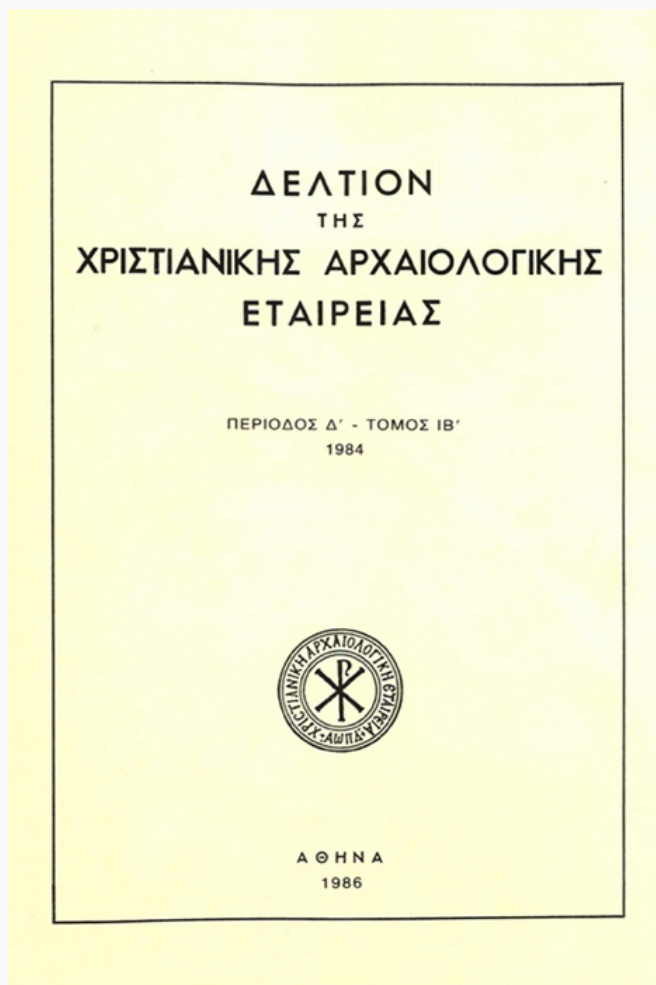


## Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας

Τόμ. 12 (1986)

Δελτίον ΧΑΕ 12 (1984), Περίοδος Δ'. Στην εκατονταετηρίδα της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας (1884-1984)



**Δίπορτο: Μία πρώιμη βυζαντινή ναυτική εγκατάσταση στον κόλπο της Κορίνθου**

*Timothy E. GREGORY*

doi: [10.12681/dchae.955](https://doi.org/10.12681/dchae.955)

### Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

GREGORY, T. E. (1986). Δίπορτο: Μία πρώιμη βυζαντινή ναυτική εγκατάσταση στον κόλπο της Κορίνθου. *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*, 12, 287-304. <https://doi.org/10.12681/dchae.955>



# ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ

## Diporto: An Early Byzantine Maritime Settlement in the Gulf of Corinth

Timothy GREGORY

Δελτίον ΧΑΕ 12 (1984), Περίοδος Δ'. Στην εκατονταετηρίδα  
της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας (1884-1984)•  
Σελ. 287-304

ΑΘΗΝΑ 1986

## DIPORTO: AN EARLY BYZANTINE MARITIME SETTLEMENT IN THE GULF OF KORINTH

Since 1979 the Ohio Boeotia Expedition has been carrying out a systematic archaeological exploration of the territory of ancient Thisbe, located in the far southwestern corner of Boeotia (Fig. 1)<sup>1</sup>. Most of this work has focused on the fertile plain south of the ancient city, but the discovery of large port facilities at the harbors of Vathy and Tiphai (modern Alyki), along with significant amounts of pottery of early Byzantine date (4th-7th century) suggested detailed investigation of the coast of the Gulf of Domvrena and the offshore islands.

The Gulf of Domvrena provides admirable shelter for ships, protected as it is by curving peninsulas at either end and by a string of three islands across its mouth (Fig. 1)<sup>2</sup>. In the words of the Mediterranean Pilot, "This magnificent bay is five and a half miles in length east and west and from about one to ten and a half miles in width.... The shores of the bay are rocky and irregular, the water is generally deep, and there are no hidden dangers". Although Bérard's thesis about trans-Boeotian trade has been largely abandoned<sup>3</sup>, the port of Thisbe at Agios Ioannis was still an important entrepot in the early years of this century: a customs house (τελωνεῖον) was built there in 1912, and in 1934 it was a village of 62 inhabitants from which grain and maize from the Kopais were shipped, primarily to the Korinthia<sup>4</sup>.

The importance of the Gulf of Domvrena and its ports is all the greater

1. See T. E. Gregory, *Ohio Boiotia Expedition: Field Seasons 1979-1980. Preliminary Report*, *Teiresias / Archaeologica* 1980, pp. 31-41. On the area see Alfred Philippson, *Die griechischen Landschaften* 1.2, Frankfurt 1951, pp. 458-459. This work has been made possible by a permit issued by the Greek Archaeological Service to the American School of Classical Studies. Thanks are due to Mrs. Eleni Manolessou, Ephor of the First Ephoreia of Byzantine Antiquities, Miss A. Andreiomenou, Ephor of Classical Antiquities at Thebes, and to Professors Henry Immerwahr and Stephen G. Miller, Directors of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. The Ohio Boeotia Expedition is sponsored by the Ohio State University and it has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, Dumbarton Oaks, and the National Geographic Society. The architects were Charles Peirce and Karen Hutchinson.

