica Prefecture, where more than a third of the country's population resided, was further subdivided into four prefecture-level administrations. In addition, there were three super-prefectures





- Thrace (3 prefectures)
- Macedonia (13)
- Epirus (4 prefectures)
- Thessaly (4 prefectures)
- Central Greece (7 prefectures)
- Peloponnese (7 prefectures)
- Ionian Islands (4 prefectures)
- Aegean Islands (5 prefectures)
- Crete (4 prefectures)



A collage of four environmental images. The top-left image shows a bald eagle in flight against a blue sky. The top-middle image shows a forest with trees in autumn colors. The top-right image shows a large tree with bright orange autumn foliage. The bottom-left image shows a wide river valley with mountains in the background. The bottom-right image shows a close-up of a brown bear's face.

ENVIRNONMENT

Fauna

Greek fauna is especially abundant ,due to its geographical position and rich horizontal and vertical partitioning and the wide range of habitats that are provided. The basic element of this wealth consists of the increased endemicity and geographical diversification of most of the animal groups. On *Greek soil* we thus have innumerable kinds of land and aquatic fauna, and we can observe temperate, sea, port or *river fauna*. Over 1,200 kinds of vertebrate animals and over around 30,000 invertebrate species have been identified.

Flora

Flora in Greece

.greeka

With diversity in climate and landscape, Greece flora proposes a rich and diverse collection. Many species of trees, bushes, flowers and herbs grow all over the country, making it an interesting place for botanologists.



The forests of Greece mostly have fir trees, pine trees and bushes. These trees exist in the alpine parts of Greece, which are found in the northern part of the country and in high altitudes in Sterea and Peloponnese. Forests in lower altitudes mostly have poplars, plane trees, oaks and cypress trees. At the foot of the trees, various bushes and flowers grow.

***T*he most characteristic tree of Greece is of course the olive tree. They can be seen all over the country, both in the mainland and the islands. In fact, the olive oil is one of the most traditional products**



Flowers

As for flowers, there are many characteristic flowers over the country: roses, daisies, poppies, orchids, lilies and various wildflowers. In fact, every region has special kind of flowers. For example, the flora of Crete is pretty special and even botanical tours are organized to explore the various flora species that grow there.





CLIMATE

Greece has a Mediterranean climate with plenty of sunshine, mild temperatures and a limited amount of rainfall.

Due to the country's geographical position, its rugged relief and its distribution between the mainland and the sea, there is great variation in Greece's climate.

In **summer**, the dry hot days are cooled by seasonal winds called the meltemi, while mountainous regions have generally lower temperatures.

Winters are mild in lowland areas, with a minimum amount of snow and ice, yet, mountains are usually snow-covered. Moreover, a common phenomenon is the occurrence of different climactic conditions during the same season (for instance, mild heat in coastal areas and cool temperatures in mountainous regions).



