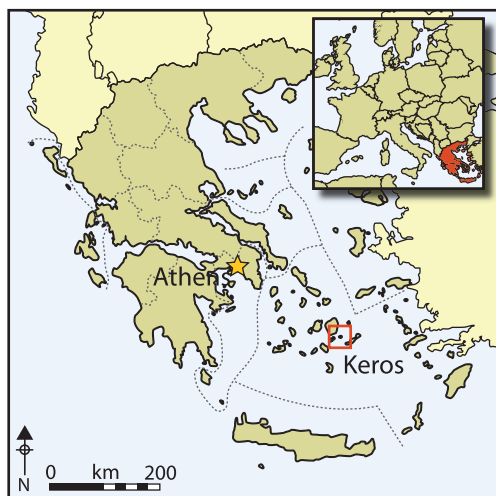


The oldest maritime sanctuary? Dating the sanctuary at Keros and the Cycladic Early Bronze Age

Colin Renfrew¹, Michael Boyd¹ & Christopher Bronk Ramsey²



The sanctuary on the island of Keros takes the form of deposits of broken marble vessels and figurines, probably brought severally for deposition from elsewhere in the Cyclades. These acts of devotion have now been accurately dated, thanks to Bayesian analyses of the contemporary stratigraphic sequence on the neighbouring islet of Dhaskalio. The period of use—from 2750 to 2300 cal BC—precedes any identified worship of gods in the Aegean and the site is among the earliest ritual destinations only accessible by sea. The authors offer some preliminary thoughts on the definition of these precocious acts of pilgrimage.

Keywords: Aegean, Cyclades, Keros, Bronze Age, figurines, sanctuary, pilgrimage, congregation, religion

Introduction

The world's earliest sanctuaries are getting older. The remarkable symbolic centre at Göbekli Tepe in eastern Turkey (Schmidt 2007) dates from the Early Holocene period (some 11 000 years ago); sites in coastal Peru such as Caral (Shady *et al.* 2001; Shady & Kleihege 2008) date to the very inception of food production there some 6000 years ago. And now the site of Kavos on Keros in the Aegean Sea, here proposed as a sanctuary or place of pilgrimage, can be dated with precision by radiocarbon determinations to the years 2750 to 2300 cal BC. This is not so early as Göbekli or Caral, but it has the special quality of being a maritime centre, the earliest regional maritime symbolic centre yet known anywhere, preceding the great island centre of Delos (also in the Cycladic Islands of Greece) by some 2000 years.

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These findings have relevance for the early emergence of ‘cult’ or ‘religion’—if those terms are reserved specifically for places and rituals where deities, conceived as real and powerful supernatural beings, may be adduced (Renfrew 1985: ch. 1, 1994). Religion or cult in that sense is well documented in early state societies, whether in Egypt, Mesopotamia, in the Mycenaean world or in Mesoamerica, where shrines or temples can be identified (e.g. Marcus & Flannery 1996) through their explicit iconography. Here we are speaking rather of ‘sanctuaries’—places of assembly or the structured deposition of symbolic artefacts—where the explicit iconography of the divine, with identifiable gods or goddesses, has not yet developed. At Göbekli Tepe or Caral or Kavos on Keros it is not easy for us to define what belief system or ‘faith’ brought the pilgrims together. That is why, at another more recent pilgrimage centre, Chaco Canyon in New Mexico, it has seemed appropriate to choose a vaguer term: locations of ‘High Devotional Expression’ (Renfrew 2001).

The Early Bronze Age of the Aegean in the third millennium BC was a crucial period for the emergence of Aegean civilisation and for the development of the strong maritime interactions that helped to bring it about (Renfrew 1972; Broodbank 2000). The recent excavations on the Cycladic island of Keros, both at the sanctuary at Kavos and at the settlement on the islet of Dhaskalio, lying 90m offshore, give new evidence for the scale of such interactions (Renfrew *et al.* 2007b, 2009; Research Horizons 2011). In particular the new radiocarbon determinations for the settlement at Dhaskalio allow a greater chronological precision for the later part of the Aegean Early Bronze Age and indeed for the Early Cycladic period (Manning 1995).

Dhaskalio Kavos on Keros

The site at Kavos, which lies on the western tip of Keros (Figure 1), first came to light in 1963 as a result of looting. The ‘special deposit’ (North) was investigated in the same year by Christos Doumas (Doumas 1964) and by Photeini Zappeiropoulou in 1967 (Zappeiropoulou 1968a, 1968b), and was the subject of a detailed investigation in 1987 (Renfrew *et al.* 2007a). The Cambridge Keros Project of 2006 to 2008 led to the discovery of a new and previously undisturbed special deposit, now termed the Special Deposit South (Figure 2).

As a result of the latter excavation it is now clear that the vast quantities of broken pottery, broken marble bowls and vessels and fragmented Early Cycladic sculptures (‘figurines’) recovered from Kavos were deliberately broken in the course of rituals of breakage, and deliberately deposited at the Special Deposit South on Keros (as well as at the later-looted Special Deposit North). Moreover, from a detailed study of the find circumstances, including patterns of breakage, it can be inferred that these products of ritual deposition were not broken locally at Kavos. They were broken elsewhere, presumably on other Cycladic islands, following a use-life of many years, and a residue of the broken fragments was then systematically brought to Keros for ritual disposal. More than 550 figurine fragments and more than 2300 pieces of marble bowls and vessels have now been recovered from the Special Deposit South (Figures 3 & 4), and comparable numbers were originally present in the looted Special Deposit North. Kavos can now be regarded as a place of ritual deposition and in that sense a sanctuary visited from elsewhere by sea.

