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Reconstructing the settled landscape of the Cyclades : the islands of Paros and Naxos during the late antique and early Byzantine centuries
Roussos, K.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“The location, the port Auza (Naoussa), together with its island Paros, is so important and necessary, that I consider it better than all other islands in the Archipelago, because there are harbors and the best bay, and roadsteads - there is nowhere we could fortify our position and defend ourselves with a small force as well as in the Auza bay”

Grigori Spyridov
(Head of the Russian fleet, 1770)

1.1 THE LATE ANTIQUE AND EARLY MEDIEVAL CYCLADES AS CASE STUDIES

Mediterranean coastal landscapes have a distinctive character and changed rapidly over time as a result of their morphology and the long history of human evolution. Especially in a small and more manageable scale of island landscapes human impact is even more visible, historically and in modern times. Small Mediterranean islands played multifunctional roles in wider social, economic, and political networks; functioning in different periods of time as refuges for pirates, hermits, or political exiles, productive and exporting centres, military naval bases, pilgrimage places, maritime commercial stations, or holiday destinations for modern tourists.

During recent decades, the study of island environments within the highly interactive Mediterranean world is being increasingly recognised as one of the most promising areas of research, forming the broad field of “island studies” and including many different disciplines (*e.g.* biology, biogeography, environmental sciences, geography, political sciences, anthropology, archaeology, history etc.). In the course of the 1970s “island archaeology” emerged as a defined field of research with many theoretical trends focusing on insular communities which were assessed as discrete units of analysis (for more information about the birth of island archaeology see Broodbank 2000, 6-7; Fitzpatrick 2004). Over the past three decades, modern regional studies of islands offered new synthetic perspectives, and set the theoretical and

analytical framework according to which islands can be approached and interpreted (Patton 1996; Bass 1998; Broodbank 2000; Fitzpatrick 2004; Rainbird 2007; Costantakopoulou 2007; Phoca-Cosmetatou 2011; Bevan & Conolly 2013; Fitzpatrick *et al.* 2015).

Island archaeology intends “to generate island histories” (Broodbank 2000, 12-15) by recapturing the dynamics of island cultures and identifying common underlying themes. The questions posed by island archaeology discusses issues central to the study of insular communities, such as cultural processes and identities, interactions between islands and broader worlds, development and changes in settlement patterns, variations in coastal productivity, historical interactions between space and human agency, conservation and management of island and coastal sites, and the general human impact on the islands. The concept of “insularity” became a key idea in the theoretical and methodological approaches to islands (Broodbank 2000, 16-18; Fitzpatrick 2004, 6-9). In this context, island archaeology emerges as the basic theoretical and methodological tool for the study of individual islands or island groups, and for investigating the relation between them or with mainland cultures (Renfrew 2004). Therefore, island archaeology contributes to the study of the history of Mediterranean islands not only during their prehistory but also over the course of historical periods until modern times.

The group of islands known today as the Cyclades is located in the south central Aegean Sea at the heart of a highly interactive insular world (Figs 1.1 & 2.1). The Cyclades, as a justifiable maritime area defined on most sides by much wider stretches

