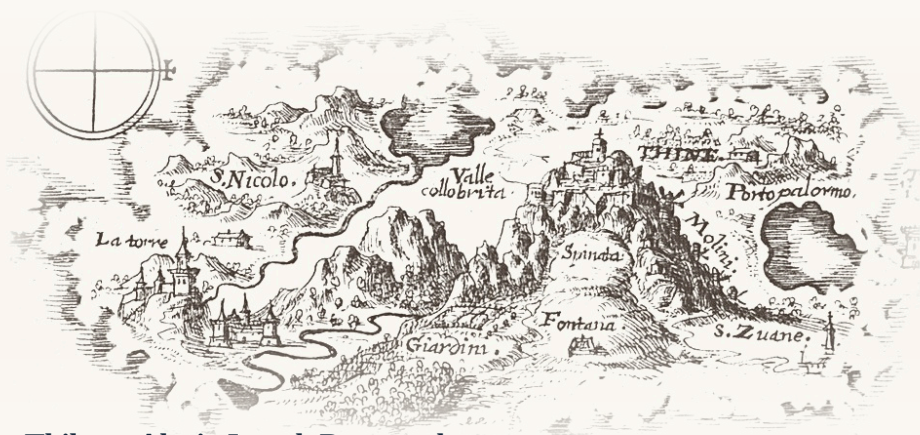




FROM HYDROUSSA, TO TENOS, TO TINE LA FEDELE, TO

THNOS

What is known about one Greek island —
and what is only thought to be known.



Thibaut-Alexis Joseph Remoundos

ANOGEIA, TINOS · 2026

Ὑδροῦσσα

HYDROUSSA · *ee-DROO-sa*

the watery one

THE ISLAND'S OLDEST NAME

PAX TIBI MARCE,
EVANGELISTA MEVS

LATIN · *paks TEE-bee MAR-chay*

Peace to you, Mark, my evangelist

THE WORDS IN THE LION'S OPEN BOOK

ΕΥΧΑΙ ΓΟΝΕΩΝ ΣΤΗΡΙΖΟΥΣΙ
ΘΕΜΕΛΙΑ ΟΙΚΩΝ

GREEK · *EF-heh GO-neh-on stee-REE-zoo-see*

The prayers of parents hold up the foundations of houses

CUT BENEATH THE SAME LION, ON THIS ISLAND, BY A TINIAN — AFTER VENICE
HAD GONE

“...the Turkish Waywode appointed over it,
who is *almost the only Turk residing in the island.*”

WILLIAM TURNER, ON TINOS, 1814

“It goes from generation to generation
as an heirloom.”

A WOMAN ON TINOS, 2025, ON THE CHAPEL HER FAMILY KEEPS

Στὸν πατέρα μου

For my father, born at Kato Klisma in 1933, who left this island and came back to it. This island does not let go.

W H Y T H I S B O O K

Like a great many people before me, I did not choose this island; it chose me, early, and did not ask my opinion. This book is what I can give it back, and that is why it is given away and never sold. It began with the questions a child asks here and an adult never quite stops asking: why the Venetians, and why for so long? Why are the houses white? Why do the dry-stone walls climb every hill? Why marble lace over the doors? I am not a writer. I spend my days on the energy markets, and nobody will mistake these pages for literature; I only tried to get the island right. How the book was made, and with what help, is in the colophon at the back. It will contain errors: if you find something it gets wrong, a date, a name, a village, a story told differently in your own family, write to **tinelaFedele@gmail.com**. The English, French and Greek editions are at **tinelaFedele.com**.

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How to read this

This is not a history of Tinos in the ordinary sense. It does not begin at the beginning and end at the end. It is arranged in four parts — the land, the rule, the faith, the people — because that is how the island's subjects actually group themselves, and because a reader who cares about marble need not first read about bishops.

The cost of that arrangement is chronology, so every section carries a **century band** at its head showing which stretches of time it covers. Marble runs from Venice to the present; silk occupies two centuries and stops; the pirates run nearly the whole length of the bar, from the ninth century to the 1820s.

Where a claim is uncertain it says so, in the text, with a label. Where two sources disagree, both are given. Where the evidence runs out, the section says where it runs out and which archive would settle it. There is a great deal about this island that is not known, and pretending otherwise would make a worse document and a less interesting one.

A note on the Greek.

Greek words are written in Greek, with a Latin spelling beside them and, where it helps, a rough English pronunciation in italics. **Capitals mark the stressed syllable** — φεγγίτης, *fengítis*, *fen-GHEE-tees*. The pronunciations are modern Greek, which is what you would hear on the island; an ancient Athenian would have said several of them quite differently.

Sources are graded on every chart, and on every table that rests on a figure.

A census, official record or peer-reviewed scholarship · **B** archive-derived or scholarly secondary · **C** a traveller or contemporary observer · **D** unattributed, popular or promotional

Grade D material is included rather than discarded. A figure nobody can source is still a figure people repeat, and saying so is more useful than leaving a silence.



The band, complete. 4th century BC to today — compressed, not to scale. Ghisi 1207–1390 · Venice 1390–1715 · Ottoman 1715–1821 · Greek 1830–

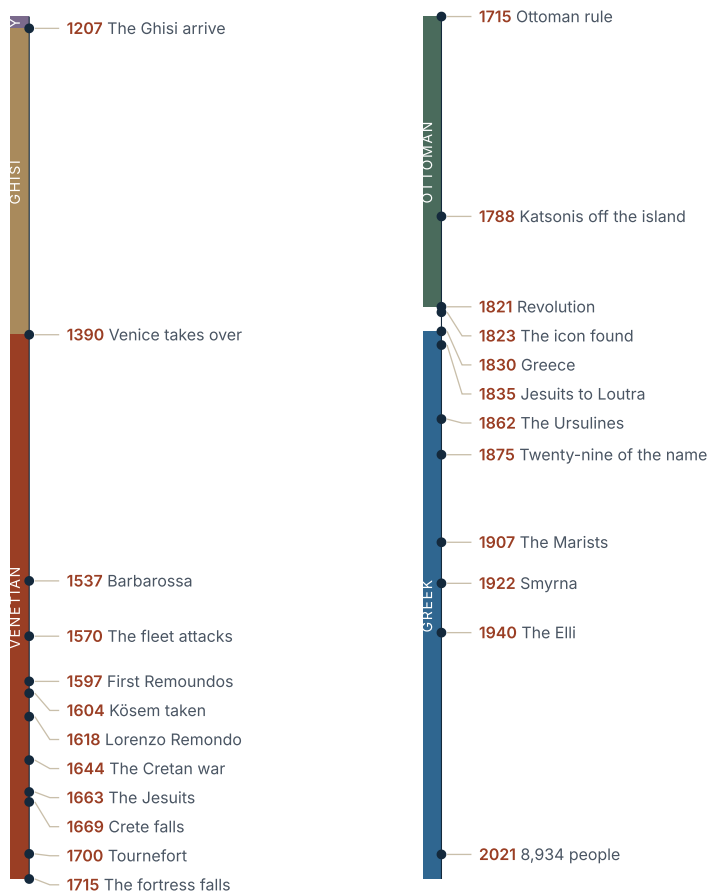
BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The whole thing, in one page

This book is arranged by subject and not by date, which is the right way to read it and the wrong way to keep your bearings. So here is the chronology once, at the front, to come back to. Every chapter also carries a band at its head showing which centuries it covers.

Eight hundred years, on one page

The colour column is who governed. Left: 1200–1715. Right: 1715–today.



The gap in the right-hand column is 1821–1830: the revolution, when nobody governed.

A Six regimes in eight hundred years, and the proportions are the point. **Venice, 325 years. The Ghisi before it, 183. The Ottomans, 106.** Set against that, the century the island tells most of its stories about is the shortest bar on the page.

THE SAME LIST, WITH SOMEWHERE TO GO

DATE

WHAT HAPPENED

CHAPTER

DATE	WHAT HAPPENED	CHAPTER
1207	The Ghisi, Venetian nobles, take Tinos and Mykonos after the Fourth Crusade	xii
1390	The Ghisi line ends and the island passes to Venice directly — the beginning of 325 years	xii
1537	Barbarossa sweeps the Cyclades. Tinos is one of the very few places that holds	xiii, xiv
1570	The Ottoman fleet attacks and the fortress holds again	xiv
1597	Zuanne Rimondo — the first written appearance of this family's name	xxix
1604	A Tinian girl of about fourteen is carried off by corsairs. She becomes Kösem Sultan	xv
1618	Lorenzo Remondo is chief elder of Kato Kleisma. The same year, Basilicata surveys the fortress	xiv, xxix
1644	Maltese corsairs seize an Ottoman convoy; the war for Crete follows	xiii
1663	The Jesuits found a house inside the castle on Exombourgo	xxvi
1669	Crete falls. Tinos becomes Venice's last position in the Aegean	xii, xiii
1700	Tournefort is here in December: sixteen thousand pounds of silk a year, and the best-cultivated island in the Archipelago	iv, xxiii
1715	5 June — the fortress surrenders without a shot. Both churches are guaranteed in the terms; two years later the fortress is blown up	xiv, xv
1788	Lambros Katsonis engages Algerian squadrons within sight of the island	xiii
1821	The Greek Revolution begins. The Aegean Catholics claim French protection and stand neutral	xix, xxvi

DATE	WHAT HAPPENED	CHAPTER
1823	30 January — the icon of the Annunciation is found , two years into a war fought under that feast	xx
1830	The Cyclades become part of the Greek kingdom	xxiv
1835	The Jesuits come down from the ruined castle to Loutra	xxvi
1862	The Ursulines open a boarding school at Loutra, under a French nun	xxvi
1875	Twenty-nine of the name Remoundos on the electoral roll of the Kato Meri	xxvii, xxix
1907	French Marist Brothers take over the Catholic school in Athens	xxvi
1917 · 1922	Odessa, then Smyrna. Half the Tinian working world closes in five years	xxv
1940	15 August — the <i>Ellī</i> is torpedoed in the harbour , on the feast day, in front of the pilgrims	xvii
1988	Kato Kleisma and Kalloni are designated traditional settlements	viii, xxviii
2021	8,934 residents — and 9,825 people registered here	xxiv

Who is who, once

Five powers and one nuisance run through this book. Here they are, one time, plainly — so that no later chapter has to stop and introduce them. When the loyalties blur, and in 1821 they genuinely do, this is the half page to come back to.

Venice. The Republic of St Mark — a merchant empire run from a lagoon in Italy, whose badge was a winged lion. It held Tinos from 1390 to 1715, and a Venetian family, the Ghisi, held it before that from 1207: five hundred and

eight years of Latin rule in one unbroken line, longer than Venice kept anything else in this sea. And it ruled by contract, not conquest — chapter xii is the story of an island that chose its own empire and set the terms.

The Ottomans. An empire ruled from Constantinople. It took the rest of the Cyclades in the fifteen-hundreds and this island only in 1715, last of all — and its century here was thin: no mosque, no settlers, the taxes assessed and collected by the islanders' own elders. A hundred and six years of being, mostly, left alone.

The two churches. The one split that matters most here, and the one to get right. The island is Catholic in its middle and Orthodox at its edges, and **both congregations are Greek islanders**: the Catholics are not a colony of Venetians who stayed, but Greek farming families who, across five centuries of Latin rule, took the Latin rite. About three-quarters of the island around 1640; about a third today. Two rites, one people — nobody in this book is a foreigner because of his church.

The corsairs. Not a nation. Muslim and Christian both — the Catholic corsairs of Malta and Livorno took more Greek cargo than the Barbary ones ever did — and they, not the Ottomans, are the reason every village on this island hides from the sea. When a chapter says pirates, think of a profession, not a flag.

France. Never ruled here and, despite a story this book tests in chapter xxvi, never protected here either. What France actually did was teach: Jesuit fathers from 1663, a French boarding school for the girls from 1862, French brothers schooling the boys in Athens after that. The protector in the story; the schoolmaster in fact.

Greece. The newest arrival on this island's clock. The revolution begins in 1821; the icon comes out of the ground here two years into it; the Cyclades

join the new kingdom in 1830. Everything Greek in the national sense is the youngest thing in this book — which is why the book keeps having to explain everything else.

PREFACE

The road from Kato Kleisma

This book has a reason, and he was born in the village in the photograph below.



Kato Kleisma, from the air. This is where the book starts. Two things are marked: the church, and the house at the entrance to the village. Chapter xxviii comes back to both — and pulls back, to show the plain they sit in.

Family photograph.

Joseph Remoundos was born at Kato Kleisma on 1 December 1933 — although the documents say the twenty-fifth, and the documents are wrong, which is a very Tinian way to begin. His father was Andonios Remoundos — Αντώνιος Ρεμουνδος. His mother was Eleonora Sklavos, Ἐλεονώρα Σκλάβου, from Aetofolia, under a kilometre away across the same fertile ground — the Livadi, the Meadow: the largest stretch of flat farmland on the island, green and watered where Mykonos, Delos or Rheneia are mostly rock, running down to the sea at Kolymbithra.

Two Catholic villages of the Kato Meri; two families off the same plain. Everything in Part Four of this book — the surname first written down in 1597, the chief elder of Kato Kleisma in 1618, the twenty-nine people of the name counted in the Kato Meri in 1875 — leads to that marriage and to him.

Until he was thirteen he worked the fields. That is not a figure of speech and it is not unusual: it is what the Livadi required and what every household on it did, and this book's chapter on the terraces and the water is a description of his childhood.

He left in August 1947, and would not be fourteen until December.

The road out

He went to Athens, to the Marist Brothers at Patissia — which is itself an island pattern, since the schools that took Tinian children were Catholic ones and the Catholic Church was the one institution that reached from these villages to anywhere else.

In **1947** he was sent to France — to the Marist school at Varennes-sur-Allier, to be trained as a religious brother and a teacher. Around 1950 he moved to Saint-Genis-Laval, outside Lyon, for the postulancy and then the novitiate.

And there it stopped. He was judged not yet ready — he did not fit the mould — and sent back to Greece, with the door left open, he was told. At the time it was a world falling apart.

He went back to Athens, to the same Marist school at Patissia, and taught French to small children. Then **military service in Greece**, from about 1956 to 1958 — while waiting to return to France to finish his training as a brother.

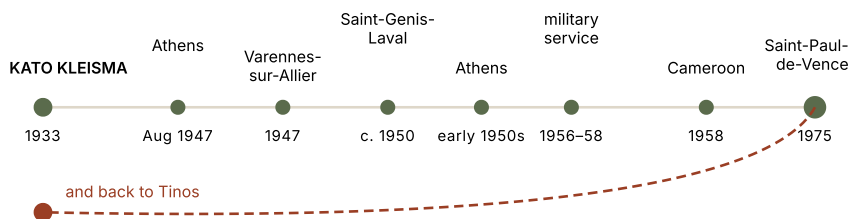
Africa

He came out of uniform and did not go back to France: he left for Cameroon, in 1958, at twenty-four. He spent about three years with the trading house Paterson Zochonis, and was then let go in a downsizing — the youngest, and therefore the first.

What he did next is the part of the story that decided everything after it. He began buying distressed lots of textiles and shirts — stock written off by other people — and turned that into a trade, and the trade into a shop with a name that tells you exactly what it sold: *Deux Cent Mille Mètres de Tissu* — later renamed *Deux Millions de Mètres de Tissu*. He was by then moving more than eight million metres a year. **The sign was revised upward once and still understated the business.**

At its height it was, on the family's account, **the largest textile import and export business in West Africa.**

Thirteen years in the fields, and then eight thousand kilometres.



Dates as given by the family; several are approximate.

The road out, and the road back. The shape is not unusual for this island — what is unusual is the distance, and the return.

In 1975 he settled at Saint-Paul-de-Vence, in the south of France, where his three children grew up. And he is now back on Tinos, for his later years, a few kilometres from the fields of his childhood.

There is one memory from the middle of all that which belongs here, because of what it measures rather than what it shows. In the early 1980s, when I was about five, we would fly down from Athens by helicopter and land in the field beside the church at Kato Kleisma — the church marked in the photograph at the head of this preface. Not once: for several years that was simply how we arrived, and on a Cycladic island at that date it was a considerable thing.

My father had worked that field until he was thirteen.

Tinos has a magnetic pull. You travel the world, you conquer the world of commerce — and you come back to the source, the wind, the light.

AND THE NAME HE IS CALLED BY

In France he is Joseph. In Greek he is Ἰωσήφ. On Tinos he is *Jusepe* — which is the Italian *Giuseppe*, worn down by three centuries of Greek mouths.

Chapter xxvii of this book is about how Latin and Italian baptismal names on this island hardened into Greek surnames, and how *Remoundos* itself came from *Raimondo*. Here is the same machinery, still running, in a living man's nickname.

Why that makes a book

Read Part Four of this book and you will find that almost nothing in that life is unprecedented here. Tinos has been exporting its people for four hundred years — marble-carvers to Constantinople and Odessa and Alexandria, cooks and servants to Smyrna, whole families to Athens. The island's own census figures record it as plainly as anything can: **8,934 people live on Tinos, and 9,825 are registered as belonging to it.** There are more Tinians of Tinos than there are Tinians on Tinos.

And they come back. The village associations are called *the association of the villagers from everywhere*. The great feasts fall in August because August is when the diaspora returns. Families keep a thousand chapels on an island of nine thousand people, and fly in from wherever they ended up to do it — from Paris, from London, from New York.

So this is not a book about a place someone came from. It is a book about a place that has spent four centuries teaching people how to leave it and how to come back — and about one man who did both, from a village of forty-five people, and whose family name has been written down there since 1597.

The people it keeps

IN THE AUTHOR'S OWN VOICE

What I have watched, over many years, is what this island does to people who did not come from it.

Countless friends have come. Some stayed a week, some far longer. The common denominator is that **Tinos left its mark on every one of them** — their minds and, in several cases, their lives. Most of the people around me remember those as the best years they have had.

Two of them did something about it. David and Margaux came out on holiday to visit us. By the end of that week they had bought a piece of land. They then built a house on it, and they have now been living here for over three years with their three sons.

That is not a story about property. It is a story about how quickly this place makes up somebody's mind for them.

My own family is bound into it: my mother Christiana; my sister Daphne; my nephew Philippe — and my older brother Philippe, who is no longer with us, and for whom this island was also home. My mother is entirely French — a Burgundian family, a Parisian childhood, not a Greek relative anywhere in it. She was christened Christiane; she now answers only to Christiana, because it sounds Greek, and she speaks the language fluently,

in an accent the villagers have grown fond of. She is not even the extreme case. A close friend of the family, Marie-France, spent time on this island and now goes by Maria-Galia — her own name translated into Greek, by a woman under no obligation whatever to translate it. That is the machinery that turned Giuseppe into Jusepe a few pages back. It took three centuries to do that to my father's name. It took a few summers to do it to others.

And my wife

Tania is Austrian and Syrian. She has not a drop of Tinian blood, and she did not need any. She felt the pull of this place as strongly as anyone born here, embraced it completely — and then, which is the part I owe her, **she pushed me.**

We built our own house at Anogeia — the name means the upper storey, the part built above everything else — and we called it Kardia, the heart. We built it because of her. And I should be exact about what that meant, because it does not happen often in a lifetime: it is the first time I have had a vision and a dream, actually done it, and then lived in it as it had been imagined. I am grateful to her for that.

And it is Alexis and Talia's — our children, who have grown up coming back to this island the way I grew up coming back to it.



The stone at the entrance of Kardia. A heart in the dry-stone wall, and the name cut across it: Καρδιά.

Author's photograph.

The name has been earned twice over. When Talia was nine she came through open-heart surgery. It was destiny to call the house Kardia.

There are three houses in this family now, and it is worth being exact about them, because between them they contain the whole argument of this book.

Joseph Remoundos — my father, the boy who left Kato Kleisma — came back to the island and built at Agios Sostis, on the hill above the bay, at my mother's urging: she had fallen in love with the place herself and wanted him to be near his own roots. **My sister Daphne** took on our grandmother's house in Kato Kleisma — the actual house, in the actual village, four hundred years of the same name over the door. And we built Kardia at Anogeia, on a mountain with no connection whatsoever to this

family's history, because a woman with no connection to this island decided we should.

One return to the island, one return to the house, and one arrival from nowhere. **An inherited return, an inherited roof, and a chosen one.** The island does all three, and it has been doing all three for four hundred years. And the pattern is not the one I expected: twice in two generations, a woman with no tie to this island brought a Remoundos back to it. This island does not only keep the people it produced; it works through the people who marry them.

We come at least once a year, and we do not really have a choice about it. We come to recharge the batteries. It is a spiritual place, and I do not use that word loosely — it has been one for more than two thousand years, as the first chapters of this book set out, long before the icon and long before the church.

And the mechanism is not mysterious. It is **the Meltemi**, which does not let you sit still. It is the light. It is the rock itself, which has a history: the marble under these terraces went down to the bottom of the earth and came back up — you are standing on something that went to the end of the world and returned. It is the perspective you get from a rock in the middle of the sea. It is the food, and it is the people. Put those together and the place does something to you that is closer to soul-searching than to a holiday — **and it works on real people.**

It is also, plainly, a landscape. In August the hills are a desert: thorn, dry grass, stone, and the scrub burnt back to the colour of the rock. Six weeks after the winter rain the same hills come up green enough to be mistaken for the Scottish Highlands, and stay that way for four months. This is a mountainous island in an archipelago of low ones — stand anywhere on the ridge and Mykonos lies flat on the water in front of you, which is the

whole difference between the two places in one glance. At night, with no city anywhere on the horizon, the stars come down to the sea. Corsica calls itself *l'île de beauté*. **Tinos is that for the Cyclades**, and almost nobody has noticed.

And there is the other thing, which I will state once and not argue. Even people who are not religious, and who arrive expecting nothing, come away saying the same sentence in different words: **there is a deep and healing spiritual presence here**. I am not asking anyone to account for it. I am putting on record that sceptics remark on it, consistently, and that it was being remarked on two thousand years before the icon was found.

One is not indifferent to Tinos. It works on the emotions and it sharpens the senses — and it does not let go.

Everything that follows is an attempt to find out what is actually known about that island: what is documented, what is merely repeated, and what can still be recovered from the archives, the stones and the parish books before the last people who remember any of it are gone. And it is a way of giving something back — to the island, to its people, and to their history; the only respect a book can pay to any of those is to try to get the story right. This book makes no claim for itself: I only want to add my stone.

One number, which I did not have before this was assembled, changed the proportions of everything else. **Venice held Tinos for three hundred and twenty-five years** — and with the Ghisi before it, five hundred and eight years of Latin rule without a break. That is **more than twice as long as the United States has existed** — 508 years against 250. The Ottoman century that everyone here remembers, and that the stories are mostly about, is **a hundred and six years**.

Nothing else on this island’s clock comes close, and it explains a great deal that otherwise looks like an accident — the surnames, the two churches, the lion over the door of a hotel in Chora, and the fact that a Greek island’s own name for itself, in the mouths of the people who governed it longest, was *Tine la Fedele*.

Thibaut-Alexis Joseph Remoundos

Anogeia, Tinos — Ανώγεια, Τήνος

August 2026

M A P S

Ἡ Τήνος, σχεδιασμένη

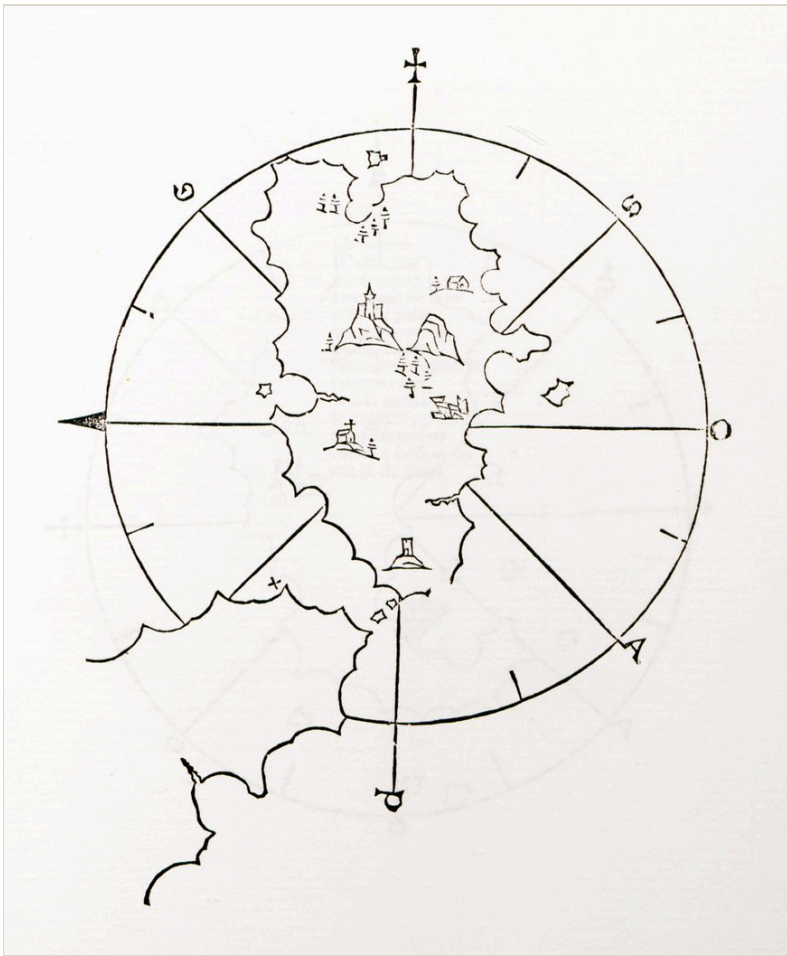
The island drawn, 1420–1809

Seven maps of one island, four centuries apart. Read in order they are not seven pictures of Tinos; they are one picture of how Tinos was *known* — and what is striking is how late the guesswork stops. The coast is still approximate in 1717. It is finally right in 1809, drawn for the first time by a man from the island.



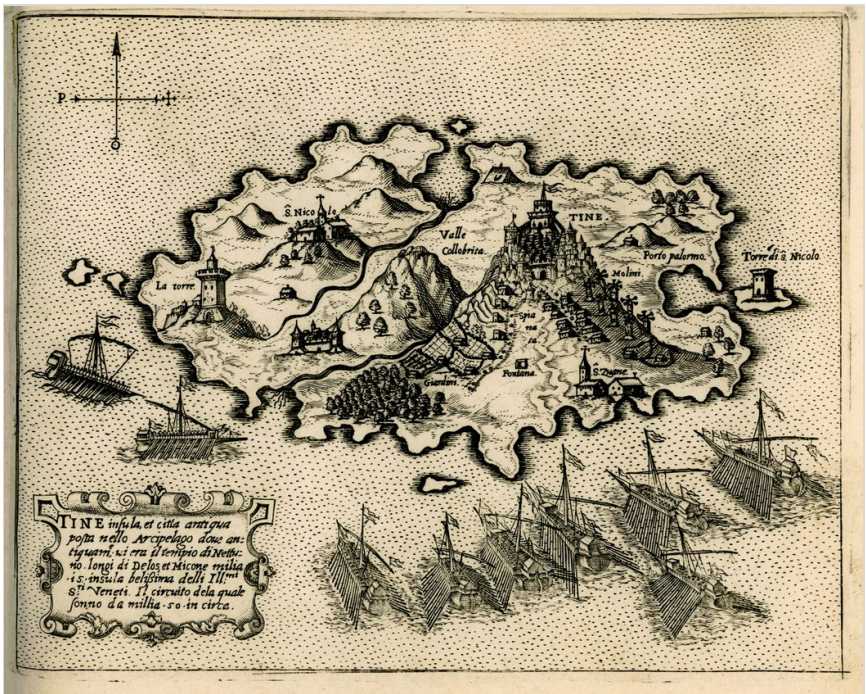
C. 1420 · CRISTOFORO BUONDELONTI

A Florentine priest living on Rhodes drew every island in the Aegean and wrote a description beside each. There is no coastline: Tinos is a rock with a fortified town on it, the sea washed in around it, and the monks' islet — *Caloieros* — set in the channel. The text beside it derives the name from the island's roundness. It is not a survey. It is what a traveller remembered.



C. 1485 · BARTOLOMEO DALLI SONETTI

This is the first *printed* map of Tinos, cut in wood and set inside a wind rose, with the eight winds lettered around the rim and the rhumb lines ruled straight across the island. It is not drawn for a reader who wants the shape of the place. It is drawn for one who has to reach it: the lines are courses.



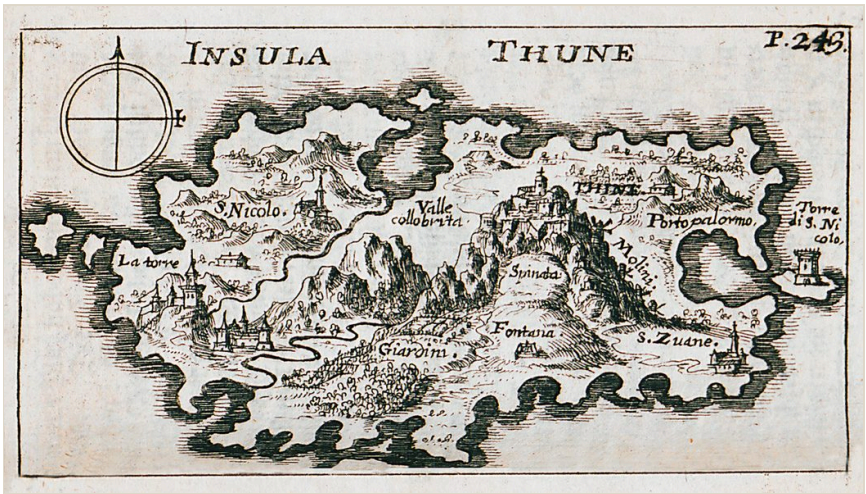
1566–74 · GIOVAN FRANCESCO CAMOCIO

Published in Venice in the Lepanto years, in an atlas of places the war was being fought over — which is why a war fleet is drawn in the water below the island. The coast is still largely invention. The things a war atlas cannot get wrong are not: the fortress, *La torre*, *Porto palermo*, and the *Molini*, the windmills of chapter iii. The cartouche calls it *insula bellissima delli Ill.mi S.ri Venetiani*.



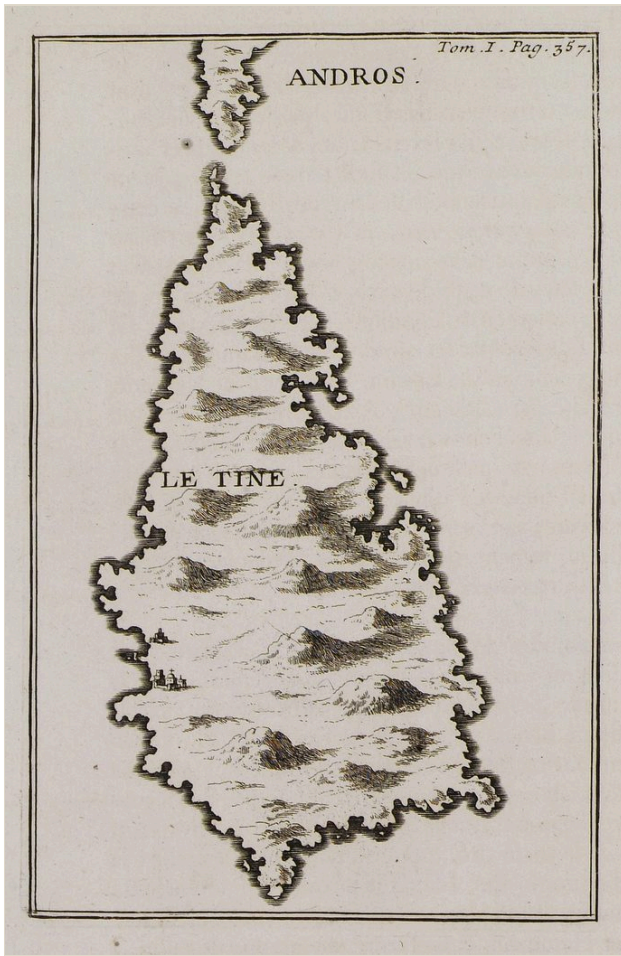
1658 · MARCO BOSCHINI

Tinos and Andros as a pair, with the strait between them and the *Caloiero* rock drawn in it — the same rock Buondelmonti set in the same channel two hundred and forty years earlier, at the head of this gallery. *Panormo* is named at the top of the island. It is the harbour of the marble villages, and it is still the official name of Pyrgos today. Latin lords had held Tinos for four hundred and fifty-one years when this was printed — the Republic itself for two hundred and sixty-eight of them — and there were fifty-seven left.



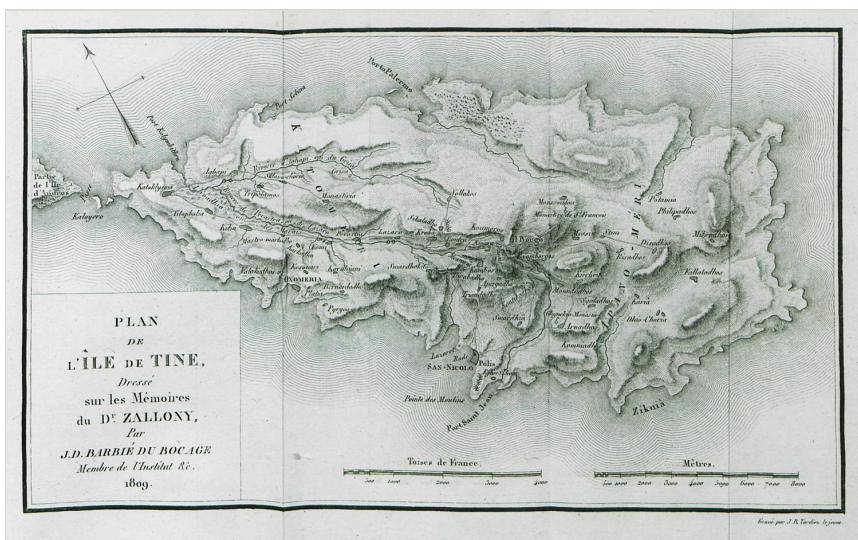
1687 · JACOB VON SANDRART

Set this beside the Camocio above it. *Insula Thune* is the same map redrawn a hundred and thirteen years later — the same hills, the same *Valle collobrita*, the same *Molini* and *Giardini* and *Fontana*, place for place, with the galleys removed. Printed geography copied itself for a century and more. What the reader of 1687 was looking at was Venice in the 1570s.



1717 · JOSEPH PITTON DE TOURNEFORT

Tournefort was a botanist sent out by Louis XIV, and he is the witness behind the silk figure in chapter iv and the sentence tested in chapter xxvi. He was on the island in December 1700; the book carrying this map appeared in 1717. The mountains are still drawn as humps and the coast is still approximate — but for the first time, the man responsible for the map had walked on the ground.



1809 · MARKOS FILIPPOS ZALLONY, ENGRAVED BY BARBIÉ DU BOGAGE

The first survey, and the end of four centuries of guesswork: contours, watercourses, and the villages named one by one — Pyrgos, Komi, Xinara, Koumaros, Loutra, Tripotamos. The rock is marked *Exomborgos* and the settlement beside it is still labelled *Il Borgo*, ninety-four years after the fortress was given up. Zallony was a Tinian doctor writing about his own island. This is the first map of Tinos made by someone from the island.

Sources, in order: Royal Museums Greenwich (original public domain; the museum asserts rights in the photograph); then Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, via travelogues.gr · CC BY-NC 4.0 for the remaining six. An eighth, the Ottoman chart of Piri Reis from the 1520s, is in chapter i, where it belongs to the argument about the island's name. Three more early views of Tinos appear in this book but not in this gallery — Basilicata's survey of 1618, Coronelli's plan of about 1707 and the Struys view of 1681. They are in chapter xiv, where they are used as evidence about the fortress rather than shown as maps.



I

Τῆνος · Tine · İstendil

Tinos — *TEE-nos*

The island has been called the watery one, the snake island, and “to Tinos”

Every ruler renamed it, and each name records what that ruler noticed. Two of them are ancient and mean opposite-sounding things which turn out to be the same thing. One of them is a Greek sentence that an empire mistook for a noun.

Τῆνος — and nobody knows what it means

The island is Tenos from the earliest surviving mention and never wavers. Herodotus calls it that, and so do its own coins: TH, THNI, and in full THNIΩΝ — *of the Tenians* — struck from the fourth century BC to the first century AD.

What the word means is unknown. No Greek or Indo-European derivation commands assent, and the probability is that it is a pre-Greek name, from whoever was here before anyone who left a written language. Most Cycladic island names are in that position, and honest scholarship leaves them there.

Two derivations circulate and both should be treated with care. One makes it Phoenician, from a root meaning *snake* — but that was proposed by **Samuel Bochart in 1646**, a Hebraist who derived half the Mediterranean from Phoenician, and it was invented in order to explain the island’s other name. It

is now quoted as evidence *for* that name, which is circular. The other invents a founder called Tenos, or in one version a princess banished by her father to a serpent-infested island, who burned the snakes out and gave the place her name. That is the standard Greek habit of manufacturing an ancestor out of a place-name, backwards.

Ὑδροῦσσα — the watery one

The best-attested of the alternative names, and the only one with a named authority behind it. Pliny the Elder, writing in the first century AD, says that Aristotle called the island *Hydrusa*, and gives the reason: *propter aquarum abundantiam*, on account of the abundance of its waters. Aristotle's own text is lost, so Pliny is the only witness — but a named fourth-century-BC authority with a stated reason is as good as this kind of evidence gets.

Ὀφιοῦσσα — the snake island

Real, but thinner than the stories suggest, and worth setting out exactly.

In the same sentence of the same book, Pliny adds four words: *aliqui Ophiusam* — “some call it Ophioussa,” snake island, from ὄφις. He names no authority. He does not say the island had snakes. He offers no etymology.

Every later account of Tinos swarming with serpents is an inference laid on top of those four words.

It also needs saying that Ophioussa was a floating label. Pliny himself applies it to Rhodes and to a town on the Dniester; it is used of Formentera, which the Romans also called *Colubraria*, and of the Portuguese coast. It was the Greek for *Snake Island* in the way English has a dozen Snake Islands. Being called Ophioussa tells you what somebody thought about a place, not which place it was.

POSEIDON AND THE STORKS

The story that Poseidon rid the island of its snakes by sending storks to eat them — which is why the great sanctuary at Kionia was his — is charming and very widely repeated. Its chain of custody is worth knowing.

The earliest text that actually tells it is Tournefort, writing after his visit of 1700: « *Hésychius de Milet nous apprend que Neptune s'était servi de cigognes pour les exterminer ; il faut que cela soit vrai, ou que la race de ces reptiles en soit éteinte, puisqu'on n'y en voit plus.* » — Hesychius of Miletus tells us that Neptune used storks to exterminate them; either that must be true, or the breed has died out, since none are seen there now.

Hesychius of Miletus was a sixth-century AD Byzantine compiler who survives only in fragments, and the fragment in question has not been located. The story is not in Pliny, Strabo, Aristotle or Aelian. What *is* in Pliny is a stork law — but it belongs to Thessaly, where killing one carried the penalty for homicide, because they destroyed snakes.

So: tell it as Tournefort tells it, name him, and let the reader see that the chain is three names long and ends in the dark.

Two things should be cleared away. There is no cult title *Poseidon Ophiouchos*; Ὀφιοῦχος, the Serpent-Bearer, belongs to Asklepios and to the constellation. And there is no stork on the coinage — which is a pity, because the coinage is otherwise emphatically Poseidon's: the trident, the dolphin, Poseidon standing and seated, Amphitrite beside him, and before all of them a bunch of grapes on a T-shaped stalk.

BUT THE ISLAND REALLY IS FULL OF SNAKES

This is the part nobody expects. The standard checklist of Greek reptiles records **eight snake species on Tinos**, including the nose-horned viper, *Vipera ammodytes* — the most dangerous snake in Europe — along with the sand boa, the large whip snake, the four-lined snake, the leopard snake, the cat snake, and **both** European water snakes.

Against its neighbours that is a high count: Delos 2, Paros 4, Andros 6, Syros 6, Mykonos 6 — and Tinos 8, level with Naxos, which is about twice its size.

And the water snakes close the circle. Water snakes need permanent water. *Hydroussa* and *Ophioussa* are not two competing names. They are the same fact, stated twice.

The geology explains both. Tinos is built of impermeable schist over granite, which is a machine for making springs — the reason it has water where Mykonos and Delos have none. Add several hundred kilometres of rubble-cored, sun-warmed, rodent-filled dry-stone terrace wall, and the island becomes about as good a snake habitat as the Aegean offers. That last step is reasoning rather than a citation, but it is hard to avoid.

And yet the island itself does not remember any of it. There is no Tinian place-name in $\phi\iota\delta$ - or $\phi\phi\iota$ -, no chapel of the snake, no custom. *Ophioussa* is a bookish name that came back to Tinos through Pliny and the travellers. It is not a name the island kept.

THERE IS A SECOND TENOS — AND THE SNAKE STORY MAY BELONG TO IT

This is offered as a suggestion, not a finding, but it accounts for more of the evidence than anything else does.

There was another ancient place called Tenos, in Thessaly. Its site is lost and almost nothing is known about it — except for the one thing it was famous for. It appears in *On Marvellous Things Heard*, a compilation that travelled under Aristotle's name, at chapter 151, and what it is noted for in ancient folklore is **a remarkable venomous snake, and that snake's equally remarkable destruction.**

Now set the pieces beside one another. Pliny attributes *Hydroussa*, for the Cycladic island, to Aristotle — so he was reading Aristotelian material about a Tenos. The Aristotelian corpus contains a famous snake story attached to a *different* Tenos. Pliny then adds, without naming anyone, that “some” call the island Ophioussa. And the classical law protecting storks because they kill snakes belongs, as Pliny himself records elsewhere, to Thessaly — where the other Tenos was.

Snakes destroyed, storks that destroy them, and two towns with the same name, one of them in the region where both stories are set.

If that is what happened, then the reputation was transferred from a lost town in Thessaly to an island in the Cyclades by someone reading too quickly, and it has stuck for two thousand years.

But notice which half of the story would have travelled. **The snakes on Tinos are real** — eight species of them, more than any neighbour, and a viper. What is imported is not the serpents. It is the ending.

And the ending is the one part we can be certain is false. Nobody drove the snakes out of this island. They are still here.

And the ending keeps being made

Above Kampos, in the courtyard of the museum that Costas Tsoclis opened here in 2011 — an Athenian painter, born in 1930, with no Tinian blood, who came to this island and stayed and gave it a museum — a serpent lies across the paving. A scaled metal body in a long double curve, the tail in one corner and the head at the far wall. **A lance runs the length of the terrace and into its back.** At the top of the lance, mounted on the wall, is the rider: a rearing horse cut in relief, and of the saint himself only an arm, a hand and a halo.

Αη Γιώργης. Not the church's Άγιος Γεώργιος but the vernacular — St George as a villager says him. That is the artist's own title. The rest, from the museum in writing: **1990; a sculptural installation eighteen metres long; painting, aluminium and screens.** 

It is monumental in the plain sense of the word: it does not fit indoors, and it is not meant to. The dragon is the size of the courtyard and the saint is the size of a hand.