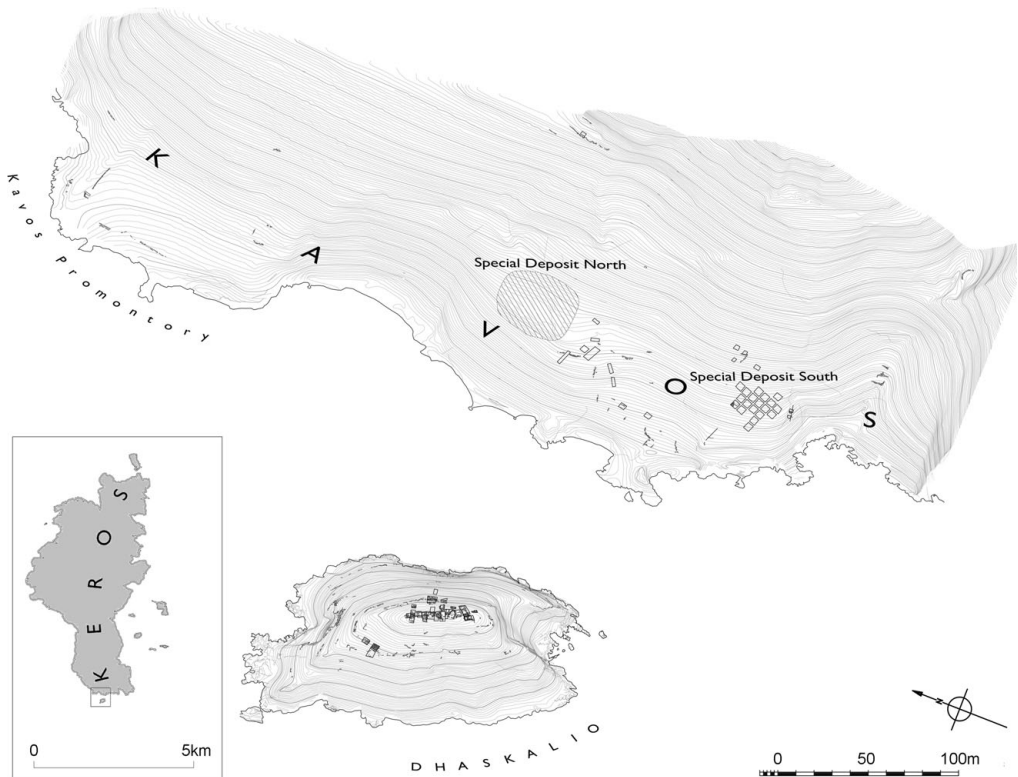


Figure 1. The western tip of Keros and the islet of Dhaskalio, showing the locations of the looted Special Deposit North, the recently excavated sanctuary at the Special Deposit South, and the settlement on Dhaskalio.

The settlement on Dhaskalio

The settlement on the adjacent islet of Dhaskalio (Figure 5) remained unexcavated, apart from a few days' work by Doumas, until the excavations of the Cambridge Keros Project of 2006 to 2008 (Figure 6). The assemblages recovered from Kavos and Dhaskalio run in parallel (for the broad framework, see Table 1). The earliest finds at Kavos are of the Keros-Syros culture (Early Cycladic II) continuing into the period of the subsequent Kastri group (Renfrew 1972; Rutter 1984; Sotirakopoulou 1993). But while the deposits at the Special Deposit South on Kavos are disturbed by continuing episodes of deposition, the stratigraphic sequence on the islet of Dhaskalio itself is secure (Renfrew *et al.* 2009: 31–37). The lower strata at Dhaskalio (Dhaskalio Phase A) have a ceramic assemblage, studied by Peggy Sotirakopoulou, which is representative of the Keros-Syros culture. The layers of the succeeding Phase B are characterised by the presence of sherds, notably one-handed tankards, of the Kastri group. These continue in the final phase (Dhaskalio Phase C) where sherds of pale fabric appear, some of a shape first published for Amorgos by Dümmler (1886). The prominent Hall and other buildings discovered at the summit of Dhaskalio are of Phase C. This secure sequence from Dhaskalio establishes a sequence which can be

