

***Dhaskalio, Keros:
An unknown early byzantine church, its ceramic finds,
and small-scale navigation in the Central Aegean***

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Abstract

Η μελέτη παρουσιάζει την ανακάλυψη μίας μικρής εκκλησίας και των συσχετιζόμενων με αυτήν ευρημάτων στην κορυφή της νησίδας Δασκαλιό, δυτικά της Κέρου, περίπου δέκα χιλιόμετρα νοτιοανατολικά της Νάξου. Τα ευρήματα χρονολογούνται προς το τέλος της Πρωτοβυζαντινής περιόδου και την αρχή της μεταβατικής περιόδου (6ος-8ος αι.). Μέσω αυτών, η ίδρυση και χρήση της εκκλησίας τοποθετείται στην ίδια περίοδο.

Στο ερώτημα που προκύπτει σχετικά με το ρόλο της εκκλησίας αυτής σε μία μικρή νησίδα του Αιγαίου κατά τη διάρκεια της περιόδου αυτής, η μελέτη επιχειρεί να δώσει απαντήσεις. Συζητούνται θέματα σχετικά με τη χρήση αγκυροβολίων και μικρών λιμανιών στο Αιγαίο: η ναυσιπλοΐα μικρών και μεσαίων αποστάσεων, πιθανές διαδρομές, η μαρτυρία ενός πορτολάνου του 16^{ου} αιώνα, ο ρόλος μικρών νησιών στο εμπόριο, καθώς και γειτονικές θέσεις δραστηριότητας. Το στενό μεταξύ Δασκαλιού και Κέρου είναι κατάλληλο ως αραξοβόλι, και η μικρή εκκλησία φαίνεται ότι λειτουργούσε ως φάρος για τις τακτικές και έκτακτες ανάγκες που συνοδεύουν τη ναυσιπλοΐα, καθώς και ως προσκύνημα.

Introduction

The present contribution discusses a small church located on the islet Dhaskalio off the west coast of Keros, 10.5 km south-east of Naxos (**fig. 1, 2**).¹ First excavated in 1964, this church remained undated and unknown to scholarship until recently, when new excavations recovered ceramic remains connected to its use. The study of the pottery has enabled a more precise understanding of when the church was in use and consequently the discussion of its role and function.

The church was first noted by Ludwig Ross in the mid-19th century, when it was already in ruins. Observing that this was the only church to be found on both Dhaskalio and Keros, Ross suggested that it dates to the Middle Ages, and was either a monastery or a pirate base:

Auch diese Insel [Keros] gehört dem Kloster der Panagia Chozobiotissa, das hier einige Heerden unterhält. Ruinen finden sich keine, außer auf der kleinen Klippe Daskalio (τὸ Δασκαλιό), am

1. I would like to express my gratitude to Mrs Olga Philaniotou, former Ephor of the 21st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities of the Cyclades and co-director of the excavation, for entrusting me with the study of this ceramic material. My sincere thanks are extended similarly to Professor Colin Renfrew, Director of the excavation. Thanks are expressed to the former 2nd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of the Cyclades for granting the study permit. Study of the pottery took place during June 2007, 2008 and 2009.

nordwestlichen Ende der Insel, Schinussa gegenüber, und diese scheinen nach der Beschreibung ganz dem Mittelalter, vielleicht einem festen Kloster oder einem Räuberschloß, anzugehören.²

Certain about the medieval chronology of the church ruins, Ross also attributed to the same period the other structural remains visible around it; these, however, later proved to belong to the Early Bronze Age.

Professor Christos Doumas was the first archaeologist on record to visit Keros, in June 1963. He undertook an excavation in order to save the context of some Cycladic figurines as the site was being looted. During the 1964 season, he opened trenches on the summit of Dhaskalio, and there, on the highest peak of the islet, among the Early Bronze Age house remains, he uncovered the ruins of the small church which had been noted by Ross. Doumas described the discovery of this church in his excavation report of 1964.³

Excavation of the settlement on Dhaskalio continued from 2006 to 2008, this time by the University of Cambridge, under the supervision of Professor Colin Renfrew and Olga Philaniotou. The excavators studied the remains of the church, and confirmed the accuracy of the account by Doumas. At the same time, a small number of medieval sherds were recovered from the trenches within and surrounding the church. The results of the 2006-2008 excavations were published recently in a collective volume⁴ mainly dedicated to the Bronze Age finds of Dhaskalio, while the presentation of the church architecture⁵ and its pottery⁶ form the only contributions concerning the historic periods. The present publication offers the chance to discuss these finds in their Byzantine context.

The church

The church is a small single-aisle basilica (**fig. 3, 4**). It measures 6.60 m in length and up to 4.40 m in width (at the western end), narrowing to 3.60 m at the eastern end before the apse. A bench runs along the interior of the apse. Remains of a square built altar were found at the eastern section of the church, in front of the apse. The walls are 0.40 m to 0.60 m in thickness (0.80 m in the apse), currently preserved to ca. 0.20-0.40 m above ground level. The walls are made of reused marble blocks taken from the surrounding remains of Early Bronze Age buildings. An entrance was located in the centre of the west wall. A photo of the church taken at the end of the 1963 excavation⁷ demonstrates that the preservation of the walls was marginally better than today. Evidence for dating the construction or the use of the church was not found, or not reported, by the 1963 excavation. The architecture of the church does not offer any clear chronological indication for the date of its construction. On this question, Dr S. Mamaloukos and Dr K. Aslanidis, specialists of Byzantine architecture, kindly offered the following observation:

The Byzantine architecture of the Cycladic islands does not follow the known trends of architecture in mainland Greece and Asia Minor, and in many cases only wall paintings can provide safe chronological criteria. Our research on the architecture of Naxos has suggested that small single-aisle vaulted churches are built from the 8th century until recent times. However, their size gradually diminishes and they become much more frequent in the course of time, especially dur-

2. Ross (1985), vol. 2, p. 32: "Also this island [Keros] belongs to the monastery of Panagia Chozoviotissa, which keeps here some flocks. There are no ruins, except on the small rock Dhaskalio, at the northwest edge of the island, across Schinoussa, and these appear to belong to the Middle Ages, perhaps to a monastery or to a tower of pirates, according to the description."

