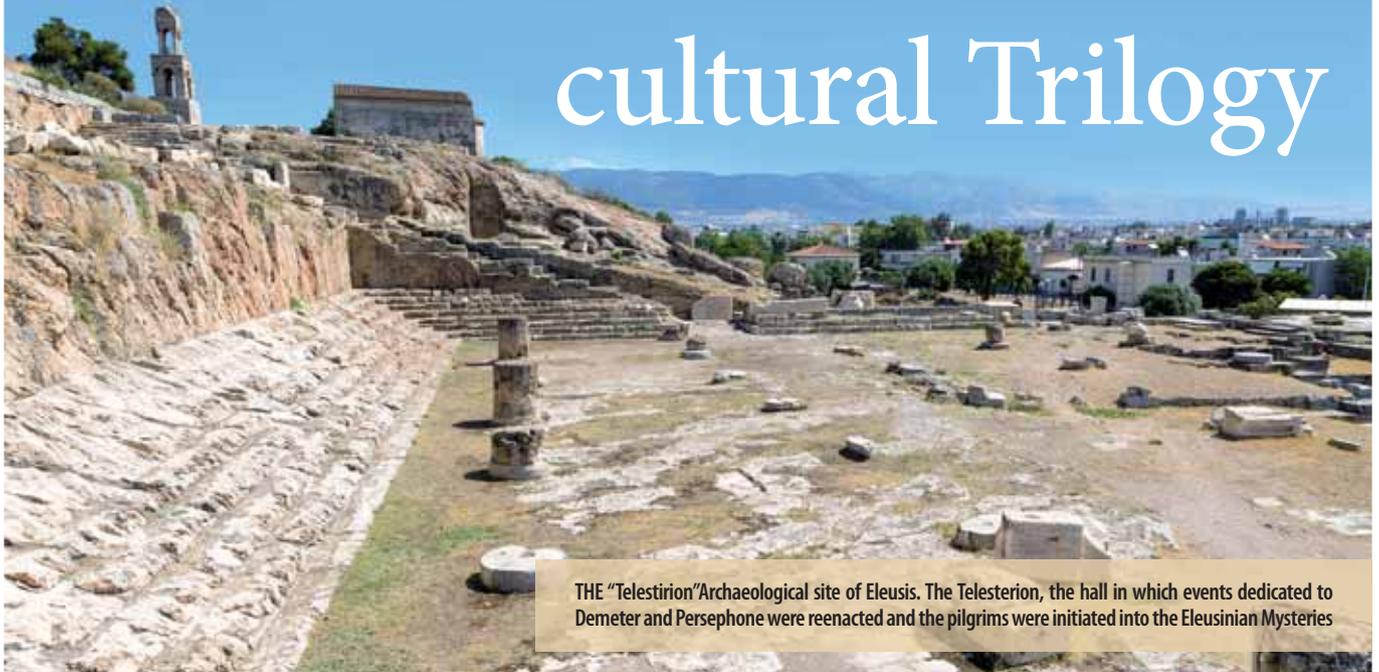


Eleusis, Athens, Lavrion

The new Athenian cultural Trilogy



THE "Telesterion" Archaeological site of Eleusis. The Telesterion, the hall in which events dedicated to Demeter and Persephone were reenacted and the pilgrims were initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries

A Cultural Triangle connecting Eleusis, Athens and Lavrion, the new Athenian cultural Trilogy, is under way. The idea is to create an integrated touristic product combining cultural monuments and local economic actors. This network could gradually develop and cover a large part of Attica, including Piraeus, and the nearby islands

By **Giannis Zirinis***



Politics, economy, and religion are three major areas of human activities of social life.

Most of what we know about Ancient Athens concerns its political institutions, art, and intellectual life: the democratic system of governance next to theatre, philosophy, architectural harmony, and visual arts.

The two other aspects of the ancient Athenian society, economic life and religious practices, remain mostly unknown to both locals and visitors, despite the fact that monuments related to all three

