

THE HUMAN FIGURE IN THE AEGEAN GLYPTIC OF THE LATE BRONZE AGE: SOME REMARKS

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The development of the modelling and the iconography of the human figure in the art of the Aegean Bronze Age, which is an intriguing topic for archaeological and art historical consideration, has been the subject of my research for many years. In this paper I shall concentrate on the glyptic examples of the Late Bronze Age. I hope to present a fuller account of my investigations elsewhere.

The long history of the representation of the human figure in Aegean Bronze Age glyptic starts with simple schematic versions on Prepalatial and Protopalatial seals¹ apparently unrelated to the sophisticated scenes of human activity that emerge around the beginning of the Neopalatial period. It is interesting to note that a conventional pose was in use even at such an early stage: already the head and the legs are generally in profile, the body in frontal position. This convention, which is observed on ancient Near Eastern seals as well, demonstrates the artist's difficulty in achieving a more or less lifelike pose. The first fairly convincing attempts to show naturalistic human figures engaged in a kind of dynamic activity may be recognized among sealings from the Temple Repositories at Knossos. The meticulously rendered musculature and the vigorous movement of the boxer² (*Fig. 1*) and of another man shown with a monster³ are particularly noteworthy; they attest to the existence of a fully developed male type well known from rings, seals and sealings, frescoes, stone vases and ivory figurines⁴. The somewhat exaggerated muscles, the long thin limbs and the wasp waist are its most salient features. The human figure depicted on a large number of sealings from Ayia Triada⁵ appear to be even closer to life and at the same time to the full development of particular iconographic types and schemes. It is true that there is more variety in the kinds of human action and of garments than in the outlook of the men and women shown on them. The groups of sealings from Zakro⁶, Sklavokampos⁷ and Chania⁸ also include interesting scenes involving the human presence. The discrepancy between the number of seal-types represented among those complexes and that of the extant seals makes the

* Source of illustrations:

Fig. 1: Evans, PM I 689 Fig. 509; Fig. 2: Evans, PM IV 502 Fig. 443. The remaining drawings from the archives of CMS.

¹ See P. Yule, *Early Cretan Seals* (1980) esp. chs. 4, 7 and 118–121.

² PM I 689, Fig. 509.

³ PM I 698, Fig. 620.

⁴ On frescoes: PM II, Fig. 450a, b, c; Zervos, *Crète*, Pl. 756; Bronze figurines: *ibid.*, Pls. 496, 499, 500, 502–3; Stone vases: *ibid.*, Pls. 481, 483, 536, 537, 552–555; Ivory figurines: *ibid.*, Pls. 519, 521, 523.

⁵ D. Levi, *ASAtene* 8–9, 1925–6, 71–156, Figs. 1–164, Pls. I–V.

⁶ D.G. Hogarth, *BSA* 22, 1902, 76–93, Figs. 1–33, Pls. VI–X; D. Levi, *AT* 157ff., Figs. 1–33, Pls. VI–X.

⁷ S. Marinatos, *AEphem.* 1939–41, 69–96, Figs. 1–16, Pl. 4.

⁸ I.A. Papapostolou, *Τὰ σφραγίσματα τῶν Χανίων* (1977) = hereafter: Papapostolou, *Sphragismata*.

task of recognizing useful and instructive affinities quite difficult. We may trace stylistic similarities between the human figures on some *Ayia Triada* examples and a few MM III–LM I seals where “Minoan naturalism” is at its best: e.g. the two tumblers in a field of lilies (*Fig. 2*) on a flattened cylinder from the Knossos area⁹, the man grappling with a goat on an amygdaloid from *Ayia Pelayia*¹⁰ and the man leaping over a recumbent bull on a lentoid from *Praisos*¹¹. More general stylistic relations may be detected between the ladies on a few *Ayia Triada* sealings and those engaged in an ecstatic dance on the miniature fresco from Knossos¹².

In the course of my endeavours to attribute the human figures represented on seals, sealings and rings to groups with specific and identifiable, stylistic features I was quite often struck by the existence of a number of common traits and conventions that could hardly be assigned to the same workshop, let alone to the same master. While attempting to write simple general descriptions of such figures I noticed repeated occurrences of a rather limited number of formulas which were thought appropriate for the rendering of the facial features and the various parts of the body. Admittedly in the case of glyptic other factors, such as the material and the smallness of the field, affect the modelling of the figures and the arrangement of the scene. In a recent study of the interpretations of the human form by artists from the Bronze Age to Early Christian times A.L.H. Robkin bypasses the glyptic examples in order to concentrate on more significant accomplishments in other fields of Bronze Age Aegean art. Her comments on the complexity of the reasons that made the artist choose one set of rules and a particular artistic convention rather than others are relevant to our inquiry¹³.

The partial or total reduction of the human figure to geometric schemes should be viewed as part of the more general problem of the abstract mode of vision or of “conceptual realism”. This is a term applied by certain art historians to primitive and children’s art. A different and more widespread type of schematization is dictated by considerations of proportion and is thought to occur as an apparently spontaneous manifestation in primitive, prehistoric, archaic, provincial and folk cultures. The geometric schematization of a human being is thus the result of a coherent process of simplification of natural forms. It can be found co-existing with naturalistic modelling even in the highest cultures of the historic period. Ancient Near Eastern and Greek artists freely made use of both modes up to the end of the Archaic period, both for representational and for expressive reasons. Classical Greek and Hellenistic painters and sculptors also chose to adopt geometric schemes on occasion¹⁴. The fact that much simpler reductions to formulas and schemes should occur in the glyptic of the Late Bronze Age can then hardly come as a surprise.

For art historians such as E.H. Gombrich, who widens his investigations so as to take account of data provided by the psychology of perception, the formulaic character of Aegean glyptic would probably be yet another manifestation of a general trend. In his view, the art of the ancient Greek world before the “Greek Revolution” that led to the conquest of naturalism in the

⁹ GGFR, Pl. 60.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, Pl. 92.

¹¹ *ibid.*, Pl. 58.

¹² PM III 46ff., 67ff., Col. Pl. XVI, XVII, XVIII.

¹³ A.L.H. Robkin, *Art and Archaeology in the Mediterranean World* (Seattle Society-Archaeological Institute of America) (1985) 55–99, Figs. 1–32, esp. 53, 56–75, Figs. 1–15.

¹⁴ *Encyclopedia of World Art* vol. VII (1963) 654–702 (Human figure, with bibliography).

