**Tour 2:**

## The Ionian Islands and Mainland Coast — A Coastal Journey of Legends, Oceans, and Olive Trees

### Day 1: Corfu - Port, Entrance and Arrival Ethics (with a historical context)

The moment you land on Corfu, you are met by the gentle, steady scent of olive oil drifting through the air—a fragrance so alive and familiar it settles around you like a welcoming cloak. The aroma isn't simply sensed; it seems to sink into your skin, into your breath, until you feel as if your own heartbeat is lined with oil and sun. This scent alone welcomes you into the gentle history of arrivals: olive oil poured in greeting, shared at tables, offered as protection and blessing. As you move through the island, the feeling persists. The warmth of sun-baked stones beneath your palm carries a faint trace of oil as if the rock itself remembers centuries of olive harvests. Even the narrow streets echo the theme, twisting and turning as if designed to guide travellers toward the source of this gift, their walls imbued with memories of all those who have carried olive branches here before. In Corfu, olive oil is more than a product; it is the key to arrival, the threshold itself. The island asks you to pause, to allow this scent and history to fill you up, and to permit yourself to be opened by the world you are now stepping into.

Before you experience what you will see, first, you will feel the serpentine streets in Corfu feature a densely packed riddle-like town; an urban maze produced through centuries of people arriving and departing; a complex web of urban defence and repose embodying mythical notions of thresholds and transformation of self through unknowns. As you begin weaving through these tangled lanes, pause and ask yourself: What unknown part of myself will these twisted avenues reveal? Let this question accompany your steps, guiding you into each turn of the maze and setting the tone for the journey ahead—inviting anticipation and mindful discovery as we explore Corfu together.

Every cobblestone and serpentine street testifies to an effort of survival in Corfu's old town portion, shaped by the very force of the weather and war. The brutal scars of the 1537 siege by the Ottoman Empire are etched into the texture of the walls of every structure. But history becomes most vivid through a single, tangible remnant of that catastrophic summer: a shadowed stone niche near one of the old fortress gates, where a cracked clay oil lamp remains, said to have belonged to Katerina, the young daughter of a baker who survived the siege. Witnesses remembered how, as the city fired cannons into the night, Katerina's mother would place the lamp in the window to show neighbours they were safe for one more hour. The lamp endured the bombardment, its rim scorched and its handle broken, yet it was found intact among the shattered stones when the fighting ceased. Even now, local guides will point out the very gouge in the wall—where legend holds a cannonball struck just above where Katerina's lamp sat burning. Survival in Corfu has always been primarily about adjustment to the ebb and flow of power. The cannons left their mark on Corfu's old city wall as they did everywhere else; here, near to one of the original entry points of the old fortress, you will find a deep gouge where cannonballs landed, and it is an invitation for you to trace the contours of resilience that the town exhibits through its history.

Most of the Venetian fortresses that are visible today were constructed and improved upon mainly between 1386 and 1797 during Venetian rule in Corfu. The walls were built in such a way that they would deflect cannon fire: walls were constructed at angles to deflect cannon balls and also to provide an open ground area to make attackers more visible. The Venetians retained Corfu in order to control the trade and traffic between the Adriatic Sea and the Hellenic world; therefore, Corfu was a vital aspect of the trade route and of defence. The design of the fortresses indicates how political and military realities were always changing and how Corfu adapted accordingly. Imagine a Venetian guard walking on patrol at night, always vigilant and aware of potential threats; this was the common experience of those who were part of life in Corfu between the seventh and 18th centuries, when power was contested.

Between the seventh and 17th centuries, there was a Sanctuary of Artemis Gorgo located on the Kanoni peninsula. The Sanctuary represented both the religious and maritime aspects of life on Corfu. Within the context of the antiquities located within Paleopolis were temples to Hera and temples to Apollo. These temples provided sailors and traders with a place to obtain protection prior to embarking on their sea voyage. These ancient shrines established many long-standing cultural traditions that instilled a great deal of respect for the United States and for the peril (unexpected calamities) and created a culture of risk and hospitality. Artemis Gorgo was respected for both sides of her persona (fierce and protector); therefore, both visitors and locals alike were reminded of the dangers of the area and the need for humility before the unknown. While we stay alert and aware, daily life continues -- as we bake bread, mend smelly nets, raise families, and keep going, in spite of all the uncertainty. As empires come and go, our daily routines carry on. The quiet acts of love you show, like those reflected in the quiet, simple acts of care, are what will help sustain the strength of the Ionians and the memories of the Ionians today.