3. Doumas (1964); Doumas (2007).

4. Renfrew *et al.* (2013).

5. Doumas (2013), p. 79.

6. Tzavella (2013).

7. Doumas (1964), pl. 481b.

ing the Latin occupation (13th – mid 15th centuries). The plan and dimensions of the Dhaskalio church matches many such cases in Naxos and other Cycladic islands. However, a dating based only on the plan is impossible.⁸

The finds

Since dating the church by its architecture was not possible, the movable finds were important evidence in defining its period of use. The finds were few in number: twenty-two sherds of clay and four of glass. The only find which was well preserved was a cup (C2410), while diagnostic fragments of four more vessels were collected. Sixteen additional sherds collected from the same area are not datable, but their fabric and manufacture is compatible with a chronology in the Byzantine period. The diagnostic sherds point to a date either towards the end of the Early Byzantine period, in the 6th to first half of the 7th century, or the earlier part of the Transitional period, the second half of 7th-8th century.

The cup **C 2410** (fig. 5, 6) is the only ceramic find from Dhaskalio which can provide a relatively safe chronological indication for the use of the church. Its rather generic shape creates some uncertainty regarding its type and chronology. However, cups of similar shape and manufacture have been found in Samos⁹ and Eleutherna (Crete);¹⁰ in both cases they appear as burial finds in graves which have been securely dated to the 7th century.¹¹ A cup of similar shape, found in a stratigraphic context of the 7th-8th century, was found in the cemetery of Perissa, Thera.¹² A further parallel from Apigliano (Apulia, Italy) has been dated between the late 7th and the early 10th century.¹³

The rim fragment **C 2420** (fig. 7) cannot be attributed with certainty to a specific kind of vessel, though it may come from an amphora or pitcher; in this case, it may also point to a date late in the Early Byzantine period. Amphorae with a broad cylindrical neck and plain vertical rim circulate in Corinth and southern Greece in the 7th century,¹⁴ but the known parallels are not close enough to C 2420 to provide a secure chronology. The abundance of mica in the fabric and the soapy feel of the surface are reminiscent of the Middle Roman Amphora 3 / Late Roman Amphora 10 / 'micaceous water jars'.¹⁵ These amphorae were produced in the East Aegean or western Asia Minor, perhaps somewhere between Ephesus and Sardis, and circulated widely in the Mediterranean¹⁶ from the 2nd to the 6th centuries. The micaceous fabric suggests an origin in the East Aegean or western Asia Minor. If C 2420 does not belong to an amphora, then it probably comes from a pitcher with broad neck; an example of this shape, made of highly micaceous fabric, has been found in Corinth.¹⁷ However, identification of the function of this vessel remains far from certain.

8. E-mail communication from Dr K. Aslanidis to Dr M. J. Boyd, 05.09.2009.

9. Martini and Steckner (1993), p. 124, no. 3.1, fig. 37, pl. 16.1.

10. Yangaki (2004), p. 135, no. 48.1, fig. 122a-b. Albertocchi (2004), p. 995, fig. 3a-b.

11. By contrast, Yangaki (2004), in discussing the typological evolution of drinking cups throughout the Early Byzantine period, argues that the end of the period (ca. 7th c.) is characterised by the use of drinking cups with a high, slightly out-turned rim, quite dissimilar to the cup from Dhaskalio.

12. Dafi (2005), p. 213, no. 1123, pl. 41f.

13. Arthur and Imperiale (2011), p. 36, fig. 20.12.

14. Slane and Sanders (2005), p. 276, no. 4-16, fig. 13; p. 278, no. 4-24, fig. 11; p. 278, no. 4-39, fig. 12. Hjolmann (2005), p. 145, no. 33, figs. 17, 98. Reynolds (2003), p. 731, fig. 2.6. Bass and van Doorninck (1982), p. 183, no. P71, fig. 8-18. Boardman (1989), p. 109, no. 242, fig. 37. Saguì (1998), pp. 319-21, fig. 10.1.

15. For the type see Riley (1979), pp. 183-86 and pp. 229-30; Bezezcky (2013), pp. 164-67, with further bibliography. For dated examples see Robinson (1959), L50-51, M125-126, M240, M255-257, M282, M335; Slane and Sanders (2005), p. 263, no. 2-27, 2-28, fig. 7.

16. Arthur (1998), p. 165.

17. Slane and Sanders (2005), p. 278, no. 4-25, fig. 11.

The amphorae body fragments C 2422 (fig. 8) and C 2423 (fig. 9) have broad and shallow grooves on the exterior surface. The exclusive preservation of body sherds prevents the identification of the exact type of amphora. However, broad grooves of this kind often appear on amphorae throughout the Early Byzantine period, and slightly later. Amphorae become far less common in the Middle Byzantine period, as they are gradually replaced by leather sacks and wooden barrels.¹⁸ The few amphorae types known from the Middle and Late Byzantine Aegean show a very different wall thickness, surface treatment and exterior grooving than C 2422-2423.¹⁹ Research on amphorae of the transitional Byzantine period is still at its preliminary stages. An amphora body sherd with the exact same manufacture and fabric as C2423 was identified recently during study of an 8th-century context excavated at Priniatikos Pyrgos in East Crete.²⁰

Four fragments of glass were found in the fill of the apse. Two, a foot and a handle fragment, belong to oil lamps (*κανδήλαι*) (fig. 10), while the other two are wall fragments of vessels of unidentified shape. *Κανδήλαι* normally had a calyx-shaped body and three little loops used for hanging the oil-lamp. Regarding the foot fragment, the glass specialist Pavlos Triantafyllides (Ephorate of Antiquities of Rhodes) provided the following description:

It is made of translucent greenish glass, and is preserved to a maximum height of 45 mm. The foot is slightly conical, tubular, and preserves part of the knob shank in the lower part of the cup. The fragmentary oil-lamp belongs with the glass lighting instruments used between the 4th and the 7th centuries in churches, secular buildings and private residences. This is the most popular type of oil lamp; it has a calyx-shaped body with a concave base which has a strong thrust from the bottom to the interior and three-lugged handles on the tubular rim. *Kandiles* of this type belong with *μονοκάνδηλα* or multiple chandeliers, known in literary texts as *candela vitraeae ingentes*. As for the workshop where these were produced, typological parallels have been found on Amorgos, on Naxos, at Perissa on Thera, on Leros, on Kos and on Rhodes; this suggests the presence of regional glass workshops in the Aegean, since wandering glassmakers during the Roman and the early Christian era went with their equipment according to the needs and orders of their clients²¹.