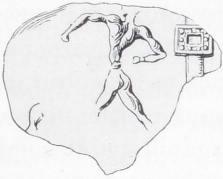


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

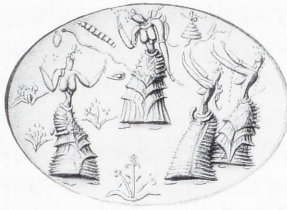


Fig. 5



Fig. 6

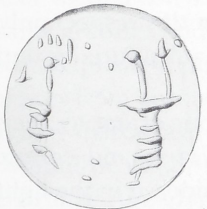


Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

Fig. 1 Heraklion Mus. No. 336. *Fig. 2* Oxford, Ashmolean Mus. No. 1938. 1955. *Fig. 3* Chania Mus. No. 2117. *Fig. 4* CMS II 3 No. 8. *Fig. 5* CMS II 3 No. 51. *Fig. 6* CMS V 1 No. 173. *Fig. 7* CMS II 4 No. 70. *Fig. 8* CMS II 4 No. 55. *Fig. 9* CMS I No. 42. *Fig. 10* CMS I No. 195. *Fig. 11* CMS I No. 86. *Fig. 12* CMS I No. 127. *Fig. 13* CMS I No. 263. *Fig. 14* CMS I No. 290. *Fig. 15* CMS I No. 5.

Classical period demonstrates an extensive use of formulas and schemata. The similarity of the conventions recognized in the arts of different cultures, as well as in the areas of “primitive art” which for chronological and geographical reasons could not have been in contact is in my view more intelligible when seen in this light. In Gombrich’s view the age in which the artist works imposes limitations, since an individual can only enrich his ways as much as his cultural level allows him. The artist needs a developed system of schemata and corrections in order to describe the visible world. The unique character of the Greek Revolution is thus manifested through the continuous and systematic modification of conceptual schemata until making was replaced by the matching of reality through the new skill of mimesis. Even the Greek artist of the Classical period used a fairly limited number of formulas for the rendering of standing, running, fighting or falling figures, with slight variations over a long period of time. Such suggestions seem to deny the existence of a kind of naturalistic art which is a faithful copy of reality. Both artist and viewer work with mental schemata projected in the acts of perception and of creation; these processes are thus “conceptual” rather than “perceptual”. The use of sketchbooks by artists is a widespread phenomenon, attested to in Chinese, Medieval, Renaissance and Later European art¹⁵.

A careful study of the different ways of modelling the human figure in LM and LH glyptic will illustrate the repeated use and elaboration of fairly simple general schemata and formulas, often modified in order to create a more decorative effect. In this respect (and in this respect only) I see no fundamental difference between the earlier sketchy figures and the substantial group of human representations dating from later periods.

In seeking to establish the “Minoan” or “Mycenaean” character of glyptic examples the evidence of findspots should be studied in combination with that of their style and context¹⁶. Nevertheless, if the particular case of the human figures is carefully reconsidered in the light of the points mentioned above, the notion of “Minoan naturalism” as opposed to “Mycenaean tectonic” or “structural” character may be found to need some drastic revision.

Any attempt to trace patterns of consistent linear development from naturalism to stylization throughout the Late Bronze Age would be seriously hindered by the parallel existence of very different styles in some periods and by the complete absence of human figures in the final phase, whose starting point cannot be placed satisfactorily at present but should fall within LH IIIB–IIIC. With the exception of a recently discovered sealing from Chania¹⁷ (*Fig. 3*), which shows a nude young woman standing in front of a pole with oval base and probably engaged in a religious or cult activity, and the male candidates mentioned earlier, I believe that hardly any human representations would qualify as naturalistic in the literal sense of the word; whereas quite naturalistic human figures do occur on frescoes and among bronze and ivory figurines¹⁸.

My impression is that the gem engravers of the Aegean Late Bronze Age were somewhat more successful with the rendering of the male than with that of the female figure and there may be special reasons for this. The simplest would probably be to suppose that it was more difficult to

¹⁵ E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion IV* (1972), esp. 24, 62–63, 76–77, 92–93, 99–103, 107, 110–112, 119–126.

¹⁶ On these questions see I. Pini, CMS DFG-Forschungsbericht (1974) 96–100. W.D. Niemeier, CMS Beiheft 1 (1981) 91–103, Figs. 1–20. J.H. Betts – J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 21, 1982, 105–110. BCH Supplément I (1985) 245–309 (*L’identité minoenne*).

¹⁷ E. Hallager – M. Vlasakis, *Kadmos* 23, 1984, 1–10, Pls. I–IV.

¹⁸ For frescoes see n. 12. Bronze figurines: e.g. Zervos, Crète, Figs. 505–508. Ivory figurines: *ibid.*, Pls. 519, 523, 530.

reduce the female body with its prominent curves and the elaborate costume and hairstyle into a system of simple linear and geometric patterns than its male counterpart. The fact that women usually appear in religious scenes whereas men participate in more varied activities may also account for the greater uniformity observed among females¹⁹.

Although the human body may sometimes have a convincingly naturalistic appearance the basic conventions are still maintained in its rendering: the treatment of the details is unnatural, the limbs often seem too long, the waist is always extremely thin and the musculature sometimes exaggerated. Suggestions to the effect that the seals and rings of the Aegean Late Bronze Age show a surprising degree of freedom and movement compared to the much more hieratic and static character of the figured scenes on Oriental cylinders²⁰ are not borne out in the case of the human figures. The degree of their stylistic and compositional freedom may have been the highest possible at the time of their creation. The fundamental differences between Aegean and Near Eastern glyptic are more easily grasped by studying animal motifs and scenes²¹. Although the style of some lively animals represented on cylinder seals is clearly differentiated from that of the stately gods, heroes and priests, they still never match their Minoan counterparts²². It may be that Minoan glyptic artists and the Near Eastern engravers of various periods, besides using the same or related conventions for the modelling of the human form, were also portraying some of the same gestures and postures in their figures²³. Nevertheless, the development of Aegean glyptic is a complicated phenomenon that followed its own rules, while receiving certain stimuli and influences from abroad²⁴. A more sceptical approach and a meticulous study of the relevant material may discourage hasty statements and vague value judgements.

It would be unfair to assess the artistic merit of the rather sketchy human figures of Aegean Late Bronze Age glyptic by comparing them only to the spectacular accomplishments of the Classical and Hellenistic Ages. Material from earlier or contemporary cultures from other parts of the world should also be taken into account.

I believe that it is possible to recognize distinct formulas in the rendering of the facial features, the parts of the body, the garments and the gestures in our material. For example, on the Minoan gold rings showing religious/cult scenes and on the Neopalatial sealings the women have an extremely small, almost aniconic, face with no indication of features, an exceedingly thin torso with rather prominent breasts and a wasp waist. They wear the long flounced skirt known from frescoes, bronze and ivory figurines and stucco reliefs; its decoration consists of simple or more elaborate linear patterns either all over²⁵ or in its lower part²⁶. This skirt is either full length²⁷ or

¹⁹ MS 26.

