

Wonders Lost and Found

A celebration of the archaeological work
of Professor Michael Vickers

edited by

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Preface

This volume originated in a day of papers organised to celebrate the archaeological work of Professor Michael Vickers, Professor Emeritus of Archaeology at the University of Oxford, an Emeritus Fellow of Jesus College, and former Curator of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum and Senior Research Fellow in Classical Studies at Jesus College.

Michael Vickers now holds the post of Dean of Degrees of Jesus College, Oxford. He formerly taught at University College, Dublin, the University of Libya in Benghazi, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Colorado at Boulder. He has been a Visiting Member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton and is a Corresponding Member of the German Archaeological Institute and of the Archaeological Institute of America. He was co-director of the joint British-Georgian Pichvnari Expedition 1998-2010.

The commemorative day was held in the Habbakuk Conference Room, Jesus College, University of Oxford on Wednesday 18 May 2011. The title of the book, somewhat unimaginatively, repeats the title of that meeting. Sometime after the meeting I, somewhat unwisely, enquired whether there were moves afoot to publish the papers given there. On being told that there were not I, somewhat rashly, offered to take on the task.

Since that time many things have changed. Over the last decade the amount of senseless administrative tasks required of academics by successive Polish governments has risen exponentially, making serious inroads into the time which I had available to work on the volume. Also the original intention was to publish this volume in the monograph series 'Akanthina', produced by the Department of Mediterranean Archaeology of Gdańsk University. Changes in policy at University and Faculty made this no longer possible.

Thus the volume languished for several years without a publisher, until Michael Vickers directly intervened and spoke to David Davison of Archaeopress, to whom I am very grateful for taking on the task of publication. I hope this will be sufficient explanation of why this book has taken such a long time to appear. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Rajka Makjanić, also of Archaeopress, who has done such a competent job of preparing the work for printing.

I look upon this book as very much a joint effort with Michael, not only for his finding a publisher. At the original meeting, constraints of time meant that only nine speakers were asked to deliver papers, and, for various reasons, some of these were not able to offer their papers for publication. It was necessary to co-opt further authors to the task in hand. It was with Michael's assistance that a list of further potential contributors was drawn up. All expressed enthusiasm for the concept, but not all were able to find the time to contribute. The resulting volume consequently reflects Michael's wide range of archaeological interests. It is fair to say that Michael has taken an active part in this book in all stages of its appearance.

One of Michael's friends who expressed great enthusiasm for the project from the outset, is Elspeth Dusingberre. By way of compensation, we have reproduced as the cover of this book, the object which she would have discussed, if time and health had permitted. It is an Achaemenid gem (Oxford 1885.491), a Chalcedony scaraboid (height: 2.7 cm, width: 2 cm), dating to the end of fifth, or the beginning of the fourth century BC. It comes from a female burial (Grave 5) from the Crimean city of Nymphaeum, which was presented to Oxford University by Sir William Siemens in 1880. It seems to be quite appropriate to use in a book dedicated to a person of such eclectic tastes. Of course Michael's interests are not confined to archaeology alone, but, given the history of the genesis of this volume, the papers contained in it are.

Nicholas Sekunda
Gdańsk 29 January 2020

Early Cycladic? Lead model boats in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Susan Sherratt

Introduction

Michael Vickers has a long and distinguished history of effectively overturning the established received wisdom, the *idées fixes*, of earlier generations of Classical archaeologists, sometimes in the face of sustained opposition and in a very difficult environment. He has beamed probing searchlights into interpretations of archaeological and literary material which were once regarded as settled beyond question, and the effect has been that many of his colleagues and younger archaeologists will never be able to accept these with quite the same confidence again. Among his many inspired acts in the late 1990s as Senior Assistant Keeper in charge of Greek antiquities in the Ashmolean (as he was then) was to send the ivory statuette of the 'Minoan Boy God', acquired by Sir Arthur Evans from a dealer in the early 1930s and published by him in 1935 in volume 4 of *The Palace of Minos at Knossos* (Evans 1935: 468-83, figs. 394, 396, suppl. pl. LIII; more recently Galanakis 2013: figs. 139-40 in colour) as a 'young male divinity', the youthful consort of the Minoan Mother Goddess in Evans's well developed view of Minoan religion, for carbon-14 dating at the Oxford Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art.¹ The result - that the ivory of the statuette was modern (Bronk Ramsey *et al.* 1999: 203), and its implications, and those for a number of other supposedly Minoan ivory statuettes which surfaced on the art market between 1914 and the 1930s, are recounted in Kenneth Lapatin's delightfully readable book, *Mysteries of the Snake Goddess* (Lapatin 2002).