Which is Poseidon and the storks in Christian dress. And the princess who burned the snakes out. And Pliny's four words. **The same story, made for the fourth time, on the same island, by a man who was not born here.**



Saint George, at Kampos — the scale of it. The dragon crosses the courtyard; the lance crosses it the other way. The saint is on the wall at the far end, and at this distance he is almost not there — which leaves the serpent as the largest figure on the terrace, and by some distance the most alive.

Κώστας Τσόκλης, *Άη Γιώργης* (1990): painting, aluminium and screens. Costas Tsoclis Museum, Kampos. Author's photograph, August 2026, by permission of the museum.



The panel, close to. The rider is an arm, a hand and a halo; the horse rears; and the lance is a real steel rod that leaves the carved frame, crosses the open paving behind the viewer and goes into the dragon's back. *The saint is barely represented. The killing is fully built.*

Author's photograph, August 2026, by permission of the museum.

The oldest alternative name this island has means *snake island*. The largest thing an artist has made on it in living memory is a snake being killed. In between lie two thousand years of people insisting the job was finished — and eight species still living in the walls.

Tine — the name in the title of this book

Through the Venetian centuries and in every traveller who came, the island is Tine. It is Tine in Buondelmonti's island-book of 1420, in dalli Sonetti's of 1485, in Boschini's Venetian atlas of 1658, on Coronelli's engravings, and in Wheler, who wrote in 1682 that "Tine was anciently called Tinos." *Tino*, the form modern Italian uses, is a later regularisation.

How Τῆνος became *Tine* has not, as far as I can find, been studied. The obvious mechanism does not fit: several Aegean islands acquired their western names by swallowing a Greek preposition — Astypalaia became *Stampalia*, Kos became *Stanchio*, Naxos became *Nicsia* — and Tine shows no sign of it. Simple Italianisation is the likeliest answer, and it is safer to say "the Venetian form" than to assert a derivation nobody has demonstrated.

İSTENDİL — AN EMPIRE MISTAKING A SENTENCE FOR A NAME

The Ottoman name for the island was **İstendil**. the Ottoman admiral and cartographer Piri Reis labels it so on his chart; an Ottoman narrative of the 1715 campaign speaks of anchoring "before the fortress of the island of İstendil."

The decisive witness is **Bernard Randolph in 1687**, who writes it without the initial vowel: "*TINE, formerly called TENOS. And by the Turks Stendill.*" Strip the Turkish prothetic *i* — Turkish cannot begin a word *st-*, which is why Istanbul, İzmir and İznik look as they do — and *Stendil* is the Greek phrase εἰς τὴν Τῆnov, "**to Tinos.**"

It is the same accident that produced Istanbul from εἰς τὴν πόλιν, "to the city." Sailors asked where a ship was going; the answer was heard as the name of the place. For a hundred years of Ottoman rule the island was officially called a Greek sentence about arriving at it.



İstendil, in the Ottoman hand. Tinos and Andros on the chart of Piri Reis, from the *Kitāb-ı Bahriye* — the Book of Navigation, compiled in the 1520s; this is a seventeenth-century copy. It is the only map in this book made by the power that eventually took the island, and the only one in colour: the coasts edged in gold and rose, the hills stacked like scales, the anchorages marked for a captain rather than a reader. The island is labelled with the name argued over in this chapter. Piri Reis — born at Gelibolu about 1470, nephew of the admiral Kemal Reis, maker of the world map of 1513, executed at Cairo in 1553 — wrote the text beside this chart in 1521, and he wrote it as a pilot writes: the island seventy miles round, a high round mountain for a seamark, a harbour with water and an islet in it, Porto San Nikola with its church, a sharp cape, the gulf of San Zuane, and the one-mile strait to Andros with its two islets. Of the island's past he says only that “the winds of hearsay carry this tale” — once prosperous, laid waste by a king from the west, rebuilt by a lord who raised a castle — and then: “Now this castle belongs to Venice.” The one Ottoman voice in this book describes a Venetian island, and it was a hundred and ninety-four years before the navy that knew every anchorage of Tinos in 1521 came for it.

Walters Art Museum, W.658, fol. 117a · CC0

WHAT THIS ISLAND HAS BEEN CALLED

FORM	LANGUAGE AND PERIOD	MEANING	GRADE
Τήνος · Tenos	Greek — from the earliest sources to today	Unknown. Probably pre-Greek	A
Ὑδροῦσσα · Hydroussa	Greek — reported from Aristotle, 4c BC	“The watery one” — for its springs	B
Ὀφιοῦσσα · Ophioussa	Greek — undated; “some”, in Pliny	“Snake island”	C
Tenos · Tinos	Latin — Roman period on	Transliteration	A
Tine	Venetian and early-modern Italian — c. 1207 to 1715, and in travel writing beyond	Italianisation; mechanism unestablished	A
Tino	Standard Italian — modern	Regularised form of the above	A
Stendil	Levantine sailors’ usage — 17c	From εἰς τὴν Τήνον,	C
İstendil	Ottoman Turkish — 16c to 1821	“to Tinos”	B
Τήνος	Modern Greek — 1821 on	—	A

The people are Τήνιοι, Tenians, in antiquity — the word on the coins — and Τηνιακοί, Tinians, today.

NOTE **And “Tine la Fedele” — the title of this book — cannot be traced**

The epithet is quoted in the modern literature on Venetian Greece — Faithful Tinos, the island Venice could rely on — and it is repeated wherever the 1715 surrender is discussed. But I have not been able to find it in any Venetian document, inscription or contemporary text, and a search of **B. J. Slot’s** *Archipelagus Turbatus* — the archival history of the Cyclades, built directly from the Venetian, Ottoman, Dutch and Roman records, and the work this book leans on most — does not turn up *fedele* or *fidèle* once.

It may well be a modern historian's phrase for a documented fact rather than a phrase Venice used. The fact itself is not in doubt: Tinos gave itself to Venice voluntarily in 1390, kept the arrangement for three hundred and twenty-five years, and was the last thing the Republic held in this sea.

Where it would be found, if it is anywhere: the Senate deliberations and the reports of the rectors of Tine in the State Archives of Venice.

PART ONE

The Land

Water and the wind that keeps what the water grows; the silk that was the island's wealth and vanished; marble, and the pierced stone above the doors; the paths, the lime, the table — and the horizon the island looks out at.



II

Ύδροῦσσα

Hydroussa — *the same hydro- as in hydraulic*

Everything on this island begins with the fact that it has water

The Cyclades are dry. Tinos is not, and that single accident of geology explains the terraces, the cattle, the cheeses, the artichokes, the mills, the dovecotes, the population it once carried and the food it became known for.

The oldest name recorded for the island is Ύδροῦσσα, *Hydroussa* — the watery one. It is not a poetic flourish. Tinos rises to 750 metres at Tsiknias, catches what the surrounding sea gives up, and holds it in springs and streams

where its neighbours hold nothing. Compare Folegandros or Anafi: austere islands, austere food, and no amount of history would have changed either.

What the islanders did with the water is the more interesting half. The mountain slopes were cut into terraces from top to bottom — hundreds of kilometres of dry-stone retaining wall, built and rebuilt over centuries, mostly under Venetian rule and extended after it. The terraces are usually described as soil retention. They are also, and more importantly, **a hydraulic system**: each wall slows the run-off, holds the rain in the ground long enough to recharge the water table, and so feeds both the crops above and the watermills in the valleys below. Wind ground the grain on the ridges; water ground it in the valleys; both were ultimately powered by dry-stone walling.

THE WORD FOR A WALL THAT HAS FALLEN

Tinians call a collapsed dry-stone structure β'λήστρες — *vlistres*. That a dialect has a specific noun for this tells you how common the event is, and how much of the island's surface is walling.

DOCUMENTED **The terraces are largely Venetian-period work, and they were built for food, not for silk**

Most of the island's terracing dates to the period of Venetian rule, 1390–1715, with further expansion in the eighteenth century after the Ottoman takeover. The purpose was subsistence food production for a dense population — wine, oil, vegetables — rather than any single cash crop.

This matters because it is tempting to attribute the terraces to the silk boom. The landscape scholarship does not support that, and says nothing about mulberries at all.

Maria Vidali, on landscape and community on Tinos

DISPUTED **How many dovecotes are there? Nobody has counted them — except once**

The figures in circulation — the table below holds them — are almost never attributed. One real count exists: **962 dovecotes documented individually** in research by Manthos Prelorentzos. And the Tinos dovecote society, founded in 1975, has restored 148 of them in fifty years.

The dovecotes are Venetian-period infrastructure and their point was never only meat. They produced **manure**, and manure is what made thin Cycladic terraces productive. Venice’s most consequential contribution to how this island eats may be a fertiliser system.

Prelorentzos, via Sustainable Cyclades; Cyclades24, 2025; Piperno

HOW MANY DOVECOTES?

FIGURE	SOURCE	GRADE
962, counted individually	Research by Manthos Prelorentzos	
“More than 1,000”, of which 148 restored since 1975	Tinos dovecote society, 2025	
“About 1,000”	Unattributed	
800	Travel press	
600 · 1,300	No live source found	

The honest answer to “how many dovecotes” is that one person has counted and everyone else has estimated.

DOCUMENTED **Water was owned, and allocated by the clock**

At Kampos, water was simultaneously private, communal and public. The village had a central spring with hoses run along the paths, and allocation was

by contracted time, not by measured volume. Disputes arose when a household overran its turn.

It is a small detail and it tells you a great deal: on an island defined by having water, water was still scarce enough to be rationed by the minute.

Maria Vidali, fieldwork at Kampos

NOTE **Windmills: about eighty, and the millers were the island's meteorologists**

The usual figure is around **80**; one source says “more than 100”. Neither cites an inventory. They first appear under Venetian rule, stand three storeys, and carry eight antennae with triangular sails on a turning cap.

Mills were sited at roads and crossroads so that flour was easier to carry away. Millers were said to be the best amateur weather-readers on the island. During the Second World War they ground illegally at night, at risk of their lives. Tinos exported flour during the Greek Revolution. Working mills ceased in the 1950s; a few survived into the 1980s.

Watermills are documented at Lazaros, Agapi, Perastra and Marouli.

Tinosecret; Greeka; Tinos Trails route notes

What is underneath, and the one place you can stand on it

Tinos is **not volcanic**, and it is not on the South Aegean volcanic arc. Santorini and Milos are; this island is not. ^A The claim turns up constantly in the Greek press — a mainstream travel site had the Volax boulders thrown out of a volcano twenty million years ago as recently as 2022 — so this is not a straw man.

What lies under Tinos is an exhumed metamorphic core complex: marble and schist that were sediments dragged sixty or eighty kilometres down a

subduction zone and brought back up again. Into the eastern part of it a body of **monzogranite to granodiorite** was intruded, molten, and cooled slowly in the dark in the Miocene, somewhere in a window of roughly **fourteen to eighteen million years ago**. A *a range, not a date, because the published ages are a range.* Its coarse interlocking crystals are the proof of the slow cooling: rock erupted at the surface chills fine-grained, and this did not.

The boulder field at Volax is that granite, and the process that made it is the opposite of what it looks like. Granite cracks as it cools, into a three-dimensional grid of joints. Water works down the joints and rots the rock inward from every face it can reach. A corner is attacked from three sides and an edge from two, so the blocks round themselves from the inside out, leaving an unweathered core inside a shell of crumbling grit. Then the rain carries the soft material away and the rounded cores are left standing on the surface.

So the giants did not throw them and no volcano threw them up. They were always there, inside the hill. The rain took the hill away.



Volax, August 2026. Granite corestones, weathered round from the inside out and left standing when the rain took the hill away. The wall in the foreground is built of the same stone, broken; the chapel on the left is one of the seven hundred and fifty; and the sheep have found the only flat ground for a hundred metres.

Author's photograph, August 2026.

One thing should be added, because it is nearly true rather than true. **No study devoted to the Volax boulder field has been found** — no monograph, no paper whose subject it is. A doctoral thesis of 2008 mapped Tinos's granite weathering forms, its tors and its corestones, without, so far as can be established, naming the place where they are most spectacular. **B** *the thesis has not been read in full.*

But the landform is not unrecorded. A geoheritage survey of the island published in 2025 names Volax directly, sets out exactly the process described above — *“chemical weathering along joint systems and fractures penetrates the granite, rounding off angular edges and progressively isolating core stones*

that remain exposed as tors following the removal of the surrounding weathered mantle” — and formally designates two geosites here: the tors of the Volax area, and the corestones of the Falatados–Volax–Livada stretch. A A geomorphological survey of 2001 had already put “the Steni–Volax area” and spheroidal weathering in the same sentence. B

So the rock has a literature, and the landform has a paragraph inside it. What it does not have is a book of its own. **For the most photographed hundred hectares on this island, that is still a gap.**

And the other one-craft village

Tinos has exactly two entries in the Greek National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. One is the marble carving of the Exo Meri, which has chapter v to itself. The other is **basket weaving at Volax**, inscribed in 2019.

A

Volax had **thirty-six inhabitants** at the 2021 census, against fifty-one in 2011 — a fall of nearly a third in ten years, on an island that grew over the same decade.

The craft established itself there in the second half of the eighteenth century because the land was poor; demand grew after 1823 with the pilgrim traffic, fell away after the 1920s, and collapsed after 1940 with the emigration. The materials are reed, willow rods and *lygariá*, each cut in its season — reed in January, willow in July and August, *lygariá* from September to March — and the rods are cut at the **full moon**, so that they will not rot. That last is not folklore collected by a journalist; it is in the state’s own dossier. A

The men wove; the women prepared the materials. They worked in the κατώι, the ground floor of the house. They made the καλάθι, the πανέρι, the κοφίνι, and the **χαλικολόγος**, a big stone-carrying basket made of *lygariá* alone. And

they made them to order and sold them **for money or in kind**, many of them to the neighbouring islands.

Then the count, which is chapter xxiv's whole argument reduced to one craft in one village: **thirteen basket weavers in the 1980s; nine in the early 2000s; three in December 2018.** A

PYRGOS AND VOLAX ARE THE SAME SOCIAL FORM POINTED AT TWO DIFFERENT MARKETS

Alekos Florakis — the authority this book uses for the fanlights and the armorials — calls Volax a **μονοτεχνικό χωριό**, a one-craft village, and wrote a monograph about it. B

One of the island's two inscribed crafts exported sculptors to Athens, Smyrna and Alexandria. The other sold stone-baskets to the next island along, for money or in kind. Same island, same century, same social arrangement — a village that does one thing — and two completely different ideas of what a market is.

That Florakis applies the same term to Pyrgos is this book's reading and not yet verified from his text.

One more thing, because it is hard to better as a fact about a small place: this village of thirty-six people built itself an **open-air theatre** — rows of marble seats for a few hundred, put up by the village association in the 1990s — and still maintains it out of donations. C *the village's own account of it was published on a website that was rebuilt in February 2026, taking the detail with it.*



III

Τὸ Μελτέμι

to Meltémi — *to mel-TEH-mee* — *the etesian wind*

The wind is not weather here. It is the machine the island runs on

Water made this island fertile. The wind made it possible to keep what the water grew. Nearly everything in the rest of this chapter — the cured pork, the pierced marble, the eighty windmills, the threshing floors, the cheese in its gourd — is a way of using it.

Two names, and both of them tell you something

The Greeks called these winds the **ἐτησία**, *etesiai* — from ἔτος, *year*. They named them for their reliability. A wind that arrives every summer without fail and can be planned around is not weather; it is a season, and they gave it the word for the year itself.

The name in use today is Meltemi, and its likeliest origin is the Italian *mal tempo* — **bad weather**.

So on an island that spent five centuries under Venice, the great wind of the Aegean carries an Italian name meaning *bad weather* — and the people who live here do not think it is bad at all. They think it is the reason the food keeps.

What it is, in plain terms: a strong, dry, cool northerly, blowing from about mid-May to mid-September, driven by the pressure difference between a high over the Balkans and the deep summer depression over south-west Asia. It reaches force 7 or 8 on the Beaufort scale. And — the detail that governs the day here — **it is strongest in the afternoon and often dies away at night.**

What the old people say it does

The knowledge passed down on this island is specific, and it is about dryness rather than about coolness:

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE WIND

WHAT IT DOES	WHY IT MATTERS HERE
Takes the humidity out of the air	The single most useful thing a summer wind can do on an island with no refrigeration
Good for the crops, and better for storing them	Grain, figs, cheese, cured meat — all of them keep because the air is dry
Less sickness	Dry air suppresses mould and rot, and standing water does not last. Held here as inherited knowledge rather than as a studied finding — but the mechanism is real
Natural air conditioning	It is a cool northerly at the hottest time of year

Everything in this part of the book is downstream of it

Read the following chapters again with the wind in mind and they stop being separate subjects.

The signature food of Tinos is made of wind. Λούζα is pork loin salted, steeped in wine, and then *hung to dry in moving air*. Without a reliable dry

northerly it does not cure; it rots. The same is true of the sausages, of the figs, and of the *myzina* that is smoked and then air-dried.

The cheese toolkit is a dry toolkit. This island preserves cheese in a gourd sealed with flour paste, under a marble slab, in a woven basket — never in oil, as the oil islands do. Dry methods work where the air is dry.

The fanlights are ventilation. The pierced marble above the doors exists to move air through a shut house — and a house is shut, in summer, precisely because the Meltemi is blowing.

The windmills are the wind made into flour. Around eighty of them, three storeys high, eight arms apiece. They exist because the wind here is dependable enough to build a stone tower on.

And the threshing floors could not work without it. Winnowing is throwing grain into the air and letting the wind take the chaff away. The circular stone *ἀλώνια* of this island are sited to catch it. No wind, no bread.

THE WIND ALSO SET THE SAILING

A steady northerly makes the Aegean easy to run down and hard to beat back up. That single fact shaped the corsairs' year in chapter xiii — they wintered in the Cyclades and worked south and east in season — and it is why the pilgrim ships of August have always had a rough crossing.

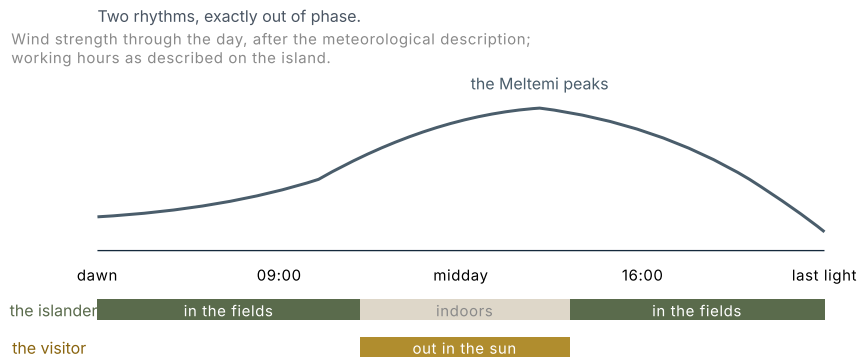
Which is worth noticing: **the largest religious gathering in Greece takes place at the height of the worst wind of the year.** Nobody moved it.

Two different days on the same island

Here is the observation that gives the whole thing away, and you can watch it happen every August.

The islander’s day is built *around* the middle of it. Out at first light, work through the cool of the morning, indoors for the worst of the heat and the worst of the wind, then out again and work until the light goes. It is an old shape and it is a rational one — because the Meltemi peaks in the afternoon, exactly when the sun does.

The visitor’s day is the inverse. The visitor shelters from the wind and seeks the midday sun — lying still, in the open, at the one hour the people who live here have spent three thousand years going indoors.



C The Meltemi is strongest in the afternoon and drops at night. The island’s working day is shaped to avoid the peak; the holiday is shaped to sit in it.

THE SCULPTOR ANTONIS SOHOS, OF YSTERNIA

« Et que dire du vent toujours présent, **aiguillon permanent de l'intelligence, de la création et de l'éveil au beau.** »

And what of the ever-present wind — that permanent goad to intelligence, to creation, to the awakening of beauty.

A man who spent his life cutting marble on this island did not describe the wind as a nuisance to be endured. He described it as the thing that would not let him settle — and gave it the credit for what he made.



I V

Μετάξι

metáxi — *me-TAK-see* — silk

Silk was the wealth of this island, and then it was cut down for firewood

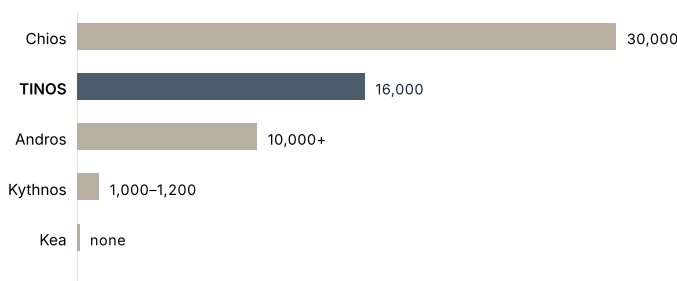
Tinos ran a substantial silk economy for at least a century and a half, out-produced the neighbour now remembered for it, and wrote silk into its own act of submission to Venice. Then the trade collapsed and the mulberries went into the fires. It survives mostly as a rumour, which is why it is worth setting down.

TOURNEFORT, ON TINOS, ABOUT 1700

« La soye fait aujourd’huy la richesse de Tine ; chaque année on y en recueille environ seize mille livres pesant. »

Silk today makes the wealth of Tinos; each year about sixteen thousand pounds weight of it are gathered there.

Joseph Pitton de Tournefort was a botanist sent to the Levant by Louis XIV. He stood on this island around 1700 and wrote that sentence, and then — being the kind of man he was — he wrote the same sentence for every other island he visited, with the numbers. That accident of method produced the only genuinely comparable set of figures for Aegean silk that exists, and on it **Tinos comes second only to Chios, ahead of Andros.**



French livres of silk gathered per year, as recorded by Tournefort, c. 1700

C One observer, one journey, one unit — which is what makes the comparison worth anything. **A warning on the unit:** if Tournefort means the French *livre poids de marc* (489.5 g), Tinos produced about 7.8 tonnes; if he is reporting a Venetian *libbra sottile* (301 g), about 4.8. Read the figure as a range, not a tonnage.

An independent survey of Cycladic industry describes Andros and Tinos as having almost monopolised silk in the islands, both of them “*covered with mulberry trees*”, each exporting some 6,000 *okades* — about 7,690 kg, which agrees with Tournefort to within two per cent. That agreement is suspicious

rather than reassuring: it probably means the later figure is derived from the earlier one. Treat them as one measurement, not two.

Silk was in the contract

This is the fact that reframes the whole subject, and it comes from the Venetian archives.

When the Tinians submitted to Venice in 1390, the agreement **stipulated that the production and export of silk must remain free**. The lordship's revenues were confined to lesser levies on less interesting products. For three centuries Venice, whose administration on Tinos ran at a loss, kept returning to the obvious solution — tax the island's single most lucrative activity — and kept being told it could not. The proposal met, in Slot's words, *vehement opposition*. All the old documents on Tinian privileges were pulled and studied. And then:

« En 1714, quand la guerre éclata, on n'était pas encore arrivé à une décision. »

In 1714, when the war broke out, no decision had yet been reached.

B. J. Slot, *Archipelagus Turbatus*

The Republic ran out of time before it ran out of arguments.

DOCUMENTED **How it was actually made — and Tinos kept the profitable step**

A dedicated room in the house held wooden trays — κρεβάτες — spread with mulberry leaves, on which the worms fed through the spring until they spun. The reeling equipment was deliberately simple: a hearth, a cauldron of hot

water for the cocoons, a thorned stick to catch the filament, and a reel to wind the thread.

Crucially, **Tinos exported thread, not raw cocoons** — it kept the value-adding step at home. The island also knitted μεταξοβάμβακα, silk-and-cotton goods. The fine weaving happened elsewhere: Kea and Mykonos wove cloth *using Tinian and Andriot silk*, and Kea produced no raw silk of its own at all.

Christina Agriantoni; Tournefort

DOCUMENTED **Venice tried to corner the trade with a tariff, and failed**

Tournefort records the mechanism precisely: those shipping silk to Venice paid **no export duty at all**; those shipping it anywhere else paid three and three-quarter écus. Venice had attempted to monopolise Tinian silk and, as the economic historians put it, did so *without success*. Tournefort's own phrasing — they pay *only* three and three-quarter écus a hundredweight — suggests why: the penalty was too small to bite.

A newly ordained priest on Tinos paid three pounds of silk to the Venetian Provveditore and three more to the Latin bishop. Dues on the island were often collected in kind, and the kind was silk.

Tournefort, i. 465 and 467; Slot

DOCUMENTED **Why the trade died: not disease first, but a change in what buyers wanted**

The economic historian's verdict is that traditional Greek silk manufacture collapsed in the mid-nineteenth century **when mechanical reeling spread and foreign buyers began paying better for raw cocoons than for hand-reeled thread**. Households that had captured the reeling margin simply lost it.

Disease was the second blow. Bent, writing in 1885, dates the outbreak on Andros to about fifteen years earlier — around 1868–70.

Andros carried its silk into the industrial age and founded one of the oldest reeling mills in Greece. Tinos did not.

Christina Agriantoni; J. T. Bent, *The Cyclades* (1885)

HOW THE EVIDENCE WAS DESTROYED

Bent, on Kythnos: after the disease struck, “*the inhabitants cut down the mulberry trees for fuel.*” On Andros: “*Fifteen years ago disease attacked the worms, and numbers of fine mulberry trees were cut down and lemons planted.*”

Bent devotes a chapter to Tinos. He does not mention silk once.

Lacroix, writing in 1853, still describes the hillsides of Tinos as clothed with fig and **mulberry** trees which never grow tall — and never growing tall is precisely what happens to a tree pruned for its leaves. But Lacroix is a compiler who can be caught copying Tournefort elsewhere, so the date he implies should not be leaned on. The census is firmer: in 1860 the kingdom still counted 142,100 mulberry trees standing in the Cyclades; nobody counted Tinos’s separately. ^A What is safe is this: mulberries were a visible feature of this island within living memory of people alive in 1900, and by the time anyone thought to write the island’s history they were gone.

The count is the agricultural census of 1860, printed in Α. Μανσόλας, *Πολιτειογραφικαὶ πληροφορίες περὶ Ἑλλάδος* (Athens, 1867) — read in his own pages for this edition. His table stops at the prefecture.

And silk did one more thing, which outlasted it

The mulberries went, and the reeling went with them. What did not go was the skill, or the people who had it.

The women of this island, working the silk that was in the house anyway, had specialised in **knitting silk goods — above all stockings, which were known in Europe for how long they lasted.** That is a domestic occupation that is also a trade, and it gave them something almost no other women in the Aegean had: **work experience outside the house and the field.** A

Zallony, the island's own doctor, watched the stockings being made. Every winter, from the first of November until Palm Sunday, the villages kept the βεγγέρα: house by house in turn, from six in the evening until midnight or one — **the young women knitting silk stockings**, the married women spinning cotton, the older women the wool and the silk, the men telling their adventures in turn or reading a story aloud, the young women singing, and the host baking τυρόπιτες of fresh cheese, egg yolks and honey. C The stocking that lasted in Europe was made in that room.

He also wrote down what the silk cost, because as a doctor he kept the bill. The leaves were the women's work, and the mulberries were tall: *“some die on the spot; others die suffering from their wounds; few escape death, after lying bedridden for many months. These accidents are frequent.”* The worms themselves — **forty and fifty thousand to a house** — were kept in the bedrooms, the doors sealed against the cold air, until the silk was gathered. C

From the second half of the eighteenth century they began to take it abroad — to Smyrna, to Constantinople, to Thessaloniki, many of them travelling alone. What they were hired for in the end was domestic service rather than silk, and the reputation they earned there is set out in chapter xxv. But the historian who traces it puts the causation in one sentence, and it is the reason this chapter is not only about a dead trade:

Silk seems to have been the basic vehicle by which the women of Tinos entered the labour market.



Μαρμαροτεχνία

marmarotechnia — *mar-ma-ro-tekh-NEE-a* — the marble craft

Tinian hands cut the marble of neoclassical Athens and then carved the

Marble on Ilios is not one story but three laid end to end. There is an ancient and Byzantine substratum, thin but continuous, with finds from the fifth to the eighth centuries and evidence increasing from the tenth. There is a Venetian and post-Venetian craft, whose oldest surviving products are coats of arms of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries and whose first documented organised team is that of Ioannis Frangiskos Apergis of Pyrgos in 1662–64. And there is the explosion after 1830, when a new Greek state needed a capital built out of marble and this island happened to contain the people who knew how.

The Venetian contribution to that middle phase is stated plainly by the Ministry of Culture, and it is more interesting than “Venice liked art”. Four things came together: relative stability; patrons building mansions and churches; technical contact with Venice and with Venetian Crete; and — the point that actually matters — **a Catholic Church comfortable with figural sculpture where the Orthodox Church was not**. An island whose western half was Latin could carve human figures on its churches. Its neighbours could not.

DOCUMENTED **Venice was quarrying Tinian marble for St Mark’s by 1309**

In 1309 the Venetian Senate procured green-veined marble from Tinos for the Basilica of San Marco. The relationship between this island and that building is therefore four hundred years older than the fall of the fortress.

Ministry of Culture, National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage

DOCUMENTED **The apprenticeship: four years, and then a box of tools**

The hierarchy ran άφεντικό / πρωτομάστορης (master), μάστοροι (craftsmen), παραγιοί (apprentices). An apprentice began with the menial work — laying out the master’s tools, cleaning the shed — before being taught to carve and to draw. Most were family. The minimum term was four years, and on qualifying the apprentice was presented with a κασελάκι, a small chest containing his own set of tools: a ritual as much as a gift.

Workshops were μπαράγκα — semi-open sheds, timber frames clad with rhododendron twigs. Craftsmen formed temporary teams, κομπανίες, for large commissions and travelled with them.

About a quarter of practitioners today are women, in a craft that was formerly closed to them.

UNESCO ICH nomination file RL/01103; Ministry of Culture

Which buildings did they cut? The list has never been published

The Tinian contribution to neoclassical Athens is universally asserted — the University, the Academy, the Zappeion, the old Parliament, the National Library, the Archaeological Museum, work on the Parthenon restoration — and abroad to Constantinople, Smyrna, Odessa, Galați, Alexandria, Thessaloniki and Mount Athos. But it is asserted generically: **nobody has published a building-by-workshop attribution**. True at the level of families — Drossis, Vitalis and Fytalis worked on the Academy’s sculptural programme — but the detail sits unassembled in Greek monographs and the archive of the Museum of Marble Crafts at Pyrgos.

Which is worth knowing when you stand in front of the Academy: somebody from this island cut that, and no one can tell you who.

KEEP TWO ECONOMIES APART

Marble is the Exo Meri, the north-west: Pyrgos, Ysternia, Marlas, Mali, Panormos. The family villages of the Kato Meri — Kato Kleisma, Kalloni, Komi — are the agricultural side of the island. Both are Tinos; they are not the same Tinos, and this document keeps them separate.

Giannoulis Chalepas was born at Pyrgos on 14 August 1851, the son of a marble craftsman, studied in Athens and then in Munich on a scholarship from the Evangelistria foundation of his own island, and died in 1938. His house is a declared monument and was restored between 2023 and 2025. The School of Fine Arts and Marble Craftsmanship at Pyrgos was founded in 1955 and still runs, with around thirty-five students from across the country — far too late to have produced any historic fanlight, and frequently confused with the tradition it was founded to rescue.

The list is the history, and the order of it is the argument

The Greek state's inventory of the craft names the carved types that came off these benches, and the order of the list is the whole story in one line: **tomb slabs, then neoclassical funerary monuments, then war memorials.** (A) Not three trades. One trade, following its market. A village cutting grave markers for its neighbours in the seventeenth century was, by the end of the nineteenth, cutting monuments for cities it had never seen, and by the twentieth, cutting the memorials Greece put up to the men it lost — with the same tools, the same apprenticeship, and in several cases the same families.

The man from Ysternia who carved another island's unburied dead

Ermoupoli, on Syros, resolved to raise a monument to the unburied dead of the Greek Revolution. The commission was decided on 26 May 1880 and went to Georgios Vitalis, born at Ysternia on this island in 1838: a stele of a metre and a half by two and a half, a Thasian marble sarcophagus, a recumbent lion, and a kneeling woman cutting the epigram into the stone. It was inaugurated in 1887 and it is signed **Γ. ΒΙΤΑΛΗΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ 1880.** (B)

Vitalis had studied at Munich on a scholarship from the **Holy Foundation of the Evangelistria of Tinos** — granted by royal decree of 26 November 1864, three years, extended to 1872, in the workshop of Max von Widmann, a silver medal in 1868. (A) The same foundation pays the running costs of the marble school at Pyrgos today.

The money a man from Ysternia used to learn to carve a monument to the nameless dead of one island came from the offerings of pilgrims on another — and it is still paying for the same thing a hundred and forty years later.

Two things that get said about that monument, one contested and one simply wrong

It is read by some scholars as a forerunner of the Unknown Soldier monuments that came later. That reading is **attributed to Drakakis and it is disputed** — other nineteenth-century cenotaphic monuments exist with a different conceptual frame. Presented here as an argument, not a fact.

And the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Syntagma in Athens, of 1932, is **not** Tinian: it is by Emmanouil Lazaridis and Fokion Rok. This gets asserted; it is wrong. A

The most famous piece of modern Greek sculpture is a grave marker

The **Κοιμώμενη**, the Sleeping Maiden, was carved in marble by Yannoulis Chalepas of Pyrgos as the funerary monument of Sofia Afentaki, in the First Cemetery of Athens. She had died of tuberculosis; her uncle commissioned it. A newspaper notice of September 1879 already called it the most significant work in that cemetery. A

It is worth saying flatly, because the reproductions have turned it into a piece of gallery sculpture: **it is a grave marker**. It was made to be looked at by one family, in the open air, over a body.

The marble is still on the grave. A permanent transfer to the National Glyptothèque was announced in March 2017, with the family's consent, but no source records that it was carried out; the Glyptothèque shows a plaster cast made in 1980. B *The date of the carving is given as 1877, 1878, 1879 and 1880 by different institutions — Chalepas himself said 1880 — and this book does not choose between them.*

Where the archive is, and where it isn't

The Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, which runs the Museum of Marble Crafts at Pyrgos, put it in its own words when it took the Brotherhood of Tinians in Athens round the First Cemetery: from the second half of the nineteenth century, families of Tinian sculptors worked on the distinctive types of marble monument there — and it names them. Μαλακατέ, Φυτάλη, Δούκα, Στεργίου, Περάκη, and alongside them Φιλιππότη and Χαλεπά, whose work still stands over family graves. **B**

Seven Tinian names in a single sentence.

Now set beside it the official visitor guide to Athens, describing the same cemetery: the original craftsmen were from Tinos, and **the anonymous creators of the elaborate crosses and stone epitaphs were never recorded.**

B

Both statements are true. The names exist and were never written on the stones.

And the same is true one step further back. The cemetery at Pyrgos itself is repeatedly described as an open-air museum of marble carving — and **no published survey of it is traceable in any catalogue, database or heritage register in any language.** Not one verifiable signature, not one date, on one monument. **A** *as a negative — though Greek grey literature is poorly indexed, so this is an absence of findable record rather than a demonstrated absence of work.*

Tinian funerary monuments have been published — at Leonidio in Arcadia, on the mainland, where even there the tombs are unsigned and attributed. **The genre has been studied everywhere except on the island that made it.**

Gyzis and Lytras were painters, and a Tinian website has been calling one of them a sculptor

Nikolaos Gyzis, born at Sklavochori in 1842, and Nikiforos Lytras, born at Pyrgos in 1832, were **painters** — the two central figures of the Munich School of Greek painting. The island's own tourism site publishes Gyzis under the heading «Νικόλαος Γύζης, γλύπτης», sculptor, and the error spreads from there. **A**

Pyrgos and its neighbours produced both the fathers of modern Greek painting and its greatest sculptor. That is remarkable enough without confusing the two.

And the last thing to say about this trade is that it has not stopped

This chapter has been written in the past tense. The circuit abroad closed; the scholarships ended; the villages emptied. That is the honest shape of it, and it is why the chart of what this island has sold, in chapter xxv, gives the carvers' emigration abroad the shortest bar on its page.

But the bench is still there.



A lion of St Mark, carved on Tinos in 2026. The work of **Lorentzos Vidalis** — Λορέντζος Βιδάλης — photographed in his workshop in Kionia. The relief is finished and the ground behind it is not: you can see the whole method in one frame — the figure brought forward out of a block whose back is still as the saw left it. The open book under the paw reads *PAX TIBI MARCE EVANGELISTA MEVS*.

Photograph by the author, by kind permission of the sculptor.

The Republic of Venice ended in 1797. Its last Aegean possession had been given up eighty-two years before that.

And a Tinian is still cutting its lion, in Tinian marble, on Tinos, in the third decade of the twenty-first century — and cutting it well.

That is the argument of this whole part of the book, standing in a yard. The sovereignty went. The rite stayed, the terraces stayed, the surnames stayed — and so did the hands. What Venice actually left on this island was not a garrison or a flag or a system of law. It was a trade, and the trade outlived the state by three hundred years.

OPEN

A question this book cannot answer and the sculptor can

Vidalis — Βιδάλης — is a variant of Βιτάλης, and Georgios Vitalis of Ysternia is the man who carved Ermoupoli's monument to the unburied dead of the Revolution on an Evangelistria scholarship, earlier in this chapter. It is also one of the six surnames chapter xxvii uses to show what a Tinian telephone directory looks like.

Not to be confused with Maria Vidali, the architect who counted this island's chapels in chapter xxi. Different name, different person, and the resemblance is a coincidence of a small island's onomastics.

Whether there is a family line between the two is not something a search can settle, and this book does not assert one. It is a question for the man holding the chisel. Asked, he said it would be better to talk than to write — so the question stands, and stands honestly.

He answered two things that were not asked, and both belong in this book.

His name is Lorentzos Vidalis — Λορέντζος Βιδάλης, son of Lorentzos and Marietta, and registered as Λαυρέντιος, which is the same name wearing its formal clothes. He lives at Ktikados: the village of the Table of Love — the

Easter meal nobody may sit down to until they have made up their quarrel (chapter xxiii).

And the village has been putting the trade over its church door for two centuries. At the church of the Ypapanti, at the far end of Ktikados, Saint George has been killing the dragon in marble since at least **1823** — mid-revolution — and he does it four times on one front.



Saint George at Ktikados, four times over. The door of the church of the Ypapanti, at the far end of the sculptor's village: a mounted George in each spandrel, mirrored around a Virgin and Child on the keystone. Over the courtyard gate he rides a third time, in a wreathed roundel between two prayer tablets — «Δέησις τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἰω... καὶ τῆς συμβίας Μαρίας Κυλένας», the prayer of the servant of God Io[annis] and of his wife Maria Kylenea — dated **1823**, the third year of the revolution. And on the wall a few metres to the right, a fourth George rides down a fourth dragon over a donor's scroll: «Αὕτη ἡ εἰκὼν ἐχαράχθη δι' ἐξόδων τοῦ ἀποθανόντος Ρανέρη Κρ. καὶ Γε. υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ» — *this image was carved at the expense of the late Raneris Kr. and Ge. his son*. A Venetian baptismal name, in Greek letters, inside a Greek prayer — the machinery of chapter xxvii, cut into a church wall.

Author's photographs, August 2026. Inscriptions read from the stones; bracketed names expanded from abbreviations.

And his workshop is at Kionia.

Κιόνια means *the columns*. Chapter xi is about what stood there: the sanctuary of Poseidon and Amphitrite, on the shore three kilometres west of Chora, in use for five and a half centuries, and named ever since for the marble that was left lying on the ground.

So the lion in this chapter was cut, in marble, by a Tinian, on the beach the island named after a marble building.

Nothing descends from the one to the other, and it would be dishonest to imply that it does. The marble villages are in the Exo Meri, on the far side of the island, and no line of workshops runs from a Hellenistic temple to a yard in 2026. It is an accident of where the flat land near the sea is.

But it is the accident this island keeps having. The same few things — the stone, the water, a position on a sea lane — get picked up and used again by people who owe each other nothing and mostly do not know the last lot were there. That is what the four parts of this book are trying to describe, and it is easier to see in one man's address than in any argument I could make about it.



V I

Φεγγίτες

fengítes — *fen-GHEE-tes* — *fanlights*

The pierced stone above the door was cut so that silkworms could breathe

Two of this island’s puzzles turn out to answer each other. The carved marble panels above the doors are not decoration that happens to be perforated. They are perforated because the room behind them was full of silkworms, and when the silk went, the carving went with it.

First, the word

The general term is υπέρθυρο, *ypérthyro* — an overdoor, any carved marble set above an opening. The famous Tinian object is a species within it: the φεγγίτης, *fengítis*, a **pierced** slab filling the tympanum under the relieving arch, which lets light and air through a shut house. The Ministry of Culture’s own definition is exact: “*fanlights — a special category of perforated lintels covering the relieving arches above doors and windows.*” In the north of the island they are called καμάρια. French scholarship calls them *lucarnes de marbre*.

Getting this right matters, because conflating the two is precisely what most writing about Tinos does.

Second, a correction

They are not unique to Tinos. Alekos Florakis, who has written the monograph on them, says plainly that they are “*très répandues dans l’île, mais aussi plus généralement dans les Cyclades*” — widespread on the island, but more generally across the Cyclades. The National Gallery catalogues its examples as “Island Fanlight”, provenance “Cycladic Islands”.

What is Tinian is not the object but the industry: the concentration, the quality, and above all the survival. The defensible sentence is that **marble fanlights are a Cycladic form which Tinos produced in greater number and higher quality than anywhere else, and on which it is on Tinos that they survive in situ in quantity.**

Third, why they are pierced

Florakis gives the reason and it has nothing to do with any empire: “*Les lucarnes garantissaient une luminosité et une aération suffisante lorsque les portes et les fenêtres étaient fermées.*” The fanlights guaranteed enough light and ventilation when the doors and windows were shut.

Why would a house be shut? Because silkworms were reared indoors, in a dedicated room, on trays of mulberry leaf, and they needed air and light without draught. The perforations also created storage at lintel level for bread and provisions.

And the proof is in the collapse. **Production of fanlights fell away from the last quarter of the nineteenth century — and Florakis attributes it to the abandonment of sericulture**, alongside new architectural fashions and the decline of the regional centres. A purely stylistic explanation cannot account for that correlation. A functional one can.

DOCUMENTED **There is a dated fanlight at Kato Kleisma, and the year is 1760**

Florakis cites “*l’église de Notre-Dame dans le village de Kato Kleisma (1760)*” — the church of Our Lady at Kato Kleisma, its fanlight dated 1760.

It is one of a small group of dated examples he gives across the island: Pyrgos, Holy Trinity, 1718, the earliest anyone cites; Kampos, Holy Trinity, 1760; Karkados, cemetery church, 1760; a house at Tinos town, 1765; Apidia, chapel of St Basil, 1777; Pyrgos, Christ the Saviour, 1788; Tinos town, St Stylianos, 1794; a fountain in lower Tinos town, 1798; a fanlight of 1806 from the Panormos region and three of 1815 from Pyrgos, all now in the Benaki Museum.

Note carefully: 1718 is the earliest *anyone has cited*, not the earliest that exists. Florakis introduces it as an example of the plain type, not as a record.

A. E. Florakis, *Nouvelles lucarnes de marbre au musée Benaki*

NOTE **Two epigraphic corpora, and they must not be merged**

Florakis’s dated series carries Greek inscriptions. The Latin lintel inscriptions recorded in the villages — 1747, 1790 and 1826 — belong to the Catholic villages and are a separate corpus.

