

Possibility for Tourism Development of a Medieval Fortress City "Mesta" in Chios Island, North-East Aegean Sea, Greece

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1. Introduction

In recent years the author conducts continuously comprehensive studies on diverse case-studies concerning synergistic effects and relationships among the following factors, as it were, tourism resources : 1) the treasurable & traditional settlements that have restored since the end of 20th Century, 2) varied cultural heritage, 3) regional gastronomy [enogastronomy] , 4) creation & arrangement of regional tourism attraction & activities, and tourism in Greece. The destinations as his research target are mainly in Crete, Cyclades islands, especially Oia which was one of the five medieval castle cities in Santorini island, and Peloponnese peninsula. These Greek destinations are so strong as to preserve noteworthy condition for their inbound tourism even in remarkably serious damage of Greek economic crisis in recent 5 years¹.

From this time forward the author will initiate to turn his eyes towards the other destinations as well in order to gather diverse and similar instances such as above regions.

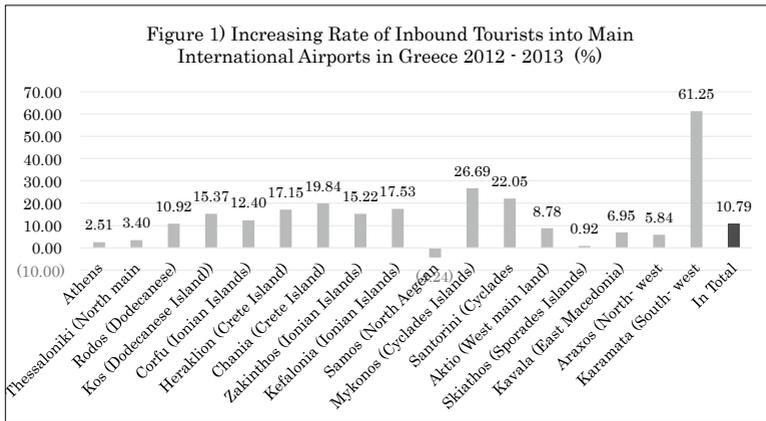
This paper aims to clarify the possibility for tourism development of Chios, an attractive island on North- East Aegean Sea, specifically approaching its medieval fortress city “Mesta”. The reason why this island will be focused is, firstly, the island of Chios is one of the most popular & historic islands of Northern Aegean Sea, Greece. Secondly, the traditional settlements inside the medieval city “Mesta” also have been restored by the great program of Hellenic Ministry of Tourism & Greek National Tourism Organization, during the period from 1976 to 1991, such as Oia city in Santorini island, which the author has already reported recent 3 years.² Thirdly, even now the other medieval fortress cities / villages similar to Mesta exist on this island such as Olympi, Pyrgi, Vessa and Armolia.

However, unfortunately, this time we don't have enough pages on this *Review*, so that the detailed analysis will be reported in another one, expecting to be ensured more accurately the author's conclusions. Therefore, this time basically the historical background of this island will be highlighted mainly.

2. Looking Back on the Greek Economic Crisis and Recent Recovery of Greek Tourism

In this late five years approximately the main theme of the author's work was to clarify whether TOURISM could play a significant role to resolve a “state level” economic & financial crisis or not, which has affected in Greece since the beginning of 2010. Particularly during years 2011-12 not only in western countries but also in Japan almost of all media used to give a severe drubbing against Greece. However, according to the annual statistical data of International Tourists Arrival towards Greece in 2013³, including the international cruises passengers' arrival, Greek tourism of that year indicates truly incredible increase compared with the previous

year "2012". Actually this data reports that the figure "16,946,543" tourists from abroad in 2012 has transformed into "20,111,406" inbound tourists in 2013, so to speak 18.68% up. Also concerning the gross revenue of Greek tourism industry in 2013, the domestic situation was considerably improved and displays 18.1% up compared to previous fiscal year⁴. In fact according to the figure (1), we can notice that the almost main Greek international airports had remarkable gain of inbound tourists.



As it is commonly known, in Japan as well, we are so pleased to have welcomed a great number of inbound tourists, indeed more than 10 million in 2013, because of *New Great Record* in the history of Japanese tourism. Nevertheless, Greece, this small European country whose population is absolutely less than that of Tokyo gained inbound tourists twice as many as Japan.

