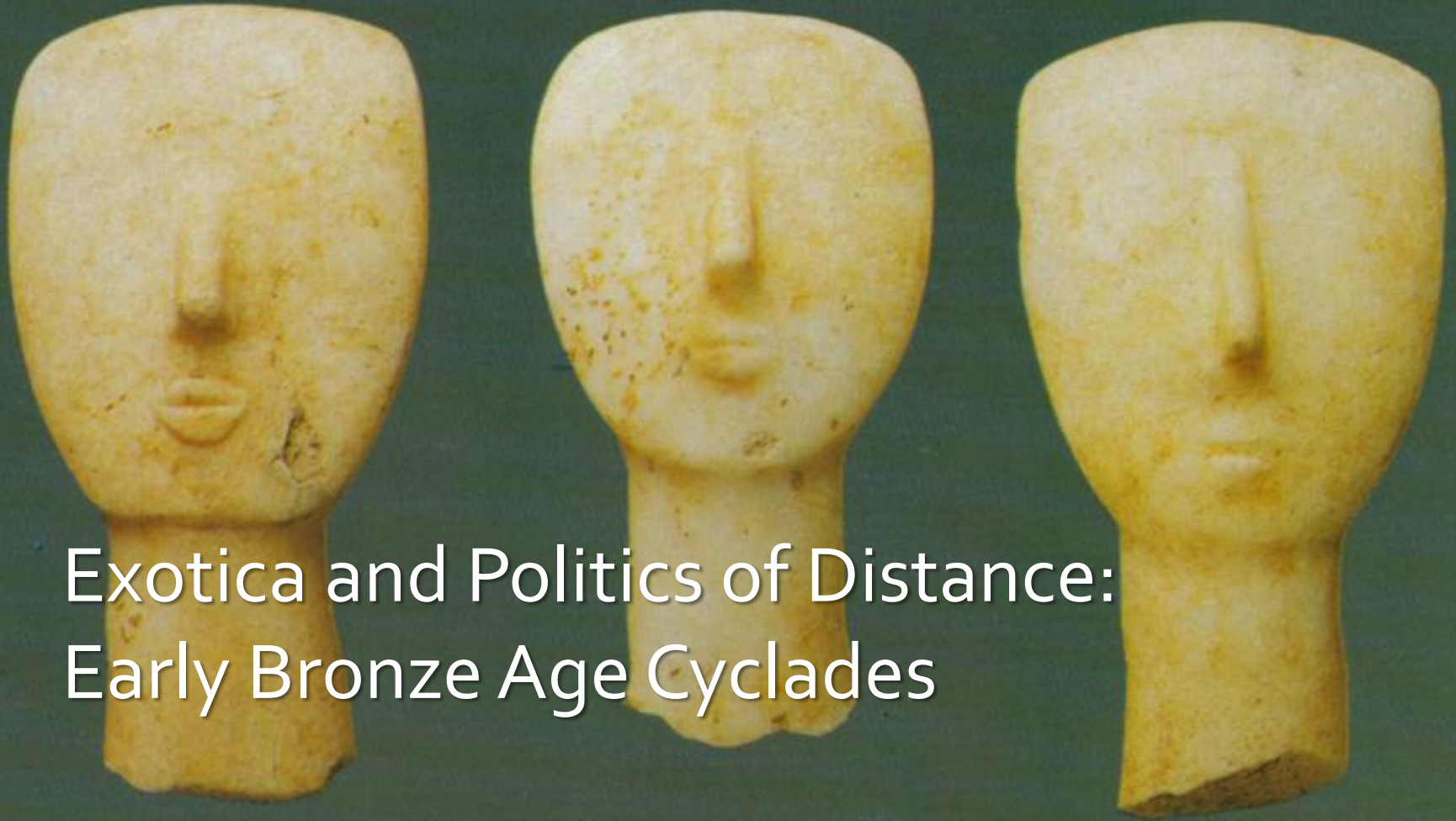


Entanglements



Exotica and Politics of Distance:
Early Bronze Age Cyclades

Politics of Distance

- Control over traded goods = strategy for the accumulation of political & ideological power
- “The select few who are either able or expected to become familiar with geographically distant phenomena may be accorded an aura of prestige or power” (Helms 1988: 5)
- Not only exotic materials but also **intangible knowledge of distant realms** & regions can be politically valuable goods” (Helms 1988: 4)
- **Esoteric knowledge** of distance places & customs is used in the construction of political ideologies:

