

*The veneration of Saint Mamas in the mediterranean.
A traveller and border-defender saint.
The case of Naxos in the Cyclades*

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Abstract

Ο άγιος Μάμας είναι για τους σύγχρονους ανθρώπους σήμερα μια σχετικά άγνωστη προσωπικότητα αγίου, παρόλο που ο ίδιος μαρτύρησε σε πολύ νεαρή ηλικία (15 ή 18 ετών) σε ένα μεγάλο κέντρο του χριστιανισμού της Μ. Ασίας, στην Καισάρεια, επί αυτοκράτορα Αυρηλιανού (270-275) και η έναρξη της λατρείας του ανάγεται στην παλαιοχριστιανική περίοδο. Ο ένδοξος μεγαλομάρτυρας Μάμας ήταν ένας από τους πιο δημοφιλείς αγίους της βυζαντινής περιόδου. Πολλοί λόγοι εξηγούν τη δημοτικότητα του: η θαυματουργική του ικανότητα, το γεγονός ότι το κέντρο της λατρείας του ήταν η Καισάρεια, οι πανηγυρικοί λόγοι που γράφτηκαν στη μνήμη του από τους Καππαδόκες Μεγάλους Πατέρες της Εκκλησίας, Βασίλειο τον Μέγα και Γρηγόριο τον Θεολόγο, και επίσης το γεγονός ότι θεωρήθηκε ο προστάτης άγιος των στρατιωτικών μονάδων που φρουρούσαν τις ακριτικές επαρχίες που βρίσκονταν στα ανατολικά σύνορα της αυτοκρατορίας (*Limitanei, Ακρίτες, Αpeλatai*). Η λατρεία του εξαπλώθηκε ταχύτατα από το κέντρο της στην Καισάρεια σε όλη την Μεσόγειο, κυρίως μέσω των σημαντικών προσκυνημάτων στην Κωνσταντινούπολη, την Κύπρο και την πόλη Langres στη Γαλλία, καθώς και από τη μετεγκατάσταση των λειψάνων του σε Ανατολή και Δύση από τον 5ο έως και τον 13ο αι. Κατά τη διάρκεια της διάδοσης της λατρείας του αγίου Μάμαντος στον χριστιανικό κόσμο, η προσωπικότητά του συγκροτήθηκε από διαφορετικές παραδόσεις και εμπλουτίστηκε με νέα στοιχεία στους τόπους λατρείας του. Τα «ταξίδια» του στον ευρύτερο χώρο της Μεσογείου βεβαιώνονται από τον μεγάλο αριθμό των ναών που τιμώνται στη μνήμη του, των απεικονίσεών του, των τοπωνυμίων και των οικισμών που φέρουν το όνομά του, μαρτυρώντας ένα γενικότερο δίκτυο επικοινωνίας, θρησκευτικών και πολιτιστικών ανταλλαγών στην ευρύτερη Μεσόγειο μέσω των θαλάσσιων οδών. Ο άγιος Μάμας τιμάται ιδιαίτερα στην ευρύτερη περιοχή της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου και το Αιγαίο, κυρίως στην Κύπρο και στη νησιωτική Ελλάδα, σε μεγαλύτερο ποσοστό στην Κρήτη, τις Κυκλάδες και τα Δωδεκάνησα, γεγονός που συνηγορεί για τη μεταφορά της λατρείας του αγίου από τη θάλασσα.

Ο άγιος Μάμας, ως προστάτης των ποιμένων και των μικρών ζώων, λατρευόταν ευρέως στις Κυκλάδες και ιδιαίτερα στη Νάξο κατά τη βυζαντινή περίοδο. Η απεικόνιση του αγίου Μάμαντα ως βοσκού στους ναούς της Νάξου ερμηνεύεται από τη βεβαιωμένη ανάπτυξη της κτηνοτροφίας στο νησί που διαθέτει εκτεταμένο ορεινό τμήμα, πρόσφορο για μια τέτοια δραστηριότητα. Οι σωζόμενες βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες στη Νάξο, οι οποίες παριστάνουν τον άγιο Μάμα με ποιμενική ράβδο και μικρό ζώο, ανάγονται στην περίοδο της Φραγκοκρατίας (13ος έως 14ος αι.) και βρίσκονται στους ναούς του Αγίου Γεωργίου στον Όσκελο ή Νόσκελο (1286), της Παναγίας «της Γιαλλούς» (1288-1289) στην Αγιασό και του Αγίου Ιωάννη του Θεολόγου στ' Αθησαρού (14ος αι.). Οι ναοί αφιερωμένοι στη μνήμη του στη Νάξο (σωζόμενοι ή κατά την παράδοση) ιδρύονται έξω από τον οικιστικό πυρήνα,

