

The historical ages in the South-Eastern Aegean (800–200 BC): a review

Magdalini VASILEIADOU¹, Ioannis LIRITZIS¹

Abstract. *During the years 800–200 BC, SE Aegean islands manifest a continuous growth and dynamic presence which is sensed both internally on each island as well as externally, within the framework of their intra-insular communication. To this day, archaeological sites bearing durable remains vestiges of inhabitation with and an uninterrupted usage have been identified in the Southeastern Aegean. The multitude of movable findings—a result of systematic and rescue excavations—suggests the use and function of these premises and at the same time attests commercial transactions between the islands and the wider mainland—even with geographically remote areas—which is a component of their undoubtedly developed economic and commercial relations.*

Rezumat. *În perioada 800–200 a.C., insulele din sud-estul Mării Egee cunosc o creștere continuă și manifestă o prezență dinamică atât pe plan intern, cât și pe plan extern, în cadrul relațiilor dintre ele. În prezent au fost identificate mai multe așezări datând din această perioadă, fără întrerupere. Multitudinea descoperirilor, rezultate atât în urma săpăturilor sistematice, cât și a celor de salvare, atestă tranzacții comerciale între insule și chiar într-un spațiu mai larg, ceea ce reprezintă o componentă a dezvoltării relațiilor economice și comerciale.*

Keywords: SE Aegean islands, Rhodes, Kos, historical ages.

1. Introduction

The creation and development of the Digital Repository² aiming to the collection of digital material concerning the SE Aegean during the period from 800 up to 200 BC has provided significant evidence on the presence and activity of the islands.

It has been ascertained that already from the end of the prehistoric period, the broader area of the Aegean constituted a fertile ground for the booming and blossoming of a new era, thanks to strong colonization activity and therefore the enrichment of the Aegean area with new elements. Penetration of new influences and sways has been a significant factor towards a continuous evolution of the islands. At the same time, constant development of trade and

¹ University of the Aegean, Lab of Environmental Archaeology; liritzis@rhodes.aegean.gr.

² Directory of Open Access Repositories – Archipelago Repository (Online: v2.sherpa.ac.uk/id/repository/3646/) / Archipelago, Documentation System for Island (Online: archipelago.aegean.gr).

the quest for new routes and commodity throughput stations has played a catalyst role. Strong financial activity led to a flourishing of arts and literature. Trailblazer creators in poetry, philosophy, sculpture and architecture have laid the foundations for their advancement.

During the Hellenistic era, SE Aegean islands display a special dynamic, which is expressed in a multi-faceted way, through the architectural remnants and the plethora of movable findings that came as an output of systematic and rescue excavations.

In the framework of the Integrated Programme for Islands Research, which was co-funded by the European Union and the Greek State, the University of the Aegean faced the challenge of establishing a web-based digital repository, able to support research and development tasks in the field of islands³.

Here we present a review of this historical period through current and ongoing archaeological excavations, the records of which strengthen and witness the aim of present work. This evidence is outlined successively per island below.

2. Islands of the SE Aegean

2.1. Rhodes

The archaeological/historical presence of Rhodes (Map 1) having a prevalent role at multiple levels in the Eastern Mediterranean is testified through a large number of publications concerning the archaeological sites of the island⁴.

The foundation of the ancient city of Rhodes in 408/407 BC after the merger of the three towns of the island—Ialysos, Lindos and Kameiros—resulted to the creation of a “new city”, a joint political and residential centre which expressed the three strong city-states of the archaic and classical era. Built in compliance with the Hippodameian system and protected with a wall, the town directly blended with the imposing natural landscape and its close contact with the sea. The ultimate zenith period for the city was the 3rd century BC, when with its powerful fleet, Rhodes controlled the largest part of the Eastern Mediterranean; it evolved to a special regional power, thanks to commerce, but also to democratic institutions that remained effective also during the Hellenistic era. Its final form was shaped gradually and was preserved throughout the Middle Ages.

The Hellenistic fortification wall⁵ of Rhodes dates back to the beginnings of the 3rd century BC and includes a noticeably larger expanse than the one defined by the first

³ VAITIS *et alii* 2017.

⁴ KANINIA 1990, 50–57; MAVRAKI-MPALANOU 2007, 288–298; PAPACHRISTODOULOU 2009, 411–426; PALAIOLOGOU 2010, 501–525; MANOUSSOU-NTELLA 2010, 582–613; CHRISTODOULIDES 2010, 480–500; FANTAOUTSAKI 2012, 41–70; CHRISTODOULIDES 2012, 71–90; GIAKOU MAKI & ZERVAKI 2012, 114–144; CALIÒ 2004, 436–459; 2011, 343–356.

fortifying precincts of the town. Constructed consistently with the rectangular isodomic system, compact and tufaceous, the wall bears four towers on its waterside part, while on the side of the southern mainland sector of town it is particularly reinforced with twelve identified towers. In addition, at the biggest part of the south sector, it is accompanied by a robust advanced fortification at least 770 m long, thus qualifying as the largest external defence work of the Hellenistic times to this day. Rainwater was collected in built, external ducts through runoff pipes that were symmetrically shaped on the upper foundation part of the advanced fortification.

On the Acropolis of Rhodes, a set of retaining walls has shaped the area with stepped terraces, on which a multitude of buildings has been constructed. The temple of Athena Polias and Zeus Polieus, the respective one of Pythian Apollo, Artemision, the Nymphaia, the odeion, the stadium, the gymnasium and the library compose a monumental zone, located at the west and uppermost spot of the city that clearly expresses the spirit of Hellenistic architecture during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.

The wide range and significance of the island architecture⁶ is confirmed today both by the conclusion or revision of studies on identified and visible monuments from the past, as well as through new architectural remainders that were brought to light within the framework of latest excavations.

The recent study on the architectural design of the Temple of Athena Lindia⁷ on the Acropolis of Lindos provides us some information about the evolution of the Temple throughout time, with the first findings going back to the 9th century BC. The temple went through two phases during the archaic era, while it was radically renovated after the fire of 329 BC. From the 4th century up to the end of the 3rd century BC inclusive, the monumental arrangement of the complex is concluded (Temple, Propylaia, Stoa). Besides, many testimonies concerning the period of the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC come from the multitude of inscriptions that have been identified.