Putting the two together into one chronology would be a genuinely original contribution. Silently merging them would be a mistake.



A house at the entrance to Kato Kleisma. Look along the left wing: every window is capped by a semicircular *relieving arch*, and the half-moon of wall inside each arch is the tympanum. On the grander houses of this island — and on the churches — that tympanum is filled with a pierced marble slab, a *φεγγίτης*. Here they read as blind. Whether they always were, or whether they once held stone that has gone, is the kind of question only a ladder answers.

Photograph courtesy of the family.



Four fanlights, and what they are for. The pierced marble slab that fills the tympanum — the half-moon of wall inside a relieving arch — over a door or a window. Note what the piercing is doing: it is not a window and not a grille but a lattice cut clean through the stone, so that air moves and light does not. The slab at top left carries a ship in low relief beside the arches — the carver put to sea on the front of somebody's house. The National Gallery in Athens catalogues these as *island fanlights* from the Cyclades and does not attribute them to Tinos, so they are shown here as the type rather than as objects from this island. For the thing itself, in place and dated 1760, on the church of Our Lady at Kato Kleisma, see the doorway below.

National Gallery–Alexandros Soutsos Museum, Athens · CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. Reproduced whole and uncropped, as that licence requires.

Fourth, and least expected: the finest ones are not Venetian

Florakis's four-phase typology runs: plain schist or thick marble slabs, originating in the seventeenth century; house fanlights of the first half of the eighteenth, in thick compact marble, roughly cut; those of the second half of the eighteenth in the grey *φιλιαρικό* marble; and then **the baroque fanlights, appearing at Pyrgos in the last two decades of the eighteenth century.**

Where did the baroque come from? Not Venice — Venice had left in 1715. Florakis’s answer is Constantinople: Tinian craftsmen migrated there for work after the conquest and brought back a rococo vocabulary in an Ottoman remodelling. “*C’est ainsi que le baroque ottoman s’introduit à Tinos.*”

So the showpiece fanlights — the ones people photograph — are strictly **post-Venetian and Ottoman-inflected**. The heraldry on this island is Venetian; the pierced form is functional and local; the flowers are Ottoman; and the industry that executed all of it is Tinian.

WHAT THE CARVING MEANS

MOTIF	CLASS	READ AS
Cross; πεντάλφα; monstrous beasts	Apotropaic	Wards off demonic spirits
Βρακοφόροι — armed guards in breeches	Apotropaic	Guardians of the threshold. A dated example, 1750s–60s
Sun as a human head, or as a wheel; tree of life	Mythological	Not glossed by the sources
Cornucopia; pomegranate; flowering pots	Fertility	Abundance and prosperity for the household
Ships; birds; fish; cypresses; hunters on horseback	Descriptive	The livelihood and standing of the owner
Coats of arms	Declarative	Power and prestige. The oldest carved stone on the island
A date, a name, initials	Declarative	Dedicatory — the owner and the year, sometimes the day

^A Categories from the Museum of Marble Crafts and the Ministry of Culture inventory. The Benaki fanlight of 1806 is inscribed 1806 / ΑΙΠ 13 / ΠΕΡΟΣ — read by Florakis as Georgios Peros, representative of the village of Platia. Day, month, year and owner.

And it has now been photographed

Until this year, the one object that would settle this chapter had never been photographed. The text said so. It has now.

The church at Kato Kleisma is the Catholic parish church of the village, dedicated to the **Metastasis of the Theotokos** — the Assumption, in the Catholic Greek form — and its patronal feast is still kept on 15 August with the archbishop celebrating.  *for the source type; the dedication and the rite are not in doubt*

Its west front carries, in what looks like a single campaign: a doorway with carved jambs under an inscribed lintel; a twin marble window — a *bifora* — with vines, grapes and crosses cut into the frame; pierced fanlights in arched niches; an oculus filled with a pierced marble wheel; and a carved interlace panel in the gable. On the cornice immediately above the door, an eagle.

And the lintel is dated.



Kato Kleisma, the west door, August 2026. Two inscribed panels flank a rayed medallion enclosing a Christogram; the jambs are cut with running foliate scroll. The date, 1760, is at the top of the right-hand panel.

Author's photograph, August 2026.

The text is laid out to be read **across** the medallion — *ANNO DOMINI* on the left, *1760* on the right — and it runs:

D · O · M
A(N)NO D(OMI)NI · 1760
IACOBVS CICALA
SAC(ER)DOS HVSVE [for HVIVSCE] RVRIS
CVRAT(VS) IL(L)E FVIT QVI EC-
CLE(SI)A(M) HA(N)C IA(M) COLLABE(N)TE(M)
EIVSDE(M) ECL(ES)Æ SVMPTIB(VS)
AC O(M)NIV(M) RVRIS CONF(RAT)RV(M)
LABORIB(VS) ET OPE RESTAV-
RAR(I) FECIT AC RENOVARE

*To God, the Best and Greatest. In the year of the Lord 1760. Iacobus Cicala, priest of this district, was the curate who had this church — already falling into ruin — restored and renewed, at the expense of the church itself and by the labours and means of **all the brethren of the district**.*

Four things follow, and they belong to four different chapters.

It is in Latin, cut in 1760 — forty-five years after Venice left, in a village that had been under Ottoman sovereignty for a generation, with no Venetian rector to impress and no Latin-reading public to address. **Nobody required this.** The Catholic villages of this island were still putting Latin over their doors when nothing and nobody made them.

It is **Roman in form**: *D·O·M*, the Christogram in glory, the whole dedicatory grammar of the Latin west. There is no ambiguity about the rite.

It names a priest, Iacobus Cicala — an Italian surname in a Greek village, which is chapter xxvii's argument standing in a wall. The Catholic bishop of Tinos and Mykonos from 1716 to 1738 was Nicolaus Cigala, whose tomb slab at Xinara bears a double-headed eagle. **B** **No document links the two men**, and the National Hellenic Research Foundation records the bishop as of the Santorini branch. The honest statement is that the same uncommon surname appears twice on this island within twenty-two years, in a bishop and in a village priest.

And it records a rebuilding **paid for by the church and worked by the village** — *sumptibus ac omnium ruris confratrum laboribus et ope*. Not a lord, not a bishop, not a foundation. The parish, and its own hands.

NOTE

Why this book says “brethren” and not “confraternity”

Confratres is a word with an institution behind it in Latin Europe, and an earlier draft of this chapter reached for that institution. It should not have. **No Catholic confraternity on Tinos is attested anywhere in the published literature** — searched in Greek, Italian and English, in the scholarly work and on the Archdiocese's own sites. The field is well developed for Venetian Crete and the Ionian islands; for the Cyclades there is nothing, and Foskolos's own history of Catholicism on Tinos does not mention them. **A** *as a negative — the volumes that would decide it, Hofmann's Vescovadi cattolici della Grecia: Tinos above all, are not online*

So the line is translated **“all the brethren of the district”** — men of the parish, not members of a body.

Which makes the silence more interesting, not less. This book carries the *Orthodox* brotherhood thread — the Table of Love at Ktikados, traced to brotherhoods formed under Venetian rule in the sixteenth century. **On the Catholic side of the same island, at the same date, there is nothing to find.**

That is a real question, and stating it as a silence is better than filling it in.

One contraction on the stone is genuinely ambiguous. Earlier photographs read CONF (RAT) RV (M); the August frames read CONSTRV. The first makes far better Latin and is printed here. **A flat-on photograph in raking light would settle it in a minute.**



The *bifora* above the same door, its frame cut with vine scroll and the mullion carved as a colonnette — and, along the bottom of the frame, the top of the 1760 inscription. **One campaign, one workshop, one year.**

Author's photograph, August 2026.



Pierced marble, in place and in use: the grille filling the opening, and above it an interlace panel with a cross in a roundel, set into an arch it does not quite fit. **The white marble of the upper panel is not the marble of the arch, and its left edge is broken.** Reused stone, of a date nobody can give.
 Author's photograph, August 2026.

Florakis dates the **transitional** type of Tinian fanlight to the 1750s or 1760s, with the developed type in the second half of the eighteenth century. **B** A dated 1760 front therefore stands at the **beginning** of the tradition this chapter describes, not in its late flowering.



V I I

Στράτες

strátes — *STRA-tes* — *the ways*

A path network is a map of an economy, and this one maps two

Several hundred kilometres of stone path cross Tinos. Where the paving is, the money was. And the paving describes two completely different islands lying on top of each other.

The Greek word usually used is *καλντερίμι*, *kalderimi* — from Turkish *kaldırım*, pavement. It is worth knowing that the popular derivation from *καλὸς δρόμος*, “good road”, is folk etymology and wrong. It is also worth knowing that on Tinos the word is slightly foreign: the local technique uses large flat slabs rather than cobbles, and **the native word is στράτα** — a *πλακόστρωτη στράτα*, a slab-paved way. The French *chemin muletier* describes the use rather than the surface.



The σιπάρα itself, above Anogeia. Large flat slabs, not cobbles — the island's own paving. Capital, laid stone by stone where the traffic paid for it.

Author's photograph, August 2026.

A kalderimi is built for hooves, not wheels. The standard width — around two metres — is the width at which two fully laden mules can pass one another. Steep sections get stone steps; slopes get retaining walls; drops get parapets; streams get paved fords. Flat, low-traffic stretches were often left unpaved, because paving is expensive and was laid where it was needed. That is why the

network is legible: **paving is a record of capital investment, and it went where the traffic was.**



Built for hooves. Two dry-stone walls and the space between them — about the width at which two laden mules can pass. The lane aims straight at the mountain, because a mule has no use for a view. Author's photograph, August 2026.

How much of it there is

THE EXTENT OF THE NETWORK — THE FIGURES DO NOT AGREE

FIGURE	WHAT IT COUNTS	GRADE
~1,000 km	All rural ways on the island	C
~400 km	Stone- and slate-paved paths	C
270 km	GPS-surveyed by Károlos Merlyn, 2007	B
120 km	Of those, judged of cultural interest	B
150–152 km	Currently waymarked and maintained	A

The spread is probably definitional rather than contradictory. The two figures with a stated method behind them are the 270 and the 120.

The waymarked network — twelve thematic routes and nine variants — was commissioned by the Municipality of Tinos in 2019 and completed in June 2020. Before that, Károlos Merlyn had surveyed the whole system by GPS in 2007 and published a map; before that again, the South Aegean Region marked twelve routes which then partly lapsed under vegetation.

ONE NUMBER, AND WHAT IT BUYS

In December 2025 a project was approved to improve the paths of Tinos: **€274,714** of European regional funding, running from June 2026 to December 2027. It covers dry-stone rebuilding, the removal of concrete at Tripotamos, and new signage — across **1,250 metres**, in three branches.

Against a paved network of three to four hundred kilometres, that is about three parts in a thousand.

Why it cannot be dated, and why that is the honest answer

The best local source says it outright: verification of the age of the paths is difficult *“because the way of their construction remains the same and*

unaltered in the lapse of the centuries.” The technique does not date itself. What can be dated is thin: the Vari path, said to be the oldest, linking the ancient town near Kionia to the settlements of the interior; Exombourgo as the island’s centre from the tenth century BC, sited inland against piracy; and one section on the Falatados–Volax–Agapi–Kolymbithra route described as Byzantine, pre-1453 — and recorded, in the same sentence, as having been **destroyed by residents.**

The defensible description is that the network is a continuously re-surfaced inheritance: an ancient armature centred on Exombourgo, densified under Venice when the population was inland and the castle was the node, and re-paved piecemeal ever since.



Steep sections get stone steps — and centuries of hooves get polish. The technique does not date itself; this stair could belong to any of them. The dog is Rambo, the author's, posing for the picture and for scale.

Author's photograph, August 2026.

The two networks

Read the twelve routes against what they touch and the island splits in half.

In the centre and east, a subsistence lattice. Short, many-branched, tying villages to terraces, threshing floors, watermills, springs, dovecotes, beehives,

field huts and chapels — and converging on Exombourgo, which three of the twelve routes touch. Its geometry is centripetal and inland. It is the geometry of a household and a parish.

In the north-west, an export corridor. Quarries at Marlas, Mali and Koumelas; the workshop villages of Pyrgos and Ysternia; the harbours at Panormos, Ormos Ysternion and Kousinia. Its geometry is linear and sea-directed, and it is here that the paving becomes marble and monumental. It is the geometry of an international market — Mount Athos, Smyrna, Constantinople, Odessa, Alexandria.

THE DETAIL THAT CARRIES THE WHOLE ARGUMENT

The descent to Ormos Ysternion is recorded as an **“impressively wide, marble trail without any steps.”**

Steps are what you build for a man on foot. A wide, stepless, marble-paved ramp running down to a bay is what you build for **loaded animals carrying marble blocks downhill to a ship.** The form of the path encodes what went along it.

NOTE **The villages were sited against pirates. The paths were not routed against them**

Tinian settlements were built inland, in hard-to-reach positions, densely, in small volumes, and **positioned so as to be invisible from a distance**, the dark schist assisting the concealment; the coastal capital was relocated under Venetian rule because it did not provide security from raids. The “labyrinth” in the sources is the alleys *inside* the villages.

But no source anywhere claims the inter-village paths were deliberately routed to mislead raiders or break sight-lines from the shore. The honest formulation is that **the network is centripetal because the settlements it**

served were sited defensively — the paths inherit the logic rather than embody it.

DOCUMENTED **Whose are they? The law says the municipality’s — but the registration is not finished**

In principle. Roads are named expressly in Article 967 of the Civil Code as things of common use; under Article 968 such things belong to the municipality, or failing that the State; under Article 966 they are outside commerce and cannot be acquired by a neighbour through long possession. Where a road serves the needs of a municipality it is a municipal road under Article 4 of Law 3155/1955.

In the cadastre. Since a ministerial decision of 31 May 2022 there is a dedicated instrument: a layer for recognised roads pre-dating 1923, and a required attribute recording “*sections of road which, on the aerial photographs of the nearest date before 27 July 1977, were non-vehicular ways — footpaths.*” The Greek State has a formal cadastral category for exactly this thing.

But. The Presidential Decree setting unified recognition criteria has not been issued; appearance on a cadastral diagram is not by itself proof of public status; and the Tinos cadastre was still open for corrections in 2026, with the Municipality formally requesting a six-month extension.

So the correct statement is that the paths *should be*, and *are in the process of being*, registered as public — not that they already are.

DOCUMENTED **A footpath can be declared a monument — and the Council of State’s reasoning is this chapter’s argument**

In decision 2470/2018 the Council of State upheld the designation as a monument of kalderimi No. 3 at Kato Verga, Kalamata, about 3.6 km long — **even though the path was partly destroyed** by later pipeline and road works

— because the surviving paved sections, route markers and associated structures, together with scientific documentation of route continuity, established its historical existence.

What is striking is *why* the Court held it significant: its association with **threshing floors, water sources and maritime trade routes**, and its function as the sole historical passage for people, goods and animals. That is a path-as-economic-map argument, delivered by the supreme administrative court of Greece.

DOCUMENTED **What is destroying them is not developers first. It is goats**

The threats, in the order the sources rank them: an estimated **6,000 to 10,000 unmanaged feral goats**, destabilising terrace and path walls while foraging for roots and preventing regeneration; development pressure, with agricultural paths bulldozed to create vehicle access for new building; and the disappearance of dry-stone masons, a skill that requires apprenticeship.

Against that: 150 km cleared and waymarked in 2019–20; twenty-five volunteers from a mountaineering club clearing paths over ten days in July 2023; a dry-stone school in 2024 with thirty volunteers; and 1,250 metres of funded restoration beginning in 2026.

For comparison: Andros has over 500 km of network, 240 km marked to European standards, run since 2009 by a dedicated research centre funded by private donation and subscription, inspected five times a year, and holding the European Ramblers' Association's "Leading Quality Trails" certification since 2015 — the only European island that does. Tinos has comparable raw extent, a municipal department, a contractor project and a volunteer call-out. The gap is not resource. It is custodianship.



And this is what lapse looks like. A lane above Anogeia going back to the island — the walls spilling inward, the thorn closing the way; out to sea, Syros, or perhaps Gyaros. A path lasts exactly as long as somebody keeps it.

Author's photograph, August 2026.



VIII

Ασβέστωμα

asvéstoma — *az-VES-to-ma* — *the liming*

Two famous explanations for the white houses are myths, and the real law is recent

Everyone repeats that Metaxas ordered the islands whitewashed against cholera in 1938, and that the colonels mandated blue and white to match the flag. Neither claim can be evidenced. What can be evidenced is stranger: the whiteness is a by-product of a rule that names lime, and it dates from 1988.

The chemistry is real, and it expires

Limestone or marble burnt in a kiln gives quicklime; slaked with water it becomes calcium hydroxide, the limewash; on the wall it slowly re-absorbs carbon dioxide and reverts to the stone it came from. That cycle explains everything.

Wet limewash holds a pH of 12.4 and is a genuine disinfectant — it inactivates *E. coli* within a day and some viruses within minutes. But outdoors it carbonates, and **the pH falls to around 9 within roughly forty-four days**, at which point it stops disinfecting altogether.

Which resolves the old argument about whether whitewashing was hygiene or habit. It was both, and it could only be hygiene *because* it was habit: a wall limewashed once and left is chemically inert. The practice worked because it was repeated every year, traditionally around Easter.

The other properties are real too, in descending order of certainty: it is vapour-open, so the wall breathes — which is why modern acrylic paint damages old masonry by sealing moisture in; it reflects heat; it consolidates masonry and seals hairline cracks. Insect deterrence is universally claimed and, as far as I can find, never studied. It should not be asserted.

MYTH **The Metaxas decree of 1938 cannot be found by anyone who repeats it**

A dozen Greek outlets and at least two professional architects state that Ioannis Metaxas ordered whitewashing as an anti-cholera measure in 1938.

Not one cites a Government Gazette reference, a decree number, or a date more precise than the year.

Two checks: the Metaxas-era sanitary regulation of 14 November 1938 covers the prefecture of Attica-Boeotia only, not the islands, and none of its ninety articles concerns whitewashing; and the framework law on sanitary provisions of 1940 mentions the general cleanliness of dwellings and says nothing about lime.

A further reason for doubt: **the disease is wrong**. The epidemic of the period was the dengue outbreak of 1927–28, not cholera. Even sources defending the story concede the ten-year gap.

The honest position: a Metaxas decree is universally asserted and nowhere evidenced. It may exist as a ministerial sanitary provision rather than a decree; if it does, nobody repeating the story has read it.

MYTH **The colonels did not order blue and white for the flag**

What exists is a real document: a circular of the Cyclades prefecture dated 15 June 1972, addressed to police and municipal officials, stating that among other building restrictions *polychromy on the exterior of houses was forbidden, and the dominant exterior colour of houses would be white*.

Read it precisely. It is a prefecture-level administrative circular, not a law. It bans multi-colour. And it says **nothing about blue, and nothing about the flag.**

The blue-and-white-for-patriotism story is an invention, and so is the related claim that blue was simply the cheapest paint or left-over boat paint — the decrees below permit blue, green, brown, grey, mustard and deep red for joinery. Blue’s dominance is a later tourist convergence.

WHAT THE LAW ACTUALLY SAYS — AND IT SAYS LIME, NOT WHITE

Two presidential decrees, of 17 June 1988 and 11 May 1989, govern building in the designated traditional settlements of the Cyclades. Both require, in the same words, that “*on the external surfaces of the façades of buildings, **lime** shall be used*”, with window joinery in a single colour from blue, green, brown, grey, mustard or deep red.

The whiteness of the Cyclades is therefore a legal consequence of a mandated *material*, not of a mandated colour — and the mandate is from the late 1980s, half a century after Metaxas and fourteen years after the colonels.

DOCUMENTED **Kato Kleisma has been a designated traditional settlement since 14 July 1988**

The decree of 17 June 1988, published in the Government Gazette on 14 July, designates, under the community of Kalloni, both Kalloni and Kato Kleisma. Kampos, Loutra, Smardakito, Tarabados, Agapi, Volax, Falatados, Koumaros, Steni, Krokos, Skalados and others are designated in the same instrument.

Komi, Pyrgos, Ysternia, Kardiani, Ktikados, Xinara, Triantaros, Tripotamos and Chatzirados were designated earlier, by the decree of 19 October 1978. Thirty-six settlements across the two decrees.

DOCUMENTED **And the law recognises the neoclassical house as its own category**

Both decrees carve out an exception: marble-dust render — μαρμαροκονία — is permitted **only on buildings in the neoclassical style**, and on Tinos only after approval by the Ministry of the Aegean.

Greek planning law therefore formally recognises the neoclassical house as a distinct thing inside a Cycladic village. If a family house carries a marble-dust render rather than limewash, that is legally correct rather than anomalous.

And Tinos is not a white island

Anglophone travel writing flattens Tinos into Mykonos. The Tinian sources do not. The building materials here are **local marble and schist**, and the settlements were deliberately built of dark schist in dense masses so as to be invisible from the sea — the exact opposite design intention from whitewash. Marble was left bare: surrounds, lintels, fanlights, fountains, bell towers, and the patterned schist of the dovecotes.

The accurate description is a **schist-and-marble island with a lime skin** — white pointing rather than white houses, which is why the marble reads at all.

What the villages looked like before is genuinely unsettled. One position, from a serious architectural historian, is that while the Aegean was pirate-infested it was irrational to paint a house a visible colour, that houses were left stone-coloured, and that deliberate colour arrives with **neoclassicism in the late**

nineteenth century — ochre, blue and pink façades — after which the whitewash erased it. The competing position is that nineteenth-century engravings and photographs already show plastered white buildings. Nobody has published paint stratigraphy, which is the only thing that would settle it.



I X

Λούζα & Γλίνα

louza & glína — LOO-za, GHLEE-na — the cured loin and the rendered fat

The pig was not a meat animal. It was the household's year of fat

Tinian food is celebrated for cured pork with Italian names, and the Venetian influence is real. But the deeper fact is one nobody says: this is not an olive island. What oil does elsewhere, lard did here — and once you see that, the whole calendar falls into place.

First, the awkward fact

Tozer, who walked these terraces, describes them in 1890 as running from top to bottom of the mountain slopes “*mainly for the cultivation of the vine.*” Not olives. In the same book, olives appear as village-fringe trees — houses “*surrounded by olives, oranges, and fig-trees*” — which is a dooryard pattern, not a grove economy. Wheler in 1682 lists “*plenty of Vineyards, Figs and Olives*”, in that order. Modern ethnography in Kampos records families producing wine, olive oil and vegetables **for family use**, on four or five scattered plots.

And Tinos appears in no Greek olive-oil designation of origin, and on no list of the oil-producing Cyclades — a list that names Naxos, Paros, Serifos, Sikinos and Milos.

Tinos had olives. It was not an oil island.

SO WHAT DID THE COOKING

Γλίνα — rendered pork fat — is one of the named primary products of the Tinian pig-killing, stored in clay vessels. Cycladic meat is kept, in the sources' own phrase, "*in salt or in fat.*" Santorini's fava is dressed παντρεμένη, "married", with pork fat. And on Tinos even the tail fat had a job: it waterproofed shoes.

The pig was a walking oil-jar that had to be filled by December and drawn down until spring.

The killing — χοιροσφάγια

It happened in November and December: before the feasts, not on them, because its purpose was to stock the larder for them. Every household kept at least one pig a year. The work needed many hands and began before dawn.

In the days beforehand the women gathered herbs, dried them in the sun and rubbed them with salt; the men collected olive wood for the fire; and the houses, the courtyards **and the roads** were whitewashed. The invited guests were the priest, the schoolteacher, the doctor — and any foreigner who happened to be on the island. That guest list is worth pausing on. It makes the pig-killing the village's annual act of self-definition, and not merely a butchery.

The animal weighed 150 to 200 kilos and was expected to feed the family through the year. From it came λούζα, the cured loin; λουκάνικα and σκορδάτα σαλσίτσια, sausages plain and garlicked; πηχτή, brawn; σύγλινα, meat cooked slowly in its own fat and sealed under it; and γλίνα, the rendered fat itself. Nothing was wasted: the bristle went to shoemakers for stitching. Afterwards there was bone soup, braised meat with potatoes, dolmades, liver, wine, and a violin and a lute.

AND THE CORRECTION THAT REVERSES THE USUAL STORY

In the Cycladic record the loin — λούζα — is named as **the only saleable part of the pig**, eaten regularly only by well-off families.

The island's signature delicacy was, for most households, a cash crop.

DOCUMENTED **How meat was kept without cold: sealed under its own fat**

The method, documented in detail in Crete and named on Tinos: cut the meat into pieces about the size of a mandarin; into the pot with only the water clinging to it; very low heat for an hour to an hour and a half, no added water and no stirring, so that the fat renders out and the pieces stay whole; salt part way through, pepper and cumin near the end; then pack into clean jars and **cover completely with the rendered fat**. Kept cold, lifted out a spoonful at a time.

The rule of the jar: *the pieces not covered by fat must be eaten first*.

It is the same principle as a French *confit*, arrived at independently or in parallel — salt, slow fat, and a seal.

DOCUMENTED **Cheese here is kept in gourds, under stones and in baskets
— never in oil**

Greece's oil-cured cheeses come from oil islands: *ladotyri* of Mytilini, *ladotyri* of Zakynthos. **No Tinian cheese is preserved in oil.** That empty space is the argument.

What Tinos uses instead:

Καρίκι — the gourd. Gourds harvested in October and dried; the seeds removed; salted cheese packed in; the mouth **sealed airtight with flour paste**. A small gourd keeps about two months; a large one of five or six kilos, six or seven. It is made in only four or five villages and is unknown in the rest of the island. Its blue mould comes from the gourd itself, not from inoculation.

Πετρωτό — the stone. Curd pressed between stones or marble slabs for days; the base from which *volaki* and *malathouni* are made.

Μαλαθούνι — the basket, from *μαλάθι*: fresh cheese drained in hand-woven baskets.

Κοπανιστή — salt and the hand. Milk held at 28–30°C for a day; salted; worked by hand every hour for twenty-four hours; wrapped in cotton under a weighted stone for a week; then forty-five to sixty days of ripening with three or four further kneadings. Tinos lies inside the protected designation.

A dry, pressure and fermentation toolkit. Not an oil toolkit.

STRONGEST **The Venetian contribution was a cow, not a recipe**

Three signature foods carry Italian names — *λούζα* from *lonza*, *σαλσίτσι* from *salsiccia*, *λαζάνια* from *lasagna* — and the loanwords are real. But the better evidence is material rather than lexical.

Cow dairy is anomalous in the Cyclades; these are goat and sheep islands. Tinos has a resident cattle population and an entire dairy architecture the neighbours lack — butter, gruyère, *petroto*, *kariki*, *malathouni*, *volaki*. Venice did not lend this island words. It changed what the island could make.

Set against that, the technique tells a mixed story. Tinian *louza* shares the cut, the gut casing and the roughly sixty-day hang with Italian *lonza* — a transmitted technology, not a borrowed noun. But the **red-wine bath, the fennel seed and the light smoking are not Italian practice**. They are Aegean additions. And the *myzina* is smoked over τσάμπουρα, grape stalks and marc — the by-product of the island's own wine harvest.

Venice gave Tinos the terrace, the vine, the dovecote and the curing vocabulary. It did not give Tinos a cuisine. The kitchen that used those inputs was Aegean, and its fat was lard.

Three loops that close

Set the year out as a circle and it does something a list cannot: it closes.

The vine. Grapes are harvested and pressed in September; the wine cures the *louza* in November; the marc left over from the pressing smokes the *myzina*. One plant, three jobs, in sequence.

The gourd. Harvested and dried in October; packed with the salted cheese; holds it through the winter; is empty again as the spring milk starts.

And the fat. The pig is fattened through the autumn, killed in November or December, and rendered. That fat is the cooking medium of the household until it runs out — which, on the Cretan evidence, is around Carnival. And Carnival is when Lent begins, and Lent forbids fat.

The larder empties at almost exactly the moment the Church forbids its contents. Whether that is coincidence, or two calendars that grew up around each other, is a question this document raises rather than settles. No source I have found makes the observation at all.

HYPOTHESIS **Two fasting calendars on one island — now with a mechanism**

The raw counts are closer than one expects: the Orthodox year has 180 to 200 fasting days; the Latin discipline before 1917 had 150 or more. The difference is not in the number of days but in three specific things.

Oil. The Orthodox fast excludes olive oil on strict days. The Latin fast never did.

Dairy — and this is the large one. Orthodox fasting excludes dairy and eggs absolutely, on roughly half the days of the year. The Latin discipline had already dispensed dairy by the Carolingian period and relaxed further through the nineteenth century. On a *dairy island*, with its own cattle and six named cheeses, that is a continuous structural difference: for about half the year the Catholic household could eat cheese and butter when the Orthodox household could not.

Bloodless fish. The Orthodox rule excludes backboned fish but permits molluscs and crustaceans, which drives a documented preference for octopus, cuttlefish, shellfish and sea urchin. The Latin rule makes no such distinction.

And then the dated consequence. **The Nativity Fast runs from 15 November to 24 December — precisely the pig-killing window.** An Orthodox household killing its pig in those weeks is producing food it may not eat until Christmas Day. A Catholic household is under no such constraint.

One thread of direct evidence exists: Tinian *salsitsi* is recorded as eaten raw, **or cooked with tomatoes in the Catholic villages.** A cooking method

marked by confession, recorded on this island. It deserves a better source than the one that carries it, and the parish registers at Xinara are where it would be found.

DOCUMENTED **The wine was Malmsey, and it was still sold as Malmsey in 1890**

Tozer, on Tinos: *“The wine, which is held in repute in the Levant, is light and somewhat sweet, and agreeable to the taste. The grape which produces the best is considered to be a lineal descendant of the vines of Monemvasia on the east coast of the Morea, the original Malmsey, and the wine is called by that name at the present day.”*

Malmsey — *Malvasia* — is the great sweet wine of the medieval Mediterranean, named for the Peloponnesian port that shipped it, and Venice grew rich carrying it. That a Cycladic island was still selling wine under that name in 1890, with a reputation across the Levant, says a good deal about what those terraces were for.

H. F. Tozer, *The Islands of the Aegean* (1890), pp. 16–17



X

Ὀρίζων

orízon — o-REE-zon — the bounding circle; what you can see and no further

Every island you can see from here is famous for something, and none of those things is Tinos

Stand on the ridge at Anogeia and turn through the compass. Due west is the island Rome used as its word for the end of the world, and modern Greece used for the same purpose. South is the capital of the Cyclades. South-east, past the flat one, is the sanctuary of the whole Aegean — which achieved its holiness by making it illegal to be born or to die there. Tinos had nothing to do with any of it, and that is the chapter.

Due west — the island Rome could not bring itself to use

There is a long grey island out to the west, low at one end and rising to a ridge at the other, and on a clear evening it sits on the water like a ship that has stopped. It is Gyaros — Γυάρος, and on the older charts *Joura*. It is 17.6 square kilometres and rises to 489 metres, which is higher than anything on Mykonos. About twenty kilometres of open water separate it from this coast; the nearest land to it is not Tinos or Syros but Andros, eight kilometres off. B

That it can be seen from here is a matter of geometry rather than of testimony. A summit of 489 metres carries a refracted horizon of about eighty-five kilometres, and an observer two hundred metres up on Tinos adds another fifty-five; against a separation of twenty to thirty-five kilometres the island is comfortably in view. A computed, not quoted. No published source anywhere states that Gyaros is

visible from Tinos, which is itself worth knowing: nobody has ever thought the relation important enough to write down.

It belongs to Syros. It has never at any period belonged to Tinos.

Juvenal, at the turn of the second century, needed a single word for the worst thing that could happen to a Roman and reached for this island:

*aude aliquid breuibus Gyaris et carcere dignum,
si uis esse aliquid. probitas laudatur et alget;*

Dare something worth narrow Gyara and prison, if you want to be somebody. Honesty is praised — and freezes. ^A Virgil had already called it lofty, and lofty is right.

The telling evidence is not the poets, though. It is the paperwork.

In AD 22 the Senate voted to relegate Gaius Junius Silanus to Gyaros. Tiberius — the emperor of Capri and the treason trials, not a man with a reputation for softness — intervened to say that the island was *harsh and without human cultivation, insulam Gyarum immitem et sine cultu hominum esse*, and sent him to Kythnos instead. Two years later the Senate proposed Gyaros again, for Vibius Serenus. Tiberius refused a second time, **observing that both islands wanted for water** — *egenam aquae utramque insulam referens* — and that a man granted his life must be granted the means of living it. Serenus went to Amorgos. ^A Tacitus, *Annals* 3.69 and 4.30, verbatim

Tiberius turned Gyaros down twice, both times over the water. Keep that sentence. The twentieth century is coming.

It was not quite empty. Strabo, the geographer, put in there in 29 BC and found a fishing village, and took aboard the man the villagers had elected to sail to Corinth and ask Augustus to reduce their tribute: they were being asked for a hundred and fifty drachmas, he says, and could barely raise a hundred. ^A It is the only recorded occasion on which anybody from Gyaros asked an emperor for anything.

DOCUMENTED **Tournefort slept there in 1700, and did not sleep well**

The botanist of Louis XIV landed on Gyaros on 21–22 November 1700.

«Les Romains avaient raison de reléguer les criminels dans cette île ; c'est le lieu le plus stérile et le plus désagréable de l'Archipel... nous n'y vîmes que de gros mulots, peut-être de la race de ceux qui obligèrent les habitants de l'île à l'abandonner, comme Pline le rapporte...»

«Voilà les réflexions que nous fîmes à Joura, couchés dans une chapelle ruinée où nous n'osions nous endormir de peur que les mulots ne vinssent nous ronger les oreilles ; & nous réservâmes notre sommeil pour le bateau.»

The first natural historian to describe these islands lay awake all night on the exile island, in a ruined chapel, afraid of mice. His *gros mulots* are field mice, not the iron-gnawing rats of the later Greek retellings — and he is repeating Pliny, not observing.

Tournefort, *Relation d'un voyage du Levant*, on Joura

And then modern Greece used it for exactly the same thing

Between 1947 and 1974 the Greek state ran a place of political exile on Gyaros, in three phases: July 1947 to October 1952; 1955 to 1961, with the prison ledgers running to 1963; and 1967 to November 1968, reopening in February 1974 until the junta fell. ^B *Papaeti, Torture 23(2), 2013, peer-reviewed. Note that*

the junta phase was not continuous, which most accounts get wrong. Something in the order of twenty thousand people passed through in total. (C)

The prisoners built their own prison. Red brick, cement mixed with seawater because there was no other water, deliberately uninsulated: about eleven thousand square metres, **and still the largest building in the Cyclades.**

(B) There is nothing in Ermoupoli or in Chora to touch it. It stands on an island with no water, and the men it was built to hold laid the bricks.

No death toll exists. There are three visible crosses in the cemetery, and the engineering study made for the memorial project counted about twenty graves and called the number surprisingly small against the size of the installations.

What is said locally is that dying prisoners were shipped to Syros so that the deaths would not be recorded on Gyaros. (C) *one source only, and given here as what is said rather than as what is known.*

Yannis Ritsos passed through — arrested after the April 1967 coup, moved on to Leros by September. (B) **The poet was here; the exile poems are from somewhere else.**

What broke it open was a photograph. In July 1967 the German photographer Fred Ihrt flew over Gyaros in a light aircraft and photographed the camp from the air; *Stern* ran the pictures, *Der Spiegel* and *Paris Match* followed, and the story took first prize for photo stories at World Press Photo that year. (A) The International Committee of the Red Cross recorded the end of it in its own words: “*the island of Yaros was evacuated completely in October 1968 and 400 sick or aged detainees were unconditionally released.*” (A)

The cruelty and the sanctuary have the same cause

The camp closed with the junta. The navy then used the island as a firing range until about 2000, and unexploded ordnance still restricts landing. Which means

that for the better part of seventy years — first because it was a prison, then because it was a target — **nobody went ashore.**

In 2013 the monk seals were found using the open beaches of Gyaros to rest, to give birth and to nurse their pups: behaviour the species had been thought to have abandoned centuries ago because of people. Gyaros and Cabo Blanco, on the Atlantic coast of the Sahara, are **the only two surviving aggregations of Mediterranean monk seals anywhere that still hold the structure of a colony.** ^A *Karamanlidis et al., Mammal Review, 2016. The often-repeated claim that Gyaros holds the largest monk seal population in the Mediterranean is not what that paper says and is not printed here.* The population is of the order of sixty to seventy animals. About a hundred and seventy pairs of Eleonora’s falcons nest on the cliffs.

The island was listed under Natura 2000 in 2011, became in 2019 **the first marine protected area in the Cyclades**, and a presidential decree signed on 16 April 2026 made the fishing ban within three nautical miles permanent while placing the prison ruins in a zone designated for restoration. A memorial went up in 2019 — *Πωγμή*, “Crack”, by Antonis Myrodias: twenty-one steel prisms, one for each year the camp operated.

Its protection has been argued over ever since — listed whole as a monument in 2001, partly de-listed in 2011, a museum funded on paper and never built, wind parks proposed inside the reserve in 2024 — and one fact indicts every number in this section: **the General State Archives hold the Gyaros prison archive, forty-two ledgers, 1945–1952 and 1955–1963**, deposited in 2002 and never tallied. Every published total for this island is an estimate sitting next to an uncounted primary source.

AND TINOS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY OF IT

This has to be said plainly, because it would be easy and dishonest to imply otherwise. Gyaros is administered from Syros. The camp was supplied from Syros. Its dead were buried on Syros. And when the fisheries of the new marine reserve were surveyed in 2024, the active small-scale fishermen working those waters came from **Syros, Andros and Kythnos** — Tinos appears nowhere in either study. ^A

The only documented relation between this island and that one is that you can see it.

South-east — and the oldest version of an argument people still have about Tinos

Turn ninety degrees and the view is different in kind. From the south-east coast, from Agios Sostis, Mykonos lies flat on the water in front of you — **eight nautical miles across to the town**, and less to the nearest beach. And behind it, out of sight, is Delos.

People who come here say a version of the same thing: that Tinos is the holy island and Mykonos is the other kind, and that the two of them face each other across a strait like an argument. It is a postcard when it is left there. It is something better when you check it, because **the pairing is twenty-four centuries old and it was originally drawn between a different pair of islands.**

Delos was the sanctuary of the whole Aegean. In 426 BC the Athenians purified it: every grave on the island was dug up and carried across to Rheneia, and from that day **nobody was permitted to be born or to die on Delos.** ^A

Thucydides 3.104 Purity was achieved by legislation, and by exporting birth and

death to the island next door. Mykonos, meanwhile, was where people lived: the ordinary, worldly, inhabited island beside the holy one.

The arrangement is not new and it is not ours. A sacred island and a profane one in sight of each other has been standing in this stretch of water since the fifth century BC — and Mykonos has been on the same side of it the whole time. What changed is which island is holy.

And both of the modern reputations are young. Tinos's rests on the finding of the icon in 1823. Mykonos's rests on what happened there from the 1960s. Two neighbouring islands whose entire modern identities were made within a hundred and forty years of each other, on a channel where the sacred and the profane have been facing one another since Thucydides.

NOTE

The wind at Agios Sostis, and what can honestly be said about it

A friend of mine, Rodolphe Hérault — who first came here as a teenager and has never got the place out of his system — stood at Agios Sostis and watched the meltemi come over the ridge of Tinos, fall on the water, and start the sea moving towards Mykonos. He said it looked like the island was trying to wash the other one.

The mechanism is real in kind. The meltemi does not flow evenly around these islands: mountainous terrain squeezes, bends and accelerates it and throws narrow jets downwind. The effect is well documented in this sea — Crete's mountains have been shown to deform the entire Etesian flow, and the orographic jets coming off Crete are strong enough to spin up eddies in the water itself. 

But there is no published study of the Tinos–Mykonos channel, and none of this island’s own topography doing it. A *as a negative* Which is exactly the shape of the Volax finding in chapter ii: the phenomenon has a scientific literature, and this particular place does not appear in it.

He was nineteen. He was not taking readings.

South — the capital, and a debt

Syros lies to the south: Ermoupoli, the largest town in the Cyclades and its administrative seat, a nineteenth-century commercial city built by refugees. Gyaros was supplied from there and buried its dead there.

And a thread of this book runs through the same town. The monument Ermoupoli raised to the unburied dead of the Revolution was carved by a man from Ysternia, on the money of a foundation in Chora — chapter v has him.

So the two things this chapter can see to the south are an exile colony and a monument to the nameless dead, and **neither is a Tinian story except through the man who cut one of them.**

Rome’s word for the end of the world; modern Greece’s; the last beach in the Mediterranean where a seal will give birth in the open; and the sanctuary that made birth and death illegal. All of it within thirty kilometres, in plain sight, on a clear evening — **and none of it ours.**

PART TWO

The Rule

Delos and the corridor; why Venice was here; the corsairs who made this island their base; the surrender of 1715 and the century that followed; the lion that stood over all of it; and the wars of the last century, which this island commemorated for everybody else.



X I

Κιόνια

Kiónia — *kee-OH-nya* — “the columns”

Tinos was the stop before Delos, and it has been a place people have come to be healed for 2,300 years

The island’s religious role did not begin in 1823 with an icon. It began with a sanctuary on the shore where pilgrims purified themselves before crossing to the most sacred island in the Aegean — and where the god was worshipped as a physician. The function never left. Only the name on the door changed.

Three kilometres west of Chora, at a place called Kionia — *the columns* — stood the sanctuary of Poseidon and Amphitrite. It was founded at the end of

the fourth century BC and abandoned in the middle of the third century AD: some five and a half centuries of continuous use.

Two things about it are unusual. Of all the Cyclades, **only Tinos gave Poseidon an entire sanctuary** — everywhere else he is one god among others. And Amphitrite stood beside him on equal terms, named in the dedication, which is rare anywhere.

STRABO, IN THE FIRST CENTURY

“Tenos has no large city, but it has **the temple of Poseidon, a great temple in a sacred precinct outside the city, a spectacle worth seeing.**”

Strabo, *Geography* 10.5.11

Note the shape of that sentence. No city worth mentioning; a temple worth crossing the sea for. Tinos was not a place people lived so much as a place people *stopped*.

The antechamber to Delos

Delos, twenty-five kilometres south-west, was the most sacred island in the Aegean — the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis, so holy that by the fifth century BC nobody was permitted to be born or to die on it. Pilgrims bound for Delos **purified themselves at Tinos first**. Kings, generals and ordinary people sacrificed here before crossing.

This is the literal version of what people mean when they call this a spiritual corridor. It is not a metaphor. It is an itinerary, and Tinos was the first stop on it.

The Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades records that at Kionia **Poseidon was worshipped as a miracle-working physician**, and that **Amphitrite healed women who could not conceive**. Priests performed procedures on patients within the sanctuary.

Healing cults of this kind spread across the Greek world late in the fourth century BC, and this one belongs to that wave: the sanctuary of Asklepios on Delos, twenty-five kilometres away, was built in the same generation. A healing-and-fertility cult, on the approach road to the holiest island in the Aegean.

One caution. “Worshipped as a healer” is the state archaeological authority’s description, and it can be used. But there is no attested ancient cult title *Poseidon Iatros*, and it should not be written as if there were.

TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED YEARS, ONE FUNCTION

The icon of the Annunciation was found on 30 January 1823, after the visions of the nun Pelagia at Kechrovouni. The church built over it became — and remains — the destination of the largest pilgrimage in Greece, and the sick are carried to it.

