

An Aegean coastal settlement at the 'end of Late Antiquity': the case of Schinoussa near Naxos

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Abstract

Η Σχινούσα ανήκει στο σύμπλεγμα των Μικρών Κυκλάδων και βρίσκεται νότια της Νάξου και δυτικά της Αμοργού. Οι παλαιότερες αναφορές για το νησί βρίσκονται στη *Φυσική Ιστορία* του Πλινίου του Νεότερου και τα *Εθνικά* του Στεφάνου Βυζαντίου. Από νεότερους ερευνητές έχουν εντοπιστεί στο νησί ευρήματα της Πρωτοκυκλαδικής, Ελληνιστικής και Ρωμαϊκής περιόδου στις περιοχές Προφήτης Ηλίας και Τσιγκούρι. Στη θέση κατασκευής ενός νέου λιμανιού στον όρμο Λιβιάδι κατά τα έτη 2007-2008 εντοπίστηκαν από την 2η Εφορεία Βυζαντινών Αρχαιοτήτων τα κατάλοιπα των αρχιτεκτονικών λειψάνων και άφθονη κεραμική ενός οικισμού της ύστερης αρχαιότητας. Βρέθηκαν όστρακα επιτραπέζιας ερυθροβαφούς κεραμικής Βορειοαφρικανικών, Μικρασιατικών και Κυπριακών εργαστηρίων, χύτρες, αμφορείς (υστερορωμαϊκοί τύποι 1 & 2) και θραύσματα λυχναριών που χρονολογούνται από το δεύτερο μισό του 4ου μέχρι και τα μέσα του 7ου αιώνα.

Κατά τη σωστική ανασκαφή που πραγματοποιήθηκε στο χερσαίο τμήμα κατασκευής του έργου, αποκαλύφθηκαν τα κατάλοιπα του νοτιοδυτικού τμήματος μίας τρίκλιτης Παλαιοχριστιανικής βασιλικής με καμαροσκεπή νάρθηκα και τρία προσκτίσματα στα νότια. Κατά τη διάρκεια της ανασκαφής, ήλθαν στο φως ενδείξεις σχετικά με την ύστερη φάση της χρήσης του μνημείου και της ανθρώπινης δραστηριότητας στον οικισμό. Τα ευρήματα υποδεικνύουν ότι το μνημείο αντιμετώπισε στατικά προβλήματα που προκλήθηκαν πιθανώς από κάποιο σεισμό και μάλλον είχαν ως αποτέλεσμα την υποβάθμιση της υψομετρικής στάθμης του οικισμού σε σχέση με την θάλασσα. Μετά από το γεγονός αυτό, ανυψώθηκε το δάπεδο της Βασιλικής και του ανατολικότερου προσκτίσματος, και η χρήση τους συνεχίστηκε για κάποια περίοδο. Δεν εντοπίστηκαν ίχνη βίαιης καταστροφής του μνημείου, ενώ φαίνεται ότι εγκαταλείφθηκε αφού πρώτα αφαιρέθηκε κάθε χρήσιμο αντικείμενο. Η εγκατάλειψη της βασιλικής φαίνεται ότι συνδέεται με την οργανωμένη εκκένωση του οικισμού, η οποία έλαβε χώρα κατά τα μέσα του 7ου αιώνα ή λίγο αργότερα, με αποτέλεσμα την μακράιωνη ερήμωση της Σχινούσας. Η εγκατάλειψη του οικισμού του νησιού συνδέεται με ένα ευρύτερο φαινόμενο εγκατάλειψης των παράλιων οικισμών και μετακίνησης των πληθυσμών προς την ενδοχώρα ή σε οχυρές θέσεις σε νησιά όπως η Θήρα, η Αμοργός και ιδιαίτερα η Νάξος.

Introduction

The period denoted by the term 'End of Late Antiquity' is rather vague, both in time as well as space. Archaeologists and historians continue to argue over the processes and causes which brought about the transformations affecting the urban landscape of Late Roman cities. While the debate is ongoing,¹

1. Most recently in the context of the International Congress of Byzantine Studies at Belgrade: *Proceedings of the 23rd ICBS* (2016), pp. 65-143. For the most recent general revision, see Magdalino (2016).

archaeological research continues to reveal new evidence concerning the profound changes in the network of insular cities in the Aegean area during the 6th-8th century. Field research by the 2nd E.B.A.² at Livadi Bay of Schinoussa traced the remains of the main settlement of the island, and excavations during the years 2007-2008 revealed an Early Christian basilica. This paper presents the archaeological excavation and finds, focusing on the late phase of the settlement, and discusses our conclusions in the context of the wider insular area, dominated by Naxos, the largest Cycladic island.

Schinoussa is an island of the Small Cyclades, along with Donoussa, Koufonisi, Keros and Heraklia (**fig. 1**), situated south of Naxos and west of Amorgos. Covering a surface area of 8.14 square kilometres, it is fertile and rather flat with an altitude not exceeding 130 m. Natural bays are formed along its coastline (**fig. 2**). The oldest written record of the name Schinoussa appears in the *Natural History* by Pliny the Younger.³ Stephanos Byzantios in his geographical dictionary *Ethnica* mentions that Schinoussa was a Phocaeen island (Φωκική νῆσος), probably meaning a colony of the Phocaeans, and that a citizen of Schinoussa was called Schinoussios (Σχινούσσιος) and Schinoussaïos (Σχινουσσαῖος).⁴

Two archaeological sites have been recorded by travellers and archaeologists on the island. The first is located on the low hilltop of Profitis Ilias, where remnants of a Hellenistic acropolis as well as potsherds of the Early Cycladic, Hellenistic and Roman periods were recorded.⁵ South of the hill, at the site of Stavros, architectural elements of an Early Christian basilica, columns, colonnettes, capitals, and panels have been found.⁶ The other site is on the Portokali promontory where wall remnants of a deserted settlement have survived. Pinton de Tournefort⁷ was the first known traveller to visit the uninhabited island in 1700 and wrote about the ruins of a deserted village. Ludwig Ross⁸ visited Schinoussa in 1841 and dated the same remains to the Middle Ages, probably during the period of the Duchy of Naxos. He compared the densely constructed walls to the kastelia of other islands. During 1967 Fotini Zafiropoulou⁹ traced the remains of great buildings at the same site, some of which were visible below sea level. According to her, the medieval village that Ross identified was built upon the site of an earlier settlement, as abundant potsherds of the Hellenistic and Roman periods demonstrate. She also noted that the remains of an Early Christian basilica were still visible at the eastern part of the site. In 2007, the decision to construct the new port of Schinoussa at Livadi Bay necessitated the archaeological exploration of the site.

Field survey

Field survey covering a total area of about 20,000 m² on the Portokali promontory and the western parts of Livadi and Tsigouri bays was able to collect potsherds and trace the remains of 72 walls built of limestone (**fig. 3, 4**). Many of the walls intersected, suggesting parts of structures, while others remain covered by soil or vegetation. In places, the outline of rectangular spaces could be detected. The wall alignments could be traced on two main axes oriented southwest to northeast. Thus, we can visualize the ground plan of a large settlement uniformly and densely occupied. The orientation of the walls respected the morphology of the promontory. On the southeast part of the archaeological area, the remains of a long wall (19 x 0.6 m) could be traced on the same axis (**fig. 5**). It was built of different kinds

2. 2nd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. Now Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades.

3. Gaius Plinius Secundus, *Naturalis Historia*, 4.12.68.

4. Stephani Byzantii *Ethnica*, ed. and German tr. Billerbeck and Neumann-Hartmann, p. 240 [Σ338].

5. Zafiropoulou (1967), p. 466; Giannouli (1991), 381-82; Philaniotou (2005), p. 289.

6. Chatzianastasiou (1988), p. 500.

7. Tournefort, *Relation d'un voyage du Levant*, Greek tr. Apergis and Apergi, p. 269.

8. Ross (1843), p. 30.

9. Zafiropoulou (1967), p. 466.

of stones, mainly limestone with lime mortar. The eastern limit of the archaeological site is defined by another long rectangular building known as the 'Tholari' (Θολάρι), which is formed by two contiguous square spaces developed on a distinctive northwest to southeast axis. At its northwest corner, parts of the roof vault of a small chamber survive, measuring about 4 by 4 meters.

During the survey at the settlement, abundant potsherds were found, a small quantity of which dated to the Prehistoric, Hellenistic and Roman periods. The majority of the finds, though, dated to the Late Roman period: potsherds of tableware, cookware, transport and storage ware as well as lamp fragments (fig. 6). The presence of Red Slip Ware¹⁰ defines the chronological limits of the Late Roman phase of the settlement. The earliest finds belong to African Red Slip plates, forms 61 (fig. 7.1) and 68 (fig. 7.2), which are dated from the second half of the 4th and the first half of the 5th century. During the period from the middle of the 5th to the late 6th century, only Red Slip Ware of Asia Minor workshops was identified. This production is termed 'Late Roman C Ware' or 'Phocaeen Red Slip Ware', as its main centre was Phocaea, the mother city of Schinoussa. A plate of the form 3C (fig. 8.5) from the second half of the 5th century and a great variety of 3F plates cover the period until the middle of the 6th century (fig. 8.6-9). The transition from Asia Minor type 3 to type 10, which took place during the late 6th century, is very well represented (fig. 9.10-11). The first half of the 7th century is dominated by the Asia Minor type 10C (fig. 9.12-15). It is worth noting that during this period we also find products of the African workshops, plates of the popular late type 105 (fig. 7.3-4). These plates along with the Cypriot Red Slip types of the form 9B (fig. 10.16-17) can be dated to the middle of the 7th century and represent the latest tableware finds at Schinoussa.