In addition, the approach of monuments on the Acropolis of Lindos⁸—as far as their construction material (local sandstone), its processing technique, methods of being put up, covering with external coating and jointing are concerned—has proven that all the above elements have influenced the form of buildings, primarily as regards their individual details. Some deviations—such as lack of absolute symmetry in the engraving of the monuments and regularity of their members' dimensions—have been observed; this would suggest that whereas monuments of Hellenistic Rhodes have clearly followed the architectural principles

⁵ KONTIS 1964; FILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 1998.

⁶ SHAYA 2005, 423–442; ELEFThERIOU 2005, 318–331; TSAKANIKI 2008, 577–589; MANOUSSOU-NTELLA 2008, 537–576; FILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU & ELEFThERIOU 2011; TSAKANIKI 2012, 145–161.

⁷ ELEFThERIOU 2009, 427–438.

⁸ ELEFThERIOU 2005, 318–331.

of that era, at the same time, they also present interesting originalities while respecting their natural environment.

The unveiling of two new settlements in the area of Gadouras⁹ River in Rhodes enriches our information concerning inhabitation of the island. On Site 2 on Pitsilououno hill, a workshop environment, a grape mill system, a rainwater collection duct and a rectangular tank have been brought to light, as well as another 11 rooms being in use from the middle up to the late Hellenistic years comprised. Site 1, “Stavlos tou Kountouri”, is a farmhouse complex with constant inhabitation from the Hellenistic years up to the mid-byzantine era. What is of particular interest is the water-supply system facility, with built and clay water collection ducts, as well as bilge wells, for its collection. The aforementioned system was used for the operation of a ceramic furnace and its usage has been placed in the period from the Hellenistic years up to the byzantine habitation of the place, when it is also abolished.

The topography of Archangelos¹⁰ area bears inhabitation vestiges already from the archaic era (Serafi, Syra) up to late antiquity comprised. These are predominantly agricultural, oil-producing settlements, according to the type of the archaeological findings (counterweights and olive press machines). Also typical is the presence of vase production evidence in coastal workshops (furnaces: Tsambika coast, workshop buildings: Laftiras), but also next to port facilities (Stegna, Papakonstantis port, Kakoskali).

Pertaining to residential architecture, the elements concerning the form of a typical Rhodian residence¹¹ of the Hellenistic years are provided by the study results of a set of roof tiles that were identified within the framework of a rescue excavation in the eastern sector of the ancient town. The usage of both basic tiling systems—i.e. the Corinthian and Laconian types—on the roof was ascertained. The plan of the excavated residence is the same as one of a typical in-between residence with a peristyle court, originating from a regular Rhodian three-house islet. Despite that, typological study of tiles can contribute to the understanding of peculiarities of the buildings concerned, as well as to the restoration of their initial form.

Under the same category, also evidence coming from funerary monuments¹² is included. Funerary architecture¹³ in Rhodes during the Hellenistic era encompasses a particular variety and diversity, while constituting at the same time a symbol of social promotion, as it is ascertained by the study of these monuments, the most typical example of which is the necropolis of Rhodes.

The identification and study of tombs nevertheless, contributes to research in a multi-faceted way, by supplementing or confirming historical data. In the case of the burial

⁹ MAVRAKI-MPALANOU 2007, 288–298.

¹⁰ GIAKOU MAKI & ZERVAKI 2012, 114–144.

¹¹ SARANTIDIS 2009, 546–562.

¹² MASTRAPAS 1990, 58–64; PATSIADA 2001.

¹³ BELLI PASQUA 2010, 43–58.

complex that came to light in the southeastern sector of the town of Rhodes, in the area of Epta Vagies¹⁴, for instance, the two pit burials containing an equal number of skeletons in a good preservation status, along with offerings dating back to the late 7th century BC and the 1st half of 6th century BC prove the existence of a settlement in the concerned area of the northeastern extremity of the island, before the *synoicimos* of 408/407 BC.

The ancient cemetery from the area of Koskinou¹⁵ in Rhodes, where late archaic–early classical tombs with an abundance of findings were brought to light, suggests the existence of an organized necropolis, but does not necessarily prove the existence of a contemporary settlement, about which it is of course theorized that it should be situated in the area occupied by the current one, given the fact that it is a spot suitable for inhabitation. The settlement spot of the inhabitants today—up to and including the eastern coastline of the island, where ancient quarries and three ancient cisterns have been identified—provides information about the professional occupation of the inhabitants of the adjacent ancient town.

What also causes great interest is the new finding from the southeastern necropolis of the town, i.e. an inscribed base (Registration number, Rhodes Museum: E2106) of the late Hellenistic period, between mid-2nd and mid-1st century BC; the finding testifies three sites of Rhodes in the area of Kamirida, where many ancient names have survived up to the modern years, e.g. Atavyrion mountain/ Atavyriou Zeus’ Temple. The sites are: *Αγύλεια* or *Αγκύλεια* and *Ιππότεια*, *Σάλακος*, and *Φάνες*. This element substantially contributes to the wider issue of geographical names¹⁶ and their significance on the historical and archaeological research of the Greek territory and Rhodes, more specifically. It is ascertained that many current place names in Rhodes have ancient roots and origin, whereas several others maintain names that are known from ancient literary and epigraphical sources.

Though inversely proportional to its digitized form, pottery¹⁷ remains the largest and best documented category. Tapered base Rhodian amphorae and their extensive dissemination constitute an eloquent testimony of the dynamic production by Rhodian pottery workshops as well as of the strong commercial activity of the Rhodians. In some cases, stamped handles bearing female names provide elements concerning the financial activity of certain women in Hellenistic Rhodes. On the stamped handles¹⁸ in question, among the tapered base Rhodian amphorae “manufacturers” names also four female ones are present: *Διόκλεια*¹⁹, *Καλλιώ*²⁰, *Νικαγίς*²¹, and *Τιμώ*²².

¹⁴ TRIANTAFYLIDIS 2008, 193–220.

¹⁵ FANTAOUTSAKI 2012, 41–70.

¹⁶ PAPACHRISTODOULOU 2009, 411–426.

¹⁷ SEAWRIGHT 1988; SKON-JEDELE 1994; NADIA 2001; LAWALL 2002, 295–324; CHADJINIKOLA 2008, 598–624.

¹⁸ PALAMIDA & SEROGLU 2009, 501–530.

¹⁹ The name *Διόκλεια* appears 56 times, on rectangular stamps from the 2nd and 3rd quarters of the 2nd century BC.

²⁰ The 17 amphorae “signed” by *Καλλιώ* are placed in the same period.

