



BRITISH SCHOOL AT ATHENS

ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ

British School at Athens
The Archaeology and Topography of Greece
18 August – 6 September 2025

The British School at Athens is delighted to report that the annual summer course for undergraduate students took place in August / September 2025.

A great number of applications was received again this year: a record 160 students competed for 30 places. Systematic advertisement (not least by the BSA ambassadors) and especially positive recommendations on word-of-mouth have been the two main contributing factors. Initially, 30 students were picked, but one student dropped out last minute without justification, although the student is known to have a serious condition. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to offer their place to another student, so the course went ahead with 29 students from 20 different universities.

As usual, the three-week course began with lectures, offering students a basic understanding of the chronology and geography of Greek history, and introducing the key themes and skills of the course. Students were also offered a tour of the Fitch Laboratory and handling sessions in the BSA Museum and Archive. Like last year, the course this year aimed to be truly diachronic, covering as evenly as possible sites and museums from the Bronze Age right through to Modern Greece. Based on last year's feedback, all discussions about reception and the role of archaeology in the formation of the Greek (and any) state last year were well-received and seem to have been truly beneficial, so more emphasis was given again this year. We devoted a whole day on the topic, with arranged visits to the National Historical Museum (which unfortunately did not open due to a demonstration that day), tour of mosques and other Ottoman-period sites in Athens, and lectures on the topics of reception, philhellenism, and 're-inventing' traditions.

After site- and museum-based lectures in Athens, Attica and Central Greece, the course departed for a seven-day journey around the Peloponnese. This section of the course covered sites from prehistory (Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos), through the Classical and Hellenistic periods (Eleusis, Messene, Nemea), all the way through to the Late Byzantine (Mystras) and Venetian (Methone) periods. Additional highlights of this course included visits to the interiors of the Parthenon, the temple of Apollo Epikourios at Bassai, and the temple of Zeus at Olympia. Students were asked to write a journal, describing their experience visiting sites, including drawing sketches of artefacts and monuments and extensive descriptions, demonstrating also in a more creative way their deep understanding of the materials covered throughout the course; and tutors offered optional evening workshops on 'additional' course content, including sessions on epigraphy and curatorial practice. To facilitate exchange between students and tutors, a session about public engagement was organized, as well as various other activities, such as a history and



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archaeology quiz, and a (course-inspired) drawing contest. Students were also asked to keep a journal, documenting their visits and experience.

The course was directed and taught by Georgios Mouratidis, with additional teaching from Rachel Phillips (BSA), Tulsi Parikh (BSA & CYA), Jan Sienkiewicz (BSA, The Richard Bradford McConnell Student), Edward Jones (BSA, The Macmillan-Rodewald Student) and Laura Nastasi (BSA, The Cary student). Guest lectures and seminars were offered by Sergios Menelaou (BSA), Niki Papakonstantinou (BSA) and Amalia Kakkisis.

In our continuing effort to make our courses as accessible to the widest range of participants as possible, Georgios Mouratidis got in touch with two students prior to the beginning of the course to discuss course practicalities and to arrange adjustments. An online session was held prior to the beginning of the course, where all students were advised on practicalities related to site visits, such as if there are places to sit down on sites, what is the shade like, is it possible to fill up a water bottles, etc. Throughout the course, indication was given in advance of site visits, on whether toilet stops and places to buy snacks or water were available. A risk-assessment form was also given to all students to sign.

We are most grateful for the continuing support of several institutions and societies that continue to provide much needed financial assistance. In particular, we (and especially the students) are most grateful that we could offer this year 17 bursaries (as opposed to 14 last year) to help students who would otherwise not have been able to accept their places and who come from underrepresented backgrounds. Funding was received from the A.G. Leventis Foundation, The Craven Committee Oxford, The Classics Faculty at Cambridge, The Gilbert Murray Trust, The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, and The Classical Association. Two students were offered full scholarships from the A.G. Leventis Foundation.



