

ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is the Venetian settlement in eastern Crete in the years 1204-1669.

This dissertation aims to develop the topic of Venetian settlement through extensive archaeological reconnaissance, topographic research, and analysis of historical sources. Based on the data collected during archaeological reconnaissance, a database was created, which was then used to perform a series of spatial analyses.

The research questions posed at the beginning of this work concerned the characteristic features of the settlement pattern in the Venetian period in eastern Crete and the factors determining this character.

Based on the collected data and analyses performed, it seems that the decisive factor in the location of settlements in the Venetian period in eastern Crete was the political factor, in particular the threat from pirates who often raided the coast of Crete. The threat of pirate raids from the sea significantly influenced settlement patterns in eastern Crete. As a result of the application of formal spatial analyses in this study, it was possible to prove that the vast majority of settlements were located at a considerable distance from the sea coast. Additionally, only 20% of the identified villages are located below the limit of 200 meters above sea level, and none exceeds the altitude of 800 meters above sea level.

Based on formal visibility analyses supported by field verification, it was established that most of the villages remained invisible from the coast. If a settlement was visible from the sea, it was at least several kilometres away and located in the higher regions of the island, which ensured relative safety for the population. These conclusions additionally emphasize the importance of the political situation in shaping the settlement pattern of east Crete in the Venetian period.

An important feature of settlement in eastern Crete is the location of villages on mountain slopes above plains used for agriculture. Flat land suitable for cultivation is not easily available in Crete, especially in eastern Crete. Therefore, it was most likely decided to establish settlements on mountain slopes so as not to occupy valuable land for cultivation, while ensuring easy access to these crops.

Lastly, an important element of the research, although not its main goal, was to document the state of preservation of monuments dating back to the Venetian period in east Crete. The development of tourism, and levelling land for crops or wind farms pose a significant threat to monuments. This was an important additional motivation for the presented research.