THE VERNACULAR RESPONSE
THE VERNACULAR RESPONSE

COLLECTIVE FORTIFICATION

SIFNOS
Kastro and a Hilltop Monastery
Located on the east coast of the island of Sifnos, the Sifnos Kastro crowns a domelike hill that stands eighty meters above sea level. Forming a peninsula jutting out of the landmass of the island, the north and east sides of the hill rise precipitously from the sea.

On the south side is a small bay called Seralia. Cristoforo Buondelmonti, the Florentine monk who visited most of the Aegean islands and produced a manuscript titled Liber Insularum Archipelagi (Book of the Islands of the Archipelago), uses the same name, Se(x)raglia, to identify the bay in his fifteenth-century map of Sifnos.

On the ridge, immediately above Kastro, and at a distance of about 3.5 kilometers by road (or two kilometers as the crow flies), appear the present-day central settlements of the island. They were built after 1830, when the last of the Barbary pirates disappeared from the Mediterranean Sea. The settlements of Xambela, Kato, Kavala, Apollonia (present-day capital of the island), Pano Petali, Kato Petali, Artemonas, and Ai-Loukas are all located on the fertile plateau 250 meters above sea level.

The second ridge in the background incorporates the highest point on the island, at 694 meters, pinpointed by a white dot that identifies the currently unoccupied monastery of Profitis Elias, a building discussed in more detail in pages to follow.

The compact medieval Kastro of Sifnos appears in the foreground. The nineteenth-century central settlements occupy the ridge in the immediate background. The monastery of Profitis Elias, a white dot in the illustration, presides over Kastro and settlements from the island’s highest point.
The side of the Sifnos Kastro most vulnerable to attack was the western side, where in past centuries, footpaths led to its three guarded gates. Today the same three gates, Venieri, Chandaki, and Portaki, provide unimpeded access for pedestrians, whether residents or visitors, to the interior of the hilltop settlement. In addition, the gates keep modern-day vehicular intruders out, thus continuing to defend the Kastro effectively and admirably!

The natural features of the site, as well as its commanding views of the sea, have invited occupancy and fortification throughout Aegean history. Indeed, the northern and highest sector of the Kastro contains the remnants of an ancient Greek acropolis first excavated by the British School of Athens in the 1930s.

In the early thirteenth century, Sifnos became part of Marco Sanudo’s Duchy of the Archipelago. With many other islands, it reverted to Greek hands when Licario, an Italian admiral in the service of the emperor, restored Byzantine rule in the area during the latter part of the century. Nearly one hundred years later, and two years before the Knights Hospitaller of Saint John installed themselves on Rhodes in 1309, Januli da Corogna, an adventurer of Spanish origin who belonged to the Knights, seized Sifnos, renounced his allegiance to the Order and declared himself an independent sovereign. His seizure initiated a period of more than three hundred years of continuous Latin rule on the island, which passed by marriage from the da Corogna to the Gozzadini family, the latter being eventually deposed by the Turks in 1617. The main features of the architecture of the Sifnos Kastro we see today date from this early period of Latin rule.
The Sifnos Kastro seems to have been built in four distinct stages, each of which enlarged the defense perimeter. The Mesa Kastro (or “inner fortification,” a term still in daily use by the inhabitants) at the north end of the settlement encloses the fourteenth-century structures of the early da Corogna rule. These structures were built on top of the ancient acropolis, which provided enough recyclable, high-quality building material for a fortified residence for the local ruler and, presumably, a local government seat. The presence of churches, both Latin and Greek and large enough for official functions, reinforces the hypothesis that the site included a government seat. Further evidence stems from the existence of a heavy masonry foundation measuring about seven meters square, suggesting a defense tower or a keep similar to structures in other Kastra and monasteries in the Aegean littoral used as strongholds for observation and last-resort defense.

At later unknown dates, two additions were attached to the southeast side of the Mesa Kastro. Neither is physically integrated with the Mesa Kastro. In the fourth building stage an arch-like row of dwelling units sharing party walls formed the last and most characteristic enlargement to the Sifnos Kastro. Facing west, it extends from the south tip to the north end of the earlier fortified enclosures. The last and most significant addition increased the size of the Kastro substantially; it was built to house the common people rather than the nobility at a time when the Hellenization of the Latin lords had advanced appreciably. As it extended to embrace the older fortifications, the new enclosure became one of the most legible and best-preserved applications of the collective fortification system. Two levels of individual properties provide a continuous, massive external wall with a minimum number of openings, each of minimal dimensions.
Surviving almost intact, three gates incorporated into the lower level of the enclosure control access to the interior of Kastro. The Venieri, Chandaki, and Portaki gates are a living part of the Sifnos Kastro, inviting pedestrians and beasts of burden to enter the Chandaki path, which bends to follow the inner surface of the enclosure.

The builders of these three gates borrowed from the formal military architecture then in Byzantine and Latin use, making adjustments for local circumstances. Each of the first two gates, Venieri and Chandaki, duplicate the dimensions and volume of a lower-level dwelling unit. Side walls shared with other units define their width. Doors of some type—probably metal, timber, or most likely a combination of the two—blocked entry at the outer and inner walls. If the enemy breached the external doors, the defenders at the upper level could reduce the attackers’ enthusiasm for breaching the second pair of doors by dousing them with boiling oil from above.

Gates were closed at sundown and opened at sunrise. As fears of piracy diminished, the gate areas came to be used as public, semi-enclosed spaces for neighborhood social gatherings, a custom that has lasted into modern times. To accommodate participants at such gatherings, stoops—that is, raised platforms for seating—ran the length of the gate enclosure on both sides and may explain the current local reference to the Venieri gate as the Loggia Venieri. Roughly shaped wood beams, of local origin, support the ceiling and reconfirm the domestic scale of the gate enclosure.

The name Portaki, meaning “little door,” appropriately characterizes the smallest of the three gates at the southeast end of the Kastro. Small indeed, with its domestic scale dimensions and a lintel that is flat rather than arched, the external opening seems intentionally undramatic and probably served spectacularly rather than public functions. Restrict-
Beyond the gates, the Chandaki path becomes a lengthy pedestrian circulation artery and a prominent part of the urban fabric of Sifnos Kastro. The name Chandaki, meaning ditch or trench in Greek, is an apt characterization of the architectural dimensions and function of the path. Echoing the curvature of the external enclosure, Chandaki path leads to Mesa Kastro and other parts of the town, Meanwhile providing graceful access to individual dwelling units comprising the external defense wall.