From ancient times until now, we can trace a path of household rituals and ceremonial events surrounding the Fire of Hestia, the goddess of the hearth. The fire of Hestia also had deep meaning for people who lived in Corfu and were undergoing sieges; the flames of her fire brought warmth (domesticity and stability), shelter, and constancy.

The Great Procession of Saint Spyridon continues this idea. It echoes the ancient processions (pompai) held in honour of Apollo and Artemis, which took place to ensure the protection of the people of the city. These great parades unite the people of the community and demonstrate the interconnection of mythology, religion and civic identity through history and across different regimes, by showing that even though many aspects of life are constantly changing, the ritual of procession still exists.

Homer finishes his epic poem, The Odyssey, on this island -- which is not surprising. If Corfu is indeed Scheria, it is not because Odysseus is praised for his accomplishments; rather, it is because

Odysseus has lost everything; he is no longer a warrior with a name, nor any weapons. Written around 750 BCE, the Odyssey tells the story of Odysseus returning to a place where he feels alone and empty, with no assurance that he will ever be remembered or return home again. This is the place in the mythology of Hellas that represents the greatest danger; the sea has erased Odysseus' identity, and he dons a new identity later.

As you stand on the beach of Corfu, ask yourself: what am I going to leave behind when I cross the sea? Think of a moment in your life when (like Odysseus) you have arrived at a new place with no familiar anchors or guarantee of success. By arriving "emptied," will you transform your own experience of the journey to one of renewal or rebuilding your sense of self? For Corfu, the mythic moment is not just a story; instead, it serves as an operating principle: it is a place where humility and openness are expected as a way to welcome others, while the ethics of how we arrive are written into the landscape and ritual. Aiding this effort will be the ability to share and/or journal about your individual "Odyssean moments"—stories of your past personal experiences of transformation— in small groups of people who are each subjected to such transformations. This activity will help link and unravel how you personally transition into your own personal story, like on Scheria.

The way in which the Phaeacian Court is ruled by Alkinoos and Arete and how they prioritise hospitality (or providing a service) to those who arrive (or land) in their land with complete respect to others, was made in order to provide.

Provide Odysseus with the items needed to allow him to reassemble from scratch. Providing Odysseus with the traditional greeting, or fig-filled bread, is done with the intention of providing him with a gift at the festival of Xenophontias. It is at this time that they return him to his home, not as an exile, but rather, as an individual transitioning back as a guest.

Thus, the actions of travelling and returning become defined as acts of discovering and belonging.

Legend has it that Odysseus landed near Kanoni, linking both his rites of the past to the present through the action of becoming home.

The task of today's volunteers who welcome others exemplifies that there is great exposure to this ethic throughout Corfu.

Corfu's later history adds evidence of the evolution of its sovereignty, both politically and culturally. After successfully preventing the Ottoman conquest of the island longer than any other Hellenic territory, it subsequently came under the control of Venice for about 200 years following its liberation from the Ottomans in 1797. From 1797 to 1799, Corfu was officially under French rule. After the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807, Corfu once again became a French possession until 1814. Then, in 1815, the British seized control over Corfu as part of the United States of the Ionian Islands. The British period lasted from 1815 to 1864, when Corfu joined modern-day Hellas. During their occupation, the British made many contributions to Corfu, including the construction of new roads, drainage systems, and the introduction of cricket. The cricket pitch built near the Esplanade still bears witness to the British presence, being in active use today. Another example of British influence on Corfu can be seen in the Venetian walls surrounding the old town; the solid construction of these structures and their use as defensive measures provide stories of the regimes that ruled Corfu. Each regime contributed to the development of Corfu's evolving identity, both culturally and physically.

