

Santoriniⁱ "Genius Loci" and Its Relation to the Over Tourism Phenomenon. Sustainable Cultural Tourism Can be a Solution

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Abstract Santorini, one of the most famous holiday destinations in the world, has a history of touristic development and a long and important cultural history, ancient and modern. In this study we search for the beginnings and the causes of the island's development and history in the ages. We will also try to discover why it has become so world-renowned and how the poor island of 1950 and 1960 became wealthy in the 21st century.

Keywords Tourism, Cultural tourism, Santorini, Cultural heritage, Tourist gaze, Heterotopia

1. Introduction

Santorini, or Thera, as its official name is, is a Greek island in the southeastern part of the Aegean Sea, opposite the northern coasts of Crete (*see Maps 1 and 2, below at the end of the text*). Although a small island, it has a long history and cultural remains. However, most of all, its semi-circular shape has its modern appearance due to its volcanic history that goes back to 180000 years before¹.

The island of Santorini belongs to the Cyclades complex and is small, with a few thousand permanent inhabitants. Its capital is Fira (*see map 5, below at the end of the text*), and there are several smaller settlements scattered along the island.

The island of Santorini is crescent-shaped and its shape is the outcome of a majestic volcanic eruption that is called the "Minoan." It occurred at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age in Crete and Thera, when the Minoan culture was at its acme. After many theories, the "Minoan" eruption is dated around 1630- 1613 B.C.².

Some consequences of the "Minoan" volcanic eruption were the volcano chamber eruption and the sinking of a

significant part of the island into the sea. A large amount of volcanic material, like pumice and tephra, was thrown all over and covered most of the island. The eruption formed a tsunami wave, reaching Crete and the southeastern Aegean Sea.

Santorini's ground is volcanic, meaning the cultivations grow on the volcanic ground without water. For that reason, Santorini is known for its wineries.

The height of the island's ground and the leveling of the sea are different on the western and eastern sides. On its external eastern side, the leveling to the sea is smooth, and the island opens to the Aegean Sea.

In contrast, the steep and high cliffs on its internal side were shaped during the volcanic "Minoan" eruption, making the sea's rocky volcanic borders. This part of the sea under the steep rocky cliffs is much deeper than the rest of the Aegean Sea and has been called "caldera"³ (*see Map 2, below at the end of the text*), after the Spanish word for the Basin.

During the inauguration of the completion of 60 years for the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) a book on the First 100 Geological Heritage sites⁴ was published in Zumaia (Spain) in 2022. The Santorini volcano has been listed in this 100 World Geological Heritage Monuments⁵ edition as a recognition of its uniqueness.

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¹ Smithsonian Institute, National Museum of Natural History, Global Volcanism Program, Santorini, Geological Summary, <https://volcano.si.edu/volcano.cfm?vn=212040>, (Last accessed 22/9/2024.)

² Friedrich, W. 2013, 37. (The Minoan Eruption of Santorini around 1613 B.C. and its Consequences, in *Tagungen des Landesmuseums für Vorgeschichte Halle*, Band 9, 37- 48, <https://tinyurl.com/26dq2tkk> (Last accessed 22/9/2024).

³ For the translation of the word caldera, from Spanish to English, see Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/spanish-english/caldera>, (Last accessed 2/9/2024).

⁴ Hilario, A., Asrat, A., Van Wyk de Vries, B., Mogk, D., Lozono, G., Zhang, J., Brilaha, J., Vegas, J., Lemon, C., Corcovilla, L., Finney, S. (eds.), The First 100 IUGS 60th Anniversary, IUGS, Zumaia, 2021.

⁵ Prete, G. 2022. Two Greek Regions among the top 100 World Geological Heritage Monuments, *Greek Reporter*, October 6th, <https://tinyurl.com/2a96gowj>, Last accessed 22/9/2024. <https://iugs-geoheritage.org/>.

It has become synonymous with an internationally known holiday place and a globally favorite destination. We will try to discover why it has become so world-renowned and how the poor island of 1950 and 1960 became wealthy in the 21st century.

2. Tourism Phenomenon in Greece

Tourism in Greece has a long history since there is evidence from antiquity of travelers noting the worth-seeing sites. There is a historical source of the Travels of Pausanias⁶ and his writings about what he saw along the Greek periphery in the 2nd century A.D. Much later, when the 'Grand Tour'⁷ of the Europeans added Greece to its itinerary in the 19th century, a slow start to tourism started. The first facilities to house foreign visitors appeared in Greece.

After World War II (1940- 1944)⁸ and the Civil War (1945- 1949)⁹, Greece managed to start over again. American economic help with the Marshall Plan¹⁰ in 1948 played an important role in tourism development. The Americans saw the prospects of the Greek monuments for tourism and encouraged the Greeks to develop tourism.

The Greek National Tourism Organization¹¹ was founded in 1929¹², it was re-established in 1950¹³, and it played the most important role in tourist development. The foundation of the Hilton¹⁴ hotel (Fig. 1) in the center of Athens was an emblematic moment, along with the building of the Mont Parnes Hotel¹⁵ on the outskirts of Athens, Mount Parnes. Both were made by the architect Emm. Vourekas team¹⁶.

Massive tourism¹⁷ developed worldwide during the 1950s because the idea of leisure holidays was widely spread throughout all social classes. In Greece, the need for modernization and development at the time focused on "history and the landscape"¹⁸.



Figure 1. View of the iconic Hilton Hotel in the center of Athens, that today is under construction, and the new owners renamed as "The Ilisian" (Photo source: Kokkinidis, T. Iconic Hilton hotel renamed "The Ilisian", June 20, 2024, GREEK REPORTER, <https://greekreporter.com/2024/06/20/iconic-hilton-hotel-athens-renamed-ilisian/>, Last accessed 25/9/2024)

The idea of developing tourist facilities for the housing of the numbers of tourists from Europe and the USA¹⁹ was the series of "Xenia"²⁰ hotels in specific tourist areas in Greece (Meteora, Mykonos (Fig. 2), Andros, Zakynthos, Nafplion).



ΥΠΝΟΔΩΜΑΤΙΑ ΣΤΟ ΞΕΝΟΔΟΧΕΙΟ ΞΕΝΙΑ/ΜΥΚΟΝΟΣ
BEDROOMS IN XENIA HOTEL/MYKONOS

Figure 2. The interior of the rooms in the Mykonos Island Xenia Hotel, built by Aris Konstantinides (1960) (Photo source: Georgiadou, Z. and Marnelos, D. & Frangou, D., 2015. Xenia Hotels in Greece: A Holistic Approach to Modern Cultural Heritage, Journal of Civil Engineering and Architecture, February 2015, 130- 40, fig. 2)

Built by the architect Aris Konstantinides²¹, it is considered the most critical state movement for making tourist facilities. The state-appointed Aris Konstantinides²², a brilliant visionary architect, made his mark on these buildings. He had to build those hotels in specific tourist areas and envisioned minimal architectural forms concerning their environment and adjustment. These hotels offered their guests fundamental facilities²³ since the rooms had minimal

⁶ Pausanias. *Description of Greece, Volume I: Books 1-2*. Translated by W. H. S. Jones. Loeb Classical Library 93. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918, <https://tinyurl.com/2ysehdbx>, Last accessed 20/9/2024).

