



# THIASOS

RIVISTA DI ARCHEOLOGIA E ARCHITETTURA ANTICA

2012, n. 1

«THIASOS» Rivista di archeologia e architettura antica  
Direttori: Enzo Lippolis, Giorgio Rocco  
Redazione: Luigi Maria Caliò, Monica Livadiotti  
Redazione sito web: Antonello Fino, Chiara Giatti, Valeria Parisi  
Anno di fondazione: 2011

Vasiliki Eleftheriou, Angeliki Markou, *The Acropolis of Lindos, the work of redesigning and enhancing the archaeological site*

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Edizioni Quasar di Severino Tognon s.r.l., via Ajaccio 41-43, 00198 Roma (Italia)  
<http://www.edizioniquasar.it/>

ISSN 2279-7297

Tutti i diritti riservati

Come citare l'articolo:

V. ELEFThERIOU, A. MARKOU, *The Acropolis of Lindos: the work of redesigning and enhancing the archaeological site*  
Thiasos, 1, 2012, pp. 29-34

Gli articoli pubblicati nella Rivista sono sottoposti a referee nel sistema a doppio cieco.



## THE ACROPOLIS OF LINDOS: THE WORK OF REDESIGNING AND ENHANCING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE\*

Vasiliki Eleftheriou, Angeliki Markou

**Keywords:** Dodecanese, Rhodes, Lindos, Athena Lindia, sanctuary, archaeological site, restoration of monuments, protection of monuments, anastylosis.

**Parole chiave:** Dodecaneso, Rodi, Lindo, Athena Lindia, santuario, area archeologica, restauro dei monumenti, protezione dei monumenti, anastilosi.

### Abstract:

*The project of redesigning and enhancing the archaeological site of the Lindos Acropolis began in 2001, within the context of the restoration works of the monuments carried out by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The most important problems that had to be confronted concerned the visitors pathways through the monument (up to 2500 visitors daily), and the existing difficulty in identifying smaller monuments, like anathimata (offerings to the gods) and inscriptions found scattered all around the place since the time of the excavations.*

*What became a necessity in order to implement the study was the composition of an accurate designing site plan and the recording of every scattered stone findings (about 2000). This recording enabled the identification of 421 inscribed stones with the list produced by the archaeologists who had excavated the site and also the location and association of more than 113 unpublished sections with architectural and votive monuments of the site.*

*The goals of the redesigning and enhancing project were the following:*

- *To optimize the routes the visitors followed and help them recognize the monuments of the site by following specific pathways.*
- *To protect and promote the smaller monuments of the archaeological site.*
- *To protect and highlight the scattered material by classifying it.*

*The study has been approved by the Hellenic Central Archeological Council (KAS) in 2006 and realized during the period of 2006-2009.*

*Il progetto di sistemazione d'area e valorizzazione del sito archeologico dell'acropoli Lindos è iniziato nel 2001, nell'ambito del progetto generale di restauro dei monumenti condotto dal Ministero della Cultura e Turismo di Grecia. Tra i problemi più importanti da affrontare è stato quello della definizione dei percorsi attraverso la zona archeologica per i visitatori (più di 2500 presenze giornaliere), e la difficoltà oggettiva di identificare i piccoli monumenti, come gli ex-voto offerti alle divinità, e le iscrizioni, all'epoca degli scavi rinvenute sparse in tutta l'area.*

*Tra le priorità è stato quindi l'approfondimento di uno studio progettuale che potesse pervenire ad una accurata sistemazione d'area, previa catalogazione di tutti gli elementi litici pertinenti all'arredo santuariare (circa 2000). Quest'ultima attività ha condotto all'identificazione di 421 delle iscrizioni segnalate al tempo degli scavi e anche alla localizzazione e associazione di più di 113 monumenti votivi e architettonici inediti.*

*Le finalità del progetto di valorizzazione sono state quindi le seguenti:*

- *Ottimizzazione dei percorsi seguiti dai visitatori, organizzati in modo da facilitare durante la visita il riconoscimento dei diversi monumenti.*
- *La protezione e la valorizzazione dei monumenti minori presenti nell'area santuariare.*
- *La protezione dei materiali sparsi e la loro identificazione mediante catalogazione.*

*Il progetto, approvato dal Consiglio Archeologico Centrale (KAS) del Ministero della Cultura, è stato realizzato nel periodo 2006-2009.*

The archaeological site of the Lindos Acropolis, located on a rocky elevation of the eastern coast of Rhodes and bordered by fortification walls, covers an area of 11,000 square meters. In antiquity, the temple, thriving in the Hellenistic period, was devoted to the worship of Athena Lindia. The temple of Athena was built on the highest spot of the rock, while on its north and progressively on lower terraces, other buildings, such as the upper portico (propylaea), the lower portico (great stoa), the Hellenistic vaults, a Roman temple and other smaller buildings, were added (fig. 1).

