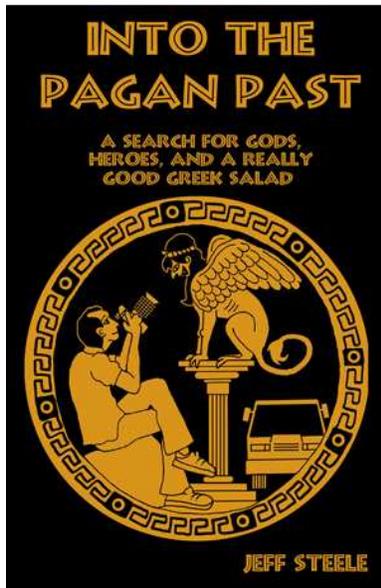


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# INTO THE PAGAN PAST A SEARCH FOR GODS, HEROES AND A REALLY GOOD GREEK SALAD

by Author, Artist, Historian, Humorist & Mailman Jeff Steele



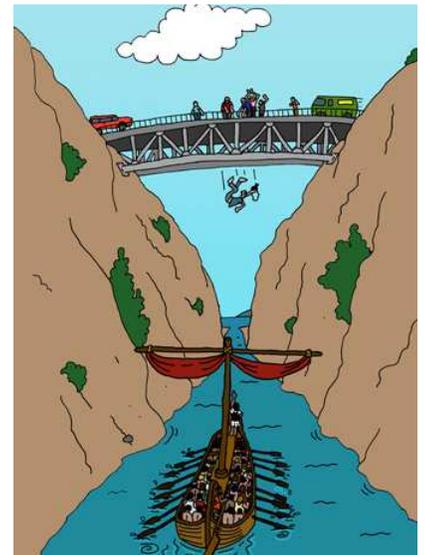
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## 170 New, Original Full Color Drawings



Chapter 9 - "*Picturesque Nafpaktos*" by Jeff Steele



Chapter 7 - "*Bonding with New Friends at the Corinth Canal (aka, The Clashing Rocks)*" by Jeff Steele

From the Sublime...

...to the Ridiculous

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA (written anonymously in the third person by Author, Artist, Historian, Humorist and Detroit mailman Jeff Steele)

Rarely in the history of the world does a ground-breaking travel narrative come along that absolutely challenges and revolutionizes the travel writing industry to its very core. Such an incredibly powerful and life-altering work has the potential ability to change the way that people see the world around them and challenge their long-held perceptions regarding the human spirit. Unfortunately *Into the Pagan Past* is not that work; it's not even close. Rather, it is a humble and heart-felt journey into the ancient Greek world in which the author literally ventures back through time and places himself into several historical and

mythological events, all while traveling throughout modern day Greece and Turkey. Liberally illustrated by the author and written in a humorous and often irreverent manner, *Into the Pagan Past* is a personal journal of what happens when an out-of-the-closet Hellenophile makes his first trip ever to southern Europe to connect with the ancient Greek past, which he loves so much.

Jeff Steele is a first time author and illustrator whose obscure background is remarkably dull and uninteresting; whose life story would put an insomniac into a deep, irreversible coma. Perhaps best known for running outside barefoot during the middle of winter, and throwing a large, pointy stick into a snow mound, all while screaming "Odin!!", Jeff today works as a letter carrier in southeast Michigan where he works his fingers to the bone in order to provide scraps of moldy bread for him and his lovely wife Patti. His incredibly high level of mediocrity is countered by his passion and almost child-like enthusiasm for his subject matter. He will be the first to admit that *Into the Pagan Past* is crude, rude, and sometimes offensive, but at the same time it also strives to be funny, informative, and thought provoking.

Jacques Branigan, a local writing critic from Jeff's hometown community had this to say about the aspiring author:

*"Jeff who? You mean that mailman who mumbles to himself, bumps into walls while reading the Odyssey, and is constantly wearing his shirts inside out? What a jerk! Hey, he still owes me twenty dollars from last year!"*

Jeff's bizarre, some say unnatural, interest in the ancient past first germinated back when he took a high school mythology class. Here, he was introduced to Homer's *Odyssey*, an epic tale which managed to seep into the thick, crusty shell which is Jeff's cranium. Mesmerized by this story of war, love, and family, Jeff wept uncontrollably for several weeks after reading *The Odyssey* until doctors finally administered powerful drugs to get his emotions under control. Afterwards, he began reading other great works of the past; Homer's *The Iliad*, Virgil's *The Aeneid*, Hesiod's *Theogony* and *The Works and Days*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *The Histories* by Herodotus, *The Peloponnesian Wars* by Thucydides, *The Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes, all of the surviving Greek tragedies and comedies, and even the rare *The Mailman and the Minotaur* by a reviled Spartan poet whose name has been expunged from the historical record. Absorbing the past like a dry sponge, Jeff would often sit by himself in the corner of an empty room, fantasizing that one day he would make the journey to Greece to see the sites where all of this ancient history and where all of these fantastic myths took place.