⁷ What was the Grand Tour? *Royal Museums Greenwich*, <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/what-was-grand-tour>, Last accessed 20/9/2024.

⁸ Hughes, T.A. and Royde- Smith, J.G., World War II, 1939- 1945, in *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-II>, Last accessed 21/9/2024.

⁹ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, Greek Civil War, Greek History, in *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Greek-Civil-War>, Last accessed 22/9/2024.

¹⁰ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Marshall Plan Summary, in *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/summary/Marshall-Plan>, Last accessed 22/9/2024.

¹¹ The Greek National Tourist Organization will be abbreviated as GNT0 here.

¹² Ελληνικός Οργανισμός Τουρισμού, Greece, Ποιοι Είμαστε, <https://gnto.gov.gr/organismos/poioi-eimaste/>, Last accessed 21/9/2024.

¹³ Ελληνικός Οργανισμός Τουρισμού, Greece, Ποιοι Είμαστε, <https://gnto.gov.gr/organismos/poioi-eimaste/>, Last accessed 21/9/2024.

¹⁴ Filippides 2015, 88. (Filippides, D., Architecture in the Era of Mass Tourism, 88- 97, in Aesopos, Y. (editor), *Tourism Landscapes, Remaking Greece*, Domes Editions, Athens 2015).

¹⁵ Filippides 2015, 89.

¹⁶ Filippides 2015, 88.

¹⁷ Filippides 2015, 88.

¹⁸ Aesopos 2015, 109. *Tourism Landscapes: Remaking Greece*, in Aesopos, Y.

(editor), *Tourism Landscapes, Remaking Greece*, Domes Editions, Athens 2015, 108- 123).

¹⁹ Filippides 2015, 90.

²⁰ In Greek the word «Ξένος» means the foreigner. Therefore, the word Ξενία (Xenia) is the half part of the word Φιλοξενία, which means Hosting the guests, the foreigners.

²¹ Aesopos 2015, 114. *Tourism Landscapes: Remaking Greece*, in Aesopos, Y. (editor), *Tourism Landscapes, Remaking Greece*, Domes Editions, Athens 2015, 108- 123).

²² Konstantinides Aris (1913- 1993), Benaki Museum, <https://tinyurl.com/27j5m5py>, Last accessed 22/9/2024.

²³ Aesopos 2015, 116. *Tourism Landscapes: Remaking Greece*, in Aesopos, Y. (editor), *Tourism Landscapes, Remaking Greece*, Domes Editions, Athens 2015, 108- 123).

needs. Perhaps because of this, they were eventually abandoned. Today, most of them stand abandoned and deserted, while some have new state uses, and only one of a later date of construction on the island of Patmos has been renovated and works as a hotel²⁴.

Some years later, the government created the Program of the Protection of Traditional Settlements²⁵ to protect certain settlements all over Greece from alterations of their architectural style and damages and, in some cases, reconstruct them.

The beach in the Matala village in south-central Crete, with the caves on the rocks, became a hippie's²⁶ destination during the 1970s. In this way, Crete became an international destination on the tourist map.

The seven years of dictatorship helped the uncontrolled building of holiday resorts because of the massive tendency to approve building loans²⁷. The many loans allowed more building and resulted in uncontrolled building tendencies that sometimes-made buildings illegal. Holiday hotel blocks ceased to be in use, and new hotels that looked more like "villages" with "bungalows"²⁸ appeared in Greece. During the 80s—90s, the "rooms-to-let"²⁹ enterprises appeared all over Greece and made former fishermen and cultivators into hotel managers.

When Greek tourism was developing, and the country was modernizing, ancient theaters were restored to house ancient tragedies for visitors and tourists, like, for example, the ancient theater of Epidauros³⁰, which established the annual festival of Ancient Epidauros³¹ or the Athens festival³² and the concerts in the Ancient Theater of Herodes Atticus in Athens.

Also, the rest of the archaeological sites were being taken care of and improved, including alterations and improvements to the visitors' paths, signs to the monuments, protection of the more sensitive ones with small covers, rest spots, etc. Today, these programs continue, and some have exemplary results regarding site management and projection of the country's achievements, like the site management of the Sounion temple of Poseidon.

Today's hotels have changed their philosophy, and in many cases, they change according to the desires of their guests. Hotel guests make the hotel since they want more facilities during their holidays. Airbnb short-term rental

housing has become a regularity worldwide, and cruising as a type of holiday is common. The number of tourists in Greece has been counted in millions since 2019 for every tourist season, and the aim is for more when a new tourist season starts.

In the same direction, continuous improvements and good practices in site management are more straightforward to achieve for the Greek monuments on the UNESCO World Heritage List (Delphi, Delos, Olympia)³³. These sites always prioritize visitors from cruise ships and organized groups.

Therefore, it is evident that tourism and culture connect in many ways, and they are interdependent.

3. Economic Profit

Today, sometime after the economic crisis and the pandemic, tourism in all its forms has become the main occupation and seasonal employment for most Greeks. When they travel, tourists use all the facilities related to tourism and eventually make the money to move.

In the part of the culture, the Greek government has now seen the economic profit that the money made each tourist season from the tickets of museums and sites is an essential part of the state's income. Therefore, they are to be given attention and funds to improve their facilities for the public or for the events they organize for the public. In the same sense, Greece is not only a place with antiquities that are worthy of seeing, but there is also the Modern Culture³⁴ and the Intangible Culture³⁵ that can add value and authenticity to the experience of the tourists' visits. Therefore, funding for the festivals and the units that work with traditional agricultural productions and the making of local produce is also to be granted. However, Greece's economy is not stable, and the economic crisis it passed has yet to finish.

4. Santorini Role

Greece's national Gross Domestic Product has been dramatically strengthened by the tourist income Santorini makes each year during the tourist season. Santorini delayed the touristic development of the rest of the country because of the large and catastrophic earthquake of 1956. The tourists made their appearance in small numbers in the beginning because back then, the only port that the island had was under the Fira town cliff in the caldera. In 1972, the Athinios port (*see Map 5, below at the end of the text*) in the southcentral part of the island and the caldera started working³⁶ after many unsuccessful plans of the port construction, and in

²⁴ Wrapped in History, Patmos Aktis, Resort and Spa, Greece, <https://www.patmosaktis.gr/wrapped-in-history/>, Last accessed 21/9/2024).

²⁵ Filippides 2015, 90-1.

²⁶ Paraskevopoulou, P., Exploring the Hippie Caves at Matala, Crete, *GREEK CITY TIMES*, <https://tinyurl.com/2yfzkw4q>, Last accessed 28/9/2024.

²⁷ Filippides 2015, 91-2.

²⁸ Filippides 2015, 96.

²⁹ Aesopos 2015, 120.

