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2.



Landscape as cultural habitat

SANTORINI'S HISTORIC VINEYARD

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Santorini's vineyard is one of the oldest in Greece. Moreover, the local history and culture are intimately related to vineyards. The devastating earthquake, tourism and the lack of an overall protection strategy, have caused the abandonment and severe destruction of Santorini's vineyards.

This paper aims to define the vineyard's role in the contemporary local community and the process of its re-appropriation, to study whether vineyards can form a cultural landscape and to explore the ways of their protection against tourism.

The unique ecosystem of Santorini produces throughout its history, a few but fine agricultural products. The main among them has always been wine.

On this waterless and dry volcanic landscape with the distinctive microclimate, grow a few of the most exceptional varieties of greek vines.

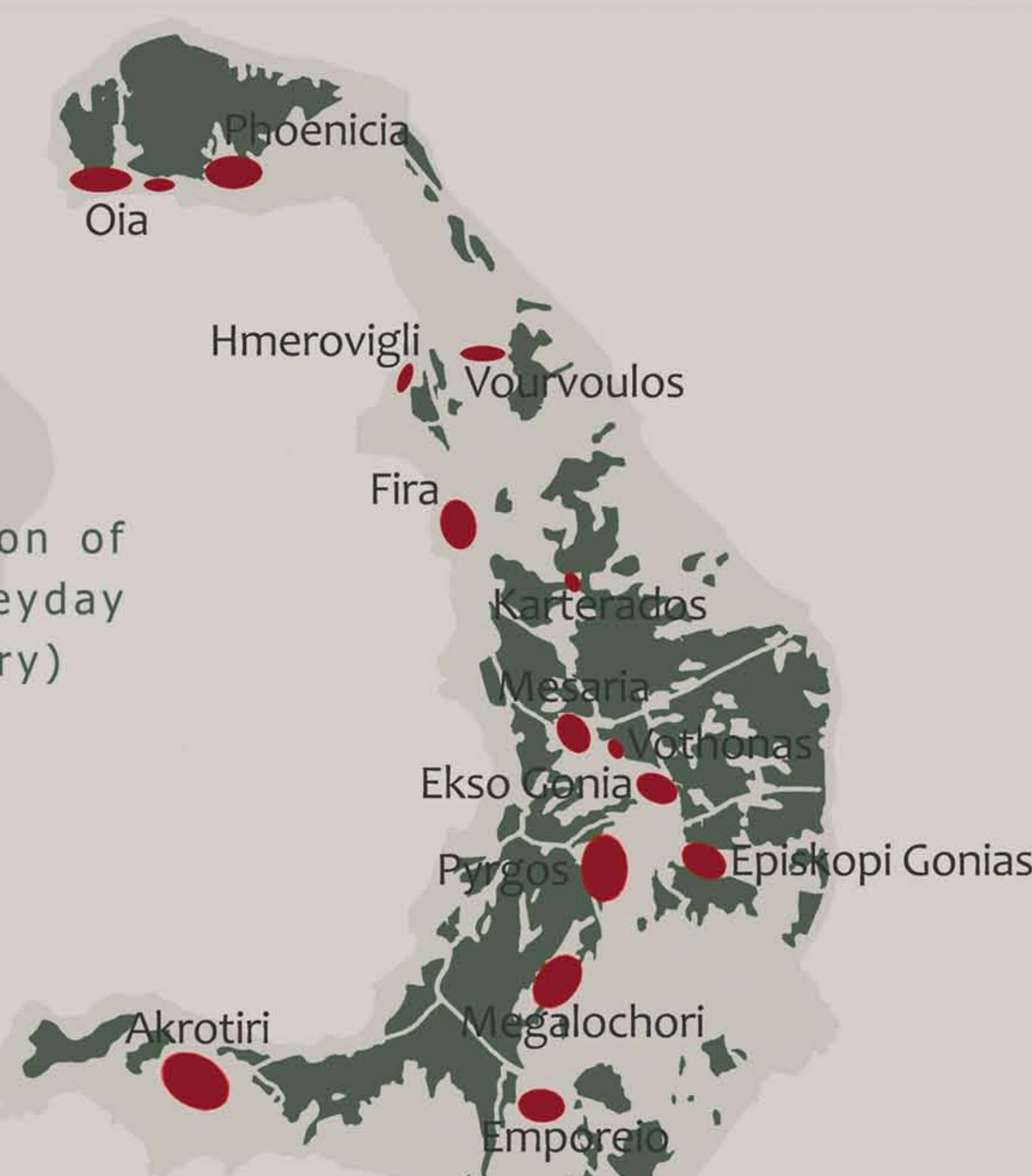
Santorini's vineyard has survived the phylloxera epidemic, which spread across Europe in the late 19th century and today it is included in the list of the few European vineyards whose vines hold their original rootstocks.