²⁰ e.g. *Ancient Art in Seals* (1980) Figs. I-1, I-8, I-9, II-2, II-3, II-4, II-5, II-18, II-19, II-22.

²¹ *ibid.*, Figs. I-4, I-6, I-7, I-11.

²² For naturalistic animals on Oriental cylinders see e.g. D.J. Wiseman, *Cylinder Seals of Western Asia*, Pls. I-II (Uruk). For naturalistic Minoan animals e.g. GGFR, Pls. 86, 93, 100, 108, 110.

²³ *op. cit.* n. 20, Figs. I-8, I-14, II-6, II-8, II-11, II-14, II-23. H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (1939) Pls. XVIII-XXXI.

²⁴ It may be noted that neither foreign imports to the Aegean nor Aegean exports abroad are particularly numerous. On this see GGFR 14, 27-28, 64-65.

²⁵ e.g. AT Nos. 128, Fig. 144; 129, Fig. 145; 130, Fig. 146; 133, Fig. 148; 135, Fig. 151; CMS II 3 Nos. 7, 16, 51, 103, 169, 170, 171, 198, 213, 276, 287, 304, 305, 326.

²⁶ e.g. CMS II 3 Nos. 2, 15, 18, 86, 117, 139, 236, 327.

²⁷ *op. cit.* n. 25, 26.

knee-length²⁸. We should probably assume that they also wear the typical bodice which leaves the breasts uncovered, as in the other media, although its traces are usually unclear. Other female figures wear a kind of trousers or knickerbockers that may be suitable for specific cult activities, such as the carrying of the sacral knot or of sacred garments²⁹ (*Fig. 4*). In these figures the torso is bent over and the lower body excessively bulging; the first may be a schematic attempt to indicate the effort involved, the second may contain some connotations of a religious belief in fertility. In all examples the hair is either rendered by a row of dots³⁰, or long and wavy and falling to the shoulders³¹. The stylistic trends outlined here find their best expressions in the cult scenes shown on the rings from Isopata³² (*Fig. 5*), Mochlos³³, Kalyvia³⁴ and Arkhanes³⁵, and in others from Vaphio³⁶, Tiryns³⁷, Midea³⁸ and the Athenian Agora³⁹ (*Fig. 6*) with their obvious Minoan affinities. A series of examples, which may be cheap substitutes in soft stone for more elaborate scenes engraved on rings and hard stones, usually represent one or two male or female figures in a kind of processional movement or dance and making a gesture of adoration; a star, a branch or another motif or symbol is sometimes visible in the field in the examples with isolated females. Their style combines abridged or simplified versions of some of the traits outlined earlier: the head becomes a mere dot, the torso and the arms are reduced to a curved band and the lower body looks detached but maintains the relatively elaborate decoration of the skirt (*Fig. 7*). It is interesting to note that the artist may omit all the details of the face and most of those of the body but almost never those of the skirt. However, in my opinion there may be an artistic explanation for this: the modelling of the human form, even in its most schematic versions, presents much more difficulty than the rendering of a decorated garment surface. The group under discussion is a large one and is identified with Younger's "Cretan Popular Group" which includes both human and animal figures; the first are subdivided by costume and the second by style⁴⁰. I believe that the ultimate stylization manifested in the reduction of the human form to geometrical and linear designs may be recognized in the variations of this motif that occur on postpalatial gems from Episkopi Pediada and Knossos⁴¹ (*Fig. 8*).

Younger's recognition of the earliest and more naturalistic examples of the "Cretan Popular Group" among seals and sealings from LM I contexts⁴² is very significant for the dating of some of the many others which have no recorded provenance; this would make them contemporary with the more elaborately decorated gold rings, hard stone seals and sealings from well-known

²⁸ e.g. CMS VII No. 134.

²⁹ e.g. AT Nos. 120, Fig. 136; 124 Fig. 140. CMS II 3 Nos. 8, 145.

³⁰ e.g. CMS II 3 No. 3.

³¹ e.g. CMS II 3 No. 8. CMS X No. 261.

³² CMS II 3 No. 51.

³³ CMS II 3 No. 252.

³⁴ CMS II 3 No. 103.

³⁵ J.A. Sakellarakis, *Prakt.*, 1967, 152–153, Pl. 137a.

³⁶ CMS I No. 219.

³⁷ CMS I No. 180.

³⁸ CMS I No. 191.

³⁹ CMS V 1 No. 173.

⁴⁰ J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 22, 1983, 123–127.

⁴¹ e.g. CMS II 3 No. 139; CMS II 4 No. 55; CMCG Nos. 369, 370.

⁴² *op. cit.* n. 40, 118.

complexes mentioned earlier. Such a correlation would suggest the coexistence of radically different styles and this need not be surprising; their presence at Vaphio and Rutsi was also pointed out by A. Sakellariou⁴³. The occurrence of contemporary cheaper and simpler versions of sophisticated iconographical themes carved on more precious materials is an interesting artistic phenomenon that finds parallels in the Hellenistic and Roman periods⁴⁴. Evans and Kenna considered the sketchier renderings late because of an apparent decline in their style. We have already noted that there is no linear development from the naturalistic to the schematic or stylized or vice versa in Aegean glyptic art. Moreover, among representations from the Mainland there are a few human beings showing a peculiar and unparalleled modelling. CMS I No. 369 from Pylos and CMS I No. 42 from Mycenae (*Fig. 9*) bear a procession of three probably male figures, while the scene on CMS I No. 195 from Midea (*Fig. 10*) and on CMS V 1 No. 11 from Aegina may be interpreted as adoration, and the association of two possibly female figures on CMS I No. 134 from Mycenae is completely obscure. There is a certain stylistic resemblance between these human types and others of the Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods; they cannot be dated with certainty. CMS I No. 42 is probably much later; the question whether the others are earlier or later than the Late Bronze Age or are even provincial variations or reversions to primitive types must remain open. A Master of Animals with caprids on CMS I No. 344 and a Mistress of Animals with dolphins on CMS I No. 356 also have stylistic peculiarities such as the extremely wide shoulders and a strikingly stiff and clumsy attitude. There is nothing to rule out the existence of local workshops whose products shared "provincial" features and whose activity went in hand with that of workshops in the main centers.

