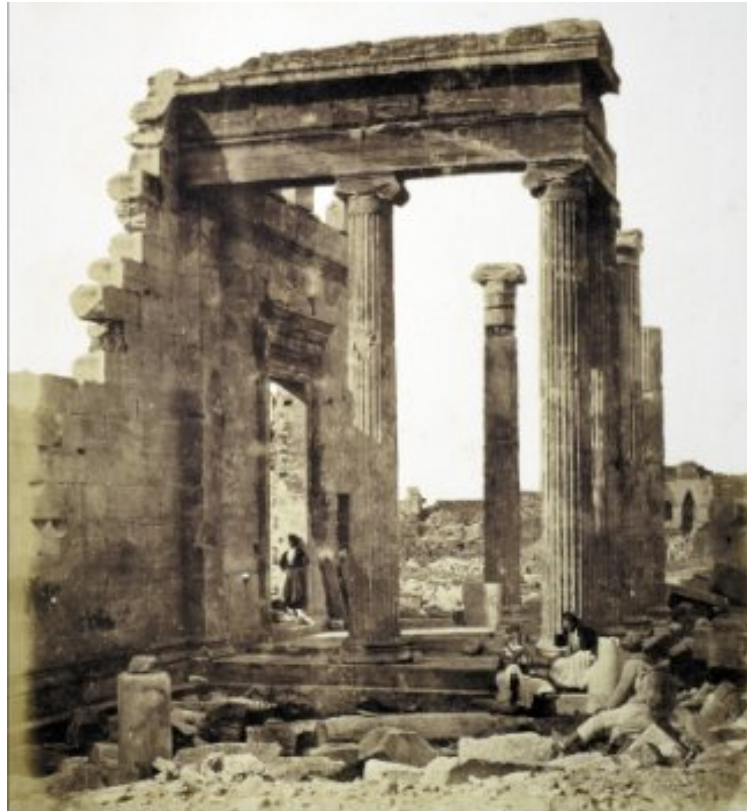


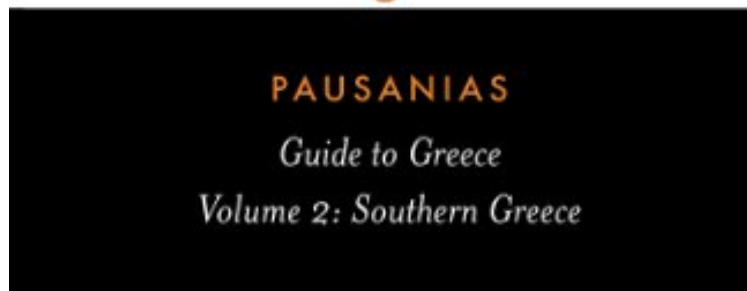
Guide to Greece, Vol. 2: Southern Greece

Pausanias

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Pausanias : Guide to Greece, Vol. 2: Southern Greece before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Guide to Greece, Vol. 2: Southern Greece:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Volume 2 is even more thrilling than Volume 1. Truly awesome. By Alan U. Kennington Volume 2 is more thrilling and more awesome than Volume 1. The survival of so much honest, detailed information from ancient Greek times is miraculous. Reading Pausanias is like being transported back in time. For me, Volume 2 is especially outstanding for two things. 1. The description of Olympia. 2. The history of

