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Vathy Astypalaia. An Early Cycladic site in the Dodecanese

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Vathy Astypalaia. Eine frühkykladische Stätte auf den Dodekanes

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG Oberflächensurveys auf der Vathy-Halbinsel auf Astypalaia sowie Rettungs- und systematische Ausgrabungen an ausgewählten Fundstellen am Kap Pyrgos/Elliniko durch die Archäologische Gesellschaft zu Athen haben zahlreiche Monumente und Funde zutage gebracht, welche nicht nur die frühkykladischen Elemente im Kulturhorizont der Insel belegen, sondern darüber hinaus die Einflüsse aus anderen Regionen der Ägäis, der Küste Kleinasiens sowie aus Westanatolien in dieser Gegend während des späten 4. und frühen 3. Jahrtausends v. Chr. bezeugen. Dieser Beitrag präsentiert ausgewählte Daten, die am Fundort in den Jahren 2011 bis 2018 erhoben wurden, beispielsweise die Kinderurnenbestattungen, die Marmorfigurinen, die Architektur und das reiche Repertoire an Felszeichnungen, mit dem Ziel einer ersten Entschlüsselung der kulturellen Physiognomie der Stätte innerhalb des chronologischen Horizonts des ägäischen Späthneolothikums und der Frühen Bronzezeit.

Schlagwörter Spätneolithische/frühbronzezeitliche Ägäis; Felsmalerei; Kykladenidole; Kinderurnenbestattungen.

ABSTRACT The surface survey carried out over the Vathy peninsula on Astypalaia and the salvage and systematic excavation of targeted sites of interest at Cape Pyrgos/Elliniko under the aegis of the Athens Archaeological Society have yielded numerous monuments and findings, which not only establish the Early Cycladic elements of the island's cultural horizon but also attest that this location received influences from other areas of the Aegean, the Asia Minor coast, and Western Anatolia during the late 4th and the early 3rd millennium B.C. The present paper focuses on selected data retrieved from the site during the years 2011 to 2018, such as the infant pot burials, the marble figurines, the architecture, and the rich repertoire of rock art, attempting a first decipherment of its cultural physiognomy within the chronological milieu of the Aegean Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age.

Keywords Final Neolithic/Early Bronze Aegean; rock art; Cycladic figurines; infant pot burials.

Βαθύ Αστυπάλαιας. Μία Πρωτοκυκλαδική θέση στα Δωδεκάνησα

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ Η επιφανειακή έρευνα που διεξάγεται στο Βαθύ της Αστυπάλαιας υπό την αιγίδα της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας και η ανασκαφική διερεύνηση επιλεγμένων σημείων στον ακρωτήριο Πύργος/Ελληνικό απέδωσαν σημαντικό αριθμό μνημείων και ευρημάτων, τα οποία από τη μία τεκμηριώνουν τα Πρωτοκυκλαδικά στοιχεία στον πολιτιστικό ορίζοντα του νησιού και από την άλλη μαρτυρούν ότι η προνομιακή αυτή θέση επηρεάστηκε από άλλες περιοχές του Αιγαίου, την ακτή της Μικράς Ασίας και τη Δυτική Ανατολία κατά την ύστερη 4η και την πρώιμη 3η χιλιετία π.Χ. Το ανά χείρας άρθρο εστιάζει σε επιλεγμένα δεδομένα της έρευνας στο Βαθύ τα έτη 2011–2018, όπως οι βρεφικοί εγχυτρισμοί, τα μαρμάρινα ειδώλια, η αρχιτεκτονική και το πλούσιο θεματολόγιο των βραχογραφιών, μέσα από τα οποία επιχειρούμε να αποκρυπτογραφήσουμε την πολιτιστική φυσιογνωμία της θέσης κατά το χρονολογικό περιβάλλον της Τελικής Νεολιθικής και της Πρώιμης Εποχής του Χαλκού στο Αιγαίο.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά Τελική Νεολιθική/Πρώιμη Εποχή του Χαλκού του Αιγαίου. Βραχογραφίες. Κυκλαδικά ειδώλια. Βρεφικοί εγχυτρισμοί.

INTRODUCTION

The clearly demarcated geographical and cultural dimension that we attribute to the archaeological image of each Aegean island, is *a priori* hazardous and biased, as this is attempted through the modern entities of island groups, which even the ancient Greeks had not unanimously established (as in the case of the Cyclades) or even invented (as with the Dodecanese, which is terminologically the most recent)[1].

With the present paper on the outcome of the archaeological fieldwork at Vathy, I do not intend to attribute an exclusive ›Cycladic‹ cultural identity to the ›Dodecanesian‹ locus of Astypalaia. Rather, by questioning the reflective convenience of current geographical place-names, I wish to illustrate that the image of Astypalaia during the late 4th and the early 3rd millennium B.C. cannot be fully conveyed through a single term, cultural or geographical. And this is because everything we know at present about the EBA on Astypalaia attests the convergence on the island of cultural traits from the central, southern and eastern Aegean, as well as, to a significant degree, from the coastal and hinterland areas of Asia Minor and western Anatolia[2], as will be shown in due course.

THE SITE

Astypalaia is a middle-sea island of the southeast Aegean, situated between Amorgos and Anaphi to the west and Kos, Nisyros, and Telos to the east *(fig. 1)*. Its geographical location as the island that bridges the Cyclades with the Dodecanese along with its impressively indented coastline and the numerous islets around it, shaped the island's physiognomy diachronically as a safe haven for sea craft. Thanks to the fertility of its land, Astypalaia was self-sufficient, for which fact in the ancient literary sources it is called τράπεζα θεῶν (table of the gods) and for its rich fishing grounds, ἰχθυόεσσα (full of fish)[3].

Vathy is a naturally protected peninsula (east-west 1400 m long; north-south 400 m wide) controlling the narrow access from the open sea to the homonymous gulf on the northwest rocky coast of Astypalaia, thus ensuring full monitoring of a wide area of sea and land *(figs. 2. 3)*[4]. The broad and flat isthmus that connects the peninsula with the opposite side of the gulf is suitable for cultivation[5]. The steep slopes of the peninsula itself (reaching 77 m asl) provide grazing for small herds of goats and sheep, thanks to the rich vegetation

The following abbreviations are used throughout the paper, in addition to those commonly employed under DAI guidelines:

asl	above sea level
EBA	Early Bronze Age
EC	Early Cycladic
EH	Early Helladic
FN	Final Neolithic
LN	Late Neolithic
MC	Middle Cycladic

Contributions by the author alone in the collective volume Vlachopoulos et al. 2024 are not listed separately, but are subsumed under the reference »Vlachopoulos et al. 2024« due to their large number.

[1] Apart from the geographical and terminological parameters, the chronological terms of the Early Bronze Age are not precise either (Renfrew 1979; Treuil 1983; Broodbank 2000; Kouka 2008) and the phases that have been classified so far »may not correspond exactly at all places in the islands themselves« (Caskey 1964, 759). See Vlachopoulos 2016c, 116 f.

[2] On the historical and modern use of terms »Asia Minor« and »western Anatolia«, see Şahoğlu – Sotirakopoulou 2011.

[3] On Astypalaia in ancient times, see Oberhummer 1896, 1873–1875. See also selected bibliography in Michalaki-Kollia 2010, 161 f; Vlachopoulos 2023.

[4] Vlachopoulos 2012, 115 f. pl. 84 a. b; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 371–373 figs. 1–3; Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 203 fig. 24.1. For the full publication of the 2011–2020 fieldwork at Vathy, see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024.

[5] Vlachopoulos 2011, 96 pl. 79 b; Vlachopoulos 2012, 116 pl. 86 b. See also the promontories of Late Neolithic Saliagos (Evans – Renfrew 1968, 5; Renfrew 2017, 24) and Final Neolithic Kephala (Coleman 1977, 1 f. pls. 2. 3. 47. 48), with similar isthmuses.

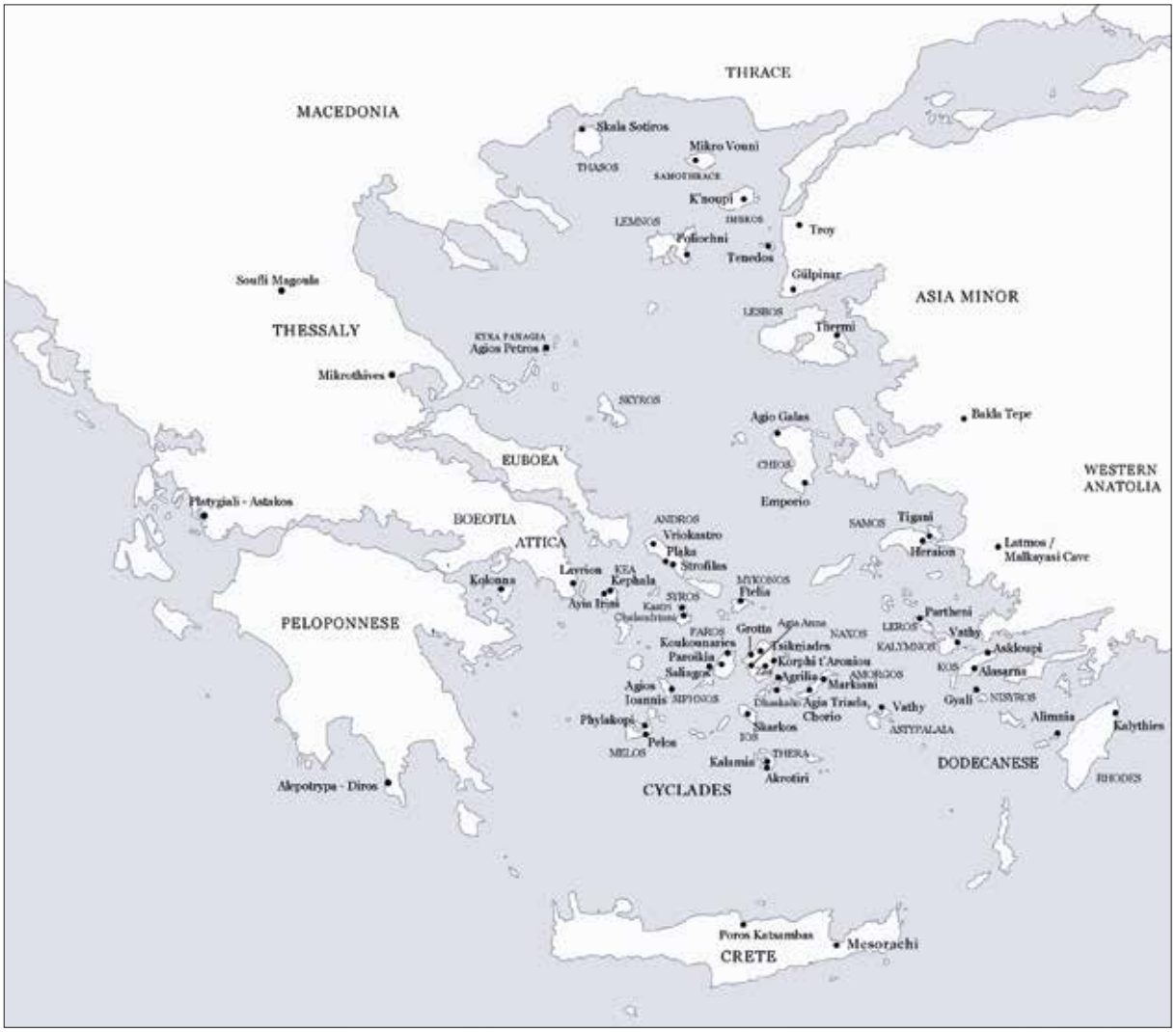


Fig. 1 The Aegean, the Greek Mainland, Crete, and Asia Minor – Western Anatolia with the sites mentioned in the text

of wild cedars, junipers, and other evergreen shrubs that sprout from the hard, dolomitic limestone. Beekeeping has been another important activity at Vathy over the centuries.

At the easternmost tip of the Pyrgos promontory, on Cape Pyrgos/Elliniko, an acropolis was founded in the late 4th/early 3rd millennium B.C., the boulder-built circuit walls and megalithic retaining walls of which are visible today[6]. On the upper level of the headland, a tower with surrounding ancillary facilities was erected in the second half of the 4th century B.C. *(figs. 4–6)*[7]. At some time, the tower complex was demolished and in the 5th(?) century A.D. it was transformed into a three-aisled Christian basilica[8]. Another church was

[6] Vlachopoulos 2012, 116 pls. 85 a; 86 b; Vlachopoulos 2013a, 213 f. fig. 1 pl. 116 a. b; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 373 f. fig. 6. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Section I.A.B.

[7] Dawkins – Wace 1905/1906, 154–156 figs. 2. 3. Vlachopoulos 2011, 93 pls. 73 a. b; 74 b; Vlachopoulos 2012, 119 figs. 1. 2 pls. 85 a. b; 86 a; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 373 f. figs. 4–9; also Vlachopoulos – Matthaiou 2014, 375 f. figs. 1–5; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Sections I.B. 1.4; II.B. The tower at Vathy presents many similarities with the tower at Chorio – Agia Triada Arkesini on Amorgos, which is dated to 340–330 B.C., see Marangou 2005, 167; Marangou 2016.

[8] Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Sections I.B. 1.4; II.Γ. A further eight or nine Early Christian basilicas have been located or partly excavated on Astypalaia, as well as other buildings dated to Late Antiquity, see Lazaridis 1955, 233–239 pls. 34–43; Volanakis 2005. The study of the Christian era monuments of Vathy has been undertaken by architects Themis Bilis and Maria Magnisali (Magnisali – Bilis 2024).

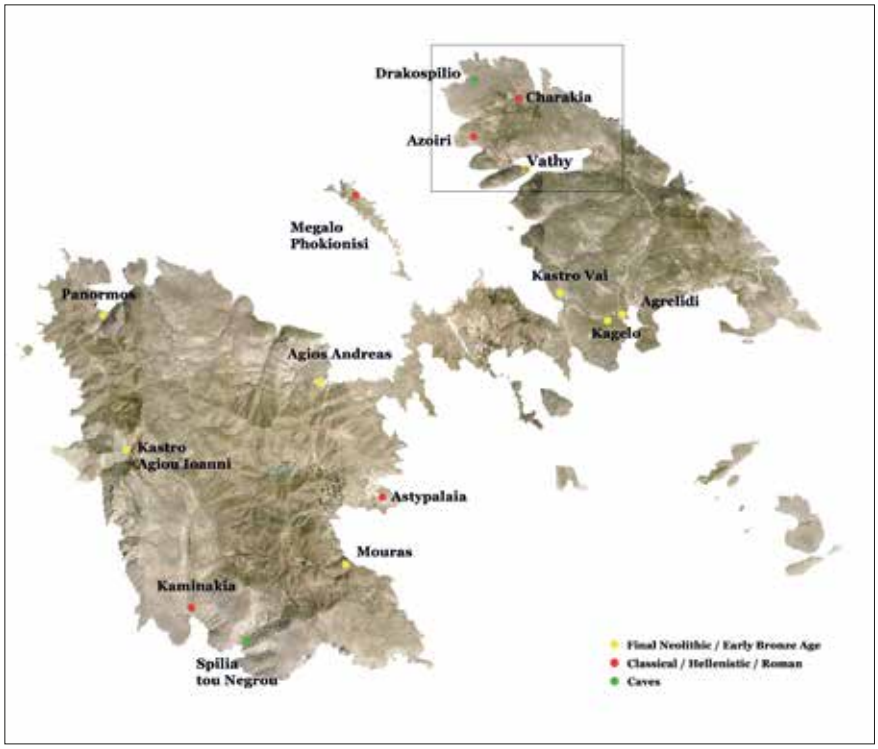


Fig. 2 Map of Astypalaia with the sites mentioned in the text

Fig. 3 Satellite photograph of Vathy and northeast Astypalaia (Mesa Nisi)

erected on top of the basilica, after a severe earthquake[9], and some Christian graves mark the continuity of faith in Medieval times[10]. In the mid-20th century, the owner of the land, Dimitrios Stavlas, installed a limekiln inside the tower[11].

[9] Astypalaia has often been struck by severe earthquakes; historical sources refer to the earthquakes of A.D. 469 and 554; the latter devastated Kos and Astypalaia (Volanakis 2005, 94). See Magnisali – Bilis 2024, 161–174 figs. 1. 2. 13–19. 22–24.

[10] Vlachopoulos 2017b, 286 f. figs. 26. 30; Vlachopoulos 2021, 85–90 figs. 5–8; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Section II.Γ.

[11] Vlachopoulos 2013a, 220 pl. 127 b; Vlachopoulos 2023. The excellent quality of the dolomitic limestone of Mesa Nisi, that is the northern half of Astypalaia, was the reason why many limekilns were built around the gulf of Vathy. The copious production of lime was among the few ways in which the island's inhabitants were able to eke out a living, until the early 1960s.

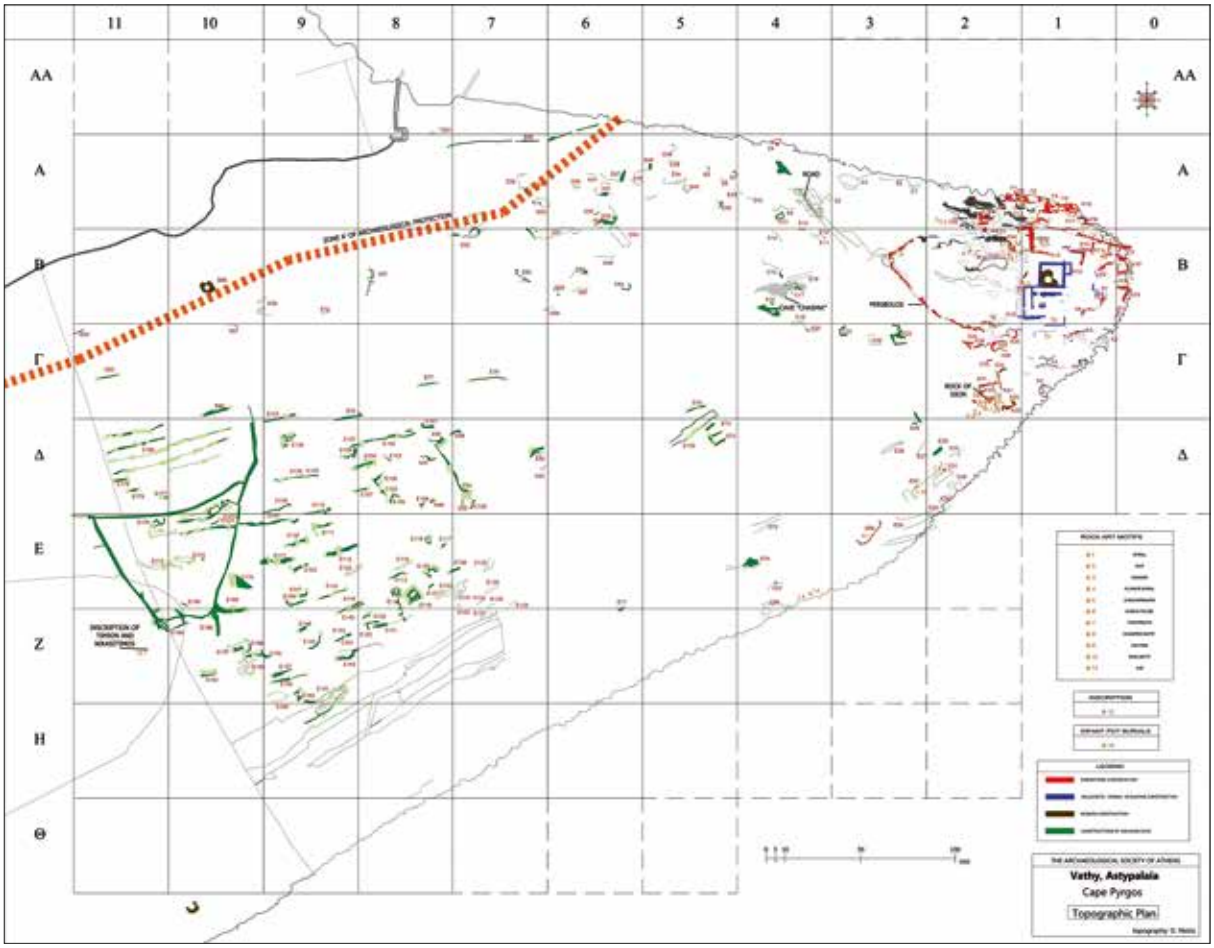


Fig. 4 Topographical plan of the Pyrgos promontory with the surface constructions (scale 1 : 4000) △

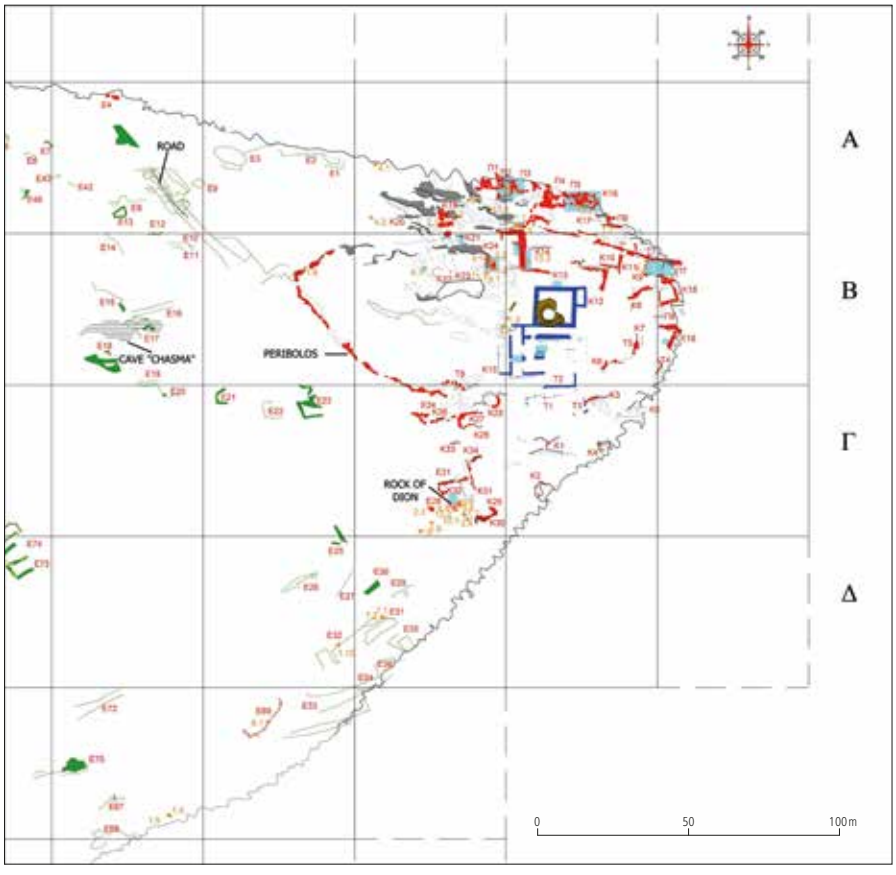


Fig. 5 Topographical plan of cape Pyrgos/ Elliniko (scale 1 : 2500)

Fig. 6 Aerial photograph of cape Pyrgos/Elliniko

On the uppermost level area of the peninsula, where the 6th-century B.C. homoerotic inscription of Nikasitimos and Timion was identified – indicating that human activity continued in later centuries –, the view of the open tempestuous sea, of the sheltered channel (Bouka) and of the tranquil gulf is unrivalled *(figs. 7. 58)*[12]. From the same patrolling point, the territories of the ancient cities of Astypalaia (Chora) and Panormos, to the southwest[13], the barren Phokionisia islets to the west[14], and the precipitous cliffs of the coasts of Amorgos to the far northwest can be viewed. Rectangular towers erected at Azoiri and Charakia (Panagia tou Thoma), to the northwest of Vathy, were constructed following the same model as the Cape Elliniko tower, thus showing that the three towers were part of a coordinated project for guarding the coasts of Mesa Nisi and for monitoring sea traffic as far as the island of Kos[15] *(figs. 1–3)*.

