Our next speaker is Bruce LaForse. I know I saw him somewhere who is an Associate Professor of Classics who specializes in the history of Ancient Greece. He has published articles on the 4th century BCE athenian historian philosopher, Xenophon, as well as on military history and ancient concepts of ethnicity. He received an MA in Greek and PhD in classics from the University of Texas at Austin. He has also studied at The American Numismatic Society in New York.
and at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. LaForse has been at Wright State since 2000. He currently is the director of the Liberal Studies program and a faculty advisor for the veteran and military center. His talk is titled "A Semester at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens and Update from Greece". I spent my semester sabbatical for which I am extremely grateful back in Athens at the American
School for Classical Studies and I had not been there in about 20 years.
1993-1994 I was there for the year.

I had not been to Greece in that span either so what I was planning to do was to go back and be a graduate student again and it's they have a year-long program there that sort of part outward-bound part Marine Corps basic training and you get to visit virtually every ancient site in Mainland, Greece in
the fall. You go out for two weeks when you come back to Athens for four days,

19
00:01:53,509 --> 00:01:57,020
prepare the report that has been assigned to you for the next trip,

20
00:01:57,020 --> 00:02:01,259
hopefully get your laundry cleaned, and then you’re out again for another two

21
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weeks to go to a different section of Greece. What this did for me is a

22
00:02:07,560 --> 00:02:11,980
number of things. One was too get the opportunity to see how things

23
00:02:11,980 --> 00:02:16,680
change over 23 years, since I've been thinking about how things change over
2,400 years, is it a really a valuable idea that you can use an ancient historians description of a battle and go out to the countryside and will can you make sense of it and I was shocked to see the differences in just 23 years let alone 2400 years. But it also got me up to date with most of the scholarship and all of the activations throughout most of those places the American School has an in with virtually every place there so we
got to go places no one else gets to go to you except the excavator and it's a lot of fun as well. It was also interesting to be in Greece and see how much they're suffering and it took me a while to see it because the country has come a long way in the last 23 years so they're very much in the 21st century in terms of their technology and Athens is a major city in ways that it wasn't 23 years ago but after a few weeks I could see that there's a lot of suffering
there and I just saw a figure yesterday that their unemployment is twenty-five percent overall for people young people. It's like 75 percent. It's a very hard time. It varies from district to district. Some areas are doing well or relatively well. Northern Greece is a disaster area. Areas around Corinth are doing well because they have a lot of citrus and they can sell that.

European Union but back to antiquity.
I was there for just under three months so I didn't have to go through the extensive process of getting a visa and they divided the fall term into four trips. I did not do the third trip because it occurred to me I wouldn't be able to see anything in Athens if I didn't take two weeks to do that so I missed out on the Peloponnese but otherwise I covered these three areas.
I'll give you a okay. This is at the

Pnyx where the assembly would meet. An Athenian democracy was direct not representational like ours, so you didn't have people that made decisions for you.

You went to a meeting and you voted of course you know the camel is a horse designed by a committee. This is a gigantic committee government by committee and the buck stops with the assembly and it met in this area here,
where's the pointer? This is the area it met.
The Pnyx over here is the familiar

54
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Acropolis and then the ancient downtown,
the Agora is in this area right here and

55
00:05:13,940 --> 00:05:18,320
then the American school is located on
the bank on the banks on the slopes of

56
00:05:18,320 --> 00:05:27,190
this mountain here, Lycabettus. And
the school dates to 1881 AD and so it's

57
00:05:27,190 --> 00:05:36,530
initiated really almost before they
getting a modern archaeology and it in

58
00:05:36,530 --> 00:05:44,450
1881 this location was like whoops 50
minutes outside of downtown Athens. Now

59
it's in a neighborhood that's roughly the equivalent of Beverly Hills for

Athens so is where politicians and movie stars live and graduate students in

archeology. So I rented a basement apartment building on the right. I was a little claustrophobic but it was literally around the corner from the

school this is a typical street on the side in Lycabettus. It's a very wealthy neighborhood, doesn't look like it, but those places are very nice. You get some
nice views like of the Parthenon there. There are other amenities that weren't there 20 years ago. A two-car garage.