A significant group of vases²³ (3rd century BC and beginnings of 2nd century BC) from the Hellenistic town of Rhodes—identified in the place where it was found according to the archaeological and topographical data as part of the pier in the south inlet of the western port of the island—is divided into two categories: the so-called «αλοιφοδοχεία», vessels for the transport of pharmaceutical or cosmetic substances and φαρμακοδοχεία.

On the occasion of this finding and pertaining to the category of pottery, we have the possibility to bring up the production and trade of aromatic and pharmaceutical substances during the Hellenistic era hence examining diverse levels. The practical level provides direct and indirect testimonies about raw materials, the preparation and properties of the substances that are described in the works of scholarly doctors and naturalists of that era, as well as concerning the containers used for merchandizing and transport.

At a symbolic, religious and ritual level, the archaeological hints are valuable for the place where they were found, as well as the rest of the findings, while—finally—at a socio-economic level, information is related to the way products were merchandized.

Also important is the group of burial offerings (sceptre in the form of a bronze mould-casted figurine of a wild goat (*caprea aegagrus*) of oriental provenance, a clay bird-shaped askos with a bull's head, product of a local workshop bearing Cypriot features, part of a clay compact figurine of an ox) from a primary cremation of the 7th century BC at the archaic cemetery on the hill of Dafni Ialysou in Rhodes²⁴. Among the latter, the clay askos stands out, characterized by a combination of eastern—mainly Cypriot—features.

It is therefore once again confirmed that during the 7th and 6th centuries BC Rhodes is one of the most significant centres in the Aegean with respect to the production of many clay products having eastern features, like zoomorphic askoi. It is pointed out that the Rhodian workshop is characterized by the simplicity of its outlines and plainness of its ornamental composition that does not alter the naturalistic character of the rendered zoomorphic plastic vases.

Influenced by the relations it had with and the features it used to receive mainly from the East and Cyprus, but also from the continental world, the presence of Rhodes also in arts has been proven to be of special significance. From the archaic era already, it stands out for its Coroplastic and Minor arts. A group of luxury silver vessels²⁵, dating—according to the excavation data and typological-stylistic analysis of vessels—in the era of the second half of

²¹ The name of Νικαγίς is present on 74 handles with her rectangular stamps and her activity is estimated in the end of the 3rd century BC, and the 1st quarter or 1st half of the 2nd century BC.

²² The name Τιμώ is attributed to two female manufacturers (Τιμώ I and Τιμώ II). Τιμώ I was most probably active in the last quarter of the 3rd century BC. The name of Τιμώ II appears on 50 handles dating back to the 2nd and 3rd quarters of the 2nd century BC.

²³ NIKOLAKOPOULOU 2009, 530–545.

²⁴ TRIANTAFYLLIDIS 2008, 89–104; 2009, 439–460.

²⁵ TRIANTAFYLLIDIS 2008, 520–536; 2013, 213–224.

the 7th up to the early 6th century BC inclusive, suggests the commercial contacts of the island with the Eastern Greek territory and the great metalwork centre of Phrygia, without however excluding the possibility of the existence of a silver vessels manufacturing centre on the island.

In the classical times, significant examples of great sculpture²⁶ appear. It reaches the zenith of plastic art in the 3rd century BC, when it was endorsed as a big artistic centre, clearly influenced by its focal position in the activities of transit trade of the eastern Mediterranean, thus securing economic prosperity. A multitude of sculptures from public and private places attributed to Rhodian sculptors or Rhodian workshop sculptors prove the high-quality local art of sculpture and justify the evolution of Rhodes to a great artistic centre, including bronze sculpture and painting.

Rhodes stands out in yet another sector, since the prehistoric times already, namely in the production of glass²⁷ objects. Particular flourishing is marked in the 14th and 13th centuries mainly, followed by a gradual decline in the archaic period (7th–6th century BC). Clearly influenced by the Middle East, during the classical and Hellenistic times, the island adopts new techniques and hence glasswork evolves into a new local production, which respectively resulted to the creation of a strong local market. Active production on the island is proven through the study of movable findings, as far as their typology and dating are concerned. Local production starts in the last quarter of the 6th century BC in Ialysos, Kameiros and Lindos and increases rapidly after the *synoicimos* of these three towns in 408/407 BC. The workshops are settled mainly close to the Temples or in the area of the port, as well as in the SE part of the town of Rhodes.

This new element, in its turn, influenced the broader geographical area of the Aegean. During the Hellenistic period in particular, it developed the method of glass reuse quite intensely, with the practice of glass recycling of workshop waste from glasswork and glass industry as well household waste in the form of broken glass from tradable finished products.

Finally, coinage²⁸ in Rhodes starts upon the foundation of the city, when silver tetradrachms are minted, the main type being the one with the Head of Helios on the obverse and the rose, the “*laloun symbolo*” on the reverse, while they bear the inscription “*ΠΟΔΙΟΙ*”; these were types that were preserved up to the Hellenistic period.

Studies on coinage²⁹ of the Aegean islands during the late classical and Hellenistic period proves that all the islands—that were divided into three geographical groups: (1) The Doric

²⁶ LESLIE SHEAR 1920, 313–322; GOODLETT 1991, 669–681; MASTRAPAS 1993, 17–21; MACHAIRA 2003, 205–210; PAPAVALSILEIOU-RAPTI 2007, 372–389; MACHAIRA 2012, 22–40.

²⁷ TRIANTAFYLIDIS 2000, 30–34; 2001, 76–80; 2003, 131–138; 2010, 460–479.

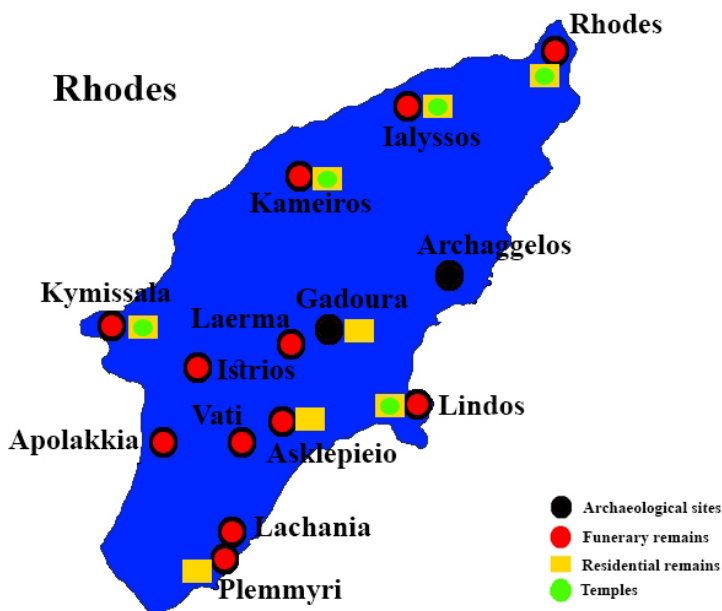
²⁸ STEFANAKIS & STEFANAKI 2006, 165–190; PAPACHRISTODOULOU & DRELIOSI-IRAKLEIDOU 2010, 421–439; MATTHAIYOU 2013, 81–84.

