

CANONICAL, VARIANT, MARGINAL A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING IMAGERY

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INTRODUCTION

Endowing mute images with speech has long been a prime concern of Aegean archaeologists. Yet nearly a hundred years of research has not created that elusive single script for the "picture book without text".¹ On the contrary, a confusion of tongues has resulted, generating a number of mutually exclusive scenarios with different finds clothed in the role of primadonna. Since the state of Aegean archaeology, or of any archaeology, precludes aiming at a single 'correct' manuscript, the doors are opened for a Babel of conflicting readings. In a world where one man's goddess is another man's priestess is another man's adorant, the most convincing method and the most authoritative handling of the evidence will go further in the struggle to attain the status of momentary gospel.

Yet the study of Aegean Bronze Age imagery lacks method in the sense that there is a disinterest in confronting the act of decoding, and the framing assumptions which direct such an activity.² The mechanics of pictorial exegesis is removed from the audience. The scientific narrative attempts to conceal the work of the archaeologist, and, thus, the dominant interpretations can only be comprehended in terms of results, not a process of becoming. Objectivity appears to be attained.

* The author wishes to express his gratitude towards the organizers for the opportunity to speak at the symposium. This paper has profited from the critical remarks of Mrs Ethel Wedde. References to finger rings, seals, and sealings catalogued in the CMS are given, as customary, with volume number, part number if applicable, and catalogue number. Representations referred to with a number preceded by 'K' appear in Kenna, CS, those by 'Z' in the works cited in n. 28.

Source of illustrations: Fig. 4 by the author; remaining photographs from the archives of CMS.

¹ M.P. Nilsson dixit.

² Exceptions exist in the form of work done by Drs Janice Crowley, Lyvia Morgan, and Christina Sourvinou-Inwood. J. Crowley in: *Transition* 203ff.; ead. in: R. Laffineur – L. Basch (eds.), *Thalassa. L'Egée préhistorique et la mer*, *Aegaeum* 7, 1991, 219ff.; ead. in: *Eikon* 23ff. L. Morgan in: *L'Iconographie Minoenne* 5ff.; Morgan, *MWPT* 10ff.; ead. in: *CMS Beih.* 3, 145ff. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *CMS Beih.* 3, 241ff. Cf. also K. Krattenmaker in this volume 117ff.

However, if it is argued, as here, that all method is tainted with explicit or implicit intellectual biases on the part of the scholar designing the research project, objectivity in itself cannot be a goal.³ This must be sought in a combination of context-sensitive principles and the application of reproduceable analytical processes, the aim being to generate a transparent examination, open to scrutiny. For although Archaeology cannot attain the status of a hard science due to its inability to repeat its experiments, pictorial analysis based on clusters mimics to a certain extent experimental repetition in that each member of the cluster represents a renewed attempt at recreating the master type.⁴ Conclusions formulated on the basis of analyses carried out on a cluster population, and valid for all members, approximates scientific explanation.

The requirements for pictorial exegesis, particularly in a domain such as Aegean Bronze Age glyptic imagery, in which description and classification serve as a prelude to the far more contentious purpose of interpreting the images, and thereby writing the book on Minoan-Mycenaean religion, go beyond devising a method, and creating a few analytical tools.⁵ Hermeneutics is a package deal. It compels the scholar to design a complete system from the professed aim, through specifying the basic assumptions, down to individual analytical steps.

Any research design is steered by the type of data involved, by past attempts to examine it, and, to a certain extent, by the aims of the scholar. To use the present undertaking as a paradigm: the conviction that the pictorial structure⁶ (the system which rules how the various components of the image are organized within the confines of a two-dimensional support), is of paramount importance to any reading of the image directs the scholar to design an analytical procedure which highlights it. Specific or general points of disagreement with the relevant literature guides the design to take these into account. And the type of support, the size of the image, the technique employed, the number of documents, etc. all influence the guiding principles.

Disagreement oft stems from incompatibilities in the framing assumptions, and in the implicit methods applied to the data. Yet any given analysis may very well be irrefutable in

³ Cf. the critique of the Popperian concept of objectivity in scientific research by P. Feyerabend, *Against Method* (1988).

⁴ The master-type is defined as the conceptual image subjacent to the creative acts undertaken by the artist. In the terminology employed by J. Crowley, the master-type corresponds to the 'icon', cf. ead. in: *Transition* 208ff.; ead., *Aegaeum* 7, 1991, 224; ead. in: *Eikon* 23. 25. 32ff.

⁵ The author is in agreement with I. Pini in: *Eikon* 11f. 18 (cf. also J. Crowley in: *Eikon* 36) regarding the need to improve the descriptive language employed in glyptic studies, but cannot accept this activity as the sole priority. It is necessary to proceed with analysis even if later terminological and interpretational corrections ensue.

