
New evidence for water management engineering at the Early Bronze Age settlement of Dhaskalio

Marie Floquet^{*†1}, Michael Boyd^{2,3}, and Colin Renfrew^{2,3}

¹Centre Camille Jullian – Aix-Marseille Université - AMU – France

²McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research – United Kingdom

³University of Cambridge [UK] – United Kingdom

Abstract

Water management in the Middle and Late Aegean Bronze Age has been widely discussed for decades, mostly in the framework of Mycenaean and Minoan architecture. It has been shown to be a major driver of architectural innovation. Water management engineering is well-known as early as the protopalatial period. Early Bronze Age water management on the other hand is thus far poorly understood and for good reason: compared to the Minoan built environment, evidence for water management in Early Bronze Age settlements is very scarce if not non-existent. Until recently, the few architectural elements excavated showed very little investment in terms of technique and resources. Poliochni in the northern Aegean did reveal a couple of drains but with no clear indications for complex planning and organization - although the settlement itself showed strong evidence for advanced urbanization. In the Cyclades, Kastri and Panormos showed no sign of water management, while the drainage of Markiani was rudimentary and hardly the product of a site-scale water management strategy. Some evidence for more complex hydraulic engineering has been recently highlighted in the settlement of Skarkos, where the excavators identified drainages running across the site from the top of the hill to the outside of the settlement.

Recent excavations undertaken at the Early Bronze Age settlement of Dhaskalio, off Keros in the central Cyclades, have revealed a complex, site-scale water-management system involving a variety of impressively well-built architectural features. This paper will examine the nature of the features and what they reveal about architectural and technical innovation, planning and management strategies, and the scalar and temporal vision of the architects. Dhaskalio is now offering a new understanding of EBA water management and through it, a new glimpse into changes in social organisation of the Early Cycladic communities around the middle of the third millennium BCE.

Keywords: water management, early Cycladic architecture

^{*}Speaker

[†]Corresponding author: marie.floquet@univ-amu.fr