It is remarkable to realise, as you pause for a moment, how many layers of foreign rule and adaptation Corfu has absorbed into its landscape and spirit. The island’s present is inseparable from this mosaic of sovereignties, each leaving its own enduring trace.

Jewish life flourished in Corfu beginning with Sephardic refugees arriving from Spain in1492.  The Jews made up a close-knit community for centuries until the Holocaust in1944 nearly exterminated them.  The impact of the absence of Jews is still felt today, even when the term "Jew" is not stated. Corfu does not present a linear account of its history. Rather, Corfu processes its

history. The long-term presence of this community and the tragedy that forcibly removed them is stored in the synagogues and cemeteries, as well as in the fabric of the city via collective memories and silence.

The practice of pot breaking occurs at Easter when the locals break clay pots from their balconies onto the Spianada, continuing the ancient traditions of Dionysus and Demeter involving the breaking of vessels to represent a new beginning and releasing spirits. For this reason (as explained above), the yearly ritual of “Carnival” is not only an occasion for merriment but an opportunity to reaffirm our connection to cosmic cycles by participating in their reenactment: chaos births order; death gives rise to life; and destruction returns us to renewal. The Spianada has become both a site of military history—which once served as a battlefield and parade ground prior to war—and a site where such historical events have become part of the culture of celebration through which we create our collective identity. While walking through the Spianada, one should consider how much of the history of war exists underfoot; at some point in time, these same bricks and stones were used by individuals who risked all they had to fight for what they believed in. Now, the Spianada is filled with children running around laughing, with families sitting together enjoying life, as it has always existed. The past lives on through each step taken and is connected to the present moment; the past and present are connected by memory that continues to live within the stones and via the ritualistic beliefs that have kept the stories alive.

When evening arrives and the sea has darkened, one can already see the lesson that has for many years now gone unspoken: The world of the Ionian has never existed in a structure of conquest but rather in one defined by being present in former habitats; to return to these habitats; and to endure those who were brought there from afar (the sea). The ethos of the Ionian has always been defined by those whose lives were marked by their experiences of receiving people/production from other locations situated afar (e.g., water). Generously giving to another (from one's heart) is a fundamental tenet shared among people, as demonstrated through history (as evidenced by examples from 800 b.c.e., 1537, and 1944), and has lived on among people of today.

**Day 2**
**Achilleion Palace**

If one is to understand this journey from here on, they should begin here, not through reception, but through learning to celebrate brilliance rather than the subtler accomplishments associated with attendance of life. The Achilleion Palace was constructed by Empress Elisabeth of Austria in 1890.
It rises out of the land on its own, like an intruder to Corfu's continuing life. It does not grow out of Corfu's past or present; it is forced into the space built by the people of Corfu. As far as the selection of Achilles, the connection between Corfu and Achilles is incidental; the issue is that he represented an aspect of European beliefs about life at the end of the nineteenth century - that life can be made meaningful through greatness, sacrifice and dramatic death. One of the caretakers of the local olive trees made an interesting statement: "The olive trees have a greater understanding of this land than anyone else. Every branch cut back reveals a piece of history created through persevering and surviving time." If an olive tree were told to talk, it would say: "I have seen palaces rise and fall, countries rise and fall. My roots have been grounded far below any temporary ambitions that come and go." This demonstrates the difference between the president and how the world progresses in the course of daily living.

Achilles is not offered by the Hellenic author of the Iliad, written in the late eighth century, as a perfect model of human society, but is looked at in admiration, fear and finally as being alone. He caused the death of nearly the entire Hellenic army by the rage of his giving; the Hellenic army became paralysed when he withdrew. Achilles was aware of the choice he made and the results of that choice: a short-lived, famous name. Hellenic mythology describes this situation very clearly. Ancient Corfu had an honour to Achilles by having a heroön in the city of Paleopolis and having foot races and simulated battles each year to honour him. Kanoni's previously mentioned promontory is a great place where sacrifices were made in order to find success in war and in athletic competitions, and has a significant cult following of Achilles. The fact that at this time of extreme hardship caused by a crumbling European aristocracy

during a period of industrial warfare, national pride, and the disintegration of nations, we find that Achilles is endorsed as a path for people from cultures, which are on the verge of destruction, to find a way to redeem their fear of the end through creating a fanciful illusion of the meaning of sacrifice by transforming it into an aesthetic experience.