Opposite and to the north of the Pyrgos promontory, is the hamlet of Mesa Vathy, which has been barely inhabited since the 1970s. Located some 2 km to the east of it is Exo Vathy, with its few houses dotting the hills, around the chapels of Agios Antonios and Agia Anna down to the easternmost shallow arable coast of the gulf[16]. The hill topped by the chapel of Agios Nikolaos is the natural south border of Exo Vathy and a spectacular vantage point for surveying the entire gulf[17] *(fig. 8)*. The natural habitat of the gulf has been relatively untouched by development and Vathy is a wildlife reserve, traditionally attracting Kalymnian fishing boats to its safe anchorage.

[12] Vlachopoulos – Matthaiou 2014, 379–382 fig. 8; Vlachopoulos – Matthaiou 2024. Around the bedrock boulder of the inscription referring to the two lovers, is a dense system of enclosures (periboloi), retaining walls and other constructions possibly belong to ancient buildings. These cannot be dated, due to the complete absence of surface pottery. See Vlachopoulos 2013a, 219 f. fig. 4 pl. 127 a; Vlachopoulos 2014, 239 drawing 4 fig. 13; Vlachopoulos 2015a, 320 f. drawing 1 fig. 8; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Section I. B2.

[13] On the topography of ancient Astypalaia, see Oberhummer 1896, 1874 f.; Michalaki-Kollia 2005, 352 f.; Volanakis 2005, 91–96. 115 f.; Michalaki-Kollia 2010, 162 figs. 1–3; Fantaoutsaki 2014, 2338 f. figs. 118–123; Fantaoutsaki 2021; Fantaoutsaki 2023.

[14] These three islets lie opposite Vathy. On the northern one, Megalo Phokionisi, surface finds of Late Classical and Hellenistic times have been attributed to a sanctuary (2014), see Fantaoutsaki 2014, 2340 f. figs. 126–128; 2345–2348 figs. 135–140; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 373; Vlachopoulos 2023, 30 figs. 21. 22.

[15] Fantaoutsaki 2014, 2336 f. figs. 110–114; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 374 n. 8; Vlachopoulos 2023, 31 figs. 26–30. There is another tower, with similar masonry, at Kaminakia on the south coast of Exo Nisi, see Zervoudaki 1972, 676 pl. 640 d; Fantaoutsaki 2014, 2340 figs. 124. 125. On the towers of the Aegean islands, see Marangou 2005, 317–328. On a historical reading of the towers, see Morris – Papadopoulos 2005.

[16] Vlachopoulos 2011, 93 pl. 73 a; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 371 f. fig. 1; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 32–35 figs. 36–38.

[17] Surface pottery and obsidian tools found around the chapel point to ancient activity at the top of the hill. Vlachopoulos 2012, 115 f. pl. 84 b; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, figs. 1. 2. 42.

Fig. 7 The inscription of Timion and Nikasitimos on a bedrock of the upper plateau of the peninsula

Fig. 8 General view of the Vathy gulf from the east, with the chapel of Agios Nikolaos in the foreground

HISTORY OF RESEARCH

The recovery of the lower half of an Early Cycladic (EC) I white marble violin-shaped figurine *(figs. 9. 10)* and the observation of a rock-art spiral on the boulder-built construction on the north coast of the Pyrgos promontory *(figs. 11. 12)* led Christos Doumas to identify Vathy as a significant EBA site, with striking Cycladic features[18]. Doumas's surface cleanings at the site in 2008 aimed at protecting the important antiquities of Vathy, which is also the objective of our systematic research that started in 2011 under the aegis of the Archaeologi-

[18] Doumas 2005, 24 f. figs. 5. 6; Petrakos 2008; Doumas 2008a; Vlachopoulos 2011, 94 pls. 74 a; 76 a; Vlachopoulos 2012, 121 pls. 97 a. b; 98 a. b; Doumas 2023. On the violin–shaped (schematic) figurine, see Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 204 fig. 24.2; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 267 fig. 31; 433 fig. 1.

Fig. 9 The lower half of a violin shaped marble figurine collected by Doumas

Fig. 10 Drawing of the figurine (scale 1 : 2)

cal Society at Athens[19]. The intensive surface survey which has been carried out at Vathy since 2012 *(fig. 4)* and the systematic excavation of targeted points of interest since 2014 *(fig. 6)* have revealed numerous monuments and finds which further establish the Early Cycladic elements but also point to influences from other areas of the Aegean.

Earlier reported research at Vathy is poor. Richard MacGillivray Dawkins and Alan Wace (1905–1906) described and published a plan of the tower on Cape Pyrgos/Elliniko[20]. In 1970, Richard Hope Simpson and John Francis Lazenby were the first to map the prehistoric sites of Astypalaia. They recognized the importance of the settlement site at Pyrgos and correctly date the surface sherds to Late Chalcolithic/earliest EBA, introducing the term »Early Bronze Age I« for this cultural horizon[21]. In 1971, Eos Zervoudaki reported surface finds from the promontory[22], and in 1998, the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese declared the peninsula Zone A of Archaeological Protection[23]. Krzystof Nowicky (2014) further documented the FN/EBA sites of the island identified by Hope Simpson and Lazenby, and commented that the topographically very different sites of Astypalaia form a complicated settlement pattern[24].

To the most accurate map of Astypalaia, published in 2005 by Doumas, with nine FN/EBA sites (Mouras, Panormos, Vathy-Pyrgos/Elliniko, Kangelo, Agrelidi-Agios Nikolaos, Kastro Agiou Ioanni, Kastro Vai, Agios Andreas, Vathy-north coast)[25] can now be added the sizeable caves Spilia tou Negrou-Vatses[26] and Drakospilio[27], the ceramic and lithic finds from which point to the systematic use of both *(fig. 2)*. Four new sites around the Vathy gulf, with pottery and obsidian surface finds (Dema-Gialoudi[28], Chalasmata[29], Bouka[30] and Agios Nikoalos[31]), document a constellation of FN/EBA sites around Cape Elliniko, which were probably complementary to the major site *(fig. 3)*. Future research will show whether these

[19] The archaeological fieldwork at Vathy is supported by funds from the University of Ioannina and the Secretariat General for the Aegean and Island Policy, as well as sponsorship of Athanasios Martinos (Aegeas AMKE). See Vlachopoulos 2012. 2013a. 2013b. 2014. 2015a. 2016b. 2017a. 2017b. 2017c. 2018. 2020. See Vlachopoulos 2023; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024.

[20] Dawkins – Wace 1905/1906, 154–156 figs. 2. 3.

[21] Hope Simpson – Lazenby 1973, 166 f. fig. 7.11 pl. 43.

[22] Zervoudaki 1971, 552.

[23] Official Government Gazette ›ΦΕΚ ΥΠ. ΠΟ./ΑΡΧ/Α1/Φ22/17911/950 Υ. Α./ΦΕΚ 1368/5.7.1999‹.

[24] Nowicki 2014, 355–361 figs. 279–284.

[25] Doumas 2005, 23 fig. 1. See Vlachopoulos 2023, 25 f. fig. 6.

[26] The rescue excavation by Ioanna Efstathiou (Ephorate of Speleology and Palaeoanthropology) in the main chamber of the Vatses cave resulted in the systematic exploration of an in situ male burial dated to the early Mesolithic times (ca 9000 B.C.). This very important find for the early habitation of Astypalaia was announced in 2019 and its first publication appeared in 2023 (Efstathiou 2023).

[27] Efstathiou – Vlachopoulos 2024.

[28] Vlachopoulos 2011, 95 f. pls. 78 b; 79 a; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 27 figs. 12–14. 17.

[29] Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 29–32 figs. 20. 24. 25. 30. 31.

[30] Vlachopoulos 2018, 291 figs. 46. 47; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 35 figs. 43–48.

[31] Vlachopoulos 2011, 94 fig. 73 a; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 372 fig. 3; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 32–35 figs. 1. 41. 42. On the topography of the Vathy gulf, see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 38 fig. 53.

Fig. 11 The built construction-pier Π5 with the pecked spiral

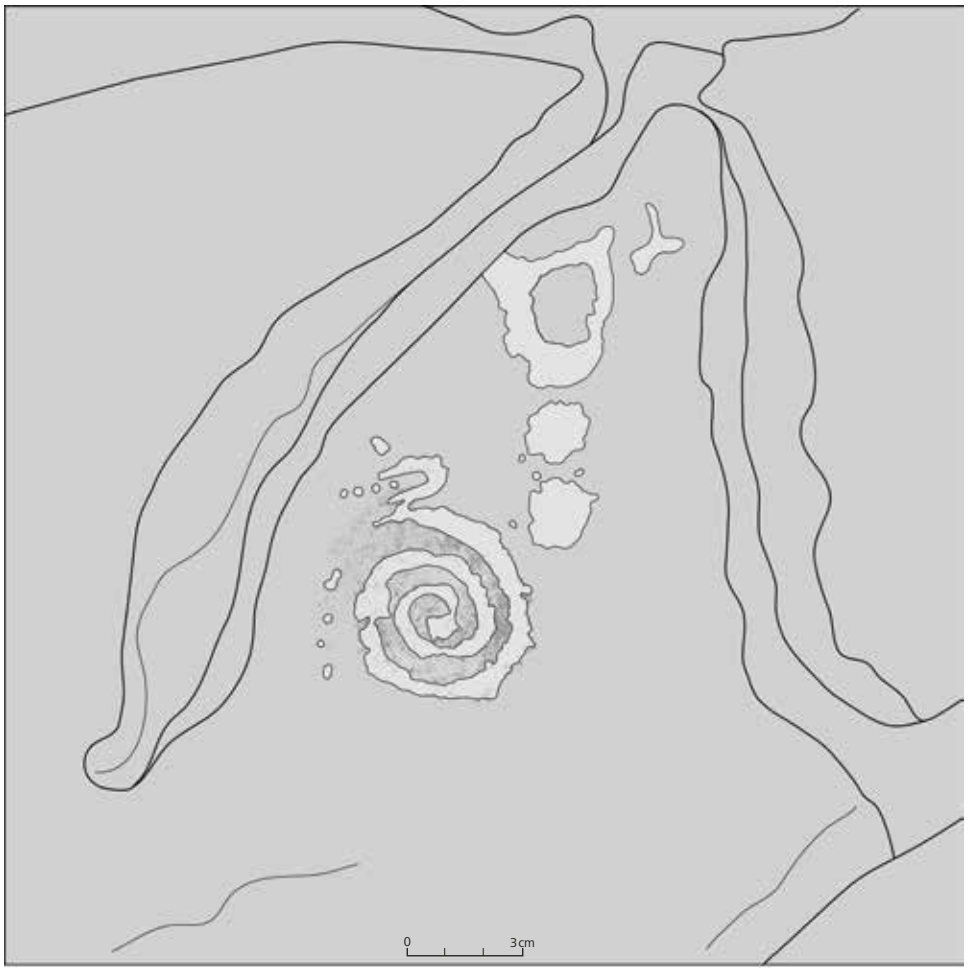


Fig. 12 Drawing of the rock-art motif on Π5 (scale 1 : 2)

Fig. 13 Clay pyxis from ›Exo Vathy‹ reported by Zervoudaki (1971)

satellite sites are synchronous in the long duration of the late 4th and 3rd millennium B.C. and the nature of the activities at each one.

In fact, a clay pyxis that was found by a local person in 1971, at »the north coast of the head of the gulf« in »a rectangular cist grave built of small flat stones«, and is illustrated by Zervoudaki[32], although later dated as Late Geometric/Archaic (ca. 700 B.C.)[33], is now clearly identified as an EC II or III vase. The pyxis has an concave cylindrical body and a knobbed lid with two holes; both body and lid are decorated with impressed concentric circles and incised lines *(fig. 13)*, with an exact parallel from Thera, which presents close similarities to pyxides from Attica[34]. Other comparanda of the impressed circles and spirals are encountered on a group of pyxides from Skarkos, Ios (EC II)[35] and few EC II B frying-pan vessels from Chalandriani, Syros[36], and Naxos[37].

The EC II or III clay pyxis from »the north coast of the head of the gulf«, presumably found in a cist grave of Early Cycladic type, advocates EBA habitation in this privileged location of the Vathy gulf and possibly points to a mid-/late 3rd millennium B.C. coastal settlement relatively close to that on Cape Pyrgos. Surface finds of EBA pottery from Agios Nikolaos hill, might hint at the location of said settlement[38].

[32] Zervoudaki 1971, 552 pl. 560 d. See Vlachopoulos 2023, 26 fig. 8; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 304 fig. 105.

[33] Michalaki-Kollia 2010, 162.

[34] Karageorgis Quarries/Agios Ioannis Eleimon; Museum of Prehistoric Thera no. 1352, see Pantazis et al. 2003, 6 fig. 10. On very similar ›Cycladic‹ pyxides from the Athens Acropolis, Thorikos, and Anavyssos dated to EC/EH II-late to early MBA, see Papazoglou – Manioudaki 2019, 25–28 figs. 3.5–3.10. Also see, Şahoğlu 2007, 316 fig. 8 (Çeşme – Bağlararası Phase 2b).

[35] Marthari 2008, 77 f. fig. 9. 12–15.

[36] Rambach 2000, pls. 27.4; 122.5 (Grab 172), pls. 55.3; 133.3 (Grab 382), table 3 (SyCha G.408). See also Marthari 2014, 224 drawing 5 fig. 7 (Kastri).

[37] Rambach 2000, pl. 25 no. 5; Stampolidis 2016, 149 no. 32.

[38] Vlachopoulos 2018, 291.

CHRONOLOGY

A significant advantage for the study of the EBA at Vathy is the clarity with which the early period of habitation is depicted: this early horizon dates to the FN–EBA I period, with finds that culturally it begins from LN I Saliagos off Antiparos and LN II/FN Kephala on Kea (late 5th–4th millennium B.C.) and reaches the Grotta-Pelos phase of the FN/EC I period (late 4th–early 3rd millennium B.C.), in Cycladic terms[39].

Macroscopic examination of the pottery from Vathy suggests that it was produced locally[40]. Its ongoing study by Anastasia Angelopoulou shows that the excavated assemblages consist of homogeneous and undisturbed deposits, with household wares prevailing. The shapes include the collar-necked *krateriskos (fig. 14 a. b)*, the two-handled hole-mouthed jar *(fig. 15 a–c)*, the crudely-made cheese pot *(fig. 16)*, the elegant collared jar *(fig. 17 a. b)*, and a variety of polished rolled-rim bowls and bowls with lugs (*phialae*) *(figs. 18–20)*, all open vessels suitable for the preparation and consumption of food. Closed vessels, such as jars used for storage are considerably fewer in number, some of them with mat impressions on the base[41] *(figs. 21. 22)*. Rare are the fragments of clay spoons[42], pyxides[43], and other fine-ware vessels. The few sherds of red and black mottled pottery *(fig. 23)* seem to belong to the LN/FN background to the ›Vathy phase‹ pottery[44].

The pottery of the FN/EBA I ›Vathy phase‹ presents close affinities with assemblages from the neighbouring Cyclades (Agia Irini-Kea, Ftelia-Mykonos, Koukounaries-Paros, Grotta, Zas and Agia Anna-Naxos, Markiani-Amorgos, Phylakopi-Melos, Akrotiri-Thera) and the Dodecanese (Gyali-Nisyros, Vathy-Kalymnos, Partheni-Leros, Alasarna-Kos, Kalythies-Rhodes, Alimnia), but also shares common characteristics with pottery from settlements on the northern and eastern Aegean islands (Poliochni-Lemnos, Thermi-Lesbos, Emborio-Chios, Tigani and Heraion-Samos), in the Troad, Asia Minor and Anatolia, the Greek Mainland (Attica and Aegina, Euboea and Boeotia, Northeast Peloponnese), and Crete[45] *(fig. 1)*.

On present evidence, the first installation on Cape Pyrgos/Elliniko seems to have been established in the transition from the FN to the EBA I period, in other words, at the turn of the 4th to the 3rd millennium B.C. This is attested by the well-preserved pottery-vases containing infant burials *(enchytrismoi)* – found in Exedres 1 and 2 on the north coast of the promontory, and by two early-type marble figurines that were found in the adjacent Exedres 4 and 5. A stone seal from the upper layers of Exedres 4 and 5 (see below) and scant surface sherds of pottery shapes that are attributed to EBA II point to a mid-3rd millennium B.C. horizon at Vathy, which, however, needs stratigraphic documentation[46].

[39] Vlachopoulos 2017a, 378–380; Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 212–224 fig. 24.16–24.38; Angelopoulou 2024a; Angelopoulou 2024b; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Sections II.A; IV.A.3. On the chronology of the 4th–early 3rd millennia B.C. and the various chronological systems and terms used for these periods (LN II/FN/Chalcolithic/Early EBA) in the Aegean in general, see Alram-Stern 2014; Nowicki 2014, 61–70. 76; Coleman – Facorellis 2018.

[40] Petrographic analysis of the pottery from Vathy has been undertaken by Professor Jill Hilditch (Hilditch 2024).

[41] On mat impressions see Vlachopoulos 2017b, 281. 287 figs. 20. 31; Vlachopoulos 2018, 290 fig. 37. For a detailed analysis of the early pottery of Vathy, see Angelopoulou in press; Angelopoulou forthcoming.

[42] Vlachopoulos 2017b, 273 fig. 2; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 678 fig. 21.

[43] Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 220 fig. 24.30; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 266 fig. 30.

[44] Vlachopoulos 2017b, 273 fig. 3; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 701 fig. 67; Angelopoulou 2024, 746 fig. 2.

[45] Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 221; Angelopoulou 2024a; Angelopoulou 2024b; Angelopoulou forthcoming. For a synthesis of the evidence until 2014, see Alram-Stern 2014.

[46] To this EC II horizon belong few surface sherds, such as one of a decorated sauce-boat (?) and a handle of a Kastri phase closed vessel: Vlachopoulos 2012, 118 fig. 87 c; Vlachopoulos 2013a, 217 fig. 121 b; Angelopoulou 2024a, 178 f. figs. 2 c–e. Trench 7 (2018) is the only excavated space of the acropolis that yielded EBA pottery of later date (EC II/III and EC III/MC), Vlachopoulos 2018, 288–290 figs. 34 (pyxis). 38 (spouted cup); Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 299–304 figs. 100. 103.

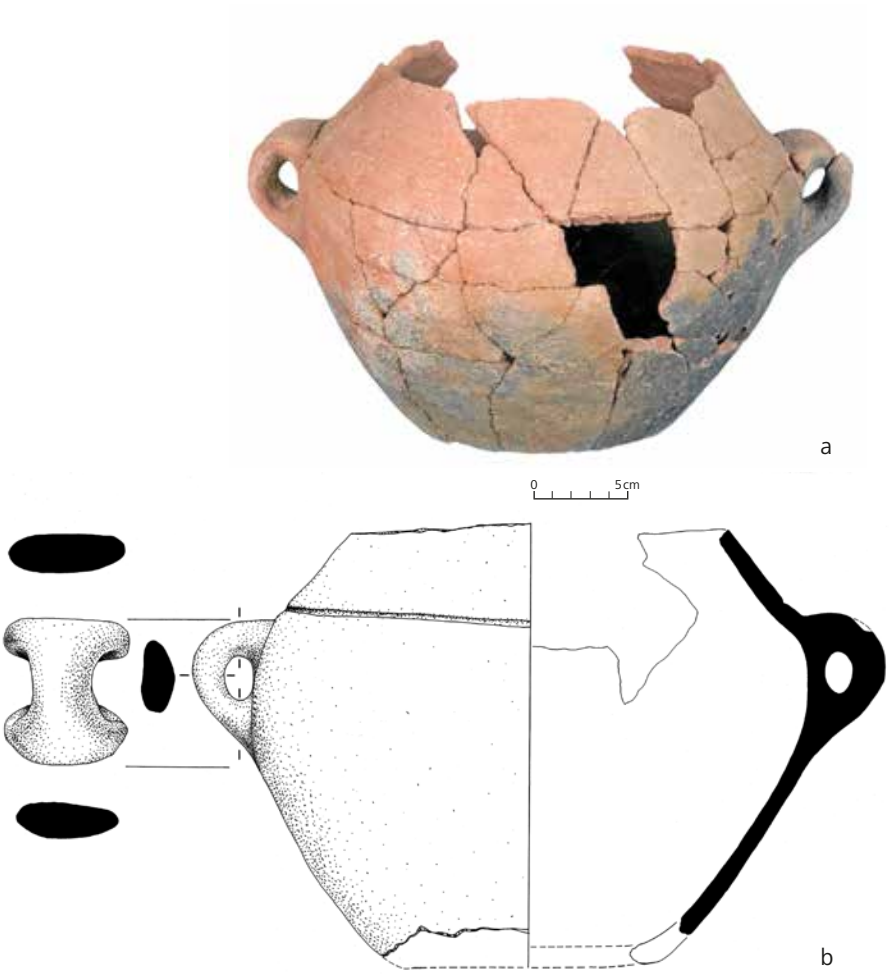


Fig. 14 The collar-necked krateriskos of *Enchytrismos* no. 1 (Exedra 1):
a. photo. –
b. drawing (scale 1 : 4)

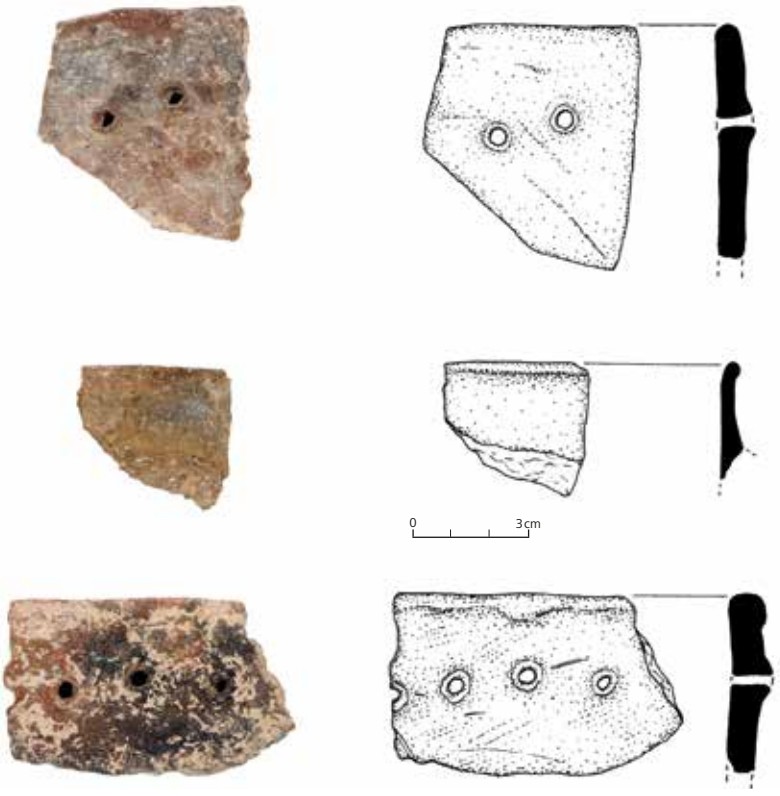


Fig. 16 Fragments of cheese-pots from Exedres 1 and 2, and Exedres 4 and 5 (scale 1 : 2)