στην ύπαιθρο χώρα. Ο ναός στον τύπο του σταυροειδούς εγγεγραμμένου στη θέση Ποταμιά (10ος αι.), που αποτελούσε, σύμφωνα με την παράδοση, αρχικά τον ορθόδοξο καθεδρικό ναό του νησιού, και στη συνέχεια, κατά τη διάρκεια της Φραγκοκρατίας (13ος-14ος αι.), τον καθολικό, δεν φαίνεται να είναι τυχαίο ότι τιμάται στο όνομα του αγίου Μάμαντα. Το γεγονός αυτό καταδεικνύει τη σημασία της λατρείας του αγίου στο νησί και τη δημοφιλία του. Τα προαναφερόμενα αποδεικνύουν επίσης την προτίμηση της λατρείας αγίων στις φραγκοκρατούμενες περιοχές που ήταν κοινώς αποδεκτοί και αγαπητοί και στα δύο δόγματα, όπως ήταν η περίπτωση του Αγίου Μάμαντα.

Introduction

Saint Mamas is for modern people a relatively unknown saint, although he was martyred at a very young age (15 or 18 years old) in Caesarea, a great Christian centre of Asia Minor, during the reign of Emperor Aurelian (270-275), and has been venerated since early Christian times. The initial Greek version (archetype) of the Saint's Martyrdom was already available by the early 4th century, and this version was gradually edited and supplemented.¹ The Greek *Vita*, certainly written before the mid-6th century, came from a combination of the archetype of the initial Martyrdom and the *aristocratic Vita*, and formed the basis for several of Saint Mamas' vitae, known since the 10th century, and was the primary source of later vitae, and for hymnographic and painted works depicting the saint.² According to the Greek *Vita*, Saint Mamas was the son of aristocrats, born in Gangra, Paphlagonia in the third century. His parents, Theodotus and Rufina, martyrs themselves, died in prison just after their child's birth. His upbringing was undertaken by the noblewoman Ammia, who raised him as her own. Still a young child, the Holy Providence transferred him to the mountains of Cappadocia, to save him from death for he refused to sacrifice to the idols. There, he lived as a simple shepherd, making cheese with the milk of deer and giving it to the needy. His fame reached the governor of Cappadocia Alexander, who ordered him to be brought to the city of Caesarea. There, he was tortured to force him to sacrifice to the gods, but he was rescued. Later on, he was brought to the stadium of Caesarea and thrown to the wild lions. With God's grace, the beasts did not devour him. Finally, the Governor ordered a soldier to strike him in the stomach with a trident. The martyr came out of the stadium holding his bowels. Bleeding, he dragged himself for two stadia before reaching a rock where he died. The earliest iconographic type of the saint appears in Cappadocia: Saint Mamas depicted full length riding a lion with an upright tail striding to the right.³

The veneration of Saint Mamas was transferred to Constantinople in the 5th century. By the second half of the 5th century, a suburb was already named after the saint. In 469, Emperor Leo I found refuge there, at the east side of the city (today Beşiktaş), during a conflagration in Constantinople. He built a palace, harbour, hippodrome, and a church dedicated to the saint.⁴ To the west of the city, close to Xylokerkos Gate (today Belgrad kapi), Justinian's chambermaid Farasmanis, according to Zonaras, founded a monastery in honour of Saint Mamas.⁵ During the reign of the Emperor Isaac II Angelos (1185-1195), the monastery was rebuilt and the skull of Saint Mamas was placed there since it had been brought by a monk in 1067 after the fall of Caesarea to the Seljuk Turks. Many scholars mention other monasteries and churches honouring the saint's name in Constantinople, but their locations remain unknown. The saint was very popular in the Byzantine capital; according to the anonymous