2. Philippson, *op. cit.*, pp. 456-457.

3. V. Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssee*, Paris 1902; A. W. Gomme, *The Topography of Boeotia and the Theories of M. Bérard*, *BSA* 28 (1911), rp. in *Essays in Greek History and Literature*, Oxford 1937, rp. New York 1967, pp. 17-45.

4. Philippson, *op. cit.*, p. 457. See also *A Handbook of Greece*, compiled by the Naval Staff Intelligence Division, London 1918, p. 154, which describes the route between Agios Ioannis and Thebes: "Except for the first ascent the road is nearly level all the way... It is important as affording an easy way into the interior from the Corinthian Gulf...".

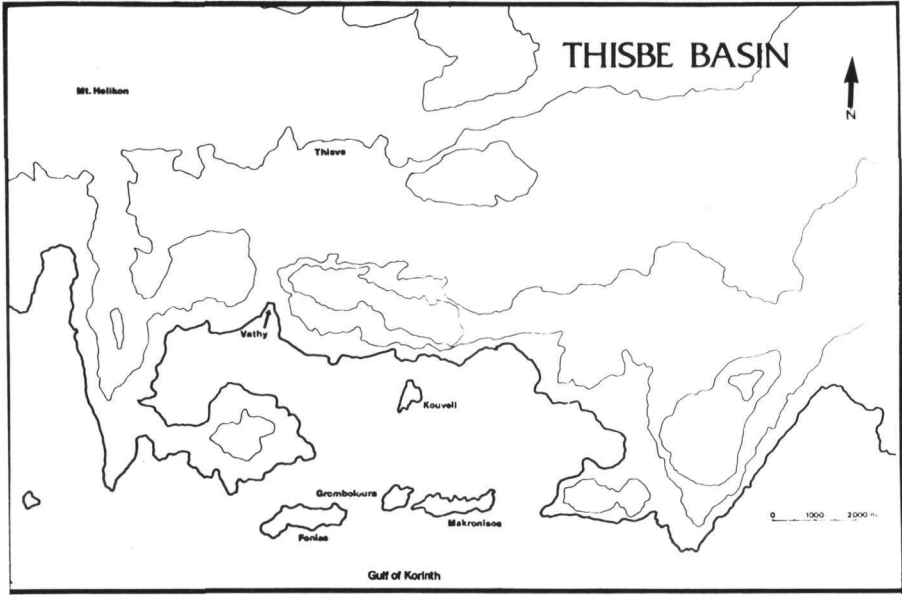


Fig. 1. Thisbe Basin.

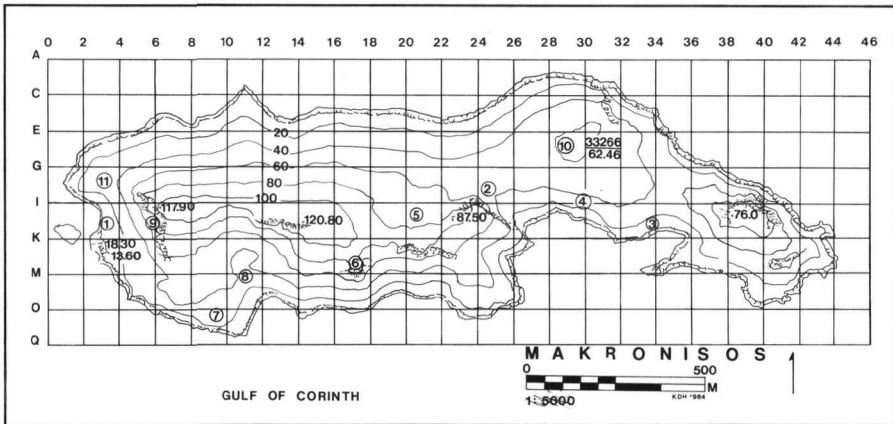


Fig. 2. Makronisos.

because Boeotia is, in fact, largely land-locked to the south. There are ports at several places along the coast, but nearly all of these are shut off from the interior of Boeotia by the coastal ridge which runs between Mt. Kithairon and Mt. Helikon<sup>5</sup>. A relatively low saddle (c. 159 m.) in the area of ancient Thisbe, however, provides one of the few easy points of access to the sea and to the ports of Agios Ioannis and Vathy. Although Leake<sup>6</sup>, Heurtley<sup>7</sup>, and Philippon provide a cursory description of the harbor facilities on the Gulf of Domvrena, there has been no previous archaeological investigation of the islands in the Gulf.

In 1981 the Ohio Boeotia Expedition began its exploration of the Gulf of Domvrena, starting with the island of Kouveli, which lies just to the south of the Boeotian coast (Fig. 1). The island has maximum dimensions of c. 600 m. (east-west) by 900 m. (north-south); it is absolutely barren and desolate, with steep rocky sides rising sharply from the sea. Four individual concentrations of archaeological material were discovered on Kouveli, one of them including a small church, another with a building c. 80 m. long, and a third with some seventeen structures or parts of structures<sup>8</sup>.

The finds on Kouveli dated almost entirely from the Early Byzantine period (3rd-7th century), but the nature of the settlements there and the reason for their existence in the desolate island landscape was far from certain. Therefore it was determined to extend our investigation to the outlying islands in the Gulf of Domvrena in order to determine if this insular settlement system continued beyond Kouveli.

During the summer of 1982 we began a full-scale investigation of the island of Makronisos, the easternmost of the three islands that lie across the mouth of the Gulf of Domvrena (Figs. 1-3)<sup>9</sup>. Makronisos is about 2 km. long and 0.5 km. wide. It is dominated by a ridge, c. 120 m. high, which runs along the center of the island, and, although the landscape of Makronisos is similar to that of Kouveli, it has considerable stands of pine trees, especially along the northern slope<sup>10</sup>.

