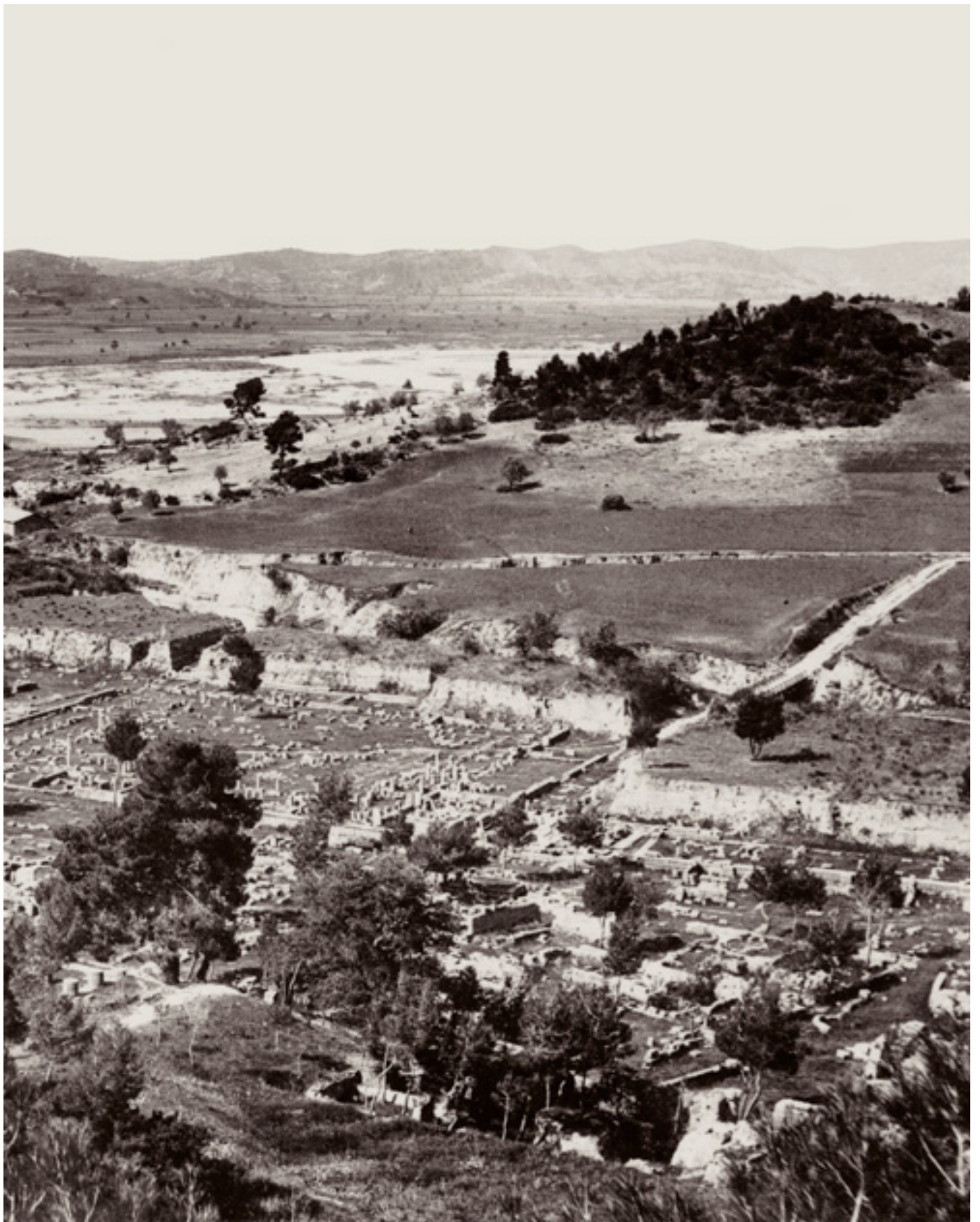




THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MUSEUM OF  
OLYMPIA







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GEORGIA E. HATZI



THE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MUSEUM OF  
OLYMPIA



John S. Latsis  
Public Benefit Foundation



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LOCATED 'ON THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SITE IN GREECE' IS OLYMPIA, the most brilliant and glorious Greek sanctuary, dedicated to Zeus, father of gods and man. A site with special emotional as well as ideological power, it was able to evolve over the centuries into an ark of human and ever timely values.

Olympia is the wellspring of peace, reconciliation, noble rivalry and fair play, virtues directly associated with the Olympic Games. This is why every four years we return there to be rebaptised in them.

The agelessness of the Sanctuary is proved by the multitude of archaeological monuments and finds that were revealed during the systematic excavation and study of the Sanctuary by the German Archaeological Institute, some of which are housed in the Olympia Museum: a museum that is unique worldwide.

It is precisely this wealth that is presented and highlighted in a singular way by the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation and Eurobank EFG through the rich publication we have in our hands today.

Olympia is at the centre of the Ministry of Culture's activities. Our goal is to reinforce the ageless nature of the site. This is why the historic Syngreion, today the Museum of the History of the Olympic Games, will present to the public the Digital Exhibition of the History of the Ancient Olympic Games.

Congratulations are due to all those who contributed to this book, which I salute with particular delight and emotion.

MICHALIS LIAPIS  
Minister of Culture



WALKING THROUGH THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF OLYMPIA, one sees the monuments of this Panhellenic sanctuary standing as silent witnesses to a distant, nostalgic past. Just one visit to its archaeological museum, however, is sufficient to demonstrate the reasons for the divine selection of this site for the first games.

According to Aeschines, the Mouseion in ancient Greek times was "a school of art" and a place in which the nine Muses were worshipped. The modern concept sees the Museum as an endless journey in time, a two-way dialectical relationship between the present and the past, in an effort to awaken the collective awareness and to achieve a synthesis of knowledge about the ancient Greek world.

The Archaeological Museum of Olympia, to which the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation and Eurobank EFG dedicate this year's publication in the series "The Museum Cycle", fulfils and serves this dual role by providing a tour of unrivalled beauty, aesthetics and knowledge around the masterpieces of ancient Greek art. The chariot race between Pelops and Oenomaus, the winged Victory of Paionios and the Praxiteles Hermes are just a few of its masterpieces, now archetypal symbols of the history of sculpture, that bring to life and express concepts, ideas and ideals, such as that of moderation, noble rivalry, ecumenism and fair play, which the fast, anxious pace of modern life frequently displaces and leaves behind.

The cultural heritage of a place is not limited to the monumental remains of a glorious past, but also includes the natural environment that hosts them. The sacred site of Olympia suffered a cruel blow in 2007, as did all of humanity, in a symbolic way. But through the power of cooperation and solidarity, it has been regenerated. The task of reforesting the hills around the Museum of Ancient Olympia was a challenge, a great wager that became reality, owing to the discerning choices of the Ministry of Culture and to the funding provided by the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation and Eurobank EFG.

Warm thanks and congratulations are due to all those who contributed to creating this book. Special mention must be made of its author, archaeologist Georgia E. Hatzi who, in the pages of this book, has shared her scholarly knowledge with us and left the imprint of her human sensibility.

MARIANNA J. LATSIS

**Z**EUS AND PHIDIAS, Hermes and Praxiteles, Nike and Paionios, Ganymede, Apollo, Heracles and Athena, Pelops and Oenomaus, Lapiths and Centaurs, Giants and gods, anonymous and eponymous artists and radiant Olympic victors all write the history of the great sanctuary of Olympia. They prospered and declined; they plunged into absolute oblivion and were then brought triumphantly to light again by the archaeologist's spade, thereby confirming the testimony of Pausanias and the victory odes of Pindar.

The archaeological investigation of the sanctuary of Zeus by the German Archaeological Institute revealed the visible part of the history of Olympia and the Olympic Games to the scholarly community. It unearthed monuments and votive offerings, displayed the finds in the historic Syngreion Museum, and soon this work done in the late 19th-century was published. The publicity for the monuments in the sacred precinct of the Altis and, above all, the amazing multitude of mainly bronze but also other dedications to Zeus, the lord of the sanctuary, constituted an invaluable contribution to scholarship and humanity.

This publication – four years after the re-establishment of the Olympia Museums, which was a major project carried out by the Ephorate and other colleagues, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, within the context of Greece's preparations for the 2004 Olympic Games – endeavours to offer the broad public a panorama of the treasures of Olympia, essentially the dedications by people and cities to its celebrated sanctuary. This book features some of the most representative works of art in the Archaeological Museum, some from the exhibition in the Old Museum, now the Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympic Games, as well as others from the cornucopia of its storerooms, and especially its armoury, which is unique in the world in the wealth of its votive offerings.

The proposal by Mr Vangelis Chronis, General Director of the Latsis Group, to the undersigned to write the text for this book about the Archaeological Museum of Olympia – the tenth in the series "The Museum Cycle" published by the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation and EFG Eurobank Ergasias – came just a few months after I had taken up my duties as Ephor at the Ephorate of Antiquities in Olympia, which I have served faithfully as curator of antiquities since 1980. It coincided with the autonomy of the Ephorate and my undertaking the responsibility and care exclusively for the monuments and the antiquities of the Prefecture of Ileia. The text was written during the period that followed the great devastation inflicted by the wildfires that raged through Ileia and the natural landscape of Olympia in August of 2007. Its publication pays dual homage to the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation: on the one hand for its on-going contribution, through its publications, to the widespread promotion of Greek museums and archaeological sites, and on the other, as a minimum tribute to its beneficence through the sponsorships and donations with which it has supported the recovery of Ileia and the restoration of Olympia.

Thanks are addressed to Mrs Marianna Latsis for her inspired public benefit activity, owing to which Olympia and the precious exhibits of its Museums are being publicised through this elegant, artistic book, in what one might call a honorific coincidence, a year and more after the disaster it suffered.

To the General Director of the Latsis Group, Mr Vangelis Chronis, for his undiminished interest and contribution, with particular sensitivity and quality, on all levels. To all those who contributed to the aesthetically superb publication, with the experienced and professional coordination of publisher Mrs Eirini Louvrou of OLKOS Publishers, to Mr Dimitris Kalokyris, who supplied his own personal viewpoint and aesthetics to the general appearance of the book, to the artistic photographers Messrs Socratis Mavrommatis and Giorgos Fafalis for their careful photographic rendering of the museum artefacts, and to the photographer and associate of the Ephorate, Mr Petros Konstantopoulos, without leaving out the unseen contributors in the studio of Mr. Dionysios Plessas for their tireless contribution to the final result and to Lilia Psarrou and Judy Giannakopoulou for the English translation of my texts, as well as to Mr Dimitris Kadianakis for his excellent printing.

And finally I would like to express warm thanks to my colleagues and associates at the Ephorate of Antiquities in Olympia, to Mr. Kostas Nikolentzos for his multiple contribution; to colleagues Stavroula Giannouli, Sotiris Lambropoulos and Panagiotis Moutzouridis who, together with our conservators Giorgos Dres, Panagiotis Kalpakos, Theone Matsouka, Olga Petropoulou and Socrates Christopoulos, assisted the photography work and settled many issues of a practical nature; to Olympia Vikatou for her indirect but essential help who, while this book was being written, shouldered the task of coordinating other colleagues in reforesting the stricken Olympian landscape. Thanks also to emeritus professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at the University of Athens, Georgios Korres, for his valuable contribution. Finally, and in particular, I would like to thank Aiki Moustaka, professor of Classical Archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and dear friend, for the constructive discussions that resulted from her long experience and knowledge of issues related to Olympia.

GEORGIA E. HATZI



## THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF OLYMPIA

The famous Sanctuary. The history of the excavations

*"O Mother of contests, crowned with wreaths of gold, Olympia, queen of truth!"*

PINDAR, *Olympian VII.1-5*

(For Alcimelon of Aegina, Winner in the boys' wrestling match, 460 B.C.)

**T**HE HOLY ALTIS. Sanctuary of Zeus Most High, father of gods and men, was created in an advantageous position, blessed by the gods, endowed by nature and established by a rich mythological tradition. The hilly, serene, and remarkably fertile valley between the legendary Alpheus and its tributary, the Cladeus, easily accessible from the mountainous interior via the great river, navigable during antiquity, with an outlet to the Ionian coast, never contained a town.

Vassileios Leonardos, Ephor of Antiquities in Olympia in 1887, replacing the previous ephor Konstantinos Dimitriadis, gave an exquisite description of the region and the landscape:

*"The illustrious valley, through the nature of the senses, flooded the soul with profound peace and happiness... Vegetation of all sorts and exuberant to the point of decadence left not a single spot of ground uncovered... Here the tame as well as the curling wild olive, the athletes' sweet ambition, flourished along with the palm tree, the luxuriant plane tree and the towering white poplar Heracles brought back from the Acheron River, the pear tree, hence the old name of Pelops' island... There thickets of heather and strawberry trees with their clusters of red fruits, and brambles, and oleanders, and anemones, and frogs and a great many poppies... and Dionysus' tame vine is everywhere. There too are a variety of irises and the sky-gold crocus, and the blond narcissus, yellow grains, and cercis siliquastrum, which Europeans call the Judas Tree, with its profusion of deep red flowers that make their appearance with the arrival of spring... The valley of Olympia with its surrounding nature is ambrosia... Under the wan glow of the silver disk the famous ruins next to the radiant sweet waters of the two rivers take on a more perfect shape, imagination fills in the blanks, thousands of statues stand reconstituted, the smoke from the sacrificed oxen rises high towards the sky, beautiful and*



*The Archaeological Museum of Olympia. View from the SW.*

vigorous bodies compete, the fearful uproar of the chariots sounds, countless pilgrims appear, acclaims and epinicia ring out, and the glorious image of that ancient festival is perfectly reproduced.”

V. LEONARDOS, *Olympia*, Athens: 1901, Introduction

Although geographically isolated in that corner of the Western Peloponnese, Olympia stood out historically as the most important Panhellenic religious, political and athletic centre of the Ancient Greek world. It was a valued meeting place for all Greeks, whether inhabitants of metropolitan Greece, of the East or of the West, a universal place and the vehicle for the ideals that emerged from the Olympic Games, which took place uninterruptedly over more than a millennium. According to Gottfried Gruben, if Olympian Zeus, the ruler of the protector-deities of the cities, were not worshipped here, and had the established means of worship not been the athletic contest, the overriding national passion of the Greeks, this remote sanctuary would never have enjoyed the singular privilege of representing the whole of Hellenism that it has possessed since the 6th century.

The sanctuary of Olympia and the most celebrated of the ancient athletic contests, the Olympics, were preserved in historical memory through “Elis”, Volumes V and VI, in the *Description of Greece*, the unique text left behind by the geographer and traveller Pausanias, the product of his journey through Greece during the 2nd century AD. The precious information on the holy Altis and its buildings, on the athletic competitions, on the Olympic victors—based on authentic details inscribed on their pedestals, on the victors’ statues created by the great sculptors of antiquity, on the altars, which, according to his record, numbered over 70, as well as on the many and various votive buildings and works of art—as well as the land’s wealth of legends and traditions, constituted the most important source of knowledge, the starting point for any investigation, identification and discovery of Olympia from the Middle Ages up to



the 19th century. The competitive spirit, the prowess, the performance and the glory of the Olympic victors are best memorialized by the 14 Olympian Odes, written by the supreme Greek lyricist Pindar, which constitute the highest tribute to Olympia and the Games, imbued with the ethos and the heroic lyricism of the 5th cent. BC.

<p>Ἄριστον μὲν ὄδωρ, ὃ δὲ χρυσοῦς αἰθόμενον πῦρ          ὅτε διαπράττει νυκτὶ μνημόροιο ἔξοχα πλοῦτου</p> <p style="text-align: center;">εἰ δ' ἀέθλια μῦθον          ἔλθεα, φέρον ἥτορ,          μηκέτ' ἄλλοιο σάσπει          ἄλλο θαυματούτερον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ φαιεννῶν ἀστέρων ἔρημας          δεῖ αἰθέρος,          μήδ' Ὀλυμπίας ἀγῶνα φέρετρον αἰθέροισεν...</p>	<p>Best is Water of all, and Gold as a flaming fire          in the night shineth eminent amid lordly wealth,          but if of prizes in the games thou art fain,          O my soul, to tell, then,          as for no bright star more quickening          than the sun must thou search          in the void firmament by day,          so neither shall we find any games greater          than the Olympic wherof to utter our voice...</p>
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*For Heta of Syracuse, Winner in The Horse-Race, Sir Richard Francis Burton, 1821-1890 (Translator)*

All traces of Olympia were lost from the Middle Ages to the beginning of the Modern Age, since flooding from both rivers and constant landslides from the Kronion Hill buried the sanctuary under masses of accumulated layers of earth approximately 4-5 metres high. Until the 15th century, the region is not mentioned in any written testimony. A manuscript by an anonymous 14th century writer names the region "Serbia" or "Serbiana". A 1516 Venetian map refers to the valley as "Antilalos" or "Antilalo" (Echo) from the thunder echoing among the surrounding hills, in the same way that past visitors to the Echo Stoa would hear sound repeated seven times. In 1688, the *Topographia Italiae* refers to Olympia for the first time using the common name Langanico (valley or scrub).

With Pausanias as a guide, in the spirit of the general quest for Ancient Greece, 18th century Western intellectual travellers and antiquarians persistently sought to discover Olympia and its sanctuary that was so famous during antiquity. In 1725, first the French Benedictine monk Bernard de Montfaucon wrote a letter to the antiquarian Cardinal Quirini in which he congratulated him on his appointment as Bishop of Corfu and his voyage to Greece, and urged him to excavate Olympia. Almost forty years later, in 1766, the English theologian and classicist R. Chandler of Oxford, visited Olympia, and identified the confluence of the Alpheus and Cladeus rivers, the Kronion Hill, the traces of a Byzantine church, and the ruins of the great Doric temple, which was first identified in 1787 as the Temple of Zeus, in the context of the first renderings of the region, executed by the Frenchman L.F.S. Fauvel. In the meantime, in 1767, the German founder of the science of archaeology and ardent exponent of Ancient Hellenism, J.J. Winkelmann, had expressed in his letters the desire to carry out excavations in Olympia with 100 workers, but his vision was to remain unfulfilled, since he was unexpectedly murdered in Trieste a year later.

The year 1788 first saw the publication in the *Atlas Relatif au voyage du jeune Anacharsis* by J. D. Barbié du Bocage of a topographic plan of the Altis by J. J. Barthélemy, based on Pausanias' description. During the first two decades of the 19th century, many antiquarian scholars visited Olympia and reported on their experiences. Among them were: the Frenchmen F.C.H.L. Pouqueville, L.F.S. Fauvel, M. Foucherot, and M.G.F.A. de Choiseul-Gouffier, the Italian S. Scrofanì, the Englishmen W.M. Leake, E. Dodwell, W. Gell, and C.R. Cockerell with the German Carl Haller von Hallenstein, and others. In 1815, Lord John Spencer Stanhope explored the location and associated it with the famous sanctuary. He collaborated with the architect Thomas Allason to publish his conclusions in *Olympia, or Topography illustrative of the Actual State of the Plain of Olympia and the Ruins of the City of Elis* (London: 1824).

In 1821, the efforts of the German Sickler to gather monies to excavate Olympia were rendered fruitless by the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence. The idea of discovering Olympia was, of course, not unrelated to the antiquities fervour that had taken hold during that era, but it gradually



*Passage of the Alpheus near Phrisa. Engraving from E. Dodwell's A Classical and Topographic Tour through Greece, vol. II, London 1819.*

became a facet of the Romantic Movement and the movement for national self-determination, as well as of Philhellenism. Although in 1806, Dodwell and Gell had carried out some small excavation digs at the Temple of Zeus, the first excavation of the Altis' emblematic monument was undertaken on April 28, 1829 by a group of scientists and artists belonging to the Morea Scientific Expedition (*Expédition scientifique de Morée*), who after the naval battle of Navarino, had accompanied the French troops of General N. J. Maison.

The scientific group at Olympia was headed by the French architect Abel Blouet. During the brief excavation process, which lasted approximately six weeks and was terminated by a decree of the Governor of the Greek State, Ioannis Kapodistrias, the Temple of Zeus was uncovered and documented for the first time. The finds of this exploration included several fragments from the Temple's metopes, primarily depictions of Heracles' Labours, the Stymphalian Birds, the Nemean Lion and the Cretan Bull, which were transported to Paris and still remain in the Louvre Museum. The results of the Expedition's work were published in Guillaume-Abel Blouet's outstanding *Expédition scientifique de Morée, ordonnée par le gouvernement français*, Vol. I (Paris: 1851).

Approximately half a century passed from that brief French excavation before the dream of unearthing the entire sanctuary of Olympia was realized. The project's visionary pioneer was the German Ernst Curtius, a professor at the University of Berlin and tutor to the crown prince and later Emperor Frederick III. Curtius first visited Olympia on May 15, 1858. During his second trip in 1840, he conceived the idea of beginning to excavate in Olympia. He gave an enthusiastic lecture in 1852 at the Music Academy of Berlin, presenting a map of Olympia marked with the hypothetical location of its monuments, based on Pausanias' description; this was very positively received and the heir to the Prussian throne was persuaded to have Prussia undertake the excavation (*Olympia. Ein Vortrag im wissenschaftlichen Vereine zu Berlin am 10. Januar*, Berlin: 1852). The ensuing excavations naturally



*The valley of Olympia called "Antilao". Engraving by Thomas Allason from Lord J. Spenser Stanhope's Olympia, or Topography Illustrative of the Actual State of the Plain of Olympia and the Ruins of the City of Elis, London 1824.*

brought about changes to Curtius' map, but they confirmed his unshakeable conviction that the monuments of Olympia needed to be explored. Curtius, influenced by Romanticism, as well as Scientific Rationalism, considered Olympia "holy ground" and the excavation of the Temple of Zeus a "patriotic act", in the sense that the German nation, just like the ancient Greeks, could discover their unity in Olympia, after the 1855 Crimean War and the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War, both of which had delayed the hectic preparations for the greatly anticipated excavation project.

While the German-Greek negotiations regarding the excavation of Olympia were taking place, Heinrich Schliemann offered, in 1875, to take up the project at his own personal expense, with all the finds remaining in Greece, and to build a Museum in Olympia as well. The Greek government did not accept his proposal, and suggested he turn his attention to Mycenae instead.

Finally, on April 25, 1874 a Treaty between Greece and Germany was concluded and signed in Athens, according to which "The Governments of the Hellenic Kingdom and the German Empire, desiring to attempt joint archaeological excavations on the soil of Ancient Olympia in Greece, and having decided to enter into a Treaty, have agreed..." The treaty was signed by the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Deligiannis, the General Ephor of Antiquities P. Eustratiades, the German Ambassador E. von Wagner, and Curtius.

The text of this historic Treaty ultimately consisted of eleven articles. It was passed by the Hellenic Parliament on October 30, 1875 and ratified by law (Law 641/12 November 1875). One of the terms stated that all the finds unearthed by the excavation would constitute the property of the Greek State, while Germany would only have the right to publish the finds and the excavation results in scholarly journals. Additionally, finding itself under extreme political pressure, the Greek government consented to a term by which the German State and the museums of Berlin would take possession of any "duplicates" or "other multiple copies" of finds, which went beyond the right to create casts and copies of all items that had been provided for in the agreement.

The treaty signed between the two countries constituted a prototype, which was later followed by other foreign archaeological missions to Greece, such as the French School of Archaeology (*École Française d'Athènes*) for the excavation of Delphi.



Official documents from the late 19th century concerned with the beginning of excavations in Olympia, the discovery of Praxiteles' statue of Hermes, the concession of "duplicate or other multiple copies" of finds to the German State, and the authorization to erect the first Archaeological Museum in Olympia with a donation from Andreas Syngros.



*Panoramic view of the Kronion Hill and the valley of the sanctuary of Zeus during the 1876/77 excavation period; Remmels Brothers photograph.*

The German State approved a very generous outlay for the first systematic excavation of Olympia, which began on 22 September 1875 and continued until 8 March 1881; this was greatly to Greece's advantage, since all finds would remain in that country's possession. The idiosyncratic administration of the excavation project was assumed by a Directorate, based in Berlin, and consisted of E. Curtis, F. Adler a professor of architecture, and a representative of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Berlin set the guidelines, and would receive weekly reports regarding the progress of the excavation, the finds, as well as the plans that were drawn up. At the end of each excavation period, the Directorate would visit Olympia to observe the progress of the undertaking, and would stay at the German excavation's house on Drouva Hill.

Remarkable archaeologists and architects collaborated in Olympia, such as G. Hirschfeld, A. Bötticher, R. Weil, E. Streichert, C. Steinbrecht, G. Treu, R. Bohn, W. Dörpfeld, R. Borrmann, A. Furtwängler, K. Pargold, P. Graef, and F. Gräber, creating a traditional relationship between the two special fields.

As regards the Greek side, Athanasios Dimitriades was assigned as commissioner-overseer of the excavations at Olympia. During the period 1875–1878, he kept a detailed excavation diary and put together an index of archaeological objects. He was succeeded in the post by his brother Konstantinos, who remained at Olympia as the permanent Ephor of Peloponnesian Antiquities until he was transferred to the Cyclades Islands in 1887. Hirschfeld translated the Dimitriades brothers' index into German, but the original was lost. The brothers' extant diary constitutes a source of valuable information on the early excavation period, the prevailing conditions and difficulties, and contains various facts about archaeological sites outside of Olympia, economic and social conditions, standards of living, hiring and remunerating the excavation workers, as well as information on the brothers' relationships with the Germans and the local residents. In his book on Olympia, Leonardos described the two as 'toiling with appropriate knowledge and admirable zeal for science and the Service'.

Taking place under frequently unfavourable weather conditions, when the region was struck by typhus and malaria, and faced with extraordinary technical difficulties to overcome, the six excavation periods at Olympia (old excavation) were indeed a colossal venture, employing a maximum number of 450 workers, and using 50 carts—originally operated manually and later horse-drawn (1879–1880). From 1875 to 1881, almost all the important monuments in the Altis were uncovered (Temple of Zeus, Heraion, Metroon, Prytaneion, Bouleuterion, Palaestra, Gymnasium, Philippeion, Pelopion, Nymphaion, stoas, treasuries and Stadium). It was during this period that the sanctuary's priceless archaeological treasures came to light, amongst them the pedimental sculptures and the metopes of the Temple of Zeus, as well as



Some of the pioneering excavators of the sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia. The visionary Ernst Curtius (1814–1896), the architect Friedrich Adler (1827–1908), the archaeologist Adolf Furtwängler (1853–1907) and the architect and archaeologist Wilhelm Dörpfeld (1853–1940).



the Nike of Paionios in 1875–1876, the Hermes of Praxiteles in 1877 (the right hand and head of Dionysus were discovered during the period 1879–1880), the limestone head depicting either Hera or a sphinx, and, in 1878, the head of Zeus from the terracotta group of Zeus and Ganymede.

Although the expectation of discovering bronze statues, based on Pausanias' testimony, was not fulfilled during the excavation, the discovery of sculptures, inscriptions and numerous votive offerings in the sanctuary gave researchers a splendid opportunity to re-examine Olympia's history and importance.

In 1881, a six-member committee consisting of P. Eustratiades, General Ephor of Antiquities, E. Kastrochis, a professor of the University of Athens, K. Mylonas, G. Treu, K. Purgold, and R. Bormann directed its attention to applying article 6 of the German-Greek treaty, according to which the Greek State ceded to the German State finds of duplicates or copies. The selection and transportation of the antiquities to the museums of Berlin in accordance with the treaty sealed the collaboration and the trust between both sides.

This "heroic" excavation period constitutes a milestone in the history of systematic archaeological research in Greece, since its established purpose was pure knowledge and not simply procuring and taking custody of museum objects. During this investigation, new scientific methods, very advanced for the time, were first applied, while exemplary use was made of plans and of photography, which, also for the first time, established itself as a means of documenting archaeological evidence. The use of stratigraphy and its ensuing results rendered it a tool for the science of archaeology, while the researchers' basic concern was to classify and categorize the finds, particularly the miscellaneous items, as well as to create casts.

The contribution of Adolf Furtwängler, the archaeologist and associate director of the excavations during the 1878–1879 period was decisive; in Volume Four of his work *Ergebnisse* ("Die Bronzen und die übrigen kleineren Funde von Olympia") he classified various types of bronze figurines, weapons and vessels, and, through typological observations and comparisons with finds from other sites, arrived at reliable dates and demonstrated the relationship of the sanctuary with East and West.

The results of the early excavation of Olympia were published sixteen years after the end of the excavation by Curtius and Adler in a monumental five-volume edition entitled *Olympia. Die Ergebnisse der von dem Deutschen Reich veranstalteten Ausgrabungen, 1890–1897*. This publication was worthy of the importance of the early excavation of Olympia and has been a fundamental text for generations of archaeologists and historians. Another five-volume publication entitled *Die Ausgrabungen zu Olympia, 1876–1881*, on the topography and history of Ancient Olympia, the architectural monuments, the stone and clay sculptures, the bronze finds and the inscriptions included many photographs by the Romaidis brothers.



*Large group of workers during the excavation of the Temple of Zeus (1875/76); Romaidis Brothers photograph.*

Konstantinos, Aristotelis and Dimitrios Romaidis who were from Konitsa in Epirus, opened a photography studio in Bucharest in 1868, and then in Ioannina under the name "Romaidai Brothers". In 1875, they moved to Patras and ran a studio in Georgiou Square until August 1876. A short while before they left the city, the newly established (1875) German Archaeological Institute at Athens (DAI) invited them to photograph the excavations at Olympia. This was the photographers' first encounter with archaeological photography. In September 1876, the "Romaidai" opened their first photography studio in Athens and very quickly became famous in Athenian circles for the technique and aesthetic perfection of their work. They were among the most important photographers of the last two decades of the 19th century, and created an enormous archive on Greek antiquities, which, unfortunately, has not survived. They gradually became the exclusive photographers of the Archaeological Society at Athens, as well as of the foreign archaeological schools in Greece. In 1878, during the World's Fair in Paris, the brothers exhibited an album with photographs from Schliemann's excavations at Mycenae, as well as landscapes from Olympia.

The first excavation period at Olympia laid the foundation for further exploration of the Altis, especially research into the early years of the sanctuary's operation. This was followed by the excavations of the architect and archaeologist W. Dörpfeld, an insightful student of the history of Architecture, Topography, and Metrology. His excavation work at Olympia (1906–1909, 1921–1925 and 1927–1929) was fundamental to the methodology of prehistoric archaeological research and centred on issues regarding the sanctuary during the Bronze Age. The discovery of the prehistoric apsidal dwellings in the Altis constituted a unique find for a Greek sanctuary. The results of Dörpfeld's research, who at the age of 25 had assumed the technical management of the excavation, were published in his two-volume work *Alt-Olympia*, 1955, which fuelled further research and the study of certain of his scientific conclusions by later scholars.

The new excavation period at Olympia (1956–1966) originally sought to complete the unearthing of the monuments located by the German excavations. Its main purpose was to reveal the athletic installations and the Stadium in particular. With the Olympic Games taking place in Berlin in 1956, the



*The Heraion during the first excavations (1877/78); Roméidis Brothers photograph.*

resumption of the excavations at Olympia was used by the Nazi regime's propaganda machine, but this was the last time Olympia was linked to politics. The excavation directors were originally Armin von Gerkan (Fall 1956), R. Hampe and U. Jantzen (Spring 1957). The winter excavation period 1957–1958 saw Emil Kunze become director. He collaborated with the architect H. Schleif until 1942 and, after the war, with the archaeologist and architect A. Mallwitz.

The excavation of the Stadium of Olympia, impressive in terms of its scope, the number of workers and the use of technical means, began under Kunze's direction. Important finds were discovered in numerous Geometric and early Classical Age depository wells. Unique votive offerings from the Late Archaic and Early Classical Age, such as the exquisite large-scale terracotta statues, were also discovered. In Kunze's scientific research, his studies of defensive armaments in particular, and of the bronze finds in general, held pride of place; he recorded the first 2,000 finds himself. The publication of the excavation findings from Olympia by the German Archaeological Institute in the series *Olympia Bericht* from 1956 on, and *Olympische Forschungen* from 1944 on, places the German excavation of Olympia among the very few, where finds in every category, with very few exceptions, were systematically published.

World War II brought the work to an end in 1942; it resumed at a normal pace in 1952. The excavation of the Stadium continued (1952–1954) and the Leonidaion was completely unearthed. During the four-year period 1954–1958, an extensive exploration was made of the Byzantine church and the architectural remains of Pheidias' Workshop—restored by Mallwitz—and its very important finds.

The technically difficult work of clearing away the earth from the Stadium was completed in 1962. The Stadium's complete revelation and restoration to its original form constituted an event of enormous historical impact and significance for Greece and humanity alike. It is noteworthy that in the period from 1875 on, earth was removed from a total area of 150,000 m<sup>2</sup>, while a total of 600,000 m<sup>3</sup> were displaced in the area of the Altis, which was under exploration. Starting in 1975, the excavation work of the German Archaeological Institute at Athens continued under the supervision of the local Ephorate of Antiquities. During the period 1972–1984, under Mallwitz's management, the emphasis was placed on exploring the SE area of the sanctuary, while the foundations were created for the later excavations of the Roman





*The excavation of the Stadium of Olympia, 1938.*



*Visitors to the southern wing of the Temple of Zeus, 1888.*



*Visitors inside the Early Christian Basilica (Workshop of Phidias), April 1891. W. Dörpfeld is second from the left.*



*The discovery of a bronze shield in a depository well inside the Stadium, 1960.*



*Reconstruction work on the Heronion, 1972.*



*View of the first Archaeological Museum of Olympia (the Syncretion) from the west (1888), and its donor, the national benefactor Andreas Syngros (1830-1899).*

structures in the SW section, which included the detailed examination of the athletes' clubhouse, performed under the direction of U. Sinn.

During the twenty-year period 1984-2004, the excavations were managed by the current honorary President of the DAI, Helmut Kyrieleis and the architect Klaus Herrmann. The purpose of the excavation work was to investigate the early years of the sanctuary's operation and the beginnings of worship, the presence of Olympia during the Imperial Roman era and Later Antiquity, as well as the exploration of the Cladeus River embankment, which led to extremely interesting results. In 2004, the restoration of the NW column of the peristasis of the Temple of Zeus was completed, while in spring 2005, the efforts to partially restore the Philippeion were completed. These projects constituted a continuation of the earlier *Altis* restoration process (Palaestra, the Stadium's Krypte stoa, the buildings on the terrace of the Treasuries, Heraion) and strikingly altered the image of the sanctuary's monuments.

Starting in 2006, the German Archaeological Institute's excavation project continued under a new director.

#### *Museum Trilogy. History of the Museums and the Exhibitions*

During a period lasting well over 150 years, starting in 1875, the year the first excavation period of the early German excavations began, up to the present, the increased excavations exploring the sanctuary of Olympia and the new finds, the gradual administrative changes to the structure of the Archaeological Service and the local Ephorate of Antiquities, and, primarily, the most recent watershed event that was Greece's preparations to host the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, are recorded as a single uninterrupted historical timeline in the site's three archaeological museums; their inauguration on March 24, 2004 "inaugurated" Olympia's new era both literally and metaphorically.

The discovery of the sanctuary of Zeus and the abundant precious finds that came to light during the first period of the excavations by the German Archaeological Institute (1875-1881) were undoubtedly a historical happenstance that, as the years went by, shaped the museum status of Olympia. Within the context of the 1854 law that regulated the establishment of museums in the provinces, the period 1885-1887 saw, for the first time, a provincial museum established in the vicinity of an archaeological site to house exclusively the treasures from the renowned sanctuary and from one of the most important systematic excavations to take place in Greece after the modern Greek State was established.

In 1882, the German architect Ernst Ziller had drafted plans for the Museum of Olympia, as revealed by Eustratiades' archive (Archaeological Society). Nevertheless, the final building design was drawn up by Adler, the German architect and innovator who, along with Curtius, set up the five-year



Visitors in the central hall of the first Archaeological Museum of Olympia, 1935.

excavation programme, and by Dörpfeld, who oversaw the project and participated in setting up the exhibition of the finds.

After various design proposals, an elegant and unadorned Neoclassical structure was erected on a hillock NW of the Altis. Standing there imposing and alone, it overlooks the ruins of the sanctuary, the Kronion, the Alpheus and the Cladeus, a true ornament of its era and of the uninhabited, bucolic landscape of Olympia.

A generous donation of 220,000 drachmas from the banker and great national benefactor Andreas Syngros was cited in an 1879 Royal Decree, in which construction of the Museum building was also approved and the Museum given the historic title 'Syngreion'. The architrave bearing the honorary inscription, supported by two Doric columns *in antis*, with capitals modelled on the capitals of the Treasury of the Gelans, is located beneath the gaze of the owl, the tripods and the griffins that characteristically crown the building pediments and serve as acroteria.

The pedimental compositions and the metopes of the Temple of Zeus were housed for the first time in the imposing main hall of the Syngreion with its marvellous carved wooden roof and upper galleries with their beautiful iron railings, in a space as long as the Temple was wide. The Nike of Paionios, flanked by two pedimental compositions, dominated the back of the same hall, while the Praxiteles Hermes was placed in a special hall behind it. The archaeologist Georg Treu and the sculptor Richard Grüttner oversaw the restoration and exhibition of the sculptures, especially the pedimental sculptures. It is to the latter that we also owe the first restoration and reproduction of the statue of Nike (1885).

The many votive offerings in the Altis were placed in the eastern and western wings of the Museum, and entered in the indexes as *sculptures, inscribed stones, bronzes, clay, and various others*. The numerous bronze finds were exhibited in smaller side galleries. At the end of the 19th century, those

considered most important were transferred for security reasons to the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, where the most representative are superbly displayed in one of the museum's renovated wings that opened to the public in 2005.

The marble bust of Ernst Curtius, the man who envisioned the excavations at Olympia, was placed in the vestibule of the Old Museum, along with inscriptions from the sanctuary; the festive unveiling ceremony took place in April 1895, on the 80th anniversary of his birth, one year before his death (July 11, 1896), and before the first Olympic Games in Athens. In Athens, *Asty* and *Acropolis*, both newspapers of the period, reported the event in many publications. Later, in 1954, the marble bust of Curtius was joined by that of Dorpfeld, as the latter had made a decisive contribution to the exploration of Olympia and the antiquities exhibition in the first Museum.

Ephors associated with the Syngreion, apart from the Dimitriades brothers, were, from 1887, Vassileios Leonardos, who published his valuable book *Olympia* (1901), and D. S. Stavropoulos in 1895. In 1901, K. Kourouniotis assumed the responsibilities of Ephor; he published a guide to Olympia and the excavations with an index of the antiquities (1904). In 1909, the duties of Ephor were assumed by A. Skias, and during the period 1911–1914, N. Kyparissis, the Ephor of Antiquities, was appointed curator; he also published his own guide to the Museum and the sanctuary (1954). During the period 1956–1958, N. Nerantzoulis was Ephor; he was followed by I. Miliadis (1958–1940). Later, I. Kondis (1940–1946) served as curator, to be followed by N. Zapheiropoulos (1946–1952), and then N. Yalouris. During Yalouris' term (1952–1966), the foundations for the New Archaeological Museum were laid, and the work to re-exhibit the antiquities began.

The establishment and operation of the first Archaeological Museum in Olympia was of great benefit to the region's development. Because of the important results of the excavations and the global publicity resulting from the discovery of the sanctuary of Zeus, within the framework of the efforts to revive the Olympic Games and bring them to Athens, the Piraeus - Athens - Peloponnese Railway (SPAP) line was extended to Olympia in 1891. A stationhouse was built in Olympia, its facade in the neoclassical style, decorated with Corinthian columns. Additionally, the SPAP hotel, luxurious for its time, which from then on "accompanied" the Syngreion Museum of Olympia, was built immediately to its west. Over time many dignitaries and other visitors were to stay there. Indeed, it is estimated that by the end of the 19th century, the Altis and the Archaeological Museum of Olympia had been visited by over 11,000 foreign visitors and their number was constantly increasing. After the destructive earthquakes of 1955, the Syngreion suffered many damages. In the meantime, the progress of the excavations in the Altis, and the new finds that gradually came to light made it imperative that a new larger Museum be constructed, which corresponded to the post-war era's archaeological circumstances and requirements.

At the end of the 1930s, in conjunction with the continued operation of the Old Museum, work began on the foundations of the New Archaeological Museum in the valley NW of the Kronion Hill. The building, completed in the decade 1960–1970, was based on a proposal by the architect Patroklos Karantinos, in accordance with the prevailing architectural style of the period, which was also adhered to in the design and construction of other Greek museums. The plan of the museum followed the same rectangular layout as the Syngreion. In addition to a vestibule, it contained a large central hall destined for the sculptures from the Temple of Zeus, around which nine other exhibition galleries were arranged in a Π-shape. The trapezoid configuration of the northern side, set aside for the statue of Nike, and the hall for the Hermes, which appeared as a separate space in the NE corner of the building, were distinct in the rectangular shape of the floor plan.

The re-exhibition, which was exceptional for the period, of the many older and more recent offerings from the sanctuary, organized in thematic and chronological order in the new Archaeological Museum of Olympia, which also contained a hall with exhibits representative of the Olympic Games, was the result of an admirable collaboration between a staff of notable archaeologists and technicians under the direct supervision of the then Ephor, and later Inspector General of Antiquities, Nikolaos Yalouris. The task of supplementing, restoring and re-exhibiting the pedimental and many other sculptures was undertaken by the remarkable sculptor Stelios Triantis.