Complete nudity is not common in Aegean Bronze Age glyptic nor in the other media. There is, however, at least one notable exception to this rule, namely the exquisitely modelled naked young lady on the sealing from Chania⁴⁵ to which we have already referred; other possible instances include the female votaries or priestesses on the sealings from Zakro⁴⁶ and Ayia Triada⁴⁷ and on the two gold rings from Kalyvia⁴⁸ as well as the male votaries on the gold rings from Vaphio, Sellopoulo⁴⁹ and Arkhanes⁵⁰. Nevertheless, Dr. Ingo Pini kindly informs me that careful examination under the microscope mostly reveals traces of a garment on figures described as naked. There is no evidence to prove either that complete nudity was required for certain cult activities or that it had a symbolic meaning such as a possible connection with fertility⁵¹, although this is a legitimate suggestion.

The female votaries or priestesses shown on the gold rings, seals and sealings illustrating cult practices and found on the Greek Mainland generally have some indication of facial features:

⁴³ MS 29, 110–111.

⁴⁴ Encyclopedia of World Art vol. VI (1962) 44–80, Pls. 33–52, esp. 56–57 (Gems and Glyptics – with bibliography).

⁴⁵ op. cit. n. 17, Pl. III; see above Fig. 3.

⁴⁶ D.G. Hogarth, op. cit. n. 6, 77, No. 3, Fig. 2.

⁴⁷ AT 143–144, No. 143, Fig. 159.

⁴⁸ CMS II 3 Nos. 103, 114.

⁴⁹ ARep London, 1968–69, 33, Fig. 43.

⁵⁰ J.A. Sakellarakis, *Archaeology*, 1967, 280, Fig. 13.

⁵¹ op. cit. n. 14, 674. A possible connection of the naked lady on the sealing from Chania with fertility ceremonies is proposed by Hallager, op. cit. n. 17, 5.

two projections stand for the nose and the chin⁵², a dot stands for the eye⁵³, occasionally be almond-shaped⁵⁴. The torso is more substantial and the bodice is clearer than on their Minoan counterparts, and sometimes the engraver has made a not very successful attempt to render the upper body and breast in profile or different postures of the lower body⁵⁵. The types and decoration of the garment and the rendering of the hair⁵⁶ (*Fig. 9a, b*) are similar to the examples found in Crete. In the case of the processions both the general scheme and the details show affinities to the processional figures of the frescoes that decorated the Mycenaean palaces, with all the limitations imposed by the different material and scale. A kind of long robe or tunic is worn by figures of both sexes, generally interpreted as figures of priests or priestesses and depicted on examples from both Crete and the Mainland⁵⁷. Male and female figures engaged in cult activities share a few gestures which may indicate prayer or adoration: either both arms are raised⁵⁸, or one arm is bent at chest level and the other hangs by the side⁵⁹, or one arm is raised in front of the face or eye⁶⁰: the latter are known from Minoan seals and rings as well as from bronze figurines⁶¹. The votaries may also hold an offering or other object⁶². The hands are seldom indicated but the feet are clear (*Figs. 11, 12*). Since the emphasis is on the action rather than on characterization and the space is limited, it is not surprising if unnecessary details are omitted. The modelling of the male figures shows an equally consistent application of established conventions both in this and in other types of scene: the face is rendered in the same way as on the females, there is schematic indication of hair or a cap, the torso is triangular and some effort is made to render details of muscles and limbs; they wear a belt and/or a loincloth, rarely with some decoration⁶³. It seems possible to distinguish two broad stylistic types of male figure: the first consists of taller and thinner⁶⁴ (*Fig. 13*), the second of shorter and more robust variations⁶⁵ (*Fig. 14*). Simple schemes and gestures may be recognized in other scenes too, such as the hunting of various animals, combats, athletic games and acrobatic performances, the Master and the Mistress of Animals, bull-grappling and bull-leaping and the priestess carrying a sacrificial animal. Admittedly we sometimes find deviations and unusual features. Discussions and comments on the main stylistic trends in Minoan and Mycenaean glyptic have been included in the major general studies and in a number of specialized articles dealing with particular aspects or indi-

⁵² e.g. CMS I Nos. 17, 86, 101, 126, 127, 132, 134, 144, 159, 179, 191, 226, 233, 279, 379.

⁵³ Dot eye: e.g. CMS I Nos. 17, 86, 101, 108, 126, 127, 132, 144, 159, 179, 191, 233, 279, 377, 379; CMS V 2 No. 728.

⁵⁴ Almond eye: e.g. CMS I Nos. 108, 127, 220, 221, 226.

⁵⁵ e.g. CMS I Nos. 86, 127, 162.

⁵⁶ see ns. 25–31.

⁵⁷ e.g. CMS II 3 Nos. 147, 198; CS No. 239; CMS I Nos. 128, 179, 223, 225, 374.

⁵⁸ e.g. CMS I No. 162. Compare CMS II 3 No. 330.

⁵⁹ e.g. CMS I No. 132.

⁶⁰ e.g. CMS I Nos. 108, 127, 191, 313, 321, 369.

⁶¹ AT No. 122, Fig. 138; 138, Fig. 154; CS No. 250; CMS XII No. 168; CMS II 3 Nos. 15, 18, 169, 252, 304, 305, 326.

For a list of Minoan bronze figurines making the gesture of adoration see Biesantz, KMS 169–171; for illustrations see C. Verlinden, *Les statuettes anthropomorphes crétoises en bronze et en plomb, du III^e millénaire au VII^e siècle av. J.-C.* Pls. 1, 4–8, 10–12, 14–18, 20–27, 43–46.

⁶² e.g. CMS I No. 279.

⁶³ e.g. CMS I Nos. 9, 12, 16, 79, 82, 89, 95, 101, 112, 113, 165, 171, 199, 200, 225, 263, 290.

⁶⁴ e.g. CMS I Nos. 9, 11, 12, 16, 79, 82, 107, 119, 126, 131, 133, 137, 163, 170, 171, 180, 199, 200, 225, 263, 294.

⁶⁵ e.g. CMS I Nos. 68, 89, 95, 112, 165, 227, 290.

vidual examples⁶⁶. In Evans' accounts in PM IV and the PM Index volume⁶⁷ there is an underlying belief in a kind of linear development from crude to naturalistic followed by a period of decadence, judging by the sketchy representations that he assigned to the LM IIIB "Reoccupation Period". Kenna's remarks and chronological arrangement of the material in CS and in the CMS volumes for which he was responsible⁶⁸ rest on similar assumptions. Biesantz's criterion for distinguishing three different styles of Creto-Mycenaean glyptic was rendering of the movement: the Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods of Crete are thus marked by the "gehemmte Bewegung" and this was followed by the "freie Bewegung" of the period of the Second Palaces (MM III-LM I) and the "nachlassende Bewegung" of LM II-III; the latter includes two different expressions, the "erstarrender Stil" and the "auflösender Stil", noted on examples from both Crete and the Mainland. His indirect recognition of the difficulties of distinguishing between Minoan and Mycenaean in LM II-III together with his extensive list of seals from dated contexts contributed much to the study of problems of chronology and style⁶⁹. On the other hand his condemnation of quite a large number of pieces as forgeries is probably too subjective⁷⁰ and the same is true of Kenna's "Gemmae dubitandae"⁷¹. Several distinguished suspects were later aptly defended by Sourvinou-Inwood⁷², Sakellarakis⁷³ and Pini⁷⁴.

