



McDONALD INSTITUTE MONOGRAPHS

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## Κέρος, Κάβος Δασκαλιού

Edited by Colin Renfrew, Christos Doumas,  
Lila Marangou & Giorgos Gavalas



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Κέρως, Κάβως Δασκαλιού



*The island of Dhaskalio seen from Dhaskalio Kavos in 1963.*



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Edited by Colin Renfrew, Christos Doumas,  
Lila Marangou & Giorgos Gavalas

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Cover photo: *The island of Dhaskalio seen from Dhaskalio Kavos during the project.*

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**Abbreviations** (as used in pottery and object figure catalogues)

g	gram
m	metre
cm	centimetre
D.	diameter
H.	height
T.	thickness
L.	length
W.	width
Wt	weight
c.	circa

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## Foreword

The small Cycladic island of Keros, one of the so-called 'Mikres Kyklades' ('Small Cycladic Islands'), along with the Ano and Kato Kouphonisia, Schinoussa and Herakleia, which lie between southern Naxos and Amorgos, has since the 1960s been something of an archaeological mystery. For it was at that time that the first reports came in of a major and recently looted Early Bronze Age site located at the coastal site of Dhaskalio Kavos opposite the small island of Dhaskalio, situated only some eighty metres off the west coast of Keros. The British scholar Colin Renfrew, then a research student conducting field survey in the Cyclades under a permit authorised by the Ephor of Antiquities for the Cyclades, the late Nikolaos Zapheiropoulos, may have been the first archaeologist to visit the site since the travels of Ludwig Ross in the nineteenth century. Dr Christos Doumas, then Epimeletis of Antiquities in the Ephorate for the Cyclades carried out some rescue excavations at the site, and these were followed by my own researches as described in Chapter 3 below.

These investigations did not, however, fully clarify the nature of the site or the extent of the looting which had previously taken place there. Many Early Cycladic sculptures had appeared illicitly on the antiquities market in the 1950s and 1960s, and it was suspected that a number of these had come from the site of Dhaskalio Kavos. This view was reinforced by the exhibition of several fragmentary Cycladic figu-

rines from the Erlenmeyer Collection in the exhibition *Art and Culture of the Cyclades*, held at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe in 1976, a collection which allegedly contained no fewer than 140 of such fragmentary pieces.

The lack of a clear understanding of the nature and extent of the site, despite the small-scale rescue excavations already undertaken there, led me in 1986, in my capacity as Ephor of Antiquities for the Cyclades, to invite Professors Christos Doumas, Lila Marangou and Colin Renfrew, the leaders of the Inter-University Research Project on Amorgos and Keros, at that time also working on Markiani on Amorgos, to organize a further investigation of the site. It was planned that the project would include the re-excavation of the areas which had been disturbed by the *archaiokapiloi* in the course of their looting enterprise and a surface survey of the entire Dhaskalio Kavos area (i.e. the area opposite Dhaskalio island) although omitting Dhaskalio island itself.

They accepted my invitation to undertake this work on behalf of the Ephorate, which was undertaken during the summers of 1987 and 1988. During the work on Keros the Ephorate of Antiquities for the Cyclades was represented on a day-to-day basis by the archaeologist Dr Panagiota Sotirakopoulou.

I am happy therefore to introduce the resulting report.

*Photeini Zapheiropoulou*



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## Preface

The site of Dhaskalio Kavos on the uninhabited Cycladic island of Keros has established itself as one of the richest in finds from the Early Bronze Age of the Aegean. Extensively looted sometime around 1960, the broken fragments of pottery and of marble figurines and vases which covered the surface when first systematically investigated in 1963 have excited considerable comment. Was this a rich Cycladic cemetery destroyed by looters? Or did the finds perhaps indicate the presence of a sanctuary or other cult centre? These were some of the questions already being discussed when Dr Photeini Zappeiropoulou, then Ephor of Antiquities for the Cyclades and Samos (21st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities) invited Professors Christos Doumas, Lila Marangou and Colin Renfrew to undertake further investigation at the site by re-examining the areas disturbed by looters, which first Christos Doumas and then she herself had earlier investigated.

The fieldwork at Dhaskalio Kavos reported here was thus undertaken in 1987 and 1988 by the Inter-University Project for Research on Amorgos and Keros (Athens-Ioannina-Cambridge) in collaboration with the Ephorate, with the approval of the Greek Archaeological Service. It was jointly directed by Professors Doumas, Marangou and Renfrew, with the participation of Dr Panagiota Sotirakopoulou as representative of the Ephorate. The Project also undertook fieldwork at the site of Markiani on Amorgos from 1987 to 1989 with study seasons in 1990 and 1991 (Catling 1987, 32; 1988, 28; 1989, 23; French 1990, 19). These are now reported in detail elsewhere (Marangou *et al.* 2006).

The purpose of the present work is to present the principal results of the Dhaskalio Kavos project, including an account of the excavations and a preliminary report of the associated surface survey at Dhaskalio Kavos, directed for the Project by Dr Todd Whitelaw, as well as to publish the finds from both excavation and survey.

The volume begins with an Introduction by Colin Renfrew, giving the background to the project and reviewing some of the considerations which led to the fieldwork of 1987 and 1988. In Chapter 2 Lila Marangou reviews what is known of Keros and the surrounding islands in antiquity and in historic times and gives a detailed account of research undertaken prior to the twentieth century. Earlier work at Dhaskalio Kavos, undertaken since 1963, is reviewed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 by Todd Whitelaw is a preliminary report of the surface survey and an indication of its findings. It is hoped that the full report of the survey and of the analyses of the data will be published in a further volume. The excavation in what came to be called the Special Deposit, the area which had previously been disturbed by looters, took place on a relatively small scale, and was directed towards the elucidation of a number of preliminary questions (see Chapter 5). In particular we sought to establish the general nature of the looted site and its occupation, and of the finds which it yielded (see Appendix A). The radiocarbon dates obtained are reported in Appendix C: although indicative for the dating of the site, coming from unstratified samples they are unable to offer a precise chronology.

The description of the finds begins with a clear account in Chapter 6 of the pottery recovered by Cyprian Broodbank, supplemented by a description of the petrography of the fabrics in Appendix D. The stone objects, and especially those of marble, constitute a special and important category for the interpretations of the site. The figurine fragments are described in Chapter 7 and the stone vessels in Chapter 8. The remaining finds of stone — obsidian, emery, stone pestles — are reviewed in Chapter 9, the other finds of clay, including animal protomes, by Christos Doumas, mat impressions and spindle whorls in Chapter 10, and the metal finds in Chapter 11. The inferences to be drawn from the breakage patterns of the artefacts recovered, the thraumatology, are reviewed in Chapter 12 by Colin Renfrew, who also contributes a concluding chapter discussing the possible function and significance of the site.

It should be noted that, in the course of the fieldwork and subsequent study, conclusions as to the nature and formation of the Special Deposit as reached by the contributors to this volume have diverged. They have crystallized around two different interpretations. Earlier views, formulated before the work undertaken during the course of the project in 1987, are discussed in the introductory chapters (mainly Chapters 1 and 3). As reported there, earlier views that the site represented a looted cemetery or, alternatively, a disturbed shrine, had by then already been called into question.

Broodbank in his *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades* (Broodbank 2000b, 225–30) suggested that the Special Deposit at Dhaskalio Kavos should be

regarded as an exceptionally rich but disturbed and looted cemetery, serving the settlement at Kavos and on Dhaskalio Island. The settlement at Dhaskalio and Kavos is regarded by him as one of a small number of notable island trading centres which emerged in the Cyclades during the Early Bronze II period (Broodbank 2000b, 267–72). This view, although not developed in detail in his contribution to the present volume, is supported by the very thorough analysis of the pottery given by him in Chapter 6. This position is argued by Whitelaw in Chapter 4 on the basis of the 1987 surface survey. It underlies also the discussion of the marble bowls offered by Voutsaki in Chapter 8(A).

The four editors, however, cannot concur with this 'rich cemetery' interpretation as argued here by Whitelaw. Their position is based partly on the observations, set out by Renfrew in Chapter 12, that the great majority of the breakages to marble vessels and figurines are old breaks, probably of Early Bronze Age date, and certainly not the result of looting in recent decades. Other arguments are concisely set out by Doumas in Chapter 10(A). The matter is further reviewed by Renfrew in Chapter 13.

In the light of this sustained divergence of viewpoints, which has not been modified through subsequent discussion, the editors have not presumed to constrain the views and conclusions expressed, notably in Chapters 4 and 8(A), although they do

not concur with some of them. Those views are presented precisely as written by the relevant specialist contributors. But it has been ensured that the data on breakages, on which some of the arguments rest, are presented here in some detail to serve as a basis for future study.