Given the fact that no later Byzantine or post-Byzantine finds have been found during the excavations, it appears that the church was erected at some point during the Early Byzantine period, possibly towards the end, and was used until the 7th century or possibly a bit later. No pottery of the Early Byzantine period was found on the rest of the islet of Dhaskalio. One can therefore legitimately suggest that this was only a small site. The existence of additional remains of the Early Byzantine and Transitional periods on the island of Keros is a reasonable hypothesis, such as the Early Byzantine site reported at Konakia on the north coast,²² but further research on the island is needed in order to test this.

Discussion

The role and function of the church is a subject which deserves discussion. Its small size appears as rather unusual at first glance, since we are used to thinking of Early Byzantine churches as destined to house large communities. In fact, recent research has brought to light examples of small, single-aisle vaulted churches from the Early Byzantine period. This evidence merits attention, since it expands our understanding of the function of churches in this period.

18. Bakirtzis (1989), p. 84.

19. Günsenin (1990); Hayes (1992), pp. 61-76. Vroom (2005), pp. 94-103.

20. Unpublished. For the excavation see Molloy and Duckworth (2014). For preliminary results of research on Byzantine amphorae see Tzavella (forthcoming).

21. Triantafyllidis (2004), pp. 39-45, 56, no. 2, pl. 3, fig. 2. Yelda Olcay (2001), pp. 86-7, fig. 7; Hadad (1988), pp. 64-68.

22. Dellaporta *et al.*, oral presentation at the conference *Naxos and the Byzantine Aegean*, Naxos Chora 12-13.04.2014.

The geographically closest examples of single-aisle vaulted basilicas of the Early Byzantine period (5th-7th century) and the Transitional period (8th-9th century) are located on Naxos. As established by recent research, the church called Monastiriotissa at Engares dates to the mid-7th century, while three further examples (Agios Ioannis at Danakos, Agios Mamas at Driti, Agios Georgios at Ropike) may be dated until the late 9th century.²³ All belong to the single-aisle vaulted type. Although larger in size than the Dhaskalio church, their ground plan bears strong similarities with the latter.²⁴

Field survey in southern Greece has recently located similar single-aisle churches of small size, associated with Early Byzantine pottery. In southern Attica two single-aisle churches were revealed in close proximity, with a size and ground plan similar to the Dhaskalio church.²⁵ The pottery recovered from both sites dates to the Early Byzantine period. There is a comparable church in the territory of Sikyon in the northeast Peloponnese.²⁶ It is possible that these churches belonged to private estates or to small communities. It is worth noting that the examples from Attica and the Sikyonia were discovered thanks to intensive field surveys; they might have otherwise escaped archaeological attention.

The motive behind the foundation of the Dhaskalio church is not clear. It may have been built as a small pilgrimage site connected to sailing routes, or as a landmark of an estate (for cattle-breeding?) on western Keros, or as a hermitage site (*asketerion*).

Asketeria are known in the Early Byzantine Aegean; a recent example has been identified at the site of Kellia on the island of Chalki (Dodecanese).²⁷ It consists of a small cave and a rock-cut cell with an apse. The date of its use has been established on the basis of three successive layers of wall paintings belonging to the late 6th, mid-7th and early 8th century, respectively. It has been suggested that a number of basilicas scattered in the area of Mesanagros in southern Rhodes may have functioned as pilgrimage sites or *asketeria* connected to small monasteries.²⁸ Finally, the Davelis cave on Mount Penteli, Attica, with rock-cut Early Christian reliefs which were (later?) integrated into a rock-cut church, may have functioned as a hermitage site – and not necessarily or not only as a pilgrimage site, as is usually suggested.²⁹

The available evidence does not allow a clear establishment of the function of the Dhaskalio site. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that the south coast of the islet and its protected coastline facing Keros could provide provisional anchorage in cases of sudden storms (**fig. 11, 12**), and therefore the small church of Dhaskalio appears as a minor religious site, where sailors could stop for a short pilgrimage.

Keros is mentioned in early portulans. A portulan of the second half of the 3rd century, known as *Stadiasmus Maris Magni*, records: “from Kereia, keeping Kereia on the left, to Panormos of the Naxians 65 stades”.³⁰ It appears that sailors of Late Antiquity were familiar with the sailing route along the north-western part of Keros.

A portulan manuscript of the 16th-17th century mentions Keros as part of an island group which also includes Ios, Sikinos, Kariotissa and Polykandros (Pholegandros) (**fig. 13**). These islands form an arc with a northeast to southwest direction, Keros lying at the northeast end of the arc. What is particularly interesting is that Dhaskalio is mentioned in this portulan, though it is not named: “Ἡ Κέρος καὶ ἡ Νίος καὶ ἡ Σίκινος καὶ ἡ Καριότισσα καὶ ἡ Πολύκανδρος, ὅλα βλέπονται εἰς τὴν κάρταν τοῦ πουνέντη

23. Aslanidis, (2014), pp. 287-92.

24. Note, among other similarities, the bench built along the interior surface of the apse in Agios Georgios at Ropike and other churches of the single-aisle vaulted type; see Aslanidis (2014), p. 292, fig. 92.

25. Lohmann (1993), Teil II, pp. 467-70 (TH 16) and p. 477 (TH 34). See also Tzavella (2014), p. 137.

26. Lolos (2011), p. 525 (SP-30).

27. Sigala (2009).

28. Deligiannakis (2004), p. 165, n. 22; Deligiannakis (2016), pp. 138-47.

29. Soteriou (1927). Orlandos (1933), pp. 196-97. Mouriki (1974), pp. 110-11.

30. <https://topostext.org/place/368258IKer>, last accessed on 02.02.2018.

εις τον γαρμπήν, μίλια ν'. Ἐξευρε ὅτι ἡ Κέρος ἔχει μίαν ξέρην εἰς τον πουνέντη.³¹ The reef mentioned just west of Keros can be none other than Dhaskalio, since there is no other ridge rising above sea level, or lying just beneath the surface (ξέρα), west of Keros. It seems therefore that for ships sailing along the coast of Keros, it was useful to know about the existence of the reef.