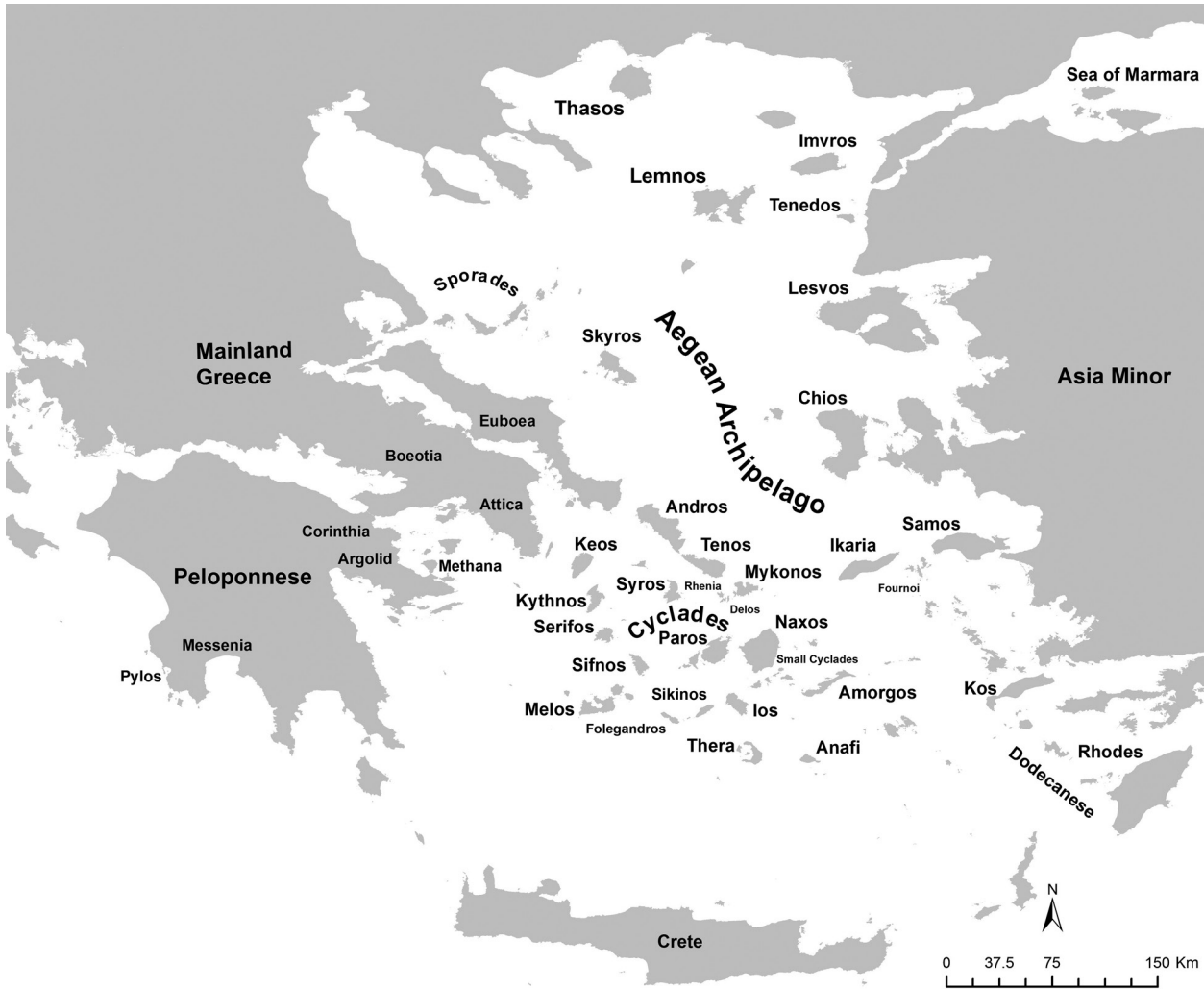


Fig. 1.1: Map of the Aegean and the Cyclades.

of sea than those separating one island from the other (Broodbank 2000, 69) experienced political, social and cultural realities created, directly or indirectly, by different political regimes, into which these islands were incorporated through time, from the Classical to the Hellenistic period, and later from the Roman and Byzantine Empires to Venetian and Ottoman domination. The Cyclades islands have often been a protagonist in academic debates on issues of insular and landscape archaeology. Despite the fact that research has made important steps in studying the insular societies of the Cyclades, primary interest and attention was always given to prehistory as opposed to Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Early

Middle Ages (4th – early 9th century).¹ A number of excavations and remarkable publications (see more in Chapter 1.4) have enlarged our knowledge of the Prehistoric and Classical periods, but did not consider the Post-Classical landscape in any detail.

During the period covered by the research major changes in social, political and economic life influenced the Cycladic settlements in terms of both their function and form (see more about the history of the Cyclades during the period in question in Chapter 3). The period between the 4th and middle

1. All dates are after Christ, unless indicated.

7th centuries (Late Antiquity) has been generally considered as a time of prosperity and stability for most of the Aegean islands. However, important aspects of this situation have not been studied in detail whilst the crucial role of the Cycladic islands within the complex network of the Mediterranean trade system has not been fully understood. Additionally, the multiple socioeconomic changes that occurred during the succeeding turbulent Byzantine Early Middle Ages have been poorly understood by scholars, especially in the Cyclades, a maritime area of special importance during the Byzantine-Arab struggle for control over the Aegean. Additionally, much of the archaeological studies until the middle 20th century that dealt with the material culture of the Cyclades dated to the period from the 4th to the early 9th centuries, focused on the study of ecclesiastical architecture and religious art, paying less attention to theoretically informed archaeological approaches (see Chapter 1.4). Thus, the increasing volume of archaeological data regarding Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Early Middle Ages from the Cyclades remained without interpretation on the basis of the conceptual and methodological models of island archaeology.

In this respect, the remarkable richness and diversity of historical or natural landscapes, monuments and material culture on the islands make it reasonable at a strategic level to select the maritime space of the Cyclades as a field of research suitable to explore the questions posed by island archaeology during Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Early Middle Ages. Having considered that, the way we perceive and understand the material culture and the landscape today is radically different from that of previous decades, this thesis contributes to filling the large gaps in the published documentation and the critical reading of the archaeological and historical data available from the Late Antique and the Early Byzantine Cyclades. It offers for the first time a complete and up-to-date reconstruction of the cultural landscape of this vital maritime region during Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Early Middle Ages. Thus, in terms of regional research, each dot added to the map is precious.

In other words this thesis aims to offer a fresh approach to the history and archaeology of the Cyclades from the 4th to the early 9th centuries under the light of current archaeological investigations,

testing questions relating to human-environmental interactions and cultural diversities (see next Chapter). This study is set to a final chronological boundary at the beginning of the 9th century and more specifically the Arab conquest of Crete (824-828). This was a turning point in the Byzantine-Arab struggle for sea supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean that drastically changed the circumstances pertaining to the Cyclades and the Aegean world in general, at least until 961 and the Byzantine re-conquest of Crete (see more details in Chapter 3.4.3).