³⁰ Theater of Epidauros, Diazoma, <https://diazoma.gr/en/theaters/theatre-of-epidavrus/>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

³¹ Theater of Epidauros, Diazoma, <https://diazoma.gr/en/theaters/theatre-of-epidavrus/>, Last accessed 23/9/2024. For the Athens- Epidauros festival, see Athens, Epidauros Festival, <https://aefestival.gr/>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

³² For the Athens- Epidauros festival, see Athens, Epidauros Festival, <https://aefestival.gr/>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

³³ Greece, UNESCO World Heritage Convention, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/gr>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

³⁴ Modern Culture, Ministry of Culture, Hellenic Republic, <https://tinyurl.com/25tt66y8>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

³⁵ Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greece, <https://ayla.culture.gr/en/>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

³⁶ The History, Boatmen Union of Santorini, <http://www.boatmenunionsantorini.com/the-history/>, Last Accessed 23/9/2024.

2022³⁷, the port was renovated and widened.

Today, this is the island's port, and a new one is under discussion³⁸ since more space is needed for the number of ferries, cruise ships, cars, buses, etc. than the one in the existing Athinios port³⁹. Driving up to the top of the caldera from the port is sometimes dangerous because of the rocks, curves, and narrow roads⁴⁰.

Before the making of Athinios, small boats brought tourists to the Santorini coasts, and going uphill to Fira town was made with mules and donkeys whom the owners rented to transport the tourists with their luggage uphill. Back then, this was the only way. Today, this habit still exists in Fira. However, today, we also think about animal welfare, and this habit is considered brutal by animal protection associations and laws⁴¹.

Also, today, uphill-downhill communication in Fira is more accessible since a cable car⁴² does this daily. The Loula and Evangelos Nomikos Foundation donated the cable car to the Thera Municipality in 1978⁴³.

The hotel development evidence over the years in Santorini was relatively slow initially and increased later. The Hotel Atlantis (**Fig. 3**) in the center of Fira town with a splendid view to the caldera dates from 1952⁴⁴, and it is the oldest hotel on the island that still functions. Evidence shows that the hotel's architect was Venetsanos Ioannis, and the building was bought by the GNTD in 1961⁴⁵, with the Royal National Institution being the initial owner.

After that, evidence shows that in 1972⁴⁶ was built the first hotel in Kamari (*see Map 5, below at the end of the text*) of the large resort type, and later, between the years 1991-4, two hotels in Imerovigli⁴⁷ (*see Map 5, below at the end of the text*) were built that combine traditional architecture in a modern, contemporary way.

Every year, the number of tourists in Santorini during the tourist season is enormous, mainly through cruise ship arrivals, charter flights, and independent tourists worldwide.

The over-tourism problem has appeared in Santorini, and there is an urgent need for drastic solutions. The crowds bring traffic, garbage, water lack, and electricity loss problems.



Figure 3. View of the Hotel Atlantis at Fira, Santorini (Photo source: Hotel Atlantis, Photo Gallery, <https://www.atlantishotel.gr/photos>, Last accessed 30/11/2024)

Thousands of day trippers from cruise ships walk in Santorini each day, overcrowding the street towns of Fira and Ia⁴⁸ (*see Map 5, below at the end of the text*). To address this problem, the Greek government decided to implement a 20-euro fee⁴⁹ for cruise ship visitors during the 2025 tourist season.

There are plenty of hotels today in Santorini. However, they are primarily small enterprises with few large resorts. They are more focused on the luxurious interior treatment⁵⁰ of the buildings, the minimal furniture, the high-design swimming pools, and the spa-jacuzzi facilities. Airbnb is also an accommodation option. Most inhabitants work in tourism or own hotels and eating or drinking facilities.

5. Genius Loci and Heterotopia⁵¹

The natural landscape attracts people's eyes, and tourists who visit a place for its natural beauty and attractions also feel attracted. People like to see lovely and emblematic places worldwide and take pictures⁵² to prove to their family and friends that they made it there.

On the other hand, each place has its character, its «genius loci» that differentiates it from every other place in the world. In Santorini's case, the height of the caldera cliffs and the sea's splendid view from above (**Fig. 4**) are the island's genius loci. In other words, the characteristic makes it unique

³⁷ Unknown, Λιμάνι Αθηνιού: Ένας Χρόνος μετά, *Atlantea*, 6/2/2021, https://atlantea.news/limani_athiniou_enas_xronos_meta/, Last Accessed 23/9/2024.

³⁸ Νέο Λιμάνι στην Σαντορίνη ως ύψιστη εθνική προτεραιότητα, Neasantorinis, 31/7/2024, <https://tinyurl.com/2xnmba2g>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

³⁹ Bulletin Editor, Santorini Sets to ban Cruise Tourists Next year, *cruise.co.uk*, The Real Cruise People, <https://tinyurl.com/2c2vrg2q>, Last Accessed 23/9/2024.

⁴⁰ Bulletin Editor, Santorini Sets to ban Cruise Tourists Next year, *cruise.co.uk*, The Real Cruise People, <https://tinyurl.com/2c2vrg2q>, Last Accessed 23/9/2024.

⁴¹ Should you do a Santorini Donkey Ride? Greece Travel Secrets, <https://tinyurl.com/25ppt7st>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

⁴² Santorini Cable Car, <https://www.scc.gr/cablecar.htm>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

⁴³ Santorini Cable Car, <https://www.scc.gr/cablecar.htm>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

⁴⁴ Hotel Atlantis, Our History, www.atlantishotel.gr/our-history, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

⁴⁵ Μουστά Μ., 2010, 257. (Πρόγραμμα Ξενία: Ονομασία, μελέτες και κατασκευές, τυπολογία και κατάλογοι έργων, στο Μεταπολεμικός Μοντερνισμός- Αρχιτεκτονική, Πολιτική και Τουρισμός στην Ελλάδα, 1950-1965, Εθνικό Μετσόβιο Πολυτεχνείο- Σχολή Αρχιτεκτόνων Μηχανικών, Πρόγραμμα Ενίσχυσης Βασικής Έρευνας, ΠΕΒΕ 2010, Αθήνα 2012, 223- 276).

⁴⁶ Majestic Hospitality, The Majestic Hotel- Santorini. <https://www.hotel-majestic.gr/el/giortazoume-50-hronia/>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

⁴⁷ Philipides, D. (ed.) 2003, 143.

⁴⁸ The Greek name of the town is Oia. In English this is read as Ia.

⁴⁹ Puckett, J., 2024, These Greek islands are implementing New Fees for cruise ship visitors, *Conde Nast Traveler*, 11/9/2024, <https://tinyurl.com/2dohlkev>, Last accessed 9/12/2024.

⁵⁰ Filipidis 2015, 98- 101.

⁵¹ Foucault, M., 1984, 3. Of other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias, *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuite*, October 1984 ("Des Espaces Autres", March 1967, Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec), 1- 9, <https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

⁵² Levine, I., Psychology of Travel: Does taking photos enhance Enjoyment? Travel Tips, more time to travel- Explore new places and savor new tastes, March 5, 2024, <https://tinyurl.com/2a3tux93>, Last Accessed 23/9/2024.

or answers a tourist's question: "What does Santorini have that you can't find elsewhere on the planet?"