A further attestation to the fact that Dhaskalio was known to medieval sailors is its name. 'Dhaskalio' is a common name for rocky islets in close proximity to a mainland.³² The name has been used in the northern and southern Aegean, in the Saronic and Argolic gulfs, as well as in the Ionian Sea. The etymology is from the Italian word 'scoglio' (da scoglio) which means a reef, a rock or cliff in the sea.³³ Islets named 'Dhaskalio' were taken into consideration by navigators, being potentially useful as they cut off stormy weather from the open sea when a ship tried to reach the coast of the mainland.

Keros seems to have been a local landmark in the maritime area between Naxos, Amorgos and Ios, as it appears consistently, usually as 'Chiero', in maps of the 16th and 17th century.³⁴ In comparison, the neighbouring islands of Koufonissia and Irakleia are omitted much more often.

The question of whether Dhaskalio was an islet or a promontory in the Byzantine period cannot be answered with certainty. Geological research has shown that the sea level in the Early Bronze Age was at least four meters lower than at present, and that a neck of land connected Dhaskalio with Keros.³⁵ The mention of Dhaskalio as a 'ξέρα', or reef, in the 16th-century portulans suggests that it had become an island by then.

The preserved literary evidence regarding navigation in the Byzantine Aegean, though scanty, stresses the difficult sea situations and the sudden weather changes encountered by ships.³⁶ Epigraphic evidence of the 5th-7th centuries from the site of Grammata on Syros testifies to circulation of ship captains and sailors from the islands of Naxos, Paros, Melos, Yaros, Andros, Thera, and Hydra around the Aegean.³⁷ This is indisputable testimony to the fact that the navigation routes between the Aegean islands were frequented during this period. Navigation through areas that provided scattered bays and gulfs, useful for anchorage in urgent circumstances, was especially desired.³⁸ Monasteries built at strategic insular sites in the Middle and Late Byzantine periods potentially functioned also as landmarks, guard posts or even lighthouses, especially before the era when maps were created and circulated.³⁹

Sites of this character are not widely known in the Aegean. However, the last two decades of research have highlighted the intensity of activity on small islets and promontories from the 5th to the 7th centuries. Numerous such sites are known in the Corinthian, Saronic, and Argolic gulfs.⁴⁰ Previ-

31. Delatte (1947), p. 279, l. 15ff (Portulan III).

32. Such as: Dhaskalio of Kimolos, an islet near the coast of Kimolos island, also known as Agios Andreas; Dhaskalio of the Argolid, an islet near Tolo; Dhaskalio of Lasithi (Crete), an islet southeast of Kavos Sidero; Dhaskalio of Skiathos, an islet in the harbour of Skiathos island; Dhaskalio of Keratea (east Attica); Dhaskalio of Samos; of Psara (near Chios); etc. For examples of Italian maps with a 'scoglio' marked on them see Tolia (2011), p. 213, map IV.9 ('Scoglio of Garabuse' [Grambousa] off Crete) and p. 215, map IV.12 ('Scogli di S. Antonio', off the harbour of Agios Nikolaos, Crete). The connection of the name 'Dhaskalio' with the Greek word 'δάσκαλος' is a popular mistaken etymology; apart from the lack of explanation for a possible connection of teachers with all these islets, 'Δασκαλιό' is written with a 'ι', an orthographic phenomenon which points to its derivation from a foreign language, rather than an 'ει', which would indicate a meaning such as 'used for [teaching]', 'of a [teacher]'.
33. Etymology: vulgar Latin 'scoclus', 'scopulus', which derives from Classical Latin 'scopulus', which in itself derives from ancient Greek 'σκόπελος'.

34. See as example Tolia (ed.) (2010), pp. 240-41, No. 80; Tolia (2011), numerous maps and *itineraria*, produced mostly in Venice.

35. Dixon and Kinnaid (2013), p. 52, fig. 4.7.

36. For a useful summary see Penna (2010), pp. 20-24.

37. Kiourtzian (2000), pp. 137-200.

38. Bazaiou-Barabas (1993), p. 437.

39. Penna (2005), p. 14. Penna (2010), p. 22.

40. For examples see Gregory (1986a); (1986b); (1999).

ously interpreted,⁴¹ and initially widely accepted,⁴² as a response to insecurity caused by the barbarian invasions of this period, current scholarship concerned with the economic use of these islets seriously questions this explanation.⁴³ They show a demographic expansion and the need to control even small well-favoured locations.⁴⁴ They are a sign of increasing economic activity, a phenomenon so well documented for the Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods by field surveys.

Moreover, the overall significance of informal landfalls and anchorages along the maritime trunk routes and highways of the Aegean has been suggested in the area of the Dodecanese by the example of the straits between Kalymnos and Telendos.⁴⁵

The island area around Keros shows habitation and architectural activity between the 5th and the mid-7th centuries (**fig. 14**). On Keros itself is the settlement at the site of Konakia in the northern part of the island: a three-aisle basilica and the apse of a further church have been found through field survey, both associated with Early Byzantine pottery.⁴⁶ On the neighbouring island of Ano Koufonissi, the apse of an Early Christian basilica has been identified beneath the church of Agios Nikolaos at the site Loutra, across the sea from Dhaskalio.⁴⁷ Numerous architectural and sculpted members have been integrated in the church of Agios Georgios.⁴⁸ Moreover, ruins of an Early Christian church are preserved at the site Prophitis Ilias.⁴⁹ Remains of a contemporary church have been attested also on the islet Antikeri.⁵⁰ On the island of Schinoussa, recent excavations around Livadi Bay have revealed a settlement used in the 6th and 7th centuries, while Early Christian architectural members were found at Stavros, the promontory Agios Vasileios, and the Panagia church at the town of Schinoussa.⁵¹ On Naxos, the central island of the broader region, thirteen Early Christian churches have been located.⁵² At least two among them, Panagia Drosiani and Panagia Protothronos at Chalki, bear wall paintings which have been dated to the mid-7th century. On Amorgos, an early form of a church (*εὐκτήριος οἶκος*) has been identified west of Arkesini, while Early Christian churches have been found at Katapola and Kolophana, both on the side of the island facing Keros.⁵³ Building remains which have been tentatively identified as Early Christian churches are recorded at the broader area of Arkesini and Kato Kambos.⁵⁴

In the 7th century, demographic and economic contraction begins in most areas of the Empire; however, the Cyclades continue to show signs of economic activity (**fig. 15**). Naxos acquired a strong fortification (Kastro tou Apalirou) between the 7th and the 9th century, as well as numerous professionally decorated churches.⁵⁵ Fifteen church monuments on Naxos bear wall paintings which have been dated to the Iconoclastic period.⁵⁶ Especially interesting is the re-use of the Hellenistic Cheima-

41. Hood (1970).

42. See for example Huxley (1977).

43. Gregory (2005), pp. 155-70; Deligiannakis, (2016), p. 59 (Chalki and Alimnia), p. 68-69 (Telendos); Armstrong (2009), pp. 175-77; Veikou (2012), pp. 177-88; Veikou (2013), p. 130; Poulou-Papadimitriou, this volume.