Characteristic feature of the island's vineyards is the peculiar pruning method is used by the local farmers, the so called "ampelies"; the vines lie close to the ground, pruned low in a shape resembling a round basket. The delicate grapes grow in the centre of the basket, in order to be protected from the sand thrown onto them by the strong winds of the Aegean Sea throughout the year. This method derives from thousands of years ago. Besides Santorini the only wine region in Europe that hosts as well

this method is a small volcanic island south of Sicily. Local farmers developed through the years this unique technique; nowadays, they still apply this method, thus "ampelies" are spread throughout the island.



Wine regions and concentration of "canaves" by village in the heyday of winemaking (late 19th century)



Based on archeological evidence, wine-making in Santorini dates back to the Prehistoric period, since when there are many indications for viticulture and vinification. However, it's not until mid-14th century, when local population began to systematically cultivate vineyards. Later, in the 17th century, the local wine reached the broad market of Europe and Russia. In that time, it was sold under a name that indicated its origin. Since the early 19th century, the vineyards were extended across the island due to the significant growth of wine-trading. In that time, the entire local population was engaged in the production and trade of wine. More of half of the island's vineyards were located in the central-southwest (adjacent to Emerovigli, Megalochori, Akrotiri, Pyrgos). On the southeast as well as the north part of the island lied a significant percentage of vines (adjacent to Emporeio, Vothonas, Ekso Gonia, Oia). In 1956 a devastating earthquake resulted in the abandonment of several wine regions in Santorini.

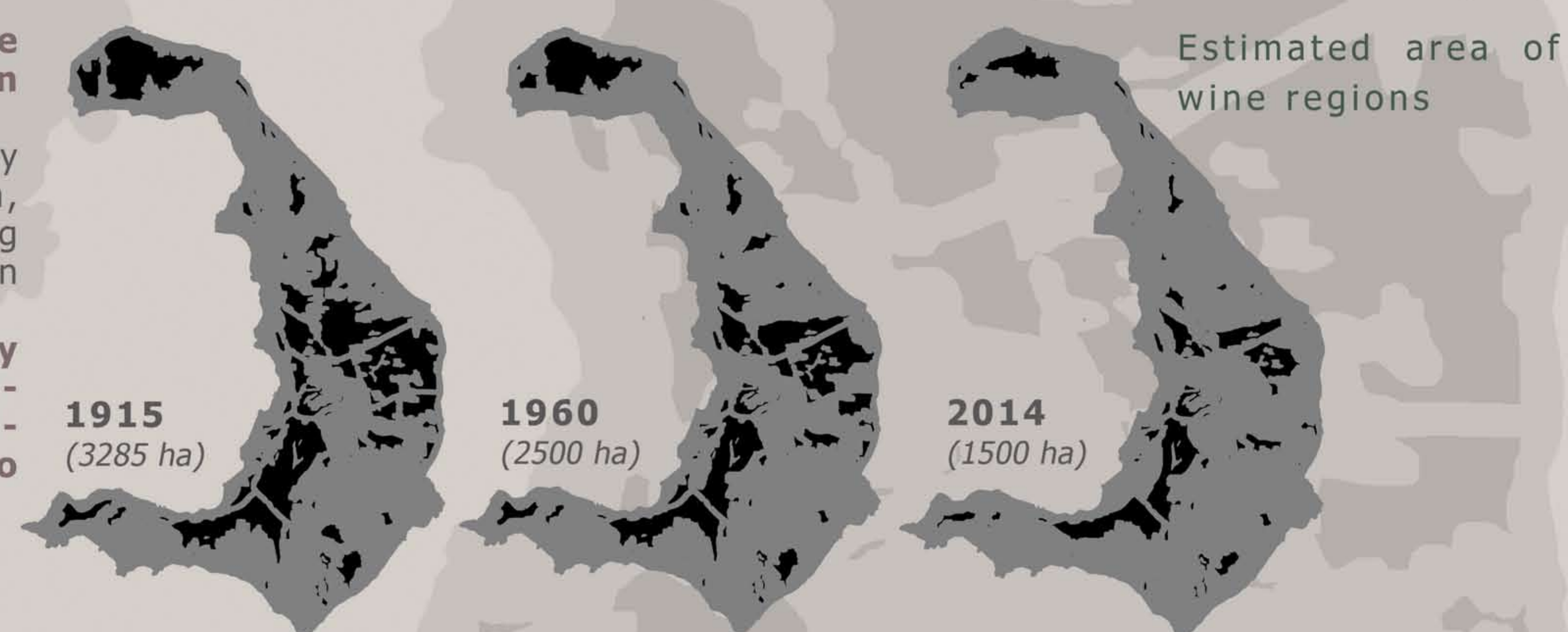
In 1970, Santorini was declared a region that produces "Appellation of Origin of Superior Quality" wines; while in 1981, the wine of Santorini was included in the European Union's list of "Quality Wines Produced in a Determined Region". Along with winemaking, a particular architectural typology for wineries was developed. Wine was produced and stored in subterranean establishments called "canaves". Such buildings, a large number of which still remains, were found all over the island. In some regions the number of "canaves" was higher than that of residences. Moreover, winemaking contributed also to the rapid development of shipping, while winetradition including certain customs linked to vine-growing and winemaking, can still be traced on the island. Beyond doubt vineyards are intimately related to Santorini's history and culture.

