

“Minding the Gap”

Thinking About Change in Early Cycladic Island Societies from a Comparative Perspective

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Abstract

Thirty years on, “Rutter’s gap” remains a challenge for Aegean prehistorians. With a precision commonly overlooked by his critics, Rutter originally set out to draw attention to a lacuna in our knowledge of material from stratified sites in the Cyclades, or of Cycladic material exported elsewhere, at the end of the third millennium B.C.E. and to a consequent hiatus in our ability to trace how island culture and behavior shifted from the Early to Middle Bronze Age. Whether the “gap” represented a real cessation of activity, whether it might be reduced from both ends, and whether genuinely interstitial strata and material might one day emerge were left open to the future. That future is now here, and this article asks where we stand today. It reviews new evidence from the Cyclades, the paucity of which suggests that the problem is at some level real, and highlights shifts of emphasis in the temporal pattern of change suggested by fresh data. It explores how two subsequent explanatory models have fared against new information: first, the association with a horizon of climate-induced collapse, and second, an explanation in terms of the maritime transition from canoe-borne to sail-driven shipping. Lastly, a pan-Mediterranean perspective reveals the third millennium B.C.E. as a period of burgeoning island societies and long-range sea traffic, but one that also witnessed crises in several island cultures toward its end, under conditions of increasing external penetration.*

INTRODUCTION

The best test of an article’s enduring value is surely how it reads several decades after its initial publication. Three points quickly jump out when one reengages with Rutter’s last substantive word, published in 1984, on the Early Cycladic (EC) III “gap”—the term by which he identified a threefold lacuna in time, our knowledge, and island social trajectories between an Early Bronze Age characterized by dispersed lifestyles, a few spectacular trading communities, a well-known material culture, and intensive canoe-based networks, and the Middle to Late Bronze Age landscape of generally more nucleated settlements, a rather different material repertoire (if with potentially connecting lineages), and sail-driven shipping.¹ The first is its meticulously careful phrasing, a quality all too often overlooked by Rutter’s more cavalier critics.² His pithy, bombshell position papers and his monumental pottery publications reveal the workings of a highly distinctive, logical, and immensely data-rich mind. Rutter would, I imagine, consider his work to be fundamentally empirical, and to name him as one of the last true data masters, at a time when the challenges facing that

*Jerry Rutter and I first crossed paths a quarter of a century ago, when he acted for the *AJA* as a reviewer of my first article (Broodbank 1989). Reopening the file on that recently was a trip down memory lane to a more genteel age, when established scholars still had the time to pen long, courteous, well-thought-out letters of advice, criticism, and encouragement to people of whom they had previously never heard. None of those letters in the file was longer, more courteous and generous, better thought-out, and yet more erudite and surgically precise in its identification of my weaknesses than Jerry’s. Countless people have benefited immeasurably, as I have, from such “Ruttergrams,” their conversational equivalents, and, perhaps most grueling of all, Jerry’s enthusiasm for what is best described as “ordeal by sherd table.” I clearly recall attempting to hide behind my codirector for three

whole days during one of the last such events on Kythera, which left “Mycenaean” Kastri in thought-provoking tatters. I thank Jerry for many years of wise, incisive, and humane advice, Jack Davis for all he has done to make this Forum a most well-deserved reality, my fellow contributors for their neighborly enlightenment, and Todd Whitelaw for thoughts concerning Phylakopi. I hope that readers will also join the discussion on the *AJA* website (www.ajaonline.org).

¹Rutter 1979, 1983, 1984. The contrast is further enhanced by distinctions highlighted in Broodbank 2000, 175–349. Rambach (2008) summarizes the case for material culture parallels across the gap, following earlier observations in Renfrew 1972, 194–95; Barber 1984.

²Barber 1983, 1984; MacGillivray 1983, 1984; Barber and MacGillivray 1984; Sotirakopoulou 1996.

role are ballooning in scope, is an understatement of the first order. And yet behind this can be discerned a constant probing after the bigger issues that lurk beyond the swarms of facts. While Rutter has largely abjured explicit theory, his work remains thoroughly intellectualized and retains an immense interrogative resonance over the years.