44. Evidence for use of small but well-favoured harbours in the Dodecanese: Deligiannakis (2016), p. 59 (Rhodes: Chalki and Alimnia), 60 (Rhodes: Armeni), 70-71 (Karpathos: Leukos, Vrykous), 84 (Saria: Palatia).

45. Deligiannakis (2016), p. 68-69.

46. Dellaporta *et al.*, oral presentation at the conference *Naxos and the Byzantine Aegean*, Naxos Chora 12-13.04.2014. The results are based on an intensive field survey conducted by the University of Cambridge.

47. Philaniotou (2017), 171.

48. O. Philaniotou, pers. comm.

49. Pennas, 'Kouphonissia', in Gioles and Pallis (2014), p. 377.

50. Dellaporta *et al.*, oral presentation at the conference *Naxos and the Byzantine Aegean*, Naxos Chora 12-13.04.2014.

51. See the contribution by D. Chatzilazarou in the present volume. Also Chatzilazarou (2008); Pennas, 'Schinoussa', in Gioles and Pallis (eds.) (2014), p. 379.

52. Pennas, 'Naxos', in Gioles and Pallis (eds.) (2014), pp. 366-77.

53. Pennas, 'Amorgos', in Gioles and Pallis (eds.) (2014), p. 377.

54. Marangou (2002), pp. 69-75.

55. On the Kastro tou Apalirou see the contribution by the Norwegian team, and on the church architecture of Naxos the contribution of Klimis Aslanidis, all in the present volume.

56. Pennas, 'Naxos', in Gioles and Pallis (eds.) (2014), p. 368.

rros Tower, located in southeast Naxos (the coast facing Keros), in the Late Roman period but also in the 8th century, as revealed by the pottery remains. An Early Christian basilica, dated to the 5th-6th century, with a subsequent construction phase, and press installations were built in the courtyard of the tower.⁵⁷ Numerous ancient Cycladic towers were re-used in the Byzantine period, but specific studies on the chronology and function are still awaited.⁵⁸

A well-attested example of a re-used tower stands on Amorgos: a *folles* of Phocas dated 607/8 and a belt buckle with a Maltese cross were found at the Pyrgos Vasili sto Chorío (Agia Triada), while a vaulted cistern was built in the courtyard possibly in the Byzantine period.⁵⁹ A further vaulted cistern was built in the courtyard of the tower Terlaki at Agios Georgios, in northern Amorgos.⁶⁰ The church of Agios Ioannis Theologos on Mount Kroukelos and the churches Evangelismos and Agioi Anargyroi at Katapola have been dated to the late 7th – 9th centuries.⁶¹ Moreover, the hoard with coins of Constantine IV (668-687), found at the natural acropolis of Arkesini, suggests the presence of military or administrative officers.⁶²

Further west, on Ios, the castle ‘Paliokastro’, considered to date to the 7th-8th century, oversees the northeast part of the island and the sea route in the direction of Keros.⁶³ On Thera, recent excavations at Perissa revealed a large 6th-century Christian basilica, the use of which continues in the 7th and 8th centuries, as attested by coins and pottery.⁶⁴

Coin circulation during the Transitional period is more pronounced in the Cyclades than in the urban sites of southern Greece or coastal Asia Minor.⁶⁵ Moreover, maritime trade continued in the Aegean and the East Mediterranean during the period of Arab invasions (7th and 8th centuries), as shown by recent research and the increasing understanding of Byzantine pottery from this period.⁶⁶

Conclusion

The islet of Dhaskalio is one of the two sites of Keros (the other being Konakia) where archaeological research revealed Byzantine activity. A small church and a few ceramic and glass remains are the only finds preserved; these date towards the end of the Early Byzantine period and the beginning of the

57. On the ancient tower see Philaniotou (2006), pp. 231-4; on the press installations Philaniotou (2003), pp. 75-83. On the Early Christian basilica see Haselberger (1985), pp. 51-3; Philaniotou (2003), p. 80; Aslanidis (2014), pp. 25-26. The 2000s excavation revealed pottery of the Late Roman period and of the 8th century (the latter is not mentioned in the publications), as observed during a personal visit, permitted by the excavator, in May 2003. The pottery is currently under study by A. Vionis.

58. Penna (2010), p. 29.

59. On the Pyrgos tou Vasili sto Chorío and its finds see Marangou (2005), p. 59 and pp. 213-15. On the *folles* of Phocas see also Pennas and Samoladou (2010), p. 145.

60. Marangou (2005), p. 253.

61. Pennas, ‘Amorgos’, in Gioles and Pallis (eds.) (2014), p. 378. The churches Evangelismos and Agioi Anargyroi at Katapola preserve a layer of wall paintings with aniconic themes, which probably dates to this period. The churches are mentioned also by Marangou (2002), pp. 82-83.

62. Touratsoglou (1999). This natural outcrop preserves post-antique remains of houses, a vaulted cistern and a defence wall, which have not yet been dated: Marangou (2002), p. 77.

63. Pennas, ‘Ios’, in Gioles and Pallis (eds.) (2014), p. 380. Eberhard (1986), pp. 163-6.

64. Gerousi (2010), pp. 28-40. Dafi (2005).

65. Penna (2001), p. 408. Pennas and Samoladou (2010). A list of the 8th and 9th-century coins of the islands neighbouring Keros reads as follows. Naxos: *Solidos* of Constantine V (741-755) at Aplomata; *Miliaresion* of Leo V (813-820) at Grotta. Amorgos: *Miliaresion* of Leo III (717-741) at Markiani; hoard of 52 *solidi*, four *semisses* and four *tremisses* of Constantine IV (668-685) at Arkesini. Santorini: *Solidos* of Leo III (717-741) and three *folles* of Leo V (813-820), all at Perissa; *folles* of Nicephoros (802-810) and Michael II (820-829) at Mesa Vouno, Agora area; a hoard of a *solidos* of Michael II (820-829) and 29 *miliaresia* of Theophilos (829-842). See also Delos, Siphnos, Mikra Akradia and Polyaiagos (both by Milos).