Figure 4. View to the caldera from Fira in 1950- 1955 by Voula Papaioannou, a well-known Greek photographer (Photo source: obtained from the Benaki Museum Photographic Archive)

The need of human beings to climb uphill on a hill or a mountain and enjoy the view from above is testified in literature, philosophy, and art since it signifies the connection of the human to the surrounding nature and sums up the meaning of the "landscape." Bearing in mind Saint Victoire⁵³, Cezanne's famous work of art shows a real mountain close to his house, and he could see it daily, not only in the artist's mind. The same feelings grow when we think about the work of Caspar David Friedrich, "Wanderer above the Sea of Fog"⁵⁴ (Fig. 5). This painting shows a man standing on his right by a cliff, looking at an unidentified misty landscape. We don't see his face or thoughts, but we grow our feelings on what we think he sees and feels about because of the feelings we all have in front of the natural landscape from above and the mental upliftment we experience.

In addition to the above, the "bird's eye view"⁵⁵ summarizes the feelings of the speechless people who stand and look at the Santorini caldera with their cameras on hand to capture the moment.

It is a heterotopia here, emphasized by the luxurious hotels, cafes, and bars that offer accommodation with a view. Therefore, all the above, with the unique caldera and the views down the cliff, are splendid, and this is precisely the

characteristic that gives Santorini this unforgettable tourist attraction.

People think that when they enjoy the caldera view, they live in another non-existing world, a utopia⁵⁶ with no problems or bad things.



Figure 5. Painting of Caspar David Friedrich, Wanderer above the Sea of Fog, in Hamburg Art Gallery (Photo source: Honigman, A.F., Wanderer above the Sea of Fog, painting of Caspar David Friedrich, Britannica, <https://tinyurl.com/y8p8tu2r>, Last accessed 28/9/2024).

As Urry states: "The romantic gaze involves a solitudinous and lengthy gaze upon aspects of nature such as mountains, lakes, valleys, deserts, and sunsets, which are treated as objects of awe and reverence. Other people are viewed as a solitary and contemplative gaze is sought"⁵⁷.

The atmosphere in Santorini, with its active volcanoes, and its connection to the destruction and sinking of Atlantis in the Platonic story due to the "Minoan" eruption in prehistoric times add to the whole fantastic utopia.

6. Santorini's Cultural Heritage

Human habitation is attested in Santorini since the Neolithic times (about 5300 B.C.)⁵⁸. The late professor Spyridon Marinatos⁵⁹ revealed the large city of the Early Late Bronze Age (around 1630- 1600 B.C.⁶⁰), covered under tons of volcanic material, impressively appeared in front of his eyes

⁵³ Montagne Saint Victoire, Paul Cezanne (1839- 1906), Musee d' Orsay, <https://tinyurl.com/2c8srsnm>, Last Accessed 23/9/2024

⁵⁴ "Wanderer above the Sea of Fog" on travel, Caspar David Friedrich, Hamburger- Kunsthalle, <https://tinyurl.com/258lw4xe>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

⁵⁵ Martin, G.R. 2017, Birds' eye views- a question of reality, OUPblog, Oxford University Press's, Academic Insights for the thinking world, March 27, <https://blog.oup.com/2017/03/birds-eye-views-question-reality/>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

⁵⁶ Foucault, M., 1984, 3. Of other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias, Architecture/Mouvement/Continuite, October 1984 ("Des Espaces Autres", March 1967, Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec), 1- 9, <https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf>, Last accessed 23/9/2024.

⁵⁷ Caletrio, J. "The Tourist Gaze by John Urry", 25 March 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/2damzxrq>, Last accessed 25/9/2024.

⁵⁸ Doumas, Ch., 2016, 22. (Doumas, Ch., Prehistoric Thera, J.S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, Athens 2016).

⁵⁹ Doumas, Ch., 2016, 18. (Doumas, Ch., Prehistoric Thera, J.S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, Athens 2016).

⁶⁰ Doumas, Ch., 2016, 21. (Doumas, Ch., Prehistoric Thera, J.S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, Athens 2016).

and the world, untouched by human hands after thousands of years⁶¹. The volcano erupted when the coastal city of Akrotiri flourished by holding the sea trade of the whole Mediterranean Sea at the time. The toxic rain and the tsunami caused after the eruption created floods and possibly destroyed crops in Minoan Crete.

Today, the archaeological site of Akrotiri (*see Map 3, below at the end of the text*) lies in the southeastern part of the island of Santorini, quite close to the harbor of the modern town of Akrotiri.

This site offers visitors the opportunity to see and experience the way the prehistoric city was functioning in its entirety, as the state of preservation of the buildings remains astonishing (*Fig. 6*). The ancient two—and three-story buildings stand still where they used to be⁶², and their interiors are visible to the visitor. The city streets and squares make an unforgettable experience of a city still in use.



Figure 6. The first building that Spyridon Marinatos revealed during the excavations in Akrotiri (1967- 1974). The building is called “The Storerooms of the Pitthoi” or “Sector A” (Photo source: Author’s photo archive)

“The new bioclimatic shelter designed by Greek architect Nikos Fyntikakis not only provides more effective protection of the site, but also enhances the architectural monuments, bringing them closer to the visitor, who can enjoy the experience of wandering amidst the ruins is an optimum environment in terms of temperature, ventilation and illumination”⁶³ we read in the book on Akrotiri by Christos Doumas, director of the site.

The Archaeological Museum of the Prehistoric Akrotiri in Fira (*Fig. 7*) houses impressive frescoes, pottery, and wooden furniture casts from the prehistoric Akrotiri⁶⁴. Finds from the archaeological site of Akrotiri are also exhibited in the

Athens National Archaeological Museum⁶⁵ in a hall on the Prehistoric Thera (Santorini).

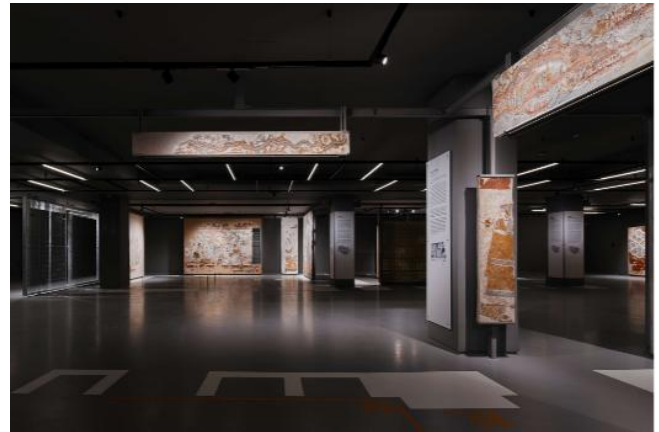


Figure 7. Museum of Prehistoric Thera, Fira, Santorini. The hall with the frescoes from the Archaeological Site of Akrotiri (Photo source: Museum of Prehistoric Thera, South Aegean, Directorate of Archaeological Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs, <https://tinyurl.com/2dbhn32v>, Last accessed 28/9/2024)

In the eastern part of the island, there is the archaeological site of Ancient Thera⁶⁶ (*see Map 3, below at the end of the text*) on the top of a mountain between the towns of Perissa in the southeast and Kamari in the northeast. A small plateau is formed close to the entrance to the Archaeological site. An Early Christian Basilica has been preserved until today with alterations, and today, it functions as a small church of Aghios Stephanos⁶⁷.

Ancient Thera⁶⁸ is one of the most impressive Greek archaeological sites because of its height, the excellent preservation of the ancient buildings, and the magnificent view of the endless blue sea on both sides, toward the North or the South.

