

FURTHER FINDS FROM KYNOS

Kynos tends to become a phenomenon for an archaeological site because it is the only place that furnished us with so many samples of ancient ships of the Late Bronze Age period.

To prove it one needs only to think that between the Vth Symposium in Nafplion (1993) and the one in Lamia (1996), that is in a period of three years, seven more examples of ships, either models or vase-paintings, have been found in Kynos¹.

Under the reserve of a more elaborate publication of the whole relevant material from Kynos, in the limited space of a paper, apart from presenting the pieces, only a few comments about the most interesting elements of them will be made by the author.

The first find to be presented is a part of a clay model of a flat-bottomed boat (Fig. 1-3). The preserved piece belongs to the amidship part, the bow and stern missing. Flat bottom models are not unknown during the Bronze Age². The example of Kynos shows that the flat bottom of a model does not necessarily imply that it represents a craft without keel, since the keel as well as the ribs or beams on the inner side of the hull are all indicated by red coloured stripes. On the outside of the hull along the port side and the starboard side two wide parallel red stripes suggest perhaps the planks or other structural detail or they are merely decorative.

Two holes on both sides near the flat bottom were not intended for suspension. Such holes are rare on models and when they occurred, as for example on the well known model from Maroni-Cyprus, are near the gunwale; they are small and numerous and are interpreted as suspension holes³. But this is not the case of the Kynos' model.

The Kynos model has only two holes, one aft and one fore, and to my opinion were used to fasten wheels with the help of wooden or metal bars. That is, the model was a toy (Fig.4)⁴. From ancient literary sources⁵ we learn that children used to play with ship models. The proposed identification of

the model as a toy is also supported by the presence of a clay wheel found near the model . By accepting this function for the above discussed model, Kynos has proven a source of surprises since, according to the examples known so far, nowhere else has been found a toy of this form dated at the LH IIIC period.

The next piece, not impressive but still didactic as far as ship construction is concerned, is also part of a clay model of the ship, which can be identified as the dead wood knee of a stem post or of a sternpost (Fig. 5-6).

Such devices we find in ancient models both astern and at stem implying that they worked either as cutwaters⁶ or as protectors of the hull when crafts were beached ashore stern to or stem to⁷. Both ways of beaching have been ascertained⁸.

Since usually by coloured stripes or lines the ancient craftsmen rendered structural parts of the ships I think that it is not impossible if we interpret the dark brown stripe along the edge as a metal sheathing. Sheathing parts of the hull with metal, especially lead, is a practice known from the traditional ship-building in the Aegean and it is also given by the ancient literary sources⁹. A metal band along the outer side of the keel and of the angle of the post would protect the wood when the ship was hauled up ashore.

The third piece is a sherd from the lip of a crater (Fig. 7). A helmsman, holding a steering-oar with a loop at its end, suggests that here the aft part of a sailing ship is represented. The end of the sail-yard can be seen above the head of the helmsman. The piece is presented for statistical reason since it increases the number of the vases with ship representations.

The next new find from Kynos is a very small sherd, from a pictorial crater also, on which one can distinguish a caricature of a warrior with the same attitude and armature as on the other already known representations from Kynos itself (Fig. 8)¹⁰.

The warrior looks as if he is standing not on a deck but somewhere in the hull, as the rail or bullwark behind him suggests. In other words, against what it is ascertained until now by the other examples from Kynos¹¹ this ship should be undecked, the type of craft that Thucydides called «ἀφρακτον»¹² or perhaps the type that Homer describes as hollow «κοίλαι» or «γλαφυραί»¹³.

The above conclusion is supported by the next sherd from Kynos again.

On this sherd (Fig. 9) the aft part of a rowing-ship is represented, of a very low hull indicated only by a thick black stripe. The vertical lines rising above the gunwale should be considered as thole-pins against which the oars were worked. There is no indication of a deck, nor of a rail or a bulwark.

Representations of ships with thole-pins rising free from the hull are not unknown in the iconography either of the Bronze Age¹⁴ or of the Geometric period¹⁵ and the fact gave birth to the theories that the ships described by Homer as hollow were undecked, something that Thucydides also supported by writing that the ships which sailed to Troy were undecked «ἀφρακτα»¹⁶.

Now based on the examples known so far from Kynos we can support that both types of war-ships were in use during the Late Bronze Age, decked and undecked.