On the other hand, in accordance with "Thomas Cook", one of the largest European tour operator, they forecast that in 2014 Greece will be back to the winner among European destinations⁵. Also the European No.1 travel enterprise "TUI AG" expresses their optimistic perspective for the season 2014 that they will have massive booking for Greek Destinations more than 52% up compared to the previous year⁶. Moreover, lately a lot of

economists of worldwide level estimate that investment for Greek market has initiated already drastically, attracting their attention⁷. At all events we are able to say that Greece is on the way to get out of the strictest situation of above economic crisis and Greek tourism probably must have played important role for these 5 years.

3. The Common Characteristics of the Most Popular Tourist Destinations in Aegean Sea

On previous studies of the author the most popular Greek destinations that haven't been affected but demonstrated upward trend of inbound tourists, even in Greek Economic Crisis, are Crete island and Cyclades islands, especially Santorini & Mykonos. As far as the author investigated, he attained a conclusion that in these islands the historic cities of Byzantine – Venetian – Ottoman Empire periods (13 -- 19 Centuries), Chania, Retymnon, Fira and Oia, where the *Traditional Settlements* have been restored with modern & marvelous atmosphere and diverted to some other purposes, for example to attractive accommodations, café, restaurants, souvenir shops etc. In addition to that, in these cities visitors are charmed to purchase the rural, agricultural and Natural Cretan products, and furthermore they are able to be satisfied in quite healthy Cretan gastronomy which is regarded as an origin of “Mediterranean Diet” (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage).⁸

Additionally, this research revealed that in particular the village of Oia in Santorini island had groaned due to “Depopulation” in the middle of 20th Century. However, like a miracle, this small city “Oia” has transformed into the most attractive island destination for international travelers from all over the world through a restoration project by Greek National Tourism Organization (Athens) during years 1975 – 1992. In same period in the other 15 historic cities & villages over the country the similar restoration

programs were implemented as well as Oia of Santorini.⁹

4. New Remarkable Tourist Destination in Immediate Future

In above meaning the author is approaching anew the other medieval city restored by the same governmental project. It is the *city of Mesta in Chios island*, one of the North-east Aegean Islands. Indeed gradually year and year this island is getting more and more popular, but unfortunately up to the present it has not been scarcely featured in European tourism market as much as Cyclades and Dodecanese islands.

By the way, recently the tourism stakeholders in Chios island were really pleased to have heard the latest news that the unique Greek Cruise Corporation "Louis Cruises" is going into a new service to visit the other Aegean islands as well as Crete, Santorini, Mykonos, Rodos and Patmos¹⁰. And one of these new island destination is CHIOS. Probably in Japan it will be first time to introduce this island and especially a medieval historic city

"Mesta" on this Review. Firstly we will initiate reporting from the geographical location and the historical background of this island as follows.



Figure 2) Map of N.E.Aegean Islands, inside the circle is Chios



Figure 3) Map of Chios Island, inside the circle is the city of Mesta

5. Geographical location of Chios Island

Chios is a Greek island which is located in Northern- Eastern Aegean Sea and considerably close to the western coast of the Asia Minor, Turkey, as referential maps (Figure 2 & 3)¹¹. There is international sea route ship everyday basically in all seasons between Chios Town (Greek side) and opposite Turkish town “Chesme” (small distance from “Smyrna”- in Turkish today “Izmir”), which takes just only one hour. And recently, a cultural interchange between Chios and Turkish mainland is getting more and more actively.

6. History of Wide-area Eastern Aegean Islands Including Chios

Within the wider region of the Aegean Sea, the islands on this sea comprise a separate environment. Since Prehistoric Age, the sea that surrounds a lot of islands had functioned as an isolating factor towards their inhabitants protecting them from undesired invasions or influxes of populations, on the other hand as an accessible channel of communication and interaction as well, owing to relatively short maritime transportation between an island and the other. Also because the islanders became users *par excellence* of these routes, their role in development of trade and commerce consequently caused the large-scale expansion of Aegean Civilization & Culture.

Techniques of shipbuilding and seafaring had been mastered already by the islanders at least in the second half of 2nd millennium BC¹², so to speak “Neolithic Age”.