It is an ancient city with many successive chronological phases of use, from the 7th century B. C. to the 3rd century A. D.⁶⁹. It has a wide cobbled street leading uphill to the city center. As the street leads up, the Artemidoros sanctuary of the 3rd century. B.C. The sanctuary precinct was named by the founder Artemidoros⁷⁰, and its impressive relief of a dolphin on a rock welcomes the visitor. Other than that, prominent, remarkable stoas⁷¹ with their columns, still standing

⁶¹ Doumas, Ch., 2016, 28. (Doumas, Ch., Prehistoric Thera, J.S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, Athens 2016).

⁶² Doumas, Ch., 2016, 30- 58. (Doumas, Ch., Prehistoric Thera, J.S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, Athens 2016).

⁶³ Doumas, Ch., 2016, 20. (Doumas, Ch., Prehistoric Thera, J.S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, Athens 2016).

⁶⁴ Prehistoric Thera Museum, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/1/eh151.jsp?obj_id=3325, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁶⁵ Collection of Antiquities of Thera, National Archaeological Museum, <https://www.namuseum.gr/en/collection/syllogi-archaiotiton-thiras/>, Last accessed 28/9/2024.

⁶⁶ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁶⁷ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁶⁸ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁶⁹ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁷⁰ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁷¹ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

in situ⁷², garrison⁷³, a theatre⁷⁴ (**Fig. 8**), a gymnasium⁷⁵ for the preparation of the youths (ephebes) for the sports of wrestling.



Figure 8. The theatre of Ancient Thera archaeological site (Photo source: Santorini, More.com, <https://santorini-more.com/wp-content/uploads/ancient-thera-33.jpg?v=9b7d173b068d>, Last accessed 30/11/2024)

At the very end, the old (7th century B.C.) The Dorian sanctuary of Apollon Carneios⁷⁶ has a precinct and a temple of the god. Today, the entrance to the precinct survives, and on the entrance threshold, two carved human feet of the entrance for the welcome of the ancient worshipper are still visible. The name of the god comes from the ancient religious feast (Carneia)⁷⁷ that the Spartans used to celebrate at the end of summer. Because of this connection to the Dorians, the Theran sanctuary of Apollon Karneios is considered Dorian, and the founder of the city was Theras⁷⁸, after whom the island was named (Thera and Θήρα in Greek).

The Archaeological Museum of Thera⁷⁹ is the island's oldest museum building. It houses finds from the excavations on Ancient Thera and elsewhere on the island. The randomly found marble colossal statue of Kore⁸⁰ (**Fig. 9**), which, with its date and excellent condition, changed the development of sculpture art, is the highlight of this museum. The museum will reopen to the public in 2025.

A small heroon (small temple dedicated to an important person in the ancient times)⁸¹ from the Hellenistic times was

built of marble blocks. This shows the continuation of the use of ancient buildings and the mention of the material of which this church is in the name of the worshipping saint. In Greek, the word for marble is "Marmara". The church of Hagios Nikolaos Marmaritis (**Fig. 10, see Map 3, below at the end of the text**) is next to the street leading to Emporeio and Perissa's villages.



Figure 9. The marble colossal Kore statue from Thera, found in Sellada (Ancient Thera). It will be exhibited in the Thera Archaeological Museum, in Fira (Santorini) (Photo source: Archaeology Newsroom, The Kore of Thera: a masterpiece has been revealed, 8 September 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/2862lhff>, Last accessed 28/9/2024)



Figure 10. The small church of Agios Nikolaos Marmaritis with the marble walls. It is located next to the street that connects the village of Emporeion to Fira and Akrotiri (Hellenistic Heroon) (Photo source: Santorini, More.com, <https://santorini-more.com/temple-of-agios-nikolaos-marmaritis-in-emporio/?v=9b7d173b068d>, Last accessed 30/11/2024)

Two monuments in Santorini, one in Perissa and one in Mesa Gonia show traces of the Byzantine Period with well-preserved religious monuments. One of them is the remains of an Early Christian Basilica in the town of Perissa (**Fig. 11, see Map 3, below at the end of the text**)⁸², which was dedicated to Agia Irini, the island's patron saint.

⁷² Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁷³ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁷⁴ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁷⁵ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁷⁶ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁷⁷ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, Carneia, Ancient Greek festival, *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Carneia>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁷⁸ Ancient Thera, Description, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh352.jsp?obj_id=2454, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁷⁹ Archaeological Museum of Thera, History, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/1/eh152.jsp?obj_id=3400, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁸⁰ Kokkinidis, T. 2022. "The Kore of Thera: Ancient Greek Masterpiece Brought out of Storage, GREEK REPORTER, September 2, 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/2atome2h>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁸¹ Unknown, An Ancient temple near Emporio Village, Santorini Discovery Tours, <https://tinyurl.com/23efqonb>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁸² Perissa site (Thera) Perissa- Περίσσαι, Perissa, Archaic Site in Thera Cyclades, TOPOSTEXT, Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, <https://topostext.org/place/364255XPer>, Last accessed 25/9/2024.



Figure 11. The Early Christian Basilica at Agia Irini, Perissa, Santorini (Photo source: Santorini, More.com, Early Christian Basilica of Agia Irini in Parissa, <https://santorini-more.com/early-christian-basilica-of-agia-irini-perissa/?v=9b7d173b068d>, Last accessed 30/11/2024).

The name Santorini, as the island is now known, is a corrupted name of the words Saint Irini, perhaps originating from Santurin⁸³, as seen in the writings of a geographer of the 12th century A.D.

The other monument of the Byzantine Period is in the village of Mesa Gonia (close to the street that connects Fira and Kamari) (**Fig. 12, see Map 3, below at the end of the text**). There is the main church of the Christian Episkopi Monastery⁸⁴, dedicated to the Virgin Mary's dormition with a great festival of gathering pilgrims ("panegyric" in Greek) during the 15th of August, the day that the Orthodox church celebrates the Virgin Mary's Dormition. It is dated from the 11th or 12th century A.D. and is an important monument from the Middle Byzantine Period on the island.

Today, it can be visited as a monument protected by the Greek Ministry of Culture⁸⁵, and sometimes it is also used as a Christian church.

The Venetian occupation of Santorini started when the island was declared part of the Duchy of the Aegean Sea (Archipelagos) and lasted from the beginning of the 13th century A.D. to 1576, when the Ottoman occupation started⁸⁶.

During the Venetian occupation, five fortified settlements were established in the towns of Emporeion, Pyrgos, Ia (Aghios Nikolaos), and Akrotiri, while the capital and the archbishop's seat⁸⁷ was in the steep rock of Skaros (Imerovigli area) (**Fig. 13, see Map 4, below at the end of the text**).



