

# ΠΑΛΑΙΟΚΑΣΤΡΟ ΣΑΜΟΥ

Σημειώσεις ιστορικής τοπογραφίας



ΝΙΚΟΣ ΜΠΕΛΑΒΙΛΑΣ

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ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΑΚΕΣ ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ Ε.Μ.Π.

ΑΘΗΝΑ 2020

Νίκος Μπελαβίλας

## **ΠΑΛΑΙΟΚΑΣΤΡΟ ΣΑΜΟΥ**

Σημειώσεις ιστορικής τοπογραφίας

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*Στη Βάσω που με έμαθε το νησί της*



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## **Palaiokastro of Samos**

### **Notes for a historical topography**

The eastern edge of the island of Samos is one great peninsula. This section, which almost touches upon the Turkish coasts, is a place where three settlements have been built. From the semi-mountainous hinterland as far as the sea, they are in order of their historical appearance: Palaiokastro, Ano Vathy and Vathy.

The first settlement, Palaiokastro, was built on a low hill directly in the centre of a small plateau, almost in the middle of the peninsula. It is not visible from the coasts and is surrounded by a fertile landscape.

The second, today's Ano Vathy (formerly Vathy), is located on the outer part of the neck of the peninsula, which looks on to the sea. It is orientated towards the north-west and towards the large gulf, the largest on the island, which stretches out a little below the settlement. The settlement has grown over the contours of the amphitheatrical slope, above the port, although without nearing the coast, and at the usual altitude of the coastal settlements of this type from the Late Byzantine period.

The third settlement, Vathy or Samos (formerly Limin Vatheos- [*transl: Port of Vathy*]), is the harbour of the upper settlement and the island's modern capital. It inherited this role from Chora, the old Ottoman capital of the island, in the 19th century.<sup>1</sup>

This triple-pole model, in which the sizes of the settlements increase in scale, going from the hinterland to the coast, at the same time represents a reversal of historical developments.



Fig. 1. The settlement of Palaiokastros on a low hilly rise, in the middle of the plateau, between the eastern shores and anchors of Samos and the large bay of Vathy.

The harbour of Vathy, as a large post-Independence War urban centre, capital of the Samian Hegemony, an industrial and commercial city port of the late 19th century, has been systematically studied by historians, and the various aspects of its urban development have, to a great degree, been uncovered.<sup>2</sup> Today (2011) it has a registered population of 6,191.<sup>3</sup>

The old Vathy (today Ano Vathy [*transl: Upper Vathy*]) with a population on the slope of 3,147, above the harbour, is also included in this general category of 'traditional settlements' which became a focus of attention in the 1980s. Research has not progressed significantly in this area beyond some brief monographs, mainly by architects, and the documentation of a few of the older buildings in the settlement.<sup>4</sup>

Absolutely nothing is known about the origins and development of the third and smallest pole of this model, the rural settlement of Palaiokastros. Very little evidence can be found for it in the pages of either the older or more modern histories of the island. Its name, the toponym Palaiokastros [*transl: Old Castle*], gives a hint, however, that this settlement may hide a more interesting history which is not simply about this little village on a small plateau, but is instead a part of the whole phenomenon of the contraction and rebirth of the system of settlements and harbours on the eastern edge of Samos.

The historiography of the Aegean, especially of the island of Samos, has constructed the narrative of depopulation. Samos is believed to have fallen into a 'century of invisibility' from the late 15th to the late 16th century, the population having left as a result of Ottoman rule over the archipelago and the constant pirate raids. From around the late 16th and throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, a relatively well-documented population settlement took place, with the founding of new settlements and, in general, a significant population growth, which, however, was not the exception but the rule in the Aegean as well as in the wider Euro-Mediterranean and Balkan hinterland.