²⁹ STEFANAKI 2010, 413–446.

islands of the Dodecanese (Chalki, Karpathos, Tilos, Nissyros, Symi, Megisti, Kos, Kalymnos, Astypalaia), (2) the Cyclades, (3) Samos and Lesbos—had adopted the Rhodian weighing unit and the Rhodian monetary types, but also used the Rhodian currency itself during that era.

Particularly interesting is the case of Kymissala in Rhodes, where during the last few years a systematic excavation has been taking place; studies from this site have had a substantial contribution to archaeological issues³⁰, management issues³¹ and cultural development of the broader area. The results of archaeological research from 2006 onwards have brought to light the following: on the hill of Agios Fokas, the temple on top of the acropolis and the robust fortified surrounding wall (peribolos), preserved at a length of about 30m. On the west slope of Agios Fokas hill, traces of an ancient street, going down towards the area of quarries and the necropolis were identified; including mainly tholos tombs, the cemetery had been in use from the archaic up to the late Roman period.

The suggestion of an integrated Sustainable Development program³² in the area of Kymissala, with the creation of a Park and Outdoor Museum, aiming to enhance the natural and cultural environment, as well as the promotion of Education on Sustainable Development, opens up new perspectives towards a fresh approach of both the past and preserved antiquities themselves.



Map 1. Presentation of the archaeological sites (temples, residential and funerary remnants) as documented in the Digital Repository for the island of Rhodes

³⁰ STEFANAKIS & PATSIADA 2009, 3–134; 2010; 2013.

³¹ STEFANAKIS 2010, 685–702.

³² VERGOTI 2010.

Within the same framework also lies the effort to bring monuments under restoration, enhancement and management projects³³. Through these programs, ancient remnants are dealt with from another point of view, namely through works of tidying up the place and cataloguing the scattered material (architectural members, inscribed fragments), as it is in the case of Lindos archaeological site.

2.2. Kos

With its crucial geographical position and thriving commercial activity, Kos (Map 2) has attracted the interest of many researchers³⁴ of all specializations already from the past. From the hill of Seragia, as well as from other spots of the modern town, we have information about the geometric necropolis that has been identified during rescue excavations. On the same hill, in Seragia, the town Kos-Meropida³⁵ develops during the archaic era. On that spot, in 366/365 BC, with the merger of the old settlements, the new capital, fortified, constructed in compliance with the Hippodameian system and embracing a multitude of fabulous temples and public buildings is founded. During the Hellenistic period, the island stably maintains its goal to remain autonomous. Kos develops both at economic and cultural level also due to its commercial contacts. The most pertinent indication of this is the Asklepieion; preserved to this day, the temple bears distinct, new imported features of Asia Minor origin mainly.

A typical example is the one of ancient Alasarna³⁶, given the fact that the site has been excavated and studied systematically for the last 30 years almost. In the area of the ancient municipality of Alasarna, survey was carried out and evidence came out from the late Neolithic era, with a total of seven identified sites. A gap was observed from the Middle and Late Bronze Age, whereas from geometric times, the operation of a cemetery is mentioned on Koutlousi hill. Remarkable archaeological material appears in the area from the 6th century BC, from local and imported clay vessels that certify intense commercial transactions with centres from Athens, Corinth and Asia Minor, as well as the existence of a settlement with no clear boundaries or surface yet. The classical era is testified by identified archaeological sites and few movable findings. The Hellenistic thriving period for Alasarna is signalled by the Temple of Apollo Pythaios or Pythaeos, already in operation from the 3rd century BC, with the most important finding being the temple of Doric order.

Most of the excavation evidence in general is related to the Hellenistic age, when the existence of a significant urban centre during the 2nd century BC is ascertained, with the

³³ KANINIA 1993, 27–29; For Lindos, see also ELEFThERIOU & PAPADIMITRIOU 1993, 22–26; PAPACHRISTODOULOU *et alii* 2002; TSAKANIKA 2007, 248–262; ELEFThERIOU 2009, 427–438; 2012, 102–113.

³⁴ LAURENZI 1931; KOKKOROU-ALEVRAS 2005, 189–203.

³⁵ KANTZIA 1988, 175–183.

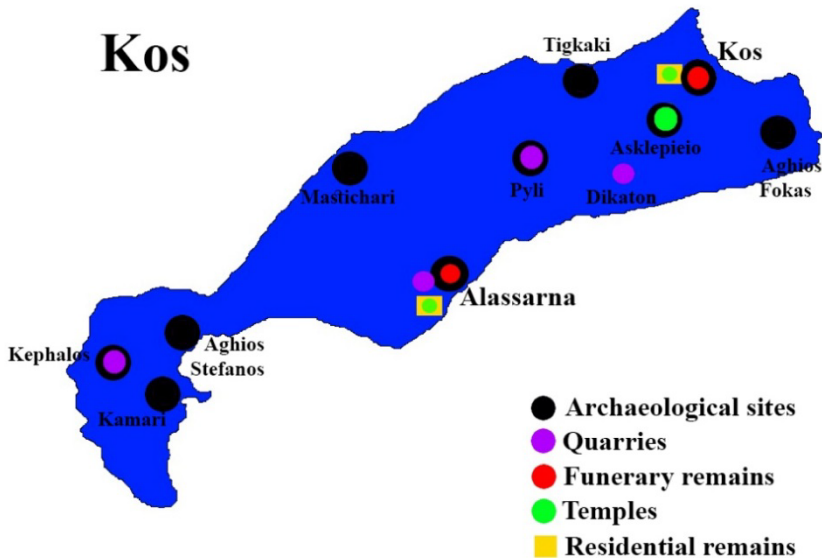
³⁶ KOKKOROU-ALEVRAS, KALOPISSI-VERTI, PANAGIOTIDI-KESISOGLOU 2006; KOKKOROU-ALEVRAS 2009, 135–155.

disclosure of an ancient theatre, public buildings and a cemetery, as well as pottery workshops, as it can be claimed by the discovery of large quantity of poorly baked clay shards and pottery discards.

