

The sanctuary at Keros: Questions of materiality and monumentality

Albert Reckitt Archaeological Lecture
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Abstract: The discovery of the early bronze age sanctuary on the Cycladic island of Keros is briefly described. Why islanders in the Aegean should establish the world's first maritime sanctuary around 2500 BC is then considered, and other instances of early centres of congregation are briefly discussed. Specific features of the Special Deposit South at Kavos, a key component of the sanctuary, are then reviewed along with those of the accompanying settlement on the islet of Dhaskalio. The Aegean context for the development in the later bronze age of cult, involving the reverence of specific deities, is then surveyed. The conclusion is reached that the Confederacy of Keros may not have involved the practice of cult in this sense, but rather the performance of rituals of congregation such as are widely seen at very early centres before the development of hierarchically ordered ('state') societies.

Key words: Keros, sanctuary, centre of congregation, ritual, cult, deity, confederacy

PRELIMINARY

It was a great honour to be invited to deliver the Reckitt Archaeological Lecture, instituted in 1951, in memory of Albert Reckitt, who died in 1947, aged 70. He was a chemical manufacturer (who participated in the development of the antiseptic, Dettol), a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a benefactor of archaeology, contributing to the expenses of Sir Leonard Woolley's excavations at Ur. At the time of the receipt of Reckitt's bequest Sir Mortimer Wheeler was the recently appointed Secretary of the British Academy, and perhaps the institution of the biennial Reckitt Archaeological Lecture may also owe something to his inspiration. The first four lecturers were: Stuart Piggott, Grahame Clark, Ian Richmond and Dorothy Garrod, and it is an inspiration to be among those who have followed them.

INTRODUCTION

The research project I would like to discuss with you today has been gestating for the past fifty years. For it was in July 1963, while doing fieldwork for my doctorate, that I first visited the island of Keros (Fig. 1), in the Cycladic Islands of Greece. With a permit from the Greek Archaeological Service, through the kindness of the Ephor for the Cyclades, Dr N. Zapheiropoulos, I was visiting all known sites in the area of early bronze age date. Christos Doumas, then an Epimelete in the Ephoreia, had told me of a looted site on the island, which he had not yet visited. Keros had only a couple of inhabitants and no means of access, so I arranged for a caique to take me from the nearest village on the island of Ano Kouphonisi (Fig. 2). The site in question was at the locality called Kavos (or Kavos Dhaskaliou) opposite the small islet of Dhaskalio (Fig. 3). Brief inspection of the looted site at Kavos revealed numerous sherds of Early Cycladic date and, more surprisingly, numerous marble fragments (Fig. 4). These were of bowls and a few bits of those small marble sculptures which are sometimes termed ‘figurines’. Such sculptures are found in burials in the known Early Cycladic cemeteries, where they are usually complete (Tsountas 1898; Doumas 1977). The canonical ‘folded arm figure’ (or figurine), seen complete in Figure 5 in a



Figure 1. The Cycladic island of Keros seen from the north.



Figure 2. The Cycladic Islands of Greece, indicating Keros.

characteristic example from the cemetery at Dokathismata on Amorgos, is one of the most typical forms of the Early Cyclades (Zervos 1957).

My permit allowed me to make a surface sherd collection, which I washed, drew and photographed, and then left in the custody of the guardian at the Naxos Museum. At first sight it looked as if they might be the residue of a seriously looted cemetery. I reported my finds to the Ephor and to Christos Doumas who had, I later learnt, himself visited Keros a few weeks earlier. He arranged for a rescue excavation the same year, collecting much further material left by the looters (Doumas 1964). That was the beginning of an association with Keros which is on-going. It came to a climax in 2006



Figure 3. The islet of Dhaskalio, seen from Kavos on Keros in 1963, with the looted Special Deposit in the foreground.



Figure 4. Marble fragments of bowls and sculptures collected from Kavos in 1963.



Figure 5. Canonical marble folded-arm sculpture from Dokathismata in Amorgos. Height 20.5 cms. Photo Zervos, courtesy Editions Cahiers d'Art.

with excavations that revealed a different area at Kavos which had not been looted (Renfrew *et al.* 2007*b*; 2009; 2013). The remains which we found in those excavations conducted between 2006 and 2008 answered some important questions. They allow us to recognise Kavos on Keros as a place to which the Cycladic islanders made ritual visits over a period of two or three centuries, from 2750 to sometime after 2500 BC, leaving bundles of broken vessels and fragmented images which they had used in rituals, presumably in their home villages. As I will detail in a moment we concluded that these, after deliberate fragmentation, were brought to this special place for ceremonial deposition.