UG24 class at the Ancient Agora of Athens, with view of the Acropolis



Georgios Mouratidis talking to students about the Pythian Games in Delphi



The class visiting Thorikos (lecture by Eddie Jones)



Students drawing a plan of the temple of Athena at Sounion (up) and tutors, Eddie, Rachel and Jan making sure students don't see the plan and cheat (left).



COURSE PROGRAMME

Sunday 17th August

20.00 Meet and greet

Monday 18st August

09.00 Course introduction and tour of the BSA & Library

10.30 Coffee break

11.00 Introductory lectures

The history of archaeology and the archaeology of history in Greece
Understanding archaeological and historical evidence

13.00 Lunch (provided)

14.00 Group Seminars

Introduction to pre-history

Introduction to pottery

Introduction to Epigraphy

17.00 Depart for Mt Lykavettos (walking)

The ancient and modern topography of Athens

19.00 Group dinner (provided)

Tuesday 19nd August

09.00 Depart for the Athenian Agora

Politics and administration in Ancient Athens
Agora Museum

13.00 Lunch (own lunch)

14.00 Visit Pnyx (via Kerameikos)

Death and burial through time (Kerameikos)
Democracy in Classical Athens (Pnyx)

17.00 Finish

Wednesday 20th August

09.00 Depart for the Acropolis

The Archaeology of the Acropolis Hill
Interior of the Parthenon: the Parthenon Restoration Project

11.30 The slopes of the Acropolis

Community in Ancient Athens: sanctuaries and theatres

12.30 Lunch (own lunch)

14.00 The Acropolis Museum

Multi-temporality on the Acropolis Slopes

Museums and Archaeopolitics

Sculpture: Archaic korai

The Great Panathenaea

17.30 Finish

Thursday 21st August

Athens in the Roman period and the Late Antiquity

the Little Metropolis

10.00 *Library of Hadrian*

11.00 *Roman Agora*

Arch of Hadrian

12.00 *Temple of Olympian Zeus*

13.00 *the Panathenaic Stadium*

13.30 Lunch (own lunch)

15.00 Byzantine Museum

Athens in the Byzantine period



	<i>Museology: reconstruction and experience</i>
17.30	Finish
Friday 22nd August	
08.30	Depart for the National Archaeological Museum <i>Prehistoric gallery: funerary assemblages and their curation</i> <i>Pottery gallery: ceramic typologies and chronologies</i> <i>Sculpture gallery: self-representation and funerary monuments</i>
13.00	Lunch (own lunch)
15.00	Workshop <i>Communicating archaeology: knowledge exchange, impact and public engagement</i>
19.00	Optional group outing
Saturday 23rd August FREE DAY	
Sunday 24th August	
08.00	Depart for Marathon Site & Museum
10.30	Depart for Brauron <i>Myths & history</i> <i>Museum of Brauron</i>
12.00	Lunch (provided)
12.30	Depart for Thorikos & Lavrion <i>Town-planning and urban spaces</i> Mines & economy
15.30	Depart for Sounion <i>The role of maritime sanctuaries in the Archaic and Classical periods</i> <i>Trade and connection</i>
18.00	Depart from Sounion
Monday 25th August	
10.00	Introduction to archaeological science and the work of the Fitch Laboratory
10.45	Group seminars <i>Archaeological science I: ceramic petrology</i> <i>Introduction to pottery II: osteoarchaeology</i>
12.00	Lunch (not provided)
14.00	Visit Museum of Cycladic Art
16.00	Visit the BSA Archive /
16.00	Optional Epigraphy session – making squeezes
Tuesday 26th August	
08.00	Depart for Delphi (coach) <i>Myth, history and the Sanctuary of Apollo</i> <i>Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries</i>
13.30	Lunch (not provided)
14.00	Archaeological Museum of Delphi
17.00	Depart Delphi
Overnight in Leivadia	
Wednesday 27th August	