The study of fine pottery³⁷ from the Temple of Apollo in ancient Alasarna on the basis of its typological and chronological analysis with comparative parallel material from the Mediterranean area leads to the distinction of domestic pottery workshops with their individual characteristics and the identification of features they have received from pottery workshops of the Aegean space.

What is of crucial importance is the contribution of studies related to tombs³⁸; in fact, the latter are quite a frequent finding during rescue excavations, since—as closed entities—they provide substantial archaeological, historical and anthropological evidence.

A typical example is the five cremations³⁹ [three from the SW part of the modern town (I. Vassiliou's property) and two from the geometric necropolis of Seragia hill (K. Koutsouradi's property)] that were found in the centre of the current modern town. In this case, it is ascertained that the funerary custom of cremation of the dead was implemented in Kos for the first time in the geometric period. This piece of evidence has resolved a significant historical issue concerning the archaeological confirmation of settlement of Dorian colonists



Map 2. Presentation of the archaeological sites (temples, residential and funerary remnants, quarries) as documented in the Digital Repository for the island of Kos

³⁷ POTSI 2013.

³⁸ SKERLOU 2001, 258–284; BOSNAKIS 2001, 223–257; 2004, 151–159; 2013, 247–263.

³⁹ BOSNAKIS 2001, 223–257.

from Argolida on the island, a subject on which there is a clear testimony by Herodotus. The absence of findings in Kos used to raise questions, since with their settlement—as it is the case in Rhodes, for instance—cremation of the dead appears too.

The group comprising inscribed funerary stelae⁴⁰ of the late Hellenistic period found in a land plot in the area of Ano Abavri is related to a “rural cemetery” on the outskirts of the ancient Kos municipality, on the slope of a hill at the eastern side of Asklepieion, with a sea view and provides interesting evidence about the duration and mainly the character of the cemetery.

Quite frequently in burials—as it can also be seen in the example of the black-figure amphora⁴¹ (Archaeological Museum of Kos, finding No: Π4612) that was found in 1994 during a rescue excavation in the zone of the south necropolis of Meropis, in Kos, in the area of Marmaroto⁴²—the use of imported vessels is ascertained. In the wider area, on the north, south and west of the land plot concerned, many burials of the archaic period have been identified, including local and imported vessels as offerings. On the basis of stylistic and iconographic analysis, this specific amphora is attributed to the Cycle of the Antimenes Painter.

Also in the case of Kos, studies related to cultural heritage restoration and management works are continuously multiplying thus creating at the same time the prerequisites for a revision of the data though the addition of new evidence. A typical example is the one coming from Ancient Agora⁴³, where there is an effort to create an archaeological park, taking into consideration the remnants of buildings, with an aim to make the archaeological site comprehensible to visitors.

2.3. Agathonisi

Recent surveys in Agathonisi⁴⁴ have revealed a significant number of archaeological sites and movable findings that date from the prehistoric period up to the medieval ages inclusive. Among the most significant monuments of the island, included are: the fortress of the Hellenistic period that was identified at the northern extremity of the island, on the site named Kastraki, in Maistros bay, as well as the imposing monumental complex, possibly dating back to the early byzantine period, situated at the site named Tholoi, at the eastern part of the island.

⁴⁰ BOSNAKIS 2013, 247–263.

⁴¹ BOSNAKIS 2012, 219–225.

⁴² Ploumi-Vallianatou's Property.

⁴³ ELEFTHERIOU & NETTI 2011, 425–438; GIANNIKOURI, SKERLOU, PAPANIKOLAOU 2011, 357–382; ROCCO & LIVADIOTTI 2011, 383–424; ROCCO 2013; FERRANTE *et alii* 2014.

⁴⁴ TRIANTAFYLIDIS 2007, 183–211.

Since 2006, when a systematic excavation started on the island, many archaeological data concerning the past of the island came to light, along with a plethora of findings from the Hellenistic and mainly early roman period that testify the existence of workshop facilities of farming and animal farming type, preponderantly apiculture. The identification of a large number of beehives⁴⁵ confirms the existence of a local production.

2.4. Kalymnos

Kalymnos presents great archaeological interest from the Neolithic Age already. From the historical times, the Temple of Delian Apollo—close to the current Chora—stands out, having been the political and religious centre of the island, comprising cult and public buildings. According to the archaeological findings, adorational use of the place starts from the beginning of the 1st millennium up to the early byzantine years inclusive. The Hellenistic era, which is a prosperity period for the island, is characterized by a settlement remnants (houses, workshops, fortifying works⁴⁶).

On the occasion of the creation of the new archaeological museum of Kalymnos⁴⁷, in Pothia, Agia Triada, studies on sculptures that are currently exhibited in it were published; hence we learn about significant plastic art works, such as the inscribed, draped kouros⁴⁸ dating back to the 3rd quarter of the 6th century BC that was found along with another 32 sculptures in an apothetes at the Temple of Apollo Dalios. Iconographic and stylistic analysis of the kouros, combined with the examination of its votive inscription—through which the dedicator of the artwork himself is recognized in the figure—lead to the hypothesis that it is a piece of art coming from a good local workshop bearing incongruous features, i.e. a combination of the sculptural tradition of Samos and Miletus' workshops.

Respectively, the relief of the funerary stele bearing the rare depiction of a Nursing Mother⁴⁹ (Inv. No of Kalymnos Museum 3900) that comes from Kalymnos and dates back to around mid-4th century BC is attributed to a local workshop that reminisces—in a liberal fashion—about the acknowledged iconographic models prevailing all over the Greek territory in the 4th century BC.

A study regarding numismatic circulation in Kos and Kalymnos⁵⁰—on the basis of the excavation and individual numismatic findings, the so-called “Hoards”, as well as written sources—shows that although the two islands are adjacent and have close relations, their

⁴⁵ TRIANTAFYLIDIS 2012, 635–653

⁴⁶ KOUTELLAS 2003, 189–205.

⁴⁷ DRELIOSI 2010, 543–562.

⁴⁸ BOSNAKIS 2012, 157–187.

⁴⁹ BOSNAKIS 2012, 377–390.

⁵⁰ STEFANAKI & GIANNIKOURI 2010, 343–366.

numismatic circulation for the period between the 5th century BC and the end of the 3rd century BC involves noticeable differences.

