

# *Journey to the Other Greece*

*From Classical Sparta to Alexander the Great*



*VDH HISTORICAL TOURS*

*MAY 29 ~ JUNE 8, 2018*

# From the Desk of Victor Davis Hanson

Dear Friend,

For our twelfth annual military history tour of Europe, we plan in 2019 to return to Greece, the site of our first tour. Yet this time, we will visit an “Other Greece,” one not usually visited by tourists. The vale of Sparta and the environs of Mt. Taygetus were the crossroads of war and conquest from classical times to the end of Byzantine Greece, with the catastrophic fall of Mistras and the Morea in the late 15th-century, now one of the best preserved Byzantine Greek sites in the world.

On the way through the Peloponnese, we will visit the valley of Mantinea, and the sites of the great battles fought there, especially the terrible ordeal of 362 B.C. where Epaminondas the Theban liberator fell. We will also visit many of the places in a novel *The End of Sparta* that I wrote about the liberation of the Messenian helots from their Spartan overlords. The other less traveled Greece is also to the north. Our drive there will take us through the historic ‘dancing floor of war’ where ancient Greek armies met from the flatlands of Thebes to the vast expanses of Thessaly.

Upon arrival in ancient Macedon, we will make our base of operations in the historic city of Thessaloniki, the nexus of conflict from Macedonian times until World War II and the subsequent Greek Civil War. From Thessaloniki, the most scenic and important sites of the classical era of Athenian imperial power and of the Hellenistic world of Philip and Alexander the Great are just short drives away, such as Amphipolis, Meteora, Pella, Philippi, and Vergina.

In addition to visiting the usual landmark sites of Greece—Athens, Corinth, Nauplion, and Epidaurus—our 2019 visit will include a Greece rarely seen by tourists, but one replete with literary, historical, and military sites that figure prominently in the Western tradition, from the gallant last stand of the 300 at Thermopylae to the great Theban battle sites where Socrates fought at the battle of Delium.

As classicists, Bruce Thornton, a Research Fellow at Stanford’s Hoover Institution and Professor of Classics and Humanities at California State University, Fresno (PhD UCLA, author of eleven books on classical and contemporary Europe), and I will offer daily formal lectures that will focus on both southern and northern Greece, from the Mycenaean Age to the end of Byzantium, as well as landmark sites of the Balkan Wars and World War II.

All Philipp with All Aboard Travel once again has arranged for luxury accommodations, gourmet meals, 24/7 service, and a professionally planned itinerary that seeks to cover an enormous amount of ground from the tip of the Peloponnese to the northern borders of Greece, with a single change of hotels.

Once again we are returning to the classical world, where both Bruce and I can best draw on our joint formal training and published works to present scholarly and accessible formal lectures on the ancient world, the ecology of the classical Mediterranean, military history, and, more informally, to share our meals and walking tours with each one of you.

As before, the contemporary world will never be far away, as we review current Mediterranean tragedies such as the financial and immigration crises of the European Union on its southern flank, the challenge to Greece from a new defiant Turkey, and the always changing status of current U.S.-Greek relations. We will again host lively debates about our own opinion journalism that will reflect many of the controversies that arise from recent changes in American foreign policy, as they affect both our friends and enemies around the Mediterranean Sea.

We hope you can join us.

Sincerely,



Victor Davis Hanson

The Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow in Classics and Military History, The Hoover Institution, Stanford University





# Agenda

## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 29**

Depart the United States on individual flights for Athens, Greece.

## **THURSDAY, MAY 30**

Arrive at Athens international airport and private car transfer to the luxurious Corinth area hotel. Meet your traveling companions and hosts at the welcome reception and dinner at the hotel.

## **FRIDAY, MAY 31 ~ CORINTH**

Travel to Ancient Corinth, a center for trade during ancient Greek and Roman periods due to its location in the isthmus that connects the Greek mainland to the Peloponnese. Following our visit to the Corinth Canal and the ruins of this ancient city, we will have lunch in Nafplion. In the afternoon, we will visit the ruins of the ancient site of Mycenae, home to Agamemnon. Here you will see The Lion Gate as well as the Beehive Tombs of Atreus, Clytemnestra, Aegisthus and much more.