As on Kouveli, the sides of Makronisos are steep and forbidding; in the center of the island there is a mean grade of approximately 1 in 2 (50%). On a

5. Philippon, *op. cit.*, p. 457; Gomme, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

6. William Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, 2, London 1835, pp. 506-511.

7. W. A. Heurtley, *Notes on the Harbours of S. Boeotia, and Seatrade between Boeotia and Corinth in Prehistoric Times*, BSA 26 (1923-25), pp. 38-45.

8. Gregory, *op. cit.*; results of the exploration of Kouveli will be fully published elsewhere.

9. Philippon, *op. cit.*, p. 456.

10. For a discussion of the natural environment of Boeotia in general and specifically the northern limit of the pine forests, see Oliver Rackham, *Observations on the Historical Ecology of Boeotia*, BSA 78 (1983), pp. 291-351, esp. 306-308.



Fig. 3. View of Makronisos and Gromboloura from south.



Fig. 4. Diporto, view from southeast.

map a single landing place can be identified as the most likely place for ancient habitation. This is on the far western end of the island, overlooking the narrow strait between Makronisos and the smaller island of Gromboloura (or Stromboli, the site shown on Fig. 2:1). Upon our arrival at the site we immediately came upon significant concentrations of ancient material – walls, pottery, glass, and coins. It was clear that the island settlement system noted on Kouveli extended to Makronisos and that we had discovered a site of considerable size and complexity, far beyond what was noted on Kouveli. The site was designated Diporto, which is the name used by the inhabitants of the mainland for the island itself<sup>11</sup>.

The site at Diporto is located in a vast naturally-theatrical setting (Fig. 4). To the east are nearly sheer cliffs, which rise to a height of almost 100 m. just below the central ridge of the island; to the north and the south are twin promontories, and the land between the promontories slopes down in all directions to the sea. Just off-shore is a small island (at K-1 on Fig. 2), c. 50 m. wide, so that the harbor is almost perfectly protected from all directions. The shoreline today is gradual and there is a small strand, providing an ideal place to beach a boat. The site at Diporto is well hidden, and it is impossible to see it until one is nearly in the harbor. Nevertheless, a lookout set up on one of the promontories or on the central ridge has an excellent view, embracing the whole of the Halcyonic Gulf, the southern coast of Boeotia, and even the distant coast of the northern Peloponnesos.

The scatter of archaeological materials at Diporto covers an area of approximately 15,625 m<sup>2</sup>. The ground is thick with scrub growth, and erosion has carried away many of the walls. The walls of many buildings, however, are clearly visible, and some of these stand to a height of a meter and a half. These walls are constructed in two different styles, one considerably finer than the other. The finer style is characterized by small, roughly cut stones, set in a mud mortar with flat surfaces inside and out. These walls are between 0.40 and 0.70 m. wide. The other style of construction uses very large stones, some of them boulders which had rolled down from the cliffs above the site. Smaller stones are also presumably used in these walls, and the whole must have been set in a mud mortar.

In all we were able to identify some 56 buildings or parts of buildings at Diporto (Fig. 5). Because of the poor state of preservation it is frequently impossible to tell where one structure stops and another begins, although the overall plan of the site seems clear. Along the shoreline there are at least two structures which project out into the water and which can reasonably be

11. Philippson, *op. cit.*, p. 465.

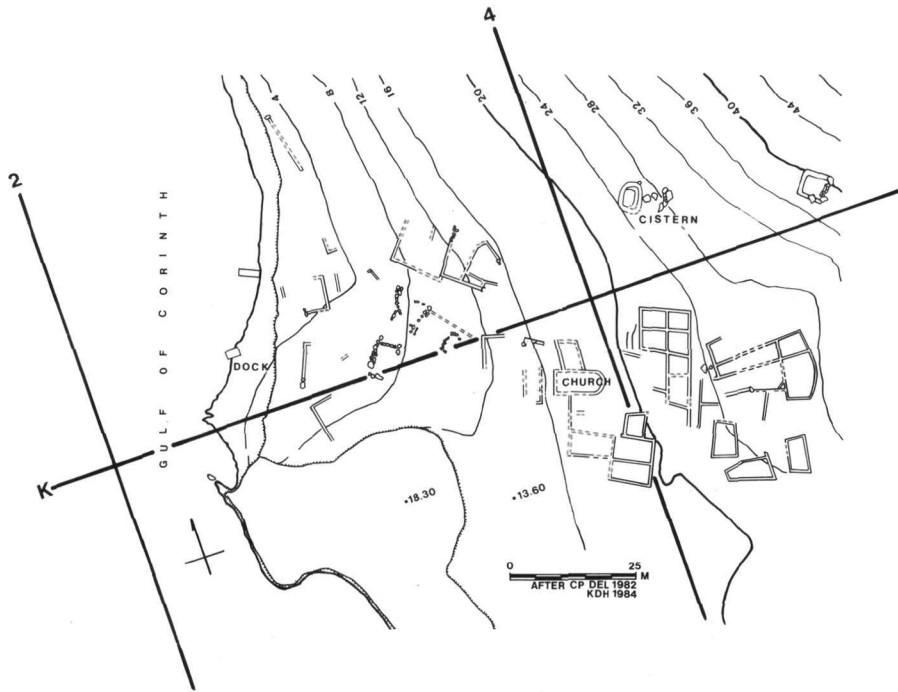


Fig. 5. Diporto, plan.

identified as harbor facilities, probably docks (Fig. 5)<sup>12</sup>. Unlike most of the walls further up the slope, these seem to have been set in a hard lime mortar. Other docks undoubtedly once existed at Diporto, but have disappeared. There is, however, evidence that a breakwater was constructed between the small island just west of the site (at K-1) and the main island of Makronisos. Large stones are piled on the eastern end of the small island and further stones are visible in a line under the sea across the narrow strait (c. 20 m. wide) which separates them and on the shore at Diporto (partly visible on Fig. 6).