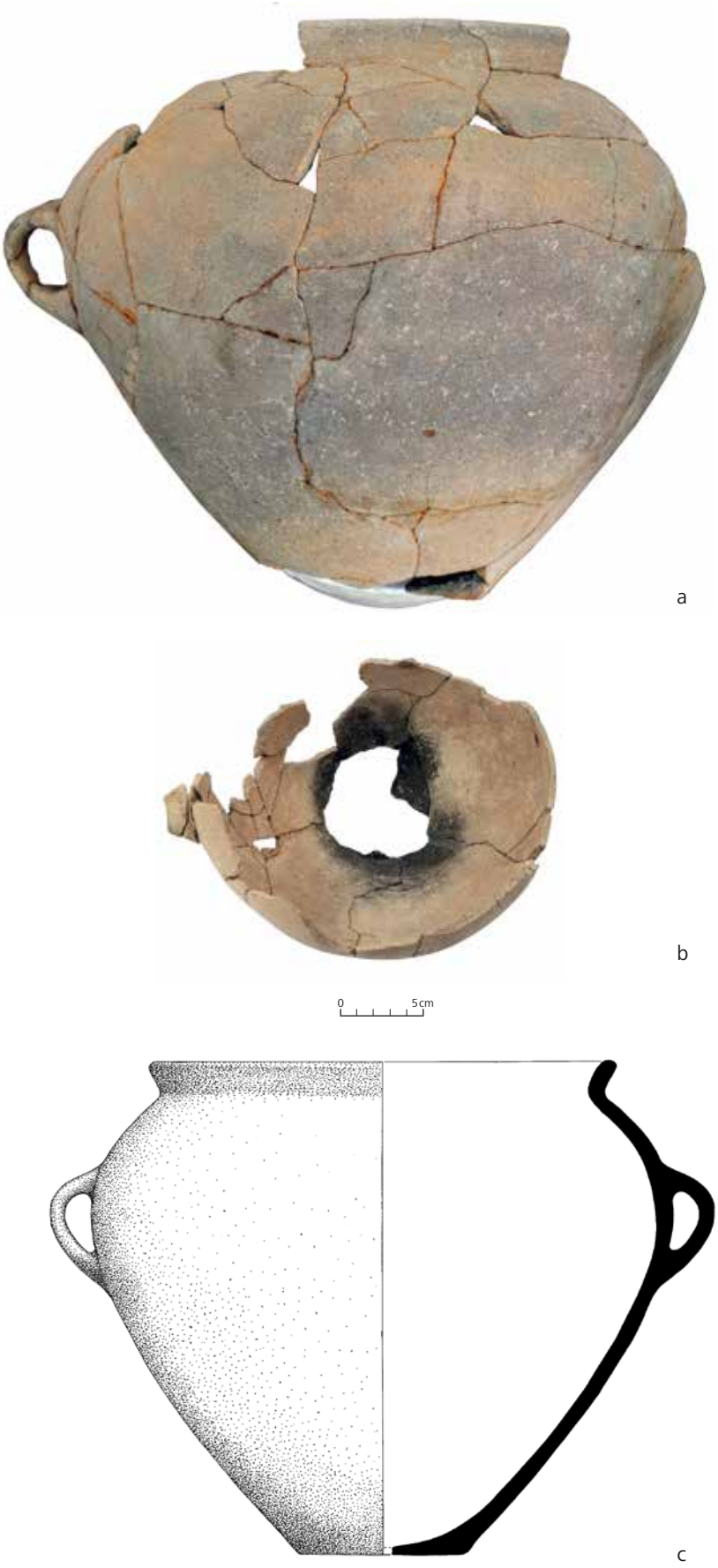


Fig. 15 The two-handled hole-mouthed jar of *Enchytrismos* no. 4 (Exedra 2): a. photo. – b. photo of interior. – c. drawing (scale 1 : 4)

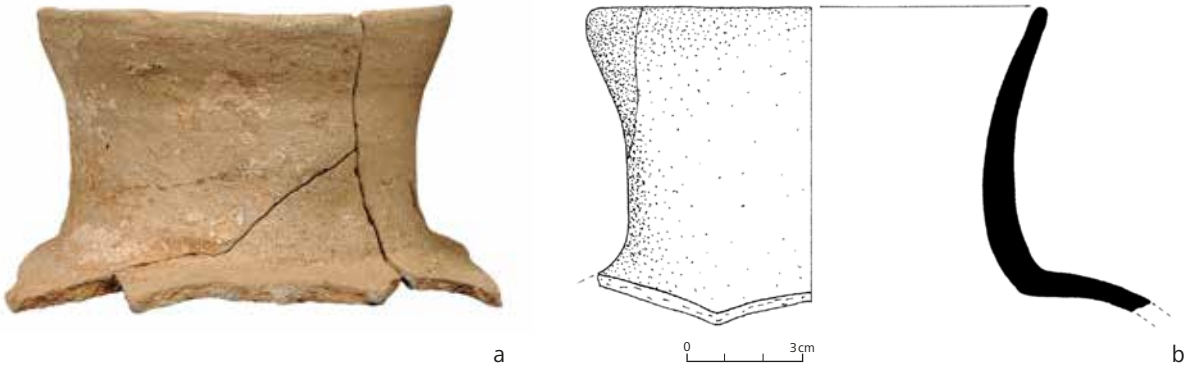


Fig. 17 Fragment of collared jar from Exedres 4 and 5: a. photo. – b. drawing (scale 1 : 2)

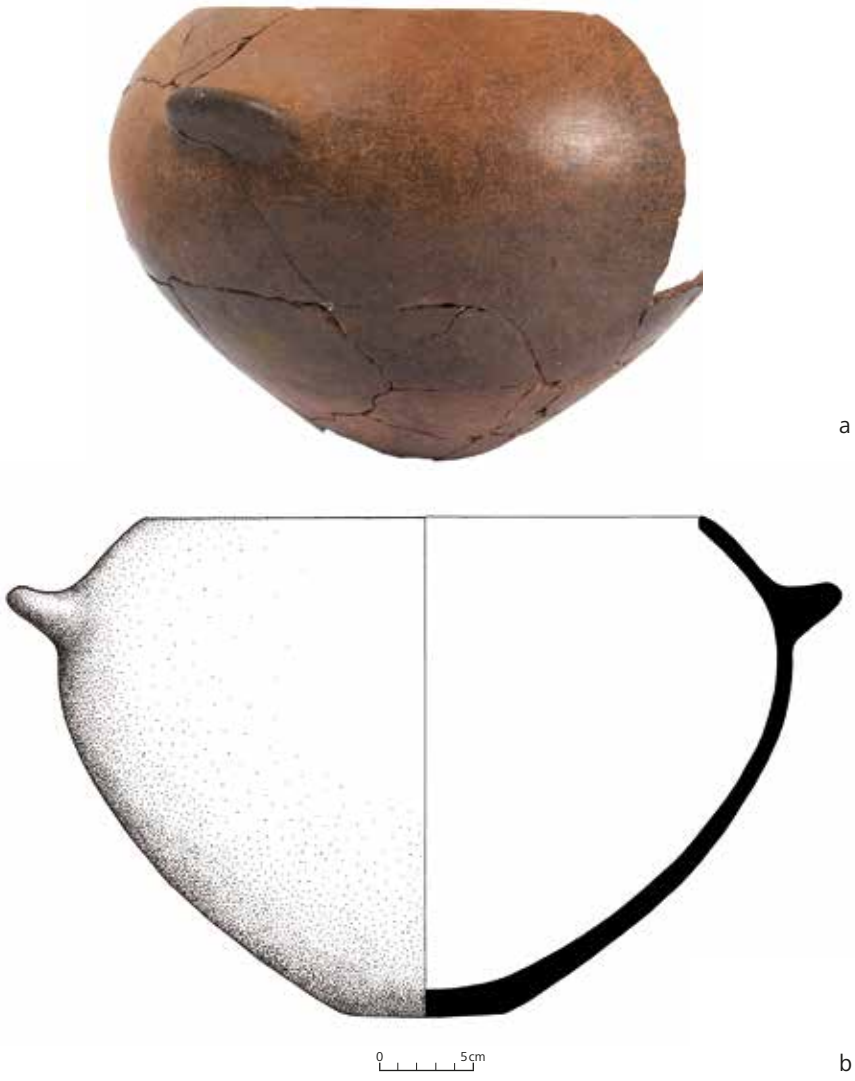


Fig. 18 The large bowl of *Enchytrismos* no. 2 (Exedra 1): a. photo. – b. drawing (scale 1 : 4)

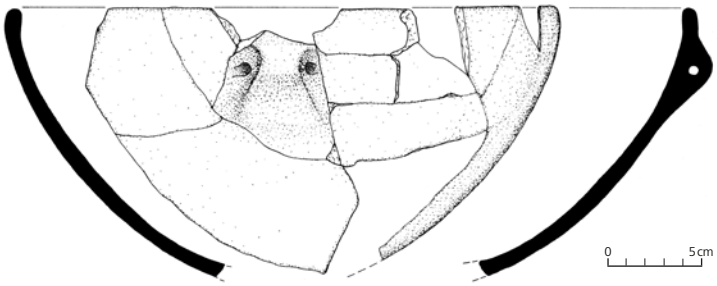
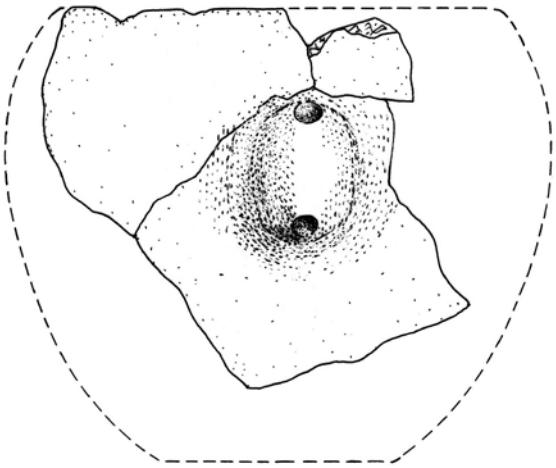


Fig. 19 Bowl (phiale) with lugs of *Enchytrismos* no. 3 (Exedra 1) (scale 1 : 4)



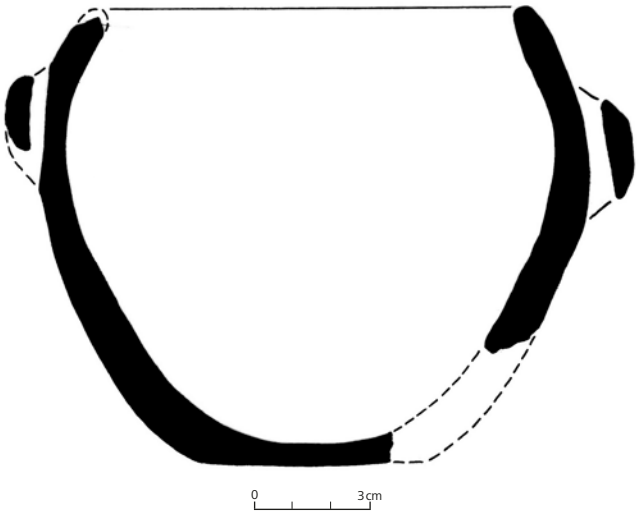


Fig. 20 Bowl (phiale) with lugs of *Enchytrismos* no. 3 (Exedra 1) (scale 1 : 2)

Fig. 21 Storage vessel with mat impression on the base (surface find; scale 1 : 2)

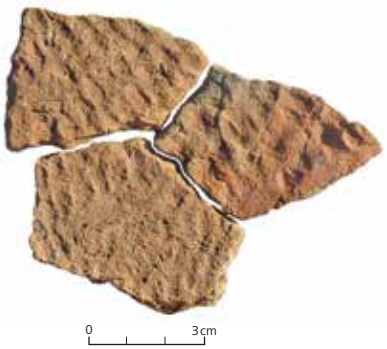


Fig. 22 Storage vessel with mat impression on the base (scale 1 : 2)

Fig. 23 Sherds of red-and-black mottled pottery, Exedra 1 (scale 1 : 1.5)

Fig. 24 Exedres 1 and 2 (right), Exedres 4 and 5 (middle) and the construction Π4

Exedres 1 and 2: the infant *enchytrismoi*

Five infant *enchytrismoi* were found in the rectangular platform Exedres 1 and 2 *(figs. 4. 5, no. 13.2)* that forms one of the series of manmade Π-shaped constructions along the north rocky coast of the promontory *(figs. 24. 25)*[47]. These *enchytrismoi* constitute a singular and mutually complementary chronological horizon, with the ceramic types dating to the transition from the FN to the Grotta-Pelos culture[48].

Exedra 1 is a low, flat platform with a curvilinear north edge consisting of large stones. It measures 3.5 m × 1.5 m (east-west by north-south) and is now partly submerged; only its south landward rectangular part (wall K16) is barely above sea level[49]. The west half of this exedra was found roughly paved with medium-sized stones, on or in which two vases and one solid accumulation of soil containing bones of infants were found in situ *(figs. 26. 27)*.

The very first vessel (*Enchytrismos* no. 1) was found in 2012, carefully buried in the thick sand-soil of the coast that had covered Exedra 1 over the centuries. A little further south, the strength of the winter waves brought to light a second vessel, which was recovered in 2013 (*Enchytrismos* no. 2). The systematic excavation of the platform in 2014 revealed yet another intact infant pot burial (*Enchytrismos* no. 4) and two more burial complexes, apparently disturbed or of some other taphonomic status (*Enchytrismoi* nos. 3 and 5) *(figs. 26–28)*.

Enchytrismos no. 1 is a FN/EBA I collar-necked *krateriskos (fig. 14 a. b)*, found embedded in the paving and carefully covered with a green stone lid, on top of which was a similar, smaller lid[50]. A stone slab placed vertically to the northwest of the upstanding vase was probably a grave marker of the burial *(fig. 28)*. As soon as the solid earthy mass of its content

[47] The platform lies between constructions Π5 and Π6. Its Π-shaped plan was not visible during the survey of 2011–2012, and was only made clear after the cleanings of 2013–2014. See Vlachopoulos 2012, 116–118 figs. 1. 2 pls. 98. 99 a; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 379 f. figs. 23–31. The Exedres 1 and 2 complex is published in full detail: Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Section IV.

[48] Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 204 f. fig. 24.15–24.23; Angelopoulou 2024b; Angelopoulou forthcoming.

[49] Vlachopoulos 2012, 122 fig. 1 pls. 99 b–100; Vlachopoulos 2013a, 215 f. pl. 120 a. b. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Section I (p. 69 f.). IV.

[50] Vlachopoulos 2012, 122 pls. 99 b – 100; Vlachopoulos 2013a, 215 fig. 3 pls. 117. 118; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 379 figs. 27 b; 29 a. b; 30; Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 205. 220 figs. 24.15; 24.36. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 667–675 figs. 1–16; Adam 2024, 825 fig. 1; Angelopoulou 2024b, 747 fig. 1.

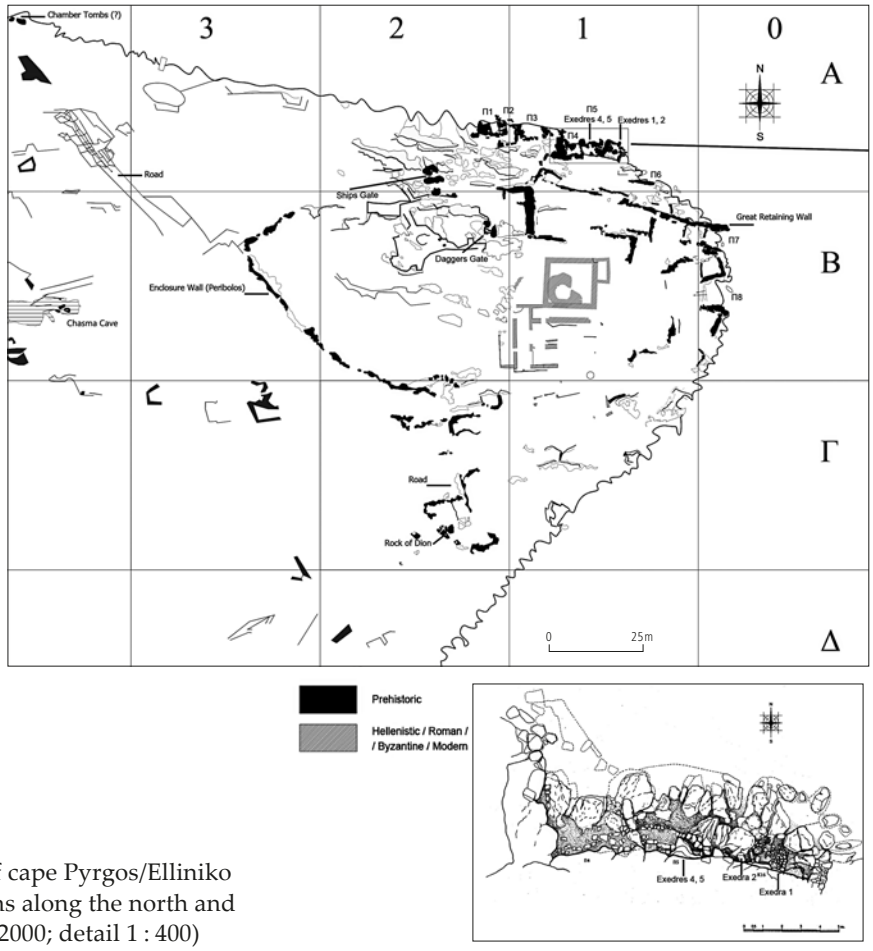


Fig. 25 Topographical plan of cape Pyrgos/Elliniko with the Π-shaped constructions along the north and the east coast (scale plan 1 : 2000; detail 1 : 400)

was removed from the collared jar, the bones of an infant (of about 4 months old) were identified at the missing bottom of the vase[51], originally wrapped in cloth *(fig. 29)*[52].

Also incomplete, broken in the lowest part, was a large clay bowl (*phiale*), containing the skeletal remains of three infants (*Enchytrismos* no. 2)[53] *(figs. 18 a. b; 30)*. The main burial at the bottom of the vessel, appeared to be an infant that died 3.5–5 months after birth. There were, however, fragments of another infant of the same age, as well as scattered bones from one of about two months. The fact that one more fragmentary bowl (*phiale*) had also been used to contain this infant *enchytrismos*[54] illustrates that more vessels could be used, obviously in order to facilitate the burial of the remains, as the main burial vessel was already broken, indicating that it came from the domestic stock of the community[55].

[51] Hillson 2024, 730–732 figs. 1. 3–6. A serendipitous conjuncture in the micro-excavation that followed and the extracted scientific data was our collaboration with Professor of Physical Anthropology Simon Hillson (University College London), who has been working for years on the island, studying the *enchytrismoi* of infants in the cemetery of historical times at Kylindra, in the Chora of Astypalaia. On this cemetery, which is unique so far in the ancient Greek world (8th century B.C.–Late Roman times), see Hillson 2009; Michalaki-Kollia 2010; Fantaoutsaki 2021; Fantaoutsaki 2023, 105–110 figs. 6–12.

[52] Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 667–670 figs. 10–12. On textiles in the LN and EBA Aegean, see Carington Smith 1977, 114–118 pl. 90 (Kephala, Kea); Takaoğlu 2006, 307 fig. 13.307 (Gülpinar, Troad); Zisis 1954, 587 n. 2 (Amorgos cemeteries); Marangou et al. 2008, 103 fig. 11.9 (Markiani, Amorgos).

[53] Vlachopoulos 2013a, 215–217 fig. 3 pls. 119. 120; Vlachopoulos 2014, 244 drawing 7; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 379 fig. 27 b; 31 a. b; Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 205 figs. 24.15; 24.18; 24.19; 24.35. See Angelopoulou 2024b, 747 fig. 21; Hillson 2024, 730–732 fig. 7; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 675–678 figs. 17–21.

[54] Vlachopoulos 2014, 244 fig. 18 a; Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 205 figs. 24.19. 24.35; Angelopoulou 2024b, 747 fig. 22.

[55] At FN Kephala, too, the vessels that had been used for the infant jar burials probably were not made specifically for burials; one of them (no. 170) »had been mended« (Coleman 1977, 48. 75 pls. 35. 79).

Fig. 26 Exedres 1 and 2 with the *Enchytrismoi* nos. 1–5 (scale 1 : 50)

Adjoining the southwest corner of Exedra 1 and at a higher level was the small triangular platform Exedra 2 (its front face approx. 0.75 m long), into which a large-bodied bottomless hole mouthed jar had been perfectly adjusted[56] *(figs. 15 a–c; 31)*. This in-situ pot burial (*Enchytrismos* no. 4) held the remains of two infants 3.5–5.5 months old, one slightly more developed than the other, and also of a third infant *(fig. 32)*. The fact that two of the infants in the *Enchytrismoi* nos. 1 and 4 showed the rare developmental anomaly known as conjoined teeth is, however, unlikely to provide strong evidence of relatedness among the infants[57].

The possible remnants of another *enchytrismos* (no. 3) are connected with a pile of fragmentary vases, mainly bowls (*phialai*). This complex of carefully piled fragments was found to the southeast of and very close to *Enchytrismos* no. 2 but at a higher level, in a niche in the south landward wall K16[58] *(fig. 33)*. Part of an obsidian core, found upright to the east of this pile, could be interpreted as a funerary gift[59] *(fig. 34)*. Clearer in intent is the deposition of a flat stone weight of high-quality workmanship precisely outside the intact *Enchytrismos*

[56] Vlachopoulos 2014, 236 drawings 1. 2 figs. 4–6; Vlachopoulos 2015a, 317. 321 figs. 1. 9; Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 205 figs. 24.15; 24.22; 24.23 (identified at that time as *krateriskos*). See Angelopoulou 2024b, 750 fig. 5; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 683–691 figs. 31–47. In the Kephala cemetery, Grave 23 was also triangular (l. 0.42 m) and »contained a jar, which held the body of an infant« (Coleman 1977, 48. 74 table 2 pls. 21. 23. 62 e. f).

[57] Hillson 2024, 733–737 figs. 8–12.

[58] Vlachopoulos 2014, 233–236 drawings 1. 2, figs. 1–4. See Angelopoulou 2024b, 747 figs. 16. 19. 20; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 678–683 figs. 22–29.

[59] Metaxas 2024, 829 f. fig. 1.

Fig. 27 Exedra 2 with the *Enchytrismos* no. 4 and the paved Exedra 1 with the *Enchytrismoi* nos. 3 and 5 in situ

Fig. 28 Exedra 1 (construction K16) during the systematic survey (2012). *Enchytrismos* no. 1 is covered with two stone lids; a stone slab was the grave marker of the burial

no. 4[60] *(fig. 35)*. Both artefacts seem to document the use of tools as burial offerings, and give insight into the ritual behaviour for honouring the dead infants of the community. Found around the pot burials of Exedres 1 and 2 were also seashells, animal and fish bones, burnt seeds and other organic residues[61], presumably associated with the ceremonial of the infant burials[62].

