

The settlements of the Middle and Late Byzantine period in Euboea

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Abstract

Η διερεύνηση του θέματος των οικισμών της μέσης και ύστερης βυζαντινής περιόδου στην Εύβοια (από τα μέσα του 7ου αιώνα έως και το 1470: οθωμανική κατάληψη) ξεκίνησε από τη διαπίστωση ότι τα σωζόμενα στο πεδίο σαφώς οικιστικού χαρακτήρα κατάλοιπα είναι περιορισμένα (κυρίως πύργοι) και μεταξύ τους απομακρυσμένα, ενώ απουσιάζουν σχετικές συνθετικές μελέτες για την Εύβοια που συνεκτιμούν τεκμηριωμένα αρχαιολογικά δεδομένα και γραπτές πηγές. Η χωροθέτηση των οικιστικών πυρήνων, ο χρόνος δημιουργίας τους, η ταυτότητά τους (πόλεις-κάστρα, οχυρωμένοι οικισμοί, ατείχιστοι αγροτικοί οικισμοί κ.λπ.) καθώς και οι μεταξύ τους σχέσεις θεωρούνται ιδιαίτερα σημαντικά για την κατανόηση της ιστορίας του νησιού και του ρόλου του κατά τη μεσαιωνική περίοδο, λόγω και της σημασίας που το δίκτυο των πόλεων και των οικισμών είχε διαχρονικά στο Βυζάντιο για τον καθορισμό της επικράτειάς του και τον έλεγχο αυτής πολιτικά, στρατιωτικά και οικονομικά. Συνοψίζοντας τα δεδομένα παρατηρούνται τα ακόλουθα: Οι οικισμοί, πόλεις-κάστρα, οχυρωμένα πολισμάτα και «χωρία», εντοπίζονται κατεξοχήν στις εύφορες περιοχές, σε παράλιες θέσεις που εξυπηρετούν και τη δια θαλάσσης επικοινωνία, όπως είναι η Κάρυστος, το Αλιβέρι, η Βάθεια κ.λπ., ή σε πεδιάδες ή οροπέδια της ενδοχώρας, όπως στις περιπτώσεις της περιοχής του Λίλλαντα ή της Δίρφυς, αλλά και στη ζώνη Αυλωναρίου – Κύμης. Εμφανής είναι, με βάση βέβαια τα έως σήμερα δεδομένα της έρευνας, η πυκνότητα των οικισμών στην κεντρική και νότια Εύβοια.

Συνολικά σημειώνονται 25 οχυρωμένοι οικισμοί. Εξ αυτών, περίπου οι μισοί εμφανίζονται για πρώτη φορά στην ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο, όπως τα κάστρα Κλεισούρας, Μαντουκό, Argalia, Γιάλτρων (Β. Εύβοια), Ριζόκαστρο, Λεχρές, Φύλλων (Κ. Εύβοια), Castello Rosso, Καστρί – Γεραιστός (Ν. Εύβοια). Άλλα συνιστούν αρχαίες οχυρώσεις με μεσαιωνική φάση χρήσης, όπως η Δραγγονάρα – La Cypria (Κ. Εύβοια), η Φιλάγρα και τα Άρμενα (Ν. Εύβοια). Πολλά είναι βέβαια τα ερωτήματα που παραμένουν. Σε ποια χρονική στιγμή της μεσαιωνικής περιόδου χρησιμοποιούνται εκ νέου; Οι θέσεις είχαν πλέον χαρακτήρα οχυρωμένου οικισμού; Η όποια κατοίκηση καταλαμβάνει το σύνολο ή μέρος της αρχαίας θέσης;

Σε κάποιες από αυτές τις οχυρωμένες θέσεις, οι όποιες οικιστικές εγκαταστάσεις –ερείπια κτισμάτων, εκκλησιών, δεξαμενών—εντοπίζονται εντός της οχύρωσης. Σε άλλες περιπτώσεις, τα μνημεία ή / και άλλα ιστορικά δεδομένα παρέχουν ενδείξεις για σημαντική οικιστική δραστηριότητα, και μάλιστα όχι συνεκτική, πρωτίστως έξω από τα τείχη, στην ευρύτερη περιοχή του κάστρου. Στην τελευταία περίπτωση το οχυρό ήταν πρωτίστως έδρα του τοπικού άρχοντα και θα συνιστούσε σημείο αναφοράς μίας ευρύτερης οικιστικής ζώνης, λειτουργώντας ενδεχομένως και ως καταφύγιο του πληθυσμού σε δύσκολες ώρες.

Ιδιαίτερη βέβαια θέση στο δίκτυο των οχυρωμένων οικισμών του νησιού κατέχει καταρχήν η Χαλκίδα. Η Χαλκίδα – Εύριπος – Negroponte συνιστά διαχρονικά το μεγαλύτερο οικιστικό κέντρο της Εύβοιας, το μόνο που με βεβαιότητα διαθέτει και κατά τη μεσαιωνική περίοδο αναπτυγμένο αστικό

χαρακτήρα και στο οποίο μπορεί, χωρίς ενδοιασμούς, να αποδοθεί ο όρος «πόλη - κάστρο». Ακολουθούν σε σπουδαιότητα οι πόλεις που φιλοξενούν τις πέντε επισκοπές του νησιού (Ευρίπου, Πορθμού, Αυλώνος, Ωρεών, Καρύστου), οι οποίες διαδραματίζουν, επίσης, έναν ιδιαίτερο διοικητικό ρόλο σε ευρύτερη περιοχή, αλλά δεν φαίνεται να είναι οργανωμένες χωροταξικά με τον ίδιο τρόπο. Ιδιαίτερη αναφορά αρμόζει να γίνει και σε άλλα οχυρωμένα πολιίσματα όπου έδρευαν επίσης—πέραν της Χαλκίδας, της Καρύστου και των Ωρεών—φράγκοι ηγεμόνες ή αξιωματούχοι της βενετικής διοίκησης, και τα οποία κατά συνέπεια διαδραμάτισαν σημαντικό διοικητικό ρόλο κατά την περίοδο της φραγκοκρατίας. Σε αυτές συγκαταλέγονται η Κλεισούρα, η Κούπα, το Ποτήρι και τα Φύλλα. Φυσικά, κατά την περίοδο αυτή στη διοικητική αναδιοργάνωση του νησιού και στον έλεγχο της υπαίθρου μετείχαν όλες οι οχυρώσεις—ακόμη και οι μεμονωμένοι πύργοι, καθώς αυτές συσχετιζόνταν απόλυτα με το φεουδαλικό σύστημα που είχε επιβληθεί με την έλευση των Λατίνων στην Ανατολή. Ωστόσο, δεν έχουν απαντηθεί με συγκεκριμένο τρόπο ούτε τα θέματα της σχέσης των επιμέρους οχυρώσεων μεταξύ τους.

Η Εύβοια φαίνεται να γνωρίζει ιδιαίτερη οικιστική ανάπτυξη κατά την περίοδο της φραγκοκρατίας, ενώ η βυζαντινή περίοδος δημιουργεί περισσότερα ερωτηματικά. Για το δίκτυο πόλεων και πολισμάτων κατά τη βυζαντινή περίοδο ελάχιστα μπορούμε να υποθέσουμε.

Introduction

The importance of the network of cities and settlements held by Byzantium through the ages is the reason this subject was chosen for the current paper. This network defined the Byzantine domain and indeed helped Byzantium maintain political, military and financial control. Another reason for this paper is the absence of other such synthetic studies for Euboea. I would like to stress from the start that this study is not the conclusion, but is rather the beginning of my research.¹ Essentially, this present work is concerned with phrasing the main questions and determining the methodology which we can use to approach this topic.

The main goal of this study is to examine the settlements on the island of Euboea during the Middle and Late Byzantine period, i.e. the period between the middle of the 7th century and 15th century CE (1470: the Ottoman conquest). Specifically, in this study an effort has been made to undertake the following:

- a) Determine the populated areas of the island during this period and, if possible, the density of the settlements.
- b) Determine the nature of these settlements (for example their role in administration, defence and economy) and also their morphological features and lifespans.
- c) Examine the relationships between different kinds of settlements.
- d) Investigate the changes that may have occurred in residential and spatial organization after the Frankish conquest.