*The historic SPAF hotel and, in the background, the Old Museum of Olympia (the Syntrion) from the SW, 1900.*

Starting in the year of the Munich Olympic Games (1972), the New Museum of Olympia was completely ready with organized storage facilities, conservation workshops, Chalcotheke and offices housing the Ephorate administration, and was receiving visitors. At the same time, beginning in 1974, the work to re-exhibit the sculptures from the Temple of Zeus in the main hall was ongoing. The antiquities were gradually transferred there to have newly discovered fragments affixed, to be reassembled with new joints of more durable material, and to have plaster casts made for teaching purposes.

During the final three months of 1975 the task of transporting the statue of Hermes from the Old to the New Archaeological Museum was completed. After what was then a revolutionary radiograph was taken of the statue, it was placed on a new base, and Triantis replaced the plaster lower legs with new ones he had sculpted, while the badly made plaster hand of Dionysus was removed.

In 1982, the new building of the Archaeological Museum of Olympia officially opened its doors to the public, after the new exhibition arrangement in the Hall of the Pediments was completed. Twelve years later, in the fall of 1994, the Nike of Paionios was newly exhibited in its own gallery. Triantis worked on it as a special courtesy, since, although officially retired during that period, he headed a specialized team of marble artisans. The exquisite winged sculpture was once again restored to its pedestal, additional fragments were added, titanium rods were used to hold it together, and it was divested of all plaster restorations, while most importantly it acquired an innovative accredited support system that ensures its protection from the region's well-known seismic activity.

Preparations in Greece, as well as in Olympia to welcome the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens resulted in important projects taking place to draw attention to the sanctuary of Zeus and certain key areas of the contemporary town's growing tourism industry. However, the major project and reward was the radical renovation of the Museums of Olympia, which were literally re-established, according to the principles decreed by contemporary museology. The project took over four years of feverish preparations, until March 24, 2004 when Olympia's Museum Trilogy was inaugurated: the Archaeological Museum, the



*The sculptor Stelios Triantis in the Hall of the Pediments of the Archaeological Museum of Olympia in the midst of the task of re-exhibiting the sculptures from the Temple of Zeus, 1975.*

Museum of the History of the Olympic Games in Antiquity (former Old Museum or Syngreion) and the Museum of the History of Excavations in Olympia (Old Ephorate, west of the Syngreion).

In the New Archaeological Museum building, which was renovated with its entire peristyle atrium, the philosophy behind the original exhibition did not change. The exhibition halls were renovated with new tasteful display cases, discreet artificial lighting and colour. The exhibits, organized anew according to the precepts of museology, are now accompanied by extensive explanatory material. A new exhibition hall dedicated to the great sculptor Pheidias was created, while the expansion of the Hermes gallery and its technical innovations show Praxiteles' important sculptural group to the best advantage, as it was placed on a new state-of-the-art anti-seismic base. The old Roman sculpture gallery acquired a tri-partite structure in order to display the Late Classical and Hellenistic Era exhibits, while the last museum gallery, originally dedicated to the Olympic Games, now contains objects from the final years of the sanctuary.

#### *Museum of the History of the Olympic Games in Antiquity*

The Syngreion (Old) Museum of Olympia, after an arduous restoration and rebuilding process, was restored to the centre of attention with its incomparable beauty and grandeur. The Athens Olympic Games were the reason it was chosen to host, for the second time in its long history, exhibits from the sanctuary of Olympia that relate exclusively to the Olympic Games, as well as relevant artefacts originating from the collections of other Greek museums, and related to both the Olympic Games and to other Panhellenic athletic competitions (the Pythian, Nemean, Isthmian and Panathenian Games).

#### *Museum of the History of Excavations in Olympia*

In the context of the re-establishment of the Museums of Olympia, the small, humble one-storey house west of the Syngreion Museum was also justly honoured. Built near the historic SPAP hotel, around the

end of the 1940s, and also known as the old Ephorate, it housed the Greek archaeologists and Ephors who over the years devotedly served Olympia.

The Museum vestibule displays the first model reproducing the sanctuary monuments, which was created under the supervision of the architect H. Schleif and was donated by the German State in 1951. The exhibition then unfolds in the single space that resulted from combining the three rooms of the former residence. The interior structure retained the windows on the south side, as well as the well-constructed fireplace at the end of the hall, another valued memento from a time long gone. A great many mementos from every period, from the first discovery up to and including the systematic exploration of the Sanctuary, are exhibited in wall and table display cases. Documents, photographs, plans, engravings, pages from old lists with the signatures of ephors and excavators, old Syngreion tickets, handwritten visitor comments, the text of the German-Greek treaty, as well as tools and archaeological equipment, all tell the tale of the excavations at Olympia calling forth memories that both teach and move us.

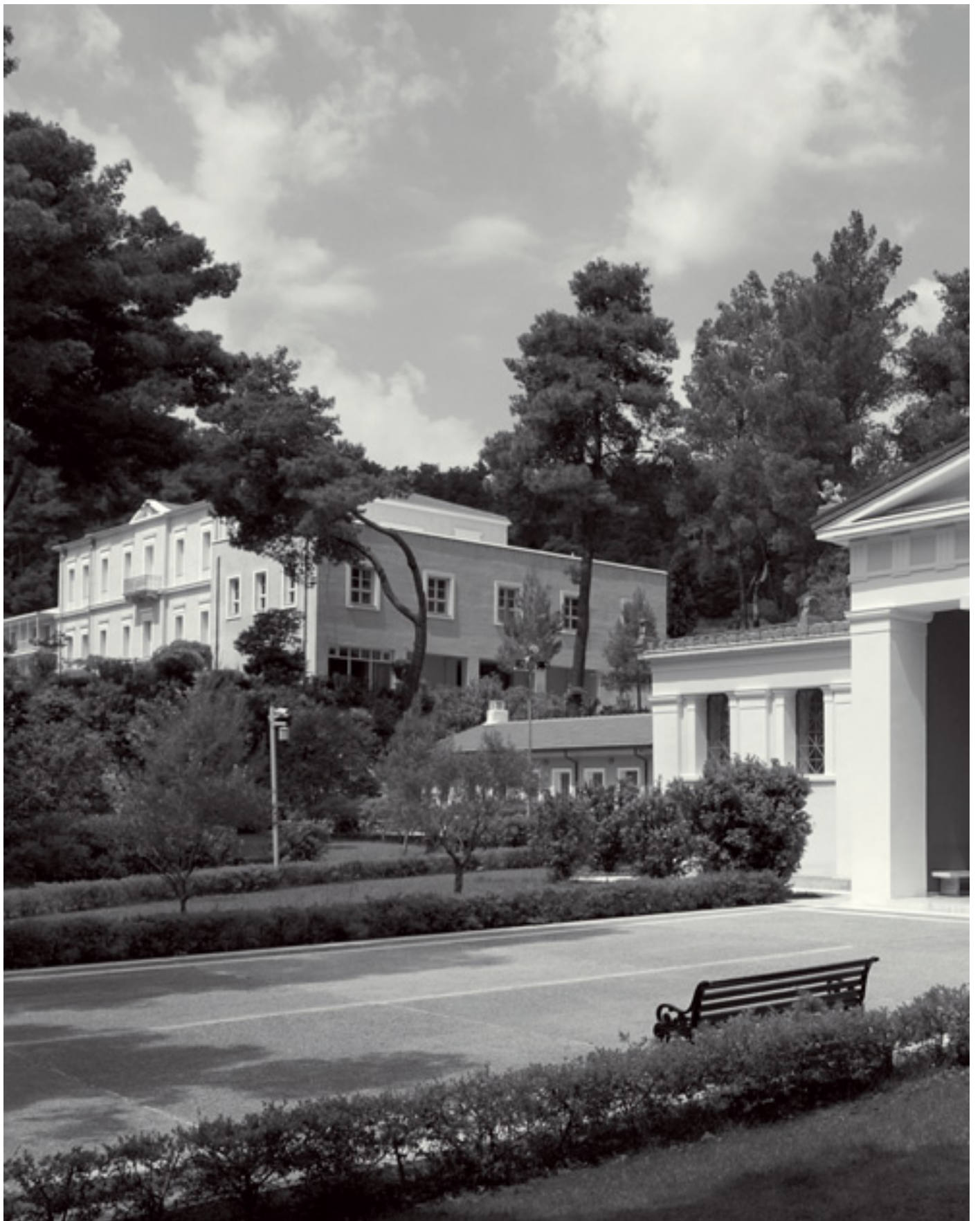
Not only were the Syngreion Museum and the old archaeologists' residence restored and made operational again, but the historic SPAP hotel, which operated continually from the end of the 19th century until 1984, was also fully restored, along with the newer western wing it acquired in the beginning of the 1960s. The imposing old SPAP building, completely renovated and with a new facade, began operating in 2004 as the SPAP Conference Centre of Olympia, and has since then hosted various artistic and cultural activities, while in March 2004 the Ephorate of Antiquities administration was transferred to the newer western wing. After approximately 120 years, the hillock bearing the Syngreion Museum, along with the Old Ephorate and the SPAP building complex is turning into a place of memory as well as the hub of new cultural activities. It can rightly be designated the historical centre of the small town of Olympia.

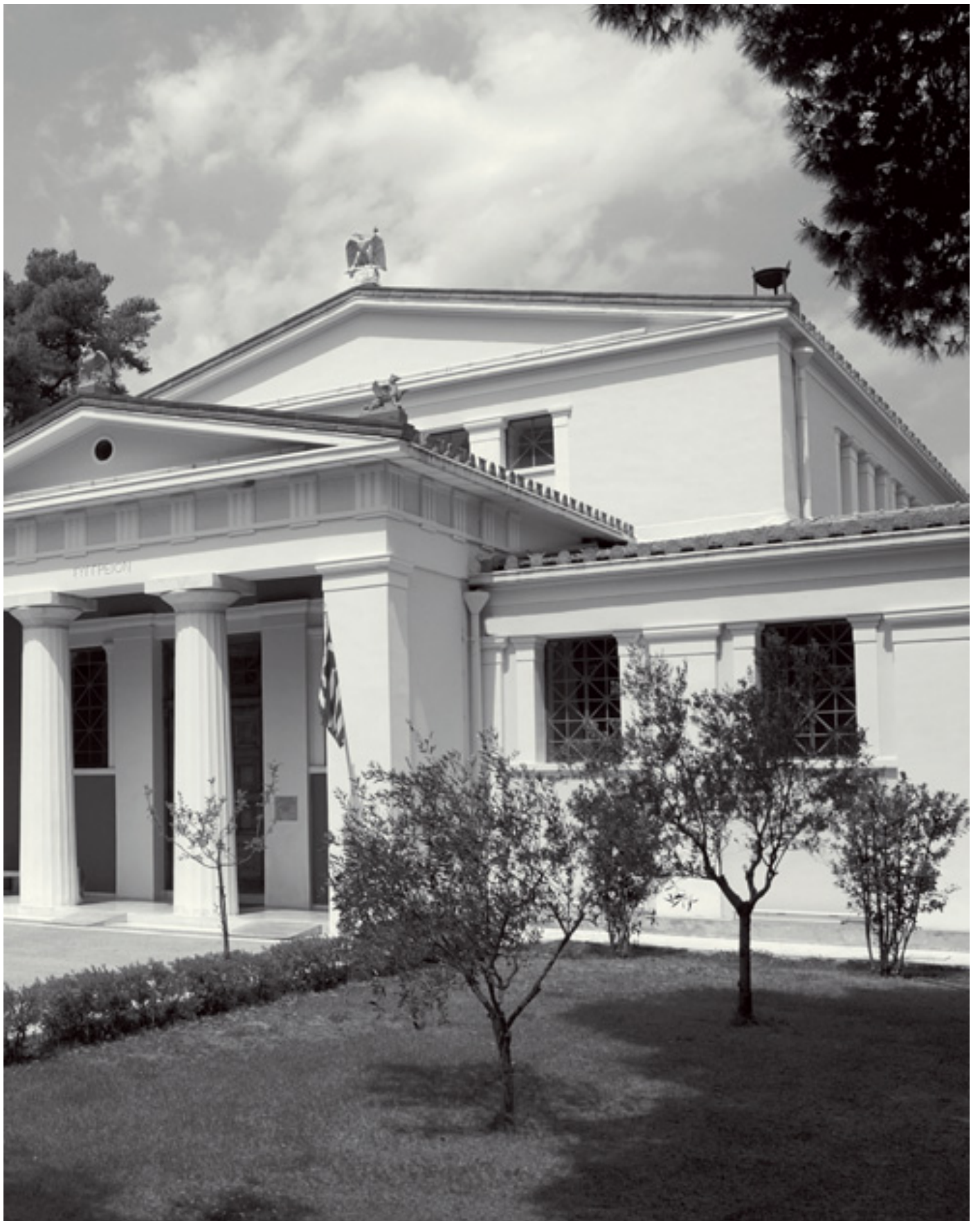
All this restructuring of the museums of Olympia has been crowned by a digital exhibition that introduces a new chapter to museum culture. Located in a specially conceived basement space of the Syngreion, and operating in pilot mode since March 2008, it supports the Museum's archaeological exhibition with a great many digital activities and a small virtual reality theatre.

In the context of amazingly favourable conditions, one of the oldest regional Greek museums, integrally connected with the Panhellenic sanctuary of Zeus and the Games, has been the first to link up with the information society and digital culture. This proves in the most eloquent fashion that museums not only must, but can, keep up with the period's advances in order to become sustainable agents of social progress and civilization, instructional bridges to the past, the present and the future.

DEPICTED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE: *The historic centre of Olympia with the Syngreion (Museum of the History of the Olympic Games in Antiquity), the Old Ephorate (Museum of the History of Excavations in Olympia) and the SPAP Conference Centre.*









## THE BEGINNING

### *Preface to the History of the Altis*

**D**ATA FROM THE EARLIEST EXCAVATIONS IN OLYMPIA, in conjunction with the most recent explorations, show that the site of the later sanctuary had been inhabited during the Late Neolithic Age (4500-5100 BC), despite the lack of any trace of buildings. Typical pottery has been found on the northern slope of the Stadium southeast of the Kronion Hill. Although very little pottery has been found representing the following Early Helladic I period (EH I, 5100-2700 BC), extensive habitation and activity are indicated by the abundant pottery from the Early Helladic II period (EH II, 2700-2250 BC) found on the north embankment of the Stadium, on the site of the Prytaneion, in the sub-foundation strata under the Museum and from the neighbouring region.

Finds from the excavations by W. Dörpfeld (1929), highly significant in terms of documenting the earliest habitation of the site, were supplemented, during the 1987-1994 period, with more recent data and thus the large pre-historic tumulus under the later Pelopion, in the centre of the Altis, has been dated to the EH II period. The absence of burial evidence in the large tumulus of the Pelopion (maximum diameter 27 m) proved that it constituted the most ancient monument in the sacred precinct of Olympia, and also suggested the possibility that it may have been dedicated to the cult of an unknown goddess associated with fertility. Its presence emphasizes the likelihood that some authority had existed as early as the third millennium BC on the later site of the sanctuary. Evidence has been found of sacrifice and a peculiar clay vessel, called *thyriato* (censer), from an "altar" built in the late EH III period on the east side of the tumulus.

During the foundation works of the Archaeological Museum, traces were found of apsidal dwellings from the following Early Helladic III period (EH III, circa 2250 BC) which is represented, *inter alia*, by conic cups, vases with painted red decoration, anchor-shaped objects, a pot in the form of a boat and others. A small grave mound that has been preserved in the basement of the Museum also belongs to a later stage of the same chronological horizon (circa 2050 BC). In the middle of the same period, six apsidal dwellings were built within the north side of the Altis, near the large grave mound. Explorations of the structures and especially of the best preserved one, apsidal dwelling III, which is visible today to the south of the terrace of the treasuries, unearthed pottery with incised and impressed decoration, such as askoi, kantharoi and tools. According to researchers, one noteworthy find was that of an incised grey Minyan vase attributed to foreign vessel types. This group, in conjunction with the brownish black incised ware found on the Altis, is regarded as indicating the place of Olympia on the trade routes over the then navigable Alpheus river and from there to the Ionian coast and beyond, to the Adriatic and the Cetina civilisation along the Dalmatian coast and the southeast coasts of Sicily, Malta and Lower Italy.

The agrarian population who dwelt in the Altis precinct lived in poor rectangular structures in the early Middle Helladic I period (MH I, 2000-1900 BC) that were succeeded by apsidal ones and associated with a number of infant burials in clay jars, some of which are exhibited in the Museum. To build these dwellings, part of the Pelopion hillock was destroyed, but the inhabitants soon abandoned the site, which had perhaps become inhospitable owing to the flooding of the Cladeus.

The broader area of Olympia appears to have been densely inhabited during the Late Bronze Age as well, known as the Late Helladic or Mycenaean period (LH I, 1600-1100 BC). During the LH I and IIB

*Clay and bronze zoomorphic votive figurines. These were the most common and most numerous offerings made by the faithful to the Altis, especially during the 8th cent. BC. Most of them came from the so-called "ash layer" of the great altar of Zeus.*

periods (1600-1400 BC), regions south of the Alpheus became active, and during the following period (LH IIIA1 (1400-1500)), when the palace centres of the Argolid and neighbouring Messenia flourished, there is no similar evidence for lowland Elis that was blessed by the gods (Homer calls it "gracious"). Despite the fact that there were no palaces in the cities of Elis and Pisa, the rivers Peneius and Alpheus, as well as the Cladeus, favoured the development of Mycenaean settlements of an agrarian nature, as testified by the Ephorate of Antiquities' identification and excavation of cemeteries of the period in the broader region of Olympia, and in the rest of Elis that are significant in terms of their extent and content.

Sporadic evidence from this period has been derived from the site of the Stadium and the region of the Olympic Academy, from the railway station in the contemporary town and from Drouva Hill northwest of the Old Museum, as well as from isolated grave sites north of the Archaeological Museum. However, a clearer picture of the era can be formed from the finds that came to light in an extensive cemetery of hewn chamber tombs that had been built in clusters northeast and east of the Archaeological Museum. The rescue work and research conducted in the 1960s and 1970s showed that the cemetery had been in use from the end of the 15th to the 12th century BC, and was used again for burials during the period of Roman rule.

Pottery finds include known types of vases (stirrup jars, alabastra, kylikes) as well as local types (handleless jars, large three-handled piriform jars) weapons, jewellery, figurines and seals. Burial customs do not generally deviate from the known stereotypes of the Mycenaean world. In presenting this group in the new Museum exhibition, the aim was to prove that the site around the Sanctuary was inhabited during the period when the Achaean inhabitants of Pisa were lords of the region, even though the investigation was also targeted on the settlement to which the cemetery belonged, and on identifying the ancient town of Pisa.



*Shards of handmade pottery with moulded decoration of the Final Neolithic Period. They were found in the lower layers of the northern Stadium embankment.*



*Broken bowl (saucier) from the northern Stadium embankment (K 1279); a typical vessel of the LH II period.*

*Anchor-shaped object with a hole for hanging, dating to the EH II period, from the area of the New Archaeological Museum.*



*Uniqar ruse ("cruser") dating to the late EH III period from the "altar" east of the Telopion tomulas (K 14037).*



*Cerical "ouzo cup" (II 1660) and pithoid vessel with a funnel-shaped rim and lid (II 153). Hand-made EH III period vessels from the area of the New Archaeological Museum.*





*Model of a boat (?) of the EH III period from the area of the New Archaeological Museum (II 2535).*



*Two-handled vessel with a funnel-shaped rim and red decoration of the EH III period from the area of the New Archaeological Museum (II 175).*



*One-handled goblet and amphora of the EH III period. Found during the Dörpfeld excavation (1908) in apsidal Building III in the Altis. The bottom of the goblet (K 1205) and the body of the amphora (K 1209) have incised and impressed decoration.*





*Gray Minyan karburos with incised decoration of the EH III period from apsidal Building VI in the Altis (K 1219).*



*Askos (K 1212) and jug with incised and impressed decoration (K 1206) of the EH III period from apsidal Building III in the Altis, excavated by Dörpfeld in 1908.*







*Gory Minyan vessels of the EH III–MH I period with incised decoration, characteristic of the Cetina culture. The goblet (AE 744) was discovered during the 1880 excavation. The amphora (K 14032) was discovered during the new excavation of the Pelopon.*



*Funerary pithos used for infant burials of the late EH III and early MH I period. It was discovered south of apsidal Building V in the Altis, in 1908. (K 14009).*



*Grey Minyan and dark brown pottery, with incised and impressed decoration of the EH III–MH I period, which suggests a connection to the Crete civilization. Discovered during the new excavations of the Pelopon.*



*Pear-shaped (II 732) and round (II 908) stirrup jars with painted decoration. Common Mycenaean vessels for storing perfumed oils. From the chamber tombs of the New Archaeological Museum.*



Body of a painted two-handled kylix (K 4366) and the ringed stem of a similar vessel (II 1037996). Found in the so-called "Black level" of the Alos that contained the earliest remnants of the Sanctuary's votive offerings (11th-10th cent. BC).



Three-handled alabastron (II 648), handleless jar (II 655) and kylix (II 733) from the Mycenaean chamber tombs of the New Archaeological Museum. This type of handleless jar and tall alabastron are frequently found in the Mycenaean cemeteries of Elis.





Small three-handled piriform jar with a lid made from the base of a kylix (II 740), and large three-handled piriform jar (II 643) with painted decoration, from the Mycenaean chamber tombs of the New Archaeological Museum.



Clay Psô-type female figurine with red painted decoration from a Mycenaean chamber tomb of the New Archaeological Museum (II 2511).





*Falere and glass paste necklace: grave offering from a Mycenaean chamber tomb of the New Archaeological Museum (Δ 28).*

*Glass paste inlay with granulated spiral relief decoration (Δ 37). From a Mycenaean chamber tomb of the New Archaeological Museum.*



*Stonite seals, decorated with vegetal relief (Δ 32) and an abstract linear design (Δ 39). Grave offerings—relics from Mycenaean chamber tombs (1800-1200 BC) of the New Archaeological Museum.*





*Neopernan relief glass paste beads (A 37, A 34), cast in a mould. They belong to the cross-shaped type and "sacred ivy" motif; found in chamber tombs of the New Archaeological Museum.*

## *The early period of the Sanctuary*

**I**N THE LATE 5TH AND EARLY 2ND MILLENNIUM BC, when the prehistoric settlement developed on the site of the later sacred precinct, Kronion Hill crowned – as it does today – the north section of the Altis, a site that symbolized primitive cult activities, possibly of an agricultural nature. Cronus was worshipped at the top of the conic hill, and on its south slopes there were shrines to divinities related to the productivity of the land, fertility and prophecy, such as Themis, Eileithyia, Rhea, the Nymphs, the demon god Sosipolis, as well as Urania Aphrodite, Artemis, Demeter Chamyne and Idaeian Heracles who, according to Pausanias, is reported to have been the initial organiser of footraces at Olympia for his brothers, the Curetes or Daktyls from Crete. It was he who determined the length of the stadium (1 stade) and established the custom of crowning the victor with a wreath of wild olive. In the same region, north of the temple of Hera, there may have been a rift in the earth and an altar, the Gaion, centre of a chthonic cult dedicated to Gaia, a prophetic goddess who may have preceded Zeus, but also a place of prophecy that played a significant role throughout the life of the sanctuary.

The Phrygian prince Pelops associated with the Achaeans and Oenomaus, the legendary leader of Pisa – which as part of Triphylia belonged to Arcadia – defeated Oenomaus in a chariot race, then married his daughter Hippodameia and became the new leader of the region, giving it his name. Up to that time, the Peloponnese (island of Pelops) was called Apia. This founding myth of Olympia, which is the longest tradition related to the beginning of the sanctuary, was depicted superbly in the 5th century BC on the east pediment of the temple of Zeus, on which the protagonists can be identified from Pausanias' description.

The secular site of the prehistoric settlement obviously became a religious centre during the 11th–10th cent. BC, the period to which the tradition of the settlement of the Aetolians in Elis, led by Oxylos, has been approximately dated during the descent of the Dorian races. Then the first *synoikism* (settlement) was built in Elis, the Pisatans were displaced and the new inhabitants of the region chose Olympia in which to establish the worship of Zeus. At this period, the top of the large tumulus of Pelops was still visible. Older and more recent excavations alike have proved that the extensive layer of ash that covered the region between the large tumulus and the later Heraion contained fragments of large painted kylikes from the late Mycenaean or sub-Mycenaean period with a high ringed stem, obviously not for daily use but rather of a religious nature. The kylikes were found – no distinct stratigraphal layer was discovered – among a plethora of clay and bronze votive figurines from the Protogeometric and Geometric periods (10th–8th cent. BC) and up to the 7th cent. BC. Consequently, the early sanctuary at Olympia was also established on Bronze Age remains, as was the case in other famous Greek sanctuaries, such as those of Delphi, Delos, the Heraion at Argos, Eleusis and the Meneiaion.

In this early shrine of Zeus, there were obviously a few simple wooden structures and altars, where older fertility deities were also worshipped. The sacred precinct of the Altis (derived, according to Pausanias, from the word *abos* = grove), verdant, as today, with plane, pine, poplar, oak and wild olive trees, was enclosed by a simple fence – perhaps that which, according to the myth, was built by Heracles – surrounding the religious core of the site. There the local heroes Pelops and Hippodameia were honoured, and the 'Great Altar' of Zeus began to take shape out of the ashes of the sacrifices and other cult activities, perhaps in the 10th century BC.

As a site of worship and religious festivities from the early 9th century BC, the Altis gradually attracted pilgrims not only from the environs of Olympia but also from other regions of the Peloponnese and mainland Greece. Multitudes of small bronze and clay offerings, zoomorphic as well as anthropomorphic, were either placed there by the farmers and stock breeders of the period as sacrifices on the 'ash altar' of the great god, or were hung on tree branches.

The Great Altar of Zeus has not been preserved as it was very probably destroyed during the reign of

the Byzantine emperors Theodosius I and II. The description by Pausanias (5.15, 8-11) places it between the Heraion and the Pelopion; the height of the cone is calculated to have been 6.5 m. at the time of his visit. Circular or elliptical, the altar stood on a substructure or crepidoma about 5 m. high. This was the level, the so-called *prothesis*, on which the ash from the sacrifices of animals accumulated, while priests took the thighs of the sacrificial animals up to the top of the hill where they were burned. The Olympia Museum hosts just some of the hundreds of votive figurines from the early sanctuary, the discovery of which contributed significantly to our knowledge of the early plastic art of the Geometric period. The exhibition of a few dozen of these figurines, randomly placed in front of the hypothetical reconstruction of the Altar of Zeus is an image that speaks to the visitor.



Cast solid statuettes of bulls (B 5616, Br 2167) were common offerings to the Sanctuary of Zeus in the 8th cent. BC.

The cast, solid bronze statuettes and terracotta figurines that represent the 9th century BC, and gradually increased during the 8th and 7th centuries, were either independent works or accessories on vessels, such as tripod cauldrons and vases made in Peloponnesian workshops (Argive, Laconian, Elean and Corinthian). Both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic statuettes (horses, bulls, oxen, goats, deer) initially characterized the age in which they were created, with the rough moulding of the natural shape and the rudimentary indication of very few anatomical features, which later tended to be rendered in a more naturalistic way. Horses in particular during the 7th century acquired distinct anatomical traits in both moulding and decorative details. The same is true of the anthropomorphic figurines that were initially rendered in two dimensions. In the exceptionally few clay figurines of women, one can recognize Hera, to whom the first temple on the Altis may have been dedicated in the Archaic period. Among the equally limited number of bronze statuettes of females, in comparison with males, a goddess on horseback stands out, as does a group of women in a circular dance from the 8th cent. BC. Clay male figures are presented in the type of the *karrns* or the charioteer, attributed to victors and sponsors (*anathets*) of chariot races respectively, as there are also large numbers of chariot wheels in both clay and bronze. Among the bronze male statuettes are charioteers with their chariot but also the type of the warrior. In the early warrior type, with the rudimentary helmet, perhaps Zeus can be identified, although in other statuettes the figure depicted with outstretched arms is interpreted as Zeus *Epiphimemus* (present but invisible), unless it portrayed an ordinary mortal supplicant. The supreme lord of the sanctuary, the pre-eminently military god in the sanctuary of Olympia, appears later holding a thunderbolt, as he is depicted in the Homeric epics.





*Bronze zoomorphic figurines, votive offerings dating primarily to the 8th cent. BC. Some were stand-alone pieces (M 883), while others were vessel attachments (B 5252). The pony (B 1309) was produced in an Argive workshop.*

Bronze decorations in the shape of zoomorphic figurines as well as bronze sheets used as diadems or as facing on objects belong to the 8th cent. BC. Towards the end of the century, they bear decorative hammered or embossed geometric motifs as well as representations of animals. The oldest hammered sheets in the Chalcotheke in Olympia, which were discovered during the excavation of the Stadium in 1960, belong to the same period. Relief scenes in bands depict the favourite themes of Assyrian art, such as processions with priests, gods, horsemen, warriors and floral and foliate motifs. It seems that in about the middle of the 7th century BC, they were being used again as facing on the statue of a woman with a wooden core created by Greek artisans.

In the sanctuary at Olympia, as in other Panhellenic shrines, magnificent bronze tripods, works made by casting and hammering, were abundant and popular owing to their dimensions, and had been dedicated as magnificent votive offerings in the sanctuary of Olympia. Originally the most essential vessels in the house, placed on the hearth, they are referred to in Homer as the pre-eminent prizes in games to honour the dead (funeral games for Patroklos and Pelias). They had appeared in the sanctuary in Olympia as early as the 9th century BC. In the Museum's rich collection, one can observe their evolution up to the 6th cent. BC, when they ceased to have significant artistic merit and their quality declined. In the 8th cent. BC, large tripods coexisted as votive offerings with very small ones that were initially cast and then fashioned of thin sheets.

At Olympia, five groups of tripods can be singled out in terms of their form and technique. In the late 9th century BC they have short legs and their handles are fitted to the body with sheets and studs. Legs and handles usually bear twisted rope-style decoration. During the early 8th century BC, they acquire a more monumental form. Additional supports, vertical to the rim, now hold up the larger circular handles

that are decorated with concentric moulded bands and crowned with statuettes of bulls and later with little horses. The most customary decoration on the legs is the spiral. At a later stage, the legs are decorated with spirals, arcs, zigzag lines, etc. Frequently, on their upper part is a rectangular frame bearing rosettes and more rarely a scene with figures, such as that which depicts the quarrel between Heracles and Apollo over possession of the Delphic tripod. The handles are perforated, with dentilated or spiral decoration, and crowned with small horses, either alone or with riders.



*Cast solid bronze group of yoked oxen (B 5618). An iron shaft supported the wheels, passing through the holes in the animals' legs (mid 8th cent. BC).*



From the middle to the end of the 8th century BC tripod cauldrons diminished in number. Their legs are sharply fluted and have a fan-like finial at the point where they meet the body of the cauldron; representations of human figures are rarely found on their upper part. The thinner handles are crowned with horses that are sometimes mounted by a jockey. In the late 8th century and throughout the 7th century BC, the legs and handles are no longer hammered, and bear characteristic incised decoration of zigzag lines, spirals and other motifs. The new casting technique lends the maximum monumentality to the cauldrons, which can be as high as 2-3 metres. The enormous handles are attached to the body with additional supports and a little later are flanked by radial human figures of helmeted warriors with strong movement of the arms, as well as by other male figures, which may represent the legendary metallurgists, the Telchines, who are associated with Rhea and Zeus.

The passage from the Geometric to the Archaic period (early 7th century BC) is marked by the cast, solid bronze horse in the Museum that is attributed to an Argive workshop. Its statuesque volume is in contradistinction to the miniature statuettes of horses that had preceded it and at the same time constitutes tangible evidence of the concerns and new artistic quests of the artisans of the age, since the work demonstrates an obvious inability to achieve either perfect casting or the absolutely flawless joining together of the two parts of which it was made.



*Cast solid bronze votive zoomorphic statuettes, from the 8th and 7th cent. BC, depicting bulls (B 761, B 13, B 2063) and bull shaped animals with goat tails (B 1569). The small horse (B 1308) is from an Argive workshop.*





*Group of three dogs attacking a deer (Br 1106). The composition sits on a solid, rectangular base decorated with groups of relief triangles on the lower surface. From an 8th cent. BC Elean workshop.*



*Bronze pories (B 21, M 884) from an 8th cent. BC Laconian workshop.*





*Cast solid group of four small bulls (B 6768); 9th cent. BC offering to the Sanctuary of Zeus, created with a marvellous "geometric" harmony, consistency and ingenuity.*



*Clay votive zoomorphic figurines (small bull: Tc 2813, pony: II 2961, dog: II 2962, ram: II 2958, ox-like head: Tc 2042) from the thick layer of ash in the Alais, between the Pelopion and the Herasion. They date to the 8th and 7th cent. BC.*



*Cast hollow statuette of a horse, decorated with delicate carving. An exquisite example of bronzework, evidencing a more realistic rendition of the animal's body and head than in earlier works; 1st half of the 7th cent. BC (Br 2127 + B 10344).*



*Clay Geometric votive  
statuettes of horses  
(II 2925, II 2960,  
II 2957) and a pony  
with its rider (II 2933),  
from the thick layer  
of ash in the Altis  
between the Pelopion  
and the Herakon.*

*Bronze votive figurine of a female, possibly a goddess, riding side saddle (B 1750)  
dating to the 2nd quarter of the 8th cent. BC.*



*Cast solid group of seven nude women dancing in a circle (B 3401); 8th cent. BC.*





Clay *voive*, anthropomorphic figurines from the thick layer of ash in the Altis between the Heraion and the Pelopion. The female figurine with the diadem on its head may depict Hera or some fertility goddess (Ic 2285). Of the male figurines, two depict Zeus as a warrior (Ic 1999, II 2953), and the third belongs to the *kosros* type (Ic 2286).







Clay votive, anthropomorphic figurines from the thick layer of ash in the Altis between the Heraion and the Pelopion. The earliest male figurine, dating to the 10th cent. BC (IT 3319) bears traces of painted decoration, and may possibly depict a divinity (Cronus or Zeus). The male character type figure (It 1941) belongs to the 1st quarter of the 8th cent. BC.

*Clay votive group of a charioteer and his horse drawn chariot.  
(I1 2929 + I1 2928 + Tc 606 + T 833 + Tc 2302).  
A work of the 8th cent.*



*Bronze chariot wheels  
from votive statuettes  
of the 8th cent. BC  
(B 7672, Br 4799,  
Br 10849).*



Early bronze votive male figurines (1st half of the 9th cent. BC). The broadly rendered shape of the body suggesting the gender is characteristic. They are wearing broad-brimmed hats (B 4245) or rudimentary helmets (B 1698). These may be among the first depictions of Zeus Epiphormenus, as indicated by the arms stretched out in ecstasy, or simply mortal suppliants.





*Upper torso of an early bronze male votive figurine, with a helmet and particularly fluted hands. (B 1392). The work of an Elean workshop (1st half of the 9th cent. BC).*

*Bronze warrior figurine (B 4600) from a cauldron handle. The right raised hand held a spear, the left a horse's reins. The figurine wears a belt rendered by scripted rings that signifies its martial character. From an Argive or Laconian workshop (3rd quarter of the 8th cent. BC).*

Cast solid bronze warrior figurines. They were attached to the handles of large hammered, tripod cauldrons. They held a spear in one hand, their horses' reins in the other. The warrior in the Corinthian helmet (B 5700) may have been produced in an Athenian workshop, and dates to the end of the 8th cent. BC. The chariotiers with schematic conical helmets are from an Attic and Laconic workshop and date to the 2nd half of the 8th cent. BC (B 24, B 5600).





Bronze votive charioteer figurines  
with their chariots from the  
9th cent. BC (B 1671) and 8th  
cent. BC (B 3005, B 1670)  
Peloponnesian workshops.





*Bronze miniature votive tripods. Originally cast and solid (K 913, B 5671), they were occasionally decorated on the rim with zoomorphic figurines (Br 8580). Later, they were constructed out of thin sheets (Al 894, M 893).*

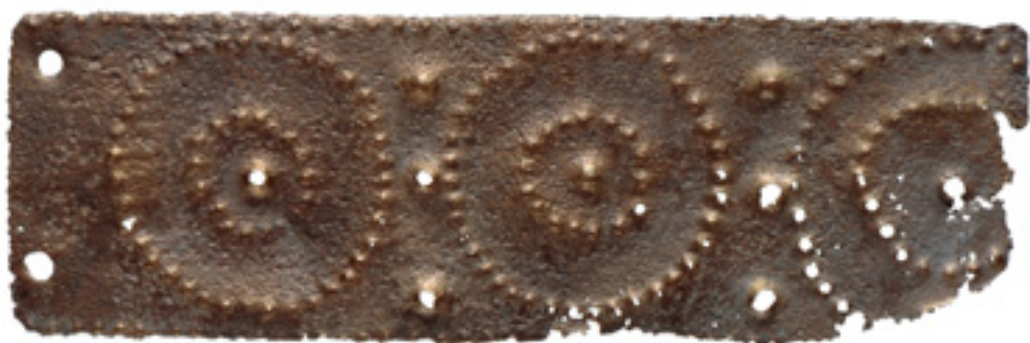




*Bronze jewellery from the 8th cent. BC. They usually bore various animal figures, such as birds (Br 6807, Br 6892, Br 9489), pennis (Br 9791), and deer (Br 7040); probably served as pendants.*







*Hammered bronze sheet dating to the 8th cent. BC, decorated with geometric motifs (concentric circles, relief granulation). Used either as a diadem or to face an object (X 5811).*



*Hammered bronze sheet dating to the 8th cent. BC, decorated with geometric motifs (concentric circles, relief granulation). Used either as a diadem or to face an object (Br 1012).*



*Solid bronze statuette of a scarab, with a base shaped like an eight-spoked wheel (B 148), from an 8th cent. BC Elean workshop.*



*Bronze sheets from the Geometric period, which were used as diadems or as facing on objects. The sheet at the top, with the incised geometric decoration of rhomboid motifs in which circles and rosettes are inscribed, dates to the late 8th or early 7th century BC (Br 21.30). The sheets with the hammered and granulated decoration (B 3489, Br 3489) belong to the 8th century.*





Part of an embossed bronze Assyrian sheet decorated with vegetal motifs and battling animal pairs, placed in heraldic fashion on either side of a tree. The head of a divinity (?) inside a medallion (B 5039) is preserved at the bottom.



Part of an embossed bronze Assyrian sheet, with wild goats placed in heraldic fashion on either side of a tree of life (B 4980).

Hammered bronze sheet with decoration arranged in friezes (B 5048 + 5047). It portrays a procession of priests accompanying bulls to a sacrifice (bottom), animals facing each other on either side of a tree of life (middle) and winged figures, possibly deities (top). The subjects depicted were particularly prized in the Assyrian art of the artistic circle of Northern Syria (9th–8th cent. BC). Later, perhaps in the 2nd quarter of the 7th cent. BC, the sheets were recycled, and used to decorate the clothing of a bronze female statue with a wooden core, a premise supported by the existing attachment points and nails.









*Legs from hammered and cast bronze tripod cauldrons of the Geometric Age. Decorated with linear and spiral motifs (M 952, B 5145), they bear simple vertical stripes (B 1255), and more rarely mythological scenes (B 1730).*





*Heracles and Apollo fighting to possess the Delphic tripod. Decorative meander from the upper section of the leg of a cauldron (B 1730). Produced in a Corinthian workshop (late 8th cent. BC).*

*Bronze tripod cauldron (B 5229 + Br 12114) from the late 8th cent. BC.*



*Olympia's oldest preserved bronze tripod cauldron (B 1240), dating to the 9th cent. BC. It has short cast legs and handles with rope like decoration.*







*Legs from cast bronze tripod cauldrons of the Geometric Age, decorated with curves, zigzag lines and spirals (B 50, B 1247, Br 13261).*

*Cast cauldron leg dating to the Geometric Age, decorated with zigzag lines and the depiction of an animal on a frieze (B 6400).*



*Bronze circular handle from a tripod cauldron dating to the early 8th cent. BC, which was attached to the vessel's rim with an additional support and fastened with nails. It has rope-like decoration and is crowned with the head of a bull (Br 5449 + K 922).*



*Hammered bronze tripod cauldron handle of the Geometric Age with incised decoration of spirals and zigzag lines (Br 9694). It is crowned with the figurine of a horse. The product of an Attic workshop (mid 8th cent. BC).*



*Cast bronze tripod cauldron handle of the Geometric Age with rope-like decoration. It is crowned with a similarly decorated handle (Br 11337).*



*Cast and pierced bronze tripod cauldron handle of the Geometric Age, crowned with a pony (Br 6341).*



*Cast and pierced bronze tripod cauldron handle, dating to the Geometric Age. It is crowned with a pony, accompanied by its rider (B 4567).*





*Cast solid statuette of a horse (B 1741) dating to the early Archaic Age (early 7th cent. BC). The artist's effort to give a monumental character to his work is evident, which definitely separates it from the miniature figurines of the previous period. However, the execution is rather unfortunate, since the casting was not perfect and the neck and body are not harmoniously joined. The product of an Argive workshop.*

*Bronze male figurines of the 8th cent. BC, placed on either side of a cauldron handle (B 3390, B 2800). The figures possibly depict the mythical Telchines, the metalworkers associated with Rhea and Zeus.*

## THE GREAT DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

ACCORDING TO TRADITION, the year 776 BC was a landmark in the history of Olympia, as Iphitus king of Elis, together with Cleosthenis king of Pisa and the Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus agreed to hold religious feasts in Olympia, on the significant condition that a sacred truce (*ekklēsia*) be observed during the games, so that the participants could travel safely to Olympia to take part in them. Pausanias reported that this ancient and priceless agreement, written in circular script on a bronze disk, to cease hostilities all over Greece, which was only violated minimally and for insignificant reasons during the more than thousand-year history of the Olympic Games, was safeguarded together with other sacred artefacts in the Heraion (5.20.1-2). Despite the fact that evidence has not to date been found in excavations confirming that athletic competitions were held there before the early 7th century BC, the view has prevailed that they were reorganized in 776 BC, the year that the catalogue of Olympic victors began in the Chronicle of Elis by the Elean Hippias who lived in the 4th century BC, according to which the historical dating was based on the Olympiad, the four-year period between games.