\* Vasiliki Eleftheriou and Angeliki Markou are both Architects NTUA, MSc NTUA Monuments Protection. This lecture was presented to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Scientific Meeting of Graduates from the Interdepartmental Postgraduate

Program: *Monuments Protection*, National Technical University of Athens, Athens 26-27 November 2010.



Fig. 1. Lindos, the Acropolis (1999). 1 - Entrance; 2 - Triimiolia area; 3 - Medieval Headquarters building; 4 - West area; 5 - Hellenistic vaults area; 6 - Hellenistic Stoa; 7 - Propylaea; 8 - Temple of Athena.

In the Byzantine period there are references to the worship of the Virgin Mary, while during the Middle Ages the site became a fortress for the Order of St John's Knighthood. The area was excavated at the beginning of the 20th century while many extended restorations were carried out during the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese.

Unfortunately, as early as the 1970s serious problems emerged on the restored monuments and since 1985 there has been in progress an intervention program, run by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism and financed by the European Union. The work of redesigning and enhancing the archaeological site constituted part of this program. This project was approved by the Central Archaeological Council in 2006, the work finished in 2009.

Before the interventions began the area presented the archaeologists and the architects with mainly two problems. The first one had to do with the legibility and comprehension of the site. While restoration allowed the recognition of the most important monuments, smaller ones that only their foundations had survived or could only be read from the carvings on the natural rock, posed a difficulty in identifying them. An additional factor that prevented the visitor from perceiving the ancient temple as a whole and undervalued its archaeological and historical value, was the untidiness of the existing scattered material in the site. A second problem was the large number of visitors in combination with their random wandering inside the area. While the central pathways were well constructed and specified, the lack of appropriate signage caused a chaos in the movements of the visitors. That, apart from discomforting and exposing the visitors to minor accidents, ran the risk of damaging the monuments themselves and particularly the scattered inscribed stones.

There were also less important problems, such as the maintenance and preservation of various monuments, the vegetation, the drainage and finally assisting any possible query of the visitors.

The necessary conditions for executing the study of redesigning and enhancing the site were on the one hand the recording and documentation of the existing scattered material, and on the other, the composition of an accurate designing basis. The measurements were gathered with the use of both an instrument, a total station, and conventional methods. In addition, before moving the stones necessary for the inventory, aero photographs were used so as to accurately record the existing state of the site.

Figs. 2-3. Roman temple area, north of the Hellenistic vaults, before and after the redesigning works (photos V. Eleftheriou).



The goals of the redesigning and enhancing project were the following:

1. To optimize the routes the visitors followed and also help them recognize the monuments of the site by following specific pathways.
2. To protect and promote the smaller monuments of the archaeological site and
3. To protect and highlight the scattered material by classifying it (figs. 2, 3).

1. The designing of **the routes and pathways of the visitors** had to ensure their safety and also to protect the monuments and relics allowing the minimum of intervention. Here emphasis was placed on the way the monuments of the Hellenistic period were visited as they constitute the most important stage of the temple. The main route followed the directions set at the ancient times. The secondary paths though, leading to other parts of the site, followed the natural slopes and formations of the rock, and special attention was given to avoid covering areas containing traces of ancient constructions - such as engravings on the rocks or vestiges of mortars. Areas that needed to be covered were firstly photographed and then recorded, while the materials used for every new construction were only taken from the local region.



Fig. 4. Lindos. The west area of the acropolis after the interventions and the reconstruction of the Propylaea western wing (photo V. Eleftheriou).

2. The works carried out for the **protection and better presentation of the smaller monuments** or relics, such as the exedras – semicircular stone benches - of Pamphyliadas, Pasiphondas, the Triimiolia and other votives, were the additions of stones recognized as belonging to them, and the cleaning and limited conservations - supports on isolated spots.

What became a necessity was the reconstruction of the western wing of the propylaea to the height of the existing renovated terrace (fig. 4). This section of the monument, where in ancient times were the closed halls of the building, had not been restored during the 1938 interventions and the rock was visible, being quite lower than the level of the floor of the building. After the reconstruction of the terrace along the length of the western side, the building acquired its initial surface. In addition a space was thus created under the terrace in order to place and so protect fragile and sensitive ancient architectural members.

3. **The classification and highlight of the scattered material.** When we refer to the scattered archaeological material found in Lindos we mean about 2000 smaller or larger stone findings that can be systematically classified as such: statue bases, pedestals and finials altars, columns, exedras, tripod bases, war votives and others. 534 of them are inscribed and 421 of them, which had been studied by the Danish archaeologists during the excavations of 1902-1914, were published in 1941. As such, although these inscriptions did not demand a reading-interpretation, it became a time consuming task to locate and identify them. This happened because many of the parts of these findings were moved from the place they were found, during the interventions of the middle war period, scattered all around the place, covered with soil and suffered damages, even fragmentations.