Politics of Distance

- Reflects difficulty of acquisition
- Faraway places lie outside the experience of most people:
 - Perceived with almost mystical reverence
 - Travellers return with exotic goods & fantastical stories of the strange & the different
- Objects from faraway places are imbued with an aura of prestige
- Symbolic relationship develops between the person who acquires materials from a mysterious distant realm & the world from which these materials derive:
 - Social & cultural capital

Consuming the Exotic

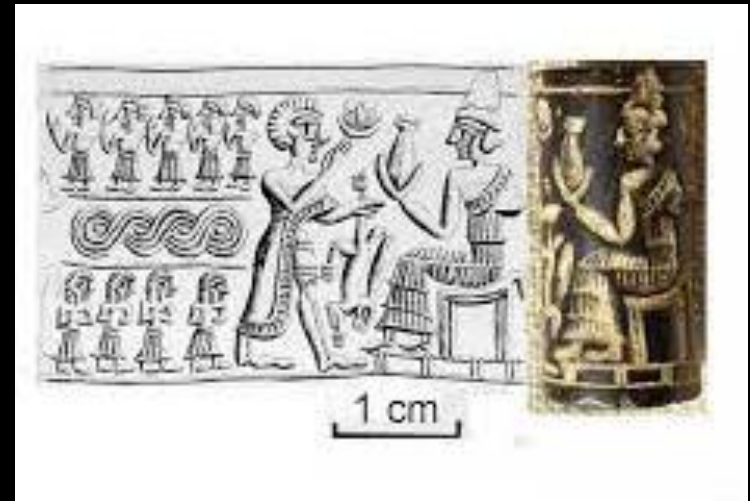
- “Not only exotic materials but also **intangible knowledge** of distant realms & regions can be politically valuable goods” (Helms 1988: 4)
- “A symbolic relationship develops between the individual who is able to source materials from a mysterious distant realm & the world from which these materials derive; adding to their social capital” (Steel 2013: 127)



Appliqué sphinx, Malia

Symbolic Entrainment

- Movement of exotic goods to a seemingly less complex society:
 - Exotica perceived to be particularly prestigious enhancing its value
- Competitive emulation & displays of wealth & power within gift exchanges etc:
- Elites: ceremonial display of exotic material
 - Identify themselves with elites of more “complex” societies
 - Exotic material imbued with symbolic & political capital
 - Creating & legitimating a new social order



Early Minoan Mochlos, [Syrian cylinder seal](#)

EBA Cyclades

- Keros-Syros Culture (c.2700-2300 BC)
- Small farming, village communities
 - Exogamy & exchanges essential for survival
- Island communities: maritime interaction
 - Sea provided an "active highway outwards towards a wider & more cosmopolitan world" (Broodbank 1993: 316)
- Development of long-distance exchange networks



Lead boat, Naxos

Keros-Syros Culture

- Mineral rich:
 - Marble, obsidian, emery, metal ores (copper, silver, lead)
- Specialist craft production:
 - Pottery
 - Metallurgy
 - Stone carving
 - Obsidian blades



Copper tools



Silver bowls

Seafaring

- Sea craft are more than means of crossing water:
 - “they are cultural objects as well” (Broodbank 2000, 96)
- Representations of long boats:
 - Angled hull
 - Powered by numerous (25?) rowers (c. 15-20m)
- Complex of maritime symbols:
 - Fish, astral symbols, spirals (waves?)
 - Ideology of maritime prowess
 - Navigation



Chalandriani: frying pan

Maritime exchanges

- Evidence for maritime interaction within & beyond Cyclades:
 - North coast of Crete, Ayios Kosmos (Attica), Manika (Euboea), West coast of Anatolia
- Movement of certain objects
 - Pottery
 - Marble vessels & figurines
 - Obsidian
 - Metal ores & finished objects
- Imports? Broodbank highlights esoteric knowledge



Folded arm figurine

Cycladic Colonies in Crete?