The conclusions from the most recent excavations indicate with certainty that for Olympia and its sanctuary, the 7th century BC was a period of significant change. At that time, and up to 668 BC, the Eleans were masters of this sanctuary. That was the date when the Pisatans, with the support of the Arcadians and Messenians, acquired control over the sanctuary, which they retained until the end of the 7th century BC. Within the context of the great colonisation and related political and territorial regroupings, the sanctuary of Olympia had already been operating as a prophetic shrine, whose contribution to spreading the reputation of the sanctuary was declared by Strabo (8.3.30). Despite the fact that we know little about this subject, it appears that the prophets of the family of Clytiades (a family of outsiders associated with Amphiaraios) and the Iamidae (clan that sprang from Iamos, son of Apollo, who is reported in legend to have been born on the banks of the Alpheus and of having been secretly brought up on the Kronion, or Hill of Cronus), would read divine signs in the flames on the Altar of Olympian Zeus. They contributed actively to solving military problems, whether by travelling to places where their intervention was necessary, or in Olympia, from which representatives of Greek cities would seek information on military matters.

At that period, it appears that the sanctuary and the Cladeus river bed extended westwards of the Kronion, whose south slopes were altered, and to the southeast, the site of the Stadium came into being for the first time (560 BC) with its west side open to the Altar of Zeus, replacing the initial level space where, prior to the 6th century BC, the one-stade (192.27 metres) footrace was held. In the late 6th century BC, after the terrace of the Treasuries was completed, the Stadium was moved eastwards to another site, acquired a slope on its long south side and its track was built on a lower level.

The now established religious festivals of Olympia, in conjunction with the holding of athletic contests in honour of the supreme military god Zeus, became a major institution in metropolitan Greece, and the colonies of the West, East and the Black Sea region, attracting growing numbers of athletes. At the same time, the influx of votive offerings began which, as early as the 7th century BC, may have been kept in simple wooden and clay structures, perhaps a type of early treasury decorated with bronze reliefs. However, no trace of such structures has been preserved.

The first construction activity on the site of the Altis or Sacred Grove is attested in about 600 BC, when southeast of the Kronion Hill, the first large Doric temple was built and dedicated to Hera, or according to modern research, initially to Zeus and later to Hera. At a higher level to the east, at the foot of Kronion, the first nine stone "treasuries", temple-like structures or votive edifices offered by Greek cities and colonies in the West, were successively built, in which rich votive offerings were kept. The then visible

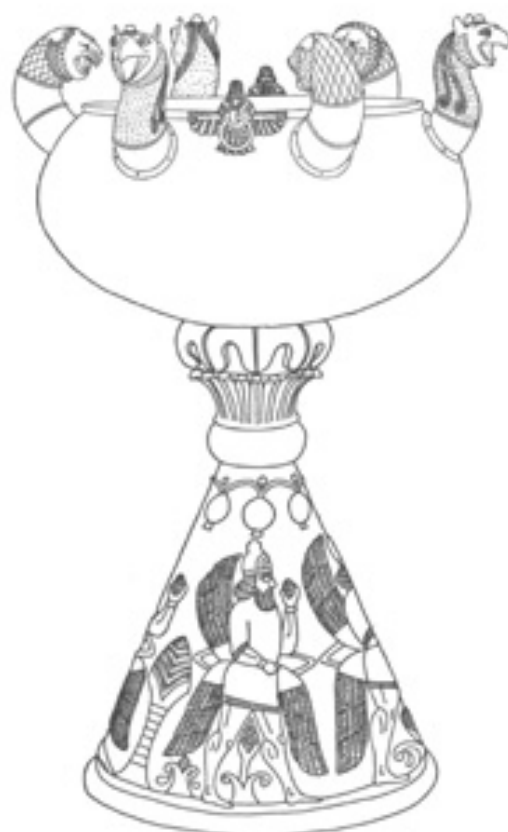


*Large cut-out embossed bronze sheet. A female griffin is depicted nursing her young, just visible under her belly (B 104). The eye of the mythic being is inlaid ivory, and the decorative details are rendered through delicate engraving and dots. It may have decorated an architectural member, attached to a wooden core. This bronze relief is an exquisite example of Archaic Hellenic art; produced in a Corinthian workshop (680–620 BC).*



tumulus of Pelops was created, which was a low earthen mound in the 5th century BC, and was surrounded by a pentagonal enclosure with a monumental entrance on its southwest side. In the middle of the same century, the northern apsidal part of the Bouleuterion was built to house the Boule of the Eleans and the Hellanodikai, who were responsible for holding the games, and the Prytaneion, seat of the Prytaneis, the sanctuary officials who looked after the sacrifices on the altars. The Prytaneion was the administrative centre of the sanctuary in which the sacred undying flame burned on the altar of Hestia (sacred hearth of the League of the Eleans). There, official banquets were held by the Eleans in honour of the Olympic victors.

At that period, and especially from the 6th century (580 BC) on, the Eleans, after constant military confrontations with the Pisatans, gained control of the sanctuary for at least two centuries. During that long period of time, peace was secured, prosperity prevailed and the sacred truce made the site inviolable and sacred, with the result that the religious ceremonies and athletic contests acquired Panhellenic prestige. The fame of the sanctuary at Olympia was widespread. The rich votive offerings in the Archaic and Classical periods, especially bronze war booty, and votive offerings of thanks to the war god Zeus for military victory were hung on poles and placed as trophies in the Stadium, according to an interpretation provided by discovery on its slopes of the typical post-hole traces that are associated with this custom. Displaying the trophies in this way informed viewers about the historic events of the times. Moreover, as has aptly been observed, given that in antiquity victory on the battlefield and on the sporting field were more significant than peace, which became associated with the Olympic Games as a modern Olympic ideal after Baron Pierre de Coubertin revived the Games, it is easy to understand why the spoils of war were erected on the site on which athletic contests were held.



*Illustration reconstructing a cauldron on a conical stand decorated with embossed representations in an Orientalizing style of art. The vessel's rim is decorated with the busts of lions, griffins, and sirens.*



*Bronze lion protome, from the rim of a cauldron dating to the early 7th cent. BC (B 2654).*



*Hammered bronze protome of the oldest extant griffin in the sanctuary of Olympia (Br 8767). Produced in a Peloponnesian workshop, it reveals eastern influences (late 8th–early 7th cent. BC).*



*Bronze cauldron in an Orientalizing style (B 4224). Protomes of griffins, lions and male winged figures decorated its rim (670 BC). The embossed lion protome had inlaid eyes (B 2000). The conical base is decorated with embossed plant motifs influenced by the East and belongs to another cauldron (B 5005), of the 8th cent. BC.*



## *Olympia: Repository of the ancient Hellenic world.*

THE EVER-INCREASING NUMBER OF VOTIVE OFFERINGS in the sanctuary of Olympia around the end of the 8th cent. BC reflected its radiance that had already reached as far as Mesopotamia in the east and Lower Italy and Etruria in the west. The famous myth of Alpheus and the Arcadian nymph Arethusa echoes the contacts of the sanctuary with the West. This couple, despite the misfortunes of their love as mortals, were lucky enough to be united when Alpheus, a river extending from the Ionian coasts, met Arethusa, source of Oetygia of Syracuse and was united with her forever.

During the 7th and 6th centuries BC, even though the economy retained its agrarian character, change was in the air with the rise of crafts, trade and shipping. Works of art bearing the seal of other cultures were available, and at the same time new trends were expressed in art through the blending of different elements and attitudes. Influences from the East became more clearly visible and artists were inspired both by the fantastic world of myth and by the natural world. Greek craftsmen of the period did not assimilate the new influences passively, but sublimated them in works of art with manifest features of their own vigorous artistic idiosyncrasy. This is recorded in the fabulous wealth—especially of bronze sculptures of the Archaic and early Classical periods, and the votive dedications of the Geometric period—that makes the Olympia Museum a repository of bronze treasures (*chakotbeke*) of the ancient Hellenic world.

The so-called "Orientalizing" period characteristic of the 7th century BC, whose name indicates the close contacts with the East, laid the foundations for the flourishing of the Hellenic civilisation that developed fresh impetus in the Archaic period and matured in the Classical age. This period in Olympia was manifested mainly in the new type of cauldron that, as an indicator of financial prosperity and a high artistic level, continued to constitute the most frequent and valuable offering to the sanctuary and its prophetic shrine. The initial conic base of the vessel, which was usually richly decorated with hammered foliate motifs, imaginary animals and daemonic figures, was replaced by a tripod. Busts (*protomes*) of griffins, lions and winged anthropomorphic beings of an apotropaic nature were now attached to its rim.

Griffins, imaginary beings of Oriental origin, made their first appearance in the second half of the 8th century and evolved throughout the 7th century BC, essentially retaining the stereotyped "daemonic" and apotropaic form of a bird of prey with a folded back tongue, pointed ears and a high crest on its head. They were initially made using the hammered technique, with robust proportions. Later, cast griffins were more refined, and in many cases, their manufacture includes hammered sections. The decoration is incised and impressed, and sometimes the eyes are inlaid with other material. From the mid-7th century to the early 6th century BC, the griffin gradually ceased to appear in art.

Winged figures were also a widespread type of accessory on bronze cauldrons. In the Museum collection, a two-faced female "Siren" and some winged male figures are regarded as genuine Orientalizing works of the 8th century BC. They were produced in workshops in Argos and later in Corinth. A hoop-type handle would be passed through the small ring on the back of the figures and used to move the cauldron.

The Museum exhibits include cauldrons that had as many as five *protomes* of bulls attached to the inscribed rim with triangular studs, the only one of which to be preserved has been rendered with exceptional realism. Cauldrons of this type were found more frequently in Anatolia, in northern Syria and in Etruria, and were common at the end of the 8th century BC.

Among the largest hammered bronzework creations of the 8th century BC is the voluminous lion's head in the exhibition, which was fashioned out of a thick sheet. Some other material was inlaid into the eyes of the lion, while on the back of its head are holes by which it was attached to a larger surface, perhaps to a large shield as a war offering. The dimensions of this figure, in conjunction with the aggressive expression of the animal, lend authority to the work, which may have been imported from the Orient.

The many bronze plaques from the Archaic period are works of extraordinary art in the Collection at Olympia, and constitute a distinguished group owing to their rich embossed or incised decoration, which fades out after the end of the 6th century BC. These plaques, products of workshops on Greek

islands, in the Peloponnese (Corinth, Laconia) and eastern Ionia, were used as facing on wooden caskets, furniture, vessels, tripods and shields. Sometimes they were also used as facing on architectural members of buildings, attached to doors or doorjambs. Some unique works in the Collection were sheets made to cover the wooden core of statues; others had been shaped as cut-out figures of mythical creatures and animals (sphinx, rooster). The rich decorative subject matter includes species of flora and fauna, as well as scenes from the Homeric epics and myths. Exquisitely rendered are: the centaurs (creatures that are half-horse and half-man) as they kill Caeneus, leader of the Lapiths, the tragic figures of Orestes, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, the representation of a departing warrior, and another that may probably represent the blinding of Polyphemus the Cyclops by Odysseus.

A monumental work in this category is the nursing female griffin with the splendid wing and raised leg feeding her baby who is barely distinguishable under her belly. The artists' ingenuity "tamed" the apotropaic mythical creature by depicting it in a moment of natural gentleness for any mammal. This splendid cut-out work dating 650-620 BC, with its incised details, which may have decorated an architectural member attached to a wooden core, was created in a Corinthian workshop.

Exceptional examples of bronze sculpture from the Archaic period are the figurines of humans, animals and imaginary creatures that were accessories to the bronze vessels offered in the sanctuary, and usually attached to their handles or rim. They are distinguished for their vigorous artistic rendering of figures of warriors wearing a helmet and belt, but also clad female figures, such as the one in the type of Palladion, (a wooden cult statue of Athena in arms), or another figure wearing a peplos, or that which represents the goddess Demeter or Mistress of Animals.

The figurines of Sileni that were created with originality in a playful mood and attached with studs to the rim of a large cauldron once constituted an impressive sight. Two interesting male figurines, one of which has been interpreted as old Nestor with his staff and the other as a young Achaean hoplite, provided elaborate decoration for the rim of a large vessel, possibly in a composition with other figures. Among the animals depicted are upright or seated lions, protomes as well as full bodies of horses, rams' heads, hares, bulls and deer, as well as the popular mythical creatures, griffins and sphinxes.

Also inspired by the Orient were the bronze legs on tripods, vessels and furniture that were frequently zoomorphic



*Bronze griffin protomes from the rims of large tripod cauldrons of the 7th cent. BC. They were embossed (B 4355), cast (B 1530), or created through a combination of the two techniques (B 2358, B 145).*

with lions' paw finials, or horses' hoofs on griffins' or even birds' legs. Among the elaborate sculpted works is a cast tripod leg with scenes on six friezes that are separated by the Greek key motif, while finely worked human figures co-exist harmoniously with the vessel that they simultaneously support and adorn, such as the young long-jumper on the base of a censer from Etruria, the helmeted kore or goddess who, while holding a blossom lifts her garment with extreme delicacy, as well as a small bronze sphinx in a balanced position, the product of a Laconian workshop. Elaborate figures of a variety of animals (snakes, bulls' heads, rams' heads, dolphins, lions etc.), busts or other parts of human figures (hands, feet) and palmettes are combined masterfully as decorative elements on handles and handle joints, as supports, finials and lids on vessels produced up to the 5th century BC.

On the winged female figure with the expressive mystic Archaic smile and the large eyes of inlaid bone, it is easy to see the early technique of producing bronze statues by attaching hammered sheets to a wooden core. This divinely daemonic creature, a Nike or Sphinx or possibly even Artemis, is regarded as one of the rarest and most monumental hammered works from an island or Ionic workshop of the early 6th century BC, and was discovered in one of the many depository wells on the slopes of the Stadium.

The superbly fashioned "mask" of a female deity, also facing on the wooden core of a statue (second half of the 7th century BC), belongs to the same category. A cut-out hammered sheet with Ionic features that associate it with works produced in Magna Graecia in the late 6th century BC is attributed to a female figure in profile. The two sections of a sheet that originated on a large statue of a bull, and parts of statues of human figures, such as the bronze eyelashes and marble eyeball, and another that renders half-open lips admirably are all that remains of similar bronze works. Products of the same period include other types of offerings, such as large bronze vessels (buckets, bowls or drinking cups with a boss), and smaller ones (lamps, censers, trefoil vases, etc.) as well as offerings of jewellery (clasps, pins, brooches, armlets, anklets and earrings).

Respect for the sanctuary of Zeus, which also provided prophecies of war, is obvious on both the monuments and the offerings. Thousands of weapons, parts of military equipment, and indeed entire panoplies were offered to Zeus. In this respect, the Olympia Museum collection is unique in the world and has justly been described as a "Hellenic armory".

Most of the weaponry from the Archaic and Classical period came to light during the excavations of the slopes of the Stadium, particularly during the excavation of the many wells dating to the period before the athletic field was created in the Classical period. These wells, numbering some 240, that were brought to light and investigated in various parts of the sanctuary, had been built during the athletic contests to supply water, used for a few days and at the end of the festival fell into disuse. Together with the soil with which the wells were closed, shards of pottery and parts of votive offerings were also thrown in which, although useless and damaged, remained on the site of the sanctuary and in the possession of Zeus. These victory ex votos were dedicated by cities as booty from victorious wars, by wealthy princes, but also by warriors themselves who offered part of their armour to the god in gratitude and thanks for the victory.

The military offerings at Olympia can be distinguished as either defensive or offensive in nature. There are hundreds of offensive weapons, mainly of iron, that were unearthed by excavations, as well as countless arrow- and spear-heads and spikes from spear-ends (*saurtes*). The extremely informative collection of mainly bronze defensive weaponry at our Museum includes all parts of armour.

The HELMET protected the warrior's head. Early helmets from the 8th century BC have been found in the sanctuary, with cheek-pieces (*paragnathides*) and a high, pointed conical dome, works from a Peloponnesian workshop. Many bronze figurines from the Geometric period are depicted wearing this type of helmet. But the majority of ex votos of this type are the "Corinthian" helmets produced between the late 8th and the mid-5th century BC. In its evolutionary course, the initial simple type, with its rough, "heavy" shape, without a distinct neck-guard (*pauchemion*) or specialized moulding of the cheek-pieces, was eventually moulded in such a way as to be adjustable to the anatomical features of the skull. A rarer type of helmet is the "Illyrian", as it was conventionally named from the initial site on which it was found in the northern Balkans. It does not have a nasal bar (*epirrhion*) protecting the nose and usually bore two

parallel grooves from the forehead to the end of the neck-guard, obviously for the adjustment of the crest. And finally, there was the "Chalcidian" helmet, characterized by the rich artistic rendering of the anatomical details of the head. Some helmets are distinguished for their additional elaborate decorative motifs. Special vigour is lent to such objects by details like an outline emphasized by a single or double row of metal studs with protruding heads, the relief rendering of curls on the forehead, added silver plates to the forehead and cheek pieces, as well as the rendering on the cheek pieces of a ram's head, incised or hammered, as a device suggesting domination and military power.

The Olympia Museum's collection of helmets includes eponymous works as well as some others associated with major historic events, according to incised inscriptions on them. It is amazing to learn that the great Greek general Miltiades dedicated his bronze Corinthian-type helmet as a thank-offering in the sanctuary of Zeus after the victorious battle of Marathon (490 BC), as attested by the inscription incised on the left cheek piece. Near it is a contemporary helmet of the Assyrian (Persian) type whose inscription states that it was offered by the Athenians to Zeus from the booty of the Persian wars. Similar votive phrases are incised on a Corinthian helmet made in a workshop staffed by Italians and on an Etruscan one, both victory dedications to Zeus from Hieron, tyrant of Syracuse, and his compatriots after their victory against the Tyrrhenes (Etruscans) at Cumae in Italy in 474 BC.

The BREASTPLATE or CUTRASS protected the warrior's chest and back. Of the twelve cuirasses in the Museum collection, three bear decorative motifs. One of them, which has been preserved in almost perfect condition, is distinguished for its skilled, albeit schematic, relief rendering of the anatomical details of the chest. When cuirasses belonged to a famous warrior, obviously an officer, they bore elaborately detailed decoration. The back part of a cuirass is one such a specimen, on which, apart from the moulded rendering of the anatomy of the shoulder blades, figures of animals and mythical creatures were incised on the upper part, and representations of gods on the lower band, making it a rare work of art, the product of an Ionian or Peloponnesian workshop in the second half of the 7th century BC.

The GREAVES that protected the warrior's shins are distinguished for their elaborate rendering of anatomical details and for their hammered ornamentation with snakes in various configurations and lions' heads, especially at the kneecap. Many right and left greaves have ornate incised scenes, and frequently these defensive parts of the armour bear incised dedicatory inscriptions which add to our appreciation of them not only for their artistic but also for their historical value.

EPIMBRIA protected the thighs, EPISPHYRIA the ankles and



*Bronze protomes of griffins. The eyes of the embossed griffin with incised decoration (Museum; Br 3177) were inlaid bone with irises of semi-precious stones (prior to the 2nd half of the 7th cent. BC). The cast protome decorated with engraved scales and coiled ringlets on either side of its neck also had inlaid eyes (Br 6108; 2nd half of the 7th cent. BC).*





*Bronze protomes of winged figures. They were used as joints on cuirass handles. The female (Siren) with the engraved decoration is from an Eastern workshop of the 2nd half of the 7th cent. BC (B 5080). The male, also Eastern in origin, belongs to the 2nd half of the 8th cent. BC (B 4312).*

EPIPODIA the feet; all were well fitted to the anatomy of human limbs. The MITRA, a belt worn around the waist under the cuirass, protected the abdominal area. Although these objects of defence weaponry were usually undecorated, some mitras also bore incised scenes inspired by mythology.

The EPIBRACHIONION and EPIPICHION protected the upper arm and forearm respectively. These parts of the armour likewise render naturalistically the part of the body they covered, sometimes with embossed scenes. The shoulder piece on the right *epibrachionion*, that is exhibited, is decorated with an apotropaic figure of a gorgon's head. Here it should be noted that upper-arm guards were always made for the right arm, since the left arm held the shield with which the warrior covered himself.

And finally, the SHIELD protected the entire body of the warrior and constituted a necessary part of his defensive armour. The hoplite held it with his left arm, and during battle in a phalanx it also helped cover the unprotected side of the man to his left.

In addition to regular-sized shields, the rich collection in Olympia includes other, larger ones that were exclusively votive offerings, as well as smaller replicas of bronze shields with impressed, granulated decoration, also votive in nature. Dedicatory inscriptions were often carved on the rim of the shields, referring to military events of the period. It was customary to emblazon shields on the outside with extremely artistic emblems cut out of hammered sheets, known as the *gisona* (device) of the shield. From the examples found in the rare collection at Olympia it can be seen that the animals depicted were not selected at random, but that creatures of power and authority were preferred that would reinforce the feeling of superiority and strength of the warrior who owned the shield, as well as his family, while at the same time it was calculated to instil fear in the adversary.

It is possible that some were regarded as insignia related to the social status and office of their owner. The winged horse (Pegasus) in a heraldic representation; the head of an ordinary horse; the terrible head of the Gorgon Medusa (Phobos) with snaky hair, wide open eyes, an open mouth with fearful teeth and protruding tongue, and in one case, with sickle-shaped wings whirling around her; but also the Gorgon with the body of a fish and lions' legs; and the irascible and pugnacious rooster are just a few of the most memorable cut-out devices on shields at Olympia. Usually even the bar across the shield through which the warrior's arm passed (*achanon*) was decorated with floral finials and relief scenes mainly of mythological content. Sometimes, the *porpax* (the central raised part of the arm bar) too bore elegant foliate, floral or geometric motifs.

A unique votive offering in the sanctuary of Olympia, which was part of a horse's defensive armour at this period and worth mentioning, is a *prometopidon* (chamfron), a plate extending from nose to brow, of lower Italian origin from the second half of the 6th century BC. Despite the obvious wear of this bronze



*Bronze winged female protomes (Sirens): cauldron handle joints. Produced in a Peloponnesian workshop during the 8th (B 1690) and 7th cent. BC (B 28).*

work, the refined facial features of a helmeted warrior in high relief have been clearly preserved, with highlighted decorative motifs on the helmet and a wonderful rendering of the eyelashes. It obviously belonged to the rider of the horse, who also dedicated the artefact.

Even though it does not constitute part of a panoply, mention should be made here of an ancient military object that is also one of a kind, an instrument of war with great weight and a distinctive shape from the early Classical period (first half of the 5th century BC) that came to light in the exploration of the slopes of the Stadium. It is a solid bronze container or chest that narrows at the top, ends in a solid wedge in front and is open at the back to function as a socket for a thick, strong wooden pole. This pole was attached to the socket with nails, and used as a battering ram.

This battering ram, which was probably made in a Sicilian workshop, despite its practical nature indicated by obvious traces of wear on the serrated ends of both side walls, is decorated with two superbly worked bas-relief rams' heads. They face the sphenoid end, with their curved horns protruding symmetrically at the back of the chest, and it was they that established the name of this weapon and lent it weight as an insignia.

As a whole, the fine armour in the Olympia Museum is a school that teaches us a great deal about the workmanship of the period and the Greeks' military expertise. At the same time, it is a valuable source of historical data owing to the information that has been inscribed on many of its objects.





*Bronze prototype of a two faced winged female (Siren) with relief decoration, which ornamented the rim of a tripod cauldron. The hoop like handle that passed through the small ring on its back was used to help move the cauldron. An authentic Orientalizing work of the late 8th cent. BC (B 1735).*



*Bronze cauldron originally decorated with five bulls' heads dating to the late 8th cent. BC (B 4422 + B 5240). The extant head was attached to the rim by a triangular joint. The rim of the vessel bears the engraved inscription IAPON ΔΙΟΣ (Sacred Ite! Zeus), in Elean characters. This type of cauldron was common in Anatolia, northern Syria and Etruria.*





*Hammered bronze sheet cut out in the form of a Sphinx, decorated with incised and embossed details, dating to the late 6th cent. BC (B 1646).*



*Hammered bronze sheet cut out in the form of a rooster's head, dating to the Archaic Era (Br 1354); this was a shield device.*



*Embossed bronze lion's head of monumental dimensions made of a thick sheet with relief details (B 4999). The inlaid eyes were of another material. The holes in the back suggest the piece had been attached to a colossal votive shield of the 8th cent. BC. According to another version, it belonged to the architectural decoration of a building dating to the mid-7th cent. BC. The work is probably of Eastern origin.*



*Hammered bronze sheets. The sheet depicting a dragon attacking a wild goat dates to the late 7th cent. BC (Br 106). The sheet with the depictions of a bull, horse, and fish predates it by a century (Br 2061).*





*Hammered bronze sheet depicting a griffin and plant motifs (B 4347). This piece, which may have been attached to a wooden core or an architectural member, combines both engraving and relief techniques (2nd half of the 7th cent. BC)*





*Hammered bronze sheet with mythological scenes in friezes (M 77). Depicted are: two heroes and a female figure (above), Orestes murdering Clytemnestra, while Aegisthus attempts to flee (middle and left detail), Theseus' abduction of Antiope (below and detail on the NEXT PAGE). This may have served to face the leg of a large tripod; the product of a Cycladic workshop, circa 580 BC.*





*Fragment of a hammered bronze sheet (M 108 + M 205). The male figure, holding a sword in its raised hands, is thought to depict Odysseus binding the Cyclops Polyphemus. It is attributed to an eastern Ionian workshop (early 6th cent. BC).*

*FOLLOWING PAGES: Hammered bronze sheet with holes on its decorated border, possibly to allow it to be attached to an item made of some other material (BE 1 ia). Two Centaurs are depicted burying Caeneus, the leader of the Lapiths in the ground, while beating him with uprooted trees. The superb creation of an Ionian workshop (3rd quarter of the 7th cent. BC).*









*Fragment of a hammered bronze sheet with vegetal motifs and the depiction of a wild boar, which is rendered through a combination of engraving and relief work (B 4174). It may have been attached to a wooden core or to an architectural member (2nd half of the 7th cent. BC).*

*Hammered bronze sheet with relief depictions in friezes (SE 117). Depicted from top to bottom: a cauldron with griffin protomes on its rim, a crab, a goose, and a reptile. They may have served to face an architectural member. Most probably the work of an island workshop (2nd quarter of the 7th cent. BC).*



*Hammered bronze sheet (B 4348). It depicts Sphinxes, followed by rams, in an opposing layout on either side of a foliate ornament, while plant motifs and birds complete the arrangement. The decoration combines both engraving and relief work. The piece had evidently been attached to a wooden core or an architectural member (2nd half of the 7th cent. BC).*



Part of the leg of a bronze tripod with embossed decoration (B 5800).  
It depicts Heracles and the Lernaean Hydra (2nd half of the 7th cent. BC).



FOLLOWING PAGES. Hammered bronze sheet (M 78). The relief depiction with its engraved details portrays a warrior departing for battle. The male figure (Amphiaraus?) is mounting a chariot with a charioteer and bidding his wife and their child, seated on her shoulder, farewell. The work of an eastern Ionian workshop (circa 580 BC).









*Hammered bronze sheet embossed with a symmetrically repeated motif of heart-shaped leaves ("sacral ivy") from the 1st half of the 6th cent. BC. It served to cover a sima (M 946 + BE In).*



*Bronze Sileni statuettes from the rim of a large bronze cauldron (B 4200, B 4235). The reclining figures have a playful expression and are holding a horn in their right hand. Created in 530/20 BC.*





*Cast bronze peplophoros type statuette of the late 7th cent. BC. The garment, the belt and the heavy plaits of the female figure are decorated with engraved straight, angled, and zigzag lines. It is among the few known examples of bronze peplophoroi (B 3400).*



*Bronze warrior statuettes with conical helmets and belts, rendered by sculpted rings (B 1999, B 2000). The product of a 7th cent. BC Elean workshop. The warrior with the striking Corinthian helmet and the breastplate is from a 6th cent. BC Lucanian workshop (B 6800).*



*Bronze figurine on a rectangular base, one of the earliest works of its type (B 4500). The statuette probably depicts the goddess Athena (Palladium), wearing a crested Corinthian helmet. The work of a Peloponnesian workshop (1st half of the 7th cent. BC).*



*Bronze female figure wearing a polos (head covering), and standing on a base in the form of a winged lion's paw (B 6050 + 1.202). It adorned the handle of a vessel. May represent the Potnia Theron or Mistress of Wild Animals. The work bears the features of early Laconian bronzework of the late 7th cent. BC.*





*Bronze statuette of a hero, an Achaean warrior with a sword (B 5000), and a man with a staff (right), which may depict the elderly Nestor (B 25). They decorated the rim of an open receptacle, as parts of a larger composition whose subject was taken from the Trojan cycle. They came from the same Laconian workshop (6th cent. BC).*





Cast solid bronze statuette of a lion (B 5250).  
The animal, which may have had inlaid eyes,  
braced on its hind legs with its torso erect, is turning  
its head miraculously in the opposite direction.  
Bronze vessel accessory (2nd half of the 6th cent. BC).



*Cast solid bronze lion and lioness statuettes. Their stance, whether erect (B 3401), or crouching (B 5251) was dictated by where they were placed as decorative elements on bronze vessels (2nd half of the 6th cent. BC).*







*Cast bronze bust of a horse (B 3021).  
It may have served as a decorative accessory for a tripod (7th cent. BC).*



*Bronze statuette of a galloping horse (B 1720)  
used to decorate a vessel (2nd quarter  
of the 7th cent. BC).*



*Bronze zoomorphic statuettes, vessel accessories. The running hare (B 5292), the sitting goat (B 3025), and the bust of a ram, possibly from added chariot towbar end (B 146), date to the 7th cent. BC. The ram's head (B 5668) and the charming dolphin (B 4694) date respectively to the early and late 6th cent. BC.*





Cast bronze tripod leg terminating in a lion's paw. It has engraved scenes on six friezes, divided by rows of meanders (B 7000). Portrayed from top to bottom are: a male figure and horse, a sitting lion with a scorpion over its back, Odysseus escaping from the cave of the Cyclops Polyphemus tied to the belly of a ram (a bird is depicted on the animal's back), a goat and a bird, birds facing each other, Gorgon with Pegasus and to the left of her head a lizard, the symbol of her death. The work of a Corinthian workshop (circa 600 BC).



Cast bronze legs of vessels with finials shaped like lions' paws with sculpturally rendered details (B 5394: mid-7th cent. BC, Br 11554: early 5th cent. BC). The finials shaped like horses' hooves (B 5294, B 1200) date to the 6th cent. BC.



*Cast bronze Sphinx stamnos, vessel support (B 5300). The head of the figure wears an elaborate covering and heavy plaits frame the face and its noble features, gazing straight ahead. The plumage and feathers are depicted with incised rhomboids and lines. The wonderful creation of a Laconian workshop (2nd half of the 6th cent. BC).*





*Cast bronze group of facing Sphinxes (B 1710).  
The figures' raised front legs are holding flowers and their heads  
are turned frontward, cauldron handle ornaments (570- 550 BC).*



*Cast bronze griffin statuette (B 172).  
Works of this type would decorate  
cauldron rims in facing pairs  
(1st half of the 7th cent BC).*

*Bronze statuette of a kore or goddess, which may have decorated the base of a vessel (B 5325). The figure holds a flower in its right hand and is clad in an Ionian garment, which it raises daintily with its left hand. Created in a Peloponnesian workshop (circa 520 BC).*



*Fragment from the leg of a cast bronze tripod with scenes in friezes (B 5314). Depicted from top to bottom are: a horse and dog, a Chimera in the Assyrian style, a bull, traces of a reptile and ringlets possibly from a Gorgon figure. The exquisite creation of a Laconian workshop (late 7th cent. BC).*





*Bronze leg of a censer in the shape of a winged lion's paw (B 1001); it is decorated with the statuette of an athlete (a jumper?). An example of elaborate bronzework from Etruria (480-460 BC).*



*Bronze statuette of a girl wearing a perizoma (loin band) and shoes (B 3004). The figurine, a decorative handle, is standing on an upside-down palmette and with the tips of its fingers supports part of a vessel, possibly a small basin for washing one's hands. Created in a Peloponnesian workshop (early 5th cent. BC).*





Bronze vessel handle terminating in bulls' heads (Br 11204; late 7th cent. BC).

Bronze hydria handle terminating in back-to-back horse heads (B 7490); from a Laconian workshop (1st half of the 6th cent. BC).



Bronze vessel handles. Elaborately decorated with lions and joints terminating in serpents' heads (Br 5176; early 5th cent. BC), as well as with joints in the shape of hands (B 5430; 6th cent. BC).



Cast bronze handle decoration in the form of a flower (B 5924). Dating to the 6th cent. BC.



Fragment from the horizontal brace of a bronze tripod with relief decoration of a continuous eye spiral (B 5777). The remains of two pairs of statuette feet are preserved on the upper surface (6th cent. BC).



*Bronze vessel handle in the form of a Gorgoneion (B 3993), and movable vase handles with zoomorphic (B 12120) and palmette joints (B 14060, B 33a) of the 6th–5th cent. BC.*



*Bronze movable vessel handle (B 4233); a panther is depicted on the joint, the animal's pelt and features elaborately rendered.*



*Palmette ornament from the upper finial of a bronze tripod (M 871).*



*Bronze hydria handle decorated with animals and a human protome (B 5262: 1st half of the 6th cent. BC).*



*Elaborate palmette that decorated the upper finial of a bronze tripod (B 5570).*



*Fragment of a crater stand (B 6100) with facing lions on either side of a palmette (mid 6th cent. BC).*

*Palmette ornament from the upper finial of a bronze tripod (B 6096).*



*Bronze bowl with a central foot of Eastern origin (B 5758 + Br 1375).  
The center of the handle is decorated with a blossom flanked by facing lions.  
Created in the early 7th cent. BC.*







*Winged bronze female figure with large almond-shaped eyes of inlaid bone, an accentuated Archaic smile and heavy plaits (B 6500). One wing is missing. We do not know whether this was simply a protome or whether it was part of a statue. The divine daemonic being, a Nike, a Sphinx, or maybe even Artemis, is considered one of the rarest monumental embossed cut-out works, through which one may comprehend the early technique of creating bronze statues, which were made of hammered sheets attached to a wooden core. Among the most remarkable offerings to the sanctuary of Zeus, it was found in a depository well in the SE section of the Altis during the 1965 excavations. The creation of an island or Ionian workshop (590/80 BC).*



*Bronze sheet in the form of a female mask (B 5099). It was attached to the bust of a wooden statue, probably a divinity. The figure's forehead is crowned with a diadem made of embossed right-leafed rosettes and its ears are ornamented with earrings. The creation of a Laconian workshop (2nd half of the 7th cent. BC).*



*Eye with bronze eyelashes and marble eyeball, which has a socket for an inlaid iris (Br 12443+A 576). This item, as well as the parted lips (Br 14431), were parts of bronze votive statues in the sanctuary of Zeus.*





*Parts of eyes with relief details (B 2150; Br 7224).  
They belonged to the large statue of a bull (7th cent. BC).*



*Hammered bronze sheet  
cut out in the form  
of a female profile (B 152).  
The slanted eye, strong nose,  
and fleshy smiling lips are Ionian  
characteristics, which suggest  
a workshop of Magna Graecia  
(late 6th cent. BC).*





*Bronze jewellery offered to the sanctuary of Zeus. Depicted are: an Illyrian style armlet (Br 9276 + K 505; early 7th cent. BC), another spiral-shaped one (Br 8515 + M 959; 6th cent. BC–1st half of the 5th cent. BC), a plain fibula (Br 6251; 7th cent. BC) and another one decorated with a rooster (Br 5662) from a Laconian workshop (6th cent. BC). The earring (Br 4277) consists of tiny balls stacked to form a cone and dates to the 6th cent. BC.*





Bronze vessels of the 7th and 6th cent. BC: Omphalosphiale (B 59059), single nozzle lamp (B 4652), and tripod censer (Br 5110). The buckets made of thick sheets (B 4573, Br 4977) were used to transport liquids (6th–early 5th cent. BC).



A "valley" of arrowheads and  
a bronze leaf-shaped spearhead (B  
4903). The bronze spear-end spike  
(Br 219) has a votive inscription  
MEGANICE AITO AAKEΔAIMONION,  
(Methanians from Lacadaemonians),  
which refers to a military event  
of the period. The objects are  
characteristic types of offensive  
weapons that were dedicated  
to the sanctuary at Olympia.







*A large number of bronze Corinthian style helmets from the Chalcothoke of the Museum of Olympia. Common votive offerings to the sanctuary of Zeus, dedicated by warriors grateful for military victories.*



*Bronze late Corinthian-style helmet  
(late 6th—mid-5th cent. BC) with  
relief eyebrow arches and applied silver  
palmette ornaments (B 5095).*



Early bronze conical helmets (8th cent. BC).  
They are depicted on many of the bronze warrior  
figurines of the Geometric Era, that are exhibited  
in the Museum of Olympia (Br 10533, B 51).



Bronze Corinthian helmets.  
The original type of the 8th cent.  
BC (B 55) is obviously different  
from the early (B 2185), mature  
(M164) and later (M 53) types,  
which range chronologically  
from the early 7th to the late 6th  
cent. BC. They are decorated  
with rows of studs, and engraved  
outlines, or have grooves for a crest.

The inscription  
ΜΕΙΕΝΟΙ ΜΥΑΑΙΩΝ  
on helmet M 53 indicates that  
the item had been dedicated  
to the sanctuary by the Messenians  
from the spoils of their victory over  
the Mylaeans (late 6th cent. BC).







Bronze Chalcidian-style helmet (B 4446; 3rd quarter of the 6th cent. BC), and Illyrian helmet (B 4667; last quarter of the 6th cent. BC). The relief decorative elements (carbs, granulated motifs, etc) are supplemented respectively by the cut-out and embossed rams' heads that decorate the cheek-guards as emblems of vigour and superiority.



Combined Chalcidian-Corinthian type bronze helmet (B 4376) distinguished by the sculptural rendition of the ears, which are flanked by helical and spiral carvings. The forehead is also decorated with relief spiralling carvings (late 6th cent. BC).



Bronze helmets in the early (B 155; 8th-early 7th cent. BC) and mature (B 5065; late 7th-early 6th cent. BC) Illyrian style with the characteristic groove from the forehead to the back of the neck, used to secure the crest.





*Embossed ram's head: an exceptional cheek-guard ornament from a bronze illyrian-type helmet (B 4667).*





*Bronze Illyrian type helmet with a wide groove from the forehead to the back of the neck to attach the crest (B 5316). The extremely meticulous and elaborate decoration of cut-out silver sheets evidently indicates the stature of the warrior who dedicated the helmet to the sanctuary of Zeus. The cheek-guards are decorated with riders and the forehead has a depiction of lions attacking a wild boar. The work dates to approximately 530 BC.*



Bronze conical helmet of Eastern origin, possibly Assyrian (B 5100). The inscription on the edge ΔΙ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΙ ΜΕΔΩΝ ΑΑΒΟΝΤΕΣ (To Zeus from the Athenians who took it from the Medes) uniquely authenticates it as a trophy from the Persian Wars.



Bronze Corinthian helmet; its crown is destroyed (B 2600). The inscription on the left side ΜΑΡΤΙΑΣ ΑΝΙΘΕΚΕΝ ΤΥΧΙ ΔΙ (Miltiades dedicated to Zeus) and the type of helmet provide immeasurably valuable historical confirmation that this was the helmet of the Athenian general Miltiades, who dedicated it to the sanctuary of Zeus in gratitude for his glorious victory over the Persians at the Battle of Marathon (490 BC).



Inscribed bronze helmets. The Corinthian (M 9) and the Etruscan (M 844) have the same votive inscription: ΗΙΕΡΟΝ Ο ΔΕΙΝΟΜΕΝΟΣ / ΚΑΙ ΤΟΙΣ ΣΥΓΚΟΙΤΟΙΣ / ΤΟΙΣ ΤΥΡΡΗΝΟΝ ΑΠΟ ΚΥΡΙΑΣ, which indicates they were dedicated to the sanctuary of Olympia by the tyrant of Syracuse Hieron, son of Deinomenes and his fellow citizens after their victory over the Tyrrhenians (Etruscans) at Cumae in 474 BC. A second Etruscan helmet with an identical inscription is located in the British Museum.