08.30 Depart for Chaeronea
Ancient Macedonia & Greece after the Battle of Chaeronea

10.30 Osios Loukas Monastery
From Late Antiquity to Byzantine

13.00 Lunch

14.00 Archaeological Museum of Thebes
Pre-history and museum curation

Thursday 28th August

10.40 Depart for National Historical Museum
The Greek War of Independence
Politics and culture in Greece's capital

11.30 Museum of Islamic Art
Visualising the Islamic World in Greece

13.00 Lunch (not provided) & return to the BSA

15.00 Thematic lectures:
Ancient monuments and the creation of the Greek state
Reinvention of traditions & historical continuity

Friday 29th August

FREE DAY

Saturday 30th August

08.00 **Depart from BSA for Peloponnese**
Depart for Eleusis (coach)
'Decoding' the Eleusinian Mysteries

11.30 Ancient Corinth
Roman and Christian Corinthia
Domestic economies

14.00 Lunch (not provided)

15.30 Nemea
Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries
The Nemean Games and Nemea stadium

Overnight in Nafplion

Sunday 31th August

08.00 Depart for Epidauros
Performing in ancient and modern Epidauros
Asklepion & Museum

11.00 Mycenae
Treasury of Atreus
The archaeology of Mycenae
Mycenae Museum

13.00 Quick lunch (provided, on the road)

14.00 Depart for Argive Heraion (n.b. no toilets at this site)
Sanctuaries, landscapes, and territory in the Argolid

19.00 Group dinner

Overnight in Nafplion

Monday 1st September

08.30 Depart for Tiryns (coach)
Late Bronze Age archaeology

11.00 Visit Tegea
Sanctuary of Alea Athena at Tegea
Museum of Tegea
Lunch on the road (not provided)



13.30	Sparta	
14.00		<i>Archaeological Museum of Sparta: the Spartan austerity</i>
15.30		<i>The Spartan Acropolis</i>
<i>Overnight in Mystras</i>		
Tuesday 2nd September		
09.00	Mystras	
		<i>The long history of Laconia, between Mystras and Sparta</i>
		<i>An introduction to Byzantine art and architecture</i>
	Lunch & depart for Pylos	
<i>Overnight in Pylos</i>		
Wednesday 3rd September		
09.00	Depart for Methone (n.b. no toilets at this site, but plenty of cafes in town)	
		<i>Building fortifications in the Venetian period</i>
11.00	Palace of Nestor	
		<i>Funerary landscapes: Messenia</i>
		<i>Conservation and public display of an archaeological site</i>
13.00	Lunch	
14.30	Pylos Castle	
		<i>Museum of underwater archaeology</i>
		<i>The battle of Sphacteria</i>
		<i>The battle of Navarino</i>
17.00	Finish	
<i>Overnight in Pylos</i>		
Thursday 4th September		
08.00	Depart for Messene	
		<i>Town-planning and urban spaces</i>
		<i>The ancient Gymnasium: education in the ancient world</i>
13.00	Lunch (provided)	
15.30	Bassai	
		<i>The Temple of Apollo Epikourios</i>
17.00	Depart Bassai	
<i>Overnight in Olympia</i>		
Friday 5th September		
09.00	Depart for ancient Olympia	
		<i>Archaeological Museum of Olympia</i>
		<i>Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries</i>
		<i>The Olympic Games</i>
13.00	Lunch	
14.00	The museum for the history of ancient Olympic Games (Optional)	
From 15.00	Free time	
19.00	Farewell dinner	
<i>Overnight in Olympia</i>		
Saturday 6th September		
08.30	Depart Olympia for Athens Airport, to arrive by c.14.00	

*All breakfasts are included within the course programme



Final group photo at the stadium of Ancient Olympia, after a race!



Student Feedback

We were extremely excited to read that the student feedback questionnaires were unanimously positive, applauding in particular the great variety of topics covered, and the enthusiasm, knowledge and approachability of all course tutors. All students were given an anonymous feedback forms. Here is some feedback students noted:

“Everything was absolutely brilliant! I enjoyed all aspects of it and came away curious about certain topics I previously felt uninterested in. The lectures were all engaging and well organised, the on site tours felt logically structured and were incredible experiences. Overall it was a thrilling experience and left me with a taste for more!”

