

# THE LATE ROMAN ANCHORAGE OF CAPE PETOUNDA, CYPRUS

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## Abstract

The topic of this thesis is the underwater survey that took place at Cape Petounda on the Southern Coast of Cyprus in Summer 2016 (Fig.1). A total of forty-five stone anchors were found, marked on a geo-referenced map, and classified according to their shape and number of holes (Fig.2). During the underwater survey two lead stocks of wooden anchors were lifted, while scattered pottery sherds, dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, were found during a brief survey on the coast.

In order to place these findings into their maritime context, this thesis discusses the surrounding coastal sites that were active during Late Roman period and the geographical features of the cape. Particular focus is placed on the topography of the modern landscape and the impact of erosion to coastal changes, as demonstrated by aerial orthophotos.

The anchors discovered in the underwater survey suggest that an anchorage for small ships used to exist at Cape Petounda during antiquity. Apart from a shelter from bad weather, the site could have been used as the fishing or trading harbour of a coastal settlement potentially linked to the recently excavated Early Christian Baptistery (Fig.3). Located close to the anchorage, this Episcopal building must have stood as a landmark on the cape and could have been an important ecclesiastical site in the first years of Christianity on the island. As the terrestrial findings of this work are dated to the same period as the baptistery, they set the historical framework of the anchorage in the Late Roman period. During this period, it seems that a seafaring network of small scale ports and shelters would have facilitated the trade of agricultural and mineral goods of the island. Petounda's anchorage, on the sea route along the south coast of Cyprus, could have been part of this network that contributed to a period of flourishing economic and commercial activity in Cyprus.

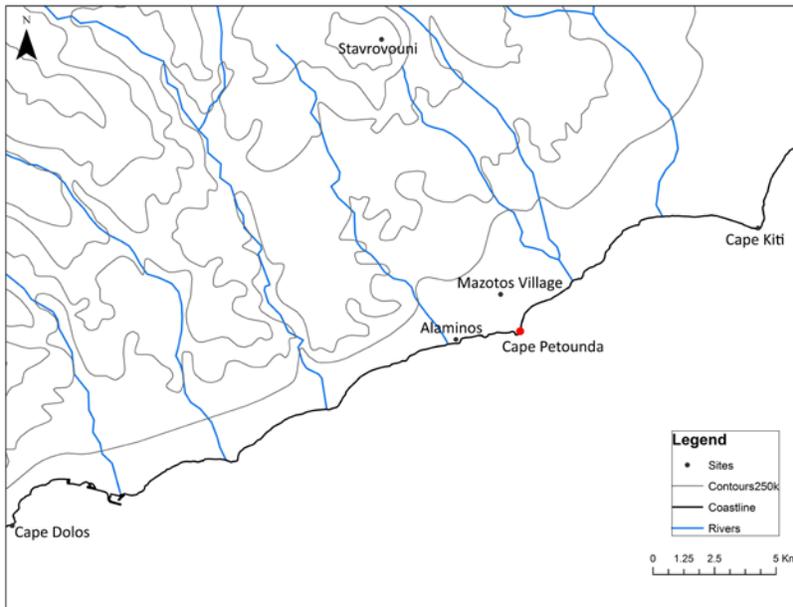


Fig.1: Map of the Mazotos coast, between Cape Dolos (on the West) and Cape Kiti (on the East). Stavrovouni Mountain is also marked as the prominent landmark of the area (Map & GIS by Niki Kyriakou, University of Cyprus)