As the basis for my research I have used the following sources of information:

1. Existing bibliography, which consists mainly of the few synthetic works on the topography of the island, fortifications, settlements and churches or monasteries. The works of Johannes

1. I presented this study at the international scientific conference 'An Island Between Two Worlds: The Archaeology of Euboea from Prehistoric to Byzantine Times' (Eretria, July 12-14, 2013). In this present expanded version, it was also presented as a lecture at the Department of Classical Archeology in Merton College of the University of Oxford, as part of a seminar dedicated to Euboea. I would like to express my gratitude to M. Aslanides for his support in translating the text into English.

Koder and Friedrich Hild,² Dimitri Triantafyllopoulos,³ Charalambos Farandos,⁴ Elizabeth Malamut,⁵ Donald Keller⁶ and Theodoros Skouras⁷ were invaluable. (Skouras has truly been a revelation to me; his essays based on local research and his meticulous listing of collected information stand as points of reference to anyone tackling the matter.) My own local research on Euboea, which was limited and not strictly related to this particular study, but mostly to other administrative issues, has also provided additional information.

2. Primary sources, mainly the first Ottoman records, cartographic information and surviving monuments. The records, however, are not exhaustive, at least in this phase of the research. I have used the existing cartographic information, both ancient and modern, pertaining to the issue.⁸ By posing new questions, I accessed useful information and I also attempted to create new maps,⁹ as a basis for debate, examination and, possibly, as a means of reaching conclusions. As for primary sources, my main guide for drawing conclusions was the archaeological remains,¹⁰ which were examined in tangent with the rest of the data.

Before I conclude this concise summary of methodological matters, it should be pointed out that the existing studies have not resulted in uniform results, either because they pose completely different types of questions or because they use different kinds of sources and theoretical frameworks. Skouras, for example, notes down every kind of fortification he comes across in the field and tries, subsequently, to link it with positions referenced in the written sources. However, his dating should be checked. Malamut, on the other hand, who is studying the central part of the Byzantine period, based her conclusions chiefly on written sources, though her work also involved a survey of relevant publications for those monuments that confirm the sources. In fact, she points out, explicitly, the issues with using sources that often provide incomplete or contradictory information while frequently mentioning medieval Euboea using anachronisms, e.g. by referring to Chalkis, instead of Euripos.¹¹ The correlation of written sources and archaeological evidence has been proven to be extremely difficult, if not impossible. An excellent recording of almost all the data has been undertaken by Koder and Hild, and Koder's work examined the matter in more detail as far as the geographical data of Euboea under Frankish rule is concerned. Nonetheless, it still draws on archaeological evidence supplied by bibliography, without independent field research in most cases. Certain issues in Koder's study are pointed out by Triantafyllopoulos who, like many of the researchers aiming to undertake a synthetic approach to the issue, focuses on attempting to identify location names and archaeological remains. One example of the problems that have arisen is that Triantafyllopoulos accepts the existence of medieval castles at Pili and Ahmed Aga,¹² the castles which Koder does not mention. Moreover, other castles referred to by

2. Koder and Hild 1976.

3. Triantafyllopoulos 1974, 209-258; 1990, 165-170; 1992, 63-75.

4. Farandos 1980, 323-380, pls. 1-32.

5. Malamut 1988, Vol. I, 221-227 and Vols. I and II *passim*.

6. Keller 1985.

7. Skouras 1975, 327-400; 2003.

8. An examination of different maps allows us to note the wide variety of ways used to present information, which depend on the issues set out by the cartographer and the goals of each piece of research. The problem of contradictions and shortages of the available primary sources was pointed out by Malamut 1988, 182.

9. This is yet another opportunity to thank Christos Petropoulos, topographer and engineer, for his cooperation in the creation of the maps; without his help this study would not have been realized.

10. Recorded here (and under examination) are mainly fortifications that are, in all probability, related to settlement units. I refer, selectively, to medieval towers and note only that they coexist with more relevant data, as there is no indisputable way of asserting that their existence is associated with the development of residential centres. The presence of non-monastic churches is also taken into consideration, especially in relation to the assumption that there has been cohesive settlement in a certain area.

11. Malamut 1988, 181-182.

12. Triantafyllopoulos 1974, 233.

name in written sources, such as Graspilea and Acalia, remain ‘ghosts,’ and are the subject of different interpretations by researchers.¹³ Dealing with medieval settlements involves, first of all, looking for cities and castles in the territory of Euboea. After attempting, first, to document those fortifications that enclosed and/or are related, in many ways, to settlement remains, it was observed that there is no homogeneity among the fortifications in terms of their function or their relationship to the settlement or settlements to which they refer. Moreover, only a small number of the fortifications were created during the period in question, whereas others are older but were still in use in medieval times.

A prominent position in the network of fortified medieval settlements on the island is, of course, occupied by Chalkis, Byzantine Euripos—one of the bigger (if not the biggest) Euboean residential centres through the ages.¹⁴ The city of Euripos evolved where the centre of modern Chalkis is presently located. The ancient city of Chalkis was situated elsewhere, around the area of Agios Stefanos, Agios Ioannis and the new hospital (where a large part of the ancient wall was revealed recently¹⁵). In fact, during the Byzantine period, the city moved closer to the Euripos Strait. The first mention of Byzantine Euripos, as a bishop’s seat, relates to 867, when the bishop of Euripos took part in a synod.¹⁶ Around 880, when the town was under siege by the Emir of Tarsus, Osman, there is the first mention of the city walls,¹⁷ which obviously predate the siege. Euripos is the only settlement of the island that definitely maintains a developed urban character during the medieval era (it was the seat of administrative and ecclesiastical authorities, commercial activity and was even densely populated); the term ‘city-castle’ can be attributed to it, without reservation.¹⁸ The development of the medieval settlement seems to have occurred in tangent with the construction of the walls by the Byzantines,¹⁹ and, according to the aforementioned written sources, these walls cannot post-date the mid-9th century.²⁰ We have access to more information on the city under Frankish and Venetian rule, on its inhabitants and how life in it was organized, although very few monuments from this period remain today: namely, the church of Agia Paraskevi and the secular, probably administrative, building known as ‘the mansion of Bailo’. We can discern two medieval sub-periods. During the first, the city was ruled by the Lombards, while during the second the Venetians became the only rulers of the city and the island. The Venetians had, during the time of coexistence, resided in a distinct part of the castle, which was separated by a special enclosure from the Lombard quarter. At that time, Negroponte emerged as one of the most powerful ports in the Mediterranean. The Venetians had even established an arsenal in the city.²¹ Outside the walls lay the suburbs, which are mentioned in the sources and are attested by recent excavations (although we do not yet know their size and their exact position). The urban enclosure was repaired almost certainly on a number of occasions or even adjusted to meet the needs of the inhabitants.

13. Triantafyllopoulos 1992, 68.

14. Kalamara et al. 2015; see Kalamara et al. 2015 for a concise approach to the history of the city.

15. Kosma and Chairidakis 2015, 8-24.

16. Kontogiannis 2012, 2, 3.

17. Kontogiannis 2012, 4, n. 14.

18. Adler, 1907, 10; Malamut 1988, 221-222 and 289-290. For the city of Venetian Negroponte and Byzantine Euripos, see Koder 1973, 69-99 and Kontogiannis 2012, 10-29, in which all previous bibliography is referenced.

19. Parts of the walls of the Castle of Chalkis are visible at only a small number of locations in the city: in the Infantry School, the part that houses the Folklore Museum of the city (Skalkotta and Mordechai Frizis St), close to the fire department (M. Frizi St) and in the basement of the Chamber of Commerce (Venizelou St). However, previous rescue excavations have revealed many parts of the medieval fortification, which makes an accurate reconstruction of its course possible. cf. Kontogiannis 2012, 5 and n. 16.