The reader will find, therefore, that while the facts and observations presented here are not in dispute, conclusions differ. It is hoped that these matters can be further clarified in future, whether through excavation or by more intensive study of the finds described in this volume. Meanwhile we invite the reader to review the data published here and to consider the various arguments expressed.

It should be noted that the island of Dhaskalio and the site of Dhaskalio Kavos have in the past sometimes been written in the form Dhaskaleio or Daskaleio or Kavos Dhaskaleiou. On the basis of the etymology indicated in Chapter 2, the form Dhaskalio and Dhaskalio Kavos have been adopted here.

Many problems remain, and some may yet be resolved by systematic excavation at the site in the future. Meanwhile it is hoped that the presentation here of the fieldwork and of the very fragmentary material recovered will give the reader an understanding of the nature of the site and of its richness.

*Colin Renfrew, Christos Doumas,  
Lila Marangou & Giorgos Gavalas*

#### **Note on the 2024 open access edition**

For the 2024 open access edition of the present volume, the opportunity has been taken to correct several minor errors introduced during the editing and typesetting process. In addition, in Chapter 8(A), a consistent editorial error whereby the word 'diameter' had been

substituted for 'radius' has been corrected. One point of fact worth correcting here is the statement on page xvii, repeated on page 1, that Colin Renfrew was the first archaeologist to visit the site of Keros on 24 July 1963. In fact Christos Doumas visited the site on 13 July 1963, as detailed in Chapter 7 of Volume I of the Keros series.

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## Acknowledgements

The 1987 field season on Keros was undertaken from 31 August to 12 September. Transportation from Ano Kouphonisi to Keros was undertaken daily in the caique of Rousetos Prasinos.

Those participating in the 1987 field season in addition to Chris Scarre and Todd Whitelaw, were: Robin Conningham, Andreas Eleftherakis, Colum Fordham, Giorgos Gavalas, Will Johnston, Paula Giecke, Wendy Horton, Prokopis Michailides, Lisa Nevett, Simon Ounsworth, Sofia Voutsaki, and Anna Zaouri, together with workmen from Ano Kouphonisi: Antonis Prasinos, Michalis Kovaïos.

Dr Panagiota Sotirakopoulou was the representative of the Ephor accompanied by Elias Probonas, phylax of the Naxos Museum.

This was followed by a study season from 1–15 September 1988, again using the field laboratory established already in 1987 at the hotel of Michailis Platis on the island of Ano Kouphonisi.

Those participating in the 1988 study season, in addition to Chris Scarre and Todd Whitelaw, were Natasha Angelopoulou, Kiki Birtacha, Peggy Bridges, Robin Conningham, Paule Giecke, Giorgos Gavalas, Will Johnston, Jo Lawson, Alex Roberts, Sofia Voutsaki and Cyprian Broodbank.

The material which had been transferred to the reserves of the Naxos Museum was also studied subsequently there. Some ceramic material (the non-feature sherds) was left in storage on Ano Kouphonisi.

The editors are grateful to the following for their encouragement and assistance: the three participating universities for jointly funding the project; the British Academy, Jesus College, Cambridge and the Greek Ministry of the Aegean for financial support, and to Hector Catling, then Director of the British School at Athens; Mariza Mathari, Director of the 21st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities; and to Mrs Olga Hadjianastasiou-Philaniotou, Archaeologist of

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## Chapter 13

# Dhaskalio Kavos as Symbolic Attractor

Colin Renfrew

In this concluding chapter an attempt is made to reconcile some of the varying, often conflicting, interpretations of the Early Cycladic remains at Dhaskalio Kavos, along with Dhaskalio, and to elucidate the significance of the finds.

Many problems hamper our current understanding of the site, not least the circumstance that the area in its northern part, the so-called 'Special Deposit', from which the richest finds have come, was wrecked by looters. A coherent context for these finds was thus definitively lost. At the same time, the researches reported here have established many important facts of a contextual nature, and have thus served to put these finds into context in a number of senses. Dhaskalio Kavos is clearly one of the most important sites of the Aegean Early Bronze Age. It presents a dazzling wealth and variety of finds. Although these are regrettably very fragmentary they establish the most extensive repertoire of 'prestige' or choice objects yet recovered from a single site of the Cycladic Early Bronze Age. Moreover the time range corresponds with that of the Keros-Syros culture (Early Cycladic II), so that although none of the finds comes from a well-stratified context, their chronological position seems secure.

In the first place, the systematic survey undertaken by Todd Whitelaw and his team has underlined the circumstance that this northern area, that of the Special Deposit, is only one component of the site. The large area to the south with its many finds is now seen as a second, major component. Study of the finds collected from it, and especially of the pottery, indicates that this part of the site had a more domestic character. This is still understood mainly from surface indications: the only structure yet documented there is the two-roomed house excavated by Christos Doumas in 1963. The third component of the site, as has been recognized since its discovery and the investigations of Doumas in 1963, is the islet of Dhaskalio itself. Beyond that brief investigation by Doumas it remains unexplored, and its systematic investigation must be one objective of any further research.

The location of the Special Deposit is now reasonably well understood, even if its internal structure, after the destruction wrought by looters, is not. The more comprehensive study of the survey materials, awaited in a projected further volume by Todd Whitelaw, should add further detail.

The context of the site within the island of Keros and its archaeology remains little explored. Beyond the survey by Zappeiropoulou (1968a; and this volume) we know little as yet of the prehistory of Keros. But at least excavations in the nearby Kouphonisia (Zappeiropoulou 1983; in press) have given some information about the nearby occupation of the surrounding islands, even if systematic information on Early Bronze Age Herakleia and Schinoussa is not yet forthcoming (see the review here by Marangou in Chapter 2).

The context of the site within the Cyclades as a whole is becoming much clearer, first through Broodbank's thorough review of the Cycladic Early Bronze Age (Broodbank 2000b) and now by the studies in the present volume. Particularly important in this respect are those categories of artefact found both in the Special Deposit and in the surface collections from Kavos South, reported here. These are reviewed, notably, in Broodbank's detailed treatment of the pottery in Chapter 6, and in the documentation of the various artefacts of stone. In this respect, however, the dearth of metal artefacts seems puzzling, despite the well-documented evidence for metallurgy at the location north of the main areas of activity and designated Kavos North, as reviewed by Georgakopoulou in Chapter 11.

The broader Aegean context of the site remains to be comprehensively reviewed. There are surprisingly few links with Crete yet recognized in the finds: not a single Cretan import has been suggested. The same is perhaps true for the Anatolian coast, even though the duration of the site extends into the time range of the Kastri Group. If we look for relations beyond the Cyclades, these are indeed indicated for

the Greek mainland, and seen mainly in the pottery finds, particularly in the fine wares, most notably the sauceboats. But there are other indications also, for instance among the fine stone pestles (see Rahmstorf 2003). These are matters which remain to be investigated, and the preliminary petrological studies on the pottery by Jill Hilditch, reported in Appendix D, promise further insights on that front.

What is not in doubt, however, is the unparalleled richness of the site, or more precisely of the Special Deposit, in terms of artefacts of a special nature, already familiar to us from the Cycladic cemeteries. These are notably rare in the few documented settlement excavations of the time, such as those at Markiani on Amorgos (Marangou *et al.* 2006) or at Skarkos on Ios (Marthari 1997; 1998). I propose to designate these special artefacts as ‘choice’. They might well be termed ‘élite’, if that did not carry the implication of premature conclusions about social organization. Ranking or stratification in the society of the time should be documented through well-stratified finds rather than assumed through designation. The term ‘exotic’ might also serve, if that did not likewise carry implications about place of origin. Much of the pottery was indeed imported, and perhaps many of the marble objects also, but it cannot be excluded that some of the high-quality or ‘choice’ artefacts to which we refer may well be of more local manufacture. We are speaking here of several categories of material: in the pottery of fine wares, many of them of special shapes, and in cases which can already be documented, numerous imports. All the marble finds — the bowls, the other vessels, the figurines — may be said to fall within this ‘choice’ category. These are forms which are well known from the richer graves in the Cycladic cemeteries, and in small quantities from the richer settlements (such as Akrotiri in Thera, Phylakopi in Melos or Aghia Irini in Kea), but they are very rare in less cosmopolitan settlements such as Skarkos on Ios or Markiani on Amorgos. The obsidian, as reviewed by Tristan Carter in Chapter 9, also has special features linking it with the richer cemeteries. And then there are other special finds, including the vessels of chlorite schist which are also to be regarded as choice, in the same sense. Another term for such artefacts might be ‘valuables’, and the use of fine materials and the labour involved in their manufacture, as well as their rarity at most sites, would make that a suitable term, did it not have economic overtones which might give it an unintended commercial sense. In this chapter I therefore propose to refer to these special finds as ‘choice’ artefacts. The term is thus used here in that specific sense, not as an aesthetic evaluation. They include forms which hitherto have been found mainly,

but not exclusively, in the Early Cycladic cemeteries, and which were there clearly regarded as of high value by those who placed them in the grave. But the repertoire of choice artefacts at Dhaskalio Kavos omits some categories which are well documented in the cemeteries, such as the daggers, pins and other artefacts of copper or bronze, the special objects of silver, and the considerable repertoire of stone beads. As Broodbank notes in Chapter 6, certain ceramic forms are missing also, notably the ‘frying pan’, well documented at Chalandriani on Syros (but admittedly less so elsewhere at this time).