[60] Adam 2024, 826 f. fig. 1.

[61] The organic residues of Vathy are under study by Professor Evi Margariti (Cyprus Institute) and Professor Maria Ntinou (Wiener Lab, ASCSA; Aristotle University of Thessaloniki). The animal bones are being studied by Dr. Giorgos Kazantzis and the fish bones and shells by Dr. Dimitra Mylona (INSTAP East Crete). See Kazantzis 2024; Margariti 2024; Mylona 2024; Ntinou 2024.

[62] Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 703–711. At Phylakopi, one of the EC III/early MC pithos burials, »contrary to the usual rule« also contained a few animal bones and seashells: Dawkins – Droop 1911, 7 pl. 4 (no. 183). In another case »some vases were found in such close proximity to the bones, that it is practically certain that they were placed there at the time of the burial« (H 4 18). Lying by the painted pithos no. 183 was the child's feeding cup no. 165: Dawkins – Droop 1911, 8 pl. 5.

Fig. 29 Detail of infant *Enchytrismos* no. 1 with fossilized remains of cloth

Fig. 30 *Enchytrismos* no. 2 as it was found on paved Exedra 1

Enchytrismos no. 5 was a solid accumulation of soil with bones, surrounded by stones of the Exedra's pavement in its westernmost area[63] *(figs. 26. 27)*. The vase (vases?) that had held the burial had possibly disintegrated, due to the action of the winter waves on the scant fill of the construction. The new-born infant was placed prone, as deduced from the position of the spinal column and the ribs, with the right arm under the left side of the body and the head facing south[64]. An obsidian flake with traces of use-wear, which was found to the right

[63] Vlachopoulos 2014, 236 drawings 1. 2 fig. 4; Vlachopoulos 2017b, 274 figs. 9–11. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 691–699 figs. 48–59. In Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019 the *Enchytrismos* no. 5 is not commented upon, as the soil accumulation that contained this infant burial was cleaned in 2017 in the excavation storeroom.

[64] Hillson 2024, 737 figs. 13–15. 20. The micro-excavation of *Enchytrismos* no. 5 was undertaken by Aliki Giannikou under the supervision of Professor S. Hillson.

Fig. 31 The jar of *Enchytrismos* no. 4 accommodated in the triangular Exedra 2

Fig. 32 The jar of *Enchytrismos* no. 4 during the micro-excavation of the anthropological remains by Prof. S. Hillson

of the ribs, and a lozenge-shaped shell artefact under the right rib and to the left of the forearm, are probably preserved in situ *(figs. 36–38)*. The group of ›grave goods‹ accompanying the dead infant is completed by a small stone scraper[65].

All the vases that held the infant burials are dated to FN/EBA I, testifying that all the *enchytrismoi* that were placed on the cobbled Exedra 1 are synchronous[66]. However, it is not clear whether they are associated with a ›monument‹ for infant burials or with a founda-

[65] Vlachopoulos 2017b, 276 figs. 10. 11; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 697 figs. 54–58; Metaxas 2024, 830. Two obsidian blades accompanied the child of the EM II intramural jar burial at Nopigia, Kissamos: Karantzali 1992, 81. On offerings to dead infants and children in the Near East, Anatolia, Cyprus, Egypt and the Aegean, see McGeorge 2012, 293 f. 298; McGeorge 2013, 4. 7.

[66] Angelopoulou 2024; Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 204 f.

Fig. 33 Exedra 1, piled fragments of bowls (*phialai*) and an obsidian core are the possible remnants of *Enchytrismos* no. 3

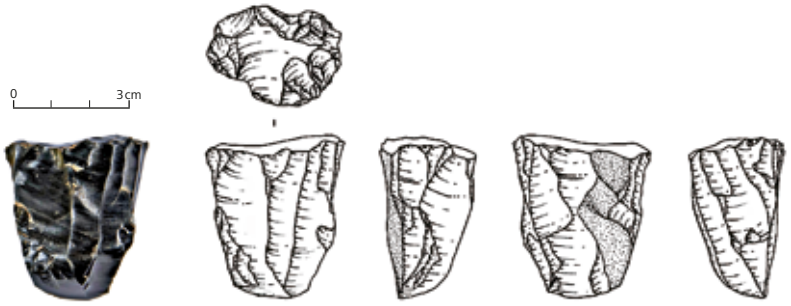


Fig. 34 Part of the obsidian core of *Enchytrismos* no. 3 (scale 1 : 2)

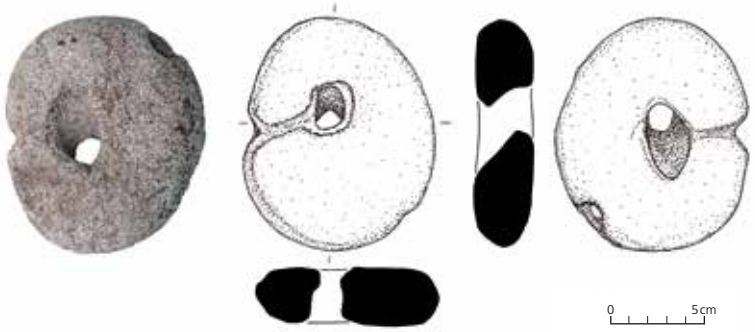


Fig. 35 Stone weight found outside the jar of *Enchytrismos* no. 4 (scale 1 : 4)

tion deposit of a house, the floor of which was later destroyed by sea erosion or within the debris of which the infant burials had been carefully arranged. *Enchytrismos* no. 4, placed on the stepped exedra at a much higher level than the other pot burials, which were also placed on different levels of Exedra 1 *(figs. 26. 27)*, makes the ›in-house pot burials‹ theory less probable. Furthermore, the schist slab that was protruding by approx. 15 cm from the lids of *Enchytrismos* no. 1, as the *sema* of the infant burial, presupposes that the even burial ground of Exedra 1 was visible and accessible at the time of the *enchytrismoi (figs. 27. 28).*

Fig. 36 Micro-excavation of *Enchytrismos* no. 5, an obsidian flake was found to the right of the infant's ribs

Fig. 37 *Enchytrismos* no. 5, shell artefact preserved in situ as another ›grave good‹

Fig. 38 The anthropological remains of *Enchytrismos* no. 5 (scale ca. 1 : 5)

The infant *enchytrismoi* of Exedra Π2

During the 2016 excavation campaign, a group of four in-situ infant pot burials carefully arranged in the Exedra Π2 of the north coast came to light *(figs. 4. 5, no. 13.2)*. The boulder-built Π-shaped Exedra Π2 is situated 50 m to the west of Exedra 1 *(figs. 6. 25)*, compared to which it is much longer and larger, and less eroded by the sea. This monumental construction measuring l. 3.95 m × w. 2.5 m was fully excavated *(figs. 39. 40)*[67].

Three quasi-jars formed from clusters of potsherds and containing infant burials were placed in line along a stone-built bench. A fourth quasi-jar of clustered sherds, further to the west and following the same orientation (north-south), was placed at a lower level, in a natural alcove of the bedrock *(figs. 41. 42)*. Thousands of small white pebbles were densely arranged underneath and around the jars, covering the whole surface of the bench and extending onto the surrounding uneven area. This impressive man-made pebble floor is evidently associated with the mortuary habits observed for the dead infants[68]. Arranged carefully around each quasi-jar *enchytrismos* were various finds (seashells, burnt seeds, carbonized wood, fish bones and bones of goats and sheep), presumably associated with consumption of food and with rituals in honour of the dead infants. A barrel-shaped bone bead accompanied the individual *enchytrismos* (pot burial no. 3) of a child aged 1,5–2 years *(figs. 41. 43)*, the oldest among the 11 or 12 dead infants that had been identified until 2018 at Vathy[69].

Taphonomic and anthropological data from Exedra Π2 help to clarify the finds of Exedra 1 and 2, and to shed new light on the

[67] Vlachopoulos 2016b, 328–334 drawing 2 figs. 1–10; Vlachopoulos 2017b, 277 f. figs. 12. 13; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 271–287 figs. 1. 2. 37–64.

[68] The EM II A child pithos burial at Nopigia was lying on an open area also paved with pebbles, see Karantzali 1992, 66 f. pl. 19 b.

[69] Vlachopoulos 2016b, 333 figs. 5. 9 ε. See Hillson 2024, 740 fig. 18; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 279 figs. 50. 58.

Fig. 39 Exedra Π2 with in-situ *Enchytrismoi* nos. 1, 2, and 3

Fig. 40 Exedra Π2, drawing of the four quasi-jar infant *enchytrismoi* in situ

burial customs of the communities of Astypalaia in the late 4th and early 3rd millennium B.C. As the sherds forming the quasi-jars of the four *enchytrismoi* of Exedra Π2 are small and worn, the exact date of these pot burials in comparison to those of Exedra 1 is difficult to establish. Likewise, it is still premature to claim that all the rectangular exedres of the north coast at Vathy were used as funerary monuments for infants[70]; however, the evidence that the excavation of the Exedra Π2 brings to light might strengthen this assumption[71].

[70] The rectangular constructions Π1 (Vlachopoulos 2015a, 319 f. fig. 7) and Π3, however, had been badly disturbed by the sea. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 69–73 figs. 106–108 (Π1); 111. 112 (Π3).

[71] Further testimonies for the importance of the Π-shaped constructions are the petroglyphs that

Fig. 41 Exedra Π2 with in-situ *Enchytrismoi* nos. 1, 2, and 3, a stone bead was a grave gift of *Enchytrismos* no. 3

Fig. 42 Exedra Π2, the manmade pebble floor with *Enchytrismos* no. 4 in situ

Six badly-disturbed burials of neonates have been excavated in 2019 and 2020 on the penultimate upper platform of the acropolis in Trench 10 *(figs. 4. 5, no. 13.3)*, close to the ancient tower and to the south of Exedra Π2 and the Large Retaining Wall[72] *(fig. 44)*. These burials were lying directly on the bedrock, outside the thick fortification (?) wall K14 (*fig. 6*) and accompanied

Fig. 43 Exedra Π2, the bone bead from *Enchytrismos* no. 3

mark the boulder-built enclosures; these are a dagger and a stone axe, as well as some geometric motifs. See Vlachopoulos 2016b, 334 figs. 11. 12 a. b.

[72] Vlachopoulos 2019, 261–264 figs. 16–27; Vlachopoulos 2020, 167–169 figs. 25–31. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 310–318 figs. 116–138.

Fig. 44 Trench 10. Four badly disturbed neonate burials directly on the bedrock were excavated in 2019. Two more burials were excavated in 2020, in the southern part of Trench 10.1.

Fig. 45 Trench 10. An infant burial with few pottery sherds, pebbles, and lithics

by very few pottery sherds, sea pebbles and lithics dated to FN/EBA I *(fig. 45).* It is premature to say whether this area was an extra-muros infant burial ground and to determine the relation of these interments to the pot and the quasi-jar burials of the coast.

Future research along the coasts, in combination with stratigraphical data from the levelled terraces of the acropolis, are expected to clarify the FN and EBA chronological sequence of the site and to enable a better understanding of the infant burial activity attested over a quite extensive area of the promontory. Further study of the anthropological material from Vathy as a whole, together with the taphonomic data obtained from the micro-excavation of the pot burials, is expected to shed light on important issues such as the demography of the site, health standards, and infant mortality of the local population.

INFANT *ENCHYTRISMOI* IN THE AEGEAN

The earliest known infant *enchytrismoi* in the Aegean islands were found at the Early Neolithic site of Agios Petros-Kyra Panagia in the Sporades[73] and in the LN settlement of Ftelia on Mykonos; the latter is an individual *enchytrismos* of a three-year-old child, whose few preserved bones were burnt[74]. In the FN cemetery of Kephala on Kea[75], three infant jar burials were placed within pits without walls around them, and with a stone placed against their mouth[76]. The very small cist Grave 2 also contained skeletal remains of a child[77], and the likewise small triangular Grave 23 contained an infant pot burial, with the ›jar‹ upright on a floor of small stones[78].

Also extramural are the extensive EBA family cemeteries of pithos-burials in Asia Minor and Western Anatolia, such as at Bakla Tepe and Karataş[79]. Intramural pot burials in the northeast Aegean island settlements (Tenedos, Poliochni, Thermi, Emborio), Troy and Anatolia are an exception, restricted to infants up to one year of age, which were normally buried under the floors of houses[80] and, as a rule, without accompanying gifts[81]. The custom of pithos graves is also attested opposite the Asia Minor coast, on Kos, where four EBA II pithos graves excavated at Askloupi contained secondary depositions, all of adults[82].

The custom of infant pot burials appears on EC I–III Thera (Akrotiri and Kalamia)[83], possibly on (EC II ?) Amorgos[84], and continues in EC III/early MC on Melos (Phylakopi)[85], Paros (Paroikia)[86] and Kea (Agia Irini IV)[87], at both intramural and extramural sites. The eight *enchytrismoi* at Akrotiri were found inside, outside or in association with the EBA subterranean rock-cut chambers, underneath the LC I settlement (ca. 1650 B.C.)[88]. Seven of them contained infants; four jars contained one infant burial, two jars contained two infants, one jar contained two or three infants, some with offerings[89]. Six of them date from EC I (Kampos

[73] Efstratiou 2018, 47 fig. 14.

[74] Poulianos 2018.

[75] Coleman 1977, 44. 48. 104 f.

[76] Coleman 1977, 48 (vessels nos. 97. 146. 170).

[77] Coleman 1977, 48. 56 pls. 21.2; 56 (a 3-year-old boy[?], no offerings).

[78] Coleman 1977, 74 f. pls. 35. 78 (infant about 6 months old); see also n. 55.

[79] »The typical western Anatolian burial custom in the third millennium B.C. was pithos burial in extramural cemeteries« (Wheeler 1974, 415); Massa – Şahoğlu 2011, 165 fig. 2 (with bibliography).

[80] »The different ritual might be explained by the high child mortality rate affecting Anatolian prehistoric communities (in Karataş up to 30 % of individuals died in their first year) that perhaps prompted parents to have a less emotional bond with offspring until they overcome the most critical period« (Massa – Şahoğlu 2011, 165). See also Wheeler 1974, 416. Intramural pot burials at prehistoric Aphrodisias are few and include an EBA III A child pithos burial, with three child skulls (accompanied by three seashells), and an EBA III B (?) pithos infant burial. Sharp – Joukowsky 1988, 52. 156 f. 176 f. fig. 25; 184. For Beycesultan, see Lloyd – Mellaart 1962, 23. 26. 33 fig. 9 pl. 4 c (with a pot as an offering/grave good). On intramural burials of infants and children in the Near East, Anatolia, Cyprus, and Egypt, see Karantzali 1992, 67; McGeorge 2012, 297–300 figs. 4–6; McGeorge 2013, 6–9.

[81] »However, when present, the grave goods are normally composed of jewellery, little rattles, feeding bottles and small marble or clay figurines« (Massa – Şahoğlu 2011, 166). See also McGeorge 2012, 298.

[82] Vitale 2013. See also Morricone 1950, 324 f. figs. 98. 100–102; Morricone 1975, 262–271 figs. 201–225.

[83] Doumas 1999, 167 figs. 8–10 pls. 101 b; 102 a. b; Sotirakopoulou 2008, 130 f. figs. 14.19; 14.20; Maniki 2021.

[84] Christos Tsountas (1898, collumn 153) found in two places at the Kapsala cemetery were large open vessels with upright slabs beside them, see Coleman 1977, 105 n. 31.

[85] Dawkins – Droop 1911, 6–9 fig. 1 pls. 5. 6. Also see Brodie et al. 2008a, 413; Sotirakopoulou 2008, 131. Some of the infant jar burials of Phylakopi were discovered in rock-cut pits; they possibly »formed a small cemetery« (Brodie et al. 2008a, 413).

[86] Overbeck 1989a, 13 no. 105.

[87] Overbeck 1989b, 184 f. 204 f. See also, Overbeck – Overbeck 1979, 108–110.

[88] Doumas 2008b; Maniki 2021. See also Sotirakopoulou 2008, 130 f. figs. 14.19; 14.20.

[89] Maniki 2021, 406. 409–411. 414. 417 figs. 4. 5 a–5 e; 8–10. 12. 13. 17. 21. 22. Maniki reports obsidian tools, lithics, and spindle whorls as grave offerings. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 114–117 figs. 74–76; 718–722.

phase) to EC II (Keros–Syros and Kastri phases) and one pot dates to EC III (Phylakopi I-iii)[90]. The bowl (*phiale*) with non-perforated lugs from the Kalamia ravine, near Akrotiri, which was found containing the burial of a neonate, dates to the early EC I period[91].

The suggested chronology for the jar burials of Astypalaia (FN/EBA I) and Thera (EC I–III) could support the view that the custom of individual and multiple infant pot burials was quite widespread among the 3rd-millennium B.C. island communities of the Aegean, continuing the earlier Neolithic tradition of the child jar burials of the Kephala cemetery[92]. The EC III / early Middle Bronze Age phase of the burial custom in the Cyclades is best documented at Phylakopi, with eight pithos child burials found under the houses of City II[93].

Infant pot burials are also encountered in caves and several settlements of the Greek Mainland and date from FN to EBA II and III[94]. The Alepotrypa cave in Mani has yielded rich skeletal remains of FN primary and secondary inhumations and pot burials, among which are some of infants[95]. Infant pot burials were excavated under the floor of houses in the EBA II settlement at Platygiali, Astakos (Akarnania) and in other EH III settlement horizons, echoing the wide distribution of this burial habit[96]. The wide dissemination and frequency of infant pot burials of the Neolithic and the EBA periods would seem to point to local adaptations/manifestations of an Aegean burial tradition, rather than to a westwards movement of populations from Anatolia, as was earlier believed[97].

Nowhere else in the Aegean, other than at Vathy, have so many densely arranged infant pot burials been found. However, the infant pot burials of Exedres 1 and 2, and Exedra Π2 are perhaps not connected with an organized cemetery. The fact that Exedra 1 itself is a rectangular construction, situated next to a similar rectangular construction (Π5/Exedres 4 and 5), which in all probability is a place of household activities (see below), makes the infant *enchytrismoi* at Vathy difficult to interpret at present.

For understanding this early horizon, which, on the one hand, already exhibits a ›Neolithic‹ tinge, and, on the other, an early connection of Astypalaia with the Cyclades, the Dodecanese, the northeast Aegean islands, the coast of Asia Minor, and even Anatolia, the contribution of pottery is catalytic[98]. Its full study and publication is expected to clarify the island's FN/EBA I production, which macroscopically bears witness to significant technical know-how and ceramic technology.

[90] Maniki 2021, 403. The eighth pot burial is connected with mixed EC and MC ceramic material. Sotirakopoulou (Sotirakopoulou 2008, 131; Stampolidis – Sotirakopoulou 2011, 90) dates the *enchytrismoi* from Thera to EC III, as contemporary to those in Melos, Paros, and the Greek mainland. She dates the burial pithoid jars from »EC II to early EC III« (Sotirakopoulou 2008, 127 fig. 14.13; see also p. 125 fig. 14.7). However, this late date should be reconsidered, since exact parallels of *krateriskoi* found at Vathy and elsewhere date to FN/EBA I, see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 714 n. 177; Angelopoulou, forthcoming.

[91] Marinatos 1976, 12 pl. 8 b. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 714 fig. 73.

[92] Wheeler 1974, 422 f. On child mortuary practices until the LN period in the Aegean, see Pomadère 2008, 57.

[93] Dawkins – Droop 1911, 6–9 fig. 1 pls. 5. 6. The mouth of two pithoi was closed by a basin (Dawkins – Droop 1911, 7 fig. 1). On a MC infant burial in the pit of a floor at Akrotiri, Thera, see Lanaras 2003, with discussion of the intra muros burials in the Aegean.

[94] Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 712–722. See also Sotirakopoulou 1999, 134; McGeorge 2013, 2 f.

[95] Papathanasiou 2018, 262–270.

[96] Dellaporta – Spondylis 1990, 129 figs. 4. 5; Stavropoulou – Gatsi 2009, 415 figs. 728. 729.

[97] McGeorge 2012, 295. On the theory of migrations from Anatolia, see Treuil 1983.

[98] Angelopoulou 2024a; Angelopoulou 2024b; Angelopoulou, forthcoming. On issues of FN/EBA I pottery, see Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 36–39 figs. 5.3; 5.4.

EXEDRES 4 AND 5, AND THE MARBLE FIGURINES

West of and adjacent to the Exedres 1 and 2 complex is the manmade Π-shaped construction Π5 *(figs. 4–6. 24. 25. 46)*. Like Exedra 1, this platform was also rectangular and its south wall (approx. 4 m long) was cut in the bedrock. For methodological reasons its east part was excavated as Exedra 4 and its west part as Exedra 5[99]. A humble curved wall built of medium-sized fieldstones and running obliquely along the coast was retaining successive layers of crusty earth, the hardest of which had been probably exposed to the elements *(figs. 46. 47)*. The considerable number of stone tools and animal bones, and the minimal presence of pottery[100] *(fig. 17 a. b)* suggest household activity for Exedres 4 and 5. This assumption is corroborated by two rectangular constructions along the south wall: a stone ›bench‹ to the east (in which a grinder was found) and a built ›cist‹ to the west *(figs. 47–49)*[101].

On the top hard layer (a few centimetres below the surface soil) a cylindrical stone seal was found, the quadrants of which are filled with incised angular motifs *(fig. 50)*[102]. This linear motif is very common on seals from the Cyclades (Kea, Naxos, Amorgos), the Mainland, Crete, the northeast Aegean (Samothrace, Lemnos), Asia Minor (Troy), and Anatolia, dating from the LN onwards. Exact parallels of the sphragistic device exist on 11 seals and sealings from islands of the Aegean, most of them dated to EB II[103]. The fact that seals were made and used at Vathy indicates that the site was participating in the proto-urban stage of the major island centres that were exercising control over and safeguarding the quality of the goods circulating.

On the lower horizon of loose earth of Exedra 5, corresponding to the surface of stones of the humble curved wall, two marble figurines were found.

Figurine 1: The intact schematic (violin-shaped) figurine with pointed neck is made of white marble and 4.8 cm high[104] *(figs. 51. 52)*. Typologically it combines LN and EBA I features of figurines from both western Anatolia (EBA I Beycesultan type [105]) and the Cyclades (LN Saliagos[106], EC I Akrotiri[107]). Another interesting parallel was found in the Malkayası cave, on the north slope of the Latmos-Beşparmak Mountains in western Anatolia and dates to the LN (5000–4500 B.C.)[108]. The appearance of schematic-type marble figurine at FN Strofilas on Andros[109], also with asymmetrical notches and triangular protuberances, favours an earlier date for the development of this type in the Cyclades (mid-4th millennium B.C.)[110]. Even though its morphological features allude to a LN tradition, the Astypalaia

[99] Vlachopoulos 2014, 236–238 drawing 1 figs. 1. 7–9; Vlachopoulos 2016b, 335 f. drawings 2. 3 figs. 13 a. b; 14. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Section II.A.1 (p. 247–251).

[100] Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 257–261 figs. 7. 11. 14–19.

[101] Vlachopoulos 2014, 237 f. drawing 1 figs. 7. 9. 10; Vlachopoulos 2016b, 336 fig. 15 a. b. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 265–267 figs. 28–30.

