



SACRED SITES JOURNEYS

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NOVEMBER 2009 E-NEWSLETTER

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Highlights of our Sacred Sites Journey to GREECE October 11 - 20, 2009



Our Sacred Sites Journeys group arrived in **Athens** on Sunday, October 11th, excited and anxious to engage the ancient and modern energies of Greece! After our Welcome Meeting and Dinner we took the elevator up to the roof of our hotel situated near the Acropolis. And gazed in awe at the Parthenon by Night! Lovely!

The next morning we transferred to the nearby port of Pireaus and boarded our cruise ship for our 4-day **Greek Island cruise**. After settling into our cabins and enjoying our lunch in the bistro, we claimed our lounge chairs on the upper deck, where we spent the afternoon relaxing and soaking up some rays! And enjoying the views of the various islands as we sailed by them. A few naps, a few tarot readings, and lots of good conversation brought us late afternoon to the Cycladic **island of Mykonos**. We took tender boats to the mainland to Hora, the island's capital, where we walked along the narrow cobbled streets of the town, passing chic boutiques, many restaurants with outdoor seating and white-washed houses. We decided that we needed to come back next year, to stay for two nights and visit the nearby island of Delos, the birthplace of Apollo. So that's stop # 1 on our 2010 itinerary!



The next day we put into port at exotic **Kusadasi**, on the west coast of Turkey. Our first stop was the **House of Virgin Mary**. The humble little chapel lies on the site of the little house where some legends say Mary may have spent her last days. Others say she may have come here with Saint John the Divine. Though this could be confusing, as research also reveals that Mary Magdalene and St. John were rumored to have also come here. So which Mary was it? We wondered as we visited a room with the altar, which had pictures of the Virgin. We also explored the nearby **well**, known in ancient times as the "Water of Mary", a salt water well with curative properties. We all felt the strongest energy at the site here; it was very peaceful and soothing. We spent a bit of time tuning in, as everyone else in our group from the ship walked by, leaving us alone in our yesteryear reveries.

Our 2nd stop was ancient **Ephesus**. Though it may be "in ruins", as our knowledgeable local Guide kept saying, it was utterly fascinating; I took over 50 photos here alone! (Apologies that I'm not able to post them all here. However, if you're on Facebook, you'll soon be able to



see many of them!) As we walked the ancient sacred way, we encountered evidence of **Asclepius**, and the teachings of his followers, some of the very first doctors in this civilization that contributed much to our current one. A very well-preserved **Nike**, the Winged Goddess of Victory, captured our attention, as well as that of many other tourists. What a coup that I got a photo with no one in it! As we continued along the sacred way we came upon the **House of Love**,



the area in the city where priestesses of the arts of love initiated men into those very sacred mysteries. As we took some time to explore this area a bit, several of us connected with the still-palpable energies of the Divine Feminine and even felt that we'd been there before, perhaps as one of the priestesses. We continued along the sacred way to one of the architectural highlights of the site, the

Library, one of the most beautiful structures in the ancient city. Built in

117 CE, it was a monumental tomb for Gaius Julius Celsus Polemaeanus, the governor of the province of Asia, who is buried beneath the ground floor. We wished we could see the statue of Athena that had been built over it, but it's no more. Oh well...her Wisdom still prevails! One of our group members, an actress from London, was very interested in The Great Theatre, the largest one in antiquity; it had a capacity of 24,000 seats!

The next day we stopped at the island of **Rhodes**. Once on the mainland we drove to Philerimos. Along the way we viewed the Acropolis of ancient Rhodes, with the Temple of Athena, the nearby Temple of Apollo, and the stadium of Diagoras, the boxer who embodied every quality of the noble ancient



athlete. As we passed the port our guide pointed out that this is where the famous **Colossus of Rhodes**, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, stood protecting the harbor. At the summit of **Philerimos** was Ialysos, one of the three ancient cities of Rhodes. Here we visited the restored Byzantine church of our Lady of Philerimos, a



chapel with 15th century frescoes, and the ruined Castle of the Knights of St. John. Afterwards we returned to Rhodes for a walking tour of the **medieval walled city**, where we strolled along the street of the Knights with its medieval buildings, winding alleys, towers, turrets and emblazoned façades. We visited the impressive Grand Master's Palace, with its superb mosaics.