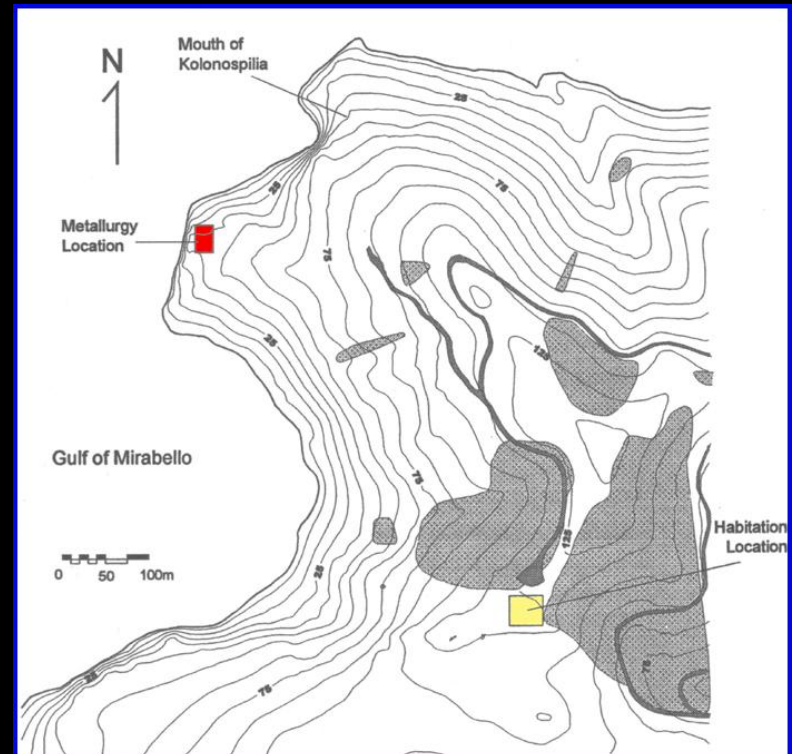
- EM I cemetery at Ayia Photia?
- Intrusive Cycladic practices:
 - Tomb types, single burials
- Intrusive Cycladic materials
 - Obsidian blades
 - Metalwork: knives & daggers of Cycladic type & copper
- Cretans burying their dead with Cycladic imports **or** foreign community settled on NE coast of Crete?



Ayia Photia frying pan

Cycladic Colonies in Crete?

- Chyrsokamino: EM III copper smelting workshop
 - Copper ore, malachite, azurite, furnace fragments, stone tools, tuyères
- Cycladic metallurgical technology
- Lead isotope analyses:
 - Cyclades are the main source of copper

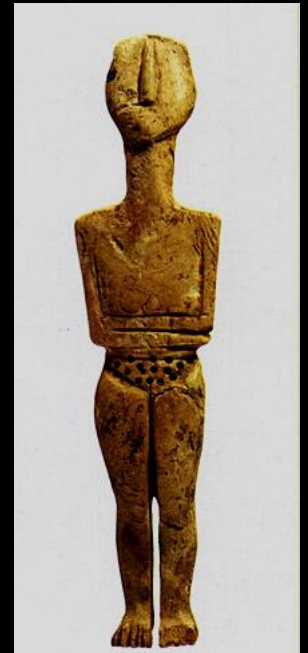


Archanes

- EM II-III: evidence for sustained trade with Cyclades
- Privileged trading relations
- Cycladic imports:
 - Large quantities of obsidian blades
 - Large number of Cycladic figurines (FAF)
 - Local imitation of FAF in ivory