“On site explanations of the archaeology - being able to see and visualise the architecture as it was in various periods of antiquity went a long way in developing my understanding of a site and archaeological terms in general.”

“All of the lecturers we met we so approachable and clearly excited to talk and discuss their work, and openly accepted any and all questions. They were also very good at making adjustments when needed (museums/ sites being closed, etc.) and communicating it effectively.”

“The site visits were fantastic! getting to actually go inside some of the temples that we wouldn't usually be able to do was amazing. also, the lectures! they were all so enthusiastic about their topics and this really showed! I also loved the social aspects of the course, I made so many friends that I hope will last forever!”

“All the lecturers were incredibly dedicated to not only academic stimulation but also of ensuring the safety of students, and it made it easy to concentrate on learning.”

“I have to admit that before this course, my understanding to Greece is very limited. But I've learnt so much throughout this course! From how exquisite and well-thought of the building of the temples were to how splendid the culture was and still is. It really touched me and inspired my interest in studying more about Greek literature, history, mythologies and culture.”

“Thank you very much for the knowledge and the opportunities this course has provided! All the lecturers were incredibly dedicated to not only academic stimulation but also of ensuring the safety of students, and it made it easy to concentrate on learning.”



Some testimonials from Award Holders

Alina (Royal Holloway University of London)

The chance to see archaeological sites with the guidance and detailed knowledge offered by the BSA lecturers was invaluable – I found myself constantly noting down details about sites I've read and studied about with fresh understanding. Especially of significance was the contribution that the multi temporal approach to each site and sanctuary gave. I feel that I have gained a depth in my understanding that would not have been possible without this course, or the specialist outlook each lecturer brought to the table.

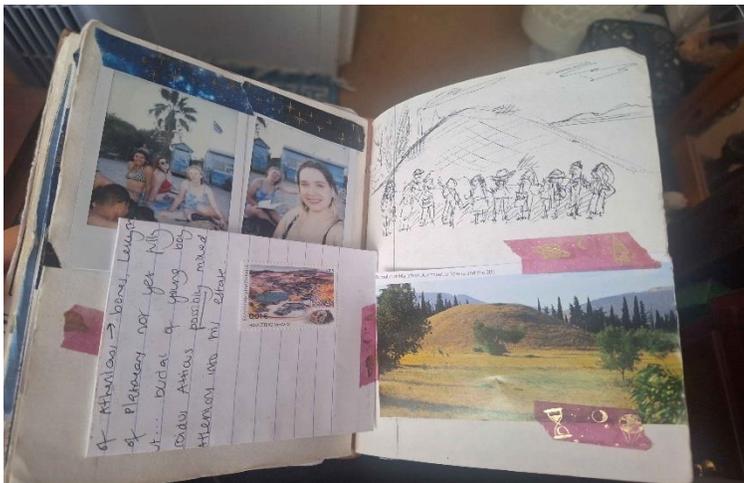
Some places that the course covered were those I'd never have considered visiting under regular circumstance, for reason of cost or transportation issues. Messenia for instance was a complete surprise and much needed blow to my understanding of the construction of a Greek city. I had little understanding of the Messenians prior to this and have come away with a good deal of interest not only in their society but in their architecture and infrastructure. Further to this, the day we visited there happened to be sculpture reconstruction taking place outside the stadium under a portico, and it was a fantastic experience to see firsthand the masterful skills ancient artisans would have needed to sculpt and create the monuments we see today. Experiences like these are not just visually interesting, or superficial, they create memories that will forever influence my approach to ancient sources and not only my reading of scholarship but in future hopefully my writing too.

In regard to just how significant the course was for my academic career; it has only been after the duration of my time in Greece that inspiration struck for my thesis topic. Having visited an incredible amount of temples, even seeing some from the inside, I am now certain that the direction my academic career will take in the near future has plenty to do with temple structure and Greek religion. I doubt I would have had so much inspiration if not for seeing first hand and being able to compare so many different sanctuaries.

