

STUDI E RICERCHE DI PROTOSTORIA MEDITERRANEA

8

Collana diretta da  
Paola Càssola Guida



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DALL'EGEO ALL'ADRIATICO:  
ORGANIZZAZIONI SOCIALI, MODI  
DI SCAMBIO E INTERAZIONE  
IN ETÀ POSTPALAZIALE  
(XII-XI SEC. A.C.)

FROM THE AEGEAN TO THE ADRIATIC:  
SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS, MODES  
OF EXCHANGE AND INTERACTION  
IN POSTPALATIAL TIMES  
(12<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> B.C.)

a cura di

ELISABETTA BORGNA e PAOLA CÀSSOLA GUIDA

QUASAR



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YANNOS G. LOLOS \*

## SALAMIS CA. 1200 B.C.: CONNECTIONS WITH CYPRUS AND THE EAST

### *Introduction*

The aim of this contribution<sup>1</sup> is to highlight the status of the Mycenaean acropolis at Kanakia, the seat of the naval kingdom of Salamis, in the Saronic Gulf (figs. 1-2), and assess the evidence for its connections with Cyprus and the East, within the context of social complexity of inter-regional relations in the Mediterranean at the twilight of the Palatial period, around 1200 B.C.

My paper is at the margin of the theme of this Workshop and, unlike the orientation of most papers, offers a view from the Aegean towards the East. It may, however, be of some use for this Workshop, adding as it does a new island centre on the map, that can be identified with Strabo's Old Salamis (*Geographica*, IX.1.9), and now finding its place within the complex international milieu of the years preceding the fall of the palaces.

### *Mycenaean Salamis: The palatial acropolis at Kanakia*

Since 2000, the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Ioannina, under the direction of the present author, has been carrying out systematic excavation and survey work in the area of Kanakia, on the southwest coast of Salamis.<sup>2</sup>

Of all coastal prehistoric settlement sites identified on the islands of the Saronic and Argolic Gulfs and placed within a dense network of sea-routes, only two harbour-sites show the longest record of occupation, spanning a period from Late Neolithic to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C.: Kolonna on the north-west coast of Aigina and Kanakia on Salamis (for the end of the Bronze Age settlement at Kolonna see Hiller 2003, pp. 11-12).

The extensive Mycenaean site at Kanakia (with an inhabited area of ca. 13 acres), which includes the acropolis and lower town, situated close to two natural harbours, in the bay of Kanakia and in the bay of Pyrgiakoni (Marabea 2007b), appears to have flourished in the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (in common with other major Mycenaean sites), and to have been abandoned shortly after 1200 B.C., in the Late Helladic IIIC Early phase.

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<sup>1</sup> The final version of this paper has been enriched with further data from the 2007 excavation at the site of Kanakia, including the new plan of Building Gamma (here figs. 3, 12).

<sup>2</sup> LOLOS 2003; ID. 2004; ID. 2005; LOLOS, MARABEA, OIKONOMOU 2007; DICKINSON 2006, pp. 56, 61, fig. 2.1.

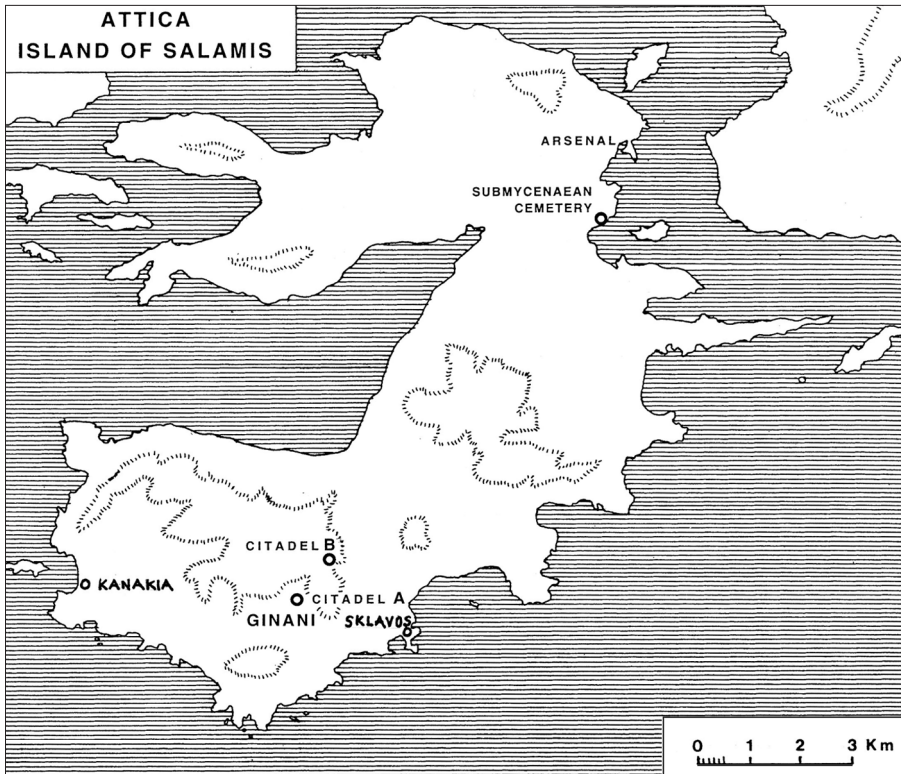


Fig. 1. - Map of Salamis, with the sites of Kanakia, Sklavos (acropolis of the Middle Bronze Age) and Ginani (Citadels A and B of the Early Iron Age), in the south part of the island.