Area of the rocks



Ivory FAF
from Tholos C

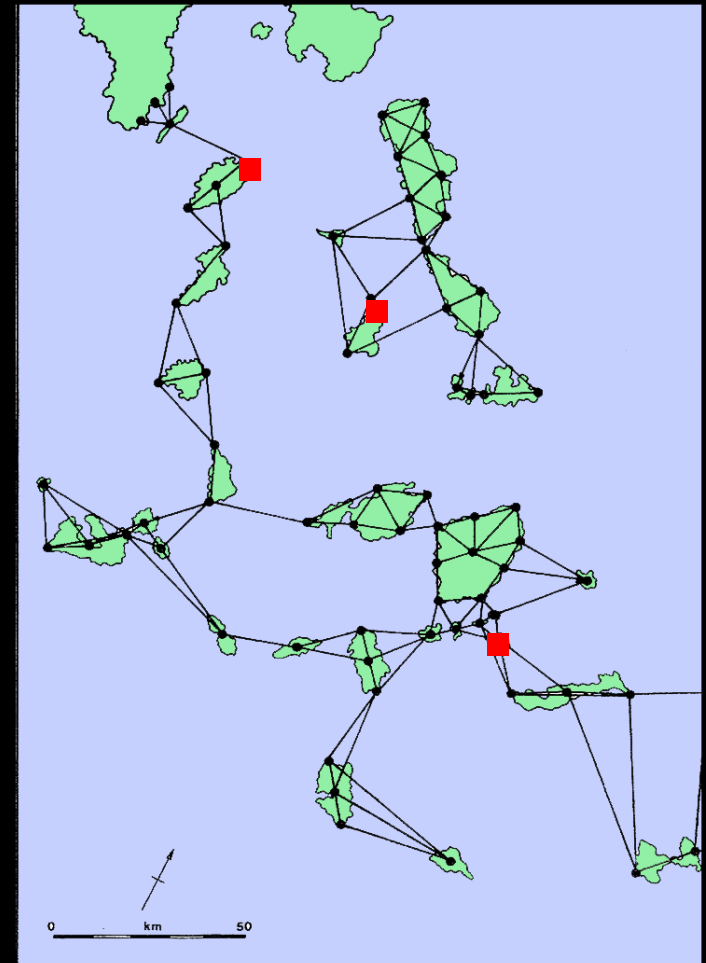
Keros-Syros Exchange

- Trader sites: larger communities with ability to manipulate local trade & monopolise long-distance ventures
 - Chalandriani, Syros
 - Ayia Irini, Kea
 - Dhaskaleio-Kavos, Keros
- How/why? No particular geographical advantages
 - Harbours
 - Mineral resources
 - Rich arable land