The excavation makes clear that this was not a place of burial, although some burials may have accompanied the deposits in the looted area (Sotirakopoulou 2005; Getz-Gentle 2008*a*; 2008*b*; Papamichelakis & Renfrew 2010). It suggests that the bearers of these well-defined collections of material came, on periodic visits, from several different Cycladic islands, and perhaps also from the Greek mainland. They did so perhaps annually, perhaps every four or five years. The settlement on Dhaskalio, today an island opposite Kavos, was where they found lodging on these visits, for one or for several nights. If we infer that their visits had a ritual and symbolic purpose, we may perhaps refer to this place at Kavos as a 'sanctuary', using a deliberately vague term, meaning a location for periodic ritual visits (and without at first making assumptions about the accompanying belief system or world view). It would seem indeed to be the first regional sanctuary in the Aegean, with visitors coming from a wide area. It may prove to be the oldest maritime sanctuary in the world.

WHY?

But why did they come? Why did they come from afar, from different islands, to bring these special objects of marble and of pottery, all broken, to leave them at this place, and come repeatedly over several centuries?

As I shall describe, we found no indications of the worship of a divinity. This must have been a special place, perhaps a holy place, but it was not necessarily the home of a divine being. If the term ‘religion’ is used to imply the worship, the cult of a supernatural deity, then religion or cult may not be the right term.

I want to suggest here that Kavos on Keros may be regarded as what we may term a symbolic focus, a ‘symbolic attractor’ (Renfrew 2007*a*). It was a place to which people came repeatedly to make ritual depositions of a formalised kind. In that sense it was a place of pilgrimage, to use a term which may be applied to varied ‘spiritual’ centres at many different times and places (Renfrew 2001*b*). But does that necessarily imply that its visitors were participants in some religious cult, partaking in rituals dedicated to the worship of a deity? It may be argued that divinities in the sense of ‘clearly conceptualised supernatural beings’ are a feature usually associated with hierarchically ordered societies, societies with powerful rulers, societies which the anthropologist terms state societies. But at this time the state had not yet emerged anywhere in the Aegean.

These considerations lead towards the field of cognitive archaeology, with its concerns about aspects of how people were thinking, although not necessarily about the specific content of their beliefs (Renfrew 1982; 1994*a*; 2005). The archaeology of religion may be regarded as a branch of cognitive archaeology (Renfrew 1994*b*; 2007*b*), where it plays a significant role (Malafouris 2004; Renfrew 2004; Malafouris & Renfrew 2010). However, care needs to be exercised when examining claims for ‘religion’ where that implies the worship of supernatural deities (Renfrew 1985: 363; Bloch 2010).

RITUALS OF CONGREGATION

Here I want to consider again some of the very earliest monuments of humankind. In several different areas of the world, at just the time that food production was beginning, we find places which I think are best described as ‘centres of congregation’. But they do not clearly document the cult of a deity or deities. We can begin to discern more clearly that religion, in the sense of a belief in specific deities, may not have been a feature of these early food-producing societies. That they had a world view, and sometimes a clear sense of cosmic order, is becoming clear. But as the evidence for early centres of congregation accumulates it seems that they were very different from the temples and shrines of more highly stratified societies which sometimes followed. This may be so over a very wide geographical focus when we look at the ritual practices of early food producing societies.

The oldest example is Göbekli Tepe near Urfa in south-east Turkey. There Klaus Schmidt (2007; 2012) has been uncovering a series of circles, arrangements of upright stelae, some carved with animals in relief (Fig. 6). It was clearly a ritual site, a meeting

place for the mobile hunter-gatherers of upper Mesopotamia some 11,000 years ago, and probably a place of feasting. Or take the monuments that are now coming to light in north coastal Peru, from around 3000 BC, again as food production is just beginning in that area. The most comprehensively explored is Caral, in the Supe valley (Shady Solis *et al.* 2001). There are plazas and somewhat pyramidal mounds of stone (Fig. 7), but there is no iconography, no indications of a deity. Or to come closer to home, let us take Stonehenge, in the later neolithic of southern England, clearly a meeting place, approximately contemporary with the Ring of Brodgar (Fig. 8), and that remarkable and recently excavated site the Ness of Brodgar in the Orkney Islands.

