

# CLAS 0210

## Sport in the Ancient Greek World



Class 16

Wednesday 3 March

The Pythian Games and  
the site of Delphi



759 - ΔΕΛΦΟΙ. Ἡ Ἱερὰ Ὀδὸς καὶ ὁ Θησαυρὸς τῶν Ἀθηναίων.  
DELPHE. La Voie Sacrée et le Trésor des Athéniens.



# Delphi

stadium

museum

theater

temple of Apollo

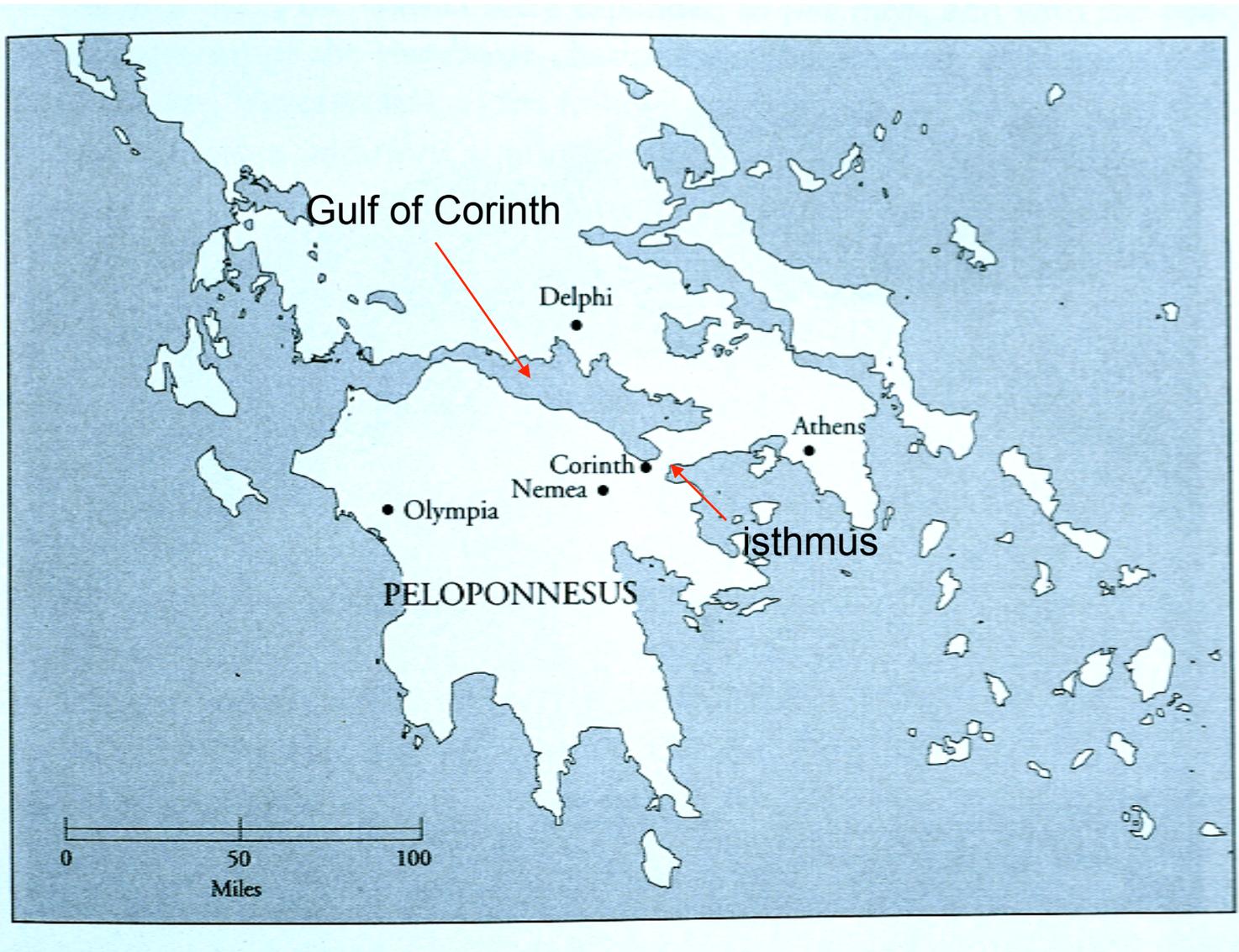




Image NASA  
Image © 2008 TerraMetrics  
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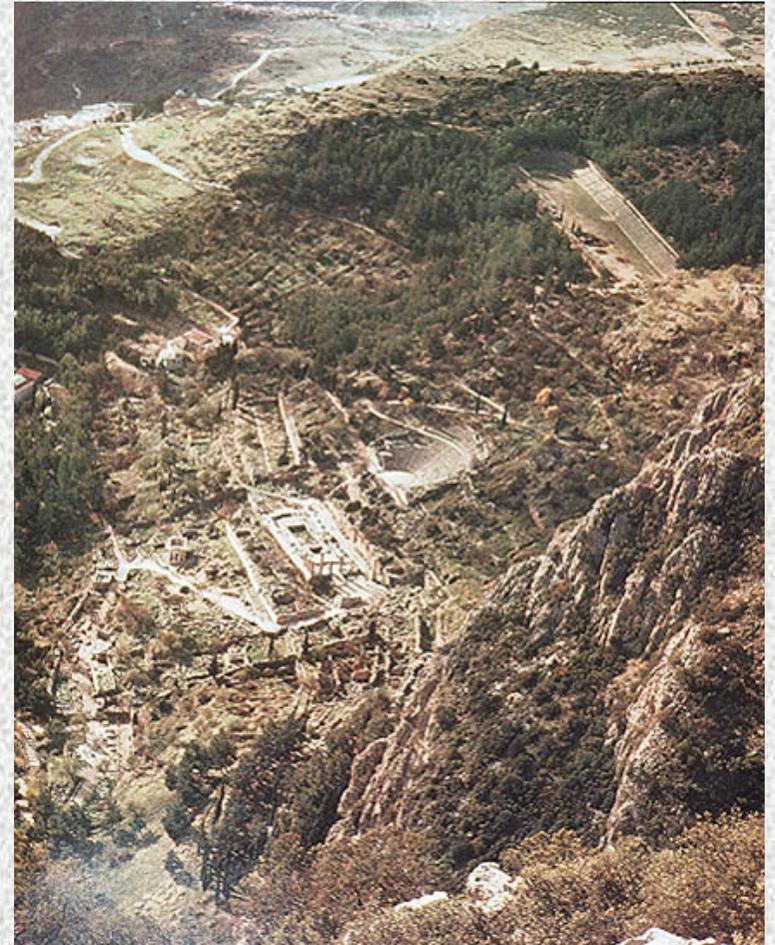
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Pointer 38°28'15.29" N 22°29'17.66" E elev 121 m Streaming |||||100% Eye alt 5.98 km



Delphi's landscape setting

Beneath the cliffs of Mt. Parnassus





Roman copy

- The omphalos (navel-stone) marking the center of the world at Delphi

# Temple of Apollo



# Temple of Apollo

- Earliest temple: wooden
- First stone temple 7th century BC (burned down in 548 BC)
- Second stone temple built ca. 500 BC (destroyed by landslide)
- Third stone temple finished ca. 305 BC (what you see today)

# Oracle of Apollo

priestess (pythia)





Red-figure vase showing the Pythia seated on the Delphic tripod, with a priest



Did the Pythia inhale ethylene??