1.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES, AIMS AND METHODS

Discussing complex socioeconomic phenomena such as development, evolution and changes in the settled landscape of islands, like the Cyclades, one needs to carefully consider a series of different parameters concerning the concept of the island which might be of great importance. In terms of methodological approach, in this study we have chosen to put emphasis on the parameters discussed in this chapter for better understanding the special conditions formed on each island. Each parameter is considered as one of the determining factors for the interpretation of complex historical phenomena in insular environment. As is noted by Bintliff: “The strong regularities exhibited in settlement networks of later prehistoric and ancient societies, may emanate as much from human ecological and sociobiological constraints as from the conscious planning programmes of ancient communities” (2000b, 8).

First of all, the relationship between insularity and island history is complex, but at the same time interesting to investigate. The concept of insularity has been accessed through two completely antithetic aspects: connectivity and isolation. In other words, islands can be considered either as open systems and parts of a complex world of interaction, or as closed geographic units with definite borders. However, as has been supported by many scholars, the concept of absolute island isolation cannot be fully applied to the interrelating insular communities of the highly interactive Aegean Archipelago (Kolodny 1976, 435; Patton 1996, 139; Broodbank 2000, 26–27). The Cyclades, situated almost at the heart of the

Aegean Sea, have formed over the course of their historical trajectory; a diverse but highly interactive world consisting of a dense network of active and extroverted societies fully interacting with broader worlds. Their historical trajectories are generally the product of complex interactions between local and external parameters. Moreover, the concept of connectivity is the key element in the interpretation of settlement networks in the Mediterranean (Horden & Purcell 2000, 123-172). Thus in methodological terms, this study has focused mainly on the concepts of connectivity, interaction and integration, rather than isolation.

The interaction between specific regions and the external world has been supported by the interpretative model of *core-periphery*, which is often used for the analysis of complex socioeconomic phenomena that characterise the societies of the ancient world. It emphasises “the exploitative economic ties between ‘core’ regions with advanced economies, technology, and political structures, and adjacent ‘periphery’ regions less developed in all these aspects” (Bintliff 1997, 17-18). According to Bintliff, “an additional feature of this model is the existence of transition or buffer zones between core and periphery, where native societies are being strongly transformed through contact, or else colonies of the core are acting as agents of change on native societies” (1997, 17-18). As Vionis has argued, the Cyclades became a world of interaction in the Early Middle Ages, between Byzantines and Arabs (2017, 175-176)

Secondly, the insular world of the Aegean is characterised by great diversity on multiple levels. Within the Aegean Archipelago, and accordingly the Cyclades, large diversities can be observed concerning the natural features of the islands. The general concept of ‘island’ makes no real distinction between large and small or fertile and barren. The term ‘island’ for instance, is used to describe the various landscapes and richness of Crete, and at the same time, the micro-topography and small-scale of the tiny islet of Schinoussa (Fig. 1.1). The natural features comprise geographical data which historically support the development and the type of cultural activity the islands express. Thus, peculiar traits such as the varied relief of the landscape, the existence of mineral sources, the high or low

water table, the complexity of coasts, as well as the availability and the distribution of rich cultivable land could play a fundamental role in shaping aspects of human behavior and accordingly the formation and evolution of settlement systems in different periods of time. Furthermore, insularity incorporates diversity in the geographical location of the islands, their distances from the mainland or other islands and their integration into traditional maritime routes. The impact of all these aspects differs from one island to another.

Thirdly, an important factor which should also be considered, is that local historical developments are closely linked to the geographical location of the settlements. In other words the strategic position of the islands is not the only key factor that forms the character and history of the settlements. Another crucial parameter is the micro-geography of their territory and production area which has great importance, especially in times of crisis.

In this context, insularity and island distinctiveness is responsible for the creation of distinct island identities in the Cyclades despite their common experiences and characteristics (Figs 1.1 & 2.1). The diversity of the islands makes it clear that these geographical entities can be approached as different case studies, and can subsequently be integrated in their wider Cycladic, Aegean or Mediterranean context. Viewing islands as distinct units does not preclude identifying them as nodes of broader networks. Thus, this thesis attempts to offer a fresh approach to the history and archaeology of the Cyclades in Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Early Middle Ages under the light of current archaeological investigations, setting a new framework for the discussion and examination of the settled landscape and material culture dated between the 4th and the early 9th centuries. It is an attempt to identify and interpret human interaction with the landscape in order to “read” the relationship between islands, settlements, landscapes and seascapes.

In order to illustrate this diversity, Paros and Naxos, two neighbouring islands of different size within a complex Aegean world, will be used as case-studies (Fig. 1.2). The geographical unit of Paronaxia, as it is called today, consists of the main islands of Paros and Naxos and a number of inhabited and uninhabited satellite smaller islands and islets.