1. Joakeim (2013), p. 32.

2. Joakeim (2013), p. 33-34.

3. Tsakalos (2013), p.113. About Saint Mamas generally see Marava-Chatzinikolaou (1995).

4. Joakeim (2013), p. 34; Polychronaki and Aggelkou (2013), p. 64. See also Marava-Chatzinikolaou (1995), p. 65.

5. Janin (1964), p. 274; Janin (1969), p. 314. See also Marava-Chatzinikolaou (1995), pp. 65-66.

French pilgrim who brought relics of the saint to the city of Langres on his return from Jerusalem, “no other Martyr’s name resounded as much among the people”. The dissemination of the saint’s veneration is possibly related to the documented influx of Isaurian soldiers into Byzantium during the 5th-6th century.⁶

The earliest accounts describing the spread of the veneration of Saint Mamas in the West are from the 6th century.⁷ Furthermore, an 11th-century inventory of the relics kept in the Cathedral of Sens includes the name Mamas, while the *Acta Sanctorum* mentions that the relic of the saint was venerated in Milan, that his tomb was at Morphou in Cyprus and that the head of the shepherd from Cappadocia also appeared in the Italian city of Lucca. Langres, in France, became the centre of Saint Mamas’ veneration in Western Europe. Holy relics from Constantinople were transferred there on three occasions: a bone during Merovingian times, which was reason for renaming the city’s cathedral Saint Mammès; secondly, in the 11th century; and finally, the saint’s skull was transported there after the Fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders, in 1209, by the cleric Gualon de Dampierre. From France, the veneration of Saint Mamas was disseminated to the Iberian Peninsula through the Way of Saint James, namely the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain. There are holy relics of Saint Mamas in Zaragoza and Bilbao. In Italy, he is venerated in Emilia-Romagna and in Tuscany, but mostly in the region of Milan (Brianza), and the Veneto (Belluno), where several surviving customs present the saint as the patron of breastfeeding women. Possibly this tradition is related to milking goats and feeding the needy by the saint. Another explanation could also be the etymology of his name, “Mamas”, generally from the family of names “Ma”, “Ammia” (his stepmother), “Mama”, common in Asia Minor, which, after all, means mother.⁸ And the breastfeeding woman symbolizes the mother. Saint Mamas is not often represented in iconography, despite the dissemination of the saint’s veneration, typical of which are the popular feasts in his honour. Among the rare examples with scenes from the saint’s life are a stained-glass window of the Auxerre Cathedral (13th century), a polyptych by the Venetian painter Francesco dei Franceschi (1445-1456) and a tapestry series designed by Jean Cousin the Elder for the Langres Cathedral (1541).⁹

Saint Mamas is among the most popular saints in Cyprus, although he neither came from nor ever lived on the island. He is broadly venerated as a healer saint, myrrh-streamer¹⁰ and patron of the flocks. A village in the province of Limassol is dedicated to his name, along with seventy churches in various regions. Among these, one should distinguish the katholikon of the monastery in Morphou, where his tomb is also found.¹¹ According to a Church tradition and the Chronicle of Leontios Machairas (15th century) a sarcophagus, dated to the Roman period (3rd century), with his relics, arrived by sea from Asia Minor to the island. The sarcophagus was embedded in the northern wall of the Byzantine church (9th century) in Morphou, where Eugene Syglitikos constructed the katholikon in 1535. According to an alternative tradition, it was Mardaite soldiers, *akritai*, from Asia Minor, settled on the island under the order of Byzantine emperors during the 6th-7th centuries, who spread the veneration of Saint Mamas in Cyprus.¹² Most probably, after the fall of Syria and Asia Minor to the Seljuk Turks during the 11th century, refugees fled to the island bringing with them relics of the Saint. However, it is not

6. Polychronaki and Aggelkou (2013), pp. 64-66.

7. Durand (2002), p. 182, footnote 13. Hen (1998), p. 299.

8. For this discussion and also the relation of Saint Mamas to the Great Goddess Ma, the Mother of Gods, see Marava-Chatzinikolaou (1995), pp. 6-7, 27; Kampanis (2013), pp. 44-47.

9. Katsaridou (2013), pp. 134-36.

10. Notable is the evidence from the Russian Zosimas (1419-1421) and the Carmelite Nicole le Huen (1487) for the healing myrrh flowing from the holy relic of Saint Mamas. See Marava-Chatzinikolaou (1995), p. 77; Bonovas and Hadjichristodoulou (2013), p. 99.