These are places of congregation, where communities of people met together. Indeed it can be argued that it was in their meeting together, and in their working together to construct these monuments, that these communities were originally established and perpetuated (Renfrew 2001*a*). Their membership was defined by the participation of those who met together there.

That is the context in which I would like to view the sanctuary at Kavos. But the centrality of Kavos is defined in a different way. It is defined not by the monumentality of the structures erected at the central location, the *axis mundi* for the community



Figure 6. The earliest centre of congregation: Göbekli Tepe in eastern Turkey, c.10000 BC.



Figure 7. Monument at the dawn of agriculture: the stepped pyramid at Caral, northern Peru, c.2500 BC.



Figure 8. Centre of congregation: the Ring of Brodgar, Orkney, c.2500 bc.

of congregated celebrants, but by a different kind of materiality. The *axis mundi* was marked instead by the deposition of symbolic materials—in this case broken vessels of marble and broken sculptures in the canonical folded-arm form. This became the ikon, the logo, of what one might call the Confederacy of Keros (Renfrew 2012). Perhaps something similar is seen in the pre-dynastic period in China, before the Shang dynasty, where well-defined carvings of jade, the *bi* and the *cong*, became dominant forms, and were often buried ceremonially. There is perhaps an analogy also with the polished axes of jade, quarried in the Alps, which are found in the neolithic of Brittany and of Britain. Their context of use is not always clear, but as the second Reckitt lecturer, Grahame Clark, demonstrated many years ago in his comparison with the Australian aboriginal axe trade (Clark 1965), they were exchanged in a systematic way over great distances

The Cycladic folded-arm figure, the logo of the Confederacy of Keros has been regarded by some scholars as representing a ‘mother goddess’ or ‘earth mother’ (Gimbutas 1974; see Thimme 1976). That remains an interesting theory. But I would argue that this icon or logo, this imposing female figure, was symbolic of the community rather than of a specific deity.

THE SPECIAL DEPOSIT SOUTH AT KAVOS ON KEROS

Let us turn again to Keros. As we have seen, Doumas excavated in 1963 at Kavos and on a small scale on the islet of Dhaskalio. Over the next few years further excavations were conducted by Photeini Zappeiropoulou in the area of the looted deposit (Zappeiropoulou 1968*a* & 1968*b*). Then in 1983, at a conference at the British Museum, there was discussion of the site (Fitton 1984: 31–6) and Doumas, Zappeiropoulou and I agreed that this did not seem to be a looted Cycladic cemetery (although Zappeiropoulou had found indications of a couple of graves there). At the invitation of Mrs Zappeiropoulou, who was then the Ephor, Christos Doumas, Lila Marangou and I organised a project to examine the looted area, the ‘Special Deposit’ as we termed it, more thoroughly (Renfrew *et al.* 2007*a*). Within the project Todd Whitelaw (2007) organised a surface survey which clearly defined the area of activity. We excavated further in the disturbed area—but it was very disturbed. Yet in studying the material more closely for publication, I made an important discovery. The breakages to the marble were mostly old breakages. These objects had been deliberately broken before the time of their deposition, in the early bronze age. This must be seen as a deposit of deliberately broken special artefacts.

There the matter rested until, after publication of the 1987 work, it was possible to set up the Cambridge Keros Project which excavated at Kavos and on Dhaskalio from 2006 to 2008. Here I wish to thank the British School at Athens and the then Ephor for the Cyclades, Dr Marisa Marthari, for supporting the permit application to the Greek Archaeological Service, and the funding organisations for their support. The associate director of the project was Olga Philaniotou, with Giorgos Gavalas, Neil Brodie and Michael Boyd as assistant directors. The participants in the dig and in the post-excavation work are too numerous to mention by name here but are listed in the first volume on the excavations on Dhaskalio (Renfrew *et al.* 2013). The next two volumes will soon be ready. Dr Peggy Sotirakopoulou is preparing the two-volume publication of the pottery.

On the first day in 2006, guided by the earlier site survey, we excavated in the undisturbed southern part of the Kavos area. At once we found fragmentary material, mainly pottery and marble, of the kind found in the looted Special Deposit further north. Soon we could define the Special Deposit South situated about 120 metres south of the looted area which was now termed the Special Deposit North (Fig. 9). We excavated in the Special Deposit South by grid squares (Fig. 10). At once we were finding fragmentary material in context. The material may have been buried in bundles, sometimes inserted into pits. Geomorphological study by Charles French and Sean Taylor (Renfrew *et al.* 2007*b*: 113–14) indicated that it was *in situ*, not much disturbed by erosional processes, but often much abraded by weathering. There was



Figure 9. The islet of Dhaskalio and the Special Deposits at Kavos on Keros.

broken pottery, broken marble vessels, broken sculptures (Figs. 11 and 12) and broken cylindrical objects or 'spools', and obsidian blades. There were effectively no metal finds in the Special Deposit. Water sieving was routinely used, and crucially there were no bone fragments or teeth in the Special Deposit South, although water sieving revealed both bone and teeth in a small separate burial area located south of the Special Deposit South.