During the last decades Santorini has developed into one of the most popular tourist resorts in the world, confronting uncontrolled growth. Although vineyards and wine are the major part of history and culture on the island, since the 1980's the wine sector has been increasingly threatened by the island's ever-expanding tourism industry, which makes farming a less-attractive commercial object. Moreover, villages expanded in the expense of farmlands in order to respond to the massive call for lodging and recreation. Alteration and desecration of Santorini's unique landscape is now a fact. Although during the last decades the surface of vineyards under cultivation has dramatically decreased, winemaking has never stopped on the island.

In fact, lately the production of bottled wines has increased due to the upgrade of wine quality; local wineries export a significant amount of their production. Eventually, vines' price has increased.

Besides, initiatives by the local wine producers lead to an organized promotion of wine. At the

same time, the concept of wine tourism is developing as well on the island. It seems that viticulture has not only survived the adverse effects of tourism, but also tends to recover considering that lately the loss of vineyards has been stabilised. In conclusion, it appears that today the local community is in the process of re-appropriating the landscape; still there is a long way to be made.



Today, vineyards lie mostly in the central-southwest, from Emerovigli to Akrotiri, that is in regions that were historically the richest in viticulture.



Nowadays, the need for re-appropriating the unique landscape of Santorini as well as for protecting it against tourism, seems to be still essential.



In what way could re-appropriation and protection of landscape be succeeded in a place, where local population in its majority consider it as a commercial "product" available for exploitation in favour of tourism?

One way towards re-appropriation and protection would be by encouraging and supporting the re-cultivation of this unique natural landscape and by promoting the exceptional agricultural products. In this case, wine, which has always been the major product, should certainly lead this endeavor. Another approach would be the re-appropriation of vineyards as a part of the island's cultural heritage. Key-tool towards the preservation of vineyards as a whole, could be beyond doubt the declaration of them as a cultural landscape; Santorini is a distinctive example of a beautiful and unique natural landscape, which is intimately related to wine. The human activity on this landscape, covers thousands of years. Moreover, wine has continuously determined all aspects of life and always held a vital role in local history, economy and culture. Vineyards' landscape, formed by the unique primal pruning method of "ampe-

lies", illustrate the human activity from the ancient years till now and could be considered as part of European wine heritage. Moreover, vineyards are an example of a historical land-use, which is the result of the specific ecosystem and culture of Santorini. In conclusion, vineyards along with historic wineries (the number of which definitely reflects the dynamic of wine throughout the island's history) and intangible heritage linked to wine, could form an overall cultural landscape.

Nowadays, Santorini's vineyard calls for immediate and direct long-term protection against tourism. This requires a well-organised plan in order to define, protect, manage and promote vineyards as cultural heritage. In this context, vineyards' protection should also associate with the preservation of historic wineries and local traditions that are related to wine. Thus, the remaining vineyards will be protected from further destruction; those which are abandoned could be re-appropriated and the traces of those which are destroyed will be preserved.