20. Many chronologies for the construction of the walls from the 6th century to the Frankish-Venetian period have been suggested (cf. Koder 1973, 71-77; Kontogiannis 2012, 5-6 and n. 16 and 17). Kontogiannis’s study, however, which examines archaeological remains synthetically, convincingly argues that the wall was constructed in a single chronological phase—the Byzantine phase. He bases his conclusions mainly on its masonry, and discusses the development of the city from the 10th to the 12th century.

21. Jacoby 1981, 169-201.

What other fortifications on Euboea are known from this period and can be related to specific settlements? Moving south, along the shores of the Euboean Gulf but remaining close to Chalkis, we can trace many fortified installations in the region of the Lelantine Plain, and it seems that there several settlements developed. Specifically, the Castle of Fylla (Fig. 1) dominates the area; this was a conquest of the knight Likarios in 1279-1280, and it dates to the era of Frankish rule.²² Adjacent, on the fertile grounds next to the Lilas River, stand the so-called 'twin towers' and the tower of Vasiliko.²³ The Castle of Fylla does not belong to the category of the city-castle, which was common in Byzantium, but rather to the type of castle-residence of a ruler, which was widely known in the feudal Occident. In addition, and also connected to the feudal system, are the numerous single towers, dating to the same period, in the Euboean countryside.²⁴ These were the seat and residence of the feudal lord of the nearby area. On the beach of the wider area of the Lelantine Plain, there are also some remnants of a sea tower-fortress, known as Bourtzi.²⁵ This region is marked on nearly all of the old naval maps as *Lilant*, *Lilanto* or *Tianto*,²⁶ and the written sources refer also to the *potamarcho de Lilanto*, after 1204.²⁷ Koder,²⁸ based on written sources and archaeological data, suggests that there was a castle in the area—the castle of Fylla—and a village (*casale*), which he situates in modern Vasiliko, around the existing tower.²⁹ However, in my opinion, the castle of Fylla cannot be considered a city-castle, owing to its size and the buildings standing inside it.³⁰ Habitation in the area most probably developed as one or two wall-less nuclei in the plain—and in the village of Vasiliko—whereas the castle, the seat of the local ruler, could have functioned as a refuge in hard times. The economy of these settlements would have been mainly agricultural. Recently, in the region of the modern village of Fylla, an agricultural unit for the production of wine has been discovered.³¹ It is interesting to note that currently known archaeological remains of the medieval era indicate intense habitation in the area during the Late Byzantine period. Skouras classifies as medieval the fortification in Afrati,³² which he identifies with the castle Lechres (*Leriche*); however, additional fieldwork is required to verify this claim. Highly enlightening for a discussion on the dispersal of the settlements are two Ottoman records from 1474, immediately after the seizure of the island by the Turks. In these records, the following four villages are reported in the vicinity of the Lilas River: Afrati (with 33 houses), Vasiliko (17 houses), Fylla (18 houses) and Zokoz (6 houses), the last of which has still not been identified today.³³

Communication between the largest city of the island, Euripos, and this particular region that represents its immediate countryside, was established by the 10th century, as we learn from an inscription,

22. Koder and Hild 1976, 242.

23. Angeli and Stylianou 2012, 41-48; Georgopoulou-Verra 1975, 171; Skouras 2003, 47, 109.

24. Triantafyllopoulos 1992.

25. Koder 1973, 96; Skouras does not mention Bourtzi, but he refers to another ruined medieval tower on the plain of Lefkandi near the seashore, which I was unable to locate during my surveys in the area. cf. Skouras 2003, 76.

26. Koder 1973, 30, 31, 95-97, 101, 102.

27. Koder 1973, 102, n. 202 and Koder and Hild 1976, 202-203.

28. Koder 1973, 102.

29. The information, provided in a text from 1420, suggests that there was a tower in the centre of the village of Lilanto, which Dimitris Triantafyllopoulos associated with the village of Vasiliko; Triantafyllopoulos notes the tower that still stands at its centre (1974, 231). From 2006 to 2010 the tower was restored by the 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities (EBA) with co-funding from the 3rd Community Support Framework (CSF).

30. Koder 1973, 96-97.

31. During a rescue excavation conducted by the archaeologist Penny Gani (July-September 2010) on the plot of I. Pappageorgiou, on the right-hand side of Mytikas St in the settlement of Fylla, a wine press and storage rooms were discovered. This agricultural settlement has been dated to the Middle and Late Byzantine era based on its ceramics, but earlier use of the area could not be ruled out.

32. Skouras 1975, 340: he mentions that within the castle many ruins of buildings can be found, and outside it there is the ruined Byzantine church of Agios Vasileios. Also, close to the castle, at the site called Petralona, there are heaps of ruins from an abandoned village. cf. also Malamut 1988, 225.

33. Balta 1989, 121.

which is now lost, that mentions the *protospatharios* Theophylaktos, who implemented the repair of the seaside road towards southern and central Euboea.³⁴ Furthermore, the close relationship between this region and Chalkis is well evidenced by the fact that the city's water supply was, for centuries, assured, thanks to the springs in the mountains near Steni and the aqueducts that passed through the region of the Lilas River. More precisely, the aqueduct traversed the villages of Pissona, where there is also a Frankish tower, and of Pournos, as well as alongside the hill of the 'twin towers'.³⁵ The fertile ground of Psahna to the north was also vital to Negroponte. The medieval, possibly even Late Byzantine, wall-less settlement of Politika is located there,³⁶ at the centre of which a Frankish tower still stands³⁷ and, close by, the mid-Byzantine church of Panagia Perivleptos (from the 11th century) is located.³⁸ The site is invariably marked on all the early naval maps as *Politica*, *Polirica*, close to the sites of *Holorita* (*Hollorita*, *Colochita*, *Colochit*) and *Il Troco* (*Il trocco*, *tronco*, *Il trodo*),³⁹ which are situated on inland hills; in contrast, Politika is depicted as situated on the shore. Politika is also included in the group of villages in the area recorded in Early Ottoman registers, as is Psahna (Ipsahna), Kontodespoti, Agia Triada and others, all of which hosted up to 50 families.⁴⁰ It has been suggested that *Holorita* should be identified with the fortification (remnants of walls and cisterns) in Kontodespoti (Fig. 2) and that *Il Trocco* was situated close to the modern-day village of Vatonta,⁴¹ although there are no remains of fortifications in the area.

The isolated towers—such as that situated in Politika—in the modern-day villages of Kamaritsa (south-east of Psahna), Fyges, near Triada, Stropones, as well as in the area between Lamari and Kymi, mark wall-less settlements and/or basic roads.⁴² Consequently, only the settlement in Kontodespoti could be considered a fortified settlement, and clarification of its character and its function requires additional research. The relationship between the city—the urban space—and the surrounding countryside, both of which constitute a uniform financial and institutional entity, has been emphasized for Byzantium,⁴³ and it seems to be applicable to the case of Euripos-Negroponte, although recent research has raised questions about whether the distinction between networks of cities (networks of *civitates/urbes*) and their vital spaces in the countryside (their *territoria*) can generally apply to the medieval era.⁴⁴

The next residential site further south is Vatheia (this is the older name that co-exists with the official modern name 'Amarynthos'), and ancient Eretria was abandoned during this period. Remnants of a wall, possibly of the Late Byzantine period, have been reported as located at the site of Paleohora, a small hill on the shore of the Euboean Gulf, where two small churches of the same period still stand.⁴⁵ The region is marked on most of the naval maps with the name *Vathia*, *Uathia* or *Vatia*,⁴⁶ which should

34. Koder 1973, 40; Kontogiannis 2012, 10; Malamut 1988, 222; Ross and Schmeller 1837, 158 and 159; Triantafyllopoulos 1970, 194.

35. Regarding the transportation of water from the region of Steni to the city: 1. For antiquity see Kalamara, 2015, 153-154; Reber and Schmid 2000, 359-387; 2. For the medieval period, and especially for the aqueduct known as 'Kamares', see Kalamara et al. 2015, 4-5, 66-67, 72; Koder 1973, 88-90; Kontogiannis 2012, 35-36, fig. 15.