Just above the modern shoreline there are walls from several structures (in the vicinity of I to K-3). These walls are not well preserved and in no case are all four walls of a building preserved. In each case, however, the orientation of the building is clear and it is remarkable that every one of these waterfront structures was oriented to face the direction of the shore line. Clearly, these structures were built to front directly onto the sea. Whether they were

12. For similar, although better preserved, harbor works, see Helmut Schlager, David C. Blackman and Jorg Schafer, *Der Hafen von Anthidon*, AA 1965, pp. 21-98; but see the comments of John Hayes, quoted by Sinclair Hood, *BSA* 65 (1970), p. 37, n. 3.



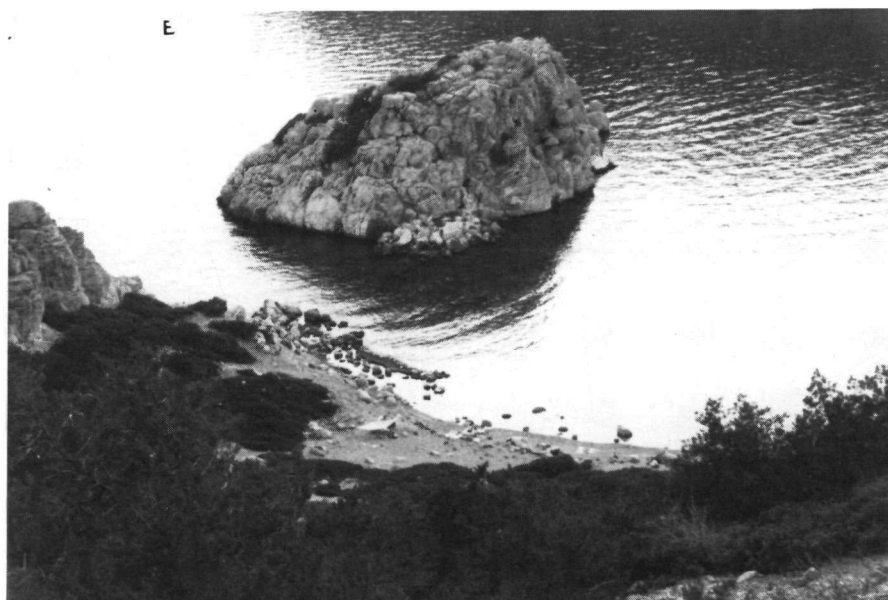


Fig. 6. Diporto, waterfront from east.

dwelling, shops, or warehouses is impossible to say, although it may be significant that none of the surviving walls can be reconstructed to form a building of more than one room.

Further up the slope, however, there are buildings of more complex plan (in the vicinity of K-3.5; Fig 7). One of these structures is apparently made up of at least six separate rooms. At the eastern part of the site (above K-3.5) the land slopes upward more gradually and there are several buildings of large plan (Fig. 8). One of these is a single-aisled structure c. 8.3 m. long and 4.1 m. wide (interior dimensions), with a semi-circular apse at the east (Fig. 9). Certainly this building must have been a church, of simple plan and design. On both the north and the south walls of other buildings are bonded to the church, suggesting a rather substantial ecclesiastical complex; another series of walls to the west of the church is built on the same orientation, suggesting an extension of the complex in that direction also. The exact form of the ecclesiastical complex and its nature cannot be fully determined, although it must have included at least ten separate rooms.

To the east of the church are walls of what appear to have been two or more large buildings, probably of a residential character (at K-4.1 eastward). The larger of these is nearly rectilinear in plan; it is over 20 m. long and has at least nine rooms. This building occupied a splendid position with a broad view out over the whole of the site and toward the sea beyond. To the north of these buildings was a sizable cistern, roughly oval in shape and c. 4 m. across.



Fig. 7. Diporto, walls in northwestern part of site.

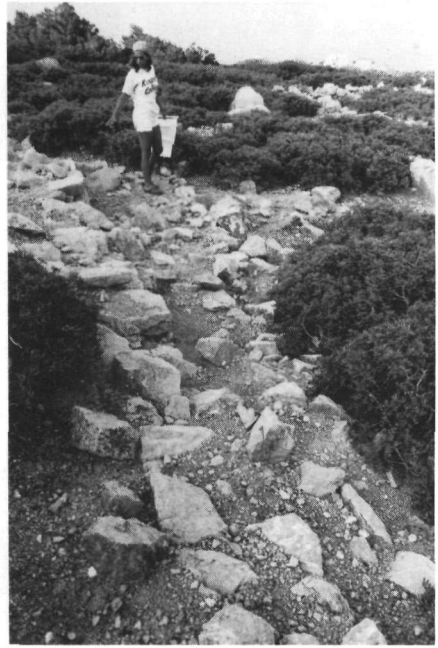


Fig. 8. Diporto, walls in eastern part of site



Fig. 9. Diporto, lower church from west.

In a saddle just above and to the north of the site at Diporto there are the remains of another small single-aisled church (Fig. 2:11 and 10). This church is c. 6.17 m. long and 2.48 m. wide (interior measurements); the walls are c. 0.50 m. thick and they are constructed of small, roughly-hewn limestone blocks set in a hard white mortar liberally mixed with small stones and pieces of tile. Just to the south of the church there are two round lime kilns, both with interior diameters of c. 3.85 m. (Fig. 11). These kilns have all been much used and their walls are highly calcified and deformed. They have been rebuilt several times on the same spot and the walls of successive rebuildings are visible in the most recent structures. Neither, however, have been used for years and their walls are crumbled and disintegrating. There is at least one other lime kiln on Makronisos, on the western side of the northern shore. Residents of the mainland know nothing of lime-burning on the island, although they do speak of charcoal-burning there.