Second, it is transparently evident that, at least in this instance, Rutter was not interested in being proved right, as such, let alone in demonstrating that the Cyclades necessarily lay empty in the late third millennium B.C.E. What he really wanted to do was to provoke Cycladic scholarship and fieldwork to sharpen and advance its game. To quote from the final paragraph of the 1984 paper: “with continued research and, above all, new discoveries, ‘the EC III gap’ in our knowledge will hopefully disappear altogether . . . although the ‘gap’s’ absolute duration in time [arguably, as we shall see], as well as the striking cultural discontinuity which is at present perhaps its best known feature [as we can certainly affirm], will remain forever.”³ This admirable, and to this day all too rare, attitude in Aegean prehistory is very much the measure of the man. To put it another way, even if the gap proposal is eventually shown on one or more levels to be wrong, it will always remain more interesting, and more productive in terms of its inspiration to further research and idea-building, than most of the contemporary and subsequent expressions of disagreement with it. And this, we might recall, is more or less exactly how mature scientific method is supposed to operate.

Third, even in 1984 Rutter was pushing ahead of his own position and trying to address the problematic he had himself set—another unmistakable sign of a scholar miles in front of the pack. The clue to this lies in the amusing title of that year’s contribution: “The Early Cycladic III Gap: What It Is and How to Go About Filling It Without Making It Go Away.” His approach was itself intriguingly innovative and drew on his encyclopedic memory for Aegean material culture and its occasional standout contextual oddities in a way that few could match.⁴ In brief, he set out to begin to plug the lacuna in our knowledge by identifying outlier objects from good contexts beyond the Cyclades and contemporary with the gap, which in sty-

listic terms looked as if they could represent interim stages between the Cycladic material that was known on either side of it. In terms of its ability to isolate the exceptional, it was a tactic not dissimilar to that which he has championed more recently: the identification of long-range imports at the great second-millennium B.C.E. south Cretan port of Kommos.⁵

THE GAP 30 YEARS ON

So much for then, as it reads now. Turning to the situation today, we can begin with a few general points. One is that the issue of the gap still very much matters on a wider stage, if not for quite the reasons that Rutter had envisaged. The emergence of palatial Crete, we can safely surmise, was a deeper transformation that owed less than he proposed to the window of opportunity provided by a hiatus or shift in Cycladic activity,⁶ though in this context the contrast between Crete and the so-called null cases elsewhere in the Aegean remains instructive.⁷ However, we are now far more aware than we were 30 years ago of the extent of contemporaneous, sometimes dramatic, changes across the Aegean, much of the Mediterranean, southwest Asia, and the Nile corridor—a point to which we shall return below. Precisely how the Cyclades fit into this wider mosaic remains significant. Turning to a broader temporal canvas (and noting Rutter’s similar engagement with questions of terminology and substantive social, cultural, economic, and political change right at the end of the Bronze Age),⁸ it is being increasingly realized that such in-between periods, for all their archaeological obscurity and vulnerability to often naively catastrophist explanations, often hold the interpretative key to major transitions in the human past.⁹ Lastly, if less positively, returning to the Cycladic specifics, a survey of the most recent literature reveals a still thoroughly inconsistent, variable use of the “EC III” terminological and chronological label, accompanied by a lack of explicit recognition on the part of most authors that this absence of consensus is itself a serious problem.¹⁰ In these vital procedural terms, we appear to be in danger of slipping backward.

More specifically, in relation to the gaps in our knowledge, time (both relative and absolute), and trajectories of sociocultural change, where do we stand? Here, it is worth making one preliminary remark. The

³Rutter 1984, 105.

⁴Rutter 1984, 99–100.

⁵Rutter 2004.

⁶Rutter 1984, 103–4; Whitelaw 2004a; Cherry 2010; Schoep et al. 2012.

