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SPECIAL REPORT

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Contributors



BRENDA L. MARDER has lived and worked in Greece periodically for forty years as lecturer in modern European history, university administrator, and magazine editor in Athens. She has also published poetry and subjects relating to the history of modern Greece. Her latest book, *Stewards of the Land: The American Farm School and Greece in the Twentieth Century* (Mercer University Press) was published in the United States and translated and published in Greece (Metaixmio Press). She is the wife of an American diplomat who was accredited to

Greece for over a decade. New England-born, she lives with

her husband in Hanover, New Hampshire, but makes an odyssey to Greece at least three times a year.

After embarking on a career in architecture, ANGELOS ROUVAS switched gears, combining his drawing skills and passion for art and cinema as an animator. He has since worked on international productions such as *An American Tail: Fievel Goes West* for Amblin Entertainment and is currently collaborating with acclaimed Greek children's author Eugene Trivizas in an animated series for Greek public television. He is also the author of *Greek Cinema*, an encyclopedia of Greek films made from 1905 to 2005.



KATHRYN KOROMILAS left her hometown of Sydney, Australia, in 1998 and now divides her time between exploring Greece and writing about it. A frequent contributor to *Odyssey* magazine, she's also written for Fodor's Greece and the Athens News, amongst other publications. She lives near the ruins of an ancient city in Epirus and this, together with Nikos Kazantzakis's idea that the country is a "palimpsest" of successive historical inscriptions, intrigued her to explore archaeological activity around Greece. She's also writing a first novel and maintains a website <http://kathrynkoromilas.com>.



Iason Athanasiadis has written, photographed, and produced television programs on the Middle East for BBC World, al-Jazeera, the Financial Times, *Der Spiegel*, the Daily Telegraph and Greece's public broadcasting network ERT among other media

Angelike Contis is an Athens-based journalist and independent documentary maker.

Kathryn Lukey-Coutsocostas is based in Thessaloniki. Her writing portfolio includes textbooks for teaching English as well as columns and articles.

Thomas Dimopoulos is an award-winning journalist and staff writer at *The Saratogian*, a daily newspaper in the greater Capital Region of New York since 2001.

Constance Droganes is a journalist and writer based in Toronto. She is a Canadian correspondent for *People* magazine, *FN*, *WWD*, *Accessories Guide* and other U.S. publications.

Ann Elder, a freelance journalist, splits her time between New Zealand and Greece.

Nicholas K. Geranios was born in Athens, Greece, in 1959 and moved with his parents to Great Falls, Montana, in 1962. He is a journalist and leads The Associated Press bureau in Spokane, Washington.

Alkman Granitsas is a freelance journalist based in Athens and is currently working on his first novel.

Kerin Hope is the Athens correspondent for the Financial Times.

Alex Kairis is pursuing a Master's degree in Environmental Studies.

Stefanie Kennell, a former Director of the Canadian Archaeological Institute at Athens, is currently working with the Heinrich Schliemann Papers in the Gennadius Library Archives.

Victoria Kyriakopoulos, a former editor of *Odyssey*, is the author of several Lonely Planet travel guides, including the guide to Crete. She currently resides in Melbourne.

Cordelia Madden, a fashion and travel writer, is the author of *Shopping in Athens*.

Lydia Maniatis is a freelance writer based in Washington, D.C.

Mavis Manus, co-author of *The Art of Russian Cuisine*, is a columnist for the *Hellenic Journal*.

Amalia Melis is director of Aegean Arts Circle writing workshops and a freelance writer.

Irene Metropoulos is Media Relations Manager for the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center in Chicago.

Harry Moskos is a former editor of the Knoxville News-Sentinel and currently a columnist for the Albuquerque Journal.

Vivienne Nilan is a journalist with the daily Kathimerini English edition.

Elena Polyzos lives in Athens with her husband and daughter. She worked in publishing for many years and is now working on a memoir.

Diana Porter, a travel writer, has backpacked her way around Europe.