The surface of the ground at Diporto was littered with ancient material, most of it ceramic, and this provides us with the best evidence about the nature of the site and its period of occupation<sup>13</sup>. Only a small fraction of that material can be presented here, but the following represent the major types encountered on the site.

1. African red slip ware plate. Pres. H. 0.032 m. Pres. W. 0.048 m. Preserves rim and part of wall. Coarse red clay with some small dark inclusions and voids; red slip inside and out. Plate with flaring straight sides, nearly vertical rim, rounded on top. African Red Slip Ware, Form 104, J. W. Hayes, *Late Roman Pottery*, London 1962, pp. 160-165, nos. 2 and 3 early form (c. 530-550) (Fig. 13a).

2. Plate. Pres. H. 0.020 m. Pres. W. 0.059 m. Preserves rim and part of wall. Hard coarse brown clay with small inclusions; reddish-brown slip inside and out. Plate with sharply-flaring straight sides; vertical rim with sharply angular concave exterior. Cf. Phocian Ware Form 3, Hayes, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-338, type E-G (late 5th-early 6th century); the fabric is that encountered commonly around Askra in western Boeotia (Fig. 12).

3. Plate or bowl. Pres. H. 0.025 m. Pres. W. 0.031 m. Dark brown clay, rather fine, with some quartz, many small voids; darker brown slip, inside and out. Slightly flaring pointed vertical rim. Local ware resembling Phocian Ware Form 3, Hayes, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-338, type B (c. 460-475) (Fig. 12).

4. Amphora. Mouth and neck preserved. Pres. H. 0.109 m. Pres. W. 0.087 m. Brown clay with many stone inclusions and quartz, evenly fired. Neck

13. Most of the pottery and other materials from the site were not collected, but left *in situ* after they were recorded and photographed. Valuable finds were deposited at the Archaeological Museum at Thebes.



Fig. 10. Diporto, upper church from west.



Fig. 11. Diporto, lime kiln.

tapers to bottom of slightly flaring mouth, rounded and vertically thickened. Cf. Henry S. Robinson, *The Athenian Agora V. Pottery of the Roman Period*, Princeton 1959, M272 (late 4th century) and P4129, pl. 40; George F. Bass and Frederick H. van Doornick, Jr., eds., *Yassi Ada, 1*, College Station, Texas 1982, pp. 157-160, type 2 amphoras (mid-7th century); W. W. Rudolph, *Excavations at Porto Cheli and Vicinity, Preliminary Report V: The Early Byzantine Remains*, *Hesperia* 48 (1979), pp. 301-302, 308-313, nos. 1-9, 11-12, pl. 80b (late 6th-early 7th century); Pierre Aupert, *Objets de la vie quotidienne à Argos en 585 ap. J.-C., Études Argiennes, BCH Supplement* 6 (1980), pp. 440-441, nos. 325-325a, fig. 46 (late 6th century) (Figs. 12, 13b).

5. Large rim. Pres. H. 0.040 m. Pres. W. 0.085 m. Coarse light brown clay with many lime inclusions and voids, unevenly fired red. Large vessel with tapering rounded sides, rounded outturned plain rim. On exterior heavy horizontal combing with pointed apices; raised ridge at base of rim. Cf. H. P. Isler, *Heraion von Samos: Eine frühbyzantinische Zisterne*, *AM* 84 (1969), p. 209, fig. 12, pl. 90.5; compare pithoi, pp. 205-206, figs. 4-7, pls. 83.1, 83.2, 84.1 (mid-6th century) (Figs. 12, 13f).

6. Beehive ware rim. Pres. H. 0.050 m. Pres. W. 0.085 m. Soft light brown clay with much mica and a few stone inclusions. Large vessel with vertical or slightly tapering walls; rounded rim with overhanging lip, rounded exterior, with deep groove at rim offset. On exterior just below the rim a horizontal wave pattern; on interior vertical incised grooves. Cf. J. E. Jones, *Hives and Honey of Hymettus: Beekeeping in Ancient Greece*, *Archaeology* 29 (1976), pp. 80-91, with an example of a 6th-century beehive from Isthmia; A. J. Graham, *Beehives from Ancient Greece*, *Bee World* 56.2 (1975), pp. 64-75 (Fig. 13e).

7. Rim. Pres. H. 0.098 m. Pres. W. 0.065 m. Hard, slightly sandy reddish-brown clay with much quartz and many small stone inclusions. Very large vessel with tapering sides. Squarish heavy rim. On exterior a single incised wave pattern (Figs. 12, 13e).

8. Rim. Pres. H. 0.070 m. Pres. W. 0.106 m. Hard brown clay with many stone inclusions. Plain rounded rim (Figs. 12, 13e).

9. Cooking pot. Pres. H. 0.039 m. Pres. W. 0.042 m. Preserves rim and part of wall. Coarse brown clay with many stone and lime inclusions, fired unevenly grey. Cooking pot with round sides; nearly vertical pointed rim set off by deep groove at bottom. Cf. Isler, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-218, fig. 37, pl. 93.7 (mid-6th century) (Fig. 12).

10. Cooking pot. (M1B-10). Pres. H. 0.014 m. Pres. W. 0.046 m. Preserves rim and part of wall. Hard grey clay with many small dark and white inclusions. Cooking pot with straight slightly tapering walls; rounded nearly horizontal rim with sharply defined groove just before edge (Fig. 12).