⁷As first observed by Cherry (1984, 26–7) in the same year as Rutter’s final word on the gap.

⁸Rutter 1978, 1992.

⁹Sherratt 2003; Schwartz and Nichols 2006; McAnany and Yoffee 2010.

¹⁰E.g., Sotirakopoulou 1996; Renfrew et al. 2012. See also several papers in Brodie et al. (2008), among which only Manning’s (2008) retains explicit self-awareness and clear definition in matters of terminology.

sheer tidiness of Rutter's approach may in fact point to the one likely methodological flaw in the gap proposal that should have been evident from the time of its inception.¹¹ For Rutter paid late third-millennium B.C.E. Cycladic culture the compliment of anticipating that it would behave as (we hope and trust) Late Bronze Age fine wares did, with fast, widespread, broadly synchronized stylistic turnovers that enable us to approximate straight, parallel lines on the time charts. Such neatness may well be unrealistic for a cluster of small islands with a long prior and subsequent history of cultural diversity, and it would not take much of a more plausibly "battle-ship curved" distribution of cultural traits over time to begin to shorten or close the gap from one or both ends. Rutter assuredly knew this; after all, he once defined the gap as simply the "period of time between the floruits of two distinct artifactual assemblages."¹² But perhaps this seemed too easy a way out—and in many respects he was quite right that overstretched artifactual and terminological bandages could not in themselves bind the gash in time. So how might we start to do so, 30 years on? We can focus our exploration around three straightforward questions.

Do we yet possess a single cinchingly demonstrable continuous stratified sequence right across the gap phase in the Cyclades? Despite recent claims to this effect,¹³ an analysis of the latest literature suggests that the answer is still "no," or "nearly, but not quite," at least if, with Rutter, we demand more signs of continuity in occupation and cultural activity than merely one stratum superimposed on another. Several of the newly excavated sites in the Cyclades, on which we might ostensibly pin our hopes, definitely went out of use permanently before, and indeed sometimes well before, the gap—witness, in particular, Skarkos on Ios and Markiani on Amorgos.¹⁴ Phylakopi's stratigraphy, for all its abundant later levels, fails this stringent test of occupational continuity, although such is not intrinsically unlikely, and the recent reaffirmation of two spatially distinguishable chronological subphases within the Phylakopi I occupation levels does tend to point to an extended and evolving history for the first post-Early Bronze (EB) II community at the site.¹⁵ For all the recent assertion to the contrary, so, too, for different reasons, does the stratigraphy at Dhaskalio, located just off the

island of Keros, where (as we shall see) the final phase pushes strikingly into the gap from its upper end but not decisively across it.¹⁶ Akrotiri remains tantalizing, with its stratified Middle Cycladic levels coming down onto a bedrock peppered with rock cuttings filled with a variety of often mixed earlier (sometimes, at least according to standard cultural definitions, immediately earlier) material.¹⁷ The current data at this key site are in fact best able to testify that a major remodeling of space was manifestly going on across, or on either side of, the gap phase. More generally, this obstinately enduring absence of conclusive proof seems to be symptomatic rather than merely unfortunate: even at sites that may well have been continuously inhabited across the gap, within the communities processes were afoot whose practical effect today is to make such a presence extremely hard to identify categorically in the ground.

Do we now know of more interstitial material (beyond the plausible inference of evolving stylistic traits across the gap) with which to plug parts of it? Here, the answer is emphatically "yes, and of two different kinds." The number of late third-millennium B.C.E. Cycladic exports has continued to grow. A jug from Palamari on Skyros and a jar from Early Minoan (EM) III Knossos were among the first additions to come to light since Rutter's catalogue appeared in 1984.¹⁸ Subsequently, Kolonna on Aegina has furnished usefully fine-grained evidence in support of Cycladic connections at the very end of the Early Bronze Age (Kolonna VI) but, strikingly, not (save for Melian obsidian, which at least in theory could have been directly accessed) among the rich destruction debris of Kolonna V, right at the heart of the postulated gap period.¹⁹ Meanwhile, the first secure gap contexts are emerging in the Cyclades themselves, to join a handful of possibilities among long-ago discovered grave assemblages, such as those at Ayios Loukas on Syros and Arkesine on Amorgos.²⁰ The most extensively documented of these is the final occupation layer, known as phase C, identified by new excavations at the large settlement on Dhaskalio, which overlies an earlier Kastro Group level and contains a mixture of continued or additional Kastro Group forms (in the latter category, principally depas cups) along with prototypes of Phylakopi I shapes, most notably the

