

# Religion and Cult in the Dodecanese during the First Millennium BC

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Cover: Acropolis of Lindos. The temple of Athena, showing the cave of Panagia Spiliotissa below, with four grottoes (photo by A. Louizidis).

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## Editorial Note

Until today, quite a portion of the archaeological community has virtually neglected the archaeological frame of research of religion on a theoretical, as well as a methodological basis. Although in recent years, the importance of archaeological evidence has been recognised for the understanding of the ancient Greek religion, more intensive study of the contribution of archaeological research to the better understanding of the ancient Greek religion has yet to be carried out.

Indeed, building upon a renewed interest in archaeological explorations of ancient religion and sacred ritual, new understandings of the material forms of religion have been constructed through the combination of multiple perspectives and differing methodological approaches. By using a variety of strategies applied to widely divergent regions and time periods, scholars have tried to demonstrate how the archaeological study of ancient religion and ritual is methodologically and theoretically valid.

Contemporary archaeological research on religion could be based on three axes: man's timeless need for the depiction and realisation of the divine, or spirituality in general, for which there is clear evidence in the archaeological archive; the comprehension of the ritual activity which has left its trail in the archaeological horizon, either in ruins, such as temples and altars, or in artefacts, such as offerings; the sites in forms of buildings intended for religious ritual activities or unbuilt, ideal sacred spaces integrated methodologically in the archaeology of landscape.

However, the archaeological understanding of such complex cultural phenomena as religion and ritual, and the formation of 'sacred spaces' in different cultural systems, is not complete and cannot be applied in a general interpretation frame in theoretical constructions. From this point of view, archaeological research of religion should initially become directly associated with the research of a specific culture or area. The local cultural framework is a key factor for archaeological interpretation.

In this context, the understanding of the local archaeological archive is of the utmost importance, as is also archaeological research in areas with apparent similarities of worship practice, before coming to conclusions and producing generalised theoretical interpreted structures.

The Dodecanese constitute such an area, with apparent similarities in religious and cult practices formed during thousands of years. Their strategic geographic position, at a point in the Mediterranean where sea-routes connect the Aegean Sea with the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus, Near East and Egypt, played a decisive role in its historical, cultural and religious evolution during antiquity. The limited geographic and compact ethnographic environment of the islands has preserved historical memories of pre-Hellenic ancient cults, either preserved in their own right, or incorporated into the worship of the classical Greek gods. Significant archaeological evidence leads us to explore also the introduction of cults associated with the cultures of Cyprus, the Near East and Egypt.

With these in mind the Department of Mediterranean Studies of the University of the Aegean and the Postgraduate Programme of Studies 'Archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean from the Prehistoric Era to Late Antiquity: Greece, Egypt, Near East', with the collaboration and support of the Region of South Aegean, organised the international scientific conference *Religion and Cult in the Dodecanese During the First Millennium BC*, on Rhodes, from 18th – 21st October 2018.

A good number of participants were hosted, from all regions of Greece and from twelve other countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Turkey.

Through the sessions of *Religion and Cult in the Dodecanese International Conference* new and old data concerning the religious landscape of the Dodecanesian area were sought, constituted by architectural remains, votive offerings, inscriptions, coins, and literary sources.

The planning of the Conference and its outcome would have been next to impossible were it not for the substantial contribution of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese, which offered its support, valuable advice, and significant participation in the presentations of the Conference. A number of organisational matters were resolved thanks to the contribution of the Municipality of Rhodes, DERMAE, Melissokomiki Dodecanisou, Mr Michalis Papanousis, and the printer, Mr Nikos Chatzikalimeris, to all of whom I am deeply grateful.

I would also like to extend my warmest thanks to the members of the Scientific and Organising Committee of the Conference, as well as to the undergraduate students of Archaeology of the Department of Mediterranean Studies, who volunteered to help: Ms Despoina Nikolaki, Ms Ioanna Polyzoaki, Ms Dioni Sourasi, Ms Seva Dramountani, Mr Dimitri Katsioulas, Ms Anna Mavraki, and Ms Stavroula Spathaki, who assisted throughout the conference. I also thank Mr Takis Angouras and Mr Nikos Lykos of the School of Humanities, The University of the Aegean, for technical support in terms the imaging, sound, and Internet connectivity.