The thick stripe extending from the hull downwards should imply a steering oar. Similar rendering of steering oars can be found among the representations of ships of the period¹⁷.

Another ambiguous ship due to her partial preservation shows an angular low hull, a rather high stem or stern and many oars (Fig.10). We obviously have here an oar-propelled galley, again a war ship.

Above and parallel to its gunwale a thick line or rather a stripe is pictured, the reserved space between being filled with a continuous wavy line, or semicircular lines, like festoons. To my opinion this band implies a bullwark, in other words a longitudinal plank or screen for the protection of the rowers behind¹⁸. According, then, to this interpretation the thick horizontal stripe on top of the festoons should be the deck. However, comparing it with the other examples known so far from Kynos¹⁹ this interpretation creates an anomaly since on those the bullwark under deck is pictured at a certain distance from the gunwale and not immediately above it.

The idea that every semi-circle perhaps represents the back of a rower on the basis of the famous Thera ship where the backs of the paddling crew form a similar wavy line²⁰ cannot be taken into consideration since only four

such semi-circles are represented against eight oars. Thera's ships, however, give us a good example of a decorated bullwark placed immediately upon the gunwale²¹.

At a distance above the bullwark another construction is pictured with vertical lines framed underneath by an horizontal band. It is not possible to know how the top of this construction was. It is sure, however, that it begins from the stem-or stern-post. None of the details of the ship pictured is decisive to conclude whether the preserved part is a stem or a stern. The above-described construction could be a platform protected by a palissade, called by the ancient writers «ἰκρίον». ²² Such constructions existed both fore and aft on ancient ships²³, either of the Mycenaean period²⁴ or of the Geometric one²⁵. Closer observation however shows that this construction is rather long compared with other similar ones pictured on ships of the above mentioned periods. The evidence so far available from the iconography of ships can not permit us to say whether this part of the ship is a second bullwark, this one under deck.

Another problematic device on this ship is the crescent-like small protrusion drawn at the angle where the post joins the keel. Undoubtedly it is not a ram. It is perhaps a kind of extension of the keel²⁶. Several forms of protrusions at the bow or at the stern, none of these similar to the discussed example of Kynos, have been attested on many Bronze Age ships.²⁷ All of them, no matter how long they are or what they look like, are interpreted as devices useful to stand the shock of beaching ashore or of a head sea²⁸, being also helpful to pull the ship ashore and fasten her by a rope²⁹. Since then beaching ashore stern to was the most usual way³⁰ this protrusion could imply that the preserved part of the ship represents the aft. Nevertheless beaching bow first was not unknown in ancient times especially at speed when attacking coastal settlements or enemy³¹ so that it is not impossible to support that we are dealing with the fore part of the ship.

The questions put forth by this example will remain unanswered until hopefully the good Lord of Kynos reveals to us the joining sherd or sherds with the ship's missing part. The writer of this contribution, however, on the account of the direction of the oars is for the stern being represented on this sherd³².

Ships in antiquity did not serve only purposes of war. So Kynos, apart from the numerous war-ships it provided us, offered us the example of a small sailing boat, part of which is pictured on a sherd, again from the lip of

a Mycenaean pictorial krater (Fig.11).

Preserved are the mast, a backstay and a forestay and one of the boat extremities which rises well above the gunwale or the deck, if there was one. The standing figure between mast and stay by facing to this end perhaps suggests that we are dealing with a stern³³. It has no decoration and it looks like an upwards and outwards turning sternpost.

Between stern and mast the distance is obviously small to accommodate more persons than the one standing on deck holding an oar rather than a steering oar. Sail and yard are not pictured and that means that the boat is moving somewhere in a port, the person on deck trying to manoeuvre the boat to beach her or to tie her. Similar actions are still familiar until today to the sea-men of the Aegean area and of Kynos itself. So the craft pictured here is perhaps a fishing-boat or a «kaiki» like the one on Skyros' stirrup-jar, which is also interpreted the same way and presents enough similarities with this find from Kynos as far as the stays are concerned³⁴.

Fishing as an occupation of the inhabitants of Kynos is attested by other finds as well, such as fishing hooks, lead weights for the nets, fish-bones, shells. Fishing played an important role for people of the settlements lying ashore all over the Aegean coasts until today and it is more than obvious that the suitable craft for this activity would have been used.