Although the strict application of Biesantz's method may present a few difficulties I must admit that I consider movement as a much more solid criterion for the distinction of stylistic groups than the vague notions used to distinguish the Minoan from the Mycenaean examples. In the present discussion I have already attempted to show that it is practically impossible to make firm distinctions between the "Minoan naturalistic" and the "Mycenaean tectonic" or "symmetrical" character on the evidence of human figures. Such difficulties are increased by the fact that even some compositional schemes and themes previously considered typically Mycenaean are now found to have earlier Minoan parallels⁷⁵.

In her discussion of the Minoan seals in the Giamalakis Collection A. Sakellariou distinguishes four different styles in the Neopalatial material: the "naturalistic", the "palatial-decorative", the "schematic" and the "magical"⁷⁶. In her later study of Mycenaean glyptic she recognizes a Minoan style (A), a Mycenaean style (B), and a magical style (C) common both in Crete and in the Mycenaean world⁷⁷. Elsewhere in the same book she assigns the male figures

⁶⁶ For a critical survey of the relevant bibliography see J.H. Betts - J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 21, 1982, 107-110.

⁶⁷ PM IV 484-619; Index Volume 783. In a seminar given in Athens in the winter of 1982 Dr. Ingo Pini provided a thorough account of the state of research on postpalatial glyptic together with many original remarks and rather sceptical comments based on a great number of examples. I would like to thank him once more for making available to me an unpublished preliminary version of this paper entitled "What do we know of the Minoan glyptic after the assumed fall of the Palace of Knossos" and for allowing me to refer to it.

⁶⁸ CMS IV (together with J.A. Sakellarakis) VII, VIII, XII, XIII.

⁶⁹ Biesantz KMS 52-83. *ibid.*, 125-167.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 84-124.

⁷¹ CS 154. On this subject see also H. Buchholz, *ActPrHistA* I (1970) 130ff.

⁷² *Kadmos* 10, 1971, 60-69, Pls. I-II.

⁷³ *Pepragmena*, 1971, AI 304ff., Pls. 85-92.

⁷⁴ CMS Beiheft I (1981) 135-157, Figs. 1-12.

⁷⁵ *op. cit.* n. 66, 105-106. Also I. Pini, *BCH Supplément* I (1985) 165, 309.

⁷⁶ CMCG XVI-XVIII.

⁷⁷ MS 104-111.

represented on the seals, sealings and gold rings in the National Museum, Athens, to three different types (I, II, III⁷⁸), the much less numerous female figures, by contrast, to one type only⁷⁹. In the present discussion I made a distinction between two different types of male figures based on their modelling and pointed out the typological uniformity of the females. There is no exact correspondence between my types and A. Sakellariou's; the reason for this may be the different viewpoint and degree of importance we attach to the findspots as indicators of "Minoan" or "Mycenaean" character. Moreover I do not think that the presence of CMS I No. 42 from Mycenae, which may be of much later date, justifies the distinction of Type III; this was discussed above together with a small number of rather individualized examples, which present some interest because they demonstrate a parallel existence of, or reversion to, more primitive styles⁸⁰.

Boardman distinguishes four major stylistic groups in the glyptic of Mycenaean Crete, which he calls 'Fine', 'Plain', 'Common' and 'Cut'; those of Mainland Greece are subdivided into seven groups for rings and thirteen for stone gems⁸¹. In the last fifteen years or so there has been a marked tendency to define much more specific groups and even individual masters. Some of the scholars working in this direction are rather more sceptical and limit themselves to the definition of broad glyptic groups or to the attribution of two or three examples to the same hand, while others go further towards the identification of particular masters and even the more precise dating of their work⁸². In his dissertation and published articles Younger recognizes the work of several masters to which he gives characteristic names after a thorough study of all the extant Late Bronze Age material⁸³. And yet his initial optimism about the possibility of making such specific identifications and datings gave way in his latest article to some more sceptical comments and to arguments for presenting material under groups rather than masters from now on⁸⁴. A great number of human figures have been attributed to his masters or groups so far⁸⁵; the most extensive is the "Cretan Popular Group", which was discussed earlier and whose equivalent "Mainland Popular Group" will be included in one of Younger's future articles⁸⁶. He believes that most members of this group that come from dated contexts were in use in LM IB/LH IIA and that this may indicate an extension of its floruit into the fifteenth century B.C.⁸⁷. The presence of identical stylistic traits among hard-stone and soft-stone examples may well suggest manufacture by the same artists⁸⁸. In my opinion it may be even more difficult to fix a

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 26–28.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 28–29.

⁸⁰ see p. 265.

⁸¹ GGFR 393–396.

⁸² For a critical survey of the literature see *op. cit.* n. 66, 113–114. See also articles by J.H. Betts in CMS Beiheft 1 (1981) 1–15, Figs. 1–12; E. Thomas, *ibid.*, 225–239, Fig. 1–34; J.G. Younger, *ibid.*, 263–272, Figs. 1–17. See also I. Pini's sceptical remarks *op. cit.* n. 75, 166.

⁸³ J.G. Younger, *Towards the Chronology of Aegean Glyptic in the Late Bronze Age* (1973), Univ. Microfilms 73–24, 867. References to groupings proposed by him and other scholars and comments on them are given in J.H. Betts – J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 22, 1982, 104–121; J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 22, 1983, 109–136; *Kadmos* 23, 1984, 38–64; *Kadmos* 24, 1985, 34–73.

⁸⁴ J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 24, 1985, 48–50.

⁸⁵ *op. cit.* n. 83.

⁸⁶ J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 22, 1983, 117–119, 123–127.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 118.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 118–119.

secure point for the last members of the “Cretan Popular Group”, and this is important for the history of the human representations, since some simplified versions of human figures may indeed be as late as LM/LH IIIB but do not come from dated contexts. Despite my earlier attribution of a group to a late phase⁸⁹ and in view of the problems imposed by the dates of the contexts in cases which have earlier stylistic parallels⁹⁰ as well as by the coexistence of more elaborate and of cruder styles, I now wonder whether any of the human beings represented on gems or sealings can be firmly placed in LM/LH IIIB, or at least in its advanced phase, but I have not yet completed my investigations into this. The small number of Neopalatial and Postpalatial seals from securely dated contexts add many difficulties. Given the great uncertainty about acceptable dating systems and my own hesitation to choose any one of them, I prefer not to consider such problems in this paper. The conservative character of glyptic and the survival of much earlier examples in contexts dating from the historic period⁹¹ add to the complications of the whole issue. The fact that it is difficult to attribute a human figure to an artist or even to a closed group is also pointed out by Younger⁹². His detailed comments on the possible contribution of seal engravers to ring engraving and to other arts as well are particularly illuminating for questions of the identity and status of those artists.