I love that. The school is see if i can do this without advancing it, right in this area here and it's one of a couple of dozen foreign schools and these foreign schools conduct all negotiations with the Greek government. So you can't just get on a plane go over to the Greek version of Home Depot, get a shovel and
go out in the countryside and start
digging you need to get a permit and the

greeks issue very very few and you have
to apply for them through one of these

schools. The American School is one of
the oldest it's the biggest. Right next
door is the British School. Same
neighborhood. That's the American School

the main library, it's non-circulating,
it's huge! They have another library that
generally covers all Greek culture the
second audien. There's the residents for
grad students and visiting faculty, view out the men's room of the third floor of

the library, was a nice day and for exercise I climbed up the top of the
capitals every evening. There's a zigzag climbing up the hill there, but
the views are an amazing from up there, it's worth that if you survive the climb.

So you got the Acropolis with the Parthenon here. Piraeus the island of Aegina the
eyesore of Piraeus, and in the distance you can see the Peloponnese which
shocked me when I was there twenty years ago how close that is how small the distances are and as an historian that sort of useful information to have. You can also see here a little the new Acropolis museum the top floor of which is exactly parallel with the Parthenon, and there's a display of plaster casts of all the things that were taken away from the Parthenon by the British and then hiking back down the hill you want
to do that before it gets too dark you

89
00:08:16,210 --> 00:08:21,820
get some nice views this is a sorry the Island of Salamis so the sea battle that

90
00:08:21,820 --> 00:08:25,300
saved the western world from Persian domination took place right in these

91
00:08:25,300 --> 00:08:30,060
straits where is it right in here.

92
00:08:30,539 --> 00:08:37,900
Another view of the Agora. This is a restored 3rd century BC building, was

93
00:08:37,900 --> 00:08:42,390
restored in the 1950's and it houses all of the fines from

94
00:08:42,390 --> 00:08:46,350
the Agora. The Agora is an american excavation, various countries have
different sites and there are all kinds of workshops storage areas labs and

everything that's stored there the Greeks had the keys to and the Americans don't. So it's very cooperative though. Another shot of the Agora. This is a where the the heart of Athenian democracy, there was a steering committee for the assembly, it met in this circular building and building next to it. The first day of the semester the melon
professor of archaeology it's a three-year appointment has the students go down to the Agora and he introduces or reviews depending on the student all the parts of Greek architecture. He uses one of the best preserved buildings from antiquity the Hephaestein on the western side of the Agora and the melon professor this this year was a guy who was a grad student when I was there very close friend. So that's another reason
why I wanted to redo this. So that I could tell all the students about the things he did when he was a student. That's Kevin Daly, he's a professor at Bucknell and brilliant archaeologist and very good teacher. When he got to Greece he was going to be a Latin poetry person, and then his year increase changed that to Greek archaeology. American school will do that, and you can date buildings by things as simple as the method used to clamp stones together, so here he's
giving a quick primer on that to these new students. I gotta throw on a shot of the Parthenon even though I missed the latest on that because they do that they do Athens in Attica in the spring term but it's being heavily restored, cleaned with marble taken from the original quarries that the stones came from, and this is an on going project, and I'm going to resist giving my usual spiel about this but there are no
straight lines of this building area I can't resist ok. The columns would meet

if you extended them a mile in the sky that bottom of that is not you know if

you put a Cubs cap right here and went over the other side and bent down and

squared you wouldn't be able to see it, the floors float by that much.

