



Article by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis published in The Times, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, and Le Monde

Covid-19 & Greek economy: Supporting public health, growth and social cohesion

Thermopylae-Salamis 2020

Eleni Cubitt, an exceptional campaigner, activist, filmmaker, mum, grandmother and soulful friend

British Press visits Athens and the Greek Islands

Aeschylus' The Persians live-streamed from Epidaurus

Irini Tzortzoglou, "Under The Olive Tree Recipes From My Greek Kitchen"

Article by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis published in *The Times*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *Le Monde*

Η Τουρκία πρέπει να σταματήσει την επιθετική της συμπεριφορά, διαφορετικά θα έρθει αντιμέτωπη με κυρώσεις από την Ε.Ε.

Άρθρο Κυριάκου Μητσοτάκη που δημοσιεύεται ταυτόχρονα στις εφημερίδες *The Times*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, και *Le Monde*.



In seeking to predict the future political scientists often look to the past, to shared history. The relationship between my country Greece and its neighbour Turkey is no exception. History teaches us that there are reasons for optimism, and areas of deep concern. Today the question of what that future holds – conflict or co-operation – has never mattered more.

When I became prime minister in July last year I was cautiously optimistic. Nothing prevented me from believing that Greece and Turkey could not be friends. After all, many of my predecessors had managed to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Leaders like Eleftherios Venizelos, my great-uncle, who signed a peace and friendship agreement with Kemal Attaturk back in 1930. Of course there have been tensions since, but the good days have outweighed the bad.

When we met last Autumn, I told President Erdogan that we were destined by geography to be neighbours, and as such we needed to co-exist, to live peacefully side by side. I made a point of extending the hand of friendship and cooperation. I talked of open dialogue, of a desire for progress, and of my willingness to act as a bridge builder for Turkey in Europe.

Sadly, things have not worked out quite like that. Since that first meeting Turkey has appeared less

like a partner and more like a provocateur. Late last year President Erdogan signed an illegal maritime agreement with one side fighting Libya's bloody civil war. Since Turkey and Libya do not have opposite or adjacent coasts, the agreement was declared by most of the international community and legal experts as null and void and a violation of the sovereign rights of third countries, including Greece.

In March Turkey made concerted moves to encourage and facilitate desperate attempts by migrants to cross into Greece. We defended our border with the support of our EU partners. Our collective message was clear – Greece's borders are the EU's borders and we will protect them.

And this summer, in response to the signing of a long standing, legal and internationally recognised maritime agreement between Greece and Egypt, President Erdogan sent his navy to support an attempt to explore for gas deposits in an area of the Eastern Mediterranean that both Greece and Turkey claim rights to, and is still undelimited. Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea this was a unilateral act in breach of international law.

Greece will never and has never sought to escalate these tensions, regardless of the provocation. But what began as ugly political posturing has turned decidedly threatening in recent weeks. Each passing day, the Turkish government presents another



The hopes that still bind me to Turkey do not blind me to the reality. We do need dialogue, but not when held at gunpoint. What threatens my country's security and stability threatens the well-being and safety of all EU member states. It risks undermining the NATO alliance. And it threatens the rule of law internationally. Greece has the military capacity to fend off any Turkish aggression. But surely a military incident between our two countries is in nobody's interest.

Later this month EU leaders will meet in special session to decide how to respond. If Turkey refuses to see sense by then, I see no option but for my fellow European leaders to impose meaningful sanctions. Because this is no longer just about European solidarity. It is about recognising that vital interests – strategic European interests – are now at stake. If Europe wants to exercise true geopolitical power, it simply cannot afford to appease a belligerent Turkey.

spurious claim or disseminates another untruth. Bellicose language, nationalist propaganda, aggressive militarism, the purchase of weapon systems from Russia that pose a threat to NATO, the conversion of world heritage monuments into mosques, illegal maritime activity, and threats of war.

Turkey's rhetoric is from a bygone age. It talks about enemies, martyrs, struggle, and a willingness to pay any price. This is the language and behaviour of a candidate country threatening not just two members of the European Union, Greece and Cyprus, but the EU itself; something that's of grave concern to member States.

In this new geopolitical landscape Turkey appears increasingly isolated. As Greece has forged strong partnerships with countries such as Israel, Egypt, and the UAE, Turkey has acted alone, posturing in the Eastern Mediterranean, interfering in Syria and Libya, and openly supporting Hamas. France, which has vital national interests in the Mediterranean has stood by us and has bolstered its military presence in the area. The US State Department has clearly condemned what it considers to be Turkish unilateral aggression.

Throughout all this I have kept an open mind about dialogue. When Berlin offered to broker talks, we sat down in good faith to try to find common ground. We even managed to get to a written understanding. Only for Turkey to walk away, disclosing as it went what were informal but private discussions.

There is still time for Turkey to avoid sanctions, to take a step back, and to chart a path out of this crisis. Turkey simply needs to refrain from its naval and scientific activity in non delimited waters, and reign in its aggressive rhetoric. They should stand down, return to the table, and pick up from where they left off when they quit exploratory talks in 2016. And if we cannot agree then we must seek resolution at the Hague.

The choice is stark. Turkey can engage, and find common ground, or it can continue to behave as the aggressor, posturing on the fringes of Europe, and pay a significant economic price for doing so. It can choose between Greece being a bridge or being a barrier to partnership and progress.

If Turkey were to choose the bridge, I believe that it would still be possible for President Erdogan to strike an ambitious far reaching agreement with the EU that benefits us all. Disputes are settled not through force, subterfuge, or manipulation, but peacefully and through mutual respect and understanding. It doesn't have to be like this. Resolving this is simple. We sit down. We discuss our differences. And we try and reach an agreement. If we can't then we let the International Court decide. What after all has Ankara to fear from the rule of law?

Kyriakos Mitsotakis is the Prime Minister of Greece

Covid-19 & Greek economy: Supporting public health, growth and social cohesion

FinMin Christos Staikouras: Successful handling of the pandemic, limiting its social and economic consequences

EXCLUSIVE BRIEFING WITH THE GREEK MINISTER OF FINANCE

CHRISTOS STAIKOURAS

Wednesday, 15 July 2020

4pm BST/ 11am EDT

Pre-registration required



On 16 July, at an online briefing, organised by The Hellenic Bankers Association (HBA-UK), jointly with the Hellenic American Professionals in Finance (HABA), Greece's Minister of Finance Christos Staikouras spoke about the measures that Greece has taken in order to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic and referred to the Greek government's plans for the following months. Mr Staikouras focused on Greece's successful handling of the epidemic during the first phase, on the lessons that can be drawn and the challenges that lie ahead. The briefing was coordinated by Isaac Karipidis, senior correspondent in London for Greek media.

As Mr Staikouras said, the coronavirus crisis was a severe shock for the society and the economy, not only in Greece but all around the world, causing a great deal of uncertainty. In the case of Greece, the crisis brought about an abrupt halt in the dynamic growth perspective. "From the very first moment that the pandemic started to spread the Greek government set as its top priority the protection of human life and public health and this is still our first priority", noted Mr Staikouras. "Greece has so far been a coronavirus success story". "Measures to

limit the contagion of the virus have been efficiently implemented as Greek people demonstrated a very high sense of responsibility."

Mr Staikouras admitted that Covid-19 is expected to lead to a significant recession and rise in unemployment. However, as he highlighted, the recession would be much deeper if the government had not taken a comprehensive, realistic and dynamic package of policy measures that has supported and continues to support public health, employment, liquidity in the real economy and social cohesion, spreading a wide safety net over households and enterprises. This included fiscal measures, referrals and liquidity measures.

To finance these support measures the Greek government manages domestic resources of general government entity with prudence, successfully borrows from the markets and is ready to use European financial instruments. As recognised by the European Commission, the Greek government has acted with responsibility, prudence, careful fiscal management, but also promptly and effectively in addressing the pandemic crisis and limiting as much as possible the social and economic consequences.



PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis:

The European Commission estimates that the recession in Greece this year will be about 9%.

Even under the pressure of the outbreak, Greece continued to implement structural reforms and to promote investment, in order to enhance productivity and structural competitiveness of the Greek economy. Mr Staikouras referred, among others, to the Hercules scheme for the reduction of NPLs, the ongoing digital transformation of the public sector, the promotion of the Hellinikon project and the progress made in the privatization process (i.e. Depa, Alimos marina etc.)

Going forward, the government's priority is to achieve high and sustainable growth, with a high level of social cohesion, also addressing demographic challenges. To achieve this objective, Greece's policy priorities include among others: the implementation of a prudent fiscal policy, the strengthening of the banking sector, the ongoing digital transformation of the public sector, the continuous implementation of the government's reform agenda, the implementation of structural reforms (i.e. tax reforms, reform of the justice

system) and the investment in infrastructure, focusing on the green economy.

The efficient way of tackling the health crisis offered Greece high credibility abroad, while citizens regained their trust in the state. All this constitutes an invaluable capital for the post-Covid 19 era. 2021 can be a year of strong rebound. In order to make this happen, the Greek government stands ready to utilize every domestic and European instrument, especially the European Recovery Fund.