HISTORY



ITALIANS

ILLYRIANS

THRACIANS

Dorian
Greeks

Aeolian
Greeks

Thebes

Mycenae

Pylos

Sparta

Athens

Argos

Ionian
Greeks

Troy

Miletus

AEGEAN CIVILIZATION

Knossos

Mallia

MINOANS

ASIA MINOR

Hittite
Empire

ARZAWA

Engomi

Greece is a country with a very rich history

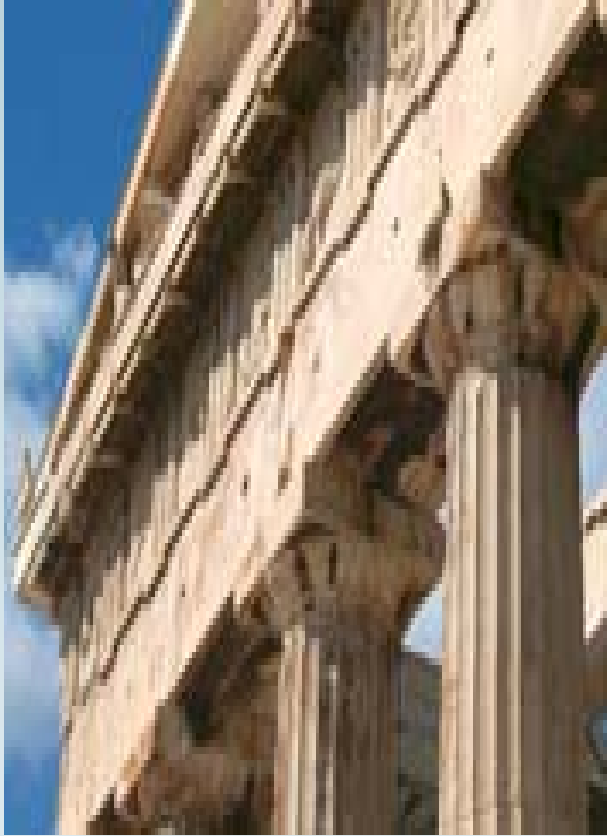
and the homeland of many famous personalities throughout centuries. This section proposes information about the history of Greece: from Stone and Bronze age to the Twentieth century, but also information about other historical facts: famous quotes, famous personalities, Olympic games, flags, archaeological sites, historical monuments and Unesco Sites in Greece. We also propose information about history of Greece for many locations and Greek islands.

HISTORY DURING STONE AND BRONZE AGE



Excavations show that the first settlement dates from the Palaeolithic era (11,000-3,000 BC). During the second millennium BC, Greece gave birth to the great stone and bronze civilization: the Minoans (2600-1500 BC), the Mycenaeans (1500-1150 BC) and the Cycladic civilization. These were the first important civilizations in the Greek history.

HISTORY DURING CLASSICAL PERIOD



The Classical Period (6th-4th century BC) is very famous worldwide. The peak of the classical period is the 5th century BC, when the foundations of the western civilization were created in Athens. This city-state became the greatest naval power of Greece that time and developed all domains of culture, including philosophy, music, drama, rhetoric and even a new regime called democracy. It is not exaggerating to say that this period changed the history of the world.

Athens and Sparta were the most powerful city-states that time in Greece and the other city-states were actually allied to one or the other of these two towns. In the 5th century, the allied Greek city-states managed to repel the invasion of the Persians. However, the Peloponnesian War that followed, between Athens and Sparta, led to the decline of the glorious classical era.

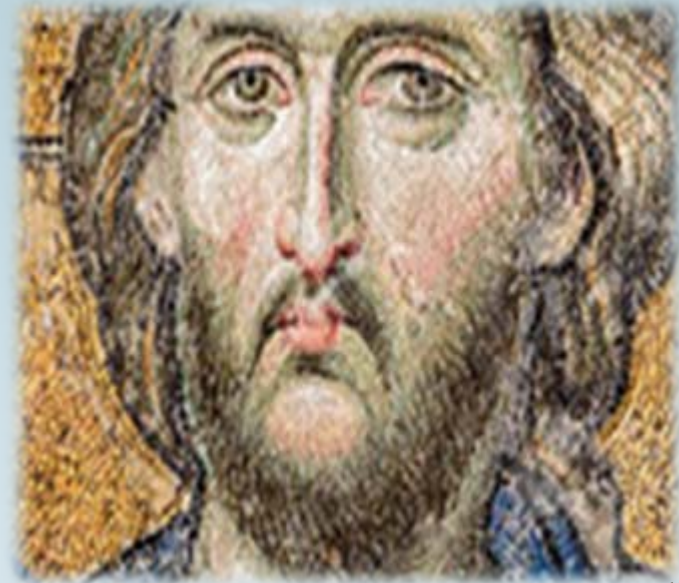
That was when the kingdom of **Macedon**, a tribe residing in northern Greece, came to power defeating and conquering the other Greek city-states. After the death of king Phillip II, his son Alexander started a large expedition in Asia. In 334 BC, **Alexander the Great** invaded the Persian Empire and his army conquered all the way till India. However, in 323 BC, he dies in Babylon at the age of 33 and his Macedonian empire is torn apart and governed by his heirs.