Academic studies in the 19th and 20th centuries to a great degree approached both the depopulation of this island and its resettlement as local phenomena that were part of a specifically Samian development. Given the state of research at that time, it was not easy to combine the historical evidence with attempts to trace these conditions in a comparison with similar examples in the wider geographical zones of the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

In this way, the contraction of both rural areas and towns due to the wider crisis which led to the end of Byzantine and Frankish rule in the Aegean, as well as the recovery which came with the stabilization

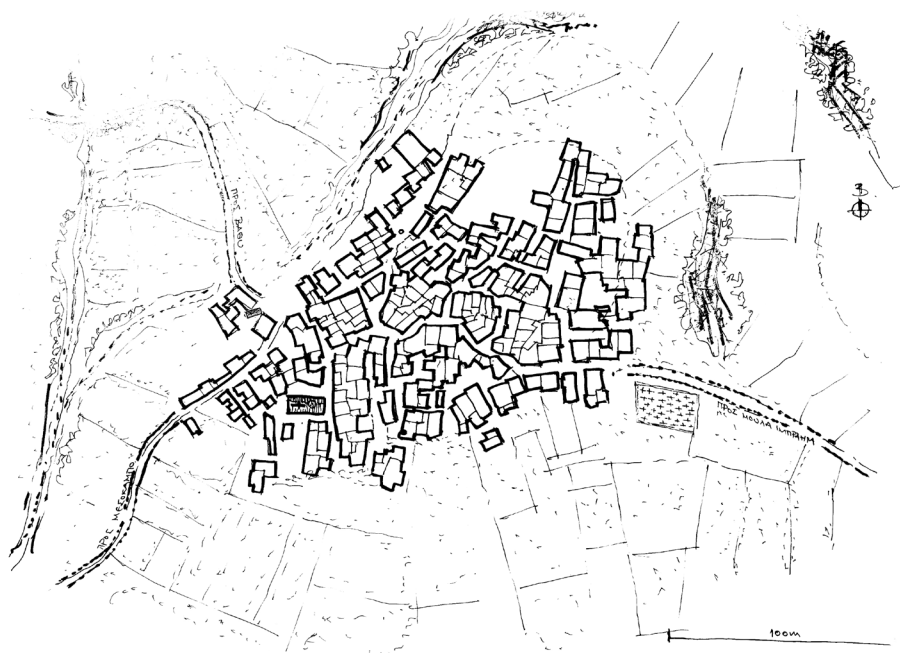


Fig. 2. Sketch of Palaiokastros settlement at the form of the 18th-19th century. The settlement is denser on the center around the old square. The core of the initial phase of the 16th century is probably the 3-4 central building blocks. The road was from the west, from Vathy, crossing the settlement and the square, to the east, towards Mullah Ibrahim and the strait. At that entrance of the settlement there is the small old church of Agios Ioannis. At the eastern entrance there was the cemetery. A few meters north of the old square there is still the opening of the communal well and at the northwest, also the old (17th century) church of the Virgin Mary. A third road was heading southwest, following the stream towards the coastline, at Aliki and Mesokambos.

of Ottoman rule and the accompanying relative consolidation of the borders are part of wider developments throughout the great basin of the Mediterranean, including the European hinterland, the Balkans and Asia Minor.

It is becoming increasingly accepted that the depopulation of Samos and the rest of the Aegean was not due to the phenomenon that has been labelled with the generic term 'piracy', as was initially assumed by historians in the 19th century and which became a trope which continued to appear in the bibliography in the 20th. Instead, there was an extended decline of the islands due to the constant maritime wars between the great powers of the day (Byzantines, Latins – primarily Venetians and Genoese – Knights of St John's Order and Ottomans), the inability of the Byzantine and Latin centres to support the Aegean periphery, and the general geopolitical instability. What historiography thus far has defined as piracy entailed every type of aggressive action at sea or from the sea towards the land, including formally autonomous pirates acting together, authorised raiders against those of another religion and corsairs, official military-religious battalions and naval forces which plundered the land and seas with or without the consent of the great powers of the day, to formal naval campaigns and leaders such as Marco Sanudo or admirals such as Hayreddin Barbarossa during the campaign against Latin possessions, and, vice versa, Francesco Morosini.

It also appears that the repopulation and building recovery of Samos did not come after a chance discovery of the heavenly island, as old historical narratives have it. On the contrary, there was an organised population settlement as part of a larger programme of re-settlement immediately after the naval battle of Lepanto. This coincided with a wider recovery in rural and urban areas in the same period, which spread throughout the whole of the Mediterranean.