Concluding his speech, Mr Staikouras stressed that "it's up to us all to turn this crisis into an opportunity of restart" and build a new, healthy, sustainable and inclusive growth model. "I am convinced that we have the plan, the ability, the experience, the skills and the determination to make it."

PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis: A National Self-Confidence Plan to protect and boost employment

Speaking on the grounds of the annual Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF) in early September Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced a series of economic measures to tackle the impact of the

pandemic, amounting to 6.8 billion euros. "The pandemic is not hitting public health only but national economy as well, and the government has responded with a package of measures implemented last spring and enriched constantly, depending on arising needs. 12 new initiatives aim to protect employment and productive activity as long as the pandemic crisis remains. And to support the income of the weaker. These are 12 steps of confidence, creating a road map for the coming months and 2021, so that the economy remains standing tall as a precondition for growth. Four of these initiatives support labor, three liquidity for enterprises and investments and another five incomes of the weak and of the middle class which has suffered for several years," said Mr Mitsotakis.

Among these initiatives is the lowering of social insurance contributions by three points in 2021, the abolishing of a solidarity levy for private sector employees, professionals and farmers, initially for one year, a subsidy scheme for 100,000 new jobs and the extension of the 'SynErgasia' labor subsidy program. Moreover, state-loans worth 1.5 billion euros will be given to enterprises and tax cuts will be offered for digital and green fixed-capital investments. Unemployment benefits will be extended for two months, the primary residence of vulnerable households will be excluded from auctions until the end of 2020, the ENFIA special property tax will be abolished for Greece's 26 smallest islands and the lower VAT rate for transport, coffee, beverage, cinemas and tourist services will be extended for another six months. A suspension of payment of tax and social insurance obligations to all workers and professions hit by the pandemic crisis will also be extended until April 2021.

In his speech, the Prime Minister Mr Kyriakos Mitsotakis also referred to a reform plan for the next 12 months, noting that the crisis cannot be an alibi to suspend big changes. Among these is the introduction of new rules for debt settlement to the state and banks, the reform of social insurance with the introduction of a capital-based system, the speeding-up of justice with the digitization of procedures and the evaluation of school units. Moreover, the national health system will be further strengthened, a new public procurement framework will be introduced, reducing bureaucracy and adding transparency, and investment licensing will be simplified, particularly for renewable energy sources.



ANNIVERSARY YEAR

The Marianna V. Vardinoyannis Foundation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Interior, under the Patronage of H.E. the President of the Hellenic Republic Katerina Sakellariopoulou, is creating the 'Thermopylae-Salamis 2020' Anniversary framework. On this occasion it is taking initiatives in four areas of action to honour the 25th centennial of the Battles of Thermopylae and Salamis.

The Honorary Committee for the Anniversary Year brings together prominent figures from Greece and abroad, conveying the message of celebration throughout the world.

At the same time, distinguished scientists and artists, as well as some of the country's major organizations, are supporting this effort by participating in a wide range of events and initiatives.

In the education sector, the Foundation is hosting competitions designed to promote children's creativity through painting, creative writing and theatrical expression. It is also holding international conferences and scientific workshops that will highlight the historic importance of the battles.

Artists and athletes, the Greek diaspora and the Hellenic Navy will also be participating in the Anniversary cycle through major events. Moreover, in collaboration with local communities in the respective areas, the Foundation will create humanitarian projects for supporting citizens in their day-to-day lives.



Message of the President of the Republic, Katerina Sakellariopoulou

The Greece of 2020 is a modern European democracy. It participates as an equal partner in the modern world, in all its forms and challenges. It faces all the adversity and risks of our era, striving firmly and persistently to overcome them in a rational and just manner. To the extent of its capabilities, it contributes to the progress of the wider region, advocating a creative, democratic and tolerant way of life.

But what constitutes an existential guide of the Greek State and a Foundation of our modern culture – as is clear from the way we responded to the coronavirus pandemic that is raging across the planet – is our commitment to the value of the Human Being. This absolute humanist priority is today shaping a path that has its beginnings deep in antiquity and on which the Battle of Thermopylae and especially the Battle of Salamis are milestones of enormous importance. It was then that the militarily outnumbered mustered their spirit and intelligence, their ingenuity and genius, to defend not only their territory, but also their ethos and world-view from the foreign invader. A universe of values and organizational practices for collective life that they had begun to shape and had to protect from the foreign invader at all costs.

At Thermopylae and Salamis, ancient Greece, at the dawn of its glory, came together, stood strong, fought for and saved its freedom, its independence and the humanist core of a civilization now recognized as universal. A core that already held what would later become the most precious historical legacy of Greek antiquity: democracy and the notion of the citizen, self-esteem and liberty, reason, the artistic mediation of tragedy in our very being, philosophy as a rigorous meeting of intellect, logic and the deepest human needs, and so much else that revolves around the value of Human Being.

As modern Greeks, we have a very heavy responsibility. The responsibility to preserve, protect and promote precisely this universal culture and its non-negotiable humanitarian identity. We are proud and honoured, as a society, as a State and as a scientific community to take responsibility for this heritage every day. The Greek State is celebrating the Thermopylae – Salamis 2020 anniversary year with due moderation and solemnity, without conceit or barren worship of our forebears, but with a genuine desire for a deeper and multifaceted knowledge of history.

I am certain that these anniversary events will contribute decisively to our self-knowledge, to promoting our homeland's historical wealth, to furthering scientific knowledge, and to protecting an invaluable and truly global heritage.

<https://www.thermopylaesalamis2020.gr/en/>

«Sons of the Greeks, go, liberate your country, liberate your children, your women, the seats of your fathers' gods and the tombs of your forebears: now is the struggle for all things»

Aeschylus, "PERSAE"



Professor Paul Cartledge is the A.G. Leventis Senior Research Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, and the emeritus A.G. Leventis Professor of Greek Culture (2008-2014) in the Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge. He is an Honorary Citizen of (modern) Sparta, and holds the Gold Cross of the Order of Honour awarded by the President of the Hellenic Republic. He is President of the UK Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies (SPHS). He is a member of the Honorary Committee 'Thermopylae-Salamis 2020'. He spoke @GreeceInUK about this initiative, and the relevance of the battles of Thermopylae and Salamis nowadays.

Professor Cartledge, you are a member of the Honorary Committee set up in the context of the 'Thermopylae-Salamis 2020', initiative. What made you accept the proposal to be part of it?

I hold the Gold Cross of the Order of Honour awarded by the President of the Hellenic Republic, I am an Honorary Citizen of modern Sparta, I am President of the UK Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies (SPHS), and I am professionally a historian of ancient Greece with a special interest in the work of the 'Father of History', Herodotus of Halicarnassus born c. 484), who is our main source for these two major Battles of 480 BC(E) – so, for me it was a 'no-brainer' to accept without hesitation or reservation the most generous invitation to join the 'Thermopylae-Salamis 2020' Honorary Committee, and a very pleasant surprise to discover who my – very distinguished – fellow-members are (not least of them a certain Mikis Theodorakis...).

How is this Committee operating and what is its role in designing and implementing the framework of this historic Anniversary?

The Committee was launched at the end of 2019 with a splendid event, presided over by the then President of Greece, H.E. Prokypis Pavlopoulos, at the S.S. Niarchos Cultural Foundation at Neo Faliro, Athens – in the 'good old days' when we could travel freely and meet freely in numbers... It has been an

enormous help to the Committee's endeavours that our chief Patron and benefactor, Mrs Marianna Vardinoyannis, is both an outstanding personality in her own right and so exceptionally well connected. Our next major celebratory event was to be held later this September in person in Athens, but now of course it has to be held 'remotely', via Zoom. It will be a tremendous success. My own, relatively minor contribution will be to a panel on the political and especially the democratic implications of the naval battle of Salamis. As President of SPHS, I gave a Zoom lecture along the same lines on September 21.

What is the relevance of the battles of Thermopylae and Salamis nowadays and what is the message you aim at conveying through this initiative?

Those two battles are just two out of a set of six fought between Greeks (who of course called themselves 'Hellenes') and forces despatched on the orders of two Persian emperors or 'Great Kings', Darius I and his son Xerxes. The other four battles are: Marathon in 490 BC (won by the Athenians and their allies from Boeotian Plataea against a much larger invasion force led by Artaphernes, a brother of Darius I, and a Mede called Datis); Artemision in 480 (fought at sea simultaneously with Thermopylae against the fleet sent by Xerxes); Plataea in 479 (the decisive land-battle of the 'Graeco-Persian Wars', won essentially by the Spartan and other Lacedaemonian hoplites); and Mycale (fought by land and sea just east of

Samos, the final united Greek victory of the 'Graeco-Persian Wars' won under the joint command of King Leotychidas of Sparta and Xanthippos father of Pericles). At stake were not only the continuing freedom of the Greeks of the islands and mainland who lived to the immediate west of the then Persian Empire but also the future of the great experiment in democracy that the Athenians had embarked on in 507 inspired by Cleisthenes, a great-uncle of Pericles. See further next Answer.