We also found sherds of the popular wine or oil Late Roman amphora types¹¹ 1 and 2 (fig. 6). Cylindrical type 1 was produced in south Cilicia, north Syria, and Cyprus as well as Rhodes, Kos, etc. from the early 5th until the early 7th century.¹² The form was especially popular in the Aegean area during 6th century. Globular type 2 was produced in Aegean centres mainly during late 5th until the early 7th century.¹³ Large cylindrical Late Roman African amphorae of the type Keay 61D¹⁴ (fig. 11.18), which were produced in Tunisia, also arrived at Schinoussa at the end of the 6th or during the first half of the 7th century.¹⁵ Their discovery is quite surprising as these amphorae are rarely recorded in the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁶ These ceramic categories cover the everyday needs for the production and consumption, transport, storage and preservation of liquid and solid food, as well as the lighting of a typical Late Antique settlement. The duration of this activity, on the basis of the pottery finds, covers the Late Roman period from the second half of the 4th to the middle of the 7th century.

During a small-scale rescue excavation near the sea, a marble inscribed stele¹⁷ of Hellenistic date came unexpectedly to light and helped to define the significance of the site (fig. 12). The stele was found 20 meters southwest of the long wall, and according to traces of later use, it must have been re-used as construction material for a building of the settlement, most probably for the basilica. Following these discoveries,¹⁸ the 2nd E.B.A. conducted rescue excavations from July until November 2008 on the landward part of the construction area of the proposed new port, to the south of the long wall.

10. Typology according to Hayes (1972).

11. Typology according to Riley (1979).

12. Diamanti (2010), pp. 49-52, 58-59.

13. Diamanti (2010), pp. 73-76.

14. Typology according to Keay (1984).

15. Chronology: Bonifay (2004), p. 141; Bonifay (2010), p. 40, fig. 5.23.

16. Keay (1984), pp. 305, 309.

17. According to the epigraphist Nikolaos Petrocheilos, the inscription casts light on a scarcely documented period. It records the pact between the Lacedaemonians and King Ptolemy II, Philadelphos. The obligations of the two contracted parties are detailed, while they are bound by oaths. The pact is attested in the well-known Chremonides decree. The latter was passed in the year 268 BC, thus the inscription from Schinoussa should antedate this year.

18. Chatzilarou (2008).

*Rescue excavation*¹⁹

The rescue excavation revealed the south and southwest part of an Early Christian basilica and three rectangular structures on the south (**fig. 13, 14**). The floor plan of the basilica is restored based on the architectural findings of the excavation along with the visible remnants of the long wall (wall 1). The perimeter of the building is defined by a north wall 1, the transverse west wall 2 and the south wall 3. All these walls are 60 centimetres thick. A vaulted narthex was revealed in the west measuring 9.50 x 2.40 m. The vault had collapsed and covered the surface of the floor (**fig. 15**). Access to the interior of the basilica was through two openings revealed in west wall 2. The central doorway is 1.85 meters long. Its great marble threshold remains in situ with mortices for the application of two door leaves. It is almost certain that there was a third opening symmetrical to the south one in the north side of wall 2 which has not been excavated.

The south opening in wall 2 leads to the south aisle of the basilica which is defined by south wall 3 and parallel wall 8 (**fig. 16**). Another opening was revealed on the west edge of wall 3 in the southwest corner of the building. A low stone bench was constructed along the south wall. Wall 8 was only a half meter high. Its edges were revealed to be damaged but it seems certain that it was not continuous. Two openings allowed communication between the nave and the aisle. A pre-existing freestanding T-shaped pier is built in wall 8 (**fig. 17**), while an identical pier was revealed on the same axis further to the east. Marble rectangular blocks from an ancient building were reused in the piers and two symmetrical pilasters were constructed on the south wall across from the piers (**fig. 18**). The floor of the south aisle was formed by multiple thin layers of compacted mortar and soil.

The southwest part of the nave was revealed to the north of wall 8 and access was gained through the central doorway of wall 2. A series of rectangular marble slabs were laid irregularly on the central axis of the building (**fig. 19**). They were interrupted by a semicircular wall, about 50 cm high, part of which has been revealed. On the bottom of its western external side, a small part of fresco wall painting has survived. The floor surface was covered by colourful pebbles pressed into a thick layer of mortar. Two fallen columns were also revealed.

To the south of the basilica, the architectural remnants of three small rectangular adjacent structures came to light (**fig. 20**). They are formed by wall 10 which was constructed parallel and adjacent to south wall 3 and the transverse walls 13 and 14. In structure B, the bases of two almost square symmetrical pilasters were revealed, apparently supporting a great arch. In structure C, the base of a similar symmetrical pilaster was found and also the lower part of a column was used as a later extension. In structures A and B, layers of compacted lime-mortar and soil were excavated on the floor. The floor of structure C was of uneven schist and limestone flags.

All these buildings were constructed from local stones such as limestone, schist, and sandstone, as well as volcanic rock not found on Schinoussa. Marble rectangular blocks from a probably Hellenistic building were reused in the excavated structures. The most important finds from our excavation were the following: architectural elements, mainly columns, colonnettes, and fragments of limestone or marble perforated panels (**fig. 21-22**); fragments of marble circular menses; and two marble funeral reliefs in secondary use as building material. The first is of late Hellenistic date and depicts a man making a greeting gesture to his wife (**fig. 23**).²⁰ It is inscribed: $\text{C}\Omega\text{Π}\text{A}\text{T}\text{P}\text{E}\ \text{Δ}\text{Ι}\text{Ο}\text{Γ}\text{Ε}\text{Ν}\text{Ο}\text{Υ}\text{C}\ \text{Λ}\text{Α}\text{Ο}/\text{Δ}\text{Ι}\text{Κ}\text{Ε}\text{Υ}$

19. Members of the scientific team: Archaeologists: Dellaporta, Aik., Chatzilazarou, D., Aslanides, A., Mougoyianni, P., Papanikolaou, P. Conservators: Vassiliou, A., Markou, E., Mafredas, Th., Podimata, F. Geologist: Ipsilanti, H. Draughtsmen: Papachatzis, N., Tsouris, N. I would like to express my gratitude to the director of the 2nd E.B.A., Mrs Aikaterini Dellaporta, for entrusting to me the scientific supervision of the excavation. Results: Chatzilazarou (2009); Chatzilazarou (2014).

20. Similar funeral reliefs in Couilloud (1974), pp. 413-17, no. 5-7, fig. 12-14.

ΑΠΟ ΦΟΙΝΙΚΗΣ ΧΡΗΣΤΕ ΧΑΙΡΕ.²¹ The second one from the Roman period represents a scene of ploughing and two scenes of funeral supper (fig. 24).²² Also found were sherds of large vessels, mainly amphorae, cooking pots and tableware of late Roman date, a few fragments of lamps from the 4th to the 6th century –whole lamps from Athenian workshops (fig. 25, 26) as well as Asia Minor (fig. 27) and 'Aegean' types (fig. 28) were found at Tholari– together with many fragments of roof tiles. Metal objects, mainly iron and copper nails, dagger blades as well as four non-identifiable copper coins were also excavated. In addition, there were fragments of glass objects such as cups, vessels, perfume flasks, larger pots and glass panes, together with fragments of human and animal bones, but no burials were discovered. Finally, on the interior of the building, many fragments of plaster were found with fresco decoration of abstract geometrical themes (fig. 29). Their original position is unknown but it seems possible that in addition to the semicircular wall, they decorated the surface of the piers or the south wall of the building.²³

According to the architectural findings of the excavated area and the visible remains of the north wall, the north aisle of our building should be restored symmetrically to the south (fig. 30). A proof of that is the formation of pilasters on the interior side of the north wall in precisely symmetrical positions to the pilasters of the south wall. The interior of the basilica is 12.30 m wide: the nave measures 5.17 m and the aisles are each about 2.9 m wide. The proportions are almost 2 to 1. Originally the aisles were separated from the nave by freestanding T-shaped piers. Arches would have been placed on the north piers and pilasters symmetrical to the ones in the south.

The combination of piers or columns and pilasters which support reinforcing arches is recorded on nearby Naxos,²⁴ Thera,²⁵ and Paros²⁶ (fig. 31). T-shaped piers were especially found in the Basilica of Agios Georgios at Astypalaia²⁷ (fig. 32). Piers of this kind were mainly used in church architecture in Asia Minor and Syria. However, they were not unknown in the Aegean as the cases of Schinoussa and Astypalaia indicate.²⁸ Orlandos also restored the original piers of the dome of Panagia Ekatonapyliani in Paros as T-shaped.²⁹ The floor plan of the basilica of Schinoussa has a very strong similarity to Agios Georgios of Astypalaia, although the latter was vaulted and smaller in size; here the moderate thickness of the perimeter walls and the limited supports for the roof indicate that the monument was originally covered by a timber roof.

The low stone bench of the south wall should also belong to the original phase of the basilica.³⁰ In this phase, the nave had a pebble floor while the floor on the aisles had mortar compacted with soil

21. "Sopater son of Diogenes from Laodikia at Phoinice, chaste one farewell".

22. Similar scenes of funeral suppers on steles in the Cyclades are dated during the second-third c. AD: Zafiropoulou (1991), pp. 525-43. The figures on the relief from Schinoussa indicate the same date and are similar to Mercky (1995), pp. 145-46, no. 3, Rf and Rg, pl. 11.1-2 (second half of the 2nd c. AD).

23. Similar wall paintings in early Christian basilicas: Sodini- Kolokotsas (1984), vol. I, pp. 53-56. vol. II, pl. 22d-g; Gerousi (2010a), pp. 21-22, 25; Themelis (ed.) (2004), p. 49, fig. 27, α-β.