*Votive bronze cuirass (front section) in excellent condition (B 5101). The anatomical details of the chest have been artfully moulded. A work of the first half of the 6th cent. BC.*



Votive bronze castrax (back section) richly decorated with engraved depictions of human figures, animals and imaginary beings (M. 394). The shoulder side sections have depictions of lions and bulls facing in opposing directions in two friezes, while between these two sections are facing Sphinxes and roaring panthers. Six human figures are depicted on the lowest row, turning, in threes, towards the centre of the composition. Zeus is portrayed at the head of the figures on the left, followed by two gods. On the right side, Apollo Citharæus, depicted opposite Zeus, is ascending to Olympus followed by two divinities, possibly Atëses, or Hyperborean Virgins. The offering clearly belonged to a notable warrior. A work of wonderful artistry, which is attributed to a Peloponnesian (possibly Corinthian) or Ionian workshop (2nd half of the 7th cent. BC).

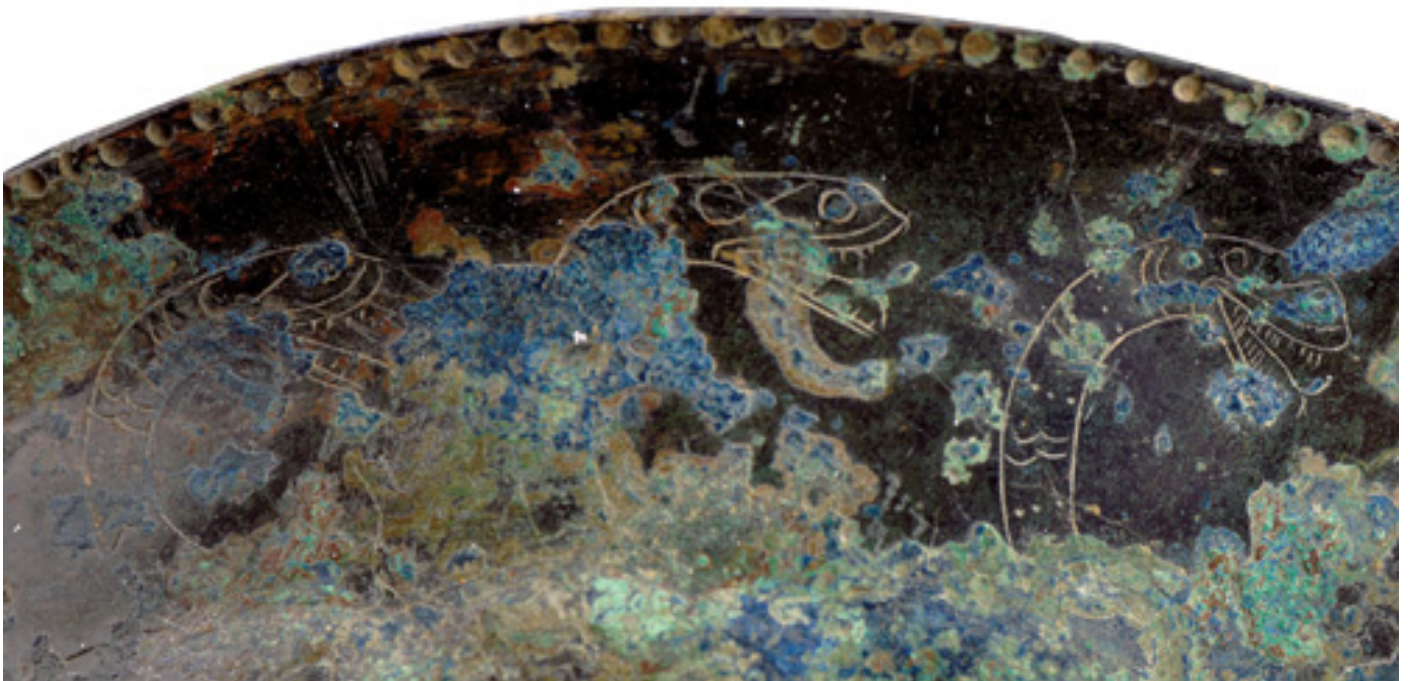








Bronze leg-guards for a warrior's left or right leg, dedicated to the sanctuary of Zeus. These were a basic part of defensive weaponry. They are decorated with relief depictions of snakes or with engraved depictions of fighting animals (B 4995: views A and B). The figure of a lion, representing power and courage, dominates the knee-piece (B 5756). Some have incised votive inscriptions, sometimes brief ones indicating the dedication in honour of Zeus (B 4995 / ΤΩ ΔΙΩΙ = *Idōkatallē To Zeus*), and sometimes lengthy ones, referring to combat events (B 4462 / ΤΑΡΤΕΙΟΙ ΑΝΕΓΕΝΤΟΙ ΔΙΩΤΟΝ ΟΡΓΗΘΕΝ = *The Argives dedicated to Zeus spells from Corinth*).





*Bronze right arm guard (B 4880). The only piece of its kind found during the excavations of the northern embankment of the Stadium. A Gorgoneion with inlaid bone eyes is depicted on the shoulder section. The depiction was rendered by a combination of embossing and incising (see detail: left page, below). The product of a workshop of Magna Graecia (2nd half of the 6th cent. BC).*



Part of a bronze girdle (mitre), (B 4900). It has a scene portrayed with embossed and engraved decoration with, on the right, a female figure seated on a throne and a warrior standing before her. The figures are thought to be Orestes and Clytemnestra, or Menelaus and Helen. Created in a Cretan workshop (2nd half of the 7th cent. BC).



Votive bronze shields. The oversized ones usually bore emblems of cut-out sheets with animals or daemonic figures, as well as geometric motifs (B 446 + B 449 + B 4564). The shield with the incised votive inscription ΔΑΝΚΑΙΟΙ ΠΕΡΙΟΧΗ on the border is from a workshop of Lower Italy (B 2651: late 6th cent. BC). It was a war trophy from the residents of Zancle (present-day Messina) in Sicily from a military expedition against the inhabitants of the Sicilian city of Rhegium.

Small shields made of metal sheets were frequent offerings to the sanctuary of Zeus. These were either plain (A1 897) or decorated with "buttons", embossed dots, and a central omphalos (A1 356, B 67). The holes on their rims may have been used to fasten them onto a wooden surface.







Embossed cut out bronze sheets with the Archaic figure of the Gorgonian. The daemonic apotropaic being would be used as a shield device and was depicted in various ways. At times shown full figure with a fishtail, lion's legs, and a crested helmet (B 4990; produced in Magna Graecia, 2nd half of the 6th cent. BC), and at others, its fearsome head would be depicted on a medallion with inlaid bone eyes and three swirling sickle shaped wings (B 110; produced in a Peloponnesian or Ierian workshop, 1st half of the 6th cent. BC). The Gorgon Medusa type is also depicted on the circular hammered sheet with engraved vegetal ornaments on the forehead and embossed and engraved serpents on its circumference (B 4772; possibly created in a Samian workshop, 2nd half of the 7th cent. BC).







*Animal figures cut out of hammered bronze sheets (rooster: B 109, and horse's head: B 108 with an inlaid eye). The winged horse (Pegasus) probably formed a heraldic composition with another identical one, and came from a workshop of Magna Graecia (B 133: 2nd half of the 6th cent. BC). The sheets were emblem devices on vase shields.*





*Bronze horse chamfron (B 4800) made from a hammered sheet, created in a workshop of Lower Italy. Relief and embossed details depict the face of a helmeted warrior in high relief, with noble features and wonderfully rendered eyelashes. A unique example of part of a horse's defensive armour, it was evidently offered by its rider to the sanctuary of Zeus (2nd half of the 6th cent. BC).*



*Hammered bronze section  
 of a shield's inside crossbar with a palmette  
 terminal and depictions on friezes,  
 separated by "buttons" in high relief (B 4292).  
 Depicted from top to bottom: a male figure  
 leading a horse (top and left detail),  
 Prometheus Bound and the eagle devouring  
 his liver (centre and left detail),  
 and the Dioscuri and Helen (bottom).  
 This elaborate shield component dates  
 to the 3rd quarter of the 6th cent. BC.*





Battering ram, discovered during the exploration of the Stadium embankments (B 2360). Unique of its kind, this ancient instrument of war was made of solid bronze, very heavy and with a distinctive shape, and was probably produced in a Sicilian workshop (1st half of the 5th cent. BC). The two decorative rams' heads, rendered with exquisite artistry in low relief, have given their name to the item, and, as emblems of power and authority, lend gravitas to its use.



Part of the bronze inside crossbar of a votive shield with a palmette finial and relief mythological scenes in friezes (B 1634). Depicted are: Priam receiving the body of Hector (top), Heracles and the Nemean Lion (middle), facing Sphingus (bottom), and adjacent to the crossbar's porpax (central raised part) are Theseus and the Minotaur (1st half of the 6th cent. BC).



## *The early buildings and their architectural decoration*

THE ARCHAIC PERIOD THAT OPENED AT THE END OF THE 7TH CENTURY BC is characterized, among other things, by the abundant output of terracotta roof tiles on temples and smaller buildings of a religious nature in sanctuaries. This output reached its zenith in the 6th and 5th centuries BC. In the sanctuary of Olympia, excavations have brought to light a large number of shards of clay architectural members from buildings mainly of the Archaic and early Classical periods.

The Heraion, the first large temple, was built with heavy Doric proportions south of the Kronion, as part of the construction activity attested for the first time in the sanctuary during the Archaic period. This building was formerly believed to have had three construction phases; but decisive studies by the German archaeologist and architect Alfred Mallwitz have proved that the building was erected in just one stage; it was constructed of the local porous shell limestone that was also used to build other structures in the Altis.

The temple was built at the expense of the Skillountians, allies of the Pisatans who controlled the sanctuary at that time. It initially had wooden columns that were gradually replaced with stone ones, according to Pausanias. This information about the gradual replacement is clearly demonstrated by the variety of forms of the capitals. Above the columns, the upper part of the temple (entablature) and roof were wooden, with clay tiling of the Laconian type. To the east of the temple the foundations of a small oblong porous stone altar have been preserved, contemporary with the temple and also dedicated to the goddess Hera. This point in the Altis has become famous worldwide since it is here that the ceremony of lighting the Olympic Flame for the modern Olympic Games has taken place since 1936.

The centre of the east pediment of the temple was crowned by a clay disk-shaped acroterion the back of which was moulded to fit onto the top covering tile on the roof. This imposing but not wholly preserved architectural member, which has been restored and supplemented, occupies a prominent position in the Museum exhibition today and once bore three groups of concentric relief bands, between which were bands with relief and painted petal-like decoration and other geometric motifs painted a vivid dark brown. The "serrated" outline of the enormous disk-shaped acroterion, consisting of triangles with a broadened point, densely arranged, as well as the overall shape of this member led to a possible interpretation of disk-shaped acroteria as symbols of the sun or some other heavenly body. Both the central acroteria and the smaller disk-shaped ones at each end of the pediment, likewise lavishly decorated, originated from a Laconian workshop.

There were probably limestone reliefs on the pediments of the Heraion. The view prevailing in the past attributed the colossal limestone head with the large almond-shaped eyes, characteristic Archaic smile, special head covering (pilos) and band holding the symmetrically placed curls on the forehead to Hera and to her cult statue that stood at the back of the cella in the temple, alongside that of Zeus, as described by Pausanias. Nevertheless, in the last 20 years, the view that this work was the pedimental figure of a Sphinx continues to gain ground.

According to Pausanias, other works of art were also kept in the temple of Hera. The chest of Cypselus is described in great detail, an offering by his descendants, the Cypselidae, placed in the opisthodomos or back room of the temple, made of wood, gold and ivory, and decorated richly with mythological themes. He mentions the gold and ivory table made by the sculptor Colotes, a student of Pheidias, on which the wreaths of wild olive (*katani*) were placed. He also describes the statue of Hermes, a work of art by Praxiteles, a piece of information that was indisputably confirmed in the first excavation period in Olympia.

A little later, as already noted, the first small, elegant temple-like single-space structures, the treasuries, appeared, most of which were votive edifices dedicated by Greek colonies of the West, as well

*Heraion: Western view of the Archaic temple, the oldest in the Altis. Circa 600 BC.*



Clay disk-shaped central acroterion from the Heraion (IT 2969), with colorful plant and geometric decoration (maximum diameter 2.30 m). An exceptional example of late 7th cent. BC. terracotta art.

as by the citizens of two cities in Greece proper (the Megarians and the Sikyonians), and erected at the beginning of the 5th century BC. Inside them valuable offerings from these cities were kept (vessels of gold and other precious metals, carvings of ivory, statues and furniture of wood, etc.) as well as equipment used in athletic games. Three discuses for the discus-throwing contest, as noted by Pausanias, were kept in the treasury of the Sikyonians (6.19.4). The ancient traveller described buildings from West to East and mentions ten treasuries. However the excavations revealed the ruins of twelve edifices, five of which can be ascribed to specific cities with certainty. They are the treasuries of the Sikyonians, the Selinountians, the Metapontines, the Megarians and the Gelans. According to recent research, the

treasury of the Epidamnians has also been identified.

The multitude of clay architectural members bearing multicoloured decorative palmettes, lotuses, Greek key patterns and other geometric motifs that came from the roofs of various buildings in the Altis make up one of the most interesting groups in the Olympia Museum. According to scholars, of a total of some fifty buildings in Olympia, nineteen roofs can be dated to the Archaic period, which in terms of their type, are distributed among Corinthian, Laconian, and Lower Italian. A fuller picture of the painted clay facing on a temple building has been provided by the restored clay decoration on the roof of the treasury of the Gelans, the largest of all, which was the last to be built on the east, on the raised terrace. It was initially the only one with a façade facing east, although later, with the addition of a six-column porch, it was oriented, like all the others, with its façade on the south.

The exceptional "Sicilian" roof on this treasury with its monumental façade of obtuse and horizontal eaves and successive decorative friezes, with elaborate carved moulding and spouts of the cylindrical type suggest a workshop in Sicily in the second half of the 6th century BC. Guilloches, Greek keys, rhomboid motifs and typical palmette acroteria in a vivid combination of red, black and white adorn the superstructure of this temple-like building which, in one view, could have been constructed in Olympia by technicians familiar with this type of roof, which was common in Gela in Sicily, without necessarily being Gelans.

Some clay architectural members may have come from the treasuries of the Selinountians and the Epidamnians, but most of them cannot possibly be attributed to any specific building. The lovely garlands of lotus blossoms and palmettes, features that also argue for the influence of Sicily and Magna Graecia, adorn part of a disk-shaped acroterion that may have originated on a building whose roof was crowned with antefixes in the form of horns with spiral ends, i.e. horn roofs or *Hörnendächer*. Examples of this type of roof from the mid 6th century BC from workshops of the West have been found in the excavations at Olympia as well as at Delphi. Other parts of eaves bearing typical cylindrical spouts and decorated with moulded rosettes constitute a special type of architectural roof decoration created in the workshops of the West. These works in Olympia are the only ones known from a Greek sanctuary to date. An object from the same period, but from a Laconian workshop, is the peculiar antefix representing a gorgoneion that adorned the roof of the northern apsidal building erected in the first construction phase of the Bouleuterion, in which the Olympic archives were probably kept.

The architectural sculptures from the Archaic period with which the Greeks decorated their early temples are known from Athens as well as other regions of Greece, such as the pedimental compositions on the treasuries of the Sikyonians, the Siphnians and the Athenians at Delphi, and on temples in Eretria,



*Colossal limestone female head (A 1). The strictly frontal figure with its large almond shaped eyes and Archaic smile was originally associated with Hera and her cult statue which, according to Pausanias, was located in the cella of the Heraion. According to the most dominant theory, it is a premonumental Sphinx figure. The product of a Laconian workshop, circa 600 BC.*



Aegina, Eleusis and Corfu. In the Peloponnese, the sculpted pedimental decoration on the treasury of the Megarians in Olympia has been preserved and is exhibited in the Museum as part of the Doric limestone entablature of the building, which has been restored and the necessary supplementary work added.

The battle of the gods and giants (Gigantomachy), which is a popular theme in Greek art, is depicted in the sculpted composition of twelve figures that have been preserved from the pediment, many of which, when they were unearthed, still retained traces of the initial painted decoration. In the centre, the damaged figure of Zeus defeats a giant, the only figure in the scene to be preserved so fully. To the left of Zeus are Athena and Poseidon, and to the right are Hera and Ares. In the corners, the composition was embellished with marine monsters and reptiles. The inscription "ΜΕΓΑΡΕΩΝ" which has been preserved, indicating the city of Megara that dedicated the building in the sanctuary of Olympia, dates to the Roman period, while Pausanias reports that a victory shield had been hung on its pediment by the Megarians from the booty they took from the Corinthians. The clay facing on the pediment, with its alternating coloured palmettes is characteristic of the Corinthian type of the late Archaic period (510-500 BC), the dating of which is based on the style of the pedimental sculptures. A typical example of a stone pedimental decoration is the section of a porous limestone bird that has been preserved and is attributed to the treasury of the Byzantians.

The sculpted, but especially the painted clay decoration of the Archaic buildings in the Altis – the Heraion, the treasuries lined up in a row on the elevated terrace northeast of it, the Bouleuterion and others – must have been an exceptionally impressive sight for the visitor, pilgrim or athlete entering the sanctuary.



*Limestone lion with an incomplete face and legs (A 3). The traces of colour on the mane, mouth and eyes suggest that the work may have been placed in a covered location on the Altis. The deep opening in the interior of the body down to the pharynx indicates it was probably the waterspout of a fountain or well. The animal's stance shows it ready to pounce, and the intensity of its fierce expression recalls Oriental prototypes. Despite the fact that the sculpture does not constitute the earliest depiction of a lion in Greek monumental sculpture, it is considered one of the earliest works, not in Olympia alone but in the rest of Greece as well (early 7th cent. BC).*



"There are here other offerings also: ... a table on which are set out the crowns for the victors. ... The table is made of ivory and gold, and is the work of Colotes. Colotes is said to have been a native of Heraclia, but specialists in the history of sculpture maintain that he was a Parian, a pupil of Pastiles, ... There are figures of Hera, Zeus, the Mother of the gods, Hermes, and Apollo with Artemis. Behind is the disposition of the games. On one side are Asclepius and Health, one of his daughters; Ares too and Contest by his side; on the other are Pluto, Dionysus, Persephone and nymphs, one of them carrying a ball." (Pausanias, 5.20.1-3)



A hypothetical rendition of the chryselephantine table created by the 5th cent. BC sculptor Colotes, which, according to Pausanias' description, had been placed in the cella of the Herion (from A. C. Quatremère de Quincy's *Le Jupiter Olympien ou l'art de la sculpture antique...*, Paris 1814).

The table is also depicted on the back of a bronze Elean coin (M 876) dating to the period of Hadrian (117-138 AD).



Part of a painted clay sima from the facing of the Treasury of the Selinuntians (9W15/9W1). It is decorated with a continuous eye spiral, diagonal bands, rectangular and triangular motifs, and is crowned by a round anafix with a painted palmette. Produced in a workshop of Magna Graecia (late 6th–early 5th cent. BC).



Part of a painted clay sima, with a continuous spiral decoration, schematic leaves, meander, and zigzag lines from the pediment of the Treasury of the Epidamnians (8V5a–b). The product of a workshop in Magna Graecia (2nd half of the 6th cent. BC). The section of the painted pedimental sima from a treasury building, decorated with palmettes (3k95), dates to the 1st half of the 5th cent. BC.





Corner section of the painted clay facing on the Treasury of the Gélens. The section of slanting cornice (TW167) and the corner section of the sima with the cylindrical waterspout (TW267) belong to the same building. This extraordinary example of a Sicilian-type roof with its monumental facade and successive friezes of carved moulding is intricately decorated with guilloches, meanders, "nooses", rhombi and palmettes, rendered in a bright colour combination of black, red and white. It may have been created in Olympia (2nd half of the 6th cent. BC).



Lacanian style clay antefix from the Bouleuterion roof (31.49). It is decorated with a relief Gorgoneion (end of the 6th cent. BC).



Clay antefix from the roof of a building, probably a treasury (4W41). It is decorated with a painted meander, while one of its horn-like finials, springing from either side of a central sharp peaked projection has been fully preserved. Antefixes of this type (horn roofs or Hörnerdächer) decorated the roofs of buildings in the sanctuaries of Olympia and Delphi. They are thought to have originated in Lower Italy (570/60-550 BC).





Clay corner sima from an unidentified treasury building (2nd c.). The relief decoration with its rosettes and cylindrical waterspout evoke Greek workshops in the West. To date, this very interesting type of clay ceiling facing has only been found in the sanctuary of Olympia (550-530 BC).

The restored Doric limestone entablature of the Treasury of the Megarians. Above the Roman *Ena* epistyle with the inscription ΜΕΓΑΡΕΩΝ (of the Megarians), which identified the city making the dedication to the sanctuary of Zeus, is a level with triglyphs and undecorated metopes. The pediment, over which is a clay facing decorated with painted Corinthian-style palmettes, depicts a Centauremachy. Of the eleven extant figures that had been painted, Zeus may be discerned in the centre, defeating a Giant. Athena and Poseidon stand on Zeus' left, Hera and Ares on his right. The corners of the composition are filled with sea monsters and reptiles (520 BC).





### *Outstanding works of large-scale terracotta sculpture*

THE CLAY AND PAINTED ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION on the treasuries, and perhaps other buildings in the Altis, complement the tall clay statues, many fragments of which have been preserved, as well as whole works. They began to be produced in the middle of the 6th century and continued throughout the 5th century BC. They were usually placed as central or side antefixes on pediments, but also existed as independent works in the form of groups that were sometimes votive offerings. The majority of the large-scale terracotta statuary at Olympia, equivalent in artistic value to the great works of sculpture, came from the excavation works on the slopes of the Stadium.

Of particular interest is the technique with which they were made. Two layers of clay were spread over a wooden skeleton. The inner one was rough while the outer one was finer, constituting the field on which the statue would be moulded. The masterly moulding of the clay and skilled firing were plainly factors in their success. This can be confirmed by the excellent state of preservation of the colours (deep brown and red or black) as well as the decorative details with which the work was finished. The Olympia Museum owns a rare group of large-scale clay statuary, the thorough study of which arrived at significant conclusions regarding their possible attribution to buildings in the Altis, while at the same time raising issues that are open to further research.

The type of corner roof tiles adorned with the figures of a Satyr and a Maenad is known in the output of Magna Graecia and Etruria. It is also possible to include in this artistic and geographic horizon fragments belonging to the group of two clay figures from the sanctuary of Olympia: a Satyr, the bottom half of whose head has been preserved, together with his goat-shaped legs and hoof, is clutching a Maenad. The well-shaped head of the female figure is wearing a finely-decorated polos, and has facial features of the typical Archaic type, with emphasis on the arched eyebrows, and part of the lower trunk, where the garment is intertwined with the body of the Satyr. This Sicilian work, the earliest drawn reconstruction of which was done by the German archeologist G. Treu, probably came from the main acroterion of the treasury of the Selinountians and dates to 550-520 BC. One can admire the exceptional rendering in clay, with lucid anatomical details, as much as the foot of a female figure, possibly originating in a similar group, that is standing on tiptoes with visible pressure on the base.

In the Archaeological Museum of Olympia, the clay head of a woman with a plain diadem also belongs to the same period (540 BC) and may perhaps have come from the terracotta architectural decoration on the treasury of the Gelans. The skill of the anonymous artist focused on the figure's charmingly expressed little smile, conveyed through the moulding of the cheeks, the strongly protruding nose and the bright eyes, whose expression is not blank, as in the early Archaic works, but focused with a lively expression emphasized by the painted eyelashes and hair. The absolutely frontal sphinxes sitting on their hind legs, their heads turned to the left, were obviously used as acroteria on an Archaic building in the Altis. Despite the fact that sections of them are missing, the well-preserved extant parts indicate the robustness of these works from the mid-6th century BC (540/530 BC).

Many fragments of clay statues of figures identified as Nikes (Victories) belonged to buildings with roofs of the Corinthian type. Two amazingly artistic trunks of this type have been attributed to Nikes that were probably acroteria on treasuries. These Nikes, although they have been preserved in a piecemeal state, can nevertheless be regarded as complete works in terms of the concept and rendering of the theme. These statuesque airy figures with long tresses, perhaps holding wreaths in one hand, while lifting a pleat of their beautifully draped and elaborately decorated garment with the other, are both turned outward as though longing to escape from the roof, in a movement that, although more liberated, is still reminiscent of the figures with bent legs in earlier Archaic works.

It is obvious that the central acroterion of the same building – as testified by the partially preserved plinth in pedimental form – was a clay group representing the Gigantomachy with Athena and a giant,

*View of the terrace of the treasuries from SSE. The pillar of the partially restored Treasury of the Sikyonians is visible.*



perhaps Enceladus, as protagonists. The enlightening reconstruction of the group from the fragments that have been preserved represents Athena in armour defeating a kneeling giant, grabbing the crest of his helmet with her left hand and perhaps holding a spear in her right. Of the entire group, the beautiful head of the goddess has been preserved with the restrained expression and hair of the mature Archaic period, elements that prepare us for the imminent Severe Style in sculpture. Athena, even though armed as usual, allows herself the right to feminine concern for her appearance in this work by wearing earrings. The vitality of the original composition with its well-preserved colours is suggested in the pieces of the two figures that are regarded as playing a key role in identifying and interpreting the representation of the acroterion, which is included among the great clay statuary of the early Classical period (500/490 BC).

The pedimental base on which the figure of Zeus is standing makes it absolutely clear that the intact



*Clay female head, which may have come from the terracotta architectural decoration of the Treasury of the Gelans (T 1). The little smile created by the moulding of the cheeks gives expression to the figure with its protruding nose and bright eyes. The hairstyle and plain diadem are rendered in a dark colour, as are the pupils of the eyes, the finely drawn eyebrows and eyelashes. Created in 540 BC.*

and particularly well preserved group of Zeus and Ganymede was the main acroterion on a building with a Corinthian roof, perhaps a treasury such as in the previous case. In this clay group, Zeus is represented carrying Ganymede, son of the king of Troy, to Olympus where the boy would be granted eternal youth and would become the cup-bearer of the gods. The rooster that Ganymede is holding symbolizes the love of the Zeus for the beautiful young prince, and the unique expressiveness, movement, vitality and colour set their seal on this most exquisite and famous example of the great clay statuary in ancient Greece, an anonymous work of 470 BC, almost as synonymous with Olympia and its Museum, as are the Hermes of Praxiteles and the Nike of Paionios. In this work, it is clear that art has become distanced from its mature Archaic phase and is entering a new era in which profound changes are taking place.

Part of a multi-figured group or composition that obviously represented a battle, but on a flat base, was the superbly fashioned body of a nude warrior, on which the quality of the white stucco gives the impression of burnished skin – a feature of early Classical sculpture (490 BC). The short mantle thrown over the shoulder of the figure, as well as the various members of the statue (palms, part of the face, upper arms) were sculpted with great mastery and are attributed to the work but without offering the possibility of re-assembling them into a whole. Thus, the rendering of the surface suggests the top creations of a Corinthian workshop. This clay sculpture must have belonged either to a pedimental composition, with no indications of any specific building, or may have been a work erected independently in the sanctuary.

The seated lion with the lavish mane and bright eye that so suits the proud leader of the animal kingdom belongs to the middle of the 5th century BC. It may have been the crowning of an edifice or some other structure, or perhaps a votive offering in the sanctuary. And finally, the beautifully fashioned dolphin depicted swimming in the foaming waves, which was certainly part of the rich ceramic tiling on the roof of an unknown building in the Altis, dates to the third quarter of the 5th century BC.



*Wing of a clay Sphinx (BE 627). This may have been the antefix of a building in the Altis during the Archaic Era (mid-6th cent. BC).*



*Parts of clay figures that served as antefixes decorating the roofs of Corinthian style buildings, possibly treasuries. The fragment of a clothed body (Te 1071/K 181) appears to have belonged to a winged Nike. The foot, attached to a plinth section, and expressing amazingly realistic movement, may come from a statue group (Te 878/ K 175). Created in a Corinthian workshop (late 6th cent. BC).*





*Fragments of clay statues that formed a group. According to the reconstruction drawn by G. Tona, it depicted a Satyr abducting a Maenad. The lower half of the bearded Satyr's face has been preserved (Tc 35259). His goat leg and hoof (Tc 1048) are tangled in the Maenad's garment. The female figure with its undulating hair and diadem, decorated with palmettes and lotuses, beautifully retains its vivid Late Archaic expression (K 172-right). The composition, of Sicilian origin, may have served as the central acroterion decorating the Treasury of the Selinuntians (530/20 BC).*





*Clay torsoes from figures depicting Nikes (T 304, Ta 254 and T 44 + T 131 + T 261 + T 297 + T 298). They stand out for the wonderful rendition of the long plaited tresses and the beautifully draped and elaborately decorated garments. They evidently served as side acroteria, decorating the pediment of a building (reconstruction). The himation fragments (T 37a) and foot (T 280) belonged to similar figures (500/490 BC).*



Clay head of Athena (T 6 / BE 144) wearing an Attic helmet, possibly with a high crest. Over a double series of spiralling curls, she wears a diadem decorated with lotus blossoms. The fragments depicted (a hand grabbing a helmet crest: T 24 + T 140 + T 41, part of a giant's face: T 260, and a Gorgoneion: T 25) when associated with others lead us to propose reconstructing a group where a fully armoured Athena is defeating a kneeling giant, possibly Enceladus (500/490 BC). Produced in a Corinthian workshop, the composition was a central acroterion flanked by the two Nikes at the ends of the pediment, apparently on the same building (reconstruction on the left).





Clay statue group of Zeus and Ganymede, found nearly intact during the 1878 excavations in the Stadium area (T2 / T2a / Tr 1049). Zeus, holding a rod and striding to the left, in a plated garment, with beautiful curls on his forehead, is carrying Ganymede, the young prince of Troy, to Olympus to make him the gods' cup-bearer. Ganymede is holding a rooster, a lover token from the god. The group was certainly the central acroterion of a building with a Corinthian style roof, as it is preserved along with the attached triangular pedimental section of its base. Unparalleled expressiveness, movement, vigour and colour stamp what may be the most exquisite example of large scale terracotta statuary of Ancient Greece, the work of an anonymous artist, originating in a Corinthian workshop (470 BC).







Clay headless body of a warrior wearing leg-guards (T 3). The fragments depicted (part of the face: T 580, a hand tightly grasping a sword scabbard: T 291 and a hand grabbing the arm of another figure: T 5) belong to the same work. It is unknown whether this multi-figured group or composition, which evidently depicted a battle and had a level base, belonged to a building. It may have simply been a freestanding piece placed in the sanctuary of Olympia.



The back view of the nude warrior (T. 3). His himation, magnificently created and decorated, falls evenly to cover the front and back left part of his torso above the diagonally worn sword belt holding the sword. The quality of the white slip used by the unknown artist gives the impression of burnished skin, a feature of the early classical plastic arts. The exceptional work of a Corinthian workshop (490 BC).

Seated clay lion with a rich mane and lively gaze, characteristic of the animal's dominant and proud nature (Tc 1798 a-b + Tc 1800 / K178). It may have crowned some building, or other structure, or even been a votive offering in the sanctuary. Produced in a Corinthian workshop (mid-5th cent. BC).

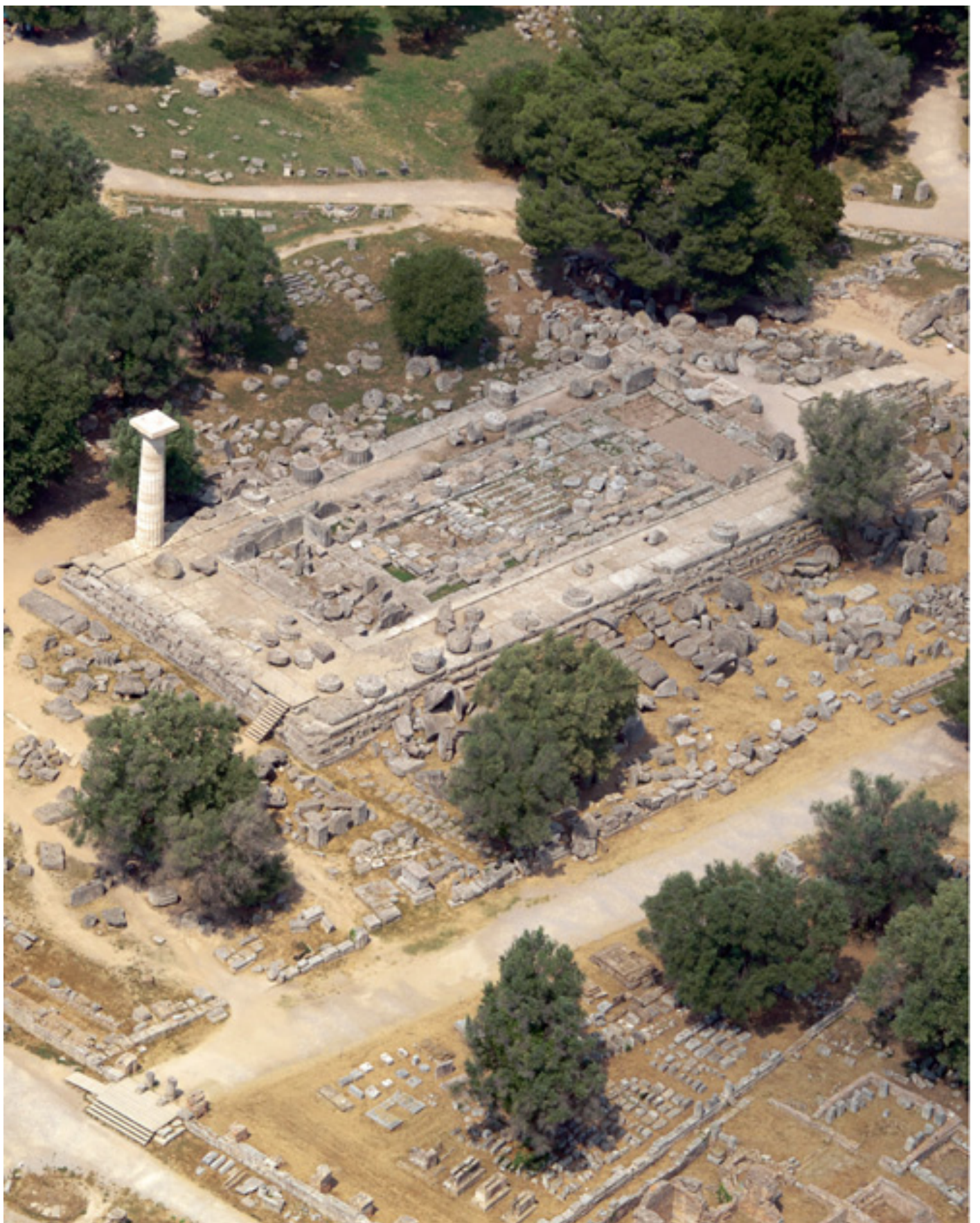


*Clay dolphin (Te 1039 + 4598 / K 182). This charming animal, beautifully crafted, is depicted swimming in the foaming waves. It was part of the sumptuous clay roof of an unknown building in the Akropolis (3rd quarter of the 5th cent. BC).*



*Sculpted clay figure of a Sphinx seated on her hind legs (Te 772 + T7). She is depicted facing straight ahead with erect front legs. The plumage on the body and the feathers retain the brown-black colour of the original painted decoration. It was the acroterion of some treasury's pediment. The work of a Corinthian workshop (mid-6th cent. BC).*





## THE HEYDAY OF THE SANCTUARY - THE 5<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BC

THE 5<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BC constituted a period of absolute prosperity, glory and splendour in every area for the sanctuary of Olympia. Extensive construction activity went on both within and outside the Altis. The continuous increase in athlete and spectator attendance also determined the final form of the Stadium at the beginning of the century, since it was moved farther east and north, to the site it occupies today. An embankment marked its western side. Many of the sanctuary's existing buildings were renovated, while the erection of the treasuries was completed. The temple-like Treasury of the Gelans, as previously mentioned, acquired its southern six-columned porch, the Prytaneion was extended and the Bouleuterion acquired its north apsidal wing in order to form, along with the earlier south wing, a balanced architectural configuration.

The impressive Hippodrome was constructed during the same period; according to Pausanias, it was located southeast of the Stadium, with its track between the Stadium and the Alpheus River. Although scholars are certain that it was destroyed by flooding and alluvial deposits, they continue searching for traces, while Pausanias' analytical description of the structural details remains unique, providing data for theoretical reproductions of the site where the most spectacular horse and chariot races took place (Pausanias, 6.20.10-20). The first bathing facilities, which were later modified, were constructed then, east of the Cladeus River bed, as well as the Theikoleon, the priests' headquarters; farther to the west of the Theikoleon was the Heroon, as well as Pheidias' Workshop, where the great sculptor and his team worked on the chryselephantine cult statue of Zeus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

The sanctuary was fully organized with a staff that encompassed various religious and athletic specializations. There were the *Hellanaidai* (judges of the games), assisted by the *alptarchoi* and the *sabdarchoi* (rod-bearers) who maintained order; there were also the *hieroboloi* (priests), the oracles, as previously mentioned, the *migitai* (who explained the ceremonies and games to the visitors), the *auloi* (who played the aulos during the sacrifices) the *xyfiai* (responsible for procuring poplar wood for the sacrifices) as well as the lesser staff, *amothoi* (wine keepers), *kleidouchai* (key-keepers), *artokopoi* (bread-cutters), *stragontai* (building superintendents), and others.

The discovery in the Altis of a characteristic group of vessels, dating primarily to the 5th cent. BC, produced locally and of a public nature (inscribed with the initials ΔΑΙΜΟΔΟΕΙ), indicates the existence of some type of regulatory authority, i.e., of employee-priests, authorized to measure the crops, grains and legumes consumed by the sanctuary's merchants and visitors. The excavations also uncovered large numbers of various types of bronze weights, most of which bear the inscription ΔΙΟΣ (of Zeus) and frequently the thunderbolt, the symbol of the god, because, apart from being used commercially to weigh products, they were also offerings to the highest of the gods. The worship of Zeus, whose stamp was located everywhere, is also corroborated by Elean coins depicting not only the head of the god, but also his symbols the eagle and the thunderbolt, as well as the winged Nike. One scholarly theory holds that a mint may have been located in the Temple of Zeus, and that later, at the end of the 5th and around the early 4th century, another was located in the vicinity of the Heraion, as evidenced by coins bearing the likeness of Hera.

The sanctuary of Olympia, the gathering place of Hellenism, became a theatre of cultural and artistic events that marked that century as well as the periods to follow. Politicians, philosophers, historians, rhetoricians, poets and artists would come to Olympia to encounter a vast receptive audience as well as a channel through which to disseminate and promote their work and ideas. Various personalities of the

*View of the Temple of Zeus from the SSW. The restored NW column of the peristasis is visible as well as the fallen drums of the columns on the southern wing.*

period and the later 4th cent. BC imprinted their presence and thought on the sanctuary's history: among them were Thales, Anaxagoras, Aristotle, Socrates, Gorgias, Lysias, Isocrates and Alcibiades. Moreover, the spectacular rituals involved in holding the games, with sacrifices on the altar of Zeus and on the burial mound of Pelops, somehow presupposed, according to ancient testimonies (Xenophon *Hellenica* VII, 4, 31) as well, the existence of a very extensive space, a theatre in the broader sense of the term, a place to view the activities. This could have extended northeast of the temple of Zeus and north of the temple of Hestia, while its western border would have been the Stadium's embankment (later the Echo Stoa), with the terrace of the Treasuries serving as its northern border.

The Altis, aside from being the location where many activities took place, also became the site where a great many offerings were dedicated. From the inscriptions, we know the names of over fifty artists, among them Myron, Pheidias, Polycleitus, Onatus, Kalamis, Ageladas, and Pythagoras of Samos. Pausanias described many votive offerings of athletes, gods, and heroes – he mentioned 197 statues of Olympic champions, while the excavation finds prove that there were at least 60 more – enumerating their pedestals and inscriptions of events and artists. Many of these were discovered during the excavations, although the corresponding statues are still missing.

Although both the 5th and the 4th cent. BC were periods during which the art of sculpting attained its culmination, very few examples of the great works of bronze sculpture from that period have been preserved in the sanctuary of Olympia, in relation to the quantity of outstanding works, primarily statues of Olympic champions, that had been erected in the sanctuary. This may be explained by the fact that the precious metal would tempt any invader who happened along to destroy the works to take advantage of the bronze in other ways. The variety of plaits and tresses of hair, as well as of various limbs from bronze statues—both lower (feet) and upper (hands, fingers) extremities, etc.—primarily of athletes or other figures, which are among the exhibits of the Olympia Museum, stand as incontrovertible witnesses to the sanctuary's onetime extraordinary votive offerings. Sections of bronze statues with their pedestals constitute rare sanctuary finds. One such find is the inscribed pedestal of the statue of the pankratiast or wrestler Kapros (late 5th cent. BC); only the lower section of the right leg of the bronze statue remains to forever recall the athlete's victories.