What is the core of values that ancient Greeks defended in Thermopylae and Salamis?

In one word, freedom (or liberty) – see the quotation from Aeschylus's 472 BC tragedy Persai at the head of this Q & A. It is important, however, to be clear that the leader of the Greek resistance – Sparta – was not a believer in democratic, citizen freedom. Never did it become a democracy of the Athenian, direct sort, a true 'People-Power'. Not only was Sparta not democratic but it also had a different conception of freedom/liberty than its major Greek collaborator, Athens. The Athenians held slaves – many slaves – who were bought and owned either by the Athenian state as such or, more often, by individual Athenian citizens or free resident aliens (metics). We today think that dreadful enough, but the Greeks didn't. And almost all the slaves of the Athenians were non-Greek 'barbarians'. So when the Athenians declared in 480 that they were fighting for 'freedom', they meant freedom FROM foreign, especially Persian control, and freedom TO practise the form of politics and society they freely chose. They didn't mean personal, legal freedom for all the inhabitants of the Greek world threatened by Persia.

The Spartans too meant exactly the same as the Athenians by 'freedom', both external and internal, but ... their 'slaves' (Helots) differed crucially from those of the Athenians in that they were not 'barbarians' but were themselves Greeks. The Spartans had no intention of giving all the Helots, on whose labour their own special way of life depended, their personal, legal freedom, ever (though later they did periodically free certain Helots for certain specific purposes). Indeed, they made use of Helots militarily both at Thermopylae, where they served as batmen/valets/armour-bearers, and at Plataea, where they actually fought as light-armed troops.

From the perspective of a historian, are there contradictory interpretations of these two battles? Are all scientists on the same page when it comes to assessing these historical facts? I was wondering

"At stake were not only the continuing freedom of the Greeks of the islands and mainland who lived to the immediate west of the then Persian Empire but also the future of the great experiment in democracy that the Athenians had embarked on in 507 inspired by Cleisthenes, a great-uncle of Pericles. "

what the current perception of the events is from the descendants of those who were defeated at the time?

Excellent question. There are two sorts of systematic issues here – i. whether it's ever possible to recover and discover exactly how any battle was fought, and why and how it turned out the way it did, and what its strategic implications were then and later; and ii. the significance, the implications, of a battle more broadly – culturally, and above all in terms of its later 'reception'. I focus explicitly on the second of those issues in my answer here.

People of Persian heritage today are of course very diverse, and relatively few of them both inside and outside (such as the Parsees of India) Iran are of the Zoroastrian faith. But those of them who are still often feel quite passionately about what they see as wounds inflicted many centuries ago on their ancestors by ancient Greeks. However, their concern is mainly directed not to the 'Graeco-Persian Wars' of the early 5th century BC but to the invasion and conquest and destruction of the Achaemenid Persian Empire in the late 330s and 320s BC by Alexander III of Macedon (later known as 'the Great').

It is in fact not quite clear just to what extent the Achaemenid Persian royal house was devotedly Zoroastrian, but, leaving that aside, most Iranians or people of Iranian descent today when they look back at Greek-Persian relations in the Classical period are more likely to have in mind the earlier, Thermopylae-Salamis encounters – for one very particular reason: the 2006 Hollywood movie '300'. Despite its undoubted artistic merits, this movie had very unfortunate consequences in the context of rising east-west political and cultural-religious tensions, for it depicted the Persian invaders fighting at Thermopylae quite unhistorically as if they were almost sub-human, indeed animalistic.

On a more personal note, what were the elements of the Classical era that attracted you to delve into this past?

“Most Iranians or people of Iranian descent today when they look back at Greek-Persian relations in the Classical period are more likely to have in mind the earlier, Thermopylae-Salamis encounters – for one very particular reason: the 2006 Hollywood movie ‘300’. Despite its undoubted artistic merits, this movie had very unfortunate consequences in the context of rising east-west political and cultural-religious tensions, for it depicted the Persian invaders fighting at Thermopylae quite unhistorically as if they were almost sub-human, indeed animalistic.”

As a schoolboy, I tended to be interested in boy-ish things: it was the derring-do of Achilles in a stripped-down ‘told to the children’ version of Homer’s Iliad that first set me – at the age of eight in 1955 – on the path to becoming a professional historian and scholar of the ancient Greek world. I had a second ‘epiphany’ (epiphaneia!) when in 1969 I first met with my future doctoral supervisor at Oxford, then plain ‘Mr’ John Boardman, who is now Sir John and – aged 93 – still going very strong, thank goodness. He persuaded me of the merits of undertaking Spartan archaeological-historical studies based on the results of the British School at Athens’s excavations in Sparta in the early years of the 20th century – and the rest is, well, ancient Spartan history (of which there has recently been a major renaissance).

Concurrently with my archaeological work (mostly done in the apothekes of the great Greek museums rather than in the field...) I studied historiography – how to do/write history (see Answer 8) – intensively and became a convert to ‘total history’ of the sort pioneered in France. So over the past 45 years since my very first publications I have endeavoured to ‘cover the waterfront’ – studying and writing on all aspects of the ancient Hellenic past, from in round figures about 1300 BC to about 200 AD, political, social, economic, religious, you name it. Which is why, when I was invited to become the first A.G. Leventis Professor of Greek history in the University of Cambridge in 2008, I chose as my title ‘Professor of Greek Culture’. In my inaugural Lecture (published by the Cambridge University Press in 2009) I had to apologise for using a word of ... Latin etymology.

As happened with many other events, I guess that the pandemic has somewhat thrown a damper on the celebrations of the Anniversary?

See Answer 2 above. I would add that the celebrations should, indeed must, continue into 2021. The battle of Thermopylae was, for the Greeks, a defeat. The battle of Salamis was a triumphant Greek naval victory, but ... the War was far from over. It was not won finally until 479 BC – see Answer 3 above. (There is also the chronological or chronographic point that, very very strictly speaking, 2021 and not 2020 is the 2,500th anniversary of 480 BC...)

What has the study of the past to offer to contemporary societies?

This is a HUGE question! I tend to begin from the fact that so many, absolutely key words in our extraordinarily rich English language have a Greek – an ancient Greek - derivation or ... etymology (from *etumos* and *logos*). Whole books have been and still are being written on this. Where to begin? I am a historian – from Greek *historia* (or in its Ionic dialectal form *historiE*). That meant originally ‘enquiry’ or ‘research’, only secondarily ‘history’ in one of its senses, the results of such enquiry/research. But history can also be ‘story’ – from the same root, and Herodotus was a brilliant story-teller.

But how best to conduct historical enquiry/research, and with what aim? Critically – and in order to explain. ‘Critically’ comes from ancient Greek *krisis*, meaning ‘judgement’ (including in a court of law). So the historian should be an expert evaluator of witness testimony, of evidence. And s/he should aim to explain the or a significant past, in Herodotus’s case the hugely significant ‘why the Greeks and the non-Greeks (‘barbarians’) came to fight against each other’. Adopting a properly historical attitude is the best antidote I can think of to the poison of social-mediated fake news.

“So over the past 45 years since my very first publications I have endeavoured to ‘cover the waterfront’ – studying and writing on all aspects of the ancient Hellenic past, from in round figures about 1300 BC to about 200 AD, political, social, economic, religious, you name it. ”

“But how best to conduct historical enquiry/research, and with what aim? Critically – and in order to explain. ‘Critically’ comes from ancient Greek *krisis*, meaning ‘judgement’ (including in a court of law). So the historian should be an expert evaluator of witness testimony, of evidence. And s/he should aim to explain the or a significant past, in Herodotus’s case the hugely significant ‘why the Greeks and the non-Greeks (‘barbarians’) came to fight against each other’. Adopting a properly historical attitude is the best antidote I can think of to the poison of social-mediated fake news. “

What is the field of interest you are currently working on? Do you have any specific projects underway?

My most recent book project was a history of ancient Greek Thebes, a major ancient Greek city (included as such in my little book, *Ancient Greece: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press 2011), but one that tends to get overlooked by the ‘general reader’ because of the enormous concentration on Sparta, Athens and the Macedon of Kings Philip II and Alexander III. In my book (*Thebes: the Forgotten city of Ancient Greece*, Picador, UK, & Abrams, USA, 2020) I have tried to do something like justice to the two ancient cities of Thebes – the city of Myth (Kadmos, Oedipus – including their representation in classic Athenian dramas) and the city of History (the city of e.g. the great federalist and liberator, Epameinondas). I have been both surprised and very pleased by the amount of – positive – attention the book has received in reviews in a variety of magazines and newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic.

My next, current project is to co-edit and contribute an ‘essay’ (on Sparta) to *The Oxford history of the Archaic Greek World*. A multi-author, multi-volume work – perhaps a million and a quarter words in all – for the Oxford University Press New York, covering much of the ancient Hellenic world between c.800 and 500/450 BC. At first to be published in hard covers, then online and therefore revisable. The inspiration for – and my co-Director of – this massive project

is Professor Paul Christesen of Dartmouth College USA. As well as being a brilliant human being, he is himself a leading scholar of ancient Sparta, and we will therefore be doing Archaic Sparta together – for me, a trip down memory lane, back to my graduate days at Oxford and in Sparta in the 60s and 70s... but also the duty to catch up on all the immense recent discoveries (not least by the Greek archaeologists in the local Ephoreia) and international research in ‘Spartan Studies’.