11. Lamp. Pres. L. 0.048 m. Pres. W. 0.026 m. Brown clay with small

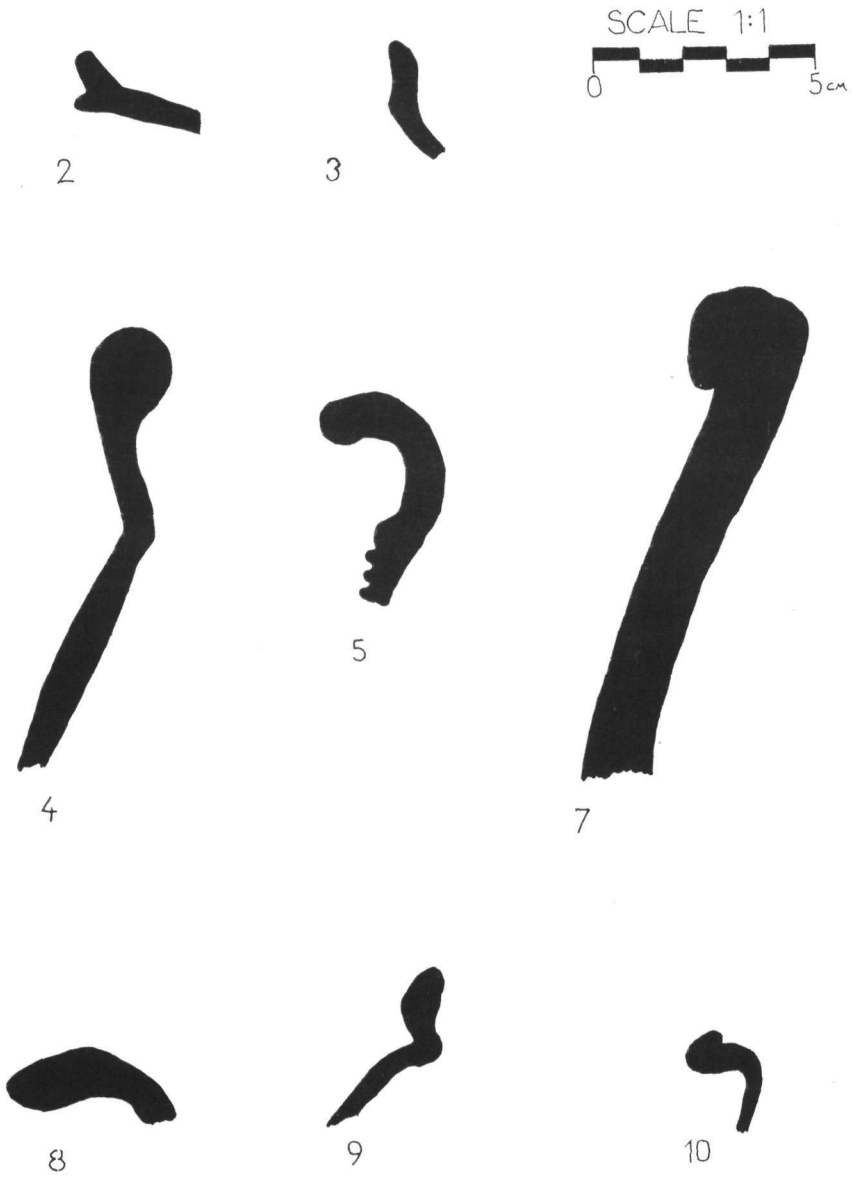


Fig. 12. Pottery profiles.

