

RURAL ARCHITECTURE, TOURISM AND SIMULACRA

Simulacra are copies of things that no longer have an original use.

The synthesis of the terms “rural architecture, tourism and simulacra” concludes that the diversity of rural architecture produces a renaissance on tourism, with the built environment playing a central role.

Diversity is the product of the senses of a place, it is the identity of each unique environment. Today, the global pressure of tourism, instant communication and profit does not allow time for authentic evolution reducing rural architecture to simulacra.

***Diversity** emerges from the various historical pathways of settlements and constitutes today the fundamental perspective for local development.*

***Local development** promoting rural identity is also related to the “third wave” of development, the “informational”, raising issues on reconstruction or “place making” and on many other “in-between” notions like **hybridity** and **authenticity**.*

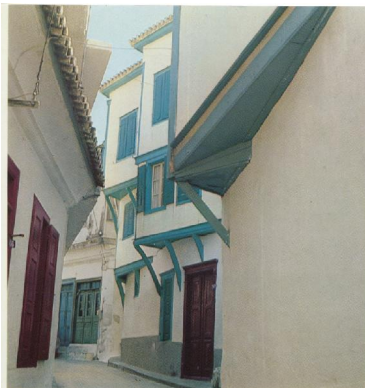
Population implosion and interaction imply a variety of interchange and diversity between cultures resulting in the phenomenon of heterogeneous architecture.

- Hybridity translates the discourse that actually produces “constructions” of cultural identity:

The ambivalent built environment produced and especially what will eventually survive defines the prospect of architectural evolution and the identity of each place.

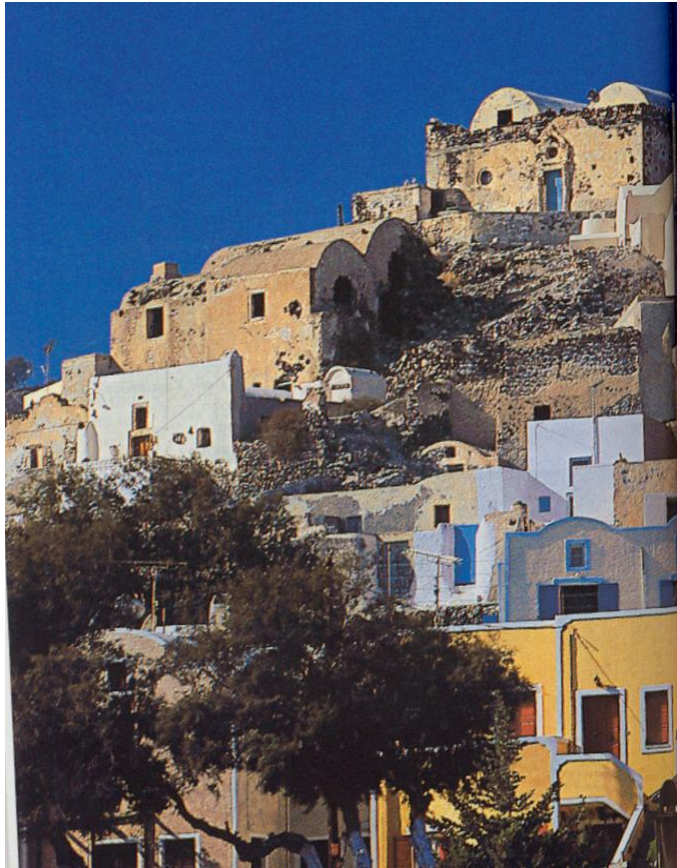
In this conceptual framework, the outcome of less implosive situations in the Greek rural space, where the interaction between cultures that occurred in every historical period are recorded in structural and architectural elements -distinct even for adjacent settlements- documents the evolution of the phenomenon.

In present time, as long as culture becomes placeless, representation in three dimensions (architecture), as the expression and the synthesis of cultures (hybrids) will reflect the degree of global counteract with the “network society”.



If **hybridity** is accepted as an inherent constituent of identity then any particular architectural form must be accepted as a reflection of a specific transitional stage in the course of a society.

In Greece -center of intersection between peoples since antiquity- the evolution of the phenomenon has been recorded in every historical period. **In some cases indeed, when development was interrupted momentarily due to a crisis (earthquake or other) the interval of history is clearly perceived through the diverse phases of heterogeneity and hybrids survival.**



1960



1945





2008

The restructuring of the Greek country followed different phases according to the addition of successive regions that had been under distinct occupation for centuries. In the early 19th century, Greece comprehended Peloponissos and Sterea that had been under the Turk occupation since the 15th century. In the early 19th century, parts of Greece like the Ionian islands and Crete –that had been under Latin occupation until then- were turned under Turkish control until their later liberation. Northern and Eastern Greece (Epirus, Macedonia, Thraki and most of the islands of Aegean sea) continued to be under Turkish occupation and were liberated during the 20th century. Population movements and intercresses between cultures provided a variety of architectural elements distinct even in neighboring settlements which corresponded to the architectural heritage of each micro-region that the modern Greek state inherited.