This fact is explained on the grounds of their political, commercial and cultural role in the area of the Mediterranean, as well as from their relations with the other city-states and kingdoms. It is ascertained that Kalymnos thrives economically before the end of the 3rd century BC that is to say while it still preserves its political independence. From this period of time onwards and later on, when it merges with the Koan municipalities, its political and economic history is affected and shaped by the respective koan; besides, this becomes obvious also from the plethora of koan coinage inside the kalymnian “hoards”, but also in the totality of the numismatic material from the archaeological Museum of Kalymnos.

2.5. Astypalaia

Due to its crucial geographical position for maritime trade, Astypalaia stood out in antiquity, from the prehistoric times already. In Arhavli, where vessels, jars, traces of fire and lamps were found, there are also vestiges of Cycladic settlements, while remnants of a Minoan settlement and Tower ruins dominate the entrance of Vathy bay. During the 5th century, being a member of the Delian League, it was structured comprising an Agora, Prytaneion, Stoa and Temples, whereas in the Hellenistic era, it operated as a port/station of the Ptolemies and Egypt.

The collection and study of epigraphic testimonies⁵¹ from Astypalaia provides evidence concerning the cults developed on the island, whereas the same research aims to extract information about the society and population of the island. We learn that in the Temples of the island, Asklepeios, Apollo, Dionysus and Zeus were worshiped, along with female deities, such as Athena, Aphrodite, Hera, Kore, and Artemis, but also Hermes and Hercules, Sarapis and Isis, Helios and Rhodos, Atargatis and finally the Nymphae.

2.6. Chalki

The geographical position of Chalki⁵², but also its limited territorial surface, has defined its close and continuous relation⁵³ with Rhodes. Sometimes subject to Kamiros, other times independent, it has been a significant town during the classical and Hellenistic times, as testified by its architectural⁵⁴ remnants, often integrated as second-hand material in newer buildings.

⁵¹ MICHALAKI-KOLLIA 2005, 711–734.

⁵² ANTONIOU 2008, 17–36.

⁵³ PAPACHRISTODOULOU 2008, 37–44.

⁵⁴ KALOCHRISTIANAKI 2008, 72–73.

In Chalki⁵⁵, findings of the classical era have been identified from the necropolis of Pontamos; 19 tholos tombs have been found (mid-5th century BC–beginnings of 3rd century BC) and 6 cists graves, carved on the sides of an antechamber (mid-4th century BC–beginnings of 3rd century BC), including an abundance of offerings. The presence of vessels of Rhodian, Attic and Thassian origin testify the relations of the island with Rhodes, Athens and Thassos respectively. The main archaeological site is Chorio, with the ancient settlement, as well as two thrones carved on top of the hill, possibly advocate the existence of a small temple. Finally, the inscriptions found suggest the existence of temples dedicated to different deities (Apollo, Asklepeios, Zeus, etc.).

2.7. Telos

The collection of data concerning archaeological research in Telos⁵⁶ has contributed substantially to the picture we have about the island to this day. Inhabitation dates back to the Neolithic period (Charkadio cave, Lakkes Site, Kambos tou Megalou Choriou), and continues in the Early Bronze Age up to the Late Bronze Age comprised (Garipa area, south of Megalo Chorio).

In the historical times, the presence of Telos is clearly more noticeable, as it acquires the status of an independent state and—as of the 4th century BC—also a democratic regime. The typical monument of the island is the ancient settlement, the excavation of which has revealed habitation of the hill of Megalo Chorio, from the Mycenaean period already. Retaining walls that were forming a flat terrace, on which a residence with a court was built, date back to the 6th century BC. This is also the typical feature of the settlement, formed by residences on separate terraces, with the existence of underground rainwater collection tanks for household usage. The fortified Acropolis with the temple of Zeus Polieus and Athena Polias, with parts of the ancient Wall and its towers preserved are worth mentioning. The Wall dates back to the Hellenistic period and combines elements of polygonal and pseudo-isodomic trapezoidal masonry for static reasons, clearly influenced—in terms of construction—by Rhodian architecture of the 4th and 3rd centuries BC.

Archaeological evidence also comes from the ancient cemeteries of the classical and Hellenistic period, but also from the numerous inscriptions of the same periods. A multitude of inscriptions and coins constitute the proof of activity of the island at the end of the classical and during the Hellenistic era. Bronze coinage of Telos⁵⁷ during the late classical era and the early Hellenistic period is confirmed by the presence of Telian coins in the collections of Greek and foreign Museums. At the same time, literary and epigraphic testimonies

⁵⁵ PALAIOLOGOU 2008, 45–70.

⁵⁶ FILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 2005, 19–37; SCANDALIDIS 2005, 181–200.

⁵⁷ STEFANAKI 2009, 472–492.

concerning the political and economic situation of Telos during this period are supplemented by the numismatic data to this day. The close relations and therefore direct influence of the neighbouring islands of Rhodes and Kos also appears on the bronze Telian coins.

2.8. Kassos

Due to its geographical position as a bridge between Crete and the East, Kassos⁵⁸ has stood out throughout the Antiquity. In the historical times, the ancient capital developed around the Mycenaean Acropolis, on the solid site of Polin, whereas according to the related pottery, the site seems to have been occupied from the Late Neolithic up to the early-Christian era inclusive. The ancient settlement in Polin—namely on the hill of Kastro—had a fortifying wall, vestiges of which are preserved to this day, while a paved street lead to the ancient port, Emporeios. On the south side of the mound, the ancient necropoleis are identified, with tombs dating back to the classical up to the Hellenistic times comprised. To the latter belong 51 peculiar, inscribed funerary signs (*semata*) (4th–3rd century BC), a burial practice only found in Kassos.

The most significant monument of the island, in use from the prehistoric up to the early-Christian times inclusive, is the cave of Ellinokamara⁵⁹ that preserves a fortifying wall of the Hellenistic era at its entrance. Pertaining to Temples, there are some indications for at least two of them. Contact of the island with Rhodes after its submission to the Rhodian state is ascertained through the discovery of Rhodian coins of the 4th century BC, as well as from stamped amphorae found there.