36. Koder 1973, 97, 100-101; Koder and Hild 1976, 245.

37. The monument was restored by the 23rd EBA with co-funding from the 3rd CSF, during the period 2011-2014.

38. Bouras 1990, 52, 53; 1988-1989, 53-62; Mamaloukos and Pinatsi 2007, 71-82. The Diocese of Chalkis restored the monument, under the supervision of the 23rd EBA of Euboea, during the period 2011-2015.

39. Koder 1973, 30, 31.

40. Balta 1989, 124, 125.

41. Koder 1973, 97, 100, 101; Koder and Hild 1976, 172, 173 (*Holorita*), 280 (*Varonda*). Skouras 2003 (*Vatontas*), 94 (*Politika*), 107 (*Figes*), 118-119 (fortifications in the area of Psahna).

42. Koder 1973, 97-98.

43. Bouras 2014, 5-12.

44. Veikou 2014, 159-206. This ambiguity in the distinction between city and country is evident throughout Euboea, as well as in relation to the principal urban centre of Euripos/Negroponte, during the period under examination.

45. Koder (1973, 103) and Koder and Hild (1976, 132) mention the remains of a wall, but I was unable to locate these when I inspected the area. At the top of the hill of Paleohora, there are two churches: of the Metamorphosis of the Saviour and of the Assumption.

46. Koder 1973, 30-31, 102-103; Koder and Hild 1976, 132. The place name is used for the first time in 1209, in a citation

be identified with the name of the medieval settlement. The ruins, which are conserved, are not enough to prove the existence of a seaside settlement, which would have developed, in all probability, not only within but also outside the walls, as far as we can conclude on the basis of archaeological evidence.⁴⁷ Moreover, a document from 1438 mentions that 80 houses located outside the walls of the castle had been destroyed.⁴⁸ In late 15th-century Ottoman registers (1474) the city-castle of Vatheia is recorded as having 30 houses, and as many as 11 villages are described as being situated in the wider area, among which the most prominent, owing to their size, were Gymno (a Frankish tower and the church of Saint George from the 13th-14th century⁴⁹ still remain), Achladeri, Agios Giannis and Prinos.⁵⁰

Further south, and marked on the old naval maps, are the sites of *Portimo*, *Protimo* and in one case *Olivero/Ulivero*,⁵¹ which should be linked with Porthmos, the ancient Eretrian municipality, which was a residential site in the medieval period and also a diocesan seat⁵² from the 4th to the 16th century, as well as with the modern city of Aliveri. In the region of Aliveri and at the seaside spot of Karavos, the existence of a settlement (dating from the Neolithic to the Copper Age, as well as from the Archaic period to the Early Byzantine era⁵³) has been confirmed by recent excavations. On the same spot a tower, which still stands today, was built later, during Frankish rule.

However, it is difficult to determine how the residential nuclei were organized during the period under discussion here. On a hill, some distance from the shore, stands a relatively small medieval castle with a rectangular floor plan, known as Rizokastro, where donjon, cisterns and other ruined buildings can be found.⁵⁴ Yet another medieval monument, the church of Panagitsa (1393), exists in the modern town of Aliveri.⁵⁵ In an inland and currently non-urban area there is the so-called 'Kokkinoklisia', also dating to the period of Frankish rule. Furthermore, in the wider region of Aliveri, close to the modern-day village of Agios Loukas,⁵⁶ in the early 11th century the *metochi* of the convent of Osios Loukas was built, with the same name as the convent.⁵⁷ This is the earliest indication of activity in the area during the mid-Byzantine period. The dispersal of Byzantine-period monuments (Fig. 7) suggests that the existence of a cohesive settlement is less likely than habitation in a multitude of small non-fortified nuclei. Taking into account the fertile soil of the region, we suggest that these settlements would have to have been agricultural in nature. Rizokastro (Fig. 6) and the isolated tower would have taken part in the defence and administrative control of the area, as well as in the protection/support of its inhabitants during difficult times.

that Vatheia is subject to the Diocese of Athens (Malamut 1988, 223).

47. During the excavation of a nearby ancient sanctuary, conducted by the Swiss Archaeological School and the Ephorate of Antiquities for Euboea, a large quantity of Late Byzantine table ware was found at the foot of the hill, to the north. Also, approximately 2 km north of the coastline the church of Panagitsa is located (built in 1311).

48. Koder 1973, 103, n. 205; Sathas 1882, 447.

49. Koder and Hild 1976, 168.

50. Balta 1989, 123-124.

51. Koder 1973, 30, 31; Koder and Hild 1976, 120, 121, 246; Skouras 1975, 335-337; 2003, 28, 29, 39-42.

52. Malamut 1988, 225, 343, 344; Koder 1973, 66, 133-135.

53. The extended rescue excavation of the 11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (EPCA) was conducted while the construction of the new electric power station in Karavos (Aliveri) and the project 'Installation of Gas Pipeline' were underway (for research in the area, cf. Kalamara 2015, 158, in which previous bibliography can also be found). As for the residential remains, it should be noted, diachronically speaking, that there is a small lateral movement of the settlement to the south and, at the same time, a partial layering of different phases. The existence of a city from the mid-Byzantine period onwards is not supported by the archaeological findings; hence Malamut's comment (cf. Malamut 1988, 225) can be considered as valid only for the Early Byzantine period, during which the city life of late antiquity continues.

54. Koder 1973, 105.

55. Triantafyllopoulos 1992, 68.

56. In the Early Ottoman records from 1474 (Balta 1989, 121), the village of Agios Loukas is referred to as a large town, and the same records never mention Aliveri; nor is any settlement in the area by the sea, where the ancient city developed in antiquity, mentioned.

57. Koder and Hild 1976, 205; Malamut 1988, 226, 227, in which previous bibliography can be found; Triantafyllopoulos 1992, 65.

Moving south towards Styra, crossing a mountainous area, we reach the castle of Armenon (Armeno, Armena, Larmeno) situated on Kliosi (Figs. 8, 9), at the site called Ai Nikolas, above modern-day Styra.⁵⁸ On the basis of archaeological evidence and the 14th-century written sources, we can posit that the castle is medieval in date,⁵⁹ provided that it can be identified with *Castello dell' Armena* (*Armene, Larmane, Larmani, Larmena, Larmenie*), as marked on the charts.⁶⁰ Imposing ruins of a Classical (4th-century) acropolis still stand at the same location. The medieval castle features two fortified enclosures, which protected the upper and the lower town, respectively. The external enclosure is reinforced on the east side with two triangular towers. Residential ruins are found all over, alongside ceramics from the Byzantine period (a more detailed study is needed for more accurate conclusions). On the lower level of the medieval castle, almost in the middle of the terrace occupied by the habitations, there is the Church of the Virgin Mary (12th-13th century) and a subterranean spring. Outside the walls, there is a second church, a cave church of Saint Nicholas. To arrive at this large and important fortified settlement, one must pass through an ancient marble quarry.

In the wider area of the castle, on a nearby hill, where other quarries have also been found, a group of megalithic houses is located (site of Pali Lakka). It has been claimed that these megalithic structures, which should be associated with the needs of social groups dealing with agriculture and stock-breeding, were also inhabited during the period under discussion here. In addition, according to Skouras, a Frankish tower that is now completely ruined stood close to the sea, inside the modern-day village of Styra.⁶¹ It is interesting to point out that early Ottoman registers record a large village (or a small town, κώμη) in the area, named Istura.⁶²

Even further to the south are medieval fortifications that are associated with the city of Karystos. The city of Karystos was the centre of South Euboea through the ages, and was reported as the seat of a diocese by Synekdimos of Hierokles (6th century); it continued to play a key role during the medieval period, also. Reported in the sources as κωμόπολη (a small city), the Byzantine city was a populous and important commercial centre, mostly because of the position it held, which allowed it to exert control over maritime routes to and from the Euboean Gulf and to the Aegean islands.⁶³ Medieval Karystos developed at the location of the ancient and Roman city, on the plain of Palaiochora, where surveys and rescue excavations of recent decades have brought to light fragmentary remains from the Byzantine period.⁶⁴ In the Late Byzantine era and the Frankish period, the city moved to the hill overlooking the Bay of Karystos, above the modern-day city. At that time, between 1205 and 1276, *Castello Rosso*⁶⁵ was

58. Skouras 2003, 103-104. The author attributes the name of Ai-Nicholas to the cave-church of the saint situated there. According to Malamut (1988, 224), the castle dates to the 12th century, but this dating has not yet been fully documented.