Finally, my special thanks must go to my dear colleagues and friends, Dr Georgios Mavroudis, and Ms Fani Seroglou, originally members of the Organising Committee of the Conference, and to Ms Maria Achiola, for joining me in the painstaking labour of editing this volume. To Ms Georgia Papagrighoriou and Mr Ioulianos Panotopoulos, for their supporting role as assistants to the editors, and to Ms Vicky Chatzipetrou for saving the volume from many language lapses.

The volume contains most of the papers presented at the Conference, touching on various aspects of religion and cult in the ancient Dodecanese. It is our hope that it contributes not only to the evolution of the Dodecanesian archaeology and history, but also, in general, to the theoretical and applied scientific knowledge on ancient religion and cult:

*What was the context of religion and worship practice in the Dodecanese during the 1st millennium BC, and how does this shift and evolve from the early Iron Age until the Roman era?*

Apart from the known gods of the ancient Greek pantheon, are there other lesser-known gods from the rest of the Greek world, or 'borrowed' gods from other cultures of the eastern Mediterranean, who were worshipped?

*What new data has occurred over the past years through archaeological research, mainly excavations, in terms of shrines and worship in the Dodecanese?*

By combining works of ancient Greek literature with the inscriptions and archaeological evidence from excavations of sacred places, as well as the remains of worshipping practices, shall new and inadequately researched areas of religion and worship in the Dodecanese during ancient antiquity be revealed?

In general, this current work aspires to the renewal of interest in the research of the 'archaeology of religion' and hopes that it will contribute to the development of new archaeological theoretical structures for the study of ancient religion and cult.

Professor Manolis I. Stefanakis  
Editor-in-Chief



# Religion and cult in the Dodecanese during the 1st Millennium BC: A summary

Fani K. Seroglou

## Abstract

Religion constitutes an aspect of one of the most prominent manifestations of culture, the human need to connect with the divine. Therefore, all possible ways of expressing this need can be detected almost everywhere. An area of great importance for the study of Greek religious landscapes is the complex of the Dodecanese islands, located in the south-east fringe of the Aegean Sea, in close proximity to the coast of Asia Minor. This paper aims to present briefly the mythical background and the material culture of the Dodecanesian religious landscape during the 1st millennium BC, which has been moulded through a thousand years of interaction between the human factor and nature.

**Key words:** Dodecanese, religious landscape, cults, myths, material culture

The close relationship existing between environment and society affects the areas of worship, as elements of the environment, which then constitute a reflection of the socio-political-economic dynamics and, ultimately, expresses a variety of broader processes. The transformation of each place of worship is approached on different and complementary analytical levels that relate both to the material culture of these places and their role in their surroundings. It is therefore no coincidence that among the basic conditions for the worship in sanctuaries one finds the natural environment, their proximity to ancient settlements, as well as the presence of roads connecting them with the settlements.

The Dodecanesian cultural landscape was formed during thousand years of interaction between human activities and the forces of nature. Its strategic geographical location, at a point in the Mediterranean where the sea routes connect the Aegean with Crete, Cyprus, Egypt and the Near East, but also with the Central and Western Mediterranean, played a decisive role in its historical and cultural evolution in prehistoric and, especially, in historical times.<sup>1</sup> These islands of the southeastern Aegean have interacted with different cultures over the centuries and are interconnected by historical events and similar historical experiences.

The arrival of the Dorians from Argos to Rhodes, which according to Homer (*Iliad*, 2, 653–670) was led by Tlepolemos, marks the foundation of the three city-states of the island – Lindos, Ialyssos, and Kamiros. From the 9th century BC, a new historical era of gradual

recovery begins, in which the reopening of the well-known, since the Mycenaean era, trade routes to the Near East and Egypt, contribute to it decisively. Rhodes became an important station in the maritime networks and the three city-states of the island, based on both agricultural production and commercial activity, with Lindos as a pioneer in this field, experienced a long period of prosperity, as evidenced by the highly important archaeological remains. This period ended with the Synoecism, the unification of the three city-states into a single state in 408 BC.