Corfu, however, is not a place that yields its grandeur. Corfu embodies the gradual buildup of the day-to-day existence. Each year, the descendants of unknown persons in history and time tend to the olive trees growing below the palace. The labour of the olive tree's caretakers comes from their trust that the essence of life is not rooted in greatness but in its existence, its nurturing and its endurance. Olive oil production and the establishment of citrus will continue to be the primary means by which the island will succeed and, by extension, how people will create a living through simpler methods of life, like fishing and farming.

Loving families in Corfu will raise their children on this experience of, and connection to, each other - on the strength of those bonds, they will refuse to be separated from one another because of any means whatsoever.

Panathenaia, the most significant festival in Athens dedicated to Athena, is mirrored through the more minor festivals of the Ionians - primarily through olive branch races, giving olive oil, and worshipping ancient olive trees (that were/are still living shrines). The Helleness never came to a resolution regarding this point within their own society. Although Achilles may burn bright today and then fading into the darkness, the olive tree remains solid, as well as, enduring. You can feel this tension within you as you stand between the village and the palace.

**Day 3: Moving South**

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**Crossing Water: Risk of Revelation**

Leaving Corfu is always a challenge. In Hellas, the sea is not only a boundary, but a force that cleans away what you thought you knew about it. I think about all of the times that I have left a location and

my heart was heavy with the burden of not knowing what was going to happen next. The air is thick with excitement and some trepidation, and you carry that heaviness upon your chest as you walk into the unknown. As such, you might consider participating in some group activity that involves sharing your own personal stories relating to departure or change, and have others join you in sharing their life experiences of uncertainty. The exchange of stories will be a source of camaraderie and further enrich the meaning of your own journey.

Many of the earliest stories of Hellenic mythology date back to around 800 B.C.E., where the idea of the sea removing one's identity before re-establishing it has played a significant role. In fact, it is common for many of the Hellenic heroes to begin their journeys as Kings and end them as Beggars. Moreover, travelling across water has always been a venture not without risk, and only last year, a ferry making the same crossing to Lefkada was caught up in an unanticipated storm, with its passengers being thrown about as the wind and ocean tossed about their plans. I had the opportunity to speak with Captain Andreas, who has operated ferries on these waters for many years. He told me, "The sea has a will of its own", as he stared off into the distance to the horizon. In the blink of an eye, the once-calm water is in a chaotic storm created by Poseidon himself. Every time something like this happens, we can only do our best to be prepared. But it is always a reminder for us of how small or insignificant we truly are. Ancient-day fears really still echo through time, as our modern-day voyage reiterates how powerful a sea can be to remove and then heal.

Roadside chapels and small shrines (naiskoi) dedicated to Poseidon and the Nereids (sea nymphs) still exist along the shores of the Ionian Sea. These shrines are the last reminders of the ancient sanctuaries that exist, and where sailors would make offerings or leave terracotta statues before undertaking risky journeys across the sea. In addition to being places of worship, these shrines are also places where we remember as a community, where we call out to the divine and ask for help to deal with the unknown power of the sea.

As one travels south towards Lefkada, one can see that the harbour areas have receded down into the sea. As you approach Lefkada, you can see the cliffs getting closer to the sea. You can see that the geography has changed; Lefkada has become much more rugged, and the cliffs facing the sea have been used for ritual purposes since at least 600 BCE, with the action of "The Leucadian Leap." Many ancient writers wrote about how desperate lovers, poets, and even others would throw themselves from these in order to gain release, purification, or forgetfulness.