24. Basilica of Gyroula at Sangri: Lambrinouidakis (1976), pp. 303-307, fig. 3. Aslanidis (2014), pp. 24-25, fig. 1, pl. 1a. Original phase of the Basilica of Ag. Isidoros at Rachi, Tragaia: Dimitrokallis (1995), pp. 261-68, fig. 15. Aslanidis (2014), pp. 26-28, fig. 5-7, pl. 3-5.

25. Basilica of Agia Eirini at Perissa: Gerousi (2010a), pp. 20-22, fig. 3. Basilica of Archangel Michael at ancient Thera: Hiller von Gaertringen (1904), pp. 195-97, fig. 213.

26. Basilica of Treis Ekklesies: Orlandos (1961), pp. 184-86, fig. 1.

27. Lazaridou (1953), p. 237, fig. 2. I would like to thank the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese which kindly gave me the picture of Agios Georgios in fig. 32.

28. Similar T-shaped piers were also used in early basilicas of Cyprus supporting the arches of the vaulted roof of the nave: Stewart (2010), pp. 171-77.

29. Orlandos (1965a), pp. 159-68, fig. 1-2. Also the Basilica of Agia Triada in Telendos: Koutellas (2001), pp. 247-48, fig. 1-2.

30. Orlandos (1994), pp. 435-37. Similar benches: Basilica of Ipsilometopo in Lesbos: Orlandos (1929), pp. 4-10, fig. 1. Basilica of Treis Ekklesies in Paros: Orlandos (1961), pp. 185-86, fig. 1. Basilica of Heraion in Samos: Schneider (1929), p. 122, fig. 14. Basilica of Agia Triada in Kalymnos: Koutellas (1998), pp. 105-106 and Koutellas (2001), p. 248.

which had been renovated several times. It is likely that the presbytery should be located on the east of the second row of piers and pilasters, where the stone bench stops (**fig. 30**). During excavation in this area, pieces of a perforated Early Christian limestone panel (**fig. 21-22**) as well as most of the glass and metal objects were found. A colonnette probably supporting an altar or marble mense was also discovered. Regarding the exact chronology of the original construction of the basilica, we think that although the available evidence is not sufficient to define it before the completion of the excavation, it seems fairly certain from the finds that the monument was in use at least during the 6th and the first half of the 7th century.

The late phase

During excavation, evidence came to light regarding the late phase of the monument and the settlement of Schinoussa (**fig. 33**). After the original construction of the basilica, there followed a phase of additions concerning the support of the roof, indicating that the monument faced problems of stability. The original piers and pilasters were lengthened by the addition of rectangular masonry which narrowed the arched openings from 2.3 to 1.35 m (**fig. 34**). Clearly, the aim was to strengthen the reinforcing arches of the aisles. Furthermore, the north wall of the adjacent structures, wall 10, was constructed in contact with the exterior surface of wall 3, giving it a dual function as a supporting wall (**fig. 35**). Wall 8 was also constructed as a stylobate between the nave and the south aisle, probably supporting columns between the piers. The two columns which were found during excavation were probably standing on the wall (**fig. 19**). Both wall 8 and the semicircular wall were built over the pebble floor and were clearly later. The latter's place and form indicate that it was constructed as the base of the ambo. Adjacent structure C must have also faced stability problems as is indicated by the two phases of additions to the original pilaster. In the second phase, even the lower part of a column was built-in (**fig. 20**).

Sometime after these structural additions, the rough walls 9 and 15 were constructed to isolate the aisle from the nave and the presbytery (**fig. 14**). The south openings of the basilica and the presbytery were blocked by rough stonework. The purpose of these structures is not yet clear. Soon an effort was undertaken to elevate the level of the floor by 10 to 15 cm over entire surface of the excavated area, although the pebbled floor was maintained in an excellent condition. The floor was overlaid from bottom to top by a thick layer of mortar, a layer of small sea pebbles with sand and a layer of mortar with clay soil. Over this substrate, uneven schist slabs were applied in the nave (**fig. 36**). On the south aisle, thick flat limestone flags were applied over a layer of volcanic pumice (**fig. 37**). The method and materials used have hydraulic properties, indicating a conscious effort to isolate the rising damp, which must have created serious problems to the maintenance and operation of the church at that time. Especially in the southwest part of the nave, this procedure was followed twice by applying a second, thick layer of mortar and new schist slabs (**fig. 36**).

In this part of the building, on the east edge of the west part of wall 8, where a column probably stood, a pit with material from a slumped wall was revealed during excavation. Lying about 30 m from the shoreline, this pit was flooded with seawater at a depth of 25 cm. A subsurface passage in the schist bedrock must have brought seawater inland to this spot; its corrosive properties were likely the reason for the slump of the wall and the fall of the column. The fall must have happened after the abandonment of the basilica, as the column was found 20 cm higher than the earth deposits which had begun to fill the space. We also believe that the later construction of two adjacent walls, 11 and 12, close to the south wall of the basilica was intended to face exactly this problem by blocking the underground circulation of water (**fig. 38**). Both walls were found too deep in comparison to wall 10; they almost blocked the southwest opening of the south aisle. All evidence shows clearly that the relative elevation of the coastal settlement to sea level had somehow dramatically changed.

The off-hand and hasty nature of the effort to raise the floor is revealed by the use of pieces of the perforated panel as slabs for the pavement. The phase of the paved floor was not revealed in structures A and B (**fig. 20**). Their floor is lower than the floor of structure C and it seems certain that these two spaces were abandoned after the rise in sea level. The pavement of structure C, due to the slope of the terrain in the south, demanded the application of two rows of level slabs, among which a big piece of the perforated panel was found, and on top of it, the relief of Sopater was revealed upside-down (**fig. 39**).³¹

After the floor levels in the basilica and structure C were raised, human activity in the building continued for a certain period. A large number of glass and metal objects in the east part of the aisle were found in the soil deposits above the pavement. Excavation was unable to reveal any sign of violent destruction; on the contrary, the basilica and the other structures seem to have been abandoned after the removal of valuable and useful elements. The abandonment of the basilica must have been related to the desertion of the settlement and does not seem to indicate any isolated incident.

Discussion

The finds of the survey and the rescue excavations undertaken by the 2nd E.B.A. on Portokali promontory sketch the image of an Aegean coastal settlement, which was originally founded during the Hellenistic period in connection to a fortified acropolis on Profitis Ilias and two natural ports in Livadi and Tsigouri bays (**fig. 40**). The finds indicate human activity in the area of the settlement and acropolis during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The transition to the Late Roman era was marked by building activity and economic prosperity as is testified by the extended area occupied by wall remnants. Other evidence includes the clear and uniform plan of the settlement, the construction of the two Early Christian basilicas at Livadi Bay and Stavros as well as the wealth, variety and long-distance origin of the pottery material.

As we have noted, the name of Schinoussa is recorded only once during Late Antiquity and not in relation to any historical event. Schinoussa along with the Cycladic islands was part of the *Provincia Insularum*³² with the city of Rhodes as its administrative and ecclesiastical centre (**fig. 41**). Schinoussa functioned as a satellite settlement in a wider network of agrarian production, naval commercial routes and international transactions. According to the *Synecdemus* of Hierocles,³³ the network included the insular cities of Naxos, Amorgos, Paros, Ios,³⁴ Doroussa (Donoussa),³⁵ Thera, and Astypalaia (**fig. 42**). Archaeological research has also traced remnants of Late Roman settlements at a few sites in Naxos, the closest of which to Schinoussa was Panormos on the southeast coast of the island³⁶ (**fig. 43**). Other neighbouring settlements were Aigiali and Arkesine on Amorgos,³⁷ Chora on Ano Koufonissi,³⁸ Keros, Perissa and Kamari on Thera, Kastelli on Anaphi, Livadi and Palaiokastro on Pholegandros and Agia Marina on Sikinos. The finds from Schinoussa shed light on the commercial activity of this remote Aegean area. They underline the significance of the naval routes which connected the capital Rhodes and the Dodecanese to the Central Cyclades and their most important island, Naxos.

The excavation of the basilica also demonstrated the problems faced by the settlement of Schi-

31. Similar use of marble reliefs at Panagia Ekatontapyliani: Orlandos (1965b), pp. 47-49.

32. Drakoulis (2009), pp. 271-75.

33. Honigmann (1939), p. 32, 686.12-687.5

34. For the Late Roman phase of the settlement of ancient Ios: Marthari (1988), pp. 512-13, pl. 319a.

35. Honigmann (1939), p. 13, 648.12. 'Δωρούσα' was listed by Hierocles among the 79 cities of 'Ἐπαρχίας Ἑλλάδος ἡγουν Ἀχαΐας'.