Figure 10. The Special Deposit South on Kavos during excavation, 2007.



Figure 11. Deliberately broken sculptural fragments in situ in the Special Deposit South (scale in cms).



Figure 12. Heads of broken folded-arm sculptures from the Special Deposit South (scale in cms).

There were almost no structural features in the Special Deposit South. There were some pits. The most striking feature was a ridge of wind-blown aeolianite, studied by our geologist colleague John Dixon (Dixon 2013), which may have been a visually prominent feature. This fell away to the west with a one-metre scarp. To the west of this some ill-defined alignments of stones were observed (Fig. 13). In one of these the



Figure 13. Line of stones in the Special Deposit South with fragmentary sculpture.

pelvis of the largest sculpture recovered was found (Fig. 14). It joined with the waist, found in a nearby trench. Originally the sculpture was about one metre in height—the largest yet found in an authorised excavation in the Cyclades.

There were no burials. This was not a burial deposit, not a cemetery. And the breakages were ancient: all the material had been deliberately broken before burial. We conducted a systematic search for joins. While a few joins were found, in general the material did not join up—not pottery, nor marble bowls nor the sculptures. The



Figure 14. Fragmentary pelvis of sculpture seen in Figure 13 (scale in cms).

material had been broken elsewhere, and brought to the Special Deposit South for deposition.

This seems a very surprising result, but it is the case. With the permission of Professor Doumas we were able to search for joins between our finds in the Special Deposit South and the earlier finds in the Special Deposit North. There were no such joins. As we shall see the breakage process did not take place on Dhaskalio. The Keros Island Survey, a surface survey initiated in 2012 and scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2013 indicates that there is no location of deliberate breakage elsewhere on Keros. We are drawn to the inescapable conclusion that the breakage took place elsewhere, on other islands.

We found 553 sculptural fragments in the Special Deposit South, which after investigating the joins, must represent about 450 sculptures. (A total of 283 have been recovered for the Special Deposit North since the looting.) They were mostly of the canonical folded-arm form. The three varieties abundantly represented were the Spedos, Dokathismata and Chalandriani varieties (see Renfrew 1969). The Koumasa variety, which is found only on Crete, was not represented. Nor was the early Kapsala variety, which is of chronological significance. There were more than 2,400 fragments of marble bowls and vessels. In general all these things had been deliberately smashed to smithereens at their places of breakage, presumably in their islands of origin.

THE SETTLEMENT AT DHASKALIO

The 200-metre-long islet of Dhaskalio gave indications of dense settlement (Fig. 15). Underwater and sea-level study by John Dixon and Tim Kinnaird (Dixon & Kinnaird 2013) indicated that during the time of its use it was united with Kavos on Keros by a natural causeway. This configuration will have provided good shelter for the visiting ships. The stratigraphy yielded three main phases of occupation, documented by the changing pottery frequencies. Phase A was assigned to the Keros-Syros culture, Phase B to the earlier timespan of the Kastri Group, while in levels of Phase C pottery with some similarities to the pottery of the First City at Phylakopi on Melos was found. The radiocarbon dates from the Oxford laboratory, with the collaboration of Christopher Bronk Ramsay (Renfrew, Boyd & Bronk Ramsay 2012), indicate occupation from *c.*2750 to *c.*2300 BC. Terracing was employed, and there were no fortification walls (Fig. 16). The main building at the summit, termed by us the Hall, was 14 metres long, and incorporated prominent bedrock features. The buildings were of neatly laid drystone walling of marble (Fig. 17). A small Byzantine chapel, now seen only in plan, was the only later feature. There was abundant restorable pottery, with obsidian,



Figure 15. The settlement on the islet of Dhaskalio, seen from the air.