59. Skouras 2003, 103 and 104; previous bibliography can be found here.

60. For the discussion on the identification of the castle of Styra with the castle of Armena (now a widely accepted hypothesis, with which I concur), cf. Koder 1973, 123-124. This discussion was initiated mainly by the frequent coexistence of both places/names in old maps (cf. Koder 1973, 30-34).

61. Skouras 2003, 104. According to the Skouras, this is how the double name in old maps should be interpreted, taking into account the fact that the names *Stura, Astura, Styra, Lastura* would be attributed to the tower. In my opinion, however, the way old maps marked positions has to be viewed from a nautical point of view—something that does not require the marking of all fortifications or even the basic ones. At the same time, those that marked ports or, because they were visible from the sea, functioned as a compass for the sailors and were marked. In any case, in the area of Aliveri, on the site of Karavos, the site of the ancient city that was not visible in the medieval period, where there was a Frankish tower and a spot for mooring, the name *Portimo* is marked. The tower and the castle of Styra must be examined as parts of a system which protected, controlled and managed the area, at least during the Late Byzantine period.

62. Balta 1989, 121.

63. Jaubert 1975, 295; Lambros 1879, 206; Malamut 1988, 222.

64. I refer especially to the findings, mostly ceramic wares, from rescue excavations in the area (studied by my colleague Eleni Tsiompikou, who excavated them and is currently studying them) as well as the church of the Transfiguration of the Saviour (12th century) and the church of Saint Mark in the Monteffoli estate (Frankish period).

65. Tsiompikou 2012, 551, 552, in which previous bibliography related to the history of the fortification can also be found.

built on top of the hill by the Lombard rulers of the region (Fig 10), of the House of Dalle Carceri; this is described in the written sources. The castle consists of the acropolis (donjon), which is surrounded by an internal wall and would have been the seat of the administration. The second fortified wall with towers protected the core of the medieval city; this part of the fortification has been attributed, with certainty, to the Lombard rulers. Today, a third fortified wall surrounds the part of the settlement that developed below, at the foot of the hill, but we cannot confirm, under the present conditions of research, when that wall was built for the first time; in its present form it goes back to the years of the Greek Revolution.⁶⁶ Taking all this into account, a typical inland city-castle developed in Karystos, yet it was not very far from the shore. Water was supplied to the castle via cisterns and an aqueduct. The aqueduct can be dated to antiquity, although it was repaired by the Venetians.⁶⁷ A small six-sided, two-storey fortress, Bourtzi (Fig. 11), that rises from the beach of modern-day Karystos and has been dated to the late 14th century,⁶⁸ would have completed the fortifications of the city. It is considered a part of a bigger seaside fort, which would have protected the settlement connected to the port, at the location of the modern-day city.⁶⁹ We cannot currently determine whether during that period other wall-less settlements, villages, had been constructed on the periphery of Karystos, as happened later, during the Ottoman period, when the villages that survive today were founded. However, recently in the village of Myloi, next to the main church and integrated into a later chapel of Saint Ioannis Prodromos, the eastern part of an older church with an outer semicircular niche built with stone masonry and covered externally with strong coating, was found; this could be dated to the Frankish period. Such a find is evidence of human activity at the location of the modern-day settlement, and it could also be indicative of habitation at this location.

In the wider region of the Karystia, Filagra⁷⁰ is another ancient fortified settlement which has been described as having had a significant medieval phase. Located on the shore of the Aegean, it has been variously identified with the *Castello Termopile* or *Metropille* and also with the city of *Anemopylae*, on the basis of Late Byzantine written sources, as well as with the location marked as *Silosa*, *Silopha*, *Silofia*, *Philasia* on early maps.⁷¹ In the bibliography pertaining to the medieval period, there is only scattered information on the existence of ruins of a church and a cistern located among unidentified remnants of walls. The ruinous state of the remains and the absence of systematic surveys mean we cannot extract conclusions on the organization of this fortified medieval settlement or the purpose it served. After a visit to Filagra, I believe that the castle itself is of ancient date and that only a large above-the-ground cistern and some adjoining buildings can be dated to the medieval period with any certainty. As for the two churches within the castle, it is difficult to substantiate the dating of their construction because of the extensive modern interferences that have altered their architectural features.

At the site of Hellenikon of Platanistos,⁷² east of Karystos on the way to Cavo Doro, there is an imposing ancient fortified enclosure, which, according to Skouras, was reused during the Frankish period and was linked to the castle of Anemopylae.⁷³ The author has taken into account a local tradition concerning the name of the site, and some archaeological evidence which is referred to in the bibliography

66. For the form and the construction phases of the castle, cf. Tsiompikou 2012, 552-559.

67. Koder 1973, 119.

68. Androudis 2010-2012, 35-63, figs. 1-32; Stai 2012, 507-516,

69. Koder 1973, 120-121.

70. Koder 1973, 123; Skouras 2003, 55-56; Triantafyllopoulos 1974, 258.

71. Koder 1973, 30, 31, 123; Skouras (2003, 56, 91-94, 97-99, 101) is opposed to identifying Filagra with Anemopylae, which he locates at Platanistos, where there is an ancient fortification that was reused during the Frankish period, or with Silosa, which he places over the village Koila/Ekali, where, again, an ancient fort stands. He also mentions, albeit without sufficient documentation, that the latter was also used in medieval times.

72. Skouras 2003, 91-94.

73. Koder and Hild 1976, 244; in a document from 1252 the monastery of Saint Elias of Platanistos is mentioned; Skouras 2003, 91-94.

(e.g. Frankish weapons and sculptures).⁷⁴ Having personally surveyed the area in the summer of 2016, I would not consider this to be a fortified settlement, even if the Byzantine church of Saint Constantine, built with ancient material, is located on the terrace formed by the ancient wall. Besides, no characteristic ceramics of the medieval period have been found at this spot. Thus, additional research needs to be undertaken if we are to reach a definite conclusion.

Based on the masonry of the fortification enclosures and on the building remains inside them, the castle of Kastri, located at the 'entrance' of the Koutsonisi peninsula, close to ancient Geraistos, as well as the fortified settlement on the island of Buffalo, can also be considered medieval.⁷⁵ The Kastri castle, of trapezoid shape (Fig. 12), is probably from the Frankish period, and it has preserved remnants of the fortification, adjacent to the houses of the modern village that now surround the church of Zoodochos Pigi. The enclosure was constructed using mainly unworked stones, small parts of tiles and mortar. The settlement on the island of Buffalo has a fortified wall, probably with towers, that surrounds the rock. Within the wall many ruins of buildings and at least two Byzantine churches can be noted.

It is important at this point to stress the absence of Frankish towers in the region of the Karystia,⁷⁶ given the fact that this may mean a difference in the model of residential organization and administration from that of the rest of Euboea. Of course, it is not yet possible to reach full and definite conclusions on the model of residential organization of the region, as the research of the written sources, not to mention fieldwork, is still incomplete. This is demonstrated in an excellent manner in the field survey of the Karystia directed by Donald Keller (supported by Indiana University and, later, by the Canadian Institute in Greece). This research has emphasized that outside and around the great urban centre of Karystos, throughout the Byzantine period (4th century to 15th century) non-fortified settlements were scattered throughout the area, and that these were likely concerned with agricultural or marine activities.⁷⁷ It is important to point out that we are left mainly with sherds from these settlements, and only rarely do we find architectural remains, e.g. foundations of small churches or rural settlements. This observation leads us to the hypothesis that similar residential data are expected in other parts of the island; however, their localization and evaluation requires exhaustive field research, which is yet to be undertaken.