11. Myrianthefs (2013), pp. 70-74.

12. Bonovas and Hadjichristodoulou (2013), pp. 98-99.

possible to determine with certainty the period at which the holy relics were transferred to Cyprus and their worship began. Each possibility mentioned above could be associated with periods of disorder in the neighbouring region and on the island, and particularly related to the context of maritime trade routes and the island's contacts with Asia Minor. Several references to Saint Mamas in the Chronicles of Cyprus as well as depictions of him in frescoes and portable icons from 12th century to the modern era reveal the broad dissemination of his veneration, notably during the Frankish era, from the 12th and specially in the 15th century. Moreover, during the Frankish period, special commercial relations between Cyprus and the southern coast of Asia Minor existed.¹³

In depictions, Saint Mamas is represented as a youth, with a sheep or a goat in one hand, the shepherd's stick (*okypodion*) in the other; usually on a lion's back and more rarely standing or as martyr holding a cross. The rare scenes from the life of Saint Mamas are in some cases combined with scenes from the lives of saints George and Demetrius, two saints who are also venerated alongside Mamas in his pilgrimage site of Morphou, because they were worshipped together since the Byzantine period.¹⁴ The depiction of Saint Mamas with saints Demetrius and George on horseback¹⁵ is an example of a fusion of hagiological texts and epics. The common stories about the three saints were obviously inspired by the broader category of Akritic folksongs, and primarily by the story of Basil Digenes Akritas, a legendary hero who fought against the Persians and the Saracens at the Akrai (the eastern borders of the Byzantine Empire), mainly in Pontus and Cappadocia. In the folk tradition of Cappadocia, Saint Mamas together with saints George and Mercurius are presented as patrons of the border-defenders. In the areas of Pontos and Cappadocia, Akritic songs emerged, spreading from neighbouring areas to the Dodecanese and Cyprus. They also spread to Crete by former inhabitants of Asia Minor, and are probably the earliest folksongs of the island, dating from the so-called Second Byzantine Period (961-1204). The iconographic type of the three saints was established during the same period that the songs emerged. Despite the limited number of these works (murals, icons), the depictions offer important information about the popularity of the three saints.¹⁶

Saint Mamas appears in frescoes and illuminated manuscripts in Greece quite early, in the 10th and 11th centuries. Toponyms, settlements and churches bearing the name of the saint are traced in insular Greece (Dodecanese, Crete, Cyclades, Saronic Gulf)¹⁷ and in coastal regions (Peloponnese, Chalkidiki), but less in mainland Greece (Epirus). This last fact testifies to the transfer of the saint's veneration by sea. The various themes and iconographic types of the representations are inspired by the hagiography of the saint and the 4th century praises of Mamas written by the Church Fathers, Gregory the Theologian in 383 and Saint Basil the Great, which fuelled the diffusion of the veneration accorded to the saint. Mamas was considered by the Akritai as the protector of the frontiersmen of Byzantium and was also venerated by the shepherds living in rural livestock and farming areas as the protector of flocks.

Saint Mamas is represented in various iconographic types. The oldest depiction in Greece appears in the church of Agios Stephanos in Kastoria where he is represented as a martyr, in half-length, holding a cross in his right hand, his left in the orans position, placed at chest height.¹⁸ This type is generally seen during the Byzantine and post-Byzantine period in the katholika of monasteries in mainland Greece (Mount Athos, Epirus) but also in the insular area (Crete, Dodecanese, Chios, Saronic Gulf).¹⁹ The type

13. Marava-Chatzinikolaou (1995), pp. 72-84.

14. Hadjichristodoulou (2013), pp. 76-81.

15. Hadjichristodoulou (2013), pp. 78, fig. 3; Bonovas and Hadjichristodoulou (2013), p. 101, fig. 3, p. 102, fig. 4.

16. Bonovas and Hadjichristodoulou (2013), pp. 98-104.

17. See now Gerstel (2015), pp. 112-16.

18. Bonovas (2013), p. 118, fig. 1.

19. Bonovas (2013), pp. 119-20.

of representation common in Cyprus, where the saint is depicted seated on a lion, is very rare in Greece and all the examples date only to the post-Byzantine period and come from insular or coastal regions.²⁰ The scenes of Saint Mamas' life are very rare, limited to the depiction of his martyrdom included in the Menologion of the month September in *katholika*, chapels and refectories of monasteries of mainland Greece during the post-Byzantine period. The least common scene from the Late Byzantine period shows the Liberation of the Prisoners in the church of Agios Mamas in Magoufiko (1355/6, Kountouras, Chania) in Crete.²¹