Jim Potts is the author of four novels, a travel book, and a memoir.

Alexandra Spyridaki has lived and worked in New York since arriving there as the foreign correspondent for leading Greek broadcast and print media, including Antenna.

Fotios Stamos, Wine Director and General Manager of Boston's Meze Estiatorio, hosts a weekly program about Greek wines on Boston radio.

Athena Vorillas is a journalist and media consultant with over a decade's experience with media organizations.

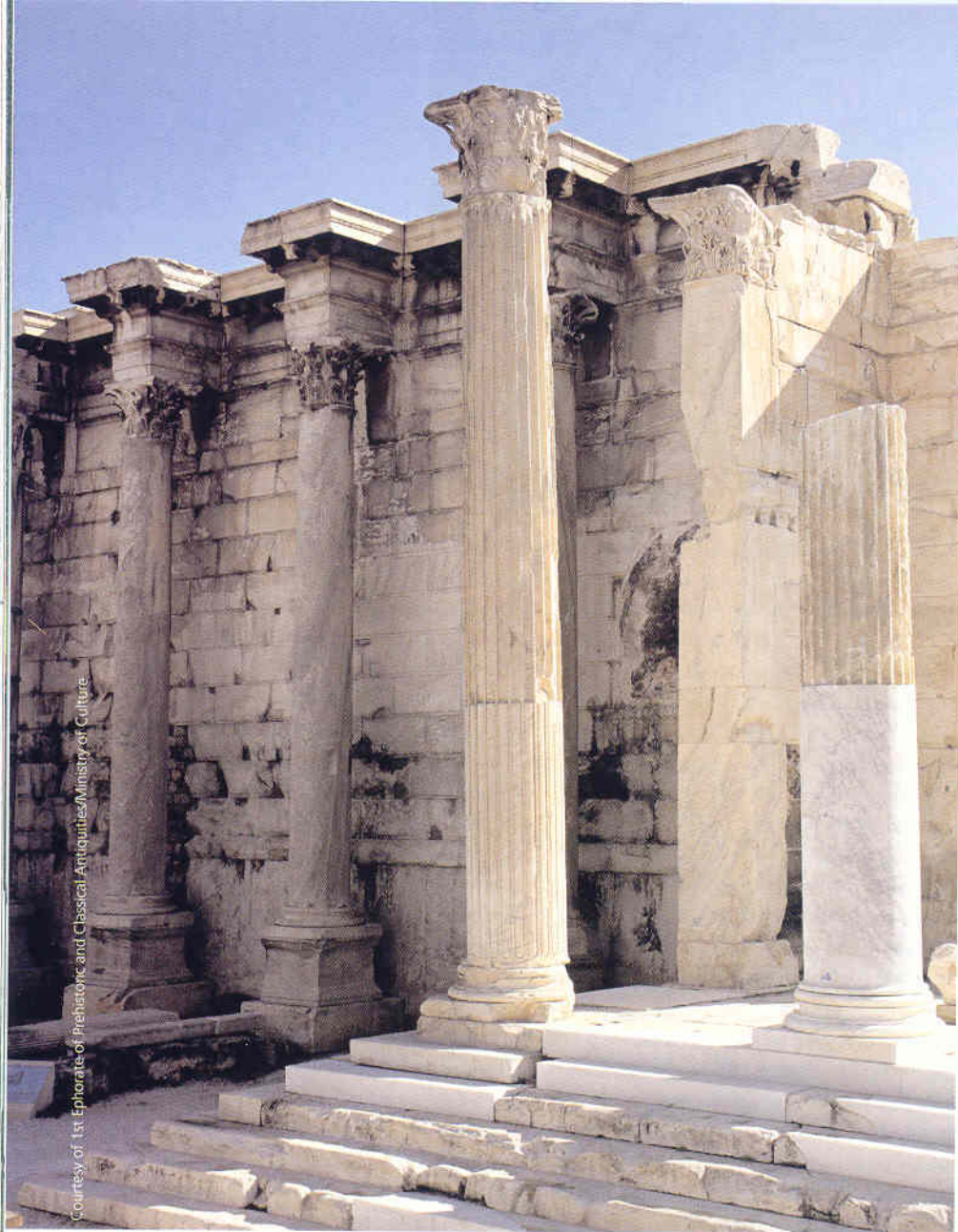
Marios Vrailas acquired an interest in medieval gastronomy while studying for his graduate degree in History.