How closely do you follow current developments on various levels in Greece and what is your take on them?

I am a scholar and a historian not a politician but I am a passionate follower of contemporary politics, especially cultural politics, both national and international/global, and therefore of contemporary Greek affairs of cultural resonance. I am Vice-Chair of the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles (all of them, not only those currently detained in the British Museum) and an elected Vice-President of the International Association for the reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures. As President of the SPHS (see Answer 1) I recently published the following blog, as a kind of ‘manifesto’ for how I see my role in the Society: ‘After the Statues Fall; decolonising Hellenic Studies’, <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/opinion-articles/articles/after-the-statues-fall-decolonising-hellenic-studies>

In fact, the Parthenon Marbles in the British Museum (since 1817) are a, perhaps the classic illustration of the colonialist-imperialist complex that so disfigures that august collection today. The large fortune acquired by the Museum’s founding collector and benefactor, Dr Hans Sloane, was itself deeply mired in the slave trade, and Lord Elgin, ambassador to the Sublime Porte, was able to loot the Parthenon marbles only thanks to Britain’s being an enemy of the Ottoman Sultan’s enemy, Napoleonic France, at a time when Greece was a possession of the Ottoman Empire. Next March 25, 2021, will mark the bicentenary of the Greeks’ declaration of independence from the Ottoman yoke after a subjection of nearly 37 decades. Is it too much to hope that it will also mark a significant moment in the decolonisation of the British Museum?

Eleni Cubitt, an exceptional campaigner, activist, filmmaker, mum, grandmother and soulful friend

Yannis Andritsopoulos, London Correspondent for Ta Nea, Greece's daily newspaper commemorates the extraordinary life of Mrs Eleni Cubitt.



Photos courtesy of Nana Varvelopolou, Eleni Cubitt at the British Museum July 2009

Eleni Cubitt was the heart and soul of the international movement for the reunification of the Parthenon Sculptures; the unsung hero of the campaign launched by Melina Mercouri 38 years ago; and the person who persuaded dozens of British politicians - including two Labour leaders - academics, artists and journalists of the need to right a 'very old wrong', as she called it, in the face of the intransigence of the British Museum and successive British governments.

Eleni Cubitt, a London campaigner, activist, filmmaker and protagonist against the Greek military junta, passed away last Wednesday at the age of 95.

She was born in Thessaloniki in 1925. Her family later moved to Athens where Eleni attended the American College for Girls.

At the age of 23, she married English diplomat Douglas Collard, then British consul in Patras, with whom he had five children. In 1964, having already lived in seven countries with her husband, she got divorced and settled in London, where she founded a film production company.

According to her son Paul, it was the Scottish Laird Sir Amer Maxwell who suggested to Eleni the idea of being a film producer, an activity in which he was

actively involved at that time.

She later met French New Wave pioneer Jean-Luc Godard in Paris and persuaded him to make a film in Britain. 'Sympathy for the Devil', starring the Rolling Stones and produced by Cubitt, was released in 1968.

She also produced several documentaries on Ancient Greece. Her most recent film was 'The War That Never Ends' in 1991 for which she was the executive producer.

In 1968 Eleni married the distinguished British architect James Cubitt. Between 1975 and 1982, she was in charge of cultural affairs at the Greek Embassy's press office in London.

In 1982, during a meeting with Jules Dassin and Melina Mercouri, whom she had known since the 1960s, Eleni and James decided to set up a lobby group for the return of the Marbles.

The British Committee for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles was founded in 1983, later renamed British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles. Eleni became the Committee's secretary, a post she held for 29 years.

Her husband died shortly afterwards but Eleni continued their work and dedicated her life to the Marbles' reunification, working tirelessly to raise awareness of the cause.

She used her connections with the arts and business worlds, set up campaigns to inform the British public, organised protests, and mobilised journalists and MPs, among them Labour Party leaders Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock. Unfortunately for the cause, neither became prime minister.

"Family was very important to Eleni and, despite the many calls on her time professionally, it was always her first priority. The sound of the phone ringing, as it did constantly, was always followed by her call:



Ambassadors of Hellenism Ambassadors of Hellenism: Eleni Cubitt, Christopher Price and Professor Anthony Snodgrass

'Tell them I am out, unless it is one of the children.' She was also always happy to share her professional life with any of her children and grandchildren who were interested", her children said in a statement.

"As children, we were expected to participate actively and to varying degrees, in the many causes she took on, not least the return of the Parthenon marbles. Because of her huge energy, she would prioritise finding the time for her children as they negotiated the many crises of growing up. Eleni loved to tell us stories, whether about the past, Greek myths or her daily experiences. In her later years, when her professional life was less demanding, she embraced her role as grandmother and great grandmother with the same enthusiasm, interest and energy and was much adored by all her 11 grandchildren and 2 great-granddaughters," her children added.

Eleni was a member of the Honorary Committee of the Melina Mercouri Foundation and received awards from the Prefecture of Athens in 2009 (Ambassador of Hellenism) and the American College of Greece in 2011 (Maria West Lifetime Achievement Award).

From 2012, she took a less active role and four years ago she moved from her Islington home to a care home.

"Eleni Cubitt - mischievous and classy and ever so Greek despite her very British associations. I remember she simply charmed me into joining the great Melina's crusade, which of course I instantly

wanted to do. It seemed such an attractive and important thing to try to put before ignorant eyes," Dame Janet Suzman, Chair of the British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles (BCRPM), told Ta Nea.

"I suppose Eleni felt drawn to another, half this and half that as she was, and we became friends. Besides being an actress and bit politically voluble and full of all the usual ingredients to help push this thing along, I happily fell in on the Greek side of things - long before my son took up with one so that I now have two half-Greek grandchildren. Isn't life wonderful? Vanessa Redgrave, much more charismatic and activist and blonder was also hauled in to push. At the centre of it all, the hurricane of Melina, both beautiful and eloquent, drew us all along in her furious wake.

"But hey, much good did it do - here we are years and years after Melina's tour of office as Minister of Culture, and even with a fabulous new Acropolis Museum duly built (thanks to Eleni and numerous others) we all sit here waiting...and waiting. Yet it won't go away; around the whole world, many fervent Hellenophiles are busy making waves, exercising great patience with an intransigent British Museum pretending to be unaware of how old hat and unpleasant is its stance.

"But, dear electric, charming, voluble Eleni, your dream of the Marbles returning home to the land of your birth will one day be a reality. So for now we all salute you and your amazing life. You will be missed by all of us and most of all by those who loved you, of which I am one," Dame Janet added.

[Her friendship with Melina](#)

Eleni Cubitt constantly supported Melina Mercouri, Greece's then Culture minister, in her fight over the marbles. They became friends and worked closely together for several years.

"Melina's vision, enthusiasm and glow pushed me to get involved in the cause," she told Ta Nea in 2000.

In May 22, 1983, Mercouri delivered the Herbert Read Memorial Lecture at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. She later came face to face with the then director of the British Museum David Wilson.

Mercouri's and Wilson's showdown was widely seen as a PR disaster for the British Museum. It is a little-known fact that Mercouri had travelled to London thanks to Eleni who had managed to persuade the ICA to invite her.



Photo from the archives of Victoria Solomonidis. From left to right: Melina Mercouri, Eleni Cubitt, Graham Binns in the British Museum's Duveen Gallery June 1986

"Cultural heritage should refer to those objects which are of central significance and vital importance to the sense of identity and dignity of a human group and whose removal by force or deception or even ignorance could cause great sorrow, pain and outrage to people who believe such objects belong to them as an integral and essential part of their history and their heritage," Eleni said.

According to Nikandros Bouras' book *Greeks of London* (London, 2013), Cubitt played a key role in the birth of the reunification campaign.

After Mercouri's death, Eleni collaborated with successive Greek Culture Ministers on this issue.

"During my 25 years as Cultural Counsellor at the Embassy of Greece in London, I have had the pleasure and luck to work closely with Eleni. Tireless, inspired and always on the front line, she was a great friend and generous adviser. She was my great teacher. The thought that she is now joining Melina and Jules is a source of comfort," concludes Victoria Solomonidis, a member of the Board of the Melina Mercouri Foundation.

"Cultural heritage should refer to those objects which are of central significance and vital importance to the sense of identity and dignity of a human group and whose removal by force or deception or even ignorance could cause great sorrow, pain and outrage to people who believe such objects belong to them as an integral and essential part of their history and their heritage"

This article is a copy from the British Committee for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles site.