2.9. Arkoi, Leipsoi, Leros, Patmos, Levitha, Pserimos, Gyalí, Nisyros, Nimos, Symi, Alimia, Karpathos, Saria, Kastelorizo

In the islands of the SE Aegean (Map 3), in the area of Tiganakia, namely in Arkoi, part of the ancient fortress—i.e. the ruins of a tower from the 4th century BC—is preserved. In Leipsoi, remnants of foundations from an ancient fortification (4th century BC) have been identified, as well as necropolis vestiges of the classical times. Minimal evidence from Leros⁶⁰ places the ancient town at the port of Agia Marina, whereas tombs and movable findings have been identified. In Patmos, remnants of the geometric and archaic period are preserved from the settlement in Kastelli, which was fortified with a robust wall during the 4th–3rd century BC and up to some height, parts of the fortifying precincts, a gate and towers are preserved. At

⁵⁸ GIANNIKOURI & ZERVAKI 2007, 331–354.

⁵⁹ SAKELLARAKIS 1985, 34–36.

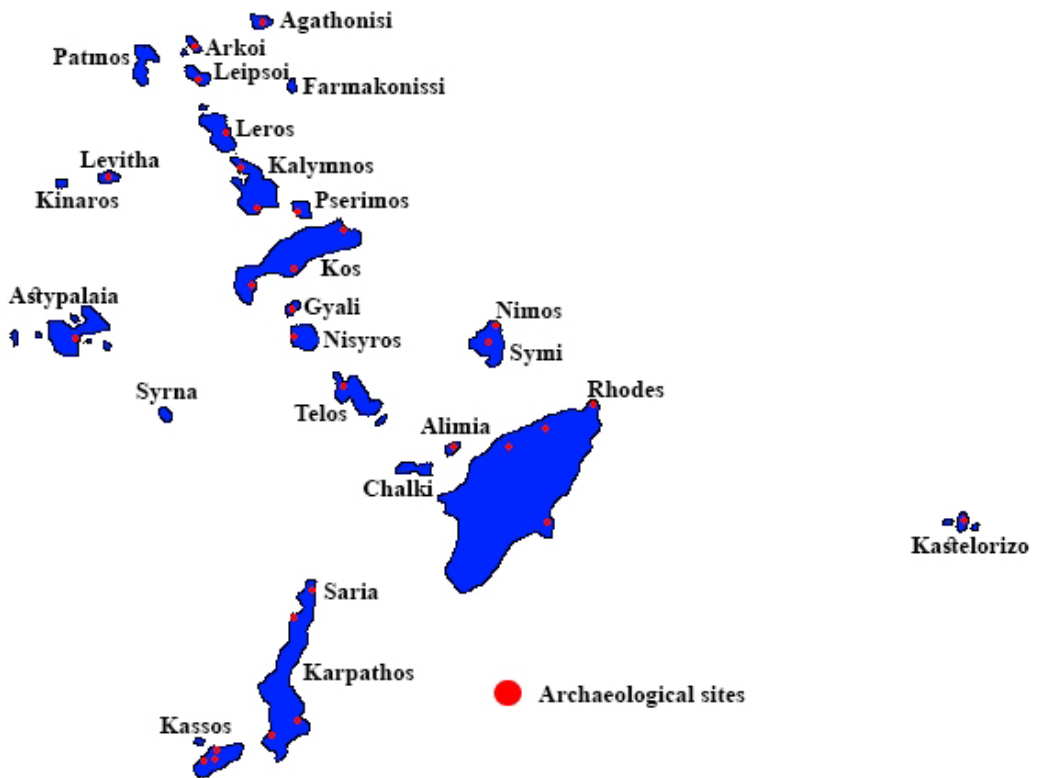
⁶⁰ MICHAELIDOU AND DRELIOSI-IRAKLEIDOU 2006.

Pyrgalio site, in Levitha, buildings of a settlement dating back to the historical times are preserved.

From Pserimos, ruins of the ancient settlement are preserved, like scattered architectural members, vessel shards, parts of altars from the Hellenistic era.

Gyali⁶¹ has played a significant role during prehistoric times, with vestiges of a settlement and a cemetery at the southwest part of the island. At the respective northeast part, obsidian quarries were identified, while obsidian blades have been collected at different sites all over the island. Inhabitation continued also during the historical times, with traces of fortification being preserved from the Hellenistic era on the site named Kastro, at the SW part of the island and other vestiges, such as vessel shards and part of a retaining wall at its NE part.

Nisyros reaches its greatest peak during the 4th century BC, when—as an autonomous city-state—it mints its own coin, while it also preserves the wall of the town, named Paleokastro. Nimos preserves vestiges of tower-like constructions of the Hellenistic times, the so-called “*Κάστρα*” (“Castles”).



Map 3. Presentation of the archaeological sites on the islands of the SE Aegean

⁶¹ SAMPSON 1988.

Symi preserves evidence from the 5th century BC, with a visible part of fortification on the Acropolis, whereas from the Hellenistic era, the so-called “Κάστρα” (“Castles”)—probably used as farmhouses—are preserved.

In Alimia⁶², where occupation of the island goes back to Neolithic years—as corroborated by the recent disclosure of an arched building, remnants of the ancient settlement (walls, two tanks and furnaces) have been found in Emporeio—as well as a Hellenistic fortress on the hill of Kastro.

In Karpathos⁶³, ruins of the Mycenaean civilization clearly stand out, while as of the historical times, the Hellenistic Potidaion—on the Acropolis of which retaining walls are preserved—evolves into a significant centre. Respective walls have been found also on the Acropolis of ancient Arkaseia, which is one of the three towns of the island (Karpathos, Arkaseia and Vrykous). Part of the fortifying precincts of the 4th century BC has been identified in Vrykous, along with tholos tombs.

The acropolis on Castello hill—south of the Palatia bay—is connected with the island of Saria in the historical times; fortification remainders are preserved on the west slope, along with two tholos tombs.

Although remote, Kastelorizo has developed an independent historical presence, constituting a trading post in the transactions between Crete and Cyprus. On Palaiokastro site, remains of fortification from the 4th century BC up to the beginning of the Hellenistic era comprised are preserved. East of the port, rock-cut, is situated a tomb with temple-shaped facade of the Ionic order, dating back to the end of 4th century BC or beginnings of the Hellenistic era.

3. Commercial contacts: influences and sways. The cases of Rhodes and Kos

In the antiquity, the crucial geographical position of the two islands played a significant role both in the political life, as well as in the commercial transactions of the Southern Aegean with the Mediterranean Sea, the mainland, but also the Asia Minor coastline across, as main transit and export trade centers.