Evans was taken in by his 'Boy God' largely because he was already conditioned to believe in his existence, not only because of the other, now equally suspect, ivory figurines of the Goddess or her youthful consort which had already surfaced, but largely because they all fitted in so well into his ideas of the nature of Minoan religion; and there is little doubt that this statuette, and probably also its companions, were designed and manufactured by someone (or more than one person) who knew exactly what Evans expected and hoped to find. However, there are reasons to think that he, and others, were also on occasion taken in by other

artefacts, not so much because they fitted neatly into their already formed visions of the past as because they added objects of a unique nature to private or museum collections of antiquities and seemed (at least at the time of initial acquisition) plausibly genuine.² The essay that follows here concerns just such a set of objects whose authenticity could perhaps only be questioned with hindsight.³ It is offered to Michael, a good friend and inspiring colleague, who long ago encouraged me never to take too much for granted.

The lead boat models and their history

There are in the Ashmolean three lead boat models, which are purportedly of Cycladic provenance and of Early Bronze Age date. Together with a fourth, now in the Merseyside County Museum, Liverpool, they are the only examples of their kind so far known from the Early Bronze Age Cyclades.

The first, and most complete, of the models (Ashmolean Museum 1929.26) (Figure 1) arrived in the Ashmolean in 1929 as the gift, through Sir Arthur Evans, of Professor R.M. Dawkins, who had been Director of the British School at Athens between 1906 and 1913. The other two (Ashmolean Museum 1938.725-6) (Figures 2-3) were given to the Museum by Evans himself in 1938 along with much of what then remained of his own personal collection of prehistoric Aegean antiquities. The fourth model (Merseyside County Museum 55.66.180) was deposited in the Merseyside County Museum in the early 1930s, on loan from the collection of Robert Carr Bosanquet, who immediately preceded Dawkins as Director of the British School from 1900 to 1906.⁴

There is very little explicit information about the provenance and circumstances of finding of these models, which were barely mentioned by anyone

¹ This was the second statuette of the 'Boy God' that Evans had acquired. The first, bought by him in the 1920s, ended up in the Seattle Art Museum (see Lapatin 2002: 98-9). The Ashmolean statuette was given to the Museum by Evans in 1938, along with most of the rest of his personal collection of Aegean antiquities.

² See, for example, Kevin Butcher's and David Gill's account of the history of the 'Fitzwilliam Goddess' (Butcher and Gill 1993). The Fitzwilliam statuette, acquired by the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1926, was in fact endorsed by Evans.

³ It was originally presented as a paper at the joint meetings of the American Institute of Archaeology and American Philological Association in New Orleans in January 2003, in a session on forgeries organised by Kenneth Lapatin, to whom Michael originally introduced me.

⁴ For the Ashmolean models, see also Renfrew 1991: 50, pl. 14, and more recently Sherratt 2000: nos. 5.2-5.4, figs. 55-57, pls. 69-71, col. pl. 3; Badisches Landesmuseum 2011: 306 no. 106; Galanakis 2013: fig. 146. For the model in Liverpool, see Mee and Doole 1993: 48 no. 490, pl. 26.



Figure 1. Ashmolean Museum 1929.26, gift of R.M. Dawkins.

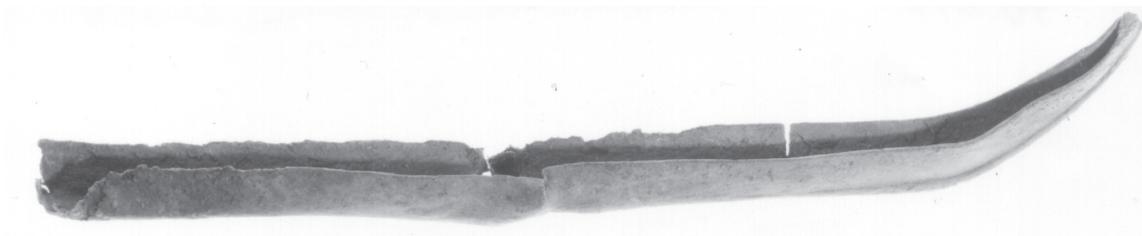


Figure 2. Ashmolean Museum 1938.725, gift of A.J. Evans.