That's what that's supposed to illustrate but it doesn't really capture

that but I couldn't get closer to it. There's the new acropolis museum behind
the theater of Dionysus. So this is parallels with the Parthenon here and

that's looking back up from the museum. One thing I didn't do 20 years ago was walk out to what's left of Plato's Academy and it's supposedly on a street that was famous in antiquity for being very beautiful and rural and now it's not. This is Plato street it's lower middle-class neighborhood very similar in terms of its feeling claustrophobic to the upper-class neighborhood. There's
a nice park there you will see no tourists if you go to this place and

this is the wrestling ground that was part of the Academy where they would get together and watch young boys and then think deep thoughts but it's not at all what did I just do sorry it's not at all restored and I don't think anybody's done much with it so it took me a while to find it. Now the three areas I went to you the first trip we drove left Athens early morning went straight to this area
and then Acarnania, Aetolia, Epirus and then to Macedon and then the second trip

focused on Boeotia and focus these are all the ancient names and then oh Jesus

last trip how come it does it just just because I'm a Mac person that it does

just am I doing wrong here?

This area right here that where I went on my fourth trip. So this is right

right near the western entrance of the Corinthian Gulf there one of the things
that I was most struck by was how much has been done on The Late Bronze Age and

there's a tremendous amount of material after the Mycenaean palaces collapsed.

Those are the ones those are the Mycenaean of the Greeks that did all

the same and stuff in the Bronze Age but their palaces collapse and there's

civilization continues for another hundred years. threesome it's called Late

Holatic Three-C and there's a very large cemetery in the foreground of this slide
and then on the hill where the settlement was and this had not been excavated or even discovered 20 years ago. There are a lot of the chamber tombs there are several dozens and massive and very rich grave goods for a society that supposedly post collapse, right? So there are really high quality swords from all over from Northern Europe so they're doing serious trading and it's a site that the Greeks the modern Greeks had
fixed up to make it into a tourist attraction but there was nobody else there. They did the same thing with the

site of Pleuron which has massive fortifications that go extensive circuit.

It was inhabited from Bronze Age times it shows up on linear b tablets and then

it's quite a major site in the Hellenistic period so the 300's

BC 200 BC and again the Greeks have tried modern Greeks have tried to turn
this into a tourist attraction but you
can see there's only our bus there but

they're very impressive walls which I'm
only going to show you very quickly I

have lost track completely of the time
how much time do I have left if any holy

moly okay and that's looking south
across the Corinthian Gulf and then the

next town over is called Oiniadai and
it's one of my favorites because it has

a complex of ship sheds for warships and
this would have held six triremes
and it's from these kinds of sheds
there's several others in the Greek

world that we get a sense of how big
triremes were they can't be any bigger

than would fit in these sheds right?
These would have been covered rollers

they tried to pull those ships out of
the water as often as they could so they
didn't get waterlogged. Their likeness was
one of their key advantages. I

actually got back up in them this time
and photographed out of them. This is a
place again in Aetolia where there are some of the earliest stone Greek temples. Long and narrow with a apsidal and different from the later ones and then skipping ahead about 500 years, this is the monument that Augustus put up after he defeated Marc Anthony at Actium and created the city he called Nikopolis Victory City and he forced all of the people living in several within 100 miles anyway to move to this new city but this is the monument he put
up the all along the front of that structure our ships Rams that he put up

his trophies right from which we get the word rostra which is the Latin word for

a ship's ran so speaker's platform would be some place you'd put those. The cuttings for those I got forced into giving a report on a medieval bridge

something I'm really an expert on, but somebody took a picture of me doing that

this is at Arta, ancient Ambracia,
and then the other major thing that I

183
00:17:03,830 --> 00:17:09,980
was really stunned by is how much
excavation the Greeks have done in the

184
00:17:09,980 --> 00:17:13,220
north in Macedonia and they have a
modern political reason for doing that.

185
00:17:13,220 --> 00:17:18,350
They want to claim Macedonia, not and
they want those current Macedonians to

186
00:17:18,350 --> 00:17:22,730
have that so in the last 25 years
they've done extensive excavation up

187
00:17:22,730 --> 00:17:26,839
there and what they found is in fact
that the ancient macedonians are very

188
00:17:26,839 --> 00:17:32,030
closely related to the Greeks. They are Greek. Much to the modern Greeks relief.