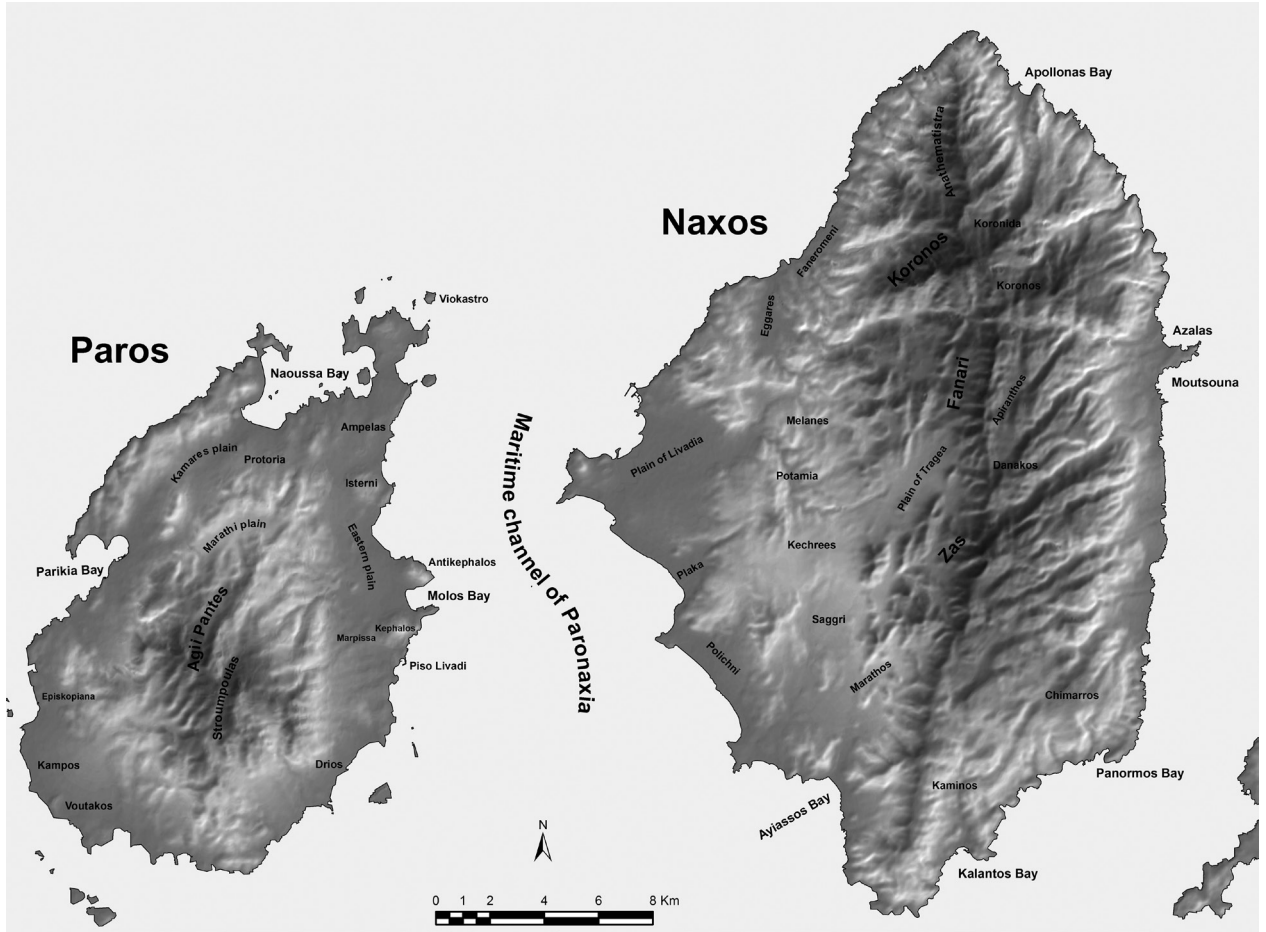


Fig. 1.2: Map of Paros and Naxos with regions and places discussed in the thesis.

From prehistoric times until the present day, they constituted two of the most dynamic spaces in the Aegean Archipelago, with enduring cultural activity fully integrated in military and commercial maritime routes. The history of these insular communities was strongly affected by their prominent strategic position, their local geographical features and their mineral wealth. Nevertheless, Paros and Naxos, although have been considered as a geographical unit, differ significantly regarding the specific features of their local landscapes. Thus, a new tantalising question needs to be answered: whether the local diversities of the Parian and Naxian landscapes have determined the historical evolution of their settlement pattern, as well as the ways in which these two adjacent small insular spaces integrated and interacted with broader worlds in specific conditions and in specific periods of time. Especially during the course of Late Antiquity and the

turbulent Byzantine Early Middle Ages, it will be a challenging task to trace how these two neighbouring insular communities reacted under the same general circumstances pertaining to the Aegean and to what extent the landscape played a role in this process.

The methodology proposed is an interdisciplinary approach, which combines archaeological evidence, literary sources, and observations of the sites and micro-landscapes as a whole, with the advantages offered by the application of new technologies in archaeological research.