Of the equally large-scale victory offerings of two bronze bulls that Pausanias saw exhibited in the Altis, the one he described as being an offering of the Kerkyraians was not preserved. The second bull was dedicated to the sanctuary and to Zeus by the citizens of Eretria on Euboea, after their victory over Athens in the early 5th century BC. Of this votive offering, only one of the bull's heroically proportioned ears and a horn have been preserved and are exhibited in the Museum. The statue had been placed on an inscribed base that to this day still remains on the spot where it was discovered. From the inscription, we know that the work was created by the bronze sculptor Philesius (ΦΙΛΗΣΙΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ ΕΡΕΤΡΙΑΙΣ ΤΟΙΣ).

One practically intact piece, noteworthy for its realistically rendered anatomical details is the Museum Collection's wonderful solid cast horse statuette, dating to approximately 470 BC. Certain details, such as the movement of the noble animal's proud head, the diagonal placement of the harness, the folded band on the left side of its belly and the position of the thighs, that indicate the horse's preparedness before the start of the race, demonstrate, according to scholars, that it was the left outside horse of a small quadriga, either another votive offering to Zeus from a victor or an offering in gratitude for victory in a chariot race. This exquisite work of art, the product of an Argive workshop, reveals how the art of sculpting horses in bronze gradually developed in Olympia; this may be charted through representative works of each period's artistic movements located in the Museum's collection, as far back as the Geometric Age.

While the Olympic Games were held, new contests were gradually introduced, until by the 145th Olympiad (200 BC) they numbered 18 in all. In the 5th century BC, the games became a complete five-day programme of events, which was repeated every fifth year, i.e., after four years had passed, (quinquennial games), at the first full moon after the summer solstice and were carried out in this fashion until the end of antiquity. Between athletic competitions, the Altis never ceased to function as a sacred place. The buildings were maintained and worshippers were constantly arriving, irrespective of the games.

There were many temples and altars to divinities where sacrifices were offered and other ritual activities took place.

The Games were announced one month before they took place, during which month, the Sacred Truce (*ekcheiria*) was in effect. The athletes, after arduous training in the *gymnasia* and other athletic locations of Elis, the organizing city and capital of the Eleans—which acquired great power after it became the centre of a union of smaller townships (*synoecism*) in 471 BC and with the establishment of a democratic regime—would compete with rather than against their opponent. The good contest, “fair play” and noble rivalry were rewarded with a prize of incalculable moral value, the *kotinos* (from the word *kotos* = rage, valour, courage). The simple wild olive wreaths were generously provided by the “beautifully-crowned olive tree” (*kaliste thanos*) in the south-western corner of the Temple of Zeus, planted there, according to tradition, by Heracles himself. In wreath-bearing contests (*staphantos*), the victor’s merit was equal to that of gods and heroes. The ancient Greeks considered an Olympic victory to be a gift of the gods and the victor was their chosen one. The custom of placing statues of Olympic champions in the Altis began during this period. The fame of a victor in the Olympic Games remained untouched by the ravages of time through his statue, which he himself erected in the Altis, as well as by the epinician, the celebratory ode to the victor, familiar to us through the epinician odes to Olympic champions and victors in other Panhellenic games composed by the famous ancient Greek poets Simonides, Bacchylides, and naturally the lyrical Pindar. The latter considered that the ode to the victor, expressed through words, was longer-lasting than the deed.

The great apogee of the 5th century BC, which rendered the sanctuary of Olympia the centre of Hellenism, may be plausibly interpreted as a natural consequence of the development of the Archaic Period, since it is situated within the broader political setting that developed after the successful outcome of the Greeks’ battle against the Persians not only on Greek soil (Plataea, Marathon, Salamis), but also on the soil of the Greek colonies in the West. The euphoric feeling resulting from victory and the defence of territorial integrity established national unity, while the high national sentiment that developed became a prime mover leading to the advancement and development of every aspect of life, social, political, and financial. This was ultimately transmuted into the great burgeoning of the Classical civilisation.

After the Persian Wars ended, the religious festivals at Olympia were celebrated with particular magnificence, and the Olympiad of 476 BC was a festival of celebration (Herodotus, 7, 165), with Themistocles, the great victorious general of Salamis, entering the Stadium and being triumphantly hailed as yet another Olympic champion.

During this period, the magnificent Temple of Zeus was built, famous for the extraordinary art of its sculpted ornamentation as well as for the colossal statue of the god placed in the rear of the cella. Located in virtually the centre of the sanctuary, its purpose was to serve as the dominant symbol of Elean unity. The temple, sculptures and cult statue were established in the minds of the Greeks as a real as well as symbolic triune monumental votive offering to the supreme god protector, around which the history of the sanctuary and the games unfolded.



*Bronze hydria handle (M 874). It is intricately decorated with palmets and a winged female protome (approximately 480 BC).*



*Bronze statue of Pan in a dancing pose (B 1601). He appears to be holding a shepherd's staff in his left hand and snapping the fingers of his raised right hand. In the sanctuary of Zeus, the Arcadian Goat God was worshipped at two altars (circa 430 BC).*





Cylindrical clay measuring vessels for fruit, grains and legumes, produced locally in Elis for public use, as indicated by the initials ΔΑ[ΜΟΣΙΟΙ] (Public), inscribed on some of them. They sometimes had painted representations (delphin), symbols or stamps with mythological subjects, such as the one depicting Thetis delivering Achilles his weapons (K 1283). The fruit measuring container (K 84) has a lead hoop near the base and a painted band on the rim. This special category of vessels was in use from the end of the 5th to the first half of the 4th cent. BC.





Solid bronze inscribed weights in the shape of a triangle with curved sides, of the Phoenician type (B 1688, B 1574). They were used to weigh various products, and as the inscription ΔΙΟΣ (to Zeus) in dotted lettering reveals, they had been dedicated to the sanctuary of the supreme god.



Bronze weight in the shape of a knuckle-bone with the incised inscription ΔΙΟΣ (to Zeus) (B 5566).



Arginetan type bronze bell-shaped graduated weight (B 801), a votive offering to the sanctuary of Zeus.

Bronze weights used to weigh various products, votive offerings to the sanctuary of Zeus. The triple-graduated one (B 3498) is inscribed with the word ΔΙΟΣ (to Zeus). The Attic Arginetan type weights are decorated with an identical relief or incised inscription and a relief thunderbolt, the symbol of the god (triple-graduated weight: B 12122, square: B 2513).





*Silver coins from an Elean mint. They depict the head of Zeus in profile facing right crowned with an olive wreath (N 225 / 271–191 BC). The head of Hera in profile facing right is depicted on Elean staters, her hair intricately arranged, covered with a polos decorated with palmettes (N 1194 / 5th–4th cent. BC). Another favourite motif of Elean coins was the winged Nike, depicted between the initials FA (= of the Eleans).*





*Silver staters produced in an Elean mint with the symbols of Zeus, protector of the sanctuary of Olympia. An eagle is depicted in two ways: wings spread (N 1198 / 471–452 BC), and in profile facing left, its imposing head realistically depicted (N 1195 / 4th cent. BC). On the reverse of coin N 1194 a double thunderbolt is depicted and on either side the initials FA (= of the Eleans); 5th—4th cent. BC.*





*Marble head of an athlete (A 99). It depicts a pankratiast or wrestler whose facial features suggest the schools of Scopos and Epseppos (circa 340 BC).*



*Nude marble torso, which according to one theory is identified as Apollo (A 100). This is a Roman copy of a work from the mid 5th cent. BC.*

ᾧ τῶν κρατῶν ἐφετμῆς  
 Ἡρακλῆος κροτήρας  
 ἀτρεχέως Ἑλληνοδίκου γλυφίδων Αἰ-  
 ταιῶς ἀνθρ' ἰσθόθεν  
 ἀμφὶ κόμησιν βάλει γλαυ-  
 κόχροα κόκορον ἑλίας, τὸν ποτὲ  
 Ἰστροῦ ἀπὸ οὐραρῶν πα-  
 γὼν ἐνεκεν Ἀμφιτρωνιάδας,  
 μνήμα τὸν Ὀλυμπίῳ κάλλιστον ἀέθλων [...].

*... for anyone over whose brow the strict Aetolian  
 judge of the Greeks tesses up around his hair  
 the grey-green adornment of olive leaves,  
 fulfilling the ancient behests of Heracles:  
 the olive which once the son of Amphitryon  
 brought from the shady springs of the Danube,  
 to be the most beautiful memorial  
 of the Olympian contests...*

*(Pindar, Olympian III, For Theron of Acragas, Winner  
 of the Chariot Race, during the Theoxenia Feast, 11–19)*



Composition of bronze leaves and sections of olive branches, a small sample of the surfeit of identical pieces dedicated to the sanctuary of Zeus.



Bronze inscribed tablet of the Archaic Era (B 134), which records the names of Hellanodikai.

The Hellanodikai were the supreme judges of the competition. Originally there was only one, known as the *diaktes* (arbitrator, judge), which was a lifelong hereditary office. After the 108th Olympiad (548 BC) and the establishment of a permanent program of athletic contests, the Hellanodikai became 10, and were elected for a single Olympiad. They were responsible for the organization, supervision and smooth operation of the games, the faithful adherence to the rules, the awarding of prizes, and the imposition of monetary or corporal penalties as punishment for any sort of transgression. Judges punished athletes who accepted bribes by banning them from the games, as well as by levying a monetary penalty, part of which had to be used to create bronze statues of Zeus (the *Zanes*).

Inscribed bronze tablet (B 6075 + B 6116). It contains the rules governing the athletes and judges during the final quarter of the 6th cent. BC.  
 Ο ΔΕ ΠΑΛΑΙΣΤΑ ΟΥΤΕ ΚΑ ΔΑΚΤΥΛΟΝ ΕΝΑ ΑΓΑΝΟ [...] ΟΥΤΕ [...] ΚΟΛΑ / ΑΔΟΙ  
 ΠΛΑΘΗ ΚΑ Ο ΔΙΑΙΤΑΤΕΡ ΠΛΑΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΚΕΦΑΛΑΙΑ [...] ΤΟΙ ΜΥΙΑΝΤΕΡΕΣ  
 ΕΝΟΙΣΕΟΝΤΑΙ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥΤΟΙ ΥΠΟΧΕΙΣΘΕΟΝ [ΤΑΙ...] Ν Τ' ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ ΚΑΡΚΕΝ  
 ΑΔΟΝΚΟΝ ΕΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥΤΟΙ ΜΥ[...] ΟΥΤ' ΑΝΘΡΑ ΦΛΕΙΟΝ ΚΑ / Ι ΤΑΣ ΣΥΜΜΗΑΘΧΙΑΣ  
 ΟΥΤΕ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΑ ΑΙ ΜΕΝ [ΒΔΟΣ ΝΑΡΟ(Ν... [ΟΥ ΚΑ]... ΑΝ / ΔΡΑ ΦΛΕΙΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΑΣ  
 ΣΥΜΜΑΧΙΑΣ ΟΥΤΕ ΚΟΒΑΛΟΣ ΟΥΤ[...] / ΚΑ ΒΑΡΧΟΝΑΣ ΑΠΟΤΙΝΟΙ ΙΤ' ΑΠΕΛΟΒΑΙΤΟ  
 Ε ΔΕΤ[...] / Σ Κ' ΕΔΟΡΡΕΟΙ ΣΥΝ Δ' ΑΛΛΟΤΡΙΟΙΣ ΧΡΕΝΑΤΟΙΣ ΟΥ ΚΑ  
 ΘΕΑΡΟΣ... ΠΟΛΕΜΟΙ





Marble roof tile from the Temple of Zeus (A 535). Shaped like a pedimental stele decorated with palmette antefixes, it was used to record the names of the staff of the sanctuary of Olympia between the 188th and the 189th Olympiad (28–24 BC).





Inscribed marble base of the statue of Damagitus. This was evidently one of the pedestals of the Diagorides, which had been erected in the Altis in honour of the famous family of Olympic champions (OI, V 152). Damagitus, one of the three sons of the famous pankratiast and Olympic champion Diagoras of Rhodes and brother of Kallipatira, famous for her daring, was proclaimed an Olympic champion in the 82nd and 83rd Olympiad (452 and 448 BC).

Stone votive halteres (jumping weight). It was used in the long jump section of the pentathlon and was dedicated to the sanctuary by the Spartan Akmatidas (A 189). The inscription ΑΚΜΑΤΙΔΑΣ ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΩΝ ΑΝΕΘΕΚΕ ΤΑ ΓΥΝΤΕ ΑΣΣΚΟΝΚΤΕ (Akmatidas, the Lakedaemonian, winner of the Pentathlon without [touching] dust dedicated this) states the athlete was victorious without facing a competitor, since the dust of the track did not touch him (late 6th or early 5th cent. BC).



Torso of an Archaic stone kouros (A 257). The inscription on the statue's chest ΑΡΡΑΧΙΩΝ ΘΥΡΑΝΙΣΤΗΣ refers to the pankratiast Arrachion, of Phigalia, who was declared an Olympic champion as he was dying, since his opponent had already signalled his submission (2nd quarter of the 6th cent. BC).



Marble base of the statue of the famous Olympic champion Polydamas, a pankratiast from Skotoussa in Thessaly (A 45). The relief scenes on its sides depict the athlete's feats. The work of the great sculptor Lysippos of Sikyon (2nd half of the 4th cent. BC).



Bronze inscribed disc, a votive offering by Popylus Asclepiades, a pentathlon champion (M 891). The inscription on one side refers to the Corinthian athlete's achievement. The inscription on the other side records the confirmation of the votive offering by the receiving official (241 AD).

Bronze statues of athletes, offerings of a pentathlon champion to the sanctuary of Olympia. The runner in the starting position (B 26) and the discus thrower (B 6767 + 7500) have the same votive inscription ΤΟΜΩΙΕ ΠΩ, and were created in an Argive workshop (circa 490). The kouros-type statuette of an athlete (B 2400) appears to be wearing a Thyreatic wreath (of palm leaves?) and comes from a Laconian workshop (after the mid-6th cent. BC).





Cast bronze statuette of a horse (B 1000). The practically intact piece was created in an Argive workshop. The rendering of the noble animal's anatomical details is exceptionally well done. The movement of the head, the diagonal position of the harness, the folded band on the left side of its belly and the position of its thighs indicate the horse's state of preparedness before the start of the race. It appears to have been the left outside horse of a small quadriga, offered to Zeus either by a victor, or as a votive offering in gratitude for a chariot race victory (circa 470 BC).





Fragments of bronze statues or statuettes, offerings to the sanctuary of Zeus. Forearms or hands of the 4th cent. BC and the Hellenistic Age (Br 7568, B 3375G), the ear of a 5th cent. BC statue (B 151), and the broken piece of a statuette's upper torso or garment with vertical pleats of the 4th–3rd cent. BC (M 961) have been preserved.



The bronze ear and horn of a heroically proportioned bull (M 888, Br 912, K 1034, K 1035). The bull was dedicated by the Eretrians of Euboea to the sanctuary of Zeus after their victory over Athens in the early 5th century BC. This imposing victory votive offering was placed on a pedestal that remains in situ in the Altis. The inscription on the pedestal ΦΙΛΕΙΔΟΣ ΕΡΕΤΡΙΩΝ ΕΡΕΤΡΩΝ (Phileides created the offering of the Eretrians to Zeus) reveals the sculptor who created the bronze votive offering.



Parts of the feet of bronze statues of the 5th cent. BC (B 272, Br. 5002). The inscribed stone base, which retains only the right foot of the statue of an athlete, belongs to an Olympic champion, the wrestler-pankratiast Kapros, and dates to the late 3rd cent. BC (Br 2772 + M 889 + K 1068).





*Broken fragments of curls from bronze statues or statuettes dedicated to the sanctuary of Zeus. There are snaky curls (Br 12851, Br 14063, Br 2086), helical (Br 3406, Br 12526a and Br 12625), and spiral (B 6410, B 7562, B 6376, Br 1219) curls, while others combine the two types (Br 179, Br 7503). They date to the 5th cent. BC.*





*Bronze handle of an opulent shallow bowl (B 5110). It is decorated with two lions mauling a deer. An exquisite example of bronzework, possibly from an Achaean workshop (circa 480 BC).*



*Cast, solid bronze figurine of a deer (B 1.387). The animal, braced on its back feet, its body erect, and its head faintly turned frontwards, was the decorative accessory of a vessel (6th cent. BC).*





### *The Severe Style: The Temple of Zeus and its Sculptural Decoration*

CONSTRUCTION WORK ON THE TEMPLE OF ZEUS began in 476 BC in a prominent location of the Altis; its dimensions and robust proportions were unprecedented in the annals of Doric temple construction. We know from a preserved inscription that construction must have been completed by 457 BC, since a gold-plated shield, part of the spoils from the recent Spartan victory over Athens in Tanagra, was placed above the temple's eastern pediment as an offering of gratitude to Zeus. *'The architect was Libon, a native'*, Pausanias states, and continues describing the edifice and its decoration to finish off with a monumental description of Pheidias' work of art, the colossal enthroned Zeus, which stood in the rear of the cella approximately two decades later.

The Deian architect Libon built the temple after previously laying out the south section of the sacred grove in an appropriate manner so that the building would be erected on a substructure approximately 5-metres high, after the necessary embankment work. The peripteral temple had a standard east-west orientation and was surrounded by a colonnade with six columns at each end and thirteen along the sides; it constituted the most splendid execution of the Doric temple construction canon. The building material was the local porous shell limestone, which was evidently brought in via the then navigable Alpheus River from a quarry next to the sanctuary. The material appears to have been superbly treated despite the fact that its exterior surfaces were completely covered with fine stucco. Parian marble was used for the roof (large Corinthian style tiles), for the sima or rain gutter beneath the pediment, with its 102 lions' head waterspouts, as well as for the sculpted decoration on the pediments and metopes above the pronaos and the opisthodomos.

Each column, with a base diameter of 2.25 m, was 10.45 m high and supported the Doric entablature that consisted of the architrave, frieze (metopes-triglyphs), pediment, cornices and acroteria. The temple reached a total height of 20.25 m, which a present-day visitor can appreciate to some degree by observing the northwest column of the peristasis that was restored in 2004. Both pronaos and opisthodomos were constructed in antis (with two columns between pilasters). The tripartite cella had a double colonnade. Between the two tiers of columns, the architraves apparently supported additional galleries. Small wooden staircases would have led up to them to the right and left of the bronze double entrance door, so the visitor could observe from up close the enthroned statue of Zeus. Pausanias mentions that a gold-plated statue of Nike served as the central acroterion, crowning the eastern pediment, the work of the sculptor Paionios from Mende in Chalkidiki, while on the side acroteria a gold-plated tripod cauldron had been placed (Pausanias, 5.10.4). Later, after the destruction of Corinth (146 BC), the traveller mentioned the placement of 21 bronze gilded shields on the exterior metopes of the temple peristasis, a war offering from the Roman consul Mummius.



*"To come to the pediments: in the front pediment there is, not yet begun,  
the chariot race between Pelops and Oenomaos, and preparation  
for the actual race is being made by both."  
(Pausanias, 5.10.6)*

*The sculpted decoration of the eastern pediment of the  
Temple of Zeus, depicting the moment before  
the chariot race between  
Oenomaos and Pelops  
began.*

An iron railing enclosed the pronaos; the ceremonial crowning of the Olympic victors would occur in its entranceway. Multiple votive offerings would have been placed in the pronaos and the cella, while the opisthodomos, which contained a stone bench running along its sides, served as a speaker's platform, on which among others, Herodotus the great historian of the period, narrated his Histories, honouring the site with his presence.

The fact that isolated examples of the period's great works of sculpture have not been preserved in Olympia is balanced by the discovery of the full complement of 42 pedimental figures carved in the round, the 12 carved metopes and the lions' head waterspouts of the temple, all of Parian marble and of inestimable artistic value. This sculptural unit encapsulates in the most complete fashion the changes that defined the period with its new perceptions of religion, politics, philosophy, letters and arts, as well as the new morality and sense of measure that dominated, both as a way of life and way to view the world and its contents. Along with the period's very few remaining examples to have been preserved from the realm of monumental sculpture, the sculptures of Olympia are the most complete expression of the Severe Style of art that prevailed from 480 to 450 BC.

As early as the first excavation period in Olympia (1876–1877) hundreds of fragments of the temple sculptures were brought to light, which had been dispersed after the monument collapsed during the great earthquakes of the 6th century AD. This was a landmark discovery. A great many had not fallen far from their original positions, others were discovered built into various structures. The German archaeologist Georg Treu devoted a large part of his life to the painstaking and patient task of selecting, joining and identifying the works. The publication of the results of his work with the reconstruction and the first restorations of the figures from the pediment and the metopes, constituted a fundamental and pioneering achievement of classical archaeology from the period of the sculptures' original exhibition in the first Museum of Olympia (Old Museum) up to their ultimate exhibition in the New Museum in 1982. It remains timely to this day.

The pedimental sculptures were created in the round and secured with bolts to the tympanum of the pediment. Some had been hollowed out to cut down on weight, while the backs of most were not completed. No trace remains of the heroes' metal armaments, or of the chariots and the quadriga accessories that would have stunningly complemented the imposing compositions on the pediments and the metopes. The artist who created the works left untouched certain areas of the hair of the figures on the metopes and some of the pediments, which would have been rendered with colour, because of the height separating the sculptures from the viewer. Indeed, from the minimal traces of red and blue paint that were preserved, especially in the hair and eyes of the figures, one realizes what an important contribution the paintbrush made in providing a final touch to the complete picture presented by the

*Left section of the eastern pediment of the Temple of Zeus. To Zeus' right stand the royal couple Oenomaos and Sterope, Mytilus, the charioteer, and Oenomaos' quadriga, the figures of a groom and a prophet, and at the end, the reclining form of a river god (Alpheus?).*



most imposing building in the Altis in the natural light, with additional red and deep blue details on the entablature, columns and capitals.

After the detached sculptures were moved from the Old to the New Museum, although the latter's doors had already opened to the public as regards the rest of the exhibits, the Museum's central hall was transformed into a ruin site, full of sculptures and fragments awaiting reconstruction and re-exhibition. The work of reorganizing the exhibition began in 1974 under the supervision of Nikolaos Yalouris, Honorary Curator of Antiquities and Stelios Triantis, a notable sculptor. After a painstaking search of the storerooms of Olympia, the sanctuary, as well as the storerooms of the Louvre Museum in Paris, the re-exhibition of the sculptures of Olympia was presented with newly identified fragments added, and without the earlier plaster fill, placed far enough away from the Museum walls to allow the public to inspect their back view. Additionally, the earlier late 19th century iron joinings were replaced, and plaster copies of the figures and compositions were made.

The spectacular addition of approximately three hundred new fragments to the pedimental sculptures, as well as the addition of fragments to many other sculptures, dating from various periods in the Museum of Olympia, is due to the worthy, experienced and artistic eye of the great sculptor Stelios Triantis, who *"had a touch of the legendary Iygeia's discrimination"* in the words of Professor Georgios Despinis' witty and concise accolade, evaluating the sculptor's work and valuable contribution to bringing to light and studying the works of ancient sculpture.



#### EASTERN PEDIMENT

The chariot race between Oenomaus and Pelops, the sanctuary's oldest foundation myth, is depicted on the eastern pediment of the Temple of Zeus. Oenomaus, aware of the augury predicting his death at the hand of the future husband of his daughter Hippodameia, invited all her suitors to a deadly race; the chariot race's strict terms stated that the losing contestant would die at the hand of the winner. Invincible because he possessed winged horses—gifts from his father the god Ares—Oenomaus had already disposed of thirteen suitors. However, Pelops, the son of Tantalus from distant Phrygia, was to fulfil the implacable prophecy. With his own divine horses, gifts from Poseidon, and thanks to a ploy of Myrtilus, the king's charioteer, Pelops defeated Oenomaus, married Hippodameia and succeeded to her father's throne, founding the House of Pelops.

The demands of the available triangular pedimental space, which necessitated some adjustments to the figures and the chariots, represented here in an abstract manner only through the presence of the horses, quite rightly led the artist to set the representation at the moment right before the dramatic contest began. The central headless figure of Zeus dominates, through its visibly divine larger dimensions (original height 5.15 m, preserved height 2.91 m), as present but invisible to mortals ("epiphany" of the god) grasping his thunderbolt, which has not been preserved. The protector of the sanctuary is flanked by the two heroic couples in the myth. On his right stands the helmeted king of Pisa, Oenomaus with his himation thrown over his shoulder, and next to him is his wife Sterope, wrapped in her peplos. To the left of the god, also helmeted but nude, in the type of an athlete, stands Pelops, the future victor and new ruler of the kingdom, with Hippodameia wearing her Doric peplos in the "unveiling" pose, indicative of her status as a bride-to-be. The bronze spears of the protagonists, which did not survive, would have been on either side of Zeus and would thus have emphasized his invisible presence, while adapting harmoniously to the upper corner of the pediment.



The remaining figures maintain their "axial" positioning within the pedimental frame, their height decreasing proportionally to the left and right of the five central figures. The maidservant stands near Hippodameia, Myrtilus near Sterope. The two groups of four horses belonging to the quadrigas follow on either side. On the left side, the kneeling figure of the groom is followed by the figure of an oracle in the same position (Clytius or Amythaon?). On the right side behind Pelops' quadriga is the seated figure of the sanctuary's other oracle, whose stance and expression express the burden of what is to come (Iamus, Amythaon or Clytius), with a servant (Arcas?) next to him. This oracle placed in the eastern pediment, with his loose aged flesh and wrinkled brow, is far removed, for the first time in sculpture, from the idealized forms of early 5th cent. BC art, as the Archaic smile is abandoned in order to express personal emotions. The two reclining male figures in the corners of the pediment portray the two rivers of Olympia, the Alpheus and Cladeus, as gods both integrally linked with the valley and its sanctuary. At the same time, their depiction defines the location where the games take place, i.e., Olympia. In the most current depiction, the two main couples on either side of Zeus have changed position. Scholars have at times expressed differing views of the various reconstructions of the pediment, which they still maintain as regards the position of the two couples and the identity of the two river gods, with corresponding arguments.

The figures on the eastern pediment, which are imbued with immobility and a certain type of motionlessness, whether presenting a slight or more pronounced turn towards their vertical axis, evoke the general image of a centripetal composition, known from the vase painting of the era. The straight line dominates, whether vertical in the central, or horizontal in the side figures. The composition's animation

*Right section of the eastern pediment of the Temple of Zeus.*

*"Pelops, his breast heaving with the pulse of youth as well as the pulse of the Eternal, which the first strictly spiritual religion in the world granted him, goes down to Olympia beautiful, his mind unclouded... The idea of this terrible responsibility contained in the secret meeting of the tribes, the mystery of eugenic responsibility, is expressed by the great Art on this eastern pediment as an inexhaustible command for ever..."*

*Lazarus Sédrales, "The Pediments of Olympia", essay written in Olympia (1928) and published in 1952.]*



is achieved by stressing the individuality of the forms through balanced asymmetry. Permeated with a slight sense of three-dimensionality, the figures reveal the care taken to avoid deviating from the frontal view, so that their immobility and isolation may express the ensuing tragedy. The eyes, the hands and the faces were created with the severity that perfectly expressed the spirit of the period, and is not repeated in the art of the period after these works.



*Part of a marble inscription assembled from three fragments (Oli. V 253), discovered in the area of the Bouleuterion and around the Temple of Zeus during the old excavations: The temple has a golden shield from Tanagra. The Lacedaemonians and their allies dedicated it, a gift taken from the Argives, Athenians and Ionians. The tithe offered for victory in war... Corinth... (Pausanias, 5.10.4) Its discovery certifies that the Temple of Zeus must have been completed around 457 BC or a little later, since, according to the inscription, the gold shield the Lacedaemonians dedicated to the temple came from the spoils of their victory over the Argives, Athenians, and Ionians in Tanagra in 457 BC. According to Pausanias' testimony, the gold shield with the Minerva device had been placed under the gilt Nike, the central acroterion of the pediment.*

Headless semi-reclining male figure, from the left corner of the eastern pediment. Personified river god of Olympia, very likely the river Alpheus.

Ἰμερθεὺς Ἄλφει, Λαῶε στερρατηφόρον ὄδαρ,  
ἔνδρα δὲ Πισαίων πεδίων κειμοναμένους ἔρπεις,  
ἡσυχῆος τὸ πρῶτον, ἐπεὶ δ' ἐν πόρτων ἰσθαί,  
ὄβρις ἀμετρήτοιο προῖν ὑπὸ κέσμα θαλάσσης,  
ναμφίως αἰτωσελευθὸς ἑὸν ἄχρητος ἐρώτων,  
ἐς Σικελίην Ἀρήθουσαι ἐπέγγραυ ὄγγρος ἀκοίτης.

Delightful Alpheus, garlanded river of Zeus,  
Resonantly flowing through the plains of Pisa,  
First softly, then upon approaching the sea  
Tumbling swiftly into the endless depths,  
A bridegroom on your own path, driven by love  
You hurry to reach Arethusa in Sicily,  
To join your waters with the Nymph.

(Palatine Anthology, Volume 2, Epigram 362, 1-6)





*Seated male figure from the left half of the eastern pediment of the Temple of Zeus. It may be a prophet from the Lemnidae or Cypriades clans, who held an important position in the oracle of the sanctuary of Zeus*







*Headless male figure kneeling behind  
Ornamentus' quadriga, possibly his groom.  
The upper torso is inclined slightly forward,  
while a himation covers the lower part of the  
body, falling towards the ground from the  
figure's left shoulder.*

Nude male figure kneeling near Sterope's feet, in front of Oenomaus' quadriga. It is a groom, or, according to others, Oenomaus' charioteer Myrtilus, the tragic key figure in the outcome of the dramatic chariot race. According to the myth, he secretly replaced the metal linchpins of the wheel axis of Oenomaus' chariot with wax ones before the race, upsetting the chariot and killing Oenomaus as a result. The myth then has it that Pelops threw Myrtilus into the sea (which was named Myrtoan after him); the latter's curse brought about the well known tribulations of the Dynasty of the Atreides, which descended from Pelops.

ὦ Πέλοπος ὃ πρόθετον  
 πολέθωνος λυσία,  
 ὅς ἔμολες αἰσθηθεῖς  
 τῷδε γῆ!  
 ἔδρε γὰρ ὁ πορνισθεῖς  
 Μυρτίλος ἐσκαμίσθη,  
 παγγύρῳον δίφρου  
 βασάνων αἰκίας  
 πρόρριζος ἐσκαμθεῖς,  
 οὐ τί μοι  
 ἔλαυνε ἐκ τοῦδ' οἴκου  
 πολέθωνος αἰκία.

O chariot race of Pelops long ago,  
 source of many a sorrow,  
 what disaster you have brought  
 upon this land!  
 For ever since Myrtilus sank to rest  
 beneath the waves,  
 harled to utter destruction  
 from his golden chariot  
 in disgraceful outrage,  
 from that time to this,  
 outrage and its many sorrows  
 were never yet gone from this house.

(Sophocles Electra, 504–515)



The five central figures of the eastern pediment of the Temple of Zeus. The imposing headless body of Zeus Epiphenomenus stands in the centre, with a himation covering the lower part of his torso. To his right stands a helmeted Orontes, his short himation thrown over his shoulder, while his adversary Pelops stands on the god's left, nude and helmeted as well. On either side of the two heroes on the right and left respectively stand the peplos-clad Siope, her hands held in a thoughtful pose, and the young future bride, Hippodameia holding the edge of her himation in a gesture of "unveiling" indicative of her imminent wedding to the victor Pelops.







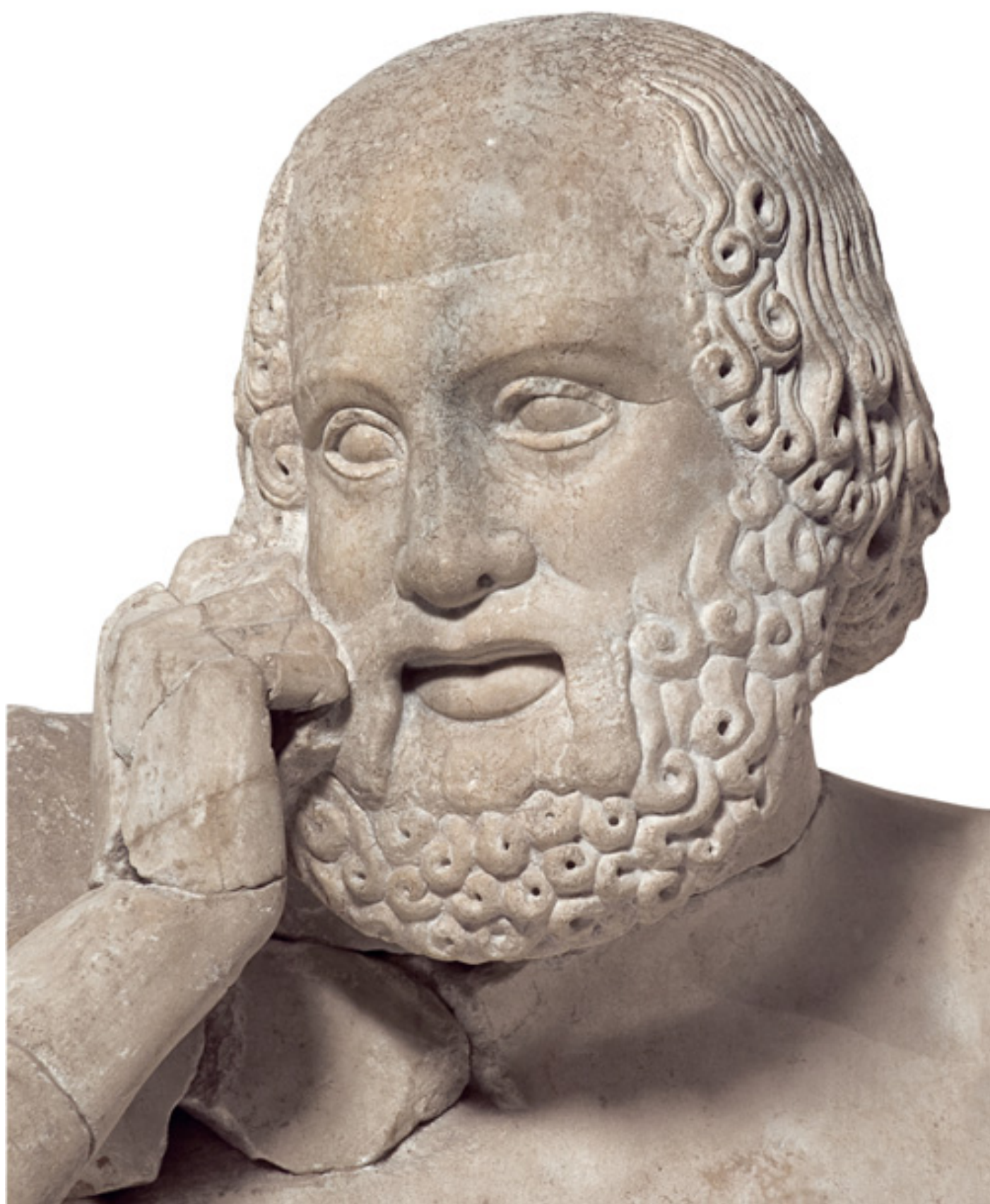
*Female figure kneeling at Hippodamia's  
feet in front of Pelops' quadriga.  
The maidservant of Oenone's daughter,  
her expression grave and absorbed,  
is wearing a long chiton that falls  
in intricate pleats especially visible  
from the back view, where the artist  
allows her flexal sole to be seen.*



*The elderly seated seer from the right half of the eastern pediment. In a remarkable position with a contemplative expression, this superb sculpted figure in the Severe Style of the art of the early 5th cent. BC bears the heavy burden of the dramatic events that are to follow.*

*Headless nude seated figure of a youth.  
Part of the left side of the sculpture is covered  
by a himation that spreads its folds over the base.  
The youth, who may represent the hero Arcas,  
is playing absent-mindedly with his toe.*









*Semi-reclining male figure from the right corner of the eastern pediment. Personified river deity of Olyropia, most probably the river Cladeus.*

*"...the Cladeus, with its source in Mt Pholoe, finally falls into the valley, twisting with infinite meanders, flowing constantly, faint and scanty in summer, but strong and noisy in winter, from which the name is derived, sometimes terrible because it was believed to be worshiped on the altar behind the temple of Hera and honoured after the Alpheus by a statue on the other pediment of the temple of Zeus."*

*(V. Leonardos, Olyropia, p. 8, Athens 1901)*





#### WESTERN PEDIMENT

On the western pediment, the challenge of hubris is powerfully depicted through the theme of the Centauromachy, along with its suppression, a divine and heroic act against bestial behaviour. The Centaurs of Mt. Pelion who were among the wedding guests of the Lapith king Peirithous got drunk and disrupted the wedding feast; their violent and brutal temperament caused them to dare to abduct the beautiful Lapith women. In the centre of the scene, another divine figure, Apollo, with an imposing presence equal to that of Zeus, 5.15 m in height, his beautiful head exceptionally preserved, intervenes in the terrible dispute as the god of light and reason. The presence of the son of Zeus on the western pediment of Olympia may perhaps be explained by the myth that claimed he was the ancestor of the race of the Iamidae, the priests of the Olympic oracle, in Olympia, near the banks of the Alpheus, Zeus' beloved river.

Here, with his extended right hand, which may have held a bow, as *epidexios* Apollo (the god who extends a hand) he is facilitating an outcome favourable to Peirithous, who is fighting on his right, while correspondingly on his left, the Athenian hero Theseus has entered the battle on the side of the Lapiths, allying himself with their leader, his friend. To the right and left of the three central figures, the conflict has reached its climax. Lapiths, Centaurs, and Lapith women form an image of tempestuous violent contrasts, with symmetrically arrayed groupings of four couples and two trios that dissociate themselves from the central figures and turn in on themselves. There, the diffused idealism of the human figures, the very world of Reason and Order, is contrasted with the irrational powers of the instincts carved into the brutal faces of the Centaurs, over which it will ultimately triumph. This is a scene in which "the mind is not present to order strength and enoble passion", as Kazantzakis summarily commented on the pediment in his inimitable fashion, when he visited the Museum of Olympia in 1957.

The centripetal movement of the figures is evident in this pedimental composition as well, which is visibly more animated since the figures, in contrast to those of the eastern pediment, are neither arrayed nor stationary. Here the dramatic engagement is wonderfully rendered through the deliberate loss of frontal viewing, the contortion and dynamism of the giant bodies that struggle, attack, defend, bite, and are repelled in diagonal groupings with a rhythmic, wavelike transfer of tension that comes to a climax towards the centre and gradually fades upon reaching the final reclining and slightly raised figures of the young and old Lapith women, who are limited to simply observing the dramatic events, but with an evident expression of anxiety. Of these figures, only the first from the right is contemporary to the

*The sculpted decoration of the western pediment of the Temple of Zeus depicting the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs.*



other pedimental sculptures while the addition to its right hand, of Pentelic marble, dates to a later period. Pentelic marble was also used for the remaining three reclining Lapith women. The first on the left may possibly date to the 4th cent. BC, while the other two reveal stylistic features characteristic of the 1st cent. BC. These replacements were due to damages inflicted on the Temple of Zeus by earthquakes.

In the existing presentation of the pedimental composition, which all scholars agree on, Georg Treu's restoration is followed, which had not been done in the Old Museum. The heroes have exchanged positions on either side of Apollo, along with the groups of Centaurs and Lapiths. Thus, the engrossing scene where Eurytion, the leader of the Centaurs, abducts the bride Deidamia, who while instinctively resisting, appears fascinated by his violent and simultaneously erotic embrace, takes place on the left side, while the corresponding right side is occupied by another grouping where the Centaur's body is better preserved.

In Olympia, the Centauromachy is presented as a pedimental scene for the first time in art. At the same time, it is innovative since it is placed within the context of a bridal festival, undeniably alluding to man's perpetual struggle against the powers of nature and of evil, and might perhaps also have been a reference to the recent glorious victories of the Greeks over the Persian barbarians. As a result, both the compositions on the eastern pediment, with its depiction of the generally accepted interpretation of the myth portrayed, the oldest in Olympia, and the western pediment as well, placed approximately 15 m above the sightline of the period's visitor and worshipper, constitute the most ideal promotion of the glory of Zeus' sanctuary, as well as the ideals of the Olympic Games. The two pedimental compositions are correctly regarded as a multifaceted trilogy in conjunction with the 12 metopes placed in two sets of six over the entrance of the pronaos and the opisthodomos of the temple of Zeus, since the temple's exterior metopes remained undecorated. During the construction works, the metope slabs must have been set in place first and followed by the pedimental sculptures. The depictions of the Twelve Labours of Heracles, which for the first time in history were presented as a whole, suggest that as the Theban hero established the athletic competitions in the Altis, he held a position equal to that of Pelops, the hero representing the sanctuary's earlier history.