¹¹ Broodbank 2000, 332–33; see also MacGillivray 1984; Manning 1995, 66–72.

¹² Rutter 1984, 96.

¹³ Principally Sotirakopoulou 1996; Renfrew et al. 2012.

¹⁴ Marangou et al. 2006; Marthari 2008.

¹⁵ Whitelaw 2004b, 155–56, fig. 13.6; Renfrew and Evans 2007, 130–31, 141–78.

¹⁶ Renfrew et al. 2012.

¹⁷ Nikolakopoulou et al. 2008; see also Dumas 2008; Sotirakopoulou 2008, 131–33.

¹⁸ Rutter 1984; Theochari et al. 1993; Momigliano and Wilson 1996, 44.

¹⁹ Gauss and Smetlana 2008.

²⁰ Bossert 1954; Renfrew 1972, 534; Barber 1981. See also Broodbank (2000, 334) for a discussion.

duck vase (whose presence, incidentally, finally casts light on the occasional finds of such vases in the nearby special deposits of Kavos).²¹ It is intriguing to observe that at Dhaskalio the cessation in occupation typical of so many late third-millennium B.C.E. Cycladic sites fell not cleanly between the Kastri Group and Phylakopi I phases but after elements of the latter's repertoire had begun to appear. This is most probably a reflection of this long-established EB II central site's exceptional pulling power and locational gravity within inter-island networks.²² Of similar date, and again probably a partial, local gap filler rather than a complete gap spanner, is the material found by the sanctioned and illicit excavation of pits of uncertain, possibly funerary function at Rivari on Melos, which bring together earlier and later stylistic elements—indeed, items such as the characteristically EB II jug forms covered with Phylakopi I-style stippled decoration are more or less ideal realizations of what one might imagine such objects to look like.²³ In this sense, it must be freely admitted that the prediction of two of Rutter's most vehement critics, Barber and MacGillivray, who suggested that assemblages with an overlap of earlier and later elements might one day be found in the Cyclades, is undoubtedly vindicated.²⁴

When, in absolute chronological terms, actually was the gap? In the early 1980s, Rutter himself was rightly cautious on this front, given the paucity of available radiocarbon determinations, though it appeared obvious that it fell in the terminal centuries of the third millennium, and most scholars have implicitly assumed a date around the 22nd and 21st centuries B.C.E.²⁵ Intriguingly, there now seem to be some indications that we may need to move it slightly earlier—a matter that is (as we shall see) of some potential interpretative significance, should it indeed prove to be correct, which is at present far from certain. At Dhaskalio, an impressive suite of radiocarbon determinations now dates the end of the final phase C, with its strong gap-plugging credentials, as early as 2300 B.C.E., with most of the standard Kastri Group dates falling earlier still.²⁶ Meanwhile, preliminary reports concerning the radio-

carbon dates for the first full Phylakopi I culture levels at Akrotiri appear to extend these levels into the last two or more centuries of the third millennium B.C.E. (though exact stratigraphic associations, which remain unpublished, will prove critical, and the reidentification of two subphases at contemporary Phylakopi indicates a need for caution).²⁷ A similar trend is attested by new dates for the earliest transitional Middle Bronze Age levels at Kolonna.²⁸ Quite where all this leaves us in a terminological sense, and how to relate it to finds from the early strata at Akrotiri of imports from Middle Minoan (MM) IA (a relatively externally well-anchored Cretan phase that seems less ready to shift two centuries), remains to be seen. But what does now appear to be certain is that the immediate roots of Middle Bronze Age (i.e., Phylakopi I culture and later) Cycladic societies go back into the last centuries of the third millennium B.C.E. The gap centuries, however we understand them, could then potentially lie instead somewhere between the 24th and 23rd centuries B.C.E.