66. Poulou-Papadimitriou (1995); (2001); (2014); see also her contribution in the present volume. Armstrong (2009). For historical sources see Gerolymatou (2001), esp. pp. 356-64.

Transitional period. Despite its scant character, this evidence is interesting since it demonstrates activity even on a small barren insular site. It thus belongs to a well-documented category of Early Byzantine sites located on islets lying near larger islands or the mainland. So far best known along the coastline of southern mainland Greece, the site at Dhaskalio contributes to the geographical expansion of this scheme.

The south coast of Dhaskalio, especially its coast facing Keros, must have provided provisional harbouring in cases of sudden storms, and the small church therefore appears as a minor religious site, where sailors could stop for a short pilgrimage. Even though the function as an *asketerion* cannot be excluded, the location of the church on top of Dhaskalio, versus a more protected site on the islet, reinforces the interpretation of the site as a local landmark rather than as a hermitage site. The church could also have served purposes of maritime communication. In the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, monasteries built at strategic insular sites potentially functioned also as landmarks, guard posts or even lighthouses, especially before the era when maps were created and circulated.⁶⁷

The erection and use of the chapel took place during a period when the neighbouring islands show intense economic activity, coupled with a new administrative and military role from the late 7th century onwards. Already by the late 7th century, Naxos is one of the bases for the fleet of the Karavisiatoi – a meeting point for the ships during the expedition to Carthage in 697/8. Therefore, the maritime area around Naxos played not only a commercial role, as it lay on the regional and supra-regional trade routes, but also had political and military significance. This is confirmed by the high number of coin hoards found in the central Cyclades during this period.⁶⁸

The evidence from the small site of Dhaskalio does not allow further precision in the identification of its function. However, sites of this character played a role in the everyday maritime life of this economically active area, as well as in cases of urgency. The site should be seen as part of ‘the dispersed town of the Archipelago’,⁶⁹ of which the main island, Naxos, was a decisive factor during this period.

67. Pennas (2005), p. 14. Penna (2010), p. 22.

68. Penna (2001). Nikolaou (2004). Touratsoglou (2006). Pennas and Samoladou (2010), pp. 135-59.

69. In the words of Asdrachas (1985), pp. 235, 241, 244.

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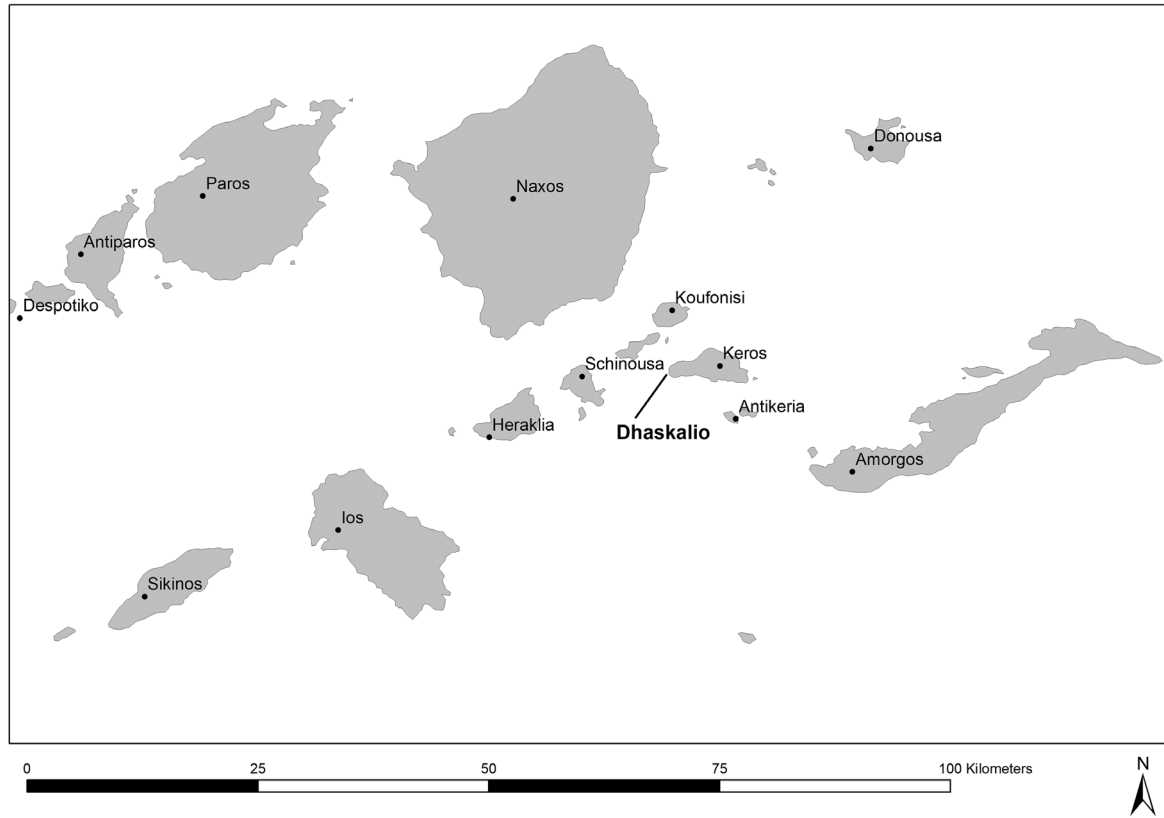


Figure 1. Location of Keros and Dhaskalio in the central Aegean.



Figure 2. Location of the islet of Dhaskalio with regard to Keros. Source: Google Earth.

