# **UNIT 25 The Mysterious Island**

**WARM-UP EXERCISE.** *Think and answer*.

* Why should an archaeologist examine the soil of excavation?
* Have you ever lost something of value to you, then found it unexpectedly?

If so, where did you lose it? What was it? How did you feel in the interim?

**NOTES.**

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**NAVIGATION. KEY TERMS.** *Study the following words prior to reading the text*.

**The Cyclades**: islands of the Aegean Sea, Greece

**deposition**: (substance) depositing; the process of laying something down or letting something fall

**deposit**: accumulation of oil, mineral, etc.; to place

**statuette**: a small statue

**promontory**: headland, a point of high land jutting out into the sea or a large lake

**headland**: cape, promontory

**sanctuary**: refuge, haven, shelter

**to date**: up until the present time, until now, up to now, until the present time

**predate (s.th.)**: date back earlier than (something)

**millennium**: a period of one thousand years

**stepped pyramid** **(or, step pyramid)**: a pyramid with terraced sides

**terrace**: a level paved area

**Ephorate of Antiquities**: Hellenic Archaeological Service Regional Division

**drainage system**: a system constructed to remove excess water

**sewage**: liquids or waste matter carried off by sewers

**phytoliths**: minute mineral particles formed inside a plant

**silica**: a [mineral](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/mineral) that [exists](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/exist) in [various](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/various) [forms](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/form), [including](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/include) [sand](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sand), [quartz](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/quartz), and [flint](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/flint), used to make [glass](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/glass) and [cement](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/cement)

**mineral**: a natural, solid, inorganic element

**residues**: remains, remnants

**metalworking**: the process of shaping metals, to create useful objects or objects of art

**mining**: the process of extracting useful minerals and other materials from the surface of the Earth

**ore**: a natural rock or sediment that contains one or more valuable minerals

**metal smelting**: the process of extracting base metals from ore by heating it

**casting**: mold of pottery

**mould** **(or,** **mold)**: cast, form, shape, matrix; a hollow container used to give shape to molten or hot liquid material when it cools and hardens

**urbanization**: the shift of population from rural to urban areas

**photogrammetry**: the technology of obtaining reliable information about physical objects and the environment through the process of recording, measuring and interpreting photographic images and patterns of electromagnetic radiant imagery and other phenomena

# **READING The Mysterious Island**

This is not about Jules Verne’s adventure novel *The Mysterious Island*. It is about a small island in the Aegean Sea, known, rather, as ‘the enigma island’, which once hosted a unique kind of settlement in the Early Bronze Age.

Keros is an islet south of Naxos, in the Small Cyclades. In the southwestern part of the island lies the promontory of Keros, now covered by the sea, but which once connected the prehistoric sanctuary with the settlement of Dhaskalio. The earliest archaeological finds from Keros were marble figurines, recovered in the nineteenth century. Today, the well-known pipe-player and harpist are in the National Museum in Athens.

In the 1960s, thanks to the discovery of a great many fragmented figurines, a journey into the ancient past began once more by archaeologists, to solve the mystery concerning those figurines. Why were so many of them broken? What were they used for? Dr. Christos Doumas, then Antiquities Curator in the Ephorate for the Cyclades, and Colin Renfrew, a young research student from Britain at the time, visited the site and discovered that part of it had been looted. Further investigation of the site followed in subsequent years by Zapheiropoulou and Doumas (1967) and by Renfrew, Doumas and Marangou (1987).

Later on, in 2006–2008, the Cambridge-Keros Project team, co-directed by [Colin Renfrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin_Renfrew) with others, conducted excavations at Kavos on the west coast of the island. The finds discovered include vessels and other objects as well as Cycladic figurines, made of marble, all broken prior to deposition, and most likely broken elsewhere, before being brought to the island for deposition. The lack of joining fragments shows that only a part of the fragmented material was deposited here. Today, it is assumed that during the Protocycladic Era, on the island of Keros, there was a cult centre, and these figurines may have been used as votive offerings to gods. The very large deposit of fragmentary Cycladic figurines found on Keros is known as “Keros Hoard”.

In 2007–2008, the same project identified and excavated a substantial Cycladic period settlement on the nearby island of [Dhaskalio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daskalio). A large area has been excavated, revealing a substantial building - the largest from this period in the Cyclades - within which was discovered the 'Dhaskalio hoard' comprising tools of copper or bronze. In addition, a survey of the islet showed that most of its surface was occupied during the Early Bronze Age, making this the largest site in the Cyclades. Specialist studies for the geomorphology, geology, petrology, ceramic petrology, metallurgy and environmental aspects (botanical and faunal remains, phytoliths) ensued. Plant remains, discovered in soil samples, included grapes, olives, figs, almonds, emmer wheat and barley, likely imported from other locations as were other raw materials, such as copper, which was used for metalworking. In 2012, the activities at this site were dated 2750 to 2300 BC.