Representation in Greece/Identity of rural architecture

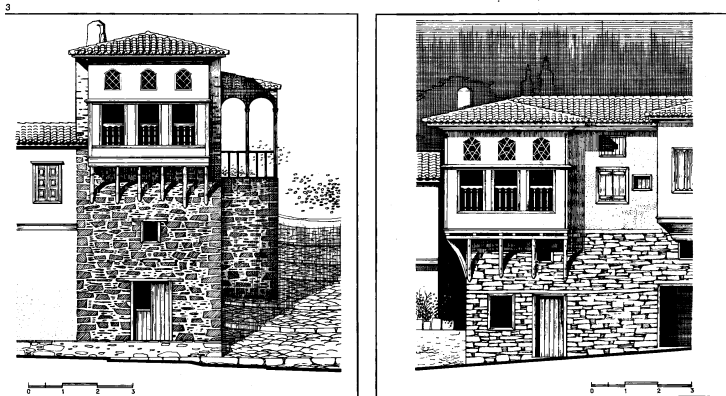
Identity constitutes a social good according to the specific historical paths of each region, from where “the desired” collective memory “is selected and projected” onto the built environment, in respect to the symbolism of the architectural heritage in favour.



The first historical phase, corresponds to the mid 19th - beginning of 20th century, when in the newly liberated parts of Greece, emphasis on neoclassical architecture was given following a simpler and clearer pattern than other parts of the world, where neoclassicism already was practiced as an international movement. For Greece, the term traditional architecture corresponds to architectural elements before the 19th century, while neoclassicism corresponds to the first phase of neo-traditional design. Neoclassicism, while a representation for other countries, for Greece was a “tradition” stemming from the Byzantine era and architecture.

Bavarian, French and Greek architects studied in the West, worked for neoclassical patterns in Greece fifty years later than in Europe, without having the ideological confrontations of the revolutionary classicism.

NEOCLASSICISM



The second historical phase corresponds to the most part of the 20th century, when Greek local identity was expressed under the search of tradition and the evolutionary theory, which formed the antipode to neoclassicism. In the beginning of the 20th century (second phase of neo-traditional design) when northern Greece was united (1st World War) and millions of Greek population were transferred from Asia Minor -under the International Regulations for the Exchange of Population- an immense reconstruction program was implemented. Emphasis was given to the search of the Greek origins of traditional architectural elements in order to implement design prototypes for the new towns and extensions plans for the new population.

LOCAL IDENTITY



The third historical phase corresponds to the recent and current one with tourism and globalization consuming the individuality of tradition and the local cultural heritage. In rural Greece, the last three decades -under building code legislation- traditional architectural elements for each micro-region have been implemented, creating a neo-vernacular environment. This fact is even more apparent in areas where tourism and holidays are imposing the (re)structuring of the built environment.

POST -TRADITIONAL

European romanticism of the 18th century and consequently the development of neoclassical patterns for the built environment while a representation for the nations of the West, for Greece -the land where ruins of classical values were still present- were incorporated in the ideology of the new nation and functioned as part of the domestic evolution. In fact, the clear distinction in Greece can only be perceived in **the distribution of plots and plans, while in three dimensions neoclassicism is fused with traditional patterns.**

Physical distributions represent the traditional pattern in rural areas (anthropological concentric-eastern logic).

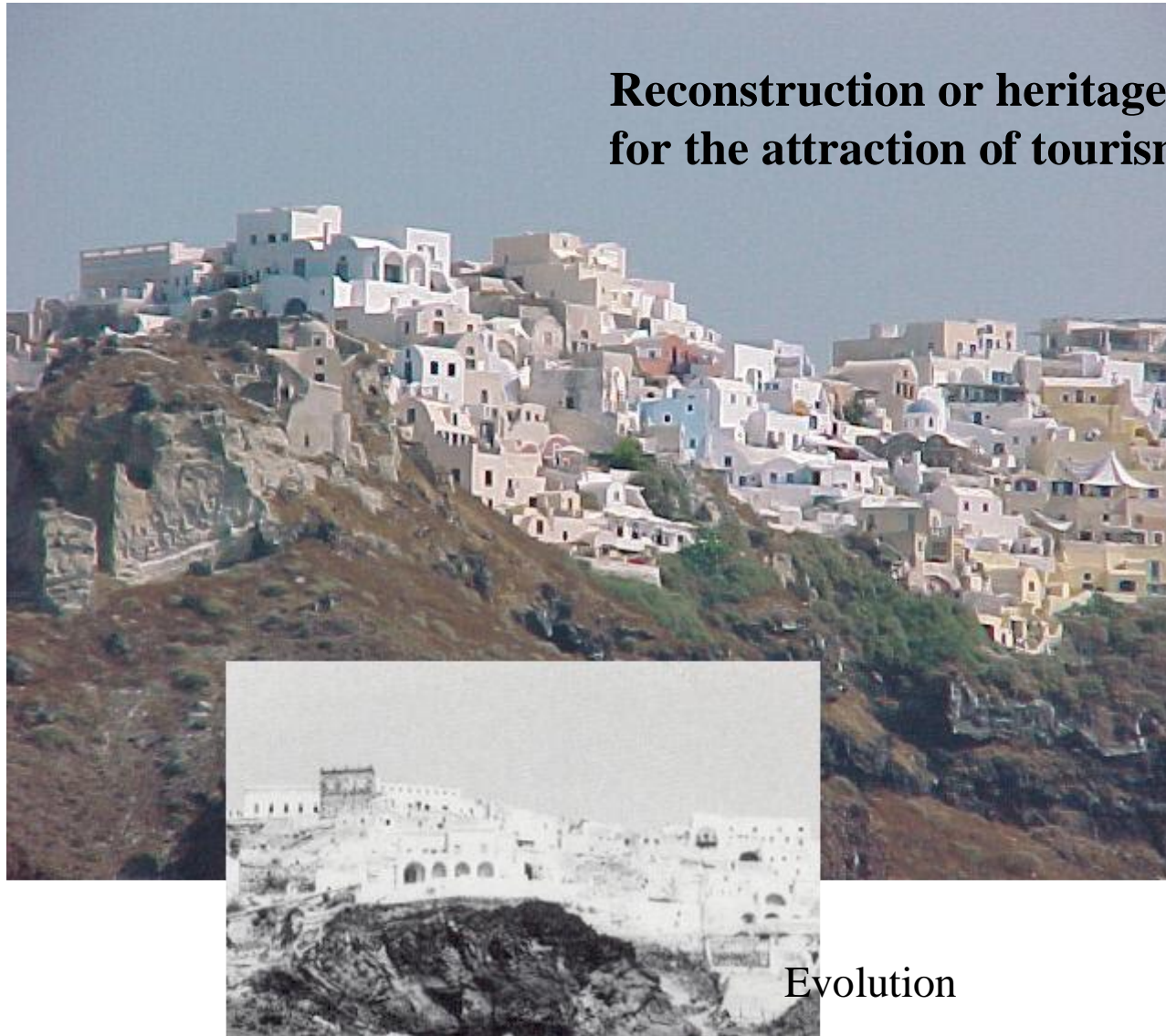
Systematic distributions represent the last two centuries (western logic).