[102] Vlachopoulos 2014, 236–238 drawing 3 figs. 7–10. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 256 figs. 9. 10; 264 f. figs. 26. 27. The pink seal has been published (Vlachopoulos 2017c, 550 figs. 5–7) as made of local reddish clay, but its inspection by Professor of Geology Ioannis Eliopoulos (University of Patras) showed that a stone with the same qualities as the well-fired clay of the Vathy pottery is equally probable.

[103] Vlachopoulos 2017c, 547–552, where bibliography on this motif is discussed. Attributed also to this, EC II (mid-3rd millennium B.C.) horizon at the site are a few characteristic surface pottery finds, such as the arched handles with radiating incisions which belong to collared jars. Vlachopoulos 2012, 118 pl. 87 a; Vlachopoulos 2013a, 217 pl. 121 a. b; Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 220 figs. 24.8; 24.30; 224.

[104] Vlachopoulos 2014, 237 fig. 8 c; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 256 figs. 12. 13; 262 fig. 24.

[105] Sotirakopoulou 2005, 54; Şahoğlu – Sotirakopoulou 2011, 287 no. 198; 297 no. 235; Schwall – Horejs 2017, 61–66, figs. 3.2; 3.12–3.17.

[106] Evans – Renfrew 1968, 63 fig. 76.1 pl. 43.1; Renfrew 2017, 27 fig. 3.7.

[107] Sotirakopoulou 2008, 128–139 fig. 14.16. The two examples from Akrotiri are locally made; the one that is closer to the Vathy figurine is of whitish tuff (Sotirakopoulou 2008, 129 fig. 14.16).

[108] Peschlow-Bindokat – Gerber 2012, 74 fig. 41.

[109] Televantou 2018a, 390 fig. 40.8 (right); Televantou 2019, 164 fig. 32.

[110] On the chronology of Strofilas in a ›Cycladic Proto-Bronze Age‹, see Dietz et al. 2018, p. xix: »Founded in the FN it was still inhabited during the earliest phase of the Cycladic Bronze Age (Grotta-Pelos)«. Also Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 41 f.: »[…] although Strofilas shares some features with Kephala […] most of the artifacts so far published seem to be closer to those of the Early Cycladic period«.

Fig. 46 Exedres 4 and 5

Fig. 47 Exedres 4 and 5, a humble curved wall was retaining successive layers of crusty earth

Fig. 48 The grinder found in the built ›cist‹ of Exedra 5

Fig. 49 Exedra 5, a built ›cist‹ with stone tools suggesting household activity

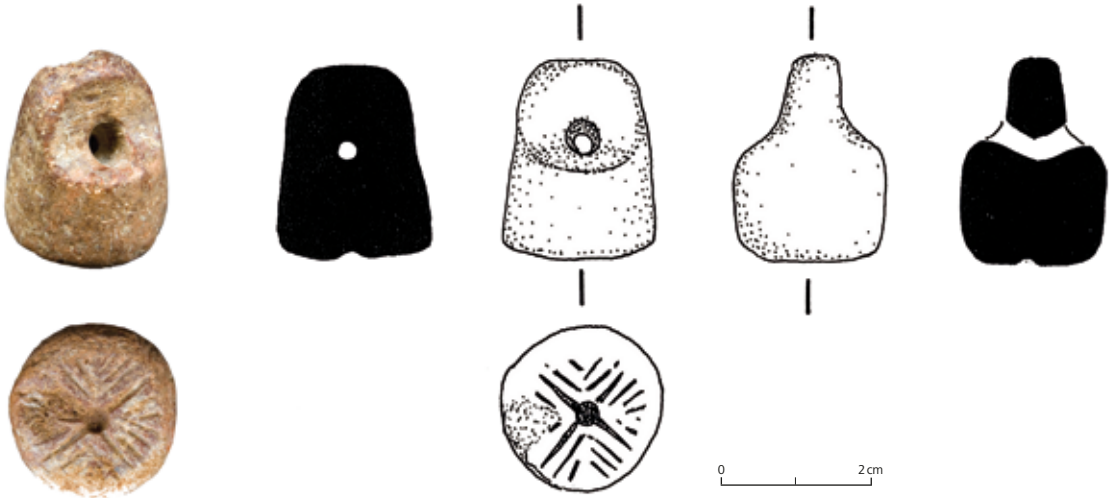


Fig. 50 Stone seal from Exedra 5 (scale 1 : 1)

Fig. 51 Exedra 5, violin-shaped marble figurine in situ

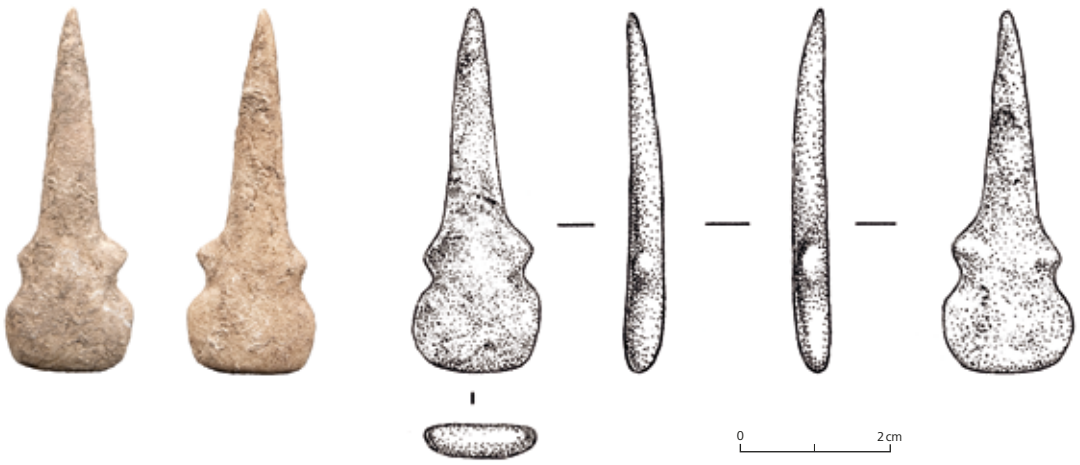


Fig. 52 Violin-shaped marble figurine (scale 1 : 1)

Fig. 53 ›Pestle-shaped‹ marble figurine

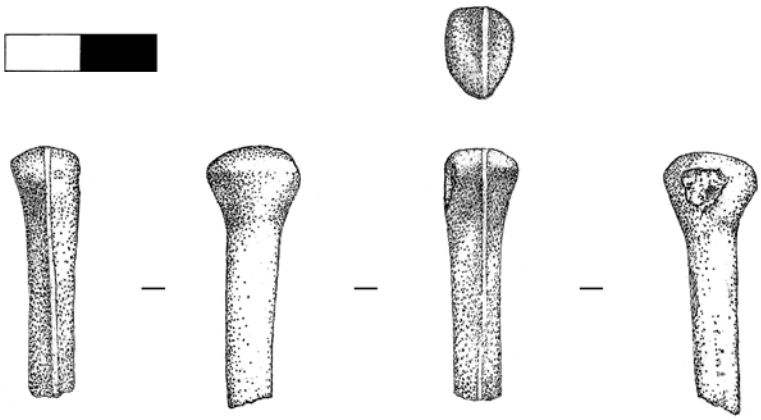


Fig. 54 Drawing of the ›pestle-shaped‹ figurine (scale 1 : 1)

figurine, following the excavation evidence of Vathy, should be associated with the FN/EBA I horizon[111].

Figurine 2: At a distance of some centimetres from the first figurine, a ›pestle-shaped‹ neck and head of a figurine was found, the cylindrical stem of which is broken[112] *(figs. 53. 54)*. Made of fine white marble, it is 3.5 cm high and very well polished. The cylindrical stem broadens to an almond-shaped backwards-tilted head, along which there is a light symmetrical carination that continues on the long neck. The contour of the head, the shaping of the forehead, ›nose‹ and chin, and the length of the neck resemble some schematic marble figurines dated to the LN (Saliagos[113]) and FN (Strofilas[114]), and also to the EC I schematic (pre-canonical and Louros types) figurines from Tsikniades on Naxos[115] and Agrilia on Epano Kouphonisi[116]. Also of the long-necked type are clay figurines from the LN settlement at Ftelia[117] and from FN Strofilas[118] and Kephala[119], which are considered among the last examples of the expiring Neolithic tradition of clay figurines.

111 Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 205 f. fig. 24.4.
112 Vlachopoulos 2014, 237 fig. 8 d; Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 205 f. figs. 24.5; 24.26. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 264 fig. 25.
113 Renfrew 2017, 27 fig. 3.8.
114 Televantou 2017, 44 f. figs. 5.12; 5.13.
115 Philaniotou 2017, 264 fig. 184; 267 figs. 18.9; 18.11; 269 fig. 18.14 foreshadow the lyre-shaped head of the developed types of EC II figurines.
116 Gavalas 2017, 275. 295 fig. 19.3.
117 Sampson – Mastrogiannopoulou 2017, 31–33 figs. 4.1–4.5.
118 Televantou 2017, 45 f. figs. 5.14; 5.19.
119 Coleman 1977, 8 pls. 26 nos. 128. 202; 73 nos. 128. 202.

Schematic figurines of the types found at Vathy are very few in the early EBA Aegean and the fact that both artefacts come from the same horizon of activity indicates their contemporaneous use. Their characteristics and typological parallels further document the FN/Chalcolithic cultural background to the earliest period of activity (FN/EBA I) known so far at Vathy[120]. The fragmentary (lower half) schematic figurine found on the surface of the site by Doumas also belongs to this period[121] *(figs. 9. 10)*.

The first attempts at an absolute dating by the method of Optically Stimulated Luminescence produced positive results, giving for the two successive horizons of Exedres 4 and 5 (the upper corresponding to the level of the two marble figurines) dates between 3590 ± 260 and 3600 ± 450 B.C., respectively[122]. Both dates agree with the earliest horizon of activity at Vathy, which can be dated through study of the pottery to the transition from the FN to the EBA I period.

As has been said, the EBA II habitation horizon at Vathy, if any existed at the site, awaits documentation. The excavation of Exedres 4 and 5 did not document any clear stratigraphical and pottery horizon later than FN/EBA I so, if this holds true, a similar early date should be also claimed for the seal[123].

ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the Pyrgos/Elliniko promontory is very important. A system of boulder-built structures, retaining walls, ramps, gates, pathways and roads shape, define, and arrange the settlement with – seemingly – distinct functions in each area. This arrangement is most visible along the north coast, where the strong retaining walls outline successive rings, the terraces of which might have hosted distinct activities *(figs. 5. 6. 25. 55)*.

A megalithic wall (Large Retaining Wall) approx. 55 m long retains the upper level of the site and follows the north-sloping promontory down to the sea, where it borders the northernmost (Π7) of the boulder-built and rock-cut ramps of the east coast[124] *(figs. 25. 56. 57)*. If, indeed, these impressive ramps (Π7, Π8) that alternate with the robust horseshoe-shaped terraces along the tip of the promontory, represent a combination of retaining walls, fortifications, and harbour works of the EBA, then the development of a broad network of community projects requiring both central planning and supervision for their construction and maintenance can be substantiated at Vathy *(fig. 58)*.

Furthermore, the (northwest-southeast) enclosure wall (peribolos) that obliquely borders the site from the southwest[125], the retaining walls that level the north slopes and the boulder-built Π-shaped terraces along the north coast give the site the features of a monumental coastal acropolis[126] *(figs. 5. 6. 25. 58)*. The cut rocks of the north coast, in rectilinear surfaces that slope steeply upwards from the shore as far as the northwest entrance of the acropolis, reinforce the natural fortification of the site[127] *(fig. 55)*.

[120] Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 206.

[121] See n. 18.

[122] The Optically Stimulated Luminiscence (OSL) method at Vathy was applied by the Archaeometry Center of the Department of Physics, University of Ioannina (Dr. Konstantinos Stamoulis). See Stamoulis et al. 2024a, 375. 379 figs. 2. 3; Stamoulis et al. 2024b.

[123] Vlachopoulos – Angelopoulou 2019, 220. 224.

[124] Vlachopoulos 2011, 94 pls. 73 b; 74 a; 75 a. b; Vlachopoulos 2012, 121 pl. 99 a; Vlachopoulos 2013a, 217 fig. 2 pl. 116 a. b; Vlachopoulos 2016b, 330–333 drawings 2. 3 figs. 1–3. 16–19; Vlachopoulos 2017b, 278–283 figs. 14. 15. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 65–69 figs. 84–105; 297 f. figs. 90. 91.

[125] The peribolos is approx. 130 m long; the quarried, even rocks at its northwest corner probably mark a gate. Vlachopoulos 2012, 122 figs. 1. 2; Vlachopoulos 2016b, 338 f. drawings 1–3. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 145 figs. 324–326.

[126] Vlachopoulos 2015a, 321 fig. 10; Vlachopoulos 2016b, 338 f. drawings 1–3 figs. 1. 2. 17.

[127] Vlachopoulos 2011, 94 pl. 75 b; Vlachopoulos 2014, 237 f. drawing 1 fig. 10; Vlachopoulos 2016b, 336 fig. 15 a. b; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 63 fig. 94; 100 fig. 180.

Fig. 55 Aerial view of the Pyrgos/Elliniko promontory from the northwest

Fig. 56 The Large Retaining Wall of the acropolis and the boulder-built construction Π5

Fig. 57 The boulder-built construction Π8 of the east coast

With the exception of the walled FN settlement at Strofilas[128], there is nothing comparable to the massive constructions around the cape of the Pyrgos promontory in the nearby islands; however, the exact date of these structures awaits the proof of excavation[129]. A trial trench opened behind the foundation of the Large Retaining Wall dates it to the EBA, thus making it probable that all the megalithic constructions at Vathy date to the 3rd millennium B.C.[130]. The marking with pecked spirals of the boulders of the monumental ramp (П6) ascending from the northeast coast *(figs. 11. 12. 56)*, as well as of the settlement's peribolos *(figs. 5. 25)*, would seem to support this hypothesis[131]. Various constructions (quarried rocks, paths, ramps, arc-shaped exedra) that are connected to two rock-cut ramps leading from the south coast (Bouka) to the steep slopes of the promontory also bear rock-art representations of spirals, human footprints *(figs. 6. 60)*, and a unique figure-eight motif[132], which date them to the time when the management of the public spaces of the acropolis was planned.

Fig. 58 The Pyrgos/Elliniko promontory from the northeast slope of Mesa Vathy with Astypalaia (Chora) in the background

Two wide roads leading to the peribolos of the acropolis from the north *(figs. 25. 59)* and south coastline, respectively[133], a dense system of passageways (one giving access to the shaft entrance of the cave »Chasma«, from where fresh water was possibly supplied[134]) and two monumental gateways decorated with emblematic rock-art representations (see below) complete the network of public circulation within the settlement. The fact that the in situ infant pot burials and the marble figurines date the megalithic constructions of the north coastline to the FN/EBA I, further supports the view that the building activity which gave the acropolis at Vathy its monumental aspect dates to as early as the turn from the 4th to the 3rd millennium B.C.

[128] Televantou 2006; Televantou 2008; Televantou 2018a; Angelopoulou 2016/2017, 132 f. figs. 105–107; Televantou 2018b.

[129] The architecture of EC I (Grotta-Pelos phase) sites is very little known, with the only fortified site at Markiani on Amorgos (Marangou et al. 2008, 102. 104; Angelopoulou 2016/2017, 134. 139); the wall of Poliochni on Lemnos, however, dates to Poliochni Azzura. The EC II fortifications of sites such as Kastri on Syros, Panormos on Naxos, and Kynthos on Delos (Televantou 2006, 4 f.; Angelopoulou 2016/2017) all differ from each other but have no megalithic constructions. In the EC II settlement at Dhaskalio, Keros, currently under excavation, successive boulder-built terraces have been revealed. See Boyd 2013.

[130] Vlachopoulos 2015a, 319. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 297 f. figs. 90. 91.

[131] Vlachopoulos 2011, 94 pls. 74 a; 76 a; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 380 f. figs. 5. 15; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 61 figs. 86. 89. 90; 520 figs. 51. 52 (П6); 523 f. figs. 53–55 (peribolos).

[132] Vlachopoulos 2013a, 218. 221 figs. 3. 4 pls. 123 b; 126 a. b; 130 b; 132 a. b; 133 a. b; 134 a; Vlachopoulos 2018, 290 f. figs. 40–42. A triangle-shaped curve on the largest ramp E33 and other isosceles triangles that had been identified as rock art representations of daggers turned out to be non-manmade constructions. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 111 figs. 192. 199; 140–143 figs. 315–318; 479 figs. 2. 4; 525 f. figs. 56–64; 573 f. figs. 122–126.

[133] Vlachopoulos 2013a, 220 f. fig. 4 pls. 123 b; 131 a. b. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 79 figs. 131. 132; 111 figs. 192. 198; 140 figs. 310–314.

[134] Vlachopoulos 2013a, 223–225 pls. 137–139 a; Vlachopoulos 2014, 240–242 drawings 5. 6. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 111 fig. 192; 143 figs. 322. 323.

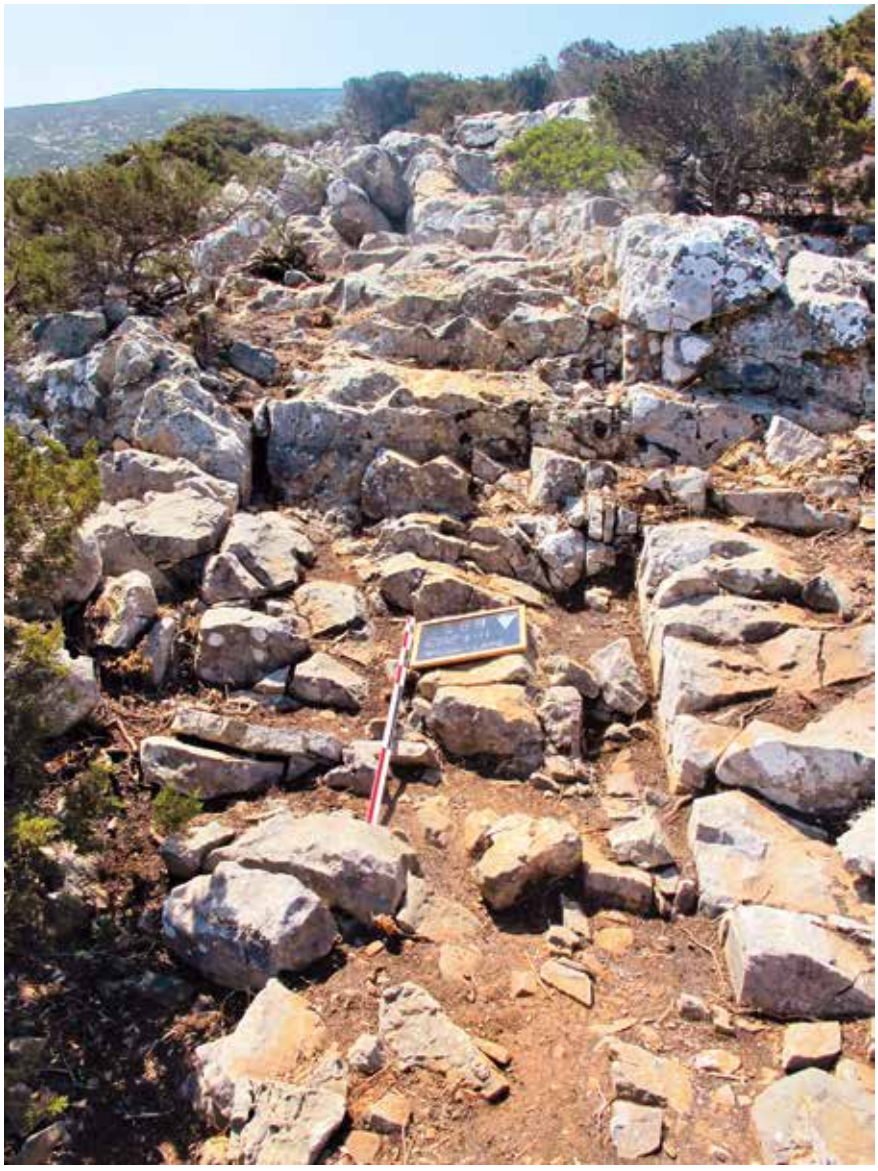


Fig. 59 Wide road leading to the enclosure wall (peribolos) of the acropolis from the north coast

ROCK ART

The most important result of the systematic survey at Vathy was the recognition and identification of a large number of prehistoric rock-art representations[135] over a wide area of the gulf, on the dolomitic limestone bedrock, both quarried, built and in natural state[136] *(figs. 4. 6)*. The earlier publications of rock carvings in the Cyclades are those of 10 marble slabs from Korphi t' Aroniou[137] and of various pecked motifs on the bedrock of Naxos and the nearby Lesser Cyclades[138], dated to the EBA[139]. The largest corpus of rock-art representations in the

[135] The motifs pecked, carved, or incised on the rocks are usually called rock engravings, rock carvings, petroglyphs, or rock art. The Greek term βραχογραφίες should be more correctly applied for rock paintings, which art is so far unknown in the Aegean; an accurate term for rock carvings should be βραχογλυφίες.

[136] Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Section III. See also Vlachopoulos 2013b; Vlachopoulos 2017a; Vlachopoulos 2018, 295 fig. 1 (list of motifs); Vlachopoulos 2021, 100–109 figs. 22–35; Vlachopoulos, forthcoming.

[137] Doumas 1965.

[138] Bardanis 1966/1967.

[139] Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 458–463 figs. 33–39; 495 fig. 34 (Naxos); 464–470 figs. 40–56 (Herakleia).

Fig. 60 Rock-pecked human footprints on a flat bedrock of the south coast (scale 1 : 12.5)

Aegean, however, has been brought to light over the past years at Strofilas on Andros and dates to the FN period[140]. Among the most commented on petroglyphs are those from Asphendou cave in west Crete, the earliest of which were dated recently to the Upper Palaeolithic[141], thus bridging the chronological gap that separates the rock paintings of the Aegean from the cave paintings of Europe.

Rock art is encountered over a vast area in southern Europe (Spain, France, Italy), across the Mediterranean (Balearic islands, Sicily, Aegean islands, Macedonia, Thrace, Turkey), but also in Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia, at numerous insular, coastal, and mainland sites, appearing diachronically from the Upper Palaeolithic, LN/FN and the EBA to medieval and modern times[142].

In the explored zone of the bay of Vathy, at least 100 rock-art representations have been identified to date. They are found individually or in clusters, all at sites in the open air. The carefully pecked subjects on Cape Elliniko mark the accesses that lead to the prehistoric citadel, the enclosure, the gates, and the spaces of hypaethral activities ›intra muros‹[143]. Petro-

[140] Televantou 2006; Televantou 2008; Televantou 2018a; Televantou 2018b; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 449–451 figs. 26. 27.

[141] Strasser et al. 2018.

[142] On the rock art of east Macedonia and Thrace, see Moutsopoulos 1969; Chatzilazaridis 2004; Iliadis – Dotsika 2014; Matsas 2018, 480 figs. 981–983. On Italy and Sicily, see Anati 2000; Colombo et al. 2013; Grifoni Cremonesi – Tosatti 2017; on Spain, see Ling et al. 2024; on Ireland, see Busher O'Sullivan 2020; on Scandinavia, see Anati 2000; Ling – Stos-Gale 2015; Ling et al. 2024. On the rock art in Europe, the Mediterranean and the East, see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, Section III.A (p. 432–443).