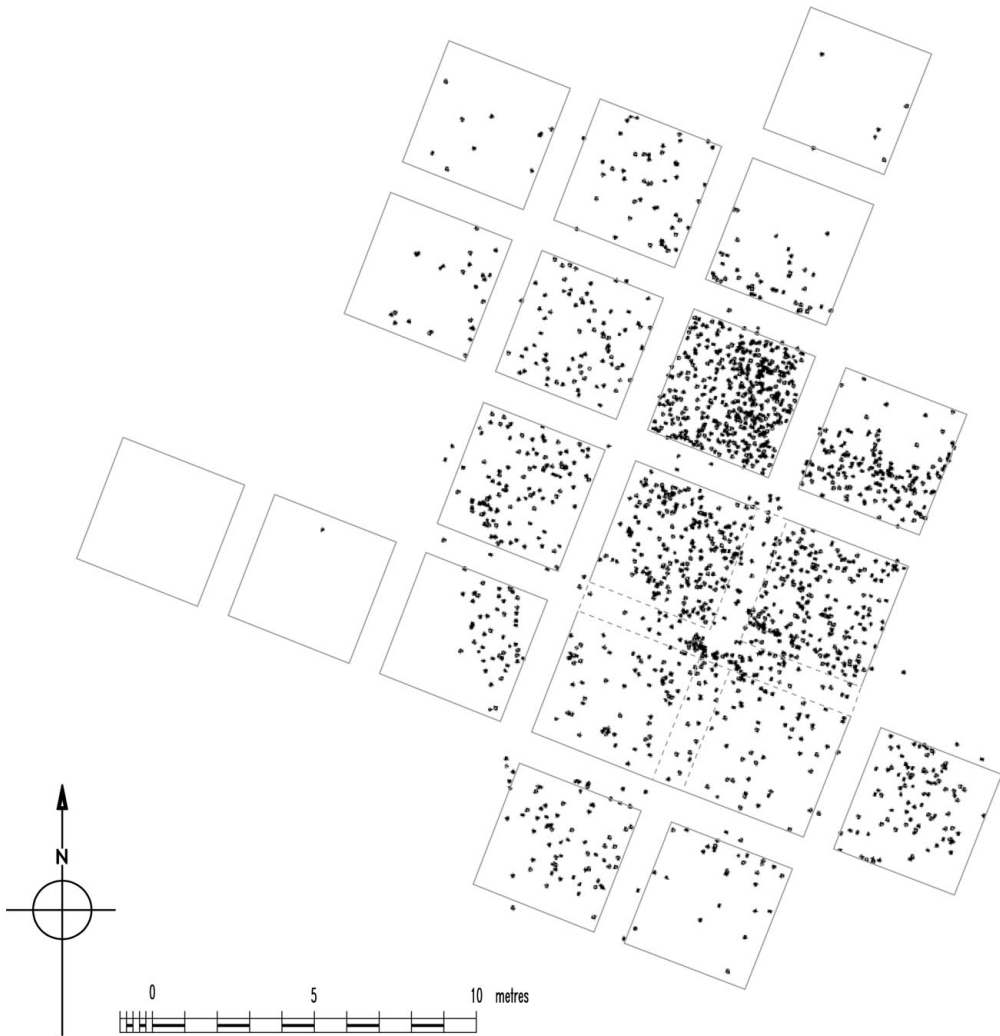


Figure 2. Plan of the excavated area of the Special Deposit South, showing the findspots of special finds, predominantly fragments of marble figurines, bowls, vessels and spoons.

extended to the sanctuary at Kavos and which has wider consequences for cultural relations within the Aegean.

Radiocarbon dating

The excavations at Dhaskalio also yielded a good number of radiocarbon samples, which have been dated and modelled by the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art at Oxford University. The combination of a secure stratigraphic context for the samples along with the well-defined ceramic assemblages recovered, together with a calibration based upon Bayesian procedures yields a chronological framework with a precision that permits dating to within a quarter to half a century. Without the support of dendrochronology on

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Table 1. Early Cycladic culture names and phases.

Dhaskalio phase	Markiani phase	Culture name	Numerical phase	Cycladic comparanda
C	–	(Dhaskalio C)	ECIII	Early Phylakopi I (Melos) Arkesine (Amorgos)
B	IV	Early Kastri group	ECII/III	Kastri (Syros) Ayia Irini III (Kea) Panormos (Naxos)
A	III	Keros-Syros culture	ECII	Skarkos (Ios) Phylakopi A2 (Melos) Ayia Irini II (Kea)
–	II	Kampos group	ECI/II	Kampos cemetery (Paros) Simigdalas cemetery (Ano Kouphonisi)
–	I	Grotta-Pelos culture	ECI	Phylakopi A1 (Melos) Grotta (Naxos) Lakkoudes cemetery (Naxos)

Table 2. Samples analysed by the Oxford Laboratory.

Sample	Trench	Layer	Ceramic phase	Material (species)	Sampling method
R42	II	39	A	charcoal (Angiosperm)	flotation
R44	III	2	A	plant remains (<i>Prunus Amygdalus</i>)	flotation
R4	I	32	B	charcoal (<i>Olea europaea</i>)	excavation
R7	I	44	B	charcoal (<i>Hedera helix</i>)	excavation
R8	I	18	B	charcoal (<i>Olea europaea</i>)	excavation
R40	I	34	B	charcoal (<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>)	flotation
R41	I	26	B	charcoal (<i>Olea europaea</i>)	flotation
R43	II	43	B	charcoal (<i>Prunus Amygdalus</i>)	flotation
R11	VI	23	C	charcoal (<i>Juniperus cf. phoenicia</i>)	excavation
R13	VI	28	C	charcoal (<i>Juniperus cf. phoenicia</i>)	excavation
R14	VI	35	C	charcoal (<i>Olea europaea</i>)	excavation
R15	VII	3	C	charcoal (<i>Juniperus cf. phoenicia</i>)	excavation
R19	VII	32	C	charcoal (<i>Olea europaea</i>)	excavation
R26	VII	41	C	charcoal (<i>Olea europaea</i>)	excavation
R45	VI	34	C	charcoal (<i>Phillyrea</i> or <i>Rhamnus</i>)	flotation
R46	VI	33	C	charcoal (<i>Olea europaea</i>)	flotation
R49	VII	38	C	charcoal (<i>Fagaceae</i>)	flotation
R51	VII	39	C	charcoal (<i>Ericaceae</i>)	flotation

stratified charcoal, this must be close to the optimum that can be achieved using ceramic-based markers and the parameters of the calibration curve.

The samples from the settlement at Dhaskalio are listed in Table 2 and the dates given in Table 3. Correction for isotopic fractionation has been carried out using the measured $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values measured on the AMS. The quoted $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values are measured independently on a stable isotope mass spectrometer (to ± 0.3 per mil relative to VPDB). For details of the chemical pre-treatment, target preparation and AMS measurement see Bronk Ramsey *et al.* 2002 and 2004. The calendar age-ranges in the final column have been generated using



Figure 3. Figurine fragments in the course of excavation at the Special Deposit South.

the OxCal computer program (v4.1: Bronk Ramsey 2009), using the ‘INTCAL09’ dataset (Reimer *et al.* 2009).

The laboratory was unable to date sample R14 due to low yield. Sample R40 yielded a modern (post-1950) date, and is omitted from further discussion. Sample R49 yielded a date of 6268 ± 34 BP, which is more than two millennia earlier than the other samples determined. There is no indication on the site of activity at so early a period, and no interpretation can be offered for this dating. The specimen is therefore omitted from further consideration.

That leaves a series of 15 radiocarbon determinations for further consideration. The careful reconsideration of the stratigraphic position of two of these samples (R 44 and R45) in the light of these radiocarbon determinations led to an adjustment of the phasing for them. This procedure is discussed in greater detail in the final excavation report now in preparation (Bronk Ramsey *et al.* forthcoming). The resultant phasing is seen in Table 4.