# Aetiological myths of Delphi

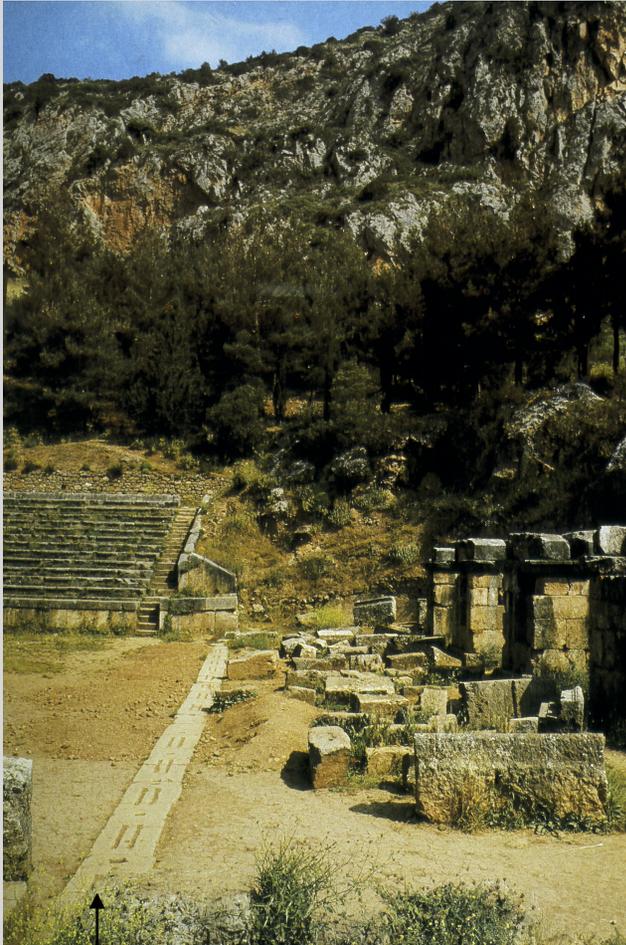
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- Apollo comes to power by slaying the python...  
“the reddish-scintillating serpent in the shade of the luxurious laurel-tree, the earth-born, huge-bodied monster, guardian of the oracle” [Euripides].
- This killing required purification: Apollo goes into exile in Thessaly, where he works as a slave for 8 years, to atone for the blood he had shed.
- The earliest festival at Delphi included a ritual enactment of the slaying of the python in its nest, every 8 years.

- Pre-586 BC, contests at Pythian Games probably purely musical.
- **1st Sacred War**, for control of the sanctuary and its oracle.
- Delphi taken over by the **Amphictyonic League**, which instituted the first games in 586 BC.
- Prizes initially were golden tripods, but quickly became **crowns of laurel** (in recognition of the founding myth)