Due to the constricted space of the dwelling units, upper floors are reached by exterior steps made of stone masonry blocks. In a mild and dry climate, these externally placed steps serve foot traffic between lower and upper levels while allowing precious internal space to be devoted to other functions. These massive blocks of steps articulate the curved Chandaki path in a manner typical of Aegean Kastra. Their presence and use introduce subtly but firmly a domestic scale into the public space and urban fabric of the Sifnos Kastro.
Above: Kastro from the west. The cemetery discussed on page 80 appears at the lower right corner of the illustration.

Below: As in other Kastra and throughout the Aegean, the flat roofs of buildings on either side of the Chandaki path have long served as rainwater catchment areas. In the region of limited annual precipitation, rainwater runoff was critical in the foundation of a house. During the Duchy of the Archipelago days, flat roofs also served, at times, as continuous ramparts, allowing defenders to move their forces quickly from point to point and to concentrate them as circumstances required.

Opposite page: The dome-like hill and the collective fortification of the Sifnos Kastro viewed from an inland location two hundred meters above sea level, near Vrissi monastery. Here, telescopic lenses underscore the relationship of these landscapes and regions within.

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At its south end the Chandaki path runs into the only definable public space inside the Kastro. Because of a drop in site elevation, the two levels of this space allow for small pedestrian bridges that cross over the path and provide direct access to the upper-level dwelling units. The long sides of this triangular public space lead to Portaki gate (at the lower end of the aerial photograph) while the façade of a small church forms the base of the triangle.

The architectural quality of this public place is dramatically enhanced by the presence of the St. John Theologos church. The south elevation of the church acts as a stage set and gently dominates the public place in front of it, echoing a grand tradition of Medieval European towns.

The domestic scale of this church, its flat roof, and the unpretentious composition of its south façade merge comfortably with the secular building blocks of the Kastro. Yet, in a masterful exhibition of the contradictions typical of the vernacular architecture of the Aegean island towns, the church’s delightful and distinctly Sifniote bell tower sets it apart.

**CHURCHES INSIDE KASTRO**

1. St. John Theologos
2. Panayia Eleoussa
3. Theoskepasti
4. Christos
5. Pantanassa
6. Fragantonis (San Antonio di Padova)
7. St. George
8. St. Nicholas

A. Horseshoe windloues

**ARCHITECTURAL SECTION THROUGH THE ST. JOHN THEOLOGOS PUBLIC SPACE**

This eloquent drawing by Michael Varming speaks of daily life interpreted in widths and heights. Note the remarkable balance in the scale of the architecture of the St. John Theologos public place and the larger container of the Sifnos Kastro.
Bell towers from Sifnos churches: unity and diversity through various interpretations of the same architectural theme. (Clockwise from top right: Apollonia, Ano Petali, Apollonia, and Seralia. Opposite page: Assumption of the Virgin (Koimesis tes Theotokou) church near Kastro. Note the enwalled drum of a column recycled during the erection of the walls on the left of the church.)

The Aegean bell tower, a partial extension upward from either the west or the south wall, identifies a church and distinguishes it from the secular urban fabric. Aegean bell towers are integral to church walls rather than separate, four-sided architectural additions to the building. Infinitely varied in form and execution, they offer a vehicle of personal expression to their builders and an inspiring enrichment to the vernacular architecture of the archipelago. Even with such variety, the careful observer can begin to discern distinctive architectural treatments and themes peculiar to each island’s bell towers.
SIFNOS % MEDIEVAL CHRONICLE

1204 The army of the Fourth Crusade sacks Constantinople. Fragmentation of Byzantine territories.

1207 MARCO SANUDO First Duke
Marco Sanudo captures seventeen Aegean islands, most of them undefended. He founds the Duchy of the Archipelago and distributes islands among his friends, to be held as fiefs of the duchy. Sifnos becomes part of the duchy.

1227 ANGELO SANUDO Second Duke

1262 MARCO II SANUDO Third Duke

1269 LICARIO Licario, a knight from Vicenza, under the Byzantine flag recovers for the Emperor several Aegean islands including Sifnos.

1307 JANULI da COROGNA Januli da Corogna, an adventurer of Spanish origin and a member of the Knights Hospitaller, seizes Sifnos, renounces his allegiance to the Order, and declares himself an independent sovereign.

1317 ANTONIO da COROGNA

1340 JANULI II da COROGNA
NICOLO da COROGNA

1347 The Black Death. Ships from the Genoese trading colonies in the Crimean peninsula pass through the Aegean Sea and bring the Black Death to Italy.

1374 JANULI III da COROGNA

1453 Constantinople falls to the Ottoman Turks.

1464 NICOLÓ GOZZADINO (MARIETTA da COROGNA) Nicolo Gozzadino, son of another Latin fief-holder, marries Marietta da Corogna, last descendant of the da Corogna family, and joins Sifnos, Sikinos, and Folegandros under his rule. Sifnos Kastro becomes the capital of this tiny state.

1537 KHEIREDDIN BARBAROSSA
Sailing out of the Golden Horn, the Turkish admiral descends upon the Aegean islands. All are taken and devastated, including Sifnos, where he expels the Gozzadini.

1551 The date and the initials on a door lintel inside Sifnos Kastro are puzzling and difficult to understand in this chronological context.

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1566 DON JOSEPH NASI Sultan Selim II, heir to Suleyman the Magnificent, names as duke Don Joseph Nasi, a Portuguese-Jewish banker and his financial adviser. Nasi, the last person to hold the title of duke, never visits the islands.

1568 It seems that the Gozzadini family rules Sifnos again, while paying taxes to the Sublime Porte.

1617 The latest date by which the Gozzadini are allowed to rule Sifnos as Turkish tributaries.

1830s End of the era of piracy. Sifnos becomes part of the new Greek state.

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Panagia Evagelistria
Archangel Michael
Archangel Gabriel
Archangel Raphael
Sikinos or Sebasto
Kastro on pages 73 and 75.
During the Byzantine era, innovative leadership in architecture came from the imperial capital of Constantinople. After the Ottoman Turks captured the city in 1453, the monasteries of the Aegean archipelago, left leaderless, continued to reproduce the basic diagram of their Byzantine prototypes. Thus, the post-Byzantine monasteries and nunneries of the Aegean islands maintained the faith and ritual of the Greek Orthodox church in the traditional architectural setting of the monastic enclosure and the Katholikon. However, the size and scale of the buildings and the materials used reflect the limited local means.