Figure 12. The Byzantine church of Episkopi (Mesa Gonia, Santorini). (Photo source: Santorini, More.com, <https://santorini-more.com/panagia-episkopi-church/?v=9b7d173b068d>, Last accessed 30/11/2024)

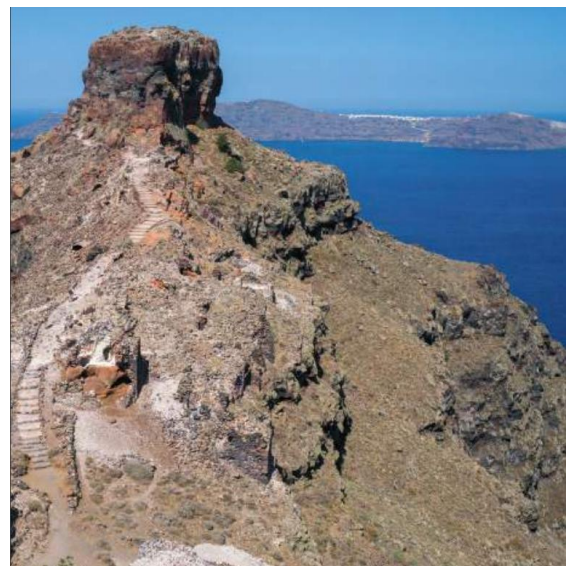


Figure 13. View of the Skaros (Imerovigli, Santorini) remnants of the Venetian settlement on the steep rocky peninsula (Photo source: Athanasoulis, D. and Efstathiou, M. and Sakellakou Ch. and Vogkli M. & Kourousia, M. 2021, Description of the Work Done, 35, in *Mo.Na: Monuments in Nature: A Creative Co- Existence, European Centre for Byzantine and Post Byzantine Monuments*, Karagianni F. and Tarovou, S. (eds.), Project Co- Funded by the European Union and National Funds of the participating countries, Thessaloniki 2021, 33- 45, <http://www.interreg-balkanmed.eu/gallery/Files/A-Creative-Co-existence.pdf>, Last accessed 24/9/2024)

⁸³ Athanasoulis, D. and Efstathiou, M. and Sakellakou Ch. and Vogkli M. & Kourousia, M. 2021, Santorini- Thera, 30, in *Mo.Na: Monuments in Nature: A Creative Co- Existence, European Centre for Byzantine and Post Byzantine Monuments*, Karagianni F. and Tarovou, S. (eds.), Project Co- Funded by the European Union and National Funds of the participating countries, Thessaloniki 2021, <http://www.interreg-balkanmed.eu/gallery/Files/A-Creative-Co-existence.pdf>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁸⁴ Athanasoulis, D. and Efstathiou, M. and Sakellakou Ch. and Vogkli M. & Kourousia, M. 2021, Santorini- Thera, 30, in *Mo.Na: Monuments in Nature: A Creative Co- Existence, European Centre for Byzantine and Post Byzantine Monuments*, Karagianni F. and Tarovou, S. (eds.), Project Co- Funded by the European Union and National Funds of the participating countries, Thessaloniki 2021, <http://www.interreg-balkanmed.eu/gallery/Files/A-Creative-Co-existence.pdf>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁸⁵ Mitsani, A., Church of Episkopi at Mesa Gonia, Thera, Greek Ministry of Culture, ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ, http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/2/eh251.jsp?obj_id=1696, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁸⁶ Athanasoulis, D. and Efstathiou, M. and Sakellakou Ch. and Vogkli M. & Kourousia, M. 2021, Santorini- Thera, 30, in *Mo.Na: Monuments in Nature: A Creative Co- Existence, European Centre for Byzantine and Post Byzantine Monuments*, Karagianni F. and Tarovou, S. (eds.), Project Co- Funded by the European Union and National Funds of the participating countries, Thessaloniki

2021, <http://www.interreg-balkanmed.eu/gallery/Files/A-Creative-Co-existence.pdf>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁸⁷ Athanasoulis, D. and Efstathiou, M. and Sakellakou Ch. and Vogkli M. & Kourousia, M. 2021, Description of the Work Done, 36, in *Mo.Na: Monuments in Nature: A Creative Co- Existence, European Centre for Byzantine and Post Byzantine Monuments*, Karagianni F. and Tarovou, S. (eds.), Project Co- Funded by the European Union and National Funds of the participating countries, Thessaloniki 2021, 33- 45, <http://www.interreg-balkanmed.eu/gallery/Files/A-Creative-Co-existence.pdf>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

Besides the house remnants of these settlements that still survive today and are protected as traditional, there are the five monumental towers⁸⁸ (**Fig. 14**), that make their impression on the visitor.



Figure 14. The Venetian tower of the village of Emporeion (Santorini) (Photo source: Goulas of Emporio, Kastrolagos- Castles of Greece, <https://tinyurl.com/27geq3xz>, Last accessed 28/9/2024.

On the rocky cliff of Skaros (Rocca in Italian), recently, there was a project by the Ephorate of the Cyclades (Ministry of Culture), and with the economic assistance of the program MoNa⁸⁹ made some restoration and archaeological works in this area, which is very impressive and as it projects on a rocky peninsula above the cliffs of the caldera makes a remarkable result.

The long period Santorini was under Venetian rule affected its religious beliefs. In addition to Christians, there were many Catholics, and this combination is reflected in the architecture of the monasteries and Christian churches in Imerovigli.

In the 19th century Santorini experienced an increase of economic power, due to the handling of sea trade and some small industries in Ia. The evidence of a short period of urban life is still seen in the mansions (captain houses) of the 19th century that survive in Ia, most of which are deserted by now. The building of the Maritime Museum of Ia⁹⁰ is one of these

mansions, while the Argyros Mansion⁹¹ in Mesaria (**Fig. 15, Map 5, below at the end of the text**), which is open to the public, is also such a mansion.



Figure 15. Argyros Mansion, a 19th century mansion with Neoclassical characteristics in the town of Mesaria, Santorini. Open to the public (Photo source: Argyros Mansion, Santorini, <https://argyros mansion.com/en/>, Last accessed 24/9/2024)

Recently another type of tourism has been developed, the walking tourism, as an option of sustainable tourism, including walking in paths outdoor and combine cultural experience with exercise⁹². In Greece, this is also a quite rising part of tourism, while it can be dangerous during the summer months if someone chooses to start walking outdoors without the relevant precautions and ignoring the summer sun.

In Santorini, there are some cultural routes that can be followed in a relevantly easy way with the needed precautions taken, in the route from Akrotiri to the lighthouse in the southernmost edge of the island (**Fig. 16, Map 6, below at the end of the text**) and the path that leads from Fira to Ia⁹³ in a much longer time of 10km. with a lot more difficulty.

The lighthouse is a building from 1892⁹⁴, renovated after WWII and it is still in use today for the protection of the ship's routes. It is open to the public on the 18th of August⁹⁵, when World Lighthouse Day is.