EXPLANATORY FRAMEWORKS

Moving from the chronology of the gap to the transformation of Cycladic island societies across and on either side of it (assuredly the issue that most deeply intrigued Rutter), the depth and extent of this transformation has not been remotely diminished by our slight success at populating parts of the period and archipelago with a few pots and people, as Rutter guessed we would. Indeed, these begin to provide us with the situated actors who effected the alterations in island life that we have long detected. The real-world dynamics of this (varied) transition or caesura remain a rich and surprisingly infrequently problematized theme in Cycladic scholarship.²⁹ There is, in fact, no lack of possible causes for this phenomenon, whether those causes acted individually or in concert, as I suggested some time ago,³⁰ although it remains worth stressing that we still need to distinguish carefully between proximate and ultimate explanations. For example, the process of nucleation itself might plausibly explain

²¹ Renfrew et al. 2012. On duck vases from Kavos, see Renfrew 1972, 194; Sotirakopoulou 2004, 1322–23, 1335, pl. 14a, left; Broodbank 2007, 162, 164, 167.

²² Broodbank 2000, 223–46, 267–75, 347–49. It might be noted that this point retains its validity even if the more prominent role for ritual activity and sacred centrality argued by Renfrew and others on the basis of subsequent fieldwork is accepted in part or full (Renfrew et al. 2007, 2012; Renfrew 2012)—indeed, the interaction-based and ritual interpretations are far from mutually exclusive, and both assume a central place for Keros within the Cycladic world.

²³ Televantou 2008. See also Sampson and Fotiadi (2008,

219, fig. 22.2) for the jugs.

²⁴ Barber and MacGillivray 1980, 151 n. 86.

²⁵ E.g., Rutter 1984, 104, fig. 3; Manning 1995, 66–72, fig. 2; Broodbank 2000, 332, fig. 113.

²⁶ Renfrew et al. 2012. See also Manning (2008) for Kastri Group dates.

²⁷ Manning 2008, 56, table 7.4; 59. See also Whitelaw (2004b, 155–56) for Phylakopi.

²⁸ Wild et al. 2010.

²⁹ Broodbank 2000, 320–49.

³⁰ Broodbank 2000, 336–49; Wiener 2013.

the widespread abandonment of numerous settlements as well as the shifts in community ideologies attested in material culture and burial practices—but what in fact drove the desire to nucleate, often at previously insignificant places? Was it a new sense of insecurity, or a consequence of ongoing population growth that crossed some critical threshold, or, as I then advocated, at least in part the result of changing maritime technology in the islands, as new sail-driven shipping, ultimately derived from the Levant, replaced canoe-based cultures and reconfigured Aegean sea space and transport capabilities, triggering a drastic shrinkage in scale and experienced sense of distance? Likewise, as in the surrounding parts of the Aegean, we need to decide how much, or little, can be attributed to outside agency, whether catastrophic (e.g., abrupt climate change, influxes of newcomers, or the archaeologically invisible epidemics liable to have accompanied growing interaction within an urban Near Eastern world system by the mid third millennium B.C.E., to which well-connected islanders on the outer fringes of this would have been exceptionally vulnerable) or, instead, attributable to fluctuating trading and specifically metal-seeking networks on an Aegean or wider Mediterranean scale. Despite the accumulating data, little has fundamentally advanced here in terms of our ability to discern between such options, save in two respects that are well worth flagging. Both concern the precise relative timing of the evidence to hand.