⁶ In a paper published in *Eikon* 181ff., the author employed the term 'pictorial architecture'. 'Pictorial structure' now appears preferable, allowing 'architecture' to be reserved in its primary meaning relative to buildings; cf. K. Krattenmaker in this volume 117ff. The author is grateful to Ms Nina Wedde for spirited opposition to the *Eikon* usage. Sourvinou-Inwood (supra n. 2) 242. 246 employs 'iconographical schemata' and speaks of the organization of 'iconic space'. Cf. also the suggestion by W. Schiering, *Gnomon* 50, 1978, 567; id., *Gnomon* 53, 1981, 579; id. in: *Aux origines de l'hellénisme. La Crète et la Grèce. Hommage à Henri van Effenterre* (1984), 66 that 'tektonisch' be preferred to 'architektonisch' for motifs such as those illustrated by Yule, *ECS* Pl. 16 (there termed 'tectonic ornament').

terms of its internally established rules — despite the objections raised by competing explanations.⁷ Such clashes of opinion stemming from different approaches to the material, rather than from factual disagreement, can be avoided if the methods applied are detailed. Currently, methodology consists largely of a body of unformulated rules to be distilled from the writings of the masters, a process bound to create clones, not independent scholars.⁸

The present paper attempts to detail aspects of a method believed useful when approaching Aegean Bronze Age glyptic imagery. It renders explicit the framing assumptions recognized as having a bearing on the way the research is designed, discusses the categories created, and illustrates, succinctly, each level within the hierarchy. It cannot constitute a definite statement as the research reported upon is in progress.⁹

CLASSIFICATION AND CLUSTERS

A classificatory scheme depends on the recurrent appearance of comparable images,¹⁰ and on the comparison, and contrast, between different types. Two separate levels of classification exist, the formal and the conceptual.¹¹ A formal typology unites within a single type, or cluster, images that share a number of primary features, as well as, although not

⁷ To quote an example: the paper by E. Herkenrath, *AJA* 41, 1937, 411ff., has generally been consigned to the scrap-heap of research. Yet if read on the terms established by its author, to wit, that invocation of the divinity takes place in a squatting, crouching or seated position, the conclusions drawn have a certain logic — despite the discomfort they cause to other scholars. Herkenrath's error lies in the framing assumption: that ethnological comparanda from Cameron, Burma, Celebes, Buddhism, the cult of Isis, etc. are relevant to Minoan ritual practice. His refusal to consider alternative approaches leaves him open to justified criticism.

⁸ There exist no textbooks on the methods of Aegean Bronze Age archaeology addressing the specific problems encountered. The teachability, and the standing as a science (however loosely the term is applied) of the discipline suffers, which to some extent explains its status as the orphan of Classical Archaeology (cf. the comments by S. Morris in: *Eikon* 341).

⁹ The paper continues work initiated in the author's to date unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Towards a Hermeneutics of Aegean Bronze Age Ship Imagery* (Universität Mannheim 1992), and the author's paper in: *Eikon* 181ff., which covers only one of the aspects treated here, and ought really have been preceded by the present paper — yet, such are the vagaries of research. An attempt to place the work within a global framework, such as those employed by J. Crowley, and C. Sourvinou-Inwood, is eschewed. It appears preferable to commence with questioning the images with the help of some simple concepts suggested by the data themselves. At no point will the literary references be complete. The aim is here to present an approach in the process of genesis, not to survey a sub-discipline of Aegean archaeology. At the origin of the author's interest in structures lies the work of V. Propp (*Morphologie du conte*, 1970) and the transformational grammar of F. de Saussure (cf. J. Piaget, *Le structuralisme* [1987]). A spurious pedigree from C. Lévi-Strauss has not been claimed, although his work undoubtedly lies behind it (for a good, critical introduction, cf. W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* [1979] 1ff.), as does that of J. Derrida behind the deconstruction to be undertaken below.

¹⁰ The following considerations are also valid for objects, although, since the paper focuses on images, no further reference thereto will be made.

¹¹ These two levels are also subsumed in the contrast between diagnostic and analytical typology. A diagnostic typology is generated from type-specific characteristics, whereas an analytical typology is based on individual-specific traits. The difference, in practical terms, consists in the coarseness (or fineness) of the mesh of the filters employed to constitute the study population.

necessarily, certain secondary traits.¹² This approach to classification is useful in glyptic research when the stone depicts a single object, for example a ship,¹³ a quadruped,¹⁴ a Zwei-, Drei- or Vierpass.¹⁵

Classification by form diminishes in effectivity when confronted with complexe images. Such representations are created by the interplay between the support, the theme, the system governing the pictorial construction, and the constituent components. The support determines the available space, the system how the components required by the theme are organized in that space. A normal typological approach with its emphasis on formal characteristics will encounter problems when faced with the diversity exhibited by the components.¹⁶

If the images are classified by reference to the superordinate organizing principle — the system, or as it is termed here, the pictorial structure¹⁷ — formal differences are attenuated, and an explosion of potential clusters into individual representations is avoided.¹⁸ The pictorial structure creates a normative framework dictating the position within the picture surface of the specific components constituting the image. Thus it is not the morphology of the individual shapes, but the fact that similar shapes recurrently occupy the same zone on the surface which is deemed significant. The interaction between the occupants of the various zones designate certain zones as favored, that is, of particular semantic interest.