The main iconographic type in Greece, becoming widespread by the early 13th century and especially from the age of the Palaeologans, typically depicts Saint Mamas as an adolescent shepherd, with a crook in his right hand and a lamb, kid or sheep (in some cases the animals wear a bell) in his left. On church interiors, Mamas is usually placed in the section with representations of full-length saints, sometimes as a guardian placed next to one of the sides of the church entrance. This type occurred in Cyprus and later spread to the Greek Aegean (Dodecanese, Crete, Cyclades, Kythera) and the Peloponnese (Mani) in areas with developed animal husbandry, where Saint Mamas was venerated as patron of the flocks.²² The earliest known example of the saint in full length as a shepherd during the Byzantine period is found in the church of Panagia of Kampos in Kofinou, Cyprus (12th century).²³

Saint Mamas as a shepherd is also represented on the island of Naxos in the church of Agios Georgios at Oskelos or Noskelos (1286) and in the church of Agios Ioannis Theologos at Adissarou together with Saint George (14th century),²⁴ where Saint Mamas is depicted on the north side of the vault and Saint George on the south. He is shown standing with his legs apart holding the pastoral crook in his right hand. His left arm is parallel to his body and he holds a little lamb by its forelegs with its head turned to the right (**fig. 1, 2**). The same iconographic type of martyr-shepherd is also presented in Agios Georgios of Generalides Lyttos or Xydias in Herakleion on Crete; in the Cretan church he is accompanied by Saint George as a military saint on horseback.²⁵ Three variations of the type that depicts Mamas frontally and in full-length as a martyr-shepherd holding a rod and an animal (lamb or kid) beside the military saints George and Demetrius occur in wall paintings of Cretan monuments from the 14th to 15th century, obviously influenced by the Akritic songs.²⁶ Saint Mamas as a shepherd saint is also depicted in the apse of the Panagia "stis Giallous" (1288-89) in Agiassos (**fig. 3**) between saints Michael of Miletus and Leontius the Younger, all three standing below the Theotokos Platytera.²⁷ The rarity of the last combination of saints, who do not share the same feast day according to the synaxarion, leads us to the conclusion that the depictions should be attributed to the personal wishes of the donors.

The depiction of Saint Mamas as a shepherd in churches of Naxos has been explained due to the pastoral character of the broad mountainous part of the island. The areas of Apeiranthos, Koronos and Philoti had the most extensive pastures and largest flocks on the island.²⁸ Later traditions recount that the saint was a shepherd and his paddock was at "Dritis" near Apeiranthos village. When he

20. Mount Athos: Dochiariou Monastery, 1567/8. Rhodes: icon, church of Archangelos Michael in Mesanagros, 17th century. The latest one derives from Asia Minor or Constantinople. Chalkidiki: icon in the parish church of Pammegiston Taxiarchon in Neos Marmaras coming from Marmaras Island, a part of the Proikonnesos island cluster in the Sea of Marmara, 18th century, Bonovas (2013), p. 124, figs. 8, 9.