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NOTES

- 1 Informations about the excavation of Kynos and the earlier finds one can find in the proceedings of the previous Symposia (TROPIS II, TROPIS III, TROPIS IV and TROPIS V)
- 2 Harry Tzalas, Problems in dating a new Cypriot Ship model, TROPIS IV, 507-515, fig1-2. Arvid Goettlicher, Materialien fuer ein Corpus der Schiffsmoedelle im Altertum, 1978, 315, No 313-314, Taf. 24. Heleni Palaiologou, Aegean Ships from the 2nd millenium B.C., TROPIS I, 217-228, fig. 1-4
- 3 Lucien Basch, Le Musée imaginaire de la marine antique, 1987, 73.
- 4 A. Goettlicher, loc. cit. 10.
- 5 Aristophanes, Clouds, 877-884.

- 6 P. F. Johnston, *Ships and boat models in ancient Greece*, 1985, 16-17.
- 7 L. Cohen, Evidence for the ram in the Minoan Period, *A.J.A.* 42, 1938, 493. Sp. Marinatos, *La Marine créto-mycénienne* B.C.H.57, 1933, 215-216. Basch, loc. cit. 85-86, footnote 57.
- 8 The clay model from Mochlos (R. E. Seager, *Excavations on the island of Mochlos, Crete*, in 1908, *A.J.A.* 1909, 279, fig. 2. Marinatos loc. cit. 173-174, No 20, Pl. XIV.
- 9 Cecil Torr, *Ancient Ships*, Chicago 1964, 36-37.
- 10 F. Dakoronia, War-ships on sherds of LH IIIC kraters from Kynos, TROPIS II, 120, Fig. 2.
- 11 Dakoronia, loc. cit. 118-120. Fig. 1-2. F. Dakoronia, *Representations of sea-battles on mycenaean sherds from Kynos*, TROPIS V, Fig. 4.
- 12 Thucydides, I, 10, 4.
- 13 Homer, *Iliad*, A, 26. *Odyssey*, α, 211. L. Casson, *Ships and seamanship in the Ancient World*, Princeton 1971, 44 footnote 3. F. Meijer, *A History of seafaring in the classical World*, London 1986, 19.
- 14 Στ. Αλεξίου, *Λάρνακες και αγγεία εκ τάφου παρά το Γάζι Ηρακλείου*, AE 1972, 92-93, πιν. 34α. E. Vermeule-V. Karageorgis, *Mycenaean Pictorial Vase Painting*, Harvard, 1982, 166, Fig. XIII, 6. J.A. Sakellarakis, *The Mycenaean Pictorial Style in the National Museum at Athens*, Athens 1992, 117, No 225.
- 15 Basch, loc. cit. 176 Fig. 368. 187-188, Figs. 393-394.
- 16 See above footnotes 12 & 13.
- 17 Αλεξίου loc. cit. Sakellarakis, loc. cit. 115 with the relative bibliography.
- 18 Torr, loc. cit. 43, 52. Casson, loc. cit. 48.
- 19 Dakoronia, loc. cit. footnote 10 & 11.
- 20 Sp. Marinatos, *Excavations at Thera VI*, Athens 1973, 51. Basch, loc. cit. 128.
- 21 Marinatos loc. cit. Sp. Marinatos, *Das Schiffsfresko von Thera*, at D. Gray. Seewesen, Arch. Hom. G, Goettingen 1974, Taf. 9. Basch, loc. cit. 120, fig, 235.
- 22 Torr, loc. cit. 56-57-footnote 130.
- 23 J.S. Morrison-R.T. Williams, *Greek Oared Ships*, Cambridge 1968, 44. Basch, loc. cit. Fig. 298. Sakellarakis, loc. cit. footnote 17.
- 24 Sakellarakis, loc. cit.
- 25 Basch, loc. cit.
- 26 Johnston, loc. cit. 16
- 27 Basch, loc. cit. 146-147, Figs. 304 & 308.
- 28 Basch, loc. cit. 86. S. Wachsmann, *Thera waterborne procession*, I.J.N.A. 9, 1980, 289-292.
- 29 Marinatos, *Thera VI*, loc. cit. 50.
- 30 Cohen, loc. cit., 493.
- 31 S. Wachsmann, *The ships of the Sea Peoples*, I.J.N.A., 10, 1981, 216.
- 32 Marinatos, loc. cit. footnote 7, 189.
- 33 The figure seems more like working an oar trying to beach stern to than handling a steering-oar.
Gray, loc. cit. Vermeule-Karageorgis, loc. cit. 145, 225, fig. X195. Λ. Παρλαμά, *Η Σκύρος στην Εποχή του Χαλκού*, Αθήνα 1984, 146 κ.ε.