According to the myth, after occupying the Peloponnese, the Megarid, and Crete at the end of the Bronze Age, the Dorians, led by the Heracleids, conquered the islands of the southeastern Aegean, Rhodes, Kos, as well as Cnidus and Halicarnassus on the opposite coast of Asia Minor (Strabo 14, 653), where they founded the Dorian Hexapolis (Herodotus 1, 144), an amphictyony with the temple of Apollo Triopius on the Cnidus peninsula as a religious centre. Founding members of the Hexapolis were Lindos, Kamiros, Ialyssos in Rhodes, Kos, Knidos, and Halicarnassus, while the islands of Nisyros, Kalymnos, Symi, Tilos, Halki, Karpathos, and Kasos were probably also part of it. The Dorians would gather in the sanctuary of Apollo, they would offer votive offerings, hold equestrian and athletic competitions and settle their disputes.<sup>2</sup> The existence of the architectural remains of the temple of Apollo Triopius or Apollo Megisteus in Cape Krios in Kastellorizo (Megisti), whose worship was widespread on the island,<sup>3</sup> may indicate

<sup>1</sup> Kanta 2003: 20; Melas 1985: 170, with bibliography; Patton 1996: 160. For relations since the Neolithic era, see Sampson 1987.

<sup>2</sup> For the Dorian Hexapolis, see indicatively Gabrielsen 2000: 181; Papachristodoulou 1994: 57, 60; van Gelder 1900: 64.

<sup>3</sup> Fraser and Bean 1954: 54; van Gelder 1900: 307. For the name of the island, see Zervaki and Papavasileiou 2011: 27. For the epithet



that other areas participated in this religious and political union.

The oldest cult remains hitherto known from historical times on the island of Rhodes date to the end of the 10th/early 9th century BC and come from the deposits of the sanctuaries of Athena and from tombs in Ialysos and Kamiros. Among them are pots/vases imported from Attica and Cyprus, or their local imitations, as well as a few small objects from the Near East and Egypt, which testify that Rhodes was a strategic station on the trade routes from the very beginning.

The temple of Athena Ialysia, probably a sanctuary of a pre-Greek deity, has been found on Filerimos Hill, within the acropolis of ancient Ialysos, since the earliest finds in the area date back to the Bronze Age. In the highly rich deposit of the sanctuary more than 5000 votive offerings, dating from the first half of the 8th – second half of the 4th century BC were found, which derived from mainland Greece, Crete, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Syria-Palestine, Egypt, as well as the Italian peninsula, thus demonstrating the crucial position of Rhodes on the Mediterranean sea routes.<sup>4</sup>

In Kamiros, to which the western and central part of the island belonged, pottery of the Late Protogeometric period (900–850 BC) has been found in the deposit of the sanctuary of Athena Polias and Zeus Polieus in the acropolis of the ancient city, while numerous finds of the following Geometric period (850–680 BC) from the same area testify to the existence of a sanctuary in this place. The building activity continues during the archaic era (680–480 BC), a period of great prosperity for the city of Kamiros, when the first temple of Athena, a cistern, as well as the so-called Temple A, a short distance north of the archaeological site, were erected on the acropolis.<sup>5</sup>

In ancient times southern Rhodes belonged to Lindos. The sanctuary of Athena Lindia and Zeus Polieus on the acropolis of the ancient city inaugurated the scientific archaeological research on the island.<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that one of the most distinguished scholars of Greek and Roman religious systems, the Swede Martin Nilsson, participated in the first excavations that took place in 1902. The great Lindian sanctuary, which was formed during the archaic times by the tyrant Cleobulus (6th century BC), one of the ‘Seven Sages’ of antiquity,

and the rich finds from the deposit of the sanctuary are irrefutable proof of the importance and significance of the safe mooring offered by Lindos to the ships that sailed in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Further south, in an early archaic temple located at the foot of the hill where the archaic settlement of Vroulia is located,<sup>7</sup> also an excellent sheltered port for the facilitation of sea routes, the find of a Cypriot figurine of a sphinx with a Phoenician inscription suggests the presence of Phoenicians and Cypriots in the area.<sup>8</sup>