The notion of the depopulation of Samos and the mass movement to Chios due to the pressure of pirate raids in around 1475 was first propounded by Emmanuel Kritikides in 1870<sup>5</sup> and proposed again by Philip P. Argenti in 1943.<sup>6</sup> Recent studies have re-assessed the assumption of depopulation in 1475-1585 and there have been similar re-assessments as to other islands during that period.<sup>7</sup> In the earlier view, Barbarossa's campaign in the Archipelago in 1537, with its spectacular and bloody raids, played an important role in and was the main cause of the theory of the 'depopulation' of certain islands. It is now believed, however, that all this has been seriously exaggerated.<sup>8</sup> We know that through resettlement Samos began to regain its population from the late 16th century onwards. Even from as early as 1565, ecclesiastical sources mention habitation.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 3. The geophysical relief, the coasts, the settlements and the connections in eastern Samos.

1. Mycale strait (Eptastadios Strait or Dar Bogaz). 2. Anchorage Vourkaria or Mullah Ibrahim (modern Poseidonio). 3. Bay and cape Mertziki or Mersentzik (modern Klima). At the east of the bay, at the head of cape Grias Podia there are the stone ruins of a potential fortification. 4. Mesokambos. 5. Anchor and fortification Tigani in the place of the ancient town and port of Samos (modern Poseidonio). 6. Fortification tower in the valley of Argyros. 7. Palaiochori. 8. Palaiokastros. 9. Fortification tower at Agios Trifonas. 10. Vathy (modern Ano Vathy). 11. Maitochori or Moraitochori. 12. Malagari. 13. Limenas Vatheos (modern Vathy). 14. Agia Zoni Monastery. 15. Vlamari valley. 16. Lakkes Bay. 17. Zoodochos Pigi Monastery.

Contemporary scholars now doubt this model of complete depopulation, which was so dominant in local history for a century. More recent researchers who have carried out systematic studies are inverting the questions of the 19th and 20th centuries. What happened during this depopulation? The regions where older historians claim habitation continued during that 'dark' century are being sought – the Castle of Loulouda, the Castle of Lazaros, Kastrovouni.<sup>10</sup> To these sites we can securely add Palaiokastros, Moula Ibraim, Mertziki and their peripheries along with the upland areas which are not visible from the sea, and the small valleys which descend towards the coast.

Historical research has shown that through the great geopolitical changes occurring in the Aegean towards and after the end of the Byzantine Empire, there were population settlements in as well as continual migration to the large urban centres, such as Smyrna, and the developed island towns of Chios and Rhodes, leading to the decline of the island populations. This situation was reversed from the early 17th to the early 19th century. In this period, there was a stable population increase at a medium rate, which became more pronounced in the run-up to the Greek War of Independence.<sup>11</sup> This generalised model fully covers the case of Samos too.

Here, there was a documented outflow to Chios and then a return. It is now known that the settlement of Samos was not an isolated event. In 1571, after the naval battle of Lepanto, the Ottoman administration carried out extensive settlement with the aim of resettling or strengthening the island populations (Agios Efstratios, Samos, Mykonos, etc.).<sup>12</sup> Another related and under-appreciated parameter which played an important role in Samos appears to have been the arrival of Albanians, as part of the wider migrations of the period. The Peloponnese has been identified as the place of origin of these settlers. Albanian settlement in Samos is mentioned by Stamatiades,<sup>13</sup> was documented in detail by F.W. Hasluck in his *Albanian Settlements in the Aegean Islands* from 1909,<sup>14</sup> and confirmed by Kostas Komis,<sup>15</sup> Evangelia Balta, Sophia Laiou, and others.

The revival of Samos took place within a wider revival, as a result of the gradual stabilisation of the Ottoman Empire. This burgeoning succeeded the decline and fall of Byzantium, and this can be seen in all the dimensions of the settlement growth of the Aegean islands – and Samos, of course. The settlements on the island experienced continual growth from the final quarter of the 16th century, in other words, from the moment when the Ottoman Empire gained control of the whole of the island and mainland Aegean region. The Ottoman feudal system, milder and more efficient than the preceding ones, and the relative peace during