Day 5 of our spiritual pilgrimage brought us to two of Greece's most famous ancient sites: The Palace of Knossos on **Crete** and Santorini. We went ashore on Crete at Heraklion, excited to visit the fantastic ruins of the **Palace of Knossos**. Discovered and excavated



beginning in 1899 by Sir Arthur Evans, the elaborate Palace is believed to be the seat of ancient Minoans who inhabited the area since the 7th century BCE, and where the mythical Cretan Labyrinth of King Minos was located. As we explored the site, we were awed by the beauty of the remaining wall murals depicting scenes from this ancient maritime culture. Though



the vast underground labyrinth no longer exists, we pondered upon the legend of this Bronze

Age structure built by Daedalus, who designed it so cunningly that he himself could barely escape it after he built it. Myth says it was Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos, who provided him with a skein of thread, literally the "clew", or "clue", so he could find his way out again.

Our stop in the afternoon was on the island of **Santorini**, with its white-washed houses clinging precariously on the rim of the caldera of an extinct volcano that some legends claim was the one that destroyed the ancient civilization of Atlantis. We wandered the winding streets of Thira, one of the main towns on the island, and finally settled at a little table at one of the many local cafes. As we gazed out over the stunning view of the sea and the surreal landscape, we reflected on the creation and history of the volcano and the last eruption leading to the destruction of the island. And that the tidal wave created by the eruption that was of such an immense magnitude, that it destroyed the thriving city of Knossos on Crete, where we had visited that morning. We also enjoyed the best pistachio ice cream we'd ever had



The next day we disembarked the cruise ship, met our Guide Alexandra and our driver Vangelis and headed out in our private motorcoach from Piraeus, crossing the Corinth Canal to the Peloponnese. Our morning stop was at **Epidaurus**, a sanctuary built in the 3rd century BCD, and dedicated to **Asclepius**, the God of Healing and Medicine, the most important healer god of antiquity. People came from all over the ancient world seeking cures for their ailments, on all levels. We visited the excellent museum and then took

some time to explore the little-visited areas that were used for healing. Away from the crowds we were able to feel a sense of the huge impact this important healing center had on the lives of those who made the pilgrimage here.



Legend says that Asclepius brought prosperity to the sanctuary, which enabled the builders to construct the now world-famous **theater**, renowned because of its amazing acoustics. Built right into the hillside and made of marble, it seated 15,000 people and was used for dramatic performances, which were teaching and healing tools in themselves. As our group member Aoife, a professional singer, stood in the middle of the platform stage and sang a beautiful aria, we pondered



whether the astonishing acoustic properties were the result of an accident or were purposefully designed to elicit this amazing effect - the high-frequency sounds from the stage can be heard perfectly in the upper-most reaches of the top rows! Nick, the youngest and most nimble member of our group, climbed up to the last row of seats and could attest to this!

From Epidaurus, our expert driver Angelis took us on some "back roads" through the mountains and some small villages, in some of the most beautiful countryside that we saw during our entire journey. We arrived late afternoon in **Olympia**, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where the first Olympic Games were held in 776 BCE, and

where the Athenian sculptor Phidias created an ivory Statue of Zeus that was placed in a magnificent temple dedicated to him. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, Zeus was seated on a throne, draped in a gold robe. He had a wreath around his head, held a figure of his messenger Nike in his right hand, and a scepter in his left. What an amazing piece of art it must have been! Unfortunately, the gigantic statue no longer exists, and the circumstances of its destruction are a source of debate: some scholars argue that it perished with the temple in the 5th century CE; others argue that it was carried off to Constantinople, where it was destroyed in the great fire of the Lauseion. In the late afternoon, under threatening rain clouds, we pretty much had the place to ourselves. We took advantage of this to thoroughly explore the various areas of this vast site, including the restored stadium. As the skies darkened, Nick quickly ran the length of it and back, and received his crown of laurel leaves for doing so! As we wandered among these timeless ruins, we felt the palpable energies that still remain. And, we felt very blessed by the Gods and Goddesses to be able to be there alone!