HISTORY DURING ROMAN PERIOD



*F*rom 168 BC and onwards, the Romans conquer Greece and a new period starts for the Greek history. That time, the country becomes the field of many important battles and new cities are constructed, such as Nikopolis in western Greece. Athens and generally the Greek culture declines, but the Greek becomes a second official language for the Roman Empire. The Romans read the classical philosophers and base their religion on the Olympian gods. In the 3rd century AD, the powerful Roman Empire starts to decline and it is divided in two pieces, the Eastern and the Western Roman Empire.

HISTORY DURING BYZANTINE PERIOD



While the Western Roman Empire was gradually conquered by barbaric North-European tribes, the Eastern Roman Empire with Constantinople (Byzantium) as capital developed and was turned into the Byzantine Empire that lasted for about 1,000 years. At this point of history, Christianity becomes the official religion of the new empire, new territories are occupied and new state laws are formed. These laws will later constitute the first laws of the modern Greek state, as it will be formed in the 19th century.

HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

After Kapodistrias was assassinated in 1831, prince Otto from Bavaria became the first king of Greece, followed by George I from Denmark in 1863. In the early 20th century, Macedonia, Crete and the Eastern Aegean islands were also attached to the Greek state after the First World War. This was the time when the figure of an important Greek politician raised, Eleftherios Venizelos, the most famous prime-minister of modern history.





CULTURE

LANGUAGE

Language constitutes one of the most important elements of the Greek culture. Modern Greek language is a descendant of the Ancient Greek language and is affiliated to the part of the Greek or Hellenic branch of Indo-European. The first written Greek was found on baked mud tablets, in the remains of the Knossos Palace of Crete island. Linear A and Linear B are the two most ancient types of written language in Greece.



Traditions & customs



Traditions in Greece and Greek Islands either have a religious character or come from paganism. Furthermore, most of the traditions and festivals still followed and celebrated today are religious. That is why so many “panigiria” are organized in the country, which are actually religious celebrations of saints followed by traditional music and dance in the square of the village. These panigiria are a strong element of the Greek culture and take place all year round, especially in summer.

Music



The Greek music is of unbelievable diversity due to the creative Greek assimilation of different influences of the Eastern and Western culture of Asia and Europe. Music in Greece has a long history dating from the ancient times, during which poetry, dancing and music were inseparable and played an important part in the ancient Greek everyday life and culture.

Food & wine



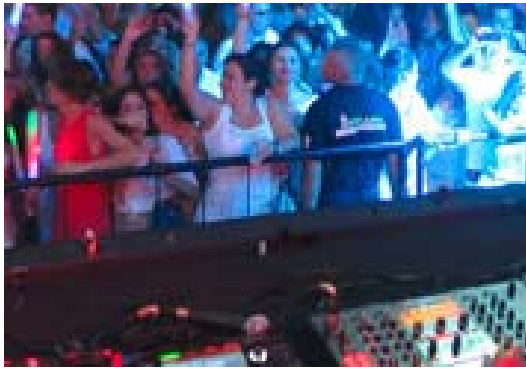
The Greek cuisine is famous for its good quality products and the amazing taste of its food and wines. Some dishes are the same everywhere in Greece, whereas some others are local culinary specialties. The same dishes can be cooked differently or with different ingredients depending on the region. Food is an important part of the Greek culture.

Products

*M*any products are characteristic of Greece, including various types of cheese (feta, metsovone and formaella), virgin olive oil from Lesvos, Crete and Laconia, capper from Santorini, potatoes from Naxos, citrus fruits from Peloponnese and others like honey, wine, spices, nutes and more. These fresh culinary products are widely used in cooking and constitute strong elements of the local culture.



Nightlife



*N*ights in Greece are a delight. A summer night out usually starts with a dinner at the many taverns and restaurants in the Greek islands and continue with a soft drink in a lounge bar or with a crazy night in a club till the sunrise. It is almost part of the Greek culture to have dinner in a traditional tavern during holidays. Some places known for their nightlife are Mykonos, Crete, Kos, Rhodes and more.