Fig. 2. - Salamis, Kanakia. View of the coastal acropolis, from west.



In the upper part of the coastal acropolis at Kanakia (fig. 2) a substantial section of the Late Mycenaean settlement has been unearthed, including a system of building complexes composed of large constructions of palatial dimensions (fig. 3). Of crucial importance is the layout and role of two building complexes.

On the west slope of the second (eastern) height of the acropolis at Kanakia a complex consisting of Buildings IA-IB-ID was revealed in 2001-2002 (figs. 4-5). It measures 42m in the east-west axis and comprises 41 rooms and other areas.

On the basis of the pottery finds retrieved from below the floors of the buildings, their construction can be dated to the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (Late Helladic IIIB 1). The period of their use appears to have come to an end soon after 1200 B.C., in Late Helladic IIIC Early (in J.B. Rutter's phase 1).

A special feature of the eastern compound is its fortified main entrance, in the north-western part of Building IB (figs. 4-6). At this gate ended the so-called Kychreia road, leading from the main harbour at Kanakia to the higher terraces of the acropolis. The gate, in the form of a double triangle, in conjunction with a strong tower on the eastern side of the inner triangle, reveals an organized system for the control of the access to the interior of the complex; the latter offers hints about the public character and central function of the complex, comprising working spaces, storerooms and auxiliary rooms.

Besides the role of the complex as a locus for the reception of people and the storage and distribution of goods, it seems that several rooms of the buildings, especially those in the upper wing of Building IA (fig. 7), were used for industrial and other activities, during the prosperous phase of occupation.

The systematic excavation of the three buildings has brought to light a substantial quantity of pottery (examples in figs. 8-10), a large number of stone implements, including querns, grinding stones and whet-stones, and various small objects.

A find of exceptional interest is a hoard of bronze objects hidden in the floor of an anteroom in the upper wing of Building ID (fig. 11). On the whole, its composition shows similarities with that of other well-known hoards of bronzes of ca. 1200 B.C. at major Mycenaean sites in southern Greece, such as the Poros Wall hoard at Mycenae and the hoard on the acropolis of Athens (Spyropoulos 1972). Yet this hoard stands out for a unique piece.

The Salamis hoard comprises: a sickle-like knife and two chisels of known types with many parallels, a bronze sheet, that was originally folded, a fragment of a bronze vessel, and perhaps what is the most important find of our eight-year excavation: a plate from a scale corselet of eastern type marked with an Egyptian royal cartouche (figs. 11, 16), for which I reserve further comment later on.

Besides the hoard, there are three isolated bronzes from areas inside the eastern compound: two knives of usual types and a fine diminutive chisel for carving wood, ivory, bone or steatite. It is perhaps worth mentioning, here, that a steatite seal-stone occurred just in front of the twin triangular gate of Building IB (Lolos, Marabea, Oikonomou 2007, fig. 14).

The central building (Building Gamma) of the Late Mycenaean palatial complex (figs. 3, 12-15) on the upper level of the coastal acropolis, adjacent to Building Delta, occupies a large part of the saddle between the two contiguous heights that form the natural relief of the area.

Building Gamma is of impressive size, measuring 45 x 30m and extending over an area of 750 m<sup>2</sup> (at present estimates). It is arranged at five (5) successive levels and comprises at least 45 rooms and other areas. Its composite plan is characterised by a labyrinth of rooms, two long cor-