[143] See n. 136. Also, Vlachopoulos 2013b; Vlachopoulos 2017a; Vlachopoulos 2020.

Fig. 61 Rock-pecked checkerboards on a boulder of the north coast

Fig. 62 Drawing of rock-pecked checkerboards (scale 1 : 12.5)

glyphs also mark a FN/EBA settlement on the opposite slope of the bay, Chalasmata, an area investigated in 2000–2001[144]. Their examination does not fall within the time periods of the research discussed in this article.

On Cape Elliniko, it was ascertained that in two cases of pathways terminating at gateway-entrances to the acropolis, there were large-scale rock-art depictions of ships, daggers, spirals, and other motifs, which, despite the long exposure to the erosive effects of wind and sea, can be distinguished satisfactorily, particularly at sunrise and before sunset, thanks to the bas relief of their incision or pecking[145]. In antiquity, however, the relief effect was less important for the visibility of petroglyphs in relation to the sharp chromatic contrast that each bright motif had against the ›pealed‹ dark grey surface of the dolomite[146], as the spiral of the construction Π5 of the north coast demonstrates *(figs. 11. 12)*.

The individual clockwise spiral is predominant among the ten or so rock-art motifs observed at Vathy and has been found dispersed all along the promontory[147]. More rock-art representations (of humans[148], quadrupeds[149], ring idols[150] *[fig. 66]*, check-

Fig. 63 Rock engravings of bow, dagger, arrows and cavities in the Rock of Dion area

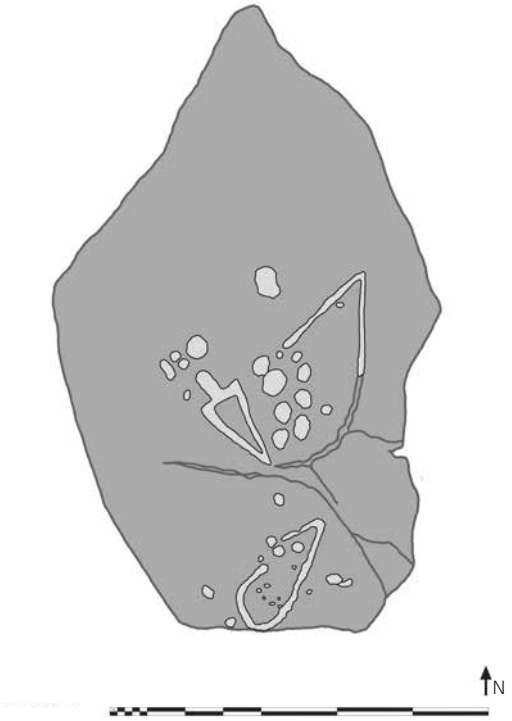


Fig. 64 Densely-pecked rock in the area of the Rock of Dion (scale 1 : 10)

144 On the Chalasmata rock art, see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 479 fig. 3.

145 The mapping of the dense rock-art representations at Vathy is a difficult and demanding task (Tsigkas et al. 2020). The artist Nikos Sepetzoglou works each year for several days under different conditions of illumination by the sun, see Sepetzoglou 2024.

146 Doumas 1965, 59 f. On the original ›antichromy‹ of the EBA rock engravings, see Vlachopoulos 2021, 100–103.

147 Vlachopoulos 2018, 295 fig. 1; see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 493–528 figs. 2. 4. 18–64.

148 Vlachopoulos 2018, 295 fig. 1; see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 95, fig. 168; 571–573 figs. 2. 9. 120. 121. See below, n. 245.

149 Doumas (2010) refers to the possible rock-art representation of a quadruped next to the composite spiral motif of the north coast (Vlachopoulos 2011, 94 pl. 76 a; Vlachopoulos 2012, 121 pl. 98 a. b). Quadrupeds – deer, felines, goats, etc. – are depicted as individual motifs in narrative scenes at LN Strofilas (Televantou 2018b, 48. 53–57 fig. 6 a. b; 12 a. c; 15 a. b; 16 a. b; 17 a. b. c; 18 a. b; 19 a. b), and on eight EC II stone slabs from Korphi t'Aroniou (Doumas 1965; Televantou 2018b, 48 fig. 13; Legaki 2014, 15 f. n. 54–56; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 458–460 figs. 36. 37).

150 Vlachopoulos 2018, 295 fig. 1; see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 583 f. 599 figs. 2. 12. 13. 127–130. See below, n. 277.

Fig. 65 Rock-pecked axe on a boulder of Exedra Π2

Fig. 66 The area around the Rock of Dion of the south coast with the Bouka channel in the background

erboards[151] *[figs. 61. 62]*, arrows and bows[152] *[figs. 63. 64]*, axes[153] *[fig. 65]*, human footprints[154] *[fig. 60]*, the figure-eight motif[155], etc.) were identified at other points on the cape, such as the boulders of the retaining walls of the coast and the peribolos, the quarried slopes and

[151] Vlachopoulos 2012, 120 f. fig. 2 pl. 96 a; Vlachopoulos 2018, 295 fig. 1; see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 570 figs. 2. 8. 118. 119.

[152] Vlachopoulos 2015a, 317–319 figs. 2. 3; Vlachopoulos 2018, 295 fig. 1; see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 586 figs. 2. 16. 127–130.

[153] Vlachopoulos 2016b, 334 figs. 11. 12 a. b; see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 584 f. figs. 2. 14. 140–143.

[154] Vlachopoulos 2017b, 287; Vlachopoulos 2018, 295 fig. 1; see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 573 f. figs. 2. 10. 122. 123. Outlines of human footprints incised or pecked on even rocks are popular motifs throughout antiquity, marking passageways, sanctuaries, marble quarries, etc. The earliest are those from Strofilas and Plaka on Andros (Televantou 2018b, 48. 63, figs. 2 a. b; 5 a. b), Naxos (Legaki 2014, 11) and Kastri, Syros (Marthari 2019, 259 figs. 8. 9). See also a 3rd-millennium B.C. anthropomorphic stele from Bulgaria, Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 42 fig. 5.6 j.

[155] Vlachopoulos 2018, 290 f. figs. 1. 41. 42; see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 575–584 figs. 2. 11. 124–126.

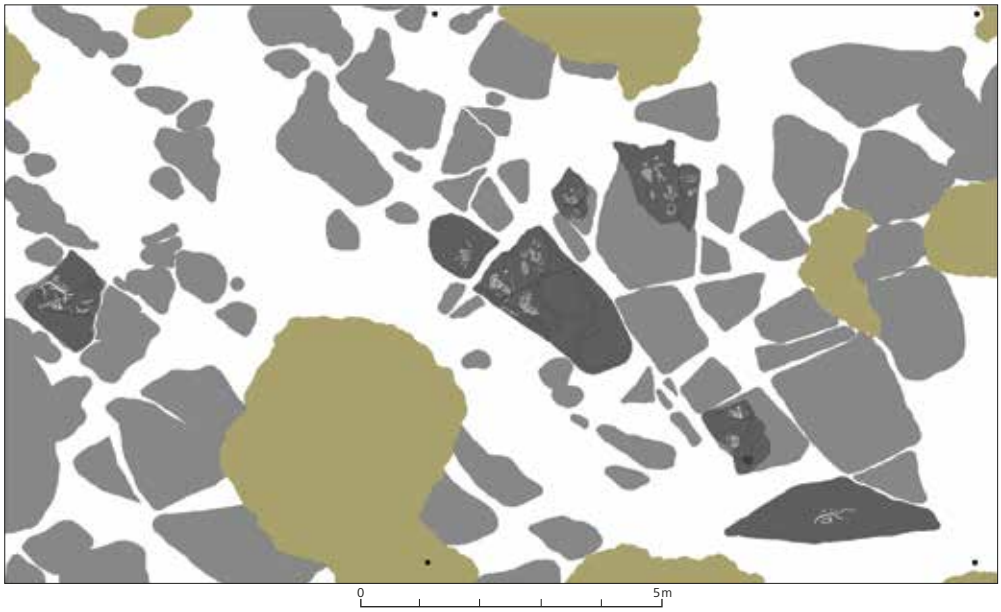


Fig. 67 The densely-pecked area around the Rock of Dion (scale 1 : 125)

the bedrock on the upper level of the cape *(figs. 4. 6. 67)*. Most petroglyphs have been executed with careful incisions of equal width and depth, which can be achieved only by the constant use of bronze chisels and other resistant tools, presumably also metal *(fig. 68)*[156]. The perfect geometry of the spiraliform incisions proves that considerable technical expertise and knowledge lie behind the rock engravings at Vathy, and that, thanks to the status petroglyphs had acquired, some skilled members of the community had developed a craft into art.

Fig. 68 Pecked clockwise spiral on the bedrock of the upper plateau of the acropolis

The Ships Gate and other rock-art representations of ships

Three to five ships are represented on the Ships Gate of the north coast and three ships are depicted on the rocks of the south coast of the Pyrgos promontory *(figs. 6. 25. 67)*. The recognition of pecked ships, oared or not, as typologically correspondent to those depicted on 14 EC II frying-pan vessels from Syros[157] and on two of the rock-art slabs from Korphi t'Aroniou on Naxos[158], make the find at Vathy exceptionally important. The earliest ship depictions

[156] On the assumption of the use of bronze chisels for the Korphi t'Aroniou plaques, see Doumas 1965, 59 f. On the tools used for the execution of the pecked rock art motifs, see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 589 f.

[157] Tsountas 1899, 90–92 figs. 16–22; Coleman 1985; Wedde 2000, 312–314 nos. 401–412; Marthari 2017; Tzovaras 2020, 5 f. fig. 1, with full bibliography. Thirteen ship-decorated frying-pan vessels have been found in the Chalandriani cemetery. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 495 fig. 35.

[158] Doumas 1965, 65 drawings 4. 7; Wedde 2000, 314 nos. 413. 414.

Fig. 69 The Ships Gate from the north

Fig. 70 The Ships Gate from the west

known in the Aegean are those pecked on the fortification wall and the bedrock surfaces of the FN settlement at Strofilas on Andros[159]. Indeed, the great number of them (more than a hundred) moves back both Aegean shipbuilding technology and artistic expression at least 800 years[160]. Recent fieldwork at the FN site of Mesorachi, in the Lasithi area of Crete, brought to light the first known rock-art ship representation in Crete[161]. A pecked image of an EC(?) ship was found on the rock wall of a shaft of the Agios Ioannis mines on Siphnos and more pecked ships were identified at the nearby beach of Apokofto[162]. A large-scale rock-art representation of a (EBA ?) ship on Imbros expands the ambit of petroglyphs to the northeast Aegean[163]. Equally important for the documentation of early shipbuilding are the 16 boat models known from the Aegean[164].

159 Televantou 2018b, 45. 50–52. 60 figs. 4 a; 9 a; 10 a. b; 11 a. b; 12 a. b; 13. 14 a; Televantou 2019, figs. 34. 36. 41. Rock-art representations of ships with »strong analogies« to those from Strofilas are reported also from the FN site of Vriokastro, Andros (Televantou 2006, 3 fig. 2).

160 Broodbank 2013, 327. On the chronology of Strofilas, see n. 114. On the issue of chronological systems of LN and FN periods in Crete and the Aegean in general, see n. 39.

161 Sofianou – Brogan 2019, fig. 2. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 474 fig. 62.

162 Weisgerber 1985, 109 fig. 2. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 454 f. figs. 30–32.

163 Andreou – Andreou 2017, 253 fig. 50 b. c. On Imbros, too, there is a rock painting depicting a ship: Andreou – Andreou 2017, fig. 53 a. b; see also n. 280. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 441–443 figs. 18. 19.

164 Papadatos 2012, 155–159: eleven specimens come from Crete, two from the Cyclades (Phylakopi and Markiani), two from Troy, and one comes from Thermi, Lesbos.

Fig. 71 Pecked ›flower spiral‹ on the quarried rock of the pavement of the Ships Gate

The Ships Gate is situated on the penultimate upper northwest level of the headland, signalling the transition from the area of the vegetation-covered rocks of the cape to the plateau with the manmade constructions of the Vathy acropolis *(fig. 25)*[165]. The gate is a monumental construction of quarried rocks, the north part of which has suffered considerable damage because of geological upheavals, possibly earthquakes *(figs. 69. 70)*[166]. The path through this entrance (approx. 4 m long and approx. 1.20 m wide) is carefully paved and a large spiraliform motif consisting of identical cavities (dm. approx. 0.25 m) is carved on the easternmost of the level quarried rocks of the pavement *(fig. 71)*[167]. Three ships approx. 0.6–0.85 m long are quite well preserved on the perpendicular surface of the grey dolomitic rock and possibly one more (heavily eroded) ship is depicted under the large paddled ship in the middle *(figs. 72–74)*.

The two upper ships are double-ended. A couple of concentric arcs connecting the flat hull of the uppermost ship with its rounded left projection probably render a cabin[168]. The lower ship has an angular projection and its thin hull ends in a fishtailed low post. The left edge of two ships is decorated with a fish effigy facing left and with a pair of hanging banners, as is the standard iconography of most of the ships' emblems on the Syros frying-pan vessels. It is not clear whether an oblique line at the bottom of the rock is the remnant of a fourth (or fifth) vessel or the representation of the sea, which continues horizontally onto the smaller rock adjoining to the right[169]. An upright motif, consisting of a vertical stem with loop finial, is clearly another pictorial element (a tree or a human figure ashore?) that enhances the narrative qualities of the rock-art fleet.

[165] Vlachopoulos 2012, 120 pl. 92 b. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 100–107 figs. 178–191.

[166] Vlachopoulos 2012, 120 pl. 93 a. b; Vlachopoulos 2013a, 217 f. fig. 3 pl. 124 a; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 375–377 fig. 10 a. b; Vlachopoulos 2021, 106 figs. 26. 27. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 485 figs. 2. 5; 534–539 figs. 76–80; Tzovaras 2024, 630 f. fig. 12; Sepetzoglou 2024, 666 fig. 17.

[167] Vlachopoulos 2013a, 217 f. pl. 124 a. b; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 376 f. fig. 18. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 143 figs. 320. 321; 566 f. figs. 7. 111. 112.

[168] One of the numerous boats scratched on a great slab in the megalithic ›temple‹ of Tarxien, Malta, (mid to late 3rd millennium B.C.) has a central cabin (Broodbank 2013, 327).

[169] Most probably both motifs are depicted and the small ship with the fish-tailed end is sailing on the sea line.

Fig. 72 The Ships Gate, detail

Fig. 73 The Ships Gate, drawing

Fig. 74 The Ships Gate, photogrammetry

Nonetheless, the novel pictorial element that this monumental-scale composition brings in Aegean art is the diminishing perspective in which the ships are depicted: Symmetrically positioned along a vertical axis, the upper ship fits perfectly into the outline of the lower one, in such a way as to convey the sense of a fleet sailing harmoniously and triumphantly into the sea or moored astern. From this point of view, the Vathy fleet may be seen as the depiction of the first Aegean regatta, the ships of which clearly demarcate functional, economic and social ranking[170].

[170] At Strofilas, most of the ships are in paratactic narrative (Televantou 2018b, fig. 9 a). A few are depicted in successive rows »creating the impression of depth« (Televantou 2018b, 45 fig. 10 a. b) but in most cases these ›fleets‹ are mixed with other incised motifs that are densely arranged on each rock surface (Televantou 2019, 165). On the rock art of Strofilas as birthplace of Aegean iconography, see Televantou 2018b.

The middle ship is the largest one (0.85 m long) and it is the only one depicted with paddles or oars, apparently an emblematic element of its superior status. The last oblique stroke to the right with a triangular end is identified unequivocally as the steering oar, allowing us to determine the stern of the Vathy ship and that its direction of travel is to the left *(figs. 72. 73)*[171]. Thus, the fleet leads those walking along the paved path of the gate towards the acropolis, in an allusive transfer from the sea to the land[172]. The steering-oar of the Vathy ship is the second piece of evidence that the Early Cycladic ships employed a steering-oar. The clearest case known so far is a sherd from Phylakopi I, on which the incised boat has a crescent hull and does not preserve the bow section. The scale of the rowing figure aboard shows that the Melian boat is a small one[173].

The central ship of the Vathy fleet preserves at least 18 paddles (or oars) attached to the gunwale. If the lacunae along the surviving paddles are filled, then at least 25 paddles (or oars) can be attributed to this ship. If the length of the boats results from the number of paddles, by calculating an average distance of 0.85–0.9 m between the rowers, then the total length of the largest ship should be estimated at about 30 metres. On account of the 25 or so paddlers, we are thus dealing with a ship whose prow and aft are of almost equal height, as opposed to the angled ›longboats‹ with low prow and raised stern, on the Chalandriani frying-pan vessel[174]. As Michael Wedde puts it, »the particular value of the Vathy carvings is that they provide the first indications that there existed a second type of Cycladic longboat«[175]. In the light of new and rich iconographic evidence from Strofilas and Vathy, these types of crescent-shaped double-ended boats should not be associated with the Syros-type longboat and probably had »different functions«, as Panagiotis Tzovaras recently suggested[176].

The individual ship pecked on an even rock of the south coast of the Pyrgos promontory[177] *(figs. 6. 67. 75. 76)*, close to the Rock of Dion (see below), is also a double-ended boat about 0.35 m long and has ten or eleven equidistant paddles along the hull[178]; so, and by analogy with the Ships Gate, this number is close to the original number of the rowers for such a vessel. The oblique line over the central part of the hull could be identified as a de-

[171] Tsountas (1899, 91) was the first to claim that the high post is the bow of the ship and that the fish effigy on the Syros frying-pan vessels points to the direction of its travel. Also see Evans 1928, 240 f.; Casson 1971, 30–32. 41 f. On the prow/stern dispute, see also Marinatos 1933; Vichos 1990; Wedde 2000, 50–52; Broodbank 2000, 99; Broodbank 2013, 327; Tzovaras 2020, 11 f.

[172] At Strofilas, the (at least 20) rock-art ships on the fortification wall are also oriented in the direction of the gate: Televantou 2008, figs. 6.3; 6.8; Televantou 2018b, 45 fig. 9 a. The prow of the Vathy ships, surmounted by a fish effigy, faces left as it does on only one among the 14 ship-decorated frying-pan vessels from Syros. Tsountas 1899, 90–92 figs. 16–22; Coleman 1985, 199 illustration 5; Marthari 2017, figs. 1–6.

[173] Atkinson et al. 1904, pl. 5 c; Wedde 2000, 60 no. 416; Televantou 2018b, 52 fig. 14 c; Tzovaras 2024, 639 fig. 17. The earlier representation of a ship with people onboard, »determining the mode of propulsion«, is the fragment of a LN pithos from Agio Galas, Chios: Tzovaras 2020, 7 f. fig. 5 (with bibliography).

[174] The number of paddles or oars on the EC II Chalandriani frying-pan vessels is smaller or greater (up to 30) but the limited scale of these representations makes these incisions less trustworthy. The ship incised on an EH II askos from Orchomenos, Boeotia, has 17 paddles (Wedde 2000, 70–72. 314 no. 415; Van de Moortel 2017, 264 fig. 1 b). An incised representation of a ship under the rim of an EC II bowl was recently found on Keros/Dhaskalio (M. Boyd, personal communication).

[175] M. Wedde, personal communication.

[176] Tzovaras 2020, 9–11. 14–17. It is important to refer also to the rock-art representations from the Middle Cycladic site of Plaka, Andros, where the ships are similar to those from Strofilas, showing that »the original Neolithic rock-art ship representations were preserved, rather than replaced by the Early Cycladic type of carinated ship« (Televantou 2006, 6. 12; Televantou 2018b, 52 fig. 14 b).

[177] Vlachopoulos 2014, 240 pl. 14; Vlachopoulos 2015a, 318 f. fig. 6; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 381 figs. 37. 38; Vlachopoulos 2021, 102. 106–109 figs. 4. 24. 25. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 485 figs. 2. 5. 28. 29; 541 f. figs. 83. 84; Tzovaras 2024, 631 f. fig. 14.

[178] Tzovaras (2020, 9 f. fig. 8) sees eight paddles and possibly two steering oars.

Fig. 75 Individual oared ship pecked on a rock of the south coast

Fig. 76 Drawing of the ship of the south coast

piction of an unstepped mast. Evidence is dubious for such a crucial detail as this, but such a technical characteristic cannot be excluded for the period before the end of the 3rd millennium B.C., when the first masted sailing ship is depicted in seal iconography[179]. An undulating linear motif attached to the ship's raised stern might belong to some rigging. Of interest too are the upper edge of a steering oar (?) inside the prow and five rectangular openings (portholes?) along the hull. A spiral ending of a thick oblong stem and other motifs on the surface of the rock (sea waves or fish?) testify to a more composite nautical scene, which again is represented in the direction from the sea to the land.

In the densely pecked area around the Rock of Dion, also, a pair of similar ships, but without oars/paddles, are depicted sailing at the same level[180]. The leading one is larger and better preserved *(figs. 67. 77. 78)*. An arched incision along the hull might render a cabin or some kind of tent, an element further demonstrating how much the Vathy rock-art fleet is adding to the knowledge on FN/EBA Aegean shipbuilding. A smaller-scale boat, with minimal accuracy of its details, is carved on the bedrock of the upper level of the cape *(fig. 79)*, where the ancient tower was founded centuries later[181]. Tzovaras suggests that the oblique parallel lines that are depicted on top of and

[179] On the masted ship on the EM III seals, see Wedde 2000, 45–50. 80 f. 331 f. nos. 701–706 (EM III–MM I); 333 nos. 801–805 (MM I). See also a possible case on a Phylakopi sherd, Atkinson et al. 1904, pl. 12 no. 23.

[180] Vlachopoulos 2018, 291 figs. 43. 44; Vlachopoulos 2021, 102. 106–109 figs. 4. 24. 25. 35. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 485 figs. 2. 5. 19; 542 f. figs. 86. 87.

[181] Vlachopoulos 2014, 240 fig. 16; Vlachopoulos 2021, 102. 106–109 figs. 4. 24. 25. 35. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 485 figs. 2. 5. 19; 539 f. fig. 82.

Fig. 77 Two ships pecked on a boulder of the south coast

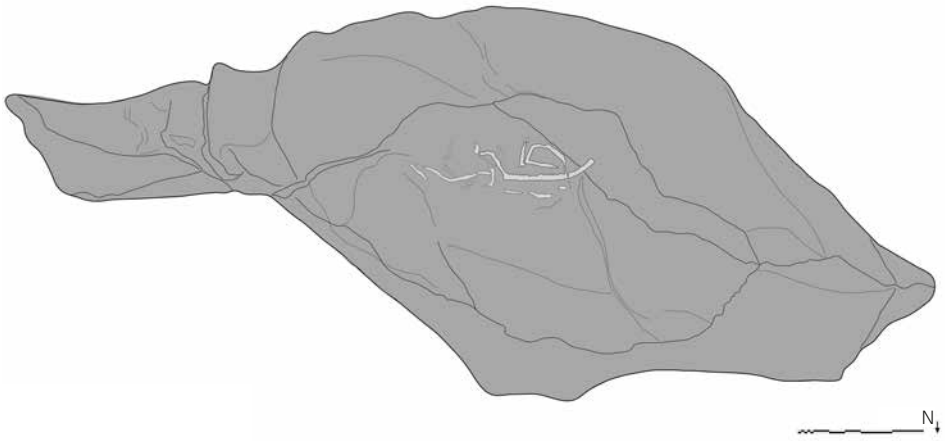


Fig. 78 Drawing of the ships of the south coast (scale 1 : 30)

Fig. 79 Rock-pecked small boat on the upper plateau of the acropolis

within the hull, probably indicate the vessel's crew, following the FN ›Strofilas model‹[182], which is also encountered on the rock-art depiction of a ship at Kastri, Syros[183].