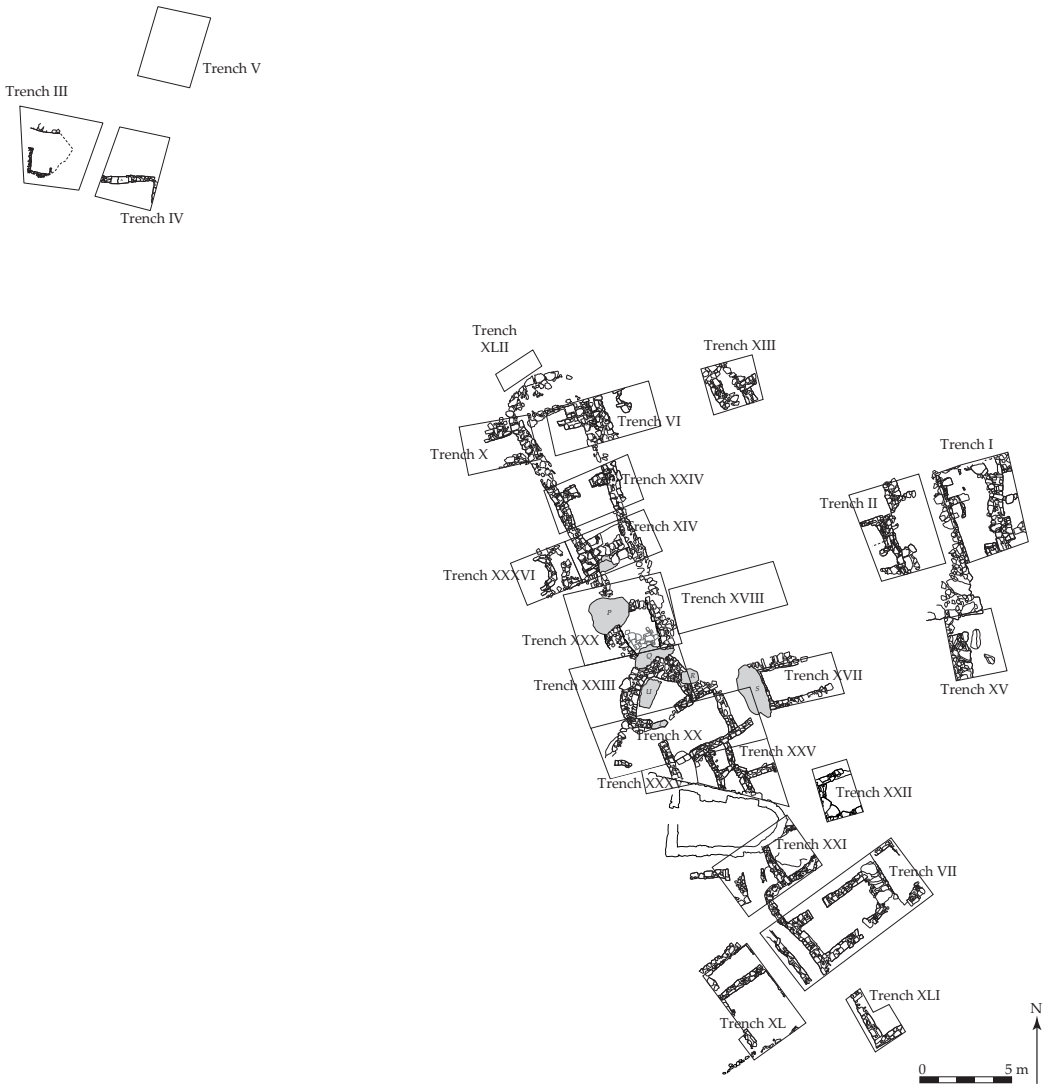


Figure 16. Early Cycladic settlement structures on Dhaskalio.

numerous stone discs (interpreted as covering for jars used to import foodstuffs), and stone and *Spondylus*-shell spoons, like those found broken in the Special Deposit South. Only a few fragments of marble vessels were found, and a dozen schematic marble figurines, mainly unbroken. Very strikingly there were no fragments—not one—of the folded arm sculptures so commonly seen in both the Special Deposits on Kavos. There were indications of metalworking of copper on a small scale (Georgakopoulou 2013). These are probably related to the secure evidence of the smelting of copper ores at the location (north of the Special Deposit North) termed



Figure 17. Walling of imported marble on Dhaskalio.

Kavos Promontory. (The raw copper ore was imported, perhaps from Seriphos or Siphnos, possibly to exploit the wood available on Keros.)

The most surprising feature of the settlement, determined by John Dixon of Edinburgh University, the project geologist, was that the marble widely used for construction in many of the buildings, was not local to Dhaskalio or to Keros (Dixon 2013). The most likely source was on the south-east coast of Naxos, some 10 kilometres away. He analysed, for instance, the walling of the Hall (Fig. 18). Much of the stone was imported, presumably by raft, in this way.