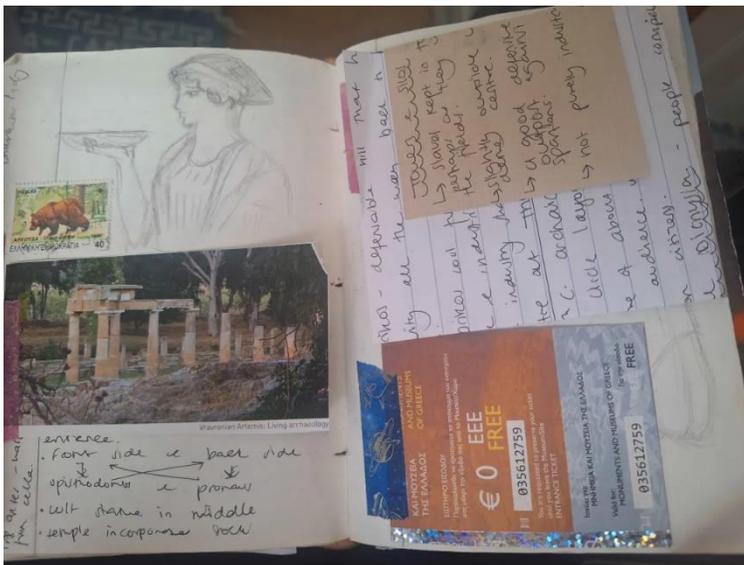
The resources provided were also exceptionally useful for my learning – the museum pass granted to me as a result of my participation in the course meant I was able to be proactive in my free time while in Greece and visit other sites and museums not covered in the itinerary without having to worry about additional costs. Similarly, just being able to use the study space in the BSA was also very

valuable to me - every experience I had during the course has greatly spurred on my determination to pursue academia.

Below are some photos from the notebook I kept while studying, and from various sites!

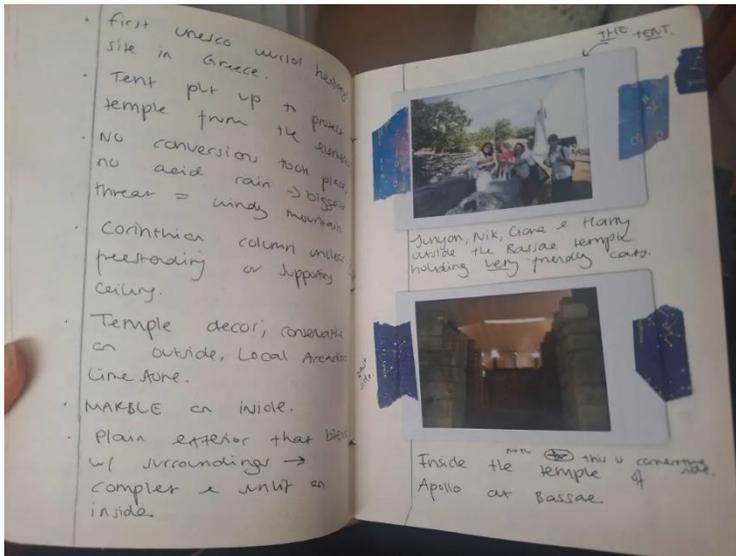


Marathon



Brauron

Bassae



Messenia





Sculptural reconstruction at Messenia



Stoa where reconstruction was taking place



inside the temple of Apollo at
Bassae

Anisah (Kings College London)