# Delphi stadium



starting line

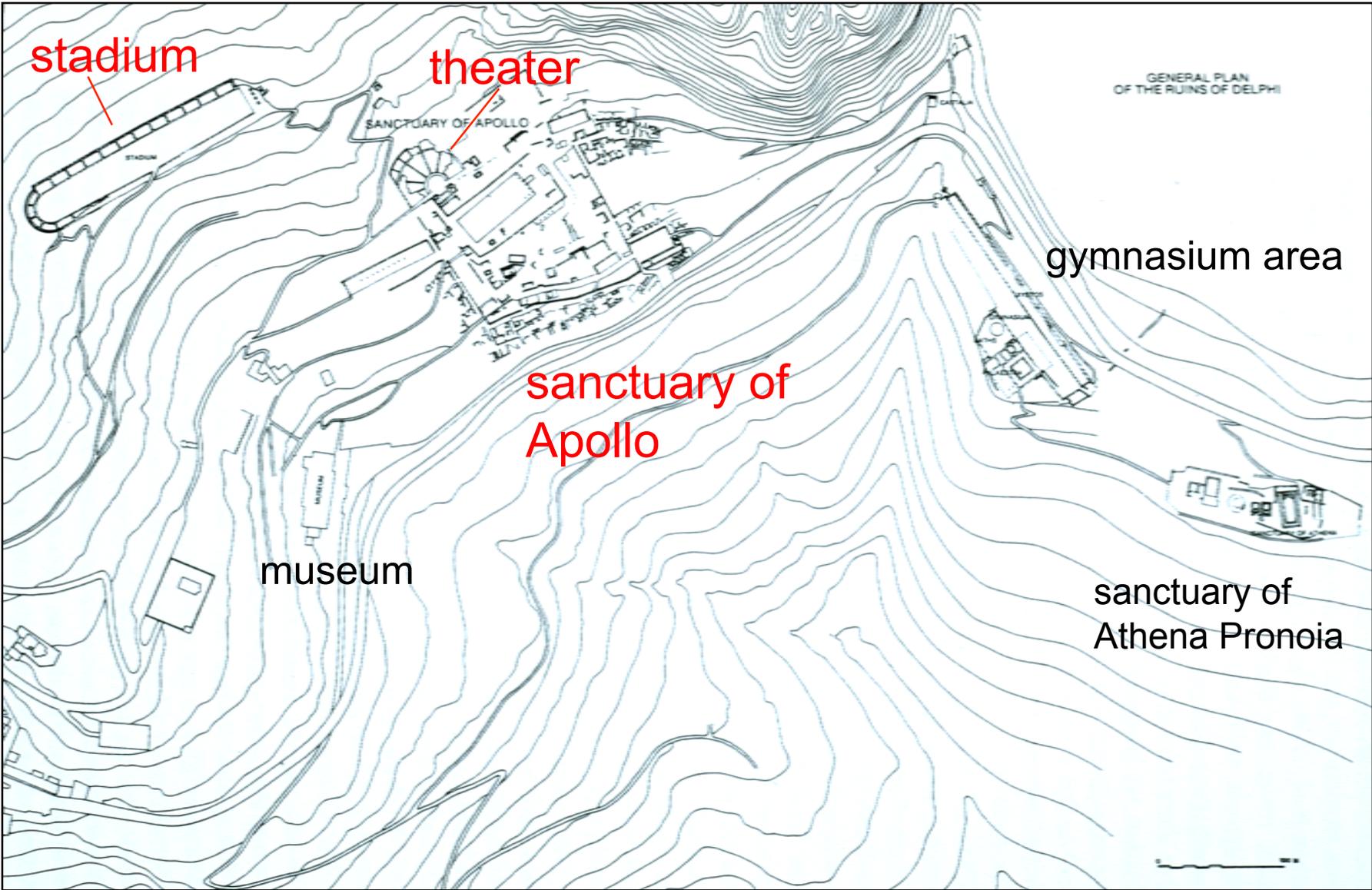




Theater at Delphi: 2nd century BC, 31 rows of seats



GENERAL PLAN OF THE RUINS OF DELPHI



stadium

theater

SANCTUARY OF APOLLO

gymnasium area

sanctuary of Apollo

museum