Throughout their history, the Eastern Aegean islands have been in direct contact with the large landmasses opposite them, coastal zones of which were their *lebensraum*. This is indicated by the archaeological evidences and holds true despite the creation of artificial administrative boundaries, which vainly try to replace the cultural ones. In a manner of

speaking, these islands exercised and received important influences, thus forming their own distinctive cultural identity¹³.

7. History of Chios

According to some claims, the name "Chios" is Phoenician origin and means "mastic". Excavation has shown that the island was settled through the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, but after the demise of the Mycenaean world, Ionians from Histiaia in Euboea migrated here under the leadership of Amphicles, who is mentioned as the island's first king. The main centers appear to have been where Chios Town now stands, and at the bay of Emporeio, ancient central city of commerce, on the island's southeast coast. Because of its origins, Chios was one of the twelve cities united in the Ionic Confederacy, whose common sanctuary was the Panionion on the promontory of Mycale, opposite Samos island. These cities soon attained a high degree of civilized prosperity, in addition the art and literature thrived in them as nowhere else in the Greek world, save Athens. The earliest exponent of this flowering was Homer, who was claimed as native of Chios Island. But a lengthy list of Chiot thinkers, artists and authors followed, including the tragic poet Ion, the historian Theopompus and sophist Theocritus. In the 6th century BC, the island had a celebrated school of sculpture, and Glaucus of Chios (fl. 490 BC) is said to have invented the art of soldering metal.

Thucydides calls Chios the greatest *Polis* of Ionia and its citizen among the wealthiest of all Greeks. The city was conquered by Persia in 546 BC, and in 499 BC joined revolt against Persian domination. The Greek fleet was defeated at the Battle of Lade in 494 BC, despite the valour of the Chiot squadron of 100 ships. Miletus was sacked, and Chios also appears to have suffered some destruction. In 477 BC, after the defeat of the Persian invasions, Chios encouraged Athens to set up the Delian League, and

remained a member of it until 412 BC. In this year Chios raised in revolt against Athens, but unfortunately was defeated. In 333 BC the island was captured by a general of Alexander the Great. In the 1st century BC her famed wealth led to her being pillaged by the forces of Mithridates, the great enemy of Rome, and it is recorded that the Chiots (people in Chios), when subjugated by Mithridates, were delivered up to their own slaves to be carried away captive to Colchis. Chios regained its independence in 86 BC, and this was respected by the Roman emperors until Vespasian incorporated it into the Province of the Islands.

Hereafter the history of Chios island becomes obscure during some periods unfortunately. Then a Christian community was established, whose patron saint was Isidore, a 3rd-century Roman military martyr of the reign of Decius. Imperial Byzantine interest in the Monastery of “Nea Moni”, which was registered into World Cultural Heritage list of UNESCO in 1990, brought an architectural and religious golden age to the island, interrupted by its occupation at the hand of the Turkish emir of Smyrna. It was freed in 1092 by Alexius Comnenus, however, was taken by the Venetian doge Vitale Michiel in 1172. The partition of territories of 1204, after the Fourth Crusade, awarded the island to the Latin emperor in Constantinople, who proved unable to hold it, and the treaty of Nymphaion in 1261 placed it officially under Genoese control eventually.

And then there followed invasions by Franks, Catalans and Turks, but by the middle of the 14th century, Genoese domination was quite secure under the



Photo 1) a fortress of Genoese period, Chios Town, by T.Ishimoto in July, 2013

shield of the Giustiniani Family. Because they embarked on a significant project in which they protected the whole island, specifically forming various fortified settlements and villages, which produced the mastic crop, with castles and towers¹⁴.

The Genoese remained in this island up to 1566, when the Turks, under Piali Pasha, captured Chios. Thereafter, until 1821, despite several uprisings, Chios enjoyed a measure of semi-independence. At the beginning of the Greek War for Independence against Turks in 1821, the Samians fatally pressed the Chiots to join them in their revolt. In 1822 the Turks inflicted a dreadful and disproportionate punishment: it is said that they massacred over 20 thousand islanders and deported or enslaved twice that number. Fortunately, but, only the Mastic Villages were spared without serious damage. Eugene Delacroix immortalized the incident in his famous painting "*Le Massacre de Scio*", which was exhibited in the Grand Salon of the Louvre in Paris less than two years later.

