

# Delphi

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The archaeological site of Delphi includes two mosques, one dedicated to Apollo and one to Athena, as well as other types of facilities, mainly sports. Those coming from Athens would first encounter the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia, i.e. Athena that was located before the temple of Apollo. Here the famous dome, the circular building and ruins of the three temples of the goddess, two ancient ones, built on the same spot, dating back to the middle of the 7th century, are preserved. e.g. and in 500 BC, and a newer, limestone one, which was built at the western end of the mosque after the earthquake of 373 BC. Inside the mosque are preserved altars dedicated to Zeus Poliea, Athena Ergani, Athena Zostiria, Eileithyia and Hygeia, remains of a building dedicated to the worship of the local heroes, Phylakos and Autononos, who in the form of giants had prevented the invasion of the Persians at Delphi, as well as two treasures of the Doric and Aeolian style, with a Parian marble superstructure. One, from which a characteristic capital with palm leaves survives, was a tribute from the inhabitants of distant Marseilles. The sanctuary also included a trophy-souvenir of the repulse of the Persians, an outdoor statue of the emperor Hadrian and a building called the "house of the priests".

Moving towards the northwest, one came across the gymnasium, sports training area and educational center, with the gymnasium and the complex of baths. Next stop was Castalia, the sacred fountain of Delphi. With its water the visitors quenched their thirst after their long journey and at the same time purified themselves before entering the oracle.

The central and most important point of the site was always the sanctuary of Apollo. It was protected by an enclosure, with an entrance in its south-east corner. From this point the visitors followed the sacred road, the main structure of the temple, which led to the temple of Apollo with the famous shelter, where the Pythia gave her oracles. With the temple and the holy street as its core, the mosque was gradually enlarged and strengthened by monumental retaining walls. Its sloping space was organized in successive levels, which were flanked by arcades (Attalus, Aitolon, Athenaion) and were accessible from corresponding gates in the precinct. Scattered among them are the remains of numerous and varied votive offerings, dedicated by Greek cities or by wealthy individuals on the occasion of various historical circumstances and socio-political events or simply to express religious reverence towards the god and his oracle. These works represent the technical skill and artistic progress of the people of that time, from the depths of the East to the shores of the Mediterranean basin, while at the same time indicating the

financial strength of the commissioners. They range from bronze or silver tripods (one of the symbols of the oracle) to complex multifaceted statuary complexes, made of marble or copper. Among the architectural tributes, the treasuries, impressive and opulent, housed movable votive offerings, but primarily showcased the art of each consignor's homeland. The sacred road was lined with such offerings, densely placed along its entire length. In the center of the sanctuary, on the large plateau, which was formed by the large analimatic polygonal wall, dominated the majestic temple of Apollo. In front of its entrance, visitors could admire the impressive offerings that had been offered mainly by wealthy individuals. Higher than the temple, towards the northwest, is the theater, where the dramatic and musical competitions of the Pythians were held, while even higher, outside the precincts of the sanctuary, was the stadium, which hosted the sports competitions.

Scattered outside and around the two mosques are the remains of the settlement of Delphi, which developed mainly in the classical and Roman periods, as well as tombs from the respective necropolises.

Dr. E. Partida, archaeologist

## Overview

Type: Archaeological site	Country: Greece	City: Delphi, Parnassos
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## Agent info

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