One of these involves the impact of climate change. The hints of a sharply accentuated downturn in southwest Asian and Mediterranean climates late in the third millennium B.C.E.—the so-called 2200 B.C.E. event—are gradually growing stronger, and our appreciation of its variable impact on the Mediterranean's myriad microregions and contextually specific local social trajectories likewise is maturing apace, with just as much emphasis now on cases of adaptation and resilience as outright collapse.³¹ It is not hard to envisage how a downturn might affect a cluster of environmentally marginal islands such as the Cyclades, although, equally, what little we can glimpse of patterns of continuity and disruption within these islands does not map particularly well onto the most clement and challenging insular niches.³² But the deeper problem is that if (and it remains an "if" for now) we do need to move

the gap phase a century or so earlier than was previously assumed, it would fall decisively too early for this climate-based explanation to apply, and the climatic crunch point would coincide instead with the nascence of the Middle Bronze Age system—itsself an interesting, but quite different, interpretative scenario.

The other codicil concerns the maritime and shipping hypothesis. Since I put this forward, the dating of the earliest Cretan sealstones that depict such craft in the Aegean has been refined from an initially generic EM III–MM I timespan.³³ Most, on steatite prismatic seals, can now be confidently dated to MM II, with only one, an Archanes Script Group piece from Platanos Tomb B, remaining datable to MM I (possibly A), and none to EM III.³⁴ Of course, first depictions need not precisely indicate first appearance, and Crete is not the Cyclades, but as the first iconographic sightings of these ships get slightly younger and the gap perhaps grows slightly older, the correlation will become less precise if not necessarily less causatively convincing over a more generous time span.

Finally, stepping back from the Aegean framework, there are abundant advantages to a broader Mediterranean perspective on insular dynamics at this time. What we can usefully think of as the "long" third millennium B.C.E., with its roots back in the later fourth, was a busy period of immense change across the basin, in social, cultural, and not least environmentally Mediterraneanizing terms. Indeed, this was arguably a decisive period for shaping the overall pattern of later Mediterranean history.³⁵ That transforming quality extended to long-range maritime activity and connections, for the long third millennium B.C.E. was a great age for people on islands, large and small, and for seafarers in general.³⁶ It was now that the remote Balearics, the last substantial landmass in the Mediterranean to feel a human footfall, were first settled, to the fatal detriment of the goat-antelope *Myotragus balearicus*, the last large island endemic surviving in the basin.³⁷ The 250 km wide uninterrupted sea desert between Sardinia and Sicily was first traversed at this stage, too, as we know from cultural traits at home in the former that appear at the western tip of the latter.³⁸ Elsewhere, tiny islands, several infrequently lived on before or since, became fully peopled—consider Christiana, Keros, or Delos in the Cyclades,³⁹ but equally, places such as Antikythera,⁴⁰

³¹ Fully discussed and referenced in Wiener 2013. See also Rosen (2007, 1–16, 128–49) and Finné et al. (2011) for a perhaps excessively skeptical assessment.

³² Manning 1997; Broodbank 2000, 326, 338; Wiener 2013.

³³ Broodbank 2000, 342–43; see also Yule 1981, 165–66; Wedde 2000, 80–1, 331–38. Note that the first depictions from the Cyclades, at Phylakopi, are poorly dated.

³⁴ For the stylistic dating of the associated seal types, see

Sbonias 1995, 107–13; Krzyszkowska 2005, 92–5.

³⁵ Broodbank 2011, 2013.

³⁶ Broodbank 2010.

³⁷ Alcover 2008.

³⁸ Leighton 1999, 98, 112.

³⁹ Broodbank 2000, 178–79.

⁴⁰ Bevan and Conolly 2013.