Chios never fully recovered from the incident of 1822. In June of the same year the Greek admiral Konstantinos Kanaris avenged his compatriots by defeating the Turkish flagship with its commander, Kara Ali, aboard. This proved to be definite victory against Turks. However, the city of Chios was destroyed and those Chiot who had escaped the massacre had already fled abroad. Moreover, in 1881 a strong earthquake struck so that approximately 3.5 thousand people of this island died as well as island's precious architectural heritage.

In 1912 at length the island was liberated by the Greek fleet and became part of the Greek state¹⁵.

8. A Medieval Fortress City "Mesta", Its Origin and Mastic Manufacture

As it is mentioned above, even in terrible tragedy in 19th Century, the Mastic villages were defended. And among these villages "Mesta" is a

typical & adamant medieval one, fortified with firm city wall which is shaped pentagon.

It seems probable that Mesta was founded towards the end of 14th century or the beginning of 15th century when Chios fell down under Genoan occupation (1346- 1566). During this period, Chios was governed by the Genoan commercial company “Maona” that belonged to Giustiniani family. Under the rule of this family, agricultural production became quite systematic (especially the “Mastic” production), commerce developed, the island was fortified and defense organized as well. And from the view point of emergency for pirates’ or the other enemies’ invasions, the Genoan administration had built fortified settlements around large defense towers, concerned about the local population (mainly mastic workers)¹⁶.

Incidentally, what is “Mastic”? Mastic is a kind of evergreen trees (*Pistacia lentiscus*), besides low, dense and ‘sculpted’ in form, with dark leathery leaves and rough, corrugated bark, from which it spontaneously weeps a pale yellow, largely



Photo 2) Mastic resin wept by hurting the tree.
by T.Ishimoto in July, 2013

odorless, resin or hardened sap. This ‘weeping’ can be promoted by making incisions (called ‘hurts’) in the trunk and branches of the mature tree and by harvesting the resin from June through to September; ‘hurting’ too young a tree, however, inhibits its growth. The sap coagulates as it drips from the cut. It is collected, rinsed in barrels, and dried: a second cleaning is done by hand. A mature tree will yield 4.5kg of mastic gum in one

season.

Mastic was well known in antiquity as a treatment for duodenal ulcer and heartburn. But its most enduring quality has been its power, when masticated (same etymology), to neutralize and scent the breath. This was widely appreciated in the harems of Arabia and Turkey; 18th-century reports suggest that the Ottoman sultan kept half of the annual harvest from Chios for the seraglio in Top Kapi- a quantity equivalent to about 125 tons. The flavor of mastic is initially bitter, but after a few minutes of chewing it softens and releases a light, cedar- like freshness, which remains in the mouth for about 15-20 minutes.



Photo 3) Mastic products, "Mastic chewing gum" with various citrus taste, in "Chios Mastiha Growers Association factory", by T.Ishimoto

sweets', Mastic chewing gum, various medicated products, healthy seasoning etc. Something of a renaissance in the marketing of mastic has occurred in the last decade, and it is now sold as a nostalgically packaged luxury items, both on the island and further afield

Actually on Chios island its distinctive flavoring / seasoning is being sampled and manufactured mainly in large-scale factory with the newest technology facility of "Chios Mastiha Growers Association" in many ways: principally in the local grape spirit or else in a variety 'spoon



Photo 4) various products made from Mastic in Chios, Chios Agri-tourism Fair Jul. 2013, Photo by T.Ishimoto

in Greece¹⁷. Recent years also, in fact, a lot of shops dealing in “Mastic” are being deployed in the world as well as European countries. Actually this food material “Mastic” is one of the most important drag force of Chiotic and Greek economy today.