For each radiocarbon determination, comparison to the calibration curve yields a probability distribution. The temporal distribution for the 15 determinations from Dhaskalio arranged according to their revised stratigraphic sequence (i.e. Dhaskalio Phase A, B and C) is seen in Figure 7. The diagram represents the best interpretation that we can achieve for the stratigraphic data. The relationship between the date of the charcoal and that of its context relies on the assumption that the charcoal on the site is often from pruned branches and twigs (based on palaeobotanical analysis, Ntinou forthcoming). We think therefore that the growth of the original wood should be within a decade or two of

Table 3. Results of radiocarbon dating. The dates are uncalibrated in radiocarbon years BP (Before Present—AD 1950) using the half life of 5568 years. *Modern date (post-1950) reported as F14C (fraction of modern).

OxA	Sample	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$	Date BP
OxA-22754	R42	-26.32	4065 $\pm$ 30
OxA-22756	R44	-25.24	3933 $\pm$ 29
OxA-22745	R4	-23.63	4021 $\pm$ 29
OxA-22746	R7	-23.34	3876 $\pm$ 28
OxA-22747	R8	-23.96	4033 $\pm$ 30
OxA-22752	R40	-24.30	*1.17301 $\pm$ 0.00339
OxA-22753	R41	-22.50	3849 $\pm$ 31
OxA-22755	R43	-25.32	3921 $\pm$ 31
OxA-22748	R11	-22.18	3919 $\pm$ 28
OxA-22749	R13	-23.97	3923 $\pm$ 29
OxA-22750	R15	-22.51	3841 $\pm$ 29
OxA-22751	R19	-25.56	3904 $\pm$ 30
OxA-22761	R26	-23.00	3870 $\pm$ 30
OxA-22757	R45	-23.93	4164 $\pm$ 30
OxA-22758	R46	-22.67	3852 $\pm$ 29
OxA-22759	R49	-24.84	6268 $\pm$ 34
OxA-22760	R51	-24.62	3837 $\pm$ 30



Figure 4. Some of the 553 figurine fragments recovered from the Early Cycladic sanctuary at Kavos.

Table 4. Samples from Dhaskalio ordered according to final stratigraphic phasing.

Sample	Ceramic phase	Date BP
R42	A	4065±30
R45	A	4164±30
R4	B	4021±29
R7	B	3876±28
R8	B	4033±30
R41	B	3849±31
R43	B	3921±31
R44	B	3933±29
R11	C	3919±28
R13	C	3923±29
R15	C	3841±29
R19	C	3904±30
R26	C	3870±30
R46	C	3852±29
R51	C	3837±30



Figure 5. The excavations at the Special Deposit South, looking west to the islet of Dhaskalio, some 90m offshore.

the deposition of the charcoal, although the possibility that some of the olive wood samples may have derived from roof timbers cannot be excluded. The limitations implied in this assumption underlie the analysis and discussions that follow. The application of a simple

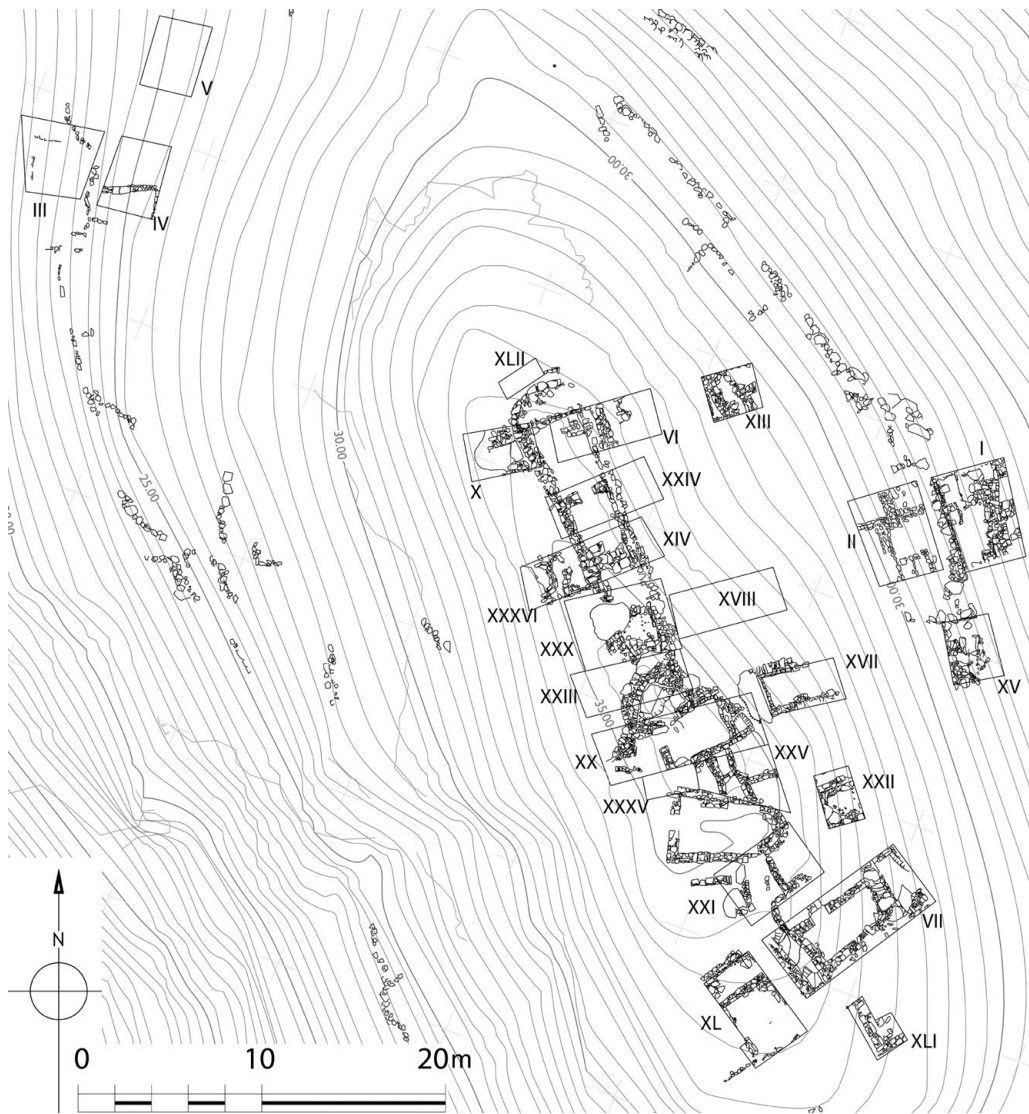


Figure 6. Plan of the excavations on Dhaskalio.

three-phase Bayesian model (Bronk Ramsey 2009) allows estimation of the dates for the boundary between Phases A and B, and also the boundary between Phases B and C.