The sites on which they were built – urban settings, open landscapes, and hills – can be used to categorize the island monasteries with regard to their immediate physical context. Representing the hilltop setting, the monastery of Profitis Elias is closer to heaven than all other religious buildings on the island and is hard to reach, sitting, as it does, at the 694-meter summit of the tallest point on Sifnos. A two-hour, early-morning hike on mule trails takes a visitor through the treeless terrain, ending on the windy summit where the monastery sits.

Besides the characteristic east-side apse, the Profitis Elias Katholikon, the monastery church, has two more apses, located on the north and south sides, thus creating a trefoil. Although often used at Ayion Oros, a trefoil plan is extremely rare in the Aegean islands; it is puzzling and surprising to encounter one on Sifnos.

Stunning views of the landscape of the island and the surrounding seascape create a unique sense of place. The fresh whitewash, together with the well-kept cells and refectory, make it difficult for a visitor to believe that the monastery had been without monks for almost twenty years.

Built with imperial funds during the fourteenth-century reign of Alexios Comnenos, the monastery sits on a precipitous site eighty meters above sea level on the southwestern side of Mount Athos. The monastery walls enclose a very tight courtyard and incorporate a twenty-four-meter-tall defense tower. Its Katholikon features a trefoil plan.
T he proximity and spiritual preeminence, as well as the intense interplay of landscape and seascapes that characterized their design, made the buildings of the Ayion Oros peninsula the prototypes for monasteries throughout the Aegean islands and for the later medieval fortified island towns. With a population in the hundreds, an Ayion Oros monastery resembled an Aegean island town in size, architectural composition, and scale.

The enclosing defensive wall characteristic of the medieval town was equally indispensable to the monastery. Built to keep out the secular world and to protect the inner place of prayer, this massive wall remains the most impressive architectural feature of the monastery. In a manner that foreshadowed the later building of the Aegean island towns, the living quarters, including cells, refectories, and storerooms, were attached to the interior surface of this enclosing wall. Such a design ensured an economy of materials and gave greater structural strength to the integrated peripheral edifice. A guarded barrier (vestibule portal) on the enclosing wall is the only access to the interior of the monastery and leads to an inner courtyard open to the sky. The courtyard is a platform on which the Katholikon, the monastery church, stands and is visible from all sides. The peripheral enclosing wall (2), the inner courtyard (3), and the freestanding Katholikon (4) together constitute the basic architectural elements of the Byzantine as well as the post-Byzantine monastery plan. Such factors, in turn, confirm the uniqueness of the monastery as a generic building type.

In plan the peripheral enclosing wall is typically quadrilateral, often polygonal, and, occasionally, triangular or rectangular. The topography of the site and the need for defensive advantage largely determined the geometry of a particular monastery plan. As institutions, monasteries have had a long life, yet their buildings have undergone repeated physical change. When war, fire, and war brought damage and destruction, repairs and replacements were conducted in the spirit of each particular time, however different the style might be from that of the original building. Nevertheless, the basic ground plan described above was faithfully adhered to.

A notable exception to this cycle of destruction and repair is the Katholikon, the geometric and spiritual center of the monastery, which remains essentially unchanged, retaining its original form and parts today. Small in area, fitting snugly into the tight monastic complex, the cross-in-square church became the dominant architectural design choice. Access to the Katholikon comes by way of a courtyard, which also serves as communal space for the monks. To accommodate large numbers of pilgrims, a generous part of the courtyard usually abuts the Katholikon entry. Regardless of courtyard articulation, however, the apse of the Katholikon always faces east.

The varying sizes of these parts, along with their proportions, relationships, materials, and details, account for the manifold architectural interpretations of this basic tripartite diagram. Such factors, in turn, confirm the uniqueness of the monastery as a generic building type.

While no essential feature was substantially altered during the twenty-eight years of the history covered by the paired photographs, patient observation registers several subtle changes. For example, in the later illustration of the Katholikon walls have been rebuilt. Blue paint uplifts the architectural and religious importance of the monument. The trees appear healthier than in the earlier illustration. And, finally, though whitewashing has been expanded over the vertical surfaces of the enclosing stone walls, the whitewashing treatment was applied with restraint, allowing to underscore such important architectural features as the saddle of the enclosing wall and the slopes of the apse and roof. While the whitewashing treatment may have been necessary, this change, like the others, points to a more prosperous society that is using its surplus wealth to enhance its communal property.
THE VERNACULAR RESPONSE
COLLECTIVE FORTIFICATION

ASTYPALEA
The Querini Kastro
Larger than Sifnos but not as fertile, Astypalaia consists of two halves united by a narrow isthmus that together measure ninety-seven square kilometers. The rocky and mountainous terrain, with elevations of 482 meters in one half and 366 meters in the other, includes little arable land. Like many Aegean islands, Astypalaia historically supported only one settlement, also known as Chora, which had a population of about one thousand people in the 2001 census.

Located in the southern half of the island, the Astypalaia Kastro—unlike the Sifnos Kastro—sat atop a promontory pointing southeast, facing major north-south Aegean sea lanes. The strategic position of the island and this particular promontory invited early settlement, the historical record of which is fragmented. The ancient name Astypalaia (Asty, or “city”; palaia, or “old”) has survived with few other

**ASTYPALAIA**

**The Querini Kastro**

Historically and geographically, Astypalaia belongs to the Dodecanese island complex and, in consequence, its more recent history has differed from those of the Cycladic complex islands such as Antiparos, Sifnos, Sikinos, and Folegandros. Astypalaia remained part of the Ottoman Empire after Greek independence in 1830 and came under Italian administration from 1912 to 1943 before it was returned to Greece with the rest of the Dodecanese islands in 1947.

**ASTYPALAIA GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Prefecture:** Dodecanese
- **Location (Kastro):** 36° 32' 38'' N, 26° 21' 20'' E
- **Distance from Piraeus:** 313 km (169 n.miles)
- **Area:** 96,85 km²
- **Dimensions:** 16.5 km long, 13.5 km wide
- **Shoreline:** 110 km
- **Highest Elevation:** 482 m (Vardia)
- **Permanent Population:** 1,246 (2001)
- **Port:** Pera Yalos or Skala
The island had changed hands a number of times before it became a fief of the Querini family as early as the thirteenth century. The precise date of its reconquest by the islanders from Tenos and Mykonos is not clear.