The action of jumping from the high cliffs was seen as a ritualised way of ending suffering, death, or transforming oneself by succumbing to the sea. The Sanctuary of Apollo Leukatas at the promontory is the site of the ritualised action of jumping from the cliffs or "Leucadian Leap." People who visited the sacred cliffs performed the ritualised action of jumping as part of the tripartite process that helped to bring the mystical ritual into being. As they walked to the site of their pilgrimage, the travellers were no doubt reflecting solemnly on their journey up the path to the cliff. Once they arrived at the cliff's edge, they prayed for help by making offerings of engraved tablets and singing hymns in order to receive divine help or heal their suffering. Finally, they would leap to their deaths. Many criminals seeking redemption or lovers hoping to escape would jump, sometimes able to survive by using rescue boats or being saved by bystanders below. Apollo is present at this site not as a gentle, artistic god in charge of music but as an entity who maintains order by cutting through chaos. He creates order by creating boundaries. In a world that gives ship access and also threatens to annihilate them, Apollo's function is vital to giving people the ability to socially connect to his core characteristic.

The land can also teach you. It is a fierce and beautiful land, as opposed to a gentle land. The cliffs reach out to the sea and contain all that you can hope for in life. The villages cling to the cliffs, and the boats are designed to get you back home, not to provide comfort to someone else.

**Day 4**
**Preveza The Mainland**

Although the Ionian Sea is one of the clearest and purest bodies of water in the world, it offers no promise of safety; it can only provide you with an opportunity to cross it.

Take a moment to put your fingers into the water; allow some of the cool and crystal clear water to run through your fingers, and allow the wind to blow the salty water onto your face; Listen to the sounds made from the waves gently hitting the rocks, and think about the history that those waves carry with them. Swimming in these waters makes one feel a sense of life because one always knows it will be short-lived, and the sea welcomes you for a limited time—but never for real ownership. What story does the concept of victory wish to tell? The creation of Nikopolis by Octavian (the future Augustus) in 29 BCE came about as a result of the defeat at the Battle of Actium (31 BCE), which marks the end of Rome's false notion that it was not destroying itself. Octavian understood that pure victory (at the Battle of Actium) cannot last. What lasts is how one creates a new meaning for the past.

As you explore the ruins of Nikopolis, you might come upon a stadium left to the sun and wind, its stands now crumbling into the wild grasses. There, in a patch of light, sits a single abandoned stadium seat, almost overtaken by weeds. Its hard lines have softened into something more like memory than monument—victory quietly relinquished to time, triumph slowly fading beneath living green. For a moment, let that solitary seat linger in your mind, letting the silence say what words cannot.

Nikopolis was created to take the civil war and turn it into a memory. The games were created to compete with those of Olympia. Returning soldiers would settle in the city to guarantee their loyalty. All of the architecture has but one interpretation; chaos has been defeated, and order has returned. Apollo, who was the god of war, fought at sea and is the driving force behind the entire design of Nikopolis, showing that the order that was born from a

war is reasonable instead of savage. The design of the city and the monuments within are designed to represent the buildings as both monuments and also instruments of governance through the creation of a myth of creation and through the layout of the city.

The Actian Games (Quadrennial athletic contests) were held at the Sanctuary of Apollo every four years overlooking the battlefield. This sanctuary included a large altar and treasury and was the recipient of gifts throughout the Mediterranean, including the spoils of war, statues, and inscribed tablets offering thanks to Apollo for victory and a safe journey home. The numerous layers of gifts represent a continuing dialogue between the Roman Empire and the indigenous people of the surrounding area, containing a continually negotiated relationship of myth and memory.

But the city never did become what it was designed to do. By the time of Late Antiquity, Christians reused the former imperial building sites not to serve the original purpose, but to negate them. The stones still exist, but the story of the stones does not.

When you're in the olive groves around Nikopolis, you can't help but be reminded of how insignificantly small human ambition is. Some have been planted more than two thousand years ago, before Christ ever existed. All these centuries later, each tree has been tended by hands long forgotten. Each tree bears witness to multiple empires over the course of history, yet they continue to thrive. As you walk amongst them while experiencing the aroma of freshly crushed leaves, observe the light dancing on the silver leaves of each tree; you will sense the immense weight of time. These trees have stories older than all of our monuments, and their quiet strength reminds us of how small our troubles really are.