Bayesian analysis

In this procedure, the radiocarbon determinations (Figure 7) are reconciled statistically with the stratigraphic order as set out in Table 4. This produces the model seen in Figure 8. The transition from Phase A to B is seen to lie between 2634 and 2481 cal BC, and the transition from Phase B to C is between 2452 and 2324 cal BC. It is convenient for

Table 5. Chronology of the phases in years BC.

Transition	Weighted mean	Median	95% probability range
Start of Dhaskalio Phase A	2789 BC	2748 BC	3124–2581 BC
Transition Dhaskalio Phase A to Phase B	2554 BC	2550 BC	2634–2481 BC
Transition Dhaskalio Phase B to Phase C	2392 BC	2395 BC	2452–2324 BC
End of Dhaskalio Phase C	2328 BC	2326 BC	2432–2238 BC

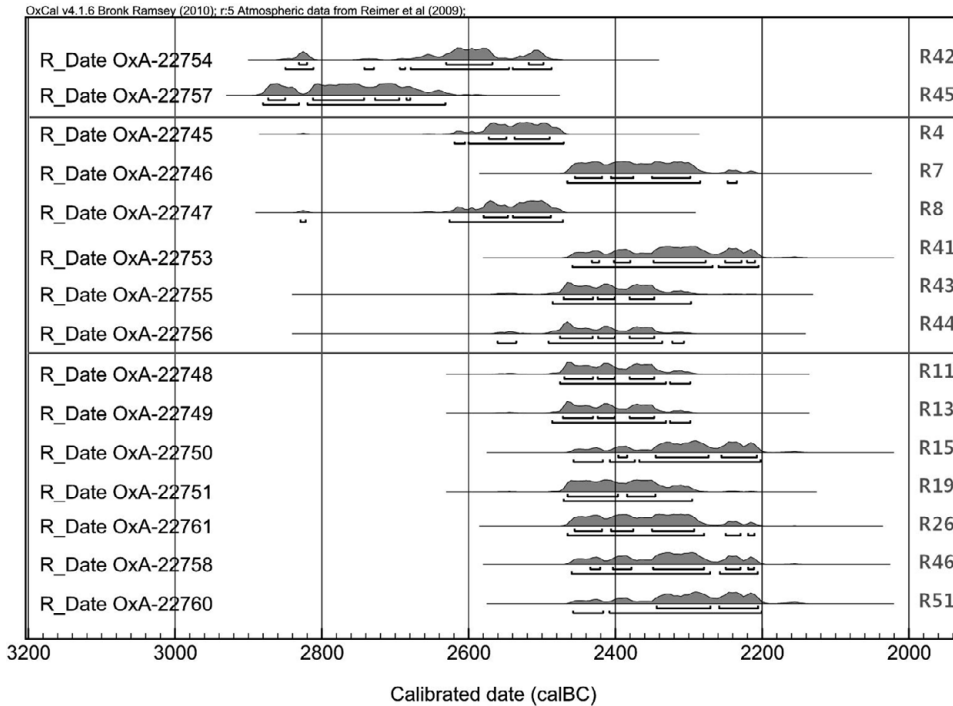


Figure 7. Calibrated date distributions from Dhaskalio.

comparative purposes to calculate the weighted mean, median and 95% probability range for each of the transitions in the model (Table 5).

Refining the chronology for the region

The large error ranges seen in Table 5 for the start of Phase A and the end of Phase C on the present model are due to the lack of earlier and later dates to represent the preceding and succeeding phases. However, the Oxford Laboratory has conducted a number of analyses in recent years for Cycladic sites, some of which are relevant to this problem.

A series of radiocarbon determinations is available from the Early Cycladic site of Markiani in Amorgos (Renfrew *et al.* 2006). Those from Markiani II, belonging to the Kampos group, transitional between the Grotta-Pelos and Keros-Syros cultures, are particularly relevant, as this phase is generally agreed to precede the Keros-Syros culture. For the Keros-Syros culture, Markiani Phase III offers five determinations. Although the pottery from these contexts was