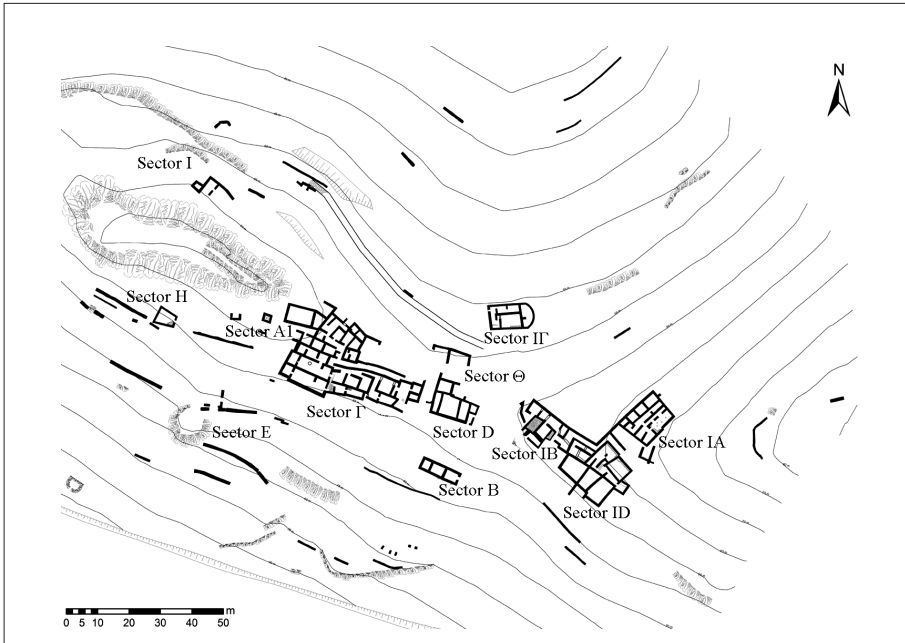


Fig. 3. - Salamis, Kanakia. General plan of the acropolis, with excavated Late Mycenaean buildings (measured and drawn by G. Makris and A. Argyriou, with additions by Y. Nakas, 2007).

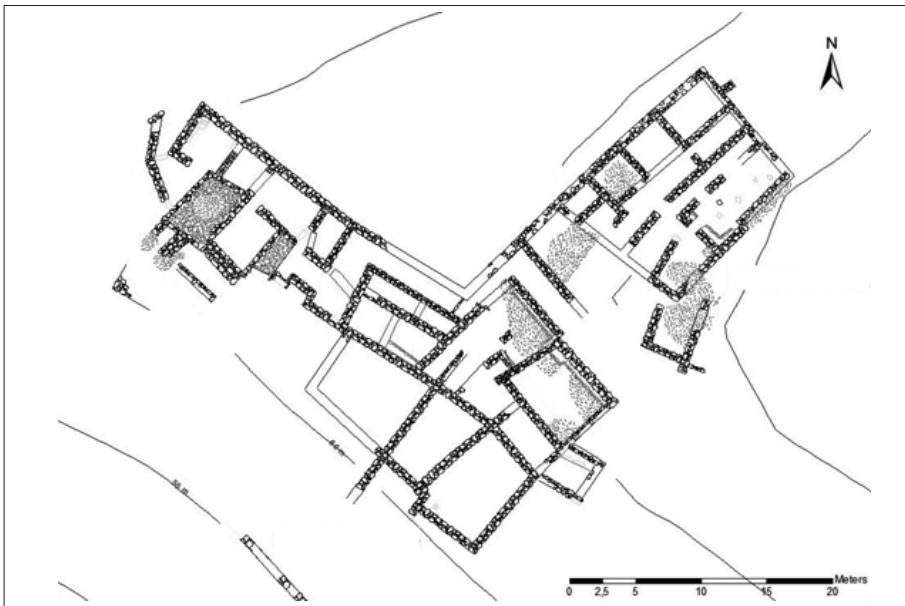


Fig. 4. - Salamis, Kanakia. Plan of Building Complex IA-IB-ID (measured and drawn by G. Makris and A. Argyriou, 2003).



Fig. 5. - Salamis, Kanakia. View of Building Complex IA-IB-ID, with double triangular gate in the foreground, from west.



Fig. 6. - Salamis, Kanakia. Double triangular gate of Building Complex IA-IB-ID, from north-west.



Fig. 7. - Salamis, Kanakia. View of industrial Building IA, from north-east.



Fig. 8. - Salamis, Kanakia, Building IB. Plain *kylix* and small decorated stirrup-jar (Late Helladic IIIB-IIIC Early).



Fig. 9. - Salamis, Kanakia, Building ID. Spouted krater with wavy band decoration (Late Helladic IIIC Early).

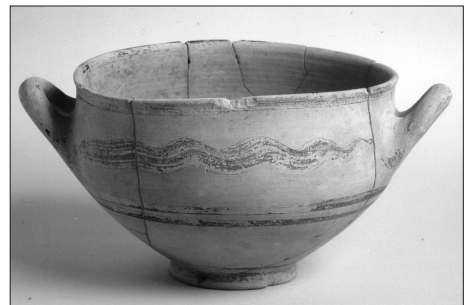


Fig. 10. - Salamis, Kanakia, Building IA. Deep bowl with wavy band decoration (Late Helladic III C early) (Height: 12 cm.; diam. of rim: 16.4-18.6cm).



Fig. 11. - Salamis, Kanakia, Building ID. Hoard of bronzes, after cleaning.

ridors and three (3) entrances of defensive nature, serving as check-points, with a main access from the east, through a *propylon* marked by a single column base.