9. The Governmental Project for Restoration in Mesta

The city of Mesta was restored by the governmental program of the Greek National Tourism Organization (hereafter “G.N.T.O.”), which belongs to the Hellenic Ministry of Tourism, with the objective to include and transfer to G.N.T.O. as many private houses as possible, since the range of intervention would contribute to the operational efficiency and

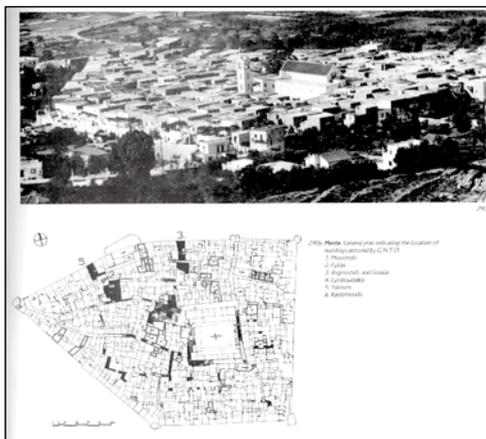


Figure 4) Photo & structure of Mesta (Preservation & Development of Traditional Settlements 1975- 1992, Cultural Heritage Showcase, p.119)



Photo 5) Right side, remains of a defense tower in this fortress town “Mesta”, by T.Ishimoto

financial success of the project. Besides, an extensive intervention would create more cohesive clusters of restoration and rehabilitation than dispersed individual buildings. Thirty-four usufruct contracts were

signed in 1976, and an additional one in 1977 as first phase of the program.

During this first phase (1976 - 1979), all necessary data (topographic and architectural plotting, photographic documentation, etc.) was collected and the first architectural restoration and arrangement projects concerning the conversion of 7 family dwellings to guest houses, were prepared.



Photo 6) Stone-built fortified town, Mesta, by T.Ishimoto

In the following, second phase (1981-1984), G.N.T.O. designed, executed and financed the arrangement of the ground- floor of the Community building into an 80 persons capacity restaurant & café. During the period 1984 - 1988, the above

Organization financed the paving of the central square. Simultaneously it also contributed to the amelioration of public lighting with appropriate units modelled on traditional, local forms of lighting. In addition in 1986 - 1987, 4 guest houses were returned to their owners in order to be operated to the guests / tourists. Also some other facilities was operated by Chios Women's Agri-touristic Cooperative¹⁸.

That is a brief description of the G.N.T.O.'s Project for Mesta City's restoration.

10. Conclusion

Even now in Mesta, year after year, various traditional stone-build houses & buildings are being restored and transformed into modernized-traditional accommodation facilities, shops, restaurant, café etc.

Furthermore, the attractive touristic activities & optional tours are organized by regional travel corporations, such as Mastic harvesting experience, organic farming, Mediterranean cooking lesson, folk dance lesson etc.

According to the above all research, it could be mentioned that the “Four Precious Factors / Tourism Resources” for enhancing the dynamism in

tourist destinations, to which the author referred in above “Introduction”, in the concrete, 1) the treasurable & traditional settlements that have restored since the end of 20th Century 2) varied cultural heritage 3) regional gastronomy [enogastronomy] 4) creation

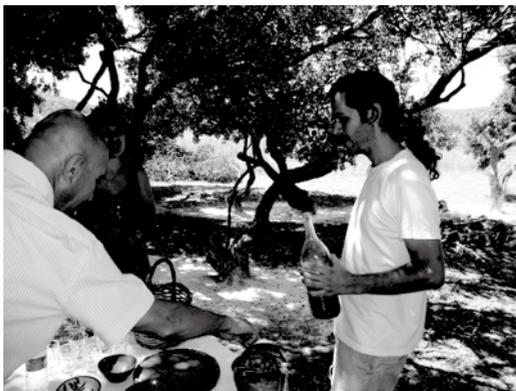


Photo 7) Mastic harvesting activity organized by “Masticulture”, Photo by T.Ishimoto

& arrangement of regional tourism attraction & activities, are all comprehended in Mesta as well as historic cities in Santorini and Crete. Especially in the meaning of cultural and historic property, in Chios there is also a site of UNESCO World Cultural Heritage, the Greek Orthodox Monastery “Nea Moni”, as it was mentioned in *Chapter 7*.

From these viewpoints the medieval fortress city “Mesta” and the island of Chios as well must have considerably high quality and possibility in order to be bloomed as a new next Greek tourist destination. Probably they will be extremely popular destination in immediate future.