Nineteenth-century travellers noticed the obvious. Tozer, the English geographer, records that the monastery **probably occupies the position of the temple of Poseidon**, patron of the island — and that the god’s place had been taken by **St Nicholas, guardian of sailors**, for whom the port town is named.

A shrine where the sea-god healed the sick, replaced by the patron saint of sailors, replaced by an icon that heals the sick. On or beside the same ground.

The island's name is cut on a monument that still stands in Istanbul

In 480 BC, on the night before Salamis, the Greek captains would not believe Aristides' report that the Persian fleet had encircled them. Then a trireme deserted the Persian side and came over — **a Tenian ship, commanded by Panaetius son of Sosimenes** — and brought full intelligence of the enemy's position.

For that, the Tenians were inscribed on the tripod dedicated at Delphi from the Persian spoils. The tripod is long gone; its bronze base, the Serpent Column, was moved to Constantinople by Constantine in 324 and **stands in the Hippodrome in Istanbul today.**

The Tenian and Siphnian names appear to have been added later — they are cut more crudely than the rest. Which is its own small story: a small island's name, added afterwards, to a list of the states that saved Greece.

NOTE

Delos went dark, and Tinos did not

Delos was sacked by Mithridates' forces in 88 BC and by pirates in 69 BC, and never recovered. By around the eighth century AD it was **abandoned altogether** — an entire island going dark in the same window as the Arab raids described in chapter xiii.

Tinos, twenty-five kilometres away, did not. And the difference is the one running through this whole book: Delos was a sanctuary and a port on open ground; Tinos had a mountain in the middle of it that people could climb.



XII

Stato da Mar

the sea state — *Venice's maritime empire*

Venice never chose Tinos. The island chose Venice, and set the terms

This is the question the family asked first, and the answer is not the one the guidebooks give. **Venice did not want this island — and ended up holding it longer than anything else it ever held in this sea.** Four moves lie between those two facts, and the rest of this chapter is how each of them happened.

1204: Venice takes what it wants, and Tinos is not on the list

When the Fourth Crusade broke up the Byzantine Empire, Venice knew exactly what it was after: ports, trading stations and naval bases. It took Corfu and the Ionians, Crete, Negroponte, control of the Dardanelles, and three-eighths of Constantinople including the docks and the arsenal.

Tinos and Mykonos were not in that category. They went instead to two brothers, Andrea and Geremia Ghisi, as a private fief — along with Skiathos, Skopelos and Skyros. The Ghisi were Venetians, but this was family enterprise, not state policy, and unusually they never recognised the overlordship of the Duke of Naxos: they held the islands directly from the Latin Emperors in Constantinople, with no lord in between.

1390: the island gives itself to the Republic — with conditions

The last Ghisi died without an heir. Venice, alarmed by the growing Ottoman threat, took over the administration and appointed a *Rettore di Tine e Micone*. Reactive, not ambitious.

But the Venetian archives describe the transfer from the other side, and it is worth stating precisely. The instrument of 1390 is an **accord by which the Tinians submitted to Venice** — and it carried terms. One of them was that **the production and export of silk should remain free**, with the lordship's revenues confined to lesser levies. Venice spent the next three centuries wanting to tax the island's most lucrative activity and never managed it.

AND THEY KEPT THE RIGHT TO WALK AWAY

George Wheler, on the island in 1675, recorded a second clause. The inhabitants had an agreement with the Republic that **whenever Venice could not, or would not, protect them any longer, it was obliged to deliver the castle to the inhabitants — who would then be free to choose their own protector**.

Put the two together and the character of the relationship is clear. This was not a conquest. It was a contract, and the islanders held two clauses in it that most subject populations of any empire would have envied: **their principal export was untaxed, and they could terminate the arrangement**. They kept both for three hundred and twenty-five years.

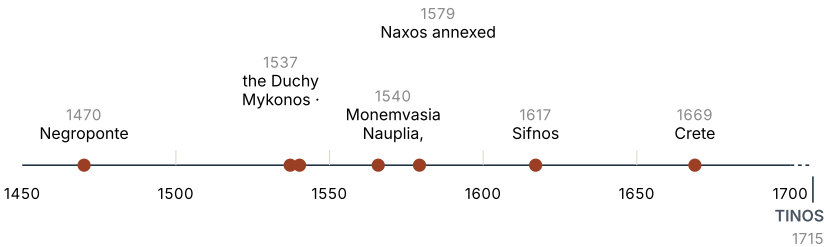
Commercially, it was minor — and it had no harbour

The trunk route of Venice's Levant trade ran Venice–Corfu–Modon and Coron–Crete–Constantinople. Tinos sat near the northern approach, not on the

artery. And Wheler, arriving in 1675, records dropping anchor in a bay on the south side because **there was no port on that side of the island**. A possession with no harbour on its inhabited coast is not a trading station.

Then everything around it fell

By 1675 the Venetians held only Cerigo and Tine among the islands of the Archipelago.



B The Venetian Aegean, dismantled over 245 years. Tinos is the last dot — forty-six years after Crete, and a hundred and thirty-six after Naxos.

Negroponte in 1470. Mykonos and the Duchy of the Archipelago in 1537, annexed outright in 1579. Nauplia and Monemvasia in 1540. Sifnos in 1617. Crete, finally, in 1669. By 1675 the Republic held only Kythira and Tinos among the islands of this sea.

And that is how a place with no harbour became important: everything else was gone.

Once it was all that remained, it acquired three real jobs

WHAT THE ISLAND WAS ACTUALLY FOR

ROLE	WHAT IT MEANT IN PRACTICE
<hr/>	

Watchtower Exombourgo overlooks not only the island but most of the Archipelago. It sat on the route the Ottoman fleet took from the Dardanelles toward the Morea — and the warning system ran islander to islander, by fire and smoke, from Syros

Corsair base Brigantines were manned out of Tinos during the war for Crete which, in the phrase of Randolph, the English merchant, “*did continually torment the Turks in all their Quarters*” — raiding the convoys that supplied Constantinople. It is why the Ottomans came in 1570, 1655, 1658, 1661 and 1684

Operational node A resident Provveditore, a castellano over the fortifications, a militia, and a nobility descended from **69 feudal landholders owing armed service**. In 1423 the Great Council notified Negroponte, Nauplia, Tinos and Mykonos to prepare ships for the takeover of Thessalonica

DOCUMENTED **What the island looked like at its Venetian height**

Around 1640 the population stood at roughly **9,000, about three-quarters of them Catholic**. Randolph in 1687 counts “*above thirty Villages upon this Island, and above 20000 souls*” and notes that the Greek-rite villages lie at the eastern end.

The Italian record describes Tinos under direct rule as *un’importante base militare* — an important military base — which is the plainest summary available of what Venice thought it had.

So the answer to the question is that Venice was here by accident and then by necessity. It did not want this island in 1204; it inherited it in 1390 on the islanders’ terms; it discovered a use for it only when everything better had been lost; and it held it, in the end, longer than anything else it ever held in this sea.

And a floor was put under all of this while the book was being written

This chapter, and the two after it, have always rested on soft ground: the assumption that between the end of antiquity and the arrival of the Franks the island goes dark and there is nothing to say. Excavation between 2019 and 2023, by the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades with the National Hellenic Research Foundation, has removed that assumption.

The castle at Xombourgo is Byzantine. The medieval castle of Agia Eleni there has a newly identified phase of the **seventh century AD** — a square walled enclosure with a large pentagonal tower, built about the time of the Arab raids — later reworked by the Venetians. In the excavator's own words: *after their arrival the Venetians went on using Xombourgo.* ^A

The Venetians did not build the fortress this book has been calling the emblem of their rule. They inherited it, and moved in.

And the harbour at Chora was working continuously from the late Roman period, on ceramic evidence from the same excavation programme: from the third or fourth century AD to the eighth. ^A

DOCUMENTED **The oldest church on the island — and the family was right about where it is**

My father has always said there is a church called Agia Anastasia over towards Komi, that it is very old — third or fourth century, he says — and that it is important.

In March 2024 the Ephor of Antiquities of the Cyclades, Dimitris Athanasoulis, described what his teams had been digging:

«Η Αγία Αναστασία είναι ένας δίκλιτος ναός του 16ου αιώνα, κάτω από τον οποίο αποκαλύπτουμε μια παλαιοχριστιανική βασιλική του 5ου αι. μ.Χ.»

Agia Anastasia is a two-aisled church of the sixteenth century, beneath which we are uncovering an Early Christian basilica of the fifth century AD.

The programme's own site is more precise: a two-aisled church of the **sixteenth to seventeenth** century over a **three-aisled** Early Christian basilica whose apse and outer walls still stand. In use to the end of the seventh century; reused in the twelfth; rebuilt in the sixteenth. **It is the oldest church on Tinos.** 

It stands at a place called **Πέντια** — and the excavators locate it **in the interior of the island, between the settlements of Komi and Kato Kleisma**, on the road that links them to Kalloni. Which is where my father said it was. In the next field is Λιβιάδι της Αγιάς, with the ruins of a Byzantine church and scattered fragments of carved marble.

And “third or fourth century” is not a wrong guess. It is what people say when they mean *palaiochristianiko*, Early Christian. Purpose-built churches barely exist before Constantine's edict of 313, and in the Cyclades the standing Early Christian basilicas are of the fifth and sixth centuries. So the excavated answer — the fifth — is **at the early end of the range, not the late one**. The family's instinct that this was very old was right. Only the arithmetic was folk arithmetic.

No finds have been published, and nothing has appeared since March 2024.

Athanasoulis to ΑΠΕ-ΜΠΕ, March 2024; «Βυζαντινή και Λατινοκρατούμενη Τήνος», Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades / NHRF



X I I I

Ἡ γουέρα δὲ κόρσο
the corso — *the corsair war*

Tinos was not only raided. In 1680 the corsair captains moved their base here

Everyone who writes about these islands writes about pirates arriving. The Venetian archives say something less comfortable: that the Tinians acquired a taste for it during the war for Crete and never lost it, that Venice’s orders against it were ignored, and that the safest island in the Cyclades was where even the Turks hid their money.

Four different things, and they should not be conflated

“Pirates” collapses four phenomena separated by eight centuries, three religions and several bodies of law. Kept apart, they explain the island; treated as one, they explain nothing.

WHO WAS ACTUALLY TAKING SHIPS IN THESE WATERS

LAYER	WHEN	WHO	BASED
Arab	c. 820s–961	Andalusian exiles who seized Crete, and Byzantine renegades. Also Slavs, in 769	Chandax, Crete
Latin	13th–16th c.	Genoese, Catalans, Venetian feudatories — and from 1330 the Turkish beyliks	The islands themselves

LAYER	WHEN	WHO	BASED
Ottoman & Barbary	16th–18th c.	The Ottoman fleet; Algerian, Tunisian and Tripolitan squadrons serving it	Constantinople; the Regencies
Catholic	c. 1530–1798	The Knights of Malta and the Tuscan Order of St Stephen	Valletta; Livorno

The fourth is the one nobody remembers, and it is the one that took most Greek cargo.



“Soltan Charadin, ditto Barbarossa, re d’Algeri.” Hayreddin Barbarossa in an Italian woodcut of about 1530–60 — drawn, that is, within his own lifetime and by the people he was raiding. In 1537 his fleet swept the Venetian Aegean and named Tinos among the islands attacked. It did not take it. The island stayed Venetian for another hundred and seventy-eight years.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Open Access · CC0

The corsair with a crown

The man in the woodcut is this chapter’s whole argument in one life.

Hayreddin Barbarossa was born at Palaiokipos on Lesbos — a Greek island — to a sipahi father, given variously as Turkish or Albanian, and a Greek

Orthodox mother, Katerina, of the same island. ^B The detail of the parentage is contested, and the hedge is part of the record.

He began as a corsair working these waters. By 1533 Suleiman had summoned him to Constantinople and made him **Kapudan Pasha — grand admiral of the Ottoman navy**. ^A The Italian caption under the portrait already says it: *re d'Algeri*, king of Algiers. A pirate with a crown, and then a fleet. The line this chapter keeps drawing — that corsairing and state navies were the same men in different seasons — is not a figure of speech. It was a career, and he is its most complete example.

And 1537, the year that sits in this book's chronology, was not a raid. It was a fleet campaign: Lütfi Pasha and Barbarossa swept the Venetian Aegean in one season — Syros, Aegina, Ios, Paros, Karpathos, Kasos, Kythira, Naxos — taken, sacked or forced to tribute. ^B

Set that list out in full, and the sentence this book has already said acquires its weight: the fleet that swept eight islands did not take Tinos.

Modern lists — the English Wikipedia article on Barbarossa among them — still put Tinos in the captured column for 1537, against a date contested by nobody: Venetian until 1715. ^A The error is a copying chain: one list repeats another, and nobody walks back to the record. It is exactly the kind of second-hand history this book exists to catch, and the reason its own claims carry grades.

Correcting the North Africans

The Barbary corsairs are the ones everybody has heard of, and their part in this sea is smaller than the stories suggest. French sources say the Algerians reserved to themselves *la course en «mer du Levant»* while Salé took the «*mer du Ponant*» — and it is worth knowing that in that technical usage “**mer du Levant**” means the Mediterranean as a whole, against “mer du Ponant”, the Atlantic. It does not mean the Levant. Anyone reading that sentence and concluding the Algerians worked the Aegean has mistranslated a technical term — a phrase that means one thing inside the trade and another outside it.

Italian scholarship states it plainly: in the eastern Mediterranean and the Adriatic, Venetian galley patrols sharply limited Barbary raiding. The documented Barbary mass raids are western — Ischia and Lipari in 1544, Vieste in 1554, Baltimore in Ireland in 1631.

But Algerian ships *were* in these waters, and twice within sight of this island: the Venetians destroyed seven of them off Chios in 1657, and Lambros Katsonis engaged Algerian vessels off Tinos and Mykonos in 1788. They came as squadrons of the Ottoman war fleet, not as independent raiders hunting villages. Slot also records that the Barbary corsairs **several times planned a great attack on Tinos** — and never made it.

The pirate economy of the Cyclades

« Comme dans les Caraïbes, il existait dans les Cyclades **une économie complète de la piraterie**. Les pirates y réparaient leurs vaisseaux, y fondaient même des canons. On pouvait tout y acheter, tandis que des négociants spécialisés achetaient le butin. **L'église catholique pourvoyait les concentrations sédentaires de pirates de prêtres** et dans certaines îles, les filles bien disposées ne manquaient pas. L'infrastructure était donc complète. »

As in the Caribbean, there existed in the Cyclades a complete economy of piracy. The pirates repaired their ships there and even cast cannons. Everything could be bought, while specialist merchants purchased the booty. The Catholic Church supplied the settled pirate communities with priests, and on certain islands well-disposed girls were not lacking. The infrastructure was therefore complete.

B. J. Slot, *Archipelagus Turbatus*

And they were not who you would guess. The principal element of the pirate population of the Cyclades was, in the words of Slot, the Dutch historian, **French subjects from Provence and Venetian subjects from Dalmatia** — with Greeks among them, both islanders and Maniots. France and Venice were officially at peace with the sultan, so their flags were forbidden on the *corso*; their pirates simply sailed under **Malta, Tuscany or Savoy** instead.

SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
WHERE THE CORSAIRS WERE			
Fourni, Ikaria	away east	back to the Cyclades	in the islands
the Anatolian coast	Cyprus · Egypt	with the takings	refit and provision
WHERE THE OTTOMAN FLEET WAS			
fitting out	IN THE AEGEAN	returning to port	laid up

The one season the Ottoman navy could reach these islands is the one season the corsairs were not in them. They left when the fleet could appear, and came home when it could not. After Slot.

B The corsairs' year, and the reason for it. Read the two rows against each other. The corsair calendar is not a season of good weather or bad — it is the exact negative of somebody else's naval timetable. The Cyclades were their winter quarters because winter was when nobody could come for them.

And Tinos was not only a victim

This is the part the guidebooks leave out, and it comes from the man Venice appointed to govern the island.

A RECTOR OF TINOS, TO VENICE

« Les Tinotes **avaient pris goût à la piraterie pendant la guerre de Crète, et ils la conservèrent une fois la paix conclue.** »

The Tinians had acquired a taste for piracy during the war for Crete, and kept it once peace was concluded.

Slot puts it plainly: the islanders kept up their links with Venice's old allies and **took an active part in the corsair war.** To avoid incidents with the Turks, the rector — at the instigation of the Venetian ambassador in Constantinople — proclaimed orders forbidding the arming of ships for the *corso*, participation in it, aid to corsairs, and the sale of booty.

The archival verdict on those orders is one sentence long: « *La valeur pratique de ces ordres n'était pas très grande.* » Their practical value was not very great.

1680 — THE CAPTAINS MOVE IN

« Lorsque, vers 1680, les chefs des corsaires commencèrent à douter de la sécurité de Milos, **ils déménagèrent à Tinos**, nonobstant des protestations ottomanes. »

When, around 1680, the corsair captains began to doubt the safety of Milos, they moved to Tinos, notwithstanding Ottoman protests.

The chiefs of the Aegean corsairs relocated their base to this island, over the objections of the empire, and Venice did not stop them.

Why here: it was the safest place in the Cyclades

Tinos was attacked like everywhere else — in 1672 the rector complained of violence against villages and of Tinian ships taken **by Western corsairs**; in 1675 a Tinian vessel was taken by a Muslim one. But the island had something no other island had, and Slot draws the conclusion:

« Si l'on considère que **même les Turcs utilisaient Tinos comme cachette sûre pour leurs biens précieux**, il devient clair que cette île, possédant seule un système de défense élaboré, **resta la plus sûre des Cyclades.** »

If one considers that even the Turks used Tinos as a safe hiding place for their valuables, it becomes clear that this island, alone possessing an elaborate system of defence, remained the safest of the Cyclades.

A fortress, a resident governor, a militia and five failed sieges will do that. The consequence is that the same walls that made Tinos safe to live in made it safe to keep a corsair fleet in — and safe for an Ottoman merchant to leave his money in while it happened.

DOCUMENTED **The island was also the first landfall for people escaping slavery**

Venice took an ambiguous view of slaves who escaped from Ottoman territory and reached Tinos. The ambassador in Constantinople regarded such escapes as a threat to good relations with the Porte; the government of Crete regarded helping them as a Christian duty. And a Cretan official went further, writing that **it was precisely Tinos's position as the first place of refuge for escaped slaves that made the island valuable to Venice.**

Slot adds the unsentimental footnote: motives other than humanitarian may have been at work, since the escapees « *pouvaient compléter favorablement la réserve limitée de marins disponibles dans l'île* » — they usefully made up the island's limited supply of available sailors.

So the same island received the escaped and armed the takers, and the second fact is part of the reason for the first.



What the corso actually looked like. Jacques Callot etched a sequence of plates of a single action in the early seventeenth century, and lettered the participants along the bottom like a diagram: A. *Bertone di Tunis di 1500 salme* — the Tunisian merchantman; B. *Petaccio di 800 salme, conserva del Bertone* — her consort; C. *Quattro Galere di S.A.S. che tracheggiano il Bertone* — four galleys of His Most Serene Highness working the merchantman over. S.A.S. is a Christian prince, not an Ottoman one. Four against two, in open water, for cargo. This is the mechanism of this chapter, drawn by a contemporary who expected his buyers to find it ordinary.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Open Access · CC0

The corsairs who were Catholic

After 1530 the Knights of Malta lost their crusading purpose and their revenues, and turned to the *corso*. Knights kept a share of the prize. The mechanism that hurt Greek shipping was the doctrine of *vista* — the claimed right to stop and board *any* vessel suspected of carrying Ottoman goods, and to confiscate cargo and crew, the crew being the more valuable. A Greek ship out of Chios with a single Ottoman-owned bale aboard was fair game, and its owner's remedy was to sue in Malta.

The Tuscan Order of St Stephen, based at Livorno, made incursions into the Aegean islands after 1640. And the general statement, from the standard account of Ottoman Greece: after Lepanto, Greek ships “*often became the target of attacks by Catholic (especially Spanish and Maltese) pirates.*”

AND A MALTESE RAID STARTED THE WAR THAT MADE THIS ISLAND MATTER

In 1644 the Knights of Malta seized an Ottoman convoy running from Constantinople to Alexandria, with high officials and Mecca pilgrims aboard, and took the prize into Venetian Crete.

That was the pretext for the Cretan War of 1645–69 — the war that cost Venice Crete, left Tinos as its last island in this sea, and, according to the island’s own governor, gave the Tinians their taste for piracy.

Which is the paragraph most readers will not have met before. On a Catholic island under Venetian rule, the corsairs who took Tinian cargo were as likely to be Catholic as Muslim, and the Tinian who lost his boat to a Maltese galley had no better remedy than the one who lost it to an Algerian.

The warning system, and the governor who was kidnapped for abolishing it

There is a tradition that signal fires on Exombourgo could be seen from Chios. It is geometrically possible — Exombourgo at 641 metres and Mount Pelineon on Chios at 1,297 give a combined line of sight of some 219 kilometres against a separation of about 130, with nothing in between. But the documented system is closer to home and better.

SYROS WATCHED FOR TINOS

The inhabitants of Tinos hated the governor-general of the neighbouring islands because he had abolished the old custom by which **the people of Syros warned the Tinians of the approach of corsairs or Turks by signals of fire or smoke.**

So in the disorder of 1570, the wholly Latin population of Syros did their Tiniian neighbours a service: the governor-general **was taken out of his bed and carried to Tinos, where he was put in prison.** He was released some months later.

It was an early-warning network run between islanders rather than between states — and when a governor abolished it, the neighbouring island kidnapped him for it. That is what the defence of these waters actually looked like from the ground.

How it ended — and 1830 is the wrong date

The Arab phase ended precisely, at Chandax, on 6 March 961. The rest ended slowly and later than most accounts allow.

The Greek War of Independence made it worse before it made it better: besieged insurgents at Gramvousa turned to piracy to survive, and the church there was dedicated to Παναγία ἡ Κλέφτρινα — Our Lady the Piratess. What finished it was a joint Anglo-French naval suppression between 1825 and 1828.

And Tinos was inside it, on both sides of the ledger, exactly as it had been a century and a half earlier. In August 1823 the island community was made to pay **2,000 γρόσια** in compensation for the robbery of a French subject by pirates then loose in the area. In May 1825 the Tinians had to fight off a

landing party. And in February 1827 Alexandros Mavrokordatos wrote, in the plainest terms, that **Tinos and Syros had become the markets where the pirates sold what they took.** A

THE SAME MARKET, UNDER A GREEK FLAG

The infrastructure was complete: everything could be bought, and specialist merchants purchased the booty. That was the Cyclades of the corsair captains. A hundred and fifty years later, with a Greek revolutionary government in place of a Venetian rector, *the same island is named as the place the goods are sold.*

The one thing that changed is who the victims were. **In October 1827 they were Tinians** — thirty-seven of them, coming home from Smyrna with their savings — and that story is told in chapter xxv, because it belongs more to the emigration than to the piracy.

27 JULY 1826 — THE ROYAL NAVY, AT TINOS

The ship's boats of HMS *Cambrian* — a British frigate's launches, rowed in — took a pirate *bombard* and burnt a *mistico*, both small armed craft, **at Tinos itself.** Five pirates were killed.

Three dates get used for the end of all this, and only one of them is right for the Aegean. **The pirate fleet at Gramvousa was destroyed in January 1828, and that is the honest end-date for these waters.** The French took Algiers in 1830 and ended Barbary corsairing, but the Barbary corsairs were never the Aegean's principal problem, and using 1830 here imports a western-Mediterranean chronology into a Cycladic story.

One last detail, and it is the right note to finish on. **The last raid on a Cycladic island that I can find is 1794, and it was Greek** — Kefalonians

A horizontal timeline bar representing the history of Venice from 4000 BC to 1900 AD. The bar is divided into colored segments corresponding to different historical periods. Below the bar, the names of these periods are listed: ANCIENT, BYZANTINE, GHISI, VENETIAN, OTTOMAN, and GREEK. The timeline starts at 4000 BC on the left and ends at 1900 AD on the right.

Period	Approximate Dates
ANCIENT	4000 BC - 476 AD
BYZANTINE	476 AD - 1453 AD
GHISI	1453 AD - 1564 AD
VENETIAN	1564 AD - 1797 AD
OTTOMAN	1797 AD - 1900 AD
GREEK	1900 AD - Present

Ἐξώμπουργο

Five sieges in a hundred and fourteen years, and
then it was given up without a shot

Exombourgo is a granite plug rising to 641 metres in the middle of the island, visible from most of it and from most of the sea around it. Its name means *outside the town* — which tells you it was named by people who already lived somewhere else. It has been the island's refuge since the Iron Age: a wall of about 1100 BC lies below the Venetian work.

At its height the place on top of it was not a garrison but a **town**: six hundred metres of ramparts with towers facing every direction, and inside them between one and two thousand people, **677 houses and five churches**. When the alarm went, the island came up here.



“Città, et Castello di Tine.” Francesco Basilicata, 1618 — a Venetian military engineer’s survey, hand-coloured, a century before the end. The *Castello* sits on the summit; the walled *Habitato* spreads below it; the *Borgo* lies outside the gate. Individual buildings are named: Santa Sofia, Santa Trinità, the cisterns, the *Casa del Castelan*, the guard post, the magazine, the *Mezza Luna* ravelin and the *Belloardo* bastion. Note two things. The roads are labelled by destination — *strada che si va a San Nicolò*, *che si va a Lutra* — which are the mule paths of chapter vii, named in 1618. And inside the walls, alongside the Latin churches, a *Chiesa Greca*.

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The same rock, about 1707. Vincenzo Coronelli — cosmographer to the Republic — draws it as a plan: *CASTELLO* on the summit with its church, the walled *CITTÀ* below with its streets dotted in, and the *BORGO* of small houses outside the wall to the south-west. The bastioned trace on the south and east is artillery-period work. The scale is in *passi*.

Eight years after this was engraved, the place stopped existing.

Gennadius Library, via the Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation / travelogues.gr · CC BY-NC 4.0

Put the two side by side and you have something rare: **the same fortification recorded by two men in the same Venetian service, ninety years apart** — one at the height of Venetian confidence, one at the end of it.

Five sieges, five failures

THE ATTACKS IT WITHSTOOD

YEAR

WHAT HAPPENED

1537 Barbarossa's fleet sweeps the Venetian Aegean and **names Tinos among the islands attacked** — but does not take it. The island stays Venetian another 178 years

1570 Canum Pasha lands with 8,000 troops and siege guns — the heavy pieces brought to batter walls. **Driven off**

1654 The Ottoman fleet plunders the island and withdraws after a brief skirmish

1655 · 1658 · 1661 · 1684 Four further attempts on the fortress. **All fail.** The blockade of 1661 is broken by a Venetian squadron

An island of this size holding out five times in a hundred and fourteen years is the reason it was thought unconquerable — and the reason that what happened in 1715 was so shocking.



The only view rather than a plan. Jan Struys, 1681. The port town below, the fortress on its rock behind — the relationship a modern visitor cannot see, because one half of it is gone.

Onassis Library, via travelogues.gr · CC BY-NC 4.0

June 1715

The force that arrived was not a raiding squadron. It was **65 warships and 74 transports carrying some 25,000 soldiers** — the fleet of a campaign that would go on to retake the whole Morea that summer.

The population withdrew into the fortress as it had done for five centuries. The fortifications had been in poor condition since about 1700. Accounts of the garrison vary from as few as fourteen soldiers to around fifty.

The Provveditore, Bernardo Balbi, surrendered without fighting.

THE TERMS, AND WHY THEY MATTERED

The Venetians — officials, families, administrative staff, soldiers and officers — left freely, **with their weapons and their movable property**, shipped to the Morea or Corfu. The Greeks stayed. And the rights of both churches, Latin and Orthodox, were preserved.

The Ottomans kept the terms exactly. **That is the detail that changed the war.**

Because the safe-conduct was honoured, and seen to be honoured, other Venetian garrisons drew the obvious conclusion. Tinos was regarded as unconquerable; news that its governor had given it up without a fight was a blow to Venetian strategy and an ill omen for the campaign — and Ottoman good faith prompted a cascade of surrenders by demoralised garrisons elsewhere. Souda and Spinalonga, the last Venetian footholds off Crete, went the same way later that year.

DOCUMENTED **Balbi was tried — and he was not the only one**

Three Venetian governors surrendered without offering resistance in that campaign: Bernardo Balbi at Tinos, Francesco Bembo at Aegina and Federico Badoer at Monemvasia. All three were tried in Venice and all three were sentenced to life imprisonment.

A separate study states independently that Balbi was charged with cowardice on his return and sentenced to life. Two languages, two traditions, one sentence — and a pattern of three parallel condemnations rather than a single scapegoat.

NOTE **Was Tinos the last Greek land taken by the Ottomans? No — and the true version is more precise**

Tinos was the last Venetian island in the Cyclades, and Slot's phrasing is nearly that: *Tinos, la dernière île vénitienne*, in a sentence about the Cyclades. That claim holds.

But it fell on 5 June 1715, at the *start* of that summer's campaign, not the end. The reconquest of the Morea followed — Corinth, Nafplio in July, Modon and Monemvasia in August — and the Cretan island-fortresses of Souda and Spinalonga surrendered later still.

And **Kythira was never taken at all**. It remained a Venetian possession until 1797, eighty-two years longer than Tinos, and stopped being Venetian only because Venice stopped existing.

The last Greek territory to pass under Ottoman rule was far later, and was not a conquest: **Parga, in 1819**, was ceded by Britain to Ali Pasha of Ioannina for a cash settlement, after which the inhabitants abandoned the town rather than live under him.

21 JULY 1718 — PASSAROWITZ

Venice ceded the Morea, its last outposts on Crete, and the islands of Aegina and Tinos, retaining the Ionian Islands together with Kythira, Preveza and Arta on the Epirote mainland.

It is the treaty that ends Ottoman expansion in the Aegean. After it, the empire never took another island in this sea.

Which leaves the strangest fact of all, and it belongs to the next chapter. **The fortress in these two engravings was not destroyed by the army that took it.** It came down two years later, in 1717 — and on one of the two surviving accounts, it was blown up by the islanders themselves, in a case of mistaken identity.



X V

Ἡ Τουρκοκρατία

i Tourkokratía — *ee tour-ko-kra-TEE-a* — the Turkish rule

The Ottomans took this island, and then almost nobody came

A hundred and six years of Ottoman rule left no mosque, no quarter, no community and — as far as the record goes — no families. The reason is not resistance. It is that the empire arrived a century and a half late, and two years after it arrived the building that would have housed it blew up.

The Cyclades became Ottoman in stages between 1537 and 1579. Tinos did not. It stayed Venetian until 1715, which means that when the empire finally acquired this island, it acquired it **a hundred and thirty-six years after Naxos** — at the very end of its expansion in these waters, with an administration already too thin to do much with it.

What the surrender actually granted

The terms agreed in June 1715 guaranteed the free withdrawal of the defenders and of any inhabitants who wished to leave, and — the clause that mattered most in the long run — **they preserved the rights of both churches, Catholic and Orthodox**. The rector and many of the leading families left. The Greeks stayed. And with the disappearance of the capital, and then of the commune of the *cittadini*, the whole Venetian class structure of the island went with them.

What replaced it was almost nothing. The island was folded into the Eyalet of the Archipelago, but Ottoman administration in the Cyclades was, in Slot's judgement, "*really decadent*" and incapable of maintaining a permanent presence. So it did the only thing it could: **it collected a lump sum through the village communities and their councils of elders**, and otherwise left the island alone. The result was a quasi-autonomy that lasted until 1821.

TWO ACCOUNTS THAT AGREE — ONE QUOTED HERE, ONE IN THE ARCHIVES

A French history of the island printed on Tinos itself puts it this way: the Turks « *conservèrent l'autonomie que les précédents maîtres avaient accordée aux habitants, en laissant intacte l'organisation communautaire avec ses institutions démocratiques. Ainsi la domination turque sur l'île, qui dura seulement un siècle, fut superficielle avec tous ses résultats avantageux pour l'île.* »

They kept the autonomy the previous masters had granted the inhabitants, leaving the community organisation intact with its democratic institutions. So Turkish rule over the island, which lasted only a century, was superficial — with all its advantageous results for the island.

That is a local source, and a proud one. What makes it worth quoting is that it is corroborated — independently, and from the Venetian and Ottoman archives — by Slot's scholarly history of the Cyclades, which is not quoted here but says the same thing. **Two accounts that have never met, agreeing.**

One qualification should be made, because it is the part the patriotic version leaves out. The Ottomans kept the old levies on the harvest and added a poll tax which began lower than on other Ottoman islands and reached the same level during the eighteenth century. The weight of taxation therefore shifted from the tithe towards the head — which in practice **taxed the poor more heavily than the system it replaced**. Light-touch government and a lighter burden are not the same thing.

A second qualification comes from the island's own historian, and it dates the thinning. Δωριζας, following Armakollas's study of the island's finances, records that Tinos was held as a τιμάριο — a revenue grant — first by a favourite of the sultan and then by Veli Efendi Zade, master of the Ottoman mint; when he died in 1805 the island passed to the treasury, and with the

change of master the privileges went: the exemption from the χαράτσι that Tinians carried with them anywhere in the empire, the fleet kept twelve miles off the coast, the duty-free cargoes. Heavier taxes followed, and the Kapudan Pasha, master of the Aegean, «κατεπάτησε ὅλα τὰ ἀνωτέρω προνόμια» — trampled every one of them. Zallony, writing in 1809, still describes the customs exemption as in force (chapter xxiii), so the two do not quite agree on the date. On the mechanism they do: the elders went on collecting the lump sum to 1821. What thinned in the last sixteen years was the room around it. C

C Γ. Ι. Δωριζας, *Η Τήνος επί Τουρκοκρατίας και κατά τον Αγώνα του 1821*, Μέρος Τρίτον, Athens 1978, pp. 170–171, citing N. Αρμακόλλας, *Οικονομικά τῆς νήσου Τήνου 1715–1822*, pp. 11–13.

And then, in 1717, the fortress was blown up

Two years after the conquest a Venetian fleet under Flangini entered the Aegean and set off a panic among the Ottomans on Tinos. Two accounts survive of what happened next, and this book gives both because the sources do.

In the first, the Ottomans abandoned the island in a panic, destroying the fortress and the capital as they went. In the second, they withdrew to Euboea and left the local militia to hold Exombourgo in the traditional way — **and the militia, sighting a fleet on the horizon, blew the fortress up with the gunpowder the Ottomans had left behind. The fleet was not Venetian. It was Barbary.** The islanders then managed to make their action acceptable to the Ottomans, which suggests some very careful explaining.

THE BLUNDER THAT BOUGHT THE ISLAND ITS LIBERTY

Whichever version is true, the consequence was the same, and Slot states it plainly: with the fortress gone, there was no longer a safe place of residence for a Muslim population — « *Tinos ne put donc pas être colonisée et les habitants de cette île purent jouir des mêmes libertés que les autres insulaires.* »

Tinos could not be colonised, and its people enjoyed the same liberties as the other islanders. Shortly afterwards a real Venetian fleet did appear, saw the ruin, and declined to garrison it either.

The island lost its castle and got its freedom in the same explosion.

How many Turks were there? In the whole Cyclades, between one and two hundred

This is where the popular picture and the archives part company completely.

Muslim *inhabitants* — as distinct from officials — first appear in the Cyclades around 1590. Slot lists the islands where they settled: **Naxos, Andros, Paros, Santorini, Ios and Kea**, with Syros only after 1617. Tinos is not on that list, and could not be: it was Venetian.

The total number of Muslims in the entire archipelago he puts at **100 to 150**, socially isolated. On Naxos around 1640 there were about seventy, with no political influence whatever. Outside Naxos and Andros the settlements were, in his word, *éphémères*.

MUSLIM INHABITANTS OF THE CYCLADES, 17TH CENTURY

ISLAND	NUMBER AND CHARACTER	GRADE
Naxos	~70 around 1640; no political influence; mostly converts	B

ISLAND	NUMBER AND CHARACTER	GRADE
Andros	“They do not seem to have been more numerous than those of Naxos”	B
Paros	12, around 1630 — “that is all we know of them”	B
Kea · Ios	Pensioned soldiers granted land	B
Santorini	A few names, nothing more	B
Syros	Only after 1617	B
Tinos	None. Venetian until 1715, and uncolonisable after 1717	B
<i>Total across the whole Cyclades: 100–150 people</i>		B

And they were not, for the most part, Turks. Slot describes the Muslim inhabitants of Naxos as “*en majorité des renégats chrétiens, surtout d’origine grecque*” — mostly Christian converts, mostly of Greek origin. Ottoman documents record many of them under the patronymic ***bin Abdullah***, “son of Abdullah,” which is the standard bureaucratic formula for a convert whose father was not a Muslim, and therefore a name that announces itself as first-generation.

They had no mosques. The *kadis* who were supposed to lead and judge them did not live on the islands. And because they were not members of the local *kinotis*, they held none of the communal privileges — becoming, in Slot’s phrase, “*des étrangers dans leur patrie*,” foreigners in their own homeland, dependent on Ottoman institutions elsewhere. By the end of the seventeenth century the last traces of Islamisation in the islands were quietly disappearing.

DOCUMENTED **Where there was contact, there was marriage — and the wives were Christian**

Of the seventy or so Muslims on Naxos around 1640, Slot records: “*Leurs femmes sont souvent des Chrétiennes.*” Their wives were often Christian women.

This is worth stating carefully. It is not evidence of a Turkish population taking local women. It describes a small community of local converts — men who had changed religion and stayed where they were — marrying within the island they had never left.

Nothing comparable is recorded for Tinos, because on Tinos there was no such community to record.

The traffic ran the other way

So the encounter between this island and the Ottoman Empire was, in the end, almost entirely one-directional. The empire did not settle here. But one Tinian went there.



Said to be Kösem Sultan. An anonymous Venetian-school portrait of the seventeenth century. Both halves of the label are tradition rather than record — that the sitter is Kösem, and that Kösem was born on this island — and the caveats set out below are the honest state of it. The painting is included because it is the image most often attached to her name, and because a Venetian painter's idea of what she looked like is itself a fact about how Venice thought of the women it lost to the corsairs.

Anonymous, Venetian school, seventeenth century. Underlying painting in the public domain.

KÖSEM SULTAN, OF TINOS

She was born on this island around 1589 — the daughter, a contemporary in Constantinople was told, of a Greek priest, from a country some two hundred miles away. At about fourteen, in 1604, she was seized by raiders and sold into slavery in Bosnia, bought by a provincial governor, and sent on to the imperial harem.

She became consort to one sultan, mother of two more, grandmother of a fourth, and for a generation **the most powerful woman in the history of the Ottoman Empire.**

She was carried off the island that the empire she came to govern would take a hundred and eleven years later.

And note how she left. Not overland, not through any Ottoman administration, but off a shore, by raiders, at fourteen — which is the whole point. **The danger to this island was never the Turkish neighbour, because there was no Turkish neighbour.** It was whoever came in a ship.

That fear is written into the map. Every village on Tinos is built inland, dense, low, and out of sight of the sea. It is simply written there by pirates, and not by the Ottoman Empire.

NOTE **Two caveats on Kösem, in fairness**

A minority of scholars argue for a Bosnian rather than a Tinian birth. The Tinian origin rests on Pietro della Valle, who was in Constantinople in 1615 and was told she was the daughter of a Greek priest from a country some two hundred miles away — which fits.

And her Christian name, usually given as Anastasia, is popular tradition rather than record. The name she is known by, *Köse*m, is Turkish.



X V I

Ὁ Λέων τοῦ Ἀγίου Μάρκου
o Léon tou Agíou Márkou — *the Lion of St Mark*

Tinos held the lion longer than anywhere in the Aegean, and has the least of it left

A winged lion with its paw on an open book is St Mark, and St Mark is Venice — the Republic’s own badge, stamped on everything it ruled. It was never decoration. It was a sovereignty mark — the visible claim that a place belonged to the Republic — which is exactly why so few survive anywhere, and why almost none survive here.

Tinos was the only island in the Cyclades where the Lion of St Mark was the emblem of the sovereign power — and it was so for three hundred and twenty-five years, from 1390 to 1715, longer than anywhere else in the Aegean.

Every other island in this group was a *feudal fief* of the Duchy of the Archipelago. Their heraldry is family heraldry — Crispo, Barozzi, Sanudo, Sommaripa. Not the Lion.

That distinction is easy to miss and it changes what the stones mean. On Naxos or Andros, a carved coat of arms is a family saying *this is mine*. On Tinos, for three and a quarter centuries, it was a state saying *this is ours*.

Where the lion comes from

It is the evangelist-symbol of St Mark, from the four living creatures of Christian iconography. In 828 Venetian merchants carried Mark’s relics out of Alexandria — smuggled, so the story goes, under a cargo of pork — and the city adopted him as its patron. From about 1260 the winged lion stood for Venice itself.

The lion is shown with a book held open under one paw, and the words in it are the whole justification: **PAX TIBI MARCE, EVANGELISTA MEVS** — *Peace to you, Mark, my evangelist* — what an angel is said to have told Mark when a storm drove him ashore in the lagoon where Venice would later stand, promising that his body would one day rest there. The sentence in the book is the title deed. Every lion Venice cut into a gate from Dalmatia to Cyprus carried the reason Venice was entitled to be there.

How to read a lion

THE FOUR STANDARD FORMS

FORM	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	WHERE IT IS USED
Andante passant	In profile, walking, the right forepaw resting on the open book	The commonest form. Gates and façades
Rampant	In profile on its hind legs, forelegs holding book and sword	Military contexts

FORM	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	WHERE IT IS USED
In moleca	Frontal, crouched, wings fanned around the head like the open claws of a crab — which is what the name means	Primarily a coin form , hence also <i>in soldo</i> , <i>in gazzetta</i> . Chosen to say this was a city born of the sea
Vexilliferous	Upright, holding a banner	Authority carried beyond the city's own borders

A halo marks the properly religious depiction — the evangelist rather than the state. In cities on water the lion is sometimes shown with forepaws on land and hind paws in the sea: dominion over the mainland and the maritime empire at once. That motif only makes sense after Venice's fifteenth-century conquests on the mainland, so **it is itself a dating tool**.

MYTH **Open book means peace, closed book means war — this is folklore, not a code**

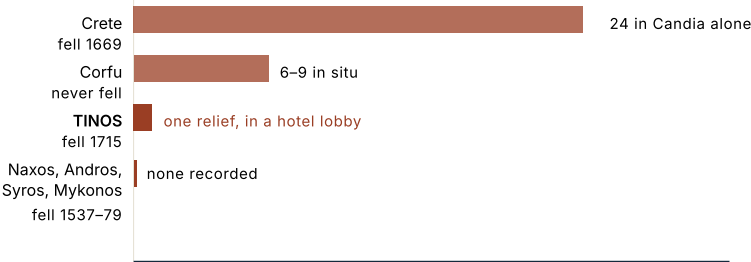
Almost every guidebook carries it: an open book means the lion was carved in peacetime, a closed book with a raised sword means war. A second version says the open book meant the town paid taxes to the Republic and the closed book meant exemption.

Neither survives contact with the evidence. Lions with open books appear in the worst of wartime — including at Lepanto — and closed books appear in peace. It is a story that grew around the emblem rather than a rule the carvers followed.

Two further corrections while we are here. **The sword means Justice**, a virtue of good government, not war. And *in moleca* is a coin type before it is an architectural one.