Figure 3. Ashmolean Museum 1938.726, gift of A.J. Evans.

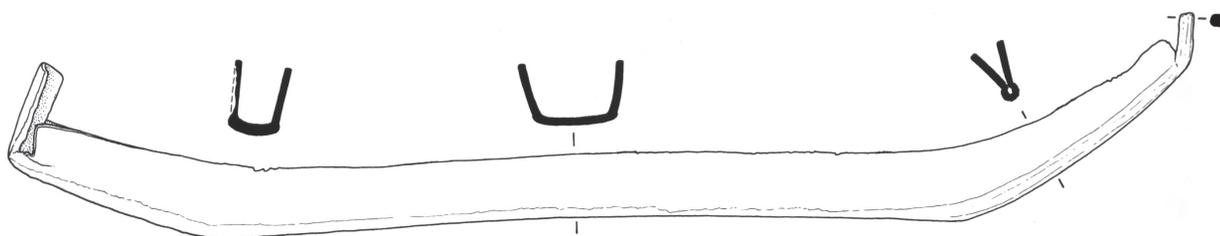


Figure 4. Ashmolean Museum 1929.26. Drawing by Keith Bennett.

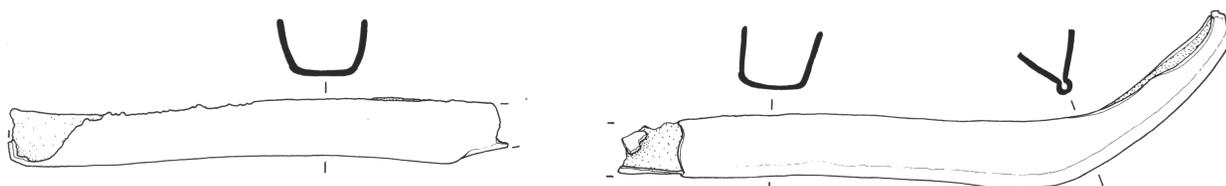


Figure 5. Ashmolean Museum 1938.725. Drawing by Keith Bennett.

All illustrations courtesy of the Department of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum.

before their publication in 1967 by Colin Renfrew (1967: 5, 18, pls. 1:12, 3:12-14).⁵ In his 1909 publication, *Scripta Minoa I*, Evans referred in passing to lead boat models 'from Amorgos' (Evans 1909, 26), but thereafter never seems to have mentioned them again, despite the fact that two of them were in his possession probably from at least 1909 onwards. This is all the more surprising since in the second volume of *The Palace of Minos* Evans devoted a considerable amount of discussion to early Aegean boats, including those of the Cyclades (Evans 1928: 239-42).

What little we do know about the lead boat models is contained in a letter written by Dawkins to Evans shortly before he presented his boat model to the Ashmolean in 1929. Dawkins says that he acquired his model in Athens around 1907, and that it was said to have been found on Naxos along with three other broken examples and at least three marble figurines, two of which were then in his possession. Dawkins also presented these two figurines to the Ashmolean at the same time as his boat model, in 1929. They are a couple of folded arm figurines of Kapsala variety, probably of Early Cycladic II date.⁶ A Dawkins label already attached to one of the figurines when it arrived in the Museum records that the two figurines and the lead boat model together originally cost Dawkins 550 drachmae.

In 1946, Dawkins presented a number of other marble figurines from his own collection to the Ashmolean. One of these, a Plastiras figurine of pre-folded arm type,⁷ carried a label stating that it was bought in November 1907 and 'was probably found with the lead boats'. The label also recorded that it came from Drakatis, Naxos. Try as I might, I have been quite unable to find any mention of a site or place of this name on Naxos in either the 19th or 20th century literature or maps, or to find anyone who has ever heard of it amongst some of those most familiar with the history of archaeology on the island. This is not to say that a location with this name does not or did not exist on Naxos: but it does not appear to be a location which is known to have produced any other antiquities.