Petrographic analysis of the pottery by Jill Hilditch (2013), supported by neutron activation analysis by Heun & Kilikoglou, suggested that most, perhaps all of the pottery found on Dhaskalio was imported to Keros (Fig. 19). Much may have come from the neighbouring islands of Kouphonisi, Naxos, Amorgos and Ios. But some came from Melos and from Thera, and perhaps from a range of other islands including Syros and Siphnos. There are clear indications also of pottery (particularly the characteristic sauceboat form) from the Greek mainland.

The presence of many water-worn pebbles, particularly in a small enclosure near the summit, deliberately imported from the beaches at the nearby island of Ano Kouphonisi was the subject of special study (Nymo *et al.* 2013). They had no discernible functional use, for instance in construction. It was concluded that they were carried to the summit in a ritual process. They may have had a symbolic role comparable to that of the similar pebbles which are a notable feature of the 'peak sanctuaries' of Middle and Late Minoan Crete (Peatfield 1990; 1992).

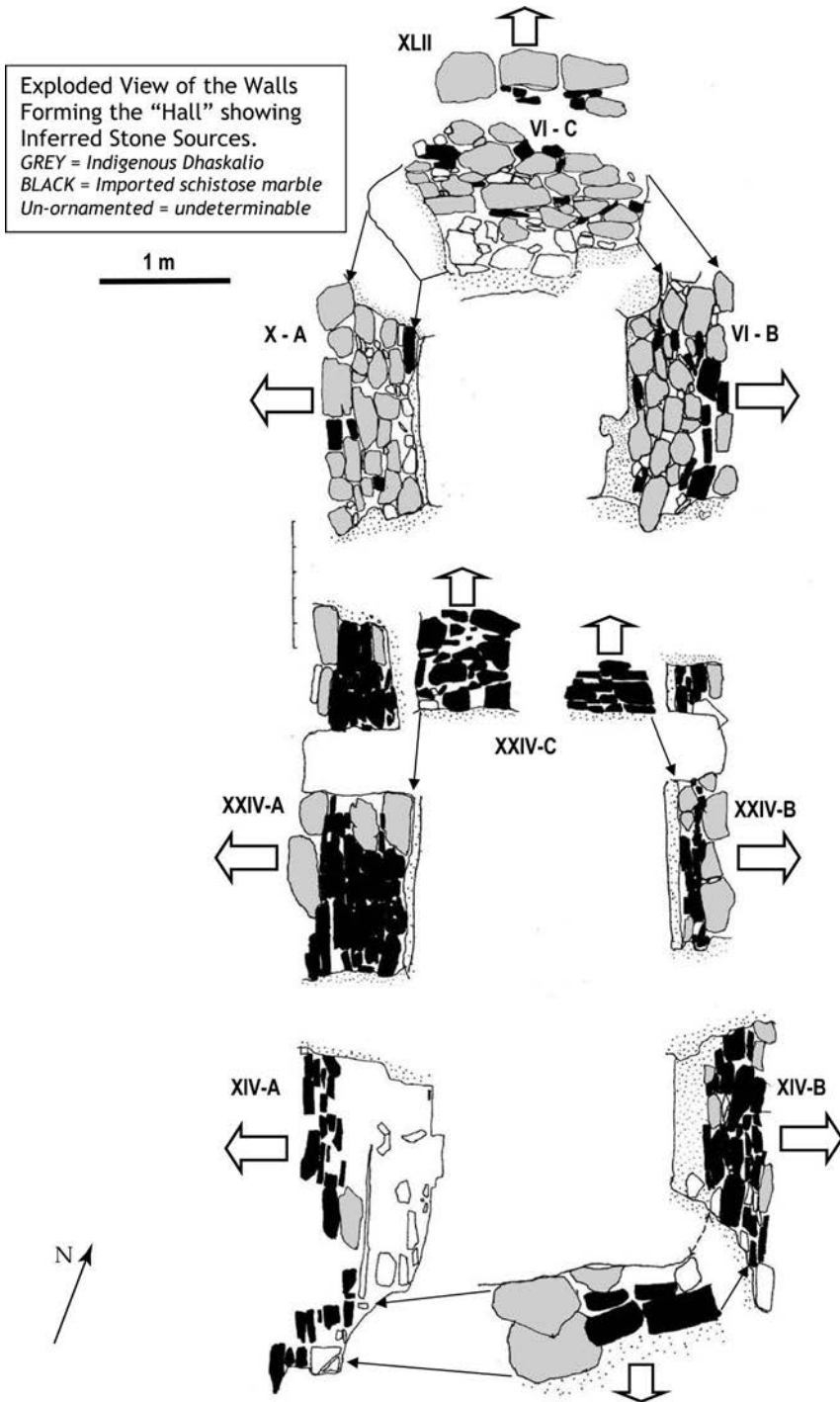


Figure 18. Petrographic classification of the marble used to construct the Hall on Dhaskalio. (By John Dixon.)