## **SATURDAY, JUNE 1 ~ MYSTRAS AND SPARTA**

Scenic drive to the Byzantine town of Mystras, which overlooks the city of Sparta to see the “wonders of Morea.” In the afternoon we will have lunch in Sparta and visit the archeology museum and sites in this historic city. Known for creating one of the most powerful standing armies in Greece, Sparta to this day stands as a symbol of military strength and prowess.

## **SUNDAY, JUNE 2 ~ EPIDAUROS AND NEMEA**

Named after the hero Epidauros, son of Apollo, the town of Epidauros served as an important sacred center for the Greeks and Romans alike. Located in the Argolid plains, which proved fertile and ideal soil for growing crops, this city thrived with its focal point at the magnificent theater that was built there. Among the elaborate ruins of baths, stadiums, labyrinths, temples, and fountains, sits a theater that fits over 12,300 people, one of the largest in all of antiquity that survived. For lunch, we will visit the archaeological site at Nemea and dine in the vineyard there. We will then take a private boat through the Corinth Canal, a magnificent and historical experience. Dinner will be paired with an authentic Greek Folklore show.

## **MONDAY, JUNE 3 ~ CORINTH AND THERMOPYLAE**

Thermopylae, made famous by the Battle of Thermopylae, fought between the Greek city-states and the Persians during the second Persian invasion. The massive Persian army lead by Xerxes was attempting to conquer all of Greece, but had to pass through the narrow passage of Thermopylae. King Leonidas of Sparta was attempting to defend this pass with a much smaller force of Spartans, Thesbians, and Thebans. Ultimately, Leonidas' army fought to the death, but they did not die in vain, because soon after, the Persians were defeated at the Battle of Plataea, which ended the invasion.

In the afternoon, we will take a scenic drive to Thessaloníki and settle at the Electra Palace Hotel overlooking the Thermaikos Gulf in the northeast corner of the Aegean Sea.

## **TUESDAY, JUNE 4 ~ THESSALONÍKI**

Thessaloníki, the second largest city in Greece was founded in 315BC and has a rich historical past. It earned its nickname as the “co-capital” when it “co-reigned” the Byzantine Empire with Constantinople. A landmark and symbol of this great city is the White Tower, built by the Ottomans in the 16th century. We will also visit the archaeological museum, which houses The Derveni Papyrus dating back to 340 BC, The Aravissos Hoard dating back to 4500 BC, and many other unique archaeological finds.

## **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5 ~ PHILIPPI, AMPHIPOLIS, AND KAVALA**

Day tour to Philippi, Amphipolis, and Kavala. Originally named Crenides, Philippi was renamed by Philip II of Macedon when he conquered it in 356 BC for its gold mines and strategic location between eastern and western trade routes. In 42 BC, Antony and Octavian defeated Julius Caesar's murderers, Brutus and Longinus, in the field to the west of the town during the Roman civil war. They added a Roman forum to the city, near the old Greek agora, still visible in the ruins today. At the archaeological site of Amphipolis, you will find the great Lion monument that was not uncovered until the Second Balkan Wars in the early 1900s. Kavala, a pivotal coastal town for the area's gold and silver mines, was founded in 7th century BC. One of the city's major landmarks is the aqueduct, which you can see from the harbor. Dinner will be served at an authentic Macedon restaurant.

## **THURSDAY, JUNE 6 ~ METEORA**

Full day tour to visit the Meteora Monasteries. Built into the sides of mountains and atop of sharp cliffs, the six Eastern Orthodox monasteries in Meteora are breathtaking and impressive. Suspended between heaven and earth, monks began to settle in the caves and caverns atop these tall cliffs in the 11th century. At one time, there were over 24 monasteries in the region.