Although I had thought of including some statistical comments on the relative frequency or rarity of particular iconographical themes I was discouraged by the unevenness of the evidence and by the possibility that an unimaginable high number of sealstones may have been produced and used in any period⁹³. We possess only a fraction of the total production and therefore the validity of even tentative conclusions must be very limited indeed. I am also very sceptical about the danger of overestimating the relevance of artistic preference to the reality of this and of any given time. Excessive speculation along such lines can be greatly misleading. Although the number of scenes of human activity is substantial they are not the majority in Late Bronze Age glyptic. The scenes illustrating religious or cult practices are the most numerous by far. In these I include the cycle of vegetation ritual and/or tree cult⁹⁴, including those with figures usually described as nude and bending over oval objects, which I believe to date from advanced LM I rather than from LM IIIA⁹⁵, the epiphany and the various processions or dances directly or indirectly related to it⁹⁶, the scenes of libation, presentation or offering to a seated goddess⁹⁷, the group of the goddess flanked or approached by female attendants⁹⁸, the ceremonial carrying of

⁸⁹ A. Tamvaki, *AAA* 6, 1973, 308–315.

⁹⁰ W.-D. Niemeier, *CMS Beiheft* 1 (1981) 91–103.

⁹¹ On this subject see G. Korres, *Pepragmena*, 1971, 455–465 (with bibliography). Also J.A. Sakellarakis, *Neue Forschungen in griechischen Heiligtümern* (1976) 283ff.

⁹² J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 24, 1985, 63.

⁹³ *ibid.*, 48–49.

⁹⁴ See elsewhere in this volume W.-D. Niemeier, N. Marinatos and Ch. Sourvinou-Inwood. For recent discussion of such scenes see G.E. Mylonas, *Mycenaean Religion* (1979) 62, Figs. 12–40; B. Rutkowski, *The Cult Places in the Aegean*² (1986) 101–102, Figs. 124–134; 205–209, Figs. 291–300.

⁹⁵ *op. cit.* n. 72; *cit.* n. 90, 98–99, Fig. 14; M.R. Popham *BSA* 69 (1974) 211, Fig. 10; 215, Fig. 12.

⁹⁶ e.g. *op. cit.* n. 6, 77, No. 1, Pl. VI, Fig. 1; 78, No. 9, Pl. VI; AT No. 124, Fig. 140, Pl. IX; No. 131, Fig. 151, Pl. XIV; *PM I* 180, Fig. 115; *CMS I* Nos. 17, 292; *CMS II* 3 No. 51.

⁹⁷ *op. cit.* n. 6, 77, No. 3, Fig. 8, Pl. VI; AT 142, No. 143; *PMI* 683, Fig. 502; *CMS I* Nos. 17, 179; *CMS IX* No. 115.

⁹⁸ AT 142, No. 141, Fig. 257; *CMS I* No. 17; Karageorghis-Buchholz, *Altägäis und Altkypros* (1972) No. 1385; *CS* 295.

the sacred garments⁹⁹ and of the sacrificial animal¹⁰⁰, the animal sacrifice¹⁰¹, the male or female votaries in front of a shrine or altar¹⁰² or among columns¹⁰³, the Master and the Mistress of Animals¹⁰⁴, the god or goddess with a lion¹⁰⁵ and the goddess feeding an ibex¹⁰⁶, which may be abridged versions of that scheme, the long-robed priests and priestesses in isolation or with a griffin¹⁰⁷, the juxtapositions of humans to a sphinx¹⁰⁸, a cynocephalus¹⁰⁹ or genii¹¹⁰, and the single or paired male or female figures making particular gestures and accompanied by stars or other symbols, which may be simplified versions of more elaborate scenes¹¹¹. The bull-leaping¹¹², the boxing and acrobatic performances¹¹³, and the unique example of a lion as a possible object of adoration by two long-robed priests¹¹⁴ probably also belong within this large category.

The hunting of various animals is also a popular subject with a very marked preference for the lion hunt, which may be subdivided into different schemes. Frequently the lion is attacked by one¹¹⁵ or two¹¹⁶ men, and there are also two addorsed groups of man and lion¹¹⁷. Sometimes the lion is tied up by two hunters¹¹⁸. On a unique example from Armenoi¹¹⁹ the beast has attacked the man. Unlike this predominantly Mycenaean theme, the peaceful association of a man with a lion, the meaning of which is unclear, seems to be Minoan¹²⁰; this is also true of the ibex hunt, represented by a few MM III–LM II examples from Crete and from Midea¹²¹. The deer is attacked by two men on CMS II 3 No. 66 from Sellopoulo or hunted from a chariot on CMS I No. 15 from Mycenae.

A MM III example shows an ewe¹²², while the boar¹²³ is a Mycenaean variant and the hunter is depicted with his prey¹²⁴ or with a dog¹²⁵. The bull hunt on a MM III sealing from Zakro¹²⁶ is

⁹⁹ e.g. CMS II 3 Nos. 8, 145; AT No. 129, Fig. 139.

¹⁰⁰ On this subject: J.A. Sakellarakis, *AEphem*, 1972, 245–256, Pls. 94–95.

¹⁰¹ e.g. AT 136, No. 131, Fig. 147; J.A. Sakellarakis *PZ* 45, 1970, 74–75, Fig. 8 No. 4; Mallia Maisons III 131ff., No. 261, Pl. XXVI, No. 6; CMS I No. 80.

¹⁰² e.g. Zervos, Crète, Fig. 666; AT 139, No. 136, Fig. 162; CMS I No. 119; CMS II 3 No. 114; CMS V 2 No. 608.

¹⁰³ e.g. CMS I No. 107.

¹⁰⁴ On this subject see A. Tamvaki, *BSA* 69, 1974, 282–286 (with bibliography) and *BCH Supplément I*, 274–275, 296.

¹⁰⁵ The god: *PMI* 505, Fig. 363b; AT 182, No. 194, Fig. 232; 137–138 No. 134, Fig. 150. The goddess: *PM I*, 505, 680, Fig. 363a, 500a; *BSA* 17, 1910–11, 265; CMS V 1 No. 253.

¹⁰⁶ loc. cit. n. 104, 287–288; Papapostolou, *Sphragismata* 85–87.