Recently, the aging yet still dementia-free letter carrier finally decided that the time had come to take his dream trip. Dragging along his good buddy John,

the duo flew to Europe where they spent the next three adventure-filled weeks exploring Turkey and Greece.

Beginning in Istanbul, the two friends took a private tour down to explore the World War One battlefield at Gallipoli, after which they crossed the Dardanelles to visit the remains of ancient Troy. Here the author fulfilled a lifelong fantasy by reading his well-worn copy of the *Iliad* before the sloping walls of Troy. Returning to Istanbul, they explored a bit of the city, all while avoiding clever carpet salesmen and desperately trying to find their way out of the maze that is the Old City.

Taking a long, slow train into Greece, the pair picked up a rental car at Thessaloniki and began making their way down to Athens where they stopped along the way to check out many historical and mythological related sites; Mount Olympus, Thermopylae, Gla, Aulis, Sounion, Marathon and Brauron.

After they had arrived in Athens, and nearly met their demise in a stuck elevator, Jeff and John joined up with a tour group, which took them throughout the Peloponnese and Central Greece. While touring Corinth, Nafplion, Mycenae, Olympia, Delphi, and the monasteries of Meteora, Jeff gradually overcame his neurotic social anxieties to actually act somewhat human and form friendships with many of his fellow travelers.

After the tour concluded, the trip was still not over for the pair. They boarded a jet for the island of Crete where they would spend the next couple of days exploring the historical sites of Knossos, Gortyn, and Phaistos. Here Jeff was able to connect with ancient legends and modern movies, be traumatized by eating a fish with its head still attached, and gape in wonder at a topless female sunbather.

The vacation and the book wrap up on the Greek island of Aegina where temples ancient and modern were visited, after which the friends finally returned home to America to the waiting arms of their significant others.

Upon their return, Jeff was asked by Dr. James Stathis of [Celebrategreece.com](http://Celebrategreece.com) to write a series of blogs for that website. What began as a simple blog soon evolved into the potentially award-winning book for which this press release was written. For some unexplainable reason, Dr. Stathis saw potential in Jeff's writing and felt that he needed to expose himself to the world. Jeff misunderstood and was soon arrested (Not really, I'm just joking. Honestly. Ask my wife if you don't believe me!). At first, *Into the Pagan Past* began as a straight-forward narrative, which meant that it was about as exciting to read as a repair manual for a sump pump. The author tried to make it somewhat more interesting by inserting photographs from his trip, but soon learned that this was not always possible without permission from certain foreign bureaucracies, whose

only purpose seemed to be that of stifling the creativity of emerging and temperamental artists. He then created a series of photo-based drawings, but discovered that those probably could not be used either. Finally, a bunch of cartoons were created as the final illustrations. Still needing to add a little something extra to make his book more palatable to readers, Jeff then created a fantasy element, which makes *Into the Pagan Past* stand apart from its fellow travel narratives. This is where the imaginary trips back into the past came into play. In the narrative, Jeff actually experiences the Trojan War first hand, visits a now obscure Bronze Age citadel during its heyday, hides in a broom closet in Mycenae the night that King Agamemnon is murdered by his wife and her lover, discusses faith with the goat god Pan aboard a tour bus, and pays a visit to the oracle at Delphi to see what the future has in store for him.

*Into the Pagan Past* was written in a manner that expresses sympathy for the ancient pagans and their beliefs. While certainly not a pagan (though he does occasionally run half-naked through the countryside during a full moon), Jeff does write his narrative in a decidedly Secular Humanistic manner which often shows the influence of pagan belief on what the later Christians thought was their own unique religious concepts; sometimes he's very subtle in pointing out these similarities, other times not so much. Feeling very protective of those who no longer have a voice, the author's love for his subject matter clearly comes through in the narrative.