Jonathan Wingate, a freelance music journalist, has written for a variety of British publications including The Daily Telegraph, The Daily Mirror and The Big Issue. He can often be heard putting the music world to rights on BBC TV and Radio.

Gourmed.gr is a website dedicated to Mediterranean food and wine. Its contributors include food writers and chefs, who will be sharing their secrets, knowledge, and love of Greek and Mediterranean cuisine in upcoming issues as guest gastronomes.

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Courtesy of 1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities/Ministry of Culture

Reconstructing the past

Arthur Evans was severely criticized for his reconstructions of Knossos. Today, as countries increasingly view their cultural treasures as exploitable assets to boost sectors like tourism, the debate touched off by Evans's interventions at the Minoan palace continues to rage over where restoration of ancient monuments should stop. **Kathryn Koromilas** speaks to Greek archaeologists engaged in restoration work about how far such restorations should go in the name of making ancient monuments more comprehensible to the public.

Archaeology occupies the often contentious position of being able to reproduce the past. And archaeologists, as guardians of the monuments that bear direct witness to the past, are bound by a responsibility to, on the one hand, preserve them, and on the other, present them to their heirs: citizens, both local and global. The domain of archaeology is no longer the idealistic and amateurish playground of long ago. There are other players involved now—architects and engineers, politicians and economists, tourism consultants, and conservationists—and the stakes are higher. Archaeology, claiming the authorial voice on national heritage, is now under fierce scrutiny. Archaeology has become everyone's business.

Less than two centuries ago the fight for Greek independence was boosted by standing firmly in the past. That Voltaire's "poor Greeks" were the direct descendants of the Greeks of antiquity inspired the intellectual circles of Europe to a new kind of regard. The philhellenism movement forged worldwide support for the liberation of the Greeks and their ailing ruins, and this ideology underpinned the emergence of the essence of the modern Greek state and its national identity.

That same past is now being called upon to fight another battle, the post-Olympic challenge to win back a more serious, more qualitative interest in Greece. Today, however, it is not enough that ruined fragments exist merely as a decadent backdrop to a blue beach or a subtle reminder of the past in a sleepy village. Gone are the days of "sun and sea" package-tours that provided blissful sojourns away from the drudgery of work and home for millions of Shirley Valentines. When London-based Leo Burnett and YouGov surveyed British tourists last year they found that 78.5 percent traveled to Greece for "history and culture" and only 39.9 percent for the "sun, sea, and beach" alternative. Greek ruins must be raised then, at least in part, so that travelers and locals (present and future) will collect a wholly

'Each generation,' says Panos Valavanis, 'has a duty to protect and preserve the cultural heritage for future generations. But the arrogance of each generation should not mark a monument with its own attitude.'



meaningful and educational experience. Regional communities are calling for their token ancient inheritance—a little theater, a little temple—to be reconstructed in the name of protection, enhancement, and development of cultural heritage, local economy, and tourism.

It is no longer a valid question to ask whether an archaeological site should be reconstructed or not. The question is how can it be done properly and how can the ensuing stampede of visitors be managed. But this is not so dire a question as it may sound. After all, Greek archaeological law is one of the modern state's oldest and, as Konstantinos Zachos, director of the 12th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, emphasized at an international conference earlier this year, one of the "most sharp-sighted laws in all of Europe." It is true: Greeks know their archaeology better than anyone.

But if the past is so fragile why not simply leave it alone? "Yes," says Panos Valavanis, classical archaeology professor at Athens University, "yes, that is a position, though an extreme one."