This can be illustrated by reference to the cluster termed by the author "scenes of manifestation".¹⁹ It subsumes the well-known depictions of a divinity appearing as a small floating figure before an adorant.²⁰ The basic pictorial structure is simple: an adorant to the left, the deity at top center, and a marker of the physical space within which the encounter takes place designating it as sanctified (a shrine, a tree, a pillar, a baetyl) to the right.

¹² A primary feature is defined as a morphological characteristic thought sufficiently significant to warrant attention in the cluster-forming stage — it thus directs the typology to take a certain shape. A secondary trait is an addition to the basic form of the image, an element common to several members of a cluster, but neither universal nor irreplaceable. A third category, incidental additions, have no classificatory significance.

¹³ Cf. the author's dissertation (supra n. 9).

¹⁴ Cf. papers by W. Müller and I. Pini in this volume 151ff. and 193ff.

¹⁵ Cf. Yule, ECS Pls. 27–28 motifs 47–49.

¹⁶ This may be illustrated by a study of any of the six groups created by W.-D. Niemeier in: CMS Beih. 3, 163ff.: the documents are classified by interactive context: adorants alone, adorants confronted by a deity, deities alone. The members of each group exhibit substantial differences, yet, based on the implicit framing assumptions employed by Niemeier, the typology appears justified.

¹⁷ L. Morgan in: CMS Beih. 3, 145 employs a similar concept, "the analysis of structure — iconic identification". It is implicit in Marinatos, MSR 61ff.; cf. also Schiering (supra n. 6 [1984]) 66. Careful study of literature pertaining to Aegean Bronze Age imagery would, no doubt, reveal a more widespread use of this approach, but it has never — to the author's knowledge — been codified within an overall, explicitly argued, system.

¹⁸ The present paper, and the work in general by its author, takes it as an irrefutable methodological principle of research into imagery that the single representation has no significance other than as a potential exception until shown to be part of a cluster. This attitude does not ignore the single large-scale, high-quality image, but militates against formulating sweeping, general-purpose statements on its testimony alone.

¹⁹ The term 'epiphany scenes', frequently employed by the author in: Eikon 181ff., should, after further thought, better be avoided, as it has certain associations, by virtue of its use in the literature, which the author prefers to reject (cf. *ibid.* 198ff.).

²⁰ Cf., for example, Niemeier (supra n. 16) 169 Fig. 2,1–6 for the most characteristic examples. The present author in: Eikon (supra n. 9) attempts to further extend this cluster.

Any individual within the cluster adhering to this pattern is termed a canonical image. It respects the master-type to the letter, even if there is morphological variance within the three zones. More substantial differences, such as introducing further adorants, additional cultic paraphernalia, or modifying the form of the floating deity, still warrants a classification, but as a variant, within the cluster — as long as the same general message can be perceived as vehiculed by the image. The crucial characteristics, it is argued, are the floating deity and the focus on either it or activities thought to induce its appearance. Such instances which flagrantly transgress the limits of mutability acceptable to ensure a convincing classification within a single cluster, yet still manifestedly manipulate parts of the message in a syntax reminiscent of the original master type, are classified as marginals.²¹

As previous writings of the present author have considered both the canonical and the variant image, the present paper will concentrate on a discussion of the marginal representation.²²

DEFINING MARGINALITY

The degree of deviation exhibited by members of a cluster can be gauged by seriation, the linear ordering of images from a chosen starting point. The document which is believed by the scholar to best approximate the master-type — the paradigm case — establishes the basic morphology, and becomes the point of departure for the succession of images ordered according to their ability to reproduce faithfully the intended message. It may also constitute the central point for radiating axes, if it is perceived that the cluster population includes more than one factor of variability.

At this stage in the present methodological exposition, the comments against objectivity made in the introduction find their full justification: the paradigm case, and the factors of variability chosen by the scholar depend on his/her conception of the material. The design of the research project cannot be objectivized beyond reach of individual sensitivities and biases. In speaking of 'context-sensitive principles', it is necessary to admit that the context is not only given by the particular problem treated, but also by the identity of the beholder. Despite this obvious deviation from objective research design, purely subjective results seeking to prove a point at all cost are avoided by the inherent checks against manipulation of data: peer review attentive to special pleading, abuse of evidence, skewed research design in favor of preconceived notions. By specifying the framing assumptions, the scholar not only makes

²¹ In the terminology of L. Morgan (CMS Beih. 3, 145), the marginal corresponds roughly to the 'ambiguous image', being "in structural terms, the synthesis of several units of which the resultant image is susceptible to multiple or conflicting interpretation." In the 'scenes of manifestation' (cf. the author in: Eikon 194ff.), the 'Ramp House' ring (ibid. Pl. XLVII,13) represents such a marginal as it combines characteristics of both the 'scenes of adoration' and the 'scenes of manifestation' (ibid. 190f.). Now add also Niemeier (supra n. 16) 173 Fig. 4,15 as a marginal scene of adoration. It should be noted that the notion of 'marginal' does not cover the range of ambiguity postulated by Morgan, nor the all-pervading ambiguity of E. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (1977), *passim*.