21. Bonovas (2013), pp. 121-23.

22. Bonovas (2013), pp. 118-20.

23. Hadjichristodoulou (2013), p. 76, fig. 1.

24. Acheimastou-Potamianou (1984), p. 338, fig. 7, footnote 17; Acheimastou-Potamianou (1989), pp. 50-57.

25. Bonovas and Hadjichristodoulou (2013), p. 99, fig. 1.

26. Bonovas and Hadjichristodoulou (2013), p. 101-102; Bonovas (2103), p. 121.

27. Drandakis (1964), p. 265, fig. 4, 26; Drandakis (1989), pp. 100-104.

28. Drandakis (1964), p. 265, footnote 6.

died, because he was a good man, they made him a saint and built a church in his sheepfold.²⁹ Saint Mamas, as a protector of small animals, and Saint Modestos, protector of large animals, were widely worshiped on Naxos.³⁰ The island had a developed livestock economy since Byzantine times, justifying the large number of churches dedicated to Saint Mamas.³¹ Among the most important is that of Agios Mamas at Potamia, a domed cross-in-square Byzantine church (10th century), which, according to tradition, was originally an Orthodox cathedral, later converted to a Catholic one, the exact date of which is a matter of disagreement (between the 13th and 14th centuries).³² Dimitrokallis argues that “the church, already in 1670, was one of the timaria on Naxos island belonging to Catholics”, an “estate (timarion) of Ai Mamas”, while the first historical description of the church was by Chr. Buondelmonti in 1417 and the first mention of its name appeared in an Italian letter of 1820.³³ The original church must have been decorated with wall paintings, of which only traces of colour and decorative motifs survive, chronologically placed with sufficient probability from the 13th to 14th century. Wall paintings depicting Saint Mamas and churches dedicated to him on Naxos have been found, dating from the 10th to 14th century. This period coincides with the financial and administrative prosperity of the island. During the Byzantine period Naxos was the seat of a bishopric, and after 1083 the see of Naxos (Paronaxia) was raised to the rank of metropolitan and the island also became the seat of the *tourmarchis* Nikitas and the *protospatharios* Ioannis.³⁴ After the Latin conquest of Constantinople, the painting arts flourished again under the rule of Marco Sanudo II (1262-1299).-

The glorious great-martyr Mamas was one of the most popular saints of the Byzantine era.³⁵ Many reasons explain his popularity: his gift of miracles, the fact that the centre of his cult was Caesarea, the panegyrics written by the Cappadocian Fathers, saints Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian, and also the fact that he was considered the protector saint of the army units guarding the frontier provinces of the empire (*Limitanei*, *Akritai*, *Apelatai*). His cult rapidly spread from Caesarea to the entire Mediterranean, mainly through important pilgrimages in Constantinople and Cyprus, as well as by the relocation of his relics. During the dissemination of Saint Mamas' veneration in the Christian world, his personality was constructed through different traditions and was enriched with new elements in the places of his worship.

As the protector saint of shepherds and of the military units guarding the Eastern borders of the empire, Saint Mamas, the border-defender Saint, travelled all around the Mediterranean. His travels are attested by the great number of churches dedicated to him, depictions, toponyms, cities, villages and settlements, which point to a network of sea-borne communication and religious and cultural

29. Drandakis (1964), p. 265, footnote 4 and Dimitrokallis (1972), p. 66, footnote 25.

30. Drandakis (1964), p. 266, footnote 2; Dimitrokallis (1972), p. 67, footnote 37.

31. Dimitrokallis (1972), p. 67, footnotes 38-40.

32. Dimitrokallis (1972), pp. 67-68, 102. About the existence of noblemen tombs in St Mamas church at Potamia and that the above-mentioned church was a parish or a metropolitan one of the castle inhabitants see also Kalogeropoulos (1933), pp. 801-805.

33. Dimitrokallis (1972), pp. 70,74,76, 102.

34. Dimitrokallis (1972), pp. 181-182.

35. In the context of the 4th Biennale of Contemporary Art at Thessaloniki, based on the thematic unit “Mediterranean”, the Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki in collaboration with the Holy Bishopric and the Municipality of Morphou, Cyprus organized the temporary exhibition “The veneration of Saint Mamas in the Mediterranean: A traveller border defender saint” (23-10-2013 to 19-1-2014). The primary goal of the exhibition was to present unknown elements of the veneration of Saint Mamas to the wider public, by exhibiting artworks from both the East and West, and especially from Cyprus and Greece. The theme of the exhibition, which could be the subject of a specific research program, was scientifically and museologically approached for the first time in Greece and abroad. Seven units and eleven subsections presented the identity and history of Saint Mamas, the dissemination of his veneration in the Mediterranean with an emphasis in Cyprus and Greece through sources, depictions of him in art, places of worship from the Early Christian to modern times. Our purpose was to research, investigate and highlight timeless cultural relationships in the Mediterranean through the sea routes of communication. See Tsilipakou and Bonovas (2013), pp. 22-29.