Their design

The two Evans models (Figures 2-3) appear to have been broken deliberately across the middle of the hull. However, as far as their state of preservation allows us to tell, all four boat models appear to be of identical design and manufactured by the same method (Figures 4-5). They seem to be made from a single strip of lead

which has been slit into three narrow strips for about one-third of its length in much the same way as a cobbler would cut the leather for a traditional Turkish slipper, two for the sides and one for the bottom of the vessel. The prows of the models are formed by clamping the two outer strips together with the middle one, producing a section which looks rather like an inverted clothes peg. The result of this is a narrow prow which rises fairly gently upwards with a keel-like ridge on its underside. The prow is topped by an upward projection of the 'keel' in the form of a rod which appears in all cases to have broken off either at or just above the tip of the prow. The stern on Dawkins's model, which shows no sign of damage, takes the form of a flat rectangular structure, formed by the continuation of the bottom strip which is bent upwards. There are gaps between it and the ends of the sides, covering the entire depths of the sides, with the result that it looks rather like the tailgate on a ferry. The stern section of one of the Evans models is missing entirely, and on the other Evans model and the Bosanquet model the stern sections are damaged. Nevertheless, enough of the stern remains on each of the latter two to make clear that the design was essentially the same as on the undamaged model. On the Dawkins and Bosanquet models, on which the stern is either undamaged or less damaged, the hull is canted upwards at this end.

Which end is which on Early Cycladic longboat representations, and how many different types of longboats were there?

This decidedly odd stern construction poses some problems, since it is clear that the gaps left on either side of the hull on Dawkins's model are quite deliberate, and not the result of damage, with the edges of both sides of the hull and the 'tailgate' remaining sheer and vertical. It thus presents us with a boat design which seems disconcertingly precarious for use on the open sea, not least since the gaps go right down to just above the waterline, even making allowances for the slight upward slope of the hull towards the stern. In the light of this, it seems particularly unfortunate that it is the stern end that is either missing completely or badly damaged on all but one of the models, especially since all of the prows are, by comparison, well preserved and extremely confidently executed.

The design of the models makes it clear beyond any shadow of doubt which end is intended as the bow and which the stern, which is more than can be said for the two-dimensional representations of Early Cycladic longboats found on the Syros frying pans, first brought to light by C. Tsountas in 1899 (Tsountas 1899), and on the Korphi t'Arioniou plaques excavated in the 1960s by C. Doumas (Doumas 1965), about which opinions have

⁵ Renfrew's statement (1967: 18) that 1929.26 was bought by Dawkins in 1917 seems quite simply to be either a mistake or a misprint.

⁶ Ashmolean Museum 1929.27-8. See Sherratt 2000: nos. 7.18, 7.19, figs. 86-87, pls. 159-164.

⁷ Ashmolean Museum 1946.118: Sherratt 2000: no. 7.12, pls. 140-142, col. pl. 8.

varied over the years.⁸ Tsountas himself believed that the high end on these representations was the prow, as did both Bosanquet and Dawkins (1923: 7) as well as Evans (1928: 240) and others. Others, however, starting with R. Dussaud (1914: 415) and including S. Marinatos (1933: 182-5), were more inclined to regard the high end as the stern, possibly acting as an aerodynamic feature to keep the boat steady in a following wind. In 1967, when he published the lead models, Renfrew believed that they settled this question once and for all. There was no doubt in his mind that they represented the same type of boat as those represented on the frying pans, and quite clearly the high end was the prow (Renfrew 1967: 5; see also more recently Wachsmann 1998: 69-70, fig. 5.1; Matthäus 2011: 117).

Renfrew was misled, not at all surprisingly in my view, by the *superficial* resemblance of the lead boats to the frying pan representations and by his very reasonable assumption that the lead models did indeed represent Cycladic longboats: but in fact he almost certainly did not look at them closely enough. At any rate, the arguments about which end was which on the frying pan boats continued, particularly amongst naval architects and others with direct experience of ships and seafaring.