²² Cf. the dissertation and the author in: Eikon 181ff.

public the theoretical foundations of a research project, but also establishes the rules within which he/she is obliged to work.²³

A cluster, if schematically rendered, contains a number of documents hovering around the paradigm case in positions determined according to the degree of deviations from the perceived master-type. At some point, the edge of the cluster will become apparent, the moment when classifying an individual image in the cluster under study is no longer viable: the formal and/or structural deviation has reached such proportions as to raise questions regarding the criteria employed by the classificatory scheme. The image has approached the marginal zone, the no-man's land at the very edge of and between clusters. Thus, the marginal image need not only be the outcast of one cluster, it can also herald the outer edge of another.



Fig. 1 CMS IX No. 61.



Fig. 2 CMS XII No. 277.



Fig. 3 CMS II,3 No. 4.

A seriation of birds with deployed wings illustrates the concept of marginality:²⁴ the structure of the image, the vertical body tapering into a beak at the upper end, spreading into a fan-shaped tail at the other, with, left and right, the V- or L-shaped wings, points orientated downwards, is not exclusive to the bird. It also appears in the bird-woman cluster (*Figs. 1–3*). The seriation of birds with deployed wings and bird-women creates a linear regression from the chosen starting point, a bird, via several subtle transformations, to the

²³ For a different approach to specifying the role of the beholder, cf. Sourvinou-Inwood (*supra* n. 2). It remains unclear why the framework constructed from an argument based on perception and right/left dichotomies in primitive thought imposes the readings suggested by Sourvinou-Inwood. It is to be hoped that her eagerly awaited *Reading Dumb Images: A Methodology for Minoan Religion and Iconography* (cf. *op. cit.* 241 n. 1) will clarify this matter.

²⁴ The following seriations serve to illustrate the concepts of canonical, variant, and marginal images. They constitute arbitrary choices of individual images without reference to possible chronological inversions. They are in no way canonized by the virtue of the choices made by the author. L. Morgan (CMS Beih. 3, 152) speaks of a 'metamorphic process', recognizing the chronological difficulty. Conceptually related to ambiguity and marginality is the polysemy of signs, cf. Sourvinou-Inwood (*supra* n. 2) 243.

canonical bird-woman. Marginality enters when it is no longer possible to determine whether a bird or a bird-woman is depicted.²⁵

A second example involves the transition from the naturalistic image of a griffin to a griffin which clearly combines a decapitated leonine body and a bird protome with one or two deployed wings.²⁶ The marginality in this instance is not one of transgressing the formal limits for depicting a griffin, but rather one of clusteral overlap: the creature clearly employs complete elements from another cluster, yet remains fully identifiable.

This introduces a second use of this clustering process, beyond that as a purely classificatory tool. It may also serve as an interpretative aid to read enigmatic images. A representation which does not clearly enunciate its message attains no more than imperfect transmission.²⁷ Yet when placed in a cluster of partially cognate documents, the missing signals may be reconstructed, and the image read. Some of the Zakro Master's work illustrates this, particularly his bird women. Among the 14 sealings belonging to this cluster,²⁸ several would not, it is claimed here, be read correctly without reference to the more obvious depictions. A seriation departing from the most trenchant image attaches the variants and the marginals to the canonical members.²⁹

The paradigm case is deconstructed by the beholder into its constituent parts, with due notice taken of the position occupied by each element within the structure of the image. By comparing the occupants of various zones, it is possible not only to specify what can, on the basis of the available data, be expected in a given zone, but also to recognize stunted images lacking a zone, or nominally 'incorrectly' reconstructed instances, caused, for example, by inversion or displacement/duplication of zones.³⁰

²⁵ One choice of images could include the following, moving in the direction indicated in the text: CMS IX No. 61; XII Nos. 254, 277; II,4 No. 176; II,3 No. 4. The margin would be drawn left or right of CMS XII No. 277 – somewhere here one senses that a new cluster has begun. The bird-woman CMS II,3 No. 4, in turn, may constitute the departure of another seriation leading to the bare-breasted frontal woman in the cult scenes (e.g. CMS I No. 126, via II,4 No. 136; the skirt on CMS II,3 No. 170 is particularly reminiscent of that of the birdwoman CMS II,3 No. 4), or continues into Z20 and the Zakro Master bird woman abstractions (cf. *infra* n. 29).

²⁶ A suggested seriation: CMS I No. 271; II,4 No. 116; V Nos. 438, 437, 590. The seals Kenna, CS, K223 and CMS X No. 318 indicate the relatedness to canonical bird images.

²⁷ The receptor is the modern beholder: whether a Minoan beholder faced similar problems is not a topic open for debate, thus restricting the range which ambiguity can take as a concept in research.