As will be discussed further below, the site has yielded more examples by far (albeit now in fragmentary condition) of many of the principal categories of choice artefact than has any other site in the Cycladic islands, whether settlement or cemetery. Indeed for some categories, notably marble figurines and marble vessels, the documented finds from Dhaskalio Kavos exceed the *total* of such artefacts reported from controlled excavations at all Early Bronze Age sites in the Cyclades, taken together. Whether that is to be seen simply as placing the site at the richer end of a continuous spectrum of wealth, visible in the Cycladic cemeteries, as argued by Broodbank (2000b) and by Whitelaw in this volume (Chapter 4), or whether it sets it apart as falling in a class of its own (of which it would so far be the only member recognized) is a matter for discussion.

In what follows the inadequacies of some earlier interpretations (e.g. the sanctuary and the cemetery hypotheses) will first be reviewed, and then some features discussed which may suggest that none of the interpretations yet proposed is entirely satisfactory.

### Polarities of interpretation

The attentive reader will already have noted that two of the major contributors to this volume, Whitelaw and Broodbank, have deployed arguments in their chapters suggesting that the complex at Dhaskalio/Dhaskalio Kavos represents a settlement accompanied by a rich cemetery, such as may be seen also at Chalandriani on Syros or Aplomata on Naxos, although admittedly richer in finds than either of these. Such was indeed the initial impression gained by the first three archaeologists who have worked at the site (Renfrew, Dumas, and Zappeiropoulou) as is fully rehearsed and acknowledged in Chapter 3. But each one of these has subsequently revised that view. There are several grounds for the change of opinion. The most obvious is that absolutely no satisfactory traces of the grave structures normally found at an Early Cycladic cemetery have been recognized — to which there is

an obvious and plausible yet not entirely satisfactory response that they may have been destroyed during the looting process. The phenomenon of deliberate breakage is also something not seen, or at any rate not at such a scale, in the Cycladic cemeteries (see Chapter 12). The case for the Special Deposit at Dhaskalio Kavos as simply a very rich cemetery, differing little in kind, although perhaps richer than others known, is well made in some contributions here, for instance in Chapter 4. But it must be said that none of the four editors of this volume finds it entirely convincing.

The other hypothesis advanced in the early days was that of a shrine or sanctuary, perhaps of pan-Cycladic status (Renfrew 1984a; Getz-Gentle 1996, 101 & n. 175; see Höckmann 1977, 37–9 for proposed Cycladic sanctuaries). But the shortcomings of this proposal, at least in its original form, must also be recognized. It was put forward in the context of a general discussion on the role and function of the Early Cycladic marble figures and figurines, where the proposal was made that these had a domestic use, no doubt of a ritual nature, during the lifetime of their owners, and that they sometimes subsequently accompanied that owner to the grave upon his or her decease. This argument was applied also to the very large, sometimes almost life-size marble figures known from the Cycladic Early Bronze Age, regrettably none from a well-documented context. It was proposed that these might have served first as effigies in some shrine or sanctuary. Whatever the merits of that general argument, it finds no direct support at Dhaskalio Kavos. For in the first place, just as no structures of a funerary nature were recovered, nor were there recognizable traces of any building or structure which might have served as a shrine or sanctuary. Moreover absolutely no trace was found, in however fragmentary a condition, of any life-sized marble figure. Yet if these had been present, and subject to the same destructive processes at the time of their deposition as the other marble fragments recovered, it seems unlikely that any of these would have escaped breakage and very clear that not all would have done. In such a case, it seems very probable that at least some small fragments would have been overlooked by the looters and then subsequently recovered by us in our more careful retrieval exercise. None was. So the original proposal of the site as a sanctuary is not well supported.

I now feel that it is time to move on from these two polar positions (i.e. rich cemetery with settlement versus pan-Cycladic shrine with large effigies) and to consider some wider issues. Several topics indeed deserve to be discussed further. These include such themes as performance and ritual deposition (where the recent Aegean literature on feasting may be

relevant), and as the relationship between funerary and other rituals within the broader field of Cycladic spirituality. The relationship between Dhaskalio Kavos and neighbouring sites in practical economic terms needs to be addressed, as does the organization and recording of economic relations between Early Cycladic sites. And above all the time is ripe for a consideration of the various dimensions of the concept of centrality in the Aegean Early Bronze Age.

Before doing so, however, it will be convenient to review some of the evidence set out in this volume, and to address in more detail the weaknesses, or at least the incompleteness, of the two polar arguments (for cemetery with settlement, and for shrine) as they have hitherto been set out.

### Production at Dhaskalio Kavos

Several features call into question the suggestion, fully laid out by Broodbank (2000b, 223–36) and by Whitelaw (this volume pp. 72–7), that Dhaskalio Kavos was simply a major centre, a settlement with accompanying cemetery, comparable with the other three locations which Broodbank situates in this category, namely Chalandriani on Syros, Aghia Irini on Kea and Grotta-Aplomata on Naxos. The first issue is undoubtedly the problem of production. For while the surface finds from the south-central area at Dhaskalio Kavos are quite reasonably seen by Whitelaw as representing the surface débris at a major settlement, neither its scale nor its nature can be regarded as established until the site has been excavated. So far we have the remains of a single house, excavated in 1963 by Doumas (see Chapter 3). That is perfectly compatible with the settlement theory, but cannot yet be said to document it.

#### *Agricultural production*

As Doumas himself observes in Chapter 10, the complete lack of an agricultural hinterland for the site on the island of Keros itself (other than some limited space for fields near Gerani) makes difficult the view that Dhaskalio Kavos was a major population centre, capable of supporting a substantial population (at least 100 persons has been suggested) all the year round. The argument can certainly be developed that the fields exploited by the farming inhabitants of the putative permanent settlement lay on the nearby islands of the Epano and Kato Kouphonisia. But although the distances between these islands are small, and we can certainly accept the view that the inhabitants must have been experienced seafarers, the practical difficulties should not be underestimated. When strong winds blow it would simply not have been possible to make

the crossing, either from Kavos to the fields on the Kouphonisia, or indeed from the fields back to Kavos.

The large Cycladic long ships with their numerous rowers, perhaps as many as twenty-five, would not be appropriate for the use of small groups of farm labourers. So we must envisage the use of the more modest canoe (Broodbank 2000b, 99–103), a dugout or dugout-derived vessel, with much more limited capabilities. A terracotta model of such a vessel was recovered in the excavations at Markiani in Amorgos (Brodie 2006). While the notional ‘one-day 10 km there-and-back’ journey from Dhaskalio Kavos would certainly encompass the Kouphonisia, it would reach neither Naxos nor Amorgos. We can imagine farmers residing in these small islands as certainly capable of moving between them in good weather, when they chose to do so. But why would they choose to live on the essentially barren island of Keros when they could live and work with just as much ‘centrality’ directly adjacent to their arable land on the Ano or Kato Kouphonisi? Whitelaw and Broodbank envisage a population of perhaps several hundred as resident at Dhaskalio Kavos, of which a high proportion would presumably be engaged in agriculture at many times of year, although no doubt available also for more wide-ranging trade endeavours (in the longboats) at others. But at peak times of agricultural activity, their hypothesis obliges us to envisage a flotilla of small boats setting out daily from Dhaskalio Kavos to the other Mikres Kyklades to work the land. It is difficult to think of a less-suitable location for a substantial group of farm workers. Admittedly, some workers, for instance during the harvest, might elect to sleep near the fields rather than row their canoe back to Keros. This was the system which I saw in the 1960s in east Naxos, when the ‘exochika spitia’ down by the coast at Psiliammos, were peopled for brief periods by their owners coming down from the inland village of Apeiranthos to undertake the harvest. Similar arrangements have been suggested for some of the later Bronze Age population usually resident at in the town at Phylakopi in Melos (Wagstaff & Augustson 1982). But at least these would be able to return on foot, or perhaps also with the use of a donkey (Brodie in press), to their main settlement and place of residence in all weathers. The episodic use of such structures in the Aegean, and notably in Amorgos, where they are termed ‘katoikies mitata’ has been discussed by Marangou (1994, 469 n. 13; 2002, 9–20). The inhabitants of Dhaskalio Kavos could find themselves isolated from (or marooned at) their fields whenever the summer *meltemi* wind might blow.

