

The second church, a monument of quite large dimensions, as far as can be seen in photographs of the time, seems to belong to the type of the free cross plan type with twin imposing bell towers in the facade. It bears similarities with churches of the same era in other cities, such as the Metropolis of Athens (1842-1862) and Hagios Vasileios of Tripoli (1855 foundation). However, it was severely damaged by the earthquake of 1956, and thus got demolished. In its place, the current church was founded in 1963 based on the plans of Georgios Nomikos and completed in 1968. It is noteworthy that in front of the new church there was another smaller one, which was demolished after its damage and in order to highlight the metropolitan new church.

In a plot donated by Evangelos Nomikos and designed by the architect Ioannis Koumanoudis, the building of **the Museum of Prehistoric Thera** (fig. 20) was erected in 1970s, in order to house the findings from the excavations at the prehistoric town at Akrotiri. The permanent exhibition, mounted in the second story and organized by the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades in 1999, houses artefacts from several sites on Thera, which date from the 5th millennium BC to the 17th c. BC and bear witness to island's participation in cultural developments in the Aegean over a long period of prehistory, as well as finds from the prehistoric settlement at Akrotiri.

Referring to the history of the archaeological research of prehistoric times on Thera, the geology of Thera, the island's history from the Late Neolithic (4500BC) to the Late Cycladic I period and the heyday of the city at Akrotiri (17th c. BC), the exhibition endeavors to sketch the course of Thera in prehistoric times. Housing works of art from one of the foremost urban centres in the Aegean world, all in an excellent state of preservation, including among others the famous wall-paintings, real masterpieces of art, the Museum of Prehistoric Thera can be considered as an extension of one of the leading archaeological sites in Greece, Akrotiri. From the summer of 2021, the first storey of the Museum houses a temporary exhibition, organized by the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades, displaying exclusively wall paintings from the settlement at Akrotiri.

M. Efstathiou- C. Sakellakou- M.-E. Kourousia

Routes along the Caldera of Therasia

The Caldera of Therasia, despite its short length, is particularly rich in monuments. Remains of settlements of prehistoric, ancient and byzantine times, individual monuments of the post-Byzantine period and traditional settlements of the 18th and 19th c., abandoned or active, testify to its historical course over time. Unlike Thera, Therasia remains untouched by the negative consequences of the intense tourist development, a fact that allows its monuments to be composed in inseparable unity with their natural environment.

The Route from Riva to Manola

The small harbor of **Riva**, at the north cape of Therasia, used to be the harbor of Therasia even in antiquity. The geographer Claudius Ptolemy in the 2nd c. AD mentioned the harbor and city of Therasia. In the 19th c., L. Ross and other travelers referred to a few antiquities from the area of Riva, as the remains of the ancient city mentioned by Claudius Ptolemy. Ruins of the Medieval period, east of the church of Phaneromeni were recorded as well. According to the recent research, the city mentioned by Claudius Ptolemy belongs to a settlement, which was developed in rela-

Fig. 20 The wall-painting of the fisherman. Prehistoric town at Akrotiri, West House, Room 5. Museum of Prehistoric Thera (EFAKYK Archive)



tion with the harbor, as it is believed that the main settlement of Therasia in antiquity was located on the ridge of Caldera, at the hill of Prophetes Elias.

Situated near the north cape of Therasia, Riva, and erected on the narrow and low tongue of land that forms the cape of Riva, the **church of Hagia Eirini** constitutes, despite its mediocre size, one of the most characteristic landmarks of the Caldera. It is a single-nave basilica, with the entrance gate at the south, covered with a groin vault. A semi-circular apse projects from the east.

At the lintel of the entrance gate, where the date of the foundation or restoration of a church is usually written, an inscription mentions the year 1892. However, in 1745 the church is represented on the map of V. Barskij. (fig. 21). Also, it is mentioned in Portolanos, edited in 1559 in Venice. According to a manuscript written before 1650, Therasia in Italian was called Santa Irene. This name eventually passed on to the island of Thera. If so, and since Thera appears for the first time as "Santurin" in the Muslim geographer al-Idrisi, in the 12th c., it would be rational to assume that already in the 12th c. a church dedicated to Hagia Eirini existed in the area. The name of the island of Therasia remained the same i.e. Therasia.