Why there is none left here, and plenty on Crete

The obvious explanation is that Tinos fell to the Ottomans and Ottomans removed the emblems of the previous sovereign. That is true as far as it goes, but it does not go far, because **Crete fell forty-six years earlier and is full of lions.**



Surviving Venetian lions, by former possession. Survival does not track how long ago the place fell. It tracks whether the buildings were reused or demolished.

B Crete fell nearly half a century before Tinos and kept dozens, because the Ottomans took over Venetian cities and went on living in them. Corfu never fell at all. Tinos was not a city — it was a fortress, and it was razed.

THE DISTINCTION THAT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING

Tinos was not defaced. It was demolished.

Effacing the lion is what a conqueror does to a place he intends to occupy. Tinos was not occupied — the fortress came down in 1717, the town on top of it was abandoned, and the people moved to the harbour. There was no gate left to deface.

NOTE **Nobody has ever catalogued the lions of the Aegean**

Alberto Rizzi’s regional catalogues of the Lion of St Mark cover Crete, Corfu, Cyprus, Istria and Dalmatia — the places where the Venetian built fabric

survived and there was something to count. There is **no Aegean or Cycladic catalogue at all.**

Tinos, where the fabric did not survive, was never studied. Which is a circular problem: the places with nothing left get no scholarship, and the absence of scholarship then looks like an absence of history.

But there is a Tinian catalogue, and it is not of lions

Alekos Florakis published *Οικόσημα Τήνου — Coats of Arms of Tinos* — in 2001, and it records **sixty-five armorials surviving on this island, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, fifty-four of them in marble**, sorted into four classes: emblems of the state, arms of lords, arms of clerics, and the insignia of monastic orders.

That first class is where any surviving Lion of St Mark on Tinos will be itemised. And the headline is far better than the one people repeat: not *one lion in a hotel lobby*, but **sixty-five carved armorials from four regimes, on an island of nine thousand people.**

DOCUMENTED What can actually be seen today

A winged-lion relief in the entrance hall of the Hotel Poseidon, Chora.

The best-documented surviving lion on the island, recorded and photographed in the standard English survey of Venetian fortresses in Greece.

Venetian coats of arms above the gate at Xinara, the seat of the Catholic archdiocese.

Latin lintel inscriptions in the villages, dated 1747, 1790 and 1826 — later than Venetian rule, which is itself the point: the Latin epigraphic habit outlived the Republic by a century.

The ruins on Exombourgo — the gate, the cisterns, the walls, the ruined church of St John.

And beyond stone, the Venetian past is in the paths, the villages, the toponyms and the surnames of the inhabitants.

VENICE LOST MORE LIONS TO FRANCE THAN TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Rizzi distinguishes three waves of *leontoclastia* — lion-breaking. The League of Cambrai, 1509–16. Yugoslav nationalist destruction in the twentieth century. And, by far the worst, **the Napoleonic period: in 1797 about a thousand external lions were demolished in Venice itself, and at least four thousand damaged across the mainland territories.**

The emblem that the Ottomans are blamed for erasing was destroyed on an industrial scale by a French republic, in the city that invented it.

And one lion went the other way

This is a different animal, and it explains a common confusion.

The Naxians dedicated a row of marble lions to Apollo on Delos in the late seventh or early sixth century BC — archaic Greek, wingless, nothing whatever to do with Venice. In 1716 the Venetians took one of them **because it reminded them of the Lion of St Mark**, fitted it with an incongruous new head, and set it at the entrance to the Arsenale in Venice, where it still stands.

Sources conflict irreconcilably on who took it and when — Morosini in 1694, Admiral Pisani, or Domenico Pasqualigo in 1716. The one hard datum is the inscription it carries, ANNO CORCYRÆ LIBERATÆ, which dates the

installation: Corfu was relieved in 1716. One year after Venice lost Tinos, the Republic put a stolen Aegean lion at its own front gate.

NOTE **Four sculptures stand at that gate, and one of them is a dog**

The group at the Porta Magna of the Arsenale is assembled from four different places. The largest is the **Piraeus lion**, 3.8 metres, carrying eleventh-century **runic inscriptions** cut by Varangian mercenaries in Byzantine service. Beside it, a recumbent lion from the Piraeus–Athens road. Then the **Delos lion**. And finally the so-called *Molosso* — which is not a lion at all but a Molossian mastiff, a Greek grave-guardian, which arrived headless and was given a lion’s head to match the company.

On Delos itself, five substantially complete lions survive and fragments of several more. The originals were moved into the site museum in 1999 because of salt decay; replicas stand in their findspots.

Which is the shape of the whole chapter, in two movements. **Venice put its lion up all across this sea, and the sea pulled it down.** Then Venice took a lion out of the sea, put the wrong head on it, and stood it at its own door — in the same year it lost the last island where its lion had been the law.



The lion at Chora. The relief described above: one slab, the halo and cross, the open book, and the Greek of Sirach cut on the scroll beneath it.

Author's photograph. Also the cover of this book, with Sandrart's map of 1687 beneath it: detail, frame and sea-hatching removed, Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, via travelogues.gr · CC BY-NC 4.0.

And one last thing about loyalty, which is the oldest thing in this book

This island's name in Venetian is *Fedele*. The faithful one. It is the compliment the whole book is titled after.

Chapter xi records what Tinos was doing nearly nineteen hundred years before Venice arrived: on the night before Salamis a Tenian trireme **deserted the**

Persian fleet, came over to the Greeks with full intelligence of the enemy's position, and the Tenians were cut into the tripod at Delphi for it.

Herodotus adds one detail that chapter did not use. With that ship, and one from Lemnos that had come over earlier at Artemisium, the Greek fleet reached exactly **three hundred and eighty** — “*otherwise it fell short by two of that amount.*” A *Histories VIII.82, verbatim* The round number in the account of the battle that saved Greece is made round by two deserters, and one of them was from here.

So the island Venice would one day call Faithful is on the monument to Greek liberty for changing sides.

That is not a contradiction and it should not be made into a joke. They are the same fact seen from two directions: a small place on a shipping lane, obliged for three thousand years to be somebody's subject, and very good at judging which somebody. It held for Venice longer than anywhere else in this sea, and it deserted at Salamis, and both got it written down in stone.

X V I I

Ἑλλη · 15 Αὐγούστου 1940

Élli — *EL-lee*

On the island's holiest morning, three torpedoes were fired into a harbour holding ten thousand pilgrims

The last time a great power did something to Tinos, it did it on 15 August, in front of the largest religious gathering in Greece, against a country that was not at war. It is the best-documented event in this book and the least known outside Greece.

The ship, and the name she carried

The *Elli* was old and she was strange. She had been laid down in **Camden, New Jersey, in 1912 for the Chinese Empire** — one of three training cruisers ordered by the Qing dynasty, to be called *Fei Hung*, the Flying Swan. Then the dynasty fell, and the new Chinese republic declined to pay the debts of the one before it. Greece bought her in 1914 for £320,000.

By 1940 she was a 2,600-ton minelayer doing about twenty knots on a good day, with three six-inch guns and a complement of 232. And she was named for the Battle of Elli, fought off the Dardanelles in December 1912 — the victory that had given Greece command of the Aegean in the same war in which Italy took the Dodecanese from the Ottomans.

Why she was here — over the Navy's objection

She was sent to Tinos to give the Dormition pilgrimage a warship: a ceremonial state presence at the largest religious event in the country, at a moment of acute national anxiety. She lay at anchor about **550 metres off the harbour mole, dressed overall**, with part of her crew ashore for the ceremonies.

THE NAVAL STAFF DID NOT WANT HER THERE

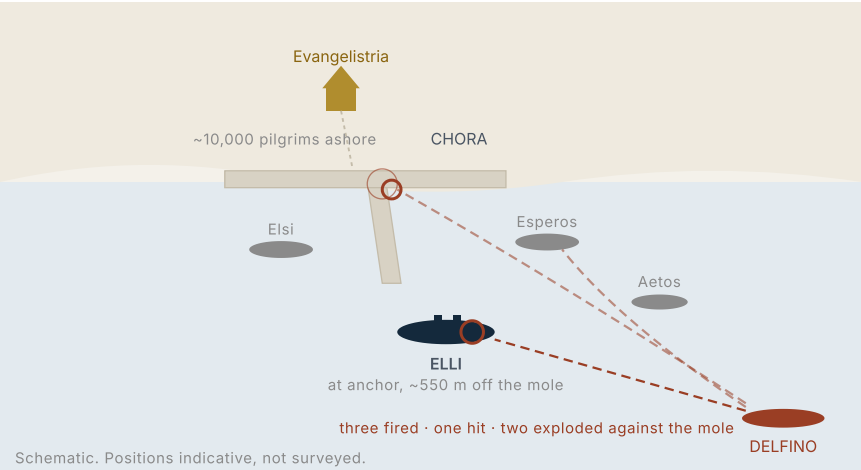
Admiral Kavvadias, Chief of the Fleet, objected. The naval staff recommended sending **a destroyer** instead. The Ministry of Marine overruled them, wanting a cruiser for a more imposing ceremonial presence.

Admiral Mezeviris recorded it in his memoirs afterwards, which is how we know.

08:25

The Italian submarine *Delfino* had sailed from Partheni on Leros — in the Italian Dodecanese — at 20:30 the previous evening, and was off Tinos by half past four in the morning. Her commander was Lieutenant Giuseppe Aicardi.

At about twenty-five past eight he fired three torpedoes from roughly seven hundred metres.



B Tinos harbour, the morning of 15 August 1940. One torpedo struck the *Elli* on the starboard side beneath the single boiler she had lit. **The other two were aimed at the pilgrim steamers *Elsi* and *Esperos*, missed, and detonated against the harbour mole — in front of the crowd.**

The hit opened the engine room and the oil bunkers and blew a crater in the deck between the funnels. She listed, burned, and went down at about twenty past ten **with her colours still flying**. Her captain, Angelos Hatzopoulos, meant to go down with her; his officers carried him off the bridge bodily and put him in a boat.

THE CASUALTIES — THE FIGURES DO NOT AGREE, AND IT IS WORTH SHOWING THAT

DEAD	WOUNDED	GIVEN BY
9	24	The figure in most Greek and English accounts — one petty officer and eight sailors
9	27	Some Greek accounts
10	—	A detailed Greek listing by rank; all of them stokers, at the point of impact
8	22	Hellenic naval history site

4 29 The Italian estimate — an intelligence figure, not the Greek record

B Take nine dead and about twenty-four wounded as the working figure, and note that war memory hardens around numbers that were never certain. **There were casualties ashore as well:** at least one civilian died on the quay, of cardiac shock, after the second torpedo exploded against the waterfront, and others were injured by debris and in the panic.

AND THEN THE PROCESSION WENT AHEAD

Metaxas ordered it to proceed. The islanders, who had run up the hill behind the Evangelistria expecting more, came back down.

An eyewitness who watched from the hillside remembered who carried the icon that afternoon: **survivors from the *Elli***, some of them in slippers, their clothes soaked in the ship's fuel oil.

She also remembered the hospital that night. «*Τίς φωνές τους, ποὺ πονοῦσαν. Ἦταν καμένα.*» — *Their cries, from the pain. They were burned.*

DOCUMENTED **The island's fishing boats went alongside a burning ship**

Michalis Petychakis signalled his caiques — the *Propontis* and the *Eleni* — to close the *Elli* and take off the wounded, while she was on fire and might have blown up. They brought off **twenty-four**. The steamer *Esperos* also went to help.

Petychakis and his crews were afterwards decorated by King George II.

The wounded were landed at the island hospital, which had almost nothing to treat burns with, and were evacuated by sea the same night.

Who did it, and what Greece said

Within days, Greek officers recovered **the tail section of one of the torpedoes that had struck the mole**. It was unmistakably Italian. A lieutenant named Doussis collected the fragments from the quay on his own initiative.

The Greek government said nothing about it. The press was permitted one formula: the *Ellis* had been **“torpedoed by a submarine of unknown nationality.”**

BE PRECISE ABOUT THE SILENCE

It is often said that Metaxas covered it up. The accurate version is narrower and more interesting: **the Greek state did not deny Italian responsibility — it declined to state it, and locked away the forensic report**. Greece was neutral, unready, and being deliberately provoked, and the government’s judgement was that saying so out loud in August 1940 meant war on Italy’s timetable rather than its own.

The findings and the photographs of the fragments were published on 30 October 1940 — two days after Italy invaded anyway.

Nobody in Greece had been fooled for a moment.

Whose order was it? The Italian archives answer this

This is contested in popular accounts and settled in the documents, and the settled version is worse than the popular one.

THE CHAIN, FROM THE ITALIAN NAVAL RECORDS

DATE	WHAT WAS ORDERED, AND BY WHOM
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DATE	WHAT WAS ORDERED, AND BY WHOM
4 Aug	Supermarina drafts instructions to attack Aegean traffic “ <i>senza distinzione di bandiera</i> ” — regardless of flag
11 Aug	Admiral Cavagnari , Chief of Naval Staff, orders a submarine campaign for 20–25 August: sink by torpedo, without warning, all steamers presumed to be trading for the enemy — “ <i>anche se coperti da bandiera neutrale</i> ”, even if under a neutral flag
—	Cesare Maria De Vecchi , the Fascist governor of the Dodecanese, on his own initiative brings the sailing forward six days and moves the operating area from the Dardanelles approaches into the Cyclades , naming Tinos and Syros. Supermarina admitted this in an internal memorandum of 1942
15 Aug	Aicardi chooses to fire at a moored warship of a neutral state. His orders covered merchant shipping
16 Aug	Rome cancels: “ <i>Suspend your activity stop With concealed navigation return immediately to base</i> ”

Aicardi’s own report claimed the *Elli* had moved towards him and forced his hand. She was moored, dressed overall, and surrounded by festival craft.

Italian naval commentary calls the account, flatly, *non è credibile*.

TWO VERDICTS, BOTH ITALIAN

Ciano, in his diary **that same day**, before anyone knew who had done it:

« Per me, c'è sotto **l'intemperanza di De Vecchi**. »

To my mind, De Vecchi's recklessness is behind it.

And Supermarina's own staff, internally, in December 1941:

« Non si possono pertanto accettare i motivi addotti per giustificare il siluramento di **una nave da guerra di potenza neutrale all'ancora in porto neutrale**. »

The reasons put forward to justify the torpedoing of a neutral warship at anchor in a neutral port cannot therefore be accepted.

So: not a personal order from Mussolini, and not one captain's madness. **A licence to kill issued in Rome, pointed at a Greek pilgrimage by a Fascist proconsul in Rhodes, and discharged into a harbour full of worshippers.** The Italian historian Giorgio Rochat's verdict is the one to keep: *a perfect example of technical incompetence and criminal indifference.*

NOTE **It did not start the war — and it may have delayed it**

Italy invaded on 28 October 1940, ten weeks later, for reasons of Mussolini's own. There is a serious argument that the *Ellis* in fact **postponed** the invasion: the diplomatic embarrassment caused Rome to suspend the whole Aegean submarine campaign the very next day.

What it did do is not in dispute. It ended Greek political division overnight. All internal opposition to the Metaxas regime stopped. The Italian minister in Athens, Emanuele Grazzi, conceded afterwards that “*this crime of Tenos*” had created in Greece “*a unity of souls*.”

One thing to avoid, because it circulates widely: the *Delfino* was lost in 1943, an hour out of Taranto, after colliding with her own escort, with 28 of her crew. Greek popular writing presents this as hubris repaid. It is folklore, and this book does not need it.

What is there now

The wreck is gone. It was raised in sections in 1955–56 and sold for scrap; when a diving team went looking in 1983 they recovered a ventilation duct. The state had been laying wreaths for years on a spot from which the ship had quietly been cut away.

AND THERE IS ONE MORE ACT, WHICH THE ISLAND STAGED ITSELF

Through the war the *Elli* was not treated as a lost ship but as a person.

Posters of the period show her **in Heaven beside the Virgin of Tinos**, who is protecting the Greek fleet in the sea battles below; the war against Italy was preached as a holy war to restore the honour of an insulted Virgin, with Greek soldiers as soldier-theologians carrying small reproductions of the icon and Italians as blasphemers carrying pictures of naked women. ^A from a

corpus of wartime material collected by Alekos Florakis and published by the Church of Tinos.

And a wish kept recurring in those texts: that a captured Italian ship should one day be brought to the spot where the *Elli* went down, on a fifteenth of August, and be washed with holy water and given her name.

In 1951 it was done. An Italian vessel handed over as war reparations was brought to Tinos and, *on the same day and at the same hour as the sinking*, was christened Έλλη II. ^A

The anthropologist who set this down draws the conclusion that only makes sense on this island. Tinos was Venetian for five centuries and Ottoman for one, and a part of its population is still Catholic. So the ceremony was not only a resurrection. *The ship was Italian and Catholic. It became Greek and Orthodox.* A conversion, performed on a hull, in a harbour, on the Virgin's feast day.

What is left of the *Elli* is in three places. **One of her guns** stands by the lighthouse at the old harbour, beside a cenotaph shaped like her bow. **A fragment of the Italian torpedo** is displayed in the Elli Mausoleum. And in that mausoleum, inside the courtyard of the Panagia Evangelistria, is **the ossuary of her dead.**

EVERY FIFTEENTH OF AUGUST

On the eve, a memorial service and wreaths at the cenotaph. On the morning itself, at half past nine — before the icon is carried — **a wreath is cast onto the water over the place where she lies**, and a salute is fired from **the *Ellī*'s own gun**.

Then the procession goes down to the harbour, as it did that day.

The ship on the flag

The island's own flag deserves the last word here. The municipal flag of Tinos carries a trireme: the ship of **Panaetius son of Sosimenes**, the Tenian captain who deserted the Persian fleet on the eve of Salamis and brought the Greeks full word of the encirclement — and for whose ship the Tenians were cut into the Serpent Column at Delphi, among the peoples who defeated the barbarian (Herodotus VIII.82–83). 

Above the harbour where the *Ellī* lies, the island flies the ship that chose Greece the night before Salamis.

Which is where this part of the book ends. The island had been a stop for pilgrims for two thousand three hundred years, a Latin fortress for five hundred years — Venetian for three hundred and twenty-five of them — and an Ottoman afterthought for a hundred. The last thing a foreign power did to it was fire three torpedoes into its harbour on a feast morning — and the answer the island gave was to carry the icon down to the water anyway, in the arms of the men who had just swum out of the ship.



X V I I I

Ἡρώα

iroa — ee-RO-a — the war memorials

This island carved everybody's names into marble except its own

There are war memorials in Chora and in five villages, and a monument to the Balkan Wars on the headland at Pasakroteri. Not one of them has been photographed, transcribed or published. There is no list anywhere of this island's war dead — and war memorials are a listed product of the Tinian marble workshop.

One headland holds three wars

At **Πασακρωτήριο**, on the headland, there is a monument to the men of this island who died in the Balkan Wars — the schoolchildren of Tinos process to it with the Philharmonic on the eve of every 28th of October. **B** *from the*

Municipality's own programmes; I have found no photograph of it and no transcription of it anywhere.

Below it is the water in which the *Elli* was torpedoed on the morning of the Assumption in 1940, the subject of the previous chapter. And the same headland took in refugees from Asia Minor in 1922.

Three wars on one promontory, inside thirty years.

There is a war memorial in Πλατεία Ελευθερίας in Chora, and village ηρώα at **Ktikados, Mountados, Triantaros, Kardiani and Kalloni.** B

And there is no published list of this island's war dead. Not in print, not online, not in any municipal record that an outside search can reach. A *as a checked absence — though what has been*

established is that no such list is publicly indexed, which is not quite the same as establishing that none exists.

This chapter is not going to invent one. No names, no estimates, no round numbers. What follows is what the record actually holds, which is less than it should be and stranger than nothing.

The occupation was run from Rhodes, not Athens — which made it odd even by the standards of occupations

Tinos was garrisoned by the Italians **from Rhodes, not from Athens** — run as an appendix of the Dodecanese command rather than as part of occupied Greece. The governor at Rhodes was styled governor “of the Dodecanese, **of the Cyclades** and of the northern Sporades”, and the units that took Tinos in May 1941 sailed from Kos. B

Which is worth holding beside the previous chapter, because the order to sink the *Elli* in this island's harbour was issued from Rhodes as well, by Governor De Vecchi, the day before the feast. **Tinos's war was administered from the Dodecanese from the first shot to the last.**

DISPUTED **The rest of the occupation story rests on a single local account, and one line of it is contradicted**

The island's own historian records three things. Ysternia was held by six soldiers, who turned a monastic cell into a machine-gun nest. In September 1943, when Italy collapsed and the Germans began rounding up the men who had garrisoned the Aegean for them, **the Catholic and the Orthodox clergy of Tinos hid the Italian fugitives together.** And the island was then left with no occupier at all, order being kept by a gendarmerie officer, Βασίλειος Κοσκινάς, whose own men were in the Resistance.

None of it is corroborated anywhere. D The article carries no sources, no second account exists, and even the officer's rank differs between tellings. It is recorded here because it is the only account there is — and because of what the middle story would mean if it were true. The seam this book keeps returning to is the line between the island's Catholics and its Orthodox: six hundred years of two churches, two clergies and two versions of the past. **In September 1943 those two clergies are described hiding the same fugitives, in the same houses, in the one month when being caught at it was a hanging offence.** If it happened, the seam closed for a fortnight.

And one line of it is actively contradicted: a Tinos heritage initiative commemorated **“eighty years since the departure of the occupation troops from Tinos”** in October 1944, which does not sit easily with an island left empty from September 1943. The book prints neither version as settled.

The clean negatives, which are part of the answer

There was no civil war on this island — no local violence, no local trials. Nothing specific to Tinos survives from the Asia Minor campaign. No famine mortality data for Tinos has been published, though the island's own school heritage projects speak of *the time of the hunger* and of soup kitchens said to

have saved hundreds of children, so this is an absence of figures and not an absence of hunger. And Tinos was never used as a place of political exile — unlike Ikaria, Ai Stratis, Makronisos, or Gyaros twenty kilometres off the west coast, where it was done on a scale nowhere else matched.

An island can be very near the twentieth century without being in it.

The inversion

The Greek Ministry of Culture, in the National Inventory entry for Tinian marble craftsmanship, lists the carved types the island's workshops produced: tomb slabs, then neoclassical funerary monuments, then **ηρώα — war memorials**. A *the Ministry's own wording, in its own inventory.*

So war memorials are a listed product of the Tinian marble workshop. This island carved other communities' dead into stone as a trade, and it is very likely that some of the ηρώα standing in other Greek villages came off benches at Pyrgos and Ysternia.

Tinos cut everybody's names but its own.

That is the chapter. Not a roll of honour — there is no roll to call — but the plain fact that a place which made a living out of commemorating the dead never got round to listing its own, and that the only thing on the island which can be read as a record is a handful of village marble that nobody has ever transcribed.

Somebody should. It is a fortnight's work with a camera and a notebook, and it would be the only original document this book could ever have produced.

PART THREE

The Faith

An island split between two churches and nobody knows why; the icon that made it the destination of a nation; the feasts, the thousand chapels, and the way the dead are buried here.



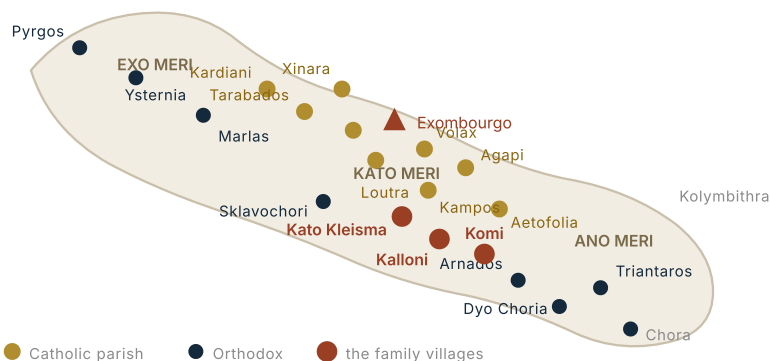
XIX

Καθολικοί & Ὀρθόδοξοι

Katholikoí & Orthódoxoi — *the two communities*

Catholic in the middle, Orthodox at the edges —
and nobody has explained why

On every other island the Franks held, Catholicism stayed a thin aristocratic crust inside the castle quarter. On Tinos it took the farmers. That is the anomaly, it is genuinely unexplained, and it is the reason this island is not like its neighbours.



Schematic — relative positions only. For the coastline, see Coronelli in chapter xiv.

A The seam runs through the middle of the island. Catholic villages cluster on the fertile centre beneath Exombourgo; the Orthodox marble country lies to the north-west and the Orthodox villages of the Ano Meri to the east. **Sklavochori is the exception inside the Catholic centre; Kardiani is the only mixed village in the Orthodox north-west.** Parish list from the Catholic Archdiocese of Naxos–Tinos–Andros–Mykonos.

The numbers, corrected

The Archdiocese lists **twenty-three Catholic parishes** on Tinos — the map above gives the shape of it, and the full roll is in the note below. The seat is Xinara; the parish church there is Sts Peter and Paul, and the cathedral, a separate building in the same village, is **Panagia tou Rodariou** — Our Lady of the Rosary.

The twenty-three: Tinos town, Steni, Myrsini, Kechros, Potamia, Koumaros, Volax, Skalados, Krokos, Loutra, Xinara, Kampos, Smardakito, Tarabados, Kardiani, Ktikados, Perastra, Komi, Agapi, Kato Kleisma, Aetofolia, Karkados and Kalloni.

It is often said that half the island is Catholic. That was true once and is not true now. The best modern figure is **about 3,000 Catholics out of 8,934**

people — roughly a third. Tozer in 1890 could still write “more than half the population”, and the Italian record around 1640 put it at three-quarters. The direction of travel is clear and the figure should be given as of a date, not as a fact.

The anomaly

Here is what makes this island strange, and it is worth stating carefully because it is easy to get backwards.

Across the Frankish Aegean, Catholicism was **the religion of the conquerors**. It sat on top of a Greek population as a thin aristocratic layer inside the castle quarter, and when the lords left, it left with them. That is the pattern on Naxos, on Andros, on Paros.

On Tinos — and on Syros — it did not do that. **The rural population became Catholic.** Whole farming villages, across the ordinary countryside, outside any castle quarter and below any social barrier. As one Greek account puts it: here the majority of the population, in all the agricultural communities and *beyond the social compartments of the other islands*, embraced Catholicism.

AND THIS IS THE CONSEQUENCE NOBODY DRAWS

On Tinos, confession does not map onto class. There was no lordly Catholic minority sitting above a Greek peasantry, because the peasantry was Catholic too.

Which is almost certainly why this island has no tradition of sectarian contempt — no stereotype of the grasping Latin or the backward Greek. There was never a social grievance for a religious difference to attach itself to.

Why it happened is genuinely unknown

The obvious explanation is that Venice promoted it. Venice did not. The Republic and the Papacy were permanent rivals, and Venice had no desire to see papal influence inside its own possessions. Its administrative categories are those of a state managing a mixed population, not converting one: it classified the islanders as *greco* and as *cattolici di rito greco* — Catholics of the Greek rite.

What can be said is what the geography shows. **The Catholic villages are the interior** — the fertile centre and much of the Ano Meri, clustered around Exombourgo. That is the footprint of a castle and its parishes radiating outward, and it is emphatically *not* the pattern refugee settlement by sea produces, which is coastal. The Jesuits founded their house in 1663 *inside the castle*, and only came down to Loutra in 1835. The centre of gravity of Catholicism on this island is the fortress, not the harbour.

Add to that the plainest structural fact available: **five hundred and eight years of unbroken Latin lordship**, from 1207 to 1715 — longer than anywhere else in the Aegean, and uniquely as directly administered Venetian territory rather than a feudal fief. That is the condition under which a rural Latin-rite peasantry can form and persist. It is not a proof. It is the best available account.

Three different quarrels run through what follows, and they are worth keeping apart. Venice against Rome — two Catholic powers elbowing each other, which is why the Republic never pushed conversion. The two communities against each other — but only over mixed marriages and precedence in processions: arithmetic, not doctrine. And once, in 1821, community against state, for two years. What never appears on the list is neighbour against neighbour — and that absence is the finding of this chapter.

DOCUMENTED **The two communities did fight — over marriages, and over precedence**

The eighteenth-century archives record real friction, and it is domestic rather than doctrinal: disputes over **mixed marriages** — which rite the couple married under, and which rite the children then followed — and a formal **settlement between the two communities in 1749**.

The Latin archbishop of Naxos, defending his brother the bishop of Tinos, made the position from the Catholic side plainly: mixed marriages generally ended in Latins converting to the Greek church, and it was only when one went the other way that the Greeks made a noise about it. Whatever the merits, it tells you what the argument was actually about — **arithmetic**. Each community was losing children to the other and counting.

The rest of the recorded conflict is jurisdictional: bishops against missionaries, and precedence in processions. Tournefort, in 1700, noted which way that went under Venice — « *le Clergé latin a toujours le pas* », the Latin clergy always take precedence.

DOCUMENTED **You can see it in the buildings — the Baroque crossed the line**

Jesuit-transmitted Baroque is not only the style of most Catholic churches on Tinos. **Orthodox churches in mixed or neighbouring villages are clearly Baroque or heavily Baroque-influenced** — Agia Triada at Kardiani, the Presentation at Tripotamos, Panagia Megalomata at Ktikados, Agios Ioannis at Triantaros.

And the most spectacular example of all is the Megalochari itself — the great Orthodox pilgrimage church of the whole Greek nation, built in a style that arrived on this island with the Catholic missions.

1821, and the flag

There is one episode where the seam opened, and this book includes it because leaving it out would be a kind of lie.

When the Greek Revolution began, the Catholic communities of the Aegean invoked their long-standing French protection and declared themselves neutral.

Ⓐ On Syros that became something concrete: the French flag went up over the churches, and in February 1823 the Catholics there appealed to the King of France against the revolutionary captain Nestor Faziolis. Ⓑ

What Tinos did with a flag is not documented. What happened on Tinos

is. The Catholic bishop of the island, Giovanni Collaro, observed and preached strict neutrality — and that neutrality, in the words of the most recent scholarly account of the Catholic islands in the revolution, “*revived old frictions and was used as a pretext for Orthodox attacks on Catholic properties and chapels.*” Ⓐ Members of the Catholic community had nonetheless been present at the assembly of April 1821 at which the Orthodox majority voted to join the insurrection. Ⓐ

The other thing on record here is narrower and less dramatic: the eparch of Tinos complained in 1822 that its Catholics, “*recognising no Greek administration, rendered nothing, although holding the most fertile parts*”, and in a longer complaint that they did not cease to harass, insult and steal animals.

Ⓒ

AN EARLIER DRAFT OF THIS BOOK PUT A FRENCH FLAG OVER THE CATHOLIC VILLAGES OF TINOS. IT SHOULD NOT HAVE

The scene is real and it belongs to Syros. Every located flag-raising in the literature is Syros. The Catholic Archdiocese's own account of 1821 names Syros and does not name Tinos. **B**

What is said of Tinos is only ever the class statement — and the strongest version of it deserves quoting, because it is as close as the evidence comes. Dimitris Kousouris, in *Historein*: “by autumn 1821 all island Catholics had officially adopted a neutral stance and appealed for French protection, which was expressed in all cases by the hoisting of the French white flag on their churches.” **A** **In all cases** would take in this island. But the sentence names no island, and the letters cited in support of it are the archbishop of Naxos's. Tinos can be *inferred* from that. It cannot be *shown*.

And the Tinian record points the other way. The island's own historians describe 20 April 1821 as the day *Orthodox and Catholics came down to the Chora together and formed an assembly*. **C** No French flag appears in the local literature at all.

So the honest sentence is the smaller one, and it is the more interesting: **the Catholics of this island were suspected of standing apart, complained about for it by a Greek official, and never actually caught doing the thing they are remembered for.**

The context is not an excuse but it is necessary. This was a community that had been Venetian for five centuries and Ottoman for one, whose protection had always come from outside, and whose institutional world was Latin. Its instinct in a crisis was to look west. That instinct was wrong, and it cost them.

In June 1823 the Minister of the Interior of the revolutionary government — Papaflessas, a fighting priest — wrote to the Catholics of the islands urging them to pay “*like the rest of the Greeks*”. And he gave them the reason in five words:

«Ἄλλο Ἐθνισμός, καὶ ἄλλο θρησκεία.»

Nationhood is one thing, and religion another.

A Greek revolutionary minister, in the middle of a war of independence fought under the banner of Orthodoxy, telling his own side that being Greek and being Orthodox are not the same thing. Two hundred years later that sentence has not dated.

And how the Catholics tell it themselves

Modern Greek national history has a spine: an unbroken Greek people running from antiquity through Byzantium to the present, with the Ottoman centuries as an interruption. It is a spine that leaves a Greek Catholic nowhere to stand, because the thing that made him Catholic — the Fourth Crusade and the Latin lordships — is the thing that broke the line.

So the Catholic scholars of these islands rewrote the argument rather than apologising for it, and an anthropologist has traced how. **A** Their case, put briefly:

BYZANTIUM WAS THE BAD PART

Under Byzantium these islands went through “the saddest and darkest period of their history” — governed by nominees without merit, and left to the pirates. But the abandonment had a consequence: it obliged the islanders **to organise their own defence and to develop a system of local self-administration** — αὐτοδιοίκηση — *which the Latins, when they came, did not abolish.*

And 1207 is therefore not a catastrophe but an entrance. In Fr Markos Foskolos’s phrase, the island then *“emerges from obscurity and appears on the historical stage as an object that attracts international attention.”*

Read that against chapter xii and it stops being special pleading. **The self-administration is real** — it is the thing that produced an island able to negotiate its own submission in 1390 with an untaxed export and a right to walk away, and to negotiate its own surrender in 1715. A minority arguing for its place in the nation and an archival historian working from the Venetian records arrive, from opposite directions, at the same island.

And today they share the date

The two communities of Tinos keep the same fixed feasts, which is unremarkable. What is remarkable is that **they keep the same Easter**. The Catholic Church in Greece adopted the Orthodox date in the 1970s — for the sake of mixed marriages and school holidays — and the Archdiocese’s own Holy Week programme confirms it: in 2025, Catholic Pascha on Tinos fell on 20 April, the Orthodox date.

The Catholic parishes here also carry an Ἐπιτάφιος on Good Friday: a Byzantine usage, kept by Greek Catholics from before their transition to the Roman rite, and still carried through Latin villages.

Syros is the island famous for this — for its two Easters and its joint celebrations, and it is written about every year. On Tinos the story is quieter and, I think, larger. **Here they simply share the date, and nobody makes a feature of it.**



X X

Ἡ Μεγαλόχαρη

i Megalóchari — *ee me-ga-LO-kha-ree* — “*she of great grace*”

An icon of the Annunciation, dug up in 1823, in the middle of a war for a nation’s existence

Everything about the timing of this discovery is extraordinary, and almost nobody says so. Two years into the Greek Revolution, on an island that had been Venetian for five centuries, a nun’s vision led to the finding of an icon of the Annunciation — and the Annunciation is the day the Revolution had chosen as its own.

What happened

In 1822 a nun of the monastery of Kechrovouni — Pelagia, Πελαγία — reported repeated visions of the Virgin, directing her to a field and telling her

to have it dug. The elders were told. Digging began. And on 30 January 1823, in the ruins of a Byzantine church, an icon of the Annunciation was found.

A church was raised over the site and the icon was placed in it. Within a generation it was the destination of the largest pilgrimage in Greece, and it has stayed that way for two hundred years.

THREE DETAILS FROM THE SHRINE'S OWN ACCOUNT, WORTH HAVING

The digging stopped once. Nothing was found, the islanders lost heart, and the work was abandoned. Then plague came to Tinos. The digging began again; the icon was found; it was carried in procession round the island; the plague stopped.  *the shrine's own telling, not an independent record.*

The workman's pick split the icon in two. When the noblewomen of the island first came to venerate it, they laid their most precious jewellery over the crack to hide it. The panel is now covered so completely in offered gold and silver that the painted surface — and the wound — cannot be seen at all.



And the landowner's wife refused permission for the dig. In this version it is not the Virgin who changes her mind but *a Greek revolutionary*, who appears to her in a dream and threatens her. Which is this chapter's whole argument compressed into one anecdote: the icon does not come out of the ground without the revolution, and the revolution is not blessed without the icon.

NOW LOOK AT THE DATE

The Greek Revolution had begun in 1821. By convention it is dated to 25 March — which is the feast of the Annunciation, and which is why 25 March is Greek Independence Day.

Two years into that war, an icon **of the Annunciation** comes out of the ground on a Greek island. A nation fighting for its existence, under a banner it had deliberately attached to that feast, is handed the feast itself in physical form.

Whatever one believes about how it got there, the effect is not in doubt. This was never only a local shrine. From the beginning it was **national**, and the church that holds it is formally the *Panhellenic* foundation.

And the state agreed almost at once, in a way worth stopping on. In 1832 the three protecting powers gave Greece a king: **Otto of Bavaria — German, and Catholic**. He landed in 1833 and **went straight to Tinos** to pay homage to the icon. A foreign Catholic monarch, imposed by foreign powers, placing himself under the protection of a Virgin who had come out of Greek ground — and in doing so giving that icon its first official recognition as *national*.

A

And it is standing on older ground

Chapter xi set out the sanctuary at Kionia, where Poseidon was worshipped as a physician and Amphitrite healed women who could not conceive, and where pilgrims purified themselves before crossing to Delos — and Tozer's observation, given there in full, that the church probably stands where Poseidon's temple stood, the god's role passed to St Nicholas, guardian of sailors, for whom the port town is named.

So the sequence on or beside this ground runs: a sea-god who healed the sick; the patron saint of sailors; and an icon to which the sick are still carried. **Two thousand three hundred years, one function, three names.**

AND THE CONNECTION IS NOT ONLY A LOCATION. IT IS THE STONE

The church raised over the field in 1823 was built, **in large part, with marble carried across from the ruins of Delos.** B

Delos is the sacred island at the centre of the ring — the Cyclades are named for the circle they make around it — and it was a religious centre and the treasury of an Athenian alliance long before it was a quarry. The reading offered by the anthropologist who noticed this is hard to argue with: *as Athens took up the role of ancient Athens when it was made the capital in 1834, so Tinos took up the role of Delos, in a Christian register.*

Chapter xi describes the pilgrims who purified themselves at Kionia before crossing to Delos. Two thousand years later the traffic reversed, and Delos was carried here.

NOTE

The church is Baroque — and the Baroque came from the Catholics

The style of the Megalochari is the style the Jesuit and Ursuline missions brought to this island. It is the most spectacular Baroque building on Tinos, and it is Orthodox.

The great national shrine of Greek Orthodoxy is built in an idiom that arrived here with the Latin church. Nobody planned that, and nobody on the island appears to find it remarkable.



Panagia Evangelistria, Chora. Built from 1823 on the field where the icon was dug up, in island marble, with the double staircase and the arcaded courtyard that make the last hundred metres of the climb a piece of architecture rather than a street. The red carpet running down the centre of the steps is the line the pilgrims of 15 August come up — the eight hundred metres from the waterfront, much of it on their knees. The woman with the stick gives the scale.

Photograph by **Hans Peter Schaefer**, www.reserv-a-rt.de, 20 July 2007, via Wikimedia Commons.
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The pilgrimage

There are four days. 30 January, the finding of the icon, marked by a procession of lanterns through Chora. **25 March**, the Annunciation, which is also the national day. 23 July, the vision of Pelagia, marked by an eight-kilometre night procession returning the icon to Kechrovouni. And above all 15 August, the Dormition.

Pilgrims come off the ferry and cross the eight hundred metres from the wharf to the church **on their hands and knees**, up the length of the avenue, on a strip

of carpet laid for the purpose. Many are bringing a sick person, or the promise of one.

DOCUMENTED **What the feast looked like in 1883, and what people came for**

The writer Georgios Drossinis was here for the feast of 25 March 1883, and what he describes is not only a pilgrimage. For three or four days **the island became a panhellenic fair**. Residents let out their houses to the richer pilgrims and their shops and cafés to the traders; the poorer pilgrims slept in the streets. Goods arrived from every part of Greece, and from **Asia Minor, Egypt and all the large Greek colonies** — and so did the dialects and the costumes. A

Three of the practices he records are worth keeping:

Babies were brought to be baptised in front of the icon — and by the custom of the place, *the first pilgrim who managed to seize the child in the church became its godparent*. A stranger, chosen by the crowd, made kin by the icon.

Pregnant women came to the island to give birth under the Virgin's protection. And he was startled by a woman walking barefoot the whole way from the wharf to the church — the practice that is now the eight hundred metres on the knees.

And a great many of the pilgrims were not Greek citizens. They came from territories still outside the kingdom, and for them a few days on Tinos meant, in Drossinis's phrase, *"breathing the air of freedom for a moment."* He complains that the Greek state was not exploiting the feast for national purposes — which is the point of this chapter turned inside out. **The nationalism at Tinos came up from the pilgrims, not down from the government.**

One category of offering makes the same point at the other end of the history. Among the thousands of τάματα at the icon — a limb, a body, a ship — there are ex-votos **in the shape of the island of Cyprus**. The older ones were offered in thanks for the end of British rule. Those after 1974 ask the Virgin for the return of the occupied part. **A** *A man offers his nation the way another man offers a diseased leg.*

DISPUTED **“A million pilgrims a year” — where that number comes from, and what to use instead**

The figure of a million visitors a year is repeated everywhere. It traces back to a single unmethodical estimate and there is no survey behind it.

There is a better number available and it is official: the national statistical service publishes **monthly passenger disembarkations at the port of Tinos**. The August spike in that series *is* the pilgrimage, counted one ticket at a time.

It is worth noting what the honest version costs and what it buys. It costs the round million. It buys a figure that can be checked, and a curve that shows the pilgrimage as what it also is — the largest annual movement of people this island has ever handled.

What the icon pays for

This is the part of the story that is never told, and it is the most surprising thing in Part Three.

The shrine is not run by a parish or a diocese. It is the **Πανελλήνιο Ἱερὸ Ἰδρυμα Εὐαγγελιστρίας Τήνου** — the Panhellenic Holy Foundation of the Evangelistria of Tinos — a **legal entity of public law**, governed by a committee elected every three years and chaired by the Metropolitan, with annual revenues of over **€3.5 million**.

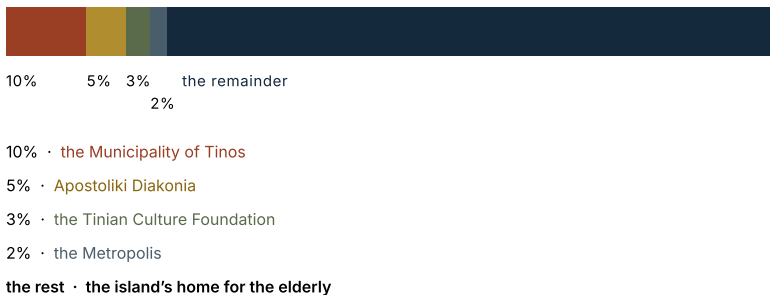
Two things about it are unique in Greece. The board is **ten people: six elected, who must be born on the island and Orthodox**; the bishop as president *honoris causa*; and then **the head of the island's secondary school, the judge, and the head of its tax office** — the local representatives of the state. The priests who serve the church are its employees and do not sit on it. A

Which makes this **the only church in Greece answering directly to the state rather than to the Synod**, through the Ministry of Education and Cults and the Ministry of the Economy. The official Church has tried more than once to bring it in. Between 1903 and 1908 the bishop of the island went as far as **ordering the priests to stop saying mass in it.** A

The arrangement goes back to a **“testament” deposited in January 1825** by the council that had run the excavation. It laid down that the building would be neither a parish church nor a monastery but an *Institution*, whose charge was **to pay teachers and maintain schools**. Those schools were running from 1825, when Greece as a state had no education system at all. B

And its statute does not let it keep the money.