¹⁰⁷ See n. 57; also CMS VIII Nos. 95, 146 and the goddess with the griffin on the gold ring from Arkhanes (n. 50). The religious character of the association of the man and the griffin(s) on CMS I Nos. 285 and 314 is not clear.

¹⁰⁸ *BSA* 60, 1965, 80, Pl. 14 (CR 35).

¹⁰⁹ *PM II* 763, Fig. 491; *CMCG* Nos. 372, Pls. XVIII, XXVIII; 359, Pls. XII, XXVIII; CMS I No. 377.

¹¹⁰ CMS VII No. 95.

¹¹¹ See figs. 7–10.

¹¹² J.G. Younger, *AJA* 80, 1976, 125–136, Pls. 20–22.

¹¹³ *Boxers*: Figs. I, n. 2; CMS I No. 306. *Acrobats*: CS 204; CMS I No. 131.

¹¹⁴ CMS I No. 274.

¹¹⁵ e.g. AT 190 Fig. 228; CMS I Nos. 9, 112, 152, 165, 228, 290, 302; CMS IV No. 233; CMS IX No. 114.

¹¹⁶ e.g. *AGD II Berlin* 31, No. 24, Pl. 7; CMS I, No. 331; CMS IX, No. 7D.

¹¹⁷ J. Boardman *RA*, 1970, 3ff. Figs. 1–3; CMS I No. 307.

¹¹⁸ e.g. AT 193, Fig. 231, Pl. XVIII; CMS I No. 224.

¹¹⁹ CMS V 1 No. 256.

¹²⁰ e.g. CMS I Nos. 133, 512; CMS II 3 Nos. 24, 27; CMS XII No. 207.

¹²¹ e.g. CS Nos. 285, 320, 326; CMS I No. 199; CMS VII No. 131; CMS V 2 No. 656.

¹²² CS No. 122.

¹²³ e.g. CMS I No. 227; *AGD II Berlin* 30–31, No. 23, Pl. 7; CMS I No. 294.

¹²⁴ *AGD II Berlin* 24, No. 3, Pl. 1.

¹²⁵ Papapostolou, *Sphragismata* 68–69 No. 26 Pl. 36.

¹²⁶ AT 162 No. 102, Fig. 174.

unique; the scenes of bull-grappling may be a substitute for the absence of the latter. Their most common type depicts a kneeling man who grasps the horns of a bull¹²⁷; in my earlier discussion of the bull games I attributed a few instances with acrobats in awkward positions to this theme as well and interpreted them as accidents in the course of bull-grappling¹²⁸. However, most were later connected by Younger with one of his three bull-leaping schemes¹²⁹. Although I still believe that the bull-grappling may have preceded the bull-leaping this need not be its only function nor need its meaning always be religious.

Unclear associations of men with animals are sometimes found too¹³⁰, but more specific examples include sealings from Knossos (The "Young Zeus", the "Prize Ox")¹³¹ and others from Ayia Triada¹³², Zakro¹³³ and Chania¹³⁴. The collared hound and the bulldog accompanied by one and two attendants respectively¹³⁵ may have religious connotations; on the other hand, the milking scenes on sealings from the Archives Deposit¹³⁶ and from Chania¹³⁷ and the man leading oxen¹³⁸ or bulls¹³⁹ or sheep¹⁴⁰ may be among the earliest genre of everyday scenes, although the possibility of a symbolic or narrative meaning cannot be excluded. The rowers¹⁴¹, the men shown inside boats¹⁴² and the men holding fish¹⁴³ or octopus¹⁴⁴ also probably illustrate everyday activities.

Warriors wearing the eight-shaped shield are attested to either in isolation¹⁴⁵ or in procession¹⁴⁶ on MM III–LM I sealings from Knossos and Ayia Triada and have later parallels from Crete¹⁴⁷. The earliest combat scenes may be recognized among the Zakro and Ayia Triada sealings¹⁴⁸, and although armed combats were thought to be a Mycenaean speciality, drawings made for CMS demonstrate the existence of early examples from Crete¹⁴⁹. In addition, the "Tragana Duellist Group", first identified by Younger¹⁵⁰ and later studied by me too¹⁵¹, appears to have a

¹²⁷ e.g. CMS I Nos. 95, 137, 274.

¹²⁸ A. Tamvaki, BSA 69, 1974, 259–293, Pls. 43–46.

¹²⁹ J.G. Younger, AJA 80, 1976, 125–137, Pls. 20–22.

¹³⁰ Such unclear associations are often found on Prepalatial seals, e.g. CMS IV No. 98; CMCG Nos. 32, 34, Pl. XVI, No. 71, Pl. XVIII.

¹³¹ "The Young Zeus": PM I 273, Fig. 202b. "The Prize Ox": PM IV 564, Fig. 532.

¹³² e.g. op. cit. n. 5, 133–4, Figs. 144 and 160a, b.

¹³³ e.g. op. cit. n. 6, 79, Fig. 7.

¹³⁴ From Chania: Papapostolou, op. cit. n. 8, 67–8. Here the man is leading an animal held by a leash and the author thinks that this may be a farming scene.

¹³⁵ With one attendant: PM IV 581, Fig. 569. With two attendants: PM I 766, Fig. 496.

¹³⁶ PM IV 564, Fig. 534.

¹³⁷ Chania 41 (unpublished).

¹³⁸ PM IV 564, Fig. 535. Also CMS VII No. 100.

¹³⁹ PM III 188, Fig. 132.

¹⁴⁰ CS No. 309, Pl. 12.

¹⁴¹ e.g. op. cit. n. 5, No. 118, Fig. 134 (from Ayia Triada); PM I 254, Fig. 149 (from Knossos) and its exact replica, a sealing from Zakro: op. cit. n. 6, 79, No. 16.

¹⁴² e.g. CMS V 1 No. 184.

¹⁴³ Man holding fish: e.g. CMS VII No. 88. For woman and fish: e.g. CS No. 282, Pl. 11 and CMS VIII No. 128.

¹⁴⁴ PM I 677, Fig. 497; also GGFR Pl. 62 (holding fish and octopus).

¹⁴⁵ CMS V 1 No. 239 (from Chania, Kastelli); CMS XIII No. 137.

¹⁴⁶ PM I 695, Fig. 516. PM III, Fig. 205 (from Knossos); op. cit. n. 5, 124–5, No. 116 (from Ayia Triada).

¹⁴⁷ see n. 145 and CMS II. 3 No. 32 (from Mavrospilio).

¹⁴⁸ op. cit. n. 6, 78, Nos. 12, 13, Pl. VI; op. cit. n. 5, 122–4, Nos. 113, 114, 115, Figs. 129, 130, 131.