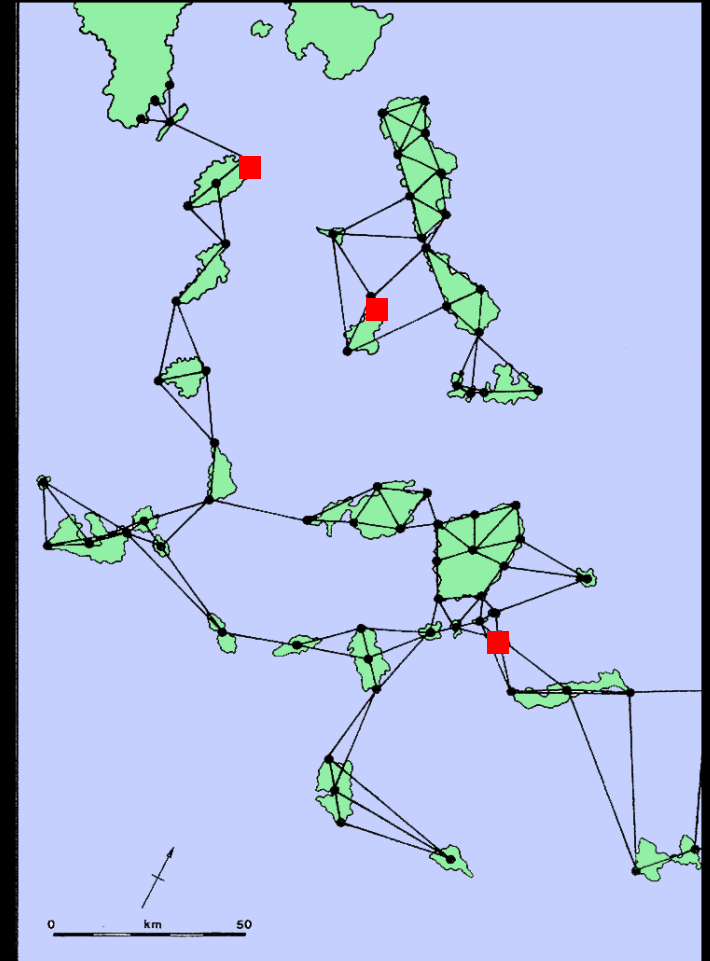
Keros-Syros Exchange

- **Proximal Point Analysis:**
 - Populations should interact most strongly with their closest neighbours
- Suggests localised patterns of maritime activity
 - Many communities with only infrequent use of sea?
- Corresponds closely with the trader sites:
 - “source of [ideological] power lay primarily in the very activity & practice of maritime movement” (Broodbank 1993: 323)



Daskaleio Kavos

- Broodbank: association of knowledge distance & power in construction of Keros-Syros ideological world
- Trader centre **furthest** from mineral deposits & extra-Cycladic world



Daskaleio Kavos

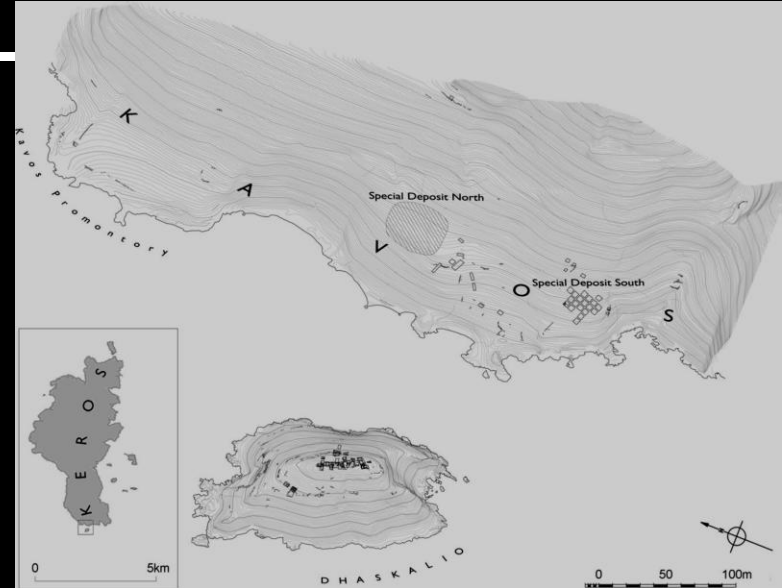
- Very rich deposit of smashed marble figurines & vessels, mixed with obsidian, pottery
- Deposit represents politics of value
 - Removal of goods from circulation in ceremony of conspicuous destruction
 - Controlling ownership of goods in highly visible ceremony



Broken figurines from Kavos

Maritime Sanctuary

- Vast quantities of broken pottery, broken marble vessels (2300+) & figurine fragments (550+) found on Kavos
- Deliberately broken elsewhere (after long use life) & brought to be **intentionally deposited** at the Special Deposits South & North
- Kavos: ritual destination accessible only by maritime pilgrimage



Special Deposits on Kavos



An International Spirit

- Long distance voyages beyond the Cyclades the prerogative of specialists
- Vast distances, & length of voyages: need to be fitted within farming calendar
- Challenge & potential power in long range travel – invisible commodity:
 - Esoteric knowledge of/from other BA centres
 - Exotic social practices
- Reiterated by iconography of long boats (prestige symbols)



Chalandriani frying pan

An International Spirit

- Circulation of obsidian blades within & beyond Cyclades
- Carter: **biography of blades** & their intended consumption within funerary ritual
 - Ephemeral nature of the object
 - “a container of power & social meaning” (Carter 2007: 101)
- Skill involved in crafting imbues blades with prestige
- Burial ritual: venue of social reproduction for “an exclusive audience of famed island characters” (Carter 2007: 102)



Obsidian blades and core

Summary

- Rich evidence for development of maritime trade within & beyond Cyclades in mid-3rd millennium BC
- Networks link Cyclades to Crete, western Anatolia & Attica
- Broodbank attempts to write ethnographies / social archaeologies of trade:
 - Using Helms: knowledge, distance & power
- Carter draws upon biography of objects