An essential element of the main palatial building at Kanakia is the twin megaron (hall of state), consisting of two identical parts, at two different levels, with external communication on the east side (figs. 12-14). Each one, measuring 14 x 4m, comprises a long hall (11 x 4m), marked out for its white plastered floor, and a rear room (chamber). The plan of each megaron can be compared to that of the first Late Helladic IIIB megaron excavated on the lower terraces of the Cyclopean acropolis at Midea in the Argolid (Walberg 1999; Ead. 2001, pp. 124-125). The existence of the double megaron inside the main building, in conjunction with the size, structure and function of the other large compounds, is a decisive factor for the identification of the palatial character of the Salaminian acropolis.

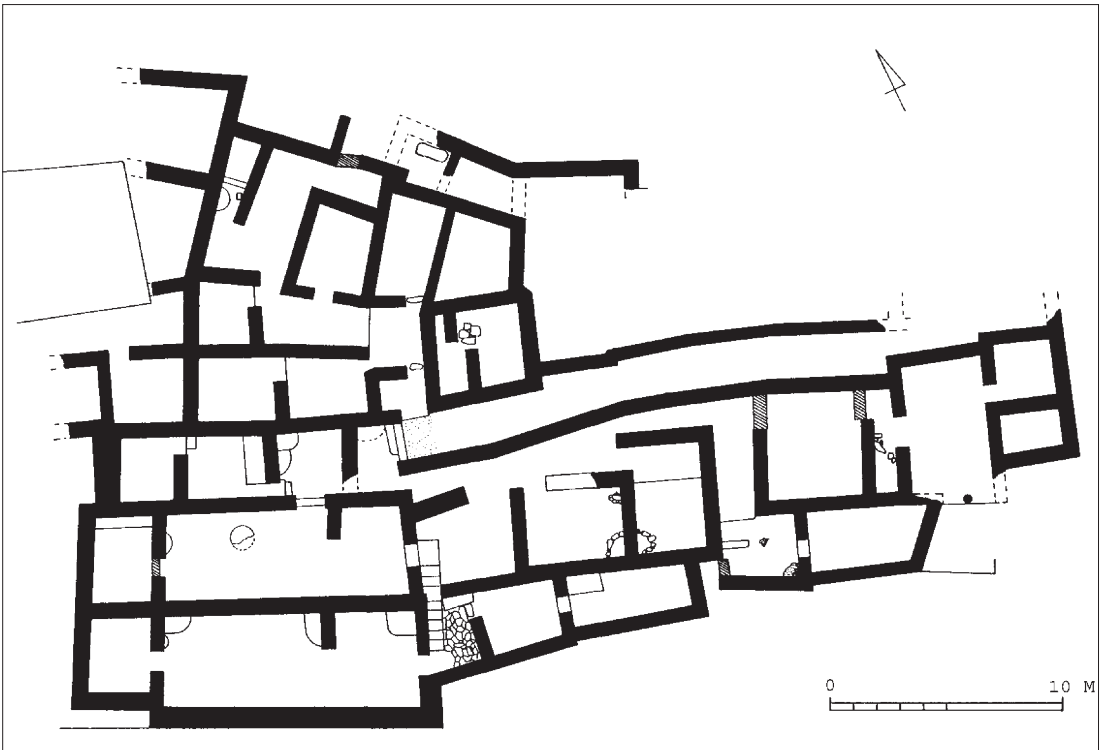


Fig. 12. - Salamis, Kanakia. Plan of main palatial Building Gamma (drawing: Y. Nakas, 2007).