From the mid 20th century, modern architectural movement, once more inspired by simple cubic forms of Aegean sea islands architecture and intercrossed with previous traditional and neoclassical architecture, composed the contemporary Greek architecture that continuous to evolve and to create characteristic built environments, specific even between neighbouring settlements.

Now days under the topic of tourism, rural architecture acquires a twofold meaning:

- As an endogenous dynamic for tourism development (for commodities intended for use)
- As an architectural representation (a simulacra) of a traditional space for recreation. A set of practices, normally governed by a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms by reputation, which automatically imply continuity with the past.

**Reconstruction or heritage development
for the attraction of tourism?**



Evolution

AUTHENTICITY: Recognised and accepted



Simulacra: Interaction of rural architectural heritage with modern era

The rural architectural heritage is perceived as an economic commodity intended for consumption: TOURISM













SURVIVAL OF HYBRIDS



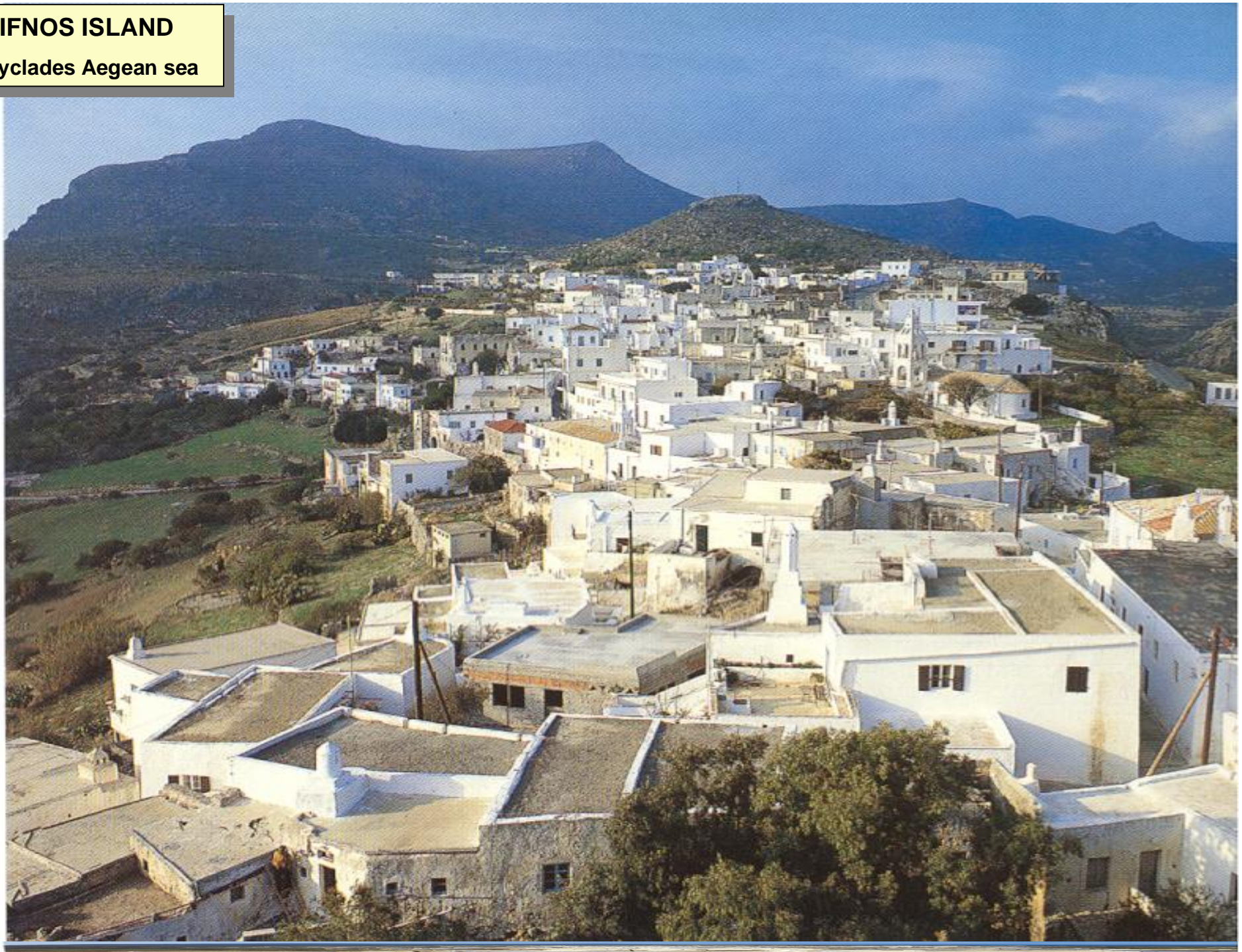


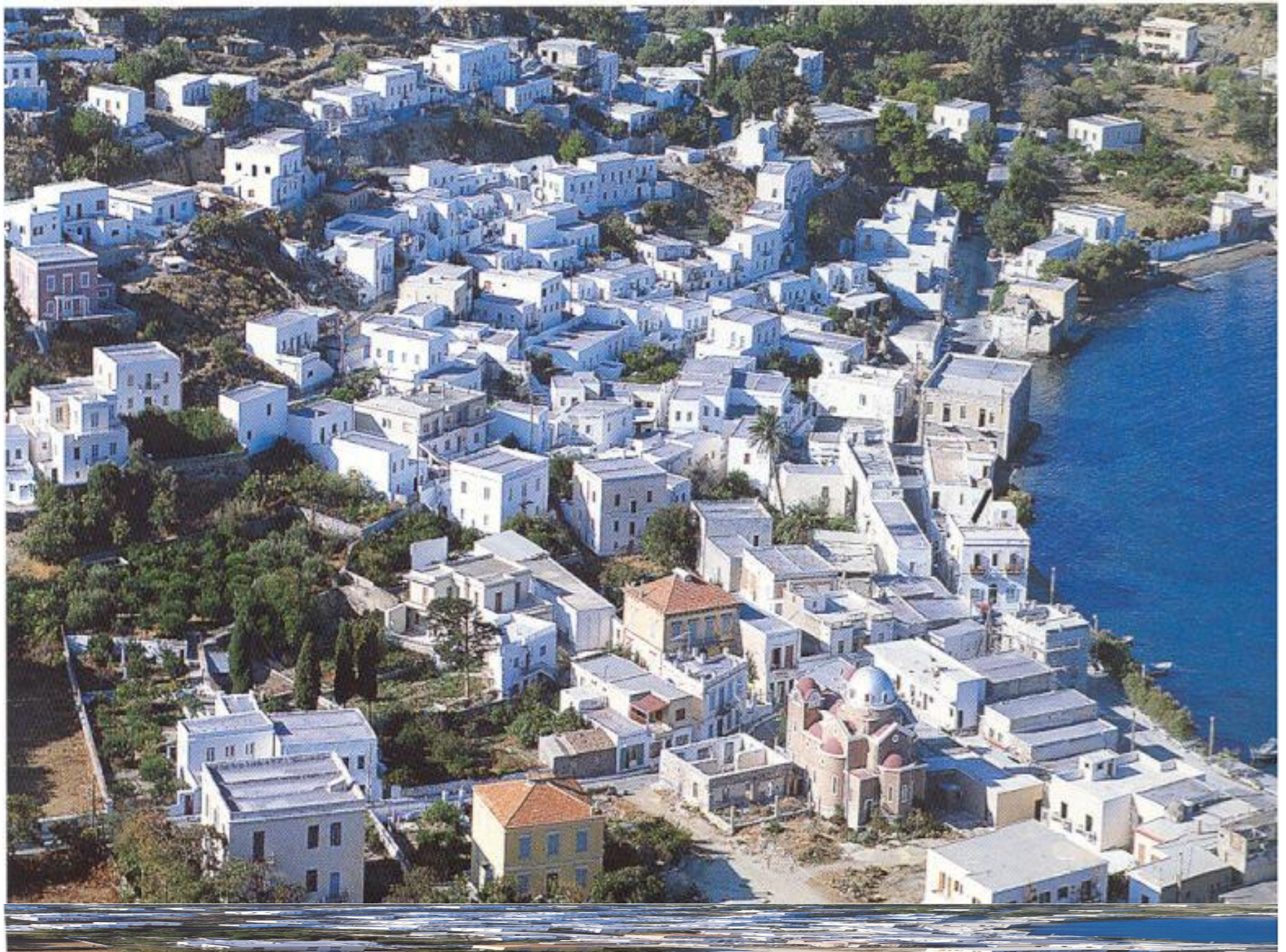
HETEROGENEITY

SIFNOS ISLAND

Cyclades Aegean sea