Statutory distribution of gross revenue



B By statute, a tenth of everything the shrine takes goes to the municipality, and the balance — after the church's own small shares — maintains the old people's home. The gold and silver votives left at the icon are auctioned, and the proceeds go the same way.

AND IT PAYS FOR THE SCULPTORS

The School of Fine Arts and Marble Craftsmanship at Pyrgos sends its **top two graduates each year to the Athens School of Fine Arts without examination** — on a scholarship provided by the Panhellenic Holy Foundation of the Evangelistria of Tinos.

Giannoulis Chalepas, the greatest sculptor this island produced, studied in Munich on money from the same foundation.

Which closes a circle that runs through this whole book. The marble chapter asked how a village of a few hundred people supplied the sculptors of a nation, and gave the mechanical answers — the quarries, the family workshops, the four-year apprenticeship, the chest of tools. Here is the financial one. **The pilgrimage pays for the marble school.** An icon found in a field in 1823 has been funding the education of stone-carvers for a century and a half.

It is also, by some distance, the largest redistribution of money on this island — from the pilgrims, through a public-law foundation, to an old people's home and an art school.

NOTE

And the Elli's dead are in the same courtyard

The ossuary of the sailors killed on 15 August 1940 is inside the Evangelistria complex, together with a fragment of the Italian torpedo and objects recovered when the wreck was raised in 1955.

Greece's first war dead of the Second World War lie in the courtyard of the Panagia, a hundred metres from the icon, having been killed on her feast day, in her harbour, in front of her pilgrims.



X X I

Πανηγύρια

panigýria — *pa-nee-YEE-ree-a* — *the feasts*

More chapels than there are days in the year, on an island of nine thousand people

Tinos has over a thousand chapels. They are private, they belong to families, and each has a name-day. That single fact explains more about how this island works than anything else in this book — and the calendar it produces is bent out of shape by something entirely modern.

Seven hundred and fifty, and somebody actually counted them

The round thousand that circulates is worth nothing: the 2025 news story that carried it gives “more than a thousand chapels” with **no attribution at all**, and the number was already in the Greek press by 2011. **D**

There are two real counts, and both are better than the rumour.

Maria Vidali, an architect who wrote her doctorate on the farming landscape of this island, surveyed the outlying chapels and published the result in *Γη και Χωριό: τα ξωκλήσια της Τήνου* (2009): «επτακόσια πενήντα εξωκλήσια» — **seven hundred and fifty**. **B** as reported; the book was published by the former Municipality of Exombourgo, and whether the figure covers the whole island or that municipality alone has not been confirmed from the book itself.

And the practice has a dated witness, from inside. Zallony, in 1809: around the villages stand many little churches; **the lamps in them are lit every**

Saturday; the parish priest comes once a year to say the liturgy there; and on the great feasts they serve as *stations* for the litanies passing from one parish to the next. C Two centuries before anyone counted them, the chapels were already doing exactly what this chapter describes — burning oil on Saturdays, waiting for their one liturgy a year, and standing along the processional roads.

And for the Catholic side alone, Fr Markos Foskolos — the island’s own Catholic archivist, writing under the Archdiocese’s name — puts it at «ο συνολικός τους αριθμός πλησιάζει τις τρεις εκατοντάδες»: **approaching three hundred.** B

Two counts, two confessions, thirty years apart, and one fits inside the other. *The arithmetic that reconciles them to “over a thousand” once the parish churches and monasteries are added is this book’s, not a source’s, and is offered as a reading rather than a finding.*

AND DO NOT LET ANYONE TELL YOU IT IS A RECORD

Ios, Sifnos and Kythnos all claim numbers that cluster on 359 to 365 — **which is the calendar, not a count**: “a church for every day of the year” is a Greek folk formula, and several islands have attached themselves to it. On their own claims, two of them beat Tinos per head. **Tinos’s distinction is not the ratio. It is that somebody went out and counted.**

What is not in doubt is the character of them. They are not parish churches. They stand **more than one to every dozen residents**. They are family property, built and maintained down the generations, and they are kept by “octogenarians and Gen Z members, goat farmers and hotel owners, Orthodox Christians, Catholics, and self-described atheists.”

Nicoleta Nazou walks up daily to look after her husband’s family chapel of Agia Paraskevi, built in the sixteen hundreds. Asked why:

“It’s our responsibility first of all, it goes from generation to generation as an heirloom.”

One thing should be said carefully. It does not follow that a thousand feasts happen each year — many chapels share dedications and dates, and many observances are a liturgy and a glass of raki for one family.

The honest formulation is the more striking one anyway. **There are more chapels on Tinos than there are days in the year.**

Who owns a chapel

The thing that is never explained, and that explains everything else, is what one of these buildings actually *is* in law. **A chapel on Tinos is a title deed you are not allowed to sell.**

On the Orthodox side, a privately owned church may be built and operated only by permission of the Metropolitan; the owner keeps it only for so long as it serves the religious needs of his own family; and the bishop may close a chapel, or hand it to the nearest parish, if that condition fails. ^B And a consecrated church is, in the Civil Code’s own words, a *thing outside commerce* — πράγμα εκτός συναλλαγής: it cannot be sold, cannot be mortgaged, cannot be seized by creditors, and cannot be taken by long possession. ^A

On the Catholic side it is almost identical, and older: a private chapel exists by permission of the local ordinary, Mass may be said in it only with his leave, and it is to be reserved for worship, free of all domestic use. ^A

The instruments: Regulation 8/1979 of the Holy Synod, art. 13 §1 (ΦΕΚ Α’ 1/5-1-1980) · Compulsory Law 2200/1940, art. 6 §1 · Civil Code art. 966 · canons 1226, 1228 and 1229 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

A chapel here is a piece of family property that cannot be sold, cannot be let, cannot be seized for debt, must be maintained at the family's expense, descends undivided to every heir, and may not be used without a bishop's leave.

Which explains the thing this chapter otherwise only describes: why the heirs fly in for the name-day from Athens and Brussels and New York. It is not only sentiment. **It is the only form of access anyone has to an asset that can never be realised, split among cousins who cannot even sell it to each other.**

And here is the part that is Tinian. About three hundred of these buildings stand under the Code of Canon Law and the Latin archbishop at Xinara. The rest stand under Regulation 8/1979 and the Orthodox Metropolitan of Syros. **Almost nowhere else in Greece — Syros is the other island — does “our chapel” mean two different legal things four kilometres apart.**

Why they stand out on the fields rather than in the villages has an answer too, and it belongs to the woman who counted them. Vidalí's account is that the Venetians granted land rights to the farmers of Tinos as a buffer against the Ottomans, and that the Ottomans, once they took over, let the locals keep that farmland and build on it. **B** *attributed to her, not asserted.* She also records what they were founded for: vows for a safe passage made by sailors' families, memorials to the dead, and dedications to the Virgin.

AND THE HONEST PART **None of the practice is Tinian, and the book should say so**

Private family chapels on farmland are ordinary Greek practice. Lucia Nixon's study of Sphakia in Crete documents exactly the same phenomenon with a full catalogue, and the reasons the Sphakiotes themselves give are the

same four: marking a boundary in a land dispute, marking a place of supernatural contact, commemorating a dead kinsman, and fulfilling a vow. The big round number is a genre. The per-capita record is unproven and probably false. Chapels kept as heirlooms by a returning diaspora happen all over the Aegean.

Religion changed people on Tinos in the ways it changed people everywhere in Greece. What is Tinian is not the piety. It is that on this one island the piety came in two legal systems, was written in Latin under an Ottoman sultan, and pays for an art school.

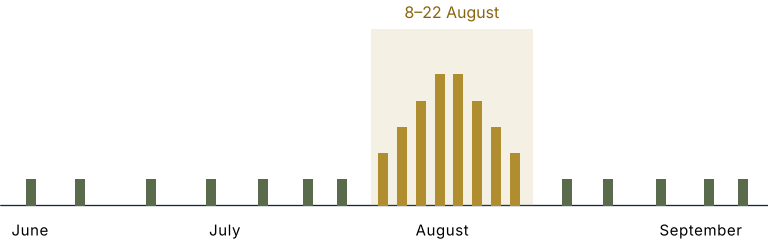
Lucia Nixon, *Making a Landscape Sacred* (2006); Vidali 2009; CIC 1983; AK 966

Two different things are both called a *panigiri*

The first is the **church feast**: vespers on the eve, liturgy in the morning at a parish church or an outlying chapel, and then hospitality. The second is the **summer γλέντι** — an open-air evening in a village square or a school yard, organised by the village association, with a hired band and a ticket.

They have come apart, and you can prove it from the dates. The Catholic parish of Kampos keeps its patronal feast on Trinity Sunday, in June — and holds its village *glenti* on 29 August. Xinara's parish feast is 29 June; its *glenti* is 13 August.

Thirteen of about twenty-nine village feasts fall in a fortnight.



Village *glentia* by date, 2026 listings. The August concentration is the diaspora coming home.

C The saints did not arrange this. **The feasts moved to August because that is when the people who left come back** — and the associations that organise them are called, in so many words, *the association of the villagers from everywhere*.

There is no Tinian national dish, and that is the finding

Most Cycladic islands have one panigiri meal. Amorgos slaughters some hundred and fifty sheep and goats and two cows a year and cooks *patatato* in twenty cauldrons of four hundred kilos apiece, with seven hundred and fifty loaves from donated grain and a named head cook commanding the kitchens.

Tinos does none of that. No source in any language describes a Tinian feast built around a communally slaughtered animal. What the island does instead is more particular, and rather more interesting:

EACH FEAST HAS ITS OWN DISH

FEAST	WHERE	WHAT IS EATEN
St Barbara, 4 December	Chora, Smovolo	Πεβίθια — chickpeas
The Holy Cross, 14 September	Ktikados	Smoked sardines
The Presentation, 21 November	Tripotamos	Dolmades

FEAST	WHERE	WHAT IS EATEN
Nativity of the Virgin, 8 September	Vourniotissa	Chickpea stew, local cheeses, sweets, raki

Two of the four are meatless and one is fish. What is offered at most Tinian feasts is not a meal at all but a *κέρασμα* — a spread put together by the families of the parish — or an invitation into the houses of the village, one after another.

AND WHERE THERE IS A GREAT TABLE, THERE IS A RULE ATTACHED TO IT

At Ktikados on Easter Monday the village keeps the *Τραπέζι της Αγάπης*, the Table of Love, with a condition: **nobody may sit down who has not first made up the year's quarrels**. It is told in full, beside the island's other machinery for keeping the peace, in chapter xxiii; Tripotamos keeps a cousin of it.

What the Catholics keep that the Orthodox do not

The two communities share the fixed feasts and, since the 1970s, share Easter. But the Catholic year on Tinos carries things that belong to Rome and to nowhere else in the Cyclades on this scale.

Corpus Christi — *ἡ Λιτανεία της Αγίας Δωρεᾶς*, the Procession of the Holy Gift — kept on the Thursday after Pentecost as a *pan-island* procession. In 2022 it went from Agios Nikolaos in Chora to Agios Antonios at Pallada, with the Archbishop carrying the Blessed Sacrament, the clergy, the seminarians, **the Tinos Philharmonic**, children in white scattering flowers, and the civil and military authorities.

Panagia tou Rodariou, Our Lady of the Rosary, proclaimed patroness of the local Church by Bishop Nikolaos Sigalas (the Nicolaus Cigala of chapter vi) in 1725 — ten years after the Ottoman conquest and eight after the fortress came

down. A community that had just lost its capital chose a patron and started its year again. The feast is the first Sunday of October, and it still opens the Catholic pastoral year.

And the Vrysiotissa pilgrimage in May, founded in 1913 on a vow made the year before, when four young men of the village left for the Balkan Wars. Since 1967 it has included a blessing of drivers and their vehicles — which is what a vow looks like after a century of being kept.

DOCUMENTED **15 August: three feasts, ten kilometres apart, at the same hour**

On the Dormition, this island runs **three separate celebrations simultaneously**, in three different registers.

National. At the Evangelistria: liturgy from half past two in the morning, bells across every church on the island at seven, the wreath cast for the *Elli* at half past nine, the icon processed at half past ten, with the Navy, the Regional Governor and the government.

Confessional. At **Panagia i Vrysiotissa**, the Catholics keep their own great Marian feast of the Assumption — a daily παράκληση from the first of August, archiepiscopal vespers, and an **all-night vigil** on the fourteenth.

Parochial. And a dozen villages hold their *glenti* between the thirteenth and the eighteenth.

Three registers of one feast, running at once, on an island twenty-five kilometres long.

NOTE **The music — two bands, twenty-nine feasts**

The Tinian sound is **violin and lute**, playing *syrtos*, *balos* and *sousta* — the line and couple dances of the Aegean — and *valsakia*, little waltzes: a repertoire that mixes local tunes with common Cycladic ones. Do not assume

the τσαμπούνα, the island bagpipe: it is documented for Mykonos, Paros, Naxos and Syros, and only one hedged source mentions it here.

The 2026 listings tell their own story. **Two ensembles cover the great majority of some twenty-nine village feasts.** The villages no longer have their own players.

Two verbal customs are worth saving. At Triantaros, the Ἀλφαβητάρι τῆς Ἀγάπης — the Alphabet of Love — in which participants take turns singing mocking couplets, arranged alphabetically. And in the Panormos region until the 1960s, young men swung girls on swings while composing verses of praise, love or complaint; Florakis compares them to the ancient αἰῶραι of the Anthesteria.

The chapels are the thing to end on. An island of nine thousand people maintains more than a thousand of them, privately, at family expense, across every faith and none — and people fly in from Paris and London for a chapel's name-day. That is not piety, exactly. It is the same instinct as the reconciliation rule and the chest of tools: **a small place inventing, over and over, reasons that oblige its people to turn up for one another.**



X X I I

Ἡ ἐκταφή

i ektafi — ee ek-ta-FEE — the lifting up

The dead are buried in a cloth, and lifted after three years

There is no coffin. The body is wrapped in a shroud and laid in a vault; three years later the bones are lifted, washed, and moved to a box in the cemetery. Anyone raised in France finds this strange. The interesting discovery is that **France did the same thing until about 1800** — and the question worth asking is not why Tinos still does it, but why France stopped.

What actually happens

A first-hand description, from the Catholic village of Skalados, is worth setting out plainly because most accounts of this are secondhand and vague.

The dead person is wrapped in a shroud and placed in a vault which has a dirt floor, cement sides and a marble cover. There are eight such vaults in the village. After **three years** the vault is opened to make room for the next, the bones are lifted, washed with wine, and taken to a chapel in the cemetery where the family's remains are kept. Memorial masses are said on the third, ninth and fortieth day after a death.

TWO DETAILS THAT GIVE THE WHOLE THING AWAY

Washing the bones with wine, and the memorial cycle of the **third, ninth and fortieth day**, are both *Orthodox* usages.

Skalados is a Catholic village. So is Kato Kleisma. A Latin-rite parish keeping these observances is not following Rome. **It is following the island.**

That is the seam of chapter xix showing up in the one place nobody looks for it. On the surface these villages are Catholic — Latin parishes, a Latin archbishop, Corpus Christi processions, the Rosary. Underneath, at the moment of a death, they do what their Orthodox neighbours do.

The Venetian explanation does not work

The natural guess is that this is a Venetian inheritance — a lagoon city's horror of disease and lack of ground, exported to its possessions. It is a good guess and the dates destroy it.



A Venice's own hygienic burial reform arrives with Napoleon's **Edict of Saint-Cloud in 1804**; the cemetery island of San Michele opens in **1807**. Until then Venetians were buried in shrouds in common graves in and around their churches. **Venice cannot have exported to Tinos a regime it had not yet adopted itself.**

And the shortage-of-timber explanation has no evidence behind it either

The other common explanation is that the islands had no wood for coffins. Not one source connects shroud burial anywhere in the Cyclades to a scarcity of timber; Turner, in 1814, describes the villages of Tinos as “*surrounded by the richest woods*”; and the practice’s own furniture is the opposite of improvised — the vault, the cover and the ossuary are masonry, in the island’s abundant **stone and marble**. Scarcity improvises. What you find is built.

The real reason, and the practitioners give it themselves

It is **space**. Eight vaults in Skalados; three years; and then room for the next. The Orthodox village of Mochos on Crete does the same and its priest lists the reasons on the record: faster decomposition, a cemetery of about a hundred and seventy plots, and monastic precedent.

Greek law is built around the practice rather than against it. Graves are held on renewable three-year terms; the ossuary niche has a legal size — **thirty centimetres by thirty by fifty-five**; and every cemetery must have a *χωνευτήριο*, a common depository for bones that no family claims.

That is a country whose statutes assume that a grave is a stage in a process and not a permanent address.

Which is what Catholic Europe assumed too, until about 1800

EXHUMATION AND REUSE, IN CATHOLIC COUNTRIES

WHERE

THE RULE

WHERE	THE RULE
Tinos	Shroud burial; the bones lifted after three years , washed with wine, kept in a family ossuary
Greece, by statute	Three-year renewable terms; ossuary niches of a legal size; a common depository in every cemetery
Italy, today	Compulsory exhumation after ten years — a presidential decree of 1990
Venice, today	Graves at San Michele leased for twelve years
France	Every commune is required by law to maintain an <i>ossuaire</i>
Paris, 1786	The cemetery of the Innocents — which held mass graves stacked fifteen hundred deep — was emptied into the Catacombs
Paris, 1801	The coffin becomes compulsory

So the question is not why Tinos exhumes its dead. It is why France stopped.

And the answer is that France stopped very recently, for reasons of public health and municipal order that arrived with the Revolution and the Empire — and that the practice this island kept is the older European one, not an eastern peculiarity.

A family from Kato Kleisma who found Tinian burial strange would be measuring it against a French convention roughly two hundred years old. Measured against the thousand years before that, it is Paris that changed its mind.

What the three years are actually for

It is worth saying what the custom does for the people who keep it, since the practical explanation above is not the whole of it.

A burial under this system is not a single event but two, separated by three years. There is the funeral, in the days of shock. And then there is a second occasion, when the family gathers again, at a distance from the death, and handles the bones themselves.

Whatever else it is, it is a structure that requires a family to come back together three years later and do something difficult in one another's company. Which is, once again, the pattern this book keeps running into.

PART FOUR

The People

What outsiders wrote down about the Tinians and what the Tinians say about themselves; the numbers, which are stranger than they look; the work, and the leaving; France; the names; the Kato Meri; and one family in it.



XXIII

Οἱ Τηνιακοί

i Tiniakoí — *ee tee-nya-KEE* — the Tinians

What outsiders noticed was not a temperament. It was a landscape under cultivation

Four travellers, across two hundred years, say the same thing about this island — and three of them say it comparatively, against everywhere else they had been. But not one of them describes a character. They describe terraces, silk, and a tax bill.

Books about Greek islands tend to tell you that the people are warm, hospitable and hardworking. It is almost always true and it is almost never informative. So this chapter takes a narrower route: what did people who were

actually here write down, and did they say anything about Tinos that they did not also say about its neighbours?

Four witnesses

BERNARD RANDOLPH, 1687

“The Inhabitants of Tine are **better to pass than any other of the Islanders**, paying only their tenths to the Venetians. They make great quantities of Silk and Wine, but have not corn nor wood to subsist a month, being supplied from other Islands.”

That is the earliest explicitly comparative statement about this island, and it is worth reading twice — because the cause Randolph gives is not a virtue. It is a **tax regime**. They are better off because they pay only the tithe.

Randolph is not a flatterer, either. Four pages later, on Mykonos: “*Most of the Inhabitants are Privateers... leaving their women to their own discretion, and the Civility of strangers.*” Same man, same voyage, same book. The judgement on Tinos means something because the judgement on Mykonos is available beside it.

TOURNEFORT, ON THE ISLAND IN DECEMBER 1700

« Elle a 60 milles de tour... pleine de montagnes pelées mais **la mieux cultivée de l’archipel.** »

Sixty miles around, full of bare mountains, but the best cultivated of the Archipelago.

A superlative, from the most systematic traveller in the Aegean of his century, and — this matters — from a professional botanist. Tournefort was qualified to judge cultivation in a way that almost nobody else who wrote about these islands was.

WILLIAM TURNER, 1814

“...we saw some beautiful villages on the heights, surrounded by the richest woods: **every inch of ground seemed (and, as I was afterwards informed, is) cultivated, a rare instance of industry in these countries.**”

Not *the Tinians are industrious*, which would be an adjective. *A rare instance of industry in these countries* — which is a comparison, made by a man who had been to a great many of them.

H. F. TOZER, 1890

The mountains are terraced “almost to the mountain-tops... which gave evidence of **vast labour employed in their construction.**”

And every one of them who gives a reason gives a material one

This is the part that keeps the chapter honest. Randolph attributes the island’s condition to **the tax**. Tournefort attributes it to **the silk** — sixteen thousand pounds a year, the wealth of the island. Tozer attributes it to **the walls**. Only Turner uses the word industry at all, and he uses it as a foreigner comparing one place with another.

The machine, seen from inside

Randolph names the cause and leaves it there. The island's own doctor, a hundred and twenty years later, describes the machine — and the first thing to notice is who is running it. The tax is assessed by the islanders on themselves: the δημογέροντες order each village to prepare its share, and every household is rated by what it has — **so much for a beehive, for a horse, a goat, a house, a dovecote**; children pay nothing until their fifteenth year. ©

Enforcement, in the ordinary run of things, is a piece of paper. A defaulter's house is sealed — *a strip of paper fixed with soft wax, the seal often a coin, the παρά, worth three French centimes* — and Zallony notes the astonishing part: the elders command **no armed force whatever**, and are obeyed. When they are not, the island has its own alarm — the bell, repeated from village to village, “so that in a flash the alarm is transmitted over the whole island.” Then Constantinople sends the machine's other face: a *voevoda* who has pre-paid half the tax and comes to collect it with interest, seats himself at **Kampos, in the centre of the island**, and squeezes until — Zallony's own image — the compressed spring unwinds: the islanders mass from all sides, and the man flees “taking the gold in slabs”, leaving the island poorer and free of him. The elders resume their seats, on the principle the doctor states in Latin: *minima de malis* — of two unavoidable evils, choose the lesser. ©

And one privilege sat under all of it. Tinos paid no customs duties of any kind — and for eight λεπτά a Tinian could buy a paper certifying only that he was a Tinian, and travel anywhere in the Ottoman Empire on it, exempt from the χαράτσι that every other subject of the sultan paid at sixteen francs for the long-robed and eight for everyone else. **A passport that said nothing but the island's name, and it was enough.**

 Zallony (1809), «Η σημερινή κατάσταση», pp. 15–17 of the 2023 Greek translation. The editor of that edition adds a note worth the whole chapter: of the sixty to seventy thousand francs the island raised each year, **the regular tax actually owed to the Porte was about 33,000 γρόσια** — the rest was the cost of running the island's own administration. Even the tribute, on inspection, was mostly Tinos paying for Tinos.

So the reputation of this island is a reputation for *cultivation* — and cultivation is what a light tax regime, a protected silk export written into the terms of 1390, and a hundred thousand retaining walls look like from the deck of a passing ship. The trait is downstream of the terrain and the terms. That is not flattery; it is economic history with people in it.

Three habits, which are better evidence than any adjective

Where the sources do become specific, they stop describing feelings and start describing arrangements. Three of them point the same way, and none of them is warmth.

DOCUMENTED **The apprentice's chest — four years, and then your tools, in front of the masters**

From the Greek national inventory of intangible heritage: “*When, after at least four years, an apprentice completes his training, the workshop owner*

gives him a small chest — κασελάκι — with a set of tools, as a kind of symbolic ritual that takes place before the masters.”

Chapter v has the mechanics. The dossier adds two details that belong here: the menial first stage was for learning *order and obedience* — and masters were said to withhold knowledge deliberately, so that the apprentice would work it out himself.

An indenture, with a duration, a ceremony, a physical object and a list of witnesses. It is still done.

Ministry of Culture, National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage

DOCUMENTED **The boundary that is a conversation, not a wall**

Holdings on Tinos are small, scattered, and divided and re-divided among family members down the generations. On an island of tens of thousands of terraces that is a recipe for litigation — and the recorded practice is the opposite.

From fieldwork on the Tinian landscape: *“the stone walls of each property do not necessarily point to a ‘fixed boundary’ since further verbal agreements need to follow most of the times.”* Disputed boundaries are arbitrated by **village elders**. Neighbours hold unwritten agreements about access, wall maintenance and shared work.

And the instruction that goes with the land: *“Do whatever you can in order not to sell your land, but pass it on to the next ones.”*

Maria Vidali, on landscape and community on Tinos

DOCUMENTED **The table you may not sit at until you have made up your quarrel**

At Ktikados on Easter Monday there is a communal meal called the **Τραπεζί της Αγάπης**, the Table of Love. A bell at noon; a great stone table in the hall beneath the church; beef soup and roast meat with potatoes, cheese, *louza* and

red eggs, cooked by the women of the village; the priest chants *Christos Anesti* three times.

And a rule: “*Those fellow-villagers who have had disagreements, disputes or tensions during the past year **must first be reconciled***” before they may sit down beside one another.

Its origin is disputed — one account traces it to Orthodox brotherhoods formed under Venetian rule in the sixteenth century, another calls it far older. The custom is not in doubt; its history as told is not evidence.

Something similar is recorded at Tripotamos, where the heads of household and the priest each bring their own bread and their own cutlery and the host provides everything else.

An indenture, a negotiation, and a reconciliation. What those three have in common is not warmth but **enforceable obligation** — three institutions for keeping promises in a place where everyone is related, the land is minutely divided, and a large share of the working men are abroad.

What Tinians say about themselves

Very little is written down, and what there is comes from people speaking about their chapels rather than about themselves. Four of them, unrelated, interviewed in 2025:

“This tradition and custom that connect us between members of the family is part of our identity. I’m fully committed to maintaining and passing them down to my children.” — Ioanna Krikelli, on a chapel of the seventeenth century

“It’s our responsibility first of all, it goes from generation to generation as an heirloom.” — Nicoleta Nazou

“Christianity has religious aspects but also cultural aspects. It brings a lot of people together. I want to keep it going.” — Giannis Kafantaris, aged 26

“All this helps to form a sense of community. In these little chapels, one becomes a brother with everyone else.” — Fr Markos Foskolos, fifty years a priest on this island

Notice what none of them says. Not hospitable, not hardworking, not warm. All four say the same different thing: **responsibility, heirloom, passing down, keeping it going.** Inheritance as an obligation. That is a self-image, it is consistent across four people who have nothing to do with each other, and it is not the one the brochures use.

AND ONE SENTENCE TO STOP THIS BEING SENTIMENTAL

Chapter xiii holds the ledger: the first landfall for people escaping the galleys — valued by Venice partly because the escapees made up its short supply of sailors — and, in its own rector’s words, an island that acquired a taste for piracy and kept it. **The island that received the escaped and armed the takers is the island whose character this chapter is describing.**

NOTE

Is there a difference of character between the Catholic and Orthodox villages? Nobody records one

The question is worth asking and the honest answer is a negative. Tozer, who notes that Catholics are more than half the population, records no friction and draws no contrast. Randolph distinguishes the two only geographically. And the standard study of the Catholics and Orthodox of eighteenth-century Tinos is institutional history — bishops against missionaries, jurisdiction, precedence in processions — with no characterisation of differing temperaments and no division of wealth or occupation by confession.

There are two structural reasons why no stereotype formed. The first is that **on Tinos the farmers became Catholic, not just the lords**. On the other Frankish islands Catholicism was the religion of a feudal aristocracy of conquerors; here it took the whole rural population. Confession never mapped onto class, so there was no lordly Catholic minority to resent.

The second cuts against a claim made in the document elsewhere, and is worth admitting. The official account of the marble tradition attributes part of its flowering to the Catholic Church's comfort with figural sculpture. But **the two centres of the craft, Pyrgos and Ysternia, are Orthodox villages**. Both things may be partly true — Catholic demand at one end of the island supplied by Orthodox carvers at the other — but the explanation as usually given is at least incomplete.

Where confessional conflict is recorded, it is political and it is dated: 1821–23, and it is about tax and allegiance rather than character. It was closed by the five words of June 1823 that chapter xix records — nationhood is one thing, and religion another.

A note from the author

EVERYTHING ABOVE IS EVIDENCE. WHAT FOLLOWS IS OPINION, AND MINE.

I should say where I am standing. I grew up in the south of France, at Saint-Paul-de-Vence. I am culturally French. What I have of Tinos came down the other side, and the result is that I look at this island from somewhere between the two — not entirely French, not entirely Greek, and probably better placed for it, because you notice a place most clearly when you are half outside it.

Seen from France, the closest thing I can offer is this. **The Tinians are what we in France would recognise as Corsicans — and then squared.**

Take that as the compliment and the warning it is meant to be, because it runs in both directions.

On one side there is a kindness I have not often met elsewhere, and a sense of family that is not a sentiment but a practice. **You are never alone here.** If something goes wrong — a hospital in the middle of the night, the kind of emergency that leaves you standing in a corridor at four in the morning — your people come, and they stay, and nobody discusses whether they will. And there is the table. They love to sit at it together, and it is not entertainment. It is a part of life, and a part of who they are.

On the other side they are hard island people. The French word is *insulaire*, and it carries both meanings at once — of the island, and closed. There is a pride here that is very strong, and I would say sometimes too strong.

But I find I cannot hold that against them. We live in a period that is losing its values, its family bonds and much of its social fabric, and these people have not lost theirs. **Can we blame them for it? I can only commend them.**

One observation from outside the family, offered because it happens to fit. The three habits set out above — the apprenticeship that ends with a chest of tools handed over before witnesses, the field boundary that is a conversation renewed with a neighbour and arbitrated by elders, the Easter table you may not sit at until you have made up your quarrel — are all, at bottom, machinery for the same thing. They are ways of making sure that obligation between people stays enforceable.

Which is the institutional form of “you are never alone.” And the same machinery, seen from an angle a degree or two different, is the pride, and the closedness, and the long memory for a quarrel that requires a rule about Easter tables to settle. It is one trait. The travellers saw the terraces and called it industry; a Frenchman looking at it from Saint-Paul-de-Vence calls it Corsican; and what it actually is, is a small place where everyone is related, the land is divided past counting, half the men have always been abroad, and the only thing holding any of it together is that people keep their word.



X X I V

Απογραφή

apografí — *a-po-gra-FEE* — the census, literally the writing-down

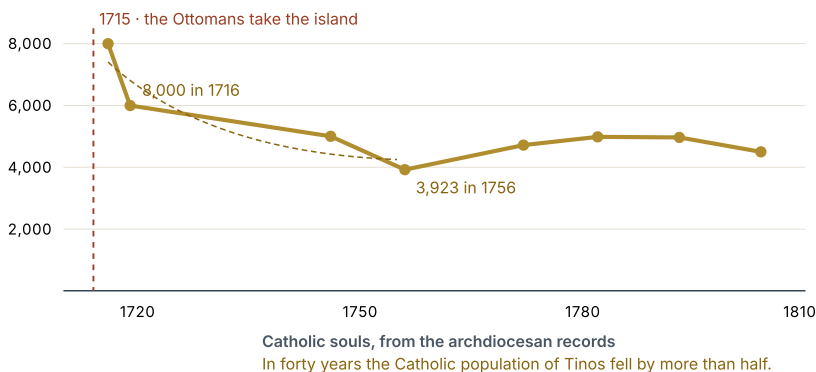
An island that held twenty thousand people holds nine thousand — and more people are registered here than live here

Counting Tinians is harder than it sounds, and the difficulty is the interesting part. Church registers and tax rolls disagree by design. And the modern census asks two different questions — where do you live, and where do you belong — and on this island they give different answers. That gap is the diaspora, measured.

Before the census: two sets of books that could not agree

There was no census in the modern sense until the Greek state made one. What exists for the eighteenth century is two parallel bodies of paperwork kept by two authorities who wanted opposite things from the number.

The **Catholic archdiocese** counted souls, because souls were its business, and a bishop reporting to Rome has no incentive to undercount his flock. The **Ottoman treasury** counted taxable men between twelve and sixty, because that was what could be charged, and every community in the empire had an incentive to make that number as small as it could be made to look.



A 1716 · 8,000 → 1719 · 6,000 → 1746 · 5,000 → 1756 · 3,923 → 1772 · 4,716 → 1782/83 · 4,984 → 1793 · 4,966 → 1804 · 4,500. The collapse is not a mystery: two hundred Catholic families were carried off to the Barbary states in the year of the conquest itself, and those who could afford to leave for Venetian or Habsburg territory did so. What is notable is the floor. After 1756 the line stops falling and holds, for the next half century, at a little under five thousand. **This chart spent most of this book's writing at grade C, and its upgrade is a story worth telling.** The figures reach this book through a single website served in a corrupted character encoding, attributed to Fr Markos Foskolos and confirmable nowhere — so the book downgraded its own chart, printed the reason, and argued from the travellers below that these had to be Catholic souls rather than the island. Then Dimitropoulos's compilation of testimonies was opened at the Tinos pages, and the argument stopped being an argument. Every point has a witness with a name: the 3,923 of 1756 are «οι καθολικοί κάτοικοι» counted by P. de Stefani; the 4,716 of 1772 by Vincenzo de Via; the 5,156 of 1783 by G. Maria d'Ameno, with Foskolos's 4,966 and 4,984 as variants of the same count; the 4,550 of 1793 by de Via again — the 4,966 plotted for that year is Foskolos's own figure. And behind the first point stands a priest's report of 1716 that counts **eight thousand Catholics and fifteen thousand Orthodox in the same breath**. The Volax parish series and the traveller record below still say what they said. The series is real, it is Catholic souls — and the island around it was three times its size. *Source: Fr Markos Foskolos, from the archdiocesan archive; the named witnesses as compiled in D. Dimitropoulos, Μαρτυρίες για τον πληθυσμό των νησιών του Αιγαίου (2004), pp. 232–236.*

TWO SETS OF BOOKS, AND NO WAY TO RECONCILE THEM

The Ottoman registers give roughly **3,025 taxable heads aged twelve to sixty**, and later in the century 2,217 and then 2,195 — the last of these expressly a count of *households*: 2,195 families, 850 of them Catholic. All of them look impossibly small beside a Catholic population alone of five thousand.

An earlier draft of this book multiplied the 3,025 by four or five, on the grounds that a taxable male represents a household, and arrived at a figure that matched the church records almost exactly. **That was wrong, and it is worth saying why, because it is the most seductive error in this whole subject.** A poll-tax register of males aged twelve to sixty is a count of heads, not of households. Multiplying it by a household factor counts the same men twice. And for most of this book's writing the 3,025 was undated in every source that carried it. Dimitropoulos dates it: **1715, the count taken at the conquest itself**, under the tahrir of Ibrahim pasha. So the two sets of books finally have their years — in 1715 the new rulers counted 3,025 taxable heads, and in 1716 a priest counted twenty-three thousand souls. They do not contradict each other. They are two instruments doing two different jobs, one counting what could be taxed and the other counting everyone; the only error is the old one of multiplying the first to reach the second.

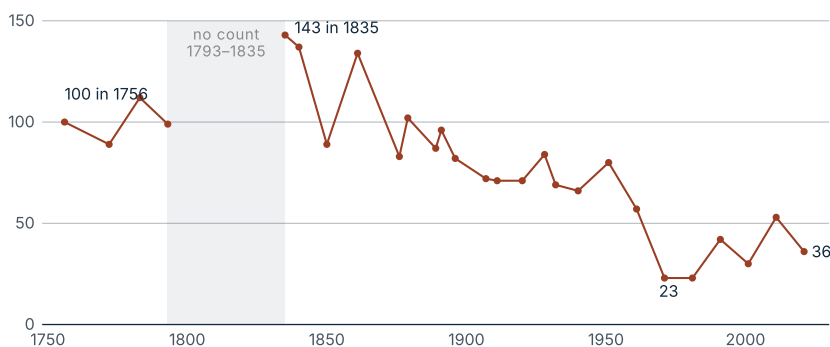
The two authorities were counting different things, in different units, for different reasons, and the honest position is that **they cannot be reconciled from the outside**. Every historical population figure in this book should be read that way — including the ones that agree.

One village, counted every time anybody counted

The series above is the island's, and for most of this book's writing it was the weakest thing in it. There is a village series that is better still, and it is better precisely because it is small.

The village association of Volax has published the population of its own village at every recorded count from **1756 to 2021**, compiled from the archives of the Catholic Archbishop, the parish register — titled, in Italian, the *Libro Maestro di Vulacus* — the registers of the former municipality of Sostheniou–Peraias from 1855, and the state censuses from 1879. **B** *a village association*

transcribing archives, not a critical edition — but the archives it names are real, named, and Catholic



B Volax, 1756–2021. Every dot is a count that was actually taken; the line is drawn only between counts, and the gap across the revolution years is left as a gap. Peak **143 in 1835**; low **23 in 1971 and 1981** — a fall of eighty-four per cent. Note where the break is: the village came through the emigrations of the 1900s, the wars and the occupation almost unchanged at between sixty-six and eighty-four, and then lost **sixty per cent in the single decade after 1961**. What emptied Volax was prosperity somewhere else, not catastrophe here.

AND IT DOES SOMETHING FOR THE CHART AT THE HEAD OF THIS CHAPTER

The eighteenth-century island series in this chapter records counts in **1756, 1772, 1782 and 1793**. The Volax series, compiled independently and from the same archdiocesan archive, records counts in **1756, 1772, 1783 and 1793**.

Three of the four years match exactly and the fourth is out by one. When this check was made, the island series still reached this book only through a single unreliable website — so it mattered that a village association, working from the same archive, showed independently that **those were real counting years in a real Catholic register**. The compilation has since put names to the counters, and the two confirmations now stand together.

A village of about a hundred souls inside a Catholic island population of four to five thousand is two per cent, and it stays at two per cent across four counts forty years apart. Consistent. Not proof.

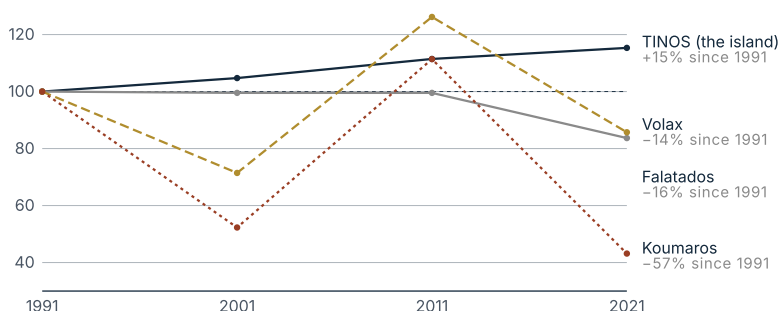
And there is a second village series, from the same archive, which fills the gap the first one leaves. The Volax chart above has nothing between 1793 and 1835, because nobody counted the village in those years. The Catholic registers did count others. Quoted from Foskolos’s census study — the one that is not online — by a historian citing it page by page: **B**

FOUR CATHOLIC VILLAGES OF THE KATO MERI, FROM THE CHURCH REGISTERS

VILLAGE	1793	1835	OVER THE FORTY-TWO YEARS
Kellia (now Kalloni)	403	541	+34%
Komi	386	436	+13%
Aetofolia	181	171	−6%

VILLAGE	1793	1835	OVER THE FORTY-TWO YEARS
Karkados	93	179	+92%

Two things follow. The first is that **the Catholic interior was growing, not shrinking, across the revolution** — which is the opposite of what the island series at the head of this chapter shows, and another reason not to trust it. The second is closer to home: **Kalloni and Komi in 1793 held between them almost eight hundred people.** Their resident populations in 2021 are 192 and 203. ● *The villages of chapter xxviii held twice as many people two hundred and thirty years ago as they hold now.*



● **The island grew. The villages behind it did not.** Each line is the census population indexed to 1991. In thirty years Tinos as a whole gained fifteen per cent — and **Koumaros lost fifty-seven**, going from forty-four people to nineteen. Absolute figures: Tinos 7,747 → 8,934 · Falatados 227 → 190 · Volax 42 → 36 · Koumaros 44 → 19. *At village populations of a few dozen a swing of a third between counts is registration as much as residence; read the direction, not the steps.*

The peak, and the emptying

Tinos was once, by a wide margin, the most populous island of the Cyclades. A figure of **twenty-eight thousand** circulates in Greek popular writing, set

against a Naxos of no more than six thousand. **It is not printed here as a number.** This book first believed the number untraceable; the compilation corrected that, and the truth is better than a mystery. Pasch van Krienen wrote “about 28,000” in 1770 — and Krienen is the Archipelago’s most cheerful inflator. Kapodistrias’s memorandum of 1828, written to persuade Europe that Greece was worth its independence, set the same figure for the eve of the revolution. An inflator and an advocate: between them they explain where the number every taverna knows comes from — and why it stands forty per cent above the twenty thousand the eyewitnesses keep returning to. The relative claim — that Tinos was the most populous — stands on the traveller record below. It does not need rescuing by an advocate’s round figure.

What the record does hold is four named eyewitnesses, across a hundred and twenty-seven years, saying the same thing.

WHAT PEOPLE WHO WERE ACTUALLY STANDING ON THE ISLAND SAID IT HELD

YEAR	WHO	THE ISLAND
1687	Bernard Randolph , <i>The Present State of the Islands in the Archipelago</i> , Oxford, p. 9 — “above thirty Villages... and above 20000 souls ”, of whom “the greatest part are Roman Catholicks”	~20,000
1782	Choiseul-Gouffier , <i>Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce</i> — «près de 20 000 habitants... répartis dans 60 villages ou hameaux»	~20,000
1809	Zallony , <i>Voyage à Tine</i> , Paris — «περί τους 23 με 25.000 κατοίκους»: about 23 to 25,000, and “the most flourishing and most densely peopled of the islands of the Archipelago”. <i>A Tinian, born at Krokos in 1782, writing a book about his own island in French, in Paris.</i>	23–25,000
1814	William Turner , <i>Journal of a Tour in the Levant</i> I, p. 411 — “sixty-four villages, and 20,000 inhabitants ”	20,000

A Randolph and Turner read verbatim from the printed pages. Choiseul-Gouffier at one remove, C. Zallony read in full in the 2023 Greek translation published by the association of his own village («Οι Φίλοι του Κρόκου»), p. 15; the 1809 French remains the citation of record. B

One caution, and it matters. “About twenty thousand”, three times over a hundred and twenty-seven years, is a traveller *consensus*, not three measurements: travellers read each other, and a round number already in print is the easiest thing in the world to repeat. Which is exactly why the fourth voice matters most — **the native goes higher, not lower**. Zallony, who did not need to copy anybody about his own island, wrote 23 to 25,000. A copied number agrees; an independent one differs.