At the borders of ancient Kamiros at the highest peak of Mount Atavyros one finds the sanctuary of Zeus Atabyrios<sup>9</sup> known from ancient sources (Pindar VII [Olympionikos], 159–160; Strabo, 14.2). This important pan-Rhodian sanctuary, which in prehistoric times may have functioned as a peak sanctuary,<sup>10</sup> is associated with the well-known myth of Althaimenes, son of king Katreas and grandson of the legendary King Minos, who found protection in the area as an exile after leaving Crete to avoid killing his father, according to the prophecy he received from an oracle (Diod. V. 59).<sup>11</sup> In the sanctuary important architectural remains, such as the sacred precinct with the large rectangular altar, the portico or sacristy, and two houses or ‘thesaurus’ dating to classical times (5th century BC) have been unearthed; scattered pits with rich deposits dated earlier than classical times have yielded metal, bronze and lead votive offerings, mainly solid figurines of various types depicting cattle (buffalo, bison, bulls), reptiles (lizards, snakes), insects (grasshoppers) and small animals (tortoises, rodents), but also cut-out figurines of hammered metal sheet in the form of cattle, dating to the 9th and 8th centuries BC, as well as bronze sceptres or votive vessels.<sup>12</sup> The survival of the worship of Zeus during Hellenistic and Roman times on the top of the mountain is confirmed by numerous inscriptions, the bases of marble and bronze statuettes of the iconographic type of Zeus Atabyrios and of marble monumental votive offerings.<sup>13</sup>

One of the most important sanctuaries of the island is the pan-Rhodian sanctuary of Erethimios Apollo at the foot of the modern village of Theologos, which must have received a monumental formation shortly after 400 BC for the first time, and flourished during

Μεγιστεύς, attributed to Apollo and possibly also to Zeus, see Lala 2015: 309; Zervaki and Papavasileiou 2011: 29.

<sup>4</sup> For the sanctuary and the cults, see indicatively Lala 2015: 172–178; Maiuri 1928: 72–79; Martelli 1988; Martelli 1997; Papachristodoulou 1989: 83, 92.

<sup>5</sup> For the sanctuary and the cults, see indicatively Calì 2001; Higgins 1954: 21–23; Jacopi 1932–1933; Lala 2015: 126–136; Morelli 1959: 3, 80.

<sup>6</sup> For the sanctuary and the cults, see indicatively Blinkenberg 1931; Blinkenberg 1941; Dygge 1960; Hiller von Gaertringen 1930: 829; Lala 2015: 52–86, with bibliography; Laurenzi 1938; Lippolis 1988–1989.

<sup>7</sup> Kinch 1914.

<sup>8</sup> National Museum of Denmark inv. no. 11328. Blinkenberg 1931: 402, 446; Bourogiannis 2014: 163–164, figs 4–5; Kinch 1914: 11, 16, no. 3, table 14.4; Kourou 2003: 255, fig. 4.

<sup>9</sup> For the worship of Zeus Atabyrios, see Lala 2015: 156–159; Morelli 1959: 140–142.

<sup>10</sup> Triantafyllidis 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Hope Simpson and Lazenby (1973: 131) report that this myth may reflect the memory of a Minoan colony on Rhodes. For Althaimenes, see Morelli 1959: 92–93; van Gelder 1900: 27–31, 352.

<sup>12</sup> Jacopi 1928: 90–91. Triantafyllidis 2017, 558, 560, 563 and fig. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Jacopi 1928: 90.

the Hellenistic era.<sup>14</sup> The epithet Apollo is associated with the disease of cereals *Claviceps purpurea*, thus echoing the rural character of the ancient cult. The Great Erethimia were held in honor of the god, with music and athletic competitions, and the participation of competitors from both the Dodecanese and the Rhodian Peraia.<sup>15</sup>

After the Synoecism (408/407 BC) and the foundation of the city of Rhodes, the 'official cult' of the Rhodian state was that of Helios.<sup>16</sup> However, the importance of the three significant sanctuaries of the island, Athena Lindia, Athena Kameiras, and Athena Polias and Zeus Polieus, was not degraded, as evidenced by the archaeological record and literary sources testifying that in the office of the priest of Helios, each year, one aristocrat was elected successively as a representative of each of the three old cities (Lindos, Kamiros, Ialysos).<sup>17</sup> It is worth noting the importance of the eponymous officials of the island, whose names are attested both on coins as well as on the stamps of the Rhodian commercial amphorae, bearing witness, in this eloquent way, to the interaction of political power with religion.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the temple of Apollo Pythius in the city of Rhodes, the sanctuaries worth mentioning are those of Athena Polias and Zeus Polieus,<sup>19</sup> of All Gods,<sup>20</sup> of Aphrodite,<sup>21</sup> of Demeter,<sup>22</sup> the Asclepieion,<sup>23</sup> the Dionysion,<sup>24</sup> the Ptolemaion,<sup>25</sup> and the sanctuary of Isis,

which was known from ancient sources as one of the earliest Greek sanctuaries of the Egyptian deities with a significant role in the spread of Egyptian worship in Greece, the findings of which certify that there was a parallel worship of Sarapis and Horus.<sup>26</sup>