The author will be the first to admit that he is not a scholar, but rather a humble Michigan mailman with a passion for the ancient Greek world. *Into the Pagan Past* is not meant to be a scholarly work, or even a travel guide, but is rather a journal of an extraordinary adventure through a land where every beach, island, field, hill, mountain, town, and city exude a historical and mythological ooze which the author soaks in and then shares with the reader. If you are looking for every little detail about a myth or historical event, then look elsewhere. If you want to know where the best restaurants and hotels are in a particular Greek town, then this is not the book for you. If you want to know why Plato is relevant in today's convoluted world, then you may wish to take a college course. However, if you want to experience the pure joy and wonder of exploring a new land for the first time through the eyes of a fan, then *Into the Pagan Past* will fit the bill! It promises nothing more.

#### Book Versions Available:

*INTO THE PAGAN PAST*: The exclusive **color "collector's edition."** Yours for only \$99.99! For those in the upper-crust echelons of society with the most discerning of tastes. This exclusive limited edition book is gloriously illustrated in the newly patented TINT-O-RAMA VISION, a state-of-the-art, highly classified high-tech process that ingeniously and painstakingly replaces

gray tones with stunning, life-like colors! Experience passionate reds, cool blues, sizzling hot yellows, suggestive greens, sexy mauves, and an entire range of nature's enticing palette. Full size images can be viewed at CelebrateGreece.com. Found in the libraries of Mount Olympus, INTO THE PAGAN PAST: The limited edition is an exclusive way of showing the world that you have truly made it. Owning a copy of this highly desirable edition is sure to impress your friends at the yacht club and will make your neighbors green with envy. ([Link](#))

*INTO THE PAGAN PAST*: The destitute **B&W printed** edition. Now at the give away price of \$25.99 For those between jobs, those living on the streets, and for parents torn between purchasing food for their starving children or buying this incredibly funny travel narrative, this is the version for you! You get the same great, potentially award-winning text, but all of the illustrations are printed in the economical gray tones of DULL-O-RAMA VISION, the centuries old precursor to TINT-O-RAMA VISION. However, full color images of the B & W images in the book can be seen at CelebrateGreece.com. For all of the retro black and white purists out there, this is the version is for you. Sure, people at the yacht club won't give you the time of day if they see you with the colorless version of INTO THE PAGAN PAST, but you have saved enough money in purchasing the destitute printed edition that your children will no longer go hungry. Smart move! ([Link](#))

*INTO THE PAGAN PAST*: The **eBook** version. Amazingly, only \$9.99 Through the heavenly magic of the divine gods up above, a full-color version of *INTO THE PAGAN PAST* can be miraculously transferred to your electronic reading device in a blink of a mortal eye. It's really quite an amazing process, which us lowly humans will never understand. And because no trees are chopped down from a sacred grove to print a tradition-style paper book, you can sleep well at night knowing that you have not incurred any divine wrath. You will not suffer blisters and boils, nor will you be transformed into a fruit fly. The electronic version is wise choice for all humans, satyrs, centaurs, and demi-gods everywhere! ([Link](#))

#### Early book reviews received from Celebrities and VIPs:

"I haven't read this book just yet, but plan on doing so just as soon as I return from some business at Thermopylae. I promise." --**Leonidas**, Co-regent of Sparta

"I found the author's narrative to be quite enlightening. However, could it not be that everything he experienced was but a dream? Could not the author's entire existence be that of a small brain locked inside a darkened box, sitting up on a dusty shelf somewhere? Is it not within the realm of possibilities that this entire adventure was nothing more than shadowy lies created by this lonely brain to cope with an isolated existence? Excuse me; my cup of hemlock has arrived."  
--**Socrates**, Philosopher and general pain in the behind

"While not nearly as vast and as all-encompassing as my great historical work, Into the Pagan Past was certainly more entertaining than the long-winded works of that dullard Thucydides."

--**Herodotus**, Father of History

"Wh-what? Hey!! While my narrative may be long-winded, at least it was meticulously researched, entirely factual, and not prone to wild speculations of fantasy. Flying snakes indeed!" --**Thucydides**, Author of The History of the Peloponnesian War

"The more I imbibe in the grape, the better this book becomes!" --**Dionysus**, God of Wine

"In a word...pitiful." --**Homer**, Epic poet

"Submit to my will or be swept away by my vast and great armies!!" --**Xerxes**, King of kings, ruler of the mighty Persian Empire

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### Background:



Jeff Steele is not a writer, a scholar, or even a regular overseas traveler. In fact, he is hardly qualified to write a book at all. In real life, he is a mailman aimlessly walking the streets of Detroit, Michigan. However he does have an intense passion, some would say unhealthy obsession, for the ancient history of Greece. *INTO THE PAGAN PAST* is his first foray into the publishing world. --Written in the third person by author, illustrator, humorist, historian and mailman Jeff Steele

*Author, Artist, Historian, Humorist and  
Mailman Jeff Steele*

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