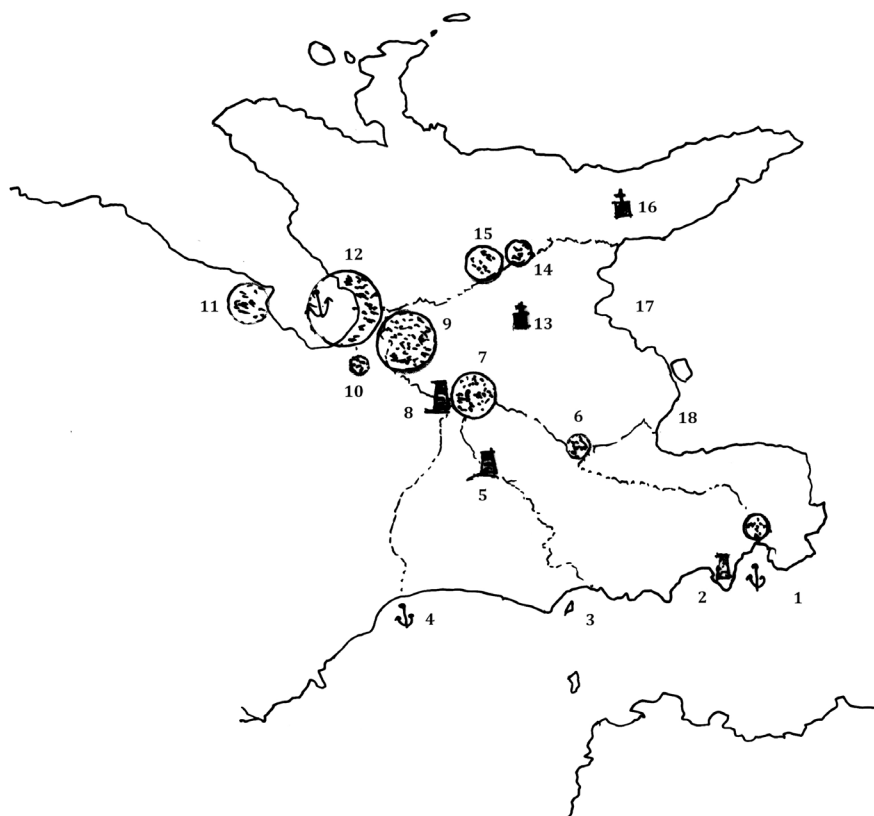


Fig. 4. The continuous dwelling of eastern Samos.

1. Anchorage Vourkaria or Mullah Ibrahim (modern Poseidonio). 2. Bay and cape Mertziki or Mersentzik (modern Klima). At the east of the bay, at the head of cape Grias Podia there is the stone complex of a potential fortification. 3. Psili Ammos Bay. 4. Mesokambos. 5. Fortification tower in the valley of Argyros. 6. Palaiochori. 7. Palaiokastros. 8. Fortification tower at Agios Trifonas. 9. Vathy (modern Ano Vathy). 10. Maitochori or Moraitochori. 11. Malagari. 12. Limenas Vatheos (modern Vathy). 13. Agia Zoni Monastery. 14. Vlamari. 15. Kamara. 16. Zoodochos Pigi Monastery. 17. Lakkes Bay. 18. Kerveli Bay.



the era of Suleyman created the preconditions for both the urban and the rural populations of the Balkan section of the Empire to prosper.<sup>16</sup>

In its final centuries, the 17th and 18th centuries, with the opening up of naval waterways in the wider island space, maritime activities, which went far beyond the earlier needs of the islands for communications and survival, now resulted in the creation of an economic sector specialising in the provision of services (maritime transport) which covered the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>17</sup> Somewhere here, along with the expansion in the processing of agricultural produce (olive and vine cultivation, leather, tobacco), we must look for the coastal building explosion which took place in Vathy in the late 18th century and which coincided with dozens of similar situations along the island coastlines. Since the new coastal centre was being developed at Vathy, the rural area of the eastern peninsula was now being transformed into a productive hinterland of this centre and Palaiokastros into a small satellite settlement, initially of old Vathy and subsequently of the large new coastal town.

In investigating this development during these centuries in the wider region of Palaiokastros, we can now confidently describe the existence of constant construction in the semi-mountainous valleys and the existence of at least two spots for docking. One of these functioned as an almost permanent place for the mooring of pirates.