Buondelmonti was traveling in the area, that Giovanni Querini recolonized Astypalaia after it was ravaged by the Turkish corsairs in 1413, twenty years after the conquest of Rhodes. He founds the Duchy of the Archipelago and distributes the land both natural and man-made. The army of the Fourth Crusade sacks Constantinople. Fragmenta Archipelagi, Gennadius Liacario, a knight from Vicenza, under the Byzantine flag recovers for the emperor several Aegean islands including Astypalaia. Licario soon submits to the rule of the Fourth Crusade. Othello takes Crete from the Knights of St. John in 1537.

The name of the Querini-Stampalia Palace on the Grand Canal in Venice is a reminder of the prominent Venetian family who sought adventure in the Aegean islands and of the era of the Duchy of the Archipelago. Whether Astypalaia became a fief of the Querini family as early as the thirteenth century is not clear. The Kastro at the top of the promontory was built then to provide a protected residence for the colonists. The Querini family preserved the Venetian presence on the island until 1541 when Astypalaia also became part of the Ottoman Empire.

The Astypalaia Kastro is defined by a completely enclosed defense perimeter, with access to the interior limited to one powerfully built gate. The astypalaio Kastro is another inspiring and site-specific application of the collective fortification system employed in most other islands of the neighboring Cycladic complex. The Astypalaia Kastro is a multi-stage construction with unenclosed domes and arches, the architectural elements used in the construction of Byzantine fortifications. It is surrounded by a moat, about 100 feet wide, making it a formidable site.

At 130 meters above sea level, crowning a promontory, the Astypalaia Kastro dominates the immediate environment in an awe-inspiring way. Built on a massive rock, the Kastro is in one stage, the Kastro is another inspiring and site-specific application of the collective fortification system employed in most other islands of the neighboring Cycladic complex.

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In an impressive merger of the man-made and the natural landscape, the edges of the rock extend upward to blend with the external walls of the long and narrow Kastro enclosure. Measuring about 50 by 130 meters, the Astypalaia Kastro protects nearly six thousand square meters. Buttressed in places, the formidable tall external walls undulate gently on the southwest side, where the gate is located, to become irregular on the northeast side. The effects of desertion are apparent in the ruins of the interior, where the walls of some dwelling units survive. Many of the top floors have collapsed since the early 1950s. However, the pace of deterioration has been slowed by recent repair work. Sharing party walls, dwelling units on three levels originally lined the peripheral defensive wall and were accessible from interior paths, as in other Cycladic collective fortifications. The remnants of foundations confirm the presence of similar units in the central, now-open, area of the Kastro. Narrow and irregular pedestrian circulation paths were important contributors to the apparent high density of building in the fifteenth-century Kastro. Measured drawings of the fortification trace the size and scale of about thirty of the original units of habitation.

Recent archaeological work indicates that there were perhaps seventy-five units per level. Assuming three levels of such units and four or five persons per family brings the full occupancy of the Kastro to about one thousand, a number larger than, but still comparable to, the likely numbers inhabiting the Antiparos and Sifnos Kastra.
Astypalaia, Kastri and Chora. Although disused, these clustered windmills, with their whitewashed and robust cylindrical forms, remain an indispensable part of the urban fabric of Chora.
Astypalaia, Kastro, interior walls. The whitewashed surfaces of Panayia church, on the right, contrast with the exposed masonry walls and monolithic lintels of a deserted dwelling unit.

Astypalaia, Kastro, exterior walls. The absence of any traces of whitewash might serve to reinforce the argument that on earlier days the exterior walls of Kastro were not whitewashed, allowing the mass of the edifice to merge visually with the immediate surrounding landscape, thus escape the observation of pirates. In contrast to the practice of Sifnos Kastro, here the exterior walls and roofs do not reveal the specific location of individual interior dwelling units.

Astypalaia, Kastro and Chora. The illustration provides an elegant determination of continuity between the man-made and the natural landscape of the island, as the massive rock formation is sandwiched between the medieval Kastro above and the contemporary Chora below. The immaculate whitewash and blue paint of the woodwork, together with all other “furniture” elements in the courtyard, present vernacular architecture at its best.
A midst the ruins of the Astypalaia Kastro, two white-washed churches are still in use and survive in excellent repair. Ayios Georgios, built in 1790 and free-standing today, was part of the tightly knit urban fabric of the Kastro. Attached to its west end is a covered space, called platia by the people of Astypalaia (perhaps a corruption of the Italian piazza), an echo of a public space from the eighteenth-century days of the settlement.

Sitting atop the gated entry to the Kastro and dedicated to Panayia (“All-Holy Mother”), the other whitewashed church, built in 1853, is still important in the religious life of the citizens of Astypalaia. Its spectacular location and the treatment of its two exterior elevations make this building symbolic of the nineteenth-century transformation of Astypalaia, when it began to spill out of its defensive enclosure and into the town below. This church also offers insights into the vernacular architecture forms of the Aegean island towns as they evolved in the nineteenth century.

The 1853 Panayia church replaced an earlier building on the same location, most likely a tower guarding access to and defending the gate. Evidence for that assumption lies in the strategic placement of the gate along the southwestern wall of the Kastro and the uniqueness, size, and elaborateness of the interior passage space that remains.

It is tempting to contemplate the symbolism of a fortification element being replaced by a church. By 1853 the defense tower was obviously an unpleasant reminder of the fear of corsairs and of Latin domination. But when the church was built, twenty years had passed since the French landed in Algiers and eliminated the Barbary corsairs, and the British and French fleets and expeditionary armies allied with the Ottoman Empire were crossing the Aegean to make war on Russia in the Crimean peninsula. The changed geopolitics of the mid-nineteenth century Mediterranean gave the citizens of Astypalaia, still under Ottoman rule, a new sense of security. Thus, the elimination of the tower and its replacement with a building that reasserted the islanders’ traditional devotion to Eastern Orthodoxy.

In a remarkably sophisticated and “current” architectural manner, each of the two exposed elevations of the Panayia church responds to its context, and each is radically different from the other. The west elevation is addressed to the domestic scale of the Kastro interior. Apart from the large and unusual arched gate opening under the church and the massive masonry pier at its southeast corner (possibly a remnant of the earlier tower structure) all the other elements—apse, domes, whitewash, and so on—are typical of the post-Byzantine vernacular architecture of the Aegean islands. Indeed, in scale, composition, and architectural vocabulary, both of the Kastro churches, Panayia and Ayios Georgios, speak the same language.