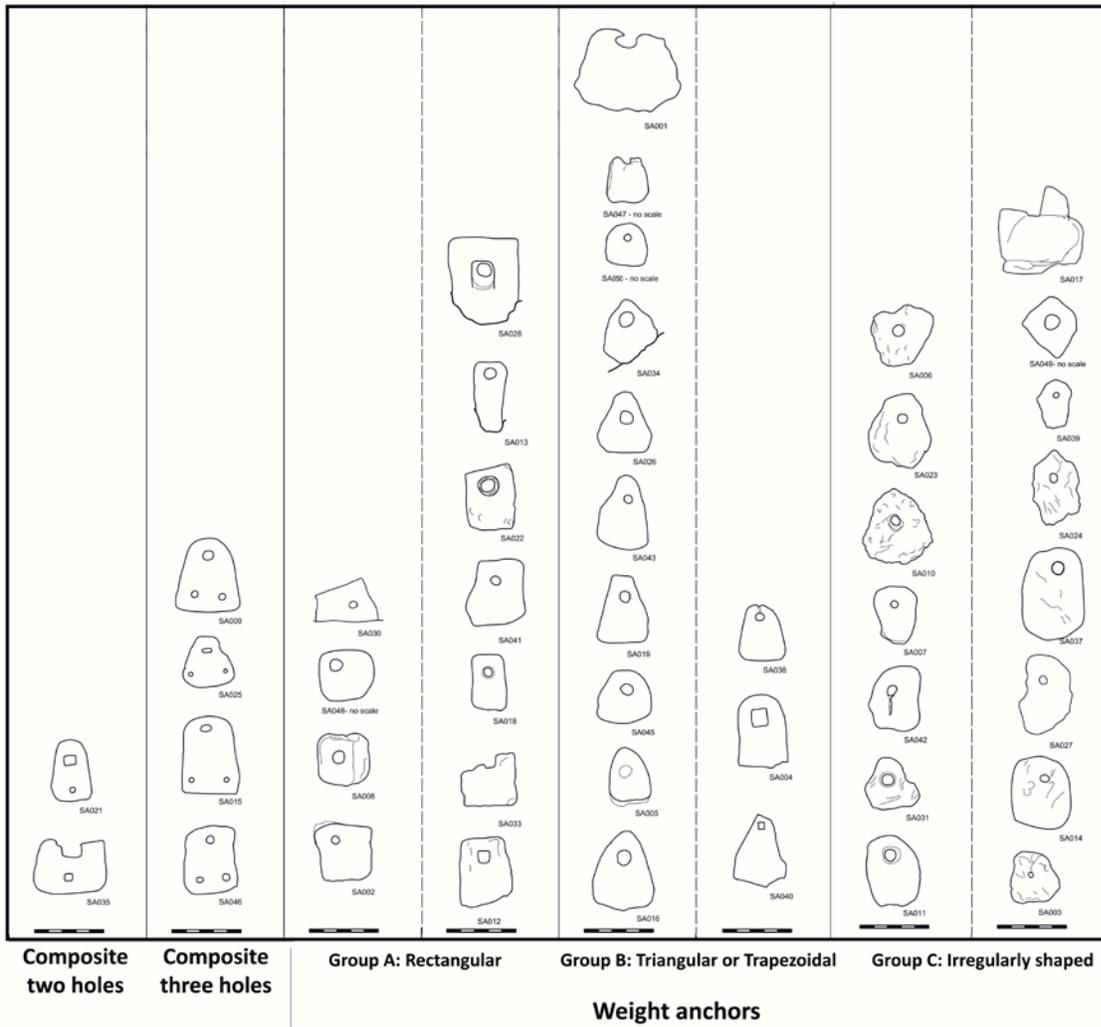


Fig.2: Typological classification of the stone anchors found at Cape Petounda (Drawing & illustration Lefkothea Papakosta, University of Cyprus)