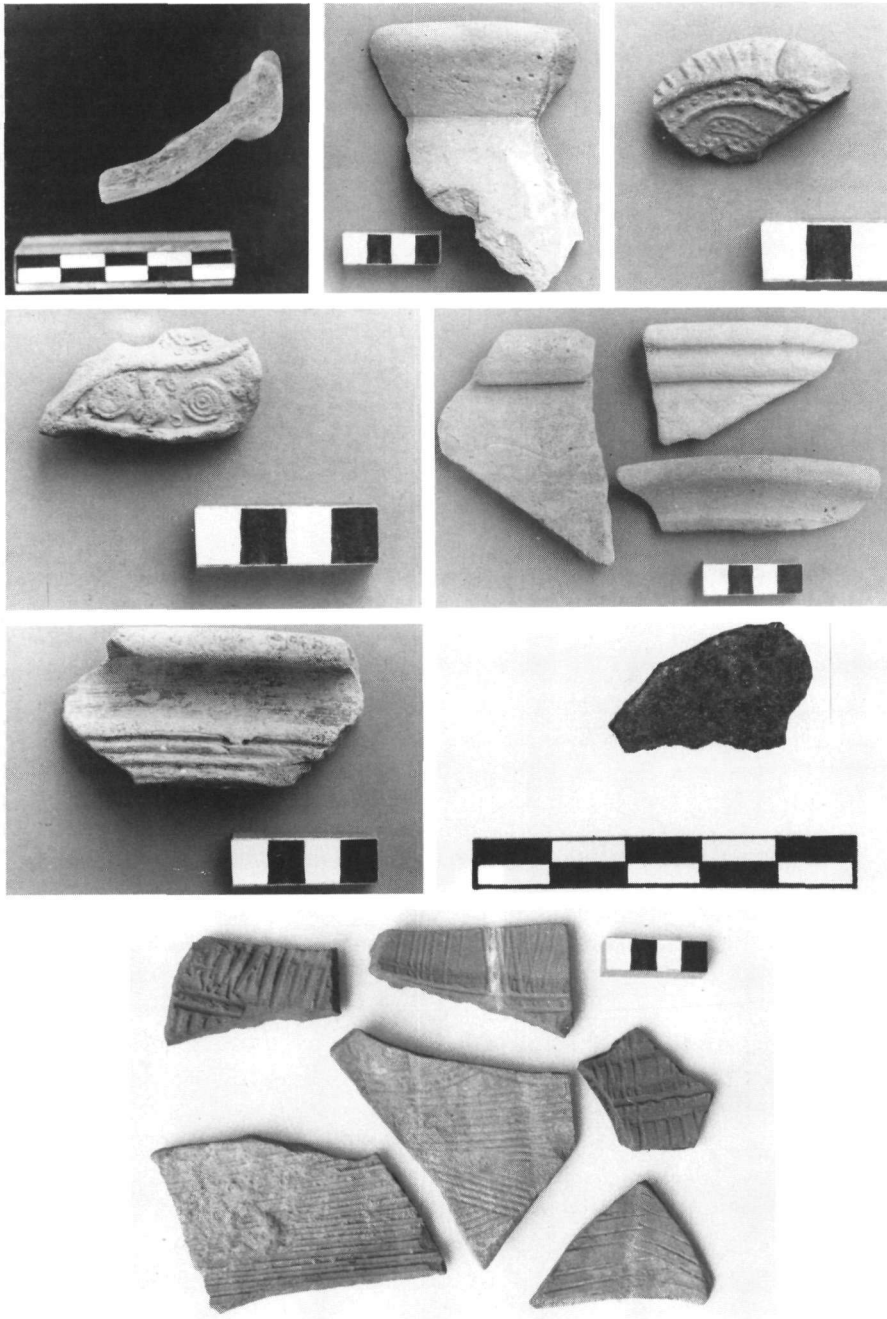


Fig. 13. Pottery sherds (a. No. 1, b. No. 4, c. No. 12, d. No. 11, e. Nos. 6-8, f. No. 5, h. Nos. 13-18) and part of a light striker (g. No. 19).



Fig. 14. Nos. 20-21.

inclusions. Fragment preserving part of rim, discus, edge of wick hole, and possibly edge of air or filling hole. On rim two sets of three concentric circles surrounding a bird; on discus a circle with smaller circles around. Cf. Judith Perzweig, *The Athenian Agora VII. Lamps of the Roman Period*, Princeton 1961, nos. 2571 (5th century), 2425 (late 5th century) (Fig. 13d).

12. Lamp. Pres. L. 0.039 m. Pres. W. 0.013 m. Hard, rather fine brown clay, fired evenly grey-brown. Preserves top of lamp including part of discus and possibly part of handle. Vertical lines on side; on top a series of dots around edge within a border, possibly a fish. Cf. Perzweig, *op. cit.*, no. 2406 (6th century) (Fig. 13c).

13-18. Body sherds, Beehive ware. Four body sherds with deep horizontal and vertical combing on the interior (Fig. 13h).

19. Light striker. Pres. H. 0.016 m. Pres. L. 0.027 m. Iron. Upper part of a light striker. Cf. Gladys Davidson Weinberg, *A Wandering Soldier's Grave in Corinth*, *Hesperia* 43 (1974), p. 517, no. 5, pl. 111c (6th-7th century) (Fig. 13g).

20. Coin. Constantine (330-337). Diam. 16 mm.

Ob. VRBS ROMA. Bust of Roma, left, helmeted.

Rev. Wolf and Twins, in field two stars, in exergue SMANO.

Antioch. Cf. Hill and Kent, *LRBC*, 1359, 1368 (Fig. 14a).

21. Coin. Arcadius (400-408). Diam. 15 mm.

Ob. DN ARCADII - (VS PF AVG). Bust facing, cuirassed, helmeted, holding shield.

Rev. CONCORDIA (AVG). Constantinopolis, seated facing, head helmeted right, holding spear and victoriola; prow by right foot; in exergue ANT Γ.

Antioch. Cf. Hill and Kent, *LRBC*, 2797 (Fig. 14b).

22. Coin. Anastasius (498-518). Diam. 34 mm.

Ob. DNASTA SIVSPPAVG. Bust right with diadem, cuirass and paludamentum.

Rev. M. Above, cross. To left and right stars. In exergue CON. Officina uncertain.





Fig. 15. Nos. 22-23.

Constantinople. Cf. DOC I, pp. 18-23, no. 23 (Fig. 15a).

23. Coin. Justin II (567/8). Diam. 30 mm.

Ob. (DNI VSTI NVSPPAVC). Justin and Sophia facing, enthroned.

Rev. M. Above, cross. To left, ANNO; to right III; beneath A; in exergue *NIKO*.

Nikomedia. Cf. DOC I, p. 227, no. 93 (Fig. 15b).

The most important, as well as the most difficult, question concerns the function of the site at Diporto. An obvious suggestion is to see the site as one of the "Isles of Refuge" described by Sinclair Hood<sup>14</sup>. In Hood's view, several islands off the coast of Greece were occupied as places of refuge when the Slavs invaded Greece beginning in the later years of the 6th century. Hood naturally sought support for this idea in the text of the "Chronicle of Monemvasia"<sup>15</sup> which notes that the people of various Greek cities fled to islands such as Aigina and Sicily. This argument has won general support

14. An Aspect of the Slavic Invasions of Greece in the Early Byzantine Period, *Sbornik Norodniho Musea v Praze* 20 (1966), pp. 165-171; and *Isles of Refuge in the Early Byzantine Period*, *BSA* 65 (1970), pp. 37-45.