Important sanctuaries and evidence of cults have also been found in the rest of the Dodecanese.

Excavations on **Kos** have unearthed the Asclepieion, famous since antiquity (Strabo 14.2.19), as the science of medicine was developed there thanks to the school founded by Hippocrates on the island. The earliest use of the site dates to the Mycenaean and Geometric eras, indications of which are also found in the literary testimonies (*Ilias parva*, Fragm. 30. Paus. III, 26.9–10). In the following centuries, the cult of the demon healer Paeon (Homer, *Iliad*, 5, 363–415, 899), and of Apollo, father of Asclepius, existed in the area. Apollo, in fact, bore the epithet Kyparissios, because he was the owner of the sacred grove of cypress trees which surrounded the temenos and was protected by a sacred law.<sup>27</sup> Other gods worshipped in the area were Zeus Ikesios, Zeus Patroos, Zeus Michaneus, Athena Fatria, Apollo Karneios and Moirai,<sup>28</sup> while in the 4th century BC, during the foundation of the city of Kos, the cult of Asclepius was also integrated, becoming one of the most important public cults of the island during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. At that time, the sanctuary was designed and developed as a single complex of buildings to promote the cult of Asclepius and gradually expanded to three terraces. The abundance of architectural elements, inscriptions and other votive offerings testify to the uninterrupted use of the sanctuary, which was functioning continuously until Late Antiquity (5th century AD).<sup>29</sup>

In the city of Kos, on a narrow strip of land on the east side in the Harbour Quarter stood the city's most important sanctuaries, such as the twin sanctuary of Aphrodite (Pontia and Pandemos),<sup>30</sup> the sanctuary of Heracles Kallinikos,<sup>31</sup> and a small temple of the port dedicated to an unknown deity. Furthermore, the temple of the Attalids, with its so-called 'altar of Dionysus',<sup>32</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For the history of the excavations in the sanctuary, as well as the philological sources related to it and the cult of Erethimios Apollo, see the study of Ch. Papachristodoulou 1989: 107–116 and Lala 2015: 179–188. For the project 'Formation and promotion of the sanctuary of Erethimios Apollo at the village Theologos of Rhodes' implemented by the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese, see *Erethimia* 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Kontorini 1975; Papachristodoulou 1989: 114, 186, no. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Diod., 5.56.4. Pindar, Ode 7.54k; Morelli 1959: 15–20, 94–99. Although it does not apply to Rhodes, there is the direct testimony of a large-scale reorganisation of the cult, and the scholars agree that the Synoecism led to the establishment of Helios (Dor. *Halios*) as a protector deity of the city, cf. Morelli 1959; Papachristodoulou 1992. For the feast of *Haleia*, see Morelli 1959: 17–20, 97–98; Zervoudaki 1978.

<sup>17</sup> Blinkenberg 1941: 61, 96; Dignas 2003: 37; Fraser 1953: 23–24; Papachristodoulou 1989: 57; Papachristodoulou 1999.

<sup>18</sup> The priest of Helios was appointed alternately from the three cities of the island, Ialysos, Kamiros and Lindos, and was also the eponymous archon appearing on the Rhodian amphora stamps, cf. Habicht 2003. For the priests of Rhodes, see Dignas 2003. For the dating of Rhodian inscriptions, Morricone 1949–1951; Gabrielsen 2000 and, more recently, Badoud 2015. For Rhodian coins, see Stefanakis and Dimitriou 2015. The new coinage with the head of Helios and the rose makes its appearance with the foundation of the city in 408 BC and is used continuously until its occupation by Cassius in 43 BC, see on BMC Caria and Islands, c-cxvii, 223–270, 272, p. XXXIV 6 – XLIII. Ashton 1986; Ashton 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Lala 2015: 227–232, with bibliography; Maiuri 1924–1925: 335.