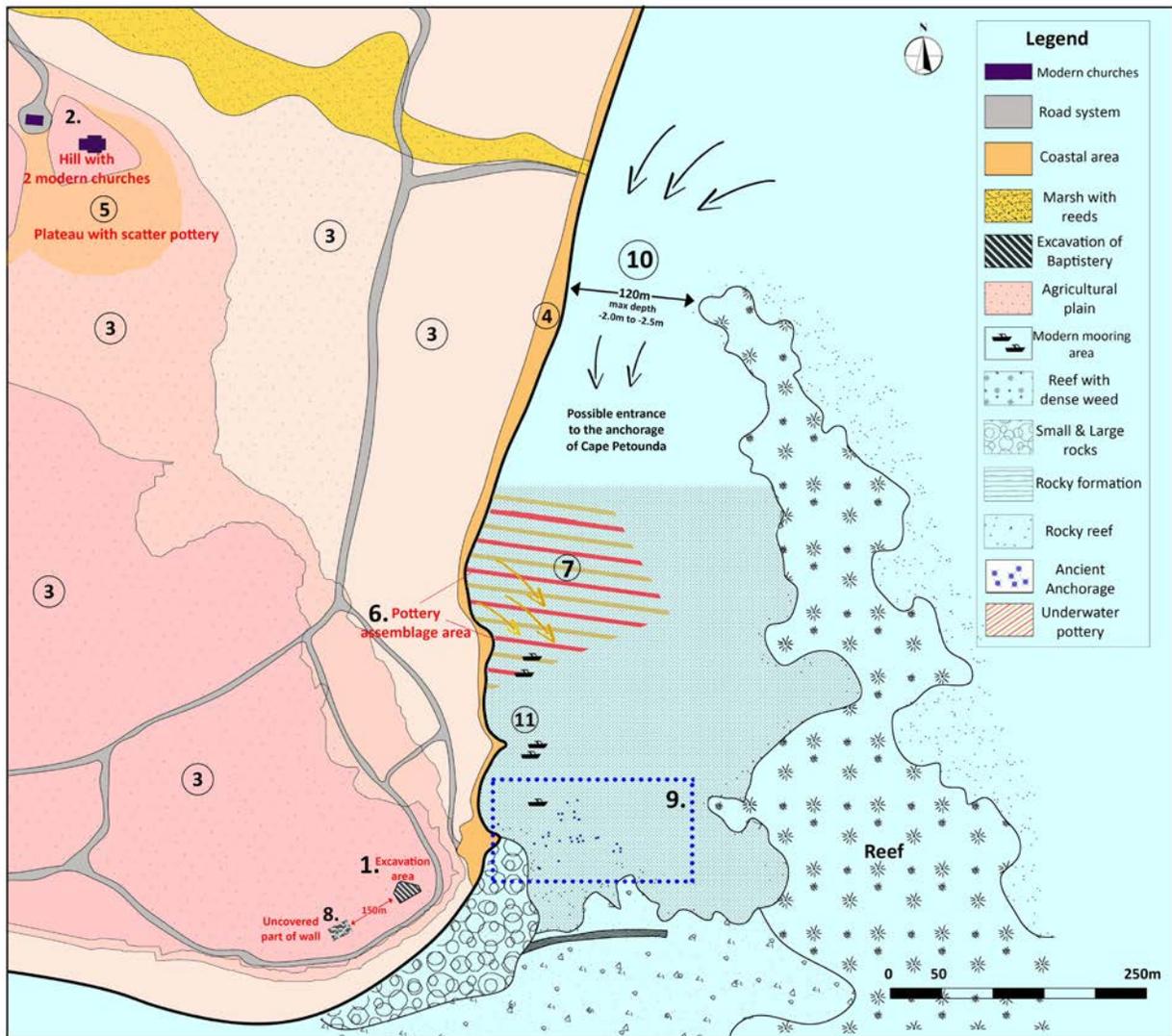


Fig.3: Map of the Cape Petounda area marking sites of special interest: **1.** The Baptistery; **2.** The hill with the two modern churches (NW); **3.** Farmed fields; **4.** Beach of pebbles and sand; **5.** Area with scattered pottery at the base of the hill; **6.** Pottery assemblage by the sea (E); **7.** Area with material drifted from the erodible shore to the sea; **8.** Location where part of a wall was uncovered, on the SW of the excavation; **9.** Ancient Anchorage; **10.** Possible entrance to the anchorage; **11.** Modern mooring sites (Drawing & illustration Lefkothea Papakosta, University of Cyprus)