Moving back to central Euboea, to the fertile region of Avlonari and Kymi, castles are located on both the seaside and in the mainland. The term *Valona*, *Valonis*, *Lalona*, *Avlonari* is reported on old maps, referring to the city which was its namesake; this was the seat of a diocese from at least the 9th century.⁷⁸ The exact position of the city is a matter of some dispute, and it has previously been claimed that the city could be found near modern Avlonari. In Chania, there is the significant church of Agios Dimitrios, near the village of Episkopi (called this because of the name of the modern settlement, which in Greek means 'diocese') close to Koupa castle, which was important in the region.⁷⁹ In the 15th century, two military commanders are reported in the region (Capitanei Avalone). One was based at *La Cupa*, *Cuppa*, *Cupna*, *Cupha*, a castle to the north-west of the village of Vrysi in Dragonara.⁸⁰ The

74. Papavasileiou 1907-1908, 101-113.

75. Skouras 2003, 53, 54; Geraistos: After surveying the area, I remark that Skouras's information on this site is rather confused and confusing; 84-86 (Buffalo island). The two other fortified settlements that he describes in the area of Cavo Doro, near the villages Zaharia (fort Kiza) and Thymi (fort Kathara), respectively (Skouras 2003, 63-65), both of which are surrounded by fortified walls made of local schist without connective mortar, cannot be dated without further archaeological research, and so I do not include them on the maps; Koder and Hild 1976, 185 'castle/ancient Geraistos'; Koder 1973, 30, 31. It is interesting to note that Porto Buffalo is marked only in Coronelli's map.

76. The three towers that Skouras mentions, which are said to have existed earlier (based on personal memories of the elderly or local traditions), in Styra, Marmari and Aetos (2003, 38-39, 81-82, 104) are not sufficiently well documented.

77. Keller 1985, 229-235, figs. 14, 58-60, 77, 80, 87, 96, 98.

78. Koder 1973, 30, 31, 104, 133-138; Malamut 1988, 344.

79. Koder 1973, 106.

80. Koder 1973, 30, 31, 103-106; Koder and Hild 1976, 140; Skouras 2003, 52, 53.

other was based at the castle of *Potiri*, which possibly can be identified with the *P. Potres* on the maps.⁸¹ It lies on a hill south-east of Avlonari and the outer wall, remnants of towers, cisterns, a church and ruins of buildings are all preserved. A small fortification also exists near the village of Koili.⁸² Another small fort from the Venetian period was possibly situated on a hill overlooking the plain of Dystos, where there are remnants of an ancient acropolis and a Frankish tower, although only scant evidence survives today; it is marked on the maps of Coronelli.⁸³ In addition, on the Aegean shore, the existence of forts has been proven at three locations: a) above Kymi—on the maps it is referred to as *Chimi*, *Porto Chimi*;⁸⁴ b) at Oktonia, close to the village of Alonia, there is an ancient castle, with a possible medieval habitation;⁸⁵ and c) at Potamia, the site of *Platari*, *Flatari* is mentioned on the maps.⁸⁶

This central region of the island, where the most fertile land is located, was richly populated during the Late Byzantine or the Frankish period on Euboea, as the wealth of extant archaeological evidence clearly demonstrates. In order to obtain a complete overview of the residential pattern present here, not including the castles mentioned above, we are recording the sites at which the existence of wall-less settlements has been proven, either through references in the written sources or based on ecclesiastical (non-monastic) monuments found there.⁸⁷ Those are medieval settlements located in the modern villages of Aliveri (Panagitsa, 1939), Agios Loukas (Agios Dimitrios in Kotsika, late 14th-early 15th century),⁸⁸ Gavallas, Tharrounia (Agios Nikolaos),⁸⁹ Makrythori (Agios Dimitrios, Kokkinoklisia, late 14th century or 1303?),⁹⁰ Agia Thekla (Agia Thekla, late 13th-early 14th century),⁹¹ Avlonari (Agios Dimitrios, late 13th century),⁹² Pyrgi (Metamorphosi Sotiros, 1296 or 1310), Orio (Gennesio Prodromou, 14th century),⁹³ Spilies (Odigitria, 1311), Oxyliothos (Koimisis Theotokou,⁹⁴ late 13th century; Agios Nikolaos Ritzanon, 1304; Agia Anna,⁹⁵ 1310 or 1370), Platana. We can note that there are 11 residential sites in total⁹⁶ which are not surrounded by a defensive wall and where small churches with murals from the Late Byzantine period have been found.⁹⁷ This picture of many small villages is also

81. Koder 1973, 30, 31, 103, 107, 108 (the author relates a former discussion about the position of the castle, which some scholars locate at Ochtonia); Koder and Hild 1976, 247; Skouras 2003, 44, 45; Triantafyllopoulos 1974, 220, n. 21 (he proposes that *P. Potres* be identified with *Porto Petres*—i.e. the Petries Gulf—an opinion I myself share, as this is the only sheltered harbour on the eastern coast of Euboea).

82. Koder 1973, 106; Koder and Hild 1976, 189, 190. According to the authors, it probably belonged to Cuppa.

83. Koder 1973, 105; Skouras 2003, 59, 60. I do not mark this fort on the map, as its existence is not sufficiently proven by archaeological remains.

84. Koder 1973, 30, 31, 106-107; Koder and Hild 1976, 196; Skouras 2003, 75.

85. Koder 1973, 107-108; Koder and Hild 1976, 226; Skouras 2003, 87, 88 (Skouras identifies it with *Graspilea* from older maps).

86. Koder 1973, 30, 31; Skouras 2003, 94, 95 (ancient fortification in use during the medieval age, according to the author). Additional field research is necessary to document the history of the castle.

87. Here I specifically refer to the churches that have been wall-painted between 1270 and 1310. During the short phase of Byzantine rule in Euboea groups of members of the local society financed many of them. For the painted churches of the period, cf. Triantafyllopoulos 1992, 68, in which the author points out that the flourishing of mural painting takes place between the years 1270-1310, during the short phase of Byzantine rule in Euboea; Emmanouel 1992, 76-80; Farandos 1980, 326, n. 10 and 327, n. 12; Kalogeropoulos 1936; Koder 1973, 163, 164.

88. Farandos 1980, 333-335.

89. Farandos (1980, 347-349) dates the church to the 16th century, pointing out, however, that close by, at the site called *Pyrgos*, there are the remains of a settlement (among them the remains of a tower, too) that could be dated even to the 13th century.

90. Emmanouel 1991; Farandos 1980, 326, 330-332.

91. Koumoussi 1987.

92. Farandos 1980, 368-370.

93. Farandos 1980, 351-353.

94. Emmanuel 1991.

95. Kakavas 2006, 267-289.

96. Koder 1973, 104: the author mentions that by the middle of the 15th century in *Dirfys* (the area in question) there were 25 villages.

97. For the Byzantine churches of the area of Aliveri-Kymi; cf. Emmanouel 1992, 76-80; Farandos 1980; Triantafyl-

supported by the Early Ottoman records from the 15th century in all of the abovementioned areas.⁹⁸ Some questions are raised: What was the relation between these wall-less settlements and the existing castles in their area? What castle had the authority over which villages? Was a castle the point of reference at times of danger?

A little to the north, in the mountains of Dirfys, we can also note that wall-less agricultural settlements, villages, developed during the Late Byzantine era. Their existence is indicated once more by the decorated churches from the period in the modern villages of Kathenoi, Vounoi, Loutsas and Steni.⁹⁹ The early Ottoman registers support this: they refer to a great number of villages in the area, the names of which are the same or sound like those in use today.¹⁰⁰ A fortified town has not been found here, possibly owing to the fact that it is difficult to access the area and also the mountainous terrain.