Festivals



*M*ost festivals in Greece take place in summer. They can be religious festivals (panigiri) on the occasion of the name day of the protector saint in a village or town, or they can also be cultural festivals with various events. These festivals constitute an integral part of the local culture and attract many visitors.



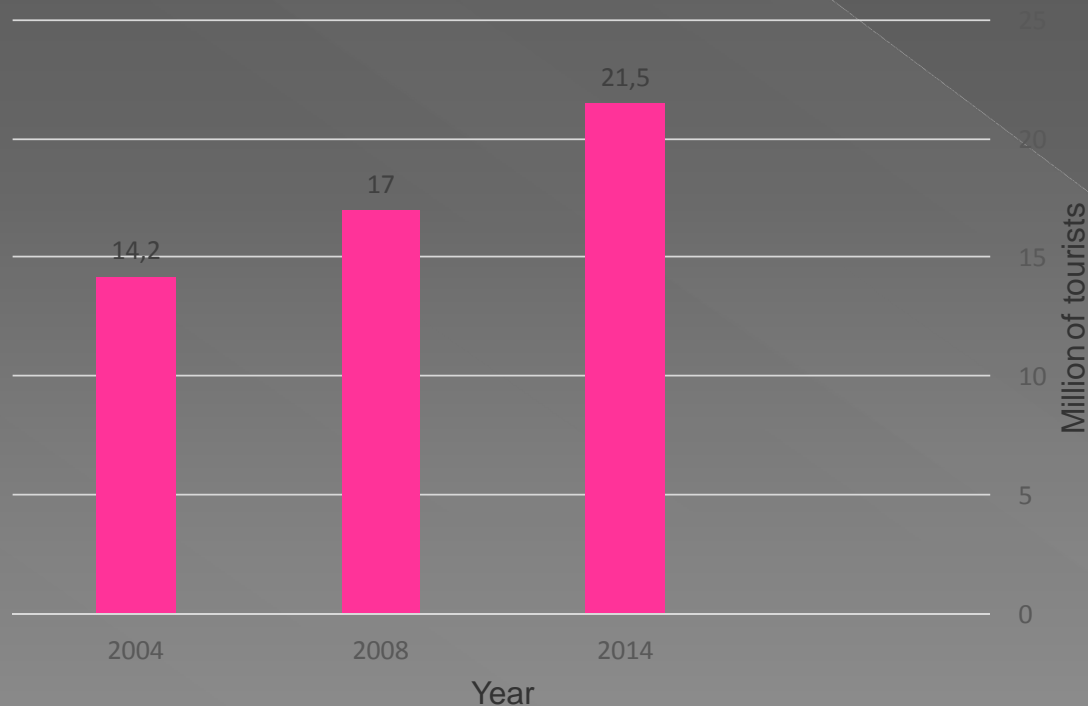
TOURISM

Tourism

Tourism in Greece and the Greek Islands, the mythical lands. Tourism in Greece is a must! This website is the perfect place to plan your holidays. It is a beautiful country characterised by its mountainous landscapes, its incredible weather, its many islands, its long sandy beaches and more. Greece is the favorite destination for many Europeans and attracts every year millions of visitors. This section provides information about Greek tourist destinations in the mainland and the Islands.

Greece is a worldwide top tourist destination.

In fact, Greece comes in the 15th place in the world rating of tourist destinations, since, according to the National Statistical Service of Greece, it receives more than 15 million tourists every year





Greece is a **famous** country, **popular** for its clean **beaches** and its long history. There are hundreds of archaeological and historical sites to visit in Greece that gloriously depict the country's past. Its landscape is mainly mountainous and the terrain is not very fertile, except for some valleys scattered along the Greek mainland. However, Greece is surrounded by water, in particular ,by the Aegean and the Ionian Sea. The country consists of more than 1,400 islands and islets, but only 169 of them are inhabited.