36. Chatzilazarou and Diamanti (2016).

37. Marangou (2002), pp. 69-75. Geroussi-Bendermacher (2007), p. 614.

38. Zafropoulou (1967), pp. 466-467. Philaniotou (2005), p. 287.

noussa during the later phase of its existence. The reinforcement of the timber-roof supports reveals structural problems which may be related to a specific seismic phenomenon. We need to closely examine the possibility that this phenomenon caused the alteration of the ground surface of the settlement in relation to the sea level. An immediate effect would be the submergence of the southeast part of the settlement below sea level: Photini Zafiropoulou saw wall remnants of these buildings in the sea during a survey of 1967. This fact changed life in the settlement of Schinoussa dramatically, as mirrored by the need to elevate the floor of the basilica and structure C. These repairs reflect the efforts of the residents of Schinoussa to keep their church functioning and also betray their attachment to remain in their ancestral homes. Similar repairs and retrofitting after seismic activity have been revealed in excavations in Kamari³⁹ (ancient Oia) and Perissa⁴⁰ on Thera, where finds were dated to the second half of the 6th century. In Thera, this activity also took place many years earlier – probably the same earthquake that affected the settlement of Schinoussa – but was not the cause for the abandonment of these settlements.⁴¹ The transformation of the timber-roofed Basilica of Agia Eirini at Perissa to a vaulted structure (phase B) has also been connected by the excavator Eugenia Gerousi to structural problems caused by this earthquake.⁴²

According to pottery finds, the settlement of Schinoussa was either abandoned or definitively deserted around the middle of the 7th century or a few years later. We cannot ascribe this event to any sudden or abrupt violent episode, as traces of destruction have not been revealed in any part of the upper stratigraphic horizons of our excavations. The two latest types of Red Slip plates found at Schinoussa also characterize the destruction layers of the settlement and acropolis at Emporio on Chios, dated to the middle of the 7th century.⁴³ These layers were connected by the excavators to the Arab raids which paved the way for the great siege of Constantinople during 674-678. The correspondence of the late pottery finds of Schinoussa to the destruction layers on Chios indicates that the abandonment of the settlement happened at about the same time as the destruction of Emporio, and it too is possibly related to the activities of the Arab navy in the Aegean during the second half of the 7th century.⁴⁴

The result of this event was the abandonment of unfortified coastal settlements in the Aegean and the movement of the population to inaccessible fortified sites.⁴⁵ This phenomenon is traced in all three great neighbouring islands. The residents of Kamari and Perissa on Thera, according to Charalambos Sigalas, Maya Efstathiou and Eugenia Gerousi, did not abandon their settlements in haste.⁴⁶ Instead, they moved to ancient Thera, after clearing first their houses of any useful items. According to Lila Marangou,⁴⁷ the coastal settlement of ancient Amorgos at Katapola was abandoned during the 7th century. New fortified settlements were created in naturally protected sites as the Kastro at Chora and Langada at Aigiali, or near the ancient city of Arkesine on the Rock of Kastriani (**fig. 44**). In neighbouring Naxos, a population movement is observed from the coastal western settlements of Chora and Plaka towards the hinterland at Tragaia and the highlands around the Kastro of Apalirou. The latter was constructed by the imperial administration during this period as a response to the Arabic danger,

39. Sigalas (1990), p. 77; Efstathiou (2000), p. 239.

40. Gerousi (2001), pp. 260-261; Gerousi (2010a), pp. 27, 30.

41. Sigalas (1990), p. 77; Efstathiou (2000), p. 239; Gerousi (2001), p. 260; Gerousi (2010a), p. 27, note 45.

42. Gerousi (2010a), pp. 25-27.

43. Boardman (1989), pp. 96-99, pl. 31.160-161; see the revised chronology suggested by Poulou in this volume.

44. Ahrweiler (1962), pp. 11-32; Malamut (1988), pp. 67-68; Hood (1989), pp. 4-8; Trombley (2001), pp. 155-62.

45. As in the case of Kastro of Emporio on Chios: Hood (1989), pp. 3-8; Ballance (1989), pp. 49-73, 80-81 (Period I). Also the Kastro of Lazaros at Samos: Tsakos (1979), p. 19.

46. Sigalas (1990), p. 77; Efstathiou (2000), pp. 239-40; Gerousi (2001), pp. 260-62; Gerousi (2010a), pp. 27, 30.

47. Marangou (2002), pp. 76-81, 302. An important testimony of the situation in the Aegean during the Arab incursions is the Arkesini Amorgos hoard 1888: Touratsoglou (1999).

according to Georgios Mastoropoulos⁴⁸ and Vasso Penna,⁴⁹ and is currently being explored by a collaboration between the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades and the Norwegian Institute.⁵⁰ In the case of Schinoussa, we do not have any clue as to where the Schinoussioi or Schinoussaioi were heading, but it is rather certain that they left their island for a more secure destination.

The island remained unoccupied during the medieval period until at least the middle of the 19th century. Families from Amorgos later settled on Schinoussa. Ludwig Ross described the Late Roman phase of the settlement by the term 'Middle Age village'.⁵¹ Sometime during this long period, the island came under the ownership of the Panaghia Chozoviotissa Monastery⁵² when Schinoussa was either used as grazing land for livestock or as a refuge for pirates. No extensive construction activity occurred on the island, enabling the preservation of walls of the ancient settlement on the surface of Portokali promontory for so many centuries. The rescue excavation carried out by the 2nd E.B.A. resulted in the alteration of the plans for the new port in order that the basilica could be preserved and remain accessible to the public. However, this decision does not restore the damage to the cultural and natural environment of the ancient settlement of Schinoussa, nor does it prevent further serious threats to its preservation posed by the pressure for building activity which always accompanies a large development project.

The ancient settlement of Schinoussa is an interesting example of the uninterrupted continuity of urban life in the Aegean during Hellenistic, Roman and Late Roman times. The finds from the rescue excavation at Livadi Bay came to support similar evidence from neighbouring islands concerning the abandonment of ancient coastal settlements during the second half of the 7th century. This phenomenon dramatically affected the long-lasting settlement pattern in the Aegean area. The movement of the populations from the coast to distant, inaccessible sites during this period mirrors dramatically the dangerous circumstances and sketches the hard struggle for survival faced by future generations. The recession of material culture is a main characteristic of the next period and a crucial reason for calling it the 'Dark Ages', but this term is by definition inadequate. Instead, the transformation of the settlement pattern should better be appreciated as a vital political, administrative and social effort that the Late Roman state and its citizens, under great threat, preventively undertook and successfully accomplished. The concentration of the population in new, protected sites on large islands such as Amorgos, Thera and mainly Naxos ensured the survival of Christian Greco-Roman civilization during the medieval period and enriched our cultural heritage with Kastro Apalirou and the aniconic churches of Naxos.

48. Mastoropoulos (1999), pp. 75-76; Mastoropoulos (2006), pp. 42-43.

49. Penna (2001), pp. 402-403. Also, see Aslanidis (2014), pp. 14-15.

50. Hill *et al.* (2017).

51. The dense development of the settlement misled Ross (1843), p. 30. A similar picture of dense development is described by Efstathiou (2000), p. 235, at the Late Roman settlement of Kamari on Thera.

52. In an official document of the Monastery of the year 1853 signed by the abbot Joseph Basarampas, Neofytos Sigalas and Gerasimos Fostieris, Schinoussa was referred to as a deserted island whose rental income supported the function of the schools on Amorgos.

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Abbreviations – Journals

AΔ	Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον
AE	Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AM	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung
BCH	Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique
BSA	Annual of the British School at Athens
ΔΧΑΕ	Δελτίον Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας
EEKM	Επετηρίς Εταιρείας Κυκλαδικών Μελετών
IG	Inscriptiones Graecae
JSAH	Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians



Figure 1.
Map of the central and south Cyclades.



Figure 2.
Map of Schinoussa.



Figure 3.
General view of Portokali promontory,
Livadi and Tsigouri bays.

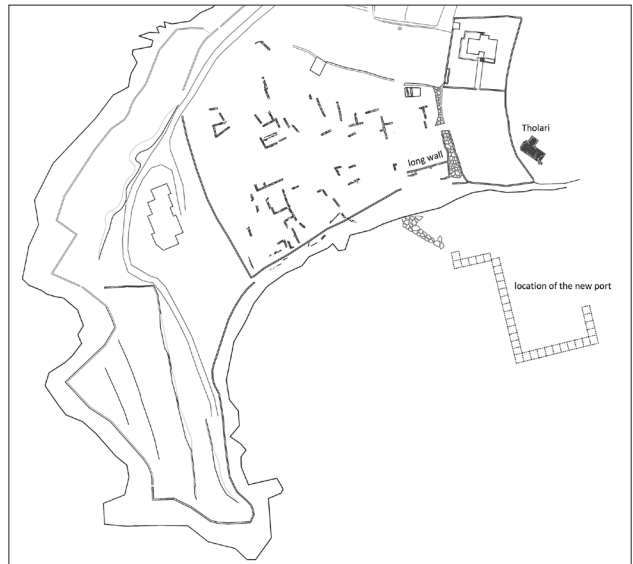


Figure 4.
Plan of architectural remains on Livadi bay.
Themistoklis Billis, architect, Konstantinos
Zafiris, topographer.



Figure 5.
Remains of the long wall.