**Day Five: Ioannina**
**The Power of Borderlands & Moral Memory**

As you near Ioannina, you begin an inward journey that looks not only outward into the landscape but inward into oneself. Because Ioannina is located on the border of an empire, it has "provisional law." Power within Ioannina is derived from relationships between people, and their memories are just as important (if not more so)

than the laws that govern them. Imagine what a conversation might have looked like between Ali Pasha and a monk from one of the monasteries located just outside of town.

In search of protection from Ali Pasha (the very powerful ruler of the empire), the monk approaches him humbly to ask him to honour their right to thrive, live peacefully, and grow their food. "O great Pasha," says the monk, "The harvests have been bountiful for the past couple of years; however, I am concerned due to increased tensions amongst our communities when it comes to food availability. We ask your permission, Pasha, to worship our God and work our land, undisturbed." As a man who is known for his strategic planning and iron fist, Ali Pasha ponders this request, gazing off towards the distant mountain range. "Your prayers would be of value to me," Ali Pasha says.“To protect your people and the peace of this land, you must continue them,” are the words of one who shows both a respectful submission to authority but, at the same time, exhibits great authority over those to whom he is speaking. This passage exemplifies the tenuous relationship between deference and power, or the tipping point between agreeing to something or resisting it, through the lens of personal communications. The relationship between the two forms is one of the major factors determining the future of areas in the borderlands. In the 15th century, the territory that is now known as modern-day Albania was part of the Ottoman Empire; it transformed from a centre into a borderland. Borderlands produce a definition of authority that is the manifestation of negotiation, personal interaction, and that is not secure. Ali Pasha of Tepelena’s rule from 1788 to 1822 exemplifies the definition of borderland authority; he demonstrates a being who is ruthless, well-educated, modern, traditional, and is never completely part of the governing system with which he interacts. The courtiers and the people in Ali Pasha's camp at Ioannina described the Pasha in both mythical and realistic forms; the heroic and the monstrous stories were created to ensure that Ali Pasha ruled in a time when other powers were vying for control in his jurisdiction.

When we compare the way Lake Pamvotis functions in relation to the sea, we see two very different landforms. The sea is the great eraser of history; in contrast, Lake Pamvotis retains all of the

history that has occurred in and around the lake. The lake has been a site of memory for generations; legends have survived through the lake, rather than via laws. An example of “moral” memory in landscape rather than by statuary is the drowning of Kyra Frosyni in approximately 1801, a deed committed on the orders of Ali Pasha, and that is integrated into the ecosystem of the lake and its islands; the emotional scars created by that event can be identified in the water and the stones on the islands. The origins of the island in Lake Pamvotis are connected with the life and worship of an ancient hero, Al-Pyrrhus (the Eagle of Epirus), the first king of Epirus; the tomb of the hero became a location for warriors to pay homage to the hero through making sacrifices and engaging in games in honour of the hero's wivesThe monasteries of the island grew to be the keepers of relics, icons and manuscripts and therefore created a unity between the Christian and the earlier cultures’ manner of remembering divinity. The layering of cult activity through time gives sacred geography a significant accumulation of meaning, as it creates a nexus between the ancient/everything that is old and the contemporary/everything that is new, between what is mythical or not real, and what is historical/what was real, and the ephemeral/what was here for such a short period of time, and the immortal/what was here for a long period of time.

The history of the Island Monastery is represented in the stone work of the monastery. Inside the monastery, the written manuscripts are created through the process of copying, and prayer is continued as the world changes outside the monastery, but the rhythm of prayer continues to remain the same, despite the changing rhythms.

In all parts of Hellas, as long as there are human beings, there are always stories to pass down from generation to generation, whenever there has been a breach of justice.
The Mouaisos festivals were for the Muses and happened on the lake – and involved poets and rhapsodes reading epic poetry and singing songs — and we see this continuing in the copying of manuscripts and chanting of psalms in the monastery. The ongoing/continuous activity of these two activities represents how two forms of cultural memory exist, oral and written, and how

continuity of cultural identity exists even when the context of the culture changes.