From the classical period to late antiquity, then, there appear to have been two settlement phases at the ports of Vathy and Mullah Ibrahim (today's Poseidonio), one possible settlement phase at Palaiochori, and the construction of two fortified towers in Palaiokastros and the site of Argyros. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the only settlement appears to have been at the fortress of Palaiokastros (Agios Tryphonas tower). It is believed that in the 16th century there was an uncompleted attempt to construct a tower next to Mullah Ibrahim, which appears to have been a permanent pirate dock, while it is also possible that earlier settlements (Palaiokastros, Argyros and Palaiochori) continued to be active. In the 17th century, there were three settlements: Palaiokastros, Moraitochori and Vathy (Ano Vathy). The Monastery of Agia Zoni was built and the small settlement of Vlamari was created, to be followed in the 18th century by the Monastery of Zoodochos Pigi, completing the construction phase on the north-eastern side. From the 18th century Palaiokastros was stable, while Vathy was rapidly expanding from the hill towards the coast, thus forming Limena Vatheos, later to be the town of the 19th century. The chain of the three settlements of Palaiokastros, Ano Vathy and Vathy provide the spatial evidence for the evolution from the Middle Ages to the modern era.



## Πρόλογος

Αυτή η έρευνα άρχισε πριν από δέκα περίπου χρόνια. Απρογραμμάτιστα στα διαλείμματα της ακαδημαϊκής δουλειάς· καλοκαίρια, λίγες φορές χειμώνα στους λόφους της ανατολικής Σάμου. Οι αφορμές ήταν δύο. Ένα σχόλιο του ιστορικού Βασίλη Παναγιωτόπουλου σε ένα συνέδριο για την ιστορία του νησιού το 1996 και εκείνες οι παλαιές γραφές του Επαμεινώνδα Σταματιάδη. Το σχόλιο στο συνέδριο, σε ελεύθερη απόδοση καθώς δεν κατεγράφη ποτέ σε πρακτικά, έλεγε πως δεν υπήρξε «ερήμωση» της Σάμου τον 15ο-16ο αιώνα αλλά ένα κατώφλι, ένα όριο, κάτω από το οποίο η Σάμος δεν ενδιέφερε. Και ο Σταματιάδης μιλούσε για τους τόπους που συνέχιζαν να κατοικούνται κατά τον «αιώνα της αφάνειας», τα ορεινά του Καρβούνη και του Κέρκη, ίσως τις ανατολικές ακτές και τα οροπέδια.

Στις αναζητήσεις, άλλων ιχνών για άλλες ιστορίες, άρχισαν να αποκαλύπτονται ελάχιστα σημάδια. Στρώματα οικήσεων με θραύσματα κεραμιδιών σε πεσμένες πεζούλες, λιθοσωροί, έπειτα βάσεις πύργων, οικημάτων, στο τέλος τα θεμέλια στον βυθό και πολλές-πολλές ιστορίες, λαϊκές ιστορίες στο Παλαιόκαστρο και στο Βαθύ. Για αρχαία, για χαμένα χωριά, για ερείπια ναών. Το τοπωνύμιο Παλαιόκαστρο, ο οικισμός και όχι αδικαιολόγητα, όλα αυτά υπαρκτά ή φανταστικά γύρω του, συγκροτούσαν κάτι που μπορεί να έκρυβε πραγματικά τεκμήρια. Το συνέδριο στο Ρέθυμνο, τον Δεκέμβριο του 2014, για τα νησιά του Αιγαίου, με έβαλε στη σειρά να γράψω το πρώτο κείμενο περί παλαιοκάστρων, με πηγές τα απρόσμενα πολλά παλαιόκαστρα που αποτύπωσε το 1420 ο

Buondelmonti, και να προσπαθήσω να καταλάβω τι ακριβώς ήταν αυτό το μεγάλο δίκτυο «ενδιάμεσων» οικισμών – ούτε αρχαίων, ούτε νέων. Επιστρέφοντας στον Buondelmonti και στη διδακτορική διατριβή του 1990.