<sup>20</sup> Zimmer and Bairami 2008; Heilmeyr 1999; Kantzia 1999; Lala 2015: 243–248.

<sup>21</sup> Bairami 2017; Lala 2015: 206–207; Livadiotti and Rocco 1996: 31–33; Livadiotti and Rocco 1999; Maiuri 1924: 238–239.

<sup>22</sup> Giannikouri 1999; Lala 2015: 281–289; Zervoudaki 1988.

<sup>23</sup> Fantaoutsaki 2004; Lala 2015: 249–257; Papachristodoulou 1999.

<sup>24</sup> Konstantinopoulos 1998: 78–79; Lala 2015: 258–263.

<sup>25</sup> Dreliosi-Irakleidou and Filimonos 1998; Filimonos and Kontorini

1989; Lala 2015: 264–268.

<sup>26</sup> Bosnakis 1998; Fantaoutsaki 2011; Lala 2015: 269–278.

<sup>27</sup> IG XII 4, 284. Bosnakis 2014: 23, 94 no. 17; Sherwin-White 1978: 212.

<sup>28</sup> Bosnakis 2014: 105; Sherwin-White 1978: 296, 341, n. 437.

<sup>29</sup> For the sanctuary, the cults and the archaeological research, see indicatively Bosnakis 2014; Ehrhardt 2017; Herzog 1903; Herzog and Schatzmann 1932; Livadiotti and Rocco 1996: 163–171, with bibliography; Zarrafitis 1912.

<sup>30</sup> Livadiotti and Rocco 1996: 112–116, with bibliography; Paul 2013: 79–95, with bibliography.

<sup>31</sup> De Matteis 2001: 115–119; De Matteis 2004: 103–106, 191–196; Livadiotti and Rocco 1996: 116–119, with bibliography; Malacrino 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Laurenzi 1936–1937: 129–148; Livadiotti and Rocco 1996: 122–125, with bibliography; Stampolidis 1991: 133–147; Stampolidis 1987; Stampolidis 1992: 129–162.

and the sanctuary of Demeter were also found in the south and west parts of the city respectively.<sup>33</sup>

We have remarkable archaeological data from Kardamaina (ancient Halasarna), where the ancient Deme of the Halasarnitae in Kos was found, the second most important deme of the island. The finds from the site demonstrate, in addition to the continuous habitation from the Bronze Age onwards, extensive commercial activity. Epigraphic testimonies preserve the information that in this deme there was a sanctuary of Apollo, a temple of Asclepius, the cult of Herakles, and a cult of Artemis. About a century later, the remains of the famous sanctuary of Apollo Pythaios/Pythaeus (3rd century BC – 4th century AD), under the acropolis of ancient Halasarna, has been brought to light.<sup>34</sup>

The excavations in the area of Limniotissa on **Kalymnos** unearthed the most important religious and political centre of the island in antiquity, the sanctuary of Apollo Dalios.<sup>35</sup>

On **Tilos**, on top of Aghios Stefanos, where the ancient fortified settlement of the island was located,<sup>36</sup> partially covered today by the church of Taxiarches, the architectural remains of the temple of Zeus Polieus and Athena Polias are preserved. The images of these two gods were depicted on the Telian coins.<sup>37</sup> Epigraphic testimonia inform us that Poseidon<sup>38</sup> and Apollo Pythios<sup>39</sup> were worshipped on the island, while at the same time the religious Association of the Pythaists is attested.<sup>40</sup>

On **Halki** there is a temple dedicated to Apollo (Strabo X.V.14–15), which, however, has not been identified with certainty.<sup>41</sup>

On **Nisyros** the sanctuary of Poseidon Argeios has been excavated. According to the legend, the island emerged during the battle of the Giants, when Poseidon hurled part of Kos at Polyvotus (Pausanias 1.2.4; Strabo 10.5.16; Pseudo-Apollodorus 1.38).<sup>42</sup> There are also testimonies

to the worship of Apollo,<sup>43</sup> Zeus Meilichius,<sup>44</sup> and Hermes.<sup>45</sup>