In 1987, Lucien Basch published a particularly convincing discussion of the frying pan boats in which he argued that the high projection, which has a sharply defined angle of 90 degrees or less between it and the bottom of the hull, would not only serve no useful purpose as the prow but would actually obscure the view of the crew and make it much harder to keep the boat steady in either a following or a head wind, while the sharp angle at the base would make beaching difficult (Basch 1987: 85-6). On the other hand, as the stern, it would actually contribute to stabilising the boat, particularly in a head wind. At the same time, Basch also argued that the curious lateral projection from the other end of the frying pan boats, whose interpretation had (by his own admission) more or less baffled Tsountas (1899: 91),⁹ was a horizontal spur which projected on the waterline and which made excellent sense at the prow of a longboat where it would facilitate cleavage through the waves, thus protecting the front of the hull from their full force and minimising the risk of frontal overwash. It would also have the effect of helping to hold the craft on course in a choppy sea. Basch was greatly aided in this interpretation by a terracotta boat model from Palaikastro, first published relatively unobtrusively in 1904 (Dawkins and Currelly 1903-4: 197, fig.1:k),¹⁰ which

in profile bears a very strong resemblance to several of the Syros frying pan representations. From this model, it is quite clear that the high projection is solid, with (as on the frying pan boats) a sharply defined angle at the base. It is also quite clear that the horizontal projection at the other end is indeed a solid spur which sits nicely on the waterline.

Yiannis Vichos has also carried out research (including some experimental replication) on the design of the frying pan longboats, and has shown conclusively (to my mind) that the interpretation outlined by Basch must be correct: the high end is indeed the stern (Vichos 1991).¹¹ Moreover, Basch has also gone a long way to explaining the canting upwards towards the stern seen on some (but not all) of the frying pan representations by showing that, if these are viewed from a slightly different angle on the circular background of the frying pans, not only do the boats acquire a plausible keel, but the horizontal projection sits squarely on the waterline (Basch 1987: 87-8).

Although not clear to Renfrew, it has seemed abundantly clear to Basch and others that the lead models differ in certain very significant features from the Syros and Korphi t'Aroniou representations and from the Palaikastro model. In particular, on the lead models the high end, which is hollow, slopes more gently upwards and lacks the sharp angle at the base, is quite clearly the prow. As a result, some scholars, such as Basch and Michael Wedde, have concluded that the lead models represent quite a different sort of boat from those represented on the frying pans, on the Korphi t'Aroniou plaques and by the Palaikastro terracotta model. Both Wedde (1991: 88) and Basch (1987: 79-80) have suggested that they represent a unique and otherwise unknown category of vessel, while Basch has argued that the odd double-canted outline of their hulls would make them potentially unstable, and that they could only therefore have been used for relatively unadventurous activities such as inshore fishing or coastal cabotage.

At this point, we ought to consider not only the material of which the lead models are made but also the context from which they purport to come. Lead is intimately associated with the cupellation of silver, one of the salient characteristics of the Early Cycladic II period,

published in 1904, it was done so very unobtrusively and in English. Moreover it does not seem to have affected the belief of Dawkins, Bosanquet, Evans etc. as to which end on either it or the Syros representations was the prow. In 1923 (in *The Unpublished Objects from the Palaikastro Excavations, 1902-1906*) Dawkins and Bosanquet argued (perhaps under the influence of the lead models, though these were not mentioned) that the high ends of both the Palaikastro model and the frying pan boats represented their prows (Dawkins and Bosanquet 1923: 7). The lateral projections at the other ends were seen as some sort of fixed rudder attached to the stern (cf. Evans 1928: 240).

¹¹ See, too, the reconstruction by Thomas Guttandin in *Badisches Landesmuseum* 2011: 304-5 no. 105.

⁸ See now also the rock engravings of longboats from Strofilas on Andros, of slightly earlier, Final Neolithic, date (Televantou 2008: 46-49, figs. 6.8, 6.10).

⁹ Tsountas suggested very tentatively that it might be some sort of steering contraption.

¹⁰ It should be noted that, although the Palaikastro model was first

and, like representations of longboats themselves, likely to symbolise one of the cornerstones of elite status and lifestyle. The fact that all four of the models are alleged to have been found in a single grave which also contained a number of marble figurines implies a relatively prestigious context, which in turn suggests a function whose prestige and symbolism was probably at least comparable to that of the longboats more usually portrayed on frying pans and marble plaques rather than something equivalent to a humble inshore dinghy. What the existence of these lead models, taken together with the material of which they are made and the context in which they are said to have been found, invites us to infer, in effect, is the co-existence of two quite different types of equally prestigious longboat, each designed to travel in the opposite direction to the other. Though this might not be completely impossible, when viewed in this way it does seem decidedly unlikely.