First of all, a rethinking over the available historical sources and a re-evaluation of published archaeological evidence were absolutely essential steps in order to shed further light on the relationship between settlement patterns, political authority and the economy of the islands. The Cyclades in contrast

to other neighbouring maritime or mainland regions, such as the northern Aegean, Crete, the Dodecanese and Mainland Greece, are hardly mentioned in the contemporary literary sources of the periods in question (see more about the available written sources concerning the Cyclades in Chapter 3.1). The review of this limited material enables the integration of new data in the study of the settled landscape of the Cyclades. On the other hand, the scarcity and uncertainty of historical evidence makes the archaeological material the most valuable source of information suitable for the investigation of Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Early Middle Ages in the Cyclades. The available archaeological evidence from the islands of Paros and Naxos is composed mostly of architectural remains (religious buildings and a limited number of public or private structures), marble sculpture, fresco decorations, ceramic material, cemeteries, workshops, and valuable data from surface surveys and excavations. Through the critical reading of the published archaeological and historical information, the understanding of the settled landscape of the Cyclades is placed on a new footing. It is also worth noting that in the present thesis architectural marble sculptures from the site of Voutakos and ceramic material from the old underwater harbour research in Parikia are published for the first time.²

Apart from reassessing published material, which is an absolutely essential process, this thesis is also based on field observations that have been conducted by the author in 2015 and 2016 at all sites and regions discussed in the following chapters. By visiting and exploring sites I had the opportunity to experience the landscape with all my senses. It was not a systematic archaeological survey but an attempt to better understand the natural environment and place sites within their context in the landscape. It is worth noting that, permission to conduct intensive survey was not obtained from the Greek Archaeological Authorities, thus, the collection of surface material was not possible. Therefore, the personal observations included the localisation of sites, the careful and thorough *in situ* examination of surface

archaeological material (pottery and architecture) by recording detailed descriptions and the photographic documentation of the archaeological structures and surface ceramics. This process not only fills the gaps in the published documentation, but also offers new valuable information broadening our perspective. As a result of this limitation, I cannot produce pottery profiles or publish professional photographs of the ceramics. Individual sherds or groups of sherds are recorded *in situ* by photography as a source of reference in research.

Finally, a key component of this study is the use of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to perform various analytical tasks, which will allow for an investigation of settlement networks and communication as well as their accessibility to the sea, their proximity to cultivable areas, to water sources, and their integration to maritime or land routes. The geographical parameter is used as the main interpretative tool for the analysis of information relating to the environmental backgrounds of settlements. The topographic distribution of settlements will support evidence regarding settlement patterns and networks. Micro-geographical features of settlements' territories will permit a better understanding of their economic potential.

The analysis of archaeological data as well as information about the geographical and environmental setting of the settlements allows a better understanding of human behaviour within a specific landscape. People, who interact with their natural environment, are placed at the centre of this analysis.

Additionally, valuable archaeological data from other areas of the Aegean and the broader Mediterranean world (insular, coastal and inland) are used as excellent comparative material. In this way the micro-regional analysis of the Parian and Naxian landscapes can be integrated into the broader Aegean and Mediterranean framework.

The overall aims and contributions of the present work can be summarised under three headings:

- a) The principal aim of this thesis is to capture the dynamics of the settlement pattern of the islands of Paros and Naxos in Late Antiquity, taking into account issues such as the different images of insularity, the geographical parameter, the micro-topography, the general circumstances

2. My deepest acknowledgements should be addressed to the former 28th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, for kindly granting me permission to study the sculpture material of the basilica at Voutakos and to Ioanna Kraounaki, archaeologist of the Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities of Greece, for kindly granting me permission to study the ceramic material of the port area of Parikia.

pertaining to the Eastern Mediterranean, and the interaction between humans and landscapes as well as between islands and the external world. It is an attempt to reconstruct the network of the Cycladic settlements shedding light on the interaction and communication between islands and settlements, the investigation of their different types and their interdependence with micro-geographical features. The analytical tools offered by the GIS permit an overview of the natural environment and the investigation of the settlement networks and communication as well as their landscape visibility, their accessibility to the sea, their proximity to fertile plains, to water sources, and to natural resources. The documentation of the settlements will provide a tool for better understanding the importance and role of certain islands or settlements in the dense maritime commercial network of the Eastern Mediterranean world.

- b) The second aim is to highlight changes in the settled landscape of the islands in the transition between Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Early Middle Ages, taking into account all the aforementioned parameters. It is an attempt to shed further light on the relationship between settlement patterns, political authority and the economy of the islands. Additionally, under the light of the Byzantine-Arab struggle for control over the Aegean, it could be possible to investigate and understand the geostrategic importance of certain settlements or islands in the communication and defensive networks of this period (late 7th – early 9th centuries). The present study aims to illustrate how these two neighbouring insular communities reacted, in terms of economy, society and material culture, under the same general circumstances pertaining to the Aegean after the early 8th century and to what extent the landscape played a role in this process.
- c) Having reconstructed the network of settlements in the periods in question we move to the last stage of our research, which is the production of thematic maps in order to visualise the results of this study (realised in an Arch GIS 10.2 environment).

1.3 THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE BYZANTINE PERIOD

The debate about the transition from Late Antiquity to the Byzantine Early Middle centuries has been dominated until recently by the concept of decline or growth of the urban centres and the resulting collapse or transformation of the ancient world (see Haldon 1997; Liebeschuetz 2001). The evolution of this strong bipolar interpretative model has shaped our perspective of the period between the 4th and the early 9th centuries in a negative manner.