located between the Peloponnese, Kythera, and Crete, or Ustica, far out in the open seas north of Sicily.⁴¹ The rock of Palagruža, alone in the middle of the southern Adriatic (as its Italian name, Pelagosa, more readily indicates), remained too small and dry to inhabit permanently, but it did receive thousands of highly decorated bowls and finely crafted stone arrowheads from passing canoe traffic involved in either sea raiding or rites of maritime passage.⁴² Seaborne interaction zones spread over unprecedented distances, not just in the Aegean of the so-called international spirit and its predecessors, but also along the Levantine coast—facilitated there from the mid third millennium B.C.E. by, among others, the famous Egyptian sail-driven “Byblos ships”—as well as over much of the western half of the Mediterranean, where beaker networks embraced Iberia, the Midi, the Maghreb, Sardinia, and western Sicily. Meanwhile, the late third-millennium B.C.E. Cetina network extended from the Adriatic as far as Malta and western Greece, where, thanks to links with the reconfiguring Aegean networks, it brought Sicilian bossed bone plaques to Lerna and Troy.⁴³ Well-placed small-island communities played key roles in these networks. Again, examples from the Cyclades and almost-islands such as Mochlos are best known, but less so is the fact that this was the first millennium of activity at Tyre and probably also Cadiz.⁴⁴ No wonder that with this long-range voyaging, such a socially charged, prestigious, and perhaps profitable activity, images of seacraft started sprouting up all over the Mediterranean, for more or less the first time, from Egypt to the Aegean and Malta.⁴⁵

Yet connectivity was a two-edged sword for the Mediterranean’s islanders. It could equally bring alien ways of life right to their doorsteps, with potentially drastic results for any societies previously buffered by the sea and hitherto able to define their own relations, positive or negative, with the outside world.⁴⁶ In this respect, it is extremely interesting that the later third millennium B.C.E. witnessed a marked crisis, or at least abrupt transformation, on the part of two other hitherto remarkably sequestered insular ways of doing things, almost certainly under precisely such circumstances. One of these was on Malta, where the extraordinary, metal-less Temple phase, with its architectural

gigantism and profoundly enigmatic social order, was succeeded via a rapid cultural and possibly chronological disjuncture by an assertively and widely connected Early Bronze Age with strong Cetina affiliations: the so-called Tarxien Cemetery phase.⁴⁷ The other took place on Cyprus, where the modestly copper-using Chalcolithic, with its bizarrely archaic round-house societies a short trip from a protourban Levant, was replaced scarcely less dramatically by an Early Bronze Age, again much more mainstream and mainland-affiliated in its appearance.⁴⁸ Of course, the Cyclades had enjoyed a radically different immediately prior history, in which their islanders had long called many of the shots in matters of external connectivity (even if Maltese-style extreme internally imposed ideological constraints on external contacts are impossible to imagine within such a densely interconnected archipelago).⁴⁹ But by the second half of the third millennium B.C.E., even Cycladic engagement with the outside world was proving to be more challenging at home in the face of new metals and, by the time of the Kastri Group, new ways of drinking,⁵⁰ accompanied in all likelihood by new economic practices and at some stage new, intrusive ships whose local adoption would entrain a whole series of new social, navigational, physical, and technological behaviors.⁵¹ The EC III gap, one could suggest, is one archaeological manifestation of a widespread phenomenon of insular breakdown and reformation that occurred as the Mediterranean became a more aggressively interconnected place and from which emerged the more familiar Cycladic world of the second millennium B.C.E., with its generic parallels in later historical times. The final gap that we will need to bridge, if we are to understand this Cycladic experience in more informative and comparative terms, is the analytical and interpretative one that lies between the patterns and processes we have long studied in the Aegean and those of the surrounding Mediterranean world.

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⁴¹ Stoddart 1999, 64.

⁴² Forenbaher 2009, 80–3.

⁴³ Maran 2007, 14–18; Broodbank 2010, 251.

⁴⁴ Bikai 1978, 5–6, 72; Aubert 2001, 270.

⁴⁵ Broodbank 2010, 252; Rahmstorf 2010.

⁴⁶ Broodbank 2000, 21.

⁴⁷ Cilia 2004; see esp. Pace 2004, 211–27.

⁴⁸ Peltenburg 2007; Webb and Frankel 2007; Knapp 2008, 103–30.

⁴⁹ See Robb (2001) for Malta.

⁵⁰ Nakou 1997, 645; Broodbank 2000, 316–19.

⁵¹ See Broodbank (2010, 254–58) on the new practices implicated in the uptake of sailing.

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