The **church of Phaneromeni** is situated at the south-west site of Riva. It is a single-nave basilica covered with a groin vault. A semi-circular apse projects from the east. It probably dates to the Byzantine period. It is interesting that it is represented on the

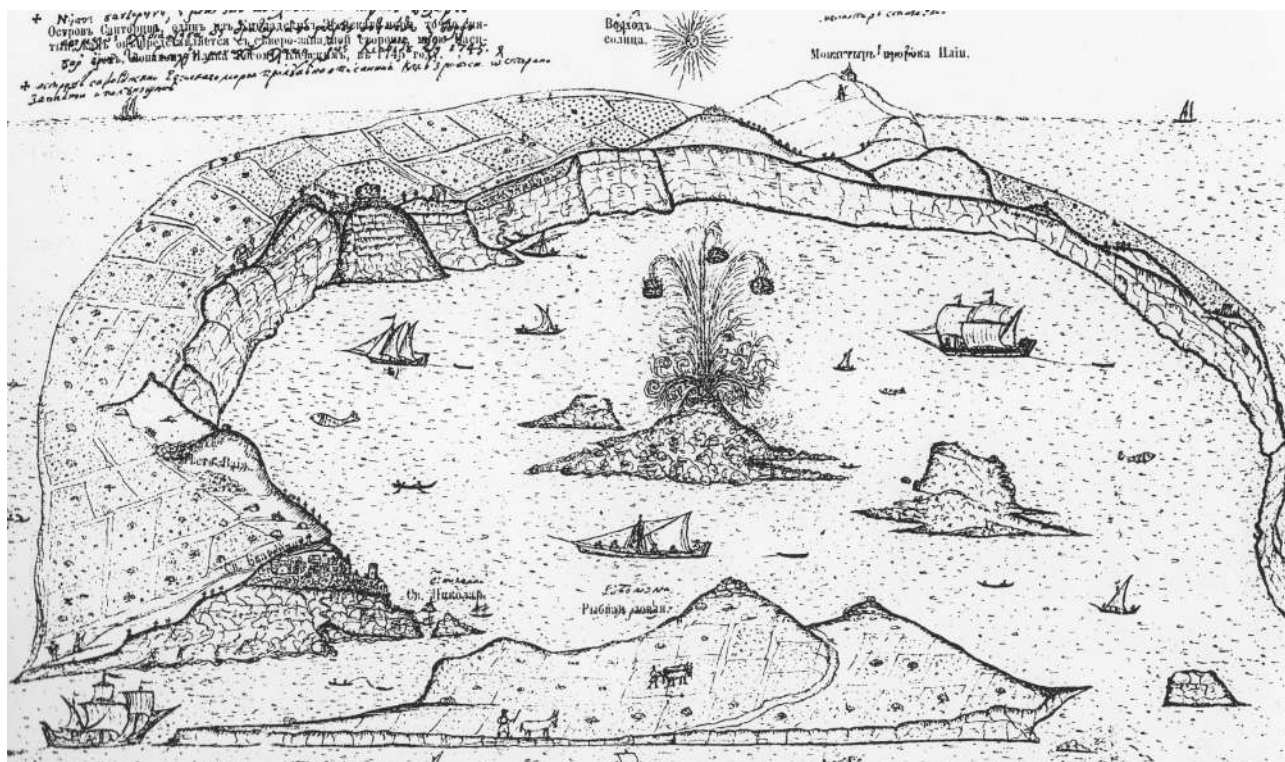
map of the monk V. Barskij (1745). In the interior, one can see an ancient cylindrical altar, decorated with bukrania and garlands, which has been chiseled in second use. Besides, there are references from the 19th c. about ancient marbles built in the walls as well as for part of an ancient mosaic on the floor.

The **church of Agios Ioannis o Palaios** is situated northwest of Kastro. It is a small, rock-cut domed building. The rectangular plan of the sanctuary is reminiscent to that of the catholic churches on Thera. Located in a short distance is the **church of Agios Ioannis**, a small, single-nave vaulted basilica with a large semi-circular apse at the east. It most probably dates to 1880.

The **settlement of Manolas**, the main village of the island today, appears for the first time in maps of the early 19th c. As a characteristic example of the traditional settlements of Thera-Therasia, it offers as well the best view to the site of Palaiokastro, one of the most characteristic landmarks of the island and of the entire Caldera. (fig. 22) Visit at the site is not possible, as it is developed on the sharp, eroded cliffs of the Caldera.