The west elevation of the Panayia church, however, is addressed to the larger, more ambitious public scale of the Kastro exterior and to the growing settlement of Chora below. Part of the larger exposed stone surface of the defense enclosure, this elevation is enriched by the four windows of the church, which alert the observer to the existence of a different place behind this short segment of the wall. The windows are framed by such formal architectural components as pilasters, arches, and pediments cut in stone in a unique and remarkable example of the assimilation of formal architectural elements into the vocabulary of vernacular architecture.
Astypalaia Kastro, Chora and port.

Astypalaia Kastro, Chora and port. Site plan

Middle 18th cent. - 1912

Middle 19th cent. - 1948

Middle 18th cent. - Middle 19th cent.

Middle 19th cent.

Astypalaia Kastro and Chora, six stages of development.

Middle 18th cent.

Middle 19th cent.

Well - today.

Astypalaia Kastro. Entry gate under Panayia church.

Astypalaia Kastro. Entry gate under Panayia church, looking towards Chora.
Astypalaia Kastro looking southwest. Sitting comfortably at the summit of the promontory, the Astypalaia Kastro, very much like Sifnos Kastro, dominates its immediate environs in physical and psychological

Adjusting to the intricacies of the site, a natural path zigzagged to form a physical spine connecting Chora and Kastro on the hill with the Pera Yialos port area. Flanked by houses and surfaced in a step-ramp-step sequence for use by pedestrian and beast-of-burden traffic, this natural path is of a width that underscores its importance as a spine and as a vibrant architectural element in the new, three-part articulation of the settlement: Chora, Spine, Pera Yialos. Unfortunately, overbuilding on both sides and “improvements” to allow motorcycles to override the steps of the spine have diminished the integrity of this precious architectural enrichment of the urban fabric of Astypalaia.
Astypalaia, Chora. Rows of dwelling units flank the spine as it points the way uphill towards Kastro

Astypalaia, Kastro, looking south from the fortification. The dome belongs to Panayia Portaetissa, the Katholikon of an earlier nunnery that now functions as the religious center of the settlement, defining the southern limits of Chora. Decorative rather than structural, its ribs echo those on the dome of the Panayia church of the Carmelite Order in Ano Syros illustrated on page 237. The cut-masonry wall of the tower attached to the perimeter of the fortification appears on the extreme right of the photograph.
In response to the topography of the new site and under the protective mass of the fortification, an assembly of dwelling units began to emerge, mostly west of Kastro, in successive rings. The floor plans of these units remained the same as those of their predecessors inside the fortification. Yet the adaptation of the units to the new site offered a welcome reduction in building density as well as ventilation and better views over the roofs of the ring of dwellings below.

Further expansion moved northward and downhill as the site dictated, towards the bay area of Pera Yialos. Commercial buildings serving the island’s sea trade appeared in Pera Yialos before and during the period of Italian administration (1912–1943).
Important components of the vernacular architecture of the Aegean islands, small churches and chapels originated not as institutionally commissioned buildings but as private places of worship built to fulfill a personal vow. As noted earlier, erecting a chapel, and dedicating it to a particular protector saint, served as a grateful acknowledgment of a safe return from a perilous sea journey or a cure for a life-threatening illness by divine intervention. Most of these votive chapels have remained private and have been bequeathed, together with family houses, to subsequent generations of each original builder’s family. The descendants have maintained the chapels and participated in the annual whitewashing that coincides with the feast day of the saint to whom the building was dedicated, an architectural ritual that confirms the chapel’s active presence in the post-Byzantine life of the island community.

A distinctive and delightful addition to the urban fabric of the Astypalea Chora, six independent, single-nave, barrel-vaulted chapels attached to each other appear in the Karais neighborhood, sixty meters north of the gate to Astypalea Kastro. Well-integrated into the site, each of the six chapels was built at a different time during the eighteenth century and has a cross atop or on the door to identify its religious mission. Each has an apex on the east wall and a door on the west side. The barrel vault of one chapel differs from that of another in geometry, width, height, and curvature. Average floor plan dimensions are four by six meters. A small opening above the solid entry door and an even smaller one in the apse allow in a cautious amount of light.

Dedicated to Panayia Leimonetria, or the “Merciful Virgin,” the chapel also encloses a thought-provoking iconostasis. Built of wood the lower part is conventional. But in the upper part of the iconostasis a deeply carved timber with angels and doves has obviously been recycled, probably from a sailing ship. Both sailing ship and chapel may once have belonged to the same family, whose two properties were ultimately fused to celebrate its naval enterprise and religious dedication.
ANTIPAROS
A Rectangular Kastro
Antiparos is the largest of a group of islands clustered near the southwest coast of the much bigger island of Paros. It has a surface area of thirty-five square kilometers and a high point of 293 meters. Despite the absence of a tourist industry, the town of Antiparos has defied the regional trend of the last several decades by retaining and even increasing its population to 1011 people, according to the 2001 census.

The earliest records of Antiparos within the feudal structure of the Duchy of the Archipelago date from the late fourteenth century. Cristoforo Buondelmonti refers to Antiparos in the early decades of the fifteenth century as a deserted island. The Antiparos Kastro was built between 1440 and 1446, when the island was granted as a fief to Leonardo Loredano on his marriage to Maria Sommaripa, the daughter of a family prominent in the duchy. According to William Miller his marriage brought Loredano to the duchy: “thus a great Venetian family obtained a footing in the Cyclades. This infusion of new blood was of great benefit to the island, which had long been uninhabited: for the energetic Venetian repopulated it with new colonists, and built and resided in the castle, whose gateway, now fallen, still preserved, in the eighteenth century, his coat of arms.”

**ANTIPAROS**

A Rectangular Kastro

ANTIPAROS

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Prefecture:** Cyclades
- **Location (Kastro):** 37° 02’ 26” N 25° 04’ 58” E
- **Distance of Paros from Piraeus:** 166 km (90 n.miles)
- **Area:** 35,09 km²
- **Dimensions:** 12.5 km long, 5.5 km wide
- **Shoreline:** 57 km
- **Highest Elevation:** 293 m (Profitis Ilias)
- **Permanent Population:** 1011 (2001)
- **Port:** Antiparos (10 min from Paros)

Inside Antiparos Kastro looking northwest. The Lion of St. Mark enwalled above a door in the center of the illustration. Color and whitewash differentiate individual properties.
The Antiparos Kastro was built as a protected residence for the colonists who most likely were brought from islands nearby. These colonists introduced olive tree cultivation to Antiparos to enhance the value of the Loredano fief. This simultaneous colonization and fortification took place as the politically and militarily fragmented Aegean archipelago was once more in the process of violent transformation. The Ottoman Turks, steadily advancing across the Balkan Peninsula, breached the walls of a dispossessed Constantinople in 1453 and reached Athens in 1460. When Turkish pirates, newcomers to the Aegean, began to raid the islands, the Duchy of the Archipelago ceded more and more of its independence in exchange for Venetian protection. The Knights Hospitaller of Saint John successfully defended Rhodes from the Turks during the first siege of 1480, but were ultimately defeated in the second siege of 1522.