On the hill of Kylindra, on **Astypalea**, a unique infant cemetery has been found, one which was used continuously from the Geometric to the Hellenistic era. According to one of the most prevalent views on the interpretation of space, dead infants were offered by their parents to Artemis Lochia and Eileithyia, in the hope of having strong and healthy babies in the future.<sup>46</sup> These two goddesses and their sanctuaries are also witnessed in inscriptions, along with Zeus, Asclepius, and Isis.<sup>47</sup>

In Steno, the strait that separates **Karpathos** from the island of **Saria**, some scholars place the location where, according to epigraphic sources, one of the most important Pankarpathian sanctuaries, the sanctuary of Poseidon Porthmios existed. According to others, this sanctuary is located north of Vrykounta, at Tristomo.<sup>48</sup> The temple of Athena Lindia, testified by inscriptions, is probably located in the acropolis of Pigadia (ancient Potideon or Posideon),<sup>49</sup> where the Dioscuri<sup>50</sup> and the Egyptian gods<sup>51</sup> were also worshipped. An open-air sanctuary of Artemis has probably been located on the rocky slopes in the southeastern part of Karpathos, at Vathypotamos.<sup>52</sup> This sanctuary is very similar to the other open-air sanctuary of Aphrodite or Artemis in Istia, 2 km further north.<sup>53</sup> A place of worship since prehistoric times has also been found in a cave that in more recent times was dedicated to Hagios Minas. Finally, it is worth noting the sanctuary of Apollo in Aperi, from the grove of which cypress wood was donated for the construction of the temple of Athena Polias at Athens.<sup>54</sup>

**Kasos** has indications for the existence of at least two sanctuaries in antiquity. One is located at Grammata, on the steep northwestern coast of the island, where excerpts from inscriptions of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC invoking the Samothrace gods and the nymphs, patrons of sailors, are still preserved.<sup>55</sup> The

<sup>33</sup> Herzog 1901: 134–137; Skerlou and Grigoriadou 2014. See also Sherwin-White 1978: 305–312, for Demeter sanctuaries on the island.

<sup>34</sup> For the research in the sanctuary of Apollo in Halasarna, see indicatively Kokkorou-Alevra 2001; Kokkorou-Alevra 2004; Kokkorou-Alevra 2009; Kokkorou-Alevra 2017; Kokkorou-Alevra, Kalopisi-Verti and Panagiotidi-Kesisoglou 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Bosnakis, Dreliosi-Irakleidou and Marketou 2012; Koutellas 1997; Newton 1856: 17, 24–30; Newton 1865: 304–315; Ross 1843: 96–98; Segre 1938: 33–35; Segre 1944–1945: 37, n. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Lala 2015: 322, with bibliography.

<sup>37</sup> Filimonos-Tsopotou 2001: 693–695; Lala 2015: 324, with bibliography. See also Reger 2004: 776, with bibliography.

<sup>38</sup> IG XII 3, 37. Lala 2015: 325.

<sup>39</sup> IG XII 3, 38. Lala 2015: 325.

<sup>40</sup> Lala 2015: 325 with bibliography.

<sup>41</sup> Apart from the sanctuary, a settlement and a port are also witnessed in the same village. Antoniou 1976: 109, 111–125; Bairami 2005: 372; Lala 2015: 303, 304–305.

<sup>42</sup> Chaviaras 1913: 8, AK 6. Lala 2015: 327–328, with bibliography.

<sup>43</sup> Lala 2015: 328, n. 1752–1753.

<sup>44</sup> Lala 2015: 328, n. 1757.

<sup>45</sup> Lala 2015: 329, n. 1760.

<sup>46</sup> Michalaki-Kollia 2005: 353. Michalaki-Kollia 2010. Fantaoutsaki 2021: 41–42, with bibliography.

<sup>47</sup> Michalaki-Kollia 2005: 352.

<sup>48</sup> For the sanctuary and its location, see Lala 2015: 316–317; Moutsopoulos 1973–1975: 259–262. Papachristodoulou 1997: 7; Susini 1963–1964: 31; Zervaki 2005: 378.

<sup>49</sup> Lala 2015: 320; Melas 1991: 28–29; Moutsopoulos 1973–1975: 140.