## **FRIDAY, JUNE 7 ~ PELLA AND VERGINA**

Excursion to Pella and Vergina. The birthplace of Alexander the Great, Pella served as the capital of the ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon. In the recently redone museum, we will find beautiful Macedonian mosaics and other unique works of art from the 4th century. After leaving Pella, we will venture to the village of Vergina, which is home to the archaeological site and museum at Aigia which houses the Royal tomb of King Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. Cocktails and farewell dinner at the hotel.

## **SATURDAY, JUNE 8**

Airport transfers and flights back to the United States.

# Speakers

## VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Victor Davis Hanson is the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. Hanson was a National Endowment for the Humanities fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California (1992-93), a visiting professor of classics at Stanford University (1991-92), and alumnus of the year of the University of California, Santa Cruz (2002). He received the National Humanities Award in 2007, and the Bradley Prize in 2009. Hanson is the author of some 170 articles, book reviews, and newspaper editorials on Greek, agrarian, and military history and essays on contemporary culture. He has written or edited twenty books, including *Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern* (2010); *Makers of Ancient Strategy: from the Persian Wars to the Fall of Rome* (ed.) (2010); *Warfare and Agriculture in Classical Greece* (1983; paperback ed., University of California Press, 1998); *Carnage and Culture* (Doubleday, 2001); *A War Like No Other* (Random House 2005); *The Western Way of War* (Alfred Knopf, 1989; 2nd paperback ed., University of California Press, 2000); *The Wars of the Ancient Greeks* (Cassell, 1999; paperback ed., 2001); and *Mexifornia: a State of Becoming* (Encounter, 2003).

## BRUCE S. THORNTON

Bruce S. Thornton was a W. Glenn Cambell and Rita Ricardo-Cambell National Fellow, and now is a Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Bruce S. Thornton grew up on a cattle ranch in Fresno County, California. He received his BA in Latin from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1975, as well as his PhD in comparative literature-Greek, Latin, and English-in 1983. Thornton is currently a professor of classics and humanities at California State University, Fresno. He is the author of 10 books on a variety of topics, including "Greek Ways: How the Greeks Created Western Civilization"; "Plagues of the Mind, the New Epidemic of False Knowledge"; "Searching for Joaquin: Myth, Murieta, and History of California"; "Bonfire of the Humanities: Rescuing the Classics in an Impoverished Age" (with Victor Davis Hanson); "Decline and Fall: Europe's Slow Motion Suicide," and "The Wages of Appeasement: Ancient Athens, Munich, and Obama's America." His numerous essays and reviews on Greek culture and civilization and their influence on Western Civilization, as well as on other contemporary political and educational issues, have appeared in both scholarly journals and magazines such as the *New Criterion*, *Commentary*, *National Review*, the *Weekly Standard*, and the *Claremont Review of Books*. Thornton is also a regular contributor to online magazines such as *Defining Ideas*, *VDH Private Papers*, *Advancing a Free Society*, *Frontpage*, *City Journal* and others. He has lectured at numerous colleges and universities and at venues such as the Smithsonian Institute, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, the Army War College, and the Air Force Academy. He also has appeared on web shows such as *Uncommon Knowledge*, and television programs on the History Channel and ABC's *Politically Incorrect*. His latest book, published in July, 2014, is "Democracy's Danger and Discontents, The Tyranny of the Majority from the Greeks to Obama."

## TOM CONNER

Tom Conner is a William P. Harris Professor of Military History at Hillsdale College. Conner (B.A. Elizabethtown College, M.A. Ph.D., University of North Carolina) has taught Western heritage and European history at Hillsdale College for 26 years. He has lectured throughout Europe on the sites of the World Wars since 1979. He currently teaches Nineteenth Century Europe, Europe in the 20th Century, and The Two World Wars.



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Daily breakfast, seven lunches, and eight dinners are included as well as all excursions and nine lectures as listed in the itinerary. Additional nights at the hotel are available before and after the tour.