Flanked by two bays, Antiparos is the only town on the island of the same name. It is sited on flat ground forty meters above sea level near the northern tip of the island. The town port on the east bay faces a shallow strait separating Antiparos from Paros. On the west side, the bay opens up to the larger Aegean Sea. With the island of Sifnos and its medieval capital of Kastro visible from this bay at only thirty kilometers away, the defense needs of the duchy as a whole probably influenced the choice of the site for the Antiparos Kastro. Although concealed by contemporary buildings on all four sides, the fifteenth-century Antiparos Kastro is still inhabited and the urban core of a very much alive twenty-first century town.

In the dry and often parched landscape of the Aegean, access to water was a vital feature for those within a defense enclosure. Indeed, an old filled-up well has been located inside the Kastro. A contemporary well, drilled in the same location, within the perimeter of the fortified enclosure, provides water for the present community.
The flat site of the Antiparos Kastro made possible the application of the concept of collective fortification within the perimeter of a perfectly square building. Each side measures slightly less than fifty-four meters. The enclosure contains twenty-four one-level units of habitation on each of the two upper floors. The top floor on the west side is missing with no indication of why or when it was removed. Contrary to the example of the Sifnos Kastro, the length of each unit runs parallel to the external wall. This length varies from six to nine meters. Shared walls five meters in length separate the units. Access to the units is from the internal court, up massive stone steps to the lower habitable floor, then up lighter wooden stairs to the upper floor. In the original building, the external masonry perimeter wall—between a meter and one half and a meter and eighty centimeters—pierced by openings whose limited number and restricted dimensions are reminders of the structure’s original defensive purpose.

In the last one hundred fifty years or so, alterations to the west, north, and east walls of the original building have resulted in a proliferation of balconies, loggias, doors, and windows. Despite their incompatibility with the original concept of collective fortification, these alterations have not harmed the visual or structural integrity of the massive external wall, which retains a surprisingly commanding presence. Originally, traffic to and from the complex flowed through a single gate on the south wall, which was shut during the night and opened in the morning, a practice that had been abandoned by 1882, according to J. Theodore Bent, who visited Antiparos that year. Today, the same gate survives as both frame and passageway and continues to provide access to the central court and to a good number of the units, as intended in the fifteenth-century plan. Other units, however, have now been remodeled to open directly to the surrounding streets.
Antiparos Kastro. Helicopter-based view looking southeast. A recent structure houses water-pumping equipment on top of an older round foundation. This lower foundation may have supported a distinet defense tower during the medieval past of Kastro.

Imported design ideas and construction techniques were used in building the Antiparos Kastro, but the actual building materials were local. A combination of natural and cut stone was used to produce the massive external walls. Corners were built with large blocks of marble cut in ways that suggest they were recycled from an older building, although there is no evidence that such a building existed on Antiparos. On nearby Paros, however, a great many marble building blocks from antique Greek temples were recycled into the erection of thirteenth-century fortifications. Considering the proximity of the two islands, the recycled marble blocks found in the Antiparos Kastro may well have come from Paros or perhaps Paroikia.

Roughly shaped wood beams, closely spaced, span the distance between the bearing walls. A local species of tree—the Fithes, a member of the juniper family—is the source of this rather poor-quality building material, which compensates for its irregular shape by being surprisingly durable.
The houses attached to the south side of the original Kastro constitute the first expansion of the original collective fortification. This expansion, which suggests a population increase, occurred in the early seventeenth century, following the devastating Barbarossa raids of 1537 and after several decades of Ottoman rule in most of the Aegean islands. The additions increased the capacity of the expanded Kastro to about one hundred dwelling units. Assuming an average of four to five persons per family and, thus, per dwelling unit, Kastro could now accommodate four to five hundred inhabitants. Indeed, travelers to Antiparos from the fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth century record populations ranging from two to six hundred.

The later dwelling units do not adhere to the discipline of the original fifteenth-century edifice. But since they were attached to the south wall and built as extensions of the east and west external walls, they attest to the inhabitants’ continued need for protection, and by inference, suggest the ongoing threat of piracy. At this time entry to the enlarged complex was relocated southward, on the axis of the old gate. The cul-de-sacs on the right and left of this axis, which echo the central space of the original building, reinforce the likelihood that this early-seventeenth-century addition, despite its somewhat awkward attachment to the disciplined geometry of the original edifice, remained focused on defense.
In the geometric center of the courtyard, rising about six meters from the ground, sits a building with a round foundation with a diameter of seventeen meters. No information about the structure or its purpose has survived, although it may have extended above the surrounding flat roofs of the enclosure to support either a residence for the local feudal lord or a keep, a stronghold for observation and last-resort defense. French and Italian defense examples might have served as prototypes for such a structure, introduced by way of Venetian overlords or the stronghold towers of the nearby Ayion Oros monasteries. Whatever its origin, this round-based building erected at the same time as the square enclosure was clearly meant to enhance the defense of the Antiparos Kastro.

According to M. Philippa-Apostolou, who made a detailed study of the Antiparos Kastro, a grid was used in the design and construction of this exceptional example of Aegean vernacular architecture. This grid was based on the passo, a Venetian unit of measurement equal to 1.78 meters. Therefore, such dimensions as the thickness of the walls, the heights of the doors, the diameters of the rooms, and the lengths of the external walls are multiples of the passo. Like most other architectural units of measurement, the passo was inspired by human scale and is similar in concept to the modular 0.30 meters or six feet, a much-debated unit of architectural measurement proposed in the 1940s by the French-Swiss architect Le Corbusier in the context of the Modern movement in architecture.

The presence of a grid strengthens the belief that the Antiparos Kastro was conceived and built as a single building, rather than in stages, to realize the colonization and fortification plans of Giovanni Loredano, the Venetian holder of the fief of Antiparos. The use of the grid also demonstrates the ability of the vernacular architecture builders of the Aegean islands to absorb new building techniques imported from elsewhere.