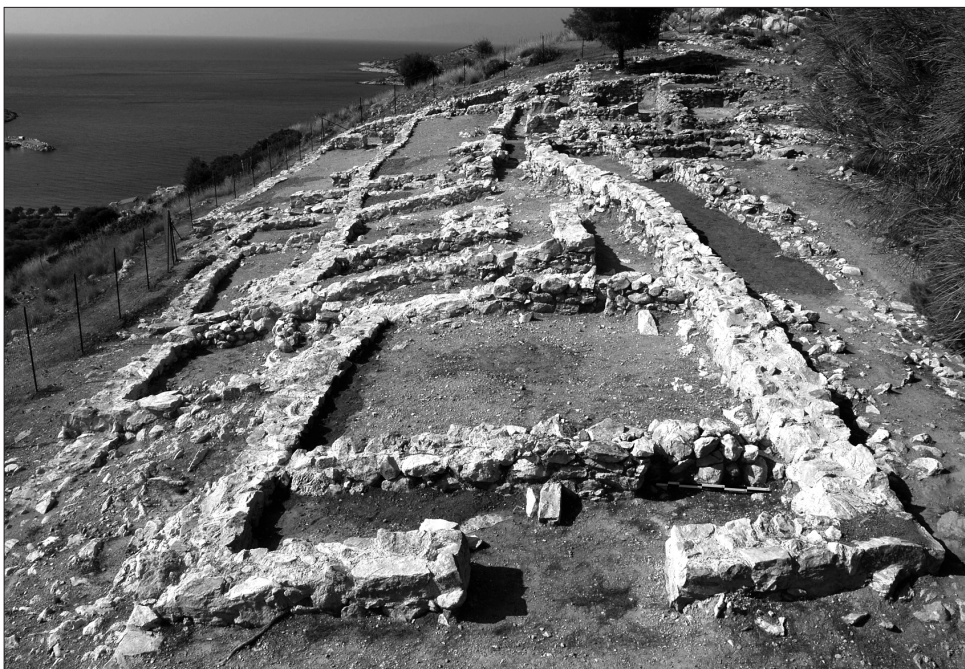


Fig. 13. - Salmis, Kanakia. General view of Building Gamma, from east (2006).



Fig. 14. - Salmis, Kanakia. View of Building Gamma, from west, with twin megaron in the foreground (2006).

The north wing of Building Gamma consists of parallel rows of small or medium-sized rooms, including private quarters, storerooms, ancillary rooms and other spaces. Of special importance is a small bipartite shrine situated close to the northern *propylon* (figs. 12, 15) and apparently forming the focus of an official cult.

By analogy to the end in the history of Building Complex IA-IB-ID, the abandonment and consequent symbolic “sealing” of palatial Building Gamma, at the beginning of the Late Helladic IIC Early period, are vividly documented by the existence of barrier walls (fig. 12), blocking all the three entrances of the large compound (both the eastern and northern *propylon* and also the auxiliary southern entrance), and sharply differing in nature from the “alterations” or “remodelling works” attested for the final phase of the Palace of Nestor at Pylos, though somewhat reminiscent of the blocking of the main entrance to the Megaron A Complex at Mycenaean Iolkos (see Dickinson 2006, p. 28, fig. 2.3).

The Mycenaean centre of Kanakia, situated at the south-western extremity of Salamis (fig. 1), and probably controlling the sea-routes of the western Saronic, was the seat of the maritime kingdom of Salamis – small compared to other Mycenaean kingdoms – that was involved in sea trade, warfare and piracy in a much wider geographical area.

It was ruled by the legendary Aiacid dynasty, of which the most illustrious member was perhaps Ajax, son of Telamon, as recorded in the Greek literary tradition since Homer (*Iliad* II, 557-558), and shown in numerous representations in art from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. till the Roman period (e.g. figs. 23-24).

The location of Ajax’s capital on the acropolis at Kanakia agrees also with topographical references regarding Ajax’s base and vital area contained in two ancient sources: Hesiod in *Catalogue of Women or Eoiai*, 55 (204) and Sophocles (*Aias* 134-135).

The recognition of the capital of the small naval kingdom of Salamis presents us with further archaeological documentation for our understanding of the fragmented political geography of Late Mycenaean Greece, as first sketched for us in the Catalogue of Ships in the second book of the *Iliad*. We are now provided with concrete evidence regarding the capital of an island kingdom (referred to as a “minor” kingdom in the Epic), which displays a number of important differences in production and storage potential and social and economic structure from the large palatial centres of the Peloponnese and central Greece (cf. structural features as outlined by Whitelaw 2001, p. 79), with an economy largely based on stock-breeding, bee-keeping, collection of pine-resin and maritime activity of all kinds.

The identification of the coastal palace complex of Salamis provides us with a number of new parameters for assessing the manifestation, exercise and gradation of royal power in Greece in the 13<sup>th</sup> and early 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Palatial power in Mycenaean Greece should not be viewed as solid and uniform, or indeed expressed in a single way, but rather as highly diversified and plausibly asymmetrical.

### *The Eastern Connection*

In addition to the contacts of the coastal centre of Kanakia with neighbouring areas, *i.e.* Attica, the north-east Peloponnese and Aigina, already documented by the archaeologist Christina Marabea (2007a; Ead. 2008), through the recognition of imported Aiginetan and other pottery at the site, there is solid evidence for Salaminian connections with distant places in the East, as



Fig. 15. - Salamis, Kanakia. Part of the north wing of Building Gamma, from west, with small oblong shrine in the foreground (2007).

shown by several finds occurring in three (3) different building complexes, on the upper level of the acropolis, and calling for special attention:

Of exceptional value, among the contents of the hoard of bronzes from the Eastern complex, is the bronze scale-plate (fig. 16), 8.5cm in length, that comes from a scale corselet of Near-Eastern origin, very different in structure from the Mycenaean type of cuirass (*thorax*) known from examples at Dendra and Thebes and also represented by ideograms figuring on the Linear B tablets, especially those from Knossos (Chadwick 1976,

