

# THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE OF C. 365 AD ON THE ANCIENT HARBOURS OF KYTHERA AND ANTIKYTHERA (GREECE). (THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TEMPLE OF APHRODITE IN KYTHERA)

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**Keywords:** Kythera, Antikythera, sanctuary of Aphrodite, earthquake, harbour, tombs.

**Abstract:** The impact of the geological and marine environment on the two islands is discussed along with its changes, based on the data obtained by the archaeological research and the geological history of both islands. As a conclusion a hypothesis on the site where the sanctuary of Aphrodite on Kythera must have been located is suggested.

**Rezumat:** Pornind de la datele obținute din cercetările arheologice și din istoria geologică se discută impactul pe care mediul geologic și maritim l-a avut asupra celor două insule și schimbările care au avut loc în urma lui. În concluzie se propune o ipoteză asupra localizării sanctuarului Afroditei pe insula Kythira.

The islands of Kythera and Antikythera are located in the south-western region of the Greek maritime area (Fig. 1). Thus, they stand in a crucial, yet hazardous point in the Aegean Sea, where two sea routes intersect: the long coastal route that crosses the Aegean from E to W hugging the southern coast of mainland Greece, and the NS route crossing the Cretan Sea from Laconia in the N to Crete in the S (Fig. 2).<sup>1</sup>

The axis formed by Cape Maleas on the Peloponnesian coast, Kythera and Antikythera and Cape Grambousa and the north-western coast of Crete delimits the Aegean Sea to the south-western part and constitutes the point of contact with the south eastern Ionian Sea and the Western Mediterranean beyond. Along this axis in the Kythera Sea three narrow entrances are formed to and from the Aegean Sea: the Strait of Elafonesos, the Strait of Kythera and the Strait of Antikythera. These are three very significant maritime passages, through which the sea moves between the Aegean, the Ionian and the Western Mediterranean, which contributes to the formation of the maritime traffic in the Cretan Sea (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Kythera and Antikythera between Peloponnesian and Crete.

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<sup>1</sup> Mantzourani, Theodorou 1989; Papageorgiou 2002, pp. 23-85 and pp. 152-238; Ploigos 1971, 1976, 1987, 1991.