

## **EXCURSIONS IN PELOPONNESE**

### **MANI**

The middle arm of the South Peloponnese, with extends from Gythio to Cape Tainard is named Mani after the Castle of Maina, built by Guillaume de Villehardouin. The landscape is punctuated with stone towers, clusters of which may from whole oil ages, gray barren earth strong winds and an immensity of sea. An independent area never concerned by foreign nations.

### **DYROS**

Travel southwards, into the Mani and towards the entrance of the underworld. Discover a vast underground world of huge caves interlaced with magnificent Stalactites and stalagmites as you are punted along the waterways and through the underground lakes in small gondolas. The caves were first found in 1958 but are believed to have been inhabited in prehistoric times as the museum on the site will show you.

### **NAFPLION**

In 1828 Nafplion became the capital of the new republic of Greece, but in 1835 after deciding that Greece was to become a kingdom the first King Otto pointed out Athens to be the new capital. It is surrounded by sea on both sides idyllically situated. On top you will find the Palamidi Fortress with its 999 steps, and in the port of Nafplion you will have a sight on the Bourtzi, a small island.

## **EPIDAVROS**

This to Aesclepius, God of healing, devoted sanctuary is a place you may not miss. The most famous theater of the world with the fabulous acoustics is an experience you will never forget. In July and August several groups of actors perform in the theatre ancient tragedies and comedy's which draws a lot of people from all over the world.



## **MYCENAE**

This Homer town has become world-famous due to the excavations and discoveries by the archeologist Heinrich Tombs. Mycenae is also the place where the golden mask of Agamemnon is discovered. This impressive fortress is worth a visit. Imagine your self-wandering around in a fortress believed to be built 1600 B.C.

## **LACONIA**

Laconia is part of the Greek landscape, with all the general characteristics in the terrain and climate. The two mountains, Taygetos and Parnonas, protect the great plain, facing the Bay of Laconia. It is watered by the Eurotas River and its tributaries, and is interspersed with low hills. The variations of altitude and the Microclimate, warm and dry in places and wet in others, in combination with the composition of the soil and the methods of farming create the right conditions for growing high quality products. The olive-tree, the vine and the orange-tree, have

always held the first place in the prefecture. Next to these, according to the seasons and the peoples' needs, there were other cultivations too: mulberries, rice, cotton and figs. Today garden-produce and maize are dominant.

## **SPARTA**

Sparta is a city with a long history and with a modern municipality. The Municipality of Sparta is the capital of the Laconia prefecture with a population of 18.025 inhabitants. With an excellent city plan Sparta stands on the site of the ancient city built by the decree of 1834 signed by King Otto and designed by Stauffer. The plan followed the Ippodamean example of wide avenues and big squares and was designed for 100.000 inhabitants.

## **MYSTRAS**

Mystras occupies a steep foothill on the northern slopes of Mt. Taygetos, 6km.NW of Sparta. The Frankish leader William II de Villeharduin founded the castle on the top of the hill in 1249. After 1262 it came under Byzantine control, and at the middle of the 124th century became the seat of the Despotate of Moreas. In 1448 the last emperor of Byzantium, Constantine XI Paleologos, was crowned at Mystras. In 1460 the hill was capture by the Turks and in 1464 Sigismondo Malatesta of Rimini managed to capture the city but not the castle. For a short period Mystras came under the control of the Venetians (1687-1715) but was again taken over by the Turks. It was one of the first castles of Greece to be liberated in 1821. The foundation of modern Sparta by King Otto in 1834 marked the end of the old town's life.

## **OLYMPIA**

The famous sanctuary of Olympia is about 20km away from Pyrgos on the road linking Elia to Arcadia. Olympia lies in the Aphelion river valley enclosed by low hills. The lovely landscape moves the beholder to ponder bygone glory so that the casual visitor and the eager student alike are led to imagine themselves

traveling back into the golden centuries when the splendid rich sanctuary of Olympian Zeus was at the height of its greatness.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM**

The treasures hidden in the sacred soil of Olympia were exhibited for the first time in a building financed in 1886 by Andreas Syngros. It is an elegant neo-classical building on the eastern slopes of Drouva hill that was severely damaged during the earthquakes. This and the dramatic increase in the number of finds made the building unsuitable for a museum. Hence the new Archaeological Museum was built NW of Kronion hill; it was completed in 1975 and inaugurated in 1928. The finds from the excavations are exhibited in the new museum; the old one is now used for conservation and is closed to the general public.

## **ANCIENT AND NEW OLYMPIA**

Pick up by bus from hotel and driving down the west coast outside Pirgos (Capital city of Prefecture Ilia) the trip will stop in Ancient Olympia.

Arriving there a Guiding tour will take place in the Arch. Site and the Museum.



After the end of the guiding tour (2 hours approx.) clients will have free time in the New Olympia village for lunch, shopping, exploring.

## **DELPHI**

Pick up from hotel bus will drive through Patras (Capital city of Achaia prefecture and whole Peloponnesus) and the new modern bridge of “Charilaos Trikoupis “ down to Rio. From there the trip goes through Nafpaktos (short break) Arriving in



Delphi guiding tour will take place in the Arch. Site (2hours approx.) After finish in Delphi bus will drive back to “Galaxidi” stop for lunch, shopping, exploring.

## **KALAVRITA**

Pick up from hotel bus will drive to Diakofto via Patras to the monastery “ Mega Spileo “. Stop for approx. 1hour for visiting. From there trip goes to Kalavrita village stop for lunch , shopping , exploring. From there the trip will go on to the” Spilea Limnon” ( Limnon caves travel in the underworld of stalagmites and stalactites). Stop for 45 min. approx. from there back to Patras visiting the winery ‘Achaia Claus” tour to the cellars and wine tasting with possibility to buy the wine.

## **ATHENS**

Pick up from hotel bus will drive on the high way to Corinth – Athens a small stop on the way will take place. Arriving in Athens bus will stop in Acropolis .Guiding tour in Acropolis and Museum approx. 2 hours. After that clients will have free time in “Monastiraki & Plaka for shopping, lunch & exploring. A short city tour will follow after lunch before driving back to hotel.