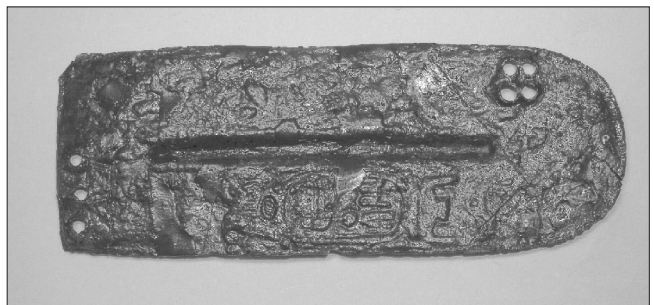
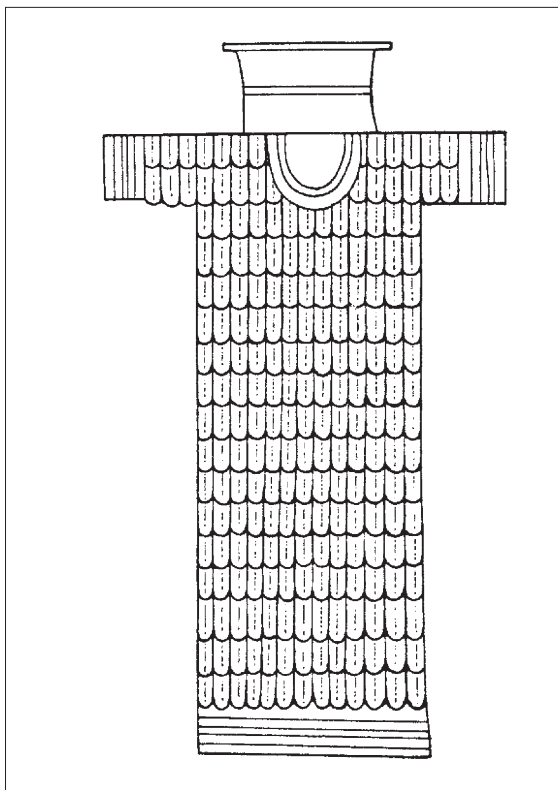


Fig. 16. - Salamis, Kanakia, Building ID. Bronze plate from scale armour, stamped with the cartouche of Ramesses II (Length: 8.5cm).



Fig. 17. - Salamis, Kanakia. Depiction of scale corselet in the Tomb of Ken-Amun, Egypt (KARAGEORGHIS, MASSON 1975, fig. 19c).



pp. 160-161, figs. 63-64; Andrikou 2007). As at Kanakia, a bronze scale occurs in the Founder's Hoard, of the same date, at Pyla Kokkinokremos in Cyprus (Karageorghis, Demas 1984, pls. XXV: 69, XXVI: 67A, XLIV: 67A; Karageorghis 2002, p. 85, fig. 164).

The Eastern type of scale corselet is known from representations in the Tomb of Ken-Amun (under Amenhotep II) and on an ivory *pyxis* from Enkomi in Cyprus (Karageorghis, Masson 1975, fig. 19c; Karageorghis 2002, fig. 205). This distinctive type (fig. 17) is also documented by a corselet fragment at Nuzi (Catling 1970, fig. 6) and by the wide distribution of bronze armour scales in Egypt, Anatolia, Cyprus and the Near East, occurring at over 20 sites, mostly in shrines and tombs (Karageorghis, Masson 1975), and also in the cargo of the Ulu Burun wreck.<sup>3</sup>

The bronze scale from Kanakia is the third example of Late Bronze Age date to be found in Greece, after two other instances at Mycenae and Tiryns (Catling 1970; Maran 2004). It is, however, unique in the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean and in the Near East, since it is stamped with an Egyptian royal cartouche.

On the basis of the reading kindly offered by Dr. Jacke Phillips and Professor John Ray of Cambridge University, the cartouche bears the name, in hieroglyphic script, of a great Pharaoh of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, that of Ramesses II, one of the leading figures of the Mediterranean world in the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

The inscribed scale-plate from the palatial centre of Kanakia has significant ramifications for an assessment of the reach of the Mycenaean kingdom of Salamis, as well as the military history of the Eastern Mediterranean in the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

With regard to its initial function, the bronze scale might have been an official armour mark, a distinction or even some kind of a medal that was imported to Salamis as keep-sake or spoil. Its occurrence at Kanakia can best be interpreted as evidence for the engagement of Salaminian mercenaries in some distant military campaign in which the Egyptian army under Ramesses II had probably a leading role.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://ina.tamu.edu/images/Uluburun/tools/KW10740>.