**Day 6**
**Parga**

— A place where one can find a harbour, shelter, and the geography of displacement
The harbour at Parga is shaped like a cupped palm—offering shelter, yet always holding the possibility of flinging away what it once cradled. This duality is built into its very form, providing a refuge while hinting at the potential for expulsion. Parga is a place more often departed from than conquered. Due to an agreement between the British government (representing the interests of Parga) and Ali Pasha, the Hellenic inhabitants of Parga were violently removed from their homeland. The locals believed that the arrangement between the governments was an act of violence against them rather than diplomacy, and, as a result, they continue to believe that they have been betrayed.

The curvature of the harbour is also a physical manifestation of the promise of shelter being present, but it is also a physical manifestation of the potential for the expulsion of a given population.

A harbour has more value than just being a place to do trade; it is also a place to escape from. The development of Parga's waterfront infrastructure, fortifications and streets illustrates the tension that exists in this place between welcoming and unwelcoming, hopeful and hopeless. The Acheron is a river in Hellenic mythology that has long been associated with the dead and has been mentioned in Homer's epic poems dating back to the 8th century B.C., and it flows near Parga. Since rivers often mark the boundary between two lands, Parga sits at a crossroads where many things cross each other - land and sea; security and displacement; mythology and actual suffering. The Acheron River expresses both the physical geography of the area and its transitional (linemal) character; i.e. a place of movement/passage, a place between two worlds, a place that connects two worlds and no place that has boundaries that completely separate them.

The Nekromanteion (Oracle of the Dead) in Ephyra was located at the mouth of the Acheron. Families brought offerings (honey, barley, black sheep, etc.) during the Nekyia festival in hopes of obtaining knowledge from their ancestors after they died. These traditions of descending and ascending have an impact on how the local people understand religion and have led to many prayers and feasts honouring the deceased. Such rituals establish a social and/or moral hierarchy in which the contact between the living and the dead is an integral part of the social/political aspects of the culture, and spirituality and memory are a sacred and political matter.

Nevertheless, there is still much life to live. Fishermen are fishing, children are diving into the water from the quay, and taverns are full of laughter and conversation. For Helleness, how well you live your life does not depend on whether or not you do anything remarkable, but on how many times you come back to those things that are most important in your life. The busy daily routines we have create a small festive celebration which honours both the people we know are living as well as anyone who has passed away before us.

The end of your journey is marked by departing from here without closure.

The second part of Odysseus' journey was not fully complete with his final objective being achieved, but rather as a recognised husband and a recognised stranger arriving back home to his country and family that remembers him.

When you arrive home, you will not be coming back with achievements, but with knowledge — the information you have gained because of the country and people of Hellas who welcomed you and accepted you as part of their families. What will you bring back as gifts to yourself from over the sea, your homeland?

In order to answer this question, think of what happened to you on this journey and be better able to discover the meaning of your return journey (nostos) by using this experience.

On Ithaca Island, they made fun of the dead Odysseus by starting annual athletic games and sacrificial rituals of adornment for him every year at the same place they thought was his grave. Yearly games and rituals of nostos were followed with libations to Hestia and the good spirit of Odysseus' family.

mily.

In Corfu and throughout the whole world, you will find sacrificial altars in most households made to Hestia, the saints, or local heroes. These have become the symbol of your return because they help connect both humans and all of the heavens with you by marking a place that carries both personal and cultural memory.

As you are leaving, you may want to reflect on the knowledge you received during this journey. The leaves and branches of the olive trees reflect the sun and the memories contained in their branches and leaves that you may never be able to understand fully, but they will now forever be a part of your memory and experience. You now see the world differently because of your experience with the Ionian people. You may never again walk or feel the surface of the earth in this way again because of how you experienced time and remembered previous experiences in this region. The gift of the journey is to teach your heart how to connect with the Earth through her cycles of renewal.

As you pause before departing, let yourself listen for a moment to the gentle rustle of olive leaves. It is a soft sound, like distant surf reaching across the sun-stilled groves, a final whisper that remains in your memory long after the journey is done.

A suggestion to conclude your journey in the past with a short completion ritual together is to form a circle and to take turns reflecting on the meaning of your travels. Take an olive branch and pass it among your group, where you can each add your own personal example or intention to each other's experiences throughout the entire journey. Doing this allows you to group together with everyone to each remember the memories of goodness and are now one with you through the Ionian Islands and throughout the world.