⁸⁸ Athanasoulis, D. and Efstathiou, M. and Sakellakou Ch. and Vogkli M. & Kourousia, M. 2021, Description of the Work Done, 33, in *Mo.Na: Monuments in Nature: A Creative Co- Existence, European Centre for Byzantine and Post Byzantine Monuments*, Karagianni F. and Tarovou, S. (eds.), Project Co- Funded by the European Union and National Funds of the participating countries, Thessaloniki 2021, 33- 45, <http://www.interreg-balkanmed.eu/gallery/Files/A-Creative-Co-existence.pdf>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁸⁹ Athanasoulis, D. and Efstathiou, M. and Sakellakou Ch. and Vogkli M. & Kourousia, M. 2021, Description of the Work Done, in *Mo.Na: Monuments in Nature: A Creative Co- Existence, European Centre for Byzantine and Post Byzantine Monuments*, Karagianni F. and Tarovou, S. (eds.), Project Co- Funded by the European Union and National Funds of the participating countries, Thessaloniki 2021, 33- 45, <http://www.interreg-balkanmed.eu/gallery/Files/A-Creative-Co-existence.pdf>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁹⁰ Maritime Museum of Oia, Santorini- Municipality Travel Guide, <https://www.santorini.gr/santorini/culture/museums/maritime-museum-of-oia/>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁹¹ Argyros Mansion, Santorini, <https://argyros mansion.com/en/>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁹² Walking Tourism- Promoting Regional Development, 31 January 2019, UN Tourism, <https://www.unwto.org/global/publication/walking-tourism-promoting-regional-development>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁹³ Walking Tourism- Promoting Regional Development, 31 January 2019, UN Tourism, <https://www.unwto.org/global/publication/walking-tourism-promoting-regional-development>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁹⁴ Information about the lighthouse are in the Hellenic Navy Lighthouse Service website, <https://yf.hellenicnavy.gr/diamoni-prosopikou-tou-pn-se-farous/faros-akrotiri-santorini/>, Last Accessed 9/12/2024. The Santorini Lighthouse is protected as a Monument by the Greek Ministry of Culture.

⁹⁵ Liatsou, M., 2024, Explore the Akrotiri Lighthouse in Santorini on World Lighthouse Day- August 18th, Santorini.net, My Santorini Network, 9/8/2024, <https://www.santorini.net/explore-the-akrotiri-lighthouse-in-santorini-on-world-lighthouse-day-august-18th/>



Figure 16. Akrotiri lighthouse in the southernmost part of the island of Santorini (Photo source: Hellenic Navy Lighthouse Service, <https://yf.hellenicnavy.gr/diamoni-prosopikou-tou-pn-se-farous/faros-akrotiri-santorini/>, Last Accessed 9/12/2024)

The industrial complex of the Museum of Tomato (Industrial Museum of Tomato D. Nomikos⁹⁶) (*Fig. 17*), which is in Vlychada (*see Map 5, below at the end of the text*), is an exciting visit since the complex exhibits the life of a tomato production industry working at the beginning of the 20th century. It is a modern museum with the characteristic industrial chimney, reminiscent of another time, offers many options to the visitor (either wander around the old industrial equipment, attend art and cultural events, or even host private events on its premises). It also has a museum shop; The museum exhibits its industrial history and houses cultural events.



Figure 17. View of the interior courtyard of the Industrial Tomato Museum D. Nomikos, in Vlychada (Photo source: Photograph that was kindly granted from the Industrial Tomato Museum D. Nomikos, Photographer Chr. Doulgeris)

Regarding modern culture options, visitors to Santorini should not miss watching a movie in the open-air cinema on the road to Kamari⁹⁷, awarded for its aesthetics and atmosphere. Open-air cinemas⁹⁸ are a summer must all over the Mediterranean and in Greece since the unique feeling of watching a movie under the stars, sitting comfortably with a

drink, is beyond any expectation.

Alternatively, there is always the festival of musical concerts hosted every year in the Gyzi Cultural Center⁹⁹ (*Fig. 18*) in Imerovigli (*see Map 5- below at the end of the text*) or the art and photography exhibitions organized and housed in the village of Pyrgos¹⁰⁰ (*see Map 5- below at the end of the text*) during the summer months.



Figure 18. Gyzi Megaron, the musical festivities hall (Photo source: Gyzi Megaron, Photo gallery, <https://gyzimegaron.gr/en/home/>, Last accessed 24/9/2024)

The architectural importance of the Santorini towns is mostly emphasized by the fact that the settlement of Ia was selected to participate in the Program of Preservation and Development of Traditional Settlements¹⁰¹ that the GNT0 introduced in the years 1975- 1982 all over Greece. During this program many of the Ia buildings were transformed into guest houses and in this way their architecture was preserved.



Figure 19. View of the village of Ia. Building in terraces (Photo source: NGTO photographic open access web archive, Photographer: Yiannis Skoulas)

⁹⁶ Tomato Industrial Museum D. Nomikos, The Museum, <https://www.tomatomuseum.gr/the-museum/>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁹⁷ Cine Kamari, Santorini, <https://santorinicine.com/>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

⁹⁸ History of Open-Air cinemas in Greece, Cine Kamari, Santorini, <https://santorinicine.com/about.php>, Last Accessed 24/9/2024.

⁹⁹ Gyzi Megaron, Where Culture meets History, <https://gyzimegaron.gr/en/home/>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

¹⁰⁰ Estia (Association) Pyrgou Kallistis, <https://www.santorinipyrgos.com/the-association>, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

¹⁰¹ Preservation and Development of Traditional Settlements (1975- 1992), GNT0 Programme, Athens 1991, <https://gnto.gov.gr/entypa/preservation-development-of-traditional-settlements-1975-1992-the-g-n-t-o-programme/>, Last accessed 29/11/24.



Figure 20. View of Fira, the capital of Santorini and the caldera to the left. The blue domes are visible in the right part of the picture (Photo source: Santorini, Greece, Visit Greece, <https://www.visitgreece.gr/islands/cyclades/santorini/>, Last accessed 30/11/24)

Building in terraces (one's yard forms the terrace of the building above) (**Fig. 19**), the vaulting, the dug-in rock buildings, and the whitewashed buildings and churches with blue domes (**Fig. 20**) are some of the architectural characteristics that are considered Cycladic and are seen in the Cycladic islands complex.

The whitewashed walls of the buildings with blue domes or windows or other architectural details go back to 1938¹⁰² when the dictator Ioannis Metaxas wanted to lower the cholera pandemic and ordered the islanders to whitewash their houses to curb the disease, with the disinfectant use of limestone that is in the whitewash for the walls.

Since then, the white color has become a habit, and it is still used today, and it gets renovated each year. Santorini is famous for its many white and blue domes of churches and, because of its cliffy formation, the terracing of the buildings.

Besides the monuments and museums, Santorini is also famous for its wines and the unique way of vine-making due to the island's ground. Therefore, many wineries on the island are organizing visiting tours for wine promotion and testing and to learn the methods of this type of cultivation. The whole wine-making process has been in the National Inventory of the Intangible Heritage of Greece since 2018¹⁰³.

7. Conclusions

The number of options regarding monuments, museums, and cultural events that can be visited and experienced in Santorini has been shown in the analysis, and these can work in parallel with the fantastic caldera view and the sunset "clapping" in Ia (**Fig. 21, 22**).

From Early Prehistory to the 21st century Santorini has quite many options to satisfy the most demanding visitor in cultural options and places to visit. The variety of cultural options and the number of places that these options are shape a daily itinerary that allows the division of visitors and minimizes traffic at the same time.

Santorini must change its profile from a worldwide destination for the unique caldera to one that emphasizes the

cultural options that visitors can see and enjoy. In that sense, the visitors would be split into more places on the island and not crowded in certain ones.