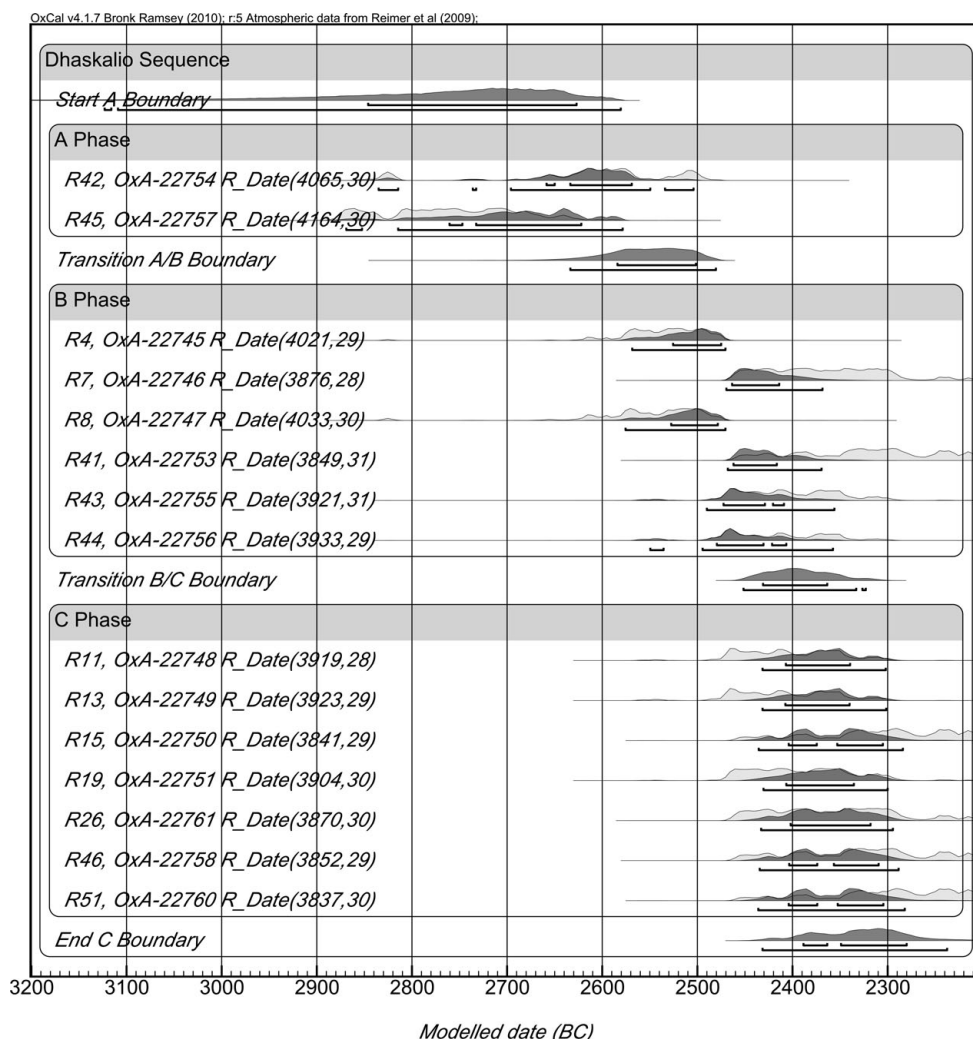


Figure 8. The calibrated radiocarbon determinations for Dhaskalio (in years BC) after Bayesian analysis which draws upon the stratigraphic phasing.

not abundant, and would not support further chronological subdivision, their attribution is clear enough and we have elected to include them in the present analysis (alternative data runs excluding OxA-3292, which might appear an outlier, or excluding all five dates of the Keros-Syros culture from Markiani, did not significantly change the outcome, and these dates have therefore not been excluded).

The material from Markiani Phase IV was considered to be related to the Kastri group. But the samples analysed were found in strata containing examples of the two-handled cup, which at Dhaskalio is associated with Phase C rather than with Phase B. So until the pottery from Markiani Phase IV is reconsidered in the light of the more precise Dhaskalio phasing it is probably safer not to involve these determinations in refining the chronology for the later part of the Early Bronze Age.

Table 6. Chronology of the phases in years BC after refinement.

Transition	Weighted mean	Median	95% probability range	Approximate consensus
Beginning of Dhaskalio Phase A	2746 BC	2742 BC	2885–2622 BC	c. 2750 BC
Dhaskalio Phase A/B transition	2540 BC	2536 BC	2609–2482 BC	c. 2550 BC
Dhaskalio Phase B/C transition	2391 BC	2392 BC	2451–2322 BC	c. 2400 BC
End of Dhaskalio Phase C	2290 BC	2292 BC	2387–2193 BC	c. 2300 BC

The same observations can be made for some of the other radiocarbon determinations reviewed by Manning in his recent survey (Manning 2008: 59, fig. 7.5). Here, in addition to the samples already mentioned, the other samples relevant to this period are from Phase IV at the Zas Cave in Naxos. These have been assigned to the 'Kastri phase'. But once more, since the pottery from Zas is not yet fully published, it is difficult to establish whether that would equate with Dhaskalio Phase B or with Phase C, or possibly with both. We propose to omit these here from further analysis. Manning also utilises the earlier Keros determinations (Renfrew *et al.* 2006; Renfrew 2007) for the chronology of the Keros-Syros culture. These were from the looted area of the Special Deposit North and so we have omitted these in the present analysis since their position in the newly established Dhaskalio phase sequence is not established.

Manning (2008: 56, tab. 7.4; also 2010: 21) does, however, make reference to three analyses from the early Middle Cycladic period from Akrotiri on Thera. These can usefully be utilised in the Bayesian analysis to help refine the end of Dhaskalio Phase C, making the explicit assumption that the Akrotiri early Middle Cycladic context should be later than the Dhaskalio Phase C contexts.

This refined version of the Early Cycladic chronology may be seen in Figures 9 and 10. For the Dhaskalio sequence, the radiocarbon determinations obtained for Markiani for the Kampos group, which there stratigraphically precedes the Keros-Syros culture (here represented by Dhaskalio Phase A), allows the estimation of the beginning of Dhaskalio Phase A at c. 2750 BC. The inclusion of the early Middle Cycladic determinations from Thera allow the conclusion of Phase C to be set fairly precisely at 2300 BC. Using these figures, the Dhaskalio chronology can now be set as in Table 6.

Implications of the refined chronology

It is instructive to compare this newly established calibrated chronology, derived from these new determinations, with the calibrated radiocarbon chronology for the Early Bronze Age Aegean proposed in 1972 (Renfrew 1972: 221). This was based largely upon the radiocarbon dates then available from the Early Helladic sites of Eutresis and Lerna, calibrated according to the early calibration curve established by Hans Suess (1967). At that time, the position in the Cyclades of the later Kastri group, which had recently been defined on the basis of finds from the island of Syros, had not been stratigraphically established, although the use of the Kastri group ceramics as a stratigraphic indicator for the later or developed Keros-Syros culture had been proposed.