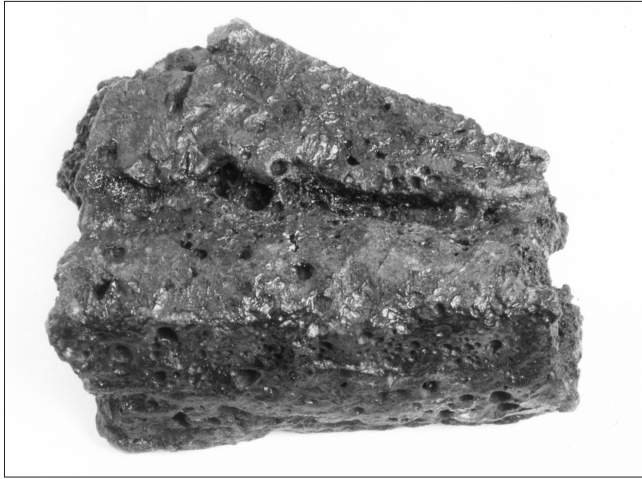


Fig. 18. - Salamis, Kanakia, Building Gamma. Part of copper oxhide ingot of Cypriot provenance (Dimensions: 11.5 x 9cm).

From a surface layer in the area of Building Gamma, and very probably associated with it, comes a large fragment of a Cypriot copper oxhide ingot (fig. 18), certainly of post-1250 B.C. date, weighing 1.7kg (Lolos 2002). Its copper has a provenance in Apliki in the north-western part of Cyprus, on the basis of the results of a lead isotope analysis conducted some years ago by Dr. Sophia Stos at Oxford.

It belongs to a type of oxhide ingot (Type 2b in G.F. Bass's typology) well-documented from the metallic cargo of the Cape Gelidonya wreck, of 1200 B.C., and from the acropolis of Mycenae (Bass 1967, pp. 53-54, fig. 55; Id. 1996, pp. 29-30).

After the discovery of copper oxhide ingots at Mycenae [one complete example and several fragments within three (3) different hoards of bronzes] and Thebes in Boeotia (reportedly three fragments), this is the third occurrence of the type at a major site of palatial status in Late Mycenaean Greece.

The recognition of a Cypriot copper ingot, as raw material, in Sector Gamma, and in conjunction with the occurrence of the hoard of bronzes in the nearby industrial complex, is seen to have an important bearing on the study of the local dimensions and facets of Cypro-Mycenaean trade and exchange ca. 1200 B.C. and on the issue of local bronze-working, possibly boosted by itinerant smiths (*planetes chalkeis*) on the acropolis.

Turning, now, to non-metal objects of foreign appearance, particularly noteworthy are two large conical spindle-whorls of black steatite, with rich incised decoration, of likely Cypriot/Near-Eastern inspiration or origin, found in destruction or abandonment deposits, of Late Helladic IIIC Early date, in rooms of Buildings Gamma and Delta (figs. 19-20).<sup>4</sup> Spindle-whorls of this kind are extremely rare on the Greek Mainland in the Late Helladic III period,<sup>5</sup> but are well attested at Late Cypriot sites, apparently continuing earlier Cypriot traditions in the production and use of richly incised spindle-whorls (Lolos 2003, pp. 112-113). The two examples from the residential areas of the palatial complex on the acropolis of Kanakia may

<sup>4</sup> A rudimentary comment on the prestige spindle-whorls from Buildings Delta and Gamma at Kanakia (see SGOURITSA 2006b) uses references to much earlier and unrelated specimens.

<sup>5</sup> Of related style and certainly of Late Helladic III date are two stone examples from Tiryns (SCHLIEMANN 1885, p. 175, pl. XXI g) and Lazarides in nearby Aigina. The stone example from Lazarides, richly decorated with incised motifs, has a height of 4.6cm. This specimen, found on the floor of a Late Mycenaean built chamber tomb and apparently belonging to the advanced Late Bronze Age, has been assigned "to the Early Helladic/Middle Helladic period" or "probably... to the Middle Bronze Age" (SGOURITSA 2006a). For the settlement and LH IIIA-B cemetery at Lazarides see EUSTRATIYOU 1979, pp. 70-71; HOPE SIMPSON 1981, p. 32 (A49); PAPADIMITRIOU 2001, pp. 131-132; KALOGEROPOULOS 2003, pp. 95-97; SIMANTONI-BOURNIA 2006, p. 183; SGOURITSA 2006a; KONTRAROU-RASSIA 2007, p. 43.



Fig. 19. - Salamis, Kanakia. Large steatite spindle-whorls with incised decoration, of Cypriot/Near Eastern inspiration, from Buildings Delta (left) and Gamma (right).

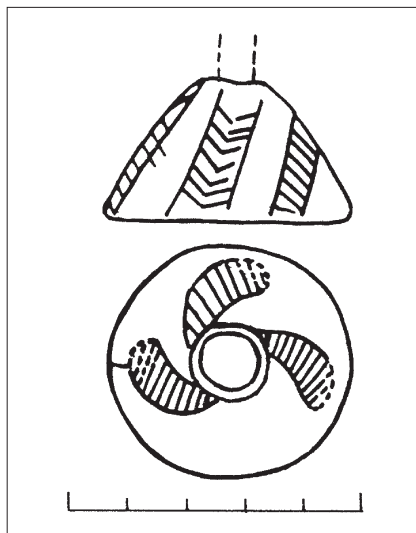


Fig. 20. - Salamis, Kanakia, Building Delta. Steatite spindle-whorl decorated with incised patterns (drawing: Y. G. Lolos).



