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AN INSCRIBED STONE ANCHOR FROM HALA SULTAN TEKKE

I would like to dedicate this small paper to the memory of my late friend Dr Kyriakos Nicolaou, who was one of the finest gentlemen I ever met. He was the first -together with Hector Catling- to draw attention to the stone anchors at the Late Cypriote town at Hala Sultan Tekke. In a paper in *Antiquity*¹ they published composite stone anchors found on the shores of the Larnaca Salt Lake. Since then many more have been discovered on land and in the sea at Hala Sultan Tekke and the nearby Cape Kiti area and published by Honor Frost², Dan McCaslin³ and others⁴. Kyriakos Nicolaou always followed our excavations with keen interest and I am sure he would have enjoyed seeing the inscribed anchor, which was uncovered in the excavations in 1988, had he lived.

The anchor (Figs. 1-2; drawing by Elias Markou) was found built into the northern wall of Room 72 near its entrance, in the western part of Area 8 at the site⁵ (Fig. 1). In the grid system of the excavations it was found in the south-eastern corner of FFb466, + 10.73m. above the Salt Lake level⁶. The room may provisionally be dated to Late Cypriote IIIAI (c. 1190-1175 B.C.). The stone anchor antedates the building of the room.

It is an oval or roughly square composite stone anchor with rounded contours (Fig. 2). It was made of sandy limestone. It has a large round hole near the pointed end and two smaller round fluke-holes side by side near the broader end. A Cypro-Minoan sign is incised between the two fluke-holes. Length 39cm. Width 40cm. Thickness 16cm. The anchor had been broken at the top and one side before it was placed in the wall. The anchor has been removed to the Larnaca District Museum and a copy has been made in its place. Although similar composite anchors have been found elsewhere⁷, there are no good parallels for the square, rounded shape.

The sign which is inscribed on the anchor is No. 27 in Emilia Masson's signary⁸. It occurs in all the three Cypro-Minoan scripts in Cyprus and in Ugarit. As Knapp has observed⁹, a common sign is not in itself conclusive proof of a Cypriote or Ugaritic provenance. One of the composite anchors published by Nicolaou and Catling has another Cypro-Minoan sign inscribed.

1. K. Nicolaou and H.W. Catling, "Composite stone anchors in Late Bronze Age Cyprus", *Antiquity* XLII, 1968, 225-229.
2. Frost, "Some Cypriot stone-anchors from land sites and from the sea", *Report of the Department of Antiquities Cyprus* 1970, 14.24.
3. G. Hult and D. McCaslin, *Hala Sultan Tekke 4 (SIMA XLV:4)*, Gothenburg 1978; D. McCaslin, *Stone Anchors in Antiquity... (SIMA LXI)*, Gothenburg 1980 (cf. B.A. Knapp's review in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102.3, 1982, 543-544).
4. O.T. Engvig and P. Åström, *Hala Sultan Tekke 2 (SIMA XLV:2)*, Gothenburg 1975. For other stone anchors from Hala Sultan Tekke see P. Åström *et al.*, *Hala Sultan Tekke 9 (SIMA XLV:9)*, index s.v. stone, anchor. Others are still unpublished.
5. For a map of the site see *op.cit.*, Fig.
6. For the grid system see P. Åström *et al.*, *Hala Sultan Tekke 3*, p. 10.
7. Note 1 above.
8. E. Masson, *Cyprominoica...* (*SIMA XXXI:2*), Gothenburg 1974, 13, Fig. 2. This sign is interpreted as "shi" or "she" by her, *ibid.*, Fig 26. Is it the initial of the name of the owner? If it is the initial of the name of the city, one would expect the same sign on anchors from Hala Sultan Tekke.
9. See note 3.



Fig. 1

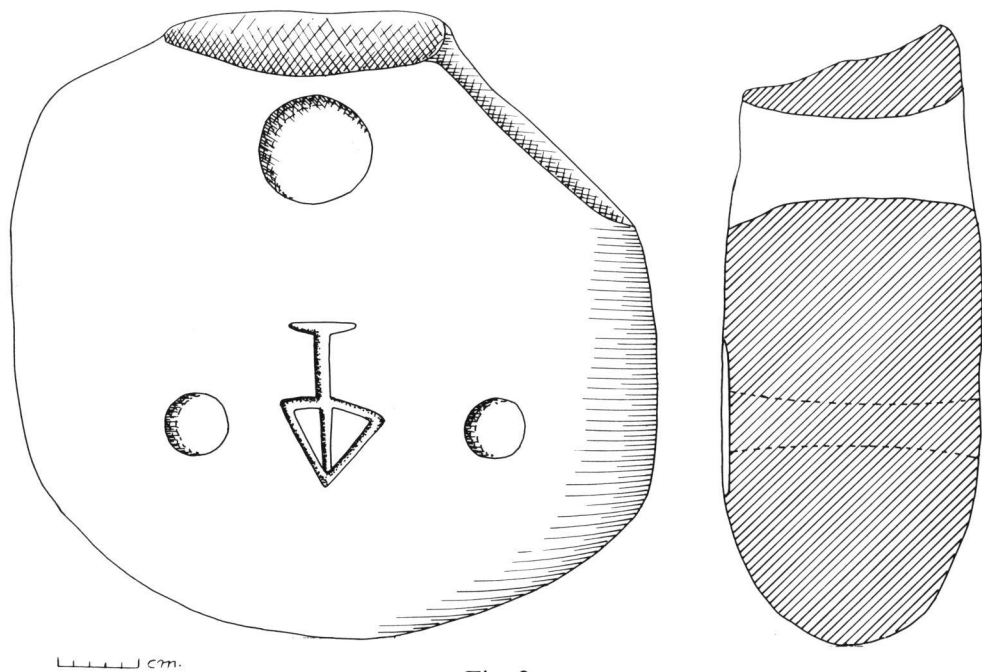


Fig. 2

It is uncertain, if the anchor belonged to a ship from Hala Sultan Tekke or elsewhere. It was partly damaged and thus not quite perfect, although it could still function with its three holes. It was, however, discarded and used as a stone in a wall. A systematic study of all the broken stone anchors in the walls of Hala Sultan Tekke will be made in the future. They are evidence of a once vivid sea trade.

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Μια άγκυρα βρέθηκε εντοιχισμένη στο βόρειο τοίχο του δωματίου 72, το οποίο χρονολογείται στην Ύστερη Εποχή του Χαλκού (1190-1175 π.Χ.), η άγκυρα όμως πρέπει να είναι παλαιότερη. Έφερε τη συνηθισμένη μεγάλη οπή προς τη στενή μεριά της και δυο μικρότερες στο πλατύτερο κάτω μέρος. Μεταξύ των μικρών οπών υπήρχε χαραγμένο γράμμα του Κυπρο-Μινωϊκού συλλαβάριου που, είναι το ίδιο με τον αριθμό 27 στον πίνακα που ετοίμασε η Emilia Masson. Αν το πλοίο άνηκε σε κάτοικο της πόλης δεν ήταν δυνατό να εξακριβωθεί. Υπάρχει πάντως πληθώρα από άγκυρες στην περιοχή, δείγμα έντονων εμπορικών σχέσεων δια θαλάσσης.