Είτε ως αποκάλυψη ενός νέου άγνωστου κόσμου που ως τώρα δεν τολμούσα να αγγίξω, της μετάβασης από την ύστερη αρχαιότητα στους νεότερους χρόνους, είτε ως ενστικτώδης βεβαιότητα· ένα νησί τόσο ευλογημένο από τη φύση, εύφορο και ευλίμενο, σε τέτοιο κομβικό σημείο των θαλάσσιων δρόμων του Αιγαίου, δεν μπορεί να είχε εγκαταλειφθεί ολοσχερώς. Έτσι η έρευνα έφτασε σε ένα αποτέλεσμα, σε μία κατάθεση τεκμηρίων που θα κριθεί εδώ για την αξιοπιστία της. Ελπίζοντας να συμβάλει στον επιστημονικό διάλογο, για αυτό το νεκρό χρόνο, σε ό,τι αφορά την ιστορική καταγραφή, της εξέλιξης των νησιών του Αιγαίου.

Συνομιλητές σε αυτό το ταξίδι, ο διευθυντής ερευνών του ΕΙΕ, Δημήτρης Δημητρόπουλος, η καθηγήτρια του Πανεπιστημίου Κρήτης, Κατερίνα Κοπακά, ο Χρίστος Λάνδρος και η Αγγέλα Χατζημιχάλη, οι δύο στυλοβάτες του Ιστορικού Αρχείου Σάμου. Πολύτιμη συνεργάτης στο στήσιμο του βιβλίου η ερευνήτρια του Εργαστηρίου Αστικού Περιβάλλοντος του ΕΜΠ, Πολίνα Πρέντου.

Θερμές ευχαριστίες οφείλονται στην Πρυτανεία και στις Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις ΕΜΠ που υιοθέτησαν την έκδοση του βιβλίου.

Καλοί φίλοι Σαμιώτες, ο Μανώλης Δραπανιώτης από τη Βλαμαρή, ο αγρονόμος Ηρακλής Μιχαλάκης, ο Θοδωρής Μωραΐτης από το Παλαιόκαστρο, ο γιατρός Κύρος Κόκκας από το Βαθύ, μου έκαναν τη χάρη να μοιραστούν τις βόλτες στους λόφους και στα ακρωτήρια αλλά και τις βραδινές συζητήσεις στην αυλή στο Μερτζίκι, χαζεύοντας το Νταρ Μπογκάζ. Η γιαγιά Μαρία Τροβά τα παλιά τοπωνύμια και τα μονοπάτια. Οι καθηγητές Ηλίας Κολοβός, Κώστας Κόμης και Σοφία Λαΐου τη γνώση της παλαιοτουρκικής και την ιστορία των νησιών, ο καθηγητής Μανώλης Κορρές και η αρχιτέκτων-αναστηλώτρια Δήμητρα Μαυροκορδάτου την προσπάθεια χρονολόγησης και τεκμηρίωσης των κτιστών καταλοίπων. Η αρχιτέκτων Pelin Tan από τη Σμύρνη τις φωτογραφίες από την απέναντι πλευρά του στενού. Ο Αλέξανδρος και η Νεφέλη τις υποβρύχιες περιπλανήσεις στα ρηχά του στενού, στην Πέτρα του Σαμψών αναζητώντας βυθισμένα ερείπια.

Θερμές ευχαριστίες σε όλους.

N.Μπ.