These Greek islands, one by one, are a beauty of nature. They are the most popular Greek destinations, especially in summer. Big or tiny, green or infertile, ideal for cosmopolitan or relaxing vacations, one thing is for sure: all these islands have the necessary requirements and facilities to offer you memorable vacations!





BEACHES OF GREECE



Shipwreck Zakynthos

Navagio or Shipwreck Beach is an exposed cove on the coast of Zakynthos, in the Ionian Islands of Greece. It has been named so, since 1983, when the alleged smuggler ship “Panagiotis” was wrecked on the beach while transporting cigarettes. The area is defined by its sheer limestone cliffs, white sand beaches, and clear blue water, which attract thousands of tourists yearly. Finally, the strip of beach is accessed only by boat.



Simos, Elafonisos



Simos is a large bay on Elafonissos, a tiny island just below Peloponnese. The beach is famous for the exotic water and the soft sand. One side of the beach is naturist, while another side has a popular camping. There are no taverns or studios on Simos, keeping the virgin beauty of the place. To go to Simos you will need a private vehicle as there are no public means in Elafonissos.

Balos, Greece

Balos in Crete island is the Caribbean aspect of Greece. Apart from amazing sea water, Balos also has an impressive landscape. Located on the north western side of Crete, Balos can be reached by boat from Chania Town and Kissamos or by car through a dirt road. This is one of the most amazing secluded beaches with soft sand and exotic water. Right next to the beach of Balos is the secluded, uninhabited island of Gramvoussa with a Medieval Castle on top.



Valtos beach in Parga

Valtos is the largest beach in Parga, just a walking distance or a short boat ride from the city centre. Lined up with taverns and studios, this white pebbled beach is suitable for all ages and all preferences. You will love the blue green water and the relaxing atmosphere. Valtos is surrounded by green hills and on top of a cliff on one side, there is the Medieval Castle of Parga.



Myrtos, Kefalonia



This is the most photographed of all beaches and it is located in Kefalonia island. The view from the cliff above is breathtaking, but the beach itself is also a marvel. You will love the exotic deep waters and the view to the open sea. Myrtos is located on the northern side of the island, close to the picturesque village of Assos. It is frequently featured in travel magazines as one of the best beaches in the world.

Kyra Panagia beach in Karpathos

Located on the eastern side of Karpathos island, the beach of Kyra Panagia distinguishes for the exotic blue waters and the fine sand. This is a secluded place but also has few umbrellas and sunbeds. Above this magical beach, there is a nice church dedicated to Virgin Mary. This is how the beach took its name, which means "Lady Virgin Mary". In summer, there are also boats to Kyra Panagia from Pigadia, the capital of Karpathos.



Paleokastritsa beach in Corfu Source



Paleokastritsa is not only a cosmopolitan resort in Corfu island, it is also a place with wonderful blue green water. There are many coves in Paleokastritsa, some are secluded and others are popular, such as the main beach just at the beginning of the road up to the monastery. From the small port of Paleokastritsa, there are very frequent boats to secluded coves with fabulous water.


Super Paradise beach in Mykonos



Although Super Paradise in Mykonos island is mostly famous for the all-day beach bars and parties, the truth is that it also has fabulous water. Lay on the soft sand of Super Paradise, go sunbathing, listen to the music and swim in the crystal waters of the Aegean Sea. This beach can be reached by boat or bus from Mykonos Town. There are many accommodations around Super Paradise, from family studios to luxurious hotels.



THE MAIN SIGHTS OF GREECE



According to archaeological and historical sources the story of Greece began deep in prehistory, and has continued to our days. This [timeline](#) outlines, the major periods and events of the Greek civilization from the Mesolithic period until the end of the Hellenistic Era.

Mythology



One of the most entertaining and enticing aspects of Greek culture is its elaborate mythology that involves gods, heroes, deeds, and mortals, all of which colored the physical world with elaborate stories and personalities. Myths, legends, deeds, and heroes permeated ancient Greek thought, enriching a large portion of literature and art. The pages here are a mere point of reference to provide "color" and context to the rich history and culture of ancient Greece.