What followed the extensive and analytical recording of the whole scattered material was its evaluation, here special attention was given to the promotion of the most important parts, which were mainly inscribed. These publications led to the restoration of five statue bases, all of them belonging to statue-groups, and two more votive exedras, while the research assisted in finding additional parts and the restoration of two more exedras. Moreover, an important scientific benefit resulted from identifying parts, which hadn't been located by the excavations, with votive monuments of the site, or from reconsidering the views of the excavators due to the results of the research. Although the location of the inscribed parts was not always a reliable indication of the initial position of the votive, it constituted the basic criterion for choosing the area to place them. However, the size of the finding, and thus its weight, limited its movement. An exception to that were the early inscriptions (4th century BC), which were all transferred to the temple terrace because of their association and relation to the worship of Athena Lindia. The rest of the inscribed bases, and after adhering the fragmented parts and aesthetically restoring the ones suffered the most (fragmentations), were placed in groups, at chosen areas accessible to the visitors. A large number of the found parts though, did not contain any inscriptions or any important feature worth recommending as isolated monuments. It was then found necessary to separate them into similar groups to different terraces and in accordance with the kind and the material of the construction (marble, lithos Lartios, - a gray-blue stone of the island - or porphyry stone). Most of them formed stone-piles: they were stone-piles of pedestals, finials, rectangular non-inscribed parts, cylindrical parts and parts made out of porphyry stone (figs. 5, 6). The total number of the composed



Figs. 5-6 . The stoa's terrace before and after the redesigning works. Stone piles are visible along the terrace (photos V. Eleftheriou).



stone-piles was 32 including 870 parts. The locations chosen for their constructions were out of the visitors main route, were not visually provocative, did not cover any engravings on the rock or other elements needed for documentation. The correct positioning of the parts helped to construct stone-piles of a limited size having a maximum height of 1.10 m. At the same time general rules of design were applied in order to organize the piles. To start with, the larger and better preserved parts were placed on the lower layers of the stone-piles, while the selected inscribed parts that were added (on the stone piles) were placed on the top layers so as to be clearly visible. An effort was made to place every part on the right support surface and thus show their more interesting sight. Finally, concerning the parts that were to be hidden, it was decided to extensively document all the elements. In particular, photographs of each side of the members were taken, they were measured, the locations of mortises and joints were recorded and a profile gauge was used to plot the cymatia.

The importance of this study lies on the accurate recording of the site, as we hope it to be of great assistance to future researchers. On the topographical plan of the archaeological site all the new locations of the recorded inscribed members were noted in addition to the relevant reference to the catalogue number and their publication.

In the same plan the location of the stone piles has been surveyed, while the position of each member inside every stone pile has been recorded in a three-dimensional digital plan (Autocad file). Moreover, with the use of Access and File-maker, programs enabling the reader to search according to location, kind, substance/matter and publication, the material was better electronically organized, recorded and indexed.

This systematic recording of the scattered members assisted in locating a substantial number of parts that, despite belonging to the same monument, were scattered in different terraces. The comparative study of the recorded elements, as well as focusing on details such as the surface processings and the preservation condition of every stone led to the assembly of more than 100 parts belonging to pedestals and finials.

Finally, 30 information signs and additional seats were placed around the site to assist the visitors.

Evaluating the renovation works in the archaeological site we must mention some negative aspects. Firstly, the coexistence of metallic steps distinguishingly differed to the ones built with stones, something that was caused by the weakness to ensure quality metallic constructions. Another negative aspect was the addition of small steps which did not exist in the ancient times at the south-west corner of the propylaea so as to allow the visitors to move in a circle. We do hope that soon the north-east corner of the area, which is still a construction site until the completion of the restoration works, will be soon redesigned and enhanced. The most important benefit of redesigning the archaeological site at the Lindos Acropolis is without doubt the 'tranquil' character the area has acquired, and at the same time an appropriate presentation of the inscribed material, probably the only distinctive feature of the area unifying and accompanying the most important restored monuments.

Finally, it has to be mentioned that this project could not only have been realized without the collaboration of architects with the archaeologists and the expertise and skills of the various workmen and artisans of the restoration works. The person responsible for the general supervision was the Committee President of the Preservation-Restoration for the Monuments of the Lindos Acropolis, the late archaeologist Dr. H. Zervoudaki, and since 2008 her successor archaeologist A. Giannikouri. The recordings/documentations and classifications of the scattered materials was carried out by the archaeologist E. Tsakanika. V. Eleftheriou was responsible for the coordination and the completion of the study, and also designed the general topographical map of the Acropolis. M. Pikoula, civil engineer and A. Markou worked together in the supervision of the works, while A. Markou surveyed the areas that were cleaned, designed the stone piles and identified a large number of the scattered members with various monuments. We should also mention the substantial help during all the works of the draftsman F. Sarika.

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