My 40 Year Search for the Battle of Actium (AIA)

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Via Zoom (link to be provided closer to the date of the talk)

In 31 BC, Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra in a naval battle off Cape Actium in Western Greece. A few years later, the victor constructed on the site of his personal camp a grand Victory Monument to commemorate the event. I first visited this site in 1978, and since then, have been trying to explain what I found there: the ruins of a massive rostral display whose complex details preserve evidence for the sizes of Antony's and Cleopatra's largest warships. After a brief attempt to find battle debris in the sea off Cape Actium, I was asked by Dr. Konstantinos Zachos to join his team in analyzing the results of his systematic excavations of the site. His work, conducted over a quarter century, has added much to our knowledge of this important monument—its original design, its elaborately decorated altar, its dedication text, and its period of use. At the same time, emerging 3D technologies have allowed me to comprehend the rostral display more fully, to visualize the monstrous sizes of the ships that fought in the final naval battle, and to restore the text of the dedication inscription. In this lecture, I will summarize the main results of our research, but do so in a personal manner, in the context of my own 40-year journey of discovery in search of the Battle of Actium.