Being able to take part in the BSA summer school was an amazing experience that allowed me to broaden my perspective of Classics. I was able to learn about different professions and fields of study within archeology and Classics, one I found particularly interesting was political archeology and finding out about how archaeology had affected politics as a whole. I also learned a lot through lectures and demonstrations, one of which showed me how being able to handle and feel artifacts for yourself, can add to your knowledge when analysing and understanding classical findings - something I hadn't thought about before. Being able to travel to a different site almost every day and see the places I've written countless essays about, with my own eyes, was a unique experience. One that also allowed me to immerse myself in the shoes of what people from ancient civilizations could have potentially seen for themselves. Being able to experience the acoustics of the Theatre and walking in the tunnels of the Stadiums in particular, allowed me to understand what it would have been like for ancient Greeks, and why such structures were so prominent in Ancient Greek cities. I was also able to familiarise myself with modern Greek culture - the food, people and traditions - an aspect that is often forgotten, and I came away with a new found respect for Greek culture as a whole. I was also able to make connections with students from all over the uk, and the growth that came from working and learning alongside people from various stages of life and the advice and ongoing support I was given, is something I am able to carry with me. Attending the BSA has allowed me to progress in my field of study with the reassurance of knowledge and experience I wouldn't have had otherwise, as well as a better idea of what my future going into academia may look like. It also allowed me to feel more confident in myself and my capabilities as it was my first solo trip abroad, I felt very at home with everyone I met at the BSA and they could not be any more welcoming.







Saim (University of Bristol)

Over the course of three weeks, our group explored the archaeology and history of Greece from prehistory through the Byzantine period. We began in Athens with intensive seminars and visits to sites such as the Agora, Kerameikos, Acropolis, and major museums, before travelling further afield to Delphi, Thebes, and a wide range of sites across the Peloponnese, including Corinth, Mycenae, Epidauros, Olympia, and Sparta. I would especially like to pay tribute to our wonderful tutors—and in particular to Georgios—for being an exceptionally responsible, resourceful, and supportive organiser, as well as an inspiring tutor. The combination of hands-on engagement with monuments and artefacts, together with lively discussions with tutors and fellow students, gave me a far deeper understanding of the material and topographical contexts of Greek antiquity.

This experience has had a significant impact on my academic development, particularly in relation to my dissertation for my final year and my future postgraduate studies. As a student of Philosophy, seeing the gymnasiums and the ancient city of Athens through an archaeological lens—places that were once at the very heart of philosophical learning in Greece—was an unparalleled experience. This not only enriches my intellectual perspective as I write my dissertation on Plato this year, but also provides a personal, emotional connection to the sites I encountered in person.



Moreover, the course introduced me to the wider fields of archaeology and topography, encouraging me to consider postgraduate research in Greek archaeology and material culture. I also benefited greatly from seminars on epigraphy, archaeological science, and museum studies, which expanded my awareness of the diverse skills and methodologies available to classicists today. In addition, the teachings and site visits focusing on Greek temples greatly deepened my understanding of the evolution of religion from an archaeological perspective.

Yuli (Queen Mary University of London)

I had wanted to attend the course since I learnt about it when I was seventeen years old, now I am twenty-two, have graduated, and am on an MSc program. The one thing I told my mum when I was about to board the airplane back to Scotland is that “It was very worth waiting five years for this.” This is true both in the sense of my expectations of the course (which was incredible in every possible way) and also in how my current perspective and goals allowed me to get more out of it.

From an academic perspective, it is very rare to find opportunities for Linguistics students who wish to gain experience in the more historical side of the field. Not only was seeing how archeology differs from Linguistics a really unique experience, the course also allowed me to learn about Epigraphy, see written artefacts I learnt about in person, and appreciate the different ways language based data can be understood in relation to other elements that go unnoticed in Linguistics sometimes. However, I very quickly found myself straying away from the goal of orienting my interpretation of course material under a Linguistic framework, and shifted into developing unstoppable curiosities into everything we were being taught. I spent a majority of my evenings at the BSA utilising the library, which sometimes made me go into the next day with a tired expression, but it was very quickly mended by the captivating lectures, and I would go back to having energy immediately.

I was particularly interested in how I ended up being drawn to topics I didn't pay much attention to previously, the biggest example is Narrative. Which was discussed throughout the course in the context of modern interpretations of ancient history, museum displays, and site layouts. I began to pay close attention to how things were arranged and what sort of interpretation that drew from me and from people around me, I made a lot of notes on particular sites and museums – it was rather fascinating especially from the perspective of a technical outsider to the department, since I could draw on my own experience seeing museums or sites for the first time and how I would relate to them without the guidance of the lectures, and then what I would do differently using said guidance. I even have an idea for a Linguistics based research, in the subfield of Multimodality (which is what I plan to go into), on how exhibit layout creates a narrative in museum-visitor Multimodal communication,



which I did my research proposal task on. I even ended up enrolling on a history module this semester that deals primarily with the question of historical narrative presentation.