Fig. 21. - Salamis, Kanakia, Building Delta. Fragment of flattened handle of brazier or wall-bracket.

well have been gifts, souvenirs or prestige items, and may be interpreted within a context of continued movement of peoples and exchange of ideas and goods between Salamis and the East ca. 1200 B.C.



Fig. 22. - Salamis, Kanakia, Building Delta. Coarse ware stirrup-jar of large size (Late Helladic IIIB 2-IIIC Early).



Fig. 23. - Italy, Ischia (Pithecusae). Sealing on amphora neck of the late 8th century B.C., with heroic scene: Ajax carrying the body of Achilles (AHLBERG-CORNELL 1992, fig. 44).

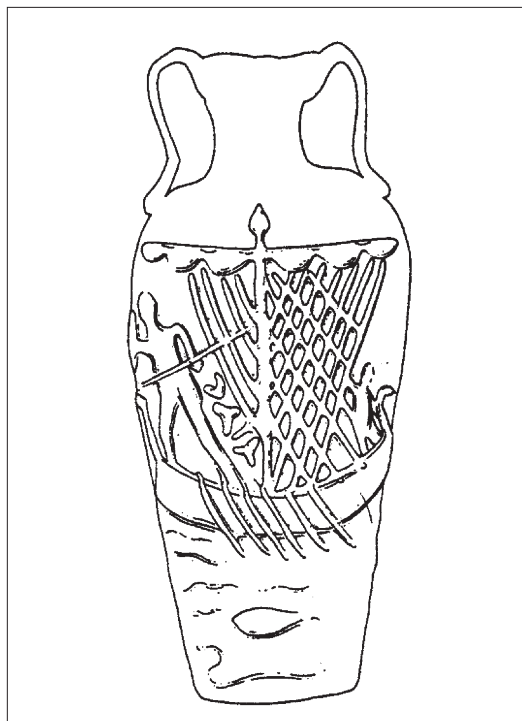


Fig. 24. - Small glass amphora of the 1st century A.D., formerly in the Constable-Maxwell Collection, with a scene showing Ajax and Teucer on board their ship (LEMOS 2003, p. 69, fig. 3).

Special mention must also be made of another find from a room in Building Delta destroyed by fire in Late Helladic IIIC Early: a fragment of a flattened handle, with a suspension hole (fig. 21), and likely of non-local fabric,<sup>6</sup> belonging either to a Late Mycenaean brazier or to a wall-bracket of Cypriot type.

Finally, from the same burnt layer in Sector Delta comes a complete coarse ware stirrup-jar (fig. 22), of a well-known type (Furumark 1941, Type 164) with an international distribution that has become a symbol for Mycenaean overseas trade. It is decorated with a system of paint-bands and carries two horizontal parallel incisions (certainly post-firing) on one handle. These can be closely paralleled on handles of Cypriot and Aegean vases at Maa-Palaeokastro, Pyla-Kokkinokremos, Akanthou and Kourion on Cyprus<sup>7</sup> and very probably belong to a Cypriot-inspired marking system current in the Eastern Mediterranean at the time (Hirschfeld 1990; Ead. 1993; Ead. 2000).

<sup>6</sup> KARAGEORGHIS, DEMAS 1984, pp. 77, 79, fig. 9; IId. 1988, pls. CXIX: 86, 15, 16; CXXV: 324; CLXXX: 337; CCXX: 15, 16, 86; CCXXXI: 231; HIRSCHFELD 1990, p. 230, # 2 a-c.

<sup>7</sup> Max. pres. length: 11.7cm; med. thickness: 2.1cm. Of orange clay, with dark brown inclusions. Its fabric is closely similar in appearance to that of a Cypriot-type wall-bracket of the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C. from the acropolis of Mycenae (see L. PAPAZOGLOU-MANIODAKI, in STAMPOLIDIS 2003, p. 250, no. 99; MARAN 2004, p. 13).

Before ending up in a room of the seaside palace on Salamis, the vessel, at some stage, might well have been traded, for its content, in the hands of Cypriot seafarers, who were voyaging, at the time, in Aegean waters, on board ships like the one that sank at Point Iria in the Argolid (Phelps, Lolos, Vichos 1999; Karageorghis 2002, pp. 68-69; Lolos 2003, pp. 101-104; Dickinson 2006, pp. 33, 34-35).

### *Epilogue*

As an epilogue, the documentation of the connection of Old Salamis with Cyprus and the East and the identification and precise dating of its abandonment and desolation have clear implications for the history of the last Mycenaean century and the archaeology of the Greek colonization of Cyprus. For these two factors, when combined, now seem to touch upon the substratum of the foundation legend for Salamis on Cyprus, in which the leading figure is Teucer (in fig. 24), Ajax's half-brother.

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