In the perspective of Classical archaeologists who excavated many ancient Greek cities evidence such as the abandonment of ancient civic or religious edifices, the privatisation of public space, and the extensive re-use of ancient building material for the construction of new structures has been regarded as clear aspects of decline, realisation and demographic decrease in a context of shrinkage or disappearance of the urban economy. In this respect, the superiority of the Classical, Hellenistic and Early Roman world was supported against the Late Antique and, mainly, Byzantine culture. In contrast, the plethora of large magnificent Early Christian religious complexes unearthed in both coastal and mainland sites, and the high diagnosticity of Late Roman ceramics (widely traded types of amphorae and fine wares) give an impression of a dramatic explosion of population and human activity, generally in the Eastern Roman Empire over the course of Late Antiquity. Additionally, the inability for many years to recognise material culture securely dated to the Byzantine Early Middle Ages, mainly ceramic evidence, suggested an interruption of human activity in many sites with previous occupation. In this respect, material culture dated to the Byzantine Early Middle Ages remained until recently a rather neglected field of research and the period between the middle 7th and 9th centuries.

The overstressed historical validity of written sources, especially hagiographical texts, such as the *Life of Saint Theoktiste*, the *Miracles of Saint Demetrius* and the *Life of Saint Theodore*, indicating

that some of the Aegean islands were completely deserted during the 8th-10th centuries has shaped our perception of this period in a negative manner for many years. Earthquakes, plagues, the penetration of Slavs in the Greek Peninsula, the dynamic emergence of Arabs in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Byzantine-Arab struggle for control over the Aegean, and the subsequent Arab conquest of Crete in combination with the limited information offered by Byzantine historians, led some scholars to support the view that life almost stopped in coastal localities, and insular populations were withdrawn to their mountainous hinterlands (Malamut 1988, 67-68). Despite considerable progress in the current archaeological investigations this historiographical topos was until recently very powerful.

A typical example is the case of Paros where the Late Antique centuries, mostly, because of the erection of the large religious complex of Ekatontapiliani were considered as a period of prosperity, while the inability to recognise securely dated material and monuments dated to the Byzantine Early Middle Ages in conjunction with the *Life of Saint Theoktiste* (Talbot 1996), led the majority of historians and archaeologists to support the view that the island was totally abandoned from the 8th to the 10th or 11th centuries (see Chapter 4.7). Books and articles dealing with the history and archaeology of Paros or the religious complex of Ekatontapiliani devote only a few words for a period that covers at least five centuries (Aliprantis 1996, 24; Kourayos 2015, 21), despite the fact that the debate about the periods in question is still ongoing and well-known through numerous case-studies in Asia Minor, Cyprus, mainland Greece and other Aegean islands.

The establishment of landscape archaeology in the recent decades as both an archaeological technique, and a theoretical construct affect our understanding of the past societies and contribute to a shift in the older dominant historiographical perceptions. Landscape archaeology has emphasised the role of the entire landscape in ancient life. It approaches the landscapes as spaces of cultural products which reflect the evidence of a dynamic process of human-environmental interaction and contributes to the recognition and interpretation of the material culture and settlement patterning of different periods of time. In this respect, the

development of landscape archaeology in Greece during recent decades offered new perspectives and interpretative tools for Late Antique and Byzantine Archaeology providing the basis upon which the insular communities of the Aegean can be studied and interpreted (Bintliff 1992; 2007; Cherry 1994). The methodological perspectives and the results from intensive regional surface surveys conducted in many regions of the Aegean have offered new approaches for better understanding the complex and contrasting characteristics of the Late Antique and Early Medieval centuries in the Eastern Mediterranean (Argolid: Jameson *et al.* 1994, Boeotia: Bintliff & Snodgrass 1985; 1988b; Bintliff 1996; 2013a, Keos: Cherry *et al.* 1991, Laconia: Cavanagh *et al.* 1996; 2002, Melos: Renfrew & Wagstaff 1982, Messenia: McDonald & Rapp 1972, Methana: Mee & Forbes 1997, Nemea: Alcock *et al.* 1994, Pylos: Davis *et al.* 1997; Antikythera: Bevan & Conolly 2013).

Regarding Late Antiquity, landscape archaeology shed more light in the examination of the multiple parameters of the social transformation in town and country in the broader Aegean world (Bintliff 2007). Between the 4th and middle 7th centuries, both prosperity and decline, wealth and poverty, gradual shrinkage of the urban life compared to previous periods, and extensive building activity is observed. According to Bintliff: "...decline is not the only option for systems which are running down so dramatically. The remaining energy can form new patterns, often of considerable internal sophistication, through concentrating the constantly dissipating resources of the system into new constellations of highpoints surrounded by increasing zones of minimal energy" (2014b, 325-326).

Additionally, landscape archaeology contributes to the recognition and interpretation of the material culture and settlement patterning of the Byzantine Early Middle Ages (Bintliff 2000a; 2013b; Armstrong 1996; 2002). It is only recently that the ceramic evidence of the so-called "Dark Ages" are becoming recognisable to the experts, something that affects our understanding of both the economic activity on the islands as well as the wider communication networks in that crucial period. Byzantine landscape archaeology, as a newly established discipline, began to deal with the turbulent period of the Dark Ages approaching the landscape

as a continuously changing cultural product of the human-environmental relationship (Tsigonaki & Sarris 2016). In Bintliff's words: "If we want to reconstruct the countryside as it might have appeared to contemporaries during the major sub-phases of the post-Roman era in a Byzantine province, the only way forward is to collate the fragmentary evidence of standing monuments, limited excavations, the "windows" opened up by literary and archival sources, and complement it with a form of intensive investigation in the landscape known as surface artefact survey" (Bintliff 2000, 38). Additionally, the publications of Vionis for the insular communities of the Aegean Sea in the Byzantine and Ottoman period (2006; 2012; 2013; 2016; 2017) contribute to a shift in the dominant historiographical perception.