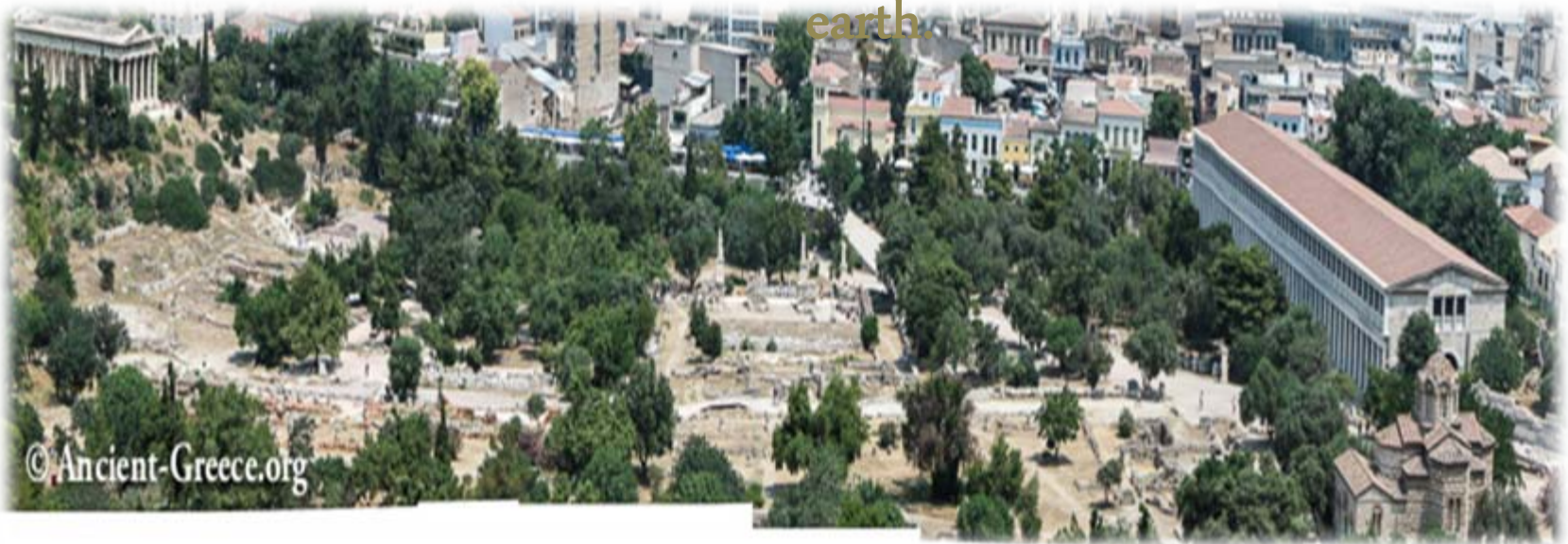
The Acropolis of Athens



If we search for one location, one overarching symbol that defines the highest achievement of greek civilization that defines its splendor, we would undoubtedly arrive at the acropolis of athens. Partly because Athens was always in the avant-guard of greek achievement, but mostly because the art and architecture on the barren rock represent the logical conclusion of almost a thousand