Despite the large scale of the Ships Gate petroglyphs (the extended length of the paddled/oared ship is 1.2 m), there are details of the iconography of the Astypalaia ships that cannot be readily interpreted, such as the hook-like protuberance projecting from the right side of the central ship; a similar element is clearly depicted on the same side of the Strofilas ›Large Boat‹, while a trapezoidal protuberance is clearly visible on its other side[184]. The depiction of fish or of other sea creatures cannot be ruled out, as the undulating line and the few cupules pecked on the smaller rock may indicate *(figs. 69. 73. 74)*.

At the present state of knowledge, we cannot ascertain whether the rock-art ships of the Cyclades are log-based expanded and/or extended boats or plank-built boats[185]. However, the numerous rock-art representations at Strofilas indicate that the technology of building a ship entirely, or almost entirely, out of wooden planks probably existed as early as the FN period. To that chronological horizon, in which technological novelties exist in both shipbuilding and metallurgy, Strofilas stands at the starting point of a long Aegean *koine* in which the island communities soon participated. Recent data from Kephala Petras, in northeast Crete, also favour the view that trading, gateway communities, and the so-called longboat have a deeper and more dynamic history going back as far as the end of the Neolithic period[186].

The issue of the date of the Vathy rock-art ships remains open until future excavations shed light on their chronological horizon; nonetheless, their earliness in comparison to the ships of the Syros frying-pan vessels seems plausible[187]. What remains indisputable is that the building of speedy cargo boats, the mobilization of large numbers of paddlers – as the ships of Astypalaia imply – and long-range sea voyages were difficult and demanding undertakings, presupposing a certain system of social complexity, the agency of leaders, and the development of important maritime centres[188].

Based on rock-art comparanda from Strofilas and also from several clay models mostly found in Crete[189], the Vathy rock-pecked ships can now be declassified as (the so-called) ›longboats‹, if actually the Chalandriani ships can support a type of ceremonial or special-purpose prestige vessel[190]. With a full crew of about 25 paddlers the double-ended ships of Vathy had increased capabilities for long-range seafaring and the necessary cargo capacities for a trustworthy transport craft. Such goods, the transportation of which demanded

[182] Tzovaras 2020, 9 f. fig. 9; Tzovaras 2024, 632 fig. 15.

[183] Marthari 2017, 118 fig. 19.

[184] Televantou 2018b, 50–52. 60 fig. 11 a. b. The length of the more than one hundred rock-art ships at Strofilas ranges from 0.08–0.25 m and only the ›Large Boat‹ is half a metre long. See Televantou 2019, 169 f. fig. 41.

[185] Casson 1971, 30–35. 41 f.; Wedde 2000, 93–143 fig. 15; Broodbank 2000, 96–106. 256–258; Tzovaras 2020, 13–17; Tzovaras 2024, 634 f. The Ankara University Research Center for Maritime Archaeology attempted a reconstruction of a ›Cycladic‹ boat and showed that the shell-first and sewn-plank methods are seaworthy, as opposed to the log-boat theory. See Erkurt 2011, 178–183.

[186] Papadatos – Tomkins 2013. See also Sofianou – Brogan 2019.

[187] On the chronology of the Vathy petroglyphs, see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 305–309 figs. 108–114; 588–599. Also see Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 42. Colin Renfrew (1972, 451) considered their appearance as part of the ›International Spirit‹-phenomenon and the intense interregional interaction in the EBA II Aegean, but as Broodbank (2000, 256) suggested, the iconography of the ›longboats‹ becomes prominent in the EBA II period for reasons related to changes in the cultural and social significance of maritime activity rather than to technological innovation.

[188] Broodbank 2000, 211–222; Papadatos 2012, 157; Broodbank 2013, 329; Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 42. On this issue, see Vlachopoulos 2021; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 595–598.

[189] Tzovaras 2020; Tzovaras 2024, 638 pl. 2. See also n. 169.

[190] Broodbank 2000, 96–102; Papadatos 2012, 157; Tzovaras 2020, 17. »Unlike everyday activity in smaller canoes, which continued unabated, travel in the new craft was ideologically charged, imbued with power, status and cosmological overtones« (Broodbank 2013, 329).

space, speed, and safety in navigation, and which were of prime importance and need for the Aegean communities, could basically be copper and silver ores from Attica (Lavrion), Kythnos, Seriphos, Anatolia, and Cyprus[191]. Other raw materials exported in large quantities were Aeginetan andesite, Melian obsidian, and Naxian emery and marble, as demonstrated by their circulation in the FN/EBA Aegean[192]. If Astypalaia could indeed support the seafaring activity of such powerful fleets, then the unique location of Vathy could have been an ideal boatyard for shipbuilding, anchorage, maintenance, and cargo transshipment, that is, an early shipping centre of pan-Aegean mercantile activity and prestige[193].

By accepting that a rich typology of boats and ships did exist at Vathy and that the prominent role of seafaring for the local community is apparent, we could go further and see the two Π-shaped ramps (Π7, Π8) that were constructed on the bedrock and were protected by horseshoe boulder-built retaining walls as possible ramps for drawing ashore the ships, as soon as they entered the serene gulf[194] *(figs. 3. 6. 11. 57)*. This scenario, however, might refer only to small boats (such as those without oars) and not to long multi-oared ships, such as the ones depicted on the Ships Gate. Apparently, other types of vessels were used for fishing and for carrying people and minor goods.

Spirals and spiraliform motifs, ring-idols and cavities

Spirals, the most popular motif of Early Cycladic art, are very densely distributed in the settlement site of Vathy[195]. Their density and typological variety surpasses any other site with rock-pecked spirals known so far, such as Strofilas[196], many sites on Naxos[197] and Herakleia[198], Keros/Dhaskalio[199] and Amorgos[200]. At least ten spirals, up to 0.5 m in diameter, have been listed at Vathy and all are perfectly designed, despite the heavily eroded condition of some of them[201] *(figs. 6. 68. 80)*. The majority are incised, with the spiral forming a continuous groove which develops clockwise[202]. If we see these repeatedly incised motifs as pictograms of an early ›writing‹ and ›reading‹ code, then the standard clockwise development of the Vathy spirals might herald the direction of the later Aegean scripts ες ευθύ. Interestingly, the rightward direction is also one of the principles of the earliest (FN/EBA) iconography[203].

The density of the incised spirals on the levelled upper plateau of the cape and around the Rock of Dion is remarkable *(figs. 25. 67)*. Spirals seem to mark slightly oblique surfaces *(fig. 81)* or to have been pecked on flat bedrocks, which ensures their visibility *(fig. 82)*. Since

[191] On LN, FN, and EBA metallurgy and metal ore deposits in the Aegean, see Gale – Stos-Gale 2008, figs. 37.1–37.4 b; 37.6.

[192] Naxian marble has been used as building material for the settlement of Dhaskalio, Keros (Boyd 2013) and obsidian, emery, andesite, and other minerals are to be found everywhere as raw materials or finished goods since the FN, the site of Vathy included. See Adam 2024; Eliopoulos – Kokkaliari 2024; Metaxas 2024; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 595–599.

[193] On this issue, see Vlachopoulos 2021, 106–109 figs. 26. 27. 34. 35; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 295–298.

[194] The slope of the ramp Π7 is 38 % and the slope of the southernmost ramp Π8 is 25 % (Vlachopoulos 2013a, 217 fig. 2). See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 54 f. figs. 61–63. 65–67. 71.

[195] Vlachopoulos 2018, 295 fig. 1. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 493–533 figs. 2. 4. 18–75; 592–595.

[196] Televantou 2018b, 49 fig. 1 a. b; 7 a. b.

[197] Legaki 2014, 11 f. figs. 13. 14, with full references to the research by Bardanis (1966/1967, 71–74 nos. 2–4. 14. 18. 19) and more recent bibliography. See also Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 495 fig. 34.

[198] Kanakis 2010, figs. 9. 11–13. 17–19. 21; Legaki 2014, 9–10. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 464–470 figs. 40–54.

[199] Bardanis 1966/1967, 75 nos. 23–25 fig. 11 e; Legaki 2014, 10 f.

[200] Legaki 2014, 9 f. n. 41.

[201] Vlachopoulos 2013a, 218 f. fig. 3 pl. 126 b; Vlachopoulos, forthcoming.

[202] Vlachopoulos 2012, 120 f. fig. 2 pl. 96 b; Vlachopoulos 2013a, 218 f. fig. 3 pl. 125 b; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 493 f. 592 f.

[203] Doumas 2013; Vlachopoulos 2015b, 53; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 591 f.

Fig. 81 Pecked clockwise spiral on the oblique surface of a boulder of the south coast

Fig. 80 Rock-pecked clockwise spiral with incisions of perfect geometry

there are no nearby surface ruins that could be attributed to prehistoric buildings[204], these individual spirals might border an open space of some communal activity, such as the rock floor of the so-called Sanctuary at Strofilas[205].

A larger version of spirals is made up of identical cavities densely arranged, like stylized flowers *(fig. 6)*. One such spiral delimits the paved passageway of the Ships Gate *(fig. 71)* and a larger (0.5 m in diameter) covers the upper oblique surface of a tall rock bordering the north-coastal quarried path leading along the coast to the promontory[206] *(fig. 83)*. The same motif is popular among the rock-art representations of Andros[207], Naxos[208], Keros and Dhaskalio[209], and Herakleia[210], testifying to the common technical and artistic means that the Aegeans used for pecking their signs. The composite theme of a spiral with hook terminal and of a geometric motif of tiered platforms, pecked on the boulder-built retaining wall of the sloping road Π6 that ascends from the northeast coast of the cape, which also borders a small built pier[211], is a unique motif at Vathy *(figs. 11. 12)*, possibly functioning as an identifying and orientation signal for those who reached the settlement by boat.

[204] This estimated area lies to the west of the complex of the tower and the Early Christian basilica, both buildings occupying the largest part of the upper plateau that cannot be investigated in depth anymore. However, no prehistoric walls are visible in the area, which remains free of later buildings, despite the minimal *epichosis* above the bedrock. Nevertheless, after the present article had been submitted for publication, the cleaning of the north face of the Large Retaining Wall (western section) revealed a surface of quarried rock densely covered with rock art representations of spirals and kernos-like cupules (›Rock of the Spirals‹), see Vlachopoulos 2020, 163–167 figs. 14–22; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 305–309 figs. 106–115; 493 f. fig. 18; 495–497 figs. 36–43.

[205] Televantou 2008, 48 f. figs. 6.9; 6.10; Televantou 2018b, 44 fig. 1 a. b; 2 a. b.

[206] Vlachopoulos 2013a, 218 fig. 3 pl. 125 a; Vlachopoulos 2021, 104 fig. 22. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 563–570 figs. 2. 7. 108–116.

[207] Televantou 2018b, fig. 20 a.

[208] Legaki 2014, 7. 11 f. (with bibliography). See n. 197.

[209] Bardanis 1966/1967, 74 f. nos. 23. 24; Legaki 2014, 10 f.; Legaki 2016, 104.

[210] Legaki 2014, 7. 9 figs. 4. 9. See n. 198.

[211] Vlachopoulos 2012, 121 pl. 98 a. b. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 61 figs. 86. 89. 90; 520 figs. 2. 4. 51. 52.

Fig. 82 Pecked clockwise spiral on the flat bedrock of the south coast

Fig. 83 ›Flower spiral‹ pecked on the boulder of a quarried path of the north coast

The repetition of the spiral motif on passageways of both the north and the south slopes of the promontory implies that these motifs were signposting the space of some important activity or function for those unfamiliar with the place and requiring a constant system of markers to facilitate their way, possibly to loci of social gatherings. However, such a functional role seems incompatible with the circulation of foreigners in a well-planned fortified acropolis. It has been suggested that the spiral motif represents the waves of the sea, thus symbolizing perpetual motion as driving force in the prehistoric islanders' thought[212]; a symbol of religious, cosmological or metaphysical perception, however, cannot be ruled out[213]. The connection of

[212] Vlachopoulos 2013b, 52. On spirals rendering the sea on the EC II frying pans, see Stampolidis 2016, 38. 41. 48. 185 no. 125; 194 no. 147; Marthari 2017, 157 f. figs. 1–4. 7–9. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 495 f. figs. 35; 592–595.

[213] Bardanis 1966/1967; Legaki 2016, 107 f.; Vlachopoulos 2016c, 382 f.; Vlachopoulos forthcoming. On the idea of fertility, Televantou 2019, 172. 174.

the spirals with astronomy and orientation at sea is also a strong possibility[214]. Considering that all these theories share common grounds of interpretation in the Vathy petroglyphs and bearing in mind the non-figurative properties of the motif (in contrast to the ships, daggers and other ›*types parlants*‹) a case can be made for the entirely symbolic value of the spiral, as a pan-Aegean *leitmotif* that renders and invokes the natural forces (stellar, solar, marine) which articulated the islanders' *sympan*[215].

On one of the flat rocks of the south coast, where ships, daggers, ring idols, arrows, systems of cupules, etc. are pecked as densely as the motifs of a carpet *(fig. 67)*, pairs of antithetic spirals joined with arcs on either side of a triangular ›body‹ shape an impressive wide-eyed creature *(figs. 84. 85)*[216]. This schematic anthropomorphic motif is repeated on an almost symmetrical – at right angle – point of the same rock, thus exerting an apotropaic effect on those who frequented this evocative place and were involved possibly in ritual or other ideologically-charged activities. The epicentre of this metaphysical ›rock-pecked garden‹, which afforded a panoramic view to the narrow strait leading into the Vathy gulf, is a very large, flat expanse of dolomitic limestone *(figs. 66. 75)*. The late 5th to early 4th-century B.C. inscription of someone named Dion, probably a guard patrolling the strategic point of the peninsula, was – at the time this find was announced (2013) – clearly associated with the deeply incised pair of ›phalli‹, depicted at right angle above a previously pecked circle with a dot in the centre[217] *(figs. 66. 67. 86)*.

A closer re-inspection of their carving technique showed that it is very likely that the ›phallus-shaped‹ motifs were incised in prehistoric times[218] *(fig. 87)*. Furthermore, their singular lunate shape with the panelled arrangement of their interior shows significant similarity to the thrice-repeated motif on burial pithos no. 57 from Karataş in Lycia, which probably renders the plan of a ›wooden hut‹ or a ›wooden portable construction‹[219]. The Vathy ›rock-art‹ palimpsest cannot yet offer the proof that such an interesting similarity requires and will have to wait a long time before this can be documented also by excavation data[220].

Incised in an earlier phase than the ›phalli‹, the annular motif with central dot that appears twice on the flat rock is most probably a version of the so-called ring-idol *(figs. 67. 86. 87)*. If so, then at Vathy too the ring-idol[221] complements the rock-art iconography with one

[214] Bardanis 1966/1967; Doumas 2005, 17–20; Vlachopoulos 2021, 105. 109; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 599.

[215] Vlachopoulos 2021, 105. 109; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 595 f. 599.

[216] Vlachopoulos 2013a, 221 f. fig. 134 b; Vlachopoulos 2015a, 317–319 figs. 2–5; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 377 figs. 19. 20; Vlachopoulos 2021, 105 figs. 23–25; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 493–496 figs. 2. 4. 19. 20. 24–27. 595. The double-spiral motif that renders the eyes of human figure appears in the plastic decoration of vases of the northeast Aegean culture, with most recent example a Late Chalcolithic (4500–4000 B.C.) vase from the Hippodrome of Istanbul: Dönmez 2017, 100 f. fig. 12.

[217] Vlachopoulos 2013a, 221 f. fig. 135 a. b; Vlachopoulos 2015a, 317–319 fig. 3; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 585 f. figs. 2. 13. 19. 20. 127–130. On the inscription of Dion, see Vlachopoulos – Matthaiou 2014, 378 f. 382 fig. 9; Vlachopoulos – Matthaiou 2024, 223 f. figs. 1. 4–6.

[218] Vlachopoulos 2021, 103 figs. 4. 33; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 585. An oblong motif similar to the ›phalli‹ on the Rock of Dion is depicted on the large rock to the east of the Daggers and Spirals Gate *(figs. 93. 95)*. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 587 figs. 17. 22. 44–47.

[219] Warner 1994, figs. 8–13. The motif (round-topped, panelled in one vertical and two horizontal divisions, each compartment filled with dots) was incised on the shoulder of the pithos along with goats, trees, and swastikas, all made before firing.

[220] Even though the inscription of Dion reveals some activity on the south coast of the promontory in the Classical period, the recent excavation yielded not a single find of historical times (Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 80 figs. 134–140; 319 f. figs. 139–145). On the contrary, the very dense dispersion of rock-art representations on the markedly stepped rocks and the picture of arrangements in the countryside document important activities of the community in this area during the FN/EBA periods. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 497. 591. 599 figs. 2. 19.

[221] See n. 150. On a possible stone ›ring idol‹ pendant from Vathy (surface find), see Vlachopoulos 2017b, 275 fig. 7.

Fig. 84 Antithetic spirals shape ›anthropomophic‹ motifs on a rock of the south coast

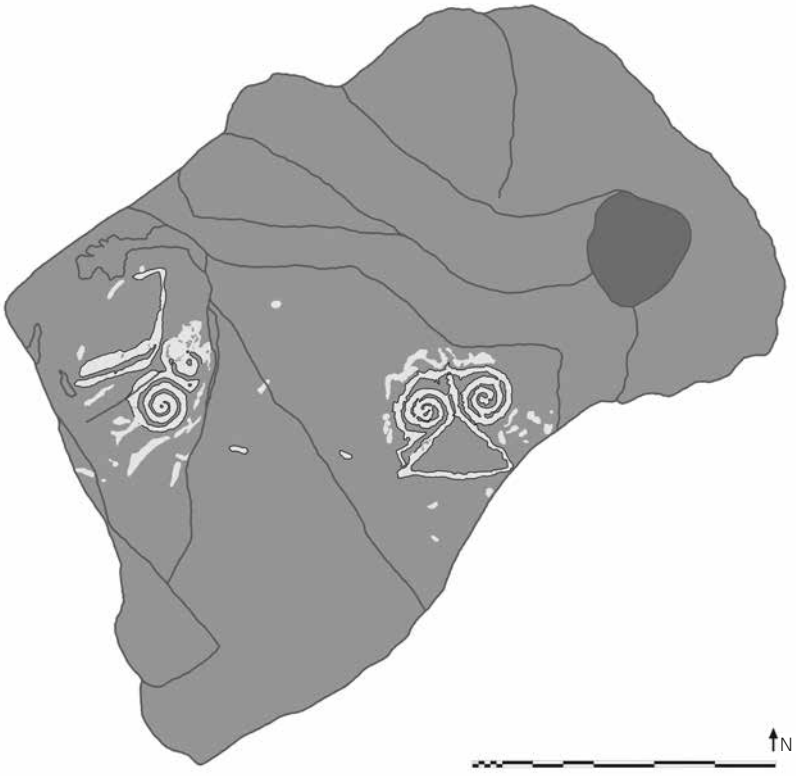


Fig. 85 Drawing of the antithetic spirals motifs (scale 1 : 12.5)

of the profoundly symbolic motifs of the FN cultures, as numerous anthropomorphic sheet-metal and stone artefacts from the Balkans and the Aegean show[222] and the rock art at Strofilas confirms[223]. Surprisingly, on one of its many depictions there, the ring idol accompanies

[222] Mehofer 2014, 471 f. 488–490 (full list); Kyparissi – Apostolika 2001, 54–56 (Theopetra cave and other sites); Psarros 2017 (Ftelia, Mykonos); Televantou 2008, fig. 6.20 (Strofilas); Zachos 2007, 174 fig. 11.2 f. j; Zachos 2010, 84. 88–90 figs. 6–9. On the Neolithic treasure of ring-idols at the Athens National Archaeological Museum, see Demakopoulou 1998.

[223] Televantou 2017, 39–43. 46 f. fig. 5.1–5.7 (Strofilas); 5.15; 5.16 (Plaka); Televantou 2018b, 44–46 fig. 1 a. b; 2 a. b; 3. 4. 11 a. b.

Fig. 86 The Rock of Dion with ›phalli‹, ring idols, cavities and other rock-art motifs. The inscription of Dion is pecked on its vertical west surface

Fig. 87 The Rock of Dion, detail of the ›phalli‹

a phallus motif[224], offering an interesting parallel for the Rock of Dion at Vathy.

A system of dense circular and equidistant cavities that surround the second ring-idol motif on this rock further strengthen the probability that all these rock-art representations date to prehistoric times[225]. Clusters or rows of similar cavities are also found on natural rocks and boulders at Vathy *(figs. 67. 86)*, recalling the mesh mats of cupules encountered on the rocks at Strofilas[226] and Vriokastro/Andros[227], Kastri/Syros[228], Herakleia[229], Panormos/Naxos[230] and many other sites in the Aegean[231]. It is difficult to interpret the rock-pecked cupules; some scholars stress their possible connection with mining and metallurgical activity, others interpret them as solar or divine symbols, or depiction of the sea, and others assume their function as offering tables or *kernoi*[232]. The impressive recent find from Mesorachi, a mountainous FN site of

[224] Televantou 2018b, 44 f. 48 fig. 3. A phallus-shaped gold pendant is among the gold cutouts of the National Archaeological Museum of Athens Neolithic treasure; see Zachos 2010, 84 figs. 6–8 στ.

[225] Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 456. 576–582 figs. 12. 13. 127–130 (see also figs. 131–139).

[226] Televantou 2018b, 48 fig. 2 a. b; 4 a; 10 b; 11 a. b; 12 c; Televantou 2019, 171 fig. 44 a. b.

[227] Televantou 2006, 3 fig. 2.

[228] Marthari 2014, 22 drawing 2 fig. 4.

[229] Kanakis 2010, 48 figs. 14–16. 20–22; Legaki 2016, 104 fig. 5. See n. 198.

[230] Legaki 2014, 22. 24 f.; Devetzi 2014, 356–358. 451 figs. 4.17.1; 4.17.2; 4.53; Legaki 2016, 103 f. figs. 1. 2. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 456 figs. 33. 38.

[231] Chatzilazaridis 2004, 172 f. 208; Legaki 2014, 24 f. with bibliography; Legaki 2016, 103. 107 f.

[232] Papadopoulos 2002, 197 (with bibliography); Legaki 2016, 106. Christina Televantou has suggested that that the pecked cavities on the rock floors of Strofi-

Fig. 88 The Daggers Gate from the north

Lasithi, where numerous cavities are densely pecked on the even rocks[233], adds Crete to the Aegean cosmos of LN/EBA petroglyphs, to which the Asphendou cave's rock carvings also belong[234].

The Daggers and Spirals Gate

About 50 m to the east of the Ships Gate, two huge natural limestone rocks aligned on the east-west axis create a kind of gateway that leads to the upper plateau of the acropolis *(fig. 25)*[235]. The ascending path between the rocks terminates at a low retaining wall, the stepped structure of which facilitates the uphill circulation towards the terrace of the tower *(fig. 88)*[236].