This is a thing. Now this is something that was found and there are

50's or 60's of these vessels that we know of and they're a luxury item and they

are found in a very rich probably a royal Macedonian tomb and

it's Athenian, they're Athenian made. Also, there's a shield cover a hoplite shield

cover, helmet, and a spear. I have, there's a butt-spike. I have hundreds of pictures of

these, I'm only showing you one, and this
is the tomb of Philip the Second most likely Alexander's father, at Vergina modern village and this is the theater

where he was assassinated most likely.

This is Mieza and this is the school probably where Aristotle had a school and taught Alexander the Great before he was great, and and also when the vicinity

is the canal that the Persian Great King Xerxes Doug across the peninsula at Athos.

I got out of the bus walked over by the
sign I said where the hell is it? I

don't see it! And it's apparently where all the vegetation is. I still don't see

it, but it's easier to see on the other end where those cattails are that's

where it empties out. Aristotle's hometown Stageira and it's from somewhere in here that his tomb supposedly has recently been found but I don't think that's any big deal probably not. This is the other big thing that we couldn't get
near this is the tomb that was creating
a lot of interest two years ago at Amphipolis

in which generated the famous
quote from a modern Greek archaeologist

everybody wants to think it's
Alexander's tomb, his mother's tomb, his

best friend's tomb, and the famous modern Greek archaeologist said "no it's

Roman!" but this is not an NPR
interview but "the modern Greeks don't
give a rat's ass about the Romans" so
that's how that started but
this is about as close as the Greeks would let us get near this. Okay. I have a lot more pictures but if there's any questions I'll be glad to take them.

The dry docks from the triremes look a long walk from the water. Could you comment on the combined terrain changes and the lack of original max when you try to figure out where things were? Yeah those ship sheds are about nine kilometers from the sea now. In an antiquity they were probably would have
used there's still quite a distance from the sea but there was a river and lagoons that they for that particular site but yeah you can't the coastline has changed enormously. The course of most rivers has changed enormously another problem when you're trying to reconstruct a battle if the ancient historian says oh they lined up right by the river, and you think because they constantly change.
The island of '89, I think you said it was a blight cause you look out from - well from the Athenian point of view yeah they early on in the Archaic period their maritime rivals so yes the eyesore of Piraeus. It's kind of a playground of the Athenians now. One of them yeah yeah I did have some slides but I don't have time to show you those. So first, you talked about the Late Holatic Three-C, how did that differ from the Late Holatic Three-D? there is no Three-D, just two dimensional. How about three-A? Three-B is the Mycenaean period and
that's when they have the big palace complexes you know, Mycenae,

with the big walls and the rich tombs as A and B and then that the Greeks arrived in Greece about 2,000 BC and then somewhere around 1600 you get this other wave of Greeks that seems to have been much more war-like. They're still speaking Greek, they're Greek and that's those are the Mycenaeans and they're the ones we have the Linear B tablets, they built the big palace
complexes, and they had a very elaborate bureaucratic system. We've got the

clay tablets reflect all of that. They'd send out seven or eight officials to

every town they control they control distribution to finish good,

collected raw materials, all that something but that all collapses those centers collapse but people out in the villages went on to a much greater degree than I was aware of. Why does it collapse? Good question.
I asked the Bronze Age archaeologists that as we were laboring up a hill. He was not in a good mood and he said "real question is why did they arrive?" I said okay all right it's a we don't know. They don't collapse in the same at the same time in the same place, but the entire Mediterranean Basin suffers quite a bit that Hittites are disappear their empire

disappears the Egyptians retrench and go through a long period of suffering and
the Greek world goes through it the first Dark Ages. nope they just revert to pastoralism, there's a huge drop in population, they lose literacy that they have so the knowledge of linear b writing is gone and that it stays that way for another till about 750 BC or so, and reasons for it or not at all clear.

Could be some climate event, could be a series of bad harvest. Once you get that happening in one part of the world and people are displaced then it's not safe
to conduct trade because the seas are full of displaced people who are making their living by being pirates.