In this general context, a re-evaluation of the archaeological and historical material at hand is needed in order for the interesting history of the Cyclades between the 4th and the early 9th centuries to be approached in a more optimistic point of view. The islands of Paros and Naxos prove to be ideal case-studies for applying this alternative interpretative model in the investigation of the material culture and settled landscape of the Cyclades. Through this thesis, the historiographical questions discussed above are placed on a new footing concerning the insular framework of the Cyclades.

1.4 A HISTORY OF RESEARCH

The history and archaeology of the Cyclades have been studied in different ways throughout the years of scientific research, in accordance with different perspectives and approaches applied. This chapter provides a brief history of archaeological research in the Cyclades highlighting the most representative excavations, surveys and studies that have dealt with the investigation of Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Early Middle Ages. The aim is not to offer a detailed corpus of the related publications but a general overview of the development of methodological approaches and interpretative models from the early 20th century to recent years.

From the very beginning of research in Greece the archaeologists of the Archaeological Services, the Archaeological Society, Greek Universities and foreign archaeological schools paid considerable

attention to prehistory as well as to the most "glorious" periods of ancient Greek civilisation (from Late Bronze Age to Hellenistic centuries), but did not consider the Post-Classical material culture in any detail. For many years excavators removed, with almost no documentation, evidence dated to Late Antiquity and the Byzantine centuries in order to reveal the remains of "the most important" periods of Greek civilisation. Archaeological research of the period between the 4th and the middle 7th centuries was mainly focused on the investigation of Early Christian basilicas, while for the following Byzantine Early Middle Ages interest centred on art historical aspects of material culture or the study and conservation of preserved religious monuments. Moreover, excavators of Early Christian basilicas tend to concentrate on those phases within their speciality.

In this respect, the majority of systematic and rescue excavations conducted in the Cyclades at multi-period sites from the beginning of the 20th century until the 70s followed unsophisticated methods, without all kinds of archaeological evidence being recorded thoroughly. As a result, pivotal information concerning the periods in question has been totally missed while very important material is still unpublished. Some characteristic examples are as follows: excavations on the island of Paros conducted by O. Rubensohn in the area of Parikia (1900; 1901; 1902; 1917; 1962), restoration and excavation works in the large religious complex of Panagia Ekatontapiliani and the basilica of Tris Ekklisies, carried out by A. Orlandos (1960a; 1960b; 1961; 1963; 1964; 1965; 1965-1966; 1969; 1975); a Christian basilica at Voutakos excavated by E. Varoucha-Christodouloupoulou in the early 60s (Orlandos 1961, 113, note 3; 1969, 199, note 3, fig. 23; Pallas 1977, 205); on the island of Naxos the temple of Apollo (located on the small islet of Palatia in the harbor of Chora), excavated by G. Welter (1924).

In the first case, the German archaeologist concentrated on the remains of his specialty (Classical period). However, nothing is visible today as most of the sites are occupied by modern activity. The publications of Orlandos regarding the two monuments from Paros (Panagia Ekatontapiliani and Tris Ekklisies) mostly concentrate on studies of the architectural history of the religious edifices and stylistic observations on the sculptural decoration. In addition, earlier or later

phases of the sites have been presented very briefly, posing rather than solving questions and confusing later researchers. The results of the excavation at Voutakos were never published and the architectural remains are not visible today. In the case of Naxos, although priority has been given to the pre-Christian phases of the temple, the excavator noticed that during Late Antiquity the ancient temple had been converted into a Christian basilica. During this early stage of research, specialised studies of specific still standing churches dated to the Byzantine Early Medieval period appeared to be focusing on the history of art and architecture (Kontoleon 1960b; Dimitrokallis 1968a).

On a rather different note, the tradition of German landscape studies from the early 19th until the middle 20th century (*Landeskunde*, “landscape lore”) focused its interest on landscapes and sought to highlight the evolution of human settlement within them in the Mediterranean in general, and Italy, and Greece in particular (Philippon 1950-1959; Jahnkuhn 1955; Kirsten 1956). In this context, the reading of various Greek landscapes was achieved by the German *Landeskunde*, which led archaeological investigation to form new modern perspectives (Bintliff *et al.* 2000, 148; Bintliff 2008, 158-159). A specific volume was dedicated to the Aegean Archipelago and its islands (Philippon 1959).

For the majority of sites, the archaeological data derived from the systematic or rescue excavations carried out in the Cyclades by the Greek Archaeological Service and Greek Universities in recent decades, which were followed by modern methods with a more scientific basis. The accompanying publications offered a limited but valuable number of sophisticated and detailed studies, based mostly on specific categories of the archaeological evidence from different sites, such as the architecture, pottery and sculpture.