Turning towards northern Euboea, I will now analyse the evidence, starting from Euripos/Negroponte and moving northwards, along the shores of the Euboean Gulf. In the mountainous area of Klimaki or Derveni, the city-castle of Kleisoura (or Sidirokastro)¹⁰¹ is located. It was built by the Franks in the early 13th century and was the seat of one of the *tercieri*. After 1385 it passed into Venetian control, like all castles on Euboea. The castle of Kleisoura, which represents the 'entrance' to northern Euboea, preserves a large part of wall, churches, houses, cistern, etc. Next, on the right side of the road that leads to Mantoudi, on the hill which is now called Palaiohora, the existence of a fortification with many towers and a church inside, was mentioned by the traveller Buchon; it was here that he found numerous sculptured architectural pieces. Although remains of a castle at this location have not yet been found, it should be identified with the position *Mandugo* from the old naval maps.¹⁰² On the Aegean coast, in the area of Agia Anna, a location called *Acalia* or *Argalia* is marked on the old maps, which probably should be identified with a castle in the area, cited in a written source from 1277; today only remains of a tower are visible there.¹⁰³ The existence of a castle in the area where modern Limni stands, or *Limene*, *Limine*, *Limne*, *Limen*, *Limint*,¹⁰⁴ as marked on the old maps, is a puzzle for researchers. Medieval written sources suggest the existence of an unfortified settlement/port in this area, and there is an ongoing debate concerning whether the remains of fortifications located nearby, at a location called Kastria, were in use during the period we are examining in this present piece.¹⁰⁵ A village is also recorded here, immediately following the occupation of Euboea by the Ottomans.¹⁰⁶

At the northern end of the island, long-term habitation, starting in antiquity and continuing during the Middle and Late Byzantine period, is documented at Oreoi and Aidipsos. Settlements from the period of Frankish rule are found at Lihada (an area that was also inhabited in the Late Roman period) and at Yaltra: sites marked on the old maps are e.g. *Loreo*, *L'Oreo*, *Soreus*, *Orioz*, *Lipso*, *Adepsos*, *Dypso*, *Dipso*, *Lisos*, *Talitada*, *Litada*, *Litar* and *Litad*.¹⁰⁷ At Oreoi (Fig. 3), which was a diocesan seat from the 8th century to 1204 and the location of *Castel del Rio* according to medieval texts, remains of the walls of the city-castle of the same name are preserved; until the 19th century, square towers of the fortification as well as a church inside it were visible. The city most likely extended beyond the walls.¹⁰⁸ From

lopoulos 1992, 68, where the author points out that the flourishing of mural painting takes place between the years 1270-1310, during the short phase of Byzantine rule in Euboea.

98. Balta 1989, 121 (Lilandi), 123 (Monodri, Vasya), 124, 125 (Agalyos).

99. cf. n. 98 above.

100. Balta 1989, 124, 125.

101. Koder 1973, 116, 117; Koder and Hild 1976, 255, 256; Skouras 2003, 35, 36.

102. Koder 1973, 30, 31.

103. Koder 1973, 111, 112, 116; Koder and Hild 1976, 106; Skouras 2003, 36, 37.

104. Koder 1973, 30, 31, 114.

105. Koder and Hild 1976, 203; Skouras 2003, 77; Triantafyllopoulos 1974, 235, 236.

106. Balta 1989, 125.

107. Koder 1973, 30, 31, 109-113.

108. Koder 1973, 110, 111; Koder and Hild 1976, 228; Skouras 2003, 120, 121. The tombs and foundations of a church

medieval Aidipsos, a walled settlement located on a hill over the modern-day city, almost nothing is preserved.¹⁰⁹ In the area of Lihada, Kastri of Lihada, a fortified town on an elevated area in the north-west of the modern city, and a small fort with donjon in the east of the city, are referenced in the literature.¹¹⁰ According to Skouras, walls of the fortification and a cistern are the only surviving remains of Kastri, both of which he dates to Classical antiquity, owing to the size of the fortified area. Additional research is needed to confirm this assertion. From the second fortified site a small fort survives, which is of substantial height, as well as a part of the long walls of a rectangular tower (donjon) that stands at the north-west end of the fort (Fig. 4). A fortified enclosure that begins from the tower, which is in bad condition today, surrounded a large area to the north of the tower, where traces of habitation have been found. The position of the fort makes it ideal for controlling the marine passageway at the north end of the Euboean Gulf. Inside and around the fort, a large quantity of tableware pottery from the Late Byzantine period has been found, which suggests that the settlement was organized inside as well as outside the walls.

Finally, remains of a medieval fortification that could be identified with the castle of *Lalutra*, as it is referred to in written sources, are preserved inside the modern village of Gialtra (Fig 5).¹¹¹ This settlement, like Aidipsos, had hot springs. These fortified settlements were administratively and ecclesiastically dependent on the city of Oreoi.

Summary and conclusions

In summarizing the evidence provided by the fortified sites and attempting to extract some preliminary conclusions about the residential organization of Euboea during the Middle Byzantine and the Frankish periods, the following should be pointed out.

The settlements, city-castles, fortified towns and ‘villages’ are located mainly in fertile areas. These may be coastal sites that participated in maritime communication (e.g. Karystos, Aliveri or Vatheia) or could be located on flatlands or plateaus of the inland zone, as is the case for the Lilantine Plain, the region of Dirfys or the zone of Avlonari-Kymi.¹¹² Some peculiarities may be observed in the mountainous and barren landscape of the Karystia. We can posit that there is a concentration of settlements in central and southern Euboea, on the basis of up-to-date research data.¹¹³

In total, 27 fortified settlements can be noted on Euboea and, on the basis of their size and function, they can be considered cities-castles or fortified towns; nine are situated in northern Euboea (Map 1), twelve in central Euboea (Map 2), and six in southern Euboea (Map 3). Approximately half of them appear for the first time in the Late Byzantine period, as is the case with the castles of Kleisoura, Mantouko, Argalia, Gialtron, and probably the small fort of Lichada (northern Euboea), Rizokastro, Lehres and Fylla (central Euboea), Castello Rosso and Kastri-Geraistos (southern Euboea). Others are ancient fortifications, with a phase of use during the period under discussion in this paper, according to the aforementioned modern synthetic studies and my own surveys. Kastria-Limne (northern Euboea), Draggonara-La Cuppa (central Euboea), Filagra and Armena (south Euboea) are some of these. This view, however, still requires further confirmation from in-depth archaeological research. For instance,

are probably connected with the suburb, the settlement outside of the castle walls (Chatzidakis 1960, 157, 158; Lazarides 1967, 260; Triantafyllopoulos 1974, 236, 237).

109. Koder 1973, 112.

110. Koder 1973, 112, 113; Koder and Hild 1976, 204, 205; Skouras 2003, 78, 79. It is worth noting that during a survey in the area conducted in August 2015, I was only able to locate the fort from the Frankish period.

111. Koder 1973, 112; Koder and Hild 1976, 164; Skouras 2003, 54, 55.

112. cf. also Malamut 1988, 270-272.

113. Triantafyllopoulos 1992, 67.

if the existence of medieval remains is mentioned in a source, this does not necessarily mean there was extensive use of earlier sites, as medieval ruins may be of limited extent or/and of special character, as we have noted in the case of the ancient castle of Filagra, where medieval remains are limited. Even if isolated archaeological remains from the medieval period were located in these areas and recognized as such, many questions still remain. For example, at what point during the medieval period do the earlier remains begin to be reused (if, of course, habitation was ever interrupted)? Could the quality of fortified settlement be ascribed to the earlier phases? Has the habitation taken the place of an ancient site? These questions are only a few but illustrate the number of issues that are impossible to resolve without further archaeological research on the ground.

At several of these fortified sites, the residential installations (e.g. houses, churches, cisterns), whenever they exist, are located within the fortification,¹¹⁴ as is the case, for example, with the castles of Armena, Filagra, and Kastri in southern Euboea. Elsewhere, the settlement extends outside the walls, as in the Castello Rosso in Karystos, the fort of Lichada and Palaiochora in Vatheia. In yet other cases, e.g. in the wider regions of Fylla, Rizokastro/Porthmos, castle Potiri/Avlonari, the monuments and/or other historical evidence suggest significant, but not cohesive, residential activity, mainly outside the walls. In the last case, the castle could have been the seat of the local ruler, but it was also a point of reference for a broader residential zone, as well as a refuge for the population at a time of danger. A prominent place in the network of fortified settlements was apparently occupied by Chalkis. Chalkis-Euripos-Negroponte was, throughout the ages, the biggest residential centre in Euboea, and the only one that in all certainty developed urban characteristics during the medieval period. Chalkis is the only one which we can call a 'city-castle' without hesitation.