During the archaeological survey in Therasia from 2007-2011, a small, so far unidentified settlement was located in the site known as "Kastro" (Castle) or "**Palaiokastro**" (Old Castle). This site lies some 960m. north of the Manola settlement and its discovery is one of the most significant achievements of the survey. It is built on a rather low hill (190m high), which is steep, rocky and looks like a natural fortress, accessible only from the west. It

Fig. 21 Map of Vasil Grigorovich-Barskij (Ritzouli 2016)



occupies a key geographic position having immediate visual contact with the castles of Hagios Nikolaos (Epanomeria) at Oia and Skaros at Imerovigli. Furthermore, it supervises the maritime route from Constantinople to Crete. On the hilltop, several remnants of the settlement are preserved *in situ*: a vaulted cistern with traces of hydraulic plaster on the walls (nowadays its vault is destroyed) and architectural remains of buildings south of the cistern. Fallen stones from collapsed walls lie in several spots of the settlement; on the east, part of the settlement has collapsed

into the caldera. Based on the architectural remains and the potsherds that were collected during the survey, the settlement could be dated to the period between the 7th and the 11th c. AD. Information about this period is limited and it mainly comes from indirect evidence, such as toponyms and the island's oral tradition. This site could be identified with the station of the Byzantine fleet during the campaign of 949 AD, which is mentioned in the "Stadiodromikon" of Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus.

Fig. 22 View from the west of the Palaiokastros site (EFAKYK Archive, Photographer: Thanos Kartsoglou)



Situated in the centre of the Manola settlement is **the church of Analepsi**, a small single-nave vaulted church with a wide facade, dated to 1660. Situated in the south part of the Manola settlement is **the parish church of Saint Constantine/Agios Constantinos**. It is a relatively large cross-in-square church – four column type, with three apses projecting from the east. The cross arms are covered with vaults while the eastern corner compartments are capped with small blind domes. The cupola has an octagonal drum pierced by eight windows. Over the south-east compartment there is a belfry tower. According to the textual sources, it was built between 1875 and 1891 and its construction was financed by the priest of the church, Emmanuel Varvarigos-Oikonomos.

The Route from Manolas to the Millennia-long Site of Koimisis

At a distance of about 1 km. south of Manolas, an uphill path 300 m long leads to **the hill of Prophetes Elias**, the highest of Therasia (295 m.). Today, the summit of the hill is occupied by the late post-Byzantine monastery of Prophetes Elias, to which the hill owes its current name. (fig. 23) The church used to be the funerary church of the nowadays abandoned Kera settlement. It is a single-nave church covered with a groin vault and with a semi-circular apse projecting from the east. An arched belfry stands at the south-western corner.

Fig. 23 Therasia, the church of Prophetes Elias (EFAKYK Archive, Photographer: Thanos Kartsoglou)





Fig. 24 Therasia. Ruins of the ancient settlement at Prophetes Elias (EFAKYK Archive)

Around the monastery, on the summit of the hill and on its slopes, remains of ancient buildings are visible (fig. 24). Undoubtedly, these remains, which probably belong to different periods, document, along with the pottery sherds found in the area, that the hill was inhabited in antiquity and that there was a settlement arranged in successive stepped terraces. In addition, a large amount of pottery sherds, scattered in the north and west sides of the hill, document a cemetery of different historical periods, associated with the settlement. Although the site remains unexcavated, existing evidence so far suggests that the settlement, probably founded at the end of the Geometric period (i.e., in the 8th c. BC) and inhabited throughout antiquity, was the main residential centre of the island of Therasia in ancient times.

Just a few meters south of the hill of Prophetes Elias, one can find the ruined cave **settlement of Kera**, which takes us to the recent past of the island, in the 17th and 18th c., with the smaller or larger cave settlements scattered throughout its area, which are found mainly in the ravines of the hinterland. Its few houses, invisible from the sea and the plain, grow linearly along the crest of the Caldera. A typical example of the folk architecture of Thera and Therasia, the houses of Kera testify to the adaptation of the building to the available local raw materials and to the very natural characteristics of the place.

At the southernmost end of Therasia, (fig. 25) where the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Koimisi) stands, there are the remains of **a prehistoric settlement** facing the caldera to the east and Aspronisi to the south; part of the settlement has collapsed, as a result of the great Bronze Age volcanic eruption.



Fig. 25 Therasia. The Monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Koimisi) (EFAKYK Archive, Photographer: Thanos Kartsoglou)



Systematic excavations carried out at the site, since 2013, in the frame of a collaboration between the Ionian University, the University of Crete and the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades, with the constant support of the Municipality of Thera, have revealed a densely constructed settlement, which enjoyed a long period of habitation from the Early Cycladic II period to the end of the Middle Cycladic period.

The surface pottery found in the area, as well as the remains of an ancient wall, document that the site was also occupied throughout the ancient times, probably from the 8th c. B.C. until the Late Roman/Early Byzantine period. According to the so far evidence, the existence of a sanctuary, most probably underneath the plateau, where the monastery stands, is assumed.

The **monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin (Koimisi)** is one of the oldest monuments on Therasia, as it is portrayed on the map of the Russian monk V. Barskij in 1745. It was completed by 1813, according to an inscription on the lintel of a cell (fig. 25).