Characteristic examples of systematic excavations on the Cycladic islands are: the rural sanctuaries of Demeter and Apollo at Gyroulas and Dionysus at Yria in Naxos, two pagan temples converted into Christian churches (Lambrinouidakis 2005; Lambrinouidakis & Gruben 1987-1988; Simantoni-Bournia 2001), and the site of Palaiopolis in Andros where there were archaeological surface surveys (1985-1986) followed by systematic excavations (1987-2007) in the basilica of the Agora

(Palaiokrassa-Kopitsa 1996; 2001; 2007). Rescue and systematic excavations in recent years by the former 2nd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities on the islands of Thera and Schinoussa have unearthed important settlements dated to Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Early Middle Ages (AD 1988; 1989; 1992-1993; 1992; 1993; 1994; 1999; Gerousi 1996; 2003; 2010; Chatzilazarou 2008).

At the same time, considerable progress has been made by the dynamic evolution of regional archaeological surface surveys in the wider Aegean context (Bintliff 2007, 649-678). A valuable and detailed book by C. Renfrew and M. Wagstaff “An island polity: The archaeology of exploitation in Melos” (1982) offers a new archaeological perspective about the study of the past of the islands. An equally important book by J.F. Cherry, J.L. Davis and E. Mantzourani “Landscape archaeology as long-term history: Northern Keos in the Cycladic Islands from Earliest Settlement until Modern Times” (1991) provides another modern attempt to reconstruct the island’s past, taking into account the whole past and all the evidence for it.

Our knowledge of the material culture of the Late Antique and Early Medieval Cyclades has also been improved by intensive field surveys on Naxos and Paros. In the 1980s a French team undertook extensive field survey in the north-west of Naxos. Their work identified a number of Late Antique and Medieval sites, but did not consider the Post-Classical landscape in any detail (Erard-Cerceau *et al.* 1993). It is worth mentioning that, the aforementioned regional surveys on Melos, Keos and Naxos had many problems in recognising Byzantine ceramics, particularly those dating between the 7th and 9th centuries. Therefore, we need to be very skeptical when discussing their results concerning the “emptiness” of the Early Medieval island landscape.

In 2001-2002 and 2006 A. Vionis, as an employee of the former 2nd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, carried out intensive surveys around early Christian basilicas and medieval churches on Paros and Naxos, identifying several settlement sites and pottery material among which there were traces of Late Antique and Early Medieval occupation (Naxos: AD 2006, 1113-1114; Vionis forthcoming, Paros: Vionis 2006, 463; 2012). Although the final results of this research are awaiting publication, some

invaluable information was kindly provided by A. Vionis for the needs of this dissertation. Additionally, the ongoing Norwegian Naxos Survey (2010) and the Apalirou Environs Project (2015) investigate the architectural remains of Kastro Apalirou on Naxos as well as its surrounding natural environment, in an attempt to highlight how economic and political changes can be seen in the landscape (Hill & Roland 2016; Crow & Turner 2016; Hill *et al.* 2017). In 2013, the Norwegian Institute in Athens organised the International Conference “Naxos and the Byzantine Aegean” by bringing together scholars who have worked on Naxos and other Byzantine sites in the Aegean (in preparation). Finally, the Historic Landscape Characterization Project, which is a method for mapping the entire landscape with reference to its historic development, used Naxos as a pilot, contributing new approaches to the archaeology of the Byzantine landscape (Crow *et al.* 2011).

Apart from the excavations, surveys and the accompanying publications, many historical and archaeological studies have appeared focusing on the architecture of churches, stylistic observations on wall paintings and sculptural members, numismatic, sigillographic and epigraphic evidence. A special mention is required for the epigraphic work of G. Kiourtzian “Recueil des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes des Cyclades. De la fin du III^e au VIII^e siècle après J.-C.” (2000). It provides a corpus of 205 inscriptions from ten of the Cycladic islands, shedding more light to the life of the islanders in the periods in question. Outstanding among them are the so-called cadastre of Thera and the invocations for divine help carved by seafarers on the rocks of the small bay of Grammata on the island of Syros. An important contribution to the architectural history of the Cyclades, and more specifically to the island of Naxos, during Late Antiquity and the Byzantine period is offered by the unpublished dissertation of K. Aslanidis “Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία στη Νάξο. Η Μετεξέλιξη από την Παλαιοχριστιανική στη Μεσοβυζαντινή Αρχιτεκτονική” (2014a). The recently published monumental work “Atlas of the Christian monuments of the Aegean. From the Early Christian Years to the Fall of Constantinople” took an important step in collecting all Byzantine monuments of the Aegean islands and, by consequence, of the Cyclades (Gkioles & Pallis 2014). Nevertheless, it is a catalogue

of sites and remains a rather descriptive work, without paying attention to the interaction between the humans, the monuments and the landscape.

In addition, the contribution of Greek archaeologists and historians is important. A. Vionis, G. Dimitrokallis, Ch. Pennas, V. Penna, E. Gerousi, G. Mastoropoulos, A. Mitsani, N. Drandakis, F. Drossoyianni, V. Christides, have studied the Late Antique and Early Medieval material culture of the Cycladic islands and have provided invaluable information for this dissertation.