Chapels and other buildings were added later within the perimeter of the original Kastro. Two chapels are part of a string of single rooms arranged in a curvilinear manner around the south and east sides of the round-based central tower, which was probably destroyed during the Ottoman conquest, its demise signaling a change in the overlordship of Antiparos as in that of the Aegean archipelago generally. A third chapel, also dating from the seventeenth century and called the chapel of Christos, stands free of the larger structure at the northwest corner of the inner court of the original edifice. On the domestic scale typical of the Aegean islands, this barrel-vault and dome-covered chapel asserts its presence in a difficult location with gentleness and conviction. Built parallel to the perimeter, its west wall makes a masterful and sophisticated architectural concession, rare in such a chapel's geometry, to its powerful and immediate neighbor. Its presence introduces an additional architectural scaling element that helps to register the magnitude of the complex. Together with the two other chapels, it celebrates, above all, the reemergence of the occupants’ Greek Orthodox faith in the era following the downfall of the island's Venetian Roman Catholic overlords.

The seventeenth-century additions to the fifteenth-century edifice, along with more recent additions and the continuous tenancy of the edifice even today, demonstrate that the Antiparos Kastro is a living organism, constantly recycling architectural elements and redesigning spaces and, in its diachronic dynamism, keeping its precious heritage alive rather than reducing it to museum status.
FOLEGANDROS
A Triangular Kastro
The Greek historian Apostolos E. Vakalopoulos writes that, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, residents of the smaller and more desolate islands took refuge from pirate attacks in the natural fortifications located on the highest ground. This line of thought finds its most appropriate and fitting illustration in the Folegandros Kastro and particularly in the siting of its northern exposure.

Smaller than neighboring Sikinos, Folegandros at thirty-two square kilometers is one of the southernmost islands of the Cycladic complex. Its long southwest coast faces the Sea of Crete, traditionally an important commercial artery for vessels sailing from the western Mediterranean through the Aegean to the Black Sea, and vice versa.

Folegandros, however, lacks the geographic characteristics to benefit from this strategic location. Unlike neighboring Melos, it has no ample bay to provide shelter to ships and pilots navigating the challenging waters of the Aegean archipelago.
Located on a massive rock formation and on top of a sheer drop to the sea two hundred meters immediately below, the north side stands out as Folegandros Kastro’s most distinctive and memorable feature. At the top of this impossible-to-scale cliff, the Folegandros Kastro seems to be flaunting its best defense feature to discourage potential assailants from the sea.

As with all Aegean Kastra, the Folegandros Kastro was erected to protect the occupants from sudden raids by small bands of corsairs. Not surprisingly, it proved inadequate to withstand assaults by the Turkish Armada, which at least once, in 1715, destroyed and depopulated the island.
A n application of the collective fortification building system in use during the Duchy of the Archipelago era, Folegandros Kastro is distinguished from other Aegean Kastra by its triangular plan. Fully inhabited today and in wondrous state of preservation, the Kastro boasts a three-sided configuration defined by the nearly ninety-degree intersection of its east and south sides. Opposite to this right angle, closely hugging the irregular edge of the cliff, the northern row of dwelling units forms the hypotenuse of the triangle. This triangular formation allows for internal rows of dwelling units, illustrating, once again, the high building density of a Kastro, a feature that the vicissitudes of times have removed from the neighboring Sikinos Kastro.

Typical to Aegean Kastra, external steps built on massive masonry blocks lead to the upper floors of these compact units. Reminders of the minimal internal space of the units, the multiple sets of steps introduce to the pedestrian path a revealing sense of human and architectural scale.
The south wall of the defensive perimeter houses the fortified settlement's two historical gates, which are still in use today. The smaller one, Paraporti, is at the southeast corner, while the main entry, known as Loggia, is located near the middle of the wall. In size, location, and name, the gates are reminiscent of their counterparts at Sifnos Kastro—Paraporti and Portaki, Loggia and Loggia Venieri—underscoring an aspect of continuity in the various applications of the Aegean Kastro building type.

In another function common to the Aegean islands, a region of limited annual precipitation, the flat roofs of the Folegandros Kastro serve as water catchment surfaces; drainpipes channel precious rainwater to storage in cisterns within the foundation walls of the individual dwelling units.

Modern-day expectations of the residents and an upsurging summer tourist industry require extra water supplies, now brought in by water tanker from the mainland.
In Folegandros the Chora incorporates the medieval Kastro and the areas where the settlement expanded when the threat of piracy lessened and eventually disappeared after 1830. Part of the expansion took place on the east side of the Kastro along the path leading higher up on the hill to the church of the Virgin, popularly known as Panayia.

The greatest part of the expansion of Chora took place south of the Kastro. Expansion in both directions occurred in a way unique to Folegandros, where four public squares articulate the physical relationship between the medieval and contemporary parts of the town. Pounta Square functions as a place of vehicular arrivals and departures, thus altering the traditional use of the east wall of Kastro. Facing the part of the south wall between the two gates, Dounavi, Kontarini, and Plaka squares serve as the main civic space of the town, enhanced by the presence of four domed whitewashed churches.
The army of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople. Fragmentation of Byzantine territories.

1204 The army of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople. Fragmentation of Byzantine territories.

1207 Marco I Sanudo

First Duke

Marco Sanudo, who came from a noble Italian family, most of them undertaken, he founded the Duchy of the Archipelago and distributed islands among his friends, to be held as fiefs of the duchy. Folegandros becomes part of the duchy.

1227 Angelo II Sanudo

Second Duke

1262 Marco II Sanudo

Third Duke

1269 Licario

Licario, a knight from Vicenza, under the Byzantine flag recovers the Empire several Aegean islands including Folegandros.

1307 Januli da Corogna

Januli da Corogna, an adventurer of Spanish origin, and a member of the Knights Hospitaller seizes Folegandros, together with Sikinos and Sifnos, renounces his allegiance to the Order, and declares himself an independent sovereign.

1317 Antionio da Corogna

1340 Januli II da Corogna

1347 Nicolò da Corogna

The Black Death.

1374 Januli III da Corogna

1453 Constantinople falls to the Ottoman Turks.

1464 Nicolò Gozzadino - (Marietta da Corogna)

Nicolo Gozzadino, son of another Latin fief-holder, marries Marietta da Corogna, and establishes the Corogna family in Folegandros, Sikinos, and Sifnos, where he expelled the Gozzadini.

1537 Kheireddin Barbarossa

Sailing out of the Golden Horn, the Turkish admiral descends upon the Aegean islands. All are taken and devastated including Folegandros, Sikinos, and Sifnos, where he expelled the Gozzadini.