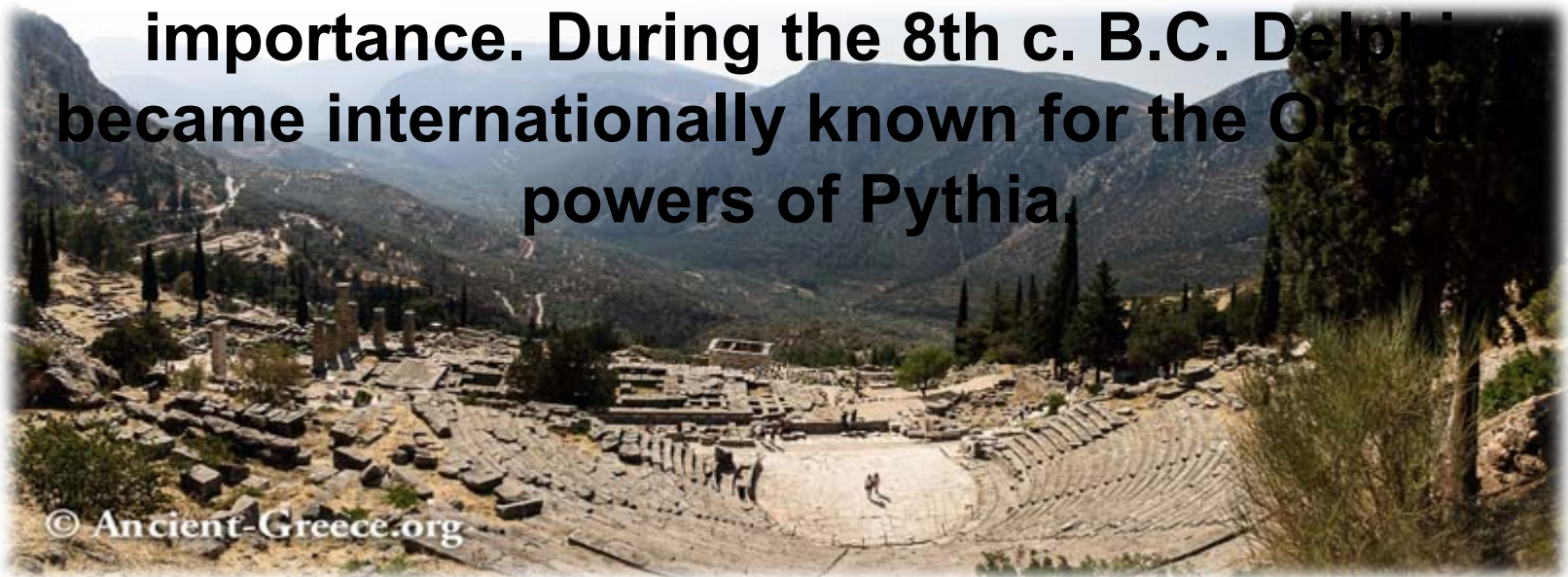
The Agora of Athens

From the 6th and until the 2nd century BC. The Agora as the heart of the government, as a public place of debate, as a place of worship, and as marketplace, played a central role in the development of the Athenian ideals, and provided a healthy environment where the unique Democratic political system took its first wobbly steps on earth.



DELPHI

Delphi was inhabited since Mycenaean times (14th - 11th c. B.C.) by small settlements who were dedicated to the Mother Earth deity. The worship of Apollo as the god of light, harmony, and order was established between the 11th and 9th centuries. Slowly over the next five centuries the sanctuary grew in size and importance. During the 8th c. B.C. Delphi became internationally known for the Oracular powers of Pythia.