AND THE HISTORIAN WHO HAS READ THE ARCHIVES, NOT THE TRAVEL BOOKS, LANDS IN THE SAME PLACE

D. Dimitropoulos of the National Hellenic Research Foundation, who compiled the surviving population testimonies for every island in the Aegean, states the position for this one flatly:

*The testimonies converge that during the seventeenth century its population exceeded **ten thousand**, while in the eighteenth century and up to the founding of the Greek state it approached **twenty thousand** inhabitants.* A

Peer-reviewed, built from the documents, and resting on the two studies this book most wanted — Foskolos’s five centuries of censuses, and Dimitropoulos’s own volume of testimonies. So the order of magnitude stands on two independent bodies of evidence: **the island held about twenty thousand people, and the series at the head of this chapter is the Catholics inside it.**

And the archive behind that sentence holds one thing no traveller ever produced: a census. In 1663, mid-way through the war for Crete, the island

was counted head by head — **7,548 people: 3,603 males and 3,945 females**; of the males, 1,009 boys under twelve, 2,174 men of working age, 295 past sixty. ^A It is the earliest count of Tinos that deserves the word — and the surplus of women over men, on an island already sending its sons to sea and to Smyrna, is the whole of chapter xxv in a single row of figures.

Turner also contradicts himself, and the book prefers to say so: at page 100, describing the outward voyage of 1812, he writes that “the island contains about **66** villages”. Sixty-four is his considered figure and the one the modern count matches, but it is not his only one.

The revolution decade, counted twice

One document catches the island on the eve of the storm and again after it had passed. A French statistical broadsheet of 1856, tabulating Greece δήμος by δήμος, carries paired figures for 1821 and 1832 — the only view this book has found of the island’s interior geography across the war.

THE FOUR ΔΗΜΟΙ OF TINOS, BEFORE AND AFTER THE REVOLUTION

ΔΗΜΟΣ	1821	1832	CHANGE
Τήνου — the town and its ring	7,796	5,847	–25%
Πανόρμου — Pyrgos and the marble north	4,050	4,300	+6%
Περαίας — the Kato Meri; this family’s δήμος	5,000	3,800	–24%
Σωστενίου — Ysternia and the west	2,450	2,280	–7%
<i>The island</i>	19,296	16,227	–16%

^B «Renseignements statistiques sur la Grèce», a broadsheet of 4 March 1856, via K. Komis, *Ιστορική δημογραφία του νεοελληνικού χώρου* (2002); reproduced in Dimitropoulos, pp. 235–236. One chain, printed a generation after the fact — read the shape, not the last digit.

Read the middle rows against each other. The town’s δήμος lost a quarter of its people across the decade, and so did Peraia — the δήμος of this family’s three villages, where twenty-nine people of this name would be counted in 1875.

The marble north alone grew. And the Peraia figure sits oddly beside the parish counts of its own villages — Kellia, Komi, Karkados, all larger in 1835 than in 1793. Both records can be honest: a δήμος can bleed through a war and its villages refill after it. The tension is printed here rather than smoothed, and the archivist who could resolve it is the one this chapter keeps returning to.

Two centuries later there are **8,934 residents in sixty-four settlements**. The same villages, in most cases the same houses, with fewer than half the people.

THE CYCLADES, THEN AND NOW

ISLAND	C. 1800	2021
Tinos	~20,000	8,934
Naxos	—	20,578
Syros	—	21,124
Mykonos	—	10,704

A for 2021 (ELSTAT). **C** for the Tinos figure of c. 1800 (Turner, 1814). The point is the reversal: **the island that had three or four times the people of Naxos now has fewer than half.**

Where the nine thousand are

Almost all of the decline is a decline of the villages. Chora — the port town, which barely existed as a settlement before the nineteenth century, because for five hundred years the population lived up at the fortress and inland — now holds **more than half the island**.

RESIDENT POPULATION, 2021 · SELECTED SETTLEMENTS

SETTLEMENT	2021	NOTE
Chora (Tinos town)	4,936	55% of the island
Pyrgos (Πάνορμος)	382	the marble village
Komi	203	artichokes; family ground
Kalloni	192	family ground
Kato Kleisma	45	the grandmother's house
Volax	36	the granite boulders
Tarabados	28	the dovecote valley
Xinara	18	seat of the Catholic archbishopric
Loutra	17	the Jesuit and Ursuline convents
Sklavochori	3	

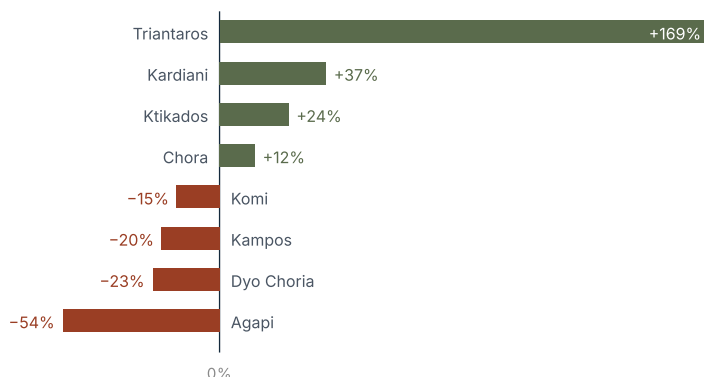
Island total: 8,934, across 64 settlements

 Municipality of Tinos, publishing the 2021 census. The full list of sixty-four sums exactly to 8,934.

Two of those rows are worth stopping on. **The seat of a Catholic archbishopric has eighteen residents.** And the village that once housed the Jesuit college and the Ursuline boarding school — which took girls from Athens, Smyrna and Egypt — has seventeen.

Which villages are growing, and which are going

Change in resident population, 2001 → 2021



A ELSTAT, communities of the municipality of Tinos. Triantaros's figure is an artefact and should not be read as a village reviving: it sits within commuting distance of Chora and the growth is suburban. The honest reading of this chart is the bottom half. **Agapi has lost more than half its people in twenty years**, and the villages losing them are the inland Catholic ones.

ONE MUNICIPAL UNIT IS STILL EMPTYING, AND IT IS THE KATO MERI

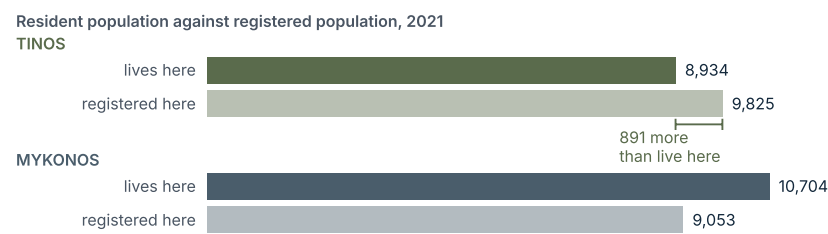
Exombourgo — the administrative unit that covers the Catholic interior, the villages under the fortress — is the **only** part of Tinos still losing residents at every census: **2,478 → 2,403 → 2,276**.

The island as a whole has grown in every intercensal period since 2001: 8,115 → 8,636 → 8,934. The interior has not shared in any of it.

The number that says the most, and nobody quotes it

A Greek census records two populations. The **resident** population (μόνιμος) is who actually lives there. The **legal** or registered population (νόμιμος) is who is inscribed on the municipal roll — where a person belongs, which for most Greeks is where their family is from, and which is where they must go to vote.

For nearly everywhere in Greece the resident figure is the larger one. On Tinos it is not.



Two islands eleven kilometres apart, pointing in opposite directions.

A ELSTAT 2021. **Mykonos has more people living on it than belong to it. Tinos has more people belonging to it than live on it.** A tourist island and a diaspora island, in four numbers. The gap is widest in the interior: the Exombourgo unit has 2,276 residents against **3,275 registered** — a thousand people who *are* from those villages and are not in them.

That thousand is not an abstraction. It is the Athens flat, the Piraeus office, the ship, the restaurant in Brussels or Johannesburg or Sydney — and the house in the village with the shutters closed for eleven months. Every August it comes back, and for two weeks the resident figure and the registered figure are the same number.

NOTE **Why population figures for Tinos never agree — a short guide to reading them**

Almost every disagreement between two published figures for this island is a definition problem rather than a factual one. The traps, in order of how often they catch people:

Resident, legal, or de facto. Greek statistics carry three population concepts (μόνιμος, νόμιμος, πραγματικός). A figure quoted without saying which is being used is not usable.

Island, municipality, or eparchy. Historically the eparchy of Tinos has at times included other islands.

Settlement, community, or municipal unit. Chora is 4,936, 5,111 or 6,092 depending which of the three you mean. All three are correct.

Taxable men against souls. Discussed above: a poll-tax roll of men aged twelve to sixty is a count of heads, not of households, and no multiplier turns one into the other.

Pyrgos is Panormos. The village everyone calls Pyrgos appears in every official statistic under its formal name, Πάνορμος. Looking for Pyrgos in the census returns nothing.

Even the count of settlements is 61, 62 or 64 depending on the basis used.



XXV

Ἡ δουλειά

i douleiá — *ee thoo-lyá* — the work

The one Cycladic island that did not live off the sea — and what it sold instead

Every picture of a Greek island has a boat in it. Tinos is the exception, and it is documented as one. This island lived off its own surface, and when the surface could no longer feed the people on it, what left was not a cargo. It was a trade, carried in the hands of the men who knew it.

Not a sailors' island

The standard survey of the Cyclades in the seventeenth century is precise about which islands made a living from the sea. Shipping mattered — as ownership, and more importantly as employment aboard foreign vessels — **at Mykonos, Milos, Kimolos and Sifnos.**

Tinos is not on that list. And Tinos was, at the time, by some distance the most populous island in the group.

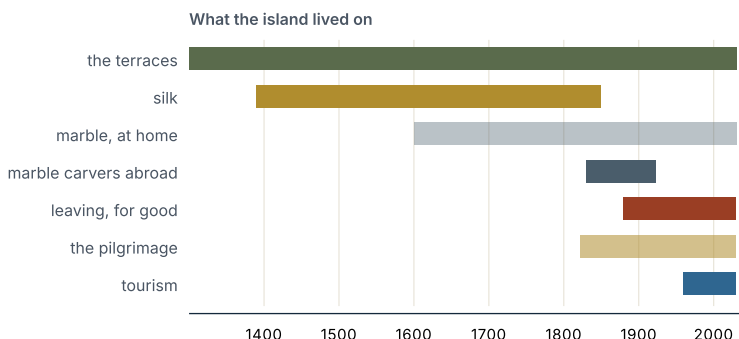
WHICH FORCES THE QUESTION

Twenty thousand people on a rock of 194 square kilometres, and almost none of them at sea. **They were all on the land.**

That is the explanation for the terraces, for the hundred thousand walls, for the dovecotes, for Tournefort's judgement that this was the best-cultivated island in the Archipelago, and for Turner's that every inch of it was under cultivation. It was not industriousness for its own sake. It was arithmetic: this many people, that much soil, no alternative.

And it explains the other half of the Randolph sentence quoted in chapter xxiii — no corn nor wood to subsist a month, supplied from other islands. A dense population, growing cash crops on terraces, buying its bread in. That is not a peasant economy. It is a commercial one.

Four things this island has sold, in order



C A schematic, and the start and end dates are approximations to the decade — but the sequence is not in doubt. Only one bar runs the whole width. **Everything else this island has ever sold has been temporary; the terraces are not.** Note also how short the marble emigration is: the carvers' circuit abroad lasts under a century.

1 · Silk, until it wasn't

Set out in chapter iv: sixteen thousand pounds of raw silk a year at Tournefort's visit in 1700, the wealth of the island, and a trade written into the terms of the Venetian arrangement. It is the reason the island was rich enough to be described as better off than any of its neighbours. It faded in the nineteenth century, undercut by industrial production elsewhere, and today the mulberry trees are what remain of it.

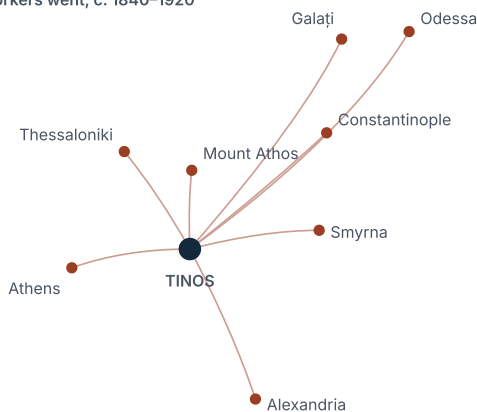
2 · Marble, and the eighty years it travelled

The craft is old and local. What is remarkable is the short, intense window in which it became an export of *people*.

The Greek Ministry of Culture dates the expansion precisely: the Tinian marble tradition extends to Athens **μετὰ τὸ 1830** — after 1830, that is,

immediately upon the founding of the Greek state, which needed a capital built and had no one else who could carve it. From Athens the circuit widened.

Where Tinian marble-workers went, c. 1840–1920



Schematic. Relative positions only; not to scale.

B The recorded working circuit: Athens, then Smyrna, Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Galați on the Danube, Odessa, Alexandria and Mount Athos. Named families of the trade include Filippotis, Vitalis, Chalepas, Sohos, Lampaditis, the Malakate brothers, Kouskouris and Lyritis. **That Tinians worked in all these cities is well attested; which building in Odessa, which church in Galați, is not on any open record** — those attributions sit in Greek monographs and in the collection of the Museum of Marble Crafts at Pyrgos.

AND THEN, WITHIN FIVE YEARS, HALF OF THAT MAP CLOSED

1917 — the Russian revolution ends the Odessa and Black Sea economies.

1922 — Smyrna burns, and the Greek presence in Asia Minor of nearly three thousand years is ended inside a month. Constantinople follows, slowly, over the next three decades.

By 1885 there were reportedly around **eight thousand Tinians in Constantinople and three thousand in Smyrna** — together, more than the population of the island today. Within a generation that world no longer existed, and everyone who could get out came back to an island that could not feed them, or went on to Athens.

^D for the 8,000 and 3,000 figures, which come from popular local history rather than a register. They are given here because the order of magnitude is corroborated by everything else — but they are not a count.



“Servantes de l’île de Tine.” Engraved for the comte de Choiseul-Gouffier’s *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce* in the 1780s — two women and a child, drawn on the shore with a boat behind them. The plate is worth more than its charm. Tinian women in domestic service were a recognised category — named as such by a French ambassador’s draughtsman, and drawn for a book meant for the salons of Paris. By the time this plate was engraved the practice was already at least a hundred and thirty years old, and it had another century to run.

Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce* · Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, via travelogues.gr
 · CC BY-NC 4.0

3 · Leaving

There were two emigrations from this island, and only the second one emptied it. The first ran for at least two hundred years before the Greek state existed, and it was circular: people went out to work, saved, and came home to buy land. The second, from about 1900, was permanent. They are usually told as one story. They are not one story, and the plate above belongs to the first.

THE REASON, AND IT IS THE SAME REASON AS THE TERRACES

The island’s own harvest fed the island for **five or six months of the year**. That is not one traveller’s impression — it is a statement that recurs, in almost the same words, from the Venetian report of 1630, through a document drawn up by the island’s own πρόκριτοι in 1700, to a British visitor in 1813. **A**

Everything in this chapter follows from that sentence. A dense population on a rock that feeds it for half the year has two choices: build more terraces, or send people out. This island did both, for three hundred years, and then ran out of the first.

DOCUMENTED **Eight travellers, and they all say the same thing**

WHAT VISITORS RECORDED ABOUT TINIANIS WORKING ABROAD

YEAR	WHO	WHAT THEY WROTE
1655	Thevenot	Overpopulation forces the islanders to seek their fortune in cities — Smyrna and Chios .
1768	von Riedesel	Men and women work as domestic servants in the Ottoman capital, in Smyrna and in the other <i>échelles</i> of the Levant; the rest earn their living on ships and caiques.

YEAR	WHO	WHAT THEY WROTE
1770	Pash di Krienen	Many Tinians in the ports of the Aegean, in the households of Europeans settled there.
1782	Choiseul-Gouffier	Draws them. The plate above.
c.1800	Olivier	On Chios and at Smyrna, women and men from Tinos work in silk . And the shipping rhythm, below.
1809	Zallony — a Tinian	There is not one family without a member abroad — and the rest of what he wrote is given at full length just below.
1814	Turner	Twelve hundred Tinians living in Constantinople and Smyrna. The men are the ablest cooks and the women the most renowned servants in the East — and the French hire them almost to the exclusion of anyone else. <i>vol. i p. 405 — six pages before the village count quoted in chapter xxiv.</i>
1820	Fuller	On the island on the eve of the revolution: the majority of the inhabitants had spent their youth as domestic servants in Smyrna and Constantinople.

Assembled by D. Dimitropoulos of the National Hellenic Research Foundation, each with its edition and page. 

Zallony’s row in that table deserves to be read at full length — because the book it comes from is now on this family’s shelf, bought in a Tinos bookshop in the Greek translation published by the association of his own village. What the doctor wrote in 1809 is the whole mechanism of this chapter in one breath:

Most Tinians travel, and there is no family without some of its members abroad. But they love their birthplace, and they always return to it. Over the most fertile, the richest, the most flowering countries, they prefer their dry islet, their barren mountains. When they have acquired the means to live with some ease, they return to their island never to leave it again, and they buy land — and for this reason the land is very expensive. A young woman born to a good family hardly accepts to marry outside the island; and even if she leaves, she never sells her fathers' inheritance, but keeps it with love, to return to it some day.

B Zallony, *Voyage à Tine* (1809), read in the 2023 Greek translation (Σύλλογος «Οι Φίλοι του Κρόκου»), pp. 49–50; the French original remains the citation of record. The land made expensive by home-comers, in 1809, is this chapter's προτίμηση loop — described by an eyewitness two centuries before the argument.

And the first to go were women. This is the part that reverses the usual picture, and it connects this chapter to chapter iv. The women of Tinos, working the island's own silk, had specialised in knitting silk goods — **above all stockings, which were known in Europe for how long they lasted.** That is a skill, acquired at home, in a trade with an export market. From the second half of the eighteenth century they began to leave with it, **many of them travelling alone**, for Smyrna, Constantinople and Thessaloniki. **A**

What they were hired for was not silk. It was service — and the reputation they had was specific: reliable, honest, and *particularly fond of cleanliness*. Two other things helped, and both are this book's subject. Many of them were Catholic. And five centuries of Venice had left them familiar with how Western Europeans lived. To a French or Italian household in Smyrna, a Catholic girl from Tinos who knew what a fork was for and did not have to be taught the calendar was worth more than a girl from anywhere else in the Aegean. **A**

Olivier counted the boats, about 1800.

A ship left Tinos for **Smyrna every ten to fifteen days**, carrying domestic servants. One a month for Constantinople. One a year for Thessaloniki. **A** *And after a few years of work the women came back to the island to marry.* That last clause is the whole difference between the first emigration and the second.

DOCUMENTED What the numbers looked like at the other end

In 1835 the Greek consul at Smyrna, Theodoros Xenos, registered the guild members of the city who had come from Greece. In the same year the Catholic church there counted **1,303 Tinians** in Smyrna. **A**

Of the **73 Greeks in the carpenters' guild, 62 were from Tinos. All sixty** of the κουντουράδες — the makers of low shoes — were Tinians, and so were a large number of the shoemakers, who formed a separate guild. The marble-workers were numerous too, but their settlement in the city thickens later, in the second half of the century, which is the emigration described under 2 · *Marble* above and not this one.

At the other capital, the record is a death register. Between 1800 and 1855, **17.48 per cent of the parishioners buried from Santa Maria Draperis in Constantinople came from Tinos** — one Catholic funeral in six, in a parish of the imperial capital, for an island of twenty thousand people. **A**

Why these trades, and not others? The obvious explanation is that the Ottoman conquest of 1715 drove people out, and it is the one the older Tinian histories give. Dimitropoulos rejects it, and his reason is better. Emigration was already substantial in the seventeenth century, and it ran *towards* Ottoman

territory rather than away from it — so it cannot have been flight. What 1715 ended was something else: **Venetian Tinos was a fortress, and a fortress needs town trades.** Carpenters, cooks, shoemakers, servants, the skills of a garrison and a governor's household. After 1715 the island became one Ottoman island among many, the apparatus was dismantled, and the demand for those trades vanished here while it continued in Smyrna. The people did not flee. **Their work left, and they followed it.** B *a historian's argument, argued from evidence — not a document.*

And there is a loop in it that explains the terraces as well as the leaving. Emigrants who saved bought land at home, or enlarged what they had. Combined with the island's custom of προτίμηση — pre-emption, the right of kin and neighbours to buy first — that pushed the price of land up. Which meant some men borrowed to buy, and then **had to emigrate again to pay the loan off.** The island's soil and the island's absence were funding each other. B

All of the above is structure. This is what it was actually like, and it survives because thirty-four people who could not write their own names had a petition drawn up for them.

The Ἅγιος Σπορίδων, a small brig belonging to Captain Giannoulis Matthaïos of Pyrgos, left Smyrna under a Russian flag, not in convoy but keeping close on the right of one for safety. Bad weather put her in at Kamari, on the sheltered side of Chios opposite the Asia Minor shore. Aboard, besides the crew, were **thirty-seven passengers, men and women of Tinos**, who had been working on that coast and were going home.

In the middle of the night two pirate boats out of **Karlovasi on Samos** came alongside. They took the ship and her cargo, put the passengers ashore, and — the word of the period is the right one — *stripped* them.

«κατεγύμνωσαν καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀνιλεῶς καὶ ἀπανθρώπως μέχρι καὶ τῶν ἐλαχίστων φορεμάτων μας»

They stripped us too, mercilessly and inhumanly, down to the least of our clothes.

On 24 October 1827 they laid it before the Δημογέροντες of Tinos, and the sentence they chose to explain themselves with is the one this chapter has been circling for four pages:

«Δὲν εἴμεθα ἔμποροι, δὲν εἴμεθα εὐκατάστατοι, εἴμεθα τεχνίται, δοῦλοι καὶ ναῦται καὶ εἰς τὰ κλεφθέντα συνίστατο ὅλη μας ἡ κατάστασις, καὶ οἱ καρποὶ τῶν πολλῶν χρόνων κόπων μας.»

We are not merchants, we are not well-off, we are craftsmen, servants and sailors — and in what was stolen consisted our whole estate, and the fruits of the labour of many years.

DOCUMENTED **Who they were, and what it cost them**

The captain drew up his own list four days later, name by name, with the sum taken from each. The two documents together give the passenger list of an ordinary crossing home. ^A *General State Archives, Secretariat of the Navy, file 62.*

THE THIRTY-SEVEN, BY VILLAGE

VILLAGE	PEOPLE	NOTE
Pyrgos	15	The largest settlement of the Orthodox north — 1,500 people at its peak in 1835.
Monastiria	6	
Kellia (now Kalloni)	5	The Catholic villages of the Κάτω Μέρη — which is to say the villages of chapter xxviii, within a few kilometres of the church this book begins in.
Aetofolia	4	
one family — husband, wife, two children	4	
Komi · Karkados	2	
Mountados	1	Orthodox, and the furthest south of them.

Six of the victims were women, and five of those were travelling alone — which is the pattern described above, caught in a single boat. There was one family of four aboard, a couple and two children.

The pirates took **36,715 γρόσια** in all. Individual losses ran from a hundred to seven thousand: nineteen of the thirty-seven lost 500 or less, and three lost 2,650, 3,500 and 7,000. To scale it — in 1826 the community of Tinos was required to lend the revolutionary government 42,000 γρόσια as the island’s contribution to the war. *Two pirate boats took, in one night from thirty-seven servants and craftsmen, most of what the whole island was assessed for the year before.*

Four of the names on the list also appear on a list of Pyrgos men who **subscribed money to the revolution in June 1822**, two of them among the largest givers. So “*we are not well-off*” was, for some of them, a petitioner’s formula rather than a fact — and the Smyrna crossing in the middle of a war was not only poor men looking for work. The networks between this island and the Asia Minor coast had been built before 1821 and **the revolution did not break them**.

The captain is not a stranger to this book’s period either. In July 1821, with this same ship, **Giannoulis Matthaios had carried the first detachment of Tinian soldiers across to Euboea** for the Karystos campaign, on the instructions of the metropolitan. Six years later he was writing out a list of what pirates had taken from his passengers.

The island’s elders forwarded the complaint on 7 November; the government ordered the pirates seized and the Tinians compensated “*to the full extent*”; the Secretariat of the Navy wrote to Samos, and separately to the elders of Karlovasi in terms close to a threat. **Whether a single grosi was ever returned is not known**. The file ends.

The second emigration is the one that emptied the island, and it is the largest single fact of Tinian life in the last hundred and fifty years. It is also the one least written about, because leaving does not leave a monument. What it leaves is chapter xxiv’s number: **891 more people registered on this island than living on it**.

The destinations, in rough order of period: Constantinople and Smyrna to 1922; Alexandria and Egypt to the 1950s; Athens and Piraeus throughout, and overwhelmingly; then, after the Second World War, the wider emigrations that took Greeks to Belgium, Germany, South Africa, Australia, the United States and — for a small number, through the schools described in chapter xxvi — to France.

What is distinctive about the Tinian version is that the ground was not sold. The instruction recorded in the fieldwork on this island is explicit: “*Do whatever you can in order not to sell your land, but pass it on to the next ones.*” So the terraces are still owned, in fractions, by people who live in Athens and Brussels and Johannesburg. That is why the fields look tended in some places and abandoned in others, and why so many houses are shut. **The island was left, but it was not let go of.**

4 · What it lives on now

Three things, and they are unusually well balanced for a Greek island.

THE MODERN ECONOMY, IN OUTLINE

SECTOR	WHAT IT IS
The pilgrimage	The Evangelistria foundation: over €3.5 million a year in revenue, of which a tenth goes to the municipality by statute and most of the rest to the island’s old people’s home (chapter xx). The August peak is the single largest movement of people the island handles.
Tourism	Late, and deliberately restrained by comparison with Mykonos, eleven kilometres away. Building is constrained by the traditional-settlement decrees of 1978 and 1988 (chapter viii), which is why Tinos does not look like its neighbour.
Marble	Still worked, still taught. The School of Fine Arts and Marble Craftsmanship at Pyrgos, whose top two graduates each year go to the Athens School of Fine Arts without examination, funded by the pilgrimage.
Farming	Much reduced but not gone: artichokes from Komi — a single grower ships twenty to thirty thousand a year, four fifths of them to Athens — capers, cheese, <i>louza</i> , wine, and the beehives.

B Foundation revenue and statutory distribution; **C** the artichoke figures, from a grower interviewed in the Greek press.

THE PATTERN, IF THERE IS ONE

Silk was a Venetian arrangement. Marble was a Greek-state opportunity. The diaspora was an Ottoman-then-catastrophe story. Tourism is a European one.

Every one of this island's livelihoods has been created by something happening somewhere else — which is what it means to be a small place on a shipping lane.

The terraces are the only thing on the chart that was not given to Tinos by an outside event. They were built here, by hand, by the people who needed them.



X X V I

Ἡ Γαλλία

i Gallía — ee ga-LEE-a — France

France did not protect this island. France taught it, described it, and eventually took some of it away

There is a family memory, and it is not only this family's: that the Catholics of Tinos were protected by France, under an agreement between François I^{er} and Suleiman the Magnificent. The memory is wrong in every legal particular. But France *is* on this island — in the schools, in the language the educated spoke, in the flag its Catholics reached for in 1821, and in the most quoted sentence ever written about the place. It arrives later than the story says, and it arrives by a different door.

The claim, tested

The story runs: in 1535 François I^{er} concluded a treaty with Suleiman which placed the Catholics of the Ottoman east under the protection of the King of France, and this is why Catholic Tinos survived. Every clause of that sentence has a problem.

THE FRANÇOIS I^{ER} ACCOUNT, ITEM BY ITEM

THE CLAIM	WHAT THE RECORD SAYS
A treaty of 1535	Historians generally treat the 1535–36 text as a draft, probably never ratified . The first well-documented capitulation is 1569 , under Charles IX.
It was a treaty	A capitulation (‘ahdnāme) is not a treaty between equals. It is a unilateral grant by the sultan , revocable, and lapsing at his death — which is why they had to be renewed again and again: 1569, 1581, 1597, 1604, 1673, 1740.
It protected all Catholics in the empire	It protected French subjects , French trade, French pilgrims and the holy places. The claim to protect all Christians in the empire dates from 1673 , under Louis XIV — and Rome never recognised it . The definitive 1740 text protects the bishops and religious “ <i>subject to the Emperor of France</i> .”
So it covered Tinos	It cannot have . Tinian Catholics were Ottoman subjects — precisely the category the text excludes. And in any case Tinos was Venetian until 1715 . A French protection of <i>Ottoman</i> Catholics has no purchase on Venetian territory. For a Venetian island the protecting power is Venice.

^A On the disputed status of 1536 see Gilles Veinstein, *Les capitulations franco-ottomanes de 1536 sont-elles encore controversables ?* — the title alone tells you it is a live argument. On the protectorate, Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453–1923* (Cambridge, 1983).

DOCUMENTED **There was one legal route for an Ottoman subject — and it was not available to farmers**

An individual Ottoman subject could be placed under a foreign consulate's protection by a *berat*, a patent bought from the Porte. It was real, and it worked.

It was also vanishingly rare and extremely expensive. There were **fewer than fifty French berats in the entire Ottoman empire in the 1790s**. They cost several years of income and they went to merchants in the trading cities.

Not to a family with terraces at Kato Kleisma.

What actually protected this island — and it is a better story

The father's instinct is sound. Something did protect the Catholics of Tinos, and it was unusual, and it lasted a century. It simply came from three places, none of them Versailles.

ONE · THE SURRENDER TERMS OF JUNE 1715

When the island fell, the capitulation guaranteed the rights of **both** churches, Catholic and Orthodox. That was written into the terms of surrender, and it held.

TWO · AN OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATION TOO THIN TO BE FELT

There was no resident apparatus of any weight. The tax was assessed as a lump sum and collected through the island's own **councils of village elders**. In practice Tinos governed and taxed itself from 1715 until 1821. A French history of the island published on Tinos itself calls the domination « *superficielle* », and independent research agrees.

THREE · ROME, NOT PARIS

The missions here were founded, funded and directed by Propaganda Fide — the Roman congregation for the missions, from 1622. The Franciscan house on Tinos was attached to the Venetian province, and afterwards to Constantinople, and paid for from there.

So the protection was real. It was a surrender clause, an absence of government, and a Roman bureaucracy — which is less romantic than a king of France and considerably more effective, since it survived every change of dynasty in Istanbul and Paris alike.

And then, once, the memory is literally true

In 1821 the Greek Revolution began, and the Catholic villages of Tinos did something that is not usually mentioned on this island and is worth stating plainly.

The Catholic communities of the Aegean **invoked French protection and declared themselves neutral** — on Syros the flag itself went up over the churches. **For Tinos, no source names a flag**, and what is recorded of this island is a tax official's complaint. The two years are given sentence by sentence, with the one text that would take Tinos in — in chapter xix. A

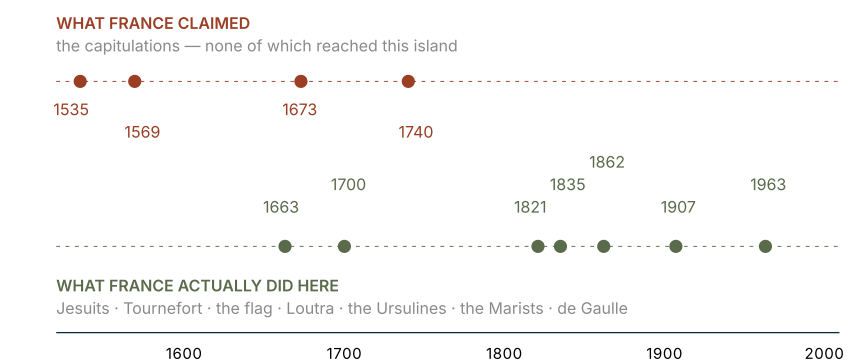
Why they held back is not mysterious. Under the Ottomans they had had a hundred years of being left alone, guaranteed by a surrender document. A new Orthodox Greek state was an unknown quantity, and the obvious insurance policy in 1821 was the Catholic great power. So they reached — as a community across the whole archipelago — for the protection the family story says they already had. **That is, in all likelihood, where the family story comes from. The memory is not an invention. It is a memory of 1821, projected back three centuries onto François I^{er}.**

And notice what the memory has done to the island, which is exactly what it did to the family: attached a French flag to a place that cannot be shown to have flown one.

It was closed, and closed well, in June 1823, by the five words chapter xix gives in full — «Ἄλλο Ἑθνισμός, καὶ ἄλλο θρησκεία»: nationhood is one thing, and religion another. Which settled it. Whatever the Catholic villages were in 1821, by the end of the century they were Greek, and no one has argued otherwise since. The episode should not be smoothed over — it is the one moment in five hundred years when the confessional seam described in chapter xix turned into a political fracture, and it lasted two years. **But it should not be dramatised either, and an earlier draft of this book did dramatise it.** The flag belongs to Syros. What Tinos has is a complaint from a

tax official, and a local tradition that the two communities went down to the harbour together.

The real French presence, which is educational and much later



B The two lanes barely overlap. Everything France is supposed to have done for Tinos sits in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and did not touch the island. Everything France actually did here is **1663 onward, and overwhelmingly after 1830** — after the Ottoman century had ended and the protection story had stopped mattering.

THE FRENCH PRESENCE ON TINOS AND AROUND IT

DATE	WHAT
1663	The Jesuits found a house — not at Loutra, as is usually said, but inside the medieval castle on Exombourgo . The Society was heavily staffed from its French provinces.
1700	Tournefort is on the island in December, sent to the Levant by Louis XIV .
1821–23	The Aegean Catholics claim French protection. The flag itself is documented on Syros, not here.
1835	The Jesuits move down to Loutra , 172 years after arriving. The church of St Joseph follows around 1860.

1862 The **Ursulines** open at Loutra, founded by **Mother Marie-Anne Le Roux, a French nun**. A boarding school for girls teaching languages, sciences, art, weaving and embroidery, taking pupils from across Greece and from abroad. Its weaving and carpet workshops became well known.

1907 Four French **Marist Brothers** arrive in Athens and take the direction of the Catholic school that becomes the **Lycée Léonin**.

1963 **De Gaulle** visits the Léonin, on 18 May.

A Jesuit and Marist foundations, from the orders' own records. **B** The Ursuline school. **A** de Gaulle.

AND THE REASON THE MARIST BROTHERS WERE AVAILABLE IN 1907 IS THAT FRANCE HAD THROWN THEM OUT

The anticlerical laws of the French Third Republic — the associations law of 1901 and the teaching prohibition of 1904 — **expelled the religious teaching orders from France**. Thousands of French teaching brothers and sisters left, and a great many of them went east: to Egypt, to the Levant, to Greece.

So the French schooling that reached Greek Catholic boys in the twentieth century was, in a real sense, **a French export made possible by a French purge**. The Republic closed the schools at home and the Church reopened them in Athens.

That is the mechanism that actually connects this island to France, and it is worth being clear that it is a nineteenth- and twentieth-century mechanism, not a sixteenth-century one. A Catholic boy from a village under Exombourgo had, from about 1860, a route that ran: village school → the orders at Loutra or Xinara → a French-run Catholic school in Athens → French, as a second language, at a level that opened Europe. **That route is why there are Tinians**

in Paris and Brussels and not only in Athens and Piraeus — and it is, in this family's case, precisely the route taken. It is set out in the preface.

The sentence

One more thing, and it may be the largest French contribution of all.

Joseph Pitton de Tournefort — royal botanist, professor at the Jardin du Roi, sent to the eastern Mediterranean by Louis XIV — was on Tinos in December 1700. His *Relation d'un voyage du Levant* is the most systematic description of the Aegean islands written before the nineteenth century, and his verdict on this one has been quoted ever since:

« ... *pleine de montagnes pelées mais la mieux cultivée de l'archipel.* »

Full of bare mountains, but the best cultivated of the Archipelago.

He also recorded the silk — sixteen thousand pounds a year — which is the single most important economic fact about Venetian Tinos, and which appears in chapter iv on his authority alone. **The most influential description of this island in any language is French, and it was commissioned by a French king.** Which is a form of influence, even if it is not protection.

And the other direction?

Honesty requires saying that the traffic is very unequal. France gave Tinos schools, a language, a botanist and a flag to raise in an emergency. Tinos gave France no institution, no monument, and no recorded body of settlement.

What it gave France was families — arriving one at a time, through the route described above, from about the middle of the twentieth century. There is no register of them and no association, which is itself characteristic: Tinians abroad have historically attached themselves to the Greek diaspora of the city they were in rather than forming anything Tinian.

So the balance sheet is lopsided, and there is no point pretending otherwise.

The one thing this island has sent to France in any quantity is people — and this book is being written by one of the results.

NOTE

A word on why the family story survived so well

Stories of protection are load-bearing. A minority community that has survived a long time generally carries an account of *why* it survived, and the account tends to name a powerful protector rather than an absence of government — because “nothing much happened to us for a hundred years because nobody was interested” is not a story anyone repeats at a table.

What makes the Tinian version unusually durable is that it has a true event underneath it. The flag really was raised — on Syros, and in the name of every Catholic island. A king of France really was appealed to. It happened in 1821 rather than 1535, and it lasted two years rather than three centuries, but it is not a fabrication — it is a compression.

Most family history works like this. The instinct is usually right and the date is usually wrong.



X X V I I

Τὰ ἐπώνυμα

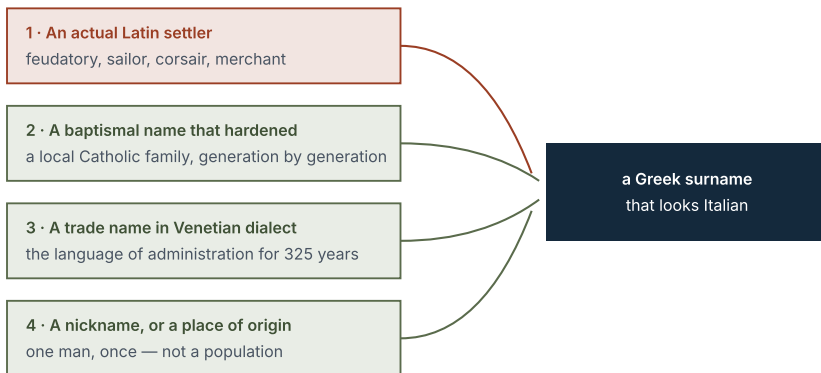
ta epónyma — *ta e-PO-nee-ma — the surnames*

Why a Greek island has a telephone directory that reads like Venice — and why that is mostly not what it looks like

Remoundos. Foskolos. Delatolas. Vidalis. Marangos. Sanoudos. On the villages under Exombourgo the surnames are Italian in shape and Greek in ending, and the natural conclusion is that these are the descendants of Venetians. For a small number of families that is true. For most of them it is not, and the real explanation is more interesting: **a Latin-looking surname on Tinos is usually the fossil of a baptism, not of a migration.**

Four ways to end up with an Italian-sounding Greek name

How a Greek family gets a name like Remoundos



Only the first route requires an ancestor from Italy.

And on Tinos it is much the smallest of the four.

B The distinction matters because the whole island's self-understanding rides on it. If the Catholic villages were founded by Venetian colonists, Tinos is a settler society with a native population underneath. If they are Greek families who took a Latin rite and Latin baptismal names, it is one population that changed church. **The evidence points hard at the second** — which is also the only explanation that accounts for the anomaly of chapter xix, that here the farmers became Catholic and not just the lords.

Route 2, the big one, worked through

The mechanism is dull and enormously productive. A Catholic family on Tinos baptises a son with a saint's name in its Latin form — Raimondo. He is known in the village as the son of Raimondo. His children are known the same way. Over three or four generations the patronymic stops being a description and becomes a surname, and it is written down in a register by a priest who spells it the Italian way because Italian is what registers are kept in.

At no point in that sequence does anybody arrive from Italy.

AND VENICE ITSELF TELLS YOU THIS IS WHAT WAS HAPPENING

The Venetian administration did not classify the population of its Greek possessions by descent. It classified them by rite: *greci*, and *cattolici di rito greco* — Catholics of the Greek rite.

That is a state saying, in its own paperwork, that the line it cared about ran between churches and not between bloodlines. A Latinate name in such a register is a religious fact before it is an ethnic one.

The mechanics of the Hellenisation

The conversions are regular enough to be almost a rule, and once you see them you can read the phone book backwards.

LATIN FORM TO GREEK FORM

GREEK	FROM	ROUTE
Ρεμοῦνδος · Remoundos	Rimondo, Raimondo	2 — a baptismal name
Φώσκολος · Foskolos	Foscolo	1 or 2
Σανούδος · Sanoudos	Sanudo — the ducal house of Naxos	1
Μαραγκός · Marangos	Venetian <i>marangon</i> , a carpenter	3 — a trade
Κρητικός · Kritikos	“the Cretan”	4 — an origin
Σκλάβος · Sklavos	Latin <i>sclavus</i>	4 — a status

The rule of thumb: an Italian name ending in **-o** takes a Greek **-ος**; one ending in a consonant takes **-ης**. Women take the genitive — a man is Σκλάβος and his wife or daughter appears in the registers as Σκλάβου, *Sklavou*, “of Sklavos.” This trips up anybody reading a Tinian register for the first time and assuming two different families.

Caught in the act

The dictionary that settled this family's entry settles the machinery too, because the Hellenisation is not reconstructed — it is caught happening, in the bearers' own hands. In 1782 a man of Agapi signs the roll «Νικόλος τελετολας». His family had been Della Tolla — named for a small port south of Venice — for three centuries on this island by then; four generations of Greek mouths had worn the name to that. The same year a village elder of Mountados signs «ταπερις» for Da Peri, and a «Γιανakis ρουγγερις» signs at the Borgo for what had begun as Ruggier — old Germanic for *the glorious spearman*. A

Sometimes a name is caught mid-change on stone. A fountain at Pologianis, 1814, is signed «μαστρο Τεμένεος πετράς» — master Temeneos, stonemason: the Venetian Doménego, which is Dominicus, the Lord's own name, halfway into its Greek dress. By 1875 the family sign Δεμενεγής — and they are still cutting marble. A

And sometimes the ear does not wear a name down but re-hears it as something better — the move this family's own name will demonstrate in chapter xxix, in *Rey del mundo*. Foscolo, a patrician name of Venice, is Latin *Fuscus*: the little dark one. In the nineteenth century Tinos began writing it Φώσκολος, pulled toward φῶς — light. The little dark one, respelled toward the light: the archdiocese's own archivist carries the result. And Βιδάλης — the commonest surname on the island, here since 1444 — is the Venetian dress of Vitale, which also produced Βιτάλης: the man who carved this book's lion in 2026 and the sculptors of Ysternia share one name in two spellings. A

One name was brought by nobody. Σκλάβος — the status, not the nation — attaches, in Florakis's account, to the slaves who escaped to Venetian Tinos from the galleys of the Ottoman fleet and the pirate fuste: more than a hundred a year by 1563, officially expelled and, in the words of a Venetian report of

1577, *secretly, returning, kept*. Sixty-one of the name stood on the Kato Meri roll of 1875, about fifteen of them at Aetofolia. A It is the name of this family's grandmother.

The electoral register of the δήμος of Peraia, 1875, holds them side by side: twenty-nine Πεμοῦνδος, fifty-seven Δελατόλας, sixty-one Σκλάβος. Three names in Venetian dress, all of them Greek for centuries by then — an island's history, filed as a list of voters.

Entries: Φλωράκης, «Ονομάτων επίσκεψις» (2014) — Δελατόλας, Δαπέρης, Δερουγγιέρης, Δεμενεγής, Φώσκολος, Βιδάλης, Σκλάβος. Photographed from the copy bought on the island, August 2026.