OxCal v4.1.7 Bronk Ramsey (2010); r:5 Atmospheric data from Reimer et al (2009);

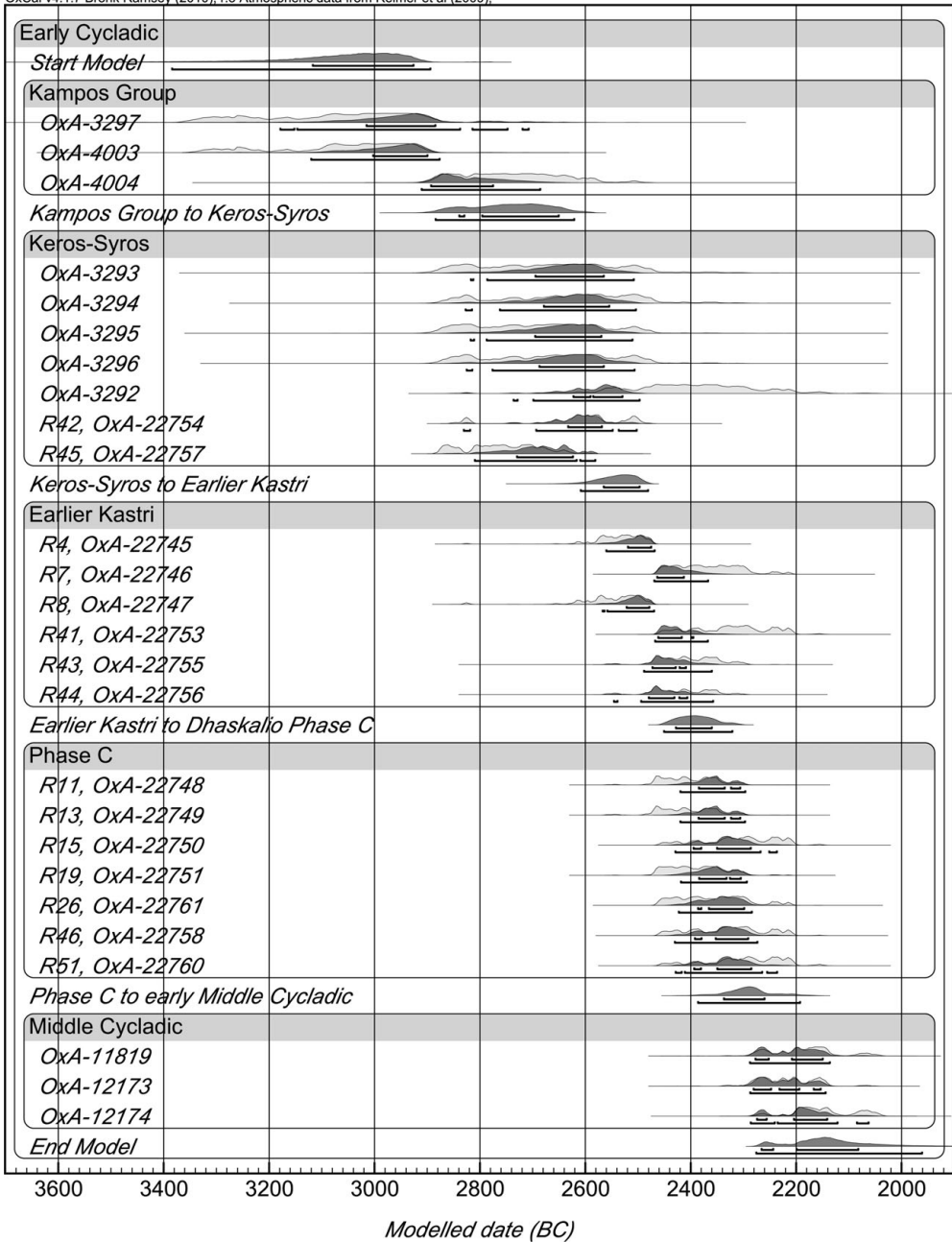


Figure 9. The calibrated radiocarbon determinations for Dhaskalio with samples from Markiani and Akrotiri (in years BC) after Bayesian analysis.

It is remarkable that the chronology proposed as early as 1972 needs so little adjustment to conform with the newly available data. The dates now obtained for Dhaskalio Phases A and B appear to be comparable with the estimate then reached for the Keros-Syros culture.

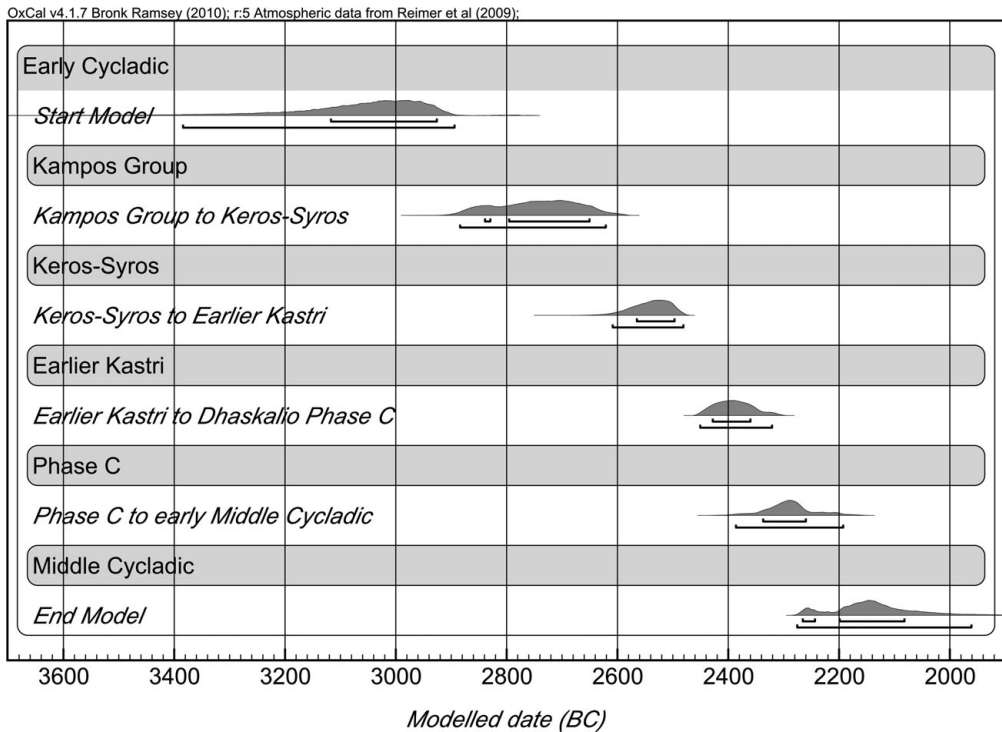


Figure 10. Modelled period boundaries, using the determinations presented in Figure 8.