"Until the 1960s," he continues, "until the Venice Charter [for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, 1964] the dominant view was a purist one. The purist position maintained that the single most significant moment in a monument's life was the time it was built." Since then, however, the perception of historical significance has shifted. All historical periods in a monument's life are important. That includes the period of restoration and reconstruction.

"Each generation," continues Valavanis, "has a duty to protect and preserve the cultural heritage for future generations. But the arrogance of each generation should not mark a monument with its own attitude."

A good example of extreme archaeological attitude is Evans's "gung-ho restoration" (as Robert Nurden put it in an article in the *Independent*) of Knossos.

"Knossos," said Dr. Alexandra Karetsou

in an Onassis Foundation lecture in 2004, "is not only a monument of the Minoan civilization, but also a monument to Arthur Evans's conception of that civilization."

But such extremities are no longer characteristic of Greek archaeological activity. These days intervention follows a "middle ground" and is marked by a good collaboration between all stakeholders especially between the industry's arch rivals: the "sensitive" archaeologists and the "aggressive" architects.

A triumph of collaboration in a long history of ups and downs atop the Acropolis is the recent unveiling of internationally acclaimed architect Tasos Tanoulas's Ionic capital for the Propylaea, the Acropolis's monumental gateway. This modern day Mnesicles commissioned four marble workers (graduates from the School of Fine Arts on the isle of Tinos, known for producing marble artists schooled in the ancient ways) to reproduce with absolute accuracy the "geometric form" and "sculptural detail" of one of the six original capitals in the western wing. Tanoulas explained to the press in April.

"A good reconstruction," says Valavanis, "essentially serves as a bridge between the ancient and the modern."

Whatever is left of the ancient to inform present reconstructions exists in ruins or has been recorded over time. Digital architect David Sherratt Johnson produces computer-modeled three dimensional reconstructions for the Museum of Reconstructions. His full-color Ionic capital was based on the studies of Tanoulas and Manolis Korres, but also on the earlier studies by Bohn and Penrose despite the fact that they are over one hundred years old. "Because of the erosion of the building's surfaces in the twentieth century," explains Johnson, "these studies remain the definitive metrical studies of these buildings."

Shrine intervention

Intervention on classical sites is more conservative than on Roman reconstructions, an unstated tradition marked by the "ethical weight" of classical antiquity on the

Greek psyche. Valavanis confirms that archaeologists are often "fearful" when working on classical sites and notes that, in the past, Roman ruins were largely ignored (or worse discarded with Byzantine remains when digging for classical artifacts) as belonging to a period of decline in Greece.

Ioanna Tiggina, a conservation architect with the 1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, has spent years working on the Library of Hadrian restoration project (which began in 1979 under the directorship of Yiannis Knithakis who died in 2004) and confirms that "on a Roman building some compromises do happen." What she means is that in reconstructing sections of the city's great library of antiquity built around A.D. 132, she and her crew have reasonably more interpretive freedom than their classicist colleagues to incorporate a greater percentage of new material, in some cases more than sixty percent, when integrating ancient fragments, replacing missing architectural members, or completely reconstructing new members.

Current reconstruction work is focused on the Library's Propylaea and aims to reproduce, explains Tiggina, "enough of the monument so that it is able to be understood and made meaningful to the public." Though some of the monument has been destroyed over time and original materials were used to construct other buildings, there is a great number of "fully identified architectural members" and several parts of the Propylaea—the substructure of the podium, parts of the marble steps, part of the stylobate, the northern part of the superstructure, and the first of four columns—that remain preserved *in situ*, or in their original position.