²⁸ The following sealings are here considered as belonging to the Zakro Master bird-woman cluster: Z 20, Z 21, Z 23–29, Z 33, Z 43–45, possibly Z 53. The winged, goat-headed creatures (Z 34–38) are not included. On the Zakro Master, cf. D.G. Hogarth, *JHS* 22, 1902, 76ff. Pls. VII–X, and, particularly, Weingarten, Zakro Master; also I. Pini, *AA* 1983, 559ff.

²⁹ Such a seriation could start with Z 20, and proceed via Z 21, Z 25, and Z 28 to Z 45.

³⁰ The sealing Z 45, for instance, displays a duplication and inversion of the bottom zone. By comparison with Z 20, the skirt and the lower extremities are expected: naked legs appear bent in a manner to simulate the shape of the skirt. Sealings such as Z 25 and Z 28 indicate that an alternative notation for this zone is the fan-tail. This element appears in the top zone of Z 45 – therefore the contents of the bottom zone are here duplicated and displaced. Curiously, A. Onassoglou, in discussion to L. Morgan in: *CMS Beih.* 3, repudiates the notion that "Einzelfälle in Gruppierungen eingeordnet werden, um sie dort zu bestimmen." This would imply an ability to read any image in a vacuum, without the benefit of more decisively rendered typological comparanda.

Depending upon the complexity of the image structure, and the degree of transformation displayed by certain real or potential members of the cluster, the degree of deconstruction will vary. In examining the bird-to-bird-woman seriation and the griffin-cluster cited above, the deconstructional level is low since it concerns almost complete components. Working with the Zakro Master's bird-women requires a greater degree of deconstruction: it is the recognition that similar parts are combined in an analogous manner which allows the seriation to be undertaken, and thereby the classification to proceed.³¹

DECONSTRUCTING 'TALISMANIC' IMAGES

In a seminal paper published in 1985, L. Morgan proposed disassembling 'talismanic' images into the "smallest definable iconographic unit" in view of "a study of unit variables". She noted that a change in reading is caused by "only minor differentiations between the units and their distribution".³² Morgan employed a content-orientated procedure. Yet 'talismanic' images are determined to a greater extent by technique than by content.³³ A more complete deconstruction, to the level of the creative acts of the cutter, that is, to the types and numbers of cuts necessary to complete the picture, appears of greater use.

This approach would isolate wide ditch-like cuts with a thick stone, thin lines of various lengths with a thin stone, and circular and semi-circular cuts with the tubular drill. By ordering the cuts according to position and association as they appear in, for example, the ship images, it becomes clear that the ditch-like cuts are reserved for the hull, and occasionally used for the ikrion uprights, the cuts with the tubular drill are employed for the lunettes of the ikrion and for waves, and, finally, that all other elements are cut as thin lines.³⁴

The position within the pictorial structure reveals that alternative notations are acceptable. All 'talismanic' ships are to be classified in a single cluster, with the option of subdividing it into three larger groups and 15 subgroups according to the cuts and articulations employed by the artist. A canonical 'talismanic' ship image depicts the forrard section of a hull with a keelline below, oars, a bird-symbol at the bow, and an ikrion with two forestays running to

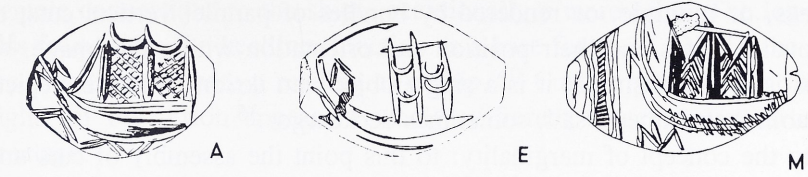
³¹ The processes of seriation and deconstruction are tools developed by the beholder in his/her work with the documents. They imply nothing concerning the thought-patterns of the artist, for instance the Zakro Master, when transforming the cuts normally used in one context into new images. The original thought-patterns cannot be recreated beyond hypotheses – in their stead must come transparent accounts of the scholar's work with the data.

³² L. Morgan in: *L'Iconographie Minoenne* 10f. I. Pini (supra n. 5) 15f. characterizes Morgan's units as "meaningless for any understanding of these motifs".

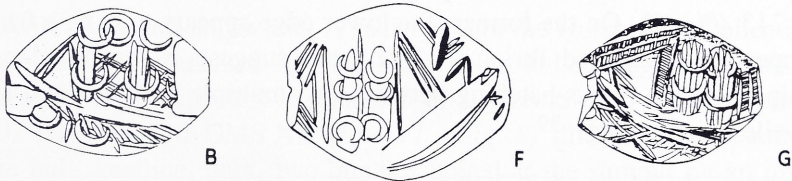
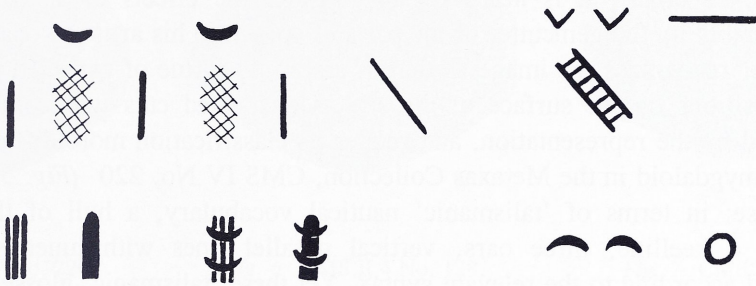
³³ Morgan (supra n. 2) 11 notes, nonetheless, that "the form of glyptic units is often largely technically determined" (cf. also the literature cited by Morgan in her n. 12). In *CMS Beih.* 3, 152, Morgan employs the term 'unit' for "the circles, crescents, lines etc.", which could suggest a deconstruction which goes further than that illustrated in Fig. 2b of her paper in *L'Iconographie Minoenne*. If this is so, then the process would be identical to that advocated here.