<sup>50</sup> Kollias 1974; Kollias 1975: 253. See also Lala 2015: 320; Melas 1991: 30, 49, AK 7; Papachristodoulou 1989: 160–161, AK 7.

<sup>51</sup> Segre 1933: 580–581, AK 2. See also Lala 2015: 320; Melas 1991: 31, 49, AK 6.

<sup>52</sup> Melas 1991: 32.

<sup>53</sup> Lala 2015: 320; Melas 1991: 31–32; Moutsopoulos 1973–1975: 162–168; Zervaki 2005: 377.

<sup>54</sup> IG XII 1, 977. SEG 34: 847. Lala 2015: 319; Patsiada 2006.

<sup>55</sup> Giannikouri and Zervaki 2007: 112; Giannikouri and Zervaki 2009:



second sanctuary, dedicated to Apollo Temenites,<sup>56</sup> is known only from epigraphic testimonies, while other inscriptions also refer to the worship of Asclepius,<sup>57</sup> Sarapis, and Isis.<sup>58</sup> In addition, the ancient sanctuaries of the island probably include the cave of Ellinokamara, one of the most important monuments of Kasos. The cave is essentially a rock shelter, with uninterrupted use from prehistoric to early Christian times.<sup>59</sup>

Archaeological finds on **Leros**, and ancient writers, indicate that a sanctuary of Asclepius may be located on the slope of Merovigli hill, while the temple of Artemis Parthenos, who protected the island, should have been located in Partheni.<sup>60</sup>

**Patmos** has archaeological evidence and literary sources that testify that in the place of the current Monastery of Hagios Ioannis Theologos, there was a temple of Artemis Patnias (Patmias), patron goddess of the island.<sup>61</sup>

A similar continuous use of an area of worship may be observed on **Symi**, where in the area of the current Monastery of the Archangel Michael in Panormitis there may have been a temple of Poseidon, parts of the columns of which have been used in the Christian basilica.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, on the island of **Agathonisi**, indications of the Milesian sanctuary of Didymaios Apollo have been found in Kastraki, the fortified port of ancient Tragaia.<sup>63</sup> According to the excavator, the sanctuary must/could have been located in the area between the port and the entrance of the fortified settlement, the reorganisation of which dates back to the second quarter of the 1st century BC, from the year 84/83 BC onwards.<sup>64</sup>

All this information offered by the archaeological finds and the literary sources constitute just a brief glimpse of our topic, 'Religion and Cult in the Dodecanese'. The Dodecanesian islands, as an important and vital part of

the large interaction networks operating in the Aegean and East Mediterranean, provide a wide variety of data to be further investigated. We hope that this conference will generate further studies and research about the religious landscape of this important southeastern part of the Aegean.

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20–22; Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970: 71; Lala 2015: 334; Susini 1963–1964: 208, 213–216; Zervaki 2005: 379.

<sup>56</sup> Giannikouri and Zervaki 2009: 15; Susini 1963–1964: 205. See also Lala 2015: 332.

<sup>57</sup> IG XII 1, 1041.

<sup>58</sup> For a possible cult of the Nymphs in the settlement of Panagia, see Giannikouri and Zervaki 2009: 28; Lala 2015: 333, n. 1780.

<sup>59</sup> Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970: 70 figs 14–15, 71; Lala 2015: 333; Melas 1985: 82; Sakellarakis 1992; Sakellarakis 1993; Susini 1963–1964: 206–208, figs 3–6; Zervaki 2005: 378–379.

<sup>60</sup> Dreliosi-Irakleidou 2005: 335.

<sup>61</sup> Dreliosi-Irakleidou 2005: 332.

<sup>62</sup> Farmakidou 2005: 358; Farmakidou 2011: 90; Lala 2015: 308.

<sup>63</sup> Apollo Didimeus was the main deity of Miletus, on which the ancient Tragaia depended politically, see Triantafyllidis 2010: 36; Triantafyllidis 2015: 100. For the cult of the god, see Dreliosi-Irakleidou and Michailidou 2006: 38; Ehrhardt 1988: 133.

<sup>64</sup> Three fragmentary stamped clay tiles found in a deposit on the fort of Kastraki indicate a dating to the early 1st century BC, see indicatively Triantafyllidis 2010: 36; Triantafyllidis 2014: 578; Triantafyllidis 2015.

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