Μερτζίκι Παλαιόκαστρου

Άνοιξη 2018

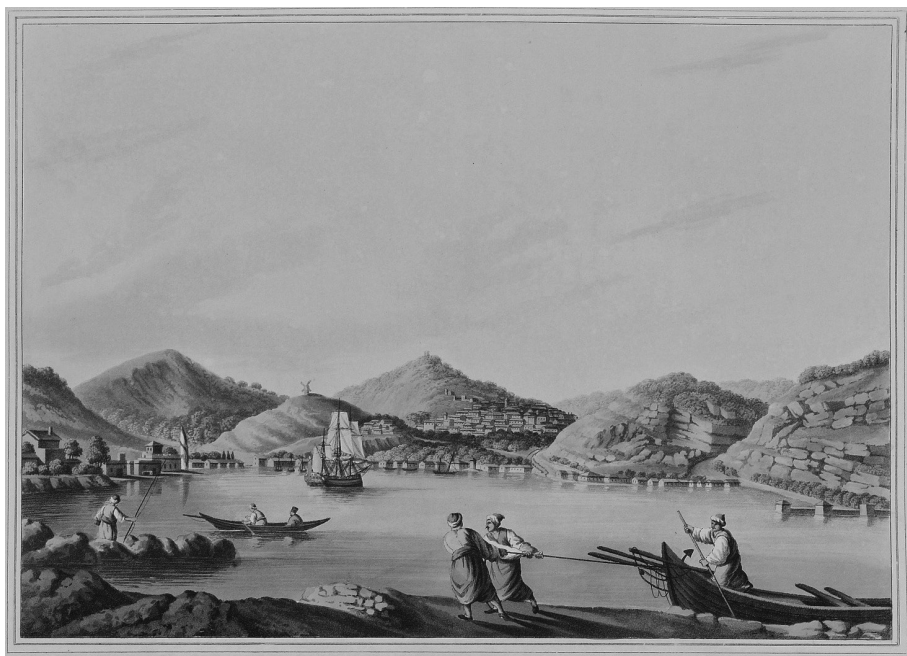
## Εισαγωγικά

Η ανατολική άκρη της Σάμου είναι μία μεγάλη χερσόνησος. Το τμήμα του νησιού που σχεδόν αγγίζει τις τουρκικές ακτές αποτελεί έναν τόπο όπου έχουν αναπτυχθεί τρεις οικισμοί. Από την ημιορεινή ενδοχώρα της χερσονήσου ως τη θάλασσα, βρίσκονται με τη σειρά το Παλαιόκαστρο, το παλαιό Βαθύ, και το νεότερο Βαθύ.

Ο πρώτος οικισμός, το Παλαιόκαστρο, έχει οικοδομηθεί σε ένα χαμηλό λόφο καταμεσής του μικρού οροπεδίου, σχεδόν στο κέντρο της χερσονήσου. Είναι αθέατος από τις ακτές και περιβάλλεται από έναν εύφορο τόπο.

Ο δεύτερος, το σημερινό Άνω Βαθύ (άλλοτε Βαθύ), βρίσκεται στην εξωτερική προς τη θάλασσα πλευρά του αυχένα του οροπεδίου του Παλαιοκάστρου. Είναι στραμμένος προς τα βορειοδυτικά προς τον μεγάλο κόλπο, τον μεγαλύτερο του νησιού που απλώνεται λίγο πιο χαμηλά από τον οικισμό. Ο οικισμός έχει αναπτυχθεί στις ισοϋψείς της αμφιθεατρικής πλαγιάς, επάνω από το λιμάνι, χωρίς να πλησιάζει την ακτή, στο συνηθισμένο ύψος που διατηρούν οι παράκτιοι οικισμοί της υστεροβυζαντινής περιόδου αυτού του τύπου.

Ο τρίτος οικισμός, το Βαθύ ή Σάμος (άλλοτε Λιμένας Βαθέος), το επίνειο του υψηλότερου οικισμού, είναι η σύγχρονη πρωτεύουσα του νησιού με πληθυσμό 6.191 κατοίκων,<sup>1</sup> αφού διαδέχθηκε κατά τον 19ο αιώνα την παλαιά πρωτεύουσα των οθωμανικών αιώνων, τη Χώρα.<sup>2</sup>



Εικ. 1. Η γνωστή εικόνα του Luigi Mayer από το *Views in the Ottoman Dominions in Europe, in Asia, and some of the Mediterranean Islands* εκδόθηκε στο Λονδίνο το 1810. Απεικονίζει το δίπολο Άνω και Κάτω Βαθέος κατά τη στιγμή της συγκρότησής του. Το παλαιό Άνω Βαθύ στον λόφο, είναι ήδη ένας οικισμός τουλάχιστον δύο αιώνων. Ο παράκτιος οικισμός Λιμνή Βαθέος – μετέπειτα Βαθύ και σήμερα πρωτεύουσα του νησιού – συγκροτείται από λίγα οικήματα και αποθήκες. Το Παλαιόκαστρο είναι αόρατο πίσω από την κορυφή του λόφου του Άνω Βαθέος. Η απεικόνιση έχει γίνει από το Μαλαγάρι.