³⁴ Onassoglou, *DtS* 31. 171ff., esp. 173 Fig. 3.

the stempost. The ikrion consists of three uprights joined at their summits by two lunettes, and of cross-hatching. Occasionally waves may be added below the vessel.



Superstructure



Hull

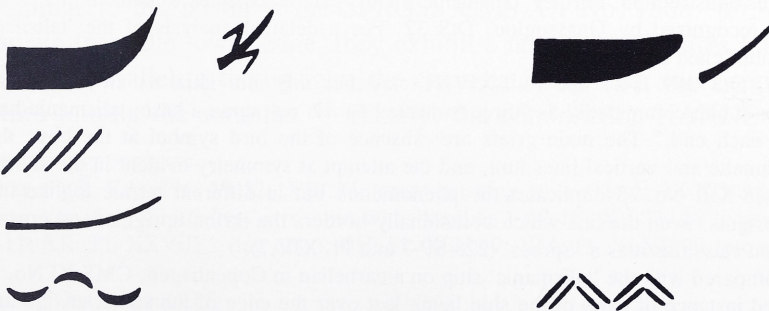


Fig. 4

The three groups are generated by a simple presence/absence matrix (*Fig. 4*): the *ikrion* either is rendered with lunettes and cross-hatching, or with the one or the other. The subgroups depend on points of detail, such as the size of the uprights, whether they are cut with single lines, or multiple, or rendered by bundles of parallel vertical cuts; other details include additional lunettes and their position and orientation within the image.³⁵ The result of this analysis is to establish that it is a single object, an *ikrion*, which is depicted, and not sometimes a cabin, sometimes a sail, sometimes deckcargo.³⁶

To return to the concept of marginality: to this point the assembly of cuts undertaken by the artist, and the reassembly subsequent to deconstruction undertaken by the beholder, has been controlled by rules of syntax. Canonical images, and a number of variants have ensued. Although not the purpose of this paper to digress into a consideration of the much-abused concept of 'artist's error', it is necessary to consider the effects of an 'uncontrolled' or 'incorrect' assembly by the gemcutter of the parts of speech in his artistic vocabulary.

The beholder recognizes the image as that of a ship by virtue of expected parts appearing in expected positions on the surface of the seal. Unexpected cuts will confuse the signals believed emitted by the representation, and render its classification more difficult. The image on the jasper amygdaloid in the Metaxas Collection, CMS IV No. 220 (*Fig. 5*), may serve as a paradigm case: in terms of 'talismanic' nautical vocabulary, a hull of the low type is depicted, with a keelline, three oars, vertical parallel lines with lunettes, all elements correctly placed according to the relevant syntax. Yet these 'talismanic' glosses do not suffice to create a 'talismanic' ship image.³⁷

Apparent truncated images of ships appear on two seals, the steatite from the Mavro Spileio nekropolis, CMS II,4 No. 128 (*Fig. 6*), and side b of the Brauron carnelian, CMS V,1 No. 213 (*Fig. 7*). On the former, the lower edge appears to have a fringe of 'oars', and a very imperfectly rendered *ikrion*.³⁸ The latter suggests a magnified section of the 'talismanic' ship on side a: cross-hatching between two multiple uprights, and to the right, a grotesquely swelled bird symbol.³⁹

³⁵ The analysis of cuttlefish by L. Morgan in: CMS Beih. 3, 153ff. Figs. 13–14 illustrates similar aspects of 'talismanic' images construction. Further 'talismanic' motifs can be expected to behave in a related manner.

³⁶ As already recognized by Onassoglou, DtS 32. For a detailed analysis of the 'talismanic' ships, cf. the author's dissertation, cited *supra* n. 9.

³⁷ Onassoglou, DtS 289 Is-21 and Pl. LXIV,21 classifies this individual as an 'isoliertes Motiv'. CMS IV No. 220 describes it non-committedly as "three truncated panels rest upon a base; talismanic hatching in the field; terminal lines at each end." The main griefs are: absence of the bird symbol at the bow, the presence of the central inverted lunette and vertical lines unit, and the attempt at symmetry evident in the short cuts left and right of the 'hull'. CMS XIII No. 73 duplicates the phenomenon but in different terms: loglike hull, keelline, oars, zigzag waves, uprights, even the line which occasionally borders the *ikrion* uprights, and cross-hatching. It is not a ship; Onassoglou classifies it as a 'Spross' (223 SP-7 and Pl. XIV,7).