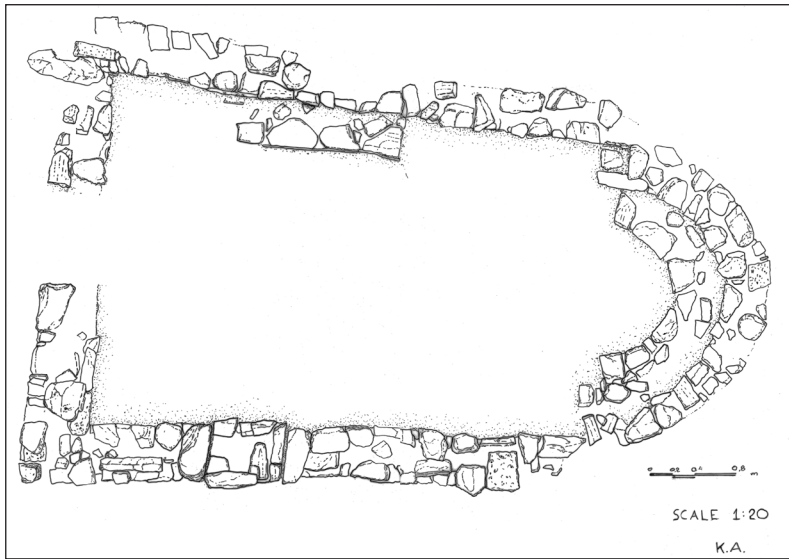


Figure 3.
Church on the summit of Dhaskalio, ground plan. Source: Tzavella (2013), p. 88, fig. 8.1. © McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.



Figure 4.
Church on the summit of Dhaskalio, preserved condition. © McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

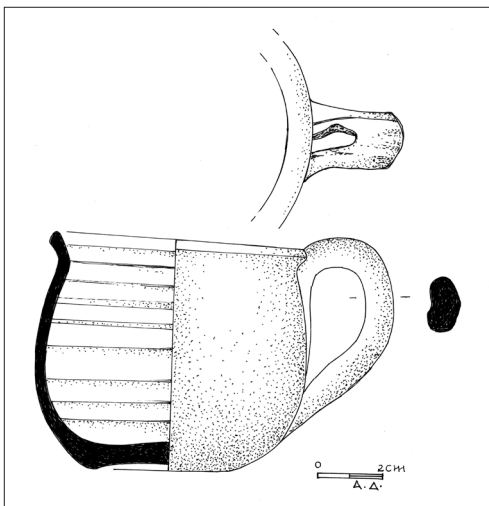


Figure 5. Cup C2410, drawing. Source: Tzavella (2013), p. 90, fig. 8.2. © McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.



Figure 6. Cup C2410, photo. Source: Tzavella (2013), p. 90, fig. 8.2. © McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.



Figure 7.
Ceramic fragment C2420, photo.
Source: Tzavella (2013), p. 90, fig.
8.3. ©McDonald Institute for Archaeo-
logical Research.



Figure 8.
Amphora fragment C2422, photo.
Source: Tzavella (2013), p. 90, fig.
8.4. ©McDonald Institute for Archaeo-
logical Research.



Figure 9.
Amphora fragment C2423, photo.
Source: Tzavella (2013), p. 90, fig.
8.5. ©McDonald Institute for Archaeo-
logical Research.



Figure 10.
Glass fragment of a *κανδήλα*, photo.
©McDonald Institute for Archaeo-
logical Research.



Figure 11.
Dhaskalio seen from south.
Photo: author.



Figure 12.
Strait between Dhaskalio and Keros,
seen from Dhaskalio. Photo: author.

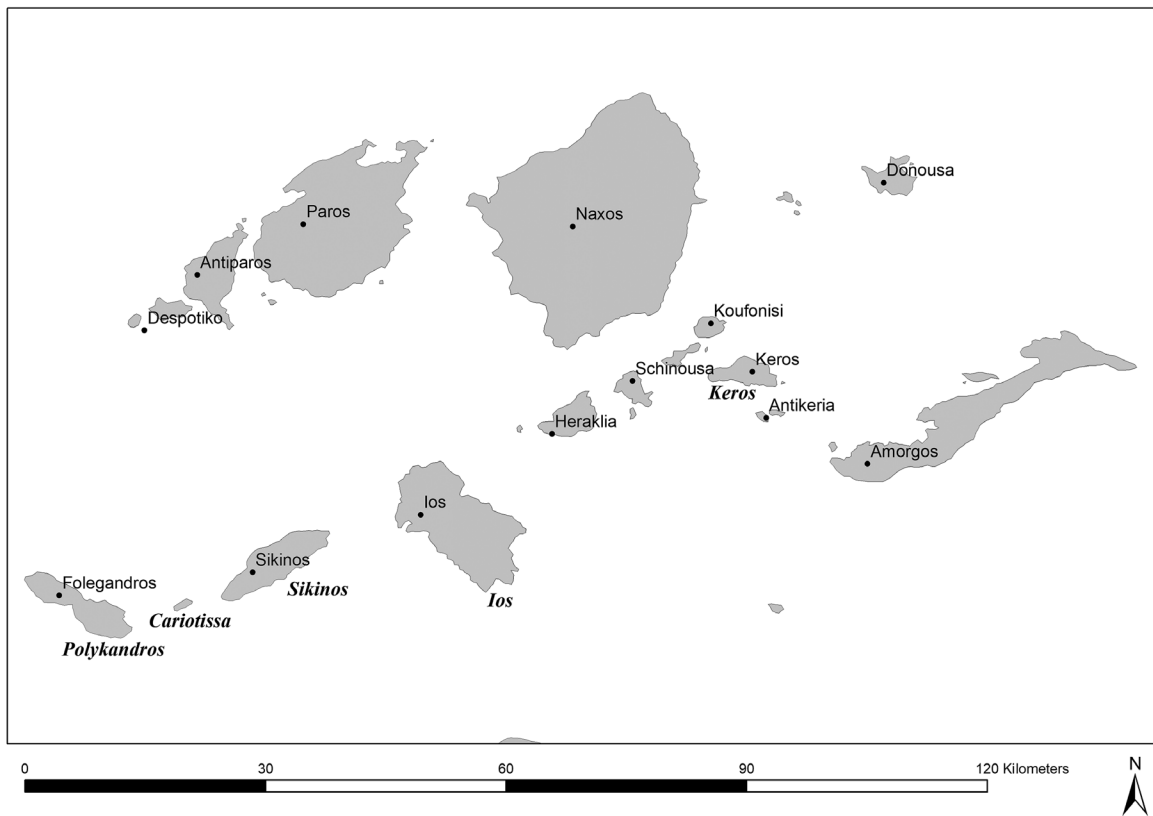


Figure 13. Islands on a sea-route mentioned in a portulan of the 16th-17th century (italics).