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Corfou Island

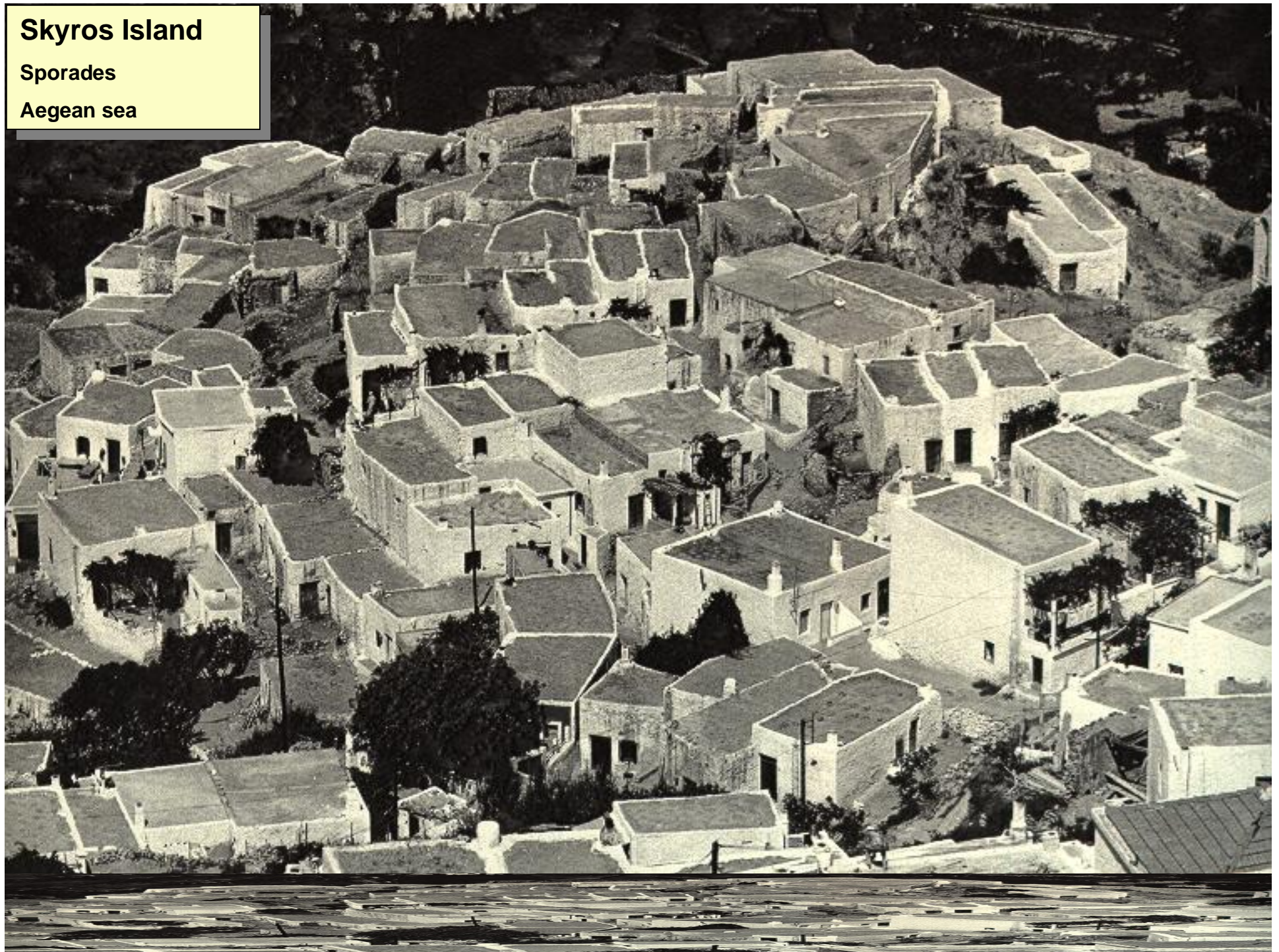
North Ionian sea



Skyros Island

Sporades

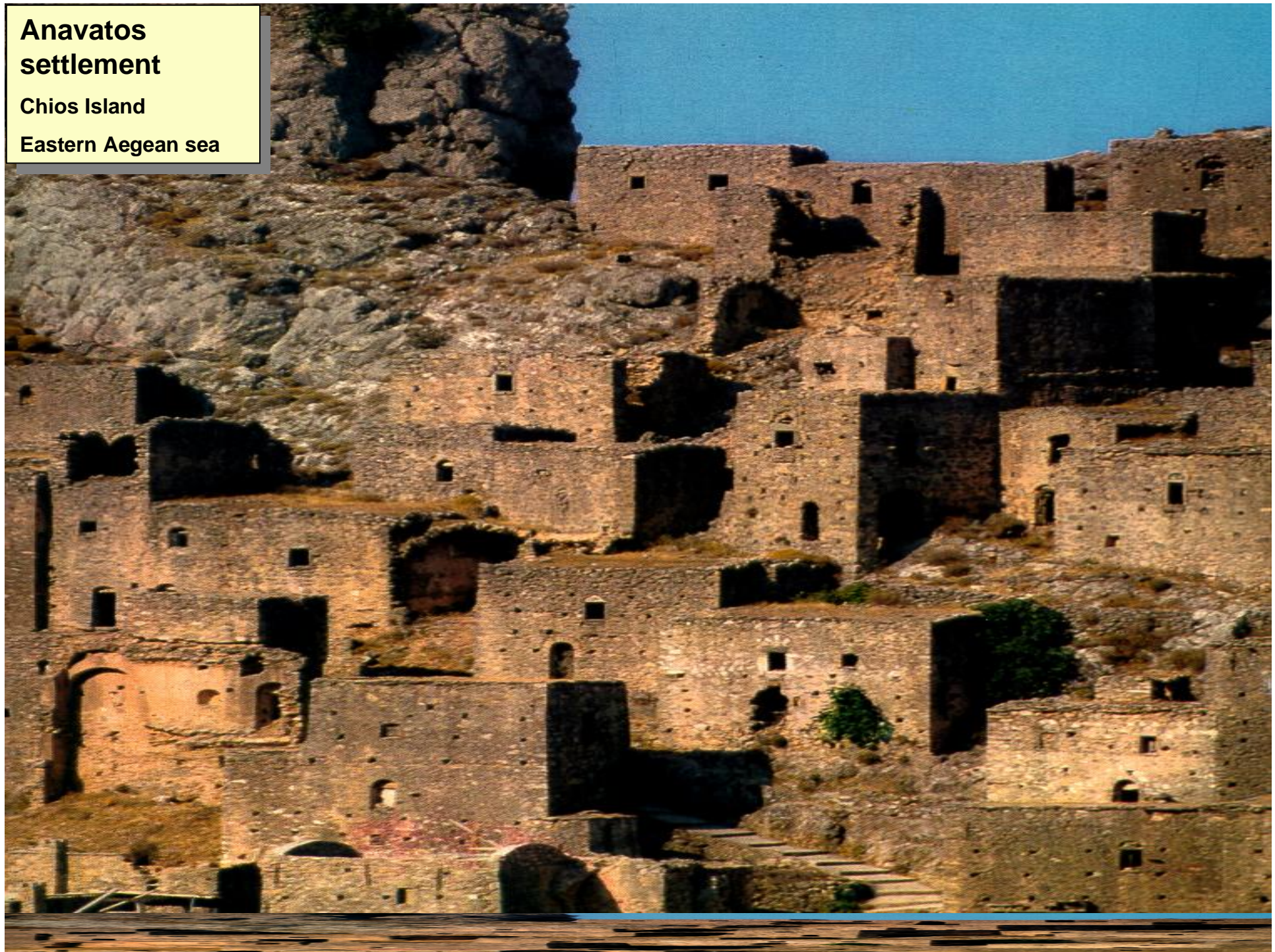
Aegean sea



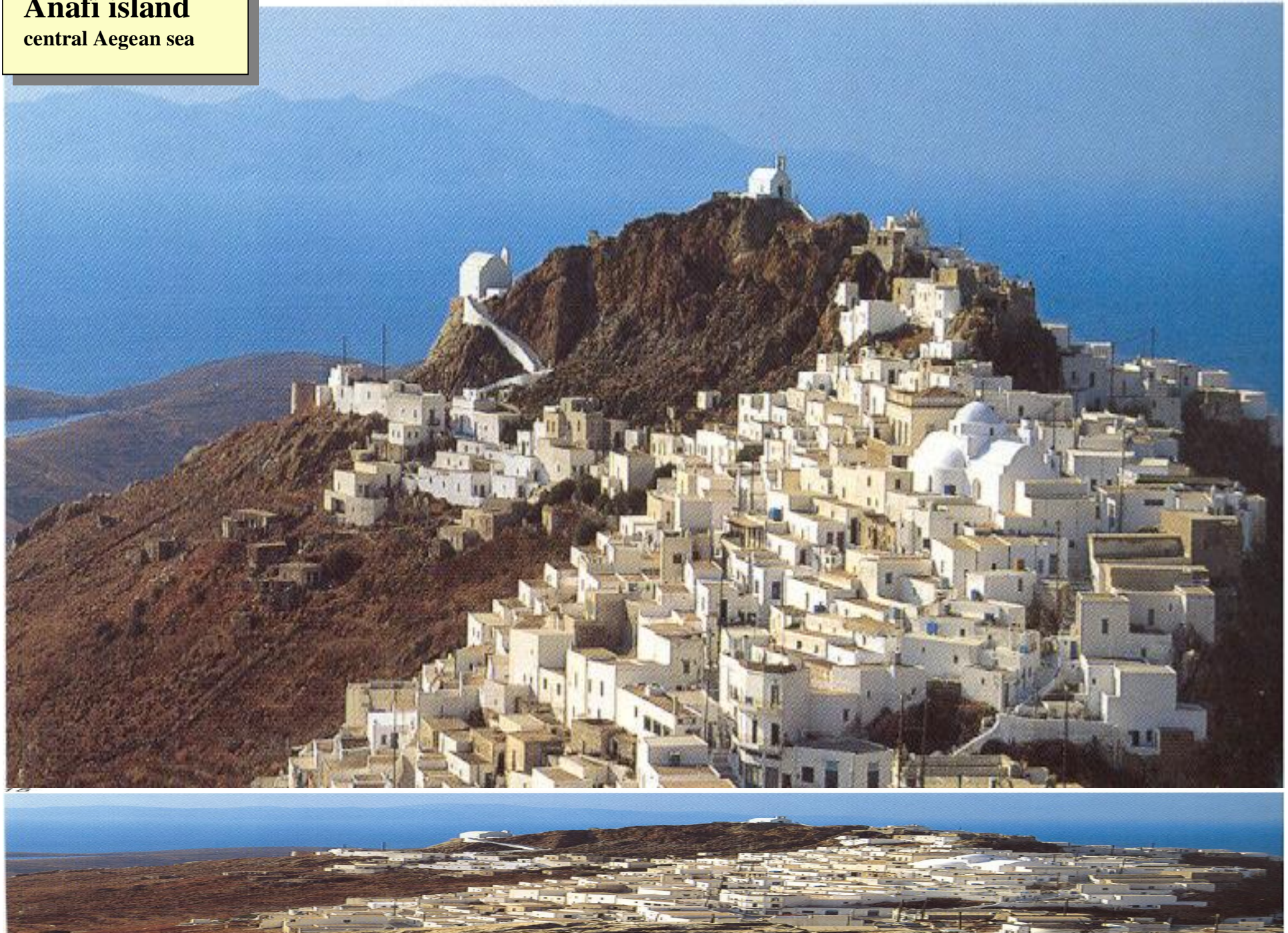
Anavatos settlement

Chios Island

Eastern Aegean sea



Anafi island
central Aegean sea



Olibi settlement

Chios island

Eastern Aegean sea



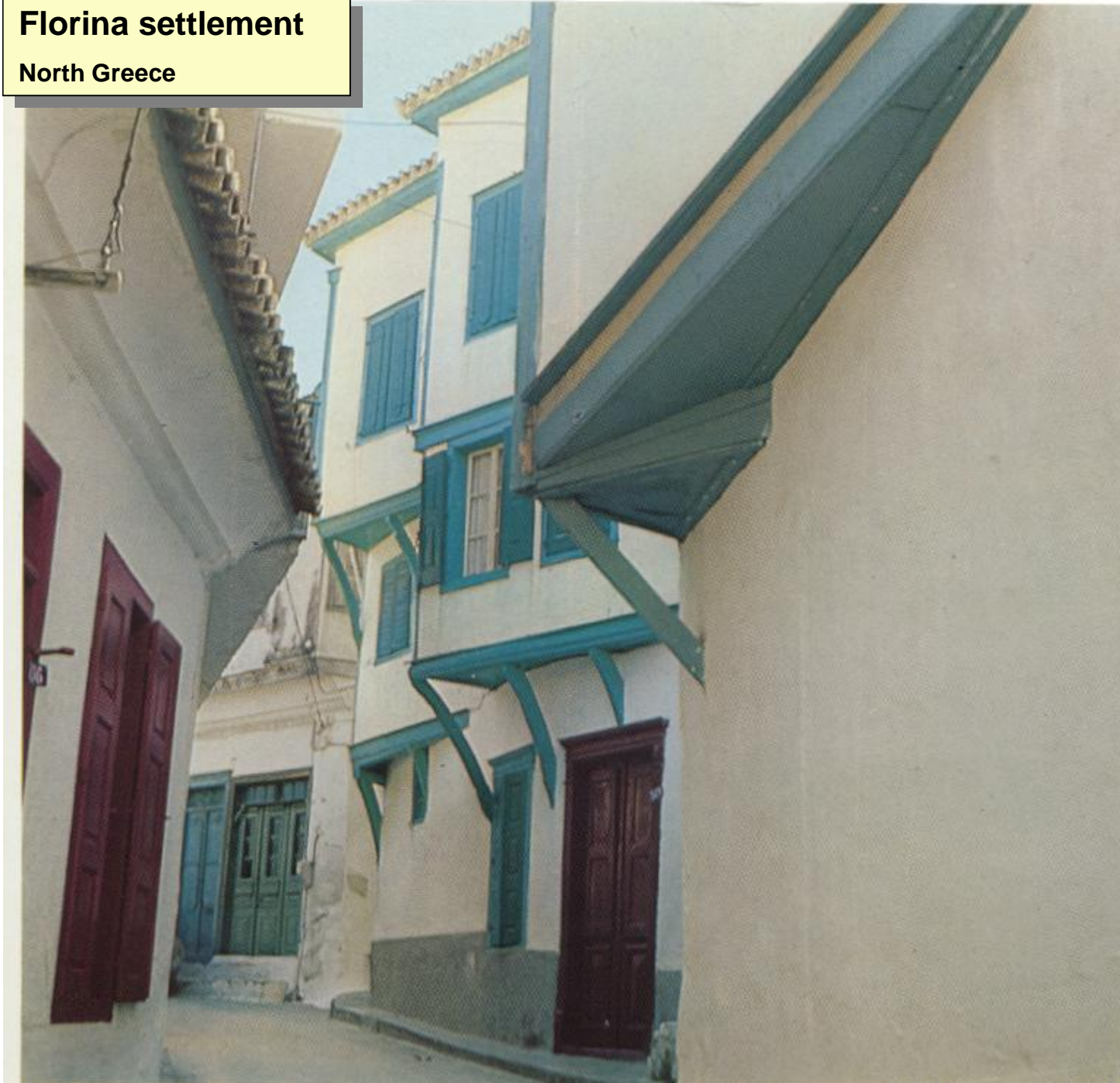
Patmos island

Central aegean sea



Florina settlement

North Greece



Nonetheless, **hybridization** that comes along with (re)constructions and neo-traditional projections -as well as the typologies just for consumption- does not constitute architectural heritage. Structures, that have only a specific beginning, but unknown duration and end, can not be embraced in the definition of architectural heritage. For now, they justify the term **simulacra**.