The cells and several secondary spaces occupy the three sides of the courtyard. The large church of the monastery is located at the east. It is a domed, three-aisled basilica with three semi-circular apses projecting from the east. The western facade is elaborate. The entrance gate is surrounded by a door frame and at its both sides there are two colonettes with pier-capitals. The date 1872 is written at the arched belfry that tops the west part of the building. The impressive wooden iconostasis which decorates the main church is dated to 1851.

In the courtyard of the monastery, a large, early Christian, marble monolithic mullion topped with a stylised Corinthian capital was reused as a basin. Two marble colonettes are immured in the window frame of a cell at the south-west of the monastery. Each of them is decorated in low relief, with a cross that stands on a sphere; there is also a small relief shaft between the cross and the sphere. The arms of the cross are almost tripartite. These colonettes could be dated between the 5th and 8th / 9th c. Two remarkable Christian inscriptions are carved on the natural bedrock south of the monastery.

M. Efstathiou - M. Vogkli

Bibliography

- Βόγκλη Μ., *Κεραμική της Θηρασίας από την Ύστερη Αρχαιότητα μέχρι και τους βυζαντινούς χρόνους*, στο: *Θηρασία III*, (forthcoming).
- Buondelmondi C., *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*, 1420.
- Γκουλιοπούλου Β., Μολίδα Ο., Νάση Μ., Οι εκκλησίες της Θηρασίας: Ο ναός των Εισοδίων της Θεοτόκου στην Αγγιλιά, in: Κ. Παλυβού – Ι. Τζαχίλη, (eds.), *Θηρασία I, μια διαχρονική διαδρομή*, Αθήνα 2015, 179-183.
- Choiseul-Gouffier Marie Gabriel Florent Auguste de, *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce*. Paris, J.-J. Blaise M.DCC.LXXXII, 1782.
- Ευσταθίου Μ., Η Θηρασία κατά τους αρχαίους χρόνους, in: Κ. Παλυβού – Ι. Τζαχίλη, (eds.), *Θηρασία I, μια διαχρονική διαδρομή*, Αθήνα 2015, 73-91.
- Κατσίπη Φ., Η ονομασία Σαντορίνη, in: Μ. Α. Δανέζη (ed.), *Σαντορίνη*, Αθήνα 1971, 273-274.
- Κουμανούδης Ι., *Η λαϊκή εκκλησιαστική αρχιτεκτονική της νήσου Θήρας*, Αθήνα 1960.
- Μονιούδη-Γαβαλά Δ., *Σαντορίνη, Κοινωνία και χώρος, 15ος-20ος αιώνας*, Αθήνα, 1997.
- Mathari M., Raos and Akrotiri: Memory and identity in LC I/LM I Thera as reflected in settlement patterns and ceramic production, in: E. Borgna, I. Caloi, F. M. Carinci, F.M. & R. Laffineur (eds.), *MNHMH/MNEME: Past and memory in the Aegean Bronze Age*, Liège 2019, 135-144.
- Ντούμας Χ., Φτέλλος: Ύστερομινωική 1 Α εγκατάσταση παρά τα Φηρά Θήρας, *AE* (1973), σ. 161-63.
- Παλυβού Κ., Σκάρος: η πρωτεύουσα της ενετοκρατούμενης Θήρας. Ιστορία, παρόν και μέλλον, in: Γ. Καραδέδος (ed.), *ΔΩΡΟΝ. Τιμητικός Τόμος στον Καθηγητή Νίκο Νικονάνο*, Θεσσαλονίκη 2006, 615-626
- Ριτζούλη Κ., *Η εξέλιξη της αρχιτεκτονικής και της οικοδομικής τέχνης στη Σαντορίνη από τη βενετοκρατία (1204) μέχρι τον σεισμό του 1956*. Δημοσίευτη Διδακτορική Διατριβή. Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης 2016.
- Sbonias K., Tzachili I., Efstathiou M., Palyvou, C., Athanasiou C., Farinetti E., & Moullou, D., The Early and Middle Bronze Age Settlement at Koimisis, Therasia: Periods of habitation and architecture, *The Annual of the British School at Athens 115* (2020), 1-28.
- Sperling, J.W., Thera and Therasia, *Ancient Greek Cities 22*, Athens 1973.
- Televantou, C., Chronika, *ArchDelt 42/B' 2* (1987), Athens 1992, 509-512.
- Vougioukalakis G., The Minoan Eruption of the Thera Volcano and the Aegean World, Society of the Promotion of Studies on Prehistoric Thera. English offprint of the Greek article first published in *ΑΑΣ 4* (2006), 21-55.