The next morning we visited the excellent museum at Olympia, and then departed on our drive north through the beautiful Greek countryside on our way to Delphi. At Patra we crossed the biggest cable-stay bridge in the world (which opened in August 2004) into northwestern Greece. We were blessed by the Gods once again. We arrived late afternoon at [Delphi](#), one of the most mystical sacred sites in the world. Located on the hillside of Mount Parnassus, it was considered in ancient times to be the center of the known world, the place where heaven and earth met, the place on earth where man/woman was closest to the Gods and Goddesses. We found the sacred site almost completely deserted! We first visited the [Sanctuary of Athena](#), dedicated to the Goddess of Wisdom who was born full-grown from the forehead of Zeus. We had time for meditation to connect with Her palpable energies. I received the following short but succinct message: "*You carry the energies of Athena, as you live with the double-edged sword, with the cool intellect that your wisdom brings you. In what you call the ancient past (though you know that all time is NOW), you taught others here. You held the Sacred Light. That is still your job today...to hold The Light and help bring it back into the world, which sorely needs it at this time of huge and sweeping changes in the fabric of known Consciousness. The Light is the Way, the Way of the One. Please continue to bring others here to this living portal, to focus on continuing to re-open it. Thank you!*"



We then walked the ancient way up to the [Temple of Apollo](#), dedicated to worship of Apollo after he slew the Python, the earth serpent who lived there and protected the navel, or center, of the Earth. We came upon a replica of the [omphalos stone](#). Legend says it was placed in the Temple of Apollo, where the Oracle would give the God's messages. The original stone is believed to have been a meteorite. In Greek mythology, the Omphalos at Delphi was said to be the stone which Rhea, the Mother of the Gods, wrapped in swaddling clothes, pretending it was Zeus in order to deceive his father Cronus, who swallowed his

children so they could not grow up and depose him as he had deposed his own father. Omphalos stones were said to allow direct communication with the Gods and Goddesses.



Continuing on the sacred way, we found the very ancient **Sybil Rock** (now covered in vines), where it's said the famous **Oracle of Delphi**, also known as the Sybil or the Pythia, relayed prophetic messages from the God Apollo himself. The 2nd century CE Greek traveler and geographer said "*There is a rock which extrudes from the ground. The Delphians say that after she stood above this rock, a woman named Herophile chanted her oracles.*" As well, the historian Plutarch (46-120 CE), who served as high priest here, said that this famous Oracle remained popular while others fell into disrepute because the Gods declined to speak through the other oracles because those who approached them brought

questions that were too trivial, that they asked for advice concerning love affairs and disreputable business transactions. He described how the oracle worked: The priestess went into a small chamber where she inhaled sweet-smelling fumes that were released from fissures in the rocks by the serpent deep within the cave. The Pythia would go into a trance, seeing the future and issuing predictions, which the priests would then interpret." We pondered the enduring mystery of this great Oracle. Were the Pythia merely very good psychics, or were their psychic powers enhanced and influenced by the



possibly consciousness-expanding ethylene gases that they inhaled? Were their messages interpreted in pure form by the priests, or were they possibly tainted with the desires and wishes of their own egos?



After a visit the next morning to the exceptional museum at Delphi, we departed south, on our way back to Athens. Mid-day found us at one of the most mysterious sacred sites of ancient Greece - **Eleusis**, home to

the **Eleusinian Mysteries** of **Demeter**, the Great Mother Goddess of Agriculture, and her daughter **Persephone**, the Goddess of Death and Regeneration. The celebration and initiation into the Mysteries was the most profound and sacred festival of the Greeks. On a mundane level, the rites imitated the agricultural cycles of planting the seed, nurturing its growth, and harvesting the grain. On the esoteric level the drama enacted for the initiates symbolized the odyssey of the human soul, its descent into matter, its earthly sufferings, its terror in the darkness of death, and its rebirth into divine existence. The initiatory rites were performed only for select participants, and were secret. Thus, their mysteries became shrouded in the ancient mists of the past. The initiates were sworn to secrecy on pain of death. Apparently, no one ever broke their vows and described the details. Therefore, with no conclusive evidence available today that describes the scope of these esoteric teachings, we were left to ponder and mediate upon their meaning as we explored the ancient site and museum.



Our last day in Greece we visited various sites in **Athens**. Starting of course with the **Acropolis**, the original site of Athens, a limestone plateau overlooking the city and supporting the **Parthenon**, the all-

marble temple dedicated to **Athena**, Goddess of Wisdom, War, and Crafts. Long a religious shrine and high fortress for the Athenian people, today it's a UNESCO World Heritage Site which honors the universal symbols of the classical spirit and civilization. Once on top, we took time to walk around the plateau and enjoyed the 360 degree view of Athens and the surrounding countryside spread out around us.