From 2018 onwards, numerous excavations have been conducted by multinational teams of archaeologists, headed by Co-Directors of the excavations, Professor Colin Renfrew and Dr Michael Boyd of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, the Cyclades Ephorate of Antiquities, and the Cyprus Institute. These excavations have brought to light many finds, such as sherds of various kinds, figurine fragments, obsidian, stone discs, and metal artifacts from about 2750 to 2250 BC. Moreover, they have revealed the remarkable monumental buildings on Dhaskalio. It is estimated that over 1,000 tons of stone were used for these structures, while marble as building stone is noticeable as well. A staircase on the lower terraces and evidence of a complex drainage system also came to light. Archaeologists believe that ancient Greeks must have embarked on at least 3,500 maritime voyages to transport between 7,000 to 10,000 tons of white marble among islands, in order to construct the buildings. Researchers said: "The island is naturally pyramid-shaped, but one should not refer to the island as a pyramid - a pyramid is a completely artificial construction."

This settlement complex is, to date, the largest known in the Cyclades of that period and one of the most impressive archaeological sites of the Aegean Sea during the Early Bronze Age. In an interview with British Archaeologist Richard Hodges, Colin Renfrew explained “how this Cycladic network anchored on Dhaskalio may well be the earliest such urban community”. Dhaskalio was, in a way, “the sanctuary’s counterpart, and it is quite possible to imagine that this was the place where people involved in the ceremonies were living. … Visits to the island were presumably seen as a special activity. The way the terraces on Dhaskalio were constructed to create rising walls in receding planes must have made the site look very impressive to those approaching by sea from the north. While the settlement and sanctuary have different characters, they both seem to have a symbolic significance.”

For the above endeavours, the use of digital technology has played a significant role in the more recent years. Themethods used are:

1. An iOS application called *iDig*, which means that excavation data and laboratory analyses are simultaneously documented in the same system. This enables each member of the excavation group to have direct access to all available information in real time.
2. *Photogrammetry*. This method creates three-dimensional models of the excavation site(s) at every stage of the research.
3. A *laser scanner* that captures the site in a detailed manner.

**TASKS**

**Task 1.** *Complete the sentences based on the information contained in the text above*.

1. This is not about Jules Verne’s adventure novel *The Mysterious Island*. It is about a …………………………….……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
2. The earliest archaeological finds from Keros were …………………………………..…………………………..…………………………………………………..……………………………………………….……………………...
3. The finds discovered include vessels and other objects as well as ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….......……………………..…………..........., all broken prior to deposition.
4. During the Protocycladic Era, on the island of Keros, there was a ……………….……..…………...
5. In 2007–2008, the same project identified and excavated a substantial Cycladic period settlement on ………………………………………………………………………………….……………………….......………………..……
6. These excavations have brought to light many finds, such as ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….………………………………………………………………….
7. The research team estimates that over 1,000 tons of stone …..……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….…………………..………………………………..………..
8. The way the terraces on Dhaskalio were constructed to create rising walls in receding planes must have made the site …………………………..………………….…………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..…………………………………………



**Task 2a.** *Answer the questions below*.

1. What were the earliest archaeological finds from Keros?
2. What were some of the discovered items of later excavations?
3. What was found in the soil of the excavation by the team of archaeologists?
4. What did the new excavations bring to light?
5. In your opinion, what are some signs revealing the beginning of urbanization on Keros island in antiquity?
6. What kinds of methods were used for the finds in the excavations on Keros island?

**Task 2b.** *Gap-filling exercise*.

Use the following words, to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

**residue; starch; production; digital; mould; consumption; intact; centralization**

**1*.*** Autocracy is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of power in the hands of one ruler or polity.

**2.** Global crop \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has increased worldwide in recent decades.

**3.** YouTube, Vimeo etc. are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ media platforms, used for worldwide communication.

**4.** In archaeological excavations, it is, indeed, a rarity to find ancient artifacts still \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and complete.

**5.** What is left at the bottom of a jar of olive oil, after the rest has been removed, is called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**6.** Excessive \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of fast food and alcohol over a long period of time has adverse effects on one’s health.

**7.** Education helps \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ children’s character.

**8.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is found in lots of staple foods, such as wheat, rice and potatoes.

**Task 3.** *Team Work or Individual Work*. *Speaking*.

* Use the internet to find and watch a documentary film, titled: “The Enigma of Keros” (2020). Then, talk about it with your fellow students and instructor.

**Task 4.** *Creative writing*.*Write a bonsai story*.

A *bonsai story* is a short story of few words.

Topic: You are walking in the company of friends, or alone, and you bump into something on the ground. Say where you are, who you are with, what time it is, and what happens next.

**Task 5.** *Food for thought*.

You will be joining a team of archaeologists from different parts of the world, in order to participate in excavations at an archaeological site. The duration will be five weeks.

* See what you need to pack for the archaeological dig.
* What is high on your list of priorities? Justify your opinion.