A contextual explanation?

It seems to me that there is a much more satisfactory explanation which can take account not only of the somewhat eccentric design of the unique lead models and in particular the curious stern construction which makes little sense in terms of vessels designed to cope with the open sea, but also of the timing of and decidedly murky circumstances surrounding their appearance in the first few years of the 20th century.¹² The key to this lies in their superficial resemblance to the Syros frying pan representations which convinced Renfrew and others that they were indeed three-dimensional models of the longboats shown on the frying pans and the Korphi t'Arioniou plaques. This strange mixture of extremely plausible superficial similarity combined with what we can recognise (largely thanks to the Palaikastro terracotta model and to Basch's expert analysis) to be radical differences in structural design can perhaps best be explained if we regard the lead models as the result of a rationalised interpretation of the frying pan representations (published in 1899), executed on the basis of Tsountas' account of these by someone who knew enough about boats in general to attempt a plausible three-dimensional version.

Whoever constructed these models seems to have assumed (like Tsountas) that the high end on the frying

pan boats was a hollow prow, in which case the modified slope and angle in order to produce a more practical prow design becomes quite understandable; as does the provision at the same end of a strongly marked keel whose projection forms the broken-off stem on which we might envisage the attachment of a fish pennant like those seen on the frying pan longboats. It is the treatment of the stern, however, which perhaps more than anything else indicates that a rationalised interpretation of the two-dimensional frying pan representations is what we are actually witnessing. In place of the horizontal projection at the other end of these representations, which can have made little sense to anyone used to late 19th century craft (and which certainly baffled Tsountas), the model-maker has perhaps quite reasonably constructed the sort of raisable tail-gate with which some river ferries and shallow-draught livestock carriers were equipped by the late 19th century, which - when envisaged in a lowered position - provides an extremely good visual replica of this end of the frying pan longboats. However, that the model-maker himself may have felt understandably tentative about attaching this particular interpretation of the horizontal projections on the representations to sea-going craft is at least suggested by the curious coincidence that on three of the lead models it is this 'tailgate', rather than the prow, which is most consistently damaged or missing altogether.

The suspicions which arise from the very curious (not to say improbable) design of the four lead boat models, and their superficial similarity to the Syros frying pan representations, are compounded by the timing of their appearance just a few years after Tsountas' publication of the latter, by the murk which surrounds their find circumstances (not least that all four appear to have come from the same dealer who seems to have led Dawkins at least to believe that they were found together), and by the fact that no other models or representations of boats of the same type have ever been found before or since. To this we can add the striking silence about their existence on the part of Dawkins, Bosanquet and Evans, despite the fact that the latter devoted several pages of one of his *Palace of Minos* volumes to early Aegean boats, including the Syros frying pan representations. This suggests that they, too, may well have had serious doubts about their authenticity. Evans's single mention in 1909 of lead boats 'from Amorgos' (at a time when two of the boats may already have been in his possession) is curious, since almost certainly it refers to the same boats.¹³ Perhaps this is what he was told by the dealer, or perhaps he was merely giving them a plausible provenance. Amorgos, from the late 19th century, was an island from which

¹² The lead from which the models were made was originally thought, as a result both of lead isotope analysis and chemical composition, to be of Siphnian origin (Gale and Stos-Gale 1981: 213, fig. 13, table 10; cf. Sherratt 2000: 104 with nn.12-13). Subsequently, however, this was changed to become 'isotopically consistent with Pb/Ag ore from Gümüsköy in [north-west] Anatolia' (Gale and Stos-Gale 2008: 388, 402, fig. 37.7). All that this demonstrates to me is the inadvisability of using lead isotope analysis for positive identifications of provenance on the basis of databases that are inevitably less than comprehensive. In any case, lead continued to be extracted both on Siphnos and at Gümüsköy until well into the twentieth century (Sherratt 2000: 106, with further references; Kaptan 1981-1982).

