

TEMENOS PRESENTS ODYSSEY TWO
A MYTHOLOGICAL EXCURSION TO ANCIENT GREECE

FALL 2004

Athens – Delphi – Parga – Dodoni – Meteora

Welcome to the abode of the ancient gods of Greece. May Hermes guide your footsteps on this sacred soil.

After a restful night in Athens, we will begin our journey by paying homage to the Goddess Athena at her abode, the Acropolis of Athens.

What an awesome sight it is to stand at the base of this sacred rock, while looking up towards the sky, perceive the Propylaia (elaborate entrance), the Parthenon and the Erechthion where the Goddess Athena's olive tree flourished. In the afternoon we will explore the ancient agora or market-place with its many treasures and dine together in the old section of plaka.

The next day after an enjoyable breakfast, we will depart for Delphi the center of the ancient world. The Goddess was the first to be worshipped at Delphi until Apollo slew the mighty python and became the most important God of the oracle. Pilgrims would trek up the mountain side from the sea, first stopping at the Temple of Athena Pronaia in order to bring Her their votive offerings. A leisurely walk up the winding road would take them to the Castelian spring where they would purify their bodies and souls. The last stop found them praying at the Temple of Apollo overlooking the majesty of Greece's mountains, rolling hills and the sea at the very bottom of the valley. The setting on the slopes of Mt Parnassus is breathtaking!

From Delphi we will proceed to Parga an unbelievably beautiful picturesque fishing village surrounded by coves and incredible beaches. Near Parga, located in north western Greece, and a short trip up the Acheron (which means stream of woe), one of the rivers of the underworld, will find us at the Nekromanteion, the Temple of Hades and Persephone. In ancient times the shades of the dead would inhabit Hades and blood offerings were made to them in order to ascertain one's future.

This spectacular site is located in the lush and verdant fields of Ephyra and once was completely submerged under water.

We will proceed north to the ancient oracle of Dodoni where around 800 B.C. the site became an oracle for dedicated to Zeus. The great God of thunder resided in the roots of the sacred oak and spoke His oracles through the rustling of the leaves. Later on the oracle spoke through the vibrations emanating from copper cauldrons. The Goddess Dione was also greatly revered here.

From Dodoni we will drive through spectacular mountainous terrain to Kalambaka a small town at the base of Meteora, a different kind of spiritual place. The mysterious black rock formations rise majestically above the surrounding Thessalian plain. These awesome rocks hold 24 Byzantine Monasteries with beautiful frescoes and astonishing views. Six of the 24 are still inhabited today by religious orders and are open to the public. Ladies here you must wear skirts and be modestly attired.

Late in the afternoon will find us back in Athens and a free night on the town. There will be one more free day in Athens for leisure time or for optional visits to Sounion, famous for the Temple of Poseidon, or the Keramikos where the sacred road to Eleusis can be found.

That evening will find us celebrating our last meal together as we rejoice in our new found friendships.

Thank you for sharing this adventure with me. - Yasu Frances