The original columns were crafted from Phrygian marble, but new material is crafted from Skyrian marble, chosen for its "great resemblance" to the original material in terms of the "color of its veins and background, as well as its similar composition and strength." Column bases, made from Pentelic marble, will be integrated with Dionysos marble. As



The Central Archaeological Council has approved reconstruction of the Tholos (left), a circular structure at the Sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidaurus. Other reconstructions underway include the Ionic capital for the Propylaea of the Acropolis (below) and Hadrian's Library in Athens (pages 30, 31).

far as reassembly and reinforcement goes, titanium, "a relatively light non-corrosive metal" is used. Titanium is durable and boasts "mechanical properties that permit good collaboration with the marble."

Possibly the most controversial of current reconstruction projects is that of the Tholos, the circular structure at the Sanctuary of Asclepius, demigod of medicine and healing, at Epidaurus, with its mysterious inner labyrinth. The Central Archaeological Council (KAS) characterized the project as "ambitious and difficult" because so little original material is available, but on September 5 further approved the part reconstruction of the Doric colonnade that originally stood around the exterior of the building. The limestone building material was partly destroyed during a sixth century earthquake and then more fully desecrated when used for other purposes in the eighteenth century. Now, the flat puzzle of the Tholos will rise once more to become an aesthetic and meaningful monument for visitors to admire.

Seven of the original twenty-six Doric columns of the external colonnade will be reconstructed, one of which will rise to its original height. Following that, and pending further approval by the Central Archaeological Council, the wall of the inner cella or naos will grow to about a meter tall and finally, nine or ten columns of the internal Corinthian colonnade (forty percent of the original structure is preserved) will also be reconstructed, three of them in full.

Meaningfulness and authenticity are key goals in any reconstruction. Valavanis points out one of the most exquisite mistakes in the history of archaeological reconstruction in Greece: the columns of the Sanctuary of Poseidon and Athena at Sounion. The evocative columns raised in the foreground of a deep blue sea and sky is a quintessential image of Greece. But Valavanis says, "the columns are wrong. They give off a fake im-

age. Columns don't look out at the blue sea, columns look at walls."

Still, when it comes to reconstruction, Valavanis takes a middle ground. He is in favor of it, "only in very specific cases, for example, in cases where the walls of a monument have been preserved but the roof is missing, and where the use of the monument would in accordance with its ancient use."

This is the case with the Ancient City of Nikopolis, in Preveza, Epirus, built by Augustus following his historic defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 B.C. The archaeological site spans an awesome 900 hectares and its dominant Roman walls and numerous monuments (Odeion, Thermae, Nymphaeum, Aqueduct) have been preserved in excellent condition (the site was never built on because the land surrounding it was ceded to locals and

refugees in the 1920s strictly for cultivation purposes only). Work on the site—excavation, restoration, reconstruction—has been progressing on and off since 1913. Sections of the ancient city's walls has been reconstructed and on viewing them one wonders, how far will the reconstruction go?

"Well, we can't rebuild the entire Nikopolis," says Dorita Kontogianni, an archaeologist with the 33rd Ephorate, "there aren't available data on the entire height of the walls, and some fragments are so ruined that they cannot be reconstructed." New bricks are a different color than the original bricks, but Kontogianni assures that it is in line with archaeological theory that requires "material used for integration" to "always be recognizable." Where the difference is less obvious metal sheets are used to separate the old from the new. In this way the public is never misled as to what is authentic, and what isn't.

The next big restoration project for which approval is forthcoming is the reconstruction of the Monument of Augustus built at the location of his campsite during the battle of Actium. The current worksite consists of a neat collection of stone blocks with foot-high letters that, when reconstructed, spell out a dedication.

But the most ambitious project recently approved in the Epirus area is Zachos's great idea: an archaeological park. Zachos's park won't be the sort of "fake" theme park satirized by Julian Barnes in his novel *England, England* but, as archaeologist Thalia Kyrkou explains, a unified archaeological site, with organized walkways, an integrated museum, an educational program, and a visitors' center. In the future, it may even become a flourishing ecosystem of flora and fauna of the Roman and Byzantine eras.

But all of these projects take a long, long time. As far as Zachos is concerned, "we need another 200 years of excavations to fully uncover ancient Nikopolis."