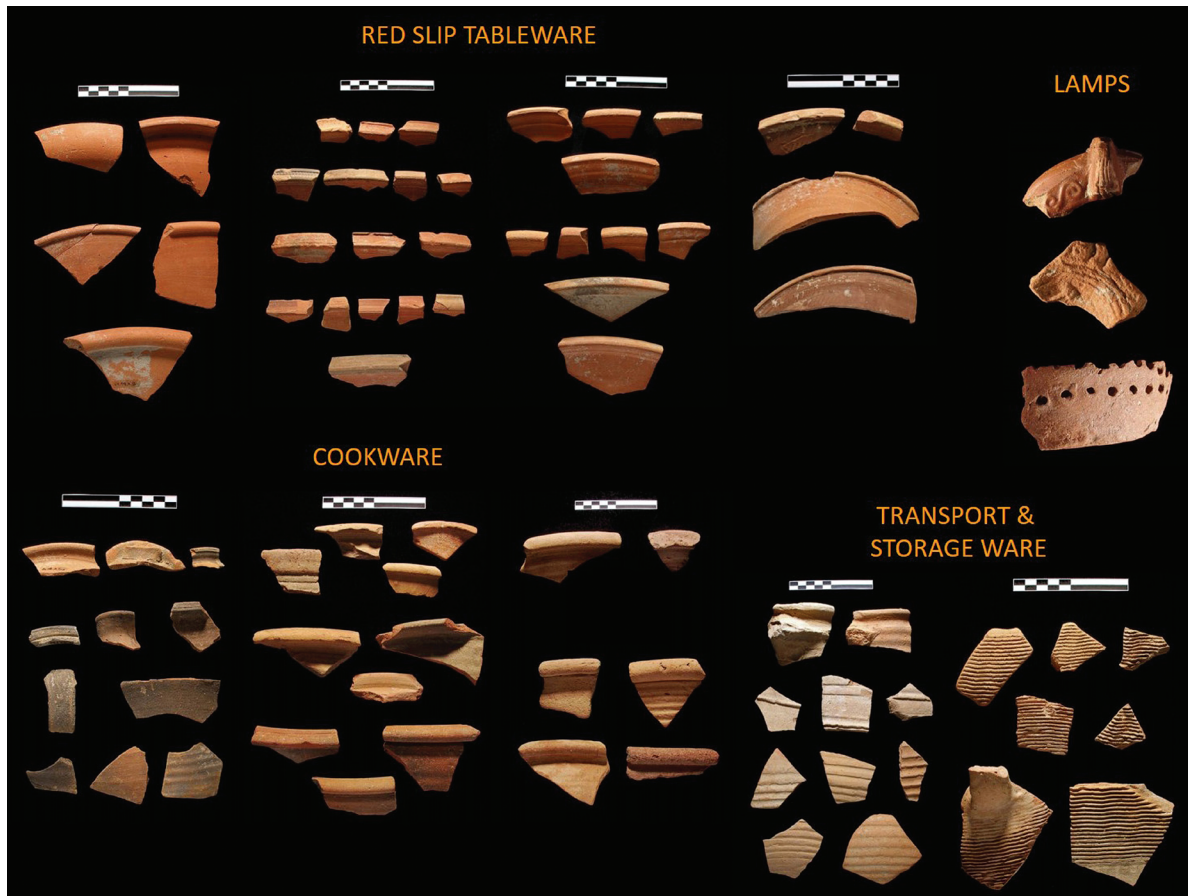


Figure 6. Potsherds found during the field survey.

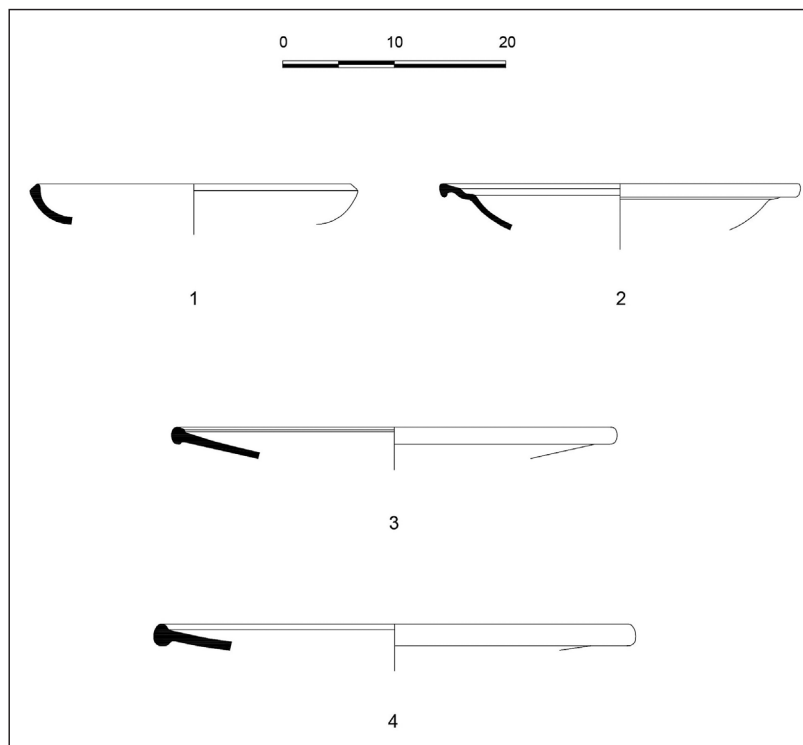


Figure 7. African Red Slip Ware. 1. Form 61. Drawings by Nikolaos Tsouris, painter. 2. Form 68. 3-4. Form 105.

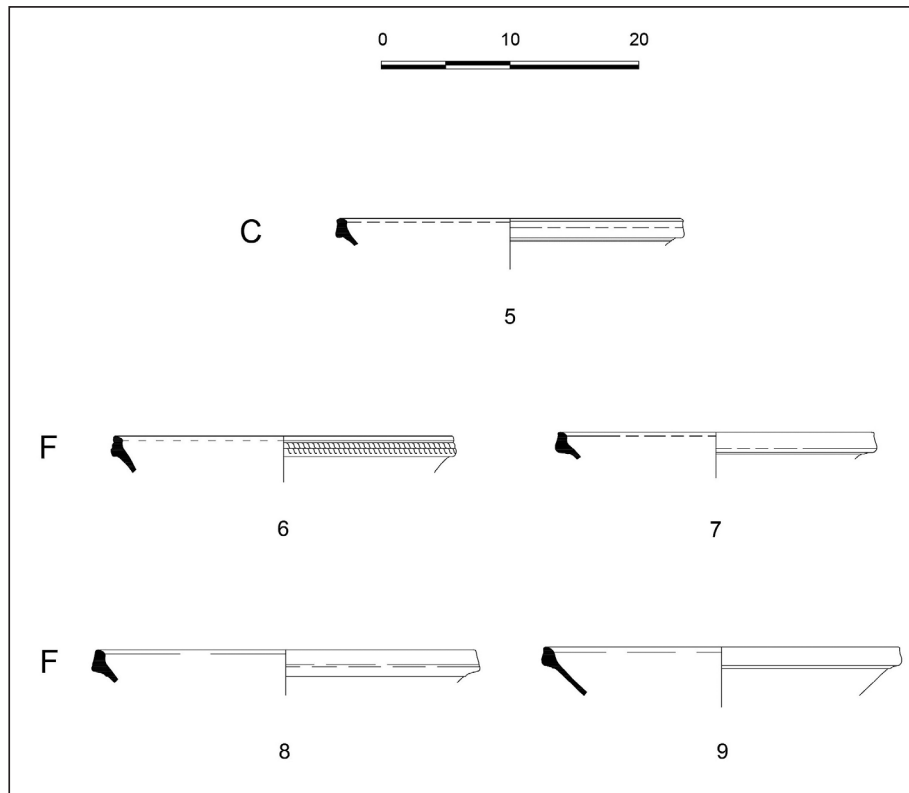


Figure 8. Late Roman C Ware. 5. Form 3C. 6-9. Form 3F.

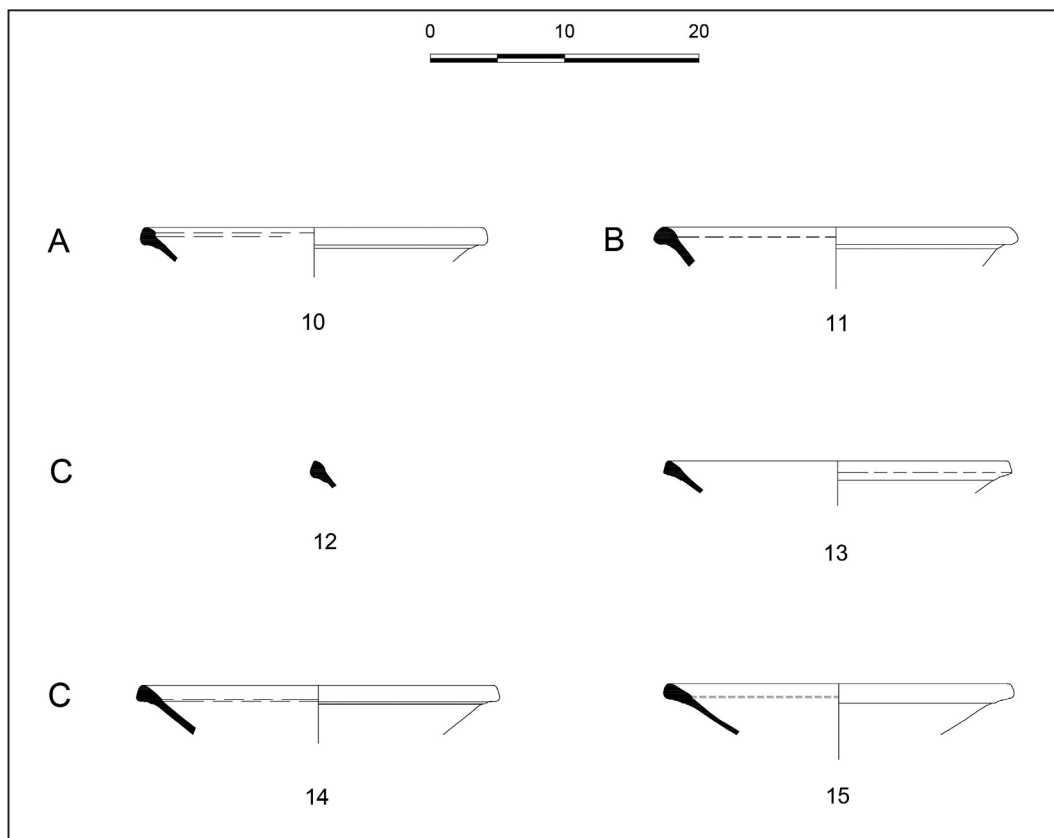


Figure 9. Late Roman C Ware. 10-11. F form 10A-B. 12-15. Form 10C.