*The original is written by **Yannis Andritsopoulos**, London Correspondent for Ta Nea*

British Press visits Athens and the Greek Islands

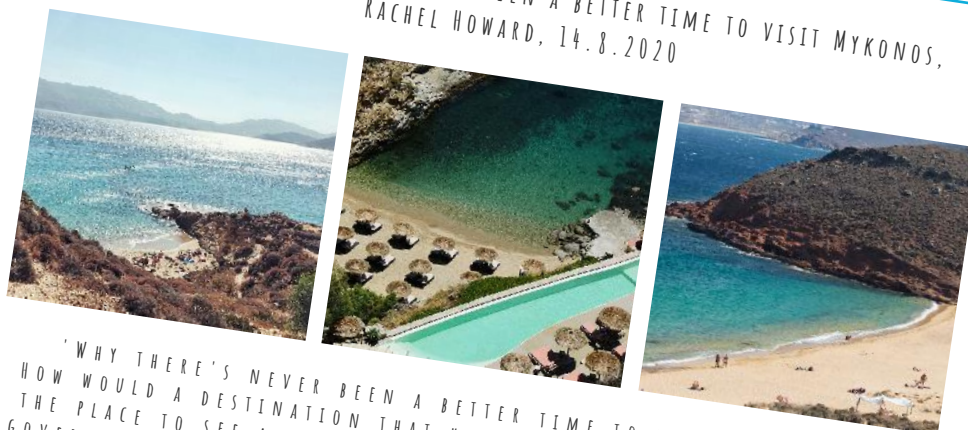
"I'm obsessed with Greece – its food, its landscapes, its beaches and its people – and I've been to a dozen Greek islands, from Corfu to Kefalonia, Mykonos to Skopelos. So why on earth haven't I set foot in Athens, the country's iconic capital?", Telegraph, Oliver Smith, 4.8.2020

"But Athens is no historical theme park, and there are plenty of other things to do", Telegraph, Rachel Howard, Jane Foster, 25.6.2020

'From sandy beaches to volcanic vistas, fortresses to fine dining, Greece has something for everyone', John Malathronas, i
'In the Covid-free Greek islands I found uncrowded beaches, low prices – and freedom', Mark Stratton, Telegraph



TELEGRAPH: WHY THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO VISIT MYKONOS,
RACHEL HOWARD, 14.8.2020



'WHY THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO VISIT MYKONOS'!
HOW WOULD A DESTINATION THAT HAS BUILT A GLOBAL REPUTATION AS
THE PLACE TO SEE AND BE SEEN COPE WITHOUT THE CROWDS? SINCE A
GOVERNMENT CURFEW INTRODUCED LAST WEEK TO REDUCE THE RISK OF
CORONAVIRUS, ALL BARS, CLUBS AND RESTAURANTS MUST CLOSE
BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND 7AM, MAKING THIS THE SEASON TO DISCOVER
THE OTHER SIDE OF GREECE'S "PARTY ISLAND".



Telegraph: Olives, monasteries and a stunning coastline. A cruise guide to the
green island of Corfu, John Wilmott, 12.8.2020

'CORFU IS ONE OF THE GREENEST, MOST SCENIC AND MOST INTERESTING OF ALL THE GREEK ISLANDS, WITH A
WONDERFUL LITTLE CAPITAL IN CORFU TOWN, ALSO KNOWN (LIKE THE ISLAND ITSELF) AS KERKYRA. THERE ARE GREAT
BEACHES, VARIED ACTIVITIES AND A CLUTCH OF PALACES AND MONASTERIES TO VISIT. FIRST-TIMERS SHOULD TRY
TO GET AN OVERVIEW OF THE PICTURESQUE LANDSCAPE, STREWED WITH OLIVE AND PINE TREES, AND THE LOVELY
COASTLINE AS WELL AS EXPLORING CORFU TOWN. THERE'S PLENTY TO SATISFY SPECIALIST INTERESTS, FROM PALACE
TOURS AND GASTRONOMIC WALKS TO BOAT TRIPS AND MOUNTAIN BIKING.'



GREEK TRAVEL PAGES, ATHENS ENTERS TOP 10 MOST BOOKED EUROPEAN CITIES LIST AT 4TH SPOT, 29.6.2020

ATHENS HAS MOVED INTO THE TOP 10 MOST BOOKED EUROPEAN CITIES FOR 2020, ACCORDING TO A STUDY RELEASED JOINTLY BY TRAVEL ANALYTICS FIRM FORWARD KEYS AND THE WORLD TRAVEL + TOURISM COUNCIL (WTTC). ATHENS NOT ONLY ENTERED THE TOP 10 THIS YEAR BUT ALSO MOVED TO THE 4TH SPOT DESPITE THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19.

Telegraph, I've visited a dozen Greek islands, so why have I never been to Athens?, Oliver Smith, 9.8.2020

"I'M OBSESSED WITH GREECE - ITS FOOD, ITS LANDSCAPES, ITS BEACHES AND ITS PEOPLE - AND I'VE BEEN TO A DOZEN GREEK ISLANDS, FROM CORFU TO KEFALONIA, MYKONOS TO SKOPELOS. SO WHY ON EARTH HAVEN'T I SET FOOT IN ATHENS, THE COUNTRY'S ICONIC CAPITAL? (...) OBVIOUSLY, YOU CAN'T VISIT ATHENS WITHOUT VISITING THE ACROPOLIS. THE SHEER MAJESTY OF THE SETTING, ARTISTRY OF THE ARCHITECTURE, AND PALPABLE SENSE OF HUMANITY'S QUEST FOR ETERNITY WILL GIVE YOU GOOSEBUMPS. JUST MAKE SURE YOU DON'T GO AT MIDDAY - ALL THAT DAZZLING WHITE MARBLE REFLECTS THE SUN".



TELEGRAPH, HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF A CITY BREAK IN ATHENS THIS YEAR

BY EARLY SEPTEMBER, THE VAST MAJORITY WILL HAVE RETURNED, REINVIGORATING THE CITY WITH THE INTOXICATING BUZZ THAT HAS TRANSFORMED IT INTO ONE OF EUROPE'S MOST VISITOR-FRIENDLY DESTINATIONS, WHERE ANCIENT MONUMENTS COMFORTABLY CO-EXIST WITH A YOUTHFUL, LIVE-IN-THE-NOW ATTITUDE.


WHAT MAKES ATHENS PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE IN THE CORONAVIRUS ERA IS THAT LIFE IS LIVED OUTDOORS PRETTY MUCH YEAR-ROUND - FROM ITS HISTORICAL SITES AND SQUARES TO ITS OPEN-AIR RESTAURANTS AND CAFES, ADD TO THAT THE FACT THAT THE POCKET-SIZED CITY CENTRE IS EASILY WALKABLE, SO PUBLIC TRANSPORT CAN MOSTLY BE AVOIDED.

HELEN IATROU, 22.8.2020

EAT LIKE A LOCAL IN ATHENS: FROM BACKSTREET SOUVLAKI JOINTS TO NO-MENU SEAFOOD SPOTS

FROM BUDGET-FRIENDLY TAVERNAS TO DIRT-CHEAP SOUVLAKI JOINTS WHERE SOME OF THE TASTIEST MEAT YOU'LL EVER EAT IS WRAPPED IN GREASEPROOF PAPER, ATHENS IS A CITY WHERE YOU CAN EAT WELL WITHOUT SPENDING A FORTUNE. LOCALS EAT LATE AND NEVER ALONE; THEY LINGER FOR HOURS OVER TINY TABLES HEAPED WITH MEZZE. EATING OUT IS AS MUCH ABOUT SHARING DISHES, CLINKING GLASSES, AND PEOPLE-WATCHING AS IT IS ABOUT SEASONAL INGREDIENTS SERVED WITH MINIMAL FUSS. AS ATHENS ABSORBS MORE MULTI-CULTURAL COMMUNITIES, THE FOOD SCENE IS BECOMING MORE EXCITING - YOU'LL FIND THAI NOODLES, SYRIAN FLATBREADS AND BAO BUNS, AS WELL AS THE ULTIMATE GREEK SALAD.

TELEGRAPH RACHEL HOWARD 25.6.2020





TOP10 THINGS TO DO IN ATHENS... AND THE BEST DAY TRIPS FROM THE CITY

Telegraph

WITH SO MUCH HISTORY CRAMMED INTO ONE CROWDED, CHAOTIC CITY, IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHERE TO START SIGHTSEEING IN ATHENS. IF YOU'RE INTO ANTIQUITIES, YOU COULD SPEND A WEEK WANDERING AMONG THE RUINS CLUSTERED AROUND THE ACROPOLIS. BUT ATHENS IS NO HISTORICAL THEME PARK, AND THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER THINGS TO DO. CONTEMPORARY CULTURE IS EVERYWHERE, FROM THE POLITICALLY CHARGED STREET ART THAT'S BECOME THE MODERN CITY'S TRADEMARK TO SPECIALIST MUSEUMS, STREET MARKETS, AND OPEN-AIR FESTIVALS THAT REFLECT THE CITY'S INCREASINGLY MULTICULTURAL POPULATION. ATHENS WEARS ITS LONG HISTORY LIGHTLY – YOU'LL EVEN FIND LOCALS SUNBATHING BESIDE AN ANCIENT TEMPLE ON ONE OF THE CITY'S MANY GOLDEN BEACHES.

