

Olympia

We left Israel during Tuesday evening, 1 November, with our expected arrival in southwestern Greece about noon on Thursday. About noon on Wednesday our captain made an announcement. A man had developed a serious medical condition that required evacuation to a hospital. We were in the middle of the Sea, far from any land. Helicopter rescue was not appropriate in this case. So we changed course and arrived at the southeastern corner of the Greek island of Crete at about 7:30 PM, in the dark. The man and his wife were transferred to shore by a coast guard boat. Then we continued on our way. The captain stressed that our safety is his greatest concern. The diversion did not affect our arrival time on Thursday.



Our port was at the small village of Katakolon. It had only two streets parallel to the shore.

We went by bus for a half hour trip to the nearby ruins of Olympia.



Our ship, the Celebrity Silhouette

Our guide told us that there was no city at Olympia, only the facilities for training and conducting the athletic games. That included a temple to the Greek god Zeus. The modern Olympic Games were started in the late 1800s. The modern Olympic torch begins its journey from here. The ancient games stressed physical and moral perfection for all participants. These scenes show some of the remaining structures.



Gymnasium location

Our guide, with group flag



On the next page are the entrance and field of the stadium where contests were held. Along the left side of the path before the entrance arch are pedestals. If anyone was caught cheating (such as bribing a judge or other contestant) the name and city of that cheater were carved on a statue that sat on the pedestal. The cheater had to pay the cost of that monument. Otherwise his city had to pay. The row of such statues was called the row of shame. Only a few persons ever suffered that penalty of permanent shame, carved in stone. Winners of contests, however, received great honors.



Entrance to stadium. Shame at left.



Asian visitors to stadium

Stone remnants around the stadium showed places reserved for special people.

Friday was spent going around southern Italy, through the narrow gap between Sicily and the rest of Italy, on our way back to Rome.

Dr. Ed Holroyd, 4 November 2016, written at sea north of Sicily.

There is space here for birds seen at this stop in southwestern Greece.



Great Tit, similar to American Chickadee



Gray Wagtail, always moving its tail up and down



White Wagtail, common across Asia



Mediterranean Gull