*The left part of the western pediment of the Temple of Zeus. Peirithous, the leader of the Lapiths is fighting with the Centaur Eurytion on Apollo's right, defending his wife Deidamia. This is followed by groups of two couples and a trio of Lapiths, Lapith women and Centaurs, while two Lapith women are half-reclining in the corner of the pediment.*



«Τὸ δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἄνωγῃς ἔστιν αὐτῶν ἀντιμάχων ἐν τῷ Πηλεΐδου γάμῳ πρὸς κενταύρους ἡ μάχη»

*"What he carried on the pediment is the fight between the Lapithae and the Centaurs at the marriage of Peleus"*  
(Pausanias, 5.10.8)

*The Centaureomachy was presented in Olympia for the first time in the history of art as a pedimental composition, although subsequently, it became a favourite subject for the decoration of temples and other buildings (the Parthenon, the Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Phigalia, the Tholos at Delphi).*

*The two semi-reclining figures in the left corner of the western pediment of the Temple of Zeus comprise a young and an older Lapith woman. Their facial expressions denote their mounting anguish over the outcome of the titanic struggle unfolding dramatically before them.*







*Kneeling Lapith from the sculptural group of three figures on the left side of the west pediment, to the right of the semi-reclining Lapith women. With its upper torso extended and arms raised, the figure is grouped with a kneeling Centaur who has grabbed the hair of a young Lapith woman defending herself.*





*Partially preserved head of a Centaur from a sculptural group of three figures to the right of the semi-reclining Lapith women at the left end of the west pediment. The Centaur is being attacked from the left by a kneeling Lapith, whose torso is extended towards him, while seizing in his left hand the hair of a young Lapith woman kneeling on the right.*

*Figure of a kneeling Laphth woman from a sculptural trio on the left part of the western pediment of Olympia. The young woman is being attacked by a Centaur who is violently grabbing the hair at the back of her head, while simultaneously being pushed away by her hand extended to his face. The female figure stands out for the patient endurance on her face as she courageously attempts to contend with brutal, irrational Passion.*









*The group of Deidamia and Eurytion to Peirithous' left.*

*Then she saw him there again,  
Lying in wait in some dark corner  
Coming silently behind her  
He would seize her by the waist and breast  
And latching on to her flanks  
With one leg  
He would thrust his powerful hoof  
To the side of her exquisite thigh.*

*He never startled her  
Each time he assailed her  
Why she expected it, was used to it by now  
She made as if to resist pushing  
With her elbow at his carnal head  
And as she lost herself entirely  
Seized by his body  
She felt him transform  
Into a Centaur, so slowly.*

*(G. Parlopoulos "The Stair and the Artisan"  
from the collection The Skeleton Keys, Athens, 1988)*





A detailed marble sculpture showing a woman, Deidamia, in a long, pleated dress. She is embracing a centaur, Eurysthenes, who is depicted with a human torso and a horse's lower body. The centaur's hand is on the woman's chest, and his other hand is on a horse's hoof. The woman's expression is one of mixed attraction and repulsion. The sculpture is made of light-colored marble and shows signs of age and wear.

The exquisite head of the newborn Deidamia, wearing a headdress held in place with a Heracles knot, from the group with Eurysthenes, leader of the Centaurs (1271). Her body is resisting the tight embrace of the drunken but "dignified", according to J. Boardman, Centaur who is grabbing her simultaneously with his human hand and horse's hoof (01c211). The unknown artist matchlessly renders the mixed feelings of attraction and repulsion in the expression of the beautiful Lapeth woman.



The central nude sculpted figure of Apollo on the western pediment of the Temple of Zeus. A simple himation covers his right shoulder and is elaborately draped around the left forearm. As god of Light and Reason he turns his head to the right and with the corresponding arm extended (epiboleion), he determines the outcome of the dramatic engagement between Man and Beast, is invisible to the combatants, but present to impose justice and order. Immediately to his right, holding a sword in his raised right hand, the leader of the Lapiths Peirithous is fighting against the leader of the Centaurs Eurytion.





*The exceptionally beautiful head of a serene Apollo, the emblematic figure of the western pediment of the Temple of Zeus has a symbolic weight in the representation of the Centauroomachy. The face with its divine features is flanked by spiralling curls fastened with a band. The presence of the son of Zeus on the western pediment of Olympia may perhaps be linked with the myth that holds him to be the ancestor of the Iamidae, the priests of the Olympic oracle, in Olympia near the banks of Zeus' beloved river, the Alpheus.*











*The right section of the western pediment of the Temple of Zeus. In an absolutely balanced correspondence with the left section, the fighting sculpted figures were developed with the same tension and movement. To Apollo's left, the hero Theseus is battling against the Centaurs on the side of the Lapiths and their leader and his friend Pirithous. This is followed by a graduated arrangement in groups of two couples and a trio of Lapiths, Centaurs, and Lapith women. In the right corner of the pediment, two more semi-reclining Lapith women are anxiously observing the struggle.*

*"In the contest between the Centaurs and the Lapiths, and in the secret presence of the God amongst them, I shall attribute very generally only the meaning of the clashes between two currents, two tribes, two peoples, two beliefs, and so that we may become more in line with this general concept, two classes, with the significance of the intervention in the midst of those clashes of Logos, a higher spirit or God..."*

*(Angelos Sikelianos, "The Pediments of Olympia", essay written in Olympia (1928) and published in 1952.)*



*"Here, on this pediment you can distinguish the whole scale of hierarchy: god, man, woman, slave, beast. God stands in the middle, erect, serene, master of his power. He sees horror and is not disturbed. He subdues rage and passion, yet without remaining indifferent. Because he tranquilly extends his arm and grants victory to whomever he likes... This is an exquisite moment, when all the graduated degrees of life maintain their image intact...: the divine serenity, the discipline of the free man, the outburst of the beast, the realistic depiction of the slave. After the passing of some generations the latter two baser elements will dominate, realistic passion will spread and will distort free men and gods, the reins will be released and art, belting, will wane..."*

*(N. Kazantzakis, "The Symbolic Atmosphere of Mykè", from the book Travels in Greece, Athens, 1969)*





*Sculpted group of three figures to the left of the central figure of Apollo. The hero Theseus, holding an axe in his raised left hand is battling the Centaur that a young Lapith woman is vigorously resisting with both hands.*







*Group of Centaur and Lapith, the ne plus ultra of the symbolic representation of the eternal clash between Spirit and Matter on the western pediment of Olympia. The Lapith with his wrinkled brow and serene expression is trying to defeat the monstrous Centaur, who is resisting and, with brute instinct that is amazingly rendered by the composition's artist through every detail of his bearded head, biting his opponent, while at the same time trying to free himself from his forceful hold.*



*Left part of a sculpted trio from the right section of the western pediment. A young Lapith woman is being attacked by a Centaur whose horse's body is kneeling, while he grabs her with his right hand, and with his left huge strong palm holds tight to her left foot above the ankle as she attempts to escape him. The female figure's inclination to flight is revealed in the entire movement of her body to her right and registers strongly in her hands, with which she is attempting to free herself from the violent hold of the Centaur that has caused her garment to come undone at her left shoulder revealing her firm breast. Her expression remains serene and superior, transcending her plight as she increases her effort to escape from the charish Centaur. At the same time, the latter receives a death blow in the chest from the sword of a Lapith on his left. It appears this blow will put an end to "that monstrous host of double form, man joined to steed, a race with whom none may commune, violent, lawless, of surpassing might (Sophocles Trachiniae 1095-1096).*





*Right part of a sculptural trio on the right section of the western pediment.  
The headless Centaur—the lower portion of his beard still preserved has  
been driven to his knees by the deadly blow he has been dealt to the  
chest by the sword of the Lapith on his left. The superbly crafted  
male torso of the kneeling young man, whose best right leg  
is half covered by a himation, is stretched forward, and  
imposes itself on the composition as it is extended  
through the forward thrust of his right arm,  
holding the weapon with which he is  
killing his two formed opponent.*







Two Lapith women, old and young, are semi-reclining in the right corner of the western pediment and anxiously observing the progress of the struggle between Lapiths and Centaurs. Of the four female figures placed in pairs at the two corners of the pediment, only the first on the right, made of Parian marble, as are the other figures of the two pediments, is contemporary to the sculpted groups (5th cent. BC). The other three Lapith women are made of Pentelic marble and replaced the originals, after the temple was damaged, probably by an earthquake. (4th and 1st cent. BC).



## METOPES

The first brief excavation of the Temple of Zeus by the French Morea Scientific Expedition (*Expédition scientifique de Morée*) in 1829 brought to light, along with other sculptural fragments, sections of the temple metopes that were transported to France and are exhibited today in the Louvre Museum. The fragments are mainly from the metopes depicting Heracles' Labours: the Nemean Lion, the Stymphalian Birds, the Giant Geryon, the Cretan Bull, the Amazon Hippolyte, the Erymanthian Boar, and the Mares of Diomedes.

After his visit to the Altis, Pausanias described the metopes in the order he saw them placed on the monument (5.10.9–11), beginning at the western side of the temple. On the opisthodomos, from left to right were: the Nemean Lion immediately after being slain by Heracles, the labour of the Lernaean Hydra, the Stymphalian Birds, Heracles capturing the Cretan Bull, the Ceryneian Hind and the metope with the theft of the girdle of Hippolyte, Queen of the Amazons. The Twelve Labours were completed in the pronaos with the capture of the Erymanthian Boar, the taming of the Mares of Diomedes, the slaying of the three-bodied Giant Geryon, the Apples of the Hesperides, the abduction of Cerberus, the guardian of Hades, and finally the cleaning of the Augean Stables.

The central hero, Zeus' beloved son, performed the labours assigned him by Eurystheus, ruler of Mycenae, Tiryns and Argos, in order to purify himself, because, having been driven mad by Hera, he slew his wife and children with his own hands. Hermes assisted him twice, once to capture and slay the terrible lion in Nemea, and again when he descended into Hades to fetch Cerberus, whereupon the god served as his soul guide (*psychopomp*). The goddess Athena was his faithful companion during four of his difficult missions, and is presented on the respective metopes in a different way. They portray an immortal goddess who was already adult from the moment she sprang from the forehead of Zeus, yet she is depicted with abundant mastery at four different ages. In the labour of the Nemean Lion, the minimally preserved figure of the goddess, unarmed, practically a young maiden, casts a tender eye upon her protégé, who in this depiction appears beardless, indicating he is still very young, something very rare in the hero's iconography.

In the feat of the Stymphalian Birds, a sculptural concept that was innovative for its time depicts a carefree Athena, once again weaponless and wearing the aegis over her peplos, sitting barefoot with youthful grace on a rock, accepting the hero's token offering of the slain murderous birds, in an almost completely idyllic scene.

In the two remaining metopes, the goddess is preserved intact in all the beauty of her erect bearing, her torso depicted frontally with her head shown from the side. With her raised left arm, she is calmly assisting Heracles bear the weight of the Heavens until Atlas returns with the apples of the Hesperides, while her right hand probably held her spear. Her divine mature beauty is highlighted by the austere noble hairstyle and the unadorned, evenly pleated Doric chiton. Because this beautiful metope is the best preserved of all, it served as the measure used to calculate the proportions of the others, so as to produce the frame in which to place the fragments of the figures.

In the cleaning of the Augean stables, Athena is present as the warrior goddess. She is wearing her helmet, leaning with her left hand on her shield that is standing on the ground, holding her spear in her right hand, and actively assisting the hero in his difficult endeavour. The subject of the dung in Augeas' stables is related to a purely local myth that appeared here for the first time in Greek art and rarely afterwards. The locality of the labour is directly linked to Olympia and to Heracles' decision to select the site as the location for conducting the Olympic Games. This is according to recent research done on the subject of the ancient drainage (flood prevention) works and the behaviour of Olympia's rivers, the Alpheus and the Cladeus, in relation to the sanctuary. The archaeological finds led to the formation of a credible view, which overturned the conventional wisdom regarding the diversion of the Peneus River. According to legend, Heracles diverted the Cladeus and the surrounding wall which he demolished with an iron bar may have been either the ridge of the river located on the western side of the sanctuary, or its link with the Alpheus embankment.

Although in matters of technique certain metopes show an insistence on the archaic iconographic tradition (Lernaean Hydra, Ceryneian Hind, Hippolyte, Erymanthian Boar, Geryon), most are animated by

the innovative spirit of the new era that followed the Persian Wars, where lyricism replaced the epic element (Stymphalian Birds). In other metopes, the static quality of the figures, with their mental vertical and horizontal lines, recalls the figures of the eastern pediment (Stymphalian Birds, Nemean Lion, Diomedes' Mares, Apples of the Hesperides), while the rest follow the path of the vigorous movement that can be observed in the rendering of the western pediment figures (Cretan Bull, Cerberus, Augean Stables) in conjunction with immobility.

The discovery of the sculptures from the Temple of Zeus and their correlation with Pausanias' testimony generated a broad range of scholarly research on issues related to the artistic birthplace of the sculptures, which artistic "hand" or "hands" were involved, as well as the multiple possible interpretations of the mythological depictions. The information Pausanias transmitted through his work, evidently reproducing the narrative he was familiar with during his lifetime, that Paionios of Mende in Chalkidiki was the artist who created the eastern pediment, while Alcamenes created the western one, has now been refuted, since the technique revealed in the work of these two well-known artists of antiquity differs greatly from the pedimental sculptures' strictly dynamic figures, which follow the directives of the post-Persian era to a point, yet do not appear to have either a precursor or a successor in the history of ancient Greek art. There have been endless discussions on this issue. However, it appears that the unknown artist remained a pioneer as regards his daring and innovations, and evidently collaborated with other artists. The result, despite any differences in execution, guides the entire sculptural achievement towards homogeneity and unity, and its monumental conception and distinctiveness, which had neither precursors nor successors, has left its stamp on early classical sculpture, after the pedimental compositions on the Treasuries of Delphi and before the Parthenon sculptures.

The pedimental sculptures and metopes were completed by lions-head waterspouts, joined to the temple's marble roof as functional elements draining off rainwater, while at the same time adding decorative grandeur to the edifice. Of a total of 102 lions-heads, many were preserved intact; the lions are rendered according to different techniques, which reveal the respective periods during which they were created, since it appears that they needed to be replaced on the building at least nine times, since they fell off for various reasons. All waterspouts replaced during the temple's long life from the 5th cent. BC to the 6th cent. AD, the period the great earthquakes caused the monument's final collapse, were made of Pentelic marble, as were the restored female figures on the western pediment.

The total number of sculpted lions-head waterspouts discovered during the excavations constitutes an instructional group on the evolution of Greek sculpture from the Severe Style period (5th cent. BC) to the later period of Roman rule. The distinct differences in the artists' rendition of the lion's mane and other features are remarkable, so that beginning with the original realistically formed heads the rendition culminates in more formalized forms, whose dominant element is the outflow of water, i.e., the protruding spout-like open mouth.





METOPE (A 86). Western side (episthodes). The Nemean Lion.  
Hercules' goddess-companion and ally in the difficult missions imposed on the hero by Eurystheus, the ruler of Mycenae, Tiryns and Argos appears in this very imperfect metope weaponless, practically a maiden. Her forehead is crowned with short spiralling curls. The restrained expression of the art of the period is clearly defined in the outline and dividing line of the lip, which has lost the Archaic smile, as well as in the gaze, which in its severe style contemplation and introspection appears to be directed tenderly towards her protégé.



*The central here is depicted in this metope, of which very few fragments of the figures have been preserved, after killing the terrible lion of Cithaeron, now lying at his feet. His slightly bent right leg is on the body of the dead beast, and, propping his right hand on his knee, he places his head, which still bears traces of the original red paint, on his palm. His left hand is braced on his club. This moment of repose after his tiring feat is combined with what was, for the period, a rare and innovative iconography, the appearance of Heracles in an obviously pensive stance in which he is depicted as a beardless youth.*

ASETOPE (A 88). Western side (episthados). The Stymphalian Birds.

Heracles has completed his labour and is offering the deadly birds, which have not been preserved, as a victory trophy to his protectress Athena. For a second time, she is depicted without her weapons. Carefree, sitting on a rock, with youthful grace and barefoot, she is wearing the aegis over her peplos and turning towards the now bearded hero. The idyllic scene is imbued with an innovative perception. The artist's personal expression has replaced the earlier epic narrative method with a diffusely lyricism on this metope, which is the oldest and only depiction of this labour in the monumental sculpture of the 5th and 4th cent. BC.











*METOPÉ GA 891. Western side (opisthodomos). The Cretan Bull.  
Upon orders from Eurystheus, Heracles went to Crete to bring back  
alive the ferocious and destructive Cretan Bull. The metope of the labour  
depicts Heracles at the moment he is trying to tame the beast, brandishing  
his club in his right hand and pulling the bull by the bronze rope in its mouth.  
The dynamism and the violently opposing movements of hero and animal  
are characteristic elements that render this metope comparable to groups  
of corresponding movement and activity on the western pediment of Olympia.*

METOPE (A 91—left). Western side (episthodomos).  
The Girdle of Hippolyte. Heracles is preparing to deliver the final  
blow to the queen of the Amazons, who, fallen onto the  
ground, continues to defend herself with her shield.





*METOPÉ (A 93—above right). Eastern side (pronaos). The Mares of Diomedes. Eurystheus' assignment to Heracles to deliver to him alive the man-eating mares of Diomedes, the king of Thrace, is depicted on this partially preserved metopé (A 93). The hero is using his left hand to pull the horse by its bridle, while preparing to strike the animal with the club held in his raised right hand. The balanced vertical and horizontal lines of the figures recall similar depictions on the eastern pediment of Olympia.*



*METOPÉ (A 92). Eastern side (pronaos). The Erymanthian Boar. The figure of Eurystheus has been preserved who, terrified at the sight of the terrible wild boar of Arcadian Lyrabris, hides in a storage jar.*





*METOPÉ (A 94). Eastern side (pronaos). The Cattle of Geryon.*

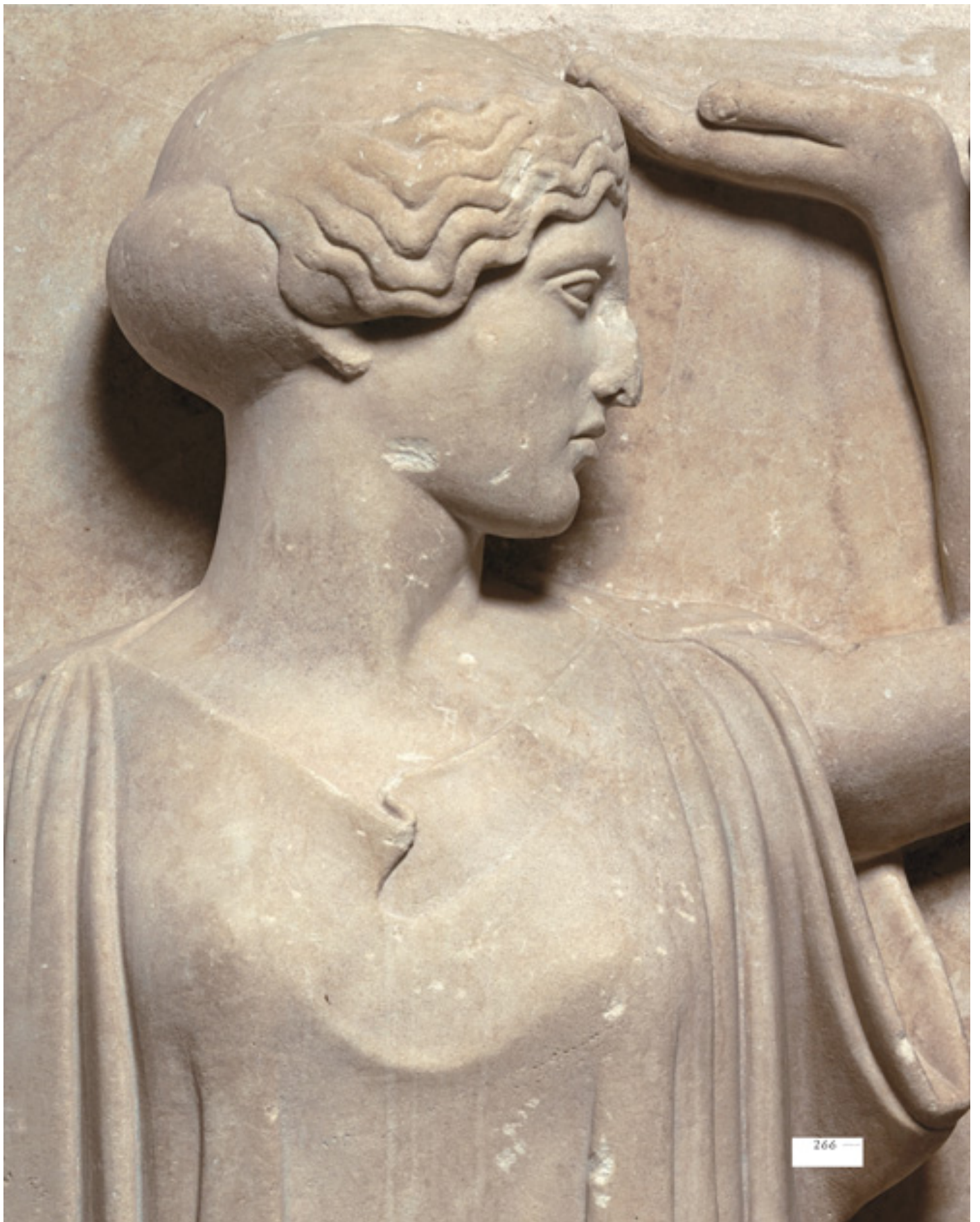
*Heracles overcomes the three-bodied Giant Geryon, who is armed with a shield, helmet and cuirass (A 94). He lands a final blow on the head of the monster with his club. Afterwards, undisturbed, he will transport Geryon's famous red-skinned cattle, which he had already seized to deliver them to Eurystheus. This labour was completed after an adventurous return.*



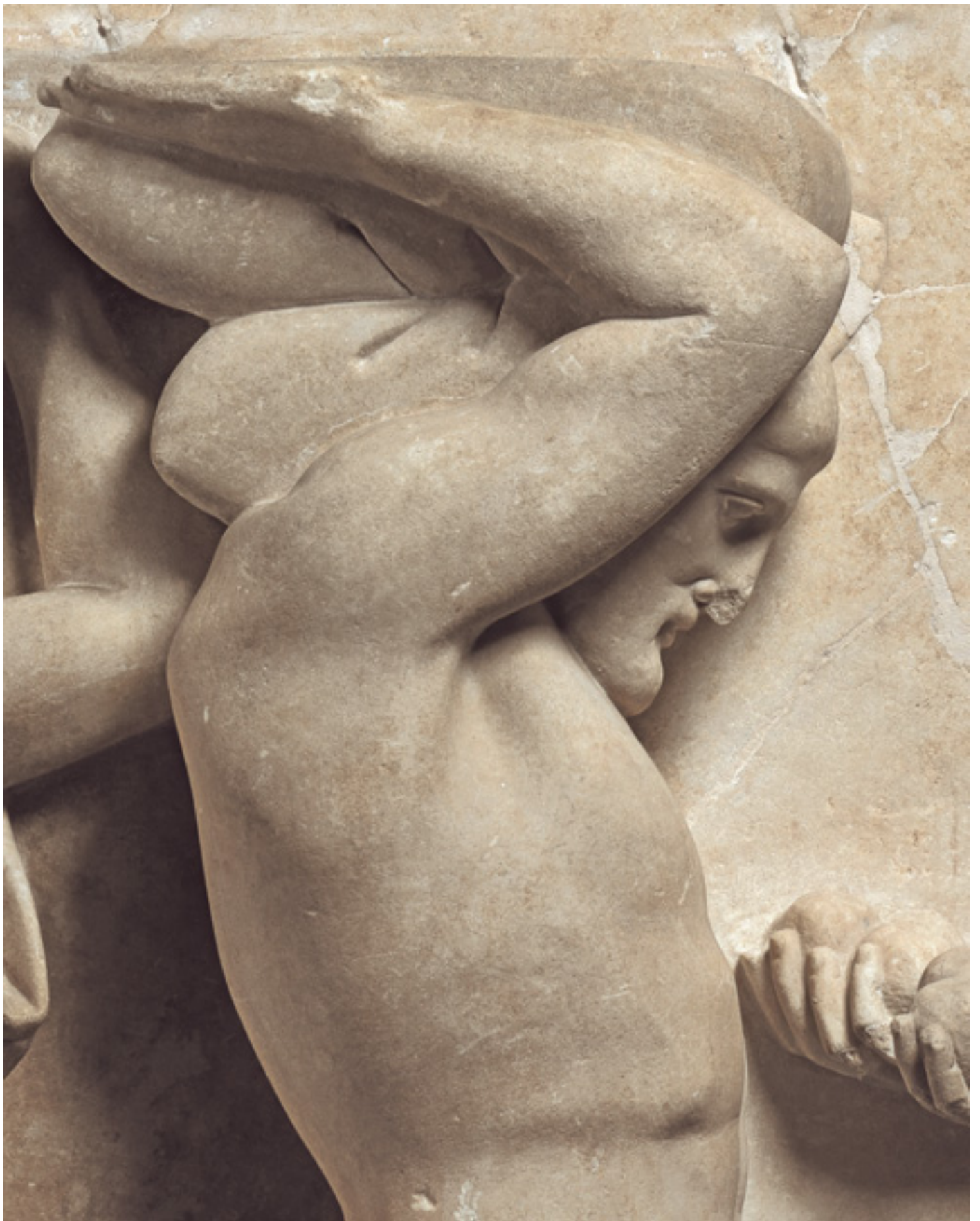
*METOPE (A 95). Eastern side (pronaos). The Apples of the Hesperides.*  
Olympia's metope of the Apples of the Hesperides constitutes the oldest monumental depiction of the labour, and thanks to its exceptional preservation, was the standard by which the dimensions of the rest were calculated in order to properly place the preserved fragments. As Heracles holds the heavens on his shoulder upon a soft pillow, Atlas offers him the marvellous gold apples of eternal immortality and youth from the Garden of the Hesperides, the garden of the gods in the far-off West, beyond the Ocean. Athena, here an invisible presence, assists, serenely counterbalancing the firmament with her left hand, while her right hand probably held her spear. Her divine, mature beauty is underlined by her austere noble hairstyle, her magnificent figure and upright bearing in the simple regularly pleated Doric chiton, which brings to mind a temple column.

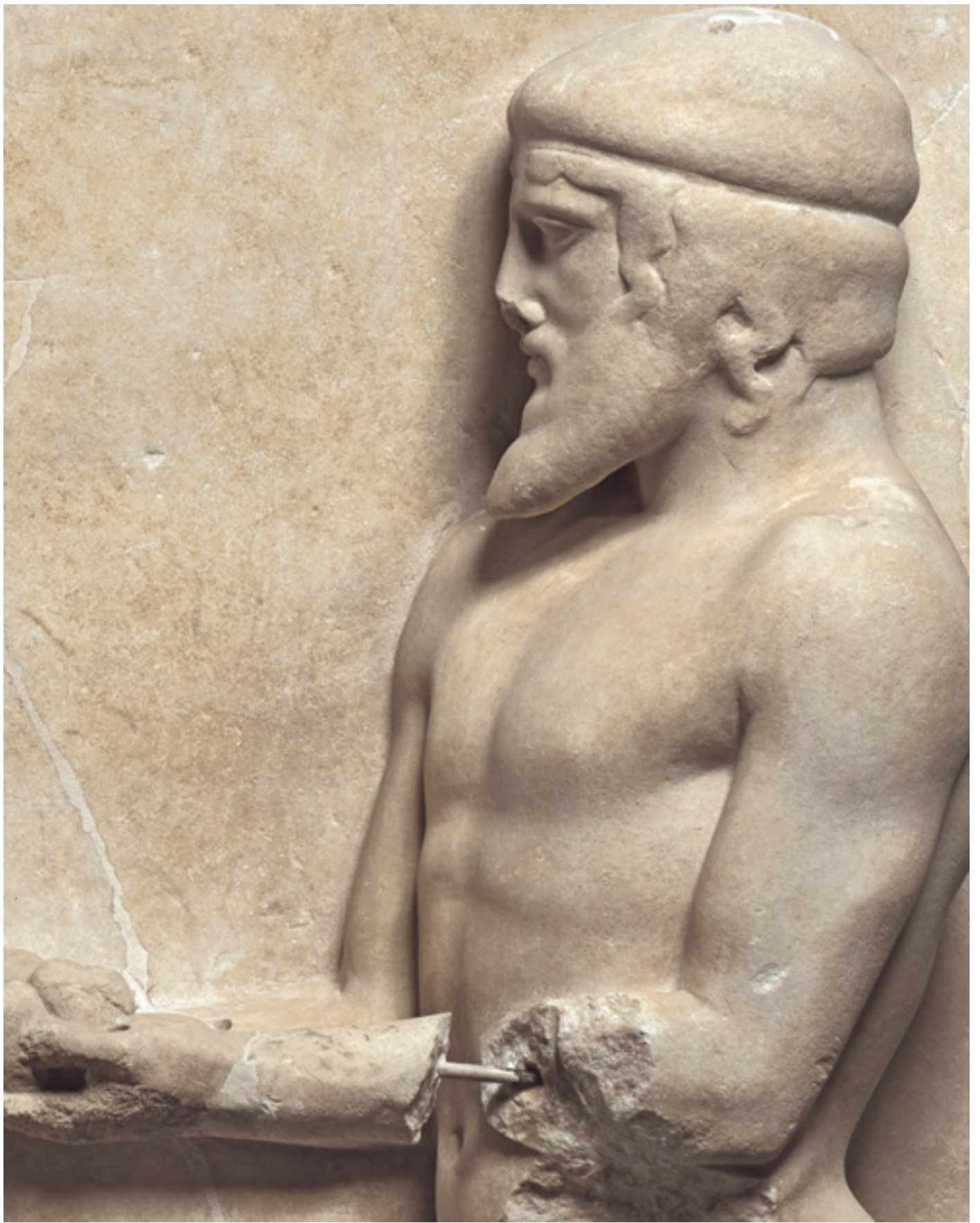
















*METOPÉ (A 96—left). East side (pronaos). The Abduction of Cerberus. Heracles in a short chiton holds Cerberus, the fearsome guardian of Hades, depicted here with one of the three dog heads he had on the front part of his body, from the total of fifty that grew on the rest of his body. Hermes Psychopompus is at his side.*



*METOPÉ (A 97). East side (pronaos).  
The Augean Stables.  
The subject of the cleaning the stables of Augeas, King of Elis, appears in a unique depiction on the metope of Olympia, evidently due to the local nature of the myth. Heracles holding a pole whose end cannot be discerned (broom, shovel, or hook) is purposefully attempting to divert the river (Peneus or Cladeus?) and succeed in his mission. Here again, his faithful ally is an imposing, now fully armed, Athena.*









Lion's head waterspouts. They decorated the long sides of the roof of the Temple of Zeus (51 on each side) and, along with its sculpted decoration, constituted exquisite works of art. Those depicted date to the 5th (A 880—ABOVE) and the 4th cent. BC (A 882—BELOW).



The original lion's head waterspouts of Parian marble were gradually replaced by others of Pentellic marble due to damages to the temple caused by earthquakes or other events. As a whole, the lion's heads are divided into nine groups evidencing characteristics of the each period's art, which makes them an instructional group regarding the evolution of Greek sculpture from the Severe Style period (5th cent. BC) to the later Roman years. The originally realistically crafted heads end up as stylized forms with an extended open mouth spout (left).

## WORKS OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

### *Pheidias, the Colossal Statue of Zeus and the Great Sculptor's Workshop*

**A**FTER THE MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE OF ZEUS WAS COMPLETED in the Altis, around 457 BC, approximately two decades elapsed before the cult statue of the god was erected in the cella. According to the most prevalent supposition, the Elean priests of the Altis—being familiar with the great fame of the sculptor Pheidias, who as an artist held an important position in the construction programme of the Acropolis of Athens and had already created the chryselephantine statue of Athena Parthenos for the Parthenon in 458 BC—invited him to create a corresponding statue of the protecting god for the sanctuary of Olympia. During the long intervening period, it is possible the old cult statue of the god was moved temporarily from the Heraion to the temple of Zeus so that the edifice created by Libon would not remain without any image of the god worshipped. It was apparently later returned to its place in the temple of Hera, where Pausanias saw it.

We know very little of the life of antiquity's most famous sculptor from written sources and we only have secondary information regarding the work he created during his peak period (470/460 and 450 BC). His illustrious presence and contribution to the conception and execution of the sculptural decoration of the Parthenon, at the head of a large group of collaborators, which included Alcamenes and Agoracritus, during the era of his friend, the ambitious Athenian politician Pericles, linked him forever to the apogee of Greek art's classical period and designated him the representative of the essence of the classical miracle.

Pheidias was a student of either the sculptor Hegias or the Argive sculptor Agelas, together with Myron and Polykletus, important sculptors of antiquity as well. As a sculptor, caster in bronze and painter, he possessed the ability to work with unmatched mastery in every medium, be it marble, bronze, gold, or ivory.

He was the foremost creator of divine figures whose individual characteristics he captured with unparalleled skill. Tangible evidence was provided by his magnificent creations, the two chryselephantine cult statues of Athena Parthenos in the Parthenon and of Zeus in the sanctuary of Olympia. Although his arrival in Olympia was associated with a dark chapter of his life – coming after he had been charged with misappropriating part of the gold destined for the construction of the chryselephantine statue of Athena Parthenos, as well as impiety, which caused him to abandon Athens – his illustrious name, personality and work remain eternal and have guided the footsteps of many later artists.

Pheidias performed wonders in Olympia when he created the colossally proportioned chryselephantine cult statue of Zeus, which around 450 BC was placed in the rear of the tripartite cella of the god's temple. The traveller Pausanias saw this exceptional work in situ during his visit to Olympia in the 2nd cent. AD and described it with enlightening details (5.11.1–8). The traveller's description may be verified only by certain depictions on bronze Elean coins from the era of the Emperor Hadrian, since not a single trace of this artistic masterpiece has been preserved, apart from a section of its base, discovered during the excavations.

«Σοφὴν ὕψιστος Ζεὺς, Κρόνιον τε νῆσον λόσον τιμῶν ἔ' Ἀλαφῶν ἐπὶ φέοντι [...]»  
"Savior Zeus, high in the clouds, you who dwell on the hill of Cronus and honor the wide flowing Alpheus"  
(Pindar, Olympian V, For Psalms of Camarina, Male Race, 17–18)



This exquisite example of ancient Greek sculpture, after remaining for approximately eight centuries in the temple, and after weathering many hardships and repairs, one of which may be attributed to the 2nd cent. BC Messenian sculptor Damophon, was transported to Constantinople at the end of the 4th cent. AD, and according to the most prevalent theory, was probably destroyed by the great fire that devastated the city in 475 AD.

The figure of Zeus dominated the sanctuary of Olympia from the period when legend presented him as Cronus' adversary, the victor in that conflict and the founder of the games to celebrate the victory. His presence in the sanctuary was manifested in many ways. Pausanias briefly mentions the figure of a cult statue of the god, standing, bearded and helmeted, next to the seated statue of Hera, which he had seen safeguarded in the Heraion (5.17.1).

In his long passage on the sacred Altis, Pausanias mentions, among other matters, a series of altars dedicated to Zeus with a variety of epithets, describing the attributes of the god (5.15.8; 5.14.1 and 4-9; 5.15.4-5). The traveller noted that apart from the great altar, whose existence preceded the temple and where the god was worshipped with both bloodless and bloody sacrifices, another great altar to Olympian Zeus existed inside his temple. Zeus was also worshipped as *Laias* (god in a public place, in a public sanctuary), as *Arms*, definitely referring to his military attribute, possibly related to Hephaestus, as *Heras* (a family god, perhaps because his statue was placed in a courtyard), as *Catharsis* (a god who purifies guilt or defilement), and as *Githimus* (related to Hades). He was also known as *Craeneus*, because according to tradition, he was the one who cast a thunderbolt upon the house of Oenomaus. The grave-mound of Oenomaus, 'in the other side of the Cladeis' and traces of buildings that may have been the stables of the Pisatan king's horses, were also noted by Pausanias at the end of his long narrative on Olympia (Pausanias 6.21.5). Zeus was worshipped on the altar as *Catadatus*, he who descends in the form of the thunderbolt, i.e., thunder and lightning, in areas considered sacred, enclosed and untrodden, as well as *Agonans*, (protector of public gatherings) and *Apomyias* (whom the faithful call upon to drive away the swarms of annoying flies at slaughter and sacrifice sites). According to Pausanias, another altar was dedicated to Zeus *Moiragetes*, an epithet that denoted the god's ability to know everything the Fates have granted humanity.

Apart from the altars dedicated to Zeus, Pausanias mentions over twenty depictions of the god, placed at various points in the Altis. These were either individual statues of Zeus or arranged together with other divinities or heroes, made mostly of bronze, some bearing inscriptions or elegies that revealed the majority had been dedicated to the god by various cities as victory votive offerings, or as trophies from the spoils of victorious wars (5.22.1-6; 5.25.1-7; 5.24.1-9). Other statues were described as private votive offerings. Some of these statues of Zeus, always according to Pausanias, were of massive proportions. One, 12 feet in height (approximately 4.9 m; 5.24.4), was a votive offering from the Spartans after one of the wars they waged against the Messenians. The largest of all the bronze statues of Zeus, 27 feet high (approximately 8.10 m), had been placed in the Altis by the Eleans, along with the war spoils acquired after their victory over the Arcadians in 564 BC, after the latter had been cast out of Olympia.

Zeus is usually described as bearded and rarely depicted beardless or as a child. He usually grasps a thunderbolt, or, in some cases, thunderbolts in both hands. As Zeus *Hercius* (who presides over oaths), he may have been holding thunderbolts in both hands. Pausanias had seen the statue of Zeus *Hercius*, evidently placed in an outdoor location of the Bouleuterion. It was before this statue that the athletes, their immediate families and their trainers gave a grave and terrible oath, standing upon 'skins of bear's flesh' (the hardy





*Part of a bronze sceptre (B 4916). It is crowned with an eagle, the symbol of Zeus, and may come from a large statue of the god (1st half of the 5th cent. BC).*

*Bronze statuette of Zeus (B 5778 + B 5500). He may have held a thunderbolt in his raised right hand, and an eagle in the extended left (480 BC).*



*Bronze statuettes of Zeus. The god is depicted holding a thunderbolt in his left hand and possibly an eagle in his right, according to the prototype of his early portrayals of the Archaic Period (B 5550: 470/60 BC). The statuette from the Laconian workshop (B 3010) depicts him "two-handed" (brandishing thunderbolts in each hand) or holding a thunderbolt in one hand and a sceptre in the other (520 BC). The eagle with spread wings and relief decoration (B 1590) crowned the head of a sceptre, possibly of a large bronze statue of Zeus (1st half of the 5th cent. BC).*

animal's reproductive organs represented the source of life swearing they would compete honestly, or face the threat of the extermination of their lineage (5.24.9). It is within this interpretive context that the supposedly terrible appearance of the statue of the god may be placed, created to inspire fear in every potential oath-breaker.

Depictions of Zeus as warrior, or in an attitude of "epiphany", hands raised, have already been mentioned as some of the first possible portrayals of the god, based on finds in the Geometric Period sanctuary, while starting from the end of the 6th cent. BC, Zeus appeared as an imposing figure, holding one or two thunderbolts, as in Homer. The statuette type of Zeus, a thunderbolt in his right hand and an eagle on his left, or with thunderbolts in both hands survived into the classical period, as evidenced by various characteristic exhibits in the Museum. Apart from the statuettes of the god, bronze eagles with closed or open wings, which had probably crowned the head of sceptres, have also been preserved. These sceptres with Zeus' emblem may have constituted sections of somewhat larger statues of the god.

Pheidias' Zeus constituted an apotheosis—one might say—of the god himself. It was said that the foremost creator of divine physiognomies, the divinely inspired artist, in creating Zeus in all his divine majesty, as *pancreator* or Creator of All, and ruler of mortals and gods, brought great joy to all who saw the god's face up close. People in antiquity lent greater emphasis to how impressed they were by the unprecedented conception and execution of Pheidias' creation by wondering whether Pheidias had ascended into the heavens to observe the god up close, or whether the god had revealed himself to the great sculptor.

Zeus was depicted enthroned with an wreath of olive leaves on his head. In his right hand he held an eagle-topped sceptre, and in his left, a chryselephantine Nike crowned with a wreath and wearing a ribbon. The core of the statue was made of wood and sheets of gold were attached to it. These gold sheets rendered Zeus' hair and shoes, as well as the draped himation, decorated with various depictions and floral and foliate motifs, which covered his shoulder and lower body. The uncovered parts of the statue were made of ivory, i.e., the face, torso and arms.