1566 Don Joseph Nasi

Twenty-second Duke

Sultan Selim II, heir to Suleyman the Magnificent, names as duke Don Joseph Nasi, a Portuguese-Jewish banker and financial adviser. Nasi, the last person to hold the title of Duke, never visits the islands.

1568 It seems that the Gozzadini family rules Folegandros, Sikinos and Sifnos again, while paying taxes to the Sublime Port.

1617 The latest date by which the Gozzadini are allowed to rule Folegandros, Sikinos and Sifnos as Turkish tributaries.

1830s End of the era of piracy. Folegandros becomes part of the new Greek state.
Sikinos provides a rare, if not unique, Cycladic island example where a more recent town unfolds as expected around the periphery of a medieval Kastro. And yet, a short distance from the original Kastro is a Chora, which has a clearly separate physical existence. There are no historical records to account for this phenomenon. Today, only the site, an extended hilltop ridge where both Kastro and Chora sit in a linear relationship to each other, provides some clue to this apparent puzzle of proximity and separation.

Among the smaller of the Cycladic islands, Sikinos, at forty-one square kilometers, is hemmed in by Ios and Folegandros and lies directly south of Antiparos. On a clear day, to the northwest of Sikinos Kastro, Sifnos Kastro appears in the horizon forty kilometers distant. Capped by a 552-meter high point, the rocky and mountainous terrain of the island of Sikinos is tempered by a multitude of retaining walls and terraces. Common in all Aegean islands, these terraces, locally called pezoules, over the centuries conserved the precious soil of the island and provided for a moderate agricultural wealth. The population they sustained never exceeded several hundred.
Built during the years of the Duchy of the Archipelago, perhaps only decades after the Antiparos Kastro, the Sikinos Kastro is another inspiring application of the collective fortification building system prevalent at the time. The west wall of the strategically located four-sided enclosure asserted a commanding view of the sea 270 meters immediately below.

The Kastro’s east side oversaw the land approaches from the present-day port of Alopronia. Missing dwelling units have created substantial gaps in the old external fortification walls. Surviving parts, however, allow a clear understanding of the geometry of the original Kastro.
In contrast to those of a typical Aegean Kastro, the dimensions of the enclosed space at Sikinos Kastro are excessively large, indicating the removal of internal rows of dwelling units. This demolition probably occurred in coordination with the erection of the church of Pantanassa, which dates to 1787. An obvious addition to the original bell tower of the Pantanassa suggests that the church in its present form might not have been erected in one stage. As with Antiparos Kastro, Northern Italian architectural prototypes very likely guided the building of the original Sikinos Kastro. The replacement of the internal rows of housing units by the church of Pantanassa brings to mind the image of a Greek Orthodox monastery court surrounded by cells, with the Kastro standing free in the center. This image originated in buildings extant in the Aegean littoral during the early years of the Duchy of the Archipelago. The pattern was very much in the mind’s eye of the vernacular architecture builders of the eighteenth-century archipelago and apparently likewise so in the eyes of those in charge of the eighteenth-century transformation of the Sikinos Kastro.

Today, Sikinos Kastro continues a vibrant existence. In addition to its exhibition space and war memorial, it houses offices for the community administration and the local archaeological authority. Such uses underscore how a living architectural organism has transformed itself throughout the years in the service of the citizens of Sikinos.

The bell tower casts a shadow on the barrel-vault surface. Enclosed space of Kastro, shown on upper left corner of photograph, includes war memorial.

Sikinos Kastro, Pantanassa church. The bell tower casts a shadow on the barrel-vault surface. Enclosed space of Kastro, shown on upper left corner of photograph, includes war memorial.
Sikinos Kastro. The door frame (top) incorporates decoration themes common to most Aegean island towns. The window frames illustrated on the immediate left may have been used as prototypes in the later building of Kimolos Kastro.

DUCHY OF THE ARCHIPELAGO

1207
Marco Sanudo captures seventeen Aegean islands, most of them undefended. He founds the Duchy of the Archipelago and distributes islands among his friends, to be held as fiefs of the duchy. Sikinos becomes part of the duchy.

1210
Angelo Sanudo
Third Duke

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

1269
Licario, a knight from Vicenza, under the Byzantine flag recovers for the Emperor several Aegean islands including Sikinos.

1307
Januli da Corogna, an adventurer of Spanish origin, and a member of the Knights Hospitaller, seizes Sikinos, together with Sifnos and Folegandros, renounces his allegiance to the Order, and declares himself an independent sovereign.

1317
Januli III da Corogna

1340
Januli II da Corogna
Nicolo da Corogna

1347
The Black Death.
Ships from the Genoese trading colonies in the Crimean peninsula pass through the Aegean Sea and bring the Black Death to Italy.

1374
Januli III da Corogna

1453
Constantinople falls to the Ottoman Turks.

1464
Nicolo Gozzadino - (Marietta da Corogna)
Nicolo Gozzadino, son of another Latin fief-holder, is named Marquis da Corogna, last descendant of the da Corogna family, and prince Sikinos, Sifnos, and Folegandros, under his rule. Sikinos Kastro becomes the capital of the tiny state.

1466
Don Joseph Nasi
Twenty-second Duke
Sultan Selim II, heir to Suleyman the Magnificent, names as duke Don Joseph Nasi, a Portuguese-Jewish banker and his financial adviser. Nasi, the last person to hold the title of duke, never visits the islands.

1537
Sikinos becomes part of the new Greek state.
Sikinos Chora. Two single-nave chapels are frequently joined into one building, as the examples on this page illustrate. Some scholars believe that the double-nave, single-chapel building originated during the reign of the Duchy of the Archipelago, when the strong Latin Roman Catholic presence on the islands may have prompted simultaneous dual liturgies designed to meet the religious needs of a mixed community. The photograph at the top, looking west during early morning hours, brings to mind Le Corbusier’s definition of architecture as “a masterly, correct, and magnificent play of masses brought together in light.”

Sikinos island, Monastery of Episkopi. In the context of recycling architectural parts and functions, the island of Sikinos provides a unique and remarkable example in the monastery of Episkopi. Its surviving Katholikon was originally a Roman mausoleum. The front two unfluted columns of the structure were later enwalled to provide enclosure for a Christian church. Still later a distinctly Aegean vernacular bell tower was added to crown this façade. All together these adaptations compose an architecturally complex and diachronically developed expression of the religious needs of the community.

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