Messenia. The number of statues and altars in Olympia described by Pausanias is truly breathtaking, and perhaps a little exhausting after a while. It's like visiting a huge museum and seeing a thousand relics. Each relic is fascinating in itself, but the vast number of them can be overwhelming. It is deeply saddening that such a huge amount has been lost from that time. Without Pausanias, we would not have known the scale of the loss. Pausanias's history of Messenia is so ancient that it must be suspected to be mostly mythical despite the superficially convincing level of detail. This Messenian history reminds me of the History of the Kings of Britain by Geoffrey of Monmouth, which is probably at least 95% myth. But I think there is probably very much more validity in this Messenian history than in Homer's Iliad. Even mythical histories are of real value because they tell you what people were willing to believe at that time. The wikipedia entry for the First Messenian War states the following. "The details of the war are not so certain but Pausanias gives an evaluation of his two main sources, the epic poem by Rianos of Bene for the first half and the prose history of Myron of Priene for the second half. Nothing survives now of the sources except fragments." These two sources are also discussed by Peter Levi in the introduction to this Penguin translation on pages 105 and 118-119. He gives the impression that the Messenian history has a fair amount of credibility, which is quite astonishing for a time more than two centuries before the Persian wars. Before reading this book, I had no idea that there was anything credible going back so far, in so much detail. On a blank page at the end of this book, I have made about two dozen notes about things which I found remarkable in this book. I won't list them all, but I'll just mention that Pausanias refers at multiple points to participation of women in the Olympics, contrary to what you hear nowadays in the popular press. See pages 27-28, 50, 61, 219, 231-232, 285, 286. On page 345, Pausanias wrote that virgin girls were allowed to watch the Olympics as follows. "The stadium is a mound of earth, but it has a seat built for the presidents. Opposite the Greek arbiters is a white stone altar, and on this altar a woman sits and watches the Olympic games, the priestess of Demeter of the Ground, an office awarded by Elis to different women at different times. Virgin girls of course are not barred from watching." I think the motivation for barring married women was possibly to prevent certain kinds of distractions and diversions. Similarly on page 286, a woman Kyniska won an Olympic event. So women were allowed to compete and to win! "I have already given an account of Kyniska, her family and her Olympic victories, in my discussion of the Lakonian kings: at Olympia beside the statue of Troilos is a stone ledge with a chariot and team and a driver and a portrait of Kyniska herself by Apelles, and there are inscriptions about Kyniska." To find all of the other remarkable points in this book, you will have to read it.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Great for archaeology buffs who tour the Peloponnese
By Fredrick Broom
I'm not a professional archaeologist, but love the subject all the same -- my ideal vacation is to tour obscure sites with ancient literature mentioning the places. For that, Pausanias is ideal! True, as a previous reviewer wrote, the names are thick and obscure (just say "Sthenelaus" off-hand, then imagine dozens of other tongue-twisters in close context), the writing is not the best (although as early travel books go, this is the real thing!), and without looking at the actual sites, the casual reader may find little of interest. But I agree, Levi's footnotes bring hours of pleasure to someone who has visited the little-known places that, with a little attention from the Greek archaeologists, would be just as famous as those knee-deep in tourists. The fact you are alone, and with a voice from 1800 years ago to guide you, is like a personal discovery. Having been to such places, I plan to return again, and I'll have my copy with me.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Travel Guide of Antiquity
By Jan Wouters
I always enjoyed Pausanias. He has a wealth of background information to share and many (though) of course not all of the landmarks he describes can still be visited. I think modern travel guides can pick up a few pointers from Pausanias for how to make a decent traveling guide

The second volume of the time-honored travel book about Greece, written 2,000 years ago
Written by a Greek traveller in the second century ad for a principally Roman audience, Pausanias' Guide to Greece is a comprehensive, extraordinarily literate and well-informed guidebook for tourists of the age. Concentrating on buildings, tombs and statues, it also describes in detail the myths, religious beliefs and historical background behind the monuments considered. In doing so, it preserves Greek legends, quotes classical literature and poetry that would otherwise have been lost, and offers a fascinating depiction of the glory of classical Greece immediately before its third-century decline. This, the second of two volumes, explores Southern Greece including Sparta, Arkadia, Bassae and the games at Olympia. An inspiration to travellers and writers across the ages, including Byron and Shelley, it remains one of the most influential of all travel books. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

From the Back Cover
Pausanias was a Greek traveller and writer in the second century A.D. His Guide to Greece is an extremely comprehensive guide book for tourists, concentrating on buildings, tombs and statues and including a lot of information on the mythological, religious and historical background to the monuments described. It is so informative that it may be called the foundation of classical archaeology and this ancient Baedeker is still used as a guide to

classical Greece. About the Author Pausanias was a Greek geographer and native of Lydia who explored Greece, Macedonia, Asia and Africa, before settling in Rome. Pausanias is believed to have lived in the second half of the second century A.D. and is thought by some historians to have been a doctor as well as a scholar. Peter Levi was a Jesuit priest and archaeological correspondent for *The Times* before his appointment as Professor of Poetry at Oxford. In addition to his translation of Pausanias he also published biographies of Tennyson, Edward Lear, Virgil, Horace and John Milton, and 22 volumes of poetry.