The god's imposing throne was magnificently decorated, constructed of ebony and gold. Pausanias' wonderful description of the throne is worth a word for word perusal:

*The throne is adorned with gold and with jewels, to say nothing of ebony and ivory. Upon it are painted figures and wrought images. There are four Victories, represented as dancing women, one at each foot of the throne, and two others at the base of each foot. On each of the two front feet are set Theban children ravished by sphinxes, while under the sphinxes Apollo and Artemis are shooting down the children of Niobe.*

*Between the feet of the throne are four rods, each one stretching from foot to foot. The rod straight opposite the entrance has on it seven images, how the eighth of them disappeared nobody knows. These must be intended to be copies of obsolete contests, since in the time of Pheidias contests for boys had not yet been introduced. The figure of one binding his own head with a ribbon is said to resemble in appearance Pantares, a stripling of Elis said to have been the love of Pheidias. Pantares too won the wrestling bout for boys at the eighty-sixth Festival.*

*On the other rods is the band that with Heracles fights against the Amazons. The number of figures in the two parties is twenty-nine, and Theseus too is ranged among the allies of Heracles. The throne is supported not only by the feet, but also by an equal number of pillars standing between the feet. It is impossible to go under the throne, in the way we enter the inner part of the throne at Amyclae. At Olympia there are screens constructed like walls which keep people out.*

*Of these screens the part opposite the doors is only covered with dark blue paint; the other parts show pictures by Panaemus. Among them is Atlas, supporting heaven and earth, by whose side stands Heracles ready to receive the load of Atlas, along with Theseus; Perithous, Hellas, and Salamis carrying in her hand the ornament made for the top of a ship's bows; then Heracles' exploit against the Nemean lion, the outrage committed by Ajax on Cassandra, Hippodameia the daughter of Oenomaus with her mother, and Prometheus still held by his chains, though Heracles has been raised up to him. For among the stories told about Heracles is one that he killed the eagle which tormented Prometheus in the Caucasus, and set free Prometheus himself from his chains. Last in the picture come Penthesilea giving up the ghost and Achilles supporting her; two Hesperides are carrying the apples, the*





*Hypothetical depictions of an enthroned Zeus, inspired by Pausanias' description. ABOVE: In a Roman style temple (cross section) with a double colonnade in the central aisle and a dome inspired by the Pantheon in Rome. In the background of the depiction, Olympic contests are taking place, while the town of Elis is also shown with buildings in accordance with Roman prototypes (1721—Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach). BELOW: In the interior of the temple of Zeus in Olympia (cross section), according to the interior's precise measurements, which resulted from the first investigation of the monument by the French in 1829. The depiction of the enthroned Zeus is closer to Pausanias' description (1831—Guillaume Abel Blouet).*



keeping of which, legend says, had been entrusted to them. This Panarnes was a brother of Pheidias; he also painted the picture of the battle of Marathon in the painted portico at Athens.

On the uppermost parts of the throne Pheidias has made, above the head of the image, three Graces on one side and three Seasons on the other. These in epic poetry are included among the daughters of Zeus. Homer too in the *Iliad* says that the Seasons have been entrusted with the sky, just like guards of a king's court. The footstool of Zeus, called by the Athenians *thrusion*, has golden lions and, in relief, the fight of Theseus against the Amazons, the first brave deed of the Athenians against foreigners.

On the pedestal supporting the throne and Zeus with all his adornments are works in gold: the Sun mounted on a chariot, Zeus and Hera, Hephaestus, and by his side Grace. Close to her comes Hermes, and close to Hermes Hestia. After Hestia is Eros receiving Aphrodite as she rises from the sea, and Aphrodite is being crowned by Persuasion. There are also reliefs of Apollo with Artemis, of Athena and of Hercules; and near the end of the pedestal Amphitrite and Poseidon, while the Moon is driving what I think is a horse. Some have said that the steed of the goddess is a mule not a horse, and they tell a silly story about the mare."

(Pausanias 5.11.2–8)

The larger than life seated statue of the god, which along with its base reached a height of 12.40 m, i.e., falling just short of the temple roof, evoked awe and admiration in the era's faithful, who, as previously mentioned, could admire the statue up close from the gallery constructed for precisely that purpose. Strabo surpassed every description of the amazing larger-than-life statue with his fanciful supposition, claiming that were the god to rise up from his throne, he would destroy the roof of his temple, since standing, his height surpassed it (8.555–554).

Tradition has it that the moment Pheidias completed his work, the god himself demonstrated his approval of the amazing results by casting a thunderbolt that fell before the inspired artist. At the very spot where the thunderbolt fell, stood a hydria, which was still there even when Pausanias visited the Peloponnese. Pheidias had taken care to place before the statue a shallow container of oil to protect the fragile sculpture from the particularly damp climate of Olympia, as he had also made sure to have a container of water in front of the Parthenon's chryselephantine Athena to protect it from the particularly dry climate of Attica. Specialized sanctuary staff, the *phaiálytes* (φαίλυτοι = make bright, cleanse) took care to keep the statue of Zeus clean and generally in good condition. The famous sculptor had even taken care to sign his creation in a spot under the feet of the god, which was not visible: **ΦΕΙΔΙΑΣ ΚΑΡΜΙΔΟΥ ΥΙΟΥ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΣ ΜΕΓΕΘΟΖΩΝ** (Pheidias, son of Charmides, an Athenian, made me).

Indicative of how impressive the existence of the amazing statue was in the temple of Zeus and the respect it generated is the fact that around 165 BC, the retractable purple cloth veil of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem was removed by Syria's King Antiochus IV Epiphanes and placed before the statue.

The sole detailed description of the chryselephantine statue written by the traveller Pausanias and its depictions on coinage issued by Hadrian — in conjunction with the enchantment exuded by the lost work and its subsequent, much later, designation as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world — constituted a source of inspiration for various reconstructions of the enthroned god by many European lovers of antiquity and the arts, starting as early as the 16th century. Without doubt, this work influenced the figure of Roman Jupiter, which survived much later in Christian iconography as the depiction of God, the Father-Fantastar.

The reconstructions were based on the stance and technique of ancient statues, sculptures or coins with added elements that originated in the descriptions of ancient writers, and were definitely influenced by each period's contemporary artistic trends. The engraver Vincenzo Cartari was the first to use Pausanias as a source. After a first portrayal in 1581, he created, in accordance with the traveller's description, a more complete depiction in 1647, where Zeus' throne took on an ecclesiastical appearance and was borne by Nikes rather than angels. In 1608, another engraver, Antonio Tempesta, depicted the enthroned Zeus inside a round Corinthian structure, surrounded by a crowd of people of various races and nationalities. In 1614, Simon de Passe depicted a muscular, extremely dynamic Zeus, seated upon an eagle, with



LEFT: Hypothetical representation of an enthroned Zeus in a hall with a two-tier colonnade and vaulted ceiling, with openings for light (1814, Antoine Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy). In 1896, after the first systematic excavations of Olympia were completed, the German architect Friedrich Adler gave his own more accurate version [RIGHT] of the colossal statue based on the depictions on ancient coins and the reconstructions of de Quincy and Blouet.



Inside of a Laconian black figure kylix (K 1292) with the depiction of an enthroned Zeus and Hera seated next to him. Behind the god's throne is his symbol, the eagle. The vessel, the only offering discovered with a depiction of Zeus, comes from the northern embankment of the Stadium. It is attributed to the workshop of the Naucratis Painter (530-525 BC).



Bronze coin from the period of Hadrian's rule (117-138 AD) with a portrait of the emperor on the obverse. Zeus enthroned is portrayed on the reverse (Numismatic Museum of Athens). This pictorial evidence and Pausanias' description constitute unique evidence as regards the renowned lost creation of Phidias.

elements indicative of the natural landscape of Olympia, while the seated sphinx contained in the representation suggested the oracular nature of the sanctuary. In 1721, Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach portrayed the enthroned Zeus inside a temple depicted in cross-section. The temple, in accordance with the Roman fashion, stands on a podium (*Podiumstempel*), with a double colonnade in the central aisle and a dome inspired by the Roman Pantheon. In the background, behind the temple, Olympic contests are taking place and the organizing city Elis, is portrayed, its buildings inspired by Roman models.

In 1812, the German architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel created another portrayal of Pheidias' work in the interior of a three-aisle temple, placed on an unadorned base, which was subsequently confirmed by the excavations that followed. Zeus is depicted in an archaic stance, holding Nike and a sceptre, while the shape of the throne is archaic.

Two years later (1814) came the reconstruction of the politician, lawyer, architectural historian and art lover Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, who, after studying the ancient sources and the construction and colouring techniques of ancient statues, reproduced the statue inside a hall with vaulted ceiling illuminated through openings.

Guillaume Abel Blouet, the architect accompanying the first exploratory excavation of Olympia in 1829, drew a cross-section of the temple of Zeus in 1831, and placed the enthroned Zeus inside, in accordance with de Quincy. However, he lowered the base of the statue and depicted a narrower central aisle, since the exact dimensions were known by then.

The architect Victor Laloux was in Olympia in 1855, and participated in the operation of measuring the buildings in the Altis. At that time, he created a detailed, high quality cross-section of the temple of Zeus and placed Pheidias' statue upon a throne with archaic decoration. Laloux did not use the scholarly findings but based himself on older depictions and on certain black-figure vessels. Finally, the German architect Friedrich Adler portrayed a cross-section of the temple in 1896, with an enthroned Zeus based on ancient coins and the depictions of de Quincy and Blouet. The god is depicted in an archaic style, bearded, his sceptre held vertically, and standing on an exceptionally low base. Adler is perhaps the only one aside from Tempesta, to give the statue greater height than the various earlier reconstructions. "Outside the Altis there is a building called the workshop of Pheidias, where he wrought the image of Zeus piece by piece." (Pausanias 5. 15.1)

Pausanias had also seen Pheidias' Workshop during his visit to Olympia in the 2nd century AD, and archaeological excavations confirmed his description yet again. Actually locating and uncovering the artist's workshop, opposite the west side of the temple of Zeus, outside of the sacred precinct of the Altis during the early excavations was a very important step towards substantiating the creation of Pheidias' colossus, as was, later on, the discovery of more enlightening finds under the direction of Alfred Mallwitz during the 1954-1958 excavation period.

The building, the second tallest in the Altis after the Temple of Zeus, was built of large rectangular slabs; its entrance faced east and its dimensions were practically identical to those of the temple cella (9.52 X 6.54 m). Inside this space, the prepared parts of the statue were assembled before they were transported and placed within the temple proper. The entire installation made provision for lodgings for artisans and artists, outdoor sites and covered work galleries. In the main workshop areas, south of the main building, quantities of clay moulds, used to create garment folds in various sizes, were located in store-rooms dating to about the end of the 3th cent. BC. These had evidently been used to create either Pheidias' work or other slightly later works that Pheidias may also have created. Pausanias mentioned that Pheidias had been commissioned to create a chryselephantine of Aphrodite Urania standing on a tortoise (6.25.1).

The numerous clay moulds, created of an exceptional, exceedingly fine-grained and carefully fired clay, come with folds of various shapes and would have been used for either the upper or the lower portions of the god's garment, or for the garments of secondary figures, such as the Nike in his right hand. Pieces of ivory and semi-precious stones, leaf-shaped glass ornaments, which would have been left over from fabricating the decorative elements of the statue's garment, as well as many bronze, bone and iron tools, among them a small bronze goldsmith's hammer, another tool shaped like a double-axe and bronze or bone spatulas were also unearthed. Along with these artist's implements, parts of terracotta vessels



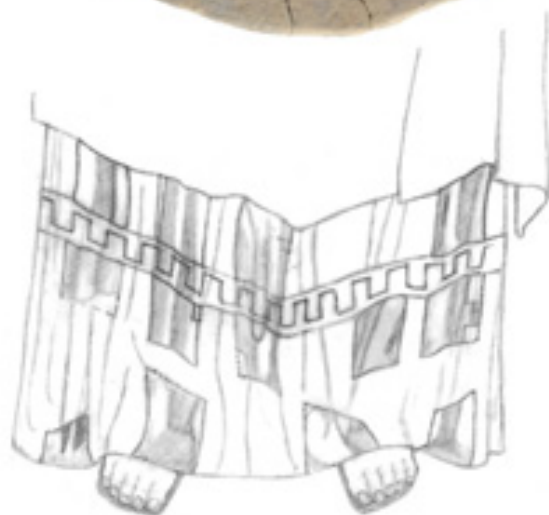
containing the dregs of various pigmentations that must have been used to colour the statues also came to light. A particularly appealing find, along with the clay remnants of Attic vessels, was a simple flawed black-glazed oenochoe, which acquires a precious dimension in time and collective memory because of the inscription reading  $\Phi\theta\iota\alpha\iota\delta\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota$  ("I belong to Pheidias") on the bottom of its base.

Pheidias' Workshop served as a place of worship during the Roman Era, while around the 5th cent. AD, an Early Christian three-aisle basilica was erected on its foundations; it thus became a centre of worship for the Christian community, which had settled on a large portion of the sanctuary during that period. Pheidias' workshop, a simple structure rather lacking in architectural interest, was ornamented with a beautiful roof; terracotta members of which, with rich vegetal decoration and meanders, have been preserved. Among them, the building's beautiful palmette-shaped corner end tile, dating to approximately 450 BC, stands out for its exceptionally well preserved colours.

During the period in question, one of the best-preserved portions of the Bouleuterion roof appears to have come from the prostoon, erected after the end of the 5th century, which linked the building's two apsidal wings. This is a section of a terracotta sima that includes an intact lion's-head waterspout, its colours still vivid, flanked by cut-out S-shaped spirals in relief. The find, which resulted from recovery operations performed in the fall of 2006 by the Ephorate of Antiquities in the context of a large public technical water supply project, appears to validate the proposed restoration of the prostoon's terracotta sima, which, based on other partially preserved sections, must have been an impressive composition of four different decorative units, i.e., a lion's head, a large rosette or sunflower, a gorgoneion, and another floral or foliate motif, supplemented with spirals and palmettes.

Clay moulds for rendering the folds of the upper (G1 / II 3645, G 123) and lower parts of a statue's garment (II 3641). Moulds were also used to produce various types of decorative glass elements (II 3648, II 3649).





*Hypothetical rendering of the upper and lower parts of a statue's plated garment, upon which sections of the clay moulds, discovered in the location of Phedias' Workshop, have been positioned. Mould II 3649 was used to produce curved decorative elements.*



*Various tools and decorative items made of bone and ivory. The tools with the flattened end may have been burnishers, while the pointed end ones may have been styli. In the centre are decorative elements in the shape of palmette leaves.*



*Bronze tools, mainly chisels and awls, from Phidias' Workshop. The small double axe (B. 3436), which was probably used to work on glass objects, stands out, as does the small goldsmith's hammer (B. 3008).*





Black glazed vessel bases from the site of Pheidias' workshop. They are of interest because traces of various pigments are still preserved inside; these were used by the artisans to colour their work.



Small black glazed amphorae with sharply vertical grooves on the body (II 3653). It would not be an item worth mentioning, since the type of vessel was very common during the Classical Era, were it not for the incised inscription ΦΕΙΔΑΙΟΣ ΕΙΜΙ (I belong to Pheidias) on its exterior base, which may have been the handiwork of the famous Athenian sculptor.







*Part of an Attic red-glazed calyx krater, possibly by the Kleophon Painter (II 3650). It depicts a winged Nike in profile and a singer with a cithara, part of which has been preserved. The female figure's fine features are rendered with exceptional quality; so too are the earrings she wears, the movement of her hands, and her rich garment (2nd half of the 5th cent. BC).*



Part of the clay sima from the roof of Pheidias' Workshop with a lion's head waterspout (10K9). It is decorated with a painted meander and a series of lotus blossoms and palmettes (circa 430 BC).



Part of an Ionic pedimental sima with rich painted decoration, enhanced by the notable combination of black, red and white (12K120).

Part of a clay horizontal sima, possibly from the Bouleuterion prostyleon (II 12316). The row with the "eggs" and the Lesbian moulding is preserved. The well preserved lion's head of exceptional quality, with its bright red mane and features emphasized with vivid colour is framed with eye spirals. This architectural member was supplemented by a large rosette, a Gorgonion, and another vegetal motif with interposed palmettes.





Clay architectural members from the roof of Theodius' Workshop, dating to approximately 430 BC. The corner antefix is amazingly intricate with its palmettes and complementary motifs (II 3321). The other antefix sections are distinguished by their beautiful bright painted decoration (10K30), and the combination of relief palmettes with acanthus leaves at the base (10K10).



## The Nike of Paionios

*"The Dorian Messenian who received Naupactus from the Athenians dedicated at Olympia the image of Victory upon the pillar. It is the work of Paionios of Mende..."* (Pausanias, 5.26.1)

ONE SINGLE VICTORY COMMEMORATION—an original statue erected on a tall stele—of all those that Pausanias saw in the Altis and described, was reverently preserved by time in the depths of Olympia's sanctuary until 1875, when it was revealed, fallen before its pedestal, by the spade of the early German excavations. This was not a statue of Zeus, but rather a Nike—an exquisitely formed female figure, flying down to earth from the heavens, the complete incarnation of the military victory she is about to triumphantly announce. Dedicated to Zeus, the protector of the sanctuary, it underlined the warlike aspect of his worship, and was placed at a distance of only 50 m away from the southeastern corner of his temple. Its trihedral pedestal consisted of twelve blocks of triangular section; the statue's total height, including the epikranon was 8.81 m. The third triangular stone from the bottom preserves two valuable inscriptions, attesting to the reason the work was commissioned, as well as to its creator, ΜΕΣΣΑΝΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΝΑΥΠΑΚΤΙΩΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ ΔΗ ΟΛΥΜΠΙΩΝ ΔΕΚΑΤΑΝ ΑΠΟ ΤΩΝ ΕΠΙΔΑΜΟΝΩΝ (Dedicated by the Messenians and the Naupactians as the tithe of their war spoils to Olympian Zeus). The inscription most probably refers to a battle that took place in the final year of the Archidamian War (421 BC) when the hitherto powerful Lacedaemonian army was utterly defeated by the Messenians and Naupactians.

Further down, another inscription follows, in smaller letters, which certifies that this statue was created by the sculptor Paionios of Mende in Chalkidiki, who was also the creator of the acroteria of the Temple of Zeus, since he had been victorious in a competition ΠΑΙΩΝΙΟΣ ΕΠΙΘΗΚΕ ΜΕΝΔΑΙΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΑΚΡΟΤΗΡΙΑ ΕΠΙ ΤΩΝ ΝΑΩΝ ΕΝΙΚΑ.

In circa 155 BC, the Messenians carved another inscription on the side of the pedestal and lower than the votive one, which dealt with the determination of the borders between the Messenians and the Lacedaemonians on Mount Taygetus, according to an arbitration decision of the six hundred Milesians.

The sculpture, made of Parian marble, had a total height of 2.115 m; if the full height of the wings were included, it reached 5 m, so that the total height of the statue and the pedestal was almost 10.92 m.

The goddess Nike, her wings open, was depicted at the very moment when, ablaze with triumphant vitality, she flies down from the sky to land softly on earth. Her left leg is almost straight, while the foot of her slightly bent right leg is imperceptibly touching an eagle, the symbol of Zeus and the heavens. The distinct head of the princely raptor appears to protrude from under her feet to her right, and although its metal wings were not preserved, it adds dramatically to the statue's complete sense of flight.

The figure of Nike lacks its neck, left arm from the shoulder down, right forearm and a large portion of its right palm, which, according to the depictions on the back of contemporary Elean coins, must have clasped a ribbon, or a branch of laurel or palm. Despite the fact that most of her wings are missing and the goddess' face is considerably worn, the end result places the work amongst the undisputed masterpieces of ancient sculpture.

What is admirable about this statue is the dexterity with which the sculptor succeeded in taming the raw marble mass of approximately three cubic meters successfully carving, instead of a standing or resting statuesque figure in the round, a flying goddess that he portrayed landing with her body at an





exceptionally bold forward angle. The balance and counterbalance of this angle occurs wonderfully at the back of the statue. There, marble acquires form with unparalleled mastery and is transformed into the folds of the figure's chiton, billowing back, as well as into the himation, which one must imagine swelling dramatically as, its end clasped in the Nike's left hand, full of wind, it too billows back, inflating with the resistance of the wind caused by the goddess's flight.

The amazing sense of the wind that accompanies the Nike during her flight registers on her thin chiton, which leaving the left breast and corresponding thigh bare, clings to her translucent skin like a damp garment, allowing the taut young female body to be seen. One can see how the weightless flight of the Nike is fixed in marble, when observing the Museum exhibit from the side. Then it is easy to imagine the impression this wonderful winged figure must have made, standing on its pedestal within the sanctuary in the midst of flourishing nature, under the blue sky, from whence it was descending to announce a military triumph. The sculpture's chiton was painted red; the belt at its waist was gold, while its head was ornamented with a gold riband.

A small plaster replica, based on the first published reconstruction of the votive offering was created by the sculptor Michael Tombros in 1919; commissioned by Eleftherios Venizelos, as his gift to the French Marshall Louis Franchet d'Esperey, it is now exhibited in the History of the Olympic Games Museum (formerly the Old Museum).

The Nike of Paionios is the earliest Nike of such monumental proportions that we know of, in relation to the older representations in the "kneeling" pose; a model from which, as previously mentioned, the richly painted terracotta Nikes that were acroteria on the Altis buildings, had already appreciably departed a century earlier.

Half a century later, around 575 BC, the sculptor Timotheos was most probably the creator of another sculptural achievement, as he had created the acroteria Nikes for the Temple of Asclepius in Epidaurus. The Nike of Samothrace in the Louvre Museum represents a stage 200 years later in the history of art, as the figure is no longer in flight, but standing on the prow of a ship, where it exists amongst mortals.

The extraordinary sculpture of Nike at Olympia, an expressive and representative example of the so-called Rich Style of art (450/420-400/390 BC), was a departure from the composite image of the full classical post-Parthenon figure, and is a vivid example of the new artistic trend, with artists rendering well-crafted figures, whose garments, while covering the body simultaneously revealed its refined nudity through rich and elaborate folds, in conjunction with free movement, abundant grace and ethereal lyricism.

The personification of Nike was always a popular theme in ancient Greek art and appeared in many sculptures and carvings, as well as in paintings or miniatures. Her figure decorated votive monuments, was frequently painted on pottery, either as a companion or a figure crowning the victors, as well as a flying figure guiding chariots to a victorious outcome. In Olympia and its sanctuary, in addition to being depicted on coins, Nike's presence was closely associated with Zeus himself, who in Pheidias' work holds her in his right hand. She was also associated with his temple, since she decorated its pediments as a central acroterion. This connection, which underlines the martial aspect of the worship of Zeus, demonstrates Nike's military as well as political symbolism, since she is usually associated with martial events of historical and political importance.















## THE SANCTUARY DURING THE 4<sup>TH</sup> CENT. BC AND THE HELLENISTIC AGE

THE SANCTUARY OF OLYMPIA attained a pinnacle during the 5th cent., which was primarily centred on constructing new buildings and smoothly implementing the Games. This continued unabated during the subsequent century as well. Nevertheless, the constant clashes between the Eleans and their neighbours continued to constitute the historical framework of its existence and operation, while Elean involvement in the broader political stage of the Hellenic world was characterized by various events, which they sought to manage to their advantage.

During the events of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC) the Eleans would alternately align themselves with the two great hostile powers, Athens and Sparta, following an inconsistent policy, which did not always result in positive consequences for them, as they clashed with cities allied to the one or the other side. Their conflict with Sparta and their refusal to permit the Spartan King Agis to perform sacrifices on the Great Altar of Zeus after the Spartan victory over Athens in 404 BC, i.e., at the end of the Peloponnesian War, resulted, some few years later (399 BC) in the Eleans' being restricted to Koile Elis, the eastern section of Pisa, while retaining the administration of the sanctuary of Olympia. The size of their state decreased significantly, while after the battle of Leuktra (371 BC) and the defeat of Sparta, the region of Elis was incorporated into the Theban Alliance, having regained Akroreia and Pisa.

In 364 BC, having expelled the Eleans, the Pisatans organized the 105th Olympiad on their own, with the backing of the Arcadians, who had stationed a military detachment on the sanctuary grounds and fortified themselves on the Kronion Hill. During the Games, in blatant violation of the truce, the Eleans invaded the sanctuary to recapture Olympia and clashed with the Arcadians, according to Xenophon's narrative (*Hellenika* 7.4.28–52). The crowds that had flocked into the Altis for the Games witnessed the military enterprise, which had absolutely no effect on the ongoing games and the proclamation of the victors. The Eleans, however, after reclaiming Olympia and reasserting control over the sanctuary and the Games, agreed to peace with the Arcadians in 362 BC, but repudiated that eventful Olympiad, which was described as an "Anolympias", i.e. it was not to be acknowledged since it had not taken place under their administration.

The spirit of competition and athletic ideals appears to have entered a period of steep decline, especially after the about-face that took place in the sphere of moral values after the Peloponnesian War, and the growing decline of the institution of the city-state, which had remained strong until then. During this period, Olympia played an important role in the development of the Panhellenic ideal, expressed in the superb speeches of various 4th cent. BC intellectuals. The orator and sophist Gorgias urged the Greeks to put an end to their internal conflicts, while in the same spirit a few years later, Lysias would deliver his Olympic Oration, and Isocrates his Panegyric in the sacred Altis.

The Elean strategy of siding each time with the most powerful interests was evident under the Macedonian Dynasty as well, as the oligarchs in authority aligned with Philip II and Alexander the Great, following a pro-Macedonian policy. Nevertheless, the political exploitation of the Sanctuary and the Games by the Macedonians as well as by their successors, the *Diaadochi*, resulted in radically transforming Olympia's athletic spirit into something purely professional, with a simultaneous decline in the religious character that was the core of the Games.

In 312 BC, during the period of Alexander's successors, the first act of sacrilege was committed by Telephonus, one of Antigonos' generals, who plundered the sanctuary's treasures; after his defeat, he was

*View of the Gymnasium of Olympia from the east.*



*View of the Stadium of Olympia from NNW. One can make out the platform of the Hellanodikai practically at the centre of the southern embankment. The vaulted entrance, also known as the Krypte Stoa, was added to its western side around the end of the 3rd cent. BC; it also acquired an imposing propylon on the side facing the Altis during the early Imperial Era (1st cent. BC).*

forced to return the stolen property to the sanctuary. The Eleans continued their strategy of joining various camps during the Hellenistic Age (3rd–1st cent. BC) seeking to maintain not only their autonomy but control of the sanctuary as well. After Philip V invaded in 219–218 BC, their domain suffered heavy territorial losses.

Subsequently, they aligned themselves with the Aetolians during the Macedonian War (200–197 BC), and became Roman allies in 199 BC; they lost their independence for good upon becoming members of the Achaean League (191 BC). The ultimate supremacy of Rome (146 BC) had, naturally, unpleasant consequences for Greece, although it is commonly acknowledged that Greek civilization ultimately conquered the conqueror. Elis, however, thanks to the pro-Roman policies of its inhabitants succeeded in avoiding the unpleasant consequences of Roman rule.

During the 4th cent. BC, changes took place within the Altis directly associated with historical events and with the reversal of the spirit of the athletic contests. A monumental enclosure isolated the purely sacred ground with three entrances on the western side and two on the southern. The South Stoa was built on the southern side, corresponding to the southern border of the Altis facing the Alpheus; here, the Corinthian order made its first appearance. The Echo Stoa, whose construction began around 550 BC, constituted the eastern boundary of the Altis; it owes its name to its extraordinary acoustics, as a sound would repeat seven times (*ἑπταφώνος* or *ἑπταφώνος*). It was also referred to as the Painted Colonnade (*Stoa Poikile*), due to the wall paintings on its interior walls. (Pausanias, 5.21.17) The building was completed later under the Emperor Augustus, when the imposing Doric order 44-column exterior colonnade was added. The construction of the Echo Stoa, and the addition to the south of the southeastern Stoa, a natural extension of the Stadium's western embankment, irrevocably isolated the Stadium from the main grounds of the sanctuary, signalling the Games' deviation from their religious character.

*Headless statue of a seated female figure of Pentelic marble with a floor-length heavily pleated chiton and a bird depicted on the right thigh (A 168). It may have been a votive offering honouring the deity; it is the only seated figure discovered in the sanctuary of Zeus. From the Gymnasium (mid-1st cent. BC).*



*Small statue of Nemesis-Tyche crafted of Pentelic marble (A 112). In her left hand, she holds a measuring stick and in her right, a rudder fastened to a wheel. One of two identical statues placed on either side of the Krypte entrance of the Stadium, to serve as a warning to athletes to compete fairly (2nd cent. AD).*





All the Olympic competitions, apart from the horse and chariot races that took place, as previously mentioned, in the Hippodrome, were held in the Stadium. So were the *Heraia*, footraces honouring Hera and run exclusively by women (160 m course).

During this period the competition grounds inside the Stadium acquired a distinctive architectonic form with specific limits, the track was laid out with start and finish lines marked (with stone slabs), and the platform of the *Hellanosdikai* was also constructed in the centre of the southern embankment. The altar of Demeter *Chamyne* was later placed, around the middle of the 2nd cent. AD, on the northern embankment almost opposite the *Hellanosdikai* platform; Demeter's priestess was the only female spectator of the competitions. No stone seats were ever constructed on the Stadium embankments, although approximately 45,000 spectators could observe the Games. As early as the 5th cent. BC, a stone water channel with small basins placed at intervals ran along the track perimeter.

At the end of the 5th cent. BC, a long vaulted 52-meter entrance was added to the eastern side of the Stadium, also known as the *Krypte Stoa*, which acquired an imposing propylon facing the *Altis* during the early imperial era (1st cent. BC). On either side of the entrance were two statues of the goddess *Nemesis-Tyche*, placed to caution athletes to compete fairly. On the north side of the sanctuary the limestone stepped retaining wall of the *Treasuries* spread out, while parallel to it and east of the *Heraion*, the *Metroon*, the third and last temple, was built in the *Altis* around the beginning of the 4th cent. BC, with its entrance facing west. This small Doric temple was erected with six columns at each end and 11 along the sides (*pristasi*), and appears to have lacked an interior colonnade. It was dedicated to the worship of *Rhea*, Mother of the gods, who had long been worshipped in *Olympia*, in common with many other female divinities.

During the exceedingly turbulent Hellenistic Age, the period of Alexander the Great and his successors, within the context of the general economic decline and political instability caused by constant warfare and by the creation of new cultural centres in the East (*Pergamon*, *Antioch*, *Alexandria*), the Olympic Games acquired an ecumenical character and gradually, by the 1st cent. BC, were transformed into professional athletic events.

From then on, no new construction activities took place within the *Altis*, apart from the occasional building repairs necessitated by the frequent earthquakes afflicting the area. Outside the precinct, however, new installations were erected that ensured better service for the athletes and visitors. Two such installations were constructed east of the *Cladeus River*.

The *Palaestra*, built around the end of the 5th cent. BC, apart from constituting the training facilities for the wrestling, boxing and jumping competitions, was also the place where philosophical discussions would take place and young men's intellects were trained. A little later, just north of the *Palaestra*, the *Gymnasium* was gradually constructed during the 2nd cent. BC. In the oblong expanse, measuring over 26,000 m<sup>2</sup>, whose dimensions were established by the length of the course of one *stade* (192.27 m), the athletes trained for the running and *pentathlon* (jumping, running, javelin, discus, and wrestling) competitions. At the end of the 2nd cent. BC, the *Gymnasium* acquired a magnificent propylon on its southern end. Repair work was performed during the 5th cent. AD, while a century later, its western side was swept away by the flood waters of the *Cladeus River*; the athletes' quarters were also destroyed at the same time.

As in the 5th cent. BC, the finds from the sanctuary dating to the 4th cent. BC and the Hellenistic Age were less numerous and less diverse than those from the earlier periods we examined up to and including the late Archaic period. Only meagre traces of the multitude of statues of gods, heroes, athletes and officials that so richly ornamented the *Altis* were preserved, while the pottery finds are nothing more than standard everyday vessels. In art, which by then had conquered the third dimension, its elements of realism and naturalism for all to see, gods descended upon the human world while maintaining their divine serenity, and mortals were depicted with individual characteristics, and without the idealization of the past.

*The Palaestra of Olympia, an almost square space with a central peristyle court for athletes to train in wrestling, boxing, jumping, and the pentathlon. It had a 72-column Doric colonnade (3rd cent. BC).*





Part of a black-glazed "Elean" skyphos with relief plant decoration on the body (K 2799). The depiction of the head of the Medusa (Gorgoneion) on the bottom of the exterior is supplemented by three clamshells in high relief (mid-3rd-early 2nd cent. BC).

Representative "Elean" style pottery of the 4th cent. BC. The oval lekkythos with the relief and embossed decoration was a vessel for oils or unguents (Jl 2017). The kantharoi, with the relief (K 998) and incised (K 1579) decoration of plant motifs applied in white between the handles, were drinking cups.



*Marble head of Aphrodite in the "Cnidian" style, an exceptionally beautiful piece (A 98). In the opinion of many, the half-open lips and dreamy gaze of the figure reveal the characteristic features of the art of the great sculptor Praxiteles (4th cent. BC).*



*Head of a female statuette dating to the Hellenistic Era (A 182).*



*Head of a terracotta female figurine of the 4th cent. BC, with a very sweet expression and elaborate hair style (II 2967).*



## *The Hermes, a work of art by Praxiteles*

\*...a marble Hermes carrying the baby Dionysus, a work of Praxiteles\* (Pausanias, 5.17.5)

**I**N THIS SENTENCE, PAUSANIAS, in his description of the Heraion and all the splendid artefacts he saw preserved in this temple, the earliest in the Altis, encapsulated the sole written testimony we have regarding one of the most important statuary groups of ancient Greek art, which he saw placed inside the temple cella, concisely describing the work's material, figures and creator.

This brief comprehensive reference made the moment the statue of Hermes holding the infant Dionysus was discovered on April 27, 1877, even more astonishing; whereupon the formal announcement of the event was telegraphed by Athanasios Dimitriades, the Greek authorized overseer of the German excavations to P. Eustratiades, General Ephor of Antiquities of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education.

This superb work was discovered lying in front of its original location in one of the right wall niches of the Heraion's cella. It had evidently been transferred there for protection, along with other statues, when the temple cella had been turned into a museum space during the Roman Era. The sculpture was preserved practically intact, because during its fall it was protected by the mud bricks of the cella, which collapsed upon it, when the temple was destroyed in an earthquake in the 5th cent. AD. Although Pausanias' precious testimony stands alone, since both the statue and its pedestal lack any inscription referring to why this group was dedicated to the sanctuary, or to its creator, the work is considered a genuine creation of the spirit of the 4th cent. BC, and the art of the great sculptor Praxiteles.

The statue of Hermes with the infant Dionysus was carved of Parian marble and is 2.15 m. tall. The grey limestone base has a wall-base (toichobate) with a capstone incised at the top to accommodate the statue's plinth. The pedestal, along with the statue, has a total height of 5.72 m. Hermes, who is depicted nude wearing only sandals, lacks his lower legs and left foot along with the section of the plinth it stood on. Part of his upper right arm is also missing, as well as the entire forearm and hand. His left hand lacks its thumb and forefinger. The god is holding the infant god Dionysus with his left arm and simultaneously leaning on a tree trunk. His himation or chlamys lies upon the trunk and spills down in deep rich folds. The draped garment also enfold the lower body of the young Dionysus, who lacks his entire left arm from the beginning of the upper arm, as well as his upper right arm and forearm.

The grouping of the two figures depicts an incident from the journey of the herald of the gods to the dwelling of the nymphs in Nyssa, Boeotia. He needed to place in their hands the infant Dionysus, fruit of the love affair their sister Semele had with Zeus, to be brought up in safety, far from the rage of Hera. According to myth, the hapless nymph came to a wretched end through a trick of envious Hera before she could give birth. Zeus, however, intervened in time, and after rescuing his son, bore him in his thigh until he could be reborn as the god of revelry and humankind's joyful moments.

The divine infant is clearly sitting up, turning its upper body to the right, while resting its small palm confidently on the left shoulder of its god-protector and fixing its interested gaze on Hermes' raised right hand. A bunch of grapes must have hung from it—the symbol of Dionysus' subsequent attribute, as the god of intoxication and enjoyment. Hermes was holding the grapes and showing them to Dionysus to attract his attention during a tranquil restful moment in their long journey. It is generally accepted that a bunch of grapes is the component missing from the piece, as evidenced from a corresponding Pompeian fresco depicting Hermes carrying Dionysus. This grouping type is also encountered in vessel painting and sculpture, as well as on Arcadian coins.

Hermes' stance captures all the attributes of the art of late classical antiquity (end of the 4th cent. BC). In the position of the god's legs, the principle of *contrapposto*, with the right supporting leg held straight and the left slightly bent and at rest, brings about a sharp bend at the hip level with the body

twisting in the opposite direction, while the neck and head are turning slightly to the left in order to evoke the sense of a more or less S-shaped composition. Hermes' dreamy tranquil gaze contemplates infinity with divine serenity, although he does not seem to be ignoring his precious burden. This face with its intense tenderness and "liquid eyes", the exceptional luminosity of the surface of the sculpture, the movement of the bodily members and muscles, and the smooth rendition of the flesh of a living well-made harmoniously proportioned athletic body, constitute characteristic features of Praxiteles' art, known to us primarily from Roman copies of works that can be attributed confidently to the great sculptor, such as the Cnidian Aphrodite and Apollo Sauroctonus, as well as another two works of art that are considered original works. These are the reliefs on the slabs of the statue bases of the statuary groupings of the Apollonian triad in the sanctuary of Mantinea, and the bronze statue of the Marathon Boy.

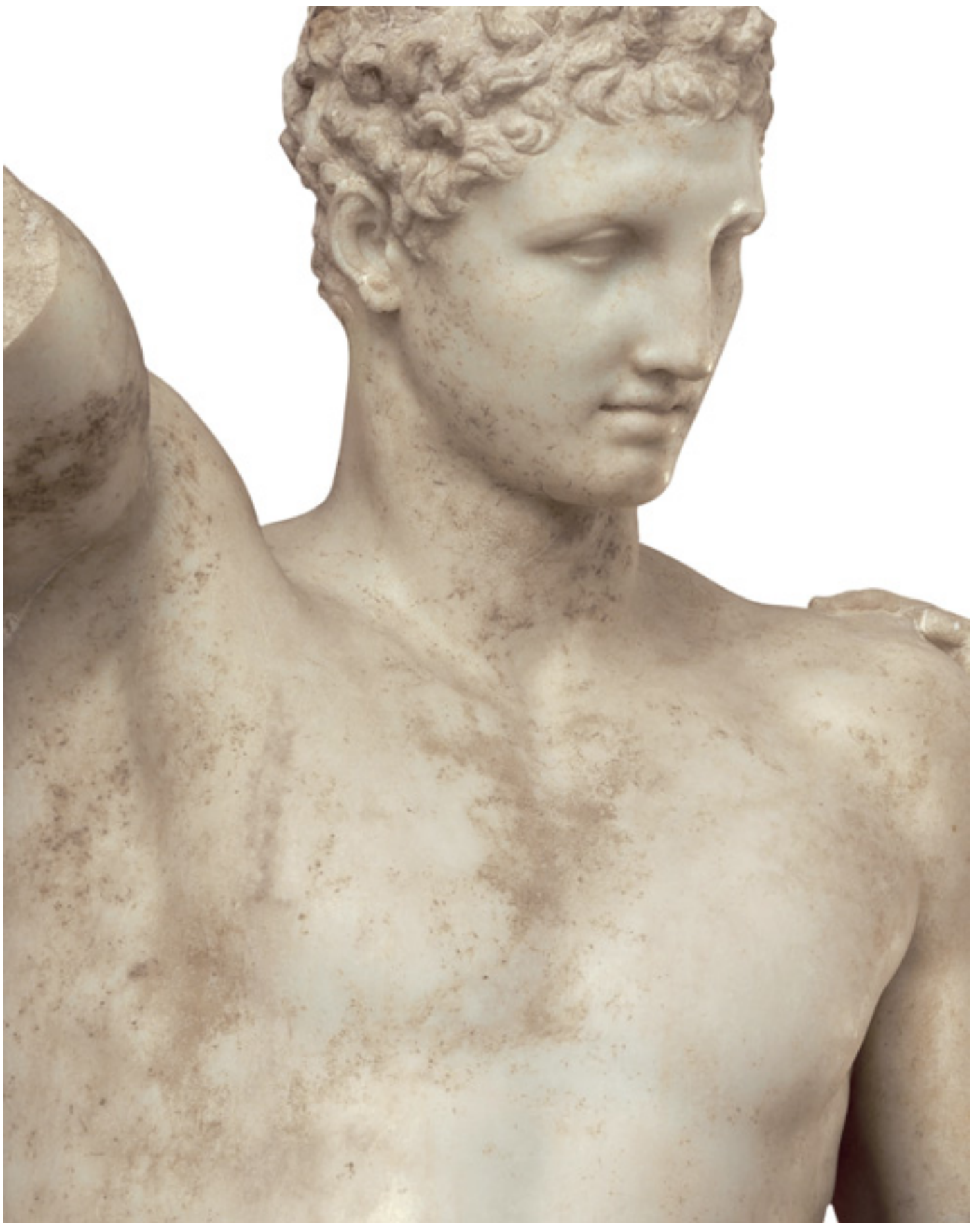
Additional decorative elements, such as the wreaths on both Hermes' head and the child's hair, the metal caduceus (herald's wand) in the messenger's left palm, a symbol of his attribute, which was not preserved, and the originally bright shades used to colour the composition, revealed through traces of reddish-brown colour on the flame-shaped curls of Hermes' hair, as well as the remains of gilding on the sandal of his right leg, enhanced the beauty of this wonderful sculpture.

Despite the many and contradictory views regarding the famous sculpture's authenticity or lack thereof, supported through various arguments, the investigation tends towards the most prevalent opinion, which holds this to be an authentic work of Praxiteles, who continuing the magnificent tradition of his father Kiphsodotus in the art of sculpture—just like his own two sons, Kiphsodotus the Younger and Timachus—lived creating masterpieces during a period of great political and social changes that are reflected in the sculpture of the 4th cent. BC. The statues, within the context of the complete evolution of realism and naturalism, artistic movements timidly making their appearance during the 5th cent. BC, were no longer animated by symmetry, but rather by a rhythm that conquers three-dimensional space.