³⁸ It can be compared with the 'talismanic' ship on a carnelian in Copenhagen, CMS XI No. 237c.

³⁹ For a related instance of parts of the ship being lost over the edge of the stone, cf. the agate in the Cabinet des Médailles, CMS IX No. 88c. Cf. Schiering (*supra* n. 6 [1984]) 66 n. 4; 70. This approach suggests a type of *pars pro toto*; cf. Chr. Boulotis in: 1st International Symposium on Ship Construction in Antiquity, H. Tzalas (ed.), Tropis I, Piraeus 1985 (1989) 57.

The cited representations retain a tenuous link with the 'talismanic' ship cluster through an apparent duplication of certain canonical features, but in contexts which prohibit an inclusion in a catalogue of Aegean Bronze Age ship images. Other seals depict objects or compositions with more remote connections to the ships, occasionally a mere echo. The log-like hull with oars, and, less frequently, the keelline, function as a base for the KANNE, the SPROSS, and other motives, but do not invite a reading as a ship.⁴⁰ Cuts very similar to those employed for the uprights of the ikrion appear in wholly different contexts, yet clearly indicate a technical parentage.



Fig. 5 CMS IV No. 220.



Fig. 6 CMS II,4 No. 128.



Fig. 7 CMS V,1 No. 213.

Four seals will be passed on review. A schist seal in the Hutchinson Collection, CMS VIII No. 122, combines an attenuated logshape base, cross-hatching, concentric circles, all elements known from the ships, but in a manner totally removed from any identified motif.⁴¹ The BÜNDEL IN V-FORM CMS XII No. 177 (Fig. 8) illustrates substantial links to the ship — log-like hull, keelline, oars, two bundles united at the summit by an inverted lunette, cross-hatching between them, plus additional branch motives left and right — yet the classification cannot be doubted.

Intriguingly similar to the ikrion is the SPROSS CMS XII No. 186b (Fig. 9): although the 'uprights' radiate from the lower edge, they exhibit a number of features known from the ships, such as the line parallel to the upright, the cross-hatching, and, most significantly, the double zigzag lines joining the summits.⁴² Finally, the combination KANNE+SPROSS on

⁴⁰ Cf. Onassoglou, DtS, KA: Pls. VI,32; VIII,74 (cross-hatching below log); IX,KO-6; SP: Pls. XIV,5 (cross-hatching below log). 6.11.13.16 (no 'oars', but with 'keelline') .17.18; XV,23–25 (cross-hatching below log) etc.; XVI,KO-11; KR: Pl. XXVIII,1 (log only); BU: Pl. XLV,17; WZ: Pl. XLVII,20 (cross-hatching below log).

⁴¹ Not catalogued by Onassoglou, DtS.

⁴² Line parallel to upright: CMS I Suppl. No. 74; IV No. 227; V Suppl. 1A No. 191; X Nos. 110b. 276. Cross-hatching: CMS VII No. 104; VIII No. 139; IX No. 116; XI No. 20b. Double zigzag joining uprights: CMS IV No. 227; V Suppl. 1A No. 334; X No. 99.

CMS IV No. 243 stands on a stunted hull-and-oars base, and includes a cross-hatched background. It is clear that the image is far removed from the ship cluster, but it illustrates the use of simple technical means to create superficially or partially similar images. These documents cannot be considered marginal to the ship cluster, yet there is a manifest technical overlap, and little would be needed for any one individual to slip into marginality.



Fig. 8 CMS XII No. 177.



Fig. 9 CMS XII No. 186b.

A final instance may be quoted due to its interesting double marginality: the three uprights with lunettes depicted on CMS IX No. 99, classified as an "isoliertes Motiv",⁴³ vaguely resemble less tidy depictions of 'talismanic' ikria without the cross-hatching,⁴⁴ yet could also be considered as marginal to the OKTOPUS motif.⁴⁵

The sharing of cuts determine the choice of employing them, rather than a "smallest definable unit", as diagnostic traits when working with 'talismanic' images. A greater scope for identifying parallels ensues, particularly when the position of the cuts is taken into account.⁴⁶

⁴³ Onassoglou, DtS, 291 Pl. LXV,44.

⁴⁴ Cf. CMS I Suppl. No. 125; II,3 Nos. 157. 182; XI No. 125.

⁴⁵ Cf. Onassoglou, DtS Pl. XXVII,8–12 (note, however, that the lunettes are always arranged to either side of the upright).