**OBVIOUS HETEROGENOUS HERITAGE
BETWEEN AUTHENTIC SETTLEMENTS**

Kastoria settlement

North Greece



Monemvasia settlement
South Greece



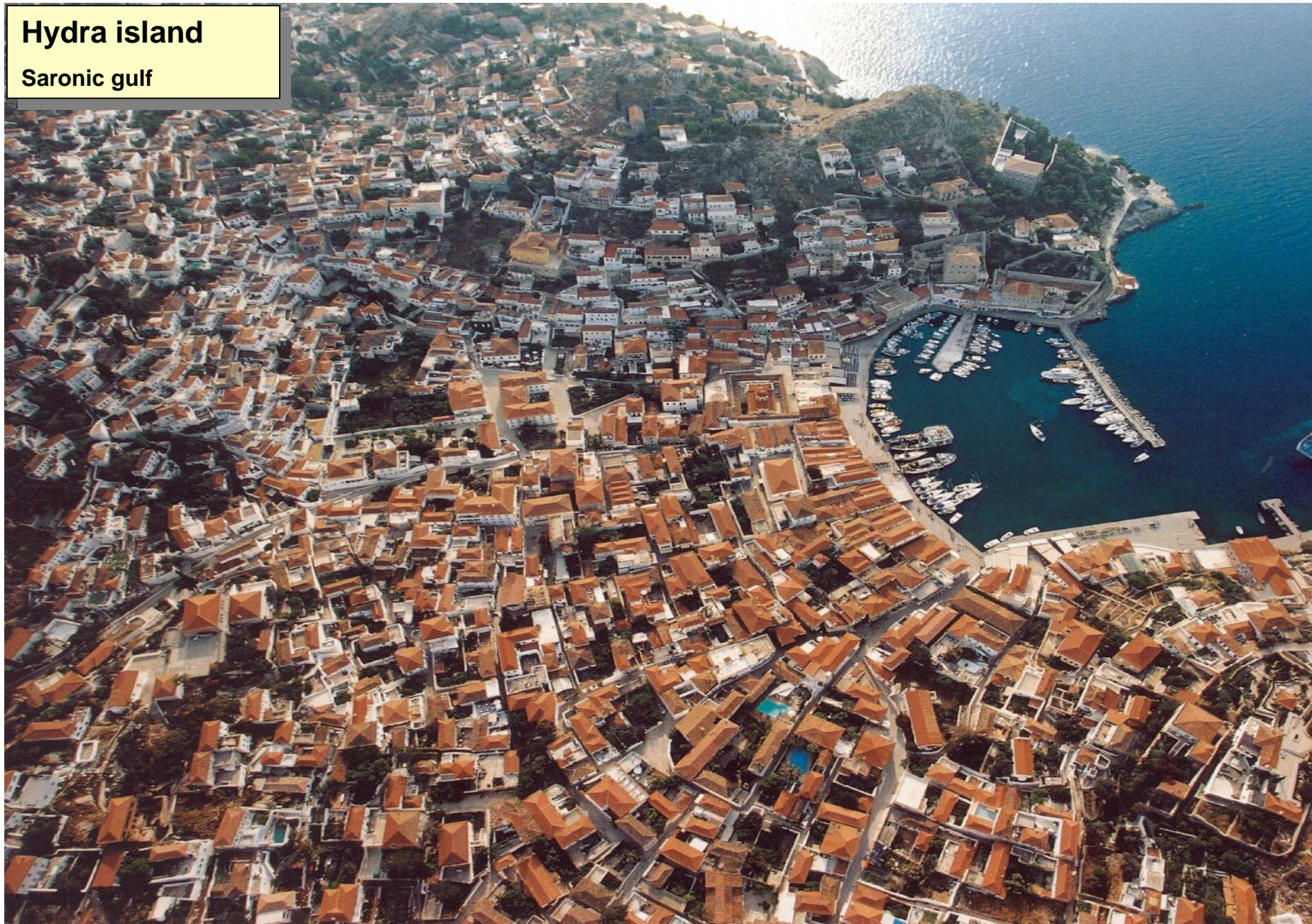
Sifnos island

Central aegean sea



Hydra island

Saronic gulf



and HYBRIDITY

Santorini island

Central Aegean sea



The intersections between opposite cognitive systems and now the network society in the context of a continual influx of information activate new hybridity due to the heterogeneity involved. What will eventually survive defines the prospect of architectural evolution and architectural heritage to ensuing generations. Greek architecture presents architectural elements distinct even between neighboring settlements documenting representations with an equivalent image between sign and reality.

The antithesis of the two cognitive systems in the current post-global age, continuous to be evident producing simulacra beyond control which deconstruct every significance. In other words, the difficulty of "place making under the rural diversity" is becoming more intense, as there is notable discord between “western linear” and “eastern concentric” logic and their coexistence leads to heterogeneous phenomena.

It seems however that to a larger extent than historic forms, it is the people who define place and the consequent individual atmosphere, the people who inhabit the place and perform a number of activities there.



Simulacra are copies of things that no longer have an original use, but they keep the traditional (rural) form pretending to be the result of the original needs that created the form. In this sense, any traditional reconstruction or representation can be included.



The question that remains is about the novel dichotomy between the “users” of the instant communication (product of western rational thinking) and the “receivers” of rural cultures, injecting information into contradictory contexts, once inaccessible, and transforming local individualities in theme parks and finally wrapping with some nostalgia the paradox “instant” amusement of contemporary tourism.

Tourism, by it self, as an experience expects staged authenticity, but also a “true” authenticity to exist. The last introduces **rural traditional architecture** as the “true” authenticity that “wraps” the package.

True authenticity in the rural environment does not include the exhaustive use of tourism



Or is it just **Tradition** wrapped with **Tourism**!



The questions:

1. Is it, that rural architecture (with its twofold nature: endogenous dynamic for development and traditional representation) functions as antidote to information technology?
2. Is it a general schema of hybridization of thought and action?
3. Is it simply the wrapping of some nostalgia induced by inertia at critical times, until a new organization of the built environment, currently invisible, arises?

The answers:

1. It seems that the “users” of the instant communication technology (western logic) are the best “users” (tourists) of the rural environment (receivers: eastern logic).
2. As a result, there is a general schema of current hybridization of thought and action that creates spaces using any available possibility (historical paths, instant uses, natural environment, every day life) in order to fulfill the current order of tourism.
3. Probably, in the era of globalization, there is a fusion between the eastern and the western logic, which the built environment is recording.









Considering that

identity constitutes a social good according to the specific historical paths of each region, from where “the desired” collective memory “is selected and projected” onto the built environment, in respect to the symbolism of the architectural heritage, and that

simulacra is every architectural representation,

rural Greek architecture provides the “authentication” certificate to invite

tourism

THANK YOU