As it has been already mentioned, during the archaic era, Rhodes constituted one of the most important production centers of clay artifacts in the Aegean having eastern features, with the most typical ones being the zoomorphic askoi. Plastic vases of the Rhodian workshop are characterized by a naturalistic depiction of figures.

Within the same framework—i.e. exchange of ideas and commodities, influences and sways between the East and the West—did Rhodes’ effect work on the islands around it. The discipline of numismatics is perhaps *the* most indicative example, according to coinage

⁶² SIMOSI 2004, 349–354

⁶³ KARNAVA 2007, 359–371; MELAS 1991.

studies of the Aegean islands and their relation to Rhodes during the late classical and Hellenistic period. The numismatic activity of the Doric islands of the Dodecanese (Chalki, Karpathos, Telos, Nisyros, Symi, Megisti, Kos, Kalymnos, Astypalaia) provides all the information concerning the influence of the Rhodian state on them. The adoption of the Rhodian weighing unit and the Rhodian numismatic types, as well as the use of the Rhodian coinages themselves proves the catalytic significance of Rhodes in this sector.

Respectively, Kos is influenced and influences through its commercial contacts. Its interventional role—in particular from the late classical period onwards—is ascertained through pottery—with the export of Koan amphorae⁶⁴—and numismatics, with the large production and circulation of Koan coins⁶⁵.

The intensity of commercial contacts is also confirmed through the presence of foreign coins respectively, covering a geographically wide range of the ancient world, from the Western Mediterranean up to Egypt and from Athens up to the coastline of Asia Minor (Lykia, Troas and Thrace) and constitute an indisputable substantiation of the contact of Kos with other towns within the framework of commercial and economic transactions.

Furthermore, combinational studies⁶⁶ concerning Koan amphorae and coins identified all over the ancient world provide information pertaining to the power and expansion of the island through its commercial activity under the prism of novel approaches. The examination of the stamped amphorae of the 4th century BC has shown that the form of the national name (ΚΩΙΟΝ, ΚΩΣ, ΚΩΙΟΣ) and the symbols of the stamps clearly refer to the types of Koan coins, with the stamps following the iconographic types of their contemporary coins. The common features in the two categories of findings aimed to the accuracy of Weights and Measures, as well as to the quality of products. During the Hellenistic era, however, these tactics seem to change and a gradual iconographic differentiation starts between stamps and coins. Respectively, the presence of common names between the two categories is limited; there are only just 57 common names, while we have knowledge of 336 names coming from stamps and 197 coming from coins. The development of comparative studies will be able to enrich our knowledge concerning the stratification of the Koan society, the social and political changes, as well as the social classes that were active in the public and economic life of Kos.

The existence of raw materials⁶⁷ gave the island the possibility of self-sufficiency in terms of being able to manufacture objects from these raw materials, as well as being in a position to export them. Ancient quarries⁶⁸ have been already identified and so have the related

⁶⁴ GEORGOPOULOU 2005 (Ph.D).

⁶⁵ TOULANTA-PARISIDI 2005, 363–377; GIANNIKOURI & STEFANAKI 2006, 105–124; TOULANTA-PARISIDI 2007, 321–330; GIANNIKOURI & STEFANAKI 2010, 447–480; STEFANAKI & GIANNIKOURI 2011, 343–366; STEFANAKI 2012.

⁶⁶ GIANNIKOURI, STEFANAKI, GEORGOPOULOU 2011, 887–906.

⁶⁷ POUPAKI 2004, 165–179; POUPAKI 2011.

⁶⁸ POUPAKI & CHADJICONSTANTINOU 2014, 541–555.

artefacts (findings from the Temple of Apollo), such as marble from Dikaion⁶⁹ mountain, granite from a site close to Eastern Kardamaina and volcanic rocks from Kefalos. In the village named Pyli⁷⁰, a travertine (kind of limestone of lacustrine origin, rare due to its composition) quarry has been found.

With regard to the item of glass, the production of which is particularly intensive in Rhodes, the most prevailing view about Kos is that the island imports products either from Rhodes or from another big glass workshop from the broader area of the Aegean. The view is based on the study⁷¹ of a group of shards from glass vessels (late 2nd century BC up to the 3rd quarter of the 1st century BC) that were found during the rescue excavation of a late Hellenistic apothetes around the ancient wall of the town of Kos.

4. Conclusions

Looking at the SE Aegean islands and their activity during the period from 800 up to 200 BC we can easily see their continuous growth and their dynamic presence in the broader area of the Aegean. All these islands as a whole and each island individually has played a major role in the enrichment of the Aegean area with the introduction of new elements. The archaeological evidence, through architectural remains and movable findings as a result of systematic and rescue excavations, attests to their special dynamic and the commercial transactions between them and the wider mainland.

The large number of publications concerning firstly the archaeological sites of Rhodes and Kos and secondly all the other islands of the SE Aegean affirms the close relationship of the islands—through trade routes—with neighbouring civilizations of the Near East, mainly Iran and Caucasia during the early 1st millennium BC and in particular during the late 8th and 7th centuries BC. The maritime communication route from the Eastern Mediterranean to Cyprus, the Aegean and continental Greece makes commercial contacts with the East and the West particularly frequent. Apart from the imported artefacts themselves, the import of new stylistic features is observed; subsequently, these features are assimilated and hence transformed in local workshops, resulting in the creation of new compositions.

Evidently this study presents only an overview of the SE Aegean islands during the Historical Ages (800–200 BC) but it provides significant evidence on the presence and activity of the islands. Recent scientific studies and publications, in combination with management projects which aim to enhance the natural and cultural environment by creating Archaeological Parks and Outdoor Museums, enlarge the present framework and offer new fields of study.

⁶⁹ CHADJICONSTANTINOU & POUPAKI 2009, 61–67.

⁷⁰ POUPAKI & CHADJICONSTANTINOU 2004, 111–124.

⁷¹ TRIANTAFYLIDIS 2006, 145–161.

Table 1. Summary presentation of the archaeological remains on the islands of the SE Aegean per periods

SE Aegean Islands	Geometric period	Archaic period	Classical period	Hellenistic period
Agathonissi				•
Arkoi			•	
Leipsoi			•	
Patmos	•	•	•	
Kalymnos			•	•
Pserimos				•
Kos	•	•	•	•
Astypalaia			•	
Gyali				•
Nisyros			•	•
Nimos				•
Symi			•	•
Telos			•	
Alimia				•
Chalki			•	•
Karpathos			•	
Kassos				•
Rhodes	•	•	•	•
Kastelorizo			•	•

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