The west rock is vertical and the other is horizontal, with its even surface sloping to the east. At least two vertically-positioned daggers up to 0.3 m long, with their T-shaped hilt fully formed, cover the perpendicular surface of the west rock *(figs. 89. 90. 91)*[237]. They are the only daggers known in the rock art of the Aegean. The two best-discerned daggers represented on this massive rock seem to be aligned in a row, but – paradoxically – in a downhill direction[238]. The existence of more rock-art daggers, however, cannot be ruled out[239].

las depict the sea (Televantou 2019, 171 fig. 44 a. b). On ›kernoi‹ see Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 105. 294 f. 448 (Thasos); 468 (Naxos); 473 fig. 60. 61 (Thera); 494. 497. 511. 566. 576. 580 f. 589. 591. 599. See also n. 210.

233 Tom Brogan and Melissa Eaby, personal communication (6/2018). See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 474 fig. 62.

234 Clusters of cupules are among the rock carvings of the cave: Strasser et al. 2018, 104 f. figs. 6–8.

235 Vlachopoulos 2018, 291 fig. 1. 45; Vlachopoulos 2021, 104. 108. 110 fig. 29. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 98 f. figs. 172. 173.

236 Vlachopoulos 2017b, 283 f.; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 297 figs. 87–89.

237 Vlachopoulos 2012, 120 pl. 94 a–c; Vlachopoulos 2017a, 375 f. figs. 11. 12. 16. 17; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 550–553 figs. 2. 6. 22. 44. 93–99.

238 Vlachopoulos 2018, 291 fig. 45.

239 An earlier drawing of these petroglyphs shows many more, but doubtful, daggers, Vlachopoulos 2016b, 334 fig. 24 a. b.

Fig. 89 The west rock of the Daggers Gate

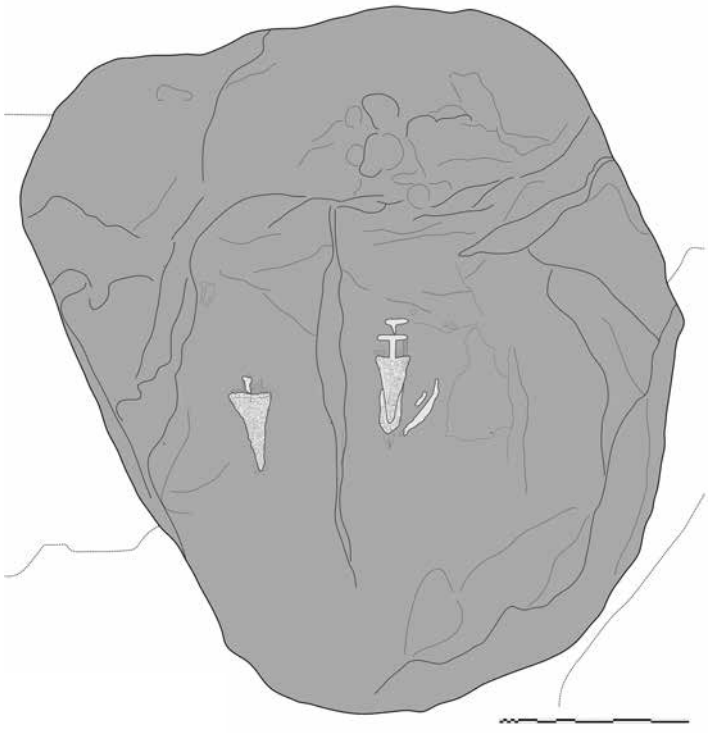


Fig. 90 The Daggers Gate (scale 1 : 20)

A perfect pair of crudely-pecked smaller daggers decorated the lower visible level of the adjacent sloping flat rock, thus showing that the gates leading to the acropolis were symmetrically decorated with systems of motifs *(figs. 92–95)*[240]. Even though the subjects and the depth of the glyphs vary, making ›decipherment‹ of the motifs extremely difficult, it is clear that on the upper part of this rock large double (›eyed‹) spirals are depicted, possibly in a horizontal series or frieze, and on the remaining part of the surface there are numerous pecked daggers in vertical arrangement, with the characteristic T-shaped hilt that is encountered also on the adjacent rock. Particularly interesting is the arrangement of most of these weapons on the lowest part of the rock, perhaps pendent from a horizontal band, as a kind of baldric[241]. Outstanding on the middle zone of the rock is a long and narrow motif with fusiform finial, which is noted for the first time in the rock-art representations at Vathy and could perhaps render in ground plan the Pyrgos promontory[242]. A large number of shallow circular cavities, a familiar subject at several points on the promontory, as we saw, as well as a host of indeterminate glyphs, cover the remaining surface of the motif-filled rock.

The dagger motif is not only found on the Daggers and Ships Gate. Identical daggers, but less well preserved, were found on the rocks of the south coast, along with spearheads and at least one bow[243] *(figs. 63. 64)*. These sets of weapons for hunting or warfare, which in this case seem to be pecked randomly on rock surfaces – either

Fig. 91 Daggers Gate, detail of a pecked dagger with T-shaped hilt

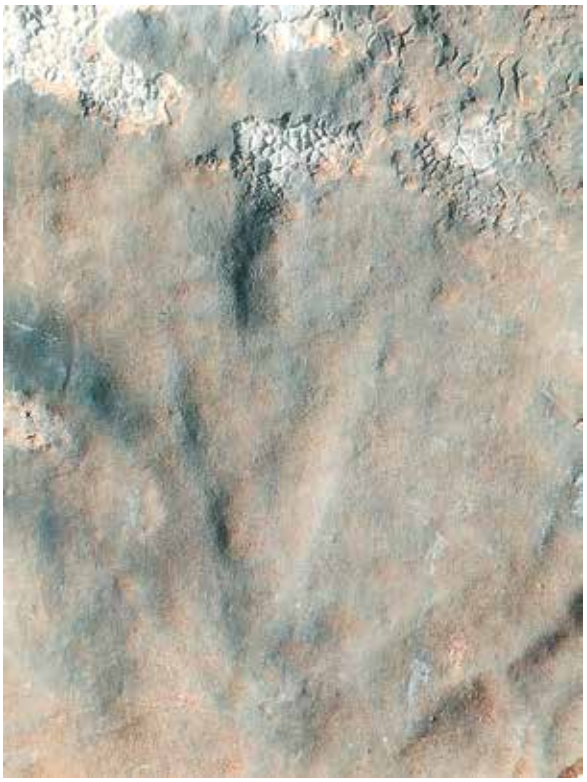


Fig. 92 The Daggers Gate, small dagger pecked on the north oblique surface of the east rock

[240] Vlachopoulos 2012, 120 fig. 2 pl. 95 a. b; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 98 fig. 174; 553–556 figs. 98. 99.

[241] Vlachopoulos 2017b, 283 f. fig. 24; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 98 fig. 174; 520 figs. 44–47; 553–557 figs. 2. 6. 98. 99; Sepetzoglou 2024, 610 fig. 10.

[242] See n. 218. 241. On ›topographic representations‹ engraved on 3rd-millennium B.C. menhirs and carved slabs from the Balkans, see Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 42.

[243] Vlachopoulos 2015a, 317–319 figs. 2. 3; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 98 fig. 174; 520. 557 figs. 2. 6. 100–103.

Fig. 93 The east rock of the Daggers Gate. The densely pecked motifs are outlined with chalk.

Fig. 94 The east rock of the Daggers Gate (scale 1 : 40)

naturally level or levelled by cutting – designate the public space of the promontory but do not reveal anything about the specific use of these open spaces[244]. A cruciform motif incised on a perfectly vertical rock of a nearby plateau (an open space, too) in all probability depicts a highly stylized standing human figure with outstretched arms *(figs. 6. 96)*[245].

The rock art at Vathy adds to our knowledge the T-shaped hilt, thanks to which the dagger can be handled or attached around the waist. It is this important feature that is seen on a few EC male figurines (the so-called hunters or warriors) from the Cyclades[246], as well as on figurines or anthropomorphic statue stelae from Soufli Magoula-Larisa[247], Skala Sotiros-

[244] Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 598 f.

[245] See n. 148. See also Vlachopoulos 2013a, 217 fig. 3 pl. 123 a; Vlachopoulos 2016b, 334 fig. 25 a. b. Human figures are depicted in various narrative scenes of the rock art of Strofilas (Televantou 2018b, 62 f.), most of the stylized ones rendering the oarsmen of the ships (Televantou 2018b, 50 figs. 10 a; 11 a. b; 13). More realistic are the human figures depicted on eleven of the twelve known EC II stone slabs from Korphi t'Aroniou (Doumas 1965, drawings 3–12; Legaki 2014, 15 f. n. 54–56; Stampolidis 2016, 142 no. 14; 157 no. 203), who are involved in various activities, such as hunting, dancing, seafaring, etc. See n. 141. 143.

[246] Getz-Preziosi 1979; Stampolidis 2016, 45 f. fig. 4; 205 f. no. 160. »On the Cyclades, self-presentation with a dagger played an important role among the male elite to emphasize military prowess« (Steinmann 2016, 30). See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 558–563 fig. 105.

[247] Biesantz 1959, figs. 1. 2; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 560–562 fig. 107.

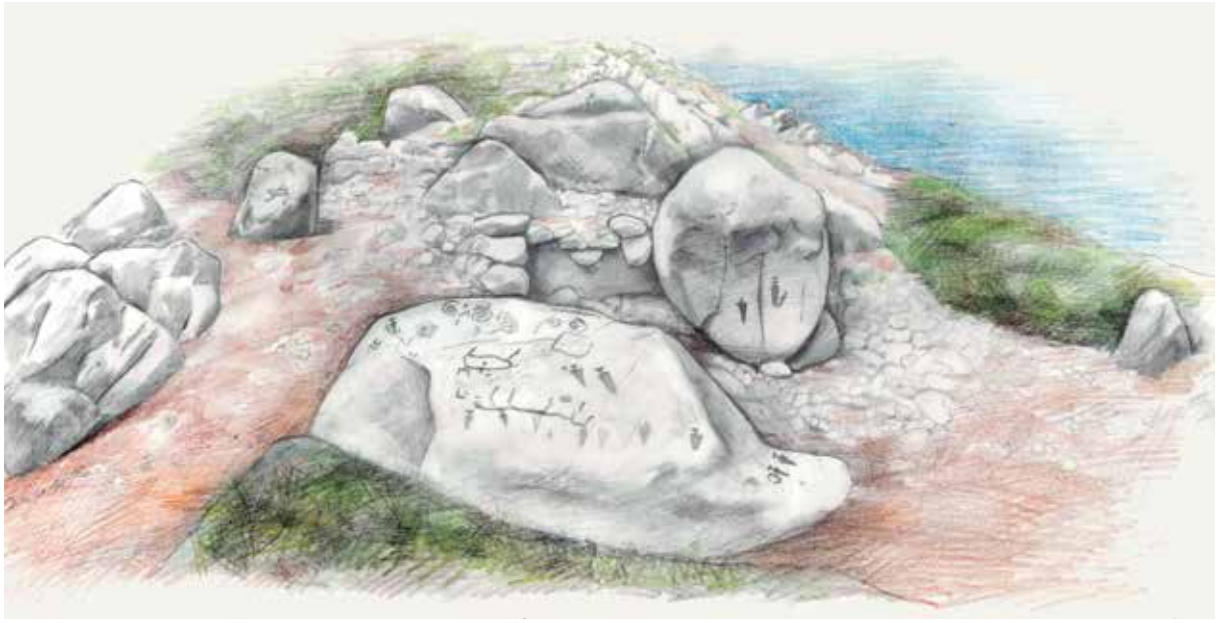


Fig. 95 Drawing of the Daggers Gate area from the northeast

Fig. 96 Schematic human figure on a vertical rock

Thasos[248], Troy[249], the Balkans[250], Corsica[251], south France[252], the Iberian Peninsula[253], and the Alps/Italy[254], dated from Neolithic/Chalcolithic times to the EBA period[255]. The rock-art representations of Val Camonica, in the Valle d'Aosta plain, include hilted daggers among their numerous motifs, which have been dated to the 3rd millennium B.C. too[256].

248 Koukouli – Chryssanthaki 1989, 520; Papadopoulos 2002, 197; Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 41 n. 69; 45 n. 102; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 446–448. 560 f. figs. 23–25.

249 Korfmann – Mannsperger 1997, 53.

250 Papadopoulos 2002, 197. Of special interest is the representation of daggers on two figurines from Bulgaria, of the mid 4th millennium B.C., and also on anthropomorphic stelae of the 3rd millennium B.C. (Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 36 fig. 5.6g–j).

251 Leandri et al. 2015.

252 D'Anna – Renault 2004.

253 Oliveira Jorge 2000, fig. 3; Broodbank 2013, 306 fig. 7.29.

254 De Marinis 2000; Broodbank 2013, 306 fig. 7.29; Leandri et al. 2015; Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 42–45 n. 103 fig. 5.6 k. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 432–440 figs. 2–15.

255 However, anthropomorphic stelai, one with a waisted dagger, appear in northwest Saudi Arabia as early as the 4th millennium B.C. (Steimer-Herbert 2010).

256 Anati 2000; De Marinis 2000, 147–149; Arcà et al. 2001. See n. 259.

The broad geographical diffusion of the ›bronze daggers iconography‹ reflects the enthusiasm of the 3rd-millennium B.C. communities of Mediterranean and Alpine Europe for this weapon *par excellence*, which is linked with male iconography and can be decoded as the triumphant insigne of virility and power[257]. Without doubt, behind the almost ›pan-European‹ glyptic pictorial *koine* of daggers lies the generalized spread of metalworking in bronze[258], which resulted in the mass-production of such weapons in such an admirable typological homogeneity, not observed in any other artefact of the 3rd millennium B.C.

Bronze daggers in the Aegean appear as early as the Late and Final Neolithic periods, as four daggers from Alepotrypa, Diros, two daggers from Mikrothives, Magnesia, and a few specimens from mainland and cycladic sites show[259]. A mid-rib miniature bronze dagger (7.2 cm long)[260] and three other daggers (up to 16.7 cm long)[261] from Strofilas push back the making of such weapons to the FN period (Attica-Kephala culture), at least in the Cyclades, as the result of advanced bronze technology[262]. An EC I bronze dagger from the Zas cave, Naxos, testifies to the Neolithic background of Early Cycladic metallurgy, further evidence that the technology of these weapons had an Aegean evolution, independent of and earlier than that of the Balkans[263].

In the Early Cycladic sequence, the production and dissemination of strong mid-rib bronze daggers is dated to the EC II period (Keros-Syros culture[264]), a fact also supported by metallurgical evidence in EM II Crete[265]. However, based on the above data and given the architectural, stylistic and scale coherence of the Daggers Gate with the Ships Gate, an earlier date for the Vathy rock-art daggers is possible.

Just as with the fleet pecked on the fortification wall at Strofilas and the Ships Gate at Vathy, daggers are used as emblems, in an early version of a coat-of-arms, through which the community proclaims and promotes its power[266] *(figs. 69. 88. 95)*. Additionally, the dimensions of these rock-art motifs ensure their visibility from a distance, even from the sea, transforming the monumental acropolis into a densely pecked public gallery of meaningful signs.

Some concluding thoughts on the Vathy, Astypalaia rock art

Since the 1960s, when the first articles on the rock art of the Cyclades were published, this genre met with limited acceptance among researchers in Aegean prehistory, mainly due to the fact that petroglyphs were exposed to the elements and so their documentation was

257 Zachos 2010, 84–88; De Marinis 2000. »One reason why daggers spread like wild-fire was their adoption as the predominant male emblem, the first codification of an emergent warrior identity, alongside older ways of being a man in the wider world, notably hunting« (Broodbank 2013, 306).

258 Pernicka – Anthony 2010. On the arsenical bronze of the FN and the EBA, see Zachos 2010, 79; Angelopoulou 2014, 453–457; Mastrotheodoros – Basiakos 2014; Mehofer 2014, 467 f.

259 Zachos 2007, 177–179 figs. 11.1; 11.6; Zachos 2010, 84–88 figs. 6. 7; Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 35 f. fig. 5.6 a. b. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 550–553. 558–560.

260 Televantou 2006, 10 fig. 8 a; Zachos 2010, 84–87; Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 42 fig. 5.6 c; Televantou 2019, 163 fig. 29. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 550–553. 558–560 fig. 104.

261 My thanks go to Dr. Televantou for sharing this information with me.

262 Zachos 2010, 87 f.; Georgakopoulou 2016; Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 33–35. On-site metallurgical activity on Keros/Dhaskalio has been recently documented since the EBA I period (Colin Renfrew and Michael Boyd, personal communication 2017. 2018).

263 Zachos 2010, 87 f. n. 39. »The Aegean Neolithic daggers seem to have developed independently from their Northern neighbours« (Zachos 2007, 179). See contra Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 35 f. 45.

264 Renfrew 1972, 451; Broodbank 2000, 256; Stampolidis 2016, 38 fig. 4; 46. 182 no. 116; 183 no. 118; 207 no. 163; 219 no. 188; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 558–560 fig. 106. On this issue, see Angelopoulou 2021.

265 Mid-rib daggers appear in Crete in EM II A at Poros Katsambas, where such daggers were cast, see Doonan et al. 2007. On the EBA II daggers of the Aegean, see Steinmann 2016.

266 Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 590 f. 598 f.

considered insecure. However, the dramatic expansion of this art at FN Strofilas has substantiated the mature dynamism of a representational and symbolic art that could stand at the starting point of the 2nd-millennium B.C. Aegean pictorial art, with which it shares morphological, narrative, and even metaphysical canons[267].

The systematic research on Astypalaia has documented the vigorous diffusion of rock art in the Aegean and enriched considerably the relevant corpus of motifs. Most data converge in confirming that the rock-art representations on the rocks of Vathy chronologically bridge the 4th millennium B.C. petroglyphs of Strofilas with the mid-3rd millennium B.C. incised ships of Syros and the pecked marble slabs of Naxos.

Irene Legaki, who has studied the rock art of the Cyclades, reached the conclusion that this is concentrated in a region that encompasses mainly southeast Naxos, (9 sites) and the small islands opposite (Keros), and reaches up to Amorgos, with Herakleia as its centre, where its densest distribution occurs[268]. Recent research on Syros[269], Siphnos[270], Keros/Dhaskalio[271] and elsewhere in the wider Aegean (east Macedonia and Thrace, Thasos, Imbros, east Crete), has challenged this geographical scheme of the spread of rock engravings, but without cancelling it.

Is it, I wonder, possible to discover the chronological and ideological origin of this art beyond the Aegean islands? In contrast to the rich evidence in east and southeast Anatolia[272], rock paintings and engravings are little known and of dubious date in the regions of western Anatolia and Asia Minor[273], where, however, the case of Mount Latmos in the hinterland of Miletos is of special interest. Originally part of the Aegean coast, Latmos was one of the holy mountains of Anatolia since Neolithic times, connected with fertility rituals. At more than 170 locations, images of human figures were painted on the interior wall of mostly small cave-like places or hollowed rock boulders, showing people in their social context, in events such as weddings, ritual dancing, or simple family life[274]. One of these sites is the Malkayası cave, where the LN violin-shaped figurine referred to above was found[275].

The Latmian paintings are dated to the LN/Early Chalcolithic period (late 6th and first half of 5th millennium B.C.). They are unique in style, subject, and concentration in one specific region, belonging to a culture which »is spread over the East Aegean and the corresponding Anatolia coast and may be seen as maritime-oriented«[276]. The human element in these rupestral representations clearly alludes to the art of figurines, most of the principles of which are common to the islands and the Asia Minor coast.

At the moment, the relations between the 5th millennium B.C. rock paintings of Latmos and the 4th millennium B.C. rock carvings of the Aegean are few and beg further documentation. A first evidence for such documentation was brought to light in the K'noupi rock

267 On the ›roots‹ of Aegean pictorial art, see Televantou 2018b.

268 Legaki 2014; Legaki 2016.

269 Marthari 2014, 221–223 drawings 1. 2 figs. 3. 4 (Kastri); Marthari 2017, 157–159 figs. 19–21; Marthari 2016. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 452 f. figs. 28. 29. On Syros, there are more locations with rock-art motifs, some of which might date to prehistoric times. I thank Teos Romvos, the devoted scholar of these monuments, for sharing with me some of the petroglyphs that he has found so far (Romvos 2002, 17–25).

270 See n. 162. Personal examination of the rock-art representations at Agios Ioannis documented several temporal phases of their incision from prehistoric times until the later Byzantine period.

271 Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 471 f. figs. 58. 59.

272 Rock paintings have been recently reported from Lycia (Korkut et al. 2015) and far eastern regions, such as Elbistan (Yaman 2019).

273 Recently published petroglyphs (Gürbıyık – Cilingiroglu 2019) in the region of Smyrna, of unknown date, have parallels in central and southern Asia. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 440 f.

274 Peschlow-Bindokat – Gerber 2012. See Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 440 figs. 16. 17.

275 See n. 108.

276 »The emergence of the Latmian imagery in connection with the archaeological background as manifested by the pottery reflects a considerable interaction between the coastal area of Anatolia and the Eastern Aegean islands« (Peschlow et al. 2012, 76).

shelter of Imbros, where a red-ochre rock painting depicts a crescent-hulled masted ship[277]. The technique of the drawing dates it to either the Mesolithic or the Neolithic age, reinforcing the scholarly view that many manifestations of the early Aegean cultures originate in the Late and Final Neolithic of Anatolia and the Asia Minor littoral. On the other hand, the extensive contacts between the Aegean and a wide area, including southeast Europe, the Black Sea, Anatolia, and perhaps Egypt and Libya, which are documented since Neolithic and Chalcolithic times[278], attest that the Aegean had already become a multi-faceted and dynamic space of seafaring activity, where various achievements of ship-building technology seem to originate in much earlier times than is traditionally believed.

Monumental fortifications at Strofilas and Vathy suggest that »perhaps piracy was one of the inhabitants' marine activities«[279]; however, the emblematic iconography at both sites points to a symbolic, but also legend-telling and repellent narrative, far surpassing the idea of self-protection. The ships, the daggers, and the other weapons of Vathy reflect an elite-based society of wealth and prosperity that gave birth to the warrior ideal »combined with an Argonautic and Odyssean one«, to use Broodbank's words[280]. These rock-art representations encapsulate insignia of dignity and superiority that echo a community with distinguished symbols of power and social status. Rituals are not ruled out at all.

All the issues dealt with above show that the finds at Vathy, their affinities, and their chronological correlations, substantiate and verify the crucial geographical position of Astypalaia as an island-station on the sea route between the Cyclades, the Dodecanese and the coast of Asia Minor, and vice versa. They show too the amalgamative character of the culture of Astypalaia. The FN/EBA settlement and harbour site at Vathy combines Cycladic, Dodecanesian, coastal Anatolian features, as well as north and east Aegean ones, without the contacts with Astypalaia being exhausted in these areas.

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[277] Andreou – Andreou 2017, fig. 53 a. b; Vlachopoulos et al. 2024, 441–443 figs. 18. 19. I am indebted to Elias and Ioanna Andreou for sharing the evidence on the Imbros rock art with me.
[278] Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 42–45.
[279] Coleman – Facorellis 2018, 42.
[280] Broodbank 2013, 329.

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