Cretan core and strong Minoan connections. Chariot scenes occur on a small number of sealings from Sklavokampos and Knossos and of seals from Vaphio¹⁵²; they are the closest compositional parallels for CMS I No. 15 from Mycenae, where the chariot is used in the deer hunt.

A closed group of representations of male heads was put together by Betts, who discussed it and linked it to the activity of a MM III–LM I Knossian workshop that specialized in other arts as well¹⁵³. The fact that the portrait (*Fig. 15*), which was to become a favorite theme of ancient and modern glyptic from Hellenistic times on¹⁵⁴, should be so poorly and questionably represented in our period is also of some interest.

References to specific stories or myths may be contained in a few seal-types: the man with the monster on the Knossos sealing mentioned earlier, the monumental combat schemes on CMS I No. 16 from Mycenae and CMS I No. 263 from Tragana and CMS VII No. 130 from Crete, the scenes around the arrival or departure of a ship on CMS I No. 180 from Tiryns and Oxford 1938.1129 from the outskirts of Iraklion, the enigmatic composition of CMS V 1 No. 173, the Minotaur ring from the Athenian Agora and the youth leaping over a saddled ibex on CMS V 2 No. 638 from Koukounara are the most prominent cases. Although it is possible that they have an obscure narrative meaning it would be extremely hazardous to suggest a direct relation to incidents from known Classical Greek myths¹⁵⁵.

An attempt to interpret the meaning of the religious and the possible narrative scenes would be seriously hindered by the lack of the texts and inscriptions which so greatly facilitate the study of Egyptian and Near Eastern glyptic. This difficulty is insurmountable, whether we view the scenes with the eye of the twentieth-century beholder or make some fumbling attempt to think ourselves into the religious and aesthetic beliefs of the men of their time. I do not think that we shall ever find satisfactory answers to the following question. Do such scenes refer to their time of creation or to the remote past? Was their significance personal and closely connected with their owner or more widely understood and appreciated? Should we interpret these and other scenes symbolically or at face value? To what extent was the choice of particular themes and motifs dictated by the taste of the patron and was there any freedom left to the artist? Do any of the groups and associations have an emblematic character? We may safely suggest that certain themes were considered appropriate for the decoration of gems and rings and that their rendering relied heavily on the use of established schemata. Indeed, if one were trying to write a text entitled “Everyday life in the Aegean Bronze Age” based exclusively or largely on the evidence of

¹⁴⁹ These are the sealings impressed by the same seal which come from Ayia Triada and Knossos and were previously thought to represent athletic games. On this subject see I. Pini's remarks in *BCH Supplement I* (1985) 309.

¹⁵⁰ *op. cit.* n. 83. See also *op. cit.* n. 83b, 127.

¹⁵¹ To be published in the Acts of the Congress on “Premycenaean and Mycenaean Pylos” (Athens 1980) in press.

¹⁵² *op. cit.* n. 5, 125–6, No. 117, Fig. 133a (from Ayia Triada); *op. cit.* n. 7, 90, No. 8 (from Sklavokampos); CMS VIII No. 87 (from Knossos); CMS I Nos. 229, 230 (from Vaphio); PM IV, Fig. 803 (GGFR Pl. 110) is an exceptional example from Avdou showing a chariot drawn by two goats. Another goat chariot occurs on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus: Marinatos-Hirmer, *Crete and Mycenae*, Pl. XXIX B.

¹⁵³ *TUAS* 6 (1981) 2–6.

¹⁵⁴ *op. cit.* n. 44.

¹⁵⁵ It is always tempting to recognize possible forerunners of well-known figures from classical myths on Bronze Age works of art but the evidence for such identifications isn't enough. On the subject of narrative art: E.J. Kantor – G. Hanfman and other, *AJA* 61, 1957, 43ff.

glyptic, the emerging picture would be very strange! The next question to ask is why art should be a mirror of life and whether it ever has been. In my opinion Bronze Age glyptic belongs to the circle of aristocratic art and its patrons were probably members of the court aristocracy. The existence of cheaper examples in soft stone possibly made by the same artists does not affect the validity of this statement, because they could have been made in imitation of the hard stone products for a different clientele.

Despite certain relations and influences, the iconography of glyptic need not correspond exactly with that of other arts, notably with that of the fescoes, often suggested as monumental prototypes of glyptic compositions, or of the related ivory and plaster reliefs. The iconography of some Babylonian cylinders includes reflections of monumental works of art as well as independent new themes¹⁵⁶. Greek art of the Classical period illustrates some relations between sculpture and the iconography of gems and coins and this is true of other periods in the history of art as well¹⁵⁷.

We do not know whether the end of Bronze Age glyptic, which is later than that of the theme discussed here, is related to some social or political causes or changes. Some scholars believe that the reemergence of glyptic in the eighth century B.C. may have something to do with the Greek city-state, the growth of commercial enterprise and the increasing power of local families¹⁵⁸. The conventional treatment of the schematic linear figures on gems of the Late Geometric period¹⁵⁹ somewhat recalls examples of Prepalatial and Protopalatial seals and also some of the more "primitive" examples mentioned earlier that cannot be securely dated¹⁶⁰. In the following periods it may be possible to trace more consistent patterns of a linear development from the stylized archaic representations to the admirably naturalistic versions of the Classical and Hellenistic periods.

DISKUSSION

I. PINI fragt, ob A. TAMVAKI die minoische Glyptik als höfische Kunst betrachtet.

A. TAMVAKI sieht die Bearbeitung von harten Steinen und die Anfertigung von Ringen als höfische Kunst an. Die Substitute in weichem Stein sind es nicht unbedingt gewesen. Doch wissen wir nicht, ob beide Materialarten von denselben Künstlern bearbeitet wurden.

I. PINI weist auf das Vorkommen von kostbaren und schlichten Siegeln in vielen Gräbern abgelegener Gebiete Griechenlands hin. Manchmal werden nur die einfachen Stücke gefunden, wie z.B. die Beispiele der »Mainland Popular Group« nach J.G. Younger. Es ist problematisch, generell zu sagen, Hartsteingravur und Goldringtechnik sind höfische Kunst und die etwas schlichteren Stücke nicht.

¹⁵⁶ H. Frankfort, in: *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (The Pelican History of Art, 1970 edition) 35, states that the Mesopotamian mural paintings and other large-scale decoration often seem to depend on the compositions of the seal engravers.

¹⁵⁷ A good general survey in *op. cit.* n. 44.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 51.

¹⁵⁹ For Late Geometric gems with human figures see e.g. GGFR Pls. 208, 209.

¹⁶⁰ For prepalatial and protopalatial examples and for others of more "primitive" type dating from the period under discussion see above.