From a non-academic perspective, something I had not mentioned in my application form is that I work as a writer. I previously worked as a ghost-writer, but recently made the decision to stop in order to focus the same amount of time into my own creative output. One of my biggest projects, which is due to be published sometime in the next few years (following what I am working on now), is a story that takes place in early 2000s Greece and involves the main characters getting to a lot of different (previously undecided) locations, given how I had never been to Greece before the course, I had planned to do some research in person on modern day Greece by experiencing various cultural aspects, understanding modern Greek architecture, and most importantly for that project – figure out a potential path the characters could take. While I did my best to supplement these sorts of tasks in my own time, it was incredibly helpful to learn about topography while getting to see it in the form of our travels around from site to site. I ended up drafting a whole course map for my story, which ended up being heavily linked to the real course we took to get from place to place. Seeing the topography in person also allowed me to get a great perspective on possible transport methods and how long they would take as well as how each geographical region we visited feels like. I absolutely cannot be happier with the fact that I got to do this sort of research in person and to go through so many amazing experiences thanks to your support!

Lastly, I wanted to share my memories of my favourite site from the course program. Before I departed to Greece, I made the assumption that my favourite site would be Delphi, as I have a particular interest in sanctuaries of Apollo. Throughout the course I made an evolving ranking of all the sites we visited, and it immediately went to the top spot when we arrived – I was so excited that day that I had exuded too much energy and fell asleep immediately when we arrived at the hotel for the night – it was breathtakingly beautiful, and I really enjoyed climbing up to see the stadium (which is another area of interest that captivated me throughout the course). However, at the end of the course, Delphi ended up being my second favourite site... It was replaced with the Temple of Apollo at Bassae.

It was early afternoon. We had just finished walking through the site of Messene and had boarded the bus to head for Bassae. I knew nothing about Bassae, only that it would take us a while to get there and that the road was rather “jumpy”, so I had settled into my seat and did some reading. After quite a while, someone noticed that we did not make a certain turn, and then later, the people around me in the back-seats began talking about whether or not we got lost. We started joking around, calmed one another down from the shock of being so high up on a mountain, and



had a fun conversation about topography and musical theatre. It did take us a while to get to Bassae, longer than expected, but when we got there the sky was just starting to turn towards evening and was also greying as a sign of rain, which looks breathtaking from up the mountain. We were told the site is within a massive tent, as well as the story of how it was discovered – a French architect riding on a horse and randomly stumbling across a nearly fully standing temple – it made me humorously curious as we walked up a hill towards a massive white tent, I wondered just how strenuous such journey would be for a horse and what sort of reaction the French architect would have. After splitting into two groups, I followed the lecturer into the tent and was immediately taken aback by the temple. We had gotten the unbelievable opportunity of going into temples before, but the announcement that we would be going into this one in particular immediately made me giddy with excitement. The lecturer mentioned theories of where a bronze statue would be placed, and how the columns and their positions were interpreted through a theory of light casting that was also digitally simulated (I went on to read this paper later too). I proceeded to linger for quite a while after the lecture ended, and tried to see the temple from all possible view points I could manage, it was then I really understood the scope of ruins we witnessed in other sites. While the other group was in the temple, two cats fell asleep on me, and I was further preoccupied with the incredible views from the mountain, which my coursemates and I would later sit and watch for a while in awe before going back onto the bus and enjoying yet another scenic coach ride.

Overall, this was an experience I will never forget, and as you can tell by the word-count of this letter, it was rather difficult to sum up even small parts of it; truly, every part of it was a learning moment for me, both academically and personally.

Some final photos from the course



Jan is teaching students about the sanctuary of Artemis in Brauron



Discussing the topography of Marathon and the famous battle that took place there



The entire UG25 class, in front of the temple of Poseidon at Sounion