Those for Dhaskalio Phase C are comparable with the earlier part of the estimate then reached for the Phylakopi I culture. If the assumption is made that the end of Dhaskalio Phase C corresponds to the inception of the Middle Cycladic period, the end of the Early Cycladic period would now appear to fall some two centuries earlier than suggested in 1972.

It should also be noted that the alleged 'gap' in the Early Cycladic sequence (Rutter 1983, 1984), which has for long been a matter of debate, is no longer evident. Rutter had argued that a gap of up to 150 years was evident in the Cycladic sequence between the Kastri group and the Phylakopi I culture. He himself however had suggested that this gap would be likely to disappear with the excavation of an unbroken stratigraphic sequence (1984: 95). This is now the case, and the evidence of Dhaskalio indicates a striking continuity between the successive phases there, with no suggestion of a gap. The good series of radiocarbon dates from Kolonna on the Saronic island of Aegina (Wild *et al.* 2010) harmonises well with the dates here, suggesting that the end of Dhaskalio Phase C falls a century or so earlier than the Early Helladic/Middle Helladic transition at Kolonna.

It is to be hoped that the chronology presented here can now form a sound basis for the chronology of the later part of the Early Bronze Age in the southern Cyclades. However, such a claim must await the final publication of the Dhaskalio pottery sequence (Sotirakopoulou forthcoming), with its full analysis of the relationship between the latest Dhaskalio pottery and that of the Phylakopi I culture. It may well be possible at that point definitively to propose that Dhaskalio Phase C represents the final phase of the Cycladic Early Bronze Age sequence.

History of the Kavos sanctuary

Turning again to the sanctuary at Kavos, it is clear that the *floruit* of the site was during the Phase A occupation of the settlement at Dhaskalio, with strong continuing use during Dhaskalio Phase B, and only sporadic activity later, in Dhaskalio Phase C. That places the *floruit* of the sanctuary at Kavos from *c.* 2750 to 2550 BC, with its continued use during Dhaskalio Phase B from *c.* 2550 to 2400 BC, and with a further period of infrequent use of some 100 years. The wider significance here is for the development of symbolic interaction in the Aegean. Ritual activities can be recognised on a modest scale in the Aegean in earlier periods, but the sanctuary on Keros seems to be the first time that ritual activity was practised not only on a local but on a wider regional scale. The sanctuary at Keros came to act as a symbolic attractor for the entire region of the Aegean occupied by the Cycladic Islands, and perhaps more widely. Moreover at this time the symbolism embodied in the typical Cycladic folded-arm figurine was seen also on Crete and on the Greek mainland. It may not be appropriate to speak here of a religious cult (which raises problems of definition). But clearly Keros was, from around 2750 BC, serving as a regional ritual centre. This is the first time that such a phenomenon can be recognised in the Aegean, although in one form or another it persisted from that time, with the archaic sanctuary on the Cycladic island of Delos being a notable example flourishing two millennia later. The origins of that ritual practice can now be dated with precision.

Congregation before deism

The primary purpose of this paper was to set out the more precise chronology for the Aegean Early Bronze Age resulting from the new radiocarbon determinations. But it also offers an opportunity to note the wide variety of early places of congregation, from Göbekli Tepe to Chaco Canyon, and to draw attention to the special role which seafaring may have in the early annals of pilgrimage. The site at Kavos, although it does not have the monumentality of Göbekli Tepe, or of Tàrxien in Malta, or indeed of Stonehenge, can now be claimed as the oldest maritime sanctuary in the world—maritime in the sense that it is only accessible by sea.

The wider problem here is for the study of early religion. The difficulties in using the term ‘religion’ have been well brought out recently in a volume devoted to social and cognitive life at Çatalhöyük (Hodder 2010)—another Anatolian site but a couple of thousand years more recent than Göbekli Tepe. Maurice Bloch (2010) argues persuasively that the term ‘religion’ cannot be validly applied at Çatal. We would likewise argue that its proper use requires the evidence for explicit reference to deities, such as can be claimed for the Late Cycladic shrine at Phylakopi in Melos (Renfrew 1985)—some 1500 years more recent than Kavos on Keros—or for the temples of Early Dynastic Egypt or Mesopotamia. The sanctuaries at Göbekli Tepe, Caral or Kavos on Keros cannot be identified as temples or shrines with such an explicit iconography. Yet, even if they are not temples or shrines in this sense, they can be regarded as places of convocation and pilgrimage, as locations of high devotional expression.

So it may now be appropriate to define a ritual behaviour of great antiquity (congregation), which we would not want to dignify with the designation ‘religion’, where that term implies the veneration of specific deities, of supernatural powers which can be separately identified

(i.e. deism). Yet sites of congregation and convocation, whether marked by monumental meeting places (as at Göbekli Tepe or Stonehenge) or by the structured deposition of symbolic artefacts (as at Kavos on Keros) may be regarded as sanctuaries, as places of pilgrimage. The nature of the belief systems that motivated their devotees or participants requires further consideration. But it seems useful to establish, in a preliminary way, that such rituals of assembly and of deposition were practised millennia before the well-defined deities of organised religion can be identified.

Acknowledgements

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