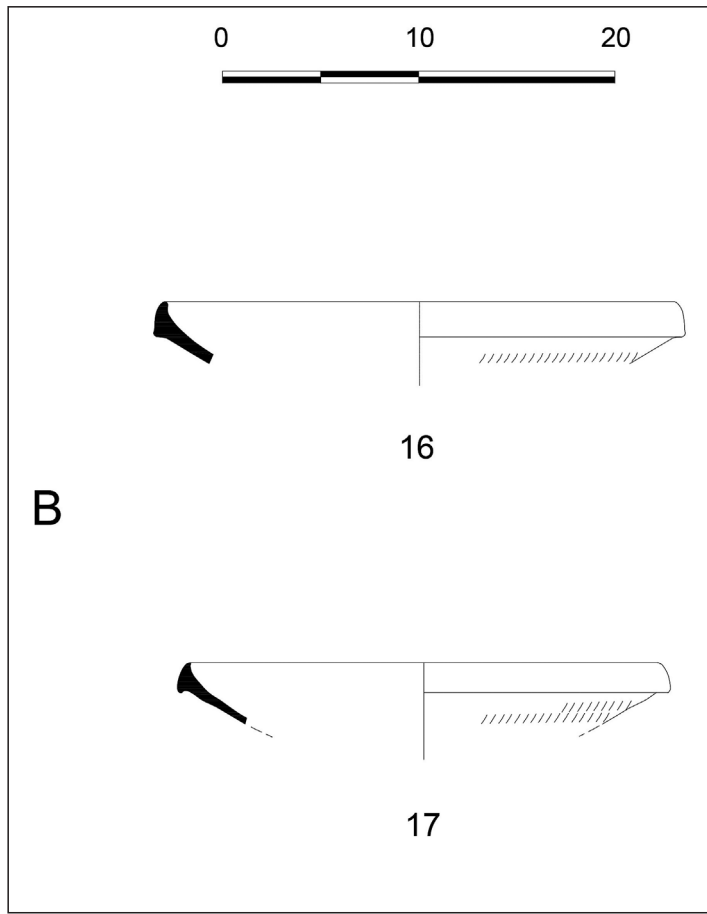


Figure 10. Late Roman African amphorae. 18. Type Keay 61D.

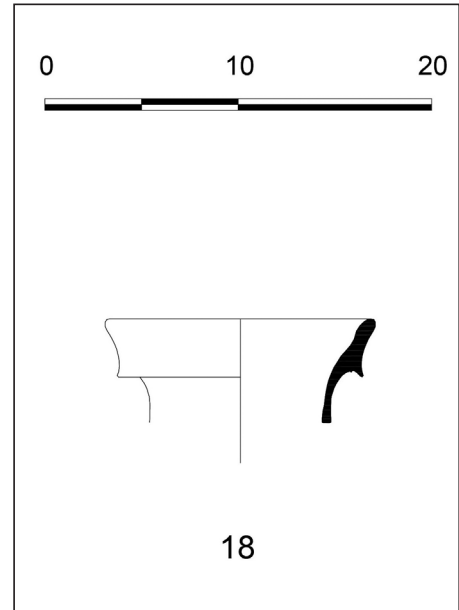


Figure 11. Late Roman African amphorae. 18. Type Keay 61D.



Figure 12. Marble inscribed stele of Hellenistic date.



Figure 13.
General view of the excavated area.

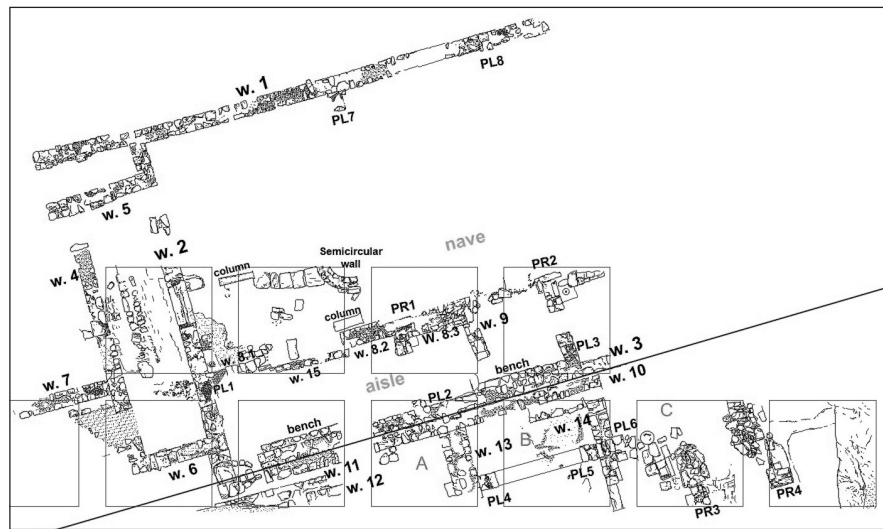


Figure 14.
Plan of the excavated
remains of the basilica.
Themistoklis Billis, archi-
tect, Konstantinos Zafiris,
topographer.



Figure 15. The collapsed vault of the narthex.



Figure 16.
View of the south aisle of the basilica.



Figure 17.
The T-shaped pier built in wall 8.



Figure 18.
View of the piers and pilasters of the south aisle



Figure 19.
West view of the nave with a series of marble slabs.

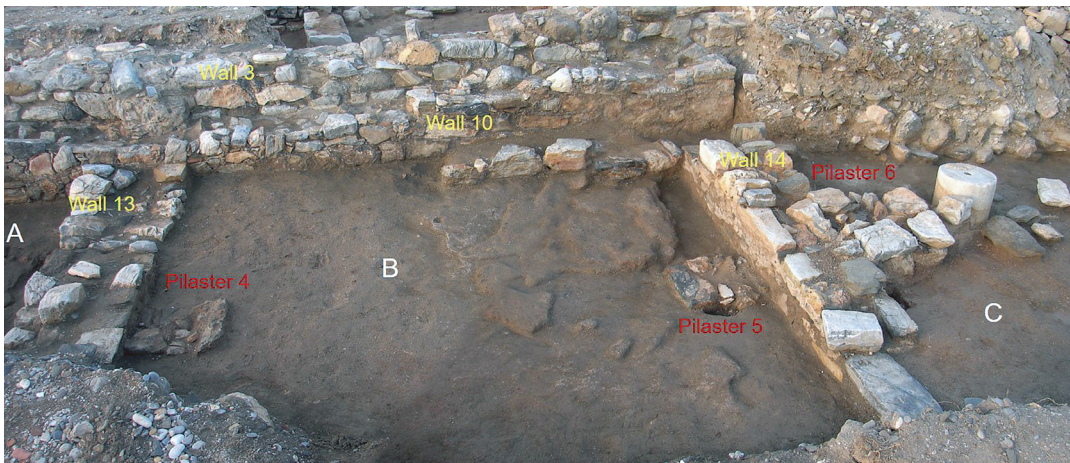


Figure 20. Architectural remains of the south adjacent structures.

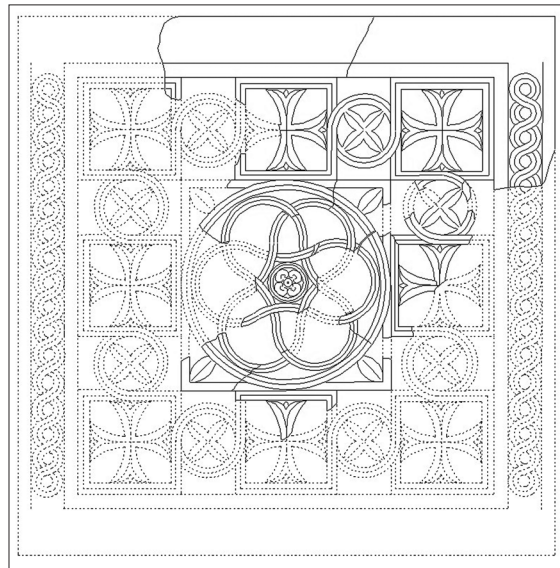


Figure 21-22. Photo and drawing of a perforated panel.



Figure 24. Marble funeral relief of the Roman period.

Figure 23.
The marble funeral relief of Sopater.



Figure 25. Lamp from an Athenian workshop. Karivieri (1996), p. 226, no. 215, pl. 19.



Figure 26. Lamp from an Athenian workshop. Karivieri (1996), pp. 205-6, no. 149-53, pl. 14.



Figure 27. Lamp from a workshop in Asia Minor. Williams (1981), pp. 74-75, no. 403, pl. 18; Gerousi (2010b), p. 224, fig. 23.E.



Figure 28. Lamp of 'Aegean type'. Bruneau (1965), p. 142, no. 4731, pl. 34.



Figure 29.
Fragments of plaster with fresco decoration.

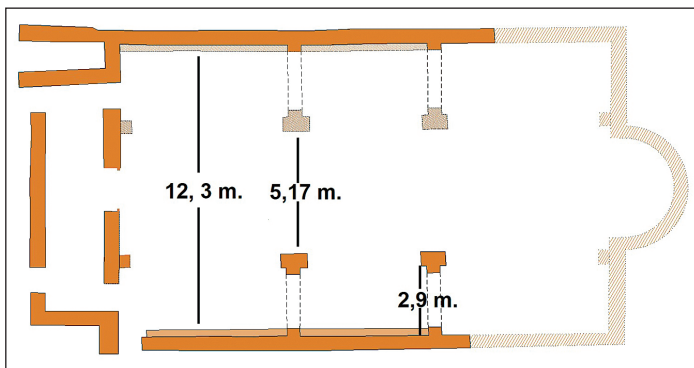


Figure 30.
Plan of the original phase of the basilica of Schinoussa.