RACHEL HOWARD JANE FOSTER, 25.6.2020





TELEGRAPH, 'NO KISSES BUT LET'S GET TOGETHER FOR A GLASS OF WINE' - A POSTCARD FROM ATHENS AS HOTELIERS AND SHOPKEEPERS AWAIT VISITORS. HELEN IATROU, 17.7.2020

" NEARBY, ON DIONYSIOU AREOPAGITOU STREET, PART OF THE GRAND PROMENADE WHICH WRAPS AROUND THE ACROPOLIS, DOZENS OF ATHENIANS SAVOURED AN EARLY EVENING STROLL AS THE SUN DIPPED BEHIND PNYX HILL, WHERE PERICLES ONCE SPOKE TO RAPTUROUS AUDIENCES ABOUT DEMOCRACY. "



'IT'S QUIET, BUCOLIC, RURAL. JUST A HANDFUL OF ROADS SPIN OFF FROM TINOS TOWN, LEADING TO TIME-WARPED VILLAGES BURIED AMID ITS RUGGED INTERIOR. AND IT'S SO SAFE, SAYS ONE BORN-AND-BRED RESIDENT, JENNY, THAT PEOPLE LEAVE THE KEYS IN THEIR SCOOTERS WHILE THEY DO THEIR SHOPPING AND THEIR BACK DOORS UNLOCKED AT NIGHT. THIS BLUE-AND-WHITE ISLAND IS ALSO INCREASINGLY MARKING ITSELF OUT AS A HAVEN FOR ART AND DESIGN. AFTER ALL, ARTISTS TAKE INSPIRATION FROM THEIR SURROUNDINGS... AND, WELL, THERE ARE FEW PLACES BETTER THAN THIS LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD'.

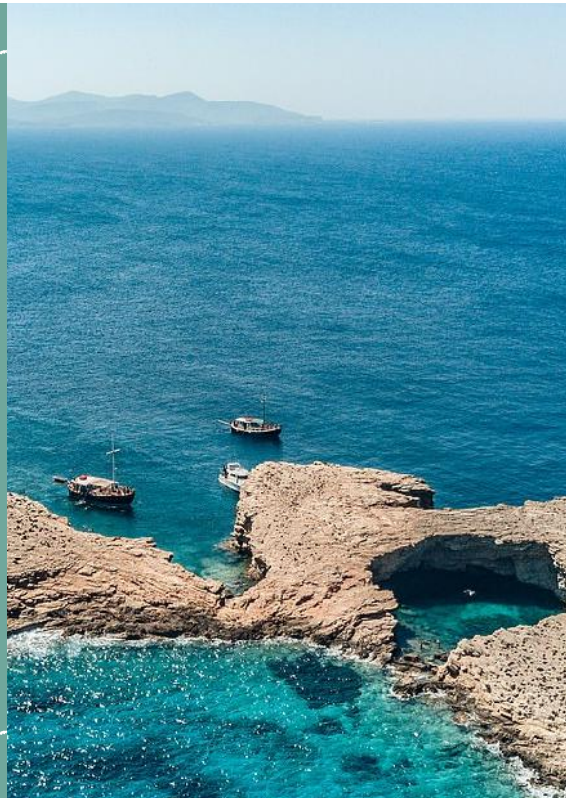


INDEPENDENT: WHY YOU SHOULD VISIT TINOS THIS SUMMER, CATHY ADAMS, 12.8.2020

*Daily Mail: Greece without the crowds:
Six lesser-known Greek islands to visit to
discover secluded beaches and secret
coves. Carol Driver. 16.3.2020*

'CASCADING WATERFALLS, BEAUTIFUL
WHITEWASHED VILLAGES WITH COBBLESTONE
STREETS, AND STRETCHES OF GOLDEN SAND
LEADING TO THE SPARKLING AEGEAN SEA - A
HOLIDAY TO GREECE IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER.
IF YOU WANT TO DISCOVER THE COUNTRY'S
QUIETER SIDE, LOOK NO FURTHER THAN THESE SIX
OF THE COUNTRY'S IDYLIC ISLANDS, ALL UNIQUE
IN CHARACTER AND CHARM, WITH THE PROMISE
OF LEAVING THE CROWDS BEHIND. DAILY MAIL
SUGGESTS:

- ✓ STUNNING SAMOS
- ✓ CHARMING KARPATOS
- ✓ PERFECT PATMOS
- ✓ LOVELY LEROS
- ✓ CAREFREE KALYMNOS
- ✓ LUSH LIPSI



GUARDIAN, HYDRA, THE GREEK ISLAND FOR DREAMERS

I FIRST WENT TO HYDRA SIX YEARS AGO, WHEN IT WAS
SIMPLY A BEAUTIFUL GREEK ISLAND AND NOT A PLACE I
WENT TO COMMUNE WITH ITS GHOSTS. I DON'T THINK I
WAS EVEN AWARE THAT IT WAS THE ISLAND LEONARD
COHEN HAD LIVED ON, AND KNEW NOTHING OF
BOHEMIAN CLIFF, GEORGE JOHNSTON AND THE
HALF-TERM AND WE WANTED A LAZY WEEK WITH
FRIENDS AND CHILDREN - AND GUARANTEED SUNSHINE.
JOURNALIST ROSIE BOYCOTT RECOMMENDED HYDRA
BECAUSE SHE SAID: THE ISLAND IS SURROUNDED BY THE
CLEAREST WATER YOU WILL EVER SWIM IN. THERE ARE
NO SANDY BEACHES; INSTEAD IT'S A PLACE OF PINE-
SCENTED COVES, WARM CREVICED ROCKS AND, YES,
CRYSTAL WATER WHERE JEWEL-COLOURED PEBBLES
SHINE UP AT YOU EVEN WHEN YOU ARE WELL OUT OF
YOUR DEPTH. IT HAS NO AIRPORT AND NO HIGH-RISE
BUILDINGS OR BIG HOTELS;

POLY SAMSON. 23.5.2020



A tour of Greece that will satisfy the interests of the most discerning traveller (Patmos, Dodecanese: The mystic's outpost, Mani, Peloponnese: The road-tripper's route, Kalymnos, Dodecanese: The climber's challenge, The Argolid, Peloponnese: The culturati's corner, Tinos, Cyclades: The foodie's hotspot, Naoussa, Central Macedonia: The wine lover's nirvana, Pelion, Thessaly: The sportsman's playground, Milos, Cyclades: The photographer's snapfest, Alonissos, Northern Sporades: The nature-lover's niche, Zagori, Epirus: The hiker's heaven)

FROM SANDY BEACHES TO VOLCANIC VISTAS, FORTRESSES TO FINE DINING, GREECE HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE, JOHN MALATHRONAS, 30.7.2020



The sun on one of the "non-standard" islands. The towering landscapes are famed by long, empty beaches. Yet you might just find your place in Naxos - where towering landscapes are famed by long, empty beaches. Yet you might just find your place in state and to build Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem (m) and choose between the loneliness of Antiparos or instead, make your way to Paros (whose fine white marble was used in antiquity for the Venus de Milo Agassan has several candidates for escape. Forget the busy beaches and sky-high prices of Mykonos; the tougher the journey, the thinner the crowds; and the Cyclades, sitting pretty in the centre of the

INDEPENDENT: HOW TO CHOOSE THE IDEAL GREEK ISLAND FOR A HOLIDAY, SIMON CALDEY, 12.7.2020



“There’s more to Corfu than its comely beaches. Dig deeper and you will uncover many centuries of history in and around the cobblestoned old town capital, dating from antiquity to the present day. One of Greece’s most lush islands, this Ionian jewel is made for hiking enthusiasts and there are marked trails everywhere you look. On the western and northern coasts strikingly sculpted cliffs, some bare and others verdant, plunge down to cerulean seas. Visit a functioning hilltop monastery that enjoys eye-wateringly beautiful sea views. In an isolated inland village see age-old olive groves and learn how to identify high quality extra virgin olive oil”.

-TELEGRAPH:10 DELIGHTFUL THINGS TO DO IN CORFU, FROM STUNNING HIKES TO SUNSET SAILING TRIPS, HELEN IATROU, 24.6.2020



“While Mykonos’s main attractions are, largely, its profusion of pretty beaches and the twisting, maze-like allure of strolling through the capital, Chora, look a bit deeper and there are some interesting cultural experiences to be had. The island is close to one of the most famous archaeological and mythological sites, Delos, where you can still see the remnants of some traditional pastimes and industries. Pleasures are to be had in discovering quiet squares and browsing around avant-garde galleries, following pathways and streets that were once trodden by the pirates who used to patrol the island’s waterways.