sanctuary of Athena Pronoia



theater and Temple  
of Apollo

remains in  
gymnasium area





circular bathing pool

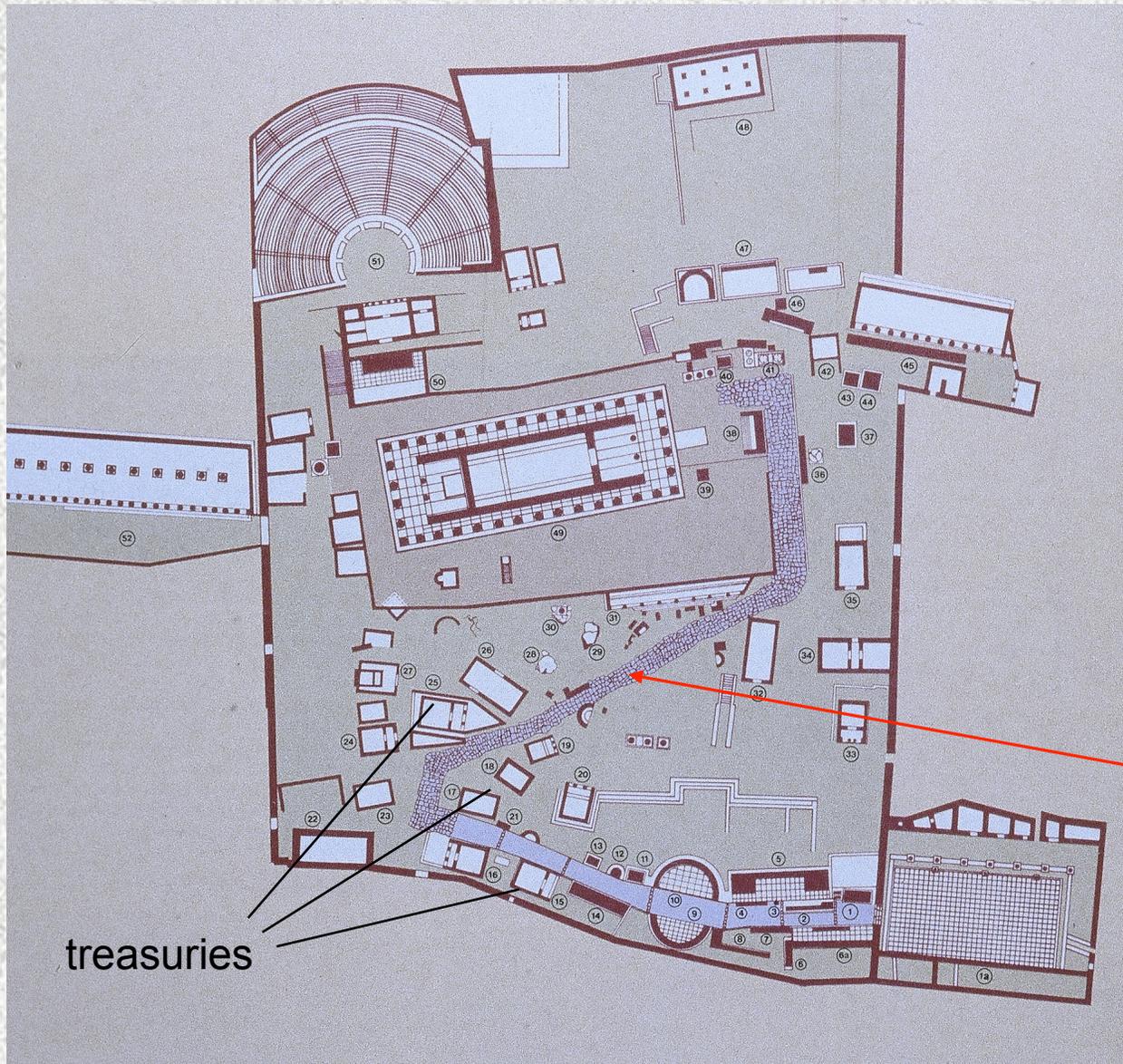
- running track





The Tholos, in the Sanctuary of Athena Pronoia

# Delphi, sanctuary plan



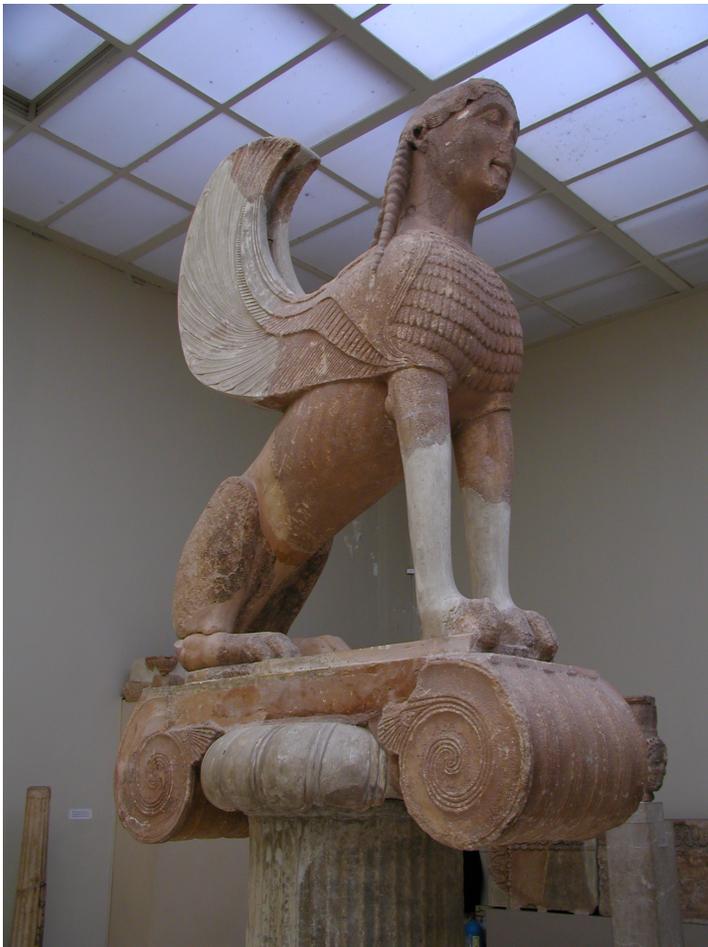