Another much more specific factor which might call into question the status of Dhaskalio Kavos as a

large rural settlement is the apparent absence in the surface finds of quern stones. These constitute an important category of find at rural sites in the Cyclades already from the Neolithic period (e.g. Evans & Renfrew 1968, 71). They are well documented for the Early Bronze Age at Markiani (Scarre 2006), and are seen throughout the history of the site at Phylakopi in Melos (Renfrew and Macfarlane, in press). Why has none been found in the extensive site survey at Dhaskalio Kavos? We have finds of emery, indicating some working activities, no doubt used for abrasion, but where are the querns? Their absence from so comprehensive a survey must raise questions about the nature of the proposed settlement at Dhaskalio Kavos.

Rough hammer stones and other pounding implements such as are generally found on Cycladic settlement sites likewise do not figure prominently in the survey collection from Dhaskalio Kavos. This point may be covered by Whitelaw in further publication of the survey, in which the survey strategy will be more comprehensively discussed. But certainly such finds are generally a feature of Cycladic settlements. Their absence may serve to call into question whether Kavos South is simply a very large settlement.

#### *Craft production*

Doubt may also be raised about other manufacturing activities. The work of Georgakopoulou on the metal finds, mainly from Kavos North, must certainly be accepted as indicating some copper-smelting activity there (see Chapter 11). But this rather specialized activity is often carried out at special sites, sometimes at sites with particularly favourable wind conditions, for instance Chrysokamino on the north Cretan coast (Betancourt *et al.* 1999). This would be a seasonal, periodic activity. So that, while the finds at Kavos North are of great interest, and there is no reason to situate them chronologically outside the life of Dhaskalio Kavos (although their date is a matter of inference), they do not pertain directly to the nature of Dhaskalio Kavos itself. Kavos North might conceivably be regarded as a separate site, discovered during the survey. It could even have been used by a population based on the Ano Kouphonisi, if the hypothesis of the special suitability of its location for smelting is upheld.

The possibility that Dhaskalio Kavos served as a workshop for marble vessels and marble figurines has also been raised in Chapter 4, and by earlier writers. There is no clear evidence to support such a hypothesis, although as Whitelaw remarks in Chapter 4, we do not really know what categories of evidence to expect. Our own project recovered only one clearly unfinished

piece, an open bowl of greyish marble (no. 151: Figs. 8.23 & 8.24) which had been roughed-out but not yet subjected to polishing procedures. Despite earlier suggestions, there has previously been no published evidence from Dhaskalio Kavos for uncompleted figurines, although Figure 3.35 here, from the 1967 recovery by Zapheiroupolou certainly looks like one. The suggestion by Whitelaw (Chapter 4) that there might be unfinished figurines among those recovered by us in 1987 may not be sustained: nos. 237, 245 and 625 (Figs. 7.5 & 7.6) may be regarded as schematic figurines of the Apeiranthos type (see Renfrew 1969, 14) and their minor irregularities seem to be the result of damage sustained in the fragmentation process. There is no need to view them as rough-outs.

His suggestion is, however, to be taken very seriously that our recovery methods might not have been such as effectively to collect the *débris* of manufacture. The use of emery for such purposes is perfectly feasible, since we have pieces of several emery tools (Chapter 9: Fig. 9.13). Since emery is an abrasive, small fragments of emery would be produced during the polishing process, but these would not be noticed in the course of sieving with a 1 cm mesh nor during surface survey. It is indeed the case that very small pieces of marble, by products of the polishing process, might also have escaped us, both during the excavation procedures and during the survey. So one could imagine the final, polishing stage of production being undertaken at Dhaskalio Kavos.

Accepting these points, however, it is not in my view possible to view Dhaskalio Kavos as a marble workshop location. For there would clearly be chunks of waste marble of 2 or 3 cm in length (or indeed perhaps much larger) which would readily have been recovered both in the trenches and in the survey. Then there would certainly have been some pieces damaged or broken in the course of manufacture. Even if fragmentary, these would have differed very markedly from the fragments which we recovered. These were in general the fragmentation products of marble vessels and figurines which had been successfully completed.

It is indeed the case that no workshop site for the production of marble figurines or marble vessels has yet been recognized in the Cyclades: it would be a discovery of the highest interest. But a comparable discovery has indeed now been made in western Anatolia, which gives us, for the first time a much clearer idea of what we might expect. This is the site of Kulaksızlar, some 16 km south of Akhisar in Manisa Province, western Anatolia (Takaoglu 2002). There are very abundant surface finds, whose significance is immediately evident. As the author of the surface survey states:

The surface artefacts, which consist largely of blanks, waste by-products, manufacturing rejects and tools, confirm that this was the locus of marble working. The enormous quantity of artefacts associated with marble working (90%), relative to the artefacts relating to daily life such as pottery and food processing implements (10%) show that marble working occupied a central role in the lives of the site's population (Takaoglu 2002, 74).

Two main products are identified on the basis of the manufacturing *débris*: the figurines of 'Kilia' type, and marble vessels, especially pointed beakers, comparable to the example discovered at Kephala in Kea (Coleman 1977a, pl. 23; Renfrew 1972, pl. 1.2) and at Tigani on Samos (Felsch 1988, pl. 48). It should be noted that a bow drill was used at this site, already in the Chalcolithic period, which the author equates with levels X to VIII at Emporio in Chios. These finds are therefore at least a millennium older than anything at Dhaskalio Kavos. But they make a spectacular contribution to our understanding of the production of marble vessels in or near the Aegean towards the dawn of the Bronze Age. The rough-outs and damaged pieces are so numerous and so unambiguous that we can unequivocally state that nothing like this has been found at Dhaskalio Kavos. It was not a marble workshop, although some minor on-site polishing activities can certainly not be excluded. Moreover the abundant hammer stones at Kulaksızlar remind us that these artefacts would certainly have been found had the site at Dhaskalio Kavos been used for anything more than simply the polishing up of already well-shaped artefacts. Apart from the unfinished bowl and figurine mentioned earlier there is no direct evidence for this.

The finding of obsidian *débris* at Dhaskalio Kavos confirms the on-site production of material from cores. This seems to be very standard for all Early Bronze Age sites in the Cyclades. Moreover Carter (Chapter 9(A)) sees indications also of 'necrolithic' technique — the skilled pressure flaking of blades that seems actually to have been undertaken on the spot at some of the grander Cycladic cemeteries, perhaps as a conspicuous part of the funerary ritual. But there is no suggestion that obsidian was worked on an important scale at Kavos.

There is, moreover, no evidence for ceramic production at Dhaskalio Kavos, although admittedly such indications are rare during the Early Bronze Age. Broodbank has shown that a very large proportion of the pottery — perhaps in excess of 90 per cent — was imported. So once again the site does not figure as an important centre of manufacture or of production.

### Problems with the Special Deposit as a cemetery

There are several problems with the suggestion that Dhaskalio Kavos along with Dhaskalio simply represents an important settlement, a major Early Cycladic centre, with an accompanying and particularly rich cemetery. The case for the settlement does in itself seem well enough established as a result of the surface survey, although it needs to be tested by excavation: only one two-roomed structure, excavated by Doumas in 1963, has yet been documented. The cemetery, however, is more problematic.

The first and very obvious difficulty is the lack of any very impressive indications of tombs, which one might expect to have detected despite the extensive looting of the site. Human bones have been recovered from the area, albeit in small quantities. It is not of course surprising that not much bone was found on the surface, since it will have decayed rather rapidly on being brought to the surface by looters. On the other hand one might have expected to encounter more bone in the trenches excavated by us had it initially been very abundant. However this line of argument is probably best discounted, since it is not clear in precisely what conditions bone would be well preserved on the site. As noted in Chapter 3, Zapheirópoulou did find one burial (Zapheirópoulou 1968) with two complete footed vessels and two blades of obsidian near the skull of the deceased (Fig. 3.20). This is, however, the only documented burial of this period from the site. Its accompanying pottery vessels were exceptional in being complete, and it was not accompanied by any of the choice but fragmented artefacts so characteristic of the Special Deposit. One may question, therefore, whether it should be regarded as representative of the Special Deposit.

The absence of evidence for structures works against the cemetery hypothesis. The absence of the marble slabs or *plakes* common at so many Early Cycladic cemeteries need occasion no surprise, since such slabs are not a feature of the immediately local geology. But there is no suggestion here of rock-cut tombs, for which the bedrock would not be conducive. Zapheirópoulou reported small stones (Figs. 3.21 & 22) which at the time she regarded as possibly from a constructed tomb of Syros type. But the more extensive areas excavated in the course of our project (see Chapter 5) did not support this view (and of course Zapheirópoulou's final conclusion was that this was not a cemetery). It is perhaps not surprising that our trenches, in view of the looting, did not reveal any clear funerary structures. More telling, however, is the absence of stones of suitable size and quantity from which such structures might have been built.

The second difficulty is the limited space occupied by the Special Deposit in relation to the number of choice finds recovered from it. If this were a cemetery, it would require a very large number of graves to accommodate such a wealth of goods. The density plots of materials recovered from the excavations within the Special Deposit, prepared by Scarre (Figs. 5.55–5.62), serve to indicate the approximate area from which most of the choice finds must have come. It is difficult to see how an important Cycladic cemetery could be accommodated in so limited an area. Broodbank (2000b, 229) addresses this by envisaging 'a complex mass of pits and structures built over and into each other, rather than the scatter of discrete graves that is normally encountered'. We did not find direct evidence for such an arrangement. After the looting, that was perhaps to be expected. But nor did we find evidence of the stones for the walling which such a complex would have necessitated.

The third problem is created by the very abundance of the finds. They outclass by an order of magnitude those from the richest known Early Cycladic cemeteries. On this argument this would not only be the greatest of the Early Cycladic centres: it would outshine its nearest rival by a factor of ten. Again, Broodbank (2000b, 225 ff.) makes the case for a rich cemetery, taking as a starting point an estimated 650 figurine fragments collected from Kavos and the estimated thousands of vessel fragments recovered. By assuming that fracture occurred on site, so that all fragments would originally have been incorporated within the Special Deposit, he reduces the estimated numbers to suggest 100 to 200 complete figurines, and complete marble bowls in the 'low hundreds'. This figure, which we can accept for the basis of discussion, is an order of magnitude larger than that reported for any Early Cycladic cemetery, and as noted earlier, must comfortably exceed the total of figurines and bowls reported from the totality of the archaeologically documented cemeteries. He is right to cite the very rich graves excavated by Kontoleon at Aplomata on Naxos (Kontoleon 1972a,b), where 27 graves reportedly yielded a total of 42 figurines (not all of them, however, of the folded-arm type) and 60 stone vessels. But these finds are not yet fully published, and it is not excluded that the richest of the reported 'graves' may rather have been repositories of choice objects than graves in the ordinary sense. So it may be equally appropriate to compare the Kavos numbers with the occurrence of marble figurines at the notable cemetery of Chalandriani in Syros, where Tsountas (1899, 78–9) excavated about 540 graves, and found 4 folded-arm figurines, or the rich cemetery of Spedos on Naxos where Stephanos excavated 19 graves,

recovering 5 folded-arm and 3 schematic figurines (Papathanasopoulos 1962, 106). In sum, the Dhaskalio Kavos quantities greatly exceed those of any known cemetery. Comparable arguments apply to the choice ceramics. For instance the estimated figure of 120 sauceboats from the Special Deposit (Broodbank this volume Chapter 7, Section 7; see also Sotirakopoulou 2004) exceeds the total recorded for the Cycladic cemeteries by a factor of 3 or 4.

The fourth objection to seeing this as simply a major Early Cycladic cemetery is the deliberate fragmentation of most of the objects recovered from the Special Deposit, as discussed at length in Chapter 12. Such fragmentation is a procedure not generally reflected in the grave-goods of the Early Cycladic cemeteries. Individual graves do contain fragmentary figurines, and on rare occasions isolated heads. But it would be fair to say that in more than two thirds of the properly reported finds of folded-arm figurines, the figurine has been recovered essentially complete, although commonly with some slight damage. Despite the comments of Voutsaki in Chapter 8(A), the same observation holds for the marble bowls and other marble vessels found in the Cycladic cemeteries.

If this were indeed a cemetery, it would differ markedly in several respects from any other known. The attempt to represent the site of Dhaskalio as a fairly typical, if exceptionally rich, settlement and cemetery pair is not persuasive.

### Performance and periodicity

We have seen that the difficulty in interpreting the Dhaskalio complex rests mainly with the exceptional features of the Special Deposit, specifically the marked abundance there of 'choice' objects, and the clear conclusion that these were deliberately broken.

Were it not for these factors, it might be quite possible to regard Dhaskalio with Dhaskalio Kavos as a simply a prosperous but perhaps otherwise unremarkable settlement of the Keros-Syros culture (extending in duration into the time of the Kastris Group). Even so the pottery from Dhaskalio South, with its very high proportion of imports, would single this out as rather a special site, very different in that respect from Skarkos on Ios (Marthari in press) or Markiani on Amorgos. It might well make the grade as a 'major centre' in the terminology used by Broodbank (2000b, 212–22) in view of the range of imports. But it would still suffer from two peculiarities. The first is the lack of an immediate agricultural hinterland, as discussed above, which would make it altogether exceptional among Early Cycladic settlements. And the second is the notable lack of the expected repertoire of domestic

artefacts of stone — coarse or unpolished stone — including querns and hammerstones. These, as noted earlier, are an important feature at Markiani (Scarre 2006), and at Early Bronze Age Phylakopi (Renfrew & Macfarlane in press) as well as at Aghia Irini on Kea (Wilson 1999, 148–53). They are a feature to be expected at any permanent settlement of the time.

The abundance of finds testifies clearly that Kavos was used, and in that sense 'occupied', during the period of the Keros-Syros culture. But they do not testify directly to the nature of that use or occupation, other than the discard and deposition of so many fragments of choice artefacts. Most of the pottery was imported, and we have seen that this is likely to have been the case for the marble artefacts also, since there are no indications of a marble workshop on site. It may therefore be appropriate to question whether the site was in continuous, year-round use, as is commonly supposed for the other Early Bronze Age settlements. Earlier in this chapter we have considered, and provisionally rejected, the suggestion that a large, permanent population of Dhaskalio had seasonal, periodic use of small houses on the Kouphonisia, houses located near the fields which they would notionally have cultivated there. It may be appropriate now to reverse the argument and consider instead whether the settlers on the Kouphonisia and perhaps beyond may have had permanent residence there near their own fields, and may have made shorter, periodic visits to Dhaskalio. Dhaskalio might have been either uninhabited or with a very small population indeed during the intervening periods.

### *Destruction as conspicuous consumption*

If the inhabitants of the Kouphonisia and the neighbouring islands did behave in this way, and make periodic visits to the site, we can identify two activities which are likely to have been among those carried out when they did visit Dhaskalio. The first, quite evidently from the finds, is some process which resulted in the fragmentation and deposition of quantities of the choice artefacts which came to form the Special Deposit. Such conspicuous consumption may quite possibly have taken place within the context of some mortuary ritual, whether or not accompanied by the deposition of human remains. The small quantity of the human bones recovered may not be significant here, since preservation may have suffered as a result of the looting process. But we are not yet in a position to judge whether any deposition of human bones at the site was primary — i.e. straightforward burial, as appears to have been practised in most Cycladic cemeteries. Or was it instead some procedure of secondary deposition, following some initial mortuary treatment

undertaken elsewhere? Such was, for instance, standard practice during the British Neolithic.

It does not, however, follow that the fragmentation and deposition of choice artefacts at Dhaskalio Kavos was undertaken primarily in a funerary or mortuary context. Such an assumption might understandably arise in view of the preoccupation of modern scholars with the Early Cycladic cemeteries, and of the undoubted circumstance that choice artefacts were frequently deposited in them, although not usually in fragmentary condition. A funerary association certainly cannot be excluded, and, as we have seen, human bone (albeit in small quantities) was found in the area of the Special Deposit. It is probably sufficient, however, to assert that there was conspicuous consumption at the site, involving fragmentation of a range of choice artefacts, without yet making any judgement about possible funerary associations.

The repertoire of forms certainly overlaps markedly with those seen in the cemeteries of the time. But perhaps significantly at Kavos there is no evidence for the personal adornments (beads, bracelets, earrings) or the weapons (daggers primarily, of copper or bronze as well as spears or knives) so common in the cemeteries. Throughout the Aegean Early Bronze Age these are the very personal items usually accompanying the dead when grave-goods are found in association with the mortal remains of the deceased.

#### *Feasting at Kavos*

The second activity which may be suggested as significant at Kavos is feasting, a term which is to be taken to include ceremonial drinking as well as eating. The circumstances of the surface collection have not permitted the collection of significant quantities of faunal remains, which could only effectively be recovered in the course of controlled excavation. So we do not have direct evidence for ceremonial feasting in the form of the débris of eating. But already it is clear from Broodbank's study that the pottery recovered includes high frequencies of fine wares. Many of these, notably the sauceboats, can be interpreted as drinking vessels. The two-handled cup so popular in the Kastri Group, the ancestor of the kantharos of the Middle Bronze Age, is not yet significantly in evidence. But the sauceboat is not the only ceramic form represented which can be regarded as a drinking cup. The same use is generally assumed for a high proportion of the marble vessels represented, for which the term 'kylix' is indeed generally used in the literature. And of course the most frequently found marble form at the site is the bowl. Although such shallow bowls have sometimes been found to contain various small objects, they are mainly of a size to have functioned conveniently as drinking

cups. Such will not have been their only use: those with traces of red pigment are perhaps unlikely to have been used in this way.

The topic of feasting has become a major focus for research in recent years, especially with reference to the Aegean Late Bronze Age (see Wright 2004a). But it has long been recognized that the repertoire of ceramic and metal forms of the Aegean Early Bronze Age relates to the handling of fluids, and that their sudden frequency coincides with evidence in the Aegean for the domestication of the grape and the use of wine (Renfrew 1972, 281–5; J.M. Renfrew 2003), an issue much debated in recent years. The same has been argued for Early Bronze Age Cyprus (Steel 2004). Many of the arguments recently deployed to support the hypothesis of feasting in the Mycenaean world and indeed in the preceding Middle Helladic period (Wright 2004b) can be applied with equal effectiveness to the Cycladic Early Bronze Age. As noted in Chapter 12, similar possibilities were considered by Tsountas (1898, 168) in relation to the finds which he made at Kato Akrotiri on Amorgos. The question of feasting has also been discussed by Pantelidou-Gofa (2005; in press) in relation to the large quantities of broken pottery found near the graves at the Tsepi cemetery at Marathon.

Many of the choice artefacts, marble as well as ceramic, widely found in the Early Cycladic cemeteries, could relate to feasting just as much as do those of the Middle Helladic (Wright 2004b, 19 table 1). Of course, as noted above, the cemeteries also contain artefacts of a more immediately personal nature, including weapons and jewellery, as well as depilatory tweezers and cosmetic pigments. But jugs and cups in particular are an increasingly frequent feature as the Early Bronze Age develops, with closed forms, notably pyxides with lids, becoming less frequent.

These two lines of argument — fragmentation and feasting — lead naturally to the notion of performative action. The role of the social activities involved in feasting has recently been widely discussed (Dietler & Hayden 2001). Moreover, in considering feasting as an activity, its role in 'creating socioeconomic inequalities' (Hayden 1995) has been emphasized. This has led a number of authors to stress the importance of the occurrence of the paraphernalia of feasting (including drinking), as documented in tombs (Dietler 1990; 1999; Wright 2004b, 27; compare Renfrew 1972, 501). There they are now recognized as items of choice equipment accompanying the dead which had also had a significant role in the life of the deceased. As Wright (2004b, 27) suggests:

Feasting can either be an inclusive or an exclusive activity, as we know from many sources from classi-

cal antiquity and modern ethnography. The presence of feasting equipment in a tomb no doubt represents the ability of the deceased to sponsor feasts, and may also indicate memorable occasions of sponsorship and a reputation for hospitality. Drinking is a specialized and often exclusive activity that occurs either in the context of feasts or on an individual basis.

The implication which I wish to follow here is that the repertoire of 'choice' artefacts seen in the Early Cycladic cemeteries, such as Chalandriani in Syros, or Aplomata or Spedos on Naxos, discounting the personal adornments and weapons, pertains often to the activity of the recently deceased of feasting, practised perhaps throughout his life. This applies equally to the equipment from tombs of the Middle and Late Helladic period discussed by Wright (2004b) or from those of Early Iron Age France as discussed by Dietler (1990).

#### *Performative acts*

Feasting is, above all, performance. It is intended to be seen. It ranks as conspicuous consumption, often as competitive consumption. Its role among the emerging élite of the Early Bronze Age Aegean was as part of the process of the emergence of ranked society, widely recognized as under way at that time.

The additional performative dimension which we can begin to discern at Dhaskalio Kavos, documented in the Special Deposit, is that of conspicuous destruction. Everything, with few exceptions, is broken. Moreover it is not simply broken in such a way as to preclude its future use. It is smashed to smithereens. It is this particular feature which suggests a performative element to the destruction. In that sense the 'destruction strategy' involved may in some respects have resembled the potlatch of the American Northwest (Gregory 1982, 60 & 209). There the destruction takes place in the context of what is ostensibly gift-giving, but as Mauss (1925, 12–15) noted, destructive gift-giving can be interpreted as a 'gift to god'. The smashed drinking vessels may represent the costly and expensive gesture when a very special toast or pledge has been drunk. The fragmented figurines, like the broken coppers of the Northwest, may represent highly conspicuous expenditure of choice goods, in a performative context, at a moment of particular significance.

To stress the performative dimension is, I think useful. It may lead on to other lines of examination. But care should be taken not to equate too readily the motives of those taking part in such tournaments of value (Appadurai 1986, 21; see Broodbank 2000b, 268). The competitive emulation for the purposes of social aggrandisement of a Kwakiutl chief may not have

been the same as an Early Cycladic celebrant on Keros. Even so the context of performance is illuminating, and finds resonance in any evidence we may have for dance and for music — the latter, very conveniently, in the celebrated marble flautist and harpist actually from Early Cycladic Keros itself, although probably not from the site of Dhaskalio (Köhler 1884; Renfrew 1972, pl. 27).

#### *Aspects of periodicity*

So when did these performative acts of feasting and of formalized destruction take place? We do not yet know, but there are arguments to suggest that these were special occasions. That they were not a daily occurrence is underlined by the calculations of Whitelaw and of Broodbank (this volume), who point out that if these processes lasted for the four centuries or so which we estimate for the duration of the site, it would only take the deposition of a couple of figurines and a dozen marble bowls per year to accumulate the estimated total. We cannot be specific, but it seems plausible to suggest that these processes took place annually, or perhaps on more than one occasion per year, although it is not excluded that there could have been a major ceremony or performance once ever three or four years, as in the case of the periodic games (at Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia etc.) during classical times.

At this point it would be a mistake to be too specific about the nature of such periodic assemblies. And it remains to be discussed precisely who would have taken part in them, and indeed for what purpose. The discussion has at this point been deliberately conducted at rather a general level. We should note, however, that with certain further assumptions, such a description would readily include one of the suggestions made earlier about the function of Dhaskalio. The suggestion that there should have been a periodic, perhaps annual assembly there, with feasting and with notable acts of conspicuous consumption involving choice artefacts can be combined with the notion of funerary ritual and with secondary burial to reach one specific hypothesis, formulated by Dumas who would see Dhaskalio on Keros functioning as an 'isle of the blest' (Dumas 1989; 1990). The suggestion implies the use of Kavos as a special place of secondary burial of dead persons who lived elsewhere in the nearby Cyclades (southeast Naxos, Amorgos etc.). If we postulate an annual festival at which such ceremonies would take place, along with the feasting and the conspicuous consumption already discussed, the two proposals effectively coincide. For the moment it may be wiser to reserve judgment upon this funerary or mortuary component. But it will be seen that the

discussion has the merit of allowing scope for explanatory approaches which transcend the former cemetery versus religious sanctuary dichotomy.

### Dimensions of centrality

#### *Dhaskalio as a commercial centre*

One of the positive features of Broodbank's analysis of spatial patterning in the Early Bronze Age Cyclades (Broodbank 2000b, 184) is the formal development of the concept of centrality, based upon his system of point proximity analysis. He shows effectively how the growth of population and the development of the technology of sea travel would favour the development of commercial centres in certain areas. A corresponding shortcoming, however, may be that the accompanying notion of centrality seems restricted primarily to maritime trade of a commercial nature. The Cycladic longships are seen as a prehistoric version of the British merchant navy of the seventeenth or eighteenth century AD, efficiently transporting goods to and fro across the seas and thereby bringing wealth and profit as well as exotic materials to the home port. This process is seen as leading to the establishment of a number of 'major centres' during the Early Bronze Age, in what resembles some microcosmic precursor of the Hanseatic League.

In many ways that is a good model, catching the flavour of the 'international spirit' of the Early Bronze 2 period. But, so far as Dhaskalio is concerned, the site notably lacks two of the ingredients necessary for an early port of trade. The first, as already discussed, is an adequate agricultural hinterland, so that the local population can be effectively self-supporting in subsistence commodities, or better, have a crop or natural product worth exporting (as, for instance, wool in the British Middle Ages, to maintain the merchant navy analogy). The second is a local manufacturing base, so that the permanent population of the maritime centre has itself some gainful employment beyond seafaring. These are both features abundantly seen at Late Bronze Age Akrotiri in the Cyclades, where weaving was one such manufacturing industry. Weaving was indeed a feature of several Early Cycladic sites, including Markiani on Amorgos, but there is no special indication of this craft, or indeed of any other, at Dhaskalio. The one notable exception would, of course, be metallurgy, as indicated in Chapter 11. But as noted earlier, the use of Kavos North for smelting may not necessarily have been associated with a permanent population at Dhaskalio. And certainly metal finds have been almost absent from the surface survey, perhaps not surprisingly in view of the possible oxidation of artefacts exposed on the surface. But, more puzzlingly, they have

also been effectively absent from the Special Deposit, a dearth which the suggestion of subsequent looting in ancient times, advanced by Whitelaw in Chapter 4 cannot altogether explain.

#### *The symbolic dimension*

What is notably lacking from these discussions is a sense of place and the power of place. The point-proximity analysis would as validly recognize a 'major centre' situated somewhere on the Kouphonisia or at some nearby coastal location, as it does the specific positioning of Dhaskalio. It gives, and indeed can give, no inkling as to how or why Dhaskalio and Dhaskalio Kavos were chosen for such a role, other than as a suitable location to beach ships — and even here its suitability in bad weather is not entirely clear. One possible explanation may have been that Dhaskalio already commanded recognition as a very special place with a major landscape feature carrying symbolic overtones. This would patently be so if there was, at the time, a major cave at the site (Bassiakos & Doumas 1998). It is certainly a conspicuous location, the conical form of Dhaskalio island being visible from afar. But at some point in the discussion it may also be necessary to introduce a spiritual dimension. Indeed that is a dimension too readily excluded from many recent discussions. Such exclusion is perhaps a modern, or indeed post-modern reaction (e.g. Gill & Chippindale 1993) to the excessive admiration and de-contextualization of Early Cycladic sculpture in the modern art world. To criticize the excesses of a market in illicit Cycladic antiquities, a market which has had such disastrous consequences as the looting of the Special Deposit, is entirely appropriate. To counter the illicit trade it may also be necessary to decline to publish unprovenanced pieces and thus to decline to legitimize the illicit ownership of unprovenanced antiquities. But paradoxically this laudable reluctance seems to have led some authors to undervalue the significance even of those Cycladic pieces which have both good provenance and legitimate documentation. The folded-arm figure or figurine of marble, some of which are almost of life size (including the Louvre head attributed to Keros: Marangou this volume, Chapter 2; Renfrew 1972, pl. 32.3), is perhaps the most striking iconic form of the Aegean Early Bronze Age. Its aesthetic merits may perhaps have been exaggerated in recent years, and their over-enthusiastic recognition may well have encouraged the illicit trade and the looting which we deprecate. But certainly we risk throwing out the Early Cycladic baby with the ethical bathwater if we fail to recognize the enormous impact and allure which this form clearly possessed in Early Bronze

Age times. Along with the sauceboat, and later the two-handled cup, and of course a range of metal types (dagger, tweezers, pins) it perhaps the most notable of the several widespread forms characteristic of the international spirit.

The significance of this iconic form is underlined by the circumstance that in the Cyclades at this time it was the principal, indeed almost the only way in which the human body was represented: the canonical form, always executed in white marble. There are no anthropomorphic terracotta figurines in the Early Bronze Age Cyclades. Apart from a very few schematic marble figurines (the so-called 'Apeiranthos type' (Renfrew 1969, 14), also found at Kavos) this particular form had the monopoly of expression. Plastic representations of animals are rare and exceptional in the Cyclades — one limited class being the animal head protomes on ceramic sauceboats described here by Doumas (Chapter 10). That this human form reflects a powerful symbolic convention is indicated also by the several well-defined idioms in which the canonical form came to be expressed, the so-called 'varieties' — Kapsala, Spedhos, Dokathismata, Chalandriani etc. and Koumasa in Crete. There can be little doubt that this form was one of considerable significance and resonance in the Cyclades and indeed beyond.

Dhaskalio Kavos was clearly a privileged and very special place with regard to this form, and the Spedhos, Dokathismata and Chalandriani varieties in particular are very well represented. And while many of the choice artefacts found in the Special Deposit could be directly associated with feasting, in the sense of involvement in the formal and perhaps ritual consumption of food and drink, that is hardly the case with these figures. Of course we can imagine various possible secondary roles for them in a context of feasting. If competitive destruction were the name of the game among these tournaments of value, smashing figurines would be as conspicuous as destroying coppers at a Kwakiutl potlatch. But in the case of the canonical or folded-arm figure there has to be something involved which goes beyond the skill and craftsmanship involved in their production, which, as Oustinoff (1984) has shown, may not in any case be so very great.

I have been careful in the discussion so far not to introduce the notion of prehistoric ritual and religion as a separate sphere of activity, wishing to avoid the mysticism which can sometimes envelop discussions of early religion. It is perhaps sufficient to think here in terms of a symbolism which is both pervasive and powerfully attractive. It must be significant to our understanding of the Kavos site that this important symbol is represented here more abundantly by an

order of magnitude than at any other site, and that it appears in a context of deliberate fragmentation.

This suggests that Dhaskalio Kavos did indeed function as a centre, and as a powerful attractor. But it also calls into question whether a simple commercial analysis sufficiently describes the varying dimensions of its centrality. To say this leads us to a central question. What was the nature of this centrality, and in human terms, how did it work?

The commercial model sees the centrality of Dhaskalio as residing essentially in the maritime activities of its merchant fleet. On this model it was the ships under the control of the population resident at Dhaskalio which transported various categories of artefact around the Cyclades and beyond, generating a profit which can be gauged by the surplus of choice objects which the residents were able to deposit locally in their community cemetery. That they chose to break them in the process in a manner not seen in other Cycladic cemeteries must, on this model, be regarded as a local aberration which remains to be adequately explained.

#### *Dhaskalio as a place of pilgrimage*

An alternative model which I would like to explore sees Dhaskalio as a centre, certainly, but one which was based upon a symbolic attraction associated with the place itself. If the term is not taken in too explicitly religious a sense, it could be regarded as a place of pilgrimage. To set the matter in a wider context the role of Dhaskalio as an attractor might be compared with that of other ancient sites which may broadly be regarded as pilgrimage centres, such as Chaco Canyon in the American Southwest, a location of symbolic importance whose interpretation has proved controversial (Noble 2004). Some of the more important henge monuments of the British Neolithic, including Stonehenge itself, would constitute another example, as would the Ring of Brodgar in the Orkney Islands (Renfrew 1990, 255). In writing about Chaco Canyon I have used the term 'Locations of high devotional expression' (LCHDE) (Renfrew 2001). This term may not be an entirely appropriate one in this case, and it is not my intention to set up Chaco Canyon as an analogy for the Dhaskalio phenomenon. The feature which Dhaskalio may share with Chaco, however, is its capacity to act as an attractor, with a symbolic power to induce people to travel over considerable distances in order to participate in periodic public events and to spectate at or participate in performances at a special location. In some cases such participation involves conspicuous material consumption, which may be represented in various ways as prestations, or as offerings, or simply as conspicuous public gestures, often involving significant expenditure.

The motivation in such cases is often described as 'religious', and indeed such travels or pilgrimages often do operate within a coherent framework of religious belief. But it is not necessary to exaggerate the transcendental nature of the experience involved. The Olympic Games in Ancient Greece, and the other periodic games (Renfrew 1998) certainly operated within a fairly coherent religious framework, but it is possible also to view them as a largely secular phenomenon, much as one might view the modern Olympic Games. But the original Olympic Games did of course take place at a single place which could reasonably be termed a Location of High Devotional Expression. Within the Cyclades at much the same time, Delos also had the role of a LCHDE, although it also operated increasingly as a commercial market.

If we seek to analyse what features in practice serve to distinguish the two models, there are two fundamental criteria. The first model is commercial and there need be nothing special about the central place involved, other than its centrality and its efficacy as a good harbour to accommodate the merchant fleet. But the second model requires that the centre serve as a symbolic attractor, capable of inducing people from afar to undertake the periodic pilgrimage. Such attraction is often accompanied or mediated by the use of some specific symbolic forms, sometimes using a characteristic iconography, and it often also involves artefacts of high symbolic value. Those observations serve as a basis for the first distinction.

The second difference centres upon the people involved. In the first case it is the seamen of the merchant fleet who undertake the necessary travel. There is no need for offcomers to visit the centre itself, although the centre can indeed often function simultaneously as a market. But on the commercial model the main travellers are the local inhabitants. If the fleet depicted at Late Bronze Age Akrotiri is regarded as made up of local ships, it could offer an excellent example of the commercial model. On the symbolic attractor model, however, it is the pilgrims who are the main travellers, and they may come in their own ships from their own lands. They come to the periodic ceremonies and functions which occur at the LCHDE. They participate in feasting. They watch the conspicuous displays and tournaments of value, and sometimes they leave behind symbolic artefacts.

The explicit motivation for the deposition of these choice artefacts will differ from case to case. As noted earlier, some instances may simply be conspicuous consumption and the débris which it leaves behind. In such cases it is often important that the artefact be 'consumed' and hence broken. In other cases, choice and valuable artefacts may be left as an offering, either

to a deity or to the spirit of the place. As noted earlier there can also be a funerary dimension, and it may be appropriate to make an offering with reference to a deceased person, or even to bring part or all of the mortal remains of that person for deposition.

It is within the discussion of these models that I believe the interpretation of Dhaskalio Kavos can usefully be situated.

It should at once be acknowledged that Broodbank, here in Chapter 6, has anticipated much of the foregoing discussion, and has argued that the range of ceramic types and fabrics seen at Kavos suggest an element of selection which must have been practised by the local population. This would argue strongly in favour of the commercial model, where the sailors of Dhaskalio were the carriers and traders. But we should not overlook the possibility that some classes of artefact may have been generally regarded as suitable for the competitive (and destructive) feasting involved at this place of pilgrimage or as offerings, while other artefacts were not. As he notes, there are no frying pans of the kind found in graves at Chalandriani in Syros. But so far finds of such frying pans are largely restricted to that one site. They may not have been suitable for the celebrations at Dhaskalio, and in any case they could have no obvious role in feasting. Another absence from the Special Deposit, as noted above, is artefacts of metal. But, as we have seen, most of these are not appropriate to feasting. Vessels of gold and silver are excessively rare in the Aegean Early Bronze Age, and may simply have been too valuable to sacrifice, even in public competitive consumption.

### **Between life and death**

The differences between the various views advanced here of the functions of Dhaskalio Kavos may well be resolved in the light of further excavation. Here, however, it is worth reviewing them within a broader interpretive context. For in order to comprehend adequately the lives and the motivations of the prehistoric inhabitants of the Cyclades, and in order to consider agency, to use a convenient theoretical term (Robb 2005), it is necessary to seek an integrated view. Alongside the study of technology and of trade and of social relations it is useful to try to consider the cognitive dimension. In the terminology of systems thinking this was earlier referred to (Renfrew 1972, chap. 19) as the symbolic and projective subsystem. Today one speaks of cognitive archaeology. Both approaches extend rather beyond what has sometimes been termed the archaeology of cult (Renfrew 1985). But religion cannot be excluded.

One weakness of the commercial model as outlined here may be its emphasis upon the mundane. It might be described as 'functional-processual' (Renfrew & Bahn 2004, 496–501). It lacks a view on the place of religion in the daily life of the time. Indeed the terms 'religion' and 'ritual' are not to be found in the index of *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades* (Broodbank 2000b, 412), in which the commercial model is coherently and comprehensively developed. Such an explanatory strategy is perhaps in many ways wiser than invoking belief in the supernatural at every point of interpretive difficulty. But it does have the effect of making the cognitive and the spiritual retire into the background. This approach to the Early Bronze Age contrasts markedly with most contemporary approaches to the later Bronze Age of the Aegean, where what are claimed as religious 'shrines' have been identified, and where a complex religious iconography is widely recognized (Hägg & Marinatos 1981).

An essential question here may be the extent to which the beliefs and observances of the living were, during the third millennium BC, integrated with the customs and observances relating to the dead, and in particular to the disposal of the mortal remains of the dead. In responding to this point it should be recognized how much the archaeology of the early Cyclades has rested upon a data base derived largely from the Cycladic cemeteries (see Rambach 2000). Most of the known complete ceramic vessels do indeed come from the cemeteries, and all the complete marble figurines and bowls known (if we assume that the remarkable finds from Late Bronze Age Akrotiri (Sotirakopoulou 1998) had originally such a derivation). It is perhaps that circumstance that has led some authors to suggest that the many of the Cycladic grave-goods, and in particular the marble ones, were manufactured expressly for the grave.

Earlier it has been suggested that this was view may not hold good. Instead a role for many of the vessels found at Kavos in the procedures of feasting may be suggested. The implication must be that the choice goods seen in the Cycladic graves were not in general made primarily for funerary purposes. Instead they would be artefacts used during life, often for the purposes of conspicuous consumption. As noted earlier the same arguments have been put forward for the ceramic and metal vessels found in Mycenaean graves: that they were used, during the life of the person buried, for the purposes of feasting. To say this does, of course, take these artefacts out of the exclusive purview of the funerary dimension, and situates them firmly among the artefacts of the living.

If that were the interpretive position taken for the drinking vessels and jugs found in the graves,

it might be difficult not to extend the same logic to the figures and figurines also. They could then be recognized as having been used during life as well as in death (Renfrew 1991, 95–105). To argue this in detail here would be to embark upon a very complex field. But the distinction is in many ways a central one to the interpretation of the Kavos site and its Special Deposit. For if it were assumed at the outset that the canonical figurines were exclusively made for funerary use, and specifically for deposition in graves accompanying the dead, the assumption would dictate the conclusion that the Special Deposit had a mortuary purpose and is to be regarded as what is left of a cemetery. If, on the other hand, one takes the view that these choice artefacts were made for use in life as well as in death, there is an incentive to examine the possibility that life-oriented (rather than exclusively death-oriented) activities were being undertaken at Dhaskalio Kavos, leading to the formation of the Special Deposit.

This is part of the fascination of the site. The conclusions to be drawn, often from quite small depositional details, promise to have a resonance for Cycladic archaeology that extends far beyond the confines of Keros. These questions cannot be answered adequately at present. But if we can go on to do so, we may be able to move beyond interpretive assumptions and on to more secure pathways of interpretation.

### The future of Dhaskalio and Dhaskalio Kavos

The foregoing discussion confirms the status of the complex at Dhaskalio as one of the most important sites of the Aegean Bronze Age. Sadly, the Special Deposit is so seriously disturbed that it is doubtful whether further excavation there alone would reveal stratified deposit sufficient to resolve the uncertainty which now exists about the original presence there of coherent structures, funerary or otherwise. But the area to the south, proposed as the main settlement following the survey reported in Chapter 4, is still largely undisturbed. Clearly its excavation must be a major objective for Cycladic archaeology. The same is true for the features on the islet of Dhaskalio, which is itself large enough to hold a substantial settlement. There are hints that there may be fortifications on the island, and one could readily imagine it as the location of a citadel, analogous perhaps to that at Panormos on Naxos or Kastri near Chalandriani on Syros. Whether its occupation would be entirely coterminous with that of the settlement at the south of the Kavos site or indeed with the use of the Special Deposit remains to be seen. Some of these question can probably be answered by further fieldwork at the site.

Ultimately, however, the centre at Dhaskalio and Dhaskalio Kavos needs to be seen within the context of a broader understanding of the way in which the choice artefacts, for long seen as the distinctive feature of Early Cycladic culture, functioned within Cycladic society. It may be a mistake to focus exclusively upon the special features of the Special Deposit, just as it is to dwell exclusively upon the aesthetic merits of Cycladic sculpture. We do not yet know where the choice artefacts of the Keros-Syros culture were made, or how their production was organized, whether in small local workshops or on a more central basis. Even more

significantly, we do not have any good understanding as to how they were used, other than in the deposition at the end of whatever use life they may have had, as documented in the Early Cycladic cemeteries. Until we can find some further evidence for Early Cycladic beliefs and religion, going beyond that which has long been recognized from the cemeteries, we shall have a poor understanding of the world view of the islanders. A site as important, indeed as central, as Dhaskalio and Dhaskalio Kavos, must somehow have had an important place in that world view, not just for its own inhabitants but perhaps also much more widely.

## Keros, Dhaskalio Kavos: the investigations of 1987–88

### Κέρος, Κάβος Δασκαλιού

The site of Dhaskalio Kavos, on the remote Cycladic island of Keros, was extensively looted in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Investigations starting in 1963 then revealed large quantities of fractured marble bowls, broken marble figures and smashed pottery of the Early Cycladic period from around 2500 BC. This report of the subsequent survey and rescue excavations of 1987–88 reveals the extraordinary richness of the site, now confirmed as one of the most prolific in elite goods of the entire Aegean Early Bronze Age. Was it an unprecedentedly rich Early Cycladic cemetery, recently wrecked by looters? Or was the damage deliberately produced during Early Bronze Age times in some procedure of ritual breakage and ceremonial deposition? Here the survey of the site and the rescue excavations undertaken within the looted area are documented in detail, with a full account of the finds. Alternative explanations for this extraordinary deposit are explored. What has been termed ‘the Keros Enigma’, in the light of the finds at the site, can now be reconsidered with the full documentation which this volume offers.

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**Cover photo:** *The island of Dhaskalio seen from Dhaskalio Kavos during the project.*

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