TELEGRAPH: WHAT TO DO IN MYKONOS, FROM SUNNY SAILING TRIPS TO OPEN-AIR FILM SCREENINGS, LAURA MILLAR, 25.6.2020



**-TELEGRAPH: 10 FANTASTIC THINGS TO DO IN RHODES, FROM VINEYARD VISITS TO COASTAL HIKING
HELEN IATROU, 25.6.2020**

"WITH MORE THAN 300 DAYS OF SUNSHINE A YEAR RHODES, FITTINGLY, GIVES PRAISE TO GREEK SUN GOD HELIOS. BEYOND THE MYRIAD BEACHES, THERE LIES HISTORICAL DRAWCARDS SUCH AS THE ANCIENT ACROPOLIS OF LINDOS AND EUROPE'S BEST PRESERVED AND LIVELIEST MEDIEVAL CITY. ON THE NORTH-EAST COAST, A TREK TO A HILLTOP MONASTERY REWARDS YOU WITH A PHENOMENAL BEACHSCAPE. INLAND OFFERINGS ARE PLENTIFUL: FROM A REMOTE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE WHOSE WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE REMAINS FAITHFUL TO AGE-OLD RECIPES, TO A YOUNG VINTNER QUIETLY SPREADING THE WORD ON WINE PRODUCED WITH THE ISLAND'S LITTLE-KNOWN GRAPE VARIETIES. MEANWHILE, THE UNTOUCHED WIND-LASHED WEST COAST IS A HIKER'S DREAM".



There are few sandy beaches to speak of. But instead, you flop into the sea off dreamy limestone platforms with gurgling spouts, or from sleepy, olive-fringed pebble and shingle beaches - many of them reached only by foot or rental boat.

SUN: AVOID THE CROWDS AND HEAD TO PAXOS FOR TRANQUIL TURQUOISE WATERS AND DESERTED BEACHES, INGO HIPPISEY, 11.7.2020



WILD, ISOLATED AND FIERCELY SELF-WILLED, THIS IS THE ISLAND FOR ESCAPING THE GROOMED GREECE OF THE BROCHURES, SAYS NICK REDMAN. 'I'LL ALWAYS TREASURE A WEEK WHEN I ONCE VENTURED BEYOND HERAKLION, HAVING TICKED OFF THE PALACE OF KNOSSOS, THE MINOTAUR'S ODDLY EVOCATIVE OF AN GAUDILY PAINTED COLUMNS. I WENT EAST TO EXPLORE OUT-OF-TOWN HOMEBASE. I WENT EAST TO EXPLORE LASITHI, THE EASTERNMOST REGION'.

THE TIMES: 'GRECIAN YEAR: WHY I'LL ALWAYS RETURN TO CRETE', NICK REDMAN, 16.8.2020



Reopened, a Greek Isle Beckons Amid the Pandemic

'As Hydra faces a challenging tourist season, the island's storied past and glittering present—rife with legendary writers and artists, from Lord Byron and Leonard Cohen to Jeff Koons and Kara Walker—continue to lure tycoons and fellow travelers'.

WSJ: REOPENED, A GREEK ISLE BECKONS AMID THE PANDEMIC, MADELEINE SPEED, 8.7.2020

Aeschylus' The Persians live-streamed from Epidaurus

Live from Epidaurus: For the first time ever a live ancient Greek drama performance streamed globally from the ancient theatre of Epidaurus.



On 25 July, for the first time ever, an ancient Greek drama performance was streamed live from the ancient theatre of Epidaurus, often called "the world's most beautiful theatre." The National Theatre of Greece, with the support of the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports, presented, free of charge, to a global audience, a production of Aeschylus' drama *The Persians*, commemorating the 25th centennial of the Battle of Salamis. It was the first time that a major ancient Greek drama production was being livestreamed, and it was also the first time that any event was being livestreamed from Epidaurus.

Dimitris Lignadis, Director of *The Persians* and Artistic Director of the National Theatre of Greece, noted ahead of the performance: "Amidst an enforced lockdown, art and the theatre once more emerged as vital human needs, as a place of refuge. The National Theatre of Greece, with the support of the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports, invites the entire planet to the most beautiful theatre in the world, at Ancient Epidaurus, to share and participate – even if only online – in our production

of *The Persians*; in a ritual that takes us back to the past, reminding us of the essence and the core of existence, which is at the same time a bridge between people and cultures. Culture belongs to all humanity and humanity has the right to unity, even when conditions do not allow it."

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis spoke of "a pivotal moment" that came at a critical juncture to underscore the universality of the principles that led to the construction of the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus, a UNESCO World Heritage site, 2300 years ago. "The *Persians*, Aeschylus' most important antiwar play, dramatizes the naval battle of Salamis, one of the most decisive battles in the history of humanity, constantly recalling the timeless values of democracy and freedom, as well as the meaning of Ancient Greek metron and moderation."

Lina Mendoni, Minister of Culture and Sports noted that the theatre of Epidaurus is connected to the birth of theatre as well as healing, as it was part of a holy site dedicated to Asclepius, god of medicine and father of goddess Hygeia who personifies health.

Music and dramatic contests hosted at this theatre were part of the patients' therapy, as they prayed to the god for their healing. "It is therefore quite fitting that in 2020, when the entire planet is being tried by COVID-19, that Greece symbolically and literally transmits globally an ancient drama performance from the holiest of places, to heal the wounds that were inflicted by this pandemic."

A triumph of empathy for a time of Covid-19

The performance was highly acclaimed by British media.

The [Guardian](#) wrote: "Watching the last rays of a low sun on the seats at Epidaurus, hearing the bustle of excited theatre-goers as they arrive, it's hard not to be moved. People have been attending plays here for more than 2,300 years. As theatres struggle to survive, Epidaurus has a better chance than most – partly because it is outdoors and partly because its vast size makes social distancing relatively easy. Happily, it is also sacred to Asclepius, the ancient Greek god of healing." It characterised the play "a triumph of empathy". "Aeschylus had fought at Salamis, as had many of the men in the original audience. Yet he chose to tell the story from the perspective of the Persians, particularly the Persian queen waiting for her son, Xerxes, to come home." "The play would have reminded its original Athenian

audience that even a mighty power could be brought low by excessive confidence. No wonder it seems relevant for 2020. Lignadis promised his audience that they could find theatre's beating heart in Epidaurus tonight. He was absolutely right."

The [Financial Times](#) reported: "It was an inspiring fusion of ancient and modern. Here was the oldest surviving tragedy, performed in a space first visited by audiences 2,300 years ago and now beamed around the world by the latest technology. Here was a drama empathising with a vanquished enemy, delivered in a theatre dedicated to healing and shared with a worldwide audience battered by a global pandemic."

The play

The *Persians* (472 BCE) is the oldest ancient Greek drama that has survived in full to present day. It is also a historical record of the most important battle of the second Persian invasion of Greece (and one of the most crucial conflicts in human history), the Battle of Salamis, in which the play's author, Aeschylus, took part.

The plot

In Susa, the Persian capital, the old men who loyally guard the glorious palaces of Xerxes are awaiting





news of their army's campaign against the Greeks and are apprehensive about the outcome of the expedition. The impressive size of the Persian army, the fame of its generals, and the God-given power of their king do nothing to alleviate the fear of the elders, who know all too well how the web of Ate, the goddess of folly, can entrap men and lead them to their ruin. Their trepidation reaches its peak when Queen Atossa, the mother of the campaign's commander, Xerxes, and widow of the deceased King Darius, recounts an ominous dream in which Xerxes attempts to yoke a Greek woman and an Asian woman to his chariot. The Greek woman breaks free, throwing the king to the ground.

The arrival of an out-of-breath messenger confirms their worst premonitions: the Persian army has been annihilated; the Greeks have won. A detailed account of the rout concludes with a long description of the Battle of Salamis, the flight of Xerxes, and the ill fortune of the remaining army that attempted to return by land. Darius, the symbol of former glory, is summoned from Hades by a necromantic ritual and the grief of the Persians. According to the dead king, the blame for the disaster lies with the arrogant Xerxes, whose hubris defies nature and the gods. The arrival of the ragged and vanquished king, in stark contrast to the magnificent presence of Darius,

completes the image of absolute defeat. Praise for the achievements of the past is transformed into wailing and lamentation for the present, crowning the suffering in the once-splendid palace of the Persians.

The ancient theatre of Epidaurus

The Theatre of the Asclepeion of Epidaurus, built on the northwest slope of Mount Cynortion in the Peloponnese, is the consummate form of the architectural experience of the ancient world, combining elegance with perfect acoustics, and is the best preserved ancient theatre in Greece. It was built in the late 4th or early 3rd century BCE by architect Polycleitus the Younger to host the music, singing and dramatic contests involved in the worship of god of medicine, Asclepius. Attendance was an integral part of the treatment of patients, as the ancient Greeks viewed the nurturing and cultivation of the soul and spiritual development as inherent to bodily health.

The harmony of the theatre is due to its unique design, based on a regular pentagonal orchestra (the part of the theatre where performances took place), as well as the use of three centres in the plan of the curved cavea, where the spectators sat. Specifically, the cavea originally comprised 34 rows

of seats, holding between 6000 and 8000 spectators, divided into 12 cunei (wedge-shaped sections) and 13 staircases, radiating outwards from the corners of a notional 20-sided polygon in the orchestra. The seats in the first row were for officials and were distinguished by being made from limestone and having backs. In the mid-2nd century BCE, the cavea was extended and its capacity increased to 13,000 or 14,000 spectators. The orchestra is 20 metres in diameter, with the thymele, the base of an altar of Dionysus, at its centre.