We visited the **Temple of Olympian Zeus**, also known as the Olympieion, the ruins of a colossal temple in the middle of the bustling metropolis dedicated to Zeus, king of the Olympian gods. Construction began in the 6th century BCE, but it was not completed until the 2nd

century CE, which made it a 650 year building project. During the Roman rule of Greece it was known as the largest temple in the country and housed one of the largest cult statues in the ancient world. After the 3rd century CE barbarians arrived, and it fell into disuse, and eventually was extensively quarried for building materials to supply building projects elsewhere in the city. We were surprised to find that we felt peaceful energies in this soothing and calm oasis. We ended our day as we watched the fascinating **Changing of the Guards** in front of the Parliament building in Syntagma Square.



We ended our Sacred Sites Journey in Greece with our Farewell Dinner at a local taverna. Delicious "local" good and great music! Our appetites were whetted on all levels. But we knew there was more to explore, so the discussion turned to what more we'd like to see and do on the next pilgrimage. Stay tuned!

Here's a few words from Christina about the journey:



Greece was my fourth sacred journey with Andrea and it was nothing but fabulous. Each island on the cruise had its own flavor, beauty and history. And there was so much I learned from our gracious and knowledgeable local guides at the sacred sites and throughout our tour of the mainland. Driving through the mountains and along the coast was as educational as it was scenic. I am convinced that there is no better way to appreciate the

accomplishments and spiritual traditions of the past than to experience them first hand (and with Delphi, Crete, Epidaurus, Olympia, Ephesus and Eleusis there was so much to learn). My 12 year old son has never had such a fabulous history lesson. What an adventure through so many different spiritual traditions for us both! The pilgrimage through Greece cannot but deepen the spiritual unfolding of a person's life. I most highly recommend it.

And a few words from Lynn: I would recommend the Greece trip to ANYone! It's a fascinating and beautiful country. SO much history! I didn't really know much about Greece before the trip. Just that I needed to visit Delphi. And the foodit's fantastic and healthy. Andrea is a wizard at keeping things organized and on time. And I highly recommend the olive oil soap by the way. I gifted a bar to my cleaning lady and she's already called me to report how nice her skin feels! I'm definitely sold on Greece and will return in the next year or two.



Our next Sacred Sites Journey to GREECE
will be in September 2010

For more information, visit our website. www.SacredSitesJourneys.com
The tour itinerary and pricing will be posted soon.

2010 Sacred Sites Journeys

MARCH



SPECIAL EVENT!

The Khemit School of Ancient Mysticism & Sacred Sites Journeys

invite you to join us in Giza, EGYPT

2012: Spiraling into The Next Cycle
March 16 - 21, 2009



Speakers:

Wisdom Keepers Shahrzad Awyan and Yousef Awyan
Peter Sterling, Harpist & Sound Healer

Others to be announced soon!

SPECIAL OFFERINGS!

**Private Entrances for Meditation & Initiation:
Between the paws of the SPHINX
The King's Chamber of the GREAT PYRAMID
Sacred Site of ABU GHUROB**

For complete details, visit www.EgyptInitiations.com

**Stay on in EGYPT after the event and join us for a
Sacred Initiatory Journey
March 21 - 31, 2010**



**PLUS Optional post tour class with Wisdom Keeper Shahrzad Aryan
to learn ancient Egyptian Healing Techniques: March 31 - April 2, 2010**

For complete details, visit www.EgyptInitiations.com

APRIL



PERU: Mystical Journey to Machu Picchu

April 24 - May 1, 2010

Extension to Lake Titicaca May 1 - 4, 2010

For more information, visit: <http://www.sacredsitesjourneys.com/Peru-April2010/Peru-April2010.htm>

MAY



COSTA RICA: Women's Retreat - Goddesses in Paradise

May 22 - 29, 2010

With an optional extension to the Arenal Volcano area!

For more information, visit:

<http://www.sacredsitesjourneys.com/CostaRica-May2010/CostaRica-May2010.htm>

JUNE/JULY



IRELAND: Shamanic Journey around the Irish Spirit Wheel

June 25 - July 5, 2010

Itinerary and pricing being finalized. Check our website soon for details!

JULY



SCOTLAND: Sacred Sites & Knights Templar Journey

July 10 - 18, 2010

Itinerary and pricing being finalized. Check our website soon for details!