⁴⁶ Related phenomena can be observed in the use of simple shapes as building blocks in image construction on early Cretan seals; e.g. the hatched segment of a circle for human figures: Yule, ECS Pl. 2,38; for birds: *ibid.*: Pl. 9,14; CMS II,1 No. 414; IX No. 17d; XII No. 45c; the petaloid loop for human figures and a cat: C.G. Thomas in: *Eikon* 218 and Pl. LIId, from G. Walberg, *Tradition and Innovation, Essays in Minoan Art* (1986), 32 Figs. 37–38 (= Yule, ECS, Pl. 32,15,24) and 18 Fig. 13; for a net with fish: Walberg, *op.cit.* 18 Fig. 12; for *Zweipässe*: Yule, ECS, Pl. 27,1.3. On the use of formulae, cf. Walberg, *op.cit.* 11, Thomas *op.cit.* *passim*, and J. Crowley in: *Transition* 211.

CONCLUSIONS: RESEARCH DESIGN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

The work of the archaeologist examining pictorial data consists of two complementary operations, the ordering of the documents, and the creation of a discourse, serving both to justify the classification employed, and to interpret the evidence in accordance with the methods applied. Both are, objectively considered, flawed, since they are tributary to the particular scholar: archaeological interpretation does not create facts, only opinions. The integrity of the opinions depends on the theoretical framework within which the study is undertaken.

Given the nature of pictorial data, clusters (or 'groups' or 'types' or related terms) constitute the only valid basis for formulating general statements. No matter how artfully created, a single document with no parallels cannot be hailed as major evidence due to its possible status as an exception. The cluster approach is the closest pictures can come to statistics and quantification.

The creation of discourse by the archaeologist generates texts, to be examined as such. This entails explicit enumeration of the elements considered necessary and/or sufficient for the inclusion of individual documents in a cluster, as well as of their consequences for the continuing investigation.⁴⁷ One such consequence of clustering allied with pictorial structure when examining complex images is the recognition that the cluster population contains documents which adhere closely to the master-type, the canonicals, others which deviate slightly, the variants, and some which deviate considerably, the marginals.

The margin, as was noted above, is drawn by the beholder.⁴⁸ It need not have meant anything to the artists creating the objects. The beholder is conditioned by the perception of an apparent matrix within which the documents appear to have been created. This matrix-orientated thinking is a product of the typological classification which has dominated Archaeology since its inception. Marginality is, thus, an externally imposed analytical concept which tries to account for such individuals which do not duplicate a canonical image or any of its variants, yet appear to invoke their essence.

Marginals are borderline cases to the classificatory and interpretative act imposed upon the archaeological data. They do not enter into the defined categories by virtue of their inability

⁴⁷ The author's paper in: *Eikon* (supra n. 9) constitutes a sustained attempt to apply pictorial structure in general, and a specific structure in particular, to a well-known category of evidence. A number of consequences emerging from inclusions in the cluster obliges the study to examine further candidates, and the discourse to continue elsewhere. It cannot be ignored that the approach creates problems, not all solved in the paper in question. This, however, is considered preferable to choosing a cut-off point in respect of past opinions emitted concerning the relevant material.

⁴⁸ 'Talismanic' ship formulae (bird symbols, lunettes) are also employed on the so-called 'trees in the wind' (J. Betts, *AJA* 72, 1968, Pl. 61, 1-3; most recently discussed by J. Weingarten, *SMEA* 28, 1990, 98, 103 and 103 n. 30), suggesting a reading as three superimposed bows but thereby creating images radically marginal to the 'talismanic' ship cluster. Whether the artist attempted to create an image familiar to his contemporaries or a wholly new artistic vision lies outside the scholar's ability to judge. The beholder can only proceed from the known (the components) to the unknown (the message) and place the image in the periphery of his/her classification.

to fully respect the criteria suggested by the cluster population as valid for inclusion. The term 'ambiguity', if the onus is placed on the beholder, corresponds to the state of marginality: time has removed the code, and the scholar manages, by creating an analytical matrix from the aggregate of signals emitted by those individuals which can be confidently clustered, to recreate only part of it — or something believed to approximate the original code.⁴⁹

Marginality — even more than clustering, seriation, and deconstruction — places the scholar at the burning point. The margin drawn is tributary to the framework within which the investigation is undertaken. Since there is a margin, or border, to each cluster, any attempt at classification must face the problem of fluctuating marginality. In other words, classification is variable, and the results — the discourse — cannot attain more than a status of justified belief, where the justification is dependent on the theoretical and methodological solidity of the explicitly formulated framework.

Therefore, if this paper closes with a call for a theory-based approach to Aegean Bronze Age imagery, it is not merely an attempt to encourage scholars to develop new methods of analysis. It is a demand for global systems which specify framing assumptions, define terminology, create analytical tools, and, above all, particularize the role of the scholar in the hermeneutic process.

⁴⁹ The frequent reference to Morgan's paper on ambiguity (in: CMS Beih. 3, 145ff.) should make it clear that the present author does not agree with the criticism leveled against it by Onassoglou (in this volume). The concept of marginality as argued here postulates 'ambiguities', particularly in the 'talismanic' image structure, resolved only through an explicit (or implicit) de- and reconstruction. The approach of Morgan is a valid attempt to go further in the understanding of individual 'talismanic' representations, employing as a base the fine typological study which Onassoglou, DtS is.