exchange in the wider Mediterranean:³⁶ a common culture throughout the centuries between Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities that unifies and does not divide. Saint Mamas is venerated in the East Mediterranean and the Aegean, mainly in Cyprus and insular Greece, especially on Crete and Cyclades (**fig. 4**), a fact that testifies to the transfer of the saint's veneration by sea. The relationships and connections between Naxos in the Cyclades, Cyprus, Crete and Asia Minor have been recognized in the fields of art and architecture.³⁷ As we have already mentioned, the surviving Byzantine wall paintings depicting Saint Mamas on Naxos come from the Venetian era (13th to 14th century): the churches of Agios Georgios at Oskelos or Noskelos (1286), Panagia "stis Giallous" (1288-89) in Agiassos, Agios Ioannis Theologos at Adissarou (14th century). The great number of churches (surviving or attested, decorated or not) dedicated to Saint Mamas can be justified by the development of animal husbandry on the island since Byzantine times. The churches are distributed outside the core of the villages, in the wider countryside. The domed cross-in-square 10th-century Byzantine church dedicated to Saint Mamas, which according to tradition was originally an Orthodox cathedral and then, during the Latin occupation, converted to a Catholic one, also testifies to the great importance and popularity of the saint on Naxos. This evidence also demonstrates the preference for the veneration of saints commonly accepted and beloved by both doctrines, as is the case of Saint Mamas.

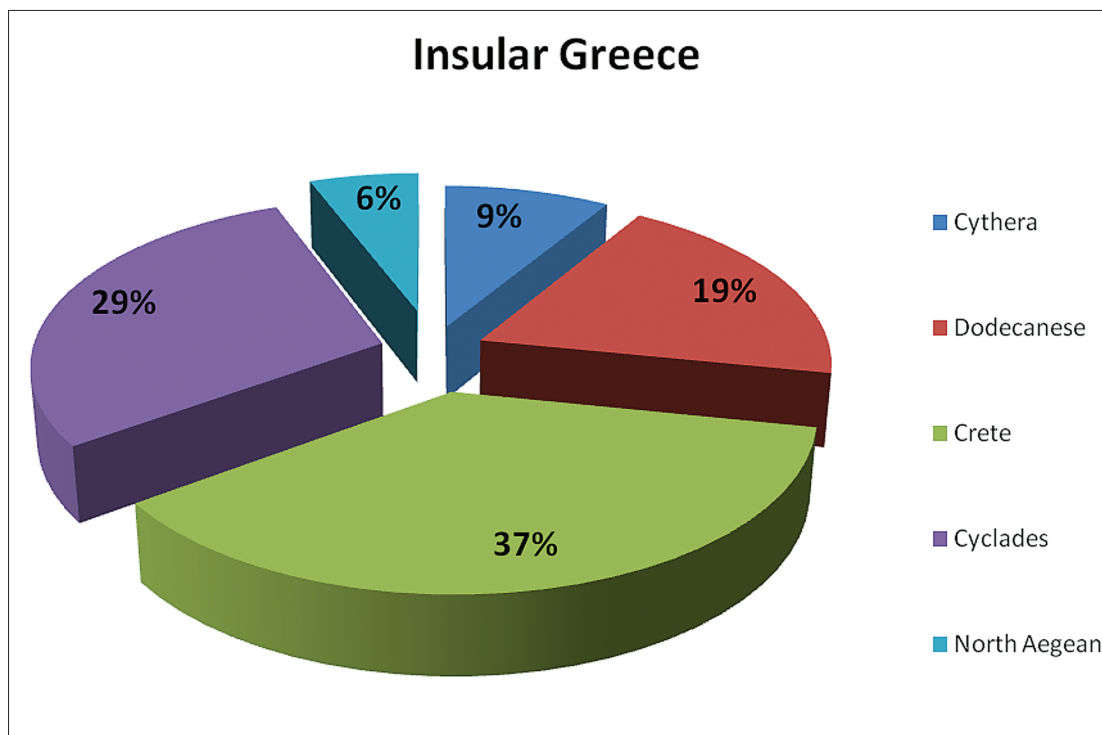


Figure 4: The veneration of Saint Mamas in insular Greece: Settlements, villages, wall paintings, portable icons, places of feasts of Saint Mamas

36. Bonovas *et al.* (eds.) (2013), pp. 138-51.

37. Dimitrokallis (1972), pp. 188, 190, 193-196.

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Figure 1. Naxos, Adissarou. Saint Mamas in the church of Agios Ioannis Theologos.



Figure 2. Naxos, Adissarou. Saint Mamas in the church of Agios Ioannis Theologos. Detail of the small lamb.



Figure 3.
Naxos, Agiassos. Saint Mamas in the church of Panagia "stis Giallous".