JULY



ENGLAND: Mystical Journey of Initiation to Avalon & Stonehenge

July 18, - 24 2010

Itinerary and pricing being finalized. Check our website soon for details!

AUGUST



INDIA: Mystical Himalayan Pilgrimage

August 24 - September 6, 2010

Itinerary and pricing being finalized. Check our website soon for details!

SEPTEMBER



FRANCE: Mary Magdalene & Black Madonna Pilgrimage

September 20 - 30, 2010

Itinerary and pricing being finalized. Check our website soon for details!

SEPTEMBER



GREECE: Spiritual Odyssey to Sacred Sites

Itinerary and pricing being finalized. Check our website soon for details!

For more information, please email Andrea at
Andrea@SacredSitesJourneys.com
Call 888 501-3853 (Toll Free in the US) or 928 284-2384

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Astrological Influences for November 2009 By Mark Amaru Pinkham, Western and Vedic Astrologer

We regret that due to illness, Mark is not able to offer his astrological insights for this month.
He'll be back in the December enewsletter.

For more information about Mark and his Astrology practice, visit this link:
<http://www.gnostictemplars.org/astrology.html>

Links

The International Order of Gnostic Templars

A Modern Day Knights Templar Order
Dedicated to the Revival of Gnostic Wisdom and the Goddess Tradition
<http://www.GnosticTemplars.org/>

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Illuminating the Path of Self-Realization through breath, movement,
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Peter Sterling, Harpist & Sound Healer

www.HarpMagic.com

A FEW WORDS FROM ANDREA: As I write this on October 31st, many of us are celebrating the day, evening and tomorrow in various ways. Halloween, Samhain, All Hallows Eve, All Soul's Day. Halloween's roots lie in the Celtic festival of Samhain ("summer's end"). In Gaelic cultures the October 31–November 1 festival is a harvest festival with ancient roots in Celtic paganism. The Gaels believed that the border between this world and the otherworld became thin on Samhain, and thus it also has some elements of a festival of the dead. The Gaelic festival became associated with the Christian All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. Its name is derived from being the eve of the Western Christian holy day of All Saints.



I recognize the holiday as the end of the harvest, and the end of the "lighter half" of the year and beginning of the "darker half". With this in mind, I'd like to invite you to consider for yourself what it is that you've brought to fruition and harvested this year in your life. And to give thanks for manifesting whatever it is that has occurred.

As the days grow shorter, and the light wanes and the darkness pulls us inside, I also invite you to take time to go within and reflect on what has worked and not worked for you in your life this year, and the lessons you've learned from both. You can also meditate on what you want to let go of creating, and what you want to continue to create. Remember that you're a very powerful Spiritual Being having a human experience and you CAN create what you want. Focus on it, be positive in your focus, and hold the emotion that you associate with your creation. It's Metaphysics 101! And you have done it many times, and can continue to do so.

Im closing I'd like to share with you that I observe in myself and most everyone who I come in contact with these days that the energies of change are accelerating rapidly. (OK...I know you're all rolling your eyes, thinking "Yes Andrea, this is a given, we all know this!" But please bear with me.) As we on planet Earth move to line up with the center of the galaxy, powerful high vibration frequencies are entering into our energy fields, and thus affecting our consciousness. And sometimes they affect our lives in not so subtle ways.

One way that I consistently notice is that anything that is not in alignment in your life with your Truth, i.e. whatever you're not in integrity with, is coming up for you to look at and get in alignment with. This means that many relationships are changing...and rapidly. It means that out-moded belief systems are falling by the wayside. People who have been working at jobs that no longer serve their best and highest good are quitting, getting fired, retiring...in short leaving these situations. And though all of this can seem rather chaotic, remember that you have the choice to move into the chaos, integrate it, and thus shift into the peace-full moment of knowing that all is in Divine Order. Which will you choose? Change is going to happen. It's up to you how you embrace it. My wish for you, and for all of humanity, is that we do it with ease and grace, so that we move throught the Dark into The Light.

Peace and Blessings in The Light to You!

Andrea

Andrea Mikana-Pinkham
Founder/Director, Sacred Sites Journeys
P. O. Box 20548; Sedona AZ 86341
888 501-3853 (Toll Free in the U.S) or 928 284-2384
www.SacredSitesJourneys.com
info@SacredSitesJourneys.com

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