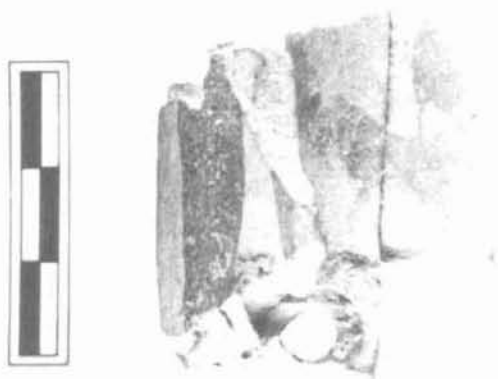


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

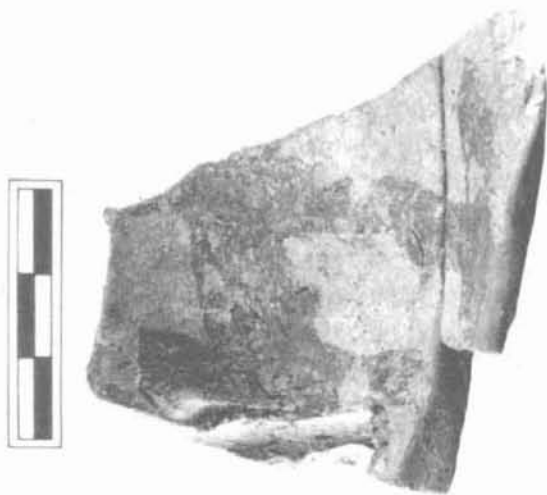


Fig. 3



Fig. 5

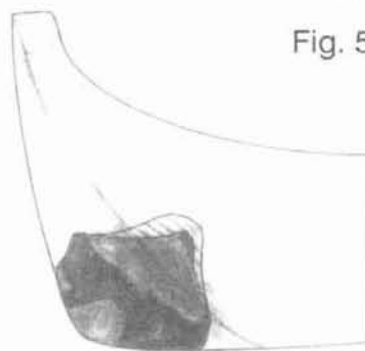


Fig. 6

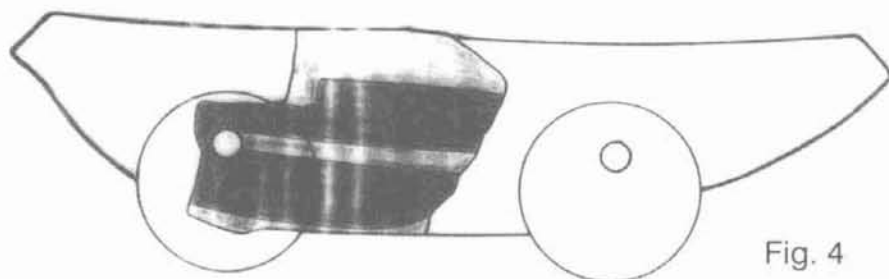


Fig. 4



Fig. 8

Fig. 7

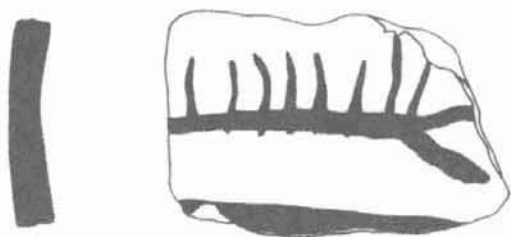


Fig. 9



Fig. 11

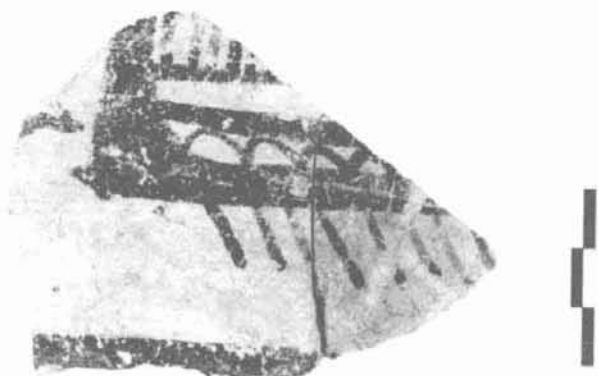


Fig. 10