Next in terms of prominence were the cities that hosted the five ecclesiastic dioceses of the island (Euripos, Porthmos, Avlonas, Oreoi and Karystos). These cities served a special administrative role within their broader region, but their fortifications do not have common features. Karystos and Oreoi, both surviving ancient cities, appear to have stronger characteristics of an urban centre preserved, and habitation there was organized around the focal point of a city-castle. In contrast, in Aliveri and Avlonari habitation was not consistent and the settlements in these areas were first and foremost, if not exclusively, agricultural.

In addition to Chalkis, Karystos and Oreoi, we should also mention other fortified towns, seats of Frankish rulers or officials of the Venetian administration. These include Kleisoura, Koupa, Potiri and Fylla, and these played a crucial administrative role in the Frankish period. It is only natural, during this period, that all fortifications, even the isolated towers, participated in the administrative reorganization of the island, as they would have been closely linked to the feudal system that was imposed upon the arrival of the Latins in the East. For the administrative organization of the large Euboean territory, a legal system called 'Assizi of Romania' was used. It had been already implemented in the 13th century by the Lombards and it still existed in 1390, when the island was under the control of the Venetians.¹¹⁵ Taking into account that the fiefs of the island may have been public, ecclesiastical or private, it would be fruitful to examine the relationship of residential units with the fiefs, in light of the fact that socio-economic classes were largely defined by their relation to the land.

For the moment, there is no adequate answer to the question of the relationship between the fortifications. For example, should we consider castle Koili, which according to Koder belongs to La Cuppa, a separate residential centre? Which of the castles and during which periods truly worked as a network? Triantafyllopoulos¹¹⁶ speaks of 'the island of the fortifications'; and recognizes a variety

114. Of course, the absence of extensive field research cannot rule out the development of residential units outside them.

115. Papadia-Lala 2006, 30-32.

116. Triantafyllopoulos 1992, 67, 68.

of types, categorizing according to function: fortified cities, independent forts, simple towers, watch-towers, etc., without providing any specific data. In any case, there has not been a systematic study of any of them, except for Chalkis and, perhaps, Karystos. Euboea appears to experience an intense residential development during Frankish rule, but the Byzantine period raises more questions. Where are the many cities that Kinnamos¹¹⁷ (12th century) refers to? It is interesting to point out that some cities during the Middle Byzantine period continued to grow in place of the old urban centres, as is the case for example with Karystos and Oreoi. Elsewhere there was a change of place (as is observable at the castle of Euripos) or abandonment (as in Eretria and Porthmos-Aliveri). It is possible that the history of every area during that early period was formed under different conditions, and that there was subsequently a different framework for the growth of various areas during the Frankish period. For the network of cities and towns during the Byzantine period, there is very little that we can assume.¹¹⁸ This brief tour around the fortifications of Euboea leaves many questions for further researchers to answer. To conclude, I cannot stress enough the fact that, to 'feed' and support further study of medieval settlements (fortified or not) on Euboea, systematic field research and surveys of the castles are absolutely necessary, in order that they can be securely dated and catalogued (using their typology), and the networks of communication and their relations investigated. The use of GIS-based technology could also be especially helpful to this end.

117. Malamut 1988, 272 and n. 22.

118. Malamut 1988, 287-290: the author puts forward an interesting proposal on the recording of different types of settlements/cities from the Byzantine period and their ranking. Equally interesting is the theoretical framework proposed by M. Veikou in a recent study (2014, 160-170), and this could possibly be applied to the study of medieval Euboea.

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Figures



Figure 1:
Castle of Fylla

Figure 2:
Fortification in Kontodespoti,
near Psahna.



Figure 3:
Topographical plan of the region of Aliveri,
where the medieval monuments or/ and sites
are marked.



Figure 4:
Rizokastro, in the region of Aliveri.
View of the interior.



Figure 5:
Castle of Armenon, Styra.
View of the internal fortification
wall, which protected
the “upper town”



Figure 6: Castle of Armenon,
Styra. View of the external, eastern
fortification wall, which protected
the “lower town”. It is enhanced
with triangular towers.



Figure 7:
Castello Rosso,
Karystos



Figure 8:
Bourtzi,
Karystos



Figure 9:
Castle of Geraistos



Figure 10:
Castle of Oreoi

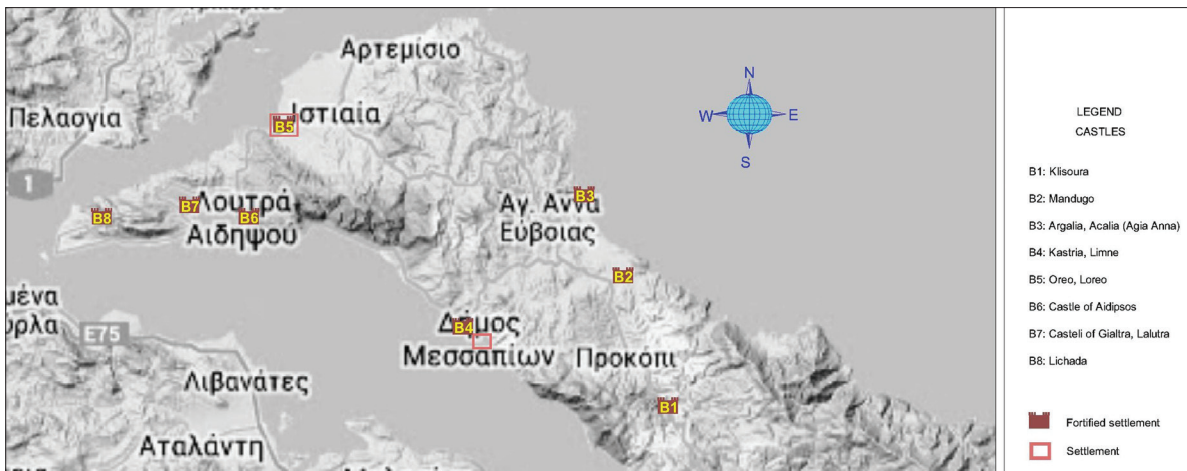


Figure 11:
Castle of Lichada



Figure 12:
Fortification wall
in the modern village
of Gialtra.

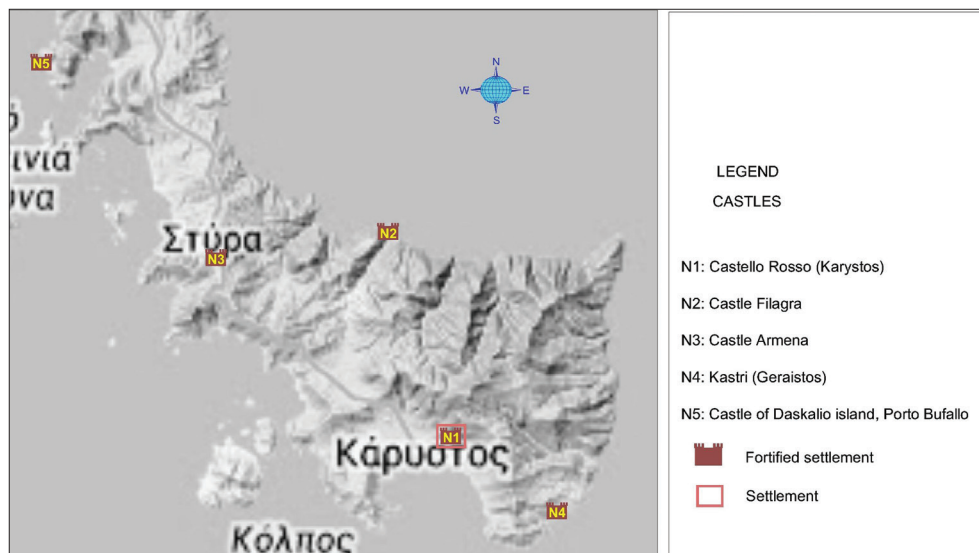
Maps



Map 1. North Euboea.



Map 2. Central Euboea.



Map 3. South Euboea.