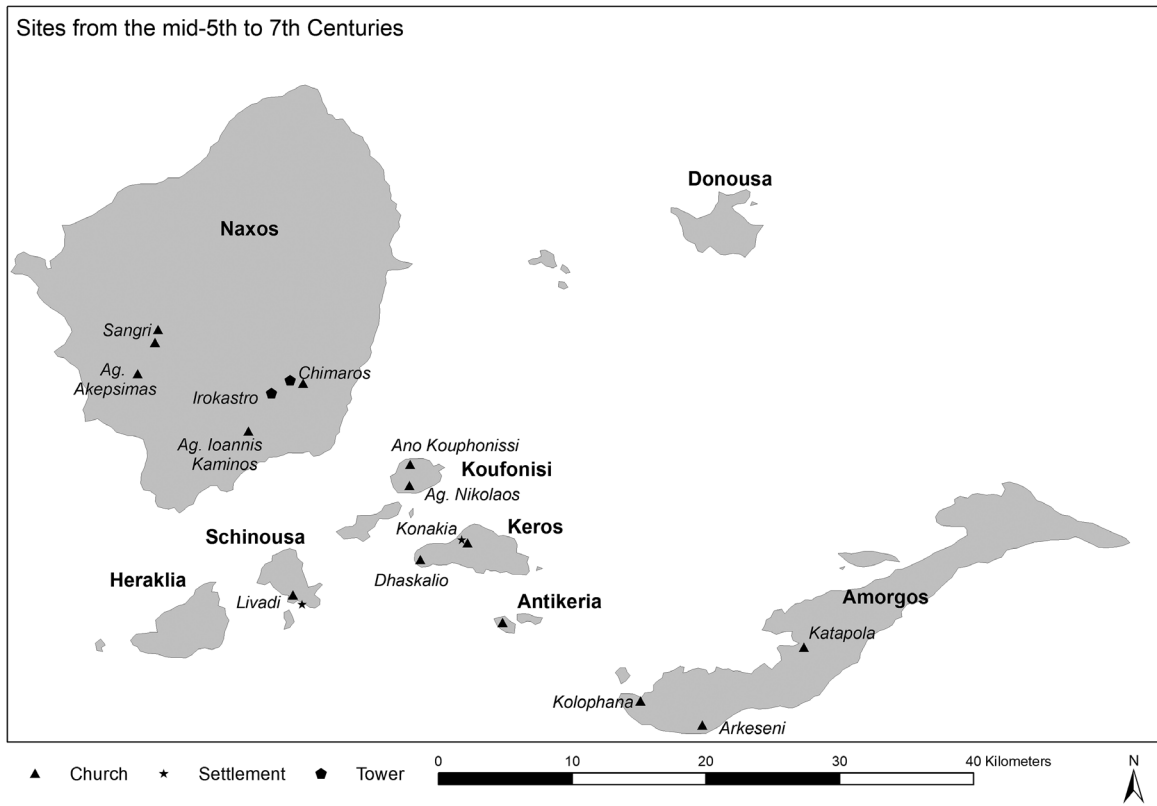


Figure 14. Sites of the Early Byzantine period (5th century to first half of 7th century).

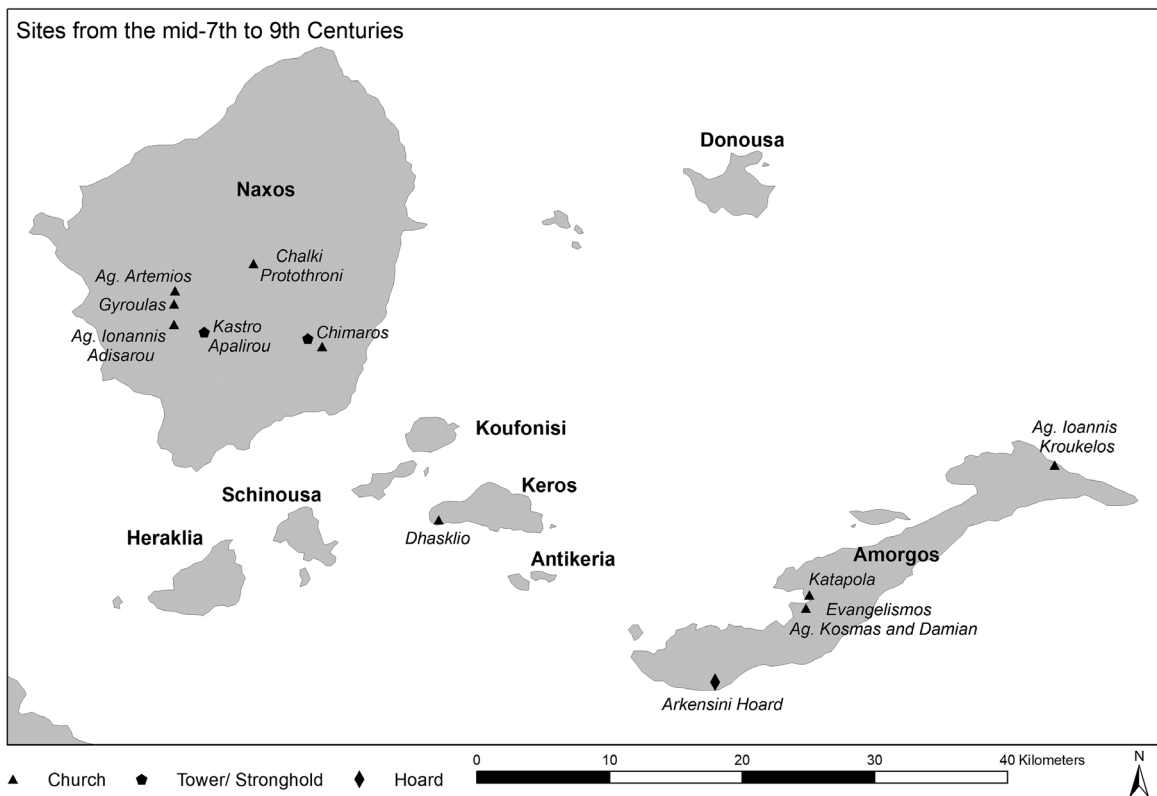


Figure 15. Sites of the Transitional period (second half of 7th century to 8th century).