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(要旨)

ギリシャ北東エーゲ海ヒオス島の中世城塞都市 「メスタ」における観光発展の可能性

石 本 東 生

近年筆者は、ギリシャ経済危機のネガティブインパクトにも拘らず、外国人観光客の入込数を減少させることなく、むしろ増加を見せているというギリシャ国内のデスティネーションにおける「強い観光力」について研究を続けてきた。そしてそれらのデスティネーションを調査・分析した結果、各地の「強い観光力」に共通する要因は、1) 20世紀終わり頃から復元・再生された貴重な伝統的建造物集落であること 2) 豊富な文化遺産の存在 3) 地域ならではの食文化（ワイン等の飲料も含めて）が豊かに提供されること 4) 地域における参加体験型のオプションツアーが準備されていること - などである。そしてこれらの要因を複数のコンビネーションで持ち合わせているデスティネーションほど、観光地としてより安定した持続可能性を堅持していると言ってしまうのではない。

これまで筆者は南エーゲ海地域の島々（サントリーニ島、クレタ島）、およびペロポネソス半島南部のデスティネーション（ラコニア地方、マニ地方）などをフィールドとして調査を続けてきたが、今回は注目すべき潜在力を秘める北東エーゲ海諸島の一つ「ヒオス島」における中世城塞都市「メスタ」にフォーカスする。

ヒオス島はその独特の地理的特性、すなわち1) 周囲を海に囲まれて防衛戦略的にも好立地であったこと、2) エーゲ海においてクレタ島、エヴィア島について3番目に大きく農耕にも適していたこと、さらには 3) 小アジアの西海岸および東部エーゲ海の島々と非常に近距離にあるため、他地域との文化的交流も盛んであったことなどから、先史時代より絶えず繁栄を築いてきた。

要旨

特に13世紀半ば以降16世紀後半にかけては、ジェノバ人の「ユスティニアニ家」がこの島を支配し、現在でも世界に他の生産地例を見ない「マスティハ」というウルシ科の常緑樹の生育で地中海世界に名を馳せるようになった。というのも、この樹の幹から採取される独特の樹液は、中世より十二指腸潰瘍や胸焼け、口臭除去にも優れた効果のある医薬として大変貴重な生産品とみなされていたからである。ユスティニアニ家は、これらマスティハの生産地と農業従事者たちを外敵から護るため、島内の各地に堅固な要塞都市を築いた。その代表的な都市が「メスタ」である。

その後16世紀後半から19世紀初めにかけて、ヒオス島はオスマントルコの支配を甘受することとなるが、1822年には2万人以上の島民が犠牲となる大虐殺がオスマン王朝によって引き起こされた。さらにはその倍以上の人々が島から追放され、あるいは奴隷として同国に連行された。近代には、実にこのような悲惨な歴史をヒオスは経験した。しかしながら、「マスティホホリア」と呼ばれるマスティハ生産地の都市・集落だけは、ジェノバのユスティニアニ家が築いた堅固な城塞により、幸いにも甚大なダメージを蒙ることは免れた。

その大虐殺と同年の1822年、ギリシャは当時の海軍最高司令官コンスタンティノス・カナリスの指揮により、オスマントルコとの厳しい戦いを闘い抜き、ヒオスは晴れて独立を勝ち取ることができた。

その後1976年以降88年の間には、ギリシャ観光省ギリシャ政府観光局アテネ本部は、ヒオス島メスタの城塞都市において、古びた伝統的建造物の復元・再生事業に着手し、ゲストハウスやカフェレストランへの転用を促進してきた。今や宿泊施設も拡充、マスティハ畑で観光客が「マスティハ樹液採取」を体験できるツアー、有機農業体験、ギリシャ料理レッスンなどのアクティビティも豊富に準備するなど、ハードとソフトの両面からの「観光資源」を次々に生み出してきている。すなわち、冒頭の『「強い観光力」のデスティネーションに共通する4つの要因』を、メスタはすべて満たしている。

その意味で、今まではそれほど注目を集めることのなかった「ヒオス島」そして中世城塞都市「メスタ」は、今後近い将来に、多くの観光客を魅了す

ギリシャ北東エーゲ海ヒオス島の中世城塞都市「メスタ」における観光発展の可能性

る新たなデスティネーションとして名を馳せる可能性を十分に備えていると言えるであろう。