Kavousi
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Kavousi is the name of a modern village located on the northern coast of eastern CRETE. A number of ancient sites found in the district have been the subject of a major American project aimed at shedding light on the social and economic conditions that prevailed in a rural area of early Greece. Excavation has revealed three closely located and most probably interrelated settlements, which date from the end of the Bronze Age to the Classical period and are situated on hilltops controlling mountain passes and a coastal communication route. Vronda is a low hill occupied during mostly the twelfth century BCE. Following the abandonment of Vronda, the community probably moved to the considerably higher peak of Kastro, which has yielded the remains of houses (actually agglomerative groups of buildings) spreading over successive terraces and dating from the twelfth to the seventh centuries. The inhabitants of Kastro reused the ruins at Vronda during the eighth and seventh centuries BCE for a number of burials. This period further witnessed a gradual population shift from Kastro to the neighboring hill of Azoria. Azoria had been inhabited since the twelfth century, but grew considerably in size during the seventh century by attracting population from sites in the vicinity. Expansion at Azoria was connected with the development of an urban landscape; ongoing excavations on the peak of the hill have identified an andreion (men’s dining club), a monumental civic building, a cult building, and what is probably the location of the agora. All structures are of Archaic date and the site was abandoned in the early fifth century. On these grounds, the Kavousi settlement cluster is important for our understanding of the rise of the Greek polis as a physical and sociopolitical entity.

SEE ALSO: Karphi; Praisos; Prinias in Crete.

REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS