



Reimagining the Special Deposit South

.....■ **The Study of Cycladic Figurines**

Cycladic figurines are often studied from an art historical approach. They experience a large amount of looting due to their value on the black market. This removes them from their original context, making it difficult to make archaeological arguments about their uses.



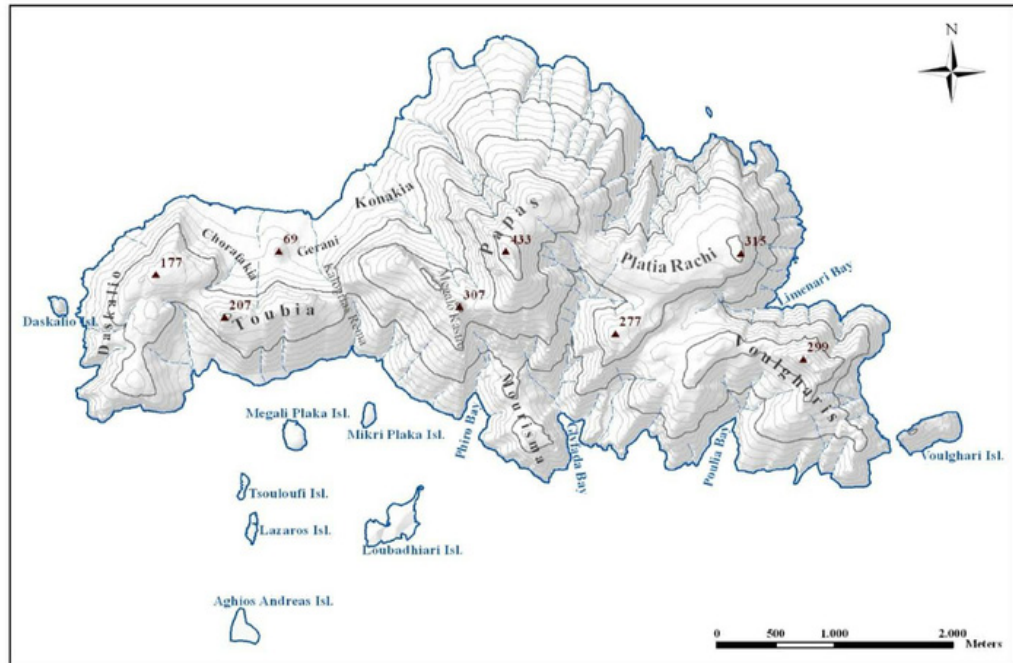
.....■ **The Island of Keros**

The Island of Keros is a Cycladic island between Naxos, Amorgos, and Ios. It is southeast of Mainland Greece and is currently uninhabited, although it was inhabited in antiquity. On the island in 1963 archaeologists discovered Kavos, an Early Cycladic site (2800-2300 BC)

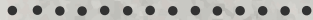


.....■ **The site of Kavos**

At the site of Kavos a collection of broken figurines, along with other bronze age material, was found. Experts initially assumed they were broken due to looting of the site, but after examination it was clear that the breaks were ancient and the pieces did not join together, meaning they were likely intentionally broken away from Keros and then deposited at Kavos



Types of Figurines

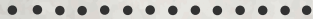


Folded Arm

Schematic



Keros-Syros Culture
EC II 2700-2200 BC



.....■ **Past Research**

Extensive research and volumes have been released by Colin Renfrew, the leading excavator and scholar on Cycladic figurines. While archaeologists have done much research analyzing the break and conclude that Kavos was a ritual site, few take the time to develop this ritual aspect. Very little is said concerning what this ritual might have been and who its participants were.

Communal theory

The most expansive theory I encountered during my research was in a paper by Colin Renfrew. In it, he states that these deposited figurines were pieces that had "run their course" and were taken to Kavos out of reverence before depositing the remainder of the figurine in some other location. He considered the role of a communal leader who would deposit multiple figurines that came from his homeland. Through this, Renfrew created a political structure around the figurines.

Proposed Theory and Aim of Paper

The goal of my paper was to stray from the modern fascination with the abstract and aesthetically pleasing qualities of the figurines and attempt to imagine these figurines in their original context. This will prove the intentional and ritualistic deposit of fragmented figurines at the Special Deposit South, and demonstrate the votive aspect of this ritual, while comparing it to other ancient votive practices as well as present ones in the Greek Orthodox church.

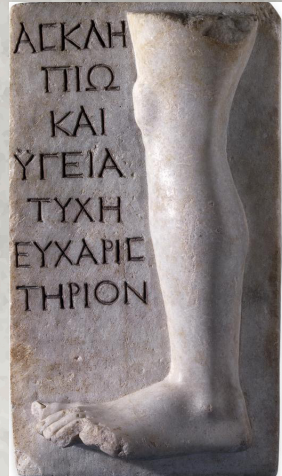
Votive Offerings in Ancient Greece

Votive offerings are first seen at peak sanctuaries in the third millennium BC on Crete. The Minoans would create replicas of human members or organs with clay or marble and place them during religious ceremonies.



Votive Offerings in Ancient Greece

This practice reemerged in ancient Greece in the fifth century BC, mainly in the sanctuaries of Asclepius. Arriving at the sanctuary, “some people, both men and women, seeking god’s provision for the members of their body that have been suffering” would dedicate replicas of the body or parts of



Votive Offerings in Modern Greece

This compares to the modern-day practice in the Greek Orthodox Church where metal plaques are embossed with a body part that needs healing (ταματα). These are placed in churches in front of shrines and icons, once again indicating a wish or thanks for healing



The finds

- 498 Folded-Arm figurines and 40 Schematic figurines
 - folded-arm figurines were broken into 6 or 7 pieces while schematic figurines were broken in half.
- 11 special or other figurines
- "a majority of pelves and waists are predominantly found west of the aeolianite"
- "feet are found mainly on the aeolianite"



Agency



- The mother goddess
- Prayers for fertility
- The community vs the individual

Conclusion

The Special Deposit South represents a unique opportunity to study Cycladic figurines within their original context. When examining the deposit closely, it is clear that individuals went to Keros with the intention of placing votive offerings in the form of broken figurines. This practice is not unique to Keros, and can be seen throughout Greece as a practice focused on individual healing.

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.....■ **Thank you** ■.....