The theatre came to light during excavations by Panagis Kavvadias from 1881 to 1883. Since then,

its continuous care by the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports has aimed to repair damage from natural causes and use. After centuries of silence, ancient drama was once again heard at Epidaurus in 1938, when the National Theatre of Greece performed Dimitris Rondiris' production of Sophocles' *Electra*, starring Greek Academy Award winner Katina Paxinou and Eleni Papadaki. Regular performances of ancient drama began in 1954, while in the following year, the Epidaurus Festival was inaugurated as an annual event for the presentation of ancient drama with a performance of Euripides' *Hippolytus*.

Photo credits: National Theatre of Greece



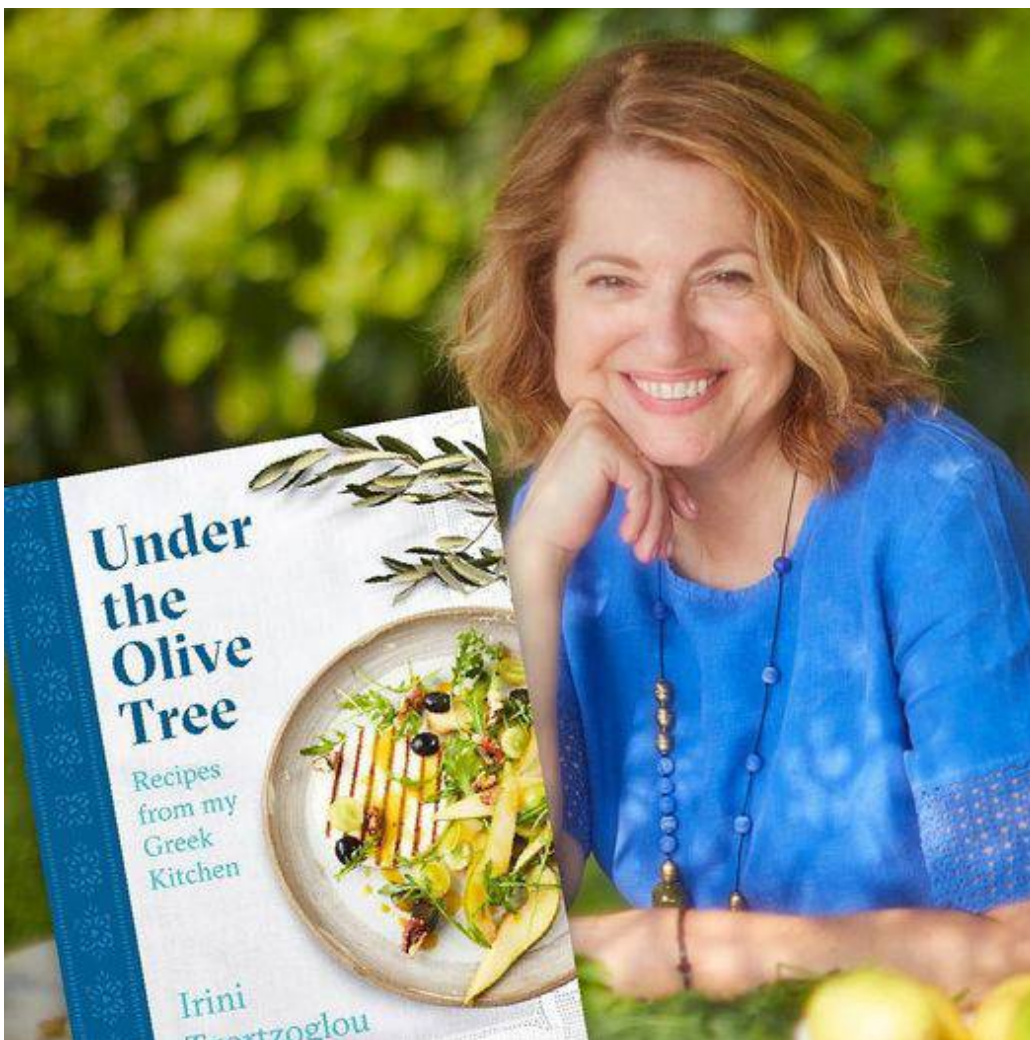
**“Under The Olive Tree
Recipes From My Greek Kitchen”.**

Celebrating Greek cuisine.

Irimi Tzortzoglou, the 2019 champion of MasterChef UK, offers a user-friendly collection of Greek family recipes, from the simplest dishes to the more complex.

'Glorious and sumptuous. From the simplest dishes through to the more complex, Irimi totally captures the gastronomy of Greece.' Victoria Hislop

'This is my favourite cookbook of the year. A total joy from start to finish.' Russell Norman



Irimi Tzortzoglou is a Greek cook and winner of the MasterChef 2019 UK TV show competition. On 23 July 2020 Irimi published her book “Under The Olive Tree (Recipes From My Greek Kitchen”.

In her book she champions wonderful Greek produce and producers, changing old perceptions regarding our food (most people still think that Greek food is souvlaki and Greek salad) and since she attended an olive oil sommelier course she is also keen to promote Crete’s olive oil which is one of the best in the world!

The book is not just a collection of recipes but, what is most important, it also informs the

international readers of the different ways food is cooked in Greece, lists some basic ingredients that may not be known, lists a number of wine and food suppliers in the UK and pairs some of the dishes with very good Greek wines.

The press attention has been amazing and many of praising comments come from chefs such as Simon Rogan, Russel Normal and Rachel Khoo to authors like Anthony Horowitz and Victoria Hislop and celebrities such as actress Anna Chancellor and Gregg Wallace.

Alongside nostalgia for the Greece of her childhood, Tzortzoglou offers modern, cheffy flourishes (there is a chapter on “fancy gadgets”, like sous vide wands). The opening chapters offer a broad tour of Greek cuisine, from kokkinista (tomato dishes) to pités (pies).

The book is split into two: recipes for “Everyday”, including breakfasts, salads and meat, and for “Entertaining”, including Easter celebrations, Christmas feasting and appetisers, mains and desserts for pull-out-all-the-stops dinner parties – like monkfish with roasted garlic foam.

It closes with Greek wine pairings from 67 Pall Mall sommelier Terry Kandylis, and a guide to Greek food specialists to shop from, like Oliveology and Agora Greek Delicacies.

Tzortzoglou’s warm personality pervades recollections of her father playing his bouzouki, olive oil decanted into ceramic pytharia pots, and of her mother baking the village’s communal wood-fired oven.

She shows there is far more to Greek cuisine than the several dishes we associate with a holiday; source her recommended ingredients – like manouri and mizithra cheese, kritharaki (Greek orzo-like pasta), dried giant beans (gigantes), trahanas (fermented wheat and milk) and reap the rewards.

Telegraph, Under the Olive Tree, cookbook review: "Recipes from a Greek childhood, with modern flourishes", 8.9.2020

Naturally, there has been a huge amount of change since the 1960s, but the natural beauty of the island is still as I remember it. The Samaria Gorge will never be any less dramatic than it appeared to me when I first did the 10-mile trek from high up on the Omalos plateau to the coastal village of Agia Roumeli (from where the only way to leave is by ferry boat unless you go back the way you came!) And the pink-sand beach of Elafonisi is no less stunning now than it was when I first saw it.

I’ve lived in the UK for over 40 years but I’ve never been able to find produce to rival that of Crete, so even in a simple taverna here a basic xoriatiki (village) salad is bursting with zest and vibrancy. It’s all down to the climate, of course, which is so conducive to agriculture that two or even three crops a year are possible. Until the 1970s, agriculture had always been the economic mainstay of the island.

I’m always keen to enjoy the cooking being produced in Crete. The traditional image which many people in the UK may once have had of Greek food being not much more than moussaka and salad is no more accurate than the view that English food is all about fish and chips. I tried to show on MasterChef that elements such as trachanas (cracked wheat cooked in soured milk then dried in the sun) can be used in fine dining, and there are many Greek chefs finding creative uses for basic local ingredients.

Irini Tzortzoglou, Telegraph, Crete's culinary and travel secrets revealed by a MasterChef champion, 30.7.2020



Kefalonia Island, Photo Credit GNTO

@GreeceInUK is a newsletter with a regular roundup of news related to Greece, Greek Politics, Economy, Culture, Civil Society, the Arts as well as Greece's distinctive vibrant presence in the UK. Our ambition is to offer an accurate and rich source of information to those interested in Greece and her people.

Embassy of Greece in London
Public Diplomacy Office
1A Holland Park, London W11 3TP
Tel. 0207- 727 3071 / Fax. 0207- 792 9054
E-mail: pdo.lon@mfa.gr
<http://www.mfa.gr/uk>

Facebook: [@GreeceInUK](#) / Twitter: [@GreeceInUK](#) / Instagram: [Greek Embassy in London](#)

*cc of pics not mentioned otherwise:
Public Diplomacy Office or free for noncommercial reuse*