The base of the statue is newer, as are the alterations to the back of the statue, as evidenced by the obvious traces of work that extends to a level deeper than the rest of the smooth surface. The holes piercing the base of the statue's spine, with yet another at the lower section of the supporting trunk are thought to be Roman additions, which were apparently necessary to repair the work, as well as to better secure it once it was placed in the Heraion where it was transported and remained until it was discovered.















*Hermes' pensive and tranquil gaze contemplates infinity with divine serenity. However, he does not appear to be ignoring the young Dionysus, the fruit of the love affair of Zeus and Semele, his precious burden on the journey to Nysa, Boeotia. The statue of the herald of the gods, with its tender expression and "liquid eyes" is acknowledged by most to be a genuine "work of the art of Praxiteles".*





## *Benefactors, Votive Offerings and Buildings*

**T**HE REVERSAL OF THE SPIRIT OF THE GAMES within the context of the corresponding deterioration of moral values demonstrated from the 4th cent. BC on, is irrefutably established by the Zanes sanctuary offerings, a specific category of bronze statues of Zeus. The Zanes (the name derives from the Doric dialect's genitive plural for Zeus) were exclusively funded by monetary fines levied by the *Hilaniadikai* against athletes who did not compete honestly and according to the rules. Sixteen such statue pedestals were discovered during the temple excavations; aligned in front of the terrace of the Treasuries, a short distance before the Stadium entrance, they served as a reminder to athletes.

Pausanias contains extensive references to the Zanes and to the punishments of athletes (5.21.2 and 6.20.8). The first six statues were erected during the 98th Olympiad (588 BC) by the boxer Eupolos of Thessaly, who was penalized for bribery, while during the 112th Olympiad (552 BC) six more pedestals with representations of Zeus were placed on the same site, as evidence of the punishment imposed on the Athenian pentathlete Calippus, who had committed the same offence.

During the 201st Olympiad (25 AD), this particular form of punishment was also imposed on the pankratiast Sarapion of Alexandria, but for cowardice rather than for transgressing the rules.

The bases of the Zanes were inscribed with the name of the transgressor, and an elegy exhorting athletes to compete without deceit to attain Olympic victory, followed by the artist's signature. Pausanias mentions that Cleon of Sicyon created the first two Zanes west of the sanctuary, which still bear the inscriptions *ΚΛΕΩΝ ΣΙΚΥΟΝΙΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕ* (Cleon of Sicyon made them). It is speculated that the Zeus depicted on the Zanes pedestals was a life-size statue with its entire right foot apparently planted on the pedestal, and the left just touching its surface with the tips of its toes, a conclusion indicated by the remaining evidence demonstrating how the statue was attached to its base. Although created in different time periods, the depictions of Zeus were probably identical.

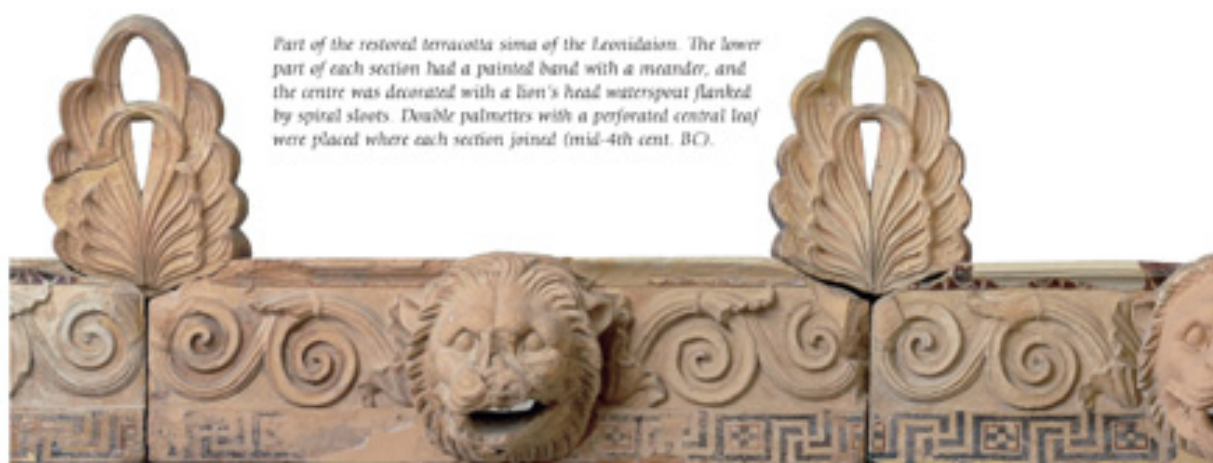
Olympia, as well as its sanctuary, well-known throughout the Hellenic world, apart from the epinician and political offerings it contained, also attracted the interest of foreign benefactors or sponsors, who used their financial strength to contribute to the improvement of the sanctuary infrastructure, while at the same time achieving public promotion and acquiring additional status through their social contributions, i.e., beneficences. This phenomenon clearly points to the reversal of the spirit of the 5th cent. BC, i.e., the shift from exhibiting the votive offerings of the city-states to the tendency towards self-promotion on the part of either rulers or wealthy private individuals, a trend that emerged in the 4th cent. BC.

Leonidas of Naxos was a wealthy individual benefactor of the sanctuary; around the mid-4th cent. BC, he financed the building of the *Leonidaion*, a large guesthouse in the south-western section of the sanctuary, according to his own design. This is corroborated by the inscription preserved on a section of the building's exterior Ionic peristyle: *ΛΕΩΝΙΔΗΣ ΑΕΘΟΥ ΝΑΞΙΟΥ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ* (Leonidas, a Naxian, son of Leotos, made it).

The building was constructed to provide accommodation for the sanctuary's official visitors. The largest of all Olympia's buildings (a practically square area, its dimensions were approximately 82 X 89 m), it contained six banquet halls and various other apartments arranged in a stoa around a square peristyle atrium with a 44-column Doric colonnade. The exterior of this imposing building was surrounded by 158 Ionic columns over 5.50 m high. It was during this period that the ethereal Ionic order along with the Corinthian order, made its appearance in the Altis.

*Pedestals of the Zanes, arranged parallel to the terrace of the Treasuries and dating to the 4th cent. BC. Their placement, a short distance in front of the Krypte entrance of the Stadium, reminded athletes they should take to heart the instances when fines were levied for unsportsmanlike behaviour during the contests and compete according to the rules*





Part of the restored terracotta sima of the Leonidaion. The lower part of each section had a painted band with a meander, and the centre was decorated with a lion's head waterspout flanked by spiral scrolls. Double palmettes with a perforated central leaf were placed where each section joined (mid-4th cent. BC).

The elaborate terracotta sima that decorated the building, with its beautiful relief spiral scrolls and palmettes between lion-head waterspouts, has been largely preserved and is included in the exhibits of the Olympia Museum.

The Leonidaion had entrances on both its north and south sides and was remodelled at least twice during the Roman Era. Then, its interior atrium space (the central courtyard) was transformed into an artificial lake (pool) as a section of the residence of Roman officials. The building complex would have constituted an attractive sight as well as recreation space for the visitors to the sanctuary.

Under the Macedonian kings, the sanctuary of Zeus was the target for the political display and promotion of the Macedonian dynasty's ascending power in the Hellenic territories. King Philip II, having utterly defeated the combined armies of Athens and Thebes in the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC, advertised his Panhellenic authority in the famed sanctuary of Olympia, appearing not as a conqueror but rather as the manifestation of the Panhellenic ideal. He erected the Altis' sole round structure, an elegant building named after him as a monument to his victory and a visible sign of his triumph—another offering to Zeus, the war god of the sanctuary.

Philip began constructing the Philippeion himself after the battle on the Boeotian plain. The building was completed some years after his death (336 BC), possibly by his son Alexander, who, after his father, was also considered a benefactor, and dedicated it as a memorial honouring and memorializing his father. The name of the great army commander had, moreover, been linked to the sanctuary in other ways, since in 328 BC, he announced he was creating a programme to solve the refugee problem of a Greece worn out by civil wars (Diodorus 17.109.1 and 18.8.5–4).

The Philippeion was incorporated into the grounds of the Altis, extending its precinct to the west, and was thus presented as a political offering and war memorial honouring the Macedonian kings. Its exterior circular colonnade consisting of 18 Ionic order columns rested upon a three-stepped marble foundation, while inside around the cella perimeter were 9 Corinthian order half-columns. Above the circular building's porous limestone Ionic entablature rose a marble conical roof that terminated in a floral metal decoration, which according to Pausanias was shaped like the head of poppy: "On the roof of the Philippeion is a bronze poppy" (5.20.9).

A semicircular pedestal was discovered during the excavations in the centre of the cella, opposite the monument's entrance. This is possibly the spot where, according to Pausanias' testimony, Alexander the Great had erected five chryselephantine statues, the work of the famous sculptor Leochares: "These works are by Leochares, and are of ivory and gold" (5.20.10). The statues portrayed Philip, his wife Olympias, and



Alexander, as well as Philip's parents, Amyntas and Eurydice. The traveller saw the last two in the Heraion; it is likely they had been transferred there from the Philippeion (S.17.4 & 20.10).

Of Leochares' marble semi-circular pedestal four of the five concave-convex sections of the base have been preserved, as well as four of the five sections of the crown, which contains the rectangular cavities in which the statues, which did not survive, would be placed. The base as well as the crown, which were linked with a stanchion, bore elaborate relief plant decoration.

In recent studies of the Philippeion, scholarly interest appears to be centred on the issue of the monument's date, as well as the composition and placement of the statues on Leochares' podium, and generally, on the nature of the circular building, which undoubtedly constituted for the Sanctuary of Olympia the symbol of the Argead dynasty's authority. The remarkable restoration work on the monument, which was completed in Spring 2005, was a collaboration of the German Archaeological Institute and the Department of Restoration of Ancient Monuments of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, and resulted in the Altis regaining, if only by one third, the three-dimensional graceful presence of the elegant building on its grounds.

After the death of Alexander the Great (323 BC), the turbulent period of the Successors that followed, was marked, as we saw, by the sacrilege Telesphorus committed in the sanctuary of Olympia. However, this sacrilegious act was offset by another benefaction to the sanctuary of Zeus, and was associated with a member of the new Ptolemaic Dynasty, which, based in Alexandria in Egypt, proved to be a strong adversary of the Macedonians in the struggle for the mastery of Greece.

In the sanctuary of Olympia, around 270 BC, an unusual monument was erected; its purpose was to make the sanctuary's worshippers aware of the period's opposing tendencies, and this in front of the as yet still half-finished Echo Stoa, which Philip II had probably begun constructing and either Alexander the Great or his successors may have completed. At the corners of the terrace foundation, approximately 20 m long and 4 m wide, two Ionic columns were erected, approximately 9 m high, on which the statues of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his sister-wife Arsinoe were placed. This honorary offering, one of the most splendid of its kind, was dedicated to the sanctuary of Zeus by Callicrates, the commander of the Egyptian fleet, to honour the royal couple he served. Recent investigations in the sanctuary uncovered evidence that suggest the Ptolemaic Dynasty, indeed Ptolemy II himself, was the benefactor-sponsor of the Palaestra on the western side of the sanctuary.

Ancient practices remained strong in Olympia, even during the 2nd cent. BC: this was demonstrated by the behaviour of the Roman general Lucius Mummius, who after his victory over the Achaean League

and the conquest of Corinth in 146 BC, ordered 21 shields, spoils of war, to be plated in gold and sent to the sanctuary to be hung on the walls of the Temple of Zeus (Pausanias 5.10.5). Excavations in the Altis brought to light two other statues of Zeus, as well as other votive offerings, whose inscribed pedestals reveal they were his offerings as well.

*The name of Alexander the Great was linked to the sanctuary of Zeus, primarily through the Philippeion, the votive offering which celebrated the victory of the Argead Dynasty while simultaneously commemorating it.*



*Marble portrait head of Alexander the Great (A 246). The exceptional portrait of the Macedonian king, with the head bent to the left, rich wavy hair, forehead wrinkle, limpid expression gazing up in the distance, and half-parted lips, reveal the characteristic features of the sculptural art of Lysippus, statue maker par excellence. It was found in the broader area of Olympia (Alphrussa), and is believed to be a copy of a 4th cent. BC work.*





The Philippeion, a unique, elegant circular building in the Altis, a victory monument and votive offering to the sanctuary of Zeus from the Macedonian king Philip II after the battle of Chaeroneia (338 BC).

Cornithian style half column (A 566) from the circular cella of the Philippeion. The abacus consists of a triple acanthus, which supports the impost block.



Sections of the base and capstone of the semicircular pedestal of Leokhares. The pedestal was placed in virtually the centre of the cella, opposite the entrance of the Philippeion. After the building was completed, five chryselephantine statues, according to Pausanias' testimony, were placed in the five rectangular niches in the capstone's upper surface. The statues portrayed Philip, his wife Olympias and Alexander, as well as Philip's parents, Amyntas and Eurydice. The two parts were linked with a stanchion and bore elaborate relief decoration.



## OLYMPIA IN THE ROMAN ERA (1st cent. BC – 4th cent. AD)

FROM THE TIME OF GREECE'S SUBJUGATION BY ROME until the period of Augustus (146–50 BC), various events took place that degraded the sanctuary of Olympia, such as the Roman general Sulla's plundering foray during the Second Mithridatic War (85 BC), when he sought to finance his military ventures. In 80 BC, the 175th Olympiad was moved to Rome and presented as entertainment to the conquerors as a form of victory celebration.

Nevertheless, although the initial decades of the 1st cent. BC were disastrous for Greece, Olympia does not appear to have been directly affected, since devotional ceremonies and the Games continued to be held as usual. This fact does not mean that the formerly glorious spirit of the athletic competitions endured, since the constant degradation of their cohesive religious foundation increased to an irreversible degree the trend towards turning them into a professional event.

The Roman conquerors were aware they had conquered a civilization that was definitely more advanced than their own and were conscious of its superiority. Many emperors possessed a philhellenic spirit and sought, and to some degree succeeded, to reanimate the Panhellenic games and athletics in general. They were not, however, able to nourish, or even preserve the glory of the old spirit; the reason is obvious since, putting aside the actual change that took place in socio-political conditions, the Romans themselves never acquired a deep fundamental understanding of this spirit.

In the age of Augustus (29 BC) and subsequently, once the Pax Romana was established, and within the framework of the demonstrations of reverence to Rome and the Augusti emperors, the Metroon, dedicated to Rhea, mother of the gods, which had been destroyed by an earthquake, was renovated and converted into a site where, according to the inscription on its architrave, Augustus and the Roman emperors who succeeded him were worshiped. At the rear wall of the temple's main hall, stood the colossal statue of the Emperor Augustus, as Zeus, with a sceptre in one hand and a thunderbolt in the other, about 5 m in height. Visitors to the Museum of Olympia may get an idea of the impressive dimensions of the statue, whose weight required a monolithic base and a strong foundation, from the statue's headless upper torso, exhibited in the peristyle of the atrium.

Worship in the Metroon continued under Augustus' successors. In the age of Claudius (41–54 AD), the central hall of the temple acquired many statues, one of which depicted Claudius himself as Zeus, while others belonged to his family. It appears that at a certain period in time some sculptures were transferred to the Treasury of the Cyrenians, while others were added to the Metroon. The impressive statues currently in Olympia's museum depicting Claudius, Titus in a breastplate, and Agrippina the Younger constitute representative exhibits of the imperial worship underway in the temple of the mother of the gods.

The successful repair of the Temple of Zeus, which had been damaged in an earthquake in 40 BC, was a project attributed to the general Marcus Agrippa, Augustus' son-in-law, who had funded many projects during that period. It was then that certain figures of the western pediment were repaired, and many of the roof's lion-head waterspouts were replaced, while the Echo Stoa, which for three centuries had remained unfinished, was completed and roofed. For the first time Roman rulers acquired the right to participate in the games as Greeks, as evidenced by the case of the heirs of Augustus, Tiberius (194th Olympiad, 4 BC) and Germanicus (199th Olympiad, 17 AD), who participated in chariot races and were proclaimed victors.

During the Roman era, the Doric temple of Hera was transformed into an exhibition hall, housing many statues, most of which portrayed women who belonged to important Elean families. One of the

*Marble statue, possibly of Peppaea Sabina, (2nd half of the 1st cent. AD).*





most well-preserved statues is that of Poppaea Sabina. Her garment with its rich folds and her intricate hairstyle grant majesty to the noble features of the Roman lady, who is evidently portrayed as a priestess.

Within the general climate of the philhellenism of the Roman emperors, a consequence of their admiration of classical Greece, certain isolated incidents demonstrating arrogance and a conqueror's conceit marked the history of the sanctuary and the Games during the period under investigation. The cancellation of Caligula's plans to transport the chryselephantine statue of Zeus to Rome (40 BC) so as to add lustre to the rising authority of the imperial capital was both felicitous and fortunate for the sanctuary.

Some decades later, Nero's fervent desire to associate his name with the sanctuary and to be hailed as an Olympic champion caused the established chronological order of the Olympiads to be overturned. The 211th Olympiad was pushed back by two years, in order to coincide with the idiosyncratic ruler's visit to the Peloponnese and the sanctuary of Zeus (67 AD).

Then the Altis precinct was enlarged and a monumental propylon was constructed in the southeastern area to welcome him, while a many roomed villa with a peristyle court was constructed for his accommodation upon the earlier foundations of the southeastern 4th cent. BC building. The emperor's participation in the Games was eventful and unorthodox for many reasons, and after his suicide, which occurred a year after the events, the Eleans proclaimed the 211th Olympiad invalid.

In the framework of a recent excavation programme in Olympia that sought to examine the condition of the sanctuary during later antiquity, a building complex, which constituted the headquarters of an athletic guild, was discovered southwest of the Leonidaion. An inscription testifies that this building was founded in the age of Nero and was completed with financial support from the emperor Domitian. It is particularly interesting, since, dedicated to the worship of Heracles, it proves that the structure and organization of the athletic guilds during the Imperial Age still retained the religious character of the preceding periods. A building complex discovered north of the Prytaneion, with a peristyle, mosaic floors and many storage facilities belongs to the same period.

The second century AD constituted a period of recovery and general prosperity for the sanctuary of Zeus. This was the period of the rise of the Antonines, that most philhellenic of dynasties, during which many of Olympia's buildings and athletic grounds were renovated, while the Altis received many statues and votive offerings. The Prytaneion and the Theikoleon were brought up to date and the Leonidaion was radically renovated according to the fashion in Roman villas, as previously mentioned. During the age of Hadrian (117-138 AD), and for a short while later, one final alteration was made to the Stadium, extending the southern embankment and widening the platform of the Hellanodikai.

During this time, the traveller Pausanias visited the Peloponnese (160-170 AD). His description of the sanctuary of Olympia, as it was during that period, acquired historic dimensions for following generations. His valuable work *Description of Greece*, published in 175 AD, represents the tradition of travel at its finest and is rightly termed an "encyclopaedic panorama" of Greek antiquity, a precious guide to the "discovery" of ancient Greece and its civilization.

The institution of benefaction was extremely widespread throughout the Hellenistic years and prevalent during the Roman occupation as well. Within this framework, Tiberius Claudius Herodes Atticus Marathonius proved to be a great benefactor of the sanctuary during the golden age of the Antonines. Descended from a wealthy and illustrious family, he was a high official, scholar, skilled rhetorician, and tireless student of ancient Greek literature. Some of his especially well known projects were the renovation of the Panathenaean Stadium in Athens, and the Stadiums in Olympia and Delphi; he also underwrote the construction of the impressive structure enclosing the Peirini spring in Corinth.

An exceptionally impressive secular building served to associate the names of Herodes Atticus and his wife Rigilla with Olympia and its sanctuary. Erected in 160 BC, it liberated the sanctuary from the centuries-long problem of drought, especially noticeable during mid-summer, the season the Olympic Games took place.

The Nymphaion, an elaborately luxurious building also known as the Exedra of Herodes Atticus, was erected on the western end of the terrace of the Treasuries. An aqueduct that transported potable water to the sanctuary from the east to the southern slope of the Kronion Hill terminated there. A semicircular

reservoir and a rectangular basin on a lower level constituted the principal structure of the fountain, while two small *monopteroi* (circular pavilions), each holding a Roman statue, stood at each end of the rectangular basin.

The monumental and ostentatiously stylish two-storied *exedra*, 15 m. high, with eleven niches per floor, was built in the front of the semicircular cistern, and eloquently represented the new era in the otherwise austere Hellenic atmosphere of the *Altis* grounds. Statues depicting the family of the imperial Antonine House were placed in the niches of the lower level, while the upper level was decorated with the sculpted depictions of the family of the dedicator-benefactor. The entire composition was governed by strict hierarchy, which was revealed by the vertical placement of the figures.

Inscriptions testify to the fact that the statues of the imperial family were dedicated by Herodes Atticus, while those of his family by the city of the Eleans. Zeus, as the recipient of the votive offering and the guarantor of the sanctuary's order, occupied the two central niches of the stories.

On the upper level the god was portrayed with a *himation*, in the type of the Dresden Zeus. Below, he was depicted in the beauty of male nudity, coiled curls ornamenting his broad sternum. This 2nd cent. AD statue type is thought to be a copy of a 5th cent. BC work of Myron.

An almost life-sized marble statue of a bull had apparently been placed in the centre of the rectangular basin of the *Nymphaion*. This was an offering made by *Rigilla*, who had been honoured at Olympia with the title of priestess of Demeter *Chamyne*. The inscription carved on one side attests to the identity of the dedicator and specifies the nature of the votive offering, associating the animal with the symbolism of the element of water and sacrifice: *ΡΗΠΑΛΑ ΙΕΡΕΙΑ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΟΣ ΤΟ ΥΔΡΟ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟ ΥΔΡΟ ΤΟ ΔΗ* ('*Rigilla* priestess of Demeter (dedicated) the water and the (objects) around the water to Zeus').

Most of the *Exedra* statues were discovered during the earlier excavations of the *Altis* and their



*Marble statue of a woman, possibly Agrippina the Younger, wife of the Emperor Claudius and mother of Nero (A 143). She is portrayed as a priestess, her himation covering her head. The statue's plinth bears the inscription ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΣ ΑΘΩΜΑΓΝΙΟΥ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ (Created by Dionysius, the Athenian, Ison of Apollonius), (1st cent. AD). The statue was placed in the *Metreon*, when the temple was converted into a place of worship of Augustus and subsequent Roman emperors.*



*Marble statue of the emperor Titus (79–81 AD), one of the statues of the Roman emperors that were placed in the Metron (A 126). Titus, with an oak leaf wreath on his head is depicted as a breastplated general, his sword near his right leg and touching a tree trunk. A Gorgoneion, dolphins, and Nereids mounted on sea-horses decorate the engraved breastplate; the cuirass tongues bear depictions of the head of Amun, a lion's head, etc., (1st cent. AD).*



approximate identification was made according to the inscribed bases in the buildings, in association with the standard features used to depict the figures. The statues clad in togas or armour did not belong in the layout of the Nymphaion, since, due to their size, it was impossible to place them in the niches; they evidently decorated the two circular buildings at the ends of the rectangular basin. The new configuration of the Roman sculptures hall in the Museum of Olympia, introduced during the re-exhibition work in the context of the Olympic Games projects, displays the majority of the statues of the Nymphaion, the Heraion, and the Metroon, transforming the space into an imposing Roman sculpture gallery.

During the 3rd cent. AD, powerful earthquakes struck the sanctuary, while the threatened incursion of the barbaric Herulian tribe (267 AD), which ultimately did not reach Olympia, caused many of its buildings to be torn down to construct a protective wall to safeguard the temple of Zeus and Pheidias' statue of the god, as well as many other precious votive offerings.

Many of the buildings in the sanctuary of Olympia underwent repair and renovation, especially under Diocletian (285-305 AD). Outside of the Altis precinct, in every direction, many new bathing facilities were established as well as a new guesthouse, so that the grounds could meet the hospitality and service requirements of the visitors, and naturally the athletes, who continued to flock to the sanctuary from every region under Roman rule, especially after the edict issued by the emperor Caracalla (212 AD), granting the right of Roman citizenship to all free subjects of the Empire.

From the 4th century on, despite the frequent flooding of the Alpheus and the Cladeus Rivers, the religious ceremonies continued to be held. The earlier theory that Olympia had fallen into a total decline was overturned by an extremely important find during recent excavations, associated with the athletic guild that was discovered, as previously mentioned, southwest of the Leonidaion.

This is a long inscription in verse carved upon a bronze plaque, 75 x 40 cm, which records the names of the athletes, obviously members of the guild, their birthplace, the type of competition, and the date of their victory in the sanctuary of Olympia. This find indisputably proves the Games continued to be

regularly held at the sanctuary during the 4th century AD as well, and that the universality of the Games had not excluded Greek athletes in favour of others originating in the various Roman provinces. Among other athletes, the bronze inscription notes that the guild's last Olympic champion was the Athenian Zopyros, who was victorious in the youth pankration during the 291st Olympiad (385 AD).

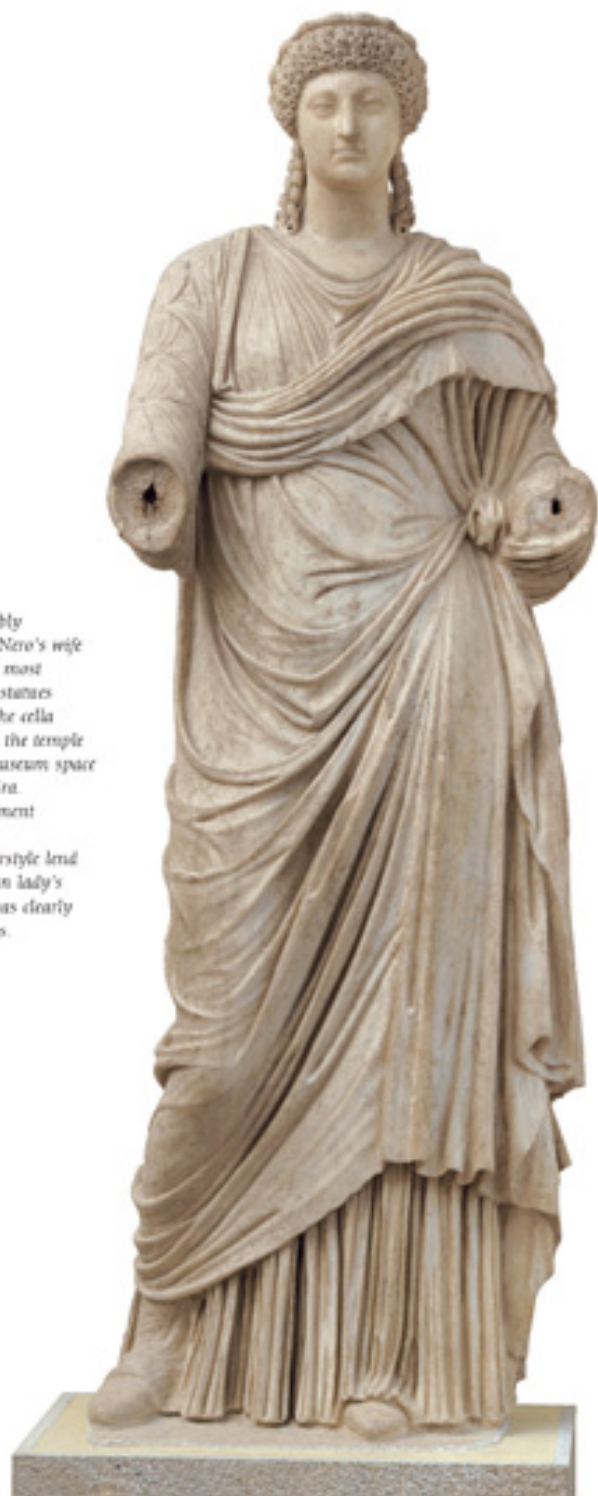


*Marble upper torso of the Emperor Augustus from the cella of the Metroon (A 110). The colossal statue, made of Pentelic marble, stood at about 3 m, and according to the torso and other preserved members, depicts the emperor as Zeus, his left hand resting on a sceptre, while holding an eagle in his right. A himation covered his left arm, falling to his ankles. The statue of Augustus was later flanked by the statues of Roman emperors and their wives.*



*Marble statue of the emperor Claudius (41–54 AD) as Zeus. His raised left hand would have held sceptre, while his right would have held a Nike or a sphere. An eagle, the symbol of Zeus, is depicted next to his right leg (A 125). The work was placed in the Atrium, along with the other statues of Roman emperors.*

*Marble statue, possibly of Poppaea Sabina, Nero's wife (A 144). One of the most well-preserved of the statues that were placed in the cella of the Heraion when the temple was turned into a museum space during the Roman Era. Her floor-length garment with its rich folds and her intricate hairstyle lend majesty to the Roman lady's noble features; she was clearly depicted as a priestess.*



Headless marble female statue from the semicircular upper storey of the Nymphaeum (A 156). It most probably portrays Rigilla, wife of Herodes Atticus, in a chiton and himation in the type of the Large Herculaneum Woman (2nd cent. AD).





Headless marble statue of a female with a floor-length chiton and himation (A 163). It is associated with Elpinike, Herodes Atticus' firstborn daughter, and holds a libation phiale in its right hand. From the upper semicircular stoa of the Nymphaion (2nd half of the 2nd cent. AD).





*Exquisitely made Corinthian capital (A 565). It belonged to one of the two monopteroi (circular pavilions), which decorated the two ends of the lower rectangular basin of the Esdra of Herodes Atticus.*

*Headless marble statue of a togate Roman (A 154). It may depict Herodes Atticus at an advanced age. A scrinium (small case) with a relief key on one side is depicted near his left foot. It was found in the western pavilion of the Nymphaeum (2nd half of the 2nd cent. AD).*





Marble bull, practically life size (A 164). It decorated the centre of the rectangular basin of the Nymphaion and was dedicated to the sanctuary of Zeus by Rigilla, the wife of Herodes Atticus. The inscription engraved on one of its flanks: ΠΡΟΣΑΑ ΙΕΡΕΙΑ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΟΣ ΤΟ ΥΔΩΡ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟ ΥΔΩΡ ΤΩ ΔΘ (Rigilla priestess of Demeter [dedicated] the water and the [objects] around the water to Zeus) attests to the dedicator, who had been honoured in Olympia with the title of priestess of Demeter Charopse. It also defines the votive offering type, associating the animal with the symbolism of the element of water and sacrifice.





*Zeus, clad in a himation, in the type of the Dresden Zeus from the central niche of the upper level of the Nymphaeon (A 108). This imposing statue made of Pentelic marble is a 2nd cent. AD Roman copy of an original bronze work dating to approximately 430 BC.*



*Zeus, the recipient of Herodes Atticus' votive offering and the guarantor of the sanctuary's order, dominated the two central niches of the Nymphaeion's semicircular stories. On the lower level, he was depicted in all the beauty of male nudity, with long tresses decorating his broad chest (A 109). Copy of a probably bronze original dating to 450 BC.*



*Marble statue of the emperor Hadrian (117–138 AD) from the lower story of the Nymphaeum. He is depicted as a breastplated general, bearded, with a laurel wreath in his hair (A 148). The breastplate is richly decorated in relief with two Nikes placing a wreath on a Palladium, flanked by an owl and a serpent. The Palladium is standing on the She-wolf nursing Remulus and Remus.*







*LEFT: Marble portrait statue of the emperor Lucius Verus (161-169 AD). He is portrayed as a beardless youth wearing a laurel wreath on his head. (A166). From the bottom level of the Nymphaeum. RIGHT: Head of a marble statue of Antinous, favourite of the Emperor Hadrian (A 104 + A208). From the Palaestra of Olympia. Portrayed in the type of the young athlete, perhaps a wrestler. Hadrian dedicated statues of the beautiful youth from Bithynia, who was drowned in the waters of the Nile in 130 AD, to many different sanctuaries.*

*Marble portrait head of the emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD) with a laurel wreath in his hair. It belonged to his statue that was placed on the lower level of the Nymphaeum (A 165).*



*Marble portrait head of M. Appius Bradua, grandfather of Ripilla (late 3rd cent. AD). (A 135).*

Upper part of the statue of Faustina the Elder, wife of Antoninus Pius (A. 155), according to the inscribed base  
ΦΑΥΣΤΕΙΝΑΝ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΥ ΕΥΣΕΒΟΥΣ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΑ. From the lower level of the Nymphaion.





*Headless marble statue of a Roman breastplated emperor (A 150), possibly Marcus Aurelius (161–180 AD). His breastplate is decorated with a relief Gorgoneion. The trunk near the figure's right leg depicts a schematic palm tree with leaves and fruit.*





Headless marble statue of a breastplated emperor (A 149). It most probably depicts Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD) in leopard-skin shoes. The breastplate bears a relief decoration of two facing griffins on either side of a lamp stand and painted cuirass tongues. The statue is leaning against a schematic palm tree with leaves and fruit. It stood in the eastern pavilion of the Nymphaion.



*View of the lower level of the Esplanade of Herodes Atticus from the east. The architectural members of the two monopteroi (circular pavilions) that decorated the rectangular basin are visible.*



*Headless marble female figure in a chiton and himation (A 158). It belongs to Faustina the Younger, wife of Marcus Aurelius. From the lower level of the Nymphaeion (2nd half of the 2nd cent. AD).*

*Marble statue of a maiden (A 160). It is thought to depict Antonia Faustina or Lucilla, one of the daughters of the emperor Marcus Aurelius. From the lower level of the Nymphaeion (2nd half of the 2nd cent. AD).*









Articulated clay figurines made of four fitted members that depict a Roman soldier in a short chiton (II 3118, II 2218, II 2219). Along with the clay owl (II 2220) and cat (II 3119) statuettes, these constituted grave offerings of toys, obviously from children's graves. From the Roman cemetery of Franconissi, Olympia (1st–3rd cent. AD).



*Blown glass vases (Δ 80, Δ 74, Δ 96, Δ 73, Δ 69, Δ 81). Grave gifts from Roman graves in the cemetery of Frangonissi, Olympia (1st-4th cent. AD). The trefoil oinochoe (Δ 84) is from the 5th cent. BC, and was found in a Roman grave, clearly as a family heirloom.*





## THE GAMES COME TO AN END THE SANCTUARY IS ABANDONED

**I**N SPITE OF THE EDICT OF THE EMPEROR THEODOSIUS I (529 AD) closing all the Greek temples of antiquity, it is not certain that this affected the operation of the Olympic Games to any large degree. During this period, the chryselephantine statue of Zeus may have been transported to Constantinople, where, according to prevalent opinion, it was later destroyed (475 AD) during a fire. A few years later, Alaric at the head of the Visigoths, attacked the Elean territories.

Under Theodosius II and Pulcheria (426 AD) a second edict evidently dealt the final blow to any sanctuaries that continued to function. During a period that cannot be accurately determined, and as the Christian religion was becoming established, the priests of Olympia were forced to comply with the command, their compliance a natural outcome of the total decline of the athletic and religious spirit of the ancient Hellenic world.

In the 5th century AD, the city of Elis installed an agricultural and commercial population under its administration in the former sanctuary of Olympia, where, despite hardships, many of the buildings and the magnificent Temple of Zeus itself remained standing. Over the ancient, mostly ruined buildings, new dwellings were constructed, extending from the left side of the former sanctuary and beyond the western boundary of the Altis. The excavations have revealed that the inhabitants engaged in various activities and were wine producers, woodworkers, artisans, and pottery makers. The use of imported vessels from North Africa and Asia Minor, as well as local production, demonstrates that Olympia still maintained its trade contacts in the Mediterranean.

The centre of worship of this Christian community, which had created an extended cemetery of over 200 graves inside the settlement, was marked by the construction of an Early Christian three-aisle basilica around the mid-5th cent. AD upon the ruins of the large Workshop of Pheidias. The wall stanchions were all that remained of the workshop. An apse was added to the building's east entrance transforming it into the church sanctuary. The sanctuary's well-preserved parapets, in their original position, and the church entrance on the southern side of the narthex, with its extant inscriptions regarding the marble-paved floor and the era's occupations, constitute a complete historical reference point, where the lives of the ancient and the Christian world intersect.

The Christian settlement survived up into the 6th century until the great earthquakes of 522 and 551 AD dealt the final blow to the area. In the heart of the erstwhile Panhellenic sanctuary, transformed into a vast landscape of ruins, the archetypal temple of Almighty Zeus, its protector, collapsed completely.

Avar and Slav raids from the north led the inhabitants to gradually abandon the area, while flooding from both the rivers finally removed everyone from the slopes of the Kronion.

From the early 7th and up to the late 8th cent. AD, a small Slavic settlement occupied the Cladeus Valley north of the Kronion Hill. From the early 9th century AD, the area closed in upon itself. Up to, and including, the 19th century, which would mark the end of Olympia's obscurity, shards of statues and votive offerings, temple and building remains, and with them, sacred memories and bright abiding athletic glories were buried under the massive layers of sand accumulated by the sacred rivers of the valley and the legendary Kronion. Muses, sacred sites, altars, temples, wreaths and votive offerings were thunderously

*Early Christian inscription from the narthex of the three-aisled Early Christian basilica at Olympia, with information regarding the marble paving of the church floor and the professions of the period. (5th cent. AD)*

silent over the passing of the centuries. Even the name of the site, Olympia, possibly a gift from Hera's designation as 'Iera Olympia', was obliterated, and another took its place during the medieval era.

Then the valley of the forgotten sanctuary was called Antilala (Echo)—a trace perhaps, a surviving echo of the Iliptāthos Echo Stoa. This was the explanation Lord J. S. Stanhope adopted when he visited the valley searching for the forgotten sanctuary in 1815.

He also mentioned the name "Antilala", which he attributed to a more practical and plausible interpretation, i.e. that it denoted the position of the sanctuary and the valley opposite the town of Lala, a valid hypothesis as regards the topography of the period. The area's other name "Serbia" or "Serbiana" may possibly have lingered as a reminder of the area's last habitation, limited though its size may have been.

Above the buried ruins, the Kronion Hill, symbol of Olympia's myths, stood solitary and immobile, an unsleeping guardian of memory, a silent witness to over a thousand years of history and events, a mute narrator without a pen. The hill became the companion of the poet who communed with it, the lyricism of the fifteen-syllable verse his inventive pen produced, sweeping along even the most unmusical:

*I see you now, alas, your legs extended,  
Tightly grasping the ruins tumbled before you,  
And from your slender peak, I see eternal before me,  
Your wakeful eye guards the shadows of a lost world ...*

A bitter lament slowly trickles through the verdant, heavily shaded heart of the Kronion Hill. Nevertheless, as it apparently responded to the poet, hope ran through its sorrowful delirium:

*It was my destiny, now over seasons and years,  
To contemplate the immortal, the eternal lifeless*

.....

*But from that first hour when the contests fell silent,  
I have been guarding up to now the ancestral glory.  
And from that first hour when the rivers below  
Flooded the land and covered it with sand,  
I was not abandoned by hope  
Freedom's ray would again uncover the former great glory!*

As time traced its wise circle, the passing of the centuries transformed the Kronion's lament into joy, ineffable, yet still expressed:

*All at once, the voice from the depths of the earth fell silent  
Before the sun that, brilliant, arose again*

.....

*And you my eternal beauties, in these holy lands,  
That saw the gods as men, and men as Gods.  
And you Alphons, your liquid silver ceaselessly  
caressing the remains of glory your tenderness unquenched,  
Be glad, rejoice again for this land,  
Casting off slavery this ill-starred land is now free.*

.....

Clay palmette ansæfx with leaves, sprouting from a relief decorative head of Zeus. This crowned a clay sima, which may come from the so-called "House of Nero" (1st cent. AD).

Zeus continued to make his presence felt in the sanctuary buildings during the first Christian centuries as well (9R7 or 9R6).





The Light is here, dawn has arrived and clearly saw  
How bright the stones shine under the holy light of truth.  
You might think that beauty was first given them  
By freedom's labourer and the wise man's pickaxe,  
And what black shadows and oblivion had covered,  
Is once again worshipped with reverence and honour by all!

DN. Kyparissis, 'Kronion's complaint', *Olympiada*, Athens 1977)

This was how Olympia's former archaeologist-curator, Ephor of Antiquities and amateur poet Nikolaos Kyparissis gave voice to the inspiration of endless hours of contemplation and thought in the idyllic valley of Olympia during the 1950s. The site finally escaped isolation and was reborn, through the archaeologist's spade that bestowed upon the world the visible portion of the history of the famous Panhellenic temple, and through the idealism this discovery instilled in the revivers of the Olympic Games, the Greek Dimitrios Vikelas and the French baron Pierre de Coubertin. This reclaimed past allowed their hearts and their spirit to rest upon the laurels of a vision, which was not only realized, but is inscribed in perpetuity as a universal trust imbued with the spirit of Greece.

*\*...in the fairest part of Greece...\** (LYSIAS, Olympic Oration, 55.2)

*Inscribed bronze plaque from the building of the Athletes' Guild, in the southwestern section of the sanctuary of Zeus (inv. 1148). It records the names of the athletes who were members of the guild from the 1st cent. BC up to the 4th cent. AD. The last name engraved on the list is that of the Athenian Zopyras, the guild's champion in the youth pankration at the 291st Olympiad (385 AD).*









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