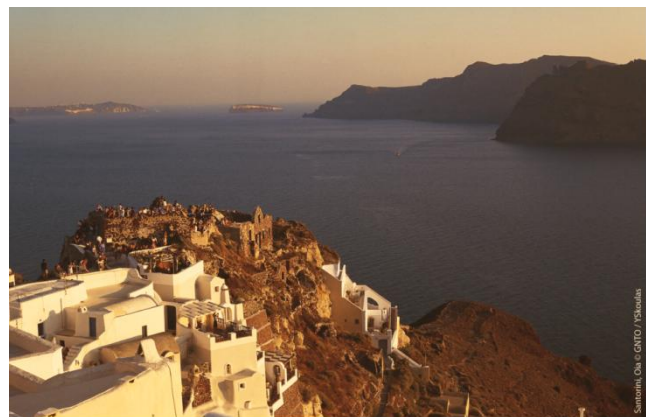


Figure 21. View of the Agios Nikolaos Venetian castle of Ia, where the tourists gather every day to "clap" the sun setting (Photo source: NGTO photographic open access web archive, Photographer: Yiannis Skoulas)



Figure 22. Tourists enjoying the Ia sunset (Photo source: NGTO photographic open access web archive, Photographer: Yiannis Skoulas)

In that sense, the island would change the level of quality and options and become more popular for those tourists who seek to know the island culture they visit along with the luxury or well-being holidays. After all, they are of a higher economic status than the others who follow the trends or arrive in thousands on cruise ships.

The island is well-known worldwide for its caldera, the magnificent views it offers, and for being the Instagram favorite place for selfies. However, it has many sites and museums of cultural interest that must be promoted, become more well-known, and help change the island's profile from an overcrowded destination to a well-known destination with the ability to experience unique cultural monuments or museums.

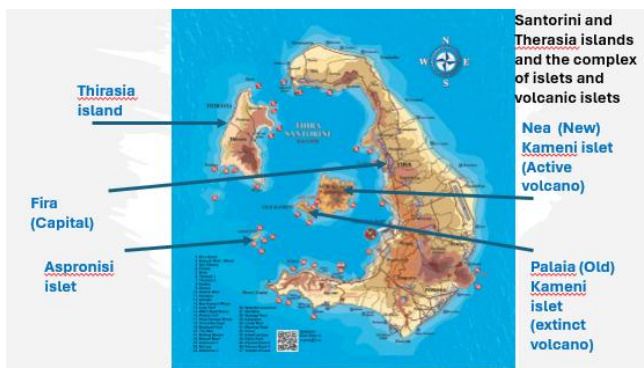
¹⁰² Kalafatis, I., 2024. Why Greek Island Houses are blue and white, GREEK REPORTER, June 4, <https://tinyurl.com/226o9s8v>, Last accessed 30/11/2024.

¹⁰³ The vine culture and wine making heritage in Santorini (Thera, Thirasia), 2018, Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greece, https://ayla.culture.gr/en/i_ampeloooiniki_klironomia_tis_santorinis/, Last accessed 24/9/2024.

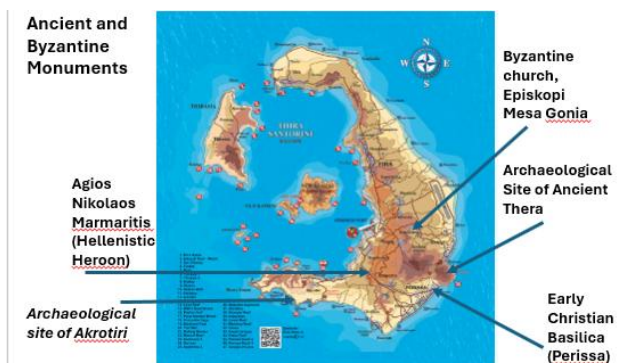
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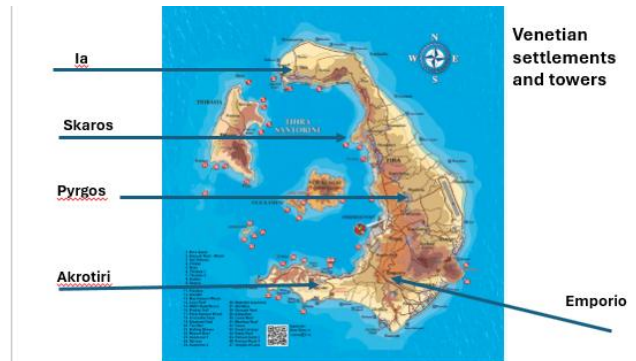
Map 1. Map of Greece. Santorini is in the Aegean Sea, right above Crete (Map Source: Santorini Travel, Santorini map, <https://www.santorinitravel.com/santorini-map/>, Last accessed on 26/11/2024)



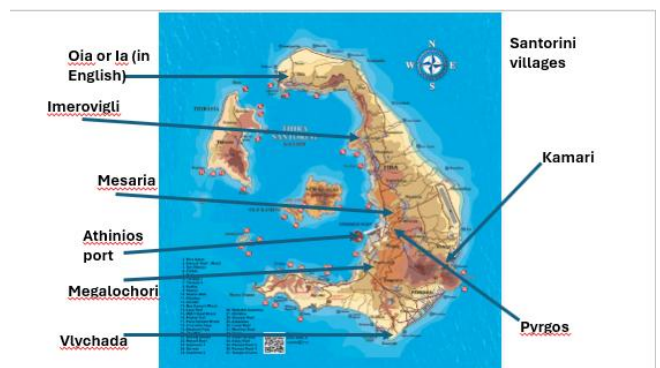
Map 2. The complex of islands and islets that form the surroundings of the Santorini caldera (Map Source: Santorini Travel, Santorini map, <https://www.santorinitravel.com/santorini-map/>, Last accessed on 26/11/2024)



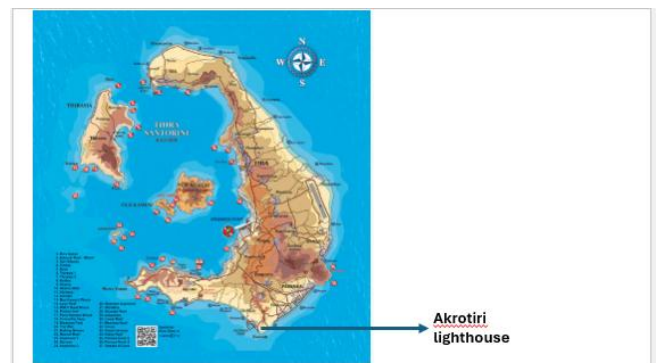
Map 3. Ancient and Byzantine period monuments in Santorini (Map Source: Santorini Travel, Santorini map, <https://www.santorinitravel.com/santorini-map/>, Last accessed on 30/11/2024)



Map 4. Sites with remnants (towers and settlements) of Venetian occupation (Map Source: Santorini Travel, Santorini map, <https://www.santorinitravel.com/santorini-map/>, Last accessed on 30/11/2024)



Map 5. Various villages on the island of Santorini. The island's port, Athinios, is also marked here (Map Source: Santorini Travel, Santorini map, <https://www.santorinitravel.com/santorini-map/>, Last accessed on 9/12/2024)



Map 6. The lighthouse of Akrotiri in the southernmost part of the island of Santorini (Map Source: Santorini Travel, Santorini map, <https://www.santorinitravel.com/santorini-map/>, Last accessed on 9/12/2024)

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ⁱ The island's official name is Thera, but everybody knows the name Santorini, and this is the term that will be used here.