One belief this does not support

There is an account held widely on Tinos, and in this family, that surnames like Kritikos — the Cretan — and Chiotis — the Chian — are the trace of refugees arriving when Chios fell in 1566, Cyprus in 1571 and Crete in 1669, and that Tinos was the Catholic refuge of the Aegean.

It is an attractive account and the evidence does not carry it. The short reason is that **the documented Cretan exodus of 1669 ran the other way**. It went westward, along Venice's own lines of retreat — to Corfu, the Ionian islands, Italy, and Cargèse in Corsica. Tinos between 1669 and 1715 was a blockaded front line with decaying walls and a garrison nobody reinforced. It was somewhere to leave.

And a surname of that kind records *one man, once*, whom his neighbours called the Cretan. It is not a census of anything.

DISPUTED **The full case against reading an origin-surname as a migration**

Four problems, and any one of them would be enough to require caution.

One. Kritikos and Chiotis are among the commonest surnames in all of Greece. Their presence somewhere is not information.

Two. A surname records a single name-founding event. It says nothing about how many people came with the man it was founded on, and usually the answer is none.

Three. The same form arises with no migration at all — as a nickname, as a trade-route name, or as a mark of where a man's wife came from.

Four. Names of exactly this shape — Arvanitis, Moraitis — belong on these islands to a settlement stratum centuries older than the events in question.

The canonical statement of the caution is B. Z. Kedar, "Toponymic Surnames as Evidence of Origin," *Viator* 4 (1973).

AND THIS FAMILY'S OWN NAME IS THE ARGUMENT AGAINST THE THEORY

If Remoundos comes from the baptismal name Raimondo — and the dictionary of Tinian surnames says it does — then here is a family with a thoroughly foreign-looking name and **no foreigner anywhere in the line.**

Which is the whole point. On this island, a name that looks like it came from somewhere else is usually evidence of a church, not of a boat.



X X V I I I

Τὰ Κάτω Μέρη

ta Káto Méri — *ta KA-to ME-ree — the lower parts*

The island calls its own halves by different names, and this family comes from one kilometre of one of them

Tinos is not one place. Everyone on it knows this, and the vocabulary is old: there is the Exo Meri, the outer parts, and there is the Kato Meri, the lower parts. The line between them is not a mountain range or a road. It is the seam of chapter xix, and it has held for six hundred years.

The two halves

HOW THE ISLAND DIVIDES ITSELF

	ἘΞΩ ΜΕΡΗ · EXO MERI	ΚΑΤΩ ΜΕΡΗ · KATO MERI
Where	The north-western arm, running out to Pyrgos and Ysternia	The interior plateau and the slopes under Exombourgo
Rite	Predominantly Orthodox	Predominantly Catholic
What it is known for	Marble. The quarries, the workshops, the school, the sculptors of a nation	Land. The terraces, the dovescotes, the fortress, the Latin parishes
Its centre	Pyrgos	Xinara — seat of the Catholic archbishop, population 18
Direction of travel	Growing or holding	The only part of Tinos still losing residents

B The division is a living local usage rather than an administrative boundary — but the nineteenth-century Greek state made it administrative too, as the **Δήμος Περαιάς**, the municipality of Peraia, which covered the Kato Meri and which is the unit the older records count in.

Chapter xix gave the anomaly: on every other island the Franks held, Catholicism stayed a thin crust inside the castle; here it took the farmers. The Kato Meri is that anomaly, drawn on the ground. It is the part of Tinos that stayed inside the fortress’s reach and stayed Latin, and it is still, three centuries after the fortress was pulled down, a demographically distinct place with its own churches, its own feast days and its own decline.

Three villages inside two kilometres

Within that region, this family occupies a triangle you could walk across in a morning.

THE FAMILY GROUND, AT THE 2021 CENSUS

VILLAGE	RESIDENTS	WHAT IT IS
Kato Kleisma Κάτω Κλείσμα	45	The Remoundos village. A Remoundos was its chief elder in 1618.
Kalloni Καλλονή	192	The community Kato Kleisma belongs to administratively.
Komi Κώμη	203	The artichokes. Down 15% since 2001.

A ELSTAT, 2021 census, resident population.

WHICH PRODUCES ONE SMALL FACT WORTH SITTING WITH

Both sides of this family — Remoundos and Sklavos — come from **Catholic villages of the Kato Meri less than a kilometre apart**. Kato Kleisma and Aetofolia are under a kilometre in a straight line and about twenty minutes on foot; Komi, the third of the family villages, is the next valley over. An earlier draft of this book said four kilometres, in several places, and it was wrong in the direction that made the story smaller.

Not from opposite ends of the island, not from across the confessional line, not from another island. One kilometre. For as far back as the registers go, this is a family that married inside a walk.

And then, in one generation, it went to Athens, to Cameroon, to Africa and to the south of France — **about sixteen hundred kilometres from Kato Kleisma to Saint-Paul-de-Vence**. Four hundred years of one kilometre, and then that.

Kato Kleisma from above



A Kato Kleisma from the air. Two things are marked: the grandmother's house, at the entrance to the village, and the church. That is most of what a Tinian village is — a church, and the houses within earshot of its bell, set into a slope so that no terrace is wasted and nothing is visible from the sea. Forty-five people live in the frame.

The house itself appears earlier in this book, in chapter vi, where it is doing a different job — the row of relieving arches along its left wing is one of the clearest examples on the island of the form that becomes the marble fanlight. It is worth turning back to. **It is the same house.**

Why the villages are where they are

None of these villages is on the sea, and that is not an accident of taste: four hundred years of raiding built the Cyclades inland, out of sight of a masthead, dark schist against the light — chapters viii and xiii carry the argument. The

reason particular to the Kato Meri is the second one: these villages sit within a morning of Exombourgo.

When the alarm went, the population of the Kato Meri went up the hill and inside the walls. The fortress was not a garrison post standing apart from the island. It was the island's upstairs room, and these villages are the downstairs.

That relationship ended in 1715, when the Ottomans took the fortress and then dismantled it. The villages remained, facing an empty hill.

LEGALLY PROTECTED, SINCE 1978 AND 1988

Komi, Xinara, Ktikados, Triantaros, Tripotamos, Pyrgos, Ysternia and Kardiani were designated **traditional settlements** by presidential decree on 19 October 1978; **Kato Kleisma and Kalloni followed on 14 July 1988**. What the decrees require — the lime, the joinery colours, the marble-dust exception for the neoclassical — is chapter viii's subject, and it is the reason these villages still look as they do.

A ΠΔ 19-10-1978 (ΦΕΚ 594/Δ) and ΠΔ 17-06-1988 (ΦΕΚ 504/Δ), with ΠΔ 11-05-1989 (ΦΕΚ 345/Δ).

NOTE **How the village spells itself, and what the word means**

The official Greek form is **Κάτω Κλείσμα** — with the diphthong *-ει-*, not the *-ι-* that the sound would suggest and that outsiders usually write. Anyone searching a Greek register, map or census for Κλίσμα will find nothing.

The spelling carries the meaning. Κλείσμα belongs to κλείω — to shut, to close, to enclose. A *kleisma* is **an enclosure: a place that is closed off**. *Kato* is simply “lower”.

Which is how people who live on terraces name places — by what the ground does, not by who owned it. There are no Tinian villages named after a lord.

Inside the family's own church, and the stone that was there before it

The village church three hundred metres from the family house is the one dated 1760 in chapter vi. Its inside settles an argument this book makes at second hand everywhere else.



Kato Kleisma, the nave. Three aisles, monolithic marble columns under plain block impostes, a barrel vault painted sky blue with ochre lunettes, benches in rows facing an altar — **and no iconostasis**. This is the book's Jesuit-baroque argument photographed in a village of forty-five people, rather than borrowed from a plate of somewhere else.

Author's photograph, August 2026.

And the Ministry's inventory of Tinian marble products lists «αλτάρια, βαπτιστήρια, αγιαστήρες των καθολικών εκκλησιών» — the altars, fonts and stoups of the Catholic churches — among the things these workshops made. **That craft is in this building, doing its job.**



The font: a rosette in a roundel on the face of the block, and beneath it a bowl of **pierced openwork marble** — the same technique as the fanlights of chapter vi, turned through ninety degrees and asked to hold water. No attribution and no date.

Author's photograph, August 2026.

Four pieces of older stone, and what can honestly be said about them

The 1760 inscription records a church *already falling into ruin* and rebuilt. A rebuilt church reuses stone. Four things in this building are visibly not of a piece with it.



The column is two stones. A clean horizontal joint, a smoother upper shaft, and a lower drum that is coarser, pitted and fissured — **with a cut rectangular mortise in its face**, which is a socket for something that is no longer there. A second colonnette in the forecourt is spliced under its impost in the same way.

Author's photograph, August 2026.



A rosette — an eight-pointed star in a raised disc ringed by eight fluted, gadrooned petals — **bedded into modern cement** and worn smooth on the high points, which is what happens to stone that has been trodden on or handled rather than looked at from below.

Author's photograph, August 2026.



The head, kept loose in the forecourt and said locally to have been found on site during works. **It is not Cycladic** — Early Cycladic figures have no carved eyes and no carved mouth; the features were painted. This has cut eyes with pupils and a cut mouth. Its form is **architectural**, a block finished at one end and rough at the other, and **the mouth is bored and holds a corroded iron core**.

Author's photograph, August 2026.

DISPUTED **None of it can be dated, and the reason is worth understanding**

The obvious move is to date these pieces by their ornament. **It cannot be done.** The motif vocabulary here — vine and grapes, guilloche interlace, cross in a roundel, eight-pointed star — runs unbroken from Early Christian closure slabs, through Middle Byzantine templon panels, through Venetian

work, to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Tinian workshop production **including the fanlights already in this book.** The motif can never date the piece. Published expert chronologies for Byzantine sculpture in the Aegean are themselves unstable.

What is real is the *fabric* evidence, and it is real: different stone, broken edges, awkward settings, a mortise for a fitting that is gone. **Reuse at this building is certain. Where the stone came from is not recorded and probably cannot be recovered.**

The bored mouth is consistent with a fountain spout — and κρήνες, fountains, are on the Ministry's list of Tinian products — but an iron dowel would look much the same.  The neck is mortared into its ledge, so the back cannot be seen as things stand.

And there is no scale in a single one of these photographs. **A ruler in the frame would be worth more than another hundred pictures.**

AND THE FAMILY KNEW

My father had heard, before anyone showed him the spliced column, that columns and other pieces had been taken and reused here. He offers no further detail and no source.

That does not make it true. It makes it independent — which is a different and rarer thing. The tradition is not an echo of a photograph taken last summer; it came first.  *as testimony; the connection to any particular older building remains untestable*

The other lettering in the building is domestic and recent. The ambo base carries painted Greek — «ΕΙΣ ΜΝΗΜΗ[Ν] ΤΩΝ ΓΟΝΙΩΝ ΜΟΥ ΛΩΡΗΣ...», *in memory of my parents, Loris...* — and the high-altar frontal

has raised Greek capitals, almost certainly ΧΑΙΡΕ ΜΑΡΙΑ, hidden behind the lace cloth. **In sixty-seven photographs there is no other inscription: no tomb slab, no donor plaque, no date stone, and — the largest gap of all — no photograph of the bell.** Bells are normally dated and founder-signed. It is the most likely second date in the building and nobody has looked at it.



X X I X

Ρεμοῦνδος

Remoúndos — *re-MOON-dos*

One name, four hundred and thirty years of it, and a legend that turned out to be in the dictionary

In September 2022 a few pages were photographed in the Catholic library at Xinara, out of a Greek dictionary of Tinian surnames. Page 87 carries this family's entry. It settles the etymology, it vindicates a family story that had been written off as invention, and it supplies a documented line of ancestors running back to 1597.

The entry

Ριμόντος, Ρεμοῦνδος. Ἐπώνυμο Arimondo καὶ Rimondo στὴ Βενετία, Raimondi καὶ Rimondi στὴν Ἰταλία, προερχόμενα ἀπὸ βαπτιστικὸ ὄνομα Raimondo, γερμανικῆς καταγωγῆς (*ragan* + *munda*), μὲ ἀφειρητικὴ ἔννοια «θεία προστασία». Ὁ τύπος Ρεμοῦνδος προέκυψε ἀπὸ ἀντίστοιχο τύπο *Rachimundus*, μὲ φραγκικὴ παράδοση, πὺλ πέρασε

καὶ στὴν Ἰσπανία ὡς *Reimundo* καὶ ἐρμηνεύτηκε ὡς *Rey del mundo* = ὁ βασιλιάς τοῦ κόσμου, δηλαδή ὁ Χριστός.

Rimontos, Remoundos. The surname Arimondo and Rimondo in Venice, Raimondi and Rimondi in Italy, from the baptismal name Raimondo, of Germanic origin (ragan + munda), with the original sense “divine protection”. The form Remoundos arose from the corresponding form Rachimundus, in the Frankish tradition, which passed into Spain as Reimundo and was interpreted as Rey del mundo = the king of the world, that is, Christ.

So: the name does not mean king of the world — and the family story is still true

Take the two halves separately, because they are both facts and they point in opposite directions.

The name does not come from *Rex Mundi*. That is settled.  Remoundos descends from the baptismal name Raimondo, and Raimondo from the Germanic *ragan + munda* — counsel and protection — with the original sense “divine protection”. There is no king and no world anywhere in it. The dictionary states this as the etymology and states the other thing as an interpretation, and it is right to.

And the family story is not an invention. There is a story in this family that the name means *Rex Mundi*, king of the world. It has the exact shape of the flattering thing families make up about themselves, and an earlier draft of this book deleted it on those grounds. That was wrong. **Somebody did re-hear the name that way — not this family, and not recently.** Spanish speakers did it to *Reimundo* centuries ago, and the philologists wrote it down.

So the honest sentence is neither the family's nor the sceptic's: **the story is a mistake, it is a real and recorded mistake about six hundred years old, and the family inherited it rather than made it.** Which is a better thing to own than a coat of arms.

Where the name comes from, and where the legend enters

ragan + munda — Germanic: counsel + protection

Rachimundus — Latinised

Raimond — Frankish

Reimundo — in Spain

Rimondo → Ρεμοῦνδος
on Tinos, from the baptismal name

re-heard as "**Rey del mundo**"
king of the world — meaning Christ

The legend is a mishearing —
and it is six centuries old.

A The chain is documented. Spanish speakers, hearing *Reimundo*, reanalysed it as *rey del mundo*. That is a mishearing — but a recorded one, and an old one. **And the original Germanic sense is arguably the better line for a family book anyway: *divine protection*** — which, given the subject of chapter xxvi, is not without irony.

The line, as the registers have it

ATTESTATIONS OF THE SURNAME ON TINOS

DATE	RECORD
1597	Zuanne Rimondo — the earliest recorded bearer
1618	Lorenzo Remondo, πρωτόγερος — chief elder — of Kato Kleisma
1700– 1715	Twenty-four deaths recorded under the surname Remondo
1715– 1750	Thirty-six more
1740	Nadal Rimondo, at Skalados
1785	Nikolos Remoundos, son of the late Loïzos, at Smardakito
1821– 1831	Remontos Antonakis and Georgakis, in Chora
1822	Nikolaos Remontos, one of the Ἐπίτροποι — commissioners — of Tinos, co-signing with the eparch to Hydra, 14 September
1875	Twenty-nine bearing the surname in the former Δήμος Περαίας — the Kato Meri
today	The surname survives in the form Ρεμουῆδος

A Ἀλέκος Ε. Φλωράκης, «Ὀνομάτων ἐπίσκεψις». *Τὰ τηνιακά ἐπώνυμα καὶ ἡ προέλευσή τους*, Ἀδελφότης τῶν Τηνίων ἐν Ἀθήναις, 2014 — first met in the Catholic library at Xinara, since bought in a Tinos bookshop; its own footnotes cite the Xinara parish registers and the published Catholic death registers. Note the spellings: *Rimondo*, *Remondo*, *Remontos*, *Remoundos* — the same family, written by whoever was holding the pen.

B The 1822 row: Γ. Ι. Δωρίζας, *Η Τήνος ἐπὶ Τουρκοκρατίας καὶ κατὰ τον Ἀγώνα του 1821*, Μέρος Τρίτον, Athens 1978, p. 308, citing Ἀμυραλῆς, pp. 121–122, and the Hydra community archive published by Λιγνός, vol. 8, pp. 483–484.

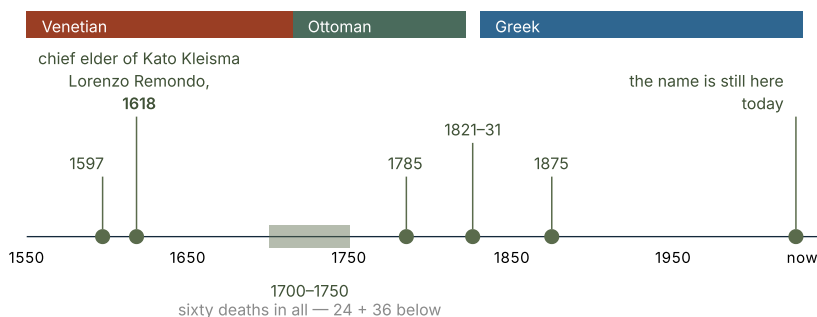
READ THAT SECOND ROW AGAIN

1618. Lorenzo Remondo, chief elder of Kato Kleisma.

Not a Remoundos somewhere on Tinos. A named man, holding a named office, in the named village where the house still stands — **four hundred and eight years ago.**

That is not a family tradition. It is a document. And it converts this section from “we come from there” into a line.

The family against the island’s own clock



B The point of putting the two on one axis: **this family is attested on Tinos before the fall of the fortress, through the whole Ottoman century, and out the other side.** It was here under three sovereigns. Lorenzo Remondo was chief elder of the village ninety-seven years before the Ottomans arrived, and the same surname is on the same ground today.

NOTE **Arimondo — the Venetian patrician family at the head of the entry**

The dictionary opens the entry with the Venetian forms Arimondo and Rimondo. Arimondo is a patrician surname of Venice.

It would be pleasant to conclude something from that and it would not be sound. The entry lists Arimondo as a *parallel form of the same root*, not as an ancestor — exactly as it lists Raimondi and Rimondi in Italy. All of them descend from the same baptismal name, independently, in different places.

Chapter xxvii is the relevant caution. A shared name is a shared saint, not a shared grandfather.

OPEN

Was the first Rimondo a Venetian, or a Greek?

The question every bearer of the name will ask of this chapter, answered as far as paper can answer it. The name itself came from the Venetian world — that much is settled. And the family's earliest recorded men are dressed entirely in that world: **Zuanne** in 1597, **Lorenzo** in 1618, **Nadal** in 1740 — Venetian baptismal names in Venetian spellings. But a Venetian first name proves Venetian culture, not Venetian blood: the Catholic Greeks of this island were christened Zuanne and Lorenzo too, and both roads demonstrably ran here. **Della Tolla** arrived as a settler family, named for a small port south of Venice; **Δεμενεγής** formed on the island, a local family named for an ancestor baptised Doménego. And Raimondo itself was in use on Tinos as a baptismal name — a Raimondo Fuscolo, an officer, signs in 1609 — so the local road was fully open.

What the record shows is not an origin but a direction of travel. From 1597 the family is Catholic, inside the Venetian world, and the island slowly re-dresses its name in Greek — Rimondo, Remondo, Ρεμόντος, Ρεμοῦνδος. Whether the first bearer stepped off a boat from the lagoon or was born under Exombourgo, no page says — and this book prefers the open question to a handsome guess.

Φλωράκης, «Ονομάτων επίσκεψις» (2014) — the Ρεμοῦνδος, Δελατόλας, Δεμενεγής and Φώσκολος entries

DOCUMENTED **Another Remoundos line, at Tarabados — with a bishop in it, and an unread archive**

Fr Manolis Remoundos died on Naxos on 5 November 2023. He had been born there in 1935 to parents from Tarabados on Tinos, who had gone to Naxos to work the Catholic archdiocese's landholdings.

He was a nephew of **Timotheos Remoundos, former bishop of Thira**, and inherited from him a substantial correspondence which the archdiocese says ought one day to be studied and published, because it bears on difficult periods in the region's history.

Tarabados is a Catholic parish of the Kato Meri, in the same historic community as Xinara, Loutra and Smardakito — which is where the 1785 attestation above was recorded. Whether the two lines join is not established. But clergy leave paper, and an unpublished archive under this surname exists and has an address.

Catholic Archdiocese of Naxos, Tinos, Andros and Mykonos

And the twentieth century

The rest of the line is in the preface, because it is a life rather than a record: a boy working the fields of the Kato Meri until he was thirteen, taken off the island in an August, taught by French brothers in Athens, military service, and then a departure at twenty-four for Cameroon — and from there a trajectory that ends in the south of France.

What the table above adds is the scale that a single life cannot supply.

Between Lorenzo Remondo, chief elder of Kato Kleisma in 1618, and a boy leaving that same village for Athens, there are roughly eleven generations who did not leave.

Which is the last thing this book has to say about the Tinians, and it is not sentimental.

The reason there is a document to write is that for four hundred years nobody in it went anywhere. The terraces, the registers, the boundaries settled by elders, the Easter table you may not sit at until you have made your peace, the bones lifted after three years and put with the family's — all of it is machinery for staying.

And then it stopped, in one generation, and produced a diaspora that outnumbers the island. Both halves of that are true, and neither is a decline. It is what a small place does when the world finally reaches it.

The name means *divine protection*, and the family heard it as *king of the world*. On the evidence of the last century, the second reading was not entirely wrong.

The back of the book

How to weigh what is here; where the pictures came from; where the paper is kept, for anyone who wants to go further; and what to read.

KEY

How to weigh what is in this book

Some of what follows is a census. Some of it is a sentence written by a passing Englishman in 1687. Both are useful and they are not the same thing, so every chart in this book, and every table that rests on a figure, carries a mark saying which it is.

- A** A census, a statute, a peer-reviewed study, or a document. Countable, checkable, and reproducible by anybody who goes to the same place.
- B** Archive-derived, or from a serious scholar. The underlying document exists and is cited, but this book has not seen it directly.
- C** A traveller, an eyewitness, or a contemporary observer. Someone who was there and wrote it down — with all that implies about what they could see and what they wanted to believe.
- D** Unattributed. Widely repeated, no source behind it. Included only where the round shape of the number is itself part of the story, and always marked.

The boxed rows carry a second kind of label, which says what sort of claim is inside rather than how good the source is — five recur, and once in a while a row writes its own.

THE ROW LABELS

LABEL	MEANS
Documented	A record exists. This is by far the commonest label in the book.
Disputed	Two or more accounts exist and they do not agree. Both are given.
Myth	Widely told, and the record contradicts it. Kept because the telling is itself a fact about the place.
Hypothesis	A proposition of this book's own, which no source states. Marked so it is never mistaken for a finding.
Note	A digression that would break the flow of the page.

THREE RULES THIS BOOK TRIED TO KEEP

Where two sources disagree, both are given. Averaging them produces a number that nobody reported.

Where a figure has no source, it is either marked D or it is not printed. Several well-loved statistics about Tinos did not survive this rule.

Where the record is thin, the text says so — but only where the thinness is interesting. This is a book, not a research file.

The pictures, and where they came from

Every image in this book is either a family photograph, a photograph taken by the author for it, or comes from a public digital collection under a licence that permits non-commercial reuse. **This book is given away and is never sold, which is what those licences require.**

Rows marked in the tint are photographs made for this book in August 2026, or from the family’s own albums. The lion carved by Lorentzos Vidalis of Ktikados is his work and appears by his permission; the copyright in the sculpture is his.

PLATE LIST

CHAPTER	PLATE	SOURCE
Preface	The stone at the entrance of Kardia — a heart in the dry-stone wall, the name cut across it	Author’s photograph
Preface	Kato Kleisma from the air — the church and the house marked; <i>the same photograph returns in chapter xxviii</i>	Family photograph
Maps	The island drawn, 1420–1809 — Buondelmonti c. 1420; dalli Sonetti c. 1485; Camocio 1566–74; Boschini 1658; Sandrart 1687; Tournefort 1717; Zallony / Barbié du Bocage 1809	Buondelmonti: Royal Museums Greenwich. The other six: Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, via travelogues.gr · CC BY-NC 4.0

CHAPTER	PLATE	SOURCE
i	The Saint George at Kampos — the dragon crossing the courtyard, the lance crossing it back	Author's photograph, August 2026 · K. Τσόκλης, <i>Ἀη Γιώργης</i> (1990) · by permission of the Costas Tsoclis Museum, Kampos
i	The panel, close to — the rider an arm, a hand and a halo	Author's photograph, August 2026 · by permission of the Costas Tsoclis Museum, Kampos
i	İstendil — Piri Reis, <i>Kitāb-ı Bahriye</i> , fol. 117a. 1520s text, seventeenth-century copy	Walters Art Museum, W.658 · CC0
ii	Volax, the boulder field — corestones, a chapel, a dry-stone wall and a flock of sheep	Author's photograph, August 2026
v	A lion of St Mark carved on Tinos in 2026 — the work of Lorentzos Vidalis, in his workshop in Kionia	Author's photograph, by permission of the sculptor
v	Saint George at Ktikados — the church door of the Ypapanti with a George in each spandrel; the gate beside it dated 1823; the Raneri donor scroll	Author's photograph, August 2026
vi	The house at the entrance to Kato Kleisma — the relieving arches along the left wing	Family photograph
vi	Four island fanlights — shown as the Cycladic type, not attributed to Tinos	National Gallery–Alexandros Soutsos Museum, Athens · CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, whole and uncropped

CHAPTER	PLATE	SOURCE
vi	The west door of the Catholic church at Kato Kleisma — the inscribed panels and the rayed medallion, dated 1760	Author’s photograph, August 2026
vi	The twin marble window above the same door — vine scroll cut in the frame	Author’s photograph, August 2026
vi	Pierced marble in place — the grille, and the interlace panel reset in an arch it does not fit	Author’s photograph, August 2026
vii	The στήματα itself — slab paving above Anogeia	Author’s photograph, August 2026
vii	Built for hooves — the walled lane, two mules wide	Author’s photograph, August 2026
vii	Steep sections get stone steps — and Rambo, for scale	Author’s photograph, August 2026
vii	What lapse looks like — a lane going back to the island, Syros or Gyaros at sea	Author’s photograph, August 2026
xiii	Hayreddin Barbarossa — anonymous Italian woodcut, c. 1530–60	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Open Access · CC0
xiii	Galleys attacking a merchantman — Jacques Callot, early 17th c.	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Open Access · CC0
xiv	“Città, et Castello di Tine” — Francesco Basilicata, 1618. Venetian military survey, hand-coloured	Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, via travelogues.gr · CC BY-NC 4.0

CHAPTER	PLATE	SOURCE
xiv	Plan of Tine — Vincenzo Coronelli, c. 1707. Cosmographer to the Republic	Gennadius Library / Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, via travelogues.gr · CC BY-NC 4.0
xiv	View of Tinos — Jan Struys, 1681. The only view rather than plan	Onassis Library, via travelogues.gr · CC BY-NC 4.0
xv	Said to be Kösem Sultan — anonymous, Venetian school, 17th c.	Underlying painting in the public domain
xvi	The lion at Chora — winged, nimbate, with a Greek proverb from Sirach cut beneath it. <i>Also the cover, above Sandrart’s map.</i>	Author’s photograph · cover map: Sandrart 1687, detail, frame and sea-hatching removed, Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, via travelogues.gr · CC BY-NC 4.0
xx	Panagia Evangelistria, Chora — 20 July 2007	Hans Peter Schaefer , www.reserv-art.de, via Wikimedia Commons · released by the copyright holder for use for any purpose, including redistribution and commercial use
xxv	“Servantes de l’île de Tine” — Choiseul-Gouffier, <i>Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce</i> , 1780s	Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, via travelogues.gr · CC BY-NC 4.0
xxviii	Kato Kleisma from the air , with the house and the church marked	Family photograph
xxviii	The nave at Kato Kleisma — three aisles, a blue barrel vault, and no iconostasis	Author’s photograph, August 2026
xxviii	The font — a rosette in a roundel over a bowl of pierced openwork marble	Author’s photograph, August 2026

CHAPTER	PLATE	SOURCE
xxviii	The spliced column — two stones, a clean joint, and a cut mortise in the lower drum	Author’s photograph, August 2026
xxviii	The rosette bedded in cement — an eight-pointed star in a gadrooned disc, worn on the high points	Author’s photograph, August 2026
xxviii	The carved head — cut eyes, a bored mouth with an iron core, kept loose in the forecourt	Author’s photograph, August 2026

All charts, maps and diagrams in this book were drawn for it and carry their own source note. The century band at the head of each chapter is a device of this book and not a historical document.

ARCHIVES

Where the paper is

Almost everything this book could not answer is answerable, and the reason it was not answered here is that the documents are on shelves rather than on the internet. Four collections hold most of it. They are listed in the order in which they would be useful to anybody in this family who wanted to go further.

THE FOUR ARCHIVES

WHERE	WHAT IS IN IT
Xinara, Tinos Catholic Archdiocese of Naxos, Tinos, Andros and Mykonos	The parish registers of the Catholic villages — baptisms, marriages, deaths. The published death registers from 1700 . The library, which holds the dictionary of Tinian surnames from which chapter xxix is taken. This is the one that matters to this family, and it is fifteen minutes from the house.

WHERE	WHAT IS IN IT
Venice Archivio di Stato	Three and a quarter centuries of Venetian government of this island: the rectors' dispatches, the fiscal records, the terms of 1390, the correspondence about the corsairs, and the surrender of 1715.
Istanbul Ottoman state archives	The poll-tax registers that give the taxable population, the assessment of 1717–18, and the administrative record of a century in which almost nothing was administered. The one Ottoman text this book did read, the sailing directions of the admiral Piri Reis of 1521, is from before that century, when the island was still Venetian.
Rome Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide	The missions, from 1622: who was sent, what they reported, how many Catholics they counted and what they said about the Orthodox. The source underneath most of the population figures in chapter xxiv.

Three more, for specific questions. ELSTAT, the Greek statistical service, publishes the censuses and the monthly port arrivals — the spine of everything modern and numerical here. The **General State Archives** in Athens hold the revolutionary state's own paperwork, including the night of 1 October 1827 that closes chapter xxv. And the **Museum of Marble Crafts at Pyrgos** holds the attributions that would finally say which building in Odessa and which church in Galați were carved by which Tinian family.

If you want to go further

The four that changed this book

B. J. Slot, *Archipelagus*

Turbatus: les Cyclades entre colonisation latine et occupation ottomane, c. 1500–1718 (Leiden, 1982)

In French. Built from the Venetian, Ottoman, Dutch and Roman archives together, which almost nobody does. Freely available as a PDF from the Netherlands Institute for the Near East.

Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453–1923* (Cambridge, 1983)

The standard work on the question of chapter xxvi. Also his *The Island Princes of Greece: The Dukes of the Archipelago* (Amsterdam, 1988).

Alekos E. Florakis

A lifetime on Tinian material culture. *Οικόσημα Τήνου* (Ερίννη, 2001) — the sixty-five coats of arms. *Τηνιακοί φεγγίτες* (2006) — the marble fanlights. «Ονομάτων επίσκεψις» (Αδελφότης των Τηνίων εν Αθήναις, 2014) — the Tinian surnames, and the source of chapter xxix.

Fr Markos Foskolos

Archivist of the Catholic archdiocese; his study of the Catholics and Orthodox of eighteenth-century Tinos, and his published death registers, underlie most of what this book can say about who lived here.

Six more that this edition leans on

Maria Vidali, *Γη και Χωριό: τα ξωκλήσια της Τήνου* (2009)

The only person who has actually counted the outlying chapels — seven hundred and fifty of them; chapter xxi carries the one caveat — and the source of the account of why they stand on the fields. Published by the former Municipality of Exombourgo. Not online.

Lucia Nixon, *Making a Landscape Sacred: Outlying Churches and Icon Stands in Sphakia* (Oxbow, 2006)

Crete, not Tinos — and that is the point. It documents the identical practice with a full catalogue, and is why chapter xxi says the chapels are not a Tinian peculiarity.

Δ. Δημητρόπουλος (National Hellenic Research Foundation)

Two things, both free online. *Μαρτυρίες για τον πληθυσμό των νησιών του Αιγαίου* (Τετράδια Εργασίας 27, 2004) compiles every surviving population testimony for every island in the Aegean; Tinos is at pp. 232–236 — read for this edition; chapter xxiv’s eighteenth-century series now stands on its named witnesses. And «*Τηνιακοί μετανάστες, θύματα πειρατών στα χρόνια της Επανάστασης*» (2017) — one night in October 1827, thirty-seven Tinians, and behind them the whole structure of this island’s emigration. Chapters iv, xiii, xxiv and xxv all lean on it.

Dimitris Kousouris, “The Catholic Communities of the Aegean Archipelago during the Greek Revolution, 1821–1830”, *Historein* 20(1), 2022 — open access

Peer-reviewed, and the only modern account that treats the Catholic islands in 1821 as a single problem. It is the source for the bishop of Tinos preaching neutrality, and for the white flags — read carefully in chapter xix, because what it says of Tinos and what it says of the islands in general are not the same sentence.

Katerina Seraïdari — two open-access pieces: «La Vierge de Tinos: le cœur sacré de l'État grec», <i>ASSR</i> 113 (2001), and «Byzance dans le discours d'une minorité religieuse: les catholiques de Tinos et Syros» (École française d'Athènes, 2013)	An anthropologist on the two things this island is arguing about with itself: what the Evangelistria means to the Greek state, and how the Catholics here narrate their own past. Chapters xvii, xix and xx.
Anna Papaeti , in <i>Torture</i> 23(2), 2013	Peer-reviewed, on Gyaros. The only place the three phases of that camp are set out with dates that hold together.

The travellers

YEAR	WHO
1521	Piri Reis , Ottoman admiral and cartographer, <i>Kitab-ı Bahriye</i> — the chapter on İstendil, read in Yavuz Senemoğlu's modern Turkish edition (Istanbul, 1973, p. 250). The bilingual edition is the Historical Research Foundation's, four volumes (Istanbul, 1988), not yet consulted.
1681	Jan Struys — the earliest view of the fortress used here
1682	George Wheler , <i>A Journey into Greece</i> (London) — on the island in 1675; the anchorage, and the vineyards before the figs and olives
1687	Bernard Randolph , <i>The Present State of the Islands in the Archipelago</i> (Oxford) — the comparative judgement of chapter xxiii
1717	J. P. de Tournefort , <i>Relation d'un voyage du Levant</i> (Paris) — on the island in December 1700; the silk, and the sentence
1782	Choiseul-Gouffier , <i>Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce</i> (Paris) — «près de 20 000 habitants... répartis dans 60 villages ou hameaux»

-
- 1809 **Zallony** (Ζαλλώνης), *Voyage à Tine* (Paris) — a Tinian, born at Krokos in 1782, writing a book about his own island in French. Twenty-three to twenty-five thousand inhabitants; the tribute at sixty to seventy thousand francs — both figures now read in his own pages
-
- 1814 **William Turner**, *Journal of a Tour in the Levant* (published 1820) — on the island in June 1814. Sixty-four villages and twenty thousand inhabitants; the Waywode “almost the only Turk residing in the island”. *He also says sixty-six villages, at page 100.*
-
- 1885 **J. T. Bent**, *The Cyclades, or Life Among the Insular Greeks* (London) — a chapter on Tinos, and not one word of silk
-
- 1890 **H. F. Tozer**, *The Islands of the Aegean* (Oxford) — the terraces, and the temple of Poseidon under the Megalochari
-

Still to be found

ONE ARTICLE WOULD SETTLE MORE THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE THING

π. Μάρκος Φώσκολος, «Πέντε αιώνες γενικών και μερικών απογραφών της νήσου Τήνου (1470–1991)», Τηνιακά Ανάλεκτα 4 (2000), 335–344.

Five centuries of censuses of this island, general and partial, by the archivist of the Catholic archdiocese, working from the archive itself. Less is doubtful in chapter xxiv than there was — Dimitropoulos carries the article’s spine, witness by witness — but the full text remains unread, and it turns out to exist **twice**: first in Τηνιακά Ανάλεκτα 2 (1981), 80–82, the fuller printing and the one Dimitropoulos cites, and again, trimmed, in volume 4 (2000), 335–344. Neither is online anywhere, at any price. Either volume settles what remains; the 1981 printing settles it better.

One book would answer questions this one left standing and is not online anywhere: **Αγγελική Χαριτωνίδου, Ελληνική Παραδοσιακή Αρχιτεκτονική: Τήνος** (Μέλισσα), which would settle the architecture and the colours.

COLOPHON

How this was made

Written and edited by Thibaut-Alexis Joseph Remoundos, at Anogeia, above Agios Romanos, in 2026 — working with Claude (Anthropic, models Opus 5 and Fable 5) for research, cross-checking and drafting.

Sources were sought in **English, Greek, Italian, French and Latin**, and cross-checked against one another wherever possible rather than taken from a single account. **One Ottoman source was consulted, and one only: Piri Reis's sailing directions of 1521, read in a modern Turkish rendering, and they describe an island that was still Venetian. For the Ottoman century itself the gap is real rather than an oversight.** The century this book calls thin — 1715 to 1821 — is precisely the century for which the primary record is Ottoman: the fiscal registers, the *cizye* rolls, the *kadı* court books. Every Ottoman figure quoted here reaches this page through a Greek or western intermediary, which is why they are graded low. An Ottomanist would probably overturn a chapter of this book, and should. Where the record is thin the text says so. Where two sources disagree, both are given. Nothing here is invented, and where something is a supposition it is written as one.

The document owes particular debts. To B. J. Slot, whose *Archipelagus Turbatus* — an archival history of the Cyclades built from the Venetian,

Ottoman, Dutch and Roman records — settled several questions this book had given up on, and overturned two things it thought it knew. To Alekos E. Florakis, for a lifetime of writing on Tinian material culture: the marble fanlights, the coats of arms, the customs, the surnames. To Fr Markos Foskolos, archivist of the Catholic Archdiocese, whose published death registers from 1700 and whose study of the Catholics and Orthodox of eighteenth-century Tinos underlie most of what this book can say about who lived here and how. And to the **parish records kept at Xinara**, without which the family chapter could not have been written at all.

It owes a debt of a different kind to the historians and travellers who wrote the island down when nobody was asking them to — Tournefort, Wheler, Randolph, Turner, Tozer, Bent — and to the dictionary of Tinian surnames in the library at Xinara — Florakis again, it turned out — from which a name first written in 1597 was recovered.

GIVEN AWAY — AND IF YOU WANT TO GIVE SOMETHING ONWARD

This book is free and will stay free, and none of what follows is connected to its author. But if it gave you something, three doors stand open.

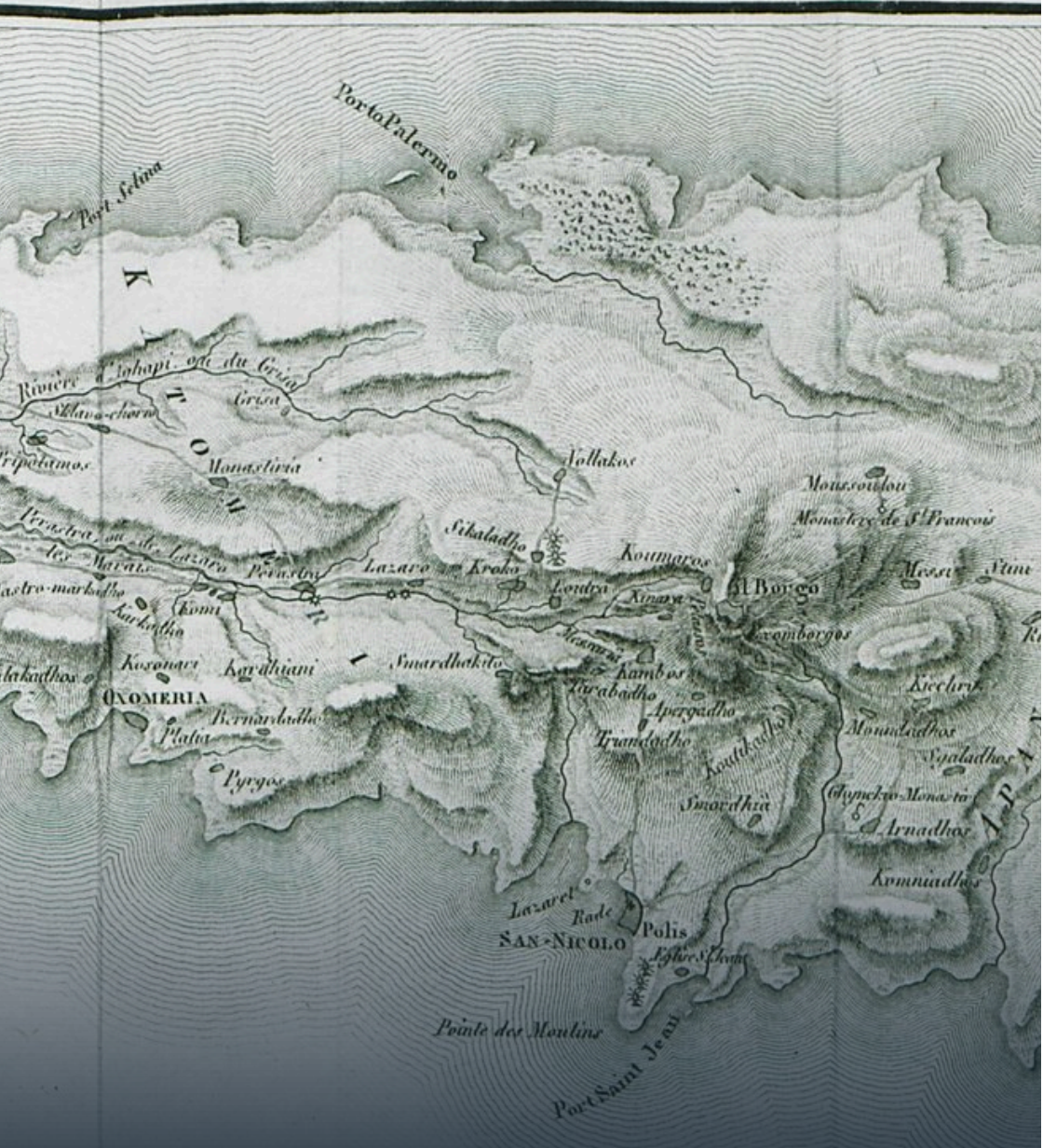
The Society for Tinian Studies — Εταιρεία Τηνιακών Μελετών, etimel.gr — the island's learned society: seven volumes of the Τηνιακά and twenty more titles of Tinian scholarship since 1995, several of them behind the chapters of this book. Buy their books, or become a member.

MOm, the Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal — mom.gr — for the seals raising their pups on the open beaches of Gyaros, chapter x.

We Live Together — aegeancats.org — sterilising twelve hundred stray cats on this island in 2026: the cats at the edge of every photograph in this book. Behind it stands **Manolis Vorrissis of Symviosis**, the veterinary practice of Syros and Tinos — a friend of this island, of its animals, and of this book.

Thibaut-Alexis Joseph Remoundos

Anogeia, Tinos — Ανώγεια, Τήνος
First edition, 2026



The first true survey of the island — drawn by a Tinian, in Paris, in 1809.

A Tinian abroad, mapping home.

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