treasuries

Sacred  
Way



Treasury of  
the  
Athenians





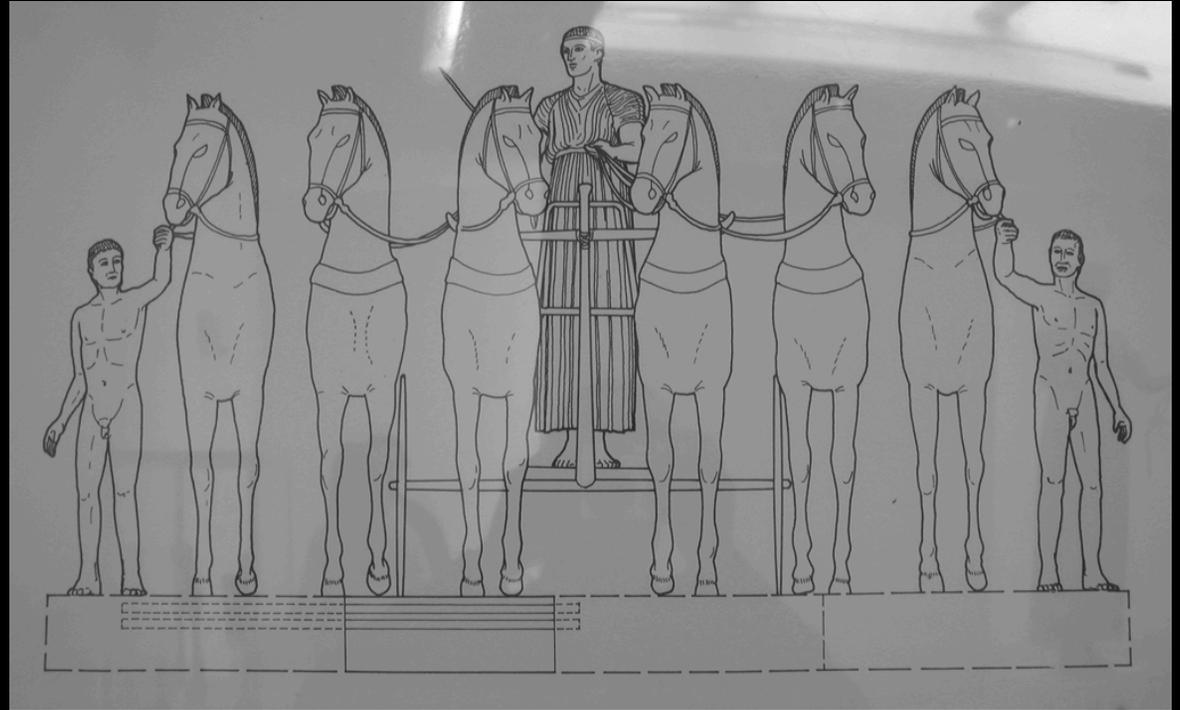
Sphinx of the Naxians



Cleobis & Biton



- Agias, the pankratiast
- by the sculptor Lysippos
- 4th century BC
- Delphi



Delphi charioteer  
ca. 470 BC