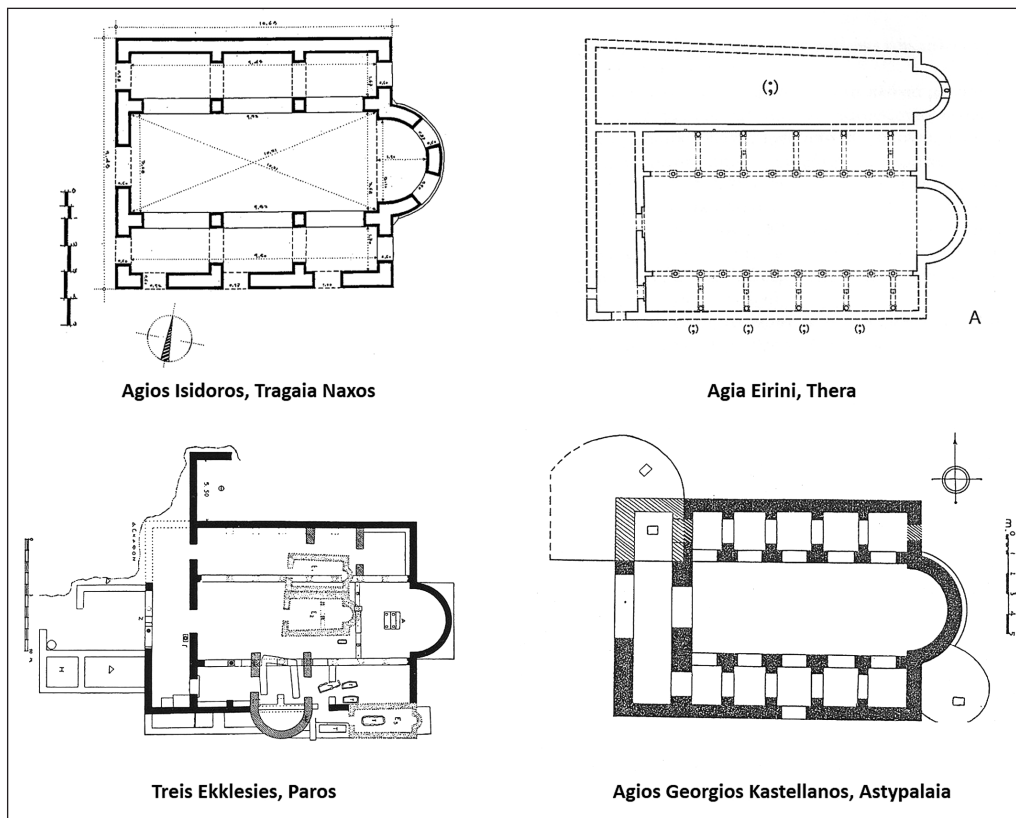


Figure 31. Floor plans of Early Christian Aegean basilicas.



Figure 32. View of the still-standing north aisle of Agios Georgios at Astypalaia.

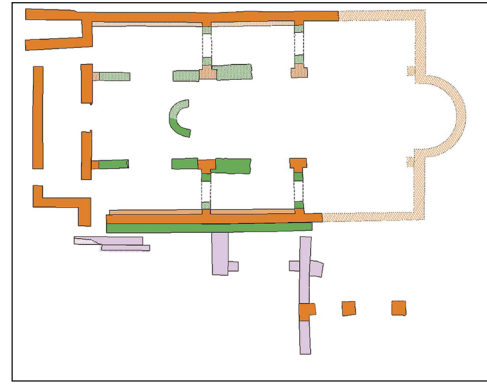


Figure 33. Plan of the basilica of Schinoussa with later additions.



Figure 34. View of the eastern pier and pilaster of the south aisle of the basilica of Schinoussa.



Figure 35. South wall 3 and 10 of the basilica of Schinoussa.



Figure 36. View of the southwest part of the nave.



Figure 37. View of the floor of the south aisle.



Figure 39. The Sopater relief as found lying upon an Early Christian perforated panel.

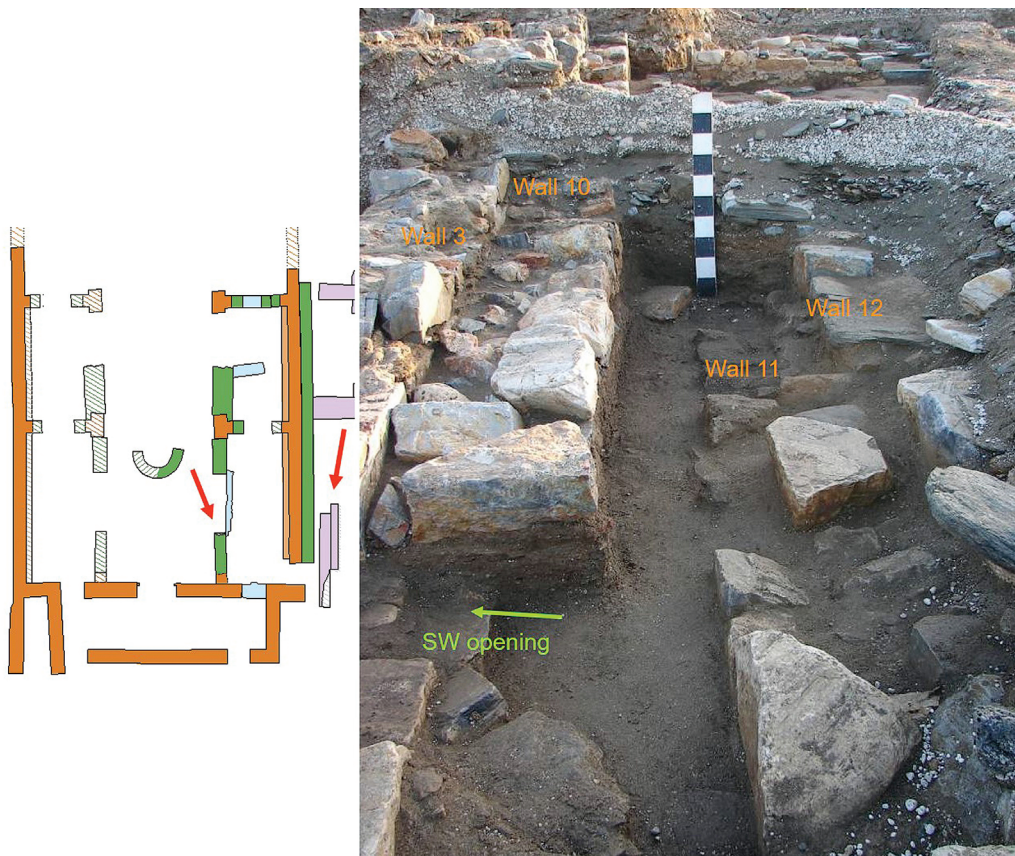


Figure 38. West view of walls 3, 10, 11 and 12.

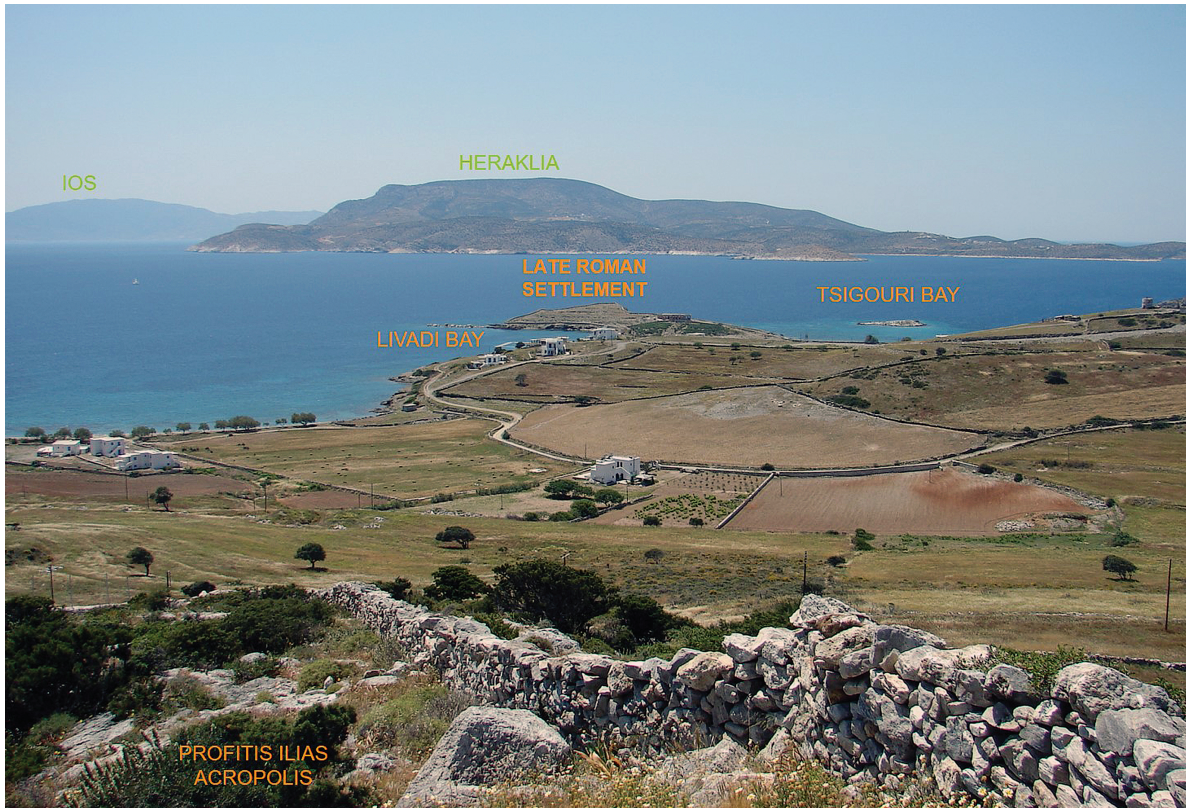


Figure 40. View of the Late Roman settlement of Schinoussa from the Profitis Ilias acropolis.