¹³ A note attached to the register entries of 1938.725-6 refers to relevant correspondence in the archive - presumably Dawkins's letter concerning the supposed association of all four models.

collectors expected prehistoric Cycladic antiquities to come, and the centripetal pull of this expectation seems to have exerted an effect on several objects now in the Ashmolean register whose Amorgan provenance may be seriously doubted.

Epilogue

What conclusions (or, if you like, what moral) can be drawn from all this? The first is the obvious general one: that objects bought through antiquities dealers, the provenances and contexts of which (if any) are vague and uncertain, can at best be of very limited use and at worst (as probably in this case) downright misleading. Although there is perhaps little point now in criticising the activities of late 19th and early 20th century collectors (who saw the collecting and classifying of archaeological no less than geological or zoological specimens as a primarily scientific activity), this is as undeniably true of artefacts collected a century ago as it is of those which surface in the hands of dealers today. As for the particular problem of forgery, there is little comfort to be found in the idea that an object safely deposited in a museum a hundred years or more ago can automatically be regarded as above suspicion. One need only glance at the contents of a lecture delivered by John Evans (Arthur Evans' father) at the Royal Institution in 1865 (Evans 1893), in which he bewails the quantity and variety of forged antiquities of all types already washing around Europe, to realise that this is not the case; while, as far as the prehistoric Cyclades are concerned, objects such as obsidian tools, ceramic 'kernoi' and marble figurines (often illicitly rifled from graves) had been assiduously collected from the time of the Greek War of Independence and were particularly prized from the 1880s onwards. The price of 550 drachmae paid by Dawkins for the lead boat model and two figurines, probably something like 30 times the daily wage of an archaeological foreman, alone demonstrates the incentive to provide the kinds of antiquities that might be thought attractive to collectors.

In addition, it is worth pointing out that, whereas nowadays the best strategy for a forger is to produce objects which fit comfortably within known typological categories, sixty to a hundred years ago the premium put by collectors and museums on unusual or unique objects - ones which would stand out within any given class or general type of object - meant that the manufacture of antiquities provided scope for a greater element of original but informed creation. In this context, the creation of the lead boat models as an exercise in turning Tsountas's frying pan representations into unique three-dimensional versions is particularly fascinating, since it fulfils both of these criteria at once. As an exercise in itself, though not in

the long run entirely successful, one could even regard it as legitimate and worthwhile. Indeed, it was only at the point at which these models were sold as genuine antiquities (something which perhaps their maker might just conceivably never actually have intended) that any potentially lasting damage was done.

The third and final point that arises from a consideration of the lead boat models is that modern scholars should perhaps beware of seizing too enthusiastically on 'discoveries' of objects found languishing apparently ignored in museum collections, particularly when those of an earlier generation, who are known to have been fully aware of their existence, can be seen to have been unexpectedly reticent about them.¹⁴ This is especially so in cases where such objects are recruited to the cause of 'solving' major interpretational problems - and in such circumstances one can only recommend that their 'discoverers' examine them and what is known of their history, and the timing and context in which they first surfaced, with the greatest care.

Looking a little more closely at the models reveals that, despite their beguiling superficial resemblance to the frying pan representations, there are some significant differences - the noticeably gentler rise of the prows, for example, and the much more obtuse angle seen at the bases of these. One also has to wonder about the plausibility of the curious stern construction which apparently leaves deliberate gaps down the entire length of the hull (of which, incidentally, Renfrew made no mention in 1967). Either one has to conclude, with Basch and Wedde, that the models represent a quite different type of boat from those shown on the frying pans, the Korphi t'Aroniou plaques and by the Palaikastro terracotta, or that there is something decidedly odd about them. As it is, the timing of their collective (and unique) appearance in the hands of an Athens dealer in 1907, and their congruence with Tsountas' interpretative description, published just a few years earlier, of the boat representations incised on the Syros frying pans seem to me to offer good reasons to doubt both their authenticity and their ability to supply an independent solution to the problem of which end was which on the frying pan boats.

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¹⁴ Cf. Renfrew (1967: 5) who expresses surprise that nobody has mentioned them, and wonders if 'the rather unexpected material of which they are made has led to doubts about their authenticity'. In his letter to Evans Dawkins includes the remark 'I think that there is no doubt at all of the genuineness of these things', which suggests that both he and Evans may indeed have harboured some doubts.

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