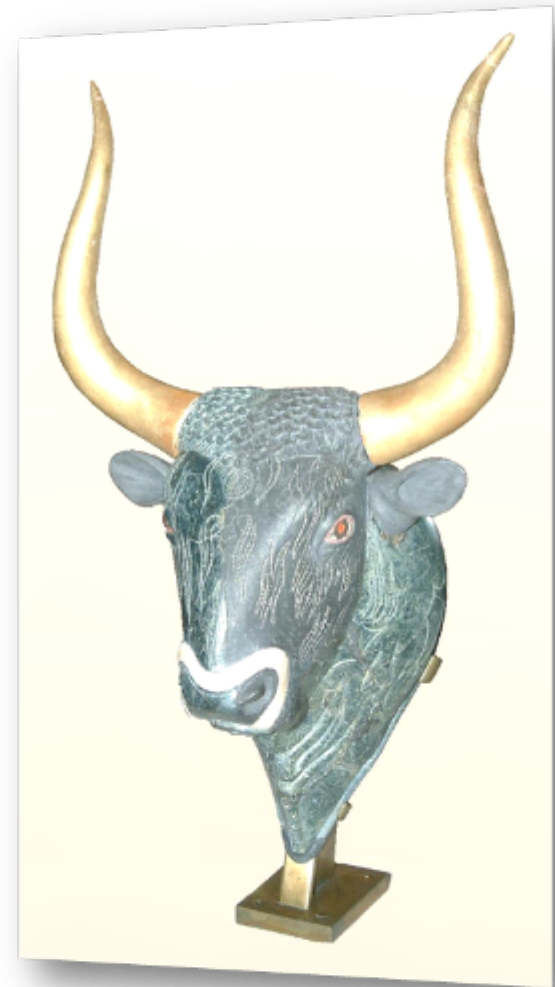
DODONA



Dodona is an important ancient Greek oracle, second in fame only to Delphi. It is located in a strategic pass at the eastern slopes of the imposing Mt. Tomaros, close to the modern city of Ioannina in western Epiros. It was dedicated to Zeus and Dione, and the Greeks believed it to be the most ancient of oracles.

Minoan crete history

Archaeological evidence testifies to the island's habitation since the 7th millennium BC. After the 5th millennium BC we find the first evidence of hand-made ceramic pottery which marks the beginning of the civilization. Evans, the famous archaeologist who excavated Knossos, named it "Minoan" after the legendary king Minos.



MINOAN CULTURE

Nurtured by the fertile and secure island of Crete, and situated in the middle of the Mediterranean, the inhabitants of the island developed an advanced culture evident in the artifacts their labor produced. A joyous seafaring people, the Minoans did not create monuments to their gods, or kings. Instead, their art speaks of a humble religion, and their architecture serves the well being of the community, and reveals their relationship to nature and to themselves.



Olympia History

The sanctuary at Olympia is positioned in a serene and fertile valley between the Alpheios and the Kladeos rivers in western Peloponnese, in Elis. It was the host of the Olympic games for a thousand years in antiquity.



Delos

It's a UNESCO world heritage site, and s an ark of history, floating lazily on the waters of the Aegean Sea, just a few miles away from cosmopolitan Mykonos. It's a chance to walk around the revival of the glory of the Greek civilization. It's the head priest of the Cyclades, the birthplace of the immortals. It's Delos.

In the ancient times, the myth of god Apollo, god of light, and goddess Artemis having been born there rendered the island sacred: no mortal would ever be allowed to be born on its land. But, a cradle of gods as the island has been, no mortals would ever be allowed to die on it either. So, apart from it being a conspicuous religious and economic centre, the island had also been exclusive in that: even during the years of peak of the Delian Alliance, women on the brink of childbirth and people close to dying would be carried to the neighbouring island of Rineia. The whole of the known world of that age was aware of the sacredness of the island and of its uniqueness



Vergina

The excavation by Professor Manolis Andronikos and his associates under the Great Tumulus of **Vergina** village in Imathia, Central Macedonia in 1977 brought to light the **most important archaeological discovery of the 20th** century in Greece. Today's Vergina (Ancient Aigai), in the foothills of Mt. Pieria, was the first capital of ancient kingdom of Macedonia, called Aigai. The site of the Royal Tombs under a modern roof hosts the main excavation, as well as an exhibition of the major finds from the burials. It is protected by UNESCO as [world cultural heritage](#) and comprises a unique discovery of an enormous universal impact.



In the same area, inhabited continuously since the 3rd millennium BC, are also the ruins of an acropolis, palace, theater, shrines and private buildings, and hundreds of common graves of an extensive necropolis of the ancient city of Aigai until Roman times.

The exhibition's shelter has the external form of the Great Tumulus, a man-made mound, while the underground building has been housing since November 1997 tombs and treasures found in them. This sheltered group includes three Macedonian tombs: the intact **tomb of Philip II** with a hunting scene fresco painting. Intact is also the so-called **Tomb of the Prince**, which may belong to Alexander IV, grandson of Philip II and his son Alexander the Great and another ruined and plundered Macedonian tomb of the third BC century.



➤ Miros Gonianakis

➤ Catherine Giannadaki

➤ Helen Tzagaraki

➤ Raphaela Dautlari