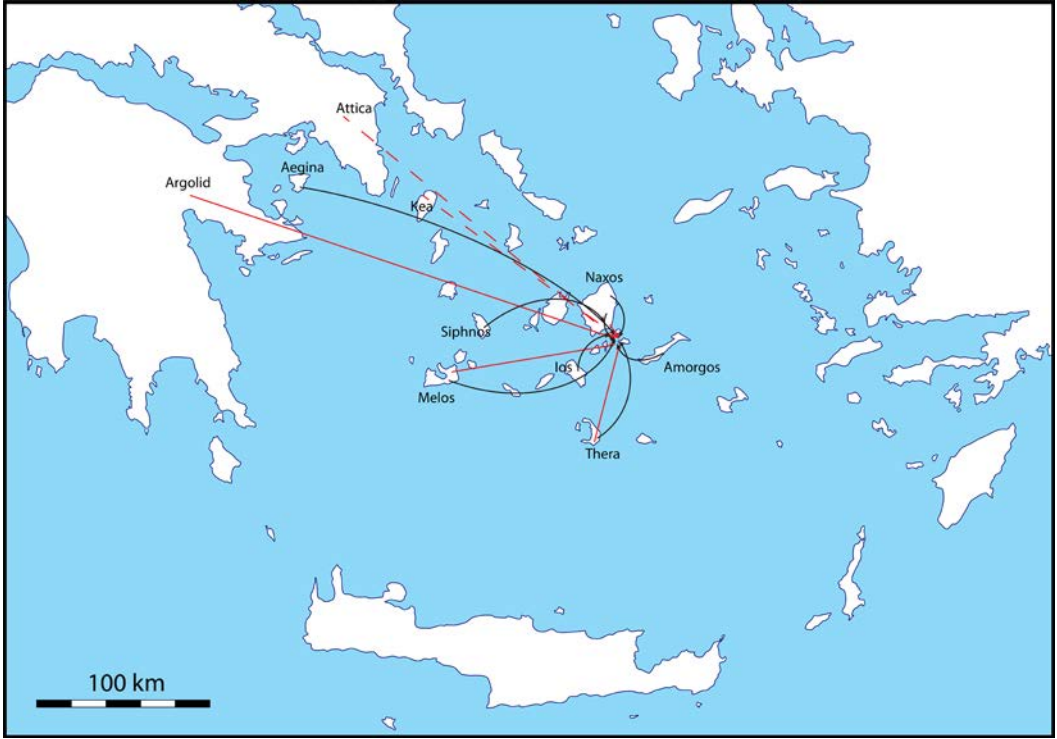


Figure 19. The sanctuary on Keros as a centre of congregation: sources of pottery imported to Keros as indicated by neutron activation analysis.

Flotation procedures allowed the recovery of plant remains: barley and wheat, vine and olive and pulse crops (Margaritis 2013). The animal bones were mainly sheep and goat, and also cattle. Fish and shell were not abundant. The consensus of the environmental studies was that the population suggested by the extent of the settlement must largely have been a seasonal or periodic one. A permanent population of twenty might be suggested, with a seasonal or periodic occupation rising as high as 400 persons.

KAVOS ON KEROS AS A SANCTUARY

The clue to all this deliberate fragmentation and deposition comes, I think, from suggestions made recently by Elizabeth Hendrix (2003) and Gail Hoffman (2002) who have studied the painted decoration seen on some of the preserved Cycladic figures, for instance one in the National Museum in Athens from Amorgos, and one of unknown provenance in Copenhagen, both early finds and so probably genuine. They,

like many of the marble figures, were originally painted. Moreover it seems that they were painted on different, subsequent occasions. Hendrix and Hoffman suggest that they were carried on ritual occasions in the small village settlements in the Cyclades, perhaps in processions. They were re-painted each year for the festival. When they came to the end of their use life, they could not, as ritual objects, simply be thrown away. They had to be removed from circulation. This, it seems, was by ritual breakage. It must have become the convention to take a piece of the broken object to Keros on some suitable ritual occasion.