Figure 41. Map of provinces and cities in the Aegean according to the Synecdemos of Hierocles.

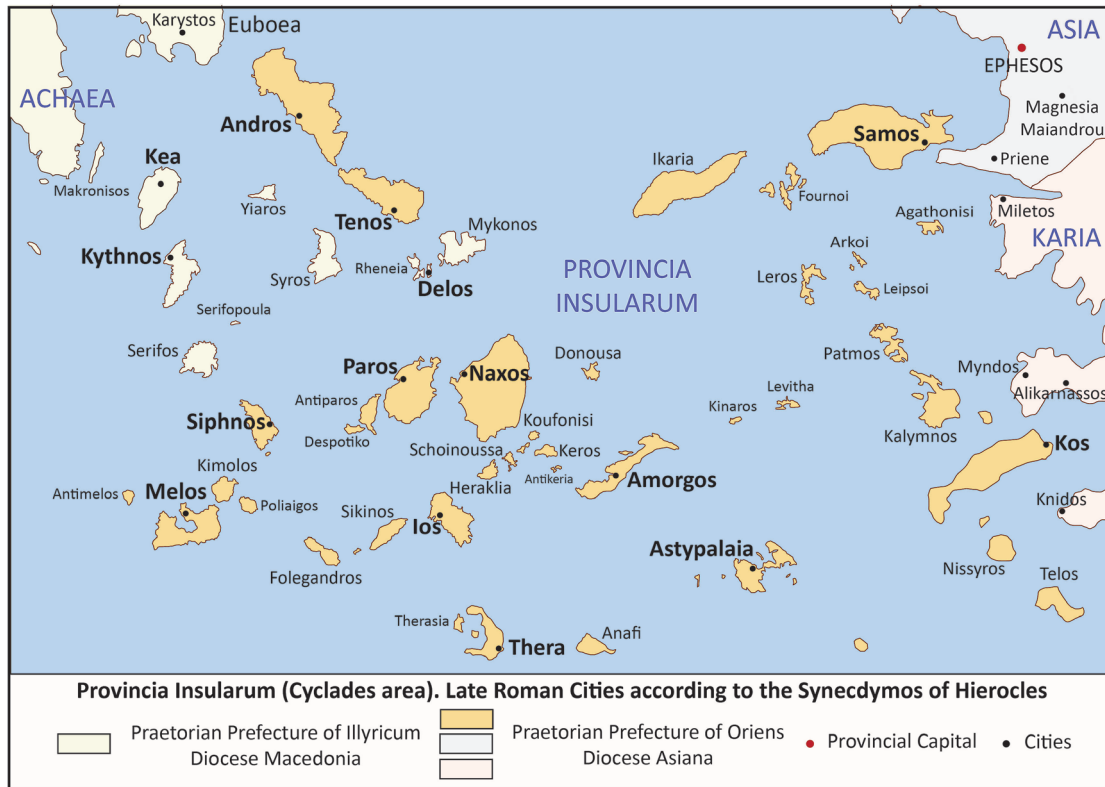


Figure 42. Map of Late Roman cities in the Provincia Insularum (Cyclades) according to the Synecdemos of Hierocles.

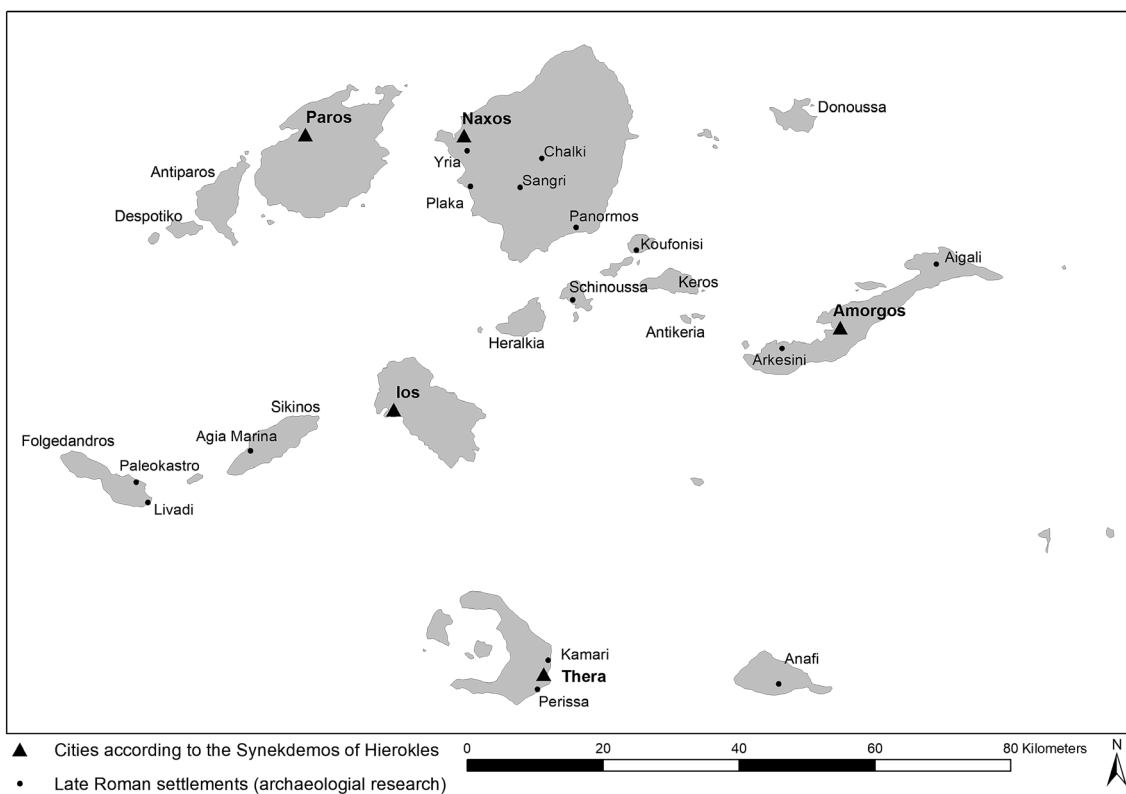


Figure 43. Cities and settlements in the southeast Cyclades during the Late Roman period.

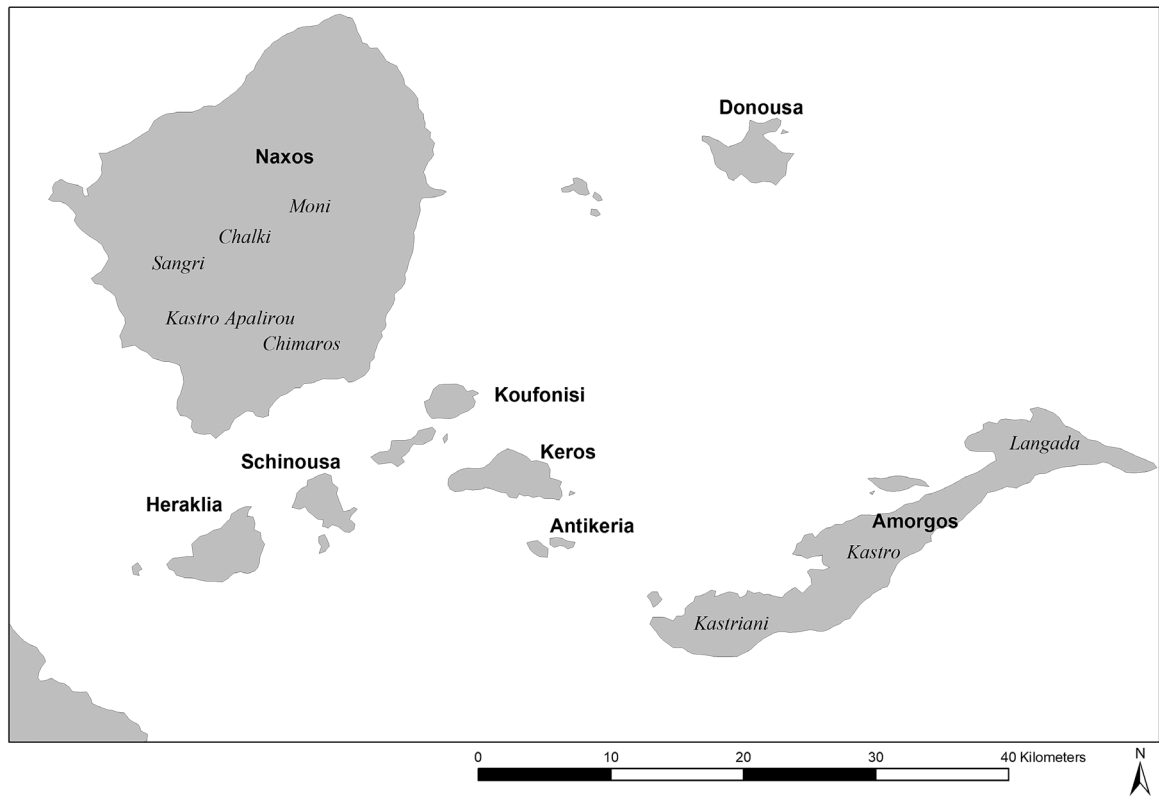


Figure 44. New settlements in Naxos and Amorgos during the 7th century.