15. Ivan Dujcev, ed., *Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici, Testi e Monumenti, Testi 12*, Palermo 1976.

among students of the period and it is cited favourably in most synthetic studies<sup>16</sup>.

There are, however, several problems associated with the identification of the site at Diporto as a refuge settlement. In the first place, the pottery and coins suggest that Diporto was first occupied in the 4th or 5th century, a date much earlier than the first invasions of the Slavs. The settlement, moreover, has all the appearances of permanence and it cannot reasonably be associated with any of the earlier invasions of Greece, such as those of the Goths and Heruli (mid-3rd century) or Alaric and the Visigoths (c. 396). An even more serious objection is that there is absolutely no evidence of fortifications at Diporto, something which is hard to explain if the settlement was indeed a refuge from invaders. While it is true that the Slavs invaded primarily along the land, they did have boats, they attacked Constantinople by sea in 626, and they probably reached Crete sometime during the century. This led Hood to suggest that the island settlements may have been abandoned by c. 615<sup>17</sup>. The pottery and coins from Diporto, however, show that the settlement spanned a much longer period. It seems to have been founded well before the danger of the Slavic invasions became a reality and it probably continued at least until the middle of the 7th century. This is not to deny that Diporto may have served as a place of refuge at one time or another; such was, however, not its *raison d'être*.

The presence of two churches, one in the lower settlement and the other on a ridge to the north, may suggest a monastic presence. Indeed, the buildings that were apparently connected to the lower church show that the ecclesiastical structure was more than a simple free-standing church; it must have been a complex of some importance in the site. Nevertheless, we have almost no idea what a Greek monastery of this date should look like and if the settlement was indeed monastic, it cannot have been built by monks hoping to flee the world and live in solitude.

Indeed, the foremost characteristic of the site at Diporto is that it was built to face directly onto the sea. There is considerable open land immediately southeast of the settlement, and there are several high and nearly inaccessible peaks where monastic solitude could have been sought. Instead, the community was built right up against the shore, above the ideally situated harbor. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the settlement was primarily commercial in orientation. Further, the size of the buildings at Diporto seems to have been

16. E.g. G. L. Huxley, *The Second Dark Age of the Peloponnese*, *Λακωνικά Σπουδαί* 3 (1977), pp. 84-110.

17. *Isles of Refuge...*, p. 43.

related to their location, with large houses located at the top of the settlement and poorer, smaller dwellings closer to the sea. This suggests that the social structure at Diporto was a complex one with a clearly-defined hierarchy.

The apparent commercial importance of Diporto may seem strange since the island of Makronisos cannot have produced anything of great value and there were good ports at Vathy and Alyki on the mainland. The land available for warehouses and other services necessary for long distance trade at these mainland harbors was, however, extremely limited and island settlements may reasonably have been used to expand the area used for such purposes: we should remember that in antiquity (as in many areas still today) the sea served to unite rather than divide many places. In fact, Diporto seems to have been a "port of trade", a place where goods brought from various areas are brought together, divided, traded, loaded, and shipped in different directions<sup>18</sup>. Possible parallels may be found in the islands of Jezirat Fara'un in the Red Sea<sup>19</sup> and Gemile Ada on the coast of Lycia.

The primary direction of the trade in the Gulf of Domvrena must have been from and toward the interior of Boeotia, but merchants from various parts of the empire may have met in emporia such as Diporto to trade and exchange cargos. The evidence of the Yassi Ada shipwreck demonstrates that the volume of seaborne trade must have been considerable well into the 7th century and one might expect trading centers to have flourished at least until that time<sup>20</sup>. Fishing, shipbuilding, and perhaps even piracy may have contributed to the economy of Diporto, and some of its inhabitants may have worked as sailors in much the same way that the men of Hydra and Spetses were to do in later years, but the key element in the economy of the community must always have been commerce.

Water, of course, must have been a problem on Makronisos. As mentioned, there was a large cistern in the northeastern part of the settlement and many of the houses may have had small cisterns of their own, although these cannot have been substantial since we encountered no trace of them. Thus, water was probably brought to the island from the abundant fresh springs on the mainland just north of Makronisos. Given the considerable maritime activity suggested for the Gulf of Domvrena, this would not have been an

18. See Robert B. Revere, *No Man's Coast: Ports of Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean*, and Anne C. Chapman, *Port of Trade Enclaves in Aztec and Maya Civilizations*, both on Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg and Harry W. Pearson, eds., *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, Glencoe, III. 1975, pp. 36-63; 114-153.

19. A. Flinder, *The Island of Jezirat Fara'un. Its Ancient Harbour, Anchorage and Marine Defense Installations*, *Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 6 (1977), pp. 127-139.

20. George F. Bass and Frederick H. van Doornick, Jr., eds., *Yassi Ada*, 1, College Station, Texas 1982.

unreasonably difficult undertaking, and the practice has been repeated for other Greek island settlements over the centuries.

Indeed, the situation at Diporto –its theatrical setting, the position of the churches on high points overlooking the settlement, its reliance on trade, and the necessity of importing water– is strongly reminiscent of the island of Hydra in more recent times. Thus, at the beginning of the 19th century, Henry Holland noted that Hydra was “but a few miles in circumference, with a surface so rocky as scarcely to yield the common vegetables, and even without any other water than that collected in cisterns; this little spot has an active and wealthy population of more than 25,000 souls, and a property in shipping, amounting, it is said, to about 300 trading vessels, many of them of large tonnage...”<sup>21</sup>. Surely, the community at Diporto was not nearly so large or so prosperous, but the comparison nevertheless seems apt.

*Columbus, Ohio*

*TIMOTHY E. GREGORY*

21. *Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia, etc. during the years 1812 and 1813*, London 1815, p. 424.