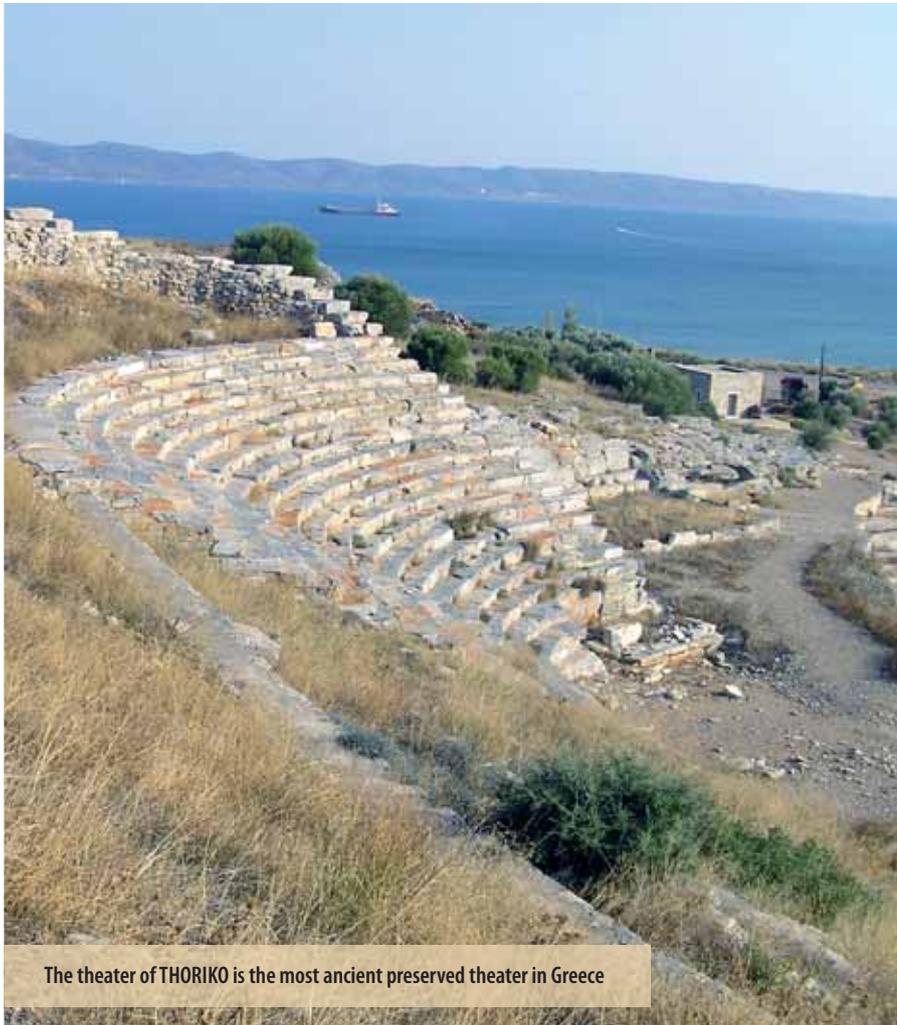
aspects are abundant in the largest area of Athens. The silver mines of Lavrion, the main source of the ancient city's wealth and the sanctuary of Eleusis, where religious ceremonies (the Eleusinian Mysteries) used to take place, are only visited by the initiated few.

This proposal for the tourist development of the wider Attica area stems from the above assessment and aims to create a Cultural Triangle connecting Eleusis, Athens, and Lavrion, the new Athenian cultural Trilogy. The idea is to create an integrated touristic product combining cultural monuments and local economic actors. This network could

gradually develop and cover a large part of Attica, including Piraeus, and the nearby islands.

Lavrion is like an antique technology park containing unique masterpieces of human ingenuity: the ancient masters had developed techniques for ore extraction and enrichment, water recycling, ventilation systems for mine galleries, some of which are direct precursors of contemporary methods.

Eleusis has a well preserved and restored archeological site that includes sacred monuments, where ancient rituals, related to the afterlife, used to take place.



The theater of THORIKO is the most ancient preserved theater in Greece

DIAZOMA ASSOCIATION

In 2008, the Citizens' Movement "DIAZOMA" was established in order to contribute to the protection and promotion of ancient places of performance (theatres, conservatoires, stadiums, amphitheatres), as well as to raise the awareness of relevant institutions and citizens towards this direction. In addition, in these past years, the fundamental principal of the Association has been the integration of the monuments into the center of life, and their connection to sustainability and sustainable development. In this context, and whilst making use of the results of the absolute synergy among all relevant partners, we are planning and proposing the implementation of new programs such as *Cultural - Environmental Routes and Archaeological Parks*.

ECONOMIA Group is a member company since 2015 among others including TITAN, MYTILINEOS, OTE, INTERAMERICAN, APIVITA, STAVROS NIARHOS FOUNDATION, SEV etc.

The new proposal

Both cities, Eleusis and Lavrion, and their many related monuments—the Sacred Way (Iera Odos) connecting Athens to Eleusis, the temple of Jupiter in Sounion next to Lavrion, the sanctuary of Brauron, among others—provide the canvas on which human-centered storytelling (as opposed to monument-centered, which is today's common practice) can be developed in a way that will make a visit an unforgettable experience for the visitor. The endless possibilities that digital applications offer for the widespread use of virtual presentations will further enrich the image of classical Athens offering new aspects for worldwide promotion and open up business opportunities and job creation.

Investments will be necessary in the long term, but the existing infrastructure, sites, museums, road connections, the Athens Airport etc.—with some

face-lifting and a well focused marketing campaign can act as a booster to the tourist industry, encouraging the creation of visiting tours in the area.

The proposal intends to bring out important but lesser known monuments not exclusively in Eleusis and Lavrion but also the ones connected to them, to establish a quality system in every link of the tourism value-chain and create a sustainable Destination Marketing and Management Organization which will run the project on a permanent basis.

Such a venture will broaden the appeal of Athens as a city-break destination and serve as a guideline for a targeted marketing campaign for all stakeholders: the Attica region, municipalities, and major private players. It will also act as a catalyst in mobilising the numerous stakeholders to better cooperate, because this ambitious project needs close synergies and innovative ideas to build

common goals and create mutual trust between the major players.

Diazoma Association, a civil society NGO specializing in cultural development, launched the idea in its annual meeting of corporate members in Eleusis in April 2018. It will be further discussed during its general assembly which will take place in Lavrion next September.

So far, some important private players have expressed active interest, among whom is SETE the Greek Tourism Confederation. The Region of Attica and the Municipality of Athens are also considering their participation. A master plan for the project will be assigned once funding is secured by private donors.

All stakes are on the table for this ambitious project. 

* Development expert, member of DIAZOMA