This perhaps unexpected conclusion seems in the end almost unavoidable. But it does make one wonder where the other pieces went. Certainly the best confirmation of the hypothesis would be the discovery, near one or more settlements, of local debris from such a fracturing process.

KEROS IN ITS AEGEAN CONTEXT

Here we should be reminded of the evidence for cult, for the reverence to deities, which is seen in the later bronze age Aegean (Marinatos 2010). The most persuasive is the wall painting at Akrotiri on Thera, buried in the Minoan eruption of around 1600 BC in House Xeste 3 of a seated goddess, beautifully clothed (Doulas 1992: 158 pl. 122). Her status is established by the presence of a mythical beast which attends her, a winged griffin. In 1974 I had the good fortune to discover a building of the late Bronze Age at Phylakopi on Melos which it was possible to identify as a shrine, because of the accompanying iconography which made a link with a Minoan deity, the 'Minoan Goddess with Upraised Arms'. I tried to make the case for the cult of a deity in the publication of that building in *The Archaeology of Cult* (Renfrew 1985: 363). There it was possible to recognise 'the performance of expressive actions of worship and propitiation by the human celebrant towards the transcendent being'. Comparison with four Minoan cases, the 'shrines' at Gournia, Gazi and Knossos (Shrine of the Double Axes) and the Aghia Triadha sarcophagus, made the case. The Phylakopi shrine dates from about 1200 BC. The comparable structure at Aghia Irini on Kea (Caskey 1986), still not completely published, is several centuries earlier, and might be regarded as the first plausible cult centre in the Aegean, where a deity was worshipped.

The shrines at Phylakopi and Aghia Irini were essentially town shrines, serving mainly the local island. Network analysis for the Aegean later bronze age settlements, by Carl Knappett and colleagues (2011; also 2008), gives an impression of the linkages of the time. The connectivity of Thera, Melos and Kea is clearly seen. For the early bronze age Cyclades Cyprian Broodbank (2000: 184) has given a Proximal Point Analysis. This analytical technique assigns points according to the area and inferred

population of each island and does not employ archaeological data. If, however, we postulate a direct link between each Cycladic cemetery where marble sculptures have been found and the sanctuary at Kavos (on the assumption that those villages using marble figurines in their village feasts, as implied by their funerary use also, participated periodically in the depositions on Keros) then we have a map of a very different kind, which emphasises the symbolic centrality of Keros. To the extent that Dhaskalio was simply a supporting settlement with mainly periodic occupation, this may offer a valid impression.

The evidence is clear that the symbolic attraction of Keros had lost its power by the end of the early bronze age, already before 2000 BC. The community of participating islands, which we might call the Confederacy of Keros, dwindled. For the Cyclades the important islands in the later bronze age were those which Knappett and his colleagues indicate. But later, during the early first millennium a new maritime ritual centre arose: Delos. This time, however, it was a religious centre as well as a congregational one, venerated by the Greeks as the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis.

THE FIRST MARITIME SANCTUARY

In this lecture I have tried to give a brief account of our recent excavations at Dhaskalio and Kavos on Keros. The occupation of the impressive settlement at Dhaskalio in the third millennium BC was of a largely periodic nature, yet the main buildings at its summit were constructed of marble brought by sea from Naxos some 10 kilometres away. It was at that time joined by a causeway with Kavos on Keros, the location of two major special deposits. These had few constructional features, but were the locations for the ritual deposition of symbolic materials, deliberately fragmented at their places of origin. These were the Cycladic villages which together formed a community which we may call the Confederacy of Keros, which may have extended as far as the Greek mainland.

Our understanding of the nature of this sanctuary must follow from our interpretation of the materials discovered, which document a community of culture and of outlook. The high frequency of a particular figurative form, the Cycladic figure with folded arms, does not, however, establish the sanctuary as a cult centre for a specific deity. These are ritual depositions, and the significance of the female figure may be a sign of community affiliation, a logo, rather than one of religious belief.

This would place Keros among the other Centres of Congregation in the prehistoric world, where convocation and sometimes monumental construction was a feature of a new social order. These were not hierarchical societies: they were not

proto-states. They were in general replaced later by more centralised societies in which a presiding deity or pantheon was often prominent. In their day, however, they were the first great symbolic centres of world prehistory.

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